

Skills Ontario

Annual Report



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Message from the CEO



As the CEO of Skills Ontario, it is my honor to work alongside students, educators, parents, volunteers, labour, industry professionals, and employers in "changing lives and inspiring leaders through skilled trades and technologies."

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your dedication and contributions in helping Skills Ontario inspire youth to pursue careers that will lead to fulfilling and happy lives. For over 35 years, our organization has grown to become the largest and most impactful skills promotion organization in the county!

Thank you to all Skills Ontario staff and volunteers who continue to provide high quality work, programs and events.

This year, our programs and events achieved remarkable results. The 2026 Skills Ontario Competition attracted over 37,000 attendees, including 2900+ competitors and more than 800 volunteers. Our Trades & Tech Summer Camps saw over 600 registrations and we reached approximately 150,000 students across the province through our in-school presentations. The Trades& Tech Truck visited 12 communities as part of the LevelUp! Career Fairs. We welcomed 100,000 visitors to our TTTs and now have a fleet of six units! Our Trades & Technology Days hosted by the Young Women's Initiatives are expanding into more areas of Ontario. Finally, we continue to look for new ways to engage Ontario's youth to explore skilled trades, and are proud that we have included more experiential opportunities in the programming we offer.

I would also like to recognize and thank our partners for their unwavering support for our programs and events. We could not achieve the success we have this year without the contributions of these key organizations. Thank you all for your continued contributions dedication and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ian Howcroft".

Ian Howcroft
CEO, Skills Ontario

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Message from the Skills Ontario Chair



Skills Ontario makes big things happen for young people across Ontario. We help youth to aim high and be ambitious. We create enthusiasm so that our next generation choose training and start careers in skilled trades and technologies.

Our school presentations, tech trucks, camps, and special events for young women or Indigenous youth are the best ways to engage with hands-on experience. Our competitions from the local to national levels showcase expert performance by highly skilled individuals.

We are on track with our three-year strategic plan to achieve our priorities and performance goals. In accomplishing that, we efficiently align our resources to the results we want to achieve.

We are extremely grateful that we receive investment from the Government of Ontario. We are proud and purposeful about the major partnerships with companies that trust us by contributing generously.

We are so pleased to partner with colleges, school boards, schools, and training organizations across Ontario. We share their commitment to education and pathways to employment.

The Board members, CEO, leadership team, and every Skills Ontario employee are motivated to continue to have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of Ontario's youth!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Morley".

David Morley,
Chair of the Board of Directors,
Skills Ontario

Year In Review

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Year In Review

Our Impact this Year

Media Hits

183+

Events
Organized

4,009+

School Boards
engaged

72

Total Partners

123

Members of the
Skills Ontario
Alumni Group

160+

Team Ontario
Medals

39

Followers on
Social Media

39,882

Hours of video
content
watched

8,528+

Website
Visitors

433,502

Educational Presentations & Workshops

132,965 participants

Young Women's
Initiatives

6,535
participants

First Nations, Métis,
& Inuit Initiatives

11,096
participants

Diversity, Equity,
& Inclusion
Initiatives

12,195+
participants

Competitions
(Qualifying &
Skills Ontario
Competition)

2,925+
competitors

Skilled Trades
Conference for
Guidance Educators

440+
registrants

Provincial
Entrepreneurship
Showcase

350+
participants

Junk Drawer Races

2,480
participants

Trades & Tech Truck

95,767
Participants

Trades & Tech
Camps

600+
Participants

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183+ Media Hits

39,502 Social Media Followers

433,502 Website Visitors

8,528+ hours of Skills Ontario video content watched on YouTube & TikTok

5,999 Email subscribers

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Skills Ontario offers a variety of digital and printed resources to assist educators and students looking for information on careers in the skilled trades and technologies.

54,000+ of Skills Ontario app downloads

6 Skills Ontario publications

13 Skills Ontario podcast episodes

Junk Drawer Races

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Qualifying Competitions

Since 2021, Skills Ontario has been hosting the Junk Drawer Races, a competition program where students can compete in curriculum-based, skill-developing contests related to the skilled trades and technologies.

2,480 participants in the 2025 - 2026 school year

Prior to the provincial-level competition Skills Ontario hosts our Qualifying Competitions for four of our most in-demand secondary contests (Culinary, Carpentry Individual, TV Video (team of two), and Welding). Secondary students must first participate and win gold, silver, or bronze to determine who will advance to the provincial level competition

350+ participants

7 colleges participated across Ontario

Skills Ontario Competition

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Career Exploration Showcase

The largest skilled trades event in Canada, the Skills Ontario Competition, annually welcomes tens of thousands of visitors, exhibitors, and competitors each May. From animation to horticulture, welding to baking, this is the ultimate display of the future of skilled trades and technologies! The Skills Ontario Competition offers an experiential opportunity for competitors to demonstrate their skills, wowing educators, family, friends, and prospective employers.

2,925 competitors

37,000 attendees

6,000 online participants

"I was in awe and repeatedly said 'I don't know what I was expecting, but it wasn't this!' An incredible event that I plan to return to."

The bilingual Provincial Entrepreneurship Showcase provides a catalyst for aspiring student entrepreneurs to display and present their business ideas and/or products.

79 Showcase Exhibitors

Skilled Trades Conference for Guidance Educators

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This informative conference offers career educators an in-depth examination of skilled trade careers and the educational and workforce pathways that support progression within these fields.

440+ registrants

130+ YouTube Livestream recording views

12 exhibitors

95% of educators reported an increased understanding of how students can pursue a skilled trade or apprenticeship pathway

“The insightful statistics shared by the speakers at the conference enhanced my knowledge of the skilled trades and the diverse opportunities available to students. This experience has increased my confidence in discussing these career pathways with students and their families.”

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Provincial Entrepreneurship Showcase

The bilingual Provincial Entrepreneurship Showcase provides a catalyst for aspiring student entrepreneurs to display and present their business ideas and/or products.

2,000 participants

150 educators in attendance

100% of student attendees reported they were satisfied with the event and reported an increased confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities following the provincial entrepreneurship showcase

“This has been the best year yet! Love the changes every year that you are bringing. We had a fantastic day and we are so grateful to be a part of things.”

Educational Presentations / Workshops Program

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First Nations, Métis & Inuit Program

Skills Ontario engages students through our Educational Presentations delivered by Program Facilitators virtually and who visit schools across the province throughout the school year.

132,965 participants

2,573 presentations and workshops delivered

“The students had a great time learning about the trades. They are always interested in learning about the variety of jobs available, but this year's addition of the hands-on activities engaged students in a whole new way. They loved it!”

Skills Ontario's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Initiatives are created for Indigenous youth and unemployed/underemployed adults. These programs offer opportunities to explore careers in the skilled trades and technologies while staying connected to culture, community, and land.

11,096 participants

43 events delivered

20 presentations held in the 2025 - 2026 school year

2,300 participants in the First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Student Conference

Skills Ontario is dedicated to fostering equal opportunities for all youth by actively removing barriers and providing inclusive career exploration programs. Our initiatives are designed to create meaningful access points into the skilled trades and technologies for underrepresented communities.

12,195+ participants

28 total events held between 2025 and 2026

“This RISE event helped find my way back to the trades.”

“Seeing people that look like me in the trades is encouraging.”

Skills Ontario facilitates week-long day-camps across Ontario in the summer to encourage the exploration of skilled trade and tech careers through hands-on workshops and activities.

600+ registrations

30+ camps held across Ontario in 2026

Trades & Tech Truck Program

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Young Women's Initiatives Program

The Trades & Tech Truck is a mobile unit of fun experiential learning! With activities and simulators, youths 12 and older can explore skilled trades and technologies in a unique and hands-on way.

95,767 participants

1286+ schools visited by a Trades & Tech Truck

94% of participants enjoyed their visit on the Trades & Tech Truck

72% reported learning something new while on the Trades & Tech Truck

"All of my students were fully engaged... They were exposed to trades they may not have known much about and really enjoyed trying them."

Skills Ontario's Young Women's Initiatives empower young women to explore skilled careers and help bridge the gap in female participation in skilled trades and technology pathways.

6,535 participants

43 events delivered

72% of all participants in YWI programs & events identify as female

68% of female event participants were in Grades 9 to 12

"Thank you, for involving us with the career fair. I am the technology and trades teacher at Hornepayne Secondary School and am quite enthused to promote the trades and careers pathways that are desperately needed these days. The students that attended seemed to have a fantastic time and became more aware of the opportunities that are available to them in the skilled trades... and for two individuals specifically, a new enthusiasm in pursuing careers in technology and the trades."

Skills Ontario appreciates our corporate and government partners and suppliers who provide better opportunities for everyone in Ontario. It is through their generosity, vision, and commitment that we are able to touch the lives of so many Ontario youth each and every year. Thank you to our partners for the 2025-2026 year!

Government Partner



This Employment Ontario program is funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Exclusive Home Improvement Retail Partner



Platinum Partners

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Gold Partners



Silver Partners

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Bronze Partners



Collaborating Organizations

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Collaborating Organizations

Women in Renewable Energy
Women's Trucking Federation of Canada
Women in Trades, Technology & Engineering
Women of Steel
St. Clair College Genesis
Women in Nuclear
Women in Mechanical Construction
Women in HVACR Canada
Ontario Building & Construction
Moxy

Agospace
Anglo-Franco Communications
Artline Salon
Bay of Quinte Economic Development Group
BWXT Canada Ltd.
Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario
County of Renfrew
Creation Camp
CWB Welding Foundation
Electrical Power Systems Construction Association (EPSCA)
Enterprise Holdings

Henlex Inc.
Indigenous Friendship Centre Sault Ste. Marie
Innovative Trailer Design Industries Inc.
Inuuqatigiit Centre
Kingston Economic Development
Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association
Ontario Council for Technology Education (OCTE)
Ontario Educational Championship Team
Ontario General Contractors Association
Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

Collaborating Organizations

Ontario Horticultural Trades
Foundation

Procor Limited

Progressive Contractors
Association of Canada

Resolute Forest Products

Samuel, Son & Co.

Social Development Council
of Cornwall & Area

Sudbury & Manitoulin
Workforce Planning

Toronto Congress Centre
(TCC)

Toronto Transit Comission
(TTC)

Volvo

Unearth Education

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Skills Ontario is a registered Charity # 89420 5491 RR0001