
Q U I N T E LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

...a better community for everyone

Minutes of the meeting
18 January 2012

MEETING :	Quinte Local Immigration Partnership
LOCATION	Quinte Gardens Boardroom, 30 College Street W., Belleville, ON
FACILITATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Robertson - Project Coordinator – Quinte Local Immigration Partnership - Email: lip@quis-immigration.org
NOTE TAKER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Robertson
ATTENDEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Osborne – President Quinte United Immigrant Services • Suzanne Andrews – Manager Quinte West Chamber of Commerce • Roberto Almeida – Program manager – Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention - Health Unit – Hastings & Prince Edward Counties • Laura Mounstevan - Employment Consultant - Loyalist College Community Employment Services • Mike Hewitt – Coordinator - Manufacturing Resource Centre • Michele Dean – Loyola School of Adult & Continuing Education • Jordana Laport – Lawyer (for Michele Leering) – Community Advocacy & legal Centre

Agenda topics

DISCUSSION	Introductions	
Introductions were conducted		

DISCUSSION	Review - Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
Reviewed		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A		

DISCUSSION	Website Launch - 2012	
The QLIP website was discussed with the Partners and it is still under construction, specifically changes to the content are being made, and will be ready for an official "Launch Event" to be held sometime in the early spring of 2012 once official approval has been requested and granted.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Partnership members may still provide to the QLIP Project Coordinator their organization logo, a brief statement on services provided, and a link to their web site. All will be included in the QLIP website to be launched in 2012	QLIP Partners	Voluntary

DISCUSSION	Statistical information from the data base	
The Project Coordinator distributed for discussion a draft chart and graphic of the percentage breakdown for country of origin in the QLIP Database. The comments by the Partners are being used to modify the chart and graphic for a truer reflection of the database statistics. New copies will be available at the next meeting.		
ACTION ITEMS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Surveys/information gathering: follow-up by the QLIP Project Coordinator	John Robertson Project Coordinator	Ongoing

DISCUSSION	Open Discussion	
Discussion Topics and Open Discussion:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey of services available – simple questions on services - data on services available to newcomers Links to services http://quinte.cioc.ca 2. Information on access to ESL language training 3. Employers awareness of ESL language training options and viability (potential awareness campaign) 4. Research into area transportation planning 5. Possibility of awareness campaign advocacy on education equivalencies with a focus on employers 6. QLIP Partnership website – current status and proposed launch dates 		
1. Survey of services available – simple questions on services - data on services available to newcomers		
<p>Mike Hewitt introduced the topic. It was discussed that through surveys completed to date, that in most cases we are confirming what is already evident to the Partnership, in addition to discovering what represents new information.</p> <p>Discussions: around the idea of surveys, the partnership should, in addition to identified gaps or shortfalls; we should look for what is "good" and what is working well. As follow-on, the "good" or best practices can be passed on to employers and service providers.</p> <p>Paul Osborne noted that if email surveys or phone interviews are used, we may wish to look into the possibility of high school students as participants making calls for the QLIP and thereby also gain community hours. Open ended questions would be preferred.</p> <p>Group discussion:</p> <p>It was concluded that the best approach to gain access to the opinions of newcomers might be to meet with language training student to pose questions on what was their experience as a newcomer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What worked for you on arrival 		

- What did you find that was not available to help you
- What did you find that was helpful
- What services
- What would or could be provided that would make things better for newcomers

2 and 3. Information on access to ESL language training. Employers awareness of ESL language training options and viability (potential awareness campaign)

Michele Dean from the Loyola School of Adult & Continuing Education announced that there has been a breakthrough in providing ESL training to newcomers. Loyola has entered into a night school contract with the Wellington Mushroom Farm (established in 1990) in Prince Edward County to provide ESL language training for 25 of their employees who are newcomers to the Quinte area. This is a significant change which in the past was not an option. Workers are bused daily from the Belleville area to Prince Edward County to work at the mushroom farm making day training a non-option and night school was in the past not “on the table”. Some students have been waiting for five years for the opportunity to take English language courses.

Because the employees live in the Belleville area the transit is not an issue for night school as most can drive or car pool but if transit is an option it can be used.

There are four students taking the language for business purposes, four professionals who are very talented people who are at Level 4 or 6 in their ESL training.

There are 30 students most of which are in the basic course and the rest are in a mid-level course in English

Michele will investigate obtaining the “information flyer” for the ESL courses as a marketing tool to businesses and employers within the Quinte region. (Update – Project Coordinator has received the electronic documents)

Discussions: around the table the partners were very positive about this success story that could be built upon. If other employers could see the success of this English as a Second Language program and “get on board” it could lead to more success for newcomers. In terms of various employment services this information could add momentum to newcomers looking for jobs and could lead to more layers of success.

The discussion brought the partners back to the well-known issue of the “survival job” limiting the options for progress in language skills, which could relate to the acquisition of job skills, and acquiring skills relating to job seeking, and placement skills for newcomers.

The acquisition of language skills also relates to the area of Health Care, and the discussion involved the newcomers need to communicate with health care providers and maneuver through the health system without the necessary language skills.

Roberto Almeida discussed with Michele Dean from Loyola the possibility someone from the Health Unit making presentations at the night school on services available to immigrant newcomers. This led to discussions on the benefit of having guest speakers which helps the student learn and also identify access to services for these same newcomer students, thereby meeting a possible need and possibly closing a gap in information. Michele noted that if a guest speaker were to come to the night school classes that it would be important to have in advance a glossary of terms that will be used to assist in the learning process.

Suzanne Andrews suggested that a flyer or possibly a pdf electronic file could be distributed through the four Chambers of Commerce. Suzanne discussed that the Quinte West Chamber of Commerce has contact with many businesses and information on the success story on ESL could be passed on to those businesses. It was further discussed that with the four Chambers of Commerce involved the distribution could cover a lot of businesses. Increased awareness may eventually affect the hiring possibilities for ESL graduates.

Shortages forecasted - The shortages forecasted by Statistics Canada in the recent past has not materialized as expected possibly in part due to the economic climate but it is still recognized that shortages will eventually affect the talent pool in Ontario. Rural areas like the greater Quinte area was hit harder and faster by the recent downturn in the economy making the efforts to retain and employ skilled immigrants an imperative for the area, and for the QLIP Project

Mike Hewitt added that the distribution of information could also involve the Manufacturers Association.

The success of this venture needs to be publicised as an affordable vehicle available to employers to offer their newcomer employee(s) who may need ESL training.

Laura Mounstevan expressed interest in the flyer/pdf for employment services in the Quinte area in terms of information to be shared with employers and client newcomers.

Discussions took place surrounding the current state of affairs of employment and employer ventures in the Quinte area. Comment: Without good full time jobs some newcomers move away to other larger areas like Toronto because they cannot “make it’ here. If good local jobs were available and accessible it may affect retention and provide a more viable option to remaining in the area where they have settled.

4. Link to Transportation

In order to expand the ESL for newcomers in Quinte West the question of affordable transportation still applies. Taxi service is \$20 per trip for four students or \$50 per day for a four day week. The Quinte Access transportation option is more expensive, carpooling has insurance issues.

5. Awareness Campaign – The awareness campaign was discussed in terms of the ESL program information for newcomers and employers.

6. The QLIP website was noted above and is still pending changes to the site.

CONCLUSIONS

- The new developments surrounding the ESL night school to be explored.
- The possibility of discussions between the Project Coordinator with the Loyola night school participants to be explored.
- In addition, all related planning activities for the QLIP to be actioned by the Project Coordinator
- Project Coordinator to pursue the possibility of interviewing ESL student newcomers for the QLIP (Update – Project Coordinator completed ESL student Focus Groups Jan 24, 2011)

DISCUSSION

Next Meeting

Next QLIP meeting scheduled for February 15th, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.– Location Quinte United Immigrant Services - Room U2, 41 Octavia St., Belleville , Ontario

CONCLUSIONS