



IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP
Settle. Work. Belong.

Community *Action Plan*

2014 - 2016



Message from the Chair and Manager

We are delighted to present the Community Action Plan 2014-2016 (CAP). This Plan is an update to the original 2010 Plan that will guide the priorities of the Immigration Partnership over the next three years. It serves as a framework to ensuring the successful settlement, integration and community involvement of immigrants in Waterloo Region.

The development of this Plan has involved the engagement of over 150 people including immigrants, service providers, settlement agencies, community agencies, government representatives, and employers. This broad-based approach has not only served to strengthen the Plan itself, but has also led to the forging of new relationships and partnerships as we work toward the shared goal that Waterloo Region will be a community where immigrants and refugees settle, work and belong.

Specifically, we want to extend our appreciation to the members of the Immigration Partnership for their passion and commitment throughout the CAP update process. Their support through participation in consultation sessions and additional meetings, offering extensive feedback to the report and overall enthusiasm to making the CAP the best that it can be has been remarkable.

We look forward to working together with you all to address the priorities in the CAP. Although there are opportunities and challenges inherent to this important work, we are confident that as an Immigration Partnership and as a community, we have what it takes to continue to make a difference. Together, the possibilities are infinite.

We look forward to the continuing journey.



John Haddock
Chair,
Immigration Partnership
Council



Jo-Anne Gibson
Manager,
Immigration Partnership

Background

The Waterloo Region community has always welcomed and benefitted from immigration. Today, about 23% of Waterloo Region residents are immigrants or refugees from diverse regions of the world, with expected growth to 30% by 2031. Waterloo Region is one of the top seven communities in Canada for recent immigrants and refugees on a per capita basis.

The Immigration Partnership is a community-wide initiative focused on facilitating the successful settlement, integration and community involvement of immigrants in Waterloo Region. Planning for the Immigration Partnership began in 2009 and was 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 developed a local immigration partnership structure and Community Action Plan that included the following Immigration Partnership vision and mission:

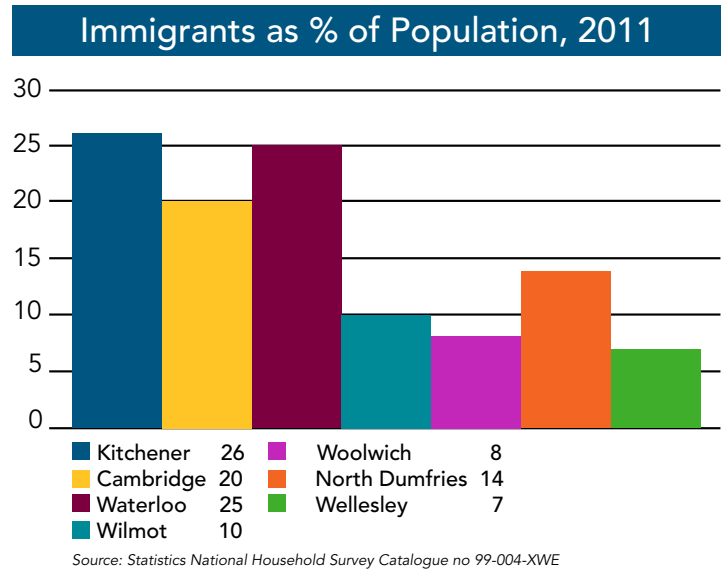
Vision: Waterloo Region will be a community where immigrants and refugees settle, work and belong.

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

The structure of the Immigration Partnership is multi-layered, consisting of a leadership Council as well as steering groups representing three different pillars: Settle, Work and Belong. Action groups formed by the Immigration Partnership Council and/or the steering groups facilitate specific projects and implement initiatives.

Community Action Plan (CAP)

The CAP provides a framework for achieving the mandate of the Immigration Partnership. It focuses on actions that can be accomplished through building upon existing community strengths and the formation of strong partnerships. The first CAP was developed in 2010 and was subsequently reviewed in 2011 and 2013. During this period, the Immigration Partnership released a number of documents to further understand some of the identified gaps, including the Settlement Systems Mapping Project, Mental Health Services Inventory, and the Employment Services Inventory. To access these and other reports, visit the Immigration Partnership website at www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca.



For the Immigration Partnership, the **definition of 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."

In 2013, Council provided direction for the Immigration Partnership to refresh and update the CAP to guide the Partnership over the upcoming three years. This involved assessing past progress (refer to the Progress Update 2011-2013 on the Immigration Partnership website) as well as setting future priorities through extensive consultation with immigrants, service providers, settlement agencies, community agencies, government representatives, and employers throughout summer and fall 2013.

During the CAP update process, there was emphasis on communication and collaboration across the pillars as well as creating clarity around the purpose and impact of the Immigration Partnership. This approach was informed by recommendations emerging out of the Developmental Evaluation 2011-2012 that assessed the impact of the Immigration Partnership.

While some issues in the community have remained consistent in the various pillar areas since 2010, the current CAP goes beyond identifying issues to include focused, purposeful and actionable activities for change. The evolution of the CAP also corresponds with the Immigration Partnership's increased presence, strong relationships in the community and ability to mobilize system change activity.

The CAP includes 10 overarching goals and related strategic directions (not listed in order of importance), 24 priority action areas and many possible activities across the three pillar areas. For the list of possible activities, refer to the Full Report on the Immigration Partnership website. The CAP reflects the deep appreciation that the Immigration Partnership is focused on complex community issues that defy simple and linear solutions, and that the needs and circumstances of the community may change over time. As such, emphasis has been placed on the importance of nimbleness and flexibility.

Implementation of the CAP

The CAP will be implemented collaboratively by steering groups and community members with support from the Immigration Partnership Council and the Immigration Partnership staff team. Implementation will involve both engaging new partners and supporting related activities that are led by other local community groups and organizations. This collaborative approach is essential to developing creative and timely solutions that foster an inclusive and welcoming community for immigrants in Waterloo Region.

Steering group implementation plans detail and prioritize activities with the goal of making progress on all priority action areas by the end of 2016. There are opportunities for cross-collaboration as some priority action areas and activities extend across more than one pillar area. An annual report to the community is proposed for release in March 2015 to report on CAP progress.

The pages that follow include the core action plans for the Settle, Work and Belong Pillars.



SETTLE

Strategic Direction 1

Strengthen awareness of and access to community supports for immigrants and refugees

Overarching Goal: Improve quality of life for immigrants and refugees

- 1.1 Develop community supports for refugee claimants specifically geared toward their first eight weeks in Waterloo Region
- 1.2 Work with mental health service providers to improve service delivery through increased awareness of immigrant and refugee-specific issues

Strategic Direction 2

Strengthen awareness of and access to healthcare supports for immigrants and refugees

Overarching Goal: Improve health outcomes for immigrants and refugees

- 2.1 Develop an education strategy for health service providers to improve service delivery to immigrants and refugees
- 2.2 Work with the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) to prioritize services for immigrants and refugees
- 2.3 Building on past work, implement and enhance existing protocols for access to interpretation services within the healthcare system

Strategic Direction 3

Strengthen awareness of and access to education and language supports for immigrants and refugees

Overarching Goal: Reduce barriers to settlement and maximize positive outcomes for immigrants and refugees

- 3.1 Strengthen partnerships with school boards to ensure that immigrant and refugee children are welcomed and encouraged
- 3.2 Develop an integrated English as a Second Language learning model for adults focused on practical use of language

Strategic Direction 4

Reduce housing-related barriers for immigrants and refugees

Overarching Goal: Increase the stock, quality and accessibility of affordable housing for immigrants and refugees

- 4.1 Define and address issues related to accessible, affordable and quality housing for immigrants and refugees
- 4.2 Enhance the existing Emergency Shelter referral protocol to include settlement services

WORK

Strategic Direction 5

Increase awareness of and opportunities related to immigrant employment

Overarching Goal: Enhance immigrant access to the skills and supports needed to gain and retain meaningful employment

- 5.1 Develop and deliver employment preparation courses for immigrants
- 5.2 Enhance job retention supports for immigrants
- 5.3 Increase knowledge of and referral to community support services among employment service providers

Strategic Direction 6

Strengthen employer understanding of the value of creating a more diverse workforce

Overarching Goal: Enhance employment opportunities for immigrants and increase employer recognition of the high value of the skills and experience immigrant employees can bring to Waterloo Region

- 6.1 Develop and deliver diversity training for employers
- 6.2 Develop strategies and tools to encourage employers to hire immigrants
- 6.3 Provide support to relevant economic/workforce development initiatives to identify existing skills, address gaps, and work with community partners to attract employers and skilled immigrants to the region

Strategic Direction 7

Streamline/maximize employer access to immigrant talent

Overarching Goal: Increase immigrant connections to potential employment opportunities

- 7.1 Develop a common access point for employers looking to hire immigrants (i.e., virtual, physical)



BELONG

Strategic Direction 8

Increase public awareness of the value of a diverse and welcoming community

Overarching Goal: A culture of inclusivity in a diverse and welcoming community

- 8.1 Develop and implement a public education campaign to increase cultural sensitivity
- 8.2 Increase understanding and respond to issues of immigrant isolation

Strategic Direction 9

Promote civic education, participation and leadership for immigrants

Overarching Goal: A cohesive community with an inclusive civic identity and enhanced immigrant participation in civic affairs

- 9.1 Develop an initiative to increase immigrant awareness of services provided by Municipal/Regional government and the school systems
- 9.2 Strengthen immigrant participation in the Municipal process
- 9.3 Create/enhance immigrant leadership development programs

Strategic Direction 10

Promote community-wide organizational change to ensure inclusive practices

Overarching Goal: Organizational practices that facilitate full immigrant participation in political, economic, social and cultural life

- 10.1 Support organizations to enhance, develop and/or implement inclusive practices
- 10.2 Share strategies and develop initiatives for parenting in a new society
- 10.3 Strengthen partnerships with school boards to ensure that immigrant and refugee children are welcomed and encouraged




This is the
Community Action Plan 2014-2016 (CAP).
It summarizes information
included in the
Community Action Plan 2014-2016: Full Report.
For further detail, please refer to the
Full Report on the
Immigration Partnership website at
www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca.

For more information, please contact the Immigration Partnership Manager:

Name: Jo-Anne Gibson
Phone: 519-575-4757 ext. 3171
Email: jgibson@regionofwaterloo.ca

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