

Enhanced Opportunities in Gap Training and Bridge Programming for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs)

Whereas: Between 2015-17, more than 3,000 internationally educated professionals (IEPs) applied for registration in a Manitoba regulated profession. Only 16%, or 488, of these applications resulted in full registrations in their professions.

Whereas: Among working-aged immigrants aged 25-54, 43% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with only 26% of those born in Canada. Immigrants aged 45-54 with a university degree earn around 18% less than those aged 45-54 with university degrees who were born in Canada. This earnings gap costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$50 billion per year.

Whereas: Most assessment and registration processes in the regulated professions in Manitoba are designed for recent graduates of Canadian professional programs who do not have professional experience. Manitoba needs systems that support effective assessment and the recognition of applicants from international programs with varying degrees of professional experience. Fair assessment involves providing people with an opportunity to address any gaps they may have in their professional knowledge and skills relative to Canadian standards and ways of doing things.

Whereas: Gap training helps internationally educated professionals meet the requirements of the regulator, while bridging programs prepare individuals to join a pre-existing program of study. Gap training programs provide an opportunity to address IEPs' individual gaps in knowledge and skill and to develop an understanding of the culture, values, and practices of their profession in Canada. They provide a fair pathway with multiple, credible opportunities for IEPs to demonstrate their competencies and how they meet a regulator's requirements for qualifications recognition. Gap training programs are a timely, efficient pathway to recognition and entry to practice that helps ensure IEPs' language and professional skills do not decline while working to meet registration requirements.

Whereas: Manitoba has a history of developing and delivering effective gap training programs in the professions. Proven models involve post-secondary institutions, professional regulatory bodies, and employers working together to develop effective pathways to formal recognition and positive labour market outcomes.

Whereas: Current gap training opportunities are limited to few professions and most IEPs to Manitoba continue to experience low success rates in having their qualifications formally recognized. Some gap training and bridge programming in Manitoba can only support a small number of people looking to get qualified in certain regulated professions. Manitoba loses internationally-trained professionals to other provinces where gap training and bridge programming opportunities exist.

Whereas: Manitoba needs to increase gap training opportunities that will support timely recognition and successful employment outcomes of IEPs settling in the province. Immigrants also need more pre-arrival support to understand qualification recognition processes.

Whereas: The Government of Manitoba has had success in attracting IEPs to Manitoba through its unique Provincial Nominee Program and has recognized the importance of qualification recognition by establishing the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner.

Whereas: Immigration and workforce development are linked and more collaboration is needed between these sectors. Manitoba needs to ensure streamlined and effective approaches to maximize the economic integration of skilled immigrants to Manitoba. Manitoba needs a means of addressing shortages in the skilled labour market and ensuring the public has access to services.

Whereas: Manitoba has the opportunity to benefit from knowledgeable, skilled and experienced professionals from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Manitoba can benefit from significant economic spin-offs through increased earning and spending power of licensed professionals (substantial return on investment).

Whereas: One of the actions in the Mandate Letter from the Premier of Manitoba to the Minister of Economic Development and Training is “Developing a first of its kind skills, talent and knowledge strategy, with targeted actions to strengthen alignment between post-secondary institutions, immigration, training and employment services and our workforce skills needs; ensure a comprehensive approach to labour market data and intelligence; and expand opportunities for work integrated learning”. Another aspect of this mandate is “Conducting a comprehensive review of immigration processes to further streamline, simplify and leverage opportunities to meet employers’ demand for skilled and talented workers, with a focus on economic growth and business expansion, including working with federal partners to improve Manitoba’s Provincial Nominee Program”.

Be It Resolved That: The Government of Manitoba meets with the settlement sector and the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner to discuss workforce priorities and develop a strategy to provide consistent, long-term, and adequate opportunities and stable funding for gap training and bridge programming with the aim of ensuring that all new Manitobans can access these supports and continue in their professional careers.

Contact Allen Mankewich SEED Winnipeg Inc if you have questions or suggestions regarding this resolution: allen@seedwinnipeg.ca