

The AMSSA Info Sheet series has been created to inform and support settlement service providers and key stakeholders across British Columbia. The Info Sheets cover a wide range of topics and highlight important facts and trends from across Canada and BC. Our goal is to assist organizations in navigating the rapidly changing landscape of the BC settlement sector.*

Understanding Express Entry

Express Entry is a new online application management system introduced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in January 2015. Express Entry is designed to improve Canada's immigration system into one that is faster and more responsive to economic and labour market needs, and it will enable employers to have a direct role in selecting economic immigrants.¹

More Than a New Way of Processing Applications

The introduction of Express Entry is one of the most fundamental changes to the economic immigration system in many years.

This new model coordinates many previous legislative and policy changes to economic immigration programs into a single, overarching system.² Its introduction is a move towards a system in which employers are now directly involved in the selection of immigrants, integrating employment opportunities with 'human capital' factors.³

Immigration applications have historically been processed on a first come, first serve basis. Under Express Entry, candidates who are the most likely to successfully integrate into Canada's labour market will be issued an invitation to apply for permanent residence. This assessment is made by a new points ranking system called the Comprehensive Ranking System.⁴

Express Entry is not a new immigration program, but is instead a new way of managing applications from three federal economic immigration programs listed below and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP):⁵

- Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)
- Federal Skilled Trades Program (FSTP)
- Canadian Experience Class (CEC)

Express Entry works in two steps:

1. Prospective immigrants create an online profile, which will include information about their skills, language abilities, work experience, and other biographical information. If the profile meets the minimum criteria it will be entered into the Express Entry pool all other profiles.⁶
2. Invitation rounds will occur approximately 15-25 times per year. The highest-ranked candidates from the pool will be issued an Invitation to Apply (ITA) for permanent residence. Those with a provincial nomination will also be sent an Invitation to Apply.⁷

It is important to note that an Invitation to Apply does not guarantee the application will be successful, as the applicant must still meet minimum entry criteria, program requirements, and medical and security admissibility requirements.⁸

Employers Play a Growing Role in Selecting Immigrants

Anyone can be accepted into the Express Entry pool as long as they meet basic eligibility requirements for one of the three federal economic immigration streams. *There is no fee to complete an Express Entry profile.*⁹

Once in the pool, candidates will be ranked on a number of factors that have historically predicted the economic success of new immigrants. One of which is a job offer or a provincial nomination; in the new Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) up to 600 additional points may be awarded.¹⁰

Although a job offer is not required to enter the pool, it will play a significant role in whether or not a candidate will receive an Invitation to Apply for permanent residence. The outcome of this change is that employers play a greater role than ever before in selecting who can immigrate to Canada.

Candidates will be in the pool for one year from the day they get in.¹¹

If candidates do not already have a job offer or a provincial nomination, they must register for Job Bank to be eligible for the pool. In addition, they will be given a personal reference code to use to register in Job Bank.¹²

Issuing a Job Offer

Before a skilled immigrant can be considered for a job, employers must make every effort to first try and find a Canadian or permanent resident to fill the vacancy. Among other things, employers must advertise the vacancy for a period of at least 30 days.

If a Canadian or permanent resident cannot be found, employers broaden their candidate search to include foreign workers. If a qualified foreign national is found, the employer can then apply for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA). The employer must apply for an LMIA in order to hire the foreign candidate. *There will be no LMIA fee for permanent residence applications.*¹³

Employers will need a positive LMIA to make a qualifying job offer to a foreign national under Express Entry, even if the position was previously considered to be "LMIA exempt".

1. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, '2014 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration', October 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HR5DI>.

2, 3, 14. Daniel Hiebert, 'Presentation: Moving to Express Entry', January 2015.

4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Launch of Express Entry and e-applications for certain economic permanent residence programs', January 2015. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HR6bs>.

9, 10, 11, 12. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Ministerial Instructions for the Express Entry Application Management System', November 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HR8pl>.

13. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'How will the Express Entry system benefit employers in Canada?', December 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HRiX5>.

Faster Economic Integration & Application Processing

There has been growing recognition that many skilled immigrants are underemployed, and that their talents are going wasted in many cases.¹⁴

CIC has described rapid economic integration as a major rationale for the introduction of Express Entry; as employers will play a significant role in who will come to Canada, job offers will go to immigrants with skills that align with current labour market needs.¹⁵

Secondly, applications for permanent residence have historically taken up to five or more years to process, regardless of the likelihood that the application will be accepted.

With Express Entry, CIC anticipates that 80% of Express Entry permanent resident applications will be processed within 6 months.¹⁶

BC Provincial Nominee Program (BCPNP) Express Entry

British Columbia has created a new Express Entry stream under the Provincial Nominee Program. Applicants must meet the criteria for at least one of the federal economic immigration programs subject to CIC's Express Entry system (FSWP, FSTP, CEC).¹⁷

This new stream adds 1350 positions to BC's PNP quota and targets skilled workers, healthcare professionals and students/graduates, bringing BC's total quota to 5,500 PNP slots. Figure 2 below describes the BCPNP Express Entry categories.¹⁸

Figure 2 – Four Categories of Express Entry British Columbia¹⁹

| PNP Category | Employment | Occupation <i>National Occupational Classification</i> | Experience |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Skilled Worker | Full-time job offer from an eligible B.C. employer | Skill Level O, A or B | Directly related work experience |
| Health Care Professional | Full-time job offer from a Public Health Authority in B.C. | Physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives and allied health professionals | Directly related work experience |
| International Graduate | Full-time job offer from an eligible B.C. employer | Skill Level O, A or B occupations | Not required |
| International Post-Graduate | A job offer or work experience is not required. | | |

Source: WelcomeBC—Categories at a Glance, available at: <http://ow.ly/HRbxc>

A Government of BC webcast further outlines the specific requirements of each Express Entry BC stream: <http://ow.ly/IQjiz>.

Understanding the Matching Process

- ⇒ Express Entry candidates will need to register with Job Bank if they do not already have a Canadian job offer supported by an LMIA or a provincial/territorial nomination. Job Bank will give them the opportunity to view jobs available with employers in Canada and to begin promoting themselves to employers, recruiters, private sector job boards, etc.²⁰
- ⇒ Eligible employers will be able to access candidates in the pool through Job Bank.²¹
- ⇒ Later in 2015, Job Bank will “match” eligible employers with Express Entry candidates who meet their job description when there are no Canadians or permanent residents available to do the job.²²

Canada Job Bank

[Job Bank](#) is the Government of Canada's source for jobs and labour market information. The Job Bank website offers users free occupational and career information such as job opportunities, educational requirements, main duties, wage rates and salaries, current employment trends, and outlooks.

In advance of the launch of the Express Entry model, Job Bank was modernized to include more up to date information. In late 2015, Express Entry candidates will be able to perform *Job Match*, which allows employers and job seekers to find matches on their respective job ads and job profiles.²³

Understanding the New Points System

The Express Entry Comprehensive Ranking System is an entirely new system of identifying those who meet the minimum criteria and the top ranked potential immigrants. The CRS does not replace the Federal Skilled Worker points system.

When someone completes an Express Entry profile, the Express Entry system will assess the candidate using the Comprehensive Ranking System, and in parallel, the program requirements of FSTP, CEC and the Federal Skilled Worker Program points grid to determine if they have met the minimum requirements for one of the three federal programs.

If a candidate receives an Invitation to Apply under the Federal Skilled Worker Program, and submits an application, they will be re-assessed using the Federal Skilled Worker Program points grid to confirm that the applicant is indeed eligible for that program.

14, 15, 16. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'How will the Express Entry system benefit Canada?', December 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HRc1g>.

17, 18, 19. Province of British Columbia, 'Launch of Express Entry British Columbia helps streamline immigration for skilled workers', January 2015.

Available at: <http://ow.ly/HRc9K>.

20, 21, 22, 23. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'How does Job Bank work with Express Entry?', December 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/HRcSs>.