

Mobility: immigration alert

March 2021

Canada

Quebec's new pilot immigration programs

Executive summary

The province of Quebec has released additional guidance regarding its new pilot immigration programs, which give additional pathways to obtain permanent residence in Quebec and helps solve the labor shortage in specific sectors of the province. The benefit of these new pilot programs is that they are expected to open pathways to permanent residence in Quebec for certain skill types that might otherwise not easily qualify - or face significant delay - in obtaining permanent residence.

Background and analysis

The province of Quebec is launching three new immigration programs to meet its goal of attracting and retaining immigrants whose skills meet its labor market needs. These pilots focus on foreign nationals who work in the following three sectors:

- ▶ Artificial intelligence, information technology and visual effects
- ▶ Food processing
- ▶ Health (orderlies)

These programs are scheduled to last for a maximum of five years and will be reviewed in 2026 to determine whether they will continue as permanent programs. 550 spots will be available annually for each of the three programs, in total 1650 annually.

To be eligible, applicants must be at least 18 years old and must demonstrate that they can financially provide for themselves and their accompanying family members for at least three months once they become Permanent Residents. Full time work experience in Quebec through valid legal status is required in most streams.

Artificial intelligence, information technology and visual effects

This pilot comes into effect on 22 April 2021 and will close on 1 January 2026. There will be a total of 550 spots reserved annually for this pilot program, which will be divided in equal parts between each component.

The program has 2 components:

- ▶ Artificial intelligence
- ▶ Information technologies and visual effects

The artificial intelligence component has 2 subcategories:

- ▶ Foreign worker
- ▶ Quebec graduate

Candidates will also have to meet qualifications under either the "Francophone" or the "Francization" policies. Those fitting into the "Francophone" profile will already have a proven and existing proficient level of French language abilities (with an oral proficiency grade of at least



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7 on the Quebec scale of French proficiency levels for adult immigrants). Under the “Francization” profile, applicants who are not proficient in French will automatically be registered with the Integration service for immigrants under *Accompagnement Québec*. This measure is intended to help support applicants’ French learning and integration into Quebec society.

Program requirements

Artificial intelligence - foreign worker subcategory

- ▶ Have stayed in Quebec for the purpose of working under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program/International Mobility Program or taking part in a youth exchange program entered into by Quebec or Canada and a foreign country
- ▶ Possess a diploma that, at minimum, is equivalent to a Quebec university’s bachelor’s degree
- ▶ Have either held full-time employment under the National Occupation Classification (NOC) levels O, A, or B, for a minimum period of 24 months within the 60 months prior to the filing date of the application, or have obtained the equivalent of a graduate degree in the preceding 12 months
- ▶ Possess or have accepted full time-employment in Quebec in the artificial intelligence sector (the annual gross salary should be at least CAD 75,000 if the employer is outside the metropolitan area of Montreal, or at least CAD 100,000 if within this territory)

Artificial intelligence - Quebec graduate subcategory

- ▶ Have studied in Quebec for at least half the duration of their program of studies
- ▶ Not hold a scholarship requiring return to their country of origin at the end of the program of studies or have complied with that condition
- ▶ Possess a post-graduate diploma, master’s degree or a doctorate issued by a Quebec educational, obtained in the 24 months prior to the filing date of the application
- ▶ Have possessed full-time employment under either NOC O, A, or B, if the diploma is a post-graduate diploma, for a minimum six months in the 12 months following the termination of their program of studies
- ▶ Possess or have accepted full time employment in Quebec in the artificial intelligence sector

Information technologies and visual effects subcategory

- ▶ Have stayed in Quebec for the purpose of working under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program/International Mobility Program or taking part in a youth exchange program entered by Quebec or Canada and a foreign country
- ▶ Hold a diploma corresponding minimally to a Quebec diploma of college studies in a technically program or to a Quebec university attesting to a bachelor’s degree
- ▶ Possess full-time employment, for a minimum of 24 months within the 60 months prior to the date of filing the application
- ▶ Possess or have accepted full time employment in Quebec that meets hourly wage requirements as provided by the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity
- ▶ Possess employment or a job offer in an occupation identified as corresponding to the IT or visual effects sectors

Food processing

This pilot comes into effect on 24 March 2021 and will close on 1 January 2026. There will be a total of 550 spots reserved annually for this pilot program. To qualify, applicants will need to be able to communicate orally in French, have work experience in Quebec in an eligible occupation, and be working in the province when they submit their application.

Food processing subcategory

- ▶ Possess a high school diploma or professional studies diploma from a program in Quebec
- ▶ Have occupied an eligible full-time job for at least 24 months in an eligible sector in Quebec during the three prior to the application date
- ▶ Show a knowledge of oral French at level 7, according to the Quebec scale of French proficiency levels for adult immigrants
- ▶ Eligible occupations include those identified with the food processing industry

Health (orderlies)

This pilot comes into effect on 31 March 2021 and will close on 1 January 2026. There will be a total of 550 spots reserved annually for this pilot program. There are two streams under this program:

- ▶ Work
- ▶ Studies-work

This pilot is for temporary foreign workers who have worked as orderlies in Quebec for at least one year. Among other eligibility requirements, you must be proficient in spoken French and hold a job as an orderly in Quebec when submitting your application.

Orderlies - foreign worker subcategory

- ▶ Possess a diploma (at least one-year of full-time studies) that, at minimum, is equivalent to a Quebec vocational diploma
- ▶ Possess experience as an orderly for a minimum period of 24 months within the 36 months prior to the date of filing of the application. At minimum 12 of those months must have been as an orderly in Quebec

Orderlies - Quebec graduate subcategory

- ▶ Not hold a scholarship requiring return to their country of origin at the end of the program of studies or have complied with that condition
- ▶ Possess a Quebec vocational diploma, obtained in the 24 months prior to the filing date of the application
- ▶ Possess work experience as an orderly in Quebec for a minimum of 12 months following the end of their studies

As these pilot programs begin to be implemented in the coming months, EY Law will continue to monitor any developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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