

Annual Report  
2023-24

# Building Opportunity

**WBF**™ WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES®

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## Land Acknowledgment

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We respectfully recognize that our main office is located in the territory of the Treaty 6 First Nations and the Métis people who share a deep and resonant history with this land. We acknowledge the spirit of Treaty 6, to peacefully co-exist and to share these lands, the ancestral territory of the Nehiyaw (Cree), Denesuliné (Dene), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux) and Nakota Sioux (Stoney) peoples.

We also recognize the First Peoples were sovereign on this land from time immemorial, living according to their own established structures of governance, social, spiritual and economic systems and beliefs. Recognizing Treaty 6 and Métis ancestral lands is to also acknowledge how settlement and colonization deeply affected and altered their way of life.

We owe our strength and vibrancy to this land and its First Peoples' as we work together with Indigenous communities and organizations, to learn more about their history and their relationship with the land and the natural world.

We also gratefully acknowledge that many of our team members live and work on the traditional and ancestral homelands of hundreds of Indigenous Peoples and Nations across Turtle Island, each with their own unique languages and traditions, histories and cultures. We remain committed to strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships through acts of reconciliation.

# OUR VISION AND MISSION

## About us

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Women Building Futures (WBF) is a non-profit organization currently offering skilled trades training programs to unemployed and underemployed women and gender-diverse individuals in Alberta and Saskatchewan. We also offer commercial transportation training in Alberta. Our mission is economic security for women. We are building relationships and increasing awareness of our organization in Ontario with the goal of expanding our programs into this province. As we expand, we are focusing on building strategic partnerships with governments, industry, community groups, post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities. WBF is also partnering with employers to create more inclusive workplaces. WBF was founded in Edmonton, Alberta 26 years ago.

## Mission

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To foster economic security for women facing barriers to entry in a workforce where they are traditionally underrepresented.

## Our values

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**Integrity is built on respect and trust.**

**Health & Safety is everyone's responsibility.**

**Courage empowers our ingenuity, innovation and sustainable growth.**

**Compassion nurtures inclusion, teamwork and service to others.**

## Our strategic vision

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To grow our impact by connecting more women to opportunity through values-aligned partnerships and a sustainable funding strategy that supports our core mission.

**In 2023–24 we celebrated the highest number of graduates from our programs.** This historic milestone means more women have the training and skills to move into higher paying trades and professional driving professions to achieve economic security.

At WBF, we are committed to working with industry and government partners to ensure unemployed and underemployed women can become personally and financially independent, while contributing to their local economies.

We have expanded our programs outside of our home province, Alberta, into Saskatchewan and soon Ontario.

In all three provinces, we are currently building critical partnerships with employers to help to meet their workforce needs and to support more women to enter skilled trades and with provincial governments to support our mission.

**Economic security means a steady source of income, which allows people to meet basic needs such as housing, food and healthcare and at the same time enables them to be secure during times of financial uncertainty.**



# Message from president and board chair

Landa Richards,  
board chair and  
Carol Moen, P.Eng,  
president and CEO



**If there is one takeaway from the past year, it is that WBF's model works. We helped a record number of women take more control of their lives through careers in the skilled trades and transportation industries, and demand for our programs continues to grow.**

## On behalf of the Board of Directors and the team at Women Building Futures, we are proud to present the 2023–24 Annual Report.

2023–24 was a year of incredible growth of WBF's mission-related work, with a record number of women and gender-diverse individuals graduating from our programs. In all, 284 graduates acquired skills to change their lives by starting down the path to rewarding careers in high-demand sectors of the economy. This number is almost double the number of graduates in 2020–21. We are delighted with this strong result, which could not have been achieved without the dedication of WBF staff and the generous support and encouragement of our partners in government, industry and the non-profit sector.

**Of course, the true heroes are the women who invested in themselves and began their journeys toward greater economic security, stability and self-confidence.** Their grit, determination and hard work are proof that with the right support, you can achieve momentous things for yourself, your loved ones and your communities.

While the number of graduates is a clear measure of success, our year was not without a few headwinds.

Our statistics show that the percentage of students who found employment within six months of graduating dipped from 87 per cent in 2022–23 to 80 per cent in 2023–24. In part, this was due to Alberta's rapid population growth, along with some employers seeking new hires with experience rather than pre-apprentice candidates. We are working with our industry partners to clearly demonstrate the advantages of hiring our graduates, who can be taught from the ground up about the organization's processes, procedures and culture.

Also of note, our metric measuring graduates' starting wage against the average living wage dipped from 30 per cent above a living wage to 20 per cent above in 2023. This was largely due to increases in the overall cost of living, which has had a negative effect on the entire population.

Our organization has seen signs of financial turbulence in the coming fiscal year, as the federal government signaled reductions in funding through its Labour Market Transfer Agreements to all provinces. This was expected to negatively affect flow-through dollars from provincial governments to on-the-ground service providers like WBF – but the magnitude of the impact was unknown. We did our best to prepare for any headwinds in the coming fiscal year, without knowing precisely how severe they might be.

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If there is one takeaway from the past year, it is that WBF's model works. We helped a record number of women take more control of their lives through careers in the skilled trades and transportation industries, and demand for our programs continues to grow.

We offered 24 employment training programs in Alberta and Saskatchewan, a 33 per cent increase over the previous year, while demand grew dramatically for coaching and readiness support.

In Alberta, our strategy to offer more services in Calgary, Edmonton and Fort McMurray bore fruit, and if there is employer demand elsewhere in the province, we will respond.

One focus is Alberta's Industrial Heartland northeast of Edmonton. Strong industrial growth in the region gives our graduates a chance to connect with excellent employers and work from the ground up.

Our presence in Saskatchewan keeps strengthening as we establish ourselves in Regina. Working closely with the provincial government and industry partners Enbridge, Pembina Pipeline and TC Energy, we successfully piloted our first Journey to Trades program in the province. The program was 100 per cent filled with a 100 per cent graduation rate. We are now planning to expand.

We are also working with private sector partners to explore employer-sponsored programs, much like our successful three-year program with BHP, a global mining company, which wrapped up this year and saw graduates of our Trades Readiness program find employment at the Jansen Mine site. This partnership has opened the door for more collaborations with industry in Saskatchewan.

We are laying the foundation in Ontario. This year we focused on the Sarnia-Lambton County area, building relationships and increasing awareness of our organization and mission, with plans to focus on the Greater London area. Program offerings will begin in the near future.

Our Employers of Choice program, which recognizes industry leaders who commit to safe and inclusive workplaces, continues to grow at an impressive pace. Our total number of EOC partners reached 71, a 61 per cent net increase over the previous year.

WBF's commitment to deepening our relationship with Indigenous Peoples continued to move forward as the organization achieved a Phase III Committed stage under the Partnerships Accreditation in Indigenous Relations (PAIR) with the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business. We are committed to understanding and supporting culturally appropriate learning opportunities for students and staff, and to support equitable opportunities for training and employment for Indigenous women.

We have so much to be proud of, but more importantly, we have significant work ahead. With the crucial help and support of our partners, we will continue to grow and help more women and gender-diverse individuals take control of their lives.

*Richards*

*Carol Ann*

## Message from the board

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## Board of Directors

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*Landa Richards – Board Chair*

*Bob Masterson – Board Vice-Chair*

*Lina Cosentino – Current Treasurer, Audit Committee Chair*

*Freddie Martinez – Governance Committee Chair*

*Lindsay Osmond – Current Secretary and current Governance & Human Resources Committee Chair*

*Maya Pungur-Buick – Audit Committee Chair (partial term)*

*Rebecca Kragnes – Director (partial term)*

*Danielle Corsaro – Director*

*Tara Matheson – Director*

*Scott Brattly – Director*

*Randall Benson – Director (new)*

*Lora Cardinal – Director (new)*

*Alan Skoreyko – Past Board Chair, Ex-Officio Board Member*

# Growing with the organization

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## **As with the rest of the organization, 2023–24 was a busy and productive year for our Board of Directors.**

One of the Board's top priorities was renewing WBF's strategic priorities to reflect the organization's considerable growth in Alberta and expansion into Saskatchewan and Ontario. We are now focusing on six areas of strategic intention:

1. Our people are engaged
2. Our clients feel supported
3. Our partners are committed to our work
4. Our programming has positive and reliable results
5. Our influential voice is valued
6. Our work is sustainable

The Board worked on other policy areas, including ensuring that WBF complies with all legislative requirements in Saskatchewan and Ontario as our presence grows in those provinces, and working on an overall Enterprise Risk Management system to build on our historical risk matrix. High priority risks have been identified and work has commenced on assuring WBF has the necessary controls in place.

When the federal government signaled funding reductions to the provinces and the provincial governments responded in a similar way, the Board strongly advocated on the organization's

behalf to retain as much mission-direct funding as possible. Once reductions were fully understood, the Board actively supported the president in operational adjustments that were required.

## **Diversity, equity and inclusion**

In keeping with the organization as a whole, the Board of Directors has committed to diversity, equity and inclusion by monitoring the overall diversity of its membership. Here are the highlights of the 11-member Board's demographic survey:

- Seven respondents identified as women, four as men
- Two respondents identified as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- One respondent identified as Indigenous, two as persons of colour, and eight as Caucasian (White)
- None of the respondents identified as persons with a disability

We also welcomed two new members, Randall Benson and Lora Cardinal. A heartfelt thank-you to outgoing members Maya Pungur-Buick, Freddie Martinez and Rebecca Kragnes for their valuable contributions.



# 2023–24 OUR IMPACT

## Lives changed in 2023–24

We assist women and gender-diverse individuals achieve stability, economic security and self-confidence by preparing them for in-demand careers in the skilled trades and transportation industries.



**284**

A record number completed our programs, for a 97% graduation rate



**80%**

Were hired within six months into fields related to their training



**24**

Employment training programs held



**1.2X**

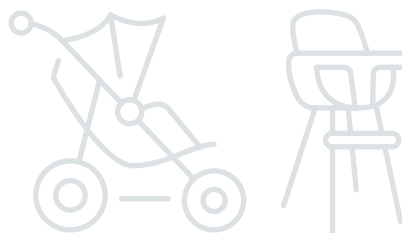
Their average starting wage was \$26.23 per hour, or 1.2 times the average living wage

## Who are our 2023–24 graduates?

Our students come from diverse backgrounds and situations, but one thing unites them: a desire for a rewarding career and the independence that comes with it.

**113, or 39%**

Were unemployed prior to entering our programs; the remainder were under-employed



**45, or 16%**

Were Indigenous

**98, or 35%**

Were supporting dependents, including children



Scan to view  
Impact Reports.



# Surrounded by support

A resilient career can be life-changing, but to achieve that, it takes the right support. We provide that support before, during and after students go through our programs.

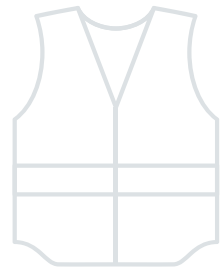
**860**

Times women accessed readiness support in Alberta and Saskatchewan.



**70**

Women entered our programs after receiving coaching and readiness supports



**439**

Alumni from previous years connected with WBF

for support 1,542 times, including connections to new employment, résumé assistance, assistance with upgrading skills and industry networking events

**23**

Alumni were connected to new employment



**76**

Women and children lived in our Edmonton housing

**33%**

Of housing residents were Indigenous

# Employers of Choice

We work with industry leaders who are committed to inclusion in the workplace and providing safe and equitable work environments.



**32**

New Employers of Choice

**71**

Total EOC partners, a 61% net increase from last year

**37**

Employers of Choice hired our graduates

**45%**

Of students who found employment within six months of graduating were hired by EOC partners

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a green protective suit and yellow gloves, holds a black welding mask. She is standing in a dark industrial setting with large pipes and machinery in the background. The text "OUR YEAR IN REVIEW" is overlaid in large white letters, with a horizontal line underneath.

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

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"The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum predicts Alberta will need 26,000 new journeypersons and 51,000 new apprentices in the top 15 Red Seal Trades by 2026 to meet industry demands. According to a Buildforce Canada Report, the province will need 20,000 skilled workers to support \$22 billion worth of resource value added projects between now and 2030."

— Alberta Enterprise Group, December 2023

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## Support to change their careers —and their lives

**Women are lining up to take our training and this was evident this past year as we saw the highest number of women graduate from our employment training programs: 284 graduates in 2023–24 compared to 188 graduates in 2022–23. Most of the graduates, 256, were from Alberta, along with 28 Saskatchewan graduates.**

Our graduates are joining the skilled trades and transportation professions that help build their provinces. Their training and experience will contribute to strong, thriving economies.

Industry needs our graduates and the unique set of skills and perspectives they bring to the trades workforce. For example, women tend to be more detail-oriented and creative, and they bring problem-solving and effective communication skills to worksites. Women also help to diversify the skilled trades and bring fresh and new approaches to the job.

There is plenty of room for women and gender diverse individuals to be employed in the trades, as men make up 95 per cent of the current workforce in skilled trades and transportation, while women make up only five per cent.

WBF is committed to working with our industry partners to develop exceptional, well-trained tradeswomen who work hard to change their lives, their families' lives and their local economies for the better.

### Challenges to meet

WBF celebrated many successes but was also met with challenges. In fact, the performance metrics around employment are showing that the economic and hiring environments are shifting and changing.

Inflation had an impact on graduates' buying power. In 2023, average starting wages were 1.2 times higher than the average living wage, compared to 1.3 the previous year.

A lower percentage of students found their first trades or transportation job within six months of graduation. In 2023, 80 per cent of students found jobs within six months compared to 87 per cent in the previous year. The lower rate is attributable to a large influx of people moving into Alberta, creating greater competition for jobs, higher rates of unemployment and an industry trend of hiring more experienced candidates over newly trained individuals.

WBF relies on a strong industry apprenticeship system to create opportunities for future journeypersons and professional drivers to gain the experience they need to keep industry staffed with qualified and skilled employees. The current trend to seek more experienced employees over recently trained candidates will continue to put pressure on a Canadian workforce that is already experiencing labour shortages.



# Supports for a Better Future

## Readiness and Coaching

This series of workshops is an essential step for women considering entry-level trades training. The workshops help women to upgrade math skills, explore trades, work on emotional and physical well-being and take control of their personal finances. Our success coaches also work with women to ensure they are ready, willing and able to begin their journey to building a new career. In 2023–24, 70 women who entered employment training programs had participated in coaching and readiness services.



## Safe and affordable housing

Having access to safe and affordable housing can be a bridge to gaining economic security for many women. A safe living space for women and their children offers the stability needed to take the first step to enroll in training, leading to a career in the skilled trades and financial and personal independence. Our Edmonton training facility includes studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom suites that are fully furnished and ready to welcome women and their children. Renters do not need to be students. When WBF runs programs outside of the Edmonton area, funding is available for our students who need housing support. In 2023–24, 76 women and children lived in WBF safe and affordable housing in Edmonton.

## Pathways to a promising future

For 26 years, our industry-recognized employment training programs have helped unemployed and underemployed women gain the skills and confidence to connect to higher-paying careers in skilled trades and now in commercial transportation. In 2023–24, we ran 24 employment training classes.

**"I learned so much during my time at Women Building Futures," Helen says. "I wouldn't have been prepared for the work I'm doing now if I didn't take the program. I'm really happy with my career as a millwright apprentice. I'm learning every day!"**

**– Helen, Journey to Trades Fort McMurray, March 2023**

## From explorer to apprentice

Helen was interested in taking a training program with WBF, but she was not sure which program would be a good fit based on her skills and interests. She needed to improve her English before being accepted into a program. Helen was connected to a WBF success coach, and together they set goals and created an action plan to determine her next steps.

She had weekly virtual meetings with her success coach for three months where they practised answering interview questions. Helen was also connected to members of her community who could help her improve her English pronunciation. Helen's hard work and determination paid off when she was accepted into the Journey to Trades program in Fort McMurray.

She graduated in 2023 without missing a single day of training and began working with Ledcor on the Suncor site. In 2024, she became a millwright apprentice with Ledcor.





# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

*Journey to Trades  
graduates in  
Calgary*

## Journey to Trades

Journey to Trades (J2T) is WBF's flagship program. J2T is a comprehensive 12-week or 17-week training program to help women succeed in entry-level positions within the construction and maintenance industries. The primary goal of this program is to enable participants to secure jobs with industry partners who will support their journey through apprenticeship and establish a rewarding career in the trades.

In 2023–24, WBF successfully expanded the program. There were:

- Eight J2T classes with 136 graduates, compared to six classes and 89 graduates in 2022–23
- Classes were held in Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie

The 17-week version includes math and science for the trades.

**"I worked in an office prior to taking the J2T program. I'm a single mom and was struggling to make ends meet. The four-month program changed my life! I was employed within one month of graduating. I recently completed my first year of schooling and am working as a second-year plumbing apprentice. I am forever grateful for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."**

**– Jodi, J2T, August 2023**



*The 104th class of the Journey to Trades program*



*The 110th class of the Journey to Trades program*

## Transportation Programming

### Professional Class 1 & Class 3 Driver Training

In 2023–24, WBF re-introduced Professional Class 1 and Class 3 Driver training in Alberta. Professional Class 1 Driver training sets graduates on the path to driving commercial trucks with trailers, while Professional Class 3 Driver prepares graduates for more specialized, local work, which can include opportunities driving dump trucks, hydrovacs and oilfield vehicles.

- One Professional Class 1 Driver class with 12 graduates
- Two Professional Class 3 Driver classes with 16 graduates
- Classes were held in Edmonton and Calgary

**"Women Building Futures is not only giving me the opportunity to become financially stable but also a life career that I can be proud of. I want to show my family and the world that it is not too late for a woman in her 40s to change her career path and get a better life for herself and family! I feel that this opportunity is allowing me to retire someday and have my future protected as well, so that I won't someday become a burden to my children in my old age."**

**– Tobi, Driver and Operator. Edmonton, September 2023**

**“WBF provides a vast network of connections and offers support in various forms. I never felt alone in my journey. As I reflect on my experience, I can confidently say WBF has been instrumental in changing my life, paving the way for a promising future.”**

**– Lorena, BHP.  
Saskatchewan,  
June 2023**

## Trade Readiness Classes

WBF offers a variety of trade readiness programs in Alberta and Saskatchewan. These programs include important support from industry partners who provide critical funding support for students and who hire graduates directly out of program. Programs in 2023–24 included Women Ready to Work, Haul Truck Operator, Heavy Equipment Technician and Women of Steel in Alberta, and BHP Trades Readiness in Saskatchewan. Successes in these programs included:

- Three Women Ready to Work classes in Alberta (34 graduates)
- One Syncrude Heavy Equipment Operator class in Alberta (20 graduates)
- One Heavy Equipment Technician class in Alberta (10 graduates)
- One Women of Steel class in Alberta (14 graduates)
- Three BHP Trades Readiness classes in Saskatchewan (28 graduates)

*The steamfitting/  
pipefitting workshop  
at WBF Headquarters  
in Edmonton.*



*The Carpentry workshop at the WBF Headquarters in Edmonton.*

## Construction Bootcamp

The Construction Boot Camp program is a condensed four-week training program to fast-track graduates into entry-level positions within identified skilled trades. The primary goal of this program is to enable women to get jobs with industry partners who will support their journey through apprenticeship to help them establish rewarding careers in the trades.

- Three Construction Bootcamp classes were held (29 graduates). Two Construction Bootcamp classes were held in Edmonton and one in Calgary

**“I’m sincerely grateful for the unwavering support, invaluable assistance, and exceptional guidance WBF has provided me throughout my journey. WBF’s mentorship, encouragement and dedication to my growth have been instrumental in my recent success. I am thrilled to share that I have received a job offer from ATCO. I firmly believe that without support from WBF, I would not have been able to secure this opportunity. Your belief in my potential and continuous motivation pushed me to strive for excellence. Your valuable insights and advice have played a pivotal role. I feel truly blessed.”**

**– Julie Ann, Construction Bootcamp –  
Carpentry. Calgary, July 2023**



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## Power Engineering Career Accelerator

The WBF Power Engineering Career Accelerator (PECA) connects women who are ready, willing and able to enroll into 4th Class Power Engineering Programs at post-secondary institutions. WBF works with post-secondary institutions throughout Alberta, including NAIT, SAIT, Keyano College, Portage College and Lakeland College. The PECA program is sponsored by industry partners such as IPL, Pembina Pipeline Corporation and Dow Chemical Company, who support graduates post-program through a work placement to ensure they achieve their required steam time.

- One PECA class was held – 10 graduates

**“By collaborating with WBF through the PECA program, we are able to create opportunities for women to gain hands-on experience at our facilities and receive the support and services they need to thrive in their careers. Their success strengthens our communities, building economic resiliency and encouraging inclusion and connection, and we’re proud to be part of that.”**

**–Jaret Sprott, Chief Operating Officer,  
Pembina Pipeline Corporation**



*WBF alumni met with Alberta Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, Tanya Fir, to discuss challenges for women in the trades.*

## A brighter future for our alumni

Upon completing their training programs, our graduates continue to benefit from a range of alumni services and a supportive network designed to advance their career journeys. These services include employment referrals, industry connections, mentorship and opportunities for upskilling. In 2023–24, our Alumni and Career Services team supported 439 alumni from both current and previous years. Also, 1,542 connections were made through new employment opportunities, résumé assistance, professional skill upgrades and attending WBF industry networking events.



*WBF alumni and industry partners attend a mixer at NAIT.*



Casara (left) with her mother, Heather



Jenna, Driver & Operator

## Heather and Casara, the mother-daughter duo

Heather and Casara both had a wealth of experience from different fields: the food industry, camp work, healthcare and construction. Both were looking for an opening that would lead to a career they felt deeply passionate about.

### Pushing past early barriers

Heather grew up with a strong pull towards the trades. "My father brought me everywhere to help him with his work," Heather recalls fondly. She wanted to follow in his footsteps and began working at a construction company over 30 years ago. She was the only woman on site and did not feel welcome.

"I ended up being let go," Heather shared. "They told me I was a distraction." She hoped that one day she would find an opportunity where she would have the support to succeed. More than three decades later, that opportunity finally came.

### Finding a career path

Heather had been to a local job fair where she learned about WBF. She came home that day to tell her daughter, Casara. Like her mother, Casara developed a love for working with her hands and an interest in the trades. They decided to apply together.

The mother-daughter duo graduated from the J2T program in February 2024. They completed the program feeling confident in their skills and future. Heather and Casara both found employment with PCL Construction.



Jenna, Driver & Operator

"I'm so proud to be able to say what I do for a living when someone asks," Casara gushes.

"I feel empowered," Heather exclaims. "Nothing can stop me but myself right now. That's what this course gives you. I'm glad I joined. I have zero regrets."

## Determination and hard work paying off

Jenna was interested in becoming a Heavy Equipment Technician (HET). She applied several times for entry-level work in the industry, but she wasn't getting called back. Jenna was determined to make a change, so when she saw that WBF was accepting applications for a Class 3 Driver & Operator program, she decided to apply.

She started working as a Driver & Operator shortly after completing the six-week program, and in April 2024 got an opportunity at Finning as a helper to the journeyperson HETs, with plans to begin an apprenticeship soon. "Having WBF on my resume helped me stand out," Jenna says. "I'm forever grateful."

She's currently working on the top of a mountain at the Quintette Coal Mine in British Columbia.

**"I've been doing engine sets and have been on all types of equipment," she says. "I've been told that morale goes up when I'm on site because I'm always smiling—even when I'm knee deep in grease!"**

**– Jenna, Driver & Operator. Edmonton, October 2023**



# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## Growing our connection with Indigenous women

At WBF, we are proud of our actions to deepen our relationship with Indigenous Peoples. In 2023–24, we took action to strengthen economic reconciliation with Indigenous communities through achieving a Phase III Committed stage under the Partnerships Accreditation in Indigenous Relations (PAIR) with the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business.

PAIR lets Indigenous communities know that an organization is a good business partner, a great place to work and is committed to prosperity in Indigenous communities through economic reconciliation.

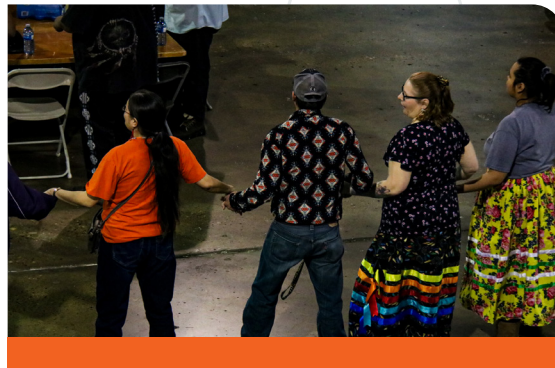
WBF is committed to understanding and supporting culturally appropriate learning opportunities for students and staff, and to providing equitable opportunities for training and employment for Indigenous women. In 2023–24, 16 per cent of the women that graduated from WBF training programs were Indigenous.

WBF continues to strengthen our commitment through our connection with students and actions addressing Indigenous issues and concerns. In 2023–24, WBF staff hosted and participated in Moosehide Campaign Day events in Alberta and Ontario on May 16, 2024. The Moosehide Campaign asks men and boys to take a stand against violence toward women and girls. In Alberta, we hosted a walk in the City of Calgary and co-hosted a walk with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society in Edmonton. Participating in events like these is important to furthering our journey on the path to reconciliation.

WBF also partnered with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society to help with their annual Round Dance in Edmonton.



L-R Meghan McCracken, Angela Allen, Nicole Ellerbeck



Bent Arrow  
Traditional Healing  
Society's annual  
round dance

**"We are committed to strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships, and our focus is on building sustainable and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous communities and WBF.**

**— President and CEO of WBF, Carol Moen**

**"Joint activities like this Round Dance are beneficial, as we can all come together to learn and build relationships with the community, which in turn helps the community trust WBF's ability to support Indigenous women."**

**— Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society**

# Employers of Choice Program and Inclusivity Training



**We know that economic security goes beyond simply getting a foot in the door; it is about having the stability and support needed to grow and thrive in a chosen career.**

True economic security means access to a living wage, advancement opportunities and a workplace that nurtures personal and professional development and well-being. When women can enter and build fulfilling, sustainable careers, they can achieve long-term stability, contribute meaningfully to their industries, and lead empowered lives.

One of the ways that WBF supports this is by working closely with employer partners who genuinely share this understanding.

The Employers of Choice (EOC) program began in late 2021 and is on a solid growth path. In 2022-23, program membership grew from seven to 45. This year, the program grew to 71 EOC partners, a net 61 per cent increase from last year. This membership program establishes our employer partners' commitment to inclusiveness in the workplace and supports members on their journey to provide safe and equitable workplaces.

**"I just want to say thank you. I feel I have a lot more to learn. Your knowledge and patience are incredible, along with your sense of humour to make difficult conversations easier to work through."**

**- Work Proud Inclusivity training partner**

## Work Proud Inclusivity Training

Work Proud Inclusivity Training was developed by WBF to provide organizations with the insight and tools to create more engaged, safe and inclusive workplaces in the skilled trades and transportation industry. Work Proud helps organizations build workplaces where all tradespeople, including our graduates, can thrive. Training sessions are offered in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and they will be offered in Ontario, too.

- In 2023-24, 131 industry participants took the training, as well as 23 WBF staff.

# OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

## Employers of Choice

Aspen Installs  
ATCO  
Baker Hughes  
Bird Construction  
Bison Transport  
Bluewater Group  
Bradken  
Breck Construction  
Brock Canada Inc  
Clark Builders  
Cairo Development Ltd.  
Canadian Pacific Rail  
Caron Transportation Systems  
CDN Controls  
Cenovus Energy  
Chemco  
Clark Builders  
CN Rail – Intermodal  
Colas Western Canada Inc.  
Cross Canada Millwright  
Cummins Inc  
Daveta Energy Services  
Deford Contracting Inc  
Elevate Energy Corp.  
(previously True North Solutions)  
Enbridge Pipelines Inc.  
Encore Trucking & Transport  
Finning Canada  
Fireball Equipment Ltd  
FLINT Corp  
Fluor Driver Inc.  
Government of Alberta -- Public Service  
Commission  
Integral Energy Services Ltd.  
Inter Pipeline Ltd. (IPL)  
Jardeg Construction Services Ltd.  
JATEC Electric Ltd.  
KAG Canada  
Kamwin Electric Ltd  
Kiewit Management Co.

Komatsu Mining Corp. (Joy Global)  
Kuby Renewable Energy Ltd.  
Lafarge Canada Inc.  
Western Canada Region  
Landform Inc.  
Ledcor Group  
Liebherr-Canada Ltd.  
Loblaw Transport  
Magnum Cementing Services Operations Ltd.  
Matrix HR  
Mondi Hinton Inc (previously Hinton Pulp – West  
Fraser)  
NCSG Crane & Heavy Haul  
Noble Construction Corp  
North American Construction Group (NACG)  
North West Redwater Partnership, Sturgeon Refinery  
Parkland Corporation  
PCL Constructors Inc.  
Precision Drilling Corporation  
Promise Robotics  
PTW Energy Services  
Rising Edge Group  
Sanjel Energy Services Inc.  
Seletech Electrical Enterprises Ltd.  
Sherritt International Corporation  
Silent-Aire Limited Partnership  
Site Resource Group Inc. (Previously Centurion)  
Spartan Controls Ltd.  
Strike Group Limited Partnership  
Surepoint Group  
Sysco  
TC Energy  
Trail Building Supplies Ltd./Westek  
Truss Systems Ltd.  
Trican Well Services Ltd.  
Velocity Truck Centre (previously First Truck Centre)  
Waiward Industrial  
Wajax Limited  
Watt & Stewart Commodities  
WorleyCord LP

# WBF EXPANSION

## WBF into Ontario and Saskatchewan



WBF President and CEO Carol Moen announcing WBF's pilot of Journey to Trades in Saskatchewan

WBF entered a two-year Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) \$2.6 million contribution agreement with the Government of Canada in August 2023.

The ESDC contribution agreement enabled WBF to initiate services to women and gender-diverse people in greater Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan, as well as in the Sarnia-Lambton County region in Ontario. Activities in both provinces included hosting readiness workshops with prospective students. We also hosted diversity, equity and inclusion educational workshops with partners. All this work is to establish a foundation for the future implementation of WBF programming.

### Saskatchewan by the numbers

- 12 events introduced women to WBF training
- 13 info sessions and readiness workshops
- 199 women in total attended information sessions and participated in readiness training workshops

The vision WBF has for Saskatchewan is ambitious. Through our partnerships, we will make systemic change by promoting diversity, inclusion and the retention of women in the skilled trades.

Together, we will forge a future where women in Saskatchewan can better access fulfilling careers and contribute to a thriving workforce.

**"Empowering women to thrive in the skilled trades is at the core of WBF's mission. As we opened doors to new opportunities, we helped to secure a pathway for women's economic security. By fostering strategic partnerships, we helped create meaningful change with companies that were committed to safe, inclusive workplaces where all people could thrive."**

**– Carol Moen, president and CEO of Women Building Futures, emphasized the significance of this growth.**

### Attracting and retaining women in the skilled trades

Expansion into Saskatchewan and Ontario focused on building partnerships with governments, industry, post-secondary institutes, community organizations and Indigenous communities and organizations to:

- Raise awareness of opportunities for women in sustainable, well-paying careers in the skilled trades
- Provide readiness programs to help women thrive in training programs and chosen careers
- Connect women apprentices with WBF graduates, so more women would stay in the trades
- Develop employer partnerships and support employers to lead positive change through workforce inclusion initiatives



# Women Building Futures brings trades program to Saskatchewan

## BHP Trades Readiness

In August 2022, WBF announced an exciting introductory construction trades program that provided hands-on skills needed for women to begin a career in the mining industry. After two years of successful collaboration with BHP, WBF graduated our fifth and final class of BHP Trades Readiness at their Jansen Mine site near Saskatoon.

The BHP Trades Readiness program provided women with safety certificates, hands-on skills in a variety of construction trades, along with best practices for working in construction.

In 2023–24, we held three trades readiness classes in Saskatoon and Lanigan. A total of 28 women graduated. Graduates were excited to start their new careers at the Jansen Mine site. One graduate from the second BHP class is now entering her second year of electrical apprenticeship. Another graduate is working as a millwright apprentice and has shared her excitement about her career progression on site.

The BHP Trades Readiness program not only supported increased diversity in the industry, but provided economic security for women in the community. An inclusive and diverse workforce promotes safety, productivity and wellbeing.

**There were five classes, 47 graduates and a 94 per cent graduation rate. There was a lot to celebrate as the BHP Trades readiness program wound down. WBF is thankful for these types of partnerships, which are catalysts for women for to gain better and secure lives.**



*The 5th and final graduating class of BHP Trades Readiness*

## Virtual Alumni Mixer

WBF hosted an alumni event in Saskatoon to introduce the community to WBF and our Work Proud Inclusivity Training program. This event highlighted WBF's role in narrowing the skilled trades gap and empowering unemployed or underemployed women. It also showcased how partnering with WBF can enhance businesses' diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

The event brought together business owners, non-profit organizations, community leaders and unions to network and explore collaborative opportunities. The Work Proud session, a three-hour workshop, focused on enhancing DEI and equipping participants with the skills needed to build inclusive workplaces.

We also conducted numerous readiness workshops throughout the province to help women explore and prepare for careers in the skilled trades. These sessions provided valuable insights into the industry and helped participants build the foundational skills needed for success.

**Continues >>**

# WBF EXPANSION

## Virtual Alumni Mixer (continued)

Our Work Proud sessions, which support employers and organizations in their DEI journey, have been instrumental in building a sense of pride and accomplishment among our graduates, encouraging them to pursue their careers with confidence.

Our success would not be possible without the strong partnerships we have established with employers, non-profits, training and educational organizations and the Government of Saskatchewan. We remain committed to our mission of empowering women through trades training and readiness programs, while working with employers in their DEI journey. Since our expansion into Saskatchewan, we have supported more than 50 WBF alumni who are now working in the skilled trades.

## Growing our presence in Ontario

This year, we focused on the Sarnia-Lambton County area by building relationships and increasing awareness of the organization. Moreover, we worked to build a strategy for expansion within Southwestern Ontario, with plans for an additional program focus on the Greater London Area.

Securing the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) grant contribution in August 2023 enabled WBF to expand operations into Ontario and set up our first team to begin laying the groundwork. The Ontario team members are based in Sarnia-Lambton County in Southwestern Ontario.

The team hosted 19 employment readiness sessions for regional explorers; made 70 connections with industry and government; and 83 connections with community organizations, post-secondary institutions and affiliated agencies through continued attendance at events, such as networking gatherings.

In 2023-24, the Ontario team focused on building local awareness of WBF and forging relationships with key groups. WBF president and CEO Carol Moen travelled to Sarnia-Lambton County to meet with local government representatives, major industry and unions. The Ontario team also participated in public events, including networking sessions with the local Chamber of Commerce, career fairs, Indigenous-led conferences and more. This time was all about building awareness and establishing where WBF could grow from this starting point in Ontario.

## Continuing WBF's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiative in Ontario

WBF was nominated for a Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business Achievement Award in Inclusivity, recognized for our organization's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

WBF also secured our first donor partnership in Ontario with Dolce Media Group, which contributed \$43,500 in-kind marketing and \$3,000 to support Student Awards in a future Ontario program.

# OUR PARTNERS

## With thanks

### Partnering for a better tomorrow

Our partnerships with industry, government, community organizations and post-secondary institutes are the cornerstones of our success in uplifting women. These trusted relationships enhance collaboration, resources and our ability to bring innovation to our training programs to advance the careers of women. We are grateful to our government partners, notably Employment and Social Development Canada; and the Government of Alberta's ministries of Advanced Education, and Transportation and Economic Corridors. In Saskatchewan, we are grateful for the support of the Saskatchewan government ministries of Immigration and Career Training; and Parks, Culture & Sport. And WBF is thankful for the welcome reception and positive response it has received from the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development; and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

WBF depends on the commitment and support of our partners and donors to deliver on our mission of economic security for women. Thanks to this support, we can continue to transform lives and break down barriers, leading to brighter futures for our graduates and their families.

#### Legacy

City of Edmonton  
Family & Community  
Support Services  
CLAC  
Government of Alberta  
Government of Canada  
Suncor

Leacross Foundation  
Pembina  
Shell Canada  
TC Energy  
TD Bank

PCL Constructors Inc.  
Precision Drilling  
RBC Foundation  
R.B. Somerville  
Saint-Gobain  
Sherritt International  
Surepoint Group  
WorleyCord

Pembina Pipeline  
Corporation  
Sanjel  
Suncor  
Watt & Stewart  
Worley

#### Awareness partners

AltaGas  
Bird Construction  
Chemical Industry  
Association of  
Canada  
ConocoPhillips  
Cross Canada Millwright  
Dolce Media Group  
Jardeg  
Kiewit  
MNP  
NCSG Crane & Heavy  
Haul  
NWR  
Parkland Corporation  
PCA

#### Program Partner

BHP  
BFI  
Bison  
Caron  
CWB Welding  
Foundation  
Finning  
Inter Pipeline  
KAG  
Imperial  
Magnum  
NACG

#### Cornerstone

SureHire Occupational  
Testing

#### Growth

Canadian Women in  
Energy  
Cenovus Energy  
Chevron  
Enbridge  
Graham Management  
Services Ltd.  
Government of  
Saskatchewan  
Inter Pipeline

#### Community partners

We offer a heartfelt thank you to the many organizations, committees and associations that work in partnership with us to strengthen our communities. Your generous support is deeply appreciated.

# OUR FINANCIALS

## Women Building Futures Society

Statement of Financial Position As at June 30, 2024

	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	8,781,235	3,546,135
Restricted cash	29,473	79,888
Guaranteed investment certificates	581,349	7,055,553
Accounts receivable	489,588	751,708
Prepaid expenses	168,611	190,583
	10,050,256	11,623,867
<b>Capital assets</b>	4,735,905	5,081,786
	14,786,161	16,705,653
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,031,510	731,947
Deferred contributions	5,153,266	7,676,028
Deferred revenue	1,084,457	606,235
	9,014,210	9,896,009
<b>Deferred capital contributions</b>	3,804,670	4,203,964
	10,697,525	12,818,880
<b>Commitments</b>		
<b>Subsequent event</b>		
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Invested in capital assets	1,307,613	1,277,116
Internally restricted	2,500,000	2,500,000
Unrestricted	281,023	109,657
	4,088,636	3,886,773
	14,786,161	16,705,653



# Women Building Futures Society

## Statement of Operations As at June 30, 2023

	2024	2023
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grants	6,440,902	3,981,630
Tuition	4,876,370	3,656,683
Sponsorship	852,034	969,793
Interest income	472,639	331,018
Rental income	325,075	282,039
Other	196,590	146,300
Donations and casino	148,949	196,869
	<b>13,312,559</b>	<b>9,564,332</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries and benefits	7,274,014	5,406,143
Program expenses	2,326,039	1,540,223
General and administrative	2,037,287	1,546,506
Marketing and advertising	1,252,732	980,912
Building expenses	105,807	190,277
Interest and bank charges	12,909	10,863
Bad debts	12,254	7,835
	<b>13,021,042</b>	<b>9,682,759</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses before other items</b>	<b>291,517</b>	<b>(118,427)</b>
<b>Other items</b>		
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	408,497	399,294
Amortization of capital assets	(498,151)	(519,082)
	<b>(89,654)</b>	<b>(119,788)</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>201,863</b>	<b>(238,215)</b>

# SUPPORT OUR MISSION

**Together, we can make a difference.**

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**Help us deliver on our mission of economic security for women**

## **Four reasons to partner with Women Building Futures**

### **Empower women**

Partnering with WBF can provide women access to meaningful employment that leads to economic independence. Your contribution provides women with training, mentorship and support services that enable them to embark on successful careers and contribute to their communities and local economies.

### **Support gender equality**

Promoting gender equality in the workforce is a strategic advantage. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse teams outperform others. Partnering with WBF is a way for your company to increase the representation of women in the trades and inspire innovation, creativity and improved decision-making.

### **Build a sustainable workforce**

Building a sustainable workforce requires addressing societal challenges and investing in talent development. Partnering with WBF allows your company to contribute to a talent pipeline that addresses skills gaps and your future workforce needs. By investing in women's success in the trades, you are creating a diverse, skilled and adaptable workforce that can thrive in an evolving economy.

### **Dedication to social responsibility**

Including partnerships with organizations like WBF in your environmental, social and governance portfolio showcases your company's commitment to advancing gender equity, empowering women and building a more inclusive society. Investors and stakeholders increasingly value businesses that prioritize social responsibility.

**To donate, find us on Canada Helps:**

**[www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/women-building-futures-society](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/women-building-futures-society)**

**"WBF gave me a foot in the door. The work is on you to do, but they help to remove barriers to enter the industry. It would have taken me a lot longer to get where I am without WBF. I used to live paycheque to paycheque, always hoping for a more stable and better future. Now I'm able to provide for my family and give them the life they deserve."**

**- Nadine, Driver & Operator graduate**









*Ana Saint-Angel  
Driver and Operator  
graduate and Women  
Building Futures  
recruitment advisor*

## Alberta

Phone: (780) 452-1200

10362-107 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 1K2

Amiskwaciywâskahikan (Edmonton) located in  
Treaty 6 Territory and Fort Edmonton Métis District

CRA Registered Charitable No. 884181223 RRO001

## Ontario Mailing Address

Women Building Futures

PO Box 30064  
Sarnia RPO  
Eastland Plaza ON N7S 0A7

Ancestral Territory of the Anishinabek of the Three  
Fires Confederacy and Treaty 29, the Huron Tract  
Purchase

## Saskatchewan Mailing Address

Women Building Futures  
PO Box 39076 Saskatoon  
Lake Wood, Saskatchewan S7V 0A2

Treaty 4 aaniin-hâu-tawāw  
& Treaty 6 aaniin-haâ hau-tawāw

"As long as the sun shines,  
grass grows and rivers flow"



**Scan for ways to help us  
deliver on our mission of  
economic security for  
women.**