

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Sub-council Monday, March 22, 2010

Present: Mohamed Al-Adeimi, Nan Abuhelib, Fadela Ahmed, Maria del Pilar Silva, Marel Fielding, Rifat Hussain, Ramona Lucan, Mersija Nuric, Nancy Santos, Jill Tansley, Eugene Tremblay, Nina Hamou;

Regrets: Mayssa El-Sayegh

SUMMARY

Welcome and introductions

Mohamed welcomed the committee members and thanked everyone for their interest. The group was asked to introduce themselves and new members were welcomed.

Updates

a. Meeting Minutes

Following review, minutes were motioned by Maria and approved by Fadela. Ola Abiodun name will be included in the list of those present at the last meeting. There was consensus that all action items have been achieved. Jill was thanked for sharing statistics on immigration in London.

b. Timelines and Tasks

The group was reminded that there are only two more meetings remaining to complete the required task by April 23, 2010. The group was asked to save the date of May 26, 2010, whereby the draft strategic plan will be presented to the community for input.

A document from Statistics Canada was circulated showing projections of diversity and immigrants in the next few years. This is important information to be mindful of as we move forward.

Review Gaps

In consultation with the Chairs, Nina compiled the priorities the group discussed in the previous meeting, as well as what the community has suggested, into the following categories (highlighted items reflect additions by the group):

1. Connecting newcomers to services

- Immediate access to information upon arrival
- Communication
- Welcoming process
- Needs of Refugees vs. Landed Immigrants
- GARS/PSR vs. Economic class
- Providing settlement services at the neighbourhood level
- Agency vs. ethno-cultural referrals

- Long-term support
- Use of the Immigration Portal
- Students
- Temporary Workers

2. Navigating systems

a. Bureaucratic Systems

- Difficulties for immigrants in navigating bureaucratic structures, filling out forms, responding to letters etc.
- Language and literacy

b. Managing Finances

- Credit
- Transition from government sponsorship
- Taxes
- Phone bills

c. Education System

3. Family Challenges

- Families who separate upon arrival (divorce, psychological barriers to adapting)
- Families who separate geographically (some immigrate and some stay in home country)
- Children and Parents (values, language)
- Transition from collectivist to individualistic Societies
- Childcare/child minding
- Youth
- Seniors
- Parenting
- Role of men in the community
- Family Sponsorship

4. Housing

- Landlord/ tenants rights and responsibilities
- Affordable housing
- Co-ops

5. Overarching themes

The following additions and revisions were made:

- Students, temporary workers to be added as a priority groups under “connecting services to newcomers”
- “Education system” is to be included under “navigating systems”
- “Housing” will be included as a separate priority with issues of tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities falling under it

- “Family challenges”: parenting, family sponsorship and the role of men will be included. The role of men in the community was given considerable discussion. It is felt that men are being neglected in the settlement process. There need to be services to address their role as a father figure and male of the household.
- “Space concerns” will be removed from the list as it is unclear

The following activities were suggested:

1. Connecting Services to Newcomer

- Effective use of the immigration portal by service providers, immigrants, and potential immigrants
- Setting up a joint reception centre
- Providing support for students in the university
- Targeting economic class immigrants by promoting London abroad (Immigration Portal)
- Information available to GARs and Refugees Applicants- creating a database of services available for different categories of immigrants by building on the database we already have

2. Navigating the systems

- Providing additional training services to students
- Involve Interpreters with training and knowledge on settlement information
- Cognitive behavioral therapy- helping immigrants change the way they perceive situations

ACTION: Nina to organize all the priorities and the activities discussed in a working template for the group.

Next steps:

The group will continue to discuss activities.

Meeting minutes will be posted on the Immigration Portal welcome.london.ca.

Next Meeting:

April 8, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Kinsmen Recreation Centre, room 2a

Regards to nhamou@uwlondon.on.ca