Global Immigration alert

March 2026

Canada

New temporary work permit initiative strengthens Quebec's skilled workforce pipeline

Executive summary

Canada has announced a new temporary immigration measure designed to support Quebec employers and retain skilled workers already on a pathway to permanent residence under Quebec's reformed selection system. The measure was announced on 13 March 2026 by The Honourable Joël Lightbound, on behalf of The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

This targeted initiative allows certain Quebec-selected workers to obtain a 12-month employer-specific Canadian work permit under the International Mobility Program (IMP), enabling continued employment while Quebec's Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration (MIFI) assesses eligibility for a Quebec Selection Certificate (CSQ). The measure reinforces federal-provincial alignment, supports labor market stability in Quebec, and facilitates the transition of long-term temporary residents to permanent status.

Key developments

Under this new temporary public policy:

- Eligible foreign workers may apply for an employer-specific work permit valid for up to 12 additional months, allowing them to continue working for their current Quebec employer.
- The measure applies only to individuals who have received an invitation from Quebec to submit a *Demande de Sélection Permanente* (DSP) under Quebec's new *Programme de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés (PSTQ)*.
- Applicants must currently hold, or have recently held, an employer-specific work permit under either:
  - The Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), or
  - The International Mobility Program (IMP),
  - With permits expiring between 13 March 2026 and 31 December 2026
- Applications may be submitted until 31 December 2026, and expedited processing will apply.

Analysis and recommendations

The introduction of this Quebec-specific work permit measure benefits both foreign workers and employers navigating Quebec's revised permanent residence framework. By bridging the period between DSP submission and CSQ issuance, the policy reduces the risk of loss of status, work interruptions, and unplanned workforce disruption, particularly for individuals with expiring work authorization.

For foreign workers, the measure provides a clear, time-limited opportunity to remain employed in Quebec while provincial selection is under review. Eligible individuals should confirm DSP invitation status, validate their eligibility under the public policy, and submit applications before their current permits expire to preserve continuity of work authorization.

For Quebec employers, especially those relying on specialized or difficult-to-replace talent, the measure enhances predictability and workforce stability. Employers should nevertheless anticipate heightened scrutiny around

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occupation classification, the genuineness of the employment relationship, and alignment between the role performed and the DSP submission. Proactive review of job descriptions, wages, and duties is recommended to mitigate compliance risk.

While the new temporary public policy creates meaningful opportunities, its narrow eligibility criteria mean that workers without a DSP invitation will continue to rely on standard extension options or alternative pathways. Employers should therefore segment their workforce population and plan accordingly to avoid status gaps and operational disruption.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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