

CANADIAN
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L'APPRENTISSAGE

National Registration and Completion Trends in Red Seal Trades 2023

in Red Seal Trades 2023



About the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) is a national, not-for-profit organization working with stakeholders in all regions of Canada. We influence pan-Canadian apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration sharing insights across trades, across sectors and across the country. We promote apprenticeship as an effective model for training and education. Our Board of Directors has representatives from business, labour, the jurisdictional apprenticeship authorities, education and equity-priority groups. Through our work, CAF-FCA has shed light on several key issues affecting apprenticeship, such as the perceived barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeship and the business case for apprenticeship training. For more information, visit the CAF-FCA website at www.caf-fca.org.

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to Canada's apprenticeship system. In 2020, Canada reported the largest year-over-year decline in new registrations and completions since 1991. New registrations in the 15 largest Red Seal trade programs fell by 27%, resulting in approximately 34,930 registrations, the lowest number of annual registrations since 2000. The number of program completions saw a slightly steeper decline, falling by 32% to approximately 16,550 completions, marking a drop in completion levels not seen in more than a decade.¹

There was a significant reversal of this trend in 2021. New registrations were up significantly compared to 2020 levels. In 2021 the total number of new registrations in the 15 largest Red Seal trades was 47,385. This represented a 36% increase compared to 2020. The total number of new registrations in 2021 represents an almost complete recovery to the pre-pandemic level of apprenticeship registrations, reaching 99% of the total number of new registrations reported in 2019.

A positive trend was also observed in the number of completions. In 2021, the number of completions recorded was 22,737. This represented a 37% increase in completions compared to 2020.

The total number of completions in 2021 represents 93% of the total number of completions in 2019. This indicates a near total recovery in program completions compared to the pre-COVID pandemic level.

The 15 largest Red Seal trades saw an increase in new registrations between 2020 and 2021. The size of the increase ranged from 8% (hairstylist) to 55% (steamfitter/pipefitter). Likewise, between 2020 and 2021 there was an increase in completions in all trades except for cook. Among these increases, the lowest was 4% (hairstylist) and the highest was 68% (painter and decorator). Completions for cook, the only trade that continued to decline, decreased by 14%.

A crucial characteristic of the COVID-19 pandemic was its disproportionate impact by gender. Although the number of new registrations and completions have increased compared to the levels observed in 2020, this recovery has been notably slower for women apprentices.² Program completions for women apprentices has been slower to recover than new registrations. The difference in completion rates between men and women increased in 2021 compared to 2020.



¹ See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2021072-eng.htm>.

² The terms men and women have been used throughout this report. Men means those who identify as men. Women means those who identify as women. Data on other gender identities could not be obtained due to small sample sizes.

Introduction

This report provides an analysis of national and provincial trends in apprenticeship registrations and completions based on the latest available data (2021) from Statistics Canada's Registered Apprenticeship Information System (RAIS).³ Data from the provinces and territories, based on the number of individuals registered in apprenticeship programs and those who obtain certification, are presented in RAIS.⁴

This report provides statistics and analysis of the trends in new registrations and completions for the 15 largest Red Seal apprenticeship programs across Canada, excluding the territories.⁵ Table 1 lists the 15 largest trades covered in the analysis.

Table 1 – Top 15 Red Seal Trade Programs, Canada

Red Seal Trade	NOC 4
1. Automotive Service Technician	7321
2. Carpenter	7271
3. Construction Electrician	7241
4. Cook	6322
5. Hairstylist	6341
6. Heavy Duty Equipment Technician	7312
7. Industrial Electrician	7242
8. Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	7311
9. Painter and Decorator	7294
10. Plumber	7251
11. Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	7313
12. Sheet Metal Worker	7233
13. Steamfitter/Pipefitter	7252
14. Truck and Transport Mechanic	7321
15. Welder	7237



³ This report focuses on provincial data. Territorial data could not be used due to small sample sizes.

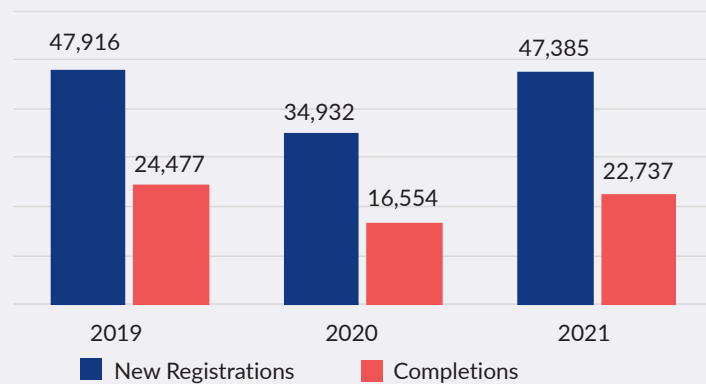
⁴ The data might not match what was produced in the 2022 report due to revisions to Statistics Canada's historic RAIS data.

⁵ The 15 largest Red Seal trades were determined based on the 2020 RAIS registration numbers.

National Trends in Registrations and Completions

In 2020, Canada reported the largest year-over-year decline in new registrations and completions since 1991.⁶ There was a significant reversal of this trend in 2021. The total number of new registrations in the 15 largest Red Seal trades reached 47,385. This represented a 36% increase compared to 2020 and accounts for 99% of the total number of new registrations in 2019. The number of program completions also saw a significant recovery, increasing by 37% to approximately 22,740 completions, indicating a near total recovery in completions compared to the pre-COVID 2019 level.

Figure 1 – Net Change in New Registrations and Completions, Canada, 2019 to 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

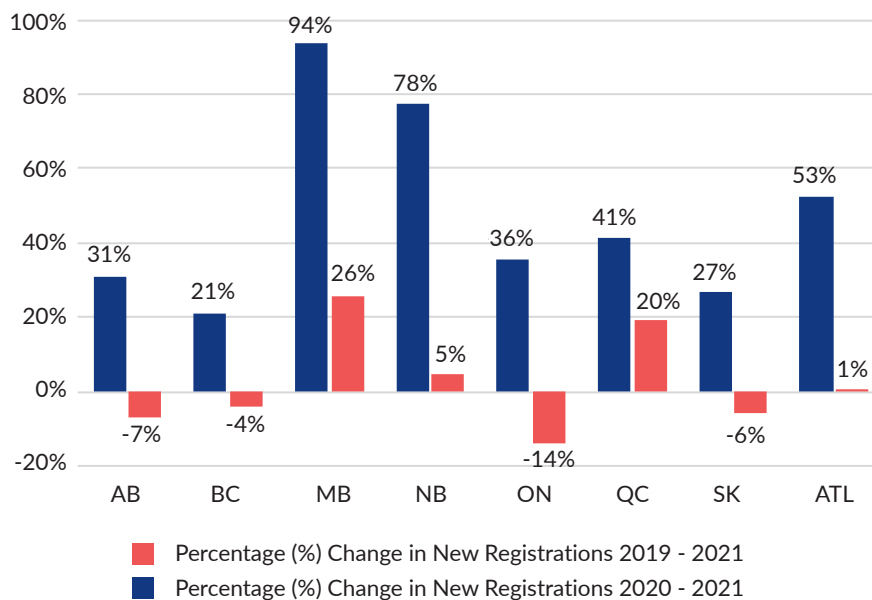
⁶ See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2021072-eng.htm>.

Registration Trends

The impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship training programs was felt across Canada. New registrations in most provinces retreated to historically low levels, while Newfoundland and Labrador reported the lowest number of new registrations since data collection began in 1991.⁷

New registrations improved considerably in 2021. Compared to 2020, all provinces saw an increase in the number of new registrations, however, most provinces remained below their 2019 registrations. Manitoba, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada were exceptions and had higher numbers of new registrants in 2021 than in 2019. It is notable that in 2021 Quebec achieved its highest number of new registrations on record.

Figure 2 – Percentage (%) Change in New Registrations by Province, 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2021

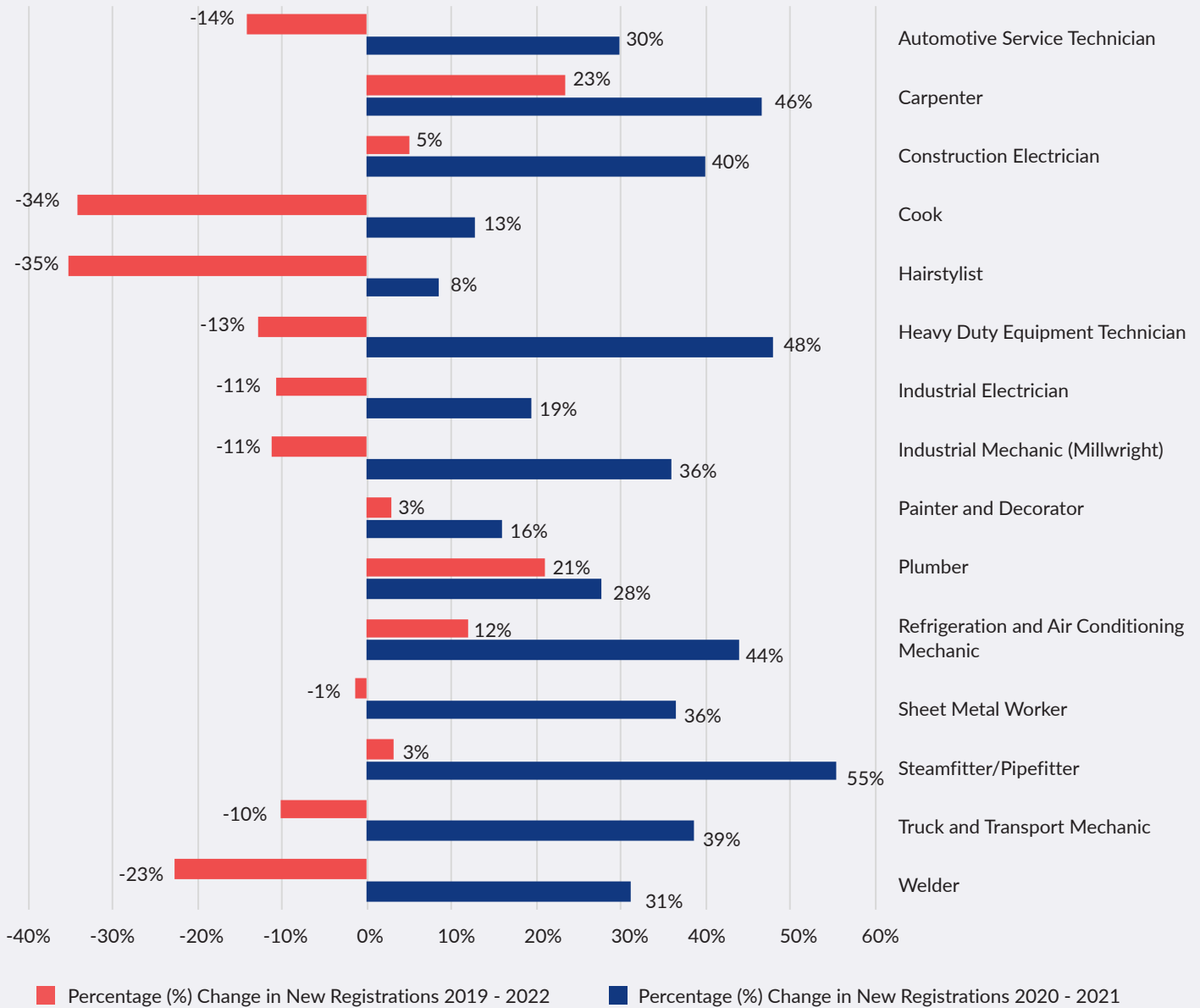


Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

By trade, the rate of new registrations has also improved significantly since 2020. The 15 largest Red Seal trades saw an increase in their new registrations compared to 2020 levels. As of 2021, most of the Red Seal trades have new registration levels that are either in line with or exceed their 2019 levels, including: steamfitter/pipefitter, refrigerator and air conditioning mechanic, plumber, painter and decorator, construction electrician, and carpenter. Other trades had not yet recovered, with welder (-23%), hairstylist (-35%), and cook (-34%) remaining well below their 2019 levels.

⁷ Ibid.

Figure 3 – Percentage (%) Change in New Red Seal Program Registrations, 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2021 by Trade, Canada (Excluding Territories)



Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

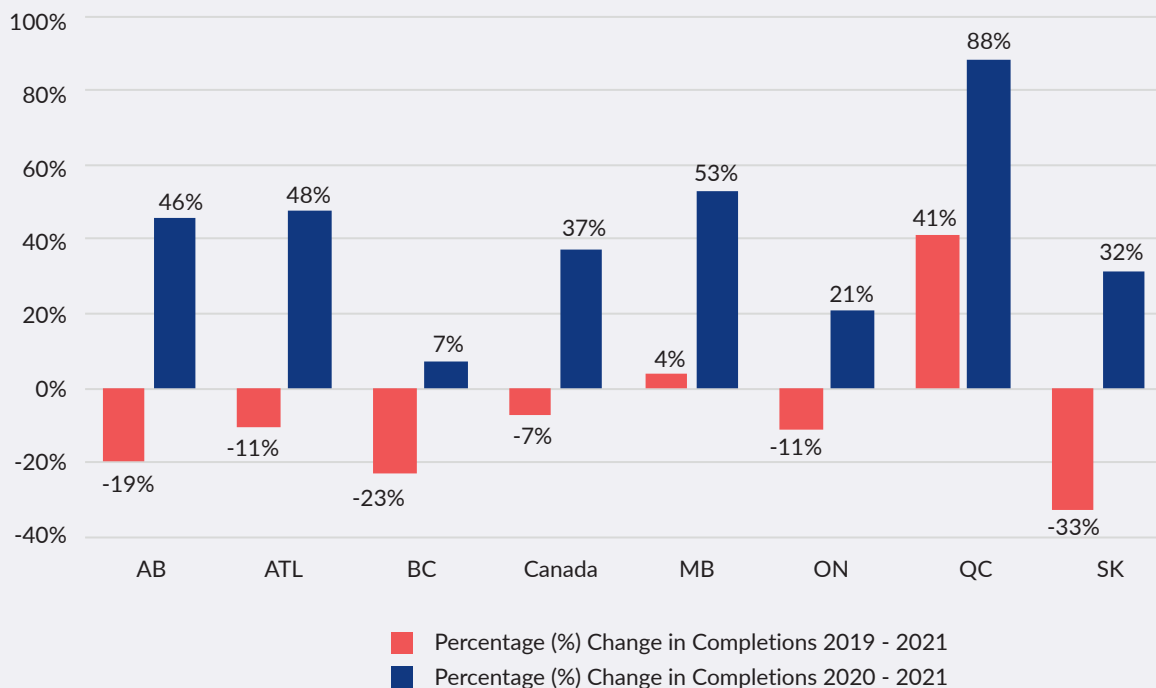
Completion Trends

Economic conditions significantly impact an apprentice's ability to progress in a program because, unlike other forms of post-secondary education, apprenticeship programs rely on employment in work-based training. In the 15 largest Red Seal trades employment declined notably in 2020, with employment in most trades below pre-COVID levels. Provincial/territorial lockdowns and restrictions also had considerable impacts on program completion as social distancing measures created new administrative challenges and imposed many obstacles in the delivery of technical training, testing and certification.⁸

The barriers imposed in response to the pandemic were associated with a 32% decline in the total number of completions, resulting in the lowest number of completions since 2006.⁹

Across provinces, program completions increased considerably in 2021 compared to 2020. Additionally, Quebec and Manitoba exceeded the number of completions recorded in 2019. All other provinces had fewer completions in 2021 than in 2019. Saskatchewan (-33%) was the furthest below the number of completions recorded in 2019. It is notable that in 2021 Quebec achieved its highest number of program completions on record.

Figure 4 – Percentage (%) Change in New Red Seal Program Completions, 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2021 by Province, Canada (Excluding Territories)



Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

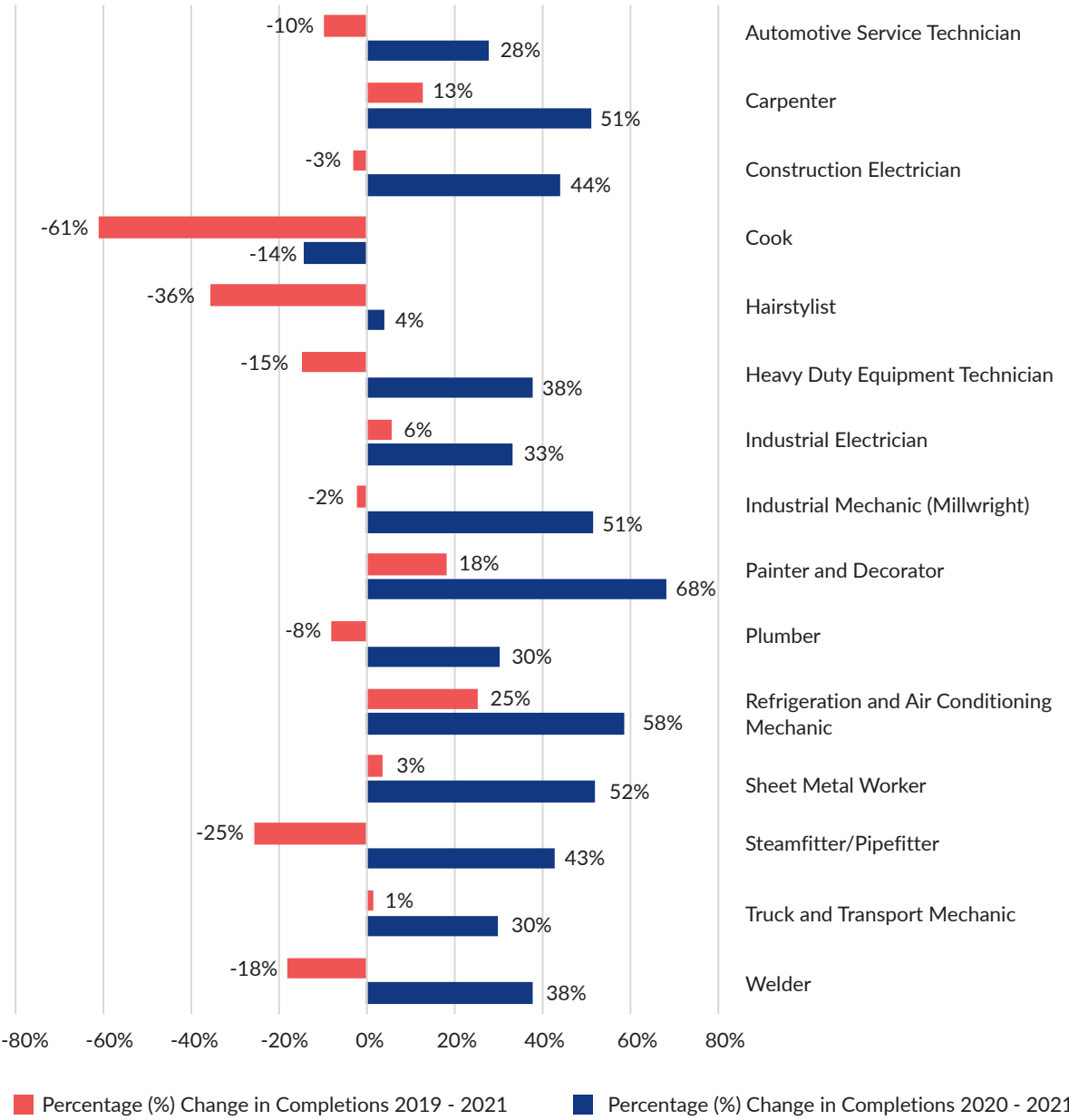
The number of completions increased for 14 of the 15 largest Red Seal trades. The size of the percentage increase ranged from 4% (hairstylist) to 68% (painter and decorator). The only trade which saw a continued decline was cook, which fell by a further 14%. Just under half of the 15 trades

(truck and transport mechanic, sheet metal worker, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, painter and decorator, industrial electrician, and carpenter) fully recovered and had program completions that exceeded their 2019 levels. Of the 9 remaining trades which had not yet fully recovered, cook fared the worst, with program completions in 2021 remaining 61% below those of 2019.

8 CAF-FCA, *The Impact of COVID-19 a Year Later: Apprentice Perspectives*, (Ottawa: CAF-FCA, 2022).

9 See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2021072-eng.htm>.

Figure 5 – Percentage (%) Change in New Red Seal Program Completions, 2020 to 2021 and 2019 to 2021 by Trade, Canada (Excluding Territories)

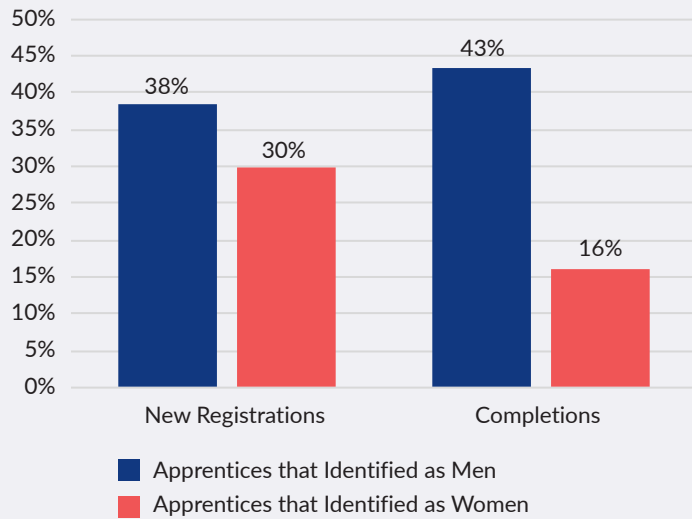


Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

Gender Differences in Completion Among Red Seal Trades in Canada

Recovery has been notably slower for women, as shown in Figure 6. Program completions have been slower to recover than new registrations.

Figure 6 - Percentage (%) Change in New Registrations and Completions, 15 Largest Red Seal Programs, Canada, 2020 to 2021



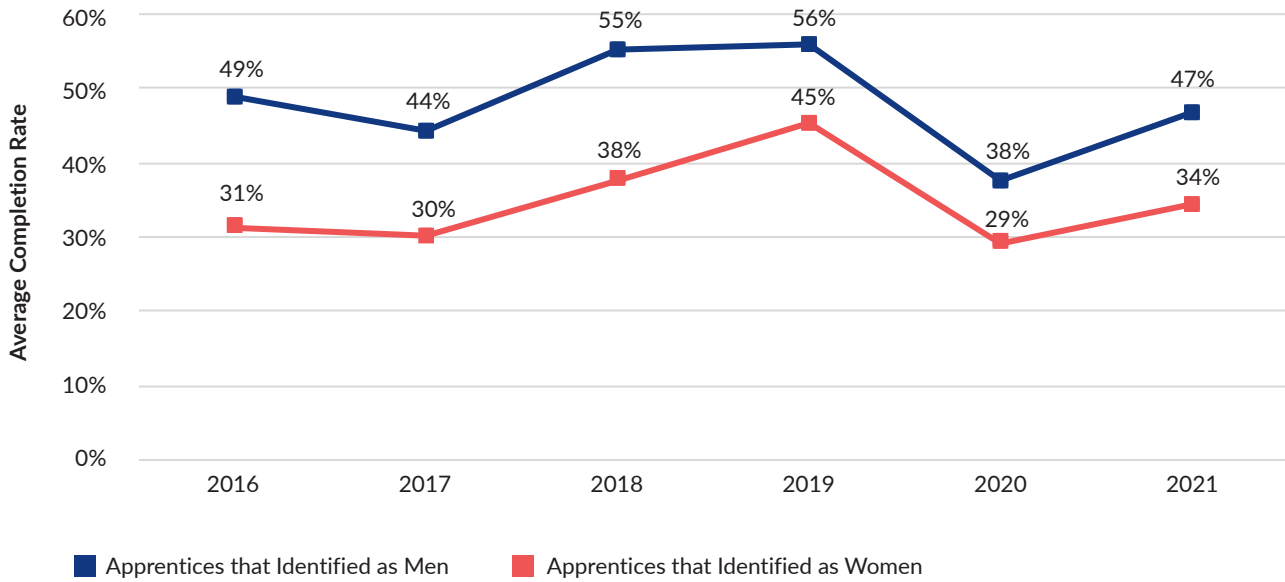
Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades



On average, completion rates in the 15 largest Red Seal trade programs are higher for men than women. In 2021, almost half (47%) of the men registered as apprentices in a Red Seal trade completed their program, compared to one-third (34%) of the women – a 13% difference. The gender gap in program completion has been persistent, averaging 14% over the past six years. This gap increases to 16% when cook and hairstylist trades are removed.

Compared to 2020, the difference in completion rates between gender categories increased in 2021. In 2020 the average difference in completion rates of men and women was 9%. In 2021 the average difference was 13%. The difference in 2021 is greater than the difference observed in 2019, which was 11%.

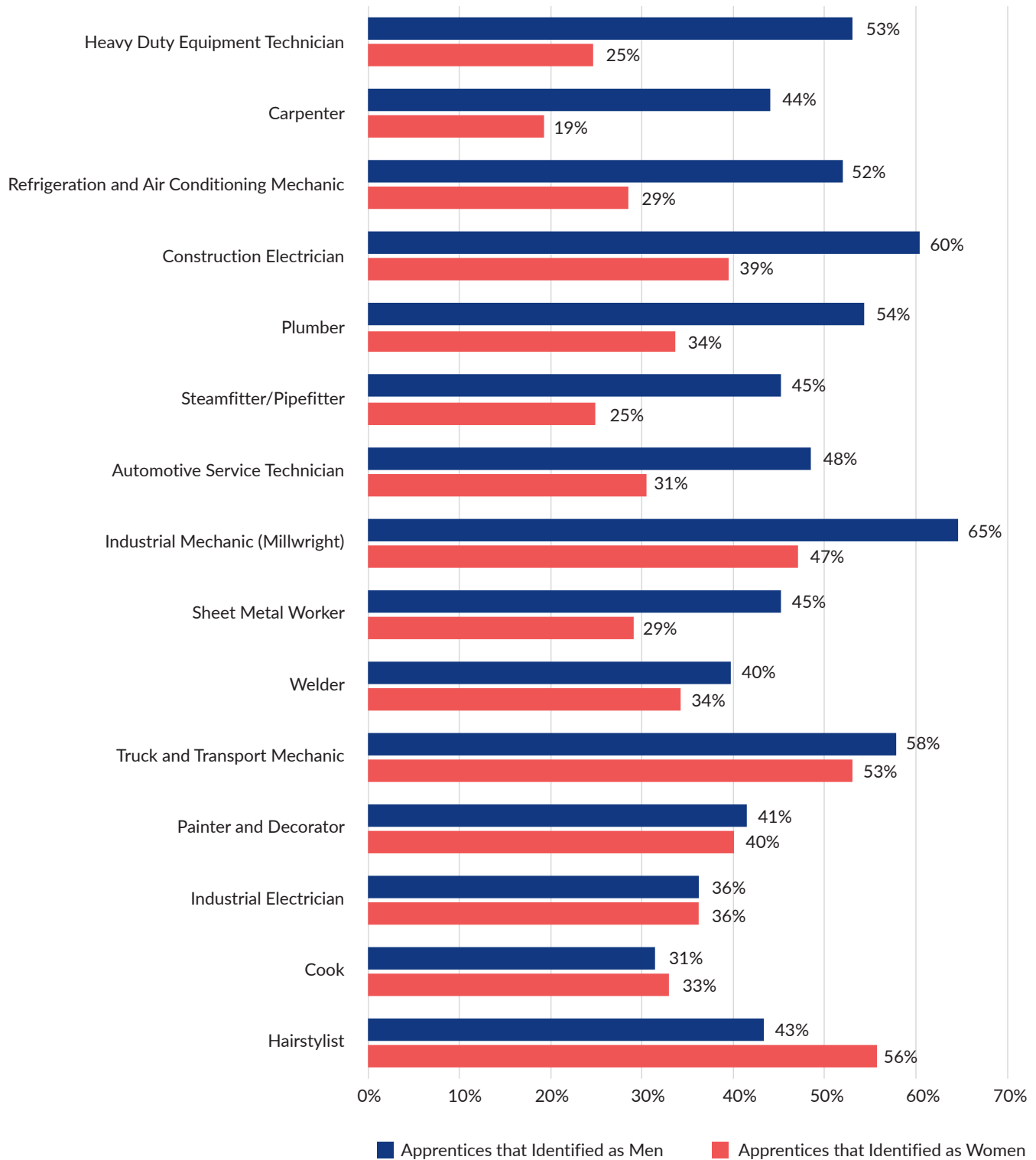
Figure 7 – Average Historic Completion Rate, Top 15 Red Seal Trades, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada (RAIS), 2021; CANTRAQ Prism Economics (2023)

The gap in completion rates continued to follow its historic trend into 2021, and increased slightly compared to 2020. On average, women apprentices in several trades have relatively equal or higher completion rates than men, including welder, truck and transport mechanic, painter and decorator, industrial electrician, cook and hairstylist. The rate of program completion is significantly higher for men for the remaining Red Seal trades, with heavy duty equipment technician reporting the largest gender gap, a difference of 28 percentage points.

Figure 8 – Average Completion Rate by Red Seal Trade, Canada, 2017 to 2021

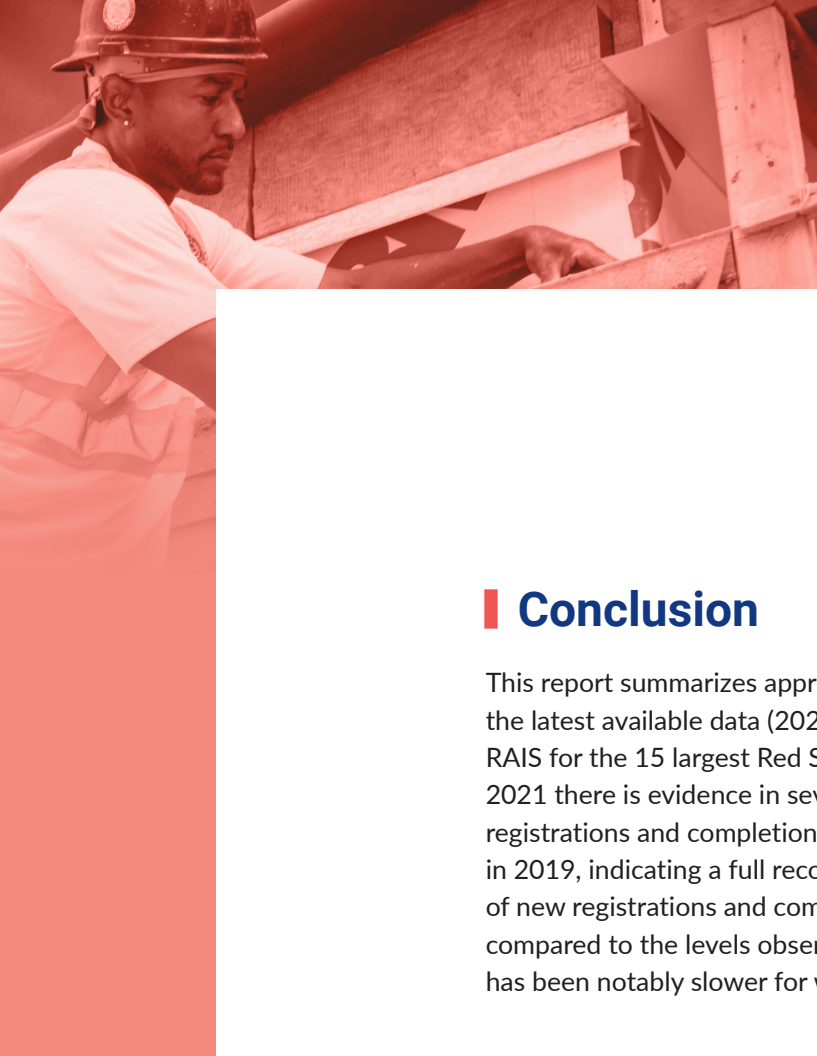


Source: Statistics Canada (RAIS), 2021; CANTRAQ Prism Economics (2023)

In 2021, completion rates for women increased in 11 out of the 15 trades. Completion rates declined in these trades: carpenter (-1%), refrigerator and air conditioning mechanic (-14%), truck and transport mechanic (-12%), and heavy-duty equipment technician (-6%). Compared to 2019 levels, the completion rates for women remained lower in 11 of 15 trades. The trades in which 2021 completion rates exceeded their 2019 levels included: construction electrician (10%), painter and decorator (7%), sheet metal worker (13%), and plumber (7%).

Table 2 – Change in Completion Rates for Women Apprentices, Canada

Trade	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Difference 2020 - 2021	% Difference 2019 -2021
Automotive Service Technician	20%	29%	33%	36%	24%	30%	6%	-6%
Carpenter	17%	16%	17%	29%	17%	16%	-1%	-12%
Construction Electrician	40%	29%	32%	42%	41%	53%	12%	10%
Cook	36%	36%	44%	36%	23%	26%	3%	-11%
Hairstylist	65%	65%	83%	58%	35%	38%	3%	-20%
Industrial Electrician	33%	33%	33%	50%	28%	35%	7%	-15%
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	36%	30%	35%	82%	36%	52%	16%	-30%
Painter and Decorator	30%	28%	54%	42%	27%	49%	22%	7%
Plumber	29%	27%	36%	33%	30%	41%	10%	7%
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	14%	22%	0%	60%	38%	23%	-14%	-37%
Sheet Metal Worker	15%	19%	33%	28%	25%	41%	16%	13%
Steamfitter/Pipefitter	30%	26%	40%	25%	9%	24%	15%	-1%
Truck and Transport Mechanic	38%	36%	58%	67%	58%	46%	-12%	-21%
Welder	42%	31%	36%	52%	25%	27%	2%	-25%
Heavy Duty Equipment Technician	25%	24%	29%	36%	20%	14%	-6%	-21%



| Conclusion

This report summarizes apprenticeship trends based on the latest available data (2021) from Statistics Canada's RAIS for the 15 largest Red Seal trades in Canada. In 2021 there is evidence in several trades that new registrations and completions exceeded levels recorded in 2019, indicating a full recovery. Although the number of new registrations and completions have increased compared to the levels observed in 2020, this recovery has been notably slower for women.

