



ActiveCitizen

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"This has been a busy and exciting time at our Ministry. We have launched the Partnership Project report and begun implementing its recommendations. We have also taken action in the face of federal cuts to keep our settlement agencies open and serving our province's newcomers. And we will continue to press for a new Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement that helps our newcomers succeed, and that helps protect Ontario's economic future."

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.



Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement Negotiations Underway

Negotiations for a new Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) are now underway. The current agreement expires on March 31, 2011.

The province is pushing for a deal that will not only help newcomers succeed but one that will also strengthen Ontario's economy.

Ontario's birth rate is declining and the population is aging. Immigrants help replenish our workforce; they help our businesses connect to every market in the world; they create new markets and products here, in Ontario, and nationally. The sooner newcomers are able to apply their skills, the better for them, their families and our economy. That's why settlement and integration services are important and necessary.

That's also why Ontario is pushing for the same treatment the federal government as already given to other provinces – British Columbia, Quebec and Manitoba.

Ontario is seeking a new deal that:

- Provides better services that will help newcomers settle and succeed in Ontario
- Gives the province a stronger voice in selecting newcomers that come to the province;
- Reduces administrative burdens and duplication by flowing funds directly to the province; and
- Reverses the \$44 million in unilateral federal cuts to settlement services.

Ontario continues to receive more immigrants than the western and Atlantic provinces combined. Helping them contribute to Ontario's success is vital to the province's future, and integral to the province's present and future economy.

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Important dates

April

1 – Yom ha-Shoah or Yad Vasham (Holocaust Memorial Day)

3 – Independence Day (Guinea)

4 – Independence Day (Senegal)

7 – World Health Day (UN)

9 – Independence Day

Ontario Takes Action To Support Not-For-Profits

On March 3, Ontario released the [Partnership Project Report](#) a new strategy to strengthen its relationship with the not-for-profit (NFP) sector.

The government is doing this for both economic and social reasons.



Economically, Ontario's not-for-profit sector employs one million people and represents seven percent of our gross domestic product – close to \$50 billion of the province's economy. This makes the sector larger than the auto and the construction sectors combined.

Not-for-profits also partner with more than five million Ontarians who volunteer more than 800 million hours annually.

Almost everyone in this province has been helped by a not-for-profit organization or volunteered for one of Ontario's 46,000 not-for-profit agencies.

To help guide the strategy, the Partnership Advisory Group is being created and will include leaders from the NFP, public and private sectors. And the Partnership Project Office will also be established to help renew, streamline, and modernize the government's relationship with community organizations and provide better coordination.

The recommendations contained in the Report are the product of eight months of consultation with the sector that took place between April and December last year.

Ontario's not-for-profits deliver services to Ontario families and help sustain communities across the province through programs supporting health, culture, social services, sport and recreation, housing, environmental conservation and economic development.

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(Georgia)
13 – Vaisakhi (commemorates the founding of the Khalsa Sikh community in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh)
17 – Independence Day (Syria), (Mauritius)
10 - 16 National Volunteer Week
18 – Independence Day (Zimbabwe)
10 – May 1 – ChangeTheWorld – Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge
2011 is International Year for People of African Descent



Encouraging Youth to ChangeTheWorld

[ChangeTheWorld](#) celebrates its fourth year in April launching on April 10 and ending on May 1.

ChangeTheWorld has one goal: get high school teens to volunteer in their community. The bonus is they can get community involvement hours they need to graduate from high school.

Last year 11,328 youth volunteered across Ontario contributing 41,683 hours".

We sat down with Billy Morrison, a former recipient of the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers and a member of the Campaign's [Youth Advisory Committee](#) to ask him about youth volunteerism.

How did you get started?

I started volunteering when I was in grade 7 timekeeping and scorekeeping at the local arena.

Did you continue to volunteer in high school?

In high school I organized a ball hockey tourney that raised \$200 for the Terry Fox Foundation – it was then that I realized I enjoyed making a difference and that I could make a difference. I already had my 40 hours of community service by the end of grade 9. Throughout high school I continued to organize volunteer events.

What are the benefits and what did you gain?

Volunteering gives you more than you put in. It helps to build confidence and composure; you gain massive amounts of knowledge and experience; you gain a sense of accomplishment and you learn networking skills. You also make a lot of new friends.

Where would you suggest a young person get started?

First find out what kind of volunteer activities might interest you. Then talk to family and friends see if they know of any opportunities. As well, many cities and towns have a local [volunteer centre](#) that you can check out. Finally, it's really important to get started right away in high school.



GEO – Helping Internationally Trained Individuals

An engineer immigrates to Canada from India. Before arriving she has researched her new home through [Welcome to Ontario](#). She knows about Ontario's school system, how to get a driver's license, where she and her family are going to live and most importantly, how to go about finding a job through [Global Experience Ontario](#) or GEO.



GEO offers career services to foreign trained individuals at no cost, wherever they live in the province.

Since opening its doors in 2006, GEO has served more than 7,000 individuals by providing information about licensing and registration in Ontario's [14 non-health regulated professions](#).

Information is personalized to the individual's circumstances, helping to make the process of getting a license or registration in a regulated profession easier and faster.

Most individuals are referred to a range of agencies based on their need. For example, in 2009-10, GEO made almost 19,500 referrals to regulatory bodies, [Employment Ontario](#), community agencies, [bridging programs](#), [language training](#), [financial assistance](#), and [internship](#) and mentoring programs.

GEO also works closely with the Ontario regulatory bodies, other government offices, educational institutions and community agencies that serve internationally trained professionals.

GEO has also established a vibrant partnership with the [Canadian Immigration Integration Project](#) to help incoming professionals better integrate into the Ontario labour market.



Volunteer Service Awards – 25 Years of Honouring Ontario's Volunteers

This year, the VSAs will celebrate their 25th anniversary by recognizing approximately 10,000 volunteers in [48 ceremonies](#) across Ontario.

Nominations for the Volunteer Service Awards come from volunteer organizations – not the government. The VSAs are truly a people's choice awards. Since 1986, more than 150,000 Ontario volunteers have received recognition through the [Volunteer Service Awards](#) to recognize their selfless contributions to building community life in towns and cities across the province.

This year's nominations are now closed but you can nominate a worthy volunteer for the 2012 awards [on-line](#).

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Order of Ontario – Our Province's Highest Honour

Thirty Ontarians including a Nobel Prize recipient, a lifelong champion of Black Canadian history and a paraplegic lawyer and advocate for persons with disabilities were appointed to the [Order of Ontario](#) on January 27.



In 2007, [Gordon McBean](#), a professor in the departments of Geography and Political Science at the University of Western Ontario received the Nobel Peace Prize through his work with the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#). That year the panel shared the prize with former US Vice President, Al Gore for their joint efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract this change.

[Wilma Morrison](#) of Niagara Falls is a lifelong champion of Black Canadian history. She founded the Niagara Black History Association and the Central Ontario Network for Black History.

[Dave Shannon](#) of Thunder Bay is a paraplegic lawyer committed to policy and legal advocacy for the protection of human rights and community integration for persons with disabilities.

The appointees to Ontario's highest honour were chosen for their contributions to the arts, justice, science, medicine, history, politics, philanthropy, and the environment.

[The Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario](#), invested the appointees at a ceremony at Queen's Park.

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Newcomer Champion Awards Expanded

Nominations can now be made in one of three categories:

- **Community Leader** – recognizes an individual who has made an exceptional long-term commitment in ensuring that immigrants and

refugees gain equal, adequate and universal access to social services, and/or promoting active citizenship and engagement in their community or across the province.

- **Newcomer Champion** - recognizes settlement or community groups who have exemplified excellence in promoting cross-cultural understanding and/or implementing programs to help settle and connect newcomers in communities.
- **ChangeTheWorld Youth Ambassador** - recognizes an outstanding youth volunteer between the ages of 14 to 18. ***Nominations must be made by the volunteer centre where the youth participated in the ChangeTheWorld Youth Challenge Program.***

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Honours and Awards – Upcoming Deadlines

Newcomer Champion Awards – April 29

James Bartleman Aboriginal Youth Creative Writing Awards – May 31

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