



# Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy

The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy

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# A Message from Premier Scott Moe

**With record capital investment and one of the most sustainable and highly competitive business environments in the world, Saskatchewan is growing at its fastest rate in the last century. There are more people living and working in Saskatchewan than ever before, creating more opportunities for residents.**

This remarkable growth fueled by tens of billions of dollars in new investment and explosive growth in the value of Saskatchewan exports has led to the creation of tens of thousands of new jobs and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

As the provincial economy continues to thrive, it is important to have a workforce that aligns with the needs of Saskatchewan's labour market. The number one challenge employers are facing as a barrier to the continued rate of growth in our province is developing a labour force that maintains pace with the opportunities our economic success is creating.

We want to ensure that the labour force is not a constraint on growth and Saskatchewan people are able to benefit from the significant employment opportunities available today and in the future.

The jobs are here. The opportunity is now. The Government of Saskatchewan is working with employers and industry partners to address labour force shortages and develop an engaged, agile and productive workforce. To address the immediate and critical workforce shortages, the labour market strategy provides a blueprint to ensure we capitalize on the existing and emerging opportunities.

The Government of Saskatchewan is taking action with a three-point plan. First, we will ensure Saskatchewan residents benefit from the jobs our economy is creating through training, upskilling, and prioritizing engagement of

under-represented groups in our labour market. Secondly, we will also advance our nation-leading credential recognition services to ensure Saskatchewan residents who have earned credentials in other parts of Canada, or internationally, are able to maximize their participation by working in the jobs that they have been trained in. Finally, we will focus on international recruitment to attract skilled talent to Saskatchewan.

Through targeted investments in skills training, credential recognition and international talent attraction, the province is actively building a strong and talented labour force now and into the future.

This plan will ensure Saskatchewan continues to enjoy an excellent quality of life. We know this is already one of Saskatchewan's strengths. Housing costs are lower in Saskatchewan compared to most other major Canadian cities. The average commute time in our major cities is about 20 minutes, which means more time to do the things that you enjoy. There is world-class and year-round recreation and entertainment here. Through this strategy, we're working to ensure Saskatchewan continues to be the best place to live and work in the country.

**There are more people working and living in Saskatchewan than ever before and this plan will ensure that growth continues.**



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'S' followed by a few horizontal strokes.

**Scott Moe**  
Premier of Saskatchewan



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# Introduction

**Saskatchewan is growing at its fastest rate in a century. So too are the number of high-quality jobs across the province. The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy focuses on giving Saskatchewan residents the opportunity to fully participate in that growth.**

## **Saskatchewan's economy is one of the fastest growing in Canada.**

In 2022, the province led all Canadian provinces in real gross domestic product (GDP) growth, increasing by 6.0 per cent compared to 2021. The province also exported a record \$52.6 billion of goods to international markets in 2022.

This remarkable growth has led to tens of thousands of new jobs and one of the lowest sustained unemployment rates in the country. Saskatchewan ended 2023 with a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 5 per cent, well below the national average of 5.8 per cent.

Business and industry recognize that Saskatchewan has one of the most sustainable and highly competitive business environments in the world. This is backed up by record capital investment.



As the provincial economy continues to thrive, it is important to have a workforce that aligns with the needs of Saskatchewan's labour market. The number one challenge identified by employers is recruiting and retaining a labour force that can keep pace with the opportunities our economic success is creating.

A recent report commissioned by Economic Development Regina calculates the cost of 4,000 unfilled jobs in Regina at close to \$500 million annually in lost GDP.

**To address these current workforce challenges, and ensure that Saskatchewan citizens are prepared for the emerging opportunities ahead, a three-point plan has been developed that includes:**

- **Actions to support Saskatchewan citizens to fill these high quality existing and emerging jobs through access to post-secondary training, skill development and apprenticeship programs while engaging underrepresented groups in the labour force;**
- **Actions to recognize the skills already in this province, and accelerate the assessment and recognition of credentials earned outside of Saskatchewan; and,**
- **Actions focused on international recruitment to bring skilled talent to the province.**

# 1 Preparing Saskatchewan ● People for Jobs

**The Government of Saskatchewan is working to ensure Saskatchewan residents have the first opportunity to take advantage of the high-quality jobs being created in our economy.**

Saskatchewan is leading the nation in private sector investment growth. Private capital investment in Saskatchewan increased by nearly 25 per cent in 2023 and is expected to lead the nation with an increase of 14.4 per cent in 2024.

**This investment is creating thousands of jobs across the province.**

While there are more people in Saskatchewan working than ever before, we have an opportunity to maximize the participation of Indigenous people and persons with disabilities in the labour market and provide training and upskilling opportunities for in demand jobs.

Saskatchewan boasts responsive and robust labour market programs to connect employers and job seekers, as well as a suite of workforce development programs that remove barriers to employment.

The Government of Saskatchewan is making record investments – \$306.5 million in 2023-24 – in labour market programming, working closely with employers to address immediate workforce needs.





## Programs and Services for Employers

Saskatchewan deploys a pathfinding service for employers through an accessible, client-focused network that develops workforce planning solutions tailored to the needs of individual employers and addresses sector-wide barriers in labour force development using innovative tools such as:

- Labour market intelligence – a service that provides statistical analysis to industry and government partners on the current state of the labour market, labour market supply and demand forecasts to support the development of employment, education and training programs and services.
- Saskjobs.ca – Saskatchewan’s #1 job board captures more than two-thirds of all job vacancies posted by employers in Saskatchewan. More than 7,100 employers are actively using the service and post more than 75,000 jobs annually.
- Saskatchewan’s Credential Recognition Service – a service that supports regulators to streamline the assessment of international qualifications and supports individuals to become licensed to work in regulated occupations in Saskatchewan with dedicated navigation services tailored to the individual needs of clients.

## Indigenous Engagement

The Government of Saskatchewan works directly with Indigenous businesses and communities to identify opportunities and pathways that help increase Indigenous participation in the economy.

Partnership with Indigenous communities is essential to the continued growth and success of Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan has developed the First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework to build stronger relationships between First Nation and Métis communities, businesses and government.

The province is committed to ensuring Indigenous persons have every opportunity to benefit from our economy. This includes business development activities, increased participation in the resource sector and increased participation in the tourism industry.

- A dedicated Government of Saskatchewan Indigenous Economic Development team supports the growth of First Nation and Métis communities and businesses in the province by engaging with investors and by working directly with Indigenous communities to align priorities and identify potential business partnerships.
- Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation (SIIFC) provides access to capital for Indigenous communities investing in Saskatchewan’s natural resource and value-added agriculture sectors. SIIFC guarantees loans for equity investment that spurs economic growth and creates jobs.
- The province has gaming agreements with the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA) to oversee seven casino operations across the province, each which generates employment opportunities for Indigenous people and generates revenue for Indigenous communities.
- SIGA also administers the province’s first legal, regulated online gaming platform, Playnow.com, with revenue shared between First Nations and the province and reinvested back into Indigenous communities.
- The Government of Saskatchewan maintains an Indigenous and Northern Labour Market Services team that serves Saskatchewan’s northern employers and job seekers.
- The Northern Labour Market Committee is a multi-party collaboration that works to identify and assess emerging labour market and economic development issues in northern Saskatchewan to ensure Residents of Saskatchewan’s North benefit from economic development activities in their region.
- SaskPower’s Indigenous Procurement Policy prioritizes Indigenous ownership and labour participation in all requests for proposals. With more than \$260 million in contracts awarded to Indigenous suppliers, this approach creates sustainable capacity in the supply chain and employment opportunities.

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## **Saskatchewan's Growth Plan highlights the Government of Saskatchewan's goal to grow Indigenous participation in Saskatchewan's natural resource industries.**

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With the highest quality and most sustainable uranium supply anywhere in the world, Saskatchewan's uranium producers are leading the way to ensure Indigenous people participate in the industry and benefit from the development in their communities.

- Cameco is the largest employer of Indigenous people in Canada and prioritizes employment of Residents of Saskatchewan's North, the majority of whom are First Nations or Métis. In the last year, Cameco has invested more than \$64 million in wages for Residents of Saskatchewan's North and Indigenous employees who represent nearly half of the mining and milling workforce in northern Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan, Cameco is working to increase the number of women in the skilled trades at their mines and mills in Northern Saskatchewan.

Recognizing the need to build capacity, the Government of Saskatchewan is also partnering with the private sector to deliver innovative, sector-specific skills training in the mining, energy, natural resources, agriculture, and tourism sectors.

- The Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence works to support initiatives that engage more First Nations people in business, educational and employment programs aimed at the energy resource sector. The province will invest more than \$400,000 in employment and skill development programs through the centre in 2024.
- The province has partnered with Morris Interactive to deliver the Digital Transformation in Potash Mining Program. This Indigenous pre-employment program is delivered in communities across both Treaty Six and Treaty Four territory. The program has a proven track record of successfully preparing participants for the potash industry, with 24 of 26 graduates working in the mining sector or pursuing additional industry focused education following the course.

- Saskatchewan is home to the largest First Nation agriculture land base in Canada and Indigenous communities play a critical role in meeting the agriculture targets in *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*. The Government of Saskatchewan is engaging Indigenous communities and organizations to participate in agricultural programs and services including crop science, greenhouse production and irrigation.
- In the non-renewable resource sector, the Accelerated Site Closure Program (ASCP) is a tangible example of successfully increasing Indigenous participation. Under two streams within the ASCP:
  - The First Nations Stewardship Fund deployed over \$32 million in funding on Reserve lands to conduct site closure work on inactive oil and gas sites.
  - The Indigenous Business Credit Pool supported completion of \$59 million in site closure work by eligible Indigenous oil and gas service companies across the province.
  - These subprograms within ASCP helped foster relationship building between First Nations communities, oil and gas producers, and oil and gas service sector companies. In addition, the Indigenous Business Credit Pool helped build capacity and expand the service offerings of Indigenous oil and gas service companies.

Tourism is a multi-billion-dollar industry in the province, employing approximately 65,000 people. Given the rich Indigenous culture in Saskatchewan, there is a unique opportunity to collaborate with Indigenous communities, leadership and organizations to foster further growth in Indigenous tourism.

- The Government of Saskatchewan has provided \$120,000 to Wanuskewin Heritage Park to support their pursuit of a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. The UNESCO designation would support the growth of Indigenous tourism and may also create new job opportunities.
- The province provides annual funding of \$300,000 for the Ready to Work program, which provides essential skills training for up to 100 participants each year in the tourism sector. This program is a partnership with Indigenous communities, First Nations Tribal Councils, education institutions, local administrators and economic development agencies.



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For 35 years, Cameco has recognized that our long-term success in northern Saskatchewan must happen in partnership with Indigenous communities near our operations. We have strategically focused on increasing specialized training and employment opportunities for Residents of Saskatchewan's North (RSN). Our goal is to enhance the depth in the northern talent pipeline – increasing the capacity of RSNs through a combination of training, work placements and apprenticeships, so they are ready for permanent opportunities when they arise. RSNs make up more than half of the staff at our northern mining operations, the vast majority of whom are Indigenous. Our commitment to building relationships and fostering employees' growth in our industry has not only been a competitive advantage but has contributed to our company's success.

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Tim Gitzel, Cameco President and CEO

The Government and Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions are working together to increase the enrolment and educational attainment of Indigenous students. As part of these efforts, post-secondary institutions offer supportive learning environments that are critical in building a strong, representative labour force for the future.

Saskatchewan invests more than \$26.6 million annually in three world-class Indigenous-led and informed post-secondary institutions: First Nations University of Canada; Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute; and, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

These institutions provide opportunities for students to pursue programming from an Indigenous-led perspective. Additionally, the province invests more than \$23 million in other post-secondary institutions for targeted programs and initiatives that support Indigenous student success and development of in-demand skills and training to facilitate connections to jobs in Saskatchewan's labour market. Some of these initiatives include:

- Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Indigenous Student Success Strategy is based on four pillars that aim to welcome, prepare and support Indigenous learners, inspire learning, empower building of professional and support networks and facilitate belonging through connections to Indigenous culture both on campus and with Indigenous communities. This strategy addresses barriers to completion faced by Indigenous students. This successful strategy has seen a 61 per cent Indigenous cohort graduation rate, and a 92 per cent graduate employment rate.
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies' Indigenous Student Support Services focusses on:
  - Indigenous student recruitment;
  - helping students with the application process;
  - providing culturally responsive learning environments and holistic student supports; and,
  - offering career counselling, linkages to employers and job ready graduates for employers.
- Indigenous education programs such as the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program and the three Indigenous Language Teacher Education Programs offered in Dene and Cree, not only build capacity in the education sector, but ensure Indigenous students can learn from Indigenous educators. This investment of more than \$3.8 million improves the quality of education and promotes Indigenous culture



**Government's total investment in Mitacs is \$1.15 million. In 2023-24, the province contributed \$150,000 to the new Indigenous Pathways Initiative to support 15 Indigenous internships for project-based work related to industrial and social innovation.**

and languages in Saskatchewan and increases teacher recruitment and retention rates and improves Indigenous student engagement and graduation rates. Teacher education programs in the North are particularly successful, with 96 per cent of students enrolled in the Master of Education program offered through the Northlands College, Gabriel Dumont Institute and University of Regina partnership completing or graduating from their program.

- In 2021-22, the province began funding training and professional development to support Indigenous curriculum in early learning and child care environments. More than \$5.1 million has been provided to the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies this year to support First Nations Early Childhood Educators programming.

In 2023-24, the province invested \$677,000 to partner with Dumont Technical Institute to expand programming options for early childhood education which includes the development of micro-credentials to strengthen Métis cultural awareness in the early learning and child care sector and programs to achieve community-based Early Childhood Educator Level II certification.

Saskatchewan is taking action to support Indigenous student success and ensure educational opportunities are available for Indigenous students. Through partnerships with training organizations, Indigenous communities and employers, the province supports programming that connects Indigenous learners directly with the skills they need to build a successful career. For example:

- The Career Pathways Program is a \$1.2 million Indigenous internship program that provides a mechanism to bridge 22 graduates from eligible post-secondary institutions to employment with Crown Corporations.
- Investment of \$4.8 million in Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies' Career Centres connect job seekers with employment opportunities. Career centres provide career planning, assessments, coaching, and mentoring in nine communities and via mobile job connections in remote communities. In 2022-23,

approximately 70 per cent of participants achieved employment.

- Over \$10 million in Essential Skills funding supports Indigenous learners to acquire the essential skills and credentials required to secure employment or pursue more advanced skills training programs. Saskatchewan is a leader in offering these programs on-reserve.
- The province has also invested \$5.7 million through Indigenous training partners to deliver pre-employment skills, employment readiness, skill development and training, and job matching with the aim to help Indigenous people acquire the skills they need to enter and stay in the labour force.

## Pre-Employment and Work Experience

Career development is an integral part of the provincial education plan framework and provides students with the skills and knowledge required for future learning, life, and participation in society. As the skills required to enter the workforce change as the economy evolves, the province will continue to ensure K-12 education adequately prepares students to leverage foundational education for employment.



**Following Their Voices is a program to improve Indigenous student outcomes, including graduation rates, by changing student-teacher relationships, instructional practices and the learning environment to best support students. This year, 39 schools representing 10,000 Indigenous students are participating in this made-in-Saskatchewan program which is supported by an investment of \$2.3 million.**

Building on the success of current innovative programming and delivery of the K-12 system in Saskatchewan, the province will continue to explore and invest in education, providing Saskatchewan learners with flexible options to acquire the knowledge and skills they need. These tools include:

- Dual credits that allow high school students to accelerate their education and provide an alternative pathway to graduation by allowing high school students to take courses that earn high school credits and post-secondary credit concurrently. Students who are interested in a specific career path, such as Continuing Care Assistant, Early Childhood Educator or Youth Care Worker, can earn a dual credit certificate and be ready for the workforce upon high school graduation.
- The Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (DLC) provides high-quality, choice-driven K-12 education that empowers learners to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to build a strong educational foundation.

The DLC plays a vital role by offering flexible, innovative and accessible online learning that enhances workforce capabilities and contributes to a competitive, forward-thinking provincial economy. Offering more than 180 courses, including many high school courses not commonly found in provincial brick and mortar schools, the DLC is an important alternative for learners. The province is working with partners to ensure that pre-K-12 education is inclusive and reflects the cultural values and practices of Indigenous people; and to build capacity in primary and secondary school educators to enhance opportunities for education and delivery at the community level.

- Innovation Saskatchewan provides more than \$250,000 to the International Minerals Innovation Institute to administer the Diggin' Digital Teacher Resource Hub to enhance communication and technology skills in remote communities. The partnership also delivered digital bootcamps for over 225 Indigenous students in nine communities across the province last year.



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**Campus Regina Public (CRP) is a career-centred educational institution available to all Grade 11 and 12 students registered with Regina Public Schools. Students from all Regina public high schools can access the programming by attending half days at CRP. Students take courses that are occupation specific and taught by experienced teachers and industry professionals using state-of-the-art equipment. For example, students enrolled in the Auto Mechanics course will receive two credits, one in automotive and another in math. CRP maintains partnerships with local companies and post-secondary institutions to ensure students are learning industry standard skills paired with academic excellence. This combination of experiences allows students to make informed career decisions.**

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Bringing the pre-employment welding program to Ochapowace First Nation has been incredibly successful and it's shown how delivering programming on First Nations can lead to better outcomes for learners. It's made training accessible and enabled our members to pursue a rewarding career without the added barriers that come with leaving the community. The program has led to exceptional outcomes, with the vast majority of participants receiving job offers to work across the province.

Michelle Bear, Education Superintendent  
Ochapowace First Nation



The province is encouraging, supporting, and retaining the future of Saskatchewan's workforce through meaningful work experience and skills training, as well as through targeted initiatives that help raise awareness about prospective career options that are in-demand and emerging in Saskatchewan. Some of these programs include:

- Industry Education Councils build valuable bridges and partner with employers to help youth explore career opportunities within the K-12 system. The Government of Saskatchewan provides more than \$700,000 in funding for programs that include:
  - The Young Worker Readiness Certificate is an accessible, online course that prepares young workers to understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, including labour standards and workplace safety.
- The Graduate Retention Program is the only program of its kind in Canada. It provides up to \$20,000 in income tax credits to post-secondary graduates who live and work in Saskatchewan. Since its inception, more than 81,000 post-graduates have stayed in Saskatchewan and claimed more than \$739 million in benefits.
- Skills Canada Saskatchewan runs an annual skills competition to promote opportunities in skilled trades and technology. Students compete in more than 25

categories for the chance to represent the province at the Skills Canada National competition.

Pre-employment education programs better prepare learners to enter the workforce. This results in a higher number of qualified workers available to meet Saskatchewan's labour market demands. Programs support underrepresented participants in the labour market, including Indigenous persons, young people, older workers, and workers with disabilities. The labour market programs include:

- Investment of over \$24.1 million in partnership with post-secondary institutions to offer Essential Skills Programs to assist adult learners with gaining foundational literacy skills, completing Grade 12, developing basic skills in areas considered essential for employment and obtaining educational prerequisites for further training or employment opportunities. Over the past five years, more than two-thirds of adult learners completed the program and 85 per cent went on to pursue further education or got a job.
- The General Educational Development (GED) is an alternative program allowing individuals to acquire the equivalent of a high school education.
- In 2024, the GED will transition to the Canadian Adult Education Credential to better serve the needs of learners and better reflect the competencies of the Canadian system.

## Engagement of Persons with Disabilities

The Government of Saskatchewan is taking steps to reduce barriers for individuals with disabilities by creating a labour market that is accessible for everyone. This includes:

- The development of a Provincial Disability Strategy that provides a roadmap to improve education and employment prospects for people with disabilities while promoting economic and social inclusion.
- The *Accessible Saskatchewan Act*, which will prevent and remove accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities. Implementation will raise awareness of how barriers hinder full and equal participation, as well as promote accessibility for persons with disabilities. Implications for workforce participation will be considered and designated public sector bodies will be required to create accessibility plans that outline the actions an organization will take to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers for people who are in, or interact with, their organization.
- Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities programs support Saskatchewan residents with disabilities to actively participate in education, training or employment. The Government of Saskatchewan invests \$10 million in this program, managing 63 agreements with 23 community-based organizations. The Government of Saskatchewan, partners with community-based organizations such as Cosmopolitan Industries Ltd, Cosmopolitan Learning Centre Inc., KIN Enterprises Inc. and Cypress Hills Ability Centres Inc. to deliver day programs and supported employment services. Some examples include:
  - Day Programs that operate as either centre-based or community-based programs for individuals outside of the supports provided by residential service providers. These supports range from quality-of-life activities, activity of daily living, volunteerism, skill-building services and supported employment. Supported employment programs are available to support individuals to participate in meaningful work experiences in community settings.
  - The Cosmopolitan Learning Centre Inc., which the province funds to deliver supported employment opportunities for 45 individuals with intellectual disabilities.
  - The 4to40 Program, which is a successful Saskatchewan Employment Transition Initiative project. This program connects individuals with

intellectual disabilities to employers who support a flexible work week ranging from four to 40 hours. Over the past four years, 53 individuals gained employment, and program staff are currently supporting more than 100 individuals working towards employment with 20 employer partners that include Dutch Industries, Farm Credit Canada, SaskTel, YMCA and the Hotel Saskatchewan.

## Education, Training and Apprenticeship

A strong education system will provide Saskatchewan residents with the competencies and skills they need to fully participate in the workforce. By encouraging flexibility in the province's training system, the province has made post-secondary education and training more accessible to students.

To attract students from across Canada and around the world, Saskatchewan is strengthening its responsive and agile post-secondary and training systems through targeted investments and multi-year funding agreements. Investments in micro-credentials and partnerships between communities, businesses and training institutions ensure opportunities for learners across Saskatchewan.

### Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship

Skilled trades are in-demand occupations in Saskatchewan resulting in increased demand for apprenticeship training opportunities, especially in the construction sector. The Government of Saskatchewan's continued infrastructure investment along with the private-sector investment in major projects is expected to generate significant economic activity and increase demand for skilled trades.

To further support the apprenticeship and trade labour force, the province increased its investment for a total of \$21.4 million to increase training opportunities for skilled tradespersons to 4,450 training seats. Saskatchewan added 250 training seats last year and this year the government will be funding 250 more. This investment supports industry by creating a pipeline of talented labour force professionals, such as carpenters, electricians, welders, plumbers and heavy equipment operators.

Additional investments in skilled trades training include:

- The Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship program, which introduces high school students to the skilled trades and gives them a head start on pursuing this career path by having hours credited towards apprenticeship;



While Saskatchewan employers are struggling to hire good quality entry level workers, job seekers are struggling to get their boot in the door because they lack the experience and knowledge they need to secure employment and cannot afford the tuition costs associated with training. Regina Trades and Skills Centre can quickly respond to these challenges by providing tuition-free, entry-level training that connects our students to employment opportunities with these employers. The partnership that we have with the apprenticeship commission allows us to grant apprenticeship hours for the hours trained. Not only does this assist with transitioning a student to an employee, it also helps them work towards a long term career.

Brian Shankowsky, Executive Director  
Regina Trades and Skills Centre



- The \$2.9 million Apprenticeship Training Allowance, which keeps skilled trades training affordable by providing financial support to apprentices who must leave their home community to attend training; and,
- The Government of Saskatchewan’s continued investment of \$1.9 million in Trades and Skills Centres in Regina and Saskatoon to deliver in-demand programs that are responsive to employer needs.

### Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Institutions

Saskatchewan offers high-quality, affordable education that allows students to find meaningful jobs in sectors throughout the province. Saskatchewan’s post-secondary education institutions, which include two universities, one polytechnic, six regional colleges, three Indigenous institutions, federated colleges, affiliated colleges, and

private vocational schools, offer a wide range of courses and credentials from trade certifications to doctoral degrees. We have state-of-the-art research and innovation facilities and top-quality educators, which attract students from across Canada and around the world.

Over the last nine years, enrolment in post-secondary education has grown by 14 per cent in Saskatchewan. In 2022-23, there was a record number of students studying in post-secondary institutions with 54,570 students enrolled in credentialed programs. This includes 8,250 self-declared Indigenous students and an all-time high of 10,500 international students. In 2022-23, Saskatchewan experienced the largest one-year increase in international student enrolment with 1,620 additional students enrolled, an 18 per cent increase over the previous year.

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**The province has invested approximately \$13.4 billion in post-secondary education and student supports over the last 16 years to ensure Saskatchewan has the programs needed to meet the demand for skills in our economy and the supports necessary for students to access post-secondary education. In 2023-24, the province provided \$697.4 million in operating and capital grants to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions.**

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Since 2007-08, the province has invested \$780.7 million in infrastructure funding at post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan to increase capacity and modernize the training facilities.

In September 2023, the province announced \$200 million for the first phase of a new Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus in Saskatoon. The new campus will consolidate most of the institute's programs currently spread across the city, address enrollment pressures, and attract students with its state-of-the-art facilities. By attracting more students, the province is preparing graduates who have the skills needed to build sustainable careers, enabling them to make valuable contributions to Saskatchewan's economy.

The Government of Saskatchewan provides a variety of financial supports to post-secondary students and graduates and this year government will provide \$112 million in direct support to students through tax credits, grants, scholarships and loans, including:

- The Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship program, which provides up to \$3,000 to Saskatchewan Grade 12, Adult Basic Education or General Educational Development graduates that have applied and qualified for student aid and attend a Saskatchewan post-secondary institution.
- The Saskatchewan and Canada Student Grants and the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, which provide low-income students with up to \$6,000 in grants per eight-month academic year.

- Students with disabilities are eligible for up to \$22,000 through the Canada-Saskatchewan Grant for Services and Equipment, empowering success in post-secondary education studies.

As our economy grows and changes, Saskatchewan workers will be asked to learn new skills. Helping people connect to education and training opportunities is key to closing the skills gap and growing an economy that works for everyone.

The province has invested in a series of targeted programming that enables people to learn new skills and acquire the certification they need to gain employment or advance their careers.

- The Training Voucher Program helps individuals train to re-enter the labour market. In 2022-23, more than \$1 million was provided to 11 training institutions to support 296 individuals.
- Investments of more than \$22.7 million in a suite of Workforce Development Programs that target unemployed and underemployed Saskatchewan residents who face barriers to employment to assist in preparing for, finding and maintaining employment. Program participants include Employment Insurance recipients and individuals transitioning from provincial income assistance.
- More than 12,550 clients participated in these programs in 2022. The Government of Saskatchewan funds more than 80 community-based organizations to improve workforce participation across the province, such as:
  - The Trade Journey Program that helps women access training and employment in the construction industry.
  - The Road to Employment Program helps participants in the Regina core neighbourhood obtain employment.
  - The Self-Employment Program teaches the skills necessary to become entrepreneurs and successfully operate a small business in the province.
- The Government of Saskatchewan administers a network of 10 Regional Career Services Offices with career development professionals available to assist clients with services that include:
  - Job Searching and Job Matching – identifying job opportunities, resume building, interview preparation and connection to employers;
  - Career Planning – providing information on occupational outlooks, skills inventories, referrals to



Through the Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant, we were able to provide our staff with specialized training for career development practitioners, which has ensured that our clients are receiving the best service that we can possibly provide. Investing in the team's growth and learning has also improved our work culture as employees have started feeling more valued and supported at our workplace.



Shelly Christian, Executive Director  
Regina Work Preparation Centre



- employment and training programs, and developing a career action plan; and,
    - Job Training – identifying employment programs to improve skills; connections to community service providers and post-secondary institutions and determining eligibility for financial assistance.
  - Affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care enhances opportunities for parents to participate in the workforce – fulfilling the commitment to \$10 a day child care meets this need. To ensure a strong workforce of early childhood educators that enables accessibility of child care, the Government of Saskatchewan has increased the Early Childhood Educator Wage Enhancement Grant up to \$7.50 an hour. At the same time, the Government of Saskatchewan is building capacity and flexibility in the training system, to increase credential pathways, including introducing cost-free, accelerated and remote training programs, and professional development opportunities that can be taken at home.
  - The Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant is an \$8.1 million employer-driven training program designed to support employers to upskill their workforce, address skills gaps and provide targeted and relevant training for new and existing employees to build the workforce they need to grow the economy.
- To address barriers to employment the Government of Saskatchewan administers programs that include:
- The Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) programs provide earned income exemptions to allow clients to earn more money from their job and gain valuable work experience before benefits are impacted. Clients may also receive additional benefits to pay for the cost of:
    - relocation or travel for employment;
    - child care while attending employment, training or job interviews; and,
    - transportation associated with employment.

- The Education Training Incentive provides a monthly benefit of up to \$200 to SIS and SAID clients, supporting them in completing their high school education, participating in workforce and skills training programs, improving employment opportunities and starting a career. Individualized planning and supports are provided to learners to help them achieve their training and employment goals.
- The Saskatchewan Employment Incentive (SEI) program was launched in January 2024 to make life more affordable for working families with low incomes. The SEI program provides low-income working families with a financial benefit, supplementary health benefits, connections to employment through the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training and access to the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. The SEI supports families to manage the costs associated with being at work, like transportation and child care, so they are better off working than on other income support programs. Working parents earning between \$500 and \$2,200 per month may be eligible for the maximum monthly SEI benefit ranging from \$400 to \$600, depending on the number of children they have.
- Addressing rural and remote healthcare priorities by expanding the Saskatchewan Student Loan Forgiveness for Nurses program to include Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton and the Battlefords to attract nurses to designated underserved communities by relieving up to \$20,000 in provincial student loan debt.
- Providing additional funding of \$3 million to continue offering the Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive into 2024. Available to new employees in nine high-priority health occupations, this incentive of up to \$50,000 has seen great success with 226 hard-to-recruit positions successfully filled as a direct result of this program to date. The program is available in 54 rural and remote communities across Saskatchewan.
- Adding 250 new and enhanced full-time healthcare positions including registered nurses, continuing care aides and licensed practical nurses in rural and remote regions.
- Hiring over 700 new nursing graduates from Saskatchewan and out-of-province since December 2022.
- Recruiting 850 internationally educated healthcare professionals to Saskatchewan to address immediate needs in the system. As of February 14, 2024, over 400 internationally educated nurses from the Philippines have received conditional offers to work in Saskatchewan. Of these, 172 are at various stages of an accelerated licensure pathway and 62 are working as nurses at Saskatchewan Health Authority facilities.
- Supporting previously licensed nurses in Saskatchewan who are not currently practicing through the Nursing Credential Recognition Program that provides eligible individuals up to \$20,000 for assessments, tuition, income support while engaged in a clinical/practicum, and exam fees.

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## The Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan is the province's innovative approach to stabilize and grow the health care workforce.

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The plan focuses on a series of actions to train, retain, recruit, and incentivize health care workers, including:

- Expanding training seats – over the last two years, government has invested over \$45 million to add new training opportunities for a range of health care professions. Specifically, 150 new nursing training seats and approximately 550 new seats across multiple health programs from primary care paramedics to physical therapists to clinical psychologists.
- Physician Assistants are a new focus of recruitment efforts to join Saskatchewan's health care teams and will play an important role in strengthening the health system.



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# 2 Recognizing Skills in Saskatchewan

**Saskatchewan is prepared to assist people to get to work in their chosen fields as quickly as possible. Saskatchewan's strength has always been its people. In 2022, Saskatchewan had one of the most productive labour forces in Canada, producing \$80.10 of GDP per hour worked, well above the national average of \$61.10.**

As Saskatchewan's economy continues to grow, there will be more demand for skilled workers and it will be essential that individuals are able to fully maximize the utility of existing credentials and skills.

It is unacceptable to have internationally trained doctors or tradespeople from one part of Canada unable to practice their profession or trade in Saskatchewan. To continue Saskatchewan's growth, individuals need to be able to fully utilize their skills and knowledge in this province. This includes cutting red tape to more efficiently recognize credentials attained in other parts of Canada or internationally.

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As a part of this initiative, Saskatchewan will be resourcing a Saskatchewan Credential Recognition Service with the mandate to work directly with those seeking to have a credential recognized in the province.



## Credential Recognition

Today, many newcomers are held back from entering the workforce by lengthy regulatory processes. To address this issue, the government passed *The Labour Mobility and Fair Practices Act* that created the authority for Government to work with regulators to cut through red tape. Using the authority under the Act, we have enacted regulations that created lawful obligations for Saskatchewan regulatory bodies to:

- provide a formal approval or rejection for internationally obtained credentials within 50 days of an application being submitted;
- provide a formal approval or rejection for Canadian obtained credentials within 20 days of an application being submitted;
- In the circumstance of an approval not being granted, the regulator must provide a detailed explanation and remediation path such that a credential will be recognized in a timely fashion; and,

- For health care-related professions, the Government of Saskatchewan has created the International Credential Recognition Grant that will provide up to \$6,000 per application for internationally trained healthcare workers to have their credential recognized in Saskatchewan.

Further to this the province has established the Labour Mobility and Fair Registration Practices Office which will be the nucleus of the new Saskatchewan Credential Recognition Service, tasked with:

- Building the fastest and most efficient credential recognition system in Canada;
- Supporting individuals to become licensed to work in regulated occupations in Saskatchewan with dedicated navigation services tailored to the individual needs of the clients; and,
- Supporting regulators to streamline the assessment of international qualifications.



# 3 International Recruitment

**From 2007 to 2022, nearly 179,000 newcomers from 186 countries arrived in approximately 455 Saskatchewan communities across the province. These newcomers recognize the immense opportunities available in Saskatchewan and play an important role in filling in-demand occupations in communities across the province.**

**Saskatchewan has been the national leader in advocating for autonomy of our immigration program, having proposed the Saskatchewan Immigration Accord in 2022. Many provisions of the proposed accord have been implemented, including significant expansion of the program and increased provincial control of selection of economic migration.**

## Immigration to Grow the Workforce

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) enables Saskatchewan to nominate up to 8,500 skilled workers for permanent residency in Canada by 2025. This will result in more than 21,000 newcomers to Saskatchewan,

who will contribute to our diverse and growing population annually. The SINP supports workforce development by:

- Attracting international skilled workers to in-demand occupations through the International Skilled Worker category, a human capital category of the SINP that is responsive to current and emerging labour force needs;
- Supporting the permanent residency applications of temporary foreign workers with Saskatchewan Experience, including the ability to retain international students studying in Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions; and,
- Creating pathways to permanent residency for farm owners/operators who are investing in Saskatchewan.

To support the retention and integration of newcomers in Saskatchewan, the province invests more than \$14.4 million annually in settlement and newcomer supports, including pre-arrival and planning support, language training, employment assistance and referrals to more than 20 community-based organizations to deliver services for newcomer clients. Participation in these programs increased almost 140 per cent from 2021 to 2023.

The province has also taken strong action and unique efforts for Ukrainians fleeing war. Saskatchewan has been a national leader in advocating for a pathway to permanency for Ukrainians who wish to stay in Canada, with 6,000 Ukrainians having arrived in Saskatchewan since Ukraine was invaded by Russia.

The Government of Saskatchewan's investment in immigration has contributed to positive outcomes for the economy, communities, and newcomers to the province with key indicators of success including:





**In 2023, Saskatchewan employers participated in two skilled worker recruitment missions. In September 2023, a delegation participated in a recruitment mission in Warsaw, Poland, attracting more than 150 talented candidates from around the world to occupations in demand in the province. The second mission in December 2023 took place in Manila, Philippines, and resulted in over 1,000 nominations to the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program, to fill critical vacancies in occupations that include skilled trades, healthcare and manufacturing.**

- an employment rate of 78 per cent for new immigrants (ages 25 to 54); and
- an unemployment rate of 6.9 per cent for new immigrants (ages 25 to 54) compared to 7.7 per cent nationally (2022).

## Recruiting and Hiring Skilled Workers

Targeted labour recruitment initiatives in Saskatchewan, across Canada and around the world will support Saskatchewan employers to acquire the workforce they need to grow their business.

Saskatchewan is placing an emphasis on in-demand occupations in its recruitment efforts and will attract skilled workers to address immediate and critical skills shortages.

International recruitment is an important approach to attract skilled talent that is not immediately available to meet the needs of Saskatchewan employers. Saskatchewan will undertake domestic and international labour recruitment missions this year and will leverage the network of International Trade and Investment offices around the world. Employer led labour recruitment missions to Poland

(with a focus on Ukrainian refugees) and the Philippines resulted in 1,300 SINP nominations last year. In addition, the province will pursue agreements with jurisdictions around the world to streamline credential recognition, develop capacity-building agreements and improve immigration pathways.

## Retaining International Skilled Workers

To encourage retention in Saskatchewan's labour market, the province expanded the Existing Work Permit stream of the SINP to provide pathways to permanent residency.

The province will continue to advocate for more autonomy to best support Saskatchewan's newcomers. When newcomers are connected to their jobs and their communities, they're more likely to stay permanently in Saskatchewan.

International students also play an important role in addressing Saskatchewan's labour market needs. The province works with partners to coordinate the marketing of Saskatchewan as an international destination for high-quality post-secondary education.

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# Moving Forward

**As the province continues to experience record growth and investment, Saskatchewan is well-positioned to address current and future labour force needs by equipping residents with the education and training needed to meet demand.**

Unprecedented private capital investment of \$13.2 billion combined with \$4.2 billion in public sector infrastructure investments, such as the expansion of water pipelines and power generation infrastructure, or the Provincial Broadband Strategy, not only build a strong, resilient foundation, but create jobs in communities across Saskatchewan.

## Emerging Labour Market Needs

Saskatchewan is a world leader in the production of sustainable, high-quality natural resources, agriculture, mining and energy production. The growing economy, along with sector specific growth, has measurable impacts on the footprint of the provincial workforce.

Relying on practical and tangible labour market indicators, the province is working with industry to identify emerging career opportunities and forecast labour market challenges. This will inform training programs, employment incentives and industry partnerships to prepare to meet the challenge.

The natural resource sector is a priority to develop capacity by partnering with Indigenous communities and employers to empower and mobilize the workforce. To fully realize the economic potential of the mining sector, Deloitte is

predicting the need for Saskatchewan to train, recruit, and retain an additional 5,000 skilled mining-sector workers by 2030.

## Energy Security

Providing high-quality, sustainable energy production now and into the future, Saskatchewan will continue to be a world-leader in ensuring North American energy security.

- The more than 3,000 skilled workers employed in oil and gas production in the province contribute to the sustainable production of energy products – and are driving innovation in the industry like carbon capture, storage and utilization and enhanced oil recovery solutions.

With 23 of 31 critical minerals Canada has deemed necessary for future energy production, Saskatchewan will continue to be a world leader in supplying high-quality, sustainable energy products now and into the future.

- The PVC Welding Micro-Credential offered by North West College meets the unique needs of the Saskatchewan Research Council's first-of-its-kind rare earth element processing facility. This training ensures learners are well-equipped with the competencies necessary to build, operate and maintain the infrastructure necessary to maintain Saskatchewan's important role in providing continental energy security.

Saskatchewan has the largest, high-quality uranium deposits in the world.

- One in nine homes in Canada are powered by Cameco uranium and that number will continue to grow with the development of small modular reactors in Saskatchewan.

Preparing and developing a strong and capable provincial workforce for the nuclear sector is essential for success. The introduction of small modular reactors to supply clean electricity to the power grid will shift workforce skills. Developing a nuclear workforce is underway, from production to supply chain. A workforce needs assessment is underway and will be completed in 2024.

From skilled trades to specialized engineers and geoscientists, Saskatchewan's workforce will be well prepared by a dynamic and forward-thinking post-secondary system that is challenging the status quo and adapting service delivery to meet the needs of learners.

Working in partnership with post-secondary institutions, Indigenous organizations and employers, the Government



of Saskatchewan is building a training system to address these opportunities, creating meaningful employment opportunities across the province.

Future energy production will also substantially impact the supply chain, creating economic opportunity and creating jobs for Saskatchewan residents.

### Mining and Minerals

Saskatchewan is one of the most attractive jurisdictions in the world for exploration, mining, processing and manufacturing, and the footprint is continuing to grow.

Saskatchewan's training institutions are adapting programming and delivery to ensure Saskatchewan has a skilled workforce capable of meeting the needs of the evolving demands of this sector.

- The Mining Industry Pre-Employment program offered by the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies expands the available talent pool while also supporting the province's efforts towards economic reconciliation.
- The success of employers like Cameco and Orano in northern Saskatchewan, and Mosaic, Nutrien and K+S are continuing to build strong and skilled workforces, proving the province has what it takes to meet the needs of the sector and establish Saskatchewan as a global powerhouse.

The province partnered with the International Mineral Innovation Institute (IMII) to deliver training programs designed to help ensure Saskatchewan has the talent it needs to support the industry. For example:

- IMII members have access to six micro-credential programs. These micro-courses focus on upskilling the current workforce in digital communications, digital productivity and digital analysis such as data processing software and dashboarding.

### Manufacturing

Saskatchewan's manufacturing sector is vital to the province's continued growth and prosperity. Manufacturing shipments hit a record \$25.6 billion in 2022, exceeding the *Growth Plan* targets.

- There are more than 32,000 people working in the manufacturing sector. Nearly half of Saskatchewan manufacturing companies are located outside of major cities, making a substantial impact on the communities in which they operate.

Key growth sectors include AgTech, agricultural manufacturing and a myriad of suppliers to support Saskatchewan's growing mining and aerospace and defense industries – this leads to strong employment and career opportunities for a wide range of roles in our skilled workforce.

Saskatchewan companies design and produce world-class advanced manufacturing solutions with exports accounting for the majority of electronic and digital product sales. Advanced manufacturing provides high-tech solutions to boost productivity in our traditional economic sectors, as well as leading-edge technology for emerging sectors like aerospace, defense and nanostructure fabrication.

## Agriculture

As part of *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*, we aim to grow our primary production in agriculture, as well as increase agri-food exports to \$20 billion and increase value-added revenue to \$10 billion by 2030.

Agriculture drives Saskatchewan's economy, and technological advancements are rapidly transforming industry, creating new job opportunities. Saskatchewan leads the way in the development of tools and technology to streamline and automate traditional farming and ranching practices.

- According to the Conference Board of Canada, the GDP forecast for Saskatchewan's agriculture sector for 2023 is 6.2 per cent, well above the expected real GDP for the province overall in 2023, which is 1.5 per cent.

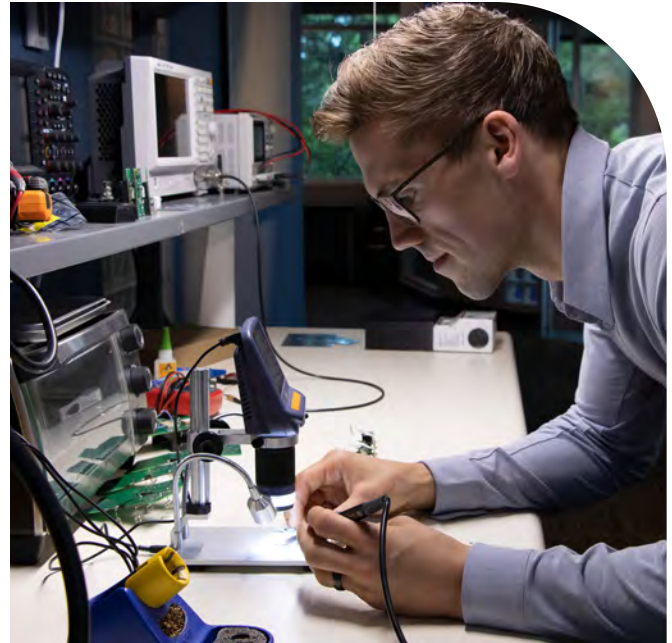
To meet the increased demand for skilled labour, the province is investing in training programs for students, enabling them to pursue in-demand and emerging jobs in the agriculture industry in the province.

Industrial mechanics and power engineers will be essential to growing the value-added industry, along with construction-related skilled trades, which are needed to build the new oilseed, grain and pulse crop processing plants in Saskatchewan.

- The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership aims to keep the sector competitive, innovative and resilient. Programs like Saskatchewan Lean Improvements in Manufacturing provide funding to agri-businesses for the adoption of practices to improve productivity and increase productive capacity, which also addresses labour market demand in the sector.
- The University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bioresources is at the forefront in preparing students for the future of the industry. As a leader in agricultural education and research, their teaching and research facilities are among the most modern and extensive for agricultural science in the world.

The Government of Saskatchewan also recognizes the demand for veterinary professionals across the province and has taken steps to support demand in this field by:

- Increasing the number of subsidized veterinary student seats at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine from 20 to 25; and,
- Expanding the veterinary professional loan forgiveness



program to encourage professionals to practice in rural Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan companies continue to lead the way for sustainable primary production while creating jobs across the province.

- Precision AI is developing the world's first AI-powered drones to create more profitable, efficient and sustainable farms. Its technology is already revolutionizing farming practices and has career opportunities in engineering, computer science, agriculture and artificial intelligence.
- There are three canola crush facilities under development in the province. Saskatchewan has invested almost \$25 million to increase apprenticeship and post-secondary pre-apprenticeship training seats to respond to emerging demands for construction trades to address both the development and maintenance of new greenfield investments in the value-added agriculture sector, as well as the broader infrastructure investments across all sectors in the province.

## The Technology Sector

Saskatchewan's thriving technology sector is booming because of private sector investment and innovative business.

- Over the past five years, Saskatchewan has experienced significant growth in investment. The Canadian Venture Capital Association reported a record \$210 million in 2021 and another \$136 million in 2022.

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**Innovation Saskatchewan is building a science and technology ecosystem that positions Saskatchewan as a competitor on the world stage. The Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund, launched in 2012, and AgTech Growth Fund, launched in 2019, support projects that develop game-changing technologies. To the end of October 2023, the funds have together invested \$19 million in projects in the province with outcomes that impact the province's economy and labour market, including:**

- **Leveraging \$68 million in private investment and another \$9 million in federal investments;**
- **Over \$120 million in follow-on investments post-project;**
- **Successful commercialization of 20 projects and 43 intellectual properties generated;**
- **Almost 300 jobs created directly because of the funded projects with hundreds more from related activities; and,**
- **Over 200 highly qualified individuals attracted or retained in Saskatchewan's workforce.**

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- Increased investments in Saskatchewan's tech sector means more high-paying skilled jobs to attract and keep talent in the province, while tech sectors in other jurisdictions are downsizing.

To attract and retain talented individuals, the province partners with educational and training institutions to ensure that training aligns with the evolving nature of the industry. Targeted investments are made in partnerships and initiatives to support technology employers to recruit, train and retain the talent they need.

- As of November 2023, the Saskatchewan Startup Incentive has leveraged over \$83 million in private investment in the province, creating 362 new jobs since the program launched in 2018.
- Co.Labs, Saskatchewan's first technology incubator located in Saskatoon, provides early-stage startups with the necessary skills to build successful tech companies. As of November 2023, Co.Labs has supported 200 startups, raising over \$34 million in investment, generating \$56 million in revenue, and creating over 799 jobs since its launch.

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to partner with industry where social and economic priorities

are strategically matched. Supporting companies like PLATO helps to grow Saskatchewan's economy as well as Indigenous participation in the labour market.

- PLATO is a majority-Indigenous-owned and operated Saskatchewan company working to increase diversity in the technology sector by providing meaningful employment opportunities for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in software testing and technology services.
- PLATO currently employs over 60 Indigenous and non-Indigenous technology specialists in Saskatchewan and is on track to more than double this number.
- Through the Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant, PLATO has accessed more than \$200,000 over the past three years to train 30 employees.

Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) has committed \$1.5 million over 10 years to the University of Regina to support undergraduate programming in data science, the Bachelor of Data Science. In 2019, the University and SGI partnered with a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Data Science to develop the program, and in 2021 established a Masters of Computer Science (Data Science) program which to date has graduated 18 students with another 43 expected to complete in the next two years.



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## Economic Success Story

The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy outlines the province's plan to ensure we can meet the needs of our growing economy and achieve the growth plan goal of 100,000 more jobs by 2030.

Working with employers and community partners, Saskatchewan can ensure that individuals are prepared for emerging job opportunities and remain connected to the labour market. Saskatchewan's growth is a success story that is powered by its people.

The success of this plan will benefit Saskatchewan students, businesses and communities as evidenced by increased graduation rates, employment rates, and improvements in the overall economy. In short, Saskatchewan will build a stronger economy and enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

