

RETENTION
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Managing Talent During and Post COVID-19



WHITE PAPER

10-Point Workforce Recovery Plan

Tourism **HR**
Canada



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Tourism HR Canada is a pan-Canadian organization with a mandate aimed at building a world leading tourism workforce. Tourism HR Canada facilitates, coordinates, and enables human resource development activities that support a globally competitive and sustainable industry and foster the development of a dynamic and resilient workforce.

Tourism HR Canada is your source for current human resources issues and solutions, and works with the industry to attract, train, and retain valuable tourism professionals by giving them the tools and resources they need to succeed in their careers and entrepreneurial endeavours.

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Performance Matters

RETENTION RECOVERY RESILIENCE

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The purpose of this document is to provoke discussion and ultimately inform policy and program decisions. We welcome your input and ideas, and we promise to further shape the strategy to better serve our collective interests.



Preamble

Getting Tourism Back to Work: 10-Point Plan

With tourism businesses starting to reopen, many need clarity in understanding how to proceed, particularly with physical distancing requirements and maintaining the health and safety of workers and customers. Anxiety stems from not knowing the rules and the difficulty in finding guidance from government and public health officials (and the fact that the rules or requirements are routinely changing). There are other workforce/staffing concerns, like anticipating how many and how quickly workers are required, the type of training needed, and whether the business can procure the necessary health and safety supplies now necessary to operate (e.g., gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, plexiglass shields, special signage).

Recovering from a pandemic is well beyond the experience of most business owners. Knowing how to adapt to the impacts of the virus is difficult; there are many unknown variables and the situation is complex. Many have a feeling of uncertainty and seek guidance.

As Tourism HR Canada works on its own comprehensive online recovery toolkit and resource for tourism businesses, we have discovered various sources of information on workforce recovery during and following a crisis. These include recent recovery plans from the World Tourism Organization, provincial governments, and businesses, as well as guidance material produced from many industry associations. This review led to ten prevailing recommendations aimed at helping the tourism sector rebound by ensuring it has a post-COVID-ready workforce.



1

Practical, Explicit Guidelines

Tourism businesses are seeking practical, comprehensive, explicit, consistent guidelines that can be applied to most tourism operations across Canada. This is to avoid consumer confusion, to increase confidence in the health and safety practices of the industry (for both workers and consumers), and to create a “level playing field” (conditions that are fair for everyone).

Several groups have done work on guidelines. Some focus on industry-wide strategies, such as repositioning marketing strategies aimed at new markets and ways to help build consumer confidence in the tourism brand as a safe and healthy destination. Other strategies have an operational focus, with guidance on retrofitting spaces to comply with safe distancing requirements, adjusting workforce policies to accommodate new working realities, dealing with potential COVID-19 outbreaks stemming from staff or customers, or even guidance on reforming business models. There are also guidelines containing protocols staff are to follow to ensure increased sanitation and cleaning practices meet new health standards, including quarantine situations.

Many of these protocols or guidelines are good, but often lack the specificity or information to help employers understand how they apply the guidelines to their workplace context. There are differences and inconsistencies in the recommended practices, and how they will be applied will vary because of differences in work contexts or the product or service offered. As we learn more about COVID-19, government and health authorities are routinely making changes to recommended practices. Keeping up with information, knowing where to find it, and knowing where to get answers to questions, has led to confusion and debate for both consumers and operators.



One way to mitigate this concern is to rely on the work of the national industry associations. [Restaurants Canada](#) and the [Hotel Association of Canada](#) have invested in industry-specific guidelines and committed to maintaining them on behalf of the industry. The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada is also working on guidelines that take into consideration circumstances specific to Indigenous tourism operators and cultural protocols. Companies that employ many workers in several locations and some suppliers have also invested in guidelines.

The sector is eager to work with government and health authorities to inform, design, and implement guidelines that will work for tourism operators.

The UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) recently published a COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance Package to assist Member States in developing a gradual approach to recovery, structured around three pillars: economic recovery, marketing and promotion, and institutional strengthening and building resilience.

Although associations and governments are responding to the need for coherent guidelines, more work is needed. Some parts of the sector may not have the guidance they need, such as outdoor recreation and adventure or small, independent operators (which account for a large percentage of tourism businesses). Further consultation with tourism stakeholders to design and implement guidelines that are explicit and practical, and a sector-wide clearing house to collect and disseminate information on sanctioned guidelines, will ensure the industry is well poised to deal with required and emergent protocols (Tourism HR Canada currently serves as a clearinghouse on other industry standards and could expand its capacity to fulfil the mandate). This practice is essential to mounting a campaign that builds consumer confidence on the tourism sector's health and safety standards.



2

Flexible Back-To-Work Employment Insurance Scheme

Well over 800,000 tourism workers have been displaced, many of whom have been furloughed or laid off due to COVID. The Government of Canada introduced employment benefit programs to help incentivize job recuperation and retention. With uncertainties on how long it will take the industry to recover—and the strong likelihood of missing the peak summer season for business (and revenues)—many companies expect that it will be months, perhaps years, before they are able to gainfully employ many workers. Until there is enough demand and consumer confidence returns, employers will be prudent with their hiring practices. Until then, additional and alternative job supports are needed, and government benefit programs will need to be extended. Once businesses are allowed to open, it may take as many as three to six months before they become profitable and can support stable employment.

One consideration is for the government to look at more flexible EI programs or policies that will enable people to return to work part time or casually, with the assurance that government will make up the difference in income that falls below a threshold (e.g., equivalent to the CERB benefit). This is one example that is an incentive for both workers and employers and can help people wean off government subsidies.



3

Skills Training Focused on New Service and Workplace Requirements

Things will be different. The new reality of tourism in the aftermath of COVID-19 is hard to predict, but we can anticipate different travel patterns, revised growth scenarios, new products and services for new markets, increased use of technology, added regulations or protocols, increased public-private partnerships, and more. Tourism will be very different. Businesses will need to rapidly adapt their business practices to survive, and this means they need to build capacity and prioritize investments towards building a skilled, flexible, and resilient workforce. Investment in the right training will ensure greater organizational agility.

It's a new world that requires new skills. Upskilling is necessary to ensure the workforce will have the knowledge and abilities to effectively navigate the post-crisis environment.

Skills upgrading and cross-training are essential to helping prevent, mitigate, and recover from COVID-19. This involves new skills for frontline, mid-level/ supervisory, and executive functions—everything from elevated sanitation to learning how to create new business models and design new products and services. Investments are needed in new program development and alternative delivery modes. The industry will also benefit from a comprehensive inventory of qualified programs and a trusted referral system to avoid duplication and increase overall quality and capacity. The main aim is to create and offer skills and business development training to build resilience over the short and long terms.



As mentioned, Tourism HR Canada is building a Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit aimed at all types of tourism businesses, focused on the very topics that will help a business get its footing and begin to prosper. The free online resource will contain dynamic learning opportunities, case studies, best practices, downloadable tools, and information pertinent to the local context. The topics are far-ranging and will grow. Some examples include:

- › Developing targeted marketing strategies aimed at new markets
- › Refinancing and accessing capital
- › Reforming the business model/plan
- › Product development
- › Managing supply chain risk and disruption
- › Building public-private partnerships
- › Dealing with crisis communication

And it's more than skills for business owners that are needed. Frontline and direct customer-facing roles require, for example, enhanced training in hygiene and cleaning, increased customer service skills, knowledge on the development of new products and services, cultural competence, and technical skills to enable them to work in various job functions. Mid-level and supervisory roles are seeking knowledge and skills related to new workforce management practices, risk management, and operations. Tourism HR Canada has a battery of programs to address these immediate needs, [all of which are offered for free at this time.](#)

Free online training during the COVID-19 pandemic has been made available by Tourism HR Canada to help students, workers, and employers equip themselves with the skills needed to quickly rebound from the crisis. Because of the early demand for these select Emerit programs, the offer was extended to include all Emerit online courses.



4

Overhauled Workforce Plans: A Post-COVID People Strategy

Workforce planning is the cornerstone of a viable tourism business. Tourism relies on its people to deliver the experience; without them, tourism lacks heart and meaning. COVID-19 has profound impacts on the workforce (see: [Profound Workforce Changes Expected](#)). Subsequently, employers need to completely overhaul their human resource practices and policies.

Regardless of the size of business, these workforce plans need to factor in the types of new skills and changing work environments that will be implemented in light of COVID-19. It is likely that operators will learn to work with fewer workers and rely more on technology to augment or enhance the services provided. COVID-19 impacts will inform many workforce practices, some of which include:

- › Compliance with new protocols, e.g., processes to follow when an employee tests positive for COVID-19, and the implications on guests, other staff, and products
- › New/expanded health and safety training
- › Telework/telecommuting practices
- › Privacy law in the context of pandemics, and employee and employer rights
- › Guidance for high-risk and essential workers
- › Leveraging government programs



Clear policies will be needed to address absence due to sickness or caring for relatives, protocols for guests, and procedures for reporting illness. Policies will need to factor in special provisions for parents (e.g., to deal with extended school or childcare closures) and for staff that travel and may be forced to stay at a destination longer than expected. These changes will impact insurance policies and premiums and other long-standing arrangements employers have with their employees.

To refit their workforce practices, employers will need guidance and support in the form of training, financing, and technical and legal guidance. Associations, education and training providers, and governments all have a role in helping businesses reshape their practices.

Managing People will be a main resource category in Tourism HR Canada's new Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit. Existing workforce planning and development tools that are part of the organization's Emerit programs will be updated to help employers respond to the new realities.



5

Community Labour Force Development Plans and a Pan-Canadian Tourism Labour Market Strategy

Tourism HR Canada has long advocated for the need to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian tourism labour market strategy. Perhaps more than ever, this is needed in a post-COVID environment. The collapse of the tourism industry, especially in rural communities, has had a profound impact on the economic and social wellbeing of those communities. At the local level, tourism was Canada's largest job creator and attracted many entrepreneurs. Tourism has played a key role in regional development and helped transform communities affected by declining industries. In Indigenous communities, tourism is helping restore and showcase historical and cultural heritage. Investments in labour market strategies are essential to tourism's ability to recover and be a key economic engine and future job creator for the Canadian economy.

Community labour force development plans are building blocks towards a pan-Canadian tourism labour force strategy designed to regenerate the social and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Community labour force development plans aim to engage all community stakeholders. The study of labour market development and needs is essentially an assessment of what exists and what's needed. Such studies focus on the economic development goals of the region or community, tourism growth potential, the skills and capacity required, demographic data, potential industry partners and employers, the existence of education and training to meet demands/needs, and opportunities for public-private partnerships.



Through a facilitated process, the community makes decisions on the local tourism economic development plan. It focuses on existing and possible new tourism products and services, and what's needed to build capacity. The plan informs financing activities, workforce strategies, and destination marketing organization (DMO) management and initiatives. This effort will restore tourism's vital role in building capacity and economic prosperity in rural communities and ensure there is a skilled workforce to meet visitor demand.

A targeted skills and workforce development strategy is crucial. Businesses, organizations, governments, and the education sector need improved workforce planning strategies, along with the resources, appropriate support mechanisms, and capacity to implement them.

A national tourism labour force strategy aligns with strategic aims set by the national associations and Destination Canada's strategic objectives. In addition, an effective strategy helps address labour force priorities set by government and ultimately builds a resilient and inclusive labour market. Establishing a tourism labour force strategy at the national level is achieved by leveraging the role and mandate of Tourism HR Canada, whose governance structure is representative and inclusive, along with the capacity and expertise to guide the work.



6

Tourism Job Retention and Job Growth Strategy: Marketing Tourism as a Destination for Employment

COVID-19 has decimated the tourism workforce (for statistical details on the impact, see [Widespread Impacts as Tourism Employment Plummets](#)). Tourism's ability to rebound, grow, and compete is dependent on its ability to attract and retain qualified workers. Promoting and enabling careers and entrepreneurial pursuits in tourism, in collaboration with tourism stakeholders, will help increase the visibility of job opportunities and promote safe and healthy work environments.

Marketing tourism as a destination for employment will require an all-of-sector approach and leverage existing programs and services. The strategy must engage industry associations, destination marketing organizations, the education and training sector, governments, community services (e.g., career development services, settlement agencies, economic development offices), and provincial/territorial Tourism Human Resource Organizations. Collectively, common messages must reinforce the value proposition, such as: tourism is transformative and changes lives; workers gain a lifetime of skills; there are well-paid, stable jobs that fit different lifestyles.

Industry and policymakers are acutely aware of the need to reduce the further loss of qualified and productive workers. With a massive change in the economy, jobs are changing rapidly, and workers and jobseekers will need to gain new skills to remain employable.

This awareness and image campaign must promote tourism as a 'destination for employment' and be highly visible in preeminent tourism marketing campaigns to help change negative perceptions of the sector for both the consumer (i.e., promote recovery confidence and service standards and the economic revival for communities) and jobseeker (i.e., promote job attainment/career opportunities).



In the short term, the general aim of a campaign would be to restore the workforce. Beyond the immediate future, the overall aim should be to develop a diversified workforce strategy—one that will increase the participation of under-represented groups, improve multiple career and worker pathways, and improve on the image of tourism jobs and careers.

Attracting, building, and sustaining a future tourism workforce is fundamental to driving profits and the growth of the economy.

Tourism HR Canada has made attempts to get federal funding to revive Discover Tourism—a robust online resource for jobseekers, employers, educators, and others, aimed at helping attract and retain an inclusive and globally competitive tourism workforce. An updated and enhanced Discover Tourism will help individuals by improving employability, social mobility, and inclusion by:

- › Helping jobseekers connect with good job prospects and under-represented groups connect with the right supports to help increase their level of participation in the workforce
- › Helping companies better manage their workforce by providing resources to address new skills needs and different working arrangements and adjust their recruitment and training systems as they adapt to the new economic reality
- › Providing colleges, universities, and other educational institutions labour market intelligence on current and future skills needs that will inform changes to their programs to better prepare graduates for jobs in demand
- › Aligning information and services to government policy interventions or programs that will help increase the number of tourism workers
- › Improving on the overall image of tourism workers and careers, so that consumers value and trust safe, high-quality service

Tourism HR Canada will be working with the national tourism associations, and with the provincial and territorial industry associations and human resource organizations, to advance a new funding proposal to develop and implement a comprehensive job retention and growth strategy.



7

Newly Aligned Business and Service Strategies

COVID-19 has changed the playing field. For tourism businesses to survive and grow, they will need to react quickly to the profound changes in the economy. Businesses must now align products and services with new markets, respond to new regulations, manage risk associated with their supply chain, learn to work with very different staffing situations, recover from significant losses in revenues, and more.

Dealing with the COVID crisis has been particularly stressful for business leaders consumed with liquidity concerns to remain afloat. They are reacting to daily issues to combat the COVID crisis and are not as focused on the longer-term strategy that will enable their business to thrive.

Governments everywhere are wondering how to go about restarting the economy. And, as the economy recovers, there will be intense competition for government support and funds that will incentivize business development, create jobs, and support groups that are most impacted by the pandemic. Economic, social, and political factors will contribute to the decisions on fiscal priorities and policy decisions. The tourism industry will need to increase its efforts to demonstrate its value proposition, such as the emphasis on its role as a job creator, how it incites economic development and fosters entrepreneurship that can help transform waning economies and increase economic diversification, and how it offers social, political, and environmental benefits. Tourism contributes to political stability and is synonymous with Canadian identity: it embodies the very values or ideals that define Canadian culture.

Tourism operators are in a more precarious financial position than those in many other sectors. The timing and uncertain duration of COVID-19 coincides with what is normally the industry's busiest and most lucrative business period.



Tourism is by its very nature all about human contact and social gatherings. The restrictions on physical distancing impact nearly every tourism enterprise or experience, and currently governments are reporting that the lifting of these restrictions will be measured and gradual and will not fully be lifted for as many as 18 to 24 months, or once a vaccine is available. The largest proportion of tourism businesses are small enterprises, entrepreneurial start-ups, and seasonal operators. Small businesses and those operating in rural areas will be more significantly affected than larger ones as most do not have the cash reserve to survive beyond a few months of lost revenues.

The new reality means a new business model—it's a blueprint for recovery and growth. Preparing for a post-COVID environment can make the difference between success and failure.

In this fiscal climate, tourism operators will not be able to move forward without solid business strategies and plans. Lending institutions often view tourism businesses as 'high risk', and perhaps this will be more so in the uncertainty of the next two or three years, as the industry recovers. The business plan must focus on priorities (e.g., market development, research, strategic partnerships), and contain realistic financial projections based on solid data showing market potential/demand. This is increasingly difficult in a time when the industry is hampered by restrictions on travel and constraints on physical distancing.

Business owners may need to identify new partners or investors. Partnerships between two or more companies are expected to increase as a way to share risk while growing markets and revenues. Because tourism recovery in some regions will be slow and gradual with markets that are diminished in size, joint ventures could make all the difference for some tourism businesses to survive.

Business planning will also speak to many of the elements captured in the Workforce Strategy (described in item 4 of this article). Such a plan will demonstrate what's needed for re-startup phases and what it will take for operators to grow their workforce to meet future demand.



8

Tailored Strategies for Targeted Populations

The pandemic amplified some workforce issues companies were already facing. Increasingly, and more acutely in the past several years, the industry was grappling with a shortage of workers. The nature of work had undergone a massive transformation brought on by a demographic shift (i.e., an aging population), increased automation, and ever fiercer global competition for workers. Government policy focused on increased immigration and worker mobility to help address shortages. Companies invested in improved HR practices aimed at attracting and retaining workers. Industry associations and other interest groups made labour issues a priority in their agendas.

The effort to attract workers post-COVID could be more difficult than ever. Studies from previous pandemic or catastrophic events, such as hurricanes, or from global economic depressions identify a common theme: during the early recovery period, the industry can expect reduced staff loyalty and a significant increase in the turnover of workers. Although this may seem paradoxical, the fact is workers seek new opportunities as the economy recovers. Generally, there are more jobs available and jobseekers have greater choices. Some are seeking better-paid or more stable employment, others need increased flexibility to accommodate different lifestyle requirements (e.g., childcare, elder care, education). In aging populations like Canada's, many decide not to re-enter the workforce and instead retire. Because the tourism industry is expected to recover at a slower rate than other sectors, many of its workers will have found employment elsewhere.



To fill jobs, we anticipate a clear policy and program shift that will prioritize groups that have been most affected by the loss of employment and those whose employment prospects are precarious. Varying strategies and culturally appropriate or tailored supports will be needed for each target population. A priority should be placed on Indigenous populations and working with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to develop a National Indigenous Tourism Labour Market Strategy.

A diversified workforce strategy aimed at increasing participation of under-represented groups to fill current and projected needs, along with improved multiple career and worker pathways to increase the access to these jobs, will help the industry recover more rapidly and improve worker retention and resilience in the workplace.

Attracting workers from under-represented groups is good business and makes tourism workplaces better for everyone, including workers and guests. Hiring for diversity is good social policy and makes economic sense. These workplaces have shown to be more profitable, more likely to innovate, and are better at responding effectively to change. Perhaps there is no better time than now to realign the workforce requirements to match the new business models, new visitor markets, and new skills required.



9

Labour Market Data to Inform Policy and Program Decisions

Tourism HR Canada made it a priority to study the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism labour market over the lifespan of the virus. The use of reliable, timely, robust labour market information (LMI) is required for effective policy making and to be able to act quickly and confidently in responding to any crisis that affects the labour market. LMI is important to ensure there are coherent policy decisions that work both at a national level and in a local context.

Mandated shutdowns led to hundreds of thousands of laid-off or furloughed workers in the sector in a very short time. More than one million tourism jobs have been affected and numerous tourism businesses are not expected to survive. Current data also makes it difficult to tell what jobs will be available in six months or a year, given that recovery is tied to the easing of restrictions (with an indefinite or unknown timeframe).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, March 15, 2020), up to 50 million jobs in the travel and tourism sector are at risk worldwide due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Even when portions of the industry begin to open, it will require a gradual and measured response that spans months, if not years. With great uncertainty and unknown threats, people are seeking timely, reliable information to give them confidence in making calculated decisions. (As a direct response to COVID, Tourism HR Canada introduced the [Employment Tracker](#), an essential tool showing monthly labour market impacts on the sector.)



Unlike many economic sectors, tourism is human capital intensive. Developing projections of the medium- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on tourism's labour market will help us understand if the programs in place will be sufficient to help Canadian workers through this crisis, or if more, longer-term support will be needed. The research must also factor in trends and policy decisions and realign with priorities. It must consider all types of available research and data and overcome the challenge of reconciling the significant variation in methodologies.

In March, as businesses were first shuttered, Tourism HR Canada estimated that close to 780,000 jobs were affected by COVID-19 (approximately 43% of the tourism workforce, based on a metric of 70% revenue loss), and that no jobs would be available for the 230,000 students or casual labourers usually hired for the summer season. The following week, Destination Canada reported that 1.66 million tourism employees could be laid off, which accounts for 83% of the workers in the sector. The impact was acute, immediate and estimated to get worse if the industry remained closed.

As a result of the COVID crisis, monthly labour force data reveals that tourism employment has fallen over 880,000, while the number of unemployed individuals has only increased by 342,800.

Tracking the tourism labour force on a monthly basis has already revealed important information about how this crisis is unfolding. Employment in the tourism sector has plummeted, while unemployment has risen sharply. However, while employment has fallen by over 880,000 since February, the number of unemployed individuals has only increased by 342,800. Canadians are only counted as unemployed if they are actively seeking work. This gap between employed and unemployed shows that many who were working are waiting for signals that the job market is recovering before seeking employment. Tracking this data as the crisis evolves and programs like the CERB and CEWS wind down can help us understand if people start to look for work, if they find it, or if they become discouraged and start to drop out of the labour force.



We can already estimate that tourism industries like restaurants, attractions, and recreation facilities will see some rebound in employment when restrictions on local travel are lifted and those on social distancing ease. For hotels, airlines, and tour groups, domestic and international travel must revive before they can expect to see any major increase in employment. Similarly, it is important to estimate the economic outlook in Canada and globally, so we can predict when we can expect to see a significant and sustained revival of tourism demand that supports employment.

It may be many years before we see demand for tourism from both tourists and non-tourist recover to 2019 levels.

Tracking the effect of COVID over the summer of 2020 will be crucial. Many tourism businesses rely on the summer season to make the year profitable. They rely on increased traffic from local visitors and significant revenues from international visitors. Without a profitable summer season, many businesses will find it difficult to survive. The loss of these businesses will inhibit the tourism sector's ability to employ Canadians even when the industry starts to recover.

In the meantime, the labour market will grow as young people gain employment. Projections can help us understand if there will be jobs for young people in tourism. Frontline tourism jobs serve as a key entry point to the labour force for young people, whether it's to build a career in tourism or find a job that that accommodates their schedule and allows them to save money while going to school. A delay entering the labour force can limit early work experience and [have negative long-term consequences for their career progression](#). Considering the tourism sector employs 10% of the Canadian labour force, any significant, long-term downturn in tourism employment would have ramifications that extend to all reaches of the Canadian economy.



One consideration is for the government to invest in a targeted youth employment program that connects young people to employment in tourism jobs. The model would enable young people and those gaining their first work experience to earn income while still eligible for income assistance. As employers recover, this would enable them to build capacity while mitigate risks during a time when revenues will be uncertain.

There is continued need for labour market infrastructure for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data, as well as for qualified analysts specializing in tourism labour market matters. A strengthened statistical infrastructure and ability to act on new types of data and research demands is essential. With COVID, there has been an identification of gaps in labour market information (of past trends and anticipated future demands). Work will be required to address the gaps in research and to improve on the dissemination of the information. Support for labour market policies based on broad stakeholder consultation and with all levels of Canadian governments is needed.

The reduction in tourism employment is likely to delay entry into the labour force for young Canadians. Young people filled 31% of tourism jobs in 2016, according the census, and 28% of Canadians acquired their first job in tourism, where they gained highly transferable and sought-after skills.

Working with employers, governments, and researchers, Tourism HR Canada has been producing foundational labour market data for more than two decades and continues to be the main source of the most comprehensive, timely, and reliable labour market information.

Moving forward, Tourism HR Canada is hoping to secure continued funding from the federal government to maintain its foundational labour market research mandate (which has been in existence since 1994). The proposal will seek to continue to maintain the essential labour market research pillars and to enhance the organization's research capacity and coordination. This will require backing by all tourism stakeholders.



10

Credential Passport: Improving on Worker and Learner Mobility

Beyond dealing with the crisis, it's time to think about the future and investing in systems that will enable a more flexible and responsive workforce—one that can respond to evolving workplace and skills demands or severe business disruptions.

Tourism HR Canada has been working towards a modernized competency-based credentialing system. With funding from Employment and Social Development Canada, Tourism HR Canada has been consulting with industry extensively as it defines the Future Skills Framework—a comprehensive map of the competencies or skills expected of qualified tourism workers (regardless of where they work or what type of job they do). The work embodies the spirit of the tourism brand; in other words, it defines the service standards that enable the Canadian tourism workforce to be globally competitive and ultimately fuel strong economic growth. ([For more information on the Future Skills Framework, click here.](#))

COVID-19 has created some urgency in getting the framework to market. Skills defined in the framework already address new and emergent training or credentialing needs as a result of changes in workplaces.



Moving beyond the framework is the intent to transform the current certification system (the largest competency-based system in Canada next to the Skilled Trades system, with 28 pan-Canadian, employer-endorsed occupational credentials) towards a dynamic assessment and recognition model, so that individuals can be recognized for any type of experience, knowledge, and applied skills. This credential passport would promote the currency of competency across the labour market, beyond tourism. Principally, this helps foster an inclusive, resilient, and mobile workforce—one with greater flexibility and ability to adjust to novel skills and workplace demands.

Tourism HR Canada will be engaging all stakeholders in the design and development of a new funding proposal that will reshape how tourism workers are valued and to improve on their professional, long-term career paths. This future proofing will also help build a more inclusive, responsive, resilient, and mobile workforce.



10-Point Summary: Rebuilding a World-Leading Workforce

The recovery of Canada's tourism workforce requires rapid deployment of resources and a comprehensive engagement strategy that involves all stakeholders. Tourism HR Canada, with a mandate to facilitate, coordinate, and enable human resource development activities which support a globally competitive and sustainable industry and foster the development of a dynamic and resilient workforce, is poised to take the lead on workforce recovery strategies. Ten priority recommendations have been identified as a place to start, many of which build on existing Government of Canada investments:

1. Practical, explicit guidelines

- › Refer industry to authoritative resources that are maintained, many of which are sector specific.
- › Work with government and health authorities to inform, design, and implement further guidelines that will work for tourism operators.

2. Flexible, back-to-work employment insurance scheme

- › Work with government to look at employment insurance programs or policies that will be responsive to the unique issues facing tourism, especially because of the gradual recovery period.

3. Skills training focused on new service and workplace requirements

- › Promote newly created Tourism Workforce Recovery Toolkit (funded, in part, by the Government of Canada, and made available free of charge) and seek additional resources to expand on the products and services (resources) offered in response to emergent needs.
- › Continue to offer and promote the comprehensive list of Emerit online training courses at no cost. Seek funding to further expand content and delivery format options, as needed.



4. Overhauled workforce plans: a post-COVID people strategy

- › Provide tools and support to help employers develop post-COVID workforce strategies.
- › Monitor anticipated changes to labour codes and other regulations that impact workforce practices and inform the sector of these changes.

5. Community labour force development plans and a pan-Canadian tourism labour market strategy

- › Develop and implement a framework for community labour force development planning.
- › Work with the federal and provincial governments, national associations, and other key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive tourism sector labour force strategy that complements the Government of Canada's (i.e., Destination Canada) tourism marketing and growth strategy.

6. Tourism job retention and job growth strategy: marketing tourism as a destination for employment

- › Seek government support to revive Discover Tourism as a key vehicle to drive a tourism job retention and job growth strategy.
- › Equip Tourism HR Canada, national tourism associations, provincial and territorial industry associations, and Destination Canada with a common campaign to promote viable careers in tourism while reinforcing messages on safe travel and good service standards.

7. Newly aligned business and service strategies

- › Provide tools and support to help employers develop new business models and learn to access resources or other supports to refit their operations.
- › Work with governments to seek programs and policies that take into consideration the unique business recovery issues faced by tourism operators.



8. Tailored strategies for targeted populations

- › Develop workforce strategies that will help increase labour force participation of under-represented groups, i.e., Indigenous peoples, new Canadians, international students.
- › Work with colleges and universities to augment or support needs of the future tourism workforce, by offering access to Emerit online learning and joint credentials and promoting these graduates as job ready for quick deployment to the sector.

9. Labour market data to inform policy and program decisions

- › Tourism HR Canada continues to study the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism workforce and disseminate timely, comprehensive information and analysis to help inform policy and program decisions.
- › Tourism HR Canada seeks the renewed agreement with the Government of Canada, with broad support from tourism stakeholders, for the continuation of the Foundational Tourism Labour Market Research mandate.

10. Credential passport: improving on worker and learner mobility

- › Invest in future proofing the tourism workforce by introducing a universal competency credential, which builds on the Future Skills Framework and fosters an inclusive, more resilient and mobile workforce that can quickly adjust to new workforce demands.



Tourism HR Canada works on behalf of tourism's 200,000 employers and 1.8 million workers to respond to new and emergent labour market issues, including:

- › **Skills, Productivity:** e.g., identify required skills, conduct studies to measure productivity
- › **Supply, Attraction and Retention:** e.g., promote tourism careers, articulate career paths, project future occupational and skills needs
- › **Learner and Labour Mobility:** e.g., develop qualifications frameworks, provide tools to facilitate valuation and credit transfer, recognition and reciprocity agreements with foreign credentials
- › **Labour Market Intelligence/Human Capital Strategies:** e.g., conduct research, identify emerging needs, disseminate information, develop plans
- › **Professional Standards:** e.g., set occupational/competency standards, promote training standards
- › **Employer Investments in Training:** e.g., promote and support employer investments in staff training and professional development, demonstrate return on training investment
- › **Improved Curriculum:** e.g., set guidelines for use by educators, conduct research on 'skills in demand'
- › **Labour Market Adjustments:** e.g., develop plans to address local/regional needs
- › **Facilitate Policy Discussions:** e.g., host fora, contribute to industry consultation events
- › **Quality Assurance, Program Accreditation, Rating Programs:** e.g., set quality standards, accredit programs, conduct quality audits

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