

EMPLOYER INFO SESSION:

Strategies for Retaining International Talent

Executive Summary & Key Takeaways

Session: August 20, 2026

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Presented by: Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)

Executive summary

The session's central message was that retaining international talent is now a workforce-planning issue, not a last-minute immigration task. Employers should begin six to twelve months before work authorization expires and assess temporary work authorization and permanent residence together. The right strategy depends on the employee's full profile and the employer's operational needs; no pathway or outcome is guaranteed.

Central takeaway: Start early, assess each case individually, and keep employment records accurate.

Stay current: This information reflects requirements in effect on August 20, 2026. Join our next IEC-BC employer information session or visit the IEC-BC Employer Learning Hub at iecbclearning.ca for updates and additional resources.

Key takeaways for employers

- **Plan six to twelve months ahead.** Early review preserves options, gives employers time to coordinate temporary work authorization and permanent residence, and reduces the risk of a work interruption.
- **Treat work authorization and permanent residence as separate tracks.** An Express Entry profile does not provide legal status or permission to work. The employee may still need a separate temporary-status plan while waiting.
- **Time filings deliberately.** Applying too early can reduce the practical benefit of a time-limited permit; applying too late can eliminate work authorization. Maintained status is not universal, and travel can end it.
- **Assess the whole profile before choosing a pathway.** Nationality, age, occupation, wage, location, education, experience, language, family status, and travel needs all matter. Check employee-led options before committing to an employer-heavy process.
- **Make accuracy, compliance, and reassessment non-negotiable.** Employment information must match reality. Do not reshape terms solely to manufacture eligibility; expect inspections, changing program criteria, periodic reassessment, and no guaranteed outcome.

What the main pathways mean for employers

- **Express Entry:** typically lighter employer involvement, but the employee often needs a program-specific reference letter. A generic HR system employment-verification letter may be insufficient.
- **BC Provincial Nominee Program:** more employer-intensive. Support can include a qualifying job offer, declarations, corporate and financial evidence, and cooperation with information requests or site visits. Employers should confirm eligibility and the business case before committing.
- **Temporary work authorization:** options may arise through Francophone Mobility, free-trade agreements, LMIA-based routes, International Experience Canada, spousal eligibility, or another exemption. The rules, duration, wage requirements, and access to maintained status differ by category.

Employer action checklist

1. **Create an expiry-date inventory.** Track expiries centrally and trigger a structured review six to twelve months in advance.
2. **Explore employee-led options.** Ask what the employee is pursuing and whether an independent pathway may exist; respect privacy and role boundaries.
3. **Evaluate the need and recruitment evidence.** Assess role criticality, past recruitment, availability of Canadian or permanent resident candidates, and replacement difficulty.
4. **Choose the pathway and support level.** Decide involvement, fees, dependant coverage, and practitioner use; obtain legal advice before any repayment term.
5. **Strengthen controls and build a fallback.** Assign document owners, verify HR and payroll facts, and coordinate timing, travel, wage requirements, and possible work interruptions.

Roles and boundaries

Employer's role	Employee's role
Decide what level of organizational support is appropriate and sustainable.	Own the personal immigration strategy and make informed choices with qualified advice where needed.
Provide accurate, complete employment information and program-specific documents.	Provide personal records, language results, travel information, and complete applications on time.
Maintain compliance with the employment terms represented to authorities.	Maintain legal status, monitor deadlines, and promptly disclose changes that may affect eligibility.