



REGION OF WATERLOO

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: January 6, 2009

FILE CODE: A26-50

SUBJECT: LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Municipality of Waterloo take the following actions regarding the development of a Local Immigration Partnership for Waterloo Region as described in report CA-09-001 dated January 6, 2009:

- a) Enter into a Contribution Agreement with Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada by her Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the satisfaction of the Region's Chief Administrative Officer and the Regional Solicitor.
- b) Enter into an agreement with the Centre for Community Based Research to lead the community facilitation and coordination of this initiative with the costs to be entirely funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada via the contribution agreement noted in a).

SUMMARY: Nil

REPORT:

1.0 Background:

Waterloo Region is a community that has always welcomed and benefited from immigration. Presently, 22.3% of Waterloo Region residents are immigrants from diverse regions of the world, and this is expected to increase to 30% by 2031. Our region is one of the top six communities in Canada in terms of the percent of our overall population and the number of recent immigrants in our community.

The challenges and barriers faced by our newest citizens are varied and complex including: understanding the Canadian health system and accessing needed services, finding employment in their field and getting their foreign credentials recognized, learning a new language, learning how to integrate with local cultures and how to adapt family or personal ways with a new environment, or facing discrimination.

There have been initiatives throughout Waterloo Region over the past several years to develop strategies to address these challenges and systemic barriers faced by new immigrants. For example, the recently created Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN) has facilitated the creation of several programs to assist with immigrant employment. Work has been very successful; however, there is still much to be done to develop a comprehensive and strategic approach to settlement and integration for our community.

2.0 Proposal to Develop a Local Immigration Partnership:

In response to a request for proposals from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and recognizing the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to immigration issues, a proposal to develop a Local Immigration Partnership was developed and submitted by the Region of Waterloo on behalf of the many settlement organizations participating in the Immigrant Support Work Group of WRIEN (Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network). Phase 1 of this funding proposal has been accepted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and requires Regional Council approval in order to enter into an agreement with both the funder (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) as well as the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) to lead the community facilitation of this initiative. Citizenship and Immigration Canada will issue a second call for proposals for Phase 2 funding to implement the actions identified in the work of Phase 1. The goals and objectives of this initiative and CCBR's role are described further in subsequent sections of this report.

3.0 Goals and Objectives:

Establishing a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) and developing a comprehensive and strategic approach to settlement and integration for our community will deliver significant benefits to Waterloo Region. The first phase will have two goals:

1. To develop a comprehensive Local Immigration Partnership.

One primary goal of this initiative is to develop a comprehensive Local Immigration Partnership. This would include:

- I. Developing a structure for the LIP including terms of reference.
- II. Identifying future roles and responsibilities of the LIP.
- III. Determining the membership of the LIP.

It is envisioned that the Partnership will be a dynamic collaboration of community stakeholders from many sectors, including the immigrant service provider community, business sector, youth, employment, generic community based organizations, health, governments and educational institutions.

2. To develop a comprehensive and collaborative settlement and integration strategy.

This strategy is part of planning for future growth in Waterloo Region, but it is also about creating a welcoming and sustainable community. It is envisioned that this strategy will address three objectives:

- I. Improving access to and coordination of effective, strategic and comprehensive services/programs that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration.
- II. Improving access to the labour market for immigrants.
- III. Strengthening awareness and the capacity of Waterloo Region to integrate increasing numbers of immigrants.

Given that a local immigration partnership on labour market access already exists in Waterloo Region (WRIEN - Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network), the emphasis of Phase One will be on settlement and integration. WRIEN is the 3rd year of its mandate and is the process of identifying future directions for the Network. The evaluation of future roles for WRIEN will be integrated with and will provide input into the Local Immigration Partnership planning and will happen in parallel to the development of the collaborative settlement and integration strategy. The outcome or product of this process will be a comprehensive immigration strategy that addresses immigrant settlement, integration, attraction and employment.

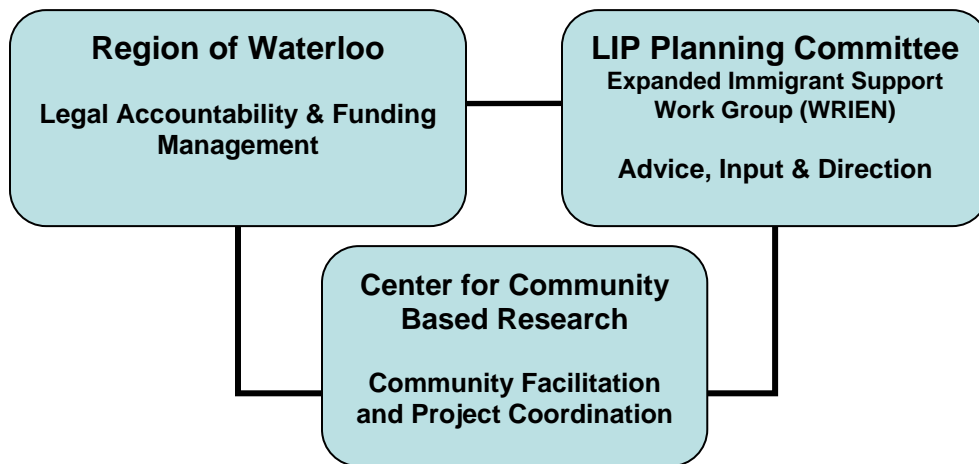
4.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

The proposal to develop a LIP and settlement and integration strategy was written at the request of and in consultation with many of the participants in existing partnerships including WRIEN's Immigrant Support Work Group. It was through this process that it was proposed that the Region of Waterloo take the lead to ensure that this process was successful on behalf of the community. Since the Region does not have the staff capacity to facilitate and organize such a process it was proposed that the Region of Waterloo contract with the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR), an independent, non-profit organization to lead the community facilitation in developing the LIP and a comprehensive strategy. CCBR has extensive experience working with various community stakeholders to strengthen immigrant services in this community. For example, CCBR led the Immigrant Skills Summit held in 2005 with 200 community leaders from all sectors recommending the establishment of the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network. CCBR is also currently running a five year CURA project related to mental health issues in immigrant communities in Toronto and Waterloo Region, involving numerous service providers, academics and ethno-cultural groups.

And lastly, it was proposed that rather than set up an entirely new structure to oversee this project, the existing WRIEN Immigrant Support Work Group would expand its membership to be reflective of the necessary sectors and serve as the LIP Planning Committee. To that end, three main parties to implement the project are:

1. Region of Waterloo
2. Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR)
3. Local Immigration Partnership Planning Committee (Expanded WRIEN Immigrant Support Work Group).

The roles and responsibilities of each group are described further below.



4.1 Region of Waterloo

The Region of Waterloo will be responsible for all legal and financial aspects of the project. The Region of Waterloo's Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) office will be the primary contact to the funder. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- Responsible for all legal and financial aspects of the project and contractual provisions with Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.
- Develop a formal partnership agreement between the ROW and the CCBR to ensure that all project activities are completed.

- Complete the financial and other reporting as required by the funder.
- Assist with preparation of the Phase 2 proposal.

4.2 Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR)

CCBR will be responsible to carry out all the community facilitation and project coordination aspects of the project. A formal partnership agreement with the Region of Waterloo will be developed to state that CCBR will be sub-contracted to carry out all activities as outlined in the workplan. Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- Project coordination of all aspects of the project.
- Community facilitation of community forums and task groups.
- Coordinate all meetings.
- Follow up with all delegated tasks.
- Take notes throughout the process.
- Write the comprehensive and collaborative settlement and integration strategy.
- Provide project updates and seek input into next steps.
- Assist with preparation of the Phase 2 proposal.

4.3. Local Immigration Partnership Planning Committee

An expanded WRIEN Immigrant Support Work Group (ISWG) will be the community planning committee for this project. This dynamic collaboration of community partners will bring together the thinking, resources, leadership and expertise necessary to guide the development of a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP). Once established, this LIP will develop a comprehensive and coordinated immigration and settlement strategy for Waterloo Region.

The overall role of the LIP Planning Committee (expanded Immigrant Support Work Group - ISWG) is to provide strategic advice, input and direction on the LIP planning process. Specific responsibilities of the LIP Planning Committee include:

- Review invitation lists for community forums and task groups to ensure representation from multiple sectors, including immigrant/refugee representation, municipalities, business, education, health, generic community based organizations, etc.
- Guide the marketing and communication of invitations and updates to the community.
- Establish task groups to address priorities identified in the community forums.
- Participate in the Community Forums and/or task group(s).
- Review and refine the reports that are produced through the LIP planning process.
- Ensure the strategy is aligned with other initiatives throughout the community.
- Facilitate partnerships amongst stakeholders.
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders to identify priorities and issues.
- Develop and implement a process to ensure stakeholder endorsement of the collaborative settlement and integration strategy.
- Provide input and advice into the preparation of a proposal for Phase 2 of the Calls for Proposals by Citizenship and Immigration Canada as recommended in the settlement and immigration strategy completed in Phase 1.

5.0 Community Involvement:

There are many formal and informal partnerships related to settlement and integration of immigrants in our region. This process will bring the various sectors as well as immigrants living in our community, together to build a plan for a more comprehensive and coordinated system of settlement and integration.

There will be many ways for organizations and citizens to get involved in the identification of the issues and solutions related to coordinated immigrant and refugee settlement and integration throughout the next year and they are through community forums and thematic task group meetings.

5.1 Community Forum Meetings

In the upcoming months there will be three large community forums (dates to be determined) to explore the issues, gaps and opportunities related to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration services. Specific roles and responsibilities of community forum participants include:

- Identification of priorities and issues across Waterloo Region.
- Identify thematic areas of focus for the Local Immigration Partnership.
- Review, provide input and validate the reports generated throughout the planning process.
- Prioritize and endorse commitment to priorities identified by the task groups.
- Endorse the comprehensive strategy and follow-up commitments.

5.2 Thematic Task Groups

There will be thematic task groups formed based on a variety of settlement and integration themes identified in the Community Forums (dates and themes to be determined). These task groups will review the national, provincial, local context on their particular theme and will develop local action plans in their respective theme areas.

6.0 Term and Scope:

Phase 1 has duration of 12 months commencing with approval of the proposal by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Phase 1 outcomes include the development of the Local Immigration Partnership, including terms of reference and accountability framework. This partnership will develop and ensure that all stakeholders are in agreement with the coordinated settlement and integration strategy by December 31, 2009. Citizenship and Immigration Canada will issue a second call for proposals for Phase 2 funding to implement the actions identified in the strategy by the Local Immigration Partnership.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

The need to successfully embrace diverse practices and culturally appropriate programs and services was identified through the Region's 2007-2010 strategic planning process.

Related objectives and actions specific to this initiative in the Region's recently approved Strategic Plan (Focus Area 4: Human Services) include:

- Improve programs and services to support immigrants.
- Support and actively participate in the Waterloo Region Immigrant Employer Network (WRIEN).
- Develop a strategy to improve access to regional programs and services for citizens from diverse backgrounds.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Funding will be provided by the Federal Government of Canada from Citizenship and Immigration in the amount of \$132,894. The community facilitation and coordination of this initiative will be conducted by the Centre for Community Based Research in the amount of \$71,400. CCBR's fees will be entirely funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. There will also be other expenses incurred, e.g. translation, interpretation, promotion, etc., and these also will be entirely funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

All Region of Waterloo Departments have been consulted with on this report. Legal Services has been consulted regarding the development of the contribution agreement. Finance has provided support in reviewing project financial report requirements.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

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APPROVED BY: *Michael L. Murray, Chief Administrative Officer*