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Immigrant Employment Council of BC

www.iecbc.ca

New Mentorship Program for Internationally Trained Technologists & Technicians

SURREY, BC – The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) and the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) today announced a joint mentoring program to assist internationally trained professionals find work in engineering and applied science technology.

The program builds on IEC-BC's successful provincial mentoring program that brings internationally trained professionals together with established Canadian professionals in occupation-specific fields in one-on-one relationships, giving them local insights and access to professional networks. IEC-BC adapted the mentoring program to meet the requirements of registered engineering technologists and technicians in BC.

"Skilled immigrants entering our mentoring programs have the education, experience and language skills to succeed in the BC labour market; however, they may not understand the Canadian context of their profession or the nature of the local job market," says Kelly Pollack, Executive Director of IEC-BC. "This partnership with the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians uses the power of connections to mobilize immigrant talent, giving internationally trained professionals access to professional networks while helping employers access immigrant talent - all with minimal investment of time and resources."

The customized mentoring program will seek to match mentors identified by ASTTBC with internationally trained professional mentees in engineering and applied science technology fields. Mentors provide 24 hours of support and guidance spread over 15 weeks through face-to-face meetings and other forms of communications. In the first phase, which starts in September 2012, the program aims to match 15 mentors.

The program, delivered in partnership with immigrant service organizations, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., MOSAIC and the Immigrant Services Society (ISS of BC), is funded under WelcomeBC by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program through partnership with the Province of B.C.

"We know a skills shortage is looming," says John Leech, Executive Director of ASTTBC. "Technologists and technicians in engineering and applied science technology are key contributors to the growth and development of British Columbia's economy. To keep the BC economy healthy, we need to start taking full advantage of the foreign-trained technology professionals already in BC."

Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation Pat Bell helped launch the mentoring program at a business luncheon event in Surrey. "*British Columbia is going to need a highly skilled workforce to fill the million job openings expected in the coming decade,*" said Pat Bell. "*This new mentorship program will help attract more skilled immigrants, which is a key commitment in our Jobs Plan.*"

IEC-BC's mentoring program is part of a growing suite of employer-facing resources, designed as a cost-effective bridge between skilled immigrants looking for work in BC and employers that need their skills.

For more information on IEC-BC's mentoring programs, see www.iecbc.ca/our-services/mentoring.

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BACKGROUNDER

Quick Facts

- Immigrants make up 27.3 per cent of the provincial labour force. (WelcomeBC)
- According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses (CFIB), more than half of members surveyed said they could not find the people they need to bring their products and services to market.
- 74 per cent of small businesses across Canada believe it's becoming harder to find employees that have the skills they require (AMEX small business monitor).
- Immigrants are more likely to have a post-secondary education than Canadian-born workers. (StatCan)
- BC accepts approximately 40,000 immigrants per year.

About the Mentoring Program

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About IEC-BC

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC is a provincial non-government organization that stimulates the integration of skilled immigrant talent into BC's workforce by fostering solutions, building connections and being a catalyst to help employers attract and retain skilled immigrant talent. IEC-BC collaborates with government, employers, service providers and community organizations to develop and implement effective solutions that help employers find talent and ultimately strengthen BC's economy.

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC is an initiative of the Vancouver Foundation and is funded in whole or part by the federal government through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement and the Canada BC Immigration Agreement. www.iecbc.ca

About ASTTBC

Technologists, technicians and technical specialists achieve professional recognition through the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC). The eighth largest self-regulating association in BC, ASTTBC has registered 10,000 Technology Professionals.

Technologists, technicians and technical specialists work in applied science technology fields such as architecture, bio-medical engineering, building, civil, electrical, electronics, environmental, fire protection, house inspection, information, mechanical, onsite wastewater and other related disciplines tied to the built and natural environment.