

Human Resources Update

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CCA Seeks To Expand Federal Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit Coverage

CCA will argue for an expansion of coverage of the proposed Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit promised by the conservative party in their election platform. As Canada's governing party, they are expected to release details soon of how this will be implemented. In Press Releases, documented outlines suggested it would apply to 45 Red Seal trades. Although they account for less than one-quarter of the 200 trades listed in the HRSDC published Ellis Chart, they do cover approximately 80% of all apprentices. The Red Seal Program encourages standardization of provincial and territorial apprenticeship training and certification programs. The "Red Seal" allows qualified tradespersons to practice the trade in any province or territory in Canada where the trade is designated without having to write further examinations.

However, many of the occupations in a major sector of our industry – Roadbuilding –

have skilled workers who either do not go through a formal apprenticeship or, where they do, they are not for the most part, working in trades that are currently eligible for "Red Seal" certification. As a result, these employees and their employers who invest in training in these informal and non-Red Seal trades would be ineligible to apply for most of the benefits announced in the Conservative "Stand Up for the Trades" promises, including the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit. Expansion of the number of Red Seal trades has long been a policy of the CCA.

CCA Membership must start planning immediately for Foreign Worker Assistance

In today's economy, billions of dollars of investment in Canada are counting on an adequate skilled labour force that is already considered by many to be in deficit. The availability of an adequate supply of labour is on every contractor's mind. Certainly, governments both federal and provincial must recognize the exploding demands being laced on Canada's construction workforce.

There is no question that education and understanding are a major part of the solution, but so too are tangible programs like immigration and workforce development. Education and understanding will always be part of the ongoing approach to dealing with manpower planning issues but immigration and workforce development are more immediate solutions to alleviating existing pressures. As CCA begins an extensive lobby to facilitate entrance of skilled workers, contractors hoping to access immigrants through one or more of the foreign worker programs ought to be aware of the expectations that will be placed on them. Eligibility to hire foreign workers to meet short and long term human resource needs, may well hinge upon a contractor's ability to:

- Demonstrate comprehensive and on-going efforts to recruit Canadian youth, aboriginal people, recent immigrants and Canadians in areas of high unemployment;
- Show efforts to hire unemployed Canadians through HRSDC and provincial employment programs;
- Consult with the local union if the position is covered under a collective agreement;
- Sign an employer-employee contract outlining wages, duties, and conditions related to the transportation, accommodation, health and occupational safety of the foreign worker;

- Cover all recruitment costs related to the hiring of the foreign worker;
- Help the worker(s) find suitable, affordable accommodation;
- Pay full airfare for the foreign worker to and from their home country;
- Provide medical coverage until the worker is eligible for provincial health insurance coverage;
- Register your worker under the appropriate provincial workers compensation/workplace safety insurance plans.

Some of the above items you can begin immediately through job placement activities, want ads, etc. Having a formal job offer certainly expedites the entrance for the potential employee.

HRSDC/CEIC will take each into consideration. Once you have convinced yourself that you are willing to comply with the above, your next step is to find workers. That is your obligation