

## PARTNERSHIP-WIDE

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>Champion advocacy and engage with elected officials, policy and systems leaders</b></p>	<p>IP Council members, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urged the Federal and Ontario Governments to invest in Waterloo Region's immigration priorities in oral and written submissions to the 2021 Budget Consultations.</li> <li>In a roundtable with the federal Minister of Immigration, shared Waterloo Region's priorities regarding immigration planning and service supports.</li> <li>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 and accessibility of information on prevention measures, vaccine and more.</li> <li>Advised the Regional Chair and Kitchener Mayor's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on anti-racism developments. With the Mayor's Task Force, informing disaggregated data strategy, equitable hiring and retention strategies and community fund development.</li> <li>Presented the 2020-2025 Community Action Plan to the Kitchener and Cambridge City Councils, securing their endorsement, support and ongoing engagement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>Build awareness of the Immigration Partnership and beneficial impact of immigration</b></p>	<p>IP Council members, partners, staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through Council/SG partner and staff engagement in pandemic tables, grew awareness of IP. Awareness and responsiveness to immigrant impacts growing.</li> <li>Significant social media engagement via Twitter and Facebook to promote the importance and contributions of immigrants to Canada. Attention to immigrants as essential workers in the context of the pandemic. Approx. 3,500 followers and 162,000 impressions across these platforms in the period.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p>Partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with Council to embed an anti-racist approach into IPs governance.</li> </ul>

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<p>Lead collaborative learning and community education</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refreshed Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) membership and continued to develop IPs Data and Evaluation Strategy to align with the new CAP and incorporate anti-racism lens.</li> <li>Conducted IP's 2020 Partner Survey, with EAC, including new anti-racism focus. Data being analyzed and targeted reports being drafted. Information gathering with key partners to update top languages of translation, feeding into public health communications work.</li> <li>Engaged the Centre for Community Based Research to conduct an independent evaluation of IP's employer engagement work. Evaluation completed, results discussed with WSG and Council.</li> <li>Grew partner capacity for anti-racism work by hosting an Anti-Racism 101 training for all partners in mid-Nov in implementation of <a href="#">IPs Anti-Racism Commitment</a>. Follow-up training planned.</li> <li>Helped build data/research knowledge and capacity among community partners (i.e. shared 1. analysis of Muslim women responses to IP's 2019 Immigrant Survey with Coalition of Muslim Women of KW, 2. profile of immigrants/refugees in WR to staff at GRH, 3. demographic questions with Children and Youth Planning Table, etc.).</li> <li>Shared experience/advised Local Immigration Partnerships across Canada on various topics (e.g. National Secretariat project on increasing use of settlenet.org national discussion board; PEI LIP re housing actions; Hamilton LIP re temporary resident data; Grey-Bruce LIP re interpretation actions; Durham LIP re performance measurement framework; Southwest Ontario LIPs re advocacy, employer engagement, municipal engagement, etc.)</li> <li>Regular updates to the Immigration portal, with 9,513 visits by 7,587 unique visitors and 725 visits to the COVID landing page. Eleven Weekly Updates on Covid-19 and Immigration to 499 subscribers, with a 36% open rate and 1,738 opens. Shared relevant research reports via the Immigration Weekly to grow community knowledge of immigration matters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b> 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"> <li>Engaging a Council and Steering Group-wide approach to implementation of <a href="#">IPs Anti-Racism Commitment</a> and evaluation framework development.</li> <li>Continued to share resources, connections, provide support between BSG and SSG partners and pandemic groups on language and interpretation issues.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>

## SETTLE STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>Develop communication strategies and tools to simplify service systems and pathways for immigrants</b></p>	<p>ROW Citizen Service and Public Health, settlement partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IP partners and staff continue to work with Ontario Health Team KW4 region partners in assessing critical needs in refugee/newcomer health – focusing on mental health, interpretation, and pandemic-related needs. In the Interpretation Services work stream, developed a common <a href="#">interpretation commitment statement</a> - will be seeking 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 the process and increase interpretation usage in hospital settings.</li> <li>With Reception House, engaging with a Wilfrid Laurier University Political Science class to further local research on language interpretation processes at local organizations, municipalities, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>Drive collaboration and innovation within the settlement sector</b></p>	<p>YMCA, KWMC, Reception House, Carizon, MCRS, IP staff</p> <p>IP partners and staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported YMCA, KWMC and Reception House in exploring service coordination and integration initiatives. Have developed a shared list of staff at each organization (with languages spoken by settlement workers) and a list of programs – both to enhance inter-organization knowledge and referrals. Are exploring electronic options for sharing documents and staff communication between organizations. These three organizations hosted the first of ongoing quarterly brown bag lunches for their frontline staff to build relationships and collective learning. Are developing a coordinated pathway/process for GARs that move to WR from other communities in Canada.</li> <li>Hosted shared learning events when needs are identified at SSG or action group tables (e.g. upcoming learning session about London program to reach out to and support landlords re. renting to newcomers; OW/ODSP information session for frontline staff serving newcomers – 40 attendees; hosted a meeting of local settlement organizations and the College Boreal that has recently been funded to provide francophone settlement services in the WR area)</li> <li>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)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>Leverage service providers and planning</b></p>	<p>Settlement partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners and staff are supporting <a href="#">KW4</a> 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</li> </ul>

<p><b>tables as effective immigrant supports through strong relationships and collaboration</b></p>		<p>Group. IP and LHIN staff to co-lead KW4 Interpretation Services working group comprised of many partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted a collaborative meeting with newcomer-serving agencies, International Student Advisory Group, WLU and Conestoga College to explore services available to international students. Setting up Microsoft Teams platform for ongoing connections.</li> <li>• Maintained connection to and contributed to various housing community action tables, the WR Oral Health Coalition and other community tables to bring forward immigrant perspectives.</li> <li>• Local housing providers met regularly through IP’s Immigrant Housing Working Group to share and problem-solve.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">One partner notes that due to connections made through this group 9 large families they serve were approved for the Ontario Portable Housing Benefit enabling them to move into housing that is affordable for them.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>Engage networks of private stakeholders in supporting immigrants</b></p>	<p>Settlement and other partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on IPs <a href="#">video series</a> featuring Landlord Award recipients, IP, Reception House and Compass/MCRS are developing a series of videos about newcomers finding home in Waterloo Region.</li> <li>• Connected a volunteer interested in providing creative writing workshops for newcomer youth with local agencies – as a result Carizon will be offering this workshop for local newcomer youth.</li> </ul>

## WORK STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>Develop campaigns and tools to amplify the value proposition and economic contribution of immigrants to employers</b></p>	<p>WSG members/IP staff</p>	<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"> <li>• Upcoming full page ad in the Cambridge Chamber Spectrum</li> <li>• Awareness building of IP and immigrant talent opportunities via event partnerships with the Greater KW Chamber.</li> <li>• Collaborated with Business and Economic Support Team WR (BESTWR) on webinar for restaurant/food sector, increasing awareness of the work of Immigration Partnership.</li> <li>• Hosted booths at virtual job fairs to connect with employers and boost awareness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>Foster cohesive service to employers and immigrant job-seekers across sectors and the talent spectrum</b></p>	<p>WSG members/IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked closely with employment service partners and employers to build the bridge for immigrants to access meaningful employment.</li> <li>• Continued to work closely with the Workforce Planning Board (WFPB) to market their new FindyourJob.ca job board</li> <li>• Worked with a WFPB steering team to prepare the last of three job fairs for spring 2021. The first two were held in Oct and Nov, with around 20 employers and over 250 job seekers each.</li> <li>• The Talent Hub task group is operating again. They decided to explore existing platforms or programs that can be enhanced to create the hub's foundation, hearing from Magnet, FindYourJob.ca and Immploy (forthcoming). 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>Engage networks of employers to hire and retain immigrants</b></p>	<p>WSG members/IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 to see what their current hiring needs is challenging but many sectors are still hiring and are in need of talent. Sometimes 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.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with the Workforce Planning Board on the final (of 3) virtual job fairs to create opportunities for connections to employers.</li> <li>• Continue to participate in Reception House's Working Together Program to recommend and create connections to employers to create job opportunities for refugees.</li> <li>• Worked with KW Chamber to provide a virtual training on anti-racism in the workplace for approximately 50 employers.</li> <li>• We are working with the KW Chamber on 5 more webinars. IP determines the topics, theme, questions and recruits panel members. The next one will be focused on the Working Together Project and what English Language supports are available to employers.</li> <li>• We will be working with both the Greater KW Chamber and Cambridge Chamber on immigrant related events during 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>Collaborate with leaders and organizations (public, private and not-for-profit) to foster immigrant attraction, employment and entrepreneurship</b></p>	IP staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Continued to deepen connections and interactions with economic development during COVID with City of Waterloo, City of Kitchener and City of Cambridge ED reps.</li> <li>• Participated in regular 'All Hands On' economic development meeting with business and community leaders sharing status of supports and advocating through COVID.</li> <li>• Continued to work with the Small Business Centre, promote their workshops and make connections with immigrant service providers to improve supports for immigrant entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Continued to partner with other Immigration Partnerships across Southwestern Ontario to deliver webinars for employers. There will be four delivered during 2021, with the next focused on what employers need to know about hiring International Students.</li> <li>• Continued to work with the Job Developer Group and CELC (Community Employment and Literacy Council)</li> <li>• Entered a partnership with Worldwide Education Services (WES) on a program called Immigrants Works. Originally launched as a national social media campaign, numerous programs are now being delivered as an extension. We have begun work closely beginning with WES with the ultimate goal to launch an employer playbook for Waterloo Region re: hiring immigrants and more. We are currently meeting bi-weekly with WES team to develop a work plan, meetings with foundational partners, and an employer workshop. This WES initiative will review IP's work with employer engagement activity, the hub and more. It will build on and enhance the work which we have already been doing.</li> </ul>

## BELONG STEERING GROUP

Strategic Direction	Who's Leading	Progress Update
<p><b>1.</b></p> <p><b>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</b></p>	<p>BSG partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethno-cultural groups list being updated.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Participated in the Cambridge Mobilization Team (CMT) to maintain connections and share information. Helping bring anti-racism training to CMT members.</li> <li>• Ongoing connection with groups/organizations/individuals making reassurance phone calls to address isolation and offer help and support.</li> <li>• Recruited and supported 12 ethno-cultural leaders to make a personalized video to contribute to the Welcome Cambridge Virtual event in Nov.</li> <li>• Ongoing connections and network building with the Indigenous community leaders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>Work with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates to strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement</b></p>	<p>City of Waterloo, City of Cambridge, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported and contributed to the planning of the City of Cambridge's Nov Welcome Cambridge Virtual Event.</li> <li>• Supporting City of Waterloo to develop a Social Inclusion Recognition Toolkit for senior/older adults.</li> <li>• Continued support to the Waterloo Region Police Service to host a First Response Service information session for immigrants. On hold for in-person gathering.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>Increase public support for immigration, and action to address racism, discrimination and foster immigrant belonging through campaigns and initiatives</b></p>	<p>IP Staff and Public Education Working Group (PEWG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted the fourth annual Waterloo Region Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) in Nov/Dec 2020 in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Number of Films selected - 7</li> <li>○ Number of Screenings - 13</li> <li>○ Total Numbers of Participants/audience - 270</li> <li>○ Number of Filmmakers attended - 5</li> <li>○ Number of partners/hosts – 9, including City of Cambridge, Idea Exchange, Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre, Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region, Waterloo Public Library, StudioHere, KW Art Gallery, International Migration Research Centre and City of Kitchener.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ IP hosted two screenings: 1<sup>st</sup> screening was on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> for IP Council, BSG, WSG, SSG, and IP staff. This film highlighted the subject of trauma and migration. 2<sup>nd</sup> film screening was on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> for IP and the community at large. This film explored the intersection of disability, sport, migration and ambition. Both were screened on the Zoom webinar digital platform in partnership with Waterloo Public Library. The filmmakers attended the film screening as the guest speaker.</li> <li>● BSG reviewed the overview, goals, and strategies of the Community Action Plan 2020-2025. 2021 plans are currently being elaborated. The intention for this year is to be proactive and reactive to support and respond to social isolation in ethnocultural groups.</li> <li>● Building capacity to address hate crime, hate incidents, racism at the individual, organizational, and community level by attending related workshops and trainings.</li> <li>● The PEWG continues to develop anti-racism strategies, resources and campaign – a #RacialEquityWR.</li> <li>● Ongoing contributions to the webpage with anti-racism work/resources/connectors taking place in Waterloo Region. The webpage is housed on the IP website <a href="#">RacialEquityWR</a></li> <li>● Staff and partners continue to be part of the Finding Hope Movement planning/information committee. Webpage: <a href="#">Finding Hope</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>Collaborate with systems and community tables and leaders</b></p>	<p>Municipal partners, IP staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to participate in the Pandemic Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group and Cambridge Mobilization Team.</li> <li>● Continue to be a member of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Wellbeing Waterloo Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group</li> </ul>

## Welcome New Partners!

**SSG:** Sophia Stanberry (Region of Waterloo, Citizen Services), Wisam Osman (Coalition of Muslim Women KW), Rozina Shaheen (Muslim Social Services), Jean De Dieu Basabose (College Boreal), Charlene Mak (International Student Advisors Group).

**BSG:** Chaitali Maybhate (Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank), Renu Bhandari (Focus for Ethnic Women), Fauzia Wafai (Muslim Women of Cambridge and Islamic Center of North America), Katie Hill (Sustainable Waterloo Region), Serap Tezgel (Volunteer Action Centre student), Aisha Wovenu (Carizon), Marwa Gebeil (Kinbridge Community Association).

# Context and cross-referrals

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## Immigration Data and Trends

- Permanent resident arrivals in Waterloo Region were down by 36% in the first 11 months of 2020 compared to 2019 (2,790 permanent residents arrived Jan-Nov 2020 compared to 4,350 in 2019). ([IRCC data, 2020](#))
- IRCC announced its plan to welcome over 1.2 million permanent residents to Canada from 2021-2023. This is an increase of nearly 200,000 people over previous levels to account for 2020 arrival deficits and support economic recovery. ([IRCC, 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan](#))
- The Jan [2021 Supplementary Mandate Letter to the Minister of Immigration](#) focuses on:
  - Bringing newcomers to Canada to drive economic growth and recovery, per the Levels Plan,
  - Creating pathways to permanent residency for those who provided health care or performed other essential services during the pandemic.
  - Continue exploring pathways to permanent residency and citizenship for temporary foreign workers.
  - Fully support and protect workers who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and secure labour to fill workforce gaps in farming and food processing.

## 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.

## Other community initiatives and how 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.
- Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, which provides support for refugee claimants in Waterloo Region and area has changed their name to Compass Refugee Centre as of February 2021 (<https://mcrs.ca>).
- Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre is merging with the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre – a very welcome development to stability of health supports for vulnerable newcomers.