



## Summary: Immigration Strategy





## The Labour Market Framework

In order for Yukon to take a more strategic approach in addressing labour market needs in the territory, the framework outlines five strategies that needed to be developed:

- Comprehensive Skills and Trades Training Strategy;
- Immigration Strategy;
- Labour Market Information Strategy; and
- Recruitment Strategy and Employee Retention Strategy.

Four summary documents of the five strategies have been produced (the Recruitment Strategy and Employee Retention Strategy were combined into one): this is the summary of the Immigration Strategy.

*Ce document est également disponible en français.*

2010

ISBN 978-1-55362-500-1

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## Summary

# Immigration Strategy

*Yukon is well-acquainted with the immigration. During the Klondike Gold Rush, tens of thousands of people came to the Yukon. By 1898, the small Hän fishing camp at the meeting point of two little-known northern rivers had become the largest and most cosmopolitan Canadian city west of Winnipeg. The arrival of stampeders changed the face of Yukon forever and brought many changes to the political, social and economic realities of the territory.*

Yukon government/C. Archbould



Bringing immigrants into the labour force is still an important part of the prosperity and growth of Yukon's economy. And although population growth on the scale of that of the late 1800s is not predicted, it is anticipated that immigration will play an important role in developing capacity in all kinds of businesses and providing essential services for Yukoners.

Immigration is only one source of the labour market. It must be approached in a manner that is responsive to labour market needs and is sustainable through both strong and weak economies, being cautious not to negatively impact job opportunities for Yukoners.

### **Why immigration is important**

Thanks to immigration, Yukon is a culturally rich territory. As a result of immigration, Yukon's workforce, neighbourhoods and schools are diverse

places and the territory is better off, both economically and socially.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada predicts that immigrants will account for all net labour force growth by 2011 and for all net population growth by 2031. This is partly because of the aging workforce; as baby boomers retire, there will not be enough workers to fill job vacancies without relying on immigration. Declining birth rates also play a role in the need for immigration.

If immigration cannot meet employers' needs to fill a variety of skilled and semi-skilled jobs, there will be serious consequences for the economy in the short and long term. Without enough people to fill jobs in Yukon, there will be more pressure to raise wages and prices. This can lead to an unstable economy and services and goods that will not meet the demands of the Yukon consumer.

## The need for an Immigration Strategy

In order to maintain immigration's positive impact on the territory, both now and in the future, Yukon must be strategic in planning and evaluating immigration programs and services.

In October 2008, the Government of Yukon released the Labour Market Framework. The framework identified the need for a strategic approach to immigration in Yukon. It also outlined a process to create strategies that will ensure that Yukon's labour market is inclusive and adaptable.

The Immigration Strategy will not only focus on Yukon's current and future immigration needs, but will also complement and support the other strategies of the Labour Market Framework.

The Immigration Strategy will serve as a long-term, proactive planning tool for the next ten years. Having a plan to move forward in the face of change is key to coordinating and focusing effective and efficient programs and services.

During the development of the Immigration Strategy the need for an action plan that would guide the detailed implementation of the goal and objectives was recognised. The Immigration Strategy Action Plan will be renewed, as needed, every one to three years to support new initiatives and to guide monitoring and

evaluation. (A copy of the action plan is available; see the back cover for contact information.)

## Stakeholder participation

The Immigration Strategy is the result of a dialogue among key immigration stakeholders. This dialogue supports the creation of sustained and effective investments in the labour force, such as supporting the Yukon Nominee Program and language training.

The Immigration Strategy is a Yukon-wide initiative that will be delivered by a diverse group of stakeholders. Many businesses, education institutions, governments, non-profit organisations and cultural associations were involved in the creation of the Immigration Strategy. Stakeholders play a key role in the implementation of the Immigration Strategy.

## Taking a closer look at immigration

Many questions were raised during the development of the Immigration Strategy. These questions shaped the strategic approach to supporting immigration-related activities in the years to come:

- Why is immigration important to Yukon?
- How can the territory improve its approach to immigration in a way that best meets the needs of the labour market?

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- What kind of workplace supports do employers and their immigrant employees need to contribute to business growth?
- What program and services exist for newcomers to Yukon and how can they be accessed more easily?

### Challenges and opportunities

As part of creating a comprehensive immigration strategy that addresses Yukon's labour market needs, stakeholders identified and analysed core challenges and opportunities specific to immigration.

The Immigration Strategy focuses on two main challenges and opportunities:

- labour force integration; and
- the regional characteristics of Yukon's labour market needs.

#### *Labour force integration*

Language skills, foreign credential recognition and Canadian work experience have a significant impact on immigrants' integration into the labour force. More often than not, these three elements overlap and depend on each other. A strategy that can reduce challenges and take advantage of opportunities associated with its labour force is a step to ensuring that Yukon has the workers it needs to continue to build a strong economy.

#### *Regional characteristics*

Yukon's needs are different than those in the rest of Canada, which can be seen in its employment rates, the impact of geography on labour market diversity, population structure and immigrant retention. These regional characteristics are explored in the Immigration Strategy. Initiatives featured in the Immigration Strategy Action Plan have been designed to meet the territory's labour market needs in the short, middle and long term.

#### Goal and objectives

**Goal: Support a responsive and sustainable approach to Yukon immigration**

**Rationale:** The goal of the Immigration Strategy is to create immigration-related policies and supports responding readily and viably to bringing immigrants into Yukon's labour force.

## Objectives

These six objectives support the goal of the Immigration Strategy:

**1. Be responsive to industry and business labour force needs through improving and monitoring the Yukon Nominee Program**

**Rationale:** The Yukon Nominee Program helps local employers recruit and retain much-needed skilled and semi-skilled workers. The continued support and refinement of this program helps local employers navigate through skills shortages when they occur. The Yukon Nominee Program also has a positive impact on the economy and the quality of life of all Yukoners.

**2. Assist more immigrants to engage in Yukon's labour market opportunities by providing better information and services**

**Rationale:** Information and services that help people immigrate to Yukon benefit the territory. Better access to information about investment and existing skill shortages will make the transition easier for immigrants. Support for diversity and cross-cultural training on the part of Yukon employers will help ensure that immigrant workers are integrated into, and retained by, the workforce.

**3. Ensure that settlement services are provided for all newcomers, including temporary foreign workers and participants in the Yukon Nominee Program**

**Rationale:** Providing better access to language training and other settlement services for all immigrants is central to making effective use of their skills and expertise. Newcomers need assistance in settling into life in Canada to realise their full potential in Yukon workforce. Cooperation among governments and stakeholder groups is instrumental in realising this objective.

**4. Provide immigrants with the resources and training they need to seek further education for working in their chosen field or obtaining better employment**

**Rationale:** Providing immigrants with the resources and training they need to engage effectively in the labour force – through bridging programs, workshops on worker rights and responsibilities, cross-cultural employment skills or foreign credential services – benefits immigrants and Canadians alike. Workers who are fully engaged in the labour force improve the economy's capacity for diversification and contribute to the territory's tax base.

**5. Support immigrant communities within Yukon by helping them increase their capacity, their profile and the services they offer their members**

**Rationale:** Yukon's immigrant communities make an important contribution to settling and retaining immigrants. Immigrants who adapt to life in Yukon and integrate into the labour force are more likely to be retained.

**6. Increase immigrant retention rates by promoting the benefits of immigration and celebrating multiculturalism**

**Rationale:** Yukon currently retains a large percentage of its immigrant workers, and maintaining this trend is desirable. Retaining immigrants ensures the effective use of settlement resources and immigrant skills.



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## Expected results

### 1. The way forward

The Immigration Strategy and the Immigration Strategy Action Plan make several recommendations for both employers and immigrants on supporting immigration in Yukon.

#### Employers

Recommended initiatives under the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan will help employers in:

- recruiting and retaining enough staff to meet the employer's seasonal and permanent needs;
- developing workplace language, safety and cross-cultural supports for newly immigrated employees; and
- assess and recognise foreign education through more effective services in order to have access to in-demand skills.

#### Immigrants

Recommended initiatives will also assist immigrants in:

- having their potential assessed — before they arrive in Canada — to better integrate into the workforce;
- finding and keeping jobs that use immigrants' in-demand foreign education and training;
- access to language training before and after immigrants become permanent residents; and

- being able to participate fully in Yukon society through the support of safer workplaces and community involvement.

### 2. Monitoring and evaluating progress

The Immigration Stakeholder Committee will be a central part of monitoring and evaluating the progress of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan. This group will review and analyse current initiatives, ensure that the goal and objectives are met through the implementation of the action plan, and make adjustments to the plan as necessary, based on the changing needs of the labour market.

## Conclusion

Immigration has already had a positive impact on Yukon's economy by helping employers deal effectively with shortages of critical skilled and semi-skilled labour. If the territory continues a responsive and sustainable approach to immigration, the labour market will be diverse and stable enough to support a high quality of life for all Yukoners.

If you would like more information about how the Immigration Strategy can benefit you or how you can participate in the Immigration Stakeholder Committee, please call 867-667-5131 (toll-free 1-800-661-0408, ext. 5131) or go to [www.labourmarketframeworkyukon.com](http://www.labourmarketframeworkyukon.com).

These documents are also available:

- additional copies of this summary;
- a copy of the strategy and action plan; and
- a complete list of the organisations involved in the creation of the strategy and action plan.

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