

## IDEAS AND PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO IEPC

### Idea: LMIEC Job Match Network

**Submission Type:** Organization

**Description:**

The London Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council (LMIEC) proposes to leverage local, provincial and federal investments to develop a “Made in London” immigrant recruitment and retention strategy for our community.

The LMIEC Job Match Network was developed in 2011-12 based on needs articulated by employers, community partners and newcomers themselves. A funding proposal to establish the Network was put forward to the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) in 2011 and funding was recently approved to launch. This start-up funding will result in the matching of 100 internationally trained individuals to open job opportunities in London region over the course of the next two years.

Employer umbrella groups and organizations have joined forces with immigrant-serving organizations, local colleges and not-for-profit employment agencies to found the LMIEC Job Match Network. The infrastructure of the pilot is, therefore, built upon a collaborative foundation of community partnerships – creating a large talent pool of job-ready skilled immigrants who are matched to employer job orders. This infrastructure includes several strategic pieces that are unique to London and do not exist in other Canadian municipalities, including the Access Centre for Regulated Employment; Skills International; and a new Internationally Trained Worker Loan Program pilot funded by the federal government.

This provincial investment presents a significant opportunity for the City of London to make its own strategic investment to connect newcomer populations currently studying and/or residing in our city that are ineligible to participate in this pilot program. This includes the thousands of international students studying at our post-secondary institutions seeking employment in our region. Municipal funding of the network will also open the door to the recruitment of internationally trained individuals residing outside of the province of Ontario – including those individuals who are currently overseas and in the process of immigrating to Canada – through the LMIEC’s partnership with Skills International.

Specifically, an investment from the City of London would provide the necessary human resources for a dedicated staff position that will connect local employers with untapped talent from these newcomer populations. By improving London employers’ connections with immigrant talent pools, local companies and our regional economy will grow. This is consistent and complementary to the city’s recent *Hire One* Strategy.

In other words, the infrastructure to connect employers to the talent they require has been funded and built. It is the eligibility to qualify for the programs and services that have been created that remains the significant stumbling block that this initiative has been designed to address. All that remains to be done is for our City to leverage this infrastructure to our best competitive advantage.

### **What is the status of this idea – is anything already happening?**

What is happening with the LMIEC?

The LMIEC is a non-incorporated volunteer body led by a Governance Council of local employers and supported by an Advisory Committee with representation from the City of London, the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) and WIL Employment Connections (WIL). The LMIEC was established by the community as a strategic response to engage regional employers in addressing barriers to full and commensurate employment for immigrants. The community recognized that in order for labour market conditions to improve for immigrants, employers needed to be part of the solution. The LMIEC brought employers to the table, promoting awareness of the benefits of hiring newcomers, and addressing the business community’s perceived and actual barriers to employment.

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The LMIEC has had tremendous growth. In fact, the efforts of LMIEC and its partners were recently recognized by the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) with Top Honour in the category of Workforce Development. What started as a Task Force of 14 employers in 2007 has now grown to a Council of over 180 business leaders sharing their “hire immigrants” message with colleagues in their companies, business networks and industry sectors. Through the LMIEC’s Employer Leadership Strategy, these employers have reached out directly to over 800 business associates.

The LMIEC’s Mentorship for Immigrant Employment program has matched over 200 job seekers with local volunteer mentors at London area companies, with 140 newcomers finding a job in their field in our community. **The program is 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, a Corporate Champion of the Mentorship program, hosted a highly successful Networking Event between City Staff and newcomer professionals on May 24, 2012. Through complementary mentorship programs, the LMIEC also brings mentees and mentors together in small group sessions throughout the year and facilitates peer-mentoring opportunities in both regulated and non-regulated professions.

The LMIEC is also partnering with the London Chamber of Commerce to mobilize engagement among small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in our region through a Global Experience @ Work initiative.

What is happening with the LMIEC Job Match Network?

Companies that are growing in our community are often small to medium sized enterprises with very specialized skill needs. Even in today’s challenging economic climate, these employers are having a hard time finding qualified candidates for open positions. These companies have called for:

- More coordinated access to a skilled immigrant talent pool -- already in London -- in order to recruit for positions that are presently going unfilled;
- AND a proactive talent attraction and retention strategy that makes London a go-to destination for global talent, international students and skilled immigrants from across Canada.

By actively connecting an expanded immigrant talent pool with London employers seeking their skills, the London Middlesex Immigrant Employment (“LMIEC”) Job Match Network provides a solution to both of these needs. As a community, if we are able to collectively match more internationally trained individuals (ITIs) that are already in London, willing to relocate from other areas of Ontario or pre-screened for arrival from overseas to unfilled positions, companies will find the talent required to grow their business – which will lead to further job creation for all Londoners.

A proposal to establish a Job Match Network was put forward to the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) in 2011 and funding was received to launch the Network in 2011-2012. The Job Match Network is in early stages of development with a broader roll-out anticipated when LMIEC receives permission to formally announce from the Ministry.

While the LMIEC Job Match Network has begun its work, it is presently unable to provide services to some qualified individuals that are already in London seeking employment, such as international student graduates. An investment from the City of London will enable local employers to better attract talent and tap into talent already in London, including unemployed and underemployed individuals that we are currently unable to match and market due to provincial funding restraints.

**Who are the partners that would need to be involved? What are their roles?**

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Strategically guided by the LMIEC employer-led Governance Council and Advisory Committee members including the London Economic Development Corporation and the City of London, the following immigrant-serving London partner organizations have agreed to participate in the LMIEC Job Match Network:

- Access Centre for Regulated Employment
- ACFO London-Sarnia
- College Boreal
- Fanshawe College
- London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
- Mentorship for Immigrant Employment
- Skills International
- South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre
- WIL Employment Connections

The roles of the Job Match Network partners are as follows:

- Work with Job Match Network staff and program partners on establishing a streamlined Job Match Network application and referral protocol that operates on a shared definition of job readiness
- Work with Job Match Network staff and program partners on establishing an unfilled job order sharing protocol
- Refer job-ready ITI candidates to the Job Match Network
- Share unfilled job orders with the Job Match Network
- Participate in quarterly Advisory Committee meetings of the Job Match Network program partners
- Encourage the creation and updating of Skills International profiles for job-ready ITIs.

Beyond London partners, Job Match Network staff will also actively liaise with Skills International and other job matching networks and Immigrant Employment Councils across Canada to communicate unfilled job orders and attract ITI candidates willing to relocate for available and meaningful employment opportunities. This will lead to improved economic prosperity for all Londoners.

**Cost to implement:** \$150,000 app./yr

**Funding Requested from City (\$) if any:** \$50,000

**Will this idea move forward without City of London funding?**

Funding for the LMIEC Job Match Network has been secured from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration through to October 2013. However, MCI funding carries some restrictions on the immigration categories of newcomers that can be marketed for hire. For example, international student graduates, immigrants on work visas, landed immigrants in other provinces and approved immigrants overseas are all legally authorized to work. However, provincial funding dollars from MCI cannot be utilized to market these candidates through the Job Match Network.

An investment from the Prosperity Committee will enable the LMIEC to leverage other local, provincial and federal investments to develop a "Made in London" immigrant recruitment and retention strategy for our community. The investment will enable the LMIEC and its Job Match Network partners to market ALL newcomers to London employers, thus expanding London's ability to attract and retain top talent and satisfying more hiring needs of local employers.

Specifically, matching qualified talent to unfilled job orders and marketing those candidates to employers is a labour intensive process. A \$50,000 investment from the Prosperity Committee will cover the salary of a full-time Sales and Marketing Advisor. Without this investment, LMIEC will not have the resources necessary to screen, match and market these otherwise ineligible groups of newcomers to unfilled job opportunities through the Job Match Network.

**Will your idea create jobs? No**

**How many jobs will be created? -**

**Full or Part-time:-**

**Permanent or Temporary:-**

**Job Level:-**

**Job Salary:-**

**What sector(s) will this create job(s) in? -**

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**Is there anything else you can tell us about your idea that will create jobs? -**

**Will this idea leverage investments from others? What kind? How much?**

Yes. This idea leverages a 2-year provincial investment from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for the Job Match Network in the amount of \$300,000.

In addition, the Job Match Network leverages the many provincial and federal investments, with added support from private foundations and the United Way of London-Middlesex, that have been made in establishing London Region as a model for newcomer recruitment and retention. These premier London resources include:

- A regionally-based centre that directly assists ITIs in navigating the licensure process and submitting applications to regulatory bodies (Access Centre for Regulated Employment);
- A low-interest federal loan program that helps ITIs access funds to navigate licensure and credential evaluation;
- A web-based job matching tool (Skills International);
- A mentorship program that connects newcomers to London hidden job market (Mentorship for Immigrant Employment);
- An immigration web portal;
- Canadian work experience placements;
- Bridge training programs;
- And enhanced, specialized and occupation-specific language training programs.

The Job Match Network will market this suite of services and integrated London model to both newcomers and businesses, strengthening London's economic and talent attraction strategies and portfolios.

An expanded Job Match Network able to serve International Students studying in our community will also be able to significantly leverage the LEDC's Annual Student-2-Business Conference which already delivers an International Student Workshop component (delivered by WIL Employment Connections).

Beyond these employment related supports, London stakeholders have also been coming together surrounding issues of settlement, education, health & well-being, justice & protective services and employment through the work of the London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership to strengthen London Region as a welcoming and vibrant community for newcomers. This idea builds upon these collaborative community initiatives and existing investments.

**Will this idea stimulate spin-off benefits? What type? How? Where?**

Past workforce development surveys conducted by the London Economic Development Corporation have found that 60% of respondents experienced difficulty filling positions and/or compromised their requirements as a result. 10% decided against expansion in London because of difficulty finding staff. If these companies had been able to source the right talent at the right time, this would have led to spin-off job creation for all Londoners.

Job Match Network will help more London companies find the qualified talent at the right time, stimulating London's economy and job creation for all.

The economic spin-off benefits are substantial. The Conference Board of Canada has estimated that our country's failure to recognize immigrants' learning and credentials costs the economy \$3.4 billion to \$5 billion in lost earnings every year. Furthermore, a study by RBC Economics indicates that if immigrants had the same likelihood of employment at the same average income as people born in Canada, then personal income would be about \$13 billion higher and there would be almost 400,000 extra workers.

**Will this idea build new or existing partnerships? How?**

The Job Match Network brings together local, provincial, national and international partners in a unique way to directly market job opportunities that are presently going unfilled to a wider audience of ITIs. Some of these partnerships are detailed further in Section 2.

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### **Will this idea benefit emerging or established industry sectors? How?**

The Job Match Network benefits both emerging and established industry sectors.

Up to 70% of the new jobs in emerging industry sectors such as London's Information Technology, Life Sciences and Renewable Technologies sectors require post-secondary education. Over 50% of recent immigrants have a university degree – twice the proportion of the Canadian born population (22%). Newcomers will be a key source of the talent to fill the immediate skill demands of these emerging industries.

London's established industry sectors are also becoming increasingly complex in their skill demands, as companies move towards lean and advanced manufacturing work environments that are more reliant on engineering, planning, logistical and information technology skills.

Beyond helping London's economic sectors fill skills demands, the Job Match Network will also enable London companies to proactively tackle upcoming labour shortages. Immigration will be responsible for 100% of London's labour market growth in the years ahead and recent Census results reflect that London's population of seniors is higher than the national average, further highlighting the need to be vigilant and competitive in talent attraction strategies.

### **Will this idea fuel transformative change in London's economy? If so, how?**

The Job Match Network fuels transformative change in London's economy by helping more companies access the right talent they need at the right time to grow their business, grow London's economy and accelerate job creation for all.

#### Contact:

Jennifer Hollis | Project Manager  
London-Middlesex Immigrant Employment Council  
141 Dundas Street, 4th Floor, London ON N6A 1G3  
Tel: 519.663.0774 ext. 228 | Fax: 519.663.5377 |  
[JenniferH@LMIEC.ca](mailto:JenniferH@LMIEC.ca)<mailto:JenniferH@LMIEC.ca>