

What Works – Alberta

Effective Practices for social, workplace and labour market programs and services

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Welcome to Alberta Human Resources and Employment's *What Works-Alberta* newsletter.

The focus for this edition is immigrants as sources of skilled workers. Learn how immigrants are playing an increasingly vital role in contributing to our economy. Read on about a successful, recent Team Alberta mission to Germany and the United Kingdom to attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs to Alberta. Find out about resources designed to provide useful information to immigrants about working in Alberta.

As always, we hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and welcome your feedback. Please refer to page 8 of this newsletter for information on how to send us your input. Enjoy.

Looking for Work in Alberta

An Immigrant's Perspective

Looking for work can be stressful. Even for an educated and experienced professional, securing employment can be a daunting task. Imagine how challenging it could be to find work if you are an immigrant. How and where do you start? What are the secrets to finding work? Who will help you? This article looks at answering those questions from the perspective of two foreign-trained immigrant professionals who moved to Alberta to find better opportunities for themselves and their families.

According to an Alberta Profile released in 2003 and highlighted in this newsletter, 16,290 immigrants came to Alberta in 2001. Of these, nearly half (46.6%) aged 20 years or older, had a university degree, and 16.2% had trade certificates or non-university diplomas. Edgar Dimalanta was one of these immigrants who arrived in Alberta in 2001, with a University Degree in Nursing from the Philippines.

Edgar came to Canada under the Federal Government's Live-in Caregiver program. After completing two years as a caregiver, Edgar eagerly began his search to find work as a Registered Nurse (RN).

One of Edgar's friends suggested that he have his Nursing credentials assessed by the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses (AARN). The AARN has been the professional association and regulatory body for registered nurses in Alberta since 1916. He found out that he needed to take a nursing refresher course. He also found out he could challenge the Canadian Nurses Examination, which he did and passed. Edgar registered with AARN and recently got hired as a full-time RN in Edmonton. Edgar faced many challenges and obstacles along the way to finding work as an RN in Alberta but was successful in achieving his goal. "My family was my greatest motivation in not giving up," said Edgar.

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At the same time that his family arrived from the Philippines to join him in Canada, he landed a job as a full-time RN in Edmonton.

The advice he gives to other immigrants looking for work in Alberta is:

- Never give up.
- Trust in yourself.
- Be determined, prove to yourself you can do it.

For Gabriela Radu, the phrase “trust in yourself” rang true for her while searching for work in Calgary. Gabriela moved to Alberta in 2003 from Romania with a Master’s Degree in Engineering. She didn’t find work in her field right away, and although there were times when she felt like giving up, she trusted in herself and stayed motivated. When asked what she believed were the reasons for her success in finding work, Gabriela replied, “Because I wasn’t a recent graduate, I had experience in the field”.

Upon graduating in 1995, Gabriela worked in Romania in petroleum engineering before receiving a scholarship to work in Germany, which she did for more than three years before moving to Calgary. Her first job in Canada was in sales for a large department store. It was at this job where she started to network with people in her area of interest. She landed a part-time job with a company closely associated with petroleum engineering. From there, she attended an industry fair, where she garnered several job offers and just recently accepted a full-time position in her field.

What advice does Gabriela give to other immigrants looking for work in engineering in Alberta?

- Keep learning; improve on your knowledge every day.
- Realize you are not alone; it’s not only difficult for immigrants but for Canadians too.
- Get to know people, get involved in society.
- Don’t just look at newspaper advertisements for job search; the best way is to network.
- Find your inside power and inside energy.

Both Edgar and Gabriela accessed services designed to help foreign trained immigrants find work. These were: The Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals in Edmonton and Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers in Calgary, respectively.

To find out more about these and other Career Development Services, contact AHRE’s Alberta Works Contact Centre at 1-866-644-5135 or drop into one of AHRE’s Labour Market Information Centres in Alberta.

International Qualification Assessment Services (IQAS)

A Foreign Academic Credentials Evaluation Service

Education is one of many considerations for employment, post-secondary admission and licensing. *IQAS* certificates are designed to promote the awareness and recognition of formal foreign academic credentials. They can help employers in Alberta better understand the education equivalencies of an internationally trained applicant. There are some post-secondary institutions and professional licensing bodies that accept *IQAS* assessments as part of their admission process. While *IQAS* assessment certificates are advisory only, they serve to promote an understanding of education obtained in other countries.

IQAS provides a ‘Description of Course Work’ assessment that lists courses and hours/credits taken within an educational program of another country. Professional licensing bodies can use this assessment to understand the content taken in another program. *IQAS* also provides basic assessments for general employment purposes and an ‘Assessment for Educational Institution’ for admission to specific institutions. *IQAS* recommends that internationally trained people contact the professional association or educational institution they are interested in to confirm if an *IQAS* assessment is required or recognized.

IQAS ensures quality assessments by:

- Following methodology principles that are recognized by national and international educational associations.
- Researching to find the most current and up-to-date educational assessment systems.
- Ensuring assessment staff are trained and experienced.
- Communicating regularly with employers, institutions and professional licensing bodies in order to have current information on educational requirements for occupations.

Evidence that *IQAS* is meeting a need and working, is demonstrated through increased levels of:

Recognition:

- Other government bodies recognize the value of *IQAS* and as a result the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Saskatchewan have entered into service agreements with *IQAS* to provide services for their immigrants. This makes the certificates portable and transferable across provincial borders.

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International Qualification Assessment Services continued from page 2

Satisfaction:

- Over 30 post-secondary institutions and 46 professional licensing bodies in Alberta and across Canada use *IQAS*.
- According to a client survey, 81% of respondents reported overall satisfaction with their *IQAS* assessment for the period between January 2000 and the end of June 2002.

Demand:

- Demand for *IQAS* services is growing. Since 1994, the average growth rate in the request for services has increased by 20%.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (or contracted service providers) can refer AHRE clients for IQAS assessments at no cost to the client.

IQAS is located in Edmonton, and is a part of Alberta Learning. Applications can be mailed to *IQAS*, as it is a mail-in service.

For more information, please go to <www.learning.gov.ab.ca/iqas>. A request for an application form can be made by calling 310-0000 and when prompted enter (780) 427-2655.

EuroMission 2004

Attracting Skilled Immigrants to Alberta

EuroMission is a project that supports the Government of Alberta's (GOA) plan to ensure Alberta has enough skilled workers to meet industry's demands.

Organized by Alberta Economic Development, the objective of EuroMission 2004 was to send Team Alberta to the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany to attract and convince skilled workers to emigrate to Alberta for work.

The goals of *EuroMission 2004* were to:

1. Work in a cross-sectoral approach to deliver the Alberta Advantage message in Europe.
2. Encourage independent skilled worker immigration to Alberta to fill labour shortages identified by Alberta employers.
3. Encourage business and agricultural immigration to Alberta.
4. Increase the awareness about Alberta and its different regions to potential economic immigrants.
5. Promote Alberta's Provincial Nominee Program.

The Alberta Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is an employer-driven immigration program operated by the GOA in conjunction with Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Team Alberta's members include:

- Alberta Economic Development
- Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- Alberta Human Resources and Employment
- Alberta First.Com Ltd.
- Alberta Real Estate Association
- Five Regional Economic Development Alliances
 - Alberta Capital Regional Alliance
 - Central Alberta Economic Partnership
 - Northeast Alberta Information Hub
 - Palliser Economic Partnership
 - Regional Economic Development Initiative for North West Alberta

Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) participated in *EuroMission 2004* as a new member of Team Alberta. Along with the other delegates, AHRE brought tools and resources to provide information to encourage people to move to Alberta for work.

Team Alberta shared information on Alberta's labour market, job postings as well as information related to regional economies on AlbertaFirst.com website, and reports highlighting statistical information on Alberta's economy.

Prior to the mission, the regional economic development alliances advised employers in their areas of the upcoming Mission and encouraged them to register their need for skilled workers on the Alberta First.com web site.

Representatives from a number of regional alliances, as part of Team Alberta, encouraged investment and attraction to the region by speaking to potential entrepreneurs and immigrants.



EuroMission continued from page 3

EuroMission also participated in three events in the UK and Germany between March 15 and 21, 2004.

1. Immigration Showcase Germany was organized in partnership with the Federal Republic of Germany. Positive results include:
 - a. In Germany, Mission participants met with 120 pre-screened skilled workers.
 - b. Forty-seven workers have come to Alberta under the Young Workers Exchange Program (YWEP) and are employed at various businesses throughout Alberta. Examples of these are:
 - Two people from Germany are filling the need for experienced cabinet makers in Blackfalds.
 - Five workers were hired in Germany to work in Red Deer. Three are coming to Canada under the YWEP and two are being admitted under the Temporary Foreign Worker program.
2. Emigrate 2004 was held in London, England, and is the world's largest annual emigration tradeshow. Positive results include:
 - a. This event attracted over 20,000 visitors who were interested in emigrating to a number of countries, including Canada. Alberta's booth logged approximately 1,100 visitors daily.
3. An evening reception was hosted at Canada House for UK workers, entrepreneurs and farmers. During this event, the Alberta delegation also met with some of the most recognized immigration consultants in the UK.
 - a. In London, Mission participants met with approximately 100-pre-screened skilled workers, farmers and entrepreneurs prior to the Emigrate 2004 show.

For more information about the EuroMission, please go to www.albertafirst.com

Immigration and Migration in the Labour Force

An Alberta Profile

Are you involved in the planning and development of programs / services to Alberta immigrants? Need to have reliable information to make an informed decision to help your immigrant client group? Then choose to peruse the *Alberta Profile: Immigration and Migration in the Labour Force* report.

Released in 2003 by Data Development and Evaluation, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, the *Alberta Profile: Immigration and Migration in the Labour Force* provides comprehensive statistical information on the movement of people into Alberta.

The data is compiled into various categories:

- Alberta's Population
- Immigration Statistics
- Immigration Education Levels
- Immigration Intended Occupation
- Immigration Income Levels
- Immigration Labour Force
- Interprovincial Migration
- Interprovincial Migration 2001 Labour Force Statistics

Using various data sources such as Statistics Canada, the Statistics Canada 2001 Census and Alberta Learning, the profile presents numerical facts in an easy to read format with graphs, tables and charts along with brief summaries.

The profile contains data from 1961 and up to 2003. You may be interested in knowing that between 1961 and 2001, the number of immigrants aged 15 years or older who arrived to Edmonton and Calgary has been increasing. Other statistical data in this report include:

- 16,290 immigrants came to Alberta in 2001.
- 88% of Alberta immigrants went to either Edmonton or Calgary between 2000 and 2001.
- Over 46% of Alberta immigrants had at least a university degree in 2001.
- Over 62% of immigrants to Alberta in 2003 reported on their application for permanent resident status their intentions to work in the Natural and Applied Science occupations.
- Over 77% of Alberta immigrants who filed their taxes in the 2000 tax year and arrived in Alberta between 1995 and 1999 claimed employment income.

For a closer look at *Immigration and Migration statistics in Alberta*, the *Alberta Profile: Immigration and Migration in the Labour Force*, can be found at

www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/pdf/Immigration_MigrationProfile.pdf

A Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program

Addressing Skill Shortages

In 2002, a program was created to address the issue of skills shortages in the pipe trades and to help unemployed First Nations people enter the workforce. A partnership between the Edmonton Pipe Trades-Local #488, First Nations Resource Council (FNRC) and the Alberta Government was formed and the *First Nations Trades Training Program* was born. It is a successful project helping First Nations people to secure employment as apprentices in the pipe trades.

The *First Nations Trades Training Program* was administered by the First Nations Resource Council. The goal of the program was to train 60 First Nations people to work towards qualifying as first year apprentice pipe fitters. The program had four intakes in the following locations in Alberta:

- Edmonton (two)
- Blue Quills (northeastern Alberta)
- Driftpile/ Lac La Biche (northeastern Alberta)

This program focused on training for five pipe trades: Welding, Steamfitter/Pipefitter, Plumber, Instrument Technician, Sprinkler System Installer, and Gasfitter. Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE) paid for the costs of tuition and books while funding for a living allowance was covered by each individual's Band. The program offered 16 weeks of training that included:

- Six weeks of pre-employment training (including remedial math and English)
- 10 weeks of hands-on skills training

The maximum number of students per intake was 15. Out of a possible 60, a total of 50 students started the program. The projected outcome for this program was: 70% of the clients would be working as apprentices within 180 days of completing the program. After reviewing the 25 clients who completed the program so far, 80% were still working within 180 days.

One of the reasons for the success of the program was “the hands-on case management from the project staff and the addition of the remedial math and English component,” says one of AHRE's Contract Services Coordinators for this program. The crucial part in this project's success was First Nations Resource Council's strong networking skills with the local employers and the students having the ability to join Local #488 to access employment. The FNRC and Local #488 had employers buy-into this program prior to the program start.

Based on the success rate of the pipe trades training program, the FNRC is considering developing other trades training programs, such as for the Ironworkers and the Electrical trades.

For more information please contact the Trades Training Initiative, c/o First Nations Resource Council, Edmonton, Alberta, phone (780) 453-6114 or email

[<office@fnrc.ab.ca>](mailto:office@fnrc.ab.ca)



**DIRECTIONS FOR
IMMIGRANTS IN TRADES
AND PROFESSIONAL CAREERS**

A Career Development Service for Immigrants

Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers

In 2002, over 50% of all immigrants to greater Calgary applied to immigrate to Canada under the Skilled Workers Independent Class category of the Immigration Act. Data for 2002 show that over 47% of new immigrants to Calgary over the age of 18 held at least a Bachelor's degree.¹ For these immigrants and all foreign trained professionals, a service in Calgary can help them access information on the accreditation process for their occupation and what the expectations are of Calgary employers. This service is *Direction for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers Centre* (DITPC).

The DITPC service started in April 2004 in Calgary as part of the Bow Valley College Centre for Career Advancement. Since it opened 245 clients have accessed services. The types of services offered by DITPC are:

1. **Self-Directed Services/Resources:** Online information and hard copies of information are available to assist immigrant professionals. These include: work search strategies, labour market information, resumés and cover letters.
2. A **web site** containing continuously updated information on the accreditation process for occupations and employment expectations of Calgary employers.

¹ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, special tabulation (2003)

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3. **Intake/Orientation Session:** Based on client demand, these sessions provide information on employment goals, training needs and the next steps for clients. Clients are evaluated for suitability for further sessions.
4. **Sector Specific Sessions:** With the focus on specific occupations or industry sectors, these sessions provide information on how the client can secure accreditation or employment in the profession that the client was previously trained and/or employed. Initially, *DITPC* is focusing these sessions on occupations in the engineering and construction industries.
5. **Individual Sector Coaching:** This coaching session helps the client develop an action plan outlining the steps required for them to secure employment.
6. **Group Follow-up and Networking:** Industry employers, local industry professionals and employed immigrants are invited to attend sessions that are designed to provide clients with an opportunity to gain industry contacts and potentially develop mentor relationships.

Since its inception the *DITPC* program has delivered 962 of the above listed services: 692 were self-directed services, 154 accessed individual services and 116 were group services. The majority of the clients have degrees in the engineering field and work experience in the energy sector.

For more information on client eligibility, intake dates or general information on Direction for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers Centre please contact the *DITPC* at <www.ditpc.ca> or phone (403) 297-2555.

Integrated Training Program

Northern Lakes College

As the global economy continues to change and the need for skilled workers increases, Northern Lakes College strives to offer innovative programs and develop partnerships with industry that address the concern of skill shortages in Alberta. For almost 30 years, Northern Lakes College, an educational institute in Grouard, Alberta has been serving 22 Northern Alberta communities that span over 130,000 kilometres. Its prime location helps Northern Lakes College to respond to the local economy's need for workers in the oil and gas, forestry and trades sectors.

One of the College's programs, *Petroleum Employment Training (PET)*, has been successful in training workers to fill that need.

Based on research conducted with industry, *PET* is an integrated training program that combines on-the-job experience with classroom instruction. Northern Lakes College screens and selects students for the *PET* program based on the following criteria:

- a minimum of Grade 9 education
- an aptitude for mechanical reasoning
- motivation to work in the petroleum production labour force.

PET is a 10-month program that is divided into two terms. Each term consists of a number of modules such as safety certification, industry skills, academic upgrading and employment skills followed by three weeks of on-site training.

Northern Lakes College along with various industry partners, local and regional governments, Métis and First Nations organizations, actively participate and maintain a close relationship to help ensure the success of the students in the *PET* programs. Graduates are prepared for employment in the following positions:

- trades helpers or apprentices
- trainee well/plant/battery operators
- vehicle and heavy equipment operator trainees, or
- oil field maintenance workers.

Now in its fourth year of program delivery, *PET* continues to impact the local economy. In 2003, 45 students took part in various *PET* training. 73% of these students graduated into the workforce. One of the *PET* trainees stated, "The practicum was awesome."

For more information on client eligibility, intake dates or general information on the Integrated Training Program please contact <www.northernlakescollege.ca>

RESOURCES

for immigrants and on skill shortages



New for WAGEinfo

A Resource for Wage, Salary and Skills Shortages Information

Access to information on provincial skills shortages is now available at the click of a button. *WAGEinfo*, an online database on the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website, displays information from the **2003 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey**. Conducted every two to three years, the survey gathers information from employers on wages and salaries for full and part-time employees in the province. New to this year's *WAGEinfo* site is the data collected from additional questions on the survey. Employers were asked if they experienced hiring difficulties or had vacancies that had been unfilled for four months or longer.

Alberta Human Resources and Employment, in partnership with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Alberta Economic Development commissioned the 2003 Wage and Salary Survey. The survey was sent to more than 21, 000 employers in Alberta with 10 or more employees. With over 6, 500 completed responses, the survey provides current information on 497 occupations.

The wage and salary information is broken down by occupation, geographic location and industry group. Information is generally presented at the four-digit National Occupation Classification (NOC) System. Each occupation contains wage and salary and skills shortages information. To access skills shortages information click on the four-digit National Occupation Classification (NOC) code.

Findings from the survey can be used by industry / employers to identify positions that might require additional retention and recruitment strategies and to determine competitive pay rates. For career consultants or individuals who plan careers, the information found on the *WAGEinfo* site could help them make better-informed career planning decisions. For governments, access to this information is essential in responding to public inquiries and supplying both the public and industry with up-to-date information on provincial and regional labour market trends. Training providers may also benefit from skills shortages information in order to design and deliver appropriate training programs in a timely manner.

For more information about WAGEinfo, go to www.alis.gov.ab.ca/wageinfo.

CERTinfo

Certification and Registration Requirements for Employment in Alberta

Each province in Canada has different legislation and regulations that govern employment in specific occupations (professions or trades). If you help 'new arrivals' to Alberta find employment or make career decisions related to professions and trades, check online for answers. The *CERTinfo* website provides information on what the requirements are for professions and trade occupations that are regulated and / or require certification in Alberta.

Like the *WAGEinfo* site, *CERTinfo* is a searchable database on the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website. *CERTinfo* contains three sections:

1. Start Here: Find answers to the most commonly asked questions about the procedures for working in regulated occupations, including:
 - What are regulated occupations?
 - What if I trained in another country?
 - How do I obtain work in Alberta?
2. Search for Requirements for Professions and Trades: Identifies the occupations that have mandatory requirements for working in that profession or trade. There are three ways to search for an occupation: alphabetically, keyword or by six occupational groups.

Occupational descriptions include general information and hotlinks to additional detail for the following topics: duties, titles of relevant legislation, educational requirements, information on the Labour Mobility Chapter of Canada's Agreement on Internal Trade and Mutual Recognition Agreements, as well as contact information for the appropriate professional regulatory organization.
3. *CERTinfo* Directory: This feature lets you access the PDF version to print the complete directory.

CERTinfo contains links to related resources such as *WAGEinfo*, OCCinfo (detailed occupational information) and EDinfo (Alberta post-secondary information).

To access the *CERTinfo* web site or to print a copy of the directory please visit www.alis.gov.ab.ca/certinfo *CERTinfo* is produced by AHRE in partnership with Alberta Learning and Alberta Health and Wellness.

An Upcoming Event

Planning for the *What Works-Alberta* conference is underway. This annual conference will be held in Edmonton in early February 2005.

All AHRE staff and service providers will be invited to participate in this event to share and learn what works well in programs and services addressing the issue of skill shortages in Alberta.

So mark your calendars for early February and stay tuned as more information on this one-day conference will be coming your way!

Share Your Success Story!

What Works – Alberta invites you to share your effective practices. If you have an idea for a future article or if you'd like more information, please contact Jacqueline Wallis, Effective Practices Coordinator.

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Below is a copy of the template for submitting effective practices information. It is intended to be a guide to help compile data about your program, project or service. We hope this makes it easier to identify and share “what worked” with readers.

What is the name of your project/practice?
Please provide a brief description of the project/practice. (e.g., location, size)
In your opinion, what makes your project work?
Please describe the desired outcome(s) for your project/practice. (e.g., what benefits for the client were realized?)
If you have information about positive results, please list it here. This could include results from project evaluation, follow-up surveys, positive feedback from users, or awards received as a result of the project.
Is this project a partnership? If so, please list the partners involved.
Please use this space to list any additional relevant information (e.g., website/online or print resources related to the project).
Please identify the key contact for this project. Be sure to include name, phone number, e-mail, and mailing address. <i>Please complete and forward to Jacqueline Wallis at</i> < Jacqueline.Wallis@gov.ab.ca >

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& workplace
department