Webinar

ULI BC | Economic Mobility and Housing Resiliency: Jobs and Housing
Date: November 15, 2023

00:00:20 --> 00:00:22: Shannon, how are we doing for waiting room?
00:00:23 --> 00:00:25: Yes, feel free to to to give us.
00:00:25 --> 00:00:27: Get going here, get going.
00:00:27 --> 00:00:28: OK, Yeah.
00:00:28 --> 00:00:32: Good afternoon everybody and welcome to the third and last
00:00:32 --> 00:00:35: part of our HealthEquity Partnerships series, looking at how
00:00:35 --> 00:00:39: we can include and what Indigenous and Indigenous
00:00:39 --> 00:00:43: communities and walk
00:00:43 --> 00:00:46: in this spirit of reconciliation that we’re all trying to
00:00:46 --> 00:00:48: live and understand, I'd first like to start off with
00:00:49 --> 00:00:53: a land acknowledgement if I may.
00:00:53 --> 00:00:56: ULIBC is committed to the process of decolonization and
00:00:57 --> 00:01:00: reconciliation
00:01:00 --> 00:01:04: with First Nations and urban indigenous communities.
00:01:04 --> 00:01:08: We acknowledge ULIBC is on unseated traditional
00:01:08 --> 00:01:09: indigenous and 1st
00:01:09 --> 00:01:13: nation territories and in particular many of us are coming
00:01:13 --> 00:01:14: from the unseated traditional territories of the Muskum,
00:01:14 --> 00:01:18: Selebutic Nations.
00:01:18 --> 00:01:21: We recognize that everyone participating today on this virtual
00:01:21 --> 00:01:24: call may be on a different territory.
00:01:24 --> 00:01:28: And this acknowledgement is a reminder of the
00:01:28 --> 00:01:30: discriminatory, discriminatory,
00:01:30 --> 00:01:32: racist and colonial practices that had a lasting legacy and
00:01:32 --> 00:01:34: continue to create barriers for indigenous peoples and
00:01:34 --> 00:01:36: communities today.
00:01:36 --> 00:01:38: So in that, and I will, I will introduce our
00:01:38 --> 00:01:39: esteemed panel members today.
Today we're here to talk about the linkage between economic mobility and housing resiliency. How does jobs and jobs accessibility? What does that mean for housing resilience? Knowing that we have, if we look at the data of homelessness, at risk of homelessness or even those who are trying to find accessible and attainable housing, there is an over representation of Indigenous all over the province and most acutely here in what we call the urban environment in the Lower Mainland region.

We're looking here today and we have panel members from McCullough Group of Companies. Kayla Shram give us a little way of Kayla Macola has many services, many aspects of the affordable housing community both as a consultant, developer, indigenous advocate, community and capacity builder.

As far as housing operator and housing developer as well, Next up we've got Steve Johnson from series Community Impact where we think about the connection between employment and housing. Steve has a very unique niche in our market where we look at social enterprise and the connections of those who are trying to they're on their journey of either recovery or re entry to the job market and how we might link those two.

And then we've got Gary. Joan from Blade Runners, Ambers I'm not sure how many of our audience today might be familiar with Blade Runners. I hope you are been long standing, at least a couple decades if not more, where we link Indigenous employment in the how we build, in the creation of housing. So we're looking at trades employment, we're looking at labour employment in the construction arenas.

And then we're also flanked here today by another one of our committee members, Don Elliott from the Capital Regional District over on the island to help us with some
of this indigenous content and indigenous way of thinking as far as procurement opportunities, economic development opportunities, job creation and how we can stabilize just the work environment so that housing is, is, is continues to be attainable. So maybe I will take it. I'll hand it off to maybe our, our first panel member, Kayla, and maybe I'll start off with a question for you and you know, big question. I want to, I want to send it to all of you. How does job resiliency tied back to housing resiliency and the stability for an indigenous person? Do you have any examples of success? Yeah, that's a really great question. I think that you know at the end of the day having a a job equals the money that you need in order to pay rent. Being how sustainable housed so that you're stabilized helps you be a more effective employee, for example. So big question, maybe a small example of a group that we work with in Prince George, an urban indigenous group. They worked really hard to incorporate job opportunities into their builds and we're actually able to do a bit of an apprenticeship underneath their general contractor for one of their bills. It happened to, it went through a competitive process. There was a focus on on sort of an indigenous apprenticeship. It happened to go to one of their residents who at the end of the apprenticeship got a job and no longer needs the subsidized housing that he was living in. So really interesting sort of opportunity to kind of have a feedback loop that stable housing opportunity, you know, was able to help lever that into, you know, a bit of an apprenticeship and now full time job and stability. So in that and you know I I do want
to highlight Macola.

As an entity and you know, a representative of a consultant sector, just I know that you do way more than that, but how did Macola as a service provider in the sector create that segue, facilitate that?

How did Macola and your expertise facilitate that to comfort fruition?

Oh, yes.

So the way that we facilitate those types of opportunities, you know it it comes down to the way that we sort of manage the projects from the start.

So we work with our organizations to understand their particular priorities and build that into the overall development process.

So it's it's something that leads the way when we reach out to consultants.

So you know another the example would be a Macola project.

We really wanted to prioritize hiring firms that were partnered with the local First Nation that we had a relationship with.

And so we made an effort to reach out to some joint venture partners around a couple of the consultants that started off just at that schematic phase.

But by putting that forward, making that decision at the front end, we're able to build it in.

We also build it into the process of of choosing either a construction manager or general contractor and making it clear that either we have a set of priorities that we want them to utilize when going out to tender.

Or we have sometimes actually gone out and said work with us to develop a process that will work best for you where we can prioritize indigenous owned companies and firms in sort of that tender and procurement.

Process.

Awesome.

Thanks.

Kayla.

I think I'm going to ask the same question.
And in that asking that question, I'm also going to segue as I have with you, Mikayla, how your business facilitates the answer to the question. So I'm going to pick on Steve Johnson Mr. Series.

In your experience, in your opinion, how does your work inspire tie back job resiliency to housing stability and what does series do to facilitate that?

Yeah, great. Question and and thanks for having us as part of this panel for community impact real estate, we manage commercial real estate. So we're not a developer, but we are engaged in a process of building inclusive local economies through maintaining affordability and commercial real estate.

And we think about income generation opportunities or work opportunities in a bit of a different way. We are unique in how we structure our leases with our tenants. We include social benefit covenants on lease. So legally binding covenants that work with a business or a tenant to better understand how they can create additional community value through their tenancy in our portfolio.

It's meant to be a collaborative, cooperative process that creates opportunities for low income residents to find employment, food security or other types of stability. So one of the ways that we do that is to to come alongside tenants, A lot are in the hospitality industry and help them identify employment opportunities within their business and then connect them with service providers that can facilitate engagement with the local Indigenous community of job seekers, with prospective employers.

Again, that's meant to be a collaborative and cooperative process, but because we put those covenants on lease, we do have the hammer if needed to hold them accountable to
fulfilling those obligations.
In the end, it's not something we've ever had to do because there's such a need for employment, particularly in certain sectors of the economy, the hospitality sector being one where if you can help identify sources of Labor and facilitate the introduction, the connection and the onboarding of our prospective worker to a business, there's a tremendous amount of value there.
So we we use our lease and our lease structure as a tool to identify and create employment opportunities for residents in Vancouver's downtown peninsula and particularly Indigenous residents. Awesome.

Thanks, Steve.
I've got follow up questions for you too, but let me go to our friend Gary.
Gary, you there?
Gary's on the phone today guys, so he's a voice.
Gary, same question to you for Blade Runners and you know Blade Runners again for for my business, Blade Runners is a is a sector leader in this work.
Could you talk about a little bit what job resiliency means for housing resiliency for your community and those that you serve?
How does Blade Runners and Embers support that?
Well, how we support it is is training the kids 90 percent, 95% of our kids come in into our program.
They don't have housing, they're staying in shelters, they're couch surfing, staying door to door.
So if we have one kid per intake that has their own self-contained housing, that's a bonus for us.
So what we're going to do is we have, you know we've been around since 1994.
We have a lot of contacts in the construction industry in all levels, developers, general contractors, sub trades. We've got procurement agreements with the city and I like
to talk about those procurement agreements in time.

But what we do is that we train the kids, find the kids jobs.

It's not a work practicum or anything like that.

They go right onto the contractor's payroll.

We bring them to work the 1st morning, we'll get up at 6:00 in the morning, bring them to work,

get them orientated, introduce them to their foreman.

The company showed them where their lock up is, make sure they got their form and cell number and then we just make check in with them, make sure they're getting to work every day and all that.

Their bank accounts are set up cause a lot of the contractors are going to a direct deposit, but we're on call 24/7.

So if there's issues in the evening, issues on the weekend, kid gets paid one day, not at work the next day, contractor calls us, we come up, we get out and deal with that.

So we're on the sites quite a bit.

We got some kids in in training right now already.

Three of them are going to start on Tuesday morning at the Synap project with Coastal Estella, 100% owned Indigenous Rebar Company owned by Brandon Joseph and Squamous Nation.

And we're just on those sites supporting them, making sure they're getting to work, helping them with housing.

That's what we're mostly dealing with now.

We're very fortunate we have our own housing at 250 Powell St.

That means Jim Green, the founder of Blade Runners.

We worked on this housing for years.

We started it in 1994.

We initially wanted to put it at the old Four Corners Bank at Main and Hastings, and that fell through.

And so the old remand center was going to come to, we knew was going to be, you know, coming to housing about 10 years ago.

We talked with designer Gregory Enriquez and the city and the province, all of that.

So we have 39 units here, but you've had to
graduate the program.
You have to be working and have free paychecks before you.
You can apply your self-contained housing.
Units are beautiful.
There's a basketball court downstairs.
A lot of our kids are into sports and we just come in to support the kids.
So they're ready to stand on their own 2 feet.
And the contractor as well, kids not showing up, not calling us, not checking in with the contractor, well, we don't check them out of the program.
We'll lay them off and get a new new Blade Runner to that contractor.
So it's more being a a support system, you know, for the industry, for the contractors and until these two kids can stand on their own 2 feet and it's worked out really, really well.
I mean we've got kids that you're standing up, meaning haste and sling selling drugs or whatever and they come into Blade Runners and you know six months, you know, a year later, they're trades people and all that.
So it's been a very, very successful program and it's been a pleasure to be part of it.
Gary, I have so many questions I want to ask you, but I I know it it for those of you in the audience, we we the panel here is sectioned off our discussion into we're going to talk about employees and experience first and then we're going to talk about career pathing and then we'll get into some procurement
strategies and some ideas to keep the mind flowing for all of those of you in the sector that you might be able to do for your organizations.
Gary, can I going the other way now on the panel, can I ask you a question about stigmatization, right. You know, recognizing many of the indigenous that, you know, all of us in the sector are working with, some of them are either traumatized, intimidated.
There's based on the systems that we have, whether it be education or health.
There's always, there has been a history of disincentive to put yourself forward and look for a job, right. How do we as an industry get past some of the stigmatization and really encourage and invite indigenous persons to apply? How do we get past some of that? I think are getting out in the community and giving presentations. We have the, you know, we have contractors and that come in to speak to the kids. The ANI group comes in many LMS, many contractors come in, speak to the kids. All of that about what their expectations are when they're hiring, what they're looking for in an employee. Again, a lot of it's our job coaches and all that meet with the employers that let them know that, you know, there could be some trips and bumps along the way, but we're going to be here to work with this. But I think it's more getting out in the community meeting with the, I would say meeting with the local band, Squamish and Squamish and you know Muskie and Sway, Latus and all that. But I think having the what's worked for us is having the employees come in and talk to the kids before they get onto the sites. And then when they get to the sites they say OK, I remember her talking or this forum and talking and all of that. So you know, I I can approach them if I haven't, you know, if I'm not, if I have questions or anything like that. That's worked really, really well for us. Awesome. I'm going to ask a similar question like Gala. Oh, it totally helps, Gary. Thank you. I'm going to ask a similar question to Kayla, but in a slightly different context. So Kayla, I know you work on really complex partnerships.
You know some of them with you got indigenous group, say a non profit housing group and you've got a non indigenous entity, maybe private developer or a municipality. And they're still stigma, right, how to either partner with a group or encourage employment. And we're going to get to that because there's a difference between job creation and career pathing, right? So how do, how do you as a facilitator, project manager, development facilitator, bridge that we all came up with an education that was different from what drippa tells us and what the reconciliation path that we're on today, How does, how does Mccola do it when we have these two worlds that we're kind of living in? That's a really good question, and I don't think that there is like 1 easy answer to that. But I think one of the biggest things that we try to do in the work that we do is be thoughtful and purposeful about who we partner with and really_the time that it's take that it requires or that it takes to build a relationship. Someone doesn't have the patience to sort of maybe work with us on a process that's a little bit slower. BC Housing is a great partner. We love partnering with them. Sometimes those processes are a little slow and it can be frustrating, especially maybe our first time partnering with a market developer who's, you know, kind of stepping into that affordable realm. You know, it's really important that there's the patience there around those processes. And then often times when we represent either urban indigenous groups or even First Nations who are developing affordable housing on reserve, there's an extra layer then of relationship building and you know criteria outreach to tenants or members. And so it's really about making sure that we're able to we then on our side try to be very transparent and put that out there at the front end. This is not going to be a quick win.
I will say I have noticed a lot of contractors and builders go let's go on reserve it. They don't have municipal process quick win false. There are other pieces to consider that take time and it is not necessarily that quick win. And so sort of a respect for that process and understanding that it's not your typical municipal process but there are still approvals and and steps and and structures and layers of of review. It just might not look the the same. So it might not be a two year rezoning process with the City of Vancouver, but it is you know something, something else that might, you know, achieve in council review, a land use designation and a lot of nations do have development permit permit approvals and planners on staff like it doesn't just not exist. So that's starting to go down another path but to come back. I think that that sort of that relationship, building that patience and making sure that it's a true partnership, both parties acknowledge that there's sort of an opportunity to gain from that is really important in sort of facilitating moving forward as a as a team. Thanks for that, Kayla. I think, I think I'm going to move to Steve and I'm going to ask a similar question related. But knowing that Steve, your business is diverse. I mean you do you do work with Indigenous groups, but you also work with the social enterprise sector overall. And in this call to action either from DRIP or UN DRIP or TRC, however you want to look at, but this call to reconciliation, you know we live, we're trying to write a history that goes back hundreds of year, couple, 100 years to bring back time and the respect for culture. How does working with Indigenous for job creation, Indigenous groups
to create jobs?

How does this fit into your corporate reconciliation strategy for you, Steve?

You know that's a really good question and and to be quite honest, I think we're still figuring you know it.

It's been a bit of a process for us at community impact real estate to better understand what reconciliation looks like in the context of our work.

And we think as property management having space available, what does economic reconciliation look like and how do we kind of embody those values in our day-to-day work.

And I think we're coming to a realization, one that it's important in our governance structure as a not-for-profit to have indigenous representation on our board and embedded in our governance structure.

Some from a holistic oversight perspective, our strategic plans, our work plans, our operations are being not just receiving oversight from from our Indigenous community and partners.

And actually informing the creation and execution of those strategies.

So it presses starting with governance and ensuring that we have a diversified board that prioritizes indigenous knowledge and representation.

And when it comes to the day-to-day activities, I think we're taking a a greater look at what we do with our vacant properties as they become vacant and understanding better how to make them available to indigenous organizations or small business owners, startups first, so that we're approaching that community with an opportunity first.

It doesn't mean that we would change our vetting practices or how we evaluate prospective tenants, but that we're thinking more intentionally about how to market those spaces and who to market them to from a first right of refusal.
I was in a meeting a month ago with an indigenous elder and kind of raised a philosophical question about how do you work in real estate on stolen land. You're in the practice of land policy and zoning and land usage and you know it's unseeded territory. How do you do that? And I took that message away and I've been thinking about it quite a bit and trying to better understand how to incorporate that thoughtfulness into the work. And I think for us it would start by saying we have space, it's based on unseeded land. So who do we make it available to first? Who do we seek out from the outset to occupy that space. So again for community impact real estate, it's really being intentional about having Indigenous representation in our governance and informing our governance and then from an execution standpoint recognizing the assets we have, who's land they're on and how we, how we market them and who we market them to most. That's interesting. You should talk about leadership and how that, I'll call the trickle down effect happens when you're creating the space for the Indigenous lens to be a decision making table and how it Peters out into your business, right. And this, this is a great segue for me to ask Gary the next question about creating safe spaces for Indigenous persons within an employed employment environment. Right. Whether it be in leadership or in staff level kind of positions recognizing indigenous persons come from All Stars and walks of life and experiences. Many we know have are trauma informed, are still in recovery for for a multitude of things, it could be many barriers.
How do we as employers recognizing that?

I think there's many that are following the same suit as Steve, bringing in decision making with an indigenous land.

Maybe there's an elder member of the board, there's some governance piece that has an indigenous land.

How can we be doing better, creating a safe environment for indigenous persons that are in our employee?

I think I've always thought that what was black and is I would have an indigenous job coach with the community, the community agencies.

Although I've often said, I thought, I always thought that, you know, that's what's lacking English.

A lot of these companies is there's no engaging this you know HR person or job coach.

Some of our, a lot of our people need support when they first start right.

All of that and a lot of the issues are work's not the problem like you were saying.

A lot of them are traumatized or dealing with issues.

There's a lot of the issues are outside the workplace where that job coach much like Blade Runners can come in and work.

And I always thought that's been lacking and I'd like to see more of that within you know companies and and or and organizations as you know how many community liaison work, work work rate within the company with the employer and then with the employees, the indigenous employees and dealing with trauma or dealing with issues.

You know, a lot of time when there's a death or something, our community's affected.

One way or another it's affected.

And although a lot of times our Blade owners have to go back to Prince Rupert or William's Lake or Prince George for you know, they're going to be gone for a week or 10 days and a lot of the contractors sometimes don't understand that, right.
We've got to, we've got to talk to them about it and this is how our community is and that and they've gotten a lot better let's be honest, they've gotten so much better from when I started in 96. But I always thought that you know, having an indigenous liaison or job coach within the company organization could you know that has the skills, has the knowledge, experience working in the community and all of that. And plus like I said, know the agencies in the community. Because if there is an issue or something like that, you usually know the agency that can help and deal with that issue or whether whether it's in this or native health or native housing, whoever and all of that. And I, you know, that's well aware of the community and I think that would be a big help. That's interesting. You should talk about that. We talk about meeting people where they're at and you know if we're, if we're borrowing language from Jedi or EDIB language about inclusivity and meeting people where they're at. And Kayla, so kindly put a suggestion in in the chat that you know we come from, in the business culture we come from. If it if's not written down, it's not, it's not, it's not there, it's not real. But what we understand is many times when we're interacting with indigenous groups, storytelling or oral tradition is very much how that business is conducted with indigenous groups. So you know, sometimes job application or job initiation is orally and that's got to be OK. Maybe you meet them where they're at and maybe I could talk if I could partly add to my next question, Gary about and we're getting into career pathing now. It was interesting, we had another discussion with Ian Campbell TV and Campbell a little while ago and we were
asking about what is the unemployment rate if you walk
down to Nation Today and what is the unemployment rate.
I think for us non indigenous, we're really surprised to
hear that the jobless rate is actually quite low.
Unemployment's actually quite low.
But that's not the issue.
Getting a job is not the issue.
Getting a career is the issue, right.
And so when you think about the pathways to, yeah,
OK, entry level, everybody has to start from somewhere.
But is there opportunities for growth for that person that
could really flourish into something that, you know, we all
want to, you know, have a, a starter abode and
then we move on to something bigger as, you know,
we accumulate family or we have a significant other.
And you know, that kind of goes along with what
many people want in life, you know, job growth, family
growth, How do we do better?
In fostering this idea of an individual who, say, enters
it, say as a laborer, as a trade.
And in this idea of we hear the sector screaming
that we don't have enough trades, we don't have enough
engineers, we don't have enough coordinators, how do we help
those individuals move along a career path as opposed to
just giving them a job?
Well I think I well, well it always.
I always go back to when I I when they
come in for an interview and you know if you
want to be, you know work in tech or be
in the hospitality industry, this isn't, this isn't the program
for you.
These jobs are construction and construction only and we
want
to see you with the career, right.
We want to see you with the two about a
long five years down the road.
But we're fortunate here at you know with Access Blade
Runners and our kids is we can bring in Access
Trace to foster those careers.
They can take care of the apprenticeships and what's the
employer likes because it doesn't cost the employer anything.

All we need from the employer is the hours.

So when a lot of our kids become entry level workers as a glacier or plumber and all that, after three months, we'll do an evaluation with the contractor.

We'll look at their punctuality.

How do they work on supervisors?

Are they there every day?

Are they?

How's their communication skills?

They're a good fit for construction.

And if that goes well, we bring in access trace to push the apprenticeship.

So they take care of everything to school in our blade runner's hours, all of that.

We've had, you know, a kid that started to do it as a laborer at the Trump Tower.

And by the time the Trump Tower was done, he was a third year Carpenter apprentice, right so and a couple of how many?

But people have gone on to get their red Seal and all that.

So I think having an organization like Access and Access trades to help at least in the trades help us get our kids apprentice old.

It's just not a job.

You're getting a queer and that's our whole goal here is to see you with the tool belt on five years down the road.

That's the whole goal of Blade Runners.

That's interesting.

I think what I heard there was there's a mix between, there's the skill set and the application of competency and that competency development, whether it's teamwork, whether it's communications,

whether it's assertiveness and project management, those are transferable outside of the entry level skill set application, right.

And that's the career path that we look to foster.

And if I'm talking to the audience here, we've got a mixture of providers here.
You've got Blade Runners that looks at the construction side, I would say predominantly, although I hear there’s there’s pieces for consultancy as well. You've got commercial leasing, social enterprise with Steve and you've got development consultant sector, right or development management sector.

So Caleb, I could turn to you similar question thinking about those competencies and training, right. And I, I know you've got a Co-op program, This is why I'm picking on you. How do you Foster and I guess nurture this idea specifically for Indigenous employees, right? Creating a safe space, honoring where they're at, wanting to encourage them to find a career, not just a job?

What kind of training strategies does Macola employ to facilitate that?

Yeah. So I mean, I think there's a few things that I can speak to. And some are like directly employed with us and others are directives from our board. So we have a fully indigenous Board of directors that values sort of build, giving, giving back and building into our process which is for service consultancy. You know having that come back into indigenous community and that happens in a variety of ways, everything to back to school picnics and you know fully resourced backpacks and supply kits for kids in all of our residential complexes and units across the province to a set of scholarships. So we have a trades bursary that we offer every year. We have a scholarship for post secondary that we offer every year and we have now connected scholarship opportunity with the internship program that MD’s Development Services offers every year. So basically it is covering one year of graduate level or sort of like you know past that post secondary level education and then it's directly tied to our internship
which would be then coming into the office and gaining some of that direct skill and training and that is an indigenous only focused program for the direction of our board. So we have several interns currently on staff with us now.

So taking advantage of that opportunity of you know going to school, building up sort of that knowledge base but then getting some actual experience you know in the office at construction sites from a a management perspective less of a trades perspective.

And then the thing that's been really great for us is you know it might, it might sound like it is you know about empowering that that individual but it's really benefited the organization. It's a win win.

We we have several excellent staff that that are with us now full time and we're doing some work now within the organization.

We are just, I think we just put the final touches on our Macola development services EDIV vision statement which our entire staff worked on.

We're now working on taking a very measured specific approach to continuing to do the work that we've done, which is we've always done pieces of it, but we're trying to be a bit more structured and and intentional with how we approach those things.

So little things like adding an indigenous lens to all of our HR policies which are quite colonial and legal and that kind of stuff.

But what sort of the rationale as to why there are hours of service of, of work that you're supposed to be in the office for, right. It's about being available to our clients.

So just trying to add some of that rationale and understanding, but one of the other other pieces that we're going to to do in all of that is work on sort of we have, we have positions here, we have some structure, but we're actually working to do some career pathing.
In terms of what does that path look like if you're sort of maybe starting as a junior position and how do you get to be that project manager, development manager, senior person, what does, what is the time, what is the skill set?

We have all the competencies, we have all of the job requirements, but but sort of trying to lay that out as a path so that it's really clear to someone what is it that we need to do to kind of get to that next level.

And they can see that sort of they can set that target and they can see that. And I think that that's helpful for for anybody. But I think our interns are a great example of sort of starting off, you know, fresh out of school and working your way up.

And if I may, if I could share, I think you and I has been a beneficiary of the bedrock that you've laid down for some of this intern work. Recognizing just like with any other Co-op or any young person that's coming into organization, I think leadership, there's an obligation to foster their curiosity and keep them engaged.

And so you give them network opportunities. And so you alive, this particular committee that put together this series, we actually employed one of your interns, right? And so that in turn it actually is exposed to our network now and looking at various where she could insert not necessarily you know Macola, but the greater sector overall, right.

So now you see this longevity or this long term ability to to to flex and to work excellent. So Steve, over to you.

Question for you.

How do, how do you do it job versus career path and what kind of training strategies do you have for for your staff?

Yeah.

So we're not a big team and we don't do a lot of frontline hiring.

So it's a little bit different for me to answer
this question, I think through the context of community impact
real estate.
But I think I'd like to pivot just a little bit and think about some form of work that I've done in municipal policy development in both Toronto and Vancouver, specifically on community benefit agreement policy that ties into development.
Always been passionate about the opportunity for the development cycle to create a range of job opportunities for job seekers and facilitating those types of connections. So through that policy development and work with with groups like ULI or the Urban Development Institute or other construction and trades associations is helping those partners see beyond the physical construction of a building to understand the breadth of opportunity that the development sector offers. And not just putting folks into construction trades because that's what we've always done. And not that that's a bad thing, because it's a great, viable career path. But. Thinking about all the other areas in a development that create employment opportunities and almost breaking it down into a pre construction construction and post construction occupancy way of looking at development and saying where can we create employment opportunities and pre construction. So is it an internship with your architect to better understand building design? Is it integrating opportunities and planning and land use and then moving into construction? The trades are obviously the most immediate, but think about accounting, HR, all of the site support services, whether it's site security, catering, there's a laundry list of job opportunities there.
And then in post construction occupancy, if you're an owner or operator, what does property management look like?

What about comprehensive janitorial services.

So again, I think we've started to do a really great job with groups like Blade Runners really focused on the trades portion of the development space.

But I think there's ways to think differently about the development sector and the array of job opportunities that are really represented.

And then engaging really fulsomely with community partners like Access, like Blade Runners to identify those other types of career pathways that that open up longer term sustainable good jobs for folks that are not always hammer in hand, but maybe a computer and a pen.

You're funny, Steve.

You totally set me up for the segue into procurement strategies.

But you know if we wanted I think you and I here if we wanted the audience to understand is just like any when you think about the young persons or people entering the job market, we want to look at opportunities across the life cycle as as Steven said the life cycle of a quote UN quote project pre construction design development, construction execution and then the living of the building right, project management administration etcetera.

But in that we have direct employment of Indigenous persons, we have access to programs that act as a segue like Gary's program, right, to those individuals.

But let's talk about you know some, I think some of our audience members and sorry Tim, I'm going to pick on you.

We got PCI here, we've got Gordon Easton, Easton here. We've got some big, big develop big development mines here where we're looking to procure a vendor service, right.

Let's talk about you know professional services or big construction contracts at that level.

Let's talk about what kind of procurement strategies when
you do that.

And I as a public sector, I know I have to, I have to all my all my contracts are publicly let, they're publicly tendered, right BC bid.

What kind of strategies, policies, scorecards if you will, do you guys put up to encourage vendors to include indigenous minded lenses when they're offering services for those of us who are looking for to employ them, maybe I'll go to Steve first what, what kind of procurement strategies if you're procuring or if you're looking to submit a tender right responding to an RFP, what would you be looking for?

Yeah, that's a great question. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, our financial policies and procedures prioritize and privilege social enterprise spend.

So right from the outset, if we're looking for services or support our, our policy framework directs us to the social enterprise sector.

And within that there are a number of Indigenous owned and managed businesses that can kind of meet our needs.

So it's actually baked into our policies and procedures from the outset.

And then in addition, we work with some trade or some sector organizations like by Social Canada for example, which is a procurement partner that certifies social enterprises and has a really great list of indigenous owned businesses that would qualify with their bias Social Canada certification.

So we'll use kind of that third party betting as well when we look at potential partners in our procurement practices.

So it's it's kind of prioritizing it within our own spend, but then also.

Working with other types of certification bodies or or umbrella organizations to help us better tap into the the wealth of social enterprise and indigenous own business that is out there.

Maybe I'll flip it over to Gary, similar question and and I know this just because in most of BC
Housing’s procurement we actually say you know employment with blade runners is highly encouraged, right.

And in some cases depending on the project we will we'll we'll set it out more explicitly with a score.

What from your side has been really successful in the sector targeting indigenous employment as part of a procurement process in a tender for example, what what are some examples.

Wow, that's a good, that's a great question.

I think where it's been successful, I can give you a couple of examples is one was with One Pacific, Concord Pacific where they were building 1 Pacific and so there was procurement greens to hire, you know 10% blade runners or whatever because that's usually the work we go for is 10%.

But a lot of those procurement agreements with the general contractor and that's where a little bit of the hiccup is.

The general contractor doesn't have many jobs at all.

They have a foreman, they have a project manager, they have a general labour.

They might be able to hire a couple labours or a hoist operator when the site gets moving along.

What Concorde procedure gave in the Centreville is the first time that project started coming out of the ground, in the beginning we were with the Iron workers and all of that and porn slabs and stuff like that.

And when that when that project started coming out of the ground as the floors and as the tradespeople were coming on, sub trades were coming on, I would e-mail Concorde, Pacific, Centreville once a month.

They knew what sub trades were on site.

And so, you know, if there was a sub trade that wasn't hiring, trust me, I got a phone call because it came down from the top to get a hold of Blade Runners.

So I believed, you know, they were going to hold back some of their budget and that and I had a call from contractors I didn't even know existed when I met with them.
They got on board, hired our kids. To this day.

One of them is Star Line Windows. What's your program about all of that?

The first thing I was asked, are they going to steal from the sites?

To this day.

Right.

I said no, they're not.

We're going to Beyoncé.

We're going to, you know, if there's any problem with issues with our kids, we'll come out and deal with it.

She became the first crew boss in the history of the company, all of that.

To this day they're still hiring.

So that worked.

Well it was like I said sending the 1st of every month to center rail construction.

They will look at what sub trades hadn't been hiring.

They got on them they contacted me they hired another one was with that was Don on on on Park Vancouver where they brought in the community liaison to work

with the community and were both indigenous and non indigenous to to buy into the sub trades hiring from the community and that and that that went you know that went pretty good as well too but not as well as it went with Concord Pacific.

So I thought with these procurement agreements we got to get the sub trades to buy in more and hire and being part of these procurement agreements because I don't know legally they have to hire, they can just say we're, you know we're not hired.

You know we haven't got any room enough.

You know we have no jobs available and stuff like
that and put a little bit more pressure on the sub trades to higher and that's where it worked for Centerville Construction at 1:00 Pacific. Awesome. And and I'm not quite sure if this is a Gary question or if this is a Kayla question. Let's talk about connection to Indigenous Devcos for example. And or for when we look at First Nation groups, we think about their economic development office, I think it's what it's called. And in that economic development office, when we think about the different divisions in construction site works, excavation, which now you know Heritage Conservation Act is law, we have to go through archaeology now, right? And there's a process for that. Is there, if you were advising your audience, is there a way that they can approach the active office to encourage direct employment as well as economic positive movement for the nation itself knowing that that JV out of that economic development office reports directly to the nation. Like a developer, how might someone just call, how, how, how can they make that part of the procurement process? Maybe, maybe. Gary, I'll give you a break, I'll, I'll, I'll send it over to Kayla first. Yeah, yeah, she'd be good with that. That's a good question. Yes. I think some type of of contact like yes, out of the blue is a little bit tough. I think we have found you know mixed success sending you know cold emails. We have often visited sort of banned offices or sort of head offices, introduced ourselves, explained who we are, what we're doing, try to not go with an ask but sort of lay the groundwork for a bit of a relationship piece.
So you know, hey, our offices are here or hey, we're just on the brink of starting to plan a development sort of like on traditional territories that may or may not be seated or under treaty. And you know we, we just want to understand where you guys are AT and you know we've gotten a mix of, hey, we're focusing on building units on reserve in our on our territories for our people. We'd love to know what you're up to but we just don't have the capacity to be involved all the way to well let let's talk partnership. We, you know, we want you to hire our companies, our nation owned businesses. We want units for our members in the community and so that whole range you know leads to a variety of different ways of of responding but we always look to try and you know balance out those interests and find a good way to to partner moving forward. So if I may I do have an example of a nation, I think this is this is specific to sort of a nation development. But I think that there are pieces that you that we could pull from this for other projects. But for them it was really important to encourage the hiring of nation owned businesses and they actually broke down sort of the the tender process for a larger project into pieces and laid out a specific a process 'cause I think it does, it does take time. If we want to be, you want to take the time to be thoughtful, you want to think through the process and you want to make sure that there are good options to still move forward. So just saying that you prioritize hiring indigenous or nation owned businesses is one thing. What does it actually look like on the ground? So you know it's having a good list of of businesses, having those contacts, making it clear that they get first notification of the opportunity, it's open for a certain number of days and then your general contractor moves on to whatever is next on the list. They did that work and broke out sort of all
of the jobs under the general conditions which are smaller in nature, maybe our are not necessarily tendered but as as construction goes on they're sort of brought in. So that might be somebody to do some cleaning up on the site or it could be those types of things. So those you know were were to be put out to member owned businesses or interested members first. We did have a another group take that approach and actually there was a number of youth that were the target of the housing that they were building. They actually came in and did all of the the site cleanup and light work. So an interesting opportunity to sort of be involved in the project. They helped on the planning stage, they helped during construction all the way through and then sort of broke it up into another stage of member owned businesses would sort of be next in their tender. So for the those larger divisions of your construction contract. And then after that it was the connections a partnership. So there might be some joint venture companies, there might be some partnerships where there is, you know, firms that prioritize hiring nation members or perhaps indigenous. And so that was next. And then once we've kind of gone through that list, whatever was sort of leftover where they had not identified or appropriately gotten a bid, then that became part of the more competitive tender process. So sort of breaking that down, laying out that option, being clear around you know notice and you know who gets contacted in what order allowed us. This was ABC housing project that they did this for, allowed us to present something to a government that has rigorous procurement requirements that was acceptable. So sort of it sort of fit both the nation's needs and government needs. So an interesting opportunity to sort of break that into pieces and actually competitively provide and it to provide that option to members first, but still sort of keep that
project competitively tendered.

So when you know in listening to Gary, some, some of the, I'll say challenges or things that we need to overcome to really set Indigenous individuals up for success is you know one, creating a safe environment, workplace environment.

for them, right, Recognizing, trying to meet them where they're at.

But the flip side as well, when we think about, I mean how many hands touch a single building, thousands of hands when you think about it right, how?

And so but in that interface with whether it's consultants, engineers, contractors, inspectors, city folk, whoever their stigma, right. So how do we take care of those folks.

So when you when going back to the question of interfacing with say either a dev Co that's related to a nation whether it's in the territory or not right or or their economic development office.

Are you guys finding that when an individual needs that say that other support that piece that Gary was saying is blacking in the sector right.

That whether it's emotional encouragement career pathing that just that that that you know that hand that guides a little bit.

Does connecting directly with nations help do that with their dev office.

Does it provide individuals who may need that little extra, You know, you see them on the job site, they're showing up later and later every day.

How do we get them, encourage them to, you know, stay on their path?

Is that, is that, is that a, is that a helpful connection to have like are we seeing that or is it is it still still early days?

Yeah, That's a good question.

Yeah, I'm not sure that I have a great answer to that.

But I think that you know when you hear Gary talk about what Blade Runners does, I think that's the
I think you know some nations, you know active companies will be able to provide that extra component. But again it depends on what projects you're talking about where if you're not necessarily you know sort of single sourcing from a a nation or maybe you're hiring somebody that is urban indigenous and they're they don't necessarily have their nation isn't local right. They're they're maybe from the East Coast or or the Prairies, you know that's where I think it's a little bit, it might not be quite as simple as being in touch with that ecdev organization, but yeah. I'm just cognizant of time. We've got about 6 minutes left in the session and I think we've got one question. I encourage the all anybody in the audience have any questions you can put in the chat or put up your hand, we'll we'll make sure we get to you. Don, can I open up to you? Yes, thank you so much panelists and thank you Cheryl. Though I am on the committee, I promise this is not a planted question. It actually came from I was feverishly sort of scribbling down notes. So I really appreciate the the approach and and the response from all the panelists. My question is a little bit and just for context. So I'm 1/2 indigenous person working in regional government. And I think what we've learned and what I've learned is the corporation that I work for. Now what's been really interesting about this is we went into this work starting in sort of 2015, sixteen, really afraid of failure. It was always about, you know, it's got to be successful if we're going to do something, it's got to work.
over the years is that, you know, a lot of 
the efforts, a lot of the, the energies, the input 
isn't necessarily going to create the immediate results that 
we're 
all hoping for, right?

We create positions and and then there's no applicants. 
We create, you know, all of these different tools, but 
we don't necessarily see wholesale success in those areas. 
So my question is to the panelists to help us 
all understand that it's OK to try and then learn 
and then try again.

I'm wondering if you can sort of help us understand 
what some of the maybe failures have looked like, what 
they felt like, but I think more importantly, how you 
overcame those challenges, how you were able to continue 
building 
that relationship or continue delivering that service or or 
whatever 
it may be depending on the context. 
Really good question Don. 
And I think it's a helpful for the group that 
yeah, just committing to sort of incorporating you know some 
of these practices and some of this work is not 
necessarily going to immediately lead to you know a a 
success story. 
You know I think it's helpful to be reminded that 
all of there is a lot of focus on reconciliation 
right now and there are a lot of requests going 
to nations and there may not always be the capacity 
to to partner on your project to provide you know 
those resources. 
You know I'm trying to think of you know some 
of the some of the you know failures and and 
and I do say that you know hopefully with the 
best of intentions in that we we've had a lot 
of you know misfires or moments that didn't work out 
the way that we wanted them to. 
You know, I think one of the one of the 
more challenging requests that we sometimes get is Macola 
Housing 
Society and urban Indigenous provider. 
I want my nation's members to be housed in your 
development and that's not how the agreements with BC
00:55:33 --> 00:55:33: work.
So how do we work together to try and answer
that request And sometimes that has come back to
us as we didn't ask that question early enough to
to build that into the process from the get go.

00:55:51 --> 00:55:54: So that's a learning for us next time because we
do serve urban indigenous but there's still that local nation
component.

00:56:01 --> 00:56:01: So how do you kind of weigh those two pieces
together?

00:56:06 --> 00:56:06: It's definitely tricky but you know finding ways.

00:56:08 --> 00:56:08: So one of the things that we just worked with
a nation on is just doing information sessions on reserve,
on territory with members who are interested in housing.

00:56:19 --> 00:56:22: Sometimes the income requirements will mean that those
units are
not attainable for members and that's disappointing.

00:56:25 --> 00:56:25: But we're there to help work get on the BC
Housing registry to understand what that process looks like,
what

00:56:32 --> 00:56:34: the, what the rental structures are, you know.

00:56:38 --> 00:56:39: provide that opportunity.

00:56:42: So that might be a recent example.

00:56:46: We have dealt with that many forms across the province
in and we're continuing to try and and and
improve it as we work on different.

00:56:51 --> 00:56:53: Projects, thanks, Kayla.

00:56:56 --> 00:56:57: I'm, I'm gonna address the last question and then I'll
close for the for the afternoon.

00:57:01 --> 00:57:03: about trays and construction, job creation, but what are we
doing to promote office and consulting projects?

00:57:06 --> 00:57:07: Sorry jobs.

00:57:10 --> 00:57:13: our HR recruitment, we actually have, we have an
Indigenous
relations department.

00:57:16 --> 00:57:16: That is what the expectation is.
Many, if not all of those persons that are employed there are all Indigenous providing that lens to the full contingent of the Commission.

Well, we also have roles. So we have the typical development management role with 50 of them in in our branch.

And there are ones that are specifically Indigenous development manager, right, With the expectation again for those programs that we offer to the community, having an Indigenous development manager at the helm, the hub really means something to really push those projects along either for cultural values or the way they make decisions. And then we take those learnings and we try to spread that across Commission wide.

I would also suggest part of our procurement strategies in asking when we go up for vendors and I'll say our lead consultants for example, when we try to find an architect or an urban designer that might have a series of sub consultants and have their own employment practices, we provide scores. If they have persons who identify as indigenous within that contingent of engineers, even engineers and training coordinators, whoever's on their team, they get additional points for that. So hopefully that helps.

So there's one more question and oh, it's already 1:00. I'm just going to plug our resource hub that I know Shannon is diligently pulling together that resource hub for our audience as we close out the series on HealthEquity and how we build, how we build better in the era of reconciliation, well, we're hoping to keep adding. It'll be a living resource where you can find things like Indigenous business. You might be able to find some clauses and some procurement policies that are being used within the sector. I know some Crowns are already up there. BC High does procurement policies pertains to Indigenous employment is
already up there.
We're hoping to get some case studies as well.
Both of our Indigenous projects or Indigenous employment projects will
be up there.
So please come back and visit our website.
I think, I think Shannon put the link into the
the chat, Please come and visit.
I encourage you all to to take a look.
And I wanted to thank all of those who are
joining us today and all those who joined any of
the three series.
This was, this is a bit of a labor of
love.
I think we're all passionate here on the committee to
try to do better and think differently than maybe how
we originally came up.
I won't say my age, but 20 odd years a
year ago when we first entered the sector, we're in
a different era.
And you know, when you think about the private sector,
the public sector, the nonprofit sector, we now have an
indigenous sector as well that we can work with and
we should be working with.
So in closing, I will thank the panelist, Kayla, Steve
Gary for your time and your energy in presenting the
series to our to our audience.
Shannon in the background for being administrator
extraordinaire and Don
being a committee support for this session.
I will send everybody off in a good way and
thank you very much for attending and have a great
rest of the week.
Thank you for having me.