

The logo for the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) features the word "triec" in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the text are three white chevron arrows pointing to the right, stacked vertically.

Toronto Region Immigrant
Employment Council

Diversity Drives Success

Written Submission to the 2019 Pre-Budget Consultations

By

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)

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Recommendation: that the Government of Canada invest \$11 million annually in mentoring program across Canada to improve the employment outcomes of 6,000 immigrant professionals and to encourage employers to hire immigrant talent.

Background:

In the release announcing the 2019 federal pre-budget consultations, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance indicated it is seeking recommendations regarding **Economic Growth: Ensuring Canada's Competitiveness**. Specifically, the committee seeks steps the federal government can take to support and/or encourage Canadians and their businesses to grow the economy in the face of a changing economic landscape.

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) respectfully submits this brief and a recommendation that responds *directly* to the government's call for measures for Canadians and for Canadian businesses. The recommended investment in mentoring programs for skilled immigrant professionals helps individuals and Canadian businesses. It will accelerate business understanding of how to tap into the talent that immigrant professionals bring and that brings innovation, diversity of thinking and access to global markets.

Further, support to programs like the proven TRIEC Mentoring Partnership helps unemployed and underemployed immigrant professionals newly arrived in Canada reach their employment goals sooner, providing Canadian business with diverse, internationally successful talent. Our experience demonstrates that Canadian businesses which partner with TRIEC to provide the mentors for the program find that their employees develop important new skills in cultural competency, coaching and mentoring.

TRIEC is grateful to the Government of Canada for its current investment in the Mentoring Partnership via Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Since its 2004 inception, the program has supported over 15,000 immigrant professionals in the Greater Toronto Region. It currently serves 2,000 each year in the region and another approximately 650 across Canada. With \$11 million in additional funding, 6,000 more immigrant professionals and their families will find financial security and contribute to Canada's economy.

Boston Consulting Group research indicates that there are 10,000 potential mentees each year in the Greater Toronto Area and another 30,000 potential mentees across Canada outside the GTA who could benefit from mentoring¹.

About TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

Since 2004, TRIEC has coordinated [TRIEC Mentoring Partnership](#), a program that matches recent immigrants to Canada with a mentor who shares their professional background. Mentees are job-ready immigrant professionals who need help to gain employment that is commensurate with their skills and experience. They have the education, experience, and language skills to succeed in the labour market. What they need are the local insights and access to professional networks that only a one-to-one professional connection with a

¹Boston Consulting Group, *Driving Optimization and Growth of TMP Market Assessment- Mentees*, 2014

mentor can offer. TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is a powerful, proven, cost-effective program that delivers outstanding economic and social returns:

- *In the Greater Toronto Region, 77% of mentees matched through the Mentoring Partnership find employment in their field within six months of completing the program.*
- *Full-time annual earnings of immigrants who completed the Mentoring Partnership and similar programs across Canada increased from \$36,905 to \$59,944, an increase of 62% according to an Accenture study in 2013.*
- *For the \$1,700 the program invests per mentee, an inexpensive solution compared to the cost of in-house training, the program returns \$15,000 in benefits associated with taxes and another \$2,000 in potential network effects to Canadian society.² This works out to a return of \$10.50 in benefits to Canada for every \$1 invested.³*

TRIEC partners with seven organizations across Canada who deliver programs modelled on TRIEC Mentoring Partnership but modified to meet local labour market needs. These organizations are:

- [Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia](#) (IECBC) (Vancouver)
- [Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council](#) (CRIEC) (Calgary)
- [Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council](#) (ERIEC) (Edmonton)
- [London-Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council](#) (LMIEC) (London-Middlesex)
- [Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization](#) (OCISO) (Ottawa)
- Niagara Immigrant [Employment](#) Council (NIEC) (Niagara)
- [Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia](#) (ISANS) (Halifax)

Because of the success of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, we know that more immigrant professionals to Canada can benefit from the program. With further investment of \$10 million annually, this proven, cost-effective mentoring solution can reach thousands more immigrants and their families, giving them that important first Canadian job at the right level for their skills and experience. The benefits are enormous—to individuals, to their families, to their communities and to society.⁴

“Diversity is Canada’s Strength”

In the 2015 *Speech from the Throne*, the Government of Canada underscored its belief in the value of Canada’s diverse residents with the statement, “Diversity is Canada’s strength.”

² Based on results of an impact analysis conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in partnership with TRIEC and LEAP: The Centre for Social Impact. The BCG analysis determined that the initial investment per mentee is paid back to Canada through taxes within two years.

³ This estimate is a conservative reflection of mentoring’s contribution as it does not quantify the further impact of employment on health, well-being and future prosperity of immigrant families and the potential decrease in costs to social assistance required.

⁴ TRIEC has been working diligently to make the case for increased investment and augment its capabilities to successfully manage such an investment. In 2014, the Mentoring Partnership was chosen by LEAP: The Centre for Social Impact for in-kind investment to accomplish these goals. LEAP applies the discipline of private equity investing to select, support and scale charities with quantifiable social impact. TRIEC has received in-kind consulting support from the Boston Consulting Group, Cossette, Ernst & Young, the Offord Group and McCarthy Tétrault and has generated \$1,600,000 to support technology upgrades, recruiting new employer partners and reaching out to more immigrant professionals.

Further, the federal government committed to make it “easier for immigrants to build successful lives in Canada, reunite their families, and contribute to the economic success of Canadians.”⁵

The Government of Canada’s *Innovation Agenda*⁶ includes the goal of fostering an “Entrepreneurial and Creative Society” so that “Being innovative becomes a core Canadian value”.⁷ There is a necessary and welcome focus on immigrant professionals in the *Innovation Agenda*, as the federal government states that “Highly skilled workers, researchers and entrepreneurs should be welcomed to Canada in higher numbers and at a faster rate than in other OECD countries...”.⁸

The Diversity Dividend

In 2017, the Centre for International Governance and the Pierre Trudeau Foundation published the report *Diversity Dividend: Canada’s Global Advantage*. The authors noted that,

As a growing number of countries turn inward and shut their doors to immigration and free trade, Canada stands poised to reap the benefits of its successful immigration policies and its diversity... In approximately 20 years, immigration will account for all net growth in Canada’s population and workforce (Statistics Canada 2017). With an aging population and increased pressure on health care, pensions and other social services, a dynamic and productive skilled workforce will be an essential element in maintaining Canada’s standard of living and remaining internationally competitive. Underemployed high-skilled immigrants are, in effect, a stranded resource, something the country cannot afford, in either economic or social terms. In a highly competitive world, talent follows opportunity, and Canada needs to ensure it remains an attractive destination for the world’s top talent.⁹

The OECD’s recent economic update on Canada (July 2018) paid special attention to the positive economic impact of immigrants on our country and their employment outcomes on arrival in Canada. However the authors note that “a problematic development is that immigrants’ entry earnings fell sharply relative to those of the comparable native-born in recent decades.”¹⁰ Their solution to this problem: “Bridge programmes, which help with post-secondary credentials recognition in regulated occupations, and mentoring programmes, which help immigrants overcome underrepresentation in high-quality jobs by developing professional networks, have proved effective and should be expanded.”

⁵ Government of Canada: *Making Real Change Happen: Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session of the Forty-second Parliament of Canada*. December 2015. <http://speech.gc.ca/>

⁶ <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1084739>

⁷ *ibid.* This is one of six Areas for Action outlined in the backgrounder *Positioning Canada to Lead: An Inclusive Innovation Agenda*.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *Diversity Dividend: Canada’s Global Advantage*, 2017.

https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/documents/DiversitySpecial%20Report%20WEB_0.pdf

¹⁰ *Enhancing Labour Market Integration of Immigrants in Canada*, July 23, 2018, OECD

<https://oecdecoscope.blog/2018/07/23/enhancing-labour-market-integration-of-immigrants-in-canada/>

Immigrant Unemployment and Underemployment: The Challenge Persists

Every year, a city's worth of new immigrants are welcomed to Canada and the government's planned new levels will have record numbers of immigrants arriving over the next three years. Many of these newcomers will require support to enter the labour market at a level aligned with their skills and experience:

- Over 52 percent of recent immigrants have a bachelor's degree compared to 24 percent of Canadian-born,¹¹ yet once they arrive in Canada they suffer severe and chronic under- and unemployment.
- In 2016, the employment rate for recent immigrants (those in Canada less than five years) with a university degree was 70% while the Canadian-born university educated population was 91% employed

Once employed, the struggle is not over. A significant wage gap exists between Canadian-born individuals and immigrants with the same level of educational attainment. According to the 2006 census, individuals with a university education between the ages of 25-34 earned an average of \$45,100 annually if they were born in Canada, but only \$29,200 if they were born elsewhere.¹²

This gap costs the Canadian economy. In 2011, a study by RBC found that if immigrants' skills were rewarded in a similar way to that of Canadian-born workers, the increase in their incomes would amount to \$30.7-billion – or the equivalent of 2.1 percent of the country's gross domestic product.¹³ A 2012 Statistics Canada study on immigrants' initial firm allocation and earnings growth shows that immigrants whose first paid employment after arriving in Canada was in high-paying firms fared better in both the short and long term than their counterparts whose first paid employment was in lower paying firms.¹⁴

Skilled immigrant women, in particular, face marked challenges integrating into the labour market. The stakes are high because women play a central role in supporting families, both as breadwinners and as caregivers. A 2015 study found that 48.7% of immigrant women and 60.1% of recent immigrant women with a bachelor's degree or higher were employed in positions that do not typically require a degree, compared to both Canadian born women (30%) and immigrant men (41%).¹⁵ Currently, 56% of immigrant professionals served by TRIEC Mentoring Partnership are women.¹⁶ We can grow the numbers of this critical group served by the program with an increased investment by the Government of Canada. Many women served by TRIEC Mentoring Partnership go on to "pay it forward" by becoming

¹¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171129/cg-a005-eng.htm>

¹² <http://www.yorku.ca/tiedi/doc/Roundtable%204%20primer.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/pdf/1219-2011-immigration.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160601/dq160601a-eng.htm>

¹⁵ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14217-eng.htm>

¹⁶ This percentage is an average over the three-year period from 2013-14 to 2015-16.

mentors themselves. The program has been proven to support women's leadership growth and ultimate success in the workplace.

Conclusion

Mentoring is a proven, evidence-based intervention that delivers results for the immigrant and for the Canadian economy. **TRIEC recommends that the Government of Canada invest in mentoring programs across Canada to improve the employment outcomes of 6,000 immigrant professionals and to encourage employers to hire immigrant talent.**

Immigrant professionals have made the choice to come to Canada and contribute to our country. We owe it to them, and to ourselves, to ensure they have the best opportunity for success.

About TRIEC

[The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council \(TRIEC\)](#) champions the talent and experience that immigrants bring to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). We support organizations to become more inclusive, and help newcomers expand their professional networks and understand the local labour market. We collaborate with leaders and organizations to build a GTA where immigrant professionals can contribute to their fullest potential.