
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training

Apprentices bring value from classroom to job site

VICTORIA – British Columbians and employers will learn the economic value of apprenticeships, thanks to a study funded by the B.C. government and the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum - Forum Canadien sur l'Apprentissage (CAF-FCA).

“The skilled trades are at the centre of our COVID-19 recovery and building a stronger B.C. means supporting the people who build up our province,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. “As the demand for skilled trades workers grows, apprentices will be a vital part of filling the gap. Through research and collaboration, we’re working to demonstrate the value apprentices bring to employers and the provincial economy.”

The CAF-FCA is a non-profit organization that connects Canada’s apprenticeship community. The membership represents stakeholders in the trades sector, including employers and employer associations, unions, equity-seeking groups and educational institutions across Canada.

In 2006 and 2009, CAF-FCA conducted two national studies to calculate the economic return on training investment for employers who hired apprentices. In 2006, using a cost-benefit model, CAF-FCA found that for every dollar spent on apprenticeship training, an employer receives an average benefit of \$1.38. When the study was repeated in 2009, the return had increased to \$1.47.

While the net benefit to employers when hiring apprentices differs by trade, the results showed that in the majority of trades there is a positive return for those employers that invest in apprenticeship training, and the net benefit increases in each year of the apprenticeship.

To develop up-to-date data regarding the value of apprenticeship training to employers in B.C., CAF-FCA will update and replicate their 2009 study across 21 skilled trades. The trades sector spans numerous industries of B.C.’s economy, including construction, manufacturing, mining, forestry, mineral and resource extraction, automotive, marine and shipbuilding, services, aerospace, and tourism and hospitality.

The research is expected to take 20 months, with estimated completion in July 2023. Working in partnership with the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) through focus groups and surveys, the project will examine employment in the skilled trades sector, determine the prevalence of apprenticeship training among employers, and quantify the return on training investment for employers in B.C. Additionally, the final report will identify strategies for encouraging higher levels of participation in apprenticeship training among employers to ensure the skills and training needs of the current and future labour market can be met.

Quotes:

Shelley Gray, chief executive officer, Industry Training Authority –

“Skilled trades apprenticeships are vital to our economy as they are the next generation of tradespeople that will continue to contribute to growing our economy, as well as building and maintaining the infrastructures that enable us to do just that. Funding for studies like this one will not only raise awareness of the integral role skilled trades has in the province but also encourage British Columbians to participate in trades, as an apprentice, employer, training provider and more.”

France Daviault, executive director, Canadian Apprenticeship Forum –

“CAF-FCA is pleased to be partnering with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training and BC Construction Association on this project. By understanding the costs and benefits of apprenticeship training, employers are equipped to make more informed decisions when it comes to HR planning and their future recruitment and retention strategies. This industry-driven research will have value for employers across the province and it is hoped will spark a national conversation about the importance of employer investments in workplace training.”

Chris Atchison, president, BC Construction Association –

“BCCA is committed to workforce development and apprenticeship, and we know that good data drives good decisions. We support CAF in its efforts to further develop the apprenticeship ROI data for B.C.'s construction industry.”

Quick Facts:

- November 2021 is Apprenticeship Recognition Month in B.C.
- The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training and the ITA will highlight the roles apprentices play in building a stronger B.C, as well as opportunities for people to start a career in the skilled trades.
- The Sector Labour Market Partnership between the Province and industry will be led by the (CAF-FCA) with funding support of \$650,000 from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training.
- The selection of 21 skilled trades included in the study will be determined through focus groups with employers of skilled trades apprentices and finalized by the project governance committee.
- The 10 trades introduced into the Skilled Trades Certification (construction electrician, industrial electrician, powerline technician, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, gasfitter A and B, steamfitter/pipefitter, sheet metal worker, heavy duty equipment technician, automotive service technician and auto body and collision technician) may be included in this study.

Learn More:

Sector Labour Market Partnerships: <https://www.workbc.ca/labour-market-industry/sector-labour-market-partnerships-program.aspx>

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum - Forum Canadien sur l'Apprentissage: <https://caf-fca.org/about-caf-fca/>

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