

The AMSSA Info Sheet series has been created to inform and support our members and community partners. The Info Sheets cover a wide range of topics and highlight important facts and trends from across Canada and BC. Our goal is to assist organizations in navigating the rapidly changing landscape of the BC settlement sector.*

Labour Market Statistics—Trends for Canada and BC

Current demographic trends indicate that new permanent residents (PRs) will play an increasingly important part in the labour market. This is underscored by the twin demographic challenges on the horizon: the first being the retirement of a large number of baby boomers and second, a limited number of new workers who are coming from domestic sources.¹

Highlights: Labour Market Trends — October 2012

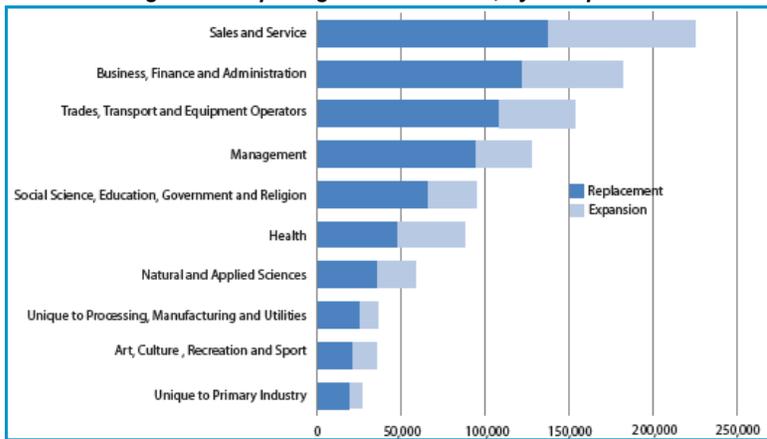
Canada

- ⇒ 7.4% unemployment in October 2012, constant after 2 months of job gains.²
- ⇒ 229,000 jobs created between Oct. 2011—Oct. 2012.³
- ⇒ 6.4 million jobs expected in next 10 years.⁴
- ⇒ 1 million PRs will enter workforce in the next decade.⁵

British Columbia

- ⇒ 6.7% unemployment in October 2012, down by 0.3% from September. There are currently 167,400 unemployed.⁶
- ⇒ 29,500 jobs created between Oct. 2011—Oct. 2012⁷
- ⇒ 1.03 million new jobs expected between 2010-2020.⁸
- ⇒ Workers needed expected to exceed supply by 2016.⁹
- ⇒ 9.6% of the provincial labour force are very recent or recent immigrants, 17.7% are established immigrants.¹⁰
- ⇒ Very recent immigrants had an average unemployment rate of 11.1% in October, compared to 6.1% for established immigrants.¹¹

Fig. 1— Job Openings in next decade, by occupation



Data Source: BC Stats¹¹

B.C. Economic highlights¹²

- 3rd largest clean technology sector in the world, behind California & Germany
- B.C.'s debt-to-GDP ratio is currently 17.4% (2012). ON— 37%; US— 72%
- 23% increase in trade with China in just one year
- 3rd highest growth in GDP in the country
- 18% increase in new investments in one year; \$80 Billion currently underway

Changes to EI Benefits & Possible Connection with TFW Program

The Federal Government announced important upcoming changes to EI benefits. Specific definitions of “suitable employment” and “reasonable job search” that were once left ambiguous will be explicitly defined. One stated objective of the EI changes is to link the EI program with the Temporary Foreign Workers program. This link will provide employers seeking TFWs with information about the presence of EI recipients in their region. In British Columbia, 3102 TFWs were employed in industries in which 8895 EI claims had been filed, i.e. 35% of TFWs work in the former occupational field of EI claimants.¹³

Concerns have been raised by labour groups regarding the potential for employers to pay TFWs up to 15% less than the local average wage. Current legislation allows employers to pay TFWs lower wages if the position was previously held by a Canadian who received a lower-than-average wage. If an employer can no longer find Canadians to fill these low wage positions, there may now be an incentive to hire TFWs as opposed to increasing the wage to attract Canadian workers. A federal review of the TFW program is now underway, following a lawsuit filed by two B.C. labour unions.¹⁴

1. Stats Canada, 'The role of Migrant Labour Supply in the Canadian Labour Market', Nov. 2012. Available at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/2012-migrant/index.asp>.
 2, 3, 4. Statistics Canada, 'Labour Force Survey', Oct. 2012. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/121102/dq121102a-eng.htm>.
 5. See above: Footnote 1.
 6. B.C. Statistics, 'Labour Force Statistics Highlights,' Oct. 2012. Available at: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/bfbc9243-476f-4ecd-a146-c987cc7587e8/LabourForceStatisticsOctober2012Highlights.pdf>.
 7. WorkBC, 'Labour Market Snapshot', Oct. 2012. Available at: <http://www.workbc.ca/Statistics/Labour-Market-Snapshots/Pages/Labour-Market-Snapshots.aspx>.
 8, 9. WorkBC, 'Labour Market Outlook 2010-2020,' 2009. Page 3. Available at: <http://www.workbc.ca/Documents/Docs/BCLMOutlook.pdf>.
 10. WelcomeBC, 'Immigrant Labour Market', Oct. 2010. Available at: http://www.welcomebc.ca/local/wbc/docs/communities/imm_labour_mar.pdf.
 11. See above: Footnote 7.
 12. BC Jobs Plan, 'Delivering for British Columbians', Available at: http://www.bcjobsplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/new_pocket_card_fin_009.pdf.
 13. Mowat Centre, 'What the New EI Rules Mean', June 2012. Available at: <http://www.mowatcentre.ca/pdfs/mowatResearch/66.pdf>.
 14. Toronto Star, 'Conservatives' wage model will hurt all workers, unions say', May 2012. Available at: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1178645-ei-reform-changes-will-drive-down-wages-for-everyone>.

* Disclaimer: The following summaries have been compiled by AMSSA. They have not been sanctioned by the Immigrant Integration Branch (IIB), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) or agency representatives, so the information should be confirmed as appropriate.

Key Highlights from BC's 2010 Labour Market Strategy Report

BC is facing an aging workforce as well as global competition for talent. According to the Ministry of Advanced Education's labour market strategy report, "the initial wave of Baby Boomers has reached retirement age, and the numbers of workers retiring each year is projected to swell from 56,000 to over 62,000 over the next decade. Coupled with rising life expectancies and lower birth rates, this will increase the average age of the population and create a scarcity of skills and experience in the labour market."¹⁵

This trend is also not unique to BC, according to the report "many other jurisdictions around the world share similar challenges with an aging workforce and increasing demand for higher skills. British Columbia will experience more competition for internationally trained workers. This includes highly skilled and experienced professionals and international students who are potential new labour market entrants. Migration – both international and interprovincial – of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and students will be key to the economic future of all regions in the province" (see Figure 2). "Forecasts indicate that 36 percent of job openings over the next decade will need to be filled by skilled workers from outside British Columbia" (emphasis added).¹⁶

It is important to add that the Ministry further projects that "77 percent of job openings over the next decade will require a college diploma, trade certificate, university degree, or higher" (emphasis added). "Many of these new jobs will require advanced skills, including increased science and technology skills (see Figure 3)."¹⁷

The report identified 3 key labour market priorities:¹⁸

- 1) Increase the Skill Level and Labour Market Success of British Columbians.
- 2) Attract Workers and Entrepreneurs from Outside the Province Who Meet BC's Regional Economic Needs.
- 3) Improve Workplace Productivity.

Potential Impacts

- ⇒ BC needs to attract a high trained / educated workforce seeing that a third of new jobs are predicted to being filled by skilled workers from outside of BC by 2020.
- ⇒ Exact details of changes to EI benefits are forthcoming and the concern is that TFW substitutes may suppress wages in long term.
- ⇒ With over 1 million job openings expected in the next 8 years and only 650,000 students in the education system, there is increasing pressure to grow the workforce and build the right skills so that economic development can continue in all regions.²¹
- ⇒ Regional expected job openings by 2020: Mainland / Southwest (666,250); Vancouver Island / Coast (152,620); Thompson—Okanagan (110,320); Kootenay (31,170); Cariboo (29,170); North Coast and Nechako (19,890); Northeast (18,020).²²

Fig. 2 – BC Population growth, by source, 1990-June 2012

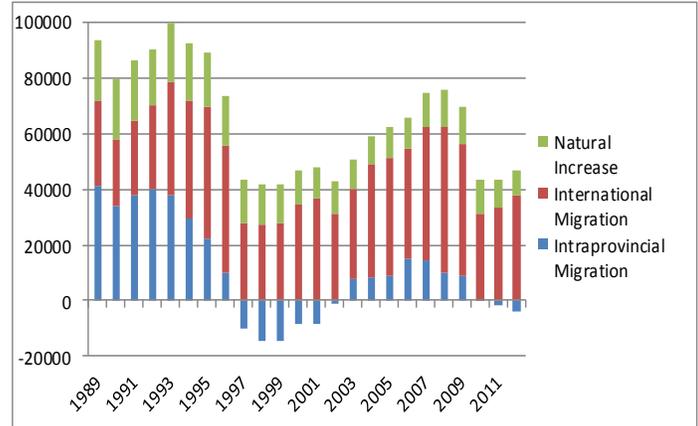


Figure created by AMSSA; Data Source: BC Stats¹⁹

Fig. 3 – Skill requirements for B.C. job openings, 2010-2020

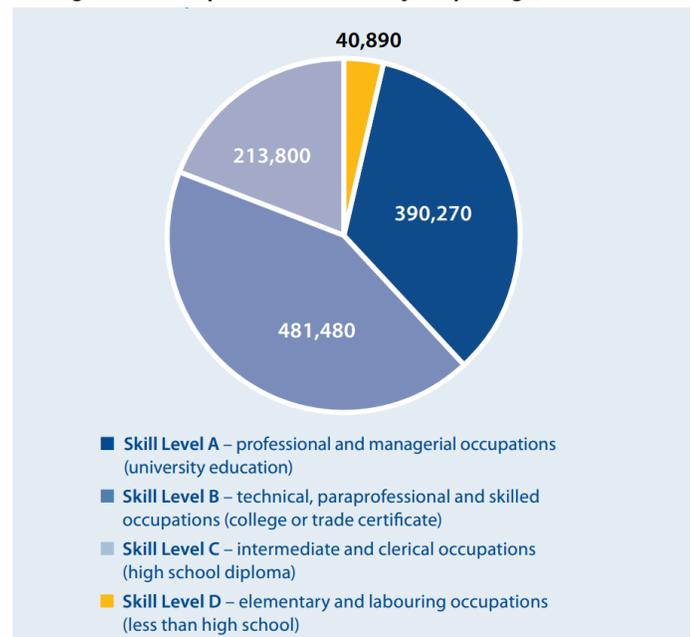


Chart Source: BC Labour Market Strategy Report²⁰

15, 16, 17, 18. B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, 'Skills for Growth: B.C.'s Labour Market Strategy to 2020', 2010. Available at: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/skills_for_growth/docs/Skills_for_Growth_Strategy.pdf.

19. BC Stats, 'BC Population Components of Change', June 2012. Available at: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationProjections.aspx>.

20, 21. See above: Footnote 15.

22. WorkBC, 'Labour Market Outlook 2010-2020,' 2009, page 11. Available at: <http://www.workbc.ca/Documents/Docs/BCLMOutlook.pdf>.