



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Labour

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT BERMUDIANS







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OVERVIEW

Countries worldwide are challenged to implement effective policy solutions that address the unanticipated social and economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In these unprecedented times, leaders and governments must ensure that they remain resilient and laser-focused on implementing critical policy responses.

In this vein, the Ministry of Labour is working toward establishing effective policies that will foster the expansion of jobs and economic growth. The objectives of the Ministry are:

- To utilise labour policy to minimise the adverse effects of the global pandemic on our labour force;
- To provide social support and employment services for Bermuda's unemployed and underemployed population; and
- To facilitate the requisite supply of labour for jobs demanded by the labour market.

The initiatives, programmes and policies outlined below will enable Bermuda to navigate the unanticipated economic challenges and progress towards achieving economic recovery. The Government will remain relentless in its commitment to Bermudians.

PART I: LABOUR LAWS, POLICIES AND SOCIAL PROTECTIONS

Labour Laws

Amended the Employment Act and Modernised Labour Laws to Produce the Labour Code

On June 1 2021, changes to the Employment Act come into effect. These amendments seek to strengthen employee benefits and protect all employees in Bermuda's labour force. The changes also modernize and clarify areas of the existing legislation to ensure alignment with international best practices.

Some of the significant changes to the Employment Act 2000 include:



1. To help ensure protection for all employees, employers must provide a written policy against bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace and advise how to access it.
2. Employers will have to provide employees with a midway performance review during their probationary period to ensure they know of areas of improvement needed to complete their probation successfully.
3. Bereavement is expended to include grandparents, great-grandparents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
4. The requirement that upon employee termination, employers pay any wages and other remuneration or benefits owed to the employee within seven days or at the next interval that the employee would have been paid.
5. Employees are entitled to a meal break of at least 30 minutes after working continuously for five hours.

Social Protections

- a. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has provided over \$60M in **benefits** to assist those displaced from the workforce.
- b. We are also repositioning the Department of Financial Assistance to get individuals off financial assistance and be employed critical to the service offered. The Department will aim to strengthen education, training and employment services to help individuals secure employment.

- c. To provide future financial protection for all Bermudians in the event of job loss, the Ministry is establishing the **Unemployment Insurance Program**, which will ensure funds are readily available when needed. Consultation with stakeholders has already begun in this regard.
- d. On receipt of the Wage Commission’s report, the Government will table a Wage Bill in Parliament to establish a **statutory minimum wage and a national living wage**.

Labour Policies

The National Reemployment Strategy

- We are executing this strategy by utilising professional recruitment agencies to match talented workers to local job opportunities by connecting qualified Bermudians to employers with current job vacancies.
- The Department of Workforce Development is facilitating training and development programs that have provided reskilling and upskilling opportunities to over 110 people in the following categories:



- Cleaning Technician Training
- Administrative Assistant Training
- Horticulture Training
- Learn-to-Earn Restaurant Training

- Food & Beverage Waiter Server Training
- Computer Literacy Training
- Digital Literacy for Administrative Professionals

Youth-Focused Initiatives

- Through Workforce Development, we are also implementing the Graduate Training Program that provides paid internships allowing young Bermudians to gain industry experience in their area of study and benefit from expert guidance to build their personal brand. Additionally, all participants will receive career readiness training that will include modules on:
 - Developing Your Brand;
 - Emotional Intelligence and Communication;
 - Diversity and Inclusion; and
 - Office Etiquette.
- We have retained the Scholarship Programme, thereby enabling students to continue their graduate studies.
- We retained the Summer Jobs Programme, enabling college and university students to earn money while on summer break.
- The Department also expanded the Apprentices Programme, creating paid work experience opportunities across numerous occupational categories.

PART II: IMMIGRATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

To support Bermudians, the Ministry uses a managed immigration policy as one of the strategic tools to encourage economic growth in Bermuda.

A. Protecting Bermudian Employment Opportunities

Moratorium on Work Permits.

In November 2020, the Ministry placed a **moratorium** on 41 additional occupations, bringing the total number of closed job categories to 53. The Ministry scrutinises work permit applications to ensure that capable and qualified



Bermudians are not passed over for Job opportunities. The aim is to:

- Promote job opportunities for Bermudians; and
- Enables Bermudians to take advantage of more available jobs.

B. Retention of Long Term Residents

Normalise Residency of Long Term Residents

As indicated in the 2020 Speech from the Throne, the Ministry will explore provisions to support the normalised residency of long-term residents who consider Bermuda their home but have been unable to do so under the current policy.

This change will:

- Provide residential security to long-term residents;
- Increase investment in Bermuda's economy; and
- Keep families together.



C. Expansion of Bermuda's Residential Population

Amend Affidavit of Domicile Policy

The Ministry will amend the current policy removing Bermudian parents' requirement to provide an Affidavit of Domicile for children born overseas. This change will

make it easier for children born to Bermudian parents while abroad to obtain Bermudian Status, enabling them to repatriate to Bermuda in the future. This will:

- Simplify the process for children who were born abroad to a Bermudian parent to obtain Bermudian Status;
- Increase the residential population; and
- Encourage Individuals to reside and invest in Bermuda.

Leverage Innovative Immigration Policies

To expand the residential population and stimulate the economy, the Ministry has implemented the following policy changes:



- The Economic Investment Certificate entitles a person to reside in Bermuda while contributing to its economic development.
- The One-year Work from Bermuda policy has yielded nothing but positive results. Over 600 applicants are approved and there is interest from businesses wishing to set up in Bermuda on a long-term basis.
- Increasing visitor stays from 90 to 180 days to partially offset the drastic decline in tourism. Already we see visitors wishing to reside in Bermuda longer than 180 days.

Collectively these policies benefit Bermuda by:

- Increasing the number of persons living and residing in Bermuda;
- Helping stimulate the Bermuda economy;
- Contributing to the economic development of the island; and
- Offsetting the decline in tourists arrivals.



