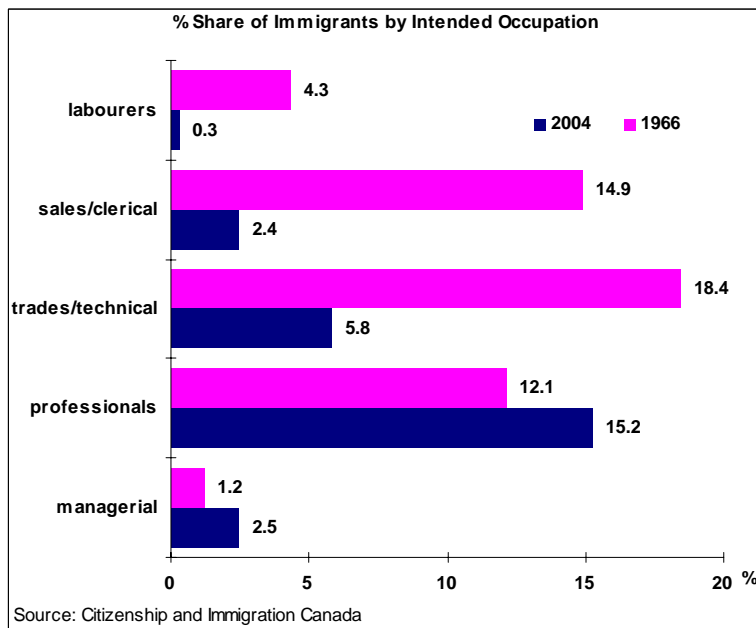


Construction Immigration Backgrounder

The Independent Contractors and Businesses Association believes the current skills shortage facing BC's construction sector is being made worse - not better - by Canadian immigration policies that discriminate against foreign-trained tradespersons and BC construction companies desperate to hire them.

Proportion of immigrants with trades skills plummeting

- There has been a dramatic decline in the proportion of immigrants to Canada with trades/technical skills from 18.4% of all immigrants in 1966 to 5.8% in 2004. Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Construction trades declined from 9.6% of all immigrant workers in 1966 to only 1.3% of all immigrant workers by 1994. After this time the federal government stopped providing a breakdown of trades. Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



Small construction companies caught up in rat's nest of red tape

- Small BC construction companies are forced to spend thousands of dollars on advertising for Canadian workers, again and again, simply to prove there is a domestic skills shortage, before they're even allowed to apply for temporary work permits for highly skilled foreign trades.
- This is in sharp contrast to how the federal government currently treats information technology workers - and how they treated foreign exotic dancers in the late 90s - when all they require is a letter offering them a job in the industry.

Skills shortage impacting all construction projects

- A recent industry survey found two-thirds of BC's contractors - both residential and non-residential - were experiencing labour shortages. Many of these companies are involved in building many of the province's large infrastructure projects.
- There is a serious shortage of skilled workers in almost all trades including carpenters, plumbers, heavy equipment operators, electricians and painters.

Demand for construction outstripping supply

- Since 2004, there has been a 70% increase in the number of registered trainees in the province. However, the demand for these new trainees is nearly insatiable as the number of people employed in the BC construction sector has grown by 70,000 (from 110,000 in 2001 to 180,000 today).

Construction companies, recruitment agencies and legal experts are willing to be interviewed on this critical issue. Please contact ICBA President Phil Hochstein @ 604.880.7700.