



ANNUAL REPORT

24/25



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*We acknowledge with gratitude that we live, work,
and play on the traditional unceded territories of the
Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.*

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BRITISH
COLUMBIA



Jenna Forbes
CHAIR

Tremendous congratulations to ACCESS for another successful year of dedication supporting urban Indigenous people across Metro Vancouver gain meaningful employment while also promoting our Indigenous ways of being and knowing.

It is a great honour to contribute alongside the tireless staff, managers, the President and CEO and Board Members to the success of so many community members to have access to quality education, certification and connections to gain meaningful employment. The ACCESS team have all rallied together to continue our goals of supporting our urban Indigenous community members adapt and meet their employment goals and overcome barriers. Our professional staff, partnerships and stakeholders are truly the foundations of our success - they bring inspiration, creativity, loyalty, resiliency and support to the Board of Directors that enables us to make informed decisions. I've observed the ACCESS team working tirelessly with great enthusiasm to meet the needs of

community and achieve the mission they are committed to: "To increase urban Indigenous peoples participation in the labour market" for both youth and adults. We, as a board, are extremely proud of the ACCESS team, who work together to deliver quality services to our diverse urban Indigenous community. I want to acknowledge that these employees go above and beyond, working to create atmospheres for healing, building confidence and finding what jobs bring our program participants the most joy.

I would also like to recognize and acknowledge the Board of Directors past and present who give so willingly of their time to serve ACCESS, they are all very busy individuals who are Executive Directors/CEOs of their own organizations and yet make time to give back to community by serving on a governing board for ACCESS. Thank you for your commitment, dedication and leadership; it is an honor to serve you.

Hasaqu nm t'oyaxsn da gasgaaw waan: Congratulations again to all involved, a job well done.



Lynn White
PRESIDENT & CEO

As we live and work in this urban environment, the relationships we cultivate—with one another, the land, and the broader community—are deeply rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. These connections guide our work and reflect our ability to understand and respond to the unique needs of our urban Indigenous population.

Even when we are away from our home territories, we carry our cultural identity with pride—honouring our traditions, ceremonies, stories, and teachings. These cultural foundations are powerful tools that guide our efforts to move our people forward in a good way, fostering confidence and creating a supportive, healthy learning environment.

This year, our staff demonstrated outstanding dedication and commitment. Every department met or exceeded its targets, with record achievements in trades training across all levels of apprenticeship. Our Programs team expanded into exciting new career pathways, including makeup artistry at Blanche Macdonald, pastry arts, and airline training. Indigenous Skills for Success continues to serve as a vital stepping stone for many students on their career journeys, while BladeRunners remains

a transformative first step for youth, helping them transition from at-risk to at-work.

Our Indigenous Youth Leadership Hub supported high school students to reach the finish line—graduation—through innovative opportunities like welding camps and robotics. Our youth workers provided critical support, including tutoring and help with graduation-related expenses, ensuring no student is left behind.

Behind the scenes, our Finance and HR teams exemplified our core values—Respect, Kindness, Sharing, and Honour—while delivering their work with professionalism, integrity, and efficiency.

We also take great pride in the events we hosted this year, from completion and graduation ceremonies to our Community Forum and Honouring Dinner. These gatherings gave us the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the achievements of so many participants who reached their goals and aspirations.

Lastly, we acknowledge the vital role of our Board of Directors—a source of strength, balance, knowledge, and wisdom. Their strategic guidance and steadfast support continue to ground and elevate our work.



Background

ACCESS began as a cooperative venture of the urban Indigenous community of Greater Vancouver. Our founding members came together to ensure that the employment and training needs of urban Indigenous people in Metro Vancouver were being met.

A duly incorporated BC not-for-profit society since 2002, ACCESS has grown into one of the most comprehensive employment and training service providers in Canada. We support all Indigenous people, providing status, non-status, Métis, and Inuit people with access to education and training that leads to meaningful long-term employment. Our client-first approach integrates the expertise of six business units to streamline our program participants' experience with us.

At ACCESS we provide services for Indigenous people by Indigenous people. Decisions related to programming and operations are made for the betterment of our urban Indigenous community

and are consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). A vital component of our programming is the integration of Indigenous culture, including traditional knowledge, teachings from Elders, and land-based learning which helps to ground our participants, instilling pride and confidence in who they are, while empowering them for continued success.

In 2019, ACCESS signed a 10-year Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program agreement, securing our funding until 2029. This long-term investment allows us to continue advancing holistic, culturally-informed approaches that honour Indigenous ways of being and knowing, while supporting our people in building fulfilling futures rooted in cultural identity and self-determination.

OUR MISSION

Increasing urban Indigenous peoples participation in the labour market.

OUR VISION

ACCESS envisions an urban Indigenous community empowered through culture, wellness, achievement, and self-sufficiency.

OUR MANDATE

ACCESS serves to enhance human resource development and the sustainable capacity of the urban Indigenous population in Metro Vancouver through the provision of employment and training.



OUR CORE VALUES:

Honour
Kindness
Respect
Sharing

ACCESS

Board of Directors



Jenna Forbes

ACCESS CHAIR

Vancouver Aboriginal
Transformative Justice
Services Society



Olivia Jim

ACCESS SECRETARY

Helping Spirit
Lodge Society



Merv Thomas

ACCESS VICE CHAIR

Circle of Eagles
Lodge Society



Lou Demerais

ACCESS DIRECTOR

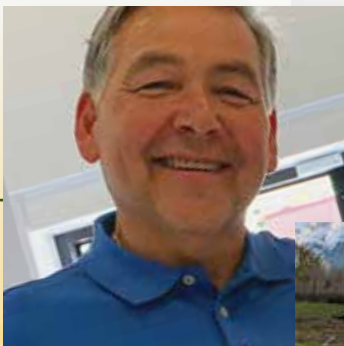
Community Leader



Susan Tatoosh

ACCESS DIRECTOR

Vancouver Aboriginal
Friendship Centre Society



Nick Calla

ACCESS TREASURER

White Raven Consulting Ltd.



Carrie Humchitt

ACCESS DIRECTOR

Vancouver Aboriginal
Health Society

Governance

A volunteer Board of Directors, representative of the needs, interests and diversity of the urban Indigenous population of Metro Vancouver, guides the growth and direction of ACCESS. The Board of Directors establishes policies and strategic direction for ACCESS and entrusts daily operations to a capable staff and management team. All authority is delegated through the President and CEO. The Board meets ten times per year and as required to address issues and opportunities. Timely responsiveness is a key to professional and needs-directed human resource development.

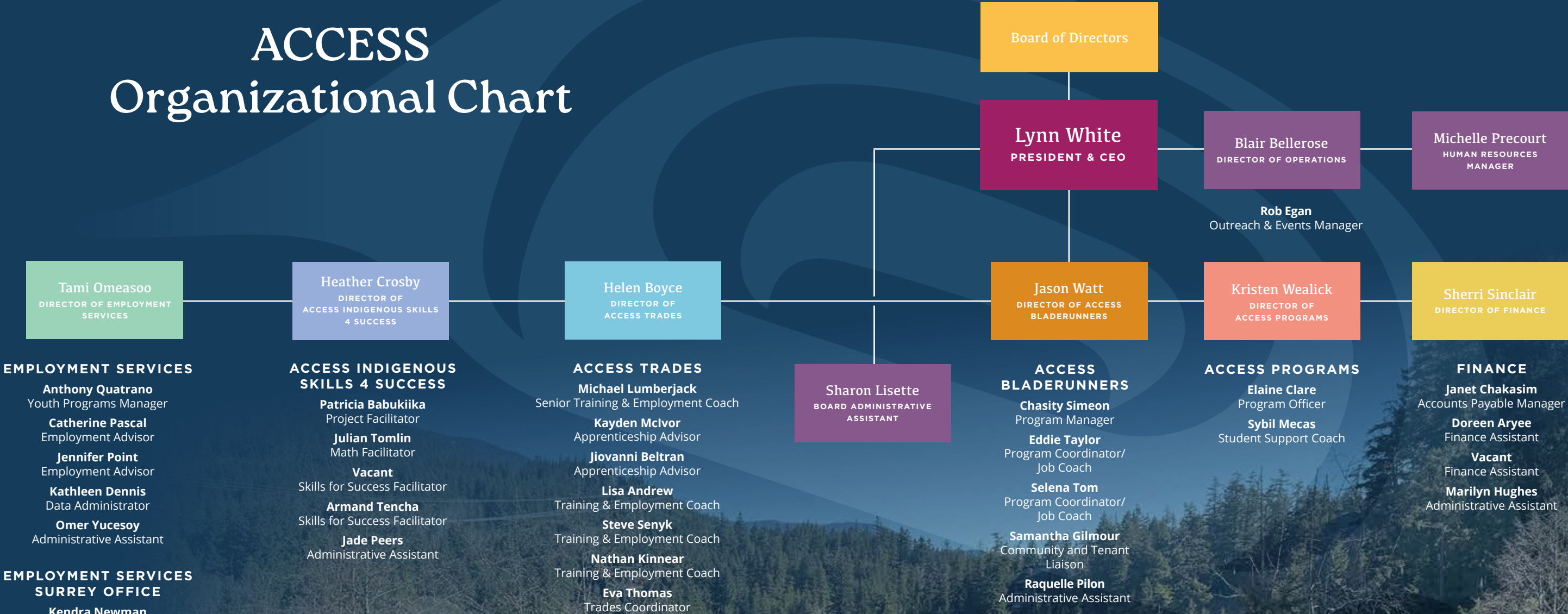
Leadership

The President and CEO is the official ACCESS representative to the Board of Directors, the community and the media. The President and CEO provides leadership consistent with Board approved ACCESS policies, goals, and objectives. Specifically, this includes the development and implementation of the ACCESS strategic business plan and annual operating plans, as well as fiscal planning and accountability, asset protection, and maximization of human resources. Reports and recommendations that analyze progress, measure success and identify hurdles are provided to the Board on a regular basis.

Management Team

The President and CEO oversees a management team comprised of Directors and Managers who work together collaboratively to ensure the successful delivery of the strategic goals and priorities of ACCESS. These individuals are responsible for the operational success of their departments, which is achieved through outstanding management practices including team leadership, ensuring accountability with thorough reporting, developing capacity through funding proposals, and building and maintaining partnerships with industry partners, training institutions and all levels of government.

ACCESS Organizational Chart



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Anthony Quatrano
Youth Programs Manager

Catherine Pascal
Employment Advisor

Jennifer Point
Employment Advisor

Kathleen Dennis
Data Administrator

Omer Yucesoy
Administrative Assistant

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SURREY OFFICE

Kendra Newman
Surrey Program Manager

Cathy Roy
Employment Advisor

Destiny Wells
Employment Advisor

Andrew Eang
Employment Advisor

Candace Knutson
Trades Advisor

Tammy Dunn
Administrative Assistant

ACCESS INDIGENOUS SKILLS 4 SUCCESS

Patricia Babukiika
Project Facilitator

Julian Tomlin
Math Facilitator

Vacant
Skills for Success Facilitator

Armand Tencha
Skills for Success Facilitator

Jade Peers
Administrative Assistant

ACCESS TRADES

Michael Lumberjack
Senior Training & Employment Coach

Kayden McIvor
Apprenticeship Advisor

Giovanni Beltran
Apprenticeship Advisor

Lisa Andrew
Training & Employment Coach

Steve Senyk
Training & Employment Coach

Nathan Kinnear
Training & Employment Coach

Eva Thomas
Trades Coordinator

ACCESS BLADERUNNERS

Chasity Simeon
Program Manager

Eddie Taylor
Program Coordinator/
Job Coach

Selena Tom
Program Coordinator/
Job Coach

Samantha Gilmour
Community and Tenant
Liaison

Raquelle Pilon
Administrative Assistant

ACCESS PROGRAMS

Elaine Clare
Program Officer

Sybil Mecas
Student Support Coach

FINANCE

Janet Chakasim
Accounts Payable Manager

Doreen Aryee
Finance Assistant

Vacant
Finance Assistant

Marilyn Hughes
Administrative Assistant

ACCESS Locations

Serving the urban Indigenous community of Metro Vancouver for over 20 years



ACCESS Head Office
 108 - 100 Park Royal South
 West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2
 TEL: 604 913-7933
 FAX: 604 913-7938

ACCESS Indigenous Skills 4 Success (IS4S)
 201 - 681 Columbia Street
 New Westminster, BC V3M 1A8
 TEL: 604 521-5929
 FAX: 604 521-5931

BladeRunners Provincial Management
 1848 Commercial Drive
 Vancouver, BC V5N 4A5
 TEL: 604-688-9116
 FAX: 604-688-9146

ACCESS Trades
 108 - 100 Park Royal South
 West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2
 TEL: 604 922-4077
 FAX: 604 922-4088

ACCESS Programs
 108 - 100 Park Royal South
 West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2
 TEL: 604 913-7933
 FAX: 604 913-7938

BladeRunners Place
 250 Powell Street
 Vancouver, BC V6A 0E2
 TEL: 604-558-7787
 FAX: 604-608-0476

ACCESS BladeRunners Vancouver
 1848 Commercial Drive
 Vancouver, BC V5N 4A5
 TEL: 604 688-9116
 FAX: 604 688-9146

ACCESS BladeRunners Surrey
 10708 136A Street
 Surrey, BC V3T 5G9
 TEL: 778-395-0385
 FAX: 604-581-0944

TWO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES LOCATIONS

ACCESS Employment Services
 110 - 1607 East Hastings Street
 Vancouver, BC V5L 1S7
 TEL: 604 251-7955
 FAX: 604 251-7954

ACCESS Employment Services
 10708 136A Street
 Surrey, BC V3T 5G9
 TEL: 778 395-0385
 FAX: 604 581-0944

Employment Services (ES)

Employment Services (ES) operates out of two locations in Vancouver and Surrey, providing employment and training support to Indigenous people across Metro Vancouver. Grounded in ACCESS' Indigenous values—honour, kindness, respect, and sharing—ES offers client-centered, culturally informed services that reflect the strengths and lived experiences of urban Indigenous individuals.

Employment Advisors work one-on-one with clients to bridge employability gaps and support engagement in the urban labour market. They assist with resumes, cover letters, interview skills, and career planning while fostering confidence, self-determination, and cultural identity.

ES Resource Labs offer safe, welcoming spaces for career exploration and job searches. Financial support is available for job starts, group training, individual seat purchases, short-term certificates, and Targeted Wage Subsidies. Driver's licence workshops and lessons are also funded, supporting mobility as a key to employment.

Clients are assessed and referred to ACCESS group and Trades training programs, where learning incorporates both industry standards and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Guided by integrity and respect, ES is deeply committed to each client's success. That success is a shared journey and a powerful step toward building a stronger future for the urban Indigenous population.



Emilie Qilluniq
INUIT

"Thanks to funding from Access, I've been able to attend university and pursue a degree in forestry, something that once felt out of reach. This support has lifted a huge financial weight, allowing me to focus on my studies and future career in sustainable land management. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to turn my passion for the environment into a profession."

Emilie is a recipient of the Indigenous Forestry Scholarship Program, a partnership between ACCESS and the First Nations Forestry Council.

1,717

CLIENTS SERVED

370

K-12 YOUTH SERVED

675

EMPLOYED OR

RETURNED TO SCHOOL

Tanya Steinauer
MÉTIS

Tanya recently completed the Forest and Natural Areas Management (FNAM) diploma program at BCIT. Her training was funded through a partnership between ACCESS and the First Nations Forestry Council's Indigenous Forestry Scholarship Program. Tanya was drawn to the FNAM program because of the hands-on learning through numerous field trips, the incredibly supportive, knowledgeable, and passionate instructors, and the job readiness at the end of the program. After completing her training, she now has a better understanding of BC forests, the forestry industry, soils, ecosystems, and the legal, social, and economic contexts surrounding land management.

This summer she is working with the research department of the Ministry of Forests in Nelson, BC. She will be working alongside a hydrologist, entomologist, and silviculturist while exploring their research projects. Tanya is grateful to ACCESS for helping to fund her education in partnership with the First Nations Forestry Council.

ACCESS Youth Services

ACCESS Youth Services (YS) supports Indigenous youth in achieving high school graduation, career readiness, and long-term success through culturally grounded programming. Rooted in Indigenous values, YS empowers youth to build confidence, cultural identity, and independence.

Year-round programs include STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), information technology, driver's licensing, and driving lessons. Spring Break and Summer programs engage youth in cultural activities, job readiness, and life skills development. Signature initiatives—such as the STEAM Program, Canoe Leadership Program for Indigenous Girls, Job Club, and tech-based programs—reflect Indigenous ways of knowing through experiential learning, mentorship, and community connection.

YS is committed to creating accessible, engaging opportunities that prepare youth for future education and employment. Whether pursuing trades, technology, or academic pathways, our goal is to provide the tools and experiences youth need to make informed decisions.

This year's highlights included a Welding Camp with BCIT, expanded STEAM programming, employment support through our Job Club, and wage subsidies that helped youth secure their first job placements. Programs emphasize teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving while incorporating land-based knowledge, cultural teachings, and Elder guidance.

Strong partnerships, including with Vancouver and Surrey School Districts, help us extend our impact. At YS, we honour each youth's journey through culturally rooted, future-focused support.

Sebastian Point SQUAMISH NATION

Sebastian first connected with ACCESS through school. He enrolled in the driver's training program and summer Youth Job Club, which led to a Targeted Wage Subsidy placement at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. After a successful summer, he was hired part-time with the Centre's catering team. Sebastian quickly proved himself capable, taking on various kitchen duties and event work. Since completing the programs, he has earned his driver's licence, purchased his own vehicle, and maintained steady employment. Through his journey, Sebastian has gained financial independence, learned to manage money, and developed confidence working in a fast-paced environment. He credits ACCESS with helping him overcome key barriers to employment.



Kristen Whitsoon GITXSAN NATION

Kristen completed ACCESS's What the L driving program, which she indicates changed her life for the better. When she first started to learn how to drive, Kristen felt very nervous, but after completing this training she feels much more confident when she drives. She can now drive to her high school, see her family and friends more often, help her family and grandparents to get groceries and will be able to drive to college in the fall. She is grateful to have more freedom now to pursue her future endeavors.

"ACCESS is such a supportive organization and knowing that there are people out there to support me and my culture, makes a very big difference in my life and the lives of other Indigenous people as well."

Tahira Anderson LOWER NICOLA INDIAN BAND

Tahira is currently taking the Global Esthetics program at Blanche Macdonald, a path she chose after dealing with her own skin challenges. She's passionate about helping others feel confident in their skin and says supporting people in this way is incredibly rewarding.

She's grateful to ACCESS for making this opportunity possible, calling it an amazing organization that creates real pathways for Indigenous people. Tahira encourages others to reach out and explore the programs ACCESS offers. With their support, she feels more confident pursuing her goals and building a future she's proud of.



ACCESS Trades

ACCESS Trades offers trades training and apprenticeship supports for urban Indigenous Peoples. Since 2005 we have partnered with the Federal and Provincial Governments, Seaspan, and other employers throughout Metro Vancouver to provide training and employment to our skilled trainees.

We are currently responsible for 575 active apprentices and journey people in 48 trades and occupations. In addition, we have 173 people who have completed their training and achieved Red Seal Certification in their trade, and 36 people who hold a Certificate of Qualification in a trade that does not require Red Seal Certification. On the Marine side 42 people have completed the Bridge Watch Program and hold a Bridge Watch Rating Certificate. This year, three of our Bridge Watch people upskilled, one completing the Master 500GT program and is a ship's Captain.

We also take pride in the achievements of our graduates who have completed master's Degrees, or Project Management Programs, became Trades Instructors, or employed in Quality Control and

Inspection, and even started their own business. From the first training program, we encourage our trainees to look far into the future, beyond the trade itself.

Training is ongoing and in 2024-2025, the Trades Department sponsored and delivered twenty-one trades programs with our partners, BCIT, EJTC, Skill Plan, and UAPIC. We also have significant employer partners such as Seaspan, Saam Smit Towage, Marcon, BCIB, Marcon, Bosa, Axiom, Georgia Mechanical, IBEW 213, who support us by providing employment to our graduates.

Trades also collaborated with local schools to offer Trades Discovery programs which take place over a few days or up to a week and in addition we provided funds for high school students who are in the first year of their apprenticeship while in Grade 12.

The work we do is made possible by funding through the Skills & Partnership Fund, Seaspan, and ISETS. Bosa and Axiom are both providing funding for carpentry tools.



575 ACTIVE APPRENTICES

173 RED SEAL CERTIFICATIONS

48 TRADE DESIGNATIONS

15% OF OUR APPRENTICES ARE WOMEN

ACCESS IS PROUD TO TRAIN 3X MORE WOMEN APPRENTICES THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE



Christopher Breen

Christopher is proud to have completed upskilling through the ACCESS Skills 4 Success program and the ACCESS sponsored Welding Foundations program at BCIT. During his time training he developed a strong understanding of the work ethic and attention to detail required to pursue a professional career in the trades. From day one, Christopher said he felt welcomed by both staff and peers, supported, and part of a greater community.

One year ago, he never imagined he would be where he is today, but he is excited and ready to build a better future for himself. A chance, he says, not everyone gets, and he feels incredibly fortunate to have been part of ACCESS.

He also wants anyone considering this path to know that he can confidently say this program has the potential to change lives. He feels it has changed his.



Leon Matchuck

Leon came from Regina, Saskatchewan; he is Cree with ties to Kawacatoose First Nation. After moving to BC four years ago, he had no clear path—until he walked into ACCESS Employment Services. A chat with reception led to a career advisor appointment, where he discovered ACCESS training programs. Metal fabrication caught his eye, having done some metal work in his youth. He enrolled and was surprised ACCESS covered tuition, living allowance, transportation, and meals. The commute—two hours to IS4S, later three to BCIT—was tough, but he stayed committed. Now, Leon has completed the program and works as a welder at Marcon Metal Fab.

“ACCESS has been everything to me, they helped me start my career, supported my goals, and gave me the skills to elevate my career and now I am moving towards owning my own business.” - LYLE LERAT

Elizabeth Florence

Elizabeth Florence is a proud member of the Katzie First Nation. From an early age she knew she wanted to pursue a career in the trades. She was inspired by watching her mother and sister attend welder training together. Elizabeth chose a different path as an electrician, but is incredibly grateful to have discovered a program that truly aligns with her own interests and passions. She added it was especially meaningful to meet and learn alongside people from different Indigenous communities. This enriched her experience both culturally and physically. Elizabeth expressed that she is deeply thankful to ACCESS, SkillPlan, and EJTC for their guidance and support, and all the incredible people that were part of it. For Elizabeth, this experience has been transformative and has set her on a path toward a rewarding career in electrical.



Lyle Lerat

Lyle came to BC in 2017 and hails from the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan but grew up in Regina. Before moving to BC, he worked as a carpenter's helper and labourer but found this did not lead to long term meaningful employment. His cousin told him about ACCESS, and he gave us a call.

He learned about BladeRunners and was glad because it eventually led him to decide to become a welder. He struggled with academics and math specifically during foundations but credits the staff at IS4S who tutored him and prepared him for BCIT.

Now a Level B Welder he works for Pacific Conveyers, and he is confident he made the right decision to become a welder.



ACCESS Indigenous Skills 4 Success (IS4S)

ACCESS-IS4S removes employment barriers for Indigenous learners by providing targeted training in key Skills for Success, such as reading, writing, numeracy, and communication. The IS4S Program addresses these skills by building upon individual strengths and enhancing these key skills through a curriculum aligned with the 9 Skills for Success framework. This approach focuses on foundational skills that empower our Indigenous learners to overcome barriers and establish a clear pathway towards their training and employment goals, ultimately leading to full labor market participation and self-sufficiency. The IS4S Program equips participants with the foundational knowledge and confidence to succeed in today's economy.

This year 2024-2025 we completed 10 programs, encompassing both our Employer Partnership and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs that empower Indigenous learners through training and skills development.

1. **ETC/Indigenous Housing Worker Program**
2. **ECOMM911 (12 Weeks)**
3. **Welding (BCIT)**
4. **Carpentry (BCIT)**
5. **Security System Technician (EJTC)**
6. **ICBC4**
7. **Metal Fab (BCIT)**
8. **Pipefitting Foundation (BCIT)**
9. **Sheet Metal Foundation (BCIT)**
10. **Welding UAPIC**

ICBC Employer Partner Program: A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

ACCESS-IS4S and ICBC successfully partnered to deliver a 4th Skills for Success Intake, equipping 11 Indigenous learners with the skills and knowledge necessary to secure permanent roles within ICBC. This 8-week program focused on developing key workplace skills such as customer service, computer proficiency, and communication skills.

The program incorporated cultural workshops and provided intensive coaching and mentorship throughout the selection process, which included:

- Pre-screening and assessments
- Keyboarding tests

- Site visits
- Interviews with department

Participants successfully secured permanent positions within ICBC across various departments. This success highlights the effectiveness of the partnership between ACCESS-IS4S and ICBC in providing meaningful employment opportunities for Indigenous learners.



Empowering Indigenous Futures: THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE WORKER PROGRAM

ACCESS-IS4S first program of the year, in collaboration with the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS), successfully launched the inaugural Indigenous Community-Based Service Worker Program. This 8-week program aimed to address the shortage of Indigenous housing professionals by equipping participants with the skills and knowledge necessary for careers in the housing sector.

This pilot program demonstrated the successful collaboration between ACCESS-IS4S and VAFCS in addressing the need for qualified Indigenous housing professionals. While challenges were encountered, the program provided valuable skills and pathways for participants seeking careers in the housing sector.



E-COMM 9-1-1 Operators Program: A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

ACCESS-IS4S partnered with E-COMM 9-1-1 to develop and deliver a 12-week training program for Indigenous candidates seeking careers as 911 operators. The program focused on developing essential skills, including:

Technical skills: Computer proficiency, keyboarding, and E-COMM 9-1-1 specific software.

Communication skills: Exceptional customer service, active listening, and clear communication.

Professional skills: Resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and professional conduct.

The program also incorporated cultural workshops, such as weaving and drum making, to foster a sense of community and cultural connection.

Eleven candidates successfully completed the program and underwent a rigorous selection process, including:

- Pre-screening and assessments
- Keyboarding tests
- Site visits
- Background checks
- Interviews with E-COMM 9-1-1 representatives



Bridging the Gap: PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

ACCESS-IS4S Pre-Apprenticeship Programs empower Indigenous learners by honing key skills, including numeracy and communication, while promoting a strong sense of cultural identity through integrated workshops. This holistic approach equips participants with the confidence and practical skills to excel in their chosen trades, ultimately leading to successful careers and contributing to a skilled workforce.





Kendall Drager

HAIDA NATION

Kendall Drager, from the Haida Nation, sought a better future beyond minimum wage jobs. Through the BladeRunners Program and subsequent enrollment in ACCESS' Trades and Indigenous Skills 4 Success Program, he gained valuable foundational skills and a renewed sense of confidence. "It made me see I'm capable and helped me get out of a rut," he shares.

Kendall emphasizes the importance of taking your time and learning from the experience. He is now pursuing his goals with newfound confidence and a brighter outlook on the future in Welding.



Lauren Lynxleg

VALLEY RIVER FIRST NATION

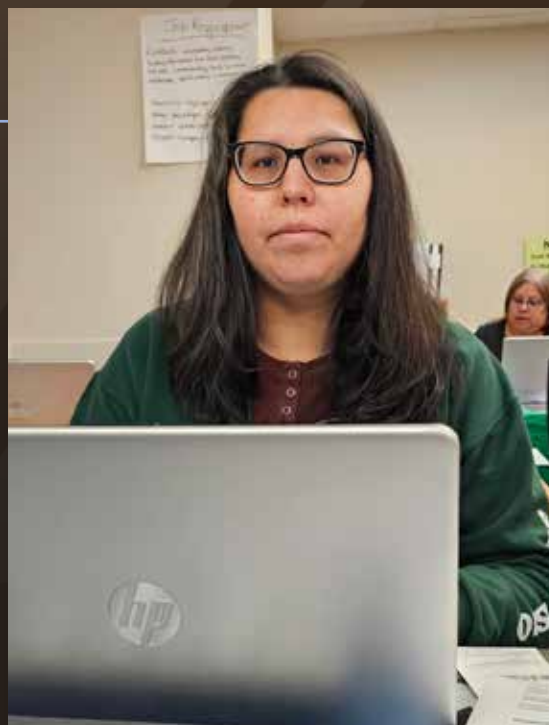
Lauren Lynxleg, from Manitoba, overcame personal challenges to successfully complete the Indigenous Skills for Success Program at ACCESS. Initially hesitant, she found the program to be a turning point, boosting her confidence and equipping her with the skills and knowledge to pursue a career in housing. Lauren credits ACCESS-IS4S program's holistic approach and dedicated instructors for her success, expressing deep gratitude for the opportunity and a strong desire to give back to the program in the future.

"The program, along with the incredible support from the staff, gave me the tools I needed to succeed" - JENNIFER LINDSAY

Jennifer Lindsay

DOG RIB RAE FIRST NATION

Jennifer Lindsay, from the Dog Rib Rae First Nation in the North West Territories, embarked on a journey to transition from warehouse worker despite initial feelings of hesitation. The ACCESS-IS4S program's strength lay not only in its skills training but also in its supportive environment, which recognized and respected the diverse Indigenous backgrounds of everyone in the group. This holistic approach enabled Jennifer to gain the confidence required to secure employment at ICBC. This training has profoundly impacted her life, leading her to a promising career path she previously thought unattainable due to a lack of confidence and skills. The collaborative support of ACCESS and the facilitators at IS4S was instrumental in providing Jennifer with what she needed to thrive at ICBC.



"It made me see I'm capable and helped me get out of a rut"
- KENDALL DRAGER

Logan Spencer-Barber

MÉTIS

Logen Spencer-Barber, a 32-year-old Métis man originally from Prince George, British Columbia, and currently residing in Burnaby, found himself at a career crossroads. He had long desired a change, specifically to enter the piping trades, but lacked the necessary experience. An opportunity presented itself through a Facebook advertisement for ACCESS's upcoming programs.

Though still in the early stages of the Pre-Apprenticeship Piping Foundations program, Logen acknowledged the impact it had already had on his life. He had struggled to find a way to break into the piping trades without prior experience and expressed immense gratitude for being selected.

Logen characterized the Skills for Success Program as a valuable tool for individuals transitioning back into an educational setting and he felt the program was a vital stepping stone, facilitating his pursuit of a new career path.



ACCESS Programs

The ACCESS Programs department oversees training projects delivered by urban Indigenous organizations in Metro Vancouver or through partnerships with public training providers. These project-based training initiatives are designed to assist Indigenous people to enter the workforce directly or to pursue

post-secondary education that will eventually lead to future career placements. The training projects respond to local labour market needs. Projects funded may include group skills training, pre-employment training, employer partnership training, and summer student employment programs.



8 GROUP TRAINING PROGRAMS

6 GROUP SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS

2 EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

127 CLIENTS ENROLLED IN GROUP TRAINING

57 CLIENTS IN PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

17 SUMMER STUDENTS PLACED IN 8 INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

27 YOUTH ENROLLED IN THE MENTORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM



“ACCESS gave me the most support I have ever received. The employment advisor Destiny and student support coach Sybil instilled a huge amount of confidence in me that I am forever thankful for. I appreciate access for all of the cultural activities we had the privilege of participating in like Ribbon skirt workshops, cedar weaving, various ceremonies. - LINDSAY TANNER

74% COMPLETION RATE





Shaili Kealy
GITXAALA NATION

Shaili saw the **ACCESS ICBC Program** as a valuable opportunity to step into a new career path, especially during a time when she struggled to find employment despite prior experience. Completing the program opened many doors for her, both personally and professionally. It included cultural activities that enriched the experience—one highlight was drum making, a meaningful first-time activity for many that deepened their connection to culture and each other. These shared moments strengthened both the community and the program's impact. Afterward, she was hired as a Personnel Assistant in ICBC's HR department. She also joined ICBC's employee resource groups, participating in conversations around change and inclusion. She wrote an internal article for the International Day of Pink and has volunteered at several community events, including those focused on reconciliation and Pride in Vancouver.



Lindsay Tanner
ANISHINAABE

Pursuing the **Global Makeup Program** at Blanche Macdonald had always been a dream for her since childhood, though it once felt out of reach due to financial limitations. Makeup has long been a passion and creative outlet—what began as a hobby has now evolved into a meaningful and rewarding career. This training has been truly life-changing, offering her not only professional skills but also a strong sense of belonging, community, and purpose. She finds it incredibly fulfilling to provide a service that brings joy and confidence to others.

Through her internship with Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week (VIFW) and ACCESS, she has received numerous opportunities she never imagined possible before enrolling in the program. Her work has also taken her beyond Canadian borders—she has traveled internationally to work as a makeup artist at Santa Fe Indigenous Fashion Week, in collaboration with SWAIA and VIFW.

Jocelyn Gabriel
LIL'WAT NATION

Jocelyn chose the **ACCESS Baking and Pastry Program** at Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts to pursue her passion without financial barriers. As a First Nations individual, she saw it as a chance to gain formal training, refine her skills, and unlock new career opportunities in the culinary industry. ACCESS support enabled her to focus fully on education and personal growth, bringing her closer to her goal of owning a business and giving back to her community. She began developing her bakeshop, Xazillyvanilly, offering cakes, cookies, macarons, and bread with a focus on high-quality ingredients and custom orders. She graduated with two awards: Top Practical Mark and Finishing Touch Award, recognizing her dedication, technical skill, and attention to detail. Jocelyn is deeply grateful for the support and hopes more aspiring chefs and bakers can benefit from the program.



Tabitha Schooner
NUXALKMC, NUXALK NATION

Tabitha enrolled in the **Office Administration and Employment Training (OAET) program** at Native Education College to further her education and improve her career prospects. Frustrated with earning only minimum wage and struggling to live paycheck to paycheck, she was determined to gain the skills needed for a better-paying job and greater financial stability. The training opened job opportunities for her in ways she never imagined. She is deeply grateful for the support she received. Working at the First Nations Health Authority had always been a goal of hers, so after completing the OAET program, she chose to do her practicum there. When she expressed interest in learning more about the Medical Transportation department, her supervisor encouraged her to speak with the manager that very same day. Now, she is part of the Medical Transportation department and actively working toward the job she has always wanted.



ACCESS BladeRunners

ACCESS BladeRunners is a dynamic, community-driven initiative that connects inner-city youth—particularly Indigenous individuals aged 18 to 30—with employment opportunities in construction across Metro Vancouver. Rooted in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, the program bridges the gap between the industry workforce needs and youth seeking meaningful career pathways.

With a committed team providing ongoing, individualized support, BladeRunners helps participants break through barriers to employment. Youth receive essential life skills, health and safety training, and up to a year of follow-up support. This holistic, wraparound approach is central to the program’s enduring success and its recognition as a leading workforce development model.

Since 1994, thousands of young people across B.C. have benefitted from BladeRunners’ targeted programming. Key to this success is a thorough intake process, tailored job-readiness training,

and strong collaboration with employers in the construction industry. Participants also gain access to essential supports such as housing referrals, education upgrades, meals, work attire, transportation, and other foundational services to help them succeed.

Beyond the core employment program, ACCESS BladeRunners also runs BladeRunner’s Place—an innovative supportive housing initiative offering 38 subsidized units for graduates ready to transition into independent living.

Our work is sustained by generous support from the Province of British Columbia—particularly the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills—and Service Canada. We also deeply appreciate the employers who consistently open their doors to our participants, including industry leaders like Bearclaw Traffic Management, Aecon Group, True Mechanical, and Ledcor.

627
PARTICIPANTS
PROVINCIALY

14
INDIGENOUS AND
NON-INDIGENOUS
AGENCIES

280+
EMPLOYED ACROSS
THE PROVINCE

270
COMPLETED IN
VANCOUVER & SURREY

100%
PARTICIPANT GRADUATION
SUCCESS

38
RESIDING AT
BLADERUNNERS PLACE

BladeRunners

The impact of BladeRunners extends beyond Metro Vancouver, with programming and partnerships active in 14 communities throughout the province, including Vancouver Island and Northern B.C. This reach is made possible thanks to an extensive network of local collaborators who share a deep commitment to empowering youth.





Calista Robinson

Cali, a proud member of the Kitasoo XaiXais Nation, joined the BladeRunners program during a time of uncertainty—unemployed, facing housing instability, and seeking direction. Like the bear she is connected with, her journey reflects resilience, quiet strength, and a deep commitment to healing.

Through BladeRunners, she found a supportive space that honored her spirit. She completed an esthetics program and began working at an Indigenous-owned spa, where she expressed cultural pride through hand-painted Indigenous formline art on nails.

Now living in BladeRunners housing and pursuing a Professional Counselling Diploma, Cali is guided by a vision of service. She aims to become a counsellor and bodyworker who blends traditional Indigenous practices with therapeutic care.

Cali's story is one of strength and transformation—rooted in community, cultural identity, and the powerful medicine of the bear.



Mabel James

Mabel, from the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw Nation, carries the spirit of the killer whale—symbolizing strength, deep family bonds, and resilience. A young mother to her two-year-old son Brandon, she has shown leadership through life's challenges.

After completing training and earning certifications through the BladeRunners program, Mabel began working as an apprentice electrician with OZZ Electric in June 2024 at the Señákw development site on Squamish Nation territory.

Following the tragic loss of her sister, Mabel adopted her nephew, balancing full-time work and motherhood while navigating the legal and emotional complexities of custody.

With support from BladeRunners and her employer, Mabel has found stability. Her role at OZZ offers hands-on learning and health benefits for her son.

Like the killer whale, she leads with strength and care—moving forward with purpose, protecting her family, and building a strong foundation for their future.

Jesse Johnson-Taylor

Jesse, of Gitksan, Gwich'in, and Cree descent, was born in Vancouver, BC. He carries the spirit of the wolf—symbolizing leadership, loyalty, and perseverance. As a first-year apprentice electrician with OZZ Electric, he brings dedication and teamwork to the Señákw development project.

Jesse's journey into the trades has been shaped by initiative and self-advocacy—negotiating wages, requesting site changes, and seeking new challenges to grow his skills. He's taken on a variety of roles with pride and supports others in learning and integrating into the crew.

Earlier in life, Jesse overcame educational challenges to earn his Grade 12. That same determination now fuels his strong attendance and growing skill set.

Praised by his employer for his work ethic and leadership, Jesse is walking a path of growth and contribution—guided by the wisdom and quiet strength of the wolf.



Tyler Langford

Tyler Langford, a Cree man from God's Lake First Nation in Manitoba, carries the spirit of the bear—symbolizing strength, protection, and healing. His early life was marked by adversity and a high-risk lifestyle that led to incarceration. After his release to a halfway house in New Westminster, BC, he was determined to rebuild his life and reunite with his children.

There, Tyler was introduced to the BladeRunners program and completed it in May 2024. With their support, he began working as a drywall labourer in August. Just one month later, he qualified for BladeRunners' transitional housing.

Now with a home of his own and steady work, Tyler continues to grow—welcoming visits from his children and aiming for a more skilled role. Like the bear, he is reclaiming his future with strength, healing, and purpose.



Urban Spirit Foundation



The Urban Spirit Foundation (USF) is a charitable organization that exists to further the success and self-reliance of Urban Indigenous people in the Metro Vancouver Region. USF was created in 2007 by the founders of ACCESS, and with ACCESS' support all funds raised by USF go directly to our purpose with no administration fee. We are united in our purpose, with the Foundation working to grow philanthropic resources to provide education and employment training opportunities, secondary and post-secondary scholarships and bursaries, and community-based programs and projects that move people from poverty to self-sufficiency. In what seems like a short time since, we have worked to create our vision, build our leadership, support our local community, and

engage with people who have been so moved by our purpose that they have made valued contributions of many kinds. Annually, USF supports the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre's Children's Back-to-School Backpack Program. Children receive a backpack filled with school supplies needed to start the new school year. USF also supports the VAFCS (Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society) Children's Christmas Party where low-income families receive a food hamper, and each child receives a present to open on Christmas morning. Each year for Giving Tuesday, USF has the Chili and Bannock Lunch-To-Go Fundraiser and the Annual USF Charity Golf Classic Tournament.



Since 2010 we have provided more than 180 scholarships totaling over \$174,000



Harmony Basi-Lightfoot
MOOSOMIN FIRST NATION

Harmony graduated from Cariboo Hill Secondary in Burnaby. Harmony plans to enroll at the Justice Institute and would like to become a Paramedic. We would like to wish her all the best in her future.

“I am so grateful to Urban Spirit Foundation and the assistance toward my future education”



Sonny Many Grey Horses
BLOOD TRIBE

The **Apotex Urban Spirit Foundation Grant** not only eased her financial burden but also provided the hope and encouragement she needed to keep moving forward. She is often reminded of her goal to serve her community as a registered nurse. However, the weight of tuition costs, textbooks, and other educational expenses often feels overwhelmingly heavy. As a casual employee, this grant allowed her to focus fully on her studies without the constant worry of how to afford her basic needs. It enabled her to dedicate her time and energy to learning and growing in the medical field, rather than having to split her focus between work and school. Knowing that she has the support of this grant inspired her to strive for excellence and persevere through various challenges. It served as a powerful reminder that her goals are achievable and help place her in environments where Indigenous students can thrive.



Keisha Pelletier
COWESS NATION

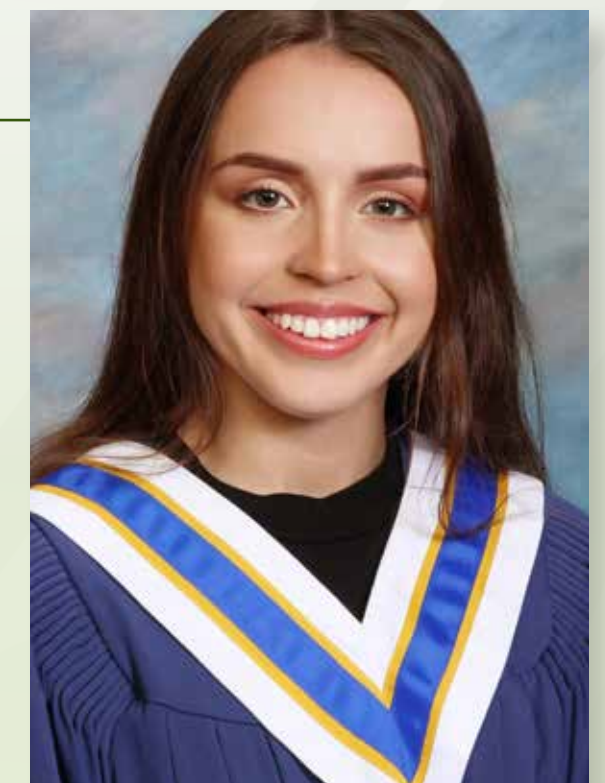
Keisha Pelletier is from the Cowess Nation in Saskatchewan. She graduated from the Heron's Nest Education program and plans to attend the Family Community Counselling Program at Native Education College.

“I would like to thank USF for the award! In the future I see myself being a hairdresser and then I'll go to school at NEC for Family and Community Counselling. My daughter and I are very thankful for this scholarship”

Vanaya Jobin
BLACKFOOT AND NISGA'A NATION

Vanaya graduated from Vancouver School District and plans to pursue the Early Education Program at Native Education College. She would one day like to be a contender for the UFC Straw Weight Martial Arts Championship.

“I would like to thank Urban Spirit Foundation for the scholarship toward my post-secondary education. Thank you for your help so I can achieve what I want to do in my life”



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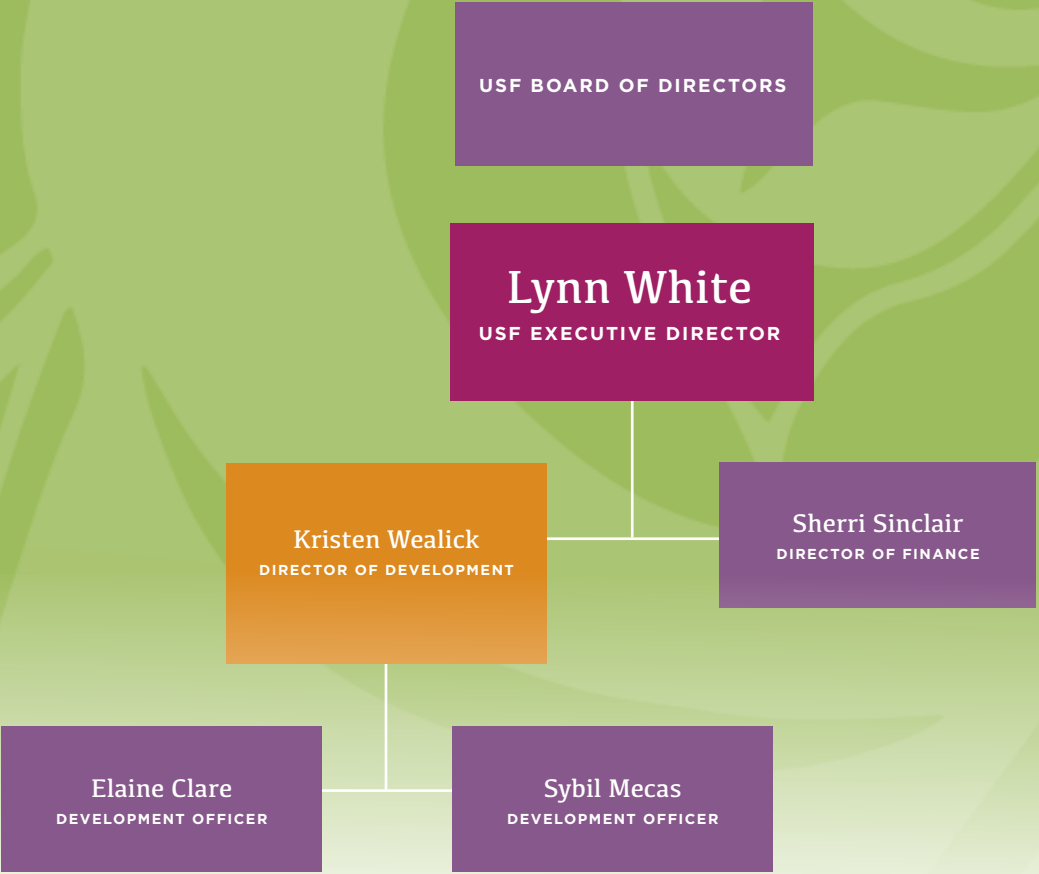
Community Member



Samantha Singbeil
USF DIRECTOR

FortisBC

Organization Chart



We would like to thank our donors





ACCESS

2024-25 Audit Finance Department

Our Finance Department consists of five employees. We pride ourselves in being accurate, timely, and efficient, yet flexible in our relations with clients, employees, and vendors.

ACCESS and Urban Spirit Foundation are audited annually by an independent auditor in accordance with the Canadian Accounting Standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Details of the ACCESS audit are available on our website at www.accessfutures.com



ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CAREER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SOCIETY (ACCESS)
Statement of Financial Position
March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 1,990,384	\$ 5,254,324
Accounts receivable (Note 5)	899,782	1,032,885
GST receivable	332,350	279,416
Prepaid expenses	123,412	151,112
	<u>3,345,928</u>	<u>6,717,737</u>
PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (Note 3)	<u>3,787,550</u>	<u>3,815,356</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 7,133,478</u>	<u>\$ 10,533,093</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 385,727	\$ 2,131,449
Wages payable	56,842	41,940
Employee deductions payable	15,090	10,336
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	1,417,997	3,135,461
Current portion of mortgage payable (Note 6)	36,247	1,323,415
	<u>1,911,903</u>	<u>6,642,601</u>
MORTGAGE PAYABLE (Note 6)	<u>1,245,450</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>3,157,353</u>	<u>6,642,601</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted contributions	1,489,747	1,398,552
Invested in capital assets	2,486,378	2,491,940
	<u>3,976,125</u>	<u>3,890,492</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$ 7,133,478</u>	<u>\$ 10,533,093</u>
LEASE COMMITMENTS (Note 7)		

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD
 Director
 Director

Thank you to our partners!



Our
Funders

Canada





FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Aboriginal Community
Career Employment Services Society**

Tel. (604) 913-7933

www.accessfutures.com