

Erin ELO Lecture: Skilled Trades, A Fresh Look

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Who we are

Skilled Trades Ontario is an agency of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development responsible for apprenticeship and skilled trades certification in Ontario. It was established through the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021.

We are committed to making it easier for skilled trades professionals to access services, promoting careers in the skilled trades and addressing the labour shortage. We want to make Ontario the place where skilled trades professionals thrive.



Our work

- Establishing apprenticeship programs, training/curriculum standards, and certification exams
- Administering apprenticeship programs, approving apprentices and sponsors, registering training agreements and assessing apprenticeship program completion
- Issuing certificates of apprenticeship
- Assessing Trade Equivalency Assessments
- Administering exams in all trades subject to certifying exams
- Issuing and renewing Certificates of Qualification
- Maintaining a Public Register for compulsory trades
-  Researching apprenticeships and the trades

The Ministry's role

- Trades legislation and regulations, prescribing/deprescribing trades, scopes of practice, trade classifications and ratios
- The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program and Pre-Apprenticeship Training programs
- In-school training administration, seat planning, seat management, and funding for training providers
- Financial oversight for apprenticeship grants and support programs
- Compliance and enforcement related to skilled trades, workplace health and safety, and employment standards



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Latest updates



Progress to date

100,000	25,000	1,975	1,899	785
Approx. number of active apprentices	Approx. number of active sponsors	Average monthly registrations	Average monthly exams written	Average monthly C of As issued



New Program Evaluation Process

- Skilled Trades Ontario is undertaking a Program Evaluation Process to ensure that apprenticeship programs continue to align with industry and government priorities
- This places certain trades under a review for a period of three months
- To verify the status of a trade, please visit the Trade Information webpage available on the Skilled Trades Ontario website

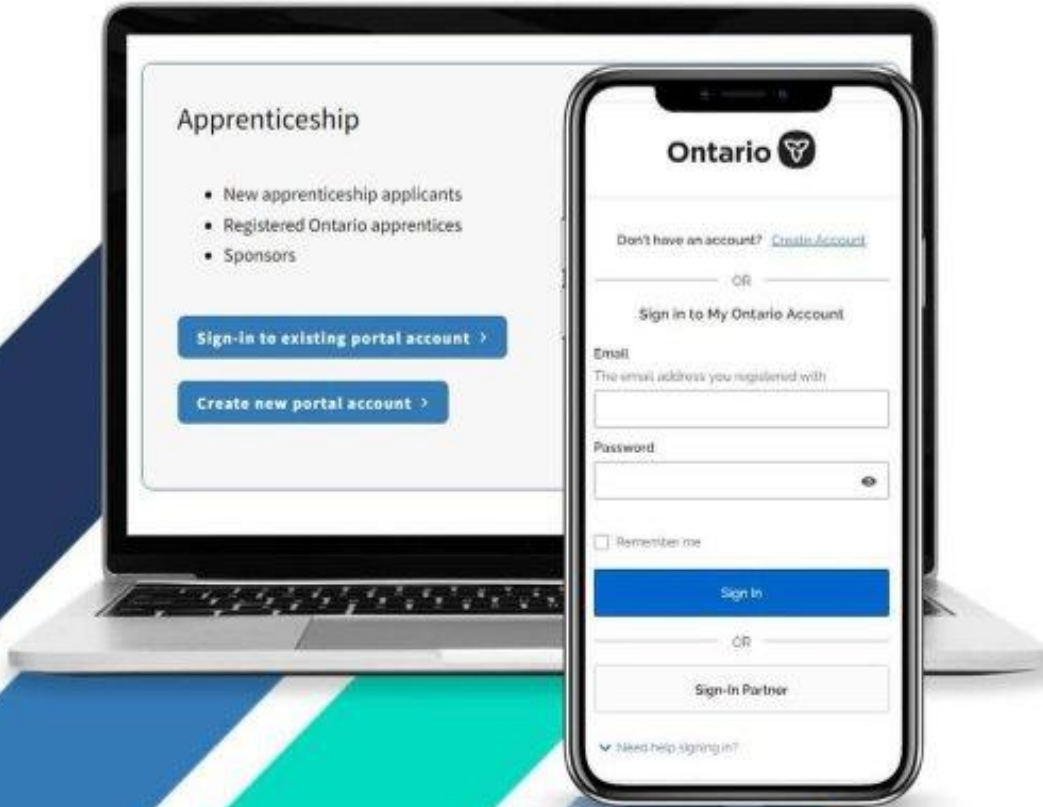


New exam delivery model

- STO is the direct administrator of certifying exams, so apprentices can book any exam directly through the STO Portal
- Booking, delivery, identity verification and support for onsite delivery and exam-day support is under one system
- On-site certification exam delivery now available at all Training Delivery Agents that offer a final level of in-class apprenticeship training — over 100 locations across Ontario



Technology that supports access



- Strengthening the apprenticeship pathway
- Digital access to training agreements, exam booking, and sponsor changes
- Online exam payments and expanded on-site exam delivery
- Improved transparency and clearer timelines for apprentices and employers
- Predictable certification pathways support workforce planning



The SOY Advantage

Supporting the Apprenticeship Pathway



The Government of Ontario and its agencies are in no way bound by any recommendations contained in this document.

SYSTEMIC CHANGES

At a system level, Ontario's strategy is doing three important things simultaneously:

a) Increasing volume

- More apprentices
- More employers being encouraged to participate
- More pathways (OYAP, pre-apprenticeship, other accelerated routes like FAST)

This increases demand for navigation, compliance, and coordination, even if processes are "simplified."

b) Centralizing administration (Skilled Trades Ontario + online portal)

- One system of record
- Standardized processes
- Digital-first interactions

This streamlines delivery but raises the stakes of getting things right.

Errors, delays, or misunderstandings now have wider and faster-reaching impacts.

c) Shifting focus from access → completion

- Registration numbers matter less on their own
- Retention, progression, and certification matter more

The system becomes more sensitive to drop-outs, stalled apprenticeships and those struggling to pass final certification exams.

CBC NEWS – DECEMBER 21, 2025

“Yet with 46,971 certificates issued in 2024, the completion rate (19.9 per cent) is still lower than pre-pandemic levels, while the continuation rate — apprentices registered in programs, but not yet certified — remains elevated (49.2 per cent).

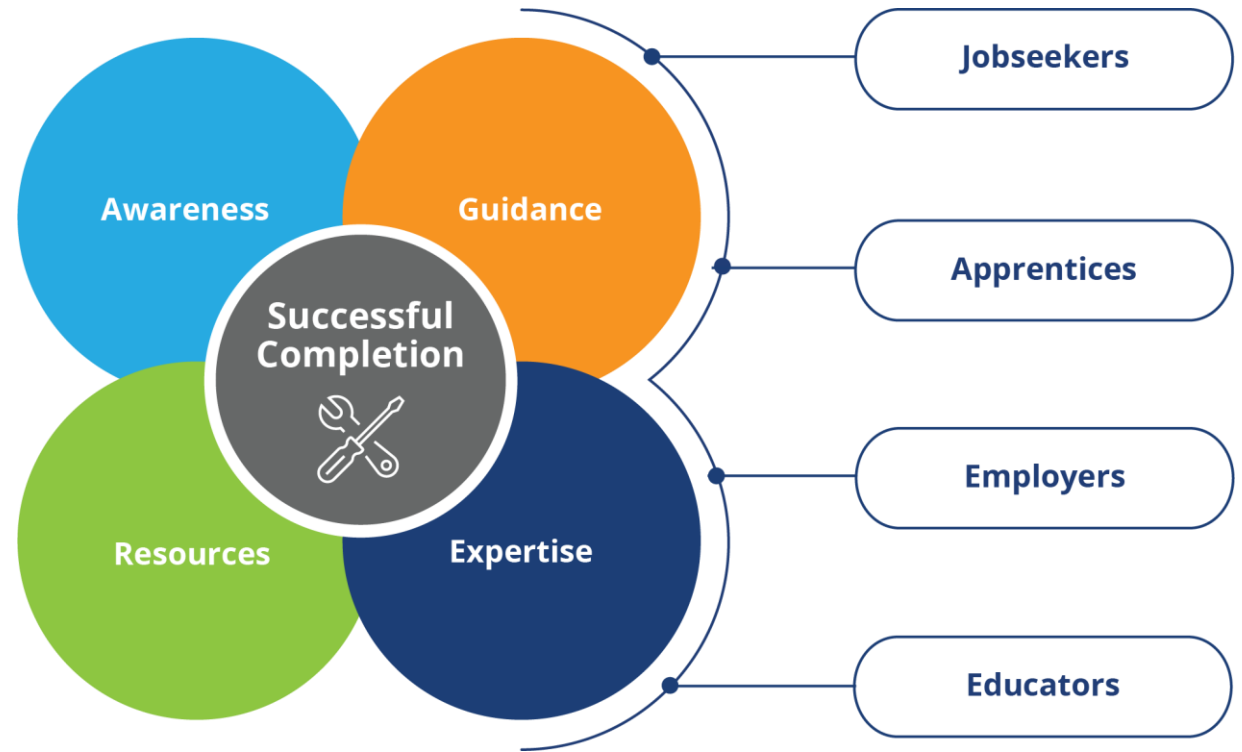
"New registrations are going up — that's awesome, but we need people to complete," said Emily Arrowsmith, director of research at the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, a national non-profit advocacy and research organization.

"We need to offer those supports and resources and get them through the program, because if a bunch of people just end up dropping out, it doesn't matter that there's new registrations." “

[In the trades, apprentices are increasing, but not enough are making it to certification | CBC News](#)

Our Purpose

To raise awareness and provide guidance, resources and expertise. To enable successful completion of the skilled trades pathway, leading to fulfilling, life-long careers.



Our Programs

- ✓ Tools in the Trades Boot Camps
- ✓ Essential Employability Skills
- ✓ Trades Readiness Program
- ✓ Group Sponsor & Mentorship
- ✓ Transition to the Trades
- ✓ Guidance Counsellor Workshops
- ✓ Events & Community Engagement
- ✓ Scholarships



Scan to **learn more**
about our programs!

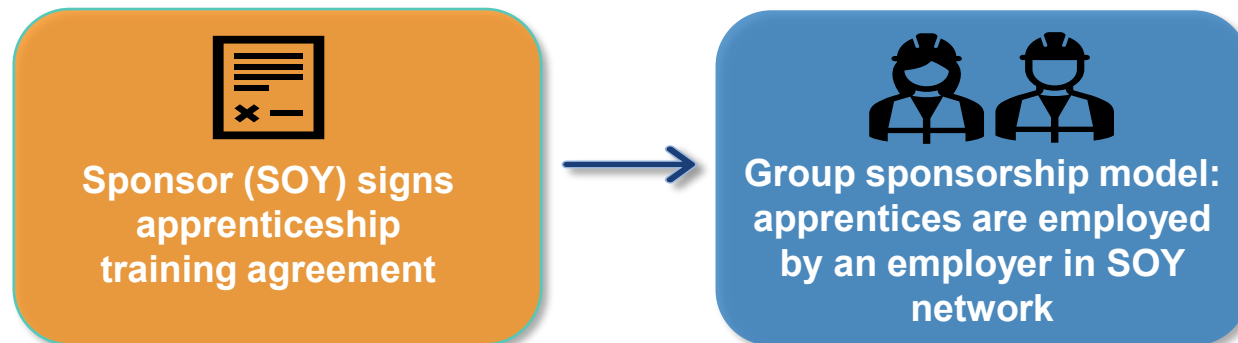
Group Sponsor Program Support

Employers

- Assist in finding and screening best-fit candidates for apprenticeship roles
- Offer tools and resources to support effective apprentice mentoring
- Facilitate apprenticeship tax credits and/or government grants
- Reduce administrative burden
- Serve as point of contact with MLITSD and STO

Apprentices

- Streamline the apprentice registration process
- Hold Registered Training Agreement
- Provide support & guidance throughout the apprenticeship journey through mentoring and tutoring
- Facilitate communication with the ministry
- Connect apprentices with relevant resources & services



Our Group Sponsor Program Trades

Motive Power Trades

- Automotive Service Technician (310S)
- Auto Body & Collision Damage Repairer (310B)
- Truck & Coach Technician (310T)

Industrial Trades

- Industrial Mechanic Millwright (433A)
- Industrial Electrician (442A)
- General Machinist (429A)
- Tool & Die Maker (430A)

- Mould Maker (431A)
- Welding (456A)

Construction Trades

- Electrician, Construction & Maintenance (309A)
- Plumber (306A)
- Residential Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic (313D)
- Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic (313A)
- Low-rise Sheet Metal Installer (308R)
- Sheet Metal (308A)

Our Boot Camps



SOY's Tools in the Trades Boot Camps are FREE one-day events designed to introduce participants to careers in the skilled trades through hands-on skilled trades training and engagement with industry professionals.

- ✓ Applicants first complete an assessment to ensure suitability for the trade.
- ✓ Participants are led by licensed Journeypersons through the hands-on portion of the day.
- ✓ Local employers participate to share insights, promote their trade, and connect with future talent.
- ✓ Participants connect with employers and trades professionals, gaining exposure to real career pathways.
- ✓ Each participants leaves with a trade-specific starter toolkit.



Our Impact



With the continued support of the government, and working together with partners and industry, we are designing, developing and delivering innovative workforce development solutions that are advancing the skilled trades in Ontario.



450+

Employers Serviced



1,366

Apprentices Registered



145

Journeypersons



200+

Educational & Training
Community Partners



250+

Boot Camps



4,300+

Boot Camps Attendees

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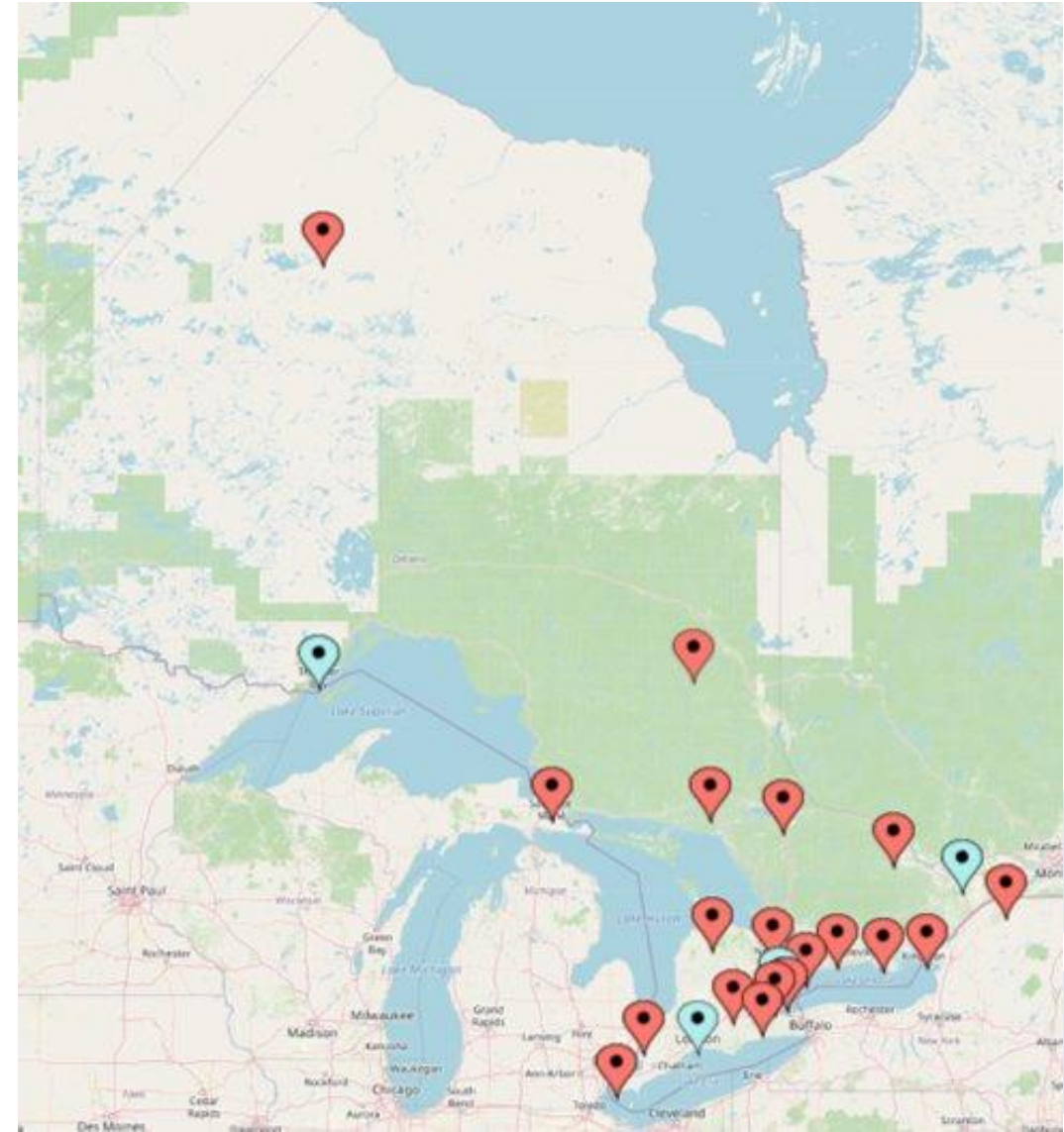
Provincial presence



Regional support

Skilled Trades Ontario now has regional staff across the province, providing dedicated local support to apprentices, employers, schools, and community partners.

- **Central Region: Vaughan (Hub)**
 - Mississauga, Barrie, Peterborough, Durham, Toronto
- **East Region: Ottawa (Hub)**
 - Cornwall, Kingston, Pembroke, Belleville
- **West Region: London (Hub)**
 - Hamilton, Kitchener, Owen Sound, Sarnia, Windsor
- **North Region: Thunder Bay (Hub)**
 - Kenora, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Timmins



The apprenticeship program journey

1

EXPLORE THE TRADES

- Research trades and job opportunities as well as programs to help you get ready
- Find a sponsor and check eligibility with Skilled Trades Ontario

Visit skilledtradesontario.ca to find out what it's like to be an apprentice

2

BECOME AN APPRENTICE

- Apply for an apprenticeship program with Skilled Trades Ontario and sign a Registered Training Agreement with your sponsor



LEARN ON THE JOB

- Start on-the-job training and track it in your Training Standard (Logbook)

3

COMPLETE APPRENTICESHIP

- Finish all required training and confirm program completion with Skilled Trades Ontario to obtain your Certificate of Apprenticeship

Visit skilledtradesontario.ca to find exam prep resources.

GO BEYOND

- Some trades have a certifying exam you need to pass to obtain a Certificate of Qualification
- For compulsory trades, you must renew your Certificate of Qualification annually to be able to keep working

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LEARN IN CLASS

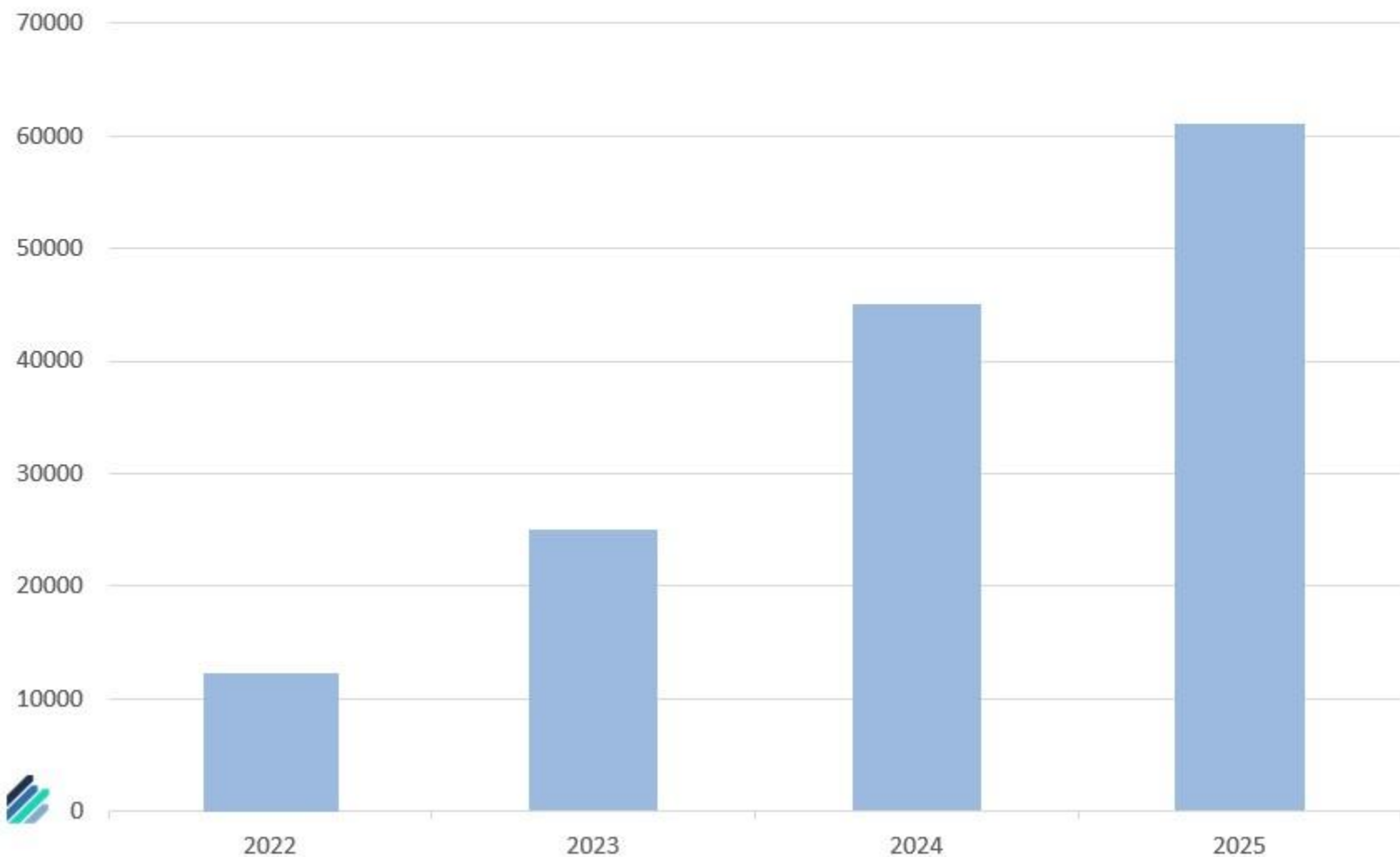
- Arrange time off with your sponsor for classroom training before going back on site for more on-the-job training

5

6

Marketing and outreach

Level Up! Projected Attendance



Let's connect!

- For meetings and presentations:
stakeholderinquiries@skilledtradesontario.ca
- For TDAs, large sponsors, and employers:
groupsponsor@skilledtradesontario.ca
- For apprentices, call 647-847-3000



Thank you!

Any questions, thoughts, or concerns?