

2013-2014
Annual Report
Summary



Hamilton Immigration
Partnership Council



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Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council Members 2013-2014

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Elizabeth Beader	Executive Director, North Hamilton Community Health Centre
Gail Belisario	Principal of Equity, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Mary Cipolla	Superintendent, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Jim Commerford	(<i>Chair</i>) President and CEO, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford
Huyen Dam	Doctoral Student and Research Assistant, McMaster University
Alain Dobi	Coordonnateur du Resau de soutiena l'immigration francophone
Howard Elliot	Managing Editor, the Hamilton Spectator
Gillian Hendry	Director, Housing Services Division, City of Hamilton
Aisling Higgins	Communications Officer, Strategic Services Division, Community Services Department, City of Hamilton
Don Jaffray	Executive Director, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
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Lily Lumsden	Senior Regional Manager, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford
Brian McHattie	City Councillor, City of Hamilton
Claudette Mikelsons	Regional Director, Collège Boréal
Evelyn Myrie	Executive Director, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
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Stephanie Taylor	Director of Neighbourhood Development and Newcomer Services, Wesley Urban Ministries
Judy Travis	(<i>Vice Chair</i>) Executive Director, Workforce Planning Hamilton
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Message from the Chair

It is with excitement that on behalf of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) I am able to report another year of great advancements in the implementation of Hamilton's Immigration Strategy. In their independent assessment, the Kovacs Group Inc. reported that since inception the HIPC has addressed 77% of the Strategy's priorities.

Over the past year, the HIPC's Working Groups continued to produce new research reports, resources and informative materials to ensure newcomers to Hamilton are aware of, and have access to, valued programs and services. Partnerships continue to be formed and strengthened as collaborative community initiatives are building a well-coordinated, seamless settlement service system. The many events organized by the HIPC and partners have brought together service providers, stakeholders, employer and newcomers to network, share ideas and resources and discover innovative solutions and ways to collaborate.

The success of the past year has been contingent on working collaboratively with community partners. The HIPC continued to expand these relationships to facilitate increased coordination among service providers across all sectors, but also ensure stronger involvement of the informal settlement service sector in supporting newcomer issues.

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton recently released the results of its assessment of the impact the HIPC has on its partners. The report acknowledges the supportive role of our partners in implementing the Immigration Strategy. It demonstrates their high level of commitment and serves as an indicator of how invested they are in the HIPC's work.

The HIPC has become a central body in the community which unifies and coordinates efforts aimed at the successful integration of newcomers. With increased public awareness of the HIPC's mandate and role, community organizations are turning to the HIPC for research, information, resources, connections and opportunities to ensure Hamilton is a welcoming community for all newcomers. The HIPC is a key link in the development of innovative, cost effective solutions that effectively address potential barriers in service provision.

This Annual Report is a summary of just some of the work accomplished by the HIPC and its partners throughout the 2013-2014 fiscal year¹. It is my hope that this report adequately acknowledges and recognizes the contributions of our many partners, committees and the superior leadership provided by our staff team.

As Judy Travis, Executive Director of Workforce Planning Hamilton, assumes the role of Chair, I know we will continue to build on the momentum we have gained. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

In closing, I must acknowledge our many partners – the Government of Canada, the City of Hamilton, and the many individuals, organizations and institutions that participated in our work. I want to thank them for their commitment and support in pursuing the goals contained in the Hamilton Immigration Strategy.



Jim Commerford
Chair, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council
President & CEO, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford

Who We Are and What We Do

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) was established in January 2009 as a planning and advisory body dedicated to forging community partnerships to improve the access, coordination and effectiveness of local settlement and integration programs and services. In this role of catalyst, convenor and collaborator the HIPC supports the development of local partnerships and community based planning around the needs of immigrants.

The HIPC is a multi-sector stakeholder body comprised of community leaders representing organizations that provide services to, or have an interest in, the integration of newcomers to the city. Members of the HIPC reflect many sectors of Hamilton's community including local government, community organizations, immigrant-serving agencies, language training bodies, business networks, educational institutions, media, employers, and the francophone community.

The HIPC has established a vision of Hamilton and is dedicated to realizing it:

*Hamilton is an inclusive community
where the talents and experience that immigrants and refugees bring
are valued because they are integral
to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.*

Highlights of 2013-2014

This Annual Report provides a summary of the achievement of the objectives and activities identified in the 2013-2014 Work Plan. The Annual Work Plan guides the work of the HIPC, its Steering Committee, Working Groups and the staff support team toward implementing the broader, long-term goals of the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the HIPC made great strides in addressing the Immigration Strategy's four strategic priorities. The highlights of these accomplishments are described below.

1. Building Collective and Collaborative Leadership

The HIPC has recognized that if the Immigration Strategy is to have legitimacy, significance and impact it must have a strong degree of community ownership and buy-in. The involvement of all the major organizational and institutional sectors has been essential in building collective and collaborative leadership within HIPC's network of community partners.

Over the past fiscal year much of the work of the HIPC has focused on increasing community ownership of the Immigration Strategy by expanding membership, advising and supporting local immigrant-related projects, and identifying and facilitating collaborative partnerships among community organizations that are working to meet the needs of newcomers and establishing relationships with community partners to garner collective support.

Building relationships is essential for a community initiative to be effective. A cohesive, well-connected network is a valuable resource to community members as it is the way in which resources and information are transferred. A great deal of knowledge is gained through trusted interactions and collaborative leadership can make a difference in moving community work forward.

The HIPC has established itself within the community as catalyst for bringing together local organizations and service providers to share information, resources and collaborate on projects related to immigration. For example, Rockwell Automation contacted the HIPC with an idea to help newcomers find meaningful employment as a part of their Inclusion and Engagement efforts. A meeting was arranged with Rockwell and Workforce Planning Hamilton who had just begun to develop the Hamilton Immigrant Mentoring Partnership (HIMP). The meeting resulted in a key partnership between the two organizations with Rockwell becoming a major sponsor of the HIMP program. To date, they have supported HIMP events, the HIMP website and continue to help internationally trained individuals by increasing their pool of mentors.

The HIPC has also developed strong relationships with many community and City of Hamilton bodies that are not formally linked with the HIPC through membership on HIPC committees and Working Groups. For example, the HIPC has worked with the City Manager's Office and the Planning and Economic Development Division on implementing the Immigrant Attraction Action Plan and enhancing the City's Immigration Portal. The HIPC also works with the City of Hamilton's Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee and in the fall of 2013 supported the planning of and participated in an Open House for newcomers to Hamilton. The HIPC has been called upon by City staff in the development of the City's Seniors' Strategy and the Citizen Engagement Strategy for direction on strategy development, governance and incorporating the needs of immigrants and newcomers. The HIPC has also partnered with the not-for-profit organization, CORE Collaborative Learning, to assist in providing training for service providers on the housing and health needs of newcomers. The HIPC also has worked closely with the Niagara LIP over the past year to share learnings and support them in their transition from being hosted by a community organization to being sponsored by the municipality. Although these bodies are not represented in the formal network of the HIPC partners, none-the-less connections with them have helped to advance the work of meeting the needs of newcomers in Hamilton through the sharing of information, expertise and resources.

Collective and collaborative leadership has also been achieved through working with and encouraging partners to align their business plans and strategic priorities with the work of the HIPC in an effort to integrate and prioritize the needs of newcomers and immigrants in Hamilton. Strategies and reports which reflect this alignment include, the City of Hamilton's Seniors' Strategy, Workforce Planning Hamilton's Labour Market Plan, the City of Hamilton's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and the City of Hamilton's Citizen Engagement initiative. These plans and strategies recognize the importance of addressing the needs of newcomers due to the partnerships formed with the HIPC.

Through these partnerships and with the support of the HIPC, community partners have acquired funding to carry out numerous projects to achieve the goals of the Immigration Strategy. For example, Workforce Planning Hamilton received funding from the Trillium Foundation to establish the Hamilton Immigrant Mentoring Partnership program and website. City Housing Hamilton developed 14 five bedroom units that are rent geared to income and suitable for larger families such as newcomer families. The Affordable Housing Flagship, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's and the City of Hamilton's Housing Services Division cohosted the National Housing Day "Building Bridges to Homes: Addressing the Housing Needs of Newcomers" with the HIPC and produced a video of newcomers describing their housing experiences in Hamilton. The Housing Help Centre provided workshops to service providers who work with newcomer clients regarding the rights and responsibilities of newcomer tenants. These

are just some examples of the ways in which with the influence of the HIPC, community organizations are working to achieve the common goal of helping newcomers settle and integrate successfully.

In a report released by the Kovacs Group Inc. that assessed the progress of implementing the Immigration Strategy, it was found that as a result of the HIPC's work, engagement and collaboration within and across stakeholder groups had been enhanced and that stakeholders were working together in new and innovative ways. The report concluded that there is "evidence that the HIPC's work has resulted in systemic change by re-engineering how stakeholders in the City of Hamilton work together, provide service and meet the needs of the newcomer community." The effectiveness of the collaborative efforts facilitated through the HIPC was also identified in a survey administered by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and completed by community partners. Although much work has been done to establish and strengthen partnerships, the importance of collective and collaborative leadership to achieve the Strategy's priorities cannot be understated and therefore continuing this work remains a priority for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

2. Strengthening the Delivery of Settlement Services

It is in the early stages of settlement that immigrants face the greatest challenges. Finding a job, finding appropriate affordable housing, learning the language, obtaining access to public services, and developing a support network are all part of this phase.

The HIPC has identified the creation of a more responsive and integrated system of service provision as a strategic priority. The objective is to better coordinate services at the community level and improve newcomers' access to mainstream service institutions, as well as to increase newcomers' awareness of these services.

Over the last year, the HIPC has brought together a wide range of community partners and facilitated the coordination of their efforts to address the needs of newcomers. These efforts have resulted in producing and disseminating a myriad of resources, conducting research and disseminating the results to inform planning, organizing networking and information sharing events, and creating and implementing innovative strategies. This work contributes to increased levels of knowledge and awareness of both providers and newcomers about the programs and services available to newcomers. The HIPC also employed the use of rigorous evaluative mechanisms to ensure that the quality, relevance and usefulness of all initiatives, events and resources produced meet the needs of service providers and their newcomer clients.

Through its five working groups, the HIPC provides timely information about services for newcomers to provider agencies, practitioners, immigrant communities and local representatives of various levels of government. The HIPC facilitates and encourages collaboration among these groups to respond to the diverse needs of newcomers. For example, the Settlement Service Provider Working Group collaborated with the Language Training Working Group to develop a business proposal for the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) to reduce public transit fares for newcomer language learners. This proposal will be presented to HSR in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Improving access to language programs through affordable transit helps to ensure that newcomers develop the language and communication skills needed to successfully settle into the community.

Through evaluations and feedback survey data collected by the HIPC (e.g., Service Provider Survey 2013; Cross Training Event Feedback, March 2013; HIPC Evaluation Report, Kovacs Group Inc., June 2013, etc.) it is clear that connections with informal networks such as ethno-cultural associations and faith-based institutions need to be established and strengthened so that newcomers can readily access

accurate information and services. The Settlement Service Provider and Language Training working groups are working together to build and sustain trusting relationships with informal networks that are mutually supportive to create an integrated system of services, both formal and informal, to better serve newcomers.

The Language Training Working Group and the Employment/Labour Market Working Group have also begun to work toward addressing the communication needs of employers to assist newcomers in obtaining employment. These groups will co-host a forum in the next fiscal year with language training providers and employment counsellors to identify the issues and devise solutions. Similarly, the Housing and Health Working Groups have plans to coordinate their efforts to determine and respond to the needs of newcomers related to acquiring and maintaining healthy housing.

Throughout the year, the HIPC Working Groups engaged in a series of strategic activities and developed and distributed resources to help strengthen the coordination within the settlement and broader service sector. The HIPC's Settlement Service Provider Working Group re-examined the level of coordination among providers for a third year in a row. Findings of the 2013 Service Provider Survey showed an improvement in providers' knowledge of services for newcomers and an increase in collaboration among providers. Since 2011 there has been a 16% increase among service providers across all sectors who indicate they are very knowledgeable about making referrals to other providers' services. Providers (62%) also reported that they collaborate with other providers more often than they did two years ago (prior to the HIPC working groups being established). The majority of providers either usually (49%) or occasionally (46%) work with other service providers to meet the needs of their newcomer clients. Results of the survey indicated that the existence of the HIPC and its resources has helped to increase the level of coordination among formal service providers. Given that an integrated system of services is a priority of the HIPC, the Settlement Service Provider Working Group has committed to measuring level of coordination annually.

In recognizing the significant role that networking opportunities play in fostering collaborative partnerships and enhancing coordination efforts among service providers, the HIPC held its second annual event for all HIPC members and community partners. The half day event in March 2014 brought together members of the HIPC, Steering Committee, working groups and members' colleagues. The focus of the event entitled "Immigration Innovation" was to foster the creation of innovative solutions in a collaborative manner across sectors of the community. Over 100 participants heard from Hamilton's CIC Settlement Supervisor, Hamilton's City Manager and project lead of ALLIES Maytree Foundation about the importance of immigration and innovative trends across the country. Participants also were engaged in roundtable discussion to address some key issue faced by the HIPC. A networking period and display tables of the working groups' resources, materials and research reports were available to participants. The report of the roundtable discussions will be shared with members in the next fiscal year to help inform the development of their work plans.

The HIPC's Health Working Group also hosted their second annual event, "Embracing Cultural Competency for Better Health Outcomes - a Forum on Newcomer Health in Hamilton" in February 2014. This event brought together 100 health care providers, settlement service providers, policy makers and other stakeholders who work with newcomers in Hamilton. The event provided participants with an opportunity to learn how local organizations have achieved improved health outcomes through delivering culturally competent services and supports to newcomers. It featured five short presentations showcasing local organizations' best practices around culturally competent care for newcomers. The presentations were followed by break-out discussions where participants could learn more about each of the organizations' practices and contribute their own ideas and practices around cultural competency. A report of the break-out discussions is being compiled and will be released and distributed to providers to

facilitate efforts in strengthening cultural competency to improve health outcomes in newcomer populations.

Also in November of 2014, the Settlement Service Provider Working Group coordinated its second annual workshop for all front-line staff of CIC-funded settlement agencies. The workshop provided 80 service providers with information on organizational changes management to increase their understanding of CIC streams, expectations, and outcomes. Not only were front-line staff provided with excellent resources and tools to improve their skills when working with their newcomer clients, they also were able to develop new relationships and strengthen existing ones with their settlement service provider colleagues.

By hosting such events and highlighting the role of cross sectorial collaboration, the HIPC provides service providers with connections which are pertinent for the development of innovative solutions to meet the needs of newcomers and the community. For example, the HIPC facilitated an association between the largest settlement service provider in Hamilton and Workforce Planning Hamilton with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce. Providers wanted to share with the Chamber the information about the programs available to recruit and hire immigrants and how their services can support employers and their newcomer employees. Although this initiative was not a planned activity in the 2013-2014 Work Plan it was identified as a priority in aiding the settlement process and the labour market needs and as such is deemed as necessary.

The findings of a recent survey and key informant interviews conducted by the Social Planning Research Council of Hamilton described the result of the HIPC's efforts to coordinate services through facilitating collaboration among providers:

Another theme that emerged from the gathered information was the link between the collaborative processes of the HIPC and an improved system of newcomer services. Survey responses consistently identified that collaboration and partnerships are an important value of the HIPC to their organizations' work and processes. As well, service coordination, awareness of services and knowledge exchange are identified benefits of their HIPC involvement. The participants in the key informant interviews articulated that an increase in collaboration had led to continued inter-agency cooperation and enhanced service processes. They identify that the development and delivery of services has improved through an increase in partnerships and community input.

Source: HIPC 2013 Impact Assessment, SPRC April 2014

3. Creating a Safe and Welcoming Community

The third strategic priority was updated in December 2013 to add a safety component to the concept of a welcoming community. The HIPC approved additional goals and strategic actions for this priority that will be addressed over the next several years. The HIPC recognizes that the successful integration of newcomers to Hamilton and the pursuit of a welcoming community must be built on a solid base of shared knowledge. Part of this process involves increasing awareness about the needs of newcomers and the services available to support their settlement and highlighting the contributions newcomers make to the community. Public awareness plays an instrumental role in maintaining a direct and virtual presence in the community, strengthening and increasing partnerships, increasing the awareness of the work of the HIPC and conveying the importance of immigration to Hamilton to the broader community.

To help create a welcoming community the HIPC works to create resources, conduct local research, increase awareness of services and promote the benefits of a diverse community. Over the last year the HIPC had a strong presence in the media highlighting the housing needs of newcomers, the increased level of collaboration among service providers, employers' experiences hiring newcomers and the results of the HIPC health forum. In addition, the HIPC hosted and attended numerous events, community meetings and consultations at which information about the HIPC and the needs of newcomers was shared.

One event that took place in September 2013 not only disseminated information about the needs of newcomer job-seekers it also raised awareness about a new program for newcomer job-seekers. The results of local research conducted by Workforce Planning Hamilton with support of the HIPC on the experiences of 378 employers in hiring immigrants were released at the "Pathways to Employment: Strengthening the Immigrant Connection" event. The findings described the barriers employers face in recruiting and hiring newcomers and what is required of newcomer job-seekers. The study's recommendations offered ways to meet the needs of employers and newcomers to address labour market needs and increase immigrant employment. One of the report's recommendations was to create a mentorship program which was established in August 2013 through Workforce Planning Hamilton with support from the HIPC and launched at this event. Employers, service providers and newcomers in attendance were given the opportunity to share their stories and advice on gaining employment and make professional connections. The event, the report's findings and the Hamilton Immigrant Mentoring Partnership program were further publicized in a subsequent article in the local newspaper.

Further recommendations of the report led to other activities being carried out that facilitate a welcoming community. For example, employers and service providers received resources and summaries of the report with the recommendations to assist them in recruiting and hiring immigrants. Networking events have been hosted by Workforce Planning Hamilton and the HIPC to further prepare newcomers for jobs and raise awareness among employers about the benefits of hiring global talent. Also, in partnership with the Hamilton Spectator, Workforce Planning Hamilton, the Immigrant Attraction Action Plan and the HIPC, a project is underway to profile newcomers and their pathways to employment in a bi-weekly series in the business section of the newspaper.

Another event aimed at increasing an understanding of the experiences and needs of newcomers related to housing took place in November and was attended by over 100 people. The HIPC's Housing Working Group hosted the 2013 National Housing Day event. In communities across Canada, National Housing Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the country's affordable housing needs and to work towards finding innovative solutions for housing and homelessness issues. The theme of Hamilton's event was Building Bridges to Homes: Addressing the Housing Needs of Newcomers. The event showcased a video produced by the HIPC's Housing Working Group entitled "Hamilton, My Home" featuring newcomers to Hamilton who shared their experiences in attaining affordable housing. A panel discussion with the newcomers featured in the video offered further insight into their housing needs, challenges and solutions. The local media conveyed the messages of the day through coverage in the newspaper and radio and television interviews with event organizers. The "Hamilton, My Home" video has been broadly distributed and aired on the local cable station. The Housing Working Group has also begun to partner with a priority neighbourhood in the community to help newcomer tenants obtain and maintain safe housing.

The Health Working Group's event on cultural competency for better health outcomes for newcomers is another example of publicizing the needs of newcomers and ways to fulfil them. The event was covered by the media and presentations of culturally competent best practices were recorded to will be shared on an online platform to inform the work of health care providing organizations.

In addition to recognizing the important role played by public events and the media in shaping public perception and discourse around the importance of immigration, the HIPC also continued to increase newcomers' access to information about local settlement services. The HIPC's Welcome to Hamilton website has also become key in helping newcomers settle. Service providers and newcomers can access information on programs and services and to download resources, inventories, tools and guides created by the HIPC working groups to facilitate settlement. This website plays an important information sharing role for those interested in the settlement and integration of newcomers to community. In the coming year the website will be expanded to include interactive web-based applications to allow providers to share information, post questions and forge virtual partnerships.

A website that aims to attract immigrants to Hamilton should also raise awareness of and showcase the array and quality of settlement services available in Hamilton. A coordinated system of services that facilitates the prompt and successful integration of newcomers into the community is itself an attraction strategy and indicative of a welcoming community. Throughout the year the HIPC has had input into the enhancement of the City's Immigration Portal, work that will continue into the next fiscal year to ensure that the Portal addresses the settlement and integration needs of prospective residents. Given the significance of a web based presence in this digital age, the HIPC has worked to make vital, current information available to service providers and their newcomer clients to ensure they settle in Hamilton and feel at home.

The HIPC also supports community partners who work towards building an inclusive community and bringing a diversity-focused lens into the institutional practices. In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the HIPC participated in events such as the City of Hamilton's Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee's Open House, the Turning Talk into Transformation Conference and Diversity Awards hosted by the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, International Refugee Day organized by Wesley Urban Ministries and the Immigrant Women's Centre, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO)'s Franco-Ontarian Day and others to promote an inclusive and welcoming community.

All of the efforts of the HIPC including the development of resources for newcomers and service providers, awareness raising and knowledge sharing events, and media coverage contribute a more welcoming community in which newcomers can more readily settle and integrate making Hamilton their home.

4. Creating and Disseminating Knowledge of Immigration

Building foundational knowledge and local data is crucial to implementing the Immigration Strategy because:

- Service providers and employers who have access to the most recent research and data are more aware of newcomers' needs and skills and are better equipped to serve and employ newcomers.
- Strengthening local capacity to integrate newcomers is best achieved through a sharpened narrative and a more informed body of knowledge about immigration.
- Evidence-based planning results in the delivery of relevant high quality immigrant integration services and facilitates effective monitoring and oversight.

Since its inception, the HIPC has been pursuing this priority through a number of activities using a variety of formats and technology. It has commissioned a number of studies, reports and needs assessments, collaborated on many community events to garner and record community input, created and administered numerous surveys to service providers and stakeholders and presented at meetings and forums.

A recent example includes the work of the HIPC's Employment/Labour Market Working Group which, through the leadership of Workforce Planning Hamilton, secured funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to conduct research on the experiences and attitudes of employers in hiring immigrants. This project engaged over 350 employers in Hamilton through telephone surveys, focus groups and individual interviews. A report of the project findings was released in May 2013 which outlined ten key findings including that employers are open to hiring immigrants but most do not seek out immigrants in particular and tend to use informal methods of hiring such as word of mouth and personal contacts. Employers also were very satisfied with their immigrant employees but noted that language and communication skills are extremely important when they are considering hiring a newcomer. The report made several recommendations to connect immigrants to employers, connect employers to employment service providers and to improve the employment readiness of immigrants and the diversity readiness of employers. An overview of the study's key findings and relevant recommendations were produced for employers and another for community members. Furthermore, the study's recommendations formed the basis of the Employment/Labour Market Working Group's 2014-2015 work plan. The Language Training Working Group also has used the study's findings to develop activities for the next fiscal year aimed at identifying and addressing the specific communication needs of employers.

Other examples include the Health Working Group's Community Health Report: The Health Needs of Newcomers and Immigrants in Hamilton. This report is the result of the Health Working Group's Health Equity Roundtable event of March 2013. The report, released in September 2013, is the result of the event's group discussions about the barriers faced by newcomers in accessing health care services how such barriers can be overcome. Eight themes of the discussions are described in the report including the significance of collaboration, coordination and partnerships among health care providers, the need for translation and interpretation supports for newcomer patients, the importance of raising newcomer awareness of services and the providers' awareness of newcomers' issues, and the need for local research and culturally appropriate health care services. The report provides recommendations under each of these themes which the Health Working Group will implement as part of their work plan in the next fiscal year.

Further data has been gathered and reported by the Settlement Working Group with their third year of administering the Service Provider Survey to providers across all sectors. This tool assesses the level of coordination and collaboration among providers and their knowledge of services available for their newcomer clients across Hamilton. The findings of this year's survey show that providers are increasingly collaborating and coordinating their efforts to better serve the newcomer population. Similarly, the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton's Impact Assessment study identified that HIPC partners are highly committed to the work of the HIPC and are better coordinated because of it. Both of these reports will be shared widely in the 2014-2015 fiscal year to inform planning of services and HIPC's work.

During the past year the HIPC has been called upon to share information about their practices and processes. For example, the HIPC's Project Manager was a key informant for a project of four Local Immigration Partnerships in Toronto to build capacity to collaborate. As part their project to develop a mini-toolkit outlining emergent best practices for LIPs, they documented the HIPC's best practices to date, and how they have been applied. Similarly, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities included the HIPC's Project Manager in a focus group to learn of the most effective ways to coordinate a system of services and the City of Ottawa sought the HIPC's advice on sharing information with internal and external audiences about immigration related initiatives. The HIPC also participated the strategic planning of the Francophone Immigration Network for the central southwestern region on Ontario. The HIPC was also invited to present its work around evaluation of its progress and impact to a national audience in Ottawa at the National Pathways to Prosperity Conference.

This past year, the HIPC has continued working on the significant task of evaluating its impact on the community. Following the 'roadmap' to evaluation created by the Kovacs Group Inc., the completion of

the first phase of evaluation in 2013-2014 documented the progress of the Immigration Strategy. This work has led to work being undertaken for the second phase to develop a collaborative impact evaluation framework and plan. This process has been truly collaborative. The HIPC has participated in suggesting outcomes, objectives and indicators to be measured that capture the impact of this work on the community. The Steering Committee has reviewed and refined an evaluation framework that was subsequently approved by the HIPC. A sub-committee of the HIPC has evolved who have taken on the task of selecting outcomes, indicators and baseline measures that will form the evaluation plan. In the next fiscal year, the working groups also will be engaged in the process and asked for their input into the outcomes and to identify any data their organizations have that can contribute to measuring the outcomes. Once the evaluation plan is completed it will guide the third phase of the roadmap in the next fiscal year to evaluate the impact of the HIPC on the community. The plan will be revisited and revised in the following year.

The HIPC will continue to support, produce and disseminate local information on immigration. In a report that evaluated the progress of the HIPC in implementing the Immigration Strategy, Kovacs (2013) found that:

The work of the HIPC and its partners has resulted in a robust, evidence-based body of knowledge related to each of the four Strategic Priorities to inform strategic decisions in addressing the needs of newcomers.

Impacts and Contributions

The HIPC is committed to carrying out a multi-phased and multifaceted evaluation plan to attempt to assess the project's impacts and contributions towards the successful settlement and integration of newcomers in Hamilton. Measuring the impact of the HIPC's work on the community is a complicated and complex task and there are limits to how much can be measured and how confidently changes in newcomers' settlement can be attributed directly to the work of the HIPC. Irrespective of the challenges of evaluating social change, the HIPC is dedicated to developing a robust measurement procedure to begin to determine some of the ways the HIPC's work is making a difference. As the evaluation work progresses it will be improved and refined to yield more detailed results. The evaluation framework will measure the outcomes of the HIPC, assess the current delivery model and support other communities to measure the impact of the LIP in their area.

While some stages of the evaluation plan remain ongoing and are expected to be completed in the next fiscal year, other components were completed this fiscal year. What follows is an overview of the results of the major evaluation projects that were completed within the current fiscal year to measure the impact and contributions of the work of the HIPC. Plans for further evaluations to be carried out in the next fiscal year are also discussed.

Progress in Implementing the Immigration Strategy

In the 2012–13 fiscal year the Kovacs Group Inc. was enlisted to develop a 'roadmap' of evaluation to measure the impact of the HIPC on the community and newcomer settlement and integration. Three phases of evaluation were outlined. The first took place last fiscal year (2012 -2013) in which the overall progress of implementing the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan was assessed. Results showed that the majority of the strategic actions identified in the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan have been addressed and that due to the work of the HIPC, stakeholders are working together in innovative ways.

Kovacs reported that there is evidence of systemic change because of the HIPC and more robust evidence-based knowledge pertaining to immigration in Hamilton.

Recommendations from that report provided direction for future evaluation: 1) focus on impact, process and innovation; 2) create an evaluation framework; 3) develop an evaluation plan; and 4) review the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan to determine relevance of all goals and actions and incorporate evaluation into HIPC's annual Work Plan. In December 2013, The HIPC reviewed the Immigration Strategy and Action Plan determined that all goals and actions remained relevant. However, they also agreed that two more goals relating to safety and one related to collaborating with informal networks be added to the priority 'Creating a Welcoming Community.'

Phase two of the evaluation road map addresses Kovacs' second and third recommendations. Throughout the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Kovacs Group Inc. has facilitated a collaborative process to develop an Impact Evaluation Framework. Through a survey to members of the HIPC and group consultations with the Steering Committee and HIPC members a framework for evaluating the impact of the work of the HIPC was drafted. The framework aligns with the four Strategic Priorities of the Immigration Strategy and identifies outcomes for each of the priorities' strategic goals along with the measures and metrics to be evaluated in the first year and the desired results. The Steering Committee will recommend to the HIPC the outcomes to be measured in the next fiscal year. They will chose outcomes under each of the four strategic priorities based on the resources and data that are readily available and those that will most effectively reveal something about the HIPC's impact on the community. The HIPC will review the outcomes selected by the Steering Committee in May 2014 and members of working groups will also provide feedback.

Phase three of the roadmap addresses the third recommendation in the Kovacs Report (2012-2013), the development of an evaluation plan which consists of the outcomes selected for each priority to be measured and the methods of evaluating each of them. This plan will be executed throughout the 2014-2015 year so that by the end of the year there will be a report on the impact the HIPC has had on the community. This work will further inform the continued evaluation of the other outcomes identified in the evaluation framework.

Measuring Partner Contribution and Impact

In March 2014, the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) completed an assessment of the impact of the HIPC on its community partners. Through surveys distributed to HIPC partners, this work sought to quantify in-kind and financial contributions and document the impact their involvement in the HIPC has had on their work, the work of their organizations and the people they serve. Finally the survey sought to assess the number of partnerships HIPC partners have been able to establish through their participation with the HIPC and the nature of those partnerships. The online survey was in administered in February 2014. Due to a low response rate (33%), SPRC conducted key informant interviews with 8 HIPC members to garner further information about members' involvement with the HIPC.

The SPRC reported three key findings:

- The HIPC remains consistently strong with high levels of commitment (for example, 96% of survey respondents indicated that they are committed or very committed to the HIPC's work)
- The collaboration and partnerships built through HIPC's work are an indication of an effective community system of services (for example, all key informant interview participants identified that the HIPC has contributed to their initiatives' successes through the building of collaboration and partnerships leading to enhanced service processes)

- The HIPC promotes increased investment in resources that support the successful integration of newcomers (for example, 71% of survey respondents have used HIPC resources in their work)

Findings also showed that the HIPC's community partners have contributed a great deal of their own time, their staff's time, resources (such as printing, meeting space, and refreshments) and funds as well as leveraged additional funding from other sources to support various projects identified on the HIPC's work plan. The total dollar value of contributions was a conservative estimate (as all partners did not participate in the survey) of \$200,000 for the 2013 calendar year. This further indication of the commitment of community partners to the work of the HIPC.

In addition, the SPRC report (2014) found that the HIPC's work has had a range of impacts on both individual and organizational levels; the HIPC's materials/resources and reports are utilized by community partners, community partners have become more involved in newcomer issues, and cross-organizational collaboration has increased and improved. Organizations have also promoted the importance of immigration and incorporated newcomer issues into their strategic plans because of their involvement with the HIPC.

The most significant impacts on the community reported by respondents included an increased awareness of services, the formation of new collaborative relationships, better coordinated services, increased municipal involvement in newcomer integration and a decrease in duplication and gaps in services.

The majority of respondents identified that they have established new partnerships through their involvement with the HIPC for various purposes such as exchanging information, accessing funding, implementing activities, sharing resources, making referrals, sharing and conducting research and for advocacy purposes.

Over 90% of respondents reported that they are motivated to be involved with HIPC due to opportunities to share information, resources and ideas and through the belief that Hamilton benefits by having a diverse population. A high response rate of 84% was given to the motivating factor of ensuring services are coordinated without duplication or gaps. Respondents also reported a high level of commitment as 96% indicated that they are committed or very committed to the HIPC's work.

The findings of the SPRC report are consistent with other evaluations undertaken by the HIPC during the 2013 – 14 fiscal year, in which the improved coordination and awareness of services and collaboration among the community interested in and serving newcomers is attributed to the HIPC.

The full report will be presented to the HIPC and subsequently widely disseminated following the May 2014 meeting of the HIPC.

Assessing Level of Coordination among Service Providers

The annual HIPC Service Provider Survey is designed to measure the level of coordination, knowledge and awareness of services and ability to make referrals among mainstream and settlement service providers. This survey has now been conducted for three consecutive years to date (2011-2013), allowing for cross-comparison to highlight trends and identify where improvements have occurred and where they are still needed. While the response rate was higher this year than in 2011, it was down considerably from last year (378 respondents in 2012 versus 209 respondents in 2013) which should be considered when comparing results.

Results of the 2013 survey demonstrate that coordination among service providers continues to improve with the help of the HIPC and its resources. This year's survey results (November 2013) showed that 72% of respondents indicated that they felt they could readily find all the information needed to confidently refer newcomer clients, this is an improvement from 2012 (67.2%) and 2011 (37%).

Survey results also revealed that there have been improvements across all sectors represented in this survey (language, education, health, settlement, housing, recreation, social assistance, legal, etc.) in the level of knowledge needed to make referrals to other services in Hamilton. A greater proportion of respondents from each sector identified themselves as 'very knowledgeable' of other services and a lower proportion reported 'not having any knowledge' of other services than in previous surveys. For example, 33% of providers indicated that they were 'very knowledgeable' about making referrals to settlement services, compared to only 19.6% in 2012 and 17% in 2011. This is indicative of a positive trend toward greater coordination (knowledge of other services and resource exchange) within and across sectors serving newcomers in Hamilton.

Unlike previous years, this year's survey also measured the level of collaboration of among providers. Forty nine percent of providers responding to this question indicated that they 'usually' work with other service providers on matters related to their newcomer clients. Forty eight percent reported that they 'occasionally' collaborate with other providers while less than 1% indicated that they 'never' work with other providers. The majority of respondents (62%) also reported that they currently work with other providers to meet the needs of newcomers more often than they did 2 years ago, since the HIPC working groups have been established. Respondents noted that they participate in meetings, workshops, events, and consultations with other providers; share information and resources; and co-organize/host workshops, events, training sessions and forums with other service providers.

This year's survey also sought to develop a better understanding of the relationships between service providers and informal networks. Respondents were asked to report their level of knowledge of supports provided by informal networks and their frequency in working with the informal sector. Only 5.9% of respondents indicated they were 'very knowledgeable' about the supports provided by informal networks. Fifty nine percent indicated they had either 'limited' or 'no knowledge' of informal supports. Additionally, just 10% of respondents noted that they 'usually' work with informal networks while 52% 'occasionally' did and 25% 'never' worked with informal networks. This data will further inform the work of the Informal Networks Project led by the HIPC's Settlement Service Provider Working Group to establish ongoing and mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with informal networks.

The evaluative efforts of the HIPC have been recognized as innovative and as such the HIPC was invited to present its evaluation work at the national Pathways to Prosperity conference in Ottawa in November 2013. The presentation, to an audience of over 200 people, including academics, CIC representatives, settlement organizations and other LIPs garnered much interest and led to many requests to share more details on the HIPC's evaluation projects.

While formal evaluations and assessments have highlighted the important contributions to, and impacts on, the newcomer community and settlement sector, the HIPC also has had a wide range of impacts which have not yet been formally documented or measured. For example, through discussions with the Housing Working Group Chair (the Director of the Housing Services Division of the City of Hamilton) and City Housing Hamilton's CEO, City Housing Hamilton constructed 14 new five bedroom rent geared to income units to address the needs of large families including newcomer families. The cost of this project is over \$2.9 million. In addition, Inform Ontario has taken an interest in the Welcome to Hamilton website created by Community Information Hamilton (CIH) and the HIPC. Inform Ontario has met with CIH and the HIPC to learn more about the website and is looking to duplicate it in other regions. Furthermore, the HIPC model has been sought out to be emulated by other collaboratives in the City of

Hamilton and beyond. The City's work regarding the development of citizen engagement and a seniors' strategy have sought out the HIPC to learn more about the governance structure and mechanisms that are in place that make the HIPC model effective to use in developing their own models. Furthermore, other Local Immigration Partnerships, the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities have all drawn on the model of the HIPC to inform their own work.

Resources produced by the HIPC are also utilized in ways beyond the obvious. For example, the "Tip Sheets" to assist newcomers in seeking employment produced by the Employment Working Group have been adapted by Collège Boréal and are being included in their curriculum throughout the province. Also, the Welcome to Hamilton website is featured in a training video produced by Wesley Urban Ministries for service providers working with newcomers. The video describes the website as a key resource for those serving newcomers. Furthermore, Wesley distributes to newcomers a USB that contains information and materials to assist them in settling in Hamilton. The resources produced by the HIPC's working groups such as the Housing and Employment Guide for Newcomers and the HIPC's Quick Guide of services are among the materials included on the USBs. The work of the HIPC also has been recognized in all levels of government. In July 2013, the provincial minister of Citizenship and Immigration visited Hamilton to learn more about immigration initiatives after he was made aware of the HIPC's work through an HIPC member who participated in the Minister's Employer Table. This visit resulted in the beginning of an important and mutually supportive relationship with that ministry.

The impact of the HIPC has been far reaching however the challenging task of measuring and documenting the impact of the HIPC on newcomers and the community has just begun. The next fiscal year will result in a better understanding of the ways which the HIPC is making a difference in the community.

Successes, Challenges and Next Steps

As demonstrated by the evaluations and assessments discussed above, the HIPC has made strides in helping to improve the system of service for newcomers during this fiscal year. As evidenced by the interest of other LIPs, the provincial minister, and commitment and expansion of working group members, the HIPC is seen as a 'best practice' collaborative. Success in this respect is attributed to detailed planning, high level of coordination, and the dedication and engagement of all stakeholders. The HIPC's community partners attribute improved collaboration and communication in the settlement service sector, to their involvement with the HIPC. Partners also feel a strong sense of inclusion and high level of alignment. It has also been noted by members that the broader community is starting to identify the unique needs of immigrants and refugees and have begun to customize accordingly.

With increased public awareness of the HIPC's mandate, role and work, service providers are increasingly turning to the HIPC for research, information, resources, and opportunities to participate in the HIPC's working groups. The HIPC makes every effort to ensure that a wide spectrum of perspectives is represented through diverse and inclusive membership. While membership of working groups has expanded, this has not come without challenges. As evidenced by the SPRC report (2013) described above, membership can be demanding in both time and resources and sustaining a high level of investment is sometimes challenging. Even the most dedicated and invested members may reach membership capacity. However, there remain significant opportunities for further community engagement and increased ownership of newcomer issues and with the creation of the HIPC's engagement strategy during the fiscal year, the HIPC remains dedicated to seeking out these opportunities.

As noted earlier, there has been an overall improvement in the coordination of services and collaboration among service providers. Despite this success, there remains a need to establish collaborative relationships with the informal sector as one of main sources to whom newcomers turn for sources of information and support when settling and integrating into the community. A sub-committee of the Settlement Service Provider Working Group was established in the 2013-2014 fiscal year and has developed a detailed work plan to make a concerted and methodical effort to better connect with informal networks. In March 2014, members of that sub-committee with an HIPC staff member met with the Imam of Hamilton's downtown Mosque. The meeting resulted in plans for future partnerships. One suggestion of the Imam was to provide an office in the Mosque to formal service providers to distribute information about their services and assist the Mosque's newcomer members. The sub-committee has also set a meeting with the Somali and Iraqi communities for May 2014. Meetings with the informal providers will continue throughout the 2014-2015 fiscal year to develop relationships that are mutually supportive and to create an opportunity for the consistent reciprocal flow of information to better support newcomers in the settlement process.

Revisiting the Immigration Strategy and its four Strategic Priorities will remain an important exercise for all stakeholders as the needs and circumstances of newcomers to Hamilton shift and change over time. Further attention will be needed to support and commit to some of the more 'aspirational' goals such as the elimination of racial discrimination in contributing to a safe and welcoming community. While aspirational, the HIPC members agreed that it remains fundamental and necessary to building a community that embraces and celebrates the difference and diversity that newcomers bring. In choosing to retain such goals, the HIPC community partners recognize the immense challenge ahead, but have expressed their support in collaborating to develop more specific steps to addressing barriers to housing, health care, employment and other services to newcomers that stem from racism and discrimination.

With over 80 community partners, the HIPC has also created numerous resources including the Newcomer Services in Hamilton: Guidebook for Service Providers and Quick Guide which were updated by providers and re-released in 2013. All HIPC resources have been shared both in print and electronically, via public forums and distributed to service providers and to newcomers through providers' organizations. The Welcome to Hamilton website (www.welcometohamilton.ca) continues to be a valuable tool for providers and newcomers alike to access all HIPC resources. Respondents in the 2013 SPRC Contribution and Impact Assessment also indicated that the information and tools produced by the HIPC are well-used by front-line staff. The Service Provider Survey noted that while providers prefer to online resources, newcomers prefer print materials. As such, the HIPC will continue to make its resources available in print in multiple languages. During the year, the HIPC also supported the work of the Immigrant Attraction Action Plan in further enhancing the Portal. This work will continue in the next fiscal year to ensure the Portal conveys Hamilton as a welcoming community in which newcomers can be successful with the help of a well-coordinated settlement service system.

Producing resources for newcomers and in multiple languages can be extremely costly. Members from the Employment Working Group, Settlement Service Provider Working and the Housing Working Group have submitted grant proposals for funding for the development of programs, resources and materials for newcomers. While some proposals have not been successful others have. For example, with the support of the Employment Working Group, Workforce Planning Hamilton received over \$150,000 to develop and execute a mentorship program. The Hamilton Immigrant Mentoring Partnership (HIMP), was developed in the summer months and by March 31, 2014 had 32 matches (25 completed) with four mentees finding employment. The program has three corporate sponsors and is looking to increase sponsorship in the next fiscal year and include an interactive forum on the website (www.himp.ca). In a time of fiscal cutbacks, the HIPC remains committed to supporting member organizations in seeking and obtaining funding for projects that advance the implementation of the Immigration Strategy.

In addition to the resources produced, the HIPC and its many partners have created many opportunities for networking, information sharing and workshops for providers, stakeholders, employers and newcomers. From events on immigration innovation, cultural competency in health care provision, the launch of the mentorship program and the release of the Hiring Immigrants Project findings to the annual workshop for CIC-funded service providers and monthly Brown Bag Lunch meetings of all service providers, the partners of the HIPC, providers and stakeholders alike, have underscored the importance of HIPC's events gaining information and facilitating collaboration. The HIPC will continue its commitment to create such opportunities throughout the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

While the HIPC is successfully working with service providers in Hamilton as noted in the SPRC's survey findings (2013), HIPC partners also identified a need for increased broader community engagement and education. Enhanced effort is required to strategize processes for bringing educational opportunities to the wider Hamilton community. The HIPC has incorporated into its 2014-2015 work plan the creation of a broad public education strategy in collaboration with community partners as a means of making Hamilton a more welcoming city. Partners' input on this issue was garnered at the HIPC's annual event in March 2014 and their recommendations will be used to inform the development of a public education strategy in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The HIPC is a champion and facilitator in connecting community partners and institutions throughout the city and supporting them in working together to ensure the successful settlement and integration of Hamilton's newcomers. The HIPC has enabled a large number of community stakeholders and experts to contribute in a collaborative and cooperative manner. Given that community engagement is a delicate balancing act of, in some cases, conflicting interests, the HIPC has worked to acknowledge community partners' diverse interests while being cognizant of the resources required to complete the activities outlined its annual Work Plan. By drawing on relevant research, employing evidence-based approaches, consulting extensively with community partners and involving service provider organizations in the priority setting and execution process, the HIPC has been able to garner the support and confidence of Hamilton's vast service sector.

ⁱ For a the detailed work plan of activities accomplished in 2013-2014 please visit www.hamiltonimmigration.ca choose the "Immigration Strategy" tab and select the option "Work Plan Implementation"

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council

www.hamiltonimmigration.ca



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