

CANADIAN  
APPRENTICESHIP  
FORUM



FORUM  
CANADIEN SUR  
L'APPRENTISSAGE

# Apprenticeship Registration Trends and Completion Rates



# 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](http://www.caf-fca.org).

This research was completed for CAF-FCA by Prism Economics and Analysis.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada

Funded in part by the  
Government of Canada's  
Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy

Canada

## Author:

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

601-1420 Blair Towers Place

Gloucester, Ontario K1J 9L8

Email: [info@caf-fca.org](mailto:info@caf-fca.org)

Website: [www.caf-fca.org](http://www.caf-fca.org)

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

Copyright April 2024

ISBN: 978-1-998075-09-6

# Table of Contents

---

Key Highlights .....3

Introduction .....4

National Trends in Registrations and Completions .....5

Registration Trends .....6

Completion Trends .....8

Gender Differences in Completion Among Red Seal Trades in Canada ..... 10

Conclusion ..... 13

## Key Highlights

CAF-FCA and Prism Economics and Analysis analyzed Statistics Canada data from the Registered Apprenticeship Information System (RAIS). The latest year available is 2022. There are nine key findings:

- The apprenticeship system continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, new registrations in Canada's largest Red Seal trades reached 54,100, an increase of 15% (+6,900) from 2021.
- Program completions have been slower to recover. Despite gains in 2022, the number of program completions remains 6% (-1,400) below the pre-pandemic 2019 level.
- Apart from Manitoba, new registrations in the largest Red Seal trades increased in every region with most provinces surpassing their 2019 pre-pandemic levels. Ontario was the only province where the number of new registrations had not yet returned to the pre-pandemic level.
- In 2022, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia reported a record number of new registrations.
- There was a record number of new registrations in carpenter, painter and decorator, industrial mechanic (millwright), and refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic trade programs in 2022.
- As of 2022, cook, hairstylist, industrial electrician and truck and transport mechanic were the only trades where new registrations had not recovered to their pre-pandemic levels.
- Most provinces saw a decline in program completions in 2022. Ontario (+25%) and Saskatchewan (+5%) were the only provinces to report an increase from the previous year.
- Ontario reported a record number of program completions in 2022, driven by increases in completions in the construction electrician and industrial mechanic (millwright) trades.
- Program completions remain lower for women apprentices compared to men apprentices. In 2022, nearly half (46%) of the men registered in a Red Seal trade completed their program, compared to just over one-third (36%) of the women.



## Introduction

This report provides an analysis of national and provincial trends in apprenticeship registrations and completions based on the latest available data (2022) from RAIS. Statistics Canada compiles data from the provinces and territories based on the number of individuals registered in apprenticeship programs and those who obtain certification.

This report analyzes new registrations and completions for the 15 largest Red Seal apprenticeship programs across Canada, excluding the territories.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 lists the 15 largest trades covered in the analysis.

Table 1 – Top 15 Red Seal Trade Programs, Canada

Red Seal Trade	NOC 5
1. Automotive Service Technician	72410
2. Carpenter	72310
3. Construction Electrician	72200
4. Cook	63200
5. Hairstylist	63210
6. Heavy Duty Equipment Technician	72401
7. Industrial Electrician	72201
8. Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	72400
9. Painter and Decorator	73112
10. Plumber	72300
11. Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	72402
12. Sheet Metal Worker	72102
13. Steamfitter/Pipefitter	72301
14. Truck and Transport Mechanic	72410
15. Welder	72106

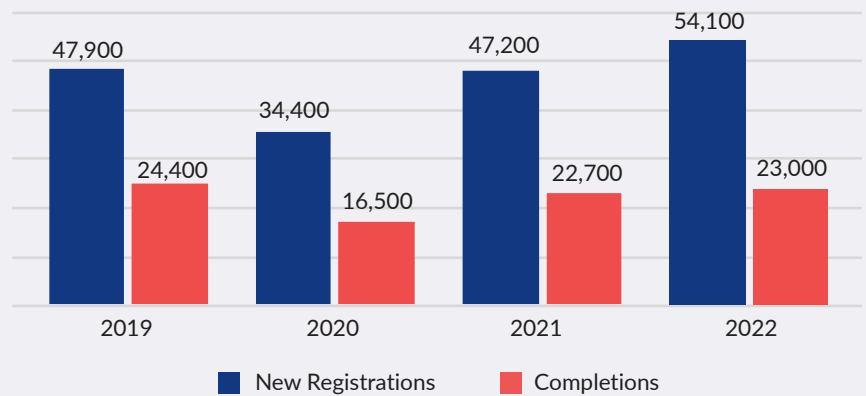
<sup>1</sup> The 15 largest Red Seal trades were determined based on the 2020 RAIS registration numbers.

## National Trends in Registrations and Completions

In 2022, new registrations in Canada's largest Red Seal trades reached 54,100, an increase of 15% (+6,900) from the previous year.

Program completions have been slower to recover. Despite gains in 2022, program completions remain 6% (-1,400) below the pre-pandemic level.

Figure 1 – Net Change in New Registrations and Completions, Canada, 2019 to 2022



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

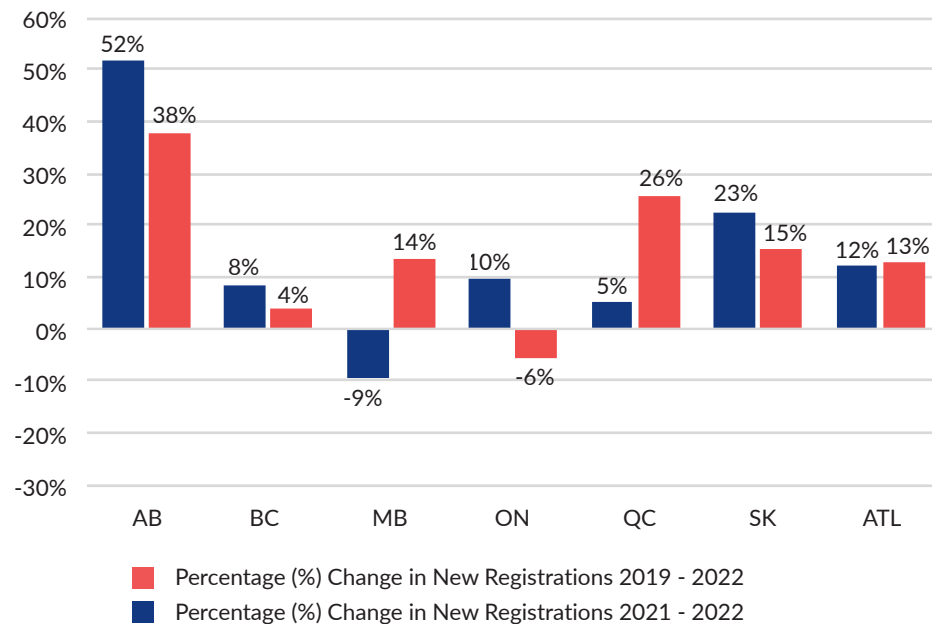
## Registration Trends

In 2022, new registrations in the largest Red Seal trades increased in almost every province, with most regions surpassing their 2019 pre-pandemic levels. Manitoba was the only province where new registrations declined in 2022 following a record number of new registrations reported in 2021, with provincial new registrations remaining considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels. Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia reported a record number of provincial new registrations in 2022.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, Alberta saw the most significant gains in new registrations in 2022, increasing by 52% from the previous year. Saskatchewan also reported a considerable increase of 23% compared to 2021. The remaining provinces reported increases between five and twelve percent.

As of 2022, Ontario was the only province where the number of new registrations had yet to return to the pre-pandemic level. In contrast, new registrations in Alberta were nearly 40% higher than in 2019, likely due to the sharp decline in provincial registrations leading into the pandemic. Quebec has seen a significant rise in provincial apprentices in recent years, with new registrations increasing by 26% compared to 2019.

**Figure 2 – Percentage (%) Change in New Registrations by Province, 2021 to 2022 and 2019 to 2022**

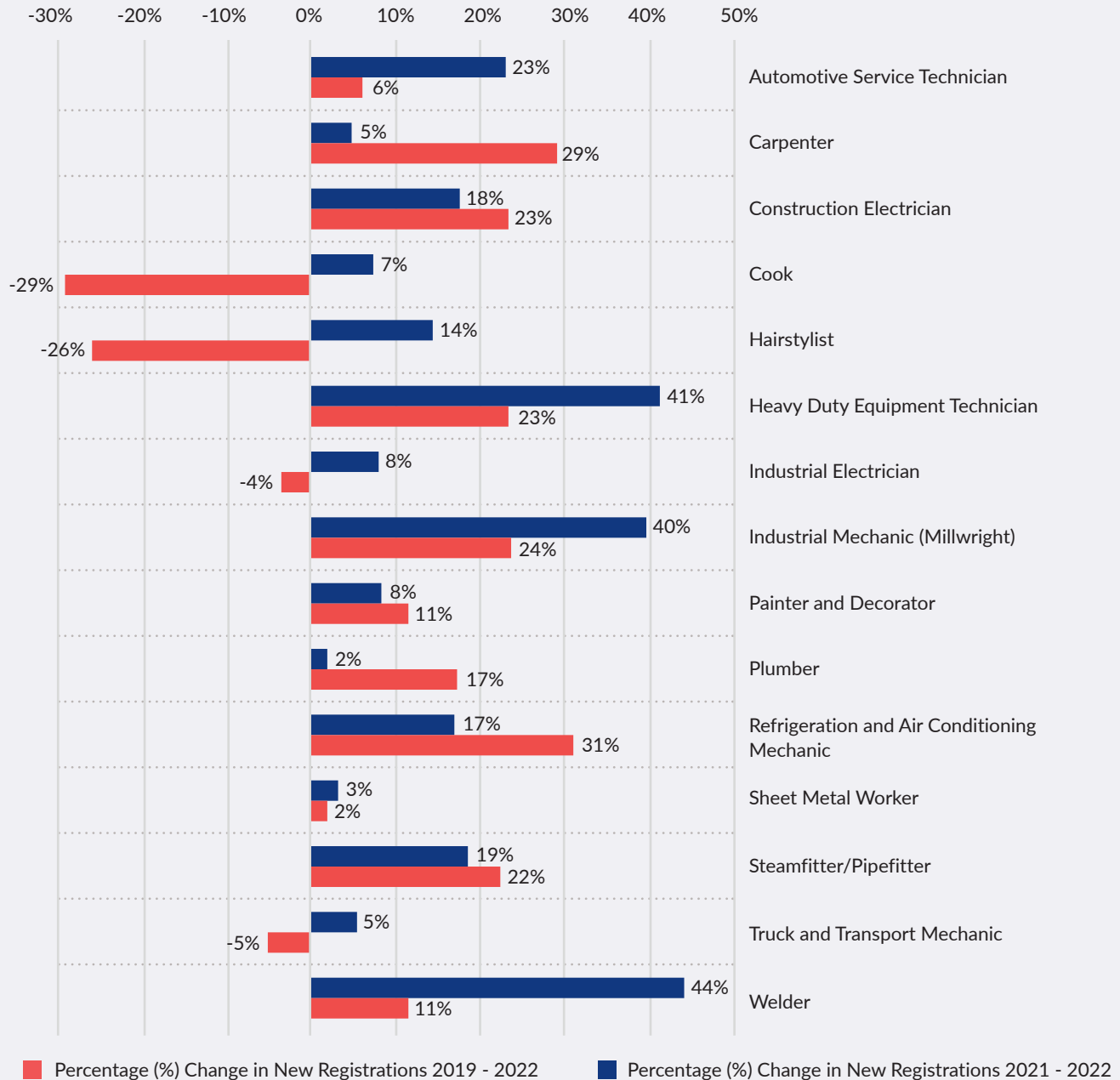


Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

In 2022, gains in new registrations were observed across trades. Welder reported the largest increase in new registrations, increasing 44% from the 2021 level.

There was a record number of new registrations in carpenter, painter and decorator, industrial mechanic (millwright), and refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic trade programs. Cook, hairstylist, industrial electrician and truck and transport mechanic were the only trades where new registrations did not recover to pre-pandemic level.

**Figure 3 – Percentage (%) Change in New Red Seal Program Registrations, 2021 to 2022 and 2019 to 2022 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 their program. Unlike other forms of post-secondary education, apprenticeship programs rely on employment. Most of this training occurs at the workplace.

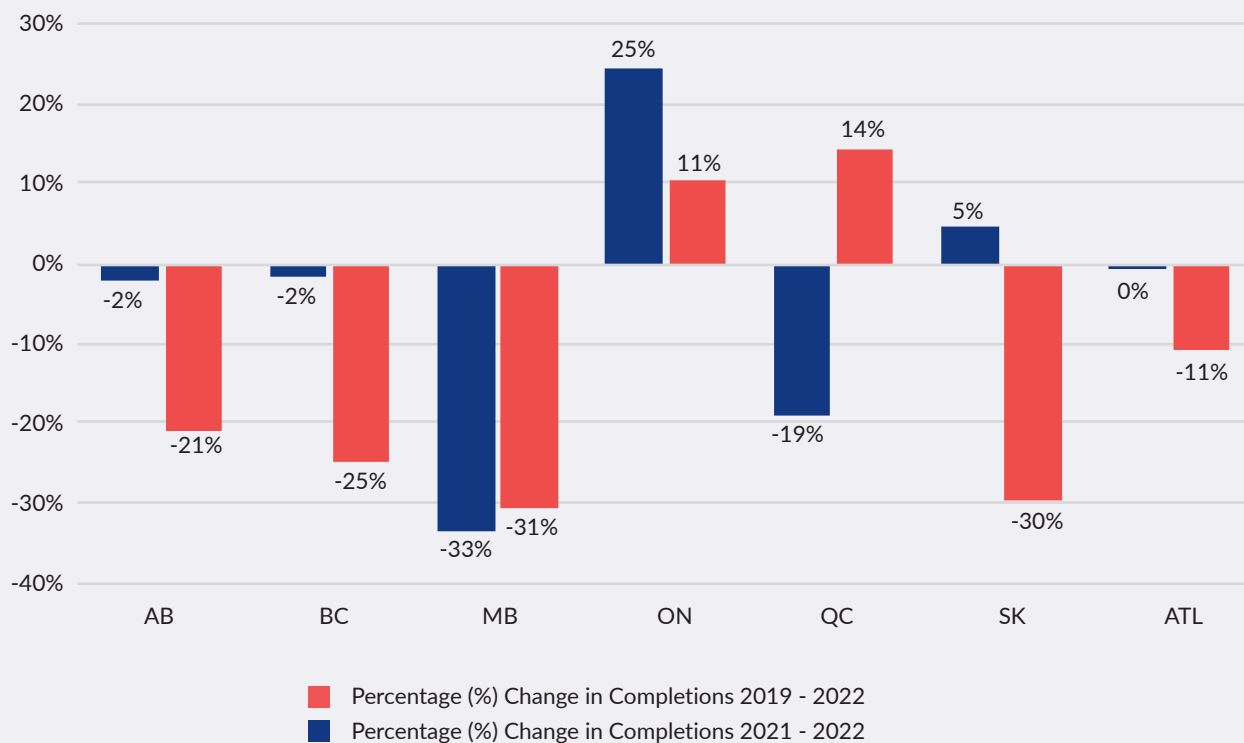
Most of the pandemic-related barriers to completion, such as not being able to earn work hours due to lay offs or delays when booking exams, were alleviated. This led to a surge in completions in 2021. Having dealt with the backlog of apprentices due to the pandemic, a decline in program completions was observed in 2022.

Before the pandemic, Ontario saw a surge in new apprenticeship registrations. As those apprentices worked their way through the system, (most apprenticeship programs are four years in length), Ontario reported a record number of program completions in 2022.

Similar to Ontario, when the pre-pandemic levels are examined, Quebec exceeded the pre-pandemic level of program completions. In contrast, program completions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan were more than 30% lower than the pre-pandemic levels.

When the data for 2022 alone are analyzed, Ontario and Saskatchewan were the only provinces to report an increase in program completions in 2022.

Figure 4 – Percentage (%) Change in Red Seal Program Completions, 2021 to 2022 and 2019 to 2022 by Province, Canada (Excluding Territories)

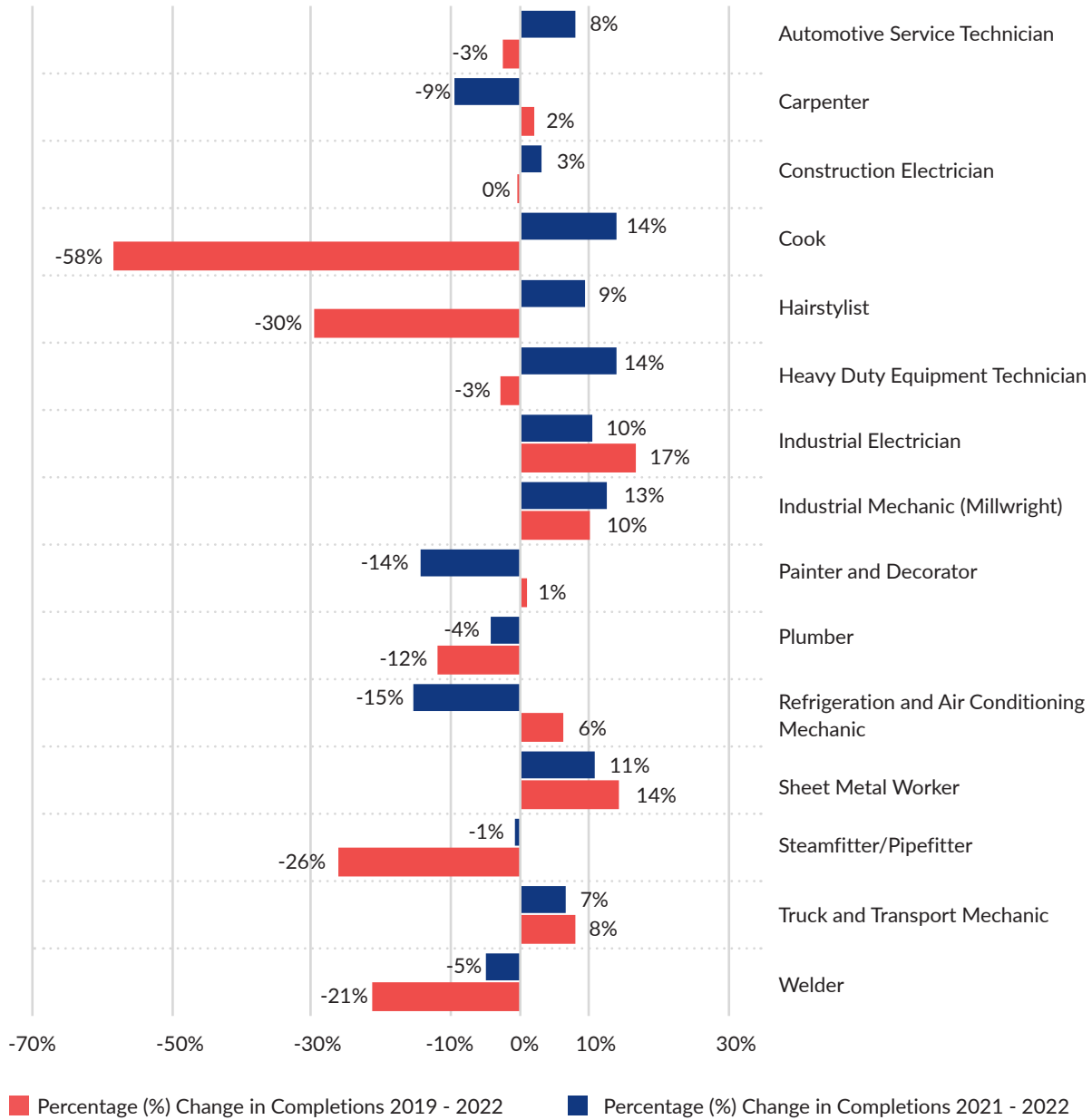


Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

In 2022, 9 out of the 15 largest Red Seal trades reported an increase in program completions, ranging from 3% for construction electrician to 14% for cook and heavy-duty equipment technician. Carpenter, painter and decorator, plumber, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, steamfitter/pipefitter and welder were the only trades to report a decline in program completions in 2022.

Despite an increase in 2022, the number of program completions in the cook program was nearly 60% below the pre-pandemic level. In addition to cook, completions had not returned to the pre-pandemic level for automotive service technician, hairstylist, heavy-duty equipment technician, plumber, steamfitter/pipefitter and welder trade programs.

**Figure 5 - Percentage (%) Change in Red Seal Program Completions, 2021 to 2022 and 2019 to 2022 by Trade, Canada (Excluding Territories)**

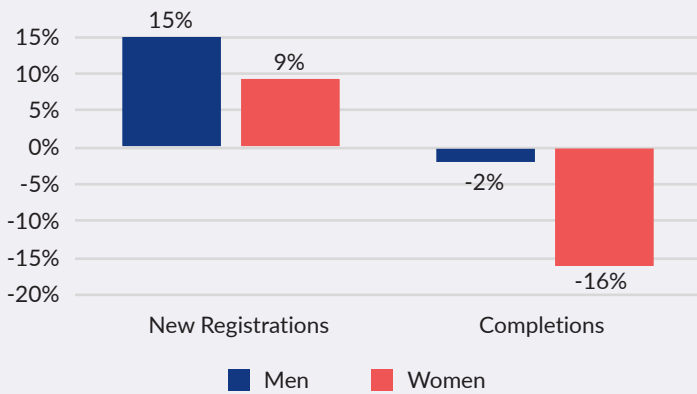


Source: Statistics Canada, RAIS, Custom Aggregation, Top 15 Red Seal Trades

# Gender Differences in Completion Among Red Seal Trades in Canada

The number of new registrations in apprenticeship programs rebounded in 2022 for both men and women. Program completions have been slower to recover, particularly for women apprentices, where the number of program completions remains 16% below the pre-pandemic level.

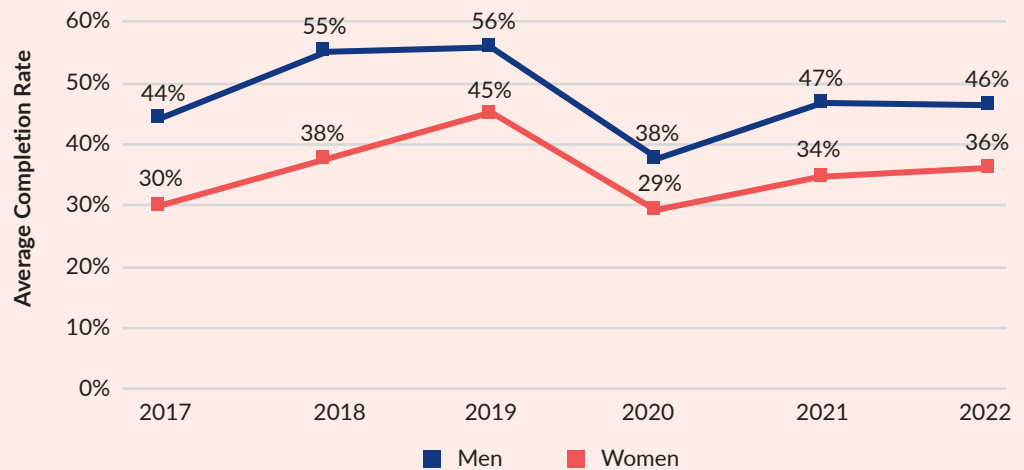
Figure 6 - Percentage (%) Change in New Registrations and Completions, 15 Largest Red Seal Programs, Canada, 2019 to 2022



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 for women. In 2022, almost half (46%) of the men registered in a Red Seal trade completed their program, compared to just over one-third (36%) of women – a 10% difference. The gender gap in program completion has been persistent, averaging 12% over the past six years. This gap increases to 15% when cook and hairstylist trades, trades with high numbers of women, are removed.

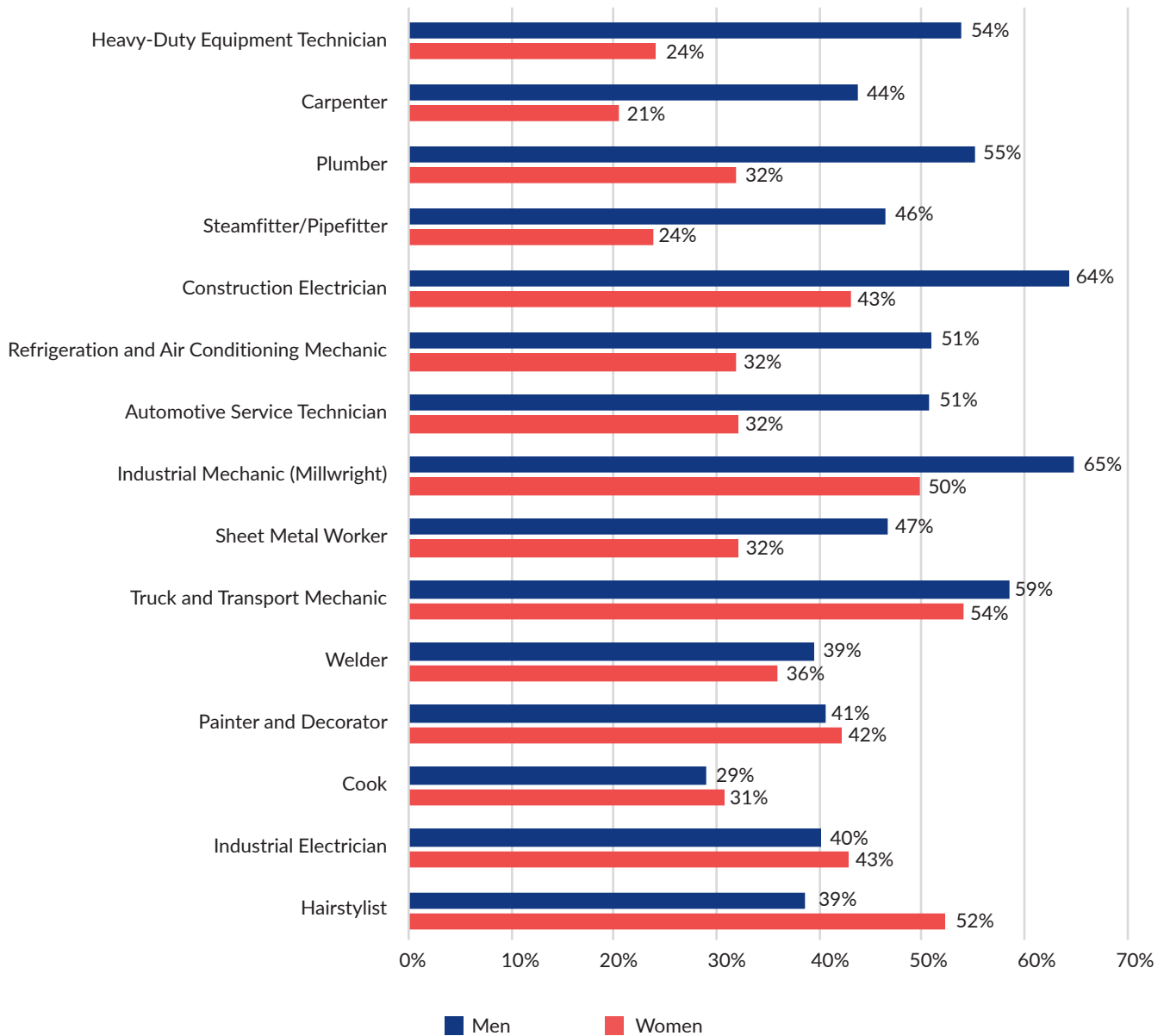
Figure 7 - Average Historic Completion Rate, Top 15 Red Seal Trades, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada (RAIS), 2022; CANTRAQ Prism Economics (2024)

A gender gap varies by trade, as seen in Figure 9. Men have significantly higher completion rates than women in the heavy-duty equipment technician, carpenter, plumber, steamfitter/pipefitter and construction electrician trades. Women have higher completion rates than men in the hairdresser, industrial electrician, cook and painter and decorator trades.

Figure 8 – Average (2018 to 2022) Completion Rate by Red Seal Trade, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada (RAIS), 2022; CANTRAQ Prism Economics (2024)

Compared to 2017, a higher number of women completed their programs in the industrial electrician, construction electrician, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic and sheet metal worker trades in 2022. The industrial electrician trade experienced the largest increase with a completion rate for women that doubled from 33% in 2017 to 68% in 2022.

In trades such as heavy-duty equipment technician, steamfitter/pipefitter, plumber, cook, and hairstylist, there are fewer women completing than in 2017. The trade with the highest decline was hairstylist, with the completion rate falling from 65% in 2017 to 48% in 2022. The significant decline in this trade may be explained by the reduction in work opportunities in this occupation during the pandemic.

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

Trade	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change (%) 2017 to 2022
Industrial Electrician	33%	33%	50%	28%	35%	68%	35%
Construction Electrician	29%	32%	42%	41%	53%	47%	18%
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic	22%	0%	60%	38%	23%	39%	16%
Sheet Metal Worker	19%	33%	28%	25%	41%	33%	15%
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	30%	35%	82%	36%	52%	43%	13%
Painter and Decorator	28%	54%	42%	27%	49%	39%	11%
Welder	31%	36%	53%	25%	27%	39%	8%
Automotive Service Technician	29%	33%	36%	24%	30%	37%	8%
Carpenter	16%	17%	29%	17%	17%	23%	7%
Truck and Transport Mechanic	36%	58%	67%	58%	46%	41%	5%
Heavy-Duty Equipment Technician	24%	29%	36%	20%	14%	21%	-3%
Steamfitter/Pipefitter	26%	41%	25%	9%	24%	21%	-5%
Plumber	27%	36%	33%	30%	41%	19%	-8%
Cook	36%	44%	37%	23%	26%	25%	-11%
Hairstylist	65%	83%	58%	35%	38%	48%	-17%

Source: Statistics Canada RAIS, 2022; CANTRAQ Prism Economics (2024)



## **Conclusion**

This report summarized apprenticeship trends based upon the Statistics Canada's 2022 RAIS data. The analysis focused on the 15 largest Red Seal trades in Canada. The data indicates Canada's apprenticeship system continues to recover from the pandemic, reaching high levels of new registrations in 2022, with most trades and provinces returning to their pre-pandemic levels. Program completions, however, have been slower to recover, as most trades had yet to return to their pre-pandemic level in 2022. For women apprentices, program completions remain considerably lower than the pre-pandemic levels.