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## **Ontario Invests in Skills Development to Attract and Train Workers for Employment in the Construction Sector**

HAMILTON, ON - The Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development has awarded the Industry Education Council of Hamilton a contract of \$1.127M to support the skills development of youth in the construction sector for the Greater Hamilton and Golden Horseshoe regions, for a second year. Through the Skills Development Fund, over \$2.9M has been invested in training our future workforce to fill the skilled labour gaps in the region since 2021.

Individuals in search of up-skilling for career advancement will be able to gain skills and employment through the 'Workforce Accelerator Generating Employment (WAGE II)' Construction Fundamentals program, utilizing long-standing industry, education, and community relationships through the collaborative efforts of the project partners which include Mohawk College, LiUNA Local 837 and the Halton Industry Education Council (HIEC). The foundational knowledge will provide the springboard for graduates to enter employment or enable graduates to pursue further apprenticeship training. They will be equipped to provide workforce support for companies operating in the construction sector, supporting the growth of the region's economy.

"Over the next ten years, Ontario is expected to need 100,000 more workers for the construction sector alone," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "That is why we're supporting innovative programs like the one here in Hamilton, which will give young people the skills they need to begin exciting careers and earn more take-home pay."

"Providing opportunities for our youth to gain the skills and knowledge for success in the career of their choice is at the core of the work we do, and we thank Minister McNaughton for supporting this mission. Utilizing experiential learning opportunities and supported with the collaborative partnerships in our region, individuals can succeed in finding their career path, while building the local workforce," comments Cesare Di Donato, Executive Director, Industry Education Council of Hamilton.

"The WAGE II program is a true example of community-centred collaboration and Mohawk College is proud to be involved," said Ron J. McKerlie, President and CEO of Mohawk College. "The labour shortage in construction trades is urgent and green building practices will be critical for a successful recovery. Mohawk will continue to work with our community and industry partners to provide participants with the theory, foundational skills and life supports necessary for meaningful work in construction trades. We are grateful to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development for funding this important project."

"LiUNA Local 837 is excited to be a part of this project and partner with the Industry Education Council of Hamilton. Together we support to build a skilled workforce that meets the labour market needs now and, in the future," states Nick Ciccone, Director of Training & Apprenticeships at LiUNA Local 837. "We

need to address the gaps in essential skill sets required by individuals and demanded by employers in a changing global and competitive economy. It is important to provide our signatory contractors with safe, trained, and competent workers. The WAGE II program will provide the Skills and Training required to find employment in this fast-growing industry. A special thank you to the Federal and Provincial government of Canada for funding this necessary and important project”.

"HIEC-ApprenticeSearch.com is thrilled at the extension of the WAGE program, which has proven to be an excellent community-based solution to addressing the labour shortage in the construction sector, " said Kelly Hoey, Executive Director, HIEC-ApprenticeSearch.com. "We look forward to connecting this new cohort of participants with ApprenticeSearch.com's vast network of construction employers who are eager to hire the next generation of skilled workers."

To learn more about this exciting program, visit [www.iechamilton.ca/WAGE](http://www.iechamilton.ca/WAGE).

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The Industry-Education Council of Hamilton is a not-for-profit organization located in Hamilton, Ontario who champions career exploration through programming, group mentoring and facilitating partnership discussions. We help our stakeholders showcase their industry or sector to their future workforce, through practical hands-on learning opportunities. Acting as the catalyst, between education, industry, and the broader community, we offer programs and industry-lead initiatives to accommodate career exploration and workforce development.

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