

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Launching New Agency to Better Serve Tradespeople

Skilled Trades Ontario will address labour shortage by improving training and simplifying services

January 25, 2022

[Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government has launched Skilled Trades Ontario, a new Crown agency, to improve trades training and simplify services. The new agency will promote and market the trades, develop the latest training and curriculum standards, and provide a streamlined user-friendly experience for tradespeople. These changes will result in more workers for in-demand jobs and prepare Ontario for a strong economic comeback.

“We’re redrawing the system to address Ontario’s labour shortage and make the trades a career of choice for more people,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. “The skilled trades provide well-paying and rewarding careers that are vital for our economy. By creating this new agency, we are working for workers and delivering the generational change that labour leaders and employers have been calling for.”

The new [online services](#) will help apprentices conveniently manage their careers in one place with an online one-stop-shop for scheduling classes and exams, submitting forms, paying fees and more. These changes will reduce the skilled labour shortage the province currently faces – estimated at 350,000 by 2025 – by making it easier for more people to learn about and enter the trades, including reducing processing and registration times for applicants from 60 days to 12.

“The creation of Skilled Trades Ontario is an important milestone, and one I am thrilled to be a part of leading,” said Michael Sherrard, Chair of Skilled Trades Ontario. “The implementation of a successful apprenticeship and skilled trades



system is critical to the economic growth and success of our province, and today's announcement is the next step in securing that future for us all."

An independent Board of Directors will lead the agency in delivering on the government's [Skilled Trades Strategy](#) to break the stigma surrounding the trades, simplify the system, and encourage employers to hire more apprentices.

"The skilled trades are the backbone of our province – offering 144 well-paying and in-demand careers for people to choose from," said Chief Executive Officer and Registrar Melissa Young. "I commend this government for bringing generational change that will remove the stigma surrounding the trades, cut down on red tape, and ensure all young people know these jobs offer a clear path to a better life."

Launching this new agency builds on the government's ongoing efforts to [attract, support, and protect workers](#), making Ontario the [top place in the world to work, live and raise a family](#).

Quick Facts

- There are [144 trades](#) in Ontario. By 2025, one in five jobs will be in the trades.
- Under the Ontario College of Trades, apprentice registrations fell by over 17,000 or 40%. Today, the average age of an apprentice is 29 years old.
- The previous system had prospective tradespeople mailing documents to offices for one service, calling in for a second and appearing in person for a third. This was confusing and prevented many apprentices from pursuing their interests.
- Data suggests that the need to replace retiring workers is greater for trades workers than for other occupations. In 2016, nearly one in three journeypersons in Ontario were aged 55 years or older.
- Over 500 Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development inspectors are now responsible for compliance and enforcement of the trades and apprenticeship legislation.

Quotes

"On behalf of the Labourers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) we applaud Minister McNaughton's continued dedication and focus on promoting



the skilled trades as a viable career path in Ontario and creating numerous opportunities for prospective workers in the industry. The launch of Skilled Trades Ontario is a critical step in eliminating barriers and time-consuming red-tape for apprenticeship training, while streamlining a worker focused approach to empower opportunities for a rewarding and lucrative career path. These welcomed changes will help to ensure that our province continues to respond to growing labour demands while empowering career building opportunities for a diverse and skilled workforce who remain at the forefront of building and strengthening critical infrastructure that our communities and economy rely on."

- Joseph S. Mancinelli

LiUNA International Vice President and Regional Manager of Central and Eastern Canada

"The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario welcomes the establishment of Skilled Trades Ontario. We look forward to working with their leadership team to promote and strengthen the construction trades, and to ensure that Ontario leads the way with the best, safest, and most up-to-date training standards in Canada."

- Jim Hogarth

President, Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario

"The IBEW CCO congratulates Minister Monte McNaughton on the launch of Skilled Trades Ontario. We looks forward to working with both the CEO and the Board on the important work of strengthening Ontario's trades training system."

- James Barry

Executive Secretary Treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Construction Council of Ontario

"We're optimistic that Skilled Trades Ontario is up to the challenge of building a skilled trades and apprenticeship system that's more modern, streamlined and flexible; a system that encourages employer participation, focuses on narrowing the skills gap and showing more high school graduates and job seekers why the skilled trades are such a worthwhile career of choice."

- Patrick McManus

Chair of the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance

Additional Resources

- [Strong Leadership to Guide Skilled Trades Ontario](#)

- [Skilled Trades Ontario](#)
- [Apprenticeship in Ontario](#)
- [Find a Career You Wouldn't Trade](#)
- [Action Plan: Response to the Apprentice Youth Advisors' Report](#)

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