



Addressing the National Labour Shortage with a National Workforce Strategy

Description

Canada faces a critical labor shortage impacting vital sectors like construction, manufacturing, and hospitality. Immediate action is needed to address the scarcity of skilled workers and prevent a worsening crisis. A unified National Workforce Strategy, led by the federal government, is necessary to collaborate with industry stakeholders and all levels of government. This strategic framework will focus on industries with labor shortages, fostering innovation and targeted workforce development to meet the urgent demand for skilled labor.

Background

Canada is presently facing an immense labour shortage. It is experiencing a historically low unemployment-to-job vacancy ratio that has decreased in every single province over the last two years. 35% of Canadian businesses reported that they expect a labour force shortage to be a significant obstacle for their business. Companies in the construction (49.5%), manufacturing (47.4%), and hospitality (46.3%) industries have even higher expectations that the labour shortage will present significant obstacles.¹⁵¹

While provincial jurisdictions have implemented various workforce strategies, the problem has become a national crisis requiring the more considerable national coordination that only the Government of Canada can provide. This strategy needs to identify areas of labour need and remove barriers to entry while generating interest in them.

There is an example to take inspiration from in Australia, where similar challenges are experienced, and a similar form of a national government is in place. In 2022, the Australian government implemented its National Workforce Strategy, designed to bring together all levels of government, industry, and businesses to address its current workforce shortage and expected growth in labour demand.¹⁵²

The federal government needs to do the same with a sense of urgency. We are already behind, and the demand for labour is only growing. Canada needs a National Workforce Strategy that can quarterback workforce development with industry and the provinces to propel its economic growth into the future.

¹⁵¹ Statistics Canada. "Labour shortage trends in Canada", accessed June 7, 2022, https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/labour/_labour-shortage-trends-canada

¹⁵² The Government of Australia. "Australia's National Workforce Strategy", accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.dewr.gov.au/workforce/national-workforce-strategy>



Recommendations

That the Government of Canada:

1. Create an employer-led National Workforce Strategy in collaboration with governments, indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, and other skill providers to mitigate labour force shortages that will:
 - a. Gather and employ data to understand the current and future state of the workforce and share it with Canadians to build understanding around workforce opportunities
 - b. Provide incentives to industry to drive change through incentives that encourage coordination across all levels of government and industry
 - c. Equip Canadians with skills that are in-demand through incentives that link them to careers in areas where there are labour shortages
 - d. Encourage newcomers who have the skillsets in demand in Canada to immigrate by removing barriers to local accreditation and employing special visas to ease access for potential new Canadians in those professions
 - e. Eliminate disincentives to work and put priority on removing barriers to accessing work opportunities

Endorsements

The National Workforce Strategies Committee supports this resolution.

Submitted By: Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce

Supporting Organizations: Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce