



Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

giving our best 2008-09

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



**Government
of Alberta ■**



*Honourable
Hector Goudreau
Minister of Employment
and Immigration*

“helping Albertans realize possibilities”

Employment and Immigration (E&I) helps Albertans achieve their potential by improving their work-related skills, helping newcomers settle into their communities, promoting and enforcing fair, safe and healthy work environments, and providing support to those in need.

Over the past year, we worked with our many stakeholders and business and industry partners towards the following objectives, among many others:

- building a skilled workforce to improve the long-run sustainability of Alberta's economy;
- increasing the total off-reserve labour force of Alberta's First Nations, Métis and Inuit people;
- doubling the number of workers entering the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program;
- helping newcomers to Alberta to integrate and settle into the community by increasing the support services provided to them; and
- promoting fair, safe and healthy workplace practices.

I am pleased to report we made good progress on each of these priorities, achieving and surpassing many of our targets.

I would like to thank E&I's staff, partners and stakeholders for making the Ministry's accomplishments of the past year possible. The following stories are examples of our dedication to enabling Albertans to realize their potential in our province's labour force.

Original signed by:

Honourable Hector Goudreau
Minister of Employment and Immigration



*Career and
Employment
Consultant
Matthew Holden
gives advice to
a client (right) at
the Labour Market
Information Centre
in Lethbridge.*

“working together to provide a wide variety of services to Albertans”

Employment and Immigration (E&I) provides a wide variety of services to Albertans, including:

- delivering career assistance and employment training programs;
- providing financial assistance and health benefits to those in need;
- helping newcomers settle into the community;
- assessing workers' academic credentials from international institutions;
- enforcing regulations and promoting fair, safe and healthy workplaces in the province; and
- liaising with the francophone community.

As departmental staff, we believe that every person deserves the opportunity to contribute their unique skills to Alberta, and to make our economy and quality of life better. By working together with this objective in mind, each division of the department is better able to identify ways to help Albertans.

Our team works with stakeholders and partners to support Albertans with our collective supply of knowledge, experience and resources. In the following pages you will see examples of how our work has made a difference for the people of this province over the past year. I would like to thank E&I staff and our partners for making these accomplishments possible.

Original signed by:

Shirley Howe
Deputy Minister of Employment and Immigration

E&I's Aboriginal Development Branch develops and supports the implementation of initiatives to improve the participation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Alberta's economy.

*From left to right:
Paul Wyminga,
Reginald Cardinal,
Darina Falsnes.*



helping Alberta's Aboriginal entrepreneurs

In the 2008-09 fiscal year, 172 Aboriginal-owned businesses received advisory services from Aboriginal service providers funded by E&I. According to one service provider, they are "able to assist Alberta First Nation entrepreneurs in much greater depth and quality than would be possible without E&I's commitment." Another provider comments that the "Aboriginal Development Branch really 'gets it' in terms of their support for First Nation economic development initiatives."

meeting Alberta's labour force requirements

Together with industry partners, local businesses, educational institutions and stakeholders, we aim to ensure Alberta has a sufficient supply of workers to meet both present challenges and future needs. This year, we continued our implementation of the *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce* strategy to inform, attract, develop and retain Alberta's workforce. We worked with our partners to develop and release three workforce strategies in the non-profit, forestry and supply chain logistics industries to address their specific labour issues.

We provided workforce adjustment services to businesses who were forced to lay off workers due to economic pressures. These services included setting up job fairs, offering career planning and resumé writing advice, and helping individuals access employment and training programs. We also offered these types of services to groups that are traditionally under-represented in the labour force, such as Aboriginal people, mature workers and Albertans with disabilities.

To better meet the need for a skilled and productive workforce, we collaborated with other ministries to develop the first ever suite of Alberta Official Statistics. The initial suite was composed of 67 fact sheets that include statistics and information about Alberta and its people. Having ready access to high-quality data and statistics will help government, business and the public make better informed decisions.

GOAL 1

The Integration Programs Unit staff work in the areas of settlement services, language training and the implementation of the Foreign Qualifications Recognition Plan to assist Alberta's newcomers.

*From left to right:
Carolyn Dieleman,
Margaret Overland,
Valerie Parr.*



helping newcomers obtain employment

Although their credentials meet provincial standards, some internationally educated teachers have difficulty obtaining employment in Alberta's schools. To address this issue, E&I funded the "Transitions to Alberta Classrooms" pilot project. The 24 week program familiarizes these teachers with Alberta's education system, improves their language skills and enhances their knowledge of western teaching styles. Of the 18 teachers who completed the program, 14 received either permanent or temporary positions with the Calgary Board of Education.

“attracting and retaining workers to the province”

Labour attraction is key to Alberta's long-term labour force requirements. We continued to expand the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program to address existing labour and skills shortages in Alberta. We participated in the Pan-Canadian negotiation of the Agreement on Internal Trade, which will remove interprovincial trade barriers to allow workers in regulated occupations to work anywhere in Canada. We work with newcomers to verify their foreign-earned skills, education and job experience meet Alberta standards through the implementation of *A Foreign Qualification Recognition Plan for Alberta*.

We are committed to helping newcomers integrate and settle into Alberta's communities. We completed and released several publications that provide newcomers to the province with useful information about settling, working and living in Alberta. People who are considering a new life in our province can also access information through the *Immigrate to Alberta* website, which guides them through the immigration process before and after arriving in the province. To ensure Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) are aware of their workplace rights and responsibilities, we established a TFW Helpline and two TFW Advisory Offices.

GOAL 2



Child Support Services helps parents with limited incomes obtain child support agreements or court orders. Client assessments are needed for court documentation.

Colin Dykes and Teresa Wilson in Red Deer video conference with Karen Johnson (centre) in Drayton Valley.

helping people through technology

Being accessible to Albertans while keeping government travel costs to a minimum is an ongoing challenge. To address this while maintaining the personal connection possible only through face-to-face contact, some E&I programs, such as Child Support Services, now conduct client interviews using webcams and live meeting technology.

Over 90 Drayton Valley area clients have been assessed from the Red Deer office in this manner over the past year.

“helping all Albertans share in and contribute to the economic prosperity of the province”

Our Ministry plays an important role in assisting Albertans in need. We connect individuals with skills training, helping them become self-reliant through employment, and we deliver health benefits and income support to cover their basic costs of living. We also provide Albertans with career counseling, job search tools and many other resources through our 59 Labour Market Information Centres around the province.

We released *Connecting Learning and Work: Alberta's Commitment to Career Development*, a strategy that promotes stronger linkages between education and work to provide better access to career and employment services and programs. Other ways we helped Albertans participate more fully in the labour market include:

- Providing training to Albertans through the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement;
- Increasing income support benefits and earning exemptions;
- Increasing qualifying income levels for the health benefit program, which provides funding for dental and eye care, ambulance services, prescriptions and prenatal nutritional products;
- Working extensively with the francophone community;
- Launching a new version of the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website (www.alis.alberta.ca); and
- Responding to over 100,000 telephone and email requests through our 24/7 emergency contact centre.

GOAL 3



Educational materials and collaboration with business, industry and labour are part of the department's efforts to promote and enforce healthy and safe work practices.

*From left to right:
Cailín Mills,
Barrie Harrison,
Sharon Chadwick.*

helping Alberta's young workers stay safe

The Bloodylucky campaign aimed to educate 15 to 19-year-olds about their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace health and safety by emphasizing that workplace incidents can be very real with lasting consequences. The campaign was designed to catch the attention of a young audience through the YouTube website, advertisements in movie theatres and the www.bloodylucky.ca website, which received 100,000 hits in the first two weeks.

ensuring people in Alberta have a fair, safe and healthy work environment

Supporting employers and employees in promoting a safe, healthy and fair culture in the workplace is an important part of our business. We want to see all Albertans go home at the end of the day able to fully enjoy their lives. To achieve this, we review workplace programs and associated legislation on an ongoing basis, and partner with industry and business on initiatives like Work Safe Alberta.

Our educational and promotional activities this year consisted of:

- Reminding Albertans through our 2008 Workplace Health and Safety public awareness/social marketing campaign that injuries and fatalities can be prevented;
- Recognizing Alberta's safest employers by presenting them with an Alberta's Best Safety Performers award;
- Improving access to our information and services for employees and employers by adding Health and Safety/Employment Standards kiosks in several Labour Market Information Centres across the province;
- Releasing new resources such as the *Basics of Employment Standards* eLearning course and *An Employer's Guide to Employment Rules* booklet; and
- Working with employers and union representatives to solve disputes through 184 arbitrator appointments.

GOAL 4

“ensuring Alberta has a fair, equitable and stable
**labour relations
environment,**”

The Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB) is an independent and impartial administrative tribunal that processes applications regarding labour laws and often conducts hearings on matters from both private and public employment sectors. The ALRB considers issues such as certifications, revocations, votes, bargaining unit determinations and unfair labour practices.

In 2008-09, the ALRB provided effective and efficient services to the Alberta labour relations community by booking hearing dates promptly, delivering clear and timely decisions, and efficiently processing cases in progress.

GOAL 5

“ensuring the province has an
effective mechanism for the final appeal of **Workers’
Compensation Board** decisions,”

The Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers’ Compensation is an independent and impartial body that hears appeals of Workers’ Compensation Board decisions. This year, in addition to booking hearings as quickly as possible, we addressed many outstanding appeals that had been in an adjourned status for a long time, and introduced refined methods of tracking hearing dates. We are committed to issuing solid, defensible decisions by working toward consistency and accuracy in the application of legislation and policy, and fairness in the application of the principles of natural justice.

GOAL 6

Contact us

Alberta Employment and Immigration provides programs and services throughout the province.

For more information, including locations, phone numbers and available services in each area, visit www.employment.alberta.ca/offices

310-0000
www.employment.alberta.ca

Our vision

Albertans have a fair, safe and supportive environment in which to work and live.

Our mission

To contribute to the long-term sustainability of the economy by ensuring Alberta has a skilled workforce, productive and safe workplaces, and by helping to improve the well-being of Albertans.

Please refer to www.employment.alberta.ca/annualreports for a full version of Alberta Employment and Immigration's Annual Report 2008-09.