

Huron Welcome Hub for Newcomers

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Association

We are a collaborative group of volunteers who work to welcome and help newcomers from outside Canada who are settling in Huron County without other support. The Association acts as a touchstone to link newcomers to agencies and programs that can provide the services they need to ensure a successful transition to life in the county.

The Mandate

Association objectives to be accomplished include:

- Provide support to newcomers upon request/referral
- Assist with transportation coordination, temporary housing, information
- Partner with existing service providers locally who provide support to newcomers and make referrals as needed.
 - Existing partners include (but are not limited to):
 - YMCA of Southwestern Ontario
 - Centre for Employment and Learning
 - Huron County Immigration Partnership
 - Faith groups
 - Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre
 - Service Clubs (such as the Goderich Lions – Huron Area Newcomer Fund)

Parameters and Limitations

The authority of the Association is to:

- Act with independence in response to newcomer needs within Huron County and area
- Address gaps that exist in newcomers' settlement experiences in Huron County and area
- Be self-governing
- Periodically review needs and the Terms of Reference

Limitations of the Association include:

- The Association does not conduct the work of available no-cost-to-user services, such as work conducted by the Local Immigration Partnership, settlement services, employment services or language services. Instead, the Association liaises and makes referrals to these organizations.

Responsibilities of the Association include:

- Support newcomers' transition to longer term housing
- Support newcomers with transportation upon request
- Manage communication tools (such as Whatsapp, Facebook, email, phone calls)
- to share information/requests with newcomers and volunteers
- Collect and share information to support newcomers' settlement experiences
- Liaise with partner organizations and refer newcomers to access services and Support

Priorities of the Association include:

- ! Complete work in a timely manner, without prejudice, to minimize hardships
- for newcomers
- ! Respond to newcomer needs as they arise
- ! Communicate the mandate and invite community contributions
- ! Develop an action plan, if needed, to seek funding to address newcomer needs

Membership

Two levels of volunteer involvement are anticipated within the Association:

Steering Group members

The Steering Group will identify and seek opportunities to further understand newcomer needs, as informed by volunteer and newcomer feedback.

The Steering Group will consist of nine members with liaisons from the following organizations being invited to attend regular meetings as ex-officio members:

- Huron County Immigration Partnership
- Centre for Employment and Learning
- YMCA of Southwestern Ontario – settlement services

The roles of the individual members are as follows:

- Chair – Halina Zaleski
- Vice Chair – Sinead Cox
- Secretary – TBD
- Treasurer, Funding lead – Chris Mewhort
- Transportation lead – Peter Hrudka
- Housing/hosting lead – TBD
- Information provision/communication lead – Patti Tasko
- Member at large
- Member at large

Nomination of the Steering Group members will be guided by bylaws (see APPENDIX A).

General members

General members of the Association will include, but are not limited to, individuals from various communities geographically dispersed throughout Huron County and area.

Association general members should be committed to helping newcomers, learning about newcomer experiences and referring to other resources available to newcomers.

Accountability

The Association is led by a Steering Group who reports to all general members annually.

Minutes will be made available to all general members and partner organizations by the secretary of the Association on request.

Time Frame

The Association was formed in 2023 and will exist until such time that the Steering Group chooses to disband it.

As a guideline of the Association, and to maintain continuity and encourage involvement, Steering Group members terms will be staggered.

The Steering Group will have a minimum of four meetings per year, with additional meetings as required.

Resources Required

There is no defined budget for the operation of this Association. Members will be working as volunteers. Organizations will be approached for in-kind contributions to cover expenses.

Communication Process

Information about the Steering Group will be communicated, but not limited to:

- Volunteers/members
- Partner organizations
- Newcomers

Information about the Association will be broadly distributed to the community.