

MEDIA RELEASE

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Skills Ontario looks forward to working with new Crown agency, Skilled Trades Ontario

Ontario (January 25, 2022) – Today, the Honourable Minister McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, announced that the new Crown agency, Skilled Trades Ontario has launched and is now ready to serve tradespeople and employers across the province. With the shutdown of the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT), Skilled Trades Ontario has been established in an effort to modernize the skilled trades and apprenticeship system. Skills Ontario supports and looks forward to working with Skilled Trades Ontario to assist with its goals to simplify the system for skilled professionals, encourage employer participation, and break the stigmas that surround the skilled trades.

"As an organization dedicated to building the future skilled workforce, Skills Ontario applauds the Government of Ontario for this initiative," says Ian Howcroft, CEO of Skills Ontario. "Working together and setting skilled trade and technology leaders up for success is crucial. Skilled trades and technologies play an imperative role in our lives and continuing to support these fields and the professionals working within them benefits us all. We look forward to working closely with Skilled Trades Ontario to realize our common goals and objectives, and we are committed to leveraging our resources, extensive network, and expertise."

"We're redrawing the system to address Ontario's labour shortage and make the trades a career of choice for more people," says Minister McNaughton in [the Government of Ontario's news release](#). "The skilled trades provide well-paying and rewarding careers that are vital for our economy. By creating this new agency, we are working for workers and delivering the generational change that labour leaders and employers have been calling for."

As per [the Government of Ontario's website](#), Skilled Trades Ontario has a goal to "help more young people find suitable careers in the skilled trades and complete their training faster." Under the proposed legislation, Skilled Trades Ontario is set to become the province's industry-informed training authority to lead the promotion, research and development of the latest apprenticeship training and curriculum standards.

From October 2020 to March 2021, Ontario appointed three youth advisors to work with Minister McNaughton to attract more youth to skilled trades careers. The appointed youth advisors were Jennifer Green, Director of Competitions at Skills Ontario, Adam Melnick, volunteer with Skills Ontario, and Andrew Pariser, Board Director with Skills Ontario. Within [the final action plan](#), the advisors suggested improving access into apprenticeship by putting clear, streamlined pathways to apprenticeship in place and establishing Skilled Trades Ontario as a simplified, one-window service delivery portal.

Skills Ontario has been delivering programs and events since 1989 with an aim to inspire youth to explore skilled trades and technologies, and the organization applauds the government's continued emphasis on skilled trades. Skills Ontario has found great success through its initiatives, and continues to deliver programs for many audiences, including young women, Indigenous youth, new Canadians, persons with exceptionalities, and more, in order to connect education, experience, and employment.

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**About Skills Ontario**

Skills Ontario has been growing a portfolio of programs to inspire and engage youth since 1989, including presentations, career exploration events, competitions, summer camps, and Young Women's and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit workshops and conferences. To see how you can partner with Skills Ontario and help make a difference in the lives of Ontario youth, visit skillsontario.com/get-involved.

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