



**AMO Delegation
Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development**

Representative: Hon. David Piccini, Minister
Date: Monday, August 18, 2025
Time: 10:45 AM – 11:00 AM
Location: The Westin – Oak Room
Attending: Saugeen Shores Delegates

Summary Ask

That the Ministry:

Establish consistent, multi-year funding for small rural organizations such as the Saugeen Sparks Training Centre which connect individuals to trades and apprenticeships in areas facing labour demand from large infrastructure or energy projects such as those in Saugeen Shores, a host community to Bruce Power.

Summary Issue

Positioning for Growth Readiness:

Saugeen Shores is recognized as the fastest-growing community in Bruce County, currently accommodating roughly 30% of Bruce Power's workforce of over 4,000 permanent employees—more than any other municipality within the region—and is home to 18 nuclear suppliers. Indicators demonstrate that all economic sectors within the Town are experiencing robust performance, supporting ongoing and substantial growth.

While grassroots skills development organizations with direct training pathways are essential, they frequently face challenges in securing funding as resources favour larger organizations. For example, Sparks Training Centre has repeatedly been denied support from the Skills Development Fund. We urge the province to review its funding approach to better assist these smaller organizations, which find it difficult to compete with urban programs due to their limited scale.

Looking ahead, should the Bruce C project proceed, it is anticipated that the Town's current trajectory of rapid growth will persist. To accommodate and sustain this expansion, strategic investment in skilled labour, housing, and immigration pathways will be essential.



Supporting Background

Saugeen Shores is committed to being a progressive community that proactively addresses future challenges and opportunities. In recognition of the importance of skills development in trades and technical disciplines, the Town is urging the province to provide targeted funding for grassroots initiatives that build local expertise and ensure the community is prepared for the future. A key component of this strategy is engaging underserved youth and equipping them for success through accessible education, training, and employment pathways.

As the Bruce C Nuclear Project progresses, Saugeen Shores must position itself for growth, infrastructure expansion, and increased service demands. This will require strategic investments to support Bruce Power as a major employer, benefit its workforce, and serve the broader community.

Grassroots organizations within Saugeen Shores and the surrounding area are instrumental in connecting individuals, particularly youth, under-skilled adults, and newcomers—to skilled trades and apprenticeship opportunities. These community-led initiatives are vital for cultivating a workforce equipped to meet the needs of significant regional projects like Bruce Power's life extension program. Sustained and reliable funding is crucial to maintain and enhance these important efforts.

The Town partners with local organizations such as the Saugeen Sparks Training Centre (SPARKS) to promote careers in skilled trades. Nevertheless, the ongoing impact and reach of these grassroots programs are often constrained by limited or short-term funding, underscoring the need for long-term, stable financial support.

About Sparks Training Centre

Founded in 2023, the Saugeen Sparks Training Centre is a not-for-profit that provides outreach and practical skills programs to support diverse employment opportunities.

Mission: To provide opportunities for youth and adults to explore their curiosity and discover their interest in the skilled trades through programs, partnerships and community engagement.

Vision: Through hands-on learning and positive mentoring, the Centre will provide introductory hands-on skills development programs, leading to further educational and/or diverse regional employment opportunities.

The Centre's goal is to ignite students' interest in the trades as a valuable career option. In the pursuit of our mission, we are proactively establishing partnerships and connections with all community members and similar-minded collaborators. Our



commitment to inclusivity guides us, all while acknowledging the unique mandates of each organization.

Provincial Alignment

The skilled trades play an essential role in shaping Ontario's economic future. Local organizations are distinctly positioned to engage underrepresented groups and address barriers to entry within the trades. With Bruce Power's sustained capital investments and commitment to long-term energy production, demand for skilled workers in the region is set to increase. Supporting these grassroots networks aligns directly with the Ministry's priorities for workforce development and apprenticeship expansion.

This initiative advances the Ministry's mandate to:

- Increase both awareness of and participation in the skilled trades;
- Strengthen Ontario's apprenticeship and employment services systems;
- Ensure employers can access a job-ready, locally sourced workforce to facilitate economic growth.

Given Bruce Power's ongoing projects and the region's escalating need for skilled labour, targeted investment in community-based employment and apprenticeship programs is crucial. These efforts substantively advance the Ministry's Skilled Trades Strategy and Ontario's Plan to Build, enabling Saugeen Shores and Bruce County to meet present and future infrastructure and energy requirements.

Saugeen Shores Delegation Members

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Saugeen Shores: A Growing Rural Community and Host to Bruce Power

The Town of Saugeen Shores is a host community to Bruce Power housing upwards of 30% of their labour force. Saugeen Shores stands out as a community defined by its unique blend of urban advantages and rural character. As one of Ontario's fastest-growing municipalities, the Town has seen a **16%** increase in population since the last census—nearly three times the provincial average. This momentum, sustained through consecutive census years, illustrates a place where modern conveniences and rural tranquility coexist. The community is attracting families with children under 15 (**27.8%**) and adults aged 25 to 44 (**29.4%**), reflecting the appeal of a setting that offers both the dynamism of a growing town and the welcoming nature of a rural environment.

Economic opportunity in Saugeen Shores is anchored by Bruce Power, Canada's largest nuclear generation station, which supports a balanced, forward-thinking local economy. The Life-Extension Program at Bruce Power has sustained thousands of jobs, drawing talent and expertise from a wide area and fostering a climate where innovation meets the values of small-town living. This integration of industry and community creates an environment where residents benefit from stability and connection—enjoying the best elements of both urban and rural life.

Tourism continues to play a vital role in Saugeen Shores, with seasonal visitors often returning to become part of the community. The population of residents aged 65 and older has grown by **36.2%** since the last census, highlighting the Town's appeal to those seeking a balanced lifestyle post-retirement. Here, newcomers and long-time residents alike find opportunities to enjoy local amenities, outdoor spaces, and a pace of life that complements personal and professional aspirations.

Saugeen Shores' diversity adds further depth to its character. Over **11%** of residents are newcomers to Canada, and nearly **8%** identify as racialized. Close collaboration with Saugeen First Nation, through shared facilities and ongoing projects, reflects a commitment to inclusivity and partnership. Across backgrounds and stages of life, people are drawn to the Town for its balanced mix of opportunities, services, and community spirit.

Today, Saugeen Shores continues to evolve as a regional hub where the richness of urban amenities meets the warmth of rural tradition. This balance—carefully cultivated and naturally present—offers residents and newcomers alike the space to thrive, connect, and enjoy a lifestyle that truly offers the best of both worlds.