



Skills Canada – Ontario

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Overview of Skills Canada – Ontario Programs/Competitions

Established in 1989, Skills Canada – Ontario is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting the development of youth and the prosperity of industry in Ontario. Through a number of programs, competitions and events, we strive to promote the skilled trades and technologies as viable, first-choice career options for young people.

The **Ontario Technological Skills Competition (OTSC)** is Skills Canada – Ontario’s cornerstone event, attracting over 1900 competitors from across the province. More than 60 contests in the skilled trades and technologies are offered at the competition to secondary and post-secondary students, including apprentices. 30,000 spectators take in an incredibly diverse array of contests, including carpentry, aircraft maintenance, culinary arts, robotics, electrical wiring, landscape design, 3D character animation, welding, and hairstyling. These contests allow participants to showcase their skills, talent and knowledge while providing them with networking opportunities with partners from industry, labour, government and education.

In 2013, the **24th Ontario Technological Skills Competition** will be held May 6-8, in Waterloo, ON. In order to make this event a reality, \$5 million worth of tools, equipment, materials and supplies are generously donated by sponsoring organizations that understand and support the mandate of Skills Canada – Ontario. Hundreds of volunteers will work countless hours throughout the year to ensure that the contests run smoothly and that the hosting facility, RIM Park and Manulife Financial Sportsplex, is prepared for the event.

Team Ontario:

Each year the top competitors in most contests at the Ontario Technological Skills Competition are invited to join Team Ontario to represent our province at the National level. In June 2012, 65 competitors participated at the 18th Canadian Skills Competition in Edmonton Alberta. Team Ontario did very well and took home 35 medals in total, capturing 13 Gold, 12 Silver and 10 Bronze. Skills Canada-Ontario will be supporting Team Ontario at the next Skills Canada National Competition, to be held in Vancouver June 5-8, 2013.

Skills Canada – Ontario’s other events and programs include:

Qualifying Competitions – Six of the OTSC’s 63 contests draw so much interest from competitors that students must first earn their eligibility to compete in them by participating in Ontario-wide challenges, all held on the same day. The six select contests are: 2D Character Animation, Individual Carpentry, Culinary Arts, Small Powered Equipment, TV and Video Production, and Welding. The Qualifying Competitions will be hosted at community colleges in Barrie, London, Niagara, North Bay, Kingston, Thunder Bay and Toronto on April 20, 2013.



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Those who qualify at this level will then move on to compete at the Ontario Technological Skills Competition.

Elementary Technology Day – Day one of the 24th Ontario Technological Skills Competition (OTSC) is Elementary Technology Day, when over 2000 senior elementary school students participate in a dozen interesting technology challenges and a wide variety of workshops. Participants also spend time touring the Career Exploration Showcase exhibitor booths.

Career Exploration Showcase – This tradeshow-style event, part of the Ontario Technological Skills Competition, features more than 60 interactive booths manned by representatives of Ontario colleges, industry, trade associations and government. For students, this is a great opportunity to see technological and skilled trade careers in action and make the connection between skills and jobs. For teachers and guidance counsellors, the Showcase is the ideal place to gather more information to prepare students for apprenticeship training and technological careers.

“Think Skills...Think Future” Young Women’s Conferences – Held in conjunction with the Ontario Technological Skills Competition, the Young Women’s Conferences are offered on two different days to senior elementary and secondary students, respectively. Their purpose is to introduce young women to careers in the skilled trades and technologies through a fun-filled agenda of hands-on activities, informative presentations, and inspirational guest speakers. Participants have the opportunity to network and enjoy lunch with female role models who work in the skilled trades and technologies. The day is rounded out with a trip to the Ontario Technological Skills Competition to take in the contests and tour the Career Exploration Showcase.

Skills Canada – Ontario provides a full complement of programming throughout the year, including:

“Skills Work!® What’s Out There?” Opportunities in the Skilled Trades and Technologies – In-school Presentation Program – Since its inception in 1998, the in-class presentation program has been providing young people from across the province with information about the vast career opportunities in the skilled trades and technologies. Every year, this outreach program has an impact on the lives of over 100,000 students in senior elementary and secondary schools. Offered in both official languages, this program is delivered by a total of ten liaison officers throughout the province to more than 1300 elementary schools and 700 affiliated high schools.

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Aboriginal Initiatives – In 2011, Skills Canada-Ontario hired two liaison officers to deliver our “Skills Work! What’s out There?” presentation to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities throughout Ontario.

“Skills Work!® for Women” Networking Dinners – This award-winning program was designed to introduce high-school girls who are interested in the skilled trades and technologies to female mentors who are currently working or studying in a related career field. The young women leave feeling inspired and informed about the wide variety of post-secondary choices available to them. This program is offered to students in grades 9-12 in various communities throughout Ontario, including, in 2012-2013: Barrie, Port Elgin, St. Catharines, Durham, Ottawa, Timmins, Toronto, Dryden, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Guelph, Pembroke, Manitoulin and Windsor.

Cardboard Boat Races – This program, offered at both the elementary and secondary levels, demonstrates in a fun way the importance of studying science, math and technology. It’s amazing to witness teams of students build a boat with cardboard and duct tape, then watch as they race their boats across the pool to the other side. Hosting cities have included: London, Scarborough, Kitchener, Nepean, Espanola and Windsor. In total, approximately 1200 students compete, and a Championship Cardboard Boat Race is held in February for the medalists from each of the host locations.

Cardboard Boat Video Challenge – The Video Challenges offer elementary and secondary-level students the opportunity to test their communication and video production skills in a fun environment. During this full-day event, teams of two students will film, produce and edit a video that promotes the Cardboard Boat Races. Skills Canada – Ontario forwards video submissions to industry professionals so that the work can be judged on quality, creativity, content, overall impression and adherence to rules.

Soap Box Derby – At the Soap Box Derbies, students design, construct, decorate and race cars that they have made out of plywood, cardboard, and a set of rubber wheels. Large ramps supply the gravity needed to make it to the finish line, as students compete in speed, distance and agility challenges.

“Skills Work!® Camp”- Exploring Careers in Skilled Trades and Technologies One Hands-on Activity at a Time – This week-long day camp is intended for students entering grades 7 and 8, and offers hands-on activities in construction, manufacturing, technology, transportation and services. These camps blend career opportunities in skilled trades and technologies with the importance of employability skills, and are facilitated in many communities across Ontario, including: Kingston, Ottawa, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Tiverton, Guelph, Whitby, Belleville, Toronto,



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Midland, Kitchener-Waterloo, Manitoulin Island, Sarnia, Peterborough, Timmins, Toronto, Stoney Creek, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury.

“Building Futures, One Dream at a Time” Celebration Gala & Silent Auction – This evening event is held annually, with the proceeds ear-marked for the Skills Canada – Ontario Bursary. In 2013, the Fundraising Dinner and Silent Auction will be held on March 22, at St. George Hall in Waterloo, Ontario.

Awards, Recognition and Financial Assistance

Many tributes and awards are arranged through Skills Canada-Ontario to honour individuals who have had a positive impact in encouraging young people to pursue opportunities in the skilled trades and technologies. These include the Dick Hopkins Award, the Skilled Trades Hall of Fame, the Glenn Beatty Award and the School Board and College Awards of Distinction.

Skills Canada-Ontario also arranges its own Scholarships and a Bursary to assist with the travel costs of Team Ontario members and sponsors eligible participants in other programs where costs may be a prohibitive factor. Skills Canada-Ontario also provides a means for outside organizations to offer monetary awards to top students, facilitating 42 such financial prizes in 2012, each ranging in value from \$50 to as high as \$1500.

Skills Work!® Booklet Distribution

As part of their affiliation with Skills Canada-Ontario, schools receive class sets of Skills Work!® Booklets, a highly-requested resource for young people, parents and teachers who are interested in finding out the aptitudes, education and training needed to get into more than 60 top skilled trades.

Women in Skilled Trades and Technologies – MYTHS & REALITIES

This position paper not only contains information for women considering the skilled trades, but also offers advice on how industry, government and educators can provide them with meaningful support, from high school straight through to the workplace. The report also highlights six common myths about women working in the skilled trades, and dispels these with the realities that are found in these careers, including excellent wages, good working conditions and room for advancement. Written in partnership with Women in Nuclear (WiN), the publication is available as a free download on www.skillsontario.com.