**News Release**

For Immediate Release

Creating job opportunities for youth in Ottawa

Youth facing barriers to employment benefit from job skills upgrading and employment opportunities

**Month 28, 2017 Ottawa, Ontario Employment and Social Development Canada**

As part of the Government of Canada’s plan to strengthen the middle class and help those working hard to join it, Ottawa youth are developing job skills and gaining hands-on work experience thanks to a new project supported with funding provided by the Government of Canada. Catherine McKenna, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre, made the announcement today on behalf of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour.

Close to 150 youth will participate in the projects delivered by The Social Planning Committee of Ottawa and The Wood Manufactiuring Council. These programs will provide training in the wood manufacturing industry and green construction sector to participants, many of whome are recent immigrants, Syrian refugees, and Indigenous youth.

The Government of Canada will provide approximately $1.8 million in funding through the Skills Link program, which supports projects that provide hands-on work experience, job search assistance and skills upgrading resources for youth facing barriers to employment. This includes youth who are single parents, have disabilities, are newcomers, or live in rural and remote areas.

**Quotes**

*“Giving youth a strong start through this type of project will ensure that the next generation of capable workers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, innovators and tradespeople achieve success and grow our economy.”*

– The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

*“Developing Canada’s youth is a priority.The Social Planning Council of Ottawa and the Wood Manufacturing Council’s projects are concrete examples of what we can achieve for youth by working in partnership with organizations across the country. Projects like this one can help put regular paycheques into the reach of those who need it. But more than that, they give young Canadians the chance to change their future.”*

– Catherine McKenna, Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre

*“This funding will be used to provide participants from the refugee and First Nation communities with both essential skills training and 8 weeks of woodworking training in the shop. These funds will help our companies get access to much needed skilled workers and will support the participants to start on the path to great and interesting careers in the wood manufacturing sector.”*

– Richard Lipman, President, Wood Manufacturing Council

**Quick Facts**

* Skills Link is part of the Government’s Youth Employment Strategy (YES). Each year, the Government invests more than $330 million in YES to help young people gain the skills, abilities and work experience they need to find and maintain good employment.
* To expand employment opportunities for young Canadians, Budget 2016 invested an additional $165.4 million in 2016–17. That’s an increase of 77 percent over the year before, and the largest increase to YES since 1997.
* This new funding is on top of the $339 million investment over three years in the Canada Summer Jobs program to create up to 70,000 new jobs for youth each year.

**Associated Links**

[Youth Employment Strategy](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/yesprograms.shtml)

[Skills Link Program](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/skillslink.shtml)

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**Backgrounder**

**Youth Employment Strategy**

The Youth Employment Strategy (YES) is the Government of Canada’s commitment to help youth make a successful transition to the workplace. The YES helps youth between the ages of 15 and 30 get the information and gain the skills, job experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition to the workforce. The YES includes Skills Link, Career Focus and Summer Work Experience, and is delivered by 11 federal departments.

**Skills Link** helps youth facing barriers to employment—including single parents, youth with disabilities, young newcomers and youth in rural and remote areas—to develop the skills and gain the experience needed to find a job or return to school.

**Career Focus** helps post-secondary graduates transition to the labour market through paid internships and helps provide youth with the information and experience they need to make informed career decisions, find a job and/or pursue advanced studies.

**Summer Work Experience** provides wage subsidies to employers to create summer employment for secondary and post-secondary students. The Summer Work Experience program includes Canada Summer Jobs. The Canada Summer Jobs program provides funding to not-for-profit organizations, public-sector employers and small businesses with 50 or fewer employees to create summer job opportunities for young people aged 15 to 30 who are full-time students intending to return to their studies in the next school year.

Each year, the Government invests approximately $330 million in the YES to help young people gain the skills and experience they need to find and keep good jobs.

More recently, Budget 2016 proposed to invest an additional $165.4 million in the Youth Employment Strategy in 2016–17 to:

* create new green jobs for youth;
* increase the number of youth who access the Skills Link program; and
* support employment opportunities in the heritage sector under the Young Canada Works program.