

**Ministry of Labour, Training
and Skills Development**

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**Ministère du Travail, de la
Formation et du Développement
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To: Employment Ontario Training Partners
From: Cordelia Abankwa, Assistant Deputy Minister
Employment and Training Division
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Date: May 6, 2021
Subject: **Introduction of Legislation to establish the Building
Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act and closure of the
Ontario College of Trades**

Dear Employment Ontario training partners:

I am writing to update you on new developments regarding the government's plan to simplify, transform, and strengthen the skilled trades and apprenticeship system and the ongoing work to support the closure of the Ontario College of Trades.

Today, the government introduced new legislation that would, if passed, transform the skilled trades and apprenticeship system in recognition of the critical role that skilled trades play in the province's economy. These changes will help prepare people across the province for jobs, making it easier for them to find rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

The legislation is to establish the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. If passed, it would restructure the Ontario College of Trades into Skilled Trades Ontario, a new agency accountable to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Once proclaimed, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021 would replace existing skilled trades legislation.

The proposed legislation would lead to a new simplified and client-focused model and support the needs of apprentices, sponsors and industry. At maturity, Skilled Trades Ontario would be responsible for developing industry-informed training standards and examinations, registering and monitoring apprenticeships, and issuing industry-recognized certificates.

Establishing Skilled Trades Ontario would happen in phases, beginning with the agency performing most functions currently performed by the Ontario College of Trades by the end of this year. At this time, the ministry would also become responsible for compliance and enforcement and continue to have responsibility for regulatory matters and funding for special purpose programs. The ministry will continue to put apprentices and tradespeople first, ensuring the phased implementation of Skilled Trades Ontario is carried out in a thoughtful and measured way to minimize disruptions in services to apprentices, journeypersons, sponsors and employers.

These changes were informed by the work of a five-member Skilled Trades Panel appointed by the minister in September 2020. As part of its first phase of work, the panel consulted with the public and industry stakeholders to provide advice on the path forward for the skilled trades and apprenticeship system. The panel's final Phase 1 report can be [found on Ontario.ca](#), and the ministry appreciates the hard work and extensive consultation reflected in it. The panel is beginning the second phase of its work and will provide advice and recommendations on matters related to the classification and training for trades.

Some additional information can be found in a Questions and Answers document posted on the [Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway](#). In the coming months, we will provide you with updates as more information becomes available. Thank you for your interest in Ontario's skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Cordelia Abankwa,
Assistant Deputy Minister, Employment and Training Division
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

Cc: David Carter-Whitney,
Assistant Deputy Minister, Workforce Policy and Innovation Division
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development