



**SAULT STE. MARIE
AND AREA
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP**

Terms of Reference 2025

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1 Introduction

1.1 Territorial Land Acknowledgement with Gratitude

We (Sault Ste. Marie and Area Local Immigration Partnership) would like to acknowledge that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and that the land on which we live, work and play is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, specifically the Garden River and Batchewana First Nations, as well as Métis Peoples.

As newcomers, we recognize the Metis, First Nations and Inuit peoples as the traditional stewards of this land. Additionally, we recognize their traditional ways of life and their ties to the land.

As we welcome more newcomers, it is important to look back and acknowledge the dark history of this country and the struggles faced by its original inhabitants.

Acknowledging the land we have built our lives on is a small but important step towards reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and those who came later.

1.2 Background

The Sault Ste. Marie and Area Local Immigration Partnership (SSMLIP) was established in 2009, under the stewardship of the City of Sault Ste. Marie. Since then, SSMLIP has engaged thousands of community members and is active partners with over 50 local and regional organizations including employers, service providers, cultural groups and key institutions in education, healthcare, housing, and economic and workforce development to attract, support and retain newcomers, immigrants and refugees within the community.

A Local Immigration Partnership (or a “LIP”) brings together service providers, settlement agencies, community groups, employers and other key organizations across the municipality to create a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers.

LIP conducts research to identify potential barriers for newcomers and then works through its partnership to remove them so newcomers can fully participate in the economic, social, cultural, and recreational life of the community. The goal is for newcomers to enjoy a smooth and worry-free transition throughout their settlement experience.

LIP develops relationships and innovative linkages between organizations to encourage intentional collaboration in an effort to share knowledge and build on each other’s strengths. This makes it easier for organizations to successfully serve, hire and interact with newcomers, while feeling more connected to the overall community vision.

Funded by Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Local Immigration Partnerships are part of a Canada-wide project to increase the engagement of newcomers at the local level.

LIPs across Canada are helping municipalities take a greater role in planning for and guiding immigration and settlement in support of a two-way process of integration.

1.3 Key Definitions

Integration: a two-way process that involves intentional collaboration, mutual learning and meaningful interrelationships between newcomers and the host community. Integration is achieved when an individual feels they can fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of community life (economic, social, cultural and political). A strong sense of attachment to the community (meaningful work, suitable housing, strong relationships etc.) and acceptance by the community (a sense of belonging) characterize a state of integration.

Newcomer: an individual of any age currently residing in Sault Ste. Marie who is or has been an immigrant at some point in their life, who does not feel they are fully participating everything the community has to offer.

Immigrant: people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities.

Multiculturalism: the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences within a dominant political culture. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

Interculturalism: involves moving beyond merely accepting the fact that multiculturalism exists within society and intentionally engaging with people from different races, cultures, faiths etc. through dialogue and interaction.

1.4 LIP Objectives

- Identify and eliminate gaps in programs and services for newcomers and immigrants
- Consolidate and centralize community resources and services for new immigrants
- Address current and pending labour shortages through Immigration Strategy development
- Develop and construct a working community strategy/plan

1.5 Governance

The LIP initiative will continue to be administered through the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie (the City) under the supervision of the Department of Community Development and Enterprise Services. The City and LIP staff are responsible for financial accountability to IRCC and will be considered the final decision-making authority on the project. LIP will be responsible for all deliverables to IRCC including all required financial and administrative reporting.

Local Immigration Partnership staff supports the LIP Council, Immigrant Advisory Committee, and the partnership overall by providing “backbone” supports that include developing linkages between organizations, conducting research and evaluation, creating opportunities for cultural learning, information-sharing, and networking, and facilitating both internal and external communications.

Ultimately, LIP is accountable to members, partners, and stakeholders of the Sault Ste. Marie and region for the directions and actions it takes to fulfill the overall community vision. The partnership will regularly seek recommendations, authentically and openly engage, and report progress to the community on its activities.

The image below (Figure 1) illustrates the governance model for the Sault Ste. Marie and Area LIP, which we have adapted and modeled after the Waterloo Immigration Partnership and Cape Breton LIP frameworks. SSMLIP’s Governance Model will continue to evolve over time under the direction of the LIP Council.

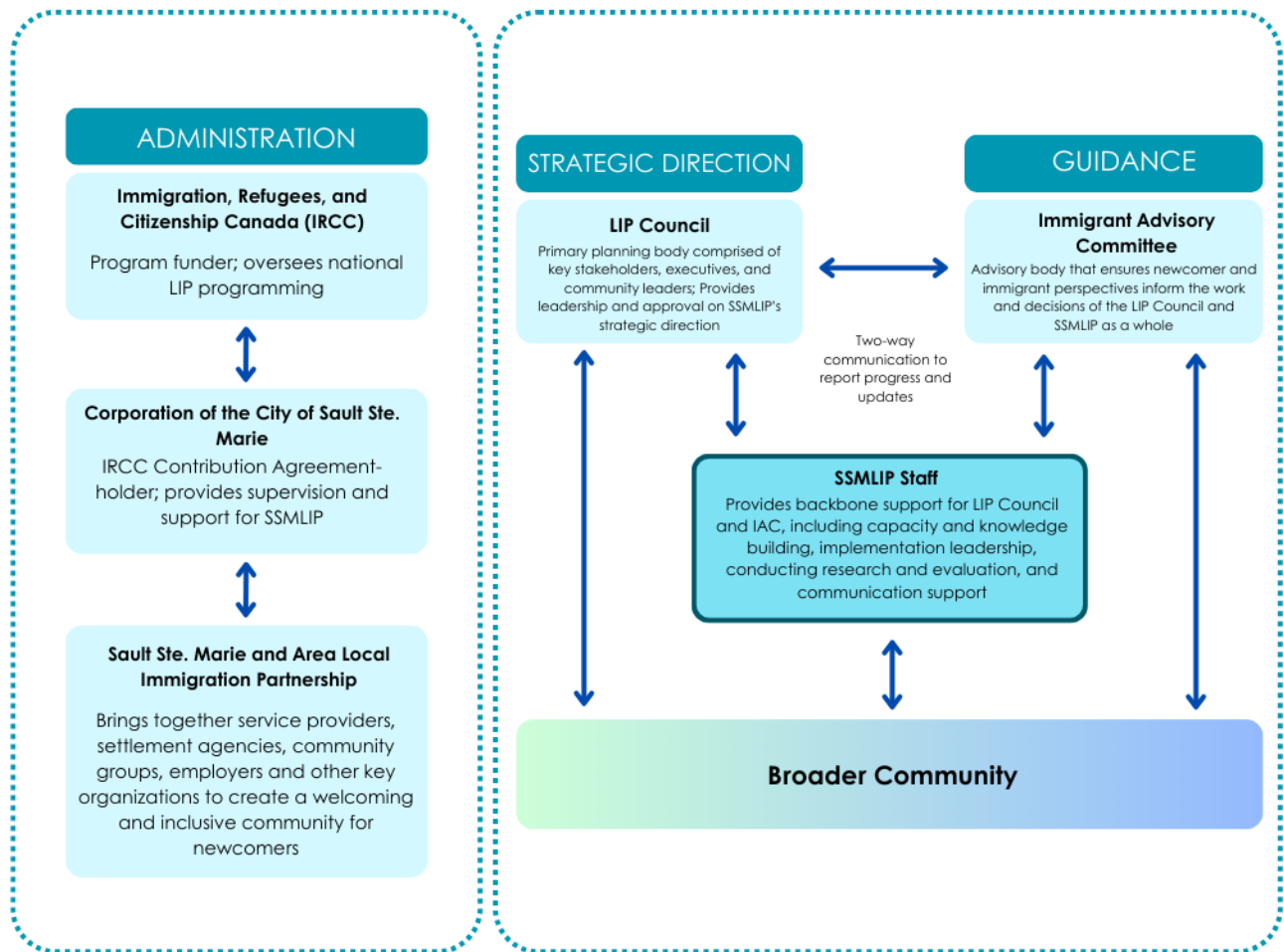


Figure 1. SSMLIP Governance Model

2 Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIP Council)

2.1 Intent

The Local Immigration Partnership Council (the Council) serves as the primary mechanism through which the LIP engages stakeholders in systematizing and guiding settlement and integration, building on local initiatives, augmenting community engagement, and planning for the future. Through the LIP Council, multiple stakeholders from across the sectors can come together to develop a guiding vision and comprehensive strategic plan that reflects and responds to current and emerging local needs.

The Council enables collective planning and action by establishing and developing enhanced connections within and across sectors, by assisting non-settlement agencies increase their awareness and understanding of newcomers' needs, and by facilitating information-sharing as well as intentional collaboration between organizations on key issues.

The Council serves as a unified voice and planning body that works towards promoting the benefits of immigration and diversity within a local context, champions the work of Partnership members, and helps create supportive environments where dialogue and collaboration can flourish.

The Council is also a mechanism to ensure strategic leadership and good governance of the Local Immigration Partnership in Sault Ste. Marie.

2.2 Principles

The Local Immigration Partnership Council will be guided by the understanding that the successful settlement and integration of newcomers is a two-way and mutually-beneficial process that involves the active participation of everyone in creating environments that enables both newcomers and stakeholders to succeed and thrive. It is imperative, therefore, that the LIP Council seeks out and engages newcomers in the planning process in recognition of the mutual responsibility between community stakeholders and newcomers in co-creating a system that works for everyone. Mutual learning, intentional collaboration, and meaningful interrelationships will be defining characteristics of a system designed to maximize the full benefits offered by immigration and increased diversity.

Within this exchange model, LIP Council's strategic planning activities will be guided by the C.O.R.E. priorities established by Immigration, Refugee and citizenship Canada (IRCC). They include:

- **Client-centered** – the Council will ensure that all services and programming are tailored to meet the actual and specific needs of newcomers. This includes considering the unique needs of highly-skilled professional immigrants and vulnerable or marginalized newcomers, such as refugees, who face barriers, as well as ensuring Francophone services for those newcomers who want to live and work in French. Planning will take a holistic approach and consider the complete individual within a constellation of their needs as a human being.
- **Outcomes-Driven** – the Council will ensure all planning and action items are driven by evidence, ensuring the best outcomes, both short and long term, at the individual, organizational, and community levels.
- **Responsive to Need** – the Council will ensure that programming and service delivery meet the needs of not only newcomers, but of society itself, to best integrate newcomers and achieve the shared vision for settlement and integration.

- **Effective Use of Resources** – the Council will ensure that programming uses the most effective means of reaching the best outcomes, including the use of innovative approaches and pilot testing.

To this list, the Local Immigration Partnership adds the following values which characterize how members of the LIP Council will work with each other to produce the best outcomes:

- **Inclusivity** – the Council welcomes the participation and/or membership of all individuals regardless of their immigration status, race, citizenship, gender, profession, health status, and sexual orientation. Additionally, the Council will seek out and engage all community spheres to ensure the benefits of diversity are distributed throughout the community.
- **Collaboration** – the Council prioritizes intentional collaboration within and across sectors, and between Partnership members and non-members, in recognition of the value of leveraging resources and strengthening relationships between organizations.
- **Transparency** – the Council ensures all information related to LIP activities are shared clearly and honestly with each other, other partners and the community.
- **Commitment** – the Council will support and participate in LIP activities to the best of their abilities and will bring to the Council gatherings a mindset that is open, attentive, engaged and honestly intent on working towards mutual agreement.
- **Communication** – the Council will maintain open and clear channels of communication with each other beyond Council meetings. Council members respond promptly, clearly and respectfully to each other in all communicate.
- **Unity** – the Council will speak as a unified voice and support decisions made by the group both within their organization and within the public sphere.

2.3 Council Objectives

The primary objective of the LIP Council will be the development and implementation of a local settlement strategy. The strategic plan will:

- outline priority action items based on an understanding of newcomer needs;
- identify key tasks and tactics to achieve solutions;
- establish timelines for activities and clearly identify milestones to measure progress; and
- assign roles and responsibilities to ensure accountability.

The strategic plan should also address how the Local Immigration Partnership will achieve the following objectives:

- Improve access to and coordination of effective services that support newcomer integration
- Improve labour market outcomes
- Increase local knowledge and capacity to integrate newcomers
- Strengthen the community's awareness of newcomer needs and the benefits of diversity
- Enhance partnerships and participation of stakeholders across the sectors in coordination of service delivery and adjusting programming

In order to support better decision-making and ensure activities address actual newcomer needs, the strategic plan will include

- statistical data collection on immigrants and an inventory of settlement-specific and mainstream services and programs to provide an overview report on immigration population profile;

- first-person newcomer stories, focus groups, key informant interviews, and while providing a greater understanding of the settlement experience in Sault Ste. Marie;
- an aggregation of best practices and models of service delivery used in other communities to generate discussion for development of strategy; and
- the results of community consultations questionnaires to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current system and identify opportunities to build on existing successes through collaboration.

After the strategy has been created, the LIP Council will create an action plan that includes all major tasks required to realize the strategy. The action plan will subsequently guide LIP in establishing and coordinating working groups responsible for implementing activities addressing priority areas identified in the strategy. The action plan will also include a framework for measuring performance and progress towards goals and a methodology for evaluating success of the project.

2.4 Accountability

The LIP Council is accountable to IRCC and the residents of Sault Ste. Marie.

2.5 Membership, Roles, and Responsibilities

The LIP Council will consist of between 10 to 15 members representing a combination of the following key stakeholders:

- Immigrants
- Settlement service providers
- Mainstream service providers
- Faith and ethno-cultural groups
- Business and industry
- Police and justice
- Municipal government
- Education and Training
- Francophone community
- Indigenous community
- Healthcare
- Researchers and research liaisons
- Funders

LIP will strive for diverse representation of Council members to facilitate collaboration across sectors and ensure strategic planning is broad in scope, inclusive and build a strong network of partnerships.

Representatives will primarily be individuals in positions of executive leadership and management to maximize the impact of decision-making within and across organizations and community spheres beyond the operations of the Partnership.

Members of Council are expected to connect with their professional networks and circles of influence, both locally and beyond, to ensure they bring various perspectives to Council activities and take information back to the community. Members will ensure to appraise the organizations they are representing and (when appropriate) any other committees in which they are participating in Partnership activities and events.

Council members will always strive to represent their *sector* in strategic planning rather than focus on their specific organization or program.

In its first year of operation, Council members will be selected by the LIP coordinator based on organizational fit with immediate and emerging community needs. Afterwards, Council and sub-council members will be recruited through an open application process. The Council will evaluate applications and select new members based on competence and fit with Partnership objectives.

2.5.1 *Composition*

The LIP Council will be comprised of the following:

- Chair
- Co-Chair
- Up to 15 members representing key stakeholders (including Chair & Co-Chair)
- SSM & Area Local Immigration Partnership staff (ex-officio)

The Chair and Co-Chair will be selected by LIP Council Members by nomination and election by majority vote.

2.5.2 *Role of the Chair*

- Lead, facilitate, and chair meetings.
- Guide discussion at meetings to ensure dialogue focuses on issues related to the strategic aims of the Partnership and generates concrete actions for moving the project forward.
- Foster and maintain a respectful and inclusive environment conducive to open and productive dialogue to ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute to planning.
- Ensure members follow agreed rules of conduct related to decision-making, conflict of interest and other responsibilities.
- Meet with the LIP Coordinator at least one (1) week before any meeting of the Committee to set the meeting's agenda.
- Act as public spokesperson for the Council in conjunction with the LIP Coordinator.
- Assess the performance of the LIP Coordinator each year as well as evaluate the progress of the Council itself according to its established goals.
- Work closely with the LIP coordinator to recruit new members, spur support and participation in important activities, and ensure prompt and timely communication.
- Commit to a term of at least two (2) years at the helm of the Council.

2.5.3 *Role of the Co-Chair*

If the designated Chair is not available for a meeting, the Co-Chair will be responsible for convening and conducting the meeting. The Co-Chair is responsible for informing the Chair as to the relevant points or decisions raised or agreed to at that meeting.

The Co-Chair shall serve in their position for two (2) years.

2.5.4 *Council Member Responsibilities*

- Contribute to, review, and support the development of the settlement strategy.
- Help engage a wide variety of community stakeholders.
- Provide feedback and support to the LIP Coordinator and Chair/Co-Chair.
- Intentionally support the creation of a welcoming and inclusive community.

- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Participate in data collection, research initiatives, community consultations, and other projects that support or contribute to the development of the settlement strategy.
- Prepare for and regularly attend quarterly meetings or, if unable to attend, notify the LIP Coordinator in advance and appoint a delegate.
- Assist in the selection and recruitment of members for working groups.

The LIP coordinator will guide the LIP Council by organizing meetings, liaising between Council members and levels of Partnership structure, mobilizing backbone supports, and keeping the Council informed of project status, progress, upcoming events and potential issues. The LIP Coordinator will also serve as spokesperson for the project.

A member of the LIP staff will act as the secretary for Council meetings. The LIP staff member will keep meeting minutes and will distribute within one (1) week of a Council meeting.

2.5.5 Terms

LIP Council members will serve for two (2) years, or until such time that the organization they represent initiates a change in representation for the LIP Council, or if consistent attendance is not achieved as determined by the representative or by the LIP Council.

The Chair and Co-Chair will serve two (2) year terms with the option to hold an additional two-year extension of this term, if re-elected through majority vote.

2.5.6 Appointment Method

New members may be added to the LIP Council from time to time as the Council evolves and the need for additional community perspectives arises. New LIP Council members may be appointed through nomination and majority vote at a regular Council meeting.

In the event that an existing LIP Council member organization appoints a new representative from within that organization, that individual will be appointed as a LIP Council member without a vote of the LIP Council membership being required. That organization must, however, indicate the change in representation in writing to the LIP Coordinator.

The LIP Coordinator, Chair, and Co-Chair will be responsible for onboarding new members.

The question of LIP Council membership and composition will be reviewed by the Council on an ongoing basis.

2.5.7 Resignation

Any resignation of a Council member should be tendered in writing to the LIP Coordinator.

2.6 Procedures

2.6.1 Meetings and Attendance

The LIP Council is expected to meet at minimum four (4) and no more than six (6) times per fiscal year. It is desired that meetings will occur quarterly.

The LIP Council acknowledges, however, that meetings may be called at any time in response to urgent community issues such as the announcement of new federal or provincial immigration programs that directly impact the community.

It is expected that in such cases, Council members will attend the meeting regardless of prior or future scheduled meetings.

2.6.2 Agenda

The agenda for Council meetings will be distributed to all members no later than three (3) working days before the next scheduled meeting.

If a Council member desires to add an item to the agenda, they will forward the item to the LIP Coordinator at least five (5) days prior to meeting.

2.6.3 Decision Making

Quorum has been achieved when a majority of the members of the LIP Council, at least one of which must be a Chair or Co-Chair, is present at the meeting. Voting will be deferred until the next meeting should there be less than majority of council members, or if neither Chair nor Co-Chair are present.

1. The Local Immigration Partnership has adopted a simple “Yes (In Favour) or No (Against)” procedure for voting on action items. Action items receiving a majority of the votes will be considered approved by the entire Council. In the case of a tie, the Chair or Co-Chair has the authority to approve or deny the motion.
2. Once a motion is carried, it is expected that all Council members will support the decision of the group.

3 Immigrant Advisory Committee (IAC)

3.1 Intent

The Immigrant Advisory Committee (IAC) provides an opportunity for the direct participation of newcomers and immigrants in SSMLIP's operations, thereby increasing a collaboration base of organizations and individuals on overlapping issues related to diversity, inclusion and immigration. The IAC also serves to provide newcomers, refugees and members of racialized or religious minority communities in Sault Ste. Marie with a leadership role within SSMLIP's governance structure.

Within SSMLIP, the Immigrant Advisory Committee plays three key roles:

1. To represent authentic voices of immigrant and newcomer residents in SSMLIP's strategic planning processes;
2. To help increase awareness of and engagement in intercultural issues and activities;
3. To share information with immigrants and newcomers from various ethnic, cultural or faith communities in Sault Ste. Marie and encourage their participation in SSMLIP's ongoing work in the community.

3.2 Membership, Roles, and Responsibilities

Membership shall reflect the diversity of the community in Sault Ste. Marie by seeking representation from a variety of ages, cultures, professions, types of immigrant status, and settlement experiences. While SSMLIP cannot guarantee that the IAC will have representation from every ethnicity, culture or perspective, it will strive to ensure the IAC reflects an acceptable range of experiences.

Should the IAC decide that a critical knowledge gap exists within the roundtable, it may recommend that SSMLIP identify and seek to recruit a representative of that particular cultural community, industry sector, or immigrant type for membership in the IAC.

Non-member newcomers, who represent end-users of supports developed by various working groups and coalitions across the community, shall be asked for input as a resource as and when required in order to support diverse, equitable and representative decision-making.

3.2.1 Composition

The Immigrant Advisory Committee will be comprised of the following:

1. Chair
2. Co-Chair
3. Up to 10 members from the community (including Chair & Co-Chair)
4. SSM & Area Local Immigration Partnership staff (ex-officio)

The Chair and Co-Chair will be selected by IAC members by nomination and election by majority vote.

3.2.2 Role of the Chair

- Lead, facilitate, and chair meetings.
- Ensure the timely delivery of all agendas and minutes.

- Call the meeting to order, deliver a land acknowledgement, and ensure appropriate procedures are followed throughout.
- Deliver reports and recommendations to the LIP Council as requested.
- Meet with the LIP Coordinator at least one (1) week before any meeting of the IAC to set the agenda.
- Foster and maintain a respectful and inclusive environment conducive to open and productive dialogue to ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute to planning.
- Ensure members follow agreed rules of conduct related to decision-making, conflict of interest and other responsibilities.
- Serve as the representative of the IAC at official functions (the Chair may delegate this role to the Co-Chair or other committee members as required).
- Serve in their position for two (2) years.

3.2.3 *Role of the Co-Chair*

If the designated Chair is not available for a meeting, the Co-Chair will be responsible for convening and conducting the meeting. The Co-Chair is responsible for informing the Chair as to the relevant points or decisions raised or agreed to at that meeting.

The Co-Chair shall serve in their position for two (2) years.

3.2.4 *Committee Member Responsibilities*

- Participate fully in IAC meetings and relevant activities, such as community consultation or strategic plan sessions as required.
- Come to meetings prepared – read minutes, agenda items, ready to discuss items and make decisions.
- Promote the mission, vision and values of the Sault Ste. Marie Local Immigration Partnership and, by extension, Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).
- Make decisions and act in the best interests of newcomer communities or key stakeholders.
- Share data, best practices, and provide information to the committee.
- Collaborate with other agencies, stakeholders, committees, or SSMLIP partners, as needed.
- Represent the interests of the particular cultural community or communities with which they identify.
- Contribute to the implementation of action items generated by the IAC.
- Treat all members and ideas with respect.
- Respect confidentiality when appropriate.
- Listen to others and allow time for opposing views.
- Inform the Chair if special accommodations are required or if unable to attend meetings.

A member of the LIP staff will act as the secretary for IAC meetings. The LIP staff member will keep meeting minutes and will distribute within one (1) week following a meeting.

3.2.5 *Terms*

The term of committee membership shall be two (2) years.

The Chair and Co-Chair will serve two (2) year terms with the option to hold an additional two-year extension of this term, if re-elected through majority vote.

3.2.6 Resignation

Any resignation of an IAC member should be tendered in writing to the LIP Coordinator.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 Meetings and Attendance

The IAC will meet once every two (2) months or at the call of the Chair. The Chair will work with the LIP Coordinator to ensure that the committee meets no less than four (4) and no more than six (6) times per year. Frequency of meetings can be re-evaluated by the IAC as the year progresses.

Informal meetings of project-specific working groups may occur in between committee meetings. While these do not count as official IAC meetings, participating in these meetings by committee members is strongly encouraged.

Members' participation in bi-monthly meetings is essential to the effective functioning of the committee. Therefore, IAC members are expected to attend at minimum four (4) of the six (6) yearly meetings. Should a member be absent for more than two (2) meetings in a given year, they will be replaced in the committee.

3.3.2 Agenda Items

The agenda for IAC meetings will be distributed to all members no later than three (3) working days before the next scheduled meeting.

If a committee member desires to add an item to the agenda, they will forward the item to the LIP Coordinator at least five (5) days prior to meeting.

3.3.3 Decision Making

Quorum has been achieved when a majority of the members of the IAC, at least one of which must be a Chair or Co-Chair, is present at the meeting. Voting will be deferred until the next meeting should there be less than majority of committee members, or if neither Chair nor Co-Chair are present.

The Local Immigration Partnership has adopted a simple "Yes (In Favour) or No (Against)" procedure for voting on action items. Action items receiving a majority of the votes will be considered approved by the entire IAC. In the case of a tie, the Chair or Co-Chair has the authority to approve or deny the motion.

Once a motion is carried, it is expected that all committee members will support the decision of the group.

4 Transparency Policy

All meeting minutes will be considered open to the public, unless dealing with sensitive IAC or LIP Council issues.

The IAC and LIP Council acknowledge that all Partnership activities may be used as content in traditional or on social media, at the discretion of the LIP Coordinator.

5 Conflict of Interest

Members of the Immigrant Advisory Committee and the LIP Council are expected to declare any conflict of interest for any agenda item in which they or an organization they represent has direct financial or vested interest in a specific outcome. Once a conflict interest has been declared, it is expected the individual member will not participate in discussion or final decision on the agenda item.

6 Confidentiality

No information discussed at IAC or LIP Council meetings is considered confidential unless specifically requested by a member or organization, unless the information is protected by law.

7 Media and Communications

To ensure consistency of messaging, media inquiries should be directed to the LIP Coordinator. All advertising and promotional materials must be approved by the SSMLIP prior to publication.

8 Amendments

The SSMLIP Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the LIP Council and IAC members. The Terms of Reference is a dynamic document and may be amended as needed, with the oversight and approval of these two groups.

9 Acknowledgement

The Sault Ste. Marie and Area Local Immigration Partnership would like to thank the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership, Huron County LIP, Timmins LIP, Cape Breton LIP, and London & Middlesex LIP, whose Terms of References were frequently consulted and, in many places, adapted for this document.