



## **BACKGROUND:** London Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council (LMIEC)

- Immigrant attraction and retention is a vital economic issue for London region to grow our local economy.
- As Canada's workforce gets older and emerging industries require more specialized skill sets, our region's economic prosperity will be directly linked to our business community's ability to attract and retain immigrant talent.
- When employers are able to access the qualified talent they need at the right time – companies grow and everyone benefits. Hiring immigrants is the right thing to do – it makes for good business.
- Established in 2007, the LMIEC is committed to communicating the solid business case for hiring internationally trained individuals to the broader business community and connecting employers to an international talent pool free of charge.
- Despite a high unemployment rate, employers have reported that some positions remain difficult to fill. The LMIEC is working with these employers to address short-term labour market demands while proactively positioning our community to take advantage of the longer-term trends and demands when they arise.
- The LMIEC has employer representation from a broad range of industries and sectors reflecting the diversified regional economy. The Council is currently chaired by Gus Kotsiomititis, RBC's Vice President of Commercial Banking London/St.Thomas.
- The LMIEC is one piece of a significant chain of action already undertaken at the community level.
- London is a national leader in developing immigrant recruitment and retention tools. In recent years, the community has developed unique solutions aimed at connecting skilled immigrants with local employers, including: Skills International, the Access Centre for Regulated Employment, a Skilled Immigrant Loan program, and the LMIEC Mentorship for Immigrant Employment programs.
- The LMIEC coordinates the *Mentorship for Immigrant Employment* program (now funded by the United Way of London-Middlesex). This highly successful program connects internationally trained individuals with local mentors in 4 to 6 month matches to gain a better understanding of the local job market in their field or occupation; establish valuable networking contacts; and learn more about sector-specific language and professional practice in Canada.
- To date, the Mentorship for Immigrant Employment program has matched over 160 job seekers with local mentors, gaining considerable provincial and national attention for its success – having outperformed similar mentorship programs in larger Canadian municipalities and utilizing creative marketing techniques.
- The City of London is a Corporate Champion of the Mentorship for Immigrant Employment program, and to date has connected 14 mentors to the program who have been matched with internationally trained individuals seeking employment in our community.
- The LMIEC is currently in the process of launching complementary Mentorship programs serving the unique and often complex needs of both job seekers and employers (including a Peer Mentorship program funded by RBC Royal Bank).
- The LMIEC has also partnered with the London Chamber of Commerce to mobilize SME engagement in our region.