
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Economic Development

PROVINCE HELPING SKILLED IMMIGRANTS FIND JOBS

VICTORIA – Six service providers have been chosen to administer the Province’s new program to help highly-skilled immigrants move more quickly into jobs that match their qualifications, announced Economic Development Minister Colin Hansen.

“For too long, immigrants have been frustrated by long wait times and barriers to getting the jobs that match their skills,” said Hansen. “If immigrants move to B.C. to work in a field where there is a shortage then we need to help them get their training and credentials recognized, which is exactly what these service providers will help do.”

The B.C. Skills Connect for Immigrants Program will consist of career assessment and planning, workplace language upgrading and orientation, skill enhancements, as well as a mentorship component. Many B.C. immigrants possess skills in occupations where there are shortages but face challenges in navigating a complex labour market entry system, language barriers, difficulty getting their credentials recognized and lack of employment networks. Through the program, it is expected that over 5,000 immigrant will be employed in the next three years in areas related to their skills and qualifications.

“We hear stories all the time about skilled immigrants working in jobs that are unrelated to what they were trained to do,” said Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism and Immigration Dave S. Hayer. “This government has developed several programs to make these kinds of stories the exception rather than the rule. Skills Connect is just one way we’re ensuring new British Columbians can get the help they need to use their education and experience to their best advantage.”

The program will begin by focusing on connecting immigrants with employers in the construction industry, transportation industry, energy industry and tourism and hospitality industry. It is intended that the program will be expanded to include service providers with a focus on health care over the coming months. Services through the Skills Connect program are available across B.C. through the following service providers:

1. ASPECT, providing services throughout the province;
2. Back in Motion, providing services in the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland;
3. Camosun College, providing services in the Capital Regional District;
4. Douglas College, providing services in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley;
5. Multicultural Helping House Society, providing services in the Lower Mainland; and
6. Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society, providing services in Surrey and the Fraser Valley.

Provincial funding for the Skills Connect program will be \$14.5 million over the next three years, while federal funding for the program is projected to be \$10 million over the next three years.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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