

Strengthening Employer Feedback Channels

FORUM DIGESTS



ABOUT IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL OF BC

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to empowering BC employers with the solutions, tools, and resources needed to effectively attract, hire, and retain skilled immigrant talent. We understand that the successful integration of skilled newcomers into BC's labour force is essential to both their success and the province's long-term economic performance. By collaborating with employers, government, and other partner stakeholders, we ensure that BC employers can effectively integrate global talent.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

As Canada refines its immigration approach to better align with labour market needs, the Immigrant Employment Councils of Canada (IECC) launched the Strengthening Employer Feedback Channels (SEFC) initiative to ensure employer perspectives inform system design and policy alignment.

SEFC convenes structured forums across regions to understand how immigration, settlement, and workforce systems function in practice. These forums surface barriers, identify opportunities, and generate actionable insights to improve how employers attract, hire, and retain internationally trained talent.

This digest reflects insights from a Feedback Forum focused on workforce development, labour market challenges, and newcomer workforce integration in Langley. Findings are grounded in survey responses and facilitator insights and should be interpreted as directional signals from engaged participants.



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FEEDBACK FORUM DIGEST



Participation and Response Rates

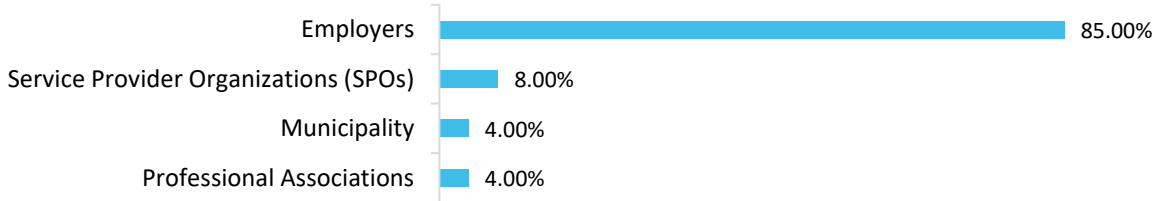
We extend sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the Langley Feedback Forum, and to Trinity Western University for their partnership in convening this session.

Total participants: 26

Survey response rates : Pre-forum survey: 58% | Post-forum survey: 46%



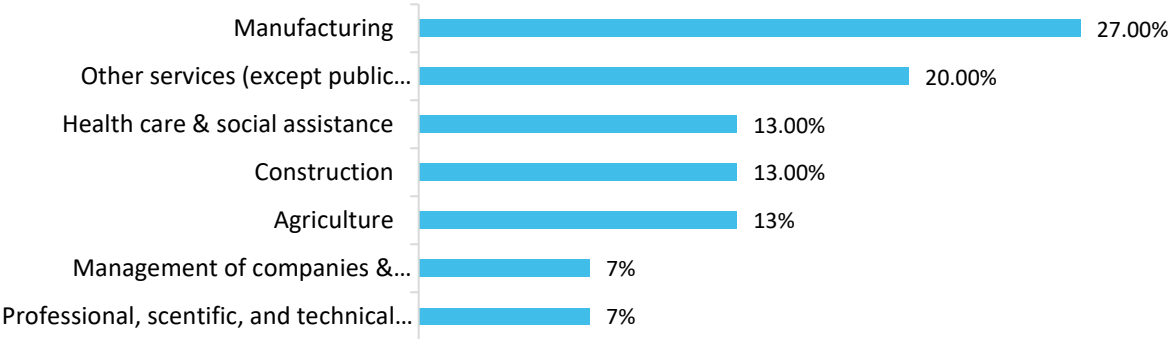
Who Shaped the Conversation



Employer Profile Snapshot

Based on pre-forum survey responses, participating employers represented a range of organizational sizes, with **53% from medium-to-large organizations (100+ employees)** and **40% from micro-to-medium organizations (1–99 employees)**.

Sector Representation



Impact Snapshot: Employer Value Signal

The Langley forum demonstrated strong engagement and practical relevance.

Perceived Quality

Average experience rating: 4.8 out of 5 | 100% rated the session a 4 or higher.

Practical Relevance

Average experience rating: 4.8 out of 5 | 100% rated the session a 4 or higher.

Behavioural Intent

- **100%** reported learning something new
- **100%** intended to apply the insights learned with their organization

These results highlight the growing need for stronger coordination across workforce systems, more practical employer-facing supports, and clearer pathways for immigrant and international talent to participate meaningfully in the labour market.



Here's what we heard

Navigating workforce and immigration supports requires greater coordination

Information, resources, and services remain distributed across multiple organizations, referral pathways, and platforms, making it difficult for employers and newcomer talent to identify relevant supports, workforce pathways, and employment resources. Limited coordination across service providers, employers, educational institutions, and government systems can contribute to duplication, unclear referral pathways, and challenges navigating immigration and workforce policies.

The complexity of these systems creates a disproportionate burden for small and medium-sized employers (SMEs), which often lack dedicated HR, immigration, or legal resources to navigate available programs and supports. Information gaps and unrealistic expectations prior to arrival can further complicate workforce integration and employer engagement.

Opportunities include strengthening coordination across organizations, improving navigation and referral supports, developing more centralized and accessible information systems, and leveraging technology-enabled tools to better connect employers and newcomers with relevant resources and workforce pathways.

Workforce Integration Beyond Technical Credentials

Workforce integration challenges extend beyond licensing and formal qualifications. While many immigrants and international students arrive with strong professional experience and transferable skills, successful integration often depends on workplace culture, communication expectations, mentorship, and access to practical experience.

"Canadian experience" emerged as a recurring challenge, often reflecting broader employer concerns around workplace norms, communication styles, and familiarity with local industry practices. Employers also identified difficulties interpreting international credentials, job titles, and professional experience, particularly where licensing requirements and occupational standards vary across jurisdictions. Verifying international references can further add to the complexity of hiring.

Organizational capacity also influences integration outcomes. While some employers have dedicated resources to support onboarding and workforce development, smaller employers often lack the capacity to provide tailored supports for newcomer talent. Generational differences in workplace expectations were also identified as a factor affecting workplace integration. The discussion reinforced that successful integration depends on both newcomer adaptation and employers' ability to effectively onboard, mentor, and support diverse talent.

Opportunities include expanding mentorship and peer-support models, strengthening bridging and pre-arrival orientation programs, increasing employer-informed workplace supports, and creating more structured pathways for practical experience and professional development.

Immigration Policy Uncertainty, Labour Shortages, and Retention Pressures

Immigration policy uncertainty, labour shortages, and workforce competition continue to create workforce planning and retention challenges across sectors. Frequent policy changes, unclear permanent residence pathways, work permit restrictions, LMIA complexity, and lengthy recruitment timelines contribute to hiring uncertainty and administrative burden for employers.

Within the skilled trades sector, labour shortages are compounded by persistent stigma and misconceptions about trades careers despite strong earning potential, stability, and advancement opportunities. Increasing awareness of skilled trades pathways among youth, parents, newcomers, and career influencers was identified as an important long-term strategy to strengthen the talent pipeline.

Strong labour demand and competition for skilled workers further intensify retention challenges. High employee mobility, candidate drop-off, and turnover make it difficult for employers to maintain a stable workforce and fill vacancies efficiently.

Opportunities include creating clearer immigration pathways, improving alignment between immigration systems and labour market needs, strengthening retention strategies, and increasing awareness of skilled trades as viable long-term career pathways.

Tensions and Trade-Offs

These structural tensions emerged:

Workforce Demand



System Navigation Complexity

Employers urgently need workers, yet both employers and immigrant workers face difficulty navigating fragmented systems.

Employer Expectations



Workforce Integration Readiness

Immigrants arrive with strong qualifications and transferable skills, while employers continue to expect immediate Canadian workplace experience and readiness.

Labour Market Needs



Immigration Policy Constraints

Employers seek stable, long-term workforce solutions, while shifting immigration policies, work permit restrictions, and unclear pathways create uncertainty for both workforce planning and employee retention.

Recruitment Urgency



Retention Stability

In highly competitive labour markets, employers must hire quickly to address shortages, but rapid turnover, candidate drop-off, and workforce poaching make long-term retention increasingly difficult.

Emerging Signals

- Workforce integration challenges increasingly reflect gaps in system coordination, highlighting the need for stronger collaboration, shared infrastructure, and more connected employer support systems.
- Mentorship, communication skills, cultural awareness, and workplace integration supports are increasingly recognized as core workforce development strategies that contribute to recruitment, retention, and long-term workforce success.
- Immigration pathways, workforce attraction, and employee retention are increasingly interconnected, requiring more coordinated approaches that align immigration systems with labour market and workforce needs.

If you're interested in participating in our Feedback Forums, register now to receive exclusive invites, updates, and access to valuable resources. **Join the conversation shaping the future of work in BC.**

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