

Proposed Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (MOU)

Date: March 28, 2018

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On November 24, 2017, the federal and Ontario governments signed a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). The purpose of the Agreement is "to strengthen the long-term partnership between Canada and Ontario to welcome and settle immigrants, boost the economy and address shared humanitarian responsibilities."

The City of Toronto has been working with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and the federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to negotiate a new Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) similar to that which accompanied the original COIA and expired in 2011. It recognized "that the extent to which immigrants succeed in Toronto is directly linked to the successful implementation of Canada's immigration policy, the successful implementation of settlement and integration policies in Ontario, and the success of Toronto as Ontario's and Canada's largest city."

MCI and IRCC will work with the City to have a new MOU finalized and ready for signing in late spring 2018. This report seeks delegated authority from City Council for the Deputy City Manager A to sign the MOU.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A to enter into a Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (MOU) that will provide a framework for the three governments to discuss information sharing and matters related to immigration and settlement.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed MOU is not a funding agreement. There is no funding associated with the 2017 COIA Agreement, including its Annexes. There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT

Newcomers face numerous challenges in terms of their social, economic and civic integration. In 2013, Toronto City Council approved the Toronto Newcomer Strategy in recognition of the important role the City of Toronto plays in providing supports to immigrants. The recommendation in this report, if adopted by Council, advances the City's efforts to support immigrants through building a strong partnership and aligning actions with the federal and provincial governments.

DECISION HISTORY

In February 2013, City Council approved the Toronto Newcomer Strategy that affirmed the principle that "funders (federal and provincial governments) and providers of services (municipal government and community-based organizations) share leadership for settlement and service integration planning."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD18.7>

In August 2010, City Council reaffirmed the City's commitment to supporting all immigrants by "working with the Ontario and federal governments to renew the trilateral agreements to provide Toronto with a strong role in servicing immigrants to this City."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.CD35.9>

In June 2008, the Executive Committee received a report from the City Manager that outlined that the September 2006 Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement had improved the relationship between the City of Toronto and the provincial and federal governments through "an effective and empowered partnership made possible by the agreement."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.EX22.13>

In January 2007, the Executive Committee received a report from the City Manager that recommended Council ratify the Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding dated September 29, 2006 "which provides the framework for formalized discussions between the three governments with respect to immigration and settlement issues in Toronto."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2007.EX2.11>

COMMENTS

Issue Background

The Original COIA and Extension (2005-2011)

The first Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) was signed on November 21, 2005 with a purpose to "establish the framework for a long-term partnership between Canada and Ontario with respect to immigration." In 2010, the federal and provincial governments signed a one-year extension to COIA which expired on March 31, 2011.

The original COIA outlined the respective roles and responsibilities of Canada and Ontario related to attraction and settlement of immigrants. The first COIA also highlighted the important role of local governments. This was a recognition by both the federal and provincial governments that immigrants settle not just in Canada or Ontario, but first and foremost in local communities – in municipalities. In its Annex F, titled Partnerships with Municipalities, the first COIA recognized the special position of Toronto in terms of the number of new immigrants, and the related challenges. It also recognized that the city has developed "experience, expertise and community infrastructure to respond sensitively to the social and economic integration needs and potential of immigrants."

One of the most significant outcomes of first COIA was the establishment of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in Ontario, and their subsequent expansion throughout Canada. Funded by IRCC, LIPs facilitate coordination between the non-profit agencies, government and the for-profit sector to better meet newcomer needs and support their settlement process and access to the labour market.

The First Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (ratified by City Council in 2007)

Annex F of the 2005 COIA established a commitment for Canada and Ontario to sign a separate Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Toronto within nine months, which would provide a framework for the three governments to discuss matters related to immigration and settlement.

The first Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (MOU) was signed on September 29, 2006 by the Mayor of Toronto, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. City Council ratified the MOU at its meeting on February 5-8, 2007. The MOU was not a funding agreement.

The first MOU highlighted four areas of mutual interest:

- Access to employment;
- Access to education and training;
- Access to services; and
- Citizenship and engagement.

It also outlined five principles: horizontality; cooperation; transparency and accountability; focus on results; and relationship with other initiatives. The MOU put in place the following governance structure:

- An MOU Steering Committee comprised of the City of Toronto's City Manager and the Assistant Deputy Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, will meet to ensure the goals and objectives of the MOU are met; identify priorities; and monitor and review progress.

Overview of the 2017 Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA)

On November 24, 2017, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and the Honourable Laura Albanese, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration signed a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). The agreement's intent is "to strengthen the long-term partnership between Canada and Ontario to welcome and settle immigrants, boost the economy and address shared humanitarian responsibilities." COIA will guide the bilateral relationship on immigration between Canada and Ontario for the next five years.

The agreement can be accessed at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/federal-provincial-territorial/ontario/immigration-agreement-2017.html>.

The purpose of the new COIA "is to further strengthen the long-term partnership between the Parties with respect to immigration. It defines the respective roles and responsibilities of the Parties relating to Immigrants and Temporary Residents under the IRPA [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act]." The Agreement lays out a number of objectives, including: fostering collaboration with regards to policy; maintaining and enhancing a positive relationship between Canada and Ontario related to the appropriate level and composition of Immigrants to the Province; responding to Ontario's current and emerging economic development, social and labour market priorities; supporting the successful economic and social integration of Immigrants and Refugees in Ontario; supporting Canada's humanitarian objectives; facilitating strategies to address barriers to foreign credential qualification and recognition; ensuring the effectiveness and integrity of the programs of Canada and Ontario; developing common outcome measurements and, where possible, undertaking research projects; foster cooperation in attracting and retaining French-Speaking Immigrants; and facilitating good governance in relation to the Agreement. The Agreement also includes Annexes on Provincial Nominees and Foreign Workers, and a commitment to negotiate Annexes on French-Speaking Immigrants, Municipal Partnership, and International Students.

The new COIA includes a section on Local Government that, like the original COIA, recognizes the important role played by municipalities in attracting and retaining newcomers; in supporting the successful settlement and integration of immigrants in Ontario; and in ensuring that communities are welcoming and inclusive. The section includes a commitment by Canada and Ontario to "explore issues related to [Local Governments'] respective interests in immigration, to pursue opportunities related to communities' interests in immigration, and encourage immigration throughout the province of Ontario." The agreement defines Local Government as "the council of a municipality or the board of a regional district." As noted above, COIA also includes a

commitment to "negotiate in good faith and in a timely fashion" an Annex to the agreement on Municipal Partnership.

Draft Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding

The City of Toronto has discussed with MCI and IRCC the drafting and signing of a Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) modeled on the Canada-Ontario-Toronto MOU on Immigration and Settlement that was ratified by City Council in 2007.

As was the case with the first agreement, the 2017 COIA recognizes municipalities as a critical partner in the successful settlement and integration of immigrants to Ontario. In the case of Toronto, this recognition takes the form of a specific Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding.

The MOU provides the City of Toronto with direct policy input in a collaborative framework with the federal and Ontario governments with regards to immigration-related issues. It also provides the City with a formal mechanism to focus on issues of specific relevance to Toronto. Like with the previous MOU, this new MOU provides the framework for an effective trilateral partnership.

The MOU will be similar in content to the 2007 MOU with minor revisions. It will not address funding issues and issues associated with "pre-claim" refugees will continue to be outside the scope of the MOU.

Next Steps

City Council authorize Deputy City Manager A to enter into a new Canada-Ontario-Toronto Memorandum of Understanding on Immigration and Settlement (MOU). MCI and IRCC will work with the City to have a new MOU finalized and ready for signing in late spring 2018.

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SIGNATURE

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