



*Government of Bermuda*

**Ministry of Education and Workforce Development**

**Ministerial Statement**

By

**The Hon. Diallo Rabain, JP, MP**

Minister of Education and Workforce Development

**Training Program Initiatives**

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018

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**Mr. Speaker,**

I rise this morning to provide this Honourable House with an update on some of the training program initiatives the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has been instrumental in driving during the past few months.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me first start by providing a backdrop for my Honourable colleagues as it relates to the National Certification programs for ‘designated occupations’. As mentioned in previous statements, this program is a “critical component for the sustainability of the workforce”. Persons operating as a Welder, Electrician, Automotive Service Technician and Landscape Gardener are required to be ‘nationally certified’ as legislated by the National Occupational Certification, Act 2004. National Certification is directly aligned with workforce development initiatives, and is meant to create a ‘level playing field’ and build a competitive advantage for all Bermudian trade professionals. This process is instrumental to providing enhanced work opportunities for Bermudians, and was designed to ensure an outcome of potential growth, increased confidence, and improved quality and efficiency of our workforce.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The total number of persons registered to become nationally certified is nine hundred and sixty-four (964). This comprises three hundred and eighty-eight (388)

work permit holders and five hundred and seventy-six (576) Bermudians. Let me share a further breakdown of these totals by occupation:

OCCUPATION	BERMUDIAN	NON-BERMUDIAN
Landscape Gardener	278	286
Automotive Service Technician	79	65
Electrician	194	28
Welder	25	9

**Mr. Speaker,**

During the week of November 27<sup>th</sup> 2017, twenty-five welders participated in a practical training assessment. This is a mandatory component of the national certification process for Welders. The assessment is based on the Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) 47.1 standard. Participants were required to complete welds in four different positions – horizontal, vertical, flat and overhead; and were given 45 minutes to complete each weld. Twenty-one (21) of the total 25 participants completed the assessment. The Department is now awaiting the results from CWB to determine who can be recommended for national certification.

**Mr. Speaker,**

A total of forty-eight (48) electricians participated in training courses during the week of December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017. An instructor from the National Fire and Protection Agency (NFPA) facilitated the National Electrical Code (NEC) courses to assist local electricians to extensively learn proper applications and techniques for their occupation. Technology changes so rapidly and as a result this code is amended every three years. To ensure that our tradesman are aligned with international standards this training is necessary, and has been added as a mandatory component in the certification process. The Department is awaiting the results of this training to determine how many will be recommended to be nationally certified.

**Mr. Speaker,**

During a meeting of the National Training Board held 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 seven automotive service technicians and two electricians were approved to be nationally certified. Of the seven automotive service technicians, six were approved at level 3

while one was approved at level 2. Level three is the second highest level of recognition based on a 4 level standard. Of the two electricians, one was approved for a FULL license while the other was approved for a LIMITED license. A full license allows one to operate in commercial and residential applications and limited only allows a person to carry out residential work.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Department continues to work diligently to complete all files submitted for the certification process. A work permit policy amendment document has been completed and submitted to the Department of Immigration for consideration. When approved, employers will be required to check with the Department of Workforce Development to determine if there are any suitably qualified Bermudians to fill the post. If it is determined that there are none, persons seeking employment in a ‘designated occupation’ must then register with the Department so that it can be determined if they possess the necessary qualifications to be successful in the national certification process prior to a work permit being issued. The new policy will also allow all designated occupations to be added to the ‘restricted category’. This will allow Bermudians to have increased access to work opportunities.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As a further update, in January 2018, the National Training Board also approved Apprenticeship Contracts for four young Bermudians entering the workforce - three electricians and one landscape gardener. These young Bermudians are currently participating in courses at the Bermuda College. The electrician trainees will receive their work experience from BUE/BAC Universal Electric while Brown and Company Ltd – Landscape Gardners and Tree Surgeons have agreed to train the landscape gardener trainee. We are thankful to our industry partners for collaborating with this initiative.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Department continues to put in place the relevant training and development opportunities for Bermudians. Currently it is participating in a joint initiative with the Department of Financial Assistance and the Bermuda Hospitality Institute to train individuals as Housemen and Chambermaids who would work in the hotel sector. The Fairmont Southampton Resort is partnering with the Department and

has agreed to undertake the practical training. The first cohort of 25 training participants will begin a two-week course commencing February 19<sup>th</sup> 2018. Based on industry discussions the Department understands that there is a need for these occupations for the upcoming tourism season. It is anticipated that a total of 50 persons will be trained in these occupations with the second cohort of twenty-five starting the week of March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The Department has also been engaged in assisting the Ministry of National Security, Team Street Safe with the one hundred (100) jobs initiative. Both teams are working to identify employers and suitable candidates to participate in the upcoming job fair scheduled to be held at the end of February. The team will ensure that potential candidates will be security vetted, skills assessed, and possess updated resumes and portfolios. Wherever necessary, prospective candidates will also be assisted with job coaching and interview skills preparation for the Job Fair.

**Mr. Speaker,**

In closing, the Department of Workforce Development continues to carry out its mandate to improve the quality and efficiency of Bermuda's workforce through training and re-training. Once again, it gives me great pleasure at this time to provide my Honourable colleagues with an update on the diversity of training and development work program initiatives the Department of Workforce Development has been engaged in, which are equipping Bermudians for job placement in the workforce.

**Thank you Mr. Speaker**