



IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP

Settle. Work. Belong.

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2012

Immigration Partnership Waterloo Region

Annual Report to the Community

2012

This document is available in alternate formats upon request.

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1.0 History and Background

The Immigration Partnership is a community-wide initiative whose mandate is to facilitate successful settlement and integration of immigrants¹ in Waterloo Region. Planning for the Immigration Partnership began in 2009, supported by funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

Throughout 2009 and 2010, the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN), the Region of Waterloo and other community partners and members, participated in various collaborative community planning and consultation processes, to develop a local immigration partnership structure, and a local settlement and integration strategy and action plan including vision, mission and goals.

The vision, mission and mandate of the Immigration Partnership is:

Vision: Waterloo Region will be a community where immigrants and refugees can settle, work and belong.

Mission: The Immigration Partnership helps facilitate successful settlement, integration and community involvement of immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region.

Mandate: We create and enhance partnerships and implement collaborative strategies, specifically through:

- Coordination and information sharing: promoting and building partnership; planning and strategically setting priorities; providing advice and direction on key initiatives; seeking input from various groups/sectors and immigrants; sharing between groups; communicating to the broader community; speaking with a unified voice.
- Planning and implementing strategies for change: identifying and addressing local immigrant issues; acting as a catalyst for collective and coordinated action; working for policy change; seeking out resources; public education.

In 2011, the Immigration Partnership received further funding from CIC to develop and implement actions to meet the three objectives of the strategy:

1. Improve access to and coordination of effective, strategic and comprehensive services/programs that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration.
2. Improve access to the labour market for immigrants.
3. Strengthen awareness and the capacity of Waterloo Region to integrate increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees.

¹ "Immigrants" includes people who immigrated a long time ago or more recently, refugees and refugee claimants, immigrants who are and are not Canadian Citizens and all newcomers to Canada, who are living in Waterloo Region

A Partnership Council was formed to guide implementation of the strategic activities. Action groups were developed that represent the three different outcome or domain areas: Settle, Work and Belong. These action groups were established between June and September 2011 and are comprised of between 15 – 25 diverse stakeholders, who are responsible for working in collaboration with community partners to carry out strategic activities identified in the action plan. Additionally, Ad Hoc Task Groups have been established to facilitate focused activity in specific priority areas. The structure of the Immigration Partnership during the period of September 2011 – December 2012 is attached in Appendix A.

2.0 Introduction

The Immigration Partnership in Waterloo Region has evolved significantly over the previous two years, moving from a conceptual framework to implementation. The period January – December 2012 was a year of various activity including research, needs assessment, partner relationship development, learning and mutual understanding, and system change activity.

The Immigration Partnership is comprised of numerous stakeholders in the community representing sectors such as community services, health, education, social services, businesses, human resources, government, immigrants and refugees. It was established to create and enhance partnerships in a comprehensive local immigration partnership system to help facilitate our collective impact to support successful settlement and integration of immigrants to our region.

The partnership is hosted by the Region of Waterloo, on behalf of the community. The Region of Waterloo employs and manages partnership staff, provides support to manage operational funds for the partnership, provides various in-kind resources to support the initiative including information technology, planning and mapping services, and also a financial contribution towards the strategy.

Funders that contribute financial funding to the strategy are:

- The Government of Canada through Citizenship and Immigration Canada: CIC provided a financial contribution of \$286,941 for April 1st, 2012 – March 31st, 2013 for staffing and operational resources.
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Labour Market Integration Unit provided \$80,000 to support engagement of employers and networking among employers and Internationally Trained Professionals.
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Information, Research and Evaluation Unit provided \$48,400 to support review and development of the Waterloo Region Immigration portal.
- Region of Waterloo provided \$50,000 (for each year 2012, 2013, 2014) to support implementation of settlement and integration strategies.
- United Way Kitchener Waterloo provided \$26,000 to support implementation of settlement and integration strategies.

The variety of funding sources to support immigrants to come to our region to work, settle and belong reflects the local commitment to working together for better and improved outcomes for immigrants.

This report describes the Immigration Partnership governance, activities related to the action plan, as well as highlights of some of the successes and challenges faced during 2012.

3.0 Immigration Partnership Council

The **Immigration Partnership Council** was formally established in January 2011. Governance of the Immigration Partnership is provided by leadership through the Immigration Partnership Council. Membership includes a broad group of stakeholders from sectors such as health, education, business, municipal government, and settlement services. Council meets on a bi-monthly basis and is provided with monthly updates from the Partnership Manager, and the Chairs of each Pillar Action Group.

Over the course of the year, a number of Council sub-committees were operating:

- The **Executive Committee** met monthly prior to each Council meeting to support the Immigration Partnership Manager in operations of the partnership, as well as review and agree agenda items and review actions for Council meetings. During a governance review of Council, it was agreed this committee would be disbanded. Their final meeting was held in September 2012.
- The **Communications Committee** met monthly to guide integration and further development of the joint immigration portal and Immigration Partnership website. In November 2012, they completed their work approving website recommendations for implementation. Members agreed to disband this committee but committed to reviewing the draft Communications Plan during winter 2013. Their final meeting was held in November 2012.
- The **Data/Evaluation Committee** began its work in January 2012 and met regularly until summer 2012. They worked with Council to support the Developmental Evaluation project and with the Settling Action Group to support the Settlement Systems Mapping project.
- The **Future Possibilities Committee** began to develop a strategy for diversifying the funding, and supporting access to sustainable funds for the Immigration Partnership. During this process the partnership was notified of CIC's commitment to extend their funding commitment until March 31st, 2014 so this committee agreed to re-convene early 2013.
- The **Settlement Services Planning Group** met during the past year to commence dialogue and discussion related to service planning and

recommendations from the Settlement Systems Mapping report. A draft Terms of Reference was developed and individuals continued their connections and dialogue throughout Summer and Fall 2012 to discuss options related to the local CIC call for proposals. Some individual partners worked together to develop joint training strategies for their staff in 2013. This group will re-convene early 2013.

Some initiatives of the Council were:

Partnership Launch

In January 2012 we held a public launch of the Immigration Partnership. The event was attended by over 120 individuals representing employers, settlement, health, education, government, non-government, and individuals with lived experience. At the launch we presented the promotional DVD about the partnership and what it means to settle, work and belong in Waterloo region. The event was a huge success.

Developmental Evaluation

The Council worked together to develop a draft scope of work and developmental evaluation plan. Immigration Partnership Council members and pillar stakeholders were interviewed and provided feedback about the implementation of the the Immigration Partnership, and their engagement in the partnership. To read a full copy of the report go to <http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/resources/research-and-reports.html>

4.0 Settling Pillar Initiatives

The Settling Action Group is responsible for working in collaboration with community partners to carry out strategic activities to achieve the outcome of improvements in the coordination of and access to services that facilitate immigrant settlement.

Settlement focuses on the short-term transitional issues faced by newcomers as they arrive in Waterloo Region. The Settling Pillar partners are working to develop increased capacity of the settlement services systems. Their activities include mapping of services, identifying barriers and access to services, coordinated planning, and training opportunities for enhanced service provision.

Ad-hoc groups developed to further the work during 2012 were:

- Settlement Systems Mapping
- Access to Hospital Interpretation
- Access to Primary Care
- Access to Mental Health Care

Settlement System Mapping Group

The purpose of the Settlement Systems Mapping project was to confirm what settlement services currently exist and create a model of what services should exist for immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region. The Settlement Systems Mapping Team reviewed, developed and implemented a process for mapping of services within the settlement system. The completed systems map provides an inventory of what services exist in Waterloo region and what capacity exists within each service/agency.

Recommendations from this project are:

1. Review standardized tools across all settlement agencies
2. Review evaluation tools across all settlement agencies
3. Begin to track secondary migrants across all agencies
4. Clarify the way in which service provision is tracked and reported across programs
5. Create opportunities for concrete/practical systems planning with Senior Management staff of immigrant-serving agencies through development of a Collaboration Council
6. Begin a process to further explore/develop a one-stop model of service provision for immigrants/refugees in Waterloo Region
7. Review and develop information materials regarding services that are easy to access in a variety of formats and reflect how to navigate the system effectively

Various working groups have begun dialogue on how to best move forward the first four recommendations and will continue these to develop strategic actions during 2013. The Data/Evaluation Committee of the Immigration Partnership has started working on reviewing standardized tools and tracking systems. Recommendation 5 has been implemented and a systems planning group comprised of settlement service senior Managers and language service providers has begun to meet and work together. This group will take the lead on implementing recommendation 6 and other collaborative opportunities that emerge. The Settling Action Group will develop a plan to implement recommendation 7.

The full systems mapping report is available through our website http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/files/news/Immigration_Partnership_Mapping_Report_October_2012.pdf While the systems map provides a snapshot of the current services available, over time, the framework will serve as a catalyst for ongoing discussion, particularly at the systems planning table. The map should be viewed as a “living document” that invites continued reflection and discussion.

Access to Hospital Interpretation Group

This group of hospital healthcare representatives and the Guelph Local Immigration Partnership, worked together to submit a concept paper to the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) for development of a model of integrated interpretation services in Waterloo and Wellington Regions. Group members liaised

with the WWLHIN to increase awareness of the need for support in this area. This resulted in the WWLHIN extending an invitation to community health care centres to submit a proposal for a language platform and cultural competency training for primary care providers.

The group members developed a proposal to provide cultural competency training to local WWLHIN funded agencies. The lead agency in this project will be Guelph Community Health Centre. Training will also be made available for partner agencies and future plans for an on-line version for on-going training and orientation was included in the plan. Work on developing the language platform is ongoing. Group members are exploring the RIO (Remote Interpretation Ontario) service to determine the feasibility for implementation in our region.

Access to Primary Care Group

Members of the Access to Primary Care group have completed a number of activities this year. They responded to a request from health care providers for clarification on the changes to the Interim Federal Health Benefit program by developing a chart that provides an overview of the changes. This primer has been distributed to doctors, nurse practitioners and other medical personnel so they may better understand the program, provide medical services to immigrants and refugees, and make necessary referrals as appropriate.

The chart is available at:

http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/files/Immigration_Partnership_-_Interim_Federal_Health_program_Chart_Feb_2013.pdf

Access to Primary Care group members have also been working closely with the Access to Hospital Interpretation Task Group to ensure cultural competency training is provided to all primary health care providers. The group linked with the Access to Hospital Interpretation group and played a role in securing the funds for cultural competency training for WWLHIN funded agencies.

And finally, members of this task group have supported a partner to submit a proposal to “Stronger Together Grants” through Christian Charities to create a health care clinic that would assist immigrants and refugees who do not qualify and meet the criteria for Interim Health Care Program benefits.

Access to Mental Health Care

The Access to Mental Health Care group created a list of service providers working with Immigrants and Refugees. The group also assisted with the “Stronger Together Grant” proposal submitted by the Region of Waterloo Public Health Mental Health group, by providing research materials and statistical information on access to mental health barriers. This group continues to meet with the intent to improve access and coordination of services for immigrants and refugees with mental health needs.

5.0 Working Pillar Initiatives

The working pillar comprises two groups focused on achieving successful employment outcomes for immigrants in our Region. Successful employment is two pronged – the demand side recognises what skills, experience and recruitment opportunities local employers require to hire immigrant talent and the supply side focuses on preparing and supporting immigrant talent for job search and employment in Canada. The Working Action Group targets the demand side through recruitment, selection and retention, and the Immigrant Employer Awareness Group focuses on the supply side through preparation, training and support.

Working Action Group – Demand

The Working Action Group priorities are focused on employer connections, outreach to job ready immigrants, and implementing a marketing/promotional strategy to engage employers. Staff has been actively involved in planning networking events and employer seminars, which is funded through Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, in partnership with the Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce and other organizations. Individual meetings with employers have been initiated and awareness of the Partnership and working pillar has increased.

The following events were held, either as a lead or in partnership:

- Diversity Intelligence Seminar “Cultural Competency” Kitchener, June, 2012
- Green Event, Kitchener, June, 2012
- Deloitte Impact Day “Preparing New Canadians for Work” Kitchener, September, 2012
- Conversation Café “Newcomers and Working” Kitchener, October, 2012
- Diversity Intelligence Seminar “Cultural Competency” Cambridge, November, 2012
- Point of View event “Canada’s Skill Shortage and Literacy Challenge” Kitchener, November, 2012. A representative from our Data/Evaluation group was a keynote.

In total, over 280 employers and 40 service providers were engaged through our events. In addition, 40 internationally trained professionals were also engaged in our networking and training events.

Immigrant Employment Awareness Group – Supply

Local pre-employment service providers, including Employment Ontario Employment Services providers, that support immigrants to move toward employment, people with lived experience and community members, came together to form this group. Originally named the Working Advisory Group, they engaged in a process of determining the purpose of the group, identifying links to the Working Action Group, defining their terms

of reference and selecting a new name, the Immigrant Employment Awareness Group (IEAG).

Group members developed an online survey for front line pre-employment provider staff to identify the skills and training needs they require to fully support the immigrant clients they serve. Survey data will be used to prioritize, recommend and develop training opportunities working with IEAG members as the community experts to deliver the training. The survey data will be provided to local employment service providers and they will be invited to work with the IEAG to implement recommendations for program and service changes as appropriate.

In addition, a small working group is meeting to plan and develop an immigrant employment systems map considering eligibility, access, programming, duplication, capacity and program and service gaps. First steps are researching past and current local employment mapping initiatives and results through an immigrant employment lens.

6.0 Belonging Pillar Initiatives

Belonging is usually a longer term process than settlement, and involves both immigrants and the broader community engaging in a process of mutual learning and inter-relatedness. Belonging focuses on integration – an ongoing process of mutual accommodation between an individual and society.

The Belonging Action Group developed priorities that focus on civic engagement and connecting with informal supports such as ethno cultural communities. Four task groups were developed:

- Civic Engagement
- Civic Leadership
- Ethno Cultural Groups

Civic Engagement Task Group

The Civic Engagement group, together with Region of Waterloo's Diversity and Inclusion staff, held a "Dialogue on Diversity – Civic Participation" event to create an opportunity for dialogue amongst stakeholders and identify how immigrants can become engaged in our communities. The event was attended by 127 individuals. Guest speaker Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director of Toronto's Maytree Foundation, challenged the audience to assess diversity in the communities we live and work, and encouraged individuals get involved and help immigrants to get involved.

Ms. Omidvar invited our community to take up the challenge to:

- Get involved in and follow the research commissioned by Maytree and the Greater Toronto Leadership Project under the brand DiverseCity and count and

measure visible minorities in Board leadership positions in our non-profit, governmental sectors and private organization.

- Develop local board leadership and governance training to prepare immigrants to move into local leadership positions
- Develop a roster of local newcomers who are prepared to move into positions of leadership to help local boards in their recruitment
- Compare data collected, programming created and successes and challenges with Toronto and other communities across Canada engaged in this work as part of a community of practice

The Belonging group members accepted the challenge and have started our own Diversity Counts research project. The Waterloo Region is an area of increasing diversity. In 2006, visible minorities made up 13.10 % of the total population and when new data is released from the 2011 census in May 2013, this number is expected to increase. The Diversity Counts project measures how leadership in the Waterloo Region reflects the population's diversity. Leaders, whether elected or appointed, have power and influence to make decisions and affect policy and community well being. Leadership positions in elected office, public service, corporate sector companies, non-profit and education sectors as well as government agencies are being counted to determine the representation of visible minorities.

The Counts project is replicating the methodology and data collection used by the Diversity Institute at Ryerson University's three year DiverseCity Counts research reports for the Greater Toronto Area. Using online technology, photographs, biographies and news articles are reviewed by independent coders using the definition of Visible Minority used by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Employment Equity Act to measure visible minority representation.

Locally, a second phase of the project is planned utilizing an online, voluntary survey to establish Immigrant representation on these same groups. A small work group consisting of community volunteers, local students, and an MSW Intern have been working to complete the initial counting of visible minorities, prepare a report and develop the survey for the second phase.

Civic Leadership Task Group

The Civic Leadership group identified the need for training and support to immigrants and refugees who want to volunteer on leadership Boards of private, government and not for profit organizations. Local research identified current training opportunities: Kitchener Waterloo Volunteer Action Centre "Board Readiness Training" and YMCA "Step Up to Leadership" training. Representatives from these organizations came together to develop funding proposals, for submission to various funders, to adapt and enhance their programs for the immigrant participation. Unfortunately the funding was not accepted, but this group continues to explore together how they can engage more immigrants into their development opportunities.

Ethno Cultural Task Group

The Ethno Cultural task group developed a listing of ethno cultural groups in Waterloo Region, and established a contact with each group. Members of the cultural association were invited to attend an information-and-networking session. The goal was to further engage these groups in the Partnership, with a view to connect and provide ongoing information on employment, funding, and capacity-building opportunities. The event was successful with 43 members of cultural groups attending the event.

The Ethno Cultural task group members will continue to reach out to community members and build relationships with the many associations in Waterloo Region. The purpose is to ensure the informal support mechanisms in the region have access to information and services that might be needed for their cultural members.

7.0 Challenges

Establishing networks and partnerships is a complex undertaking. Given that the issues related to immigration touch many aspects of community, the challenge becomes exponentially greater. Waterloo region has shown a strong commitment to the principles of full integration and, as a result, the challenges of establishing the Immigration Partnership are connected to the sheer scope of the endeavour and the limited time frames in which to demonstrate measurable outcomes. However, the potential for meaningful collaboration is strong and the time invested in engaging stakeholders across a broad spectrum will pay significant dividends in future.

Our evaluation process enabled partners to share with us feedback on the challenges from their perspective. A few participants mentioned concern regarding the separateness of the pillars and cautioned that the Immigration Partnership needs to be careful not to create silos of its own. This was most frequently mentioned within the context of a communications issue and participants were keen to see the communication linkages between the pillars strengthened.

A small number of participants indicated that the Immigration Partnership needs to be clearer on its purpose and impact. Given the complexity of the issues that are being addressed, this is feedback that needs to be considered both from a communications perspective and from an implementation perspective. Work is being conducted through both perspectives to both simplify our partnership structure and processes, as well as communicate more frequently and broadly as this will help to alleviate the issue of lack of awareness of our purpose and intent.

8.0 Successes

The evaluation process implemented by the Immigration Partnership Council is both innovative and unique in local immigration partnership work. The Immigration Partnership is the only local immigration partnership to date utilising Developmental Evaluation to demonstrate impact from our partnership. The evaluation process engaged partners in reflective dialogue and strengthened the relationships and connections within our system. It also provided participants with an opportunity to contribute to the future mandate of the Partnership team, which helps clarify to the community the support and opportunities working within the Partnership can offer.

The settlement systems mapping process was also a new, innovative process implemented within the community. It enabled settlement service organizations to build stronger relationships to begin the processes of working together more closely to align and deliver services. The map was used in a recent call for proposals by settlement service providers, which also highlights its practical worth in the community.

Implementation of the Council committees is a huge success and shows the community will to work together to support immigrant integration in Waterloo Region. The Settlement Systems Planning Group and the Data/Evaluation Committee has engaged new partners into our work and all members have found it a valuable asset to their contribution to support immigrants. Although momentum slowed toward the end of 2012, there have been conversations with participants about next steps in re-establishing connections.

The launch of the Immigration Partnership in 2012 was a success in showing the community the valuable contribution partners are making to support immigrants. It was attended by a large number of individuals and had media exposure which creates momentum in the work and engagement of individuals in our vision.

Within the Settling Pillar, working with the WWLHIN and ultimately securing funds to support cultural competency training is a success. Within the Working Pillar, working with the employment service providers has resulted in increased awareness of immigrant job seeker challenges. Also, new partnerships created with Human Resources Professional Association will support our networking and learning initiatives for employers. The work of the Belonging Pillar on bringing Ethno-cultural groups together has helped create a bridge to the informal supports accessed by immigrants and refugees, and will continue to be an area of connection and relationship development.

Perhaps one of the greatest successes of the Immigration Partnership that continues is the hosting support that has been provided by the Region of Waterloo. The Region of Waterloo has consistently recognized the need for the community to “own” the Partnership and has graciously agreed to support the community’s efforts with no attempt to influence or control the project beyond its formal accountabilities. Additionally, the Region of Waterloo has provided financial support and significant in-

kind resources to support the development of the Partnership. Most significantly, the Region of Waterloo Council voted to continue this financial support of \$50,000 per year to the Partnership over the next two years, during a particularly challenging budget year for the Region. Added to this is in-kind support from other departments such as Information Technology, Social Services and GIS mapping team. This approach to hosting has allowed the Immigration Partnership to create a strong foundation that is grounded in the community it is intended to support, and ensure we have the flexibility to support emerging opportunities that arise from partnership collaboration.

10.0 Opportunities

Aside from the opportunities indicated above, we are currently in a period of increased momentum in the partnership. With any transition, questions are asked and opportunity for dialogue is provided. Although 2012 was a busy year for both implementation and review of our governance and action plans, the process has provided an opportunity to engage partners' passion and enthusiasm for this work. There have been many successes, and also challenges, but dialogue about these, as well as partnership direction, whatever the outcome provides new opportunity to connect and collaborate for positive impact in our communities.

Momentum has been building over the past twelve months thanks to the support and commitment of all partners engaged in the Immigration Partnership. As we continue to learn about each others organizations, challenges and opportunities in supporting immigrants, as well as dialogue about creative and innovative ways to support immigrants in our region, we will ensure Waterloo Region is a community where immigrants and refugees can settle, work and belong.

In 2013, the Immigration Partnership will renew and review membership of their groups, plus undergo an update of the Community Action Plan (CAP). This review and update of the will provide all partners opportunities to reflect, review, renew and implement strategies and initiatives that will carry forward from 2014 – 2016.

Appendix A – Immigration Partnership Structure

