

Skills Ontario Competition to showcase student talent

Over 2,300 students to compete in events at Toronto Congress Centre from May 7-9, 2018

TORONTO, ON (April 30, 2018) – More than 2,300 students from across the province will test their mettle in dozens of skilled trades and technology contests at the 2018 Skills Ontario Competition at the Toronto Congress Centre on May 7-9, 2018.

The largest of its kind across Canada, the three-day annual competition for elementary, high school and post-secondary students is expected to draw more than 30,000 spectators, including employers looking for prospective young talent in sectors that have been coping with chronic labour shortages for years.

A broad range of skills and careers will be represented from across the manufacturing, transportation, construction, service, and technology sectors. Students will compete in nearly 70 events for gold, silver and bronze medals, monetary awards and job offers in select contest areas, offered by partnered organizations. Gold medalists in select contests are also eligible to go on to represent Ontario at the Skills Canada National Competition on June 4-5, 2018 in Edmonton, AB.

“The collaboration and support from many industry, education, labour, and government partners, including the Government of Ontario, allows Skills Ontario to offer valuable skill development, experiential learning, and mentorship opportunities at the Skills Ontario Competition,” says Ian Howcroft, CEO of Skills Ontario. “Together with our partners, our goal is to provide a skills solution that benefits our youth, our economy, and the quality of life that we enjoy here in Ontario.”

The focus of Day 1 (Monday, May 7th) at the Skills Ontario Competition is on elementary student participation and skill development. Elementary students from across the province will participate in a range of workshops and challenges designed to introduce them to career opportunities and relevant skills in the skilled trades and technologies.

The secondary and post-secondary-level contests take place on Day 1 and 2. Competitors are judged on their skills in completing their contest project, as well as their job interview skills and related soft skills. Winners are announced at the Skills Ontario Closing Ceremony on Wednesday, May 9th at the Toronto Congress Centre (North Building).

These highly skilled students — and thousands more like them — are in high demand by Canadian companies. Canada’s shortage of tradespeople is expected to hit at least one million by 2020, fueled in part by babyboomers retiring, according to recent research by Workopolis. By the same date, Canada will create an estimated 218,000 new technology jobs, says a 2016 report from the Information and Communications Technology Council.

Skills Ontario strives to build Ontario’s skilled trades and technologies workforce, in part by organizing the annual provincial competition and qualifying competitions that lead up to it at several colleges.

In addition, the Skills Ontario Young Women’s Conference – the largest young women’s conference in Canada – and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Conference, that hosts Indigenous youth from across the province, take place in conjunction with the Skills Ontario Competition. These are

key events in the effort to build the momentum for a skilled, diverse, and robust workforce in Ontario.

About Skills Ontario

Skills Ontario is building Ontario's skilled trades and technologies workforce. We enable and empower all youth, including women and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth, to consider a career in the skilled trades and technologies. Engagement with students, teachers, parents, volunteers, employers and mentors ensure our programs connect education, experience, and employment. We deliver in-school presentations across Ontario, host Canada's largest skills competition, run summer camps for skills development and connect students to employers. We are focused on growth sectors such as construction and infrastructure, technology innovation, and hospitality services.

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