

Skills Connect for Immigrants Program

~A YEAR IN REVIEW 2013~



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2013 in Review

With the announcement that the program will be extended by another year and end March 31, 2015, Skills Connect saw an increase in the number of clients looking to enroll in the program during the first six months of the year, particularly in our Surrey and Vancouver locations.

Many clients who had previously decided not to continue with the program due to limited language skills or for personal or health issues contacted us for an opportunity to re-enter the program. We implemented additional pre-screening and assessment processes to determine the suitability of these potential clients and their commitment to the program.

In April, we launched our in-house mentoring services, and having overcome challenges associated with streamlining referral and matching processes, mentorship has become increasingly popular. We also hired a Mentoring Specialist who has been integral in getting the service off the ground and marketing mentorship opportunities to clients and community partners. With these initiatives in place, there have been numerous successful matches, and we are confident that this specialized service will enhance employment outcomes for the remainder of the contract.

Throughout 2013, our Job Developers were actively attending job fairs, career fairs and other local events to market the Skills Connect Program. We continue to build close relationships with community partners and local employers in order to enhance their understanding of the services provided by the Skills Connect Program and the many benefits of hiring immigrants.

We started the year off strong, achieving over 80% successful outcomes for two months, and then maintaining an outcomes average above 70% for the remainder of the year. We implemented various strategies to increase our employment success, as well as to more effectively gather outcomes information. One creative strategy was to utilize LinkedIn to contact clients and view their employments history.

Another success of the past year was the launch of additional workshops specifically for healthcare professionals, including Alternative Careers, Interview Preparation, and Power of Networking. These workshops provided our healthcare clients with opportunities to network with other professionals in their field, learn about the various careers that exist within the health sector, and better prepare for interviews. The Alternative Careers workshop highlights the benefits and opportunities of moving outside of Metro Vancouver to gain Canadian work experience in healthcare.

Skills Connect is part of my success to secure job in my field here in Canada. They funded part of my tuition fee. My wonderful Employment Counselor is knowledgeable and effective in helping me to prepare myself in finding a job.

~Skills Connect Participant

As 2013 comes to a close, we remain optimistic that the government will continue to invest in Skills Connect for Immigrants. This service has a demonstrated track record of supporting new immigrants to secure meaningful employment that leverages their pre-landing skills and expertise, while at the same time benefitting BC Employers by addressing skills shortages across several key industries.

“The most important thing about the program is that you find people who trust in you and give their support from the very first day. You find people who are in the same boat, all with different histories but similar objectives, to share tips and advices with. Skills Connect opened a lot of doors to other programs and tools that the government have in order to give you the opportunity to success “

~Skills Connect Participant

Demographics

The following demographics are based on Participants who commenced services in 2013 (n=1531):

	Persons Served in 2013		Persons Served in 2012	
Male: Female Ratio	42:58		45:55	
Average Age	37		38	
English Level at Program Start (CLB 7 or higher)	53.4%		58.4%	
% of Participants landed in BC when they first came	85%		87%	
% of the City Participants live in	Surrey	36%	Surrey	32%
	Vancouver	17%	Vancouver	16%
	Richmond	11%	Richmond	15%
Primary Language Spoken	Tagalog	14.2%	Tagalog	16.9%
	Punjabi	12.9%	Punjabi	10.3%
	Farsi	10.7%	Farsi	8.6%
	Mandarin	8.9%		
Country of Most Work Experience	India	21.8%	Philippines	21.2%
	Philippines	15.1%	India	18.1%
	Iran	13.9%	China	9.2%
	China	10.3%	Iran	9.2%
Field of Study prior to coming to Canada	Nursing	10.7%	Nursing	12.5%
	Medicine	5.6%	Medicine	4.5%
	Accounting	3.3%	Pharmacy	3.7%
	Pharmacy	2.7%	Accounting	2.8%
	Business Admin	2.4%		
Referral Source	Friend/Family	40.3%	Friend/Family	35.3%
	Other	25.5%	Other	31.7%
	MOSAIC	10.3%	MOSAIC	9.2%
	Internet Search	8.2%	Internet Search	8.6%

“Thank you for helping the new immigrants here in Canada and for helping us to start and providing us information regarding our professions.”

~Skills Connect Participant

“Skills Connect supported me all the way from scratch to being someone who is confident in facing a good life in Canada.”

~Skills Connect Participant

“I am satisfied and really happy with the services that skills connect provided me, especially with my counsellor who supported me until I got a job. Thanks a lot.”

~Skills Connect Participant

Service Efficiency

The aim of the Skills Connect for Immigrants Program 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 2013.

	2013	2012
Duration (average days in program from date of program acceptance to file closure)	448.2	316.4
# of Participants who received service in the year	1486	1895
Inquiry to Program Acceptance (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	66.0%	46.9%
Program Application to Program Acceptance (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	66.2%	55.6%
Program Acceptance to Action Plan Complete (occurs ≤ 20 business days)	91.5%	92.7%
Action Plan Complete to Employment Start (average days in program before starting employment)	106.9	144.3

Summary of Above Measures:

- In 2013, almost 20% more of the program participants are accepted within 20 business days from their first inquiry
- 10% more of the participants are accepted within 20 business days from the time they apply for the program
- Participants start employment in an average of 107 days after starting the program; this is 37 days faster than in 2012

What Participants said:

“Skills Connect is a great program for Immigrants to find jobs in their field and upgrade their skills.”

“When I came to skill connect, I thought they will not help with what I was looking for, but they provided more than what I expected.”

“The program is unique, informative, and enlightening. It should be expanded to assist future immigrants.”

“Skills connect had been very helpful. I hope a lot of new immigrants would be able to experience what you have done for me.”

Additional Efficiency Measures:

- Participants are required to meet a specified level of English which is assessed through the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) assessment prior to being accepted into the program. Of the Participants accepted into the program in 2013, 98.2% have completed the English Assessment.
- 57.9% of the participants who completed English Assessment are accepted into the program within 20 business day from the time of their first inquiry; 82.6% of the participants who completed English Assessment are accepted into the program within 40 business day from the time of their first inquiry.
- The average length of time it took Participants to secure employment related to 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.

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 2013:

	2013	2012
Number of Participant Files Closed in 2013	1483	1414
Percentage of Participant Completed Program	89.8%	86.6%
Percentage of Placements (for those who completed program)	69.8%	69.1%
Percentage of Placements that are Aligned with Previous Training/Experience	43.5%	25.6%
Average Wage of Participants with aligned Employment	\$20.14	\$21.75
*Average Wage of Participants with unaligned Employment	\$13.96	\$15.24

“Skills Connect has been a very big help in guiding me to get my RN license and work here in BC. Your workshops are very informative. The counselors are extremely helpful and I am very grateful to them.”

~Skills Connect Participant

The top 5 sectors in which Participants achieve employment:

Employment Sector	Percentage
Health	21.5%
Retail	13.0%
Business and Finance	11.3%
Education	5.5%
Other	14.7%

With respect to level of the positions secured, these include:

Level of Employment	Percentage
Skilled/Technical	40.9%
Professional	32.1%
Management	4.0%
Other	23.0%

*Employment outcomes of unaligned placements include Participants who gained employment while continuing to work on licensing to gain related employment, as well as Stream B Participants who are new to the workforce.

Participant Satisfaction

Out of our commitment to quality service, 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. Results are as follows:

	2013	2012
Average Satisfaction Score (target ≥ 90%)	93.6%	94.0%
% who would recommend us to a friend (target ≥ 90%)	98.6%	99.3%
# of Respondents	339	443

“Skills Connect is a real help for immigrants; it’s an excellent opportunity to be informed and prepared for getting a job in the new environment.”

“I joined Skills Connect and today I am successful in my field with their help.”

“Today I feel I have achieved everything that I wanted in my career. I deeply thank all the staff who works for Back in Motion; they are doing a tremendous work.”

Celebrating Success

Varun arrived in Canada in June 2012 from India, where he was a Software Engineer for almost 3 years. He has a Bachelors Degree in Technology (Electronics and Communications). His work as a Software Engineer included using program language such as Java, Java Script, JSP, HTM and XML.

Upon arrival, Varun spent the first few months settling his family and looking for career opportunities. During his research, he found employment as a Security Guard, but was still determined to find employment in his field. He found out about the Skills Connect Program from his mother-in-law, who was a past Skills Connect Client. He booked an appointment and attended an information session.

After attending the information session, Varun decided to enroll in the Skills Connect Program and immediately connected with his Counsellor who worked with him to establish realistic employment goals through developing an Action Plan.

He expressed a very strong desire to find work in his pre-landing profession. As part of his Action Plan, he connected with an Advisor from British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) who provided him with guidance in choosing the appropriate courses in order to fill existing gaps in his education. He attended BCIT and completed relevant studies, thus gaining invaluable Canadian credentials.

Varun was very pro-active and focused while in the Skills Connect Program. He participated in various workplace orientation workshops, as well as one-to-one sessions with his Counsellor. He indicated that the assistance he obtained with writing his resume and the financial assistance for the courses at BCIT were highly beneficial. He shared with his Counsellor that “as a result of the BCIT courses, I am 60% more prepared for answering the technical questions in my job interview.” In April 2013, Varun was offered a fulltime position as a Web Developer with Syscon Justice Systems earning \$22/hour.

Varun is very appreciative of the Skills Connect Program and the support it provides new immigrants. He believes that were it not for the Program, he would not have had such great success in finding a position that utilizes his pre-landing skills and experience.

Upon closing his file in July 2013, Varun stated that:

“Skills Connect Program made all the difference in making the journey easier and helped me to prepare for a professional position.”

He will continue to recommend the Skills Connect Program to his friends and family, which is how he got started!

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