



IMMIGRANT  
EMPLOYMENT  
COUNCIL OF BC **IEC<sub>BC</sub>**

## FINDINGS & SOLUTIONS

### MANAGING MIGRATION FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH IN B.C

Research conducted by the Mobility for Innovation Research Team at Carleton University, Ottawa, and the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia. This project received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Contact [martin.geiger@carleton.ca](mailto:martin.geiger@carleton.ca) or [sangeeta.subramanian@iecbc.ca](mailto:sangeeta.subramanian@iecbc.ca) for further details.

BC faces significant talent shortages, especially in the area of technology. The lack of skilled STEM professionals with 3-5+ years of job experience is a major barrier for the growth of BC's tech sector.

High-skilled immigrant talent fills labour shortages and strengthens businesses. It provides BC employers with new knowledge and contacts, including to global markets, and it promotes innovation.



#### Observable Barriers to Immigrant Employment

A significant challenge facing global talent is the inability to find relevant employment in their field of training. Lacking a Canadian educational background or work experience, or failure to recognize foreign credentials are main reasons why global talents are not being considered for positions they desire and are qualified for. **Employers are able to mitigate barriers to employment by shifting towards competency- and value-based hiring models.**

Conscious and unconscious biases are hindering talent sourcing, attraction and retention. **Education on and recognition of bias at all levels of an organization are important steps that employers can take to enact equality in recruitment and improve retention.**

Steps to successfully integrate global talent include personalized on-boarding processes (e.g. regular points of contact, meetings, milestones). **Peer-mentorship helps newcomers to adapt and it creates an environment where talent feels valued and supported.**

## TOP BARRIERS



### Lack of Information

- Unclear requirements and pathways for immigrants
- Uncertain outcomes and unpredictable timing for application processing
- Costs of sponsoring and resettling talent uncertain
- Inability to ask questions directly to immigration officials

### HR Capacity

- Limited employer resources to acquire immigrant talent
- Barriers for immigrants to access relevant networks
- Lack of awareness on skills profile of available talent
- Employers requiring 'Canadian Experience' bar qualified immigrants
- Culturally insensitive hiring and interviewing practices

### Low Retention

- Employers inadequately prepared to ensure integration and retention

## INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS



### Leveraging Networks and Experience

- Connecting businesses, recruiting firms, consultants and professionals with prior experience of the process
- Using early applications to make templates for the future
- Communicating challenges to relevant governments and advocating for change

### Innovative and Supportive Practices

- Structuring company practices around diversity and inclusion
- Strengthening emphasis on required skills
- Hiring for applicant attitude, team fit and match in values

### On-boarding Support

- Discussing work expectations with new employees
- Collaborating on personalized plans to ensure accommodation and retention
- Promoting peer-mentorship



## VOICES TO GOVERNMENT

Key areas identified by employers that should be addressed:

- **Clarity:** overwhelming amount of information and immigration pathways, and unclear language in program explanations leading to issues identifying essential information (costs, timelines, eligibility, requirements)
- **User-friendliness:** inability to ask questions to immigration officials; frustration with repetitive submission of the same information; **requests for a platform that enables applicants to maintain one profile for multiple applications** with built-in ability to monitor their status in the system; calls for greater coordination between provincial and federal systems.
- **Business needs:** NOC codes are confusing and limit talent recruitment for new occupations; Labour Market Impact Assessment is inconvenient, and its 30-day position advertising requirement deters businesses from undergoing the process; shift immigration requirements expectations to short alternatives that **allow for probationary periods; Federal increase of overall immigration levels; faster processing times to fill pressing talent needs with international talent.**