

# OTTAWA CONNECTOR

Building an inclusive Ottawa community  
one professional connection at a time



CONNECTOR TOOLKIT



I have had the fortunate opportunity to serve as a Connector. It has allowed me to meet new professionals who are dedicated and eager to join the Canadian workforce, and present a myriad of expertise and educational credentials. Given my federal work experience, I was presented with a number of questions on my career path, including challenges and advice on how to move forward in this sector. The experience has also taught me about the current job search market, which is useful to me in my other role as a career mentor as it has helped make sure my knowledge is up to date. I encourage professionals of all backgrounds to take part in this program! You will meet impressive and intelligent newcomers and have the opportunity to improve Canada's workforce. To conclude, the feeling of knowing you contributed to someone's career path is one that cannot be measured. It is heartwarming and rewarding! Please consider taking part and getting your friends to help too!



*Amena Nabi*

*Senior Policy Analyst, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*



The connector program is a great program helping new immigrants to "connect" with people in the industry. Immigrants face many challenges when on the job search and getting to know the Canadian job industry is one barrier that the connector program seeks to remove. My interactions with the connectee were very insightful, and there was a mutual learning that transpired while engaging in conversation. I learned about different cultures and the insights to the engineering industry in South America, while my connectee learned about the engineering industry in Canada. I highly recommend this program to future connectors and connectees as it is a mutually valuable experience.



*John Im*

*Section Head, Department of National Defence*



## WELCOME

Thank you for supporting the Ottawa Connector Program as a Connector.

Many employment-ready and talented Internationally Educated Professionals in Ottawa have the skills and education to secure work. Connectees are Internationally Educated Professionals who dream of settling down in this city with a prosperous professional career. Networking is very crucial to their entire settlement process. Thus each of your referrals plays a significant role in a newcomer's career and life. The sooner Connectees receive referrals, the faster their professional networks grow.

The Ottawa Connector Program is a formalized networking initiative to help broaden Internationally Educated Professionals' networks through one-on-one meetings with established business leaders who work in the same field. It is a simple but effective referral process that puts newcomers in touch with people like you so they can connect to our workforce and settle successfully in our community.

## WHO ARE CONNECTORS ?

Connectors are people in our community who know large numbers of people and are in the habit of making introductions. Connectors know people through social, cultural, professional, and economic circles, and have a special gift for bringing people together who work or live in different circles.

## CONNECTOR BENEFITS

By becoming a Connector, you will benefit from:

- Gain the sense of achievement of helping newcomers succeed in Ottawa
- Be seen as a professional or organization who values and supports international talents
- Bring value to your network by connecting people who could benefit from knowing each other
- Increase awareness about your organization and industry
- Contribute to a program that leads to greater community engagement and encourages a culture of inclusion and collaboration



## Connector's Role

- Meet with a Connectee for a one hour informational meeting
- Listen, ask questions, and share knowledge of current market demands and the skills required in the Connectee's field
- After the meeting, provide the Connectee with **three** relevant contacts in their industry within **two weeks**. Each of the contacts will be asked for **another three referrals**, essentially creating a basic business network
- Be honest; provide any feedback to the Connectee through the Connector Program Project Coordinator

## Connectee's Role

Connectees who are selected for this program should:

- Arrive prepared and on time for meetings with Connectors
- Demonstrate professionalism during all meetings and respect the time and dedication of the Connector
- Ensure business inquires and concerns align with the goal to conduct informational meetings in their related field
- Take the initiative to e-mail the subsequent contact with the next round of Connectors/other referrals provided
- During and after meetings, write down important notes that may help throughout their job search
- **Understand that there is no guarantee to find employment through the program, and never ask for a job during an informational meeting**



## HOW DOES THE CONNECTOR PROGRAM WORK?

### What is the time commitment ?

This program requires a minimal time commitment. As a Connector, **you will only be asked for a one time informational meeting for 1 hour. You are only matched with a Connectee once or twice per year.**

### What is the procedure ?

#### STEP 01 - MATCH

You will be matched with a Connectee who has similar educational background and work experience as yours. Once a match has been made, the Project Coordinator will introduce you to the Connectee via email.

Please respond within **one week** and provide the Connectee with a time and location to meet. The Connectee will follow up with you directly to arrange a meeting based on your availability and convenience.

#### STEP 02 - CONNECT

A one hour informational meeting is held between you and your Connectee. This is where you will be asked questions related to your job, company, or industry.



## What is the procedure ?

### STEP 03 - REFER

Within **two weeks** after your meeting, you should be able to provide the Connectee with three referrals within your network. Each of your referrals is asked to provide another 3 contacts. The potential contacts are limitless, and it is up to the Connectee to make the most of the connection meetings.

We suggest sending an email to your three referrals letting them know about the program structure and your new Connectee. Please encourage and ensure your referrals provide another 3 contacts to help your Connectee build professional networks in Ottawa.

### STEP 04 - SURVEY

Please fill out the **program surveys** sent by the project coordinator soon after you receive them. Please reflect on your Connector meeting and program experience. Your response is very important to us. It should only take 3 minutes.



## INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

An informational meeting is an opportunity for the Connectee to learn through the Connector's professional experiences by asking questions related to their career progression, occupation, or industry.

### Questions you may be asked by the Connectee

- I have done a bit of research on your organization by looking over the website, but I am wondering if you would mind telling me more about your role within the organization?
- I'd like to ask you about the work culture within your organization, and in this industry in Ottawa. Do people work in teams or more individually? Is the office formal or informal?
- How can I learn more about workplace policies and corporate expectations of employee's performance?
- What do employers look for in a successful candidate in this industry?
- What is the training process or the on boarding normally like in this industry once I get a job?
- Would you also mind telling me about a few other organizations that may be suited to my experience
- What key jobs or experiences led you to the position you are in today?
- What are the top three skills needed for the role/position?
- Is there an entry level role/position that could be a stepping stone to this type of role/positon?
- What experience and expertise is expected within this industry?
- Are there any unspoken expectations of people working in this industry?
- How does one typically find employment in this industry?



## MANAGING REFERRALS

### Why is Providing Referrals so important?

Connectees are involved in the Connector program because they have a limited network and are looking to build their professional connections. Referrals are extremely valuable to Connectees as they allow them to:

- Gain information from different professional perspectives that can be applied to their career or job search
- Meet other knowledgeable and experienced professionals they normally wouldn't meet
- Have a better understanding of the local job market, sector of interest, and their occupation

### How soon should 3 referrals be provided?

While it is mandatory for referrals to be provided within two weeks after meeting with the Connectee, since the success of building a newcomer's professional network through this program is the smooth referring process.

### Potential referrals

- Referrals are anyone within your personal or professional network who would be a good resource for the Connectee
- These could include: Executive, Managers, HR, connected or influential business leaders, or members of industry associations, even someone who is looking to fill a job vacancy
- Inviting the Connectee to a local networking event with them or attending an association networking event with the Connectee could also be counted as one referral

We trust that you'll do your best in coming up with at least 3 referrals for your Connectee to meet. There is no 'perfect' match but we know that expanding contacts based on similar interests and backgrounds works well for professional newcomers.





**Sample Template for asking your contact to be your referral**

Dear Jonathan

Hope my email finds you well.

I am currently volunteering for the Ottawa Connector Program at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization as a Connector to help newcomers broaden their professional network. I just met a wonderful marketing professional through the Connector Program and I would like you to meet with him.

As part of the program, I had a one hour informational meeting with Eric, who is an internationally educated professional and is trying to build his professional network in Ottawa. As you are aware, 85 % jobs are hidden in Ottawa and networking is the one critical factor that can make or break his potential success.

As a Connector, my commitment was to meet him to provide insight into our local industry with no pressure to interview or hire, and to then introduce him to three more people in the industry. After hearing about his experiences and interests, you naturally came to mind. For a 90 second overview of the program, please see this link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEFmeAGS7\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEFmeAGS7_M)

If you could, please meet with him in the next few weeks and also introduce him to three more professionals in our field, we would both be very grateful for



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*your support. Your one hour with this internationally educated professional is impactful. I trust you will follow up individually with these three referrals, that is, give them a short overview as I have just done, so that this process will be the most effective.*

*Also, if you would like to become a Connector who meets with one or two Connectees a year, then we would love for you to join the program. Please contact [connector@ociso.org](mailto:connector@ociso.org)*

*Thank you in advance for paying it forward, sharing your network and for doing your part to keep great talent in Ottawa. I am sure that our connection will absolutely ignite the hope of a newcomer's profession and light his/her career in Ottawa.*

*Kind regards,*

*Ruth*



## Sample Template for introducing a participant to one of your contacts

*Good Afternoon Jonathan and Eric*

*I am so pleased to be writing this email to introduce the both of you, and to connect you through the Ottawa Connector Program.*

*First, for you Jonathan further to our discussion, I have attached Eric's resume. As you can see, Eric has a Bachelor of Arts (Political Science) and a Public Relations Diploma. Eric wants to stay and live in Ottawa. He is most interested in building his networks and finding that first Canadian career opportunity aligned to his education.*

*Eric - allow me to introduce you to Jonathan. Jonathan has over 17 years of experience in marketing and communications. He is skilled in branding, advertising, stakeholder relations and engagement, issues management and social media. He is currently employed as the Manager of Marketing, Ottawa. Most recently, he played a lead role in the launch of the new Ottawa brand for the City. I am sure you will gain a lot of insight from meeting with Jonathan in person and will be happy with any information and referrals he is able to provide.*

*Eric, please email Jonathan directly to see about having an informational meeting in the coming weeks. Thanks, and I look forward to hearing from you both.*

*Kind regards,*

*Ruth*



## THIS ISN'T MENTORSHIP

While we encourage our Connectors to build relationships beyond the first meeting, this is not a mentorship program.

If Connectors feel comfortable after the initial meeting to provide further advice to a Connectee, they are free to do so. However, the primary goal of the Connector relationship is to focus on networking opportunities.

Mentorship is of great value, OCISO offers a variety of mentorship opportunities. Those interested in mentorship programs can visit: <http://ocisocareermentorship.org/> for more information.

## OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Why should I be a Connector?**

Becoming a Connector is a way to explore the hidden talent in the Ottawa area. Making a connection to skilled professionals who have worldwide ties and are ready to work will give your business a competitive advantage in today's economy.

### **2. How do we meet?**

- The project coordinator will meet with one Connectee for an intake meeting to further assess his/her eligibility and know his/her background and career interest.
- If the Connectee's background and career interest match with your expertise, the project coordinator will send the Connectee's resume to you. It's up to you to decide whether or not to meet the Connectee and provide 3 referrals.

After you agree to meet with the Connectee,

- The project coordinator will introduce you to the Connectee via email. The email will provide details including your name, title, employer, contact information, and a brief biography.



- The Connectee will contact you directly to arrange an informational meeting based on your availability and convenience (you will decide the time and location).
- You meet with the Connectee for a 1 hour informational meeting. You could provide your 3 referrals at the meeting or within 2 weeks after your meeting.
- Your Connectee will contact your referrals to initiate another three informational meetings following the same rules and structures.

### **3. Where will the Connection meeting take place?**

The meeting will be scheduled either at the Connector's office or at other convenient public locations.

### **4. What happens at the first meeting?**

You could discuss the following topics with your Connectee:

- Professional backgrounds, skills and areas of expertise
- Sector related news
- Ottawa labour market demands
- Potential career opportunities in Ottawa
- Networking tips

### **5. How does the referral process work?**

As a Connector, you are required to provide 3 referrals to the Connectee within 2 weeks after your meeting. In turn, each of your referrals is asked for another 3 contacts to the Connectee. The basic business network created from this program will better connect them to the opportunities available in Ottawa.

### **6. How does OCISO ensure Connectees are employment ready / ready for a Connector meeting?**

Each Connectee is screened and comprehensively trained before being matched with a Connector. The basic business network created from this program will better connect them to the opportunities available in Ottawa. If you have any doubts that the person is employment-ready, please share your concerns with the Project Coordinator.



## 7. Do I need to keep in touch with the Connectee?

For this program, we don't expect a 'mentor connection' where you would routinely keep in touch. If you would like to be connected on Linked In or through e-mail, that is up to you but it is not required. We do hope though that the Connectee will share good news with you when they secure employment, etc.

## 8. Do we have to be able to offer a job to the Connectee?

**No.** The purpose of the Ottawa Connector Program is to help Connectees grow their professional networks, learn more about the Ottawa business community and accelerate their job search in their chosen field. Connectees are aware that the goal of the Connector Program is to enhance their networking skills and current job search strategies. **They are aware that there is no guarantee they will find employment through the program.**

If you have any question  
please contact the Ottawa Connector Program at  
613-725-5671 X 307 or [connector@ociso.org](mailto:connector@ociso.org)

*THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT !*



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