

# Job Skills' Agency Profile

Over the years, Job Skills has earned a reputation for being able to develop special initiatives to meet the needs of specific target groups.

Job Skills has established a strong community presence and continuously works to strengthen its relationships with Employment Service providers, social service agencies, the business community, educational institutions, municipalities and all levels of government. These relationships make it possible for individuals and employers to achieve their employment goals.

Job Skills' Programs and Services are provided at no cost to unemployed individuals and are funded by the Government of Canada, the Ontario Government, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, municipal governments and the United Way of Toronto and York Region. Funds are also generated through special initiatives.

Job Skills has earned a reputation for excellence that is client-centered yet results-oriented. The services and programs delivered by Job Skills are designed to meet clients' and employers' specific requirements, as well as be flexible enough to respond to the needs of the community and changing employment conditions.

Other special initiatives, undertaken by Job Skills to build on community capacity or support a specific target group, complement the Agency's offerings.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES and PROGRAMS

Job Skills' Employment Services and Programs support individuals looking to enter or re-enter the job market, as well as those who are looking to develop special skills to achieve their career goals.

Job Skills' Employment Ontario Employment Service (EOES) Centres in Brampton, Keswick and Markham are available to all residents wanting to access community information, employment services and Employment Ontario-funded programs. Job Skills also offers individualized assistance to job seekers through the creation of an Employment Service Plan, which may include activities such as career exploration, coaching and job development or referral to services/programs/ training.

Young people or students looking for a job, regardless of background or circumstances, can get help through a variety of programs offered at Job Skills. Through Youth Job Link, Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer/Part-time, Job Skills is able to provide the appropriate supports to help youth from 15 – 29 years of age, connect with employers and find employment opportunities.

Another employment service provided by Job Skills is Smart Start, a specific employment program designed to support unemployed residents of York Region as they obtain the skills and certification necessary to compete for employment in Food Services or Customer Service. The newest addition to the Employment Supports offered by Job Skills is the Right Fit program, helping Persons with Disabilities to gain independence through gainful employment.

## EMPLOYER SUPPORTS

Job Skills has experienced Staff dedicated to supporting employers faced with the challenges of hiring. Employer Services, including workforce planning, recruitment services, facilities for job fairs,

apprenticeship information, and financial supports, can be customized to support the hiring of both youth and adults. Employer networking and specific professional development events are also organized to provide additional resources to employers.

## NEWCOMER SERVICES and PROGRAMS

Job Skills' Newcomer Division recognizes the unique employment needs of newcomers/ immigrants to Canada by offering specialized programming to help them transition into the Canadian workforce.

Bridge to HR is a bridging program for internationally trained individuals in the Human Resources sector. The program allows participants to fast track the achievement of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation as well as provide access to work placements, mentoring and coaching opportunities.

Job Skills also played a key role as one of five lead agencies involved in developing the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services model for York Region. The Welcome Centres offer a broad range of services and programs for immigrants and newcomers – all under one roof. Job Skills manages the Welcome Centre in Markham North, one of five in York Region. Job Skills is also responsible for providing Employment Support Services and Job Search Workshops (JSW) Program at the Centres.

In 2015, Agency added a Job Find Club for Internationally Trained Individuals to support newcomers who possess specific skills, but need focussed job search support to land a job.

In Spring 2016, Job Skills launched Simpect, a Practice Firm for newcomers seeking experience in a simulated work environment.

## BUSINESS SERVICES

Job Skills is committed to assisting start-up, existing and growing business ventures, supporting entrepreneurial supports and increasing the chances of business success. For more than 18 years, Job Skills has delivered a range of programs/services for individuals who want to pursue self-employment as an option. Currently Job Skills provides a Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP) for youth at risk, as well as a Self-Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (SEPWD).

To address the gap in services for newcomers interested in self-employment, Job Skills delivers Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers, a mobile program in York Region, that helps these clients explore the idea of starting a business in Canada.

In the Winter of 2016, Job Skills launched a Social Enterprise called Build Your Business, providing a range of fee-for-service offerings for entrepreneurs including one-on-one business coaching, business workshops, Business Concept Assessment and Business Plan Evaluation.

## DevelopU

In 2014, Job Skills launched a new division called DevelopU to provide individuals, businesses and organizations with increased learning, personal and professional development opportunities.

# Job Skills

## Working Together

– to embrace opportunities in the communities we serve

# Annual Report for 2015

## Report from the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

We anticipated that in 2015 we would continue to face unprecedented challenges and we also knew that these challenges would create new opportunities.

2015 was certainly a year of new opportunities and it all started in May when provincial funding for the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit (OSEB) program was cancelled. The OSEB program had been successfully delivered as part of Job Skills menu of offerings since 1998 and over 3,000 entrepreneurs had started their businesses with the training, business coaching and encouragement of Job Skills. The discontinuation of the program throughout the province, as well as the lack of funding for entrepreneurial programming in the foreseeable future, opened a path for Job Skills to look at ways to fill this gap with the startup of a social enterprise. Aptly branded as Build Your Business, it will provide fee-for-service offerings geared towards existing, startup and growing business ventures, making it possible for Job Skills to continue to support new entrepreneurs in the community.

Job Skills continued to focus on meeting the needs of our various target groups in 2015. Relentless in our efforts to seek out new funding streams, we were successful in securing new dollars to focus on providing newcomers/immigrants with valuable, current work experience through the re-establishment of a Practice Firm. The Practice Firm provides hands-on work experience in Accounting (Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Purchasing), Administrative Support and Reception, Human Resources / Records Management, Information Technology (Technical Support, LAN Administration and Web Design), Sales / Marketing and Graphic Design. This commitment to serving this specialized target group provides Job Skills the opportunity to operate the only Canadian Practice Firm outside of Quebec. The new Practice Firm will begin operating in Spring 2016.

In November, Job Skills was awarded the Youth Job Connection (YJC) program, to serve the northern part of York Region, providing the opportunity to expand services to youth at-risk at a time when youth unemployment is at 13% — well above the national average of 7.1%.

In October, the federal government announced that Canada would welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees by year end (later revised to February 2016). As part of the Welcome Centre system, we worked in partnership with other stakeholders to provide information and supports to sponsor groups and a small number of sponsored refugees. However, we anticipate that the range of supports under one roof available at the Centres will be especially key in 2016. We will have the prospect to continue to be a

primary source of information and services for these new Permanent Residents, as well as for sponsoring groups that are supporting their integration.

The partnership with our Employers was again instrumental to Job Skills' success. We supported Employers with recruiting, hiring, training and matching qualified job seekers to meet their workforce needs. In turn, Employers reciprocated by hiring our clients, offering work experience placements, mentoring, providing knowledge and expertise for our job seekers, serving as program experts and guest speakers for many of our programs. Every occasion to add an employer to our 'family' adds value to our work.

As always, we extend our sincere gratitude to Job Skills' talented, knowledgeable and passionate staff, our Senior Management Team and our Executive Director. None of these opportunities would come our way without the strategic direction, expertise and commitment of our dedicated and diverse Board of Directors.

We would also like to acknowledge all our funders and donors who have invested in Job Skills to achieve its goals and objectives and in return expect service excellence, outstanding outcomes and impact in the communities we serve. A huge thank you to all our community partners and the umbrella organizations that support us through advocacy and membership support.

We will continue to be focused on what is most important and embrace/create new opportunities, working to get you working.

Wayne Thiessen, Chair, Board of Directors

Nella Iasci, Executive Director

## Our Mission

Job Skills is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing people's capacity to participate in the labour market, thereby contributing to the economic and social viability of our community.

## About Job Skills

Job Skills, a non-profit, charitable community-based employment and training agency, began offering employment training in northern York Region in 1988. Today, the Agency provides Employment, Employer, Business and Newcomer Services and Programs to residents of York Region, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Dufferin, Halton, Peel and Toronto. Job Skills currently maintains locations in Keswick, Newmarket, Markham and Brampton.

Over the years, Job Skills has earned a reputation for being able to develop special initiatives to meet the needs of specific target groups.

Job Skills has established a strong community presence and continuously works to strengthen its relationships with employers and the business community / corporate partners, employment service providers, social service providers, educational institutions, municipalities and all levels of government. These relationships make it possible for individuals to achieve their employment goals. Consistently focussing on expanding partnerships will allow the Agency to assist even more individuals.

Job Skills' Programs and Services are funded by the Government of Canada, the Ontario Government, municipal governments, the United Way of Toronto and York Region and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Funds are also generated through our social enterprise, special initiatives, fee-for-service activities, sponsorships and donations.

## Vision

We will develop a continuum of services to support individuals facing employment transitions as they progress towards self-reliance.

Our services will span the employment development spectrum including social, workplace and labour market information, action planning, job-specific skills, employability skills, job maintenance, and self-employment assistance.

Our services will build on the assets of the community and will promote community well-being.

We will offer services at various levels of intensity and match clients to the level they require.

We will be the service provider of choice for individuals, employers and the community.

We will be at the forefront of human resource development, seeking out and taking on new initiatives that extend our expertise.

We will have a diversity of funding sources, including federal, provincial and municipal governments, employers, non-governmental organizations, and individual fee payers.

We will utilize the latest technologies and flexible workplace practices where they contribute to excellence in service delivery to clients and / or excellence in administrative functions.

We imagine a day when there will be universal access to all labour adjustment services.

## 2015 Employment Results

Job Skills reaches more than 20,000 individuals annually through outreach/referral services and programming in three Divisions. 5,100+ clients received assistance to achieve their employment goals: 2,800 accessed Employment Services and Programs, 2,100 individuals accessed Newcomer Service and Programs, and 213 accessed Business Services and Programs.

Job Skills worked with 800+ employers; top five sectors represented were: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, Administrative and Support, Construction, Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance.

A snapshot of our clients shows: 25% were aged 15-29, 54% were aged 30-49 and 21% were aged 50+. Gender: 52% female, 46% male, 2% not specified. Our clients came from 80 different countries and speak over 34 languages.

## Client Success

“As a newcomer to Canada, I was looking for a competitive edge among other internationally-trained HR professionals. The Bridge to HR program provided outstanding educational and professional opportunities and has positively shaped my future. Job Skills' excellent service, flexibility and availability to help their clients reach their objective, is extremely outstanding. They have been, and still are, very responsive and very professional in the valuable service they provide. I successfully achieved my objective with a position as a Bilingual Talent Services Representative in the consulting sector.” – Mark G., Employment Ontario Employment Services & Bridge to HR Client

"The ladder of success is best climbed by stepping on the rungs of opportunity.

—Ayn Rand

## Client Success

“I was doing a lot of short contract jobs through employment agencies; finding a stable job was very hard after my graduation. Then I came to Job Skills for help with my resume and interview skills. Job Skills sent me weekly job postings and after applying to only three positions, I landed on my current job. Job Skills has definitely been of great help in assisting me to find a job.” - Patience M., Employment Ontario Employment Services Client

## Employment Services and Programs

In 2015, Job Skills' Employment Services and Programs supported 2,800 individuals of all ages looking to enter or re-enter the job market, as well as those who were looking to develop special skills to achieve their career goals.

Job Skills' three Employment Ontario Employment Service Centres – in Brampton, Keswick and Markham – provided self-serve resources, as well as individualized assistance through 23,485 visits to the three centres. With the support of Employment Consultants and the development of Employment Service Plans, individuals were able to identify employment goals, and pursue the components needed to achieve personal and professional success.

The Province's Youth Jobs Strategy provided a specialized focus on supporting youth facing barriers to employment to reduce the youth unemployment rate (trending at more than 13%). The introduction of the new Youth Job Connection (YJC) Program in October 2015 meant Job Skills was able to provide specialized supports and financial incentives geared towards youth at risk of diminished life outcomes, aged 15 – 29 in the northern part of York Region. A part-time/summer job program (YJCS), to be introduced in the Spring of 2016, will provide support to barriered youth aged 15-18 who are in school or returning to school.

Through the YJC and YJCS programs, Job Skills will be supporting 362 youth per year to develop workplace skills, acquire job search tools and strategies, and connect with employers to gain work experience and find employment.

Specialized Employment programs also offered by Job Skills supported 125 clients with specific needs, or training requirements. Smart Start and Fast Forward supported unemployed individuals in York and Peel

Regions, to obtain the skills and certification necessary to compete for employment in Customer Service or the Food Services Sector.

Right Fit, an employability program to support Persons with Disabilities, utilized both in-class and online supports to help participants to conduct career exploration and obtain employment to suit their needs.

### Statistics:

Assisted Clients in 2015 at Job Skills' Employment Ontario Employment Services Centres: Markham 1,059 (46%), Keswick 836 (36%) and Brampton 408 (18%). Job Skills hosted 747 workshops with 3,632 attendees. Top sectors where Job Skills' clients are finding employment: 1. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, 2. Administrative & Support, 3. Retail Trade, 4. Manufacturing and 5. Construction.

## Business Services & Programs

For more than 18 years, Job Skills has been committed to supporting the entrepreneurial dreams of clients. In 2015, Job Skills' helped 213 entrepreneurs of all ages start their own businesses. Using a combination of personalized coaching, focused business essentials workshops and mentoring, these new business owners received practical and motivational support through various Job Skills' self-employment programs to help them with their new ventures.

The Ontario Self-Employment Benefit (OSEB) program offered by Job Skills in Newmarket, North Toronto, Brampton and Mississauga, supported 167 new entrepreneurs, before provincial funding for the program was cancelled in May 2015.

Job Skills also provided entrepreneurial guidance and support for youth at risk and persons with disability.

YRCompany helped support the entrepreneurial dreams of 18 youth – allowing them to focus their energies on creating their own work – from make-up artistry and landscape construction companies to clothing designers and paralegals.

For those who wanted to create employment opportunities to meet their own specific needs, Job Skills offered the Self-Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (SEPWD). The Program helped 28 participants, discover the flexibility, freedom and independence self-employment offered them as they looked at ways to create their own accessible work environment.

### Client Success

"If someone had said I'd be running my own business 42 weeks ago, I'd have said they were nuts! Here I am, living proof that one can pursue their passion and an idea and turn it into a business. No one said it would be easy, but it is possible. Act on your dreams!" Greg Coman, Greg Coman Photography

### Client Success

"Think positive about the changes you made to peoples' lives, like myself. We are set to expand into the next unit, another 4,000 square feet, making a total of just over 8,000 square feet. ORPS Parts now employs 5 full time and 2 part time. We are looking at sales this year of just over \$1.5 million! Still lots

of challenges daily. But again, my success is what the Job Skills' Self-Employment program was about and that it worked." - Jim Cunningham, Owner, ORPS Parts, Ontario Self-Employment Benefit program Alumnus

"A wise man adapts himself to circumstances, as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it." — Chinese Proverb

## Newcomer Services and Programs

Along with cultural and language differences, many newcomers have struggled with employment issues as they seek to find work that is financially viable and commensurate with their skills and training.

Job Skills' Newcomer Employment Division recognized the unique needs of newcomers and immigrants to Canada as they transition into the Canadian workforce and developed various programs designed to help them deal with their specific employment requirements.

These specialized programs provided guidance and supports on how to adjust to the Canadian workplace, developing resumes that would get interviews, providing opportunities to practice interview skills, and how to network and connect with employers, so they could reach their full potential in their new home.

Bridge to HR, a bridging program for internationally trained individuals in the Human Resources sector, helped participants find comparable work in their field by 'fast tracking' the achievement of the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation, in partnership with Seneca College, as well as provided work placements, mentoring and coaching opportunities.

Specifically designed for Internationally Trained Individuals, the Job Find Club helped participants focus their job search efforts to successfully land a job in their field. With specific coaching, individualized supports, networking opportunities and linkages to employers, these newcomers were better prepared to tackle the job market.

For newcomers interested in self-employment as an option, Job Skills delivered Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers (SEPN), a mobile program that helped explore the realities and feasibility of starting a business in Canada. During the year, 21 new businesses were created ranging from an internet marketing company to offering Mandarin lessons for business executives.

At the end of 2015, Job Skills received approval to re-open a Practice Firm that will support newcomers with real hands-on Canadian work experience in a simulated environment.

In 2015, Job Skills continued to play a key role as one of the lead agencies operating the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services system in York Region. The Welcome Centres offer a broad range of core services and programs for more than 7,700 newcomers annually. Job Skills managed the Welcome Centre in Markham North, one of five in York Region, and was responsible for providing employment supports to 1,633 individuals through the Job Search Workshops (JSW) Program and Employment Support Services (ESS) at all of the Centres.

The range of supports available under one roof at the Centres will be especially key in 2016, with the arrival of Syrian refugees to the Greater Toronto Area. It is anticipated that the Welcome Centres will be



a primary source of information and services to these new Permanent Residents as well as the sponsoring groups that are supporting their integration.

Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers clients come from: Venezuela, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, Iran, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Philippines, China, Armenia, Russia and Belarus. 70% of Bridge to HR participants were in Canada for less than a year. The top five first languages spoken by individuals accessing JSW and ESS were: 1. Arabic, 2. Urdu, 3. Mandarin, 4. Farsi, and 5. Spanish.

### Client Success

"The Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers program at Job Skills has given me the support I needed to improve my skills. The three phases helped to develop the confidence to set up my own business. One-to-one sessions helped and reinforced my determination to start my second life. I really appreciate that you give newcomers a great opportunity to find their way in Canada. I always recommend this program to everyone who wants to be successful entrepreneur." - Marina L. Self-Employment Pathways for Newcomers Client, Owner, Advanced Sports Solutions.

"Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable." —William Pollard

### Client Success

"Equipped with the skills I learned from Job Skills, I was able to get a job shortly after attending the Job Find Club for Internationally-Trained Individuals. I am definitely thankful to Job Skills for the support and for helping me in getting the right job in my desired career." - Phoebe F., Job Find Club for Internationally Trained Individuals Client

## Employer Services

Employers and Job Skills have been working together for over 28 years, meeting labour demands and supporting the growth of our business communities, while at the same time helping job seekers to find meaningful employment.

During 2015, working with a network of more than 800 small, medium and large employers across the Greater Toronto Area, Job Skills was able to link experienced, qualified and job-ready candidates through various programs, with specific hiring needs. Employers hired from our pool of clients – providing opportunities for job seekers of all ages and skill levels — from youth clients with little or no work experience, to the new immigrant bringing their skills and expertise to a new Canadian workplace.

Job Skills offered customized Employer Services including workforce planning and recruitment services, facilities for job fairs, apprenticeship information and financial supports – from government-funded wage subsidies, to incentives and job trials. Specialized supports, available through the Canada Ontario Job Grant Program, also provided individual employers with the financial supports to provide specific training opportunities for their staff.

From Employment Law Essentials to Cultural Diversity in the Workplace and Small Business Essentials, Job Skills' annual Employer Training and Development Series provided 232 attendees in 2015 with professional development and networking opportunities. An Employer Appreciation event in November 2015 provided a forum for Job Skills to publicly recognize these valuable Employer relationships.

Job Skills collaborated with employers in other ways in 2015. Many clients, from youth to internationally-trained individuals benefited from the mentoring and placement opportunities with employers who offered valuable career and job search advice. Other employers volunteered their time and expertise as guest speakers and workshop presenters for many of Job Skills' programs, providing a real-world perspective to these job seekers. Employer Representation on Advisory Committees provided up to date sector-specific expertise, input on curriculum development and program development and design.

## Statistics

Employer Partners by Size: 500+ employees - 4%, 100-499 employees - 9%, 20-99 employees - 15%, 2-19 employees - 34%, 1 employee - 38%. 21% of our employers attended the Employer Training and Development Series; 25% provided donations/volunteered their expertise (provided mentors/coaches, panel member, guest speaker, advisory committee, etc.); and 46% receive support (recruitment, job fair, job postings).

## Client Success

"I have been given a gift. What better way to gain help at our office than to have someone else train your next employee on how to behave and perform well at a job and for them to also find a suitable candidate on our behalf? This gift is the partnership that Marquee Theatrical Productions has found with Job Skills...

...While it's my job to train them at specific tasks at our establishment, the training that Job Skills gives these young individuals prior to starting with us is essential for a smooth ride and for their success... I see my partnership with Job Skills as a win/win opportunity and I look forward to a long relationship together." - Sheryl Thomas, General Manager, Marquee Theatrical Productions, Employer-Youth Job Connection program.

"The highest levels of performance come to people who are centered, intuitive, creative, and reflective - people who know to see a problem as an opportunity." — Deepak Chopra

## Recognition and Acknowledgements

Job Skills acknowledges the dedication and commitment of all Staff. By sharing knowledge, experience and compassion, they are instrumental in assisting thousands of clients to reach their employment goals. They impact the lives of every single person they assist. During the 2015 calendar year, the following Staff achieved these milestones:

### 5 Years of Service

Alex Arrobo	Luciana Longo
Deborah Arsenault	Belita Lowers
Rashmi Bakhshi	Jane Mendita
Adelina Bridi	Tamara Puhalo
Tom Hollands	Kwadwo Yirenkyi
Jan Lewis	

## 10 Years of Service

Penelope Berger

Cindy Kozlowsky

## 20 Years of Service

Karen Calow

## Volunteers

Job Skills appreciates the Volunteers who have provided invaluable input and energy, especially the Job Skills' Board of Directors, who bring diverse expertise and work experience to the Agency, along with their commitment to quality service standards and the Agency's Mission.

## Board of Directors 2015

Wayne Thiessen, Chairperson

Malency Wainwright, Vice-Chair

Lisa Alfieri-Sladen, Vice-Chair

Carmen Polog, Secretary-Treasurer

David Bell, Director

Lori Dalton<sup>1</sup>, Director

Sonya Goldman, Director

Alastair Hobson<sup>2</sup>, Director

Elias Lyberogiannis, Director

Mikayla Wicks, Director

Helen Wright, Director

Mary Lou Armour, Past Chairperson

<sup>1</sup>Completed Term in 2015

<sup>2</sup>Elected October 2015

## Community Partners

Job Skills recognizes the contributions and thanks all of our Community Partners, for the opportunity to work together to build stronger communities, including:

Welcome Centre Immigrant Services York  
Region Partners

COSTI Immigrant Services

Catholic Community Services of York Region

Centre for Immigrant and Community Services

Social Enterprise for Canada

York Region Local Immigration Partnership  
Council

York Catholic District School Board

Senior Enrichment Program

Centre for Education and Training

York Region Community and Health Services  
Department and Human Services Planning  
Board

Community Living of York South

Seneca College

Scarborough Social Housing

City of Markham

Employment Ontario Service Providers

Workforce Planning Board of York Region &  
Bradford West Gwillimbury

York Region Police

Women's Centre of York Region

Addiction Services for York Region

Canadian Chinese Support Association

### Umbrella Organizations

We would also like to recognize the collaboration and support of various groups including:

ONESTEP (Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects)

First Work

OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants)

CASIP (Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-trained Persons)

Human Resources Professionals Association

Chambers of Commerce

Boards of Trade

Service Delivery Networks in our specific catchment areas, supporting Employment Service Providers in York Region, Toronto, and Peel, Halton and Dufferin Regions

### Employers

For their generous in-kind donations and sponsorships to support the Agency's work in delivering services to those in need.

### Funders

Job Skills would like to acknowledge the funding and support from:

Government of Canada

Service Canada

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Government of Ontario

Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration

Ministry of Community & Social Services

Ministry of Economic Development, Employment & Infrastructure

Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities

Regional Municipality of York

United Way of Toronto and York Region

Ontario Trillium Foundation