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Item No. 2
Community Planning and Economic Development
July 19, 2018

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Catherine Mullally, Director, Human Resources/Office of Diversity & Inclusion

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 22, 2018

SUBJECT: Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 10, 2005 Halifax Regional Council adopted a vision for immigration.

October 18, 2005 Halifax Regional Council was provided an Information Report and accompanying HRM Immigration Action Plan.

April 30, 2013 Halifax Regional Council directed staff to provide a report outlining the benefits and costs of having HRM negotiate a funding agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for 3-year funding, to house the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Coordinator.

June 25, 2013 Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approved the updated Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan
2. Authorized staff to seek funding in the amount of \$160,473 from Citizenship and Immigration Canada for 3-year funding, to administer the part time Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for promotion and attraction of institutions, industries and businesses, the stabilization and expansion of employment opportunities and the economic development of the Municipality.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality's first Immigration Action Plan was endorsed by Regional Council in 2005 along with a vision which states:

"Halifax Regional Municipality is a welcoming community where immigration is supported and encouraged. Halifax Regional Municipality will work with other levels of government and community partners to increase our collective cultural, social and economic diversity by welcoming immigrants to our community".

The plan was updated in June of 2013, and initiatives were identified which continue to move the Municipality towards being a more welcoming community to newcomers and residents alike. This Council approved updated plan was renamed "HRM's Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan" which was a 5-year plan. Through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and HRM Business units, actions have been taken to support the plan.

In 2013, Regional Council also authorized staff to seek funding from CIC for 3 years, to administer a Local Immigration Partnership, including a part time Coordinator. In 2017, this project was renewed by Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (formally CIC) for another three years, 2017-2020.

The Local Immigration Partnership is managed through an advisory Committee and supports the following objectives:

- To engage diverse community members with experience in the settlement and integration of newcomers
- To form broad-based partnership for planning and setting community priorities
- To assess the needs of the community and its newcomers in a coordinated manner
- To increase capacity to support the integration of newcomers and to foster welcoming communities, including a receptive labour market
- To improve outcomes for newcomers

The Local Immigration Partnership funding is meant to complement existing activities and assist to integrate and optimize programs and services to newcomers. In addition, the LIP initiative focusses on current successes in the community, working with what is already in place, and supporting organizations as they develop services to best meet the needs of newcomers to Halifax.

DISCUSSION

Welcoming Newcomer Action Plan

The purpose of the Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan was to identify the outcomes and measures needed to achieve success with integrating and retaining newcomers and creating a welcoming and friendly community for all. The plan identified five key outcomes for Business Units to track over a 5-year period:

- Outcome 1:
HRM communications tools are developed to serve and represent diverse groups
- Outcome 2:
HRM programs and services support a welcoming community.
- Outcome 3:
HRM celebrates and enables a variety of cultural and creative opportunities.

- Outcome 4:
HRM maximizes opportunities for increased stakeholder alignment, awareness, engagement and newcomer retention through partner organizations.
- Outcome 5:
HRM staff value diversity and are provided with the appropriate tools to serve diverse client groups.

HRM's Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference, section 3.2.3 states, the purpose of the Committee includes the oversight of the progress of HRM's Immigration Action Plan and related initiatives. Therefore, staff committed to providing regular updates to the Committee on progress while implementing the plan.

Business Units and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion have worked together to implement a wide variety of actions to support the action plan outcomes. Some key initiative that have been undertaken include:

- **Welcoming Newcomers Guide:**
 - The Newcomers Guide was initially created as a print document, requiring regular and costly updates. The Guide has evolved into a section on Halifax.ca (see <https://www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/newcomers>). In 2018, the guide is undergoing a complete revamp based on consultation and feedback. Newcomers have identified what they need from this site and provided advice on content.
- **Support for New Canadians:**
 - HRM played a significant role in supporting the re-settlement of Syrian Refugees. Some of this work included Parks and Recreation having staff representation on the Provincial Community Recreation Access Committee (focusing on improving service delivery and identifying barriers to access for Newcomers). HRM also hosted an Open House for Refugees with booths displaying information on municipal services. Participants had the opportunity to engage with municipal staff at the event.
 - Parks & Recreation provided free access to all HRM owned and operated recreation centres and programs to newcomers for one year upon their arrival in Halifax. This became the **Welcome Halifax Cards** and included one-year free Transit and access to local museums including Pier 21 and the Museum of Natural History.
 - In 2017, Recreation Services was successful in receiving a Regional Development Grant through Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) to support a 34-week position which will assist in coordinating collaborative efforts of community stakeholders to offer more engaging and user-friendly service delivery processes for newcomers in the HRM. They will also assist in establishing a Recreation Advisory Committee for Newcomers made up of Newcomers to enhance and support HRM Parks and Recreation to develop strategies to eliminate barriers and enhance programming opportunities for newcomers.
 - Recreation staff participated as a member of the "Recreation Access for Newcomers Partnership" during the 2017 year and coordinated a Sport and Recreation Information Event in March 2018. The event brought service providers and newcomers and their families together to provide them with information to support their engagement in community sport and recreation opportunities.
 - Recreation Services provided translated documents to support the registration process for newcomers.
 - Recreation staff partnered with ISANS to offer the 4th Winter by the Sea event at the Oval.
 - Recreation Services continues to work collaboratively with ISANS' staff to support the engagement of New Canadians into recreation opportunities offered by the municipality.
- **Support for Newcomers' Participation on municipal committees and boards:**
 - Ads were placed to encourage diverse residents to apply to municipal boards and committees. Working with the Municipal Clerks Office, Communications and the Office of

- Diversity and Inclusion, ads were sent to targeted community groups to increase awareness of opportunities to become engaged in municipal government.
- Regional Council has established a Youth Advisory Committee effective September 2018. The Committee will be comprised of up to twelve (12) youth members. Two youth per Community Council area shall be appointed for a total of six youth; the remaining six seats will be filled through a nomination process and must include youth from the following communities: LGBTQ community; Disability community; Indigenous Mi'kmaq community; Indigenous African Nova Scotia community; Francophone/Acadian communities; and Newcomer communities.
 - **Mayor's Welcome Reception:**
 - Held annually in September, the Mayor's Welcome Reception invites international students from all the local universities, colleges and language schools to an event which includes information booths, entertainment and refreshments. This event provides the Mayor with an opportunity to welcome these new residents to the city and showcase why Halifax is a place to remain once they finish their studies. Annually an average of 300 hundred international students attend.
 - **Local Immigration Partnership:**
 - There are over 30 organizations involved in the LIP representing settlement, educational and businesses from around the municipality.
 - LIP Stakeholders met to develop a new three-year strategic plan. The advisory Committee was expanded to include a chair of communication (new communications sub-committee). The purpose of restructuring this Committee was to ensure greater engagement and communications with Newcomers.
 - The LIP increased participation and support to other partnerships and community efforts. This has been one of the best ways to ensure the partnership has a presence in existing initiatives and to bring an immigrant lens to broader initiatives some of which include the Halifax Language Consortium, Interfaith Harmony Halifax and the United Way Halifax's Poverty Solutions Strategy. LIP has also, in partnership with HRM Diversity and Inclusion Staff, been working on activities such as Recreation Access for Newcomers, Walk with Refugees and the (Im)migrant Health and Wellness Fair.
 - Inter-community circles working group piloted three successful activities to facilitate spaces for new immigrants to connect with the Mi'kmaq community. This group was started in a collaboration between the Local Immigration Partnership coordinator, Mi'kmaq elder and scholar Patti Doyle-Bedwell and ISANS. The first activity saw more than 60 recently arrived immigrants joining a session delivered by two Mi'kmaw knowledge holders, organized in two two-hour sessions, with available interpretation on-site. The sessions took place at a wikuom that Mi'kmaw artist and scholar, Cathy Martin, had built at the meadows at Mount Saint Vincent University. The second activity was an experiential learning opportunity in which more than 100 new immigrants, mostly youth and young families, attended the Mawio'mi at Grand Pre, that celebrates the friendship between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadian. A delegation of this group was received and welcomed by Chief Googoo. The last activity took a delegation of more than 50 new immigrants to the Mawio'mi celebrated at Millbrook First Nation. The HIP coordinator, through the collaboration of Aaron Prosper, liaised with organizer Garrett Gloade and had the delegation invited to join at the Grand Entry, where they were welcomed in the arena and were made part of the ceremony. An appointed representative from this delegation made a tobacco offering to Chief Gloade, and was officially welcomed as part of their community. Attendees participated in inter-tribal dances, and connected with local artists, storytellers, and knowledge holders.

The existing plan expires in 2018 and the Diversity and Inclusion team in partnership with the Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator have been developing an updated Immigration Services Strategy for HRM. This strategy will align with the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Framework and will further support

the municipality's work in becoming a welcoming place for newcomers. The strategy will be developed through consultations with community partners and will be brought to CPED for review and endorsement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All activities were accommodated within the current budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Individual projects described within the body of the report have included public consultation of various degrees, including the Newcomers Welcome Guide, programming, training and Local Immigration Partnership initiatives.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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