

Open for Business: Modernizing Ontario's Apprenticeship System

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Ontario's Government for the People is helping employers and workers to better fill the demand for skilled trades and apprenticeship jobs and bringing quality jobs back to Ontario by cutting red tape. The province is taking the first steps to modernize and transform Ontario's skilled trades and apprenticeship system. The current regulatory burdens placed on employers and apprentices create barriers to apprenticeship, making it difficult for Ontario to keep up in training the skilled tradespeople that will be demanded by the economy. About one in five new jobs in Ontario in the coming years are expected to be in trades-related occupations.

Employers say that it is difficult to find the key skilled trades workers they need. As part of the province's larger Open for Business Action Plan to increase investment and create good jobs in Ontario, our government is cutting unnecessary regulations that are inefficient, inflexible or out-of-date, while maintaining rules that keep Ontarians safe and healthy, including:

Set all journeyman to apprentice ratios at one-to-one

Currently, Ontario's ratios are among the highest in Canada, limiting the number of apprentices an employer can train relative to the number of journeymen they employ. Ontario's journeyman to apprentice ratios likely contribute to the higher costs seen in the construction sector.

For trades that are subject to ratios, the change to a one-to-one journeyman to apprentice ratio would simplify and streamline how employers can hire and oversee apprentices, reduce costs and provide more flexibility for employers. Setting a single, lower ratio would better align Ontario with other provinces and territories in Canada.

Implementing a moratorium on trade classifications and reclassifications

There are currently 133 voluntary and 23 compulsory trades in Ontario. Anyone practicing a compulsory trade must have a Certificate of Qualification or be registered as an apprentice or journeyman candidate and must be a member in good standing of the Ontario College of Trades, unless they are exempt under the legislation.

Trade classification and re-classification in Ontario is currently overly burdensome and can affect decisions to hire new staff, as well as companies' ability to compete in the global marketplace. The moratorium would mitigate the risks of increasing regulatory burden and costs for businesses.

Winding down the Ontario College of Trades

There have been persistent challenges in how the skilled trades in Ontario are regulated, the amount of College membership fees that apprentices and journeypersons are subject to and the complexity of the rules apprentices, journeypersons and employers are bound by.

Apprenticeship in Ontario needs to be modernized and transformed to better meet the needs of apprentices, employers and industry. As part of the government's commitment to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens, and to modernize apprenticeship in Ontario, the government is proposing to wind down the Ontario College of Trades.

If passed, the government intends to support an orderly transition and ensure continuity of services to employers, workers and apprentices. The Minister would have special powers in legislation, including the authority to take charge and control over the College's Board of Governors and to appoint an administrator to act on her behalf.

The government intends to develop a replacement model for the regulation of the skilled trades and apprenticeship system in Ontario by early 2019.

The Ministry of Labour will continue to enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure worker safety.

Further Improvements to the Apprenticeship System

The government will look at ways to promote the skilled trades in Ontario and to improve access to the apprenticeship system for both apprentices and employers. The government will make it easier to navigate and move through the system so that Ontario gets the skilled trades workforce it needs to build a thriving economy and create quality jobs.

Simon Jefferies Premier's Office

Simon.Jefferies@ontario.ca

Stephanie Rea Minister's Office

Stephanie.Rea@ontario.ca