



Engaging Employers

Building Capacity for
Immigrant Employment
A Five-Year Success Story
2006-2011

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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. The initiative was launched in 2006 as a response to a growing need to identify and address barriers faced by employers in the hiring and integration of skilled immigrants into the labour force.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa

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Funded by:



Employer Council of Champions

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CGI*

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LASI World Skills*

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TD Canada Trust *

The Ottawa Hospital *

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat*

United Way Ottawa *

University of Ottawa *

** ECC organizations with representation on the Working Groups*

Working Groups Member Organizations

BioTalent Canada

Canadian Council for Aviation and Aerospace

Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Certified General Accountants

Certified Management Accountants

Information and Communications Technology Council

International Development Research Centre

Kinaxis

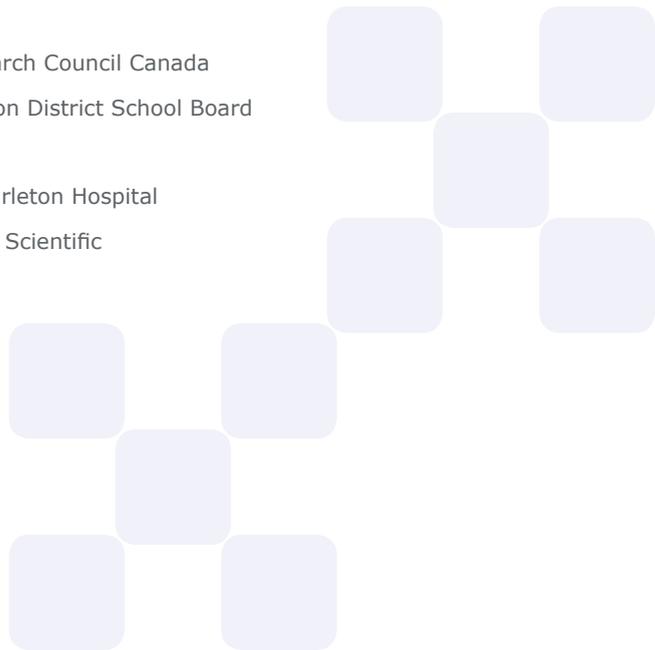
National Research Council Canada

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

Pythian

Queensway Carleton Hospital

Thermo Fisher Scientific



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Message from the Council Chairs

As Co-Chairs of the Employer Council of Champions (ECC) we are proud to present this report describing the activities and accomplishments of Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) since its inception five years ago. The cumulative result is impressive: Participating organizations have hired more than one-thousand immigrants into skills appropriate positions in the Ottawa region since the Council was launched in 2007. But even more important, the HIO initiative has brought together the collaborative efforts of local employers and numerous community partners and stakeholders to help foster systematic change within our workplaces – changes that will have lasting impact in the ability of employers to hire the best available talent.

By improving our recruiting and hiring practices, adopting innovative mentoring and coaching programs, enhancing our cross-cultural competencies, sharing our lessons learned and celebrating our success stories, together as employers we are laying a foundation for long-term success — with a diverse and inclusive workforce that is key to our community’s prosperity and cohesiveness.

As we take stock of our accomplishments, we must continue to reach out to our networks and increase the number of employers who understand how to effectively tap this diverse talent — not just how to recruit and hire people of diverse backgrounds, but how to take full advantage of the energy and innovation that diverse work teams and diverse leadership can bring to our businesses and to our community.

We also take this opportunity to recognize and thank our many partners, stakeholders and Council members for their collaboration and support in achieving these successes. Looking ahead to the next few years, we invite all local employers to join us in making Ottawa the destination of choice for this global talent.



Gaye Moffett
Co-Chair,
Employer Council of Champions
Founder, GEM Healthcare
Services Inc.



Dennis Jackson
Co-Chair,
Employer Council of Champions
Vice-President, Scotiabank,
Ottawa and West Quebec



Employer Council of Champions
Official launch of Hire Immigrants Ottawa, April 2007.



Engaging Leaders • Involving Employers

Our Goal: Increase the number of employers who hire skilled immigrant into skills-appropriate positions.

Over the past five years, HIO has approached this task by engaging local leaders and employers:

A cross-sector **Employer Council of Champions** (ECC) - launched in May 2007. The ECC which is comprised of senior executives from leading Ottawa private and public sector employers, business associations and labour groups, gives employers a collective voice, enabling them to champion the successful integration of skilled

- **32 organizations engaged on the Employer Council of Champions**
- **37 organizations participate in sector-working groups**
- **137 employers have implemented systemic changes to their HR policies and practices since 2009**
- **525 employers have been reached by HIO since 2007**
- **Employers and stakeholders have contributing over 6,000 hours of their time and expertise towards the work of HIO since 2007**

immigrants into the workforce. ECC members are at the forefront of the HIO initiative, promoting the integration of skilled immigrants within their organizations as well as within their organizations as well as professional networks and business relationships.

Five sector-specific working groups

represent employers and stakeholders in health care, information technology, finance, bio-technology and the public sector. The working groups are the operational arm of the ECC. Each group tackles the barriers and systemic challenges that employers in their respective sector face when attempting to hire and integrate skilled immigrants into the workplace. The working groups lead and are engaged in a broad range of activities — hosting events that connect employers with skilled immigrants, sharing promising practices, participating in cross-cultural competency training workshops, promoting the adaptation of HR policies and practices, and creating workplaces that welcome cultural diversity.

Employer Engagement - Through ongoing employer outreach and engagement activities, HIO shares lessons learnt from the sector – specific working groups and employer-oriented tools and resources with the larger employer community of Ottawa.

EMPLOYERS IN ACTION

From Recruitment
to Retention



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Sector specific working groups are increasing on information technology groups, most group tackles barriers to employment from an employer perspective. Participants include HR professionals from ACC organizations, recruitment agencies, unions, government, educational institutions, and professional associations.

Working Group Objectives

- **Address barriers** – recognizing and exploring solutions to common cultural differences, access to professional networks, and human resource processes.
- **Identify gaps** – assess information and identify areas for improvement, and recruitment action plans to reduce the gaps.
- **Create hiring opportunities** – hire qualified immigrants.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa

H2O At Work



> Guide de l'employeur pour l'intégration des immigrants au milieu de travail



Ottawa
Chamber of Commerce

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HIRE IMMIGRANTS OTTAWA

TAPPING INTO TALENT: A CASE STUDY

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Developing Solutions to Workplace Barriers

Our Tactic: Provide employers with the tools and resources to more effectively tap the local pool of immigrant talent.

Breaking Down Barriers through Innovative Solutions

- HIO has produced an ***Employers Guide to Integrating Immigrants into the Workplace***, which provides tips and strategies on how to deal with the most common challenges faced by employers when hiring and retaining skilled immigrants.
- The ***Working Groups Action Plan*** is a document that outlines the preliminary activities and action plans of the working groups after their first year. An update to this document, ***Employers in Action***, helps employers enhance their efforts to hire and integrate skilled immigrants. Both documents highlight identified barriers that employers face and recommend strategies that they can adopt or adapt. An implementation template helps employers measure the outcomes of these activities.
- ***Networking Events*** bring together employers and skilled immigrants. These informal events provide opportunities for immigrants and employer representatives to have discussions and interactions related to their sector and profession.
- Working group members also host and participate in ***Coaching Events*** for skilled immigrants. These events typically involve several employers within a specific sector. Immigrants meet with HR personnel and/or managers who review and provide feedback on résumés and offer sector-specific information and job-search guidance.

17 networking and coaching events, involving 300 skilled immigrants, have taken place since 2009



Public Sector Working Group members (HR Professionals and Hiring Managers) coaching skilled immigrants at a HIO Coaching Event. Event Hosted by the City of Ottawa – January 2010.



Building Capacity and Awareness

Employer concerns about cultural differences in the workplace can be a strong barrier when considering immigrant applicants in the hiring process or managing diverse teams. Employers benefit from enhanced cultural competency in their workplaces, and from greater appreciation of the business drivers related to cultural diversity and changing demographics.

To achieve the objective of building capacity and awareness, HIO offers:

Complimentary **cross-cultural competency training** to employers in the Ottawa area. These modular workshops help employers improve their cross-cultural communication skills, develop effective cultural adaptation and successful accommodation strategies, and inclusiveness practices, so that they can

better prepare their organizations for a more culturally diverse workforce.

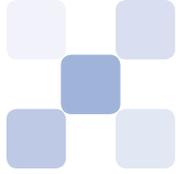
Employers Learning Exchanges –events that provide employers and stakeholders an opportunity to learn and exchange ideas with subject matter experts and practitioners on a wide range of topics on the effective labour market integration of skilled immigrants.

Information sessions which provide employers with current local labour market information, and the business case for integrating skilled immigrants into the workplace ,with a focus on the implications of the changing demographics of Ottawa’s labour force for employers. At these sessions employers are also introduced to the tools and resources that are available, through HIO and its network of stakeholders and partners, to help them more effectively leverage the talents of skilled immigrants in their workplaces.

Labour Market Fact Sheets highlight employer workforce needs, demographic trends and labour market developments.

- **6 interactive cross-cultural competency workshop modules have been developed**
- **52 workshops have been delivered to 634 participants since 2008**
- **11 information sessions have been delivered to 96 employers since 2008**





Building Public Awareness

HIO's ongoing communications initiatives create awareness of the facts and issues related to the effective integration of skilled immigrants into the local labour market, and promote greater understanding of the economic contributions of immigrants to the local economy.

These initiatives include:

- quarterly HIO Communiqués, distributed to stakeholders and interested individuals;
- periodic media advisories and press releases, as well as local media coverage of events;
- articles contributed to professional and industry publications;
- profiles of employer and employee success stories and best practices on the HIO website;
- presentations at conferences, workshops, business association meetings and workplaces;
- the HIO website and its employer-focused tools and resources; and
- an annual Employers Summit, where proven strategies and programs that are making a difference in workplaces are highlighted and local results and success stories are celebrated.

- **125 media articles/features and references**
- **85 presentations at conferences/workshops**
- **Over 113,000 unique visitors to hireimmigrantsottawa.ca have downloaded over 46,000 copies of various resources**



Hire Immigrants Ottawa is a winner of the 2010 Arthur Kroeger College Awards in Public Affairs for Citizenship and Community Affairs.



Employer Recognition

An annual Employer Excellence Awards program recognizes local employers for their leadership, innovative recruitment, retention and engagement policies, and promising practices around the integration of skilled immigrants into their organizations.



1158 skilled immigrants have gained skills appropriate employment with participating HIO employers since 2007

Employer Excellence Award Recipients

- Algonquin College
- Association pour l'intégration sociale d'Ottawa
- CGI
- Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- City of Ottawa
- GEM Health Care Services
- MBNA Canada Bank
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- OCRI Talent Bridge
- Pythian
- Revera Health Services Inc.
- Scotiabank
- University of Ottawa
- Vanier Community Service Centre

Read about Award recipients at: hireimmigrantsottawa.ca

HIO Stakeholders with Minister Chan, May 2009



Employer Council of Champions Summit, March 2011



Networking Event, May 2008





Making Connections and Collaborations

LASI World Skills Inc (Ottawa Job Match Network)

HIO collaborates with local immigrant serving organizations through LASI World Skills to connect employers to skilled immigrants. In response to employers request for a centralized access point to the skilled immigrant talent pool, the Ottawa Job Match Network was launched by our agency partners. Led by LASI World Skills, the OJMN is a partnership that includes the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) and the National Capital YMCA-YWCA. The goal of the OJMN is to match internationally trained individuals with jobs commensurate with their education, skills and experience, as well as providing post-hiring support for managers and employees. The OJMN also pre-qualifies and invites skilled immigrants to HIO's Networking and Coaching events.

Federal Internship for Newcomers Program

Hire Immigrants Ottawa has worked closely with the Federal Government, first through an inter-departmental roundtable of federal departments, and subsequently with Citizenship and Immigration Canada as they built upon two successful pilot projects to launch the Federal Internship for Newcomers program. Working with immigrant serving organizations such as LASI World Skills, Service Intégration Travail Outaouais and World University Service of Canada, CIC leads FIN, which engages with other federal departments and agencies to provide valuable Canadian work experience to newcomers in order to enhance their labour market outcomes.

Working with other Cities

- HIO is a member of the ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies) network, an initiative that supports local efforts in Canadian cities to successfully adapt and implement programs that further the suitable employment of skilled immigrants.
- HIO is from time-to-time invited to share its model, lessons learned, and employer engagement strategies with other communities. Some of the communities visited include Cornwall, Kingston, Peterborough, Brockville and Smiths Falls.



Financial Statement

Schedule of Contributions and Expenses

	Cumulative period from March 13, 2006 to March 31, 2012 \$
Contributions	
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	1,047,105
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration	1,944,660
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities	20,000
United Way/Centraide Ottawa	445,809
Interest	32,483
	3,490,057
Deferred contributions	(180,419)
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Total contributions	3,309,638
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Expenditures	
Salaries and benefits	1,704,086
Professional services	522,948
Administration	950,652
Repayment of unused contributions	131,951
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Total expenditures	3,309,638
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Note: Audited annual financial reports are available upon request