

18. Training and Apprenticeships

Training

Training is a universal right that must be available to all employed workers, displaced workers, and people wanting to enter or re-enter the workforce. Skills training programs must be open to all, not just the youngest or fittest members of the workforce. It must be universally accessible, equitable and developmental. Training must become a vehicle for correcting the discrimination that women, visible minorities, aboriginal people, and the disabled have had to contend with in both the educational system and the workplace.

The current trend toward making individuals responsible for their own training must be reversed. All training must be voluntary and made available to workers during paid working time. Many employers make on going training a condition of employment, but require workers to enroll at their own expense and on their own time. This practice must be stopped.

Training must be targeted to the individual needs of workers. Workers must be able to have some choice in their training. Appropriate career and employment counseling must be available to ensure they can make informed choices.

Training must take into consideration the current condition of the labour force as well as future development needs of industry and the Canadian economy. This would include:

- the current and emerging needs of a particular industry or occupation;
- the identified economic development needs of a geographic region or community;
- the changing nature of work;
- occupational standards where they exist;
- employability skills, and
- work processes related to health and the environment for workers, individually and collectively.

Training must link the classroom to the workplace. Training programs must incorporate monitoring and evaluation practices that provide frequent feedback and various techniques to measure learner progress. Teaching staff must have recognizable qualifications, demonstrated instructional skills, and relevant experience in and knowledge of the field of study.

Recommendations for A People's Charter:

- **Skills training for employed workers should be guaranteed through legislation obliging employers to provide it.**
 - *Employers must pay the cost of job-related training for employed workers through a payroll training tax administered by a bipartite Ontario training commission. This would act as a disincentive for employers to poach skilled workers from other employers who invest in training.*
- **Skills training for displaced workers and those entering or re-entering the workforce should be provided through government-financed training programs run in conjunction with public educational institutions.**
 - *Access to the training must be assured by government provision of adequate income support and social services support such as childcare and counseling. Any system of individual learning accounts must be opposed.*
- **Skills training must be developmental, portable, and generic, not employer-specific or narrowly defined.**
 - *It must provide real skills. It should not be used to shape, or otherwise limit, workers' expectations to make them more willing to take poor-paying insecure jobs.*
 - *Training programs must be provided in conjunction with public education institutions in which labour has a much more significant voice than it does now.*
 - *Government regulation is necessary to establish standards and ensure they are met.*
- **Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) must be supported and funded to provide increased access to public education and training programs.**
 - *This enhances job security and career potential, and gives workers greater mobility within industrial and geographic sectors.*
 - *PLAR must include:*
 - *literacy*
 - *basic skills*
 - *ESL programs*

- *pre-apprenticeship training to assist semi-skilled and unskilled workers who are most in need of training and education*
- *assist immigrant workers whose skills have not previously been recognized*
- *PLAR must not be used to:*
 - *avoid proper apprenticeship training*
 - *aid competency-based occupational standards set by private corporations*
 - *shift training costs to the individual*
 - *undermine nationally recognized standards*
- ***The Ontario government must become party to a labour market agreement that will bring needed federal dollars to fund provincial training programs.***
 - *Labour market agreements have been signed between the federal government and all provincial governments except Ontario.*

Apprenticeships

Ontario's apprenticeship system provides future skills for industry and the economy. By ensuring an adequate supply of skilled workers, it allows the province to better compete in the global economy. Recent changes to the apprenticeship system through the passage of Bill 55 threaten to dismantle this system.

Apprenticeship training is a cost-effective and efficient method of training for industry. Ninety to 95 percent of apprenticeship training is done on the job. The success of apprenticeship as a training program is dependent on its unique combination of workplace and academic education. The time-based, workplace component of apprenticeship training is essential, in that the apprentice must have an adequate period to learn from the journey-person. In-school training must support what is taught in the workplace.

Apprenticeship training must be used more widely to promote entry of new workers into the labour force, re-entry of workers returning to the labour force, and transition of those already in the labour force. Apprenticeship training must be promoted more effectively in the school system to provide opportunities for students not going on to post-secondary education in an era of high youth unemployment.

Apprenticeship training must be accessible to all. Marketing and education initiatives must be expanded to ensure that current and future employers recognize female, aboriginal, and visible minority employees as potential apprentices.

Bill 55 split the apprenticeship system in Ontario in two, placing industrial trades in its purview, and leaving construction trades under the old *Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act (TQAA)*. It deregulated the system shifting the focus from apprenticeship as an employment relationship to apprenticeship as an education and training relationship. It removed the enforcement of regulatory provisions governing ratios and wage rates, and removed entry levels and duration from the legislation.

Skill sets must not replace “whole” trades. While there must be flexibility to recognize genuine new trades as technologies change, this must not be an excuse to fragment existing trades into partial components or skill sets which are then treated as new trades in themselves. Bill 55 redefines the work of specific trades to that of simple skill sets, which results in an increase in multi-crafting and multi-skilling, and a further fragmentation of existing trades. This splintering of the trades compromises the health and safety of workers, as well as consumer safety and environmental protection. It leads to a generation of workers who lack an understanding of their complete trade, and an overall de-skilling of Ontario's workforce.

Apprenticeship standards are set across the country through the Red Seal Program. This was established to provide greater mobility across Canada for skilled workers. By successfully completing an Inter-provincial Standards Examination, they can obtain a "Red Seal" endorsement on their Certificates of Qualification and Apprenticeship.

The program is intended to encourage standardization of provincial and territorial apprenticeship training and certification programs. The "Red Seal" allows qualified trades persons to practice the trade in any province or territory in Canada where the trade is designated without having to write further examinations. To date, there are 45 trades included in the Red Seal Program on a national basis.

The program is administered under the guidance of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA). Each province and territory has an appointed Director of Apprenticeship for this purpose.

Recommendations for A People's Charter:

- **Compulsory certification must be introduced, after re-establishing “whole” trades.**
 - *Employer established, non-regulated “designer trades” must come under regulation through the established apprenticeship training programs. With that as a starting point, the entire system should move toward compulsory certification for all trades.*
 - *Compulsory certification will ensure increased flexibility and mobility, as well as higher standards, higher skill levels, higher quality training, and increased confidence in the apprenticeship system.*
 - *Compulsory certification will also help ensure public safety and consumer protection.*
- **Enforcement mechanisms must be legislated to ensure compliance with compulsory certification regulations by both employers and individuals.**
 - *Fines for violating the Act must be increased to significant levels. The enforcement mechanisms must have more clout, and penalties must be more strictly enforced.*
- **Wage requirements must be re-established and tuition fees for apprenticeship programs must be abolished.**
 - *Bill 55 deregulated wage requirements for apprentices and the government is now introducing tuition fees for apprenticeship programs. Both of these moves download the costs of training to the individual, and act as a deterrent to potential new apprentices entering the trades.*
- **Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC) must be established for all trades, and must be given more responsibility and authority.**
 - *In Ontario, they exist for regulated trades only and they are strictly advisory in nature. The committees should provide more input on training, intake, standards, and education requirements while government should retain a role in promotion, licensing, programming, and enforcement.*
 - *School-to-work and pre-apprenticeship programs must be designed to adhere to the wages, ratios and standards set out by the PAC's.*

- ***The Red Seal Program must be expanded.***
 - *The provincial government must be part of a move to expand and enforce this program to provide for national standards based on industry needs for all occupations identified as suitable for the apprenticeship training model.*
 - *These standards must cover all aspects of training, including on-the-job and in-school training, trained qualifications, examinations, and certifications.*