

Media Release

Staying Put

More than half of Canadians not interested in moving for employment opportunities

Toronto, April 30, 2014 – According to a report released today by the Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC), more than half of Canadians have no interest in moving within Canada for employment opportunities – regardless of incentives. The news comes on the heels of controversy surrounding the federal government’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program and points to a broader concern facing employers looking to attract high skilled labour.

The survey, conducted for CERC by Ipsos Reid, polled over 2,000 Canadians about their willingness to move either within or outside of their province for job opportunities. Only 10 per cent indicated an eagerness to move, while one third said they might be persuaded to take a job requiring them to move if the right conditions and incentives were in place.

“On the surface these results are not surprising,” said Stephen Cryne, President and CEO, Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) “Generally people like stability and resist change, particularly the kind that might involve uprooting their family and moving away from their social networks.”

“That said, the staunch position held by so many Canadians is deeply concerning for those businesses looking to fill high skilled positions,” added Cryne. “Clearly more work needs to be done to influence and change these firmly held positions and promote the broader benefits of labour mobility for both employers and employees.”

What’s in it for me?

The right incentive matters, especially when considering how to move the 34 per cent of Canadians who would consider a relocation to another province. The top three incentives selected by those who would consider a move to another province were:

- 20 per cent raise in pay plus all expenses paid by employer (48%)
- role guarantee i.e., return to the current role after two years (39%) and;
- assistance for spouse/partner to obtain employment in the new location (31%)

Role of Government:

In terms of policies the federal government could implement to incent employees to consider relocating for employment, respondents who expressed a willingness to move to another province, identified the following as a top choice:

- Allow an employer to provide me with a tax-free housing allowance for up to six months to allow a person to be settled in the new location – 52 per cent
- Ability for my employer to provide a nontaxable interest free loan of up to \$100,000 for the purchase of a home in the new location – 43 per cent
- Allow a tax deduction for duplicate housing costs to a maximum of \$10,000 per year for

- up to two years – 38 per cent
- Provide a tax credit for the costs incurred in traveling to a location in order to obtain employment – 36 per cent

“This study reveals some of the real action that government and business can take together to get Canadians moving to areas where jobs are going unfilled,” said Cryne. “Given the raging debate about the use of temporary foreign workers to fill vacancies, this report should convince all stakeholders that it’s time for meaningful dialogue around Canada’s skills gap and the role labour mobility can play in addressing the issue.”

According to a 2013 report from Statistics Canada and Haver Analytics, the percentage of the Canadian population moving between provinces has been in steady decline since 1977, when 1.5 per cent of the population was mobile, to less than one per cent in 2012.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in a 2013 report, recommends that “Canada should also reduce barriers to geographical and occupational mobility” as a way of easing rates of unemployment and improving the economy.

Other findings from the study are that 52 per cent of employed Canadians believe that they are “suitably employed”, while 21 per cent feel they are, or might be, underemployed in their current occupation.

(These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between March 18th to 20th, 2014 on behalf of the Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC). For more details about the study and methodology please visit www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/)

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For further information and interview requests:

Catherine O'Neill

*Manager Marketing & Membership Services Canadian Employee Relocation Council
416.593.9812 coneill@cerc.ca*

About CERC

The Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to removing barriers that restrict mobility and deployment of human capital, which are vitally important to Canada’s future prosperity. Established in 1982, the Council represents the interests of its members on workforce mobility matters. Many of the Council’s members are listed in Canada’s Financial Post Top 500.