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**To:** Nova Scotia Chambers

**From:** Glenn Davis, VP Policy,

**Date:** February 5, 2016

**Re:** Immigration and Economic Growth

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Attracting and welcoming immigrants to Nova Scotia has been a very public issue for many months. Whether because of its prominence in the recommendations of the Now or Never (Ivany) report or because of our federal and provincial governments' commitment to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees, our province has repeatedly demonstrated a desire to contribute to welcoming newcomers to our province.

Many chambers have demonstrated an interest in understanding how they can contribute to the collective effort to provide urgently needed relief from hardship. These efforts have focussed on helping immigrants to achieve self-sufficiency and find a home in communities across NS. In fact, many chambers have already established a connection with organizations such as the Office of Immigration and the Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS).

We want to bring particular attention to opportunities to work with ISANS. The opportunities include programs that allow chamber members to access the employer support programs to benefit in hiring, diversify their workforce, and share their experience, knowledge and resources to help immigrants create a connection to Nova Scotia communities.

Immigrants moving to rural areas require employment as an important part of their settlement plan. Involvement in the programs below will allow chambers to make a tangible contribution to the well-being of newly arrived immigrants, our business community, and social fabric.

The **Workplace Culture Program**, as one of the Employer Support Programs, supports NS employers in recruiting and retaining immigrants in the workplace. The program assists employers (Senior Leaders, HR Specialists, Managers) to develop an understanding of cross-culture competence, workplace cross-cultural challenges and opportunities. This program will:

- raise awareness of the benefits of cross-cultural talents and experience
- identify methods by which an organization can improve its cross cultural competence
- provide tools for cross-cultural leadership development

Introductory workshops are live-streamed and available to any business throughout NS. There are also more in-depth workshops and an organizational assessment that can be arranged at employer locations. All services are at no charge to employers.

For more information please contact Paul Pickering, Coordinator, Workplace Culture Program [ppickering@isans.ca](mailto:ppickering@isans.ca) (902) 406-8693

The **Immigrant Professional Mentorship program** is one of the most interesting and innovative programs that ISANS administers. The program is an exceptional opportunity for business owners and professionals to contribute to the province's economic growth by assisting newcomers in their efforts to navigate our province's business and regulatory environments.

The program provides volunteer mentors to participate in a self-regulated dialogue with an immigrant to discuss issues related to career objectives. By contacting ISANS, chamber members in any community across the province can be put in contact with an individual hoping to better understand how to pursue their business and career objectives. Once the initial contact has been made, the mentor and mentee independently schedule their interactions in-person or by electronic means.

More information on this rewarding volunteer opportunity is available on the ISANS website <http://www.isans.ca/employment/for-employers/professional-mentorship/> or by contacting Cliff MacDonald (902) 406-8694 or Rita Ganju (902) 406-8662

ISANS operates **additional support programs** that can be of significant value to local businesses while providing immigrants with needed business experience and knowledge:

1. **Work Placement Program** – involves six week, full time, unpaid internships at businesses providing immigrants with local business experience and businesses with an opportunity to experience the new insights that someone from another culture can bring to the table.  
<http://www.isans.ca/employment/for-immigrants/work-placement-program/>
2. **Skills Match** – ISANS maintains a database of skills possessed by registered immigrants that can be accessed for free by employers to fill specific needs at their businesses  
<http://www.isans.ca/employment/for-immigrants/skills-match/>
3. **Business for Sale website** – an in-house website accessed by entrepreneurial immigrants that allows business owners to list their business at no charge.  
<http://www.directory.isans.ca/businesses-for-sale/>
4. **Information regarding Refugee Sponsorship in Nova Scotia – Information Guide**  
[http://www.isans.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/InformationPackage\\_2015.pdf](http://www.isans.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/InformationPackage_2015.pdf)

This memo is intended to pique the interest of chambers and their members and we encourage you to circulate this information to your members and/or add resource links to your website. In addition, the staff at ISANS and the Office of Immigration have indicated a willingness to organize information sessions that could be formatted as a Lunch 'n Learn or other chamber event. Please contact Cliff MacDonald ([cbmacdonald@isans.ca](mailto:cbmacdonald@isans.ca)) directly if you feel your chamber members would be interested in hearing more about how chambers can be engaged in the efforts to increase immigration and settlement in all Nova Scotia communities.