

Apprenticeships and Newcomers

Newcomers are interested in apprenticeship and skilled trades. The trades are of interest to those who have similar training in their country of origin and who want to practise their trade in Canada. The passing of the Working for Workers Act, 2021 eliminates the requirement for newcomers to have Canadian experience, which should make it easier for highly skilled internationally-trained immigrants to get access to jobs that match their qualifications and skills, and find work in their field of expertise. Immigrants have varying levels of understanding of apprenticeship, depending on their countries of origin, and the countries they have lived in. Those from countries with strong apprenticeship pathways (for example, Germany) usually perform well in apprenticeship challenge exams, particularly because the systems are similar. Other newcomers have the same outdated, negative perspectives about the skilled trades that many other Canadians have.

Many countries do not have apprenticeship programs, so there is room to help educate newcomers about occupations in these trades, and what that means for credential recognition in Canada. In addition, language acquisition is another obstacle to the credential recognition/challenge process for apprenticeships in Ontario.

Recently, the Ontario government invested over \$900,000 to connect 900 new immigrants across the province to well-paying jobs as carpenters, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, welders, chefs and other in-demand trades. [The Ontario Newcomer Trades Action Program \(ONTAP\)](#) is being organised and delivered by the YMCA/YWCA in Ottawa, Toronto, and other Ontario cities. Through the ONTAP online workshops, newcomers learn how to find an apprenticeship, what employers look for when hiring and how to get a Trades Equivalency Assessment. Outreach workers help connect newcomers, employers, and local employment service centres.

ONTAP provides service providers with all of the information they need to advise clients on opportunities in the skilled trades, including foreign experience recognition process, local resources, labour market information, and viable career pathways. In addition, ONTAP helps employers develop strategies for attracting, training, and retaining newcomers as employees. Sessions also review how employers can support their internationally-trained workers with apprenticeship and trade equivalency assessment processes.

[Learn more about the program and participants.](#)