

Responding to Temporary Foreign Workers' Needs During COVID-19 in B.C.



EST. 1976

MOSAIC

Engaging Newcomers, Enriching Communities

Migrant Worker Support Network

AMSSA

Training Needs

SUCCESS - CANN

Services at the Airport

MOSAIC

Community Capacity Building



MOSAIC's

Community Capacity Building Project

- **Funding provided to 22 collaborating agencies across BC**
- **Collaboration & strengthen partnerships**
- **Dissemination of resource materials**
- **Direct support to migrant workers**

Services Offered By The Community Capacity Building Project

- Educational Info- Sessions- ESB, Health & Safety, Taxes, Housing Guidelines, Bullying & Harassment, Policy updates, Accessing Benefits, Canadian Workplace Culture and more
- Mobile health clinic- offers medical appointments, physiotherapy
- Emergency Support: COVID19 and non-COVID19
- Outreach work to other communities
- Translation and Interpretation
- Transportation Support
- Mental Health Support
- 1-1 case management
- Community events
- Housing Support
- English classes
- Skills Training
- Referrals: food banks, shelters, other agencies

During COVID-19

Stream 1

Immediate Response to Emergencies

Stream 2

Project Based Capacity Building

Stream 3

Ad-Hoc Funds

MOSAIC's Migrant Workers Program

Objectives

01

Educating migrant workers about their rights & accessible services and resources;

02

Providing a trusted channel to bring forward issues or allegations of abuse of wrongdoing;

03

Supporting employers in understanding the conditions & requirements of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program;

04

Working together to enhance the knowledge & capacity of supporting organizations to meet the needs of migrant workers and/or employers.

Canada

Funded by the Government of
Canada's Migrant Worker Support
Network

Project started in April 2019

MIGRANT WORKERS PROGRAM IS UNIQUE IN CANADA



Service Canada approved over 100,000 Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA) nationwide in 2018 and 28,553 LMIA's were approved just in British Columbia. The primary jobs are in the natural resources and agricultural sector, but other sectors relying on migrant workers include sales and service, as well as occupations in the areas of education, law, community, arts, culture and sports.

Work permits for migrant workers are only made available after employers apply to Service Canada for an LMIA and are approved. The processing time for applications differs depending on the type of work. The employer-specific work permit can create an imbalance of power between the employers and migrant workers, which may lead to the exploitation and mistreatment of migrant workers.

The new Migrant Workers Program at MOSAIC is a one-year project funded by the Government of Canada's Migrant Workers Support Network (MWSN) led by Employment and Social Development Canada. As a funding recipient, MOSAIC contributes to the goals of the MWSN, which is unique to British Columbia and intended to provide information to migrant workers about their rights while working in Canada as well as to support employers in understanding the

conditions and requirements of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Information will be shared via in-person forums, newsletters, events and one-on-one meetings.

MOSAIC is working collaboratively with 20 agencies located throughout the province. Each agency provides unique and specialized services that will help to achieve the project pilot objectives of enhancing the knowledge and capacity of supporting organizations to meet the needs of migrant workers and employers.

MOSAIC's Migrant Workers Program began March 2019 and the outcomes will be reviewed and shared with members of the MWSN and other organizations that support migrant workers.

¹ Data is from Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) LMIA System.

mosaicbc.org/ccb

“
There's a lot of people coming from all over the world and in every part of the work there's a different set of rules, different work culture and we want to avoid the confusion between employers and workers. We want to prevent abuse; we want to keep everyone safe.”
— Liza Ferris, Kamloops Immigrant Services



“
If you don't take the job, you have to leave.”



A MIGRANT WORKER'S STORY

Submitted by Dennis Juarez, Manager, Migrant Workers Program

Pedro was happy to come to BC in June, 2017, when he received his work permit, but his happiness didn't last long.

In his early 20s, Pedro was a cement mason/concrete finisher and had been promised a wage of \$28 per hour. Upon arrival however, he was told by his employer that his pay rate was \$15 per hour. When he complained, he was told “if you don't take the job, you have to leave.”

Because Pedro was on an employer-specific work permit, this was a true statement and left Pedro with little recourse but to accept the revised offer.

Over time, his pay was gradually increased to \$19 at the end of his first year, and ended at \$22 near the end of his two-year contract – still 27% less than the starting wage that was agreed upon.

In November 2018, Pedro suffered an accident while working under Vancouver's Burrard Street Bridge. Although he suffered from restricted breathing and temporary paralysis, his employer did not allow him to use sick days during his recovery. Pedro felt forced to return to work sooner than he should have, as he could not afford more time off.

Pedro was injured a second time in April 2019 when he fell two meters and broke his right arm and elbow. Several surgeries were required as a result of this second accident.

Top: Program Manager Dennis Juarez is pictured (left) with migrant workers. Migrant workers are employed in many sectors including agricultural, caregiving, construction, and business.

Although his employer attempted to prevent the testimony of a colleague who witnessed the accident, a report was eventually filed and WorkSafeBC covered the cost of Pedro's surgery, physiotherapy and lost wages.

Pedro did not return to work and his employer still owes him \$14,390 in unpaid wages.

IN SUMMARY

Pedro's employer breached the conditions established under both the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, and the BC Employment Standards Act. Those violations include:

- Indicating a \$28 hourly rate on pay stubs but actually paying far less
- Not providing vacation time, vacation pay, breaks and sick leave
- Frequently working 80-hour weeks and not being compensated for overtime
- Bullying, harassment and threats to the life of employee

Violations, if brought to the attention of authorities, will trigger investigations of the employer by the Employment Standards Branch of BC as well as Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Pedro approached MOSAIC with his issues, and his case was logged. An Employment Standards complaint was submitted and an application for an open work permit for a vulnerable person was made on his behalf. That application was subsequently approved by IRCC and Pedro won the right to stay in Canada for an additional six months.

**Note that the name of the migrant worker has been changed to preserve anonymity. All other information presented is factual.*

Who is eligible?

- Workers holding a work permit issued under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.
- ***Note: Tourists, Permanent Residents or International students enrolled in CO-OP programs are not eligible for this program.***

Workshops & Info Sessions

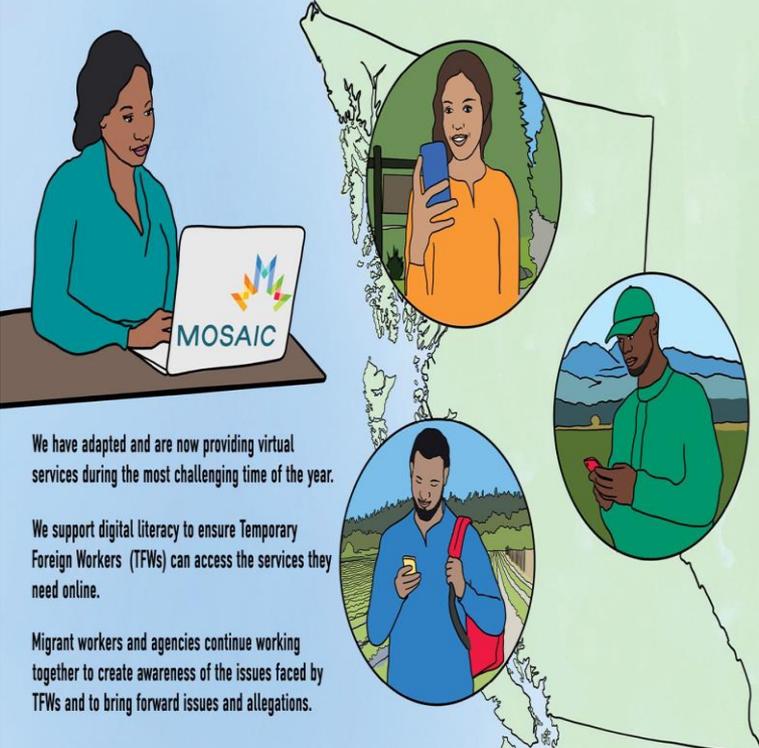
- Workers Rights and Responsibilities
- Housing, Bullying and Harassment
- Health and Safety at Work
- Income Tax
- Canada Workplace Culture



Photos from MOSAIC's Migrant Workers events

During COVID-19, MOSAIC's Migrant Workers services are available online and by phone.

Our work has transformed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:



We have adapted and are now providing virtual services during the most challenging time of the year.

We support digital literacy to ensure Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) can access the services they need online.

Migrant workers and agencies continue working together to create awareness of the issues faced by TFWs and to bring forward issues and allegations.



Migrant Workers Program

ONLINE SERVICES

Services available:

- Assistance with school enrollment
- Language assessment and English classes
- Settlement Services & referrals to other agencies
- Assistance in daily activities such as banking, booking appointments with clinics and other third-party providers
- Assistance in finding housing, transportation, and community building
- Assistance in filling out government applications
- Assistance filling complains and appeals from Employment Standards Branch, WorkSafeBC and Service Canada

Contact us:

migrantworkers@mosaicbc.org
236-889-4115 (English & Tagalog)
236-889-8541 (English & Spanish)
WhatsApp, Text, iMessage, Phone & Video Calls, Facetime, ZOOM.



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Funded by the Government of Canada's Migrant Worker Support Network

We have services in English, French, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Tagalog. Interpretation support in over 50 languages is available upon request.

Covid Impacted Temporary Foreign Workers and Employers

Positive

- Service providers implemented innovative methods to accommodate workers' needs during the pandemic (flexible hours/online services/outreach)
- Strengthened collaboration between partner agencies
- Mental health support available in different languages
- Online info sessions accessible to workers across BC

Negative

- Office closures, limited in-person services
- More restrictions and limitations to in-person outreach work
- Workers receiving an overload of information from the government, agencies and employers
- Delay of Government applications (work permit, LMIA, MSP application)
- International travel restrictions in place/quarantine
- Shortage of Labour (employers & workers)
- Interpretation and translations request increased
- Medical accessibility issues
- Workers stuck in Canada due to flight cancellations

Migrant Workers Project



WE CAN HELP SUPPORT YOUR TRANSITION INTO BRITISH COLUMBIA

Visit our website to learn more about our programs and upcoming virtual events

www.options.bc.ca

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Info-Line for Temporary Foreign Workers

Provides information and referral to resources and services.

Services available by phone, text & WhatsApp

Spanish & English.....+1 604-803-4169 & +1 604-788-3509

Punjabi, Hindi & English+ 1 604-220-3057

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■ Individual Services

- Support to Access Government & Other Services & Benefits
- Canada Recovery Sickness Benefits & Employment Insurance
- Support on filing WorkSafe BC Claims
- Open work permit for vulnerable workers
- Use the online Fraud Reporting Tool
- Referrals to trauma/counselling services

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■ Info-Virtual Nights-Group Sessions

- Digital Literacy – How to use Zoom to join Info-Sessions
- Covid-19 Resources Updates
- CRA & Service Canada Info Session
- Canadian Legal System
- BC Employment Standards
- Personal Safety & Accessing Emergency Services emergency services
- Service Canada Fraud Reporting Tool

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Employment Skills Building for vulnerable workers

22 workers gain new employability skills
Food Save & First Aid certification

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Emergency Support for Temporary Foreign Workers

Emergency support both COVID and non-COVID related (shelter, housing supports, food, clothing, transportation, interpretations).

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COVID-19 Emergency Support

Emergency Support for Temporary Foreign Workers

- 28 received emergency housing support
- 174 received food support/gift card/culture appropriate hampers
- 18 vulnerable workers applying for an open work permit received certified translations support

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■ Support to Employers

The partnerships developed with employers allow us to reach out to more workers and make the resources accessible.

- Support to navigate immigration processes (In-Canada work permit renewals)
- Employment placement
- Health & Wellness resources on site – vaccination clinics

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Outreach Events

- Worksites
- Places of Worship
- MLA & MP Offices
- Ethnic Media
- Libraries

Partnerships

- Community partners meetings-
Bring awareness of the issues
faced by TFWs in the community
- Consulates
- Employers
- Members of the BC Migrant
Worker's Network
- AMSSA Advisory Committee

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Resource Development

- Coming Soon:
Resource Guide for
Temporary Foreign
Workers working in
Surrey, Delta &
Langley.



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Resource Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers



Health



COVID-19 Vaccines

Thank you for doing your part to contribute to COVID-19 immunity in our community!

The COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved by Health Canada are safe, effective and will save lives. Vaccines do more than protect the people getting vaccinated, they also protect everyone around them. The more people in a community who are immunized and protected from COVID-19, the harder it is for COVID-19 to spread. For more information visit:

HealthLink BC

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/hlbc/files/documents/healthfiles/hfile124.pdf>

Fraser Health COVID-19 Immunization Booking

www.fraserhealth.ca/vaccinebooking
+1 (855) 755-2455 if you are having difficulty or have questions about booking your appointment.

HOSPITALS

- Surrey Memorial Hospital**
☎ (604) 581-2211 📍 13750 - 96 Ave, Surrey
- Jim Pattison Out Patient Care & Surgery Centre**
☎ (604) 582-4550 📍 9750 - 140 St, Surrey
- Peace Arch District Hospital**
☎ (604) 531-5512 📍 15521 Russell Ave, White Rock
- Delta Hospital**
☎ (604) 946-1125 📍 5800 Mountain View Blvd, Delta
- Langley Memorial Hospital**
☎ (604) 514-6000 📍 22051 Fraser Highway, Langley
- Abbotsford Regional Hospital**
☎ (604) 851-4700 📍 32900 Marshall Road, Abbotsford



HEALTH SERVICES

Health LinkBC 811

Free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia. Provides translation services on request in more than 130 languages.

You can speak to a registered nurse, registered dietitian, qualified exercise professional, or pharmacist.

BC Medical Service Health Insurance B.C.

Medical Service Plan/Pharmacare ☎ (604) 683-7151
✉ mспенquiries@hbc.gov.bc.ca (for general inquiries only)
🌐 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents-contact-us#HIBC>

COWAN Insurance Group

☎ +1 (855) 896-0808
✉ clients@cowangroup.ca
🌐 www.cowangroup.ca

Umbrella Multicultural Health Cooperative

☎ (778) 751-4850 (phone / WhatsApp / after hours)
📍 715 Cameron Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 1E6
✉ umc-coordinator@umbrellacoop.ca

Find a Family Doctor

Surrey-North Delta Family Practice ☎ (604) 589-0297
Langley Family Practice ☎ (604) 510-5081
🌐 <https://smd.searchdoctors.ca/>

Local Walk-in Clinics

For local walk-in practices/wait times
🌐 www.medicmap.ca

Langley Maternity Clinic

Langley Memorial Hospital
📍 22051 Fraser Highway, Langley ☎ (604) 514-6151



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BC Settlement and Integration Services (BCSIS)

- BCSIS provides specialized support on immigration, settlement and employment to refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers (closed work permit and international mobility program) international students, provincial nominees as well as naturalized citizens.
- Educate and support clients with respect to their rights and responsibilities as residents, students, workers and citizens of BC.
- Support access to legal services, housing, food banks, low cost household items

Funded By Ministry of Municipal
Affairs



WelcomeBC



Langley Outreach for Vulnerable Workers

Langley Outreach for Vulnerable TFWs

To support vulnerable Temporary Foreign Workers as they manage the impacts of COVID-19 by disseminating information on rights and responsibilities and resources through community and volunteer outreach and engagement.



Options Community Services is supported by the Government of Canada's
Emergency Community Support Fund & Community Foundations of Canada



Food Hub Taste of Home



Taste of Home – Food Hub

Local Love Food Hubs project, the *Taste of Home* program is supporting clients facing food insecurity by providing them with food and personal care/hygiene hampers and grocery store gift cards.



Funded by the
Government of Canada



United Way
Lower Mainland

Administered by United Way
of the Lower Mainland



Welcome Kits for Migrant Workers

“Welcome Kits” were distributed to migrant workers while they were in quarantine. The kit included items such as soap shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, dental products, toques, socks, first aid kits, and many more items. We then delivered to different groups of migrant workers from Mexico, Guatemala and the Philippines.



Funded by Vancouver Foundation

Best practices to ensure the health and safety of migrant workers at the workplace during COVID-19

- Keep workers informed about health & safety regulations imposed by government in their native languages to make sure they understand their rights. *For example, what happens if they get COVID-19? What happens during initial 14-day quarantine period – what supports are available? What type of financial support are currently available?*
- Check in with workers to see if any support is needed: online and in person outreach.
- Remind workers to self-assess their health and take the necessary safety precautions at work and in the community
- Connect with government agencies & consulates to see if any new guidelines are in place / if any support is needed (WorkSafeBC, ESB, Mexican consulate for SAWP workers, WALI, IRCC, MSP offices)

ESDC's COVID-19: A Guide for Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada

Section 1: What COVID-19 (coronavirus) is

Section 2: What you need to know before leaving your country

Section 3: What to know for your arrival and initial period of quarantine in Canada

Section 4: What to know for the rest of your stay in Canada

Section 5: COVID-19 income support measures

Section 6: Changing jobs

Section 7: Contacts for questions or help related to COVID-19

Section 8: Contacts to report your employer for not respecting the COVID-19 requirements

Available in English, French, Spanish, Thai, & Tagalog



Beyond the pandemic we hope to see occupational health and safety regulations continuing to evolve in the following ways:

- **Continued government funding for mental health support for TFWs & frontline support workers'**
- **Make sure workers have medical coverage even if they don't have status in Canada (waiting for work permit extension/maintained status)**
- **Health & safety regulations being complied by employers in all industries**
- **Regular housing inspections to prevent overcrowding in housing for workers**
- **Regular inspections of employers to ensure they are providing safety equipment & protection supplies for their workers (construction, agricultural, hospitality)**

Case scenario

A BC construction company brought a construction worker from Guatemala for a 2-year contract, a salary of \$26 per hour, full-time position. The worker brought his wife and 2 sons. (open work permit & student permit).

The worker paid \$7000 for the LMIA application, work permit, and advertisements to the employer, in cash through their paystub. The worker did not receive any document or receipt as proof of payment.

The worker has been receiving \$15 per hour. Working 60 hours a week with no payment of overtime and no breaks. The employer is not providing a pay statement.

The worker has no record of government deductions (CPP, EI, Income tax)

The worker is living on the employer's premises and paying in cash \$800 plus utilities. The employer obligates the worker to work holidays and sometimes weekends.

The worker does not speak English, neither does their family. Also, the worker does not have MSP.

The worker is now in a vulnerable situation: He does not have employment, no personal savings, he is still paying the recruitment agencies fees, no health insurance, language barriers and he is here with his family.

Wife is not working because the kids are not enrolled in school.

The worker visits MOSAIC to request support.

Questions and Answers



Thank you!

MOSAIC's Migrant Workers
Program

migrantworkers@mosaicbc.org

Options Community Services
Migrant Worker's Project

www.options.bc.ca



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