

## COMMUNITY COUNSELLORS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS INFORMATION IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES

The Ontario government is reaching out to vulnerable workers through various community and cultural organizations to provide information about employment standards in Ontario.

### **A Commitment to Diversity**

Ontario's diversity is a tremendous source of strength and enables Ontario do business with the world. In Ontario, people come from some 200 countries and speak more than 130 languages. Ontario's diversity helps advance a strong and prosperous province that provides our people with a high quality of life.

### **A Commitment to Outreach**

Protecting rights in the workplace and offering resources to help workers and employers achieve compliance with employment standards is vital to ensuring healthy communities and a strong Ontario.

The Ministry of Labour was originally approached by the Centre for Information and Community Services (CICS) in November 2004, and asked to help train their counsellors.

CICS wanted to provide employment standards information to their clients in other languages. They are able to provide outreach services to members of several immigrant communities in their own languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Tamil, Urdu, Sindhi, Hindi, Arabic and South Sudanese.

A pilot training session took place on September 29-30, 2005. Twenty-six CICS staff came away with a better understanding of the Employment Standards Act, 2000 (ESA). They learned how to explain the rights workers have in the workplace, and what workers should do if they think their rights may have been violated.

### **Other Initiatives**

- The Ministry of Labour is working with the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) to market the training program developed for CICS to other community groups. It is also working with OCASI to develop a self-learning package for professionals serving immigrants on how to help their clients know and assert their employment standards rights.

- The government is also undertaking further strategic awareness/outreach measures focussed on both employers and groups serving vulnerable workers, including:
  - Monthly presentations at Ministry of Economic Development and Trade seminars: “Doing Business in Ontario” for new immigrant entrepreneurs
  - Working with the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association to provide employment standards information to its members
  - Working with the Settlement and Integration Services Organization of Hamilton to develop training and support similar to that provided for CICS.
- In addition, in October 2005, the Minister of Labour announced increased proactive employment standards inspections to protect vulnerable employees. A Dedicated Enforcement Team of Employment Standards Officers will carry out 2,500 proactive workplace inspections over the next year to ensure workplaces are in compliance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000.

### **Employment Standards Act Resources**

- Four easy-to-understand brochures about workplace rights in 21 languages available on the Ministry of Labour website [www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca) and from Government Information Centres.
- A revised and simplified employment standards poster, which must be displayed in all workplaces. It is now free and easily downloaded from the Ministry of Labour website [www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca). It is also available in 21 languages.
- The Workplace Gateway ([www.serviceontario.ca/workplacegateway](http://www.serviceontario.ca/workplacegateway)) – a one-stop Internet site where both employers and workers can access information.

In 2004 and 2005 the ministry reached out to over 100 organizations to seek their assistance in providing information on employment standards to their clients or members. These are primarily groups in the Greater Toronto Area serving vulnerable workers and specifically new immigrants, as well as selected employer groups.

-30-

Contact:  
 Belinda Sutton  
 Ministry of Labour  
 416-326-7405

*Disponible en français*

[www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca)