



**Data** in your Food.



# Rapid Results

## EXECUTIVE REPORT

Rapid Results Survey Series  
Survey 2: Focus on Immigration

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**Food Processing Skills Canada**

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# Food Processing Skills Canada

FPSC is your labour, skills and workforce development non-profit organization. Our job is to provide leadership in professionalizing the food and beverage manufacturing industry so that the most important resource - people - are the best in the world. We have developed a national skills strategy which is a proven long-term approach successfully utilized by other Canadian professional sectors. This strategy builds collaborations with industry, government, academia, unions, associations, community organizations and other stakeholders.



**Canada**

This program is funded by the Government of  
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# About



## **A new national panel of employers**

in the Canadian food and beverage processing industry was established to collect real-time data on the most relevant issues, including recruitment and retention, supply chains and rising costs. Results will be shared across Canada to provide critical information to guide labour and employment solutions for the industry.

## **Food Processing Skills Canada**

is pleased to present this research, which will help both industry and governments make key business decisions quickly.

**No more waiting** to get the latest data.

# Introduction

In response to demand for more current labour market information, Food Processing Skills Canada developed the Rapid Results Employer Opinion Panel. As G.I. Joe said, “knowing is half the battle” and getting up to date industry information gets you more informed to meet the challenges that you face. The panelists will be asked to complete 6 surveys, each with a different theme relevant to the industry. This is the second report in the Rapid Results Series and the theme is Immigration and Recruitment.





## Methodology & Survey Sample

This was designed to be a national panel covering all food and beverage processing sectors. It is conducted at the facility level to be able to capture differences in the size of facilities or the location of facilities. Each survey has 2 sets of questions, core questions that will be asked during every survey and theme questions asked during this specific survey.

### **The core questions cover:**

-  Size of facility
-  Vacancies
-  Departures
-  New hires
-  Starting wages
-  Recruitment challenges
-  Automation
-  Business outlook

### **This survey’s theme questions cover:**

-  Perceptions of Immigrant Workers
-  Recruiting Immigrants and Equity-deserving groups
-  Barriers to recruitment
-  Resources, Onboarding, and Training

The survey was administered from August 1 - August 31, 2023. The response rate was 33% (39 of 119 total Employer Panelists completed it).

In order to get a sense of recency, and track changes over the next year or so, we set the timeframe for many of the questions in this survey as “in the period between May 31, 2023 and now (now being Aug 2023)”.

# Key Findings



The theme for this survey was Immigration.

We had a panelist response rate of 33%, over half of whom employ recent immigrants and international skilled workers. 63% of respondents rated their experience of recruiting recent immigrants as "successful", and most used the approach of encouraging referrals from current employees. Other key sources of recent immigrant hires include the use of an immigration consultant or recruitment agency and partnering with local colleges and universities to hire post-graduates.

Over half (54%) of respondents currently recruit workers from outside of Canada, and 70% are successful. Over half (53%) of respondents who have never recruited workers from outside of Canada would consider recruiting international skilled workers.

The top countries for recruiting international skilled workers are the Philippines and Mexico.

For hiring, the top two federal and provincial programs that respondents have used are the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (74%) and Provincial Nominee Programs (48%).

For respondents who are not currently recruiting workers from outside of Canada, cost is the top challenge, with 33% indicating that it is too expensive to navigate the immigration system. Over a quarter also say they don't understand the process and that it's complicated. Most companies indicate a greater need for permanent workers, compared to temporary workers.

About 7 in 10 employers allow additional onboarding time for recent immigrants or international skilled workers, and over half are interested in providing or funding language training.

Most respondents (over 80%) agree that immigrants bring economic benefits to the Canadian economy and unique perspectives that can lead to new ideas. The workforce is now more diverse compared to a few years ago, but only 23% agree that current immigration systems serve their needs well.



# Insights

## Recruitment & Hiring Challenges



We learned that in this period, recruitment challenges have increased or stayed the same for the majority of employers (62%, down from 76% in June 2023). The new hire rate is 72%, which is also down from 86% in June 2023.

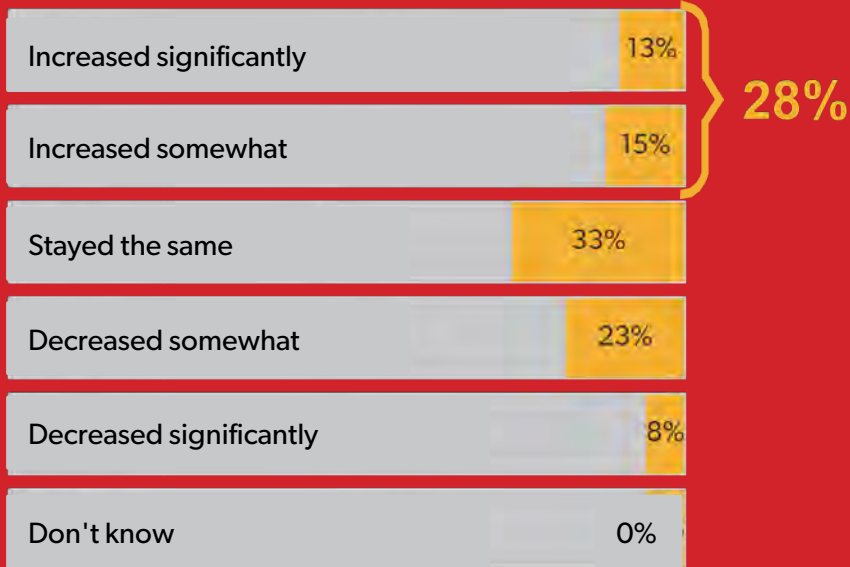
Similar to June 2023, new hires come predominantly from applications received through private job sites (74%) as well as employee referrals (65%).

# Recruitment Challenges



A majority of facilities have indicated that their recruitment challenges have stayed the same or worsened in the last 2 months (May 31 – July 31, 2023). This is not surprising given the labour shortage. Moreover, 74% of businesses report having vacancies, though this is down slightly from 80% reported in the last reporting period (March 31- May 31, 2023).

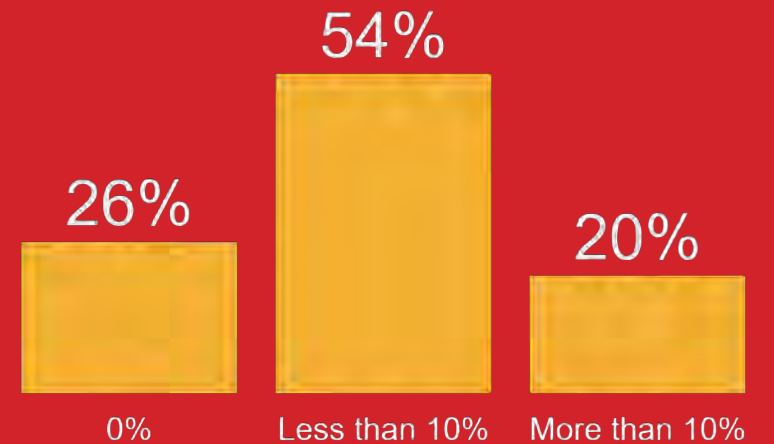
**Q.** Would you say that recruitment challenges have increased or decreased?



**62%**  
say challenges have increased or stayed the same

**31%**  
say recruitment challenges have decreased

## Vacancy Rate

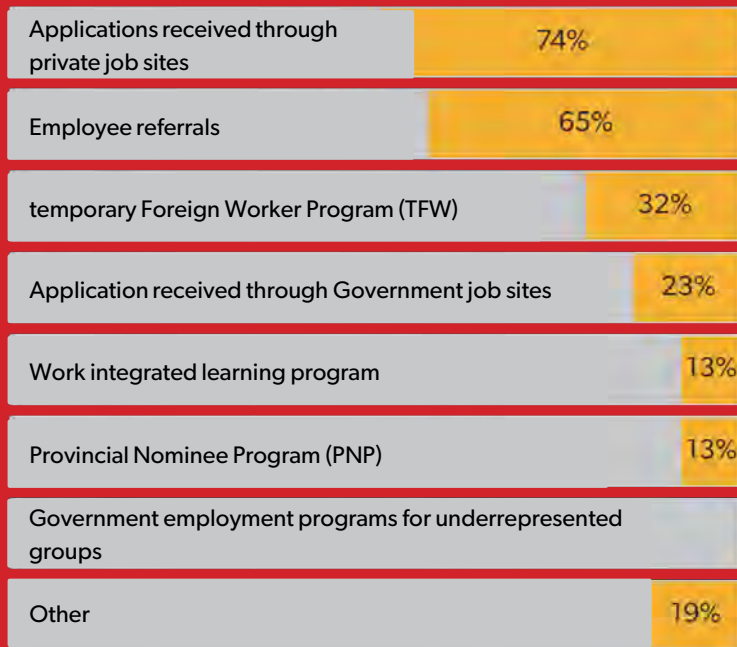


# New Hires



**80%** of respondents hired new staff in the survey period (down from **86%** in March 31 - May 31, 2023). There was a large preference for traditional domestic hiring sources such as private job boards and referrals from existing employees. Job search sites and company websites continue to be two of the top places people looked for new jobs.

## Q. What sources have your new hires come from?

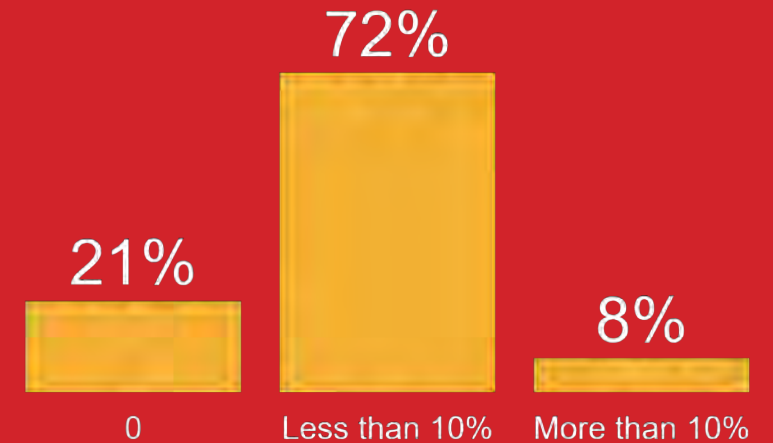


\* Respondents could select from multiple answers

**49%**  
of the general public trust job opportunities from family and friends.

**55%**  
of the general public use job search websites for career opportunities.

## New Hire Rate



This is a percentage of the workforce that are new hires, between August 31 and Survey Completion



# Average **Starting Wages** are slightly up since May.



## March 31 - May 31, 2023



**\$17.50**

Panelists'  
**AVERAGE NATIONAL**  
starting wage



**\$2.63**

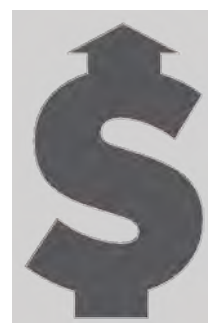
Panelists'  
**AVERAGE ABOVE**  
minimum wage

## May 31 - July 31, 2023



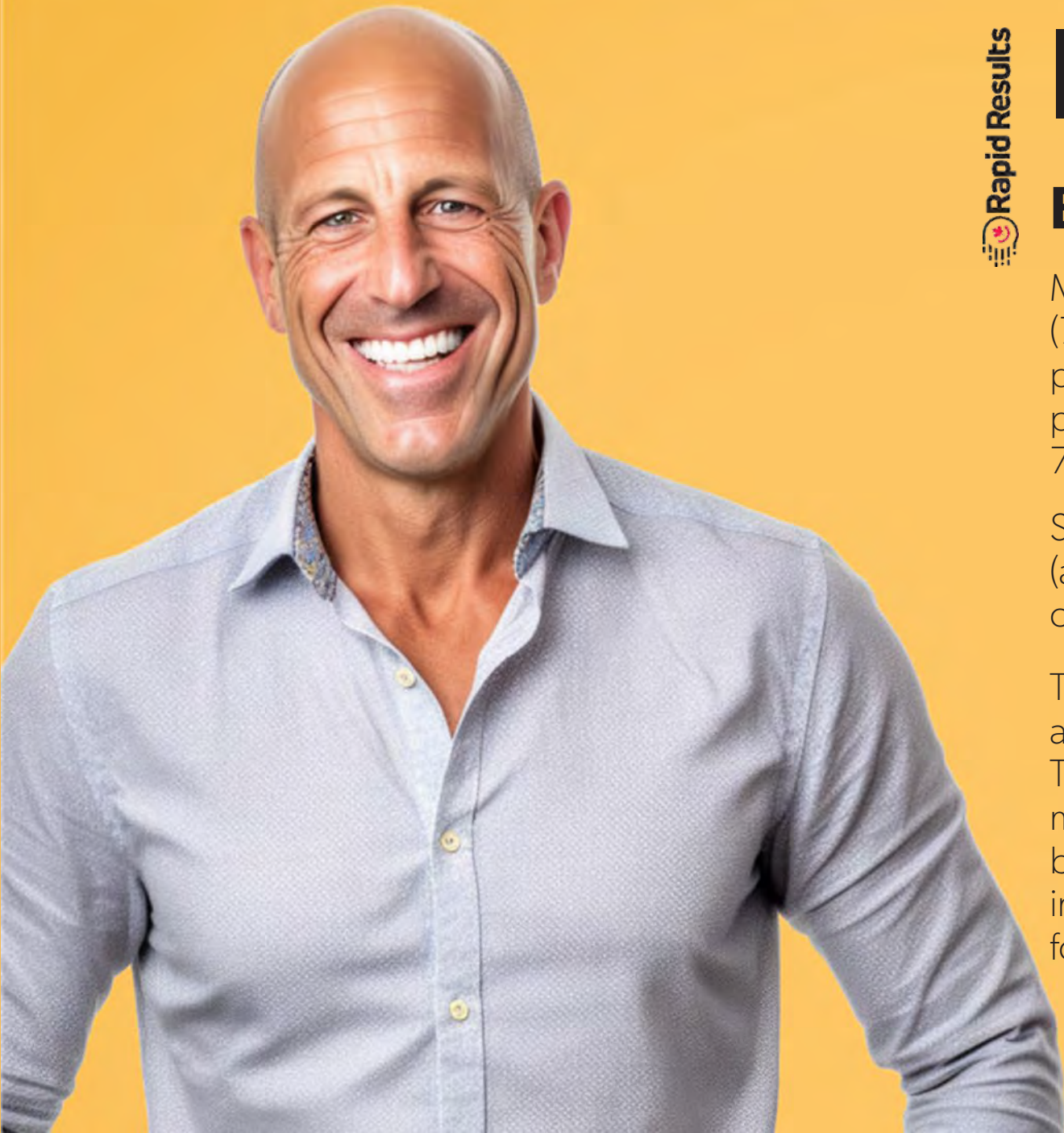
**\$17.74**

Panelists'  
**AVERAGE NATIONAL**  
starting wage



**\$2.87**

Panelists'  
**AVERAGE ABOVE**  
minimum wage



# Insights

## Business Outlook



Most respondents are optimistic about their business (72%) and the future of the Canadian food and beverage processing sector (72%). However, these two data points are down slightly from June 2023 (81% and 75%, respectively).

Similar to June 2023, 40% are investing in innovation (and a majority of businesses expect to continue to over the next six months).

This optimism is encouraging. Having this outlook about one's business can be beneficial in several ways. This optimism could be the foundation needed to stay motivated and focused on goals, to help businesses make better decisions, to attract customers, employees, and innovators to businesses, and to ultimately create and foster a positive work environment.

# Panelists are optimistic about the Future



About half of respondents felt that current supply issues are negatively affecting business and that hiring and retaining people is more challenging, down from **53%** in June 2023. Respondents also believe that the industry will overcome these challenges as **72%** are optimistic about the future of the industry and the future of their business.



Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

I'm optimistic about the future of the Canadian food and beverage processing sector

I'm optimistic about the future of our business

Supply chain issues are having a major negative impact on our business

It's getting more challenging to hire people

It's getting more challenging to retain people

## Panelists are overwhelmingly optimistic...

**72%**

optimistic about the future of their business

**72%**

optimistic about the future of this sector in Canada

## While there are challenges ...

**62%**

agree that it's getting more challenging to hire and retain people

**49%**

agree that supply chain issues impact business negatively

# Business Outlook | Innovation



Automation, Digitization, and Wireless interconnectivity are vital methods that businesses can use to become more efficient and overcome labour shortages. Fewer respondents indicate having made investments in innovations across all functional areas in this reporting period, compared to the previous one (March 31 – May 31, 2023). Planned investments for the future have also dropped slightly across the board.

**Q.** Since May 31st, 2023, has your business invested in automation, digitization or wireless interconnectivity in the following areas?

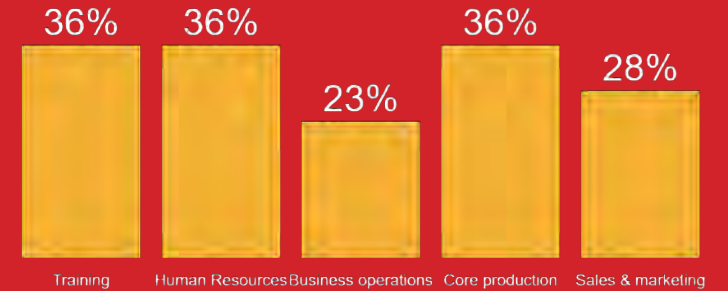
**Almost 40%** of panelists invested in some area of innovation in the 2 months preceding the survey.

**Over 50%** of panelists plan to invest in some area of innovation at their facility in the next 6 months.

**Q.** Over the next six months, do you expect your business to invest in automation, digitization or wireless interconnectivity in the following areas?

## Investments in Innovations\* ...

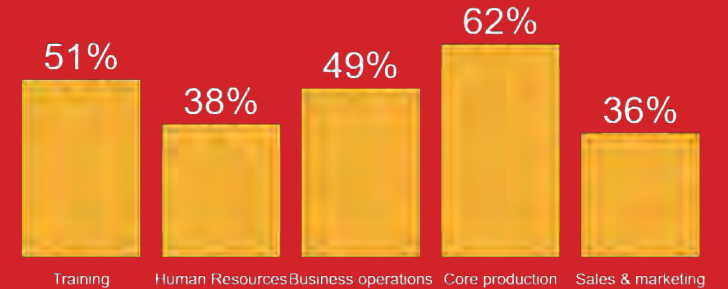
\*Since May 31, 2023



## Planned Investments in Innovations\* ...

\*Over the Next Six Months

\* automation, digitization, wireless interconnectivity



# Insights

## Perceptions of Immigrants in the Workforce



Most respondents have positive perceptions of immigrants in the workforce. A large majority (over 80%) agree that immigrants benefit Canada's economy, that they bring diverse and unique perspectives that can lead to new ideas, and that the current workforce is much more diverse than it was a few years ago.

This data is both positive and encouraging, as it highlights Canadian business' understanding of the importance of and their openness towards hiring immigrants and equity-deserving groups.

While recognizing their workforces are more diverse than before, some respondents are still experiencing challenges in integration of immigrants into their operations. There is a lot of training available, including a course called "Canadian Workplace Cultures" from FPSC that can help smooth the integration of international workers into your business.

# Perceptions Regarding Immigrant Workers



More than **80%** of respondents agree that immigrants bring economic benefits to the Canadian economy and that foreign nationals can bring unique perspectives that can lead to new ideas. However, less than a quarter of respondents agree that the current immigration system serves their needs well.

Most companies also agree that their workforce is much more culturally diverse compared to a few years ago. However, only 1 in 5 companies offer English as a Second Language training to newcomers.

**Q.** Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

## Top 3 popular perceptions

Immigrants bring economic benefits to the Canadian economy	85%
Hiring foreign nationals can bring unique perspectives that can lead to new ideas	82%
Our workforce is much more culturally diverse than it was a few years ago	82%

## Top 3 least popular perceptions

Our current immigration system serves our needs well	23%
Our company offers English as a Second Language training to newcomers	21%
We have experienced a clash of cultures within our workforce	18%



# Insights



## Recruiting Immigrants and Equity-deserving People

Almost 7 in 10 businesses make a concerted effort to hire recent immigrants, and over half make an effort to hire international skilled workers. Fewer companies make an effort to hire Indigenous people (41%), people with disabilities (36%), and workers over 50 years old (23%).

FPSC's perception research showed that recent immigrants and Indigenous people were both more likely than the general public to consider careers in the sector. As well there are more people over 50 that are transitioning out of other sectors and there has been a lot of work done on how to integrate people with disabilities into manufacturing settings. These are all demographics that employers feeling the crunch of a labour shortage should be focusing on recruiting.

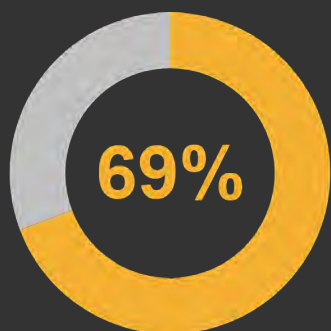
# Recruitment

## Immigrants and Equity-deserving People

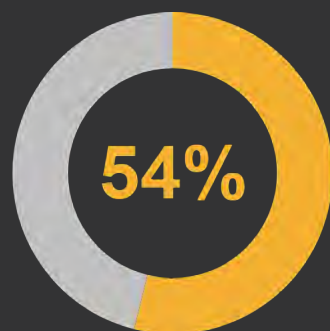


Over half of companies make an effort to recruit recent immigrants and international skilled workers. Few companies seek ways to recruit workers over 50 years old.

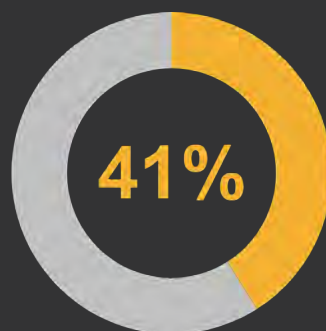
**Q.** Does your company make a concerted effort to seek ways to recruit from any of the following groups?



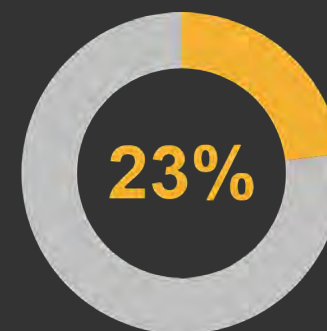
Recent immigrants



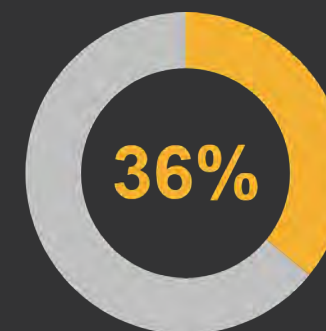
International skilled workers



Indigenous persons



Workers over 50 years old



Person with disabilities



# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Demands Breakdown



There is a preference for permanent workers rather than temporary workers. There are relatively more non-skilled positions, though more than half of companies (57%) typically recruits for both.



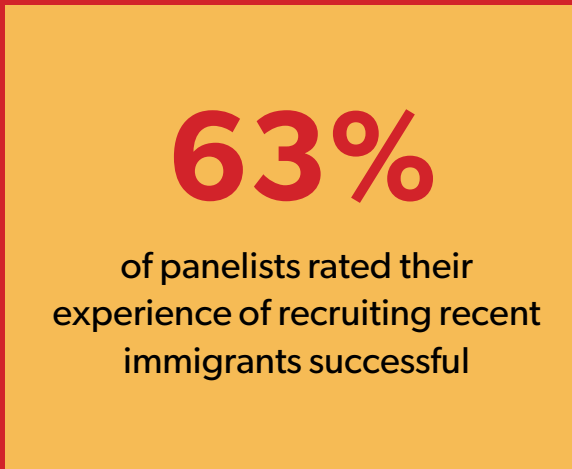
# Strategies

## Recruiting Recent Immigrant



About 6 in 10 respondents rate their experience of recruiting recent immigrants as "successful". Most companies encourage referrals from current employees or use an Immigration Consultant or Recruitment Agency.

**Q.** How would you rate your success at recruiting recent immigrants?



**Q.** What approaches do you use to recruit recent immigrants (select all that apply)



# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Current Recruitment



More than half of respondents say their company recruits workers from outside of Canada, and **70%** rate their experience as successful.

Of companies who have never recruited international skilled workers from outside of Canada, **53%** would consider it.

**Q.** Do you recruit workers from outside of Canada?



**Q.** How would you rate your success at recruiting workers from outside of Canada?



**Q.** Would your company consider recruiting international skilled workers?



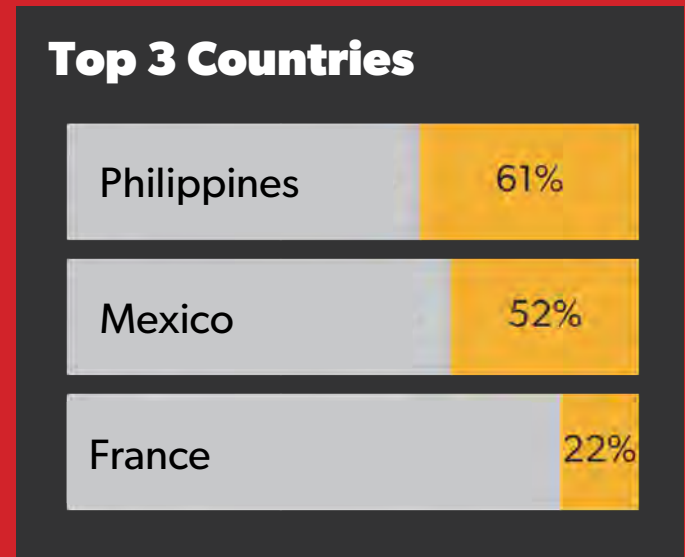
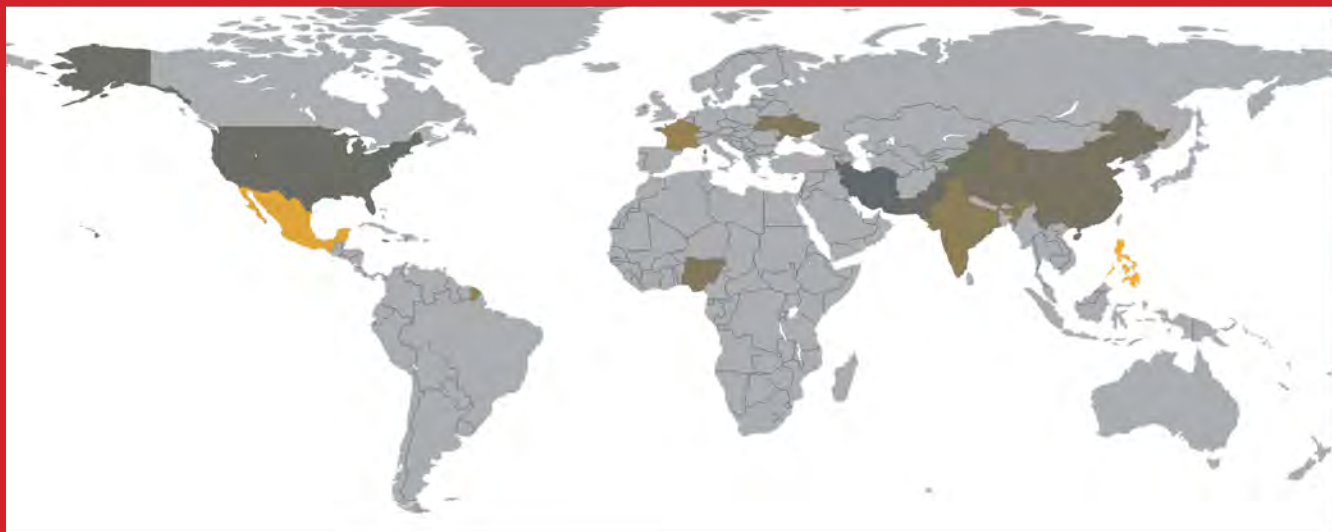
# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Top Recruited Countries



Companies recruit international skilled workers from all over the world, as see in the map below. However, the top three countries are the Philippines, Mexico, and France.

**Q.** Please tell us what countries you have recruited international skilled workers. (Select all that apply).



# Insights



## Barriers to Recruitment

Barriers to recruitment of immigrants and equity-deserving groups mostly comes down to costs and complicated processes.

About a third of respondents say it's too expensive to navigate the immigration system. Over a quarter say they don't understand the process because it's complicated.

Previous data shows that businesses are open to hiring immigrants and equity-deserving groups, even if they are not doing so currently. Businesses also recognize the benefits of a diverse workforce. Thus, the aspiration to hire from these groups seems to exist and it's likely true that once businesses go through the process once, they're more likely to continue hiring immigrants and equity-deserving groups. This points to a need for ways to simplify or help to streamline the hiring process for businesses.

# Recruiting Foreign Workers

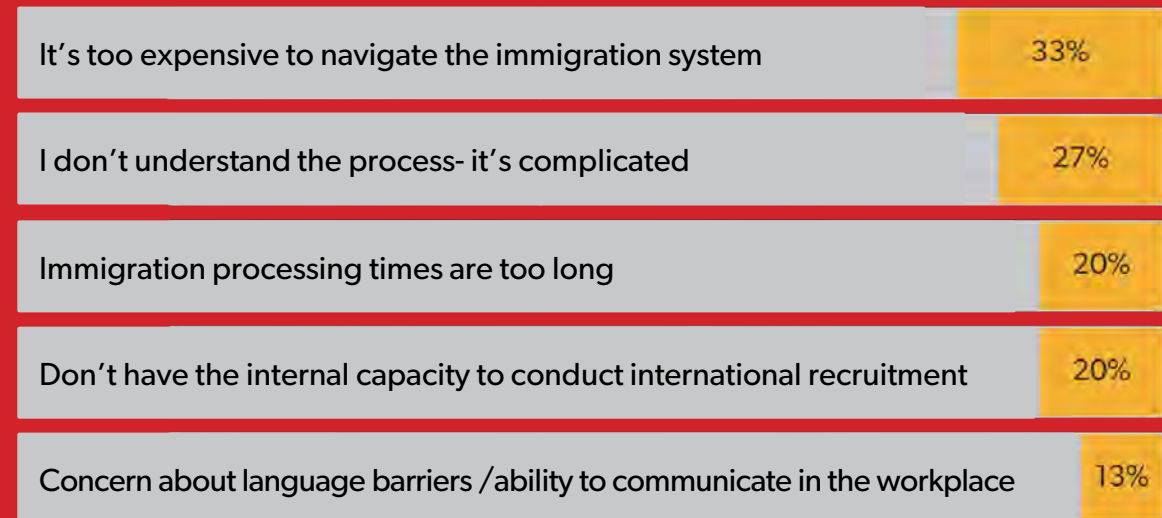
## Barriers



For companies who are not currently recruiting workers from outside of Canada, the **cost and complicated process** are the two top reasons for why they are not doing so.

Processing times are also too long for some, and other companies don't have the internal capacity to conduct international recruitment.

**Q.** Which of the following best describe why you are not currently recruiting workers from outside of Canada?





# Insights

## Resources, Onboarding, and Training



Most respondents (74%) report using the Temporary Foreign Workers Program to support recruitment of international skilled workers. The next highest program was Provincial Nominee Program (48%) which varies from province to province.

The Express Entry Program, Rural Immigration Program, and Francophone Mobility Program are very rarely used (4% of respondents report using each of these).

There are benefits in using some of the under-utilized immigration pathways as in some cases, such as with the Francophone mobility program processing times are faster.

When an immigrant or international skilled worker is hired, most companies report allowing additional onboarding time (69%). However, only half of companies indicate interest in providing or funding language training. Competency in an Official Language is an important part in community and workplace integration as well as a requirement in some immigration pathways.

# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Resources Used

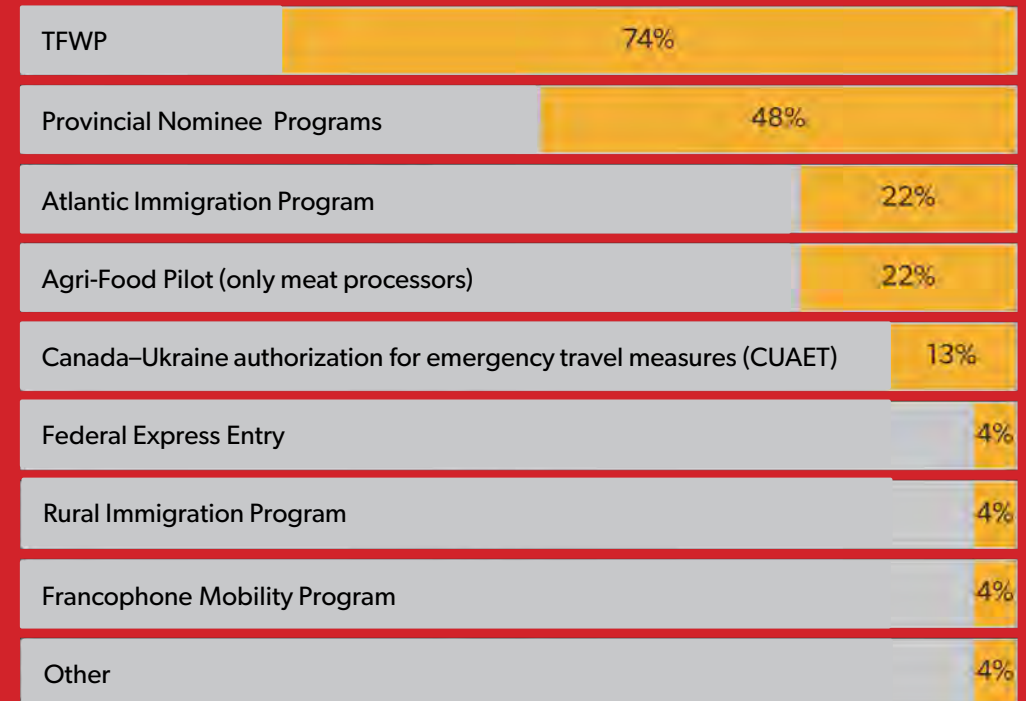


The Temporary Foreign Workers Program is the top program companies have used to support recruiting of international skilled workers.

Companies have also used Provincial Nominee Programs, the Atlantic Immigration Program, the Agri-Food Pilot, and the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel measures.

Very few companies have used programs such as the Federal Express Entry, Rural Immigration Program, or Francophone Mobility Program.

**Q.** Please tell us whether your company has used any of the following federal and/or provincial programs aimed at supporting employers recruit international skilled workers







# Insights

## Barriers



Recruiting from other countries takes longer. There are many processes to go through to ensure that people coming to Canada are safe and ready to contribute to our economy.

When developing recruitment strategies, look at the different immigration programs and requirements to ensure everything will run as smoothly as possible. One example is looking at the Post Graduate Work Permit to recruit international graduates from Canadian post-secondary institutions, as these candidates are exempt from the Educational Credentials Assessment.

Another strategy is looking at the cut off points between different immigration options. For example, the low wage and high wage TFW streams. There are different costs and responsibilities involved with each stream, but there have been cases where paying a higher wage was the more affordable option.

# Recruiting Foreign Workers

## Onboarding & Training



A majority of companies allow additional onboarding time for recent immigrants or international skilled workers. Half of companies would be interested in providing or funding language training for newcomers.



Do you allow additional onboarding time for recent immigrants or international skilled workers?

**69%**

of companies give additional onboarding time



Would your company be interested in providing (on-site) or funding (offsite) language training for newcomers?

**51%**

of companies are interested in providing/funding language training



 Rapid Results

# Help is out there!

## FPSC ran multiple immigration bootcamps in 2023



Additionally, there are private immigration consultants, immigration-focused organizations, as well as many other resources specifically created to help you succeed at recruiting and integrating Canadian immigrants into your operation.

Have your goal in mind! If you want your newly recruited workers to stay with you in the long term, make sure they have all the documents they need for their PR application before you recruit them.

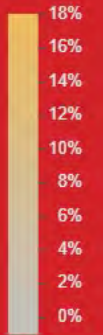
### Stay Informed

Standards can vary when it comes to all the different immigration programs currently available, but there are resources you can take advantage of. For instance, language standards are very different depending on the program you would like to use to recruit your workers, so checking out this [CLB breakdown](#) would give you all the information you need to make the right decisions when it comes to your recruitment strategies.

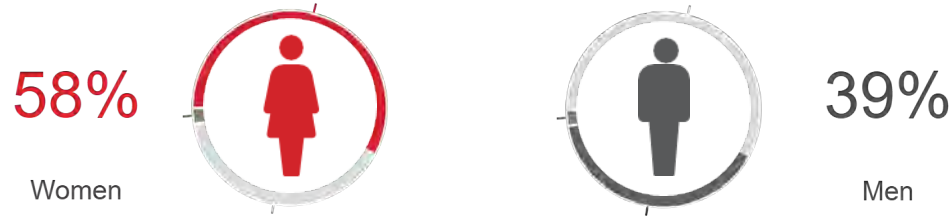


 Rapid Results

# Background Profile of Employer Panelists

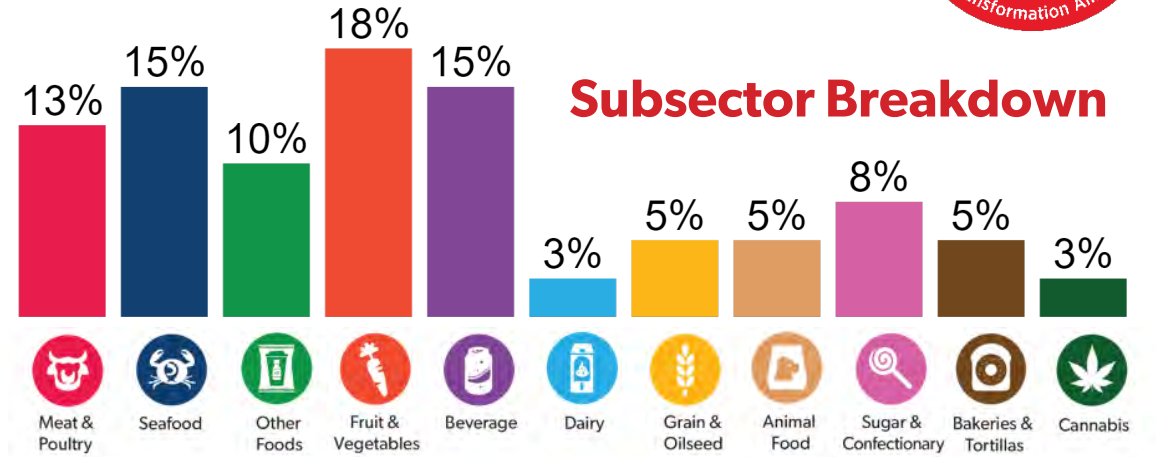
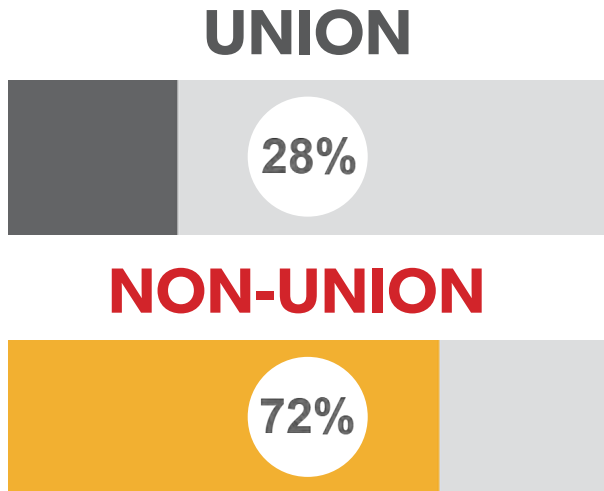


# Respondents Profile



## Mix in Age and Education

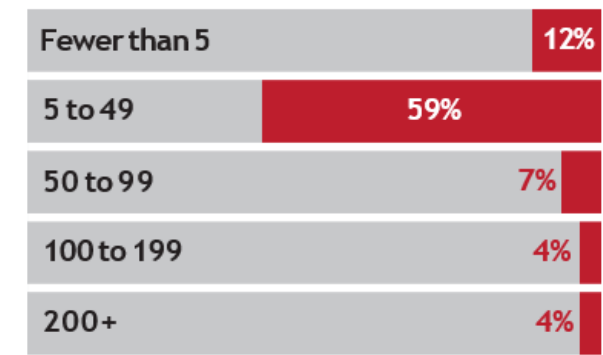
### Panelists with Unionized Workforces



### Panelist Size of Facility Breakdown



### National Size of Facility Breakdown



The Canadian Manufacturing Unionization rate for the same period is 23%.



# **Rapid Results**

Our next survey is coming out in February, so keep an eye out!

If you are not already signed up to participate in the Rapid Results Employer Panel, sign up now at **[rapidresults.ca](https://rapidresults.ca)**



**Canada**

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