

advertorial


 The logo for vpi (Vocational Preparation Inc.) features the lowercase letters 'vpi' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The 'v' and 'p' are connected at the bottom, and the 'i' has a solid blue dot above it.

The first step on your pathway to employment

Are you unemployed and looking for work? If you live in Brampton, Halton or Dufferin, there is help available close to home. Since October 2005, vpi has opened seven Employment Assessment Centres in the area, to provide assistance to people looking for work.

The first step onto vpi's Pathway to Employment program, which is funded by Service Canada, is to attend a free group information session at one of their assessment centres. "People may not know what kind of programs and services are available in their area," says Anne Reycraft, vpi's senior program coordinator for Brampton/Halton/Dufferin. "The presentation acquaints people with all the community services available in their area to assist them in seeking employment."

Paul Barbosa, general manager of funded services in the west for vpi, says "We're the initial entry point, and we refer to other programs and services. Once clients have been through a group session, we meet with them and create an individual return-to-work action plan. This plan outlines the steps, including referrals to community agencies."

"We also provide case management," Barbosa says. "A client may, for example, go through a Career Exploration program. Then we follow up at the end of the program to review their employment goal before moving on to the next step. We stay with the clients from the time they first call until they find a job."

When you're looking for work, you want help that's individualized to your specific situation. Perhaps you've been let go from your job and just want

to brush up on your skills to make you more marketable for your next job. vpi can help you make the right connection to Skills Training services. For example, a receptionist looking for a new job might benefit from upgraded computer skills. Short courses are available on a wide range of topics to help prepare you for employment. These Skills Training courses are also funded by the Government of Canada.

Other available programs include Career Exploration, Career Counselling, Job Matching, Job Finding Clubs, Resumé Writing, Job Search Assistance, Job Creation, Self-Employment and Job Development Services.

As part of the Job Development Services, vpi will refer clients to Wage Subsidy programs. These programs help match an employee with an employer, while offering an incentive to the employer.

What sets vpi apart from many other agencies is that they are available for everyone. "We're the first stop for all employment services in the community," Barbosa explains. "And we cater to a wide range of clients: people in transition, persons with disabilities, youth, and new Canadians. And if they need a

more specialized service, we refer them to the most appropriate intervention or program."

"Yes, that's part of the return-to-work action plan," says Reycraft. "The plan outlines the steps they need to make, including any referrals to community agencies, whether it's for credit counselling or help for the homeless. We also work closely with the other employment services, and make sure the needs of the client are met."

The people you meet with, the case managers, are highly qualified workers. They all have a background in career counselling, with an undergraduate degree or college diploma.

There are certain criteria to be eligible for vpi's Employment Assessment services. You must be unemployed and seeking work. You have to be eligible to work in Canada. You must not be in school full-time and you have to reside in Brampton, Halton or Dufferin.

vpi is a privately-owned, wholly Canadian organization that has been operating government-funded programs for over 10 years. And they have been helping people get back to work for over 18 years, getting their start in vocational rehabilitation, a service they continue to offer in addition to current programs.

As well as their government-funded programs, vpi also offers corporate services and disability management services to organizations, for example, assessment, case management, return-to-work facilitation and independent medical evaluations.

Their head office is located at One Yorkdale Place and they have offices from Ottawa to Kitchener-Waterloo and as far north as Owen Sound and Collingwood.

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The seven Brampton/Halton/Dufferin Employment Assessment Centres are conveniently located in Brampton, Caledon, Oakville, Burlington, Georgetown, Milton, and Orangeville. Call their toll-free number at 1-888-336-9550 and you will be directed to the office closest to you. Or you can visit the vpi website at www.vpi-inc.com, where you'll find a list of offices across the province, along with maps and contact numbers.