

ASSISTING LOCAL LEADERS WITH IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES (ALLIES)

A Collaboration Between
THE MAYTREE FOUNDATION *and* THE J.W. McCONNELL FAMILY FOUNDATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING

BACKGROUND

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

Canada brings in roughly 250,000 immigrants per year. The largest cohort is individuals who have been selected by Canada as best equipped to meet the needs of our evolving economy. However, only four of ten skilled immigrants are able to attach themselves to employment that is relevant to their education and experience. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that our country's failure to recognize immigrants' learning and learning credentials costs the economy \$3.4 billion to \$5 billion in lost earnings every year.¹

Most of the debate on immigration focuses on national policies and programs, therefore discussions of solutions tend to focus on national levers. However, the lived reality of immigration is uniquely urban and local. A total of 94% of immigrants arriving in the 1990s went to urban centres in Canada.² These cities are recognized as the drivers of our national economy and prosperity. How well these urban centres do will depend in part on how well they manage to integrate immigrants into the economic, cultural and social fabric of society. If they succeed, the result will be a vibrant local economy and a cosmopolitan community. If they fail, the result may be poverty, segregation and exclusion.

The last few years have been a time of significant experimentation and innovation by communities towards solving this problem. This innovation has focused not simply on the delivery of services to skilled immigrants, but on drawing new and unusual partners to the table in a broad coalition devoted to solutions. The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council

¹ Conference Board of Canada. Performance and Potential 2004-2005: How can Canada prosper in Tomorrow's World? Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada, 2004.

² Statistics Canada, 2003. *Canada's Ethnocultural Portrait: The Changing Mosaic*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001008. Ottawa, January 21. Analysis Series, 2001 Census.

(TRIEC) launched in 2003, was a first expression of city building and renewal by the Toronto City Summit Alliance and a group of local leaders including The Maytree Foundation. .

In June 2007, The Maytree Foundation, with support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation hosted a “Learning Exchange” for communities interested in this model. Close to 140 participants from more than 18 communities participated and demonstrated significant appetite for a national network for dissemination, learning, and creating a national movement of locally engaged communities that are providing successful employment solutions for skilled immigrants. ALLIES is a direct outcome of the Learning Exchange Conference.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

ALLIES is a four-year project funded by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and The Maytree Foundation:

The objectives of the project are to:

- (a) contribute to the resilience of communities in Canada by enabling citizens and institutions to act on solutions that result in the employment of skilled immigrants, thus contributing to the prosperity and vitality of their communities;
- (b) create a nation-wide movement and impact through a series of successful community initiatives and national partnerships;
- (c) create shifts in hiring and other relevant systems and behaviours through these initiatives; and,
- (d) position leading local employers as agents of change and champions for skilled immigrants.

ALLIES has two key project components:

1) A national hub for learning and dissemination

The National ALLIES hub is a coordinating and learning centre located at The Maytree Foundation. It will support communities across Canada by managing the granting process, supporting grant recipients and monitoring their progress. The hub will also be responsible for building a national movement which will include developing and documenting the community of practice as it grows, telling the stories of various communities, and ensuring a climate of ongoing dialogue and learning.

2) A grants program to support local communities and build partnerships

Three types of grants are available to interested communities at this stage of the project: (i) Start-Up Grants, (ii) Partnership Grants, and (iii) Innovation Grants.

TYPES OF GRANTS

Start-Up Grants are available in two phases.

The purpose of **Start-Up Grants: Phase One** is to enable communities to determine whether they possess the champions, the ideas and the capacity to move to full partnership with other stakeholders in the area of employment of skilled immigrants. In this phase, communities are

expected to evaluate their internal capacity and to identify external partners for building a sustainable partnership.

The purpose of **Start-Up Grants: Phase Two** is to continue the momentum gained in Phase One and to bring communities a step closer to full partnership. In this phase, communities are expected to work on building the foundations of a successful community partnership.

It is possible for communities to apply to join the project at Phase Two without going through Phase One as long as they meet the qualifying criteria.

Phase One and Phase Two grants are valued at up to \$30,000 each. Funded activities are to be completed in four months for each phase. Please note, that any unspent funds, or funds utilized for purposes other than those in the grant proposal, are subject to repayment .

Partnership Grants of up to \$90,000 per year over three years will be provided to communities that have successfully completed all elements of developing a multi-stakeholder effort as outlined in Phases One and Two. The project expects to develop and support approximately seven communities at this level.

Communities may apply to join the project as a full partner without having received Phase One and/or Phase Two grants as long as they meet the qualifying criteria.

Participating partner communities are expected to assemble local or regional councils that include leading employers, businesses, immigrant-serving organizations, agencies, labour, essential local institutions such as universities, colleges, boards of trade, community or public foundations, immigrant professional associations and government. Through such partnerships, communities should be able to leverage place-based collaboration and develop and implement ideas that are relevant to their economy and context. They may also adapt and/or replicate tried-and-true strategies from other participating urban centres in Canada (e.g. The Mentoring Partnership).

Innovation Grants will be available for the development of new ideas that relate to integrating skilled immigrants into the Canadian workforce and the work that ALLIES grant recipients are undertaking. Innovation grants are small and supplementary in nature. ALLIES grant recipients as well as other groups such as regulatory bodies or community colleges may apply. Ideas generated through Innovation grants will be disseminated to ALLIES grants recipients through the National Hub.

Applications for Innovation grants will be announced at the beginning of 2009.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Applications will be reviewed on an on-going basis, however there is a limited amount of funding available. Communities are encouraged to submit their proposals as soon as possible.

Please e-mail a copy of your application with attachments to:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

ALLIES	Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies is a four year project funded by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and The Maytree Foundation. ALLIES will create a national movement of engaged communities that are providing successful employment solutions for skilled immigrants.
Catalyst	A person and/or an organization that builds a movement around the creation of a local partnership that is developing solutions for integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market.
Census Metropolitan Area	Area consisting of one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a census metropolitan area, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000.
Champion(s)	A high profile person(s) of influence who has the capacity to develop a local partnership and who is/are willing to leverage his/her influence with their colleagues and other key stakeholders.
Convening Organization	An organization that is able to foster and house the initiative. Ideally a local convenor has a deep knowledge of the issue of employment for skilled immigrants or the capacity to quickly grasp its history and nuances. It has the capacity to bring diverse players to the table, enjoys a high reputation in the local community, has some degree of independence and is not perceived as having a 'special interest'. The convening organization provides management, oversight and accountability over the project.
Diverse Stakeholders	Persons and organizations with a role in resolving the problems of integration of skilled immigrants into the labour market. They include skilled immigrants, settlement organizations, employers, all orders of government, occupational regulatory organizations, post-secondary institutions, and other key players.
Inter-Government Table	A consultative body that consists of representatives of various departments of all three orders of government (local, provincial and federal) to discuss ideas and to identify priorities in the decision making process.
Partnership Model	An approach to resolving the problem of integrating skilled immigrant into a local labour market that brings together all relevant stakeholders. These stakeholders cooperate, agree and carry on the project; contribute to it by combining resources, knowledge or activities; and share responsibility for its accomplishment.

Place-Based Collaboration A method to achieve sustainable solutions by empowering local, provincial and national stakeholders to act together in the best interests of the local community.

Skilled Immigrants Immigrants or refugees living in Canada with post-secondary education or work experience acquired outside of the country, knowledge of English or French and other abilities that help them to establish themselves successfully in Canada.

**The J.W. McConnell
Family Foundation**
www.mcconnellfoundation.ca

A private charitable foundation established in 1937 by [John Wilson McConnell](#) (1877-1963). It seeks to improve quality of life by building communities that help people to develop their talents and contribute to the common good.

The Maytree Foundation
www.maytree.com

A private charitable foundation established in 1982, committed to reducing poverty and inequality in Canada and to building strong civic communities. The Foundation accomplishes its objectives by identifying, supporting and funding leaders, and leading organizations that have the capacity to make change and advance the common good. Maytree was the local convener for the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council. The National ALLIES Hub will be housed at The Maytree Foundation.

TRIEC
www.triec.ca

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council is a multi-stakeholder collaboration comprised of members presenting employers, occupational regulatory bodies, immigrant professional associations, community organizations, all three orders of governments, and post-secondary institutions to ensure effective and appropriate inclusion of skilled immigrants into the Canada's labour market.