



News Release

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Better Information Needed If Employment and Training Programs are to be Effective: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The province spends more than \$1 billion a year on employment and training programs without sufficient labour-market information about where skilled workers are needed now, and where they will be needed in the future, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk says in her *2016 Annual Report*.

“The province has worked to improve its employment and training programs,” Lysyk said today after tabling her Report in the Legislature. “However, the province needs to take additional steps to increase completion rates of apprenticeship programs and to help people find long-term full-time employment.”

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (Ministry) offers programs and services through Employment Ontario that are designed to help Ontarians develop skills and find sustainable employment. Programs and services are delivered by 400 third-party service providers.

The audit found that the Ministry does not collect or analyze regional information on labour-force supply and skills demand to identify those jobs that face a shortage of skilled workers. Thus, the Ministry lacks the detailed and timely information it needs to ensure that funding is directed toward areas that will bring sustainable employment.

In the Employment Service Program, designed to help people find long-term sustainable employment, 68% of people who received employment services in 2014/15 reported either being employed or on a career path, but within 12 months, that percentage had dropped to 52% for the same group of people.

Other significant findings in the Report include:

- In 2015/16, only 38% of those using the Employment Service Program reported being employed full-time at program completion.
- Fewer than half of those who begin an apprenticeship program in Ontario complete it. Despite this, the Ministry does not fully review and analyze apprentice completion rates by training provider or employer to determine why.
- In the last three years, the government has written off as uncollectible nearly \$27 million advanced by the Ministry to participants in the Second Career Program—a program designed to retrain them for high-demand jobs. The advances became refundable, for example, when these participants did not provide receipts to support their expenditures or did not regularly attend their education program.

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