

OVERVIEW OF CANADA'S TEMPORARY WORK PERMIT PROGRAMS AND PROCESS

Employers can hire temporary foreign workers through two different programs, the [Temporary Foreign Worker Program](#) (TFWP) and the [International Mobility Program](#) (IMP). The program you use depends on whether or not you need a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). As an employer, you need to determine [if you need an LMIA](#). If you do need an LMIA, you must hire the temporary worker through the TFWP. There are two steps to a work permit application. The employer completes the first step. The prospective employee completes the second step — submitting a work permit application.

► STEP 1 (Employer)

Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) (LMIA require)

This program helps employers fill labour shortages on a temporary basis when no qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents are available.

The program is comprised of five streams, including two targeted at employers in search of higher-skilled talent:

HIGH-WAGE STREAM

For this stream, the wage rate offered by the employer to the temporary foreign worker is at or above the provincial/territorial median wage and applications must be accompanied by an employer transition plan describing activities the employer is agreeing to undertake to recruit, retain, and train Canadians and permanent residents to reduce their reliance on the TFWP.

GLOBAL TALENT STREAM OF THE TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

Employers seeking highly skilled foreign workers may be eligible for ten business-day processing of the Labour Market Impact Assessment, 80% of the time, for their applications under this stream.

All Global Talent Stream employers must complete labour market benefits plans as part of their application process to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Employers can apply via two categories:

- **Category A:** For innovative Canadian companies having open positions which need to be filled with unique and specialized global talent in order for the firm to scale-up and grow. To access Category A, firms must be referred by an ESDC [Designated Partner](#).
- **Category B:** Hire highly skilled foreign workers for occupations found on ESDC's [Global Talent Occupations List](#) which have been determined to be in-demand and for which there is insufficient domestic labour supply. No referral is required.

With a positive LMIA under the Global Talent Stream (category A or B) the employee will qualify for a two-week processing of the work permit application under the [Global Skills Strategy](#) (GSS).

Application guides, the actual application, and further information on the Global Talent Stream can be found [here](#).

The processing fee for an LMIA is \$1000.

International Mobility Program (IMP) (LMIA exempted)

This program lets employers hire temporary workers without an LMIA.

Exemptions from the LMIA process are based on:

- broader economic, cultural or other competitive advantages for Canada
- reciprocal benefits enjoyed by Canadians and permanent residents

There are approximately [50 exemptions](#), some of which include :

INTRA-COMPANY TRANSFEREE (C12):

covers intra-company transfers for citizens of nations that **do not have** an international or free trade agreement with Canada. Please consult the list of [International Free Trade Agreements in force with Canada](#).

Executives, Senior Managers and Specialized Knowledge workers are included in the C12 LMIA exemption. Please carefully review the [general program requirements](#) and the requirements applicable to [specialized knowledge workers](#) in particular.

MOBILITÉ FRANCOPHONE (C16):

For French-speaking applicants in any skilled (NOC levels 0, A or B) anywhere in Canada except for the province of Québec – To note that speaking French at work isn't a requirement of this exemption.

There are many more exemptions, for a complete list, please consult our [website](#).

NOTE TO EMPLOYERS:

Employers of foreign nationals applying for an employer-specific LMIA-exempt work permit must pay an employer compliance fee of \$230 and electronically submit an offer of employment information directly to IRCC via the [Employer Portal](#).

The \$230 fee must be paid and the Offer of Employment must be submitted by the employer **before** a foreign national makes an application for an employer-specific LMIA-exempt work permit.

The employer should provide the offer of **employment ID number (A#)** to the foreign national for inclusion in their work permit application form. If employers do not meet these requirements when hiring foreign nationals under employer-specific LMIA-exemptions, officers have the authority to refuse the work permit application.

Once the **LMIA** or the **offer of employment ID number (A#)** has been obtained by the employer, the employee is now ready to apply for the work permit.

▶ STEP 2 (Employee)

Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)
(LMIA required)

International Mobility Program (IMP)
(LMIA exempted)

HOW TO APPLY

Work permit applications should be submitted [online](#) by creating an online account. The employee will need the LMIA number if applying via the TFWP, or the offer of employment ID number (A#) generated by the Offer of Employment if applying via the IMP.

ADMISSIBILITY

In addition to meeting the work permit requirements, any person coming to Canada [must also be admissible](#). Depending on their situation, the worker may need to undergo a [medical exam](#) and in most of the cases [give biometrics](#).

FEES

The [fees](#) for all applications are listed in Canadian dollars and are paid online. Please keep an electronic copy of the fees paid.

ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBERS

Spouses or common-law partners of persons who hold a Canadian work permit can apply for their own, [open work permit](#). Children of the employee would also be eligible to apply to receive a study permit (6 years and older) or a temporary resident visa. The accompanying dependents can apply for the open work permit, study permit or visitor visa at the same time as the head of family.

An applicant can [check processing times](#) to see how much time their application(s) may take.

Exemptions from the work permit requirement

A work permit is usually required to work in Canada but there are some [exceptions](#). Most work permit exemptions refer to very specific situations where the foreign national will need only [visitor status](#) to work in Canada, including:

- Business visitors
- Highly skilled workers needed for very short-term work. Under GSS, Workers in NOC 0 or A do not need work permits for short-term work (a 15-day job every 6 months or a 30 day job every 12 months).

If eligible, the worker may need a [temporary resident visa or electronic travel authorization](#) to come to Canada. Our immigration programs use the [National Occupational Classification \(NOC\)](#) to decide if a job or type of work experience meets their eligibility. We consider “skilled” jobs those with NOC Skill Type 0, A or B. Consult the website to find an occupation.

PATH TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY VIA EXPRESS ENTRY

Canada manages how people with skilled work experience apply to immigrate to Canada through the [Express Entry system](#). Candidates create a profile and enter a pool if eligible for immigration programs managed through Express Entry. Candidate profiles are scored based on their skills and experience using a points system. Those with the highest-ranking scores are invited to apply for permanent residence. Canada has committed to processing 80% of Express Entry permanent resident applications in six months or less.

The following immigration programs managed through the Express Entry system may be applicable for high-skilled talent:

- [Federal Skilled Workers Program](#): For those with skilled work experience at the NOC 0, A or B level.
- [Canadian Experience Class](#): After 1 year of skilled work experience in Canada at the NOC 0, A or B level.
- [Federal Skilled Trades Program](#): For those with experience in a skilled trade at the NOC B level.
- [Provincial Nominee Program](#): For those meeting the minimum requirements of a province or territory’s Express Entry stream.

