

# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Using Government Programs

The following Fact Sheets are available on line at [www.aofp.ca](http://www.aofp.ca):

1. Becoming an Employer of Choice
2. Employee Turnover
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### How can this Fact Sheet help me?

In today's economy, finding highly skilled, specialized, or sufficient numbers of domestic workers is not always possible. Companies are increasingly recruiting internationally to meet their skill and labour shortages. Hiring foreign workers is not an easy or quick process, but if your company cannot find the workers it needs in Canada, it may be an option.

### Challenges and Opportunities

The process of bringing foreign workers to Canada takes three to six months from the time the initial application is received to the time the worker(s) joins your company. It is important therefore to plan ahead and understand future trends in labour availability.

Hiring foreign workers requires a more extensive recruitment, orientation, socialization, and training program than for other employees. Foreign workers may have difficulties with language and the culture of the workplace. Make sure you have the commitment and resources needed to ensure success.

Foreign workers can fill important skill gaps and help a company survive in a tight labour market. But, to ensure long-term survival and profitability, and to meet the terms of the foreign recruitment program, you must keep training the existing workforce. You must also continue to look for suitable workers in Canada.

## Case Study

**Conestoga Meat Packers Ltd.** demonstrated that they could not find local skilled workers.

The company was approved for sourcing twenty foreign workers with “knife skills” – trained butchers and meat cutters.

Conestoga Meat worked with a foreign worker broker who helped them select appropriate employees and arranged their transportation to Toronto. The company met the workers at the airport and introduced them to a community church, which helped the foreign workers become connected to the community and manage the challenge of living away from their families.

The company posts notices in multiple languages. Conestoga Meat has also found it is best to communicate with these employees in quiet settings, away from background noise. The company has been pleased with the calibre of the workers’ skills, rate of adaptation, work ethic, interest in career advancement, and willingness to work overtime.

## Solutions

Foreign workers fall into three occupation categories:

- **Standard occupations.** A Labour Market Opinion is needed to hire and bring workers to Canada.
- **Labour Market Opinion (LMO) exempt occupations.** A confirmation letter is required indicating LMO exemption, from the nearest Service Canada Centre (<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/hrcc.shtml>) as well as a work permit.
- **Work permit exempt occupations.** As a result of several international agreements, a work permit is not required for some occupations.

To determine which occupations are LMO exempt and/or do not require a work permit, go to:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/fw/fw02e.pdf>;

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/apply-who-nopermit.asp>

## How do I start?

Determine the category your workers may fall in. If necessary, obtain a Labour Market Opinion

### Obtaining a Labour Market Opinion (LMO)

1. Get a qualification and certification assessment of the job. This can come from a local Canadian regulatory professional, or technical or trade organization. The LMO application requires the job description of each job for which the company is planning to hire a foreign worker.

2. Complete the Labour Market Opinion (LMO) application online at:

[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/fw\\_p\\_application.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/fw_p_application.shtml) or download at:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/forms.shtml>.

To help speed things up you can apply for a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) pre-approval prior to recruiting the foreign worker(s). This is done by leaving the foreign worker information blank. The pre-approval process takes about 10 weeks.

3. Submit the LMO application and supporting documents to the Service Canada Centre. To locate the nearest Service Canada Centre, go to:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/listhrcc.shtml>.

If you are planning to hire more than one foreign worker for the same job, only one LMO application is needed. You will have six months from the date of approval to recruit and bring foreign workers to Canada.

## Resources

Government of Canada Foreign Worker Program:

[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml)

Foreign worker application forms:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/form.shtml>

LMO application:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/form.shtml>

LMO exemption categories:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/exempt-2.html>

LMO extensions:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/emp5354e.pdf>

National Occupational Classification List:

<http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/generic/matrix.pdf>

NAFTA occupations:

[www.cic.gc.ca/manualsguides/english/fw/fwe.pdf](http://www.cic.gc.ca/manualsguides/english/fw/fwe.pdf)

Job offer contents:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/employer-2.html>

Work permit exemptions:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/exempt-1.html>

YWEP program:

[https://www.infoport.ca/geo/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=1483-1485-1486](https://www.infoport.ca/geo/bins/content_page.asp?cid=1483-1485-1486)

Ontario Pilot Provincial Nominee Program:

<http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/english/PNPEmployers.asp>

National Job Bank of Canada:

<http://jobbank.gc.ca>

Foreign Worker Information Line: 780-427-6419

## Your Responsibilities

- Provide a formal job offer to the foreign worker through a written letter or a formal employment contract.
- Send the names and information about each foreign worker to Service Canada, who will issue a LMO confirmation letter for each foreign worker.
- For employees hired through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, employers are expected to pay travel costs for unskilled workers.
- Employers are expected to help arrange affordable accommodation. Foreign workers are expected to pay for their own accommodations.
- Employers are expected to cover medical and insurance expenses from the moment a foreign worker begins working for them in Ontario until the foreign worker is eligible to apply for provincial health care coverage.
- If the foreign worker does not meet the expectations outlined in the job description, employers can terminate the employment contract. If terminated, the foreign worker must return to their home country, unless he or she finds another employer to hire them. If returning to their home country, the employer must pay the travel expenses for unskilled workers only.

## Responsibilities of the Foreign Worker

- Apply for a work permit at the closest Canadian Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in the worker's country. For more information, go to:  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/offices/apply-where.asp>
- Present the following documents to a border Services Officer:
  1. Passport or valid travel document.
  2. Signed job offer and/or employment contract.
  3. Authorization letter approving a work permit application issued by CIC (if applicable).
  4. Copy of Service Canada's positive LMO (if applicable).
  5. Copy of confirmation by CIC Temporary Foreign Worker Unit that the job offer is exempt from a work permit or LMO (if applicable).
  6. Evidence of credentials (education, professional and work experience) (if applicable).
  7. Temporary resident visa (if applicable).

A Border Services Officer at a port of entry has the authority to decide whether or not to issue a work permit.

## References

Foreign worker program. Human Resources and Social Development Canada.  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign\\_workers/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/index.shtml)

Foreign worker manual. Citizenship and Immigration Canada.  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/fw/fw01e.pdf>

How to hire a temporary foreign worker: A guidebook for employers. (2006). Government of Canada. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/pdf/pub/TFWguide-e.pdf>

Temporary foreign worker: Quick reference guide. Citizenship and Immigration Canada.  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/manuals/fw/fw02e.pdf>

Regional occupations under pressure list – Ontario. Government of Canada.  
[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/ON\\_ROL\\_200611\\_e.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/epb/lmd/fw/ON_ROL_200611_e.pdf)

## The following diagnostic tools may be helpful:

Employee Turnover Calculator

Best Practices Assessment

These resources are available on line at [www.aofp.ca](http://www.aofp.ca) under Workforce Development.

## How to Help your Foreign Workers Adapt

Hiring a foreign worker represents a commitment to helping that person (and in some cases their family) settle into both the job and the local community.

- Offer hands-on help with daily living activities, such as setting up bank accounts and telephone access, grocery shopping, connecting to local church or community groups, and using the local transportation system.
- Pair the foreign workers(s) with a co-worker for the first several weeks or months.
- Adapt existing health and safety training materials to facilitate comprehension by those with low English language skills (e.g., highly pictorial, limited text).
- Offer cross-cultural communication training to facilitate communication and collaboration among existing employees and foreign workers.
- Use translation services (perhaps an existing employee).

If using third party agents (recruiters, immigration consultants, lawyers, labour brokers), remember:

- Use of third-party agents will not speed up the application process or influence wage rates.
- Third-party agents may be able to facilitate the recruitment and selection process on your behalf. For example, labour brokers may speak the native language of foreign workers. They may also be able to place ads, conduct job fairs, pre-screen applicants, and facilitate immigration to Canada.
- It is important to establish a relationship with a trusted and reputable broker.

### ADVANTAGES OF BEST PRACTICES

- More qualified job applicants
- Better trained and informed employees
- Better health and safety practices
- More engaged and productive employees
- Fewer line interruptions
- Fewer product quality problems
- Easier implementation of new technology
- Lower absenteeism and employee turnover
- Higher sales per employee
- Higher market value to book value