

Membership of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership Council

Settlement

- Collège Boréal
- Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County
- New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc.
- South Essex Community Council

- Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women
- Women's Enterprise Skills Training Of Windsor Inc.
- YMCA of Windsor and Essex County

Education

- Conseil Scolaire de District Des Écoles Catholiques Du Sud-Ouest
- Greater Essex County District School Board

- Language Assessment Resource Centre
- University of Windsor – Department of Sociology
- Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

Employment-Related

- Leamington District Chamber of Commerce
- Windsor Essex Development Commission

- Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce
- Workforce WindsorEssex

Other Stakeholders

- Essex County Library System
- Mayor's Senior Advisory Committee
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee
- Newcomer Representative
- St .Mary's Family Learning Centre

- Salvation Army Windsor Community and Rehabilitation Centre
- Windsor-Essex Bilingual Clinic
- Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation
- Windsor Essex County Public Health Unit
- Windsor Public Library

Resource Group

- Canada Border Security Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- City of Windsor, Social & Health Services
- County of Essex
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration – Windsor Office

- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration– Regional
- Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- United Way/Centraide of Windsor and Essex County

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Executive Summary

A Community Plan to Promote the Settlement and Integration Of Immigrants In Windsor and Essex County

Local Immigration Partnership

The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is an initiative of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to encourage communities across Ontario to develop comprehensive plans for the delivery of newcomer services. The goals of the Windsor and Essex County LIP initiative included:

- How to improve access to, and coordination of, immigrant services;
- How to improve labour market outcomes for immigrants; and
- How to strengthen local awareness and the capacity to integrate immigrants.

The LIP initiative was not an evaluation of specific agencies or programs. It was a process that examined the whole service delivery system with consideration for how the system could be strengthened to promote the short and long-term settlement and integration of newcomers in Windsor and Essex County.

Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership Council

The City of Windsor signed an agreement with CIC in November 2008 to serve as project manager for the Windsor Essex LIP Initiative. In January 2009 the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership Council was founded to serve as advisory support during the research process and in the development of recommended strategies and action plans. The membership of the Council is diverse and includes stakeholders from 34 organizations including the Settlement, Language Training and Employment-related sectors, as well as mainstream organizations and individuals interested in the enhancement and integration of newcomers.

Research Process

In order to build a foundation, the City of Windsor contracted with a Research Consultant, Dr. Uzo Anucha, to organize and facilitate the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) data collection. The research was conducted between March and October 2009 and had four parts:

- 1) Over 100 stories were submitted by newcomers in which they described their experiences of settling in Windsor and Essex County;
- 2) Twenty (20) focus groups were conducted with 132 newcomers and 47 community stakeholders;
- 3) Ten (10) in-depth interviews were conducted with management of settlement agencies and primary stakeholders; and
- 4) Four half-day public consultations were held and attended by 128 persons. At these sessions, service providers, employers, business, education, health care and immigrants were invited to share their ideas on ways to shape newcomer services in Windsor and Essex County.

Development of Strategies and Action Plans

At the end of the research phase, the Research Consultant submitted a working report to the LIP Council which outlined a series of issues which impact on the delivery of services to immigrants. A summary of those issues is represented in the following chart, "Summary of Key Settlement Issues." These issues were then examined in relation to other research and planning activities, most notably the "Integrated Local Labour Market Plan" created by Workforce WindsorEssex. The examination resulted in the Recommended Strategies and Action Plan, also outlined below which are intended to be the basis for a plan to meet the challenges facing newcomers who settle in Windsor and Essex County and the organizations which strive to meet their needs.



Summary of Key Settlement Issues

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL	PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY LEVEL	SYSTEMIC-LEVEL
Employment 1. Recognition of foreign credentials and experience—the dilemma of “Canadian experience” 2. High cost of licensing exams 3. Immigrants highly vulnerable in the current recession 4. Need for more specific training according to “market requirements”	Accessing Information 1. Need better, more comprehensive information when first arrive 2. Difficult to locate necessities such as hospital, malls, dentist, doctors 3. Information on services for newcomers should be clearer for people outside the settlement sector 4. Information to settle successfully is scarce and hard to find	Current Funding Model Funding Structure 1. Need for core and multi-year funding from CIC for settlement sector to provide consistent, stable service 2. Funding required to increase staff complement and enhance professional development skills of existing staff to manage complex needs of newcomers
Language 1. The importance of learning/improving one’s English as part of the settlement experience/Learning English is necessary 2. The need for English lessons tailored to their occupational field 3. Interpretation/Translation services 4. Language barriers in accessing services (e.g. health care)	Coordination within the Settlement Sector 1. Need for better collaboration, more transparency, trust and less competition within settlement sector 2. Sector agencies should share information and work together to provide and coordinate provision of services 3. Leadership is needed to bring agencies together	Need for Leadership at the Municipal Level 1. Leadership at the municipal level (City and County) to promote benefits of newcomers and diversity in community 2. Leadership in coordinating and sustaining advocacy campaign on importance of settlement services with all levels of Government.
Psycho-Social Issues/Challenges of Integration 1. The difficulties of leaving family/home and adapting to new surroundings 2. Getting used to life in Canada and how things are done here 3. Newcomers at high risk of mental health issues due to social isolation & post traumatic stress 4. “Power shift” occurs between parents and their children as children learn English more quickly 5. Difficult to reach some families e.g. male-dominated households	Change Public Attitudes Towards Immigrants/Newcomers Who Need Understanding and Respect from the Community 1. Reframe how newcomers are portrayed 2. Promote the “success stories” and contributions newcomers bring to the community/Newcomers as an asset 3. Communicate value of diversity and multiculturalism/Address racism/discrimination	Challenges Across the three Levels 1. Access to affordable child-care 2. Shortage of affordable housing 3. Access to transportation 4. Access to health care system: translation/language issues, 3 month waiting period, cultural differences not addressed by system, stigma/lack of awareness re: mental health services.
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES		
Essex County 1. Absence of regional transportation presents challenges for newcomers to access services (such as health care), programs (such as language training or job training) or employment opportunities within Essex County or in Windsor 2. Challenge for agencies to provide services for newcomers in a low-density, rural environment/Difficult to offer more advanced language training with limited number of students	Francophone Services 1. Insufficient services available in Windsor and Essex County for Francophone newcomers even though Canada is officially bilingual 2. Long wait-times and limited choices	Refugee Claimants 1. Immigration system is difficult to navigate and understand/Needs to be more flexible regarding the provision of documentation 2. Stresses of waiting to get status and separation from families 3. Barriers to accessing re-training and educational opportunities



Recommended Settlement Strategies and Action Plans

To achieve the goals of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership initiative, it is recommended:

- 1) That Citizenship and Immigration Canada stabilize funding allocations to Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in Windsor and Essex County;
- 2) That Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and all funders reference the findings of this report as part of their allocation processes;
- 3) That Citizenship and Immigration Canada fund the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Council to continue its work to enhance newcomer services in Windsor and Essex County; and
- 4) That Citizenship and Immigration Canada and all funding partners continue to participate in the Local Immigration Partnership planning process to firmly establish an environment of trust and open communication among all stakeholders.

In order to Improve Access to, and Coordination of, Services for Immigrants, the Windsor Essex LIP Partnership Council recommends the following priorities:

To Meet Individual and Community Challenges

- Promote 211WindsorEssex as the first source for up-to-date local information for newcomers, service providers and all community partners;
 - Plan a coordinated approach for newcomers to receive information and case management regarding all services, including faith-based and cultural networks;
 - Match settlement service capacity to client needs through the use of a continuous quality improvement model of service;
 - Enhance access to language services for immigrants living in Essex County;
- #### To Meet Systemic Challenges
- Apprise the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) of the challenges related to accessing health care services by immigrants and urge the Ministry of Health to address these challenges.

- Advocate with Essex County regional and municipal governments regarding the importance of a public transportation system and county-wide telecommunication to enhance access to services and employment opportunities for immigrants residing in Essex County;
- Enhance capacity to provide qualified and affordable translation and interpretation services; and
- Continue to liaise with Local and Provincial Francophone planning groups to enhance services and employment opportunities for Francophone newcomers.

In order to Improve Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants, the Windsor Essex LIP Partnership Council recommends the following priorities:

To Meet Individual Challenges

- Urge all funders to provide child-minding and transportation supports to allow all newcomers to access and benefit from settlement and language programs;
- #### To Meet Program or Community Challenges
- Develop specific strategies to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants to small and medium size employers;
 - Develop a series of educational workshops to provide labour market information to community partners; and
 - Coordinate mentoring and bridging programs to promote ease of use by employers and immigrants.
- #### To Meet Systemic Challenges
- Integrate immigrants into the Windsor Essex labour force by leveraging knowledge, skills and experience, outlined as a priority in the Integrated Local Labour Market Plan

In order to Strengthen Local Awareness and Capacity to Integrate Immigrants, the Windsor Essex LIP Partnership Council recommends the following priorities:

To Meet Program or Community Challenges

- Promote community participation and civic engagement among immigrants in Windsor and Essex County.
- #### To Meet Systemic Challenges
- Develop and coordinate a public awareness campaign which promotes multiculturalism and the benefits of settlement and integration in Windsor and Essex County.

