

# **Chilliwack Community Labour Market Research Proposal:**

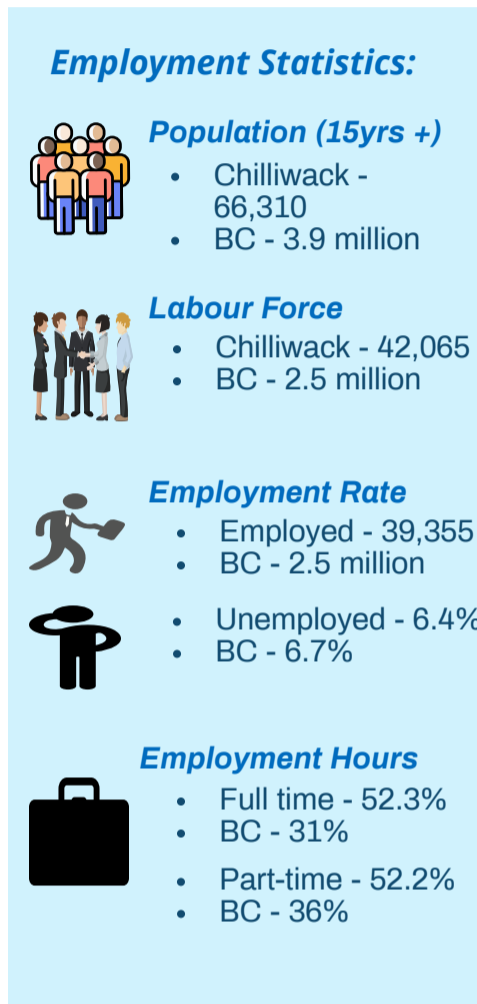


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# Introduction

Chilliwack is located about 100kms from the city of Vancouver and in the area of the Pacific Coast of Canada. It is along the TransCanada Highway and bordered by the USA to the south, the City of Abbotsford to the west, Fraser River to the north and the community of Popkum to the east. Recognized for its strong economy, Chilliwack has had a 7.5% population growth over the last census period of 2016, which part of the growth is in major developments bringing to the local economy an average of \$121 million each year (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Table 1. - The employment statistics for the City of Chilliwack 2017



For the purpose of this proposal, we will look at the City of Chilliwack, which includes the district of Kent, Harrison Hot Springs, several Indian Reserves and the Fraser Valley East including Cultus Lake and Chilliwack Lake (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

The intent of this Community Labour Market Proposal for Chilliwack is to assist in identifying and presenting current labour market trends and demographics such as major industries contributing to the employment status for this region and the future economic outlooks. Determining the number of people residing within the community and identifying specific demographic groups and what services and resources are required to meet the specific needs of each populace category. As well as providing recommendations to assist in developing strategies intended to close service gaps and strengthen not only the region economically, but also to persuade new residents, businesses and shareholders about the profitable advantages of relocating and investing within this region.

Note. Data for the employment statistics of the City of Chilliwack from Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017), and Statistics Canada (2016).

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## Impacts of Local Industries

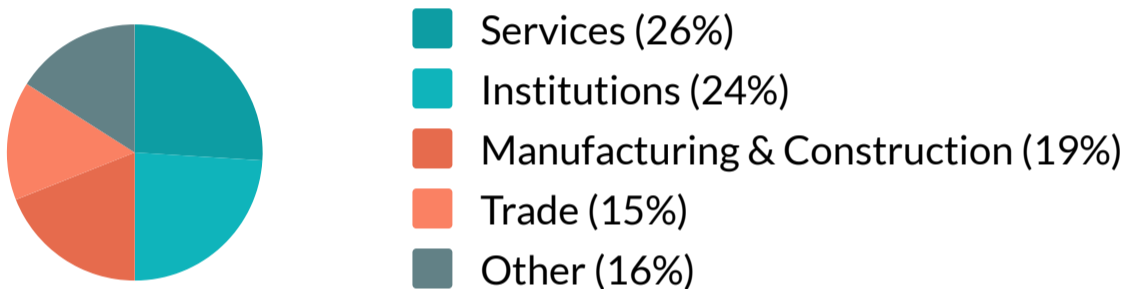
Chilliwack has a strong economy and averages about 12% in annual growth, which generates about \$121 million each year in investments. Over the last three decades, Chilliwack has seen an accumulated investment reach a total of \$3.6 billion, which 40% of the total saw investment in commercial, industrial, institutional and agricultural development (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Ranked as one of the tops in commercial development within the Fraser Valley due to easier application requirements, lower land and facility costs and with no municipal tax on fuel, Chilliwack has the lowest commercial and residential tax burden compared to all Lower Mainland communities (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*)

Located along the TransCanada Highway and near 4 USA border crossings, as well as access to national and international railway systems, Chilliwack is able to provide local market access to about 2.8 million people including American customers, suppliers and is in close proximity to the Pacific Rim ports (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*)

Table 2. - The key sectors influencing the Chilliwack labour market 2017

### Key Sectors Influencing Local Labour Market



Note. Data for key sectors influencing the Chilliwack labour market from Chilliwack Economic Partners, (2017).

As Chilliwack's population continues to grow in urban development, so too does the business development sector continue to prosper as during the last 10 years the City of Chilliwack has seen twice the amount of business license applications, which relates to about 500 licenses each year (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*)

### Education:

With Chilliwack's diversity in age population, there are numerous educational institutions located throughout the region to meet the needs of everyone; from 20 public elementary schools, 6 public middle/secondary high schools and 2 accredited post-secondary institutions as the University of the Fraser Valley (+4 other locations across the valley) and Sprott Shaw College (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Chilliwack is also home to the Canada Education Park, which houses other training facilities as the RCMP Pacific Region Training Centre (PRTC), Canadian Police College, Justice Institute of BC (JIBC), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and the Agriculture Centre of Excellence (ACE) (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*)

### Healthcare:

Fraser Health Authority operates and provides the health services within Chilliwack that includes Chilliwack General Hospital and other community-based residential, home health, mental health and public health services (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Table 3. - The health care amenities in the City of Chilliwack 2017



Note. Data for the health care amenities in the City of Chilliwack from Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017), and Fraser Health (2017).

## Recreation & Sports:

Chilliwack is home to multiple sports and recreational amenities.

Tables 4 (a) and (b). - *The indoor and outdoor recreational amenities in the City of Chilliwack 2017.*

### Indoor:

- 4 swimming facilities across the city.
- 2 ice sports facilities equipped with 2 rinks each.
- 4 public indoor sports facilities and several private.
- 3 city-operated fitness centres and several private.

### Outdoor:

- 1 city-operated outdoor facility with 87 community parks.
- 11 public sports complexes.
- 8 golf courses, country clubs, putting greens, and/or mini-golf facilities.
- Outdoor recreation such as fishing, kayaking, white-water rafting, hiking, biking, horseback riding, parasailing, hang gliding and more.

Note. Data for indoor and outdoor recreational amenities Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017).

## Tourism:

Table 5. - *The tourism attractions in the City of Chilliwack 2017.*

- Home to several provincial and private campgrounds located by or near Chilliwack Lake and Cultus Lake attracts visitors from all over Metro Vancouver and Lower Mainland.
- Chilliwack holds a world-renowned reputation for fantastic fishing at the local Chilliwack, Vedder and Fraser rivers.
- 2 waterslide parks: Cultus Lake Waterpark and Bridal Falls Waterpark.
- It is surrounded by 33kms of trails and offers activities such as hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Note. Data for the tourism attractions Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017).

## Labour Force Demographics

### Population:

Chilliwack's population is at 90,000 residents and has a greater population growth rate at 7.5% over a five-year period compared to its neighbouring communities of Abbotsford, Mission and Hope, and is expected to surpass 100,000 by the year 2021 (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Table 6. - *The population by age in the City of Chilliwack 2017.*

In the City of Chilliwack, the median age is 41.3 yrs old.



- Almost 80% of the population is under the age of 59



- 26.5% of the population is between the ages of 0 to 19 years old



- 16% of the population is aged 65 and over and is comparable to the rest of BC

Note. Data for the population by age from Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017) and Statistic Canada Census (2016).

## Households:

Approximately 80% of households are located in the urban and suburban areas of Chilliwack with the average income set at approximately \$82,311 annually (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

There are approximately 10 subsidized developments for seniors and low-income multiplexes in Chilliwack, with several privately owned facilities for seniors (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

For specialized housing, there are several group homes located throughout Chilliwack for physically, developmentally and mentally challenged people. Chilliwack Society for Community Living is the current contact for further information (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

## Language & Ethnicity:

As Chilliwack has seen a continuous growth trend of immigrants moving out of BC's major cities, there is potential that the current population of immigrants has significantly changed to a higher population percentage since the gathering of this information (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

- Of Chilliwack residents, 95% speak English at home.
- Most of the people living in Chilliwack originate from the British Isles and Western Europe.
- The immigrant population is estimated at 10,985, whereas the non-immigrant population is estimated at 70,840.
- The migration growth is estimated at 7.5%

## Specialized Populations:

Tables 7 (a) and (b). - *The Indigenous statistics and population in the City of Chilliwack n.d., and Disability statistics in Canada 2018.*

### **Indigenous:**



- The First Nation Communities are Sto:lo First Nation and Ts'elxweyqw Nation.
- There are 14 reservations within the city limits of Chilliwack.
- The total indigenous population is 9.2%.
- The population of indigenous persons aged 15 to 24 years old is 18%.
- The population of indigenous persons aged 25 to 64 years old is 51.4%.

### **Persons with Disabilities:**



- 1 in 5 Canadians aged 15 years and older has a disability.
- The occurrence of disability increased with age, those aged 15 to 24 years at 13% and people aged 75 years and older at 47%.
- Mental health-related disabilities were the highest type of disability for people aged 15 to 24 years old.
- People with a disability aged 25 to 64 years old were less likely to be employed at 59%.
- People aged 25 to 64 years old and diagnosed with a mild disability were 76% more likely to be employed compared to 31% of those diagnosed with a severe disability.

Note. Data for Indigenous statistics and population City of Chilliwack (n.d.), and Data for disability statistics Statistics Canada (2018).

# Community Supports

Table 8. - The community resources to support youth, seniors, disabilities, immigrants and indigenous in the City of Chilliwack 2017 - 2020.

## Community Resources to Support Population:

<u>Youth:</u>	<u>Seniors:</u>	<u>Disabilities:</u>	<u>Immigrants:</u>	<u>Indigenous:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child &amp; Youth Mental Health Offices</li> <li>• Chilliwack Community Services</li> <li>• Cyrus Centre</li> <li>• Chilliwack Youth Centre</li> <li>• Catch 22 Solutions</li> <li>• Youth Emergency Housing Program</li> <li>• The Breakfast Club</li> <li>• WorkBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilliwack Seniors Recreation Centre</li> <li>• Old Age Pensioners Organization</li> <li>• Chilliwack Seniors Resource Society</li> <li>• Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 280</li> <li>• Seniors Veteran Society</li> <li>• WorkBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilliwack Society for Community Living</li> <li>• Communitas Supportive Care Society</li> <li>• Mental Health Chilliwack</li> <li>• Chilliwack Community Services</li> <li>• WorkBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chilliwack Community Services</li> <li>• Immigrant Services</li> <li>• Chilliwack Newcomer Connections</li> <li>• Chilliwack Learning Society</li> <li>• WorkBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children &amp; Family Services Society</li> <li>• Sto:lo Nation - Community Health &amp; Home Care, Early Childhood Education, Family Empowerment, Wellness Services, Employment Services, Family Services, Elders Lodge, etc.</li> </ul>

Note. Data for community resources to support population in the City of Chilliwack from Chilliwack Newcomer Connection (2017), Chilliwack Child & Youth Committee (2018), Sto:lo Service Agency (2018), and City of Chilliwack (2020).

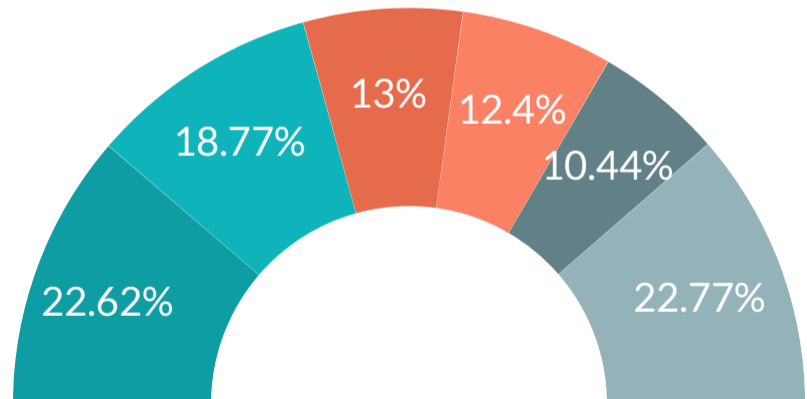
## Industry & Labour Market Information

The current labour force for Chilliwack is at about 42,065 people and has more people working in trades (18.8%) and manufacturing (3.9%) compared to the rest of BC. Additionally, 10.4% of Chilliwack's workforce is in management occupations with 13% also working in business, finance and administration type positions (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Table 9. - The occupations with the highest number of employees in the City of Chilliwack 2017.

### Top 5 Occupations with Highest Number of Employees:

- Sales & Service (22.62%)
- Trades (18.77%)
- Business, Finance, Admin (13%)
- Education, Law, Social Services (12.4%)
- Management (10.44%)
- Other (22.77%)



Note. Data for occupations with the highest number of employees from Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017), and from Statistics Canada Census (2016).

Table 10. - The occupations and average wages per hour in the City of Chilliwack 2017.

<b>Occupation &amp; Wages Per Hour:</b>	
Management -----	\$40.30
Sciences -----	\$36.23
Education, Social Science, Government -----	\$31.70
Health -----	\$31.39
Trades, Transport, Equipment Operators -----	\$28.31

Due to lower land values, the cost of living in Chilliwack is significantly lower than the cost of living in Vancouver. The cost of a single-family detached home in Chilliwack is 39% lower compared to Greater Vancouver (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*).

Note. Data for occupation and wages per hour Chilliwack Economic Partners (2017) and Statistics Canada (2016) and BC Min Wage (2016).

## Predictions & Trends - Changes for the Labour Market

Over the next 3 decades, Chilliwack is predicted to grow to an estimated increase of 58% in the population. Alongside this prediction, it is estimated that there will be 48,000 new residents, 25,000 new homes and 21,000 plus new jobs to keep local residents employed (*City of Chilliwack, 2015*)

For the next 10 years, the labour market outlook for Chilliwack is that 40% of new jobs will be related to new growth and 60% will be due to the replacement of retiring workers (*City of Chilliwack, 2015*).

A few general economic development policies the City of Chilliwack is working towards implementing over the next 20 years are (*City of Chilliwack, 2015*):

- Contain out-of-town commuting for the long-term growth in the local labour force by establishing a strong employment base locally.
- Increase the use of the employment land reserve or existing business/industrial sites.
- Entice industries and commercial enterprises that generate high employment levels to relocate to Chilliwack.

## Gaps in Services



### Affordable Housing:

As the total rental rate in Chilliwack is at 24.6% but the availability rate is at 2.3%, clearly, there is a significant need for more affordable and low-income housing developments for Chilliwack to meet the needs of its residents (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*).

In 2017, the homelessness in Chilliwack was at a rate of over 200%, and for those that completed a Chilliwack Service Providers survey, the cost of housing was the most common concern (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*).



### Transportation:

As the most common mode of transportation to commute to and from work in Chilliwack is by private vehicle (9 out of 10 people), those that have restricted access are at a higher risk of living in poverty due to the lack of transportation options available to commute to and from other surrounding Lower Mainland communities for employment. Additionally, another reported concern is the rising cost of fuel and car maintenance (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*).

## Recommendations

As the population of Chilliwack is forecasted to increase with a five-year growth rate of 7.5%, which is higher than any other neighbouring community to Chilliwack, and with the projected population to exceed 100,000 residents by the year 2021 (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*). There are still not enough affordable or low-income housing developments available to meet the needs of a community that has seen a huge increase in population as well as homelessness. Currently, there are eight subsidized housing units in Chilliwack; only two of them accept families and another two accept people with disabilities. However, none accepts singles or couples under the age of 55 years old (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*).

I believe Chilliwack would significantly benefit from building more subsidized housing units that accept families, singles and couples. In doing so, it would lower the rate of homelessness and poverty in Chilliwack and provide more people with the ability to get off income assistance and gain sustainable employment, provide for their families and be contributing members of the community we call Chilliwack (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*).

Furthermore, while there are approximately 140,000 people within a 30-minute commute of Chilliwack's neighbouring communities, and approximately 1.5 million people aged 15 and over employed in the workforce within the Lower Mainland (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*). I believe Chilliwack and its neighbouring communities would significantly benefit from a well-structured public transportation system that connects to each community with a final destination ending at the sky train station in either Langley or Surrey.

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## Conclusion

Considering Chilliwack has a lot to offer its residents such as lower cost of living, excellent recreation amenities and growing economic opportunities (*Chilliwack Economic Partners, 2017*), there are still some gaps in community services and resources that currently do not meet the needs of its growing population (*Robertson-Taylor, 2018*). However, if the City of Chilliwack and its municipal council were to develop a plan in addressing the current gaps in community services, Chilliwack would definitely hold to its reputation of being a great place to live and raise a family.

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