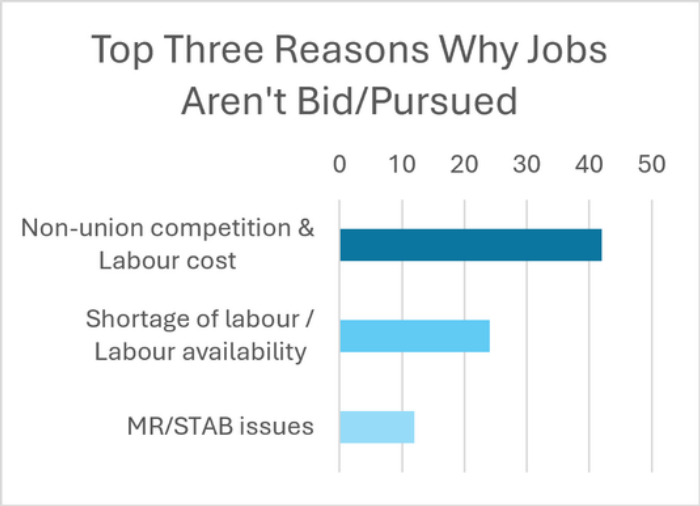
You Ought To Know

ISSUE: 32

Why don't contractors bid on all available jobs?

It might seem like a solution for increasing market share or the number of jobs our contractors and their employees are working on, but it's not that simple. Bidding on jobs uses resources – time and money – and some contractors bid all jobs themselves while others have estimators to assist.

Earlier in 2026, we reached out to 450 of our contractors to ask them why, over the last 6-9 months, they chose not to bid on jobs or seek out work falling within their expertise. Overall, the top reasons consistent among over half of respondents for not bidding or seeking work were: (1) the presence of non-union competition, meaning lower labour costs, (2) lack of available, qualified workers, and (3) issues relating to market recovery and/or stabilization funds.



How have megaprojects impacted our contractors?

We also asked contractors not involved in Ontario's megaprojects how that work affected their businesses. The most commonly reported challenge was labour availability. Higher pay, overtime, per-diem, and the promise of long-term work on these projects were stated as factors pulling workers away from smaller jobs, disrupting business planning, and creating openings in previously union-held markets for new competition.

The long-term residual impact that these Ontario megaprojects will have on our market share once they have wrapped up remains to be seen. If we base our assumptions on past research, such as ELECTRI's 'Megaprojects Impact on Labour Markets' study, published in 2025, the main concern is that the markets that either have been – or will be – lost during this period of megaprojects will become permanent.

How are wage package amounts determined?

Every three years, bargaining agents IBEW/IBEW CCO and ETBA negotiate increases to the wage package. If you look at the wage schedule, which is located in each local appendix, you will see a number of columns. The Wage Package column is outlined with a distinct, bold border.

This is where the negotiated (or awarded through Final Offer Selection) increase is applied.

As mentioned in earlier versions of YOTK, it's important to understand that the Union and its members determine the amount of money that goes to Union Funds. The remainder of the wage package amount is put into the Base Rate with 12% applied to vacation and statutory holiday pay.

You can see the wage package amounts and averages in the table on the next page.

IBEW Local	May 1 wage package		
	2025	2026	2027
105	$79.13	$82.13	$85.18
115	$77.90	$80.90	$83.95
120	$78.17	$81.17	$84.22
303	$78.51	$81.51	$84.56
353	$79.84	$82.84	$85.89
402	$77.78	$80.78	$83.83
530	$79.82	$82.82	$85.87
586	$78.46	$81.46	$84.51
773	$78.54	$81.54	$84.59
804	$78.12	$81.12	$84.17
1687	$78.48	$81.48	$84.53
Average	**$78.61**	**$81.61**	**$84.66**

Watch our video on Total Compensation here: https://youtu.be/WekVHsZRiLA

Access the accompanying Toolbox talk here: https://www.ecao.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Tool-Box-Talk-Total-Compensation.pdf

Do you know how to read the Principal Agreement?

New to the Principal Agreement? Or need a refresher on how to navigate the sections? We've got you covered.

Join us for a review of the Principal Agreement, tailored specifically for non-bargaining unit supervisors and staff who have limited experience reading the Principal Agreement. No prior contract knowledge required — this is a beginner-friendly walkthrough.

The course will cover the following:

- An overview of the Agreement structure and what's changed.
- Zooming in on the major provisions that matter most to you.
- Pro tips for reading, interpreting and applying clauses in real life.
- Understanding your management rights, boundaries and responsibilities.
- Letters of Understanding (LOUs) and their application.

Join us!
Date and time: July 28, 2026 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM EST
Where: Virtual on Zoom. Click here to register.
Cost: FREE for ECAO members