

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK**

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**REPORT NO. 1 OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES**

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**For Consideration by  
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York  
on February 21, 2008**

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YORK REGION'S APPLICATION FOR  
THE LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE**

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Municipality of York apply to be assigned role of lead applicant for the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative, under the Call for Proposals issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.
2. Regional Council approve Catholic Community Services of York Region as the Project Partner for the York Region application for the Local Immigration Partnerships.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to make an application for, and enter into such legal agreement, on the Region's behalf as may be necessary to access federal funding available through Citizenship and Immigration Canada as the funder of the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative, subject to review by the Corporate Services Department, Legal Services Branch.
4. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute service agreements with municipalities and agencies regarding the implementation of the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative.

5. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, Catholic Community Services of York Region, the Human Services Planning Coalition, the Inclusivity Action Plan Steering Committee, and the York Region Community Social Data Strategy Consortium and Community Reference Group.
6. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services report back to Committee and Regional Council on the results of the Local Immigration Partnerships proposal, as appropriate.

## **2. PURPOSE**

This report requests that the Commissioner of Community and Health Services apply, on behalf of York Region, to become the lead applicant for the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative. As the lead applicant, the Commissioner is requesting authority to apply for federal funding to establish a Community Partnership Council and develop a local settlement strategy as required under Phase One of the Local Immigrant Partnerships initiative.

Phase Two of the initiative will include a detailed implementation work plan of the settlement strategy developed in Phase One. Phase Two will be implemented and funded through a separate Federal Call for Proposals.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **York Region a member on the Municipal Immigration Committee**

The release of *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region* report provided hard data that dispelled the myth that York Region was a homogenous community and also showed that York Region had the fastest growing recent immigrant population in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This information resulted in an invitation for York Region to join the Municipal Immigration Committee, established to support the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. This Committee, which is chaired jointly by The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the federal and provincial governments, is an information-sharing, strategic policy and consultation forum where, for the first time, municipalities have a say about how immigrants should be attracted, integrated and settled in their communities.

Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director of Policy and Program Support Services, Community and Health Services Department was appointed by Chairman Fisch to represent York Region on the Committee.

## **Results of municipal negotiations**

Successful negotiations by the municipalities at this table have resulted, among other things, in the creation of the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative. Essentially federal and provincial governments have agreed to give communities much more control over how immigrants are settled and integrated.

On February 6, 2008, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration announced a Call for Proposals to strengthen the role of local and regional communities in serving and integrating immigrants through the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative. This initiative will be funded 100% through Citizenship and Immigration Canada under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement.

The Local Immigration Partnerships initiative will provide a collaborative framework for, and facilitate the development and implementation of, sustainable local and regional solutions for successful integration of immigrants to Ontario. This initiative seeks to help communities put immigration on their overall planning agenda so that communities will positively benefit from the successful social and economic integration of new immigrants.

Local Immigration Partnerships will be implemented in two phases: Phase One will include the establishment of a Community Partnership Council and the development of a settlement strategy; and Phase Two, will include a detailed implementation work plan based on the settlement strategy. The deadline for Phase One proposals is March 7, 2008. Phase Two will be implemented through a separate Call for Proposals.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

### **4.1 SCOPE OF LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS PROPOSALS**

#### **Role of the Local Immigration Partnerships Community Partnership Council**

Under this initiative each community will only have one Community Partnership Council. The Community Partnership Council will:

- Coordinate the participation of multiple stakeholders in the planning and coordination of the delivery of immigration services (settlement, language training, and labour market integration).
- Include the participation of a wide range of community stakeholders including the municipal and/or regional government, community organizations, settlement agencies, language training providers, local associations and employers.

- Develop a strategic plan for immigration and integration that fits the needs of the community it represents.

### **Rationale for York Region to provide leadership**

The Local Immigration Partnerships initiative will require municipalities to sit at the planning table and preferably lead it.

York Region has a vested interest in being the lead applicant for the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative and for leading the Community Partnership Council and development of the settlement strategy.

According to the 2006 Census, immigrants accounted for close to 60% of the Region's growth. Most services – social and otherwise – that recent immigrants in particular need to settle in a community are provided by local and regional governments. Managing the funds and linkages that will come with the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative will help provide effective, community-specific settlement support and labour market integration. This can support the successful integration of this vulnerable group and in turn, reduce the risk of reliance on municipal social supports that are managed through the Region. It will also support relevant, integrated services at a regional, local and agency level.

The Region's participation in the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative will have several immediate benefits including, continuing in its leadership role and working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a "made in York Region" settlement strategy that is responsive to the needs of our residents, employers and other community stakeholders. A lead role will also provide an opportunity for the Region to continue to acquire and advocate for a fair share of funding for Ontario's fastest growing community.

The Community and Health Services Department is well positioned to act on behalf of the Region as the Community Entity. In addition to its ongoing role on the Municipal Immigration Committee, the Department:

- Has extensive experience in successfully managing a variety of federal and provincial funding initiatives that assist community agencies such as the Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) and the Homelessness Partnership Initiative (formerly known as Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI)).
- Leads community consultations and has developed, as well as implemented, strategic planning documents such as the Community Plan to Address Homelessness, Annual Accessibility Plans and the Community Social Data Strategy.
- Plays a lead role on the York Region Consortium and Community Reference Group, which includes representation from the Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC). The Department has developed strong relationships with key community stakeholders such as the school boards, police services, health services, settlement services, local

chambers of commerce and community agencies. These organizations will be essential partners in making York Region's Local Immigration Partnership a success.

### **Supporting the work achieved through the Inclusivity Action Plan**

In 2005, the HSPC, Chaired by Regional Councillor Joyce Frustaglio and Bill Hogarth, Director of Education at the York Region District School Board, launched the Inclusivity Action Plan (IAP), as a region-wide community-based approach to promoting inclusivity. The IAP project focuses on the broader issues of York Region's ethno-cultural diversity.

Using the hard data provided by the *Community Snapshots: Recent Immigrants Living in York Region* report, the HSPC has been successful in advocating for funding for the following IAP initiatives:

- \$4.1 million over three years (2006 – 2008) for Vaughan's Welcome Centre
- \$300,000 for the York Region Immigration Portal

The IAP has successfully engaged leading service organizations in the Region who serve the immigrant communities. Frank Scarpitti, Mayor of Markham, chairs the IAP Steering Committee. Representatives of HSPC and the IAP would be key to the success of York Region's Local Immigration Partnership and would be invited to participate on the Community Partnership Council.

### **Identifying a project partner**

Proposals submitted by municipalities must include a letter of support from a community-based organization that serves immigrants as a Project Partner. Catholic Community Services of York Region has indicated its interest in being the Project Partner, pending Regional Council's approval of York Region becoming the lead applicant. Catholic Community Services of York Region is the first and major provider for immigrant settlement services in York Region. As a member of HSPC, the IAP Steering Committee and York Region's Community Reference Group, they will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the Community Partnership Council in developing the settlement strategy.

## **4.2 NEXT STEPS**

If the Region is authorized to apply for Local Immigration Partnerships funding, Community and Health Services staff, in consultation with the Corporate Services Department, Legal Services Branch, will proceed to take the necessary steps to prepare the proposal for funding and submit an application by the March 7, 2008 deadline.

Community and Health Services staff will report back to Regional Council on the status of the application, and if successful, the terms of the contract after negotiations are completed.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications for Phase One of the Local Immigration Partnerships. The federal government has indicated that it will fund all program administration costs to establish and support the Community Partnership Council and the development of a settlement strategy. The details of Phase Two, which will involve the implementation of the settlement strategy, will be available through a separate Call for Proposals. All funding for Phases One and Two will be through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement.

The Local Immigration Partnerships initiative does not include a predetermined funding allocation for each community. Funding allocation decisions will be based on the needs of the community. York Region's funding request will be determined during the development of the proposal.

## 6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

York Region communities, including local municipalities, residents, community-based organizations and employers, will benefit from a settlement strategy that is customized for York Region.

Most services – social and otherwise – that recent immigrants particularly need to settle in a community are provided by local and regional governments. Managing the funds and linkages that will come with the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative will help provide effective, community-specific settlement support and labour market integration throughout York Region.

## 7. CONCLUSION

For the first time, municipalities have been invited to participate in determining the settlement service needs specific to their community and have an active voice in communicating with other levels of government through the Municipal Immigration Committee. Successful municipal negotiations have resulted in the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative, through which communities can put immigration on their overall planning agenda, and actively support the successful social and economic integration of new immigrants.

As a result of our successes, the Region is well positioned to be the lead applicant for York Region's Local Immigrant Partnership. Work in areas such as the *Community Snapshots Recent Immigrants Living in York Region* report, our role as a community funder, a municipal Service Manager, member of the Municipal Immigration Committee, and the HSPC's Inclusivity Action Plan project has created this leadership opportunity.

The goal is to have a collaborative partnership with key community stakeholders to establish a “made in York Region” settlement strategy that is reflective of the unique needs of the region and secure funding for settlement services.

For more information on this report, please contact Cordelia Abankwa-Harris, Director of Policy and Program Support Services, at Ext. 2150.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**February 20, 2008  
Newmarket, Ontario**

**J. Simmons  
Commissioner of  
Community and Health Services**

***(Report No. 1 of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services was adopted, without amendment by Regional Council at its meeting on February 21, 2008.)***