

Ontario invests \$25 million for flagship immigration program

BY Jim Wilson 29 Mar 2023

Ontario is setting aside another \$25 million over three years under its flagship immigration program to tackle the labour shortage.

The new investment in Budget 2023 through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program will speed up processing and ensure those coming to Ontario can start working in their professions quickly, according to the government.

It will also support the government's bid to enhance security and other IT updates to ensure the system can handle increased demand now and in the future.

"Our government is ready to welcome more skilled newcomers to Ontario, to help build the highways, transit, schools, homes and hospitals our growing population needs," said Premier Doug Ford. "As we continue to tackle historic labour shortages, we're doing everything we can to ensure we have the workforce to help build Ontario. It's all hands on deck."

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program allows the province to nominate individuals for permanent residence who have the skills and experience to contribute to Ontario's economy in industries like the skilled trades and health care.

Earlier this month, the province and federal government announced a [doubling of the number of economic immigrants to Ontario](#) to a record-high 18,000 by 2025.

The \$25 million investment is in addition to the \$15 million over three years that Ontario announced in Budget 2022.

Welcome news

Ontario needs more skilled trades and construction workers to build its growing province, said Nadia Todorova, executive director at the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario.

"When coupled with the government's focus on domestic recruitment and training, these measures will help ensure that industry has the necessary workforce to build critical infrastructure."

The Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) also applauded Ontario's decision to prioritize immigration as an immediate solution to the labour shortage in skilled trades.

“Opening the doors to skilled immigrants will rectify the current, and future, workforce deficit construction is facing and allow for more projects to move forward exponentially,” said Giovanni Cautillo, OGCA president.

In January, the [Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance \(OSTA\)](#) urged the federal government to amend its current immigration policies to strengthen the province’s current construction workforce.

In December 2022, there were nearly 300,000 jobs in Ontario going unfilled.

Ottawa is also creating a new federal pathway under the [Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot](#) (EMPP) to welcome immigrants who can work in Canada as nurse aides, personal support workers or long-term care aides, among others.