



**Employment and
Immigration
Ministry Annual
Report Highlights
2010-2011**

**Government
of Alberta** ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

Message from the Minister

2010-2011 was a year of steady economic recovery. For Employment and Immigration, it was a year the labour market began to recover, the flow of international immigration increased and new safe and fair workplace initiatives were launched.

The highlights contained in this booklet reflect this ministry's wide range of activities including workforce development, immigration, income support, occupational health and safety, employment standards, employment and training programs and labour relations.

Our work is about investing in our people and our workplaces so that Albertans are able to contribute to and share in the province's prosperity. It is about creating an environment where Alberta maintains a reputation as an attractive place to live, work and do business and as a place that is globally competitive.

In the past year we have connected thousands of employers and job seekers and saw over one million visits by potential immigrants to our AlbertaCanada.com website with information on living and working in Alberta. We also launched a contact centre to provide Albertans with better access to social programs and began a series of initiatives to improve workplace safety and employment standards enforcement.

I wish to thank our community, business and industry partners and our staff for their hard work during the past year. The following stories are examples of their dedication to investing in our people and our workplaces.

Thomas A. Lukaszuk
Minister of Employment and Immigration
MLA, Edmonton – Castle Downs



Employment and Immigration
Minister Thomas A. Lukaszuk

Support and Financial Services
Coordinator Lecky Rasheed (right) helps a
client in an E&I Alberta Works office.



Vision

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

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.

Message from the Deputy Minister

I am proud of the work of Employment and Immigration's more than 2,000 staff who ensure Albertans have safe, supportive and fair work environments.

Staff assist Albertans in countless ways. Through Alberta Works, staff help people in a time of need and train Albertans for new careers. In occupational health and safety and employment standards, we ensure job sites are safe and fair. We help newcomers settle in our communities and have their foreign credentials recognized.

In the following pages, you will read just some of the many ways Employment and Immigration helped make a difference in the lives of Albertans in 2010-2011.

I would like to thank our staff for their continued hard work and I know they are prepared to help Alberta continue to grow. I would also like to thank our partners for helping make all this possible.

Shirley Howe
Deputy Minister of Employment and Immigration

Goal 1

Alberta is able to meet its labour force requirements

In 2010-2011, the ministry continued to ensure Alberta has a workforce to meet the needs of the economy. Although still feeling the effects of a global recession, government, industry and other stakeholders used this period to prepare for economic recovery and take actions to reduce anticipated labour shortages.


Many ideas were shared during the Minister's Workforce Forum. About 120 senior officials representing employers, industry associations, labour and professional organizations, education and government attended. The forum was part of our work to refresh the Alberta government's comprehensive labour force strategy, Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce. Since the strategy was released in 2006, much has changed in the workplace such as the introduction of new technologies, increased labour mobility

and workforce diversity and the aging workforce. Forum participants offered ideas on how to better utilize the workforce, how to attract workers from Canada and abroad, shared examples of employer investment in workforce development and offered ways to foster innovation and improved productivity.

Other highlights throughout the year included the 244 job fairs to match employers with job seekers. Several projects focused on increasing employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. The opening of a labour opportunities office in Conklin with partner Statoil Hydro provided Aboriginal business development services to 300 people. A project for under-employed or unemployed Aboriginal youth provided essential skills and competency training in northeastern Alberta.



Instructor Calvin Feist shows a student interested in automotive careers how to remove a car's wheel during the Canada Career Week Fair in Edmonton in 2010.



Born in Palestine, Islam El Nems came to Canada to continue her post-secondary education. An IQAS assessment recognized all of her previous education and helped with planning her studies with NAIT.

Goal 2

Alberta is able to attract and retain workers to the province

While employing Albertans and Canadians remains our top priority, attracting skilled workers from outside Canada is necessary to reduce the impact of future labour shortages. As our economy recovers and our workforce ages, Alberta needs to recruit and welcome the world to our province. This year we helped over 25,000 immigrants settle into Alberta communities. We continued working to reduce and remove barriers which prevent newcomers from fully participating in Alberta's economic prosperity.

One of the challenges immigrants may face is having the education and skills they obtained in other countries recognized in Canada. Our International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) assessed international educational credentials and compared them to educational credentials in Canada. This year IQAS issued over 6,000 assessment certificates. We also worked collaboratively with Foreign Qualification Recognition stakeholders, including professional

regulatory organizations and employers on making improvements in the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications in Alberta. These improvements include the development of online information, tools and application forms that helped newcomers before they arrived in Alberta.

Communicating in English is another challenge that can prevent immigrants from reaching their full potential. In addition to funding English language training, we found new and innovative ways to improve the language skills of newcomers. Breakthewall.alberta.ca is a new resource combining news, feature story audio files and written lessons. A partnership with CBC Radio One, the free online resource can be used by classroom students or by those not able to attend language training classes. CBC broadcasters provided current radio news stories, read at a slow pace, to help students improve their listening and comprehension skills. Written lessons were also included to improve reading skills.

Goal 3

All Albertans share in and contribute to the economic prosperity of Alberta

Newcomers to Alberta are not the only ones facing challenges to reach their full potential. We are committed to ensuring that all Albertans can make the best use of their education, skills and work experience and have the opportunity to share in Alberta's economic prosperity. We do this by providing a wide range of training resources, labour market information and financial supports.

Staff at our Alberta Works offices provided a variety of tools and resources to Albertans looking for work or wanting to make career and education decisions. Career and employment consultants can assess an individual's personal situation, identify their needs and strengths, make suggestions for resumé writing and job searching, and provide information on ways to upgrade education, skills and certifications.

We introduced a new resource this year to increase awareness and improve access to provincial government services.

The Alberta Supports Contact Centre, a one-stop access point for information on social programs, was launched in June 2010 and has responded to more than 115,000 calls. The contact centre provided information on our programs and services such as income support, adult health benefits, child health benefits and child support services.

The contact centre and the albertasupports.ca website provided service to Albertans across 34 programs and 120 services on behalf of Employment and Immigration, Children and Youth Services, Housing and Urban Affairs and Seniors and Community Supports.



Serving Albertans in the Alberta Supports Contact Centre: Supervisor Jennifer Weenk (right) and Advisor Julie Gonzales.



**OHS
OFFICER**

Increasing employer and employee awareness of Alberta's workplace health and safety legislation received a high priority in 2010-2011.

Goal 4

Alberta has a fair, safe and healthy work environment

Safe and fair workplaces play a key role in the employer's ability to attract and retain employees. In addition to enforcing health and safety and employment standards legislation, we provide information to make employers and employees aware of what they need to do to make worksites fair, safe and healthy. We also provide information and resources to support collective bargaining relationships.

This year we introduced two new online resources to make information more accessible.

In September we launched the Employer Records website, www.employment.alberta.ca/employerrecords, the first of its kind in Canada. The website allows Albertans to see information on injuries and fatalities involving over 140,000 employers insured by the Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta. Information can be searched by employer,

industry, and town or city. We hope that making this information public will encourage employers to commit to even better health and safety performance.

In December, we launched a pilot project to make the Employment Standards complaint process easier for employees. In addition to the more traditional methods of mailing a complaint or dropping by in person, Alberta workers can now use the new online resource to complete a complaint from start to finish. The form can be accessed at www.employment.alberta.ca/EScomplaint. During a 14 week period, approximately 72 per cent of the complaints received were submitted through the online system. Out of more than two million workers, Employment Standards receives about 5,000 complaints annually.

Goal 5

Alberta labour relations laws are administered in a fair and equitable manner

The Alberta Labour Relations Board (ALRB) is an independent and impartial administrative tribunal responsible for the day-to-day application and interpretation of Alberta's labour laws. In 2010-2011, the ALRB processed applications and conducted hearings on matters arising from both private and public employment sectors. Most of the issues that came before the ALRB included certifications, revocations, various votes, bargaining unit determinations and unfair labour practices that fell under the *Labour Relations Code*, *Public Service Employee Relations Act* and *Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act*.

Alberta has an effective mechanism for the final appeal of Workers' Compensation Board decisions

The Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation (Appeals Commission) is an independent, impartial quasi-judicial body responsible for the final level of appeal for decisions of the Workers' Compensation Board – Alberta. In 2010-2011, standard appeals were processed on average in 154 days and complex appeals in 176 days. Of the decisions issued, 97.8 per cent were either not challenged or upheld upon review by the courts, the Ombudsman or the Appeals Commission.

Goal 6



Please refer to our website for a full version of Alberta
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