



NEWS RELEASE

go2 – BC's Tourism Industry Human Resource Association
British Columbia Construction Association

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OLYMPIC LEGACY FUNDS PILOT TO ACCELERATE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN BC'S TOURISM, HOSPITALITY WORKPLACES

Tourism and hospitality employers in Lower Mainland now have easier access to a pool of talented people with disabilities, part of the lasting legacy of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Vancouver, BC – go2 - BC's tourism and hospitality human resource association - is pleased to announce the official launch of the Workforce Inclusion Initiative (WII-STEP). Funded by 2010 Legacies Now, as a lasting legacy of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, WII-STEP is a no fee service that connects tourism and hospitality employers to a skilled, job-ready workforce of people with disabilities. The goal is to accelerate the inclusion of people with disabilities in the industry.

Workforce Inclusion Initiative



"WII-STEP is different from other employment programs offered to industry," states Arlene Keis, CEO, go2. "Employers are encouraged to use WII-STEP as a recruitment resource to attract career-focused individuals with proven skills who are ready to make a positive contribution to the growing tourism industry."

As the fastest growing consumer travel group, travellers with disabilities in North America alone spend \$13 billion annually on travel. Current trends show that 92% of consumers favour businesses that hire people with disabilities, with 87% preferring to give their business to those companies. Building on the success of the Global Accessibility Initiative managed through the Rick Hansen Foundation, WII-STEP will enable tourism employers to take accessibility a step further by employing a diverse workforce that fully represents the communities they share and do business with.

WII-STEP is a collaborative effort between go2 and the British Columbia Construction Association's Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP). BCCA and go2 represent two of the largest contributors to the BC economy: construction and tourism. The success of BCCA's STEP program model in connecting employers with job seekers caught the attention of go2.

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“When go2 approached us to explore the implementation of the STEP ‘Connector Model’ into the tourism and hospitality sector, we immediately saw a perfect fit,” states Randy Garon, STEP Provincial Manager. “We were convinced that with collaboration, the transferable model would bring immediate value to the industry that is facing the same predicted labour and skill shortages in BC as the construction sector.” STEP is credited for its high success rate in the 140 recognized skilled trades, four of which are in the tourism and hospitality industry.

“We want to reach out to the group of highly capable individuals with disabilities who may be working in other industries and are ready for a career change, but have never considered tourism as an option. Our industry offers an exciting and varied environment to put their education and skills to work,” Keis adds.

While fear, attitudes and/or preconceived notions of disabilities remain the greatest barrier to employment for those with a disability, this initiative is for employers who embrace a workforce that represents the communities and businesses they serve. Whether it’s an employer focused on Corporate Social Responsibility or those who are committed through personal values, it’s easier for candidates to be successful if the employer is committed to the initiative and their success upfront,” says Jamie Millar-Dixon, WII-STEP Tourism Employment Specialist. “It’s not about token employment or job creation. It is all about connecting the right opportunity, in the right environment, to the right person.”

WII-STEP is currently being piloted in the Lower Mainland. Visit www.wiistepbc.ca for more information including how to get involved as an employer.

About go2

go2 is BC’s tourism and hospitality human resource association responsible for coordinating the Tourism Human Resource Action Plan, a key component of the industry’s growth strategy. Tourism is one of the largest resource industries in BC comprising 18,000 mostly small to medium-sized businesses which directly employ over 129,000 British Columbians. www.go2hr.ca.

About British Columbia Construction Association

The British Columbia Construction Association is a non–profit organization that acts as the provincial voice of firms active in the Industrial, Commercial, Institutional, and Multi-Family Residential Construction Industry. The association’s mandate is to provide leadership and excellence in the representation of and service to British Columbia’s construction industry.

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