

## Candidates sign up for forum on jobless immigrants

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#### Municipal Election

Heading into the municipal election, council candidates in Waterloo Region are lining up to participate in a forum organized to spotlight how skills of foreign-trained immigrants are going to waste.

The forum, which will be held in Kitchener next Wednesday, two days after the Nov. 10 municipal election, follows a survey of about 200 highly trained and educated immigrants living in Waterloo Region.

The survey was prepared by the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services, a non-profit social research organization in downtown Kitchener.

Senior researcher Rich Janzen said yesterday he's impressed that 12 municipal candidates from across Waterloo Region have already promised to attend the forum at the Polish Legion, 601 Wellington St.N.

"Even though this is a provincial and federal issue, municipal people are recognizing it is a community issue and want to add their voices to those trying to make change," Janzen said.

He said regional employers and agencies who already work hard to help highly educated, foreign-trained newcomers will also attend the lunchtime forum.

The survey showed that immigrant trade and professional skills are being wasted because of ignorance, discrimination and overt forms of racism exhibited by some employers, regulatory bodies and Canadian society.

Authors of the one-year, \$100,000 survey examined experiences of male and female immigrants between the ages of 25 and 54 living in Waterloo Region who were told, before leaving their home countries, that their job skills matched those required in Canada.

Instead 68 per cent are unemployed and many work part time.

Among those employed, the survey found that 45 per cent have jobs unrelated to their educational and professional backgrounds.

Researchers scrutinized the cases of 29 people with training and experience in medical and other professions identified as the top 10 in demand.

Research revealed that, prior to coming to Canada, more than half had completed bachelor's degrees and 32 per cent had either a master's or doctoral degree.

The study, financed by Heritage Canada, noted only one of the 29 immigrants is working in an appropriate professional area. Despite additional training and classes in Canada, the remaining 28 were either unemployed or working part time in a different profession.

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