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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

### **Connecting newcomers to jobs**

VANCOUVER – Government is investing more than \$630,000 to find new ways for refugees and immigrants to join British Columbia’s growing economy.

Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation Michelle Stilwell announced the funding today for three projects directed at increasing immigrant and refugee employability in partnership with MOSAIC BC and the Immigrant Employment Council of B.C.

MOSAIC is receiving \$443,000 for two projects. One is a Project-Based Labour Market Training program based out of Delta. ‘Fast Track to IT’ will see up to 28 immigrant job-seekers receive paid training to work as information systems analysts through classroom instruction and on-the-job work experience with local employers. It will give a group of newcomers a chance to gain new skills in the Lower Mainland’s tech industry while offering local businesses a crop of trained and motivated employees ready to step into jobs with the tools they need to succeed.

Another project with MOSAIC will test a new approach to providing unemployed refugees with employment services. ‘Hope to Work’ will provide two groups of 15 clients in two sessions, one in English and another in Arabic, with a ‘hope-centred’ approach to their search for work. This approach was developed by the Hope-Centred Career Development Group, which includes UBC professor Norman Amundson, as a way to inspire jobseekers in their career development. It provides a framework of essential career competencies to help job-seekers learn the key skills for taking control of their career development. The employment outcomes of these 30 clients will be compared over two years with the outcomes of 30 other immigrant clients receiving regular WorkBC employment services. This study will examine whether or not using the hope-centred approach to employment is beneficial to immigrant clients.

MOSAIC is a non-profit organization providing extensive settlement and employment services to newcomers and refugees, including translation, learning English, workplace training and counselling. It operates the North East WorkBC Employment Services Centre in Vancouver and co-operates the Fraser Works Work BC Employment Services centres in Burnaby and New Westminster.

Government is also providing the Immigrant Employment Council of BC. with more than \$186,000 for the Mapping Refugee Skills and Employer Needs project. This labour market partnership will focus on developing employment opportunities for refugees in Surrey and Abbotsford by creating and examining skill profiles of those clients while engaging local employers to identify barriers faced in hiring refugees. A final report will include strategies to connect employers to the refugee talent pool in the two regions. The outcome will give businesses a better idea of the available talent brought by refugees while also giving service providers more knowledge of barriers that need to be overcome in order to connect refugees

to jobs.

The Immigrant Employment Council of B.C. is a not-for-profit organization that provides employers with solutions, tools and resources they need to attract hire and retain qualified immigrant talent.

Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation funding for the three projects is provided through the Community and Employer Partnerships program, which funds projects that increase employability levels and share labour market information.

Community and Employer Partnerships are featured in B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint and provide support to people who are struggling to gain a foothold in the job market. The program also helps build stronger partnerships with industry and labour to connect British Columbians with classroom instruction and on-the-job training, while making it easier for employers to hire the skilled workers they need – when and where they need them.

To date, nearly 1,400 job seekers have benefited from work experience and more than 250 projects have been funded throughout the province.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation –**

“We are committed to finding new and innovative ways to help unemployed immigrants and refugees find good-paying jobs that will provide them a secure future in British Columbia. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of each of these unique projects as they develop and help newcomers move into meaningful, full-time work.”

##### **Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour –**

“By 2025, B.C. is expecting nearly one million job openings. We want to ensure all British Columbians are first in line for those opportunities and that includes those that are under-represented in the workforce such as women, persons with disabilities and refugees and immigrants. These investments will help newcomers become job ready and help employers get the talent they need to stay competitive.”

##### **Joan Andersen, director of employment and language programs, MOSAIC BC –**

“Newcomers arrive here wanting to build successful lives in their new country and all too often, they face challenges finding good jobs. That's why MOSAIC is pleased to be offering employment programs such as Hope To Work and Fast Track to IT, which focus on improving employment prospects for newcomers and work towards fulfilling MOSAIC's mission of empowering newcomers to fully participate in Canadian society.”

##### **Kelly Pollack, CEO, Immigrant Employment Council of BC –**

“Meaningful employment is one of the best ways to integrate into your new home country and your community, and refugees have a lot to give – their talents, resilience and unique perspectives. Through the Mapping Refugee Skills and Employer Needs project we will identify the occupational skills and experience of refugees in Surrey and Abbotsford, engage employers

in those communities to get a better understanding of their labour needs, and develop strategies to effectively connect local businesses to the refugee talent pool.”

### **Quick Facts:**

- On average, British Columbia welcomes 37,000 permanent residents every year, 1,600 of whom are refugees.
- Due to the federal government’s commitment to Syrian refugees, B.C. received 1,725 refugees in 2015, and has received 2,980 from January to mid-September of 2016.
- In response to the federal government’s Syrian Refugee initiative, the B.C. government has provided:
  - A \$1 million Refugee Readiness Fund to help connect private sponsors and service providers to the information they need to plan for the arrival and support of Syrian refugees. This includes \$500,000 for five Refugee Response Teams to identify and prioritize short-term community needs of refugees; and, \$500,000 for the Immigrant Services Society of B.C. (ISSofBC) to develop the Refugees Readiness Online Hub to help make information and connections more accessible throughout the province.
  - Up to \$2 million under the Canada-B.C. Job Fund to help get refugees job training and match them with employers.
- Local WorkBC Employment Services centres play a leading role in connecting eligible job seekers to Project-Based Labour Market Training opportunities in their communities. Once a connection between the client and a suitable project has been made, the WorkBC centre continues to provide financial support and services to ensure the client’s success.
- In 2016-17, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation has committed to investing \$331 million in employment and labour market programs under the Employment Program of British Columbia.
- The Employment Program of BC is funded by the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada through the Labour Market Development Agreement.
- Funding supports 84 WorkBC Employment Services centres throughout the province and the five components of the Community and Employer Partnerships fund:
  - Job Creation Partnerships
  - Labour Market Partnerships
  - Project-Based Labour Market Training
  - Research and Innovation
  - Social Innovation

### **Who is eligible for Community and Employer Partnerships funding?**

- Businesses
- Non-profit organizations
- Crown corporations
- Municipalities, agencies or territorial governments
- First Nation bands/tribal councils
- Public health and educational institutions

### **Learn More:**

Learn more about MOSAIC BC: <https://www.mosaicbc.org/>

For more information about the Immigrant Employment Council of B.C.: <http://iecbc.ca/>

For more information on Community and Employer Partnerships: [www.workbc.ca/CEP](http://www.workbc.ca/CEP)

Find a local WorkBC Employment Services Centre: [www.workbccentres.ca](http://www.workbccentres.ca)

Learn more about the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation:  
[www.gov.bc.ca/sdsi](http://www.gov.bc.ca/sdsi)

To find out more about the BC Jobs Plan: [www.engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/](http://www.engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/)

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