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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HELPING OTTAWA NEWCOMERS WORK IN THEIR FIELDS SOONER

Seven Bridge Training Programs Help Meet Skills Demand Through Expertise Of Newcomers

OTTAWA – The McGuinty government is investing more than \$3.8 million to help Ottawa newcomers work in more than 20 trades and professions sooner, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Mike Colle announced today at Algonquin College.

“We’re on the side of newcomers to Ottawa who want to put their skills and experience to work,” said Colle. “These new bridge training programs will benefit newcomers in a range of fields from health care to teaching and agriculture. We’re helping newcomers get into the job market so local companies will benefit from their global experience.”

This investment will benefit more than 265 newcomers in seven bridge training programs that will provide skill development, language training, exam preparation and mentoring.

Colle was speaking at Algonquin College as it launched two bridge training programs in the health care field. These programs will help newcomers reach their goal to become respiratory therapists, anaesthesia assistants, cardiac diagnostic technicians and sleep clinic staff.

Ottawa is the second most popular destination for newcomers after the GTA. On average 6,000 newcomers arrive in Ottawa each year, and of those 500 are in a regulated profession or skilled trade.

“We are pleased to participate in this important program that helps to put people to work in their related field,” said Jo-Ann Aubut, Chair, Health Development - Faculty of Health, Public Safety and Community Studies at Algonquin College.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has invested over \$34 million in more than 60 bridge training programs. Over 6,000 newcomers in more than 100 professions will benefit and get jobs in the profession in which they were trained, sooner.

In the past three years, more than \$5.7 million has been invested in 14 bridge training projects in Ottawa. This has benefited over 475 newcomers to Ottawa in more than 25 professions and trades.

These projects are the latest way the McGuinty government is working to help newcomers. Other initiatives include:

- Fighting on behalf of newcomers, negotiating the first ever Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, which quadruples federal funding for language training and settlement programs to \$920 million over five years.
- Creating *Ontarioimmigration.ca* that provides up-to-date information for newcomers on everything from Ontario communities to working in professions and trades.
- Doubling the number of training and assessment positions for internationally trained medical graduates.
- Investing \$130 million annually, more than any other province, on services that help newcomers get settled, upgrade their language skills and find work.
- Increasing annual funding to the Newcomer Settlement Program by 29 per cent - from \$4.1 million to \$5.3 million.

“These investments are part of our government’s plan to support newcomers and help our province compete in the global economy,” said Colle. “When newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.”

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