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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

### **Supporting employers in meeting COVID-19 workforce challenges**

SURREY – The Surrey Board of Trade will develop a plan for local employers to navigate their capacity to respond to COVID-19 workforce needs and help workers connect to employment opportunities.

Through a \$402,105 Community and Employer Partnership (CEP) project, the Surrey Board of Trade will develop a back-to-work strategies playbook that can be adapted and used by other communities and tailored to specific industry sectors. The playbook will help employers prepare for workforce-related impacts and opportunities resulting from the pandemic and will help people who have lost their job to find re-employment, redeployment, retraining and sustainable employment opportunities.

“This is an unprecedented time for everyone, including employers,” said Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “It’s important that we provide tools and guidance to employers to connect with people who want to work, build flexible and efficient work environments, and meet the challenges that COVID-19 has created. I expect this playbook to be a model that other communities can follow to help get people back to work.”

With this project, more Surrey employers will have the capacity to manage and respond to workforce challenges and address other COVID-19 related issues. Surrey educators, service providers and post-secondary institutions and the Surrey Board of Trade, employers and industry groups will be enabled to work together in a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach on workforce priorities in a rapid-response structure to help with economic recovery.

“The Surrey Board of Trade is honoured and pleased to have received this funding from the B.C. government to deliver on a real roadmap to economic recovery for Surrey employers through this pandemic,” said Anita Huberman, CEO, Surrey Board of Trade. “Employers need help to develop capacity to be agile while responding to ever-changing workforce and economic conditions. The Surrey Board of Trade is pleased to continue its support to the business community in Surrey.”

The project started July 27, 2020, and will conclude July 23, 2021. Actions will include ongoing labour-market information to support employer and service provider decision-making and help to better connect people to government supports.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Over \$19 million was invested in CEP projects around B.C. in 2019-20.
- CEP’s goal is to increase employment and work experience opportunities in communities throughout B.C. through partnerships, shared information, technology and innovation.
- The provincial government recently announced more than \$4.4 million for health

profession-related education and training at public B.C. post-secondary institutions.

**Learn More:**

For more information on the Surrey Board of Trade's COVID-19 Workforce Support project:  
<https://businessinsurrey.com/workforce-support/>

For more information on CEP:  
<https://www.workbc.ca/employment-services/community-and-employer-partnerships.aspx>

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