

Review of Career and Employment Programs and Services for Immigrants in Calgary

**Prepared for
Alberta Human Resources and Employment**



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Executive Summary

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) initiated this *Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary* to assist them in meeting the needs of job-seeking immigrants and employers' staffing needs. Julia Melnyk of Springboard Consulting Inc. was contracted to conduct the review.

Objectives of the project were to:

- Conduct statistical research and a literature review, and summarize the key issues regarding programming and program delivery for Calgary
- Develop an inventory of career and employment programs in the Calgary region, including funding sources
- Obtain partner input through interviews with funders, immigrant-serving agencies, and other key stakeholders to identify programming gaps/needs and issues.
- Produce a final report detailing the project research, analysis of the findings and proposed recommendations to respond to identified needs

Literature Review

The research included a review of more than 30 statistical documents and reports and 10 websites and compilation of an inventory of current career and employment programs in the Calgary region. Qualitative research took the form of a structured telephone interview based on a short questionnaire. Twenty-five stakeholders participated: 10 funders and 15 service providers. An additional 10 providers were contacted to obtain information about their employment-related programs or courses for inclusion in the inventory. Following the preparation of a draft report and proposed recommendations, a forum was held for stakeholders to learn about the findings and to comment on the recommendations.

In 2004 56.5% of immigrants to Alberta settled in Calgary with the top immigrant sources countries for Calgary being China, India and the Philippines. The continuing growth of Calgary and the young, highly educated immigrants that are settling in the city make it an excellent environment for successful career and employment programs that will assist these immigrants to apply their skills and to integrate into the society.

The literature review research uncovered the following key issues:

- The need to facilitate immigrants' entry into the Canadian labour market at a level commensurate with their skills and experience in a timely manner. This is a labour market, societal need as much as an individual one.
- The importance of programs tailored to the participants who need them, whether they are immigrant professionals, immigrants with little formal education or immigrant youth. In addition, it is important to be aware of the expertise required by staff to deliver such specialized programs.

- The need for employment programs to be able to serve larger numbers of participants. The nature of program components such as work experience and internships works against this, since one-on-one assistance and support is required.
- More employers need to be active partners in the employment process and in programs designed to transition immigrants into the work force. Employers seem to be slow to appreciate the untapped resources of immigrant workers.

Strategies proposed in the research for overcoming the well-documented barriers faced by recent immigrants include:

- Assessment, whether of credentials, skills, abilities or interests as a necessary starting point
- Career counselling to help immigrants become aware of options and career paths in order to make informed choices
- Bridging programs to assist with the transition to employment
- Volunteer placements as one way of obtaining Canadian work experience if the placements are matched to an immigrant's education and experience
- Employer incentives such as the added value in hiring skilled immigrants and overcoming labour shortages

Now is an opportune time for funders, service providers, institutions and employers to build programs and partnerships that will speed up the effective integration of immigrants into the work force.

Qualitative Findings

Twenty-five stakeholders (10 funders and 15 service providers) completed a short email questionnaire or participated in a telephone interview. In order to develop a complete inventory of Calgary employment-related programs and services, an additional 10 providers were contacted. The inventory is included in Section III of the report.

The findings from funders and providers were generally consistent and can be grouped as follows:

Issues with Access to Programs

- Lack of coordination as to the overall picture about what types of programming are being offered where and who is eligible for them
- Eligibility restrictions (on EI or provincial Income Support, being unemployed)
- ESL and literacy levels, especially low ESL/literacy (also an eligibility restriction)
- Limited program capacity: the number of spaces and offerings per year
- Timing: at what point after arrival, what makes the most efficient route or career path

- Need for more specific training for occupational groups (including a concern about the lack of statistics as to which are groups with the highest numbers, greatest need for programming).

Issues with Access to Employment

- Too few partnerships with employers – at the programming level, delivery level, placements and job retention/maintenance
- Need for support for employers, such as coaching and training
- Need for expert counselling/advice regarding clients' occupations, career paths, potential employers, industries etc.
- Issues regarding employment placement
 - Providers: how to access employers
 - Employers: how to access immigrants
- Need for partnerships/cooperation with professional associations
- Lack of options regarding alternate career paths in the trades and technologies for example
- Need for more work placements and bridging programs
- Need for mentoring programs

Issues Related to Youth (specific points not included above)

- Need for mixed programs, not segregated by ethnic group
- Need for programs offered to young immigrants as they leave school, before they “disappear”
- Need for multi-faceted programs, including social, adaptation issues, life skills, academic etc.
- More individual counselling and case management
- Solutions to the challenge of attracting and motivating immigrant youth

A presentation of the findings was made to a group of 35 stakeholders based on a draft of the report. This session provided an opportunity for stakeholders to review the program inventory and to comment on the proposed report and recommendations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this review are consistent with the research in that there appears to be a trend toward greater demand and greater need at both ends of the immigration spectrum – the more highly educated and those with low education and English proficiency. “At-risk” youth are another group identified as needing employment programs.

Both funders and providers indicate general satisfaction with the direction that employment programming has been going regarding immigrant professionals. They appreciate AHRE for the extent that it is already assisting immigrants in Calgary to make the transition to work. At the same time, however, they also acknowledge the need for more occupation-specific programming and improvements or adjustments to existing offerings. Overall they recognize the

value of AHRE's transparent tendering process and do not feel that in Calgary duplication of programs is an issue.

The current labour market demand and low unemployment rate in Calgary creates opportunities and challenges for providers of employment programs and services to immigrants. There also seems to be increased public awareness, thanks in part to recent media coverage, of skill shortages and the under-utilized skills and expertise of immigrants already in Canada. It is up to funders and providers to find and support new ways to benefit from these positive conditions and to build further expertise in employment programming of all types. No matter what the labour market conditions are, immigrants will still need support making the transition to work in Calgary. Research shows that the sooner they can make that transition, the better it is for them in terms of their confidence and skill levels and the benefits they can provide to employers.

The following recommendations respond to the issues raised in the study and are grouped under the themes of coordination, programming, partnerships, and professional development and research.

Coordination

1. Create a centralized easy-to-access source for information on all types of employment-related programming available for immigrants in Calgary. This could be done on a website with information on the variety of stakeholders; programs and services and what a program or service consists of (its goals, elements, length of time); where programs are offered; who is eligible; what the application process is, and contact information. Encourage funders and providers to have links to this site for immigrants to access.

Programming

1. Increase program capacity in currently successful work experience and occupation-specific programming by funding additional offerings within the same year as long as the increased demand for employees can be indicated.
2. Fund new occupation-specific training programs in occupations where there is the greatest need and numbers, acknowledging the challenge of assessing the potential demand. Encourage providers to look to models of similar programs being offered in other parts of Canada.
3. Consider funding a work experience program for immigrants with lower ESL, taking into consideration the challenges of teaching and placing the participants. Encourage the use of a model that provides employee and employer support during the work experience

4. Support courses on alternate careers for professionals, grouping them by occupational areas, for example, medical professionals or engineers. Such a program could include job shadowing or work experience and guest speakers who have chosen an alternate career path.
5. Assuming that there will be a change to current restrictions on funding for youth just out of school, investigate opportunities for employment-focused partnerships with a school board or agency that is experienced in working with youth. Outreach, individual counselling and case management would be essential parts of any such project.
6. Focus more on coaching support for immigrants once they enter the workplace in order to promote a positive work environment and job retention. On the job coaching should be offered to both parties: the new immigrant employee and the employer, including co-workers and managers. This type of ongoing coaching should be included as an integral feature of all employment programs. Coaching could also be part of advance preparation at a workplace just prior to new employees being placed.

Partnerships

1. Promote partnerships between experts. This is already being done by organizations partnering with institutions like SAIT that provide a technical certificate recognized by employers, and could be pursued further. It should be noted that in the case of working with other professionals outside the immigrant services sector there may be additional salary costs.

Possible partnerships include:

- With an employment agency that has expertise in working with employers and can facilitate making the connection between immigrant employees and work
- With a professional association where someone from that association participates in the development of training content, materials and participates in program delivery.
- With professional associations or business organizations to offer a mentoring program for immigrant clients as a complement to a training program.
- With the Youth Employment Centre to develop and provide programming specific to the needs of immigrant youth.
- Within AHRE between Intergovernmental Relations and Immigration and regional services, in this case in Calgary, so that the knowledge from ELT programs can be passed on and so that there can be a

smooth transition from ELT funding to other AHRE funding if a program is successful.

2. Work with public schools to provide career and employment information and exposure (orientation to occupations, job shadowing etc.) as well as workplace-related skills (including cultural differences) to in-school immigrant youth.
3. Support providers in finding new ways to involve employers more directly in programming. In spite of the need for skilled workers, there seems to be a lack of awareness of availability of immigrant workers, their skills and needs.
4. Explore ways to co-fund a training program as a quick response to an employer-identified need for workers. An employer would have to contribute a certain percentage of costs and meet certain conditions regarding hiring etc.

Professional Development and Research

1. Build in funding for professional development for counsellors or program coordinators working with specific occupations so that they can acquire more specialized knowledge. This could take the form of finding a coach or mentor, setting up a job shadowing experience, working with a professional association, or researching a similar program in another part of Canada. Recipients of this funding would be expected to provide a report on findings that could be distributed to other providers and funders to increase their knowledge base.
2. If planning to fund mentoring programs, conduct research on mentoring programs for immigrants and how they compare to effective practices and lessons learned by corporate mentoring projects.
3. Research and document best practices regarding job retention strategies and supports for new immigrant employees.

I. Introduction

The mission of AHRE is “to provide a continuum of services and information that enables individuals to succeed in the changing workforce, fosters safe and healthy workplaces, and assists people in need.” Part of the department’s mandate is to assist immigrants to Alberta to make the transition to work.

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Objectives of the project were to:

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- Develop an inventory of career and employment programs in the Calgary region, including funding sources
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- Produce a final report detailing the project research, analysis of the findings and proposed recommendations to respond to identified needs

Methodology for this project included:

- A review of more than 30 statistical documents, reports, articles and 10 websites
- Compilation of an inventory of career and employment programs in the Calgary region, based on brochures, website information and telephone conversations
- A short questionnaire was given to 25 stakeholders: 10 funders and 15 providers. (See Appendices B & C for the questionnaires.) These stakeholders were given the option of responding by email or participating in a telephone interview. The majority chose a telephone interview.
- An additional 10 providers were contacted to obtain information about their employment-related programs or courses for inclusion in the inventory of programs and services in Section III of this report. (See Appendix D for a list of participants.)
- A preliminary presentation of the program inventory, interview findings and issue analysis was made to AHRE representatives for discussion.
- A draft report including proposed recommendations was prepared.
- A forum based on the project findings was held with a group of 35 stakeholders at the University of Calgary Red & White Club. This session provided an opportunity for stakeholders to review the program inventory, learn about the findings and provide feedback on the proposed recommendations. (See Appendix D for a list of participants.)

II. The Current Context for Career and Employment Programs for Immigrants

In order to understand the career and employment needs of recent immigrants, it is essential to know the context in which programs and services in Calgary and Edmonton are being offered. The following provides a brief overview of immigration statistics, current labour market and other issues facing immigrants and solutions proposed in the research.

1. Immigration to Alberta

There are different predictions about immigration and Canada's population. One theory is that immigration to Canada will likely account for net labour force growth by 2011; others say 2015. Projections indicate that immigration will account for total population growth by 2031.¹ With no immigration, Canada's population would slowly decline over the next 50 years.

In 2004, over 16,000 immigrants came to Alberta. The majority (85.7%) went to Calgary or Edmonton. On average over the past 10 years, Alberta has received 6 to 7% of Canada's immigrants each year, although Alberta has 10% of the population. A Canada West Foundation report suggests that the West's inability to draw a proportional share of immigrants will result in a "relatively tough road" in trying to fill labour shortages.²

New immigrants are, on the whole, a young and highly educated group. Immigrants landing in Alberta between 1995 and 1999 had higher education levels than immigrants who landed in Alberta between 1990 and 1994. Nearly half of immigrants to Alberta each year from 2001-2004 (49.4% in 2004) were between 25 and 44 years of age.³ Of newcomers to Alberta over the age of 19 in 2003, almost 60% possessed a university degree (i.e., Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate), trade certificate, or non-university diploma and in 2004 that number increased to 64.9%.⁴

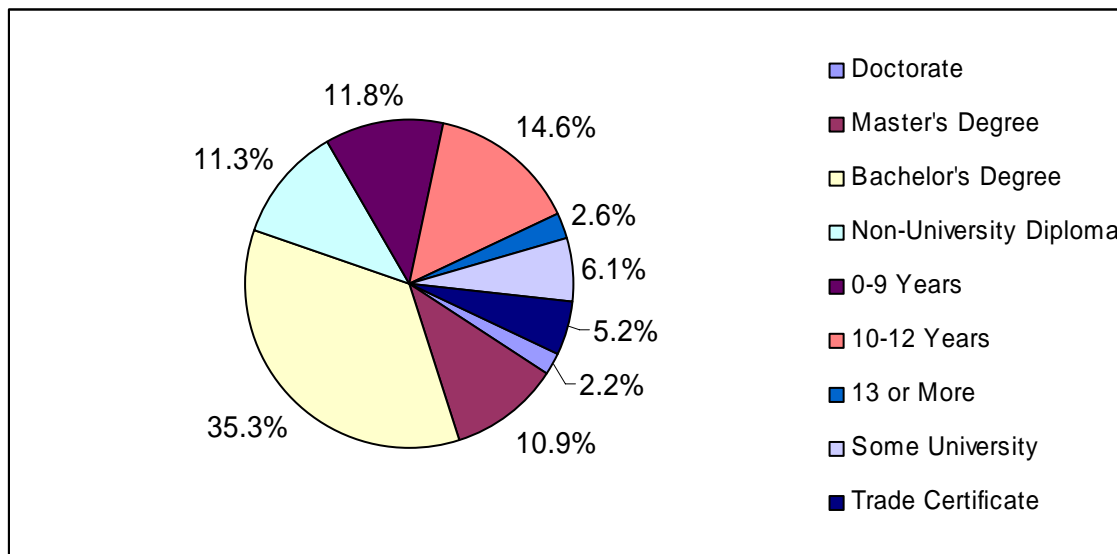
¹ Derek Cook and Valerie Preugger, "Attraction and Retention of Immigrants: Policy Implications for the City of Calgary," June 2003, PCERII Working Paper Series.

² Azmier, Jason J. for Canada West Foundation, *Improving Immigration: A Policy Approach for Western Canada*, March 2005.

³ Immigration to Alberta – Statistics, An Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2003 and An Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2004.

⁴ An Overview of Immigration to Alberta. 2004.

Immigration (19 years of age or older) to Alberta by Educational Attainment 2003



Source: *An Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2004*

With the new point system introduced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada in the late 1990's, immigrants were increasingly selected on the premise that the more education they had, the better they could meet labour market needs. The disconnect between the point system and what appears to be the true earning power of immigrants with foreign educational credentials leads to unmet expectations on the part of Canada, the host country, and the new immigrants.⁵ A Statistics Canada report points out that immigrant contributions to Canada are "central to the economic justification for relatively open immigration policies" and that there is "considerable concern regarding the deteriorating economic outcomes among recent immigrants over the past two decades."⁶ The Canada West Foundation found in its study that there is a "clear recognition of the current and future skilled labour shortage in Western Canada, but virtually no connection with immigration's role in supplying labour."⁷

Reports from settlement agencies in Calgary and Edmonton confirm a trend at both ends of the immigration spectrum, with the largest increase being among the more highly educated and a group, primarily refugees, with low education and English proficiency.⁸ Recent immigrants (those in Canada less than 10 years) were more likely to be in low-income jobs than those who immigrated prior

⁵ Alboim, Naomi, Ross Finnie, and Ronald Meng, "The Discounting of Immigrants' Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations." *IRPP Choices* 11, no.2. February, 2005. p.16.

⁶ Statistics Canada, Garnett Picot, *The Deteriorating Economic Welfare of Immigrants and Possible Causes 2005*, Research Paper 11F0019 No.222, July 2004. p. 5.

⁷ Jason J. Azmier for Canada West Foundation, *Improving Immigration: A Policy Approach for Western Canada*. March 2005. p.12.

⁸ Springboard Consulting for Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Education, Alberta Human Resources & Employment, *A Review of Adult ESL in Alberta*, April 2005.p.18.

to 1990. This is consistent with studies that show that it takes more than 10 years in Canada before the unemployment rate of immigrants falls to the level found among the Canadian born population.⁹ The average income from employment income and self-employment for both male and female immigrants was less from 1995-1999 than it was in the previous five-year period.

Immigrant learners in AHRE's Skills Investment programs tend to reflect this demographic trend. It is estimated that 70% of immigrant learners in AHRE's Skills Investment programs between 2003-04 (based on an estimate of 14,141 learners) participated in tuition-based training programs (academic upgrading, literacy, ESL, life management, pre-careers training and integrated training) and 30% in contracted programming which included Job Placement, Self Employment, Skills for Work, Temporary Programs and Training on the Job.¹⁰ This represents approximately 35% of the total population of learners.

The Profile of Immigrant Learners in Skills Investment Programs points out that the immigrant population in Skills Investment programs tends to be more highly educated and skilled than the general population of learners in these programs. It estimates that 45% of the immigrant population in these programs has a university degree. In addition, over 40% are professionals in the fields of Engineering, Medicine, Accounting, Information Technology and Teaching. The report states that "these results support the conclusion that skills shortages in these areas and others can be addressed by facilitating the entry of this immigrant population into the labour market."

2. Urban Demographics

New immigrants to Alberta prefer to settle in urban areas. In Alberta, between 2001 and 2003, almost 90% of new immigrants settled in larger centres, most going to Calgary (57.6%) or Edmonton (28.8%) In 2004, Calgary received 9,308 immigrants (56.5%) of the 16,469 immigrants who settled in Alberta, while Edmonton received 4,810 (29.2%).¹¹ Calgary and Edmonton are quite different: each city has its own context, labour market needs, industry trends and current programs and services for immigrants.

2.1 Calgary Demographics¹²

- Calgary's immigrant population (191,410) made up 20.9% of the total population (943,310) in 2001. (2001 Census of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003))

⁹ Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *CLBC Handbook on Immigration and Skills Shortages*, 2004. p.19

¹⁰ AHRE. *Profile of Immigrant Learners in Skills Investment Programs*, October 2004. Executive Summary.

¹¹ Alberta Human Resources and Employment. *An Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2004*.

¹² Data reported for Calgary refer to the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and provided by the City of Calgary. See "Facts about Calgary Immigrants", 2003.

http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/community_strategies/immigrant.pdf

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- 34.9% of Calgary's immigrant population arrived in Canada between 1991 and 2001; 65.1% immigrated before 1991. (Statistics Canada, 2002)
- An average of 6,904 new immigrants came to Calgary each year from 1982 to 2002. (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003) The overall trend in the last 20 years has been an increase in immigration, in particular for the periods 1985-1990 and 1998-2001.
- 56.6% of new immigrants to Calgary in 2002 were born in Asia. In 2002, for the fifth consecutive year, China, the Philippines and India were the leading countries of birth for immigrants to Calgary.

Top Immigrant Source Countries, Calgary, 2002 – 2005					
	2002	2003	2004	2005*	Grand Total
China	1059	1,615	1,451	1027	5152
India	1121	1001	853	523	3498
Philippines	661	851	941	612	3065
Pakistan	650	652	786	366	2454
United Kingdom	484	392	437	216	1529
Korea	486	401	227	119	1233
USA	197	231	339	190	957
Colombia	166	319	211	85	781
Iran	312	169	137	58	676
Russia	154	162	200	131	647

*Quarter 2, 2005

Source: AHRE Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2004.

New Immigrants' Top 10 Native Languages, Calgary					
Native Language	2002	2003	2004	2005*	Grand Total
Mandarin	880	1468	1319	957	4624
English	928	838	1069	561	3396
Tagalog	634	823	873	558	2888
Punjabi	866	874	755	376	2871
Urdu	545	543	572	266	1926
Spanish	383	567	570	307	1827
Russian	421	372	410	231	1434
Arabic	401	370	385	190	1346
Korean	481	403	229	118	1231
Other African	115	180	257	185	737

*Quarter 2, 2005

Source: Landing File, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Second Quarter, Release Date September 2005. Prepared by AHRE.

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- Countries that experienced highest growth in new immigrants to Calgary over the 1992-2002 period were Ukraine, Russia and Nigeria.

Countries that experienced high growth in new immigrants to Calgary CMA over the 1992-2002 period*						
	Number of Immigrants					
	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
Ukraine	2	17	33	48	117	163
Russia**	8	35	123	137	156	190
Nigeria	8	13	17	29	80	108
Colombia	14	12	18	60	166	175
Sudan	21	4	5	49	110	177
South Africa	26	59	34	86	144	125
Iran**	72	71	152	217	163	328
Afghanistan	48	12	82	71	142	177
Romania	77	76	125	94	193	197

Note:

*The countries shown experienced some of the highest percentage growths from 1992-2002; all contributed less than 100 new immigrants in 1992 and more than 100 new immigrants in 2002.

**These countries were in the "Top 10 Countries for Birth" for 2002 (Russia ranked 10th, Romania ranked 9th, and Iran ranked 7th).

Source: *Calgary & Region Socio-Economic Outlook 2005-2010*

- The most frequent age of both male and female new immigrants to Calgary was 26 to 35. This means that they are in their prime working years.
- Since the early 1990s, the percentage of new immigrants to Calgary who have completed university has risen substantially. 47.6% of new immigrants to Calgary in 2002 over the age of 18 held at least a Bachelor's degree or higher. This trend was due in part of changes to the selection criteria for immigrants that put greater emphasis on education.

New Immigrants (age 18 and over) by Education Level, Calgary CMA, 1982, 1992, 2002						
	1982		1992		2002	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No education	224	3.9%	326	5.2%	306	4.6%
Secondary or less	2,480	43.1%	3,416	54.1%	1,829	27.4%
Formal trade certificate or apprenticeship	694	12.1%	632	10.0%	315	4.7%
Non-university certificate or diploma	551	9.6%	453	7.2%	641	9.6%
Some university – no degree	395	6.9%	427	6.8%	403	6.0%
Bachelor's degree	1,038	18.0%	816	12.9%	2,258	33.8%
Master's degree	190	3.3%	149	2.4%	627	9.4%
Some post-graduate education – no degree	106	1.8%	50	0.8%	172	2.6%
Doctorate	61	1.1%	44	0.7%	120	1.8%
Unknown	14	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Source: *Calgary and Region Socio-Economic Outlook, 2005-2010*

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The following chart shows the education levels of immigrants arriving in Calgary in a particular year. It includes all immigrants age 15 and above.

Immigrants' Education Levels for Calgary					
	2002	2003	2004	2005*	GRAND TOTAL
0 to 9 years of schooling	1146	1164	1082	540	3932
10 to 12 years of schooling	1152	1154	1110	510	3926
13 or more years of schooling	574	634	593	295	2096
Bachelor's degree	2438	2540	2527	1546	9051
Doctorate	117	96	130	78	421
Master's degree	632	616	780	495	2523
Non-university diploma	630	726	689	394	2439
Trade Certificate	310	267	314	152	1043
GRAND TOTAL	6999	7197	7225	4010	25,431

*Quarter 3, 2005

Source: Landing File, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Second Quarter, Release Date September 2005. Prepared by AHRE.

The City of Calgary's "Facts about Calgary Immigrants" highlights the number of youth 12 – 25 years of age who do not speak English or French and comments: "With cuts to English as a Second Language Programs and arbitrary cut-offs for education at 18 years, young immigrants may not be prepared to integrate effectively into the Canadian labour market."¹³

The 2005 *Calgary and Region Socio-Economic Outlook* indicated that half of all immigrants to Calgary in 2004 were either Skilled Worker or Business Class, a slight increase from the previous year. This would indicate that new immigrants have a lot to offer Calgary.¹⁴

In Calgary the combination of slower labour force growth and the increasing demand for workers is likely to keep the unemployment rate at relatively low levels. For program planning purposes it is interesting to know that, overall, job growth in Calgary in 2004¹⁵ was largely due to construction activity in the institutional, health care, commercial and residential sectors. In addition, several head offices relocated to Calgary; there was increased investment in the oilsands and conventional oil; and renewed growth in the tourism industry in the mountain resorts. In 2004 Sales and Service occupations accounted for the largest number of jobs in Calgary, followed by Business, Finance and Administration, and Trades, Transport and Equipment Operations.

¹³ Facts about Calgary Immigrants. p.5.

¹⁴ *Calgary & Region Socio-Economic Outlook*, 2005-2010. p.122.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.109.

The continuing growth of Calgary and the young, highly educated immigrants that are settling in the city make it an excellent environment for successful career and employment programs that will assist these immigrants to apply their skills and to integrate into the society.

For Edmonton demographics, see Appendix A.

3. Issues Affecting Career and Employment Programming

There are a number of issues that ultimately affect the types of career and employment programming that is needed at this time. Among them are labour market issues and the situation and needs of recent immigrant groups.

3.1 Labour Market Issues

Alberta has a strong economy and is experiencing growth. It has the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and activity in many occupations and industries. A growing economy creates both opportunities and challenges. The economy is becoming increasingly diversified and sophisticated in its use of modern technology. A key challenge is the pressure on the demand for skilled labour and the supply of individuals with the right skills and abilities to meet that demand.¹⁶ In 2004, 24 out of 53 occupational groups in Alberta had an unemployment rate under 3%, one indicator of a shortage of skilled labour and a trend that is predicted to continue. By September 2005 that figure rose to 32 of the 53 occupational groups.

It is predicted that two out of every three new jobs added to Alberta's economy before 2008 will require post-secondary education¹⁷. Existing jobs will also require higher levels of education and skills. A Canada West Foundation survey found that of the 76 industry associations that responded to their survey, 62 indicated that there is evidence of "some to severe" shortages of skilled labour. When asked to forecast labour demand over the next five years, 73 of the 76 associations indicated that they expect "some to severe" shortages.¹⁸

An aging workforce and low fertility rates also contribute to the reason why Alberta will need to depend on immigrants to provide the skilled labour needed for continuing economic growth.¹⁹

Various figures are used to highlight the price tag on these wasted skills: The Conference Board of Canada has reported that more than 500,000 Canadians would earn an additional \$4.1 billion to \$5.9 billion annually if the experience and

¹⁶ Canada West Foundation. *Toward a Bright Future: Recommendations for Addressing Skills Shortages in Western Canada*. Todd Hirsch, Chief Economist. Building the New West Report #39, January 2005, p.2.

¹⁷ *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*, September 2004, Government of Alberta. p.1.

¹⁸ Canada West Foundation, *Toward a Bright Future*. p.3.

¹⁹ Almost half of the labour force in 2001 was between the ages of 37 and 55 and by 2011, half of this group will be over 55, and 18% over 60. Statistics Canada 2003a, as quoted by Timothy Owens in *The Labour Market Experience of Immigrants*. p.1.

credentials of Canadians (notably immigrants) were recognized in the workplace. In addition to the needless struggle faced by immigrants, the Canadian economy is paying a price.”²⁰ Another more conservative estimate is that the under-utilization of immigrants’ skills costs the Canadian economy about \$2 billion annually.²¹ Either way it is a considerable loss. The *CLBC Handbook* sums up this loss:

“Apart from issues of equity, health and well-being, or social cohesion, Canadians should be concerned about a deepening transition penalty because it constitutes an increasingly protracted under-utilization of labour and skills, which is particularly important in light of growing concerns about skills shortages.”²²

3.2 Immigrants’ Deteriorating Earnings

It has been observed in a number of studies that the work experience from immigrants’ home countries is increasingly being discounted in the Canadian labour market. In the 1990s new immigrants did not integrate into the Canadian labour market as quickly as previous groups of immigrants. This is in spite of the fact that on the whole the average level of education of these new immigrants was higher than previous immigrant groups and than the Canadian average. Their employment rate was lower and they earned less than the Canadian average.²³ A year of university education, for example, when converted to earnings in the labour market, was worth less to recent immigrants in the late 1990s than during the 1960s.²⁴

A number of possible explanations are offered for the decline in relative entry-level earnings and rising low income among recent immigrants²⁵ Researchers, however, point out the challenge of obtaining evidence on *which* of a number of underlying factors accounts for this “discounting” of immigrants’ human capital investments.²⁶

Underlying factors include the following:

- A change in the source regions of increasing numbers of immigrants, which includes Eastern Europe, South Asia (India, Pakistan), East Asia (China, Korea, Japan), Western Asia (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan) and Africa.

²⁰*Towards Prosperity: a national and provincial perspective on the need to utilize immigrant skills.* Centre for Research and Education in Human Services.p.6.

²¹ Reitz, Jeffrey G, “Tapping Immigrants’ Skills: New Directions for Canadian Immigration Policy in the Knowledge Economy”, *IRPP Choices*, vol. 11, no. 1, February, 2005. p.18.

²² *CLBC Handbook – Immigration and Skills Shortages.* p.18.

²³ McIsaac, Elizabeth. *Immigrants in Canadian Cities: Census 2001 – What do the data tell us?* Policy Options, May 2003. p.58.

²⁴ Garnett Picot for Statistics Canada, *The Deteriorating Economic Welfare of Immigrants and Possible Causes 2005*, Research Paper11F0019 No.222, July 2004. p.17.

²⁵ *The Deteriorating Economic Welfare of Immigrants and Possible Causes*, p.16.

²⁶ Alboim, Naomi, Ross Finnie, and Ronald Meng, “The Discounting of Immigrants’ Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations.” *IRPP Choices*, volume 11, no.2, 2005. p.3.

- Less proficient English language skills that prevent the application of skills and education qualifications. Not surprisingly, language and communication skills are related to productivity and wages.
- Racial or cultural discrimination is also a factor since the number of visible minority immigrants has increased significantly. However there is little data to reliably estimate the effect of this factor. It should be noted that the discrepancies are not a matter of skin colour alone, since Canadian-born visible minorities experience no discounting of their education and experience.²⁷
- Credentialism is also a factor. Institutions such as professional regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions and employers may not be familiar with the qualifications that recent immigrants are presenting and thus are less able to assess them appropriately. Several reports also point out that there may also be real differences in the qualifications being presented and gaps in specific competencies that need to be filled.²⁸

In “The Discounting of Immigrants’ Skills in Canada”²⁹ the point is made that with the appropriate interventions, “immigrants should benefit from higher incomes and from other economic, social and psychological advantages associated with faster and greater integration into the Canadian labour market, while the Canadian economy should benefit from a better utilization of the skills that immigrants bring to this country and from their reduced dependence on income support and other social assistance programs.”

3.3 The Situation of Visible Minority Immigrants

A study done by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation found that during the census period (1996 to 2001), even though the visible minority population of Canada was growing faster than the national average, visible minority groups did not advance proportionately in the labour market and continued to have higher rates of unemployment, and experience a double digit income gap.³⁰ The gap occurred regardless of educational attainment, and was identifiable among those who are university educated as well as those with high school education.

The study also pointed out how visible minority immigrants are over-represented in low paying occupations such as textile (sewing machine operators and labourers in textile processing, for example), light manufacturing (electronic assemblers) and service sector jobs (taxi and limo drivers), and under-represented in better paying, more secure jobs (senior management, professionals, etc.). One area where the researchers found them to be faring

²⁷ Alboim, Naomi et al., p.14.

²⁸ McIsaac, Elizabeth, “Immigrants in Canadian Cities: Census 2001 – What do the data tell us?” *Policy Options*, May 2003.p.62.

²⁹ Alboim, Naomi et al., p.15.

³⁰ Teelucksingh, Cheryl and Grace-Edward Galabuzi, *Working Precariously: The impact of race and immigrants’ status on employment opportunities and outcomes in Canada*, Canadian Race Relations Foundation website, www.crr.ca p.3.

better is in the information technology industry, with software engineers, computer engineers and computer programmers.

3.4 Challenges Faced by Immigrant Professionals

Researchers acknowledge that there has been recent interest and attention to the process of accreditation. In spite of this, internationally educated professionals and tradespeople continue to be frustrated and disappointed as they confront barriers to the conversion of their education, skills and experience into equivalent credentials and licenses.³¹

In 2004 Alberta Learning and Alberta Human Resources and Employment collaborated with Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Community Development and Alberta Economic Development and 40 other stakeholders to produce a strategy entitled: *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*.³² This document identifies the challenges faced by skilled immigrants in the areas of:

- occupation-specific information
- assessment of all kinds (language, academic credentials, training, work experience)
- specialized advice and counselling
- bridging programs to fill gaps
- workplaces receptive to employing them.

Canada Labour and Business Centre's *CLBC Handbook – Immigration & Skill Shortages*³³ identifies the following major contributors to immigrant under-employment:

- poor pre-migration information
- transferability and lack of understanding of the credentialing process
- level of English language proficiency
- lack of Canadian work experience
- limited access to bridging programs

Similarly, the Canada West Foundation includes “recognition of skills of immigrants by employers” and “working with employers in terms of allowing opportunity for immigrants at proper levels” as priority issues.³⁴ The same study also refers to “negative attitudes towards immigrants in Alberta” as a barrier to attracting and retaining immigrants³⁵.

³¹ Teelucksingh, Cheryl and Grace-Edward Galabuzi, p.4.

³² *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*, September 2004. Government of Alberta. P.10
This document notes that these challenges are confirmed in numerous other recent studies. Footnote 15.

³³ *CLBC Handbook on Immigration and Skills Shortages*, p. 17.

³⁴ *Improving Immigration: A Policy Approach for Western Canada*. March 2005. p.15.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.15.

3.5 The Need for Programming for Immigrants with Lower Education Levels

With all the present attention on skilled immigrants, it is important to realize that immigrants with less education can make a valuable contribution to the labour market. Martin Papillon in *Immigration, Diversity and Social Inclusion in Canada's Cities*³⁶ states that it is important to invest in skills training and education for newcomers who lack skills and recognized credentials. Contrary to what many say, Papillon thinks that immigrants with higher levels of human capital (education and experience) are generally thought to integrate more easily into the labour market. Without appropriate support, many less educated immigrants "find themselves dependent on government support for a lengthy period." Immigrants with lower education and literacy levels must continue to be included on the service continuum along with the more highly educated immigrants.

3.6 The Need for Effective Programming for Immigrant Youth

For the purposes of this AHRE study, youth are the group between ages 18-24. Service Canada (formerly HRSDC) defines youth as 15-30. Immigrant youth, in general, are less likely to have work experience than Canadian-born youth, and recent immigrant youth more so than immigrant youth who have been in the country longer. Visible minority immigrant youth are more likely to be unemployed than those who do not belong to a visible minority group.³⁷

Similar to the situation for adults, a lack of familiarity with Canadian work culture, language proficiency and the lack of a social network are barriers for immigrant youth, often in addition to a lack of education and work experience. Language skills appropriate for the workplace can especially be a problem for youth who immigrated in their late teens or early 20's.

In spite of their growing presence, newcomer youth seem to have fallen into the "integration limbo", too young to benefit from programs for adults, but too old for those aimed at children.³⁸ Youth in one study were found to regard employment counselling programs negatively in part because they operated from the erroneous expectation that they would be found a job when in fact the agencies or programs had only notices of low-paying jobs that attracted many applicants.³⁹ The same study found that ethno-specific agencies have a more holistic approach to youth and use an approach that involves outreach to the whole family, which may in some cases be more successful than the "individualistic" approach used by many agencies. The main challenge is finding an appropriate delivery model that will attract youth and help them become successful in mainstream society.

³⁶ Canadian Policy Research Networks. *Immigration, Diversity and Social Inclusion in Canada's Cities*. Martin Papillon. Discussion Paper F/27, Family Network. Dec.2002. p.4.

³⁷ Human Resources Development Canada. *Being Young and Visible: Labour Market Access among Immigrant and Visible Minority Youth*. May 2003. Jean Lock Kunz. p.2

³⁸ *Being Young and Visible*, p.8, citing Kilbride and Anisef. *To Build on Hope*.

³⁹ Kilbride, Kenise and Paul Anisef, *To Build on Hope: Overcoming the Challenges Facing Newcomer Youth at Risk in Ontario*, CERIS, October 2001.

The Review of Adult ESL in Alberta recognizes the lack of appropriate programming for immigrant youth and recommends transitional programming to facilitate their access to employment options.⁴⁰ The Skills Investment Division's *Profile of Immigrant Learners*⁴¹ also recommends programs targeting immigrant youth who come to Canada as teens or young adults. This research also points out that there is a need to identify effective practices for employment programs for this group.

3.7 The Need for More Employer Involvement

Employer involvement is essential to the success of employment programs for immigrants. Much of the research refers to the importance of having employers as partners in employment programs and calls for more work experience opportunities. For example, the *Profile of Immigrant Learners* recommends making more on-the-job training available to compensate for immigrants' lack of Canadian work experience and skill sets that may need to be upgraded.⁴² The Canada West Foundation⁴³ proposes involving employers in "more advanced language training" so that it is geared to the skills needed for working in a particular occupation or field. The report refers to "in-job language programs" as needing to be developed and funded.

Internships and mentoring programs, often cited as effective interventions, rely on the interest and support of employers. Program providers need extensive contacts in the business community, not only in the larger corporations but also in small to medium-sized businesses, where there may be opportunities.

3.8 Summary of Key Issues

The three most important factors in finding appropriate employment are education, language or communication skills and prior relevant experience.⁴⁴ All of these are dependent on the appropriate recognition of skills and experience or, in the case of youth and others with little or no work experience, the acquisition of those skills and experience. Career and employment services for recent immigrants are intended to facilitate immigrants' transition and promote integration. Public and employer attitudes at any given time also promote integration into the labour market.

Timing is crucial. Obtaining appropriate work experience soon after arriving in Canada increases immigrants' confidence and labour market outcomes. The *CLBC Handbook*⁴⁵ refers to the "transition penalty" ("the more education, the deeper the penalty") that immigrants encounter and an increasingly large under-

⁴⁰ *Review of Adult ESL*, p.77.

⁴¹ Howard Research for AHRE, *Skills Investment Division: Profile of Immigrant Learners Involved in Skills Investment Programs*, October 2004,

⁴² *Profile of Immigrant Learners*, p. vii.

⁴³ *Improving Immigration: A Policy Approach for Western Canada*, p.19

⁴⁴ Owen, Timothy, World Education Services, *The labour market experience of immigrants*. Paper at The Future of Lifelong Learning and Work, OISE/University of Toronto, June 2005. p.1.

⁴⁵ *CLBC Handbook*, p.18 & 20.

utilization of labour and skills, which is particularly important in light of growing concerns about skill shortages.

The key issues discussed in the research can be summarized as follows:

- The need to facilitate immigrants' entry into the Canadian labour market at a level commensurate with their skills and experience in a timely manner. This is a labour market, societal need as much as an individual one.
- The importance of programs tailored to the participants who need them, whether they are immigrant professionals, immigrants with little formal education or immigrant youth. It is important to be aware of the expertise required by staff to deliver such specialized programs.
- The need for employment programs to be able to serve larger numbers of participants. The nature of program components such as work experience and internships works against this, since one-on-one assistance and support is required.
- More employers need to be active partners in the employment process and in programs designed to transition immigrants into the work force. Employers seem to be slow to appreciate the untapped resources of immigrant workers.

4. Key Strategies

Numerous reports propose strategies for overcoming the well-documented barriers faced by recent immigrants, some in more detail and specificity than others. The following is a selection of those suggestions.

4.1 Assessment

Assessment, whether of credentials, skills, abilities or interests, is a necessary starting point for recent immigrants. *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy* includes assessment as one of the key components of its strategy. It points out the need to go beyond the limited scope and accessibility of current assessment services offered by professional regulatory bodies, colleges. Alboim and colleagues⁴⁶ call for a "full assessment" of an individual's education and experience, followed by a determination of the gaps (if any) between those assets and what is required to bring the individual up to the Canadian equivalent.

4.2 Career counselling

Counselling immigrants on their career paths can be a challenging task and requires special expertise. Knowledge of the various options and pathways specific to an occupation or profession is increasingly required as providers see more immigrants with high levels of education and expertise.

The HRDC report "*Being Young and Visible: Labour Market Success among Immigrant and Visible Minority Youth*" calls for career and employment

⁴⁶ Alboim, Finnie and Meng, *The Discounting of Immigrants' Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations*.

counselling that help youth find meaningful employment” The report states that this is more important for one’s economic well-being than “just having a job”.⁴⁷ *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy* recommends monitoring the progress and effectiveness of counselling services for skilled immigrants.

4.3 Bridging Programs

To assist with the transition to employment, bridging programs are singled out as “gap-filling educational and experiential measures” and a “catch-up process”⁴⁸. Bridging programs are a way of bridging to licensure or employment, filling gaps in academic skills, language, and work experience. Most bridging programs have common elements:

- occupation-specific terminology
- communication training
- information on the Canadian workplace context for practice of the occupation,
- a work experience or internship
- counselling

Using a modularized approach, these programs can accommodate immigrants’ needs “in ways not reflected in the degree/diploma-focused system currently in place in Canada.”⁴⁹

The authors of “The Discounting of Immigrants’ Skills in Canada” refer to positive results from initial bridging programs in Ontario, such as those for midwives, internationally trained nurses and pharmacists. However, they point out that the challenge is that the programs are offered to a relatively few individuals in a few occupations.

A report for the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services⁵⁰ in 2004 looked at bridging programs in Canada. The following components were included in the largest number of bridging programs:

- introduction to Canadian workplace culture
- work experience or job shadowing
- vocation-specific language training
- technical training or review in field of expertise
- mentoring component
- evaluation of foreign credentials

The report stresses the importance of taking an individualized approach in order to focus on a client’s strengths and skill gaps. Partnerships with employers and agencies are identified as being pivotal to the success of bridging programs. The

⁴⁷ HRDC, *Being Young and Visible*, p.8.

⁴⁸ Alboim, Finnie and Meng. p. 19.

⁴⁹ Alboim, Finnie and Meng. p. 19.

⁵⁰ FuturEd Inc. for BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services, *Bridging Program Benchmarks, Recommendations and Evaluation Framework*, May 2004.

report also recommends that governments assist the bridging process by providing access to wage subsidy programs.

On the subject of bridging programs, the recent *Review of Adult ESL in Alberta*⁵¹ proposes that the government fund “more integrated language training in a broader selection of sectors and occupations for foreign-trained immigrants, assisting them to “fast track” into their chosen field. The study also recommends that when funding is provided for “pilot” programs, at least two iterations of the program should be supported so that program planners and instructors can fine-tune the content and process. This would assist providers to develop mechanisms for providing integrated language programs on a sustained basis for as long as they meet the labour market demand. Developing a niche and expertise in certain sectors or occupations should make it easier to attract qualified staff.

4.4 Volunteer placements

Volunteer placements are one way of obtaining Canadian work experience. They appear to be most effective if immigrants are matched to jobs similar to their education and experience. Participants in a study on volunteer work placements for immigrants indicated that informal learning was more significant than formal job-related training they received.⁵² Among the most important learning acquired were communication/English language skills (40%), the value of networking (36%), knowledge of Canadian workplace practices (25%), adapting to and understanding “Canadian culture (16%), increased self-confidence (16%) and working in a diverse workforce (13%). Very few participants mentioned technical or “hard” skills developed specifically from the volunteer work placement. Most of their learning was acquired through informal contacts with others, including discussions with other volunteer and staff members, observation and unofficial mentoring.

4.5 Employer Incentives

One way of encouraging employer involvement in work experience or internships programs for immigrants that is often proposed is to provide subsidies to employers.

However, employers first need to see for themselves the value in hiring skilled immigrants and overcoming labour shortages. That may be the biggest incentive. *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy* proposes developing a plan for increasing “community and business involvement”⁵³ in initiatives that help immigrants feel welcome, respected and included in the workplace.

⁵¹ Springboard Consulting Inc., *A Review of Adult ESL in Alberta*. April 2005. Prepared for Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Education and Alberta Human Resources & Employment. p. 76.

⁵² Schugurensky, Daniel, Bonnie Slade and Yang Luo. “Can volunteer work help me get a job in my field?”: *On learning, immigration and labour markets*. Paper at The Future of Lifelong Learning and Work, OISE/University of Toronto, June 2005. p. 5-7.

⁵³ *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*, p. 16.

With such a low unemployment rate in Alberta, now is an opportune time for funders, service providers, institutions and employers to build programs and partnerships that will speed up the effective integration of immigrants into the work force. The issues can be dealt with and the groundwork has already been laid for successful strategies.

III. Inventory of Career and Employment Programs

An inventory of programs and services in Calgary provides a picture of the current offerings available to immigrants making the transition to work. The listing below groups the programs by type. The tables that follow are a more complete inventory of the programs, their funding sources, client groups and the goals and elements that make up the programs.

A. Overview of Programs by Type of Program

Career and Employment Services

- ❑ Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers (Bow Valley College) – specifically 24 construction trades and regulated occupations: engineering, finance and accounting, health occupations, legal and education
- ❑ Employment Resource Action Centre (CMCN)
- ❑ Employment Services - Centre d'Accueil pour les Nouveaux Arrivants Francophones (Le R.O.C.C. Inc.)

Work Experience Programs

- ❑ Canadian Employment Skills (YWCA)
- ❑ Work Experience for Immigrants (BVC)

Specific Occupational Training

There are two types of occupational training: one that adds to or updates skills that immigrants already possess (such as the Engineering and Technology Upgrading Program and the Electrician Upgrading Program) and one that teaches them new skills (such as Health Care Aide, Glazier or Drilling Rig Hand training.) Some of the latter type may, however, include a mix of participants: those who have worked in the same field or a related occupation and those who are learning new skills.

Occupational training courses offered in Calgary are:

- ❑ Clerical Training; Office Practices & Procedures (CIES)
- ❑ Collective Kitchens Catering (CMCN)
- ❑ Drilling Rig Hand Training (CCIS)
- ❑ Engineering & Technology Upgrading Program (CCIS)
- ❑ Electrician Upgrading & Certification (CCIS)
- ❑ Floor Coverings Training (CCIS)
- ❑ Glazier (CMCN)
- ❑ Health Care Aide (CMCN)
- ❑ Interpreting for Justice Certificate (BVC)
- ❑ Millwright Pre-apprenticeship Training (CCIS)
- ❑ Receptionist Training (CIWA)

AHRE Employment Programs with Significant Numbers of Immigrant Participants

There are a number of AHRE-funded programs offered in Calgary that, although they are open to any Albertans, have a significant percentage of participants who are immigrants. These include:

- Bow Valley College – Career Connection (downtown location)
- Prospect Human Services Society - Advantage 50 Plus
- McBride Career Group- Workplace Training
- Mennonite Central Committee – Self-Employment
- Mennonite Central Committee – Women’s Venture Program
- Motive Action Training Foundation - Automotive Repair Training (for youth)
- Youth Employment Centre

Services for Immigrants

The following organizations offer services to immigrants but not specific employment programs for immigrants at this time:

- Calgary Chinese Community Service Association
- Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
- Calgary Multicultural Centre
- Columbia College
- Educere Learning Centre
- Jewish Family Service

Specializing in youth, The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth provides services to immigrant youth only up to the end of high school so it is not eligible to receive AHRE funding.

The following program descriptions include:

- Career and employment programs and services
- Employment-oriented programs for youth
- Employment readiness programs
- Enhanced Language Training projects
- Employment-oriented part-time courses

Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary

**B. Career and Employment Programs and Services for Immigrants in Calgary
Current as of September 2005**

Organization, Program & Funder	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Program/Service
Bow Valley College <i>Work Experience for Immigrants</i> (AHRE)	<p>Skilled immigrants (in Canada 10 years or less)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unemployed (part-time work of up to 20 hours per week is allowed) ▪ minimum CLB L/S 6 R/W 5 ▪ can be on EI, IS or eligible for EI Reachback <p>Annual client capacity: 110</p>	<p>To assist skilled immigrants to access meaningful employment using the qualifications and experience gained in their native countries.</p> <p>Full-time program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ employment-related ESL (10 weeks) – including work culture, job search and job maintenance skills ▪ work experience (6 weeks) – that takes advantage of education and work history ▪ job-finding support for 6 months after completion
Bow Valley College <i>Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers</i> (AHRE)	<p>Skilled immigrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at least 2 years work experience in profession or trade in home country ▪ minimum CLB 6 ▪ specific assistance for those in the trades and 6 identified regulated occupations <p>Annual client capacity: level 1 – 1,000; level 2 – 400; level 3 – 200</p>	<p>To assist skilled immigrants to restart their career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ self-directed resources: website & information resource centre ▪ orientations to resources and services ▪ industry and sector-specific information workshops ▪ individual coaching sessions ▪ group follow-up and networking activities within specific industries
Bow Valley College <i>Interpreting for Justice Certificate Program</i> (AHRE)	<p>Unemployed immigrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ working less than 20 hours ▪ minimum CLB L/S8, R7, W6 ▪ high school diploma or equivalent ▪ fluent in one of the specified languages <p>Annual client capacity: 32</p>	<p>To be a self-employed interpreter to agencies connected with the legal and justice systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9 weeks full-time, including language & computer labs ▪ topics include intro to entrepreneurial skills, interpreting skills, legal system ▪ deal with interpreting in different occupational settings for courtroom interpreting
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society <i>Engineering & Technology Upgrading Program</i> (AHRE)	<p>Immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ post-secondary degree in engineering, geology or geophysics ▪ preference to EI recipients ▪ CLB 6-8 <p>Annual client capacity: 15</p>	<p>To facilitate integration into the local engineering industry; promote employability in the participants' related fields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ skills training: communication, business computer applications, project management, job search strategies (13 weeks) ▪ AutoCAD training (5 weeks) – SAIT ▪ practicum (12 weeks)

Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary

Organization & Funder	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Program/Service
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Drilling Rig Hand Training (AHRE)	Immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preference to recipients of EI or SFI ▪ CLB 5 Annual client capacity: 15	To obtain entry level position in drilling industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ upgrading: English, math, work & life management, occupational health & safety (10 weeks) ▪ occupational training at Petroleum Industry Training Services (PITS) (2 weeks) ▪ work experience on rig (1 week) & practicum (2 weeks) ▪ employment placement support on completion
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society <i>Electrician Upgrading & Certification Program</i> (AHRE)	Immigrants who have electrical journeyman status from country of origin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ proof of at least 6 years of electrician work experience ▪ Grade 10 equivalent ▪ preference for recipients of EI or provincial Income Support. Annual client capacity: 60	To obtain electrical journeymen status in Canada: 22 weeks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ electrical code and applied theory: SAIT ▪ skills training; WHMIS ▪ English and workplace communication, life and work management, job hunting skills ▪ work experience ▪ employment placement on completion
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Floor Coverings Training (AHRE)	Immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preference for recipients of EI or provincial Income Support. Annual client capacity: 16	Pre-apprenticeship training: 31 weeks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training: occupational English, occupational health and safety, work skills, customer service (10 weeks) ▪ occupational training: SAIT (15 weeks) ▪ practicum (6 weeks) ▪ employment placement on completion
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Millwright Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program (AHRE)	Immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ preference for recipients of EI or provincial Income Support ▪ Grade 11 with strong math and science Annual client capacity: 28	To complete first year apprenticeship as a millwright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 30 weeks ▪ upgrading: math, science, English, communication skills, occupational health & safety, work & life management skills (14 weeks) ▪ millwright training: SAIT (12 weeks) ▪ work experience (4 weeks) ▪ employment placement on completion
Calgary Immigrant Education Society <i>Clerical Training (United Way)</i>	Immigrants with previous experience in clerical positions but lacking skills to get employment in Canada Annual client capacity: 90	To train students to get entry-level clerical jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ classroom training on basic computer and clerical skills (60 hours) ▪ volunteer job placement (20 hours)

Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary

Organization, Program & Funder	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Program/Service
Calgary Immigrant Education Society <i>Office Practices & Procedures</i> (Anonymous donor)	Immigrants with previous experience in clerical positions but lacking skills to get employment in Canada Annual client capacity: 90	To train students to get entry level clerical jobs or secure their present positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ classroom training for more advanced computer and clerical skills (60 hours) ▪ volunteer job placement (20 hours)
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association <i>Receptionist Training Program</i> (Corporate funding)	Immigrant women with previous experience in administration, computers, office and CLB 7 Annual client capacity: 20	To assist women to find receptionist/office work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training (74 hours): communication, customer service, time management, business culture etc. ▪ 3 placements: 2 within CIWA and one with a company (total of 50 hours) ▪ partnership with U of C to provide customized computer training
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers <i>Employment Resource Action Centre</i> (AHRE)	Unemployed and underemployed immigrants 10 years or less in Canada Annual client capacity: level 1 – 1,000; level 2 – 829; level 3 – 433	To assist immigrants with language and cultural barriers with their career and employment needs and preparation to enter the job market. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counselling and facilitation in first languages. ▪ Level 1: service for independent job seekers including job search supports such as internet, fax, job boards and publications ▪ Level 2: counsellor assessment; workshops, assistance to develop plans for finding work; follow-up and support throughout work search ▪ Level 3: needs determination and individual counselling for career transition and decision-making
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers <i>Skills Investment Program – Health Care Aide and Glazier</i> (AHRE)	Unemployed and underemployed immigrants 10 years or less in Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EI recipients and other Albertans Annual client capacity: Health Care Aide – 36; Glazier – 9	To provide integrated training to immigrants who are destined to work in health care (health care aide) and the glazier trade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 32-34 weeks ▪ development of a skills investment plan ▪ academic upgrading to grade 10 level; life management skills, job search strategies (16 weeks) ▪ occupational training and work experience in occupational area: Health Care Aide (BVC – 18 weeks) and Glazier Trade (SAIT – 16 weeks) work experience in occupational areas ▪ Partners: BVC and SAIT

Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary

Organization, Program & Funder	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Program/Service
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers <i>Collective Kitchens Catering</i> (United Way & sales revenue)	Immigrant women facing significant barriers to finding their first job in Canada Annual client capacity: 40	To provide employment experience and training opportunities for immigrant women who are facing significant barriers Approximately 3 months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ paid work experience (part-time, on-call, temporary) ▪ training activities re: working in a commercial kitchen; finding and keeping employment in Canada ▪ peer support activities - social support networks, community resources etc. ▪ Partner: Calgary Health Region
MCC Employment Development <i>Occupational Training: Plumbing, Welding, Carpentry, Pipefitting</i> (AHRE)	Immigrants (in Canada 10 years or less) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLB 4 preferred • EI and Reachback, Income Support Annual client capacity:36	To prepare participants for a career in a trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ comprehensive upgrading (12 weeks): English, Math, Science, Employability/Life Skills ▪ technical training (8 weeks): theoretical and hand skills in the trade, first aid, CPR, WHMIS, safety ▪ work experience (5 weeks) ▪ job placement and ongoing support for 6 months
Le R.O.C.C. Inc. <i>Centre d'Accueil pour les Nouveaux Arrivants Francophones (CANAF)</i> (CIC)	Francophone immigrants Annual client capacity: 200	To provide service in French including: goal setting and development of an action plan, access to resources, referrals to employment services
YWCA <i>Canadian Employment Skills Program</i> (AHRE)	Immigrants (in Canada 10 years or less) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intermediate ESL (L/S 6, R 5, W5) ▪ Unemployed, EI and Reachback, Income Support ▪ Occupational skills, training and experience from country of origin Annual client capacity: 66	Goals: to assist immigrants in finding viable employment; to prepare immigrants for work in Canada; to support immigrants in maintaining employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canadian workplace culture (6 weeks): adapting to the workplace, English upgrading, job readiness, computer training, tours/speakers ▪ work experience (10 weeks) ▪ job search assistance (3 weeks)
Youth in Motion Foundation New Horizons Mentoring Program (Calgary Foundation & corporate funding)	Immigrant women 18-35 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New to Canada ▪ Unemployed or underemployed ▪ Not in school full-time Annual client capacity: 25	To assist and support participants by matching them with a mentor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ part-time program (6 months) ▪ a series of practical workshops on employment-related topics ▪ mentors who provide mentees with insight into working life in Canada and help them get employed

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Employment-Oriented Programs for Youth

Organization, Program & Funder	Client Group	Goal and elements of Program/Service
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society <i>Signposts for Youth</i> (HRSDC)	Immigrant & refugee youth (15-30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unemployed and not receiving EI Annual client capacity: 15	To provide participants the tools and knowledge to gain Canadian work experience and build a plan of action for employment and/or continued education (32 weeks). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ life skills & work management: goal setting, communication, problem solving, work ethic, job preparation (12 weeks) ▪ work experience (20 weeks) ▪ job search support for up to 2 weeks
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society Youth Industry Internship Program (HRSDC)	Immigrant & refugee youth (18-30), out of school and not eligible for EI or Reachback benefits Annual client capacity: 30	To assist immigrant youth to find and retain long-term employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ group based employment preparation workshops, guest speakers ▪ work experience (14 weeks) ▪ job search support
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society <i>Youth Skills Connection Centre</i> (HRSDC)	Immigrant & refugee youth (15-30), out of school and not eligible for EI or Reachback benefits Annual client capacity: 200 (outreach)	To assist youth having difficulty identifying career goals and who are facing challenges integrating into the Canadian workplace. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ individual outreach, referrals, resource centre, computer access, assessment, career planning, follow-up
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers Youth Possibilities Program (HRSDC)	Highly barriered immigrant youth aged 15-25 Annual client capacity: 30	To help youth facing barriers to employment develop a broad range of skills, knowledge and work experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 24 weeks with components integrated throughout: ▪ life management skills ▪ community services project and volunteer experience ▪ case management and mentorship to support and help participants to apply learning ▪ outdoor education
YMCA <i>New Horizons</i> (HRSDC)	Immigrant & refugee youth (16-30), unemployed or under-employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not in school and not on EI during the last three years Annual client capacity: 42	To assist youth in making a healthy transition to the labour market and/or further education by focusing on improving skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ life skills, goal setting and leadership (12 weeks) ▪ skills for finding & keep a job (6 weeks) ▪ work experience (24 weeks)

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**Employment Readiness Programs
Funded through the Integrated Service Program (ISP) AHRE & CIC**

Organization & Workshop/Program	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Program/Service
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Employment Communication Workshop	Immigrants in Canada for 3 years or less Annual client capacity: 120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ job search competencies workshop (30 hours) ▪ business communication workshop(90 hours)
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Career Bridge Workshop	Immigrant and refugee newcomers Annual client capacity: 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 3-week program offered in English and other languages to meet the needs of newcomers ▪ Groups on job search strategies, interview preparation, networking, etc.
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association Skills Training & Employment Services	Immigrant women Annual client capacity: 135	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ individual employment counselling ▪ workshops: resume preparation, workplace communication, interview techniques, e-applications, etc.
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association Making Changes Employment Association <i>Making Changes Program</i> (ISP and Wild Rose Foundation)	Immigrant women, the majority of whom have been in Canada less than 3 years Annual client capacity: 40 + 20 (WR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ part-time life skills and pre-employment orientation ▪ information about Canada, the labour market, job search skills etc.

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Enhanced Language Training Projects (AHRE & CIC)

The emphasis of Enhanced Language Training (ELT), referred to in Alberta as Integrated Language Training (ILT) is on increasing language proficiency. The following programs were offered in 2004/05. 2005 project approvals had not been announced at the time this research was done.

Organization & Project	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Project
Bow Valley College <i>Language & Practice Enhancement for Internationally Trained Counsellors</i>	Foreign-trained social workers and psychologists wishing to obtain accreditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At CLB 6 or higher Annual client capacity: 12	To help participants integrate into the counselling culture and profession and achieve professional accreditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ part-time program offered two evenings (3 hours) and all day Saturday (6 hours) ▪ classroom learning (250 hours) ▪ related work experience (200 hours)
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Integrated Language Enhancement	Foreign trained tradespeople and a limited number of professionals over the age of 40 Annual client capacity: 30	To increase language proficiency and assist participants to find employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ occupational language development including job search and labour market preparation workshops (14 weeks) ▪ unpaid work experience (4 weeks)
Calgary Immigrant Education Society <i>Enhanced Language Training</i>	Immigrant professionals for whom English is the main barrier to getting professional jobs Annual client capacity: 24	To assist immigrant professionals to attain employment in their fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CLB 8 training (800 hours or approximately 8 months) ▪ paid or voluntary workplace practicum (2months)
Maple Leaf Academy <i>English for Professionals: Training for Career Development</i>	Foreign-trained professionals with university degrees and work experience in business management, engineering, natural sciences and math or oil and gas related industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At CLB 6 Annual client capacity: 24	To increase language skills and provide Canadian work experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 strands: 1 part-time (308 hours over 9 months) and 1 full-time (378 hours over 7 months) ▪ classroom learning (language and workplace culture) 3 months ▪ paid or unpaid work experience (3 months) with additional supported classroom learning for some students
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology <i>Ready to Teach</i>	Immigrants with an MA or PhD who have taught in the post-secondary system in their countries Annual client capacity: 16	To increase participants' ability to obtain employment related to their qualifications in post-secondary institutions

Another bridging program piloted in 2004-2005

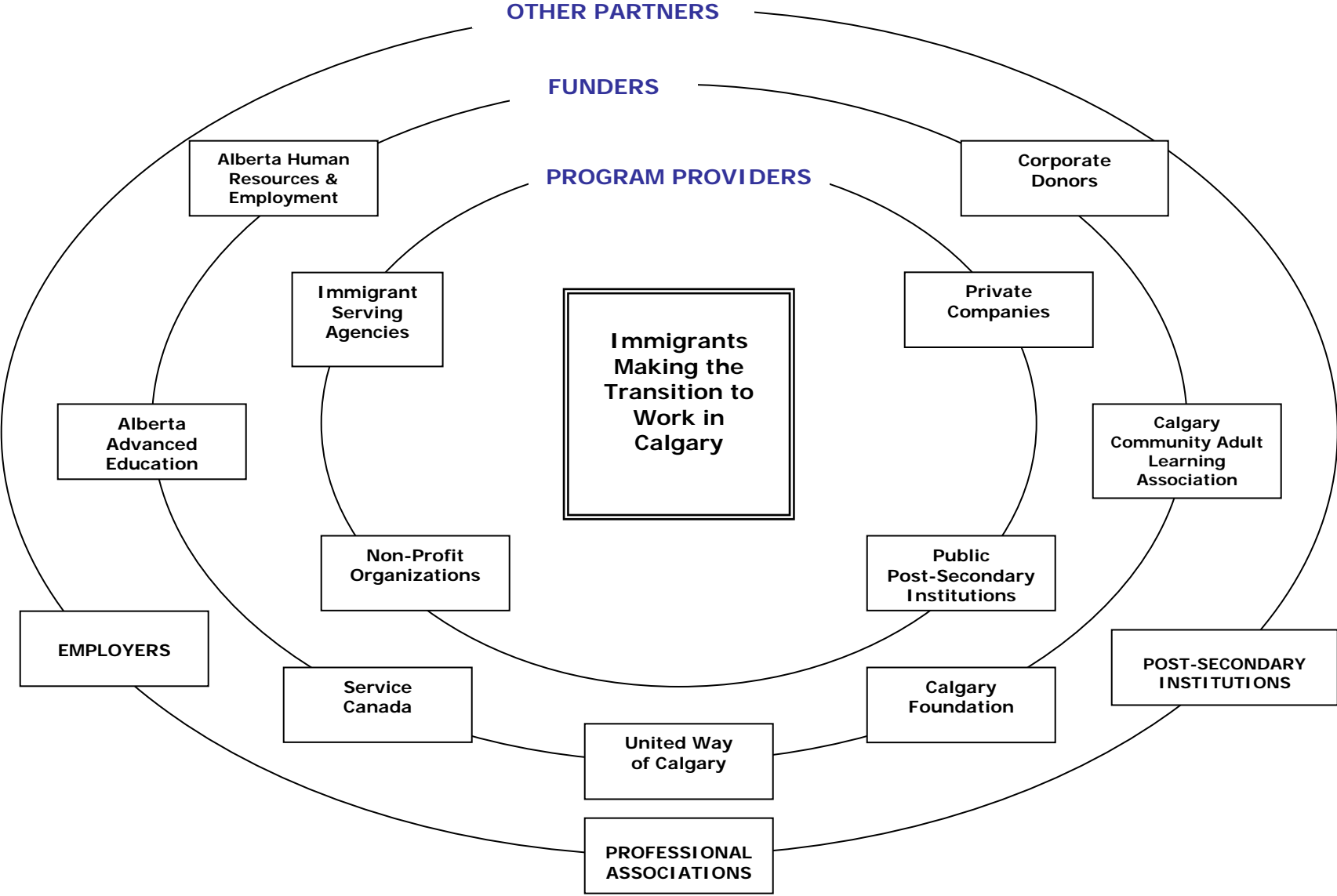
Mount Royal College <i>Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) with Internationally Educated Nurses</i> (Health Canada)	Immigrants who are foreign trained nurses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ minimum of CLB 6 	To prepare foreign-trained nurses to pass the licensure exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ nursing-specific language training (3-4 months or 360 hours) ▪ nursing theory review (1 semester) ▪ clinical practicum (360 hours)
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**Other Employment-Oriented Part-time Courses
(Current as of September 2005)**

Organization, Course & Funder	Client Group	Goal and Elements of Course
Alberta Network of Immigrant Women with the Alberta Immigrant Medical Graduates Association <i>Skill Enhancing for International Medical Graduates</i> (Advanced Education)	International medical graduates	To assist in improving communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ - patient-centred patient relations communication course
Bow Valley College and Calgary Catholic School Board <i>Bridge Program</i> (Advanced Education)	Refugee youth 17-25 with low literacy skills	To help bridge to academic programs and boost academic skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ includes life management, educational and career planning
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Hands On Computer Training (C-CALA and student fees)	Primarily immigrants but open to anyone	To help adults gain knowledge of software and upgrade their job skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instructor-led hands-on experience ▪ Windows XP, and foundational skill development in MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher
Calgary Immigrant Education Society <i>Access to Employment</i> : a program of the Alberta Association for Immigrant Professionals (Calgary Foundation)	Immigrant professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information sessions ▪ IQAS service
Mennonite Central Committee Employment Development <i>Trades Success (C-CALA)</i>	Immigrants who are having trouble passing the pre-apprenticeship entrance exams or who wish to attempt the exam	To help students pass their pre-apprenticeship exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ teacher support for Math and ESL ▪ materials related to apprenticeship entrance exam
University of Calgary <i>Language Communication Assessment Project</i> (Advanced Education)	Foreign-trained physicians	To teach language and communication skills needed to communicate skilfully and appropriately with patients and healthcare personnel in a Canadian medical context (16 weeks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in-class training (8 weeks) ▪ practicum (6 weeks)

Stakeholders in Career and Employment Programming For Immigrants



IV. Stakeholder Input

As the diagram on the previous page indicates, two essential partners in the delivery of programs and services to immigrants are those who fund employment programs and services and those who provide them. Both parties participated in the information gathering for this project. Their responses have been kept separate in order to show the similarities and differences in their perspectives on the same questions and issues. Furthermore, following development of the draft report, funders and providers were invited to a forum to learn of the findings and provide feedback on proposed recommendations.

4.1 Funders

Interviews were conducted with ten representatives of organizations, in addition to Alberta Human Resources and Employment Calgary Region, that provide funding, including, Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Community Development, Alberta Human Resources and Employment – Intergovernmental Relations and Immigration, Canadian Heritage, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Service Canada (formerly HRSDC), Calgary Foundation, Calgary Community Adult Learning Association, and Area, City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), and United Way of Calgary.

Opinion of AHRE funded programs

Interviewees were asked their opinion as to whether, in general, AHRE funded training and employment programs are serving the immigrants who need them. Almost half of the funders were either unaware of what AHRE is funding or felt they could not comment on how well AHRE-funded programs are serving immigrants. Several of those that did comment had expressed concern that AHRE appears to be not serving the neediest individuals and only training “the easily trainable”. This approach was also referred to as “creaming” a select few individuals.

Duplication of services

The general opinion of the interviewees is that duplication of programs and services across providers is not an issue. Comments included:

- “The more voices the better”, and
- “There is lots of work to do.”

In addition, funders acknowledged that AHRE is conscientious about not having too much duplication. AHRE is open about its process and criteria through the use of a tendering process and also the funders tend to consult each other and share information about what they are funding. As one funder said, they know when to refer providers to AHRE for funding.

Issues identified by funders on program effectiveness from the perspective of immigrants

Funders were asked whether, to the best of their knowledge, current programs are effective from the perspective of: immigrants.

The funders identified the following issues regarding programming:

- A fragmented array of programs to select from
- Immigrants' access to programs, in particular the issue of English levels required for acceptance into a program
- Access to employers. One funder stated that Calgary is "still operating like a small town" in the way employees are hired. Most agreed that employers are not aware of the different agencies working with immigrants or how to hire immigrants.
- Lack of spaces and/or programs for immigrants with lower skill levels
- Immigrants going into academic upgrading after ESL when they "need some place to go". Academic upgrading was identified as not necessarily being the most efficient pathway for many immigrants.
- The need for less general training and more focused occupation-specific training
- The importance of immigrants' retaining employment not just obtaining it

Issues identified by funders on program effectiveness from the perspective of employers

Only four interviewees felt they were in a position to comment on the perspective of employers:

- There is a need for more and different partnerships with employers and professional associations.
- Employers need to be more involved in the programming (seem to be external to the process) through assessment, input, advice about placing people etc.
- Employers don't really know how to access immigrants.
- Employment counsellors face challenges in advising clients and placing them in voluntary or paid employment. Some may lack the technical language relevant to particular occupations and skills.

Issues identified by funders on program effectiveness from the perspective of service providers

When asked about the perspective of service providers, funders focused on the following issues:

- Importance of clustering program participants by occupation
- The need for service providers' staff to have career counselling skills and greater depth of knowledge about employer and immigrant issues when working with specific groups of professionals and tradespeople
- The challenge for staff to have contacts in a variety of occupations, professions and industries.
- The need for more work placement and bridging programs.
- The strings attached to funding: the limitations of individuals having to fit certain eligibility criteria and the requirement by AHRE for a certain level and type of outcomes

Services for immigrant professionals in Calgary

Funders seem to agree that career and employment services in Calgary are meeting the needs of immigrant professionals better than before, but there is room for further development and improvement. One interviewee commented that if the services were meeting immigrants' needs, they would not be applying for Income Support.

Needs identified were:

- Resources to provide very specific skill training. For example, the challenge of finding and paying the right instructor, knowledgeable in the profession.
- The need to involve institutions like SAIT and U of C because they are the "experts" and provide recognized certificates
- Concern about the small number of participants that programs can take in.
- The need for information and counselling on alternative careers. (e.g. other health careers) to deal with the underemployment of professionals
- The availability of statistics/information to be able to identify pools of trained professionals in the city (e.g. the number of immigrant medical lab technicians/technologists at any one time). Collection of this type of information would have to be included in the scope of a provider's contract in order to collect the data and do outreach on the actual demand for a program.
- Recognition of foreign credentials. Although it is recognized to be a policy issue, government needs to work with the licensing bodies.
- More work experience programs, aiming for more than entry level jobs

- More responsiveness from employers regarding work placements where immigrants get exposure to language and workplace culture

Services for immigrant youth

Funders articulated the following needs of immigrant youth:

- Transitional employment services and career counselling – bridging into employment, academic upgrading or apprenticeship
- The need for “good” jobs for youth. A concern was expressed that programs may have interesting volunteer components but they tend not to lead to “good” jobs or address academic issues.
- At-risk youth with low ESL literacy. There is a need for programming for these youth as they leave school and before they join gangs, “disappear” and are hard to find. Word of mouth promotion appears to be most effective.
- Multi-faceted, creative programming to meet the multiple needs of immigrant youth and the importance of building trust and credibility

Other segments of the immigrant population

Funders were asked if there are segments of the immigrant population in Calgary that they think need training and employment services because they are not being served by current offerings.

The following were identified

- Refugees
- Specific occupational and professional groups (e.g. pharmacists)
- Medical graduates
- Individuals with limited formal education
- Men with ESL literacy needs, who are hard to reach and often in and out of employment
- Others that do not really fit AHRE’s mandate: isolated women at home, ESL seniors
- Immigrant groups that could be reached through working with the leaders in different ethnic communities; the idea of communities providing services to their own people

Other types of programs needed

When asked if there are other types of programs needed, funders suggested the following:

- The use of mentors as a program element. However, it was acknowledged that mentoring programs are difficult to run and expensive. Providers must not use the term “mentor” lightly (more than just “being nice to an immigrant”) and could benefit from learning from corporate experience and their effective practices.

- ESL literacy learners: the need to find effective strategies to assist them in finding a way into employment
- Job maintenance: how to deal with the challenge of keeping a job
- Educating employers and the community on the value of accommodating immigrant employees and benefiting from their knowledge, skills and experience.

4.2 Providers

Twelve organizations providing career and employment services and programs responded to the questionnaire and were interviewed. Three of the organizations have large numbers of immigrant participants in their programs but are not at present offering specific career and employment programming for immigrants.

Opinion of AHRE funded programs

Overall providers expressed considerable appreciation of the increased variety of programming made available through AHRE funding. In general, they thought that the programs are serving many of the immigrants who need them and the services offered are very relevant and useful to those they do help.

However, there was also general agreement that a number of issues interfere with providing employment programs and services to the immigrants who need them. The following issues were identified:

- Assessment and career planning: It was suggested that newcomers going directly to post-secondary institutions may not always get the information they need. This raises the question as to whether they are able to make a really informed choice about their career.
- Immigrants with lower or mid-range ESL have difficulty. LINC does not necessarily get them to a high enough level for acceptance into other programs. According to one provider, the message seems to be “go get ESL first and then come back for an employment program”.
- There are said to be “noticeable gaps” in services to clients at the opposite ends of the educational spectrum: those with low education levels and those with considerable education and specialized training.
- It is a challenge for immigrants to know and understand all the different workshops and programs available in Calgary and which ones suit their needs the most. Some immigrants visit and use several agencies and services.
- Applying to programs involves time (long waiting periods), commitment and, in some cases, fees.

- EI restriction: Concern was raised by a number of providers that newly arrived immigrants are not able to benefit from integrated skills training as there are more seats funded through EI. They think that the program quota is often low for “other Albertans”.

Duplication of services

Providers, like the funders, were asked whether AHRE funded programs in Calgary are duplicating other funded services to immigrants. The majority of the providers think that there is enough need and enough clients so duplication is not an issue. As long as programs and services are well-utilized, duplication does not seem to be an issue. It was pointed out that some duplication can be useful depending on where clients live. Comments included: “It is beneficial to provide programs in a variety of locations” and, “many clients will not access mainstream organizations until they have a sense of belonging.”

Issues identified by providers on program effectiveness from the perspective of immigrants

Providers were asked whether, to the best of their knowledge, current programs are effective from the perspective of: immigrants. There was some difference of opinion. Several providers thought the programs are good because they get immigrants working and help them keep jobs

Others identified the following issues:

- Programs are “piecemeal” One comment was that “comprehensive intensive programs delivered by institutions that are best for the purposes are still not gaining momentum”.
- Programs are not reaching enough people. Program capacity is one issue and interviewees thought that there is a need for more offerings of successful programs. There is always a need for more work experience and training. However one provider representative cautioned that more program intakes make sense as long as the supply and demand for workers is balanced.
- There seems to be an emphasis on “economically driven” programming and who can deliver the program the most economically.
- There is a need for programs for specific occupational groups – e.g. physicians
- Immigrants want Canadian certification from institutions like SAIT and NAIT.
- Limits on the number of “other Albertans” accepted for programs means that suitable participants have to be turned away.
- Eligibility restrictions mean that those with low to middle English can’t qualify for programs and only those with higher levels of ESL are accepted.

- Need for cooperation between government, professional associations and service providers to talk, for example, about alternative career paths for professionals
- The challenge of how to avoid having clients bounce from one agency to another. One reason for this is that they may feel that they have not received accurate information and help that fits their specific needs.

Issues identified by providers on program effectiveness from the perspective of employers

On the subject of the effectiveness of programs from the perspective of employers, the providers interviewed generally thought that recently more employers have been getting involved through word of mouth. Employers are now contacting the agencies, looking for employees. They are beginning to realize that immigrants are a new group to tap into. For example, one interviewee said that employers are “clamouring for tradespeople”.

Challenges identified:

- Resistance by employers to providing jobs at the appropriate level – tend to be entry level jobs
- Employers not wanting to take a chance on immigrants. They want employees that are qualified and 100% job-ready.
- Finding potential employees for employers who contact agencies
- Educating employers in terms of working with immigrants
- Employer feedback regarding language difficulty and soft skill deficits or lack of cultural knowledge where people have had just one year of ESL. It was suggested that life management skills taught in a cross-cultural setting would address this deficit and increase settlement and acculturation skills.
- How to provide support to employers. For example, employers hear about career coaching for clients and would like assistance with their immigrant employees regarding work expectations, performance and probation review.

Issues identified by providers on program effectiveness from the perspective of providers

From the perspective of providers, several interviewees commented that there is only so much each provider can offer a client within the constraints of time and funding. Providers say they need greater resources and capabilities to serve clients better. This is in part in response to the type of clients they are serving: those not looking for survival jobs, having higher expectations and feeling resentment and frustration about their transition into work.

Needs identified were:

- Providers would like the option of providing life management skills, basic computer training (e.g. 20 hours) as part of pre-employability skills
- Providers would like to be able to respond to employers asking them to offer courses on office communication and soft skills with cultural orientation components. It was suggested that such topics could speed up the acculturation process if addressed early, before immigrants are employed.
- Processes that facilitate successful outcomes for clients, such as case management that would allow one provider to help clients through several interventions and not just in the short-term.
- More offerings of successful employment programs to meet the challenge of retaining good staff and make use of rented space when, for example, there are only two program intakes per year.
- Frustration with restrictions on the number of EI or provincial Income Support clients
- Need for more training/programs in occupations women traditionally go into
- More staffing for employment services to work with the current volume of clients and dealing with their expectations and transitional issues.

Issues identified by providers on program effectiveness from the perspective of partners

Providers were also asked about partners, however few providers responded to this question. Most interviewees do not seem to work with partners. Some identified employers, guest speakers, or community organizations that provide tours as their partners.

Issues identified:

- Challenge of two organizations having to “divide up the pie”. An example was given where fee for service was a problem and an agency received “lesser amounts of money”.
- Challenge around different definitions of success. For example, where part-time work or going back to school was considered a success for one party and not for another.

Services for immigrant professionals

There seems to be general agreement among providers, that on the whole, the needs of immigrant professionals are not being met. However what is being offered is “good” but there is a need for more programming, such as for specific occupations.

Needs identified were:

- Recognition of credentials is still a major barrier. Accreditation issues make it “really tough”.
- Program capacity: programs specific to one occupation take such small numbers of participants and turn away so many
- Need to find more creative ways of meeting the needs of immigrant professionals
- Need to work more with employers to get work experience placements
- Need for placements and contacts. Immigrant professionals ultimately want an appropriate job placement and/or networking contacts in their industry.
- Need for coordination. One comment was “Immigrants go to a couple of places for information, a couple of places to network, a couple of places for language and so on and so on.”
- Need for a comprehensive service with specialized skilled staff to focus on a particular profession. One provider commented: “Each profession has its nuances, its culture, its training, and its accreditation policies that need to be understood.”
- Need for “a focal point” for immigrant professionals to proceed to directly for information regarding their professional career. For example, many clients are directed to several agencies before reaching Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers (DITPC) and even then, they may not be in the right place because DITPC only works with regulated occupations.
- Funds provided to professional associations to enable them to provide the necessary courses so that immigrants can meet the requirements of that association. An example of such a course would be one on the communication skills necessary to work in their profession.

Services for immigrant youth

When asked about services and the needs of immigrant youth, three providers who do not work with immigrant youth did not feel capable of expressing an opinion. A number of those who responded pointed out that youth programs require more resources, more one-to-one service and detailed planning

One interviewee identified two sub-groups of youth: those still exploring and just entering the workforce and those who worked in their home country and have career goals but lack Canadian experience. (Both groups are often in one program and get along since they share common ground: the immigration/accluturation/transition experience and camaraderie, but it is an added challenge for the staff.) A third group was also mentioned: high school graduates, such as some Chinese youth who are very protected, and lack social skills, work or volunteer experience.

Challenges identified were:

- How to motivate youth; how to get them interested and involved. They may be frustrated at being unemployed and may be more interested in social or sports activities.
- How to attract at-risk youth when participants are paid at minimum wage. It can be hard for them to make ends meet and support family members or help out with rent. Illegal activities can be more enticing and lucrative.
- Finding placements to fit participants. As one provider commented: "It is not easy getting employers on board."
- EI restriction on youth who have been fired. For example, two different providers mentioned that if a youth applies for EI and is rejected, for whatever reason, he or she is considered as having applied for EI and therefore not eligible for an HRSDC-funded program.

Suggestions for improvement were:

- More one-on-one employment counseling time for youth between 18 and 24. One comment was that school counselling does not meet the needs of cultural adjustment and workplace issues.)
- Longer ongoing support for youth between 18-24 as part of programs, with trained and experienced staff who have knowledge of the acute needs of cultural identify crises and the experiences of minority youth
- Case management and support with one employment counselor who has built up trust with the youth as the youth move through their career plans
- Trades training as an option for youth; e.g., a youth trades training program that incorporates pre-employability skills, academic upgrading, life skills with cultural components, as a precursor to entry into programs such as those at SAIT – challenge re: lack of appeal of trades, lack of

- knowledge/info about the trades and the benefits of trades training among youth and the ethnic community as a whole
- Youth programs that deal with specific issues such as post-war trauma, criminal activity etc. Such programs need to be conducted in a safe manner where youth feel comfortable sharing their life experiences and learning from others
 - Importance of life skills/life management courses and the need to have experiential learning
 - Value of having mixed groups (i.e. not a homogeneous group) – good for mixing, learning English, learning about others' experiences and relationship-building
 - The importance of getting youth on the right footing through effective programming; to overcome alienation and to build self-confidence and a sense of belonging. As one provider said: "It helps when they are about the same age and can make friendships." Activities such as soccer, for example, might attract youth through word of mouth.
 - Programs such as Ready-to-Work Tourism Careers and the Calgary Construction Association program are for the general public not immigrant youth, but there might be some kind of connection/partnership.

Other segments of the immigrant population in Calgary

Providers were asked if there are segments of the immigrant population in Calgary that they think need training and employment services because they are not being served by current offerings. They identified the following:

- Immigrants who congregate at their cultural centres and religious organizations and may not know where to go to get the help they need
- Immigrants who are unskilled or have ESL and/or literacy issues
- Immigrants with little or no education in their home country. (One comment was: "There is an unrealistic expectation that they can be prepared for employment in the same length of time as immigrants who have 12-16 years of education.")
- Training and placement for women with lower English skills (between CLB levels 5 and 8) with a workplace language component built into the training
- Immigrant professionals: offering them the opportunity to decide whether or not they want to settle for an alternate career choice. They need to get a clear picture of how their career might proceed if they make a particular choice.
- Those that are working full-time but are clearly under-employed and could benefit from an employment program.

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- Immigrants age 45 and up who need assistance with fitting labour market needs. For example, professionals with many years' experience where age may be a barrier to getting senior positions.
- Orientation to trades and other careers for groups such as the Sudanese.
- Government-sponsored refugees with good English (not professionals) who could access training fairly quickly instead of continuing in ESL and/or academic upgrading

Suggestions offered were:

- Having liaison workers with direct contact with cultural and religious centres who could offer some introductory career and employment-related services and then provide direct links to other services
- Training on the job for literacy and low-skilled immigrants, using unskilled jobs available through temporary agencies and find ways for learning to occur while working.

Other types of programs needed

Asked about any other types of programs need, providers came up with the following:

- Basic computers skills included as an employability skill such as learning to write a resume and addressed as short-term training which could be offered through the many venues. One provider commented: "Adding an additional \$10,000 to an employment contract could train 300 individuals on basic keyboarding and computer skills."
- Soft skills, business communication and cultural knowledge
- Language training in the workplace in two areas: for specific technical purposes and general knowledge of workplace culture and behaviour
- More programs which provide training towards entering apprenticeship in the trades.
- For employers: awareness of other cultures/backgrounds and human rights
- Employment training for jobs such as bakery and deli work, warehousing and shelf stocking, and general labour in large supermarkets. It was suggested that these programs can be developed in cooperation with employers who need this kind of employee.

Other comments

- Two interviewees commented on the value of integrating immigrants into mainstream programs or at minimum inviting mainstream speakers into classes.

- The importance of career coaching for supporting clients during their action plan was mentioned. “The first year is crucial. They get involved in their day to day life and may get stuck in whatever job they first find.”
- Too much emphasis on outcomes, the deliverables model: “It’s like a funnel to employment with a bottleneck, especially if you’re working with participants who have low English skills.”
- “AHRE policy appears to be funding training programs offered by established organizations. The current need for programming is in southeast Calgary and programs offered in the downtown are not easily accessed by immigrants.”

4.3. Synthesis of Key Findings

The key findings from the questionnaires and interviews can be grouped in two: access to programs and access to employment. Under each heading is a list of the main needs or issues identified by funders and/or providers. In general, there was considerable consistency (though not complete agreement) as to what were seen to be the major needs by the two groups. Additional points specific to immigrant youth are added afterwards.

Issues with Access to Programs

- Lack of coordination – overall picture re: what/where/who is eligible
- Eligibility restrictions (on EI or provincial Income Support, being unemployed)
- ESL levels - especially low ESL/literacy (also an eligibility restriction)
- Limited program capacity – number of spaces, offerings per year
- Timing – at what point after arrival, what makes the most efficient route or career path
- Need for more specific training for occupational groups (including a concern about the lack of statistics as to which are groups with the highest numbers, greatest need for programming).

Issues with Access to Employment

- Too few partnerships with employers – at programming level, delivery level, placements and job retention/maintenance
- Need for support for employers, such as coaching and training
- Need for expert counselling/advice re: clients’ occupations, career paths, potential employers, industries etc.
- Issues regarding employment placement
 - Providers: how to access employers
 - Employers: how to access immigrants
- Need for partnerships/cooperation with professional associations

- ❑ Lack of options regarding alternate career paths – trades, technologies etc.
- ❑ Need for more work placements and bridging programs
- ❑ Need for mentoring programs

Issues Related to Youth (specific points not included above)

- ❑ Need for mixed programs, not segregated by ethnic group
- ❑ Need for programs offered to young immigrants as they leave school, before they “disappear”
- ❑ Need for multi-faceted programs – social, adaptation issues, life skills, academic etc.
- ❑ More individual counselling and case management
- ❑ Solutions to the challenge of attracting and motivating immigrant youth

4.4. Feedback from Partner Forum

The Forum was based on a draft of the report and proposed recommendations. The funders and providers who participated in the Forum learned about the project findings and provided input on the proposed recommendations. These 35 participants represented a mix of funders, not all of whom fund employment-related projects but have an interest in immigrants, and providers, not all of whom have AHRE contracts at this time. Forum participants commented that they appreciated the variety of people and perspectives.

Participants were asked to identify what they see to be the top three priorities among the recommendations. (For the complete version of the recommendations see Section V.) The following were identified:

- #1 Create a centralized source of information on all types of employment-related programming for immigrants
- #2 Consider funding a work experience program for immigrants with lower ESL/literacy
- #3 (a three-way tie)
 - Increase program capacity in current successful work experience and occupation-specific programming
 - Support providers in finding new ways to involve employers
 - Research and document best practices re: job retention strategies and supports

For comments on the recommendations and words of advice to AHRE from those at the forum, see Appendix F: Partner Forum Input.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

As the inventory in Section III shows, there is a variety of career and employment programming in Calgary, including:

- General career and employment services that offer information, workshops, and referrals
- Work experience programs
- Specific occupational training
- Employment-oriented programs for youth
- Employment readiness programs
- Enhanced Language Training projects
- Employment-oriented part-time courses

In addition, there are programs not specifically for immigrants that have significant numbers of immigrant participants.

Many of these programs and services have an impressive track record and have met the needs of numerous immigrants. Knowledge gained from recent pilot programs and from those who have been delivering employment programs for a long time are useful in future planning. These include the following:

- The challenge of trying to offer part-time occupation-specific training when participants are busy with jobs and personal commitments
- The difficulty of putting together a cohort of participants in a particular occupation or trade, especially in good economic times when they may be busy working at whatever job(s) they can get
- The challenge of students having inadequate levels of ESL to tackle occupation-specific terminology and communication. Several programs found that an eligibility requirement of CLB 6 was too low for the course content and the time allotted to master it.
- The importance of creating realistic expectations about the outcome of a program at the outset and not leading participants to believe they'll get jobs at a level that may not be realistic for them.
- The increased expectations put on counsellors and instructors to know about complex occupations, terminology, workplaces etc.

The findings of this review are consistent with the research in that there appears to be a trend toward greater demand and greater need at both ends of the immigration spectrum – the more highly educated and those with low education and English proficiency. Both funders and providers indicate general satisfaction with the direction that employment programming has been going regarding immigrant professionals. They acknowledge success and progress to date. At the same time, however, they also acknowledge the need for more occupation-specific programming and improvements or adjustments to existing offerings.

Review of Career and Employment Services for Immigrants in Calgary

Overall they recognize the value of AHRE's transparent tendering process and do not feel that in Calgary duplication of programs is an issue.

There is agreement between funders and providers that employers need to be better informed and more involved in the training, placement and employment of immigrants. There is an interest in developing new partnerships with employers. Partnerships with post-secondary institutions that provide occupational training have proven to be successful and add to the credibility of the training immigrants receive. There may be opportunities for other types of partnerships with organizations that are experts in their field.

Those with low education, literacy and ESL were identified by both stakeholder groups as being in need of employment programming. However stakeholders recognize the challenge of having realistic, successful outcomes and meeting the success rate set by funders. Another factor is the cost of funding such programs in relation to the types of jobs participants obtain in the end. As was pointed out, it can become a case of whether government is interested in training unemployed immigrants to become "working poor".

Another group that was identified as needing employment programs is youth, in particular "at-risk" youth. It was stressed that the challenge is often attracting and motivating such youth to participate in employment programs. Another hurdle is presented by the fact that, at present, young adults leaving high school are not eligible for any student funding until they have been out of school for one full year. However, it appears that this restriction will soon be lifted. The recent *Review of Adult ESL in Alberta* recommended that creative solutions through cross-ministry and/or intergovernmental collaboration be sought to provide youth with bridging programs to employment.⁵⁴

A concern consistently raised by the providers is the number of seats set aside for EI/Reachback recipients in any one program. This can particularly be an issue when there are fewer EI recipients since the unemployment rate is so low, while there may be "other Albertans" who are available and suitable to take the course. However, the terms of the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Development Agreement direct how EI funds can be used.

The current labour market demand and low unemployment rate in Calgary creates opportunities and challenges for providers of employment programs and services to immigrants. For example, graduates of programs are finding it easier to get work, sometimes even before the end of their program. On the other hand, tradespeople may ask for information about apprenticeships and then, rather than taking a workshop or program, get a job on their own because there is such the demand is so high.

⁵⁴ Springboard Consulting for Alberta Advanced Education, Alberta Education, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, *Review of Adult ESL in Alberta*, April 2005.

There also seems to be increased public awareness, thanks in part to recent media coverage, of skill shortages and the under-utilized skills and expertise of immigrants already in Canada. It is up to funders and providers to find and support new ways to benefit from these positive conditions and to build further expertise in employment programming of all types. No matter what the labour market conditions are, immigrants will still need support making the transition to work in Calgary. Research shows that the sooner they can make that transition, the better it is for them in terms of their confidence and skill levels and the benefits they can provide to employers.

Recommendations

Stakeholders in this study have indicated their approval of Alberta Human Resources and Employment for the extent that it is already assisting immigrants in Calgary to make the transition to work. However, there are still needs to be met and areas where there are gaps in service. AHRE is in the fortunate position of being able to respond to the increased demand for skilled workers in Alberta by further investing in employment programs and services.

The following recommendations are in response to the issues raised in this study. They are grouped as follows:

- Coordination
- Programming
- Partnerships
- Professional Development and Research

Coordination

1. Create a centralized easy-to-access source for information on all types of employment-related programming available for immigrants in Calgary. This could be done on a website with information on the variety of stakeholders; programs and services and what a program or service consists of (its goals, elements, length of time); where programs are offered; who is eligible; what the application process is, and contact information. Encourage funders and providers to have links to this site for immigrants to access.

Programming

1. Increase program capacity in currently successful work experience and occupation-specific programming by funding additional offerings within the same year as long as the increased demand for employees can be indicated.
2. Fund new occupation-specific training programs in occupations where there is the greatest need and numbers, acknowledging the challenge of assessing the potential demand. Encourage providers to look to models of similar programs being offered in other parts of Canada.

For example, programming in Edmonton has evolved differently and its array of programs and services may suggest other program options. Two examples of this are NorQuest College's Practical Nurse Re-entry Program for Internationally Educated Nurses for part-time distance students and Edmonton Catholic School's Community Integration Program for newcomers who want to find a job and have CLB2 or less.

3. Consider funding a work experience program for immigrants with lower ESL, taking into consideration the challenges of teaching and placing the participants. Encourage the use of a model that provides employee and employer support during the work experience
4. Support courses on alternate careers for professionals, grouping them by occupational areas, for example, medical professionals or engineers. Such a program could include job shadowing or work experience and guest speakers who have chosen an alternate career path.
5. Assuming that there will be a change to current restrictions on funding for youth just out of school, investigate opportunities for employment-focused partnerships with a school board or agency that is experienced in working with youth. Outreach, individual counselling and case management would be essential parts of any such project.

For example, Alberta Advanced Education is funding the Bridge Program, a two-year pilot partnership between Bow Valley College and the Calgary Catholic School District to assist young ESL adults who are exiting high school but still in need of ESL literacy training. The goal of the program is to improve their language and literacy skills, learning strategies and essential skills to prepare them for further education or workplace training.

6. Focus more on coaching support for immigrants once they enter the workplace in order to promote a positive work environment and job retention. On the job coaching should be offered to both parties: the new immigrant employee and the employer, including co-workers and managers. This type of ongoing coaching should be included as an integral feature of all employment programs. Coaching could also be part of advance preparation at a workplace just prior to new employees being placed.

Partnerships

1. Promote partnerships between experts. This is already being done by organizations partnering with institutions like SAIT that provide a technical certificate recognized by employers, and could be pursued further. It should be noted that in the case of working with other professionals outside the immigrant services sector there may be additional salary costs.

Possible partnerships include:

- With an employment agency that has expertise in working with employers and can facilitate making the connection between immigrant employees and work
 - With a professional association where someone from that association participates in the development of training content, materials and participates in program delivery.
 - With professional associations or business organizations to offer a mentoring program for immigrant clients as a complement to a training program.
 - With the Youth Employment Centre to develop and provide programming specific to the needs of immigrant youth.
 - Within AHRE between Intergovernmental Relations and Immigration and regional services, in this case in Calgary, so that the knowledge from ELT programs can be passed on and so that there can be a smooth transition from ELT funding to other AHRE funding if a program is successful.
2. Work with public schools to provide career and employment information and exposure (orientation to occupations, job shadowing etc.) as well as workplace-related skills (including cultural differences) to in-school immigrant youth.
 3. Support providers in finding new ways to involve employers more directly in programming. In spite of the need for skilled workers, there seems to be a lack of awareness of availability of immigrant workers, their skills and needs.
 4. Explore ways to co-fund a training program as a quick response to an employer-identified need for workers. An employer would have to contribute a certain percentage of costs and meet certain conditions regarding hiring etc.

Professional Development and Research

1. Build in funding for professional development for counsellors or program coordinators working with specific occupations so that they can acquire more specialized knowledge. This could take the form of finding a coach or mentor, setting up a job shadowing experience, working with a professional association, or researching a similar program in another part of Canada. Recipients of this funding would be expected to provide a report on findings that could be distributed to other providers and funders to increase their knowledge base.

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2. If planning to fund mentoring programs, conduct research on mentoring programs for immigrants and how they compare to effective practices and lessons learned by corporate mentoring projects.
3. Research and document best practices regarding job retention strategies and supports for new immigrant employees.

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APPENDIX A: EDMONTON DEMOGRAPHICS

Edmonton Demographics⁵⁵

- The City of Edmonton's 2005 civic census shows its population to be 712,391. The City's population is expected to increase by 35,000 to 748,000 by 2010.⁵⁶
- The Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) population is expected to increase by 58,000 over the next five years, reaching 1,066,000 by 2010.
- Net migration for the Edmonton CMA is expected to average 7,000 people per year between 2005 and 2010.
- Over 40% of recent immigrants came from south, southeast and east Asia with the Philippines, China and India being the top source countries.

Top Immigrant Source Countries, Edmonton, 2002 - 2005					
	2002	2003	2004	2005*	Grand Total
Philippines	433	670	665	373	2141
China	471	471	632	563	2137
India	556	617	558	271	2002
Pakistan	156	166	200	120	642
Afghanistan	151	160	123	94	528
USA	108	108	151	92	459
Korea	115	155	102	48	420
Sudan	69	129	160	60	418
Vietnam	134	96	114	42	386
United Kingdom	88	88	137	65	378

*Quarter 2, 2005

Source: AHRE *Overview of Immigration to Alberta, 2004*.

New Immigrants' Top 10 Native Languages, Edmonton					
Native Language	2002	2003	2004	2005*	Grand Total
Tagalog	395	636	607	345	1983
Mandarin	283	364	489	425	1561
Punjabi	405	452	381	164	1402
English	339	325	427	222	1313
Arabic	187	234	295	137	853
Spanish	191	210	181	121	703
Urdu	131	159	167	101	558
Other African	32	209	231	73	545
Chinese	175	86	134	139	534
Russian	157	120	157	98	532

*Quarter 2, 2005

Source: Landing File, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Second Quarter, Release Date September 2005. Prepared by AHRE.

⁵⁵ Unless otherwise noted, information about Edmonton demographics provided by the City of Edmonton.

⁵⁶ *Edmonton Socio-Economic Outlook, 2005-2010*. Prepared by City Forecast Committee, September 2005.

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- Education levels for immigrants to Edmonton parallel those from Calgary, showing a high percentage of immigrants with at least a Bachelor's degree.

The following chart shows the education levels of immigrants arriving in Edmonton in a particular year. It includes all immigrants age 15 and above.

Immigrants' Education Levels for Edmonton					
	2002	2003	2004	2005*	GRAND TOTAL
0 to 9 years of schooling	677	724	693	317	2411
10 to 12 years of schooling	579	640	682	303	2204
13 or more years of schooling	305	345	298	179	1127
Bachelor's degree	932	1087	1155	714	3888
Doctorate	84	62	84	71	301
Master's degree	306	291	381	346	1324
Non-university diploma	275	367	368	230	1240
Trade Certificate	129	176	188	82	575
GRAND TOTAL	3287	3692	3849	2242	13,070

*Quarter 3, 2005

Source: Landing File, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Second Quarter, Release Date September 2005. Prepared by AHRE.

- Recent immigrants had a higher unemployment rate. In 2001 the unemployment rate for the total Edmonton population was 6.0% and for recent immigrants it was 7.2%. More recently, their unemployment rate was 5.9% versus 4.1% for other Edmontonians.⁵⁷
- 40.6% of recent immigrants to Edmonton (1996-2001) had low income in 2000. This compares to 21.2% of Edmonton's population as a whole. Low income is defined as less than half the median income in Edmonton for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. In Edmonton, this amount was \$33,600 in 2000.

The City of Edmonton's "Immigrant Fact Sheet" highlights the three most serious difficulties experienced by immigrants entering the labour force in 2001 as "a lack of job experience in Canada, difficulty transferring qualifications and language problems."

Employment in Edmonton between 2005 and 2009⁵⁸ is projected to increase by more than 60,000 jobs.

- Three major industries are projected to grow by 8,000 jobs: manufacturing, construction and the retail trade

⁵⁷ *Edmonton Socio-Economic Outlook, 2005-2010*, p.22.

⁵⁸ <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/edmonton/jobgrowth.asp>

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- Two major industries are projected to grow by more than 4,000 jobs: professional, scientific and technical services, and accommodation and food services.
- Two other industries are projected to grow by more than 3,000 jobs: health care and social assistance, and other services

Edmonton City Council has announced it will seek ways to increase the numbers of new immigrants who settle in Edmonton. The City has included immigration and settlement issues as one of its Special Initiatives for 2005-2007. As part of this initiative, the City will explore ways to attract and retain immigrants and support programs “that attract immigrants and their effective integration”.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Edmonton Outlook 2005-2010 (Fall Edition)

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APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FUNDERS

Alberta Human Resources and Employment has contracted with Springboard Consulting Inc. to conduct a review to ensure that career and employment services for immigrants in Calgary are meeting the needs of job-seeking immigrants and employers' staffing needs now and in the future. We appreciate your insights, as funders, on the following questions.

1. What is your opinion as to whether, in general, AHRE funded training and employment programs are serving the immigrants who need them?
2. Are current programs effective from the perspective of: *(If no, please explain)*
 - immigrants?
 - employers?
 - program providers?
3. Are the current services in Calgary for **immigrant professionals** meeting the needs of that client group? *If not, please specify.*
4. Are the current services in Calgary meeting the needs of **immigrant youth** entering the labour market? *If not, please specify.*
5. Are there segments of the immigrant population in Calgary that need training and employment services but existing programs are not reaching them?
If so, what services would be appropriate for this population?
6. Are AHRE funded programs in Calgary duplicating other funded services to immigrants? If so, please specify.
7. Are there other types of programs needed? If so, what type? For whom?
8. A part of this project is to develop an inventory of all such programs being offered in Calgary. Is your organization funding any career and employment programs for immigrants? *If so, could you please provide the name of the organization being funded, the program title, and contact information.*

Thank you.
Julia Melnyk

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APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROVIDERS

Alberta Human Resources and Employment has contracted with Springboard Consulting Inc. to conduct a review to ensure that career and employment services for adult immigrants in Calgary are meeting the needs of job-seeking immigrants and employers' staffing needs now and in the future. We appreciate your insights on the following questions.

1. What is your opinion as to whether, in general, AHRE funded training and employment programs are serving the immigrants who need them?
2. To the best of your knowledge, are current programs effective from the perspective of: *(If no, please explain)*
 - immigrants?
 - employers?
 - program providers?
 - partners?
4. Are the current services in Calgary for **immigrant professionals** meeting the needs of that client group? *If not, please specify.*
5. Are the current services in Calgary meeting the needs of **immigrant youth** (18-24) entering the labour market? *If not, please specify.*
6. Are there segments of the immigrant population in Calgary that need training and employment services but existing programs are not reaching them?
If so, what services would be appropriate for this population?
7. Are AHRE funded programs in Calgary duplicating other funded services to immigrants? If so, please specify.
8. Are there other types of programs needed? If so, what type? For whom?

Thank you for your input.

Julia Melnyk

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APPENDIX D: INVITATION TO FORUM

You are invited
to participate in a

***Presentation
On The Review of
Career & Employment Programs
For Immigrants***

You will:

- Learn about the findings of research conducted by Springboard Consulting Inc. for Alberta Human Resources & Employment
- Have an opportunity to comment on proposed recommendations arising from the research

Thursday, February 2

Olympic Room, Olympic Volunteer Centre
(by McMahon Stadium)
9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be available from 8:30 a.m.

Confirm attendance by January 18
to Julia Melnyk – 234-0797

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APPENDIX E: LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

1. Organizations Providing Information

Funders

Alberta Advanced Education
Alberta Community Development
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Calgary Community Adult Learning Association
Calgary Foundation
Canadian Heritage
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services
Service Canada (formerly HRSDC)
United Way of Calgary

Providers

Alberta Network of Immigrant Women
Bow Valley College
Calgary Bridge Foundation
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Calgary Chinese Community Services Association
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
Calgary Immigrant Education Society
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Calgary Multicultural Association
Columbia College
Educere Learning Centre
Jewish Family Service
Maple Leaf Academy
McBride Career Group
Mennonite Central Committee – Employment Development
Mount Royal College
SAIT
University of Calgary
Youth Employment Centre
YMCA
YWCA
Youth in Motion Education Foundation

Note: Fifteen of the providers were selected to participate in the questionnaire/interview. The other providers on this list were contacted to provide information on their programs and services for immigrants and the unmet needs of immigrant clients.

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2. Forum Participants

Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Bow Valley College – Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional
Careers
Burns Foundation
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Calgary Chamber of Commerce – Talent Pool
Calgary Chinese Community Service Association
Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
Calgary Learns
City of Calgary – FCSS
City of Calgary – Youth Employment Centre
City of Calgary – Youth Probation
Columbia College
Educere Learning Centre
Jewish Family Service
MCC Employment Development
Mount Royal College
SAIT
Service Canada
United Way
YMCA
YWCA

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APPENDIX F: PARTNER FORUM INPUT

COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants at the Forum took part in small group discussions where they selected their top priorities among the proposed recommendations and identified some of the challenges related to implementing them. Only the recommendations chosen by the groups are included below. They are not listed in order of importance but in the order they appear in the recommendations.

Coordination

Create a centralized easy-to-access source for information on all types of employment-related programming available for immigrants in Calgary.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Making the information accessible to two main types of users: providers and immigrants; multiple access points, not relying only on the internet because not everyone has access to it
- Publicizing the information and promoting usage; having multiple distribution points
- How to make it user-friendly; well-known/centralized; regularly updated
- Need to ensure the resource is effective; who will “own” it and be responsible for keeping it current
- Need accurate information – realistic, helpful, aimed at specific occupations
- Making use of and/or linking to existing resources: 211 info services (City of Calgary), ILVARC ESL directory, Bow Valley College’s Directions website, government’s ALIS website; providers of employment programming
- Marketing overseas for immigrants prior to arrival
- Suggestion of having a discussion board for input and exchange

Programming

Increase program capacity in currently successful work experience and occupation-specific programming by funding additional offerings within the same year as long as the increased demand for employees can be indicated.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Funding constraints; increased funding in one area may lead to decreased funding in another due to finite funds
- The number of qualified/skilled staff to provide increased services to larger numbers of clients
- The need to maintain this increased capacity beyond one year
- Importance of an increased level of employer involvement to support increased participant involvement in work experience programs
- Fund programs in occupations that coincide with labour market needs

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Consider funding a work experience program for immigrants with lower ESL/literacy, taking into consideration the challenges of teaching and placing the participants.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Incorporate work experience into the last week of ESL and provide opportunities for students to work in service industries, restaurants etc.
- Work experience helps students try and learn on worksite; learning is faster. It may build motivation to increase language skills for work/life
- Involvement with employers is important; need effective partnerships with industry
- Include mentorships
- Use an integrated bridging program that includes ESL, skills, and work experience
- Include workshops for employers to prepare them for employee needs
- Need to address cultural barriers to employment and integration for both employers and the immigrant workers; deal with issues such as post-traumatic issues. .

Assuming that there will be a change to current restrictions on funding for youth just out of school, investigate opportunities for employment-focused partnerships with a school board or agency that is experienced in working with youth.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Get youth interested in meaningful employment early, while in school, prior to 16
- Have counselling services in school and out, and programs to give support and provide direction to career opportunities. Also provide counselling re: post-traumatic stress disorder
- Have more partnerships with high schools.
- Focus more specifically on immigrant youth who are potential early leavers
- Increase cultural component with ESL
- Look at flexible work/school arrangements; school must meet students' needs and take into account individual issues; cannot give up on students 18 years and older
- Introduce non-university careers early in high school
- Increase accountability of schools for outcomes and participation

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Partnerships

Work with public schools to provide career and employment information and exposure (orientation to occupations, job shadowing etc.) as well as workplace-related skills (including cultural differences) to in-school immigrant youth.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Ensure funds for this purpose are used for this purpose with services delivered to priority individuals – i.e. immigrants
- Clear, reporting, deliverables and outcomes are required
- Competent, qualified staff are needed to deliver the service
- Need to begin at junior-high level to help support high school completion

Support providers in finding new ways to involve employers more directly in programming.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Need partnerships from program outset
- Need to culminate in jobs
- Issue of dealing with legal liability for employers
- Provide professional development/education for employers, including the benefits to them and the labour market of hiring immigrant workers; employers lack information and knowledge and hiring immigrants is often new and untried
- Need to know what employers' challenges are and how to help with the challenges; employers perceive bureaucracy and extra work and extra costs
- How to reach employers
- Time issues for employers – want employees sooner rather than later; have little time to commit
- Challenge re: service providers. They develop their own partnerships with employers so there are “territorial” aspects and concerns about loyalties, taking contacts, ethics etc.

Explore ways to co-fund a training program as a quick response to an employer-identified need for workers.

Challenges and suggestions:

- The urgency of employers' needs
- The challenge of how to be proactive instead of reactive
- How much is available for new programs? If funding is moved from one type of programming to another, what goes?
- Present policies and procedures impact the ability to be timely
- How to handle retention within 90 days follow-up (make it effective so they're better mentored and our program evaluations are more immediate); better assessment process for follow-ups

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Professional Development and Research

Build in funding for professional development for counsellors or program coordinators working with specific occupations so that they can acquire more specialized knowledge.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Funding provided for this could cause a decrease in funding for actual service delivery for clients
- Ensuring professional development opportunities are accessible to all providers/staff in region
- Need to identify and understand the skill training required
- Ensuring clear outcomes are demonstrated as result of training
- Bring in younger people to work in this field (visibility and accessibility)
- Must look at people with non-education/social work background (engineers etc.)
- Must be recognized
- Must be flexible and timely
- Must be short in duration

Research and document best practices regarding job retention strategies and supports for new immigrant employees.

Challenges and suggestions:

- Who will do this?
- Concern that if it's not invented here, how can it work here?
- Challenge of getting the information because businesses are in competition with each other and not usually willing to share

Additional Comments

- Need more follow-up with immigrants; need to ask participants "What could we have done better?"
- Need to review the measures of success – i.e. advancement in job not just staying employed and integrating into society

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ADVICE TO AHRE

Participants at the Forum were given the opportunity to provide a piece of advice to AHRE.

- The report has many good suggestions. All have important value; need to work on and acknowledge the importance of all the recommendations not only those priorities identified.
- Build on existing human resource firms/agencies' capacity to enhance connections to employment; build capacity here.
- Make use of existing human resource departments in large post-secondary institutions and encourage them to help their graduates.
- There is a need to promote younger people working in the field of immigrant employment. Emphasize the multiple skills sets required: ESL and technical skills.
- Increase training opportunities for skilled instructors to facilitate workforce integration; there is a shortage of instructors in this area.
- Do more to promote the skilled trades, the skills sets required and the potential in order to attract youth.
- Review present policies and procedures to simplify the funding process so it's timely and consistent with the programming (track policies to identify barriers); paperwork is an issue.
- Look at shortages in particular skills areas for the future in Alberta and then advertise these areas effectively/attractively to our youth.
- Before going with a centralized information system identify who it is for, how to update and promote it. Make it user-friendly and not just web-based.
- A centralized information source has to have a clear focus; there are already successful sources in the city where people can get information in person.
- Create a centralized source for courses and/or programs: actual course outlines for programs not just information on where it is offered.
- Timing re: evaluating new programs is an issue.
- The need for providing employers with a real sense of the urgency in terms of the labour shortages is enormous. There needs to be an investment of similar proportions to educate/stimulate employers to take action earlier rather than later.
- More support for mentoring services – taking a more holistic approach, supporting new immigrants not just to find a job but to gain social support, life skills, cultural adjustment and success in their jobs.

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- Coordination of services: there is a need for a coordinated master plan not only for Calgary but Alberta and Canada; strive for continuity in serving immigrants and coordinate strategies, programs and services nation-wide
- Focus on quality of services not quantity. Politicians don't like funding things that don't work.
- Keep in mind the interconnectedness of the different priority areas.
- Take this group's identified challenges to heart.
- Work in partnership with accrediting and post-secondary educators to ensure that modular, gap-filling programs (sheltered classrooms) will result in assured accreditation instead of recommendations for down-scaled alternative employment.
- Look at immigrant youth issues such as programming around employment, life skills that may be in schools (prior to age 16 to reach school leavers).
- Support counselling programs for youth around post-traumatic stress disorder.

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APPENDIX G: SELECTED PROGRAM EXAMPLES FROM OTHER PROVINCES

The following programs are a limited selection of the many being offered across the country. This selection highlights the variety of programs and providers.

Government of Ontario's Opening Doors

The Government of Ontario's Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on their Opening Doors website outlines their plan to speed the entry of internationally trained immigrants by:

- providing info for prospective immigrants on labour market needs and criteria required for licensure, registration or certification so they know what to expect before arriving or when they arrive
- expanding access to higher-level language training
- providing an assessment service that evaluates international credentials
- increasing opportunities for the internationally trained to upgrade their skills as required.
- increasing opportunities for internationally trained immigrants to gain the equivalent of Canadian work experience

This plan parallels the one outlined by the Alberta government in *Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*.

The website includes tools such as labour market information, career maps prepared in collaboration with regulatory bodies (for 16 professions and 10 skilled trades to date), electronic fact sheets for nurses, pharmacists, engineering technologists and medical laboratory technologists.

Occupational groups being funded by the Ontario government include:

- International medical graduates – to help them improve their skills or find employment in non-regulated health sector careers
- Medical laboratory science professionals – to gain Canadian work experience and create more opportunities for clinical work experience
- Midwives – development of simulated clinical models to provide Canadian-based clinical experience (Ryerson)
- Medical technologists (radiation, lab science, respiration therapy) – bridge training to prepare for licensure; simulated clinical training (Michener Institute; Mohawk College)
- Nurses – provide customized skills assessment, training and clinical placement leading to licence in nursing or related occupations in the health sector (Mohawk College)
- Pharmacy graduates (Ontario College of Pharmacists with the University of Toronto; University of Waterloo)
- Dental specialists (Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and university dentistry faculties)

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- Social workers – develop and implement bridge training project (Ryerson and Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre)
- Teachers – speed up entry into education system; Teach in Ontario: observation and classroom visit, training and document intervention
- Engineers – mentoring and coaching; development of Ontario Portal for International Engineering Graduates accessible overseas
- Industrial engineers, construction and maintenance electricians, and industrial mechanics/millwrights – skilled trades training projects (Skills for Change and The Electro-Mechanical, the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (Ottawa), the Canadian Union of Skilled workers) – to help them write their certificate qualification exams and continue in their careers

Other Bridge Training Projects focus on teachers, foresters, university professors, professionals in food and nutrition, optometrists, and a voluntary sector program to prepare for certification with the Project Management Institute,

Of interest is the range of professionals being targeted and the partnerships involving post-secondary institutions and regulatory bodies.

The government is also funding Career Bridge (see below), \$1.3 million over 3 years to provide 450 internships for internationally trained individuals in the Greater Toronto Area in the information technology, manufacturing, sales and financial sectors

Toronto Region Council for Immigrant Employment (TRIEC)

The Toronto Region Council for Immigrant Employment (TRIEC) is a multi-stakeholder council that works to improve immigrants' access to the labour market. It grew out of a recommendation of Toronto's civic-led Toronto City Summit Alliance in September 2003. Other recommendations called for the development of an employer-led internship/mentoring program to address the problem of obtaining Canadian work experience, which is a significant barrier for most immigrants, and the drafting of a tri-level multilateral agreement to coordinate the development of policy and the delivery of programs and services.

Of the six initiatives undertaken by TRIEC, three are of relevance to this study:⁶⁰:

- **Career Bridge** – an internship program to help immigrants obtain Canadian experience. It is operated by Career Edge a not-for-profit organization that was already in the business of providing internships for Canadian youth. Employers pay the wages for interns during their 4 -12 month internship. However, all interns are pre-screened and are officially employed by Career Bridge, thus mitigating the risks involved.

⁶⁰ www.triec.ca

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- **Bridging Occupation and Licensing Gaps**, limited at present to the financial services sector and the health care sector. For Financial Services Sector the three “key products” are a database of applicants, communications assessment and training, and an information portal. The Health Care Sector Table is exploring alternative employment planning for international healthcare professionals.
- **Mentoring Partnership** – Volunteer mentors and “mentees” are matched and negotiate the objectives of their mentoring relationship. The pairs then work together for a total of 24 hours over a four-month period. This relationship is used to help overcome some of the information gaps and hurdles on both sides.

Skills for Change

Skills for Change⁶¹ in Toronto is one of the partners in TRIEC. It offers a number of programs of interest:

- **Employment Preparation for Retail Services**, a 13 week full-time program offered in partnership with The Bay and the Toronto Catholic District School Board.
- **Bridge to Success for Trades** focuses on three sectors: industrial electricians, construction and maintenance electricians and industrial mechanics or millwrights. Since February 2004, the Bridge to Success for Trades project has assessed 166 internationally trained tradespeople with experience in the electromechanical sector from 24 countries. Sixty-one industrial electricians, construction and maintenance electricians and millwrights have been awarded positions in this project. The program website reports that 54 industrial and construction and maintenance electricians and industrial mechanics have completed their studies with 53 of these successfully achieving the status of journeymen by passing their Certificate of Qualification examination.
- **One 2 One Coaching** is primarily for internationally trained immigrants in accounting, engineering, health care and IT. The coaching team offers assistance with job search techniques, interview preparation, and career planning.
- **Mentoring for Employment** – matching internationally trained professionals in engineering, accounting, finance, IT, human resources, sales and marketing, biotechnology, social services and office administration. This program is limited to immigrants who have been in Canada less than two years. In 2003-2004 the program served 200 clients and 85 matches were made. The program website indicates that 75% of

⁶¹ <http://www.skillsforchange.org/one2one/index.html>

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the program participants obtained employment in their fields and on average clients find work after being matched for only three months.

STIC (Sector-Specific Terminology Information and Counselling)

The STIC project provides a model for sector specific orientation, occupational terminology training, computerized profile building, and career action plan development for internationally trained professionals and tradespeople in four sectors: engineering, accounting, health care, and automotive service mechanics. The program consists of two types of workshops: Overview and Orientation, and Occupational Terminology. A website⁶² provides the workshop materials and lesson plans so that these workshops can be offered by regulatory bodies, community groups or any other organization wishing to provide an introduction to one of these occupations.

Looking Ahead -This website⁶³ serves as an on-line portal to information, programs and services that support immigrant employment in British Columbia, Canada. It was developed and supported under the leadership of EASI (Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants), a broad-based coalition of community-based agencies, post-secondary institutions, professional and trades associations, regulatory bodies, employers, unions and the three levels of government. Information on the site is targeted for immigrants, employers and service providers.

Other Resources

There are a number of tools that have emerged recently as useful resources. Immigrants can access valuable on-line information through ALIS, professional association websites, immigrant-serving agency websites, and AHRE publications such as *Welcome to Alberta*.

Tools for demonstrating skills such as PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) portfolios are being used by some institutions and employers in some sectors use competency-based assessment tests to test the skills of potential employees as part of the hiring process. Loan programs such as Calgary's Immigrant Access Fund or the Maytree Foundation's Immigrant Employment Loan Program are additional resources.

⁶² http://atwork.settlement.org/stic/English/about_stic.asp

⁶³ <http://www.lookingahead.bc.ca>

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