

NATIONAL CONNECTOR PROGRAM




2020-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



NATIONAL
CONNECTOR
PROGRAM

PROGRAMME
DE CONNECTEUR
NATIONAL



The National Connector Program is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the birthplace of the initial Connector Program. This program provides communities with a turn-key solution that increases talent retention through the process of intentional networking.

Currently based in 32 Canadian communities and growing, the National Connector Program is a successful model to help retain talent, engage employers, and create more welcoming communities. The program is led by Halifax Partnership with funding from Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The Connector Program is a unique and innovative workforce development initiative aimed to help immigrants build their professional network, secure relevant jobs, and stay in their community. This program connects employers facing labour challenges to highly qualified talent. Since the program was implemented in 2009, it has seen tremendous success and has been replicated in 32 other communities across the country.

The innovation and effectiveness of the Connector Program's Match. Connect. Refer. model lies within three simple steps:

- Local immigrant serving organizations and post-secondary career centers refer employment-ready participants (Connectees) to the program.
- Program staff coach the Connectee and match them with a Connector in their field.
- The Connector and Connectee meet face-to-face or virtually. After the meeting, the Connector links the participant to at least three other people in their business network. Those three people also refer three more people to the Connectee.
- Through these introductions, Connectees rapidly build their professional network and gain insight into the local labour market, which increases their likelihood of finding jobs and staying in their new communities.

Everyone benefits from this program. Newcomers gain professional contacts and meaningful employment, professionals learn about new talent entering the workforce, and businesses connect with pre-qualified, skilled labour.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Messages	4-5
Executive Summary	6
2020-21 Activity Report	8
Adapting to COVID 19	8
New and Prospective Communities	9
Training	9
Tracking System	10
Collaborations and Connections	10
Resources Developed	11
Member Resources Portal	11
Newcomer Employment Readiness Resources	12
Challenges, Best Practices, and Lessons Learned	14-16
2021-22 Activity Report	17
Central Canada	18
Western Canada	18
Community Activity Profile	18
Community Impact	20
Moving Forward	21
Report Card and Cumulative Results	22
About Halifax Partnership	26

“What I learned

from WR Connectors is that networking is the root of everything. If you put the theory into practice and apply that through action, to connect every day and to look for companies, you are going to be successful in your networking. You build a network. Brick by brick. One day, you’ll look back and you’ll see how powerful your network is.”

Waterloo Region Connectors Connectee





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robyn Webb

I'm pleased to present the 2020-22 Annual Report for the National Connector Program (NCP). The challenges of the past two years have shown the importance of programs, like the National Connector Program, in creating connections and engaging communities.

The National Connector Program is based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the birthplace of the initial Connector Program. A simple yet highly effective networking program, the Connector Program puts immigrants directly in touch with local businesspeople, civil servants, and community leaders – people who are in the habit of making introductions and connecting others to opportunities. Further, the program provides communities with a turn-key solution that increases talent retention through the process of intentional networking.

Currently active in 32 communities across Canada and six around the world and growing, the National Connector Program is a successful model to help retain talent, engage employers, and create a more welcoming community. Over the past two years, we have welcomed three new communities – Music Newfoundland, Lethbridge Family Services, and Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association. From 2020-2025 we will be welcoming 10 new communities to the program that are committed to helping newcomers gain professional contacts and meaningful employment while helping business connect with pre-qualified, skilled labour.

Within these communities, the National Connector Program is poised to help 12,500 newcomers gain professional contacts and connect to their community from 2020-2025. In 2020-21, NCP communities worked with 1,203 Connectees, 815 Connectors met with these newcomers and provided referrals and introductions, resulting in 568 Connectees finding jobs in their field. In 2021-22 Communities engaged with 1,104 new Connectees, 841 Connectors, and these new connections resulted in at least 439 Connectees finding meaningful employment in their field of choice.

These past two years have been challenging for many, and the National Connector Program is no exception. Meeting in person was a cornerstone of the program, however, COVID-19 showed the program it could be nimble and adapt. Communities engaged with their Connectees and Connectors in new ways, allowing the program to discover that there are opportunities in even the most trying of times. We became more reliant on email and video chat than we had ever thought possible, and for some, this increased their ability to engage with the program.

Thank you to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Halifax Partnership for supporting the National Connector Program since the beginning. This long-standing and consistent support, along with the support of our referral partners, is a demonstration of tremendous commitment to helping Canadian communities support and retain newcomers.

With all that has transpired over the past two years, it is truly inspiring to see the positive impact the program is making in communities across the country. I look forward to watching the program continue to grow, increase meaningful connections, and create more welcoming communities into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robyn Webb". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Robyn Webb
Executive Director
National Connector Program



PROGRAM MANAGER

Alida Campbell

Coming into the role of Program Manager in the middle of a global pandemic, it was difficult to know what to expect. What I found was a community of dedicated individuals and organizations making a positive difference in their communities by helping newcomers develop the skills and networks needed to thrive in their new homes.

While the program is simple in nature, it has a multi-faceted impact on the community and those involved. Based on the premise of developing networks in a person's professional industry, it can also lead to broader community ties, friendships, job opportunities, and paying it forward for others new to the community. It gives businesses access to talent they otherwise would never have tapped into, human resources professionals and firms a broader understanding of the experience, skills and education that make an excellent candidate, and employers the knowledge that they have made a sound choice in hiring diverse international talent.

This program engages the broader community and various organizations to welcome and support new talent as they integrate into their community. Creating a welcoming place isn't just about saying hi to your new neighbour - it's about fostering connections and opportunities for new talent. It's about finding an open and caring community and meaningful employment - a place where someone new can come and know that they will be valued and that their background and contributions will be recognized. The National Connector Program helps to accomplish these goals.

This past year, new resources aimed at further engaging and attracting Connectees were developed. These resources will enable new and existing communities to better attract, engage and retain Connectees from all streams.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the program from holding a learning exchange, shorter sessions on a variety of topics were held, allowing every community to continue to learn and develop as a result of collaboration. In 2022-23 we are looking forward to returning to in-person training while continuing to regularly connect virtually for workshops and learning exchanges.

Thank you to all the communities for making my introduction to this program so meaningful. The dedication I see from each of the Connector coordinators makes me proud of the work we are accomplishing together, welcoming and connecting immigrants across Canada each and every day.

Sincerely,

Alida Campbell

Alida Campbell
Program Manager
National Connector Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With support from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) over the last nine years, Halifax Partnership has been supporting the development and growth of 32 active Connector Programs across Canada to help immigrants successfully attach to the workforce. The 2020-22 fiscal years mark the first two years of a five-year agreement that will lead us to 2025.

We are proud to report that from 2020-2022 the NCP recruited three new Connector communities and reengaged with one community.

We also identified five new communities that could benefit from a Connector Program. There are now a total of 32 active National Connector communities, including one industry association, working to connect immigrants to business networks in Canada.

We are proud to share that, in 2020-21, Connector communities achieved the following collective results:

- **YTD results: 1203 newcomers assisted**
- **YTD business Connector results: 815**
- **YTD results: 568 newcomers found jobs in their field**

In 2021-22, Connector communities achieved the following results:

- **YTD results: 1104 newcomers assisted**
- **YTD business Connector results: 841**
- **YTD results: 439 newcomers found jobs in their field**

These numbers reflect the total number of participants in the programs across the country.

We would like to acknowledge and thank IRCC for funding the NCP and Halifax Partnership for leading the program over the past nine years. This support, along with our referral partners, immigrant serving organizations, local chambers of commerce, local economic development organizations, and business and Immigrant Employment Councils, has shown tremendous, shared commitment to helping Canadian newcomers and communities by launching Connector Programs.



“What an exciting opportunity

to welcome and meet new residents of Saskatchewan. As a member of Regina’s IT community, it is my pleasure to highlight the insights and culture of our close-knit industry. It is always interesting to hear the stories and backgrounds of the Connectees; what brought them to Saskatchewan and to learn about their skills, experiences and career goals. It is very rewarding to be able to connect these bright individuals with other IT specialists that can help provide further insight into the training and actions needed to meet their goals. The Connector Program provides the opportunity for Connectees to initiate and build their networks, allowing for further integration into their new community.”

**Connector,
Saskatchewan Connector
Program**

“I personally benefited

from the connector program. Thank you ERIEC for connecting me with my Connector who provided me with very valuable tips and guidance in settling down professionally. The meeting left an indelible impression on me for my career path and my Connector took the time to answer my numerous questions.”

Connectee, Edmonton Connector Program



Image: Details about the image to go in the spot.



“I support the Connector Program

because it encourages employers to hire candidates they might not have met using traditional job postings. Diverse teams with a variety of backgrounds gets people to think differently about their work, and often leads to collaboration and new ideas.”

Connector, Cape Breton Connector Program

“If you are moving to the Okanagan for work,

this is the program for you! The Okanagan Young Professionals Group was quick to respond to any questions and the Connector Program was (and will continue to be) an asset to my professional development. I was unsure of what to expect with the program and I was quick to be partnered with a mentor in my field. She responded to all questions and went the extra mile to help me prepare for my interview. The coffee socials and Lunch and Learns will continue to be added to my schedule as they are a great way to network in Kelowna. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic I was able to network and meet young professionals via Zoom. This program is a great way to make friends in a new city and I would recommend it to everyone I know.”

Connectee, Kelowna Connector Program

2020-22 ACTIVITY REPORT



“One of the most valuable things

[about the Connector Program] is that our previous skillset was recognized. Event though we were ready to start from the entry-level, we could keep building from our previous level.”

Connectee, PEI Connectors

Adapting to COVID-19

From the onset of COVID-19, the Connector Program quickly responded to the shift by updating the Connector and Connectee toolkits to reflect the virtual nature of the program. As the program is national in scope, working together virtually was always a hallmark of the program. However, several actions have made virtual collaboration even more seamless these last two years. The first is an updated website where communities can upload resources to our member resources portal. Second, the increased support from the NCP program towards training and resource development of online and virtual programming helped communities adapt quickly to the changing needs of the Connectees and Connectors. While it was a trying time for many, including the Connector program coordinators, the sharing of best practices, resources, and training allowed the community to weather the storm together.



New and Prospective Communities

Over the past two years, the National Connector Program welcomed three new communities and reengaged with one.

- Lethbridge Family Services in Lethbridge, Alberta
- Music Newfoundland (a Music Industry Association), based in St. John's Newfoundland
- Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association in Sudbury, Ontario
- Reengaged KEYS Job Centre in Kingston, Ontario

Five further communities have been identified as potential additions to the National Connector Community:

- Grand Prairie, Alberta
- 3+ Economic Development Corporation, New Brunswick
- Ignite Fredericton, New Brunswick
- Envision Saint John, New Brunswick
- IECBC (Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia, which covers British Columbia).

Training

Virtual onboardings took place with the Northwest Connector Program in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Lethbridge Connector Program in Lethbridge, Alberta, Sudbury Connector Program in Sudbury, Ontario, and Instrumental Connections in St. John's, Newfoundland were completed during the report period. Individual virtual training sessions were provided to new coordinators to address turnover in several communities: KEYS Job Centre in Kingston, Success Skills Centre in Winnipeg, and Cape Breton Partnership.

Additional training was held with a variety of communities: PEI, Winnipeg, Northern NS, ACCES Employment in the Greater Toronto Area, Saskatchewan, Valley REN (this training was held on-site), Lethbridge, Instrumental Connections, Thunder Bay, Western REN, Sudbury, CRIEC, and ERIEC. These trainings were a result of Connector Coordinator turnover, or a specific request for training from the communities.

The new Program Manager held two individualized introduction and discussion sessions with each coordinator in 2021-2022. The topics were mostly informal, to develop a rapport with the communities, but also as a way to discern major challenges and successes in each community, so the Program Manager could best support them moving forward.

This year was slated to be a "Learning Exchange Year" where all communities gather in Halifax to share successes, best practices and brainstorm solutions to overarching issues. Due to COVID-19, it was determined that having a large gathering was not safe and could not be executed to the caliber expected and desired by the communities. Nevertheless, professional development is a very important piece of the National Connector Program, and so the Learning Exchange was extended to several shorter sessions over several months.

The topics covered included:

- Reviewing the Connector Pre-Arrival program (October)
- How programs might support international students (November)
- Information Technology (IT) sector presentation by tech recruitment agency, Venor (January)
- Social media content creation (March)



“I interviewed today and received an offer

just a couple of hours ago. Needless to say, it wouldn't have happened without your network, guidance, and advice. I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for all your help and feedback.”

Connectee, Halifax Connector Program

Tracking System

The customized NCP tracking system continues to be used by communities across Canada. This proprietary system allows for automatic matching of Connectees and Connectors. An algorithm matches skills and industries to provide an appropriate list of potential matches for the coordinators to make the most impactful connection. The tracking system also aids the coordinators in recording and reporting on all aspects of the Connector program. A twenty-minute training video was developed for all Connector coordinators to be able to quickly feel comfortable using the system. The system is also enabled to track Connector program engagement with businesses, including how often they send resumes and talent to each business. We work closely with our technology partner, MindSea, to address any issues and ensure maintenance is up to date.

Collaborations and Connections

As a national program, it is important for the NCP to connect communities to opportunities that could benefit their programs and their Connectors and Connectees. In 2022, communities were connected to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Talent Acquisition Program Lead for Sobey's Canada to create opportunities for Connectees in their area. NCP also facilitated a group discussion with Project Learning Tree Canada to inform job seekers in the green energy and forestry sectors of opportunities across the country.

Individually, the Program Manager connected various communities with opportunities in their own areas, or within their provinces. This included linking them with service organizations, businesses and organizations, post-secondary institutions, industry associations, as well as with sponsorship opportunities.

Resources Developed

To support Connector communities, resources are always being developed from the latest best practices, suggestions and requests. Two workshops with all the Connector communities resulted in the Connector Attraction, Engagement and Retention Toolkit, and the Connectee Attraction, Engagement and Retention Toolkit.

These toolkits also resulted in other resources, such as:



Video 1: Connector Onboarding and Engagement



Video 2: Connector Support and Retention



Infographic: Connector Program Benefits

Additional resources include:

- Launch toolkit for new NCP communities
- “Business Engagement” email template
- “Effective Following Up” resource
- Tracking system video complete with time stamps
- French versions of the Connectee and Connector toolkits
- “Strategies for Immigrant Inclusion in Canadian Workplaces” employer playbook (co-developed with Immigrant Employment Councils of Canada and World Education Services)
- Community social media handles document so every community has access to each other’s social media to help improve engagement, reach, and impact.

“I received support on navigating through positions of interest. The program helped me in articulating my story and learning how to present myself well on paper and in virtual meetings. It was good practice for my job interviews.”

**Connectee, Kelowna
Connector Program**

Member Resources Portal

In addition to the resources shared with the communities and Connectees, a new member portal was developed by Revolve Marketing Agency to house all the resources used by the Connector coordinators across the country. This is a well-used portal by communities, and they have appreciated the ease of finding everything they need for their programs to thrive. The portal also allows for best practices to be shared effectively across communities and will support the continued growth and sustainability of the National Connector Program. Now that the portal is intuitive and well-organized, it is regularly visited by the community coordinators to find new resources and contribute their own when they find gaps in topics or themes. In the last six months of this fiscal year the member resources portal had 1,067 unique page views and 159 documents were downloaded.

Newcomer Employment Readiness Resources – Website Refresh

The website for newcomers is also receiving attention now that it has been updated and resources have been added, and it is more user friendly. It has a wide variety of newcomer employment readiness resources and information to improve their employment readiness.

The following pages were added to the website:

- interview etiquette
- resume tips
- labour market information
- industry sector profiles
- networking tips
- workplace culture
- employer engagement programs and incentives including francophone integration



For the last six months of the 2021-22 fiscal year, 1,691 users visited the website, with 300 accessing the newcomer employment readiness page.

“My Connector and I had a meeting,

and it was an extremely useful meeting. In the meeting, she educated me about the nature of the Canadian labor market and how I need to brand myself to be able to get my foot in the door, especially in my field of interest. She discussed some useful strategies I need to incorporate in my job search. She told me, if I found a job I’m interested in, she’s willing to advise me on how to navigate the application process. It was a very useful meeting. Thank you for putting us together.”

Connectee, Edmonton Connector Program



“I thank you for the support

and for connecting me for the informational meeting. It was an honor and a pleasure to meet the connector. She has been very helpful and supportive all through and has even been kind enough to forward my resume to people among her connections.”

Connectee, Ottawa Connector Program



“We did get to meet yesterday over Teams

and the conversation went quite well. He spoke a bit about his experience, and we discussed ‘fractional’ finance roles, which is what he currently does. He was kind enough to invite me to a dinner event organized by FEI next week (in person), which I am really excited about. We did discuss the three contacts that are expected for the connectors program, and he is quite confident that he can provide many more than three of those.”

Connectee, Lethbridge Connector Program



BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED

Transitioning from a face-to-face program to one that is solely virtual has been a challenge for many over the past two years. However, the National Connector Program, through discussion, collaboration, and nimble action, was able to successfully transition the program to a virtual one and continue to support new and existing NCP communities. The ability to adapt quickly to challenges is a best practice and lesson learned for organizations and programming of any kind.

Best Practices

The National Connector Program is comprised of a group of coordinators who run the program in their community, which makes for incredible collaboration, support, and engagement within the program. Coordinators work together and are not in competition with one another. As they are all working towards the same goal – increasing newcomer integration into Canadian communities and the workforce – they share their own best practices, challenges, and successes with one another. This in turn allows for greater resource and program development, broader impact and reach nationally, and a welcoming environment.

Due to restrictions, we were unable to host an in-person learning exchange. Instead, regular workshops and presentations were held virtually throughout this period, which allowed each coordinator to be able to learn continually from experts as well as from each other. Following this model, NCP coordinators will be able to have ongoing professional development each year, which can be more agile and responsive to their needs.

“WR Connectors was the most real and practical

networking program I found. With their help, I developed an action plan, an understanding of how to prepare, who to connect with, and how to follow up. I met with my Connector, who introduced me to my current employer. I would encourage every job seeker to take part in the program.”

Connectee, Waterloo Region Connectors



“A huge shout out

to Matthew, and the Northern Connector Program. I am really blessed to have you to help me. I can't describe how much your help means to me and how drastic change it will bring to my life. Thank you for guiding me through this process”.

Connectee, Northern Nova Scotia Connector Program

Lessons Learned

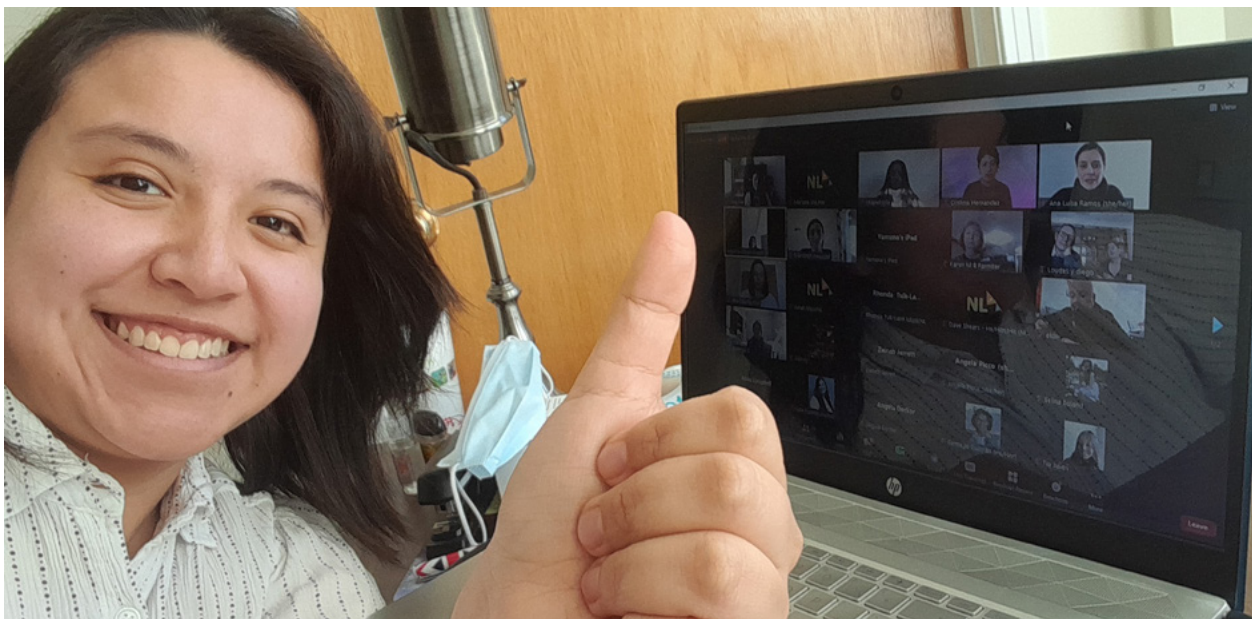
The past two years have shown that the National Connector Program could indeed survive and thrive in a virtual environment. For some Connectees and Connectors, this was a convenient option as it decreases the need for transportation, it creates more accessibility in the program, allows for greater flexibility in meeting times, and in some cases lessens the time commitment. While the face-to-face program is still the preferred way to network and run the Connector programs, understanding the benefits of a virtual option, and being able to assess it in real time, was beneficial.

A hybrid brainstorming and toolkit development session was held in 2021, which was the first of its kind for the NCP. While the session itself went very well and met its deliverables, there were lessons learned in running hybrid and online meetings. We used a whiteboard app, which allowed for each group to build upon the previous discussions on each topic. While this was successful, it was not without its difficulties. In the future, information and videos will be sent out with new technology, so coordinators will have time to become comfortable with the application. Also, breakout rooms will be preassigned and there will be protocols mentioned at the beginning of the session to connect with the Program Manager should any issues arise. The Program Manager will float among the rooms and be available at a moment's notice.

“The recommendations and connections

I received through this program helped me to secure a great position in the region. It means that my family and I did not have to move away from a place we love.”

Connectee, Western Nova Scotia Connector Program



Responding to Challenges

Although communities successfully adapted their Connector programs to operate virtually, and Connectors and Connectees were comfortable with virtual meetings and how the program pivoted in the early stages of the pandemic, there have been challenges. COVID-19 continues to affect numbers across the country, and some communities have made the decision to put their programs on hold until the face-to-face program can resume.

Immigration is beginning to increase; however, the continued uncertainty is affecting the intake in many areas of the country. With training and support from NCP, the communities are gaining momentum bringing on new Connectors and Connectees. The current economy is also affecting the program: as there are many vacancies and the labour market is changing rapidly. People are signing up for settlement services but are finding jobs before they can be accepted into the Connector Program.

A challenge for many communities across the country is ensuring they receive sustainable funding for their programs. Oftentimes, communities have year-to-year or three-to-five-year agreements, which negatively impacts their ability to run long-term programming in their communities. Community targets across Canada are also based on individual funding agreements, resulting in inconsistent program targets. This year, we will be developing a strategy to increase the targets in the communities so more newcomers can be supported by the program.

“Thanks again

for letting me be a part of this program. It went very smoothly; I got a chance to look at jobs I didn't even know were available and discuss the industry with professionals in the field.”

**Connectee, Valley
Connector Program**

While faced with challenges, we see tremendous opportunity and room for growth as we move forward. As a national community, we work together to tackle the challenges that we collectively face. In doing so, this creates a strong, resilient program in every community across the country.

Recognizing the importance of collaboration and community engagement, National Connector communities work with organizations in their areas to organize larger scale, joint events. Communities partner with non-profit organizations, all levels of government, industry associations, immigrant settlement agencies, post-secondary institutions, local immigration partnerships (LIPs), small businesses, and other Connector Communities.



COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS

Communities are at the heart of the National Connector Program. Their activities, successes and challenges are specific to their own community, but reflect what is happening nationally. The ingenuity and adaptability that each community used/uses in the face of a global pandemic showcases the importance and sustainability of the program in today's world.

Communities recognized the need for additional and specific resources relating to the ever-changing world during COVID-19. They compiled new information, continually updated resources, and helped both Connectees and Connectors adapt to the rapidly changing labour market.

Communities came together and continued to develop innovative ways of engaging their Connectees and Connectors. In many cases, the services provided were as, or more, effective as previous versions.

Atlantic Canada

- **The Valley Regional Connector Program** hosted “how-to-network” workshops for international students at Acadia University. They also participated in a panel discussion on acing virtual interviews, – something that has become very important over the past two years.
- **Cape Breton Connector Program** facilitated a virtual series on networking every week. They were able to keep their Connectees engaged with the program and feeling supported through the process by having more touch points with them.
- **Northern Nova Scotia, Western REN and Cape Breton Connector programs** held “HireMe” pitch competitions virtually, with pitches submitted to a website where participants, Connectors, and community members could engage. This is an excellent example of adapting to the situation, while creating a successful virtual event.
- **Western REN Connector Program** partnered with Ignite Labs’ She Means Business, and hosted an online networking event, Empowering Moms Through Connections – geared toward mothers who may be looking to get back into the workforce.
- **All Nova Scotian communities** worked together to present the Connector Program to over 500 international students at the Building Employability Skills for a Successful Transition (BEST) Conference, held annually by EduNova Cooperative. This conference is a networking and employability skills conference for post-secondary students in their final year who wish to stay in Nova Scotia upon graduation. This conference allowed the Connector communities to recruit more talented people as Connectees, and deepen partnerships with post-secondary institutions in the province.
- **PEI Connectors** organized virtual and in-person networking, information, and resume sessions for their Connectees. They were very successful in engaging their clientele.
- **Newfoundland and Labrador** launched the Instrumental Connections Program at Music Celebration Week 2022 in Corner Brook. Additionally, they participated in Newfound Attachments by St. John’s Farmers Market to meet and connect potential Connectees. Two Connectees were invited to The Institute of Corporate Directors IWD roundtable: #BreakTheBias: Mentoring Young Women to Serve on Boards.

Central Canada

- **Ottawa Connector** Connectees participated in three speed interviewing events, as well as a volunteer appreciation networking event, and a networking event focused on soft skills in the Canadian workplace. These activities kept Connectors and Connectees engaged with the program.
- **Waterloo Region Connectors** hosted the 14th annual Global Skills Conference, called “Making Digital Connections”, which allowed Connectees to engage with employers and learn vital skills for their job search.
- Through the Connector Program, Connectees and Connectors were able to access services, trainings, and informational materials from communities across the country, such as the WorkSCAPE Northwest labour market tools in the **Northwest Connector Program** (Thunder Bay), and job counselling in the **ACCES Employment Connector Program** (Toronto).

Western Canada

- **Calgary Connectors & Edmonton Connectors** held several SmartConnections networking events online to facilitate clients meeting with large companies in Alberta, which allowed large numbers of newcomers to connect with companies on a virtual platform, learn about opportunities to work with them, and learn about important issues regarding their job search.
- **Edmonton Connectors** held the Alberta Global Talent Conference virtually in 2021 and 2022, allowing for a larger audience than previous conferences, including newcomers who were not yet in Alberta but were wanting to move there.
- **Kelowna Connector Program** adapted their Connector recognition events by sending thank you packages to their most engaged Connectors. The Connectors found this very thoughtful and were pleased with the appreciation they received. They also expressed their commitment to continue being involved in the program.
- **Saskatchewan Connector Program** held a virtual networking event in June ahead of a virtual job fair that CECS was hosting. Connectees got to hear from and network with industry experts in HR who provided them with insights and excellent advice related to networking and making yourself stand out at a job fair.

Community Activity Profile

MusicNL - Instrumental Connections

To promote the program, Instrumental Connections, and develop relationships around Newfoundland, MusicNL has partnered with the St John’s Farmer’s Market to produce events around arts and culture called “Newfound Attachments”. Artists from the Connector program were spotlighted and had a chance to grow their brand as well as network with the local community and music sector. This has also led to the production of a mini documentary on the program and Connector community. This community also presented with the Association of New Canadians at IDEAS 2022 to inform participants (mostly future Connectors) about the Connector Program and network with them. They also partnered to launch the second season of the “Global Frequencies” podcast, which is hosted by the Association of New Canadians in Newfoundland.

“My Connector Ken,
was such a pleasure talking to and taking the time to answer my many questions about what it’s like to work in Customer Success/ Product Management Roles and giving various insights about the industry.”

ACCES Employment Connector Program



“The program explained
how to tweak ones resume to secure an interview. The program has been an eye opener for me to differentiate between what is important in a resume and what is not. Yes I will recommend the program to everyone”

Connectee, Cape Breton Connector Program



“At the St. John’s Farmer’s Market,
locals and newcomers found a space to connect with one another, to reach a different audience, and to learn about one another and the community as a whole.”

**Instrumental Connections -
Music Newfoundland and Labrador Connector Program**

COMMUNITY IMPACT

In each NCP community there is a tangible impact on the Connectees, Connectors and the job market. Connectees are learning about Canadian workplace culture, best practices when searching for meaningful employment, building their professional networks, and becoming a part of the community they have chosen as their new home. Connectors are gaining knowledge into the skills and education newcomers and new graduates bring to the table for their industry, as well as expanding their networks, and sometimes filling roles within their organizations. Industry is connecting with internationally trained professionals in their community and providing Connectees with access to opportunities within key sectors. All in all, communities are able to recruit the best, diverse talent, and is a benefit from a larger variety of experience, skills, and education, as well as diversity of thought and opinion.

The National Connector Program, even in times of uncertainty, is making a difference in its communities. Through the work of the coordinators, the dedication of the Connectors, and the willingness of the Connectees to learn and thrive, programs across the country are contributing to the success of their communities and will continue to do so in the years to come.

“I had the coffee meeting session today.

It was a great session, and I was able to answer all her questions. Thank you once again for allowing me to support talented immigrants. Look forward to the next Connectee candidate.”

Connector, Calgary Connector Program



MOVING FORWARD

As we move forward, there is much to do to increase newcomers' labour market participation, confidence and employment readiness. More communities are interested in joining the NCP, numbers are increasing in current communities due to loosening restrictions, and employers are being engaged across the country to become Connectors and hire newcomers.

In the year ahead, the NCP will focus on expanding professional development opportunities for coordinators, developing training programs, and inviting experts to present on various topics of interest. The portal and website will continue to be updated, and resources shared by communities. Most importantly, Connectees will continue to be supported as they prepare to enter the Canadian labour market and understand the opportunity that exists for them in their chosen community and industry.

“The PEI Connectors program was very helpful

because I got to develop my network and establish business contacts, especially in events like information sessions, six on six, and some workshops. I got an outlet to discuss and promote ContactBoss to various business organizations.”

Connectee, PEI Connector Program



“It broadens your horizon.

The connector program was a way for me to look outside of my present position /department and learn more about what is there for me. It broadens your horizon and allows you to reflect on possibilities for long term goals.”

Connectee, Ottawa Connector Program

REPORT CARD AND CUMULATIVE RESULTS

National Connector Communities and Industry Associations	Partnership and Sharing Agreement between Community and the National Connector Program	Status
Halifax, Nova Scotia	2009	Operational
Edmonton, Alberta	November 27, 2013	Operational
CPA Alberta	December 18, 2013	Closed
Applied Science Technologies and Technicians of British Columbia (ASTT - BC)	January 22, 2014	Closed
Vancouver, British Columbia		Closed
Surrey, British Columbia		Closed
Campbell River, British Columbia		Closed
Calgary, Alberta	March 10, 2014	Operational
Ottawa, Ontario	June 30, 2014	Operational
Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario	September 27, 2017	Operational
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador	July 6, 2015	Closed
Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador	October 24, 2017	Closed
Grand Falls, Newfoundland and Labrador	October 24, 2017	Closed
Yukon Territory	August 5, 2015	Closed
Winnipeg, Manitoba	August 12, 2015	Operational
Regina, Saskatchewan	March 31, 2016	Operational
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan		Operational
Regional District of Central Okanagan (includes Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake Country, Peachland, West Banks First Nation), British Columbia	January 17, 2017	Operational

National Connector 2020-2021

Program Name	Delivered by:	Key Performance Indicators								
		National Connector communities will aid 12,500 newcomers between April 2020 to March 31, 2025			National Connector Program communities will contribute to increasing labour market participation (jobs) in their respective communities			Increase the engagement of business leaders by matching them to immigrants to increase their business networks		
		Count # of Newcomers			Count # of Jobs			Count # of Connectors		
		20-21 Annual	21-22 Annual	2013-2022 Cums.	20-21 Annual	21-22 Annual	2013-2022 Cums.	20-21 Annual	21-22 Annual	2013-2022 Cums.
Halifax Connector Program	Halifax Partnership	151	150	1560	244	194	1681	73	73	1081
Connector Program - Edmonton	Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council (ERIEC)	93	102	535	55	34	138	28	34	208
Connector Program - CPA Alberta	Chartered Professional Accountants - Alberta	-	-151	302	-	-	39	-	-	395
IEC-BC Connector Program - ASTT-BC	Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IEC-BC)	-	-	261	-	-	205	-	-	227
IEC-BC Connector Program - Vancouver										
IEC-BC Connector Program - Surrey										
IEC-BC Connector Program - Campbell River										
Calgary Connector Program	Calgary Economic Development	147	89	758	7	7	93	61	40	495
Ottawa Connector Program	Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization (OCISO)	207	175	1007	34	48	392	226	177	822
Waterloo Connectors Program	Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre* <i>Includes numbers from previous pilot</i>	16	11	168	14	11	73	16	10	149
NL Connector Program	St. John's Board of Trade	57	-	217	5	-	32	9	-	211
NL Connector Program										
NL Connector Program										
Yukon Connector Program	Yukon Tourism Education Council	-	-	36	-	-	1	-	-	14
Winnipeg Connector Partnership	Success Skills Centre	-	0	171	-	0	141	-	-	99
Connector Program - Regina	Conseil économique et coopératif de la Saskatchewan (CÉCS)	29	21	279	6	8	60	14	16	176
Connector Program - Saskatoon										
Connector Program - Kelowna	Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission on behalf of the Regional District of Central Okanagan	33	33	106	3	0	7	27	10	105
Connector Program - West Kelowna										
Connector Program - Lake Country										
Connector Program - Peachland										
Connector Program - West Banks First Nation										

Western Region, Nova Scotia (includes Digby, Yarmouth and Barrington)	February 13, 2017	Operational
Toronto, Ontario	March 13, 2017	Operational
Scarborough, Ontario		
Brampton, Ontario		
North York, Ontario		
Mississauga, Ontario		
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia	March 22, 2017	Operational
Province of New Brunswick	September 26, 2017	Closed
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island	February 23, 2017	Operational
Summerside, Prince Edward Island	February 23, 2017	Operational
Eastern Region, Nova Scotia	February 13, 2018	Closed
Valley Region, Nova Scotia	February 13, 2018	Operational
North Superior Workforce Planning Board	March 29, 2019	Operational
Truro and Colchester Partnership	June 12, 2019	Operational
Music Newfoundland	November 1, 2020	Ramping up
Lethbridge, Alberta	January 24, 2021	Operational
Sudbury, Ontario	March 29, 2021	Ramping up
Kingston, Ontario	January 4, 2022	Re-launching

Connector Program - Western Region	Western Region Enterprise Network	27	25	82	14	16	35	39	57	237
ACCES Employment Connector Program - Toronto	ACCES Employment *Includes numbers from previous pilot	70	56	497	22	22	193	26	34	145
ACCES Employment Connector Program - Scarborough										
ACCES Employment Connector Program - Brampton										
ACCES Employment Connector Program - North York										
ACCES Employment Connector Program - Mississauga										
Connector Program - Cape Breton	Cape Breton Partnership	101	22	192	33	3	52	30	12	243
ONB Connects	Opportunities New Brunswick	42	-	248	67	-	134	5	-	571
PEI Connectors	Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce	125	187	344	26	0	30	150	194	396
PEI Connectors	Charlottetown Chamber of Commerce									
Connector Program - Eastern Region	Eastern Strait Regional Enterprise Network	-	-	8	-	-	3	-	-	103
Connector Program - Valley Region	Valley Regional Enterprise Network	19	25	75	4	4	11	25	10	81
NorthWest Connector Program	North Superior Workforce Planning Board	-	71	71	-	13	13	-	44	44
Northern NS Connector Program	Truro and Colchester Partnership	78	107	197	34	56	93	84	79	276
Instrumental Connections	MusicNL	-	9	9	-	14	14	-	7	7
Lethbridge Connector Program	Lethbridge Family Services	8	9	17	-	3	3	2	18	20
Sudbury Connector Program	Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association	-	9	9	-	3	3	-	21	21
Kingston Connector Program	KEYS Job Centre	-	3	3	-	3	3	-	5	5
TOTAL PROGRAM OUTCOMES		128	1104	7155	568	439	3494	815	841	6205



ABOUT THE HALIFAX PARTNERSHIP

Halifax Partnership is Halifax's public-private economic development organization.

The Partnership drives and accelerates economic growth by selling and marketing Halifax to the world, helping businesses reach their full potential and tracking Halifax's economic progress. The Partnership's network of over 115 influential and globally connected partners are committed to building a thriving, prosperous Halifax.

Halifax Partnership is an Accredited Economic Development Organization (International Economic Development Council) which displays expertise and excellence in the field of economic development. The Partnership has been nationally and internationally recognized for its innovation and successful initiatives in the areas of talent attraction and retention, business retention and expansion, investment attraction, and regional and national collaboration. The Partnership is committed to fostering economic collaboration and sharing knowledge and expertise with local, national, and international partners to support economic growth and prosperity.

In 2009, the Partnership created the Halifax Connector Program to specifically address the barriers immigrants face in developing professional networks by linking them to business and community leaders called Connectors. Through direct referrals, Connectors help immigrants (Connectees) rapidly build their professional networks which increases their likelihood of finding a job in their field. Connectors benefit by gaining access to pre-qualified job seekers and helping to grow their industry, local workforce, and economy.

After the first year of implementation, immigrants were building their networks, finding jobs, and staying in Halifax. Since then, the Partnership has expanded the Halifax Connector Program to support additional talent pools including local and international graduates.

With 4,412 Connectees and 1,591 volunteer business Connectors, approximately 42% of Connectees are finding jobs in Halifax with the help of the business networks established through the Connector Program. This success has garnered interest across Canada, as communities face declining workforces and fall short in getting immigrants to come and to stay.

As an organization committed to collaboration and the sharing of best practices, the Partnership recognized that the Connector model could be replicated in other Canadian communities to support their immigrant retention initiatives, and as such, created the National Connector Program in 2013.

Thank you to our funder:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



Led by:

HALIFAX
PARTNERSHIP
CONNECT. COLLABORATE. PROSPER.

Nova Centre, 1675 Grafton Street
Suite 701, North Tower
Halifax, NS, B3J 0E9
902.490.6268

: rwebb@halifaxpartnership.com
: connectorprogram.ca
: @ConnectorPrgm (NCP Twitter)
: [linkedin.com/showcase/national-connector/](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/national-connector/)