

CITY OF HAMILTON

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Strategic Services Division

Report to: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	Submitted by: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager, Community Services
Date: March 17, 2008	Prepared by: Glenn Brunetti, Ext. 4882 Cathy Kealey, Ext. 6608

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That the City of Hamilton accept the \$330,000 in funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to develop a Hamilton Immigration Portal.
- (b) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute all necessary documents, between the City of Hamilton and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, with respect to the Hamilton Immigration Portal funding, in a form satisfactory to the General Manager, Community Services and the City Solicitor.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In September 2007, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration released a third call for proposals for municipalities to apply for funding to develop a municipal immigration portal that links with federal and provincial online immigration initiatives. The City of Hamilton submitted an application and provided a detailed plan and budget, supporting documentation and letters of support from the community as requested in the proposal. The City of Hamilton has been awarded \$330,000 in funding over two years to develop

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 8

a Hamilton immigration portal. Staff within the Community Services Department will lead the initiative and work with internal and external service providers and stakeholders, including recent immigrants to Hamilton, to develop a solution that works for the intended audiences.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2005, the government of Canada and Ontario signed an Immigration Agreement as a way for the federal and provincial governments to collaborate on the integration of newcomers to Ontario. Over five years, Citizenship and Immigration Canada will invest \$920 million in new funding for settlement and language training programs and services with the goal of supporting the successful social and economic integration of immigrants in Ontario.

As part of the agreement, the governments of Canada and Ontario are committed to working with municipal governments, community and private sector stakeholders in immigration. Municipal governments are important partners as a broad range of services are delivered that support the successful settlement and integration of immigrants.

The federal-provincial agreement also includes provisions for the development of a Canada-Ontario-municipal immigration portal to help support the social and economic integration of immigrants. As part of the federal funding, Ontario is developing a provincial portal that focuses on supporting the successful integration of new immigrants and promoting Ontario to prospective immigrants by providing user-friendly, seamless access to information and services. This will be accomplished by working inter-jurisdictionally, customizing information to meet the needs of immigrants, eliminating duplicate information through using existing websites and serving as a primary point of access to immigrant-related information resources and services in Ontario.

The Canada and Ontario Immigration Portals will be aligned to provide prospective immigrants with reliable and current information before they come to Canada and Ontario, and tools that will facilitate their integration into Canadian and Ontario labour markets and society. The portals will act as important integrated communication and online service delivery tools.

To make this vision happen, efforts are underway to ensure information, service and technical standards are established between the different levels of government.

In order to bring municipalities into the fold, the government of Ontario has established a municipal immigration portal fund. Each year since the Agreement was signed, the province of Ontario has requested municipalities apply for funding to develop municipal immigration portals for the purpose of identifying municipalities that may be interested in receiving grants for web-based projects that:

- Improve newcomer access to municipal information or services;
- Promote a municipality as a destination for newcomers to Canada;

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 8

- Provide an improved focus on immigrant or newcomer needs regarding settlement and/or employment opportunities at the local level; and/or,
- Provide a tangible benefit to both newcomers to Canada and the municipality.

In 2005-2006, five pilot projects were funded (City of Greater Sudbury, City of Ottawa, City of London, City of Toronto and the City of Windsor and County of Essex) and eight projects were funded in 2006-07 (Regions of York, Waterloo, Niagara and Peel, the cities of Chatham-Kent, Brantford, Sault Ste. Marie and the County of Lambton).

In September 2007, the Ontario government released the 2007-2008 Application Guide for Ontario municipalities interested in establishing locally produced, web-based resources for newcomers. The City of Hamilton's Community Services submitted a proposal for funding.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The City of Hamilton's application was evaluated on the following criteria:

Demonstrated Need for the Project:

As part of the proposal, the City of Hamilton had to demonstrate a willingness and/or past history of recognizing the immigrant as a target group for locally delivered information and services and show that immigration provides an economic benefit to the municipality.

The importance of immigrants to the City of Hamilton's future growth and prosperity has been well documented. As in the rest of Canada, Hamilton's population growth will primarily be driven by immigrants and newcomers. Labour shortages are already reported across Canada and experts believe that this shortage will continue to increase over the next twenty-five years. The RBC Financial Group's report *The Diversity Advantage: A Case for Canada's 21st Century Economy*, stresses the importance of growth and not simply workforce replacement. Another study in Hamilton, *HR Matters*, published in May 2002, indicates that Hamilton's population growth is declining and aging, and that after 2016; Hamilton's labour force growth will cease and subsequently begin to decline. This will create a significant shortage of skilled labour that will be felt across many sectors. Increased immigration will be a critical means of addressing a declining population and skills shortages in the labour market.

The City of Hamilton's Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS) report indicates that Hamilton has been receiving approximately 2,500 to 3,500 immigrants annually since 1994. Recent statistics indicate that the majority of these immigrants have been skilled (approximately 40% between 2001 and 2003).

The table below summarizes the immigrant population in Hamilton compared to the province and Canada.

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 8

IMMIGRANT POPULATION OF HAMILTON AND ONTARIO, AS PROPORTION OF TOTAL POPULATION, 2006			
Comparisons of Locations	Total Population	Immigrant Population	Immigrants as % of Total Population
Hamilton	497,400	126,485	25.4%
Ontario	12,028,895	3,398,725	28.3%
Canada	31,241,030	6,186,950	19.8%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2007. *Immigrant Status and Place of Birth (38), Sex (3) and Age Groups (10) for the Population of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions, 2006 Census - 20% Sample Data* (table). *Topic-based tabulations: Immigration and Citizenship*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-557-XCB2006015. Ottawa. December 4.

Hamilton, however, will be competing directly with major cities in Canada (Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, in particular) and other Ontario municipalities to attract immigrants. The City of Hamilton's immigration portal will assist in promoting Hamilton as a great place to live, to work, to study, and to raise a family as well as help Hamilton become successful at recognizing the skills and experience brought by immigrants that are required by Hamilton employers.

Project Governance and Sustainability Plan, including Partnerships:

The City of Hamilton had to demonstrate that the immigration portal would be guaranteed to have long-term sustainability for ongoing delivery of the municipal immigration site (for example: content updates, user support and hosting). Immigration is of significant importance to the City of Hamilton. As a result, the Community Services Department has the appropriate existing resources to lead the development and implementation as well as sustain the immigration portal post funding. The City of Hamilton has made immigration a priority issue and as a result, Community Services will realign internal resources in order to develop and nurture whatever is developed.

Management and sustainability for the immigration site (content updates, user support and hosting) will reside with the Strategic Services Division. Within Strategic Services is a Marketing and Information Services team which brings together marketing and user research to drive, implement and evaluate citizen centred marketing and business strategy. For this project, identification of business and user needs will drive development and implementation for citizen centred online service delivery. This upfront work takes more time but yields long-lasting, meaningful and sustainable results.

The other strength to the sustainability to the Hamilton proposal is hosting the immigration site on the City of Hamilton website. Not only does this leverage the existing technology of the City, ensuring long-term sustainability, it also improves the overall customer experience and accessibility through having City and community content accessed through a common, accessible and high traffic front-end.

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 8

As the City of Hamilton develops an immigration strategy, the immigration portal will work in tandem with many of the same individuals and organizations through consultations and engagement. This will ensure alignment between the strategy and portal. The proposal was presented to members of the City's Immigration Strategy Advisory Committee and letters of support were received from Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) as well as the Chair of the City's Immigration Strategy Advisory Committee.

Outcomes and Performance Measures:

The City of Hamilton had to demonstrate its ability to align technology and information architecture standards with that of the province and federal governments as well as adhere to provincial standards regarding official languages, accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities, use of federal and provincial visual identifiers and the development of joint performance measures.

Detailed Deliverables:

The City of Hamilton had to provide a detailed work breakdown structure outlining deliverables, timelines, sequenced tasks, project milestones, risk assessment and mitigation strategies and overall project evaluation and performance measures.

The Community Services' standard for development is an industry standard methodology called a user (or citizen) centred design. It is somewhat different from the methodologies typically used by municipalities but it is the best methodology to achieve successful citizen centred service delivery. The process places emphasis on rich and in-depth citizen engagement by identifying and understanding audience segments (also known as profiles/personas) and uses techniques which focus on these audiences to garner goals and motivations which can be translated to key tasks needed on the site to satisfy audience needs. These personas are engaged up-front and throughout development and iteratively through testing. This process goes beyond focus groups and usability testing and invests more time understanding needs with real users throughout. The series of steps in the methodology in summary include understanding stakeholder and user needs, prototype, test, build, launch and measure.

Deliverable	Date
1. Report of Focus Group with Community Stakeholders	June 30/08
2. Interim Site Launched	July 31/08
3. Expert (Heuristic) Review*	October 31/08
4. Profiles (Personas) Developed**	March 31/08
5. Hamilton Service Gaps Report	June 15/09
6. Local and/or Remote Testing Results	June 15/09
7. Meta-Analysis Report	July 31/09
8. Prototype Tested	October 31/09

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 6 of 8

9. Tested Site Built	February 15/09
10. Promotion Plan Implemented	February 15/09
11. Evaluation Plan/Results	March 31/09

* A **Heuristic** review is to find usability problems in the design of a Web site so that improvements can be made as part of the iterative design process. Heuristic evaluations usually are conducted by a small set (one to three) of evaluators. The evaluators independently examine a user interface and judge its compliance with a set of usability principles. The result of this analysis is a list of potential usability issues or problems.

** **Personas** are fictitious characters that are created to represent the different user types within a targeted demographic that might use a site or product. Personas are most often used as part of a user-centered design process for designing software or online applications, in which the goals, desires, and limitations of the user are considered when designing the product. Personas are useful in helping to guide decisions about a product, such as features, interactions, and visual design. A user persona is a representation of the goals and behavior of real user group. In most cases, personas are synthesized from data collected from interviews with users.

Budget:

The City of Hamilton provided a budget outlining expected expenditures. A total of \$330,000 was requested over two years to develop the Hamilton immigration portal. These are costs associated with surveys, interviews, focus groups, design, prototype development, measurement, audience testing and incentives.

Based on the plan and documentation provided, the City of Hamilton was successful in achieving funding for a Hamilton immigration portal.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Although not recommended, the City of Hamilton could choose to reject the funding.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:

A total operational budget of \$330,000 (100% funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) will be allocated over two years for the development of the immigration portal. Upon completion of the project, audited financial statements will be prepared for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Staffing:

Community Services has identified the immigration portal as an internal priority and it aligns to the development of a community-wide Immigration Strategy. As this is a priority, even without the funding, Community Services would have allocated resources to better understand the needs of this group of people in our community. With the resources from the province, Community Services will be better able to collect and analyse information and implement recommendations to improve service delivery to new immigrants. Staff in Community Services will project manage the initiative using

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 7 of 8

the existing staff complement and will use the provincial funding to outsource much of the labour intensive data collection, development and testing components of the project, rather than bring on additional staff. This two year initiative will be managed through operational planning which will require some reprioritizing of existing Community Services projects but overall should see no major service disruptions with current business priorities or needs.

Legal:

There are no legal implications associated with the recommendation of Report ECS08015.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

A City of Hamilton immigration portal will follow all City policies and standards and will follow provincial standards regarding accessibility, official languages, federal and provincial visual identity standards, links and information architecture.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

The draft proposal was provided to community partners who have been involved in preliminary discussions regarding a City-wide immigration strategy. This includes representatives from the City of Hamilton's Planning and Economic Development Department, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), McMaster University, Mohawk College, Hamilton Community Foundation, Hamilton Training and Advisory Board, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and Hamilton residents. Letters of support were provided by SISO and the City of Hamilton's Immigration Strategy Advisory Committee.

The Information Technology (IT) Division has been consulted on the funding proposal. The immigration portal will use the existing technological platform and standards of the City. Community Services is not requesting resources from IT.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the "**Triple Bottom Line**", (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced.

Yes **No**

An online tool will provide one means of support for recent immigrants to Hamilton as well as those considering their options to settle. The Hamilton immigration portal will provide a means to connect to programs and services at the local, provincial and federal level.

SUBJECT: Funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Build a Hamilton Immigration Portal (ECS08015) (City Wide) - Page 8 of 8

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.

Yes **No**

Online tools as self-service, low-cost and paperless solutions that have a smaller environmental footprint than other service delivery models.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced.

Yes **No**

Attracting and retaining immigrants to Hamilton is critical to meet the growing demographic challenge of an aging workforce.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?

Yes **No**

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?

Yes **No**

The Hamilton immigration portal could potentially be a tool to attract talent to work at the City of Hamilton.