



County of Simcoe
Social and Community Services
Children & Community Services
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MINUTES

MEETING DATE: 9/28/2012

MEETING TIME: 1:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Douglas, L. (LIP, recording secretary); Gavarre, N. (City of Barrie); Laycock, S. (SMWDB); Lee, S. (LIP); Oosterbaan, C. (Chair, County of Simcoe); Plaxton Smith, T. (Greater Barrie Business Enterprise Centre); Wisken, R. (LIP)
Regrets: Benedetti, C. (Orillia Area Community Development Corp); Dorsey, A. (Barrie Public Library); Kouassi, C. (CCO); Landy, D. (City of Orillia); Terrance, M. (Social Enterprise for Canada)

SUBJECT: Business Development Sub-council Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members to today's meeting.

2. LIP Updates

R. Wisken provided a brief overview of LIP activities:

- Settlement Strategy Launch: The Community Settlement Strategy launch will take place on October 17, 2012, at 1:00 p.m., at the Mady Centre for Performing Arts in Barrie.
- Portal: I. Pozgaj has been hired as the MIIO Program Coordinator. Community Information Sessions on the development of the immigration website will be arranged in 5 different areas of the County and are expected to begin in late October. The portal can serve as a useful tool in promoting business development opportunities.
- Immigrant Directory. The working group on the Immigrant Resource Directory continues. The Employment section is currently being developed and work on this section is expected to wrap up in mid-October.
- LIP Sub-councils:
 - Education:* The Education Sub-council meets on a regular basis and is reassessing its priorities. The Sub-council suggested newcomers be represented on the sub-council and a member of the Barrie & Area Chinese Association has agreed to sit on the Sub-council.
 - Employment:* There are 4 active working groups within this Sub-council: employer education, newcomer education, professional development for front-line workers, and an Immigrant Employment Council (IEC). Allies Canada is no longer able to fund the development of IECs, and alternate funding resources will be explored.
 - Human Services:* Robert Hickey, Executive Director, Catholic Community Services of York Region, was a guest speaker at the last meeting who spoke on the changes in their services to accommodate settlement. This sub-council has established 2 priorities: to develop a framework for translation/interpretation services; and develop a best practices conference.
 - Welcoming Communities:* This was the most active sub-council over the summer. One of their main priorities revolves around the development of the public education framework, which will tentatively be presented to the Partnership Council by late fall.

3. MBD Report

Members were invited to discuss the goals and recommended actions as outlined in the “Opportunity” section of the draft Millier Dickinson Blais (MDB) report: Attract Immigrants to the Simcoe County Area to meet Labour Force Needs and increase economic opportunities.

#1 Develop an employer education program that provides information about the benefits of hiring newcomer employees and encourage local employers to post employment vacancies/ opportunities on the immigrant portal website:

- spread the word through partners
- marketing piece – giving packages to those who are hiring → employment resource centres might find this helpful as well
- challenge to get employers to attend information workshops
- send out information to employers on twitter or Facebook

#2 Implement a multi-pronged multicultural ethnic media campaign in Greater Toronto area to attract immigrants to the Simcoe County area

- good idea
- would attract IEP (internationally educated professionals) individuals
- showcase community and entrepreneurship opportunities
- Field trips to community
- Link into professional networks
- Attend IEP conference → lifestyle piece from County – could be available in booth

#3 Establish an immigrant entrepreneurship connections program

- interesting
- not necessarily limited to newcomers
- Creation of a mentorship transition program
- CAFÉ – Canadian Association of Family Enterprise → for family members do not want to take over business → Central Ontario Chapter → may be good for mentorship
- Put roster of services together to foster this, i.e. real estate, succession planning, bank, etc.
- Approach Ministry → present idea to move forward – Dave Aldersey, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development
- Matching service
- Core type of business that would be interested in connections
- Natural fit for business class and those who work in business. Specific needs of newcomers – comfort level.
- Advertising on Portal → are you looking to invest in business?
- Develop quarterly workshops about operating a business in Canada. Use newcomer business people to present workshops on legalities, etc.
- Problems when immigrants arrive and unsure about type of business to start → Disconnect as they may not have the right skills – homework/research needed before they come in → struggle with basic issues of relocation.

#4 Provide informational seminars on the educational systems of a number of countries to better inform employers of foreign credentials and the level of professional skills and abilities immigrants offer

- Interesting but daunting → many different countries – employers may not be interested. Could narrow it down to identification of where majority coming from → most common 3-4 languages
- Consult with other areas to see what they have done. Share the package or information.

#5 Link newcomers to available resources for starting a new business and bridging their credentials to Canadian standards

- Ensuring that newcomers have the necessary tools to start business
- Identify what it is that is missing
- Make sure they are a good fit in the area of business interest
- Ministry has funding for translation of information sheets → scaling away from hard copies
- Necessary to understand business language, government language.
- Use of portals

#6 *Assist immigrant business owners with growing their business*

- Fairly easy
- Government expertise should be available to provide workshops
- Finding right person who has the information that newcomers could absorb
- Value in having someone that can relate to audience → someone who has gone through system → use local success stories → been there, done that.

#7 *Advocate to lending institutions and the CFDSs to adjust the requirements for accessing financial services to better reflect the barriers faced by newcomers*

- How relevant?
- Bank accommodates those with the money such as the business class
- Have trouble with immigrants starting business who would not have the money → if they are looking for government assisted funding
- Stage of newcomers might make a difference
- Credit history is a problem for everyone
- Bank-controlled

It was agreed by Sub-council members that a recommendation cannot be made to move forward with this action item.

#8 *Analyze local demographic, labour market and economic trends across Simcoe County*

- Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board (SMWDB) & County of Simcoe are doing this right now.

4. Develop Sub-council Priorities

There was limited discussion on developing priorities for the Sub-council. Food-for-thought included:

- Informing employers, providing seminars (item #3 above)
- Survey of businesses necessary – what works, areas of priority; failures; successes
- Identify barriers – consult with other enterprise centers who have worked with high immigrant populations
- Arrange guest speakers → Terri has network who could assist with this
- Do we have right people at table?
 - reviewed current membership
 - CFDC in Collingwood – has close ties west
 - Enterprise Resource Centres
 - Chambers representation → networking is important for newcomers
 - immigrant entrepreneur to sit on sub-council → possible honorarium
 - South Simcoe business links (Chair)

5. Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Sub-council is scheduled for November 2, 2012, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., at the County of Simcoe Administration Centre. T. Plaxton Smith offered to arrange for a speaker from another enterprise centre for an upcoming meeting.