



Committee Report

To: Councillor Steve Hammell, Chair and
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Mark Paoli
Director of Planning and Development

Date: April 21, 2022

Re: Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Update

Staff Recommendation:

The “Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Update” report is for information.

Background:

The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to enable community-based partnerships to support the unique needs of newcomers in the region. By working in partnership, leveraging existing resources, and sharing best practices, GBLIP addresses gaps in the Grey Bruce region, allowing partners to deliver responsive and coordinated services. In addition, this work supports and fosters multiple partnerships to deliver attraction and retention programming for newcomers and works towards addressing labour issues regionally.

The GBLIP is led by its Partnership Council which brings together community partners from different sectors invested in the successful integration of newcomers that support welcoming and inclusive communities. Attraction begins with identifying and facilitating opportunity, moves to retention and ends when individuals feel a part of a community. It is with this in mind that the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership is built on. This partnership works to build capacity, strengthen community, cultivate prosperity, and foster inclusion.

Summary:

Since its inception in April 2020, GBLIP has established the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Council comprising of over 50 members from over 40 organizations across Grey and Bruce. The GBLIP Partnership Council supported by GBLIP staff and Grey and Bruce Counties economic development staff has developed and launched a brand and key messaging toolkit and a Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy 2025 (the Strategy). The Council is working towards the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategy, which was approved by IRCC and endorsed by Grey and Bruce Counties in 2021.

The three sub-committees identified through the Strategy are now in place, allowing for a more focused approach to execute the actions outlined within the strategy:

1. Employer Sub-Committee

This committee is planning a virtual employer roundtable for April 2022 to connect employers and service providers to better understand current practices and challenges in hiring and integrating immigrants/newcomers into the workforce. The goal is to create an employer network, highlighting employment success stories, developing educational campaigns, and encourage inclusive hiring practices that support attraction and retention efforts across the region. This network aims to provide a voice to newcomer educational challenges such as credential recognition and apprenticeship opportunities.

2. Belong Sub-Committee

This committee is working towards recognizing multicultural festivals and events and aims to better understand the cultural and ethnic groups in Grey and Bruce. A calendar of local festivals/cultural days is being created to recognize and celebrate special events with added education and context for the broader community. There is also interest in reviewing a relaunch of the “Welcome Wagon” to provide local information and welcome gifts to newcomers.

3. Community Sub-Committee

This committee is working on developing a print-on-demand Welcome Package for distribution by municipalities as newcomers arrive in the area. The Welcome Package contains general information about living in Grey and Bruce, and provides space for municipalities to enter information specific to their location (i.e., garbage collection, community centers, municipal services, banking, schooling, grocery, health care and transit services, etc.)

Some of the other initiatives currently in progress are described below.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) Training

GBLIP is partnering with local organizations, employers, and municipal leaders to provide training and education to expand knowledge of JEDI and introduce this practice into policies, processes, and everyday work and life. This training has various components:

- a) Diversity Dialogues are being held with municipal leaders to strengthen community capacity and understanding around JEDI. Engaging all municipalities will build the foundation for a collaborative approach to cultivating inclusive and equitable cultures within organizations and communities.
- b) In partnership with the Nuclear Innovation Institute and Municipal Innovation Council, training sessions are being offered to municipal staff across Grey and Bruce Counties to learn about and understand equity in practice, using inclusive language, and promoting inclusive communities.
- c) Small Business Inclusive Workforce Policy Development workshop is being hosted in partnership with Grey and Bruce Small Business Enterprise Centres to guide business owners and HR staff through the development process to create an inclusive workforce policy.

Train the Trainer Project

The purpose of the Train the Trainer project is to create facilitated workshops on JEDI with region-specific content delivered by local residents. Local residents are being trained for this inaugural project, representing a diverse array of identities, experiences, and perspectives, including people who are newcomers, immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and indigenous communities, among other diverse identities.

With the guidance and training from the consultant, these “trainees” will be equipped with the knowledge and resources to deliver workshops to partners, employers, and other local groups through 2022 and 2023. A training manual will also be developed to allow for more local JEDI trainers to deliver workshops across the region.

Experiences of Discrimination in Grey Bruce: A Survey

GBLIP partnered with the University of Western Ontario in launching an “Experiences of Discrimination in Grey Bruce: A Survey” in mid-March to understand the experiences of discrimination in Grey and Bruce Counties. The study focuses on new immigrant/visible minorities, Indigenous people, and local white non-immigrants, who will be asked about any discrimination they may have experienced. Once the data is collected, focus groups will be established in Grey and Bruce to further understand the experienced racial discrimination.

This will give an opportunity to self-reflect and work towards having a better understanding and make a positive change to create a more inclusive community where everyone feels they belong. The results will inform the ongoing efforts to educate and support the community in welcoming new immigrants and newcomers to live and work in Grey and Bruce.

GBLIP Accomplishments

Since the endorsement of the strategy in April 2021, the following have been achieved:

1. Community Dialogues and Outreach Efforts

Staff participated and presented in various events organized by partner members to share priorities and find ways to collaborate in achieving the collective goal of a welcoming community. This includes but not limited to Community partners Rural Pathways for Newcomer Women and the Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce, Grey Bruce Newcomer and Immigrant Women’s Collective, Grey Bruce Child & Family Services. GBLIP hosted a workshop on Afghan Refugee Resettlement for local volunteers, settlement workers, and English teachers working directly with Afghan arrivals.

2. Website Launch

The website, www.greybrucelip.ca was launched and includes information about national multicultural events on the “Educate & Celebrate” calendar; partner organizations on the “Service Map,” and resources for newcomers and employers under “Resources”, “News & Events” is used to promote virtual events.

3. Southwestern Ontario LIP community partnership (SWOLIP)

GBLIP is part of the national LIP network and is actively involved with the Southwestern Ontario LIP community partnership. Contribution to this group allows staff to collaborate and share best practices/challenges within the region, benefiting greatly from dialogue with other rural LIPs. GBLIP has connected a local employer to be featured in a Southwestern webinar on 'Newcomer Talent for Future Success'. Also, developed a coordinated program for Welcoming Week in September 2021, organized a consultation on supporting refugee resettlement within the housing sector, and a positive messaging campaign for immigrants or Afghan refugees to showcase rural Ontario.

Conclusion:

Over the next three years, GBLIP will endeavor to contributing to a prosperous and welcoming Grey Bruce - moving beyond settlement to inclusion. As a desired outcome, the region will be able to strengthen its position to attract newcomers and address labour force challenges felt across sectors by local businesses. The Grey-Bruce Local Immigration Strategy 2025 and its corresponding actions will help build a stronger regional economy.

Attraction, integration, and retention of newcomers continues to be a priority across Grey and Bruce as workforce challenges continue. GBLIP complements the broader economic development portfolio and works in collaboration with stakeholders to provide strategic and specific supports benefiting all our communities and residents.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

None

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #3 Find creative new ways to engage our public.

Goal #7 Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development

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