

## GBLIP Partnership Council Meeting January 23, 2025; 1:00pm

### Microsoft Teams

Present: Adam Kahgee, Aka Sébastien Kouakou, April Marshall, Barb Watt, Christine Brandt, Courtney Miller, Crystal Ellis, Crystal Ferguson, Dana Soucie, Dave Barrett, Dave Shorey, Deepikaa Gupta, Evelyn Sabando, Jan Lai, Jeff Lonely, Jennifer Isber-Legge, Joanna Aegard, Joel Loughead, Julie Hamilton, Kate Paul, Kimberly Trombley, Lisa Alguire, Lorie Fioze, Madison Kittel, Martha McCleary, Mary Solomon, May Ip, Melissa Marshall, Pierre Valley, Savanna Myers, Sharon Safra, Sophie Silvertro, Stuart Reid, Suneet Kukreja

## Welcome and Introductions

GBLIP Manager, Deepikaa Gupta, welcomed the group to the meeting and reviewed the agenda with the group.

## Land Acknowledgement

The Municipalities of Bruce and Grey Counties sit on the traditional territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. We give thanks to them, and to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Neyaashiinigiing, as the traditional keepers of this land and water, and we also recognize the traditional homeland of the Metis Nation. We do this in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

## New Members

Barb Watt, Eligibility & integrity Supervisor, Bruce County Human Services – standing in for Erin Becker)

Stuart Reid, Executive Director, Community Foundation Grey Bruce

Ipsita Peter – Grey Bruce Newcomer & Immigrant Women's Collective

Julie Hamilton, Deputy Clerk, Municipality of Arran-Elderslie – attending on behalf of the municipality’s Accessibility Diversity Inclusion and Equity Committee

Madison Kittel, Georgian College (Owen Sound Campus) International Students Coordinator – returning from maternity leave

## GBLIP’s Status Update

Jeff Loney – Bruce County has entered negotiation with IRCC on finalizing the next round of funding for three years. The county is excited to keep the program going.

Savanna – Grey County is in the process of wrapping up GBLIP’s first five years and preparing for transitioning the program to Bruce County.

Deepikaa – will be on maternity leave starting February 7.

## Sub Committee Updates

### Belong (Sharon Safra)

- The Sub-committee continued to populate the [Educate & Celebrate Calendar](#) on GBLIP website.
- Member organizations were busy with events/activities:
  - Bruce Grey Mentorship in Hanover hosted its annual Inclusive Winter Dinner with the families they work with.
  - Christmas on the Bay worked with several partners (e.g. Georgian Bay Community School, Owen Sound and District Junior Optimist, Settlement Services) on the annual Christmas farmers market that took place from November 28 to December and offer a free Inclusiveness Training with Breaking Down Barriers for volunteers in the community.
  - Grey Bruce Newcomer & Immigrant Women’s Collective continues its outreach and community connections.
  - Georgian College, Sanatan Centre, Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce co-hosted the second Festive Feast.

### Community (Lisa Alguire)

- Since the last GBLIP Council meeting, the Sub-committee continued to work on the Municipality Welcome Package project:
  - To date, twelve municipalities have completed and uploaded their Welcoming Packages to their respective websites.
  - GBLIP has been maintaining and updating the [Municipality Welcome Packages](#) page to include links to all the Packages.
  - The results of the Distribution Survey with municipalities indicate that Different means were used to make the Welcome Packages available for

newcomers. However, it was a challenge to track how many printed copies were picked up by newcomers. So far, the user evaluation survey (link in the back of the Package and on the QR code postcard) has not received any response

## Employment (April Marshall)

- The Newcomer Readiness Project planning group is currently analyzing the survey results. A report draft will be shared with the Sub-committee at the next meeting in February. The report will include recommendations on to collaboratively support newcomer integration as a region.
- The Sub-committee continued to maintain and update the [Employer Resources](#) page on the GBLIP website.

## GBLIP 2024 Highlights

### Achievements & Milestones

- Resources
  - Employer Resources page on GBLIP website
  - Educate & Celebrate Calendar on GBLIP website
  - Positive Messaging Instagram picture frames
- Community Outreach
  - Regular posting on social media increase public's understanding of GBLIP's work and knowledge of how to help build a welcoming community
- Achievements over the first five years
  - Connected over sixty community partners
  - Provide community partners opportunities to collaborate on projects
  - Developed resources to support immigrant integration.

### Community Engagement

- Municipality Welcome Packages
  - Twelve municipalities have completed and uploaded their Packages to their websites
  - Municipality Welcome Packages page on GBLIP website provides links to all the Packages.
- Welcoming Week 2024
  - Sub-committee organized activities: quiz, colouring book and contest, Welcome Package promotional video
  - Promoted partners events.
- Partnered with member organizations on events
  - Grey Bruce One World Festival (Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce)

- Multiculturalism Day event (Settlement Services)

## Collaborative Projects

- #ImmigrantsWork Project (in partnership with WES)
  - Delivered training modules to employers and employment service providers
  - In the process of developing the Employer Navigator
- Diversity & Belongingness Conference
  - In partnership with Bluewater District School Board, Owen Sound Police Services, Sanatan Centre, Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce, YMCA Owen Sound Grey Bruce Settlement & Language Services
  - Attended by 150 people (including volunteers)
- Newcomer Readiness Project
  - In partnership with Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Town of Hanover, Saugeen Economic Development Corporation, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus
  - Encouraged municipalities to utilize the Newcomer Readiness self-assessment tool developed by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus.
  - Result of the project will help develop a collaborative approach to support newcomer integration in the region.

## EDI Support

- In-person sessions of “Conversational for a More Inclusive and Welcoming Community” EDI Training have been delivered to 4 organizations with a total of 66 participants.
- Supported community stakeholders to incorporate EDI into their strategic plans, policies and mandates.

## Roundtable Updates

Deepikaa –

- GBLIP has contracted PRA to conduct evaluation and asked that members fill out the evaluation survey which will only takes 10 minutes
- Continued to work with WES on the #ImmigrantsWork Project – there will be a soft launch for the Employer Navigator in spring. Some employers will be invited to try the tool and provide feedback. The launch event will be in August.

April Marshall –

- Town of Hanover, in partnership with the Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, Grey County Business Enterprise Centre and GBLIP, is hosting an XNow event on March 28 at the Community Hall of the Hanover Civic Centre.

Dave Shorey –

- Georgian College experiences decrease in international student enrollment since the Government has cut back the quota. The reduced list of work that students are allowed to apply for immigration upon graduation does not only cause affect the students. It will also impact the workforce which is already experiencing shortage.

Aka Sébastien Kouakou

- A series of workshop on employment to help jobseekers including newcomers to find work and adapt to workplace. 10 sessions on Thursdays, bilingual.
- Aka is being transitioning to London office. He will introduce the person who will take over the role to ensuring continual engagement with GBLIP Council and member organizations.

Suneet Kukreja –

- Settlement Services is in negotiation of next round of funding with IRCC.
- Multiculturalism Day event this year will be held in Port Elgin in partnership with Saugeen Shores.
- There is a new mother program being offered at the Pregnancy Centre in Owen Sound for newcomers.

Joel Loughead –

- Joel is a candidate for the Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound Green Party. He invited members to share concerns to bring to Green Party platform.

Joanna Aegard –

- Bruce County Public Library has launched a [new website](#).
- New language learning platform – include programs for people whose first language is not English to learn English
- Showing “Patty vs Patty” on February 2 in celebration of Black History Month.
- Summer Reading Club’s theme is Around the World. Kick off party will be on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Crystal Ellis –

- New rural strategy: Enabling Opportunities has been released

<https://www.ontario.ca/files/2025-01/mra-enabling-opportunity-ontario-rural-economic-development-strategy-en-2025-01-22.pdf>

Sharon –

- Welcoming Communities Grey Bruce will be hosting a fundraising GALA on April 25.

Stuart Reid –

- Community Foundation Grey Bruce is hosting the Not-for-profit workshop March 18

Dana Soucie –

- Four County Labour Market Planning Board will be publishing reports from the projects from last year. A live release event has been scheduled for March 6.

Kimberly Trombley

- Grey County Regional Job Fair on February 20.

Pierre

- Saugeen Shores Job Fair on February 18
- Job Fairs in Kincardine and Wiarton on March 5

May

- Lunar New Year Celebration events throughout Grey Bruce in February

## Next Meeting

In person. Date to be confirmed.

## Adjournment

2:35 PM