

IMMIGRANT
EMPLOYMENT
COUNCIL OF BC

IECBC

Program Guide



 MENTORCONNECT

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Introduction

About IEC-BC

The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) is a not-for-profit organization that provides BC employers with solutions, tools, and resources they need to attract, hire and retain qualified immigrant talent. We believe that the successful integration of skilled newcomers into the BC labour market is critical to both their success and the province's long-term economic performance. We work with employers, government and other partner stakeholders to ensure that BC employers can effectively integrate global talent.

The Context

Canada's immigration policy is designed to help address the need for talent in high demand industries and occupations by attracting skilled newcomers. IRCC's (Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada) latest Immigration Levels Plan 2021-2023 aims to welcome over 1.3 million immigrants, a large proportion of whom will be highly skilled prospective mentees.

MentorConnect is designed to connect employers to this untapped skilled talent pool, through one-on-one, occupation-specific career mentorship. The skilled newcomer professionals have the technical competencies, education, experience and language skills, to succeed in the Canadian labour market. However, they often face pervasive obstacles to finding employment in their fields, including:

- Lack of context around the Canadian job market.
- Limited understanding of Canadian workplace culture.
- Occupation-specific language and terminology.
- Under valuing of international credentials and work experience.
- Lack of local professional networks.



Program Benefits

For the BC Economy

Access to the right talent is critical to grow our businesses and economy, yet declining population growth coupled with increased attrition and retirement are resulting in lower labour force participation. Over the next five years, the number of British Columbians leaving the workforce will exceed those entering it. Employers will increasingly need to use innovative and effective strategies to hire and retain a skilled workforce. BC is Canada's second-most popular immigrant destination, yet there is a significantly lower employment rate for recent immigrants. MentorConnect helps employers to broaden their talent pipeline by connecting them to an untapped skilled newcomer talent pool.

Mentoring is recognized as an effective approach in addressing employment barriers faced by skilled newcomers. It is also an effective strategy to assist employers to broaden their talent pool. Mentoring offers unique opportunities and benefits to employers, mentors and mentees.

For Employers

- Connect with a skilled immigrant talent pool.
- Advance diversity and inclusion strategies.
- Build a more culturally competent workforce.
- Increase employee engagement.

For Mentees

- Obtain local occupation-specific information and advice.
- Increase understanding of the local labour market.
- Build professional network.
- Receive overall career guidance and support.

For Mentors

- Increase cross-cultural coaching and leadership skills.
- Gain insights into global business perspectives.
- Contribute to building a more diverse and inclusive workplace.
- An opportunity to “give back”.

Did you know:

“For every \$1 invested in mentoring, \$10.50 is returned to the economy”.

- Boston Consulting Group, 2014.

Partners and Roles

The three primary partners in the MentorConnect program are: IEC-BC (MentorConnect Program Lead), Employer Partners and Service Delivery Partners (SDPs). Each partner has distinct roles and responsibilities.



Immigrant Employment Council of BC

As the MentorConnect Program Lead, we will:

- Provide overall program leadership and coordination.
- Serve as a liaison between Mentors and Mentees.
- Facilitate training for SDPs within the MentorConnect program.
- Establish and ensure Quality Assurance standards and take the lead on continuous improvement of the program.
- Lead monitoring and evaluation activities.

Employer Partners

As the primary source of mentors, the Employer Partner will:

- Identify an internal “Champion”, who will act as the internal lead to promote the program to staff and facilitate mentor recruitment within the organization.
- Promote “mentorship” as a Diversity and Inclusion initiative within the organization.
- Work with IEC-BC to plan and execute kick-off and/or wrap up events.
- Invite mentors to participate in events, which may be held in person or virtually.

Service Delivery Partners (SDPs)

As the primary source of mentees, the SDP will:

- Assign a staff member(s) to be the mentoring coach for their clients who have referred or matched with mentors.
- Refer mentees to the program and facilitate their registration via the mentee registration form.
- Assist mentees with their initial onboarding and setting expectations from the program.
- Attend the first meeting of the mentor and mentee to help facilitate meetings, as required.



“As an immigrant, I am aware of the challenges faced by someone who is starting this journey. Let’s share our experiences and help new immigrants overcome these hurdles with ease. This is the best way we can give back to society and Canada.” - Mentor, City of Vancouver

Mentor and Mentee Criteria

Mentor Criteria

Being a mentor is a rewarding experience. If you are eager to share your knowledge and experience, willing to provide employment guidance and are a good communicator, then congratulations! You possess the key traits of an effective mentor. The mentoring partnership provides a unique blend of sharing insights on technical skills, individual experiences and coaching on soft skills to contribute to an effective and meaningful relationship with a newcomer mentee.

Eligible Mentors Must:

- Have a minimum of two years of professional experience in their occupation in Canada.
- Possess local industry knowledge.
- Be willing to connect their mentee to contacts within their professional network when applicable.
- Reside in British Columbia.
- Have strong communication skills.
- Possess coaching characteristics and traits.
- Dedicate and make time to meet with their mentee for approx 12 hours over a 2-month period (hold regular meetings, communicate with both mentoring coach and IEC-BC's Program representatives as needed).

Mentee Criteria

A mentoring partnership allows a mentee to learn from someone who is already working in the same occupation or field.

Eligible Mentees Must:

- Has arrived in Canada within the past ten years.
- Is eligible to work in Canada (PR, Refugee Claimant or Citizenship), or have a valid open work permit (Student Visa and/or other TFW with open work visa).
- Possess high-intermediate to advanced English skills and endorsed as job-ready by SDP program partners.
- Have a job-ready resume, clear goals and a personal pitch.
- Commit to the two-month partnership, including making time to meet regularly with their mentor and taking action, as advised by mentor.

IEC-BC Support

- Leadership and coordination: overall program delivery and main point of contact.
- Technical assistance: program planning and delivery.
- Orientation and ongoing support for mentors, mentees, and mentoring coaches.
- Recognition: highlighting the employers' leadership and recognizing mentors within each employer partner organization.

Mentees are more likely to find good quality employment. **2.5x**

Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council, 2019



Mentoring Coach Support

If referred to IEC-BC by a Service Delivery Partner (SDP), the mentor-mentee partnership is supported by a mentoring coach. Mentoring coaches can be an employer relation specialist, job developer or case manager from the SDPs who referred job ready newcomers to the program. They provide guidance and resources to help facilitate the mentoring partnership. Mentoring coaches conduct monthly check-in meetings, either by email or phone, with mentor-mentee pairs. Mentoring coaches also help to identify and mitigate problems that may arise during a partnership. Mentors and mentees are advised to contact their mentoring coaches at any point during their mentoring partnership if they have questions or concerns.

The Mentoring Coach:

- Monitors the mentor-mentee relationship.
- Offers advice/suggestions on programs, services and resources for the mentee.
- Provides guidance or intervention when expectations are not being met, when boundaries are perceived to have been crossed, or other issues as they arise.
- Follows-up with mentor and mentee to track outcomes.

Program Structure and Process

Registration Process

IEC-BC's registration process is designed to build a thorough and complete profile account for both mentors and mentees. Your thoughtful responses allow our matching system to identify the most suited profile that catches your unique skills, interests, and goals.

All data provided in the registration form are confidential, can be updated when requested, and are stored on Canadian servers to meet Canada's Personal Privacy Act.

MentorConnect Matching Steps

Step
1

Sign-Up

Mentors are recruited by IEC-BC and invited to complete a registration form. Mentoring coaches recruit and screen newcomer mentees according to eligibility criteria. Approved mentors and mentees receive a welcome email with next steps and program resources to help them better prep for the program.

Step
2

Orientation

Mentoring coaches conduct orientation session with mentees, individually or in groups.

Step
3

Matching

The information provided in your registration form allows our matching system to generate and recommend matches. Your matching opportunities are then confirmed by the IEC-BC Program Team. Mentors are provided an opportunity to confirm or decline a proposed match or given an opportunity to choose from more than one potential mentee for a match.

Step
4

Partnership

IEC-BC Program Team will finally confirm the match through an introductory email.

Once confirmed, mentees are encouraged to reach out to their mentor to schedule the first meeting as soon as possible.

Program Evaluation

The MentorConnect Program is continuously evaluated through surveys, mentor focus groups, and in-service sessions with SDPs. We track program outputs, outcomes, and gather feedback from employers, mentors, mentees, and SDPs on a quarterly and annual basis.

Data collection will be used to:

- Highlight what works.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Collect compelling success stories and mentor/mentee testimonials.
- Measure the impact of the program on newcomer employment.

Data insights will be used to:

- Provide formal and informal feedback to all program stakeholders.
- Make appropriate program modifications.
- Communicate feedback and modifications to concerned parties.
- Document feedback to inform program enhancements.

Guide to Mentoring Activities

There are many activities that contribute to a successful mentoring partnership. The mentor-mentee pair determine the nature of their partnership and develop an action plan for managing it.

Suggestions on how mentors can support their mentees:

- Set realistic goals.
- Develop an action plan.
- Identify barriers or challenges.
- Review steps on action plan.

Take time to identify the following:

- Top priorities.
- Whether additional training is required.
- Challenges and barriers.

Focus on job search challenges and mentee goal identification:

- Are the goals realistic?
- Are the goals achievable within the given time frame?
- Is it necessary to identify interim goals instead?



Tools and Resources

A part of the Introduction Email

Valuable tools and resources will be shared as a part of the Mentor and Mentee introduction email.





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#MentoringWorks

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Financé par :



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