



June 28, 2012

# York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy moves from talk to action

## Three-year action plan identifies 126 actions to support inclusive communities

NEWMARKET - York Regional Council today endorsed Leading Change for a Stronger Community: Community Partnership Council Collective Action Plan 2012-2015 (Action Plan), a three-year plan that supports the integration of newcomers and builds welcoming and inclusive communities.

"Immigration is driving growth and diversity in The Regional Municipality of York. Ongoing investment from all levels of government is necessary to effectively respond to the needs of residents," said York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch. "Through the development of the Action Plan, the Community Partnership Council has identified ways to support all York Region residents and further advance York Region's position as an economic, social and cultural leader."

Released in September 2011, the York Region Local Immigration Settlement Strategy sets a long-term vision and priorities for the well-being of newcomers. Developed under the Local Immigration Partnership initiative and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the strategy is intended to guide community action to enhance quality of life and increase opportunities for all residents.

The Action Plan is the next phase in the strategy. Community Partnership Council (CPC) members, which include community organizations, school boards, labour market planning boards, local municipalities, York Regional Police and all three levels of government, committed to 126 actions to help support the well-being of newcomers and residents.

"Proactive planning is a key priority for ensuring our communities are sustainable and successful," said Town of Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Chair of York Region's Community and Health Services Committee. "The Action Plan identifies specific and collective initiatives to help all residents and local businesses thrive in the long term."

Ten collective actions, grouped into three themes of building community capacity, supporting positive attitudes towards diversity and enhancing labour market outcomes, are also identified in the Action Plan. Specific collective initiatives that CPC members will work on together include:

- Building library connections through collaboration among all nine local municipal libraries to share information and services in multiple languages
- Increasing public awareness of the positive impact of immigration by creating and implementing a public awareness campaign
- Working with Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to expand the mentoring partnership program in York Region to provide newcomers and mentors with valuable learning opportunities

"New Canadians bring new energy and talent to our community. The Action Plan reinforces that we all have a role to play in building supportive and inclusive communities," said Town of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Co-Chair of the Community Partnership Council. "Newcomers who live in York Region tend to be highly educated, well motivated and make meaningful contributions to our local culture and economy."

As a key item within the Action Plan, York Region will host an Internationally Educated Professionals Conference this fall on Tuesday, October 23, 2012. The one-day event welcomes all levels of government, professional associations, entrepreneurs, employers and newcomers for an opportunity to network and learn.

“More than one million people, including a substantial and growing population of newcomers, have chosen York Region as their home,” said Stephen Lam, Director of Immigrant and Community Services, Catholic Community Services of York Region and Co-Chair of the Community Partnership Council. “As York Region continues to grow, it is important that all residents have access to the programs and services needed to succeed, thrive and engage in the community.”

Today, a community event at the York Region Administrative Centre was held to celebrate Canada, immigration, multiculturalism and the launch the Action Plan. As part of the celebration, York Region and Citizenship and Immigration Canada hosted a special citizenship ceremony for 26 new Canadians.

“The Local Immigration Settlement Strategy demonstrates the collaboration needed between all levels of government and community partners to reflect unique and local settlement needs,” said Costas Menegakis, Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill. “Celebrating this milestone at a community-based citizenship ceremony certainly illustrates the end result of effective settlement planning.”

Online versions of Leading Change for a Stronger Community: Community Partnership Council Collective Action Plan 2012-2015 and York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy are available at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

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Founded in 1971, The Regional Municipality of York is made up of nine municipalities  
and provides services to more than one million residents, 29,000 businesses and 495,000 employees.

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