

Niagara Local Immigration Partnership



Niagara's Collaborative Approach: Building on Existing Services for Newcomers

Funded By:



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- Sean Jackson, President, Meridian Credit Union, NIEC Business Co-Chair
- Paul Leon, Leon, Fazari, LLP, NIEC Community Co-Chair
- Trudy Parsons, Executive Director, Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services, Niagara Region
- Jack Lightstone, President, Brock University
- Bala Kathiresan, Chief Operating Officer, Niagara Health System
- Franklin Leukam, Community Liaison, South Central Francophone Catholic School Board
- John Fisher, President, Walker Industries

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We would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to the members of the initial Working Group. They include:

- Lori Watson, Niagara Region, Community Services
- Martha Mason, Fort Erie Multicultural Centre
- Corinna Carson, Niagara Immigrant Employment Council
- Trudy Parsons, Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Maryam Al-Harazi, Niagara Local Immigrant Partnership

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Lastly, we would like to thank Wayne Hussey of Wayne Hussey Consulting Inc. and Ralph Kikkert of Strive for their facilitation in the development of the plan.

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Background and Context

A funding opportunity arose through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to have various Regions throughout Ontario review their current delivery system for Newcomers and make recommendations for strengthening existing services. This was to establish whether a better method of connecting services could be devised through a collaborative consultative process that included key stakeholders. The objective was to enable organizations that worked with Immigrants to critically reflect on the current model and review how existing services could be enhanced to assist Newcomers integrating into Canadian society. These recommendations could then be implemented thus benefitting Newcomers and service providers alike. Initial funding was provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada in August of 2009.

The name of the project, called Local Immigrant Partnership, reflected the focus of the group which emphasized collaboration by community partners in the development and enhancement of community programs with Immigrants. The name Local Immigrant Partnership will be referred in its acronym form as LIPS throughout this document.

The initial phase of the project began in September 2009 with the creation of a foundational group made up of several key members. This initial group, called the LIPS Working Group, consisted of the following individuals:

- Lori Watson, Niagara Region, Community Services
- Martha Mason, Fort Erie Multicultural Centre
- Corinna Carson, Niagara Immigrant Employment Council
- Trudy Parsons, Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Maryam Al-Harazi, Niagara Immigrant Partnership

The objective of the working group was to set the parameters of the initial project ensuring that logical steps were in place for implementation. Niagara Region acted as project manager; project administration was carried out by the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre with project coordination assisted by Niagara Immigrant Employment Council. Guidance and support was also provided by the Niagara Workforce Planning Board.

Literature Review

A literature review was completed to capture main ideas impacting Newcomers settling within Canada. This review was used as a foundation in capturing qualitative data in the form of themes. These themes were evident in the final recommendations made by the Working Group. The terms Newcomer and Immigrant are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Continued Economic Growth

In order for Canada to continue to grow and prosper, skilled individuals are needed to perform the many jobs that are required. A declining population within Canada due to a low birth rate has impacted the viability of Canada to survive within a global economy. Without having individuals to replace our aging population, many employers may find that they lack the necessary people to fill these positions causing some companies to look elsewhere.

On average, Canadian women are having only 1.5 children each, far below the 2.1 necessary for a population to sustain itself. The numbers mean the labour supply will slowly shrink as the nation ages. By 2011, Ottawa estimates that all new growth in the labour market will have to come from immigrants (Taylor, 2005, p. 2).

In other words, “the future of the Canadian marketplace will soon depend for its very survival on a steady supply of foreign born workers” (Taylor, 2005, p.2). Changes to the labour market due to technology and globalization have also placed an increasing urgency in recruiting skilled workers as well as “redefined the world of work” (Blair, 2005, p.6). Technology has increased the speed with which we correspond and interact with one another requiring greater technological skills and contact with others around the world. Globalization has made our backyard increasingly larger requiring workers to be fluent in a multitude of languages and knowledgeable regarding international business policies and protocol in order to be increasingly competitive in a global economy.

“The future of Canada’s economic growth and stability depends a great deal on its ability to maximize skilled immigrant’s abilities effectively and within the shortest possible time frame” (Blair, 2005, p. 4).

According to the Conference Board of Canada, Immigration and Employment 2010, they speak to the importance of acquiring and retaining talented and skilled Newcomers to Canada.

The stakes are high. In 2006, Canada welcomed 251,511 immigrants, most of them highly skilled, through its doors. Almost 70 per cent of them landed in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, the urban engines of our economy (with Toronto alone accounting for 39 per cent of the total). Yet there is a pressing need for more immigration. The Conference Board estimates that we need 375,000 new immigrants annually in order to stabilize the workforce and ensure economic growth. Finding and attracting them is the first challenge facing this country.

What this Means

This means that by attracting immigrants from abroad, we need to also provide the means to support them and enable them to successfully integrate within Canadian society and become productive citizens. In order to do this, “immigrants to Canada require services from the host society that will enable them to integrate effectively and contribute to the building of this nation” (Blair, 2005, p. 1).

Encouragement

In encouraging Newcomers to move to Canada, greater emphasis has been placed on inviting immigrants to relocate to less populated areas. Immigrants who move to these less populated areas which do not have the proper supports in place are faced with greater problems by being socially isolated from their cultural groups, as well as negatively impacted in their ability to be acclimatized to Canadian society. “Without pre-existing ethno cultural associations or community and other key stakeholders working together to support their resettlement, a recipe for disaster is being created” (Blair, 2005, p. 2). Immigrants have no choice but to consider migrating to one of the larger cities that offer a variety of services and

ethno cultural communities better suited to meet their needs of feeling connected within Canadian society. Where the intent is of Canadian Officials to encourage relocation to rural areas, “76% of all Newcomers have chosen to settle in the three major urban centers, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver” (Taylor, 2005, p. 2). Encouragement to assist immigrants in staying within smaller communities needs to be addressed if we want to get away from urban areas growing larger and rural areas becoming a thing of the past.

Supports in Place

In order to encourage immigrants to stay within smaller communities it is imperative to recognize that proper supports need to be in place that best meet their needs including a sense of connectedness to their new culture. To do this, we need to “act locally, supporting the needs of immigrants so that they can eventually develop a sense of identity and neighborhood” (Blair, 2005, p. 1).

According to Dr. Miriam Stewart of the CIHR Institute of Gender and Health Canada, she identified the following challenges faced by immigrants and refugees: language, employment, education, finances, racism and discrimination, immigration status and navigating the system (u/k, p. 1). She continues that there were difficulties facing Newcomers such as “culture shock, social isolation, emotional loneliness, cultural understanding, language and communication” (u/k, pp 1-2).

Supports to alleviate the difficulties that immigrants face can include a broad range of services including English as a Second Language, housing services, training, and employment. This involves educational institutions, various levels of government, the private sector as well as community based organizations. “Community based service providers breed life into the community, and provide point of access for the variety of programs and services necessary for the integration of immigrants into the community and into society at large” (Blair, 2005, p. 3).

Supports need to be designed to integrate Newcomers into opportunities that focus on skilled jobs. In the past, “labour market participation in most cases has been restricted to the menial types of jobs” (Blair, 2005, p2). According to Blair (2005), over half of the immigrants admitted in the past decade were chosen because of reasons economically driven; the reason today is more on skilled labour and education (2005, p. 5). Manitoba has designed its nominee program to focus on skill shortages in its own labour market. This means skilled tradesmen are in greater demand than PhDs” (Taylor, 2005, p. 5).

According to the Canadian Council for Refugees report dated April 2003, “before Newcomers are encouraged to settle in smaller communities, the government ensures that they have in place the supports necessary to welcome new immigrants and that there be adequate access to settlement, economic and social services” (2003,p. 3).

Reason for Review

Although many supports are in place, there is sometimes confusion as to what exists and the role that they play in assisting Newcomers. With the cooperation of community agencies and with the assistance of the LIPS Task Force, this was an opportunity to look at existing services and make recommendations for change that would prove to be beneficial for Newcomers and service providers.

Opportunities exist for a systems approach to the effective integration of immigrants instead of the current fragmented approach. Incentives need to be put in place to support collaboration that brings key stakeholders together in the planning for and integration of immigrants. Unless all the relevant players become involved, Canada will not achieve the competitive edge it seeks. Furthermore, the significant role immigration has always played in sourcing Canada's labour pool is certain to continue, given our current demographic profile of aging population and a declining birth rate. A systems approach would also support sustainability as its components are interdependent and grounded in community development principles. Consequently it will produce tangible benefits and results at both the community and societal levels (Blair, 2005, p 6).

Process

The process of initiating the Niagara Local Immigrant Partnership first required the group to develop a mandate.

Mandate

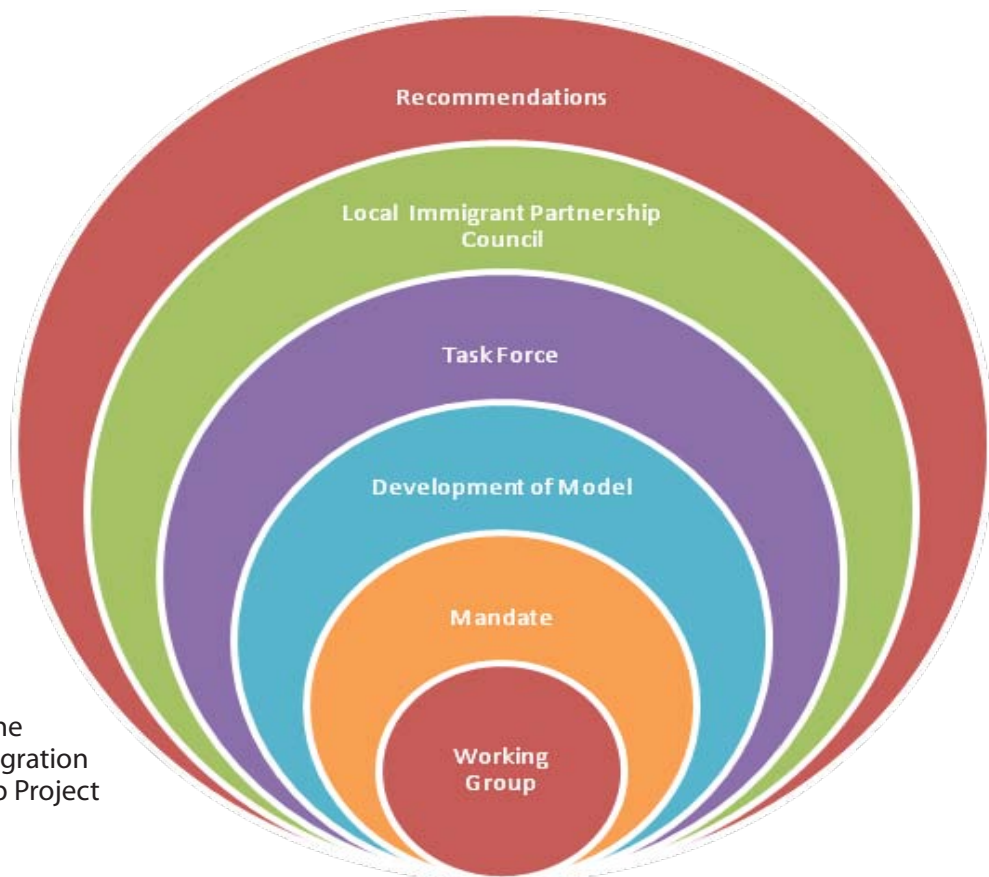
The mandate was based on project objectives outlined by CIC. It was considered an integral part of the initial process as it defined the intention of the project. The mandate was defined as:

The Local Immigration Partnership is a new initiative that funds communities to develop a comprehensive and collaborative approach to immigration by developing a local partnership council that represents a cross section of organizations that have an interest in working toward a strategy that fits the needs of their community. The local partnership council will then develop a strategy that fits the needs of their community.

Three groups played a critical role in implementing the Project Mandate. They included the LIPS Working Group, the LIPS Task Force and lastly the Local Immigration Partnership Council.

Development of a Model

In understanding the key issues that Newcomers faced, a working group was created. The Working Group would then utilize the members of the Niagara Immigrant Employment Council to create a Task Force to advise and direct the Working Group in ensuring that the mandate of the project was adhered to. A Local Immigrant Partnership Council would then be created which represented a cross section of organizations who worked with Immigrants in providing insight to the Working Group. Their goal would be to work towards developing a strategy that best fit the needs of their community. Wayne Hussey of Wayne Hussey Consulting Inc. assisted with the facilitation of the process.



Model of the Local Immigration Partnership Project

Creation of LIPS Project Task Force

The LIPS Working Group recognizing the expertise, experience and insight of community leaders, recruited members of the Niagara Immigrant Employment Council Steering Committee to add value to the LIPS Project as the Task Force.

The members were as follows:

- Sean Jackson, President, Meridian Credit Union, NIEC Business Co-Chair
- Paul Leon, Leon, Fezarri, LLP, NIEC Community Co-Chair
- Trudy Parsons, Executive Director, Niagara Workforce Planning Board
- Brian Hutchings, Commissioner, Community Services, Niagara Region
- Jack Lightstone, President, Brock University
- Bala Kathiresan, Chief Operating Officer, Niagara Health System
- Franklin Leukam, Community Liaison, South Central Francophone Catholic School Board
- John Fisher, President, Walker Industries

The mandate of the project was presented to the prospective members of the Task Force and members along with the invitation to participate. Their scope:

- to assist with review of the LIPS Project Model in identifying areas requiring enhancement
- to provide opening comments to the Agency Consultation Meeting encouraging collaboration
- to review the LIPS Project Working Group's Draft Integrated Service Delivery plan and request their input
- to provide opening comments to attendees of the Agency Review of the ISDP (Integrated Service Delivery Plan) meeting in support of a regional service delivery perspective

The members of the Task Force after reviewing the model and mandate of the project developed the LIPS Accord which they presented to agency representatives at the first agency meeting (which was the starting point of creating the LIPS Council) in January of 2010. The Accord emphasized key ingredients needed to establish a trusting relationship among key stakeholders in ensuring a positive collaborative effort.

Feedback from Other Communities

A preliminary model was developed and reviewed by the Task Force. A selection of contacts in Ontario who were also participating in a similar process within their respective municipalities, were contacted to identify potential best practice improvements to the LIPS Project Model. After contact and review, the Working Group concluded that based on the design of other LIPS community models, we were well aligned with other efforts and that no major changes to our model were required. Through contact with other communities, Niagara LIPs established ongoing relationships and information sharing practices.

Creation of the Local Immigration Partnership Council

The voices of core and secondary service agencies were considered critical to the LIPS Project as they provide direct and indirect service to Newcomers. It was important to have their invaluable input to acknowledge the vast services that did exist and recognize the benefit of collaborative effort. In recognition of this, the Working Group created a Local Immigrant Partnership Council and invited those having an invested interest in working with Newcomers to strengthen existing services. More than 40 agencies that had at least one element of direct service to New Canadians was compiled and contacted. Members of the Working Group interviewed each of the Executive Directors of these agencies in order to compile data. The interviews were designed to ensure the LIPS Project was aware of the specific services these agencies provided to new Canadians, the number and nature of client contact, and questions soliciting

the Executive Directors' perception of key issues facing new Canadians that the LIPS project should try to address. The main outcome of these interviews established that the service continuum mapping prepared by NIEC in 2008 was updated in light of recent restructuring and re-circulated. A secondary outcome from the agency Executive Director interviews validated the service recipient view that service collaboration and integration could be dramatically improved. The EDs acknowledged that the number of agencies involved in service delivery was extensive with strong personalities and politics. Upon completion of the interviews, agencies which participated were invited to the Local Immigrant Partnership Council.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of LIP staff surveying Newcomers directly along with organizations that provide direct and indirect services. A document in the form of a White Paper presented a starting point for the literature review and open dialogue in the development of themes and ideas for final recommendations.

Needs Assessment of Newcomers

The voices of Newcomers were seen by the working group as crucial to this project as they gave invaluable insight into their experiences and accurately reflect their reality. Therefore both in-service clients and post-service clients were selected to be interviewed once their permission had been obtained to share personal information by the multicultural centres or other service providing agency. They were asked to share their sense of satisfaction with the services they received to help identify areas to improve services. The assessment confirmed that the key issues to those surveyed were around housing, employment and support for language education. Both in-service and post-service expressed satisfaction and appreciation for the support and services they received from agencies. While a variety of specific ideas were offered, overall a recurring theme emerged - services in the region - difficulty in navigating their way through services and where to find the information.

Agency Consultation

The Working Group, being cognizant of the social issues that Newcomers face, developed a White Paper distributed to prospective Local Immigrant Partnership Council members prior to the first agency consultation. This paper focused on the future prosperity of Canadians and the important role that new Canadians play in particular within Niagara Region.

The paper emphasized how the future of our region is heavily dependent upon our ability to attract and retain highly trained professionals who use creative thinking as their primary employment skill. Examples of this "creative class" of workers (or knowledge based workers) are artists, consultants, planners, architects, designers, computer programmers, and, of course, the entrepreneur. The White Paper stressed the importance of support of small businesses and entrepreneurship as well as the vital role it would play in creating an upsurge in the Canadian market.

41% is the share of the total private sector workforce who works in enterprises of fewer than 20 employees.

(Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 2005)* *According to the Conference Board of Canada, this number has risen dramatically in the last four years and could now be as high as 60%.*

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the sector that dragged the US out of the last recession was small business – they were the ones who created the new jobs that allowed the country to exit from a difficult recessionary period.

The initial Niagara Local Immigrant Partnership Council meeting was designed with three fundamental purposes:

1. To bring together the spectrum of settlement agencies and facilitate greater trust, mutual respect and

willingness to work more closely together. It should be noted that there are individual and small group efforts around integration and collaboration but the sheer number of settlement agencies made an integrated service delivery system a true challenge

2. To gauge the degree of ambition that these agency leaders had concerning our ability to increase our ranking as presented in the Conference Board of Canada Report, City Magnets II where St. Catharines was listed as one of the weakest of Canada's largest 50 cities in retaining new Canadians
3. To identify specific ideas on how to increase agency collaboration, cooperation and integration

Meeting exercises conclude positive results in establishing trust between agencies. A more collaborative and integrated approach to service provision will act as the foundation in our ability to improve the retention of new Canadians in Niagara region.

New Funding and Secondary Consultations

A request for extension of LIP funding was made by Niagara Region on February 12, 2010 for the 2010/2011 year to enhance the existing outcomes towards a more inclusive and comprehensive strategic plan.

The request included realignment in project management as a result of feedback from the agencies in having Niagara Region as a neutral body and not a service delivery agent. Transition with the new structure included the shift of staff and funding dollars to better support the creation of the Integrated Service Delivery Plan.

As a result of the funding revisions, a number of additional activities designed to broaden the scope of the LIPS Project were added to the Model. It became apparent that there were a number of community contact points for new Canadians far beyond the agencies that provided direct settlement services. These additional community contacts were captured under the title of Adjacent Agencies and included police, library, mental health, public health and children and senior services. A meeting of these agencies was held and it became apparent to all attending that despite the collection of relevant data by services, it was not done in a consistent fashion to paint a Niagara wide picture. The attending agencies agreed to revisit their client contact data management systems to determine if new Canadian specific data could be captured for future analysis.

Secondary Consultations were conducted with like groups of agencies who were involved in the community that did not have an explicit settlement mandate. Specifically, over 300 Niagara Faith and 55 Cultural Community organizations were invited to a facilitated LIPS session to express their views. The primary outcome of the meeting was to understand the role Faith communities played in integrating Newcomers into society. It was identified that some faith based organizations were currently in the process of "hosting" New Canadian families as the key support network. The need to disseminate service information to these organizations was recognized and information of available services provided with promotion of the Immigrant Portal when seeking information. This "wrap around" model could be actively promoted in the "Attraction and Retention Strategy" that is found within the recommendations of this Report.

The LIP Working Group met with the Task Force on May 25, 2010 to receive guidance and direction on the work plan. The work plan was endorsed and direction was given to continue moving forward as presented in the model. The Task Force members identified future opportunities for Niagara to attract and retain College and University students under "Open Ontario" funding.

In response to the CIC call for proposal for Modernized Settlement Approach, core agencies came together to explore an approach that would best meet the needs of Niagara. Agencies were encouraged to openly share funding specifics in a Joint Agency Intent. Agencies who participated in the sharing of information were provided a Common Letter of Support by the Niagara Region.

Next Steps

A meeting was held on October 15, 2010 involving the Local Immigration Partnership Council Core Agencies and funders from CIC to provide an opportunity to review the recommendations made by the Working Group. It was agreed that time was needed to reflect on the recommendations. Consideration by the group was to be given to determine whether the recommendations aligned with the mandate and objectives of the Local Immigration Partnership Council. A second date was set.

In response to a recommendation made by members of the LIPS Council, an agency showcase event was held on October 15, 2010. Over 40 agencies were invited to set up a tradeshow booth showcasing their services. The intent of the showcase was to introduce front line staff, increase awareness of existing services in the Region and encourage referrals. The Ethno Cultural and Faith Organizations were also invited to attend the showcase to explore the expansive services available within the Niagara Region.

On November 10, 2010 the Working Group held a meeting for Local Immigrant Partnership Council Core Agencies to encourage candid conversation and input regarding the recommendations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

1. The Analysis of Core Service Accessibility

An analysis of service delivery accessibility of the primary service providers should be conducted to investigate the opportunity for outreach, partnership service delivery, and co-location as a way to improve service delivery, accessibility and avoid duplication. This analysis will result in the creation of a Service Delivery Plan that increases access, effectiveness and efficiency for the benefit of new Canadians in Niagara Region.

2. Improve Integrated Service Delivery

Improve collaboration and integration. Each of the primary service delivery agencies have the capacity and the need, especially in such a geographically spread community as Niagara, to be able to receive basic contact from new Canadians and “steer” them in the right direction.

3. Expand The Niagara Enticement and Retention Strategy

Some very good foundations exist to expand and strengthen the Niagara Enticement and Retention Strategy – a strategy that will work even harder and smarter to attract the skills and talents required by the Niagara workforce to meet the needs of our area economy. The Niagara Immigrant Portal, the Niagara Economic Growth Strategy, the Niagara Local Labour Market Plan and the work of NIEC itself are all positive foundations on which to build. Those plans are all part of the process of ensuring that we reach out to attract and integrate skilled individuals who are needed in our area economy.

4. Invest in the LIPS Partnership Council and Partnership Coordinator

The Partnership Council needs the active support of a Partnership Coordinator with the singular responsibility to incubate dialogue and analysis of how to effectively increase the amount of cooperation and collaboration among primary service delivery agencies and to facilitate the development of more integrated service delivery strategies. This dedicated person would be of enormous value to the LIPS objectives in helping identify key issues and opportunities and encourage participatory and inclusive planning to address our community specific priorities in servicing newcomers.

5. Develop a Common Brand for Settlement Services in Niagara

Development of a common brand will provide for simple definition of who is in the settlement business regardless of location or legacy agency and should be investigated by the Partnership Council.

6. Foster Innovation/New Service Development

Creative thinking is essential to innovation which when applied leads to new product or service development.



Development of a Work Plan

A meeting for the members of the Local Immigrant Partnership Council was held on January 14, 2011 to review alignment of core mandate and objectives of LIPS with the list of recommendation. Individuals were given an opportunity to review the list and provide suggestions as to what they wanted to see develop into action plans. Individuals were able to discuss their thoughts on the list of recommendations and steps and develop time lines.

The work plan is a compendium of the work completed to date with collective input of Newcomers and the agencies that serve them on a daily basis. The 2011/2012 implementation work plan outline submitted to CIC has been included within this document. The work plan includes timeline and measurable, achievable steps needed to begin the process of turning recommendations into implementation.

A second meeting took place on January 28, 2011 with the Local Immigration Partnership Council. Members of the LIP Council were given an opportunity to review the work plan, reflect on the recommendations and determine whether the action plan met the mandate and objective of LIPs with achievable, measurable outcomes.. Agencies at this meeting supported and endorsed the actions recognizing that this process provides opportunity to participate in identified future action and build collective expertise while creating opportunities for growth.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Project Reporting	Narrative Report to CIC	Funder is informed about progress of LIP Initiative	Monthly beginning April 2011 and ongoing thru the project	Project Coordinator
The Analysis of Core Service Delivery	Analysis of current service delivery sites to identify opportunities for existing and future site locations that will further enhance client accessibility and agency partnerships	Working Group established	April 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	April 2011	Project Coordinator
		Site analysis work plan developed, finalized and shared with Partnership Council	May 2011	Partnership Council
		GIS mapping of all Primary and Secondary Newcomer services in Niagara	May 2011 – August 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Information layered on to existing neighborhood mapping; identify service gaps and opportunities for additional partnerships	August 2011 – October 2011	
		Report finalized and presented to LIPs Partnership Council	November 2011	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Improve Integrated Service Delivery	Create a no wrong door approach to service delivery resulting in an increased awareness of Newcomer needs and agencies ability to respond	Working Group established	April 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	April 2011	Project Coordinator
		No wrong door work plan developed, finalized and shared with Partnership Council	May 2011	Partnership Council
		Develop demonstration project consisting of 5 partnering agencies across service areas (immigrant, employment, health, etc)	May 2011 – June 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Develop measurement and evaluation for behavioural change/ business practice of project to match desired outcome	May 2011 – June 2011	
		Implement demonstration project	June 2011– December 2011	
		Evaluate outcomes of the demonstration project	January 2012	
		Report finalized and presented to Partnership Council	February 2012	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Improve Integrated Service Delivery	Create a common client tracking system of Newcomer data that informs, supports and influences future planning	Working Group established	April 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	April 2011	Project Co-ordinator
		Client tracking system work plan developed, finalized and shared with Partnership Council	May 2011	Partnership Council
		Develop demonstration project consisting of 5 primary service agencies ; web-based common referral and tracking system	May 2011 – June 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Research existing tools and resources in Niagara and across Ontario	May 2011	
		Develop measurement and evaluation for business practice of project to match desired outcome	May 2011 – June 2011	
		Implement demonstration project	June 2011 – December 2011	
		Evaluate outcomes of the demonstration project	January 2012	
		Common tracking system report finalized and presented to Partnership Council	February 2012	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Improve Integrated Service Delivery	Create a Niagara wide service delivery system that is client centered built on the outcomes from the demonstration projects of no wrong door and common tracking system	Evaluate findings from the 2 demonstration projects no wrong door and client tracking system to establish best practices for Niagara wide implementation	February 2012 – March 2012	Partnership Council Project Co-ordinator Working Group
		Implementation of no wrong door and client tracking system across Niagara	March 2012 – September 2012	Project Coordinator Working Group

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Expand the Niagara Enticement and Retention Strategy	Strengthen cultural communities to create a greater sense of belonging for Newcomers	Working Group established	June 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	June 2011	Project Co-ordinator
		Cultural communities work plan developed, finalized and shared with Partnership Council	June 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Research of current events, explore best practices across Canada, leverage existing programs and resources; Niagara Immigrant Employment Council, Niagara Immigrant Connectors program, etc.	July 2011 –September 2011	
		Promotion of multicultural positives across municipalities through utilization of multicultural events creating sense of belonging; Niagara Immigrant portal, other forms of media	September 2011 - ongoing	Partnership Council
		Promote high growth industries and occupations and benchmark Niagara's competitive advantage to comparable communities	September 2011 - ongoing	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Invest in LIPs Partnership Council	Foster an ongoing inclusive planning environment that maximizes Niagara's ability to respond to the needs of Newcomers	Project Coordinator to chair, coordinate and report on the working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site analysis (start April) • No wrong door (start April) • Client tracking system (start April) • Cultural communities (start June) • Common brand (start August) • Learning culture and innovation (start June) 	April 2011 - ongoing	Project Coordinator
		Create a quarterly report; LIPs update, best practices, agency/ program highlights, improvements to service delivery, new initiatives, etc.	June 2011, Sept 2011, Dec 2011, Jan 2012	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Develop a Common Brand for Settlement Services in Niagara	Create a common brand for Newcomer Settlement Services in Niagara	Establish Working Group	August 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	September 2011	Project Coordinator
		Common brand, develop work plan, finalize and share with Partnership Council	September 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Organize sessions to gather feedback from agencies and Newcomers on themes and ideas to create logo/branding	October 2011 – November 2011	
		Engage local graphic artists for submission of samples to be presented to the working group	November 2011 – December 2011	
		Recommendation for common brand outlined in report to the Partnership Council	January 2012	
		Launch to community and direct linkage to Niagara Immigration Portal and Municipal websites (at Learning Forum)	February 2012 – March 2012	
		Marketing campaign on new common brand	March 2012 – ongoing	

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOMES	SEQUENCED TASKS	TIMELINE	LEAD
Foster Innovation and New Service Development	Create a support system that fosters learning and innovation	Establish Working Group	June 2011	Partnership Council
		Establish Term of Reference for the working group	June 2011	Project Coordinator
		Learning culture and innovation work plan developed, finalize and share with Partnership Council	July 2011	Project Coordinator Working Group
		Quarterly learning forums for service providing agencies, frontline staff, faith and ethno-cultural groups; Incubation for creative thinking	October 2011, Feb. 2012, May 2012, Sept. 2012	Partnership Council

Conclusion

The creation and utilization of the Local Immigration Partnership Council and Task Force has enabled this project to successfully collaborate with community partners in developing innovative ideas in better serving the Newcomer population. The next step is to continue working with our community partners in order to successfully implement the various ideas. Key players have already committed themselves to participating in the various work groups and are eagerly awaiting its commencement.

In conclusion, by taking the time to critically reflect on the way that current business is being done; to work in a collaborative approach in reviewing existing services and make recommendations for improvement, will not only benefit Newcomers but the very agencies that provide these services. This process in involving key stakeholders has encouraged dialogue, as well as an increased understanding and awareness of the complexities of providing exemplary services to Newcomers across Niagara.

“Any definition of a culture of peace must address the problem of achieving justice for communities and individuals who do not have the means to compete or cope without structured assistance and compassionate help.”

Mahnaz Afkhami

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