

For immediate release

First Cohort of the National Leadership Development Program for Women in the Skilled Trades Underway

OTTAWA, ON (Sept 7, 2022) – The inaugural cohort of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's (CAF-FCA) National Leadership Program for Women in Skilled Trades is underway after an enthusiastic application period. Eighteen apprentice tradeswomen will be the first participants in the program developed and administered in partnership with the Office to Advance Women Apprentices (OAWA). Due to the high level of interest, the partners will fund an additional cohort at no cost to tradeswomen which will start in February. CAF-FCA and OAWA will work with industry, trades unions, government, and training institutions to support future development and administration costs of the program.

Guided by subject matter experts, participants will learn effective strategies and gain practical tips to empower them as leaders in their skilled trades workplaces and the broader community. Modules included in the program are Principles of Leadership, Communicating with Confidence, Teamwork, Mentoring and Conflict Resolution, Supervisory and Management Skills and Mental Health and Well-Being. Participants will complete the program online through a learning management system allowing for self-paced learning and an interactive forum with facilitators and tradeswomen coaches.

Background

Women are marginalized in skilled trades workplaces and experience barriers. Female apprentices report more difficulty finding employer sponsors and have lower apprenticeship completion rates than males (Prism, 2021). As a result, non-completing women cannot access the high paying, full-time work associated with certification in the trades. A positive work environment and support from peers are key to program retention but in the absence of these women apprentices report poorer mental health than male apprentices (CAF-FCA, 2020) contributing to a lack of confidence and sense of isolation. Many women apprentices and journeypersons have limited access to leadership training or development opportunities for self advocacy, public speaking, conflict resolution and mentoring.

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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. As a national voice for the apprenticeship community, CAF-FCA influences apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration. Its research and events provide stakeholders with accurate, unbiased insights into apprenticeship challenges and barriers and illustrates the substantial benefits of hiring and training apprentices. Employers, unions, equity-seeking groups, educational institutions and the jurisdictions support CAF-FCA operations through membership.*

About OAWA: The Office to Advance Women Apprentices (Newfoundland & Labrador) was established in 2009 with funding from the NL government, with a mandate of increasing employment opportunities for women in the skilled trades. The office provides ongoing support to tradeswomen seeking work or already employed in the skilled trades. This includes providing career services, employment supports, and networking opportunities for tradeswomen.

CAF-FCA is a national not-for-profit organization collaborating with stakeholders in all regions of Canada. We influence apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration – sharing insights across trades, across sectors and across the country – to promote apprenticeship as an effective model for training and education. For more information, visit the CAF-FCA website at caf-fca.org.