

To:	Chair and Members of Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	January 30, 2018
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-ED-04-2018
Title:	New to Grey Initiative Update
Prepared by:	Savanna Myers, Manager of Economic Development Jacinda Rudolph, Outreach Coordinator
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Grey County
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution ED03-18; Endorsed by Committee of the Whole February 8, 2018 per Resolution CW59-18;

Recommendation

1. That Committee Report CAOR-ED-04-18 titled New to Grey Initiative Update be received for information.

Executive Summary

The New to Grey Initiative was launched on October 30, 2017 following a successful application to the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration under the Municipal Innovation Program.

The focus of this initiative is to build capacity and partnerships to aid in retention and attraction efforts by becoming a welcoming community, well prepared to integrate newcomers into our neighbourhoods and labour market.

The pilot program will operate for 15 months, until December 31, 2018.

Background and Discussion

The New to Grey Initiative launched on October 30, 2017 following report CAOR-ED-15-17 with the hiring of a part-time Outreach Coordinator. As an initiative fully funded by the Province of Ontario, the Outreach Coordinator is responsible for delivery of the following actions by December 31, 2018:

- Initiating a steering committee with representatives from Grey Bruce Welcoming Communities, and “champions/allies” from member municipalities;

- Developing a self-assessment tool in consultations with the committee;
- Coordinating familiarization tours with newcomers, community leaders and employers;
- Coordinating a launch event and wrap up forum with partners and stakeholders;
- Coordinating nine Cultural Competency Workshops hosted in each of Grey County's member municipalities for community leaders and employers; and
- Developing and distributing a newcomer attraction and retention toolkit for newcomers, community leaders and employers.

The focus of this initiative is to build capacity and partnerships to aid in retention and attraction efforts by becoming a welcoming community, well prepared to integrate newcomers into our neighbourhoods and labour market.

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan has now been completed in consultation with newcomer support groups, community champions and current newcomers to identify existing gaps and challenges required to be a welcoming region. This assessment emphasized the need to define the term “newcomer” as follows:

Newcomers are people who relocate from outside the community to work and/or live in your community. They could be from another country or from within Canada

Findings from the scan include:

- Jobs, a familiar ethnic community and local churches, language training opportunities, housing and health services are essential to the retention and attraction of newcomers.
- Despite having a large number of sponsored refugees coming to Grey County, there is no basic settlement and integration support available to them. Individual volunteers and newcomer networks currently make up that system.
- Grey County has very few ethnic communities already established, which plays a significant role in whether a newcomer comes to and stays in Grey County.
- Retention and attraction efforts need to happen simultaneously in order to expand the newcomer population in the region.
- Arden Language School (Owen Sound) is the only location in Grey County to provide ESL classes. Students travel a long distance to attend classes. The School functions in partnership with the Alliance Church and is run by two paid Coordinators and approximately 50 volunteer teachers.
- The single most referenced challenge expressed throughout stakeholder consultations is the lack of available housing in Grey County. This issue is not limited to newcomers but certainly poses a significant barrier for the attraction and retention of newcomers to the area.

Steering Committee

As the steering committee is not a formal committee of Council, an Action Group has been created to fulfill this requirement under the grant. Membership is made up of local newcomer champions who meet once per month with the coordinator to help inform the initiative with first-hand experience and local knowledge.

New to Grey Action Group Members

- **David Morris** – Grey Bruce Newcomer Network
- **Gemma Mendez-Smith** – Four County Labour Market Planning Board
- **May Ip** – Multicultural Arts and Crafts Collective and Chinese Heritage Ambassador
- **Francesca Dobbyn** – United Way (interim)
- **Coordinator TBD** – Settlement and Integration Services for Refugees and Vulnerable Newcomers Grant (United Way)
- **Melissa Harris** – Talent Acquisition Specialist, The AGENCY
- **Zackary Henein** – Local Expert
- **Lisa Mollon** – Georgian College International Student Representative

Kick-Off Event

Recognizing and celebrating the diversity that exists in Grey County will be the focus of the New to Grey kick-off event scheduled for February 14, 2018 from 11:30am to 3:30pm at Grey Roots. This is an opportunity for our stakeholders to become acquainted with the initiative and learn about the experiences that newcomers bring to and gain from our region. A formal invitation has been sent to key stakeholders.

Cultural Competency Workshops

Discovering the challenges service providers face when working with newcomers has been a crucial exercise in creating the right resources and tools for a more effective service delivery. The Outreach Coordinator will deliver training workshops in each of Grey County's municipalities in addition to training sessions customized for service providers (ie. YMCA Employment and Grey County Social Services) and larger employers upon request (ie. The Agency).

Similar to the challenges faced by service providers, our employers can face challenges in meeting the needs of a more diverse workforce. Workplace cultural competency workshops will help employers to be more successful with their efforts to attract and retain newcomers.

Following the projects identified above, a toolkit suite will be developed as a resource for newcomers, community leaders and employers.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None.

Financial and Resource Implications

The New to Grey Initiative is fully funded by the Province of Ontario (Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration) through the Municipal Innovation Fund for the period October 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018.

Relevant Consultation

Internal - Manager of Economic Development, Economic Development staff, Director of Social Services, Health and Safety.

External – Georgian College, Welcoming Newcomer Networks (Four in Grey & Bruce Counties), Arden ESL language school, Public service providers and Employers.

Appendices and Attachments

None.