

Take Me Home!



Issue 18: April 2020

WORK-WISE

Keeping you current on North Okanagan's employment scene

Job Tips and Leads During COVID19

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During these uncertain times, WorkBC is here to help. Our physical office is closed, but we've got all the tools to support you virtually. That means we're just a phone call or email away: 250-545-2215 or info-vernon@workbc.ca. Or visit us at <http://workbccentre-vernon.ca/> and click on Virtual Job Search Services!



Here are a few tips and leads to help you find work in this unfamiliar landscape:

- Essential services (like grocery stores and some manufacturing) are hiring, and many have increased hourly wages. Superstore, Shoppers Drug Mart, Nature's Fare, Save-On, Maax Bath, and others, for example, are all offering an additional \$2 an hour, at least during the pandemic.
- Face-to-face job fairs are off the table, but Digital Job Fairs are still underway. Check out Facebook for the Black Press Digital Career and Education Fair happening over two weeks from April 4 to 18.
- WorkBC Vernon is working hard to bring you a Virtual Job Hub this month. Interior Health will be there, plus we are waiting on confirmation from one more employer. Call us to check on date and details.

We look forward to continuing to support you as we all navigate this new terrain together.



Virtual WorkBC Services are OPEN!

A WorkBC Good News Story

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Two years ago, Brittany Couchman was struggling. She was a single mom of two young kids, and things were tough.

"I was on income assistance, I didn't get child support, and I was working nights which was kind of killing me," she says. "I was depressed."

At first, asking for help was hard, but Brittany took the first step and reached out to WorkBC Vernon.

At WorkBC, Brittany was connected with Case Manager Hallie Webster, who assessed her as "Precariously Employed", making her eligible for support even though she had some employment. Hallie's first step was to register Brittany in a week-long course called Creating Career Possibilities (CCP).

"CCP made me see that I actually am good at lots of things," Brittany recalls. "It made me see that even the skills I had from being a mom were skills I could use on a job, like organization and multi-tasking."

After the workshop, Hallie and Brittany talked about next steps. Despite her fears, Brittany enrolled in the Women in Trades program at Okanagan College in Vernon.

"I was scared of going to school," she says. "Tests made me nervous."

Story Continues...

Good News Continued...

But again, Brittany took the next step. This time WorkBC helped through the Single Parent Employment Initiative (SPEI). The Women In Trades program was paid for, including books and tools, and WorkBC covered extra costs like daycare and gas.

"It was amazing," Brittany reflects. "I got my kids into Maven Lane daycare the Saturday before I started school. Everything was falling into place like it was meant to be."

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Once in the program, Brittany tried her hand at welding, plumbing, carpentry, electrical, and more. But things weren't always smooth sailing.



Just before Christmas, Brittany wrote a math test. It was hard. It had fractions and decimals, she wasn't allowed to use a calculator, and she was afraid of tests to begin with. She didn't pass. "I was bawling," she says. "It was Christmas and I was broke and I had failed my test."

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Brittany left to pick her kids up from daycare. There, she found a surprise: staff said her family had been sponsored for Christmas. "I was bawling all over again," she says.

So Brittany kept going. She wrote that test again, and passed with 85 percent. "I was so proud," she says today.

After the three-month course, Women in Trades sponsored Brittany to do her Carpentry Foundation Program. After graduating, Brittany took her next big step and accepted her first job in carpentry. A WorkBC Wage Subsidy paid 50% of her wages for the first six months, and for the first year her daycare was covered through the WorkBC Single Parent Employment Initiative.

"I like the work," Brittany says today. "Some of it is scary. I have to get over some of the fears, like heights and the table saw, but I am proud of myself. I'm proud because I realized I can actually make a change in my life. I didn't even know how to read a tape measure before I started."

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Today, Brittany is home every night with her kids, and she's happy she can provide a regular routine and income for the three of them.

"There is help out there," she says to other single parents who are struggling. "Use that help. It might feel like a lot of steps and a lot of work, but it's so worth it in the end."

Featured WorkBC Programs

In Brittany's story, we shared various WorkBC programs for job seekers. Call us to find out if you're eligible for:

- The Single Parent Employment Initiative
- A Wage Subsidy
- Skills Training
- Services for folks who are Precariously Employed
- And more! We're here to help.



Reach WorkBC Employment Services:



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