

An Action Plan for Medical & Scientific Workforce Attraction in Canada

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Massive cuts in medical and scientific funding, coupled with subject restrictions, have created a sudden and unprecedented crisis in U.S. STEM research. Skilled workers, researchers, physicians and engineers in fields ranging from cancer treatments to clean tech have suddenly found themselves without funding or institutional support, jeopardizing progress on work that benefits us all. Canada and other countries must be prepared to step in to support them.

Here are some of the ways visionary Canadian federal and provincial lawmakers can do so:

Promote Fast Track Immigration Pathways for Researchers

- Enhance and expand the Global Talent Stream (GTS) to expedite visa processing for scientists, postdoctoral researchers, and STEM professionals.
- Introduce a dedicated Research Talent Visa that offers accelerated entry and work authorization for those with proven research backgrounds.
- Provide sources of bridge funding for researchers who lost U.S. grants or positions, ensuring continuity in their work.

Enhanced Funding for Science & Innovation

- Increase investment in federal research programs through bodies like the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). Canada's research funding relative to GDP currently stands at around 1.6%, well below the OECD average of 2.7%.

- Establish a Science Stability Fund to support displaced U.S. researchers looking to relocate their projects to Canadian institutions.
- Prioritize funding for key fields affected by U.S. cuts, such as climate science, sustainable transportation engineering systems, public health, and social sciences.

Strengthen University Partnerships & Recruitment

- Develop targeted recruitment programs at major U.S. research hubs, encouraging affected faculty, postdocs, and students to relocate.
- Launch a "Science Safe Haven" campaign, promoting Canada as a stable, inclusive environment for evidence-based research.
- Partner with U.S. universities to facilitate dual appointments or visiting scholar programs for scientists facing instability.

Develop Industry Collaboration & Private Sector Incentives

- Incentivize tech companies, biotech firms, and research institutions to expand Canadian operations, positioning Canada as a global innovation hub.
- Offer tax credits for companies that hire displaced U.S. scientists or launch research partnerships with Canadian institutions.
- Build on Canada's strengths in AI, quantum computing, and clean energy to attract top global talent.

Support for Graduate Students & Early-Career Researchers

- Expand Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships and Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships to attract displaced U.S.-based talent. Additional new scholarships and fellowships can be directed at key areas.
- Establish an Emergency Fellowship Fund to provide immediate support for graduate students impacted by U.S. funding cuts.
- Create mentorship programs that connect displaced researchers with Canadian industry leaders.

Promote Inclusion and Diversity

- Emphasize Canada's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core value in its research landscape.
- Develop tailored support programs for scientists from marginalized communities who may be disproportionately affected by U.S. policy shifts.

Highlight Canada's Stability & Global Leadership

- Promote Canada's long history of political stability and global role in peacekeeping
- Promote the Canadian record of leadership in evidence-based policymaking, environmental science, and public health.
- Promote the country's universal healthcare, social safety nets, and progressive research environment as key quality-of-life benefits.

Marketing & Communication Tactics

By emphasizing stability, funding opportunities, and inclusiveness, Canada can attract top-tier scientific talent while strengthening its own innovation ecosystem in response to U.S. policy disruptions.

- Launch a targeted online marketing campaign in U.S. academic journals, tech hubs and on LinkedIn.
- Organize virtual events directed at researchers, scholars and graduate students at universities and research hospitals across the United States, promoting Canada and offering information about scholarships, fellowships, employment opportunities, and visas.
- Host outreach events at U.S. universities affected by funding cuts.
- Work with the provinces and key institutions to establish a Scientific Relocation Task Force to guide displaced researchers through the immigration, funding, and integration process.

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