

## **Assessing Labour and Skills Shortages in Canada: A Knowledge Synthesis**

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Recently there has been plenty of discussion across the country regarding labour shortages. The federal government, some provincial governments, and a number of industry groups argue that labour shortages are chronic and the problem can be resolved by shifting resources away from training for occupations that are not in demand to those occupations that are currently needed. Improvements to both permanent and temporary immigration programs are also touted as a way to fill the skills gap. Labour groups, by contrast, generally argue that industry is simply trying to keep wages low and ensure that a steady supply of labour is readily available. Educational institutions assert that they are producing high-quality students and that industry is not doing its part by providing on-the-job training to freshly-minted graduates. More cautious observers point to the inability to ascertain labour and skills mismatches by industry and region owing to the lack of adequate labour market data. This research will synthesize what we currently know about occupational and regional labour and skills shortages and where there exist knowledge and information gaps. Emphasis will be placed on data shortcomings, and the roles of post-secondary education and immigration policy. Suggestions for fruitful future research will be discussed.