



# Employment and Social Development Canada

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## Hiring Agricultural Workers

Temporary foreign workers (TFW) can help employers meet their labour needs when Canadian citizens and permanent residents are not available. These workers often bring new skills and knowledge to help the country's economy grow.

The agricultural sector incorporates occupations that reflect a variety of skill levels. In an effort to balance the temporary employment needs of employers with the protection of workers, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) has a variety of streams that cover lower or higher-skilled occupations.

Employers can hire temporary foreign agricultural workers under 4 streams; however, each stream has specific criteria that must be met.

### 1. [Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program \(SAWP\)](#)

- TFWs must be from Mexico or certain Caribbean countries
- production must be included on the National Commodities List
- activities must be related to on-farm primary agriculture
- positions can be in lower or higher-skilled occupations

### 2. [Agricultural Stream](#)

- TFWs can be from any country
- production must be included on the National Commodities List
- activities must be related to on-farm primary agriculture
- positions can be in lower or higher-skilled occupations

### 3. [Stream for Lower-skilled Occupations](#)

- production is NOT included on the National Commodity List
- employers can hire TFWs for any lower-skilled agricultural position
- education or formal training required for the occupation includes at most a:
  - high school diploma or
  - maximum of 2 years of job-specific training

### 4. [Stream for Higher-skilled Occupations](#)

- employers can hire TFWs for any higher-skilled agricultural position
- education or formal training required for the occupation includes:
  - university education
  - college education
  - vocational education
  - apprenticeship training

Whether hiring lower or higher-skilled TFWs, employers must always meet the requirements of the particular stream chosen. The [Comparison of Options and Criteria table](#) provides a summary of the requirements that employers must follow for the different streams.