

What Do Skilled Trades Actually Pay in Canada?

Canadian Skilled Trades Salary & Career Path Cheat Sheet

A practical guide for Filipino professionals rebuilding their careers and income in Canada



• Real wage ranges across Canada



• Apprenticeship & Red Seal pathway overview



• High-demand trades worth considering



• Career rebuilding guidance



Built using official Canadian and provincial sources



WHAT DO SKILLED TRADES ACTUALLY PAY IN CANADA?

A salary and career path cheat sheet for Filipino professionals rebuilding in Canada

All wage data: Government of Canada Job Bank (jobbank.gc.ca), Nov 2025. Income gap data: Statistics Canada (2022). Nothing in this guide is stated without a cited source.

SECTION 1 — The Number That Changes Everything

Before salaries, before trade selection, before any pathway planning — you need to understand what staying in a survival job actually costs. This is not opinion. This is Statistics Canada data.

Statistics Canada (2022): Immigrants who completed skilled trades training and earned Canadian credentials: median income **\$54,100** seven years after arrival.

Immigrants without Canadian credentials: median income **\$35,700**.

Income gap: **\$18,400 every year**. For high-demand trades (electricians, plumbers, HVAC), the gap is often \$20,000–\$35,000.

That gap doesn't shrink. It compounds. Here's what staying put actually costs:

Years in a Survival Job	The True Cost (at \$20,000/yr gap)
Year 1	\$20,000 — your father's medication, your family's emergencies gone
Year 5	\$100,000 — your sister's full university tuition, never paid
Year 10	\$200,000 — a house down payment that never materialized
Year 20	\$400,000 — the complete financial freedom you moved here for

► Source: Statistics Canada. (2022). Post-migration education of immigrants admitted in 2010 and 2011: The impact of completing skilled trades training in Canada on economic outcomes. Catalogue no. 81-595-M. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-595-m/81-595-m2022002-eng.htm>

SECTION 2 — What Skilled Trades Actually Pay (Government Data)

All figures below are from the Government of Canada Job Bank (jobbank.gc.ca), updated November 2025, based on the Labour Force Survey by Statistics Canada. These are real wages — not inflated estimates.

Annual estimate = median hourly x 2,080 hrs. Does not include overtime, camp premiums, shutdowns, union top-ups, or benefits.

Trade	Low (\$/hr)	Median (\$/hr)	High (\$/hr)	Median x 2080 hrs
Electrician	\$20.00	\$35.00	\$48.00	~\$72,800
Industrial Electrician	\$28.00	\$42.00	\$54.00	~\$87,360
Instrumentation Tech	\$31.00	\$46.00	\$65.78	~\$95,680
Powerline Technician	\$28.40	\$46.00	\$62.00	~\$95,680

Power System Electrician	\$36.26	\$46.55	\$60.00	~\$96,824
HVAC / Refrigeration	\$22.00	\$37.50	\$56.00	~\$78,000
Millwright	\$24.00	\$37.00	\$52.00	~\$76,960
Heavy Equipment Mechanic	\$23.87	\$37.12	\$55.00	~\$77,210
Welder	\$22.00	\$30.00	\$47.00	~\$62,400
Plumber	\$21.00	\$34.00	\$46.00	~\$70,720
Carpenter	\$22.00	\$32.12	\$44.23	~\$66,810

► Source: Government of Canada Job Bank — wages by NOC, all provinces, updated Nov 19 2025. Verify any figure at: jobbank.gc.ca → Labour Market Information → Wages.

Why some websites show higher numbers: Higher claims are not automatically false — they often describe experienced workers, union jobs, camp or remote work, overtime, shutdown premiums, or specialty tickets. The Job Bank figures above are the verified baseline. Upside comes on top.

Alberta industrial electricians, for example, are reported as high as \$68/hr on the Job Bank — not a fabricated number, but not a starting wage either.

SECTION 3 — Red Seal + How Apprenticeship Actually Works

The Red Seal Program (Interprovincial Standards Program) sets a national skills standard for tradespeople across all Canadian provinces and territories. Passing the Red Seal exam adds an endorsement to your provincial certificate — recognized everywhere in Canada.

- There are currently 54 designated Red Seal trades in Canada.
- A Red Seal endorsement means you can work in your trade in any province or territory without re-examination.
- Apprenticeship is regulated provincially — rules vary by province. Registration is through your provincial apprenticeship authority.

► Source: red-seal.ca — About the Red Seal Program | canada.ca — Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship

The practical pathway: outside the system to inside the system

Stage	What Actually Happens
1. Choose a trade	Match the trade to your existing skills, physical demand, local employer availability, and realistic income target — not just the highest wage number.
2. Find a sponsoring employer	Most apprenticeships require a licensed employer to sponsor you. You are paid from Day 1 of on-the-job training.
3. Register with your province	Alberta: tradesecrets.alberta.ca BC: skilledtradesbc.ca Ontario: skilledtradesontario.ca
4. Work + accumulate hours	Approximately 80% on-the-job, 20% in-class technical blocks at an approved college. You earn wages throughout.

5. Pass your exams	Minimum 70% pass mark at each level. After all hours and levels: Certificate of Qualification (your “ticket”).
6. Write the Red Seal exam	After your provincial certificate, write the interprovincial Red Seal exam for national recognition.

Government financial support to verify:

Canada Apprentice Loan: up to \$4,000 per period of technical training for eligible Red Seal apprentices.

EI for apprentices: may be available when referred to full-time technical training. Timing matters — EI processing can lag behind school start dates.

These are real programs. Verify eligibility and current amounts directly with Service Canada.

- ▶ Source: canada.ca — Canada Apprentice Loan: canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/support-skilled-trades-apprentices/loan.html
- ▶ Source: canada.ca — EI for apprentices: canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/support-skilled-trades-apprentices/ei-apprentices.html
- ▶ Source: red-seal.ca | canada.ca — How to become an apprentice

SECTION 4 — The Better Question: Which Trade Fits Your Life?

The wrong question is: which trade pays the most? The better question is: which trade gives me the best return on my time, my body, my family situation, and my starting point? A high wage number is useless if you can’t enter the trade, finish the apprenticeship, or sustain the work at 55.

If your background or priority is...	Look at these trades first — and why
Engineering / technical thinker	Industrial Electrician, Instrumentation, Power Systems — uses troubleshooting, diagnostics, and systems thinking. Strong in Alberta’s industrial sector.
Mechanical-minded	Millwright, Heavy Equipment Mechanic — machines, diagnostics, maintenance. Strong in resource and manufacturing sectors.
Customer service / business potential	HVAC, Plumbing, Residential Electrical — recurring residential/commercial demand, potential for self-employment.
Need predictable family hours	Automotive Tech, Residential Electrical, some commercial trades — more stable schedules than camp/shutdown work.
Want the highest income ceiling	Powerline Technician, Power Systems, Industrial Electrical, Instrumentation — higher wage signals, but expect travel, shift work, and physical demand.
Protecting your body long-term	Instrumentation, Controls, Electrician, Automotive Tech, Finish Carpentry — more sustainable at 50+ than heavy labour paths.

15-minute pressure test before you choose:

Are employers in your city currently hiring apprentices or helpers in this trade?

Does the median wage (not the high) actually support your income target?

Can your body realistically do this work at 55?

Can your household absorb a school block with reduced income? (Tool costs, EI delays, and remittances all land at the same time.)

SECTION 5 — What the Numbers Don't Tell You

This cheat sheet gives you verified data — the what. The harder work for Filipino professionals specifically is the how. And those answers are different from what any generic guide will give you.

Question the data alone cannot answer	Why it matters for you specifically
Which trade fits your exact skill set from back home?	Your engineering degree and technical background isn't worthless — but matching it to the right trade pathway takes more than a wage table.
How do you survive financially during a 4–5 year apprenticeship?	Rent, remittances, school-block EI timing, tool costs, and family obligations don't pause while you train. Cash flow planning is not optional.
How do you find a sponsoring employer without a Canadian network?	Most trades jobs are not on job boards. Reputation, crew trust, and inside knowledge of how to get hired are skills on their own.
What do Canadian employers actually recognize from your past?	Reliability, safety mindset, and technical troubleshooting transfer — but only after you translate them into Canadian language and verify what the trade authority accepts.
How do you turn trade income into long-term wealth?	Journeyman income is real professional income. Whether it becomes a house, an RRSP, and a generational legacy depends on what you do with it — not just how much it is.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GO BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Hope doesn't come from pretending the path is easy. It comes from seeing a path that is difficult but real — and having a plan specific enough to actually follow.

The Professional Reclamation Framework™ is a 10-chapter system built for this exact transition — written specifically for Filipino immigrants, not a generic career guide. It covers what this cheat sheet doesn't: trade selection using a decision matrix built around your background, detailed financial planning through apprenticeship (including remittances, school blocks, and cash flow), how to find sponsoring employers without a Canadian network, the Filipino cultural advantages that actually accelerate advancement, and a wealth-building roadmap that converts trade income into retirement funds, real estate, and long-term family security.

It's not a motivational pamphlet. It's a working blueprint — with chapter workbooks so you move from reading to doing.

Move from "What do trades pay?" to "Which pathway can I realistically enter, complete, advance in, and build wealth from?" That's the work the full framework was built to guide.

Sources

- [1] Statistics Canada immigrant journey person income study: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-595-m/81-595-m2022002-eng.htm>
- [2–12] Job Bank wage pages by NOC: jobbank.gc.ca → Labour Market Information → Wages (updated Nov 19, 2025)
- [13] Red Seal Program: <https://red-seal.ca/eng/about/program.shtml>
- [14] Canada Apprentice Loan: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/support-skilled-trades-apprentices/loan.html>
- [15] EI for apprentices: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/support-skilled-trades-apprentices/ei-apprentices.html>
- [16] Alberta apprenticeship authority: tradesecrets.alberta.ca
- [17] Skilled Trades Ontario: skilledtradesontario.ca
- [18] SkilledTradesBC: skilledtradesbc.ca

Disclaimer: Educational information only. Not legal, financial, tax, immigration, licensing, or employment advice. Wages vary by province, city, employer, union status, overtime, specialization, and economic conditions. Verify current requirements directly with Job Bank, Red Seal, your provincial apprenticeship authority, Service Canada, or a qualified professional before making decisions.

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