

To:	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	September 28, 2023
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-13-23
Title:	Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) Year Three Review
Prepared by:	Deepikaa Gupta
Reviewed by:	Savanna Myers
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-13-23 regarding GBLIP Year Three Review be received for information;
2. That staff be permitted to travel out of province to attend the Pathway to Prosperity National Conference, as required and funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); and
3. That staff be permitted to travel out of country to attend the #WESImmigrantsWork Annual Convening funded by WES.

Executive Summary

The Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership (GBLIP) is a joint initiative, between Bruce and Grey Counties, fully funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The program is positioned to facilitate community-based partnerships that promote integration at the local level and foster more welcoming communities.

GBLIP works in partnership to identify and address gaps and opportunities in the region, encouraging local businesses, community partners and service providers to consider newcomers' needs related to access, coordination, and programming.

Background and Discussion

As the result of critical gaps being identified in the local labour force, municipalities and community partners are taking on a greater role in planning for and guiding immigration and settlement. In addition to the development of workforce and resident attraction strategies,

retention is a key concern for our region given the reality that entire families need to feel welcomed for workers to stay.

To help and lead in this work, GBLIP works closely with its Partnership Council, bringing together more than 66 community partners and organizations, including all 17 member municipalities in both Bruce and Grey counties. The Partnership Council members collaborate on newcomer-focused initiatives, including coordination of services, community research, planning, and other activities that support welcoming communities. The partnership works to build capacity, strengthen community, cultivate prosperity, and foster inclusion.

The Partnership Council, coordinated by GBLIP staff, is responsible for achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Settlement Strategy (attached), endorsed by both Grey and Bruce Counties and approved by IRCC 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 GBLIP's commitment to regional continuous improvement, members now benefit from two learning opportunities each meeting. These learning opportunities include guest speakers to share lived experience and professional development to foster inclusive leadership. The intention is that members (municipal and organization staff) 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 have continued to be active in year three of operation, providing a forum to focus more specifically on action items. The following outlines a few of the key priorities addressed in year three of the five-year program.

Employment Subcommittee

- Hosted an Employer roundtable with 39 participants titled “Contemporary Challenges in Hiring and Retaining Immigrants in Grey Bruce”.
- The discussion focused on the challenges, ideas, and best practices for successfully recruiting and integrating immigrants into the local workforce and assisted GBLIP in identifying the resources required to further support employers.
- Recognizing employer needs to access information and effective solutions to inclusive recruiting, hiring, and retention practices, an application was submitted to the competitive World Education Services #ImmigrantsWork program. Grey, Bruce was one of five communities selected across Canada. This work is ongoing and is anticipated to be completed in 2024.

Belong Subcommittee

- Collectively promoting multicultural festivals and events in the region was initiated through GBLIP and is still underway to explore diverse cultures and better understand the cultural and ethnic groups in Grey and Bruce.
- Supported the Emancipation Festival and Open Hindu Culture event, which saw more than 400 community members attend in Kincardine.

Community Subcommittee

- **Welcoming Week** - GBLIP coordinated and collaborated with Council members as well as community stakeholders across Grey-Bruce who were offering a variety of events and activities providing an opportunity for newcomers and long-time residents to connect. 17 organizations participated.
- **Welcome Package** - A print-on-demand welcome package was developed and provided as a resource to local municipalities. As of today, four municipalities include the package on their website as a resource for newcomers who arrive in the area. The welcome package contains general information about living in Grey and Bruce and provides space for municipalities to enter local information.

Conversations for a More Inclusive and Welcoming Community

As per the strategic plan, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) was the key priority in 2022-2023. To achieve this priority, GBLIP received additional funding from IRCC for a pilot, Train the Trainer Project to initiate GBLIP Conversations for a More Inclusive and Welcoming Community.

In Phase 1 and 2 of Train the Trainer, an EDI curriculum was co-created by Impact Consulting and program participants. The trainees (Local 11) developed workshop facilitation experience and skills while shadowing the consultant in mock delivery to GBLIP Council members. Partnership Council members gained understanding of crucial, fundamental concepts related to eliminating discrimination and fostering inclusion, such as brave space, micro-aggression, and unconscious bias.

In Phase 3 of the program, the remaining trainees (Local 7) worked in pairs to facilitate a total of 23 training workshops to 199 clients. The training received very positive feedback from participants, ranging from senior municipal management to various levels of frontline staff. Since delivery, a number of organizations have inquired about further training for staff. The Train the Trainer Project was originally planned as an eighteen-month project and has now been funded to investigate continuation using a self-sustaining model.

2022/2023 Accomplishments & Current Projects

Community Dialogues: Throughout the year staff participated and presented in more than 25 events organized by partner members locally and regionally to share priorities and find ways to collaborate in achieving the collective goal of becoming welcoming.

Municipal Delegations: GBLIP, alongside Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce delivered 17 delegations to Municipal Councils, to raise awareness of the services and supports that are available in the region for newcomer integration and creating welcoming communities.

The most frequently asked question was: How can GBLIP increase visibility of Grey and Bruce Counties? In response, GBLIP has developed a pre-arrival, online mentoring partnership with Settlement Services and JVS Toronto. This unique service provides skilled immigrants with one-on-one and occupation-specific career support before they even arrive in Canada.

Additionally, GBLIP is invited to present at the Canada-Wide Expo organized by Access Employment on November 9th, 2023, providing an opportunity for new immigrants to learn about what Grey-Bruce has to offer.

Research - Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Grey Bruce: An Empirical Study was conducted to better understand discrimination experiences of immigrants, visible minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Grey Bruce.

From this research,

- GBLIP in collaboration with Huron LIP and Guelph-Wellington LIP created and launched a positive messaging campaign.
- Partnership council members were provided with Indigenous Cultural Mindfulness trainings in partnership with the Giiwe program at M'WIKwedong.
- GBLIP along with Huron LIP is planning a municipal information session on how to build welcoming public spaces in November 2023.

National LIP Secretariat - GBLIP is representing Grey Bruce at the National LIP secretariat as Executive Committee members and providing strategic and operational guidance to the NLS projects for Anti-Racism.

Opportunities for Employers - GBLIP has been selected as one of five communities across Canada to join the World Education Services (WES) #ImmigrantsWork program. In response to the ongoing Canadian labour crisis, WES launched #ImmigrantsWork to help community partners mobilize local employers to co-design solutions that help identify, recruit, hire, and retain local immigrant talent. GBLIP will leverage the expertise and knowledge of staff from the World Education Services' (WES) to create and implement strategies and resources for tapping into immigrant talent best suited to our region.

First Immigrant Survey 2023 - This survey will launch Fall 2023 and seeks to understand the experiences and perspectives of immigrants, including how services have changed over time and implications for service delivery and collective community action.

Upcoming Conferences

GBLIP staff are required to participate in Pathway to Prosperity National Conference: Exploring Innovation in Immigration and Settlement in Canada: Challenges and Opportunities of New Geographies, Modes, and Levels of Immigration. The 2023 conference will take place from November 20 to 23 in Montreal. Attendance is a requirement of the contribution agreement and fully funded by IRCC. Staffs' proposed workshop entitled Rural LIPs: Building Capacity from Within, was accepted for presentation at the national conference.

Staff have also been invited to attend the Annual Convening, organized by WES #ImmigrantsWork – SIIP (Skilled Immigrant Integration Program) which will take place in Washington D.C. on December 11-12, 2023. This is a great cross-border opportunity for US and Canadian community partners to meet and exchange best practices. WES will reimburse costs for staff travel and accommodations up to \$2500.

A Way Forward

GBLIP is proud to advance collective efforts towards newcomer integration and welcoming communities, across Grey and Bruce Counties. Staff suggest a next step could include joining the UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities to promote inclusion and diversity, while maintaining a focus on racism and discrimination.

Addressing racism and fostering inclusion can help build sustainable small and rural municipalities. It can be useful to think about sustainability in terms of the sustainability frameworks used by many municipalities across Canada, which see sustainability as incorporating four main pillars: economic, environmental, social, and cultural. Although issues of racism and discrimination are often referred to the social and cultural pillars, they have a significant impact on the economic and environmental pillars as well.

GBLIP staff will continue to ensure coherence and maintain momentum within Grey-Bruce. As GBLIP matures, new practices, new partnerships and new ways of working together will emerge. GBLIP will continue to systematize initiatives while supporting bridging between settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) and mainstream organizations.

Financial and Resource Implications

All financial and resources required for this work are included in the approved budget, as per the contribution agreement and federal funding.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Economic Development
 - AODA Compliance (describe)
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)
- External: Bruce County Economic Development

Appendices and Attachments

Settlement Strategy 2025