

Cabinetmaker

Build custom kitchens, cabinets and furniture in a shop. A 4-year paid apprenticeship, quieter and steadier than site work, with lower pay.

TYPICAL PAY

\$50,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$35k to \$70k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Cabinet shops, millwork factories, furniture studios

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Grade 12. Woodworking, math and design classes help. Ontario students can start early through OYAP (the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program).
- 2 Find a sponsor** Weeks to months
 A cabinet shop, millwork factory or furniture maker willing to register you. A one-year college woodworking program makes this much easier.
- 3 Register the apprenticeship** Days
 With your provincial trades authority: Skilled Trades Ontario, Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, or SkilledTradesBC.
- 4 Work and study** About 4 years
 About 8,000 hours in Ontario: 7,280 in the shop plus 720 hours in class, usually three blocks at a college. Other provinces set their own hours.
- 5 Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal** After your hours
 Pass the provincial exam. Add the interprovincial Red Seal endorsement to work in any province.

Pros and cons

- + Indoor, steady hours, no winter layoffs
- + Paid from day one, low tool costs
- + Creative: you see the finished piece
- Lower pay than site trades, and it starts near minimum wage
- Wood dust and noise, so lungs and hearing need protecting
- Repetitive work in production shops

Good to know

It is a Red Seal trade

Cabinetmaker is one of the Red Seal trades, so a certified cabinetmaker can work in any province without re-testing.

Wood dust is a known carcinogen

Fine dust from hardwoods like oak and beech is linked to nasal cancer after years of exposure. Good shops have dust collection on every machine, and good cabinetmakers wear a mask anyway.

Optional boosts

CNC (computer-controlled cutting machine) programming. 3D design software. Finishing. Solid wood furniture and joinery.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Cabinetmakers, wages (updated Nov 2025)

Red Seal Program: Cabinetmaker

Skilled Trades Ontario

SkilledTradesBC

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/cabinetmaker>



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