
COSTI LAUNCHES NEW ON-LINE INITIATIVE FOR NEWCOMER PROFESSIONALS

**Funding aims to support a technological approach to facilitating
the labour market integration of
Newcomer Professionals in their field of expertise.**

(Toronto) – November 22, 2004 – The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) awarded COSTI Immigrant Services \$347,336 over the next three years to assist newcomer professionals to secure permanent employment in their field of expertise. It is anticipated that 250 newcomer professionals will secure permanent employment through this unique and innovative on-line initiative.

The **On Line Learning Support for Unemployed and Underemployed Newcomer Professionals** project, is a partnership project between COSTI, OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants), and the York Catholic District School Board, that will provide internationally trained newcomer professionals residing in the Greater Toronto Area, with the opportunity to acquire on-line sector-specific workplace communication training, information and referral, employment advice, and peer support. A total of 3,400 individuals will receive information and referral services, with 540 receiving expert employment counselling and guidance.

“I’m excited about working with OCASI and the YCDSB on this initiative”, says Mario J. Calla, COSTI’s Executive Director. “It’s great to see three organizations come together to help newcomer professionals with their struggle to find employment – each contributing a high level of expertise in the areas of technology, learning, and employment. OCASI’s expertise in on-line communication; the YCDSB’s reputation for developing exclusive curriculum and course content for thousands of ESL learners; and COSTI’s experience in offering specialized employment and educational services to internationally trained individuals, is definitely a recipe for success!”

On-line initiatives expected to be developed and launched over the next three years include: professional/peer support networks; workplace communication and terminology curriculum and course content for three professional sectors; a help desk for five sector specific chat rooms.

“To ensure that training and resource materials meet the needs of newcomer professionals, community-based agencies and key stakeholders will be invited to participate through an advisory group and/or one-on-one interviews”, says Robert Cazzola, COSTI’s Director of Education and Information Technology. “Inviting relevant stakeholders to take part in the evaluation of this pilot project is key to its long term sustainability.”

Specialized services to internationally trained individuals, information and referral, employment assessment and counselling, work placement, job search training, and youth employment services are some of the employment services offered by **COSTI**. In the past, COSTI has been providing English as a Second Language training to newcomers. In the past year, COSTI provided educational, social, and employment-related services to over 41,000 individuals in need.

In addition to its advocacy and public education work on behalf of community organizations, **OCASI** is responsible for the ongoing development and maintenance of Settlement.Org and for providing support and training to Settlement.Org users. Settlement.Org is a vital source of information for newcomers and for those seeking to immigrate to Ontario.

Serving one of the fastest growing regions in North America, the **York Catholic District School Board** has extensive experience in developing curriculum for students who come from a variety of linguistic, racial and ethnocultural backgrounds. The YCDSB offers program support in developing and/or refining standard Canadian English communication skills.

**For more information on the OLT Project, contact:
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**If you would like to learn more COSTI and its
programs and services, contact:
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