

OPENING DOORS

Community-based Research Study to Identify Future Labour Market Supports for Newcomers Residing in York Region

York Region - Opening Doors is a community-based research study that will identify the future labour market supports needed to better assist newcomers to find employment in York Region that closely match their skills, knowledge and abilities.

It is not news that Canada's newcomers continue to have difficulty in finding and keeping appropriate employment. A recent report¹ from Statistics Canada states that the employment situation got worse between 1991 and 2006 and experts believe this trend may undermine the country's ability to attract immigrants.

"There is a need to act quickly and effectively to invest in our newcomer population", said COSTI's Executive Director, Mario J. Calla. "Despite the fact that the economy is in a downturn, Ontario's competitive position is at risk. Governments, business, labour, employment and settlement service providers need to work together to ensure that newcomers have the skills and knowledge they need to meet current and future labour force shortages. The Opening Doors research study will help us understand the right combination of supports newcomers, employers and others need to ensure that newcomers can benefit from and contribute to, a vibrant economy. Securing meaningful employment and building successful careers is key to individual security and social inclusion".

Through funds received from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, COSTI Immigrant Services in partnership with five core organizations and a host of other relevant stakeholders including employers, will work with project researchers to gather, analyze and synthesize information on the current and emerging labour market needs of newcomers. One of the project's goals is to recommend strategies to improve newcomer labour outcomes and develop support for service improvements and community action.

Al Wilson, Executive Director of the York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board said, "There are no easy solutions when it comes to matching employees with employers in an emerging knowledge-based economy. The results of this project will identify tools needed to support both when hiring and retaining the newcomer workforce."

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¹ Galarneau, D and Rene Morissette, *Perspectives*, December 2008

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Community Partner Organizations

- Catholic Community Services of York Region
- Job Skills
- Seneca College
- Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
- York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board

About COSTI

COSTI Immigrant Services is a community-based multicultural agency providing employment, educational, and social services to new Canadians and all individuals in need of assistance. Since 1952, COSTI has been helping those in need, providing hope to refugee families, protecting women and children, strengthening families, combatting racism and discrimination, and assisting all those who function at a disadvantage in society. With a staff of over 350 people, speaking more than 60 languages, COSTI strives to ensure that all individuals, regardless of language, cultural, or financial barriers, are given the opportunity to use their existing skills, learn new ones, and participate in all aspects of Canadian life. COSTI presently provides support to over 54,000 individuals annually through 18 service locations.

COSTI's Employment Services in York Region have been involved in employment placement services in a broad range of occupations with employers in the Region for over 20 years. More recently, to overcome a shortage of skilled workers in various trades and professions, COSTI has been working with employers to increase apprenticeship participation for youth, as well as securing higher skilled placements for internationally trained individuals.

The Opening Doors research study is funded by Employment Ontario.

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