



## West Kootenay Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What communities are part of the West Kootenay Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot?

The pilot encompasses the communities of Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Rossland and surrounding areas.

Q: How many immigrants will the West Kootenay region accept through the pilot?

The federal government has stated that we can accept a maximum of 250 immigrants over three years. We will be working with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in the fall to identify what an appropriate target number would be for the West Kootenay, keeping in mind job opportunities and the region's capacity to create a welcoming environment for each newcomer. The pilot is less about hitting a specific target, and more about attracting and retaining the "right" people, those with the skills and abilities to contribute to West Kootenay's labour market and the desire to put down roots in the community.

Q: What industries will be hiring skilled foreign workers?

The pilot will bring in foreign workers to fill jobs that have gone unfilled locally. Examples of industries currently experiencing a worker shortage in the West Kootenay include mining and metallurgy, forestry, manufacturing, health care, transportation, construction, education and technology as well as entry-level employees in retail, tourism, accommodation and food services. The pilot allows the community to set its own criteria and select the "best fit" candidates to endorse. The application criteria will be set by a committee of community stakeholders in Fall 2019.

Q: Are there local workers who could fill the positions?

The population of the West Kootenay is aging and many employers struggle to fill job vacancies, as the generation of Baby Boomers leave the workforce. According to the 2018 BC Labour Market Outlook, between 2018-2028 Kootenay employers will need to fill 19,700 jobs left vacant by retiring workers, and another 4,400 new positions created by economic growth.

Employers who will be hiring foreign workers through the pilot will have already attempted to fill their positions locally. In many cases, jobs have been vacant and the worker shortage has become a barrier to growth. When companies are adequately staffed they can grow their services which will create spin-off benefits and job growth in other areas.

Q: Is there enough housing availability in West Kootenay communities for newcomers to find a place to live?

Housing availability is a concern across much of BC, including parts of the West Kootenay. In recent years, our communities have been working to increase the local housing stock through a focus on high-density development, which has resulted in many new residential units being built. In cities where housing is relatively more expensive, some people choose to live outside city limits or in neighbouring cities, and commute to their jobs. Workers coming to our region through the pilot will be gainfully employed and, like anyone moving to a new place, they will be responsible for finding accommodations that suit their needs.

Q: Where will the immigrant workers come from? Will they bring their families with them?

The pilot will allow us to welcome immigrants from anywhere in the world who have a genuine job offer from an employer in our region. It is also open to prospective workers already living within Canada who are not yet citizens or permanent residents. Workers approved to immigrate to the region through the pilot will gain permanent resident status, which allows them to move with their families. We hope that having their family here with them will strengthen their long-term commitment to the region.

#### Helpful Links

[Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot](#) – Government of Canada webpage

[Kootenay Labour Market Profile](#) – Province of BC webpage

[Kootenay Jobs](#) – Regional job search

[Imagine Kootenay](#) – Regional relocation information

[Mailing List Sign Up](#) – Email updates for the West Kootenay Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot