

Niagara Regional Newcomer Employment Advisory Group
September 13, 2005
Community Services, 3340 Schmon Parkway, Thorold, Ontario
Winifred Cropper Meeting Room

MINUTES

1. Welcome – Catherine Mindorff

New Members - Michelle Tiffney - CIC, Niagara Falls

Present: Kate Acs, Fiona Allan, Theresa Anzovino, Michael Bauer, Miriam Cooper, Deanna D'Elia, Larry Dolan, Claire Gerencser-Masswohl, Eva Goodyer, Brian Hutchings, Heather Lee Kilty, Catherine Mindorff, Claudia Montan, Sue Morrison, Janina Olechna, Trudy Parsons, Rick Rochon, Lynn Stewart, Nancy Sutton, Jim Williams

Absent: Judith Binder, Tim Foster, Lucie Huot, Duncan MacDuff, Ted Palmer, David Redmond, Diane Sanderson, Deb Simpson, Lori Watson

Regrets: Troy Brooks

2. Review of Minutes of the May 31, 2005 meeting

Catherine: update re Peace Bridge Newcomers Centre – Executive Director Pat Simpson, hired through Trillium grant. Catherine Mindorff will move from position of ED to one of Development for the PBNC.

Growth Mgmt. in Greater Golden Horseshoe – news article re forum, keynote speaker Bruce Katz, by 2031 area expected to attract 3.7 million people, mostly through immigration, create 1.8 million new jobs.** Article online at : http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/2005/Premiers_Forum.asp

Committee in agreement, minutes reflective of meeting, more detail needed for future minutes.

3. Additions to Agenda - none

4. Presentations to Regional Community Services Committee re: Jobs Now

Brian Hutchings: new provincial initiative - WCG International, a BC for profit company, partnering with Ontario government and social services offices to place OW recipients in jobs, making connection with local Chambers, they receive a percentage for placements, now in 6 municipalities as pilot sites, looking to expand to Niagara Region and Toronto, presented to Regional Council Chair, current placement results in this area very good, would cost more to use the service, , offered to be a comparator site, placements and wages are low through WCG, avg. \$8/hr. (Hamilton info.), already have some comparator sites (i.e.: Ottawa area). Therefore Niagara will not be a comparator site.**Information online at: <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/CFCS/en/JobsNowOntario/default.htm>

5. Individual reports on key activities relevant to strategy development

T. Parsons: new project - HR Recruitment and Retention survey, North American distribution, working with US and Canadian Chambers to identify best practices (also called best of breed), Tourism and Hospitality sector

C. Mindorff: merger of 4 organizations with a transition board, Small Centres strategy, working with other organizations (Peace Bridge Newcomers Centre, Fort Erie Multicultural Centre, Casa El Norte, Refugee Assistance Organization) for continuum of service, 270 people accessed services in 6 months, very vulnerable, have health issues. New building and health unit.

T. Anzovino: increase in 18+ age group refugees, Red Cross may take over that sector, shelter/care concern due to rising numbers, expansion of countries. Columbia has been largest, now Zimbabwe (exempted county). Most are now settling Niagara Region, used to cross at Windsor. Backlog in processing, wait time 4 months, need some ESL services but already have a high level of spoken English, placing large number in Welland. Regular wait time for medical 3-4 months, can take up to 8 months.

Nov. 17th, 8:30am to 12:30pm - Diversity Forum, Mayor hosting, Governor General appearing, speaker Dr. Raymond Moriyama – Chancellor at Brock University, architect, speaking of personal experiences, also various businesses attending re diversity initiatives in the workplace. All members Of this employment council to receive by email an invitation to attend.

D. D'Elia: increase in newcomers seeking employment assistance, Spanish speaking largest population, at intake have expressed lack of recreation/leisure activities for self and families, Y will not turn people down, interview for membership assistance. Niagara Falls location is open, Welland location is finished.

K. Acs: transfer of some programming from MTCU to Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, responsibility for immigration being centralized back at Ministry of Citizenship - Access to Professions and Trades Unit, some delays possible with transition, offer language and employment training, increase communication between departments provincially.

N. Sutton: liaison between industry and employment agencies, meet with HR Councils, Tourism industry not ready for diverse workforce, international travel has increased, some training opportunities available, what is available for new immigrants, what kind of programs are still needed.

M. Bauer: youth numbers growing, ESL at Maid of the Mist campus to start next month (will update), apprenticeship placements in St. Catharines 34%, Niagara Falls 28%, Nov. 3rd, Career Exploration Day, working with MTCU – one stop concept, collaboration between programs, Ministry will consult with key stakeholders, need more training assistance in other areas outside of professional sector.

R. Rochon: Job Search Workshop program running, also Host program, received United Way funding for 3 years, Crossroads for Women goes to 2008.

H. Kilty: research on-going, updating literature review, contact her for a copy, Dr. Maria deCarvalho - spoke in Azores re results of her studies, will return in November for Resettlement Theory, noted that culture/diversity/health influence programs/courses for newcomers, also those returning for BA, designing content in Nursing Program, education for professionals, programs for foreign trained nurses, mentoring projects.

C. Gerencser-Masswohl: meetings re opportunities for newcomer recreation programs, currently have some people in shelter, working with African Association and churches, Enhanced Language Program to start Oct. 01/05, noted “secondary migration” i.e. people returning to Niagara Region.

M. Tiffney: processing medical clearances etc., additional funding needed for citizenship work, steady landings approximately 100/month, only one staff working on documents, be advised of delays, pre-landing info would help with processing documents, need some training programs for employers.

J. Olechna: Province of Ontario is working on Ontario Portal, a website that will support the social and economic success of new immigrants by providing user-friendly access to information and services. The launch date is not known. Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will provide Settlement Information & Referral, two day training for Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) workers in November and December 2005.

L. Dolan: ESL expanded to include evening and Saturday classes, special purpose classes more specific to employment sectors (ex. Nursing), approached more often for on-site language training in businesses, Ministry will fund training if 10 employees are registered.

F. Allan: joint proposal re ESL & apprenticeship, awaiting word, skills training services, immigrants on priorities list, email will be sent out re Settlement Counsellor Program.

E. Goodyer: programs running, Home Study, ELT program through Ottawa now in Niagara Region, Job Search Workshop training for new organizations and new staff, Information referral training.

B. Hutchings: late spring/summer very busy, local intake system getting good results, some applicants not eligible but providing referrals, changes in regulations as of Aug. 01/05, 50% earnings claw back, can provide extended health benefits for up to 6 months, new staffing - Spanish and French case managers, Children's Services - \$25 million over 5 years for child care in school, expansion of services, \$6 million this year for more child care.

L. Stewart: Job Connect Adult Services - 45 % are newcomers, C.A.I.P.S. mostly for professionals, Bridging Project for occupations in healthcare, education and finance, good results with people being employed, not necessarily in chosen field, but in related fields, working with Job Gym and Niagara College, OW one stop service area.

J. Williams: diverse groups at HRSDC - have a catalogue of services, expect Federal level changes - announcement Sep. 14/05 re departmental changes, not dealing with policy issues or social programs - to act as delivery arm for federal programming, working with organizations re problems in Niagara Region, i.e. lack of labour/skill shortages, how to attract skilled people to region, immigrant population source of skilled trades, government announced in Feb. /05 a focus on new immigrants, ex. Foreign/Offshore worker program, farmers rely on foreign workers (jobs physically demanding, seasonal, must demonstrate difficulty finding domestic workers to fill jobs, issuing SINs, working with CIC to authorize employment visas, funding organizations in Niagara Region that deal with new immigrants, SCPI (homelessness), new program - Workplace Skills Initiative, (re skills shortages, getting skilled immigrants into labour force), possible transfer of \$6.5 million on an annual basis to MTCU (related to future program structure).

6. Report of working groups

Report from NTAB re: Services Inventory

Summer Student – Brock graduate researching employment agencies, updating Inventory of Programs and Services (IPS), identify uniqueness of services, gather information re program descriptions/employment supports, report will be published on NTAB website and communiqué (see example chart handout), breakdown - areas of focus, community, identify gaps, services provided. Possible next step to obtain information re number of people served/target groups.

7. Status of Niagara Immigration Summit

1) Model Development

- i) Work plan

- ii) Vision Statement
- iii) Potential Goals and development of Work breakdown structure (Actions)
(please review prior to the meeting)

2) Fund Development

- i) Written Report to Kate Acs for support with positioning of funding opportunities. Needs further revisions and enhancements

3) Communication Plan

Model development

Logo created "gratis" by newcomer. Accepted the look with some minor changes (H. Kilty would like the logo modified), request to change "Strategy" to "Council" (though similar to another group in name), change meaning of "J" to represent the falls. Logo is ok temporarily, can make changes pending more funding.

Vision Statement - committee to review handout, change "new Canadians" to "newcomers" (used "newcomer" throughout to replace "immigrant"), need definition of "newcomer". Draft version to be emailed to committee, please reply to Catherine with yes or no and comments.

Vision/Values – please email Catherine with yes or no

Actions steps – Duncan and Catherine to review, comments at next meeting

Education – Catherine to discuss with Larry and Fiona, HRSDC reps and MTCU

Settlement – group to form to discuss

Immigration – group to form to discuss

Catherine will meet with various sectors, report to committee at next meeting.

Fund Development

Committee currently does not fit in pre-existing funding areas, will seek possible joint funding, distributing information to federal/provincial politicians, relevant industries and Ministries, NTAB providing website space.

T. Parsons - Niagara Executive HR Leadership Council has been formed in the region, is it possible to have someone from that group involved, make a presentation to them, speak to chair and find out their mandate etc.

C. Gerencser-Masswohl - has some funding for Employer Breakfast, will speak to Brian and Catherine.

8. New business

Next meeting:

November 09/05, 2005 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Room/location: TBA

Contributions to the Agenda from committee welcome - please email to Catherine.

NTAB AGM is Nov. 01/05 at Hernder Estate Winery, 4:30 pm, invite will be sent to committee via distribution list, Dr. David Livingstone speaking, information will be posted on NTAB website

www.ntab.org