



# WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

## E-Bulletin - August 2010

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### Retention and Attraction of Newcomers to Ontario Cities Workshop

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, the WCI is hosting a one-day workshop in Ottawa to examine what cities are able to do to improve their retention and attraction of newcomers. Support for the workshop comes from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the Welcoming Communities Initiative. The workshop will include municipal and LIP representatives from four cities – Ottawa, London, Hamilton and North Bay; federal and provincial officials; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and relevant WCI researchers.

The workshop is built around the idea that Ontario cities can emulate many of the features of Manitoba's highly successful program for attracting and retaining newcomers. What

makes Manitoba's experience so interesting for LIPs is that newcomers are settling not only in Winnipeg, but also in smaller towns like Winkler and Steinbach. As well, the numbers are very impressive.

The workshop will examine what changes would be needed in spending and program configuration for Ontario cities, acting on their own (or in collaboration with other cities), to achieve the same success as Manitoba. The workshop will also examine the partnerships that would be needed to leverage additional support. In this regard, the workshop will explore whether Ontario cities might gain accelerated access to applicants who are mired in the federal processing queue. This could produce a win-win-win situation, benefiting cities, the federal authorities and applicants in the queue.

To help set the stage for the discussion, the main architect of the Manitoba experiment, Gerry Clement, has been asked to 'deconstruct' Manitoba's program, identifying the critical program components that could be addressed by municipalities. Other factors that the workshop will look at are the innovative federal and provincial programs that deal with international students and temporary workers.

Following the workshop, a report will be issued advising the LIPs on the merits of the proposition. The report will offer suggestions for what the LIPs and the WCI might do to advance the agenda.

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### WCI-LIP Meeting in October

We will be holding a joint meeting of the Welcoming Communities Initiative and the Ontario Local Immigration Partnerships in Ottawa starting the evening of Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> and ending the afternoon of Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. This event, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, will bring together WCI representatives, LIP coordinators and municipal officials, key Citizenship and Immigration Canada program officials, federal and provincial policymakers, executives from settlement umbrella organizations, as well as select representatives from other cities and provinces. Further details and the agenda will be sent out shortly.

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### Settlement Information Renewal Exercise: Newcomer Consultations

During September and October, members of the WCI led by Vicki

Esses will be testing new settlement information text prepared by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This material will be used in the Welcome to Canada guide, CIC website and other federal settlement information products.

To test these materials, English sessions with newcomers to Canada will take place in Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, and French sessions will take place in Montreal and Ottawa. The goal of the sessions is to ensure that the information provided is clear, useful, and as complete as possible in presenting what newcomers need to know in order to settle in Canada. Additional questions will probe newcomers' preferred sources and methods of obtaining settlement information.

Following completion of the newcomer consultations, a report and accompanying PowerPoint will be prepared that present the results of the focus groups and use these as a basis for making recommendations to Citizenship and Immigration Canada on revising the draft text.

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**City of Hamilton Endorses Immigration Strategy**

A made-in-Hamilton Immigration Strategy and Action Plan, developed and adopted by the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, was formally endorsed by Hamilton City Council at its meeting of June 22, 2010.

The 15 member Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, comprising civic leaders representing key sectors in the

city, has recognized that immigration is key to the future economic and cultural life of the city. Like many other 'second tier' cities, Hamilton's population is not growing; its labour force is aging; and although many immigrants to the city are highly educated, with the skills and entrepreneurial talents that Hamilton needs in order to prosper, they are facing numerous, unnecessary barriers in accessing the labour market. As a consequence, too many newcomers to the city live in poverty.

The Strategy: The Partnership Council, in developing its vision and priorities for the Immigration Strategy, was very clear that it is the responsibility of all Hamiltonians – as residents and as members of voluntary, private or public institutions – to take ownership of the Strategy. Only by integrating and mainstreaming immigration issues into all aspects of city life can Hamilton strengthen its integration capacity and become a more immigrant-friendly city.

The vision defining the Strategy is that: "Hamilton is an inclusive community where the talents and experience that immigrants and refugees bring are valued because they are integral to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child".

In pursuit of this vision, the Hamilton Immigration Strategy identifies four strategic priorities:

- 1) Collaborative leadership through strategic partnerships with local stakeholder organizations.
- 2) Identifying gaps and areas for improvement in the delivery

of newcomer settlement services.

- 3) Building a welcoming community with the broader community and local stakeholders.
- 4) Improving the evidence base of new immigrants to the city and the barriers they face in order to better inform local policymaking and service provision.

The Action Plan identifies an initial set of over fifty initiatives that will be undertaken in pursuit of the vision.

A Locally Based Strategy: While the municipal government has no formal management powers regarding immigration, it is at the city level where the integration process takes place. The endorsement of City Council is important because it acknowledges that municipal government is uniquely positioned to serve as a model in recognizing the local importance of immigration through its responsibilities as a major employer, as a provider of services, and as a significant influencer of public opinion. The municipal government has a distinct leadership and managerial role to play in making the city an immigrant friendly and welcoming community.

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**Thank you**

We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region for their continued financial support.

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