

NORTHERN CORRIDOR
TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIP FORUM

Forward-thinking discussions for recruitment, training and retention in the trades

The Northern Corridor Apprenticeship Forum was held on Monday, October 26, 2026, at the Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre.

OBJECTIVE OF THE FORUM:

To provide an opportunity for professionals and industry leaders to connect and exchange on strategies and solutions for the recruitment, training and retention of certified workers and apprentices, and on how to foster an inclusive trades environment all (for Indigenous people, for women, for youth, for immigrants).

GOAL:

Our goal is that participants walk away from the forum with new connections, new ideas, and a continued willingness to do all that they can to help address the increasing demand for skilled workers in the trades, within their respective organizations, within their means, and within the current and sometimes uncertain economic context.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM PARTICIPANTS

Participants were asked to discuss what more can be done by employers, by educational institutions, by the community, and by government to increase the number of apprentices and journeypersons. The purpose of the exercise was to identify potential follow-up actions. Those actions will be shared with a wide range of stakeholders from each of those four groups in the hope that they will be incorporated in the future planning of trades and apprenticeship related programs and services.

The following table summarizes the results of those discussions.

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE BY EMPLOYERS?

		STRATEGIC FOCUS		
ACTION ID	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECRUITMENT	TRAINING	RETENTION
EMP-01	Bring students to visit workplace to learn about trades	●		
EMP-02	Work more closely with secondary and postsecondary schools	●		
EMP-03	Be more open to hiring apprentices without full experience	●	●	
EMP-04	Pay for wages while apprentices attend classroom schooling	●	●	●
EMP-05	High School Promotion - Promote skilled trades in high schools directly	●		
EMP-06	Offer internal promotion and incentives for advancement	●		●
EMP-07	Adapt to new generation preferences/ new reality (ex: flexible hours)	●		●
EMP-08	Promote northern lifestyle advantages of working 7-on/7-off schedules	●		●
EMP-09	Establish dedicated mentors within the company for apprentices		●	
EMP-10	Conduct cultural awareness and inclusivity training		●	●
EMP-11	Clearly explain overtime, pension, and health benefits to candidates	●		●
EMP-12	Sponsor more apprentices through formal ministry registration	●	●	
EMP-13	Accept candidates even if full qualification requirements are not met	●	●	
EMP-14	Reach out proactively to schools to hire summer trade students	●		
EMP-14	Offer retention bonuses to encourage workers to stay in the North			●

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS?

		STRATEGIC FOCUS		
ACTION ID	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECRUITMENT	TRAINING	RETENTION
EDU-01	Expand the scope of technical courses offered in rural high schools	●	●	
EDU-02	Bring back traditional shop classes (machining, welding)	●	●	
EDU-03	Host annual career fairs in schools featuring local trade employers	●		
EDU-04	Reinforce back-to-basics education (applied math, writing, reading)		●	●
EDU-05	Work with local industry to forecast 5-year trade labour needs		●	
EDU-06	Provide dedicated life coaches to support student career navigation	●	●	
EDU-07	Promote realistic expectations about labour market wages and conditions	●		●
EDU-08	Organize industry presentations directly inside the classrooms	●		

EDU-09	Expose students to apprenticeship pathways as early as Grade 7	●		
EDU-10	Inform students of step-by-step apprenticeship career pathways	●	●	
EDU-11	Expand high school/college partnerships for dual credit programs		●	
EDU-12	Integrate cultural awareness and Indigenous perspectives in curriculum		●	
EDU-13	Educate students on regional lifestyle benefits and shift work realities	●		●

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE BY COMMUNITIES?

		STRATEGIC FOCUS		
ACTION ID	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECRUITMENT	TRAINING	RETENTION
COM-01	Expand general housing and rental accommodation infrastructure	●		●
COM-02	Hold large industry developments accountable to invest in housing	●		●
COM-03	Expand daycare facilities, services, and staff to support shift work	●		●
COM-04	Develop local transportation options in smaller isolated towns	●		●
COM-05	Provide community-wide cultural training and diversity workshops		●	●
COM-06	Promote Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) community-wide	●		
C0M-07	Promote skilled trades through local newspapers and social media	●		
COM-08	Work together to leverage existing community training resources		●	
COM-09	Prioritize local contractors in municipal infrastructure bidding	●		●

WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE BY GOVERNMENT?

		STRATEGIC FOCUS		
ACTION ID	RECOMMENDED ACTION	RECRUITMENT	TRAINING	RETENTION
GOV-01	Provide direct financial incentives for young trade workers	●		●
GOV-02	Recognize all formal on-the-job training towards certification	●		●
GOV-03	Provide liability coverage for businesses hosting young apprentices	●		
GOV-04	Fund more locally delivered training programs in the North		●	
GOV-05	Reform the 1:1 journeyperson to apprentice ratio	●	●	
GOV-06	Provide rent and living subsidies for northern apprentices	●		●
GOV-07	Direct capital funds to build housing in northern communities	●		●
GOV-08	Offer financial grants to businesses that establish mentorships		●	
GOV-09	Implement tax credits and deductions for certified mentors		●	

CONCLUSION:

The recommended actions from the Northern Corridor Apprenticeship Forum highlight that increasing the number of apprentices and journeypersons in our communities is a shared responsibility.

Partnerships and collaboration are key to moving forward with most of the recommended actions. It is our hope that community leaders and stakeholders who have a role to play and an interest in addressing the needs in the skilled trades in our communities will answer the call when asked to partner as some of the actions are implemented and/or that they will take ownership of the actions that fall within their mandate.

In closing, the partners involved in planning the Northern Corridor Apprenticeship Forum would like to thank everyone who participated in these important discussions. We hope that you found the Northern Corridor Apprenticeship Forum informative and that we will see you again as we continue to have these important discussions.

