

Community Dispatch

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Canada Votes! – Immigrant Population: Inclusion & Employment

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VOTES!

“Just one question...”

This publication is intended to help you engage with local candidates in the federal election on October 14, 2008. It's all about social issues that impact your community; questions that matter to you; and the role that the federal government can choose to take in addressing them.

Questions raise issues. Questions require candidates to develop a clear position on where they stand. In this document, we cover thirteen social issues affecting communities nationwide today, provide sample questions you can ask your candidates, and include links to more information. By getting involved, you help shape the kind of community in which you live – all it takes is just **one question**.

Immigrant Population: Inclusion & Employment

New Canadians have helped build vibrant communities and a strong workforce in Canada. Currently, many immigrants find it difficult to integrate into the labour market, find meaningful work, and become socially included. The recent shift to short-term, economic driven immigration policy will likely result in more social challenges for immigrants in the long run. Our next federal government can choose to prioritize Canada's long-term needs with more focus on permanent economic

and family class immigrant entries. Coordinated settlement support across federal, provincial, and municipal jurisdictions can ensure immigrants successfully integrate into the labour market and feel included in their communities.

New immigrants and temporary foreign workers in Canada often experience social and labour related challenges: unemployment, underemployment, lack of support services, and discrimination. The low-income rate among recent immigrants is 3.5 times higher than those who are Canadian born. Highly skilled immigrants often end up underemployed because they lack Canadian work experience, their credentials go unrecognized, or they face discriminatory hiring practices. Systemic barriers still prevent ethnic minority populations from participating in all aspects of community.

To ensure that recent immigrants and temporary workers are not exploited, underemployed, or socially excluded, changes to the immigrant settlement and multiculturalism policies are needed. Currently, these policy portfolios are separate and fall under provincial and federal jurisdictions, respectively. A structure that efficiently coordinates all settlement policies and services across jurisdictions would better reduce the barriers new immigrants face when they come to Canada. There is also growing demand for cities and regions to provide the full range of settlement and integration support.

Tightly coordinated settlement and integration funding, with resources allocated at the local level (comparable to the levels that Ontario and Quebec received in 2007-2008), is needed for all provinces. Federal multicultural policies and resources aimed at community capacity building are needed to address discrimination issues and promote cross-cultural interactions. Addressing qualification barriers by funding employer-led training and work experience programs would

create more opportunities for employment and help reduce the underemployment of highly skilled immigrants.

Canada as a whole can benefit from the immigrant population's skills and expertise, and by including them into the social fabric of our country. By asking questions, you can find out which candidate has a comprehensive plan to address the many barriers immigrants face when they try to access employment in Canada.

For More Information:

Settlement.org
www.settlement.org

AMSSA
www.amssa.org

Welcome BC
www.welcomebc.ca

Sources

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2001. *Recent Immigrants in Metropolitan Areas: Canada – A Comparative Profile Based on the 2001 Census*. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/research/menu-recent.asp> (1 Sept. 2008).

Statistic Canada. 2007 January. *Chronic Low Income and Low-income Dynamics Among Recent Immigrants*. <http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=11F0019M2007294> (1 Sept. 2008).

Immigrant Population: Inclusion & Employment: Key Points & Questions

Only 66% of the recent immigrant labour force are participating in the labour market, compared to 78% participation by the Canadian born labour force.

Challenges facing immigrants trying to enter the work force include lack of Canadian work experience, unrecognized foreign credentials, and discrimination.

Short-term economic driven policy results in significant increases in temporary workers and exposes immigrants to exploitation in the job market.

What will your party do to address the systemic barriers and challenges to integrating immigrants into the labour market?

How will you and your party ensure adequate support for the settlement and social inclusion needs of the immigrant population?

Canada Votes Papers 2008 is a pan-Canadian collaboration between [SPARC BC](#), [Community Social Planning Council of Toronto](#), [Community Development Halton](#), [Human Development Council St. John](#), and [Canadian Council on Social Development](#). Social planning organizations across the country are helping to strengthen communities and work on social justice issues. We also recognize the need to work together around key issues affecting our communities. We have come together to provide this publication on the federal election because we believe that democracy works best when citizens engage in dialogue on important issues.

Canada Votes papers outline key social issues and related questions that are important in this election. Asking questions is a way to make sure these issues are on the public agenda. By reading this publication and passing it on, by asking questions and talking about the issues, and especially by voting on October 14, 2008, you can help shape the kind of community in which you want to live.

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