

MEDIA ADVISORY

Removing Barriers: Maximizing the Potential of Foreign-Trained Workers

Each year thousands of newcomers with professional skills, designations and university degrees move to Ottawa. In fact, Ottawa is second to the Greater Toronto Area in the number of newcomers it receives, with an average of 7,500 arriving each year. Unfortunately, this talented pool of foreign-trained workers is often underutilized, and thus underemployed, because their skills and work experiences are not recognized by most employers. These barriers are depriving our community of the talents and skills of individuals with global experience.

Mayor Chiarelli's Five-Point Plan:

1. The City of Ottawa will hire 100 foreign-trained workers over four years as apprentices for one year at \$20,000 each to help newcomers work in their professions sooner. Community and private sector partners will also be asked to do their part by making room for an additional 1000 foreign professional across the City;
2. The City of Ottawa will create 200 voluntary mentoring positions for three-, six- and nine-month assignments to provide internationally trained professionals with important work experience and an opportunity to combine their expertise with Canadian experience. Additionally, community and private partners will be asked to help out by creating 2500 voluntary mentoring positions in the not-for-profit and private sectors throughout Ottawa.

3. Create a Web Portal for the City of Ottawa that will help newcomers and residents to better access City services, programs, and information on demographics language and the local economy.
4. Lobby the provincial government to increase funding for its “Bridge Training Programs” at Algonquin College and Cite Collegial for foreign-trained professionals. These programs help newcomers get jobs by providing skill development, language training, exam preparation and mentoring.
5. Establish a Community Working Group made up of leaders from the multicultural community, the private sector and the provincial and federal governments that will implement and monitor progress in this area. The Working Group will also report back to Council on additional steps needed to reduce barriers for foreign-trained workers.