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Regional Voices

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From Nova Scotia

Find Distance/Online Services – Workplace Skills Initiative

by Mark Larson

Here is a situation you may be familiar with: - as a career practitioner / employment specialist you are faced with a client looking for advice and guidance concerning their need to find employment in their field. Add to this mix, the fact that this client is an immigrant and has unique challenges regarding the integration into not just the Canadian labour market but a new country as well. In addition, this individual has chosen to live in a smaller urban center far removed from your location and cannot take advantage of the face to face services your organization offers.

The Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA) recently received funding from HRSDC (Human Resources and Social Development) to extend their suite of employment and language services to newcomers throughout Nova Scotia. The Workplace Skills Initiative will help the organization reach newcomers living outside of the Halifax Regional Municipality and provide additional services to both employers and newcomers wishing to develop new workplace skills.

The online or distance education service that will extend assistance to immigrants anywhere in Nova Scotia will be the New Beginnings Online pre-employment workshops. These online workshops complement the Halifax based New Beginnings program classroom based workshops that have been successfully assisting newcomers integrate effectively into the labour market. The three workshops in the New Beginnings Online program are:

Job Search	Interview Skills	Working in Canada
In this workshop, participants learn about resumes, cover letters, methods of job search, identifying and researching potential	This workshop helps participants prepare for Canadian job interviews. Participants learn what to expect at the interview, what kinds	This workshop covers basic employment issues such as employment contracts, taxes, workplace culture, organizational culture and

employers, marketing yourself and other topics. Participants learn and practice skills which will help them compete for positions in the Canadian labour market.

of questions may be asked and what is important to employers. After this workshop, clients are better able to manage a job interview.

success in the workplace. It helps participants feel more comfortable and confident working in a Canadian environment.

E-employment specialists and online facilitators will be able to reach immigrants throughout the province and provide the employment counselling, workshop facilitation and career path expertise so crucial to those newly arrived and eager to apply their skills and qualifications to the acute labour market demands of Nova Scotia.

These labour market demands are not restricted just to a major center such as Halifax, but spread over the entire province. The distance / online services that will be made available to immigrants allow for the extension of services to smaller urban centers and rural communities throughout the province. It will also allow those precluded from taking advantage of Halifax based services due to time and cost restrictions (i.e. child care, transportation, attendance in academic upgrading, etc.) to have access to employment services and resources to assist them contribute their workplace skills as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

For more detailed information about the New Beginnings Online program, go to www.newbeginningsonline.ca. For additional information about the range of services offered by the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, go to www.misa.ns.ca/wins.php.

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