

2019 Policy Pillars for Growth

Pillar IV: Improve Access to Workers

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce (ACC) Position

ACC supports efforts to reduce the gap between the unemployment rate and job vacancies by improving skills development, supporting immigration and ensuring access to labour.

Why it is important

Full employment is both an indicator and a driver of a vibrant economy. Under full employment conditions, employers compete for available resources, driving income gains and increased productivity. A widely dispersed, highly rural population, with several industries that provide only seasonal employment, and low levels of literacy and numeracy result in employment gaps at low- and high-skilled levels.

What can be Done

Retain our Youth

Economic sustainability requires the youngest of our workforce see opportunities to work and live in their home province. We need to get this message to our children at an early age and put the question of whether to stay or leave in a realistic context.

Attract and Retain Immigrants & Foreign Students

Our region needs to establish effective collaborations between government, business, and communities to allow foreign students to connect with local businesses, ensure potential immigrants are aware of the unique nature of Atlantic Canada's lifestyle, and to provide settlement resources enabling them to attach to rural and urban communities. A long-term solution is also required to ensure adequate human resources are available to staff low-skilled and seasonal employment opportunities.

Skills Development

Governments need to mine employment data more deeply to identify regional deficiencies for access to skilled labour. Opportunity and prosperity require that public schools guarantee students early competence in reading, math and computing skills so they progress to higher learning and can operate in a workplace which demands the ability to read and solve problems independently.

Recommendations

Atlantic Chamber of Commerce recommends provincial governments:

- work with communities to prepare youth for opportunities in Atlantic Canada;
- continue to expand and improve immigration programs like AIP, PNP and TFW;
- expand access to resources to encourage settlement in communities of all sizes;
- communicate, at an early age, examples of successful entrepreneurs in the local economy;
- ensure availability of practical entrepreneurship training at all levels of education;
- continue to focus on ensuring mastery of reading, math and technology at an early age; and
- improve connections between labour market information and workplace skills acquisition.