

## **Labour Shortages and Opportunities for Foreign Workers**

Inflation in Canada recently reached its peak at 6.1% in April 2022, the highest since 1991. From the rising food and gasoline prices, empty stocks of new cars to the delayed of furniture delivery, one most obvious thing that is happening now is the labour shortages. Nowadays wherever you drive along Greater Toronto Area, you can easily spot the hiring signs everywhere.



The labour shortages in several professions have impacted service delivery, product availability, economic recovery, and business growth. Several factors that contribute to these labor shortages are the absenteeism of workers who are infected with COVID-19, aging workforce, declining birth rates, and immigration backlogs.

Canada's demography is in transition. Many baby boomers are retiring as they are aging, number of babies born in Canada fell to a nearly 15-year low in 2020. That's why the Canadian government implements the aggressive policies toward immigration by absorbing more than 400,000 new immigrants every year. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the immigration backlog issue is unavoidable. The recent report cites that Canada's immigration backlog sits at nearly 2 million applications. This is a major problem that cause strains on an already tight labour market.

Though the federal government has given each province allocation of economic immigrants they are allowed to accept each year through Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), that allocation is still insufficient to overcome labour shortages given the robust economic recovery post Covid-19 pandemic. It is reported that the labour shortages are worse in small and rural communities.

Therefore, some immigration paths have been introduced to address these issues. In partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), some rural communities have launched the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) to create a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers who want to work and live in one of the participating communities.

Similarly, the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) has been made as the permanent immigration program to help filling local labour shortages and support economic growth in Atlantic provinces. Both RNIP and AIP have been met with great success.

The labour shortages occurring across Canada have created ample opportunities for foreign workers who want to pursue their dream working and living in Canada. Though the procedures to get the job are not easy and immigration backlog is still persisting, the foreign workers have opportunities to tap the immigration niche by pursuing the jobs in rural and smaller communities through RNIP and AIP.