



French for the Future

REVIEW OF THE CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development, and the Status of Persons with Disabilities for its study of the Canada Summer Jobs Program.

October 18, 2023

Emeline Leurent
Executive Director

French for the Future
904-170 Laurier Avenue W, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V5
Tel: 613-233-1616

Background

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities is **undertaking a study of the Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy program, and ways it could be modified to improve funding and flexibility for applicants**. The study follows a motion sponsored by Louise Chabot (Member of Parliament for Thérèse-De Blainville) and adopted by the Committee on Friday, June 2, 2023.

The Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program objectives are in line with the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) and are as follows:

- provide quality work experiences for youth;
- respond to national and local priorities to improve access to the labour market for youth who face unique barriers; and
- provide opportunities for youth to develop and improve their skills.

The program provides wage subsidies to incentivize employers to create jobs for young people. The program provides wage subsidies to employers from not-for-profit organizations, the public sector, and private sector organizations with 50 or fewer full-time employees, to create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years.

The jobs must be full-time (minimum of 30 hours per week and maximum of 40 hours per week).

To be eligible, youth must:

- be between 15 and 30 years of age at the beginning of the employment period;
- be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person to whom refugee protection has been conferred under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* for the duration of the employment; and
- be legally entitled to work in accordance with relevant provincial or territorial legislation and regulations.

International students are not eligible. International students include anyone who is temporarily in Canada for studies and who is not a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person who has been granted refugee status in Canada. As the objective of the CSJ program is to support youth entering the Canadian labour market, the temporary nature of an international student's time in Canada does not allow for a long-term connection to the labour market.

Recommendation

That international students be eligible for the CSJ program.

Currently, the program excludes international students on the grounds that “as the objective of the CSJ program is to support youth entering the Canadian labour market, the temporary nature of an international student’s time in Canada does not allow for a long-term connection to the labour market.”¹

This argument could be valid for students who are doing a one- or two-semester university exchange and then going back to their home country to finish their program. However, many international students finish their entire program (college diploma, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctorate) with the goal of staying, working and living in Canada. Their ineligibility for the program is in itself a barrier to employment and to their subsequent integration into the labour market. Other eligible students will be able to benefit from the job opportunities created by the program to gain meaningful work experience, often related to their field of study. Meanwhile, international students will not have access to them since the employer will be forced to turn them down if they want to receive the subsidy. This makes it difficult for international students to acquire their first coveted “Canadian experience,” which employers are constantly asking for.

International students are often seen as a source of labour,² and with widespread labour shortages, many see them as part of the solution. Canada saw a 31% increase in international students between 2021 and 2022.³ However, finding a job plays a key role in settling international students in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, “[6] in 10 international students who were employed (with paid earnings) during their period of study or after graduation became landed immigrants within 10 years of receiving their first study permit, compared with less than 2 in 10 among those who did not work.”⁴ It is vitally important to make it easier for these students to integrate into the workforce through programs like the CSJ if we are to retain them and ensure that they fully participate in Canadian society. They are planning to—72.5% of international students plan to apply for a post-graduate work permit and 60% of international students plan to apply for permanent residence in Canada.⁵

International students are primarily visible minorities, with 40% coming from India, 12% from China, and 4% from the Philippines,⁶ to name the largest groups. It is already harder to find a job as a visible minority in Canada,⁷ doubly so for international students, who face additional barriers to employment. On top of that is the language barrier, as the vast majority have

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/canada-summer-jobs/screening-eligibility.html> See footnote 2.

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2022003/article/00001-eng.htm>

³ <https://cbie.ca/infographic/>

⁴ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2022003/article/00001-eng.htm>

⁵ <https://cbie.ca/infographic/>

⁶ <https://cbie.ca/infographic/>

⁷ https://novascotia.ca/finance/statistics/archive_news.asp?id=18946&dg=&df=&dto=0&dti=3#:~:text=Nationally%2C%20the%20unemployment%20rate%20of,in%20a%20visible%20minority%20population.

neither English nor French as their first language. Programs like the CSJ are therefore vital for removing these employment barriers and giving employers incentives to hire these young people. This would also directly address the CSJ's 2nd objective, which is to "respond to national and local priorities to improve access to the labour market for **youth who face unique barriers.**"

Lastly, let us look at it through the lens of official languages. In the new Action Plan for Official Languages, the focus was put on immigration to help re-establish the demographic weight of francophones in Canada (Pillar 1).⁸ It would make sense to incentivize francophone international students to stay and settle in Canada after graduation. These students are already largely integrated into Canadian society. They were educated here and have assimilated into Canadian culture through our post-secondary institutions. Since finding employment plays a major role in international students settling in Canada (see above), opening up the CSJ program to these students would help meet Canada's francophone immigration targets.

We strongly recommend **that international students be eligible for the CSJ program.**

About French for the Future

[French for the Future](#) (FFF) is a national non-profit organization that promotes Canada's official bilingualism and the benefits of learning and communicating in French to students in grades 7 to 12 across Canada.

FFF is working to build a Canadian society in which more and more youth are confident in their language skills and endeavour to excel in French. The FFF contributes to a Canada where all young people value and appreciate francophone cultures.

FFF believes that:

1. The development of strong French language proficiency will benefit youth in their personal lives and career paths.
2. The creation of relevant linguistic and cultural links among young Canadians will foster an appreciation of diversity and motivate students to persevere with their French studies.
3. Strong and personal connections will inspire students to nurture a lifelong relationship with the French language and francophone cultures.

FFF has been hiring two students per year through the Canada Summer Jobs program since 2019. Many applications come from international students and must be systematically rejected because they are not eligible for the program.

⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2023-2028.html>