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Internationally-Trained
Workers Partnership – Ottawa

Partenariat des professionnels
de formation internationale – Ottawa

Internationally Trained Workers

An opportunity for Ottawa

A Strategy for the Integration of Internationally Trained Workers in Ottawa



WHY?

SHOULD WE CARE ■

The changing face of Ottawa's labour force

- Between 1996 and 2001, immigrants made up 38% of Ottawa's population growth
- More than half of new immigrants in 2002 held a university degree; a further 14% held a diploma or trade certificate
- Nearly three quarters of recent immigrants are members of a visible minority

The economic potential of immigrant workers

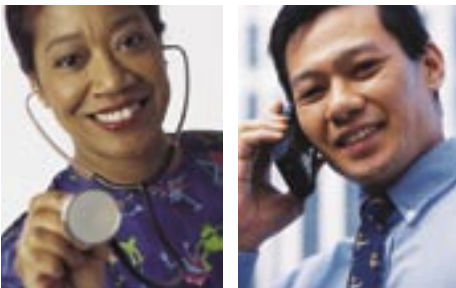
- More than 80% of Ottawa's labour force growth comes from immigration
- In 2000, Ottawa's immigrant population generated a total of \$4.1 billion in wages, salaries and self-employment income

Each year, Ottawa becomes home to immigrants who are doctors, masons, engineers, nurses, accountants, computer programmers, teachers, hairdressers, and many other professionals and trades people

As Ottawa's workforce ages and the birthrate declines, immigration will account for all of the region's labour force growth in the next five to 10 years. The local economy faces current and projected labour shortages in a number of sectors. The required job qualifications frequently match the credentials of Ottawa immigrants.

Yet, many qualified immigrants find that they are prevented from practising their profession or trade, despite many government and agency services aimed at facilitating their integration into the workforce.

The underemployment of immigrant workers costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$5.9 billion annually says the City of Ottawa in its 20/20 growth management plan, with this community absorbing a significant portion of that loss. **It is one of the top 10 economic challenges and opportunities for the region in the coming decade.**



The Ottawa community needs to come together to seize the opportunities afforded by a growing pool of talented immigrant workers.

The Internationally Trained Workers Partnership (ITWP) Project is a local partnership and community-wide strategy to facilitate the accreditation and integration of immigrant workers who are trained outside of Canada into the Ottawa labour market.

WHAT?

ARE THE ISSUES ■

The ITWP Project is a collaborative effort between:

- United Way/Centraide Ottawa
- RGA
- LASI World Skills
- City of Ottawa
- OCRI TalentWorks
- The Ottawa Chamber of Commerce

The most serious obstacles for immigrant workers to finding meaningful work are:

- Difficulty in obtaining Canadian licensing and accreditation
- Lack of opportunity to gain Canadian workplace experience
- Difficulty in getting recognition for international work experience
- Lack of information on how to access relevant programs
- Little coordination among existing programs and services
- Job- or field-specific language fluency

Barriers to meaningful employment

A mismatch of jobs and skills

- Ottawa's university-educated recent immigrants are four times more likely to be unemployed than their Canadian-born counterparts
- Only after 10 years does the unemployment rate among university-educated immigrants drop to the same level as for the Canadian-born population

Every year, Canada actively seeks out highly skilled immigrants in part to reinforce this country's labour pool. Unfortunately, once here, internationally trained workers face a complex and broad range of barriers to labour force participation. For some, the transition into careers and positions that match their education and skills never happens.

These obstacles are not only distressing to immigrants who came to this country on the promise of greater opportunities, but also costly as they translate into greater reliance on social support services. Ultimately, our community loses when immigrants cannot participate fully in our economic and social life.



HOW?

CAN WE HELP ■

ITWP Milestones

- **2004:** ITWP reported on the barriers to employment for skilled immigrants in “Moving Forward: a Strategy for the Integration of Internationally Trained Workers in Ottawa”.
- **2005:** ITWP and OCRI TalentWorks described the labour market needs of Ottawa employers in “Ottawa@Work: Large Employers Workforce Needs Analysis.”
- **2006:** ITWP launched **Hire Immigrants Ottawa**, a local initiative that will engage employers in hiring more skilled immigrants into skills appropriate positions, and will raise awareness of immigrants’ contributions to Ottawa’s economic and social success. To learn more, visit hireimmigrantsottawa.ca

Building on community strengths

Ottawa is developing a community-wide strategy to integrate immigrant workers into the local workforce to maintain the city’s competitive edge in the labour market and its attractiveness as a choice business location in the global economy.

The Internationally Trained Workers Partnership (ITWP) develops sustainable solutions that break down barriers to meaningful employment for immigrant workers. The partnership brings together employers, business associations, labour, governments, educational institutions and immigrant serving organizations.

ITWP’s objectives are to:

- Foster solutions to barriers to hiring immigrants
- Increase the number of employers who hire and recruit immigrants in Ottawa
- Increase the number of immigrants hired into skills appropriate professions

How we respond as a community to the opportunities and contributions provided by the skills and talent of internationally trained workers will ultimately determine our future success as a city.

For more information about ITWP

Contact United Way/Centraide Ottawa — Carole Gagnon at 613-228-6893