



MAYTREE

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ALLIES - Backgrounder

ALLIES (Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies) is a project jointly funded by Maytree and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. ALLIES provides funding, technical expertise and networks to Canadian cities so that they can successfully adapt and implement local ideas for skilled immigrants to find suitable employment.

What is at issue

Immigrants are a key resource for building and strengthening Canada, particularly in light of our aging population and our declining birth rate. By 2011, we will rely 100% on immigrants for our net labour market growth; and by 2026, our net population growth will be derived entirely from immigration.

Canada brings in roughly 250,000 immigrants per year. This figure is comprised of skilled immigrants and their families, family class immigrants and refugees. Of these, the largest group are skilled immigrants, i.e., individuals who have been selected by Canada as best equipped to meet the needs of our evolving economy. However, currently only four out of ten skilled immigrants are able to find employment that is relevant to their education and experience. The Conference Board of Canada, in a 2004 study, has estimated that our country's failure to recognize immigrants' learning and credentials costs the economy \$3.4 billion to \$5 billion in lost earnings every year.

What ALLIES brings to the table

ALLIES provides resources to immigrant employment councils and networks to bring together local stakeholders and to develop their own practical solutions to help skilled immigrants find suitable employment. These multi-stakeholder

groups are typically comprised of employers, community organizations, occupational regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions, assessment service providers, labour, immigrant professional associations and all three levels of government.

To increase their ability to effect change at the local level and break down the barriers to hiring skilled immigrants, ALLIES offers:

- Web-based "how-to guides" on effective programs such as mentoring, internships, and public awareness campaigns;
- Coaches who will guide and mentor communities in the development of these programs;
- Grants to support the creation of local immigrant employment councils; and
- The website hireimmigrants.ca which provides employers with interactive tools and resources to support the recruitment, integration and retention of skilled immigrants.

To complement these activities, ALLIES hosts annual conferences to share ideas, strategies and experiences about successful immigrant employment approaches.

To date, ALLIES has provided funding to Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver. ALLIES has also supported other communities across Canada with technical assistance and advice.

Contact information

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