



**THE BC
JOBS PLAN**



NEWS RELEASE

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May 22, 2012

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation

B.C. needs more skilled immigrants now

VICTORIA – The Immigration Task Force (ITF) released their final report today confirming that B.C. will need more skilled immigrants to fill labour and skills shortages throughout the province, announced Minister of State for Multiculturalism and ITF Chair John Yap at an event held today at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver.

The Immigration Task Force was appointed by Premier Christy Clark on Dec. 8, 2011, to review key government programs to increase the number of skilled immigrants and investors in British Columbia. The report was compiled after the ITF conducted eight regional consultations involving a broad range of stakeholders and industry experts. The task force also reviewed and included comments and suggestions submitted by the public through the ITF website.

Through the consultation process, the task force members heard loud and clear from employers that if more skilled immigrants are not immediately attracted to our province, businesses may have to close or relocate, resulting in fewer jobs and opportunities for British Columbians. The report was presented to Premier Christy Clark for government review on March 31, 2012.

The report contains 10 key recommendations for the Province of B.C. and the Government of Canada, including:

- Immediately increase immigration levels to B.C.
- Grow and expand the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) as the most effective way of supporting regional economic development.
- Ensure economic immigration program application processes and requirements are as straightforward and efficient as possible and reflect business realities for employers.
- Capitalize on B.C. as a destination of choice for entrepreneurs and investors.
- Provide timely, effective information and support to newcomers and employers.

The Province has already taken immediate action to fill job vacancies from Fort Nelson to Mackenzie by introducing the Northeast Pilot Project which will expand the scope of the BC PNP in this fast-growing region to include more eligible occupations. This pilot project responded to ITF consultations in Fort St. John where employers confirmed the critical need to recruit and retain more temporary workers to fill existing job openings.

The Province will engage with the federal government to expedite higher PNP levels for British Columbia and ensure ongoing reforms to national immigration programs that respond to British Columbia's regional economic development needs.

Attracting more skilled immigrants is one of a series of commitments in the BC Jobs Plan to help fill the more than one million job openings expected over the next decade.

To view the final report, please visit: http://www.jti.gov.bc.ca/immigration_task_force/

Quotes:

John Yap, Minister of Multiculturalism and Immigration Task Force chair –

“Travelling across the province, hearing stories from a range of employers about the challenges they are facing filling jobs in all types of industries impressed upon the task force the immediate and overwhelming need to bring more skilled immigrants to B.C. through a more efficient and responsive system.

“I look forward to working with my provincial and federal colleagues to implement changes to the programs available to B.C. so that our province can attract the talented immigrants needed in an increasingly competitive global fight for human capital.”

Richard Brownsey, president, British Columbia Film and Media –

“British Columbia's digital media industry operates in a global environment where creative talent determines success. An immigration system that is effective in responding to the needs of business and recognizes the competition for talent is international, is critical to the growth of the industry and to increasing employment for British Columbians.”

Lisa Wong, chair, Richmond Chamber of Commerce –

“The comments, and in many cases, cries, of the business community at the BC Immigration Task Force held in the City of Richmond were consistent: We cannot continue our businesses without immediate economic immigration facilitated by targeted, realistic, and clear policies and procedures. Without such changes, our future is uncertain. The key recommendations in this taskforce report are the answers that the business community was hoping for. Richmond Chamber of Commerce believes that if these recommendations are accepted, many in the B.C. business community will renew hope for their future economic viability.”

Pat Bell, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation –

“To sustain and create new jobs over the next decade we need more workers than British Columbia can supply. The recommendations in the ITF report point us in the right direction and give us the tools we need to achieve both our labour and economic goals. I'm proud that B.C. is taking this proactive approach to economic immigration.”

Visit the BC Jobs Plan website: <http://www.bcjobsplan.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact: Media Relations
 Government Communications and Public Engagement
 Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation
 250 356-7104

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BACKGROUND

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BC Immigration Task Force members

The Task Force members are business and community leaders who understand the social and economic challenges of attracting, settling, integrating and retaining immigrants to the province.

- John Yap, chair
Minister of State for Multiculturalism
- Tung Chan (Richmond)
Former CEO SUCCESS/Chinese community leader
- Stockwell Day (Penticton)
Government Relations Consultant/former Minister/MP
- Yuen Pau Woo (North Vancouver)
CEO Asia Pacific Foundation
- Grace Wong (Vancouver)
Senior Advisor, International, Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC
- Suki Badh (Richmond)
College instructor/South Asian community leader
- Michael Hwang (New Westminster)
Principal lawyer of Hwang & Company/Founder and Partner of Amicus Lawyers
- Narindarpal Singh Kang (Vancouver)
Founder, Kang and Company Law Firm, specializing in Immigration Law
- Barj Dhahan
Chair, Canada-India Foundation

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