
DATE: March 15, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **PEEL NEWCOMER STRATEGY GROUP: NEXT STEPS**

FROM: Janet Menard, Commissioner of Human Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Regional Councillor _____ be appointed to represent the Region of Peel on the new Central Planning Table for immigration services, as described in the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group document "Report on the Vision of a New Model for Enhancing Newcomer Settlement Services in Peel", dated June 10, 2010, as highlighted in the report of the Commissioner of Human Services, dated March 15, 2011, titled "Peel Newcomer Strategy Group: Next Steps".

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 2007, the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) has brought together a full range of stakeholders in Peel as representatives on a steering committee co-chaired by the CEO of the United Way of Peel and the Commissioner of Human Services to inform the redesign of the delivery of services to newcomers and immigrants.
- A full report on the new model, informed by extensive research, was released June 16, 2010, at a workshop at the Mississauga Convention Centre. The event was attended by 120 stakeholders including newcomers, service providers, all Levels of government and community development organizations.
- Six working groups met in 2010 to develop recommendations and to plan for the implementation of the key components of this model.
- Funding for PNSG has come from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) under an agreement that has been administered by the United Way of Peel.
- The Department of Human Services seconded a project manager in July 2010, to lead the implementation phase of the process.
- A new Central Planning Table will be a key component of the model and will benefit from strong municipal political representation to assist with achieving the community's vision for newcomers in Peel.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) was formed in response to the vision that emerged from a community meeting of immigrant-serving organizations held in February

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2006, *"The successful inclusion of newcomers into all aspects of the community, embracing everyone's contribution and ensuring well-being for all."*

A collaborative steering committee then began meeting monthly and in 2007, received funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to hire staff to conduct the research and consultations that have now resulted in the outline of a new model for enhancing newcomer settlement services in Peel. PNSG was publicly launched in January 2008.

The PNSG Steering Committee, co-chaired by the CEO of the United Way Peel and the Region of Peel Commissioner of Human Services, has wide representation that includes:

- Peel Regional Police,
- Mississauga and Brampton Boards of Trade,
- Brampton and Mississauga District Labour Council,
- Peel Halton Workforce Development Group, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (federal government),
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ontario government),
- Service Canada,
- Ontario Ministry of Training,
- Colleges and Universities,
- Sheridan College,
- University of Toronto at Mississauga,
- Peel District School Board,
- Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board,
- The Centre for Education and Training,
- Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council,
- Social Planning Council of Peel, and
- College of Family Physicians of Canada.

The settlement sector is being represented on the committee by:

- Dixie Bloor Neighborhood Centre,
- Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services,
- Newcomer Centre of Peel,
- Peel Multicultural Council and Catholic Cross-Cultural Services.

PNSG staff conducted extensive research into the needs, distribution and makeup of the immigrant population in Peel, supported actively by Planning staff at the Region of Peel and the Social Planning Council of Peel. This research was complemented by a series of three immigration projects commissioned by the Human Services Department at the Region of Peel as follows:

- A series of discussion papers, now published on the Region's internet site, on the social, health and service needs and assets of immigrants;
- The Peel Immigration Labour Market Study, also published on the Region's web site (<http://www.peelregion.ca/social-services/spec-inits.htm#immigrants>); and
- The Peel Immigration Web portal (www.ImmigrationPeel.ca), which provides timely and accessible information to newcomers both before and after their arrival in Peel.

Further to the research, PNSG consulted with over 200 stakeholders to increase the community's understanding of the challenges and identify opportunities and solutions specific to immigrants residing in Peel Region and their successful integration. Based on the research and stakeholder consultations, PNSG identified five key areas of concern and the

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challenges they create for newcomers as they experience the settlement process. These challenges are as follows:

- Newcomers have difficulty navigating the settlement services system;
- Service providers and newcomers think current services are not provided in ways that make them accessible and usable for many newcomers;
- Newcomers find the current settlement services difficult to access due to a variety of barriers;
- Newcomers continue to face high rates of unemployment and underemployment;
- Newcomers often experience difficulty with settlement and integration that is rooted in systemic barriers and bias.

2. Findings

The findings of both the research and stakeholder consultations were combined in a report entitled "Newcomer Settlement and Inclusion in Peel: Building on Existing Assets" that was launched at a widely attended workshop at the Mississauga Convention Centre on June 16, 2010. The event was attended by 120 stakeholders including newcomers, service providers, all levels of government and community development organizations.

Coming out of the stakeholder consultations four strategic priorities were identified as follows:

- Strengthen service coordination and planning across Peel;
- Ensure accessible, client-centered services for all newcomers;
- Create a continuum of effective employment strategies; and
- Enhance the receptivity of the host community.

Further to which, PNSG developed a model comprised of the following elements for implementation:

- Community hubs and neighbourhood networks – to ensure access to a full range of services in the neighbourhoods where newcomers live;
- Existing diverse and specialized services – to build on the many specialized service assets that already exist;
- No wrong door approach – weaving a network that connects newcomers seamlessly to services;
- Central planning table – to ensure coordinated national planning and adequate resourcing of services;
- Employment and career development – to connect skilled immigrants to jobs that fully utilize their abilities;
- New product development – to ensure services continue to evolve with the changing needs of immigrants; and
- Case management system – to provide consistent guidance through the settlement process for immigrants and their families.

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In the report "Newcomer Settlement and Inclusion in Peel: Building on Existing Assets", the following areas of Peel (where immigrant populations are largely concentrated) were recommended for the establishment of community hubs/networks:

- Springdale
- Bramalea
- Central Brampton
- Meadowvale
- Cooksville/Mississauga City Centre
- Clarkson/Erin Mills
- Streetsville
- Malton
- Dixie-Bloor
- Caledon

These 10 sites are potential locations for piloting Peel's version of the networks/hubs. The decision and process to determine the actual pilot sites will be part of the implementation planning. To support the implementation, PNSG has secured funding for the fiscal year 2011-2012 from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation and United Way of Peel, in the respective amounts of \$303,875, \$70,000 and \$30,000.

The full report on the vision of the new model for enhancing newcomer settlement services in Peel can be found on the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group web site at:

<http://www.peelnewcomer.org/images/stories/Articles/the-vision-of-a-new-model-report-final-june-14-2010.pdf>

A promising development is that the locally based planning process pioneered in Peel is being emulated now across Ontario, with support from both the federal and provincial governments, under a new program called Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPS). More than 40 LIPS now exist across Ontario and PNSG is the only LIP in Peel. Peel is enriched by the degree of leadership that is coming from the community, and in particular the United Way, in this planning process.

3. Proposed Direction

The six working groups that met in 2010 developed specific recommendations and action plans in each of the following areas:

- Community Networks/Hub Development;
- Employer Engagement;
- Assessment, intake and Referral System/Case Management System;
- Informal Services Network;
- Host Community Receptivity; and
- Communication and Community Engagement Plan.

The Strategy Implementation Action Plan (SIAP) is to be implemented over three years. The first phase will be implemented over the period April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.

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The (SIAP) is designed to affect changes towards achieving the following outcomes:

- a coordinated, streamlined assessment, intake and case management process that results in seamless services for newcomers;
- increased capacity of informal service providers to advise newcomer clients about the range of community services;
- engaged senior business leaders that will champion the issue and available solutions/opportunities;
- key stakeholders to have developed a diversity and inclusion policy and practices that respects differences;
- employer awareness of the benefits of hiring skilled immigrants and how to access skills immigrants talent pool to fulfill their labour force needs;
- a regional model for sharing with others as effective practice for newcomer integration;
- stronger and resilient neighbourhoods and communities; and
- engaged and involved community.

One key objective of the SIAP is the establishment a Result Based Accountability (RBA) evaluation framework to measure the status of newcomer settlement and labour market integration - outcomes and community impact. The RBA framework is proposed to incorporate key indicators, benchmarks and evaluation baseline to assess success in the following areas:

- Measurable reduction in rates of low income among recent immigrants in Peel, and enhancement of employers' access to the incoming talent pool, through improved and expedited matching to appropriate job placements for newcomers;
- A report card template that captures operational data and population data to inform impact to newcomers' settlement and labour market outcomes;
- Peel Region is recognized as a welcoming community for all residents;
- Newcomer's report high levels of service satisfaction in accessing settlement and integration services in Peel;
- Reduction in the length of time newcomers take to feel settle.

This process is being led by Laureen Rennie who is the project manager for the Peel Immigration Labour Market Study and has been seconded from the Region of Peel to PNSG to serve as Director.

Further, staff is proposing that a member of Regional Council be represented on the new Central Planning Table for immigration services. This will strengthen PNSG's capacity to better align its work with the needs of newcomers and the local labour market and elevate the requirements for addressing these needs to the higher tiers of government.

CONCLUSION

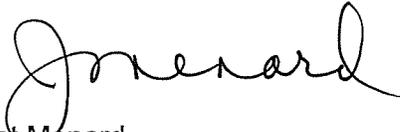
Peel's community partners around the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group table have developed a coherent vision for a comprehensive system of services to newcomers and are working to advance the model to the planning and implementation phases.

Sustainable funding for an ongoing planning table in Peel will continue to be in question until a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement is signed. PNSG partners and staff are continuing to seek multiple funding sources for the sustainable future of a planned community-based service model for Peel.

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Advocacy for the continuation of this vital planning process will be essential in the coming months, and hence, the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is asking for Council representation on the proposed new Central Planning Table. This will provide an opportunity to further connect the work of PNSG with the needs of newcomers and the local labour market and communicate to the Federal and Provincial governments the requirements for addressing these needs.



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Commissioner of Human Services

Approved for Submission:



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