

## **Further Improvements to the Provincial Nomination Program (PNP)**

Canada's aging population means that the demand for skilled labour will continue to outweigh the supply. Temporary foreign workers are a source of skilled labour and the rate of applications is on the rise. In order to hire a Temporary Foreign Worker, the employer must first request a Labour Market Opinion (LMO), as part of the PNP, through Service Canada. The LMO process is the government's way of ensuring that hiring a foreign worker is not taking away opportunities for Canadians and Permanent Residents.

There are two major challenges with regards to the LMO process:

1. Over the past few years, we have seen the processing time at Service Canada balloon from three weeks to its current processing time of up to six months for LMOs. Service Canada cannot keep up with the demand for foreign workers. The processing times at Canadian Consulates have, on average, slowed slightly but not nearly as much as they have at Service Canada.
2. Companies simply cannot wait six months for a new employee to arrive, especially when they actually needed them "yesterday". Trying to keep a prospective employee interested over the six-month waiting period is equally difficult in this hot global employment market.
3. LMOs may only be requested for full-time work when often employers have need for part time workers and there are no local sources of labour to fill the position. Because the number of employed hours is deemed more important than any other factor, such as the level of pay or the demand for particular qualifications, employers looking for part time workers are ineligible for a LMO. The absurdity of this situation becomes evident when we recognize that employers may apply for an LMO for a full time minimum wage-paying position as a cook at McDonalds but not, for example, a .8 position working as a registered nurse for \$32.40 per hour, more than 3 times the amount per hour than the cook would receive.

### **Recommendation**

That the federal government work with the provinces/ territories:

1. To shorten the processing time for PNP applications, and
2. Remove restrictions for full-time employment on the LMO application.

**Submitted by the Prince George Chamber of Commerce**

**The Special Issues Committee supports this resolution.**