

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beacon's BEAMS Project Secures Funding Boost from Island Savings and Extension from Province, with BC Transit Partnership Showcasing Real-World Success

Victoria, BC - June 24, 2025 - Beacon Community Services is proud to announce new support for its BEAMS (Beacon's Empathetic & Aspirational Method of Service) employment project. Thanks to additional funding from Island Savings and a formal funding extension from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction until March 2027, BEAMS is expanding its ability to support individuals facing complex barriers to employment across Greater Victoria.

Launched in September 2024, BEAMS offers holistic, wrap-around services to people navigating housing insecurity, mental and physical health challenges, and active substance use. Participants receive hands-on work experience, job coaching, job start supplies and key certifications like First Aid and Food Safe, empowering them to re-enter the workforce with confidence and purpose.

Since opening its doors, BEAMS has already surpassed expectations, serving 94 participants by January 2025, well ahead of its target of 80 for the full fiscal year. Demand continues to grow, and although we experienced a waitlist earlier in the season, the team successfully served all participants and met the community's growing needs. With the project receiving further funding from Island Savings, Beacon will be able to enhance project delivery by:

- Increasing the number of participants who can access BEAMS
- Providing more off-site supportive group work and immersion experiences,
- Increasing the number of clients participating in each work experience,
- Expanding and increasing outreach services in the community,
- Ensuring more clients are accessing the variety of supports available at BEAMS, such as food and transportation, free paid training and certifications, workshops, and more.

A Community Partnership in Action: BC Transit and BEAMS

A standout example of the project's impact is its partnership with BC Transit, which offered BEAMS participants real-world training opportunities at the handyDART Centre construction site in View Royal. The site became a living classroom for individuals interested in custodial and construction work.

Since December, seven BEAMS participants have cleaned and prepared the facility for its spring opening, receiving exposure to workplace culture, safety protocols, and hands-on job experience in a professional setting. Several have returned multiple times, building skills, confidence, and community connections.

"When we first heard about BEAMS employment project, we saw the significant good it can have for people in our communities who are facing employment challenges. The support for workplace readiness and inclusive access to employment that BEAMS provides is empowering our fellow community members to flourish, and that's something we believe in nurturing at Island Savings. Being a partner in this program is a proud moment for

us, and I'm excited to see its successes as we continue to support its growth." - Kendall Gross, President of Island Savings.

"BC Transit was thrilled to collaborate with Beacon Community Services on the innovative BEAMS approach to employment training and we were honoured to be their first community partner," said Lori Beaulieu, Project Manager for the Victoria handyDART Centre. "The experience has been a win-win for everyone involved and we're currently looking for another opportunity to partner with the BEAMS program to continue building experience and relationships."

"This is a transformative project - one that reflects what's possible when community partners come together to invest in people," said Tricia Gueulette, CEO of Beacon Community Services. "With renewed provincial support and Island Savings' investment, we can grow BEAMS and offer a lifeline to more individuals who are ready to rebuild their lives and futures."

About Beacon Community Services

Beacon Community Services was formed in 1974 when a small group of volunteers established the Citizens' Advisory Committee to help address social issues in Saanich Peninsula communities. Today, Beacon serves Southern Vancouver Island and the outer Gulf Islands - and the Beacon team numbers around 300 staff and 600 volunteers. Through a wide range of community programs and services, Beacon continues to support people of all ages, strengthening communities and transforming lives. Learn more at www.beaconcs.ca

About Island Savings

Island Savings is a premier provider of banking and investment services for residents and businesses throughout Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands. As a division of First West Credit Union, B.C.'s third-largest credit union with 45 branches throughout the province, Island Savings brings innovative products, an extensive branch network and local decision making to the banking experience. For more information on Island Savings, visit www.islandsavings.ca

About BC Transit

BC Transit is the provincial crown agency responsible for coordinating the delivery of public transportation across British Columbia (outside Metro Vancouver). With a commitment to community engagement and sustainability, BC Transit partners with local governments to ensure accessible, reliable, and inclusive transit solutions for all British Columbians.

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