
DATE: February 10, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN A RENEWED CANADA-ONTARIO
IMMIGRATION AGREEMENT**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Chair write the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, urging both levels of government to ensure that the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) is extended and that municipalities are full partners in the development and implementation of any new agreement on immigration services in Ontario and in any delivery model that is implemented for immigrant services and to stress the importance of ongoing sustainable local planning mechanisms to ensure effective coordinated service delivery to immigrants;

And further, that copies of the letters to the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, along with the report of the Commissioner of Human Services, dated February 10, 2011, titled "Role of Municipalities in a Renewed Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement", be distributed to all Peel MPs and MPPs, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ontario Government has begun talks with the Federal Government to negotiate a new Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA).
- The Province is seeking more control over the funds for immigration services in Ontario, and increased influence over the selection process for new immigrants.
- The current agreement has been extended to March 2011, and the Province maintains the federal expenditures have fallen significantly below their commitment under that agreement.
- Municipalities have been full partners under the old agreement and it is not clear what their role would be under a new one.
- Peel Newcomer Strategy Group was a prototype for a local planning process called Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) that has been implemented in 24 municipalities in Ontario. This local planning process requires sustainable funding to ensure an ongoing coordinated service system for immigrants.

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DISCUSSION

1. Background

On May 27, 2010, staff brought a report to General Committee on the status of the stalled negotiations between the Ontario and Federal Governments on a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). The previous agreement has been extended to March 31, 2011, and that has enabled some funding to continue for a few months for the important work of the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) to design a coordinated service system for immigrants in Peel.

Council referred this report to the June 10, 2010 Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee (IRAC) and directed staff to prepare a recommendation proposing the position the Region of Peel should take regarding which level of government should be responsible for delivery of immigration services.

As a result of the review by the Intergovernmental Relations Advisory Committee, a delegation of Councillors from Peel met with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario, the Honourable Eric Hoskins, and outlined the following request:

The Region of Peel urges the Provincial Government to:

1. Negotiate with the federal government a renewal of COIA and ensure that a renewed COIA supports integrated community planning of services which is crucial to the future success of immigrants now settling and integrating in the growth areas of Ontario.
2. Through a renewed COIA, put in place a simplified process that promotes more involvement of municipalities in immigration policy and planning, including the capacity to identify needs and provide input into the allocation of funds. A renewed COIA should also set aside sustainable funding for the creation and enhancement of municipal immigration websites.

The full Peel presentation to the Minister is attached as Appendix I.

On September 22, 2010, the Minister tabled a resolution in the Legislature calling on the federal government to come to the table to negotiate a new agreement and to fulfill their commitment to all funding under the old agreement, of which some \$207 million has not been spent. Ontario will be asking for an agreement comparable to those with Manitoba and British Columbia, giving more control over the delivery of settlement programming to the province. For more information on the proposed direction of the province, see: <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/coia/resolution.shtml>

On September 24, 2010, Minister Hoskins held a consultation with some 60 community, municipal, and settlement agency stakeholders to start getting input into the visioning and design of a comprehensive model for immigration services in Ontario. The all-day meeting was well attended by Regional and community staff from Peel, including the Manager of Strategic Policy and Research, the Director of PNSG, the CEO of the United Way of Peel, and also included Ratna Omidvar, President of Maytree Foundation and several staff.

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Key discussion points from the meeting are as follows:

- The provincial government is asking for a significant devolution of responsibility for delivering settlement services funded by the Federal government, similar to the agreement reached by Manitoba and British Columbia.
- The Provincial Minister has made strong assurances that all federal settlement funding would be spent on immigration settlement services.
- The Minister is asking the stakeholders in Ontario to support their appeal to the Federal government to come to the table and discuss a new agreement that includes municipalities.
- Municipal and community representatives at the consultation have made it clear they are not prepared to take sides over which level of government should deliver settlement services, and the Minister and Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) staff have indicated they understand and accept this.
- It is not yet clear what role municipalities will be playing in a new agreement. The Minister and MCI staff have recognized that municipalities are important "stakeholders", but have not yet formally acknowledged their role as an order of government in a new agreement. The formal inclusion of municipalities in the previous agreement has been regarded as a major breakthrough for municipal governments.
- The COIA Steering Committee (which does not include municipalities) is continuing to meet and preparing to launch a new working group on labour market services. In addition, the Municipal Immigration Committee continues to meet; however, the sub-committees have been disbanded as their work is considered complete.

The Provincial Government has begun talks with the Federal Government in late January, 2011 to negotiate a new (COIA).

In the meantime, concerns are being raised nationally regarding:

- the increase in temporary foreign workers (180,000 in 2010);
- decline in family class admissions; and
- Canada's diminished role in assisting people fleeing violence and persecution (25 per cent decline).

As well, the Province of Ontario, including Peel Region, has seen a significant decline in Federal funding for settlement and integration, putting significant pressure on organizations providing these services.

2. Implications for Peel, Local Immigration Partnerships and Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG)

PNSG predates the Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) Program for local planning of immigration services and was a precedent that led to the promotion of this idea at the Municipal Immigration Committee of COIA. However, the LIP program itself is being considered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) Management Committee as a potential national program and would likely continue independently of the outcome of a new COIA agreement. It is not designed as a permanent planning program, but as a starting point for local planning.

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Some 24 communities have LIPs now in Ontario, most of them administered by municipalities with a role as Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM). Toronto has multiple neighborhood LIPs. PNSG differs from most LIPs in that it is administered directly by the United Way of Peel, in partnership with the Region of Peel. PNSG is currently on extended temporary funding to March 2011 only. A proposal for a further year of funding has been submitted.

Thus far, LIPs are being cited as a best practice; however, they are in their early stages of development and are evolving as their successes and challenges become apparent. As such, the Municipal Immigration Committee (MIC) is in the process of establishing a LIP Advisory Committee and related terms of reference to further support LIP development.

3. Findings

The issue of federal devolution of responsibility has been discussed by the Ontario Social Services Urban Commissioners Committee and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) Board. They have agreed that municipalities have no stake in whether federal funding of immigration services continues to be administered directly by the federal government or is devolved to the Province. However, municipalities have a strong stake in a continued presence around the intergovernmental table as full partners rather than as "stakeholders." So far, the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has made no mention of the role of municipalities beyond "stakeholder."

Municipal Services Managers in Ontario have the capacity and the access to local stakeholders to support collaborative and coordinated planning of services to immigrants in their communities. PNSG is a prototype that is ready to move into sustained ongoing community planning and service delivery redesign. Peel and all municipalities in Ontario have a vested interest in ensuring the sustainability of these planning processes. They therefore have a vital interest in ensuring a new Canada-Ontario Immigration agreement is expedited before the end of the current federal and provincial fiscal year.

4. Proposed Direction

Staff recommends that Council, through the Office of the Regional Chair and the IRAC, work with other municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) to:

- Ensure that the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement includes a renewed annex that places municipalities around the table as full partners in the agreement; and
- Press the Federal Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism and Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to support ongoing local planning mechanisms to ensure effective coordinated service delivery to immigrants.

5. Benefits of Proposed Direction

The new model will require greater involvement of municipalities in identifying needs and providing input into the allocation of funds. Staff's view is that the success of a renewed COIA depends on the extent to which the new framework supports integrated community planning of services. This will provide the opportunity for the development of the right mix of policies that will streamline services, fill current gaps in services and establish a framework to maximize the benefits of immigration to Peel Region. While technically this report should go back to IRAC, due to the timelines and imminent termination of the agreement on March

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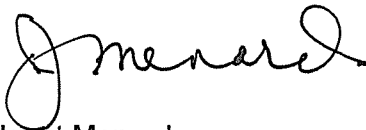
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31st, staff is seeking support directly through Regional Council. IRAC will continue their advocacy efforts as well.

CONCLUSION

The provincial and federal governments have begun talks to negotiate a new COIA. The province has stated its intentions to seek greater control of the funding of immigrant settlement services, but this has not been well received. Staff recommend that the Region of Peel not take a position as to which level of government should control immigrant settlement and integration services and funding but that the Region of Peel request that the Federal and Provincial Governments commit to involving the Region of Peel and other Ontario municipalities as partners in the development and implementation of the new framework.

Staff will closely monitor the current COIA negotiations between the Province and the Federal Government and recommend directions to council based on the developments arising from the negotiations.



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: Junior Higgins

c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

**Regional Delegation to the Honourable Eric Hoskins
August 31, 2010**



**The Honourable Eric Hoskins
Minister of Citizenship & Immigration**

Date: Tuesday, August 31, 2010
Time: 2:30 – 3:00 pm

Regional Delegation

Allan Thompson, Regional Councillor
John Sanderson, Regional Councillor
Lowell Rubin Vaughan, Intergovernmental Relations Advisor

Understanding the Region of Peel's Growth

- In 2006, Peel had the second highest growth rate of regional or single-tier municipalities in Ontario (Source: 2006 Census)
- More than 34,000 new residents settled in Peel each year between the census years 2001 and 2006
- By 2031, Peel's population will reach 1.64 million.
- This rapid growth and transformation has introduced much strength to Peel's municipal landscape. It has also, however, brought significant challenges that must be addressed.
- Our continued rapid growth continues to cause inequities in funding Peel programs and places significant demand and strain on all social services to families.

- **Immigrants make up 49% of Peel's Population**
- **On average over 23,000 recent immigrants settle in Peel each year.**

Integration Challenges faced by Newcomers

- The major challenge faced by newcomers is primarily economic. Newcomers, who have arrived in the past 10 to 15 years, are having more difficulties than previous cohorts at integrating into the work force with appropriate jobs that match their skills. This is one of the key factors behind rising poverty rates in Peel.
- In 2002, 46% of immigrants had one post-secondary degree, exceeding the Canadian average of 22%.
- About 60% of newcomers do not work in the same occupational field as they did before entering Canada.
- The lack of recognition of international credentials is a barrier to working in a related field and hinders families from re-establishing in Canada.

Local Immigration Planning in Peel

The Region in collaboration with community partners launched a strategy for immigrants in Peel in 2006, the ***leading to the formation of a local immigration partnership (LIP). The LIP in Peel is called the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG).***

- The objective of our LIP is to create a coordinated and comprehensive plan for services to newcomers in Peel. Although it was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, its work will be of interest to Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.
- PNSG recently released its model for enhanced settlement and integration of immigrants. The elements of the model include:
 - community hubs/networks – offer a broad range of services to newcomers

- a case management system – to support newcomers as they go through the complex range of services and supports
 - a central co-ordinating body to ensure that services are connected and that there is cooperation across the settlement sector as well as sector –wide planning and research.
 - A “No Wrong door” approach so that newcomers get access to the right service at the right time and so they can navigate the services.
 - Services that are diverse and specialized because no one agency can fully meet the needs of newcomers.
 - Employment and career development – place more emphasis on skills like networking and career building and on more intensive programs such as mentorships, internships and host, which have proved successful.
- The continuation of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) and implementation of the LIP recommendations is essential to ensuring that services to newcomers are connected, co-ordinated and effective and address newcomers' needs.

The Region of Peel urges the Provincial Government to:

- 1. Develop, with Peel, policies and programs that support effective integration of newcomers into workplaces which supports desire of all levels governments to put our wealth of intelligence to work.**
- 2. Work with stakeholders to further develop fast-tracking foreign credentials assessments that could be used to evaluate qualifications and certification in regulated and non-regulated occupations.**

Working with your Ministry ... ImmigrationPeel.ca: A Resource for Newcomers to Peel

A partnership between:



Citizenship and Immigration Canada



- The Region of Peel, with funding from the Ontario government, closely collaborated with the community to develop a municipal immigration portal, ImmigrationPeel.ca. The site was launched in November 2008.
- ImmigrationPeel.ca contains information that can help newcomers to:
 - Make an informed decision when considering Peel Region as a site to settle in Canada.
 - Prepare effectively before immigrating.
 - Access services and supports available for newcomers when they arrive.
- In December 2009, the Region received funding from the province to make significant content enhancements to the site. Key enhancements include a functional home page, updated labour market information and employer content, and a plan to market enhancements to employers.
- The Region appreciates the financial support the province has provided to develop ImmigrationPeel.ca and to the site's content and functionality.



Welcome to
ImmigrationPeel.ca
A Resource for Newcomers to Peel



Canada – Ontario Immigration Agreement

The Region of Peel thanks the Federal and Provincial governments one year extension of COIA through 2011

- Prior to the Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), the federal government was spending just under \$900 per landed immigrant on settlement services in Ontario.
- This is compared to a federal funding level of \$4300/landed immigrant in Quebec (over the same time period).
- Peel's and Ontario's immigration settlement funding will increase substantially by 2009-2010 (roughly \$3,400 per landed immigrant), but will still remain below that of other provinces.
- COIA is unique in that municipalities are included actively in deliberations over the priorities of immigration policy, program development and planning.

- The Region of Peel highly values the collaborative work on immigration planning that the federal government, the province and Ontario municipalities are presently engaged in and would like to continue to build on this work.
- There is concern in Peel that the badly needed supports for the nearly 25,000 new immigrants that have been coming to Peel each year could be depleted if the agreement is not renewed.
- The future of initiatives like local immigration planning partnerships is dependent on the successful outcome of negotiations over a new COIA.

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- 2. Through a renewed COIA, put in place a simplified process that promotes more involvement of municipalities in immigration policy and planning, including the capacity to identify needs and provide input into the allocation of funds. A renewed COIA should also set aside sustainable funding for creation and enhancement of municipal immigration websites.**