

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) is a community-based initiative that brings together employers, immigrant agencies and stakeholders to enhance employers' ability to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area.

Lead project partners are:

- United Way/Centraide Ottawa
- City of Ottawa
- Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) World Skills Inc
- Ottawa Chamber of Commerce
- Le Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la Capitale nationale (RGA)
- Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI)

Objectives

The project's objective is to increase the capacity of employers in the Ottawa region to effectively integrate skilled immigrants into the local workforce. This objective is being achieved through a multi-pronged approach to include three key elements:

- **Employer Council of Champions:** Hire Immigrants Ottawa's "*Employer Council of Champions*" (ECC), features leading Ottawa employers who are committed to championing the issue of skilled immigrant employment.
- **Working Groups:** To complement the work of the ECC, are sector-specific *Working Groups* in health care, information technology, finance, public service and biotech (Fall 2009) industry. Human resource representatives from ECC organizations sit on the appropriate sector working group, working together with expert stakeholders to address systemic barriers to employment for skilled immigrants.
- **Create Awareness:** Hire Immigrants Ottawa is creating local awareness to promote greater understanding of the social and economic value immigrants bring to Ottawa.

By engaging small, medium and large sized employers in the public and private sectors, this project aims to create new employment opportunities and tackle systemic barriers to employment for skilled immigrants.

Why Hire Immigrants

Statistics Canada projects that by 2011, 100% of net growth in the labour force will come from immigration. With lower birthrates, declining numbers of post-secondary graduates and unprecedented numbers of retirements, labour shortage will soon be felt across several sectors of the economy.

Ottawa is the second largest recipient of immigrants in Ontario. The underutilization of skilled immigrants accounts for a loss of between \$3.4 and \$5.0 billion dollars per year for Canada's economy, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

In the "war for talent," diversity can be a competitive edge for employers who recruit from a talented, but often overlooked, labour opportunity: skilled immigrants.

Hiring Immigrants is Simply Good Business...

Employers who diversify their workforce are better able to:

- Attract and retain top talent to alleviate skill and labour shortages
- Better understand and respond to the increasingly diverse local customer base
- Expand local markets, and develop new global markets, by leveraging immigrants' international experience and cultural awareness
- Enhance productivity, creativity, employee relations, and decision-making through diverse approaches
- Save on employee training costs by utilizing transferable foreign work experience
- Build multi-cultural understanding and enhance harmony and prosperity in the community

If you are an employer and want more information on how to access skilled immigrants, please contact us at 613-228-6715 or email us at info@hireimmigrantsottawa.ca

Employer resources and tools are available online at www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca