



## Overview of Canada's Temporary Work Permit Programs and Application Process

Employers can hire temporary foreign workers through two different programs, the [Temporary Foreign Worker Program \(TFWP\)](#) and the [International Mobility Program \(IMP\)](#), depending on whether they need a [labour market impact assessment \(LMIA\)](#). As an employer, you need to determine if you need an LMIA. If you need an LMIA, you must hire the temporary worker through the TFWP. A work permit is required for both programs.

There are two steps to a work permit application: The employer completes the first step, and the prospective employee completes the second step by submitting a work permit application.

### STEP 1 (Employer)

#### Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) (LMIA required)

This program helps employers fill labour shortages on a temporary basis when no qualified Canadian citizens or permanent residents are available.

The [TFWP](#) is comprised of several streams, including these three:

##### High-Wage Stream

For this stream, the employer must offer the temporary foreign worker a wage rate that is at or above the [provincial or territorial median wage](#), and they must include an employer transition plan in their application. The plan must describe the activities the employer is agreeing to undertake to recruit, retain and train Canadians and permanent residents to reduce their reliance on the TFWP.

##### Low-Wage Stream

For this stream, wages should be within the [provincial or territorial median wage](#). Applications in this stream must follow the [program requirements for low-wage positions](#), and employers must comply with the program criteria set out by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

##### Global Talent Stream

Employers seeking highly skilled foreign workers under this stream may be eligible for an **LMIA application processing time of 10 business days**, 80% of the time.

All Global Talent Stream employers must complete labour market benefits plans as part of [ESDC's](#) application process. Employers can apply through two different categories:

- **Category A:** This category is for innovative Canadian companies that are looking to grow by filling open positions with unique and specialized global talent. To access Category A, companies must be referred by an ESDC [designated partner](#).
- **Category B:** This category is for companies looking to hire highly skilled foreign workers for occupations found on ESDC's [Global Talent Occupations List](#). If an occupation is on the list, it has been determined to be in demand without the domestic labour supply to meet that demand. No referral is required to access Category B.

With a positive LMIA under the Global Talent Stream (in either category), the employee will qualify for priority processing of their work permit application under the [Global Skills Strategy](#).

An application guide, the actual application, and further information on the Global Talent Stream can be found on [ESDC's website](#).

The processing fee for an LMIA is \$1,000.

#### International Mobility Program (IMP) (LMIA-exempt)

This program lets employers hire temporary workers without an LMIA. Exemptions from the LMIA process are based on

- broader social, cultural, economic or other competitive advantages for Canada
- reciprocal benefits enjoyed by Canadians and permanent residents

Here are two exemption examples:

**Intra-company transferee:** This LMIA exemption permits international companies to transfer qualified employees into Canada temporarily to improve management effectiveness, transfer knowledge, expand Canadian exports and enhance competitiveness in overseas markets.

Executives, senior managers and specialized knowledge workers are included in the LMIA exemption. Please carefully review the general program requirements and the requirements applicable to specialized knowledge workers in particular.

**Francophone Mobility:** For French-speaking or bilingual applicants destined to work anywhere in Canada except the province of Québec.

##### Note to employers:

Employers of foreign nationals applying for an employer-specific LMIA-exempt work permit must generally pay an employer compliance fee of \$230 and electronically submit an offer of employment information directly to IRCC through the [Employer Portal](#).

The employer must pay the \$230 fee and submit the offer of employment **before** a foreign national applies for an employer-specific LMIA-exempt work permit.

The employer should provide the **offer of employment number** to the foreign national for inclusion in their work permit application form. If employers do not meet these requirements when hiring foreign nationals under employer-specific LMIA exemptions, officers have the authority to refuse the work permit application.

For more information, visit:

[Canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/hire-temporary-foreign.html](https://Canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/hire-temporary-foreign.html)

Once the **LMIA** or the **offer of employment number** has been obtained by the employer, the employee is ready to apply for the work permit.

## STEP 2 (Employee)

### Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) (LMIA required)

### International Mobility Program (IMP) (LMIA-exempt)

#### How to apply

The employee should create an [online account](#) and then submit their work permit application through this account. The employee will need the LMIA number if they are applying through the TFWP. If they are applying through the IMP, the employee will need the offer of employment number generated in the Employer Portal.

#### Admissibility

In addition to meeting the work permit requirements, the worker [must also be admissible to Canada](#). Depending on their situation, the worker may need to undergo a [medical exam](#) and, in most cases, [give biometrics](#).

#### Fees

The [fees](#) for all applications are listed in Canadian dollars and are paid online. Please keep an electronic copy of your fee receipt.

#### Accompanying family members

Spouses, common-law partners, and dependent children of those who hold or have been approved to hold a Canadian work permit may apply for their own [open work permit](#). Children of the employee would also be eligible to apply to receive a study permit (if they are six years old and older) or a temporary resident visa, if required. Accompanying dependents can apply at the same time as the principal applicant for an open work permit (if they are eligible to work in the province they are residing in), a study permit or a visitor visa, if required.

Applicants can [check processing times](#) to see how much time their application(s) may take.

#### Exemptions from the work permit requirement

A work permit is usually required to work in Canada, but there are some [exceptions](#). Most work permit exemptions apply only to very specific situations, such as the following, where foreign nationals need only [temporary resident status](#) in Canada:

- business visitors
- highly skilled workers needed for very short-term work
  - o workers in TEER category 0 or 1 occupations (restricted to one 15-day job every 6 months or one 30-day job every 12 months)
  - o researchers performing research at a Canadian, publicly funded, degree-granting institution or its affiliated research institution (restricted to one period of 120 days in Canada every 12 months)

Our immigration programs use the [National Occupational Classification \(NOC\)](#) to decide if a job or type of work experience meets program eligibility. We consider “skilled” jobs those at TEER category 0, 1, 2 or 3. Consult the website to find an occupation.

If eligible, the worker may still need a [temporary resident visa or electronic travel authorization](#) to come to Canada.

#### Immigrate to Canada

Anyone can apply to immigrate to Canada provided they meet the qualifications of our immigration programs. More information is available at [Canada.ca/come-to-Canada](https://Canada.ca/come-to-Canada)

