



#CelebrateCitizenship

**This milestone deserves a day off.
Will you accept the challenge?**

The Ask

It's a small gesture with a big impact. On May 1, 2019, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) launched a challenge to businesses to join us in celebrating citizenship by providing employees with paid time off to attend their citizenship ceremony. New Canadian citizens are required by the Government of Canada to attend an official ceremony to take the oath of citizenship and receive their certificate. Unfortunately, people often take unpaid time off work to do this. Will you demonstrate your commitment to diversity and inclusion by accepting the #CelebrateCitizenship challenge?

The Business Case

People want to give their time, money, and support to organizations whose values align with theirs. The same way you take a moment to celebrate birthdays, weddings, and professional achievements, receiving Canadian citizenship is a significant milestone to celebrate. A recent ICC-Leger poll found that 8 in 10 Canadians agree that people should get time off work to attend their citizenship ceremony, and over half of Canadians believe that it should be paid. Even more significantly, this agreement was felt by Canadians across the board – it was consistent across regions, ages, incomes, and genders.

Creating a sense of belonging among your employees can improve employee retention, loyalty, and satisfaction. In 2017, RBC and the ICC surveyed 64 leading organizations that collectively employ 1.2 million Canadians. They found that 82 percent strongly agreed that "inclusion is required to translate diversity into performance results," including innovation, greater revenue, earnings, and productivity.

The responses demonstrate the value of practising inclusion as an action, rather than simply looking at diversity as a hiring outcome. Strong and inclusive teams lead to better business.

Corporate culture matters. Businesses can no longer consider diversity and inclusion as something "nice to have" when looking to the future of work. According to the ICC-Leger poll, millennials in particular are the most likely to agree (81.9%) that new citizens should receive time off to attend their citizenship ceremony, with more than 60% believing that it should be paid. Beyond employee satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, providing paid time off for employees to attend their citizenship ceremony demonstrates your commitment to building a better country.

Figure 1, source:
ICC–Leger Poll, 2019.

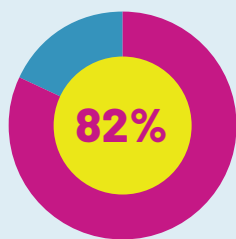
Figure 2, source:
*All of Us: What we mean
when we talk about
inclusion.* Sarmishta
Subramanian.
Institute for Canadian
Citizenship and Royal
Bank of Canada, 2017.

1. The general public supports it

8 in 10 Canadians think that people should get time off work to attend their citizenship ceremony.



2. Leading employers support it



82% of leading employers strongly agree that inclusion is required to translate diversity into performance results, including innovation, greater revenue, earnings, and productivity.

The Social Impact

We all collectively have a role to play in fostering a sense of inclusion for new Canadian citizens, because workplaces tend to mirror the cultural dynamics at play in society and vice versa. By creating a corporate culture of inclusion, you can contribute to a sense of belonging for new citizens in the business world and a stronger Canada.

By making a small HR policy change, you are taking a concrete action toward inclusion. You will be demonstrating support of your employees' hard work, sacrifices, and unique journeys to becoming Canadian citizens. This can lead to improved office morale, an opportunity for colleagues to celebrate together and build personal connections, and a demonstration of your commitment as an employer to diversity and inclusion.

→ Now What?

How can you demonstrate your commitment to #CelebrateCitizenship to your employees, customers, and shareholders? We know that promoting a sense of belonging in the workplace is a constant work-in-progress, but a citizenship time-off policy is a tangible step you can take toward a more open, diverse, and stronger Canada. It's a step in the right direction.

- Accept the challenge on the [ICC website](#).
- Share your commitment on social media using the hashtag #CelebrateCitizenship and tag the ICC. Twitter: [@inclusion_ca](#); Facebook: [@inclusion.ca](#); Instagram: [@inclusion.ca](#); LinkedIn: [@institute-for-canadian-citizenship](#).
- Use the #CelebrateCitizenship graphics available for download on the [ICC website](#).
- Update your HR policies to provide paid time off for employees attending their citizenship ceremony.

Thank you for celebrating citizenship with us!