

PARTNERSHIP-WIDE

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p>1.</p> <p>Champion advocacy and engage with elected officials, policy and systems leaders</p>	<p>IP Council members, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urged the Federal and Ontario Governments to invest in Waterloo Region's immigration priorities in submissions to the 2021 Budget Consultations and met MPs to discuss further. Advocated for immigrant-responsiveness within the regional pandemic response across sectors, contributing to a developing health equity approach, disaggregated data collection/dissemination, attention to specific challenges, language access and culturally appropriate responses. Supported ROWs development of community outreach to diverse communities, multi-lingual resources on prevention measures, vaccine and more, pop-up vaccine clinics. Advised the Kitchener Mayor's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on anti-racism developments, informed disaggregated data strategy development, equitable hiring and retention strategies and community fund development. Presented the 2020-2025 Community Action Plan to the Waterloo City Council, securing their support and ongoing engagement.
<p>2.</p> <p>Build awareness of the Immigration Partnership and beneficial impact of immigration</p>	<p>IP Council members, partners, staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through Council/SG partner and staff engagement in pandemic tables and a March presentation to the Rotary Club of Kitchener, grew awareness of IP, immigration and the experiences of immigrants in Waterloo Region. Significant social media engagement via Twitter and Facebook to promote the importance and contributions of immigrants to Canada. Approx. 3,700 followers and 153,000 impressions across these platforms in the period.
<p>3.</p> <p>Lead collaborative learning and community education</p>	<p>Partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to grow partner capacity for anti-racism work by hosting an Anti-Racism 102 training for all partners (ongoing from Mar-Jun) in implementation of IPs Anti-Racism Commitment. Excellent engagement and feedback on the first sessions. Staff participated national Metropolis immigration conference to bring learning to our work.

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the EAC, continued to develop IPs Data and Evaluation Strategy to align with the new CAP and incorporate anti-racism lens. Developed the 2021 Immigrant Survey (coming in June). • Shared the 2020 Partner Survey findings with IP Council. Planned a virtual session to share findings further and discuss implications. • Published 2021 reference guide on Top Languages for Interpretation & Translation to inform Public Health vaccine outreach efforts and community efforts generally. Provided KW Multicultural Centre a list of interpretation language gaps identified while gathering top languages list info. • Helped build partner data/research knowledge and capacity. Shared 1. refugee numbers with faith-based private sponsorship group, 2. ethnic profile of WR to inform Children and Youth Planning Table youth survey, 3. number of newcomers working on COVID frontline for Compass, 4. consulted Region of Waterloo Housing staff re. data disaggregation and ethnicity survey questions, 5. immigrant retention rates to YMCA, 6. permanent resident arrivals data to KPL for strategic planning, etc. Participated with other Waterloo Region community collaboratives in discussions about equity measurement. • Led a collaborative discussion with Local Immigration Partnerships across Canada on possible research collaboration between LIPs – possible community of practice and ongoing sharing of experience/resources may develop. Consulted with staff at other LIPs regarding theory of change models and performance measurement. • Regular updates to the Immigration portal, with 6,142 visits by 5,134 unique visitors and 427 visits to the COVID landing page. Eight Weekly Updates on Covid-19 and Immigration to 539 subscribers, with a 33% open rate and 1,266 opens. Shared relevant research reports via the Immigration Weekly to grow community knowledge of immigration matters.
<p>4. Break down silos within the Partnership and the community to promote immigrant success</p>	<p>SG partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement of a Council and Steering Group-wide approach to implementation of IPs Anti-Racism Commitment and evaluation framework development. • Continued to share resources, connections, provide support between BSG and SSG partners and pandemic groups on language and interpretation issues. • Growing collaboration and alignment by regular staff engagement with WR Crime Prevention Council, Children and Youth Planning Table and Wellbeing Waterloo Region peers (focus on aligning anti-racism/equity in governance, data and evaluation, public education, and more), and other Local Immigration Partnerships across Ontario/Canada.

SETTLE STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p>1.</p> <p>Develop communication strategies and tools to simplify service systems and pathways for immigrants</p>	<p>ROW Citizen Service and Public Health, settlement partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners/staff continue to work with KW4 Ontario Health Team region partners in assessing critical needs in refugee/newcomer health – focus on mental health, interpretation and pandemic-related needs. In the Interpretation Services work stream, developed a common interpretation commitment statement and are building formal commitment by KW4 OHT partners. Continuing outreach to primary health care providers to register/use free LHIN-funded interpretation service. Working to add interpretation to the Emergency Department internal referral system to streamline and increase interpretation usage in hospital settings. With Reception House, provided guidance to Wilfrid Laurier University Political Science class to further local research on language interpretation processes at local organizations, municipalities, etc.
<p>2.</p> <p>Drive collaboration and innovation within the settlement sector</p>	<p>YMCA, KWMC, Reception House, Carizon, MCRS, IP staff</p> <p>IP partners and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported YMCA, KWMC and Reception House in exploring service coordination and integration initiatives. Developed a shared list of staff at each organization (with languages spoken by settlement workers) and a list of programs to enhance inter-organization knowledge and referrals. Set up a Microsoft Teams collaborative space for sharing documents, discussions and building relationships. Developing a coordinated pathway/process for GARs that move to WR from other communities in Canada. Convened weekly executive leadership meetings to facilitate collaboration and alignment. Hosted shared learning events related to needs identified at SSG or action group tables (e.g. learning session about London program to reach out to and support landlords re. renting to newcomers; planning a session about summer camp programs to inform outreach to newcomer and low-English ability communities) Staff and partners continue to participate on advisory groups for provincial/national research projects (e.g. Allies in Refugee Integration exploring settlement-private sponsor collaboration in Ontario, Virtual Mental Health Access national research project)
<p>3.</p> <p>Leverage service providers and planning tables as effective immigrant supports through strong</p>	<p>Settlement partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners and staff are supporting KW4 Ontario Health Team (OHT) groups, which have identified refugees as a priority population, to determine health, mental health, and language interpretation resources and pathways for refugees. Part of the KW4 OHT Refugee Health working group and the Refugee Mental Health Working Group. IP and LHIN staff to co-lead KW4 Interpretation Services working group comprised of many partners. IP contribution also included research into interpretation requirements by professional health colleges/associations to be incorporated into local communications/advocacy.

relationships and collaboration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Microsoft Teams collaborative space for ongoing sharing and referrals between local newcomer-serving agencies, International Student Advisory Group, WLU and Conestoga College to support international students. Shared related events, information and agencies for referrals. • Maintained connection to housing and other community action tables to bring forward immigrant perspectives. Staff & partners participated in Leadership Waterloo Region’s April 2021 Affordable Housing Café. • Local housing providers met regularly through IP’s Immigrant Housing Working Group to share and problem-solve. • Language learning providers (now also including francophone College Boreal) meet periodically to share and problem-solve. • Advocated with Ontario 211 information service to enhance interpretation/translation access to their services (email/chat/web)
<p>4.</p> <p>Engage networks of private stakeholders in supporting immigrants</p>	Settlement and other partners, IP staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on IPs video series featuring Landlord Award recipients, IP, Reception House and Compass are developing a series of videos about newcomers finding home in Waterloo Region. • Connected 1) a volunteer interested in providing financial literacy workshops for newcomers, to local immigrant-serving agencies, 2) a Rotary volunteer interested in offering train-the-trainer sessions for newcomer-serving agencies on Zoom supports for newcomers, 3) ESL teacher looking for a speaker to address vaccine hesitancy within her class to Public Health • A realtor in IP’s Immigrant Housing Working Group undertook an informal survey of fellow realtors (36 respondents, shared with 11,700 individuals) about their challenges/hesitations with renting to newcomers, then shared with the working group to inform planning.

WORK STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who’s Leading	Progress Update
<p>1.</p> <p>Develop campaigns and tools to amplify the value proposition and economic contribution of immigrants to employers</p>	WSG members/IP staff	<p>Ongoing placement of strategic ads in Chamber newsletters and directories, social media and virtual events for awareness building and message sharing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted via Chamber of Commerce (Cambridge and Greater KW) events and publications. Ie: Business Awards, annual publication • Gaining greater awareness through the use of social media: LinkedIn posts related to hiring immigrant talent and associated topics.

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p>2.</p> <p>Foster cohesive service to employers and immigrant job-seekers across sectors and the talent spectrum</p>	<p>WSG members/ IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted booths at virtual job fairs to connect with employers and boost awareness. Worked closely with employment service partners and employers to build the bridge for immigrants to access meaningful employment. Continued to work closely with the Workforce Planning Board (WFPB) to market their new FindyourJob.ca job board The Talent Hub task group have been meeting and reviewing various platforms to potentially partner with. Three meetings occurred and a chart of “must haves” created. Particularly interested in FindYourJob.ca. The group will continue to explore options through a partnership with World Education Services (WES), which will include review of the hub concept and other work.
<p>3.</p> <p>Engage networks of employers to hire and retain immigrants</p>	<p>WSG members/IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSG's role is to bring awareness to employers that immigrants are invaluable to their organization, that they are here and ready to work. Also to look at processes and systems that will allow for employers to easily access this talent and make connections. During COVID the message stays the same: Immigrants are a great source of talent. Engaging employer partners continued to be challenging but many sectors were still hiring and in need of talent. Some the roles are not what immigrants are looking for but we continue to share any job postings received within our network so that a bridge can be created for immigrants to access employers. Worked closely with the WFPB team on the final in a series of three virtual job fairs which coincided with Global Skills Conference and enabled 20 employers to engage with over 200 internationally trained immigrants. The job fairs were a huge success but much more challenging to deliver virtually as there is much education for both the employer and the job seeker. Continued to participate in Reception House's Working Together Program to recommend and create connections to employers to create job opportunities for refugees. This 3 year pilot program just wrapped up, with hundreds of refugees in employment, and new plans are being put into place. We are securing recognition of the employers who engaged in these programs by the Regional Chair's Office and will provide by IP to encourage their ongoing engagement in hiring immigrants. Continued to partner with the Greater KW Chamber on the weekly Business Success webinars. The topics directly related to IP's work have been: Anti-racism in the workplace, Working Together Program, Future of Work (WFPB). Upcoming is the #ImmigrantsWork initiative and one on hiring International Students. Between September and March 780 employers participated and grew their awareness of IP.

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with the Greater KW Chamber on two Pillars To Prosperity webinars. One on education and the other on healthcare. The discussions were focused on the impact of COVID and future plans, with specific attention to how these areas affect immigrants/are impacted by immigration. We will be working with both the Greater KW Chamber and Cambridge Chamber on immigrant related events during 2021.
<p>4.</p> <p>Collaborate with leaders and organizations (public, private and not-for-profit) to foster immigrant attraction, employment and entrepreneurship</p>	IP staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked closely with regional economic development reps via Best WR. Continue to address various sectors and what they are facing during COVID and how this group can support them. Participating in a group of leaders from regional economic development, Communitel, education and more to plan for a funding application for reskilling to bring immigrant focus. Continued to deepen connections and interactions with economic development during COVID with City of Waterloo, City of Kitchener and City of Cambridge ED reps. Participated in regular 'All Hands On' economic development meeting with business and community leaders sharing status of supports and advocating through COVID. Continued to work with the Small Business Centre, promote their workshops and make connections with immigrant service providers to improve supports for immigrant entrepreneurs. Continued to partner with other Immigration Partnerships across Southwestern Ontario to deliver webinars for employers. Four are planned for 2021. The first one focused was on "How To Hire International Students – the do's and don'ts". Participated in an employer exchange organized by Immjob across Southwestern Ontario. Continued to work with the Job Developer Group and CELC (Community Employment and Literacy Council) Through our partnership with Worldwide Education Services (WES) on a program called Immigrants Works, began working closely with WES with the ultimate goal to launch an employer playbook for Waterloo Region re: hiring immigrants and more. Currently meeting bi-weekly with WES team to develop a work plan, monthly with foundational partners, and are planning an employer workshop in the fall. This WES initiative will review IP's employer engagement work, the hub and more, and build on and enhance the work we have already been doing.

BELONG STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p>1.</p> <p>Build connections, capacity and civic engagement among ethno-cultural groups and the community at large to increase immigrant influence in policy making and social connectedness</p>	<p>BSG partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited and supported ethno-cultural group to organize and plan a virtual information session about Covid-19 vaccinations in partnership with the Region for 55 participants. Planned and organized Indigenization Training for Immigration Partnership Council, Belong Steering Group, Work Steering Group and Settle Steering Group. This 4 week certificate program will be facilitated using a holistic approach to learning by Kelly Fran Davis in the month of May (3 sessions + 1 Residential School Tour). Participated in a virtual tour of a former Mohawk Institute Indian Residential School organized by Education Woodland Cultural Centre. With the Social Inclusion Working Group, planned and organized First Ethno-Cultural Leadership Roundtable. Updated ethno-cultural groups list and ongoing efforts to make connections and build relationships. Ongoing phone and zoom meetings to build a rapport and relationship with ethno-cultural leaders and members. Many ethnocultural organizations are closed temporarily and are not delivering their services, making connection difficult. Participated in the Cambridge Mobilization Team (CMT) to maintain connections and share information.
<p>2.</p> <p>Work with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates to strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement</p>	<p>City of Waterloo, City of Cambridge, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing support to the City of Waterloo in its development of a Social Inclusion Recognition Toolkit for older adults. Continued to advocate for equity of access issues and interpretation/translation services via pandemic response groups like Psychosocial and Spiritual Working Group etc. Advocating for language to be treated with similar importance as accessibility or other equity lens' in service planning.
<p>3.</p> <p>Increase public support for immigration, and action to address racism, discrimination and foster immigrant belonging through campaigns and initiatives</p>	<p>IP Staff and Public Education Working Group (PEWG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized and implemented the March 21 Social Media Campaign for The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination from March 18 to 21. Engaged partners to share the work they are doing to make anti-racist organizational change. Number of organizations that participated – 20: Carizon, City of Cambridge, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, Coalition Of Muslim Women, Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir, Family and Children Services, Focus for Ethnic Women WR Inc., Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, Idea Exchange, Immigration Partnership Council, Kind Minds Family Wellness, Kitchener Multicultural Centre, KWAG, Orange Sky Enterprises, Reception House WR, Region of Waterloo, Volunteer Action Centre, Waterloo Public Library, YMCA of Three Rivers Number of videos - 23 (several organizations contributed multiple videos)

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
		<p>Number of speakers - 26 Social media analytics (March 18-21): 87 retweets, 6,482 video views. Videos can be watched on IP's YouTube channel or Twitter account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building capacity to address hate crime, hate incidents, racism at the individual, organizational, and community level by attending related workshops and trainings. • The PEWG continues to develop anti-racism strategies, resources and campaign – #RacialEquityWR. • Ongoing contributions to the webpage with anti-racism work/resources/connectors taking place in Waterloo Region. The webpage is housed on the IP website RacialEquityWR
<p>4. Collaborate with systems and community tables and leaders</p>	<p>Municipal partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to participate in the Pandemic Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group and Cambridge Mobilization Team. • Continue to be a member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Wellbeing Waterloo Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group

Welcome New Partners!

SSG: Ajirioghene Evi-Cobbinah (Kind Minds Family Wellness)

BSG: Rozina Shaheen (Muslim Social Services), Katy Boose (Reception House), Helen Loftin (Reception House)

Context and cross-referrals

Immigration Data and Trends

- Permanent resident arrivals in Waterloo Region were down by 34% in 2020 compared to 2019 (3,050 permanent residents arrived 2020 compared to 4,590 in 2019).
- By December 2020, monthly arrivals to Waterloo Region had begun to surpass that from a year before (265 in Dec 2020 compared to 225 in Dec 2019, and 480 in Jan 2021 compared to 390 in Jan 2020). ([IRCC data, 2021](#))

Contributors to success

- Partners have been keen to know what others are doing and partner when possible (though this is tempered by the demands of simply adapting to this quickly changing environment).
- Solid foundation of partnership and collaboration within IP has enabled us to move quickly to engage in pandemic response and address gaps.

Challenges and how we're responding

- Partners have been challenged to continue programs virtually but have moved many programs/events to virtual space using multiple methods. Outreach to individuals who are not connected to specific programs or who lack tech access/skills to connect virtually is a challenge but partners are reaching out on a one-on-one basis. Virtual programming presents some challenges and also many opportunities.

How Council or other Steering Groups can support

- Refer employers seeking talent to WSG.
- Participate in IP anti-racism training opportunities and work to embed anti-racism into your organizational practices.
- Share and nominate landlords for the IPs [2021 Newcomer Landlord Award](#).
- Review and improve as needed organizational policies on interpretation provision.

Other community initiatives and how to they relate

- The Region of Waterloo and cities of Kitchener and Waterloo are building up staff capacity to address equity, anti-racism and diversity. We are following developments and looking to align.
- Regional Council is working towards a regional anti-racism plan. This relates directly to the Belong Steering Group's goal in CAP 2020-2025 that "Immigration is widely supported and racism and discrimination are addressed through a regional Anti-Racism Strategy." It struck a community advisory committee and we continue to explore alignment.
- We are exploring formal membership with the KW4 Ontario Health Team.