



SOMALI IMMIGRANT AID ORGANIZATION

The Somali Immigrant Aid Organization (SIAO) was founded in April 1986 as a non-profit organization committed to addressing the immigration, education, health, social, culture, and economics development needs of Somali-Canadians and other immigrants in Canada, through its program and services. We were incorporated in 1987 and hired our first staff in 1988 to bridge need for information and referral in the Somali language for newcomers predominantly responding to the escalation of civil war in Somalia.

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What Do We Provide?

We provide the following to any resident who seeks our support (some services in partnership)

- Language Instructions for Newcomers (LINC) Program
- Health and Community Programs (i.e.: PWW, HIV/AIDS)
- Youth Opportunities program
- Family Support programs
- Pre-Employment Development and Employment counseling / Workshops
- Information and referral services on Immigration, and Housing
- Community Development & Community economics Development programs
- Translation/interpretation services

Language Instruction for Newcomers Program (LINC Program)

The Somali Immigrant Aid Organization offers language instruction for newcomers to Canada for all eligible new immigrants. This program has proved to be successful and beneficial to the members of our community.

Here, it is of great-significance to point out, that we are grateful to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for their continued support of this important and vital project. The clients we serve in the LINC program cover the full range of age groups and the majority of our students are young women with children, senior women and men.

As always, we provide onsite childminding to the parents attending LINC classes. We also provide a standard of care that protects the health and safety of the children in our program.



Program without Walls (PWW)

Program without Walls (PWW) is a coalition of seven agencies working together to support the health and development of children aged birth to six years in the former City of York. Programs offered by PWW are funded through the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) under the Public Health Agency of Canada

The SIAO Community Food and Nutrition Program assists the community in implementing community kitchens and food buying clubs, organizing various locations and providing a variety of information sessions on nutrition, cooking, budgeting, etc.

The project also coordinates with community parents, volunteers, and staff of other programs within "Program without Walls". It also provides support and referral services to children and families living in high-risk situations.

In addition to that it educates and assists parents in performing duties such as cleaning, preparing, portioning and storing food and the appropriate method of required for the accommodation of food orders according to the request of parents, dietitian and resource persons.

Youth Opportunities program

SIAO Youth Engagement Initiative undertakes is to involve a group of young people out of school in a focused program of employment preparation and leadership development in 3 specific areas: community program development, pre-apprenticeship development and communications and media programming.



A second component of the program will be to match the students with Somali University students from York, Humber College, Ryerson University and University of Toronto in the capacity as mentors.

We expect to enroll 12 youth in each intake, work with them approximately 6 weeks on basic life skills, resulting in a draft individual action plan, and work a further 6 weeks on personal research and exploration on how to implement the action plan.

From approximately week 12 to 20, participants will have at least one opportunity for a local work placement with 2 objectives: A: to gain work experience which can be part of the participant's future resume; B: to provide for mentorship opportunities in areas of interest for participants.

Pre-Employment Development Program

Program Goal: Orientation to the Canadian Work Place for Newcomers and others who have not been in the labour force for at least one year. Clients will acquire basic skills for personal assessment and the completion of a personal

action plan for the next step. This is an eight week Pre-Employment course followed by 16 weeks during which the agency assists the client to move to other programs, social support or employment.



Community Voice - HIV/AIDS Prevention Project

The Somali Immigrant Aid Organization continues to work to raise awareness, information, Education about HIV/AIDS in the Somali Community in Toronto. We are grateful to Toronto Public Health for their continued support and for giving SIAO the opportunity to educate our community about "The Truth of HIV/AIDS".

- We recruit, train and support volunteers to assist with the project
- We write educational articles regarding HIV/AIDS to Somali Newspapers
- HIV/AIDS education programs via Somali Community Radio
- Provide escorting services, interpretation and referrals to mainstream HIV/AIDS service providers

Volunteer program:

Volunteers make up a big portion of our organization they provide the essential support for the numerous programs that we run all year round.



Board of Directors:

The board members are recruited from the larger Canadian community across Ontario.



Mohamed Nur, Board of Director

Cooperation with other agencies

Somali Immigrant Aid Organization has always worked closely with community groups, coalitions and local residents in order to meet our mandate and the needs of our community. Through strong collaborative efforts with our partner agencies, we were able to establish workshops and training that will provide information and services to our clients and target population.



Serving newcomers since 1994