

new start 2016-2025

a settlement and integration strategy for immigrants and refugees in vancouver



Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



VANCOUVER IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP





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A Settlement and Integration Strategy for
Immigrants and Refugees in Vancouver

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preface and acknowledgements

Vancouver is one of the world's most livable cities. Its spectacular natural setting, vibrant urban energy and multicultural life have long attracted people from around the globe to settle here.

From the First Nations people whose roots go back many centuries to the waves of newcomers from Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world, Vancouver's inhabitants – old and new – have shaped a city that celebrates many traditions and proudly embraces diversity.

Like many large Canadian cities, Vancouver strives to enhance quality of life for residents in ways that make it a great place to live, work and play while also addressing challenges faced by some of its residents. Collaboration across all sectors is crucial to improving conditions that enable all its residents of diverse capabilities to enjoy the highest level of health and well-being possible.

One group of residents whose needs and potential are core to the city is immigrants and refugees. Immigrants and refugees come to Vancouver for many different reasons: some come to be reunited with their families; others come to work or study; some come to start a business; still others come seeking refuge from persecution or wars. We also know that many newcomers arrive ready to contribute to the city and community, while others will require more assistance to adjust to their new lives in Canada.

Vancouver has always welcomed newcomers. Since the 1980's, City Council has adopted policy, programs and initiatives to facilitate and enhance newcomers' integration, including funding for organizations serving immigrants and refugees. In 2005, Vancouver formed the first Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) which has the mandate of advising the Mayor and Council on issues related to immigration.

Over the years, the City has engaged key stakeholders in addressing the needs and issues of immigrants and refugees through initiatives such as the first Metro Vancouver Summit on Immigrant Employment, the Vancouver Dialogues project and the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces initiative which focused on enhancing the settlement and integration of immigrants living in the city.

The City of Vancouver, with 72 organizations and groups and nearly 120 partners, are now working together to build on the work of the past decades. Funded by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada), the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) was formed to build lasting, appropriate supports to help immigrants and refugees transition into their new lives here and achieve their full potential as contributing members of society. The philosophy anchoring this work is simple: no one group has all the solutions for newcomers, and shared experience and collaboration is the best way forward. VIP members brought passion, commitment and practicality to develop the New Start Strategy, a roadmap of actions to improve and enhance the pathways of settlement and integration for immigrants and refugees living in the city.

The City wishes to thank all the members for their honest, heartfelt and invaluable contributions. (Please see Appendix A for List of Members.) The City also wishes to thank the federal government for its funding and support towards this important initiative.

executive summary

The New Start Strategy - 2016-2025* - was initiated as part of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) established and funded by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). LIPs are community-based partnerships that:

- Systematize the local engagement of service providers and other institutions in newcomers' integration process;
- Support community-level research and strategic planning; and
- Improve coordination of effective services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration.

In the fall of 2014, the City of Vancouver entered into a 2 year agreement with IRCC. At the request of community partners the City was asked to convene the LIP initiative. The overall objectives of the project were to:

- Establish a local settlement strategy identifying the key priorities for the community.
- Conduct research on newcomers' needs and the community's assets and gaps, and raise awareness of these needs with partner members and the wider community.
- Establish an inclusive partnership council that is broad based and representative of the community and create a terms of reference.
- Develop action plans with measureable and time-bound activities to implement the community's strategic priorities.
- Support the implementation of actions plans and report on results achieved.

The New Start Strategy reflects the discussions and decisions made resulting from a 16 month process that engaged members of the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP). Nearly 120 people from 72 groups and organizations make up the partnership. They are active in the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI), VIP's Strategy Groups and Research Advisory Committee. Service organization directors, university professors, front-line workers, First Nations leaders, business representatives, community organizers and government officials are all collaborating to develop the programs and strategies that will fulfill VIP's goals. Close to half of VIP's members come from immigrant or refugee backgrounds, and they bring a wealth of experiences to the discussion.

Building on the City's Healthy City Strategy which sets out a vision of a Healthy City for All and related initiatives, the New Start Strategy is comprised of four themes: 1. Enhancing Access to Services; 2. Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement; 3. Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces; and 4. Government and Public Institutions Addressing Needs. Each theme focuses on a goal, supported by one or more priorities.

This report sets out how the strategy was developed, summarizes key demographics, and provides research and context for the four key theme areas and subsequent actions for ongoing consideration, should continued funding, resources and partnerships be supported. This strategy also looks ahead and outlines the process for implementation and measuring progress. The New Start Strategy can act as a guide for all orders of government and multiple sectors to work together to improve the settlement and integration experiences of immigrants and refugees in Vancouver.

The City of Vancouver and its partners are committed to moving the settlement and integration agenda forward. In Vancouver, well over 40 per cent of the city's residents were born outside of Canada. It is recognized that immigrants and refugees arriving in Vancouver bring skills, energy and talent and enrich the city. While some newcomers need only basic settlement pointers on first arrival, others need more assistance.

VIP learned that the top three areas of service needs for immigrants and refugees are health and well-being, employment, and language skills. We also learned that the top ways for newcomers to make friends are at workplaces, schools, including English Language schools. Further, immigrants and refugees find jobs mainly through websites, family and friends and professional connections, and they value public libraries, parks and gardens and community/recreation centres the most among civic facilities.

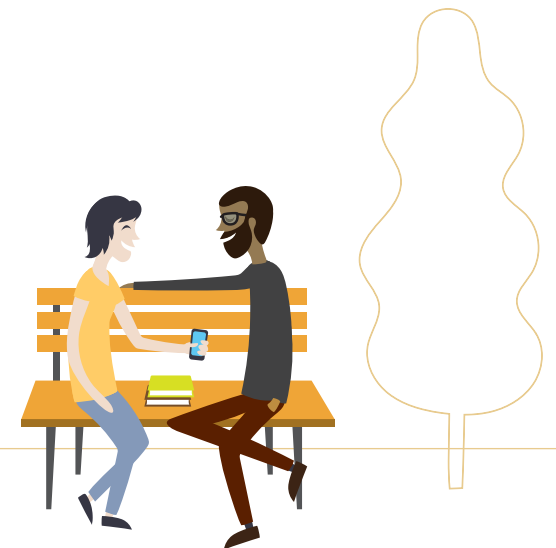
Key priority actions moving forward could include service system mapping and assessment, to examine the services available to newcomers along with strengths, gaps, and unmet needs; more direct employer engagement through survey and discussions around workplace-based initiatives; helping link immigrants and refugees with neighbourhood groups such as parent advisory committees and strata councils, while other priority actions might include continuing important reconciliation and youth engagement work.

The next step will be for VIP members to consider the priority actions within their respective agencies, examine what they are able and prepared to do and together, develop a more detailed implementation plan. While some actions require new funding and other resources, others build on existing programs. For its part, the City will pay particular attention to actions within its direct mandate, and examine how the City and the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration might help VIP gain ground in discussions with other funders and orders of government.

Nearly 120 people from 72 groups and organizations make up the partnership, and represent business, academic, community service, research and government sectors.

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developing the strategy

A Diverse Partnership

Since the fall of 2014, members of the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) have worked together to produce a strategy to help newcomers settle in Vancouver and integrate into Canadian life. Like many other immigration partnerships across the country, VIP is supported by the federal government, through the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada). Its aim is to bring together key local stakeholders and agencies to enhance and coordinate services and supports in order to create welcoming and inclusive communities for immigrants and refugees.

These partnerships are typically convened by a local community agency, which assumes responsibility for managing the process and bringing together partner organizations. In Vancouver, local stakeholders urged the City to take on the role of convener as the City has a long-standing commitment to supporting immigrant and refugee integration issues. The City is also well positioned to link an integrated response to immigrant and refugee issues with civic priorities that enhance the health and well-being of all people in the city. Nearly 120 people from 72 groups and organizations make up the partnership. These individuals represent business, academic, community service, research and government sectors.

This document highlights key discussions, and recommends actions from the VIP partners.

The City's Healthy City Strategy (HCS) is a framework that helps VIP's work contribute to achieving the vision and goals of a healthy city for all.

An Approach Aligned with Vancouver Priorities and Healthy City Strategy

The Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI), which began in 2005, set an important precedent at a municipal level for getting sectoral input and policy recommendations on immigration-related issues. In 2013, the City convened the Welcoming Communities initiative, inviting 27 established community service agencies to work together and enhance support and awareness for Vancouver's immigrants and refugees. At a broader level, the City's Healthy City Strategy (HCS), which seeks to ensure Vancouver residents can enjoy the highest level of health and well-being possible, created the framework which helps VIP's work contribute to achieving the Healthy City Strategy's vision and goals for the overall health and well-being of the city. HCS is a multi-sectoral, integrated approach based on the social determinants of health and focuses on 13 goals with aspirational targets and indicators.

The four themes of VIP that align with the Healthy City goals are:

- Enhancing Newcomers' Access to Services
- Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement
- Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces
- Governments and Public Institutions Addressing Needs

Like other metropolitan cities, Vancouver takes pride in the unique qualities that foster its livability for all residents, including newcomers. To help immigrants and refugees integrate into their new community, the City and local stakeholders aim to provide the best social supports and opportunities for newcomers' engagement and participation. An even more integrated service approach will ensure residents will have their diverse needs met, and find Vancouver a welcoming place to live.

An Engaged Process

As a “made in Vancouver” partnership, VIP drew from existing resources and structures.

The City’s convening role in VIP has the support of Vancouver City Council, which in turn, has sought advice on immigration issues from the MWGI. Instead of creating a new structure, the newly formed VIP relied on the MWGI as its main advisory and governance body, benefiting from this long-standing asset.

To enable topic-focused research and dialogue, VIP created four Strategy Groups and one Research Advisory Committee. Each Strategy Group focused on one of the four themes, and discussion in each Strategy Group was facilitated by two conveners. The Research Advisory Committee brought together representatives from key research interests, all helping to map out the research priorities and framework for the project.

The partnership evolved over months of regular meetings among Strategy Group and Research Advisory members. Members were recruited from senior staff of organizations and agencies sharing concerns for the well-being of newcomers, and a willingness to lend guidance and perspectives based on many years of experience serving and working with newcomers. As the membership list shows, organizations participating in VIP are varied and offer diverse expertise. VIP has gained significantly from the contributions of all the organizations and staff involved.

VIP has gone through many phases in its development. The chart below illustrates this process:

April 2014	July - October 2014	November 2014	December 2014	February 2015
Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) authorized by Council	Recruiting VIP partners and initial VIP meetings	Literature Review Drafting Conversation Starters	Strategy Groups identified needs and gaps	Conducted Immigrant Survey to learn about immigrants experiences accessing services, finding jobs and connecting with others
March 2015	October 2015	November 2015	December 2015	February - March 2016
Official launch of VIP at City hall VIP website goes live	Actions plans for New Start are developed for each focus area	VIP along with other community stakeholders provide feedback on the Strategy’s actions	Ranking and prioritization of the Strategy actions by VIP	Draft Strategy refined and completed

A key benefit of VIP is the way it documents and incorporates diverse community perspectives, and what one might label ‘localized ground-truthing’ – direct observations of local conditions applied to inform broader and larger-scale actions.

VIP meetings involved dialogue among community members and stakeholders sharing local, national or international perspectives, exchanging ideas based on best practices, or proposing solutions using a collaborative and novel approach. VIP has encouraged knowledge-sharing among members, and the goal of innovative but practical solutions wherever feasible.

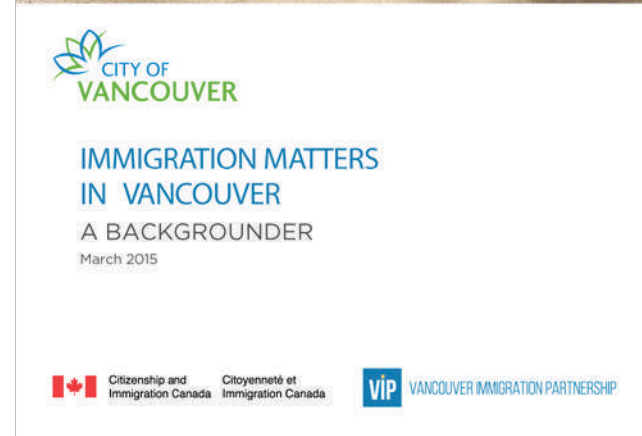
VIP also provided members with relevant and updated information on current key issues facing newcomers. The Project Secretariat compiled related research and studies on the four theme areas, resulting in four Conversation Starters which were shared among members and posted on the VIP website <http://bit.ly/1TpRIOS>

A summary of the Conversation Starters was published as the Immigration Matters in Vancouver background document <http://bit.ly/1TpRbfv>

VIP also conducted a major online survey of immigrants and refugees living in Vancouver. In collaboration with the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. (SPARC BC), and supported by the Research Advisory Committee, a survey was developed and distributed widely among members’ networks and through the City’s social media channels. More than 1,800 immigrants and refugees who are Vancouver residents responded, providing key data to VIP Strategy Groups and identifying key areas for further exploration¹. Some highlights from the survey include:

- The top three services needed by immigrant and refugee respondents are: **health and wellness; finding a job; English language programs.**
- The top three ways for immigrants and refugee respondents to make new friends are: **at workplaces; at English language schools/centres; at community centres.**
- The top three resources that help immigrant and refugee respondents to find jobs: **websites; family and friends; professional connections.**
- The top three civic services used by immigrants and refugees are: **public libraries, parks and gardens; community centres and recreation facilities.**

The survey results are available on the VIP website <http://bit.ly/27BKPjs>



The top three services needed by immigrant and refugee respondents are: health and wellness, finding a job, English language programs.



From Dialogue and Research to Action

From the extensive dialogue and research process described above, VIP Strategy Groups then considered key goals, priorities and actions for each theme area. Collectively, the Strategy Groups recommended 50 actions for the focused areas (Appendix B: Strategy Actions). Through a feedback gathering session attended by close to 140 community stakeholders, and a voting process involving VIP members, some actions were identified as 'Priority Actions' as they are considered more impactful and implementable, and have stronger alignment with the overall goals of civic priorities including the Healthy City Strategy. These actions form the core of implementation as VIP moves to its next phase.

Other actions for consideration are no less important and, like the Priority Actions, will require further discussion with partners on the potential for implementation and resource needs. In the coming months, specific Strategy Implementation Teams (SITs) will be formed to further gauge the potential of all these actions.

'Priority Actions' are considered more impactful and implementable, and have stronger alignment with the overall goals of civic priorities.

When SITs form, they will work to:

- Identify key stakeholders to invite for participation.
- Identify who and how to leverage more resources and/or funding to undertake the action.
- Outline specific steps to implement the action.
- Implement the action.
- Promote action to interested public or as needed.
- Monitor progress and report outcomes.

vision and guiding principles

The Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) adopted the following vision and value statement. The statement was recommended by the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) and adopted by City Council in 2007.

While immigration has traditionally been under provincial and federal jurisdiction, most immigrants in Canada live in cities. It is therefore increasingly important that cities play an integral role in advocating for the inclusion of newcomers in Canadian society.

The goal of inclusion is understood to be consistent with our commitment to honour and value the role of First Nations, as the initial occupants of Canada, and the bilingual nature of Canada, respecting the significance of English and French as official languages.

Vancouver is a city where immigrants and refugees have the best opportunities to become an integral part of the social, economic and cultural fabric of civic life.

The City of Vancouver is proud of its cultural diversity and values the distinctive characteristics of its residents, including newcomers to Canada;

The City of Vancouver is committed to fostering an open, welcoming and safe environment to people of all cultural backgrounds;

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that newcomers contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of Canadian society, locally and nationally, and that newcomers contribute to our relationships with other countries and cultures. Accordingly,

Vancouver seeks ways to maximize newcomers' contributions to civic life, socially, culturally and economically.

The City of Vancouver will ensure that newcomers have equitable access to all the services provided by the City.

The City of Vancouver will help to ensure that newcomers have access to appropriate and timely settlement and integration services, by working in partnership with other orders of government and non-governmental organizations.

The City of Vancouver acknowledges its role with respect to a large number of visitors to Canada, including tourists, international students, and temporary migrants.

(From the City of Vancouver Vision and Value Statement Concerning Immigrants and Refugees, 2007)



In addition to the vision and value statement, two key sources shaped the VIP conceptual framework:

1. Characteristics of a Welcoming Community (commissioned by Citizenship and Immigration Canada for Local Immigration Partnerships); and
2. The City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy (HCS).

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community describes 17 characteristics as central to a welcoming community and which matter most in integrating newcomers from social, economic, cultural and political perspectives. These characteristics range from the presence of newcomer services in the community to municipal features which are sensitive to newcomers².

All VIP members are committed to respecting guiding principles and honouring the relationships they have built with each other.

The City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy (HCS) is a multi-sectoral, integrated approach based on the social determinants of health. It comprises 13 goals, 21 aspirational targets and 45 indicators. In particular, four HCS goals - healthy human service, being and feeling safe and included, making ends meet and working well, and collaborative leadership for a healthy city for all - provide the strategic context for the four theme areas of VIP.

Overall, VIP's conceptual framework aligns VIP's four areas of focus with the 17 characteristics of a welcoming community and the 13 goals of the Healthy City Strategy.

Guiding Principles and Terms of Reference

To assist VIP's work, all members endorsed a set of Guiding Principles, i.e. core values, to facilitate their discussion. All VIP members were committed to respecting these guiding principles and honouring the relationships they have built with each other. These principles include: integrity, accountability, responsibility, leadership, respect, and openness. In addition, all groups endorsed terms of reference, which outline roles and responsibilities, meeting protocols and decision-making processes including any potential conflict of interest.

demographic context

There is no typical Vancouverite. Some residents have called the city home all their lives while others have just arrived. Immigration continues to change the look of the city and the composition of its neighbourhoods. The following facts and figures, from what is now the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), provide a glimpse into Vancouver's evolving demographic profile.

In these figures, recent immigrants are people born outside of Canada who immigrated between 2006-2011. Established immigrants are people born outside of Canada who immigrated before 2006.

VANCOUVER POPULATION ACCORDING TO RESIDENCY STATUS IN 2011



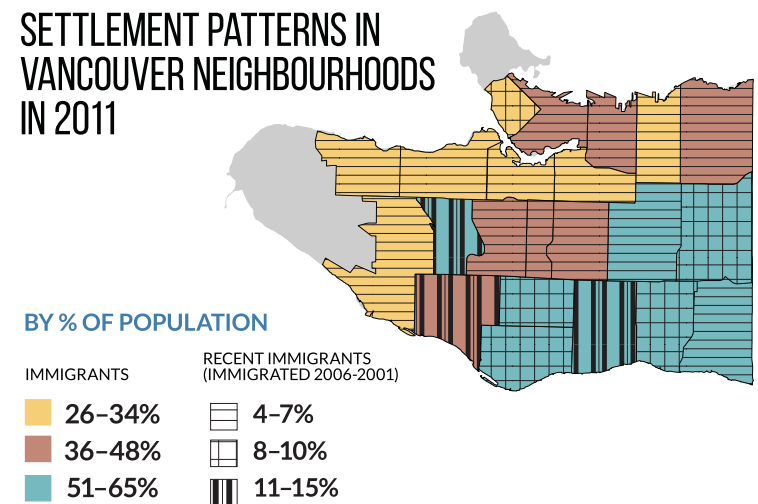
52%
born in Canada

37%
established immigrants
(immigrated before 2006)

7%
recent immigrants
(immigrated 2006-2011)

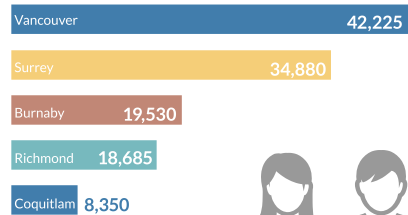
4%
non-permanent residents
(e.g. international student,
temporary workers)

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOODS IN 2011



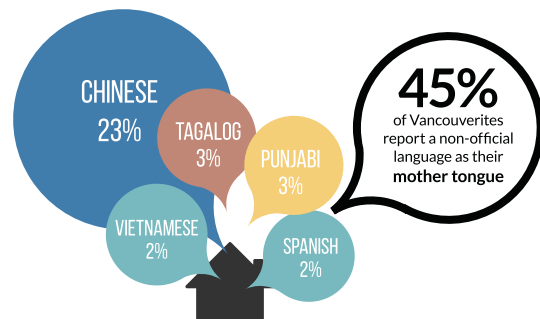
NUMBER OF PERSONS IMMIGRATED BETWEEN 2006-2011 LIVE IN THE 5 LARGEST CITIES IN METRO-VANCOUVER

REGIONAL CONTEXT



MOTHER TONGUE*

Vancouverites report more than 150 different mother tongues in 2011.



LANGUAGE*

Non-English-speaking Vancouverites in 2011.



8% of population | **46,000** people in Vancouver

cannot converse in English or French

TOP SOURCE COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRANTS

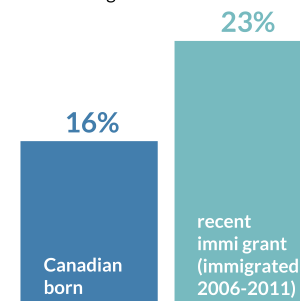
-
- | RECENT (IMMIGRATED 2006-2011) | ESTABLISHED (IMMIGRATED BEFORE 2006) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. China | 1. China |
| 2. Philippines | 2. Philippines |
| 3. India | 3. Hong Kong |
| 4. USA | 4. UK |
| 5. UK | 5. India |

48% of all recent immigrants to Vancouver are from China and the Philippines.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION ABOVE BACHELOR'S DEGREE

14% of established immigrants 25-64 have a degree above bachelor's level.



OCCUPATION

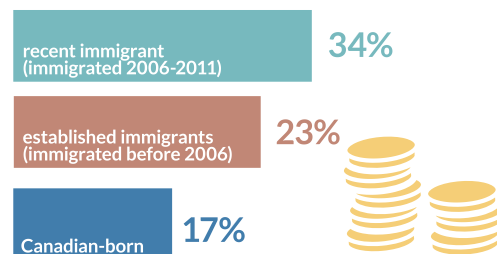
Top three economic sectors that employ recent immigrants in Vancouver.



INCOME

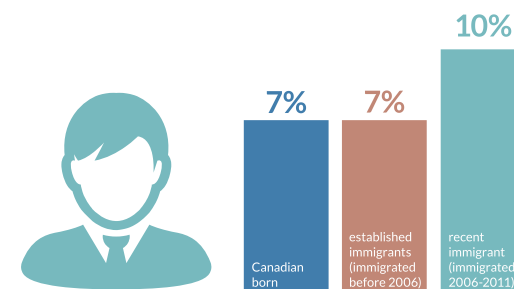
PERCENTAGE BELOW THE LOW INCOME MEASURE

The after-tax low income measure defines a low-income family as having income less than half of the national median. For example, a family of two earning less than \$28,000 is considered low-income.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Recent immigrants experience higher unemployment rate than established immigrants and Canadian born individuals.



01

enhancing newcomers' access to services

Goal

Immigrants and refugees experience meaningful access to and engagement with quality services.



With 300,000 or more newcomers expected to reach Canada in 2016, along with recent federal immigration policy changes, new questions arise about the ideal supports for Vancouver's newcomers.

Settlement services and programs are widely available to newcomers across the city; yet, some newcomers still face multiple access barriers, including a lack of knowledge about service availability³. This is especially true when newcomers have language barriers.

Many newcomers are unfamiliar with Canada's social support systems and available community services. New to the country, they must absorb a large amount of information about their new surroundings from varied sources, which can be overwhelming. As a result, the very people needing these services may be least able to access the social and community supports designed for them.

The Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funds 25 Vancouver organizations to provide settlement services to newcomers. Settlement services may include: needs assessment and referrals, information and orientation, language training, employment-related services and community connections. IRCC also addresses refugees' resettlement needs through a range of programs. In BC, between 2013 and 2014, more than 60,000 newcomers accessed settlement information and orientation services and over

20,000 newcomers accessed English language training services⁴.

Broad-based community service organizations also offer much needed services to newcomers, although these organizations are not funded by IRCC. Their services, along with IRCC-funded settlement services, are crucial for immigrants and refugees who need support in many areas, some of which are not covered by settlement services. Settlement services also have specific eligibility criteria. Settlement service users must be permanent residents, caregivers, protected persons, or hold a Minister's permit. Residents who are naturalized citizens, refugee claimants, international students, work permit holders or those who do not have permanent status, are not eligible for IRCC-funded settlement services.

The Province of BC also helps immigrants and refugees through a range of programs and online information, especially in the area of employment-focused supports, bridging programs, a temporary workers program, short-term language training, and support for employers www.welcomebc.ca

The Province also fills in some of the gaps in services for immigrants and refugees who are not eligible for IRCC-funded services.

To ensure immigrants and refugees experience meaningful access to and engagement with quality services, VIP recommends four priorities to guide further action.





Priorities

- ☑ Coordinate information to ensure newcomers access quality immigrant settlement services.
- ☑ Ensure accessible language, employment/employability, health and wellness services.
- ☑ Ensure accessible specialized services for vulnerable groups and communities with unique needs.
- ☑ Build stronger linkages and pathways in responding to immigrants' service needs including in the areas of: municipal services, housing, mental and physical health, food, education, parental support, early learning and childcare.



Coordination, Accessibility and the Right Pathways

When immigrants and refugees first arrive in Canada, it can be confusing to try to figure out the new culture, government regulations, service network and social environment. For those whose first language is not English, it can be even more daunting.

Settlement service providers help reduce the confusion and offer support. Web-based service directories also pinpoint needed information and services.

Despite the availability of in-person (e.g. settlement services) and online supports, the Vancouver Immigrant Survey found that one in three survey respondents did not access settlement services. The main reason: they were unaware of these services. A University of Manitoba study reached a similar conclusion: that a large number of immigrants have not taken advantage of settlement services⁵.

The Vancouver Immigrant Survey also identified key areas of immigrant needs. Respondents ranked health/well-being, language and employment as their top three priority needs.

The emphasis on health and well-being as the top priority for immigrants is of special interest. Recent research shows that the generally good health status of some immigrant groups shows a downward trend after they arrive in Canada. Researchers attribute this decline to stress and anxiety from the settlement process and a changed lifestyle, lower income, diminished service access, and the changing patterns of food consumption. Further, language barriers and the inability to find commensurate employment also contribute to declining health for some newcomers <http://bit.ly/1YEGEGG>

The following Priority Actions recommend conducting research, building collaborative relationships, and coordinating better information to ensure immigrants can access quality services from both settlement and broad-based community service organizations.

The Vancouver Immigrant Survey found that one in three survey respondents did not access settlement services.

priority actions

1.1

Compile the following service system inventories and assess their capacity in meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees:

1.1.1. IRCC-funded Settlement Services;

1.1.2. Broad-based community services;

1.1.3. Services offered by the City of Vancouver (municipal services)

Recognizing the huge impact of settlement services, broad-based community services, and civic services on the settlement and integration process, VIP proposes studying these systems using a mapping and capacity assessment process. The mapping process would include: documenting currently available services for immigrants in each system; and conducting a service capacity assessment to identify system strengths, gaps, unmet needs, and/or duplications.

While too many service duplications should be avoided, a certain amount of duplication can be healthy, both to avoid vulnerability in the event of any major system shifts (e.g. a major service provider dropping services) and to allow for service variations that may address different immigrant and refugee needs. Ultimately, study results would inform recommendations for system enhancement.

This approach to understanding how systems work arose in three VIP areas of discussion: Enhancing Access to Services, Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces, and Governments and Public Institutions Addressing Needs. VIP members reviewed select models of system mapping and capacity assessment by other Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and agreed they provided important findings. Those models point to promising practices or provide recommendations which VIP can learn from.

In each of the system mapping and capacity assessment projects, particular attention will be paid to critical need areas for newcomers including: health and enhancing well-being services, employment/employability and language. The assessment should also determine whether vulnerable groups and communities with unique needs have equitable access to services.

Given the complexity and scope of work for each of these mapping and assessment projects, VIP expects implementation of no more than one system mapping and capacity assessment per year over the next three years, and based on available resources. The work will need the support and involvement of related sectors and organizations.

The mapping and assessment of employment mentoring programs is a Priority Action recommended under Theme 3 for 2016. Please refer to Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces chapter.

1.2.

Develop a set of strategies which will create new or enhance existing collaborative relationships between settlement and broad-based community service organizations to increase overall service capacity, improve service pathways and system integration.

In 2014, 25 Vancouver-based organizations received IRCC funding to provide direct or indirect settlement services. As noted, broad-based community service agencies also provide essential services to newcomers and immigrants. To ensure organizations within the two sectors are fully aware of each other's work, and to maximize access to diverse services by newcomers, VIP proposes to develop strategies which will create or enhance collaborative relationships between the two sectors.

VIP itself is a reflection of participation from both IRCC-funded and broad-based community service organizations and agencies. Of VIP's 72 participating groups and agencies, 20 are IRCC-funded and 52 are non- IRCC-funded. VIP's partnership aims to share expertise, knowledge and problem-solving strategies among community service sectors, and stronger collaboration among agencies will lead to a more seamless network of quality services for newcomers.

This Priority Action also complements those proposed under the theme Government and Public Institutions Addressing Needs: a) to create better data and information sharing structure, and to b) identify a collaborative leadership model that advocates and promotes systemic change to improve the well-being of immigrants and refugees living in Vancouver.

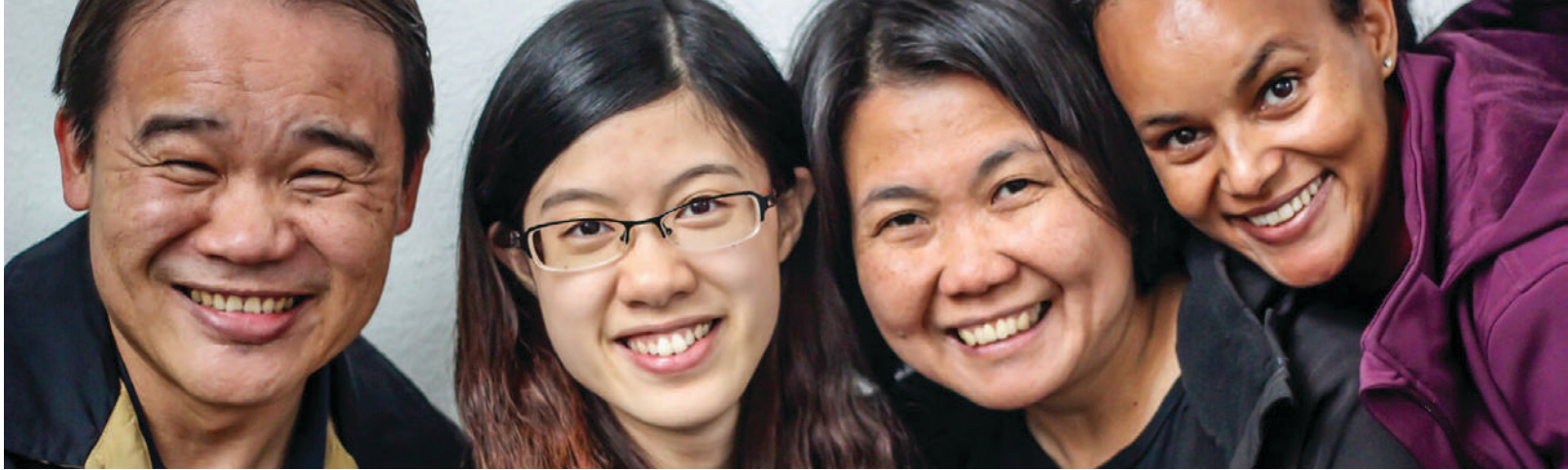
1.3.

Propose a partnership among NewToBC, AMSSA, bc211, WelcomeBC and the City of Vancouver to develop a promotional campaign to raise awareness among immigrants about the programs, services and resources available to newcomers through existing immigrant settlement and newcomers web-based directories.

Five key groups provide online information to both newcomers and/or service providers:

1. NewToBC unites 10 Metro Vancouver public library systems in the planning, development and provision of settlement and integration information to newcomer immigrants. The NewToBC website provides an online directory on information and resources available for newcomers <http://bit.ly/1suNSJu> ;
2. Affiliated Multicultural Societies and Services Association (AMSSA) hosts an online settlement service provider directory <http://bit.ly/25c1Fqr> ;
3. WelcomeBC, an initiative under the Province of B.C., produces welcome guides in different languages with specific local information to help with newcomers' settlement <http://bit.ly/1U13X2Q> ;
4. bc211 is a Vancouver-based nonprofit organization that specializes in providing online information and referrals regarding community, government and social services in BC for all residents www.bc211.ca ;
5. The City of Vancouver has an online Newcomer's Guide to the City www.vancouver.ca/newcomers

VIP recognizes there are very effective digital portal initiatives for newcomers such as www.settlement.org in Ontario. In BC, much online information is already available, including the five listed above. VIP proposes to convene meetings among these groups to discuss how best to promote their resources and information collectively to newcomers, especially in ensuring pathways and linkages are properly promoted to immigrants. These pathways and linkages may include: civic services, housing, mental and physical health, food, education, parental support, early learning and childcare. The outcome is that immigrants become more aware of all these services and how to access them. Action 1.5 below further addresses the question of creating a single digital portal of immigrant services in B.C.



1.4.

Assess community capacity and make recommendations to provide informal community-based English learning initiatives especially for immigrants and refugees who cannot access settlement language services.

Being able to communicate in English is fundamental to the immigrant settlement process and to meeting basic needs. Currently, permanent residents and refugees can access settlement language programs, which usually have long waiting lists. As funding is limited, it is not realistic to expect that English as a Second Language (ESL) programs will expand in the near future. Additionally, immigrants who have become naturalized citizens, but still struggle with English, are no longer eligible for settlement language courses.

VIP proposes to find other ways for teaching the English language, capitalizing on the community's resources and interest. The model of developing peer-based and peer-led language classes may be an effective alternative to funded ESL programs. The Province, for example, funds conversation circles. Local libraries, community centres, neighbourhood houses, voluntary groups, settlement organizations, faith groups, broad-based community service organizations, can all help create (and some already have) informal language learning groups/clubs, which can also foster connections between established and newly arrived residents. University and college students, retired language instructors or other interested professionals can be recruited to assist with the teaching.

This Priority Action may require mapping of existing programs and services, in order to better assess the community's capacity and interest to pursue proposed initiatives. VIP will convene interested groups to explore the feasibility of this approach.

Other Actions for Consideration

1.5. Determine the scope and relevance of creating a digital portal of immigrant services and seek partnerships for its development (e.g. modelled after Settlement.Org in Ontario).

1.6. Facilitate discussion among key service providers and the City to create and implement walking tours of community facilities, to help immigrants learn more about services.

1.7. Encourage the City to recognize organizations that promote inclusion and accessibility in serving immigrants and refugees through the City's Awards of Excellence program.

1.8. Launch a "tell-a-friend" campaign to encourage long-time residents to share information about services for immigrants and refugees.

1.9. Seek partnerships with academic researchers to examine the conditions that create vulnerability among refugees, refugee claimants, newcomer single parents, live-in caregivers, and immigrant women experiencing violence, LGBTQ, youth and seniors with language barriers, non-status migrants and make recommendations for appropriate service models to address barriers.

02

strengthening intercultural and civic engagement

Goal

Vancouver is a progressively open and interconnected city of people with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures who thrive on strong intercultural relationships and robust civic engagement.



When newcomers' experiences and stories are integrated into the cultural narratives of the city, they feel truly welcomed and valued.

The urban makeup of a city – its people, cultural offerings, events and celebrations, public spaces and programs – needs to reflect what the city values. A safe, vibrant city that celebrates diversity, with offerings and services that draw upon different cultures, sends a powerful message to everyone that people from everywhere matter and that the city is inclusive and welcoming.

Through its work, the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) aims for newcomers to feel safe and included, and to build connections and knowledge so they can enjoy the full range of experiences that our city offers. Newcomers need support and encouragement to delve into city life, and to avoid the real risk of falling into isolation and loneliness.

Helping new Vancouverites become part of their local neighbourhood is a good place to start. Ideally newcomers will quickly become comfortable with turning to a neighbour for help or for friendship. Local volunteering is a tried and true way for people to build positive relationships with each other and to engage more deeply with their communities.

In addition to helping newcomers get involved in city life, it is equally important for the City of Vancouver and its residents to convey welcoming messages to immigrants and refugees. When newcomers' experiences and stories are integrated into the cultural narratives of the city, they feel truly welcomed and valued.

The City has undertaken projects including the Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Immigrant Communities, and the Welcoming Communities and Workplaces initiatives. Both of these were based on partnerships and aimed to improve intercultural connections and engagement between newcomers and other residents in the city. VIP's Priority Actions, proposed under this theme, offer more pathways to engage and support newcomers in Vancouver's social, cultural and political life.



Connecting with People and Getting Involved

Priorities

- ☑ Encourage people with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures to reach out and connect with each other.
- ☑ Provide opportunities for robust civic engagement through volunteerism and people connecting and helping each other.



Connecting with People

To lead a happy, meaningful life, most of us need to feel connected to one other. People must feel safe and have their basic needs met. Individuals must also feel that their lives matter, that they have something of value to offer their communities, and can rely on them when in need. This is no exception for immigrants and refugees. The Healthy City Strategy (HCS) reminds us of the mental and physical health costs of social exclusion⁶.

In Vancouver, a majority of residents have indicated that they welcome newcomers; they believe learning about and interacting with people from different cultures enriches their lives. A study by the Canadian Council on Learning found that nearly 83 percent of Metro Vancouver residents learn from other cultures⁷. This interaction and learning is easily evident in the diversity of people in schools, workplaces, and public spaces in the city.

Despite this openness to diversity, the welcome extended to newcomers may not be enough to actually connect them with residents who have lived here longer. In fact, VIP learned that many new arrivals feel isolated and suffer from a lack of a sense of belonging or a sense of exclusion. According to the Vancouver Foundation's Connections and Engagement survey and report, half of all Metro Vancouver residents who have lived in Canada less than five years say that it is hard to make new friends⁸. This is a feeling shared by immigrants in cities throughout British Columbia, which report the

lowest sense of belonging among newcomers in all of Western Canada⁹.

There is a clear need to build upon the well-meaning, outward welcoming gesture offered by Vancouverites and transform it into concrete, alive connections.

One obvious place to start is in neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods are where we encounter various activities, routines and people. The neighbourhood is where one stops to chat with a fellow dog walker; where people sit in a park with their kids and watch a group of elders practice Tai Chi; or where people join in a local block party.

Neighbourhoods are where new acquaintances are made and friendships formed.

Informal, everyday encounters in neighbourhoods are the best way for people from different backgrounds to get to know each other. A well-known Vancouver case study, titled "From Strangers to Neighbours," showed how this has happened locally in the Collingwood neighbourhood, where people collaborated to shape a dynamic and inclusive community¹⁰.

Neighbourhood Houses are more than public facilities; they welcome all people and invest in resources to help build healthier communities. They also foster leadership, build strong relationships, provide information and resources, and contribute to newcomers' understanding about open and participatory

local processes.

Activities offered by other local groups such as Parent Advisory Committees, strata councils of buildings, and charitable service clubs, also enhance opportunities for immigrants to meet and build connections with others.

The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force in Vancouver has looked at the benefits of small, community get-togethers. These encounters include opportunities for sharing food and eating together, launching creative projects and spontaneity that can lead to surprising and rewarding initiatives. Roundtable discussions held by VIP enthusiastically endorsed these gatherings for drawing newcomers to community events.

Block parties can bring neighbours together to enjoy food and engage in something creative. Community gardening provides another wonderful way for new neighbours to build connections. It also furthers the goal of a just and sustainable food system – one shared by the Vancouver Food Strategy and the Healthy City Strategy.

VIP members recognize that sometimes the best ways of involving newcomers are through small, but purposeful, activities. The good news is Vancouver already has lots of existing resources to promote these activities, and VIP is offering more strategies to build on them.

Getting Involved

When newcomers get involved through volunteer work, they not only make a difference to their community, but also break down their own social isolation.

People don't always think of volunteering as a way of building connections. Across all population groups, only a quarter of Metro Vancouver residents reported having been part of a neighbourhood or community project in the past year or having attended a neighbourhood or community meeting¹¹. Yet more than half of the respondents to the Vancouver Immigrant Survey indicated they are volunteering.

Volunteering is not an instant panacea for immigrants and refugees to overcome isolation or loneliness. But volunteering can build very positive connections with others.

When immigrants are not yet ready to volunteer in the larger community (e.g. because of language barriers), volunteering within their own cultural communities can still have great personal and social benefits, by sparking new friendships and as a first step towards getting involved with other groups¹². A recent study also confirmed that volunteering increased newcomers' sense of 'belonging'¹³.

VIP Priority Actions outline ways to promote more meaningful engagement and volunteering opportunities and cultivate stronger relations between newcomers and other city residents.¹⁴

More than half of the respondents to the Vancouver Immigrant Survey indicated they are volunteering.



priority actions

2.1.

Identify strategic opportunities with groups such as student councils, parent advisory committees, strata councils or residential associations to create more opportunities where people of diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures can reach out and connect with each other. Approaches may include building stakeholders' capacity and tracking impact.

Local groups including student councils, parent advisory committees, and strata or residential councils provide ideal opportunities for newcomers to engage in decision-making processes close to home. However, many are unaware of the role these groups can play in shaping their schools, homes, or neighbourhoods. Becoming involved in these groups may enhance leadership, engagement and decision-making skills while affecting positive changes in those settings. Equally valuable, the relationships that immigrants and refugees form, and the knowledge gained, will likely be longer lasting. VIP could explore initiatives welcoming newcomers into these environments with all the appropriate representative groups, including concrete, inspiring examples of the impact that newcomers can make in their communities.

In addition, immigrants may need some preliminary support to make participation in any of these groups more satisfying¹⁵. Understanding meeting protocols, learning how to communicate ideas, and recognizing roles and procedures can ensure successful engagement in groups. The City and VIP are currently supporting the Laurier Institution to launch an online training program for immigrants, refugees and Aboriginal people interested in joining non-profit governance boards, and learning how to be effective board members. VIP will work with the Laurier Institution to discuss how best to broaden the training scope to support newcomer participation in group settings.

2.2.

Support Engaged City Task Force recommendations and the Canada 150 Anniversary initiatives to create new social connection initiatives, connect with existing initiatives, and magnify their collective impact.

The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommends several Priority Actions for the City to undertake which will enhance newcomer engagement and inclusion. These actions will build knowledge, capacity, trust and power among newcomer residents, which will in turn enhance the potential for positive change and create a culture of engagement. Further, the City is planning for Canada 150 anniversary celebration activities. VIP will work with the City's Engagement Office and the Canada 150 Steering Committee to explore ways to engage immigrants and refugees and to develop legacy projects with the goal of enhancing intercultural and civic engagement between immigrants and the broader community.





2.2.1. Establish a Citizen Academy. The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommends building on previous civic work to create materials or presentations on basic city processes. To further this, VIP and the City's public engagement team will support the YMCA national newcomer youth leadership initiative, and assist with piloting a curriculum-based program which will cover basic civic processes to engage the initiative's young leaders;

2.2.2. Establish an online inventory of civic facilities that are available for use by immigrant and cultural groups. This is in response to the challenges that many small cultural groups have in accessing spaces for meetings and gatherings. The City's Advisory Committee on Cultural Communities and staff could support efforts to compile an inventory of civic and other facilities which could make it easier for such groups to access to space;

2.2.3. The City has developed the Doors Open Vancouver program in the last few years, and approached immigrant and cultural groups to participate. Doors Open makes civic facilities open to the public on specific days, and helps Vancouver residents learn more about civic services and initiatives. When newcomers attend the Doors Open activities, they gain new understanding of key civic services and programs, and greater comfort with civic processes, including public consultations and providing feedback. Doors Open will continue outreach to underrepresented groups including newcomers in the coming years; and

2.2.4. VIP and partner groups will work with the City's Canada 150 Steering Committee to explore different ways of celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017. The focus will be on highlighting the participation and contributions of immigrants and refugees living in the city, both past and present.



Priorities

- ☑ Support initiatives that promote historical understanding, reconciliation and social justice between and within groups.
- ☑ Provide opportunities for greater participation and empowerment of immigrants and refugees in democratic processes.
- ☑ Challenge stereotypes and negative media coverage of immigration and newcomers.

Engaging in Civic Processes and Dialogues

To feel truly welcome, immigrants and refugees must get the sense that their fellow citizens think positively of them and want them to succeed.

For the most part, that's true of Vancouverites. Most Metro Vancouver residents appreciate living in a diverse city and enjoy learning from other cultures¹⁶. Yet, when it comes to people's own neighbourhoods undergoing change as a result of immigration, the warm feelings sometimes cool.

For example, in response to a Vancouver Foundation survey to gauge the reception new immigrants receive when moving into a neighbourhood, four in 10 respondents said all newcomers would be equally welcome. However, most respondents said they did not know if they'd welcome all newcomers or did not answer the question¹⁷. On the other side of the experience, one in five Vancouver newcomers said that racism and discrimination have made it hard to meet new friends in the city¹⁸.

Perceptions play a strong role in the kind of welcome immigrants and refugees receive and their ease in settling into their new community. Sometimes fear – or, on the positive side, absence of fear – of existing residents makes a big difference. The media have a huge

impact on public perception of immigrants and refugees. A recent study on media representations of immigrants and refugees in Canada points out that there are two main ways newcomers are usually depicted: as 'good,' quiet and holding jobs, or as a 'social problem' or even national security risk. Challenging the negative portrayal of immigrants and refugees in the media and offering alternative, nuanced and positive portrayals is key to helping shift our national story about immigration to a positive one¹⁹.

None of us change our opinions overnight. But real-life encounters in positive, mutually beneficial situations can go a long way to breaking down negative stereotypes. So too can events that enable newcomers to speak directly for themselves, telling stories that may surprise others and change views.

It's not easy for newcomers to tell their own stories. It may be intimidating to move to a new place and try to convey all kinds of important subtleties in a different language. The challenges grow if immigrants or refugees come from a place that has been negatively portrayed or misrepresented in the media.



And then there are immigrant communities here in Canada which have experienced discrimination that goes back generations. For example, the families of Canadians of Chinese, Japanese and South Asian heritage faced very specific, damaging forms of racism and discrimination. Discrimination has also seriously harmed First Nations people who experienced the legacies of colonization and the trauma of multigenerational residential schools. These and other gross injustices have been acknowledged by the Government of Canada. The Vancouver Dialogues project is one example of a program that attempted to counter negative stereotypes. It brought First Nations, urban Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees together to share stories and strengthen relations, and to build stronger intercultural connections.

When newcomers do find their voice and tell their stories, their voices can also speak up for their rights, contribute to the cause of social justice, or be added to our collective democratic discourse. For most refugees and immigrants, finding their voice involves putting their trust in Canada's democratic system, without fearing possible repercussions to themselves or their loved ones.

The following VIP Priority Actions speak to the need for historical understanding and reconciliation, the empowerment of the individuals in the democratic process, and the countering of negative stereotypes in the public realm.

priority actions

2.3.

Promote and support a continuation of reconciliation work addressing historical injustices in Vancouver through dialogue and education.

2.3.1. Vancouver has declared itself a City of Reconciliation and adopted a three-year work plan to implement the goals this involves. VIP will support these reconciliation efforts including continuing to find ways to foster stronger relations between First Nations and immigrants, such as enabling more dialogues between immigrants/refugees and First Nations communities, and planning for new collaborations. The Vancouver Dialogues project had implemented cross-cultural exchange initiatives involving local First Nations, urban Aboriginal groups, immigrant-serving agencies, arts and cultural groups, neighbourhood houses and faith groups. VIP will seek similar community-based projects to continue the dialogues.

2.3.2. Further, as part of the City's reconciliation efforts, City Council is committed to finding ways to acknowledge and address the historical discrimination towards residents of Chinese descent, and to engage the community in further dialogues and other related initiatives. VIP will seek to partner with key public institutions and community-based groups to advance these efforts.

2.4.

Support work within cultural groups to conduct dialogues on their historical and cultural experiences immigrating to Canada, and to expand the dialogues to include other groups.

2.5.

Promote and support cultural exchanges between immigrants and the community at large and facilitate the funding of these initiatives.

Priority Actions 2.4 and 2.5 are linked. The first action addresses the issue of capturing and expressing the historical and cultural experiences of immigrant and refugee groups to Canada and BC. VIP has responded to this issue in 2014/15 by collaborating with Passages To Canada, a national archival storytelling program sharing minority groups' and immigrants' stories through targeted engagement with the broader public. VIP will explore further collaboration with Passages to Canada in collecting stories from immigrants and refugees. Additionally, VIP will also work with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) on a new pilot project, which will capture experiences of immigrants and refugees. All these projects can be important in sharing immigrant stories in a local and national context.

Once immigrant and refugee stories are captured, this next action (2.5) will promote cultural exchanges between immigrants, refugees and the community at large.

Some interesting exchanges have been supported and funded by governments and the voluntary sector in the past. The Province of BC, through Embrace BC, supported a series of intra-community dialogues in recent years, involving immigrant communities and the broader public. The Laurier Institution, Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue, the University of BC, CBC annual lecture series, and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, to give some examples, have all hosted roundtables, lectures and seminars to encourage public discussion on the evolving challenges of multiculturalism and diversity in the city. VIP could approach these groups to plan for future public dialogues and forum.

Currently, the City's Advisory Committee on Cultural Communities is also considering how to engage with underrepresented and small cultural groups in the city. The City's different cultural institutions have also contributed to this discussion, including arts groups such as Urban Ink Productions, the Museum of Vancouver and Headlines Theatre. All these groups can be approached to participate in further dialogues on this Priority Action.

Different funders and governments have supported cultural exchanges. As a next step, VIP aims to bring key government agencies (e.g. Department of Canadian Heritage, BC Ministry of International Trade and Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism) and other funders together to discuss sustainable funding and potentially sponsoring public dialogues between newcomers and other communities.

2.6.

Undertake collaborative immigrant and refugee youth engagement projects to explore issues focusing on cultural identity and sense of belonging.

Several initiatives currently involve immigrant and refugee youth, with a focus on exploring issues of immigrant and refugee youth identity and developing strategies, programs or services for youth to be more engaged. They include: Vancouver Foundation's Fresh Voices which brings together immigrant and refugee youth for leadership purposes; Vancouver School Board's Engaged Immigrant and Refugee Youth program which engages with immigrant and refugee youth in schools; My Circle youth leadership training program offered by the Immigrant Services Society of BC; and the Another Route to Success program (ARTS) jointly sponsored by the City, SUCCESS, Vancouver School Board and several high schools. All these programs offer opportunities for newcomer youth to be engaged and to train as leaders.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has also supported various youth engagement programs through its community centre programming. Other organizations including neighbourhood houses, youth service organizations, multicultural groups and centres, have different programs involving immigrant and refugee youth.

VIP has developed a video series focused on belonging, highlighting newcomer youth perspectives through a youth-led and youth-based process. The "Belonging" video series can be viewed on the home page of the VIP website: www.vancouverimmigrationpartnership.ca

This Priority Action aims to launch new collaborative projects exploring cultural identity, sense of belonging, and related issues for immigrant and refugee youth. All of the above organizations are potential participants in a collective dialogue, supported by interested funders.



2.7.

Develop a campaign to promote greater participation in local democratic processes among immigrants.

The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force includes a Priority Action to increase the number of "positive cues" that encourage voting. It also recommends a strategic City social media campaign during municipal elections. In 2014, this approach produced major voter turnout gains: from 35 per cent in 2011 to 43.4 per cent in 2014. Over the years, the City has also worked with immigrant and cultural groups to promote their participation in civic elections.

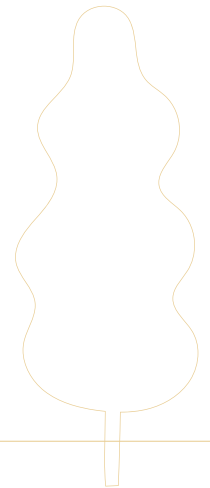
VIP and interested community partners could further leverage these efforts by collaborating with the City's public engagement team on strategies to increase newcomers' participation in local voting and democratic processes.



2.8.

Work towards implementing the Vancouver Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommendation to extend municipal voting rights to permanent residents in Vancouver.

The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force supports investigating voting right extensions to permanent residents who are not Canadian citizens. This recognizes that permanent residents contribute to their communities, the same as citizens do, yet are without a say in how tax dollars can be spent and services delivered. A number of Canadian cities such as Toronto have already begun exploring this possibility. Cities in some European countries have also granted permanent residents the right to vote, including cities in the UK and Norway²⁰. For this to take effect in Vancouver, it would require a change to provincial laws governing local voting procedures. With enough support from the City and its partners, a request to the Province to allow permanent residents to vote locally could be a next step. VIP can further explore this interest with partner organizations and their constituencies.



Other Actions for Consideration

2.9. Promote intercultural capacity building through sharing stories and histories of Vancouver cultural groups including their diaspora experiences, struggles and accomplishments in settlement and integration.

2.10. Develop an app to feature historical, cultural and intercultural contributions of immigrant and newcomer communities to Vancouver's neighborhoods.

2.11. Work with journalism/communication educators to develop curriculum or educational resources to address the labelling of cultural groups and individuals and develop strategies to challenge stereotypes and negative media coverage of immigration and newcomers.

2.12. Partner with local film festivals on intercultural issues to promote positive representation of immigrants and newcomers.

2.13. Develop a database of resources and speakers who can connect to the media and respond to inquiries about immigration issues.

2.14. Propose a series of Ted Talks to explore significant narratives regarding integration, which impacts the future of Canada in the global context.

2.15. Work with media experts to explore how immigrant issues are treated on social media, i.e. Twitter, blogs, etc.

2.16. Create a campaign to explore the rich cultural ancestry of Vancouver residents.



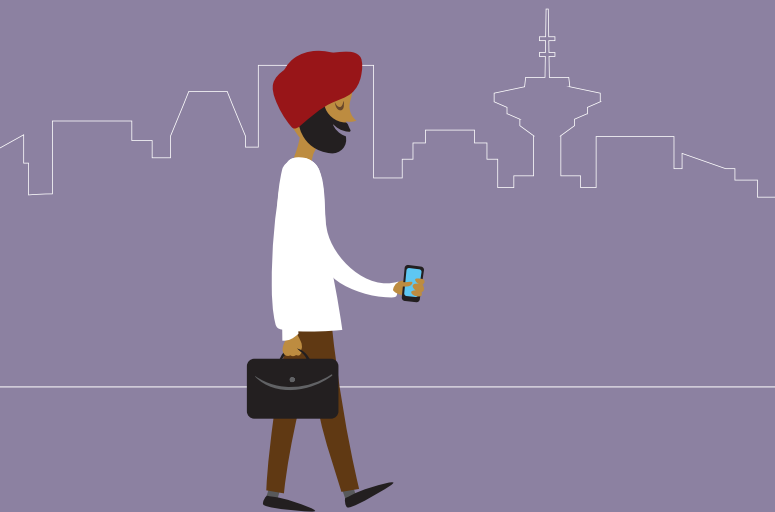
03



building welcoming & inclusive workplaces

Goal

Vancouver workplaces are inclusive and diverse, providing immigrants and refugees with access to a broad range of employment opportunities commensurate with their skills, knowledge, education, and experience; and with fair and adequate compensation for the work they do.



For immigrants and refugees, work is one of the most important ways they can integrate into their new communities in Vancouver.

Work is an essential part of life; it enables people to support themselves and their families. Work is where individuals spend much of their time, and is a central force in defining personal identities. Most of us work outside our family or personal spheres. Work is a place to interact with the larger community, and make connections with people whose social and cultural experiences differ from our own.

For immigrants and refugees, work is one of the most important ways they can integrate into their new communities in Vancouver. For newcomers, it is a sphere that even those who are highly educated and skilled need help in accessing. In the Vancouver Immigrant Survey, almost 40 per cent of survey respondents said that employment assistance was among the top three services they needed²¹.

Finding a job that matches the skills of a newcomer is not easy. Many immigrants and refugees arrive in Vancouver eager and willing to put their experience, talents and education to use, only to learn that Canadian employers or professional associations may not fully

recognize or understand the credentials they bring from their country of origin. As a result, those with professional backgrounds may find it difficult to find a job in a particular field, even if they have relevant experience and credentials.

This disconnection is creating gaps in the work place as Canada needs skilled immigrants just as much as newcomers need fulfilling employment. An Immigrant Employment Council of BC study shows that our province's main labour supply will come from immigration in the coming decades²². Consequently, employers need help to better connect with newcomers, so they can find the talent they need to fill positions in the future.

The priorities and actions here focus on enabling newcomers in their search for the right job. They also recognize that businesses need assistance in accessing services to help them connect with newcomers and ensure that the relationship is mutually beneficial.



Welcome

Hello!

Hello

Hello!

Welcome

Welcome!

Hello

Bienvenue!



Priorities

- ☑ Encourage and engage employers to improve prospects for immigrants and refugees, creating inclusive workplaces that hire, develop and retain newcomer talent.
- ☑ Ensure immigrants and refugees are aware of employment services.



Working with Employers and Businesses to Build Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces

Sometimes when newcomers arrive in Vancouver, they find a job in their field right away – a fortunate situation that eases their integration into their new home. However, for many new immigrants finding a job that matches their skills and background can be a daunting task. It's not uncommon for newcomers to get caught in a trap of underemployment and low-paying jobs that offer little or no stability.

The 2011 National Household Survey revealed that for about one in three recent immigrants in Vancouver, the household income was below the low-income measure. According to a 2010 national survey, even when immigrants do break the underemployment cycle and land better jobs, they may still earn less than their co-workers who were born in Canada²³.

Employer perspectives can play a role in how and which immigrants get hired. For instance, studies have shown that a non-English sounding last name and work experience from a foreign country can make it harder for newcomers to get Canadian jobs²⁴.

At the same time, some immigrants may not speak English well enough for certain jobs in their field, and may have trouble accessing English language classes. For others, lack of information about different kinds of jobs or valuable social and professional connections keep people from better employment. In these cases, providing appropriate information about a wide array of jobs and linking people to professional networks can make a big difference. It is essential that this kind of information be well advertised through a range of immigrant networks and channels to make sure the people who most need them actually find out about them.

Businesses that want to hire newcomers often need help determining where and how to find prospective employees. Employers have said they want more support to guide recruitment, hiring and mentoring efforts. They also wish to strengthen relationships with settlement agencies that serve immigrants, and to find ways of ensuring information about upcoming jobs quickly reaches potential employees²⁵.



For newcomers, finding a job in their field of choice can be just one of many steps in the settlement process. Like everyone, newcomers want to feel valued and included at work. Adjusting to a new culture and language can be a challenge, but it becomes easier if employers set a tone of inclusion and welcome.

Anything employers can do to create a welcoming and respectful workplace goes a long way in helping newcomers feel like they belong. In the Vancouver Immigrant Survey, eight out of 10 respondents agreed with the statement: “Employers should offer diversity training for employees (e.g. anti-bullying, cultural sensitivity, anti-discrimination)”²⁶. The same survey also found that, while half of immigrants and refugees surveyed said they were more likely to stay in a job if they were getting paid well, almost as many (40 per cent) said that getting along well with their co-workers is almost as important a reason for remaining at the job. In other words, an adequate pay cheque matters, but feeling included and welcome is also important.

It is clear what immigrants want in the workplace: respect, fairness and inclusion. As a first step to helping promote these workplace qualities, Priority Actions are proposed below.

priority actions

3.1.

Undertake a survey with Vancouver-based employers and develop and implement specific strategies to address employers' challenges in improving workplace diversity and inclusion practice.

For immigrants and refugees to succeed in the workplace and make their maximum contribution to the local economy, employers in Vancouver need to ensure that their workplaces are welcoming and inclusive. To better understand the challenges employers face in creating and maintaining diverse workplaces and the supports they might need, VIP is proposing to do a survey of employers in 2016, in partnership with a number of groups.

VIP has approached the Immigrant Employment Council of BC and the Angus Reid Foundation about their interest in helping guide a targeted survey of Vancouver employers. Both groups indicated their interest and support for such an initiative. Within this initiative, VIP also aims to include small and medium-sized businesses, particularly through its current partnerships with local Business Improvement Associations. This employer survey would illuminate the needs and perspectives of employers, and the survey results could then assist business and employer groups in developing strategies to enhance workplace diversity practice and inclusivity.

3.2.

Explore alignment with the Healthy City Strategy action on developing a social procurement framework for the City to encourage the inclusion of culturally diverse businesses. Work with large businesses to help them adopt this practice.

The City of Vancouver could adopt a social procurement framework to guide its purchase of goods and services by encouraging bids from culturally diverse businesses. As VIP's convener, the City has an opportunity to lead by example. Each year, the City generates significant revenue opportunities for local businesses that secure contracts as suppliers of goods and services. The City has already set the bar high for these businesses by requiring good environmental practices. The City could also be clear that it expects its suppliers to consider efforts toward good job opportunities for everyone, including businesses which recognize and embed cultural diversity practice in their workplaces. The City could fulfil this objective if it ensured that any social procurement framework developed is user-friendly and is clear on how businesses might promote culturally inclusive environments.

3.3.

Recommend the City consider a pilot project to provide businesses with an information package on welcoming and inclusive workplaces when they apply for or renew business permits.

In 2013, under the Welcoming Communities initiative, the Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces Working Group learned that some small and medium-sized businesses wanted to enhance, but struggled with, workplace diversity and cultural competency practice. Several hoped to increase the diversity of customers. Drawing from this earlier work and its findings, VIP members encouraged the City to educate all Vancouver business permit applicants on creating the conditions for welcoming and inclusive workplaces. Specifically, the City could promote welcoming and inclusive workplaces by providing an information package, with tips and suggestions on enhancing workplace diversity, to businesses when they apply for or renew business permits at the City. The package could also include details on services to assist businesses in creating an inclusive work environment. This proposed action would need further exploration with the appropriate City departments and community partners.

3.4.

Bring language providers and employers together to identify language needs in the workplace and make recommendations for language initiatives in the workplace.

Effective communication at work, especially for those employees facing language barriers, is essential to business success. Employers have told VIP that some newcomer employees could benefit from additional workplace-focused English language learning. While workplace-based, on-site language training would be ideal, most employers, especially small and medium-sized businesses, lack the capacity to provide this themselves. And, even where employers might have resources to provide further English language training to staff, they may not know who could help provide the training.

Research also shows that language barriers affect not only job performance for immigrants and refugees, they also impact overall employability and promotion opportunities at work.

As mentioned in the Enhancing Access to Services chapter, immigrants and/ or temporary residents who are naturalized citizens, refugee claimants, international students, work permit holders or people who do not have permanent status, are not eligible for IRCC-funded English language classes. It is even more challenging when the learners are actually already working and do not have the time to attend classes. The Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia has introduced a free online English in the Workplace training course, which could be an informative model <http://bit.ly/29dQuT5>

This Priority Action proposes to bring together employer representatives and language providers to make greater inroads in providing on-site, workplace-based English learning programs to multiple employment sectors. If there is sufficient interest among these groups, proposals could be made to appropriate funders and sectoral groups to further develop pilots.

This Priority Action also complements Priority Action 1.4, which would assess community capacity and make recommendations to provide informal community-based English learning initiatives.





Priorities

- ☑ Increase opportunities for immigrants and refugees to work in their fields at a commensurate level and compensation.
- ☑ Increase professional networking opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

Increasing Social Capital and Improving Job Prospects

Making it easier for immigrants and refugees to access properly paid jobs, in line with their qualifications and skills, involves a network of different agencies and orders of government working toward that goal.

There are four main barriers for immigrants seeking jobs for which they have experience and credentials in their country of origin:

- Information gaps about the licensing process and related labour market expectations
- Canadian work experience requirements related to licensing and professional designations
- Gaps in technical knowledge or lack of business skills specific to Canada
- Insufficient fluency in English for their profession²⁷.

Immigrants often struggle to figure out all the different steps they must take to become licensed or accredited in their profession. Even those who manage to begin the process can become frustrated with the slow pace of the review, or may come to believe that there is bias against their credentials²⁸.

Finding a job in one's field or trying to get the required Canadian work experience can feel like a Catch-22 for immigrants: local experience is hard to get without contacts, yet only through contacts can one get much needed local experience.

Some programs do exist to help people build a network of contacts and find strategies for gaining the necessary experience. In 2014, additional federal resources were channeled to the Province of BC to enhance the Foreign Qualifications Recognition (FQR) process²⁹. The FQR aims to ensure regulators and employers are able to fairly compare and assess immigrants' education, knowledge, skills and work experience in relation to Canadian standards. This makes the process fairer and clearer, as immigrants' qualifications will either be recognized or any needs for training will be revealed right away. Please also see the Welcome BC website for more information on how the process works <http://bit.ly/1Ts38kR>

But not all newcomers will know about these resources, which is why VIP is seeking more effective information channels and networks to get information to newcomers faster. Mentoring and professional networks can make a difference. When immigrants have better access to others in their professional field, they come to understand clearly what is involved in working in a given profession in Canada, and the profession's requirements. They also gain more realistic assessments of the employment opportunities that exist in their respective fields.

The Priority Actions below outline strategies for creating more mentorships and opportunities for networking with others in the fields.



priority actions

3.5.

Create a central inventory of mentoring opportunities related to employment that are available for immigrants and refugees.

These three related Priority Actions emphasize the importance of mentorship for immigrant and refugee professionals.

3.6.

Conduct a scan of employment mentoring programs for immigrants and refugees, assess the overall system capacity to respond to demand.

Having a professional contact, who can tell newcomers “how things really work” in their particular business sector in Canada, can be an important source of insider knowledge that makes all the difference in getting a good job. Mentoring is a low-cost intervention that is particularly impactful in helping immigrants find employment.

3.7.

Make mentoring opportunities available to even more newcomers through new collaborative efforts.

Recent research on mentoring programs across the country found that, 12 months after starting a mentoring relationship, immigrant mentees’ unemployment levels dropped from 73 to 19 per cent. And most mentees not only found permanent work in their fields, they also found work faster and earned 62 percent more than non-mentees. <http://bit.ly/1NAALAo>

In BC, the federal and provincial governments have both supported workplace-oriented programs, including the Skills Connect program. The Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) has been coordinating mentorship programs in the Province for a number of years, including a program for the City of Vancouver.

The City has had a newcomer mentorship program since 2011, matching skilled professional immigrants or refugees with City staff in Finance, Engineering, Information Technology, Human Resources, Fire and Rescue Services, Community Services, Library, Planning and Parks and Recreation. External partners also support the program, including IEC-BC, and community service agencies.

IEC-BC has played a key role in administering and delivering mentoring programs across the province, and is currently involved in a national discussion on how to scale up mentoring initiatives. VIP will work with IEC-BC, provincial and other business groups to undertake mapping of existing mentoring opportunities (a central inventory) and to assess how to increase these opportunities in certain sectors where there is more demand from skilled immigrant professionals. Particular attention will be paid to sectors such as Information Technology, Finance, Tourism and Health. VIP may also undertake initiatives with specific sectors in creating new mentorship opportunities, in anticipation of talent shortages in the coming years.

3.8.

Convene a partnership to host regular networking events with the business community to provide opportunities for immigrant and refugee professionals to meet members of Vancouver’s business community and build their professional networks.

VIP also understands the value of professional networking in supporting the employment goals of Vancouver’s immigrants. These networking opportunities are key for newcomers to get “plugged in” to their field of work or create connections. VIP and its partners aim to consult with various business groups, encouraging their leadership to host such networking events which will meet the needs of both the businesses and Vancouver’s newcomer professionals.



Other Actions for Consideration

3.9. Implement a recognition program for employers with robust diversity policies and practices.

3.10. Engage Business Improvement Associations to identify and implement a diversity project that would involve small businesses.

3.11. Develop a digital portal with mobile access for immigrants and refugees to easily find out about employment services in Vancouver.

3.12. Offer opportunities for training civic frontline staff including those in libraries and community centres so they can refer immigrants and refugees to settlement services including employment services.

3.13. Connect immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs to new business start-up courses and training opportunities.

3.14. Work with stakeholders to look at the current status of foreign credential recognition and report out on progress made to date.

3.15. Work with the Board of Trade and business associations to reduce / eliminate membership fees and other barriers for immigrants and refugees.

3.16. Work with social enterprises to identify how they can increase opportunities for immigrants and refugees to work at levels commensurate with their knowledge, skills, education and experience.

3.17. Identify and advocate for the removal of barriers to the creation of paid internships.

04

government & public institutions addressing needs

Goal

Leaders from the public, private and civil sectors in Vancouver work in integrated and collaborative ways to address and be responsive to the needs and interests of the diversity of immigrants and refugees in Vancouver.



Immigrant and refugee needs are varied and complex, and require policy and service delivery responses from multiple stakeholders including all levels of government and public institutions.

In Canada, the federal government administers the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Citizenship Act. It develops and implements policies, programs and services that:

- Facilitate the arrival of people and their integration into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country while protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians;
- Maintain Canada's humanitarian tradition by protecting refugees and people in need of protection;
- Enhance the values and promote the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship;
- Reach out to all Canadians and foster increased intercultural understanding and an integrated society with equal opportunity for all, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion.

It also advances global migration policies to support Canada's immigration and humanitarian objectives.

The Province of BC supports immigrant settlement and integration, especially for labour market integration, in ensuring that skilled and professional immigrants are contributing to the local economy. This includes the Provincial Nominee Program, focused on skilled immigrant professionals. The Province also assists social service agencies working with more marginalized and vulnerable immigrants.

Currently, the Province is supporting the arrival of Syrian refugees to BC.

At the municipal level, the City has a long-standing commitment to supporting immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. It funds service organizations which assist immigrants and refugees; funds capital projects for newcomer service facilities; establishes advisory bodies such as the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration; and undertakes initiatives such as Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces and the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP). The City is currently supporting efforts to welcome Syrian refugees to BC and Vancouver.

Other public organizations outside government also provide services and support. Community foundations, local business associations, educational and research institutions, colleges and universities, service clubs, sectoral organizations and charitable groups, lend their expertise and resources to enhance immigrant settlement and integration. VIP Strategy Groups include many of these organizations and institutions. The business sector also plays an important role especially in providing employment opportunities to newcomers.

VIP is built on the premise that public institutions and government groups wish to collaborate on actions and collective solutions to improve the well-being of newcomers in the city. The challenge to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration is often systemic and multi-layered, requiring more than one agency or group to intervene. This theme highlights the need for all public sectors to work together in responding to the needs of immigrants and refugees.





Priority

- ☑ Promote cooperation and alignment amongst different orders of government, public, private and civil sectors.

Creating Dynamic Collaborations

When many groups work together, they build strong momentum and a groundswell for deeper, more lasting change. The federal government encourages inter-agency dialogue and action, with initiatives such as the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP), which it is supporting along with other programming for immigrants delivered through third parties³⁰. Much of VIP's value includes the knowledge and information generated through the collective process, along with shared learning.

In 2014, the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces initiative, also convened by the City, recommended ways for stakeholders to continue collaborating to support immigrants and refugees. The discussion produced a document called the Welcoming Communities Collaborative Model for Vancouver: Suggestions for a "Blueprint".

It looked at approaches for enhancing collaboration, from large-scale efforts to finer-grained strategies. Key elements for collaboration include:

1. Ensuring there are clear vision, mission and value statements for collaboration initiatives.
2. Ensuring leadership and collaboration tables are well represented by senior people from diverse sectors and organizations.
3. Clarity on membership roles and responsibilities, including government representatives.
4. Engaging with a diverse membership, including reaching out to non-traditional sectors.
5. Developing a communication strategy which could include a website or social media use.
6. Endorsement by City Council and adopting a co-chairing approach that involves both a City of Vancouver representative and a community representative.
7. Developing a consensus-building decision-making model that encourages shared leadership.
8. Ensuring accountability through third-party evaluation.

VIP has adopted the Blueprint recommendations. In the next phase, VIP will continue to expand membership, and include more business, private sector, non-traditional group and government representation.

priority actions

4.1.

Create a data and information sharing structure to inform priorities and measure progress around immigration and the settlement and integration of immigrants in the city.

Information and data are important factors in public policy discussion and implementation. True policy change starts with gathering baseline data for analysis and understanding.

This Priority Action recognizes that many areas of immigrant settlement and integration may lack the full data picture. Settlement services collect data on what and how services are delivered and, to some extent, whether these services have met immigrant and refugee needs. Yet, key areas may still lack data. It is more challenging to produce data linking service provision to quality of life indicators or successful integration. Additionally, public services in different arenas do not always collect demographic data (such as immigration status). This prevents a more holistic picture from forming of immigrants' progress in accessing service, engaging with others, and making ends meet, for example. Very often, one service need intersects with another; and insufficient support in one area may impact need fulfilment in other areas.

VIP is built on the premise that public institutions and government groups wish to collaborate on actions and collective solutions to improve the well-being of newcomers in the city.

Data gathering can also include information/indicators on whether the services provided are actually meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees and removing barriers from the user perspective.

Data sharing is an ideal aspect of collaboration, helping individual agencies while also building a bigger picture view of immigrant settlement and integration. However, jurisdictional mandates and information privacy concerns may restrict data sharing. Also, each agency may measure outcomes and success differently.

With government and funder leadership, VIP could identify the best ways to collect data and information, sharing it more widely and creating an integrated understanding of needs and issues. National statistics are useful, as are research findings addressing specific topics. The Vancouver Immigrant Survey, along with provincial health and other research surveys, are starting points for collecting some of these important data and using them to inform collective action. In 2016, VIP proposes to assemble business associations, research groups, and IEC-BC to launch a Vancouver employer survey.

VIP could also learn from other shared measurement initiatives, including the collaborative approach known as Collective Impact, which has engaged several public sector agencies and private sector funders. Groups involved in this initiative have included the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, BC Ministry of Health, Vancouver Foundation and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

This action could shed light on whether we are delivering culturally competent services, especially for refugee populations, which might not have previously lived in large urban centres. In order to deliver culturally competent services, governments and public institutions need to make decisions differently and adapt service delivery models to deliver culturally competent services.

In order to deliver culturally competent services, governments and public institutions may need to make decisions differently and adapt service delivery models.

4.2.

Identify an ongoing collaborative leadership model that advocates and promotes systemic change in Vancouver; this model can also be expanded to a regional level (Metro Vancouver) if appropriate.

This Priority Action addresses crucial questions regarding the best ways for stakeholders, including governments and public institutions, to take action leading to systemic changes in addressing varied immigrant and refugee needs. Which agency is best positioned to advocate for the needs of immigrants and refugees? Should it be done for Vancouver alone or should it be done at a regional level? If so, who should play a leadership role? Systemic needs (and changes) refer to issues which transcend the jurisdiction or mandate of one single body or government, and require a collective effort to make change happen. Issues such as affordable housing and homelessness, equitable access to community and government services, and income inequality need to be addressed through the collective efforts of all levels of government, public institutions and civil society.

The VIP Strategy Group has reviewed several collaborative leadership models. These have included: the Federal Advisory Council on Immigration, Provincial/Municipal Advisory Group on Immigration, the tripartite model of the Vancouver Agreement, and the leadership table model of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy (HCS). The Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (MWGI) is also a model for consideration. These models range from using an advisory approach and funding initiatives by key partners including all levels of government to engaging diverse partners in participatory leadership roles. Each model uses a different decision-making approach, and the results have also varied.

Currently, there is no inter-governmental/multi-sectoral structure in place to discuss broad-based immigrant and refugee issues. Ideal features of such a structure would include: 1) involving the three levels of government and key public sectors; 2) an action-focused approach; 3) complementing rather than duplicating existing work (e.g. MWGI); 4) clearly defined roles, especially for topics where other levels of government are not as engaged, but which the municipal level government considers a high priority (e.g. affordable housing).

VIP would benefit from a tactical approach in its next phase, particularly in informing how its leadership table could guide and support priority actions under this strategy, and in ensuring public sector stakeholder participation in key issue areas. VIP could further learn from how other Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in Canada structure their leadership tables and from their successes with specific systemic issues.

Further steps under this Priority Action could include:

1. Reviewing VIP's future structure to ensure sufficient governmental and public sector representation, with clearly defined roles for all;
2. Aligning with other leadership tables at the City including HCS;
3. Consulting with other LIPs, both locally and nationally, to determine viable advocacy models;
4. Reporting back to MWGI with recommendations.

Bienvenue! Welcome!

WorkBC

Employment Services Centre

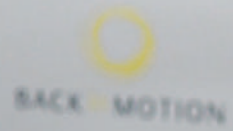
Northeast / Nord-est de Vancouver



The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of the Province of British Columbia.

Fraser Valley
Holloway

Kiwassa
neighbourhood house



ATTENTION
ALL VISITORS MUST CHECK IN
WITH THE RECEPTIONIST

IMPORANT



where do we go from here?

Charting a Course for Making Things Happen

As a result of the IRRC funding and work of the nearly 120 people from 72 groups and organizations which make up the VIP partnership, much has been learned about immigrant and refugee needs. In addition, many important ideas and potential actions have come forward through the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) discussions. The five key objectives of the IRCC funding, as stated to the right, have been achieved with a high degree of collaboration and rigor:

- Establish a local settlement strategy identifying the key priorities for the community.
- Conduct research on newcomers' needs and the community's assets and gaps, and raise awareness of these needs with partner members and the wider community.
- Establish an inclusive partnership council that is broad-based and representative of the community and create a terms of reference.
- Develop action plans with measurable and time-bound activities to implement the communities strategic priorities.
- Support the implementation of action plans and report on results achieved.

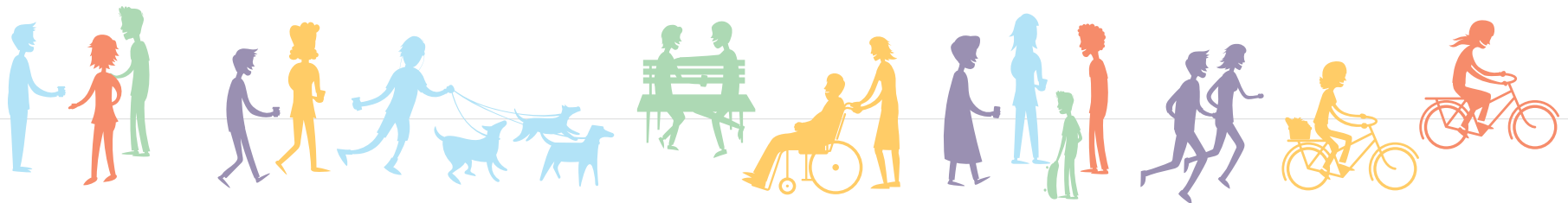
There is no question that VIP and each participating agency share a passionate desire to ensure Vancouver's immigrants and refugees benefit from the next phase. Going forward, VIP will further strengthen the collaboration and sense of shared vision informing this work, and continue to build from the tremendous partnerships and learning involved in developing this strategy. With support from the City, MWGI, a new Executive Committee and all the Strategy Implementation Teams, new opportunities will arise for stronger partner and stakeholder mobilization. Ultimately, this will enable immigrants and refugees in Vancouver achieve their full potential and contribute in the best way they can – socially, culturally and economically - to the city they call home.

The partnership itself is excited about continuing its work in the future. The intense and stimulating discussion that produced the four themes and identified a range of potential actions will be considered for implementation. For all VIP partners, a key next step involves taking the actions back to their respective agencies and examining what they are able and prepared to do to support implementation. Some actions can be implemented through existing programs and approaches but for many of the actions, new funding and other resources will be needed.

VIP and its partners will connect with a range of agencies and groups to determine the best way to move forward. Through implementation discussions and efforts, VIP will develop a focused approach to identifying resource needs and sources, timelines for implementation of priorities and monitoring progress and outcomes. The next phase will further flesh out the implementation of actions and report on results achieved.

VIP will align its implementation with current City of Vancouver's key initiatives such as the Healthy City Strategy, the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force, and Canada 150. Where possible, existing resources and coordination will enable the roll out of some of the priority actions.

In this next phase of VIP, the City of Vancouver will continue its role as project convener, with ongoing IRCC funding. It recognizes that this work is a long term commitment and requires the participation of senior government and a broad range of community partners. The City will examine those actions which fall directly within its mandate, however where senior level of government funding and/or policy is required, the City and the MWGI will raise such issues with senior governments to ensure this important work continues.



Endnotes

¹ This survey was a self-selecting survey, and not based on a random sample; as a result, its findings cannot be fully generalized to the entire population of immigrants and refugees. Nonetheless, with 1,810 respondents, it had a very high participation rate and gives us a very good sense of the experiences and perceptions of Vancouver immigrants and refugees as of 2015.

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⁵ Why don't immigrants in British Columbia feel more 'at home'? Unpacking the settlement experiences of newcomers By: Lori Wilkinson, Jill Bucklaschuk, Jack (Yi) Shen, Iqbal Ahmed Chowdhury, Pallabi Bhattacharyya & Tamara Edkins. <http://bit.ly/22hVegf>

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⁷ Canadian Council on Learning (2010), cited in the VIP Intercultural and Civic Engagement Conversation Starter. Available from website.

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¹⁰ Cavers, V.Carr, P. and Sandercock, L.. (2007). How Strangers Become Neighbours: Constructing Citizenship Through Neighbourhood Community Development. Accessed February 10, 2016 from website: <http://bit.ly/1Xnzcl7>

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¹² Yuen, F. (2013). Building Juniper: Chinese Canadian motivations for volunteering and experiences of community development. *Leisure*.37(2): 159-178.

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¹⁴ For more information on neighbourhood houses and where to find them, please refer to p. 47 of Growing Roots on the website: <http://bit.ly/27GLPCO>

¹⁵ For more information, please visit website: <http://bit.ly/1ckpEDB>

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¹⁹ Chan, W. (2013). News Media Representations of Immigrants in the Canadian Criminal Justice System. Paper for the Metropolis Project. Accessed February 11, 2016 from website: <http://bit.ly/22hVc89>

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²³ Morissette, R. and Sultan, R. (2013). Twenty Years in the Careers of Immigrant and Nativeborn Workers. Statistics Canada Publication. Accessed January 10, 2016 from website: <http://bit.ly/18wolCN>

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²⁶ BC Immigrant Employment Council, (2012), op cit.

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Appendix A

List of Vancouver Immigration Partnership Members

Mayor's Working Group on Immigration

Co-Chairs

Geoff Meggs, City Councillor, City of Vancouver

Dan Hiebert, Professor of Geography, University of British Columbia

Members

Barry Goodwin, Program Manager, Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)

Byron Cruz, Sanctuary Health

Cecilia Tagle, Member at Large

Eyob Naizghi, Executive Director, MOSAIC

Juan Gabriel Solorzano, Executive Director Population Health, Vancouver Coastal Health

Kelly Pollack, Executive Director, Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)

Kerstin Walter, Executive Director, Settlement Orientation Services (SOS)

Katie Rosenberger, Program Director, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA)

Mario Giardini, Inspector/ Marcie Flamand, Inspector – Diversity and Aboriginal Policing Section, Vancouver Police Department

Meika Lalonde/ Steven Meurrens, Immigration Section Chair, Canadian Bar Association,

Miu Chung Yan, Professor, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia,

Nancy Brennan, Associate Superintendent, Vancouver School Board

Patricia Woroch, Chief Executive Officer, Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)

Queenie Choo, Chief Executive Officer, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Scott Robinson, Superintendent/Nancy Brennan, Associate Superintendent, Vancouver School Board

Shannon Hopkins, Director Home and Transition Services, Vancouver Coastal Health/Dr. Soma Ganesan, Medical Director for Mental Health, Vancouver Coastal Health

Zool Suleman, Lawyer, Suleman & Co., Canadian Immigration Lawyers

Access to Services Strategy Group

Co-conveners

Eleanor Guerrero-Campbell, Community Organizer

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Beverley Pitman, Planner, Strategic Initiatives, United Way of the Lower Mainland

Brenda Lohrenz, Executive Director, Language Instruction Support and Training Network (LISTN)

Carol White, Executive Director, Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House

Caroline Dailly, Manager, Resettlement Assistance Program, Immigrant Services Society of BC

Catherine Ludgate, Manager, Community Investment, Vancity

Chris Morrissey, Rainbow Refugee Society (RRS)

Craig Sheather, VP Operations, YMCA of Greater Vancouver

Dawn Ibey, Manager Circulation Services, Vancouver Public Library (VPL) – Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre

Dylan Mazur, Executive Director, Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)

Gini Bonner, Executive Director, Mount Pleasant Family Centre Society

Hiroki Kase, Support worker, YWCA Munroe House

Jerry Wu, Manager, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Program, Vancouver Board of Education

Joel Bronstein, Executive Director, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House Society

Loren Balisky, Executive Director, Kinbrace House/ Multi Agency Partnership (MAP) representative

Marcela Mancilla-Fuller, Settlement Services Coordinator, Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Mariam Bouchoutrouch, Executive Director, Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)

Monette Ledesma (2014-15)/Marius Alparaque, Executive Director, Multicultural Helping House Society

Pascaline Nsekera, BC Francophone Immigration Program Manager, La Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique

Sherman Chan, Director of Family and Settlement Services, MOSAIC

Suddhodan Baidya, Regional Manager, S.U.C.E.S.S. Vancouver

Tina Chow (2014/15), Director, International & Immigrant Education, Vancouver Community College (VCC)

Victor Porter, Program and Research Analyst, Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Ministry of Justice, British Columbia (OCTIP)

Intercultural and Civic Engagement Strategy Group

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Am Johal, Director, Simon Fraser University, Office of Community Engagement

Amanda Mitchell, Public Engagement Specialist, City of Vancouver

Angie Osachoff (2014-2015)//Ela Gunad, Regional Program Officer in BC, Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education

Dan Guinan, President, Native Education College (NEC)

January Wolodarsky, Director of Community Development, Collingwood Neighbourhood House

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Mulalo Sadike, Global Initiatives and Immigrant Services Manager, YMCA

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Vi Nguyen, Director, Grants and Community Initiatives, Vancouver Foundation

Appendix A

List of Vancouver Immigration Partnership Members

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Co-conveners

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Patricia Barnes, Executive Director, Hastings North Business Improvement Association

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Angela Han (2014-15), Director of Operations, Jewish Family Service Agency

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Dennis Chan, Principal, Pathway Advisory Services

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Fiona Easton, HR Manager, Diversity and Inclusiveness, TELUS

Jennifer York, Senior Manager, Settlement Service, ISSofBC

Leslie Shieh, Director, LOCO BC

Lori Tse, HR Manager, Recruitment, TELUS

Lynn Warwick, Executive Director, Mount Pleasant Business Improvement Association

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Sandra Sharples, Director, Human Resources, Tourism Vancouver

Governments and Public Institutions Addressing Needs Strategy Group

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Karina Briño, President and CEO, Mining Association of BC

Kory Wilson, Director, Executive Director, Aboriginal Initiatives and Partnerships, BCIT

Maggie Ip, Founding Patron of S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

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William Wong, District Principal, Student Placement and ELL Services, Vancouver Board of Education

Zool Suleman, Lawyer, Suleman and Co., past Co-Chair, Mayor's Working Group on Immigration

VIP Research Advisory Committee

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Chris Friesen, Director, Settlement Services, Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)

Dan Hiebert, Professor, Geography Department, University of British Columbia/Co-Chair, Mayor's Working Group on Immigration

Deb Bryant, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC (ANHBC)

Elanna Nolan, PhD student, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia

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01: Enhancing Newcomers' Access to Services

Goal Leaders from the public, private and civil sectors in Vancouver work in integrated and collaborative ways to address and be responsive to the needs and interests of the diversity of immigrants and refugees in Vancouver.

Coordination, Accessibility and the Right Pathways

- Priorities**
- Coordinate information to ensure newcomers access quality immigrant settlement services.
 - Ensure accessible language, employment/employability, health and wellness services.
 - Ensure accessible specialized services for vulnerable groups and communities with unique needs.
 - Build stronger linkages and pathways in responding to immigrants' service needs including in the areas of: municipal services, housing, mental and physical health, food, education, parent support, early learning and childcare.



Priority Actions

1.1. Compile the following service system inventories and assess their capacity in meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees:

1.1.1. IRCC-funded Settlement Services -

1.1.2. Broad-based community services -

1.1.3. Services offered by the City of Vancouver

1.2. Develop a set of strategies which will create new or enhance existing collaborative relationships between settlement and broad-based community service organizations to increase overall service capacity, improve service pathways and system integration.

1.3. Propose a partnership among NewtoBC, AMSSA, bc211, WelcomeBC and the City of Vancouver to develop a promotional campaign to raise awareness among immigrants about the programs, services and resources available to newcomers through existing immigrant settlement and newcomers web-based directories.

1.4. Assess community capacity and make recommendations to provide informal community-based English learning initiatives especially for immigrants and refugees who cannot access settlement language services.

Other Actions for Consideration

1.5. Determine the scope and relevance of creating a digital portal of immigrant services and seek partnerships for its development (e.g. modelled after Settlement.Org in Ontario).

1.6. Facilitate a discussion among key service providers and the City to create and implement walking tours of community facilities, including the City to help immigrants learn more about services.

1.7. Encourage the City to recognize organizations that promote inclusion and accessibility in serving immigrants and refugees through the City's Awards of Excellence program.

1.8. Launch a "tell-a-friend" campaign to encourage long-time residents to share information about services for immigrants and refugees.

1.9. Seek partnerships with academic researchers to examine the conditions that create vulnerability among refugees, refugee claimants, newcomer single parents, live-in caregivers, and immigrant women experiencing violence, LGTBQ, youth and seniors with language barriers, non-status migrants and make recommendations for appropriate service models to address barriers.

02: Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement

Goal Vancouver is a progressively open and interconnected city of people with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures who thrive on strong intercultural relationships and robust civic engagement

Connecting with People and Getting Involved

- Priorities**
- Encourage people with diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures to reach out and connect with each other.
 - Provide opportunities for robust civic engagement through volunteerism and people connecting and helping each other.

Priority Actions

2.1. Identify strategic opportunities with groups such as student councils, parent advisory committees, strata councils or residential associations to create more opportunities where people of diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures can reach out and connect with each other. Approaches may include building stakeholders' capacity and tracking impact.

2.2. Support Engaged City Task Force recommendations and the Canada 150 Anniversary Celebrations to create new social connection initiatives, connect existing initiatives, and magnify their collective impact.

The following civic initiatives will be explored with the goal of enhancing intercultural and civic engagement:

2.2.1. The Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommends establishing a Citizen Academy. VIP will support a pilot project to facilitate youth leadership training.

2.2.2. Establish an online inventory of civic facilities that are available for use by immigrant and cultural groups.

2.2.3. Build on the City's Doors Open Vancouver program to invite and promote immigrant and cultural groups participation; and

2.2.4. VIP and partner groups will work with the City's Canada 150 Steering Committee to explore different ways of celebrating Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017 with a focus on highlighting the participation and contributions of immigrants and refugees living in the city, both past and present.



Engaging in Civic Processes and Dialogues

Priorities

- Support initiatives that promote historical understanding, reconciliation and social justice between and within groups.
- Provide opportunities for greater participation and empowerment of immigrants and refugees in democratic processes.
- Challenge stereotypes and negative media coverage of immigration and newcomers.

Priority Actions

2.3. Promote and support a continuation of reconciliation work addressing historical injustices in Vancouver through dialogue and education.

2.3.1. VIP will support reconciliation efforts including fostering more dialogues and collaborations between immigrants/refugees and First Nations communities.

2.3.2. Further, bring forward recommendations as part of City Council's commitment to finding ways to acknowledge and address the historical discrimination towards residents of Chinese descent

2.3.3. Services offered by the City of Vancouver (municipal services)

2.4. Support work within cultural groups to conduct dialogues on their historical and cultural experiences immigrating to Canada, and to expand the dialogues to include other groups.

2.5. Promote and support cultural exchanges between immigrants and the community at large and facilitate the funding of these initiatives.

2.6. Undertake collaborative immigrant and refugee youth engagement projects to explore issues focusing on cultural identity and sense of belonging.

2.7. Develop a campaign to promote greater participation in local democratic processes among immigrants.

2.8. Work towards implementing the Vancouver Mayor's Engaged City Task Force recommendation to extend municipal voting rights to permanent residents in Vancouver.

Other Actions for Consideration

2.9. Promote intercultural capacity building through sharing stories and histories of Vancouver cultural groups including their diaspora experiences, struggles and accomplishments in settlement and integration.

2.10. Develop an app to feature historical, cultural and intercultural contributions of immigrant and newcomer communities to Vancouver's neighborhoods.

2.11. Work with journalism / communication educators to develop curriculum or educational resources to address the labelling of cultural groups and individuals and develop strategies to challenge stereotypes and negative media coverage of immigration and newcomers.

2.12. Partner with local film festivals on intercultural issues to promote positive representation of immigrants and newcomers.

2.13. Develop a database of resources and speakers who can connect to the media and respond to inquiries about immigration issues.

2.14. Propose a series of Ted Talks to explore significant narratives regarding integration, which impacts the future of Canada in the global context.

2.15. Work with media experts to explore how immigrant issues are treated on social media, i.e. Twitter, blogs, etc.

2.16. Create a campaign to explore the rich cultural ancestry of Vancouver residents.

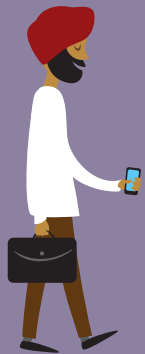
03: Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces

Goal Vancouver workplaces are inclusive and diverse, providing immigrants and refugees with access to a broad range of employment opportunities commensurate with their skills, knowledge, education, and experience; and with fair and adequate compensation for the work they do.

Working with Employers and Businesses to Build Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces

- Priorities**
- Encourage and engage employers to improve prospects for immigrants and refugees, creating inclusive workplaces that hire, develop and retain newcomers' talent.
 - Ensure immigrants and refugees are aware of employment services.

- Priority Actions**
- 3.1 Undertake a survey with Vancouver-based employers and develop and implement specific strategies to address employers' challenges in improving workplace diversity and inclusion practice.
 - 3.2. Explore alignment with the Healthy City Strategy action on developing a social procurement framework for the City to encourage the inclusion of culturally diverse businesses. Work with large businesses to help them adopt this practice.
 - 3.3. Recommend the City consider a pilot project to provide businesses with an information package on welcoming and inclusive workplaces when they apply to renew business permits.
 - 3.4. Bring language providers and employers together to identify language needs in the workplace and make recommendations for language initiatives in the workplace.



Increasing Social Capital and Improving Job Prospects

- Priorities**
- Increase opportunities for immigrants and refugees to work in their fields at a commensurate level and compensation.
 - Increase professional networking opportunities for immigrants and refugees.

- Priority Actions**
- 3.5.** Create a central inventory of mentoring opportunities related to employment that are available for immigrants and refugees.
- 3.6.** Conduct a scan of employment mentoring programs for immigrants and refugees, assess the overall system capacity to respond to demand.
- 3.7.** Make mentoring opportunities available to even more newcomers through new collaborative efforts
- 3.8.** Convene a partnership to host regular networking events with the business community to provide opportunities for immigrant and refugee professionals to meet members of Vancouver’s business community and build their professional networks.

Other Actions for Consideration

- 3.9.** Implement a recognition program for employers with robust diversity policies and practices.
- 3.10.** Engage Business Improvement Associations to identify and implement a diversity project that would involve small businesses.
- 3.11.** Develop a digital portal with mobile access for immigrants and refugees to easily find out about employment services in Vancouver.
- 3.12.** Offer opportunities for training civic frontline staff including those in libraries and community centres so they can refer immigrants and refugees to settlement services including employment services.
- 3.13.** Connect immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs to new business start-up courses and training opportunities.
- 3.14.** Work with stakeholders to look at the current status of foreign credential recognition and report out on progress made to date.
- 3.15.** Work with the Board of Trade and business associations to reduce / eliminate membership fees and other barriers for immigrants and refugees.
- 3.16.** Work with social enterprises to identify how they can increase opportunities for immigrants and refugees to work at levels commensurate with their knowledge, skills, education and experience.
- 3.17.** Identify and advocate for the removal of barriers to the creation of paid internships.

04: Government and Public Institutions Addressing Needs

- Goal** Leaders from the public, private and civil sectors in Vancouver work in integrated and collaborative ways to address and be responsive to the needs and interests of the diversity of immigrants in Vancouver.
- Priority**
- Promote cooperation and alignment amongst different orders of government, public, private and civil sectors.
- Priority Actions**
- 4.1. Create a data and information sharing structure to inform priorities and measure progress around immigration and the settlement and integration of immigrants in the city.
- 4.2. Identify an ongoing collaborative leadership model that advocates and promotes systemic change in Vancouver; this model can also be expanded to a regional level (Metro Vancouver) if appropriate.

