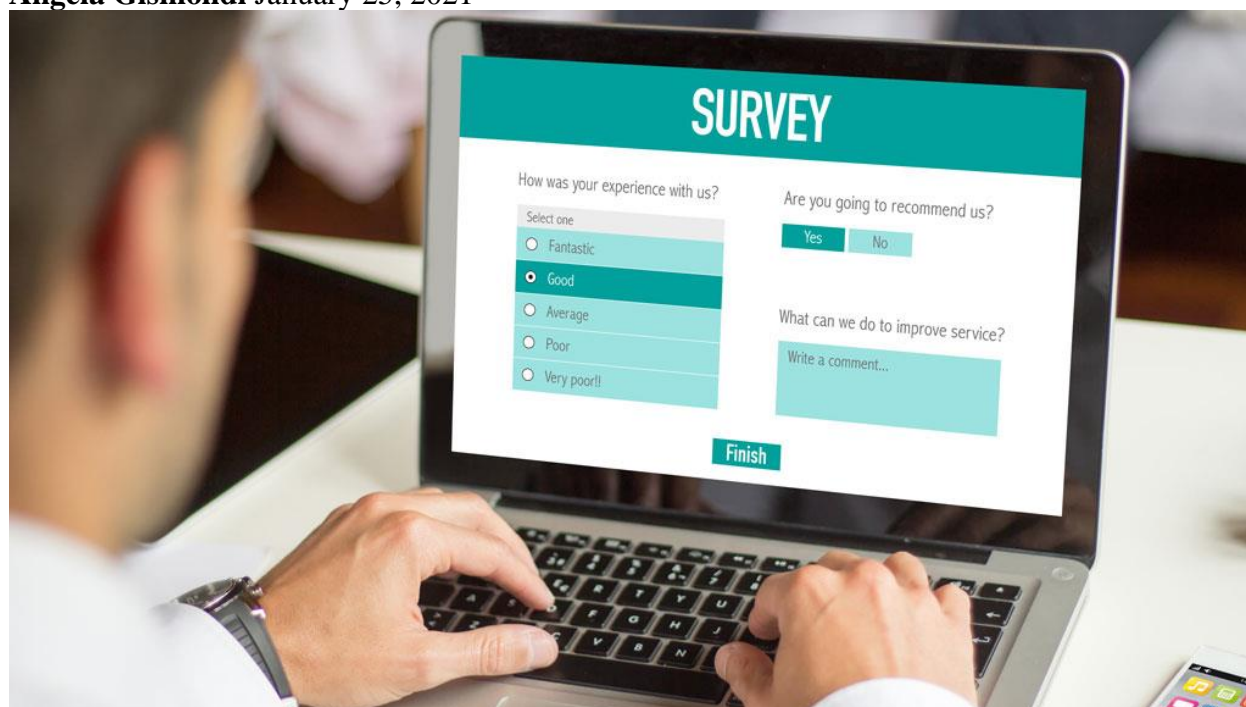


Skilled trades and apprenticeship community can have voices heard through online survey

Angela Gismondi January 25, 2021



A new apprenticeship and skilled trades survey in Ontario aims to have everyone's voices heard on how to better encourage more young people to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

“There are five main stakeholder categories, youth, educator, employer, organization and parent,” said Jennifer Green, one of the government-appointed advisers who spearheaded the creation of the online survey.

“Each of them are geared specifically to what the stakeholder group is dealing with at this point in regards to skilled trades, making sure we can have a collective voice across the province and that all those voices have a chance to be part of this conversation.”

The survey is available online until Feb. 26 and takes about 20 minutes to complete.

In August 2020, three youth advisers were appointed by Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to engage with youth and key partners to create more supportive pathways into the skilled trades and apprenticeship system. In addition to Green, who is director of competitions and young women's initiatives with Skills Ontario and an industrial mechanic millwright by trade, the other two advisers are Andrew Pariser, vice-president of the Residential

Construction Council of Ontario, and Adam Melnick, director of government and community relations with the Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 95.

Survey includes sector-related streams of questioning

To date, the team has met and consulted with about 300 stakeholder groups. Those groups were encouraged to complete the survey and share it with their network, employees, members and on social media.

“We recognize there are thousands of more people and stakeholders involved in skilled trades, apprenticeship and advocacy in the province so we shaped the survey for a broader audience,” Melnick said. “Aside from trying to get as much participation as possible, we did as much as we could to create a more specific line of questions for stakeholders. We were really cognizant of taking the time and effort into shaping those questions for the appropriate audiences.”

The survey is open to anyone who wants to provide input into the skilled trades, added Pariser.

“When you look at our mandate, or when you look at improving pathways, breaking down barriers, addressing the stigma, good answers are going to come from everywhere,” said Pariser. “We want to bring the best recommendations we can back to the minister, because the one thing that we heard is everybody has a desire to make improvements in the process and we’ve heard a lot of good ideas on how we can do that.”

Advisers optimistic survey will provide solutions, best practices

Different opinions and feedback from a variety of stakeholders bring new ideas and approaches, said Melnick.

“The only way we’re going to find new novel approaches to position growth and change on these topics is by getting as far and wide as we can in terms of the voices we’re going to hear,” he noted.

“It’s not about bringing just the concept of new novel ideas forward. In fact it is probably more likely to bring new-to-you ideas.

“Throughout the consultation and the survey we hope to capture some of those concepts and speak with those stakeholders on the successes, the challenges, what they are looking to improve upon and then also discuss how can this be replicated or adapted elsewhere in the province.”

In addition, the survey focuses on how solutions and best practices can be adopted.

“We’re all working in the same space, we are all dealing with the same barriers, the same issues, the same pathway but we’re all working in silos right now,” said Green. “This is a really good opportunity to bring everybody together in those individual silos and collectively put those together in recommendations.”

Doing the consultation during COVID has really highlighted how essential the skilled trades are.

“If we want to get optimistic and look at the recovery, it will be led by the skilled trades, all of them, not just necessarily construction,” Pariser said. “The success of Ontario I think everyone knew it depended on the skilled trades, but we really know that now. It’s even more obvious than it was nine months ago.”

Once the survey closes, the advisers will go through the data with the help of the secretariat team. The final report will be handed over to the minister in April.

[The survey is available here.](#)