



United Way
Toronto

Helping newcomers settle and integrate



Half of our city's population was born outside Canada, making Toronto the most ethnically diverse city in North America as well as the prime newcomer destination in this country. Our challenge is to help newcomers successfully settle and integrate into their new home.

New Canadians bring entrepreneurial vision, financial capital and fresh cultural perspectives to our city. They also help to sustain our population and tax base as the current labour force ages and retires. However, many newcomers who were selected to become Canadian citizens based on their educational credentials face barriers in having their credentials recognized in Canada. As a result, newcomers are more than three times as likely to be low-income than those born in Canada.

By providing language and computer training, career counselling and work placements, United Way agencies speed up newcomers' entry into the labour market, helping them to secure jobs that are appropriate to the education and skills they bring. Newcomer children receive school-readiness training, women and seniors at risk of isolation benefit from outreach activities, while refugees and survivors of torture get the counselling and peer support they need. These services unlock the doors to newcomer success, moving Toronto forward in fulfilling our promise as a fair and multicultural city offering opportunity for all.

Did you know...

- Of the more than one million newcomers who arrived in Canada between 2001-2006, 40.4% chose to live in Toronto, more than in any other metropolitan area.
- In 2005 the median total family income of families in Toronto arriving within the previous two years was \$46,203, half that of non newcomers.
- A higher share of all newcomers aged 25 to 54 hold postsecondary education credentials (67%) compared to the non-immigrant population (62%). The proportion of recent newcomers (arrived during 2001 to 2006) with such credentials is even higher: 78%.
- At 12.1% in 2006, unemployment among university-trained recent immigrants in their prime working years was only slightly lower than the average for all recent immigrants (12.8%). In contrast, the unemployment rate among university-trained non-immigrants was half that of all non-immigrants (3% vs. 5.6%).
- The job outlook for very recent immigrants (those entering the country in the previous 5 years) remained bleak in 2007, when immigrant unemployment in the core labour market (aged 25-54) rose in Ontario to 11.9%, from 11% in 2006. In Toronto Region, the rate was 12.7% in 2007.



Participants take part in a 'Newcomers Cooking Together' class run by United Way agency Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services.

Breaking down the barriers to a better life

Shankari Balendra, a professional from Sri Lanka, never had a problem finding solutions back home. But when she came to Toronto with her family in 2003, she, like so many other newcomers, had many questions but no answers. "I didn't know where affordable daycare was in my neighbourhood, let alone where to find a job," says Balendra.

For two years, Balendra struggled to find her way before enrolling in the Peer Outreach Worker training course offered by Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, a United Way Toronto agency. Now Balendra is a Peer Outreach Worker, assisting other newcomer women including leading a Healthy Cooking class organized by Access Alliance in Scarborough.

For eight weeks, women from diverse countries share cooking and nutrition tips. They also share critical information that helps break down feelings of isolation.

"As a newcomer with a bachelor's degree from Sri Lanka, I understand the barriers newcomers often face," says Balendra. "The Healthy Cooking class gives women the opportunity to practice English and discuss issues like where the best schools or community services are."

Peer outreach workers—many newcomers themselves—address newcomers' unique challenges by connecting them to their community, ensuring they have access to programs that enable them to get the best start in their new country.

Your gift helps newcomers settle and integrate by supporting:

- ▶ Pre-employment, computer and job search training, work placements and career counselling
- ▶ English language classes and school-readiness programs
- ▶ Outreach to isolated newcomers and orientation and settlement programs
- ▶ Interpretation and translation services
- ▶ Support for refugees and survivors of torture

United Way's work in the community

Helping newcomers settle and integrate is one of United Way Toronto's key priorities.

In one year, 62 United Way Toronto agencies enabled 27,377 newcomers and/or refugees to find employment, allowing them to begin their new professional lives in Canada. United Way Toronto's support also enabled an estimated 341,000 newcomers and/or refugees to participate in a United Way agency program or service, helping them to successfully settle and integrate in their new country.

How your generosity makes an impact

\$75 provides the translation costs for a newcomer to have vital health care services delivered in her own language to give her a healthy start in her new country.

\$180 enables two newcomers to participate in 20 hours of workplace communication skills practice led by an ESL instructor to help them integrate into the Canadian workplace.

\$365 enables one skilled newcomer to participate in eight hours of one-on-one employment counselling and 15 hours of job search training, interview preparation and resume critique workshops to help him find a job in his field.

\$500 provides a newcomer child 24 two-hour sessions of school-readiness training to help him integrate into his new school.