



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) Year Four Review

From: Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Date: July 4, 2024

Report Number: CDO-2024-011

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) is a joint initiative between Bruce and Grey Counties, fully funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for five years (2020-2025). The program is positioned to facilitate community-based partnerships that promote integration at the local level and foster more welcoming communities. GBLIP works in partnership to identify and address gaps and opportunities in the region, encouraging local businesses, community partners and service providers to consider newcomers' needs related to access, coordination, and programming. The purpose of this report is to provide a review of projects and initiatives undertaken in year four.

Background:

As the result of critical gaps being identified in the local labour force, municipalities and community partners are taking on a greater role in planning for and guiding immigration and settlement. In addition to the development of workforce and resident attraction strategies, retention is a key concern for our region given the reality that entire families need to feel welcomed for workers to stay.

To help and lead in this work, GBLIP works closely with its Partnership Council, bringing together more than 67 community partners and organizations, including all 17 member municipalities in both Bruce and Grey counties. The Partnership Council members collaborate on newcomer-focused initiatives, including coordination of services, community research, planning, and other activities that support welcoming communities. The partnership works to build capacity, strengthen community, cultivate prosperity, and foster inclusion.

The Partnership Council, coordinated by GBLIP staff, is responsible for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Settlement Strategy (attached), endorsed by both Grey and Bruce Counties and approved by IRCC in 2021. The Partnership Council meets quarterly, with subcommittee meetings monthly and bi-monthly, enabling organizations to coordinate and work collaboratively to achieve positive cumulative impact.

As part of GBLIPs commitment to regional continuous improvement, members now benefit from two learning opportunities each meeting. These learning opportunities include guest speakers to share lived experience and professional development to foster inclusive leadership. The intention is that members (municipal and organization staff) can take their learnings back to the organizations they represent, and further utilize their knowledge to carry out more focused work through the subcommittees.

The three subcommittees identified through the strategic plan have continued to be active in year four of operation, providing a forum to focus more specifically on action items. The following outlines a few of the key priorities addressed in year four of the five-year program.

Employment Subcommittee

- A [video](#) was created to introduce the Newcomer Readiness Assessment Checklist developed by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus.
- An [Employer Resources page](#) was created on the GBLIP website and QR code postcards were developed to promote the Employer Resources page.
- [#ImmigrantsWork program](#). In conjunction with World Education Services this ongoing work is anticipated to be completed by November 2024. Four main deliverables outlined below will be aimed at local employers looking to fill open positions.
 - 1) Communications Campaign: successfully launched in March 2024
 - 2) Video Series: Filming is done, and videos will be ready by end of July
 - 3) Training Module
 - 4) Employer Navigator

Belong Subcommittee

- Members contributed to development of the **Immigrant Survey**
- Members developed and began populating **Cultural Calendar** on the GBLIP [website](#).
- **Welcoming Week**: Week took place from September 8 to September 17. As in the previous two years, GBLIP encouraged its Council members and community stakeholders to organize events and activities that foster connections between newcomers and residents and align existing activities with the objectives of Welcoming Week. These events were promoted on the [GBLIP website](#). Some instances include a Welcome Week display at public libraries, free admission at the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, a Kincardine Welcoming Meet & Greet, Hanover Free Public Skate, an Owen Sound Police Open House & Information Night for Newcomers, and Settlement Services Citizenship Trivia.
- Additionally, GBLIP launched two **podcast videos**. The first, "[Entrepreneurship](#)," sharing resources for newcomers starting their entrepreneurship journey. The second, "[How Being Welcoming Benefits Economic Development of the Region](#)," included Jacinda Rudolph, EDO Grey County, and Pierre Valley, EDO, Bruce County, who spoke about the economic advantages of being welcoming.

Community Subcommittee

- Created the [Municipal Welcome Packages](#) page on GBLIP website and the page was launched during Welcoming Week. The welcome package contains general information about living in Grey and Bruce and provides space for municipalities to enter local information.
- Created QR code postcards to promote the Municipal Welcome Packages page.

2023/2024 Accomplishments & Current Projects

1. **Conversations for a More Inclusive and Welcoming Community** GBLIP through its Equity Diversity and Inclusion Trainer Project have trained over 340 individuals from more than 50 organizations. This included individuals from service providers, municipalities, non-profits, and community groups. Over 90% of participants rated the training as excellent, particularly valuing the facilitators' personal stories to illustrate concepts like unconscious bias and power and privilege. GBLIP continues to receive numerous requests for training.
2. **#ImmigrantsWork Project:** Grey-Bruce is one of five communities in Canada participating in the World Education Services (WES) #ImmigrantsWork program. In response to the ongoing Canadian labour crisis, WES initiated #ImmigrantsWork to help community partners collaborate with local employers in designing solutions to identify, recruit, hire, and retain local immigrant talent. An employer consultation took place in February, followed by the launch of a Communication Campaign in March that focused on Immigrant Inclusion messaging, along with ongoing marketing and awareness efforts.
3. **First Immigrant Survey 2023** - This survey was launched in October 2023 and the goal was to understand the varied experiences of diverse groups and extract research findings that will inform how service providers, multi-tier government, businesses and the community at large can foster a more welcoming and inclusive space for immigrants and newcomer.
4. **Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) Collaborative Project with GBLIP** - students enrolled in Economic Development program at TMU created a [video](#) for GBLIP that highlights conversations with key stakeholders from the area, emphasizing the program's significance and the vital role of creative collaboration at a local level in bolstering the success of our local economy.
5. **Communications Enhancements** - In March 2024, GBLIP contracted Interkom Inc. to deliver marketing and communications support. The agency is tasked with developing and executing communication and marketing plans that align with GBLIP's goals and objectives, as outlined in the GBLIP Settlement Strategy. The contract has enhanced

the online presence visible to municipalities, partners, and the public. The current contract is in place until funding expiry, March 31, 2025.

6. **Sustainability Funding** - In January of 2024, GBLIP staff in partnership with municipal staff applied to continue funding with IRCC for an additional 5 years. At this time, staff have not heard from IRCC about continued funding but expect that outcomes will occur later in 2024.

Year 5 Projects

Now in the final year of the current funding, GBLIP will embark on a comprehensive evaluation. The primary objective of this evaluation will be to assess the effectiveness, impact, and efficiency of GBLIP's programs and services. Specifically, the evaluation will focus on:

- Assessing the extent to which GBLIP has achieved its stated goals and objectives.
- Identifying strengths and areas for improvement within GBLIP's initiatives.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of GBLIP's strategies in supporting the integration and retention of immigrants in the Grey Bruce region.

In order to further enhance communications GBLIP will work on a video highlighting its first five years. The goal of this will be to effectively communicate the scope and impact of GBLIP's work, engaging and educating the community while promoting the organization's goals and initiatives which is to promote a deeper understanding of immigrant integration issues.

GBLIP will host the **Diversity and Belonging Conference**, first of its kind in our region, scheduled for September 25. The **purpose** of this Conference is to enhance understanding, celebrate diversity, and create an inclusive environment, while offering sponsors opportunities for community engagement and positive brand association. This Conference marks a significant first step towards engaging a diverse range of participants to maximize its impact. By involving various service providers across Grey-Bruce, the conference aims to promote a more inclusive, collaborative, and culturally sensitive approach to their services. This will lead to better outcomes and greater trust within the community. Additionally, it will encourage dialogue, shared learning, and joint efforts to address the diverse needs of the community.

Building Capacity

One of the core goals of a local immigration partnership is to bring together various organizations and individuals to move towards the common goal of making our communities more welcoming. GBLIP is not able to do this on their own and this process requires the support and focus of this diverse group. Now that the start-up phase of GBLIP is complete it gives staff an opportunity to put focused time and resources into building the capacity of others across the region. Year 5 plans include very specific work on understanding where partner organizations are on their own welcoming processes, developing specific plans and

goals and ultimately supporting welcoming not only from GBLIP but through the 67 community partners who represent our broad area.

GBLIP staff will continue to ensure coherence and maintain momentum within Grey-Bruce. As GBLIP matures, new practices, new partnerships and new ways of working together will emerge. GBLIP will continue to systematize initiatives while supporting bridging between settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) and mainstream organizations.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

GBLIP is fully funded by IRCC, and all financial resources are included in the approved budget as per the contribution agreement. This contribution agreement is currently maintained by Grey County and a memorandum of understanding outlines responsibilities of Bruce and Grey County in the partnership.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Staff consulted with Grey County Economic Development as partners in this project.

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

Settlement Strategy

Bruce County Economic Development Strategic Plan

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