2010
November

Welcoming Communities Initiative

e bulletin

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Announcements and Updates

Links to the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) strategic plans completed to date are now posted on our website under Quick Picks. We welcome new additions as they become available.

The WCI-LIP Conference held recently in Ottawa has a new folder posted on the site under Events containing presentations from the conference. In December, summary reports from the workshops will also be available here.

New guiding principles for funding, joint partnerships, and WCI endorsement are now available under About Us in the section WCI Guiding Principles and Protocols.

As you will have noticed, our E-bulletin has a new look. Thanks to Jessica Boissonneault at the North Bay and District Multicultural Centre for developing a new template for us.

Second WCI-LIP Conference

In October, the WCI - with the assistance of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Ontario Region – convened its second WCI-LIP meeting. The goal of the meeting was to benefit from the lessons and experiences to date for future LIP development and research planning. In addition to LIP officials, the meeting was well attended by municipal and service provider representatives, CIC Ontario regional officials, Ontario provincial representatives, CIC policy officials, and WCI academics. Also participating in the conference were provincial representatives from New Brunswick and British Columbia. Critically, Jason Kenney, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, flew in to Ottawa specifically to speak at this event – a sign of the importance that the government attaches to the LIP program. Over the two days of the conference, attendees focused on two major themes: (i) Issues related to the transition by the LIPs from planning and strategizing to implementation and action; and (ii) Clarifying the areas in which WCI research can inform the LIP planning and implementation process, helping to identify promising practices and promoting innovation. Responses by participants to the conference evaluation indicate that it was effective in achieving its goals.

Helping the LIPs to Measure Outcomes

Citizenship and Immigration Canada has been making a serious effort to look beyond program outputs and deliverables to program and service outcomes. The LIPs will need to support this effort and to demonstrate that their strategic plans will, ultimately, result in more welcoming

and inclusive communities. This is by no means an easy task but it is an area in which the WCI may be able to provide assistance. Earlier this year, the WCI presented a report to CIC identifying 17 separate characteristics that practitioners and policymakers typically associate with a welcoming community. This was well received. We would now like to bring this report to ground. The team working on the 'Measuring Welcoming Community Outcomes project' – those of you who attended the October WCI-LIP conference will know about this project - would like feedback on which of the 17 characteristics the LIPs would consider to be priorities for developing indicator measures. The Outcomes project team will be surveying the LIPs and other relevant players shortly in order to obtain this information.

Workshop on Northern and Small Communities

We are in the process of organizing a workshop on issues that resonate more urgently in Northern and small communities, to take place in February or March of 2011. The workshop will bring together municipal, LIP and academic representatives and is being planned alongside a conference on attraction and retention being mounted by the City of North Bay, the Conference Board of Canada, and OMAFRA. Thanks to Don Curry for taking the lead on this. More information will be provided in the next e-bulletin.

The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP) is a collaborative initiative designed to strengthen the role of local and regional communities in serving and integrating immigrants. The Immigrant Partnership Council which oversees the LIP is supported by a Project Advisory Committee that is co-chaired by the City of London and the United Way.

The key LMLIP deliverables are:

1) An inventory of community capacity and needs which will underpin the London and Middlesex strategic framework and guide local integration plans. The inventory was developed in partnership with the Welcoming Communities Initiative.

2) The formation of a 120 member London and Middlesex Immigrant Partnership Council. The Council will develop strategies that support immigrants and build upon excellent existing activities in the areas of attraction, integration and retention of immigrants. The Council is composed of a Central Council and six Sub-councils. These focus on: Education, Employment, Health and Well Being, Inclusion and Civic Engagement, Justice and Protection Services and Settlement.

3) The development of a collaborative, community-based strategic plan for London and Middlesex. Driven by ambitious timelines, the Central Council and the six Sub-councils have contributed significant time, energy and vision to developing the *Community Immigrant Strategic Plan* for London and Middlesex. (The full Plan is posted on the Immigration Portal, www.welcome.london.ca.) The London and Middlesex *Community Immigrant Strategic Plan* was submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada on August 24, 2010.

Implementing the LMLIP Community Immigrant Strategic Plan will require on-going community collaboration. The Partnership Council intends to build on the Strategic Plan and on existing successful measures. The Council also intends to continue to work closely with the Welcoming Communities initiative and its local representatives at the University of Western Ontario.

Post-Secondary Experiences and Outcomes Study

An exciting new study has been launched through the Education and Education Policy Domain. Developed in partnership with Academica Group Inc. (http://www.academica.ca/) and in cooperation with the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (http://www.heqco.ca/en-CA/Pages/default.aspx), it will draw upon existing databases to compare post-secondary application experiences and outcomes of immigrant and non-immigrant applicants by geographic region (2nd and 3rd tier cities vs. GTA). The study has three distinct parts. The first part focuses on college applicants from 2007-2010. In each of those years, the analyses will draw upon a pool of 50,000 applicants to examine application patterns, factors, and decisions. The second part will look for trends in the annual data leading to 2010. The third part will focus on post-secondary experiences and outcomes by considering various factors that influence applicant pathways. For example, the study will compare the factors at play in the following populations: individuals who were not accepted to college or university; individuals who were accepted but declined; individuals who attended and completed a post-secondary education; individuals still attending; and, finally, individuals who attended college or university but left prior to completion. The factors (the pathway determinants) that will be examined include academic profiles; decisions and context; use of services; school engagement; time use; financing; labour market and employment influences.

The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Community-University Research Alliance Grant. The primary researchers for the project are Dawn Zinga and Christine Tardif-Williams at Brock University. A report on the analyses will be posted on the website once it becomes available. Updates will be provided through the e-bulletin.

Antiracism and Antidiscrimination Observatory

The WCI project to develop an antiracism and antidiscrimination observatory is well underway, with the goal of finishing by the spring of 2011. This project, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, will equip policy-makers, researchers, and organizations in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors with a set of diagnostics for assessing levels of racism and discrimination, as well as practical tools for promoting harmony and inclusion. We are currently cataloguing materials from local, provincial/territorial, and federal government websites; national and international bodies; local organizations; businesses; think tanks; research groups; and the academic literature that focus on measuring and combating racism and discrimination. To limit our search, we are focusing on materials developed or published within the last ten years in English or French, and we are primarily looking at work from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Netherlands, with a bit of attention to other countries.

The research team led by Victoria Esses (University of Western Ontario) and Livianna Tossutti (Brock University), with project manager Leah Hamilton (Western) and assistants Chance Minnett-Watchel (Brock), Lisa Bitacola (Western), April Carrière (University of Ottawa), and Tanaz Javan (Western), are pleased by their progress, with over 750 sources already catalogued. Descriptions of these materials will be put into a searchable database on the WCI website so that they are easily accessible and provide useful information on source and relevance. The observatory will provide a one-stop shop for antiracism and antidiscrimination tools, and the opportunity to learn from the experiences and expertise of others. Smaller communities that are only now beginning to experience increasing diversity should find the observatory especially useful.

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.

Funded by / Financé par: Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

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