
Immigrant Bridging Program

Program guidelines

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Immigrant Bridging Program Guidelines | Alberta Labour and Immigration

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Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to outline program requirements and eligibility criteria for interested participants and providers for the Immigrant Bridging Program.

Labour and Immigration's Training and Employment Services are established and operated pursuant to section 8 of the *Government Organization Act*.

This program is administered by Alberta Labour and Immigration. Providers of this program are selected through a competitive procurement process through a Request for Proposal, when available, at [Alberta Purchasing Connection](#). Labour and Immigration will determine additional program elements that may be included in the procurement of this program.

About Immigrant Bridging

The Immigrant Bridging Program focuses on training skilled immigrants with prior education and/or experience in a specific occupation. This program provides competency-based training that combines occupation-related skills, work experience, and essential skills and includes the involvement of employers/ industry. Immigrant Bridging supports the connection between training and application of new skills in real-work situations. Immigrant Bridging builds and strengthens relationships between employers, industry and providers to help Albertans gain the skills needed in the labour market.

Although Immigrant Bridging has a workplace language component, the intent of the program is skills training.

Objectives

The Immigrant Bridging Program assists participants who are unemployed or under-employed to:

- bridge the gap in knowledge and skills to qualify for occupations that are similar or related to their previous occupation
- develop competencies (knowledge, skills and Canadian work culture)
- gain occupation-related skills recognized by industry/employers
- provide applied training including work experience

Expected Outcomes

Once participants have completed their training they are expected to be employed full-time (a minimum of 30 hours per week) in a related occupation. Providers are required to report participant information and outcomes, participants are surveyed approximately 90 days after completing the program.

Additional program outcomes for Immigrant Bridging may be included in the Request for Proposal and outlined in the contract.

Program Requirements

Occupational Skills Training

Provides participants with industry-recognized training or job-specific skills to help prepare them for job opportunities. This may be delivered through a combination of theory and applied training.

This may include academic competencies relevant to the occupation and/or workplace language training.

The following are not eligible as occupational skills training:

- pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training
- credential-based occupational training resulting in a post-secondary certificate or diploma

Workplace Essential Skills Training

Provides participants with skills they need to participate and thrive in learning, work and life. Examples of skills include: adaptability, collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation, digital literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, reading and writing. To learn more about the essential skills, see [Skills for Success](#).

Unpaid Work Experience(s)

Provides participants with an opportunity to apply new skills acquired from occupational skills training in real work situations.

Demonstrated Labour Market Need for Training

Providers in Immigrant Bridging are required to demonstrate there is a labour market need for their training and develop training that is based on current industry standards.

Employer, Industry and/or Professional Association Engagement

The involvement of individual employers, industry and associations will ensure training and work experience provided meets industry standards.

Employers, industry and/or associations will:

- indicate a willingness to participate in the design of the program
- accept participants on work experience placements
- continue their involvement with the provider throughout the life of the program
- make a commitment to hire participants upon completion of the program

Employers will be consulted to specify the competencies a participant is expected to demonstrate after their work experience placement(s) to be eligible for full-time employment.

Additional employer roles and responsibilities in training and services are contained in the Alberta Labour and Immigration [Service Management and Program Administration Guidelines](#).

Duration

Immigrant Bridging must be provided on a full-time basis up to a maximum of 52 weeks.

Full-time training is defined as a minimum of 25 hours per week, this includes employer work experience.

To meet participant needs, it is recommended that a minimum of 60% of the training occurs in the classroom or by synchronous online learning and a maximum of 40% of the training occurs during work experience. If more than 40% of work experience is required, a rationale for the length of the work experience is required.

Participant Eligibility

To be eligible for Immigrant Bridging a participant must meet the eligibility criteria and participate in the program assessment conducted by the provider.

Eligible participants must meet all of the following:

- be unemployed, or working on average less than 20 hours per week over the last 12 weeks and planning to remain employed while in training
- be in Alberta with an Alberta address, or any address in the city of Lloydminster, for the duration of the training
- have valid Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident of Canada, or a protected person under the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#)
 - protected persons with a SIN that begins with 9 must have documentation to support they are a protected person

- have a clear and realistic employment goal, be “[Ready, Willing and Able](#)” to participate in and have a need for this training to obtain and maintain sustainable employment
- be 18 years of age or older, and have not attended an education program under the [Education Act](#) in the past 12 months
- be suitable for the program as determined through an employability assessment

Further considerations for participant eligibility are contained in Operational Guidelines provided to contracted providers.

English Language Proficiency

To ensure success of participants, Immigrant Bridging providers will confirm English language proficiency according to their program, which may include:

- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Certificate issued by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) which specifies scores in all four Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) competency areas, OR
- Language proficiency assessment completed by Language Assessment Centre(s) in Alberta which also specifies scores in each of the CLB competency areas.

The minimum CLB varies based on occupation or sector and individuals who do not meet the minimum CLB (or equivalent English language proficiency measures) will be referred to upgrade their English language skills by attending either LINC program (if appropriate and if they are eligible) or English as a Second Language Program.

Ineligible Participants

Participants are ineligible if they:

- do not meet all of the eligibility requirements
- terminated employment that they might reasonably have continued to hold and were not approved for [Counsel to Leave Employment](#)
 - if a participant is employed and wants to leave employment to attend this program, they must FIRST be approved through a Counsel to Leave Employment assessment BEFORE training starts and before they quit their job
- have exceeded 20 months of training provided by Labour and Immigration
- have taken prior training funded through Labour and Immigration within the last 48 months
- have been incarcerated or convicted of an offence and are unable to work because of the conditions of their sentence or their release
- are Refugee Claimants under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* while waiting for the outcome of their status in Canada
- are persons who have arrived in Canada as a visitor, on a work or study permit, or without status under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*

Assessment

Assessment is a collaborative process between the provider and the participant to determine what steps are required to meet the participant’s goal of obtaining employment. Assessment is the initial step in the provider delivering [Service Management](#) to participants. For additional guidance on assessments, consult [Alberta Assessment Factors Handbook](#), [Skills for Success Assessment Tools](#) or contact Labour and Immigration’s Training and Employment Program Specialist.

Employability Assessment

Immigrant Bridging participants must participate in an Employability Assessment.

The assessment is done with the most appropriate interview method for the participant; such as in-person, by phone or virtually, additionally the provider may use supplementary assessments as required by the program.

The provider will complete an Employability Assessment to:

- assess whether the employment goal is realistic and the training is required for the participant to achieve their employment goal
- record and assess the participant's employment, education and training history and identify skills, knowledge and credentials as it pertains to the employment goal
- confirm the participant's current situation, that they are labour market destined and "Ready, Willing and Able" to participate fully in training to achieve their employment goal
- identify any life factors that may affect the success of achieving the goal (family commitments, health, etc.)
- determine if any further supports are required for the participant to be successful in their employment goal
- set the activities of the Service Plan based on the results from the Employability Assessment, if the individual is accepted into the program
- validate prior international education and/or experience in a specific occupation that requires bridging
- confirm sufficient English language skills to successfully complete the program

Ready, Willing and Able

"Ready, Willing and Able" is part of the eligibility criteria for a participant taking part in programming. Factors that affect whether a participant is ready, willing and able include but are not limited to:

- having realistic expectations of themselves and the work they want to pursue
- ensuring they have sufficient stability and adequate skills in their lives to function and participate
- willing and able to commit full time to the program
 - Participants cannot access other education/training or services full time that would compete for a participant's time and effort, thereby jeopardizing their success. A service or program that complements the training program and supports the participant's employment goal may be acceptable.

Further considerations for Ready, Willing and Able are contained in Operational Guidelines provided to contracted providers.

Financial Assistance

Eligible participants who require funding to support their living costs while in training may apply for Advanced Education's [Foundational Learning Assistance](#).

Provider Responsibilities

Detailed provider responsibilities can be found in the Alberta Labour and Immigration [Service Management and Program Administration Guidelines](#).

Additional processes to support the delivery of this program or service are contained in Operational Guidelines provided to contracted providers.