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~ Alexis Greenwood, SIIC Coordinator

HELPING NEW IMMIGRANT JOBSEEKERS

SKILLED IMMIGRANT INFOCENTRE

Finding a job in a new city can be an extremely long and challenging process, which is something the Vancouver Public Library's Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre hopes to change.

Funded by the Government of Canada, the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre (SIIC) is a virtual resource centre which helps newcomers to Canada with their job search. They do this by offering information that is designed to help immigrants make the most of their skills and expertise in the Canadian labour market. Located at Vancouver Public Library's Central Branch at 350 West Georgia Street, the SIIC is always ready to help via email, phone or in person.

"We provide job search and small business tours and one-to-one information sessions for new Canadians who are seeking employment," explains Alexis Greenwood, the SIIC Coordinator. "To support this process we have created detailed employment guides for over 100 careers, and many supporting guides on topics such as networking, internships and mentorships, resumes and cover letters, and workplace culture."

Offering extensive information about specific careers, the SIIC employment guides are a great starting point for immigrants looking to learn more

about their related field in Canada. These guides contain vital information such as labour statistics for BC, wage expectations for any given job; education requirements and links to credential evaluation information. They also provide links to professional or industry associations and available journals and databases at Vancouver Public Library, which can be used to research industries and companies.

"If there is no guide at the SIIC, we will research the industry or profession and share the resources with the new immigrant," adds Greenwood. "Anyone interested in finding information on their career should contact us."

In addition, the SIIC has also created a number of alternative career guides geared towards immigrants who want to learn more about the careers which have transferable skills and a shorter training period. "We also have guides on credential evaluation, higher level ESL programs and avoiding employment scams," says Greenwood. These are available in paper form at the Central Library and will be soon uploaded to the SIIC's new website.

Besides the employment guides, newcomers can also make use of the Career and Job Search Tour that SIIC offers. Every Wednesday and Thursday between 2.30 pm – 4 pm, a free, drop-in tour is held

on level 4 at Vancouver Library's Central branch. These tours come in handy, as newcomers learn about the print and electronic sources available to help with the job search. "Much of this information is only available through the public library website and is not on Google. We also talk about what the hidden job market is and how to access it," says Greenwood.

New immigrants who are looking for a career change and are unsure where to start can turn to the SIIC's Career Explorer Program. Offered twice a month, this full day workshop offers demonstrations on how to use the resources to explore career options.

"I am always very pleased when I hear from patrons who tell us they have taken the SIIC program and guide information and have used it to find employment or explore careers," Greenwood says. "A number of new immigrants have let me know that they have been successful."

Vancouver Public Library

Central Library, Level 4, 350 West Georgia Street

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www.skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca



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