

<b>To:</b>	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	February 24, 2022
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-05-22
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership Update</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Deepikaa Gupta, GBLIP Coordinator
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW36-22; Endorsed by County Council March 10, 2022 per Resolution CC22-22

## Recommendation

1. That Report EDTC-CW-05-22 regarding an update on the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership be received for information.

## Executive Summary

The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) is fully funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to enable community-based partnerships and planning to support the unique needs of newcomers in the region. While service providers in the region struggle to effectively address the unique needs of newcomers, collective work towards building welcoming communities is a start. By working in partnership, leveraging existing resources and sharing best practices, GBLIP addresses gaps in the region, allowing partners to deliver responsive and coordinated services.

## Background and Discussion

The GBLIP is led by its Partnership Council which brings together community partners invested in the successful integration of newcomers. Partnership stakeholders collaborate on newcomer-focused initiatives, including coordination of services, community research, planning and activities that support welcoming communities. This partnership works to *build capacity, strengthen community, cultivate prosperity and foster inclusion*.

The Partnership Council, supported by GBLIP staff, is responsible for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, which was approved by IRCC and endorsed by both Grey and Bruce Counties in 2021. The Partnership Council meets quarterly, with subcommittee

meetings monthly and bi-monthly, enabling organizations to coordinate and work collaboratively to achieve positive cumulative impact.

As part of GBLIPs intention to always begin its work internally, members now benefit from two learning opportunities each meeting, including a guest speaker to share lived experience and professional development to foster inclusive leadership. From here, members can take their learnings back to the organizations they represent, and further utilize their knowledge to carry out more focused work through the subcommittees.

The three subcommittees identified through the strategic plan are now in place, allowing for a more focused approach to action items. The following outlines a few of the key priorities currently underway:

#### **Employer Sub-Committee:**

A virtual employer roundtable is planned for March 2022 to pair employers and service providers to better understand current best practices and challenges in hiring and integrating immigrants/newcomers into the workforce. From here, the goal is to create an employer network, highlighting employment success stories, developing educational campaigns, and working with human resources staff to encourage inclusive hiring practices that support attraction and retention efforts across the region. The network will also be able to provide a voice to challenges outside the scope of the GBLIP, such as credential recognition and apprenticeship opportunities.

#### **Belong Sub-Committee**

Work towards recognizing multicultural festivals and events in the region is underway to explore cultures and better understand the cultural and ethnic groups in Grey and Bruce. A calendar of local festivals/cultural days is also being created to recognize and celebrate special events/milestones with added education and context for the broader community.

There is also interest in reviewing a relaunch of the “Welcome Wagon” to provide local information and small welcome gifts to newcomers moving to the region.

#### **Community Sub-Committee**

A print-on-demand Welcome Package is in development for distribution by municipalities as newcomers arrive in the area. The Welcome Package contains general information about living in Grey and Bruce, and provides space for municipalities to enter information specific to their location (i.e., garbage collection, community centers, municipal services, banking, schooling, grocery, health care and transit services, etc.)

#### **Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI)**

As per the strategic plan, Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) takes priority in 2022. To achieve this priority, GBLIP is partnering with local organizations, employers and municipal leaders to provide training and education to expand knowledge of JEDI and introduce this practice into policies, processes and everyday work/life. There are two key deliverables now in process:

- **JEDI Training in Grey & Bruce**
  - Black Birch Training and Consulting will host *Diversity Dialogues* with municipal leaders over the next two months to strengthen community capacity and understanding around

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) in Grey and Bruce. Engaging all municipalities in Grey and Bruce, lays the foundation for a collaborative approach to cultivating inclusive and equitable cultures within our organizations and our communities. The sessions also provide practical tips and tools for next steps that encourage the social integration of newcomers into our communities.

- In partnership with the Nuclear Innovation Institute, a virtual training session for all municipal staff across Grey and Bruce Counties will be offered to learn about and understand equity in practice, using common, inclusive language, and promoting positive action.
- **Train the Trainer Project**
  - Staff are in the process of hiring a consultant to support the delivery of this project over the next 15 months. The purpose is to create facilitated workshops on JEDI with region-specific content delivered by local residents. 17 local residents have signed up to be a part of this inaugural project, representing a diverse array of identities, experiences, and perspectives, including folks who are newcomers, immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and Anishinaabek, among other diverse identities. With guidance and training from the consultant, these “trainees” will be equipped with the knowledge of JEDI and local resources to deliver workshops to partners, employers, and other local groups throughout the 2022/2023 fiscal year and beyond.
  - A training manual will also be developed to allow for more local JEDI trainers to be brought in overtime to deliver workshops across the region.

### **The 24 Metropolis Canada Conference, Vancouver, March 24 - 26, 2022**

For the first time in two years, stakeholders from across Canada will have the opportunity to hold in-depth exchanges about policy needs, best practices, lessons learned, the latest data and studies, and discussion about how best to advance immigration and refugee settlement at this critical juncture in history.

The theme of the conference is *Reopening Canada: Looking to the Future of Immigration, Settlement and Integration*. GBLIP Coordinator, Deepikaa Gupta has been selected to deliver a presentation on the value of partnerships in addressing challenges in retaining Georgian College International Students to our region. The Conference is both an opportunity to share the good work Grey Bruce has been advancing around newcomer attraction and integration and an integral professional development opportunity to bring new learnings back to our region. As such, IRCC will fully fund this out-of-province travel in support of GBLIP’s growth and development.

### **2021/2022 Accomplishments**

Entering the final quarter of the federal fiscal year, staff wish to share a few highlights of achievement over the past year, since the strategy was formally endorsed.

### **Community Dialogues**

Throughout the year staff participated and presented in various events organized by partner members to share priorities and find ways to collaborate in achieving the collective goal of a welcoming community.

- Community partners Rural Pathways for Newcomer Women and the Owen Sound & District Chamber of Commerce.
- Grey Bruce Newcomer and Immigrant Women's Collective – a social enterprise affiliated with Welcoming Communities
- Grey Bruce Child & Family Services
- GBLIP hosted a workshop on Afghan Refugee Resettlement for local volunteers, settlement workers, and English teachers working directly with Afghan arrivals.

### **Website Launch**

- [www.greybrucelip.ca](http://www.greybrucelip.ca)
- Includes information about national multicultural events on the “Educate & Celebrate” calendar; partner organizations on the “Service Map,” and resources for newcomers and employers under “Resources”, “News & Events” is used to promote virtual events.

### **Southwestern Ontario LIP community partnership (SWOLIP)**

GBLIP is part of the national LIP network and actively involved with the Southwestern Ontario LIP community partnership. Contribution to this group allows staff to collaborate and share best practices/challenges within the region, benefiting greatly from dialogue with other rural LIPs. In collaboration with SWOLIP, GBLIP:

- Connected a local employer from Bruce County to be featured in a Southwestern webinar on ‘Newcomer Talent for Future Success’. This exemplified the great work and contributions being done by our local employers to other regions across all Southwestern Ontario.
- Developed a coordinated program for Welcoming Week in 2021.
- Organized a consultation on supporting refugee resettlement within the housing sector. This was an opportunity to hear from landlords, legal experts, and newcomer settlement service providers in December 2021.
- Developing a positive messaging campaign.
- Developing a point of entry presentation for immigrants or Afghan refugees in quarantine hotels in Toronto to showcase what is available outside of GTA.

Attraction, integration, and retention of newcomers continues to be a priority across Grey and Bruce as workforce challenges dominate. GBLIP is proud to compliment the broader economic development portfolio and work in unison to provide strategic and specific supports benefiting all our communities and residents.

## **Legal and Legislated Requirements**

Nil.

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

Nil.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal – Economic Development
- External – Partnership Council

## Appendices and Attachments

[Settlement Strategy 2025](#)