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## **Building Canada's Skilled Workforce Through Apprenticeship Investment**

### **The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF-FCA): A Proven Partner in Workforce Development**

For 25 years, CAF-FCA has been Canada's national voice for apprenticeship, delivering critical research, data, and insights that guide employers, industry, unions, training institutions, and policymakers. CAF-FCA is the only national organization dedicated to advancing apprenticeship research and labour market intelligence (LMI), making it an essential partner in shaping workforce policy and addressing the country's growing skilled trades needs.

### **Why Action is Urgent: Addressing Canada's Skilled Trades Shortages**

Canada faces an urgent need to **increase the participation of all Canadians in apprenticeship and skilled trades careers** to build a resilient and competitive workforce. Key challenges include:

- Persistent labour shortages and an aging workforce
- Limited data on the participation of equity-priority individuals in the skilled trades
- Barriers preventing underrepresented groups from accessing and succeeding in apprenticeship pathways

To meet these challenges, **sustained investment in apprenticeship research, workforce development, and inclusion initiatives is essential.**

### **CAF-FCA's Impactful Initiatives: Creating Pathways to Inclusion and Workforce Success**

CAF-FCA has developed national programs and initiatives that drive equity, strengthen workforce participation, and enhance apprenticeship outcomes:

**Canadian Apprenticeship Service (CAS) Impact** – CAF-FCA served as an intermediary tasked with distributing \$45 million in hiring grants to support over 7,000 first-year apprentices, demonstrating our capacity to manage large-scale, high-impact initiatives.

**Mentorship & Leadership Development for Underrepresented Groups** – Programs that empower women, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, newcomers, and other equity-priority populations to succeed in trades careers and advance into leadership roles.

**Supporting Equity in Trades (SET) Conference** – A national platform highlighting equity-focused solutions and bringing together industry leaders to drive systemic change in apprenticeship and skilled trades careers. Expanding and sustaining this initiative is critical to maintaining momentum in advancing equity and inclusion.

**LMI EDGE Dashboard (Launching September 2025)** – A cutting-edge workforce planning tool that provides real-time, searchable apprenticeship data by trade and province. Designed to support unions, employers, employer associations, educators, and jurisdictional apprenticeship



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authorities, LMI EDGE will help stakeholders optimize workforce recruitment, training, and retention strategies. This tool will empower industry leaders to align workforce development with evolving labour market needs and policy priorities.

### **What the Federal Government Should Do:**

To build a resilient workforce and ensure all Canadians can succeed in the skilled trades, we urge federal parties to:

1. **Fund Employer Hiring Grants:** Build on the success of the Canadian Apprenticeship Service (CAS) by investing in future employer incentive programs that promote hiring, training, and retention of equity-priority apprentices.
2. **Support Programs That Strengthen Employer Capacity:** Fund initiatives that equip employers and training institutions with the tools needed to hire, mentor, and retain apprentices—ensuring workforce readiness to tackle critical challenges like the housing crisis and infrastructure development.
3. **Continue Funding Apprenticeship Research Through UTIP:** Sustain investment in the *Union Training and Innovation Program (UTIP)* as part of the Canadian Apprenticeship Strategy to pilot innovative approaches and improve apprenticeship outcomes. Ongoing support for UTIP ensures that evidence-based solutions address workforce challenges and enhance apprenticeship success nationwide.
4. **Fund Data-Driven Research on Equity in the Trades:** Invest in research that tracks participation, success rates, and systemic barriers for equity-priority individuals in the skilled trades. Evidence-based insights will guide policy and program improvements.
5. **Sustain and Expand the SET Conference:** Support the ongoing development of the Supporting Equity in Trades (SET) Conference to accelerate industry-wide progress on inclusion and workforce diversity.

### **Why It Matters: Building a Sovereign and Strong Canada**

A well-supported apprenticeship system is not just a workforce solution—it's a **nation-building strategy**. By investing in workforce innovation, equity, and inclusion, Canada can address labour shortages, advance reconciliation, and build a stronger, more sovereign future.

### **Join Us in Driving Workforce Success**

CAF-FCA is ready to collaborate with federal partners to advance these priorities and secure Canada's skilled workforce future.

For more information or to discuss partnership opportunities, please contact:

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