



## Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities – Youth Employment in Canada (45-1)

October 31, 2025

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA'S HOTEL INDUSTRY

The Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) is proud to present this submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) as part of its study on Youth Employment in Canada (45-1).

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#### INTRODUCTION

Canada's tourism sector, including hotels, restaurants, transportation, and attractions, is one of the country's most important employers of youth. According to Tourism Human Resources Canada (THRC), youth make up 33% of the tourism workforce, with 18% of those youth workers employed in the hotel industry.<sup>1</sup>

Hotels provide more than jobs; they build a foundation for long-term employability by teaching essential, transferable skills that shape Canada's future workforce. They also provide strong career paths: most senior hotel executives started in entry-level roles. This demonstrates the industry's culture of promoting from within and developing its workforce. With the right support, hotels can help address youth unemployment while building a stronger, more resilient workforce for the future.

#### CANADA'S HOTEL INDUSTRY AS A YOUTH EMPLOYER

The hotel industry offers accessible, entry-level employment in every region of Canada. For many, a hotel job is their first paid work experience, a training ground for learning essential workplace skills, and a springboard to a long-term career. According to THRC's *Perceptions of Tourism as a Place of Employment Study (2024)*:

- 85% of those who worked in the industry received formal or on-the-job training.
- 74% said the industry helped them improve communication and interpersonal skills.
- 67% said the skills they gained were transferable to other sectors.

This data highlights how careers in the hotel industry serve as a launchpad for developing the skills required across Canada's service economy.

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<sup>1</sup> THRC, 2024 Labour Force Survey



## WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

Workforce shortages remain one of the most pressing challenges facing Canada's hotel industry. In 2025, 41% of hoteliers reported shortages during peak season (May to September)<sup>2</sup>. These shortages impact rural and resort regions more severely as they have a limited local labour pool, making it more difficult to fill positions. Persistent shortages impact the industry's ability to meet growing demand, maintain service standards and contribute to the local economy.

Youth employment is a critical part of the solution: encouraging young Canadians to explore careers in the hotel industry can stabilize the workforce and build long-term resilience for the industry. With targeted youth programs and industry training, the hotel industry can continue to grow as a vital contributor to Canada's economy.

## STEPS TAKEN TO ATTRACT YOUTH

Each year, HAC surveys its members in both the spring and fall to better understand the workforce challenges they face. Results show that hoteliers are investing in new approaches to make hospitality careers more appealing to young Canadians. Data from HAC's 2025 Fall Workforce Survey show the industry is actively recruiting youth by:

- Offering flexible hours (45%)
- Increasing wages (42%)
- Providing more training and development opportunities (34%)

These efforts reflect a broader shift in how hoteliers view and support their employees – focusing not just on filling positions, but on building lasting careers. By creating more flexible and growth-oriented workplaces, the industry is helping the next generation see hospitality as a platform to build their future. Despite best efforts by hoteliers, workforce pressures remain widespread.

## BARRIERS TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN HOTELS

While the hotel industry offers valuable opportunities, young Canadians remain hesitant to view hospitality as a long-term career path. According to HAC's Fall 2025 Workforce Report, 60% of hoteliers say low interest in hospitality careers continues to limit youth recruitment, while 45% report that young Canadians find hotel work hours undesirable or inconvenient. Additionally, only 39% of youth view the industry as offering excellent career opportunities<sup>3</sup> – highlighting how many underestimate the value of hospitality careers.

Increasing competition from other sectors, such as retail, logistics, and technology, attracts young workers with higher wages or hybrid work arrangements. These factors have a severe impact on rural and resort communities, where labour pools are already limited. Sixty-three percent of hoteliers cite "lack of interest from local workers" as a key hiring challenge. The result is a

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<sup>2</sup> HAC Fall 2025 Workforce Report

<sup>3</sup> THRC, 2024 Labour Force Survey



persistent youth participation gap at a time when the industry is eager to hire and needs young workers most.

## HAC RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Ensure stable, long-term funding for Tourism HR Canada to support youth engagement in hospitality careers through initiatives such as:

- **Discover Tourism:** A national campaign that promotes tourism as a viable career path by highlighting the diversity of roles available and showcasing clear progression opportunities beyond entry-level positions.
- **Emerit Skills Training and Certification:** A program that equips young workers with practical, job-ready skills and provides industry-recognized credentials to support long-term career development.

### 2. Expanding Youth Employment Opportunities through Federal Programs

Federal programs, such as the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) and the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS), play a vital role in connecting youth with early work experience. To ensure these programs are inclusive of the hotel industry:

- **Expand eligibility:** Include hotel-related careers that are not traditionally part of apprenticeship programs but require significant training and specialized expertise.
- **Increase program flexibility:** Make program timelines and funding more flexible to align with the seasonal demands and labour market realities of hotel businesses across Canada.
- **Streamlining application process:** Simplify the application process so independent and small-to-medium hotels can participate more easily.

## CONCLUSION

The hotel industry plays an essential role in introducing young Canadians to the workforce. However, the declining interest among youth in hotel industry careers is a warning sign: *Without stronger engagement, Canada risks losing a key channel for early workforce participation.* Addressing this requires continued partnership between industry and government to reshape how young Canadians view hospitality careers – not just as short-term work, but as a gateway to lifelong employability and career growth.

## ABOUT THE HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The Hotel Association of Canada is a national association dedicated to identifying and understanding the most critical challenges faced by our industry. We bring together hospitality leaders and key stakeholders to collaboratively problem-solve and mobilize for action.

We translate complex industry data into actionable insights. Through strategic advocacy efforts, we advocate for legislative solutions that create policy impact, while elevating our membership base through innovative and sustainable programming to ensure our industry's continued growth and success.



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HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
ASSOCIATION DES HÔTELS DU CANADA

A cornerstone of Canada's tourism sector, the hotel industry generates \$30 billion in annual revenue, \$12 billion in government taxes across all three levels, and employs over 320,000 Canadians.



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