



# CALGARY'S SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK





Photo: Andrew Bain

# Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, as well as the Îyâxe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina nations. We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. We acknowledge all Nations – Indigenous and non – who live, work and play on this land and who honour and celebrate this territory.

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# Calgary Skills Development Framework

**Vision:** Calgary’s learning system is inclusive and develops exceptional, creative, and adaptable talent, ready to thrive in a fast-changing world.

Our Goals	Our Priorities	Our Measures
<b>Adaptable</b> Calgarians embrace disruption and change as an opportunity.		
<p>Calgarians possess a culture of adaptive capacity and continuous learning</p> <p>Calgarians possess professional identities that enable them to adapt to rapid change and uncertainty</p> <p>Calgary’s learning system is agile and adaptive</p>	<p>Refine and scale harmonized enabling skills as the foundation of personal adaptive capacity</p> <p>To unlock system capacity, refine and scale decoupled credentials</p> <p>Leverage work-integrated learning (WIL) to accelerate adaptation</p> <p>Design and scale supports for Calgarians to develop adaptive professional identities</p>	<p>% of Calgarians developing high-demand enabling skills</p> <p>% of Calgarians developing high-demand functional skills</p> <p>% of Calgarians possessing confidence in their capacity to adapt professionally</p>
<b>Accessible</b> Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in the learning process and championed by all.		
<p>Calgarians are committed to confronting the systemic bias in our labour market</p> <p>Employers are committed to confronting the systemic bias in our labour market</p> <p>Learning opportunities are designed by the communities for the communities</p>	<p>Develop and scale justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) resources for small-medium enterprises</p> <p>Calgary refines and scales decoupled skills certification</p> <p>Collaborate with Canadian peer cities to harmonize JEDI benchmarking</p>	<p>% of employers implementing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives</p> <p>% of employers adopting skills-based hiring practices</p> <p>% learning opportunities designed by the community they are intended to support</p> <p>Alignment of executive and board to city’s demographic composition</p> <p>Tracking national media mentions of Calgary’s inclusive labour market</p>
<b>Empowered</b> Calgary’s learning system empowers personalized, purpose-based learning.		
<p>Calgarians are empowered to define their unique personal and professional goals and develop a dynamic plan to achieve these goals</p> <p>Calgarians are empowered to explore career pathways and match pathways to learning opportunities</p>	<p>Scale EDGE UP reskilling program</p> <p>Launch WIL consortium</p> <p>Expand inclusive programming</p> <p>Harmonize career and skill navigation tools</p>	<p>% of Calgarians aged 25–54 are active on a common career and skills navigation platform</p> <p>% of Calgarians who view they have agency over their professional and personal learning and skills development</p>
<b>Open</b> Calgary’s learning system is open and drives performance and innovation.		
<p>Calgary’s learning system is open, competitive, and driven by innovation</p> <p>Employers transition from being consumers of talent to becoming active co-creators of talent</p>	<p>Pilot the Open Learning Lab</p> <p>Refine and scale harmonized enabling skills as the foundation of personal adaptive capacity</p> <p>To unlock system capacity, refine and scale decoupled credentials</p> <p>Host annual “state of talent” event</p> <p>Conduct a skill development policy review to explore approaches to stimulating increased competition and innovation</p>	<p>% of the skills developers engaged in collaborative projects</p> <p>Number of collaborative projects within, and across, the ten skills developer sectors</p> <p>Funding secured for collaborative projects both within and across the ten skills developer sectors</p> <p>% of new skills developers who achieve year ten</p>

LearningCITY  
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Photo: Andrew Bain

# About the LearningCITY Collective

The [LearningCITY Collective](#) is a collaboration of organizations and individuals engaged in Calgary's learning system, including learners, educators, employers, funders, and policymakers. The LearningCITY Collective is independent of government or civic entities. Below are the 2023-2024 LearningCITY Collective Board of Directors.

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[Latosia Campbell-Walters](#), Principal, Sparks Planning Group

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[Louise Edwards](#), DredwardsVR Consulting Inc

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[Katerina Palova](#), Manager, Research and Program Development, The Immigrant Education Society (TIES)

[Margo Purcell](#), Chief Executive Officer, InceptionU

[Pablo Pina](#), Academic Chair, Sustainability at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

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[Heather Robertson](#), Director, Service Design, Calgary Public Library

[Rahim Sajan](#), Teacher and Off Campus Learning Coordinator, Calgary Board of Education

[Rob St. Denis](#), Community Futures Treaty Seven

[Alanna Wellwood](#), Head of Learning Innovation, Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School

[D'Andre Wilson-Ihejirika](#), Executive Director, Calgary Work-Integrated Learning Consortium

[Stephen Yu](#), Vice President, Technology Delivery Management @ Morgan Stanley



# Advisory Committee

The *LearningCITY Collective* would like to recognize our advisory committee for *LearningCITY 2022*.

**Dr. David J. Finch (Event Chair)**

Professor & Senior Fellow  
Institute for Community Prosperity  
Mount Royal University

**Rachael Symon**

Event Manager, *LearningCITY 2022*

**Lee Ackerman**

Distinguished Digital Learning  
Architect, TEKsystems

**Heather Chapple**

Executive Director, ActiveCITY

**Mike Chick**

Senior Policy Analyst  
Calgary Chamber of Commerce

**Jodi Drake**

Director Talent, Suncor

**Meghan Donohoe**

Principal Catalyst, Southern Alberta  
Institute of Technology

**Vanessa Gagnon**

Community Director  
Platform Calgary

**Nicole Hamilton**

Dean, Alberta University of the Arts

**Dr. Cheryl Kinzel**

Dean, Academic Innovation and  
Extended Education  
Bow Valley College

**Janet Lane**

Director, Human Capital Policy Centre  
Canada West Foundation

**Nicholas Newnes**

Talent Strategy Specialist  
Calgary Economic Development

**Cindy Nguyen**

Community Investment &  
Communications Specialist  
connectFirst Credit Union

**Erin O'Connor**

Business Development Manager  
Calgary Film Centre

**Josh Pentland**

Manager, Policy and Government  
Relations  
Calgary Chamber of Commerce

**Jason Ribeiro**

Doctoral Researcher  
University of Calgary

**Sara Struthers**

Manager, Talent Services  
Southern Alberta Institute of  
Technology

**Dr. Michael Uzoka**

Professor, Computer Science  
Mount Royal University

**Natalie Vardabasso**

Assessment Center Associate  
Solution Tree

**Dr. D'Andre Wilson-Ihejirika**

Executive Director, Calgary Work-  
Integrated Learning Secretariat

**Dr. Cory Wright-Maley**

Associate Professor, Education  
St. Mary's University

**Wunmi Adekanmbi**

Founder, Immigrant Techies Alberta

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# Community Insights

The *LearningCITY Collective* would like to recognize those who provided their insights into our research and programs.

Shetin Adams

Peter Andryszewicz

Grace Attalla

Jennifer Aubin

Karen Ball

Bev Bourque

Dr. Alex Bruton

Lisette Cameron

Alexandria Campbell

Eleanor Chiu

McKenna Chudiak

Scott Cressman

Ayotunde Kayode

Bryan de Lottinville

Ray DePaul

Craig Desjardins

Dr. Evelyn Field

Jeannie Finch

Pablo Franco

Jim Gibson

Dr. Jyoti Gondek

Kim Gordon

Jeff Griffiths

Carol Howes

Sarah Imran

Jennifer Konopaki

Dr. Sandip Lalli

Dexter Lam

Janet Lane

Stephany Laverty

Dr. Nadège Levallet

Jenn Lofgren

Krysten Loiselle

Jeff Loomis

Lauren MacKay

Marshal McCallum

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Mary Moran

Jennifer Morrison

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Dr. Jodi Nickel

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Dr. Simon Raby

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Dr. Michael Roberts

Heather Robertson

Dr. Terry Rock

Michelle Schurman

Dr. Chad Saunders

Janet Segato

Janeen Speer

James Stauch

Laurie Stretch

Terry Sydoryk

John Taylor

Dr. Trevor Tombe

Dr. Norm Vaughan

Dirk Volschenk

Cynthia Watson

Deborah Yedlin



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# Executive Summary

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## The Skills Challenge

Calgary, like many other cities, is facing revolutionary changes to how its people live, work, and learn. *Calgary in the New Economy* set out an ambitious vision and a strategic framework to develop a future-proof, sustainable economy for our city. To achieve this vision, Calgarians' must possess the capacity to learn, unlearn, and relearn new skills. This demands that we radically redefine what, when and how we learn.

Calgary's *Skills Development Framework* is designed to deliver the promise of *Calgary in the New Economy* by empowering Calgarians and accelerating collaboration across Calgary's vast learning system.

## Key Insights

Calgary's *Skills Development Framework* is the outcome of four years of community engagement and [research](#) by diverse partners. This work identified five core insights to guide the learning system.

### Insight 1: It's a community challenge

Eighty percent of Calgary's 30,870 current certified and non-certified learning programs are outside the provincial domain. The vast majority being delivered by Calgary-based organizations. Yet, no mechanisms exist to align community priorities and resources. Aligning these priorities and resources requires community-level leadership.

### Insight 2: Demand for adaptive capacity

Employers demand people with the capacity to adapt in times of uncertainty. This adaptive capacity is rooted in an ability to learn faster and better than others. This requires a systematic approach to empower Calgarians to develop both the skills and belief they can prosper. However, today's learning system is not optimized to meet these demands. Developing adaptive capacity is a critical community priority.



### Insight 3: Recognizing the legacy

For decades, Calgary's labour market supported the demands of the oil & gas industry and adjacent sectors. This included prioritizing job skills and compensating staff far above national average. One side-effect of this legacy is a significant gap between current labour market skills and the skills essential to meeting the demands of a fast-changing world. Transitioning Calgary's learning system to meet these emerging demands requires increased harmonization and collaboration across the full system.

### Insight 4: Barriers to an inclusive labour market

There are significant barriers to Calgary becoming a fully inclusive labour market. These barriers range from culture to hiring practices. Calgary must adopt strategies to unlock and develop the potential for all to prosper in a diversified economy.

### Insight 5: Barriers limiting system innovation

Though Calgary possesses a vast learning system, significant barriers impede both collaboration and competition. These barriers range from infrastructure to culture. To stimulate innovation, strategies should be adopted to accelerate both collaboration and competition.

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## The Framework

To support Calgarians meet the dynamic skills demands essential to their future, the *LearningCITY Collective* proposes the following vision:

*Calgary's learning system is inclusive, and develops exceptional, creative, and adaptable talent, ready to thrive in a fast-changing world.*

To deliver this vision, *LearningCITY Collective* define four drivers:



#### Driver 1: Adaptable

Calgarians embrace disruption and change as an opportunity.



#### Driver 2: Accessible

Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in the learning process and championed by all.



#### Driver 3: Empowered

Calgary's learning system empowers personalized, purpose-based learning.



#### Driver 4: Open

Calgary's learning system is open and drives performance and innovation.

## Only the Start

Great plans are living documents and Calgary's *Skills Development Framework* will be as dynamic as the city it is supporting. This requires those engaged in the system, including learners, educators, employers, and policymakers to own this framework and its goals.

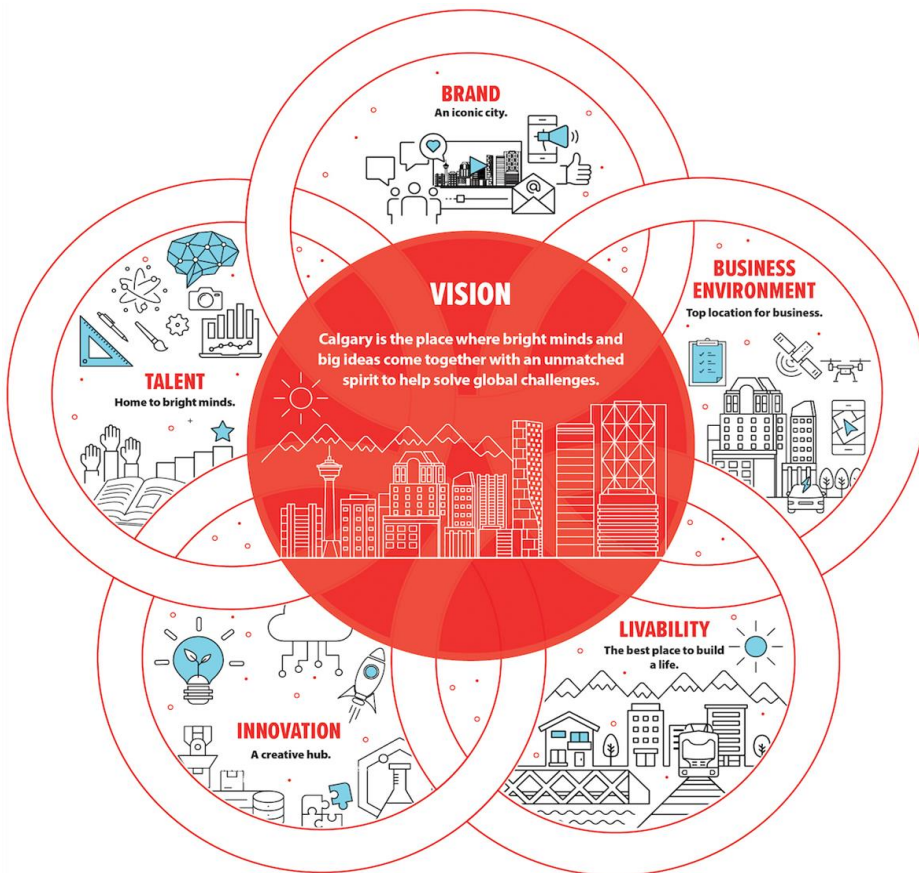
# Introduction

## Calgary in the New Economy

*Calgary in the New Economy* is the economic strategy for Calgary. This strategy sets out a bold, ambitious vision for Calgary's long-term economic prosperity.

*To be the place where bright minds and big ideas come together with an unmatched spirit to help solve global challenges.*

To deliver this vision, *Calgary in the New Economy* defines a strategic framework (see below) comprised of five connected drivers to develop a future-proof, sustainable economy for our city.



91%

Of hiring managers define adaptability as a core skill.

*The economic prosperity of a community comes from its people. Calgary is a people first city.*

Calgary in the New Economy

17

Young people are forecasted to have 17 jobs in five different sectors over their lifetime.

# Learning Our Way Forward

*The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage.*

Arie de Geus

*Calgary in the New Economy* recognizes that the prosperity of a community comes from its people. It challenges us to imagine a city whose citizens think creatively, adapt, and thrive in this fast-changing world. A city where bright minds come together to dream big, start an adventure, and build something great. A city where people proactively develop skills and are ahead of change, not chasing it. A city that attracts talent and investment from across the globe because it's not only resilient but also embraces change as an opportunity.

To deliver on these goals *LearningCITY Collective* propose the following vision for Calgary's learning system:

*Calgary's learning system develops exceptional, creative, and adaptable talent, ready to thrive in a fast-changing world.*

The capacity to adapt is at the core of this vision. But to become a city with the capacity to adapt, Calgary and Calgarians must be able to learn faster and better than others. Since 2018, *Calgary Economic Development* and other organizations have been conducting a series of studies to identify current and emerging trends associated with talent, skills, and learning (Table to the right).

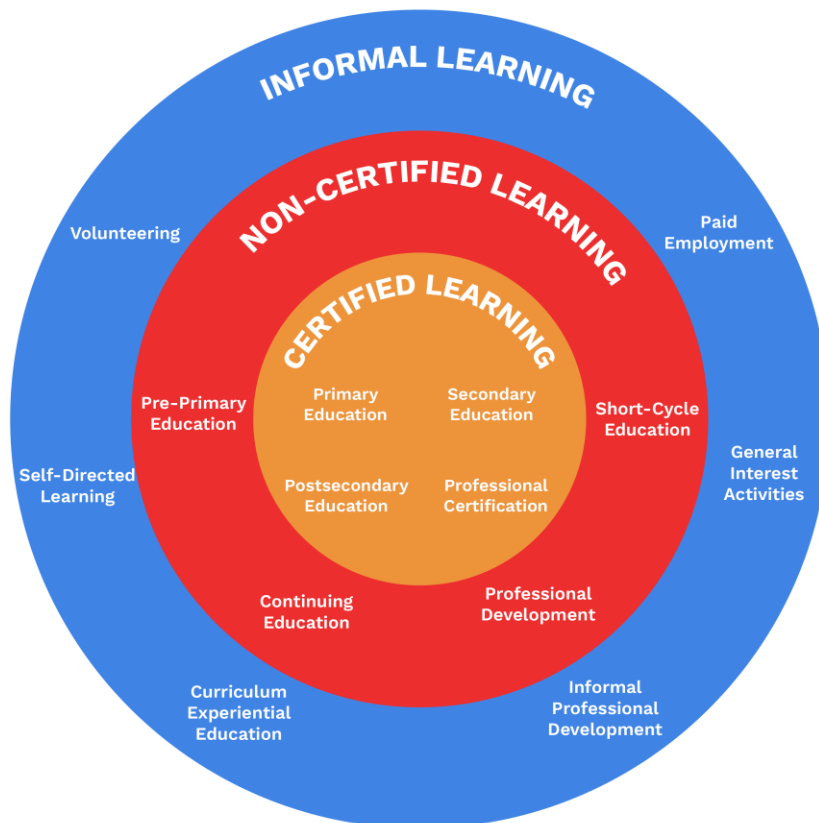
Report	Sponsor
<a href="#"><u>Mapping Calgary's Digital Future: Tech-Employment Opportunities for Displaced Workers (2018)</u></a>	ICT Council Calgary Economic Development
<a href="#"><u>Newcomers as Economic Drivers (2020)</u></a>	Calgary Economic Development
<a href="#"><u>Calgary on the Precipice (2020)</u></a>	Calgary Economic Development
<a href="#"><u>Skills by Design: A Blueprint for Alberta's Future workforce (2020)</u></a>	Business Council of Alberta
<a href="#"><u>Skills that Matter (2020)</u></a>	Calgary Economic Development Business Council of Alberta
<a href="#"><u>Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs (2021)</u></a>	Ministry of Advanced Education
<a href="#"><u>CreativeCITY: Prosperity through the Creative Economy (2021)</u></a>	Calgary Arts Development Authority
<a href="#"><u>Work to Live: Alberta Youth Mobility (2022)</u></a>	Canada West Foundation
<a href="#"><u>Calgary Skills System Audit (2022)</u></a>	Calgary Economic Development
<a href="#"><u>The Digital Talent Imperative: Calgary's Economic Edge (2022)</u></a>	ICT Council Calgary Economic Development

# The Five Insights

A synthesis of this [research](#) highlights five major evidence-based insights.

## Insight 1: It's a community challenge

The [audit](#) found Calgary's learning system incorporates 3,063 organizations, delivering 30,870 isolated certified and non-certified learning experiences. Of this system, 75% are for-profit and non-profit organizations, and three-quarters are headquartered in Calgary. The province only has oversight for 17% of the current system. However, the local community has played a limited role in areas related to learning. The result: the current learning system is highly fragmented, and it lacks a shared purpose and the underlying mechanisms to optimize its outcomes.



## Insight 2: Demand for adaptive capacity

Calgary is facing unprecedented changes in how we live, work, and learn. Technology, globalization, an unstable global energy market, and the structural impact of the pandemic are contributing to seismic economic and social change in our city. As such, a modern workplace demands people who can live with uncertainty, are innately curious, adapt to new roles, and develop new skills quickly.

The highest-demand skills sought by employers are those that provide the maximum adaptive capacity: enabling and functional skills. Both enabling and functional skills run horizontally across most of the jobs in the economy, demanding and providing the opportunity for maximum agility for people and organizations. (In contrast, demand for sectoral expertise depends more on external macroeconomic factors.) However, the current Calgary learning system is not optimized to develop the skills essential to adaptive capacity.



## The enabling skills gap

The skills demand [audit](#) supports previous [research](#) that found enabling skills as foundational across functional roles and sectors. Enabling skills (also called transferable, human, or soft skills) incorporate aptitude, ability, and knowledge, associated with problem-solving, self-reliance, collaboration, communications, core literacies, and core workplace skills. These skills are in the highest demand because they provide a capacity to adapt across diverse employment contexts.

Yet, this [audit](#) found a weakness in the explicit development of the 24 enabling skills in the *Competencies for Life* pilot. In fact, 16 of the 24 enabling skills scored exceptionally low (below 20 on a mean scale of 100). These skills include areas related to listening, numeracy, and adaptability, highlighting an opportunity to increase the explicit development of enabling skills. It's important to recognize the critical role that enabling skills play in allowing an individual to acquire and activate job skills. Possessing the optimal level of both enabling and job skills that work together provides an individual with the capacity to adapt as the world around them changes.

The lack of emphasis on enabling skills is linked to a traditional perception that job skills deliver greater economic value than enabling skills. As a result, skills developers often emphasize job skills. For example, [research](#) demonstrates that competitive sports contribute to developing skills related to collaboration and teamwork. However, when analyzing sports and recreation programming, the development of these skills is rarely explicitly identified as an outcome. Many people participating in these programs may not recognize or value the skills being developed. As such, this experience remains fully detached from an individual's learning path.

The *Competencies for Life* pilot further supports this conclusion, which found a lack of explicit recognition of enabling skills development in partner programs. The pilot found that less structured non-certified programming is required to reassess their methods and identify specific enabling skills being developed. In most cases, this did not require a large change to existing programming; rather, the *Competencies for Life* provided a harmonized framework and language for both skills developers and learners to reflect on the specific enabling skills developed.

## The Skills Challenge

Throughout the framework, we introduce you to a series of diverse people. These stories symbolize the diverse challenges and rich opportunities facing our city. Reflect on each of them and how our learning system could transform these challenges into opportunities.



### Meet Jorge

Jorge is a manager of a technology company who has struggled for a year to recruit a new product manager. He has decided that he wants to develop one of his engineers, Cindy, into the product manager role.

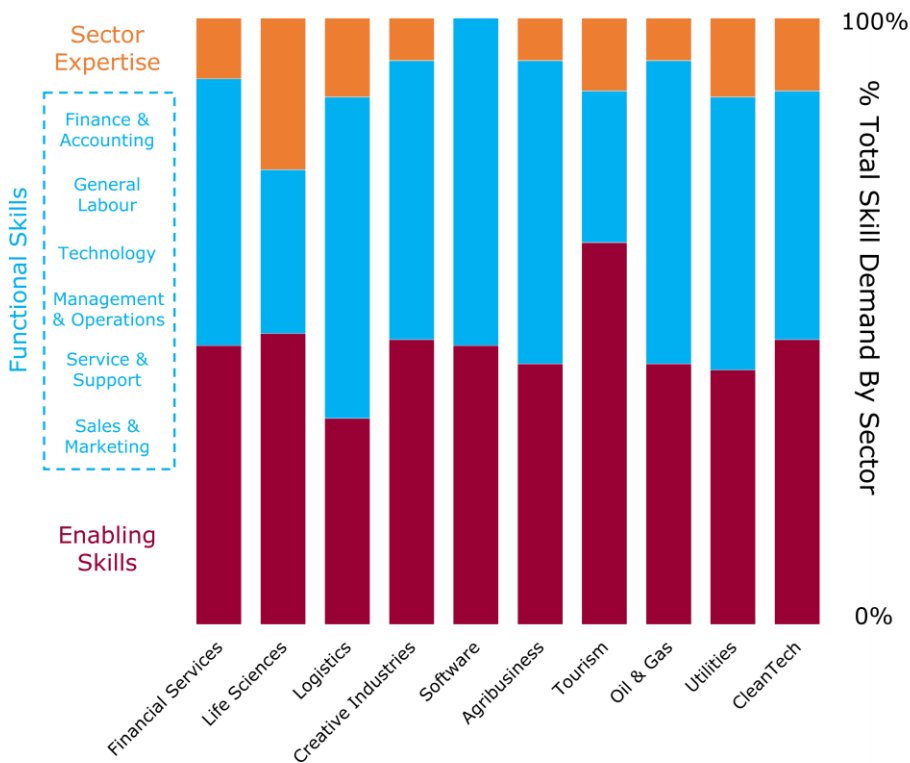
### The Skills Challenge

Where can Jorge get support to develop Cindy into a new product manager — a role that requires technology literacy and strong leadership, systems thinking, and negotiation skills?

## Functional skills and adaptive capacity

Functional skills are the skills required to complete a specific job, such as an accountant, a project manager, a chef, a nurse, or a software developer. Functional skills are not unique to a sector but provide the capacity to apply these skills across different sectors. The 2022 skills demand [audit](#) conducted by *Calgary Economic Development* identifies functional skills are in three times greater demand than sectoral expertise (see chart below). In other words, employers are three times more likely to ask for expertise in a functional role, such as marketing or accounting, than they are to ask for expertise unique to a sector, such as financial services or oil & gas. The five major functional skills clusters include:

1. Accounting & Finance
2. Sales & Marketing
3. Management & Operations
4. Technology
5. Service & Support



People with valued functional skills and a requisite level of enabling skills are able to adapt their expertise to different sector contexts. This highlights an opportunity to develop functional programming that also exposes people to different sector contexts. This may include a variety of experiential learning methods, such as work terms, volunteering, live case studies, and community-based research. Immersing people in diverse sector contexts allows them to learn how they can adapt functional skills to meet different sector and organizational contexts.

# 24

The number of enabling skills in the *Competencies for Life*.

*Calgary's economy requires talent to adapt quickly to emerging opportunities and challenges. In a constantly evolving labour market, learning must be continuous.*

Calgary on the Precipice

# 50%

Over 50% of all requested skills on job postings in Calgary are enabling skills.



Photo: Trevor Lalonde

## Professional identity and adaptive capacity

Professional identity is how we perceive our professional self, based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences. Our professional identity is often first formed through education and continues to evolve throughout our professional life. Identity is closely rooted in self-reflection and socio-emotional learning. Research shows that professional identity plays a significant role in our capacity to adapt and change professional roles. For this reason, it is important we establish professional identities that embed a capacity to adapt based on dynamic labour market demand. For example, an individual with a professional identity anchored to a high-demand functional role (e. g. , sales) will have a far greater capacity to adapt professionally compared to those who view themselves as having functional skills anchored to sectoral expertise (e. g. , financial services sales).

## Insight 3: Recognizing the legacy

For a century, the oil & gas sector has been the foundation of Calgary's prosperity. However, we must recognize the legacy of this sector on our current learning system. We have isolated this legacy in four areas:

### Weaker overall postsecondary credentials

Though Calgary's labour force is highly educated, it lags other major Canadian cities in the proportion of university graduates.

### Certified learning capacity

At 25%, Calgary has the lowest proportion (of major Canadian cities) of people attaining their credentials in the province in which they reside. Concurrently, it has the highest number of people who completed their credentials in another province or region. This reflects both the inward migration of talent over the past few decades and a dependency on other regions to develop skills. This historical capacity to "buy" skills from other jurisdictions is rooted in the compensation premium in oil & gas. With evidence of a decline in net inward migration from other Canadian provinces over the past several years, Calgary faces increasing pressure to evolve its learning capacity to reflect emerging high-demand enabling and functional skills, and sectoral expertise.

# 2X

Statistics Canada reports that compensation for those working in oil & gas extraction in 2021 was over double the national average.

# 26%

Of Alberta's GDP is represented by oil & gas.

# 6.1%

Of Alberta's total employment is in oil & gas extraction.

## Oil & gas premium

Though Calgary has the highest proportion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) graduates in Canada, this skills capacity is deeply entrenched in areas related to oil & gas exploration and production. Moreover, this specialized expertise in oil & gas has historically been rewarded with a financial premium compared to other sectors. This premium is a significant financial barrier that limits the transition to other sectors.

## Perception of limited career paths

A Canada West Foundation led [study](#) found that youth in Alberta, Toronto, and Vancouver possess deeply held convictions towards the environment and climate. For this reason, almost two-thirds of youth have no interest in working in oil & gas. However, the majority of young people believe most careers in Alberta are anchored to that sector. For example, the study showed that youth participants estimated between 40% and 70% of Albertans work directly in oil & gas. The reality is under 7%. As a result, we need to change perceptions and work to raise awareness about diverse career pathways in Calgary.

## Insight 4: Barriers to an inclusive labour market

The hiring process is one of the highest risk decisions an employer makes. Employers look to minimize risk by seeking skills certifications considered essential to a role, which may include educational credentials, professional designations, and proprietary credentials. However, most occupations lack a consistent skills certification system. This lack of rigorous and credible skills certification amplifies the risk to employers when they hire new employees.

In response, employers use various informal methods to mitigate their risk, including hiring from within their own networks, social certification (e. g. , references), submission of evidence (e. g. , portfolios), or explicit assessment and certification during the hiring process. [Research](#) suggests these informal processes embed implicit bias that systematically disadvantages certain equity-deserving communities, including females, Indigenous peoples, New Canadians, and those from under-educated or low-income households. As a result, overcoming this certification gap is essential to unlocking the full potential of Calgary's labour market.

# 20%

In Calgary, [20 percent](#) of executive positions are held by women. The lowest of the major cities.

# 40%

[40 percent](#) of Calgary's labour force is from racialized communities.

# 9%

Racialized communities represent only [nine percent](#) of board positions.

# 50%

Equally qualified ethnic minority candidates must apply for [50 percent](#) more positions than non-minority candidates to be invited for the same number of interviews.



## Insight 5: Barriers limiting system innovation

Calgary possesses a vast but fragmented learning system incorporating 3,063 organizations and 30,870 programs. This fragmentation highlights three issues and opportunities:

**System navigation:** Calgary's vast collection of learning programming is best characterized as the internet before Google. The content people are looking for may exist, but it is impossible to locate efficiently. Instead, Calgarians are confronted with infinite programs that may or may not align with their learning goals. The result is a structural advantage for traditional certified skills developers (e. g. , colleges) as people are faced with thousands of learning opportunities. This is consistent with consumer research which suggest consumers pursue "safe haven" of recognized brands.

**Demand for stackable micro-credentials:** Given the speed of change, there is an increasing demand for more agile short-cycle learning programs (e. g. , micro-credentials) that can be seamlessly stacked into macro-credentials (e. g. , degree or diploma). However, many traditional certified learning programs are tied to a macro-credential model leading to a single designation and requiring multiple years of coursework. The result is an estimated one-third of postsecondary students in Canada exit prior to receiving their macro-credential designation.

**Structural advantage:** As noted, faced with a wall of thousands of learning opportunities, people revert to recognized "safe havens" rather than new skills developers. This means that few new skills developers achieve long-term success. In fact, seven of ten skills developers are over 20 years old. In some sectors (e. g. , telecommunications, financial services) where large traditional organizations possess a structural advantage, intentional policy approaches have been deployed to stimulate a more open, innovative, and competitive marketplace.

# 3,063

Number of skill development providers currently in Calgary.

# 30,870

Number of skill development programs currently offered annually in Calgary.

# 3.5 M

Number of skill development experiences currently offered annually in Calgary.



# The Framework

This framework was developed by engaging hundreds of employers, educators, and policymakers to explore emerging labour market demands and potential paths to meeting these demands. From this engagement emerged a vision for our learning system:

**Calgary's learning system develops exceptional, creative, and adaptable talent, ready to thrive in a fast-changing world.**

Today, in Calgary, 3,063 organizations are delivering 30,870 programs and 3.5 million learning experiences annually. In addition, Calgarians have access to an infinite array of learning opportunities from across the globe. Therefore, the challenge faced is less about capacity and more about how to optimize these isolated learning experiences into an open system that can support the unique goals of every Calgarian.

Confronting this talent challenge extends beyond the capacity of any single level of government, educational institution, sector, or employer. To meet this challenge, the *LearningCITY Collective* propose a community-level solution - *Calgary's Skills Development Framework*. The framework is anchored to four drivers: **adaptable**, **accessible**, **empowered**, and **open**. We will provide an overview of each driver, their goals, priorities, and key performance indicators (refer to figure below).



In the next section, we provide an overview of each driver, including:

**Goals:** The goals required to deliver each driver.

**Priorities:** Completed, in-progress, or new initiatives ("What's Next") to deliver each driver.

**Candidate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Potential measures that could be used to manage progress towards each driver.



## Meet Spirit

Spirit is the sales manager of a wind energy technology company that plans to expand to the United States and Mexico in the next three years. Spirit wants to lead this expansion, but their boss doesn't think they are ready for it.

## The Skills Challenge

How can Spirit develop the professional and personal skills to lead their company's international expansion?

## A Living Framework

Great plans are living documents and Calgary's *Skills Development Framework* will be as dynamic as the city it is supporting. This requires those engaged in the system, including learners, educators, employers, and policymakers to own this framework.



## Driver 1: Adaptable

Calgarians embrace disruption and change as an opportunity.

The skills demand audit supports previous research that identified employers are increasingly demanding people who can live with uncertainty, adapt to new roles, and develop new skills quickly. However, the current fragmented learning system possesses limited intentionality or accountability for developing the skills that enable adaptive capacity. In short, we must develop a system and culture that prepares Calgarians to lead the change, not chase it.

### Goals

**An adaptive culture:** Calgarians possess a culture of adaptive capacity and continuous learning, which values the development of the skills that enable adaptive capacity.

**An adaptive identity:** The capacity for Calgarians to adapt requires both the skills and the belief they can succeed when faced with disruption. This belief is anchored to how they've internalized their professional identity. Therefore, all Calgarians should possess professional identities rooted in an adaptive capacity.

**An adaptive learning system:** Calgary's learning system requires the agility and capacity to adapt. This includes monitoring emerging skills demands and embedding mechanisms to efficiently optimize the system to meet these new demands.

### Priorities

#### Completed or In Progress

**Skills system audit:** In 2022, *Calgary Economic Development* completed the *Calgary Skills System Audit* to provide a shared understanding of the current system's adaptive capacity.

**Harmonized enabling skills pilot:** In 2022, a consortium of fifteen community partners conducted a pilot of harmonized enabling skills - *Competencies for Life*. The pilot tested the mechanisms required to scale a harmonized enabling skills model.

**Decoupled credentials pilot:** In 2022, a consortium of partners piloted *Trusted Skills*, a skills certification system that decouples learning from skills certification. Decoupling is essential to unlocking a more agile, adaptive, and inclusive labour market.

**Digital skills studies:** In 2018 and 2021, *Calgary Economic Development* funded studies associated with emerging digital skills opportunities. These studies identified priorities and gaps in digital skills development.



### Meet Kim

Kim is a high school senior who excels academically and loves music but is not sure a full-time college or university path is right for her.

### The Skills Challenge

Can Kim find a career and learning path where she can develop her professional skills and network while she continues to explore her future?

**Creative skills audit:** From 2020-22, *Calgary Arts Development* completed *CreativeCITY: Prosperity through the Creative Economy*. This study audited the existing capacity of the creative skills system.

**Skills by Design:** In 2020, *Business Council of Alberta* completed *Skills by Design: A Blueprint for Alberta's Future workforce*. This study identified the importance of an adaptive learning system.

**Film & television study:** In 2022, *Calgary Economic Development* completed the Film & Television Labour Market Information study. This study identified priorities and gaps in film & television skills development.

## What's Next?

**Refine and scale harmonized enabling skills:** To explicitly prioritize enabling skills, including accelerating their development and verification, employers and skills developers adopt and scale a harmonized enabling skills framework.

**Refine and scale decoupled credentials:** Extend the *Trusted Skills pilot* to assess the ability to effectively certify harmonized enabling skills.

**Work-integrated learning and adaptive capacity:** Design work-integrated learning (WIL) that accelerates the development of adaptive capacity.

**Adaptive identity tools:** Develop and scale tools to facilitate the development of adaptive identities.

## Candidate KPIs

**Enabling skills development:** Percentage of Calgarians developing high-demand enabling skills.

**Functional skills development:** Percentage of Calgarians developing high-demand functional skills.

**Adaptive confidence:** Percentage of Calgarians possessing confidence in their capacity to adapt professionally.



## Meet Paul

Paul is the president of an agribusiness tech start-up that is struggling to find software designers with a background in agriculture.

## The Skills Challenge

Is there a way Paul can immerse his current software designers into the industry processes and daily challenges facing their farming clients?





## Driver 2: Accessible

Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in the learning process and championed by all.

The existing labour market embeds systemic bias based on gender, ethnicity, age, and socio-economic capacity. This suppresses the potential of our existing labour market and employers who depend on it. We must commit to developing an inclusive labour market, open and equal for all.

### Goals

**Calgarians confront systemic bias:** Calgarians are committed to confronting the systemic bias in our labour market

**Skills-based employment practices:** Employers are committed to confronting the systemic bias in our labour market by introducing employment practices prioritizing evidence and skills.

**Diverse programming:** Learning opportunities are designed by the communities for the communities.

### Priorities

#### Completed or In Progress

**Newcomer study:** In 2020, *Calgary Economic Development* completed *Newcomers as Economic Drivers* study. It showed that newcomers bring diversity that drives innovation, develops perspective, and sparks creativity within workplaces.

**Skills system audit:** In 2022, *Calgary Economic Development* completed *Calgary Skills System Audit* to provide a shared understanding of the current system capacity.

**Harmonized enabling skills pilot:** In 2022, a consortium of fifteen community partners conducted a pilot of harmonized enabling skills - *Competencies for Life*. The pilot tested the mechanisms required to scale a harmonized enabling skills model.

**Decoupled credentials pilot:** In 2022, a consortium of partners piloted *Trusted Skills*, a skills certification system that decouples learning from skills certification. Decoupling facilitates transitioning to a skill-based labour market.

**Inclusive programming:** *Calgary's Trade Accelerator Program* ran an Indigenous cohort, designed and led entirely by Indigenous business leaders, to support Indigenous businesses in becoming export ready.



### Meet Rishi

Rishi recently immigrated to Calgary after a 15-year leadership role in healthcare administration in her home city, Mumbai, India.

### The Skills Challenge

How can Rishi leverage her previous education and experience while gaining essential knowledge about her new city and local healthcare system to further her healthcare career in Calgary?

## What's Next?

**Refine and scale harmonized enabling skills:** To explicitly prioritize enabling skills, including accelerating their development and verification, employers and skills developers adopt and scale a harmonized enabling skills framework.

**Refine and scale decoupled credentials:** Extend the *Trusted Skills pilot* to assess the ability to effectively certify harmonized enabling skills.

**Empower small-medium enterprises:** Develop justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) open access resources to empower small-medium enterprises to confront systemic labour market bias.

**Pan-Canadian benchmarking:** Collaborate with Canadian peer cities to harmonize JEDI benchmarking.

## Candidate KPIs

**JEDI implementation:** Percentage of employers implementing JEDI initiatives.

**Skills-based hiring:** Percentage of employers adopting objective skills assessment mechanisms during hiring.

**Reflective learning:** Proportion of learning opportunities developed by the community they are designed to support.

**Reflective governance:** Proportion of executive and board roles of Calgary-based organizations reflect the demographics of the city.

**Media-tracking:** Tracking media mentions of Calgary's inclusive labour market.

*Long-term recovery and a future with opportunities for our children will depend on the creativity, grit and determination of entrepreneurial Calgarians and the innovative thinkers in our economy.*

Calgary on the Precipice



Photo: Roth and Ramberg



## Driver 3: Empowered

Calgary's learning system empowers personalized, purpose-based learning.

The most serious challenge facing Calgary's competitive position is not organizational; it is cultural. Traditional education frames learning through the lens of age and life stage. The result is a highly efficient but generic system where learners progress in a linear fashion, similar to climbing a ladder. However, to compete, the system must enable personalized, purpose-based learning anchored in exploration, experimentation, and empowerment. The result is a learning experience that transforms into a personalized climbing wall. This climbing wall reframes the learning system by empowering the individual to choose their own path.

### Goals

**Empower Calgarians:** Calgarians of all ages are empowered to define their unique personal and professional goals and develop a dynamic plan to achieve them.

**Simple navigation:** Calgarians have access to simple harmonized supports that empower them to explore the endless career pathways available and match these pathways to learning opportunities.

### Priorities

#### Completed or In Progress

**EDGE UP:** In 2019, a consortium of partners launched, EDGE UP, a digital reskilling program for mid-to-senior level oil & gas workers who have been displaced from the industry. In 2021, additional funding was secured to support the expansion of EDGE UP.

**WIL secretariat:** In 2022, a consortium of partners launched a three-year integrated postsecondary WIL program to increase the volume and variety of WIL opportunities for students and improve access to talent for the industry.



### Meet Kennedy

Kennedy is graduating with a degree in communications and wants to pursue a career with a communications agency. Since she was 15, Kennedy has worked in various client-facing roles in her family's real estate business but is struggling to translate this experience into skills valued by potential employers.

### The Skills Challenge

How can Kennedy demonstrate she possesses the skills that agencies seek — above and beyond those of traditional new graduates?





Photo: Brandon Wallis

### What's Next?

**Harmonize career & skill navigation:** Collaborate with system partners to prototype a harmonized career and skills navigation support. In addition to empowering people, these supports are essential to unlocking the potential of an open learning system.

### Candidate KPIs

**Adoption of harmonized navigation:** Percentage of Calgarians active on a common career and skills navigation platform.

**Agency:** Percentage of Calgarians who view they have agency over their professional and personal skills development.

*Learning  
is not  
compulsory...  
neither is  
survival.*

W. Edwards Deming





## Driver 4: Open

Calgary's learning system is open and drives performance and innovation.

Today's learning system is closed and fragmented, embedding structural and cultural barriers to competition and innovation. Adopting an open learning system will drive competition and innovation.

### Goals

**A thriving system:** Fostering inclusive participation that works collaboratively to establish enabling infrastructures to transform the current closed learning system into one that is open, competitive, and driven by innovation.

**From consumer to co-creator:** Employers transition from mere consumers of talent to becoming active co-creators of talent. Participants in the system can evolve and adapt within a system that can handle changing realities.

### Priorities

#### Completed or In Progress

**WIL secretariat:** In 2022, a consortium of partners launched a three-year integrated postsecondary WIL program to increase the volume and variety of WIL opportunities for students and improve access to talent for the industry.

**Micro-credential consortium:** A consortium of seven postsecondary institutions submitted a joint micro-credential grant application to the Ministry of Advanced Education in July 2022.

**Decoupled credentials pilot:** In 2022, a consortium of partners piloted *Trusted Skills*, a skills certification system that decouples learning from skills certification. Decoupling facilitates transitioning to a skill-based labour market.

**Host annual "state of talent" event:** To continue to strengthen a collaborative and open system, employers, skills developers, and policymakers will host an annual "start of talent" event. *LearningCITY* 2022 will host 250 employers, skills developers, policymakers, and learners from across the system.



### Meet Maria

Maria retired after a successful corporate career as a logistics manager but wants to leverage her previous experience to start a social business that reduces clothing industry waste and pollution.

### The Skills Challenge

How can Maria develop the skills required to start and lead social business?

## What's Next?

**Pilot Open Learning Lab:** An agile and adaptive skills system designed to deliver city-level priorities demands a mechanism to enable systematic harmonization, collaboration, and innovation. The *LearningCITY Collective* recommend this mechanism be the *Open Learning Lab* (refer to visual below). This Lab is an independent non-profit entity mandated with identifying, resourcing, testing, and scaling innovations in skills development. The Lab is a place for employers, skills developers, policymakers, researchers, and learners to collaborate and work together to accelerate Calgary's skills development. To stimulate and deepen the culture of collaboration, the Lab brings together innovative thinkers and doers from across the ecosystem to deliver Canada's most agile and adaptive labour force. The pilot phase will focus on the following:

- To maximize system capacity, identify priority initiatives.
- Establish mechanism to maximize system collaboration.
- Secure financial and human capital required to activate on initiatives.
- Manage the implementation of pilot programs.
- Track progress to delivering on the defined talent goals.
- Disseminate the learnings from the *Open Learning Lab* to the learning system.

**Learning policy review:** Collaborate with the Government of Alberta to explore policy pathways to increasing competition and innovation in certified learning.

## The Open Learning Lab



### Lab Mandate

Harmonize

Collaborate

Innovate



### Lab Staffing

Lab Secretariat

Community Secondments

Work-Integrated Learning



### Lab Process

Identify Opportunity

Establish Collaborative Program

Prototype & Pilot

Measure Progress

Iterate & Refine



### Outcomes



**Adaptable people, organizations & systems**



**Empowered learners**



**Accessible & inclusive labour market**



**Open & competitive learning system**

## Candidate KPIs

**Collaboration:** Percentage of the skills developers engaged in collaborative projects within, and across, the 10 skills developer sectors.

**Engagement:** Number of collaborative projects within and across the 10 skills developer sectors.

**Funding:** Funding secured for collaborative projects both within and across the ten skills developer sectors.

**WIL scope:** Percentage of businesses actively engaged in WIL annually.

**Sustainable competition:** Percentage of new skills developers who remain in business until year 10.

*If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.*

Henry Ford



# Synthesis of Priority Initiatives

Priorities*	Adaptable	Accessible	Empowered	Open
Skills system audit	Completed	In Progress		
Harmonized enabling skills	Completed	In Progress		
Decoupled certification	Completed	In Progress		Open
Adaptive WIL	Completed			
EDGE UP		In Progress	Empowered	
Professional identity supports	Completed		Empowered	
Establish WIL secretariat	Completed	In Progress	Empowered	Open
Digital skills studies	Completed			
Creative skills studies	Completed			
Film & TV study	Completed			
Newcomer study		In Progress		
Harmonize career & skill navigation		In Progress	Empowered	
SME JEDI initiative		In Progress		
JEDI benchmarking		In Progress		
Trade accelerator program – indigenous cohort			Empowered	
Annual “state of talent” event.	Completed	In Progress	Empowered	Open
Pilot Open Learning Lab	Completed	In Progress	Empowered	Open
Learning policy review				Open

\*Completed, In Progress and What’s Next Priorities

# The Path Forward

A modern labour market demands people who can live with uncertainty, adapt to new roles, and develop new skills quickly. In this report, the *LearningCITY Collective* conceptualize a *Calgary Skills Development Framework* designed to deliver on the dynamic needs of a community in transition.

To be a community that adapts, Calgarians must possess a life-long capacity to learn. This is about re-envisioning the nature of learning by recognizing that traditional education systems, though essential, are only a small component of our city's rich learning system.

For Calgarians, it means we must take increasing ownership of our learning, regardless of whether we are 16 or 60. For employers, it means investing in learning far earlier and sustainably. For policymakers and skills developers, it means establishing an open system where competition and performance promote innovation.

*Calgary's Skills Development Framework* is Calgary's framework. It is a vision that is living and dynamic and owned by every learner, educator, employer, and policymaker in our city. It recognizes that the greatest barrier to delivering this vision is not external, but in the embedded rules, routines, practices, and cultures that influence our mindset and behaviour. Therefore, this framework is a call for collaboration and commitment to continue rethinking talent in Calgary and innovate our future together.

To provide your input into Calgary's *Skills Development Framework*, please visit  
[LearningCITY.ca](https://LearningCITY.ca)

