

LABOUR MARKET NEWS

Alberta
Employment and Immigration



Fort McMurray • Wood Buffalo

Navigating the immigration process: Tools for employers

Because of the hiring difficulties in many industries, some employers in the Wood Buffalo area have hired, or are considering hiring workers from outside Canada. The process is complex though, so it pays to do some research even before going this route.

Canadian workers first

An employer should be sure they have tried all other options within Canada, including groups that are traditionally under-employed. These groups could be immigrants already here, women (in certain occupations), Aboriginal people, youth, older workers or persons with disabilities. While targeting these groups may be more effort than traditional recruiting practices, it is less of an investment of time and money to stay within Canada when recruiting.

For information and tips on ways to hire within Canada, contact Melonie Loveless, business and industry liaison for Alberta Employment and Immigration in Fort McMurray (see contact information on page 4).

If an employer is unable to fill their vacancies in Canada, a viable choice is recruiting foreign workers. It will generally cost more money to go outside of Canada to recruit workers.

These costs will vary depending on the program used and the extent the employer wants to be involved in the process.

The Temporary Foreign Worker program is probably the most well known immigration program, but it may not be the best choice for every employer or every position that needs to be filled.

There are a few different choices for employers based on what kind of employee they are looking for (e.g. skilled, semi-skilled or low-skilled) and for how long they need someone (temporarily or permanently) and also how quickly. Processing times for different programs vary and can change weekly, so this may be a consideration in choosing which program to access. See **Different staffing needs, different immigration programs** on page 3.

Did you know?

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is not the only immigration option for employers. There are about nine different immigration programs that employers in Canada can access to bring in foreign workers. See page 3 for details...



Recruiting agencies

An important consideration when hiring from outside of Canada is whether or not to use recruiting agencies. In order to work with an agency to bring workers into Alberta from outside Canada, the agency must be licensed in Alberta, regardless of whether they have offices here. Also, agencies cannot charge workers any fees—fees can only be charged to the employer.

Whether or not an employer is using an agency, they may consider visiting the countries themselves to conduct interviews.

At a recent foreign worker panel discussion in Edmonton, Barb Smyth, of Smitty's Restaurant spoke of their experiences.

“Visiting the foreign country is worth far more that it will cost financially,” she says. “Your relationship with your staff will be much better if you take part in hiring.”

For more information on using employment agencies, visit www.alberta-canada.com/immigration/employers/index.html. Also, there is a list of resources on page 4 to help employers.

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Services for immigrants

This publication has been prepared by Alberta Employment and Immigration. Find us online at www.woodbuffalo.net.

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program

The Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program was created to help employers hire foreign workers more quickly to help ease their hiring difficulties. The process is initiated by the employer and an employer can either have a foreign worker already in mind, or wait until pre-approval is granted.

The program is open to employers who need temporary workers for positions that require more than a high-school education.

Employers are responsible under this program for ensuring their workers are covered by medical and health insurance and Worker's Compensation. All workers are covered by provincial Employment Standards. In some cases, the employer who hired the worker must cover the costs of flights to

and from Canada, regardless of whether the employee works for them for the entire term.

The TFW program can be successful for many employers, but it is not necessarily the answer to all employers' hiring difficulties.

"I'm having a hard time hiring temporary foreign workers," says Evelyn Adante, owner of Thickwood Lube and Car Wash. Adante successfully hired two

workers from the Philippines just over a year ago, but has not had success with the Canadian embassy in the Philippines for the last eight workers she has tried to hire.

"They have all been turned down for reasons of no experience or not having satisfied the visa officers that they will be returning back to the Philippines after they're done," says Adante. Other issues may include finding a contact in other countries, confusing regulations, worker qualifications and language barriers.

Unfortunately, there are no easy solutions to these issues. For further information, see the resources on page 4, or visit www.woodbuffalo.net for notice of upcoming Temporary Foreign Worker forums.

Did you know?



A new pilot project, called the Expedited Labour Market Opinion, has been created to speed the application process for foreign workers. LMOs that qualify, will be processed within five days of Service Canada receiving the application.

How to help your out-of-country worker feel at home

So the workers you've hired from another country are here—now what? There is a lot you can do to help keep them happy, productive and employed with your company.

The Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray

"If their employee has a wife and kids who are not happy, they're not going to stay," says Donna McKeough, project/resource coordinator with the Multicultural Association of Fort McMurray (MCA). "It's not just the employee you're hiring, really. In this kind of situation, you're taking on the whole family."

The MCA works with employers to create recruitment, retention and team building packages. They have workshops for employers to help integrate new staff from different cultures and countries. Workshops include the Cultural Intelligence Workshop, Improving Cultural Diversity in Canadian Companies and language workshops with cultural considerations.

For more information on one of these workshops or for information on how employers can work with the staff at the MCA to create a customized program, call (780) 791-5186, e-mail mcafm@mcaonline.ca, or visit them online at www.mcaonline.ca.

YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services

Serving permanent residents of Canada, YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services provides information,

orientation, referral, supportive counselling, and interpretation and translation services. They have 16 language volunteers for about 12 languages.

They provide Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in the evening. They also coordinate the HOST program, which matches newcomers with local volunteers.

For more information on services they provide, visit www.ymca.woodbuffalo.org, or call (780) 743-2970.

Keyano College

Keyano College's Workforce Development department provides a number of language programs and courses for people needing to learn English or improve their language skills. The college will work with employers to create a course to suit their needs. Keyano also offers LINC evening classes.

Visit www.keyano.ca or call Liliam Vasquez, english language program coordinator at the college at (780) 792-5615, or liliam.vasquez@keyano.ca.

Also, visit Alberta Employment and Immigration for information on helping your staff with government programs (employment.alberta.ca/cps/rde/xchg/hre/hs.xsl/4305.html).

Different staffing needs, different immigration programs

The different immigration programs can be very confusing because programs can be accessed for a variety of reasons. If an employer is looking for semi-skilled or low-skilled workers, the Temporary Foreign Worker program may be the answer. If an employer is looking for employees with higher skills, programs such as the Post Graduation Work Permit Program might be a better answer. Employers will also need to think of the length of time for which they need their workers—will a temporary program suit their needs or do they need help for longer?

Permanent employees

Arranged Employment

This is the traditional way to bring in foreign workers to work at permanent jobs that require higher than a high-school education. Employers find their own workers and there is no need to demonstrate that efforts were made to hire Canadians. One disadvantage to this program is that it is not a quick process and the employer must wait until the worker can get permanent resident status in Canada before starting work. This program can be used by Canadians to hire foreign family members if program requirements are met. www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/index.asp

Provincial Nominee Program

Designed for employers who wish to bring skilled employees to Canada to work on a permanent basis. It is intended to reduce the amount of time required for foreign workers to become permanent residents and is often used in conjunction with the TFW program (see below). www.alberta-canada.com/pnp

Temporary employees

Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFW)

Open to employers who need temporary workers (for 24 months at a time) for jobs that need more than a high-school education. It allows foreign workers to start quickly, and while working for the Canadian employer, apply to become permanent residents. www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/tfw-guide.asp

Live-In Caregiver Program

Open to Canadians needing in-home, personal care for themselves or their families. This program can be used to hire foreign family members, if program requirements are met. www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/caregiver/index.asp

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP)

Open to employers who need seasonal workers for businesses, such as honey farms, vegetable farms and tree nurseries and open to employers in specific agricultural fields. www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/ei_tfw/sawp_tfw.shtml

Low-Skilled Workers Pilot Project

Open to employers who need temporary workers for jobs that require high school education or less. Permits workers to remain for one year. www.cic.gc.ca/english/work/low-skill.asp

Working Holiday Program

Allows young foreign nationals (from certain countries) to visit Canada for a temporary period. During their stay, they may experience Canada as tourists, or if they wish, enter the Canadian workforce. This program is initiated by the employee, but employers should be open to the program if foreign nationals approach them. www.international.gc.ca/123go/menu-en.asp

International Students

Some international students require work experience as part of their post-secondary program. Below are some of the programs they can access in order to work in Canada. These programs provide excellent opportunities for Wood Buffalo employers to employ trained staff.

Off-Campus Work Permit Program

Allows eligible international students at participating educational institutions to work part-time off-campus during the school year and full time during the summer or holidays. Keyano College is an eligible school.

Post-Graduation Work Permit Program

The program allows international students who have recently graduated from an eligible institution to apply for an open three-year work permit.

Other programs available for international students are co-op and internship programs, and work permits for their spouse or common-law partner. Information on all of the international student programs can be found at:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-coop.asp. Employers can also contact Liliam Vasquez (liliam.vasquez@keyano.ca, (780) 792-5615) or Miyuki Schultz (miyuki.schultz@keyano.ca, (780) 791-4898) at Keyano College for more information.

Timelines

There is no simple answer to how long processing times are for different programs because the times vary depending on the program and can change weekly. Visit the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website for more information: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp.

For information on using any of these programs, contact Sergio Gaggero, regional immigration coordinator for the northeast region, Alberta Employment and Immigration (Contact information on page 4) or refer to the resources listed on page 4.

Immigration resources for employers

Navigating the immigration process can be difficult for employers, especially if they haven't gone through the process before. Following are some of the most useful resources for employers.

General Immigration resources

- **Canada Alberta Service Centre** – access both Government of Canada and Alberta Employment and Immigration services (see contact information to right).
- **Alberta Employment and Immigration** website, click on **Information for Employers**: employment.alberta.ca/cps/rde/xchg/hre/hs.xsl/4305.html
- **Alberta-Canada** website – Alberta's official immigration website, click on **Help For Employers**: www.alberta-canada.com/immigration
- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** website: www.cic.gc.ca, 888-242-2100

Government resources for hiring foreign workers

- **Alberta Foreign Worker Hotline**: (877) 427-6419 (toll free in Alberta); (780) 427-6419 (outside Alberta)
- **Human Resources and Social Development Canada** – Hotline for employers using the Temporary Foreign Workers Program: (800) 418-4446 (toll free in Alberta), (780) 495-7972 (outside Alberta)
- **Alberta Provincial Nominee Program**: www.albertacanada.com/pnp
- **Expedited Labour Market Opinion Pilot Project**: www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/foreign_workers/elmopp/elmoppone.shtml
- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** – visa office processing times: www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp
- **Alberta-Canada job site**: Site to post ads aimed at foreign workers: www.alberta-canada.com/jobs
- **Service Canada** – Hiring a foreign worker “scenarios”: www1.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/ab-nwt-nu/fwp/fw.shtml
- **Service Alberta Consumer Tipsheet** – Employment Agencies: www.servicealberta.ca/1016.cfm
- **Calgary Temporary Foreign Worker Unit** (services for all Alberta): call (403) 292-4183, or e-mail: TFWU-Calgary-UTET@cic.gc.ca

Alberta Employment and Immigration contacts

- Melonie Loveless, business and industry liaison, (780) 743-7147, melonie.loveless@gov.ab.ca
- Sergio Gaggero, regional immigration coordinator, (780) 632-8698, sergio.gaggero@gov.ab.ca

Other resources

- **Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association** has a Foreign Worker Application Step-By-Step Guide (available in late summer 2008): www.ahla.ca, or phone (888) 436-6112
- Hiring Temporary Foreign Workers: What Employers in the Canadian Energy Industry Need to Know – **Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada**: www.petrohrsc.ca/english/intro.pdf

Alberta Employment and Immigration offices

Fort McMurray

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
Phone (780) 715-0222
info@woodbuffalo.net

**Canada-Alberta Service Centre
Labour Market Information Centre**
Provincial Building, 9915 Franklin Avenue
Phone (780) 743-7192, employment.alberta.ca

Other career and employment services

Fort McMurray

Fort McMurray Association for Community Living - CHOICES Employment Services
10010 Franklin Avenue, Phone (780) 791-3355
www.fmacl.ca

YMCA - Youth Connections
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue,
Phone (780) 791-7520, www.ymcaes.com

Franco Job
312 Abasand Drive
Centre Communautaire Scolaire, Boréal
Phone (780) 791-9779
www.acfa.ab.ca/woodbuffalo/francojob.asp

Athabasca Tribal Council Employment
9206 McCormick Drive
Phone (780) 791-7445
www.atc97.org/employment

Keyano College Career Employment Services
Phone (780) 799-1589
www.keyano.ca

Fort McKay

Fort McKay First Nation Employment & Training Office
Phone (780) 828-2430, www.fortmckay.com

Conklin

Conklin Employment Services
Nakewin Centre, Conklin
Phone (780) 559-8995

Employment and Training

Aboriginal Mine Works Program
Phone (780) 791-9946
www.aboriginalmineworks.ca

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative
Phone (780) 747-6500
(previously Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project)

Immigrant services

YMCA - Immigrant Settlement Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Phone (780) 743-2970
www.ymca.woodbuffalo.org



The www.woodbuffalo.net website contains links to Wood Buffalo employers. Are you listed? Would you like to be? Contact us at:

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
(780) 715-0222

www.woodbuffalo.net

E-mail: info@woodbuffalo.net

employment.alberta.ca