

# SETTLE STEERING GROUP

## DRAFT Minutes

**Date:** January 26, 2017  
**Time:** 1:00-3:00 p.m. **Location:** Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

**Present:** Pari Kareem (Chair, YMCA), Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Tara Bedard, Michelle Martin & Dan Vandebelt (Immigration Partnership staff), Gael Gilbert & Kate McNamara (SHOW), Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Kaylee Perez, Ellen Kim & Lesly Perez (MCC), Shukri Abdulkadir (Reception House), Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), June Moyo & Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), Heidi Newton & Shelley Bolden (ROW- Public Health), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Deb Engel (Carizon), Kristen Bustamante (ROW- Children’s Services), Christine Gilles (CMHA WW), Janet Waito (St Louis, guest)

**Regrets:** Crystal Brown (LINC), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Iman Arab (CCORIC), Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Amanda Botelho (MCRS), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling)

### 1. Welcome

- Shelley Bolden will be replacing Heidi Harris on the SSG as the Public Health representative. *Gina Hickman is also replacing Vanessa Lopak from Region of Waterloo Citizen Services and Kristin Bustamante is replacing Sheri Philips from Region of Waterloo Children’s Services. Many thanks to Heidi, Vanessa, and Sheri.*

### 2. Review of Minutes – November 21, 2016

- Approved.

### 3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved with additional agenda item regarding housing guarantors.
- No conflicts of interest to declare.

### 4. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- IP Council met last week and looked at the full draft of the CAP and ongoing engagement with political representatives.
- Work Steering Group (WSG) has been busy with employer engagement, networking sessions for newcomers/employers, TECH Jam, and planning the Global Skills Conference in April.
- Belong Steering Group (BSG) has been working with municipal partners to provide presentations at local language programs to educate newcomers about municipal services and encourage civic engagement. BSG is hosting a citizenship ceremony on February 15.
- Refugee Services Action Group (RSAG) met recently and representatives from Region of Waterloo shared information about the Ontario Works application process for refugees in “month 13”. RSAG also discussed the CAP and the need to get moving on actions.
- Syrian Newcomer Fund received another round of applications in January with funding announcements anticipated by the third week of February. Depending on remaining funds

- there may be one more round but we are coming to the end of the fund. We don't expect any large infusions of donations into the Syrian Newcomer Fund. The community foundations are looking at encouraging donations to newcomer grants through their existing fund programs rather than a fund specifically for Syrian newcomers.
- There was some expectation of a potential increase in refugee claimants from Mexico in December. There wasn't an increase but it may yet happen. This could be brought to the IP Council as a potential future issue. There is broader advocacy at a federal level around opening the doors more to refugees if the US decreases their numbers. There would need to be an increase of funds to respond to this.
  - Secondary migration of newcomers to Waterloo Region was discussed and how this could be tracked.
    - iCare and OCMS are two databases that are used by many local settlement organizations and could have some potential. iCare doesn't include refugee claimants.
    - It would be valuable to encourage all newcomers to connect with settlement workers at organizations that use iCare (Multicultural Centre, YMCA, Reception House, etc.) since if the newcomers don't access those services then they don't get tracked and the federal government doesn't know that they are in the community.
    - It would be valuable to also encourage all refugee claimants to connect with MCRS for tracking purposes.
    - Could language assessment be used to track secondary migration as that can also include refugee claimants? Not all newcomers use language assessment.

## 5. Community Action Plan – Draft Actions

- Michelle highlighted the process to arrive at the draft actions. IP Council reviewed the actions and was pleased with the draft CAP (Community Action Plan) and expressed trust in the process and that the pillars (Settle, Work Belong) know the issues and the opportunities to take action. They want to see a yearly review of the CAP.
  - Council recognized that Settle Actions #3 and #4 were much more specific and could fit within Actions #1 and #2. Council suggested that SSG consider incorporating these into #1 and #2. It was noted that this was suggested to be a change in how it appears and not a change in what activities are undertaken.
- Michelle provided an overview of the prioritizing and commitment survey results with Actions #2 being seen as the highest priority, then #1, and then #3 and #4 were tied.
- Let Michelle know ASAP if your information is listed incorrectly or yet needs to be confirmed within your organization.
  - Contributions will evolve as the more specific work plans are developed.
  - Michelle noted that leading an action area means leading the entire area and not being limited by a specific organizational mandate so that we are inclusive of all that the action covers.
- We discussed each of the four draft actions and polled the group to determine if there was group consensus to move forward with each of these actions. After polling there was discussion about any reservations that individuals expressed.
- Action 1 – Consensus to move forward.
  - It was acknowledged that there was overlap of the partners and work of Action 1 and 2. We may organize our work by sectors or topic – each of which would cross over both Actions 1 and 2.
- Action 2 – Consensus to move forward.
- Action 3 – Consensus to move forward.
  - It was suggested that Action 3 is related to Action 4 and advances in one will impact the other.
- Action 4 – Consensus to move forward.

- We will adjust the wording to include “support” (“Promote, expand and support English learning opportunities”). This would include removing barriers so everyone can access programs.
- Council had suggested that SSG consider incorporating Actions #3 and #4 into Actions #1 and #2.
  - This could help with greater integration and could be more logical as there are other pieces that aren’t pulled out. It could also help with tracking progress on a more focused number of actions. It could ease demands on partner and staff time for multiple overlapping meetings.
  - The main disadvantage of incorporating is the activities won’t display as prominently in the CAP.
  - It would be important to ensure that activities aren’t diluted or lost if they were incorporated. Regardless of whether it is incorporated it will be important to measure and show progress on specific activities and to have tangible successes.
  - It was noted that language learning and interpretation are specifically for newcomers whereas housing/health/mental health sectors are for everyone.
  - It was suggested that there could also be benefits of A) combining Actions #3 and #4, or B) incorporating only Action #3 within #1 and #2 and leaving Action #4 separate.
  - The strategies to address Actions #3 and #4 are the strategies in Actions #1 and #2.
  - The role of the implementation plan is to ensure that these aren’t diluted but are organized and acted on coherently. Incorporating actions is an issue of how we organize our work more than what we do. It was suggested that if we organize by topic/sector then it will be less likely to get lost or diluted.
- After significant discussion there was sufficient consensus to move forward with incorporating Actions #3 and #4 into Actions #1 and #2 in the CAP.
- There was broad agreement with the proposed measurement framework.

## 6. National Housing Day Awards Debrief

- Before the meeting Dan shared a summary of feedback received about the Landlords Welcome Refugees award.
- The group felt that the award was a valuable effort with positive outcomes. We need more positive recognition and initiatives like this to encourage landlords and the housing sector to give accommodation to refugees and newcomers. There were some useful suggestions to consider in the feedback.
- We are okay to continue these awards in the future and will refer this to those developing a CAP work plan.

## 7. Housing Guarantors

- Fauzia shared that Deb Schlicker from Region of Waterloo Housing heard concerns that refugee families are running into barriers when they seek to move and the landlord requires a co-signer or guarantor.
- This is a broader challenge for anyone living on low income. It can also be a barrier that some landlords might use to discriminate against newcomers.
- Most settlement or community agencies don’t act as a guarantor. Some private sponsors may, though MCC doesn’t suggest that they do. Sometimes it can be helpful for a social service agency to write a letter outlining a family’s income although that can perpetuate a system of discrimination since sharing the details of one’s income may not be as likely to be required of Canadian-born individuals.
- We need systemic change – and can address this type of change through CAP actions. We need to stand together and advocate.

- It was suggested that it could be useful if some of the partners that were involved in the Syrian Resettlement Housing Working Group would be willing to have a phone conversation to look at the early 2016 strategies that could potentially help here.

#### **8. Community Updates**

- **ACTION: Please email any community or organization updates to Dan to forward to the SSG group.**

#### **9. Next Meetings**

- ***March 23, 2017, 1-3pm at location TBD***
- ***May 25, 2017, 1-3pm at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener***
- ***July 27, 2017, 1-3pm at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener***
- ***September 28, 2017, 1-3pm at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener***
- ***November 23, 2017, 1-3pm at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener***

# SETTLE STEERING GROUP

## DRAFT Minutes

**Date:** March 23, 2017

**Time:** 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Ray of Hope, 659 King St. E, Kitchener

**Present:** Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt & Larissa Smeltzer (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary Health Centre), Tara Bedard & Dan Vandebelt (Immigration Partnership staff), Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), June Moyo & Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), Heidi Newton (ROW- Public Health), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Eunice Valenzuela (MCRS), Christine Gilles (CMHA WW), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton & Shukri Abdulkadir (Reception House), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Amanda Botelho (MCRS)

**Regrets:** Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Crystal Brown & Laura Stoutenburg (LINC), Iman Arab (CCORIC), Deb Bergey/Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Herb Richardson (Community Member), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Deb Engel (Carizon), Kristen Bustamante (ROW- Children's Services)

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Review of Minutes – January 26, 2017

- Approved.

### 3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

### 4. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- IP Council approved the 2017-2019 Community Action Plan (CAP). Council also discussed having an ongoing evaluation committee, a refresh of the immigrationwaterlooregion.ca portal and the March 25<sup>th</sup> community celebration. Two new members joined Council – Dr Osei from Grand River Hospital and one of the lamWR ambassadors, as well as Jenny Flager George from the LHIN. We are planning to have our annual IP forum in the fall. Let Tara or Dan know if you have suggestions for the focus for the forum this year.
- The Belong Steering Group (BSG) has been detailing their CAP actions. They hosted a citizenship ceremony in February and led the #lamWRagainstdiscrimination campaign on March 21 which had about 200 tweets and photos involving 400+ people. (<https://twitter.com/ImmigrationWR>). Subcommittees continue to focus on activities regarding civic engagement and public education.
- The Work Steering Group (WSG) has been detailing their CAP actions and continuing to support networking and other initiatives, including the Global Skills Conference on April 12.
- The Refugee Services Action Group (RSAG) has been exploring the role of the RSAG in the ongoing CAP work plans. A refugee services hub was the original drive for this group.
- Syrian Newcomer Fund will have a last call for funding applications May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Local funders have more awareness of immigrants and refugees and it will be more of a focus in their ongoing funding. The community foundations are looking at encouraging donations through newcomer grants in their existing fund programs rather than a fund specifically for Syrian newcomers.

- It was suggested that more groups would be interested in the funding if the guidelines were more flexible and not just for Syrian newcomers. **ACTION: Tara will ask the grants committee to see if they would be open to proposals for other groups.**
- Some of the working groups have haven't been meeting for awhile and some have merged into Immigration Partnership groups. The steering committee has been meeting bimonthly with their next meeting in April. They'll likely discuss the future structure of that group and if it continues. **ACTION: Dan will send an update on the Syrian Resettlement Working Groups.**
- Region of Waterloo Community Services have registered 900 Syrian Refugees (i.e. approximately 200 families) for Ontario Works through their dedicated team pilot program and are currently evaluating it (majority were GARs with RRAP ending).
- It was suggested that the pilot evaluation could explore the value of having dedicated caseworkers that were more aware of Syrian refugees and if it would be useful to have specialized caseworkers for refugees. Having specific caseworkers that could be liaisons with refugee-focused organizations was also suggested as a possibility.
- It was noted that the Month 13 Ontario Works information sessions were useful.

## 5. Community Action Plan – Draft Actions

- The people who had previously offered to provide some initial leadership with the CAP actions met several times since our last SSG meeting and fleshed out the work plans for each sector mentioned in the CAP actions (Interpretation, Language Learning, Settlement Sector, Housing, and Health/Mental Health).
- The CAP has the agreed upon actions but we need to define the activities to operationalize them and the indicators to see if we are making progress.
- The SSG discussed each of the 5 draft work plans in terms of the following questions:
  - Does this address the key issues from the CAP actions?
  - Is anything critical missing?
  - Is this feasible?
  - What next steps are needed?
- Interpretation Sector Work Plan
  - The interpretation work plan looks really good and fits with what we've been talking about. It is tangible and feasible.
  - The Region of Waterloo Interpretation Policy could be a starting point for a SSG Position on the appropriate use of interpretation.
  - The LHIN will be a great asset in this work. There have been some conversations with Sanctuary and the LHIN about helping primary care providers to have access to interpretation. LHIN-funded organizations submit annual equity reports. We can work together with the LHIN. **ACTION: Tara and Dan will meet with Jenny from the LHIN.**
  - The interpretation and health activities need to be working together.
- Language Learning Sector Work Plan
  - There are 2 different systems (LINC and ESL). Some newcomers have access to one and not the other. It could be valuable to advocate that both be inclusive of all newcomers.
  - The work plan should incorporate more of the ESL stream.
  - The draft work plan focuses on formal learning and the original CAP action was focused on conversational learning. While the more recent "portfolio" approach incorporates more conversational and "useful" language, we should add more explicit mention of conversational and informal/volunteer supports. Formal supports could be a starting point. Community centres and their informal language supports could be included, as well as matching one-to-one support and other non-class settings. Informal supports are important for people without formal status (i.e. temporary students, etc.) or other

- populations that have challenges accessing the formal system. It is important to strengthen links between the formal and informal systems.
  - The gaps should include the gap for work-oriented language learning for lower English language levels.
  - There is a connection between the work pillar and this topic. We should link to workplace learning efforts.
- Settlement Sector Work Plan
  - The work plan should be clear that it includes all categories of newcomers (e.g. refugees/claimants). We should consider how all our work plans apply to different populations and categories of newcomers.
  - Settlement is largely a federally funded sector but we need to think beyond the typical funded programs.
  - Fact sheets may have to be updated regularly.
  - Clarify the referral process milestone/activity: it would be bi-lateral between individual organizations that refer frequently (i.e. refugee claimants from MCRS to KWMC).
  - The settlement map would be for organizations to see overlaps, gaps, possibilities for sharing resources, etc. It would not be intended for newcomers directly.
    - The context is dynamic. We would need to update it regularly (every 2 years?).
    - It could be useful to include what languages/interpretation is available at each agency.
    - It was noted that duplication is difficult to determine and we need deeper research to explore specifics and opportunities.
    - After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a broader or narrower scope, we clarified that the map should have a narrower focus on the services that are primarily for newcomers.
    - We've heard that it can be confusing for settlement organizations, broader community organizations and newcomers to know what services are available. The map would be a tool to understand how agencies are supportive of each other and how to be a resource to each other as well as other sectors.
    - The map would be primarily organized by services more than by organization. It would also be useful to organize it by newcomer category/population (refugee claimants, students, etc.).
    - We need to develop the map in the context of other sectors and services available - beyond only federally funded settlement organizations (e.g. income support, interpretation, education, etc.).
    - This map could align with or be a foundation for any "pathways" or tools for newcomers or other sectors which would focus on how systems are navigated.
- Housing Sector Work Plan
  - The housing work plan needs more detail and clarifying the purpose of each of the proposed activities. We need further discussion about this work plan.
  - Region of Waterloo Housing did have a housing inventory list but had stopped using it.
  - We need to include activities to increase the understanding of local policies; how to work with systems to access resources already in our community and for flexibility within existing systems/resources; advocating on a system level (including advocating for new resources - Fed/Prov).
  - We need to build on the relationships developed over the last year and a half.
  - The shelter sector wasn't mentioned and advocacy about accessibility for newcomers who need it. This is particularly an issue for newcomer families who might not be

homeless but are in inappropriate housing or housing that can't continue (i.e. temporarily squeezed into housing with extended family).

- The work plan should build on what the Syrian Resettlement Housing Working Group was working on previously. The emerging Faith-Tech housing efforts, Open Homes, and the housing awards could also be included.
  - We need to keep in mind that change needs to come in a multitude of places and not all of it happens at this table.
- Health and Mental Health Sector Work Plan
    - Margaret shared a conceptual model of how we could understand our work in this sector.
    - The first step may be to bring forward the key players to discuss overall needs and directions. Could the LHIN be involved in hosting this? It was suggested that we may need to clarify our end goal before we draw in the LHIN.
    - We need to have further discussion about our role in this sector and how we organize ourselves.
- Some of these work plans have implications for others (i.e. interpretation and health). We may want to focus first on some such as interpretation. We don't want to let some of these others wait too long before we take action though. The discussions at SSG will be important to ensure we are connecting activities and implications between sector efforts.
  - **ACTION: Dan will put out a call for who is interested in each respective sector group and set a meeting for each group to discuss that sector work plan in more detail.**
  - We need to be careful we don't make the groups too big to get things done. When each group meets they can assess who else should be included. Future efforts should also include those who were involved in the Syrian Resettlement Working Groups.
  - We need to build on the CAP and subsequent discussions. We need to ensure that we don't go back to square one to rehash what has already been discussed and decided.

## 6. Immigration Waterloo Region Web Portal

- Tara provided an overview of the refreshed [immigrationwaterlooregion.ca](http://immigrationwaterlooregion.ca) web portal. It will have information that is relevant for the attraction and retention of newcomers. There have been consultations with many community partners. It is intended as a community resource for information, news, and a community calendar (where partners could add events). To facilitate referrals, at the bottom of each page there will be a link to a local partner for more information/consultation related to the information on that page. The portal will go live in May.

## 7. Community Updates

- Heidi shared the "Public Health and Community Services for Newcomers to Waterloo Region" brochure. It will be available in English and 5 other languages. It is available on the Public Health website and paper copies can be ordered.

## 8. Next Meetings

- **May 25, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **July 27, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **September 28, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **November 23, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

# SETTLE STEERING GROUP

## DRAFT Minutes

**Date:** May 25, 2017

**Time:** 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**Location:** MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

**Present:** Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Gibo Shim & Larissa Smeltzer (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Crystal Brown (Conestoga College), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary), Gael Gilbert & Tyler Linwood (SHOW), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Christine Gilles & Maritza Robertson (CMHA WW), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Amanda Botelho (MCRS), Deb Engel (Carizon), Janna Martin (MCC), Dan Vandebelt & Paulina Rodrigues (Immigration Partnership staff), Sakina Kirefu-Khan (GRH)

**Regrets & Resource Members:** Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Laura Stoutenburg (Conestoga College), Fauzia Baig (ROW – Housing), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Shelley Bolden (ROW- Public Health), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), June Moyo & Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), Katie Krauss (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling), Roger Gilbert (ROW- Children’s Services)

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Review of Minutes – March 23, 2017

- Approved.

### 3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

### 4. Council and Other Steering Group Updates

- The 2017-2019 Community Action Plan was distributed. The IP Council progress report was handed out with updates from the other IP pillars.
- The Syrian Resettlement Steering Committee had their last meeting but could be called together if the need arises.
- The Syrian Newcomer Fund had one more donation and we had one last call for proposals, which are being reviewed now.
- Council discussed the funding cuts across the settlement sector and potential advocacy.
  - Settlement agencies signed funding agreements for the next three years. The reduction of settlement funds continues in the next 3 years on annual basis while there are more additional funds for agencies to apply for to meet the needs of newcomers in their communities.
  - This practise of reduction of levels of funding and providing additional funds sometime within the fiscal year creates challenges for settlement agencies. They are less able to plan/develop new programs, hire competent employees or invest in long term programing. Also it promotes lack of sustainability of funds.
  - While the Syrian “crisis” might be over in the eyes of some, the needs aren’t gone. English learning and other settlement needs of recent arrivals will continue for a while.
  - **Margaret brought forward the SSG motion that the IP should advocate and work with IRCC towards a more sustainable funding framework. Gael seconded. Passed.**

- It was acknowledged that there has been significant advocacy from IP Council and local governments in the past and that it has made an impact on limiting past funding cuts.
- It would be useful to get others in the community involved in advocating and contributing their voices. We should advocate to government funders but also look at other strategies. Stories are powerful. We need to incorporate the implications for people on the ground. We each need to look for impacts in our areas of work (e.g. # of people still without family doctors, English levels, etc.).
- We need to work with the media to tell stories. It was suggested that we could have a journalism student collect stories of impact.
- We also need to underline the fact that one year isn't typically enough time to completely settle as language, employment and other needs continue beyond that.
- **ACTION: Each of us will collect stories of impact and explore options and we can bring this back to a future meeting after IP Council has discussed this.**
- The #IamWaterlooRegion campaign is drawing to a close. A brief survey was shared to gather feedback on this in order to inform future public education campaigns.

## 5. Community Action Plan – Sector Draft Work Plans/Activities

### Interpretation Sector Work Plan

- The interpretation statement is clear and reflects our common understanding about an appropriate approach to interpretation.
- It was noted that the statement outlines when trained interpreters *should* be used. Even if we aren't there yet it is something that we all as a community want to move toward.
- The draft outreach plan is appropriate. Legal services/police is an important area for outreach. Crisis services should at least have phone interpretation as it is a first step for many people with acute need to prevent the potential escalation of the issue. The education sector is also important.
- We are interested in exploring potential technological solutions. They have the potential to empower the client. Some agencies/clients are using various tech solutions already. **ACTION: Dan will look at some of the options that are available and share that for discussion at a future meeting. Please let Dan know if you come across possible tech solutions.**
- Ana Luz, Pari, Lynne, Christine (for health settings) and Crystal offered to help with this and meet with identified agencies about interpretation.

### Settlement Sector Work Plan

- The work plan activities are appropriate.
- It was noted that we as a community and sector need to collaborate better. The more united we are as a sector the better we can push for better outcomes.
- Sakina noted that for organizations like GRH it helps them to know who to refer to and how to help. The quick guides will be quite valuable.
- We need to develop strong and ongoing partnerships with our research partners and to drive the research. The Learning Initiative is valuable. It may be worthwhile to invite local research partners to SSG meetings.
- YMCA, KWMC, Carizon and Eliseo offered to help with these settlement activities. It was noted that all these activities are our collective responsibility. Others to let Dan know if they are interested.

### Housing Sector Work Plan

- A group of individuals will be meeting in mid June to continue to refine the housing sector work plan and incorporate the feedback from the last SSG meeting.

- We decided that we will continue with the Newcomer Landlord Recognition Award at the National Housing Day Celebration in November.
- Amanda, Gael, Margaret, and someone from Reception House and possibly Sharon were willing to be involved in planning this fall's award.

#### Language Learning Sector Work Plan

- Crystal gave an update on the work plan changes that integrated the comments from the last SSG meeting. The activities will focus on reducing barriers to English language learning, sharing information about formal and informal learning opportunities, and collaboration between the formal and informal systems. The plan is to bring together settlement and language partners this fall, then in spring draw in informal language learning partners and next fall expand to connect with Early Years, neighbourhood centres, etc.

#### Health and Mental Health Sector Work Plan

- It was noted that in health and mental health there is a lot happening at this time: (monthly Mental Health Working Group, quarterly Refugee Health Clinic meeting, bimonthly Oral Health Coalition meeting, LHIN working with Sanctuary on interpretation pilot for doctors and both CFFM and Sanctuary on support for health care professionals, and our interpretation work is significantly related to health needs. We need to figure out the role for IP within all this.
- We need to ensure we don't ignore mental health. We should work with Carizon, Lutherwood, other counselling agencies and others working in this area.
- It was suggested that we should have a meeting this summer of settlement and health/mental health providers. We should include Dr Mike Stephenson, Dr Neil Arya, Carizon, LHIN, etc. Sakina offered to help with health/mental health initiatives.
- Mental health impacts many other areas. Sometimes programming may address mental health without using that label. It will be important to educate and support broader service providers to support newcomers well.

#### 6. CAP Process Feedback

- Paulina shared a survey to gather feedback on the CAP process over the last year.

#### 7. Community Updates

- Dan shared a map of where Syrian Government Assisted Refugees settled in Waterloo Region.
- Sanctuary has moved their office to 310 King Street East, unit 203 near the Kitchener Market.
- Carizon is working with newcomer youth to share their stories through video.
- Conestoga is offering July programming. There are some childcare spaces at the King St location.
- Reception House has the grand opening of their renovated house on May 26.

#### 8. Next Meetings

- Because of summer scheduling the previously scheduled SSG meeting on July 27<sup>th</sup> was cancelled.
- **September 28, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **November 23, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

# SETTLE STEERING GROUP

## DRAFT Minutes

**Date:** September 28, 2017

**Time:** 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**Location:** MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

**Present:** Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Sharon Schmidt, Alana Westervelt and Noel Bedford (Welcome Home), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Crystal Brown (Conestoga College), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Christine Gilles (CMHA WW), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Dan Vandebelt & Paulina Rodrigues (Immigration Partnership staff), Sarah MacIver (UWaterloo School of Optometry), Janice Tulling (YMCA)

**Regrets & Resource Members:** Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Laura Stoutenburg (Conestoga College), Sherry White (ROW – Housing), Shelley Bolden (ROW- Public Health), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Shelley Campagnola (MCRS), Deb Engel (Carizon), Priscilla Muzira (ACCKWA), Jessica Bigelow (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Sakina Kirefu-Khan (GRH), Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling), Roger Gilbert (ROW- Children's Services)

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Review of Minutes – May 25, 2017

- Approved.

### 3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

### 4. Topic Update: Eye Care Services for Newcomers

- Sarah MacIver from the University of Waterloo School of Optometry gave an overview of eye care services for newcomers. Sarah and Dan will draft a summary from the presentation and share that.
- There is no list of optometrists that take IFHP (Interim Federal Health Program) – word of mouth is often the most effective. It would be useful for partners to share what they know or to create a shared list of optometrists and pharmacists that are known to take IFHP or work often with newcomers.

### 5. Immigration Partnership Updates

- The IP Council progress report, with updates from the other IP pillars, was included with the agenda package.
- Pari updated on IP Council discussions about continuing to advocate for a more sustainable funding framework for the sector and next steps for the Newcomer Grant Fund through the Community Foundations.

### 6. Community Action Plan – Activities Updates & Discussion

#### Interpretation Sector Work Plan

- Ana Luz gave an update on interpretation activities to date. The Introduction to Interpreter Ethics workshop is today and is for individuals providing informal interpretation. The second

- interpretation workshop is on October 24<sup>th</sup> (Working with Trained Interpreters) and is for service providers. Please promote and/or attend.
- We will be connecting with identified service providers (e.g. local hospitals, municipalities, etc.) about their interpretation policies and practices and how we can support them to provide consistent and appropriate interpretation.
  - **ACTION: All organizations in SSG to share their organization’s interpretation policies (or informal practices)** with Dan so we have a bank of policies and practices to support other organizations in developing their own policies.
  - Dan and the interpretation task group have been looking into tech solutions for interpretation and will bring that back to SSG at a future meeting.
  - The Interpretation Statement was shared with IP Council. They thought it was good and had a few suggestions for when we engage with local service providers about interpretation.
  - We also need to work with clients to encourage them to ask for interpretation and to ensure that they fully understand in interactions with service providers and documents they sign. Service providers as well as businesses (i.e. banks or others) often need to do a better job to ensure there is communication with understanding in interactions with newcomers.

#### Settlement Sector Work Plan

- Pari gave an update about the first quarterly meeting of the Settlement EDs Group. It was conceived as a place for collaboration and communicating between organizations. A Terms of Reference was adopted. The group discussed how we can share information about what the sector as a whole is doing – through the immigrationwaterlooregion portal, possible quick fact sheets, etc. Partners are exploring a local professional development event for all sector direct-service staff working with newcomers this winter and doing some exploration of shared data systems across organizations and how that could be strengthened. The group includes YMCA, KWMC, Reception House and MCRS, but it was noted that the conversations aren’t meant to end there but are intended to often be a starting point for collaboration – they will connect with other partners and the broader SSG regularly or pull in others as needed.
- We are developing a template for a series of quick guides that have been suggested to date: key settlement services for newcomers, eye care services for newcomers, top languages for interpretation and translation, health insurance for newcomers, etc.
- Dan would like to come to local organizations’ staff meetings over the fall to give an overview of the immigrationwaterlooregion.ca portal and discuss how we can maximize its usefulness for clients and partners.

#### Housing Sector Work Plan

- The task group is refining the housing related activities. They are focused on:
  - 1) being at key housing tables to bring forward newcomer housing needs
  - 2) outreach to landlords, including connecting with landlord groups and forums, Newcomer Landlord Award, and exploring tech solutions to newcomer housing
- Tech solutions to newcomer housing is currently focused on temporary housing for refugee claimants including reaching out to Airbnb (through their “Open Homes Platform”), supporting MCRS in expanding the local Open Homes network and reaching out to the individuals who expressed interest in providing housing for Syrian refugees through the wrwelcomesrefugees.ca housing registry.
- The Newcomer Landlord Award nominations close on October 6 with the award(s) presented at the National Housing Day celebration on November 16. Gael and Alana offered to be part of the selection committee. One of last year’s award winners offered to be part of the selection committee as well. **ACTION: All to consider nominating outstanding landlords.**
- Sharon met with Remax real estate agents earlier this summer about refugee housing needs and they were very receptive.

- There was a request from a Laurier Masters of Applied Politics class to partner with them regarding student research about housing. It was felt that we should explore this further.

#### Language Learning Sector Work Plan

- Crystal gave an update on the work plan activities. The task group didn't meet over the summer but will be meeting soon to plan a discussion with language learning and settlement staff to share emerging issues, overlap and mutual support.

#### Health and Mental Health Sector Work Plan

- Over the summer Dan talked with a number of health and mental health partners about the key gaps in this area that require IP involvement. Three focuses emerged:
  - interpretation in health settings was a key gap that requires our continued involvement
  - sharing information and a connecting function was a key role for IP in light of the various other health and mental health groups that are already connecting regularly. Sharing information could also include quick guides, sharing topic information like Sarah MacIver did at this meeting, or system planning or opportunities for community input.
  - advocacy, as needed.
- It was generally agreed that we need to be realistic about what we have the capacity to undertake and that we should focus on these three areas. This may not require a separate IP health/mental health task group but partners will continue to be involved in existing community groups and can be pulled together as needed.
- Carizon and MCC submitted a proposal regarding mental health for newcomers and cross-cultural mental health training for sponsors and others in Waterloo Region and beyond. Promise of Partnership and other related programs will continue to play a role.
- It was felt that many of the existing groups are working well and the IP sharing role is important. Collectively we need to be sharing information about proposals and new directions.

### 7. Evaluation Committee Update: CAP Process Feedback & Indicators

- Paulina and Pari shared an update on the work of the evaluation committee. The committee has developed a Performance Measurement Framework to draw connections between the activities of each of the steering groups and council and the expected outcomes of these activities. The indicators for the Community Action Plan's Settle actions were shared.
- The plan is to use secondary data (i.e. census data) as well as regular surveys of partners and newcomers.
- Some of the indicators are immediate and some are intermediate or long term. Paulina and the committee will explore what the timeframe would be for the various indicators.
- **ACTION: Share any thoughts about the indicators with Paulina.**

### 8. Community Updates

- Dan shared an update from Shelley at MCRS regarding the increased number of refugee claimants recently. MCRS has had 400 new clients by August (with 52 just in the month of August). This is many more than they normally see. Claimants are coming from 33 different countries with most recent people coming from Honduras, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Iraq, El Salvador, Syria, Mexico, Turkey and Peru. Some of the people arriving have transferred from Montreal and this has been challenging because: many come without documents; some have come misinformed about services, timelines and the claims process; school settlement and other needs have been delayed for some because of these kinds of things. Housing is a critical need. With new families arriving weekly, MCRS has needed to refer several families to emergency shelters. MCRS continues to explore housing options and expand their network of people who can provide transitional or more permanent housing.

- There continues to be a need for advocacy regarding potential cuts to legal aid programming by Legal Aid Ontario. This service is needed by refugee claimants.
- Sharon noted that the federal cabinet will be setting next year's immigration levels shortly and that there is an opportunity to write to MPs. **ACTION: Sharon will share the advocacy information from the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR).**
- Margaret shared about the LHIN pilot project with a systems navigation support person for refugees across the region, housed at Sanctuary.
- KWMC has started to provide legal support for refugee claimants (in addition to ongoing settlement support). KWMC has hired 3 Arabic community interpreters who can support clients (other than at medical/legal appointments). This is a pilot until March 2018.
- Ed from Region of Waterloo Income Support is leading a new integrated team in Kitchener. Ed has forwarded the previous request from SSG partners to consider having specific Ontario Works caseworkers who are particularly knowledgeable about newcomers (similar to during the Syrian influx) and will keep us in the loop about any decisions. It was noted that other communities (Toronto/Hamilton) have this.
- KPL is providing tech support for newcomers on Oct 28. It is in Arabic for now but they want to add other languages.
- Gael will be organizing a lunch and learn event on forced marriage. She will share more information later. Contact her if you want to be involved.

#### 9. Next Meetings

- **November 23, 2017, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

# SETTLE STEERING GROUP

## DRAFT Minutes

**Date:** November 23, 2017

**Time:** 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**Location:** MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener

**Present:** Eliseo Martell (Vice-Chair, Community Member), Sharon Schmidt (Welcome Home), Margaret Brockett (Sanctuary), Kaylee Perez (MCC), Kristin Johnson-Perlock (KPL), Christine Gilles (CMHA WW), Ed Kaut (ROW-Income Support), Priscilla Muzira & Ruth Cameron (ACCKWA), Lynne Griffiths-Fulton (Reception House), Sherry White (ROW – Housing), Jessica Bigelow (Big Brothers Big Sisters), Janice Tulling (YMCA), Dan Vandebelt & Paulina Rodriguez (Immigration Partnership staff)

**Regrets & Resource Members:** Pari Karem (Chair, YMCA), Ana Luz Martinez (KWMC), Crystal Brown (Conestoga College), Laura Stoutenburg (Conestoga College), Gael Gilbert (SHOW), Shelley Bolden (ROW- Public Health), Shelley Campagnola (MCRS), Deb Engel (Carizon), Sakina Kirefu-Khan (GRH), Gina Hickman (ROW- Citizen Service), Sarah MacIver (UWaterloo School of Optometry), Helen Ala Rashi (Shamrose), Kathy Hogarth (Muslim Social Services), Mohamed Bendame (Muslim Association of Canada/Embrace Syria), Liliana Araujo (Community Member), Sharon Down (WRCLS), Leslie Josling (KW Counselling), Roger Gilbert (ROW- Children's Services)

### 1. Welcome

### 2. Review of Minutes – Sep 28, 2017

- Approved.
- Sarah MacIver is working on a summary of eye care services for newcomers to share with SSG.
- At the last SSG meeting it was suggested that we create a list of local optometrists and pharmacists that take IFHP (Interim Federal Health Program). Dan shared a list of all health practitioners taking IFHP that Blue Cross updates regularly (<https://ifhp-pfsi.medavie.bluecross.ca/en/search-ifhp-providers>). It was noted that this list isn't accurate as some of the individuals listed aren't actually taking IFHP anymore. **ACTION: Dan will connect with Lynne to start a list in Google Docs. All will contribute to it and will need to keep it up to date.**

### 3. Approve Agenda & Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- Approved. No conflicts of interest to declare.

### 4. Topic Update: HIV 101 for Newcomer Serving Agencies

- Priscilla Muzira and Ruth Cameron from ACCKWA (AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area) shared information about HIV and community services for agencies that serve newcomers.
- A few other topics were brainstormed for topic updates at future SSG meetings. **ACTION: Dan will send out a poll to gather the top requested topics for updates.**

### 5. Immigration Partnership Updates

- The IP Council progress report with updates from the other IP pillars, was included with the agenda package.

- Dan shared an update for Pari on IP Council discussions about the Syrian Newcomer Fund transitioning to a broader, ongoing fund; IRCC immigration levels and local trends; Municipal and Provincial elections in 2018; and shared about the upcoming Global Migration Film Festival and the Jim Estill event.
- Paulina provided an overview of the IP Partner Survey and Community Survey.
- It was requested that IP continue to advocate for sufficient legal aid funding.

## 6. Community Action Plan – Activities Updates & Discussion

### Interpretation Sector Work Plan

- Dan gave an update on the activity of the Interpretation task group for Ana Luz:
  - Some interpretation task group members participated in a webinar about Google Translate as part of the interpretation options available to people/organizations in WR - felt it was limited but also a useful part of a suite of options for informal conversations.
  - KWMC, Access Alliance from Toronto, and Immigration Partnership hosted a workshop on Sep 28 for 21 volunteers who are providing informal interpretation and another workshop on October 24 about working with trained interpreters for 24 health professionals, community agencies, government workers, etc.
  - We are seeking data from LHIN about informal and formal interpretation at hospitals.
- The draft Top Languages for Interpretation and Translation fact sheet was discussed. This is a good place to start if an organization was looking to translate materials. **ACTION: Dan will make it clearer that it is not exhaustive** and there are many more languages than the 6 listed which could be requested.
- The draft Interpretation Options Quick Reference Guide was also discussed. It was felt that it was useful and user-friendly. **ACTION: Dan will integrate the suggested changes. Dan will also share the link to the Access Alliance fact sheet for newcomers about interpretation.**

### Settlement Sector Work Plan

- Dan gave an update about the most recent Settlement EDs Group meeting covering various issues such as secondary migration; client software and if there is potential for collaboration; staff training and professional development and a joint training for all front line workers.
- Dan would still like to come to local organizations' staff meetings to give an overview of the immigrationwaterlooregion.ca portal and discuss how we can maximize its usefulness for clients and partners. **ACTION: Contact Dan if you are interested.**

### Housing Sector Work Plan

- The Newcomer Landlord Award was presented at the National Housing Day celebration on November 16. There were 7 nominations and 3 landlords were given awards (small private landlord, large private landlord, and non-profit). It was felt that the celebration went well and was upbeat in anticipation of the upcoming National Housing Strategy release.
- Housing task group will be meeting next week to discuss a draft quick guide on newcomer housing needs and supports that can be shared with landlords or others; debrief the landlord award; and future housing activities.

### Language Learning Sector Work Plan

- It was suggested that we could potentially develop a quick guide about language learning for newcomers.

## Health and Mental Health Sector Work Plan

- The LHIN has consulted a couple times recently with local partners and IP about Refugee Model of Care Pathways and doctor attachment (and how to encourage doctors to take on newcomer patients), and about interpretation at hospital and with other health professionals.
- It was suggested that there could be a community group around primary care and refugees/newcomers and that perhaps the LHIN could be a driving force or pull people together. It would need to link to what is already happening such as the Refugee Mental Health Working Group and the Refugee Health Clinic group.
- Christine gave an update from the Refugee Mental Health Working Group. They meet once a month to share information, client-issue brainstorming, training, resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

## 7. Community Updates

- Dan provided an update on the recent release of 2016 census data. New this year, IRCC data on category of immigration is integrated with the census data so we'll be able to get data, for example, on refugees or secondary economic applicants by their employment or their knowledge of English, etc.
- Immigration Partnership is connecting with the Immigration Migration Research Centre about research that would include data on temporary residents/students/workers and will share data coming out of that. Immigration Partnership is working with Public Health to update the immigrant fact sheets in 2018.
- Kaylee consulted with the group on behalf of CCORIC (Community Coalition on Refugee and Immigrant Concerns) about possible local World Refugee Day (WRD) themes. WRD will be in June 2018 and all are invited to participate in events through the month. Several themes were suggested. It was suggested they should be simple, make people think, and emphasize sharing refugee stories.
- It was noted that there has been an increase in RAP (Refugee Resettlement Program) rates. **ACTION: Lynne, Ed and Dan will update the chart that details OW/ODSP/RAP rates and share.** The Ontario Government is considering future rate changes in OW. **ACTION: Ed will share more information when it is available.**
- Some refugees have been called with a scam about being deported. **ACTION: Janet will share details about this with Dan and he can share (perhaps also with Region of Waterloo Communications).**
- Discussed issue of refugees using sponsorship money to send home. This is part of the broader family support/reunification issue. We need to get the information to newcomers about the means of sponsoring (i.e. group of 5) as a means to supporting. This could be another fact sheet letting staff at local agencies, sponsor groups, etc. about the different means of helping people who want to bring family over.

## 8. Next Meetings

- Dan will send out a poll to find the best 2018 meeting dates.

*Note that 2018 meetings were later set for:*

- **Apr 3, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **Jun 5, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **Oct 2, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener
- **Dec 4, 1-3pm** at MCC, 50 Kent Ave, Kitchener