

Hello everyone, and welcome to Community Literacy of Ontario's overview of the apprenticeship system for Literacy and Basic Skills providers. We've seen an increased demand for workers in the skilled trades across the province and recognize the important role that LBS plays in helping people prepare for, and complete, an apprenticeship. We're happy to provide this resource to support you in that work.

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Please note that the opinions expressed in this resource are those of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

If you have any questions about this presentation or any of Community Literacy of Ontario's other Skills for Success resources, we welcome you to reach out to us using the contact information on your screen.

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We'll start today's presentation by looking at some of the jobs offering apprenticeship opportunities in Ontario.

We'll talk about who qualifies to become an apprentice, the difference between compulsory and non-compulsory trades, and the benefits of apprenticing.

Then we will look at the apprentice/employer relationship and break down the difference between attending a 2-year college diploma program focused on a skilled trade and learning a trade through apprenticeship training.

We will look at how the Skills for Success are used in apprenticeships, and where LBS plays a role in helping people complete their apprenticeship journey.

We'll end the presentation with some information about resources to support apprenticeship-bound learners.

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When most people think of the skilled trades, they think of plumbers, auto mechanics, construction workers, or electricians. In fact, there are over 140 skilled trade jobs that offer apprenticeship training in Ontario in a variety of manufacturing, construction, automotive and service sectors. That's good news for learners upgrading their skills for employment because it opens up a whole new training option for them.

For example, someone interested in working with children could consider a Child Development Practitioner, Child and Youth Worker, or Educational Assistant apprenticeship.

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Learners who want to work with food might be interested in an Assistant Cook, Baker, Chef, or Retail Meat Cutter apprenticeship.

Someone with a passion for farming could consider apprenticing as a Dairy Herdsperson, Swine Herdsperson, or Horse Groom

Those considering a career in manufacturing could look for a General Machinist, Metal Fabricator, or Tool and Die Maker apprenticeship.

Learners interested in working with plants and trees could consider apprenticing as an Arborist or Horticultural Technician

And someone interested in building and construction could look at carpenter, construction craftworker or painter and decorator apprenticeships.

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Who can become an apprentice? Someone who:

- is at least 16 years old
- has a valid social insurance number
- has the educational requirements for their chosen trade. This is often a Grade 12 diploma or recognized equivalent, although a few apprenticeships only require Grade 10
- has an employer with a journeyperson on staff who has agreed to hire and train them. That means meeting the requirements of the employer – which may be above and beyond the criteria for signing an apprenticeship contract we’ve just discussed. For example, while not technically a requirement to sign an apprenticeship contract, many skilled trades also require a driver’s licence and employers won’t agree to hire someone without it. Some employers may even require more than Grade 12, seeking out applicants with a college certificate or diploma in their trade - and it is their prerogative to do so.

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Twenty-three of the skilled trades in Ontario are **compulsory**. That means to work in that trade legally, you must be a registered apprentice or a certified journeyperson – that’s someone who has completed apprenticeship training and has earned a certificate of apprenticeship or certificate of qualification. These are highly regulated professions like Alignment and Brakes Technician, Electrician, and Hairstylist. People may be able to take classes in how to do some of the things professionals in these jobs do, but to use that designated title they must have apprenticed in the trade and passed the provincial licensing exam.

The rest of the trades are **non-compulsory**, so while apprenticeship training is available it is not required to work in the trade. There may be courses at private schools or public colleges that would allow you to use that job title without presenting apprenticeship certification. Network Cabling

Specialist, Powerline Technician, and Tractor-Trailer Commercial Driver are all non-compulsory trades, among many others.

Why would your learners want to consider apprenticing in the skilled trades – particularly if the trade is non-compulsory?

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Aside from the growing need for skilled tradespeople across the province meaning there's a lot of work to be had, apprenticing is one of the few learning paths where someone can work and earn money throughout the majority of their education.

That's because apprentices are paid employees. They spend about 80% of their time learning the skills they need from a journeyperson - someone who is a fully certified expert already working in the trade. While working, they earn an hourly wage. It's not as high as what a journeyperson earns, since the apprentice is still learning aspects of their trade, but this is where the phrase **"earn while you learn"** comes from.

The other 20% of apprenticeship training happens in a classroom at a college, vocational school or union training centre, often in blocks of 12-16 weeks roughly once a year. When apprentices complete that block of training successfully, they return to work and earn a higher wage than when they left. While tuition is required for in-school training, it is significantly lower than what would be incurred for a full-time postsecondary program.

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We've just said that to become an apprentice, learners need to find an employer with a fully certified journeyperson who's working in the trade they are interested in, and who's willing to hire and train them. It is a big commitment for an employer to hire an apprentice. They have to pay the apprentice a salary and devote a lot of time and energy to training them.

For many people interested in the skilled trades, starting as a helper or general labourer in the trades is a good first step. Employers need to know whether someone is a hard worker, will show up on time, can communicate effectively with others, and follow directions. Those are the people they may be willing to spend their time and money to train and mentor. Learners need to know it's unlikely they will find an employer willing to sign them as an apprentice without knowing them and their work ethic first.

This provides an excellent opportunity for LBS practitioners to provide referrals to a local **Employment Services provider**. While upgrading their skills, learners can also get support with their resume and cover letter, interview and job search skills, and help to identify employers in their chosen trade who may be hiring helpers or general labourers.

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Clearly, apprenticeship training is different than attending college to earn a diploma in a non-compulsory trade. The usual path for someone registering for a 2-year trades-related college program may look something like this – starting from the top and working our way down:

1. First, the person has to confirm they have the level of education required for the college program they want to attend.
2. Then, they'll apply, which involves creating an account on OntarioColleges.ca, paying an application fee, and providing proof of their education credentials.
3. Assuming they're accepted into the program, they will pay tuition. For some, this may involve applying for financial support from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).
4. They will then complete two years of classes in the program they've chosen, taking exams and earning credits along the way. Some programs offer co-op opportunities, providing on-the-job work experience for students as part of the program.
5. Once they pass all of their classes, they will graduate, and the college will provide them with a diploma.
6. Then, they begin looking for a job in their chosen field and (if needed) start paying back any money borrowed for tuition.

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The path for someone training as an apprentice is often longer and involves more steps. It can look a bit like this – starting from the top and working our way down and to the right:

1. First the person has to make sure they have the level of education that employers are looking for and is required for their chosen trade.
2. Then, they need to find an employer with a fully-certified journeyperson willing to hire them as an apprentice
3. They will then complete an application for apprenticeship with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). This requires a "My Ontario" account, which is created on the Skilled Trades Ontario portal.
4. They will begin work and get paid for however many hours of on-the-job training are required for their chosen trade. The tasks to be learned on the job are listed in a document called an Apprenticeship Training Standard and must be signed off by both the apprentice and their employer.
5. In most cases, roughly once a year the apprentice will need to take a break from work to attend a block of in-school training. This training may happen close to home, or the apprentice may need to travel away from home for their training. In some cases, the in-school training will occur one day per week throughout the year instead of in 8- or 12-week blocks, but it is less common. In either case, the tuition fees associated with this training

are partially covered by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, but there will be fees involved. The lessons, activities and tests apprentices will complete are listed in a document called the Curriculum Training Standard, and apprentices must pass this training to progress in their apprenticeship.

6. Once they pass the first level of in-school training, they will continue on the job as a level 2 apprentice, earning a higher wage and beginning a new level of on-the-job training.
7. They will repeat the cycle as many times as necessary until all in-class and on-the-job hours are complete, and each required skill in the trade has been demonstrated. In most apprenticeships, there are 2 or 3 levels of training required.
8. Then, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development will issue them a certificate of apprenticeship. If there is a qualifying exam for the trade they've studied, they can arrange to pay for and take that exam. This Certificate of Qualification can help them earn higher wages and access more job opportunities.
9. As a journeyperson with several years of experience under their belt, they will continue working and earning money – and possibly take on the next apprentice in their skilled trade.

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A lot of the skills we mentioned employers are looking for are the **Skills for Success**. These are the nine skills defined by the federal government that everyone needs to be successful in work, learning, and life, and they are very important in the skilled trades. Let's look at each of them individually and talk about how they're used by apprentices.

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**Adaptability** is being able to adjust when things change around you. Apprentices need to be adaptable as they learn new ways of doing things, as their work shifts change, and when their training schedule moves from on-the-job to in-class and back again.

**Communication** is being able to speak, listen and share ideas. Apprentices need to listen to and understand instructions from the journeyperson who is training them, ask questions about what they are supposed to do, and share information with coworkers, customers, and classmates.

**Collaboration** is being able to work well with other people. Apprentices learn their trade from a certified journeyperson while working as part of a team, which means that being able to get along, work professionally and share job tasks with other people is critical. Many skilled trades involve clients or customers, providing more opportunities to collaborate with others.

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**Creativity and innovation** include being able to use your imagination and come up with new ideas. Regardless of the skilled trade, apprentices will need to come up with new ways of doing their work, accept and learn from failure when it happens, and build on their own and others' ideas to improve

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the work they do. Skilled trades like hairdresser, painter and decorator, special events coordinator, and gemsetter/goldsmith offer even more opportunities to use creativity and innovation.

**Digital** skills refer to being able to use computers, tablets, smartphones and apps. Even the most hands-on jobs involve technology, so this is an important skill to have. Once they find a journeyperson to hire them, apprentices will complete their application for apprenticeship online. They may also use online learning platforms during their in-class training and could encounter digital ordering and inventory systems, and software to track client orders, invoices, and payments when they are at work.

**Numeracy** is being able to work with and understand numbers. Apprentices will use numbers and math a lot because they are needed in almost every skilled trade – when ordering supplies, measuring or mixing products, calculating dimensions, applying formulas, determining how long a task should take, estimating the cost of a job, and keeping track of work hours and pay. Strong math skills are increasingly important for success in the skilled trades.

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**Problem solving** is being able to find solutions when something goes wrong. The kinds of problems apprentices need to solve will change from trade to trade but could include figuring out why a vehicle isn't running properly, how to resolve a conflict between coworkers, or how to fix something when the tools they would normally use are unavailable.

**Reading** is being able to understand written words and symbols. Apprentices need to read and understand their employment contract, assignments and instruction given during their in-class training, and the Apprenticeship Training Standard Log Book, which describes all of the skills they need to learn and demonstrate on-the-job.

**Writing** is being able to communicate clearly using words and sentences. Apprentices need to write resumes and cover letters when applying to work with a journeyperson, to complete their application for apprenticeship with the Ontario government, and for essays and assignments during the in-class portion of their training.

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We know that Ontario's adult literacy programs are a great place to learn and practice those Skills for Success. That's why having an understanding of the skilled trades and Ontario's apprenticeship system is so important for literacy practitioners. We want you to have the resources you need to support learners on the apprenticeship goal path at several places within their journey.

Let's look at where your program can play a role. For example:

- some learners may not know that an apprenticeship is an option for them, so when a learner's employment goals are connected to the skilled trades, adult literacy practitioners can introduce the opportunity to them

- supporting someone who needs to upgrade specific skills (often math) because they **do** know they want to apprentice in a skilled trade, and that they need stronger skills to be successful. LBS programs can help learners upgrade those skills using task-based activities and curriculum specific to apprenticing and the skilled trades.
- helping someone prepare to complete high school credits and earn their OSSD, or to prepare for their Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) grade 12 equivalence program at a college because they recognize that many employers won't consider hiring them – whether it's as a general labourer or apprentice - without a grade 12 or equivalent credential. While as we said earlier, the minimum educational requirement for some skilled trades is Grade 10, many employers in those trades still prefer to hire high school graduates.
- supporting participants in pre-apprenticeship programs. These provincially funded programs offer people the chance to learn more about a specific trade, practice some of the foundational skills required in that trade, and build the skills they need to take their next step toward an apprenticeship. When participants in these programs struggle, it's an excellent opportunity for literacy programs to help them upgrade their skills in ways they can put into practice immediately. It's important to note that LBS programs need to be included in pre-apprenticeship funding applications to ensure that LBS supports are built into pre-apprenticeship programs whenever possible.
- helping signed apprentices prepare for and complete the in-school portion of their apprenticeship training. As we mentioned, while most training happens on the job, apprentices also attend classes and write tests and exams throughout their apprenticeship. They must pass each level of their in-school training to move on to the next level (and next pay grade) of their job, so developing strong reading, writing, math, digital, studying and test-taking skills is critical.

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There are many resources available to help you in this work. Be sure to see the companion sheet for this presentation for links to each of them.

For example, the **Literacy Resources and Discussion Forum** offers a database of resources created through Skills for Success funding, with a dedicated area for Apprenticeship. Here you'll find resources created by several of the **Provincial Support Organizations for Literacy**.

<https://lbsresourcesandforum.contactnorth.ca/mod/data/view.php?id=59>

The **Task-Based Activities Portal** continues to be a great resource for apprenticeship-specific activities you can use with learners, giving them hands-on experience with many of the skills required in both the on-the-job and in-class portion of their training.

[https://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/english?f%5B0%5D=field\\_goal\\_path%3A9](https://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/english?f%5B0%5D=field_goal_path%3A9)

The **Learning Networks of Ontario's apprenticeship subcommittee** puts out a newsletter called the Apprenticeship Connection, offers a series of informational webinars and podcasts, and also runs a social media campaign using the hashtag #HereForApprentices. Each of these initiatives can



offer insight into how LBS programs can increase their support of learners on the apprenticeship goal path. <https://learningnetworks.ca/the-apprenticeship-connection/>

Speaking of the Learning Networks of Ontario, your **regional literacy support network** will be able to connect you with additional resources, so be sure to reach out to your network to see what they can offer. <https://learningnetworks.ca/contact-my-network/>

As a reminder, **e-Channel LBS programs** offer apprenticeship-specific curriculum online that can be used in combination with your program's in-person upgrading.

For more information about resources to support apprentices, we invite you to download our **"Annotated List of Curricula & Curricula Resources in Apprenticeship & Skilled Trades"** along with its three accompanying fact sheets – one focused on strategies, another on resources, and a third on innovative partnerships all of which are focused on learners with apprenticeship & skilled trades goals.

[https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Guide\\_Apprenticeship.pdf](https://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/Resource-Guide_Apprenticeship.pdf)

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It's also helpful to know about organizations and websites related to apprenticeship and the skilled trades, as they can be valuable places for both you and your learners to explore.

For example, **Skilled Trades Ontario** is the provincial body responsible for skilled trades certification in Ontario. For those familiar with the apprenticeship system, this is the organization that replaced the Ontario College of Trades, and their role in Ontario's apprenticeship system is growing.

Their website offers information about certification, exams, and trade equivalency. It also includes a list of every skilled trade in Ontario, the kinds of tasks these skilled tradespeople complete, and how many hours of on-the-job and in-school training are required to become fully certified in that trade.

This is also where you can find the Apprenticeship Training Standards and Curriculum Training Standards. These documents share exactly what apprentices will learn in their training, making them an excellent resource to prepare learners for what to expect during their apprenticeship.

<https://www.skilledtradesontario.ca/>

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When reviewing the list of trades on the Skilled Trades Ontario website, learners may notice that some of them are dedicated **"Red Seal" trades**. These trades offer a certification exam that, if passed, means the tradesperson's certification is recognized in every province and territory in Canada. That provides extra flexibility for a Journeyperson to travel for work.



Learners can explore this website for more information about different Red Seal trades, including how to prepare for the Red Seal exam.

<https://www.red-seal.ca/eng/w.2lc.4m.2.shtml>

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**ApprenticeSearch.com** is a free online job search and matching platform that focuses on apprenticeship trades in Canada. There, learners can explore jobs in the trades, learn what skills, interests and values they need, and what training can help them prepare. ApprenticeSearch.com also offers short self-assessments so learners can decide if a skilled trade is a good fit for them or not.

<https://www.apprenticesearch.com/trades>

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The **Government of Ontario's apprenticeship page** outlines how to prepare for, start, and complete an apprenticeship, and how to apply for grants and incentives. This can be a valuable tool for learners who would benefit from additional financial support along their apprenticeship journey.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/apprenticeship-Ontario>

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Thank you for joining Community Literacy of Ontario's overview of the apprenticeship system for Literacy and Basic Skills providers. We hope you found it valuable and learned more about the journey of apprenticeship in Ontario.

We encourage you to investigate the resources and websites shared today and to use your provincial support organization, regional literacy network, and each other to continue learning and sharing information about LBS and apprenticeship.