



BCAMTA

British Columbia Aboriginal
Mine Training Association



BC AMTA:
Providing Education
and Training Solutions
to Meet Industry and
Community Needs

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OPPORTUNITY • TRAINING • RESULTS

The impending labour shortage facing Canada's exploration and mining industry means companies across the country are looking for ways to attract and retain skilled workers. While the industry is currently the largest private sector employer of Aboriginal men and women, investment in education and training in the growing Aboriginal population will help to ensure a supply of skilled labour for the future and facilitate an increase in Aboriginal contributions to the Canadian economy.



At BC AMTA, we build relationships and partnerships. Because of this, our mining company partners provide us with preliminary information about the types of jobs they will be hiring for and we then take the lead in attracting, recruiting, and preparing Aboriginal candidates to meet employers' needs. In fact, BC AMTA is an essential force in the hiring processes for our partner mines.

With a focus on preparation and skills upgrading, BC AMTA has begun building capacity with and for communities in the Central Interior region of British Columbia and we are positioned to be a leader in creating employable, job-ready Aboriginal candidates for the mining sector and beyond. In just six months, we have 95 employed candidates; proof that BC AMTA programs and services are getting tangible results.

Recruitment, Assessments and Candidate Preparation

Many of our First Nation candidates have never been involved in rigorous testing and interview processes and can sometimes be screened out of potential job opportunities because of a mere lack of readiness. BC AMTA has taken a proactive approach to finding solutions to address this issue; our Program Coaches have assisted industry and education partners to create a pool of pre-screened candidates that are quickly becoming "the best and most qualified people for the job."

The minimum requirement of a Grade 12 education for many occupations in the exploration and mining sector is a clear employment barrier. In fact, many BC AMTA clients do not have a Dogwood Diploma or Grade 12 equivalency and often have low-levels of workplace essential skills. Because several of our industry partners utilize formal tests and assessment tools, and judge applicants on scores for numeracy, literacy and document use, often Aboriginal candidates are ruled out before they even fill out a job application.

With a clear understanding of the prerequisites, BC AMTA prepares candidates by administering the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) upfront and provides tutoring, essential skills upgrading and interview preparation, to increase familiarity with hiring processes and create an understanding of expectations. In short, with our support and guidance, BC AMTA candidates become ready for the intake process at the mines.

BC AMTA Programs and Services

Tutoring and Essential Skills Upgrading

For clients who achieve lower-than-acceptable scores on the TOWES, BC AMTA has created a combination of options for tutoring and Essential Skills Upgrading (ESU) which have helped clients increase their measurable skill levels. We have developed a network of qualified teachers who provide tutoring and we are working with Thompson Rivers University (TRU) to ensure our candidates are supported through ESU with Aboriginal instructors in a comfortable, inclusive environment.

Pathways to Dogwood Program

To meet BC AMTA's objectives and an important requirement of many mining companies, our own Adult Learning specialist has led the development of the Pathways to Dogwood Program, which allows our clients to work toward their Dogwood Certificate (Grade 12 equivalency) either before or during their employment. Working with TRU, we have created a culturally sensitive and relevant program that meets the needs of candidates, regardless of current educational or skill level.

Due to highly complex issues around program development and the high cost of administering a standardized method for this type of community service, our research indicates Pathways to Dogwood will answer a market need that has been woefully under-served.

Trades and Apprenticeships

BC AMTA clients who achieve a high score on the TOWES, or who already hold a Dogwood Diploma, are eligible to participate in a variety of training programs, including trades/apprenticeship programs with TRU and other post-secondary providers. With a goal of becoming Red Seal certified, these candidates will be able to work across Canada within their trade and will be especially welcomed in the mining sector, which is facing a record number of retirements over the next decade. BC AMTA's mining partners have confirmed a need to hire certified trades people in this timeframe.

Aboriginal Women in Trades

In support of an Industry Training Authority (ITA) and TRU effort to attract women into trades, BC AMTA collaborated on the recruitment of a cohort for an Aboriginal Women in Trades pilot. The 14-week course introduced students to several trades found across the mining industry, including electrical, piping, parts and instrumentation. Many of the women who complete this introductory program have the option of entering a subsequent Foundations Program specific to one of the trades. Several high performers are also invited to complete a one-week Heavy Equipment Operator component.

"As BC's mining sector continues to expand, we need to find the workforce to support this growth. Government, industry, educators and First Nations communities each have something to gain in working together to develop the pool of talent in BC's Aboriginal population. BC AMTA exists to make connections between these groups: building capacity within BC's Aboriginal communities and finding solutions to ensure BC's mining industry remains strong."

– Pierre Gratton, President and CEO, Mining Association of British Columbia

Introduction to Mining Skills Certificate

BC AMTA, in partnership with TRU and industry partners, has developed an Introduction to Mining Skills Certificate Program designed to familiarize students with the realities of the mining industry. Many components of this certificate program are based on safety, including First Aid, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and working in confined spaces.

Entry Level Heavy Equipment Operator Program and ITA Certified Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program

Two other useful programs designed with and for our partners include the entry level Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) program and the longer-term certificate program in Heavy Equipment Operation (HEOTP). These programs are unique based on the student to teacher ratios (3:1) and the concentration on practical operating experience. Many BC AMTA candidates opt to upgrade their driver training as well with advanced licencing in Airbrakes, Class 1 and Class 3. BC AMTA's partnership in HEO and HEOTP includes TRU and New Gold.

Underground Miner Certificate

BC AMTA has partnered with New Afton Mine to offer an Underground Mine Training program that includes orientation, safety, skills development and job-specific training and equipment use for the unique underground working environment.

Aboriginal Environmental Monitoring

BC AMTA candidates are also participating in an Aboriginal Environmental Monitoring Certificate Program, in cooperation with the Vancouver Island University (VIU), for related occupations within the exploration, environmental monitoring and reclamation phases of mining.



BCAMTA is a flexible and responsive organization that has created solutions to meet industry and community needs. New partners can expect us to evaluate quickly workforce requirements, assess the potential of the surrounding community to fulfill those requirements, and implement training-to-employment programs that will meet the needs of both. BC AMTA relies on financial support from its partners to deliver programming. To learn more about BC AMTA and our programs and services, and about how your organization can become a partner, or support our education and training initiatives, please contact:

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Canada



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