



Staff Report to Council - for Direction

Title: Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Community Action Plan & Annual Update

From: Jeff Loney, Director Government Relations

Date: March 19, 2026

Report Number: GR-2026-011

Staff Recommendation:

That the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Community Action Plan 2025-2028 be endorsed.

Report Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of projects and initiatives undertaken to date in fiscal year one (April 2025 to March 2026, FY1), including the development of the 2025-2028 Community Action Plan, and outline projected initiatives for fiscal year two (April 2026 to March 2027, FY2).

Background/Analysis:

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). The partnership was hosted by Grey County for its first term (2019-2025) and is now hosted by Bruce County for its second term (2025-2028). GBLIP works 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 program is positioned to facilitate community-based partnerships that promote integration at the local level and foster more welcoming communities.

GBLIP's mandate supports other work happening in the region intended to fill critical gaps in the local labour force by focusing on newcomer retention and integration to support and supplement existing workforce and resident attraction strategies.

GBLIP convenes a Partnership Council made up of 60+ community partners and organizations, including all member municipalities in both Bruce and Grey Counties. Members collaborate on initiatives involving information sharing, education and training, research, strategic planning, and community events, working collaboratively to build regional capacity in support of the shared goal of growing and sustaining welcoming communities. Members benefit from networking opportunities, professional development, and knowledge sharing.

Community Action Plan 2025-2028

The Community Action Plan 2025-2028 builds on the momentum of GBLIP's first five years and charts a clear path forward through the end of the current agreement in March 2028. The Partnership Council and subcommittees are integral contributors to the development and implementation of the plan shown in Attachment 1 - Community Action Plan 2025-2028.

GBLIP's vision is for Grey Bruce to be a welcoming community with a shared commitment to diversity and belonging. Our mission is to connect and mobilize partners across the region to strengthen local capacity to attract, welcome, and retain newcomers. This work is grounded in values of community, collaboration, equity, inclusion, respect, welcoming, and sustainability.

The plan identifies three strategic priorities that will guide collective action in the coming years:

1. **Fostering Community Collaboration** focuses on strengthening partnerships, improving coordination, and enhancing access to shared tools and information to align resources for maximum impact.
2. **Employer Engagement and Workforce Integration** responds to persistent labour shortages by supporting employers with education, resources, and inclusive practices that help newcomers access meaningful employment and succeed in the workplace.
3. **Welcoming Communities** emphasizes that belonging requires ongoing intention in creating opportunities for connection, challenging misconceptions, and fostering a culture where all residents feel valued and included.

Developed through a participatory process of listening sessions, consultations, and partner input, this Community Action Plan represents a collective commitment to shaping a more inclusive future. Together, GBLIP and its partners will continue building the conditions for newcomers and long-term residents alike to flourish across Grey Bruce.

Accomplishments 2025-2026 (FY1)

Since April 2025 when Bruce County began hosting the partnership, GBLIP staff have undertaken several key initiatives in addition to developing the Community Action Plan:

- Established the Workforce Subcommittee, focused on workforce development
- Established the Connect Subcommittee, focused on social and cultural development
- Hosted webinars facilitated by experts in topics such as immigration law, and the landscape of immigration policies in Canada.
- Provided cultural competency skills training for Partnership Council members

- Onboarded new partners including Elephant Thoughts, Victorian Order of Nurses, and Keystone Child Youth & Family Services
- Re-launched the Positive Messaging Campaign collaboration with Huron and Guelph-Wellington Local Immigration Partnerships
- Developed a communications strategy to facilitate public awareness and engagement
- Launched the second GBLIP Immigrant Experience Survey (2026) with the Research Shop at the University of Guelph

Planned Projects 2026/2027 (FY2)

Building on the success of FY1, GBLIP staff have several key initiatives planned for the second year:

- **Diversity and Belonging Conference, October 2026**
GBLIP will host the second Diversity and Belonging Conference in the region, convening community partners to discuss current issues, trends and research in service delivery and policy development to enhance understanding, support capacity building and celebrate diversity. The first conference was held in September 2024 and received extensive positive feedback from participants.
- **Cultural Competency Training Program Updates**
GBLIP is undertaking a re-design of the training program that was developed in the first term which trained over 340 individuals from more than 50 organizations (e.g. service providers, municipalities, non-profits, and community groups). GBLIP continues to receive numerous requests for training and is currently updating the curriculum to re-launch the program in July 2026.
- **Partner Portal Development**
In collaboration with the Partnership Council, a Partner Portal will be developed to facilitate connection and correspondence between settlement and non-settlement organizations. The portal will be a digital hub designed to cultivate relationships between partners, support integration, and streamline access to resources.
- **Speaker Series**
In response to feedback from GBLIP partners, a Speaker Series will run between 2026-2027 to provide learning opportunities focused on building partner capacity to support immigrant retention in Grey-Bruce. Facilitated by local experts, topics will include immigration law, immigration policy, EDI strategies for economic development, newcomer experiences, truth and reconciliation for newcomers, and more.
- **Continued Work on Communications Strategy**
Specific projects include a public awareness campaign for Welcoming Week in September 2026, a social media strategy, website updates and maintenance, and the continuation of the Positive Messaging Campaign.

- **Research Study with the University of Guelph**
Building on existing research on immigrant experiences of discrimination in Grey-Bruce, a study of anti-immigrant sentiment will be conducted to understand the sources of discriminatory resident attitudes towards newcomers in the region. Findings will inform how service providers, multi-tier government, businesses and community members can foster more welcoming and inclusive spaces for newcomers. GBLIP will draw on the data to support messaging strategies for communications campaigns.
- **Research Collaboration with Huron Local Immigration Partnership**
According to local data, up to 50% of immigrants who initially settle in Huron, Perth, Grey or Bruce Counties leave within five years. National research highlights that immigrants may decide to leave a small or rural community due to a variety of factors. The research will be used to identify the reasons immigrants leave communities in Huron-Perth-Grey-Bruce, which can be used to inform local policies, strategies and actions aimed at enhancing retention efforts.

Strengthening Community Partnerships

A core goal of local immigration partnerships is to bring together settlement and non-settlement organizations in a shared commitment to support immigration retention and integration. Fostering community collaboration is what drives the Community Action Plan, and it is the central focus of all GBLIP processes and projects. Harnessing the collective momentum of our diverse partnership allows us to mobilize innovative solutions to enhance efficiency through collaboration and systemic coordination.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with approval of this report. All activities are funded through an agreement with the federal government through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Not Applicable

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

GBLIP Community Action Plan 2025-2028

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Jeff Loney, Director, Government Relations

Approved for Submission:

Sean Morphy, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Community Action Plan 2025-2028