

Skills Connect for Immigrants Program

~A YEAR IN REVIEW 2012~



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2012 in Review

Here is a look at what the year 2012 meant for the Skills Connect program:

With the Provinces new Employment Service Centres opening in April 2012, many participants became unsure whether the Skills Connect Program still existed and more importantly, whether they were still able to access services. After frequent communication and continued marketing efforts, Skills Connect regained a steady stream of interested Participants as well as many new referrals.

Provinces such as Alberta and Ontario began offering immigrants more opportunities in different industries as well as lower taxes and a decrease in general living expenses. In addition, there is less competition for certain jobs and some regulatory bodies are more lenient regarding licensure allowing more immigrants to obtain professional licenses and find commensurate employment. As a result, many Skills Connect Participants relocated to other provinces during the past year.

There is an abundance of literature advocating the benefits of using social media for job search. Many people are finding work through social media tools such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Furthermore, the social media platforms allow for an increase in networking opportunities including accessing the hidden job market, which continues to be the main source for securing successful employment. In the last year, Skills Connect implemented Social Media workshops to educate Participants on using these tools for their job search as well as having an active Facebook page and LinkedIn group.

In October, the Ministry granted an (up to) 20% increase of exceptions, which resulted in more Participants being able to access services who didn't previously meet all the programs eligibility criteria. This has already seen an increase in the number of Participants coming into the program based on these new exceptions and we predict this will continue into 2013.

The Provincial Government announced that the Skills Connect Program would be ending March 31, 2014. The new Program that is anticipated to follow Skills Connect will be funded by the Federal Government. At this time, it is not clear whether the new program will be providing the same or similar services to the immigrant population. Skills Connect is transparent about the upcoming program end and encourages job seekers to enroll in the program as they are still able to benefit from the services.

“Skills Connect is very good with respect to an immigrant who needs to evaluate his credentials. The staff guides the client in a very helpful and polite manner. The workshops like Canadian work place culture, resume writing, labour market etc. are very informative to the new immigrants.”

~Skills Connect Participant

Demographics

The following demographics are based on Participants served in the program who joined services in 2012 (n=1571):

	Persons Served in 2012	
Male: Female Ratio	45:55	
Average Age	38	
English Level at Program Start (CLB 7 or higher)	58.4%	
Primary Language Spoken	Tagalog	16.9%
	Punjabi	10.3%
	Farsi	8.6%
Country of Most Work Experience	Philippines	21.2%
	India	18.1%
	China	9.2%
	Iran	9.2%
Field of Study prior to coming to Canada	Nursing	12.5%
	Medicine	4.5%
	Pharmacy	3.7%
	Accounting	2.8%

- 87% of Participants landed in British Columbia when they first came to Canada
- 35.3% of Participants learned about the Skills Connect Program from a Friend or Family Member
- 32% of Participants live in Surrey; 16% live in Vancouver and 15% live in Richmond

Thank you Skills Connect, you make a difference in our lives, in critical times, you made me feel I have a chance in Canada

~Skills Connect Participant

As a new immigrant who joined the BiM program in Jan 2011, I found the various workshops very helpful. I got a better understanding about how things work in Canada, and it certainly helped me and my family towards a smooth integration. I am also very grateful to BiM for the financial assistance provided to help me achieve my goals.

~Skills Connect Participant

I think that is an excellent program for immigrant people. It gets easy to be involved in Canadian culture and to adapt to this new way of life.

~Skills Connect Participant

Service Efficiency

The Skills Connect for Immigrants Program target is to provide services to recently landed Immigrants in a timely manner in order to assist Participants to smoothly transition into employment in Canada. The following measures demonstrate the level of efficiency in delivering services based on Participant files closed in the 2012.

	2012	2011
Duration (average days in program from date of program acceptance to file closure)	316.4	312.9
# of Participants who received service in the year	1895	1312
Inquiry to Program Acceptance (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	46.9%	44.6%
Program Application to Program Acceptance (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	55.6%	59.9%
Program Acceptance to Action Plan Complete (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	92.7%	92.6%
Action Plan Complete to Employment Start (average days in program before starting employment)	144.3	133.4

Summary of Efficiency Measures:

- From the time Participants apply for the program, they are required to meet an English Criteria based on a CLB Assessment Score. 55.6% of Participants complete the English Assessment and are accepted into services within 20 business days of completing the application.
- The average length of time it took Participants to secure employment related to the pre-landing skills and experience was 191.2 days.
- The average length of time it took participants to secure employment that was unrelated to pre-landing skills and experience was 129.5 days.

What Participants said:

“The program was very useful and interesting, it helped me to start my studies and get certain industry certificates and make significant steps to become a successful IT employee.”

“Skills Connect is very vital and helpful for us especially for new immigrants. I really appreciate all the information given and the helping hands extending by its staff. I just hope that I can apply easily what I have learned from you ... thanks a lot!!

“Skills Connect empowers people like me to have better hope in finding opportunities in my field.”

Participant Outcomes

The outcome goal of the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program is for Participants to gain employment in jobs that utilize their pre-landing skills, training, and/or experience. The following information summarizes the employment outcomes of Participant files closed in 2012:

	2012	2011
Number of Placements of Participant files closed in 2012	1235	324
Percentage of Placements that are aligned with previous training/experience	65.0%	21.9%
Average Wage of Participants with aligned Employment	\$19.01	\$28.59
Average Wage of Participants with unaligned Employment	\$12.70	\$18.02

Of those employed, Participants are working in the following sectors:

Employment Sector	Percentage
Health	19.9%
Retail	16.8%
Business & Finance	13.7%
Other	13.1%
Hi-Tech	5.1%

With respect to types of positions secured, these include:

Responsibility Area	Percentage
Skilled/Technical	37.4%
Other	29.5%
Professional	28.6%
Management	4.5%

“Thanks to my Employment Counsellor and the other Counsellors with their useful workshops, I was able to obtain a job in my profession.”

~Skills Connect Participant

“Thank you for the help/assistance. Attending to the program opens my door to find friends and opportunity to work.”

~Skills Connect Participant

*Employment outcomes of unaligned placements includes: Participants who gained survival employment while he/she continue to work on licensing to gain related employment as well as Stream B Participants who may be new to the workforce.

Employer Satisfaction

Out of our commitment to serve our Program Participants better as well as the employers we work closely with throughout the year we surveyed over 115 employers whom we worked with in 2012. Of those who responded, here is what they said:

	Percent
% of Employers who agree that staff communicate in a professional and respectful manner	100%
Employers who would use the Skills Connect for Immigrants program again to fill future hiring needs	100%
Employers who would recommend the Skills Connect Program at Back in Motion to other employers	100%

When asked which of the Skills Connect services Employers have participated in, Employers said:

	Percent
Introductions to potential job candidates	100%
Provision of Feedback on a candidate's skills and abilities	100%
Provision of feedback on a candidates employment readiness	100%
Review of resumes from potential job candidates	100%

Labour Market in Review:

- ✓ It continues to be difficult to find work in the health care industry in BC due to many factors including budget cuts and increased competition from overseas nurses re-locating to the Lower Mainland. Many of our Participants have sought alternative health care careers instead of pursuing their pre-landing occupations as well as re-locating to other parts of the province where new communities are thriving and health care professionals are in great demand. We are responding to this change in demand by offering regular workshops; educating Participants on the types of alternative careers that exist; and inviting employers to speak about the opportunities outside the Lower Mainland.
- ✓ Companies are once again ramping up their IT departments, which were downsized during the economic crisis resulting in the IT industry continuing to be one of the main sectors where our Participants are finding work.

Participant Satisfaction

Out of our commitment to serve our Program Participants better, upon completing the program, participants fill out a consumer satisfaction questionnaire. The questionnaire solicits input with respect to service delivery efficiency, effectiveness and areas for improvement. We use these results to make services more accessible for Participants. Here is what Participants said in 2012:

	2012	2011
Average Satisfaction Score (target ≥ 90%)	94.0%	92.2%
% who would recommend us to a friend (target ≥ 90%)	99.3%	97.4%
# of Respondents	443	164

“I sincerely appreciate the one on one support afforded to me at Skills Connect. It tremendously helped me in building a strong and solid career path in BC.”

“The Skills Connect Program provides unique and tangible financial and information supports. It does not duplicate with other services for new immigrants. It is easy to be enrolled and quick to get helped. Thank you!”

“I have been very satisfied with the service I have received through Skills Connect. It has been timely, precise and professional. I really value to access training; it is very welcomed. It is a difficult job to assist clients in remote parts of BC and I appreciate the help, advice and workshops in my aim to become a registered nurse.”

Celebrating Success

Rener immigrated to Canada with his family from the Philippines in February 2011. He has a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the Philippines and worked as an Electrical Engineer for the Manila Power Company for 35 years.

Rener found out about the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program in March 2011 through Back in Motion. He attended an information session in the same month to learn more about the program eligibility criteria and how the services would help him find a job where he could use his pre-landing skills and experience.

Rener was accepted into the program on March 23, 2011. He worked closely with his Employment Counsellor to develop an action plan that would help him to get credential recognition and find a job that is commensurate to his pre-landing occupation.

With the assistance and guidance of the Employment Counsellor, Rener immediately started credential and professional evaluation with the International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) offered through BCIT. While waiting for the evaluation report, Rener was actively preparing for his professional job search. He attended helpful workshops including *Orientation to Canadian Workplace Culture*, *Workplace Communication*, *Essential Skills for Finding a Job* and *The Power of Networking*. Rener was referred to the Job Developer who assisted him with revising both his resume and cover letter for specific jobs in his field of expertise. He also received relevant job leads and information on the labour market from his Employment Counsellor and the Job Developer.

Rener received his credential evaluation from ICES in May 2011 and his degree was considered generally comparable to the completion of the first 3 years of undergraduate study at a recognized post-secondary institution in BC and elsewhere in Canada. In August 2011, Rener applied for a position with BC Hydro at which point both his Employment Counsellor and Job Developer assisted him with preparing for the interview. Rener was successful in securing employment as an Electricity Theft Analyst with BC Hydro starting in November 2011 and earning \$79,900 annually.

Rener was able to achieve his career goal in Canada and is very grateful for all of the support he received from his Employment Counsellor, Job Developer, and the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program.

“I'm very impressed by the efficiency of Back in Motion when providing service to clients. Besides, it's also resourceful, go straight to the point, offer up-to-date information, thus very helpful. I really appreciate. “

~Skills Connect Participant

(All responses/comments used in this report are authorized for use by the Participant; Responses/Comments were revised of spelling errors)