



# People, careers and workforce planning for the food and beverage manufacturing sector

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Today, food and beverage is the largest manufacturing employer in Canada, collectively employing over 260,000 people — more than the automotive and aerospace industries combined. Total sector shipments, at over \$112.4 billion, are the second largest of any manufacturing sector in the country.

We believe that industry and government have a shared goal — to ensure Canada has a thriving food and beverage manufacturing sector. However, a shortage of skilled workers is holding us back.

Labour is the number one issue facing Canada's food and beverage manufacturing sector today. The problem is expected to increase in the coming years, with Food Processing Skills Canada projecting a shortfall of up to 65,000 full time employees by 2025. Canada's food and beverage manufacturing sector is facing a looming crisis.

Labour is a complex issue and the problem and the solutions are multi-faceted. Labour issues are often local, and policy and programs fall within federal, provincial and sometimes municipal government jurisdictions. Even at the federal level, multiple cabinet ministers and government departments have responsibility for various elements of the problem and hold the authority to contribute to various elements of the solution.

Based on the work of the Agri-food Labour Task Force, Food and Beverage



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Canada-Aliments et boissons Canada has developed a framework — People, Careers & Workforce Planning — that demonstrates the complexity of industry's labour problems and a pathway to the solutions.

- **Awareness of industry and career options:** Increase positive perceptions of employment in the sector and raise awareness of the variety of jobs suited to various skill sets.
- **Progressive HR practices and cultures:** Provide information and support to small and medium-sized businesses to help them develop human resource capacity and foster a positive workplace.
- **Skills training:** Make certain there is a strong match between the skills and competency requirements of the sector and that of employees and new entrants.
- **Qualified foreign workers:** Create new mechanisms for bringing qualified people, such as immigrants or temporary foreign workers, from other nations to work in the sector.

- **Underrepresented group:** Address barriers to recruiting employees from demographic groups such as new Canadians, Indigenous People and youth, that are currently under-represented in the sector.
- **Automation:** Support adoption of automation and innovation to increase productivity and upskill employees to work with new technologies.

But there is more to do in shaping the right public policies and targeting new investments if we are to reverse the labour trend. As industry requests greater engagement from government on labour, we also recognize our responsibility to co-ordinate and increase collaboration among interested stakeholders. Together, we must identify and articulate consistent labour objectives and priorities for our sector. ●

*This article is the first in a three-part series on solving the labour crisis in the Canadian food and beverage manufacturing industry.*



Food and Beverage Canada — Aliments et boissons Canada is a national association representing more than 1,500 food and beverage manufacturers from across Canada. The organization strives to support a strong business environment for members and a robust food system for Canadians. [fbc-abc.com](http://fbc-abc.com)