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Ontario Investing in Construction Workers

1 message

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**NEWS RELEASE****Ontario Investing in Construction Workers**

New programs provide training and supports for current and future tradespersons

June 21, 2021[Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

LONDON — The Ontario government is investing over \$4 million in six projects to support current and future construction workers across the province. These Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario projects will promote the trades, train future workers and ensure that current workers have the right tools and mental health supports they need.

Details were provided today by Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, joined by labour leaders and Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton at United Association Local 527's Training Centre in London.

“Construction workers make our dreams come to life – it’s on their backs that we have the homes our families live in, the schools where we learn, and the hospitals and health care centres that have been crucial to us over the last 18 months,” said Minister McNaughton. “We need to take care of these talented workers by giving them what they need to build with confidence and vision – while training our future generation for these in-demand jobs.”

The six projects in this investment are:

- A pre-apprenticeship program for 460 workers to learn about rodworking typically used in transit and light rail bridge construction. The Ontario Ironworkers District Council will provide two weeks of in-class training and an eight-week work placement. Training will be available in Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury, Hamilton and Windsor. Those who successfully complete the program will be registered and employed as apprentices.
- The Tomorrow’s Trades project to introduce 96 underrepresented youth to the skilled trades in Hamilton, London, Ottawa and Sudbury. This project will include 12 weeks of hands-on training and a 12-week work placement to learn about being carpenters, electrical workers, pipe trades, sheet metal workers and ironworkers. Upon completion, participants can enter a union-sponsored apprenticeship.
- A new Building and Construction Tradeswomen project to attract more women to the trades through marketing and free training.
- Support for Ironworkers Local 759 in Thunder Bay to purchase necessary equipment used in training, testing and certifying 140 apprentices and journeypersons so they do not need to travel to upgrade or maintain their certifications.
- The development of a one-stop online learning system for those interested in the construction trades to explore and build essential skills they can apply to apprenticeships in construction.
- A research project at the De Novo Treatment Centre in Huntsville to study

and provide support for addiction and suicide issues in the construction industry. This project will develop a report and create tools for training centres, unions, and employers to better understand and address mental health.

Funding comes as part of the government's \$115 million Skills Development Fund to address challenges to hiring, training and retraining workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of the province's *2021 Budget*, [Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy](#).

Quick Facts

- Data suggests that the need to replace retiring workers is greater for skilled trades workers than for other occupations. In 2016, nearly one in three journeypersons were aged 55 years or older.
- According to Statistics Canada, more than 500,000 people were employed in construction in Ontario in 2020.
- The median hourly wage rate of ironworkers in Ontario in 2019 was \$40.
- In the fourth quarter of 2020, there were 11,805 job vacancies in the construction sector in Ontario, up from 10,125 in the fourth quarter of 2019.
- Ontario is investing a total of \$288.2 million in 2021–22 in its Skilled Trades Strategy. The strategy aims to modernize and evolve the skilled trades and apprenticeship system by reducing the stigma related to a trades career, simplifying the apprenticeship system, and encouraging business participation.
- On June 3, 2021, the government passed the [Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021](#) to make the province's skilled trades and apprenticeship system more efficient, accessible and easier to navigate. The new legislation will help tradespeople get their certification from one reliable, streamlined destination through a new Crown agency, Skilled Trades Ontario, that would replace the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT).

Quotes

"The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario applauds the government's funding announcement. This investment will encourage young people from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds to join the construction trades, support mental health for our construction workers, deliver cutting-edge skills training to thousands of workers across the province, and help attract and retain more women in construction."

- Patrick J. Dillon

Business Manager and Secretary Treasurer, Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario

"These projects offer a great opportunity for those interested in the trades to explore, experience and get involved in any of the Unionized Construction Skilled Trade Apprenticeships leading to meaningful careers in Ontario. All of these projects will be helpful to Ontario's Building and Construction Trades Unions and their Employer Partners in advancing their efforts in building a more inclusive and diverse workforce by improving awareness and pathways to apprenticeships and careers in the industry. "

- Adam Melnick

Program Director, Construction Training and Apprenticeship Ontario & Tomorrow's Trades

"The Electrical Contractors' Association of Ontario (ECAO) applauds the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council (PBCTCO) and the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development on the announcement and launch of Tomorrow's Trades. With a focus on recruitment and preparation of candidates that are traditionally underrepresented in the skilled trades, such as women, Indigenous youth, Black youth, persons with disabilities, newcomers, youth at-risk, returning veterans, reservists, cadets, and those from racialized communities for application to apprenticeships and careers in the skilled trades; ECAO welcomes this program and commits, with our labour partners the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Construction Council of Ontario (IBEW CCO), to support fully the important work of Tomorrow's Trades. We share in the excitement of the program's founders and funders, and look forward to seeing positive steps forward in our industry."

- R. Graeme Aitken**Executive Director, Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario**

"Great initiative on behalf of the Provincial Building Trades. CECCO supports this initiative and will add assistance when needed."

- Wayne Peterson**Executive Director, Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario (CECCO)**

"This type of research project will help us identify some of the main factors causing these high rates of suicide and addiction. From there, we hope to provide resources to address these needs, address the addiction and suicide issues, and save lives."

- Aaron Sinclair**Executive Director, De Novo Treatment Centre**

"Thank you on behalf of the members and apprentices of Ironworkers Local 759. These new machines will give us the opportunity to train our young apprentices and upgrade our journeypersons on work safety with the most up-to-date equipment available. This improvement to our Local will benefit workers for years to come."

- Wayne Thibault**Business Manager, Ironworkers Local 759**

Additional Resources

- [Skills Development Fund](#)
- [Employment Ontario: Free Programs and Services for Job Seekers, Workers and Employers](#)
- [2021 Budget - Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy](#)

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