
DATE: April 29, 2010

REPORT TITLE: **CANADA-ONTARIO IMMIGRATION AGREEMENT: RENEGOTIATION AND IMPACT ON PEEL**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the Commissioner of Human Services, dated April 29, 2010, titled "Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement: Renegotiation and Impact on Peel" be sent to the Intergovernmental Relations Committee for future advocacy direction on delivering essential services in collaboration with municipalities and local immigration partnerships to ensure effective integration of immigrants into the community and the economy, through the re-negotiation of a successor Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement;

And further, that a letter be sent to the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Immigration from the Chair to demonstrate the Region of Peel's appreciation for the one-year Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement and Peel's willingness to work with both orders of government to establish a long-term funding arrangement for immigration funding.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) expired on March 31, 2010 and negotiations over a new agreement appear to be stalled.
- In the interim, the terms of the previous agreement have been extended by one year
- Peel and other AMO members have been actively engaged in the Municipal Immigration Committee of COIA.
- Many new initiatives have flowed from COIA including the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) and an inter-government strategy aimed at underserved areas in Ontario such as Peel.
- The Peel Newcomer Strategy Group has consulted widely and developed the framework for a comprehensive model for coordinated immigration services in Peel; but is currently not assured of funding for the further development and implementation of this model.
- The Region has supported this coordinated strategy with the help of further federal and provincial funding, for the Peel Immigration Web Portal, the discussion papers on immigration in Peel, and the recently released Labour Market Survey of Immigrants in Peel.

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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, signed in 2005, expired at the end of March 2010. This agreement committed the federal government to invest some \$920 million over five years, most of which it would spend directly on its own programs, and some of which was transferred to the Ontario government. Based on the agreement the average funding per landed immigrant in Ontario would have risen from under \$900 prior to the agreement to over \$3400 estimated in 2009-10 a level comparable to other provinces and approaching that of Quebec.

The funds administered by Ontario included the investments made in municipal web portals, including Peel's: www.immigrationpeel.ca

The funds administered by the Ontario regional office of Citizenship and Immigration Canada went mainly to their traditional language and settlement programs that are granted based on competitive bids from established settlement agencies. Some \$33 million were announced through these channels in 2007 in Peel, and another \$11 million in 2008. Peel staff are still awaiting information from CIC staff on how this funding was actually dispersed. In addition Citizenship and Immigration Canada directly funded the United Way to develop the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group.

(<http://www.peelnewcomer.org/>)

CIC also funded the Region of Peel to commission six discussion papers which are in use to inform the community dialogue over successful integration of immigrant.

(<http://www.peelregion.ca/social-services/discussion-papers.htm>)

2. Findings

One of the innovations of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement was its inclusion of municipalities, represented through AMO and the City of Toronto. Senior Peel staff have been active on the Municipal Immigration Committee of COIA and also on the sub-committees on settlement and language programs.

To date the agreement has yielded one unique new program in Ontario which is now being considered for application in other provinces: the Local Immigration Partnerships program, of which Peel Newcomer Strategy Group was the first prototype.

The latest evidence of the work of these tri-government deliberations is the most recent call for proposals from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, which reflects the priorities established by the COIA working groups and the steering committee. The new call for proposals also reflects a new integrated service model, (modernization) which allows for new proposals that combine or expand the old silos of traditional language and settlement programs.

Included in the COIA recommendations and reflected in this call for proposals are new settlement service initiatives aimed at under-served areas, pre-arrival services, capacity building of immigrant serving organizations, services for immigrant youth, women and seniors, translation and new language training services including a coordinated assessment referral system, workplace language training, and self-directed learning programs.

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However the competitive process of CIC is still embedded in this call which is issued to a pre-qualified list of traditional "service provider agencies" and does not lend itself easily to rational community planning.

A report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration has just been released which outlines some of the best practices from their hearings and comments on the new integrated Citizenship and Immigration service model. The review of best practices resulted in a series of recommendations that largely mirror the output of the COIA steering committee and working groups, including promotion of Local Immigration Partnerships such as PNSG.

The Government of Ontario is seeking to take a more direct role in delivering these services under the next agreement after 2010, following the example of British Columbia and Manitoba, who receive a lump transfer of funds for immigration services from the federal government and administer the services themselves. The Province maintains they will be better able to deliver these programs in a coordinated cross ministerial fashion, working with their municipal partners, local immigration partnerships and agencies serving newcomers.

a) Status of COIA

During the first four years of the Canada–Ontario Immigration Agreement, the federal government under spent by an estimated \$193 million. The Ontario government wants to begin to negotiate with the federal government a new immigration agreement that would include devolution to the Province of settlement and language training and full funding for these programs.

On May 5, 2010 the Government of Canada announced the signing of a one year extension of COIA pending negotiation of a successor agreement. Under the extension \$320 million has been allocated to Ontario for 2010-2011. (Appendix I)

Despite the extension, protracted negotiations are causing some concern among immigrants and agencies serving them, especially in high growth areas like Peel where the new funding is critical just to bring services in line with the rest of the province. For 2010-2011 local established service provider's current contracts will be secure, within some new constraints based on the 2010 federal budget.

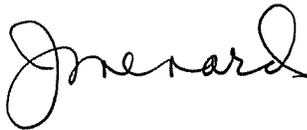
Less secure than the standard existing settlement services is the contract to support the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG), a joint planning table led by the Region of Peel and the United Way of Peel Region, which is now ready to start next steps in flushing out, with the community, the details of a comprehensive model and implementation strategy that will ensure coordination of services and a planning process to fill gaps in services to the 28,000 immigrants now coming to Peel every year.

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CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council endorse the direction of the Provincial government to renegotiate an agreement that gives it more control over immigration services, in full partnership with municipalities and local immigration partnerships, to ensure the success of the work done to date and the innovative local planning models exemplified by the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group in supporting the full integration of newcomers into our community.



Janet Menard
Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact Gurpreet Malhotra at extension 4862 or via email at gurpreet.malhotra@peelregion.ca

Authored By: Norm McLeod

c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

News Release

Canada and Ontario to extend the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement

Toronto, May 5, 2010 — The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, and Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, have signed a one-year extension to the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA).

"In extending the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, we signal our commitment to continue to collaborate to attract, retain and integrate immigrants into communities in Ontario while exploring new ways to improve immigrant outcomes," said Minister Kenney. "The extension of this agreement prolongs our support for immigrant settlement programs, including language training and programs for newcomer youth."

"Ontario is pleased to sign this one-year extension as we negotiate a successor agreement, so that newcomers to the province can continue to receive the services they need to settle and succeed," said Minister Hoskins.

Three hundred and twenty million dollars have been allocated to Ontario for 2010–2011, in addition to annual settlement funding of \$108 million.

The extension agreement builds on the existing collaborative relationship between Canada and Ontario on immigration matters and recognizes the importance of involving community stakeholders, including service providers and municipalities, in welcoming newcomers. Accomplishments to date under the COIA are significant and the Government of Canada will continue to work in partnership with the province of Ontario, settlement service provider organizations, local municipalities and other stakeholders to make a real difference in the lives of Ontario immigrants.

Attracting more immigrants to Ontario to address its unique economic and social needs will contribute to Canada's overall social, cultural and economic goals.

To obtain an electronic copy of the agreement signed today, please visit www.cic.gc.ca or www.citizenship.gov.on.ca.

For further information (media only), please contact:

Alykhan Velshi
Minister's Office
Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Indira Naidoo-Harris
Minister's Office
Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
416-325-6205

Media Relations, Ontario Region
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
416-954-7868
Ont-Communications@cic.gc.ca