



Employment demands increase in Alberta to 2034, with growth greatest in the non-residential sector

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Alberta's construction sector experienced growth in 2024 with both its residential and non-residential sectors recording increases in investment from the previous year. Growth was notable in the residential sector, with increases across all three sub-components: new housing, renovations, and residential maintenance. Meanwhile, activity in the non-residential sector expanded, driven by growth in the construction of industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) buildings.

BuildForce Canada released its [*2025-2034 Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward report*](#) for the province today. The outlook calls for employment to grow in both sectors across the forecast period. The residential sector is expected to benefit initially from growth in new housing activity as interest rate cuts boost demand for new housing. Although later years see this growth slow, the sector is driven by strong demand for residential renovations and maintenance activity. As a result of these trends, residential employment is projected to reach a peak of 8% above 2024 levels by 2026 before ending the decade at near-2024 levels.

In the non-residential sector, investment is projected to remain stable through to 2029. Across this period, work on several major engineering-construction projects either concludes or passes peak activity levels. Offsetting this trend is increased levels of construction among ICI buildings. These factors combine to increase employment by 9% above 2024 levels by 2034.

It is important to note that the investment trends and employment projections presented in this scenario were developed with industry input prior to the emergence of potential trade tensions between Canada and the United States. This forecast therefore does not take into account the possible application of tariffs on Canadian exports to and imports from the United States, nor does it account for any resulting changes in trading patterns between Canada and its other key trading partners.

“Although employment demands are expected to increase in Alberta across the forecast period, the province continues to benefit from a population that is younger than the national average,” says Bill Ferreira, Executive Director of BuildForce Canada. “That fact should help the construction sector recruit from local sources a significant proportion of those workers who are projected to retire by 2034.”

Meeting rising demands and replacing retiring workers will require Alberta's construction industry to recruit an estimated 59,000 workers over the forecast period, driven largely by the expected retirement of 43,400 workers, or 21% of the 2024 labour force.

Alberta's younger demographic should help close much of this gap, as an estimated 43,600 first-time new entrants from the local population and who are under the age of 30 are projected to enter

the labour force. However, when hiring needs relating to expansion are factored into the scenario, the province could be left with a recruiting gap of 15,400 additional workers to be filled by 2034.

Keeping pace with demand will require a combination of strategies, including maintaining local recruitment and training efforts, particularly from groups traditionally under-represented in the construction labour force, the hiring of workers from other industries with the required skills sets, and the recruitment of immigrants to Canada with skilled trades training or construction experience.

New registrations in Alberta's apprenticeship programs increased by nearly 50% in 2023, approaching levels not seen since 2014. This growth was largely driven by a surge in enrollments in construction electrician and steamfitter/pipfitter programs, which together accounted for roughly half of the overall increase.

"The development of skilled trades workers in the construction industry takes years, and it's a credit to the programs put in place by the industry and governments that we are seeing strong growth in program registrations in recent years," says Ferreira. "While these numbers are encouraging, our challenge lies in boosting completion numbers, which remain below peak levels."

Meanwhile, efforts are ongoing to enhance the recruitment of individuals from groups traditionally under-represented in the province's construction labour force, such as women, Indigenous People, and newcomers to Canada.

In 2024, there were approximately 39,140 women employed in Alberta's construction industry. That figure represented an increase of more than 3,000 compared to 2023. Of them, 32% worked on site, directly on construction projects. As a share of the 190,500 tradespeople employed in Alberta's construction industry, women made up 7% in 2024.

The Indigenous population is the fastest growing population in Canada and therefore presents recruitment opportunities. In 2023, Indigenous People represented 6.6% of Alberta's construction labour force – more than the 5.7% represented in the provincial labour force as a whole, and more than the 5.9% reported in 2014. As the Indigenous population continues to grow, the sector must continue to work with Indigenous communities to promote career opportunities to their youth and invest in initiatives that foster long-term retention and a welcoming workplace environment where they can build fulfilling careers.

The construction industry is also committed to the recruitment of newcomers to Canada. Based on historical settlement patterns and adjusted federal immigration targets, the province is expected to welcome nearly 574,600 new immigrants between 2025 and 2034, making these individuals, if successfully recruited, a strong part of the industry's future labour force.

Increasing the participation rate of women, Indigenous People, and new Canadians could help Alberta's construction industry address its future labour force needs.

BuildForce Canada is a national industry-led organization that represents all sectors of Canada's construction industry. Its mandate is to support the labour market development needs of the construction and maintenance industry. As part of these activities, BuildForce works with key industry stakeholders, including contractors, proponents of construction, labour providers, governments, and training providers to identify both demand and supply trends that will impact

labour force capacity in the sector, and supports the career searches of job seekers wanting to work in the industry. BuildForce also leads programs and initiatives that support workforce upskilling, workforce productivity improvements, improvements to training modalities, human resource tools to support the adoption of industry best practices, as well as other value-added initiatives focused on supporting the industry's labour force development needs. Visit www.buildforce.ca.

For further information, contact Bill Ferreira, Executive Director, BuildForce Canada, at ferreira@buildforce.ca or 613-569-5552 ext. 2220.

This report was produced with the support and input of a variety of provincial construction and maintenance industry stakeholders. For local industry reaction to this latest BuildForce Canada report, please contact:

Terry Parker
Executive Director
Building Trades of Alberta
780-405-3777

Paul de Jong
President
Progressive Contractors Association of Canada
403-620-3781

Warren Singh
Executive Director
Alberta Construction Association
587-785-1222

Dennis Perrin
Prairies Director
CLAC
587-785-1836

Mike Martens
President
ICBA Alberta
403-200-7598