

#BlueprintCDS

Blueprint CDS: A Comprehensive Workforce Strategy for Community Disability Services

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND POST-PROJECT ACTIVITIES



Aug 2024



What is ACDS?

- Member association of community disability service providers, since 1972
- **Over 85% of agencies contracted by PDD**
- **13,000 – 15,000 disability professionals supporting 11,000+ adults with developmental disabilities**
- Strengthening CDS sector through:
 - Advocacy
 - Sector engagement and research
 - Accreditation
 - Workforce training and development



Advocating for, supporting, and elevating the Community Disability Services sector in Alberta

About Us

The **Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS)** is a non-profit member association of community disability service providers in Alberta. Established in 1972, we work closely with the Government of Alberta and other partners to strengthen the Community Disability Services (CDS) sector to benefit Albertans with developmental disabilities.

OUR MISSION

ACDS is the collective voice of our members, advancing excellence and best practices, advocating for effective public policy, and championing professional disability services.

OUR VISION

People with disabilities live full lives as citizens supported by a vibrant network of services in their communities.

OUR VALUE



Our Programs and Services

ADVOCACY

We advocate for public policy to address issues and strengthen the CDS sector. Supported by our research and sector engagement, we are viewed as a trusted and collective voice by the Government of Alberta and the CDS sector.

ACCREDITATION

We raise professional standards through the ACDS Creating Excellence Together (CET) accreditation program, recognized as the benchmark in our sector.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We build organizational capacity by offering a range of face-to-face, virtual, and online training programs. Our sector-leading annual conference is sought after for its networking and learning opportunities.

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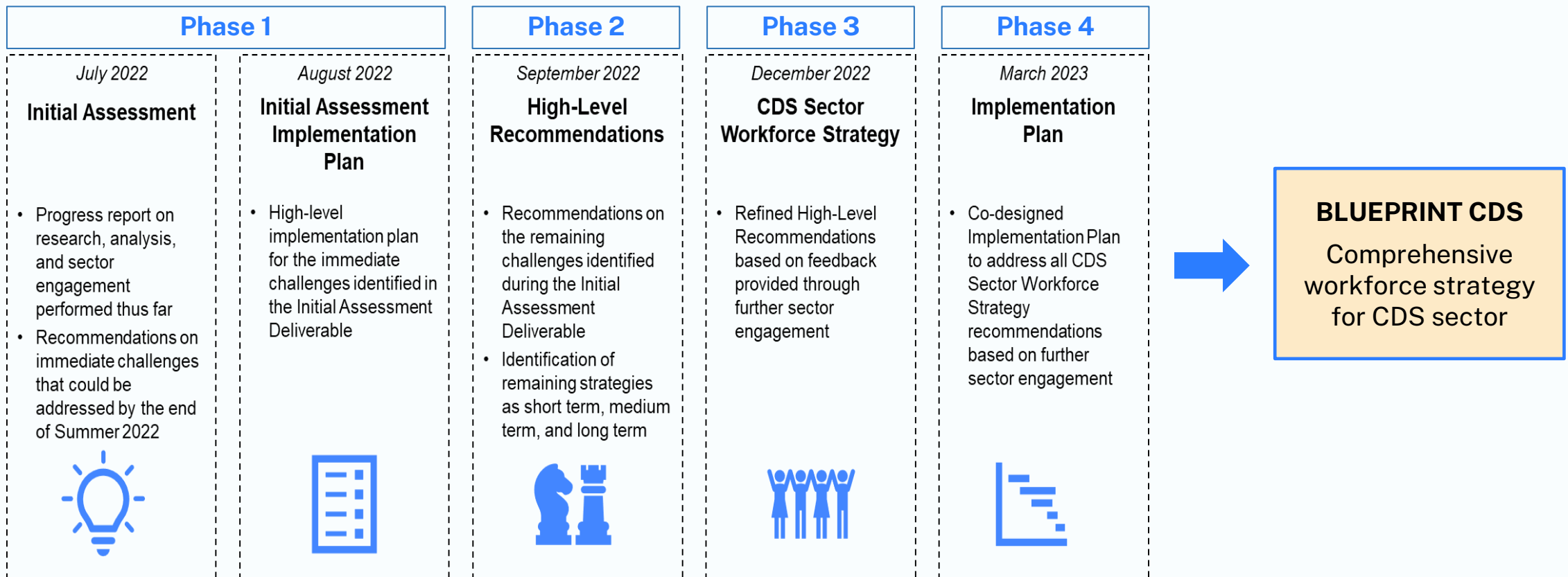
CONNECT WITH US
Facebook, LinkedIn, X,
and YouTube

We continually engage with our members across the province through consultations, committees, and councils. We collaborate with partners and allies, leveraging our network to connect and strengthen the sector.

What is Project Blueprint?

Multi-phased project, led by ACDS, to develop:

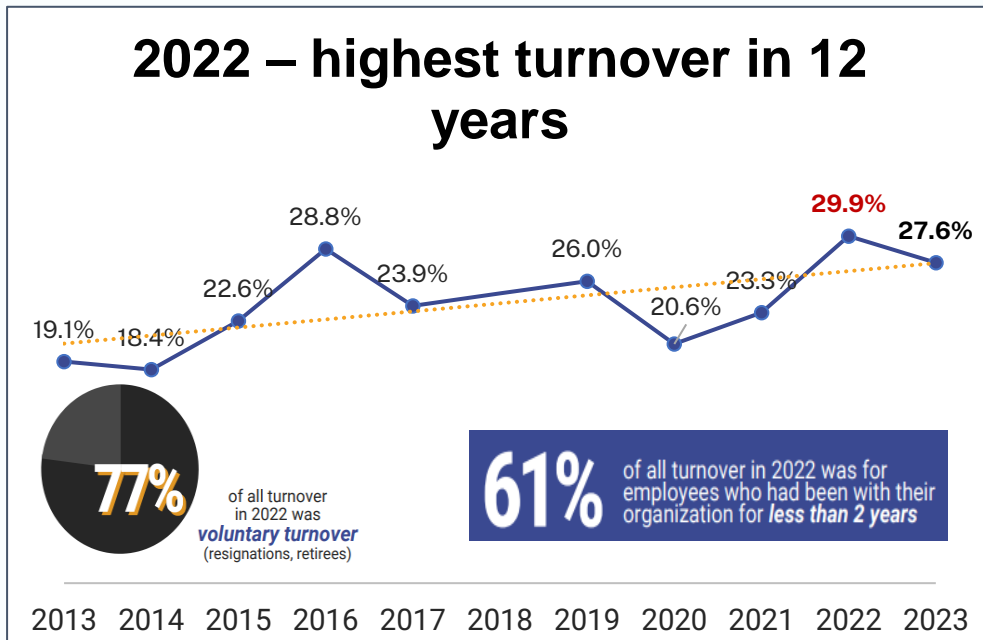
A sector-driven, evidence-based **strategy** to create a **skilled, sustainable, and professional workforce** in a sector that is **recognized for doing valuable and fulfilling work**.



Why does CDS sector need a Workforce Strategy?

Challenges

- High turnover
- Low wages
- Mental health and burnout



The overall average hourly wage for *all* positions in the CDS sector is

\$23.03

compared to \$21.50 in 2020

The average frontline hourly wage is

\$21.77

compared to \$20.32 in 2020

63%

of service providers listed **employee burnout** as one of the top three issues affecting their workforce

72%

of service providers reported that **mental health** was one of the top three issues affecting their workforce

69%

of frontline staff make under \$22.50 per hour

Why does CDS sector need a Workforce Strategy? (cont'd)

Expanding scope of practice: Greater diversity of individuals; individuals with more complex support needs.
Greater range of competencies: Difficulty finding staff with required skills; most new workers do not have formal disability services qualification.



Sophie is a mixed race woman in her 50s. Sophie loves music, games and swimming.

She has a Down's syndrome diagnosis.

Sophie lives with a roommate and receives shared day supports.

Sophie has support with community activities, life skill development, groceries and medical appointments.



Joe is an 20 year-old Cree man. He loves to be outside, play sports and participate in Cree traditions and ceremonies.

Joe has a diagnosed developmental disability, abuse and trauma history, and minor medical needs.

Joe is housed in a support home where he receives overnight supports shared among residents.



Stephanie is a 35 year-old white woman. She loves art, drawing and watching movies.

She has a diagnosis for a developmental disability, has experienced abuse and trauma, is experiencing mental illness and has significant safety considerations.

She previously lived in Alberta Hospital. She now lives in an overnight staffed residence with 24-hour care from two staff.

Complexity of service needs / Workforce capabilities

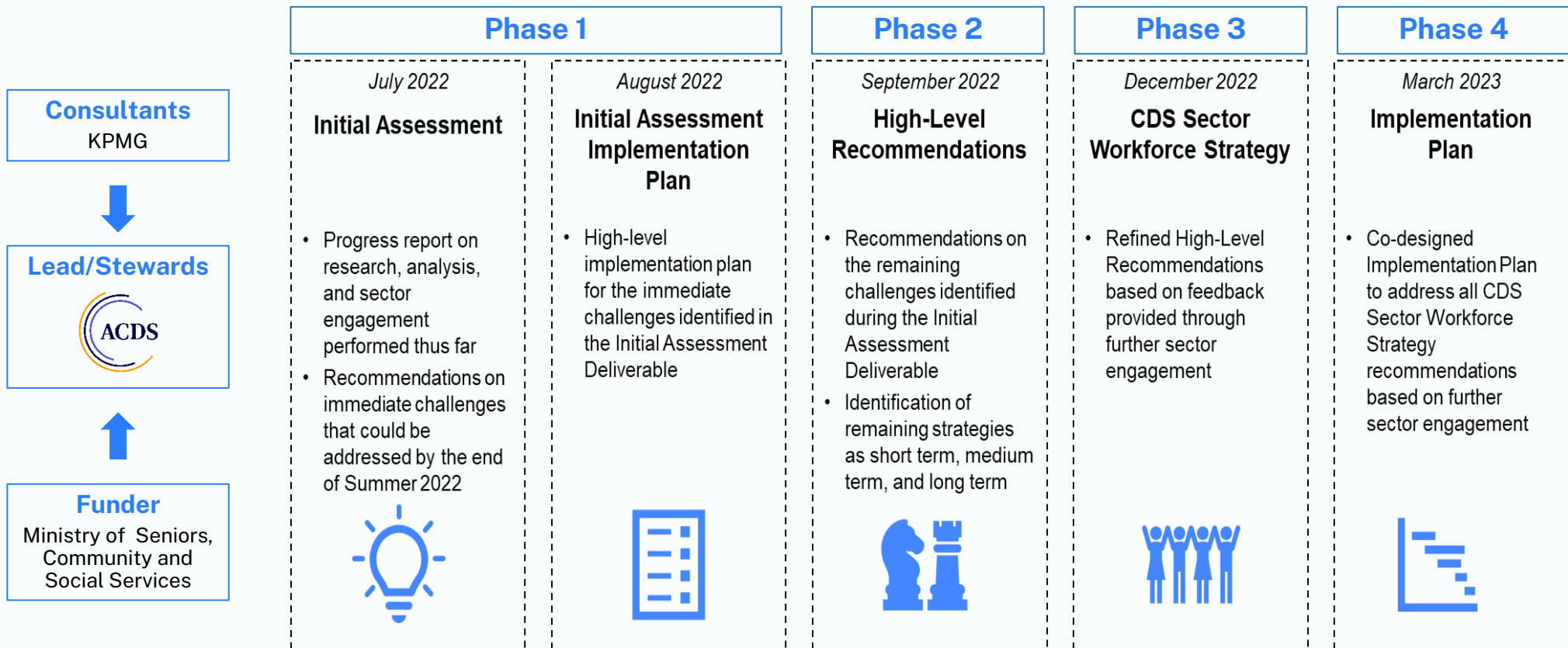
Building relationships
 Communications
 Flexibility
 Interpersonal skills
 Positive behavioural supports

Building relationships + Medication administration
 Communications + Trauma informed care
 Flexibility
 Interpersonal skills
 Positive behavioural supports

Building relationships ++ Preventative health measures
 Communications ++ Intervention techniques
 Flexibility ++ Addiction services
 Interpersonal skills ++ Mental Health first aid
 Positive behavioural supports ++ Suicide prevention
 + Medication Administration
 + Trauma informed care

Project Blueprint CDS

Multi-phased project led by ACDS, with funding from Government of Alberta, to develop:
A sector-driven, evidence-based **strategy** to create a **skilled, sustainable, and professional workforce**
in a sector that is **recognized for doing valuable and fulfilling work.**



Project Blueprint CDS (cont'd)

Phase 1

July 2022

Initial Assessment

- Progress report on research, analysis, and sector engagement performed thus far
- Recommendations on immediate challenges that could be addressed by the end of Summer 2022



August 2022

Initial Assessment Implementation Plan

- High-level implementation plan for the immediate challenges identified in the Initial Assessment Deliverable



Sector engagement

- Blueprint CDS Survey
- Focus sessions to validate and expand on survey findings

Blueprint CDS Survey explored:

1. Operational Challenges
2. Workforce Skills and Capabilities
3. COVID-19
4. Workforce Total Compensation
5. Recruitment and Retention Strategies
6. Future of the CDS Workforce



Desktop research

- Jurisdictional Research
- ACDS Reports
- **Labour Market Data** →



Labour market data

Macro labour trends

Alberta labour market

Industry and occupational groups most relevant and comparable to CDS sector:

- NAIC industry groups 623 – Nursing and Residential Care Facilities & 624 – Social Assistance
- NOC occupation groups 4212 (Social and Community Services Workers)
- NOC 4412 (Home Support Workers)

Project Blueprint CDS (cont'd)

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Sector engagement



Desktop research



Labour market data



1. Key workforce challenges

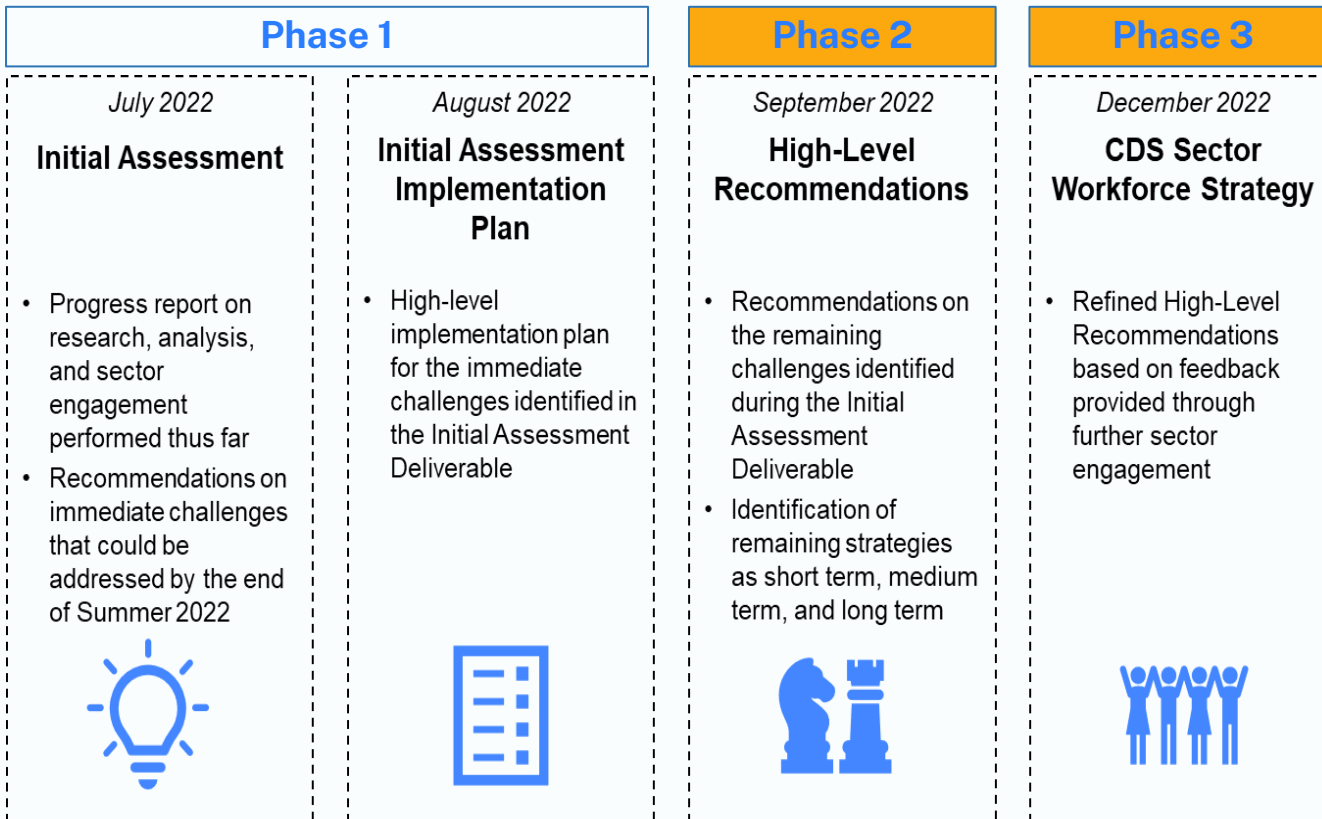
- **A: Workforce context** (systemic issues)
- B: Recruitment and retention barriers/issues
- **C: Workforce development needs**

2. 18 preliminary recommendations

3. 3 recommendations for immediate action

- **A2: Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services**
- **B6: Provide immediate and ongoing wage relief**
- **C9_c: Identify current state of training**

Project Blueprint CDS (cont'd)



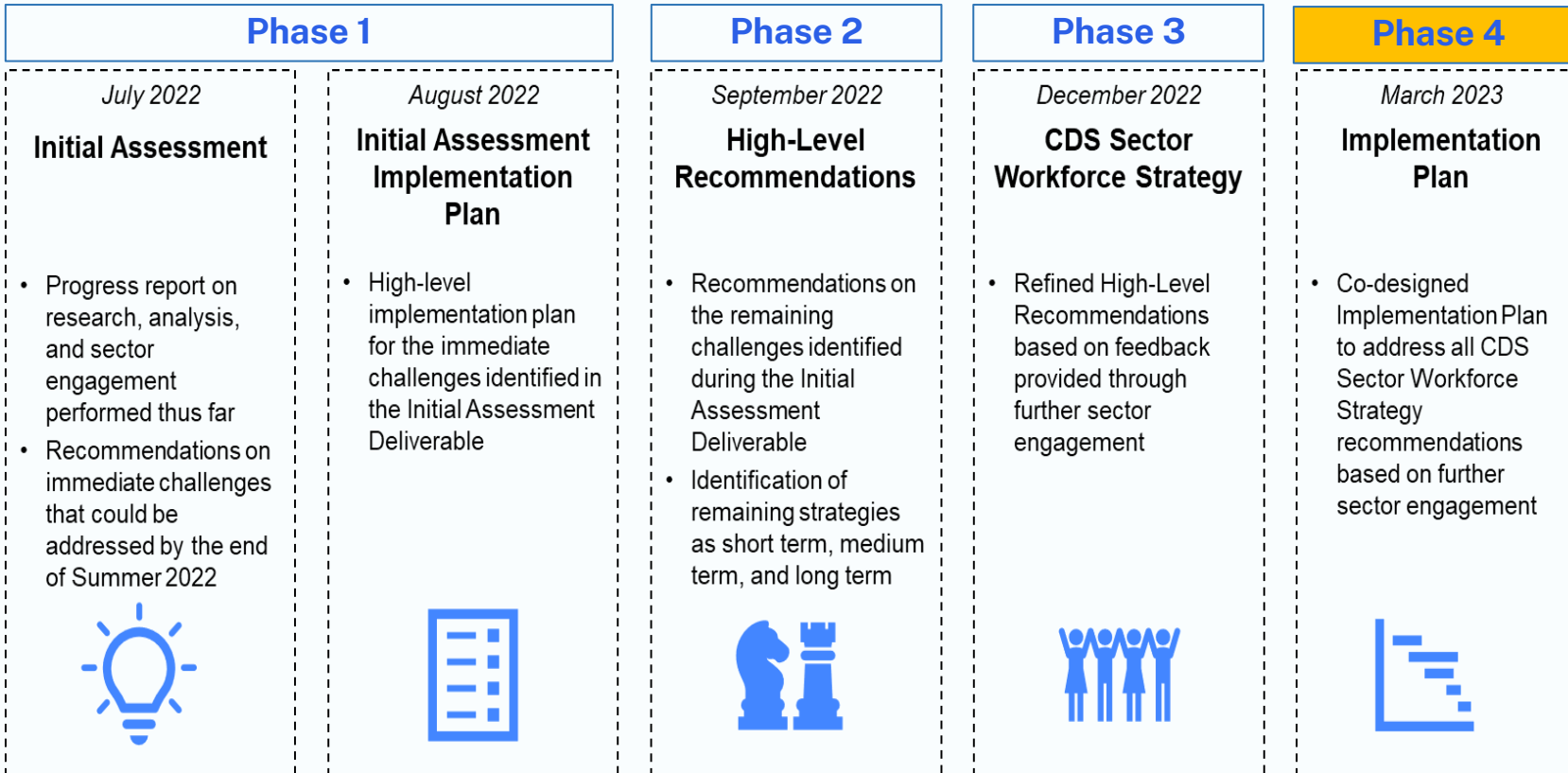
Sector engagement

- 6 workshops (5 in-person across AB, 1 virtual)
- 133 attendees
- 78 service provider organizations
- Other stakeholders (BVC, ADWA, IA)



Refined workforce strategy with suite of evidence-based, prioritized, sector-driven recommendations.

Project Blueprint CDS (cont'd)



Advisory Committee

- 10 ACDS member agency leaders
- HR expertise; solution-driven
- Diverse services, size, location



Comprehensive workforce strategy with high-level implementation plan

Key Themes in Current Workforce Challenges

A. Understanding workforce context

The context, purpose, value and functions of the CDS sector workforce.

Lack of visibility and buy-in. There is a lack of visibility into and buy-in to the value and complexity of the work of the CDS sector.



Parallel and duplicate systems. The CDS sector is creating duplicate processes to support individuals to access the supports they need outside of what is delivered by CDS organizations.



Increasingly complex service needs. The scope and needs of individuals referred to CDS sector supports and their families are growing and becoming more complex.



Rural factors. Rural communities experience workforce challenges more severely.



B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce

The things that affect whether workers choose to enter and stay in CDS sector.

Low wages. Wages are low relative to similar sectors and have been outpaced by the increasing cost of living in Alberta.



Competition from other sectors. There is competition for resources from organizations and support sectors that provide better pay, work environment, multidisciplinary teams, etc.



Work environment. The workforce brings expectations about work environment, supports, working in multidisciplinary teams, etc. that the CDS sector is not currently able to meet.



Leadership gap. Senior leaders in the CDS sector are retiring and there is a lack of experienced, willing staff to take their place.



C. Developing the workforce

The things that affect the CDS sector's ability to deliver quality services.

Barriers to training. There is a lack of funding available for training. Specialized training opportunities can be limited or expensive. Services providers find themselves having to provide their own time-consuming, expensive training which is further compounded due to high staff turnover.



Rigid contracts. The current contract parameters with Government are rigid and do not allow for service providers to be flexible about how they deliver services and support their workforce.



Mismatched staff skill sets. It is difficult to find and hire individuals with the skill sets needed by service providers. Competency criteria are not consistent and most new workers do not enter the field with a formal disability services qualification.



Lack of post-secondary training. There is a lack of post-secondary training available as many programs across the province have closed due to lack of demand.



Recommendations



A. Understanding workforce context (5)

The context, purpose, value and functions of the CDS sector workforce

- A1. Build a shared understanding of the economic impact of the sector
- A2. Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services
- A3. Adopt common workforce classifications
- A4. Adopt a network model to support cross-ministry coordination
- A5. Develop a forecasting model to support strategic workforce planning



B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce (3)

The things that attract workers to the CDS sector and keep them happy to stay

- B6. Provide immediate and ongoing wage relief
- B7. Build a compensation scale guide for frontline service delivery staff
- B8. Engage CDS sector workers to co-design a community of practice



C. Developing the workforce (10)

The things staff and service providers need to provide quality services

- C9. Increase education and training levels of the CDS workforce, including:
 - C9A. Establish a target credential requirement for frontline CDS sector workers
 - C9B. Establish a system for micro-credentialing
 - C9C. Expand post-secondary programming
 - C9D. Identify current state of training
 - C9E. Develop a provincial training framework
 - C9F. Develop a training catalogue/clearing house
 - C9G. Expand the suite of training offered by ACDS
- C10. Identify and address barriers to workforce flexibility within the PDD contract structure
- C11. Implement innovative workforce fund
- C12. Support organizations to build a culture of professionalization

Recommendations – Implementation Timeline

Immediate Term (within 1 year)	Short Term (within 2 years)	Medium Term (within 3 years)	Long Term (3 + years)
A2. Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services (→ competencies inventory)	A1. Build a shared understanding of the economic impact of the CDS sector	B7. Build a compensation scale guide for frontline service delivery staff	B8. Engage CDS sector workers to co-design a community of practice
B6A. Provide immediate wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief	B6B. Provide ongoing wage relief
C9D. Identify current state of training	A3. Adopt common workforce classifications	C9A . Establish a target credential requirement for frontline workers	C9C. Expand post-secondary programming
C9E . Develop a provincial training framework	A4. Adopt a network model to support cross-ministry coordination	C9B . Establish a system for micro-credentialing	
C12: Support organizations to build a culture of professionalization	A5. Develop a forecasting model to support strategic workforce planning	C11. Implement innovative workforce fund	
	C9F. Develop a training catalogue (clearing house)		
	C9G. Expand the suite of training offered by ACDS		
	C10. Address barriers to workforce flexibility in PDD contract structure		



A. Understanding workforce context (5)



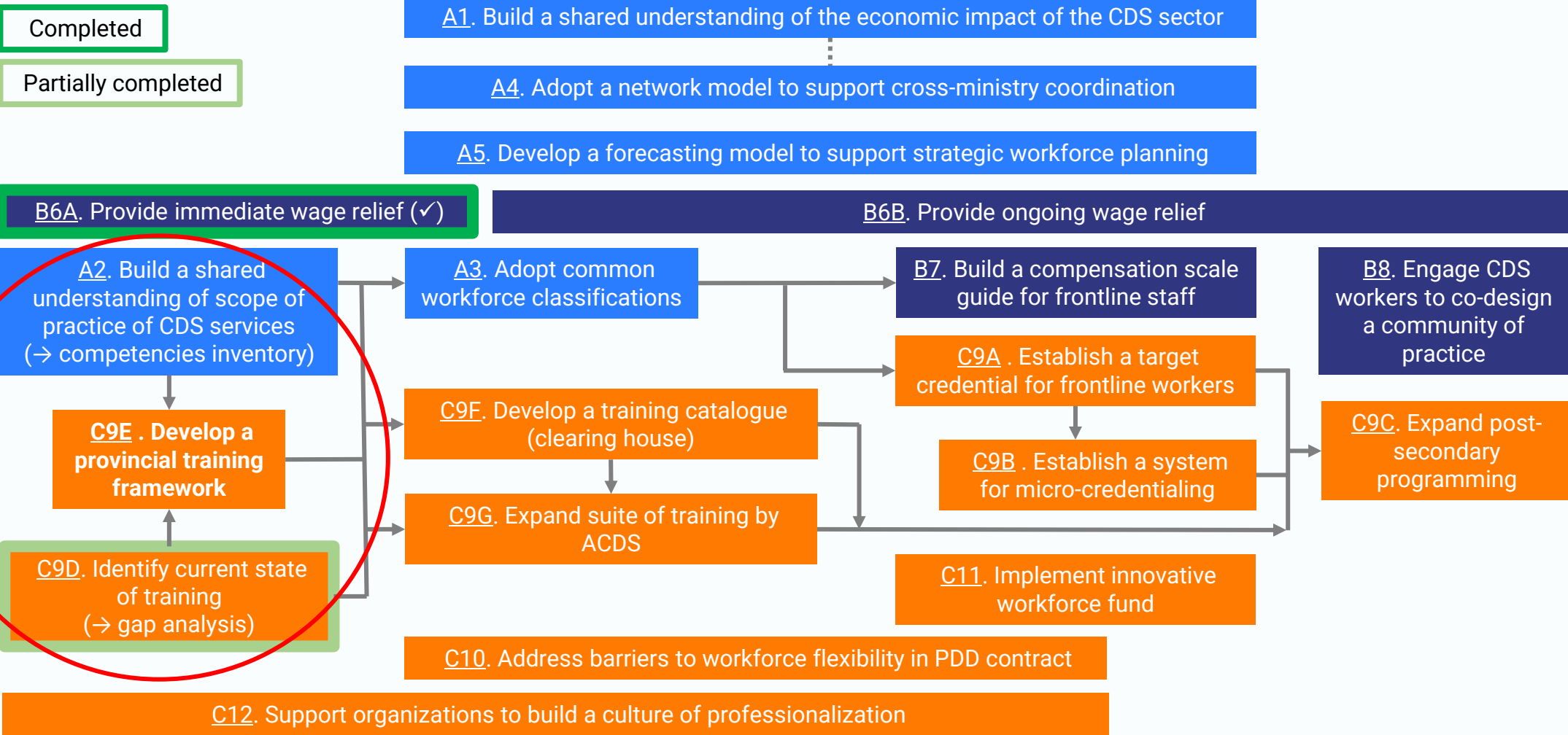
B. Recruiting and retaining the workforce (3)



C. Developing the workforce (10)

Recommendations – Sequence

Immediate Term (start within 1 year) Short Term (start within 2 years) Medium Term (start within 3 years) Long Term (start 3+ years)



Key first steps towards a skilled, professionalized workforce

Recommendation A2 Build a shared understanding of the scope of practice of CDS sector services

Scope

Create an inventory of range of supports provided across the sector.
Identify competencies needed at all levels of the workforce to provide those services.

Rationale / Benefit

Organizations are more effective in planning and preparing the workforce they need.
Workers understand how their skills fit into scope of practice, and areas for potential skill enhancement.

Recommendation C9D Develop a province-wide map of existing training opportunities and conduct a gap analysis

Scope

Gather data on current landscape of training.
Conduct gap analysis to identify where needed training is not available, is inefficient, or burdensome.

Rationale / Benefit

There is a clear understanding of the training landscape, in preparation to address gaps.

Recommendation C9E Develop a provincial training framework

Scope

Develop a training framework that lays out, for each position, the required training, describes training pathways, and enables employers to assess training already completed by newly-hired workers.

Rationale / Benefit

A cohesive, organized, sector-wide approach to training reduces administrative burden and costs.
CDS sector has increased, consistent access to standardized training opportunities.
Organizations continue to have autonomy to access any additional training unique to their needs.

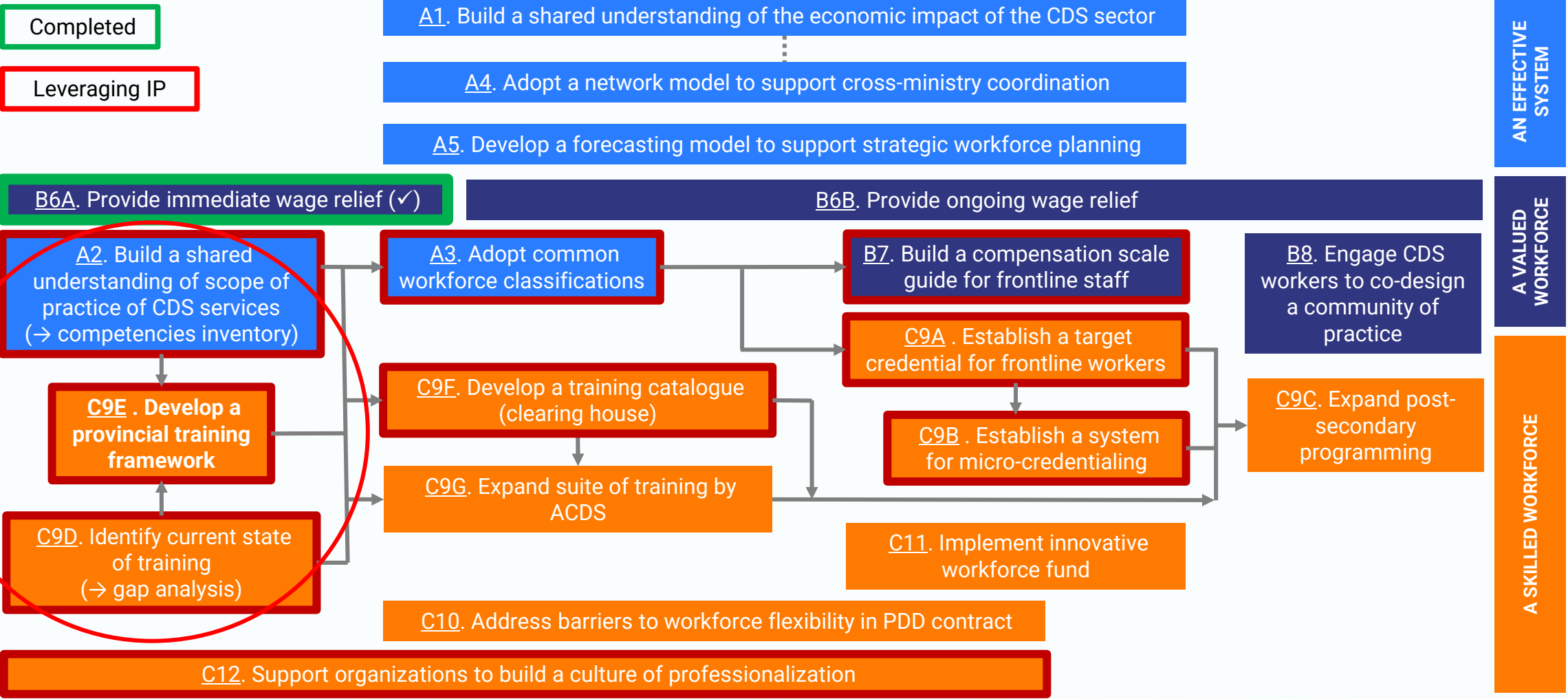
Cross-Ministry Activities since Summer 2023

Recommendation	Ministries
<p>A2,3,5; B7 C9:A,D-G C11,12</p>	<p>AB Jobs, Economy and Trade: Workforce Partnership Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Market Partnership (LMP), Workforce Attraction and Retention Partnership (WARP) • 2023/4 grants had already been allocated • Next steps: Assess advantage of applying for 2024-25 grant
<p>A2,3; B7 C9:A,B,D-G C12</p>	<p>AB Advanced Education: Apprenticeship and Industry Training. Industry Pathways Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New initiative launched Feb 2023 • New legislation: Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act (STAEA) • Expands gov't recognition of work-integrated learning models to all industries (not just regulated industries/designated trades) • Supports industries to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore work-integrated learning options • Establish province-wide training pathway and program • Provide a program resulting in gov't issued credential



Advanced Ed: Industry Pathways Initiative – Potential Impact

Immediate Term (start within 1 year) Short Term (start within 2 years) Medium Term (start within 3 years) Long Term (start 3+ years)



Why it matters

Project Blueprint CDS

To create a skilled, sustainable, and professional workforce in a sector that is recognized for doing valuable and fulfilling work



AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM

- Stronger sector
- Effective, thriving organizations
- Quality supports
- Individuals living full, inclusive, valued lives

A VALUED WORKFORCE

- Better pay
- Respected work
- Viewed as professionals
- Having a fulfilling career, not just a job

A SKILLED WORKFORCE

- Well trained
- Matched for job requirements
- Recognized credentials
- Working in a community of professionals

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