

Foreign-trained professionals find work in environmental sector

THE HONOURABLE Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State (Seniors) and Member of Parliament for Calgary–Nose Hill, announced, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, that the Government of Canada is supporting a project to help better integrate foreign-trained workers into the Canadian workforce through an initiative with the environmental sector.

The Environmental Careers Organization of Canada (ECO Canada) will receive \$1,294,865 in Foreign Credential Recognition Program funding for its Environmental Sector Immigration Strategy.

“Our government is committed to helping newcomers succeed in Canada,” said Minister of State Ablonczy. “Through Canada’s Economic Action Plan, our government is taking action to improve foreign credential recognition so that newcomers can maximize their talents. We are proud to support ECO Canada’s Environmental Sector Immigration Strategy, because attracting the best international talent is vital to Canada’s long-term economic success.”

The funding will enable ECO Canada to create an assessment and job matching system that will help foreign-trained workers to find jobs in the environmental sector. This system will place skilled immigrants in areas with the highest demand, and will enhance their employment opportunities in Canada.

“ECO Canada is pleased to be part of this project as it aligns with our mandate of ensuring a sufficient supply of skilled professionals to address the labour requirements of the Canadian environmental sector,” said Mr. Grant Trump, President and Chief Executive Officer, ECO Canada. “The Bridging component of this project provides an effective vehicle to link the environment sector’s labour market



demands with competent immigrants arriving in Canada with environmentally related education and experience.”

Canada’s Economic Action Plan invested \$50 million to work with the provinces and territories and other partners, such as employers, to address barriers to foreign credential recognition in Canada. This investment directly contributed to the development of the Pan-

Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, which was announced last November.

Under the Framework, foreign-trained workers who submit an application to be licensed or registered to work in certain fields will be advised within one year whether their qualifications will be recognized. The Framework is part of the Government of Canada’s strategy to have the best educated, most skilled and most flexible workforce in the world.

With this \$50-million investment, the Government will:

- develop the principles that will guide the process of foreign credential recognition;
- develop standards for the timely handling of requests;
- identify key occupations that will be the priority for developing recognition standards; and
- help people who want to come to Canada understand what they need to know before they arrive.

The Foreign Credential Recognition Program and the Foreign Credentials Referral Office are the key federal initiatives in place to support pan-Canadian implementation of the Framework.

To learn more about Canada’s Economic Action Plan, visit www.actionplan.gc.ca.

Workers get their money back

THANKS TO an Alberta government investigation, an unlicensed employment agency has paid back \$15,000 in illegal fees it charged to find jobs for foreign workers.

It also faces \$4500 in fines. Under Alberta’s Fair Trading Act, employment agencies must be licensed by the provincial government and cannot charge workers a fee for finding them jobs.

“If employment agencies take advantage of foreign workers, we take it very seriously,” said Service Alberta Minister Heather Klimchuk. “We investigate and take action, and we work hard to get restitution for the workers through the courts. This is a good example of that happening successfully.”

Service Alberta received nine complaints that Josephine Garcia Ramoso, operating as 4 J’s Garcia, collected \$15,000 from co-workers and individuals in Edmonton’s Filipino community to recruit their relatives

in the Philippines for jobs in Alberta. The workers remained in the Philippines and were never offered jobs.

On December 17, 2009, Ramoso pleaded guilty in provincial court to nine counts of operating without a licence. She paid back the \$15,000 in fees she had charged by the court-ordered deadline of January 15. As well, she was fined a total of \$4500 (\$500 for each count), which she has to pay by September 10.

“Most employment agencies in Alberta treat their clients properly and follow the law. However, those that take advantage of people face serious consequences,” Klimchuk emphasized.

For more information on regulations related to employment agencies, visit: <http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/1016.cfm>

Source: The Government of Alberta

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