

# On-Site

## Budget 2021: Takeaways for construction

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The federal government tabled its first budget in more than two years April 19. A number of new and enhanced programs will support construction across the country but Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland announced relatively little in new infrastructure funding.

Sean Strickland, the executive director of Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), said he would have liked to see more funding to address "caused by reduced private sector investment," but CBTU were pleased with the attention paid to supporting the skilled trades.

"The creation of the new Apprenticeship Service through [Employment and Social Development Canada] will encourage more employers to hire and start apprentices — including additional incentives for hiring those from underrepresented groups," Strickland said in a release.

"Investing in re-training, upskilling and just transition for workers in transforming sectors like energy, will position Canada better, as we look ahead."

Over three years, Ottawa plans to spend \$470 million to establish the Apprenticeship Service that will help Red Seal apprentices find jobs. It will also provide employers with \$5,000 training subsidies, or \$10,000 subsidies for women or BIPOC apprentices. \$960 million will also be set aside for the Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program to help job seekers train for jobs in in-demand sectors, like construction.

**"We applaud the government's efforts to encourage young people to seek careers in the trades, and the steps being taken to encourage employers to hire apprentices," said Andrew Pariser vice-president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), in a release. "Our industry is at risk of a sharp labour deficit and we need to get more youth into the industry. These programs will certainly help with that effort."**

On the infrastructure front, the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) said it sees positives and negatives in the budget. It pointed to the added \$1.4 billion over 12 years through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund for rehabilitating of stormwater systems as welcome, but noted the lack of new money to help municipalities with state-of-good-repair projects was disappointing, especially given the havoc COVID-19 has wreaked on city budgets.