

# CONSTRUCT

An employment social enterprise managed by Blue Door, that fosters labour market attachment for individuals facing barriers to employment in York Region

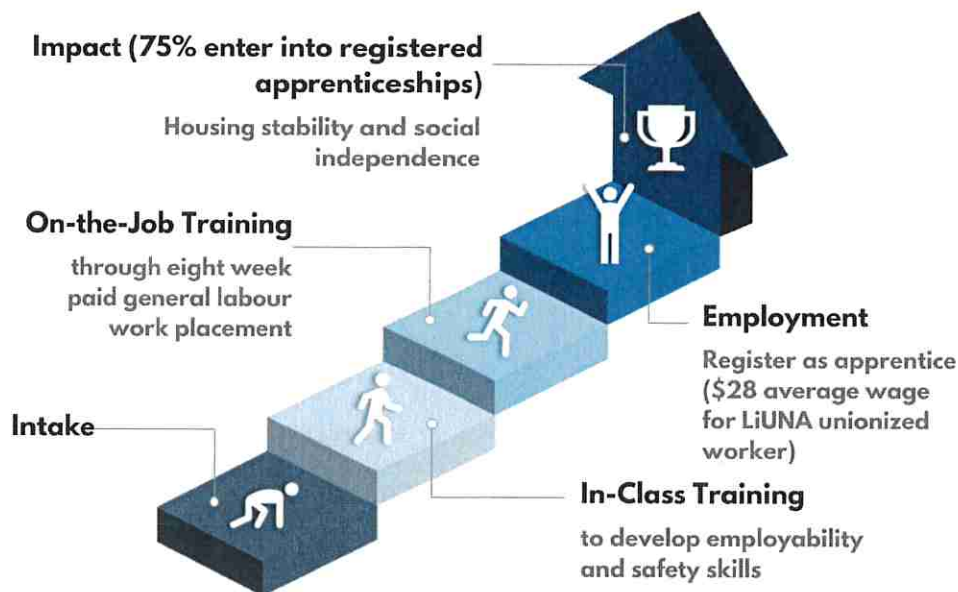
## DID YOU KNOW?

**\$24** approximate hourly wage needed to rent a one bedroom apartment in York Region

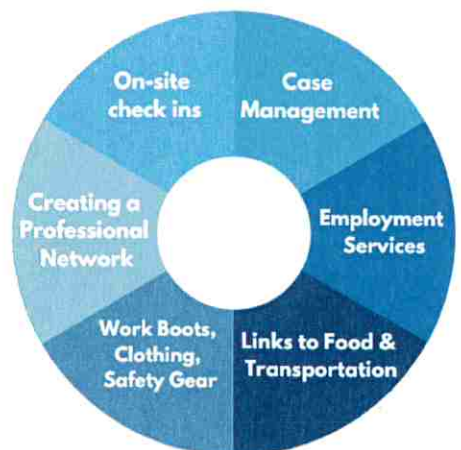
of contractors in Ontario experienced a shortage of skilled workers in the last year

**62%**

**5.4%** rate of unemployment in York Region



## PROGRAM SUPPORTS



Partners:



# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

## The Need

When it comes to securing employment needed to escape homelessness, vulnerable individuals in York Region are facing a number of barriers, as outlined in the chart below.

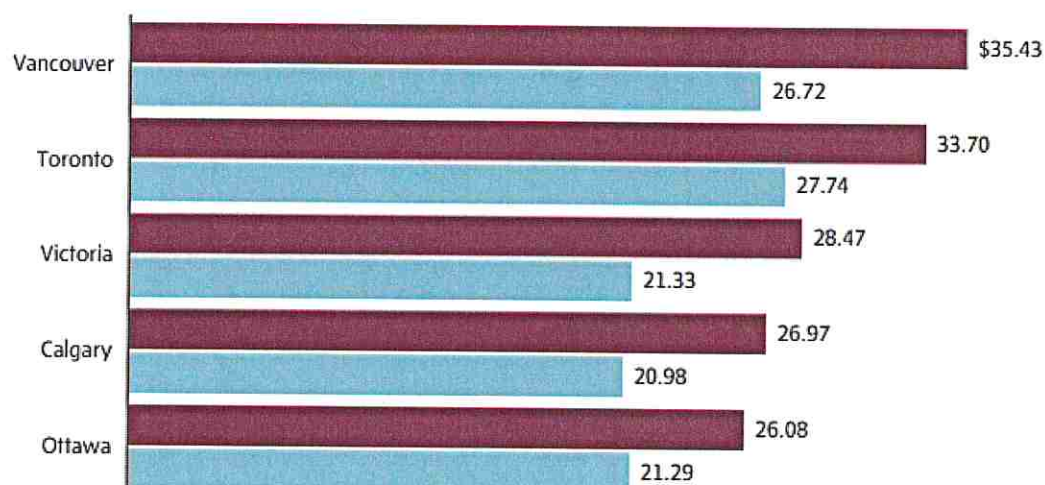
Employment Barriers	Resulting Challenges to Employment
Limited employment experience and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Gaps in or no existing employment history</li><li>- Limited soft skills</li><li>- Few professional references</li><li>- Lack of professional connections</li></ul>
Limited education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Low literacy rates</li></ul>
Mental illnesses, addictions, and poor health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Anxiety</li><li>- Behavioural challenges</li><li>- Frequent absences from work</li><li>- Low self-confidence and self-esteem</li></ul>
Limited or no funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No access to a vehicle</li><li>- No work attire or equipment</li></ul>
Involvement in the criminal justice system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Limited employment opportunities</li></ul>

As a result of these barriers, vulnerable individuals experience irregular or low-paying employment, resulting in their income falling short of expensive housing costs – propelling them towards a life of homelessness.

### Hourly wage needed to afford average-priced dwelling

Based on full-time work of 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year

● Two-bedroom wage ● One-bedroom wage



THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES / LOCATIONS REFER TO CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREAS



# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

To prevent and end homelessness, at-risk individuals must be empowered and supported with the tools, training, and social supports needed to overcome barriers to employment. With a stable, well-paying career, individuals will have the capacity to work towards a home of their own.

**Simply put, for people to avoid and escape homelessness they need a career - not a minimum wage job.**

While vulnerable people are in desperate need of a stable career, many trade unions are experiencing a shortage of new apprentices and skilled labour. In the past three years, 62% of Ontario contractors say they have experienced a shortage of skilled labour.

There are two driving factors that will continue to cause labour shortages for contractors and unions; an increased demand for new housing and housing repairs as well as existing workers retiring at a rate higher than labourers joining the field.

New housing will be in demand for decades to come. In the Greater Toronto Area alone, the population is expected to increase by 41% to reach 9.7 million by 2041 (Ontario, Ministry of Finance, 2018). To meet this growing need for housing, between 35,000-40,000 homes must be built (BILD GTA).

Despite a growing need for construction labour, over the next ten years 91,100 workers are estimated to retire from Ontario's construction labour force (2019 Construction Industry Info). Furthermore, Colleges Ontario forecasts by 2030 Ontario will face a skilled labour shortage of more than 500,000 workers.

## The Solution: Employment Social Enterprises

With evidence depicting a strong demand for skilled employees in the construction industry and at-risk individuals in need of stable well-paying careers, we have two intersecting challenges, that when paired together, are solved through employment social enterprises (ESE). ESEs provide the tools, training, and support for vulnerable individuals to gain experience and skills to enter long-term careers in construction trades and escape homelessness.



## Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

The following six ESEs are successfully using training and real work experience in trades to help end homelessness in communities across Canada.

Organization and Program Name	Description of Program	Community Served
<b>Building Up</b>	Founded in 2014, Building Up is a not-for-profit construction contractor providing long-term career pathways in trades for community members facing barriers.	Toronto, ON
<b>Choices for Youth</b> Impact Construction, The Shop, Neighbourhood	For over eight years, Choices for Youth has been operating social enterprises to train and employ at-risk homeless youth. Choices for Youth's ESE programs include operations in the construction, manufacturing and retail sectors.	St. John's, NF
<b>Community Builders</b>	Community Builders is a social enterprise construction company dedicated to building with purpose for the betterment of our community and our people.	Barrie, ON
<b>Labour Education Centre</b>  TradeLinx	TradeLinx is a twelve-week pre-apprenticeship training program for Ontario Works recipients who are interested in a career in trades/construction. Providing a pathway for at-risk individuals to secure employment and escape homelessness, TradeLinx is structured as a support program.	Toronto, ON
<b>Purpose Construction</b>	Incorporated in 2009, Purpose Construction provides trades training to individuals with barriers to employment.	Winnipeg, MB
<b>RAFT</b>  Fresh Paint	In June of 2019, RAFT launched Fresh Paint an ESE improving the lives of at-risk individuals through job training, education credit recovery, social support, and housing supports.	Niagara, ON



# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

One reason ESEs developing pathways into construction trades are an effective way to end homelessness is due to the low barriers to enter the field. Low barrier entry is essential because people experiencing homelessness often face a wide range of challenges.

Another reason ESEs are successful in supporting individuals facing systemic barriers is due to the program's design, which fully supports each participant in successfully securing well-paying employment.

Program participants receive social support throughout the program to improve program participants' overall wellness and to address challenges vulnerable individuals have as a result of previous trauma, including family conflict, abuse, or time spent in the child welfare system.

## PROGRAM SUPPORTS



## Central to Prevention

In the past, efforts to address homelessness focused primarily on providing more emergency housing. While emergency housing will always be needed to support individuals in crises, emergency housing will not stop individuals from becoming homeless or financially support them in finding and maintaining housing.

There are two widely held homelessness prevention beliefs. Communities either create low-rent housing options or connect individuals with well-paying employment opportunities.

Depressing the cost of rent creates an isolated solution where individuals are dependant on a lengthy waitlist to enter into subsidized or low-rent housing. Whereas if given training, work experience, and social supports to attain a long-term well-paying career, individuals will have the ability to pay rent on a home of their choice, achieving both housing stability and retention.

Providing a pathway for individuals to enter into well-paying careers is an effective long-term solution to ending homelessness in our community. After all, securing and maintaining a career that will pay for housing is how those of us with housing afford to keep our homes. This is what true housing affordability looks like.

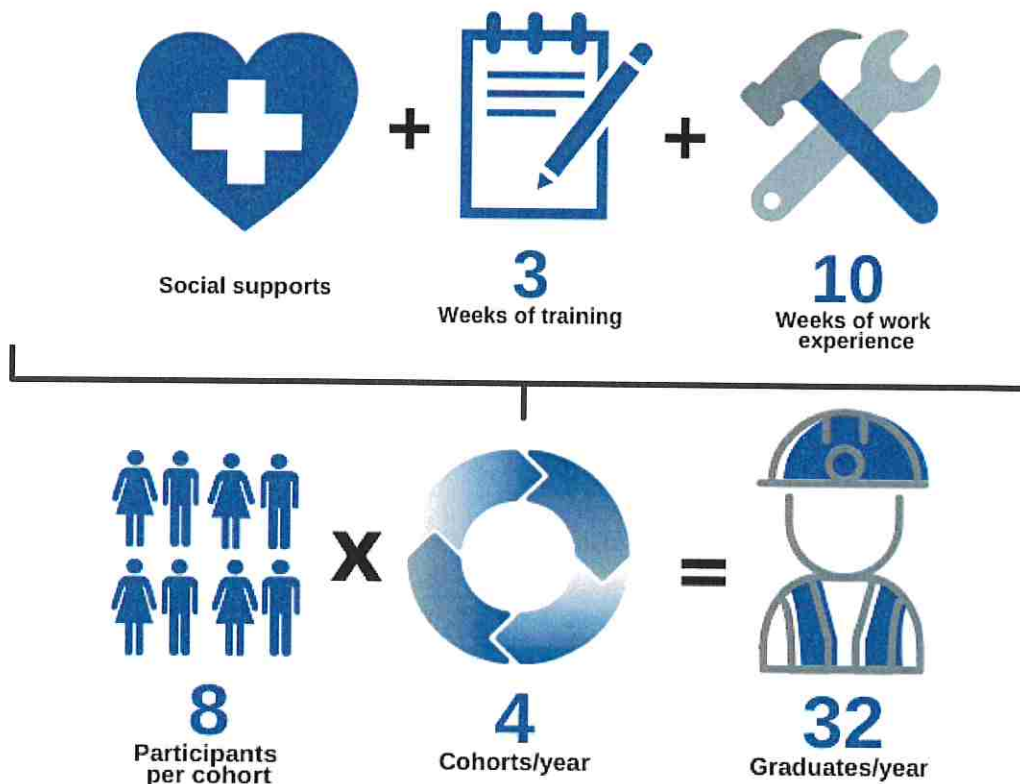
# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

## Blue Door's Construct

Blue Door is launching an ESE program called Construct in the spring of 2020. Construct is an 11-week program which will provide the training, experience, and skills needed for at-risk individuals in York Region to secure stable well-paying in-demand careers in construction trades.

In 2020, Construct will help 32 vulnerable individuals overcome employment barriers by providing:

- Three-weeks of in-class training to build skills
- Eight-weeks of relevant on-the-job experience
- On-going social supports to help program participants overcome barriers and challenges





# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

Upon completing training, graduates will be connected to apprenticeships and permanent employment through Construct's established partnerships with contractors and unions.

Name of Program Partner	Contribution to Construct
Region of York	Promoting the program and providing participants with construction contracts as well as post-program employment opportunities.
LiUNA Local 506	Promoting the program and creating awareness of Construct through community outreach; assisting with participant interviews; delivering 3-week pre-apprenticeship training; providing apprenticeship opportunities for program graduates; connecting graduates to their union and others in the GTA.
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority	Providing participants with construction contracts and post-program employment opportunities.
OPCMA Ontario Precast Concrete Manufacturers Association	Providing participants with construction contracts, apprentices, and post-program employment opportunities.
Ontario Association of Demolition	Providing participants with construction contracts, apprentices, and post-program employment opportunities.
YMCA York Region Employment Centre	Promoting the program and creating awareness of Construct through community outreach; assisting with reviewing participant applications and resumes; providing one-on-one support to clients during training, work placement and employment; teaching job skills (interviewing, conflict management, resumes, etc.).

## Measuring Impact and Outcomes

ESE programs for individuals experiencing homelessness have demonstrated many positive results. Individuals have reported an improvement in life satisfaction, family contact, peer social support, and showed a decrease in depressive symptoms (Homeless Hub, 2019).

**In the first year of supporting Blue Door's Construct, the City of Vaughan will change the lives of over 32 at-risk individuals. Individuals will gain skills to secure stable, well-paying careers in trades – and a home of their own.**



# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

The chart below outlines how the impact and outcomes of ESEs supported by the City of Vaughan will be measured.

Measuring the Impact and Outcomes of ESEs		
Impacts and Anticipated Outcomes	What will be measured?	How will it be collected?
80% report improved opportunity, self-worth and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # Participants with previous criminal records stayed out of the criminal justice program</li> <li>- # Of participants with driver's licences</li> </ul>	Questionnaire
100% report improved literacy skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grade level of math</li> <li>- Student reading age</li> <li>- Tool identification</li> </ul>	Pre and final assessment
80% report achieving the balance of education and credentials necessary to decrease employment barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # Hours of relevant work experience</li> <li>- # Improved resumes</li> <li>- # Completed orientation</li> <li>- # Participants present at training</li> <li>- # Received WHMIS certification</li> <li>- # Completed workplace violence &amp; harassment training</li> <li>- # Completed Working at Heights training</li> <li>- # Completed basic construction math training</li> <li>- # Completed toolkits, hammer exercise and skill saw practical training</li> <li>- # Completed build a birdhouse exercise</li> </ul>	Case log
75% report improved housing stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # Housed during enrollment</li> <li>- # Report improved housing stability</li> </ul>	Case log, questionnaires
75% report improved employment stability and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # Secured employment after program</li> <li>- Length of post-program employment</li> <li>- Income of graduates</li> <li>- \$ Hourly increase</li> <li>- # Secured 1<sup>st</sup> yr., 2<sup>nd</sup> yr., 3<sup>rd</sup> yr. journey license</li> </ul>	Post-program questionnaire
80% report increased confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Level of anxiety when at interview (self-reported)</li> <li>- Level of confidence in interactions during training, work placement and employment transition</li> </ul>	Intake form, questionnaire, observation
80% report increased motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amount of time present at training</li> <li>- Amount of time present at work placements</li> <li>- # Of times punctual for programming related activities</li> <li>- How positive participants feel about the future</li> </ul>	Case log, intake form, end of course questionnaire
80% of employers report reduced stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reported willingness to employ those facing barriers</li> <li>- Types of tasks employers trust graduates to perform</li> </ul>	Registration, feedback forms



# Concept Paper: Ending Homelessness Through Employment Social Enterprise

---

## The City of Vaughan's Role in Ending Homelessness

By supporting Construct, the City of Vaughan will ensure that vulnerable individuals will always have a place to call home.

Blue Door is requesting the City of Vaughan's support in connecting Blue Door with developers and city employers for community benefits work in Vaughan. Employment opportunities with developers and city employers will be used to give meaningful work experience and opportunities for paid learning to Construct's program participants.

By encouraging developers and city employers to select Construct for their next contract, allows the City of Vaughan as well as the developers and city employers to further give back to the community while affordably purchasing reliable skilled labour for already confirmed projects.

In conclusion, by supporting employment social enterprises serving vulnerable individuals, the City of Vaughan will boost community support and become a leader in ending homelessness.

**Together, this collaborative and the City of Vaughan will  
end and prevent homelessness in our lifetime.**