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# In-Demand Skilled Trades

## A Local Perspective



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## Centre for Workforce Development

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## In-Demand Skilled Trades Background

There is heightened public discussion about the growing demand for skilled tradespeople in Ontario, as well as gaps between the workers employers are looking for and the availability of tradespeople to fill them.

Several reports have identified challenges that employers in Ontario and Canada are facing in filling positions in the skilled trades. For example, a 2018 survey conducted for the Manpower Group found that 41% of Canadian employers cannot find the skills they need, with skilled trades workers identified as the hardest positions to fill. A 2013 survey of over 1,500 Ontario employers for the Conference Board found that nearly 10% of employers anticipated that engineering occupations would be the most difficult to fill, followed by electrical trades and professions, information and network technology professions, and skilled labour and trades in general.

This In-Demand Skilled Trades Project aims to add local perspectives to the understanding of the labour market conditions for the skilled trades in Ontario. “Local shortages and mismatches can be missed by national or provincial-level indicators,” as concluded by the Labour Market Information Council

The Centre for Workforce Development (CFWD) developed insights on the local labour market conditions for the skilled trades through engagement with local employers in Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington Counties. The greatest success in gaining these insights was through the on-line survey that employers participated in.

The following report is comprised of local level data that includes job posting analysis and document counts from the Ontario College of Trades. As well, a selection of responses from local employers as they relate to the local in-demand trades have been included. One of the key components of the on-line survey was the opportunity for employers to provide their overall comments at the end of the survey. These comments have been included at the end of this report.

This project is part of a larger province-wide initiative that the Ontario Government has undertaken through the Local Board network, including the Planning Councils. The evidence collected from the project will help inform how government, industry and local communities can work together to increase the talent pipeline to help business growth and support industry competitiveness in the province, particularly in key sectors such as automotive manufacturing and construction. The evidence will also help to guide steps needed to modernize and transform Ontario's skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

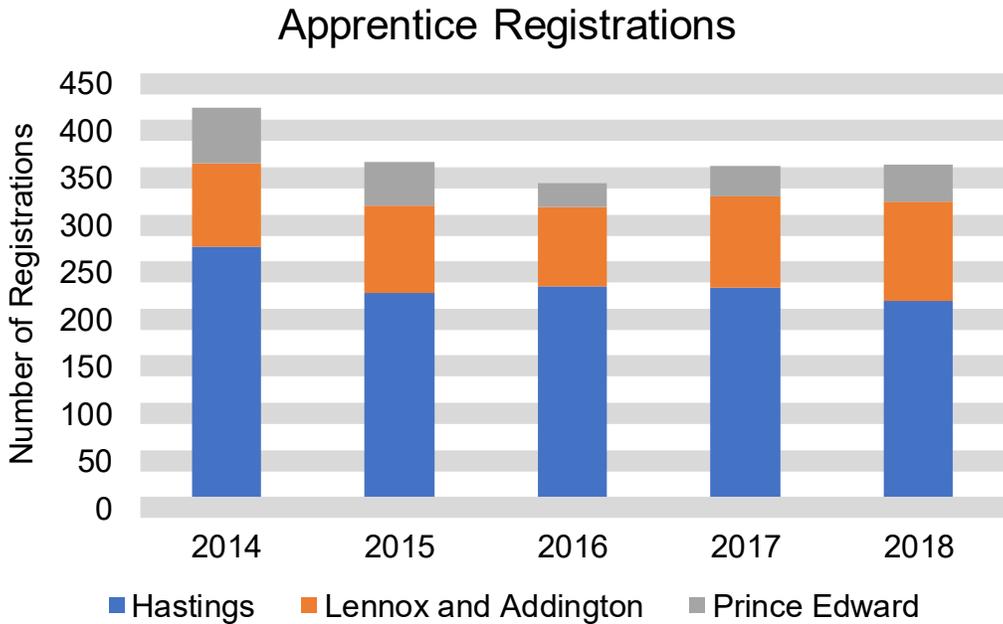
**A special thanks to the 95 employers who provided input to the In-Demand Skilled Trades Survey. Without your voice, we would not understand what your struggles are or how the community, the government or even other employers can help address the challenges you face.**

# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

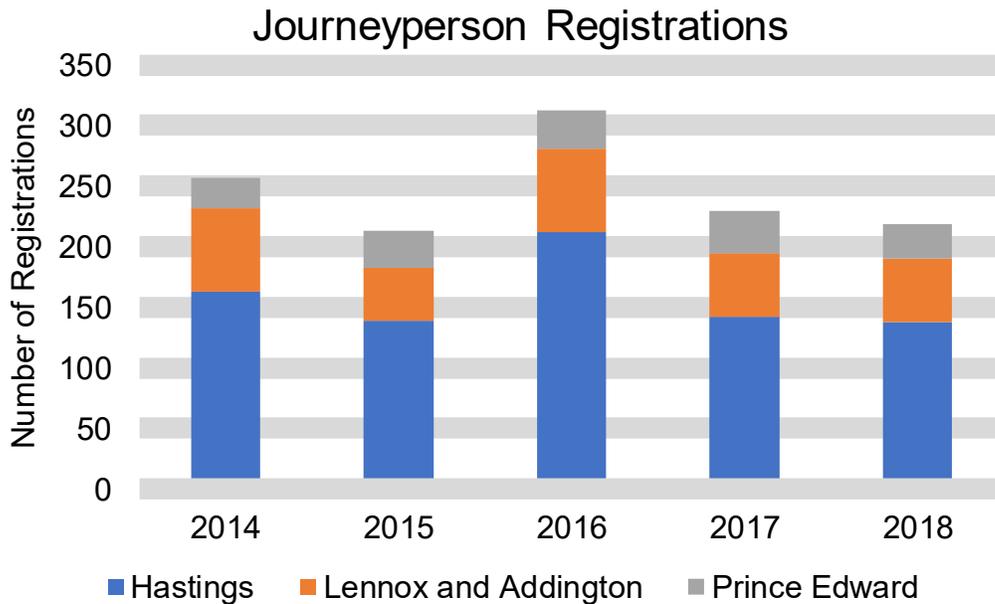
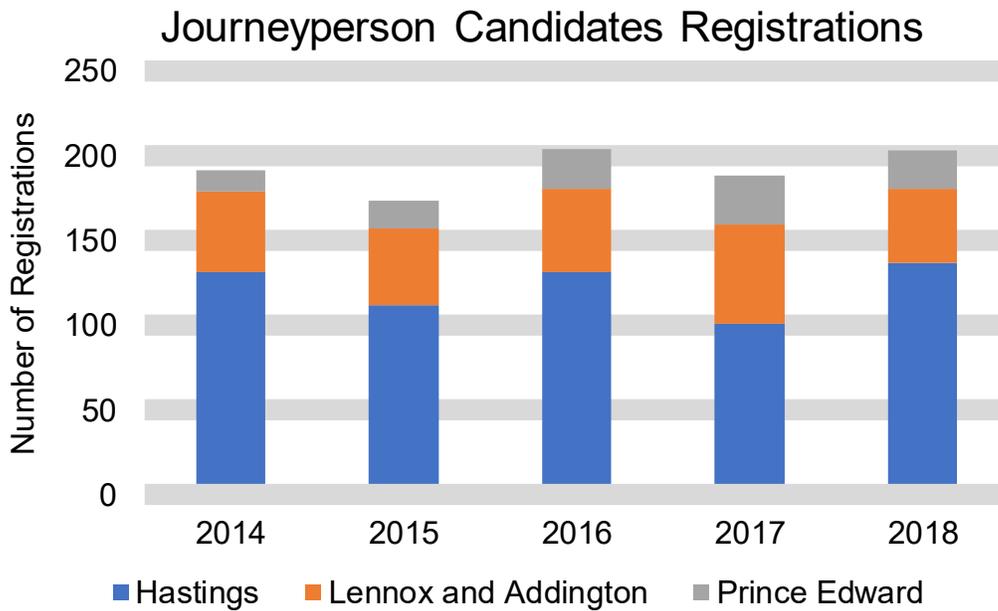
The Ontario College of Trades (OCOT) had the responsibility of maintaining the documents that apprentices, journeyman candidates, tradespersons and journeymen were required to submit to OCOT. The document counts do not have a statistical soundness but rather, they can be used to get an idea of interest level in, and activity in, each of the trades.

CFWD used document counts that were identified as being within Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington Counties. The following tables, sourced from these document counts, identify the number of apprentices, journeyman candidates and journeymen for the three counties from 2014 to 2018. Data from 2013 and 2019 were excluded due to incomplete data sets. Tradespersons are not included due to the low numbers across the time period.

The issue to note when reviewing these tables is that on average, the numbers across all three trade classes have been decreasing. With the exception of 2016 where one can see a slight spike in journeyman candidates and journeymen, by 2018, most of the classes see less registered individuals than in 2014.

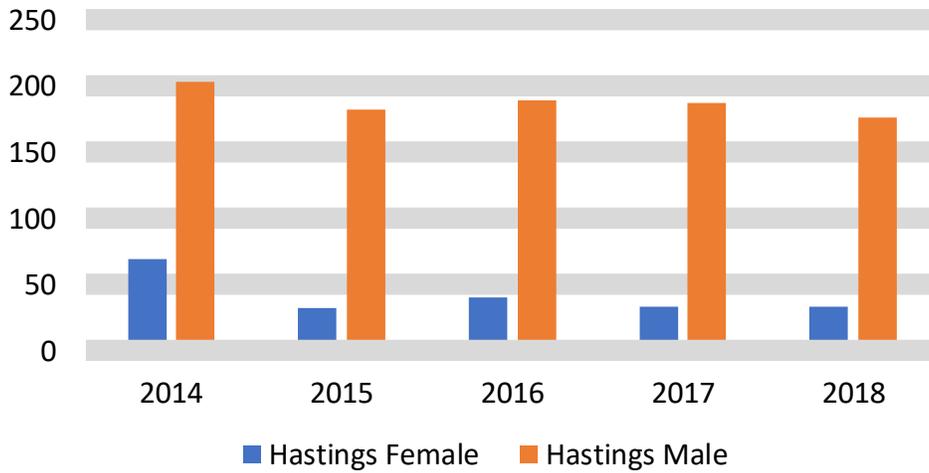


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

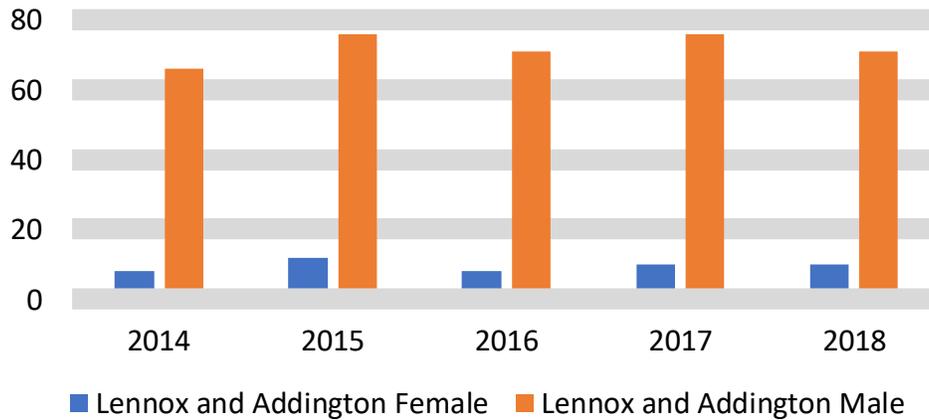


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

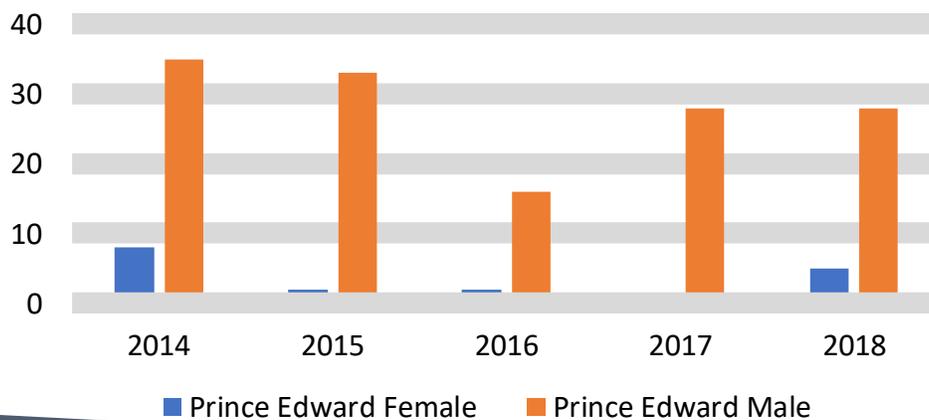
## Hastings County Apprenticeship by Gender



## Lennox and Addington County Apprenticeship by Gender

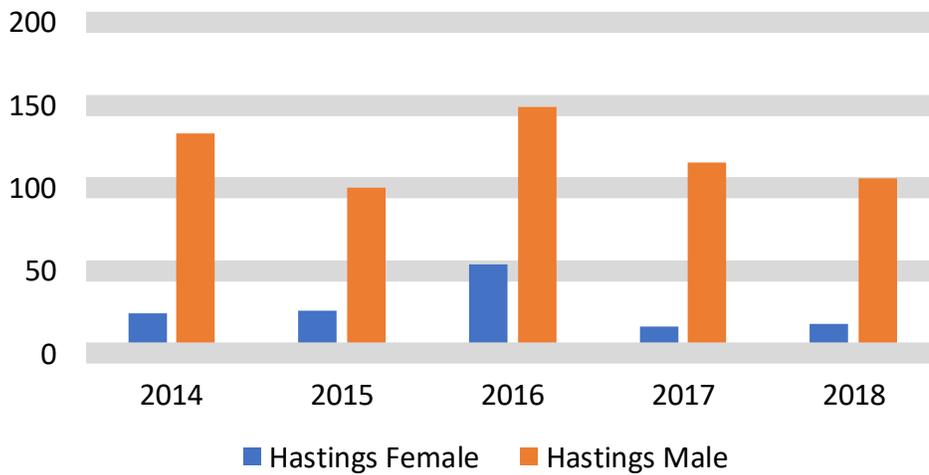


## Prince Edward County Apprenticeship by Gender

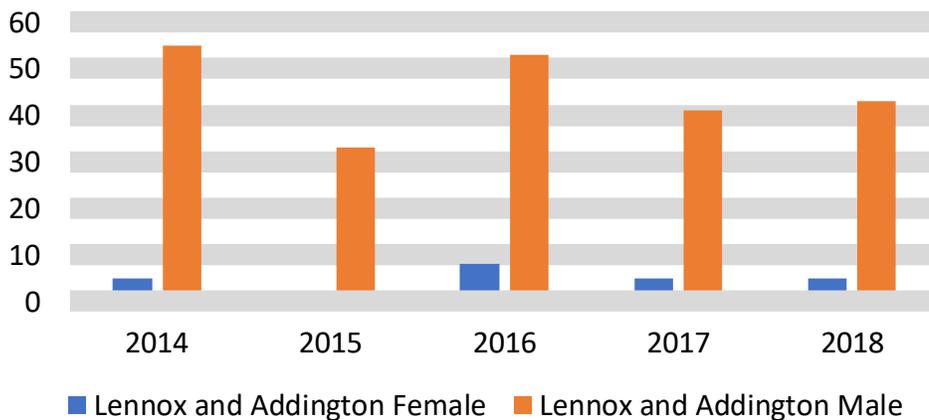


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

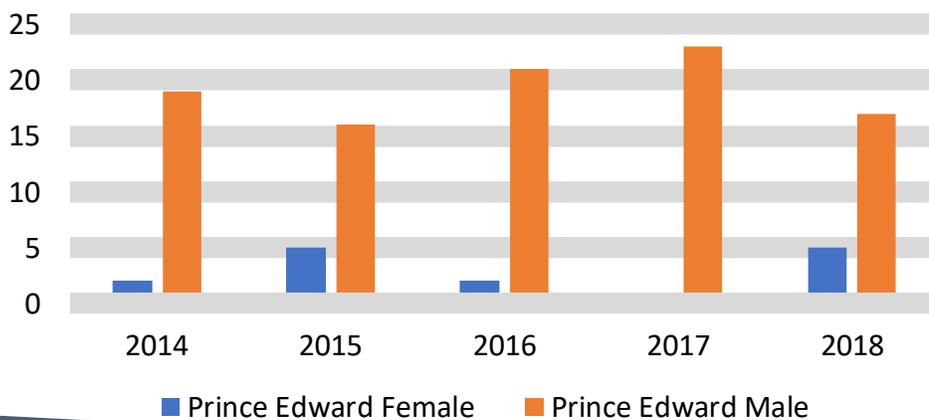
## Hastings County Journeyperson by Gender



## Lennox and Addington County Journeyperson by Gender

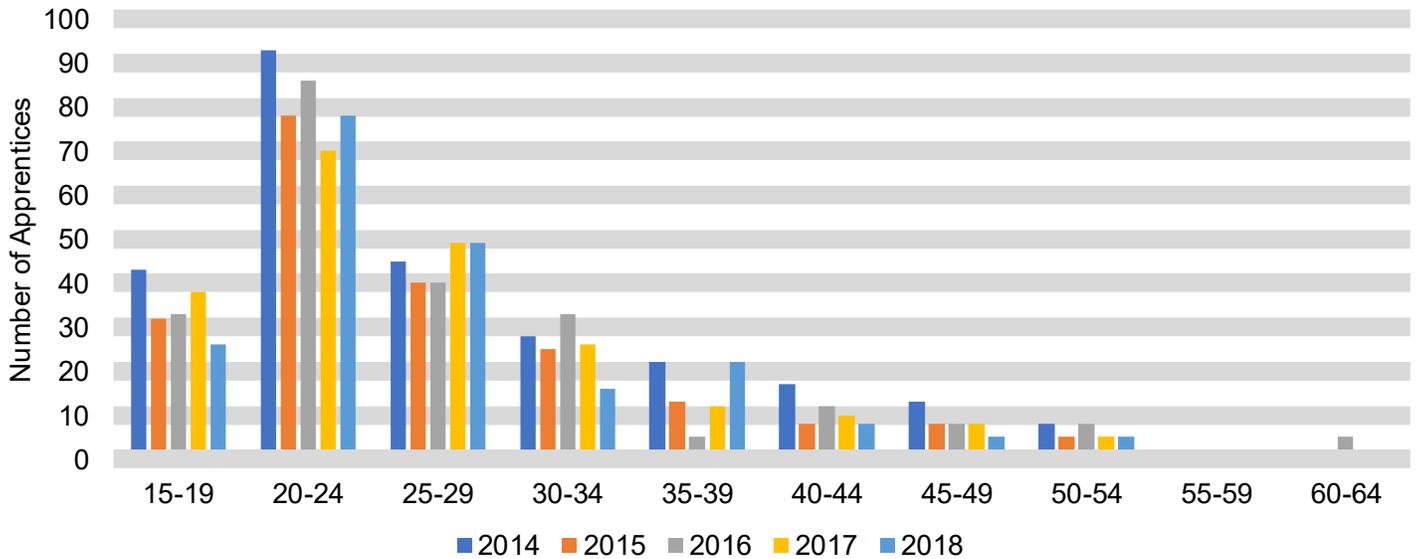


## Prince Edward County Journeyperson by Gender

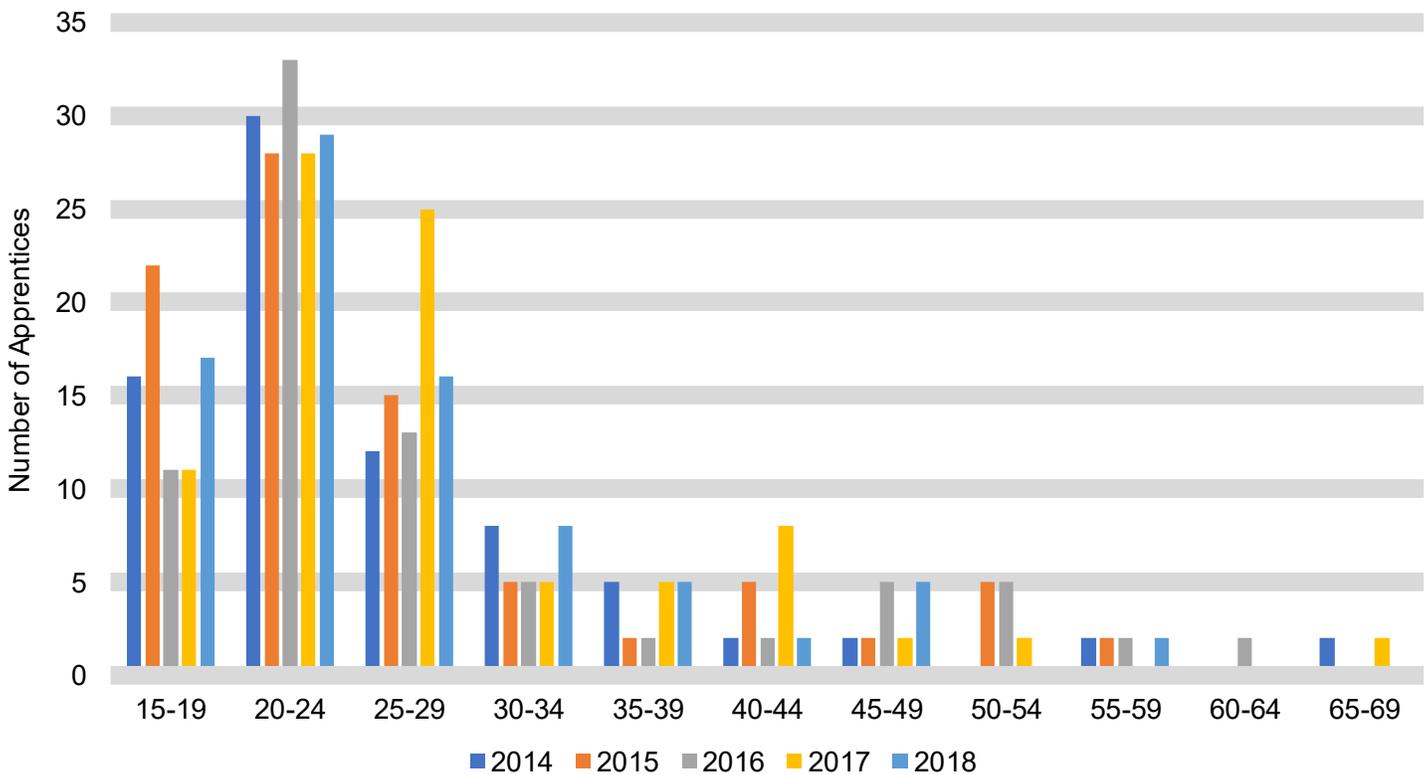


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

## Hastings County - Apprentices by Age Ranges

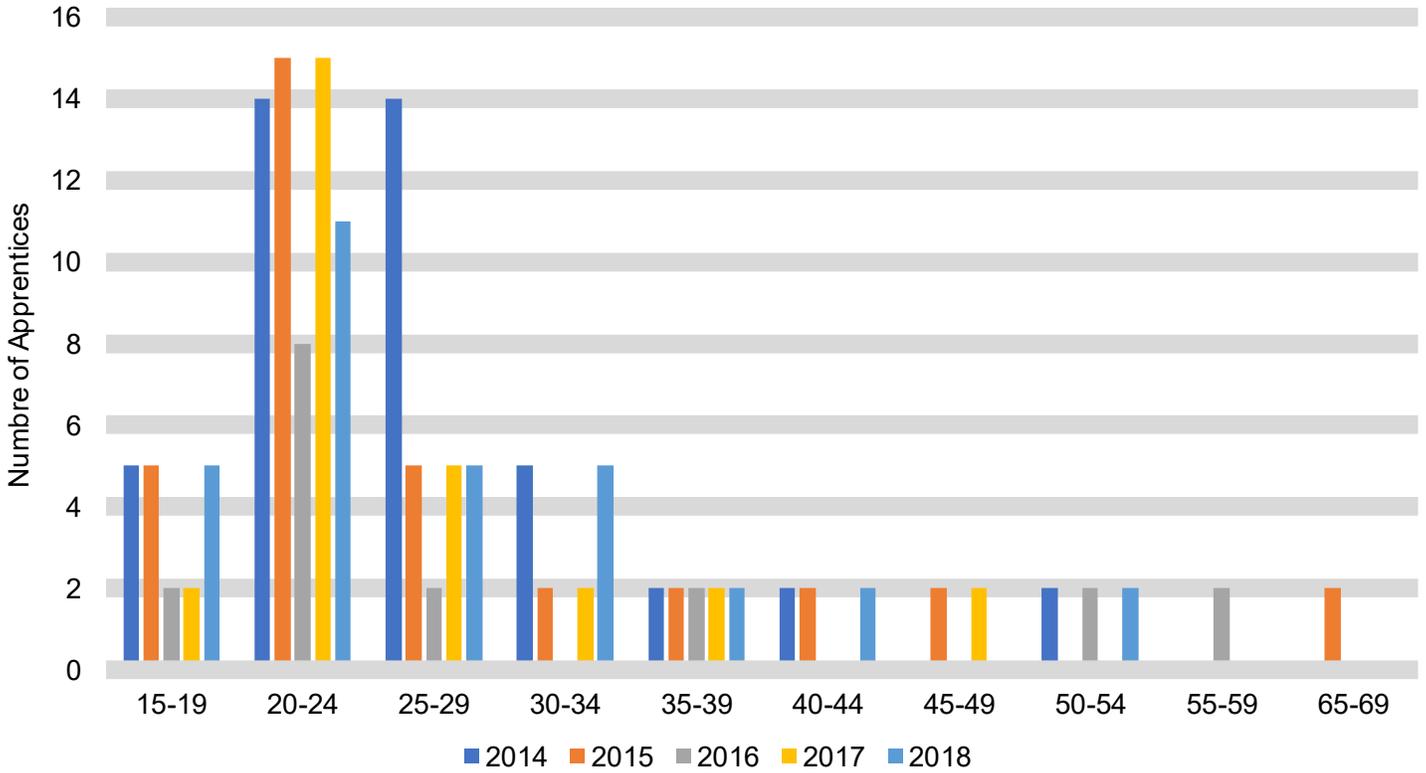


## Lennox and Addington County - Apprentices by Age Ranges

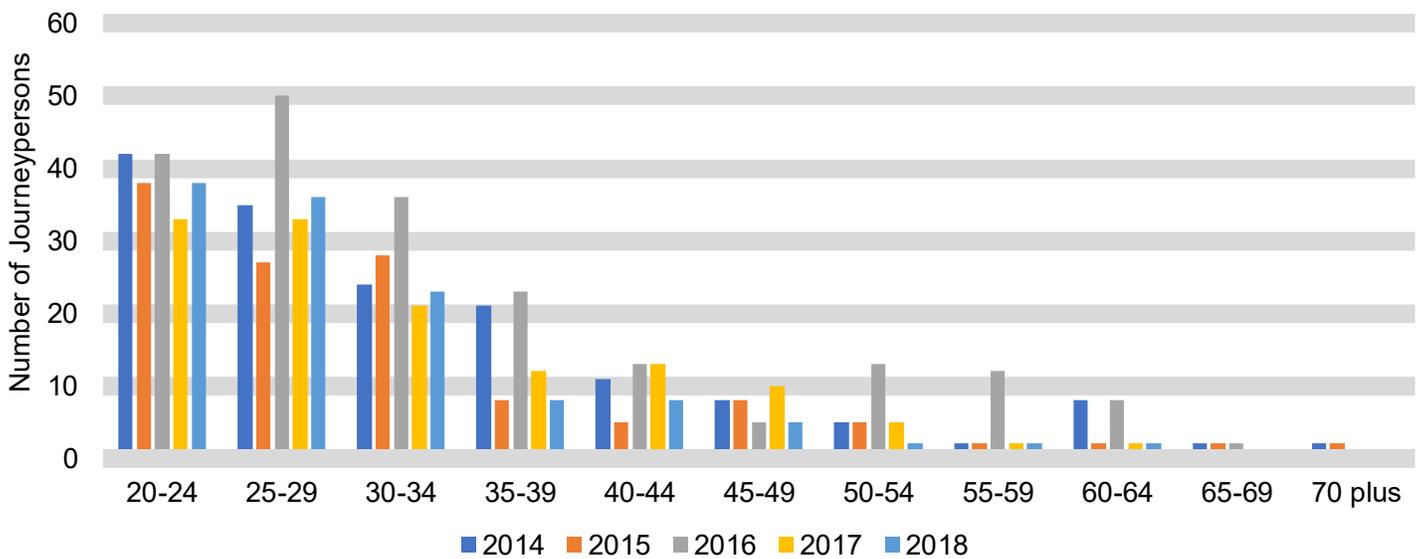


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

## Prince Edward County - Apprentice by Age Ranges

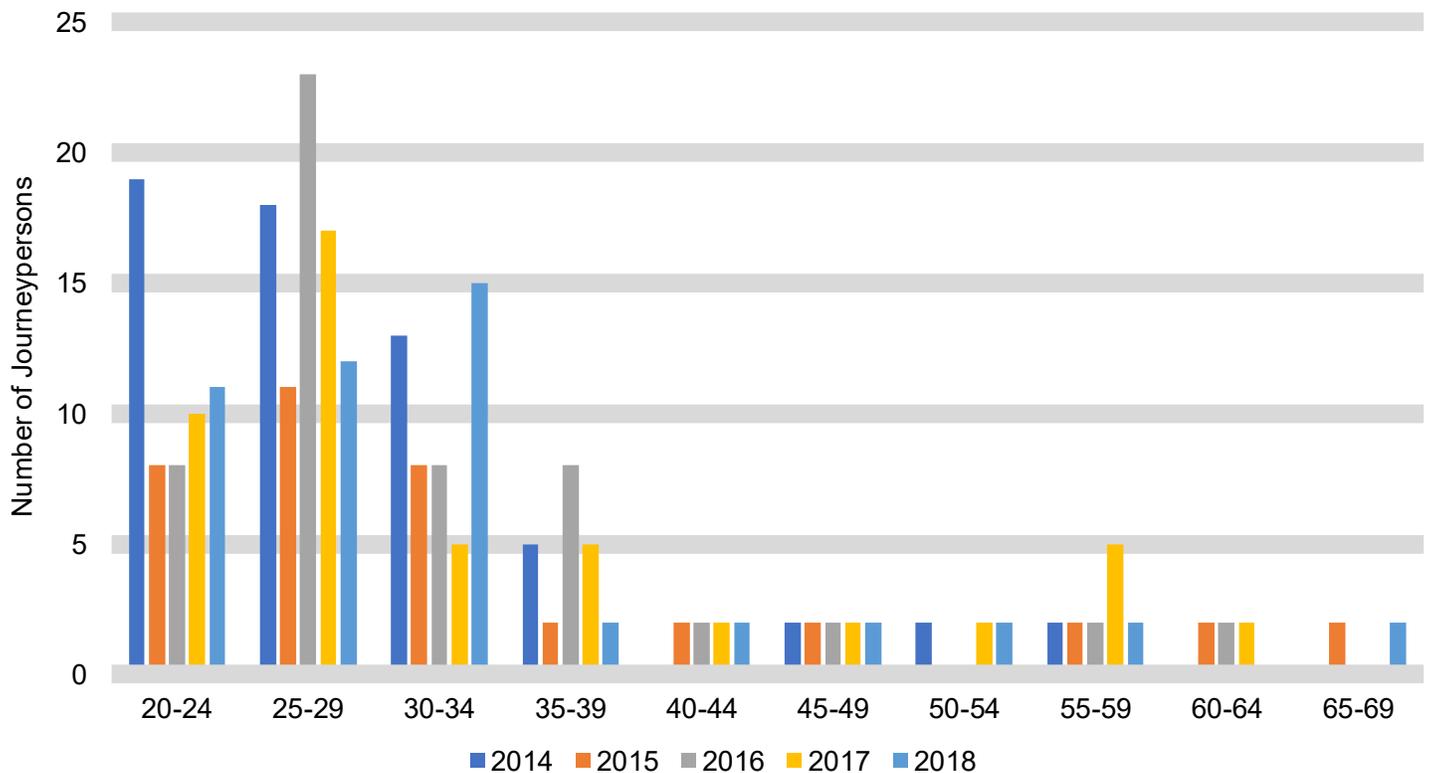


## Hastings County - Journeypersons by Age Ranges

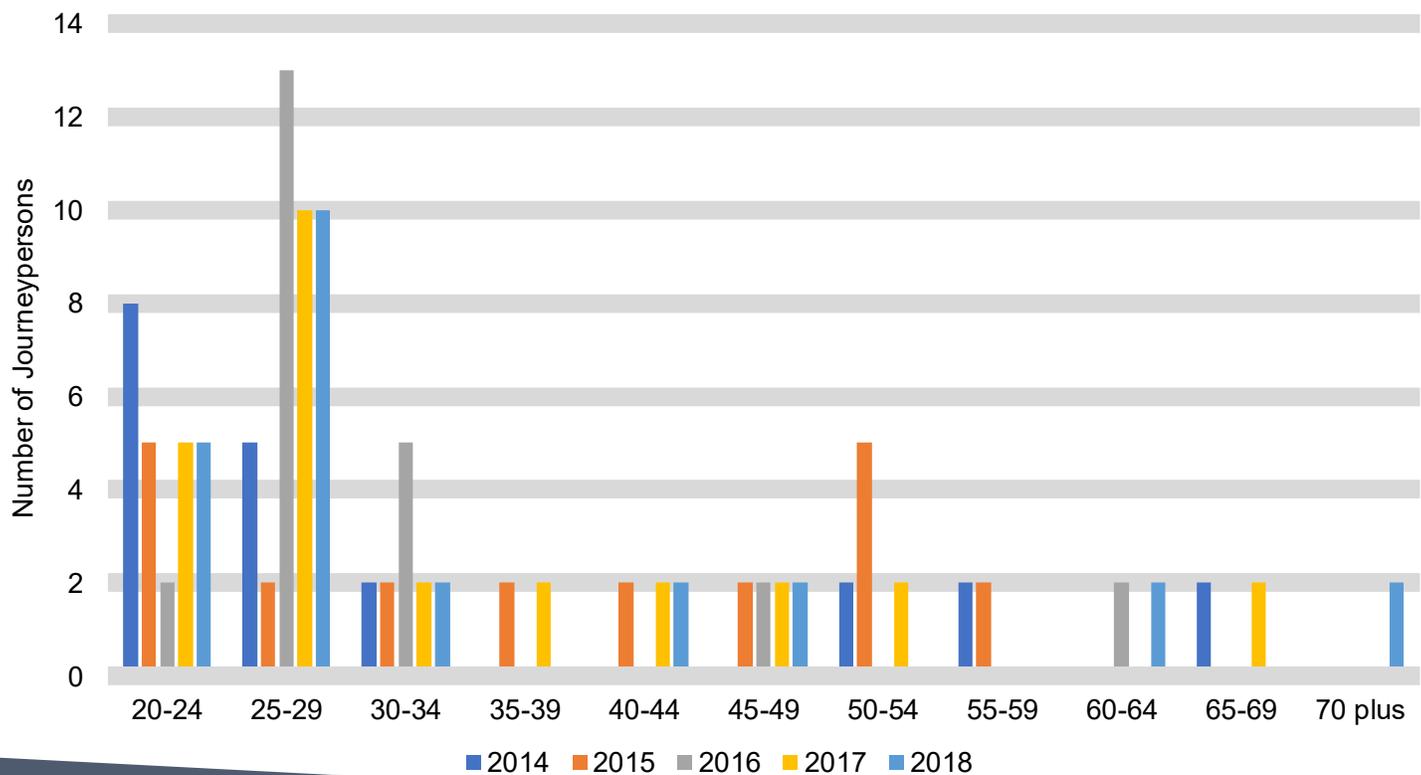


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

## Lennox and Addington County - Journeypersons by Age Ranges

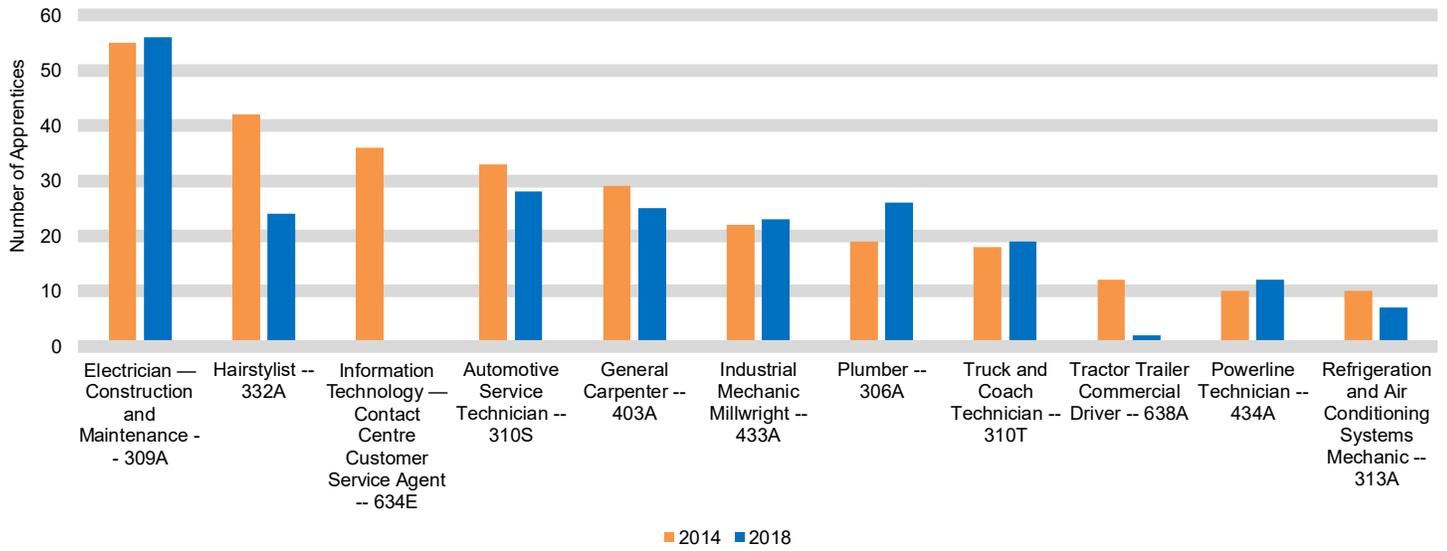


## Prince Edward County - Journeypersons by Age Ranges

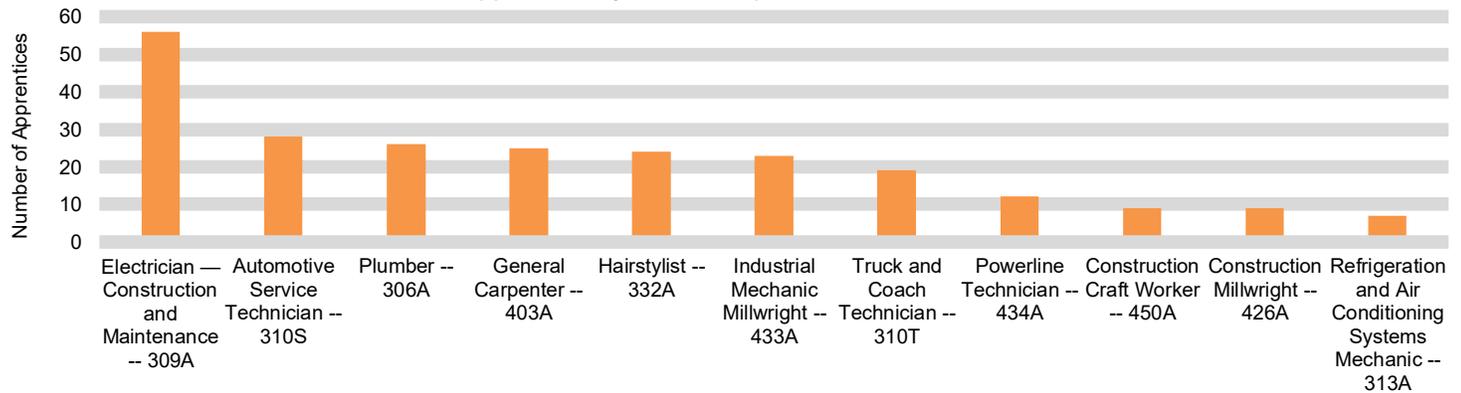


# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

Apprentice by Trade - Top 11 Trades in 2014  
Compared to Same Trade in 2018



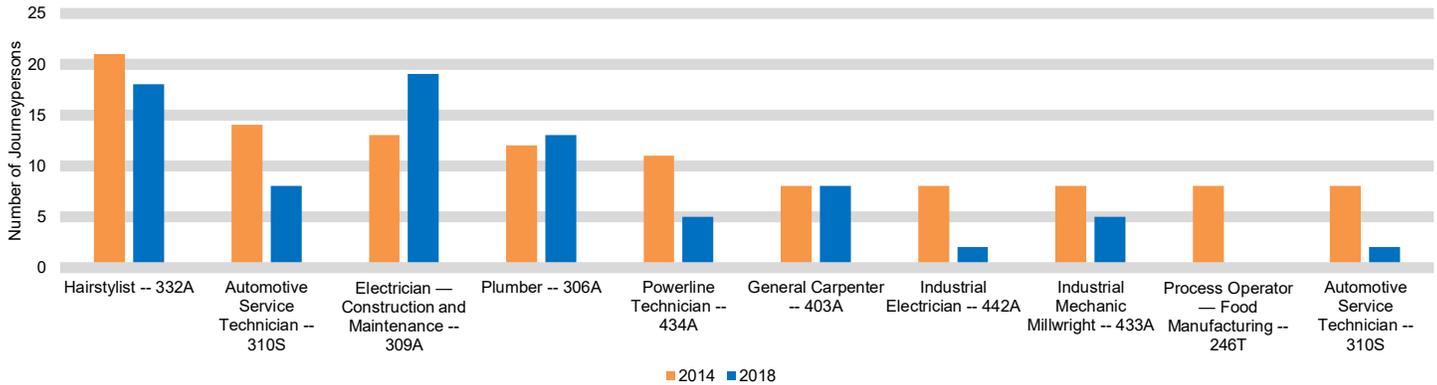
Apprentice by Trade - Top 11 Trades in 2018



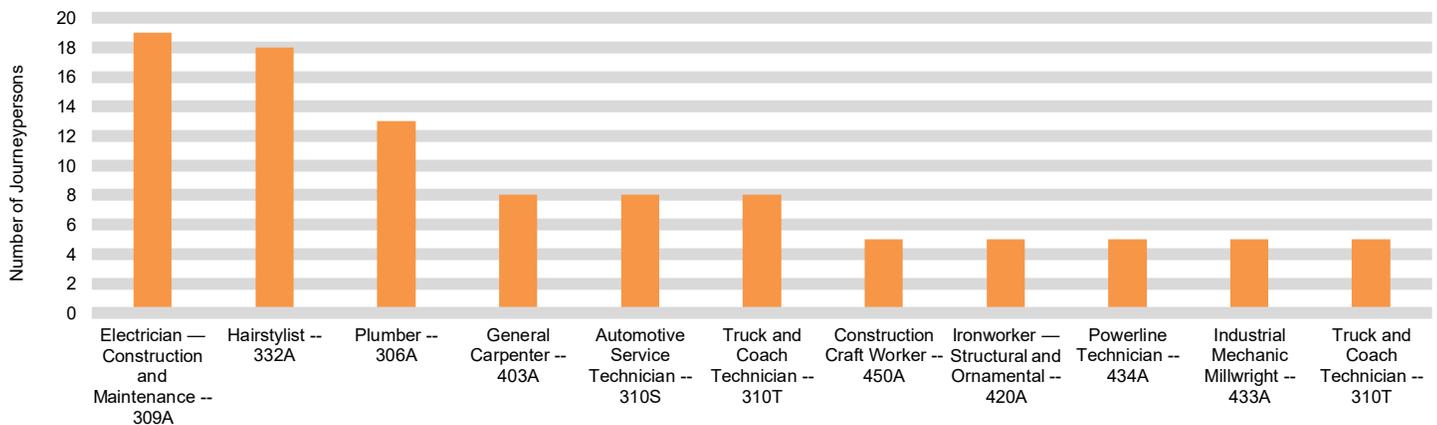
Anecdotally, employers in Hastings, Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington Counties in both the Manufacturing and Construction industries have indicated that they are experiencing difficulty filling both skilled and unskilled positions, including skilled trades. The above tables provide an indication that some trades are seeing increases in apprentices while some such as General Carpenter have seen a slight decrease.

# Ontario College of Trades Document Counts

Journeyman by Trade - Top 10 Trades in 2014  
Compared to Same Trade in 2018



Journeyman by Trade - Top 11 Trades in 2018

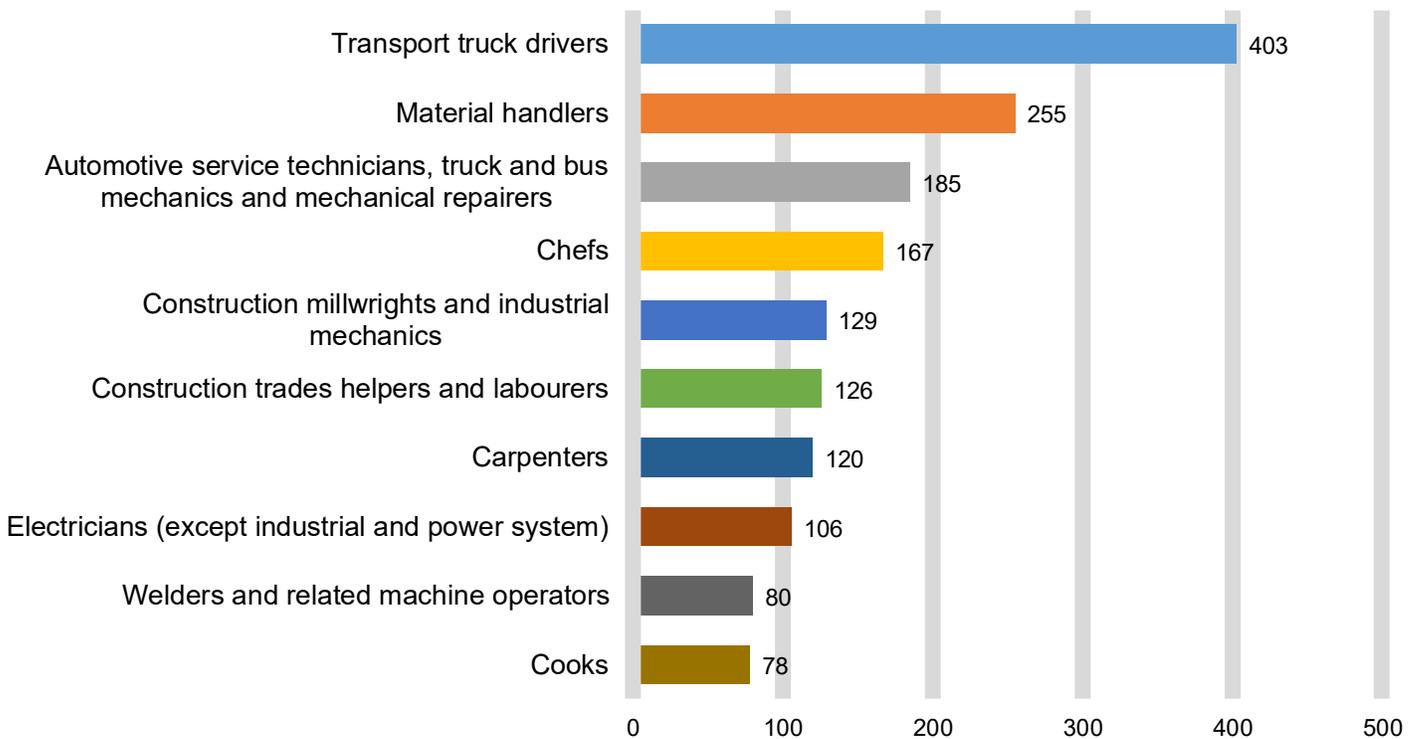


The above tables provide an indication that most of the top trades locally are seeing a loss in the number of journeymen. The exceptions being Electrician 309A and Plumber 306A. They have seen slight increases. When you compare the top apprentice by trade in 2018 to the top journeymen for the same period, it is encouraging to see that several of these trade categories cross.

# Job Postings

The source for the following tables is: **Emsi, 2019**. It is important to understand what skilled trade positions local employers are posting. This provides an indication of demand for apprentice or journeyman positions in the community. The data is based on unique job postings. According to **Emsi**, unique job postings are the number of deduplicated job vacancy advertisements scraped from various websites. Deduplication is the process of identifying duplicate job postings and only counting one of the duplicates. The unique posting count is the count of postings after the deduplication process has taken place.

Top 10 Total Unique Job Postings by National Occupation Classification  
Hastings, Prince Edward, Lennox and Addington August 2018-August 2019

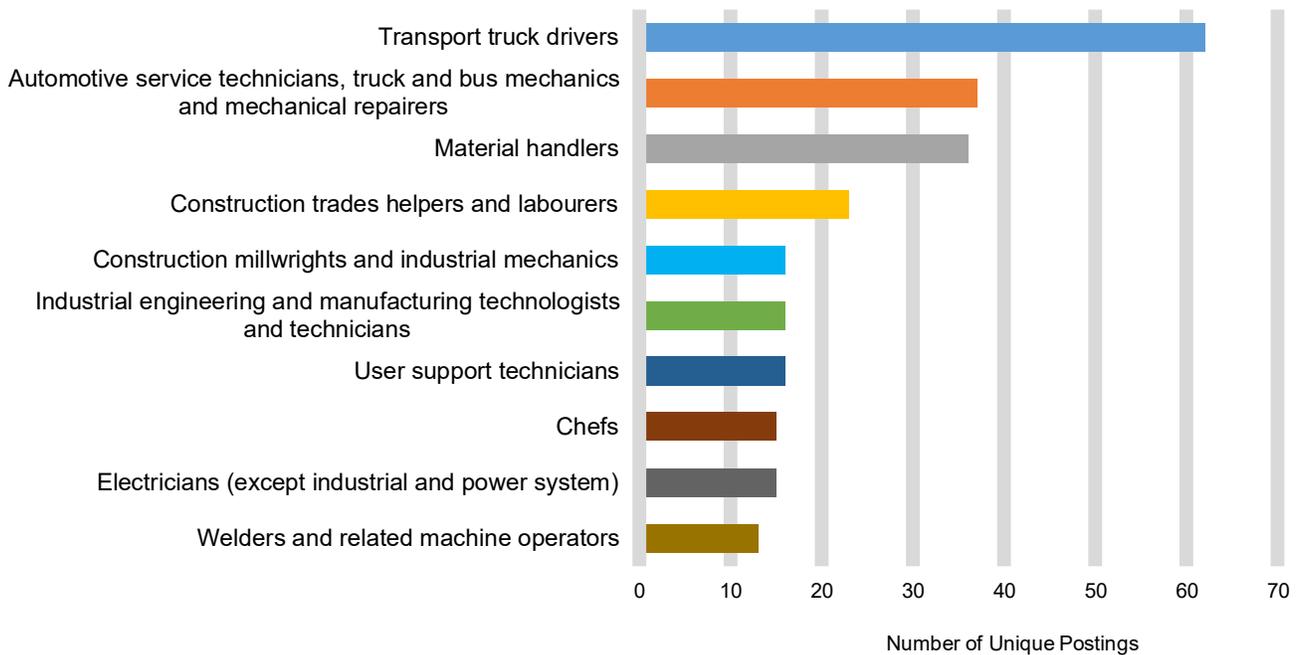


The above table shows the top unique job postings as a total between August 2018 and August 2019 inclusive. It is not surprising that Transport Truck Drivers is the most advertised occupation over that time frame. It supports the anecdotal comments that the transportation industry locally is having difficulty filling this occupation. It is not a well know fact that Transport Truck Driver is an apprenticeable trade.

The numerous skilled trades occupations related to the construction industry supports what local employers in this industry have been saying. Construction Trades Helpers is often mentioned as the most difficult position for them to fill. Most employers use this position to gauge the work ethic of potential apprentices.

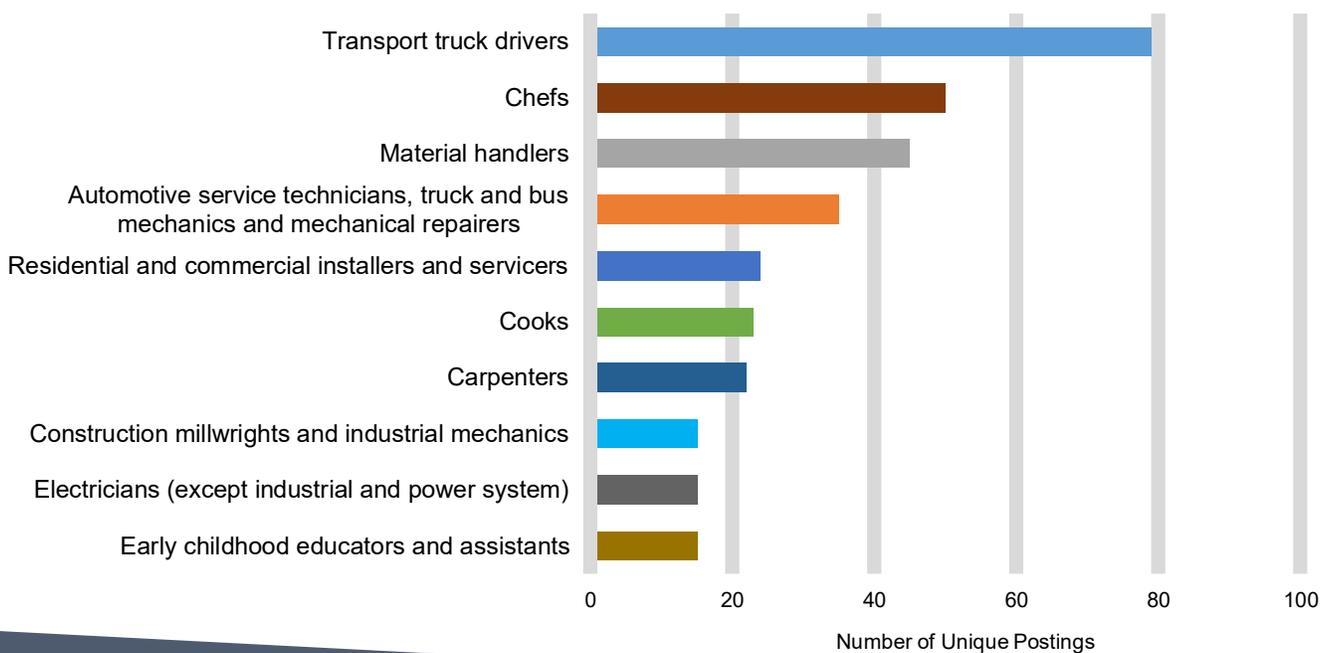
# Job Postings

Top 10 Total Unique Job Postings by National Occupation Classification  
Hastings, Prince Edward, Lennox and Addington August 2018



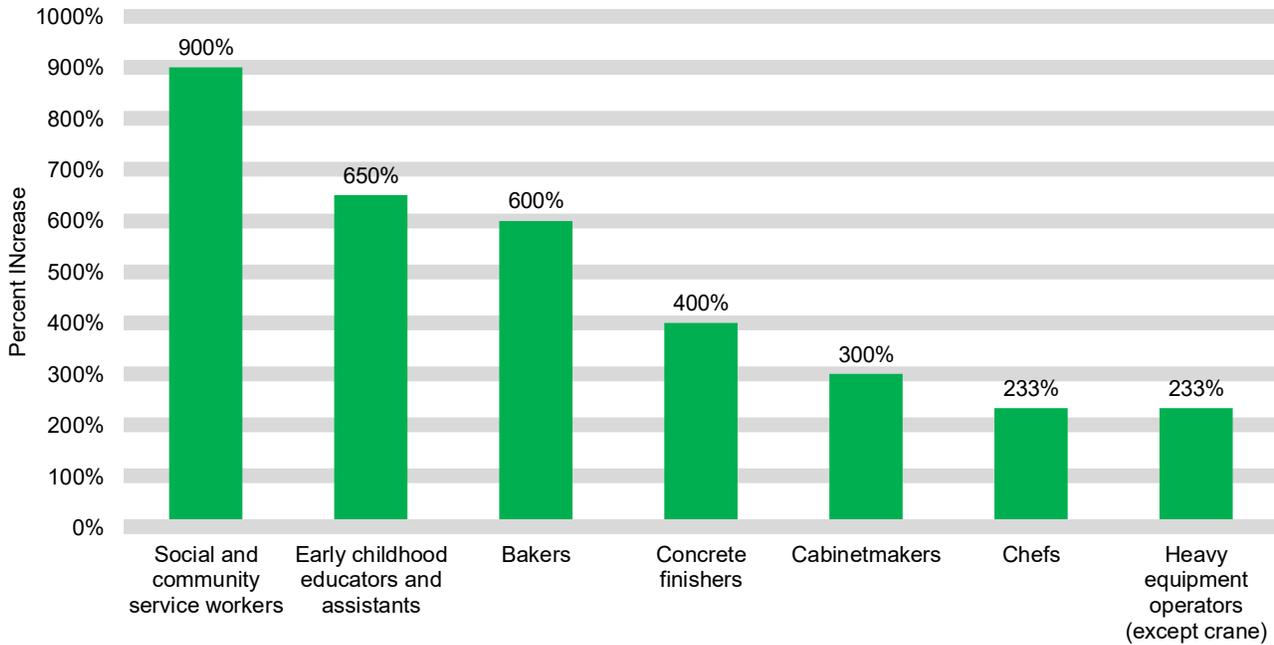
These two tables identify the top 10 skilled trade occupations advertised in August 2018 compared to August 2019. Transport Truck Drivers remains the top position that was advertised across both with consistent numbers. The data indicates a high increase in demand for Chef and Cook in 2019 which is consistent with what employers in the local Hospitality industry have said they struggle to fill.

Top 10 Total Unique Job Postings by National Occupation Classification  
Hastings, Prince Edward, Lennox and Addington August 2019



# Job Postings

Percent Increase in Unique Job Postings  
2019 over 2018



The table above indicates significant increases in job postings for seven top occupation categories. The first category is not surprising as there has been an increased effort to assist persons with disabilities in the local community. There has also been an increased demand for ECE's. Bakers and Chefs are in line with the growing needs within the hospitality industry. Of interest is the noted decrease below in Construction Trades Helpers. If, as the industry has indicated that there is a demand for this position, why has advertising dropped off? This warrants further follow-up.

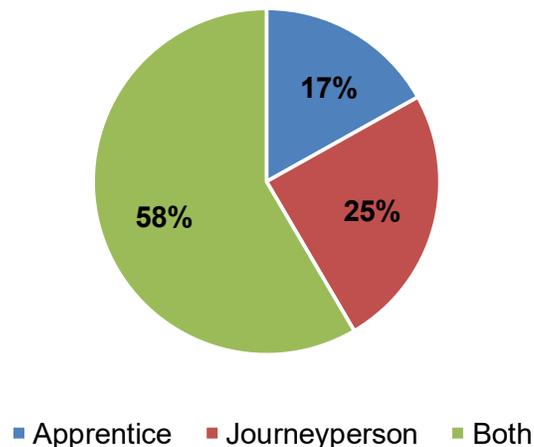
Percent Increase in Unique Job Postings  
2019 over 2018



## What Employers Are Saying

The following pages summarize local employer input from the In-Demand Skilled Trades Survey. Some comments with recurring themes have been grouped and not all comments have been included in this report. A separate report is being submitted to the Ontario Government as part of the Provincial project and will include all comments from every question in the survey.

What skilled trade positions are hardest for your organization to fill?



When asked why these positions were hard to fill, employers responded:

- Beginners don't have the hands on knowledge that is needed to run heavy equipment
- Cost of travel - travel at least 2 hours to attend a college that offers the horticultural technician program. **(This is a consistent comment across all trades)**
- Lack of young people applying for employment in the landscape / horticultural trades
- Difficult to get your hands on them when you own a small garage. They seem to only want to go where there are unions with higher salaries
- ECE apprenticeship is poorly organized and out dated from the local college
- Funding - low entry wage
- Lack of interest
- The cost of the program
- We can't hire a helper without them first going to school to get oil and gas licenses
- We don't require many honed skills as we will teach on the job

## What Employers Are Saying

What methods have your organization used to fill apprenticeship positions?

- Advertising - try to give 3 month probation period to see if they are a good fit.
- Connections with other shop owners.
- Continually offer the apprenticeship program to current and new employees.
- Direct meetings with local schools.
- Flexible hours and extra support to complete requirements.
- Grants and subsidies.
- Hiring unqualified staff on the premises that they will enroll in the apprenticeship program.
- Posting job ads consistently and interviewing.

**What changes could the Ontario government make to the apprenticeship program to better respond to the needs of employers**



The number one answer to this question was ....

More financial support and incentives for both the apprentice and employer!

**\$\$\$\$\$**

Other key changes that employers suggested included:

- More training and awareness in the school system, not just high school but rather from K-12
- Better Co-Op outreach! (...we would always take a Co-Op student but our firm is never offered any....there seems to be no interest from the students)
- More schools and pre-apprenticeship training
- Apprentice officers coming to facilities to register and monitor apprentices—use to be done and does not happen anymore. (Current method is not efficient for employers as they often have to attend Ministry multiple times to get things sorted out and completed)

# What Employers Are Saying To Increase Apprentices and Journeypersons



## Employers need to:

Allow openings for apprentices.  
Apply for more grants and subsidies.  
Bring in from outside communities.  
Continue to promote the horticulture / landscape trades to high schools & colleges.  
Employers could offer higher wages or pay for their schooling if they stay working for them for a minimum number of years.  
Offer more incentives.  
Offer training and charge more to consumers to be able to offer better pay level.  
Perhaps more collaboration with trade schools.  
Registration of available employees for hire.  
Start making the trades look more attractive.  
Offer great work life balance. Promote professionalism.  
Take on more apprentices where possible.  
Up to date curriculum and reduced workload for students. Better support from the college.

## Ontario Government needs to:

Cash incentives for entering and completing apprenticeship.  
Encourage youth that having a skilled trade is a great career.  
Funding for apprentices for mature students – no interest loans.  
Government grants for schooling, give money back to employers while workers are in school.  
Greater incentives for employers to hire.  
Lower the amount of time before apprentices get called to school.  
Making it easier for people with learning disabilities to obtain a mechanics licence.  
Promote Skilled trades. NS has great skilled trades ads!! Add financial incentives for companies to hire and train people.  
Promote the trades as a respectable, professional and high earning / low debt career path to youth.  
Offer more help financially with getting the tools required to work in this trade. In either rebate or tax refund at income tax time...it is very expensive to get equipped to work in this trade.  
Streamlining process.  
Increase the number of seats in a course.  
Recognize the need and importance of the horticultural & landscape trades, and to better promote and support young workers who do want to further their training in the field.

**I think immigration will play a role. Bring in people with those skill sets. Limit the amount of red tape required to get into the industry.**

## What Employers Are Saying

The following are a summary of themed comments made by employers for some of the top In-Demand Skilled Trades. Manufacturing is outlined as an industry response as this is how employers chose to respond.

### Electricians (Both Industrial and Residential)

#### Issues

- Not enough people to do the work.
- The aging workforce and increased construction.
- It is hard to find good candidates who are willing to work and have a technical background.
- It would be nice to have apprentices with knowledge and education in the trade prior to beginning on the tools. Requires too much time and money of the employer to train from scratch.

#### Solutions

- Night school at all local colleges for improving knowledge of courses for basic, intermediate and advance, free of charge for a signed up apprentice. This will help for higher marks and better knowledge of the trade, and in turn help pass their license in the end.
- Help with the cost of training.
- Greater incentives for employers to hire.



### Carpenters (Construction)

#### Issues

- Shortage of skilled workers—Retirements in the industry.
- Lack of youth entering the trades.
- We need plumbers, electricians and framers, you cannot get skilled people to work.
- Motivated workers, skill, communications skills.
- Keeping up with technology.
- Beginners don't have the hands on knowledge that is needed.
- Competition from other positions available.
- Past high ratios has caused a lack of available apprentices.
- Apprenticeship schooling is not necessarily meeting the reality of how things are done on the job site.

#### Solutions

- We need to reintroduce this in grades schools again. And that it is a professional job.
- More trades in school and co-op students so they know if they want to get into that trade.
- Get people excited about joining the trades, they need to see how important they are to society as a whole.
- Advertise more about the longevity of these positions and the quality of life that can be achieved by becoming one of these skilled trades.
- Offer attractive job positions through wages and benefits, training programs.
- Stop subcontracting; hire the people to do the jobs permanently.
- To make group training/sponsorship work need support of the government.
- Government needs to increase training allowances while they go to school.
- Establish mentorship opportunities with older more experienced workers.
- The government needs to advertise more the power and availability of skilled trade positions that are currently open and will be open for years to come.



# What Employers Are Saying

## Plumbers

### Issues

- Lack of skilled trades people.
- Lack of contractors willing to train.
- Lack of skills.
- Apprentices have no commitment to stay with their sponsors so this results in contractors not willing to train.
- Positions advertised but still not filled.
- They get employed and then relocate after getting experience.
- Apprentices leave because of bad employers or work culture.
- Apprentices tend to have a problem with the COQ exam.
- Finding the right “fit”.



### Solutions

- Increased salaries and incentives. Diverse employment advertising.
- Start making the trades look more attractive. Offer great work life balance. Promote professionalism. Get involved in early recruitment and promotion within schools and local agencies. Create good workplace culture. Offer ongoing training opportunities.
- Promote the trades as a respectable, professional and high earning / low debt career path to youth. Decrease barriers of entry to trades. Make the apprenticeship process easier. Incentivize employees and employers in hiring and maintaining employment. Make our area an attractive place for trades people to live and work.
- To support the idea of Group Sponsorships, create a forum of discussion between willing business people. Host info events and kick start the process. This is a great idea to have a “pool” of apprentices that employers could call on when needed. This would quickly turn into full time employment for most.
- Support business owners in supporting apprentices.
- The government needs to promote the trades as career option; Incentivize hiring of apprentices; Connect apprentices with employers.
- More schools and pre-apprenticeship training.
- We need to bring shops back to our school system.

# What Employers Are Saying

## Automotive Technicians (Mechanics)



### Issues

- A lack of skilled personnel or people, including younger generation, getting into the automotive trade.
- Early education systems not understanding the trades and their importance to the economy.
- Bigger money is in the city – makes it difficult to find people.
- More and more millennials are studying Computers and Apps and other TECH Careers. And no one is coming through the trade schools to become an apprentice and eventually a Tech!
- Qualified people & training in our community to address the issue, all training seems to be in the GTA.
- Shortage of journeymen in the heavy equipment and small engine trades.
- Skilled trade people are retiring and schools are not promoting trades.
- The lack of or the mind set that skilled trades are a last result when you can't do any other job.
- The next generation of techs coming into the industry are not getting the training in high school that we old boys had growing up that will be retiring soon.
- There is a real shortage of mechanics that can work on buses.
- Adaption and cost of technology – hard to keep up with.
- The more complex machines become the more the technicians must learn computer skills however the basic skills which have to be also taught are being left behind.
- Start up costs for a young mechanic can be upwards of \$35,000+.
- Make the apprentice program easier to get into and not be such a financial burden on them.
- Local training availability.
- Too many apprentices are falling through the cracks either trying numerous times to pass the exam but can't due to lack of knowledge or become licensed and have no idea what they are supposed to do afterwards.

### Solutions

- Be retiring soon. The industry needs a carrot for the next generation to reach for.
- Encourage young minds at a grade school level, grade 7-8 by offering shop classes like they used to have when I was a kid.
- Educate the educators. In High schools the trades are still viewed as a career path for slow learners and delinquents.
- Making it easier for people with learning disabilities to obtain a mechanics licence.
- More financial support for the apprentice while in training.
- More funds and training aids related to the field and exams to verify results.
- Need to change the perception about trades.

# What Employers Are Saying

## Early Childhood Educators



### Issues

- With respect to ECE the cost of the courses. Completing placements cannot be done at the site of their workplace.
- Limited employment opportunities.
- Not enough ECE graduates for Child Care centers.
- Aging population trades/people retiring.
- ECE apprenticeship is poorly organized and out dated from the local college.
- It is hard finding qualified candidates.
- High drop out rate because our apprentices can go a long time without getting in on a course because of space availability.
- One apprentice completed hours and most of courses but changed to distance education to complete as apprenticeship courses were disorganized and had more requirements than distance education.
- Apprentices leave the apprenticeship due to too many hours on job when also expected to complete too many out of job placements that did not count towards hours.
- For the most part, ECE apprenticeships do not fair well.
- The caseload for course now is a lot.
- Too long a process and disorganized program.

### Solutions

- Hiring unqualified staff on the premises then they will enroll in the apprenticeship program.
- Flexible hours and extra support to complete requirements.
- Up to date curriculum and reduced workload for students. Better support from the college.
- Colleges take a vested interest to help graduates.
- In response to what the Ontario government can do:
  - ◆ Increase the number of seats in a course.
  - ◆ Financial support, streamlining process.
  - ◆ Incentives to help more with educational costs.
  - ◆ Provide more funding to agencies to get them involved.
- Better organized program, less demands on apprentices to do out of site placements.
- Colleges to contact day care centers and give graduates areas to look where jobs are available.
- Streamline requirements and update curriculum.
- Our field is in dire need of Registered Early Childhood Educators but the apprenticeship program is the least effective route to recruit and retain.

# What Employers Are Saying

## Manufacturing (Including Millwrights)

### Issues

- The amount of skilled tradespeople in our industry will most likely diminish over the next 5 years. A lot of our senior tradespeople will be looking to retire soon. Our location is also not one who attracts these skilled tradespeople.
- There are less and less people going to school for skilled trades and all the locals in the area are getting older and getting ready to retire.
- Wages - Availability of workers.
- Simply finding candidates willing to train.
- Not enough people available and not enough apprentice positions available in school. Further school being held in Kingston presents a barrier to students who cannot travel.

### Solutions

- Employers could offer higher wages or pay for their schooling.
- Open houses for career options.
- Promote Skilled Trades. NS has great skilled trades ads!!
- Add financial incentives for companies to hire and train people.
- Companies should be monitored more closely to complete training criteria.
- If funding was available it should be based on and only paid as apprentice criteria sheets are completed.
- Why aren't these electronic and maintained through a web portal?
- In our modern era the apprenticeship process and testing is ancient. Tests need to be revised. We hire college grads that should be exempt from basic training!!



# What Employers Are Saying

## Chefs/Cooks (Hospitality)

### Issues

- Shortage of a labour force, lack of skilled trained people.
- Funding - low entry wage.
- Cooking ain't fun.
- The process seemed hard for my current apprentice. Ministry lost papers. Not very good at follow up or direction ie. What schools have the program needed. Missed this year's program because nothing was submitted on time.
- Requirement by a business that the Chef has to have Red Seal.
- High schools needs to have more tools for trades oriented persons. Some schools are great while others are not.

### Solutions

- On the job training. Higher than average wages, benefits, staff housing.
- Offer flexible schedules, group RSP, Health and Dental benefits.
- Offer incentives to stay or come to Ontario in fields where there is a shortage of labour.
- More grants and subsidies.
- Guidance needed to be able to hold this program together.
- Offer training and Subsidies to businesses providing the training on completion.



## Hairstylist

### Issues

- Lack of training classes not that much available in rural areas.
- Difficulty hiring both. Apprentice because the current minimum salary makes it a huge challenge for smaller salons to take on an apprentice and still make money as that apprentice is not bringing in money for the salon. Journeyperson because the skill levels of the stylists available has been destroyed by the lack of testing prior to entering the field.
- Apprentice drop out because they think that they are being held back....Salons get paid to keep the apprentice as an apprentice in some cases so they don't train them.

### Solutions

- Having been an instructor, ensuring that skilled instruction is paid accordingly.... We need to pay our instructors that are well trained and passionate about their jobs so that we can excite students and get more enrollment.
- The Ontario government can offer more training, testing and help small salons.
- It is about time that the hair industry was treated with the same respect as other trades. They all have a Red Seal certification and we don't.



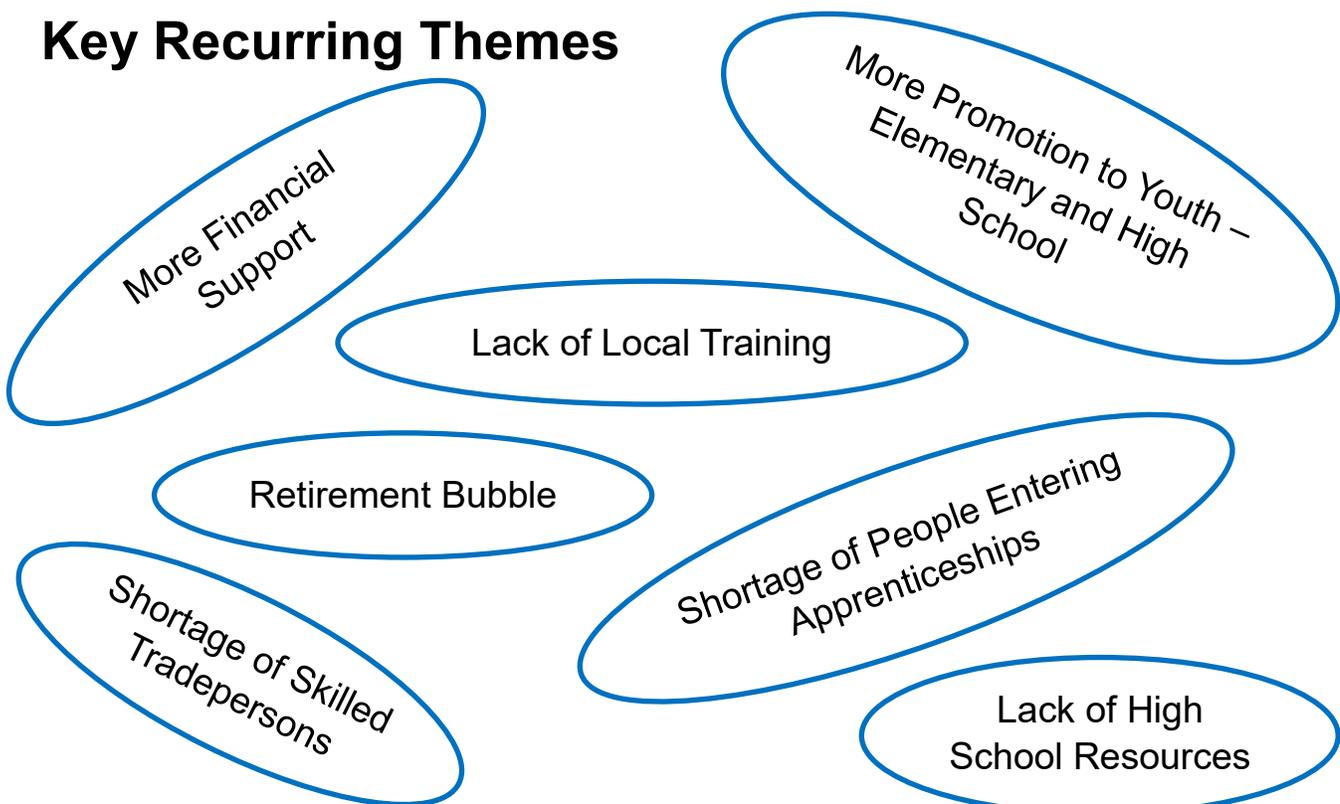
## What Employers Are Saying—Open Comments

- We old boys that have been in the automotive business for 30+ years and take pride in a job well done, we would like to hand off to next generation knowing it's in good hands.
- If young people don't start entering trades, I can see businesses having to close because of lack of staff. That is the situation we are in now. If we don't find help within the next 2 years, I can see us closing because we can't keep up with the work and the stress and associated health issues will prove too much.
- Help the small business owners attract employees any way possible so everyone isn't just trying to be employed by the large companies.
- Not really, just to reiterate earlier points. The government needs to advertise more the power and availability of skilled trade positions that are currently open and will be open for years to come. We need more skilled tradespeople and more effort to push young people in that direction. They can earn a high wage very quickly and can sometimes get paid in part to complete their school. It can be a very wise route, rather than the most common university route with no promising job lined up. Trades are an excellent, honest way to make a living, run your own business, and help the local economy and community.
- High schools needs to have more tools for trades oriented persons. Some schools are great while others are not. Poorer areas usually produce more tradesmen but poorer school have less resources. Makes ya think.
- Subcontracting within the construction sector needs to stop - people need to take responsibility for the jobs they contract - certifications need to be reimbursed, subsidized or completely paid for subcontractors.
- Society often looks down on trades people as people who were not capable of going to university. We need to change perceptions. Maybe a give journey people a new title.
- It is about time that the hair industry was treated with the same respect as other trades. They all have a Red Seal certification and we don't. I DO have a Red Seal licensing along with my licence. I also feel that once the Red Seal is acquired we should not have to pay our licensing fees each year. That is how it is in other provinces. The stylists that do not want to go for a SECOND test to acquire their Red Seal pay the fees but once you have written that test you no longer pay. And note: I said TWO practical tests. One for your license which will be a cost to take for the journey person and a second to acquire the Red Seal which will again cost a fee to take. These are PRACTICAL exams not theory exams.
- In our modern era the apprenticeship process and testing is ancient. Tests need to be revised. We hire college grads that should be exempt from basic training!! They took this college through the Mech Eng Tech program. The apprentice board offer an exemption course that is nearly impossible to pass. It has outdated questions on it that are not applicable in today's high tech skilled trades. We had one guy take the exemption test that had taken 2 yrs of University Engineering & 2 yrs of Mech Eng Tech program with his lowest score on any test of 85. He only got a passing grade of 73. Another guy took the test and scored 69, passing is a 70. He is smart start enough to be 1/2 way through his apprenticeship but he had to take basic training at school for 1 point on an outdated test!!!! Students should be paid to go to college instead of losing their day of wages. Companies should be compensated for investing in Ontario's/Canada's future. We are struggling through life in a 18 person company (this includes office staff). 5 are apprentices! No compensation. No help. Our students have to travel 88km to go to college.

## What Employers Are Saying—Open Comments

- I answered the questions according to voluntary skilled trades, not apprentices or journeymen as we do not currently employ any in those categories.
- Something has to happen and soon or we're all going to have a very big problem down the road. There'll be no skilled licensed people to repair the things we need fixed.
- Return to the high school level and instill an ongoing work ethic with a responsibility toward family and community.
- Our field is in dire need of Registered Early Childhood Educators but the apprenticeship program is the least effective route to recruit and retain.
- Schooling needs a hands on component.
- Everyone is stealing Tradesmen and paying crazy numbers for 2 year apprentices so the public will be paying for skills that are suspect.
- Trades school needs to come current with the times.
- There is a shortage of people wanting to work.
- We need to invest in the people of Ontario before bringing in skilled trades people from off shore.
- Let's continue to educate the public.
- Too many apprentices are falling through the cracks either trying numerous times to pass the exam but can't due to lack of knowledge or become license and have no idea what they are supposed to do afterwards.
- We need to bring shops back to our school system.

## Key Recurring Themes





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