



Building Community Engagement in Community Benefits Agreements

PCBN First Annual Forum

Outcomes Report

March 2022





Land Acknowledgment

The Peel Community Benefits Network acknowledges that we operate in Peel Region, which sits on Indigenous territory. This land has been home to the Anishinabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Ojibway/Chippewa, Metis, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation who are direct descendants of the Mississaugas of the Credit. The members of PCBN are grateful for the opportunity to work and live on this land. Our work in promoting Community Benefits Agreements is a testament to our respect for the first inhabitants of this land and our commitment to achieving inclusive growth for historically disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups.

Acknowledgments

The Peel Community Benefits Network would like to acknowledge the collaboration among, and contributions of its various member organizations. As an initiative created by the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee that is co-chaired by the Region of Peel and United Way Greater Toronto, PCBN invites active collaboration among non-governmental organizations, employment service providers, newcomer support and settlement agencies, labour unions, social enterprises, and government partners, including the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton, the Region of Peel, and the Government of Ontario. We are thankful to each of our member-organizations for their active partnership in supporting Peel's diverse population and promoting inclusive growth, particularly in the face of major infrastructure developments like the forthcoming Hazel McCallion Line (Hazel McCallion Line).

PCBN Co-Chairs

Anne Jamieson
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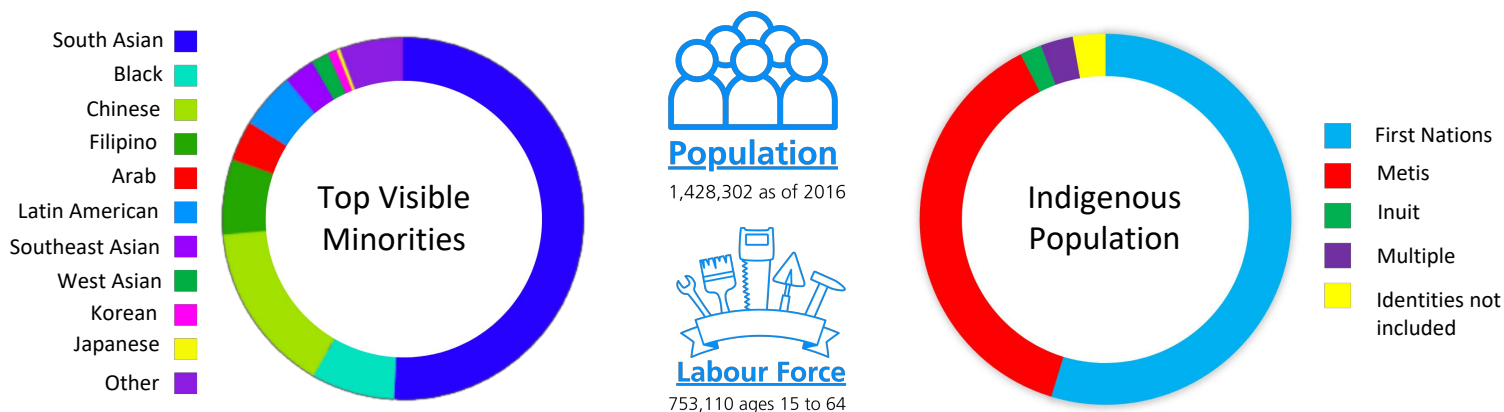
Executive Summary

The Peel Community Benefits Network hosted its first annual forum, with the theme *Building Community Engagement in Community Benefits Agreements*, in March 2022. PCBN brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders in Peel, ranging from employers, employment service providers, and labour unions, to social enterprises, non-governmental organizations that support newcomers to Canada and diverse populations, and municipal, provincial, and federal government officials. Together, these stakeholders discussed the value of a Community Benefits approach to major infrastructure developments like the upcoming Hazel McCallion line, and the importance of diverse, inclusive, and equitable hiring and social procurement practices in building community wealth.

The following report outlines concrete solutions for engaging employers and promoting the implementation of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs), promoting community education on Community Benefits, and supporting job seekers and service providers in developing diverse, inclusive, and sustainable employment pathways in fulfillment of CBA targets. In line with these, PCBN aims to raise the profile of Community Benefits across the region and ensure that future developments are built with robust and successful CBAs.

Introduction

Composed of the cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the Town of Caledon, the Region of Peel is one of the most highly populated regions in Ontario, with major urban centres in the Greater Toronto Area. Today, Peel is home to almost 1.5 million people, with an active labour force of approximately 753,000 from the ages of 15 to 64¹. It is also one of the most diverse regions in the province, with the largest population of visible minorities in the GTA²; over half of whom identify as South Asian, making Peel the region with the largest population of this racialized minority.



Building a Strong, Diverse Workforce in Peel






The combination of Peel's highly diverse population and significant workforce invites a timely and crucial advocacy for equity, representation, and most importantly, inclusive growth in which racialized, historically disadvantaged, and equity-seeking groups can take part in.

This advocacy is at the heart of PCBN's work in Peel Region to promote Community Benefits. Earlier this year, in recognition of this diversity and the ongoing work towards inclusive development, PCBN sought to uncover the barriers that the workforce faced in finding sustainable employment, particularly in the construction industry. This focus on employment in construction was selected as a result of PCBN's active involvement in the Hazel McCallion Line construction, with a view towards promoting equity and economic development through infrastructure development.

Through a survey and focus group discussions with employers, employment service providers, newcomer support agencies, and labour unions, we found the following barriers to employment faced by job seekers in Peel, along with recommended solutions:

¹ <https://data.peelregion.ca/>

² <https://www.peelregion.ca/planning/pdc/data/nhs/ethnic-diversity.htm>

Barriers to Employment	Recommendations
 <p>Lack of training opportunities or available information</p>	<p>Increase access to tools, resources, equipment, and information on training opportunities</p>
 <p>Access to employment information</p>	<p>Provide resources for learning about employment opportunities, particularly for youth and newcomers</p>
 <p>Lack of resources for job seekers</p>	<p>Promote employment counseling services, including resume writing, English language training, and information on job requirements in relation to job seekers' skills, education, and experience</p>
 <p>Lack of employer relationships</p>	<p>Establish connections with employers through key contacts to inform long-term employment needs and outcomes</p>
 <p>Systemic gaps in diversity and inclusion, particularly in key industries like construction</p>	<p>Address systemic barriers faced by a racialized workforce, as well as neurodiverse individuals</p>

First Annual PCBN Forum

Theme and Goals

In recognition of these barriers to employment faced by job seekers in Peel, particularly those belonging to historically disadvantaged and equity-seeking groups, PCBN hosted its first annual forum on March 31st, 2022. This year's forum, Building Community Engagement in Community Benefits Agreements brought together a broad cross-section of stakeholders who are instrumental in realizing Community Benefits through employment, apprenticeships, and social procurement in major infrastructure developments like the Hazel McCallion Line.

The goals of the forum were:

1. To bring together the Peel community by engaging a broader network of employment service providers, labour unions, social enterprises, and municipal, regional, and provincial governments in order to build employment pathways for Peel residents and priority populations.
2. To collaboratively develop solutions for Peel, by Peel through PCBN's Advisory Committee across Community Benefits pathways, including Professional, Administrative & Technical (PAT) Jobs, Apprenticeships, and Social Enterprises
3. To foster a culture of learning and promote the adoption of Community Benefits frameworks by highlighting best practices from current infrastructure developments and other Community Benefits Networks.

Forum Attendees

The first annual PCBN forum was attended by representatives of various employment service providers, employers, social enterprises, construction unions, educational institutions Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and our municipal, provincial, and federal partners.

Most notably, the following key figures were in attendance. They offered insightful remarks on the role of Community Benefits Agreements and the importance of cross-sector collaboration in achieving inclusive economic growth in Peel:

- Rosemarie Powell, Keynote Speaker and Executive Director of the Toronto Community Benefits Network
- Honourable Minister Kaleed Rasheed, Associate Minister of Digital Government and MPP for Mississauga East—Cooksville
- MPP Natalia Kusendova, Mississauga Centre
- MP Shafqat Ali, Brampton Centre
- City of Brampton Councilors Rowena Santos and Paul Vicente.

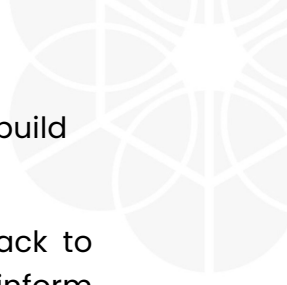
In her keynote address, Rosemarie Powell provided valuable insights from TCBN's experience in advocating for Community Benefits and implementing CBAs while building relationships with employers and holding them accountable to hiring and procurement targets. Specifically, Rosemarie recounted championing the retention of Metrolinx's 10% diversity and equity targets in the face of a rapidly evolving infrastructure development and Community Benefits landscape.

Rosemarie also emphasized the importance of timely and relevant reporting on key milestones, and engagement with all levels of government to ensure that both provincially and federally funded projects are constructed with CBAs. The requirement to build all major infrastructure developments with a CBA at the onset is crucial to job creation, the growth of local businesses, and inclusive development, from groundbreaking to long-term operation.

Program Overview

In line with PCBN's goal to bring together a cross-section of stakeholders that can impact Community Benefits in Peel, and in the spirit of mutual learning and collaboration, the main part of this year's forum centred on *solutions focused* group sessions. Each group was composed of representatives from various employment sectors and organizations in Peel. They were tasked with collaboratively developing solutions for: (1) employer engagement; (2) community education and mobilization; (3) supporting job seekers and service providers.

Through these discussions, PCBN was able to collect valuable insights into barriers to employment and necessary interventions, educating the community on, and garnering support for the adoption of Community Benefits Agreements in upcoming regional developments, and



providing key resources to both job seekers and employers in order to build sustainable employment pathways.





Following breakout sessions on each of the topics, groups were invited back to share their key takeaways and identify common themes that would inform PCBN’s recommendations and calls to action.











Recommendations and Calls to Action







In line with the first annual forum’s theme, *Building Community Engagement in Community Benefits Agreements*, the discussions resulted in key recommendations for promoting the adoption of Community Benefits Agreements in major infrastructure developments in Peel Region and ensuring inclusive economic growth that extends to the region’s highly diverse and skilled workforce. These key recommendations articulate concrete targets for achieving the crucial impacts of CBAs, namely (1) job creation, (2) community support, and (3) empowering a skilled and ready workforce through sustainable and inclusive employment pathways.

Employer Engagement

The goal of this session is to identify solutions that will enable PCBN to break down barriers to successfully engage employers in conversations about CBAs. The following recommendations target barriers to establishing employer relationships and promoting the adoption of a Community Benefits Agreement in large-scale infrastructure developments. These recommendations include proposed key messages and resources to connect with employers.

Requirements for employer engagement	Recommendations
Strategies for building employer relationships and promoting the adoption of CBAs in infrastructure developments	 <p>Promote mutual benefit among stakeholders, including government partners, non-governmental organizations, employers, and the community, and highlight the ability of CBAs to uplift a fourth “P” in Public-Private Partnerships—the People in local communities who are building these projects.</p>
	 <p>Encourage and support employers in implementing diversity management training to tackle systemic barriers, such as racism, lack of support for women requiring childcare, and transportation, in building diverse and inclusive workplaces.</p>
	 <p>Network with employers and tap municipal and provincial government leaders as champions to enable broader education on the importance of CBAs and their implementation at the onset of building to eliminate additional work later on.</p>
	 <p>Strengthen collaboration between various levels of government funding infrastructure developments, ensuring that cities are involved in decision-making since they are the closest level to local communities, as well as local industry associations and employers.</p>







	 <p>Continuously publish and distribute success stories of CBA implementation in various infrastructure developments to demonstrate its benefits and establish relationships with builders and developers. Similarly, it is important to recognize pioneering builders and developers who are adopting CBAs in their projects early on.</p>  <p>In line with the applications of CBAs in construction, it is important to promote career development in the skilled trades, address language and cultural barriers faced by job seekers, and track Peel residents working on developments in Peel through their unions.</p>
Requirements for employer engagement	Recommendations
Proposed key messages for engaging with current and potential employers	 <p>Promote the benefits of inclusive growth and collective wealth building through job creation and its intersections with social well-being and strengthened diversity & inclusion by appealing to companies' corporate social responsibility goals.</p>  <p>To avoid business closures similar to the Eglinton corridor as a result of the Eglinton Crosstown construction, it is helpful to highlight CBAs as a means for avoiding such and sustaining the local economy (i.e., through social procurement).</p>  <p>Highlight the role of infrastructure developments beyond building, and instead a tool for promoting community wealth that provides value to current and future generations.</p>  <p>Leverage case studies and past projects across Canada and the US built with CBAs to demonstrate successes and raise the profile of CBAs in infrastructure and long-term economic development.</p>  <p>Simultaneously engage public sector and crown corporations by highlighting that CBAs enable alignment of communities' needs and growth objectives, and help build a skilled and ready workforce with sustainable employment pathways.</p>
Requirements for employer engagement	Recommendations
Recommended pathways for employer engagement based on best practices	 <p>Tie CBAs with public bids and contracts to ensure fulfillment, effectively making this standard practice in future economic development initiatives.</p>  <p>Provide employers with a list of potential businesses, unions, and social enterprises within a set radius (based on postal code) or catchment area of the project in order to promote social procurements and fulfillment of hiring targets among equity seeking groups.</p>  <p>Maximize opportunities for PCBN and its partners to promote CBAs and inclusive employment in the skilled trades, and highlight success stories to employers by participating in trade shows and leveraging digital channel channels.</p>







	 PCBN can facilitate connections with youth in Peel, schools, and colleges to encourage careers in the skilled trades and promote employment pathways through CBAs  Connect with employers through newcomer support agencies and employment service providers to understand their hiring needs and funnel available labour supply, host hiring events, and ensure that job readiness is met by supporting job seekers.
Requirements for employer engagement	Recommendations
<p>Required resources for engaging employers in CBA implementation</p>	 Build government support and ensure the implementation of a Community Benefits framework, including required hiring equity targets, in infrastructure developments, per the 2015 Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act of Ontario.  Compile tools and resources for CBA education, such as guidelines, frameworks, case studies, and evidence-based research.  Implement a common language for communicating what Community Benefits are, in a highly accessible manner. These include key messages, FAQs, success stories and testimonials, employer training or focus group discussions, and the sharing of a gold-standard CBA.  Implement workforce development plans that include age- and culturally appropriate supports for job seekers, and strategies for addressing systemic barriers such as racism, language differences, and residency status (i.e., international students, temporary foreign workers, etc.), promote hiring equity.  Strengthen networking among community organizations involved in Community Benefits to share approaches to employer engagement and build upon best practices.



Community Education and Mobilization









This session was focused on identifying opportunities for PCBN to raise the profile of Community Benefits Agreements and mobilizing community support. These include identifying key stakeholder groups, working with community partners to create sustainable employment pathways, and identifying key messages for promoting CBAs.








Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
<p>Identify key stakeholders who will serve as CBA champions and develop pathways for CBA implementation.</p>	<p> Identify community partners, including government entities (i.e., Region of Peel, municipal government, and elected municipal and provincial officials) and non-governmental organizations, such as social enterprises (i.e., Building Up), fellow Community Benefits networks (i.e., TCBN), skilled trades training providers (i.e., Tomorrows Trades), career assessment and vocational assessment groups, employment service providers, youth support program providers, faith and neighbourhood centres, library services, and other community organizations like United Way, Blue Door, and Raising the Roof.</p> <p> Engage construction trades unions and training centres, educational institutions including high schools, and colleges and universities for skilled trades recruitment, as well as provide English language training for newcomers and enable engagement with specific cultural groups, particularly equity seeking populations.</p> <p> Engage real estate holders and tenant groups in land use conversations to help ensure that CBA implementation includes impacts such as affordable housing, neighbourhood improvements, and other broad, long-term public benefits.</p>
Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
<p>Collaborate with community partners to build sustainable employment pathways for Peel residents</p>	<p> Build awareness on CBAs through both digital and local media engagement, with a focus on community outreach to circles of influence, and centre work on promoting pathways for equity seeking groups, such as local pre-apprenticeship programs</p> <p> Encourage broader community support beyond championing CBAs in bidding and procurement through crucial, concrete supports like providing transportation to trainees.</p> <p> Leverage existing relationships and build a robust collaboration structure with both educational institutions and frontline employment service providers to disseminate employment opportunities through recruitment events tailored to target populations, ensure job readiness of potential local workforce employed as a result of a CBA, and coordinate re-training as needed.</p>

	 <p>Empower local neighbourhood tables, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and other community groups (i.e., faith and cultural centres) to participate in CBA negotiation and implementation, and ensure representation of equity seeking groups in hiring and procurement.</p>
Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
Identify key messages for effectively promoting CBAs	<p> Emphasize the most tangible aspects of Community Benefits, most notably job creation and hiring equity, and social procurement from local businesses to enable collective wealth building and economic development.</p> <p> Be explicit in stating that a CBA is a formal agreement, with concrete targets for local, diverse, and inclusive hiring, apprenticeship and training, and social procurement.</p> <p> Be transparent and authentic in sharing the vision for CBAs in Peel by sharing the current list of partners and project milestones achieved thus far to build trust and a strong case for implementation in more projects.</p> <p> Highlight the value of CBAs in reducing urban sprawl through added benefits like affordable housing and overall infrastructure development.</p> <p> Counter negative perceptions of CBAs (i.e., hand-out) by being clear on the intentional and purposeful nature of CBAs with tangible outcomes and benefits to local communities.</p>

Supporting Job Seekers and Service Providers

The final session was aimed at identifying the concrete needs of job seekers and evidence-based supports that can empower service providers to build effective and sustainable pathways to employment in construction. Key steps include determining the biggest barriers faced by historically disadvantaged groups in securing meaningful employment, the challenges faced by service providers in supporting these populations, mapping out solutions to these barriers, and the necessary tools and resources for successfully doing this work.

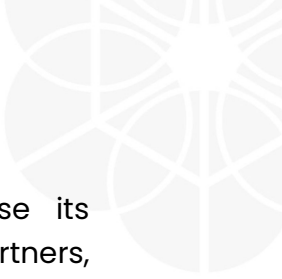
Requirements for supporting job seekers and service providers	Recommendations
<p>Identify barriers faced by historically disadvantaged populations in securing employment</p>	<p> Address lack of certification or credentials that are recognized in Canada and financial pressures to take any available job instead of undergoing re-training or upskilling in order to afford the rising cost of living.</p> <p> Address lack of English and technical/occupational language training, as well as cultural barriers and the pervasiveness of systemic discrimination based on race, gender, and former incarceration.</p> <p> Address lack of childcare and/or flexible, family-friendly hours, mental health, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and other social supports, as well as access to professional networks.</p>
Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
<p>Identify challenges faced by service providers in supporting job seekers</p>	<p> Frontline staff of employment service providers need access to networks and key contacts in the construction industry in order to refer job seekers to available opportunities and training programs, and enable job readiness for employment in construction.</p> <p> Frontline staff require educational resources (i.e., toolkit information package) on CBAs to champion employment of equity seeking groups and enable collaboration with employers on diverse and inclusive hiring.</p> <p> Employment support needs to extend beyond job counseling, and instead include broader labour market orientation, providing access to necessary technology, and combating mis/disinformation, particularly pertaining to the construction industry.</p>
Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
<p>Recommended solutions for addressing identified barriers and challenges</p>	<p> Establish a centralized construction employment resource with key information on apprenticeship, training or upskilling, construction trades and available jobs.</p> <p> Expand skilled trades recruitment to schools by connecting with guidance counselors in order to equip them with key information, resources, and aptitude for recommending students to employment pathways, with the potential for encouraging parents' support.</p>

Requirements for Community Education and Mobilization	Recommendations
Required tools and resources	<p> Compile a list of employment support agencies that can be shared with job seekers, and host career fairs and job readiness trainings.</p> <p> Identify and support job seekers in meeting their other social needs, such as housing, mental health, and childcare supports, and access to technology.</p> <p> Identify and support job seekers in meeting their other social needs, such as housing, mental health, and childcare supports, and access to technology.</p> <p> Provide job seekers and frontline service providers with fact sheets, brochures, and educational resources on construction, and career opportunities and pathways within, as well as the positive impact of employment governed through a CBA with hiring equity targets.</p> <p> Provide trade-specific information to key stakeholder groups, including agencies, youth in postsecondary and alternate schooling, planners and policy developers, and educators, among others.</p> <p> Host job education and readiness trainings, with a view towards increasing equity in employment, particularly for historically disadvantaged populations.</p> <p> Provide job seekers access to business centres with access to computers and wi-fi.</p>

The Future of Community Benefits in Peel: Next Steps for PCBN

The first annual PCBN forum highlighted the core of our vision—to bring our community together and collectively build an inclusive and thriving Peel Region. The outcomes outlined here are a reminder that inclusive development only occurs when it uplifts everyone in Peel, particularly those belonging to marginalized and historically disadvantaged groups. Most importantly, we have a valuable tool for harnessing Peel’s strong and diverse workforce in major infrastructure developments like the future Hazel McCallion Line: Community Benefits Agreements.

Informed by a broad cross-section of key stakeholder groups, PCBN outlines the necessary next steps for successful implementation of CBAs, the fulfillment of Community Benefits for target populations, and long-term community wealth building.



In line with the goals set out for this forum, PCBN aims to increase its engagement of stakeholders and grow its network of partners, collaboratively advocate for a wider adoption of CBA frameworks in upcoming infrastructure developments, and cultivate a culture of learning by emulating best practices in successful CBA implementations. Ultimately, PCBN has, and will continue to be instrumental in achieving equitable development by championing Community Benefits in Peel. The forum is the crucial first step in bringing together our community to discuss the unique value of CBAs in achieving concrete diversity, equity, and inclusion milestones, and strengthening the local economy. The real work is in broadening public awareness of Community Benefits, creating buy-in among employers and developers and holding them accountable to CBA targets, and building sustainable employment pathways, particularly in heavily involved industries like construction. Together, PCBN's growing network of partners can take part in this wide-ranging, long-term collaboration to advocate for, implement, and continuously grow Community Benefits in Peel, with the ultimate goal of living in an inclusive future.

Appendix

About the Peel Community Benefits Network

The Peel Community Benefits Network is an initiative of the Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee, co-chaired by the Region of Peel and the United Way Greater Toronto. PCBN was established to implement a Community Benefits Agreement for the Hazel McCallion Line and enable strategic community wealth building. With these at heart, PCBN aims to help build an inclusive and thriving Peel Region where everyone can access equitable opportunities as the region grows and becomes home to major infrastructure developments and economic investments.

PCBN's current CBA with Mobilinx Transit and Metrolinx has three main goals:



Accessible Transit: The Hazel McCallion Line will make transit accessible in Peel, which is crucial to our social, environmental and economic well-being.



Job Opportunities: We want to see transit infrastructure result in sustainable employment opportunities in construction and transit operation.



Economic Inclusion: At the heart of our CBA framework is a commitment to diversity—that the Hazel McCallion Line project will employ diverse workers that reflect the diversity of Peel.

Led by a Steering Committee and supported by an Advisory Committee composed of employment service providers, community, and newcomer settlement agencies, representatives from the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton, Mobilinx and Metrolinx, construction unions, social enterprises, and members of the Peel community, PCBN funnels opportunities for employment, apprenticeship, and social procurement in projects like the Hazel McCallion Line to achieve Community Benefits. PCBN has three main opportunities:



Employment Opportunities: Address lack of economic opportunity and justify public subsidy to development projects and enact targeted hiring and recruitments, as well as wage levels and work conditions through apprenticeships, professional, administrative, and technical (PAT) jobs, and social enterprises.



Procurement Systems: Enable local business and social enterprises to gain access to procurement systems.



Community & Social Improvements: Enable community and environmental improvements such as green space, childcare space, land trusts and establishment of incubators for new enterprises that will target geographical and community needs.



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