



County of Simcoe
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MINUTES

MEETING DATE: February 23, 2012

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

ATTENDANCE: Black, B. (Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board); Cuthbertson, R. (Welcome Centre – Newmarket); Douglas, L. (LIP, recording secretary); Hie, H. (Georgian Employment Service); Holt, R. (LIP); Gamache, G (La Clé d’la Baie); Hoysa, B. (Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities); Lewis, I. (bradford WORKS); Pacheco, D. (TRACKS); Scott, K. (County of Simcoe); Whittington, P. (Georgian College; Chair); Zeng, M. (Barrie Chinese Community Association)
Regrets: Brown, D. (Social Enterprise for Canada); Low, K. (Northern Lights); MacEachern, M. (FOCUS); Newell, D. (Northern Lights); Persaud, C. (Turning Points); Plewes, S. (Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board); Schlicter, S. (City of Barrie); Smith, T.P. (Greater Barrie Business Enterprise Centre); 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 January 19, 2012

The Chair provided a quick overview of the notes from the last meeting.

3. Best Practices Presentations

Rachel Cuthbertson, Mobile Unit, Welcome Centre Immigrant Services, provided a Power Point presentation on the Mobile Unit Services, including how the mobile unit works, their presence in the York and Simcoe County regions, the makeup of the unit (staff and the “one trusted person” model), goals of providing settlement and integration services, what they do (travel to remote areas, needs assessment, case management, employment, accreditation, child minding, service Canada), technology – Tandberg technology (allows remote contact, videoconferencing, possible language classes in future), and referrals (when and who to refer and how).

Best practices for the Unit include being responsive to the needs of the client, providing an opportunity to talk to the client, flexibility of meeting the client, collaboration, conducting research, and making referrals locally when possible. R. Cuthbertson explained the concept of the “one trusted person” model, which is every employee of welcome centre is trained to be a case manager, thereby wearing 2 hats – program hat (settlement) and case management hat (assessing needs of client). The case manager ensures the client goes to all appointments needed and provides the client with the same contact at Welcome Centre.

She expanded on their accreditation qualification information services, referral action plan, credential assessment referrals, conducting extensive research on behalf of client, portfolio creation program, looking at opportunities for client and providing options to the client.

Gyslain Gamache, Le Clé d'la Baie en Huronie, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Transition au Travail Program offered to 18-30 year olds, including their objectives, length of program, success for participants (obtaining employment, educational opportunities, self-confidence), success for employers (advantages of providing work experience, benefits to the economy, community awareness), criteria for participants and employers, workshop content (orientation/self-evaluation/nutrition/self-esteem/self-discovery), subsidies (8 week workshops, allowance of \$10.25 for 30 hrs/week), establishing goals, developing skills (organizational, computer, time management); resources for job searching (labour market info, networking, mock interviews, job search techniques); employment (communication/team building), and extracurricular activities (sports – team building).

Gyslain noted that new immigrants are welcomed in the program, and the program is delivered in Barrie and in French. The program starts in July with groups of 8-10 participants.

Copies of both presentations will be circulated to members.

4. Serving the employment needs of the immigrant population

R. Holt raised the questions of what skills do agencies have to serve immigrants, including those who might have higher education or specialized degrees and is more education needed for staff development?

Responses included:

- Several noted that more staff development needed
- Cultural Competency training needed → for service providers, employers
- Staff may not be able to recognize that they are not meeting needs of immigrant client
- Service providers need to adapt
- may not have time to do intensive cultural training
- Service provider is perceived to be the authority – newcomer does not want to diffuse this notion
- Opening Doors style workshops on improving employment outcomes for newcomers
- Professional development important
- Workshops on accreditation
- Research component → possibly identify the gaps from previous research (i.e. Opening Doors Research Study, funded by Employment Ontario)

5. Priorities for Working Group on Establishing an IEC

The following members expressed interest in participating on the working group on establishing an IEC:

- R. Cuthbertson/M. Terrance, Mobile Unit, Welcome Centre Immigrant Services;
- H. Hie, Georgian College;
- D. Newell, Northern Lights.

Priorities for Working Group:

- Establish time for working group to meet
- Establish timeframe for working group
- Conduct an environmental scan → is more needed?
- Examine literature out there, what's happening in Simcoe, focus groups, labour market survey through Ontario Works, United Way, etc.
- Identify gaps and then proceed to feasibility study if needed

- Needs analysis required
- Move into phase I – evaluate items outlined in Phase I
- Secure funding for feasibility study

Action Items

- Working Group set meeting for March 13, 11:00 a.m., Centre for Career and Employment Services, 48 Collier Street, Barrie.
- R. Holt will contact ALLIES on possible funding for feasibility study or other support if group decides to move forward.
- Provide update to sub-council at each meeting.

6. Next Steps

The following 3 areas were identified by the sub-council as important areas to move forward and establish working groups on:

1. Professional development
2. Employer education
3. Immigrant/Newcomer Education.

Professional development group

- Accreditation pathway process
- Cultural competency training

Employer education group

- Benefits of hiring newcomers
- Educate the employer
- Limited training for employment services
- more connections with employers/mentoring programs – LIP Business Development Sub-council

Immigrant/Newcomer group

- Canadian workplace culture training
- Immigrant education – offer workshops in service provider agencies targeted at the newcomer
- Definition of newcomer – up to 3 years after arrival

Priorities for Working Groups

- Establish timeline for each working group
- Establish makeup of working group
- Research what's out there
- Plan an event in each of the 3 identified areas.

Action Items:

- Service providers will solicit front line workers to participate on the working group
- Working group will be chaired by sub-council member & will be self-managing
- Working group will determine timeframe of meetings
- Each working group will plan an event for the fall – late September/early October
- Immigrant Education - short-term group – 2-3 meetings at most (M. Zeng has volunteered to participate in this working group.)

7. Other Business

R. Holt updated the sub-council on upcoming LIP focus groups, including 8 employer, 3 newcomer and 1 ethno-cultural focus group. The information will be forwarded to the sub-council members with a request to distribute to employer connections. Flyers on the focus groups will also be distributed through Chamber of Commerce networks.

H. Hie recently attended the Internationally Educated Professionals Conference in Toronto, which included effective cross-section panel discussions and excellent speakers. The names of the speakers will be forwarded to LIP.

K. Scott announced that Ontario Works will be participating in a teleconference on foreign-trained professionals on March 26 and will provide an update to the sub-council at the next meeting.

P. Whittington noted that there are new guidelines in place for literacy/language assessment if born outside Canada, which may result in possible ineligibility for the program at Georgian in the future.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 29, 2012, 2:00 – 4:30 p.m., at the County Administration Centre.