



Residential builders commend Ontario government for budget initiatives

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By RESCON

Vaughan, Ont. – The [Residential Construction Council of Ontario](#) (RESCON) applauds the Ontario government for its strong focus on a skilled trades strategy and digital innovation.

In a budget released Nov. 5, the province is setting aside \$500 million over four years in a new Ontario Onwards Acceleration Fund, including \$60 million for 2020-2021, which it says will pilot new technologies that improve how people and businesses experience government services in Ontario.

“Reducing barriers to development by cutting red tape, simplifying policies and modernizing and digitizing government services to streamline the approvals process is critical to increasing housing supply necessary to support demographic trends and improve quality of life,” said RESCON president Richard Lyall. “We have had a chronic undersupply of housing for a generation which has driven up costs.”

Through the government’s Skilled Trades Strategy, the budget also focuses on key themes that are crucial to enabling the trades to be considered a viable employment option for the next generation, such as simplifying the apprenticeship system and related career pathways as well as encouraging greater employer participation.

“We are heartened to see the government commit such extensive resources to the skilled trades in Ontario,” said Lyall. “This is a reflection of the province’s understanding of the importance of construction and the need for sufficient skilled trades supply over the next decade to facilitate the economic recovery and success of Ontario.”

RESCON said it is thrilled to see the government’s prioritization on expanding pathways into the skilled trades through partnerships with OYAP and Skills Ontario. Additionally, an investment of \$4.7 million to develop a digital portal to support the trades and apprenticeship system in

Ontario is a crucial part in ensuring that the pathways to entering the skilled trades are as accessible as possible for interested youth.

The Group Sponsorship Grant and the establishment of the Skills Development Fund will allow for construction employers, including RESCON members and sub-trades, to become more involved and engaged in recruitment and retention of our next generation of construction workers.

“The funding through the Apprenticeship Capital Grant will provide significant opportunities for industry to establish training facilities with necessary modern equipment to ensure that apprentices have the tools to obtain the latest subject-matter training,” added Lyall.

RESCON also commends the government for the investment of an additional \$60 million to the Black Youth Action Plan. Improving and expanding partnerships with the private sector, including the residential construction industry, will ensure that our collective efforts in addressing barriers and increasing labour market participation of Black youth in the trades are impactful.

“Recognizing that anti-Black racism exists in many aspects of our society, including in the construction industry, is the first step to making meaningful improvement,” said RESCON policy and programs analyst Amina Dibe. “RESCON commends the government for also recognizing this. Further, we’re engaging with government, builders, the sub-trades and labour through RESCON’s Anti-Racism Roundtable and a Construction Against Racism Everywhere, or CARE campaign.”

RESCON is also pleased to see a continued focus on the mental health and wellness of all Ontarians. COVID-19 has exacerbated many mental health challenges that people face, including workers in the construction industry. Expanding access and reducing wait times to mental health and addictions support services will ensure that people are able to get help when they need it the most.