

### ***Manitoba's apprenticeship program needs stronger oversight***

WINNIPEG – Auditor General of Manitoba Norm Ricard today released his report on the *Management of Manitoba's Apprenticeship Program*. The report includes 20 recommendations.

“Apprenticeships are important because they give workers an opportunity to earn while they learn, and help meet industry’s need for skilled labour,” says Ricard. “Our audit found gaps in Apprenticeship Manitoba’s oversight of in-school and workplace training, as well as in its monitoring of apprentices’ progress. We also found weak planning and performance measurement for the apprenticeship system.”

Apprentices spend about 80% of their time on the job and 20% in school to become journeypersons. Apprenticeship Manitoba (a branch of the Department of Education and Training) administers the province’s apprenticeship program. The Auditor General found Apprenticeship Manitoba’s visits to workplaces typically focused on promoting greater participation in the apprenticeship system rather than on ensuring apprentices had suitable and safe work experiences and were properly supervised.

“Apprenticeship Manitoba could do a better job of monitoring each apprentice’s progress through the system and following up with those failing to progress,” Ricard says. The report notes that while the number of active apprentices in Manitoba grew 93% between 2006/07 and 2015/16 (from 5,850 to 11,307), the number completing their programs remained flat.

The Auditor General noted Apprenticeship Manitoba requires employers to track the hours that apprentices work, but not the type of work they do – even though Manitoba’s apprenticeship legislation requires employers to report this information. “A more detailed logbook would help ensure that apprentices are learning the tasks required of their trade during workplace training,” Ricard says.

As well, the Auditor General found that while Apprenticeship Manitoba ensured all accredited in-school training courses included a standard curriculum, it did not adequately ensure the courses met all other accreditation requirements. “Without sufficient assurance that instructors have the required qualifications and that the facilities, tools and equipment meet the course requirements, the quality of training is at risk,” says Ricard.

The report also notes:

- Apprenticeship Manitoba doesn’t calculate program completion (graduation) rates, either in total or by trade, nor does it have adequate information on the satisfaction of apprentices and employers with the apprenticeship program. “This information would help Apprenticeship Manitoba better understand the challenges confronting the apprenticeship system, as well as its successes,” says Ricard.

- Apprenticeship Manitoba lacks adequate occupational forecasts for its apprentice trades. “Without information on the supply and demand for the various trades, investments in training may be misaligned and fail to meet the needs of industry,” says Ricard.
- Since 2010, Apprenticeship Manitoba spent \$2.7 million to develop online courses, but few have been offered, and enrolment in these courses has been low.

“The apprenticeship system is complex and involves many stakeholders – both these factors make oversight challenging,” says Ricard. “I’m pleased Apprenticeship Manitoba officials have acknowledged the value of our 20 recommendations.”

### **About the Auditor General of Manitoba**

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