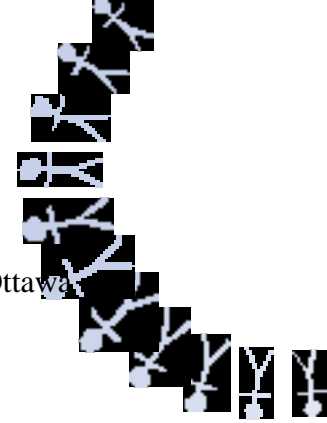




Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization  
Organisme Communautaire des Services aux Immigrants d'Ottawa



## **OCISO and Community Meeting with the National Capital Government Caucus Recommendations For Federal ACTION**

November 10, 2004

OCISO, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, has been helping newcomers integrate into the National Capital Region for over 26 years. Through innovative services, community building and public engagement, OCISO enables newcomers and their families to fully participate in an open and welcoming Ottawa.

### **A. EMPLOYMENT**

**Recommendation 1:** That eligibility for services under the Employment Insurance fund be expanded to include: EI recipients and reach-back clients, youth, aboriginals and **immigrants**.

Currently immigrants are excluded from the vast majority of federally funded employment programs because of their lack of attachment to the Canadian labour market. Just as an exception is made for youth and aboriginals, an exception should be made for immigrants.

**Recommendation 2:** That bridge training initiatives for professional immigrants be allowable programming.

Currently, HRSDC claims that it “does not fund training” because it does not fund training providers to develop programming. In fact, it funds a great deal of training by allocating training dollars directly to individuals. This policy tends to favour generic training by for-profit training institutes rather than the development of the complex bridge training programs necessary to assist immigrants who seek accreditation and employment in Canada.

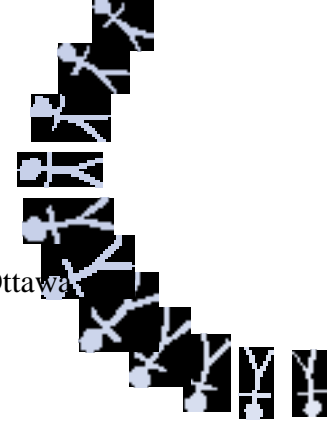
**Recommendation 3:** That services currently funded under the “Employment Assistance” monies be more flexible with regards to both programming and eligibility.

Currently, anyone who is working more than 20 hours per week is excluded from this programming, thus an internationally trained Engineer working at Tim Hortons is not eligible for services. Furthermore, the types of services allowed under this funding stream need to be much more intensive, providing individual support and counseling for promoting professional employment.





Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization  
Organisme Communautaire des Services aux Immigrants d'Ottawa



## B. BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR SETTLEMENT SERVICES

**Recommendation 4:** That the funds available for settlement services through Citizenship and Immigration Canada be increased to at least \$3,000 per client.

Currently, in Ontario the per arrival settlement budget is approximately \$800 compared to approximately \$4,000 in Quebec. The amount allocated for settlement outside of Quebec has been frozen since 1997. Allowing for inflation this amounts to at least a 15% cut over the years. As noted in the Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, "Settlement and Integration: A Sense of Belonging" this amount is woefully small.

It should be noted that recently \$20 million per year has been added for Enhanced Language Training. This is a wonderful improvement, but it should be noted that realistically this is equivalent to the costs of one large high school and will not resolve the problem. Most settlement funds are spent on language training; educational services are expensive.

**Recommendation 5:** That services currently funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada monies be more flexible with regards to both programming and eligibility.

Currently, agencies struggle with complex, changing, and often contradictory eligibility criteria. Funding requirements impose very high contractual targets that engage agencies in high volume services when far more intensive, personalized case management is needed.

## C. COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

**Recommendation 6:** That Citizenship and Immigration Canada recognize that community development is an important component of settlement and integration and fund groups involved in such activities.

Currently, all available funding is directed towards individual service provision. Citizenship and Immigration needs to recognize and support the important role of immigrant communities in the integration of newcomers. Investing in leadership and community building initiatives has a lasting, positive effect on members' abilities to integrate into the broader society.

Prepared by Nancy Worsfold, November 9, 2004

Thanks to United Way Ottawa for their support of our Community Development and Cross Cultural Education Program.



