

From better skills to better work: How career ladders can support the transition from low-skill to high-skill work

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This is the third in a series of research briefs on 'Becoming State of the Art', which encourages innovation in the delivery of literacy and essential skills to achieve results that matter. In Ontario, literacy and essential skills (LES) programming and transitions into skills training or postsecondary programs are not typically aligned with employment sectors, labour market information or workplace progression. This is particularly true when it comes to the types of occupations normally available to non-high school graduates. Under-skilled job-seekers and workers alike often experience tremendous barriers to advancing their skills as they struggle under financial constraints, child care and transportation needs, itinerant jobs and irregular work hours. At the same time for employers, having workers who can progress from lower-skilled to higher-skilled jobs results in a more satisfied and productive workforce with lower staff turnover, less time and money spent on recruitment and better overall business performance. This brief explores the relevance of 'Career Ladders' - a series of connected literacy, language and skills training programs that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational cluster, and to advance to successively higher levels of education and employment within that sector. Each step is explicitly designed to meet the needs of both participants and employers in obtaining necessary workplace skills.

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