



MOSAIC

Together we advance an inclusive and thriving Canada.

Presentation to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance

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I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are meeting today on the traditional and unceded territories of the s̓k̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), sel̓íl̓wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh), x̓m̓əθk̓ʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people and pay my respect to their elders.

For over 45 years, MOSAIC has been committed to improving the lives of immigrants, refugees, and temporary foreign workers in British Columbia as one of the largest providers of settlement, family, employment, language, interpretation, and translation services in Canada. Today I would like to share recommendations that, in MOSAIC's opinion, will lead to the improvement of the well-being and economic outcomes of newcomers.

1. Create a Federal Housing Strategy Connected to and Supporting Canada's Immigration Strategy

In 2022, for the second year in a row, Canada welcomed more permanent residents than ever before in our history – over 430,000. At the same time, temporary foreign workers increased almost 20% in 2022 to 500,000 and international student numbers rebounded to pre-pandemic levels of over 620,000. And the first six months of 2023 indicate that Canada will significantly exceed its target of 465,000 permanent residents this year. This was acknowledged as a key component of the strategy to stabilize and bolster our economy. Yet the supports necessary to settle newcomers effectively are lacking in the key area of secure, affordable housing. Without this foundation, the ability to attract and settle skilled immigrants within our communities will be impeded.

MOSAIC recommends an increased commitment to addressing the systemic barriers to housing faced by newcomers because of a lack of Canadian references, credit and rental history, work experience, but especially – the overall lack of affordable housing. We suggest that housing affordability could be promoted by continued federal leadership and increased funding that encourages provinces and municipalities to work together to increase the supply of affordable housing, specifically Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI). To address the additional barriers faced by newcomers in terms of references and experience, the federal government could encourage municipalities to require new residential developments to include affordable housing units dedicated for newcomers in their first 3-5 years in Canada.

2. Funding for Canadian Work Experience & Training Programs for Recent Immigrants

Lack of Canadian Work Experience remains one of the most significant barriers recent immigrants face in finding skills-commensurate employment. Targeted funding would allow employers and service organizations to work together to provide newcomers with occupation-specific training for in-demand job sectors, hands-on workplace experience through internships, orientation to Canadian workplaces and mentoring. By modelling an approach after the robust framework in place to support young people in gaining work experience through co-op placements, internships, and employer incentives, Canada can optimize the contribution of recent immigrants to the labour market and provide employers with the skilled and experienced workforce they need.

Given the pace at which technological advancements are changing the nature of jobs and the skillsets required for emerging jobs, we need to recognize the role employers will increasingly play in on-the-job training. For over 15 years MOSAIC has been delivering successful pilots engaging employers in the design





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and delivery of training programs. Programs including job placements consistently led to 85% of trainees landing full time positions in their field. The short-term nature of these pilots doesn't allow for meaningful engagement of employers and for ongoing on-the-job training opportunities for newcomers. We recommend creating a permanent funding envelope for this type of industry-led training and job placement programs responding to market needs.

3. Core Funding for Non-Profit Organizations

Canada has a substantial non-profit sector delivering many of the government services and supports, often supporting those most in need. Charities and non-profits contribute \$192 billion dollars in economic activity to Canada annually, account for 8.3% of our country's GDP, and employ 2.4 million people.

Canadians clearly need and want strong non-profits, as do all levels of the government. But, despite the essential societal role played by non-profits, the way government funds the sector is not sustainable.

Organizations in the charitable and non-profit sector have the same needs as organizations in the private and public spheres. They need to invest in staffing, financial management, data security and privacy, technology, evaluation, communications, office space and supplies. Many of these basic needs are ineligible to be covered by government program funding or are expected to be covered by pulling small overhead amounts, often from short-term contracts. When organizations need to constantly pursue project-based funding to stay afloat, it limits their ability to be responsive to the needs of their community. Moreover, the requirements of funding agreements around systems and security have been increasing exponentially, with governments now requiring non-profits to deploy state of the art systems that are simply cost prohibitive as is the unmanageable increase in all core costs. The constant refrain of including the costs in the existing 10 or 15% overhead is just not feasible. While these costs are not necessarily direct program costs, they are essential to providing quality programs and services to communities and upholding good governance standards and financial management as well as stable employment for its diverse workforce made up predominantly of women and immigrants.

MOSAIC supports the [recommendations presented by Imagine Canada](#) and urge the government to reclassify 30% of all current project-based funding that is destined for charities and nonprofits to be eligible as core funding.

