

SKILLS ONTARIO ANNUAL REPORT

September 2022—
August 2023





MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



As CEO of Skills Ontario, it is an honour to work with students, educators, parents, volunteers, labour, industry professionals, and employers to help Ontario's future leaders reach their full potential. I would like to thank you all for the work you do and the contributions you make to help Skills Ontario encourage youth to make career choices that will provide them with fulfilling and happy lives.

The year 2023 brought many exciting developments within our organization. One of the highlights was the successful return of the in-person 2023 Skills Ontario Competition at the Toronto Congress Centre and launch of a new event called the Skilled Trades Conference for Guidance Educators.

On top of that, Skills Ontario ends this year with a significant investment into the Trades & Tech Truck/Trailer program. We announced the launch of three new Mobile Units thanks to support and partnership with the Ontario government.

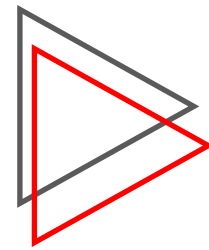
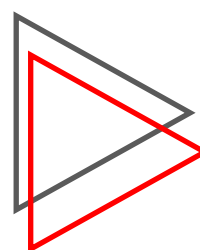
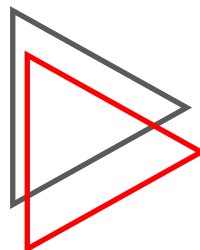
During the pandemic, Skills Ontario made the quick pivot to remote delivery, focusing on creativity, innovation, and agility. We adapted our existing programs and developed new initiatives, as well. With the return of in-person events, we continue offering virtual programming to complement our initiatives, as these programs were very successful and accessible. Speaking of programming, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) program grew tremendously in 2023, reaching hundreds of people online and in-person.

I would also like to recognize and thank our partners for their support as we could not deliver our programming without the contributions of these key organizations!

Sincerely,

Ian Howcroft

CEO, Skills Ontario



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



At Skills Ontario, our mission is simple: support and inspire Ontarians as they recognize their potential and explore their career paths.

We work to give youth and their influencers the tools to discover and explore the skilled trades and technologies through experiential learning and mentorship.

As we continue to move forward from the pandemic, Skills Ontario is pleased to resume in-person events this year which allows for more experiential opportunities to reach young Ontarians.

This is why Skills Ontario is excited to commence the development of a new strategic plan to increase engagement and the success of young people entering the skilled trades and technologies. This plan includes the expansion of the popular Trades & Tech Truck program, which will see three additional mobile learning units to travel across the province bringing hands-on learning activities to more schools and communities.

Skills Ontario and its Board of Directors recognize skilled professionals, thank our supporters and advocates, and extend well wishes to all. We look forward to continuing the mission of enabling and delivering programming to help prepare the future skilled trade workforce of Ontario.

Sincerely,

Paul Armstrong

Board President/Chair

Skills Ontario

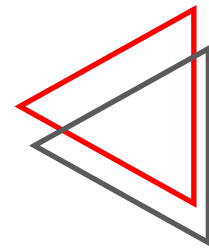
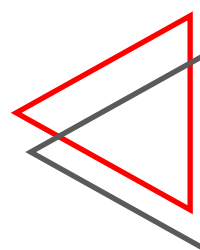
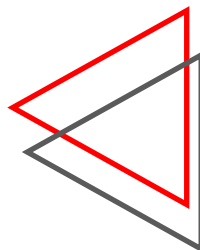


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IMPACT & REACH

For over 30 years, Skills Ontario has been promoting skilled trade and technology careers, and the organization's reach grows every year. On Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn, Skills Ontario engages thousands of followers daily to promote programs, events, opportunities, and more.

1 million+

impressions on digital
media this year.

26,000+

followers in
2023, *about a
15% increase
from 2021—2022!*

199,000+

views on our web-
site this year.



EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Skills Ontario reaches students through In-School Presentations, with Program Facilitators visiting schools throughout the school year. When the pandemic changed our circumstances, Skills Ontario adapted its presentation program to be delivered virtually. Our presentation educates students on the career opportunities available in the construction, motive power, service, industrial, and technology sectors. This presentation is updated annually and is available in both English and French, as well as in a workshop format geared toward First Nations, Métis, and Inuit audiences.

Along with this student-focused presentation, Skills Ontario also developed a presentation for parents/guardians. To learn more or book a presentation visit skillsontario.com/presentations.

127,000+

students took part
in the in-school
presentations this
year.

92.2%

of teachers agreed the
presentation was valua-
ble in helping their stu-
dents understand career
opportunities available
in the skilled trades and
technologies.



YOUNG WOMEN'S INITIATIVES

Skills Ontario's Young Women's Initiatives aim to empower young women to explore skilled careers. Alongside our Collaborating Organizations, we host Skilled Trade & Tech Days for Young Women over the school year, the International Day of The Girl activity series in October, the International Women's Day Conference in March, and the Young Women's Conference in May. The first in-person all-French conference at the 2023 Young Women's Conference. The Young Women's Conference returned to in-person at the Toronto Congress Centre this year. New this year, Skills Ontario also hosted the first in-person French Trades & Tech Day event in Ottawa and the first in-person International Day of the Girl Conference in Sudbury. Visit skillsontario.com/young-womens-initiatives!



1,900+

participants in the
2023 Young Women's
Conference.



8,000+

participants at all
Young Women's Ini-
tiatives events this
year.

FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT INITIATIVES

Skills Ontario delivers programming to Indigenous youth through its First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Initiatives. With In-School Presentations, Skilled Trades & Technology Days, Indigenous College Recruiter Information Sessions, Community Build Summer Camps, Student Challenges, and the Student Conference, these programs are for Indigenous youth to learn about the skilled trades and technologies and to hear from community members who work in these fields.

Through a continued commitment to acknowledge and respect Indigenous peoples and their history, all of Skills Ontario's events begin with a land acknowledgement and recognition of Indigenous peoples and their connection to this land. Skills Ontario also prioritizes Indigenous representation by firstly seeking staff and event speakers from Indigenous backgrounds.

Skills Ontario has also produced a series of videos for the new Indigenous Role Model Campaign which are available on our website. Learn more about the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Initiatives at skillsontario.com/fnmi.



900+

youth attended
the 2023 First Na-
tions, Métis, and
Inuit student
Conference.

5,570+

participants at all
First Nations, Mé-
tis, and Inuit pro-
gram events this
year.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVES

Skills Ontario is committed to creating equal opportunities for all youth by removing barriers and providing career exploration programs. Youth need to overcome critical barriers to be successful. Lack of experience, lack of relevant skills, and limited access to professional networks are just a few of the issues in Canadian communities today. To combat this, in 2021 Skills Ontario started focusing on creating programming and events for those facing barriers getting into the Skilled Trades. Events such as the Skilled Trades & Tech Inclusivity Series, the Rise Series for new Canadians, the Umoja Series for Black youth, the Urban Tech Workshop, and the Tools for Success Workshops, Skills Ontario continues to work towards building a diverse, robust workforce.

To learn more or to view past event recordings, visit [**skillsontario.com/dei**](https://skillsontario.com/dei).



10,000+

youth joined a
Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion
event in 2023.

95%

of attendees say
they strongly sup-
port our UMOJA
program and are
willing to go into
the trades.

THE SKILLS ONTARIO COMPETITION

The largest skilled trades competition in Canada, the Skills Ontario Competition annually welcomes thousands of visitors, exhibitors, and competitors each May. From animation to horticulture, welding to baking, this is the ultimate display of the future of skilled trades and technologies! The Skills Ontario Competition offers an experiential opportunity for competitors to demonstrate their skills, wowing educators, family, friends, and prospective employers. It's also a great way for spectators to learn more about these in demand careers opportunities and to explore at their own pace!

The two-day competition offers over 70 skilled trades and technology-based contests, an interactive Career Exploration Showcase, live demonstrations, hands on Elementary Workshops, plus a number of conferences including both English and French Young Women's Conferences, a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Conference and professional development conference for guidance counsellors and teaching professionals.

Closing Ceremony takes place on the third day, where competitors, educators, stakeholders, partners and more come together in an exciting presentation of awards and prizes. Many of those who win gold gain the opportunity to represent our province at the Skills Canada National Competition as a part of Team Ontario! Every other year, competitors at the National Competition in select contests have the chance to qualifying as part of Team Canada to compete at WorldSkills.

20,000+

attendees at the
2023 Skills Ontario
Competition.

91%

of students are likely
to recommend, at-
tend, or participate in
the Skills Ontario
Competition.







JUNK DRAWER RACES

In fall 2021, Skills Ontario launched the Junk Drawer Races, a new competition program where students from grades 2 to 12 can compete in curriculum-based, skill-developing contests.

With a Gravity Powered Robot Walker Race (for grades 2-3), a Cardboard Car Race (for grades 4-5), a Paper Glider Competition (for grades 6-7), a Hydraulic Crane Challenge (for grade 8), and an Air Pressure Rocket Challenge (for grades 9-12), youth are given the opportunity to try a hands-on approach in their exploration of skilled trades and technologies.

With emphasis on topics tied to curriculum such as flight technology, design, systems in action, and more, youth can participate in teams to build and race their structure in an attempt to advance from the regional level to the province-wide championship level. For details on this program, visit: www.skillsontario.com/junk-drawer-races.

2,200+

youth across Ontario
participated in the
2023 Junk Drawer
Races.



THE SKILLED TRADES CONFERENCE FOR GUIDANCE EDUCATORS

In 2023, Skills Ontario hosted the Skilled Trades Conference for Guidance Educators. This new, one-day event aims to help guidance counselors, tech teachers, and curriculum leaders understand the different pathways to a career in the skilled trades and resources available for students to achieve these careers.

During the conference, participants heard from three different panels of speakers, one of which included a WorldSkills Bronze Winner. The conference featured TV's Kayleen McCabe as Keynote speaker to speak about the skilled trades and apprenticeships. Held at the 2023 Skills Ontario Competition, participants were provided networking opportunities and visited sponsor booths, and checked out the Skilled Trades & Tech Truck.

Despite being introduced this year, the conference was a success with plans for another conference scheduled in 2024. To learn more about the Skilled Trades Conference for Guidance Educators, email ecollard@skillsontario.com.

450+

**attendees at the first
ever Skilled Trades
Conference for Guidance
Educators.**



SUMMER CAMPS

Skills Ontario holds week-long day-camps across Ontario in the summer to encourage hands-on exploration of skilled trade and tech careers. In 2020 and 2021, Skills Ontario continued the initiative virtually, leading youth through fun activities and virtual tours. In 2023, Skills Ontario returned to offering in-person camps. Visit skillsontario.com/camp!

300+

young people ages
11 to 14 attended
a Skills Ontario
summer camp in
2023.

20+

Skills Ontario
summer camps
were held across
the province.



TRADES & TECH TRUCK

The Trades & Tech Truck is a new unit of experiential learning! Youth can explore skilled trades and technologies through fun activities:

- Virtual Paint
- Electrical Wall
- Pneumatics
- Tires and Brakes
- Heavy Machinery Simulator
- Hybrid Planetary Gearset
- Welding
- Tool Exploration
- Try on a Trade
- Walk a Trade
- Fire Alarm Systems
- Rotating Activities Station



In July 2023, Skills Ontario received an investment of \$5.4 million from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to expand the Trades & Tech Truck program to include three additional learning mobile units which will travel across the province. The first mobile learning unit aims to be on the road by the summer of 2024. For more information, including a virtual tour, visit [**skillsontario.com/truck**](https://skillsontario.com/truck).

550+

visits the Trades & Tech Truck made to schools since 2022.

45,000+

people reached through the Trades & Tech Truck program.

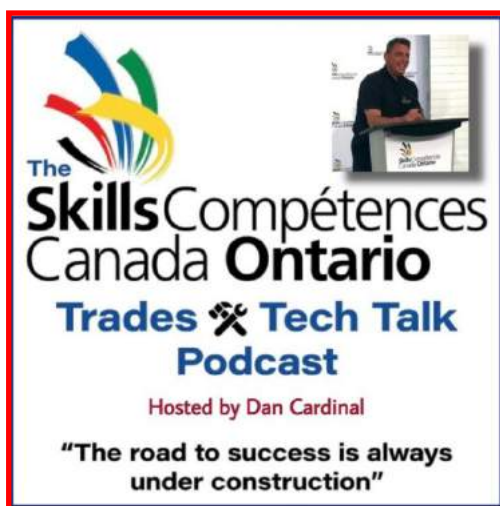
24,226+

kilometres the Trades & Tech Truck has travelled across Ontario.

PODCAST & APP

Skills Ontario launched the Trades & Tech Talk Podcast in April 2020 and continues to produce episodes. In the Trades & Tech Talk podcast, host Dan Cardinal discusses careers in the skilled trades and technologies and how important, in demand and rewarding these careers are. Various guests include professionals who work in the skilled trades and tech, apprenticeship representatives, college reps, educators, Skills Ontario staff, and more. To listen, visit skillsontario.com/the-skills-ontario-podcast.

In January 2022, Skills Ontario developed a new app. The “Skills Ontario” app provides users with an aptitude career quiz, links to opportunities, and more. The app is fully bilingual and available on the Apple and Android app stores for free. Visit skillsontario.com/app.



4200+

episode
downloads

37,000+

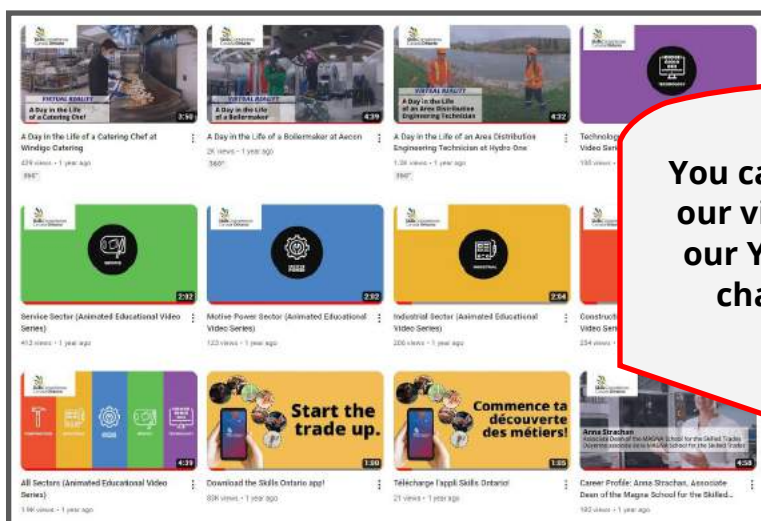
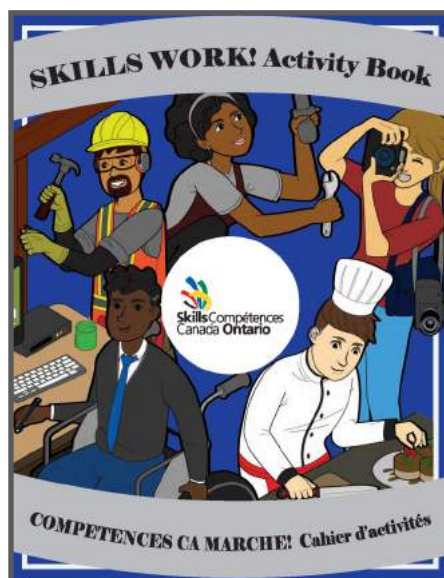
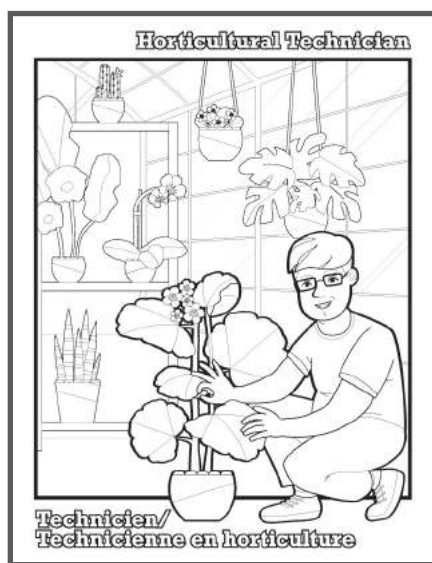
app downloads



LEARNING TOOLS & RESOURCES

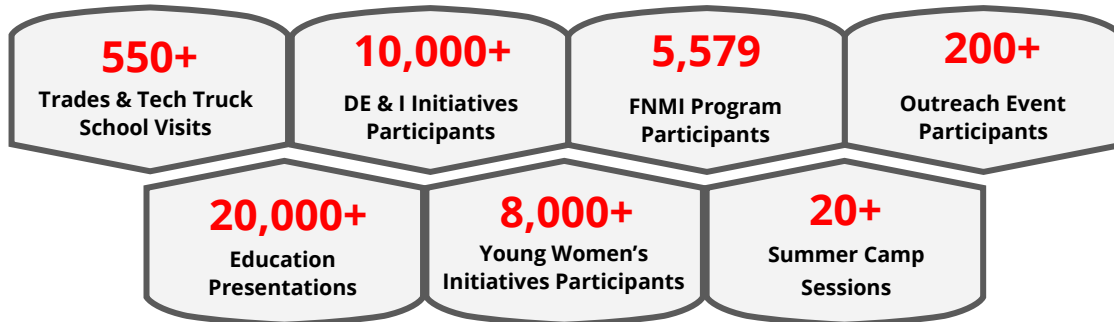
Skills Ontario revamped its print resources to assist educators and students looking for information on careers in the skilled trades and technologies. Four publications in total, including a brochure, a colouring book, a career guide, and a booklet on women in skilled careers, were offered to students across the province. To view a list of all publications and to learn more about how to order them, visit skillsontario.com/publications.

Skills Ontario also produced new videos to act as inspiring and informative resources for students, including tours of skilled trade and tech workplaces, words of advice from skilled professionals, and more. For details and to view our videos, visit skillsontario.com/videos.

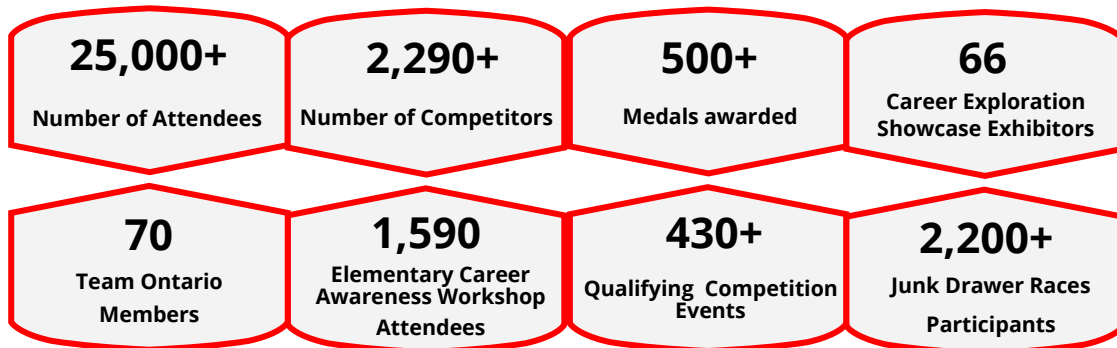


YEAR IN REVIEW: 2022-2023

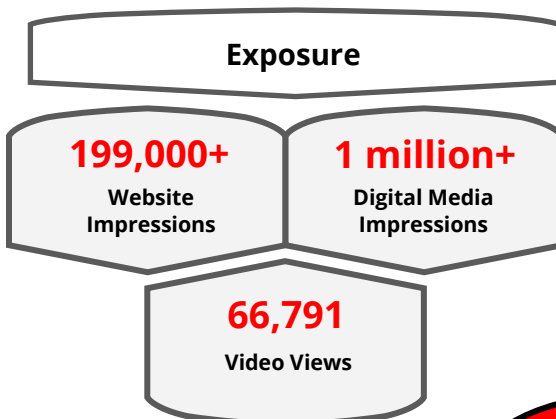
Programming



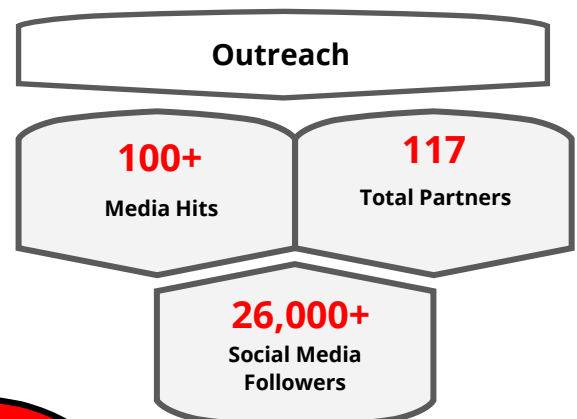
Skills Ontario Competition



Exposure



Outreach



95%

of attendees say they strongly support our UMOJA program and are willing to go into the trades.

92.2%

of teachers agreed the presentation was valuable in helping their students understand career opportunities available in the skilled trades and technologies.

91%

Of students are likely to recommend, attend, or participate in the Skills Ontario Competition.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SPONSORS

Skills Ontario appreciates our corporate and government partners and suppliers who provide better opportunities for everyone in Ontario. It is through their generosity, vision, and commitment that we are able to touch the lives of so many Ontario youth each and every year. **Thank you to our partners for the 2022-2023 year.**

Canada 

EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO **EMPLOI**
ONTARIO

Ontario 

This Employment Ontario program is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.



Future Launch



Sheridan



Seneca







PROCOR



TECHO—BLOC



POMERLEAU

Tenaris



CBRE



BOMBARDIER



VOLVO



MOXY The Voice of Women In Infrastructure





Agospace

Anglo-Franco Communications

Bay of Quinte Economic Development

Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario

County of Renfrew

Creation Camp

EEEECHO Productions

Enterprise Holdings

Henlex

Innovative Trailer Design Industries Inc.

Inuuqatigiit Center

Indigenous Friendship Centre Sault Ste. Marie

Kingston Economic Development

Niigaaniin

Nordson Canada Ltd.

Ontario Educational Championship Team

Ontario General Contractors Association

Ontario Horticultural Trades Foundation

Social Development Council of Cornwall & Area

Sudbury & Manitoulin Workforce Planning

Toronto Congress Centre (TCC)

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

Unearth Education

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SPONSORS

Skills Ontario is proud to **inspire, encourage, and empower Ontarians** to explore career opportunities in the skilled trades and technologies.

Thank you to our partners, advocates, and participants for their support of Skills Ontario. We look forward to developing our existing programs and delivering new initiatives in 2024.



Visit skillsontario.com and follow us on social media!





skillsontario.com