



Budget 2024 Consultation

Template for Public Hearing Participants

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services invites British Columbians to share their ideas and priorities for the next provincial budget. The Committee thanks all British Columbians for their continued participation in the annual budget consultation.

Should you wish to provide written information in support of your presentation, you must use this template.

Instructions:

Please provide your comments by filling out this submission form.

You may provide up to **three** recommendations (maximum 50 words each) along with your explanation for each recommendation (maximum 300 words each). Should you include more than three recommendations, additional recommendations will not be considered part of your formal submission and may only be reviewed for informational purposes.

The order of recommendations does not reflect priority.

Please ensure that your recommendations and explanations are captured within the body of the submission. Information provided through links will not be considered to form part of the submission and may only be reviewed for further interest.

If you require assistance or support to make a submission, please contact the Parliamentary Committees Office at 250-356-2933 or 1-877-428-8337 (toll-free in BC).

Please note, submissions are considered public documents and may be posted on the Committee's website and can be made available upon request to interested parties. Please do not include any personal information within the body of your submission. The Parliamentary Committees Office will remove an individual's personal contact information prior to posting or disclosing any submissions.

Additionally, the names of all individuals and organizations who provide input to the Committee are listed in the Committee's final report which is made publicly available at the conclusion of its work.

Contact Information:

First Name*:

Last Name*

Colin

Ewart

Organization (if the presentation is on behalf of an organization)

BC Colleges

Submission Form

Introduction (100-word limit)

Please provide any general background information relevant to your submission (e.g. the work of your organization or relevant personal experience).

British Columbia's public colleges are at the heart of our post-secondary education system. They serve people and communities from all walks of life with a diverse range of programs, from career, technical, trade, applied degree, university transfer, and upskilling courses. BC's colleges are geographically dispersed, highly adaptable, have strong connections to communities and employers. Colleges deliver the most relevant, accessible, affordable, and applied education programs in the province.

BC Colleges (BCC) is an association of BC's public, post-secondary colleges. Our role supports college partnership opportunities with employers and key stakeholders, while facilitating system-wide collaboration.

Recommendation 1 (50-word limit)

That the BC Government expeditiously complete its post-secondary education funding review and implement an updated funding model that, in government's words, fairly distributes provincial PSE financial resources, aligns funding with the skills training needs of British Columbians and supports student success through affordable, high-quality PSE and expanding key student supports.

Recommendation 1 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 1 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

On March 31, 2022, the Government of BC launched a "sector-wide review of how it funds operations at British Columbia's 25 public post-secondary institutions to ensure they have the resources they need to support economic recovery and student success". The announcement stated that "the current funding model has not been updated in more than 20 years and has created constraints and inequities for some public post-secondary institutions". The announcement added that "the review will help government develop an updated, modern funding model for British Columbia's public post-secondary system. It will aim to:

1. Establish a funding model that fairly and impartially distributes provincial financial resources across the public post-secondary sector.
2. Align provincial funding with the education and skills training needs of British Columbians and the communities served by the 25 public post-secondary institutions.
3. Support student success by ensuring access to affordable, high-quality post-secondary education and expanding key student supports."

The BC Government's recently released *Future Ready Action Plan* represents a significant investment by the government in post-secondary education. BC's colleges are fully committed to working with the BC Government to implement the Action Plan in response to new and emerging employer needs and to support an inclusive, balanced and resilient workforce.

However, colleges are measurably underfunded relative to other parts of BC's post-secondary education system, especially rural, smaller colleges. **An updated, modern PSE funding model will help ensure that public post-secondary institutions, including BC's colleges, have the capacity and capability to fully implement the Future Ready Action Plan.**

Recommendation 2 (50-word limit)

That the BC Government provide funding for additional skilled trades seats, particularly in high-demand construction fields, at a level that makes trades training fiscally sustainable for post-secondary institutions, and also undertake a thorough systems review of trades training, focusing on the changes needed to meet projected demand for skilled tradespeople.

Recommendation 2 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 2 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

Post-secondary institutions in BC receive funding for Trades training from SkilledTradesBC (STBC). The funding, which is based on a per seat calculation, has not increased in step with inflation and the increasing cost of delivering Trades training (particularly the substantial increases in the cost of consumables and equipment), and no longer covers the actual costs of delivering these programs at many colleges.

For rural colleges, with small numbers of students and higher costs due to their isolation, the funding gap is even more significant. This is especially true when delivering Trades training at campuses other than the main one, where facilities do not exist, and in Indigenous communities. Although these programs incur higher costs, funding for them remains the same, regardless of delivery location. In-community offerings have fewer students, which means less tuition. And yet, students who train in community are better supported by their families while receiving the training they need for highly skilled, high-paying employment.

The BC Labour Market Outlook predicts that, of the one million job openings in BC over the next decade, approximately 12% (119,200) will need an apprenticeship certificate and about 85,000 of those will be needed in the skilled trades. The Outlook also forecasts that construction will have close to 76,000 job openings over the next 10 years.

According to Canadian Registered Apprentice Information System data, the BC skilled trades certification system graduated 5,322 skilled trades professionals in 2021. The BC skilled trades certification system would need to graduate more than 12,000 skilled trades professionals annually to meet the replacement and expansion needs of the system.

Recommendation 3 (50-word limit)

That the BC Government establish a cost adjustment for small rural colleges and for Vancouver Community College to better enable rural colleges to provide their learners with the education needed to succeed in BC's future workforce and to better enable VCC to support its unique demographic of disadvantaged students.

Recommendation 3 Explanation (300-word limit)

Use this space to provide background information relating to recommendation 3 and to explain why it should be included in the next provincial budget.

Certain colleges have design and cost disadvantages due to their locations and their unique student populations. VCC places strong emphasis on attracting and supporting disadvantaged students, including the hard of hearing and the visually impaired. Rural colleges have multiple campuses with facilities throughout large regions. The regional nature of these institutions results in relatively low student demand because of low population density and a high degree of dispersion. Demand is also affected by external factors such as the level of economic activity. So long as tuition is regulated as it currently is and grant funding is not increased to cover increased costs, the small rural colleges are hit the hardest financially, especially recovering post pandemic.

Rural colleges have generally had to reduce their support costs below the level that an urban college with the same number of students would have, even support costs of rural institutions tend to be equal or higher due to the multiple campuses of the rural institutions. That suggests relative underfunding of the rural institutions, leaving them with inadequate resources for student support and management, which affects quality and sustainability.

This challenge has been known by government since the 2006 Perrin and Thorau report, Post Secondary Budget Review, Phase II – University Colleges, Colleges and Institutes. Back then, and now, the analysis supports a recommendation for an adjustment fund for BC's rural colleges in order to provide support services proportionate with larger institutions.

Importantly, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick all provide targeted funding to small campuses to account for their higher teaching costs due to their geographic remoteness and smaller size.

This recommendation can be implemented before the post-secondary education funding review is completed by government. Its need is already well-attested, and it is directly linked to the ability to implement the Future Ready Action Plan.

We require your acknowledgement that you have read our [privacy policy](#) (required in order to formally receive your submission).

I have read and agreed to the Privacy Policy of the Parliamentary Committees Office.

We also seek your permission to post your submission on the Committee's website following the release of the Budget 2024 Consultation Report. Please note that we only post submissions on the website

where consent has been received; however, any submission may be provided to interested parties upon request as submissions are considered public documents.

I consent to having my submission posted on the Legislative Assembly website.

Upon completion, please save this document with your last name and first name or organization name (if applicable), and email to financecommittee@leg.bc.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services' Budget 2024 Consultation.

To learn more about the consultation and the work of the Committee, visit the [Committee's website](#).