Potential Employers Abroad

SERV has information on the general employment situation for all countries where we have missions, plus lists of potential employers. This information can be discussed in individual counselling sessions with the Spousal Employment Counsellor. Once the posting is confirmed, a letter or telegram can be sent to the Mission to inquire about specific employment possibilities.

Spousal Employment Workshops

SERV also offers workshops for spouses preparing for a posting, on topics such as Teaching English or French as a Second Language, Community Coordinator workshop, Freelance Editing and Writing, and Consular training.

Reimbursement for Professional Association Dues and Training

Spouses on posting who were employed in their profession up until six months prior to departure should consult FSD 17 regarding reimbursement of dues to professional associations while abroad, and costs of mandatory retraining on return to Canada. For reimbursement, proof of employment in the relevant profession to within six months of being posted, proof of prior membership in the association, a letter from the professional association certifying the requirement of such dues, and the original receipt for payment of the dues should be submitted to SERV (attn: Spousal Employment) with a completed Travel Expense Claim form . In subsequent years at the same posting, one need only submit the receipt with a completed Travel Expense Claim form. Only original receipts are accepted.

This directive also covers the cost of a professionally prepared curriculum vitae to assist spouses in finding suitable employment. Spouses who were employed until six months prior to departure from Canada may claim up to $350 in actual costs for a professionally prepared curriculum vitae. Costs must normally be incurred within six months following arrival at the new place of duty.

Leave Without Pay From the Public Service

Spouses employed in the Public Service should arrange for a leave of absence from their present position, to facilitate re-employment once they return. Under various collective Agreements between the Treasury Board and Alliances, at the request of an employee, leave without pay for a period of up to five years shall be granted to an employee whose spouse is temporarily relocated. Extensions beyond five years are sometimes granted in the event of a cross-posting. Superannuation contributions must be paid for periods of leave without pay. Contributions are compulsory, and are double the amount the contributor would have paid if he or she had not been absent. They are paid at the double rate since the employee has to pay both his or her own share and the employer's share of contributions, amounting to a triple deduction once the current contribution is included. Upon the employee's return to duty they may be paid either:

a) in a lump sum payment within 30 days of the employee's return to work, or

b) by deducting from salary in equal instalments beginning from his or her return to duty and extending over a period equal to the period of leave without pay.

If you are employed by the Public Service, it is possible to get your position back if you are on leave without pay for one year. In other words, your position will be protected. After that and for a period of four more years (for a total of five years), you are eligible to apply for other positions and may be put on a priority list at the Public Service Commission. Your own department might offer you other positions as well. It is wise to keep in touch with your department, reminding them of your name and situation, and of your interest in returning to work there.