

North West Scarborough Local Immigration Partnership

Voice of Newcomers

Steering Committee Meeting

The Third Steering Committee meeting was held on September 21st at ACSA head office located at 4155 Sheppard Avenue in Scarborough, and was chaired by Hanifa Kassam, ACSA's Manager of Newcomer and Settlement Programs.

The LIP Management Team updated the Steering Committee on the findings from the one-on-one discussion conducted during the months of July through to the end of September. The one-on-one discussions mainly focused on the following issues: Services provided by agencies, outreach strategies, challenges while providing services, immediate and long-term needs to improve existing services, current partnerships with community groups, possible partnerships and structure. 25 interviews were completed by the end of September.

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Upcoming Events:

Partnership Council Meeting:

October 19, 2010, 9:30 am- 12:30 pm
Venue: TBA

Steering Committee Meeting

October 19, 2010, 12:00 pm- 1.30 pm
Venue: TBA

Cluster Meetings:

Clusters will be regrouped in the Partnership Council meeting where meeting dates and venues will be announced

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Some of the highlights from the findings include (for details please see the handout “Some of the Findings from 1-on-1 Discussions”):

- * Rather than a single approach, a combination of strategies is more useful for outreach. Outreach should be continued throughout the year
- * Challenges include: limited amount of staff and funding and lack of services in multiple languages
- * Immediate needs include: long term stable funding, staffing, bigger office space and convenient locations
- * Long term needs: to have a consistent funding, more culturally diverse staff, strong partnerships with employers and educational institutes, and become a one-stop service provider
- * Partnerships can be formal or informal, initially can be short term and reviewed in future for renewal

The Steering Committee also reviewed the recommendations of each Team. They emphasized having more action oriented recommendations in addition to innovative ideas to sustain LIP initiatives. A referral protocol should be put in place in agencies while referring clients to another agency so that the client has a clear understanding. The Steering Committee members also encouraged cross learning opportunities through organizing skill and information exchange workshops or job shadowing.

Another topic discussed was the future direction of the project and focusing on key LIP initiatives and action plan for the extended project period beyond October 2010. Some of the key activities highlighted in the meeting are Community Summits, Inter-LIP Conference, Inter-LIP meetings and Information Fair. The Steering Committee agreed to conduct more focus group and one-on-one discussions with community groups and service providers because of the great feedback.

They also recommended that the LIP council members take initiative to hosting introductory sessions within various communities to introduce agencies providing services in this neighbourhood.

In order to expedite the process of developing the settlement strategy and implementation plan, the NWS LIP Steering Committee decided to meet every month. The Clusters will also meet on a monthly basis, and the Partnership Council will continue to meet quarterly to review the progress made by the individual clusters.

Cluster/Team Meeting

The objective of the Team meetings were to share the project progress, discuss future direction and review the recommendations and activities proposed by each Team.

Team 1 Meeting: Welcome and Access to Information

The meeting was held on September 28th, 2010 at Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, 2600 Birchmount Road in Scarborough.

Primary tasks identified were:

1. Establishing more effective Welcome Centres
2. Make recommendations to improve Newcomer Information Package
 - a) Pre-arrival Package
 - b) Arrival Package
3. Improve Newcomers access to correct information
4. Connect newcomers to relevant service providers faster

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Team 1 suggests the following activities:

- * Establish and improve Welcome Centres within agencies that have the capacity and resources and are willing or are already operating as a Welcome Centre
- * Create space for a Welcome Centre at community Hubs
- * Advocate on behalf of newcomers to make improvements in the pre- arrival orientation package before an immigrant leaves their country
- * Advocate for posting online information in a way that is easily accessible to newcomers
- * Services for refugees should be clearly mentioned along with the name of service providers
- * Prepare a service directory for the North West Scarborough
- * Partnership Council to organize an Information Fair for front line staff members to become aware of the services provided by other agencies, and help build networks

Team 2: Community Engagement in Settlement

The meeting was held on September 27th, 2010 at ANC Steeles/L'Amoreaux, 331 Glendower Circuit in Scarborough.

Primary tasks identified are:

1. Strengthen Faith-based and Resident Groups
2. Build and Sustain Supportive Networking among Key Stakeholders
3. Establishing Ways the Community can Better Support Settlement

Team 2 suggested the following activities:

- * Training guide to be developed by a committee made of both residents and agencies
- * Training guide to be in various languages or in English and translated on-site as needed
- * Develop a mechanism to ensure effective training and capacity development
- * On-going training opportunities for volunteers: 1) skills, 2) refresher course
- * More relationship and rapport building among agencies and resident groups is needed
- * Partnership Council members will assess the capacity of active resident and faith-based groups. Then, identify member agencies' interested in working with groups operating in their geographic area
- * Settlement agencies will act as liaison's between funders and resident/faith-based groups to advocate for funds to help implement community projects
- * Settlement agencies can act as a guarantor on behalf of non-registered, non-profit organizations to help build their capacity and make funds directly available to resident/faith-based group initiatives
- * Involve the Better Business Bureau (BBB) to consolidate on scams and fraudulent organizations that target newcomers

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Team 3: Making Services and Supports More Effective

The meeting was held on September 30th, 2010 at Mary Ward LINC & ESL Centre, 44 Kelvinway Drive in Scarborough.

Primary tasks identified are:

1. Establish One-Stop Service Center
2. Establish Partnerships and Collaboration Mechanisms among Service Providers and Key Stakeholders
3. Enhance Capacity through Agency Collaboration and Resource Sharing
4. Improve Client Case Management

Team 3 suggested the following activities:

- * Welcome Centres will be designated through existing locations
- * Recommend CIC fund allocation necessary changes to improve Welcome Centres
- * Develop a proposal to enhance information exchange between all the Welcome Centers in NW Scarborough and settlement agencies
- * Reflect the Modernization Approach into LIP recommendations and practises

To contribute items to be include in the next issue of *Voices of Newcomers* please contact:

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****please note submissions will be due the last week of each month for the following months issue****

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