



County of Simcoe
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MINUTES

MEETING DATE: April 26, 2012

MEETING TIME: 9:00 a.m - 11:30 a.m., County of Simcoe Administration Centre

ATTENDANCE: Black, B. (Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board); Boulanger, F. (College Boreal); Cuthbertson, R. (Welcome Centre – Newmarket); Douglas, L. (LIP, recording secretary); Gavarre, N. (City of Barrie); Hie, H. (Georgian Employment Service); Holt, R. (LIP); Hoysa, B. (Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities); Lewis, I. (bradford WORKS); Low, K. (Northern Lights); Pacheco, D. (TRACKS); Scott, K. (County of Simcoe); Whittington, P. (Georgian College; Chair); Woodrow, L. (Barrie Career Centre)
Regrets: Skybin, Y. (YMCA Newcomer Services); Terrance, M. (Social Enterprise for Canada)

SUBJECT: Employment Sub-Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the sub-council, and members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Notes of Meeting of March 29, 2012

The Chair provided a quick overview of the notes of the meeting of March 29. There were no questions or comments arising from the notes.

3. Best Practices Presentation & Case Studies

Ruth Millar, YMCA Newcomer Services

- Settlement agency
- Funded by CIC & MCI
- 400 clients per year serviced
- Refugees, convention refugees, permanent residents, typically newcomers 3-5 years, free
- Language instruction for newcomers (LINC) for those eligible
- Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment
- Child care provided for those in language classes
- Settlement services (info, accessing services assistance, referrals, coordination with other agencies)
- Government document assistance and information
- Community orientation (schools, health care, transportation, housing)
- Referrals to social services agencies, translation of documents (i.e. educational)
- Legal services (legal advocates at shelters, refugee lawyers & services in Toronto)
- Employment services (resume, access to professions and trade and referrals to ERCs)
- Life skills.

The floor was opened to questions. Questions arose on staffing, financial support, wait lists, and budget cuts. A copy of this presentation will be circulated to the sub-council.

It was suggested that a presentation on the different residency categories be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

R. Holt provided a quick overview of the recently-held focus groups on employers, including the top employers in Simcoe County. Smaller businesses did not appear concerned with employer needs at this time; however, the top employers were more receptive to newcomer employment but indicated time commitment and the integration of the newcomer into the workplace were 2 factors to be considered.

4. Update on the Working Group on Establishing an IEC

The working group provided the following update on their activities:

- Consider a 2 prong approach → what can be provided to the employer; and provide support and awareness to the smaller businesses
- Come up with a consistent message with what an IEC can do
- Mentoring programs (i.e. mentorship previously ran in York);
- resources to implement program into their place of business;
- build successes with larger employers and broaden it to medium and small size business
- Identify a champion in each community – local business (small or large), teacher → powerful tool
- ALLIES suggested that champions be on board before moving ahead.

Sub-council members suggested the following be considered:

- geographic working groups
- Community specific - dynamics of community different
- Build small businesses through small business enterprise (partnerships)
- Do testimonials of local businesses that have hired newcomers, preferably small and medium sized businesses, not a time consuming venture – use as promotional piece
- The difficulty in getting a time commitment from employers
- What do we want to do now?
- Synergy between economic development officers
- What works in our community?
- personal approach
- carry a message forward to meetings that we attend o
- Arrange a separate meeting or PowerPoint presentation
- Get municipalities, EDOs, chambers to the table
- Promote newcomers as the investors of business.

Testimonials

- Start using testimonials as we go out into the community
- Use newsletter to include testimonials → let Rosemary know of businesses
- Use public or private business testimonials → provide variety
- Will help employers to see the benefit of hiring internationally trained staff.

The IEC will consider these points and report back to the sub-council. A framework and consistent message for delivery to external stakeholders will be developed by the next meeting.

5. Moving Forward with Employment Working Groups

The Chair recalled the 3 Employment working groups: professional development, employer education, and newcomer education. A call went out to sub-council members requesting membership from front line workers, and to date there are 4-5 members in each working group. P. Whittington, R. Holt and H. Hie will each attend one of the first meetings to assist in setting the guidelines.

Consideration will be given to the possible overlap of the IEC and employer education working groups.

6. Other Business

P. Whittington joined the Georgian College Barrie Campus Community Advisory Committee. An area of focus for the advisory group is the recruitment of international students, which has generated a lot of interest from employers.

K. Low reported that the Regional Labour Market Survey was launched on April 10 and will run to April 27th, although the deadline may be extended by one week. There are 20 questions in the survey, which includes questions on skill shortages, why employers don't hire, reasons for the choices made, etc. The top 100 employers in Simcoe County have been contacted, and follow-up personal contact will be made with the communities who have not yet responded. The final report of the study will be made available to all employers who participated. Members were encouraged to promote the survey to their employer contacts.

7. Next Meeting

The May 24th meeting will be cancelled to allow the working groups to meet and report back to the sub-council. The next meeting is scheduled on June 28th. CIC will be contacted to do a presentation on the different categories of immigrants at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked R. Holt for her role and commitment to the sub-council, and wished her the best during her leave.