



**Future
Skills
Centre**

Centre des
**Compétences
futures**

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FAST: Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent

Partners

Immigration Employment Council of
British Columbia

201,200 newcomers

\$5.14 million

Locations

[British Columbia](#), [Manitoba](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Ontario](#)

Topics

Career Services
Inclusive Economy
Innovation and
scaling
Pathways to Jobs

Related Tags

[career_pathways](#),
[job_matching](#),
[newcomers](#), [scaling](#),
[skills_assessment](#)

Immigration is essential to the growth of Canada's economy. However, newcomers to Canada have higher unemployment rates on average and lower wages despite higher education levels. Piloted as a pre-arrival program, FAST is an online, occupation-specific, skills assessment

and
development
platform
that
is
designed
to
aid
newcomers
in
overcoming
barriers
such
as
the
lack
of
recognition
of
international
credentials
and
the
absence
of
Canadian
work
experience.

This career preparation program helps to set newcomers up for success in Canada while simultaneously helping Canadian employers to find skilled immigrant talent. It enables newcomers to compare their skills against standards required for work in Canada, and takes a proactive approach to supporting these individuals — even before they have arrived in the country.

**Skills
Development
Stories:
FAST**

In
May
2021,
the
Future
Skills
Centre
(FSC)
invested
additional
funding
of
\$2.76
million
to
expand
this
program.
This
followed
an
initial
investment
of
\$2.38
million
announced
in
early
2019
when
the
pilot
was
launched,
for
a
total
of
\$5.14

million.

The expansion will include assessment and development options for new occupation streams in health care, which will meet the demand for long-term care workers across Canada at a crucial time now and in the face of growing projections

**on
the
need
for
more
workers,
as
identified
by
employers
in
this
sector.**

The
FAST
program
aims
to
assess
200,000
individuals
within
five
years,
rendering
Canada
a
destination
of
choice
for
qualified
care
workers.

Through occupation-specific technical and soft skill competency assessments, FAST enables newcomers to develop a better understanding of how their skills can meet labour needs. Having served clients in 68 occupations in skilled trades, biotechnology, life sciences, and information technology, the program shows promising and successful initial results, with two-thirds of FAST clients finding work in their field within four weeks of their arrival in Canada. The

program
also
received
a
90%
satisfaction
rate
by
participants
who
completed
the
program.
Partnering
with
other
immigrant-
serving
organizations,
industry
experts
and
service
delivery
partners,
FAST
has
grown
quickly,
with
1,200
newcomers
registered
in
the
first
two
years. Led
by Immigrant
Employment
Council
of
BC
(IEC-
BC),
the
program
began
testing
the
current
streams
and
exploring
expanded
pathways
in
accounting,
tourism,
and
hospitality
sectors
to
meet
demand
in
British

Columbia,
Manitoba,
Ontario,
and
Nova
Scotia.
These
efforts
will
support
newcomers
to
Canada
and
enhance
their
prospects
for
stable,
long-
term
employment.

Evaluation Strategy

This project is evaluated using tools and approaches aligned with its goals, context, and stage of development. The evaluation focuses on generating the right evidence at the right moment to move the intervention forward. [Read more about our evaluation strategy.](#)



Blueprint and FSC worked with FAST to conduct an evaluation of the platform from November 2019 to March 2021. This report shares the results of that evaluation.

The Future Skills Centre acknowledges that the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee share a special relationship to the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory,' where our office is located, bound to share and protect the land. As a pan-Canadian initiative, FSC operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, the name given to the North American continent by some Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to work in this territory and commit ourselves to learning about our shared history and doing our part towards reconciliation.

