

**IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP
Work Steering Group
Minutes**

Date:	January 29, 2020
Location:	Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
Time:	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
Present:	Ian Mclean, Sheila McIntosh, Sherri McDermid, Roberto Villamar, Sandy Little, Tim Callan, Dave Thomas, Julie Newman, Tina Allishaw, Janet Lehman, Valerie Bradford, Swati Sharma, Ksenia Zverev
Regrets:	Chris Farrell, Ela Cekanovic, Eltag Elkhalfifa, Isabel Vankuik, Janice Tueling, John Rose, Elizabeth Arcila, Sue Benoit
Staff:	Pauline Peng, Tara Bedard

1. Welcome, Introductions: - Meeting chaired by Ian McLean

2. Roundtable Introductions - Ian

3. Hub Update - Julie Newman

RFIQ went out last Friday to 1000 people, hoping to get 100 back, already 30 responses

Next steps: more responses, task group to look at the responses

Sheila: reminder to set a deadline for responses

4. Program Updates

Connector Program – Tim (on behalf of Eltag)

Implementing changes to make the experience more helpful for clients, also looking into online presentations of workshops for more flexibility

Mentorship Program – Swati

Last year, 9 out of the 11 clients. There have been challenges recruiting mentors, especially in fields such as biochemistry and biotechnology. Quality assurance in health and safety. Janet to connect with Swati.

Employment Ontario – Tim

The program is transforming, and will take some time. Meeting with Tina on Monday; several Ministry staff also attended. The Province is proposing 3 prototypes regions starting in April. WR was not picked as a prototype region, and was advised to keep an eye on ministry updates. The prototypes picked are 3 different organizations across the province, assigned to a region: Hamilton, Peel, Kawarthas. Service managers will be observing. In October we will be advised who will provide the services, and next spring is evaluations and call for proposal time. We will continue to be as collaborative as possible, and will still benefit to see what happens in other regions of the province.

Managers meeting on Jan 30. Clients are identified as Internationally trained professionals 23% in the region. Using assessment tool, measuring on exits and those still in employment. Filter people in 3 groups: furthest from labour market to closest.

5. Discussion: OCASI - Valerie and Ian

Mandate letter from Federal cabinet. Just getting started on how this will look like, partnering with local Chambers. Acknowledge that the program is there – what this group will recommend to Council. It will help if we have the Hub as we will know the kind of talent we are looking for. IP staff come back with more detail: we are interested and want to be part of the process and want to know what we can do to contribute to that.

ACTION: Reach out to MPs so they know we are keen on being part of this (Nora and Tara to follow up)

6. Task Group Updates

Communications/Events Task Group Update – Tina and Sheila

Sheila, Tina and Nora met last week: connection needed with HR consultant: development and expediting the training of local immigrants. The HR consultant will develop grassroots and concrete examples. E.g. Cleaner wants someone who has a vehicle. Get employers to look at small modifications and present them in a strategic manner so some immediate needs could be fulfilled. Employers are not filling jobs, but the approach hasn't changed in the last 50 years. Hannah Brown, the consultant, will go around and do needs assessment. 3 stakeholders to have a focus group meeting: grasp ideas and key info for Hannah to put in her training, and let people see the impact of the training. Also training with an entrepreneur spin, e.g. people who can't find a job to start their own small business. The meeting will involve service providers, employers, and job seekers. Follow up meeting in a few weeks, currently in brainstorming stage

Workforce Planning Board Update (Data Group) – Charlene

Charlene shared the results from a worker survey from December, done by employees and job seekers in parallel to the EmployerOne survey, includes immigrants.

Compare to Indeed report: why people switch jobs, the results match. We also did better than Indeed in outreach. Main reasons for people switching jobs: supervisors, business they're in not supporting them personally, bullying and harassment, pay. Varies based on age, long or short term job seeker

In demand trades report: employer reach-out. 15 in-demand skilled trades. Electricians and plumbers look healthy, but employers are still looking for them. 3 key topic areas: perceptions and awareness, training/completion/retention,

support. Employers started to realize they are part of the 15-year problem. Every board did this across the province.

Trades: 4 in 10 jobs will be in trades

Education pathways and income: what someone earns after x years. Not immigrant specific. Compares Canadian-born white male who has not completed a co-op program to other groups re: salary, chance of employment.

Full reports can be found at

https://www.workforceplanningboard.com/resources/knowledge_library

Time to talk at a policy level: more direction in the hands of municipalities and chambers to attract immigrants that fulfill the labour force needs. Tara to provide Ian with key points to highlight.

7. CAP Update - Tara

Tara explained what the CAP consists of, action items, and asked for input for Vision and Mission statements. New CAP to be approved at April Council meeting; chance to review it at next WSG meeting.

Feedback by Feb 10

8. Other Businesses

Valerie: talks at Downsview at Centennial Park about women in aerospace. There is a shortage in aeroplane pilots.

Tara: how to perceive future work when the talent pool isn't here yet? Ian: how small business get talent by doing training differently. There's gaps.

Valerie: remote working breeds isolation, especially for immigrants who want to integrate into the Canadian society. Fastest growing demographic is single-person households. Social aspect of the workplace is important. Problems amplified for immigrants since they also have problems that locals don't have.

9. Next Meeting – March 25, 2020, 12:00-1:30

Other meetings: May 27 and June 24

10. Adjournment of meeting

Immigration Partnership
Work Steering Group Meeting

March 25, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Charlene Hofbauer, Eltag Elkhalifa, Ian Mclean, Isabel VanKuik, Janet Lehman, Julie Newman, Katherine Peterson, Sandy Little, Ksenia Zverev, Michelle Hollis, Roberto Villamar, Sheila McIntosh, Sue Benoit, Tina Allishaw, John Rose

Regrets: Elizabeth Arcila, Tim Callan, Chloe Howell, Michelle Jutzi

Staff: Nora Whittington

1. Welcome and Introductions:

*This was the first meeting since COVID 19 was identified as a world wide health crisis. Ian Mclean welcomed everyone via a Zoom meeting and introductions took place.

2. Review of Status of Meetings:

Typically this group meet bi-monthly. Due to COVID this group will meet for a few months on a monthly basis and then go back to the regular schedule. It was agreed the meetings will move to 1 hr meetings vs the typical 1.5 hr meetings until the meetings are in person again.

3. Update on COVID/Chamber and Business:

Ian McLean gave an overview of how Waterloo Region is responding to COVID and feedback from local business.

Ian informed the group of BESTWR group which has been formed to support the local economy and various sectors and areas of the community through COVID.

There is a BESTWR leadership group consisting of CEO's from the Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation (WREDC), area Chambers and Communitech. There are a number of workgroups branching out from the leadership team. These teams will meet weekly to tackle various sectors and areas and report back to the leadership team. The leadership team are meeting daily and sometimes talking more than once a day.

Ian informed the group that this is going to be a long recovery and is and will greatly affecting business. He said – it won't be an easy comeback. Ian will keep the group update

to date at meetings and if anyone has questions to connect. The Chamber is sending out regular updates to their members and the community. These are being sent out once a week. There is currently a lot of work being done around accessing PPE.

4. Update from the Immigration Partnership:

- Nora shared that the staff are now working remotely. Sometimes going into office if no one is there. Adapting to virtual processes and meetings.
- Reaching out to employers and partners to see if there is anything IP can do and to know there is support.
- Team are learning how to pivot to virtual environment for meetings etc. Will be using Zoom (primarily).
- Reviewing creative ways to engage employers recognizing that right now they are being bombarded and is a very stressful time.
- Beginning to work with CCBR (Centre for Community Based Research) on the evaluation of the work of WSG (actions/deliverables). To be submitted to the provincial funder by early spring 2021. WSG will be kept up to date on the process and will be involved in giving input. Presentations will take place at upcoming meetings.
- A number of meetings/events IP was to be part of or attend have been cancelled at this time. Some will go online but everyone is still learning how to adapt.
- We will be looking at virtual partnerships with the Greater KW Chamber and Workforce Planning Board and more to deliver events etc...

5. Update from the WSG Members:

Individual members shared the status of how they are operating. Most moving to remote work. Employment service providers/programs are serving people virtually although a lot of people are challenging to reach at this time. Difficult to connect with employers at this time. Immigrants will be greatly impacted. Most international students will be leaving the country and that is a great impact as well.

Connector Program/Mentorship Program are having typical challenges trying to access mentors and coordinating these connections. To be expected.

6. Next Meeting: April 22, 2020

7. Adjournment: 1:30 p.m.

Immigration Partnership
Work Steering Group Meeting

April 22, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Charlene Hofbauer, Eltag Elkhalifa, Ian Mclean, Isabel VanKuik, Janet Lehman, Julie Newman, Katherine Peterson, Kristin Sainsbury, Ksenia Zverev, Michelle Hollis, Roberto Villamar, Sheila McIntosh, Sue Benoit, Tina Allishaw, John Rose, Elizabeth Arcila

Regrets: Tim Callan, Michelle Yutzi

Staff: Nora Whittington

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Ian Mclean welcomed the group. Introductions took place.

2. Update Chamber/BestWR

Ian Mclean gave an update on affects of COVID on Chamber and business community. BestWR Leadership Team have been meeting regularly and they are advocating for the local economy with outreach to provincial and federal leaders to support business with what they need to survive at this time. The group continue with the challenges of PPE. Tourism has been hit hard. Restaurants that can are moving to take out and curbside pick up and of course delivery. Not all are equipped to do so. Retail is also struggling and moving to online orders and curbside pick up. Business is having to learn a new way of surviving. Labour intensive sectors are struggling. Some of the workgroups that have been set up by BESTWR include: construction, agriculture, retail and service, communications and manufacturing. There is a workforce task group set up and both Charlene, Kristin and Nora are part of this.

The Chamber is busy moving events online. The Chamber normally delivers over 90 events a year so trying to find platforms and ways to deliver events and get creative.

3. Workforce Planning Board Update:

Charlene Hofbauer reported on workforce status in the region. She indicated all things considered there are still many jobs out there. Of course it has declined from this time last year but there are approximately 1800 job postings in the region. Many of them in

entry levels and health care. WFPB has been working with other WFPB's across southwestern Ontario on a job board. Hoping to have it up and working soon. This will make a tremendous difference as it will gather all job postings across the region into one location for job seekers and divide them into sectors and skills levels etc... It will be called FindYourJob.ca. Stay tuned.

Also, WFPB will be partnering with IP on virtual job fairs. Still in the planning stages.

4. Update from the Immigration Partnership:

- The group were presented with the Community Action Plan for input. Nora asked for review and approval.
- IP will be partnering on Virtual Job Fairs with WFPB
- Partnering with Southwestern Ontario IP's on employer webinars

5. Update On Talent Hub:

The group discussed the status of the work on the Talent Hub. It was agreed that it is critical to move forward on these plans and for the task group to continue to meet and plan. The feedback was that things are going to eventually turn around and immigration is going to play an even more critical role to rebuild the economy and the workforce.

6. Next Meeting: May 30, 2020

7. Adjournment: 1:00 p.m.

Immigration Partnership

Work Steering Group Meeting

May 30, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Charlene Hofbauer, Eltag Elkhalfifa, Ian Mclean, Isabel VanKuik, Janet Lehman, Julie Newman, Katherine Peterson, Kristin Sainsbury, Ksenia Zverev, Sheila McIntosh, Elizabeth Arcila,

Regrets: Tim Callan, Michelle Hollis, Roberto Villamar, John Rose, Tina Allishaw, Sue Benoit, Chloe Howell, Michelle Yutzi

Guests: Rich Janzen, Sherry Rezvani

Staff: Nora Whittington

1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

Ian Mclean welcomed the group. Group introductions. Welcome guests.

2. **Update Chamber/BestWR**

BESTWR Leadership team are still meeting regularly. Although COVID numbers are improving a bit there is still much upheaval with business and capacity for restaurants etc.. As nice weather begins to arrive, it will help some of these businesses. Having more success with PPE. Continue to advocate for business. Some sectors are thriving during this time and are becoming more innovative. Some businesses have closed and some will never recover. It is overwhelming for many SME's. There is a lot of communication with Region Public Health for updates etc.. The work groups of BESTWR continue to meet weekly and give updates accordingly. The Workforce group are running some webinars to support restaurants and for larger restaurants to share ideas with smaller businesses. It is great to see how business are helping each other.

The Chamber is beginning to use a platform called HOPIN which is fabulous and pivoting to bring everything virtual. Some events have had to be postponed but Chamber is able to manage most of them. A big learning curve for events team and all the staff. Chamber is going to be delivering more online webinars, Business After 5 etc... It seems to be working well. Those who can't attend have the opportunity to watch later as events are recorded and sent out.

3. CCBR:

Rich and Sherry presented an overview of the plan for the evaluation and the role of WSG as they proceed forward. They will be attending future meetings. They will be working on it through the summer and fall with a draft presentation later in the year.

4. Update from the Immigration Partnership:

- The Community Action plan has been finalized. WSG approved. This will now be a living document for this group although some work will need to be adapted due to COVID.
- IP will partner on 3 virtual job fairs. Two in the fall and one in the winter/spring.
- Partnering with Southwestern Ontario with a virtual employer event in the fall
- Partnering with the Chamber on Business Success Webinar beginning in the fall
- Participating in BESTWR Workforce Group
- Participating in Future of Work committee

5. General Updates:

Connector Program – connecting with some mentors but matches are low due to restrictions around COVID. Being able to go virtual may help the program in the long run. Mentorship Program – also moving slower than before as harder to get mentors engaged at this time.

*This is a time immigrant job seekers need the greatest support as they will be a group that is greatly affected by COVID and the affects on the economy and job market.

6. Next Meeting: September 23, 2020

7. Adjournment: 1:00 p.m.

Immigration Partnership

Work Steering Group Meeting

September 23, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Charlene Hofbauer, Eltag Elkhalifa, Ian Mclean, Janet Lehman, Julie Newman, Katherine Peterson, Kristin Sainsbury, Ksenia Zverev, Sheila McIntosh, Elizabeth Arcila, Tim Callan, Michelle Hollis, Roberto Villamar, Tina Allishaw, Sue Benoit, Ian Mclean

Regrets: Chloe Howell, Isabel Vankuik, Michelle Yutzi

Guests: Rich Janzen, Sherry Rezvani

Staff: Nora Whittington

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Sheila McIntosh chaired this meeting. A welcome to the group. Introductions took place. *John Rose will no longer be on WSG as he has moved back to the UK. John has been part of this group for many years and will be greatly missed.

2. Program Evaluation:

Rich Janzen and Sherry Rezvani from CCBR gave an updated plan and the work that has been done to date. Some members of the group have been interviewed or will be and Sherry will be doing a lot of the research of all the events/activity etc.. of the Work Pillar. The group discussed the direction. Questions were addressed.

3. Talent Hub:

Julie Newman reported that the Hub task group have met a few times. There is a lot of momentum right now with new ideas as the group look at this being a virtual hub. Right now the group need to know the direction of a platform and how this will work and how it will be managed. Need to look at what is already out there and see if there can be a partnership. Removing the idea of bricks and mortar helps simplify the plan a bit. Still need to discuss funding and how to deliver a virtual hub. It seems that COVID has enhanced even more how much hub is required (with all the supports). Often during such times it can be easy to see that a Hub might not be required right now but the time is now

to plan as immigration will take off again and there will be a lot of immigrants who will be out of work and need support and many employers who will continue to need people.

4. Update from the Immigration Partnership:

- Partnership with Greater KW Chamber Business Success Webinars began this month. These will run until the end of June 2021. IP will have 6 sessions dedicated to topics related to immigration but we will have recognition during each event. This is a great opportunity.
- IP will partner on 3 virtual job fairs with WFPB. There will be two this fall and one in the winter. It is a great opportunity for immigrant talent to get connected.
- Partnering with Southwestern Ontario with a virtual employer event next month – called Growing Your Workforce with Immigrants. ApplyBoard from Waterloo region will be on the panel and also representatives from London and other areas will join. A very exciting partnership.
- Participating in BESTWR Workforce Group
- Participating in Future of Work committee
- IP has signed an MOU with World Education Services (WES) A very exciting initiative called #immigrantswork. Devon Franklin will be our contact with WES and she will be leading us through this. Nora will work closely with Devon. The goal is to launch an employer playbook for Waterloo region. It is to help bridge the gap even more between immigrants/refugee's and employers.
- Anti-Racism – (FYI) IP is working on an anti-racism statement and also training sessions. Stay tuned for more.

5. Update from WFPB/FindYourJob.ca:

FindYourJob.ca is going very well. It has become an integral part of the supporting employers and job seekers through COVID. It is growing in awareness and is getting great feedback. There will also be the FindYourJob.ca virtual job fairs coming up this fall. There will be three in total with one being in winter.

Manufacturing Day will go online this year with video's of manufacturers being created for viewing by immigrant talent and others.

6. Update BESTWR/Chamber:

Ian Mclean updated group on status of BESTWR. Preparing for the second wave of COVID. Many businesses hit hard. The weather during summer helped with restaurants and many businesses but as cold weather approaches it will be more difficult. There will be an extension for patio operation. It is going to be a challenging winter for businesses and

the job market. The group continue to support the business community through advocating.

The Chamber has adapted very well to doing events on line. The Manulife Business Success Webinars are going to be delivered each Weds starting this month. IP is one of the sponsors and there will be a variety of guests and topics.

7. **Next meeting:** November 25, 2020 11:30-12:30

8. **Adjournment:** 1:00 p.m.

Immigration Partnership

Work Steering Group Meeting

November 25, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Charlene Hofbauer, Eltag Elkhalfifa, Ian Mclean, Isabel VanKuik, Janet Lehman, Julie Newman, Katherine Peterson, Kristin Sainsbury, Ksenia Zverev, Sheila McIntosh, Elizabeth Arcila, Tim Callan, Michelle Hollis, Roberto Villamar, Tina Alishaw, Sue Benoit, Ian Mclean

Regrets: Michelle Jutzi, Chloe Howell

Guests: Devon Franklin

Staff: Nora Whittington

1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

Ian Mclean welcomed everyone and introduced Devon Franklin as the guest. Group introductions.

2. **BestWR/Chamber Update:**

Chamber has been successfully delivering the weekly Business Success Webinars every Weds. Topics range from mental health to wellness and various business related topics. Chamber will be launching a Pillars to Prosperity series in the new year. BestWR leadership group continue to meet regularly. The COVID numbers are growing so group is prepping for a lock-down. Hard times. But we will work to get through this time. There have been a lot of supports for business and Chamber posts all those supports on the website.

3. **Update from WFPB:**

Charlene reported that employment has improved. There are a lot of jobs in health care. Having a tough time filling those roles. A lot of jobs in manufacturing, finance and more. Restaurants are hard hit and of course tourism overall is struggling. Findyourjob.ca continues to be strong in offering a one stop place for job seekers to search jobs through various sectors. WFPB continues to do research regarding the Future of Work which IP is part of it as immigrants are surveyed for input. Getting the job seekers input in planning the future of working is critical.

4. **#ImmigrantsWork Project (WES)**

Devon Franklin attended from WES to introduce the group to herself and the project that she will be working on with IP/WSG group over the next year (or more). She gave an overview of WES and its' history and her role and how this project will work in Waterloo region and how Waterloo region is one of three communities selected (the others are Moncton, NB and Durham Region, Ontario). First the development of a Foundational Partners group will take place which Nora will be working on. Devon and Nora will meet bi-weekly to review project and WSG will be kept in the loop with some of the group being members of the Foundational Partners group.

5. **IP Update**

- Partnership with Greater KW Chamber Business Success Webinars began this month. These will run until the end of June 2021. IP will have 6 sessions dedicated to topics related to immigration but we will have recognition during each event. This is a great opportunity.
- IP has partnered on 2 of the 3 virtual job fairs with WFPB. There will one more in the winter. The first few a huge success.
- Partnered with Southwestern Ontario on a virtual employer event last month – called Growing Your Workforce with Immigrants. ApplyBoard from Waterloo region was on the panel and then representatives from London and other areas will join. A very exciting partnership. It was well attended and we will be doing more of these partner events.
- Participating in BESTWR Workforce Group
- Participating in Future of Work committee
- WES Work
- CCBR – Evaluation Work

6. **Next meeting:** January 27, 2021 11:30-12:30

7. **Adjournment:** 12:30 p.m.