

Ontario Helping More Students Enter the Skilled Trades Faster

Grade 11 students can soon apprentice full-time and still earn their high-school diploma

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[Office of the Premier](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government is preparing young people for in-demand and well-paying careers by allowing students in grade 11 to transition to a full-time, skilled trades apprenticeship program. Upon receiving their Certificate of Apprenticeship, these young workers can apply for their Ontario Secondary School Diploma as mature students. At a time when the province continues to face historic labour shortages, this change means that more students will be able to enter the trades faster than ever before to help build Ontario.

“These changes provide students with exciting pathways to good-paying jobs and rewarding careers and support our government’s ongoing work to attract more young people into the skilled trades,” said Premier Doug Ford. “Whether it’s enhancing trades education in our schools, breaking down barriers for newcomers or upskilling workers, we’re leaving no stone unturned to train the skilled workforce that will build Ontario.”

In the construction sector alone, 72,000 new workers are needed by 2027 to fill open positions because of retirements and expected job growth. To help deliver the province’s infrastructure plans, including building 1.5 million homes by 2031, more people are needed in the skilled trades.

“For far too long, parents and students have been told the only path to succeed in life is by going to university, which is simply not true,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. “When you have a career in the skilled trades, you have a career for life. Our government will continue to provide students with the tools they need to land well-paying and life-long careers.”

Additionally, the government will begin consultations in fall 2023 with employers, unions, education stakeholders, trainers, parents, and others about ways to make it even easier for young people to enter a career in the trades. This includes the potential of lowering entry requirements for some of the 106 skilled trades that currently require a grade 12-level education.

"To ensure all students can get ahead in this province, we are accelerating pathways from high school to apprenticeship learning and ultimately, a career in the skilled trades," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "Our government's mission is to fill the skills gap by better connecting Ontario students to these good-paying jobs, helping many students who may not have graduated, now gain a credential that leads them to meaningful employment."

Quick Facts

- The Ministry of Education is working to recognize up to 30 credits required to earn the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) for individuals with a Certificate of Apprenticeship or equivalent.
 - It takes between two to five years to complete an apprenticeship.
 - 1.2 million people are working in Ontario's skilled trades. Many of them are set to retire over the coming years.
 - There are over 140 skilled trades in Ontario.
 - Recently, there were nearly 285,000 jobs in Ontario going unfilled, while about one in five job openings in Ontario are projected to be in the skilled trades by 2026.
 - Since 2020, Ontario has invested nearly \$1 billion to make it easier to learn a trade, breaking the stigma, attracting youth, simplifying the system, and encouraging employer participation.
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Quotes

"Young Ontarians who are contemplating their future career options should know that working in the construction trades by starting a registered apprenticeship on track towards becoming a Journey person can offer a lifetime of opportunity and prosperity. Meeting growing demand for skilled construction labour in order to secure Ontario's housing and infrastructure needs will demand better attraction and retention of apprentices. Jobsite health and safety is best ensured through apprenticeship training and today's announcement can bring us a step closer towards securing the next generation of safe and productive construction trades professionals."

- Marc Arsenault

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

"Today's announcement is a step forward in our collaborative efforts to strengthen opportunities for Ontario's workforce. Through early exposure to the trades, our future generation of industry leaders and community builders have an opportunity to earn while they learn, obtaining hands on, innovative skills that will empower strong careers in the industry. On behalf of LiUNA, we look forward to continue working with the government of Ontario, industry and education partners throughout the consultation period, working strategically to modernize our apprenticeship system and advance opportunities for a workforce that our province, economy and industry rely on."

- Victoria Mancinelli

LiUNA Director Public Relations, Marketing, Strategic Partnerships

"Skills Ontario applauds the government for its continued investment in building Ontario's workforce of the future. This latest initiative will support and help young people after grade 10 to better enter an apprenticeship to start their career. With enormous and growing skills shortages, it is imperative that we continue to introduce innovative solutions and pathways that will assist young people who are interested in careers in the skilled trades."

**- Ian Howcroft
CEO of Skills Ontario**

"Today's announcement further highlights the provincial government's commitment to promoting careers in the skilled trades. By allowing students after grade 10 to pursue apprenticeship opportunities is a clear signal to both students and parents that a career in the skilled trades is a career for life. Over the next decade, Ontario's housing, transit, and infrastructure objectives will be built by those beginning their apprenticeship journey today."

**- Steven Crombie
Chair, Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance**

"This is an important step to enable emerging skilled trades people to embark on their journey into the trades. Landscape Ontario is proud to support this tremendous move to further develop a larger workforce."

**- Joe Salemi
Executive Director, Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association**

"The new 'Grade 10 to Apprenticeship Pathway' announcement by Minister McNaughton, Minister Lecce and the Ontario Government will help thousands of clients we serve, most of whom are barriered youth. The trades are not only an 'in-demand' opportunity but provides a well-paying long term career. We are so pleased that the government continues to invest in Ontario's future through our youth and innovative programs like this."

**- Timothy Lang
President and CEO, Youth Employment Services**

"My Name is Austin Richard and I finished Grade 10 of my high school. YES - Youth Employment Services has been helping me and they just told me about this astonishing news from the government of Ontario. This will create more career paths for youth that are looking to develop their skills in the trades. PAC is an amazing program, especially for youth such as myself who seek employment in trades and haven't completed high school as it helps with employment and the completion of your high school."

**- Austin Richard
Grade 10, Youth Employment Services Client**

"The Grade 10 to Apprenticeship Pathway is a bold step towards building a successful career. By combining academic learning with hands-on experience, apprenticeship allows young people to develop valuable skills, earn money, and gain a sense of pride in their work. It's a pathway that opens doors to endless opportunities and empowers young people to shape their own future."

**- Jeff Johnson
Chief Executive Officer, Fernie Youth Services**

"Merit Ontario applauds Ministers McNaughton and Lecce for this much-needed initiative. The labour shortage in the skilled trades can only be addressed by ending the stigma and ensuring a path for young people to enter the trades. The "Grade 10 to Apprenticeship Pathway" removes barriers to give high school students the opportunity to pursue high paying careers that last a lifetime."

**- Michael Gallardo
President & CEO, Merit Ontario**

"This is an exciting announcement. I look forward to the consultation scheduled for the fall of 2023 that will consider lowering the grade 12 requirement for some trades. It's an important consideration especially as it applies to older apprenticeship applicants with the life experience and aptitudes for the trades but who lack high school graduation."

- Ian Cunningham
President, Council of Ontario Construction Associations

"The members of the Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) applaud our Provincial government's continued focus on normalizing construction as a career destination and making access to entry easier through apprenticeship. This movement to prepare young people for in-demand and well-paying construction jobs will make a profound difference to both students and employers."

- Giovanni Cautillo
President, Ontario General Contractors Association

"The Carpenters applaud Premier Ford's and Minister McNaughton's leadership in working tirelessly to bring more young Ontarians into good paying skilled trades jobs in the Construction sector."

- Mark Lewis
Chief of Staff, Carpenters' Regional Council, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

"Creating new pathways is a major step towards addressing the skills shortage and providing students with an opportunity to engage in the trades early. PCA applauds the government's more straightforward approach to training that helps young people better navigate what can be a complex and confusing system."

- Stephen Hamilton
Ontario Director of Public Affairs, Progressive Contractors Association

Additional Resources

- [How to start an apprenticeship](#)
- [Apprenticeship in Ontario](#)
- [Skilled Trades Ontario](#)
- [Employment Ontario: Free Employment Services and Training Programs for Job Seekers, Workers and Employers](#)

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