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Project Insights Report

# Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub



## PARTNERS

Magnet

Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce



## LOCATIONS

Manitoba



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## ☰ Executive Summary

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce launched the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub (the Hub), as part of its Commitment to Opportunity, Diversity & Equity (CODE) program, to address barriers newcomers face in finding employment. This initiative aimed to bridge the gap between local employers with labour needs and the newcomer community by facilitating effective connections. The Hub, powered by technology partner Magnet, served as an online portal where newcomer job seekers and Winnipeg employers could connect, supported by training resources, including equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) sessions.

Significantly, the project offered free childcare through a partnership with the Government of Manitoba, thereby removing a key barrier to employment for newcomers. Since its inception, 3,973 job seekers and numerous employers have created accounts, and 15 newcomer settlement agencies have joined the platform.

The Hub has been instrumental in simplifying the hiring process for employers, allowing them to post jobs and simultaneously share them with multiple agencies, saving time and resources. This has led to employers using the Hub repeatedly, which demonstrates growing interest from job seekers and settlement agencies, as well as the Hub's effectiveness.

### KEY INSIGHTS

- 1** Chambers/employer associations and community service providers have overlapping and complementary goals; through connectivity and integrated technology, significant collective impacts can be achieved.
- 2** Representation and collaboration can greatly support program design and delivery; this program was supported by an advisory council that included local businesses, settlement agencies and newcomers.

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Participating agencies demonstrated an appetite for innovation and receptiveness to innovative, technology-powered approaches; by providing effective support and training, agencies were able to leverage functionality offered on the Magnet platform to help newcomer clients, ultimately making workplaces more diverse and inclusive.

## ▶ The Issue

Newcomers to Canada face multiple barriers to finding and retaining employment. In Winnipeg, local employers told the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce that they had labour needs but faced challenges in building effective connections with newcomer support agencies.

To address this challenge, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce launched the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub, part of the chamber's Commitment to Opportunity, Diversity & Equity (CODE) program.

CODE's objectives are to:

- expand awareness of the opportunities for and benefits of greater diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- increase the number of organizations in Winnipeg committed to enhancing inclusion and equity in their workplace;
- increase the implementation of measurable actions in the workplace to further these goals.

In its capacity as the project's technology partner, Magnet supported the Winnipeg Chamber with solutions to bring the business community and Manitoba newcomer community together to address talent recruitment and retention challenges.

Through a partnership with the Government of Manitoba, the project also provided free childcare to participating newcomers, addressing a common and significant barrier to employment.



## What We Investigated

Magnet developed the technology to power the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub, an online portal to connect newcomer job seekers with Winnipeg employers.

Local employers were supported with access to comprehensive training manuals and online training sessions to facilitate platform awareness and understanding, including EDI training sessions facilitated by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. In-person meetings helped forge connections between employers and settlement agencies.

In addition, a series of virtual hiring events dubbed “Engage and Employ” helped facilitate connections between newcomer job seekers and employers.

## What We're Learning

As of March 31, 2024, 3,973 job seekers and 301 employers had created accounts on the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub. By the same date, 15 newcomer settlement agencies had also joined the Hub.

The project's relevance was also boosted by the establishment of an advisory council that included representatives from local employers, settlement agencies, and individuals with lived experience.

Participating settlement agencies responded favourably to the technology behind the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub platform, which allowed them to view client data and support individual journeys. The project's impact was further enhanced by associated supports, including partnerships for childcare, job fairs and virtual training events.

Despite these positive outcomes, there were some persistent challenges, including the following:

- Some newcomers struggled with technology in both official languages and required high-touch settlement practitioner support to utilize the technology most effectively.
- Settlement agencies lacked capacity to train employers and clients on the knowledge required to derive maximum benefit from use of the Hub.
- The launch of the competing Work in Manitoba platform led to confusion among some employers and settlement agencies.
- Systemic issues, such as recertification, credential recognition and skill-experience mismatches pose significant ongoing hurdles for newcomers.

Ideas to address these challenges include enhancing the platform's user-friendliness for those with limited language and technology skills, expanding language options, clarifying the project's role to all stakeholders, and developing strategies to overcome systemic challenges faced by newcomers.

### **Project Results:**

- Three hundred and one employers connected with the Newcomer Employment Hub, 45 of which joined the CODE Coalition, pledging to enhance EDI practices within their organization.

- Fifteen settlement agencies connected to the Hub to provide ongoing support to newcomer job seekers and employers.
- As of March 31, 2024, 3,973 job seekers had joined the Hub.
- During the lifetime of the project, 1,135 job opportunities were posted for a total of 3,008 positions.
- Thanks to its job-matching technology, 4,396 job applications were received through the Hub.

## ★ Why It Matters

The Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub made it easier and more straightforward for employers to identify the skills and hire the talent they needed. Employers saved time by creating a single job posting for vacant roles and simultaneously sharing that posting with 15 settlement agencies.

Following an initial positive experience, many employers returned to the Hub to post new jobs. Over time, additional settlement agencies and newcomer job seekers joined the growing project.

Unlike most job boards, the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub was designed exclusively for newcomer needs. It features artificial intelligence to notify newcomers of job matches, provides wraparound support to job seekers, and trains employers on the importance of inclusivity.



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The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce's reputation attracted employers previously unconnected with settlement agencies, thereby enhancing the employers' access to this labour market. Staff at newcomer-serving organizations and newcomers received training to use the portal and its features, including relevant labour market insights.

This comprehensive approach, which focused on inclusivity, technology and continuous learning, made the project more successful by offering a holistic solution to the multiple labour market challenges that many newcomers face.

The project supported the mandate of organizations to assist newcomers with their settlement needs, which includes employment. It increased the connection between these agencies and employers, which is a long-term benefit for both the organizations and the newcomers they serve. Enhanced collaboration between service providers and employers is essential for creating more effective pathways to employment for newcomers.

## ▶ What's Next

As of April 1, 2024, the Winnipeg Newcomer Employment Hub has merged with another Magnet-supported project, Work in Manitoba, which was originally launched by Economic Development Winnipeg.

Moving forward, both portals will operate under the Work in Manitoba name. This strategic alignment will enhance talent recruitment and retention by consolidating efforts and providing a unified platform for Manitoba employers and local, national and international job seekers.

Have questions about our work? Do you need access to a report in English or French? Please contact [communications@fsc-ccf.ca](mailto:communications@fsc-ccf.ca).

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