

Economic Development Strategy 2023 - 2027

Strategic Priority 5: Investing in People

2023 – 2027 UPDATE



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Economy and Labour



Strategic Priority 5: Investing in People

Updates as of November 2025

Introduction for Strategic Priority 5

Strategic Priority 5, Investing in People, focuses on ensuring that Bermudians are equipped with the skills, opportunities, and support needed to participate fully in the island's evolving economy. As global industries transform and new sectors emerge, Bermuda's long term economic resilience depends on a workforce that is prepared, adaptable, and empowered to thrive in both traditional and future focused fields.

Since the launch of the Economic Development Strategy, significant progress has been made in strengthening workforce development, expanding technical and vocational training, improving pathways for young people, and modernising systems that support talent retention. These efforts are designed to build a strong foundation for economic mobility, enhance the competitiveness of Bermudian workers, and ensure that opportunities created through broader economic initiatives translate into real and accessible benefits for the population.

This update highlights achievements across training and certification programmes, digital skill development, immigration and workforce reform, and youth focused employment initiatives. Together, these actions demonstrate Bermuda's commitment to placing its people at the centre of economic growth, ensuring that the island's success is not only measured by investment and business activity, but by the capacity, confidence, and well being of Bermudians themselves.

Execution of National Workforce Development Strategy

Action Item: DWD

- Creation of a National Workforce Development Advisory Board to monitor and advise on the execution of the strategy.

National Workforce Development Advisory Board

Since its establishment in 2024, the National Workforce Advisory Board has served as the department's primary strategic forum for aligning workforce development with Bermuda's economic priorities. The Board brings together employers, training institutions, unions and Government to provide coordinated advice on skills gaps, labour market trends, and national workforce planning. Its guidance has strengthened the demand-driven approach to training and employment initiatives delivered through the Department of Workforce Development, ensuring programmes are responsive to current and emerging industry needs.

In 2025, the Board established a Hospitality Sub-Committee to support large-scale sector growth, particularly in preparation for the reopening of Fairmont Southampton. This Sub-Committee has focused on employer collaboration, skills-gap mapping, and the expansion of training pathways across all levels of the hospitality sector. Overall, the Board has helped shift workforce planning toward a more coordinated, forward-looking and evidence-based national approach.

Execution of Youth Employment Strategy

Action Item: DWD

- The DWD will increase internal capacity and leverage external resources to create an implementation and execution strategy. Increase engagement and communication with Bermuda's youth.
- Monitor progress and execution of initiatives.

Creating Pathways for Young Bermudians

Since the launch of the Youth Employment Strategy, the Department of Workforce Development has made measurable progress in strengthening pathways from education to employment for Bermuda's young people. Through a coordinated suite of initiatives; including internships, apprenticeships, graduate and management trainee placements, and employer-led training partnerships, the Department has significantly increased access to paid work experience, industry-recognized certification, and structured career pathways. These initiatives have improved youth employability, strengthened employer engagement, and created clearer transitions from school into sustainable careers.

A key success of the Strategy has been its whole-of-government, demand-driven approach, with strong collaboration across employers, Bermuda College, and public sector partners. Young people have benefited not only from job placements, but also from career coaching, employability training, and targeted financial support for short-term certification courses aligned to labour market needs. Collectively, these efforts have positioned the Youth Employment Strategy as a central driver of talent development, workforce participation, and long-term economic resilience for Bermuda.

Based on the scale of programmes delivered under the Youth Employment Strategy to date (including apprenticeships, internships, graduate and management trainees, summer employment, and short-term certification bursaries), it is reasonably estimated that approximately 450–600 youths have been directly supported since implementation.

This estimate reflects cumulative participation across multiple annual programme cycles administered by the Department of Workforce Development, including repeat intakes, multi-year traineeships, and short-term skills programmes.

The Department of Workforce Development is committed to strengthening lifelong learning and early entry opportunities for young people.

These initiatives create clearer entry and progression pathways, helping young Bermudians build skills, gain experience, and access sustainable employment opportunities.

Execution of Personal Employment Plans

Action Item: DWD

- Co-ordinate efforts of the Department of Financial Assistance and the Department of Workforce Development to strengthen the probability of success for participants in the PEP.

Helping Bermudians Access Sustainable Employment

The goal is to equip Bermudians with the skills and tools they need to secure long-term work opportunities. This includes increasing client employability and creating structured engagement between jobseekers and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) officers.

Recent Actions:

- **Personal Employment Plans (PEPs):** Implemented tailored plans for clients to guide their job search.
- **Stronger Partnerships:** Enhanced integration with the Department of Financial Assistance.
- **Career Development:** Expanded coaching and career services for jobseekers.
- **Job Placements:** Facilitated placements through the Bermuda Job Board and employment partnerships.
- **Skills Training:** Delivered employability and résumé workshops in collaboration with partners.

These efforts aim to build confidence, improve job readiness, and connect Bermudians to sustainable employment opportunities

Creation of a National Certification and Apprenticeship Board

Revitalising Bermuda's Vocational Framework

DWD is committed to improving the quality and recognition of technical and trade qualifications, ensuring Bermuda's workforce meets global standards. Recent efforts include:

- **Re-established Governance:** Relaunched the National Certification and Apprenticeship Board (NCAB) and Occupational Advisory Committees (OACs).
- **Consistent Certification:** Continued issuance of national certifications for skilled trades.

- **Expanded Apprenticeships:** Partnered with employers such as BELCO, BAC, and Rosewood to grow registered apprenticeship opportunities.
- **New Short Courses:** Introduced training in Small Appliance Repair, Hospitality Service, and Heavy Truck Licensing.
- **Global Alignment:** Collaborated with Bermuda College to align local standards with international TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) models.

These initiatives strengthen Bermuda’s vocational framework, improve employer confidence in certified tradespeople, and create clear pathways for technical careers

Build Technological Expertise Within the Local Workforce

Action Item: EDD

- Promote information and communications technologies and computer studies, training courses and certification programmes

Empowering Bermuda’s Future Tech Talent

Every year, the Economic Development Department (EDD) provides a grant to the Technology Leadership Forum (TLF) to help develop Bermuda’s next generation of technology professionals. This support enables structured summer internships, mentoring programs, and skills development opportunities for young people.

EDD is also leading the Bermuda Coders Initiative, a free online digital skills program launched in partnership with the UAE. Designed by Udacity and Microsoft, this initiative offers learning tracks for all Bermuda residents, helping them gain the skills needed for success in the digital economy. Registration is open, and the program will remain free until 2027.

The Bermuda Coders Initiative has now been fully transitioned to the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), ensuring continued support and growth for tech education on the island.

Action Item: EDD

- Share information and arrange for subject-matter experts to speak directly to the Bermuda based learner, worker and consumer.

Connecting Industry Leaders Through Tech and FinTech Webinars

The Economic Development Department (EDD) continues to grow its network of industry experts who share insights during our monthly technology and fintech webinars. These sessions provide valuable knowledge and foster collaboration, helping Bermuda stay at the forefront of innovation.

Action Item: EDD

- Celebrate the Bermuda-based entrepreneurs who continue to innovate and lead the charge locally and foster an ecosystem that is supportive of e-entrepreneurship.

Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Economic Development Department (EDD) proudly supports initiatives that foster innovation and business growth. In 2023, EDD was a key supporter and funder of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). Continuing this commitment, in 2024, EDD sponsored the Technology Category of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation's (BEDC) Business Awards during GEW, celebrating excellence in tech-driven businesses.

Action Item: EDD

- Nurture an environment where industry leaders are easy to reach and provide realistic role models, mentors, and innovative employers.

Driving Tech Growth Through Partnerships and Grants

The Economic Development Department (EDD) is committed to building Bermuda's technology and fintech ecosystem. We continue to expand our network of industry leaders who share insights during our monthly tech and fintech webinars.

To further this mission, EDD provides grants that create real opportunities for learning, collaboration, and innovation:

- **Berkeley Institute PTSA:** Supporting Fintech Signature Student Internships at local companies, giving students hands-on experience in tech, fintech, AI, and digital technology. These internships enhance career readiness and connect students with professional mentors.
- **Penrose Partners:** Receiving annual sponsorship to host international fintech conferences in Bermuda. These events foster collaboration with local businesses, drive innovation, and provide practical industry insights from global market leaders.
- **Technology Leadership Forum (TLF):** Funded annually to cultivate Bermuda's tech talent pipeline through internships, mentoring, and professional development. Industry leaders play a key role as mentors and role models, ensuring students gain real-world guidance.
- **Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW):** EDD supports the BEDC's annual event, celebrating small and medium-sized businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship. GEW creates networking opportunities with innovative entrepreneurs locally and internationally.

Action Item: EDD

- Amendments to the Job Makers Act.

Updated Incentives for Job Makers Policy

The Economic Development Department (EDD) recently reviewed the Economic Development Act 1968 and the Incentives for Job Makers Policy Document.

The review concluded that no legislative amendments were required. However, an updated policy was issued on March 1, 2025, introducing a scoring framework that allows companies with fewer than 10 Bermudian Status employees to apply for and receive concessions.

Employers can access the Incentives for Job Makers Policy Document (Guidelines for Employers) on gov.bm.

Increasing the Working Population

Action Item: DOI

- Local Workforce Retention and Reducing Migration.

Residential and Workforce Retention:

Amendments to the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act

In March 2024, the Government issued a Position Paper on “Retaining the Local Workforce” with a focus on Permanent Resident Certificates (PRC) and considerations for lowering the residency requirements for persons to obtain a PRC.

The Position Paper proposed to:

1. Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to any person who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 20 years or more to 10 years or more, with an annual income requirement of \$83,000.
2. Reduce the eligibility criteria for the granting of PRC to the non- Bermudian parent of a child with Bermudian Status who has been ordinarily resident in Bermuda from 15 years or more to 10 years or more.
3. Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for a Job Maker from 10 years to 5 years.

Reduce PRC eligibility requirements for the following occupational categories to 5 years:

- Registered Nurses
- Chartered Financial Analyst
- Certified Actuaries
- Computer Engineers
- Software Developers
- Certified Accountants (CPA, CA, ACCA, ACA)

Consultation with the public, which spanned one month, invited feedback on the proposals.

Work in this area continues with the aim of identifying the most appropriate way forward.

Action Item: DOI

- Improve Immigration Processes

Improving Immigration Processes:

Digitisation and Automation of Immigration Processes

The Department of Immigration is pleased to report that it is making steady progress towards integrating several of its IT systems into one system that will allow for digitized and automated application processing.

Steps taken to date include:

- January to February 2025 – scoping/requirements gathering
- March 2025 – in-person visit to Bahamas Immigration to meet with key stakeholders and observe their Identity Document Management System
- April 2025 – Selection of a Vendor via the the Identity Smart Government Partners to transform Bermuda document (produced by IDT)
- June-September 2025 – Meetings with internal key stakeholders

Given the requirements to satisfy internal protocols, work continues towards seeking Cabinet approval of the vendor of choice and then advancing to build and bring the new system online.