

# International Workers and Immigration in Tourism

## Review of Policy Changes and Recommendations

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**An assessment of the impact of recent immigration policy changes (June 2024 – February 2025) and proposal of immigration pathways for addressing labour shortages in the tourism sector**

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Tourism HR Canada is recognized as a global leader in setting occupational standards, building competency frameworks, developing occupational training and certification programs, conducting research into the tourism labour market, and analyzing the resulting data to plan and implement HR strategies for the industry.

Tourism HR Canada supplies tourism stakeholders with the labour market intelligence they need to plan for and overcome their current and future human resource challenges.

For more information, email [research@tourismhr.ca](mailto:research@tourismhr.ca) or visit [TourismHR.ca](https://TourismHR.ca).

The image shows the word 'Canada' in a large, black, serif font. A small Canadian flag is positioned above the letter 'a'.

Funded by the Government of Canada.

*The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.*





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# Project Overview

**Moraine Lake, Banff National Park, Alberta**  
Photo by John Lee



# Project Overview

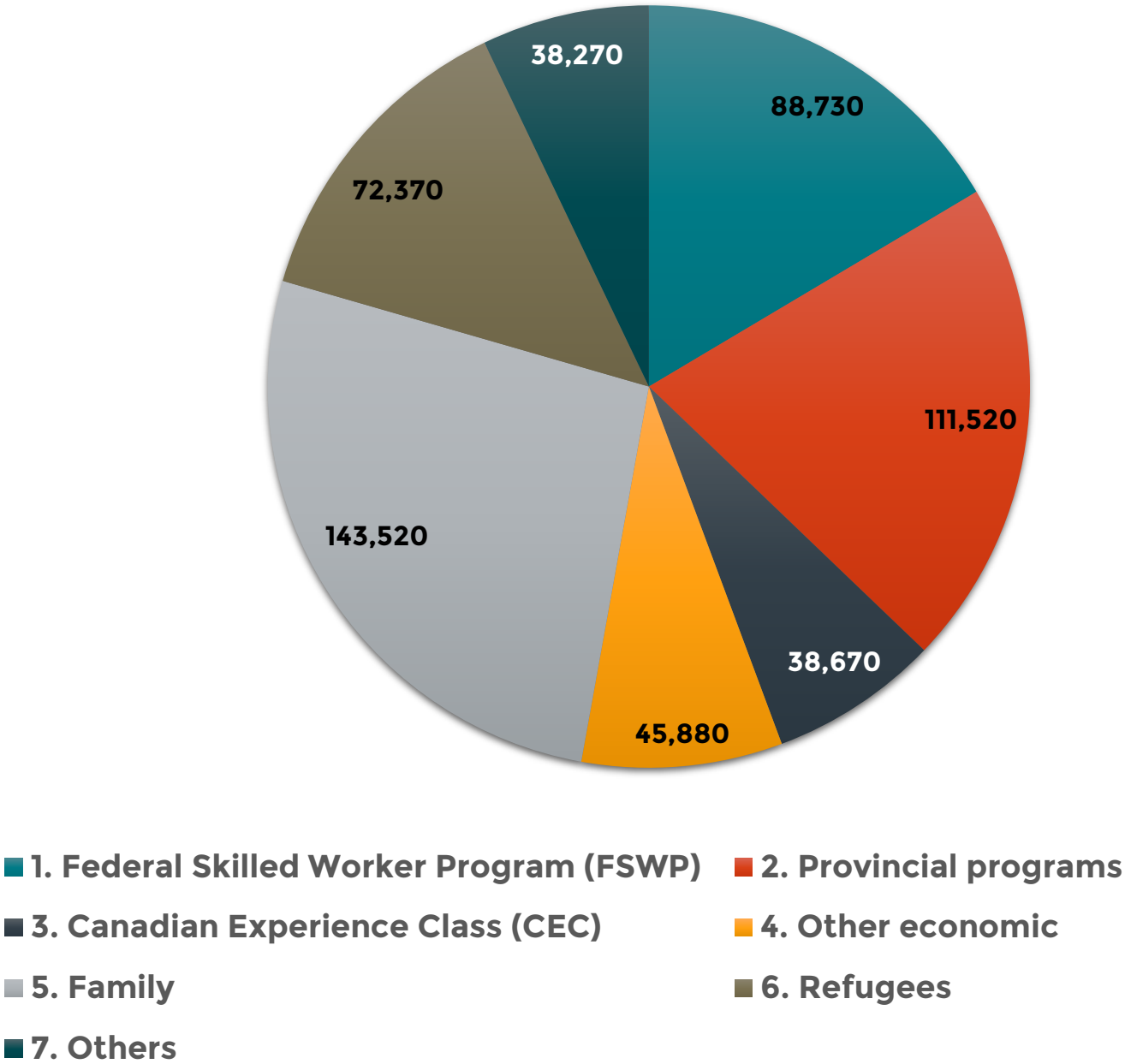
Tourism HR Canada has conducted multiple research initiatives confirming what industry stakeholders have long asserted: navigating Canada’s immigration and foreign worker programs to address labour market needs is complex, cumbersome, and often confusing. A streamlined guide to current, relevant programs would provide a much-needed resource for operators, general managers, and HR teams already facing mounting challenges.

The timing of this project is particularly critical. In the past six months, Canada has introduced some of the most significant changes to its immigration and foreign worker programs in recent memory. Just 15 years ago, the foreign worker program was in its infancy, and immigration remained steady with broad bipartisan and public support. However, in the last five years, historically high immigration and foreign worker numbers—combined with increasing media scrutiny—have led to growing hesitation among employers. Many are reluctant to engage with these programs due to concerns over compliance risks, negative media attention, or the burden of government audits.

Misinformation, inconsistent messaging from various sources, and a general lack of clear guidance have further exacerbated these challenges. This project aims to cut through the noise by offering a straightforward, comprehensive overview of past, present, and future pathways for businesses to access skilled labour efficiently and with confidence.

**Figure 1: Total of temporary residents in the tourism industry in 2020—4,618,330 temporary residents of whom 538,960 held at least one job in the tourism sector**

*(Source: Tourism HR Canada)*



# Project Overview

This project is structured around three key objectives:

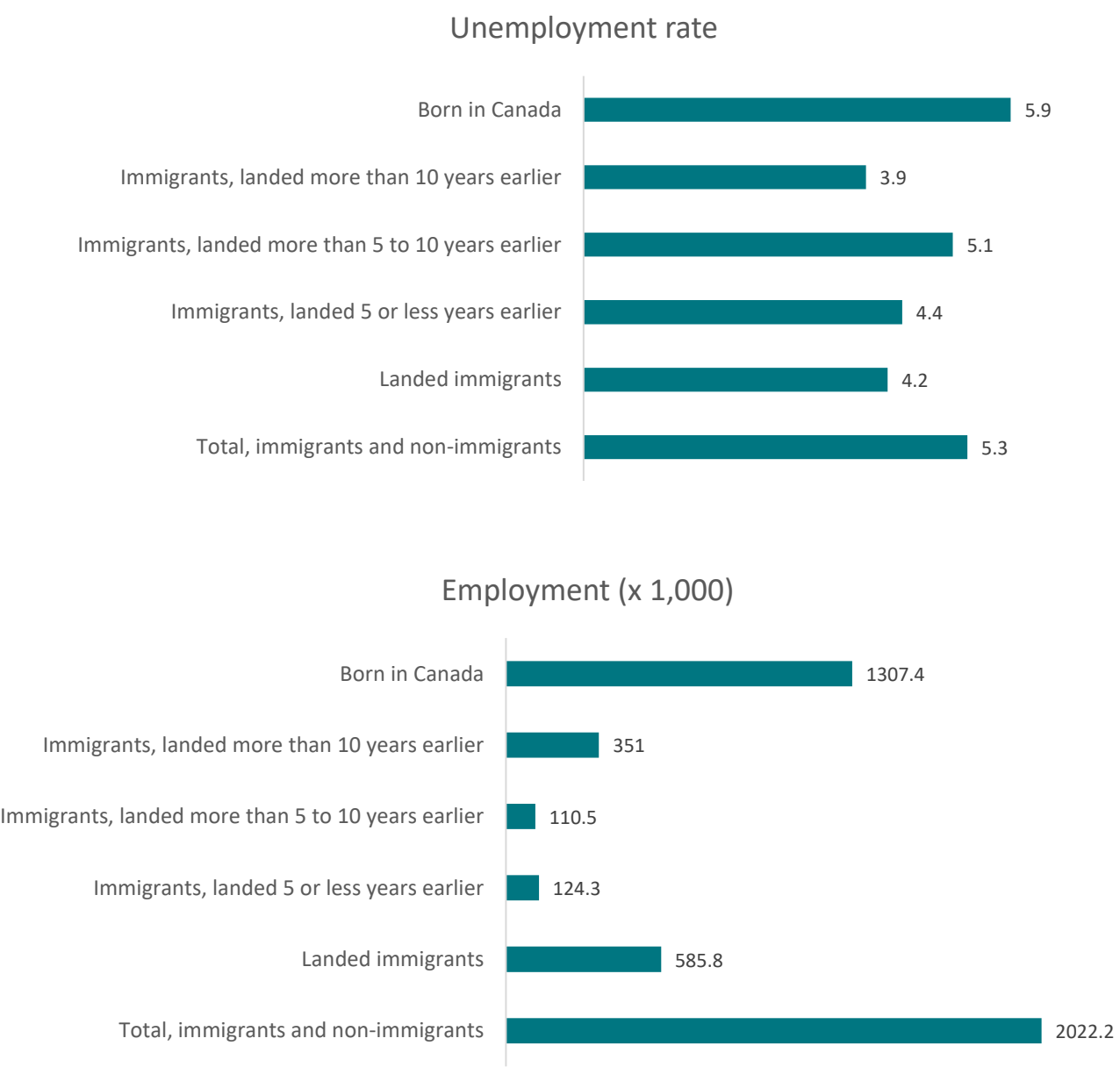
- 1. Summary of Recent Changes:** We will provide a clear and concise overview of recent immigration and foreign worker policy changes that are expected to have an immediate impact on the tourism sector.
- 2. Impact Analysis:** Using relevant data and statistics, we will assess the anticipated effects of these changes on the sector, highlighting key trends and challenges.
- 3. Strategic Solutions:** We will explore the most effective and viable programs currently available for recruiting foreign workers, offering employers practical guidance on navigating the evolving landscape.

## Additional Employer-Focused Recommendations

Beyond workforce recruitment strategies, we will also suggest immediate actions that employers can take to enhance local hiring efforts. These proactive measures will not only address current labour shortages but also strengthen employers’ long-term positioning within the industry.

By aligning immigration strategies with the evolving demands of the tourism sector, this project aims to support short-term recovery while fostering sustainable, long-term growth.

Figure 2: Employment and unemployment rates (%) are from the most recent analysis of the tourism sector provided by Conference Board of Canada



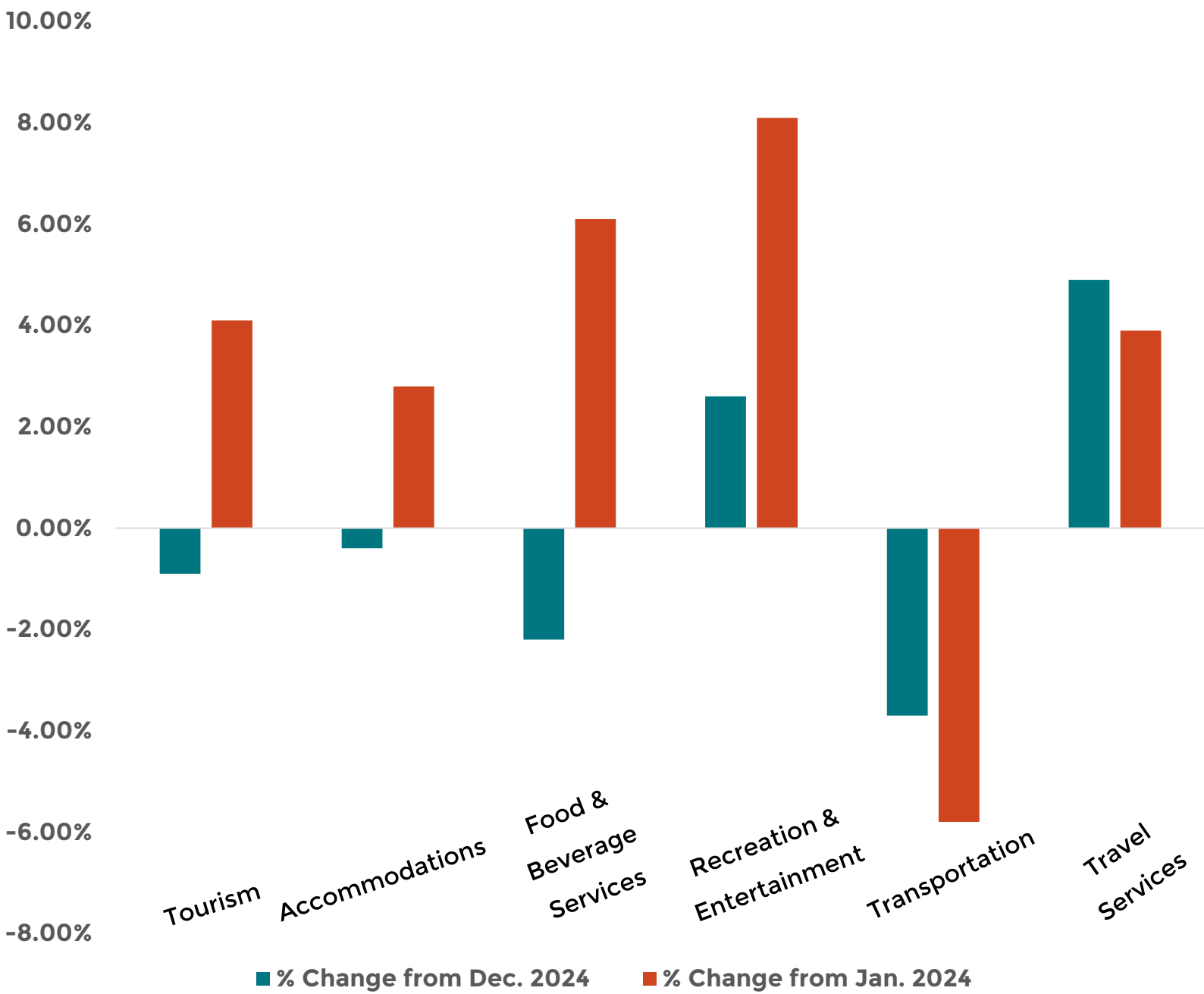
# Project Overview

In January 2025, the tourism labour force took a slight dip—a 0.9% drop from December 2024, with employment falling by 1.4% month-over-month. Yet, it’s not all doom and gloom: compared to January 2024, both the overall labour force and tourism employment are over 4% higher, even nudging past January 2019’s pre-pandemic levels by about 1%.

At an industry group level, most saw declines, except for recreation & entertainment and travel services (though caution is advised with travel services due to its small scale). Overall, tourism now accounts for 9.7% of Canada’s total labour force—just 0.1 percentage points lower than December—but still at 104.1% of January 2024 and 2.0% above pre-pandemic figures. Similarly, tourism employment remains robust at 9.8% of all Canadian jobs and 9.1% of the overall workforce.

But here’s the critical twist: as immigration policies tighten and eligibility criteria shift, the pool of available foreign workers—the very backbone this sector—will shrink dramatically. Employers need to brace for a future where, despite these seemingly stable numbers today, the long-term labour supply could become much more constrained. Now is the time to reexamine your recruitment strategies, build resilient, local talent pipelines, and prepare for a labour market where immigration pathways might not fill the gap as they once did.

Figure 3: Tourism labour force estimates (seasonally unadjusted) in January 2025 as reported by Tourism HR Canada





# Section 1: Recent Changes in Immigration Policy

## Summary

### **Part 1: Changes Related to Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Processes**

These changes affect how employers process applications for temporary foreign workers under both high-wage and low-wage streams. These changes include updated wage thresholds, tighter processing conditions (such as restrictions in regions with high unemployment), and revised caps on the number of temporary foreign workers that can be hired. Employers must now re-evaluate their recruitment strategies and adjust wage offers to comply with these more stringent requirements, which aim to protect the domestic labour market.

### **Part 2: Changes Related to Immigration & Work Permit Reforms**

These changes affect individual pathways and family work permits. This includes procedures for converting visitor status to worker status, such as flagpoling at the border, as well as restrictions on open work permits provided to family members of temporary residents. Together, these reforms streamline status conversion while tightening controls on who is eligible to work, ensuring that both the pathways for individuals and the accompanying family permits align with broader labour market priorities.



**Annie Lake, Yukon, Canada**  
Photo by Andrew Robulack



## Part 1: Changes Related to Labour Market Impact Assessment Processes

The Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) is a crucial mechanism designed to safeguard the Canadian labour market by ensuring that hiring temporary foreign workers does not lead to wage suppression or the displacement of Canadian workers. Employers are required to secure a positive LMIA before they can recruit temporary foreign workers, which ensures that every hire meets strict labour market criteria.

Within the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, there are two distinct LMIA streams—low-wage and high-wage—each determined by the wage level offered. The low-wage stream applies to jobs offering wages below the provincial or territorial median plus 20%, and includes additional requirements such as enhanced worker supports, extra recruitment methods, and specific workforce caps. In contrast, the high-wage stream applies to positions offering wages above that threshold, without such restrictions on hiring numbers or considerations of regional unemployment rates.

**Table 1: Key differences between the low-wage and high-wage streams of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program**

Criteria	Low-Wage Stream	High-Wage Stream
Wage Threshold	Jobs where the offered wage is below the provincial/territorial wage threshold requirement (refer to Table 1)	Jobs where the offered wage is above the provincial/territorial wage threshold requirement (refer to Table 1)
Worker Support Requirements	Employers must provide additional supports, including return transportation to the worker’s country of origin and ensuring or providing suitable accommodation.	No extra support requirements regarding transportation or accommodation.
Recruitment Methods	On top of the required Job Bank Ad, employers must conduct at least two additional recruitment methods that are consistent with the occupation.	Standard recruitment practices apply without the need for additional targeted methods. The advertising requirements are similar to the low-wage stream, but with a need to ensure at least one ad is ‘national in scope’.
Workforce Composition Restrictions	Employers are limited to a TFW complement of 10% of their total workforce at any worksite (up to 20% for certain high-demand sectors).	There is no limit on the number of TFWs an employer can hire.
CMA Unemployment Rate Consideration	LMIA applications will not be processed for positions in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) with an unemployment rate of 6% or higher.	CMA unemployment rates are not taken into consideration during LMIA application assessments.



1.1 Suspension of Processing of Low-Wage Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Applications

Effective September 2024, the processing of LMIA's for the low-wage stream will be suspended in Canadian census metropolitan areas (CMAs) with an **unemployment rate of 6% or higher** (refer to Table 1). While this is intended to boost local employment, it comes with significant potential consequences for sectors that rely heavily on temporary, low-wage labour, particularly the tourism sector.

General Implications

The immediate impact of the LMIA suspension could be more complex than the policy's goals suggest. The suspension of low-wage foreign workers in high-unemployment areas could exacerbate labour shortages rather than alleviate them. By limiting the available pool of workers, employers in sectors like retail, hospitality, and tourism may struggle to find domestic workers willing to fill these positions. In regions with an already tight labour market, this restriction could increase competition for the limited pool of local workers, pushing wages up and raising operating costs. In sectors where profit margins are already tight, such as tourism, this could strain financial sustainability and force businesses to either absorb the higher labour costs or reduce their workforce.

The increased competition for local talent could also lead to a rise in employee turnover, as local workers may leave for higher-paying opportunities in different industries. As businesses face rising labour costs and challenges in retaining staff, there is a risk of operational inefficiencies. With a reduced labour force, businesses might experience delays, service disruptions, or a decline in the overall quality of customer service, which could have a cascading effect on customer satisfaction and the financial performance of these businesses.

Table 2: Wage threshold to determine high- or low-wage LMIA stream as of November 8, 2024

Province/Territory	Wage Threshold
Alberta	\$35.40
British Columbia	\$34.62
Manitoba	\$30.00
New Brunswick	\$28.85
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$31.20
Northwest Territories	\$47.09
Nova Scotia	\$28.80
Nunavut	\$42.00
Ontario	\$34.07
Prince Edward Island	\$28.80
Quebec	\$32.96
Saskatchewan	\$32.40
Yukon	\$43.20

\* Wage rates as of November 8, 2024, represent 20% increase to wage rates.



Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)	Unemployment Rate (%)
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador	6.0
Halifax, Nova Scotia	4.6
Moncton, New Brunswick	5.4
Saint John, New Brunswick	6.1
Saguenay, Quebec	3.2
Québec, Quebec	4.1
Sherbrooke, Quebec	4.1
Trois-Rivières, Quebec	5.2
Montréal, Quebec	6.2
Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	5.4
Kingston, Ontario	5.7
Belleville, Ontario	N/A*
Peterborough, Ontario	4.5
Oshawa, Ontario	7.5
Toronto, Ontario	7.9
Hamilton, Ontario	6.3
St. Catharines-Niagara, Ontario	6.2
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, Ontario	7.3
Brantford, Ontario	4.2
Guelph, Ontario	6.2
London, Ontario	6.4
Windsor, Ontario	8.8
Barrie, Ontario	6.0
Greater Sudbury, Ontario	4.7
Thunder Bay, Ontario	4.9
Winnipeg, Manitoba	5.6
Regina, Saskatchewan	6.1
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	4.3
Lethbridge, Alberta	4.9
Calgary, Alberta	7.5
Edmonton, Alberta	6.8
Kelowna, British Columbia	5.3
Abbotsford-Mission, British Columbia	5.4
Vancouver, British Columbia	5.9
Victoria, British Columbia	3.1

Figure 4: Unemployment rate by CMA, January 2025

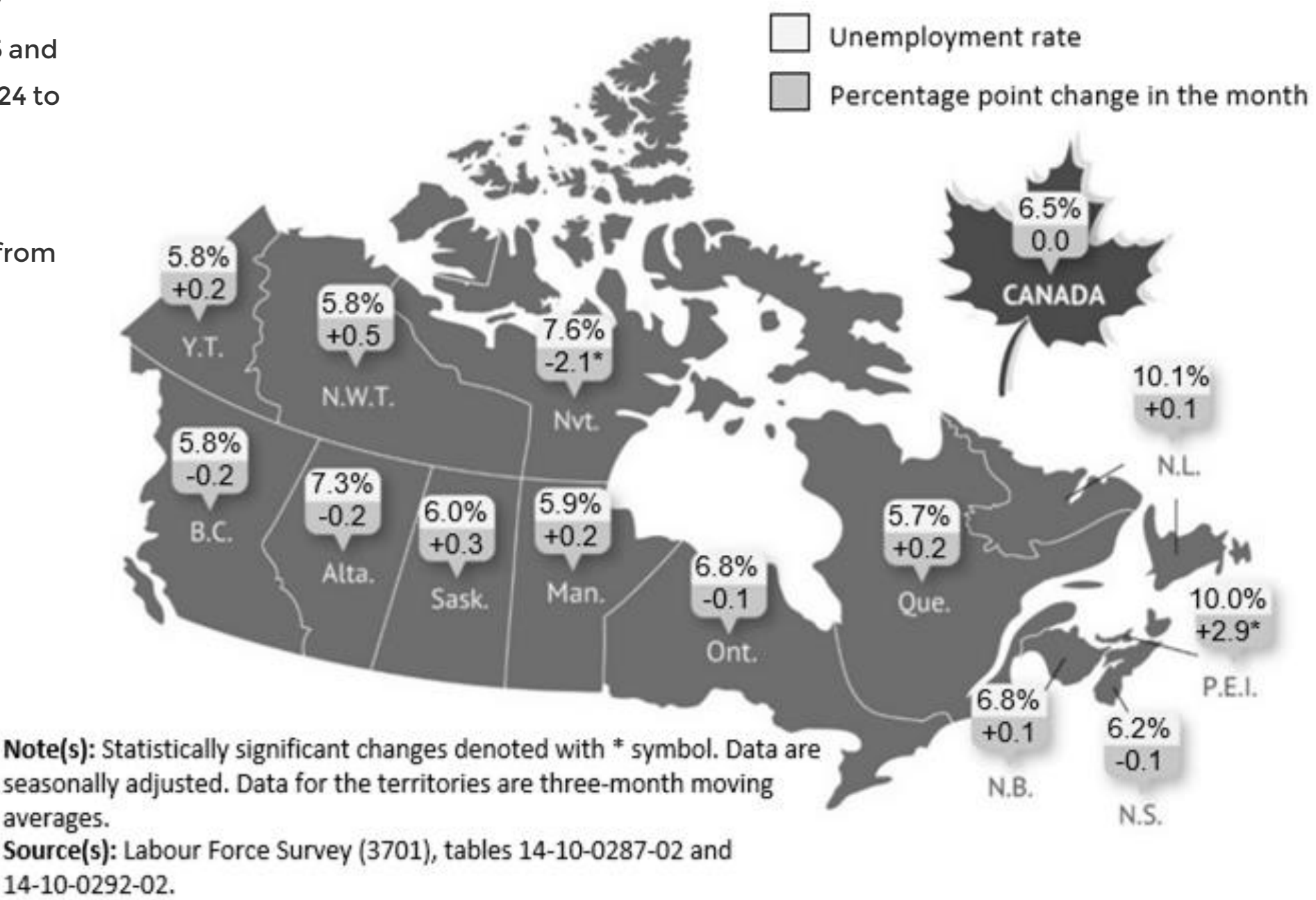




**Figure 5: Unemployment rate by province and territory, January 2025 – Statistics Canada**

This is a map of Canada by province and territory showing the unemployment rate in January 2025 and the percentage point change from December 2024 to January 2025.

The unemployment rate in Canada was 6.6% in January 2025, and the percentage point change from December 2024 to January 2025 was -0.1\*





## 1.2 Increase of Wage Requirements for High-Wage Stream

The high-wage stream of Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) is designed to ensure that foreign workers hired for specialized, high-skilled positions receive competitive wages aligned with prevailing labour market conditions. To strengthen wage standards and reduce potential undercutting of Canadian workers, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) introduced a 20% increase to the provincial and territorial wage threshold for the high-wage stream in November 2024.

This change will simply mean that any employer submitting an LMIA under the high-wage stream will have to pay 20% more than prior to these changes. Any LMIA submitted at a rate lower than the threshold as identified in Table 1 will be assessed under the low-wage stream.

This policy change seeks to uphold labour market integrity by preventing downward pressure on wages while ensuring foreign workers are fairly compensated. However, it also places additional financial burdens on employers, requiring them to adjust salary offers significantly to meet the new requirements.

### General Implications

Raising wage requirements for high-wage foreign workers could have widespread effects on Canada’s labour market. Employers who previously relied on international talent for specialized roles may face increased labour costs, prompting them to reassess hiring strategies. While this move is expected to promote domestic recruitment and wage growth, it may also lead to staffing shortages in industries where skilled local workers are in limited supply.

**Table 2: Wage threshold to determine high- or low-wage LMIA stream as of November 8, 2024**

*(also referenced on p.10)*

Province/Territory	Wage Threshold
Alberta	\$35.40
British Columbia	\$34.62
Manitoba	\$30.00
New Brunswick	\$28.85
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$31.20
Northwest Territories	\$47.09
Nova Scotia	\$28.80
Nunavut	\$42.00
Ontario	\$34.07
Prince Edward Island	\$28.80
Quebec	\$32.96
Saskatchewan	\$32.40
Yukon	\$43.20

\* Wage rates as of November 8, 2024, represent 20% increase to wage rates.



### 1.3 Reduction in Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Validity

As of May 1, 2024, the Government of Canada has implemented stricter rules under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), reducing the validity period of Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) from 12 months to up to 6 months. This means that once an LMIA is issued, employers and foreign workers must act quickly, as the selected worker now has only six months to apply for a work permit. Additionally, as we discuss in the next section, the work permit duration for low-wage LMIAs has been shortened from 24 months to 12 months.

While employers can still obtain an open LMIA for multiple positions, the timeframe in which this LMIA must be used is down from 12 months to 6 months. While employers could previously plan forward well over a year of hiring needs, this new 6-month policy forces employers to hire all their needs in a shorter time frame.

The rollback of extended LMIA validity follows the government's broader shift toward pre-pandemic immigration policies. While temporary pandemic-era measures had extended LMIA validity to 12 months to address labour shortages, the changes announced by Immigration Minister Marc Miller and Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault in March 2024 signal a tightening of temporary worker policies. However, employers participating in the Recognized Employer Pilot program remain exempt, though as that pilot is not accepting any new employers, we will not discuss further.

#### General Implications

These changes introduce significant operational challenges for employers across various sectors. Reducing the LMIA validity period forces businesses to accelerate their recruitment and hiring timelines, increasing administrative pressure and making long-term workforce planning far more difficult. The shorter work permit duration for low-wage LMIA also means that businesses will have to replace and onboard new employees more frequently, increasing costs related to hiring, training, and compliance.

Moreover, the stricter timeframes may discourage some employers from using the TFWP altogether, as the burden of constant reapplication and the risk of not securing a timely worker could outweigh the benefits. This is especially concerning for industries where hiring domestic workers remains a challenge, as it could exacerbate existing labour shortages.



## 1.4 Reduction of Duration of Employment for Low-Wage Stream and a Reduced Cap to 10%

As of September 2024, all LMIA approved for low-wage positions will be limited to a maximum work duration of one year, down from the previous two-year limit. This change applies broadly across the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), including applications processed under the *Traitement Simplifié*, with the exception of occupations in the Primary Agriculture Stream.

Additionally, new restrictions on LMIA processing will prevent applications for low-wage positions in census metropolitan areas where the unemployment rate is 6% or higher. In certain sectors, the cap on the proportion of low-wage foreign workers per employer will be reduced from 20% to 10%, with exceptions for construction and healthcare, where the cap remains at 20%.

Some employers keep their doors open by relying on foreign workers. Restricting an employer to only 10% moving forward will mean many employers will struggle to remain open. While previously an employer with fewer than 10 staff were exempt from the cap, now these employers will be restricted to only one TFW at their workplace. This restriction alone will be devastating to so many small businesses

The new policy aims to prioritize domestic workers by limiting the duration of temporary foreign labour in low-wage roles, encouraging businesses to hire Canadians for longer-term employment.

### General Implications

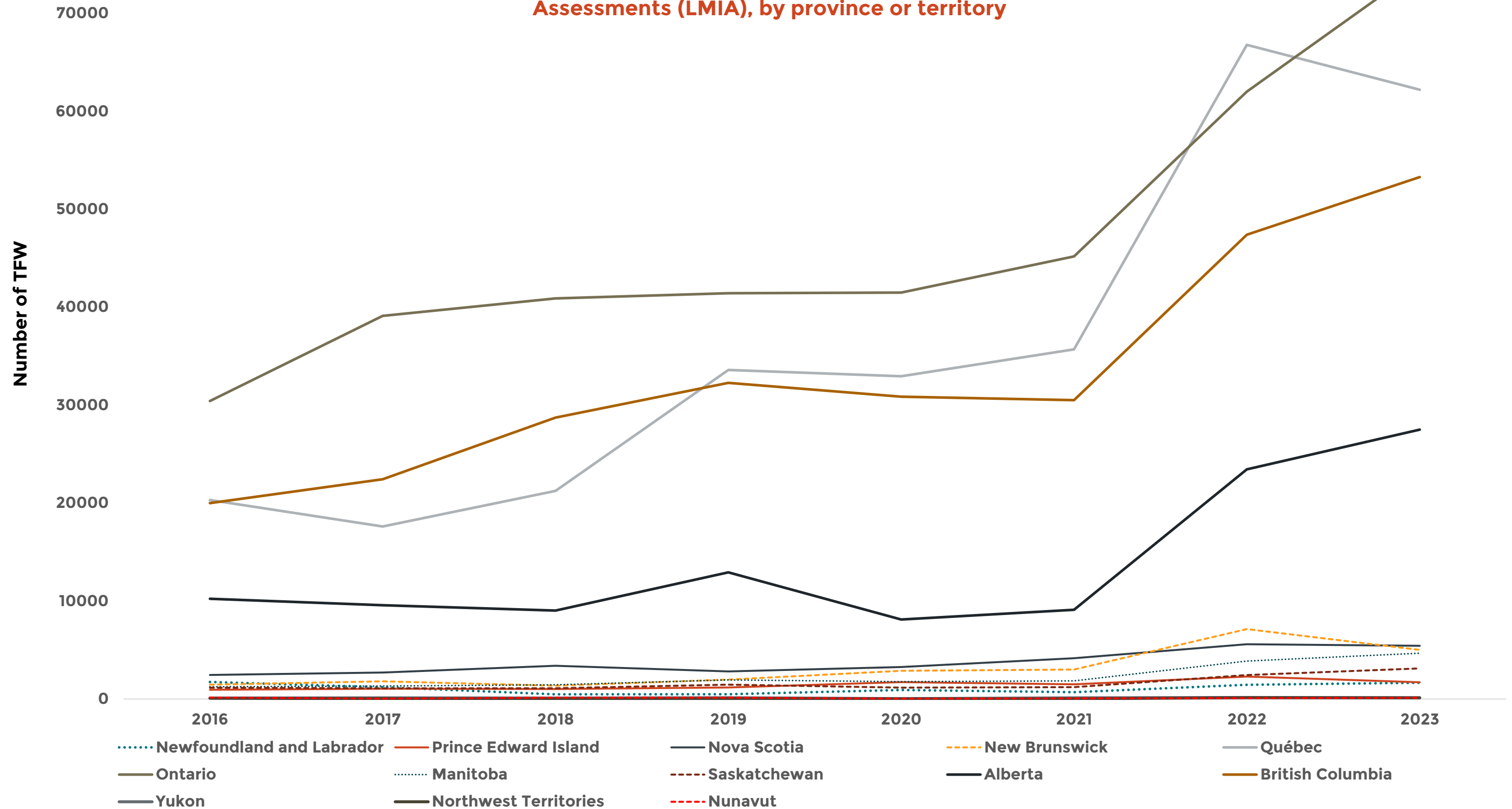
The reduction in employment duration for low-wage positions, combined with tighter processing and hiring caps, will likely increase turnover rates and administrative burdens for employers relying on foreign labour.

Businesses accustomed to a two-year work cycle for temporary foreign workers must now manage more frequent hiring, onboarding, and training processes, increasing costs and reducing stability in their workforce.

In sectors with high reliance on temporary labour, such as hospitality, food service, and manufacturing, the inability to retain workers beyond one year may create staffing shortages, as the constant need to recruit and train new employees could deter employers from utilizing the TFWP altogether. While the intent of this policy is to push businesses toward hiring domestic workers, it remains uncertain whether sufficient local talent will be available or willing to fill these roles.



**Figure 6: Number of temporary foreign worker (TFW) positions covered by positive Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA), by province or territory**



# Part 2: Changes Related to Immigration & Work Permit Reforms

## 2.1 Restrictions to Open Work Permits (OWP) for Family Members of Temporary Residents

Recently, the Government of Canada introduced significant changes to the eligibility criteria for Open Work Permits (OWPs) for family members of temporary residents. Under the revised policy:

- Only the spouses of international students enrolled in specific master’s programs (lasting 16 months or more), doctoral programs, or certain professional and eligible programs will be eligible to apply for an OWP.
- Family members of foreign workers will only qualify if the worker is employed in high-demand sectors, including TEER 0 and 1 occupations, or select TEER 2 and 3 occupations identified as priorities (e.g., healthcare, construction, natural resources, education).
- Additionally, the foreign worker must have at least 16 months remaining on their work permit at the time of application, and dependent children will no longer be eligible for family OWPs.

These changes are designed to limit the availability of open work permits to sectors facing labour shortages, streamline immigration pathways, and prioritize skilled labour within critical industries. However, the tighter eligibility criteria could have unintended consequences for sectors like tourism, which heavily relies on foreign workers, including their families.

### General Implications

The introduction of stricter criteria for OWPs will restrict the ability of foreign workers to bring their family members into Canada, leading to potential labour shortages in sectors already struggling with staffing challenges. By reducing the pool of workers eligible for family permits, this policy limits the flexibility and mobility of foreign workers, which may discourage some from relocating to Canada in the first place. For employers, especially those in seasonal or high-turnover industries like tourism, this could lead to difficulties in attracting or retaining skilled workers. Workers who might have considered relocating with their families could now be hesitant, given the added burden of securing work permits for their spouses or dependent children under the new rules. This could decrease the overall pool of available labour, particularly for positions requiring specific expertise, such as managerial roles in hospitality or specialized technical jobs.

Moreover, the new restriction that family members can only apply for open work permits if the principal applicant's work permit has at least 16 months remaining introduces additional uncertainty for both employers and workers. This requirement adds a layer of complexity to workforce planning, particularly in sectors like tourism, which rely on predictable staffing schedules aligned with peak seasons. Foreign workers and their families may face increased administrative hurdles, and employers could struggle to align the permits of their workers and their families, potentially leading to staff shortages during critical periods.



## 2.2 Visitors No Longer Able to Apply for Work Permits from within Canada

In August 2024, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) unexpectedly ended the temporary public policy that allowed visitors to apply for work permits from within Canada.

Originally introduced in August 2020 to address pandemic-related travel restrictions, this measure provided an alternative pathway for visitors who were unable to leave Canada, enabling them to transition to legal employment without exiting the country. Although the policy was initially set to expire on February 28, 2025, the government decided to end it prematurely as part of a broader strategy to reduce the number of temporary residents and reinforce the integrity of Canada's immigration system.

### General Implications

While the policy change aligns with the government's objective of tightening immigration controls, it removes a key labour supply mechanism that businesses across various industries—especially those with high turnover and seasonal demand—had come to rely on.

The ability of visitors to apply for work permits from within Canada created a bit of a 'pool' of labour for employers to choose from. Workers from many countries came to Canada to take advantage of this opportunity,

which effectively created a larger pool of talent that employers could select from.

By eliminating the ability for visitors to secure work permits from within Canada, the available workforce pool immediately shrinks, increasing reliance on conventional, more bureaucratic hiring processes that often involve delays and additional costs.

For businesses that previously benefited from a flexible and rapid way to hire workers already in Canada, the termination of this policy means longer recruitment cycles, higher administrative burdens, and increased uncertainty in workforce planning. Employers will no longer be able to tap into an immediate supply of labour from visitors already inside the country, forcing them to rely on either the domestic labour market—which may already be saturated—or formal foreign worker programs with longer processing times.



## 2.3 Ending "Flagpoling" for Work and Study Permits at the Border

In a bid to enhance border efficiency and optimize resource allocation, the Government of Canada announced the termination of flagpoling for work and study permit applications. Flagpoling, the process by which temporary residents already in Canada exit—often to the United States or St. Pierre and Miquelon—and re-enter at a port of entry to apply for or renew their permits, has long served as a shortcut to bypass the lengthy inland application process.

Effective December 23, 2024, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) will no longer process these applications through flagpoling. The government's rationale is twofold: first, flagpoling strains CBSA and U.S. border resources, leading to congestion and delays; and second, work and study permit applications are intended to be processed through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), not at border crossings reserved for new arrivals.

This move marks a shift toward stricter immigration control, reinforcing that temporary residents must adhere to the standard inland processing system.

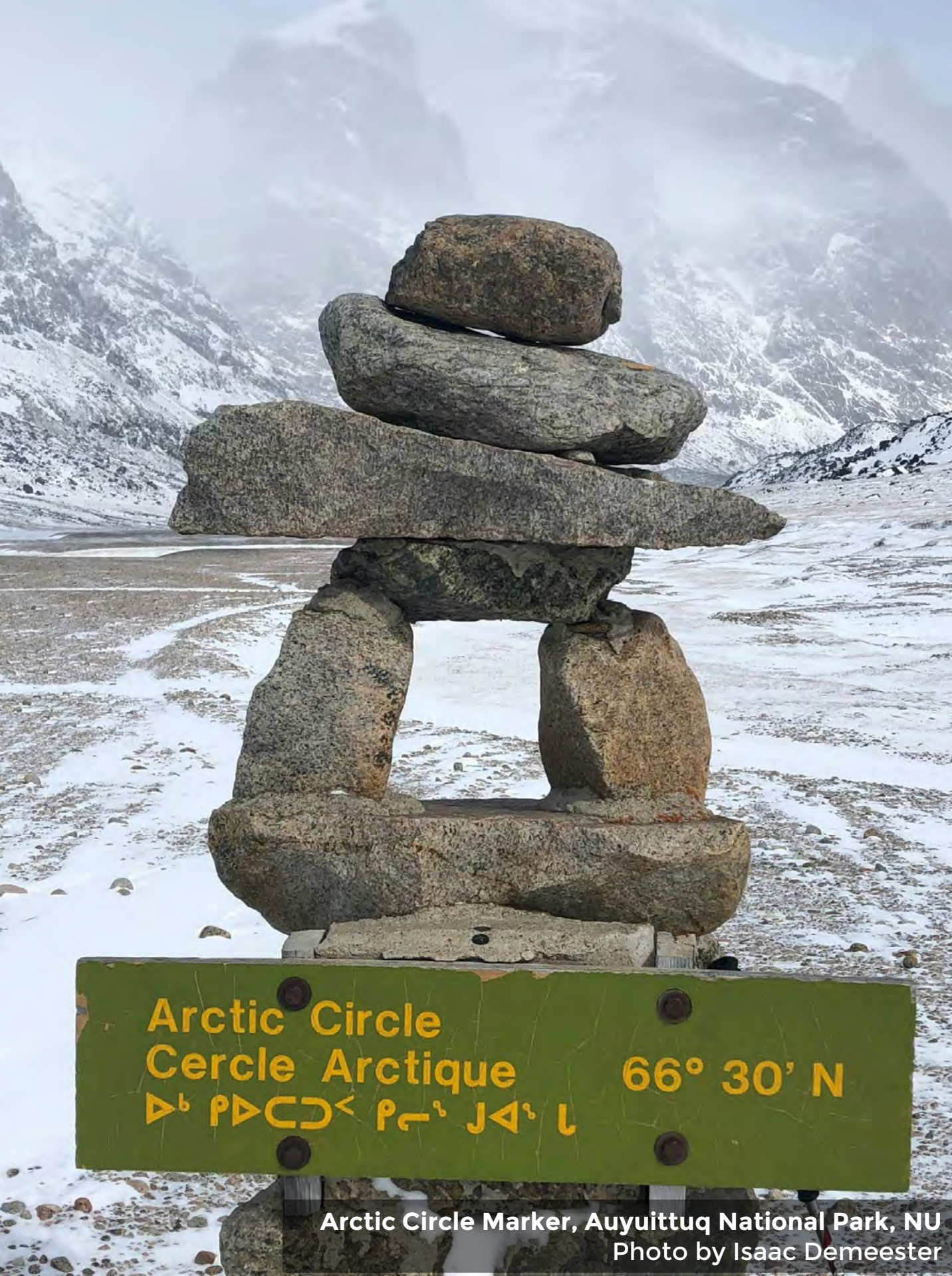
Until the option to flagpole for a work permit was cancelled, many visitors to Canada could find an LMIA, drive to the border and be working the next day.

With the ending of flagpoling, employers with a positive LMIA can no longer benefit from seeing their hired workers show up for work after a quick visit to the nearest American border.



Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, Ucluelet, Canada  
Photo by Lennart Heim





Arctic Circle Marker, Auyuittuq National Park, NU  
Photo by Isaac Demeester

## General Implications

The elimination of flagpoling for work and study permits is expected to have substantial ramifications for Canadian employers, particularly those in the tourism sector, where seasonal and temporary labour are critical to operations.

Traditionally, flagpoling allowed foreign workers to swiftly renew or update their permits at the border, providing a flexible and rapid solution for businesses facing fluctuating labour demands during peak seasons. With this practice now discontinued, employers will need to rely on the inland application process through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), a procedure that may involve longer processing times and more complex administrative requirements. This shift could lead to delays in staffing, increased uncertainty regarding labour availability, and potentially higher costs as businesses adapt their hiring strategies to meet regulatory timelines.

For the tourism sector, where timely workforce deployment is essential to maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction, such delays might disrupt operations during critical periods. Although the policy aims to streamline border operations and reinforce security, its immediate impact necessitates that tourism employers enhance their planning, engage more proactively with immigration procedures, and possibly re-evaluate their labour management strategies to mitigate any adverse effects on business performance.



## Section 2: Impact of Immigration Policy Changes on Tourism Labour



Port de Grave Boat Lighting, Newfoundland  
Photo by Ting ting Chen



# 1. Direct Impacts of Changes of Immigration Policy

## 1.1 Suspension of Low-Wage LMIA Processing in Certain Regions

The tourism sector is particularly vulnerable to this LMIA suspension in regions with greater than 6% unemployment rate, as it relies extensively on foreign workers to fill critical low-wage roles that often fall below the LMIA wage threshold. Positions in housekeeping, food service, maintenance, and customer service are vital to the tourism experience, yet these roles are traditionally less attractive to the local workforce, especially in high-demand tourist seasons when many Canadians prefer jobs with higher wages or more flexibility.

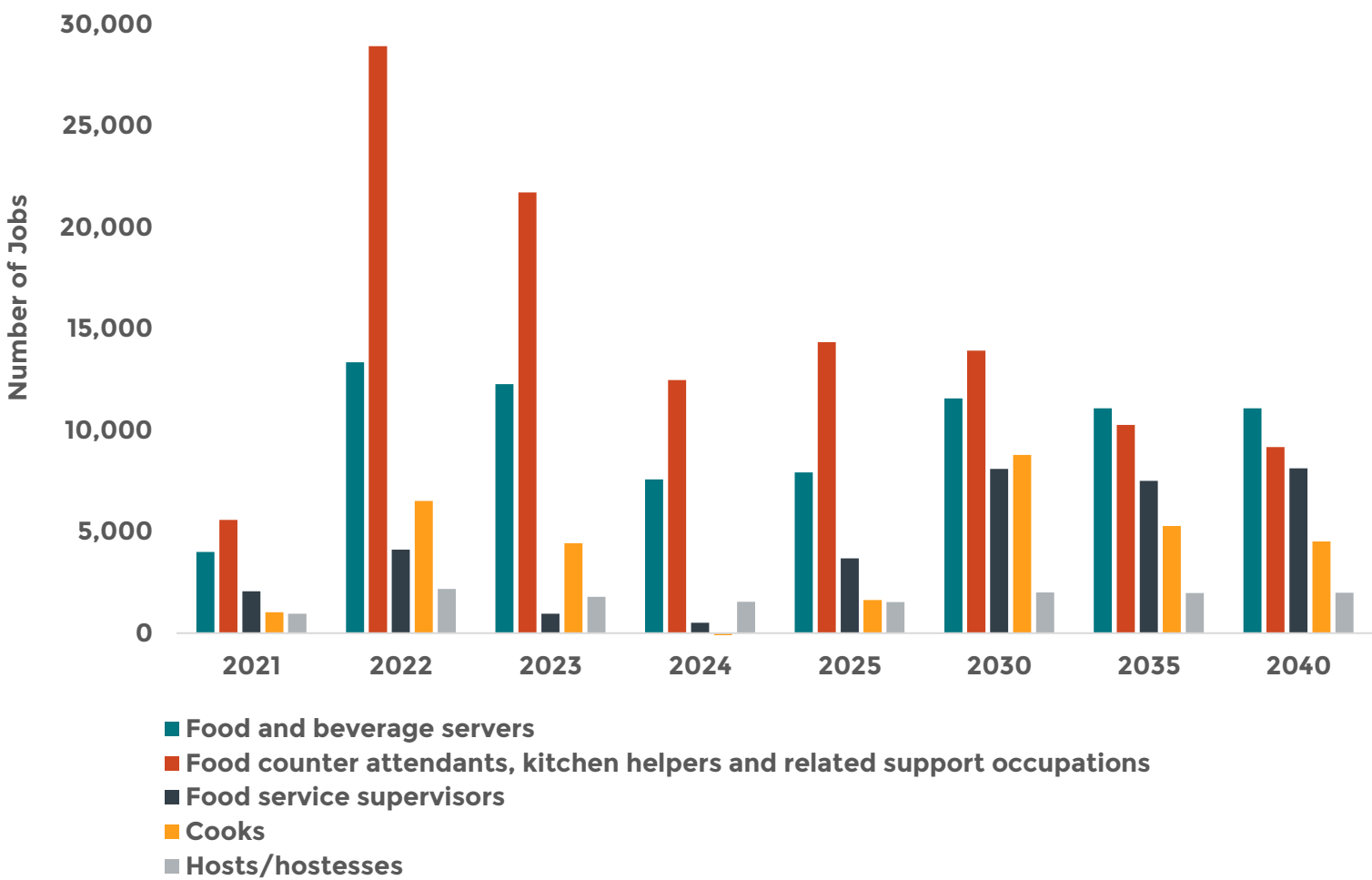
In areas with high unemployment, local workers may lack the specialized skills or relevant experience needed for these roles—such as food service supervision—leaving tourism employers with fewer viable candidates. With the suspension of low-wage foreign workers, these employers may find themselves unable to fill essential positions, resulting in critical staffing shortages. For businesses such as hotels, resorts, and tour operators, this could lead to significant disruptions in service delivery, impacting guest experiences and, consequently, their reputation.

Furthermore, tourism is inherently a service-driven industry, and any decline in service quality—whether in cleaning, maintenance, or food service—can have immediate and profound impacts on customer satisfaction. In an increasingly competitive market, where customer reviews and satisfaction are paramount, a reduction in service quality could directly lead to a loss of

business, decreased revenue, and longer-term economic instability.

In terms of operational capacity, staffing shortages could force businesses to reduce their services or limit hours of operation, further restricting their ability to serve the growing number of tourists. The resulting gap in labour supply might also reduce the efficiency of day-to-day operations, as remaining workers are stretched thin, potentially affecting both the overall morale of staff and the ability to maintain quality service.

**Figure 7: Occupations with the highest number of potentially unfilled jobs in Canada’s tourism sector**  
*(Source: The Conference Board of Canada)*



## 1.2 Impact of the Increase of Wage Requirements for High-Wage Stream

The tourism sector—especially luxury hotels, high-end resorts, and premium tour operators—relies on skilled foreign workers for specialized roles such as chefs, hotel managers, and technical service providers. With higher wage requirements, businesses in this industry may struggle to meet the new criteria, particularly given the sector's traditionally thin profit margins.

Increased labour costs could lead to higher prices for consumers, service reductions, or even difficulties in filling key positions. Since tourism businesses often operate in highly competitive markets, adapting to these wage hikes may require employers to explore alternative solutions, such as restructuring job roles, investing in workforce training, or advocating for sector-specific exemptions.

Ultimately, while the policy aims to strengthen wage fairness and domestic employment, it poses significant challenges for industries that depend on international talent, potentially reshaping hiring practices and operational strategies in the years to come.

## 1.3 Impact of Reduction in LMIA Validity

For the tourism and hospitality sectors, which depend heavily on temporary foreign workers, the reduced LMIA validity and work permit duration present significant hurdles. Seasonal hiring, which previously benefited from extended LMIA timelines, will now become much more constrained. Employers will need to anticipate hiring needs further in advance while navigating a shorter recruitment window, increasing the likelihood of staffing shortages during peak seasons.

Luxury resorts, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses that bring in skilled foreign workers, such as chefs, tour guides, and hotel managers, may struggle to retain talent for extended periods. The need to reapply for LMIAs and work permits annually could drive up labour costs, disrupt operations, and reduce service quality due to constant staff turnover.

These changes may push businesses to explore alternative strategies, such as relying more on automation, shifting focus to domestic recruitment (even if labour shortages persist), or advocating for further exemptions within the TFWP. Without adjustments or sector-specific relief, these restrictions could hinder the tourism industry's ability to maintain stable and experienced staffing, ultimately impacting service delivery and economic growth.



## 1.4 Impact of Reduction of Duration of Employment of Low-Wage Stream

The tourism sector relies heavily on temporary foreign workers for essential roles like housekeeping, food service, and seasonal hospitality. With the new one-year work limit in place, many businesses are now finding it increasingly difficult to keep workers on board for the entire busy season—especially in areas where foreign workers have traditionally filled long-standing staffing gaps.

This change means that companies must replace and train new staff every year. In practice, this leads to more frequent service disruptions, higher costs for recruiting and training, and a drop in day-to-day efficiency. For businesses in remote or resort areas, where finding local workers has always been a challenge, the situation becomes even more complicated. The extra burden of high turnover can eventually reduce the overall capacity to serve customers, push up prices, and lower profits.

Facing these challenges, many tourism operators may need to get creative. Some might turn to automation to cover routine tasks, while others may have to rethink their service models entirely. Additionally, there could be a growing push to seek exemptions tailored to the unique needs of the tourism sector, so that businesses aren't left scrambling for staff when the available pool of foreign workers shrinks.

In essence, while these policy changes aim to tighten Canada's immigration controls, they also create real-world challenges for a sector that depends on a flexible, ready supply of workers. Now more than ever, businesses must

prepare and adapt to ensure that their operations can continue smoothly despite the tightening labour pool.

## 1.5 Impact of Restrictions of Open Work Permits (OWP) for Family Members of Temporary Residents

The tourism sector is particularly vulnerable to the new family open work permit (OWP) restrictions because it relies on a seasonal and diverse workforce that includes international students, foreign workers, and their families. Hotels, restaurants, and recreational services depend on the flexibility and mobility of these workers—a flexibility that was supported by open work permits for family members. With the new restrictions in place, workers who plan to bring their families to Canada may be discouraged, ultimately shrinking the pool of skilled candidates available to the sector.

Additionally, the new rule requiring foreign workers to have at least 16 months remaining on their permits to secure family OWPs creates timing issues. This mismatch between employment contracts and permit eligibility can lead to staffing disruptions, as the seasonal nature of tourism often demands a rapid and predictable flow of workers. Businesses may face increased administrative burdens and higher recruitment costs as they struggle to fill positions, and the exclusion of dependent children from eligibility could further deter potential candidates.

In summary, these changes add another layer of challenge to an already tight labour market in tourism, forcing employers to rethink their staffing strategies and prepare for more frequent and costly hiring cycles.

## 1.6 Impact of Cancelling In-Canada Work Permit Applications for Visitors

When IRCC first announced that visitors could apply for work permits from within Canada, it represented a dual benefit. Not only did this change provide a significant convenience to workers—who could remain in Canada while waiting for their work permit decision—it also bolstered the domestic labour force. Each visitor who successfully converted their status added a vital link to Canada’s labour market, easing staffing shortages and enabling employers to fill positions more swiftly.

With the cancellation of this in-Canada application option, employers have shifted their focus toward hiring workers already residing in Canada. These in-Canada workers benefit from more agile processes, such as the ability to change work permits or request interim work authorizations, which allow them to begin working within days.

However, this shift does not result in a net gain for the labour market; instead, it simply transfers vacancies from one employer to another, as workers moving between positions create gaps that must then be filled.

## 1.7 Impact of the Inability to Flagpole for Work Permit Changes

The foreign worker program was originally designed to address immediate and acute labour shortages in Canada by providing a rapid route for foreign workers to fill critical positions.

Traditionally, flagpoling—a process where workers leave Canada temporarily at the border to re-enter with a new work permit—served as a fast-track method, ensuring that employers could swiftly replace temporary workers without enduring prolonged downtime. With the recent mandate to apply online for new work permits, workers must now rely on interim work authorizations if available or endure the full processing times imposed by IRCC.

As of February 25, 2025, the posted processing times for a new work permit or a change of conditions processed from within Canada has stretched to an average of 117 days. Such a delay is incompatible with the urgent staffing needs of many employers, who are unlikely to leave key positions vacant for over three months. Consequently, the inability to flagpole effectively undermines the program’s original intent, leaving both employers and foreign workers at the mercy of lengthy bureaucratic timelines and disrupting the swift response required to address immediate labour shortages.



## 2. Indirect Impacts of Changes in Immigration Policy

### 2.1 Labour Shortage – Increased Labour Gaps

The tourism sector relies heavily on roles classified under TEER 3, 4, and 5, such as cooks, servers, housekeeping staff, and front desk associates. However, most immigration pathways prioritize TEER 0, 1, and 2 occupations, such as managers and professionals. This misalignment has significant repercussions:

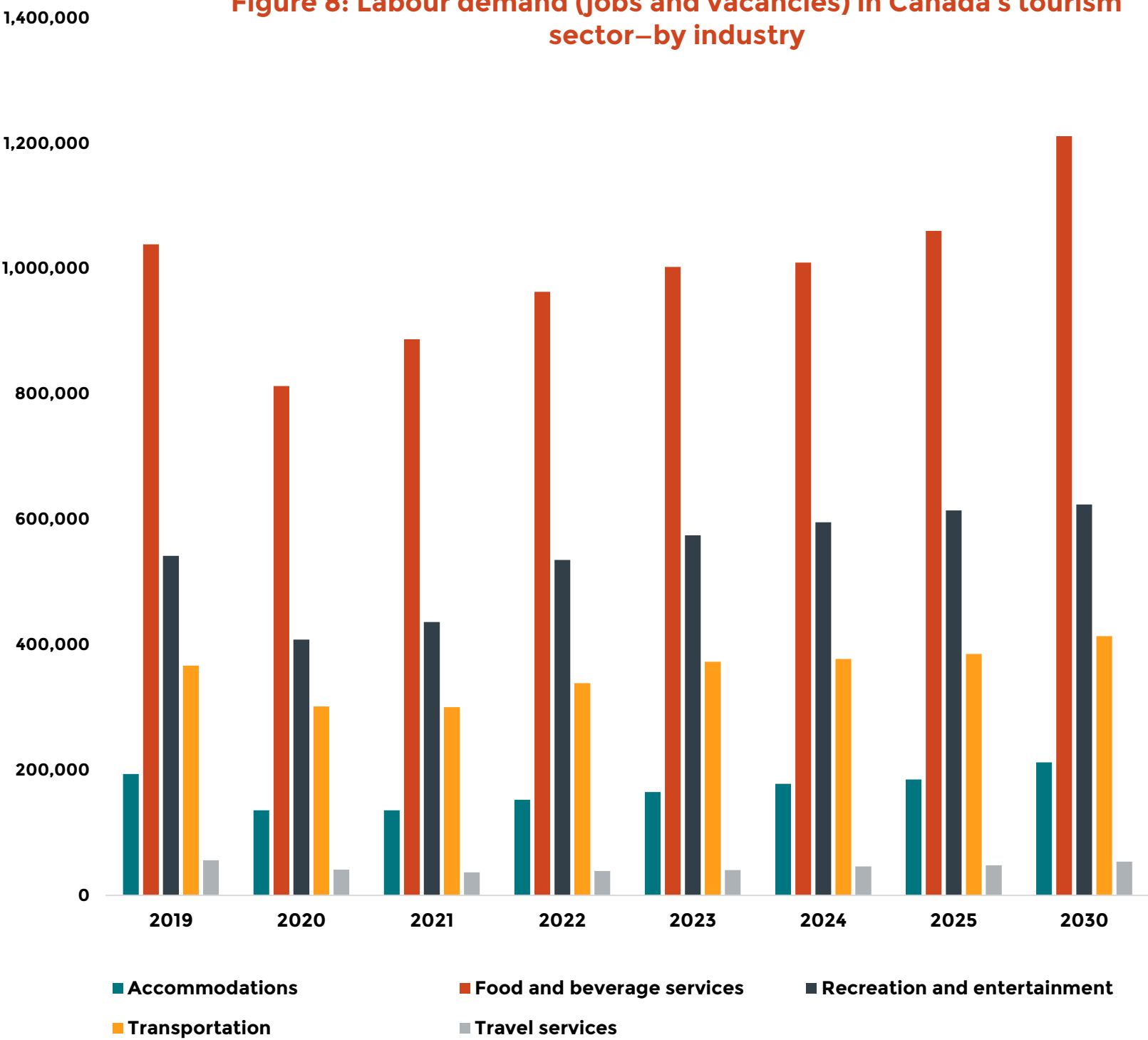
**Reduced Availability of Workers:** Seasonal roles, particularly in remote or high-demand regions, often remain unfilled due to the lack of available workers. This shortage disrupts operations, leading to decreased service capacity and diminished guest experiences.

**Retention Challenges:** Workers in lower TEER roles frequently have limited pathways to permanent residency, resulting in higher turnover rates. The lack of long-term career prospects discourages retention, forcing employers to engage in continuous cycles of hiring and training.

Additionally, seasonal jobs may not count toward permanent residency since the work experience requirements demand continuous, uninterrupted employment. This restriction could push temporary workers to favour stable, year-round positions over seasonal roles to meet the criteria for permanent residency.

**Strain on Existing Staff:** With unfilled positions, existing employees are often required to take on additional responsibilities, leading to burnout and reduced job satisfaction. This, in turn, contributes to further attrition and exacerbates labour shortages.

Figure 8: Labour demand (jobs and vacancies) in Canada’s tourism sector—by industry



Source: Projections-of-Tourism-and-Employment-Demand-in-Canada-2019-2025, Conference Board of Canada



## 2.2 Operational Disruptions

Operational disruptions stemming from labour shortages have wide-ranging ripple effects throughout the tourism sector:

**Longer Wait Times:** Insufficient staff results in longer lines at popular attractions, extended check-in durations at hotels, and reduced dining capacities. These delays negatively impact the guest experience, often leading to frustration and diminished overall satisfaction.

**Increased Costs:** With a limited pool of experienced workers, employers are compelled to invest more heavily in recruitment, onboarding, and training local staff who may lack industry-specific expertise. High turnover rates further exacerbate these expenses, inflating operational costs and squeezing profit margins.

**Lost Customers:** The combination of extended wait times, inconsistent service quality, and the overall stress of navigating understaffed environments can lead to significant customer attrition. Disappointed guests are less likely to return or recommend the destination to others, which not only reduces immediate revenue but also damages long-term brand reputation.

Service quality and guest satisfaction are directly linked to workforce stability. Tourism operators must proactively adapt their strategies—such as leveraging technology, optimizing scheduling, or enhancing staff retention programs—to mitigate these disruptions and preserve customer loyalty.



Assiniboine Park Zoo, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Photo by Eva Blue





Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada  
Photo by Tandem X Visuals

## 2.3 Economic Impact

Labour shortages in the tourism sector have far-reaching economic consequences, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the industry. Key impacts include:

**Revenue Losses:** A lack of available staff reduces service capacity, particularly during peak travel seasons when demand is highest. Hotels, restaurants, and tour operators may be forced to limit bookings, shorten operating hours, or close sections of their business—resulting in significant financial losses.

**Stunted Business Growth:** Small businesses in remote or high-demand tourism regions struggle to expand due to persistent workforce shortages. Many operators are unable to take advantage of growth opportunities, such as increasing service offerings, expanding into new markets, or scaling up operations to accommodate higher tourist volumes.

**Decreased Regional Competitiveness:** Tourism-reliant communities, particularly those in rural or seasonal destinations, face economic stagnation when businesses cannot operate at full capacity. This limits job creation, reduces local tax revenues, and weakens the long-term sustainability of regional tourism economies.

Addressing workforce challenges is essential for maintaining Canada's competitiveness in the global tourism market. Without a stable labour force, businesses risk losing market share to international destinations that can offer more seamless and high-quality visitor experiences. Strategic workforce planning, policy adaptation, and employer-driven initiatives will be crucial in ensuring the sector remains resilient and economically viable.



## 2.4 Reputational Impact on Canada as a Tourism Destination

Labour shortages in the tourism sector not only affect daily operations but also have long-term consequences for Canada's global reputation as a premier travel destination. Key concerns include:

**Decline in Service Quality:** A shortage of skilled tourism workers can lead to inconsistent service and diminished overall guest experiences. Visitors who encounter understaffed hotels, delayed tours, or subpar customer service may leave with negative impressions, reducing the likelihood of repeat visits or positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

**Negative Reviews and Public Perception:** In today's digital landscape, traveller reviews and social media play a critical role in shaping destination choices. Widespread complaints about poor service, understaffed attractions, or closed amenities due to labour shortages can damage Canada's reputation and deter future tourists.

**Loss of Competitive Edge:** Canada competes with other global destinations that offer seamless, high-quality visitor experiences. If travellers perceive Canada as an inconvenient or unreliable destination, they may choose alternative locations with better-staffed resorts, restaurants, and attractions.

**Impact on Repeat Tourism and Business Travel:** Tourism is not just about attracting first-time visitors—it thrives on repeat business and referrals. A negative initial experience can discourage travellers from returning or recommending Canada as a must-visit destination. Business and convention tourism could also suffer if event organizers view Canada as an unreliable location due to service gaps.



St. Anthony, Newfoundland, Canada  
Photo by Brian Emery





Alight at Night Festival, Morrisburg, Ontario  
Photo by Jazmin Million

## Section 3: Recruitment Strategies for Tourism Employers

Given the growing role of non-permanent residents in the workforce and the tourism sector's increasing reliance on foreign workers, it is essential to understand the available immigration pathways for employers. The tourism sector has long tapped into a variety of immigration programs to recruit talent from abroad. The choice of pathway hinges on several factors, including the nature of the job (whether it is temporary or permanent), the qualifications of the worker, and the employer's ability to meet specific program requirements. Each pathway comes with its own set of eligibility criteria and processes, making it crucial for both employers and prospective workers to choose the option that best fits their unique circumstances. The following are some of the primary avenues traditionally used by employers in the tourism sector.



# Pathway 1: Francophone Mobility Program

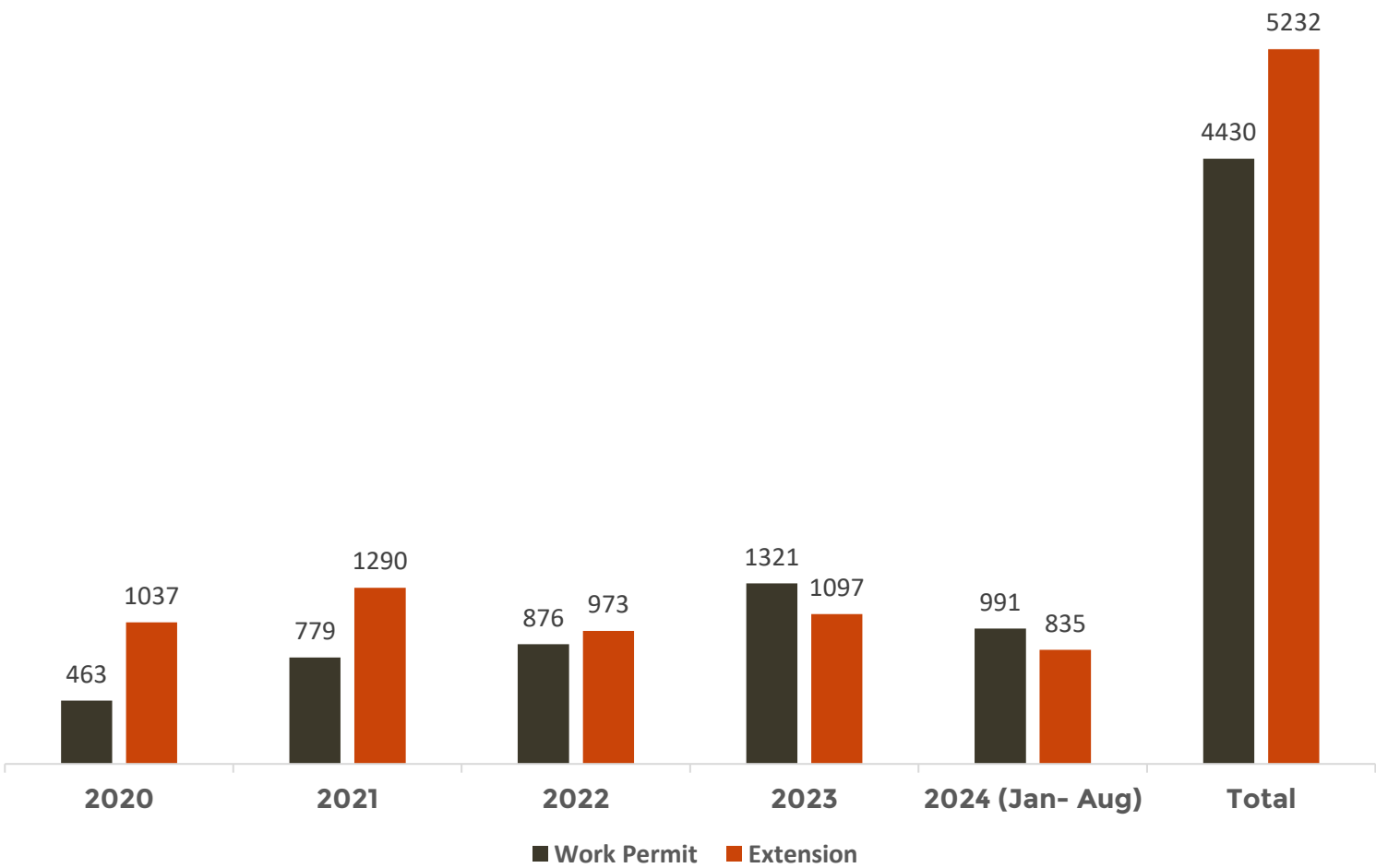
In 2016, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) introduced the Francophone Mobility Program under the International Mobility Program (Labour Market Impact Assessment [LMIA] exempt). Its goal is straightforward: to help employers recruit skilled, French-speaking temporary foreign workers for communities outside Quebec. By offering a LMIA exemption, the program streamlines the process for employers hiring workers to contribute their expertise in Canada’s Francophone minority communities.

Beyond facilitating temporary employment, the program also provides options for some of these skilled workers to transition to permanent residency. For those who have submitted a profile in the Express Entry system, the likelihood of receiving an invitation to apply for permanent residence increases significantly.

In 2019, IRCC issued 1,900 work permits (including extensions) through the program—a volume that remained steady in both 2020 and 2021. Moreover, between June 2016 and December 2020, 1,080 out of 5,700 temporary work permit holders transitioned to permanent residence. Importantly, the Francophone Mobility Program not only supports the recruitment of French-speaking workers from outside Quebec but also enriches Canada’s cultural and linguistic diversity. Recent program expansions have further broadened eligibility—now, workers from all TEER categories (1 through 5) with a valid job offer in managerial, professional, or technical roles can qualify.

Additionally, Francophone workers are crucial in meeting the needs of French-speaking tourists, especially in regions like New Brunswick, Ontario, and Manitoba. Often serving as tour guides, customer service agents, and cultural interpreters, they help ensure that visitors enjoy a truly inclusive and welcoming experience.

Figure 9: Approved Francophone Mobility Program work permits and extensions





# Pathway 1: Francophone Mobility (cont.)

## Eligibility

Francophone recruitment targets French-speaking candidates for tourism roles, particularly in regions outside Quebec. Eligibility focuses on French language proficiency and adaptability to local labour markets.

## Key Considerations

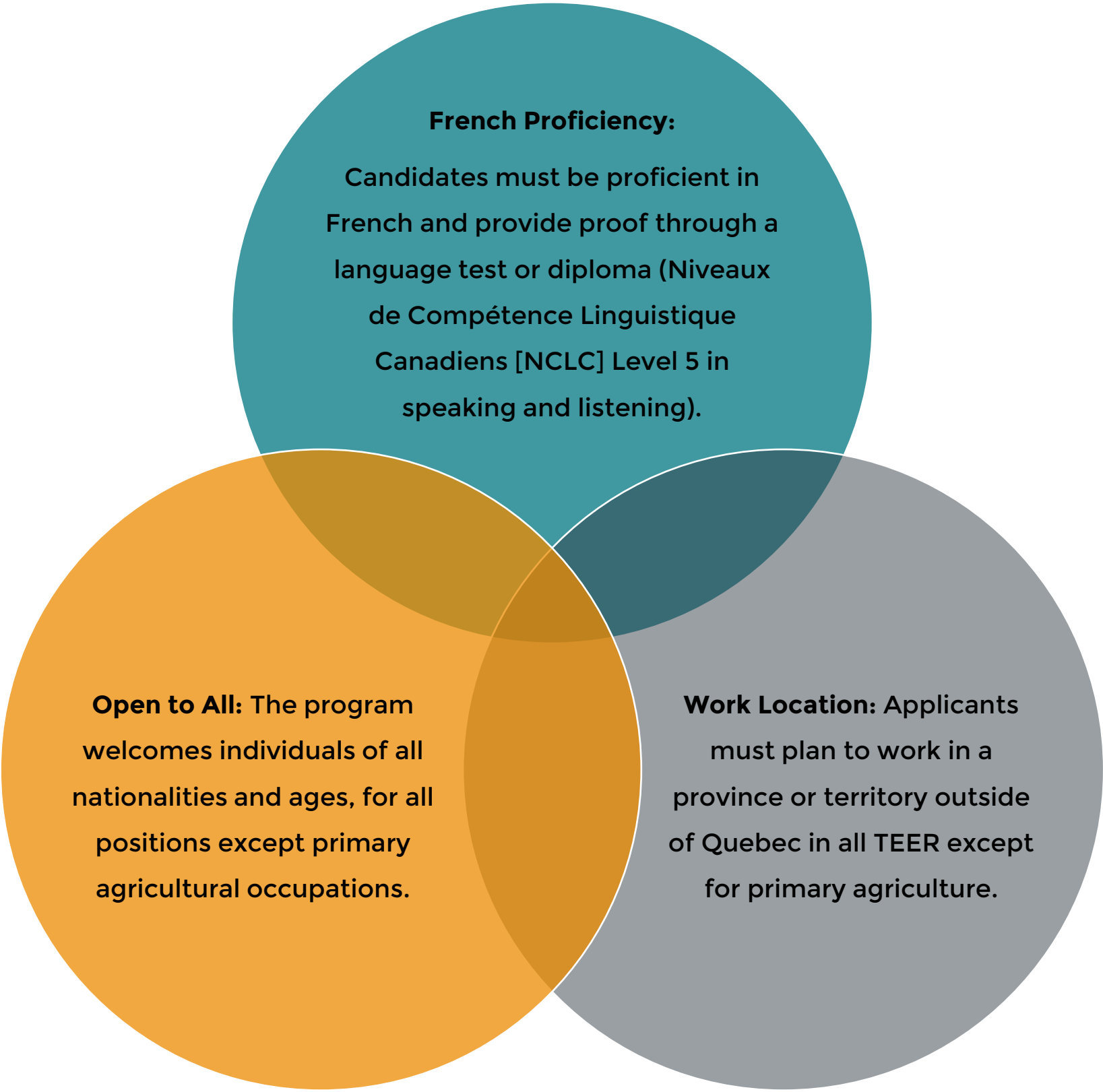
- Leveraging the **Francophone Mobility Program** to fill bilingual roles such as tour guides, customer service representatives, and hospitality managers.
- Highlighting the benefits of bilingualism for international and domestic tourism markets.
- Partnering with Francophone communities and institutions for targeted outreach.

## Pros:

- Access to bilingual employees who enhance guest experiences.
- Simplified hiring processes **without the need for an LMIA**.
- Ability to attract international tourists seeking French-speaking services.

## Cons:

- Limited candidate pool in some regions.
- Need for workplace integration programs to support cultural and language adaptation.
- Some countries lack recognized French language test resources.





# Tips for Employers: Hiring for Francophone Mobility Program

## Local Francophone Associations:

- **Advertise Locally:** Work with your local Francophone association to get the word out or to connect directly with Francophone candidates.
- **Create Bilingual Job Postings:** Ensure your job ads are in both English and French to appeal to a wider range of candidates and demonstrate your commitment to inclusivity.

## Community & Settlement Agencies:

- **Participate in Community Events:** Attend local Francophone community events or job fairs. It’s a grassroots approach that builds trust and visibility.
- **Leverage Settlement Agencies:** While these agencies traditionally focus on helping permanent residents, many are stepping outside their mandates (with IRCC backing) to assist in recruitment. Give them a call—they might surprise you with additional resources.

Table 3: The Francophone Immigration Networks (RIFs) by province and territory

Province/Territory	Organization
Newfoundland and Labrador	<a href="#">FFTNL</a>
Nova Scotia	<a href="#">RIF Nouvelle-Écosse</a>
Prince Edward Island	<a href="#">CIFIPE</a>
New Brunswick	<a href="#">RIF New Brunswick</a>
Eastern Ontario	<a href="#">RSIFEO</a>
Central-Southwestern Ontario	<a href="#">RIF Central-Southwestern Ontario</a>
Northern Ontario	<a href="#">RIF Northern Ontario</a>
Manitoba	<a href="#">RIF Manitoba</a>
Saskatchewan	<a href="#">RIF Saskatchewan</a>
Northwest Territories	<a href="#">RIF Northwest Territories</a>
Alberta	<a href="#">RIF Alberta</a>
British Columbia	<a href="#">RIF British Columbia</a>
Yukon	<a href="#">Association Franco-Yukonnaise (AFY)</a>



## Pathway 2: Applying for a Labour Market Impact Assessment

The LMIA is a critical component of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). It's essentially a government-issued confirmation that hiring a foreign worker won't negatively impact the local labour market. The LMIA process used to be a robust tool for Canadian employers to bring in foreign talent—but it's gotten trickier. This change has hit the tourism sector especially hard. However, if operating in a region where the unemployment rate is below 6%, an LMIA-based strategy for hiring lower-wage staff is still a key option.

While the LMIA program has undergone huge changes, making it less accessible, it is still a very effective method of recruiting labour, and with a falling unemployment rate we can expect Service Canada to loosen the regulations again in the coming months.

Service Canada is very clear on the division of labour:

- **Employer's Role:** Provide the LMIA confirmation letter to your chosen foreign worker.
- **Worker's Role:** Use that letter to apply for a work permit.

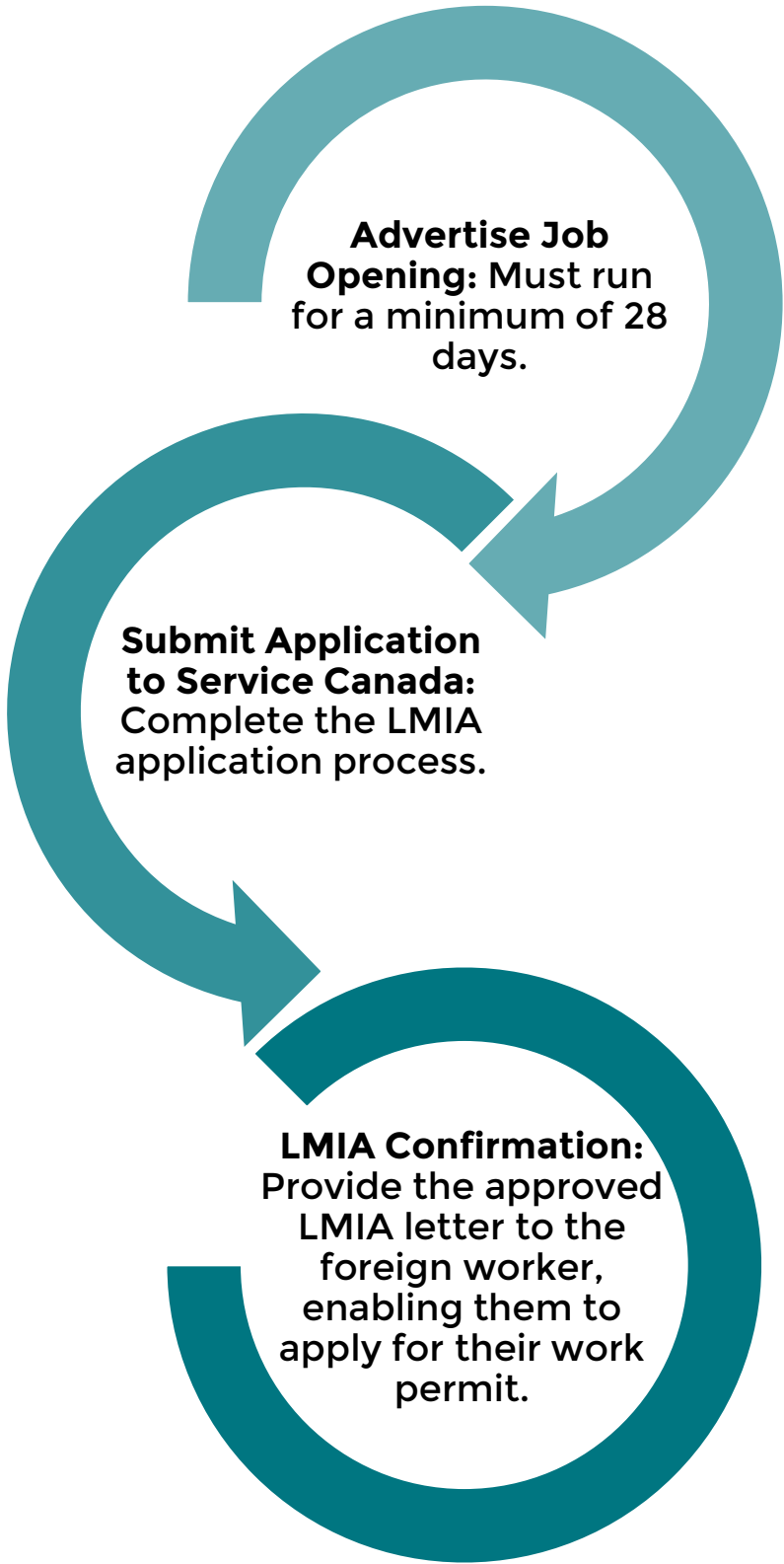
### Regional Employer Registration Requirements

Before submitting an LMIA, some provinces and territories mandate that employers register. This extra step is meant to ensure compliance and maintain a higher level of accountability.

- **Quebec:** Employers must complete additional steps (like managing the Certificat d'Acceptation du Québec [CAQ] process) before they can proceed with the LMIA.
- **Other Regions:** Some provinces may also have registration requirements (Table 4).

The LMIA remains a critical—but increasingly challenging—recruitment tool for Canadian employers, especially in the tourism sector. While the program's reduced accessibility may hinder long-term planning, it still offers value where unemployment rates are low.

Figure 10: An overview of the LMIA application process





**Table 4: Provincial/Territorial requirements for employer registration certificate (or proof of exemption) with their LMIA applications when hiring temporary foreign workers**

Province/Territory	Employer Registration Requirement & Information
British Columbia	Required – Employers must include a copy of their provincial employer registration certificate or proof of exemption.
Manitoba	Required – Employers must provide a provincial employer registration certificate or proof of exemption.
Saskatchewan	Required – Employers must include a certificate of registration or proof of exemption.
Nova Scotia	Required – Employers must provide an employer registration certificate or proof of exemption.
Alberta	Not required – No additional provincial employer registration certificate is mandated for LMIA applications. For general TFWP information, visit Alberta TFWP Guidelines.
Ontario	Not required – Ontario does not require a separate provincial employer registration certificate.
Quebec	Not required – Quebec manages its immigration through federal channels; no additional registration certificate is needed.
New Brunswick	Not required – New Brunswick does not require a separate employer registration certificate for LMIA applications.
Newfoundland and Labrador	Not required – There is no separate provincial registration certificate required.
Prince Edward Island	Not required – No additional provincial employer registration is required.
Northwest Territories	Not required – No separate employer registration certificate is mandated.
Nunavut	Not required – Nunavut does not require a territorial employer registration certificate.
Yukon	Not required – Employers in Yukon are not required to include a territorial employer registration certificate.

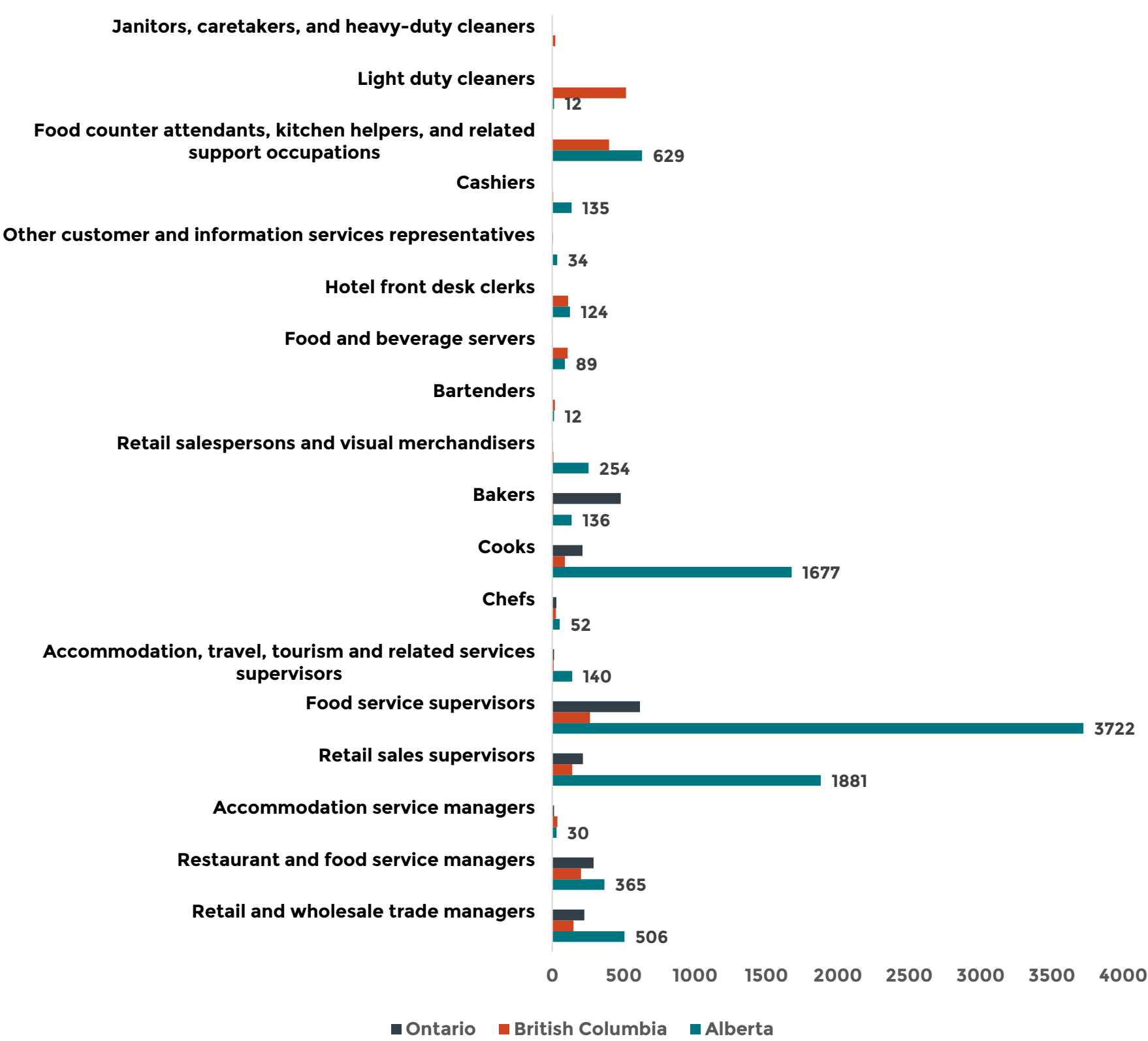
### Pathway 3: Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs)

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is a vital immigration pathway that plays a significant role in building the tourism sector workforce across Canada. By allowing provinces to nominate individuals for permanent residence based on local labour market needs, the PNP helps address critical staffing shortages in a sector that thrives on both skilled and seasonal talent.

**PNPs tend to prefer applicants who are already in Canada working, and not all PNPs are an effective mechanism of recruitment overseas. It would be prudent for an employer to focus on any workers already in Canada, and then support them with their PNP application, which will create a strong employer-employee relationship.**

With the PNP, employers can access a pool of candidates who not only possess the necessary skills but also bring cultural diversity that enriches the overall guest experience. Moreover, the PNP streamlines the immigration process compared to some federal programs. This efficiency allows for a faster transition from recruitment to integration, ensuring that tourism businesses can quickly fill roles during peak seasons or when faced with sudden labour shortages. The pathway to permanent residency also encourages long-term commitment from workers, helping to stabilize the labour force in an industry where consistency and reliability are key.

Figure 11: Total of PNP certificates issued between 2021 – 2024 for some tourism sector roles





**Pathway 3: Provincial Nominee Programs**
*(cont.)*

Several regions have tailored PNP streams to attract tourism workers. For example, Saskatchewan introduced the Hospitality Sector Project in 2021, while Alberta launched the Tourism and Hospitality Stream in March 2024 to retain foreign workers in the sector.

These programs enable provinces to compete for international talent by offering immigration support and incentives. While participants in focus groups acknowledged the benefits of these tourism-focused streams in addressing labour shortages, concerns were also raised. Some foreign workers may move between provinces in search of easier pathways to permanent residency, creating workforce instability. Additionally, critics argue that such programs could discourage employers from raising wages, as foreign workers might accept lower pay to secure residency opportunities.

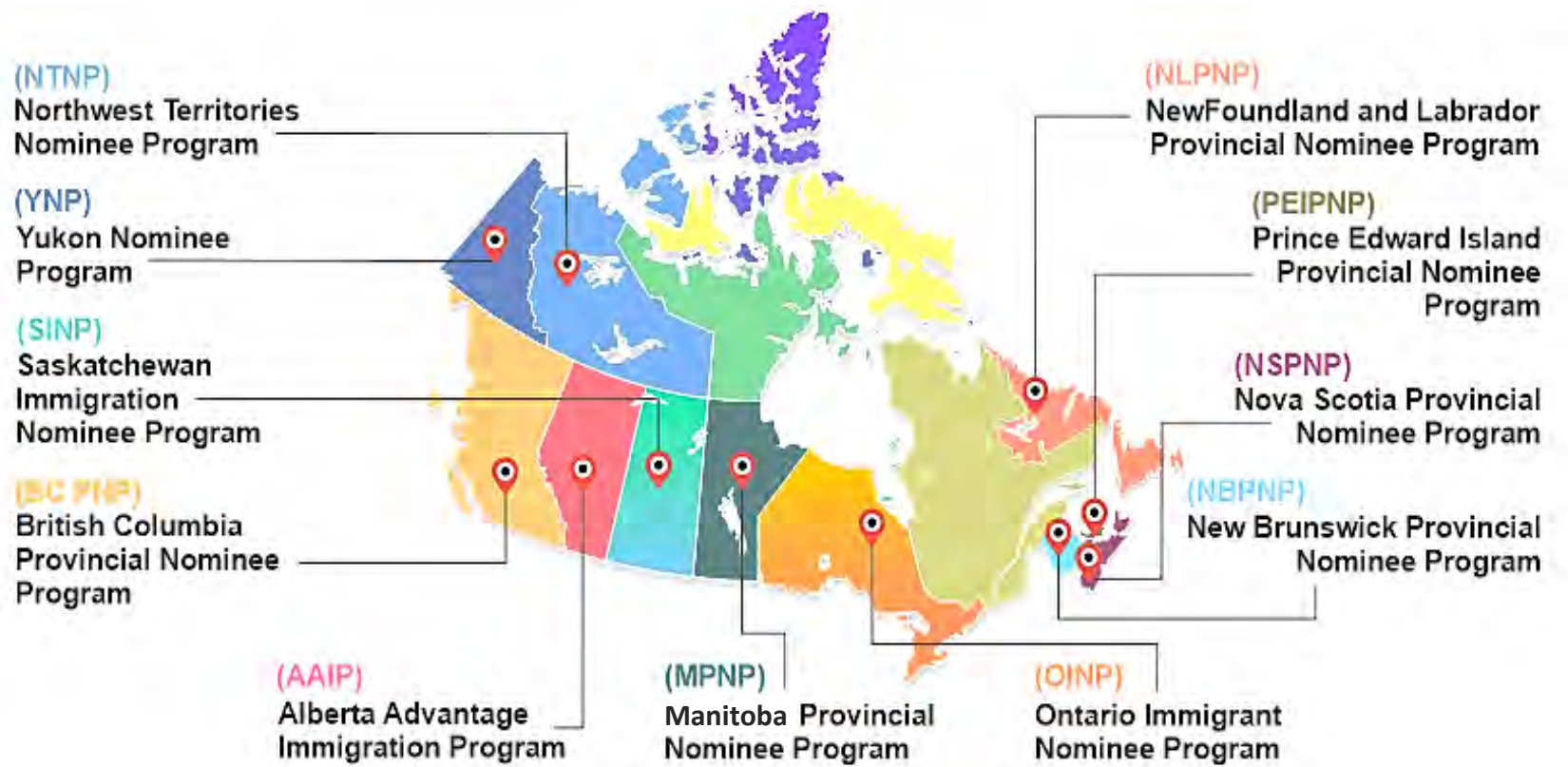
PNPs offer pathways for skilled workers, international graduates, and workers in in-demand occupations, including tourism. Eligibility depends on provincial priorities and industry-specific needs.

For tourism-dependent regions, the PNP offers a tailored approach to recruiting workers with specialized expertise in areas such as hospitality management, culinary arts, event coordination, and customer service. This targeted recruitment is especially beneficial for the tourism sector, where quality service and local knowledge are essential for delivering memorable visitor experiences.

**Why Employers Should Understand Their PNP**

It's essential for employers to familiarize themselves with the basics of their province's or territory's PNP. Many applicants to these programs initially come to Canada as international students. The work experience they gain during their studies and while on their post-graduation work permit (PGWP) enhances their eligibility for the PNP, making them an attractive and skilled workforce.

**Figure 12: A Map of the Current Provincial Nominee Programs**



## Pathway 3: Provincial Nominee Programs *(cont.)*

### Option 1: Though Direct Recruitment

These are PNP streams where an employer can help recruit a candidate who isn't yet working for them in Canada by supporting a work permit application before the candidate begins employment. The work permit serves as a temporary bridge so the candidate can start work for their supporting employer while they await the processing of their permanent residence (PR).

**Job Offer & Work Permit:** The employer extends a genuine job offer from abroad (or from outside their current company) and assists the candidate in obtaining a temporary work permit.

**Application Process:** The candidate uses this work permit to come to Canada and then applies for PR to IRCC with their PNP Certificate.

### Option 2: Through Employer Support for Existing Staff

These PNP streams allow employers to support their current employees—those already working for them in Canada—to transition to permanent residency.

#### Key Features:

- **In-Country Workforce:** The candidate is already employed and integrated into the company and local community.

- **Employer Involvement:** The employer provides a letter of support (and other documentation) to show that the candidate is a valuable existing staff member.
- **Pathway to PR:** This support helps the employee, who already contributes to the local economy, to secure a nomination for PR.

### Additional Note on PNP Allocation Numbers:

When reviewing PNP programs, keep in mind that each province's allocation reflects its focus on in-Canada workers and graduates. Atlantic provinces (like New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) and Saskatchewan also publish their annual targets, which often prioritize applicants already in Canada. These numbers are a reminder that the PNP framework is designed to give preference to those already integrated into the local labour market and educational system.



**Table 5: Provincial/Territorial support and registration conditions for Provincial Nominee Program**

**Please note: Due to the recent 50% reductions in the PNPs across Canada, most programs are undergoing significant changes now and may look very different by mid-2025.**

Province/Territory	Support Existing Worker	Recruit from Outside Canada	Pre-Registration Required by Employer
British Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alberta	Yes	No	No
Saskatchewan	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manitoba	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ontario	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Brunswick	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prince Edward Island	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nova Scotia	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newfoundland and Labrador	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yukon	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northwest Territories	Yes	Yes	Yes



Lac Jacques Cartier  
Photo by Alice Triquet

## Tips for Employers: Hiring through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)

### Key Points:

- **Support Existing Worker:** Employers can nominate current employees for permanent residency.
- **Recruit from Outside Canada:** Employers can, with some programs, hire foreign nationals not currently in Canada.
- **Pre-Registration Required by Employer:** Employers must meet specific criteria and often need to register or get approval from the province before proceeding.

### A Few Hard Truths:

- **Paperwork:** Each province has its own set of forms, requirements, and bureaucratic hoops to jump through.
- **Time-Consuming Processes:** Don't expect overnight results. Processing times can be lengthy, and patience isn't just a virtue—it's a necessity.
- **No Guarantees:** Meeting the basic requirements doesn't ensure approval. Provinces have the final say, and they don't always say "yes".

### Final Word:

- Navigating the PNP maze requires diligence, attention to detail, and a tolerance for administrative headaches. If you're not up for the challenge, consider consulting with an immigration professional who can guide you through the process without sugar-coating the realities.



## Pathway 4: Foreign Nationals in Canada with Work Authorization

Open work permits provide foreign nationals with the flexibility to work for **any employer** in Canada. These permits are commonly issued to international students, spouses of skilled workers, or individuals awaiting permanent residency decisions.

Many open work permit holders may be refugee claimants, awaiting a decision on their claim. This group has grown in recent years and is a very much untapped labour source. Contrary to what we often see in the media, many refugee claimants have highly skilled and diverse backgrounds that are often under-utilized in Canada.

In Canada, both open and post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) allow individuals to work for any employer across the country. However, they differ in terms of eligibility criteria and the specific purposes they serve.

An open work permit is not job-specific, meaning it doesn't require a prior job offer or a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). This type of permit grants the holder the flexibility to work for any employer in Canada, with certain exceptions such as employers who are listed as ineligible. Eligibility for an open work permit can arise under various circumstances.



### Option 1: International Students with Work Authorization

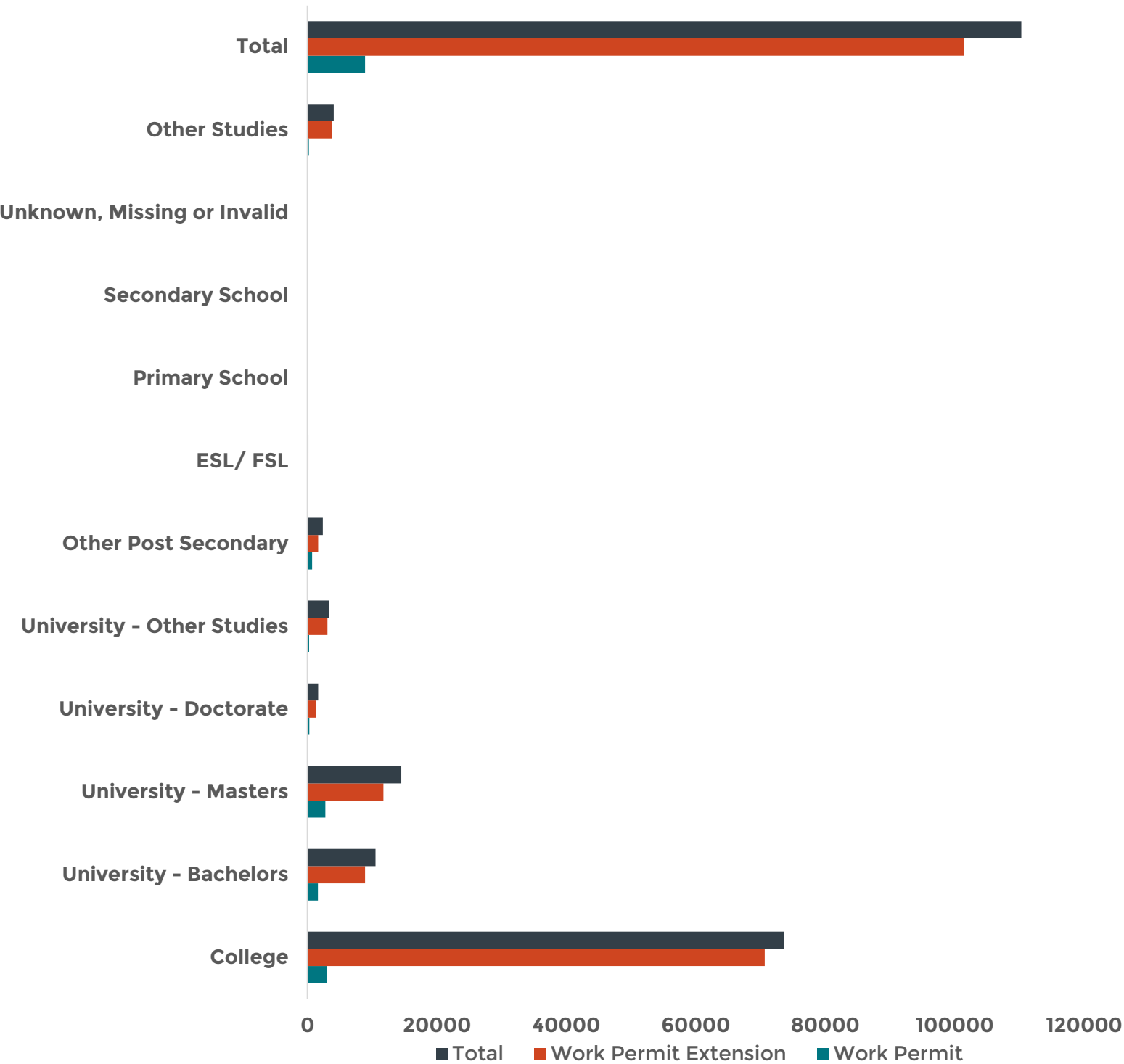
Study permit holders may work off campus without an additional work permit once their studies begin. They can work up to **24 hours per week during academic sessions** and full-time during scheduled breaks.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

- Must hold a **valid study permit** and obtain a **Social Insurance Number (SIN)** before starting work.
- Must be enrolled as a **full-time student** at a designated learning institution (DLI) at the post-secondary level (or a vocational program at the secondary level in Quebec).
- Their program could be academic, vocational, or professional, leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate and lasting at least six months.

If their program requires work placements, students can work as part of a **co-op or internship**—provided the placement is 50% or less of the study program. In 2025, Canada is set to issue around **437,000 study permits** overall, forming a vast pool of potential workers in various sectors.

Figure 13: Number of PGWP Issued January - December 2023 with a prior study permit, by level of study permit





Tips for Employers: Hiring International Students with Work Authorization

Campus Outreach:

- **Job Fairs & Career Centres:** Partner with local colleges and universities to participate in career fairs or host info sessions. These events offer direct access to a motivated pool of talent.
- **Internship/Co-op Programs:** Develop internship or co-op roles that can serve as a trial period for both you and the student. It’s a win-win: they get experience, and you build a pipeline of future employees.

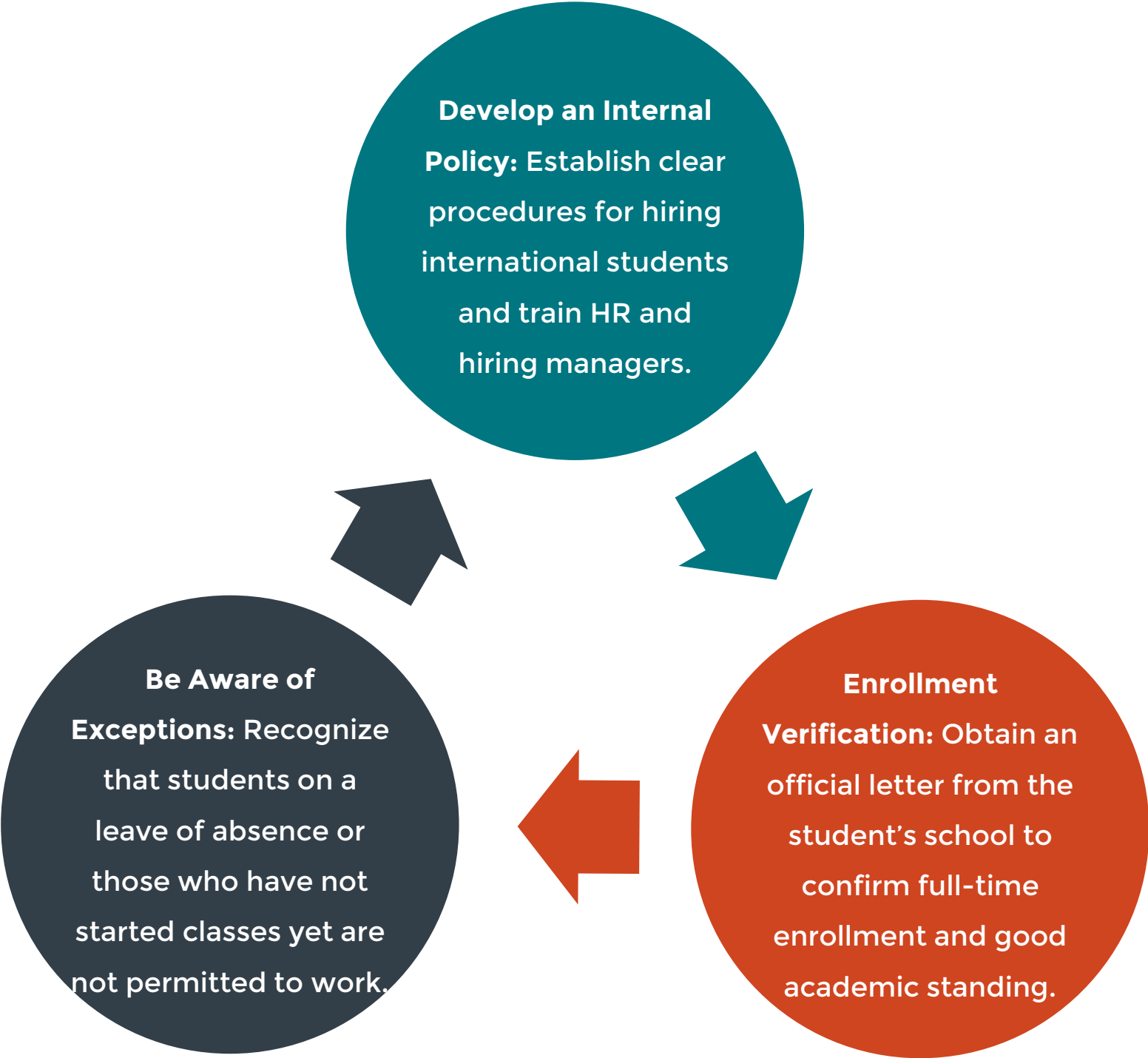
Digital & On-Campus Advertising:

- **Online Job Boards:** Post your vacancies on your institution’s career portal or popular student job platforms.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Leverage your company's social media channels to target campus communities and local student groups.

Double Your Chances:

- **Spousal Benefits:** International students often bring along spouses who might be eligible for open work permits. It’s an efficient way to potentially double your recruitment efforts without extra legwork.

Employers must adhere to Canadian immigration laws when hiring international students to avoid penalties. Key steps include:



Option 2: Post-Graduation Work Permits (PGWPs)

A PGWP is a type of open work permit specifically designed for international students who have completed a program of study at a Canadian designated learning institution (DLI). To be eligible for a PGWP, the student must have:

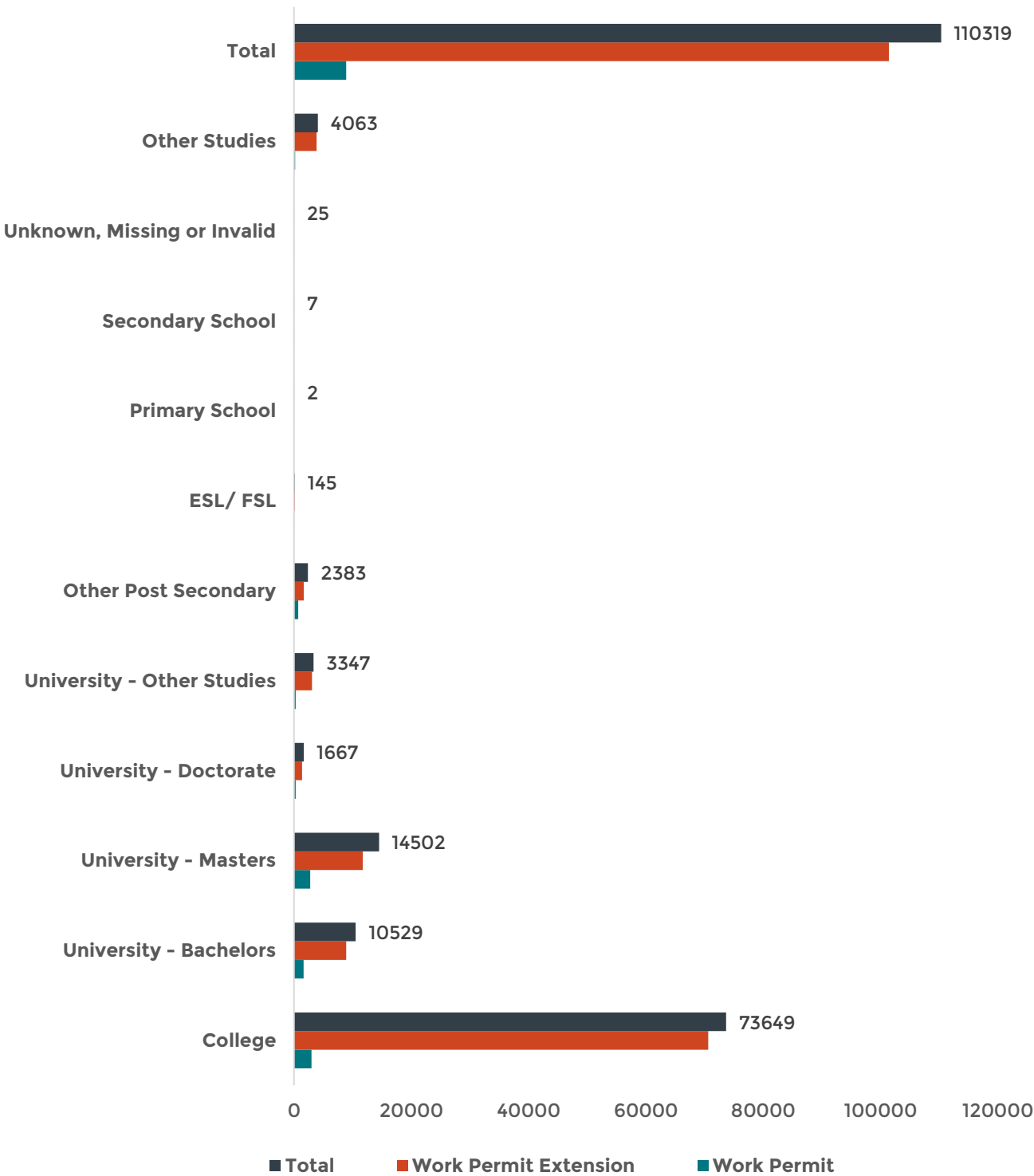
- Completed a study program that was at least eight months long and led to a degree, diploma, or certificate.
- Maintained full-time student status in Canada during each academic session of the program, with some exceptions.
- Graduated from a public post-secondary institution, such as a college, trade or technical school, university, or a private post-secondary institution that operates under the same rules as public institutions.

The validity of a PGWP depends on the length of the study program completed, ranging from a minimum of eight months to a maximum of three years. It's important to note that a PGWP can only be issued once in a lifetime.

Work experience under the PGWP can boost applications for permanent residency through Express Entry or Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs).

Employers who focus on hiring graduates who graduated from programs related to the job offer will see a higher retention rate, as that experience gained after graduation will often provide a competitive advantage to the foreign national when applying for permanent residency.

Figure 14: Number of PGWP issued (Jan 2023 - Dec 2023) with a prior study permit, by level of study permit





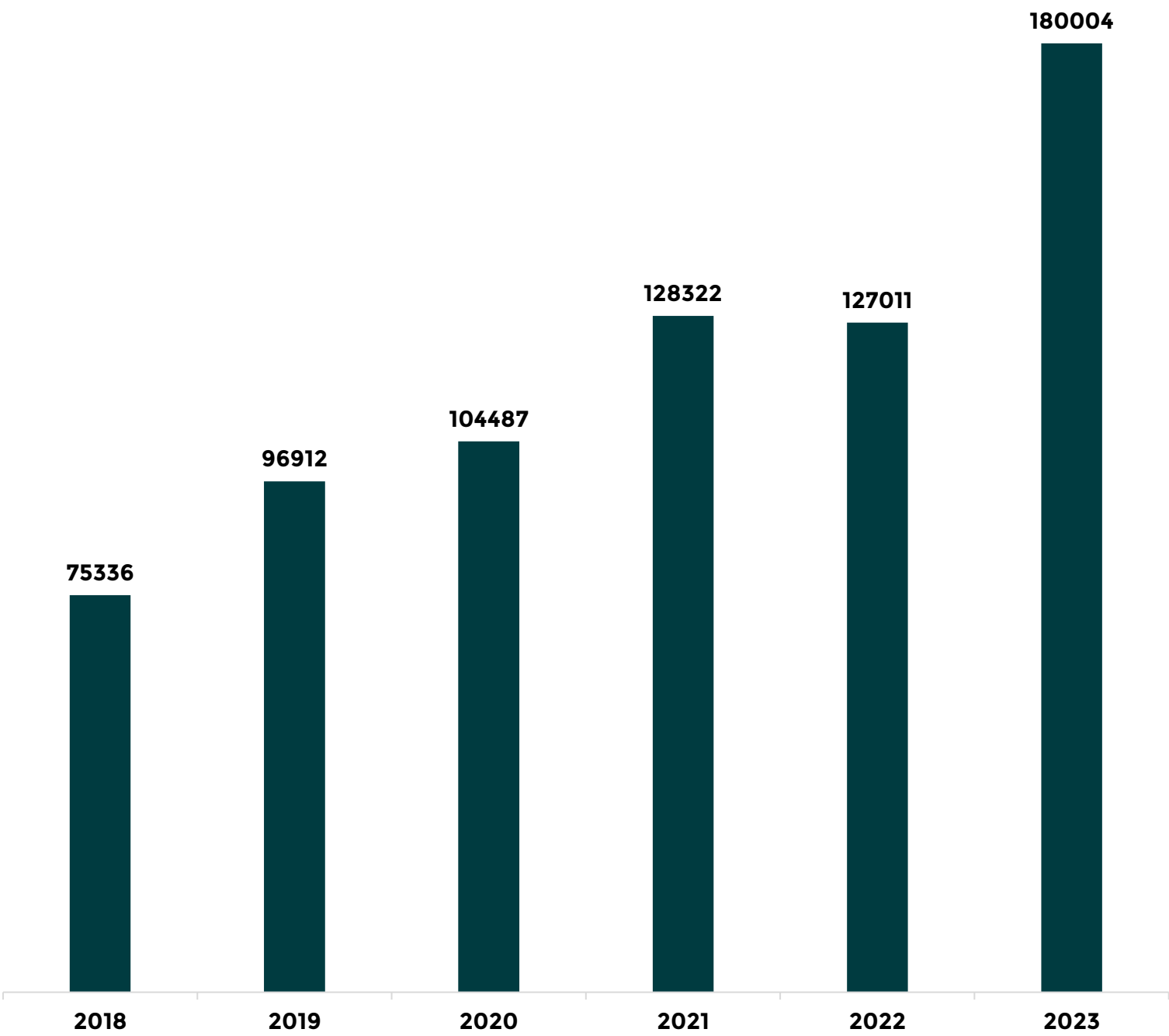
Option 2: Post-Graduation Work Permits (cont.):

Employer Responsibilities

When hiring PGWP holders, employers should:

- **Follow Labour Laws** – Ensure wages, benefits, and working conditions meet Canadian standards.
- **Verify Work Permits** – Confirm validity and legal work authorization.
- **Keep Records** – Track start and end dates of work permits.
- **Offer Clear Job Terms** – Define roles and responsibilities to comply with regulations.
- **Support Permanent Residency Applications** – Assist with references or documentation if employees pursue permanent residency.
- **Help with Integration** – Provide training and resources for workplace adaptation.
- **Track Work Hours** – Ensure compliance with overtime and labour laws.
- **Prioritize Safety** – Offer proper health and safety training.
- **Ensure Fair Treatment** – Provide equal opportunities and benefits.
- **Meet Reporting Obligations** – Be aware of any PGWP conditions and address issues as needed.
- **Guide on Termination** – Support employees in navigating their next steps if employment ends early.

Figure 15: Number of Post-Graduation Work Permits (Jan 2018 to Aug 2023)



## Tips for Employers: Recruiting Post-Graduation Work Permit Holders

### Campus & Alumni Outreach:

- **Targeted Job Fairs:** Attend career fairs or host PGWP-specific recruitment events at schools. It's a straightforward way to meet fresh talent who are eager to launch their careers.
- **Alumni Networks:** Tap into your institution's alumni community. Many recent graduates are connected through these networks, and a recommendation from a trusted source goes a long way.

### Internship-to-Hire Pipeline:

- **Trial Internships:** Offer internships or co-op programs that double as extended job interviews. It's a practical way to evaluate potential hires without committing immediately.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Pair PGWP holders with seasoned employees. This not only speeds up integration but also builds loyalty—it's an old-school approach that still works.

### Digital Recruitment:

- **University Portals & Job Boards:** Post your vacancies on campus career sites and specialized job boards that cater to recent graduates.

- **Social Media & Professional Networks:** Leverage platforms like LinkedIn to share job openings. A direct message can sometimes do more than a bland job ad ever could.

### Partnerships with Settlement & Support Agencies:

- **Settlement Collaborations:** Even though settlement agencies traditionally focus on permanent residents, many are now stepping beyond their mandate to help PGWP holders. Consider reaching out—they might have extra resources or advice.
- **Government & IRCC Programs:** Keep an eye on any incentives or programs that aim to retain PGWP talent. It might save you some hassle and even some dollars in the long run.

### Pathways to Permanency:

- **Highlight Sponsorship Options:** Make it clear in your job postings if there's potential for sponsorship towards permanent residency. PGWP holders are often on the lookout for employers who can offer a longer-term plan.
- **Career Growth Roadmaps:** Lay out a clear path for career development. It's not just about filling a vacancy; it's about investing in future leaders.





## Pathway 5: Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

Canada has established multiple Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that facilitate trade, investment, and workforce mobility. Key agreements include:

- Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA): These agreements streamline the entry of skilled professionals, including those in tourism, hospitality, and service industries, allowing them to contribute expertise in areas such as event planning and travel consultancy. (Note: At the time of writing, the future of CUSMA is riding a political roller coaster.)
- Under the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Canada grants LMIA-exempt work permit access to eligible workers from member countries, including Japan, Australia, and Vietnam, facilitating easier entry into the Canadian labour market.
- Under the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement (CKFTA), eligible South Korean workers can obtain LMIA-exempt work permits, facilitating easier access to the Canadian labour market and enhancing the exchange of goods and services.

Furthermore, Canada is actively negotiating additional FTAs, such as with Indonesia and Ecuador, to further diversify its trade partnerships.

These agreements play a significant role in shaping the country's labour market and foreign worker recruitment strategies and sometimes they include provisions that facilitate the temporary entry of foreign workers, including professionals, intra-company transferees, traders, and investors. These provisions allow eligible individuals to obtain work permits without the need for an LMIA, thereby streamlining the process for employers to access international talent.



## Pathway 5: Free Trade Agreements *(cont.)*

**Eligible Positions:** Determine whether the roles you need to fill are among those recognized under the relevant trade agreement. For instance, CUSMA lists approximately 60 professions eligible for facilitated work permits, primarily in fields like engineering, accounting, and scientific research.

**Documentation and Compliance:** Each agreement has specific requirements and documentation standards. Ensuring compliance can be complex and time-consuming.

### Pros:

- **Simplified Work Permit Process:** For eligible professions, the process is more straightforward, often bypassing the LMIA requirement.
- **Access to International Expertise:** These agreements allow employers to tap into a broader pool of skilled professionals.

### Cons:

- **Limited Scope:** The list of eligible professions is restrictive, often excluding many roles relevant to the tourism sector. Most FTAs are designed for higher-level workers, typically at the TEER 0 and 1 levels—hotel managers, for instance, are covered under several FTAs. However, some agreements allow entry for workers in TEER 2 or lower, as well as certain trades positions. For example, the Canada-Peru FTA includes a list of technicians eligible for LMIA-exempt entry, such as plumbers, electricians, and chefs. Likewise, the Canada-Colombia FTA has a similar list featuring the same professions. With approximately 15 FTAs covering services, it's essential to research each one carefully, as requirements vary for both employers and workers.
- **Complex Navigation:** Understanding and adhering to the specific requirements of each agreement can be challenging. While international agreements offer avenues to hire foreign talent, their applicability to the tourism sector is limited due to restrictive eligibility criteria and temporary work authorizations. Employers should thoroughly assess whether these pathways align with their staffing needs and consider consulting immigration professionals to navigate the complexities involved.







Wapta Falls, British Columbia  
Photo by Ben den Engelsen

## Pathway 6: International Experience Canada (IEC)

The International Experience Canada (IEC) program offers young individuals from 36 partner countries—currently Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom—the opportunity to work and travel in Canada. Participants typically receive open work permits, granting them the flexibility to work for almost any employer across the country.

The program is divided into several streams tailored to different needs. **The Working Holiday** category is geared toward young individuals (typically aged 18 to 35, though age limits vary by country) who wish to travel and work across Canada. This open work permit option is particularly attractive for roles in the tourism sector, where seasonal and temporary positions are in high demand.

The **Young Professionals stream**, on the other hand, targets those with job offers in professional fields aligned with their qualifications, providing opportunities to gain advanced work experience in sectors such as event management, marketing for travel companies, or hospitality management.

Meanwhile, the **International Co-op Internship** category is designed for post-secondary students who require work experience as part of their academic curriculum. These internships often coincide with seasonal tourism roles—from behind-the-scenes positions at major cultural festivals to operational roles in remote destinations—addressing temporary workforce gaps while offering practical industry experience.

Overall, IEC not only enables participants to acquire valuable international work experience and develop cross-cultural competencies but also plays a crucial role in addressing workforce shortages during peak demand periods, especially in regions where local labour is limited.

## Pathway 6: International Experience Canada (IEC) Program *(cont.)*

### Key Considerations:

- **Participating Countries:** Verify whether potential candidates are from countries that have agreements with Canada under the IEC program.
- **Work Permit Type:** IEC participants usually hold open work permits, meaning they can work for any employer without the need for employer-specific authorization.
- **Quota Limitations:** Each country has a limited number of spots available annually, making the selection process competitive.

### Pros:

- **Flexible Hiring:** Employers can hire IEC participants without the need for an LMIA.
- **Diverse Talent Pool:** Access to a young, diverse group of workers from various cultural backgrounds.

### Cons:

- **Temporary Tenure:** Work permits under IEC are time-limited, typically ranging from 12 to 24 months, which may not suit employers seeking long-term staff. However, holders of this visa are granted an open work permit, allowing them to work for any employer, in any location, for the duration of their stay.

- **Unpredictable Availability:** The number of participants varies yearly, and spots can fill up quickly.
- **Workers enter with open work permits,** meaning long-term retention is uncertain. These individuals tend to be highly mobile, often seeking diverse work experiences across Canada, with permanent residency not necessarily as their primary objective.
- The number of work permits issued on an annual basis is restricted.

While programs like IEC provide a pathway to hire foreign workers, their use in the tourism sector can be limited by eligibility restrictions and temporary work permits. Still, IEC participants make up a significant share of the workforce in destinations like Banff and Whistler, often taking available jobs to fund their ski season. Employers should assess whether these programs meet their staffing needs and consult immigration professionals to navigate the complexities involved.



## Section 4: Proactive Recruitment Strategies for the Tourism Sector





A photograph of a forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. The image shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees with green foliage. Sunlight is streaming through the canopy, creating a bright, hazy effect in the center of the image. The foreground is slightly out of focus, showing some green leaves and branches.

# Future Planning for Policy Changes

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## Preparing for Changes in LMIA Regulations

**The question on every employer's mind now is: when will recruiting foreign workers get easier?**

For those of us who have been involved with foreign worker recruitment for many years, we've seen various iterations of the foreign worker program. The program regularly gets tweaked, sometimes making it easier for the employer, and sometimes making it much more difficult for the employer. We are at one of these 'difficult' stages now. However, this will change as the labour market balances out as a result of the most recent changes.

Employers can be proactive now, in preparation of inevitable changes.

**We suggest the following:**

1. Develop formal arrangements with your local settlement agency to ensure they direct any and all job seekers your way. Document this well, including any and all hires gained through this partnership.
2. Develop these same partnerships with any local post-secondary institutions and any underrepresented groups in your area, such as your local First Nations employment agency.
3. Do your best to adjust current wages to the prevailing wage as defined by Service Canada.
4. Learn about the job ad requirements enforced by Service Canada for an LMIA and advertise your vacancies accordingly across Canada.

By engaging in these activities now, you will be well situated to act fast not only if you seek an LMIA in the short term, but also once Service Canada starts opening things up a bit more.



# Cultivating a Self-Reliant Talent Pipeline

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Tourism employers facing workforce shortages don't need to rely on expensive recruitment agencies. With the right approach, you can build a steady talent pipeline while keeping costs down and hiring processes smooth.

Here's how:

- **Strengthen Your Employer Brand.** Showcasing your company culture, career growth opportunities, and employee success stories makes positions more appealing to job seekers who truly fit the industry.
- **Maximize Digital & Social Media Outreach.** Job boards like LinkedIn and Indeed are useful, but don't underestimate the power of Instagram, Facebook, and even TikTok. A well-crafted online presence can attract engaged, enthusiastic candidates.
- **Forge Partnerships with Schools and Industry Groups.** Connect with tourism colleges, vocational schools, and industry associations to tap into fresh talent. These relationships position you as an employer of choice while creating a sustainable recruitment pipeline.
- **Encourage Employee Referrals.** Your current team knows the industry and can refer great candidates. Incentivizing referrals can bring in motivated hires who already understand the demands of the job.
- **Get Involved in the Community.** Participate in job fairs, host networking events, and offer internships. These activities introduce you to potential hires before they even start looking elsewhere.





# Conclusions and Future Outlook



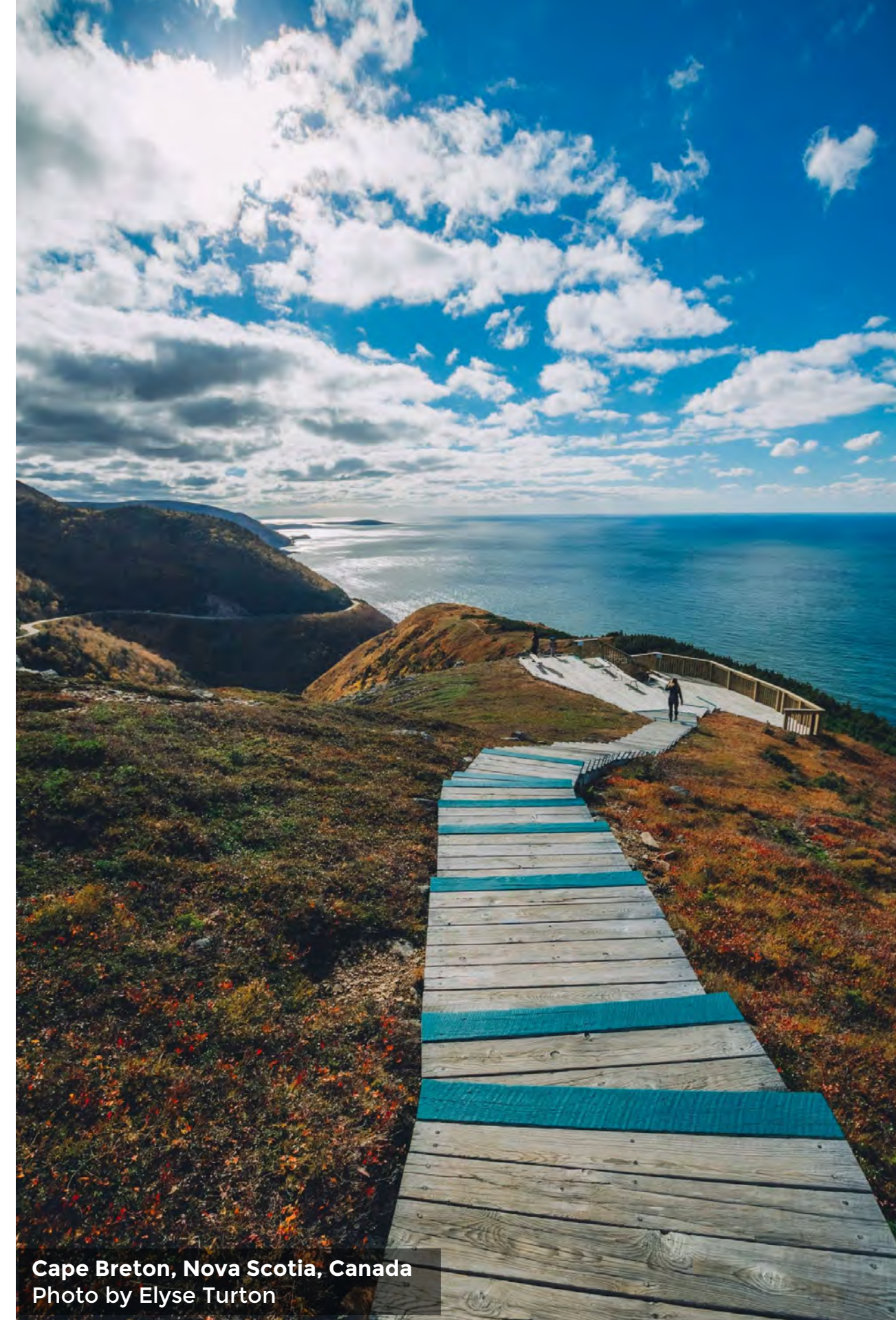
# Conclusions and Future Outlook

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The tourism sector has long relied on a diverse workforce; approximately 35% of its employees were born outside Canada or work as non-permanent residents, compared to less than 30% of the overall labour market. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, this reliance has grown—with the share of non-permanent residents in tourism increasing from 5.6% in 2019 to 6.6% in 2023. Foreign workers play a critical role in filling essential roles, such as ski resort staff, adventure tourism guides, and festival workers, while also bringing valuable skills, cultural insights, and language abilities that enrich the guest experience. Their contributions provide a dynamic entry point for international talent, facilitating integration into the Canadian workforce and enabling tourism operators to cater effectively to a global clientele.

Recent changes in immigration policies and targets are poised to significantly impact the tourism labour force. Government initiatives to reduce the number of temporary residents, tighten eligibility criteria, and streamline compliance requirements add challenges for employers and could potentially shrink the pool of available foreign workers. However, despite these shifts, viable immigration pathways remain available. Programs such as Francophone Mobility and International Experience Canada (IEC) and various provisions under Free Trade Agreements continue to offer effective recruitment avenues. Although navigating these processes requires rigorous compliance, detailed documentation, and considerable administrative effort, they remain valuable options when managed carefully.

In summary, while evolving immigration policies present challenges to maintaining a robust labour force in the tourism sector, the availability of diverse and well-structured immigration pathways ensures that essential foreign talent can still be attracted and integrated. Embracing this diversity is critical not only for addressing immediate labour shortages but also for sustaining the long-term vibrancy and competitiveness of Canada's tourism sector.



Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada  
Photo by Elyse Turton



# Appendices



# Appendix A      Acronyms and Abbreviations

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## Abbreviation

## Definition

<b>B2B</b>	Business-to-Business: Refers to transactions or activities between two businesses, often in the context of business visitor permits.
<b>BIOC</b>	Best Interests of the Child: A legal principle often considered in immigration and humanitarian cases involving children.
<b>CBSA</b>	Canada Border Services Agency: The agency responsible for border enforcement, immigration, and customs services in Canada.
<b>CCQ</b>	Commission de la Construction du Québec: Oversees the construction industry in Quebec, including work permits and licensing for foreign workers.
<b>CETA</b>	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement: A free trade agreement between Canada and the EU that includes provisions for labour mobility.
<b>CUSMA</b>	Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (formerly NAFTA): Includes provisions for certain professionals and businesspeople to work temporarily in member countries.
<b>ESDC</b>	Employment and Social Development Canada: Oversees employment-related programs like LMIA's and the NOC system.
<b>FTWP</b>	Foreign Temporary Worker Program: A program allowing Canadian employers to hire foreign workers to fill labour shortages.
<b>H&amp;C</b>	Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds: A type of immigration application considering unique personal circumstances.
<b>IEC</b>	International Experience Canada: Provides youth (18–35) with opportunities to work in Canada via work permits like Working Holiday and Young Professionals.
<b>IRCC</b>	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: The federal department for immigration, refugees, and citizenship matters in Canada.
<b>LMIA</b>	Labour Market Impact Assessment: A document assessing the impact of hiring a foreign worker on the Canadian labour market.
<b>NOC</b>	National Occupational Classification: A system classifying jobs in Canada based on skills, duties, and educational requirements. Includes TEER categories.
<b>OWP</b>	Open Work Permit: Allows the holder to work for any employer in Canada without needing a specific job offer.
<b>PNP</b>	Provincial Nominee Program: Enables provinces/territories to nominate individuals for permanent residency to meet local labour market needs.
<b>PR</b>	Permanent Residency: Status granted to individuals authorized to live and work in Canada indefinitely.
<b>SWAP</b>	Student Work Abroad Program: A program under IEC enabling youth to gain work experience while traveling in Canada.
<b>TEER</b>	Training, Education, Experience, and Responsibilities: A framework in the 2021 NOC system categorizing jobs by required qualifications.
<b>TIA</b>	Tourism Industry Association: Provincial or national organizations advocating for tourism businesses.
<b>TICO</b>	Travel Industry Council of Ontario: Regulates travel agencies and tour operators in Ontario, including licensing and bonding requirements.



## Appendix B Considerations for Employees

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Employers in the tourism sector hiring foreign workers in Canada must navigate several key considerations and requirements to ensure compliance with immigration laws and successful recruitment. These include:

### 1. Eligibility to Hire Foreign Workers

Employers must demonstrate a genuine need to hire foreign workers and ensure their business is in good standing with no history of violating employment standards or immigration laws. Meeting eligibility criteria is crucial to obtaining necessary approvals from federal and provincial authorities.

### 2. Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)

For many foreign worker hires, employers are required to secure a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). This process involves:

- Demonstrating efforts to recruit Canadian citizens or permanent residents through advertisements and outreach.
- Providing evidence of the inability to fill the position locally.
- Ensuring that hiring a foreign worker will not negatively impact the Canadian labour market.

LMIA exemptions may apply for certain categories, such as under international trade agreements or open work permits.

### 3. Job Offer Requirements

Employers must provide a valid job offer to foreign workers, including detailed information such as job title, duties, wage, work location, and duration of employment. The offer must comply with employment laws, such as minimum wage requirements and health and safety regulations.

### 4. Compliance with Employment Standards

Employers must adhere to federal and provincial labour laws, including:

- Paying fair wages that meet or exceed prevailing wage rates for the occupation and location.
- Providing benefits and working conditions equivalent to those offered to Canadian workers in similar roles.
- Ensuring workplace safety and compliance with occupational health standards.



## Appendix B Considerations for Employees *(Cont.)*

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### 5. Employer Portal and Employer Compliance Fee

For certain programs, such as those under the International Mobility Program, employers must register in the Employer Portal to submit job offers and pay an Employer Compliance Fee of CAD 230.

### 6. Settlement and Support for Foreign Workers

Employers are often encouraged or required to support the settlement and integration of foreign workers, including:

- Offering orientation sessions to familiarize workers with workplace practices and local communities.
- Assisting with housing, transportation, and access to language training, if applicable.

### 7. Bilateral or Regional Program-Specific Requirements

Depending on the immigration pathway, employers may need to meet additional requirements, such as:

- Complying with trade agreement provisions for Free Trade Agreement workers.
- Demonstrating alignment with provincial labour priorities under the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).

### 8. Work Permit and Visa Support

Employers should be prepared to assist foreign workers with the documentation required for work permit applications, including providing supporting documents for visa processes, travel, and initial arrival.

### 9. Monitoring and Audits

Employers hiring foreign workers may be subject to inspections or audits by ESDC and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to ensure compliance with program conditions. This includes maintaining records of employment agreements, proof of wages, and evidence of adherence to LMIA or program-specific requirements.

### 10. Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion

To foster a positive work environment, employers should prioritize cultural sensitivity and inclusion by addressing language barriers, respecting cultural differences, and promoting equity in the workplace.

By addressing these considerations and fulfilling these requirements, employers in Canada's tourism sector can successfully recruit foreign workers while meeting legal and ethical obligations.



## Appendix C      Registration Requirements for Employees

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Province/Territory	Employer Registration Required Before Hiring a Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW)?	Additional Notes
Alberta	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
British Columbia	Yes	Employers must register with the provincial government before hiring TFWs. <a href="http://www2.gov.bc.ca">www2.gov.bc.ca</a>
Manitoba	Yes	Employers are required to register with Employment Standards to recruit foreign workers. <a href="http://gov.mb.ca">gov.mb.ca</a>
New Brunswick	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Newfoundland & Labrador	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Northwest Territories	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Nova Scotia	Yes	Employers must obtain an employer registration certificate from Labour Standards before initiating the LMIA process. <a href="http://novascotia.ca">novascotia.ca</a>
Nunavut	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Ontario	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Prince Edward Island	No	No specific provincial registration required; federal LMIA process applies.
Quebec	Yes	Employers must comply with provincial requirements in addition to federal processes.
Saskatchewan	Yes	Employers must apply for a certificate of registration to hire foreign workers..
Yukon	No	Employers must follow federal LMIA processes.



## Appendix D Useful Resources and Links

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**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):**

Official government portal for Canadian immigration policies, programs, and updates. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship.html>

**International Experience Canada (IEC) Program:**

Detailed information on eligibility, application processes, and the specifics of the IEC work permit. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/iec.html>

**Statistics Canada:**

Comprehensive data and analyses on Canada's labour market and tourism sector trends. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca>

**Destination Canada:**

The national tourism organization offering insights, market trends, and industry reports for Canada. <https://www.destinationcanada.com/en>

**Conference Board of Canada:**

Research and reports on labour market trends, economic policy, and sector-specific analyses (including tourism). <https://www.conferenceboard.ca>

**OECD International Migration Outlook:**

Annual reports and data on global migration trends, with sections relevant to Canada's immigration policies. <https://www.oecd.org/migration/international-migration-outlook-1999124x.htm>

**Canadian Immigrant Magazine:**

Articles, tips, and policy updates focusing on Canadian immigration and its socioeconomic impacts. <https://canadianimmigrant.ca>

**Open Government Portal (Canada):** Access to a wide range of datasets on immigration, labour, and tourism. <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset>

**World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):** Global tourism trends and policy insights that can provide context for the Canadian tourism labour market.

<https://www.unwto.org>



# Appendix E Not Recruitment, But Immigration: Redefining Talent Pathways

## Francophone Community Immigration Class (FCIC)

Canada is launching a new five-year permanent residence pathway—the Francophone Community Immigration Class (FCIC)—designed to help French-speaking newcomers settle permanently in designated Francophone communities outside Quebec. Key points include:

### Target Group:

French-speaking immigrants with professional experience in in-demand occupations who wish to reside in a designated community outside Quebec.

### Core Eligibility Requirements:

- **Certificate of Recommendation:** Applicants must secure a valid certificate from an economic development organization (issued for six months), confirming they meet work experience, language, and education requirements.
- **Genuine Job Offer:** A non-seasonal, full-time employment offer from a designated employer in a priority occupation is required, with at least 75% of job responsibilities performed in the designated community.
- **Work Experience:** Candidates must have acquired a continuous year of full-time (or equivalent part-time) work in an eligible occupation (as per TEER criteria), with allowances for international graduates who meet specific conditions.

- **Language Proficiency:** A demonstrated French language ability equivalent to NCLC level 5 in all skills is mandatory.
- **Education:** A minimum of a secondary school credential is required, supported by a Canadian diploma or an Education Credential Assessment (ECA) for international qualifications.
- **Intent & Funds:** Applicants must show intent to reside in the designated community and possess sufficient funds—equivalent to half the most recent Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) for one year—for themselves and any accompanying family members.

### Additional Notes:

- Applicants within Canada must hold valid temporary status until their permanent residency is confirmed.
- The FCIC involves three key stakeholders: designated communities (with a Francophone minority), economic development organizations (issuing recommendation certificates and publishing annual priority occupation lists), and designated employers.

This new pathway is part of Canada’s broader Francophone immigration policy, aiming to attract skilled French speakers and stimulate local economies in communities outside Quebec.



## Appendix E Not Recruitment, But Immigration: Redefining Talent Pathways *(Cont.)*

### Express Entry

Express Entry is Canada's online system for managing permanent residency applications from skilled workers. It streamlines the selection process by replacing the old "first-come, first-served" model with a dynamic, points-based system known as the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS). This system administers three main federal immigration programs: Canadian Experience Class (CEC), Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), and Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP).

While not a recruitment tool per se, Express Entry is the backbone of Canada's strategy for attracting skilled workers on a permanent basis. It's a system designed to ensure that the most competitive and economically viable candidates are invited to apply for permanent residency.

### Eligibility

Eligibility depends on the specific program you're applying under:

**Canadian Experience Class (CEC):** Requires at least one year of skilled Canadian work experience in NOC 0, 1, 2 or 3 and language proficiency (CLB 7 for TEER 0 and 1 jobs, CLB 5 for TEER 2 and 3 jobs).

**Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP):** Requires at least one year of continuous, full-time (or equivalent part-time) skilled work experience in the past 10 years in TEER 0, 1, 2 or 3 jobs, meeting language requirements (typically CLB 7) and an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) if you studied outside Canada.

**Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP):** Requires at least two years of work experience in a skilled trade (within the last 5 years), and the applicant must either have a valid job offer or a certificate of qualification from a Canadian authority, and language levels slightly lower than the other streams.

### Pros of Express Entry:

**Speed & Efficiency:** The streamlined process typically sees applications processed within six months once an Invitation to Apply (ITA) is issued—a dramatic improvement over previous systems.

**Merit-Based Selection:** The CRS prioritizes candidates based on factors like age, education, language proficiency, and work experience. In other words, it rewards those who can demonstrate their potential contribution to the economy, much like a well-tuned engine that's built to run efficiently.

**Flexibility:** The frequent invitation rounds give candidates multiple opportunities to receive an ITA, keeping the process both competitive and flexible.

## Appendix E Not Recruitment, But Immigration: Redefining Talent Pathways *(Cont.)*

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### Cons of Express Entry:

**Fluctuating CRS Cut-offs:** The minimum CRS score required for an ITA can vary from draw to draw. Even well-qualified candidates might find themselves in limbo, wondering if they're just a few points short of the cut-off.

**Challenges for Newcomers:** Candidates without Canadian work experience or a job offer may struggle to achieve a competitive CRS score, which can be a significant hurdle for those trying to break into the Canadian labour market.

**Overemphasis on Quantifiable Factors:** While the system does an excellent job of measuring objective criteria, it can sometimes overlook qualitative factors—like personal resilience or community integration—that traditional approaches might value.

### How Employers Can Support Applications:

Although Express Entry is not designed as a recruitment tool, a Canadian job offer from an employer can significantly bolster a candidate's profile.

**Boosting CRS Scores:** An LMIA supported job offer adds 50 to 200 points to an CRS score, depending on the occupation's classification. This will be cancelled very soon however, as per IRCC's announcement in December of 2024, so will remain a tentative option for now. Work gained under

some LMIA-exempt work permits can increase one's score, with the most points being for work experience gained this way under a TEER 0 job. So promoting your TFW into a TEER 0 role can be one way to assist in their PR pursuit.

**Demonstrating Economic Value:** An employer's backing reinforces the candidate's potential to integrate quickly and effectively into the workforce—a factor that can't be easily quantified but carries significant weight.

Express Entry represents a major leap forward from the old “first-come, first-served” system. It's designed to bring in skilled workers who are ready to hit the ground running—and while it's not without its challenges (fluctuating CRS scores and a competitive edge that may favour those already in Canada), its efficiency and focus on merit are hard to argue with.



# Appendix F

# Recruiting with Local Settlement Agencies

Province/Territory	Organizations and Description
Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Alberta Association of Immigrant Settlement Agencies (AAISA)</a></li></ul>
British Columbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)</a></li></ul>
Manitoba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immigrant Centre Manitoba (ICM): Offers a comprehensive range of settlement and integration programs.</li><li>• <a href="#">Welcoming Place Society</a>: Provides community-based settlement services.</li></ul>
Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)</a></li></ul>
Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Centres d'accueil et d'intégration des immigrants</a></li></ul>
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)</a></li></ul>
New Brunswick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Immigrant Services New Brunswick</a></li><li>• <a href="#">New Brunswick Coalition for Refugees and Immigrants</a></li></ul>
Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Association for Newcomers to PEI</a></li></ul>
Newfoundland and Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Immigrant Services Newfoundland and Labrador (ISNL)</a></li></ul>
Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement Service Agencies (SAISSA)</a></li></ul>
Northwest Territories & Yukon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Northwest Territories Multicultural Association</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Yukon Immigrant Association</a></li></ul>
Nunavut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Settlement services are generally managed directly by territorial government programs rather than through dedicated umbrella organizations.</li></ul>

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Figure: Total applications of work permit applications (including extensions) processed from January 1, 2017, to July 26, 2022, broken down by LMIA-exempt work permit (in person)

