

Job #1 For New Federal Parliament – Get Canadians Working

TORONTO, Nov. 27, 2019 – Despite a low national unemployment rate, an increasing number of Canadians are looking for work, while jobs vacancies remain stubbornly high. National polls in Canada consistently show jobs and economy as the top concern of Canadians.

Dwayne Williams, an Express franchise owner in Guelph, Ontario, sees skills shortages as a critical issue to tackle.

“At the moment it’s an applicant’s market,” he said. “We’re seeing companies pushing up wages because there is such a demand for skilled workers. They’re even willing to hire people who don’t always have the necessary skills and invest to train them.”

He adds the shortage “could stem from a failure of the education system to provide graduates with the skills to deal with the reality of the job market. We need an education system that is much more closely linked to the needs of the economy.”

With the new federal Parliament set to resume December 5, Express Employment Professionals experts are recommending three ways in which newly elected federal Parliamentarians can help get unemployed and underemployed Canadians working.

1. The National Unemployment Rate vs. Provincial Unemployment Rates

While the current national unemployment rate remains at a near record low of 5.5%, the regional numbers vary widely from province to province. Different provinces have different priorities in terms of getting Canadians to work.

Provincial Unemployment Rates

Newfoundland and Labrador	11.1%
Prince Edward Island	7.2%
Nova Scotia	8%

Priorities for the New Parliament

1. Focus on Regional Unemployment Rates
2. Skills Training
3. Ensure Social Assistance Helps People Return to Work



New Brunswick	8.1%
Quebec	5.0%
Ontario	5.3%
Manitoba	5.3%
Saskatchewan	5.1%
Alberta	6.7%
British Columbia	4.7%

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, October 2019

2. Improve Skills Training

Although the latest jobs data shows an increasing number of Canadians looking for work, job vacancies remain high as employers continue to note job seekers don't have the skills they require.

The new Parliament needs to make skills training a national priority and do a better job of ensuring that the skills Canadians are acquiring match the needs of employers across the country.

“We’re seeing a mismatch between the jobs available and the skills the workforce has to offer,” said Niven Lee, an Express franchise owner in Delta, British Columbia. “There are many blue collar jobs available, but due to some societal and cultural expectations, there are less and less Canadians entering the industrial workforce and a large number of industrial jobs going unfilled.”

He also notes that “the government has tried to meet this demand by increasing immigration, but there just aren’t enough applicants who have the skills and the desire to work long term in the industrial sector.”

3. Provide better incentives to help people return to work

There are many currently unemployed Canadians who would like to work, but do not, because taking a job would result in them losing benefits and make them worse off financially. In many cases, government assistance programs in Canada are structured in such a way that they can create a disincentive to work. Social programs represent a complicated patchwork of federal and provincial programs with varying qualifications and levels of benefits.

It is clear reform is needed to help people reach their full potential. Over the last decade, good progress has been made on this issue, including the introduction of the Working Income Tax Benefit and the increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement Exemption. But more needs to be done to ensure that when Canadians, especially low-income Canadians, enter the workforce, they are not being financially penalized.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Adria Minsky at (416) 620-7111 or email adria@mapleleafstrategies.com

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 7.7 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.56 billion in sales and employed a record 566,000 people in 2018. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.