



We Need More Equitable Access to Employment!

Municipal elections create opportunities to talk about local issues that matter. Municipal plans, policies, and programs not neutral. They affect different people in different ways.

VOTE on OCTOBER 20
<https://www.kitimat.ca/en/municipal-hall/elections.aspx>

This factsheet¹ is about barriers to employment, and shows how we could approach this issue in a more inclusive way in the District of Kitimat. It builds on research with 130 diverse women² in Kitimat and Haisla Nation, discussed in a recent report about women's wellbeing in our area.³ Another recently released report⁴ identified several workforce and training challenges and issues. It can also help to inform efforts to promote broader participation in the labour market.

Between 2017 and 2025, Northwest employers in BC will need to fill anywhere from 1,000 jobs annually, to 10,000 jobs in the next three years if major projects go ahead.⁴ While many of these jobs are vocational and trades related, there will also be many opportunities available in education, healthcare, business administration, and other fields.⁴ In order for as many people in our community to benefit from these jobs as possible, we need to make sure that our District's employment-related decisions focus on ensuring equitable job access.

Why Do We Need a More Inclusive Approach to Employment?

The District of Kitimat needs to consider the multiple and overlapping barriers to employment, such as lack of childcare and transportation, when making employment-related decisions. Childcare and transportation must be addressed for Kitimat to be prepared for large scale industrial projects.⁵ Employment is a priority for the District, but industry jobs can be difficult to access. For example, many jobs in Kitimat require shiftwork, so lack of overnight childcare and transportation create barriers to work. An inclusive approach to work means thinking about how everyone who is able to work can access a well-paying job.

"I haven't been able to go back to work because there wasn't childcare."

"There wasn't a job that would pay enough to cover that childcare anyways."

"Like, she could not find a babysitter, daycare, for when there are nightshifts."

Lack of childcare and transportation were highlighted as barriers to employment in our research. The cost of childcare is perhaps the biggest barrier.⁶ For low-income families, the high cost of childcare can cancel out job earnings. Transportation, including a valid

¹ This is one of two factsheets produced through a collaboration between the Kitimat and Haisla Community Vitality Advisory Group and Research Team. They were written and revised by J. Ramdatt, K. Guite, C. Rumley, M. Martins, and L. Slanina (Tamitik Status of Women), L. McMurtry and L. Levac (University of Guelph), and the Ending Violence Association of BC. We are grateful to the women and girls in the Haisla Nation and in Kitimat who shared their experiences, expertise, and observations with us, and to those who are working to make the District of Kitimat safer and more equitable. We acknowledge that we work on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional lands of the Haisla, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and in the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek Peoples.

² We have used the word 'women' to be brief, but humbly acknowledge that there is much diversity among women based on age, race, ability, Indigenous identity, and experience with poverty, among other factors.

³ Kitimat and Haisla Community Vitality Advisory Group and Research Team. (2018). *The Wellbeing Experiences of Women in the Haisla Nation and the District of Kitimat*. http://tamitik.ca/cvi_report_2018

⁴ Kitimat Valley Institute. (2017). *Northwest Regional Human Resource Strategy*. www.kves.ca/initiatives

⁵ Halseth, G. & Morris, M. (2013). *Dialogues on Readiness Preparing for Industrial Development in Northern BC Communities: Kitimat*. (pp. 5, 20).

⁶ Discussion with Marianne Hemmy, Executive Director Kitimat Community Development Centre.





“There definitely needs to be better transportation service for everybody in the area.”

driver’s license, access to a vehicle, or public transit, are basic requirements for getting to work. However, people in our region face lots of transportation barriers. “The lack of a driver’s license and access to a vehicle stop people from taking training and many jobs”.⁷ Affordable transportation to work camps is limited, and car ownership is costly, leading to women’s unemployment, underemployment, or use of dangerous alternatives such as hitchhiking.

How Are We Approaching Employment in the District of Kitimat?

The provincial government has announced funding for childcare across BC, and committed to universal childcare, but we don’t yet know how this will impact families in Kitimat. Training for childcare workers is not part of this funding, and there is a shortage of qualified childcare workers and ECEs in Kitimat. A tuition-free, 11-month ECE training course currently being offered in Kitimat will partly address this challenge.⁸ Training programs that offer part-time or evening studies would increase women’s access and participation further.⁹ So would better wages, which would also help to remove the perception that child care is low-skill work that is not valued in society. The Haisla Nation has taken steps to address these barriers by supporting its members to access Early Childhood Education (ECEs) training and driver’s licences.

There is public transit in Kitimat, but our research found that these services do not meet the demands of the public. Many women are dissatisfied with local bus routes and schedules, and the cost and inconvenience of public transportation limit workers’ time with family and lead to choosing unsafe forms of transportation, such as hitchhiking.¹⁰

To Have More Inclusive Employment in the District of Kitimat, the District Could:

- develop an employment equity strategy to guide its own hiring practices, and require everyone who bids on District contracts to do the same
- address childcare and transportation issues. While childcare is not in and of itself the District’s responsibility, the District of Kitimat can ask itself what it can do to support equitable access to childcare (e.g., through zoning, community investment in childcare, and support for training ECEs).
- explore options such as 24-hour childcare, and advocate to, and work with, the provincial and federal governments to address these important issues
- encourage better transportation to and from work camps

To Encourage More Inclusive Employment in the District of Kitimat, You Can Ask the Candidates in the Upcoming Election:

- How do you think we could improve access to employment for diverse women in the District of Kitimat and Kitimaat Village?
- What could you do as Mayor/Councillor to address transportation and childcare issues, and improve access to employment for diverse women in the District of Kitimat?

⁷ Kitimat Valley Institute. (2017). *Northwest Regional Human Resource Strategy*. (pp. 5, 10) www.kves.ca/initiatives

⁸ Funded by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and LNG Canada.

⁹ Discussion with Marianne Hemmy, Executive Director, Kitimat Community Development Centre.

¹⁰ Kitimat and Haisla Community Vitality Advisory Group and Research Team. (2018). *The Wellbeing Experiences of Women in the Haisla Nation and the District of Kitimat*. (p. 21). http://tamtik.ca/cvi_report_2018/