

## SELECTING AND APPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL: A CASE STUDY OF HAMILTON

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) came into being as a result of a number of discussions held in the city over the last number of years regarding the importance of a more coordinated approach to immigrant settlement and integration.

As a result of the call from the community, the City of Hamilton facilitated the formation of the HIPC. In May 2008, a selection committee was struck from members of the existing Immigration Consortium and the Hamilton Immigration Strategy Advisory Committee (ISAC). The six members of the Selection Committee comprised senior members from the municipality, the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, the Mohawk Community College, and the Chairman of the Board of the largest settlement agency in the city, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO).

### Selection Criteria:

An underlying consideration in the composition of the Partnership Council was the recognition that the behaviours of the host society in providing a welcoming environment are fundamental to the successful settlement of immigrants and refugees and the notion of integration and an inclusive community. This approach is confirmed by international research that indicates the level of involvement and understanding by the receiving society is the most important factor and has the greatest impact on successful immigrant integration (Public Policy Forum, Ottawa, 2008).

Using a three-dimensional matrix that outlined a baseline set of expectations comprising attitudes, stakeholder links and specific assets, nominees were expected to meet the following standards:

- Be responsible and respected leaders who are passionate about Hamilton and the community and who embrace the many benefits of a vibrant diverse population.
- Have an understanding of and commitment to the principles of partnerships and collaboration as a means to effect positive change.
- Value the multi-faceted role that immigrants can play in contributing to Hamilton's growth and prosperity; and,
- Be linked to a wide network of leaders across a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

The characteristics identified for an Immigration Partnership Council member included:

- Understands why "getting immigration right" affects us all.
- Has a Hamilton community agenda in addition to individual or organizational special interest, not just their own agenda.
- Recognizes that successful collaboration produces results, not just structures and activities.
- Is able to balance keeping the peace and 'stirring the pot' to get solutions.
- Is open, reflective and can help the group find their way to the answers.
- Engages others with diplomacy and political astuteness.
- Is willing to put tough or delicate issues on the table and work them through.
- Is willing to pioneer, break through and find new ways.
- Has experience being a change agent.
- Has linkages or can connect to those who have linkages to a multitude of stakeholders.
- Brings a city of Hamilton focus.

### Selection Process:

*“The first condition of successful collaboration is that it must be broadly inclusive of all stakeholders (including those who may be” troublesome) who are affected by or care about the issue (Chrislip and Larson, 1994, p. 75).*

In July 2008, individuals from the Consortium/ISAC were invited to recommend names of community members to be considered for appointment by the selection committee.

From this process 115 invitations were extended to people seeking their interest in being considered for membership on the Immigration Partnership Council. The 52 people who responded were sent a questionnaire asking them to identify their qualifications based on the above criteria.

By November 2008, 29 people had completed the questionnaire. These were then grouped according to 10 categories: Education, Business, Labour, Health, Not-for-Profit, Government, Diversity, Financial Services, Youth and Communications/Media.

The Selection Committee agreed that there should be at least one representative on the Council from each of these sectors.

Each of the Selection Committee Members were asked to determine their top 15 candidates based on their assessment of the completed questionnaire as well as their knowledge of each candidate's qualifications, experience and suitability.

Given that Selection Committee members did not identify the same 15 people, further discussion ensued to reach agreement on the complete roster. For example, if there were 10 names common to each member list, there were just 5 additional candidates to identify.

The Selection Committee then made their recommendations to ISAC and the Consortium and then to the Mayor, who formerly invited the successful candidates to sit on the Partnership Council. Those not selected were advised in writing by the co-convenors and asked to let their name stand for participation in one of the sub-committees or working groups that might be established in developing the immigration strategy.