

Hiring temporary foreign workers



Short-term labour shortages are a common occurrence in many sectors of Canada's economy. They can affect workplaces that need employees with highly specialized skills, seasonal businesses such as tourism and agriculture, or entire regions during periods of rapid economic expansion, like the pre-Olympics construction boom in British Columbia or the development of the oil and gas sector in Alberta.

When employers look for workers, their first task is to find and hire Canadians or permanent residents for those positions. If they are unsuccessful at finding available workers in Canada to do the job, the Government of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) can help them manage their short-term labour needs.

The TFWP is jointly managed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). It gives employers from all types of businesses the opportunity to recruit foreign workers with the skills they need to address temporary shortages when they experience them.

Employers will usually need to get authorization from HRSDC first before they can hire a temporary foreign worker (TFW). This is known as a positive "Labour Market Opinion" (LMO). A positive LMO will show that there is a need for a foreign worker to fill the job and that no Canadian worker can do the job.

In most cases, TFWs need a permit to work in Canada and, depending on their country of residence, they may also need to obtain a temporary resident visa to enter Canada.

While in Canada, TFWs have the same rights as any other employee — for example, their pay must be consistent with the prevailing wages paid to Canadians in the same occupation in the same region, and working conditions for the occupation must meet the standards of the province in which they are employed.

For more information on the TFWP, please visit cic.gc.ca/work2.