

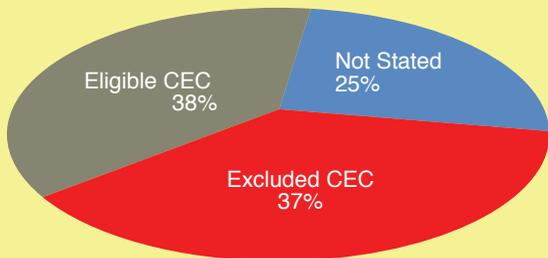
WHAT ABOUT THE NEW CANADIAN EXPERIENCE CLASS?



Citizenship and Immigration Canada has recently introduced the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), which offers a route to permanent residence for some workers with a temporary status, based on “skilled” work experience. However, the CEC excludes the “lower skilled” temporary foreign workers. Most of those excluded are racialized and women.

Government statistics show that half of the temporary foreign workers are excluded from the CEC (of those for whom skill level is stated).

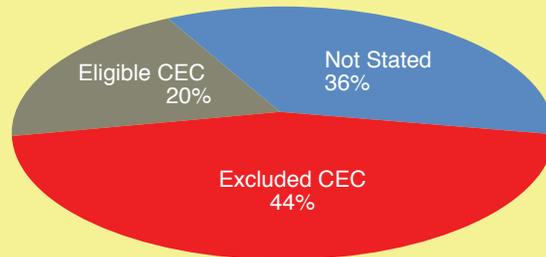
Temporary Workers, 2007 data



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2007

Most women temporary workers are excluded from CEC (69% of women whose skill level is known).

Women Temporary Workers, 2007 data



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2007

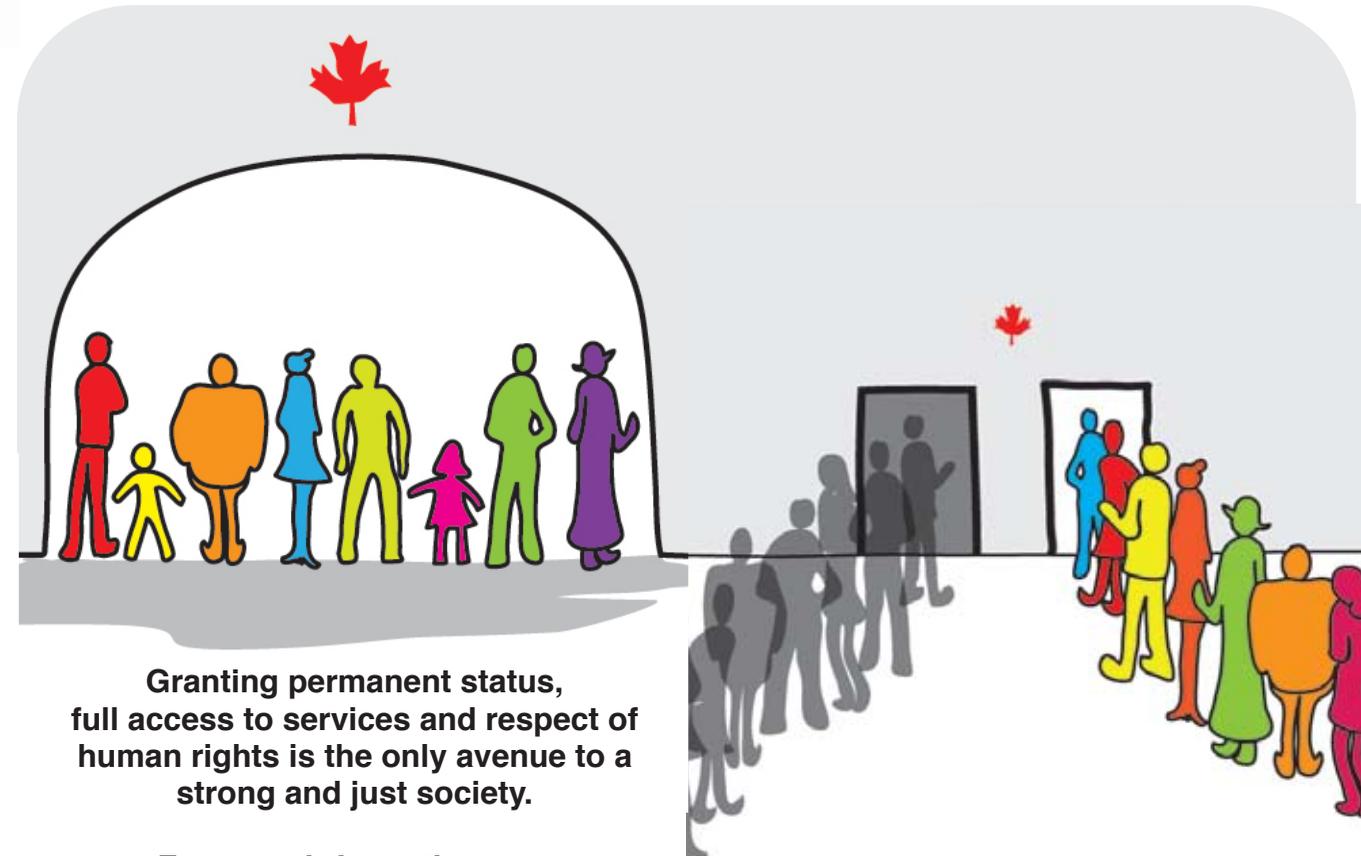
The temporary foreign workers excluded from the CEC are in high demand in Canada - yet they are forced to remain with temporary, second-class status.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

CANADA SHOULD:

- Refocus its immigration policy on permanent, not temporary, status.
- Provide more rights and better protections for temporary foreign workers.
- Increase opportunities for “lower skilled” workers to become permanent residents.

FROM PERMANENT TO TEMPORARY MIGRATION: Canada's Dramatic Policy Shift



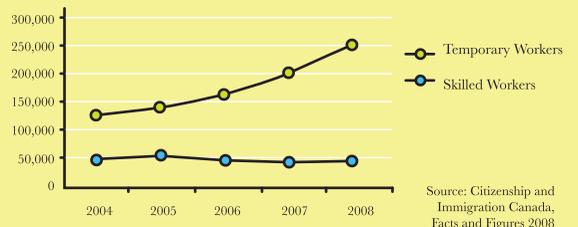
Granting permanent status, full access to services and respect of human rights is the only avenue to a strong and just society.

For more information, see ccrweb.ca/temporaryworkers.htm

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

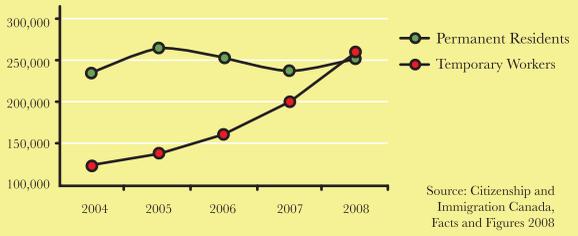
Canada is bringing in more and more workers on temporary work permits, rather than as permanent residents. In the five years from 2004 to 2008, the number of people in Canada as temporary foreign workers¹ has more than doubled. Over the same period, the number of permanent residents arriving in the skilled workers category went down.

Comparison of temporary workers (as of 1 Dec.) and skilled workers (principal applicants), 2004 - 2008



In 2008, the number of temporary foreign workers in Canada exceeded the total number of permanent residents admitted in the same year.

Comparison of new permanent residents and temporary workers, 2004-2008



¹In this document, we use the term Temporary Foreign Workers, because it is used by the government for these programs. However, we understand that the term "foreign" is problematic and reinforces the exclusion of these workers from Canadian society.

Temporary foreign workers are all persons admitted on a temporary basis to Canada in order to work, including Live-in Caregivers, seasonal agricultural workers and workers hired under the Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training Pilot Project.



WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

Traditionally Canada has welcomed immigrants on a permanent basis, with most becoming citizens. In a country built on immigration, we know that immigrants are vital for our future development. The recent shift to temporary migration marks a dramatic change in policy, yet there has been little public debate.

Large-scale temporary migration has significant social, political and human implications.

According to a recent OECD report, countries of "permanent settlement" like Canada are less likely to develop an anti-immigrant backlash, even during an economic crisis.²

²Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, International Migration Outlook 2009, <http://www.oecd.org/els/migration/imo>

WHAT DOES TEMPORARY STATUS MEAN FOR WORKERS?

- Their rights are not fully protected, making them vulnerable to exploitation and unexpected events, such as illness, layoffs and injury on the job.
- In most cases, they don't have access to settlement services such as language training.
- They can't participate to their full potential in Canadian society.
- In many cases, they cannot bring their family with them to Canada – or if they can come, their family members can't necessarily work here.
- While the federal government facilitates the hiring of migrant workers by employers, it has failed to put in place a national framework for protecting these workers.

WHAT DOES TEMPORARY MIGRATION MEAN FOR CANADIAN SOCIETY?

- We increasingly have a two-tier society, with a significant population, admitted only for their labour, who are separated from their families and have much fewer rights than others. Unequal societies are unhealthy societies.
- Reliance on temporary migrant labour contributes towards a weakened workforce, where more workers face poor working conditions, have fewer workplace protections and often receive low wages and no benefits.
- When they are forced to leave at the end of their visa, Canada loses workers with valuable experience and ties to Canadian society.

Apparent labour or skill shortages may be due to wages being too low. A hotel in BC was recruiting temporary foreign workers to fill shortages, while another hotel nearby did not have shortages because their wages were higher.³

³David A. Green "Wages, markets and temporary workers", Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, June 2007 <http://tinyurl.com/lxbzye>



ARE ALL TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS EQUALLY VULNERABLE?

Not all temporary foreign workers are treated the same. The "higher skilled" have many more rights than workers in the "lower skilled" category.

The latter tend to be from the Global South. Many have few options other than to leave their homes to find work to feed their families, but they do not qualify for permanent migration to Canada. They accept working conditions that Canadians do not accept, because they need to send money back home. By offering them access only to temporary migration, Canada is marginalizing these mostly racialized workers.

Recruiters paid by Canadian companies to find temporary workers overseas often charge workers fees, although they are not supposed to. "A temporary foreign worker may be charged an \$8,000 recruitment fee, for example, on a job that pays only \$20,000 in Canada."⁴

⁴Ottawa loosens clamps on 'rogue' job recruiters, Toronto Star, 20 July 2009 <http://www.thestar.com/article/668752>