

Ontario doubling immigration for skilled trades

By Robin MacLennan, Editor, Ontario Construction News - April 3, 2023

The Ontario government is adding \$25 million over three years to an immigration program doubling the number of skilled immigrants arriving to tackle the labour shortage.

“Our government is ready to welcome more skilled newcomers to Ontario, to help build the highways, transit, schools, homes and hospitals our growing population needs,” said Premier Doug Ford.

“As we continue to tackle historic labour shortages, we’re doing everything we can to ensure we have the workforce to help build Ontario. It’s all hands on deck.”

[The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program \(OINP\)](#) allows the province to nominate individuals for permanent residence who have skills and experience to contribute to Ontario’s economy in industries like the skilled trades and health care.

“This work builds on the government’s efforts to attract talent and investment to the province and complements the collaborative advocacy of labour and industry to strengthen our skilled workforce through training, outreach and apprenticeship programs,” said Joseph Mancinelli, [LiUNA international](#) vice-president. “As our members respond to growing infrastructure demands including housing and transit, we must continue to remove barriers in attracting and promoting careers in skilled trades, strengthening opportunities for a productive workforce who remain at the forefront of building a resilient and inclusive path forward for our economy, industry and province.”

Earlier this month, the province and federal government announced a doubling of the number of economic immigrants the province selects to a historic high of 18,000 by 2025.

“The Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) applauds the Government’s decision to prioritize immigration as an immediate solution to the labour shortage Ontario is experiencing in the skilled trades. Opening the doors to skilled immigrants will rectify the current, and future, workforce deficit construction is facing and allow for more projects to move forward exponentially,” [Ontario General Contractors Association \(OGCA\)](#) president Giovanni Cautillo said in a statement.

The government has also introduced further measures to remove barriers facing internationally trained professionals who wish to work in regulated professions and [removed discriminatory barriers](#) that prevent foreign-trained professionals from continuing their careers in sectors they trained in, such as engineering, law, accounting and skilled trades.

In December 2022, there were nearly 300,000 jobs in Ontario going unfilled.

The OINP's allocation from the federal government has more than doubled from 9,000 in 2021 to 18,361 in 2025. In 2023, Ontario will be able to nominate 16,500 immigrants.

“Ontario needs more skilled trades and construction workers to build our growing province,” said Nadia Todorova, executive director, [Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario \(RCCAO\)](#). “RCCAO welcomes today’s funding announcement to increase application processing capacity to get more workers to Ontario through immigration.

“When coupled with the government’s focus on domestic recruitment and training, these measures will help ensure that industry has the necessary workforce to build critical infrastructure.”