

SKILLS TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The skills training and knowledge of Ontarians are vital to ensuring a strong, competitive and dynamic provincial economy. Since 2003, the government has introduced a number of initiatives to boost higher education and skills training, and expand apprenticeship programs to ensure Ontario's workforce is among the most skilled in the world.

Despite current economic challenges, the government is committed to maintaining funding levels for colleges and universities, for students receiving funding through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), and for programs that help unemployed and underemployed Ontarians train for new and well-paying jobs.

2009 Ontario Budget

Skills Training

In the 2009 Budget, including proposed enhancements under the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement and Labour Market Agreement, the McGuinty government is investing nearly \$700 million over two years in new skills training and literacy initiatives and enhancements to existing programs. These measures are designed to respond quickly to the immediate challenges of the global economic slowdown while preparing the province's workforce for the new economy. These investments include:

- \$94 million over two years to expand support for newcomers, serving 15,000 more clients each year
- \$90 million over two years to expand literacy and basic skills training, helping up to 13,000 more Ontarians each year
- \$5 million over two years to develop the Green Jobs Skills Strategy that responds to labour demand in the emerging green energy sector, including electricity
- \$50 million annually in proposed enhancements to the Co-operative Education Tax Credit and to make the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit the most generous in Canada.

This government recognizes the employment challenges youth face. This Budget also announces an increase in spending on summer jobs for youth by 57 per cent, to nearly \$90 million in 2009, helping more than 100,000 young people this summer.

Postsecondary Education

Ontario recognizes the importance of developing a well-educated workforce to compete in the new global economy.

The province's colleges and universities play a critical role in equipping people for success and preparing them to generate the ideas, products and jobs that will ensure future prosperity.

In addition to the significant support provided through the government's \$6.2 billion Reaching Higher Plan, the 2009 Ontario Budget announces several initiatives to support the postsecondary sector.

(1) Infrastructure

In order to modernize facilities and boost the province's long-term research and skills training capacity, this Budget is providing approximately \$780 million in capital funding for Ontario colleges and universities. With leveraged federal funding, campus renewal and new projects could begin immediately.

The government is also providing \$35 million over three years in capital investment to support the creation of 100 additional medical school spaces. This initiative will be supported by associated operating funding.

(2) Improving Student Achievement

Enrolment growth at colleges and universities has surpassed Reaching Higher projections. In recognition of the substantive enrolment and operating pressures facing colleges and universities, this Budget announces an additional \$150 million in immediate, one-time support for postsecondary institutions.

This government is committed to expanding graduate opportunities to support innovation in Ontario's knowledge-based economy. This Budget includes \$10 million to expand graduate fellowships to assist students pursuing higher levels of education.

This Budget also proposes the following investments for the postsecondary sector:

- \$10 million over three years to the Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation to assist small and medium-sized enterprises with hands-on applied research, technology transfer and commercialization
- \$5 million for the Sustainable Prosperity Research and Policy Network at the University of Ottawa
- \$1 million for Contact North, a network of distance education and training access centres bridging 90 communities across northern Ontario.

Achievements Since 2003

Reaching Higher

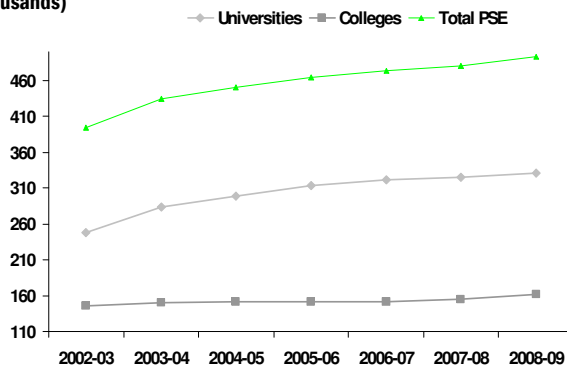
Introduced in 2005, the McGuinty government's five-year, \$6.2 billion Reaching Higher plan is the most significant investment in postsecondary education in 40 years.

Reaching Higher achievements include:

- 100,000 more students in colleges and universities by 2007-08, an increase of 25 per cent over 2002-03
- Creating almost 10,000 more graduate spaces by 2007-08 over 2002-03 levels to ensure that students can go on to pursue meaningful higher education and be leaders in the workforce. In February 2009, the government announced funding for an additional 3,300 graduate spaces over the next three years
- 160 more spots in Ontario medical schools between 2005 and 2008
- The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is expected to graduate its first class in the spring of 2009
- Operating grants for universities and colleges increased by more than 40 per cent between 2003-04 and 2008-09, supporting the hiring of new faculty, increasing student-faculty interaction and improving student services and libraries.

Full-Time Students*

Enrolments
(thousands)



Source: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.
* Full-time eligible headcounts

Access to Education

The McGuinty government has also made investments to ensure that every Ontarian, regardless of personal finances or circumstance, has the opportunity to continue their education, including:

- Over 51,000 more students are qualifying for OSAP than in 2004-05, an increase of 30 per cent
- About 168,000 students per year are benefiting from the OSAP enhancements introduced since 2004-05
- Assisting 80,000 students in 2007-08 through Ontario Student Opportunity Grants by limiting student debt to \$7,000 per year of completed study
- \$55 million by 2009-10 to increase access to postsecondary education for traditionally under-represented groups, including Aboriginal students, students with disabilities and first-generation students, and to increase access to French-language education for francophone students
- Invested \$1.4 billion through ReNew Ontario for postsecondary campus renewal and strategic capital projects.

Skills Training

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has made significant investments that provide unemployed workers with support and skills training, including:

- Over \$1 billion annually for Employment Ontario, the government's employment and training network, which helped more than 900,000 Ontarians last year
- The Skills to Jobs Action Plan, introduced in 2008, provides further enhancements to the postsecondary and training sector, including support to help Ontarians train for new careers
- The plan includes the Second Career Strategy, which provides financial assistance for laid-off workers to undertake longer-term training
- Since its launch, close to 5,000 workers have been participating, another 3,000 applications are being processed and the program is on track to meet its goal of 20,000 participants.

In addition:

- Rapid Re-Employment and Training Service has counselled more than 82,000 workers affected by layoffs and plant closures in the last two years
- Ontario Skills Development has provided access to short-term training and return-to-employment assistance to over 20,000 Ontarians in the last two years
- The Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit encourages employers to hire and train apprentices by providing a refundable tax credit on salaries and wages paid to eligible apprentices.