

Pilot Project Launches at National Apprenticeship Conference

Ottawa ON – February 22, 2021 – Attracting delegates from across the country, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's (CAF-FCA's) Board of Directors is pleased to announce its national conference, is taking place virtually on February 22-23, 2021.

To bring members of the apprenticeship community together in these unprecedented times, CAF-FCA's biennial event is taking place online and highlights promising practices and innovative solutions in apprenticeship training. More than 500 delegates from every province and territory in Canada registered to learn, share and collaborate on joint solutions. The program features expert panels, breakout sessions delivered by apprenticeship and skilled trades community partners from across the country, networking activities and an interactive virtual exhibit hall.

The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Carla Qualtrough kicked off the event in a live address to delegates. Her remarks included the announcement of a new CAF-FCA project funded through the Government of Canada's Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP). In partnership with the International Union of Operating Engineers, *Improving Pass Rates and Learning Outcomes for IUOE Apprentices*, will pilot use of an online tool with 2,000 apprentices in the heavy equipment operator and mobile crane operator trades.

As part of the UTIP, the Government of Canada also announced an investment of \$63.5 million, over five years, for 68 projects to help develop a highly qualified skilled trades workforce and prepare them to fill available jobs as our economy restarts.

"As we continue to fight this virus, our support for workers remains strong. Skilled tradespeople across the country have been critical to essential sectors during this pandemic, and they will continue to be so as Canada moves toward economic recovery. That is why the Government of Canada continues to invest in skilled trades and support organizations, such as the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, to help Canadians, including those from key groups facing barriers, get the training they need to launch exciting and well-paying careers in the trades."

- Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Carla Qualtrough

CAF-FCA knows that post-COVID-19 economic recovery will require that certified journeypersons are a core part of the skilled trades workforce. However, some apprentices make it through their training programs but struggle to pass the multiple-choice examination. This pilot project will help address barriers apprentices face around passing the final multiple-choice examination by providing access to an online tool. Best practices for accommodating apprentices with disabilities will inform development of the resource and should serve to improve exam pass rates. CAF-FCA will share lessons learned and areas for improvement

based on pilot results. By gathering and applying best practices, other unions and employers may be encouraged to adopt the tool and exam preparation approach.

Lionel Railton, Canadian Regional Director said of the partnership, “The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) has worked in collaboration with the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum for twenty years.” He continues, “This practical project, working with IUOE training directors and their staff from multiple provinces and territories is an opportunity to help apprentices directly, an approach that our union has always been guided by.”

By encouraging unions and employers to train and support them, apprentices with disabilities may complete their training, find a pathway to a long-term career, and achieve financial self-reliance.

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About CAF-FCA

The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) is a non-profit organization that connects Canada's apprenticeship community. Participants work collaboratively to support vibrant and innovative apprenticeship systems and policies with a view to developing a highly skilled, inclusive and mobile skilled trades workforce. Employers, unions, equity-seeking groups, educational institutions and the jurisdictions support CAF-FCA operations through membership.

CAF-FCA is the only organization that brings together apprenticeship stakeholders from across trades, across sectors and across Canada to share information and promising practices, identify challenges and propose joint solutions. As a national voice for the apprenticeship community, CAF-FCA influences apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration. Its research agenda and events provide stakeholders with accurate, unbiased insights into apprenticeship challenges and barriers and illustrates the substantial benefits of hiring and training apprentices. For more, visit: caf-fca.org.

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About IUOE

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) is a progressive, diversified trade union that primarily represents operating engineers, who work as heavy equipment operators, mechanics, and surveyors in the construction industry, and stationary engineers, who work in operations and maintenance in building and industrial complexes, and in the service industries. IUOE also represents nurses and other health industry workers, a significant number of public employees engaged in a wide variety of occupations, as well as a number of job classifications in the petrochemical industry.