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This document is intended for employers in Ottawa who are interested in hiring and retaining skilled immigrants. The document is a reference guide that provides information about and insight into the most common challenges faced by local employers when recruiting and integrating immigrants into the workplace. The guide offers practical tips and suggestions for employers to address these challenges, highlighting local resources.

The guide is particularly aimed at small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) which typically do not have dedicated Human Resource (HR) departments and staff. If you are an owner or manager in such an organization, you should find the information and suggestions appropriate and useful for yourself, for any managers responsible for hiring, and for anyone in your organization with HR-type responsibilities. The guide is structured for quick reference and ease of use. It includes numerous links and references to detailed information so that you may choose to pursue specific topics in more depth. These additional resources are highlighted in context in the body of the document and also in the Resources section at the end of the document.

This guide was developed by Hire Immigrants Ottawa in conjunction with the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce. Funding was provided by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Global Experience @ Work initiative with support from the Government of Ontario.

The guide is designed for easy access to information that will help you understand and deal with the most common issues you are likely to encounter when actively seeking to diversify your workforce. We hope that you will find it a practical and useful resource and will refer to it frequently.

The Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) initiative was launched in 2006. Much of the information in this guide is based on the activities of the HIO Working Groups. Four sector-specific working groups were established in mid-2007, representing employers and stakeholders in health care, information technology, finance, and the public sector. The working groups have identified the main barriers that hinder the effective hiring of skilled immigrants into their respective organizations. They have also developed an action plan to address these barriers. Some of the planned actions are already underway, and significant progress is already being made.

Among the planned actions of the HIO working groups is an intention to share their experiences and best practices with other employers in the region, particularly SME employers. HIO and its partners encourage you to contact them to learn more about their activities and to get first-hand, practical guidance from employers who have been successful in addressing challenges that you may be facing.

Contact information for HIO can be found at **www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca/contact_us**

