



Construction demands rise to 2035 in Manitoba, as notable non-residential project activity is supplemented by modest residential growth

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Construction activity in Manitoba is expected to rise through 2035, as elevated levels of activity on non-residential construction projects supplement modest increases in residential construction activity.

BuildForce Canada today released its *Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward* highlight reports for the residential and non-residential construction sectors in Manitoba, covering the forecast period from 2026 to 2035. Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program, the outlook calls for notable growth in demand for both engineering and industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) building projects, while sustained growth in residential renovations offsets contractions from elevated levels in the new-housing component.

Residential construction investment levels are forecast to rise modestly over the period. In the near term, new-housing construction activity is expected to decline due to slowing population growth and reduced demand. This trend is partially offset by continued growth in residential renovation activity. Over the longer term, housing starts are expected to stabilize, supplementing further growth in demand for renovations.

By 2035, residential construction employment in Manitoba is projected to contract by 3% compared to 2025 levels, with employment losses exclusive to the new-housing sector.

In contrast, non-residential construction is expected to be a key driver of growth over the decade. Investment has been increasing since 2023 and is forecast to rise to a peak in 2030, supported by major engineering construction projects in utilities, transportation infrastructure, and resource development. Key projects include new power-generation capacity investments by MB Hydro, ongoing activity at the Winnipeg North End Sewage Treatment Plant, and Alamos Gold's Lynn Lake mine expansion.

Investment in ICI buildings is also projected to increase over the forecast period, supported by ongoing and planned healthcare and institutional developments, and broader growth in industrial and commercial construction.

"Manitoba's construction outlook is heavily influenced by a list of significant engineering-construction and institutional-building projects across the forecast period," says Irwin Bess, Executive Director of BuildForce Canada. "Should any of a series of significant,



announced, projects on our watch list reach final investment decisions, employment demands could rise even further.”

By 2035, employment in the sector is projected to rise by 11% compared to 2025 levels, with particularly strong growth in engineering construction and continued gains in ICI building activity.

“As construction demand continues to grow, building local capacity to deliver safe, modern infrastructure is critical,” says Ramona Coey, Executive Director of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba and the Electrical Contractors Association of Manitoba. “The mechanical and electrical sectors are fundamental to Manitoba’s vertical infrastructure, providing the systems that ensure public safety, support a modern standard of living, and enable economic growth. Strengthening this workforce will be essential to meeting future demand through coordinated, industry-informed, long-term planning.”

These trends are expected to combine to create a need for as many as 3,400 additional workers across Manitoba’s total construction sector by 2035. When added to the potential retirement of 10,000 workers, or 20% of the 2025 labour force, the industry may face a total hiring requirement of 13,400 workers. That figure is expected to be offset by the recruiting of 11,700 first-time new entrants from the local population, leading to a potential shortfall of as many as 1,700 construction workers.

(Note that discrete analyses of the residential and non-residential labour force trends are available in their respective reports.)

"This forecast reinforces both the opportunities and challenges facing Manitoba's construction industry," says Darryl Harrison, President and CEO of the Winnipeg Construction Association. "Demand for skilled workers is expected to grow at the same time many experienced workers retire. Success will depend on attracting more people into the trades, improving apprenticeship completion rates, and creating the conditions that allow employers to train and develop the workforce Manitoba will need over the next decade."

Keeping pace with demand will require a combination of strategies, including maintaining local recruitment and training efforts, particularly among groups traditionally under-represented in the construction labour force, hiring workers from other industries with the required skill sets, and recruiting immigrants to Canada with skilled trades training or construction experience.

New apprenticeship registrations in Manitoba’s largest construction programs reached a record high in 2023, led by gains in refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, carpenter,



and plumber trades. Registrations remained elevated in 2024. Program completions, however, remain below historical averages, but may rise with recent intake trends.

“We’re encouraged by the fact that apprenticeship registration levels in Manitoba remain elevated,” says Tanya Palson, Executive Director of the Manitoba Building Trades. “The key to long-term sustainability, however, will lie in creating incentives that improve completion outcomes and bring more certified journeypersons into the trades.”

In 2025, there were 6,570 women employed in Manitoba’s construction industry. Of them, 36% worked on site, directly on construction projects. As a share of the 48,100 tradespeople employed in Manitoba’s construction industry, however, women accounted for just 5% of the 2025 workforce.

The Indigenous population is the fastest growing population in Canada and therefore presents recruitment opportunities. In 2025, Indigenous Peoples represented 11.9% of the provincial labour force and 16.5% of the construction labour force. Both figures were well above the national share, and notably higher than in 2016. As the Indigenous population continues to grow, the sector must continue its recruitment efforts and invest in initiatives that foster long-term retention.

The construction industry is also committed to the recruitment of newcomers to Canada. Based on historical settlement patterns and adjusted federal immigration targets, the province is expected to welcome more than 164,900 new immigrants between 2026 and 2035, making these individuals, if successfully recruited, a key and growing part of the industry’s future labour force.

Increasing the participation rate of women, Indigenous Peoples, and newcomers to Canada could help Manitoba’s construction industry address its future labour force needs.

BuildForce Canada is a national industry-led organization that represents all sectors of Canada’s construction industry. Its mandate is to support the labour market development needs of the construction and maintenance industry. As part of these activities, BuildForce works with key industry stakeholders, including contractors, proponents of construction, labour providers, governments, and training providers, to identify both demand and supply trends that will impact labour force capacity in the sector, and supports the career searches of job seekers wanting to work in the industry. BuildForce also leads programs and initiatives that support workforce upskilling, workforce productivity improvements, improvements to training modalities, human resource tools to support the adoption of industry best practices, as well as other value-added initiatives focused on supporting the industry’s labour force development needs. Visit www.buildforce.ca.



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This report was produced with the support and input of a variety of provincial construction and maintenance industry stakeholders. For local industry reaction to this latest BuildForce Canada report, please contact:

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