

2011-03-12 – Comment – Immigration and Cuts to Settlement Services

Cuts to Settlement Services

The Conservative government is cutting \$ 53 million in settlement services nationally as of March 31. \$43 million of those cuts, 81%, will be taken from Ontario, up to 40% from the GTA alone. This will negatively affect an estimated 78,000 new Canadians—the importance of funding to help new Canadians settle here cannot be underestimated. This funding has been hugely helpful to a variety of local organizations that help people establish themselves, and to become self-sufficient and contributing members of the community. Are we better to give a gift to the largest, most profitable corporations, using borrowed money in a deficit, while letting new Canadians struggle to become self-sufficient?

These cuts in funds to help new immigrants are part of the Conservative government's highly cynical politics, and they are being made in a way that works on intimidation and fear among agencies.

Everyone benefits when new immigrants succeed---themselves, their families, their children, the community, and the economy. Unfortunately, success isn't easy for someone who has trouble with the language, the culture, and a new environment, and when one person fails because we haven't helped to ensure success, we all fail. We are concerned that the Conservatives are working on dividing the older, better established communities and the those of new immigrants. The Liberal view is that we are all stronger when each one is stronger—and that we need to provide strong settlement services to help newcomers with a hand up and a fair start.