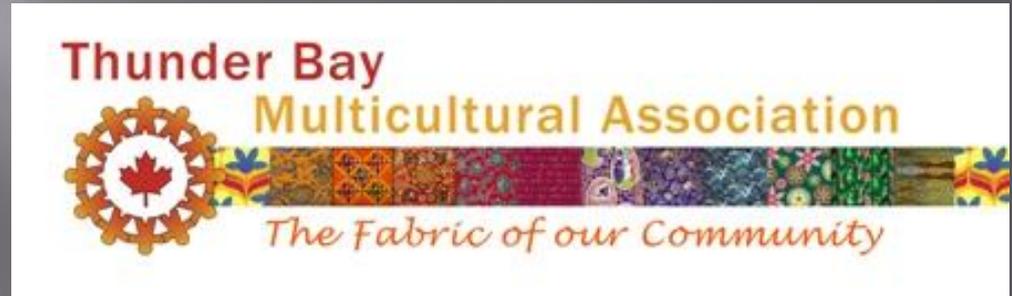


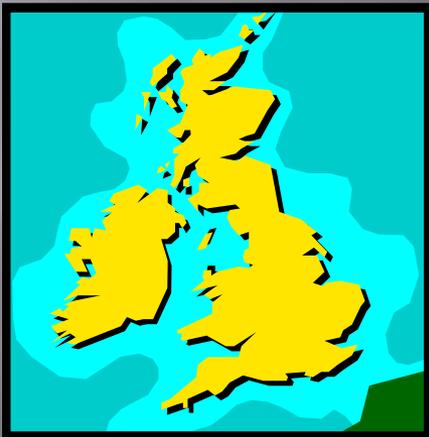
# THUNDER BAY MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION



Local Immigration Partnerships  
If you build them, will they come?

# Quick Facts

Northwestern Ontario is larger than the combined size of the United Kingdom and France with a population of 250,000.



+



# Perspective





Thunder Bay  
THUNDER BAY  
MILITARY MUSEUM

Thunder Bay  
Charity Casino

COMMUNITY  
SAFETY  
ZONE  
FINES  
INCREASED

Rollins St



## Local Immigration Partnerships

Our experience and involvement in Ontario.

- Part of the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies.
- Member of the Ontario LIP Consultative Committee
- 1<sup>st</sup> LIP in Ontario
- Thunder Bay is part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the UNESCO Cities Against Racism

The **very first step** in our process was to educate the interested LIP members in anti-racism and anti-oppression and to make sure we were all on a level playing field.

The last thing you want is to be dealing with racism and discrimination at a planning table for immigrant inclusion.

The main thing is to keep the main thing,  
the main thing!

- Don't get derailed.

The main goal of our LIPs is to improve outcomes for newcomers and create welcoming communities for all.

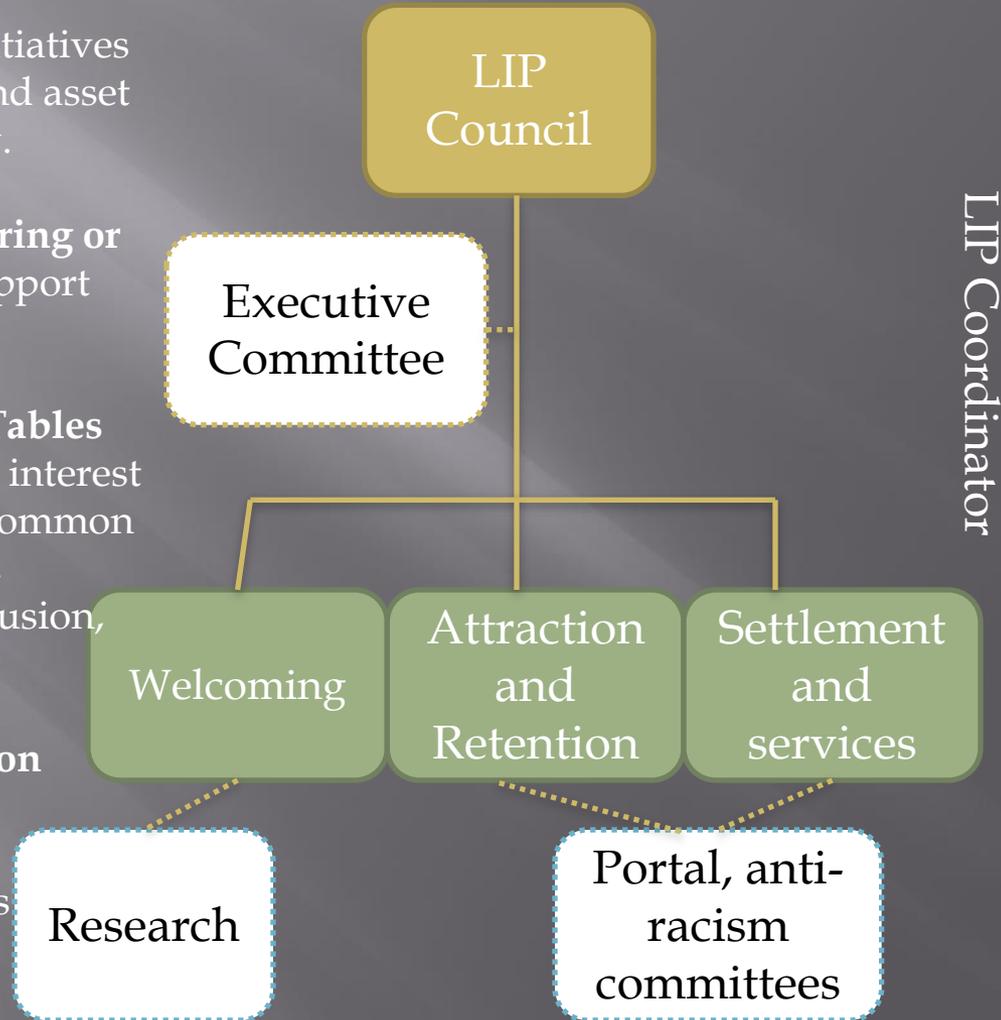
The 17 Characteristics of a Welcoming community do not necessarily apply to all communities, nor are they what smaller communities need to focus on.

LIPs are steered by broad-based coordinating **councils** tasked with overall stewardship and management control over initiatives such as needs assessments and asset mapping of their community.

Some LIPs have created **Steering or Executive Committees** to support them in this work.

**Working Groups or Sector Tables** focus on particular sectors of interest or need in the community. Common themes include employment, language training, social inclusion, settlement, health or youth.

Some LIPs have created **Action Teams** to work on specific projects emerging from a Working Group. These teams are most relevant at the implementation phase.



# Our Local and Regional Immigration Partnerships

- ▣ Thunder Bay developed a local immigration partnership council to plan in the areas of recruitment, attraction, settlement, newcomer service provision, retention and welcoming of newcomers to the city.
- ▣ With only one settlement agency as the hub of the region and a one-stop-shop in Thunder Bay there was no need to focus on coordination of services or avoiding duplication. We moved on to welcoming, integration, awareness and nation building.

# Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario Immigration Partnerships

- ▣ Thunder Bay LIP started in 2008 from an already existing immigration committee of TBMA, the city and the North Superior Workforce Planning Board.
- ▣ Northwestern Ontario IP began in 2011 with an expansion and separation from the Thunder Bay LIP. Due to a different structure, mandate and more regional group, the Northwestern Ontario Immigration Partnership meets and plans separately.
- ▣ The two were merged for funding purposes in 2012 but remain separate in meeting and planning.

LIP members include Thunder Bay Multicultural Association who holds the funding agreement, training board, employers and the City of Thunder Bay.

Who else is at the table?

Libraries, housing, Health Unit and clinics, Hospital, Workforce Planning Board, Business, School Boards, Employment agencies, Ethnocultural organizations, Multi-faith groups, University and College, Banking, Adult Education, Settlement services, social services, Refugee Sponsorship groups, City Council members, municipal economic development officers, Francophone organizations, Employers, Immigrant business owners, M.P. and M.P.P. office staff, Newcomers, Police, Long-term care, youth centre, and many others.

## Background and what we have learned

- Big picture was not considered before and there was no plan. Now everyone wants to be at the table.
- Agencies, municipalities, service providers, and employers all play a role in the settlement of newcomers. They are all starting to realize that immigration has a local impact and can also fill labour market needs as well as bring economic benefits.
- Many focus on attraction and filling their needs without paying attention to retention and successful settlement. Our role has been to educate on all of these issues and help strike a balance between attraction and retention.
- Evaluate what is, and what is not working for newcomers.
- We did a lot of teaching in our first years. (newcomer needs, experiences, gaps, referral processes, awareness of what is out there in the community)
- The BC Welcoming Communities program is very successful and that should be woven into the LIP process going forward. All of the welcoming work come into play in the LIP.
- Many stakeholders at the table has improved awareness, planning, referral, promotion of services and newcomer outcomes.

## What have we learned?

- Who do we need at the table to connect with community and employers?  
Chamber, Rotary, Executive's Clubs, Young Professional Networks etc.  
Have your leaders become champions. Make others feel conspicuous by their absence.
- Develop an outreach strategy and use all of the movers and shakers that you can think of. Find the "doers".
- You have to preach the benefits of hiring newcomers and the economic advantage to communities everywhere you go.
- Collect resources that employers and stakeholders might want and need.
- Offer training and information sessions. Hold an immigration forum.
- Find a way to gain access to municipal council and any decision makers.
- You have wonderful resources within the province, share them with each other.
- <http://www.iecbc.ca/sites/default/files/Tip%20Sheet%205.pdf>
- [http://www.wpboard.ca/english/pdfs/Immigrant-Friendly\\_Businesses\\_CBC.pdf](http://www.wpboard.ca/english/pdfs/Immigrant-Friendly_Businesses_CBC.pdf)

# Northwestern Ontario LIP

- ❑ The Northwestern Ontario Immigration Council is in the earlier stages of development and has a very different dynamic and structure.
- ❑ Made up of 35 regional municipalities, economic development officers, local planners, employers and settlement providers, it has a different make up and meets less often due to the size of the region.
- ❑ Makes use of technology and any other regional meetings taking place to connect and plan.
- ❑ It requires more coordination and training due to the size and remoteness of communities and experience with newcomers.

## My suggestions for a successful LIP

- Create a network of connections, awareness, collaboration and inclusion.
- Bring together the doers.
- Create an environment where newcomers become a part of the planning and awareness of all agencies, services and members.
- On-going education of members and an awareness that this is really an integration and awareness exercise.
- Coordination. This process doesn't work without a dedicated coordinator and meeting planning.

The LIPs, Immigration Portal and Settlement Services all work hand in hand to attract and retain newcomers as well as create a welcoming community for them.

# Exploring newcomer hiring in Northwestern Ontario

Municipalities are beginning to consider immigration as an economic driver and a community growth strategy.

Labour shortages, increased development and regional mining strategies are all affecting the need to consider immigration as a tool.

While employment has been recognized as the main attraction and sustained employment as the primary reason for retention, the supporting factors and welcoming ability of the community is critical in retention.

# The job's the thing

- ▣ Communities are quite often involved in the attraction and recruitment of immigrants without considering the need to welcome, integrate and retain them. The misconception or assumption that a job is the answer to all integration needs is quickly replaced by the reality that settlement and integration is critical and that it takes a whole community.

Following the outreach to employers, economic development offices, municipalities and chambers of commerce, the main method of information collection was a series of 27 qualitative, semi-structured interviews, four focus group sessions of 4 to 7 participants and an employers' forum with 19 attending.

% of respondents who:

<b>Have hired immigrants</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Are aware of settlement agency services</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Have integration programs for newcomer staff</b>	<b>14%</b>

# QUOTATIONS

Individual employers' comments from the focus groups and interviews were as follows:

“Employers are not really interested in the greater good per say, we need workers and usually need them immediately. The process needs to be fast and easy.”

“We don't care where our employees are from, only that they can do the job and have experience in the position we are hiring for.”

“Nation building discussions are for the higher level, small business wants to survive in a competitive market and find someone to buy our businesses when we want to retire.”

“Employers are willing to take on a new hire, whether an immigrant or not, if they are interested in the long term. We will train them and teach them soft skills. We are willing to take a chance on hiring newcomers.”

A small business owner said, “I’m the one writing the cheques every two weeks, I have the right as an employer to know who I am hiring and to be sure that they are qualified.”

“What we need is on-line information about hiring immigrants, diversity and anti-racism training and credential assessment.”

“I am willing to give anyone a chance, but what comes first is those applicants with Canadian experience”, and “I root for the home team and hire Canadians first” .

“We have to be very careful not the fuel the fire of using immigrants as a means to an economic end.”

“I have lived all over the world and have no problem hiring newcomers” .

“Hiring a newcomer, or for them, the acquisition of a job, is just the first step on the ladder or the staircase. The rest of the stairs can be difficult to climb depending on the community and the level of welcoming. People need to realize that both sides need educating and that differences need to be celebrated.”

# Best Practices

## Integration

One of the large corporations interviewed is a global company that blends the needs of the organization with the needs of the candidate. They recruit and employ from Mexico, Germany, Austria, Poland, England, India, South Africa, France, USA and Czech Republic for operations at their location in Thunder Bay. They have used a variety of recruitment strategies from Global Graduate Programs to Immigration Portal advertising. Their transfer and relocation management system is advanced and serves both the employer and the candidate well.

After recruiting and selecting the company allows the employee and the family the opportunity to visit Thunder Bay and familiarize themselves with the city and workplace. They assist with the immigration process and connect them with local settlement agency programs.

Corporate HR staff, assist with required documentation for the family. They offer what they call “cross cultural training sessions”, which are really getting to know your community and Canada sessions.

The settlement agency provides Orientation to Ontario sessions to the families and any life skills or soft skills training that they might require. Banking and taxation information is provided to the new arrivals with special focus on opening bank accounts, transferring funds, establishing credit, purchasing homes or vehicles and obtaining credit cards.

An orientation to the workplace for the whole family is provided along with a tour and a welcoming “meet and greet” session with management and staff.

In partnership with the local settlement agency and community partners, the human resources department provides and assists the employee and family with an extensive orientation package and process.

This includes:

Local history, regional geography, weather, cultural events, recreation

Federal and Provincial registration, licenses, cards and identification

Education for children or spouses (Public, Catholic, private, IB, College, University)

Health and wellness referrals to physicians, surgeons, clinics, hospital, supportive care

Banking

Legal

Real Estate

Utilities

Shopping (groceries and goods)

Places of worship, connections to local faith communities

## **Theme: The Role of Employers and the Private Sector in Supporting the Integration of Immigrants in Canada**

**Research Team: Cathy Woodbeck, Thunder Bay Multicultural Association; Aaron MacMillan, Thunder Bay Multicultural Association; and Brent Kelso, Research Associate.**

The study examines the hiring and integration of newcomers in the Thunder Bay region. Surveys and focus groups were used to explore the perceptions and behaviours of employers and human resource departments in regard to the hiring of immigrants and foreign trained workers. The study also investigates how employers envision integrating newcomers into their workforce, what barriers interfere with newcomer hiring, and what workplace training and integration supports are available. In a follow-up phase, employers who have employed newcomers were asked to assess the social and economic impact this has had on their organization and the community at large.

<http://p2pcanada.ca/library/exploring-immigrant-hiring-in-northwestern-ontario/>

Research has shown that employers may have the following reasons for not hiring skilled immigrants:

Lack of familiarity with international credentials and experience;

Preference or requirement of Canadian work experience;

Concerns about language proficiency and lack of awareness about Canadian technical terminology and idioms;

Concerns about lack of understanding of Canadian culture and business norms; and  
Lack of knowledge about and access to skilled immigrant talent.

The Canadian-born workforce is shrinking and the demand for labour is growing.

Skilled immigrants can help Canadian companies do business with the world.

Skilled immigrants bring international expertise.

Skilled immigrants can give Canadian businesses an “in” into expanding local ethnic markets.