

For Information

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DATE: April 11, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **UPDATE ON PEEL IMMIGRATION WEB PORTAL PROJECT**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

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## **OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the Peel Immigration Web Portal project including funds received from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration on January 1, 2012.

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Region of Peel has been granted \$88,200 from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for two separate web portal related projects.
- \$20,000 has been granted for implementation of a Marketing Strategy.
- \$68,200 has been granted to secure a six month contract position to lead the development of an improved governance structure and web portal sustainability plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

In 2007, the Region of Peel received funding in the amount of \$400,917 from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) to develop a municipal immigration web portal. After the portal's initial launch in November 2008, there has been significant ongoing development and enhancement of the website. This was made possible through further funding from MCI in the amount of \$105,692 received in December 2009.

The Peel Immigration Web Portal (<http://www.immigrationpeel.ca/>) provides newcomers with access to community and government services in Peel; employment and labour market information; and various resources to assist in the transition period of settling into this community.

### **2. Rationale for Requesting Additional Funds**

Regional staff are confident that the web portal is a valuable resource in the settlement process of newcomers to Peel Region.

Since the launch of the web portal, the following has been achieved:

- More than 100,000 visits to the site
- Visitors have come from 162 countries and 3,952 cities

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- More than 77,000, or 77 per cent, are new visitors
- There were 88,616, or 86 per cent, Canadian visitors largely from the Greater Toronto Area

The portal also requires further development through collaborative efforts with key community stakeholders. As a result, staff have submitted two successful proposals to MCI for support on continued marketing and promotion of the web portal and to re-engage community partners. This will foster the development of an improved governance structure that will be part of a sustainability plan.

### 3. Municipal Immigration Information Online Program (MIIO) Marketing Funding

The Peel Immigration Web Portal is a vital tool used by the Region of Peel to support the integration of newcomers to Peel Region. Marketing this tool is important in ensuring that potential and recently-arrived immigrants have increased access to the information needed for successful integration into the community. The Region of Peel submitted a proposal to MCI in September 2011, requesting funds to implement web portal marketing activities to support the following objectives:

1. Continue to recognize existing partners and identify new partners as champions to promote the Peel Immigration Web Portal among their personal networks.
2. Implement feedback obtained from our partners to further enrich the content and usability of the web portal as a resource that can help to meet the needs of newcomers and immigrants to Peel.
3. Develop promotional content and materials to attract the interest of potential immigrants to the Web Portal.

This proposal submission has been approved and the Region of Peel has received funding in the amount of \$20,000 to implement web portal marketing activities to be completed by June 30, 2012.

The goal of these marketing activities is to increase the visibility and use of the web portal through various strategic partnerships and outreach opportunities with local faith groups, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada classes, Peel employers and settlement agencies. Through this community-based approach, community organizations; formal and informal newcomer networks; as well as newcomers who are currently settled, will continue to use the web portal to access relevant information. These groups will also encourage further dissemination of the site through their contacts, thereby increasing the potential of this tool.

### 4. Municipal Immigration Information Online Program (MIIO) Partnership and Enhancement Funding

There is a need to re-engage community stakeholders involved in the development of the web portal to develop an improved governance structure and sustainability plan. This is due to discontinued provincial funding in December 2010 and municipal funding in 2011.

In December 2011, the Region of Peel submitted a proposal to MCI to request funding for one six month contract position to support the implementation of a six month project. This project would focus on strengthening existing relationships with key community stakeholders and initiate potential partnerships with new and non-traditional organizations with a view to contributing to the ongoing sustainability of the portal. This project will also examine the

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Web Portal in its current state and lead the creation of a "made-in-Peel" made governance model defining clearer roles and responsibilities of community partners.

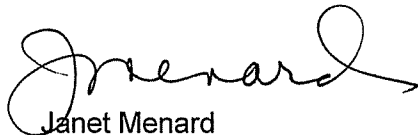
Project activities will include:

- Best practice research of governance models, in addition to the exploration of methods used by surrounding municipalities with relevant experience
- Engaging of inter-governmental and cross-sectoral collaborative partners encouraging improved knowledge transfer opportunities
- Service planning, design and implementation
- Improved coordination to enhance the sharing of information and communication technology
- A comprehensive review of current web portal content
- The creation of an evaluative framework to ensure the site continues to meet the needs of the newcomer community while ensuring it is aligned to support and compliment work of established collaboratives (e.g., Peel Newcomer Strategy Group)

This proposal submission was approved and the Region of Peel has received funding in the amount of \$68,200 to implement partnership and enhancement activities by June 2012. Due to delays in funding approvals and project start date, staff have requested and received approval from MCI for an extension of the project completion to September 2012.

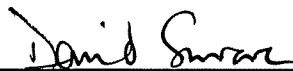
**CONCLUSION**

The purpose of obtaining funding from the MCI for two web portal related projects is to continue implementation of a community-based marketing strategy and to develop an improved governance structure and sustainability plan. The marketing strategy will increase awareness of the web portal as a vital resource to support newcomer integration into Peel Region. The sustainability plan will engage key community stakeholders to re-examine and strengthen the web portal project.



Janet Menard  
Commissioner of Human Services

**Approved for Submission:**



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D. Swarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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c. Legislative Services