

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



ABOUT IEC-BC

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) is a not-for-profit organization that provides BC employers with solutions, tools and resources they need to attract, hire and retain qualified immigrant talent. We believe that the successful integration of skilled newcomers into the BC workplace is critical to both their success and the province's long-term economic performance. We work with employers, government, and other partner stakeholders to ensure that BC employers can effectively integrate global talent.

MISSION

Integrating immigrants into the labour market builds BC's economy.

VISION

Newcomers to British Columbia are quickly integrated into our labour market at a level that uses their skills, training and education. Successful attachment to the labour market allows immigrants to fully contribute to our society and economy, and through their contributions BC prospers. By being able to tap into a labour pool of talented newcomers, BC employers are able to grow their business through using immigrants' skills.



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Immigration, Refugees
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Canada



Future Skills
Centre

Centre des
Compétences futures

HUMAN CAPITAL AS CANADA'S ADVANTAGE: A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND THE CEO OF THE IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL OF BC

British Columbia welcomed over 45,000 immigrants in 2018. On average, new immigrants arrive with higher levels of education than the Canadian-born. Despite this, highly skilled newcomers struggle to find employment commensurate with their skills and immigrants have higher underemployment and unemployment rates than the Canadian-born workers – all while employers across the province identify skills and labour shortages as critical impediments to maintaining or growing their businesses.

This is a problem. BC is failing to fully benefit from the skilled immigrant talent coming into its communities. As countries around the world become more restrictive to migrants, Canada can become the destination of choice for skilled immigrants if we can show them that the journey to Canada is worth the effort. To attract the right people, we need to provide them with the right opportunities. Aligning highly skilled newcomers with jobs in their field that use their expertise is essential to growing our economy.

But this cannot be left to the market; active interventions are required. IEC-BC and its partners connect employers to immigrant talent by providing the tools and resources needed to find, hire, and retain newcomers. We simultaneously provide newcomers with the knowledge and skills required to better access the Canadian labour market and communicate their experience to employers.



BEN HUME (L) AND PATRICK MACKENZIE (R)

Employers are confident in IEC-BC clients because we provide them with a system of support. We help assess and improve newcomers' technical and soft skills through the FAST and ASCEND programs, connect employers with newcomers through our BC JobConnect and MentorConnect programs, provide employers with the skills and resources needed to conduct culturally inclusive hiring and onboarding processes, and we coach employers on how to retain international talent.

IEC-BC is proud of our successes and efforts over the past year to better connect employers to immigrant talent and we look forward to our next steps. We invite you to learn more about our journey and the partnerships that make our successes possible.

Handwritten signatures of Ben Hume and Patrick MacKenzie. The signature on the left is Ben Hume's, and the signature on the right is Patrick MacKenzie's.

Ben Hume, Chair, IEC-BC

Patrick MacKenzie, CEO, IEC-BC

2018–2019 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Guided by our mission to grow BC’s economy by integrating immigrants into the labour market, IEC-BC prioritized building partnerships and promoting the employer perspective at policy and settlement sector meetings in 2018–2019.

Our partnerships make our successes possible. IEC-BC has had the privilege of working closely with immigrant-serving organizations for years.

In April 2019, the **Future Skills Centre** selected IEC-BC’s FAST Program as one of six innovation projects that will help build the workforce Canada needs for the future. With the Future Skills Centre and 16 partners across the country, FAST will expand to help more newcomers before and after they arrive in Canada.

This past year, IEC-BC was selected as one of ten organizations across Canada to work with **LIFT Philanthropy Partners** through its Better Beginnings, Bigger Impact initiative.

Throughout 2018-2019, IEC-BC’s perspective was sought by policymakers, academics, industry representatives, and settlement organizations.

In September 2018, IEC-BC was invited to speak with Dr. Arvind Gupta on the digital economy on behalf of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. Dr. Gupta spoke to the need for programs like FAST and the program’s application for retaining top international students in Canada’s workforce.

Additionally, IEC-BC was featured as a panelist at multiple events, including the 2019 National Metropolis Conference in Halifax and Statistics Canada’s Vancouver event, A Data Story on Ethnocultural Diversity and Inclusion in Canada.

Lastly, IEC-BC traveled to Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to speak to potential newcomers and immigration agencies about the power of competency-based assessments.

Throughout 2018–2019, IEC-BC’s perspective was sought by policymakers, academics, industry representatives, and settlement organizations.

IEC-BC HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

- › *Advancing IEC-BC's ASCEND, BC JobConnect, FAST, and MentorConnect programs*
- › *IEC-BC's FAST program identified as one of six innovation projects by the Future Skills Centre*
- › *IEC-BC selected as one of ten organizations for the Better Beginnings, Bigger Impact initiative by LIFT Philanthropy Partners*

REPRESENTING THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE:

- › *Consultation with Dr. Arvind Gupta on behalf of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development*
- › *Panelist for four workshops at the 2019 National Metropolis Conference*
- › *Presented to organizations in Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates*
- › *Panelist for Statistics Canada's Event: A Data Story on Ethnocultural Diversity and Inclusion in Canada*



"IEC-BC has given me confidence and the right path to approach a Canadian company."

ANAND KUNWAR SINGH, FAST CLIENT

IEC-BC'S PROGRAMS: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS

IEC-BC programs are designed to meet BC employer hiring needs by helping them better understand the skills immigrants bring to the table and helping newcomers better understand how to position themselves for success. Our programs are to be used either à la carte or in combination to provide a tailored approach to connecting employers with immigrant talent.

Individuals approved in principle to immigrate to Canada, or Permanent Residents already in Canada, can register for IEC-BC's **FAST** program, giving them a personalized roadmap to meaningful employment in 68 occupations. FAST enables employers to quickly recognize the skills coming to Canada and hire newcomers that have both the technical and soft skills necessary to thrive.

Newcomers looking for additional soft skill development will benefit from **ASCEND**, a program developed to reflect employer and industry

needs and administered by immigrant-facing organizations. ASCEND is designed to address gaps in job-readiness identified by employer and mentor partners and develop newcomers' communication, interpersonal skills, and cultural awareness.

IEC-BC's **MentorConnect** program helps employers better understand the immigrant talent pool. The industry-specific nature of MentorConnect allows employers to better access newcomers looking for employment.

Lastly, employers can directly find candidates with the skills they require through **BC JobConnect**, an easy-to-use repository of profiles of job-ready newcomers. BC JobConnect helps large organizations deliver on diversity and inclusion policies and support small and mid-size organizations that may have limited HR capacities to find their next hire.

IEC-BC's programs provide a comprehensive approach to connecting employers to immigrant talent, helping employers to find, hire, and retain job-ready newcomers. See pages 7–10 for program-specific highlights.



“Most Canadians are not that far removed from an immigration story of their own. Either we or our parents or grandparents came from somewhere else to build a better life. We understand immigrating takes effort, bravery, hard work, persistence.”

ANNE TOWER, AFABC, BC JOBCONNECT EMPLOYER

ASCEND: SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS' SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

ASCEND develops the soft skill and intercultural competencies of BC's skilled immigrants. The online and in-person program focuses on helping newcomers develop skills sought by BC employers, HR managers and mentors.

ASCEND is IEC-BC's newest program and has been under development throughout 2018-2019. As part of our program needs assessment, IEC-BC interviewed 25 Human Resource Managers across BC, conducted an environmental scan of existing programs, and created a curriculum outline.

The development of ASCEND is owed in large part to IEC-BC's Project Reference Group, comprised of over 30 cross-industry and subject matter experts, including HR managers, BC employers, Service Providing representatives, skilled immigrants, and mentors.

Our partner Service Providing Organizations began piloting the program in summer 2019. We look forward to reporting the program's early results in the 2020 Fiscal Year.

2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- > *Completed program needs assessment involving the input of 25 HR managers across BC*
- > *Assembled a project reference group of 30+ cross-industry experts to support ASCEND's development*
- > *Program content finalized for piloting*
- > *Partnership development with Service Providing Organizations, piloting ASCEND summer and fall 2019*



“Interpersonal relationship capabilities are necessary to impact and influence and manage up. I would say that these soft skills are more important than hard skills.”

**HURRIYA BURNEY | VP, COMMERCIAL BANKING, RBC;
ASCEND PROJECT REFERENCE GROUP MEMBER**

BC JOBCONNECT: CONNECTING EMPLOYERS TO IMMIGRANT TALENT

BC JobConnect is a free and easy-to-use online tool offering employers coordinated access to job-ready immigrant talent. Newcomers promote their work experience, skills and abilities in a format designed with employers in mind. Registered employers identify candidates of interest based on flexible, multi-parameter searches, and IEC-BC helps facilitate connections of interest.

Since its inception, BC JobConnect has connected employers with 280 job-ready newcomers, resulting in 75 getting hired. In 2018-2019 alone,

480 newcomers and 375 employers registered for BC JobConnect, with employers dipping into this talent pool 290 times.

This past year BC JobConnect launched in Kelowna in partnership with KCR Community Resources. IEC-BC and KCR worked together to connect over 40 newcomers to Kelowna employers through BC JobConnect, resulting in 16 employers hiring immigrant talent.

Through BC JobConnect, IEC-BC has developed and strengthened partnerships with business associations, immigrant-serving organizations and educational institutions. In 2018, IEC-BC hosted two connections events for Starbucks, allowing hiring managers to find job-ready immigrants. Thirteen newcomers found employment as a result of this partnership.



“We’ve used IEC-BC’s BC JobConnect online tool to fill specific roles that we are looking for... Click, connect, and IEC-BC will arrange an interview. It is so simple.”

PETER BOYD, PETER’S YIG, BC JOB CONNECT EMPLOYER

2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- > *Employers reached out to candidates 290 times*
- > *165 employer-newcomer connections*
- > *Partnership with KCR Community Resources, resulting in 42 Kelowna-based connections and 16 hires*
- > *Starbucks partnership, resulting in 13 new hires*

FAST: MAXIMIZING SKILLED IMMIGRANT TALENT THROUGH TECHNICAL AND SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) is an online skills assessment and development platform that helps newcomers enter the labour market in positions that make full use of their skills by overcoming employment barriers like international credential recognition and a lack of Canadian work experience.

According to Statistics Canada, 81% of immigrants worked in occupations requiring post-secondary training before arriving in Canada, but only 38% of immigrants work in similar sectors six months after landing and only 50% after two years. Failing to capitalize on skilled immigrant talent is estimated to cost Canada \$50B annually.¹

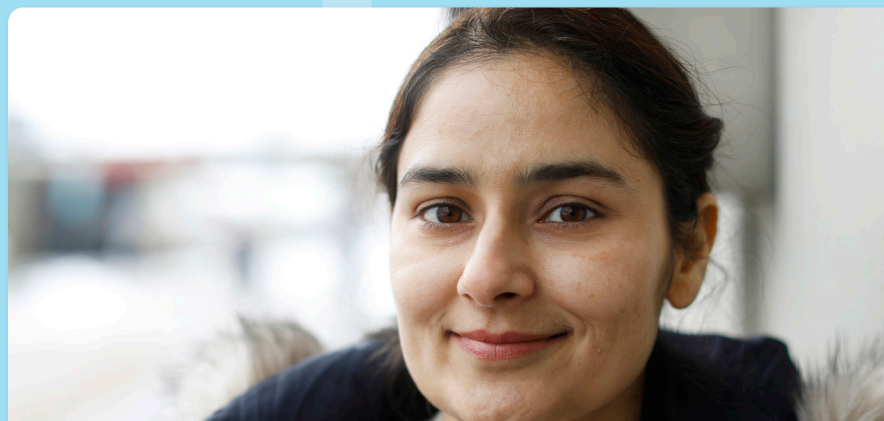
FAST helps close this “skills gap” through occupation-specific workplace cultural and technical competency assessments and gap training. This online skills development program helps employers recognize skilled immigrant talent and helps newcomers overcome barriers to meaningful employment.

Piloted as a pre-arrival program, FAST has served over 800 clients in 68 occupations across three streams – skilled trades, biotech & life sciences, and IT & data services. IEC-BC looks forward to expanding FAST to the accounting and tourism and hospitality sectors with the support of the Government of Canada’s Future Skills Centre.

In 2018-2019, IEC-BC celebrated early program successes. 67% of FAST clients who landed in Canada found employment in their field within four weeks of arrival with incomes ranging between \$36,117 to \$100,273 – rates far above the \$25,400 median income earned by newcomers admitted to Canada² – demonstrating that when newcomers to BC find work that aligns with their skills and experience, BC’s economy wins.

2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- *More than 800 clients served since 2015*
- *67% of landed FASTS clients found employment in their fields within four weeks of arrival (85% within eight weeks)*
- *51% overall client program completion rate (well above the industry average of 20%)*
- *Clients come from over 30 different countries*



“IEC-BC would compare how you do a certain thing in your home country vs. in Canada. It pushes you to integrate quite quickly. IEC-BC’s FAST Program saved me a lot of time. I was well settled in 6 months.”

RUPINDER SANDHU, FAST CLIENT

¹ RBC Economics, “Untapped Potential: Canada needs to close its immigrant wage gap”, 2019

² Statistics Canada, “Income and mobility of immigrants, 2016”

MENTORCONNECT: EXPANDING EMPLOYER UNDERSTANDING OF SKILLED IMMIGRANT TALENT

MentorConnect matches job-ready skilled immigrants in BC with established professionals for one-on-one occupation-specific coaching. Mentors share their insights, ideas and networks to significantly increase meaningful employment opportunities for skilled newcomers, while simultaneously learning to recognize the skills and experiences newcomers bring to Canada.

IEC-BC registered 100 new mentors and over 200 mentees in 2018-2019. Over 200 mentees were matched with a mentor in their field. Almost 70% of participants found full-time work in their field within six months of completing the program.

The success of the MentorConnect Program is dependent on our partners. IEC-BC is proud to work directly with seven Service Delivery Partners and 15 employer partners. This past year, IEC-BC hosted mentoring events and coordinated mentoring cohorts with BC Hydro,

City of Vancouver, TELUS, Vancouver Immigration Partnership, and Vancity. IEC-BC also looks forward to our continued involvement with RBC's National Mentoring Partnership.

Over the past year, IEC-BC spent time with over 50 past mentors and mentees to learn about their experiences with the program. We heard how valuable mentorship is. We listened to mentees who credited their employment success to their mentor's knowledge, and mentors who benefited from rejuvenating their professional networks and from their mentee's fresh perspective. To hear their stories, follow along on Instagram @iec_bc or on Facebook @iecbc.

2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- > *100 new (i.e. not recurring) mentor registrations*
- > *Over 200 mentee registrations*
- > *180 partnerships between mentor and mentee completed*
- > *Almost 70% of mentees found full-time work in their field within six months of completing the program*
- > *Partnerships with BC Hydro, City of Vancouver, TELUS, Vancouver Immigration Partnership, and Vancity*



"IEC-BC's MentorConnect Program works. Many newcomers come to Canada already prepared and this program knows that. It's not a waste of time. It's more focused on good, professional networking. Even if newcomers are already working, I would recommend they try this program because it really takes you to the next step faster."

LILIANA FIGUEROA, MENTEE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT: HELPING EMPLOYERS FIND SOLUTIONS

IEC-BC provides employers with the skills, tools, and resources to find, hire, and retain skilled immigrant talent. Our programs cater to employer needs and help newcomers develop and communicate the skills employers are looking for. To better understand BC employer needs, we work closely with industry partners and business associations.

Launched in 2017, the Employer Advisory Group (EAG) is IEC-BC's primary mechanism to hear employer needs and feedback. Representing HR professionals and hiring managers from sectors as varied as scientific and technical services, telecommunications, food services, manufacturing, finance, and public administration, the EAG informs IEC-BC programming and provides professionals an opportunity to exchange best human resource practices.

IEC-BC has also partnered with the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of British Columbia and Yukon (CPHR BC & Yukon) to host events focused on integrating newcomers and advancing diversity and inclusion.

“Newcomers bring different sorts of qualifications. Newcomers may think it's all about how many tickets they have in carpentry or how many master's degrees, but it's about their experiences and how their experiences can apply to us and the industry as a whole.”

WAYNE MARSDEN, PCL,
BC JOBCONNECT EMPLOYER

Surrey's immigrant population is one of the quickest-growing in mainland and southwest BC. To support Surrey employers, IEC-BC is a member of the Surrey Board of Trade's Surrey Workforce Strategy Project. Funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the project looks at current and anticipated labour market demand, supply and gaps over the next ten years.

IEC-BC continues to support employers in Burnaby through our partnership with the Burnaby Board of Trade. IEC-BC equips Burnaby businesses in IT, biosciences, and alternative energy with the tools, resources, and workable solutions needed to connect with refugee and immigrant talent.

2018-2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- › *Developed self-evaluation tools, hiring protocols, and onboarding toolkits for organizations with the Employer Advisory Group*
- › *Coordinated four events and one webinar series focused on hiring and integrating newcomers with CPHR BC & Yukon*
- › *Identified labour market trends for Surrey employers with the Steering Committee leading the Surrey Workforce Strategy Project*
- › *Co-hosted with Ernst & Young an event informing employers how to attract and retain global talent*
- › *Advanced IEC-BC's and Burnaby Board of Trade Partnership*

THE ROAD AHEAD

Providing employers with the necessary tools to find, hire, onboard, and retain immigrant talent continues to be the foundation of IEC-BC's work.

IEC-BC remains committed to helping employers tap into immigrant talent to support BC's economic growth.

IEC-BC has made progress over the past 11 years, and it is with our industry, government, and service providing partners that we continue to build relationships, expand our initiatives, and propose innovative solutions to employer problems.



"I applied the day after I landed in Canada, and got a call back the following day. The research that I did beforehand, and the support I received from IEC-BC's FAST webinars really helped prepare me before I got to Canada."

MEGAN GOVENDER, STEMCELL, FAST CLIENT

We look forward to working closely with LIFT Philanthropy Partners in the coming years to expand our reach and grow our impact to deliver real change in the lives of newcomers to BC. IEC-BC is also proud to work with the Future Skills Centre – Centre des Compétences futures (FSC-CCF). IEC-BC's FAST Program was one of six projects

selected to test innovative approaches for helping diverse Canadians gain the skills they need to adapt and succeed in the workforce.

Originally an exclusively pre-arrival program for those seeking work in skilled trades, biotechnology, and life sciences, FAST will expand to Permanent Residents and include accounting and tourism & hospitality occupation streams. Additionally, with the help of FSC-CCF and industry partners, the benefits of FAST will be brought to employers and newcomers beyond British Columbia through partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations in Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

IEC-BC believes that we are just beginning to tap into the potential of competency-based assessments. Programs like FAST have the capacity to become magnets for global talent and a means of assessing immigrant talent interested in coming to Canada.

IEC-BC is excited to launch our ASCEND soft-skills program with our Service Delivery Partners who will be delivering the program to newcomers. ASCEND will help BC employers recruit, hire, and integrate skilled immigrant talent as newcomers attain key employable skills.

As IEC-BC takes our next steps to better serve employers, we are focused on our future sustainability as an organization. Employers increasingly value competency-based assessments and IEC-BC is working to become a leader in the field by catering to the needs of employers from all industries.

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR HELPING US MAKE 2018-2019 SUCH A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

EMPLOYER PARTNERS

BC Hydro
BC Public Service
BDC
Business Development Bank of Canada
City of Surrey
City of Vancouver
Combustion Solutions Inc.
Compass Group Canada
David Suzuki Foundation
Deloitte Canada
Destination Canada
Dynamic Architectural Windows & Doors
Ernst & Young LLP
Fortis BC
Groundswell Cloud Solutions
Heli-One Canada ULC
Hemmera
Honeywell
Ingram Micro
KPMG
Left
PayByPhone
PCL Constructors West Coast Inc.
Powerex
Quest University Canada
Radical I/O Technology
RBC
Richmond Steel Recycling
Rogers Communications
Schneider Electric
Scotiabank
Stantec
Starbucks Canada
STEMCELL Technologies
STORMTECH
TD Canada Trust
The Brick – Pacific Region
Traction on Demand
TELUS
Vancity
Virtro Entertainment
Wesgar Inc.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abbotsford Community Services
AbbotsfordWorks
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
AMSSA
Association for Canadian Studies
Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia (ASTTBC)
Back in Motion Rehab Inc.
BC Construction Association (BCCA)
BioTalent Canada
British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
Burnaby Local Immigration Partnership
Burnaby Board of Trade
Colleges & Institutes Canada
CPHR BC & Yukon
DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
Douglas College Training Group
Engineers and Geoscientists BC
EXATEC Vancouver
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC)
ISSofBC
KCR Community Resources
Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
MOSAIC
North Shore Multicultural Society
Options Community Services
Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation
Progressive Intercultural Community Services
SFU Public Square
SFU Surrey
Société de développement économique de la Colombie Britannique (SDE BC)
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Surrey Board of Trade
Surrey Libraries
Surrey Local Immigration Partnership
Vancouver Economic Commission
Vancouver Immigration Partnership
Vancouver Public Library
YMCA-YWCA BuildON
YMCA of Greater Toronto – NextStop Canada

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The IEC-BC Board is currently chaired by Ben Hume, Past President, Sheppards Building Materials Inc., and consists of influential BC leaders in business, labour, and immigrant service organizations.

Ben Hume

Chair

Past President, Sheppards Building Materials Inc.

Neelam Sahota

Secretary/Treasurer

CEO, DIVERSEcity

Paulina Cameron

CEO, Forum for Women Entrepreneurs; Visiting Professor, SFU;

Author, Canada 150 Women

Queenie Choo

CEO, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Stephen Dooley

Executive Director, Campus Administration, SFU Surrey

David Keane

President, Woodfibre LNG Ltd

Fiona Macfarlane³

Managing Partner, British Columbia; Chief Inclusiveness Officer,

Ernst & Young LLP

Rob Mingay

CEO, Rob Mingay Consulting Services

Marija Radulovic-Nastic

Senior Vice President of Development Technology and Services,

Electronic Arts

Jay Schlosar

Director, Communities, Teck Resources Limited

Tom Sigurdson⁴

Executive Director, Building and Construction Trades Council

Adam Van Steinburg

International Representative, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

³ Fiona moved on from IEC-BC's Board of Directors in December 2018. IEC-BC thanks Fiona for her contribution and wishes her luck in all future endeavours.

⁴ Tom moved on from IEC-BC's Board of Directors in June 2019. IEC-BC thanks Tom for his contribution and wishes him luck in all future endeavours.

IEC-BC IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL OF BC

Connecting Employers to Immigrant Talent

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