

Looking for More?

- The CAF-FCA Employer Handbook highlights best practices for recruiting, retaining and mentoring apprentices
- Visit our *Skilled Trades Network* (www.caf-fca.org/skilled-trades-network) to learn about financial supports and the business case for apprenticeship training
- Subscribe to CAF-FCA's monthly newsletter to stay informed and connected by emailing info@caf-fca.org

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ See the Red Seal website:
http://www.red-seal.ca/trades/tr.1d.2s_c.1n.1d.1@-eng.jsp.
- ⁱⁱ See the Ellis Chart:
<http://www.ellischart.ca/h.4m.2@-eng.jsp>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Marinka Menard, Frank Menezes, Cindy K.Y. Chan and Merv Walker, "National Apprenticeship Survey: Canada Overview Report 2007." (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2007), 18
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/81-598-x/81-598-x2008001-eng.pdf>.
- ^{iv} CAF-FCA, "Effective Journeyperson Apprentice Mentoring On-the-Job," (Ottawa: CAF-FCA, 2013).
- ^v CAF-FCA, "It Pays to Hire An Apprentice," (Ottawa: CAF-FCA, 2008).



Canadian Apprenticeship Forum
Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage



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APPRENTICESHIP

An Introduction for Employers

WHY HIRE AND TRAIN APPRENTICES?

Hiring apprentices helps you grow your own talent, shaping their skills and knowledge to meet your business requirements. The apprentices you train today will become your core workforce and your company's future managers and leaders. This practical guide is designed to show you the way.

Even when the economy slows and there is somewhat less intense pressure on skilled trades labour, virtually every sector survey continues to report difficulties when it comes to filling positions for skilled tradespeople. While economic cycles are a reality, so is Canada's need for people who can build, install, maintain and service.

The apprentice registration process is straightforward. You hire and select a candidate of your choice and register them with your provincial/territorial apprenticeship authority. Most employers who hire apprentices say the paperwork is easy to complete and the benefits of training apprentices far outweigh the costs. Staff in each province/territory have expertise in apprenticeship training and can guide you through the process.



HIRE

Ensure you have a safe and harassment-free workplace

Recruit an apprentice using your normal hiring processes

Pay the apprentice in accordance with jurisdictional policy



REGISTER

Connect with the apprenticeship authority in your region to determine registration process

Complete paperwork or online registration forms with your apprentice

Ensure required supporting documents are attached and forms are signed

Apply for employer tax credits and grants; encourage apprentice to apply for available grants and loans



ASSIGN A MENTOR

Identify a mentor with capacity & willingness to share knowledge, skills and business intelligence

Familiarize mentor with skills required in the apprenticeship training program

Help mentor identify apprentice strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement

Consider putting a training plan in place to keep everyone on track



DOCUMENT TRAINING

Document progress in accordance with apprenticeship authority regulations

Provide opportunities to do a variety of tasks and complete safety training

Update and review documents with mentor and apprentice on a regular basis

Release apprentice to attend trade school when the opportunity arises



SUPPORT CERTIFICATION

Encourage progression and provide incentives, such as wage increases

Facilitate upgrading or provide other supports, if required

When your apprentice has completed the hours and training for their trade, encourage them to write the exam

Ensure certification paperwork is completed

WHAT IS APPRENTICESHIP?

Workplace-Based Program

Apprenticeship is a workplace-based program that teaches people the skills they need in the trades to achieve competencies and perform tasks to the industry standard.

Apprenticeship training combines alternating periods of on-the-job (80-90%) and technical training (10-20%). Technical training can occur at a community college, a union training centre, a private trainer or online. Apprenticeship programs range in length from two to four years.

Financial supports are available to many apprentices while in technical training, including Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. Red Seal apprentices may be eligible for up to \$4,000 per period of technical training through the Canada Apprentice Loan. Red Seal apprentices can also apply for federal grants. Some employers choose to continue apprentice wages or top up EI benefits during training as a way to illustrate their support for training and development.

Apprenticeship: A Provincial and Territorial Responsibility

The provincial and territorial governments regulate and manage apprenticeship, resulting in 13 unique systems managed by jurisdictional governments or agencies. The structure and governance model for apprenticeship differs in each jurisdiction.

In most cases, apprenticeship regulators rely on industry for guidance and input, ensuring apprenticeship remains relevant to industry needs.

Compulsory versus Voluntary Trades

Certification is legally required in provinces and territories where the trade is compulsory. In compulsory trades, persons working in the trade should either be apprentices or certified journeypersons. When the trade is voluntary, certification is not required and there may be labourers, apprentices or journeypersons working in the trade. Though not necessarily mandatory, certification is associated with a number of direct and indirect benefits for both businesses and their employees.

The province/territory decides whether trades are designated compulsory or voluntary based on industry input. There are more than 300 trades, but the number of designated trades varies in each province or territory.ⁱ

The Ellis Chart is a searchable, online, trade-specific database that indicates which trades have apprenticeship programs, the program length, hours required and whether the trades are compulsory or voluntary.ⁱⁱ

Compulsory	Voluntary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apprentices (journeypersons-in-training) or certified journeypersons should be the only tradespeople working in these trades• Certification is required by law	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certification is not necessary though it may be available• Workers may be labourers, apprentices or journeypersons

Red Seal Program

Apprenticeship is regulated by each province and territory in Canada, but the federal government supports the Red Seal Program. There are 56 Red Seal trades. The majority of apprentices work in Red Seal trades.ⁱⁱⁱ

A Red Seal designation means industry has come together to determine a common set of standards and competencies for a trade and that common definitions have been accepted by at least five provinces/territories.

Apprenticeship regulators in each province/territory are collaboratively responsible for overseeing the Red Seal Program and Red Seal exams. The Red Seal exam is accepted as the provincial certification exam in the majority of jurisdictions and, if the individual earns over 70% on the multiple-choice test, the Red Seal endorsement is affixed to the provincial/territorial certificate. In Alberta, Québec and the territories, apprentices write a provincial/territorial certification exam and then the Red Seal exam. If they pass the additional exam, they receive the Red Seal endorsement.

Pre-Apprenticeship Graduates: Pre-apprenticeship programs support trade exploration and preparation for apprenticeship, providing opportunities to learn hands-on skills, safety and essential skills. Many include work placements, so you may want to offer these as a way to connect with future employees. Contact your local college or union training centre to learn more.

Joint Training Committees: Unionized employers should connect with their union local to determine what supports are available when it comes to screening, training and managing apprentices. In some regions, unions and employers collaborate on apprenticeship through Joint Training Committees.

Effective Apprentice Mentoring

Every apprentice needs a tradesperson to teach them. In most jurisdictions, this tradesperson must themselves be certified, although there are exceptions. Check with your apprenticeship authority for local regulations.

Effective apprentice mentoring maximizes the training experience and enhances apprentice retention. During the training process, the apprentice becomes familiar with your processes, equipment and customers, resulting in an employee who is a “good fit” with your organization.

One of the most important things employers can do to support effective mentoring is to select the right journeyperson mentor. Good communication skills are essential to being able to transfer knowledge and skills to apprentices. Once a journeyperson is selected, engage them in a process to review, document and sign-off on skills development tied to trade and industry standards.^{iv}

Employers say that mentoring revitalizes journeypersons. They pass down their knowledge to young people, while apprentices provide valuable assistance with complex tasks. Journeypersons are careful to model safe work practices, enhancing overall workplace safety.^v

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

If apprenticeship is something your company wants to explore, take some time to learn tips and strategies from experienced employers! For example:

Recruiting Apprentices

High School Apprenticeship Programs: You can connect with potential apprentices through youth apprenticeship programs. These allow high school students 16 years or older to earn hours and credits towards their apprenticeship. Contact your local school board to learn more.