

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
General Manager's Office**

<b>TO:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> April 10, 2012	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Funding from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration to Strengthen the Hamilton Immigration Portal (CS12017) (City Wide)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Tim Rees 905-546-2424 ext. 4244
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the City of Hamilton accept \$75,000 from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to undertake a process with community partners, in particular Community Information Hamilton, to increase the quality and quantity of comprehensive and up to date local information, and the access, awareness, and use of the Hamilton Immigration Portal;
- (b) That the City Manager be authorized to execute an agreement between the City and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, to implement the above recommendation; and,
- (c) That staff be authorized to single source Community Information Hamilton for various work related to the Immigration Portal.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

At the end of November 2011, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration issued a Call for Proposals from existing Immigration Portals across the Province for

projects that had a particular focus on "partnership initiatives with community partners". A proposal for funding totalling \$75,000 was submitted and approval has been received for the full amount.

The agreement with the Province states that the City will act as a flow-through agency with the bulk of the work contracted to community partners, in particular Community Information Hamilton. We anticipate that the City's contribution will primarily include staff time to:

- assist with administering the contract and transferring the funds;
- scope the project in partnership with Community Information Hamilton and helping Inform to draft the RFQ and select vendor(s);
- complete the technical changes to the portal (either using our in-house resources or procuring a vendor); and,
- promote the changes with a launch event and materials.

The proposal was based on in-kind services being provided through staff in the City Manager's office. Since this time, staff allocated to work on this project have been re-deployed to work on the Service Delivery Project. It is expected that this work will continue through collaborative efforts of Community Services and Corporate Services.

This project will achieve the following outcomes:

- Immigrants will have improved access to information about local services, programs and resources available to them, through accessing the City's Immigration Portal.
- Front-line staff of service provider agencies will have improved access to information about local services, programs and resources that serve immigrants and newcomers, through accessing the City's Immigration Portal.
- Immigrants will have direct access to the translated content from Settlement.org (In My Language), through accessing the City's Immigration Portal.

The City has identified the immigration portal as a corporate priority that aligns with the implementation of the community-wide Immigration Strategy.

## **FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial:**

A total operational budget of \$75,000 (100% funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) will be allocated for the Immigration Portal. Upon completion of the project, audited financial statements will be prepared for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Staffing:**

The City would primarily act as a flow-through agency, with the bulk of the work to be contracted to its community partners, and in particular Community Information Hamilton.

**Legal:**

The Agreement has been drafted in consultation with Legal Services and will be approved by the City Solicitor prior to being executed by the City Manager.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In September 2007, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration was awarded \$330,000 in funding over two years to develop a Hamilton immigration portal.

In 2010, the City of Hamilton completed and launched the City's Immigration Portal as per the requirements of the contract with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The City's Immigration Portal project demonstrated how a user-centred design process could be used to understand the needs of a diverse audience and to design a solution that would be both useful and usable to the immigrant audience. The City conducted extensive up-front analysis to understand the needs of immigrants through the use of existing research literature, review of analytics, implementation of a 100-person survey, direct in-person interviews and the development of personas. This information guided the design of the City's Portal at all stages. Prototypes were developed and tested with immigrant users through an iterative process, ensuring that the Portal met the needs of visitors to the site.

The City created a sustainable Portal that incorporates content from various sources including Settlement.org, Community Information Hamilton, the City of Hamilton Economic Development Department and Tourism Hamilton. By integrating content from various sources through technological means, the City avoided costly content creation and management costs, while providing a seamless portal experience for visitors to the site. The City hosts the Portal using the same technology that hosts its municipal website, leveraging existing technology of the City and ensuring long-term sustainability.

At the time of the City's original project, the recommendation to improve the integration of information from the Community Information Hamilton database, the local directory of community and government services provided by Community Information Hamilton, into the City's Portal was considered out of scope due to funding restrictions and time limitations. The Community Information Hamilton database, which is managed and maintained by Community Information Hamilton has the most accurate and comprehensive local information on services and organizations serving immigrants.

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This funding is therefore timely in that it will provide the opportunity to build upon, rather than duplicate the collection and maintenance of this local information.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The 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**

Staff within the City Managers Office, Legal Services Division, Community Services Department, and Corporate Services Department, Finance Division have been consulted regarding the draft of the Agreement with the Province. The draft proposal was also discussed with community partners who have been involved in implementing the Immigration Strategy. This includes representatives from the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC), Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) and Community Information Hamilton.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The City of Hamilton provided the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration a budget outlining expected expenditures. A total of \$75,000 was requested to further develop and strengthen the Hamilton Immigration Portal. These are costs associated with design, prototype development, measurement, audience testing and promotion.

Based on the plan and documentation provided, the City of Hamilton was successful in receiving funding approval for the Hamilton Immigration Portal.

The project plan includes:

**1) Search and metrics analysis**

Review of search and website metrics for Community Information Hamilton website to analyze for patterns in search behaviours/needs of immigrant users and analyze for opportunities to improve information architecture and keyword metadata to better serve immigrants who are looking for local services. This analysis will be used to assess how search is performing, as well as areas for improving structure and linkages to content. Analysis will include top referrers, geographical locations of users, and browser/device types. Community Information Hamilton will engage a vendor for this purpose.

## **2) Needs analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative business requirements gathering. Based on the first phase of the Immigration Portal design, further analysis will be conducted to determine users' needs as visitors to the Immigration Portal search for essential services in the local community. Activities will include in-depth interviews with immigrants/newcomers and local service provider agency representatives to better understand their goals, motivations, behaviours with consideration to accessing local services for specific needs (e.g. housing, employment, language training, etc.). Community Information Hamilton will engage a vendor for this purpose and could manage this phase of the project. The City would share expertise gained in development of the Immigration Portal and assist in selecting a vendor.

## **3) Prototype development and testing**

Design, prototype and test revisions based on design requirements determined from needs analysis. Prototype will include Immigration Portal and/or Community Information Hamilton user interface, information architecture, navigation, links, content, metadata and/or search engine functionality and will meet technical needs of Community Information Hamilton and the City of Hamilton portal structure. Community Information Hamilton will engage a vendor for this purpose and manage this phase of the project. The City would share expertise to assist in scoping efforts and selecting a vendor.

## **4) Implement enhancements to the Immigration Portal**

Implement enhancements to the Immigration Portal based on requirements gathered from user needs analysis and testing of prototypes. The City would review this design and determine how we could integrate this into our system. This will result in improved linkages from the City's Immigration Portal to Community Information Hamilton (and vice versa).

## **5) Promotion and communications**

A promotion and communications plan will be developed (leveraging the plan developed during the launch of the Immigration Portal) to promote the enhancements to the Immigration Portal, including the hosting of an event to demonstrate the changes to the community and local service provider agencies. Ad placement may include local media, social media and search engine placements to maximize potential awareness of the improvements to the City's Immigration Portal.

## **6) Final Report**

A final report will be filed with the Province, outlining the results of the project.

This project will therefore:

- improve direct access for newcomers to an expanded body of information about local services, programs and resources available to them;

- improve access for front-line staff of service provider agencies about local services, programs and resources; and,
- provide direct access to the translated content for newcomers from Settlement.org (In My Language).

### **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

### **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)**

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

#### ***Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization***

- ◆ A culture of excellence
- ◆ A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- ◆ More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- ◆ An enabling work environment - respectful culture, well-being and safety, effective communication
- ◆ Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity

#### ***Financial Sustainability***

- ◆ Financially Sustainable City by 2020
- ◆ Effective and sustainable Growth Management
- ◆ Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

#### ***Intergovernmental Relationships***

- ◆ Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- ◆ Acquire greater share of Provincial grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

#### ***Growing Our Economy***

- ◆ Newly created or revitalized employment sites

- ◆ Competitive business environment
- ◆ A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
- ◆ An improved customer service
- ◆ An immigrant destination

***Social Development***

- ◆ Hamilton residents are optimally employed earning a living wage
- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- ◆ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

***Healthy Community***

- ◆ An engaged Citizenry

<b>APPENDICES / SCHEDULES</b>
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None