



## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS (RFIQ)

### Immigrant Talent Hub – Waterloo Region

**FACT:** Employers in Waterloo Region report experiencing challenges in accessing immigrant talent.

**FACT:** Waterloo Region (as with most western economies) has a growing population due to immigration.

**FACT:** Immigration will be a critical source of labour for Waterloo Region.

**FACT:** Waterloo Region does not currently have a specialized one-stop 'Hub' for employers to easily access immigrant talent.

**FACT:** There are 13 Employment Ontario in Waterloo region and numerous recruitment agencies and while some work closely with preparing immigrants for employment there is not a centralized or specialized service for employers to connect and hire immigrants.

***From the 2019 Employer One Survey: almost 40% of 269 employers in Waterloo Region reported experiencing difficulties in hiring immigrants. Challenges range from the time it takes to find immigrant talent, to addressing cultural differences and soft skills, and English language and other training. Employers need more help to access immigrant talent already in the region as well as bringing in new talent from across Canada and abroad.***

***Due to the aging population and low fertility rate, Canada needs new sources of talent to enter the labour force to maintain high living standards. The Conference Board of Canada reports that between now and 2040, 1.6 million fewer people will become workers than the number of people exiting the labour force. Immigration will account for all of Canada's net labour force growth (projected around 3.7 million workers) as well as one-third of the economic growth rate. Without strong immigration, the economy will shrink.***

***In Waterloo Region the proportion of immigrants that come through economic streams is 40%. Many immigrants in permanent and temporary categories want to work. Finding work is the top challenge for immigrants in Waterloo Region (46% of 1090 who completed the 2019 Immigration Matters survey indicated this). Finding***

***work is also a top indicator of immigrant success in Waterloo Region (also found in the Immigration Matters survey). Immigrants being part of the labour market is therefore a win-win – good for employers and the economy and good for immigrants.***

***Changing demographics have begun to have an impact on employers in Waterloo Region as fewer new workers are entering the labour market. Demand for skilled labour is growing, signally impending labour shortages. At the same time, Waterloo Region is becoming home to many new immigrants and refugees. StatsCan reports that Canada's population grew by 1.4% in 2018/19, the highest rate of growth among G7 countries. Canada's sustained population growth is driven mostly (over 80%) by the arrival of immigrants and temporary residents. In 2018/19 Canada admitted 313,580 immigrants and the number of temporary residents rose to 171,536. Permanent and temporary migration assists economies across Canada in meeting their labour market needs.***

## **Proposal**

A task group of the Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region is proposing to launch a pilot of an Immigrant Talent Hub by the fall of 2021. The goal: to provide employers with a clear and efficient pathway to access immigrant and refugee talent.

**Model:** A business focused philosophy and approach that would engage employers in accessing immigrant talent that would meet recruitment needs and provide ongoing support to ensure successful integration. The Hub would offer Bricks (a physical location) and Clicks (a database).

### **Business Case:**

Immigration is an economic imperative. Waterloo Region needs immigrants to grow and succeed. Employers need people.

Employers across Waterloo Region are expressing a desire for a one-stop for accessing talent. A recent survey of 100 employers in the Region confirmed that 97% are in support of an Immigrant Talent Hub. They further indicated they would like support in accessing pre-screened talent and with onboarding, cultural differences and English language.

With the majority of businesses in Waterloo Region being small-medium sized (SME's), the 'Hub' could be an additional resource for those who do not have human resource departments.

A 'Hub' would create a point of contact and have an online presence that can attract immigrants from across Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada and internationally. The 'Hub' would play an active role in an attraction and talent strategy for the region.

## **MORE...**

- The 'Hub' would provide space to SME's to interview potential candidates.
- The 'Hub' would have space for educational seminars and workshops for employers and immigrant talent.
- The 'Hub' would work in partnership with immigrant settlement service providers, as well as Employment Ontario.
- The 'Hub' would engage and connect International Students and ethno-cultural groups to increase the available talent pool.

## **NEXT STEPS...**

- Further information/input/questions from community leaders of organizations and business via a short survey (provide link to survey).
- Key stakeholders to discuss/plan next steps – governance/structure, funding, host/location, administrator, leadership and more.

Please send any questions you may have to:

- Nora Whittington - [NWhittington@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:NWhittington@regionofwaterloo.ca)
- Julie Newman – [jnewman@carizon.ca](mailto:jnewman@carizon.ca)

RFIQ Questions (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZK2MKYD>):

1. Do you support the idea of an Immigrant Talent Hub? Yes or no and why?
2. Please provide feedback on the proposal.
3. Further questions, input and ideas?
4. Can you offer resources: finances, space/host, administrator, expertise, people?
5. Other suggestions