

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP  
Work Steering Group  
Minutes  
February 6, 2019**

<b>Date:</b>	February 6, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
<b>Time:</b>	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Mclean, John Rose, Carol Simpson, Elizabeth Arcila , Eltag Elkhalifa, Julie Newman
<b>Regrets:</b>	Marilena Benak, Roberto Villamar, Chris Farrell, Isabel Vankuik, Janet Lehman, Tim Callan, Valerie Bradford, Tina Allishaw, Sue Benoit, Sherri McDermid, Sheila McIntosh, Janice Tueling
<b>Guests:</b>	
<b>Staff:</b>	Nora Whittington

1. **Welcome, Introductions:** - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean
2. **Approval of Minutes** - Minutes approved from December, 2018
3. **Update Immigrant Talent Hub :**

Julie Newman gave an update re: Talent Hub further to sub-committee/task group meeting as follows:

- The group have decided to slow down the process so a survey of employers can be completed and gather more information from the community. Ian suggested an RFIQ (request for information and questions) to gather more ideas and possible contributions. This would include reaching out to service providers, Chambers, WREDC, Communitech etc... Anyone that would have a vested interest or has ideas to share, or wants to get involved in making this happen. This would be in addition to a direct survey to a select group of employers regarding the need for a hub. This input will be invaluable to the group moving forward with the plan. The idea is to survey a group of employers at the HRPA event on March 20. Captive audience!
- A reminder that the Talent Hub has to be employer centric. Need to consider the governance and financial model and suggested that only 35% be government funded and the rest be via employer sponsorship, fee for service etc. Need investment from elsewhere to keep it sustainable.
- Will Chamber be the signatory as they are for IP? Or does the host manage this?.
- Does WSG act as the advisory group or what would the WSG's purpose be once a Hub exists?
- Suggested that perhaps the Small Business Centre is considered as a host as in each city within Region? Open to ideas!

- Strongly recommended it not be a virtual hub.
- Sensitivity from some service providers re: hosting arrangement. It will ultimately come down to who has what resources, who can successfully administer it and who can deliver on a business model with a location that has a business image.
- Reported that a settlement hub is also being discussed by another group but WSG sub-committee discussed and voted and want to keep the talent hub separate. All three pillars are important but employers will want something different.

\*Ian reported he was at a provincial meeting and there was much talk about the necessity for talent hubs.

\*Next WSG meeting we will review a draft RFIQ

#### **4. Action Group Updates:**

1. Advocacy – The Hub (as shared earlier)
2. Communications – Nora reported that the Apollo theatre is running Hire Immigrant ads for a year and also some ads running on 98.5
3. Data: Carol Simpson shared the Immigration Profile for Waterloo Region Proposal. The proposal provides an overview of immigration data available for WR. The group reviewed the questions ie: top occupations filled by immigrants vs. non-immigrants? Industries with highest percentage of immigrants? Etc. Employer One survey results discussed at next meeting.

#### **5. Updates on Partner Programs:**

- Employment Ontario – not present to share
- Mentorship Program – not present to share
- Connector Program – Eltag reported that the program needs more diversified funding to allow for broader support and service so it is not just for those with permanent residence as this program has the ability to help so many more. It is a program which could support a much larger group ie: international students. To date: 42 matches. 31 employed.

#### **6. Upcoming Events:**

**Tech Jam – February 26**

**Global Skills – March 6**

**HRPA Event – March 20**

**Point of View event – June (TBD)**

#### **7. Next Meeting – March 27, 2019**

#### **8. Adjournment – 1:15 p.m.**

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP  
Work Steering Group  
Minutes  
March 27, 2019**

<b>Date:</b>	March 27, 2014
<b>Location:</b>	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
<b>Time:</b>	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Mclean, Chris Farrell, Janet Lehman, Valerie Bradford, Tina Allishaw, Sheila McIntosh, Ela Cekanovic, Eltag Elkhalfifa
<b>Regrets:</b>	Marilena Benak, Roberto Villamar, Isabel Vankuik, Tim Callan, Sue Benoit, Sherri McDermid, Janice Tueling, John Rose, Carol Simpson, Elizabeth Aricla
<b>Guests:</b>	Dan Vandebelt
<b>Staff:</b>	Nora Whittington

1. **Welcome, Introductions:** - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean
2. **Approval of Minutes** - Minutes approved from February 6, 2019 meeting.
3. **Update Immigrant Talent Hub – Presentation/Discussion**

- **Employer Survey Questions:** A series of questions was presented for discussion. This is for employer feedback which will further validate the need and direction of Hub.

Suggestions as follows:

- a. Questions such as: Do you know there is immigrant and refugee talent available in WR to hire? Do you know how to source this talent? Do you have trouble recruiting? Would anything prevent you from hiring immigrants/refugees and if so why? Would a one stop talent hub for accessing immigrant talent be helpful? Yes or No and why? The idea is to keep questions simple and the survey short. Ask employers the size of their business and sector. Who will complete the survey? Owners/Leaders/Hiring Manager or HR Directors? It was suggested that we refer to candidates as New Canadians vs. Immigrant/Refugee's. So with reference to Hub - it would be called Waterloo Region New Canadian Talent Hub. More professional. Employers would relate to this more.

Nora to design an email for Ian to send to ie: Communitech and other organizations who can hopefully partnership in getting the survey out and Ian will reach out to selected members of the Chamber with survey. It was agreed doing a mass email will not work. It needs to be more personalized. Suggested subject line for email: **New Canadians – A Source of Talent.** It will catch employers attention.

- b. Next steps for Task Group: edit and refine questions – finalize and send to the larger WSG group for final approval and then the survey can go out before the next WSG meeting at the end of June ie: end of May, early June? Will also need to discuss how data will be evaluated.
- c. Other Things To Keep In Mind:  
The skills/experience will always be a priority when employers are hiring. They are not charities. They always want the best hire. There are still a lot of applicants – there are just fewer with the right skills. It costs a lot per hire and they look for the best with the fewest risks.

Beware that we don't want to pick up the current problems (service providers gaps or their challenges finding people for jobs) and moving it to Hub. There is an issue with finding talent including finding immigrants. We don't want employers to believe the Hub will solve all their hiring issues. Some of the jobs are not what people want even immigrants ie: manufacturing, retail, food service etc. The group confirmed that the Hub will have a presence – a one stop for immigrants as well as employers and it can attract people from abroad and build awareness for those immigrants in the community who do not currently access services. It will point people to one place. The goal is for it to have visibility and be well marketed.

Discussed that the Hub would most likely be a pilot project out of the gate.

The goal of the Hub is to have full wrap around support. As employers often need support when hiring or after hiring immigrants. It could offer a full suite of services that would be valuable to employers onboarding.

- RFIQ (Request for Information and Questions):

The idea is for this to go out to a select group: service providers, key partners ie: Communitech, WREDC, Chambers etc. to inform them of the plan for a Hub and ask them what they can contribute ie: funds, space. Also, it an opportunity for their input. Ie: Announce that there is a plan for a talent hub for new Canadians which is currently in the process of being developed and give them a basic overview of plan. How can you partner?

Sheila suggested that the Region of Waterloo may have a template of an RFIQ that we could tweak.

Valerie suggested that this could be mentioned at the Manufacturing Summit on May 23.

#### 4. Immigration Partnership Evaluation Presentation:

Dan Vandebelt from IP staff presented an overview of the results from the IP Partnership Survey.

Highlights: 60% response rate; ½ of WSG completed the survey; most partners committed to the activities of IP; there are some persistent challenges (housing) and some specific suggestions going forward. In general re: employment (services) -- 73% percent believe somewhat meeting needs. There is a full report that Nora will be sending out to the group.

#### 5. Partner Program Updates:

**Employment Ontario** – Tim Callan absent from meeting.

**YMCA Internship Program** – Janice Tueling absent from meeting.

**Connector Program** – Eltag reported that there have been 43 connections and 32 who have found employment. Progressing well.

#### 6. Review of Events:

**Global Skills** – a success again this year. The employer networking event received great feedback from employers and candidates.

**HRPA event** – postponed until October/2019

**Point of View event** – discussion: June 20/2019 sponsored by IP  
Ideas: 3 panel members: ie: Esta Chocolates – owner to talk about entrepreneurial success as a Refugee; Janet Lehman from JW Sweid Foods to discuss their involvement in hiring immigrants and the program they are involved in and possibly the Keynote speaker from Global Skills conference who is successfully employer in Waterloo region and how he prepped before he arrived and when he arrived to find employment. Panel to be moderated by ie: Scotiabank or BDC or Ian. Still to be determined.

**Immigrant Entrepreneurship Expo** – September 21/19 at the Rotunda. IP partnering with a group out of Toronto. Small Business Centre and Conestoga College to be involved.

#### 7. Next Meeting – June 27. No meeting in May.

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP  
Work Steering Group  
Minutes  
June 26, 2019**

<b>Date:</b>	June 26, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
<b>Time:</b>	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Mclean, Carol Simpson, Chris Farrell, Janet Lehman, Ela Cekanovic, Eltag Elkhalifa, Sue Benoit, John Rose, Elizabeth Arcila
<b>Regrets:</b>	Valerie Bradford, Tina Allishaw, Sheila McIntosh, Marilena Benak, Roberto Villamar, Isabel Vankuik, Tim Callan, Sherri McDermid, Janice Tueling
<b>Staff:</b>	Nora Whittington, Tara Bedard

1. **Welcome, Introductions:** - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean  
Carol Simpson made a few updates before having to leave:
  1. Employment services are under transformation – ministry may seek input
  2. Not applying to be area service system manager for employment services
  3. Windsor-Essex colleagues developed tool drawing in lots of data and builds on what they do here - asking upper tier municipalities for funding support. It could be beneficial for the hub approaching Community Services and Economic Development for support.
  4. Data group worked on immigrant profile, which Leila will present later.
  
2. **Approval of Minutes** - Minutes approved from March 27, 2019 meeting.
  
3. **Workforce Planning Board and data group update** - Leila Jabbour  
Immigration Profile for WR, adding to WR profile with deeper into immigration employment
  - CMA data – WR minus Wellesley Township; PR only – not temporary population
  - Notable: recent immigrants have high unemployment rate; recent refugees also have low employment compared to established refugees. It takes time to acclimatize to labour market
  - Do immigrants align with labour market needs? Seeing gaps in data, i.e. insurance carrier gaps. Can do deeper dive to understand - why tech industry attracting immigrants, more employed there than Canadian born (coding is transferrable whereas other skills are not as easily so). What does Employment Services capture?
  - Top occupations: relatively similar coverage of jobs in demand by immigrants vs. Canadian born. Again, tech based occupations dominated by immigrants. We can do more research to map employment progressions
  - Mobility: within first 5-10 years, immigrants have higher mobility, but once established same as Canadian born – people are staying here

- Type of income: reliance on government transfers decreases with length of time in Canada; self-employment slightly higher among established immigrants
- Low income: recent immigrants are 2.9 times more likely to live in poverty. Low income prevalence decreases over time
- Employer based training programs are costly and prevent people from doing them. Good to note to government about the barriers employers have – address business needs

Ela suggests looking into what people have on arrival and what further education you need here to get qualification equivalency. John and Sue suggest going to WES for this. Ian suggests getting this data out there on a panel at the 2020 Innovation Summit.

Chris F: shortage in entry level jobs in the region. Good to have data where they get employed in entry level job while working on equivalency, but it might be hard because of the fragmented system.

Ian: determine next steps and what resources are needed.

#### **4. Hub Review**

Survey launched at Manufacturing Summit and elsewhere – response not great right now

Need to get responses up and determine how many responses we want. Ask group to promote

Sue: promote on linked in? Nora: group needs to decide.

Ian will email businesses to invite them. Can analytics tell what types of employers are responding?

Chris F: can Cambridge Chamber do it too? SBC can ask BIAS to circulate Julie to resend the survey link and with group decide sample size

Ian: probably 100 with industry cross-section

John R: has been approached to invest \$200,000 in tech platform that might connect to hub. Ian: see what they say and bring it back to the group

Nora: talked with Carol earlier re: changes in EO, hub, and group can likely anticipate lack of support for hub and potential rob of EO because they are feeling the crunch re numbers, etc

Lee: all Employment Services funding from OW and ODSP being pulled and put with EO – major transformation. EO is overwhelmed with gap between employer needs and skills of talent. Region may apply to be service system manager

#### **5. Plan and next steps for WSG:**

Nora: with summer coming and if the hub doesn't go forward, the WSG will be focusing on the following:

- Business Expo focus on entrepreneurship with SBC

- POV on legal aspect of bringing in foreign workers  
John Rose suggests bringing in immigration consultants too because SMEs can afford them. This also allows getting all three perspectives  
Ian suggests thinking about how we can support SMEs access temporary foreign workers, etc.

## **6. Updates:**

**Employment Ontario** – see Lee’s comments in item 4

### **Connector Program** – Eltag

In April and May there were 12 connectees, 7 matches, and 3 found employment. Some were referred in from pre-employment programs. Will reach out to Guelph to get referrals to the program.

Workshops on First Job in Canada, WHIMIS and Health and Safety, Connecting with Accents.

Janet: WHIMIS and Health and Safety is a huge help because it can be done in many languages and workers can have their certificates already when starting their jobs.

John: case study or paper on this because the number one challenge in training is communication – the safety implications

**ACTION:** Tara to check employer pages for WHIMIS and Health and Safety training

## **7. Other Business**

Problem statements for the IP Fall Forum

1. English as a barrier to employment
2. Future is changing – how do we change approaches to immigration and with immigrants to address this?
3. Gap between assistance and employment because assistance level de-incentivize people to take entry level jobs

Julie: do we have things backwards? Currently we assume people first settle then work. Maybe do both concurrently.

Chris: make look at “Economics of getting a job in Canada” for immigrants modelled on JAWK programs

## **8. Next Meeting – 9 October 2019, 12:00-1:30**

## **9. Adjournment of meeting**

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP  
Work Steering Group  
Minutes  
October 9, 2019**

<b>Date:</b>	October 9, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
<b>Time:</b>	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Mclean, Charlene Hofbauer, Chris Farrell, Janet Lehman, Ela Cekanovic, Eltag Elkhalifa, John Rose, Elizabeth Arcila, Roberto Villamar, Tina Allishaw, Valerie Bradford, Isabel Vankuik, Julie Newman
<b>Regrets:</b>	Sheila McIntosh, Marilena Benak, Tim Callan, Sherri McDermid, Chris Farrell, Sue Benoit
<b>Staff:</b>	Nora Whittington

**1. Welcome, Introductions:** - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean  
Welcome to guest from YWCA – Kiran Aslam

**2. Round table introductions:** Welcome back to everyone as last meeting was in June, 2019.

**3. Program Updates:**

- Connector Program:  
Eltag gave an update on the program which has been slower over the summer months but still remaining successful with 6 connections between July and September and 5 jobs found.  
\*The Pre-Employment Program/KWMC – continues to provide the necessary supports via job search workshops and two modules.
- Mentorship Program: No representation from the YMCA present to give an update on the program.
- Employment Ontario – Tim Callan was unable to attend the meeting to give an update on the program. Charlene Hofbauer offered that changes are taking place with the program at a provincial level which will lead to local change and update will be shared as more information is provided. Tim Callan will continue to update the group.

**4. Hub Update:**

Julie Newman updated that the Hub sub-committee (via the Advocacy Task Group) met during the summer months to plan for a survey to go out to employers. A survey was created and a link sent to employers across Waterloo Region via the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, Service Provider reps, HUB committee members and Immigration Partnership. It resulted in approx. 70 employers respondents (and since this meeting an additional 20 plus were completed by new employers).

### Overview of Feedback:

- Over 98 percent of employers are in favour of a Hub (bricks and mortar and online database combined)
- Employers represented various sectors with majority being from manufacturing and next in line -- the professional sector and human services, IT and retail.
- 62 employers indicated English language to be the number one barrier and assessing education and credentials. Also, onboarding was highlighted as a concern and cultural differences.
- Over 80 percent of employers indicated they are having trouble hiring.

A small percentage of employers said they would pay for a hub service. The group agreed that this could change once it proves itself as credible via a pilot. Agreed that group can't make a decision based on this survey. Wait and see.

**Next Step:** The sub committee will create an RFIQ and send it to key stakeholders (the group will identify) and this will be sent out on behalf of WSG. The RFIQ will be looking for input, ideas, offerings, concerns, possible host and more.

\*Keep in mind this Hub will have a physical presence and will require a business model location so it has a professional presence. It should also act as a source of attracting immigrants to the community from across the country and abroad. It will also draw out those immigrants not using other services locally.

### **5. YWCA – In Her Shoes Program:**

A presentation took place about a YMCA social enterprise and employment program – In Her Shoes. This program has been gaining recognition in the community. It is an 8 week program for women and girls in K-W and it promotes entrepreneurship and employment. It offers a store which sells (bricks and clicks) women's accessories. With this women and girls learn business and customer service and a way to gain employment. They are looking for ongoing connections with employers and others who would like to support the program.

### **6. Other Work Pillar Initiatives:**

#### **September:**

- We partnered on the first Immigrant Business Expo with approx. 70 people attending. It was held on a Saturday which was a concern. It was recommended to the coordinator of the program to offer it next

time mid-week in an afternoon or evening. Will review for a possible future event. Need more commitment from key stakeholders and the community.

- **Employer Recognition Event**

This was a great success. This year's theme – Immigration. Focusing on recognizing employers who go the extra mile to engage and hire immigrants and refugee's. Several employers were recognized including JW Sweid Foods who was recognized for participating in the Working Together Program via the Reception House. They have had great success hiring refugee's through this program. A real success story. Reception House is looking for more employers to participate in this program.

- **Manufacturing Day Tour**

Immigration Partnership hosted (as part of the overall Manufacturing Day tour coordinated by the Workforce Planning Board) a bus to go to three different employers to offer immigrants and refugee's tours. Many keen immigrants boarded the bus to get a look at local manufacturers in action.

**Upcoming Events IP/Work Pillar is participating in:**

Chamber Expo – October 16

Tech Jam – November 12

IP Forum – November 13

Part-time Job Expo- November 28

**7. Other Business**

IP had a community-wide survey in the summer which was a huge success with over 1100 people completing it which was an increase from the approx. 200 the last time it occurred. It was a full community effort to get it out far and wide. Data will be shared once it is compiled and the next Community Action Plan will be based on this data.

**8. Next Meeting(s) – November 27, January 29, March 25, May 27 and June 24 Meeting held at Greater KW Chamber from Noon-1:30 with lunch provided.**

**9. Adjournment of meeting – 1:30 p.m.**

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP  
Work Steering Group  
Minutes  
December 11, 2019**

<b>Date:</b>	December 11, 2019
<b>Location:</b>	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
<b>Time:</b>	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
<b>Present:</b>	Ian Mclean, Charlene Hofbauer, Chris Farrell, Janet Lehman, John Rose, Elizabeth Arcila, Roberto Villamar, Tina Alishaw, Isabel Vankuik, Julie Newman, Dave Thomas
<b>Regrets:</b>	Sheila McIntosh, Marilena Benak, Tim Callan, Sherri McDermid, Sue Benoit, Ela Cekanovic, Eltag Elkhalifa, Valerie Bradford
<b>Staff:</b>	Nora Whittington <b>Guest:</b> Laura Heller

**1. Welcome, Introductions:** - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean  
Welcome to guest Laura Heller, MINE Project.

**2. Round table introductions:** Introductions and last meeting of 2019.

**3. Program Updates:**

- Connector Program:  
Dave Thomas gave an update as Eltag is out of the country. 4 matches and 9 new clients in the past month. Program is going quite well. There will be some small changes made to the program which are underway including adding some speed networking events.
- Mentorship Program: No representation from the YMCA present to give an update on the program.
- Employment Ontario – Tim Callan reported that transformational changes to EOES are coming. Prototypes to be announced by end of January, 2020 is expected. New service systems will be implemented. An outcomes measured model will definitely play in. The changes to come will present many opportunities and may play well into the proposed hub etc. Stay tuned for future updates.

**4. MINE Project – Laura Heller:**

Laura Heller presented to the group the new MINE project (Mobile Information for Newcomers Employment.). It is a project that is being sponsored by Federation of Ontario Libraries and the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre. It has been funded for one year as a Trillium Foundation SEED grant which started September 2019. The project will begin by assessing needs and feasibility of delivering innovative information services to underserved, newcomer communities in Ontario.

The project will include a proof of concept pilot phase. It will have mobile pop-up multimedia and learning hub delivered in community settings for people not currently accessing other info sessions.

It will provide education and info resources on employment, skills dev. And financial literacy.

There is a local advisory committee that is in place. The Immigration Partnership is represented on this group by Nora Whittington.

Laura Heller to come back to this group in the fall of 2020 to present an update on the project.

5. Julie Newman updated that the Hub sub-committee's (via the Advocacy Task Group) next step (following the survey that went to approx. 100 human resource professionals and some business owners) will be the distribution of the RFIQ (Request for Information and Questions). This will be sent to community leaders, service provider leaders, EO managers, CEO's and other key individuals and organizations. There are a few questions via a survey which will allow them to give input, ideas and to offer their support.

The RFIQ which has been approved by WSG will be distributed before the next meeting in January. Nora and Ian to connect and the email will go out to a selected email list (from Ian) built by Nora and the Chamber team.

#### **6. Other Work Pillar Initiatives:**

- Partnering with the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce on January 21 for a Point of View Breakfast. The focus is on immigration law as it relates to building and investing in a workforce.
- Planning for another Employer Recognition Event in 2020. This is in partnership with Employment Ontario. It is recognizing employers who have inclusive hiring practices and go the extra mile to use Employment Ontario services to hire -- inclusive of immigrants.
- Global Skills Conference is March 5 at the Crowne Plaza, Kitchener.

#### **7. Next Meeting: January 29, 2020**

#### **8. Adjournment: 1:30 p.m.**