

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS RESILENCY ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



A BC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NETWORK PROJECT
MAY|JUNE 2021



Funding provided through the Canada-British Columbia
Labour Market Development Agreement.




BC Chamber of Commerce

Know what's on BC's mind.



The **Table of Contents** is your interactive guide to the Resource Guide. Click on any line below and jump directly to the information you are looking for.





Click the **home button** on the bottom corner of any page to return to the table of contents. Use  **jump back button** to go back to previous page you were just on.



This **Small Business Resource Guide** can also be used for responding to any crisis or disaster and aid organizations in business continuity planning.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	SECTION 01	
	HOW DO I GET THE MOST FROM THIS RESOURCE GUIDE?	3
	SECTION 02	
	WHERE CAN I QUICKLY FIND MORE INFORMATION	4
	GENERAL RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS	4
	GOVERNMENT RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES	5
	EDUCATION, TRAINING + EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	5
	WORKSAFE BC INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS	5
	ECONOMIC SUPPORTS FOR BC BUSINESS	6
	LEGAL EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES	8
	INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC RESOURCE INFORMATION	8
	RESILIENCE + RECOVERY CHECKLIST	9
	OPERATIONAL SUPPORTS	9
	PHYSICAL WORKPLACE CONSIDERATIONS	9
	WORKFORCE ISSUES + WORKER SUPPORTS	9
	SECTION 03	
	HOW CAN YOU REOPEN, MAINTAIN, PIVOT, OR EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS?	10
	SECTION 04	
	HOW CAN MY BUSINESS BE MORE RESILIENT?	11
	LEADERSHIP	12
	DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONNECTIVITY	12
	CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE RESILIENCE	12
	REMOTE WORK	13
	WORKER WELLNESS	14
	FINANCIAL STABILITY	15
	WELCOMING CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS & VISITORS	15
	PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES	15
	EDUCATION, TRAINING + EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS	16
	DIVERSITY + INCLUSION CONSIDERATIONS	17
	SECTION 05	
	WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS LOOK LIKE?	18
	Business and workforce planning during and after COVID-19	18
	RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITIES	18
	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19	19
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	21

Resiliency

SECTION 01



HOW DO I GET THE MOST FROM THIS RESOURCE GUIDE?

The job recovery in BC has continued since April 2020 with appreciable employment gains early in 2021. It has had increased employment of over 395,000 jobs (or +17.7%) since the recovery started in April. This rebound means the pre-pandemic jobs deficit in BC is now a small -15,100 jobs or -0.6% below this baseline. However, key BC sectors are hurting.

For example, construction (down by 33,100 or -13.2% since February 2020) and agriculture (down by 3,500 or -12.2%). Service industries like accommodation & food services, other services, retail and wholesale trade and tourism and travel are collectively down by almost 70,000 jobs since February 2020. Now businesses, particularly in these sectors, are in the midst of increased public health restrictions, COVID variant cases growing and uncertainty about vaccination supply.

This Resource Guide is intended to be a lifeline for small business owners anxious and fearful of what to do next – where to quickly get information on support and potentially successful practices.



This Resource Guide is designed as a 'living' resource for all BC businesses. Content addresses the full scope of workforce planning and development and related operational challenges in the context of the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses in BC. This Resource Guide is your one-stop source for information about COVID-19 health and safety, government programming, sector-specific initiatives, legal and regulatory requirements and other small business tools. It is designed to help local businesses navigate the broad mix of available resources and ensure they know how to retrieve what they need without being overwhelmed. Note that the Resource Guide concentrates primarily on resources specific to BC, with additional information from federal and other jurisdictions.



Look for COVID-19 resilience practices and examples on page 11. Click the highlighted headlines to explore information in more detail. You'll find examples of successful practices, best practical recovery strategies and more.



Each section of the Resource guide includes information and numerous links to web-based resources. This approach eliminates duplication and ensures that the Resource Guide is focused and easy to navigate. The Resource Guide is intentionally brief and concise. It permits users to view a brief description of key topics and allows for a 'deeper dive' by following links to related web based content.



SEARCH TIP: Easily search this document for key words. Press **Control+F** (Windows) or **Command+F** (Mac) In the search box that appears, enter your search word or phrase. The first match will be highlighted. Press 'Enter' or click the right arrow to navigate between the results.

Note that in addition to this provincial Resource Guide, [the BC Chamber](#) is developing robust small business Resource Guides for each of the 7 BC economic regions to be distributed as soon as possible through regional Chambers, other economic/business groups and Indigenous organizations. **STAY TUNED!**

Resources

SECTION 02



WHERE CAN I QUICKLY FIND MORE INFORMATION ON COVID-19 RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY?

The BC Chamber has identified this concise list of federal, provincial and local resources. Most of the sites listed here include links to other resources. While this can be helpful, it can also lead to frustration since some embedded links may be outdated or no longer active. The BC Chamber suggests seeking information from the source. For example, when searching for BC Government supports, go directly to BC Government websites rather than through third party sites.



10 TIPS FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE

1. Stay The Course.
2. Follow The Facts – stick to reliable sources.
3. Take your time and don't rush or panic.
4. Consult with a trusted circle of reference.
5. Check your gut, continually.
6. Over-communicate.
7. Seek employees' input – make them part of the solution.
8. Don't skimp on costs. Not around this topic anyway.
9. Scout all possible subsidies.
10. Explore all creative alternatives.

Brian Wall, CEO
Anodyne Electronics
Manufacturing Corp.

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS

The small business-focused resources listed here provide information of interest to the majority of employers. The list will be expanded and updated as new resources are identified. Most of these sites include links to further resources. Note that some are commercial sites and will limit access to information without a subscription.

Visit [the BC Chamber](#) website for up to date business resources.

Click any topic to find up to date information on [Loans and Grants](#), [Bill Relief](#), [Wage and Rent Support](#), [Taxes](#), [Business Operations and Safety](#), [Sector and Community Supports](#)

[Business Improvement Associations](#) across BC post COVID-19 resources on their websites. Check out the [Member Directory](#)

[Small Business BC](#) has a range of helpful COVID-19 resources on its website. Be sure to check out the [Small Business Marketplace](#) and [Education](#) pages for the most up-to-date content.

[COVID-19 Supports for Businesses](#) (PDF) BC Government Information on financial supports for businesses and their workers impacted by COVID-19.

[Civic Info BC](#) maintains a list of more than 200 agencies and associations active in BC – the majority of which have specific information on COVID-19.

[BC Business](#) regularly posts COVID-19 resources.

[Human Resources Director's website](#) posts stories and links to HR resources, webinars and other sites. A subscription may be required to view full articles.

[Business Continuity & COVID-19 Small Business Resources](#) (PDF) This BC Government publication has Information about business continuity and a checklist to help minimize the impacts of COVID-19.

Gartner has posted several [free research papers](#) related to COVID-19 recovery. Check out their reset strategy, future trends, cost-cutting measures and leadership checklists.

[Price Waterhouse](#) posts COVID-19 related and other studies and research papers on its website including the Canadian Workforce of the Future survey.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has posted the [Workplace Recovery Toolkit](#). The [BC Chamber of Commerce](#) has a mix of COVID-19 resources and information on its News and Events page.

[BC Economic Development Association](#) has developed a comprehensive list of economic disaster resources to assist businesses, organizations and communities.



GOVERNMENT RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

- [Federal updates](#) on the current situation, financial support, health, containing the spread of COVID-19, travel and immigration, vulnerable populations, etc.
- The [Federal Government's 2021 budget](#) has a number of COVID initiatives.
- The [Canadian Department of Justice](#) posts information on protecting public safety.
- The [Business Benefits Finder](#) will build a tailored list of supports for you.
- The [BC Government's main page](#) is a good place to start when looking for general information. In addition to this site, BC Chamber has identified several ministry-specific sites below.
 - The BC Government hosts a regularly-updated and robust site dedicated to [Supports for Businesses and Individuals in BC](#). The site links to the BC Business COVID-19 Support Service, BC's Restart Plan, access to credit, regional relief and recovery funding, and a wide range of other supports.
 - The BC Ministry of Health has posted [tools and strategies for safer operations](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The [BC Ministry of Education](#) has issued an updated Back-to-School Plan. Check the site for the most current information on what parents need to know.
 - The [The Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#) posts important information for Employers and Businesses on orders, notices, guidance, data and modelling.
 - The BC [Government's 2021 budget](#) has a number of COVID initiatives.

EDUCATION, TRAINING + EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- The Province of BC posts links to [public post-secondary institutions](#).
- The province of BC hosts a directory of [private training institutions](#).
- [WorkBC](#) posts a mix of information on employment services and providers.
- The [Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC](#) posts resources for new immigrants.
- The [Immigrant Employment Council of BC](#) has information for employers.
- The Industry Training Authority posts information about trades training and the [Indigenous Skills and Employment Training](#) providers.

Much of the focus on COVID-19 recovery is specific to workplace and occupational health and safety. Many national and BC industry associations have created very up to date, thorough Resource Guides, Playbooks, website resources, etc. that are specific to employers in their sectors.

WORKSAFE BC INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS

This list includes links to WorkSafeBC industry-specific protocols for businesses

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Accommodation | • Agriculture |
| • Arts and culture | • Childcare and day camps |
| • Community services (non-residential) | • Construction |
| • Community services (residential) | • Education (K-12) |
| • Education (post-secondary) | • Faith-based organizations |
| • Forestry | • Gyms and fitness centres |
| • Health care | • Hospitality |
| • In-person counselling | • Manufacturing |
| • Meat Processing | • Motion picture & TV |
| • Municipalities | • Offices |
| • Parks, camping and Tourism | • Performing arts |
| • Personal services | • Real estate |
| • Restaurants, Cafés, pubs & nightclubs | • Retail |
| • Small business | • Sports and recreation |
| • Transit | • Transportation |



ECONOMIC SUPPORTS FOR BC BUSINESS



FOCUS AREA

PROGRAM NAME

ELIGIBILITY

Loans and grants

Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)	Small- and medium-sized businesses and not-for-profits
Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF)	Businesses affected by COVID-19 and, in some cases, are not eligible for other federal supports
Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program (HASCAP)	Qualifying businesses
Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)	Small and medium sized enterprises
Large Employer Financing Facility (LEEFF)	Large Canadian employers
National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program	Small and medium-sized businesses
Strategic Innovation Fund	Large business projects
Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant	Qualifying small and medium sized businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19
Launch Online Grant Program	Small- and medium-sized business owners and entrepreneurs
Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant	The grant is open to eligible businesses of any size that have been in operation since Feb. 1, 2021.

Bill relief

BC Hydro	Catch-up payment plan
Fortis BC	Flexible payment options
ICBC	Most customers

Wage and rent support

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)	Businesses and non-profits
Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) and Lockdown Support	Businesses, charities and non-profits
Employment Insurance (EI) work sharing program	Workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours because of developments beyond the control of their employers
B.C. Increased Employment Incentive	Private sector businesses
BC Employer Training Grant	BC employers



FOCUS AREA

PROGRAM NAME

ELIGIBILITY

Taxes

[PST rebate on select machinery and equipment](#)

All incorporated businesses with some exceptions

[Provincial payment deferrals](#)

Businesses and individuals

[Employer Health Tax](#)

Businesses

Operations and safety

[CanExport SMEs program](#)

Canadian small businesses

[Essential services contingency reserve](#)

Organizations identified as essential service providers

[BC Marketplace](#)

Businesses

[Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Marketplace](#)

PPE suppliers

[Alacrity Canada Digital Marketing Bootcamp](#)

Small to medium sized businesses based in and registered in BC

Sectors and communities

[Agriculture and farmers](#)

Varies – see link

[Forestry](#)

Forestry workers and contractors

[Manufacturing](#)

small- and medium-sized manufacturing businesses

[Rural, remote, and Indigenous communities](#)

Varies – see link

[Tourism](#)

Varies – see link



CLICK TO READ THESE COVID-19 BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES



Support Local BC Harnesses the Power of Collaboration to Keep Businesses Afloat During Covid-19



Support PG – Community Collaboration in Action



I Am Resilient, I Am Langford: Pandemic Economic Recovery, the Langford Way



Woman flies humanitarian aid into remote Indigenous towns



#ExploreNextDoor – Promote your community to your neighbours



FROMTO offers a unique approach to delivery from local restaurants at cost



The list will be expanded and updated as new resources are identified. Most of these sites include links to further resources.



LEGAL EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Visit these sites for current information on legal and regulatory obligations related to COVID-19 workforce and employment matters that are critical to protecting your business and your workers

[Employment Standards and workplace safety](#) The law in BC sets standards for payment, compensation and working conditions in most workplaces. The standards promote open communication, fair treatment and work-life balance for workers.

The [Law Foundation of British Columbia](#) hosts a robust, multi-lingual site dedicated to COVID-19 information.

The [Canadian HR Reporter](#) posts regular stories on COVID-19. Note: some content requires a subscription. Check out their 'focus areas' tab. Also see their article answering [five key questions on employee travel](#).

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC RESOURCE INFORMATION

This list includes links to industry/sector associations and other industry/sector COVID-related resources for businesses.

Accommodation & Food

[BC Restaurant and Food Services Association](#)
[BC Hotel Association](#)

Administrative & Support, Waste Management

[Waste management Association of BC](#)

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting

[BC Agriculture Council](#)
[Council of Forest Industries](#)

Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

[BC Arts Council](#)

Construction

[BC Construction Association](#)
[BC Construction Safety Alliance](#)
[BC Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association](#)
[Canadian Home Builders' Association-BC](#)
[Construction Labour Relations Association](#)
[Independent Contractors and Businesses Association](#)
[Progressive Contractors Association of Canada](#)

Education

[BC Teachers' Federation](#)
[Independent Schools Association of BC](#)
[BC Colleges](#)
[BC Association of Institutes and Universities](#)

Finance & Insurance

[BC Financial Services Authority](#)

Health Care & Social Assistance

[Public Health Association of BC](#)

Information & Culture

[The BC Alliance for Arts + Culture](#)

Manufacturing

[BC Alliance for Manufacturing](#)
[Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC](#)

Mining and Oil & Gas

[Association for Mineral Exploration BC](#)
[Mining Association of BC](#)

Professional, Scientific & Technical

[Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC](#)
[Engineers and Geoscientists BC](#)
[BC Tech Association](#)
[Innovate BC](#)

Public Administration

[Institute of Public Administrators of Canada \(Vancouver\)](#)

Real Estate

[BC Real Estate Association](#)

Tourism and Hospitality

[Destination BC](#)
[go2HR](#)
[Tourism Industry Association of BC](#)

Transportation & Warehouse

[BC Trucking Association](#)

Utilities

[BC Utilities Commission](#)






RESILIENCY + RECOVERY CHECKLIST

Click Below  for Help

Information on public health orders, best practice guidelines and requirements for safe operation











OPERATIONAL SUPPORTS

-  DO YOU NEED ACCESS TO COVID-19 **LEGAL ADVICE**?
-  DO YOU OR YOUR WORKERS NEED **TRAINING/SUPPORT** TO BE ABLE TO RECOVER OPERATIONS?
-  HAVE YOU **PIVOTED TO NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**?
-  HAVE YOU **RE-OPENED**?
-  CAN YOU SUPPORT **REMOTE WORK**?






WORKFORCE ISSUES + WORKER SUPPORTS

-  HAS YOUR BUSINESS HAD CHALLENGES **BRINGING BACK WORKERS**?
-  ARE SOME WORKERS **REFUSING TO RETURN**?
-  HAVE YOU DETERMINED WHO WILL **RETURN TO WORK**, AND WHEN?
-  HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ISSUES WITH **ONBOARDING** DURING THE PANDEMIC?
-  HAVE YOU **LOST WORKERS** BECAUSE OF COVID-19?
-  IS **RECRUITMENT** CHALLENGING DUE TO COVID-19?
-  ARE YOUR WORKERS FACING **FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS**?
-  DO ANY OF YOUR WORKERS HAVE **CHILDCARE** CHALLENGES?
-  IS **PUBLIC TRANSIT** A CHALLENGE FOR YOUR WORKERS?

HEALTH + SAFETY READINESS

-  IS YOUR BUSINESS' **COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN** IN PLACE AND UP TO DATE?
-  ARE WORKSAFE BC **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING** PLANS IN PLACE?
-  ARE **PPE PREPARATIONS** IN PLACE?
-  DO YOU HAVE A **PPE SUPPLIER**?
-  DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ON **PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS**, BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SAFE OPERATION?
-  DO YOU NEED **TRAINING OR SUPPORT** WITH HEALTH/SAFETY OR WELLNESS?
-  IS **CONTACT TRACING** INFORMATION COLLECTED AND MAINTAINED AS REQUIRED?
-  IS YOUR OPERATION PREPARED FOR WORKSAFE BC **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**?

PHYSICAL WORKPLACE CONSIDERATIONS

-  DO YOU NEED **TRAINING AND/OR SUPPORT** TO BE ABLE TO PREPARE YOUR FACILITY?
-  HAS A **DEEP CLEANING** OF THE FACILITY BEEN COMPLETED?
-  HAVE YOU **ADJUSTED YOUR WORKSPACE** TO REDUCE RISK OF COVID-19 INFECTION?
-  HAVE YOU POSTED **SIGNAGE** AT THE ENTRANCE TO INFORM CUSTOMERS OF THE REQUIREMENTS WHILE INSIDE YOUR BUSINESS?
-  IS THE **HVAC SYSTEM** FUNCTIONING PROPERLY?



SECTION 03

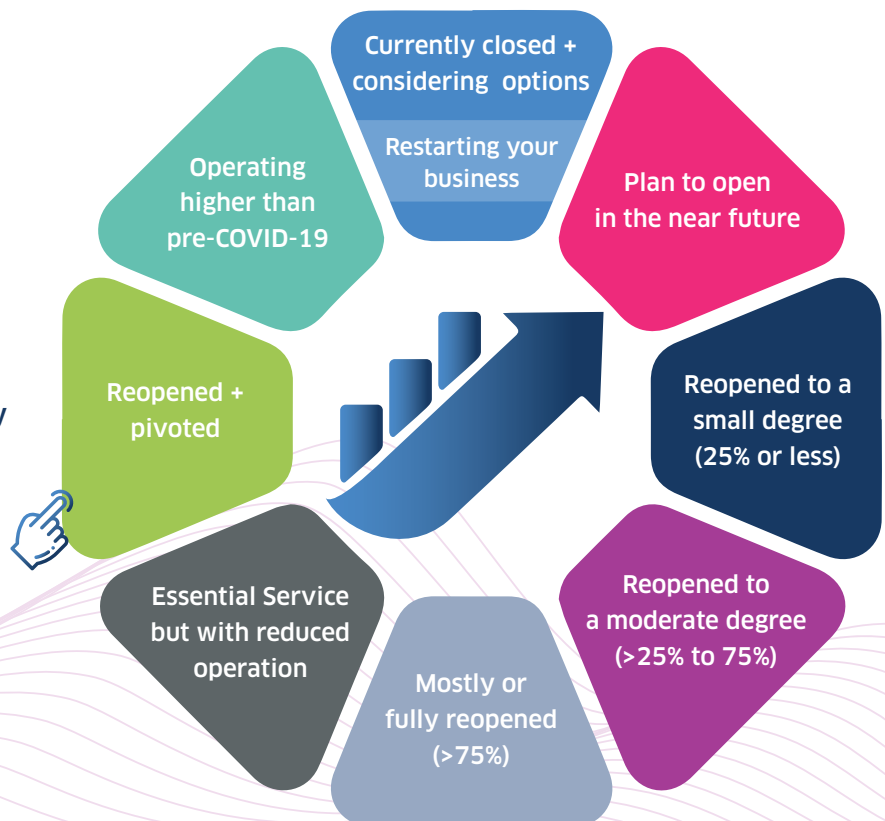


HOW CAN YOU REOPEN, MAINTAIN, PIVOT, OR EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS?

Every business has its unique COVID-19 recovery challenges. Some are fortunate to have cash reserves that allow them to avoid reducing staff or making significant changes while many others are facing the real possibility of shutting down. The BC Chamber has built this Business Readiness Tool to allow employers to plot their current position or situation and find resources pertinent to your situation. Once you have determined your position click on the coloured tile that best describes your situation - you'll be directed to resources and information that may help.

THE BC CHAMBER'S BUSINESS READINESS TOOL

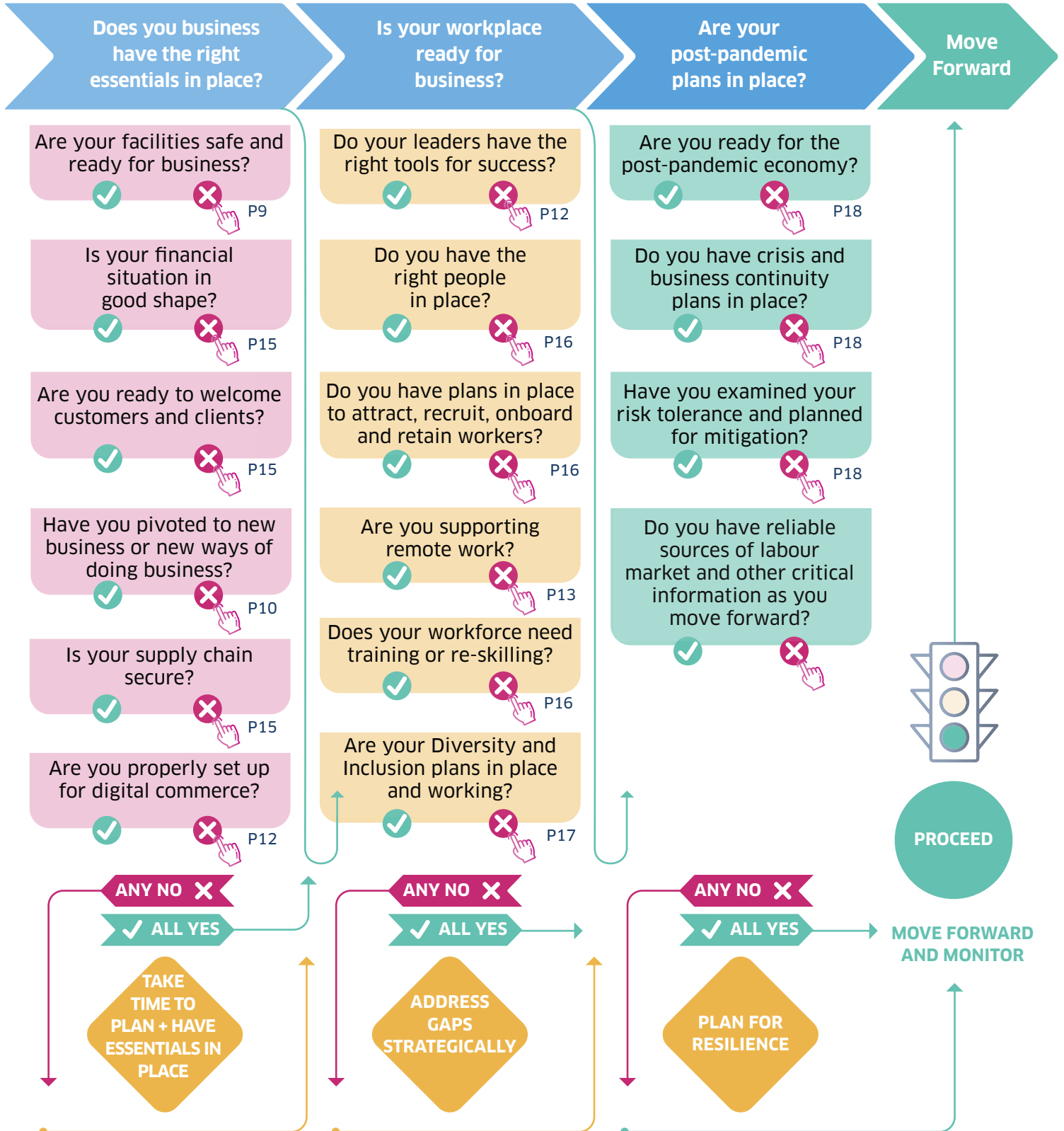
will direct you to information, resources, tips and tools to help with your COVID-19 resilience and recovery planning. The eight categories in the graphic focus on operational recovery, workforce readiness and support, health, safety and wellness, and facility readiness. Click on any category and be directed to resources that relate to each.





HOW CAN MY BUSINESS BE MORE RESILIENT?

This tool supports employers to make strategic decisions about COVID-19 business resilience by examining workforce, workplace, related operations and future work.



CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE RESILIENCE



A central focus of the Resource Guide is resilience – but what does that mean in practical terms? BC Chamber encourages businesses to focus on workforce and employer resilience by considering several key elements – Leadership, Digital Connectivity, Remote Work, Worker Wellness, Financial Stability, Welcoming Customers, Supply Chain, Attraction/Recruitment/Retention, Education and Training, and Diversity and Inclusion. Each is discussed below.

LEADERSHIP

The pandemic has caused many business leaders to rethink their corporate culture. They acknowledge that a strong workplace culture is central to their survival. Leaders know the importance of making certain that their behaviour remains stable in the face of constant disruption.

Leaders of businesses need to understand which activities best address the increased opportunities and weaknesses in these unprecedented times. Remember, every business is unique and there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution; however, in addition to providing a safe and supportive work environment, these five elements ([adapted from Gallup](#)) help separate resilient businesses from others:

1 - CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.

During tough times, workers need managers who reset priorities, involve them in re-establishing their goals and constantly clarify their role relative to their co-workers.

2 - THE RIGHT MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT.

As work changes during a crisis, ongoing discussions about what resources workers need to get work done are important to minimize stress and build high-performing teams.

3 - OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKERS TO DO WHAT THEY DO BEST.

The ability to leverage one's strengths in a crisis is the difference between moving toward opportunity and falling victim to circumstances.

4 - CONNECTION TO THE MISSION OR PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION.

During a crisis, people need to see how they, and their work, fit into the bigger picture – how they can impact something significant and know their work matters.

5 - CO-WORKERS COMMITTED TO QUALITY WORK.

All team members should be dedicated to high-quality, efficient work. It is equally essential that teams within an organization rely on and respect one another's work.



DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONNECTIVITY

The province of British Columbia covers a large area and it is costly to extend broadband coverage to rural and remote communities. A 2018 [report by the Auditor General of Canada](#) revealed that just 39% of Canadians in rural areas had reliable access to high-speed internet. In BC, only 36% of rural communities and 38% of rural Indigenous communities have access to the recommended broadband internet speeds. The lack of coverage in small communities is compounded by demographic challenges in rural areas where a large proportion of seniors have minimal opportunities to learn how to access and use online services.

The BC Government acknowledges that access to high-speed internet is important and affordability of this access is equally important. Providing the same level of access, quality and affordability in rural areas as seen in urban areas is a key priority for the Province. The solution will take some time. See this article on Connectivity in BC, posted on the [Government of BC](#) website.

Businesses should be aware of broadband limitations and demographic challenges when considering their digital presence. Notwithstanding the challenges, most businesses will need to expand their digital presence as a COVID-19 recovery response. Before the pandemic, this was something that businesses wanted to do or believed they should do. Now, it appears there's no choice but to pivot to digital transformation in order to survive.

If you're looking for information on launching your digital presence, there are numerous resources available. Small Business BC has a short 'how-to' article on [launching your website](#). The page has links to additional articles and resources to help you [grow your online business](#). If you already have a website, your ISP or host will have tailored resources available.



REMOTE WORK is a key element of the new work environment that has significant implications for human capital. All indications are that it is here to stay to some degree so businesses that can might consider it an ongoing measure. Some types of work can be performed almost entirely remotely with minimal difficulty while others simply cannot. In the early days of the pandemic, businesses were left to their own devices to navigate the uncharted waters of remote work. The strategic actions below should be considered when planning for remote work.

A November 2020 study by [McKinsey Global Institute](#) examined 2,000 tasks, 800 jobs, and nine different countries. The study discovered that hybrid models of remote work are likely to persist in the wake of the pandemic, mostly for a highly educated, well-paid minority of the workforce. The virus has broken through cultural and technological barriers that prevented remote work in the past, setting in motion a structural shift in where work takes place, at least for some people.



If your business is struggling with challenges of remote work, this report may help. It discusses nine themes including:

- 1 - A hybrid model that combines some remote work with work in an office is possible for occupations with high remote work potential.
- 2 - Activities with the highest potential for remote work include updating knowledge and interacting with computers.
- 3 - Hybrid remote work has important implications for urban economies.
- 4 - Labor forces in advanced economies can spend more time working remotely than workforces in emerging economies.
- 5 - Organizations will have to adjust their practices to capture potential productivity gains from remote work.
- 6 - Remote work potential is higher in advanced economies.
- 7 - The finance, management, professional services, and information sectors have the highest potential for remote work.
- 8 - The potential for remote work is determined by tasks and activities, not occupations.
- 9 - While the majority of the workforce cannot work remotely, up to one quarter in advanced economies can do so three to five days a week.

WORKER WELLNESS

COVID-19 has dominated the conversation since March 2020. It is no surprise that the pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives - including our wellness and mental health. There is an abundance of credible (and not so credible) information and advice available. The challenge is how to determine what advice to follow and what to set aside.

How businesses support worker safety, wellness and mental health is becoming a top talent attraction and retention factor.



What's clear is that we humans handle uncertainty and anxiety in our own ways. Some through short bursts of anxiety and others through a slow trickle. The effect, nevertheless, is consistent – creativity, cooperation, morale, and productivity suffer.

From a compliance and worker health and wellness perspective, workplace health, safety and wellness resources are critical components of an effective return to work plan. Here are some resources to help with your planning.

A December 2020 study by [McKinsey](#) points to six ways to ensure that mental health benefits serve a company and its people.

The BC Government has a page devoted to [virtual mental health supports](#).

Workplace mental health has never been more important. [BC's Hub for Workplace Mental Health](#) is here to help.



[COVID-19: Staying Well in Uncertain Times](#) (Canadian Mental Health Association – BC) offers tips and information on how to reduce and manage anxiety in the workplace due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Health information can be confusing or conflicting. What's recommended one day may be out-of-date the next day. The right information helps you stay safe and gives you a clear plan of action.

[How to Deal with Coronavirus Burnout and Pandemic Fatigue](#). Beware of COVID-19 'fatigue!' Unfortunately, some people get a bit of a thrill from doing something risky and escaping consequences.

[Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#) (BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions) – A simple one-pager with tips and resources on things we can do as individuals and collectively to deal with stress and support one another during these challenging times.

The Canadian Mental Health Association hosts a [Mental Health Check-In Self Assessment](#).

[Taking Care of Your Mental Health](#) (COVID-19) (Public Health Agency of Canada) – Tips and resources for taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak.

[The BC Municipal Safety Association](#) has released a free psychological support toolkit for workers and employers.

[WorkSafeBC's website](#) includes extensive, detailed and comprehensive COVID-19 information and resources. Visit the site for the latest information on health and safety, industry-specific information and claims provisions for workers and employers.

[Your organization is grieving—here's how you can help](#) (McKinsey & Company) Responsive leaders need to bring the mourning process forward in their organizational culture—and in their own leadership approach.





FINANCIAL STABILITY

Small Business BC has developed a comprehensive [checklist for business continuity](#) during COVID-19. It is available in five languages and covers emergency planning, protecting workers, and continuing operations. SBBC's 'Talk to an Expert' program links businesses by phone or Zoom with HR professionals, accountants, business brokers, lawyers, technology operations experts, website experts, workers' compensation specialists and more. Fees for these services vary.

As of December 21, 2020 the BC government has enhanced the [Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant](#) program to make it easier for businesses to qualify. It has also increased the support available for those in the hard-hit tourism sector up to \$45,000. Note that eligibility is restricted. Check the latest application details to see if your business qualifies.



WELCOMING CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS & VISITORS

Businesses should try to understand their customers and clients to build and maintain loyalty and increase profits. COVID-19 has made predicting customer behaviour more challenging than ever—creating immense challenges.

Your business relies on its customers. Consider these tips to better prepare your workplace for customers, clients and visitors while COVID-19 challenges persist.

- Limit the number of people on site to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- Place tape or other markings on the floor in high traffic areas to direct flow and maintain distance between customers.
- Post guidelines at your entrance to explain expectations for customer behaviour on site and make sure the language is fair and applied consistently.
- Provide workplace rules and safety guidelines in invitations for in-person meetings.
- Update your social media presence to reflect operating changes and other critical information.
- Consider the wellness and mental health concerns of your customers/clients in terms of how you do business.



PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES

BC businesses are not alone when it comes to supply chain disruptions resulting from COVID-19. Shortages, cross-border issues, public health orders, vaccination worries, and emerging concerns with outbreaks of COVID variants have and will continue to have negative effects on the fragile supply chain.

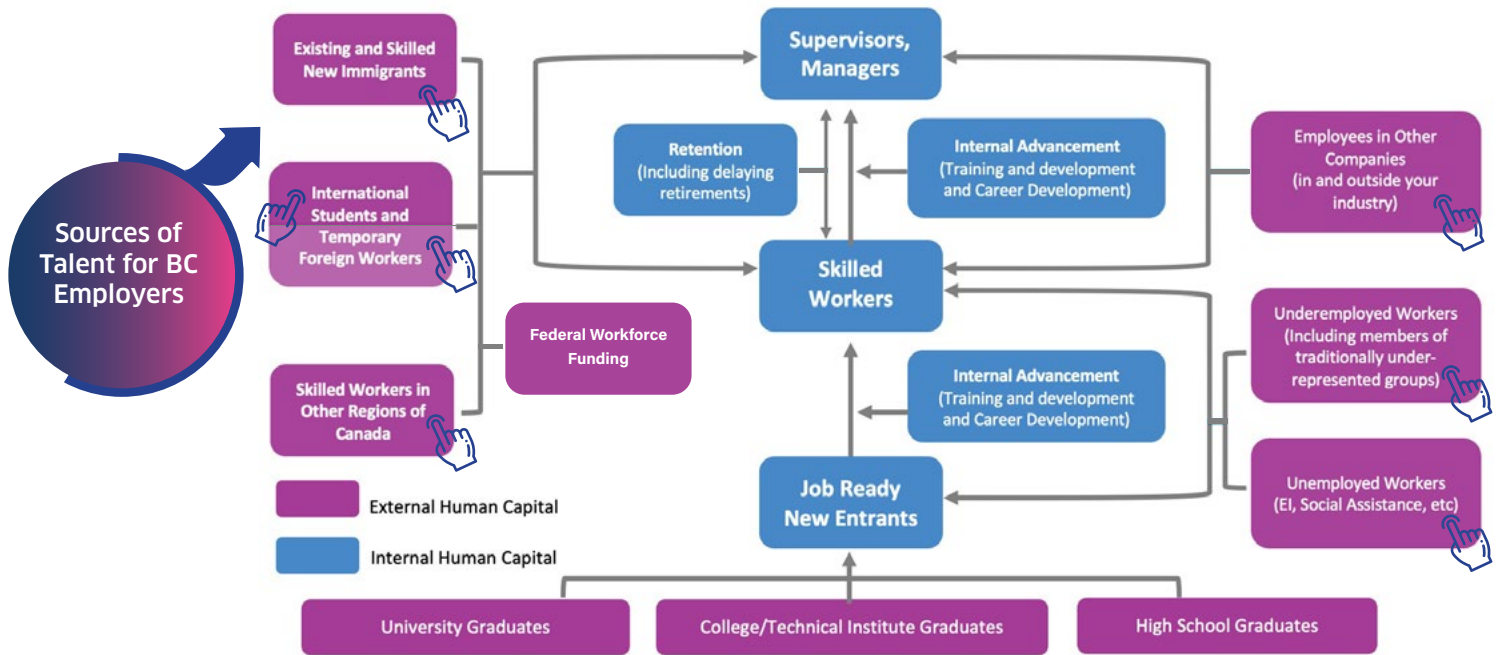
A number of online resources attempt to make sense of the issues and offer both short- and long-term strategies to manage procurement and [supply chain risks](#) during the evolving pandemic. Businesses cannot escape the impacts of COVID-19 and no business is immune and no one is certain when the pandemic will subside.

A study conducted by the Institute for Supply Management found that "20% of global companies are planning or have begun to re-shore or near-shore some operations because of supply chain disruptions." In another study, HSBC found that 22% of Canadian companies are strategically altering their supply chain to work with additional suppliers.



ATTRACTION, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Businesses should focus on ways to review workforce mobility, facilitate return to work and transferability of labour supply, execute reskilling and upskilling, attraction and recruitment, onboarding, and retention. To protect workers, employers should ensure that workers are trained and encouraged to provide input.



See links to Education and Training Providers on page 6

EDUCATION, TRAINING + EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

If your business needs to train workers to pivot or adapt to new ways of conducting business, investigate the many programs available through public-post secondary institutions and private trainers in your area. Trainers are exploring and adopting new ways of delivering training in compliance with pandemic health and safety orders and guidelines. Remember - customized, tailored training is also available through most trainers. See this link for information on [developing a training framework](#). Fees vary for customized training (often referred to as 'contract' training). It can be developed and delivered relatively quickly and is tailored to the specific needs of the business. [WorkBC](#) posts information on resources specifically for employers. [Indigenous employment training](#) information is available from the Government of Canada. Business education resources are available from [Small Business BC](#).

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CONSIDERATIONS

Businesses have a duty to ensure that diversity and inclusion initiatives set the stage for a positive future

Research shows that despite companies' recent efforts, diverse workers need more. Check out this great resource on [inclusive culture](#). Businesses should ask themselves new questions for a changed workplace. An article by US-based McKinsey and Company explores how [diverse workers are struggling](#) more than ever during the pandemic.

Given the constant workplace disruptions caused by COVID-19, diversity and inclusion efforts could easily slide lower down the priority list. Much of the progress made in recent years, therefore, could be lost. Businesses that ignore diversity and inclusion during the crisis, do so at their peril because the impact will be felt across the organization and not solely on the bottom line. Employers must be mindful of their obligations under the [BC Human Rights Code](#) not to discriminate on the basis of protected grounds.

Businesses have duty to preserve the gains they have already made and to ensure that diversity and inclusion initiatives set the stage for a positive future. A short, concise October 2020 article from Perceptyx entitled [How To Build An Inclusive Culture That Can Support Diversity](#) covers topics including the value of inclusive cultures, using culture 'FIT' in selection and hiring, purpose-built inclusive cultures, and measuring inclusive culture.

The BC Centre for Disease Control has a page devoted to [Indigenous communities and local governments](#) specific to COVID-19. Although not specific to COVID-19, the [Immigrant Employment Council of BC](#) also posts useful information. At the federal level, the [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#) webpage is a valuable resource. Note their series of inclusive leadership, workforce and educational guides. McKinsey's brief report ['Diversity wins: How inclusion matters'](#), examines the business case for diversity in challenging times. Also see their report called ['Women in the Workplace 2020'](#). Small business BC has an article on [LGBTQ2 business](#). Also visit [LOUD Business](#) for info and links to business services for LGBTQ2S+ business.



Indigenous Culture and Business

More than 230,000 First Nation, Metis and Inuk (Inuit) people live in BC. People from more than 200 First Nations live both on- and off-reserves. Métis and Inuit live in urban and rural communities throughout BC. Source [StatsCan](#). Indigenous people have distinct cultures, world views, languages, rights and traditions that form a part of the richness of BC's society today. Approximately [9000 Indigenous businesses](#) of all sizes and types exist across the province. Many have been impacted in unique ways by COVID-19. The resources listed here are not all COVID-19 specific, however, they provide links of interest and importance to Indigenous business.

Indigenous reconciliation in BC is guided by several initiatives including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ([TRC](#)) Calls to Action, the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act ([BCDRIPA](#)), and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)). The province's Ministry

of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation ([MIRR](#)) leads the BC Government in pursuing reconciliation with the First Nations and Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia. The ministry posts a significant amount of information on its website including [COVID-19 information](#) for First Nations and Indigenous Peoples.

The Indigenous Business and Investment Council ([IBIC](#)) is a partnership of First Nations leaders, industry and government. IBIC's strategic objectives are to improve Indigenous participation in the economy. The IBIC membership includes First Nations' and industry leaders from across BC.

The Reconciliation and Responsible Investment Initiative published a February 2021 report entitled [Business and Reconciliation](#). The report (informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action #92 directed at corporate Canada), highlights several approaches adopted by various companies to advance reconciliation, which may be instructive for others looking to deepen their work in Indigenous relations.

SECTION 05



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS LOOK LIKE?

Business and workforce planning during and after COVID-19

This is truly a global pandemic so it is not surprising that there is a wide array of resources available to assist with workforce planning. The BC Chamber has identified a manageable number of resources to consider including the August 2020 [Canadian Workforce of the Future](#) survey from PwC. On a positive note, the survey reports that 90% of employees and 86% of employers are confident in their organization's short-term financial stability. Interestingly, the survey discovered that 25% of workers reported a decrease in productivity; 40% reported no change and 35% reported an increase in productivity. Almost half of financial services workers reported increased productivity during the pandemic—the highest of all industries.

35%

Remote Workers
reported an increase
in productivity

ANTICIPATING RISKS

It is absolutely clear that businesses will face uncertainty in the wake of COVID-19. Typically, businesses respond to uncertainty in one of two ways – first, acknowledge it and become paralyzed by it. This translates to a slow or erratic response. The second common approach is to face the challenge quickly or superficially or even overconfidently – without fully considering the outcome. Consider the video rental business where complacency in the face of technological advances left many companies flat-footed and unable to pivot to new approaches.

BCBusiness has posted a [risk management guide](#) for business.

KPMG offers a different perspective on future challenges. Their website presents a list of 19 COVID-19 risks. Check out the brief explanations of these [19 risks](#) along with measures to consider in order to mitigate those risks. From fraud to virtual workplace to political instability – the list is comprehensive.

RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Zurich issued a report entitled [COVID-19's impacts and opportunities in the next 18 months](#). The report speaks about the combined risks of a healthcare crisis coupled with an economic crisis combined with an energy crisis and a looming humanitarian crisis. The report examines the four key decisions that will play out globally including:

- 1 - To what extent do we manage trade-offs between a quick return to work, but still protect our employees, customers and society more broadly?
- 2 - At a time of change for our business, with changing industry structures and changing competitive positions, how do we not only survive, but also find the silver linings?
- 3 - How can we accelerate our commitments to sustainability and drive a low-carbon transition?
- 4 - How will consumer behavior change in our sector - and how will that affect our propositions and the way we deliver them?

While global challenges may seem distant or disconnected from the realities of business, it is important to remember that solving global issues starts at the local level.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19

Do you have questions about health, safety and wellness as they affect your business? The BC Chamber has a number of resources that can help. We understand that businesses have questions about compliance issues including Provincial Health Officer's notices and guidelines. The following information has been sourced from a number of organizations. Remember, the COVID-19 situation is fluid and the BC Chamber will adjust this list as new questions arise and new information (e.g., vaccine distribution plans) becomes available.

Q WHO SHOULD SEEK MEDICAL EVALUATION FOR COVID-19?

A: STAFF AND SUBCONTRACTED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE:

- Ill with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have traveled from an affected area in the last 14 days. Please note: This includes travel from all countries and jurisdictions visited.
- Ill with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
- Identified through contact tracing by a health authority as a recent close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone who is being evaluated for COVID-19 infection.



Q SHOULD STAFF DELAY OR SUSPEND TRAVEL TO AFFECTED AREAS?

A: FOLLOW THE MOST CURRENT ORDERS AND GUIDELINES INCLUDING:

- Check the Government of Canada travel advisory website for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which workers may travel or use extra caution.
- Advise workers to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure workers who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- If outside Canada, sick workers should follow your company's policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country.
- Encourage workers who travel to receive all recommended vaccinations, including influenza.



Q WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE?

A: The [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) (BCCDC) is the most comprehensive source for COVID-19 data. Visit the site to learn how to protect yourself, your family and your community.

The [Employment Standards Act](#) has been amended to allow workers 3 hours of unpaid leave to receive each dose of their vaccine.

Currently in British Columbia there is no specific legislation requiring workers to get vaccinated. However, please note that this could evolve once the vaccine is underway and available to the public at large. See "[Can an employer require employees to get the covid-19 vaccine?](#)"

[WorkSafeBC](#) posts additional FAQs on its site. Q&A are grouped under various topic headings.

The [Province of British Columbia](#) has posted orders, notices and guidance information. In a Provincial State of Emergency, the Provincial Health Officer can make orders as needed. You must follow the orders. The Province also has a dedicated information line at 1-888-COVID19.

[Small Business BC](#) posts COVID-19 information relating to small business.

The [Chambers Plan](#) COVID-19 Business Resource Centre was set up to help businesses get advice, tools, and updates to support Canadian business and workers get through this time. Although not presented as FAQs, the site has a long list of links to resources from success stories to financial resources to wellness & mental health.



Q WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A STAFF MEMBER IS AT RISK FOR COVID-19?

A: IF WORKERS REPORT HAVING COVID-19-LIKE SYMPTOMS WHILE AT WORK:

- Send them home to recover for the prescribed self-isolation period.
- Ensure the worker's work station and or the workplace/tools that they were using as part of their job are cleaned prior to anyone else using them, if they haven't yet been cleaned as part of the workplace's cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Follow any directions from public health.

Q WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE FOR COVID-19 IMPACTS TO MY WORKPLACE?

A: ALL EMPLOYERS NEED TO CONSIDER HOW BEST TO DECREASE THE SPREAD OF ACUTE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS AND LOWER THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN THEIR WORKPLACE. IDENTIFY AND COMMUNICATE OBJECTIVES, INCLUDING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- (a) reducing transmission among staff
- (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
- (c) maintaining business operations
- (d) minimizing effects on other entities in the supply chains.

A: SOME OF THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN MAKING DECISIONS ON APPROPRIATE RESPONSES ARE:

- Disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community where the business is located. Since the intensity of an outbreak may differ according to geographic location, local health officials may be issuing guidance specific to their communities.
- Reviewing your business continuity plan is always important but it is critical that you do it now. Make sure you and your team members are aware of what you need to do should something happen. Also make sure your list of workers is up to date and available to access remotely – you too may get sick.
- Impact of disease on workers that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for adverse health complications. Inform workers that some people may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Where possible you may want to consider that these workers work remotely from home.
- Employers should plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
- Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.
- Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products.
- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed). In some cases you may need to shrink or add hours to meet the needs of your customers or your staff.



If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection ...

INVOLVE YOUR HR DEPARTMENT AND/OR SEEK FURTHER GUIDANCE UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Workers who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to this [useful tool](#) developed by the BCCDC for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure. Family medical leave or other legal contracts may apply.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality.
- Workers exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to BCCDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The **BC Chamber of Commerce** acknowledges and sincerely thanks the following individuals for their invaluable contributions of time, energy, passion and insight in support of this project.

First, the members of the **Project Governance Committee**:

- **Dan Baxter**, Director of Policy Development, Government & Stakeholder Relationships, BC Chamber of Commerce
- **Krista Bax**, go2HR, CEO (tourism & hospitality)
- **Pete Bourke**, Columbia Valley Chamber Executive Director (Kootenays)
- **Tom Conway**, Small Business BC, CEO
- **Todd Corrigan**, Prince George Chamber CEO (Cariboo)
- **James Delorme**, Small Business Roundtable, President, Indigeknow
- **Anita Huberman**, Surrey Board of Trade, CEO (Mainland/Southwest)
- **Kerry Jochen**, Human Capital Strategies, Principal (Project Manager) (ex-officio)
- **Julie Lawlor**, WestShore Chamber Executive Director (Vancouver Island/Coast)
- **Susannah Machelak**, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, Senior Program Manager, Sector Partnerships (ex-officio)
- **Cheryl Montgomery**, Fort St. John & District Chamber, Executive Director (Northeast)
- **Stewart Muir**, Resource Works, Executive Director
- **Dan Rogers**, Kelowna Chamber, Executive Director (Thompson/Okanagan)
- **Teri Smith**, Small Business Roundtable, Executive Director, Robson Street BIA and President, BIABC
- **Michelle Taylor**, Terrace & District Chamber, Executive Director (North Coast/Nechako)
- **Dale Wheeldon**, BC Economic Development Association, President & CEO
- **Gaby Wickstrom**, Union of BC Municipalities, Mayor, Town of Port McNeill

In addition, the Chamber expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the individuals and organizations who provided insights, perspectives and suggested solutions on the broad range of COVID-19 issues and challenges faced by employers through your participation in focus groups. Your input has been invaluable.

This important project would not have been possible without the financial support of the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training and its Sector Labour Market Partnerships Program.

Special thanks to Dan Baxter for his project leadership and to Kerry Jochen, CEO of HCS for his effective project management and his project team's thorough research, careful analysis and innovative Resource Guide development. Finally, we acknowledge the exemplary leadership and effort of BC Chamber staff and the entire Project Team.

Fiona Famulak

COPYRIGHT

The information contained in this Resource Guide should not be considered as legal advice. It is generally current as of the published revision date and was compiled from sources believed by the BC Chamber of Commerce to be reliable and representative of the best current perspectives on COVID-19. No representation is made by the Chamber as to the accuracy of any information contained in this Resource Guide or in the associated links. The Chamber will be pleased to respond to your individual requests for information, at any time.

Copyright © 2021 - BC Chamber of Commerce

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the BC Chamber, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, email the BC Chamber at bcc@bcchamber.org and enter 'Copyright Permission' in the subject line.



BC Chamber of Commerce

Know what's on BC's mind.