

# ASPECT BC Presentation to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Presented by Janet Morris-Reade, CEO

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Thank you to the Committee on behalf of the Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training, also known as ASPECT, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to these consultations. I speak on behalf of our 100-member organizations that deliver employment services and supports to over 190 communities throughout BC.

## About ASPECT BC

ASPECT members play an essential role in upskilling individuals and providing them with the best opportunities to find and maintain success in the workplace. They also work with employers within their communities to provide a bridge to a trained workforce and provide training in response to community labour market needs.

ASPECT is a community of organizations such as Mission Community Skills Centre Society, Horton Ventures in 100 Mile House and Williams Lake, Langley Community Services Society, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, DiverseCity Community Resources in Surrey, Kelowna Community Resources, WCG in Burnaby, and Community Futures North Okanagan in Vernon. If some of these organization names seem familiar to you, I've highlighted an ASPECT member in your electoral ridings. Our member organizations are a mix between non-profit societies and private businesses that provide employment services and supports largely through contracts with the provincial and federal governments.

## Recommendation 1: Further Investment in Province-Wide Tech Connectivity

We applaud the government's investment in the Connecting British Columbia program but further investment beyond the phase three \$50 million is needed.

Employment service providers throughout the province have responded quickly to the pandemic by redesigning their in-person workshops and training sessions to go online. They have created virtual resource rooms, job fairs, and one-on-one supports for those looking for work.

With the move to online services, however, we have seen the gap between the have-and-have-not communities widening at a staggering level.

Rural, remote, and Indigenous communities need better and more affordable internet connections to compete and be resilient in the current economy. We need to make sure that everyone has equal access regardless of where they live.

Broadband connectivity provides employment training, business development and can help keep young workers in their communities while at the same time providing connections outside their communities. ASPECT members have done a stellar job of moving employment services online, but they can only do so much with limited connectivity.

Investments by both the federal and provincial governments in the past are appreciated. I am asking you today to do more. Further invest in providing rural, remote, and Indigenous communities with affordable high-speed access is needed.

## **Recommendation 2: Further Investment in Affordable Housing**

As we have seen from issues raised during the recent federal election, affordable housing continues to be a challenge across the country and BC continues to be the highest-priced jurisdiction.

We ask that the provincial government continues to invest in tax rebates and economic supports, especially to help those who must pay 40% or more of their income on housing.

ASPECT members help their clients find jobs, but that is only part of the picture for sustained employment, personal financial viability, and healthy communities.

## **Recommendation 3: Continued Investment in Daycare**

We applaud the provincial government's efforts in this area and the recent agreement with the federal government to work toward \$10-a day daycare through the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Nothing promises to reshape the world of work than making it possible for all to be included in it.

For BC is to meet its current and future labour market demands, we must remove daycare as a barrier to employment. We need to ensure that funding for this issue is continuous, and that daycare becomes part of the social infrastructure for years to come.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, we anticipate that the world of work will look very different in the coming years as we navigate out of the pandemic. If BC is to recover and thrive moving forward, we must further invest in better connectivity for rural and remote communities, affordable housing, and safe and affordable daycare. We recommend that the provincial government increase its funding in all these areas over and above what has already been committed.

ASPECT members are in almost every community delivering crucial employment supports and services, quickly responding to market conditions, and employing experts in their fields. The provincial government can depend on us to help you attain a resilient and healthy provincial economy.

Thank you for your time today. I have cited references in the submitted version of my presentation with recent publications about the future of work. I welcome your questions.

## References

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