

Support for Newcomer Integration into Canada's Mining Sector: An Environmental Scan



MINING INDUSTRY
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL



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Overview and Objectives

Newcomers to Canada represent an important source of skilled labour for the mining sector. This research briefing provides an environmental scan of the programs and supports relevant to mining that facilitate newcomer integration in Canada. The scan ranged from federal, provincial/territorial to regional, municipal and community-based programming and supports.

This briefing provides a summary of the opportunities available to the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) to support the integration of newcomers, in particular, and immigrants, in general, to the Canadian mining sector. Opportunities of particular interest include targeted training, upskilling, credential recognition, and other efforts that enhance attraction, recruitment and retention of newcomers.



Methodology

An online scan and literature review focused on existing federal and provincial programs and supports as well as regional and community-based supports. Newcomers were defined as recent immigrants (including temporary foreign workers) who have been in Canada for less than five years and included international students and refugees able to work in Canada.¹

¹ The definition of immigrants encompasses those not born in Canada, including naturalized Canadian citizens, permanent residents and non-permanent residents. Non-permanent residents are persons who have claimed refugee status (asylum claimants), or persons who hold a work or study permit and their family members living with them, provided they have a usual place of residence in Canada. The term 'newcomer' is increasingly used to refer to people who have immigrated within the last five years.



Assumptions

This research was conducted with the following assumptions:

- Programs offered by different orders of government are coordinated and designed with limited/some knowledge or awareness of each other.
- Government policies on immigration levels fluctuate, with implications for funding and supports available for newcomer integration.
- Government policies and programs on urban/rural immigrant settlement fluctuate, with implications for funding and supports available for newcomer integration.
- There is a wide range of programs and supports available for newcomer integration with different levels of scope, geographical influence, timing, focus and longevity.





Findings

1. Federal Programs and Supports

Canada's federal government recognizes the opportunity for newcomers to help address labour shortages in key sectors, including mining. While newcomers with permanent resident status in Canada are authorized to work for any employer, foreign nationals² may work temporarily in Canada with a work permit. Before an employer can hire a foreign national on a work permit, they typically need to obtain a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) to demonstrate the need to seek talent outside Canada to fill the job. There are exceptions to the requirement for an LMIA, including some positions relevant to mining (e.g., engineering technologist).

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program allows employers to hire foreign nationals on a short-term basis through streams for high-wage and low-wage positions³ or for up to three years through the Global Talent Stream for in-demand, high skilled positions.⁴ The Global Talent Stream requires employers to be referred by one of the stream's designated partners.⁵ Moreover, the position being requested must require unique and specialized talent – mining and other types of engineers are among the eligible in-demand, highly skilled positions.⁶

2 According to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* S.C. 2001 c. 27, a foreign national is defined as a person who is not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident, and includes a stateless person.

3 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Hire a Temporary*.

4 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Hire a Top Foreign*.

5 See [Program Requirements for the Global Talent Stream](#) for a list of designated partners.

6 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Program Requirements*.

Through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the federal ministry responsible for immigration services, several programs offer priority pathways to permanent residency for immigrants with skills and/or Canadian work experience. The Express Entry immigration program hosts applications for three streams: Canadian Experience Class; Federal Skilled Worker Program; and Federal Skilled Trades Program.⁷ A further category-based selection sub-program prioritizes some jobs and attributes relevant to the mining sector, such as: French-language proficiency; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) occupations; trade occupations; and transport occupations.⁸

The federal government is currently poised to offer a new 'Innovation Stream' under the International Mobility Program to address labour shortages in key tech occupations. This stream will involve an exemption from the labour market impact assessment process, and potentially, employer-specific work permits or open work permits for up to five years for qualified individuals.⁹ This stream could benefit the mining sector by streamlining the immigration process for skilled international tech labour.

Other federal programs support regional and other targeted efforts to fill in-demand labour needs. For example, the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP)¹⁰ and the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program (RNIP)¹¹ were both expanded in 2022 (based on multi-year pilot programs) to help address labour gaps in Atlantic Canada and in identified northern and remote communities, respectively. Many of these communities are home (or proximal) to mining operations which may be experiencing labour shortages and could benefit from the RNIP. The Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) supports skilled refugees who meet work experience, education and language requirements to fill in-demand labour needs in Canada.¹² In addition to an accelerated permanent resident application process, employers using the EMPP can gain access to a new pool of international talent and can use refugee-serving partner organizations (for a fee) to recruit talent and provide integration services.¹³

7 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Express Entry*.

8 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Express Entry – Category Based Selection*.

9 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Canada's Tech Talent Strategy*.

10 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Atlantic Immigration Program*.

11 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program*.

12 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot*.

13 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Hire through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot*.



2. Regional and Provincial/Territorial Programs and Supports

Regional Programs and Supports

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in Canada support regional innovation ecosystems and help businesses scale up by focusing on regional growth strategies.¹⁴ Promoting inclusive growth is a fundamental objective of the RDAs. Relevant programs include support for businesses that are owned or majority-led by underrepresented groups, including newcomers to Canada, and that seek to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in the economy. The Youth Internship Program within the RDAs provides funding for businesses to hire recent graduates as interns.

Funded by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the RDAs include:

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).
- Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED).
- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor).
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor).
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).
- Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan).
- Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan).

¹⁴ Canada's Regional Development Agencies. <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/canadas-regional-development-agencies>

Provincial/Territorial Programs and Supports

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is offered in all provinces and territories (except Quebec and Nunavut) to facilitate skilled international workers coming to Canada to fill in-demand labour needs. Funded federally but managed by provincial and territorial ministries responsible for labour, immigration, or skills, the PNP provides for a valid work permit and an offer of employment from a company in that province or territory after completing at least six months of continuous full-time employment with that company as a temporary foreign worker, international student or working graduate. While the PNP operates similarly in each province/territory, minor differences occur if or when the province or territory targets particular immigrant groups, such as students, business people, skilled or semi-skilled workers.¹⁵

In Quebec, the Regular Skilled Worker Program (RSWP) allows individuals to apply for permanent residency following an assessment of training, professional skills and other criteria against labour needs.¹⁶

Complementing government efforts, province-wide councils, societies and associations of immigration service organizations (e.g., Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI),¹⁷ Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc.¹⁸ and the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC)¹⁹) champion equity and human rights for immigrants and refugees through advocacy, research and knowledge sharing. They also act as collective voices for immigrant-serving agencies and coordinate responses to shared needs and concerns in their respective provinces. (See the Appendix for a list of province-wide councils, societies and associations of immigration service organizations).

15 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *How the Provincial*.

16 Immigration Quebec. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration/work-quebec/skilled-workers/regular-skilled-worker-program/about>

17 Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. <https://ocasi.org/>

18 Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc. <https://www.icmanitoba.com/>

19 Immigrant Services Society of BC. <https://issbc.org/>



3. Local Programs and Supports

Municipal

Most municipalities provide newcomer welcome and integration services, including language training and employment programs. Often, a local guide for newcomer integration is produced, such as that created by Economic Development Winnipeg which details information and links to local integration services.²⁰ Alberta Municipalities is an example of a municipal collective at work-providing municipal governments in the province with a toolkit that includes marketing and social media collateral to promote inclusivity and the importance of welcoming newcomers.²¹

Immigrant employment councils, non-government municipal-level organizations, were formed to support newcomer integration and employment.

A leading example is the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) which supports newcomer employment in the Greater Toronto Area through education, mentorship programming and research. TRIEC encourages employers to hire immigrants and become more inclusive. By connecting employers to immigrant talent sources, events and networks, TRIEC brings employers with labour needs and immigrants seeking employment together. It provides tools and resources based on best practice research on attracting, hiring, training and retaining qualified and highly skilled immigrant workers.²² By connecting with immigrant employment councils, MiHR could increase awareness of careers in mining and potentially become the councils' go-to partner for mining sector employment expertise.

20 Economic Development Winnipeg. <https://www.liveinwinnipeg.com/live-here/immigration>

21 Alberta Municipalities. <https://www.abmunis.ca/advocacy-resources/social-issues/communications-toolkit-support-newcomers>

22 National Network of Immigrant Employment Councils (IECC). <https://iecc.network/>

Local Immigration Partnerships

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) were established in over 80 regions and communities across Canada to support the “development of community-based partnerships and planning around the needs of newcomers.”²³ Each LIP engages a variety of education, healthcare, employment, faith-based and social service organizations to address newcomer integration challenges. In addition to information and links to settlement services, many LIPs also provide job boards for local employers and newcomers to access.²⁴ Given the high number of LIPs in Canada, MiHR could focus its efforts on partnering with LIPs in areas with larger immigrant populations to share mining career information with immigrant job seekers.

Immigrant Employment Agencies

Numerous immigrant-serving agencies provide services in local communities across Canada to address newcomer settlement and language needs, provide health and legal referrals, and support employment, entrepreneurship and career ambitions. Agencies also provide resources for refugees, such as information and advice on filing a refugee claim. The federal government provides a directory²⁵ of settlement organizations from across Canada offering a variety of supports to newcomers, including assistance with obtaining employment, finding housing, enrolling children in school and other services. MiHR could select immigrant-serving agencies with which to partner and share mining career information, based on the agencies’ local immigrant population or proximity to mining operations.

COSTI Immigrant Services is an example of a local immigrant-serving agency evolving in response to local community need. With a focus on community integration, COSTI provides support for housing, language training, skills upgrading, mental health and finding employment.

23 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Local Immigration Partnerships Handbook*, p. 6.

24 National LIP Secretariat, *What are the LIPs?*

25 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Finding Free Newcomer*.



COSTI also works with employers to fill labour gaps through recruitment pre-screening services and provides information about employment-related government programs, such as the Canada Job Grant and training and/or wage subsidies. Operating from 18 locations in Toronto, York Region and the Region of Peel in Ontario, COSTI provides services in more than 60 languages to newcomers and refugees.²⁶ Recently, COSTI expanded its programming to address the needs of all disadvantaged adults, youth and women within its service areas.

Some immigrant-serving agencies focus on segments of the newcomer population. For example, the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) offers more than 50 settlement and integration programs and services to meet the unique needs of immigrant and refugee women, girls and their families.²⁷

Similarly, the Working Women Community Centre is a women-focused settlement agency that provides support to newcomers in Toronto.²⁸ The Centre offers settlement counseling, language training and other educational supports.

Individuals of like faith is another segment provided for by local immigrant-serving agencies. Research by the Angus Reid Institute and Cardus indicates that "half of Canadians who were born outside of Canada (49%) say they received material support from faith-based communities in Canada, including help finding a job or learning a language."²⁹ Recruitment agencies sometimes target specific newcomer groups as well – the Artemis Group, for example, specializes in recruitment for the tech sector and women engineers in the mining sector.³⁰ Career Edge creates paid internships in non-regulated fields, including administration, business, finance, human resources and information technology.³¹

26 COSTI Immigrant Services. <https://www.costi.org/index.php>

27 Calgary Immigrant Women's Association. <https://ciwa-online.com/>

28 Working Women Community Centre. <https://www.workingwomenccc.org/>

29 Angus-Reid Institute, *Faith and Immigration*.

30 Artemis Group. <https://www.artemiscanada.com/>

31 Career Edge, Partners. <https://www.careeredge.ca/for-partners/>

Refugee-focused Work Programs

Several organizations support refugee integration and employment in Canada. Most provide services for both job seekers and employers, including counselling, information, candidate matching and other employment related services. Examples of organizations that support refugee employment include:

- ACCESS Employment provides counselling and employment services to job seekers in the Toronto area. Refugees are a specifically targeted audience, and programs are provided to help build professional networks, connect with mentors and access job opportunities.³² The organization also offers recruitment services to employers and specializes in sectors such as engineering and information technology.

- MOSAIC is one of Canada's largest settlement and employment services organizations serving newcomers and refugees. Through employer programming, MOSAIC provides hiring, recruitment and community engagement services.³³
- The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is an advocate for the rights and well-being of refugees and migrants, in Canada and globally. Its Working Group on Immigration and Settlement exchanges information about the settlement and integration of refugees, immigrants and other migrants in Canada.³⁴
- JumpStart Refugee Talent engages with employers to provide information on the processes and benefits of hiring refugee talent. The organization also conducts job fairs, private recruitment events, candidate referrals and other recruitment programming for employers.³⁵

32 ACCESS Employment, Programs for Refugees. <https://accessemployment.ca/programs/programs-for-refugees>

33 MOSAIC, Recommended Programs. <https://mosaicbc.org/our-service-types/business-and-employer-services/>

34 JumpStart Refugee Talent, Refugee Talent Hub. <https://jumpstartrefugee.ca/programs/talent/>

35 JumpStart Refugee Talent, Refugee Talent Hub. <https://jumpstartrefugee.ca/programs/talent/>



4. Education, Research and Credentialling

Education Programs and Research

Postsecondary education institutions in Canada are sources of new graduates in fields relevant to the mining sector, such as engineering, computer science and environmental sciences. Institutions will often have an international education department tailored to support newcomers. Postsecondary institutions also conduct rigorous research and share analyses of immigration challenges and solutions which can impact Canada's mining sector.

Examples include:

- University of Manitoba's Immigration Research West³⁶ – a four-year research project on the settlement experiences and outcomes of newcomers to British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.
- Toronto Metropolitan University's Migrant Integration in the Mid-21st Century: Bridging Divides³⁷ – this seven-year project will examine challenges and opportunities that migrant integration poses in an urban context (large urban centres and small- and mid-sized cities).
- Wilfrid Laurier University's International Migration Research Centre³⁸ conducts research and policy analysis of international migration and mobility issues.

³⁶ University of Manitoba, *Immigration Research West*.

³⁷ Toronto Metropolitan University, *Migrant Integration*.

³⁸ Wilfrid Laurier University, *International Migration*.

Credentialing Services

The federal government's Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP)³⁹ supports the labour market integration of skilled newcomers through foreign education credential recognition. The FCRP provides funding for recognition services to provincial and territorial governments and other organizations such as regulatory bodies, national associations and credential assessment agencies.

The Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC)⁴⁰ has been established to provide assessment of academic credentials that adhere to the Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials. The six members of ACESC include:

- Comparative Education Service.⁴¹
- International Credential Assessment Service of Canada.⁴²
- International Qualifications Assessment Service.⁴³
- International Credential Evaluation Service.⁴⁴
- Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et Intégration du Québec.⁴⁵
- World Education Services – Canada.⁴⁶

All six organizations provide academic assessment services on behalf of IRCC, for potential immigrants to Canada. If applicants are in regulated occupations (e.g., engineers, nurses), it will be important to go directly to the regulatory college responsible for the occupation. The six members of ACESC also "provide reports used by competent recognition authorities in Canada—i.e., educational institutions, professional regulatory authorities and associations, immigration authorities, and employers—that require assistance with document authentication and comparability procedures."⁴⁷

These organizations also play a role in the integration of newcomers by providing complementary services such as the WES Gateway Program⁴⁸ and the Employer Playbook⁴⁹ that offers practical strategies to bolster immigrant inclusion throughout the four stages of the employment cycle and a high-level synthesis of community resources and services available to employers.

39 Employment and Social Development Canada, *Foreign Credential*.

40 Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC). <https://www.canalliance.org/en/#qa>

41 Comparative Education Service. <https://learn.utoronto.ca/comparative-education-service>

42 International Credential Assessment Service of Canada. <https://www.icascanada.ca/>

43 International Qualifications Assessment Service. <https://www.alberta.ca/international-qualifications-assessment.aspx>

44 International Credential Evaluation Service. <https://www.bcit.ca/ices/>

45 Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et Intégration du Québec. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/immigration/reconnaissance-etudes-experience/recognition-skills-acquired-abroad/getting-comparative-evaluation>

46 World Education Services, Benefits for Employers. <https://www.wes.org/ca/partners/employers/>

47 Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC). <https://www.canalliance.org/en/#qa>

48 World Education Services, About the WES Gateway Program. <https://www.wes.org/ca/about-the-wes-gateway-program/>
The WES Gateway Program assesses the educational credentials of individuals who have been displaced as a result of adverse circumstances in their country and have limited proof of academic achievements.

49 World Education Services. Employer Playbook. <https://www.wes.org/ca/employer-playbook/>



5. Industry and Labour Supports

Efforts by Canada's mining industry to facilitate integration of newcomers are part of larger initiatives to address labour issues. Many provincial mining associations maintain job boards to enable job seekers and employers to find one another and alleviate their respective employment challenges.⁵⁰ Other sector organizations facilitate opportunities for students to explore work in the sector. For example, CSMO Mines offers a work-study training program in Quebec that is sponsored by local businesses, free of charge to the participants and guarantees employment to students who are successful.⁵¹

Opportunities for MiHR to complement industry and labour efforts include cross-promotion of programming, identifying training and development gaps in current industry offerings and partnering with industry players to develop new programming jointly.

50 See, for example: Mining Association of British Columbia, Job Board. <https://mining.bc.ca/job-board/>

51 CSMO Mines. <https://exploreslesmines.com/fr/csmo-mines/>





Conclusion

Newcomers to Canada are an increasingly important talent pool for the Canadian mining sector. Facilitating their successful integration into employment will help to address labour gaps, create a culture of inclusion and improve retention. There are a variety of supports and programs, ranging from federal to local levels, to facilitate the integration of newcomers into Canada's mining sector. While a limited number of programs specifically target mining, most are available to the sector. Programs and initiatives that focus on in-demand occupations, such as engineering or technology, are examples of efforts that are relevant and available to mining companies. Integration services provided at the local level offer career preparation training, recruitment services and supports that reflect community needs. Mining employers can take advantage of opportunities at various levels as appropriate for their needs.

One of the challenges for immigrants and the mining sector is the overlap of services provided at different levels, and the wide range of integration service providers. This presents an opportunity for industry to use various programs at the federal, provincial/territorial and regional levels to help integrate newcomers into Canada's mining sector. Other opportunities include leveraging the networks of regional immigrant-serving organizations and agencies to share mining career resources and partnering with industry to develop joint training programs.

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APPENDIX:

Province-Wide Councils of Immigration Service Organizations

**Association for New Canadians (ANC)
(Newfoundland and Labrador)**

<https://www.ancnl.ca/>

**Alberta Association of Immigrant
Serving Agencies**

<https://aaisa.ca/>

**Centre social d'aide aux immigrants
(CSAI) (Quebec)**

<https://centrecsai.org/>

**Immigrant and Refugee Services
Association of Prince Edward Island**

<https://www.irsapei.ca/>

Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc.

<https://www.icmanitoba.com/>

**Immigrant Services Association of
Nova Scotia (ISANS)**

<https://isans.ca/>

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC)

<https://issbc.org/>

Immigrant-Serving Agencies of New Brunswick

[https://www.welcomenb.ca/content/wel-bien/en/
LivingSettling/content/SettlementAgencies.html](https://www.welcomenb.ca/content/wel-bien/en/LivingSettling/content/SettlementAgencies.html)

**Ontario Council of Agencies Serving
Immigrants (OCASI)**

<https://ocasi.org/>

**Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant
Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA)**

<https://saisia.ca/>

