



Strengthen Youth Employment Pathways



YMCAs are among Ontario's largest employers of young people — thousands gain their first job, hands-on training, and leadership experience through the Y each year. As one of the Province's leading providers of employment services, **YMCAs also support people facing barriers to work through training, job readiness, and placement programs.**

However, many young people today are being left behind. Youth unemployment remains more than double the provincial average, and in high-need communities YMCA staff report rising disconnection and hopelessness among youth.

A continuum of youth supports for young people under the age of 30 – including pre-employment preparation, mentoring, and real-work exposure

– will help young Ontarians build lasting skills, strengthen Ontario's labour force, and foster a renewed sense of confidence that the next generation needs.

Ontario YMCAs ask the Government of Ontario to:

- **Establish a dedicated youth stream within Employment Services** that provides flexible, low-barrier, developmental supports that are responsive to diverse youth needs.
- **Invest in pre-employment preparation** – including financial literacy, soft skills, and mentoring – to prepare youth for lasting employment and life-long independence.
- **Provide stable, multi-year funding for community-based service providers** to enable sustained, long-term engagement and better labour-attachment outcomes.
- **Expand outreach in high-need communities** by funding wrap-around supports such as mentorship, paid work exposure, and employer incentives.



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