

Response to the Ontario Construction Secretariat's (OCS's) question in their independent survey of 500 ICI contractors between January 24 and February 11, 2022, "Does your firm employ apprentices?"

Percentage of Contractors Employing Apprentices in 2022



UNION

76%



NON-UNION

52%

Unionized construction's commitment to apprenticeship

Unions and their employer partners are essential to Ontario's apprenticeship system, providing training and mentorship to the next generation of skilled workers. The substantial investments in training made by the unionized industry are primarily funded through the hourly-based employer and union member financial contributions to training trusts and local education funds. In 2019, the unionized construction sector's annual contribution to training was estimated to be just over \$146.4 million. This is an increase of 261% from the annual contribution estimated by the OCS in 2011 and a 300% increase from 2006. [@Ontario Construction Secretariat](#)

Is construction slow to adopt new technologies?

A timely question given the labour shortage currently being experienced in the construction industry.

Viewing the industry as a whole, the answer appears to be a qualified 'yes'. Articles written on the subject address the lack of ready adoption of software used in design, project management, and financial controls. However, we are seeing greater use of drones to assist in site layout, project management and the equipment control segments of the industry to reduce on-site manpower requirements.

Slow uptake of design technology is not impeding Ontario's architects and engineers, though. They are designing new structures with the latest in building operating system and materials and, to ensure our industry can meet their designs specs, we must make sure our field forces have the training they require for proper installation of systems and materials.

On-site technology that replaces boots on the ground reveals a similar story. View any industrial, commercial and Institutional (ICI) site and you will observe new technology being employed primarily in work area access, material handling, and laser measuring and layout. Robotics that will replace on-site product installation labour are being developed. However, a construction site is very different from a factory setting and repetitive work in a semifixed location is not the norm. When you consider weather conditions affecting exterior applications, robotics are still a way off.

Contracting is a highly competitive, high dollar value, low profit margin business and contractors will adapt to using new technologies as they become available and once performance levels are established and cost-effectiveness is proven.

Helmets to Hardhats



Helmets to Hardhats is a registered not-for-profit providing opportunities in the building trades for the serving, transitioning and former military community. They are open to contractors affiliated with one of the Ontario Building Trades unions to post opportunities to their secure website for positions such as schedulers, planners, estimators, administration, project managers and more. To learn more, visit them at <https://helmetstohardhats.ca>

Questions or comments? Ideas for a future issue of **As we see it**? We want to hear from you! Email us anytime at admin@cecco.org.

Follow us!



