

PCA Urges Federal Gov't Not to Abandon Apprenticeship Supports

(Edmonton, March 7, 2025) – At the height of a skilled labour shortage, the federal government should be doing all it can to help, not hinder the apprenticeship journey, according to the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA) which is disappointed the Liberal government is ending two apprenticeship grant programs at the end of this month.

“It makes zero sense to cut two apprenticeship programs that provide financial support to tens of thousands of apprentices across Canada every year,” said Paul de Jong, President & CEO of PCA. “The federal government is suggesting apprentices consider loans or Employment Insurance benefits to fill the gap. That just doesn’t cut it.”

Under the two programs, eligible apprentices could receive up to \$4,000 in combined supports. The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant encouraged apprentices to stick with their programs through to certification by providing grants of up to \$1,000 each year over the first two years. The Apprenticeship Completion Grant provided a one-time taxable grant of \$2,000 for registered apprentices who completed their training.

Since these programs were launched in 2007, over 1,000,000 grants have been issued, according to the most recent Government of Canada figures.

According to federal government reports, financial barriers to apprenticeship are greatest during the first two years, driven by the cost of tools and the partial loss of income during technical training. A past federal survey of program applicants revealed that:

- 70% of respondents used the grants to cover training expenses, including tools and equipment.
- 32% allocated part of their grants for general living costs.
- 21% used the funds to pay off debt.

“If the federal government won’t reconsider, we’re urging provincial governments to boost apprenticeship funding,” added de Jong. “We commend Ontario for its generous apprenticeship supports, and encourage other provinces to do the same.”

The two federal apprenticeship grant programs will end on March 31, 2025. Applications will no longer be considered after that deadline.

About the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

PCA is a national association of leading construction companies that employ more than 40,000 unionized skilled tradespeople, who are represented primarily by CLAC. Our member companies are responsible for 40 percent of energy and natural resource construction projects in Western Canada and are leaders in building and maintaining many of country's capital and infrastructure projects.

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