

Thursday, October 22, 2020

Sent to: ontarionominee@ontario.ca

Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program Team
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
400 University Avenue, 4th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2R9

To whom it may concern:

RE: Regulatory Amendments 422/17 and 421/17

The City of Guelph (the City) appreciates the opportunity to comment on proposed amendments to the Ontario Immigrant and Nominee Program (OINP). The OINP is an essential provincial tool valuable in helping the province customize immigration flows to meet local needs.

The proposed transition to an Expression of Interest (EOI) system addresses a number of issues with the current program. As we see it, the current OINP system is limited in its ability to quickly meet the needs of employers, industry and local labour market needs. The annual quotas for the different OINP streams are typically met within hours of their opening, limiting employers' ability to plan around and count on these programs. To address this, we encourage the province to continue negotiations with the Government of Canada to increase the number of newcomers able to immigrate to Ontario under the OINP.

Further, although the current list of "in-demands skills" addresses some key priorities and labour market gaps for the City and the County of Wellington, different streams could benefit from more specific or stringent requirements that better align with labour market needs at the municipal level. For example, given Guelph's strengths as an innovation and agricultural hub, a greater focus on accepting STEM and agricultural students and workers would be of great benefit to our local economy. Greater targeting measures through the OINP would allow us to better attract and retain the top candidates for our communities.

Some business members of our community have also suggested that the speed at which the OINP programs change is difficult to keep up with and that they often change without notice, disrupting a planned pathway to permanent residency for their employees. An EOI system with clear and published guidelines would likely increase employer and immigrant participation, and a larger pool will be more likely to yield better results.

An EOI system would also be better suited to streamline any regional or municipal immigration initiatives that are developed in the future. Having an existing EOI

system that can be easily tailored to these types of new programs would be crucial in ensuring quick implementation. On this note, the City of Guelph would like to signal its support for the planned Municipal Nominee Program as it provides an opportunity for better targeting and selection of candidates for immigration to address local labour needs. This targeted approach to immigrants' selection is expected to support the City's efforts to attract and retain the skills and talents that would contribute to our economic growth in the long run.

We appreciate this opportunity to formally provide feedback on the OINP. I encourage you to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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