



WORKFORCE PERSPECTIVES

Newcomer Impact

INTRODUCTION

Labour shortages across the electricity sector continue to dominate industry concerns and priorities for current-day operations. They are also critical to enable the transformation required to decarbonize legacy systems to achieve net-zero objectives and meet surging electricity demands.

Increasing demand due to societal shifts towards smart homes, smart cities, electric vehicles and more battery-powered devices have national and international studies forecasting Canada's electricity requirements to be two to three times our current generation capacity.¹

As Canada's electricity sector strives to fill critical labour gaps, its labour source is marked by a retirement rate that has escalated to 1.5x the national average at a time when the sector must both sustain and expand its workforce. In fact, 86% of workplace turnover is driven by retirements. This accelerated retirement rate, coupled with a low birth rate translate into a shrinking talent pool which creates a demographic shift, and significant industry talent management challenges.

One of the most effective ways to address the increasing severity of labour shortages is to tap

into the rich reserve of foreign-trained newcomers. In November 2022, the federal government tabled its immigration plan, which would see Canada welcome 500,000 permanent residents a year by 2025.² What's more, Canada set an immigration record in 2022 with 430,000 new permanent residents.³ Understanding newcomer perceptions – their top barriers to working in our sector, and the positive factors that inform career decisions is essential to recruiting and retaining this growing, skilled talent pool.

Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC) is the leading source of labour market data and business intelligence for Canada's electricity industry. This national newcomer's survey is part of a series of ongoing research to enable evidence-based, informed and innovative workforce planning for Canada's electricity sector.

Ce rapport est également disponible en français sous le titre : Perspectives d'avenir pour la main-d'œuvre : L'impact des nouveaux-elles arrivant-e-s.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

METHODOLOGY

This national survey was conducted online by Abacus Data with 500 newcomers who have come to Canada within the past 10 years (2012 – 2022), aged 18 and over.

The data were weighted according to census data, to ensure that the sample reflects the age and gender distribution, and geographic location of Canada's population of recent newcomers.

The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 4.38%, 19 times out of 20. Standard rounding practices are used, therefore the numbers in charts may not add to 100%.

¹ [2050 Vision: Powering Canada's Journey to Net-Zero](#), Canadian Renewable Energy Association (CanREA); [The Big Switch, Powering Canada's Net Zero Future](#), Canadian Climate Institute; [Canada 2022, Energy Policy Review](#), Paris-based International Energy Agency

² [Federal Immigration Plan to Grow the Economy](#)

³ Government of Canada [News Release](#)

KEY FINDINGS: NEWCOMER IMPRESSIONS & RESPONSES

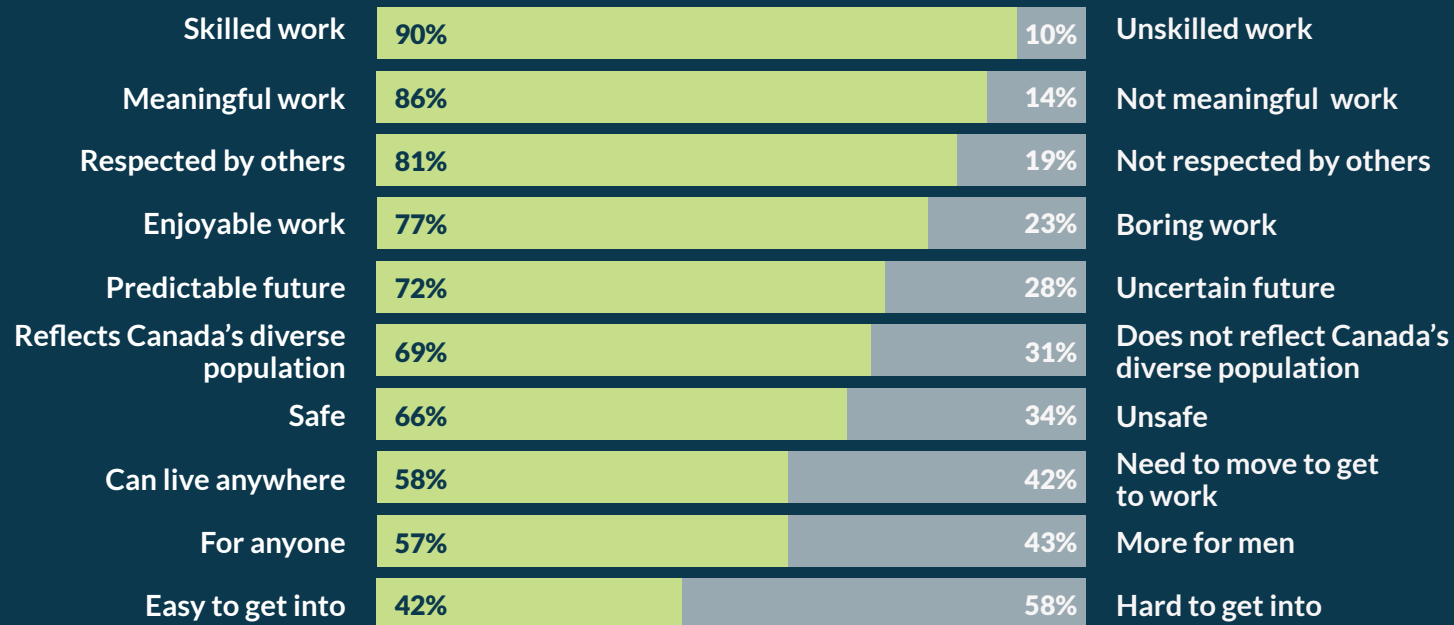


Renewable Energy and Electricity

Newcomers to Canada have a positive impression of both renewable energy (64%) and electricity (60%) overall – further reinforced by how newcomers think about specific aspects of working in the electricity sector. Newcomers overwhelmingly believe it is skilled,

meaningful work that is respected by others, and is enjoyable. Further, newcomers find the sector appealing because Canada’s grid is one of the cleanest in the world, and the industry is innovating. In fact, 36% would definitely or probably consider working in the electricity sector.

Feelings About a Career in Electricity



When you think about a career in electricity, which of the following words or phrases of each pair best describes how you feel?



Career Selection

Newcomers who are choosing a career in Canada rank pay as the most important consideration, followed by job security. While newcomers want flexible work schedules, time off, and work that aligns with their values, it is important to acknowledge the role that pay and job security play. They also want work that is active in nature, involves solving problems and involves working with a team.



Training

A majority of newcomers to Canada (68%) who are in the labour force received training in a profession before they came to Canada, but one third of these are not working in the profession they trained in. This gap points to the need and opportunity to better leverage the skills and experience that newcomers bring to Canada.

IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: RECRUITMENT, HIRING & RETENTION FOR NEWCOMERS IN THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR

Communicate the Benefits Identified by Newcomers as Important to Career Selection

The electricity sector offers career attributes and benefits that newcomers are seeking. Given the labour market, jobs in the industry are well paid, secure, safe, innovative and offer opportunities for growth and advancement in a sector that is helping to solve climate change.

Addressing Key Barriers

Newcomers perceive significant barriers to working in Canada and specifically with respect to the electricity sector. Addressing credentials, skills recognition and job training needs in collaboration with federal-provincial-territorial government planning and investments are important. The industry also needs to ensure that newcomers see a place for themselves in Canada’s electricity sector by implementing effective diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices.

TOP CHALLENGES/BARRIERS

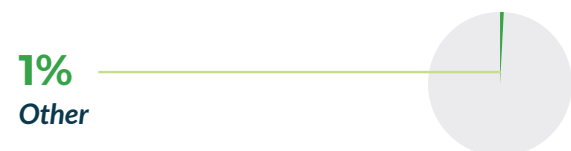
There is a widespread belief among newcomers (69%) that being from another country will limit their career options. These disadvantages include credentials, but also include language proficiency, discrimination, and challenges navigating services such as childcare, health and schooling. This belief may influence which careers newcomers choose to pursue.

Credentials: General

Credentials are a top barrier for newcomers to find a job they would like to have. More than one in four newcomers feel that getting foreign credentials recognized in Canada had a large negative impact on their ability to find a job.

Credentials: Electricity Sector

In fact, 45% believe that difficulty getting credentials is a barrier they face or expect to face when entering a career in the electricity sector. A lack of personal networks (e.g., knowing people in the sector) is the second most mentioned barrier (36%), followed by a lack of opportunities to advance (28%) and language skills (24%).



Which of the following barriers have you faced or expect to face when trying to enter a career in the electricity sector?

EHRC RESOURCES

NATIONAL SURVEY

The following programs and resources provide actionable solutions for employers to plan and implement newcomer talent hiring and retention strategies.



Our [Welcoming Newcomers](#) program provides financial incentives for internships with up to \$10,000 each to eligible employers who recruit professionally skilled, internationally trained workers. This national program is instrumental in helping newcomers achieve job readiness and timely employment.



Offer your employees a complete mentorship program with [Mentor Junction](#), an online mentorship platform that enables more effective on-boarding, improved loyalty and retention, and better knowledge transfer. Additional resources for both mentors and mentees are also included.



EHRC's [Electricity Competency Framework](#) is a dynamic tool that provides a present-day snapshot of the skills and knowledge required to work in the electricity sector and the transferability potential across roles. It is an excellent complement to our [Professional Skills Training](#) offering which provides leadership, problem-solving, communication and teamwork skills that make a real difference to career starts and advancement.



Our [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) programs and resources](#) provide valuable labour market data and workplace insights to inform planning, as well as additional wage incentives, toolkits and webinars for all DEI communities.

CONCLUSION

While it is clear that the electricity sector is facing a number of challenges on the horizon, the most immediate is labour force recruitment and retention. A declining birth rate coupled with an unprecedented retirement rate has made filling labour force gaps difficult. The only timely solution is to look at typically non-traditional talent pools – one of these is newcomers to Canada.

The electricity sector offers what newcomers are looking for - stable, well-paying jobs, that are both challenging and convey a sense of pride in that they are helping to combat climate change. However, to attract this relatively untapped talent pool, the sector must adjust its messaging and culture to be more accommodating. Countering the assumption that career entry and advancement is limited for newcomers due to their language skills, lack of credentials, or simply coming from another country is the first step in building awareness within the newcomer community of the rich opportunities offered by the electricity sector.

ABOUT ELECTRICITY HUMAN RESOURCES CANADA (EHRC)

Electricity Human Resources Canada (EHRC) is Canada's trusted provider of national labour market business intelligence, HR programs, and tools for the electricity sector.

We strengthen the electricity workforce to be safety-focused, innovative, and inclusive by delivering critical business intelligence to inform labour market decision-making; by forging partnerships that enable the industry to adapt, upskill, and innovate; by leading the industry in creating and sustaining a skilled and inclusive workforce; and by inspiring our future workforce to build a low-carbon economy.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

Further information on EHRC is available at ehrc.ca.

Copyright © 2023 Electricity Human Resources Canada

All rights reserved. The use of any part of this publication, whether it is reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (including electronic, mechanical, photographic, photocopying or recording), without the prior written permission of the Electricity Human Resources Canada, is an infringement of copyright law.

