

## The national job numbers don't show it, but Toronto's a hot market for new grads

Bricklaying and cyber security are just 2 jobs needing an influx of workers, experts say

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Jimmy Wu and instructor Paul George work together on a brick wall, focusing on the window detailing. (Madeleine Villa/CBC)

The latest job numbers for Canada don't show a huge amount of employment growth, but hidden inside those national figures is a hot market for new graduates in Toronto, experts say.

After a loss of 88,000 jobs in January, [February's Labour Force Survey](#), released Friday, showed a slight rebound of 15,000 new jobs, and a small decrease in the unemployment rate from 5.9 to 5.8 per cent.

But according to experts at the headhunting firm [Robert Half](#), Toronto's job market is very strong.

Here's a look at a couple of areas where employers are crying out for new workers.

## Bricklaying

Believe it or not, if you're a new graduate with bricklaying skills, you shouldn't have any trouble finding work in Toronto.

According to the February job figures, employment in construction has risen 3.3 per cent on an annual basis from 2.4 per cent the month before, and chances are it could rise substantially more.

"We could probably put 500 bricklayers to work tomorrow without any difficulty," said Richard Lyall, president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario ([RESCON](#)).



**Ralph Cerasuolo, director of the Skilled Trades College, says that there are guaranteed job placements at the end of the bricklaying course. (Sue Goodspeed/CBC)**

Lyall also says with baby-boomers retiring in large numbers, and very few millennials interested in the job, it's left a gap in the industry.

"It's a tough job, it's labour intensive, dirty and tough," said Ralph Cerasuolo, director of the [Skilled Trades College](#) in Vaughan.

But that isn't stopping Jimmy Wu from learning the trade.

Wu, 24, was among 150 people who applied for the college's [bricklaying program](#). He was one of 10 students who got accepted and his tuition is now fully paid by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Wu graduated with a Kinesiology degree from York University but started working in construction trades during his summers. He says his job prospects in Kinesiology were not the greatest and he's thankful for what he learned in those summer construction sites.

"I really enjoyed working in the trades throughout my university career, and I thought if I took it seriously I could go much further or just as far in trades."

Wu's dream job is now to run his own business building custom homes.



**Jimmy Wu, 24, started in the construction trades during his summers off when he was studying Kinesiology at York University. (Sue Goodspeed/CBC )**

The college hopes to graduate 40 students from its bricklaying course by the end of this year. Next year the program will be offered at their Mississauga campus. By 2020 the school hopes to have 200 students graduating a year.

## Cyber security

Construction isn't the only industry opening doors for young people. Cyber security has grown with the expanding digitization in the workforce, especially here in Toronto, a bustling financial centre and burgeoning tech hub

As digitization takes place in all industries, criminal-hackers "are getting more sophisticated and are using more complex approaches, so there is a need for organizations to spend money to make sure that they are kind of protected against these attacks," said Mohammad Faghani, a cyber security professor at Seneca College.

Faghani always reminds his students that as long as the "digitization phenomenon" continues, they will have a job.

Faghani also works at [Price Waterhouse Coopers \(PwC\)](#) as a manager in cyber security. One of his former students, Natalie Lau, now works at the same company just a year after her graduation.

Lau, 25, graduated five years ago from Seneca College with a police foundation diploma, but couldn't find any jobs in policing. As a way to kill time, Lau decided to get a second degree in cyber security.

The program included a four-month paid co-op at [eSentire Inc.](#) Once she finished she was offered a chance to stay.

"I felt that I learned a lot just from co-op itself," she said, but due to the lengthy-commute she had to turn the offer down.

Now she has a full-time job as a cyber security consultant in the architecture team at PwC.

Lau says she might look for a job in policing in the future, "but it would have to be something cyber-security related."

"I feel like the tech industry is completely just taking over... It is just very important to keep in mind that security is very important in everyone's daily life."