

AGRI - Caregiver Programs

Key messages

- The Home Child Care Provider and Home Support Worker pilots opened for applications on June 18, 2019, and will run for five years. They replaced the expiring Caring for Children and Caring for People with High Medical Needs pilots.
- Caregivers now receive a work permit if they have a job offer in Canada and meet standard criteria for economic immigration programs. Once working in Canada, caregivers can start working towards gaining the required two years of Canadian work experience to become permanent residents.
- The pilots give caregivers three years to gain two years' worth of work experience. This provides some leeway if a caregiver needs to change employers, for example, or in this case, have their work interrupted due to the COVID-19 situation.

Supplementary messages

COVID impacts on jobs and job offers

- Temporary foreign workers in Canada, including caregivers, may be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, in certain circumstances, such as if they need to self-isolate or have lost their employment due to COVID-19.
- Some caregivers may face reduced work hours, the loss of a job or job offer impacting their goal to become permanent residents. The Government has introduced many different measures to provide workers with support as they look for a new job or to help them stay in status.

Caregivers on open work permits

- Caregivers working on open occupation-restricted work permits, like those issued under the Caregiver Pilots, already have the flexibility to find a new employer in their occupation should they need to find new work quickly, or if their job was impacted by COVID-19.

Caregivers on employer-specific work permit holders

- Caregivers on employer-specific work permits who lose their job or have their hours reduced as a result of COVID-19 could begin working in their new job while maintaining implied status under a new public policy that took effect May 12, 2020. The job offer must be supported by a valid Labour Market Impact Assessment. Previously, these workers couldn't begin working in a new position until a new work permit was issued.

Caregivers asked to work when they are in receipt of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit

- We have heard anecdotally that some employers are asking caregivers to continue to work while they are collecting the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.
- The Canada Emergency Response Benefit is not intended for those who are still working and receiving income. It is an emergency form of support for those who have lost their income or employment due to the pandemic.
- If a migrant worker feels unsafe or is experiencing abuse in their job, now as at any time, they could be eligible for the open work permit for vulnerable workers, provided they hold an employer-specific work permit.
- Under the new pilots, caregivers hold open occupation-restricted work permits, so they can change employers without the need of further authorization from IRCC.

Supporting facts and figures

- In 2018, over 17,700 caregivers and family members were admitted to Canada (15,580 under the Live-in Caregiver Program under priority backlog processing, and 1,645 from the two 2014 pilots).
- In 2020, overall admissions targets for Caregivers are 5,000 persons. Expectations are that admissions will be largely through the 2019 program initiatives (particularly the Interim Pathway for Caregivers, and the 2019 Caregiver Pilots) as the inventory of applications under previous programs (Live-in Caregiver Program and 2014 Caring for People with High Medical Needs and Caring for Children pilots) are now lower.

Background

2019 Caregiver Pilot Programs

- Consultations with a broad range of stakeholders in spring 2018 confirmed the many needs and hurdles faced by caregivers, especially around having a pathway to stay, vulnerability, and family separation. The majority of caregivers who come to Canada to work temporarily hope to stay here permanently. In response, the Government introduced the Home Child Care Provider and Home Support Worker pilots in June 2019.
- A unique feature of the 2019 Caregiver Pilots is the 'two-step' process to apply. Overseas caregivers receive a work permit only if they meet the language, education and other requirements for permanent residence and have a job offer in Canada. Their work permit is valid for three years. To qualify for permanent residence, they need to get two years of Canadian work experience. When they have this work experience, they apply to finalize their permanent residence application to stay permanently.
- The occupation-restricted open work permit is specific to either in-home child care or in-home support worker employment. The new work permits are exempt from Labour Market Impact

Assessments and are occupation-specific (i.e., not tied to a named employer). These elements of the program design are intended to address the unique vulnerabilities that can arise from having your status tied to a private household employer (versus a professional business employer).

- Caregivers in Canada who already have the required 24 months' work experience can also apply (in one-step).
- The two pilots can each accept up to 2,750 principal applicants annually, for a total of 5,500 principal applicants per year (plus family).

Pause on new work permits ("Refusal to Process")

- The Department has stopped processing new work permit applications under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in the two pilot occupations for the duration of the new pilots. The pause does not apply to caregivers in other occupations, those who will work in Quebec, or those applying for work permits from within Canada.

2019 Interim Pathway for Caregivers Public Policies

- The Government launched the Interim Pathway for Caregivers to provide another opportunity for caregivers in Canada to stay permanently. The pathway required reduced work experience and education criteria compared to the 2014 pilot programs and current pilots. Open to applications for a total of six months in 2019, over 4,000 caregivers applied under the pathway, plus their families.

Previous Caregiver Programs

- The Live-in Caregiver Program was phased-out beginning in 2014 due to persistent concerns over vulnerability and family separation. The program has driven high volumes of admissions of caregivers in recent years as the Department worked to process on a priority basis the accumulated inventory of applications. There are still some caregivers in Canada working under 'grandfathered' Live-in Caregiver Program work permits, who may apply for permanent residence under that repealed program.
- The Caring for Children and Caring for People with High Medical Needs pilots, launched in 2014, replaced the Live-in Caregiver Program, but were terminated in 2019 just prior to their expiry, when the 2019 pilots launched. While eligibility criteria are similar between the 2014 and 2019 pilots, the 2019 pilots focus on two occupations where demand for a caregiver pathway is highest (home child care and support workers), because other pathways are limited.