

Immigrant-Friendly Communities: Making Immigration Work for Employers and Other Stakeholders in Small-Town Canada

Conference Board of Canada
April 16, 2009

The research does the following:

- Identifies the benefits, challenges, and some successful models in integrating immigrants into Canadian workplaces;
- Examines promising practices of Canadian and international companies in attracting, recruiting, integrating, developing, and retaining immigrant talent;
- Provides businesses and other stakeholders with recommendations for becoming immigrant friendly workplaces.

Through a literature review and qualitative interviews with organizations and individuals, the paper answered some important questions about immigrant employment and found some preferred strategies for creating immigrant-friendly communities and businesses.

The study cited immigration patterns in small communities to show:

- Why long-term economic sustainability requires a well-educated, skilled, and productive workforce
- Why the current economic downturn will not erase global competition for talent
- Skills shortages will continue to be a challenge in Canada, in light of the ageing population and comparatively low birth rates
- Why Canadian employers should leverage the capacity of an increasingly diverse workforce to innovate, create more value-added goods and services, and provide access to new markets

It takes a comprehensive look at the issues involved in integrating immigrants into Canadian workplaces, from the perspectives of both employers and immigrants.

Key facts

For employers

The research found the following promising practices for effectively attracting and retaining immigrant talent:

- Identify workforce gaps that may be best filled by recruiting immigrants
- Explore all available methods of recruiting immigrants
- Consider participating in international immigration and job fairs

- Connect with other community stakeholders to coordinate immigrant settlement and integration activities
- Establish a workplace language and or essential skills training program to explore community opportunities for such training
- Designate Human Resources staff to provide settlement assistance to immigrant employees and invest financial and other resources in settlement
- Consider assessing immigrant competencies in lieu of formal credentials assessment
- Provide job mentorship for immigrant employees
- Consider moving temporary foreign workers to permanent residence as provincial nominees