



Budget 2018 Supports Pathways to P.Eng. Licensure for New Canadians

As OSPE’s “Crisis in Ontario’s Engineering Labour Market” [report](#) revealed, only about 20% of international engineering graduates worked as engineers or engineering managers. Newcomers to Ontario with engineering degrees often face various barriers – ranging from language, foreign credential recognition, challenges finding employment in their field, and licensure, to name a few.

OSPE’s [Bridge Training Program](#) for International Engineering Graduates (IEGs), funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, helps IEGs complete their Professional Practice Exam (PPE), which is a mandatory part of the licensure process in Ontario.

Budget 2018 commits an additional \$45.6 million investment over three years in the Ontario Bridge Training program, serving up to 14,000 *additional* skilled immigrants.

Budget 2018 Takes Steps to Support Women in Engineering

Improving Access to Affordable Child Care

As OSPE’s Women in Engineering Advocacy Champions Task Force (WE ACT) [communicated](#) to the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee, women in engineering face challenges returning to work after maternity leave. Chief among these is access to affordable childcare.

Budget 2018 introduces free preschool for children aged 2 ½ until they are eligible for kindergarten (commencing September 2020). This is a \$2.2 billion investment over three years aimed at increasing access to child care and helping Ontario families save \$17,000 on average.

Promoting the Representation of Women in Engineering on Public & Private Boards

Getting more women in engineering into leadership roles and onto boards is one of WE ACT’s core mandates. Not only is diversity and diversity of thought good for business, it also benefits the economy as a whole.

Budget 2018 commits to growing the number of women on boards and in executive positions by:

- Ensuring women comprise at least 40% of every provincial board and agency by 2019;
- Encouraging businesses to set targets to ensure that between 2020 to 2022, 30% of their boards are women, and;
- Leveraging the province's buying power to encourage large firms that sign new contracts with Ontario to reach the government's 30% target; develop written policies to promote women on boards and in executive officer positions; and consider and introduce board renewal strategies.

Budget 2018 Furthers Work to Promote Transparency in Compensation

As OSPE [recently noted](#), we applaud the Premier and Minister of Labour for introducing Bill 3, the *Pay Transparency Act*. If passed, the bill would require large employers to include a pay rate or scale for publicly advertised job vacancies; prevent employers from asking applicants about their prior compensation during the hiring process; and protect employees from being penalized for discussing their pay with co-workers or their employer.

Building on this, Budget 2018 makes enhancements to enforcement and education services designed to close the gender wage gap by increasing the government's investment in the Pay Equity Office by 25%.

Budget 2018 Aims to Grow Ontario's Engineering Talent

Preparing Youth for Careers in Engineering

As OSPE noted in its [2016 submission](#) to the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, math scores continue to decline, and various stakeholders have noted concerns regarding discovery-based math curriculum.

Budget 2018 announces Ontario is launching an ambitious multi-year initiative to modernize curriculum and assessment tools from kindergarten to Grade 12. Ontario's updated curriculum will be developed through public consultations with the goal of improving student achievement in core skills, such as math and literacy.

Budget 2018 also announces the government will invest more than \$120 million over three years, hiring over 450 new guidance counsellors to help students better prepare for the transition to high school and engage in career planning.

OSPE applauds the government for this investment – guidance counsellors are often the first people in a student’s life to introduce or encourage them to pursue engineering. With this said, OSPE believes that to effectively advise young people, guidance counsellors also need to be provided with education on what a career in engineering entails, including the variety of engineering careers that are available.

Growing Enrollment in STEM Education

Budget 2018 includes a commitment to increase the number of STEM graduates by 25% – from 40,000 to 50,000 per year – to ensure that Ontario’s workforce is aligned with the increasing needs of high-growth sectors.

While this investment is well-intentioned, OSPE is concerned that the Government of Ontario has failed to [recognize](#) that only 33% of engineering graduates are employed in engineering roles while another 33% of graduates are underemployed, meaning they are working in jobs that do *not* require a university degree.

Budget 2018 Furthers Historic Investments in Infrastructure

Totaling \$182 billion over the next 10 years, Ontario has increased its financial commitment to the expansion of transportation, health and digital infrastructure.

Transportation Infrastructure & High Speed Rail

The Budget grows Ontario’s total transportation investment to \$79 billion in 2018-19, an increase from \$56 billion in 2017-18. This includes \$25 billion over 10 years to improve Ontario's highways.

The 2018 Budget includes an \$11 billion pledge towards the construction of Canada's first high speed rail line. This "initial investment" will support the construction of a high speed rail connection that would link Toronto to Windsor, reducing travel times by as much as 60%.

Public Transit Infrastructure

Ontario is promising \$8.3 billion towards public transit infrastructure in the upcoming fiscal year.

Specific recipients of that funding have not been finalized, but a shortlist is expected to include:

- Toronto's relief line and Yonge North subways;
- Toronto's Waterfront transit network;
- Durham's rapid bus transit;
- Mississauga's rapid transit along Dundas Street; and
- Brampton's rapid transit along Queen Street

Fare Integration

Budget 2018 introduces the integration of regional and local transportation systems under one fare. This will improve ridership and build the business case for greater transit infrastructure investment. This will result in savings of \$721 per year for transit riders in the Greater Toronto Area. Transit users will be able to use GO Transit and Smart Track for a TTC fare.

OSPE supports investments announced in the Budget, such as regional economic development funding, new dollars for public transit, \$500 million for broadband infrastructure and additional resources for apprenticeship and skills development.

Digital Infrastructure

The Budget promises to expand broadband internet connectivity in Northern Ontario and rural communities with a \$500 million investment over the next three years.