Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership: The First 18 Months
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Clarification of Key Terms

Community: “People who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live.” (Mattessich & Roy, 1997, p.56)

Greater Victoria: We used the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area defined by Statistics Canada when referring to Greater Victoria. In some cases CRD-based data was used, particularly in the initial stages of the research that produced the Fact Sheets (see Appendix 1-2). This was due to the nature of available data.

Newcomer: For the purposes of this study, the term “newcomers” is used to refer to immigrants and refugees who consider themselves newcomers to Canada. IRCC defines “newcomers” as an immigrant or refugee who has arrived in Canada within the previous five years; as such, there is a focus on recently arrived newcomers in this research.

Service Provider: Staff or an organization that provides services of a supportive nature to either the general population, or specifically to newcomer immigrants or refugees.

Accessibility: Services and programs are accessible to all who need them.

Inclusiveness: Services are offered in an inclusive manner that is respectful of and sensitive to the diversity of all community members.

Effective: Services that address the needs of clients and are delivered in a professional manner and according to high standards of program design and program implementation.

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Throughout the Greater Victoria region significant changes in the region’s demographics are occurring with the arrival of immigrants and refugees from more than 180 countries. A major challenge is to ensure these diverse newcomers are able to effectively and successfully access programs, services, employment opportunities, etc. Effective integration of newcomers is determined, in large part, by how well a community is able to reach out to, welcome, include and retain newcomers in areas of services and employment. There is still much work to be done to engage newcomers who are not accessing services and employment opportunities, and to learn more from service providers in detail about their experiences.

This report describes the process, form and functions of the Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership (GVLIP) and shares key findings from research that was undertaken by the Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community-University Engagement (ISICUE) at the University of Victoria. This research will inform current and future GVLIP activities. The GVLIP is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC; formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

In 2015, after undertaking a careful analysis of best practices of other LIP initiatives across Canada and newcomer integration strategies, the GVLIP conducted a participatory action research process of engagement that focused on the experiences of newcomers and service providers. Over 425 individuals, including representatives from about 75 organizations, were engaged in this process. This report is presented in six sections including the following: an overview of LIPs, the GVLIP and work to date; an overview of the GVLIP research process and participants; a summary of findings; an overview of sector-related data; a focus on collaboration; and a review of possible paths forward.

It is hoped that this report will be used beyond the scope of the GVLIP to further our understanding of newcomer integration in Greater Victoria. It is recognized that there is still much information to compile and analyze as the GVLIP moves forward with its mandate. This research and report are just an initial overview and draws from a relatively small sample of individuals and organizations in the Greater Victoria region. Over the coming years of the GVLIP, this data will be further analyzed and additional research carried out with the goal of bringing together diverse members and stakeholders to create an immigration integration plan for a more welcoming and inclusive Greater Victoria.

Any feedback and questions regarding this report are welcomed and can be sent via email to: greatervictorialipresearch@gmail.com

Information about the GVLIP can also be found on the ICA website at: http://www.icavictoria.org/community/local-immigration-partnership
About Greater Victoria LIP

What is a LIP?
The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative, funded by the Government of Canada’s then Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), first began in Toronto and other cities in Ontario in 2008. Over the past eight years LIPs have been initiated across Canada.

LIPs are municipal or regional coalitions designed to strengthen local capacity to attract newcomers and improve integration outcomes, as indicated by enhanced economic, social, political, and civic participation. They operate through formal agreements that establish broad-based partnership councils charged with developing and implementing strategies to produce more welcoming communities. LIP coalitions include immigrant and mainstream service providers; municipalities; federal and provincial agencies; employer associations; health organizations; ethno-cultural and religious groups; school boards; academic institutions; and other partners. As such, they are important focal points for increasing engagement and promoting strategic alignments and coordination among service providers and other institutions. (Pathways to Prosperity - Canada)

Greater Victoria LIP
Building on the work of the existing Community Partnership Network (CPN), a network of more than 200 local businesses, organizations and agencies that promote inclusion and the effective integration of newcomers to Greater Victoria, the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) received funding from CIC in 2014 to create the Greater Victoria Local immigration Partnership (GVLIP). The goal of the GVLIP is to develop broad community-based partnerships and create a regional immigration strategy for Greater Victoria.

Since 1975, ICA has provided settlement services and support to over 40,000 immigrant and refugee newcomers in Greater Victoria. In 2015 alone, ICA supported more than 1,600 newcomers with their settlement and integration process. Building on initial funding from the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada, ICA developed “A Welcoming Communities Action Strategy” (2009). The Community Partnership Network (CPN) was developed from this initiative. As of March 2016, the CPN has grown to more than 200 member organizations and businesses who represent a range of sectors including: health, education, business, housing, municipal government, arts, recreation, etc. The overall purpose of the CPN is to develop Greater Victoria’s capacity to more effectively attract, welcome and integrate newcomers into our communities, workplaces, organizations and institutions. The CPN supports ongoing engagement, capacity-building and networking opportunities. The creation of the GVLIP evolved from the CPN and responds to a national trend of creating integrated and broad-based stakeholder partnerships.
to address and improve immigrant settlement outcomes. The GVLIP and CPN aim to complement and enhance each other's work. For example, a number of CPN members were recruited to form the initial GVLIP Advisory Council.

Existing LIPs in Canada have documented their local experience in developing and maintaining these partnerships and thus provide a wealth of literature to inform the Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership (GVLIP). For example, Burr (2011) highlights effective practices in the 30 LIPs created in Ontario. Burr’s analysis states that successful LIPs are supported by a partnership design that is transparent, includes a broad-based and culturally competent leadership and membership, has a strong client focus, and incorporates social learning/information sharing. As stated by Drolet, Yan and Francis (2012) in A Working Paper on Settlement, Integration, and Welcoming Communities Domain in British Columbia, 1996-2012,

“Integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities.”

LIPs aim to increase collaboration and reciprocity in the relationship between newcomers and their communities (Burr, 2011). LIPs represent a rising trend in networked approaches to immigrant and service delivery.

Following the examples from earlier developed LIPs in communities across Canada and building on the work of the CPN, the GVLIP decided to use characteristics of welcoming communities as a foundation and starting point for assessing the barriers and opportunities for newcomer integration. The Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP), for example, used a similar welcoming communities approach (CLIP, 2013). Nine characteristics of welcoming communities (as defined by Ravanera et al. 2012) are present in the development of LIPs in other areas across Canada.

**These characteristics include:**

1. Employment opportunities;
2. Affordable and suitable housing;
3. Educational opportunities;
4. Fostering social capital;
5. Positive attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community;
6. Municipal features and services sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers;
7. Accessible and suitable healthcare;
8. Presence of newcomer-serving agencies that can meet the needs of newcomers; and

Additional priorities include: a focus on children and youth; newcomer attraction, retention and business development; and the social, cultural and political inclusion of immigrants (Kobayashi et al. 2012). With these characteristics and priorities in mind, this research project engaged newcomers and service providers in Greater Victoria to shine some light on the characteristics and priorities specific to Greater Victoria and provide guidance and direction as to how to best enhance the settlement and integration of newcomers to Greater Victoria. This project utilized an asset-based and vision-focused approach, which engaged local citizens in determining the assets, values and visions of the residents living in their
community, those integrating into the community, and those providing services that facilitate that integration. Kertzmann and McKnight (1993) are architects of the citizen-led and asset-based community development approach, which empowers people to take control of their lives and communities as opposed to being passive recipients of services and having their lives planned for them.

Initial and evolving structure of the Greater Victoria LIP

The GVLIP is based on LIP structures currently developed across Canada and is informed by the experiences of ICA and CPN partners - the GVLIP is structured with the GVLIP Advisory Council as a central hub where representatives from each of the Sector Tables, the Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) and the Secretariat are represented and active (see Figure 1). Open and multi-directional communication is facilitated through the GVLIP Advisory Council. The IAT has two co-chairs who sit on the GVLIP Advisory Council. The IAT assists in the development of the Strategic Plan for the GVLIP, participates in the Immigrant Advisory Table meetings (4-6 meetings per year), champions the GVLIP vision in their communities, and works with other organizations and businesses who are part of the GVLIP structure. The LIP Sector Tables are currently being developed for 2016/2017.
About Greater Victoria LIP

Table 1: Community Engagement and Research Activities to Date: Spring 2014 - Winter 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring/ Summer 2014</td>
<td>• Sign contract with CIC (now IRCC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research best practices of existing LIPs across Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall/Winter 2014/15</td>
<td>• Recruit members for GVLIP Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop &amp; circulate an online survey for potential LIP Council members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion with UVic (ISICUE) re: LIP research component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>• Partnership between ICA and ISICUE for LIP research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formation of the GVLIP Council (1st meeting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Terms of Reference for GVLIP Council, drafted, finalized and signed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
<td>• GVLIP Council meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Literature review of service provision, newcomer experience, and best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practices for LIPs across Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of Fact Sheets on process and stats for immigration in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>• GVLIP Council meetings (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formation of the Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT – 2 meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community mapping table and project introduction at the Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Festival at Gordon Head Recreation Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community mapping tables organized at the CPN members meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 6 focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 9 interviews with service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online newcomer survey (121 respondents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online service provider survey (31 respondents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter 2016</td>
<td>• GVLIP Council meetings (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• IAT meeting (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Draft LIP Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Share LIP Report with participants, LIP council and IAT for feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Revise LIP Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Introduction**

The objective of this research was to assist in identifying priorities for the GVLIP with the goal of creating an immigration settlement strategy. This research provided an analysis of past LIPs, of the current integration opportunities and service gaps in Greater Victoria, and of the best practices for LIP partnership form and function. The research determined key newcomer needs in Greater Victoria; identified community assets and gaps in newcomer settlement and integration services, programs, and processes; and examined the value of a networked approach (including various sectors) to the immigration settlement strategy. The GVLIP aims to provide a clearly defined and presented network of support for and by newcomers in Greater Victoria. This goal is supported through the inclusion of newcomers (see Clarification of Key Terms pg 4.) in the development of the LIP, coordinating this inquiry with service providers of Greater Victoria, and strategizing for future collaboration. A Community-Based Research approach was used.

“The most important thing is communication, finding ways to have your organization’s message of inclusion to be transmitted to everyone that needs your help. This is a challenge with my organization, but we are reaching a lot of newcomers” - CPN Member

Creative methods, such as asset-based mapping and storyboarding, are some of the tools used to engage participants in the research process and content. Outcomes related to this research project include: this report; a series of GVLIP fact sheets; an online map of programs and services identified through the research process (find at [http://www.crdcommunitygreenmap.ca/location](http://www.crdcommunitygreenmap.ca/location)); inclusion of over 300 newcomers and 50 service provider organizations who participated in the many meetings, online surveys, focus groups and events.

**Methods**

To address the key research questions efforts questions, were made to connect with as many newcomers and service providers as possible throughout the Greater Victoria region.

The period of July 2015-December 2015 saw a number of key activities undertaken:

- Developed three GVLIP Fact Sheets based on literature and document reviews (see Appendices pages 47-50);
- Reviewed documents related to existing LIPs across Canada and of service organizations in Greater Victoria;
- Interviewed 9 staff and volunteers from newcomers and service provider organizations;
- Held 6 focus groups with groups of newcomers to Greater Victoria and service providers;
- Received 31 survey responses from program and service providers in Greater Victoria;
- Received 121 survey responses from newcomers in Greater Victoria;
- Hosted 2 Community Mapping Tables to engage a larger audience in creating a visual representation of opportunities and gaps for newcomer integration in Greater Victoria (newcomers and service providers).

Responses to survey and focus group questions shed light on the service provider and newcomer perspective of assets and gaps in supports available to newcomers and their settlement experience in Greater Victoria. Mapping exercises and sharing through participatory story-boarding techniques were facilitated by the ISICUE Research Team during focus groups. Research Team members also carried out the transcription and analysis of the data gathered. Transcripts were coded and key themes were identified. Emerging themes were researched and linked to the literature on newcomer oriented settlement strategies, and were reviewed by the research team.
**Initial Snap-shot of Immigration in Greater Victoria**

**Trends: British Columbia and Capital Regional District**

This Fact Sheet highlights some immigration trends in BC and the CRD. Newcomers contribute to population growth, job creation and cultural diversity in the CRD and in BC. Most newcomers are immigrating to BC through Economic Class Immigration Programs (outlined in Fact Sheet 1). CRD immigrant ‘region of origin’ has historically been predominantly European. The last decade has seen a shift in immigrant ‘region of origin’ from Europe to Asia. While Canada’s official languages are most spoken in CRD homes, 16,805 residents speak a language other than French and English at home.

Note: CRD and Greater Victoria data are used for this fact sheet.

**Key Terms**

**Newcomers:** Recent immigrants and refugees arriving in the last 10 years.

**Immigrants:** Persons born outside Canada who have become landed immigrants and have permanent resident status.

**Refugees:** Persons forced to leave their own country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster.

**Immigrant Region of Origin: BC and the CRD**

- **Americas**
  - BC 9%
  - CRD 15.5%

- **Europe**
  - BC 12.3%
  - CRD 50.1%

- **Africa**
  - BC 3.8%
  - CRD 4.6%

- **Asia**
  - BC 72%
  - CRD 27.9%

- **Oceania & Other**
  - BC 2.5%
  - CRD 1.8%

These statistics are based on total immigrant populations over time (not including early colonization). Recent immigration in the CRD aligns more closely with the region of origin trends for BC. Services should therefore adapt to increasing newcomer populations from Asia.

*BC based on BC Stats (2013)*

*CRD based on the National Household Survey (2011)*

**Imigration contributes significantly to the population of BC and the CRD**

**BC at a glance**

- Total BC population: 4,324,455
- Total BC immigrant population: 1,191,875
- 27% of BC residents are immigrants

**Immigrants Landing in BC by Class (2013)**

- Economic: 19,466
- Family: 14,150
- Refugee: 1,778
- Other: 767
- Total: 36,161

*BCStats (2014)*

**CRD Quick Facts**

- Total CRD population: 336,180
- Total CRD immigrant population: 60,075
- 18% of CRD residents are immigrants

In 2013-2014, **37,451** immigrant newcomers moved to BC. Of these, **1,173** settled in the CRD.

*National Household Survey (2011)*
Initial Snap-shot of Immigration in Greater Victoria

Immigrant Newcomers in the CRD

Immigrant population % of CRD Municipalities

1. Central Saanich: 16.9% (2,660)
2. Colwood: 11.1% (1,625)
3. Esquimalt: 13% (2,190)
4. Highlands: 13.1% (250)
5. N. Saanich: 21.4% (2,315)
6. Oak Bay: 23.1% (4,140)
7. Saanich: 22% (23,795)
8. Sidney: 23.5% (2,435)
9. Victoria: 19.7% (15,415)

Data not found for municipalities shown in white.

Emerging Trends in the CRD

About 33% of immigrants in Greater Victoria are 65 years and older. Immigration dropped 10% in Greater Victoria during the last census period (2006-2011).

Services will need to align with an aging immigrant population and immigrant attraction and retention efforts could be improved.

Ethnic and Language Diversity in the CRD

Total CRD visible minority population is 37,810 (8.9% of the CRD total population)

While not all immigrants are of visible minority and vice-versa, recognizing minority groups can improve efforts to include minorities in service and program design and delivery.

The chart to the right highlights the diverse make-up of CRD residents. The numbers represent the percentages of the total visible minority population (37,810) for each minority group.

National Household Survey (2011)

Top 5 non-official languages spoken at home in the CRD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese¹</td>
<td>2460</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>2190</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹not otherwise specified

16,805 residents speak a language other than French and English at home.

National Household Survey (2011)
When newcomers are more integrated in their communities, they are more likely to feel a sense of well-being and belonging. There is a myriad of work being done in Greater Victoria to make it a more inclusive and welcoming community:

"Providing a centre where newcomers can get information and find a welcoming atmosphere and make new friends"

Employment was reported to be the most difficult area to navigate.

- Newcomers noted that recreation and immigration/settlement services were the formal services that helped the most in decreasing the barriers to settlement.
- Internet searches and recommendations from family and friends were seen by newcomers to be the best methods of gathering information about available services.
- Pre-arrival strategies were seen as fundamental for improving the experience of newcomers.

Newcomers found libraries and recreational activities to be the most helpful for successful integration in Greater Victoria.
Participant Overviews

As noted in Fact Sheet #2, there are currently 60,075 immigrants in the CRD. There were a total of approximately 425 participants in this research (see methods section above for more detail). These participants represent a fraction of the overall Greater Victoria newcomer population. Further, this data was collected through an online survey format in English, which may have limited accessibility for newcomers with language or computer literacy barriers. In addition, the majority of focus group participants and all interviewees were clients or students of ICA services, or, as with the case of service providers, they were connected to the ICA through the CPN. These are relevant factors to consider when interpreting the data and planning next steps.

Online Newcomer Survey Participants

Respondents to the online Newcomer Survey were asked to share demographic information about themselves. This section provides an overview of these responses.

Table 2: Arrival in Greater Victoria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Household Composition and Geographic Distribution of Newcomer Survey Respondents

20% of the newcomer survey respondents were from single-adult households. Of those, 54% were single-parent households with infants, children, young adults or a combination thereof. 6% of the respondents were members of multigenerational households (seniors, adults and infants-young adults). While one household had 11 family members, the average number of family members in each household was approximately five (5) and the mode (most commonly responded) number of household members was two (2). The geographic distribution of respondents can be seen in Figure 2, with the greatest concentrations in the region’s two largest municipalities of Saanich (29%) and Victoria (38%).

1. Central Saanich: 4%
2. Colwood: 8%
3. Esquimalt: 4%
4. Highlands: 1%
5. Langford: 3%
6. Metchosin: 1%
7. N. Saanich: 4%
8. Oak Bay: 2%
9. Saanich: 29%
10. Sidney: 1%
11. Sooke: 2%
12. Victoria: 38%
13. View Royal: 3%
None of the above: 2%
Participant Overviews

Current Immigration Status of Newcomer Survey Respondents
The majority of newcomer respondents identified themselves as either naturalized Canadian Citizens (39%) or Landed Immigrants (49%; also known as Permanent Residents). 5% identified as Temporary Foreign Worker Work Permit holders and 7% as International Students. Legal status plays an integral role in shaping newcomers experiences, including what supports and services they may qualify for or have access to. For example, international students and temporary foreign workers do not qualify for federally funded settlement services or English language classes offered by immigrant settlement agencies, such as ICA - but some may qualify for limited provincial government support. Detailed explanations of the immigration process, different permanent residency programs, and how newcomers are arriving and settling in Greater Victoria can be found in Fact Sheets 1 and 2 (see Appendices pages 47-50).

Educational Level of Newcomer Survey Respondents
The integration experiences of newcomers can vary quite significantly depending on their levels of skills, education and training. This can lead to feelings of frustration from factors such as under-employment or employment that does not match levels of education or experience of the newcomers. A significant number of respondents had attained university level education (36% Masters or Doctorate and 44% Bachelors degree). 12% had completed college, vocational or trade school diplomas, while 6% had obtained their high school diplomas. Only 2% of newcomer respondents indicated they had no secondary level education, certificates, diplomas or degrees. For comparison purposes, additional information (see Charts 1 & 2) regarding educational levels for the general immigrant population in British Columbia, Canada and the City of Victoria are provided below.
Participant Overviews

Online Service Provider Survey Participants

Geographic distribution
A total of 31 service and program providers (organizations, businesses and agencies) responded to the online service provider survey. Though most of the 31 responding service providers have a physical presence (office) located in the City of Victoria, the responding organizations indicated they provide services throughout the Greater Victoria region (see Clarification of Key Terms on pg. 4). Not surprisingly, services are most available in the region’s two largest municipalities of Victoria (83%) and Saanich (77%), which correlates with the geographic distribution of newcomers’ place of work and residency in Greater Victoria. The municipality where services are least available is in Sooke - with 52% of the organizations indicating their services are provided in that municipality.

Organizational composition, age and purpose
The majority of service provider organizations employ between one to five individuals. A significant number of responding organizations vary in size- with many having between 41-250 employees. These organizations are significant in size and capable of effectively serving newcomers in Greater Victoria. In addition, 61% of the responding organizations stated that they were established at least 30 years ago or longer. This indicates that many organizations have a relative long history of involvement with the community they serve. This demonstrates significant stability and the ongoing need for their services in the community. 50% of the responding organizations offer programs specifically developed for newcomers. Of the newcomer specific programs, the primary foci include: civic engagement, education, and individual and family support (81% of organizations providing these types of programs – see Chart 3). 47% of service provider respondents offer some form of services that support settlement for newcomers. Of those, over half offer information and referral services, while a smaller number offer other services such as drop-in support groups, individual mentoring, refugee services, and immigration/citizenship services.

Chart 3: Types of Services Being Offered by Organizations for Newcomers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual &amp; Family Support</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Recreation</td>
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<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Settlement</td>
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<td>Faith</td>
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About Focus Group Participants
A number of focus group were organized with newcomers to better understand their experiences as immigrants. Focus group participants were recruited primarily through ICA related programs and services. ISICUE facilitated two focus groups with ICA Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC) classes, one with ICA Employment Services clients, one with the ICA Youth Group, one with Here! Magazine staff and community members, and one with the GVLIP Immigrant Advisory Table. While surveys and community tables captured larger and more diverse audiences, future GVLIP research activities will aim to connect with participants from a broader cross section of the community.
Summary of Findings

About Interviewees
Interviewees were all members of the Community Partnership Network (CPN). They represented a range of organizations including: municipal services, community non-profit, business, and education.

Integration
Immigrant integration is a process through which newcomers participate in the economic, social and civic / political life of the receiving country/community (Welcoming Communities Initiative). When residents are more integrated into their communities, they are more likely to feel a sense of well being and belonging. Also, effective integration of newcomers in the community ensures that immigrants are contributing in a meaningful way to the economic, civic and social sustainability of Greater Victoria (see Appendix 2 for an overview of Newcomer Integration in Greater Victoria).

Settlement and Integration Services
Many programs and services are offered to newcomers by a diverse array of organizations in Greater Victoria and represent a range of sectors (housing, employment, education, recreation, etc.). Service providers were asked to respond to the following survey question: “In your opinion, what is the most effective service or program your organization provides to support newcomer immigrants? Please elaborate on this program and why you find it effective”. A summary of responses quoted below showcase the myriad of work being done in Greater Victoria to contribute to a more welcoming and inclusive community:

- “Counselling services that are sensitive to the cross-cultural and diversity issues that newcomers face when relocating to Victoria.”
- “Financial Literacy seminars, how banking works in Canada, what are good loans & bad loans. How to avoid financial fraud etc.”
- “Integration and welcoming events”
- “Health system navigation and one-on-one support”
- “Family Centre Programs - they assist parents and children to make friends in their community.”
- “Multicultural Outreach Counselling. Saanich Child and Youth Mental Health.”
- “We have several newcomers as members...we welcome all single parents and try to help them ourselves with our programs/services or to connect them with another agency if necessary.”
- “Friendship and socialization”
Summary of Findings

“Providing a centre where they can get information and find a welcoming atmosphere and make new friends.”

“Training for careers”

“Program with ICA is effective because we can work closely with the ICA team and complement their services to better support the individual needs of the group.”

“The Settlement Program”

“Speaking about the citizenship process. Improves the application success rate. Saves time and resources.”

“Being an active participant and member of CPN. CPN is an excellent vehicle that brings the community together with the common goal of building welcoming and inclusive community.”

“Focus on fitness introduces immigrants to recreational services in the region and allows them to try new activities.”

“Language training”

“[...] we strongly promote inclusion and inclusion awareness. We have many newcomer volunteers who are vital to our organization. Because [newcomers] volunteer with non-newcomers, they quickly develop relationships within the [...] community. It is important to have a place for newcomers to come together and share common values and concerns. The most important thing is communication, finding ways to have your organizations message of inclusion to be transmitted to everyone that needs your help. This is a challenge within my organization but we are reaching a lot of newcomers.”

“Faith - many diverse cultures represented and inclusive”

Service Providers
Summary of Findings

Chart 4 highlights the services most frequently accessed by newcomers and their experiences with these services. It is helpful to refer back to this chart when reading over the detailed responses in relation to sector areas. “Not Accessed” does not necessarily imply that the service is not needed, but may indicate it is not provided or easily accessible. In some cases, barriers to accessing these services do exist. For example, one survey respondent commented that there is a need for “more free community recreation activities”. This may be an indication that more targeted promotion of no cost recreation activities is required. Future research and analysis of service assets and challenges will be needed to support the development and structure of the Greater Victoria LIP. For example, the level of access and excellent rating for libraries and recreational activities is exceptional. Looking further into this phenomenon would likely shed more light on best practices that would benefit other service providers. Further, if newcomers are already accessing programs and services at the library or at recreational facilities, then these locations could be ideal key locations for information sharing about other regional programs and services offered by sectors such as health, housing and transportation.
Summary of Findings

Service provider respondents also “rated” the quality of services available to newcomers in Greater Victoria. The “rating” of various key services by both the newcomer and service provider respondents is quite similar. In general, programs were rated as “adequate” by 40-50% of service provider respondents. Some services, such as mental and dental health care; services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer; and affordable housing programs were rated as “poor” by approximately 50% of service provider respondents. There is discrepancy between the assessments of service providers and newcomers based on their experiences. Service providers generally rated the quality of services and programs far lower than those rated by the newcomers. Further research would be required in order to determine the cause of such discrepancies.

Map – Nodes of Interaction
As described in Fact Sheet 3 (see Appendix 3), and in the above section, there are many ways in which newcomers are being welcomed and integrated in Greater Victoria. In an attempt to put the information that participants shared into a useful tool, an online map has been created using the CRD Community Green Map platform. This online map identifies services and programs related to different settlement and integration needs (www.crdcommunitygreenmap.ca). This map is interactive and allows viewers to contact the map coordinator to modify a resource, initiative or service. Further, as the GVLIP progresses, individuals and organizations will be able to enter stories, videos and images that communicate their experiences as newcomers and/or service providers in Greater Victoria.

Challenges Related to Settlement and Integration
Many challenges related to settlement and integration were identified by newcomers and service providers. According to service providers survey respondents, a number of key areas were identified as challenges to effective settlement and integration.

The five most important services for newcomers in order of importance:
• Settlement
• Housing
• Employment
• Health Care
• Individual Support

Chart 5 highlights different areas of the settlement and integration process, and the levels of difficulty newcomers are experiencing in those particular areas. The responses relating to “employment” indicated that most newcomer respondents have experienced “some” (31%) or “a lot” (45%) of challenges in finding employment. This highlights the importance of employment in the integration experience and requires further focus in this area. (see page 29 for more information on employment).

There are a number of strategies for overcoming challenges related to the effective settlement and integration of newcomers in Greater Victoria. Focus group participants highlighted Greater Victoria as a place which is friendly and described its residents as “welcoming”. Such qualities have been identified as being key to newcomers to help them overcome challenges associated with settlement. For example, one newcomer respondent stated: “When I moved to my new place, lot of neighbours welcomed us so friendly.” Some focus group participants also highlighted that overcoming the challenges of settling in a new country is a process that requires taking the initiative in a number of ways, for example, by volunteering, joining community groups, taking classes, etc. (see Figure 3 on page 21).
There are a number of strategies for overcoming challenges related to the effective settlement and integration of newcomers in Greater Victoria. Focus group participants highlighted Greater Victoria as a place which is friendly and described its residents as “welcoming”. Such qualities have been identified as being key to newcomers to help them overcome challenges associated with settlement.

**Figure 3**: Storyboard expressing how one participant overcame the challenge of being accepted.
Organized, accessible and newcomer-friendly programs and services play an important role in decreasing barriers to settlement. Chart 6 below represents newcomer survey responses to the question “Please indicate the services THAT HELPED YOU THE MOST as a new immigrant to Canada”. Apart from services, many participants highlighted the importance of friends and family in assisting their successful integration into Greater Victoria. Activities and programs that foster friendship and build community are vital for successful newcomer integration in Greater Victoria.

Service Provider Challenges

In the survey, service providers identified four primary barriers encountered when providing services to newcomers in Greater Victoria.

These barriers are listed in order of importance:
1. insufficient funding to create services that meet the needs of clients,
2. insufficient funding to maintain services that meet the needs of clients,
3. inadequate translation and interpretation support, and
4. transportation challenges.

Secondary barriers identified are, in order of importance:
1. inadequate support from partner organizations,
2. lack of information about what other organizations are doing,
3. burdensome and time consuming evaluation and reporting requirements, and
4. staff turnover that impact program delivery and consistency.

This section highlights aspects of collaboration that are alleviating some of these challenges.
Summary of Findings

Accessing Programs and Services
Chart 7 below highlights the ways in which newcomers access information about services. The internet and personal recommendations by family and friends are key methods used to gather information about services and programs. This finding was echoed in the focus groups as well. Youth identified that they found out about youth groups (primarily at ICA and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Society [VIRCS]) and related programming through the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) at their schools. In a related question asking newcomers to rate the ease of access to information about services, 68% of newcomers responded that access to information about services is “acceptable”, while 15% found it “difficult” and 17% indicated it was “easy”.

Promoting Inclusion and Diversity
Within many service provider organizations, there are a number of ways that inclusion and diversity are being promoted. For example, to address financial barriers newcomers may face to access programs, many service providers provide subsidies and sliding-scale fees based on income levels of newcomers. This is particularly prevalent in recreational programming and, to a lesser extent in housing and legal services. Some organizations also provide support to address the language barriers when accessing programs, particularly in cultural and recreational programming. These supports include providing translators and information in different languages, or using online tools such as Google Translate.
Summary of Findings

Promoting a welcoming and inclusive community is enhanced when communities, organizations and individuals promote these values in the broader community. Service providers indicated they primarily promote inclusion and diversity outside of their organizations through “advocacy” and “intercultural awareness training”. One respondent in particular promotes inclusion and diversity in the community by providing newcomer integration services that focus on creating “link[s] with various culturally-specific organizations to share relevant information on caregiving and seek feedback on services”. Creating connections and sharing resources with other “culturally intelligent” organizations, can enhance the immigrant integration process.

Focus group participants pointed out that the promotion of inclusion and diversity is a “two-way street”, a conversation between newcomers and already established community members that is approached with an open heart and an open mind.

Community Wisdom
There is a wealth of wisdom and experience to share among service providers and experienced newcomers. Service providers have been working to create a more welcoming and inclusive community in Greater Victoria for years and newcomers who have lived through the challenges and successes of integrating into Greater Victoria. During some of the focus group activities, newcomers and service providers were asked to share their wisdom on the interactive and collaborative “Tree of Wisdom” (see photos below). Guiding questions were asked including: “[Based on your experiences], What advice would you give newcomers?” and “[Based on your experiences], What advice would you give service providers who provide support to newcomers?”. Responses varied from suggesting specific services and programs for newcomers, to advising newcomers to be open to different experiences in a new life, to encouraging newcomers to take the initiative to create the type of life that they envisioned when moving to Greater Victoria.

Figure 4: Trees of Wisdom from Two Focus Groups

Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership: The First 18 Months
Focus on Youth

The focus group with newcomer youth highlighted a number of key themes related to the youth newcomer experience. This was crucial because there was very little emphasis on youth brought forward in the other research activities. Four key themes that emerged from the youth were: isolation, acceptance, friendship and personal initiative. Youth focus group participants created a storyboard to explore the challenges they experienced in coming to Victoria, and how they responded to those challenges:

Youth focus group participants identified feeling isolated from their community, as if they were separate from the rest of the world. One youth focus group participant identified how she would always go on the bus with her headphones on and avoided talking to others. Then one day she decided that if she were to ever learn English, make friends and be included in her community, then she needed to take off her headphones and start paying attention to the world around her. She would then write down words that she heard and learn new vocabulary (and about her new cultural surroundings) during her daily commute.

Taking the initiative to join the basketball team helped one participant make friends and feel more accepted in her new community.

Figure 5: Identified Feelings of Isolation

Figure 6: To Learn English and Be a Part of the Community

One youth focus group participant identified how she would always go on the bus with her headphones on and avoided talking to others. Then one day she decided that if she were to ever learn English, make friends and be included in her community, then she needed to take off her headphones and start paying attention to the world around her. She would then write down words that she heard and learn new vocabulary (and about her new cultural surroundings) during her daily commute.
Focus on Children and Seniors
Survey and focus group participants identified affordable child-care and culturally appropriate seniors’ services as being key needs that were difficult to access. Many respondents indicated that lack of access to affordable child-care presented a barrier to accessing employment, education and training opportunities—since there was no one to take of their children during work hours or class times. In relation to newcomer seniors’ needs, focus group respondents identified a lack of “ethnically oriented seniors housing” that was culturally sensitive, a need for services that provided “more focus on seniors”, and “ethnically supported seniors’ organizations”.

Respect
Newcomers were asked to share or indicate levels of “respect” they “felt” from others in relation to their religious beliefs, political views, cultural practices and sexual orientation. The responses indicated that in the following areas respondents felt “little” or “no” respect:

- Religious belief: 21% felt “little” or “no respect”
- Political belief: 25% felt “little” or “no respect”
- Cultural practices: 32% felt “little” or “no respect”
- Sexual orientation: 12% felt “little” or “no respect”

One newcomer stated: “Unfortunately, even to these days, I still witness racial discrimination in the Greater Victoria Region occasionally. And it is sad and disappointing in a greater community level. People and services are definitely changing in a positive direction though. I sincerely wish our children would not need to face any form of discrimination in their future years.”

The focus groups and interviews also clarified ways that respect is being fostered in Greater Victoria and suggested how it can be improved. Cultural events were highlighted several times as a tool to increase intercultural awareness and acceptance. Further, suggestions focused on the benefit of long-term programming that meaningfully connects newcomers and long-time residents of Greater Victoria. For example, fostering connections through buddy programs and integrated community activities such as volunteering in community organizations. Many respondents spoke of respect being built through dialogue and sharing of cultures. There was also discussion of racism being present, though hidden by a veneer of politeness. This is an area for future research with particular attention on elements of discrimination based on grounds such as race, faith, colour, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Role of External Supports and Resources: Pre-arrival strategies
Service providers and newcomers alike identified services and programs that they felt required greater levels of support from external institutions. It was suggested, for example, that pre-arrival strategies could be better delivered through partnership between local newcomer service providers, provincial and federal government, and Canadian embassies.

Pre-arrival strategies were discussed as fundamental for improving the newcomer and service provider experience in Greater Victoria. Pre-arrival strategies focus on providing information and resources prior to arrival in Canada; Bonifacia (2015) noted this as a vital component for easing the initial challenges associated with settling in a new country and new community.
Over half of newcomer survey respondents volunteer in their communities.

**EMPLOYMENT**
Affordable child-care, language skills and training/education not being recognized were indicated as a barrier to finding employment or participating in education/training programs.

**HOUSING**
While service providers highlighted “housing” as the second most important focus area for supporting newcomer settlement and integration in Greater Victoria (“settlement” being first), only 31% of service provider survey respondents are currently providing accommodation or housing services.

**VOLUNTEERISM**
27% volunteer at their child’s school. This was highlighted as a source of opportunity for community engagement.

**YOUTH**
Key themes brought forward in the youth focus group were isolation, acceptance, friendship and personal initiative.

**CHILDREN**

“Waiting time for specialist is too long! Took us 5 years to have family doctor!”

**HEALTH**

**LAW**
Educational and relationship building opportunities between newcomers and law enforcement are beneficial. The Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Council has demonstrated efforts in this area.
Education and Training (Informal and Formal)
As identified in the literature, the newcomer survey responses and the focus groups, substantial numbers of immigrants arrive in Greater Victoria with significant levels of post-secondary education and work experience levels.

Many newcomers, after arriving in Canada, are building their education and training portfolio to improve their employment possibilities. Nearly half of newcomer survey respondents have taken classes in post-secondary institutions (college or university) and/or English Language classes in Greater Victoria (see Chart above). 71% of respondents participated in workshops and/or classes, in some cases to attain certificates or improve skills in areas such as Food Safe, computer literacy, etc. Such courses and training were often provided by community organizations, recreation centers, or non-profit groups. Of these, the majority of respondents took part in these activities rarely (once or twice a year – 43%) or occasionally (once a month – 41%). The remaining respondents indicated that they partake in these activities often (once a week - 8%) and very often (more than once a week – 8%). 48% of respondents partake in recreation activities provided by community organizations, recreation centers, and non-profit groups.

According to services provider survey responses, 47% of service providers offer life skills classes focusing on a range of topics from parenting to healthy eating to financial literacy. 43% offer classes/workshops on a range of interests such as birding, dance, fitness, and pottery. These types of classes are known to build community connections, broaden newcomers’ networks, improve language skills, and build self-confidence (Welcoming Communities Initiative, 2012).

Qualifications and Retraining
According to the newcomer survey, 47% of those who had credentials from their country of origin tried to get their credentials re-validated or recognized in Canada. Of those, 61% found it “Possible but it took significant effort”, 22% found it “easy” and 17% found it “impossible”. The cost and time associated with getting foreign credentials validated is both challenging and frustrating for newcomers. Many newcomers indicated feeling distressed around having to prove oneself over and over again. One respondent stated that they had to go “back to university and start from scratch” just to be able to look for employment in a position that they previously held in their country of origin.
Sector-Related Data

Employment

Employment rates
54% of newcomers indicated they are currently employed in the Greater Victoria region while 39% stated that they do not work in the Greater Victoria region (see chart). Of those who are employed, the majority work in the municipalities of Victoria (65%) and Saanich (20%). 39% of survey respondents indicated they are not employed in the Greater Victoria region and 7% stated that they are not employed right now, but have been in the past. This is significantly higher than the 2006 Census information whereby the unemployment rate amongst newcomers in the Greater Victoria region was 6%. This discrepancy will be addressed in future research.

Chart 10: Status of Employment

Figure 7 - Geographical Location of Current Work

1. Central Saanich: 3%
2. Langford: 5%
3. Oak Bay: 2%
4. Saanich: 20%
5. Sidney: 2%
6. Sooke: 2%
7. Victoria: 65%
8. View Royal: 2%
Sector-Related Data

38% of newcomers reside or live in the City of Victoria and 29% live in the District of Saanich. Meanwhile, respondents are mostly working in Esquimalt and Victoria (see Figure 7 above). 5% of respondents identified that they are travelling outside of the Greater Victoria region for work.

Self-employment
Self-employment levels among newcomer respondents were as follows:

- 14% are currently self-employed
- 2% were self-employed in the past, but were not self-employed at the time of taking the survey

This is in line with the Greater Victoria self-employment rate of 13%. Of those who are/were self-employed, about half found that their business provided enough income to meet their basic monthly expenses. Nearly all newcomer survey respondents who identified as “self-employed” indicated to do not have any additional employees (87%).

Employment Attainment and Retention
One survey respondent stated that “(l)iving in the Greater Victoria Region as a newcomer immigrant was both an exciting and challenging experience for me. Finding employment that fit my utmost qualification was a big challenge, but my determination to succeed made the challenges less challenging.”

Another newcomer survey respondent shared: “I believe that the Greater Victoria Region is the one of the best places to settle in, but at the same time it is the hardest place to do that for a newcomer, because it’s too competitive to find a job or a house against [compared to] Canadian.” Despite utilizing strategies such as networking, retraining, employment workshops and support from service providers, there is significant frustration related to finding employment in Greater Victoria. See chart below for further details about employment services offered to newcomers in the CRD.

![Chart 11: Employment Services Provided by Service Provider Survey Respondents](image-url)
Sector-Related Data

According to the newcomer survey, key barriers and challenges in finding employment are:

- Language skills (38%)
- Training and education not recognized (38%)
- Not enough Canadian workplace experience (29%; see Chart 12)

Securing affordable childcare was also identified as a key barrier to accessing employment. Registering and enrolling in LINC language programs was also listed as a major barrier to finding meaningful employment.

Two newcomers highlighted the differences in the requirements needed for both low-skilled and professional employment, stating that the lack of “Canadian workplace experience” was a significant barrier to finding employment. One mentioned racism as a barrier and another newcomer mentioned that the work eligibility limitations of international student visas also created barriers. 24% of newcomers indicated that they found “no barriers” to accessing paid employment. On a more positive note, none of the respondents listed any challenges related to discrimination, based on “religious beliefs” or “cultural practices”.

### Chart 12: Barriers to Accessing Employment (Multiple Choices Possible)

- I did not have enough experience
- I did not have enough training or education
- My training or education was not recognized
- Religious beliefs or practices
- Cultural beliefs or practices
- Language skills
- Other
- None

Health Services

As seen in Chart 13 below, while survey respondents generally rated the health care system as “good” or “acceptable”, wait times for accessing a family doctor and specialists were identified as a significant challenge for nearly 60% of newcomer respondents. The challenge of finding a family doctor is experienced by many residents in Greater Victoria. The shortage of family doctors “has reached a critical level, forcing closures at walk-in clinics” (CBC News 2015) across the region.

Interestingly, the health care system was not mentioned as an area of concern or importance among focus group respondents. Further, several focus group respondents stated that doctors require cultural competency training in order to provide more culturally appropriate care to newcomers. According to the service providers, 50% of the respondents provide some type of health related services. Of those, the primary programs are related to providing information about navigating the health-care system and mental health services. A number of the organizations indicated they approach health services from a holistic perspective that seeks to integrate physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.
“On the whole, it’s convenient and effective.”

“Wait times for specialist is too long! Took us 5 years to have family doctor!”

“Finding a family doctor was very difficult. My husband had to stay for three hours in the Emergency Room waiting for treatment.”

“The emergency waiting is ridiculous.”

“Finding a family physician seems impossible.”

“I am “lucky” to have a chronic illness, so I got a family doctor reasonably fast. Others have to wait for 5+ years... Island Sexual Health Clinic in Victoria is another good source of health care.”

“Long wait for specialists. I was lucky to find a family doctor and a dentist right after arriving to Victoria, but many people struggle to find one.”

“Specifically for emergency... too many hours of waiting...hope they will have a quicker way serving people at times of need.”

“Waiting time for specialist is too long! Took us 5 years to have family doctor!”

“We don’t have family doctor yet. It’s hard to find. We go to walk-in clinic.”

“On the whole, it’s convenient and effective.”

“Finding a family doctor was very difficult. My husband had to stay for three hours in the Emergency Room waiting for treatment.”
Community Safety

For newcomers, it is sometimes difficult to navigate and understand a new country and its legal system. For many newcomers, the laws, the court system, or the police are not institutions that can be trusted in their home countries. In many countries, police and the legal systems are seen as instruments of corruption, fraud and abuse of power. One focus group newcomer said that, here in Victoria they did not know what to do when being pulled over by a police officer. They were fearful of being asked for a bribe or being subjected to other abuses of power. Such fears and perceptions are understandable based on experiences in their home country. Similarly, it is difficult for police to serve an increasingly diverse community if they do not understand the realities and cultural contexts of the newcomers’ countries of origin. Respondents at a second focus group highlighted experiences with fraud and scams, and noted a sense of vulnerability due to language barriers and cultural differences.

One newcomer drew a storyboard to demonstrate the challenges of understanding new laws and customs in Canada. She had gone to a class and not realized that she needed to purchase a parking pass. When she returned to her car after the class, she found a ticket on her windshield and was very confused. She called the phone number listed on the ticket. The person who attended to her was described as being “understanding” of her situation, explained the ticketing process and canceled the ticket. This was a positive example of how, in this case security and police authorities, can communicate clearly and empathetically with newcomers to enhance feeling “welcomed”.

Recognizing the need to build and improve communication, understanding and relationships between the region’s police services and newcomers, the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee (GVPDAC) was created in 2003. This collaboration between the region’s five police departments and diverse community representatives who are part of the GVPDAC seek to ensure the views and experiences of newcomer immigrants are shared with police to ensure effective and culturally sensitive police services. Much work remains to be done in bridging understanding between newcomers and the police and the legal system. The GVPDAC provides a platform and mechanism to bridge this gap in community-police relationships. Additional information about the GVPDAC can be found in the section “Examples of Collaborative Work in Greater Victoria.”

Housing

Types of Residence (Rental vs. Ownership)

- 46.67% of newcomers - Rent homes in the Greater Victoria Region
- 37.78% of newcomers - Do not rent
- 15.56% of newcomers - Had past rental experience in Greater Victoria, but are not currently renting
- 43.44% of newcomers - Own their own homes
- 55.56% of newcomers - Do not own their own homes
- 1.11% of newcomers - Owned in the past, but not right now

Satisfaction with Housing

From the newcomer survey, the cost of housing and housing choices were identified as some of the most challenging aspects of finding accommodation/housing in Greater Victoria. These challenges were also echoed in the focus groups and in the service provider surveys (see Charts 14-15 below).
While service providers highlighted “housing” as the second most important focus area for supporting newcomer settlement and integration in Greater Victoria (“settlement” being first), only 31% of service provider survey respondents are currently providing accommodation or housing services. These services are outlined in chart below.
While newcomer survey respondents generally found the housing situation “acceptable”, the focus group participants highlighted the difficulty in finding housing when they first arrived in Greater Victoria. In this case, English language skills and the lack of a social network were highlighted as key factors that negatively impacted their ability to access the rental process. Furthermore, “[i]n January 2015, an International housing affordability study ranked Victoria as the second least affordable housing market in Canada behind Vancouver” (Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, 2015).

**Transportation**

The relatively small geographic size of Greater Victoria and the ability to travel from one part of town to another by driving, walking, biking or on public transport, was highlighted in focus groups as a positive factor. Geographic proximity makes it easier for newcomers to adjust to life in Greater Victoria. Based on the newcomer survey, a similar percentage of respondents take the bus or drive their own car as their primary method of transportation (see Chart 18). Few newcomers bike or walk as their primary methods of transportation. These trends are quite different compared to the transportation trends for the general population of Greater Victoria as identified in the 2011 Census (see Chart 17), please note that the census data is related specifically to commuting to and from work.
Sector-Related Data

Transportation Affordability
61% of newcomers indicated on the survey that their primary mode of transportation (own vehicle, public transportation, etc.) to be “affordable”. 34% of newcomers responded that transportation is “very expensive” and an additional 6% newcomers described it as “very inexpensive”. Of those who use public transportation as their primary method of transportation, 39% found it to be “very expensive”, while only 3% found public transportation to be “very inexpensive”.

Integration: Social Engagement
Community Connections
One newcomer stated, “I found people very friendly and welcoming... I felt home instantly. This feeling allowed me to get involved in the community, increasing my sense of belonging.” There are many ways that newcomers are connecting with and contributing to their community in Greater Victoria:

- 33% Community meetings
- 27% Child’s school
- 23% Coaching/tutoring
- 23% Event space/support (such as selling tickets, making food or performing for an event)
- 20% Hosting social activities
- 19% Spiritual/faith-based activities
- 19% Event planning
- 14% Joining an advocacy group
- 6% Block parties
- 4% Community gardening
- 3% Joining a political party
- 8% Identified “doing nothing” - that they did not engage in any community engagement activities
- 8% other

Volunteerism/ Civic Participation
In a report of LIPs across Ontario, volunteerism and civic involvement were highlighted as priority actions for effective newcomer integration. The report states:

“Volunteering has community and individual-level benefits, building trust in the community and a more welcoming environment. It also bestows personal benefits for volunteers in terms of recognition, improved life satisfaction and health outcomes, and lower levels of stress.” (Welcoming Communities Initiative, 2012, pg. 12).

Volunteerism was highlighted in nearly every interview and focus group as a way of building a sense of belonging in Greater Victoria. A number of respondents emphasized that their volunteer efforts did not necessarily require large time commitments. One service provider wrote the following in relation to how to build a sense of belonging in Greater Victoria: “Encourage [...] involvement in the community by volunteering in whatever capacity they can. That helps in integration and makes [newcomers] aware that the process of successful settlement works when they also give back.”
57% of newcomer survey respondents currently volunteer in their community; while 27% do not volunteer at all; and the remaining 17% indicated they have volunteered in the past, but not currently. Some newcomers indicated they do not volunteer, but when asked about involvement in their community, they stated that they help out at events at their children’s school, are part of an advocacy group and/or support recreation or cultural events in their community. Although these newcomers may not see these actions as “volunteerism”- these activities do provide opportunities for engaging with others and contributing to community.

**Survey and focus group respondents identified two main reasons as to why they volunteer:**
1) to gain experience, skills and connections in the community to improve access to employment
2) to understand, be a part of, and contribute to their community

---

**Newcomers shared their reasons about why they volunteer:**

“I wanted to pass my experiences to newcomers to avoid mistakes I made in the past.”

“To gain experience and skills.”

“For a newcomer, I believe volunteering is one of the best way to learn about and to integrate into the community I live in.”

“Volunteering in my community gives me great satisfaction. Giving back to my community and being a change agent helps me advocate for a healthy, inclusive and diverse community.”

“I’m happy to help other people the way they help me in many different ways.”

“Network, update skills, to learn about community and do meaningful work.”

“For social and to have an experience in the workforce in Canada.”

“I think volunteer work gives you opportunities to gain work experience in Canada.”
The 27% of the newcomer survey respondents who do not volunteer, and the 17% who previously volunteered but do not presently, expressed a desire to volunteer, but they are limited by lack of time, unfamiliarity with where to find volunteer opportunities, and concern about language barriers.

Newcomers share some comments about why they do not volunteer:

“We don’t know what to do and where to go to volunteer.”

“My language skill is not good”

“Do not know how to be a volunteer”

“Volunteering job is for people who already have a job, not for people who are looking for job. Because volunteering cannot pay the bills!”

71% of the service providers offer volunteer opportunities within their organization. Volunteering was identified as an effective way for newcomers to develop language skills, acquire local work experience, and build community. Such opportunities provide an important step in newcomers’ integration and support the service provider to become more welcoming and inclusive.
COLLABORATION

The research identified interest from service providers in creating more formal partnerships:

“Would like to see more coordination between the services to reduce overlap and better target the services through best practice”.

Meaningful collaboration includes focus on relationships, results and resiliency.
Examples of effective collaboration that supports newcomers in Greater Victoria:

Vancity Credit Union partners with organizations such as TAPS (Together Against Poverty), Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Society (VIRCS) and Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) on issues related to financial literacy and navigation of the banking system.

James Bay New Horizons Society and Silver Threads collaborate in order to offer the best services possible to seniors. They provide intentionally complimentary services, which reduces overlap and promotes respect for each other’s organization.

Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee was established to promote relationships between newcomers and the police. Collaborations include transformational theatre and educational presentations.

The Francophone Immigration Program of BC, Francophone Society of Victoria, GT Hiring Solutions and ICA collaborated to put on the first ever Francophone Job Fair in Victoria, which promoted bilingualism and matched job seekers to employers.

Saanich Parks and Recreation collaborates with both VIRCS and ICA on programs (e.g. Focus on Fitness and Enable) which supports relationship building, active lifestyles and fosters a sense of belonging.
Focus on Collaboration

Information for this section of the report was gathered from interviews with, and surveys completed by, service providers in Greater Victoria, unless otherwise noted.

Defining Collaborative Work
There is a wealth of information, research and dialogue on the topic of collaborative work in communities, including the question “What is a collaboration?”. We have chosen the following definition as the most accurate representation of the collaborative work currently done in Greater Victoria.

Multi-sectoral Collaboration - A community project in which many diverse actors -“sectors”- share responsibilities, resources, and expertise. These actors may include any combination of national and local government, large and small business, non-governmental organizations and charities, and people who live in the community. (Tamarack, n.d.)

Collaborative Solutions - The purpose of multi-sectoral collaboration is to solve community problems; many of these problems exist because community actors aren’t sharing expertise or resources very well, which leads to overlaps in some places and gaps in others. Collaborative Solutions allow many sectors to work well together. (Tamarack, n.d.)

Requirements for Building Meaningful Collaboration
Collaboration requires relationship building, patience and commitment. It must also be purposeful, and guided by the needs, values and vision of the community. Similar to what we found in the data, Relationship, Results and Resilience have been identified as necessary to build meaningful and sustainable collaborations (Ray, K. as cited by Cabaj, 2004).

Relationships: Strong, trusting relationships are a foundational component to any collaboration, regardless of scope or objective.

Results: Tangible results are required to gain traction and keep momentum alive in collaborative work. Ensure that the outcomes are applicable to as many participants as possible.

Resiliency: Flexibility, adaptability and commitment. Resiliency ensures that the roots of collaborations are planted firmly enough to weather the storm of time, funding uncertainties, and shifts in community relationships or objectives.
Focus on Collaboration

Table 3: Benefits of Collaborative Work

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synergy:</strong></td>
<td>The synergy created from working collaboratively will result in greater accomplishments than each group working on its own could ever hope to achieve. If you work separately, it will fragment the efforts and the resources, possibly leading to less accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Awareness:</strong></td>
<td>Increased participation leads to increased community awareness. By involving a number of organizations, your issue or message can be transmitted to a great many more people, and, through word-of-mouth with their associates, to an exponentially larger pool of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share resources:</strong></td>
<td>The sharing of resources and expertise can make daunting tasks more manageable. Also, it may be that you require technical expertise, knowledge or facilities that your own organization cannot provide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overcome Obstacles:</strong></td>
<td>Obstacles faced by one group may be overcome by another group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective Representation:</strong></td>
<td>A partnership, coalition or network has more power to influence policy than a single organization because a larger and broader section of the community is represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Duplication:</strong></td>
<td>Working together can help ensure efforts and services aren’t being unnecessarily duplicated, and that there is an appropriate distribution of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to Constituents:</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes one partner will have a high degree of organizational capacity for planning and implementing programs, but has not developed a trusting relationship with the community it wishes to serve, such as people with disabilities, aboriginal groups, grass roots community groups or particular ethno-racial communities. They may benefit from partnering with others who serve as a bridge into the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access to funding sources:</strong></td>
<td>There may be grant opportunities for which your organization is not eligible, but one of your partners is. By working as a collaborative these funds can be accessed to support your initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition; Online Training Course: Community Development Strategies, Module 3)

Examples of Collaborative Work in Greater Victoria

**Finances**

British Columbia based credit union, Vancity Savings Credit Union (Vancity), collaborates with a number of community agencies including: the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA), Victoria Immigrant Refugee Center Society (VIRCS), Together Against Poverty (TAPS), and Lifecycles. Vancity provides resources, education and information on topics related to financial literacy, leveraging community assets, starting your own business and navigating the banking system. Participants are able to learn new skills and information related to microfinance, loans, taxes and investments. Vancity also offers loans to immigrants to help with employment readiness costs. Interest free loans are now made available to individuals who require renovations to their homes in order to host Syrian refugees.
Focus on Collaboration

Parenting
The James Bay Community Project and ICA collaborated to offer the Welcome Play Group program, a free drop-in program for parents who identify as newcomer immigrants, refugees or are here on student/work/visitor visas. A public health nurse and dental hygienist visit the group once per month. This collaboration offers participants the opportunity to socialize with other parents and children, as well as address more practical needs related to health and wellness.

Seniors/Elders
The James Bay New Horizons Society and Silver Threads Victoria provide a range of services, programs and supports to long-term and newcomer immigrant seniors in the Greater Victoria region. Both organizations work diligently and intentionally to ensure that their services are complimentary to each other, and to reduce service replication. For example, if one agency is providing language lessons in Arabic, the other will choose a different language. This practice promotes respect for each other’s contributions to the community, decreases the likelihood of clients needing to choose one service over another, and enriches our overall integration ecosystem.

One service provider highlighted the fact that: “We are open to working with other groups to create or complement new programs to better meet the needs of newcomers, as it is our desire to lean and grow to be better able to support and serve newcomers”.

Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee (GVPDAC)
Established in 2003 as a response to research conducted in the CRD regarding the need to improve relationships between diverse community members and police, the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee (GVPDAC) is comprised of both police and community representatives. The GVPDAC provides rich opportunities for police and diverse communities to improve communication, foster trust and build positive relationships. A range of outreach, education and training activities have been organized by the GVPDAC and include: transformational theatre and forum theatre, educational presentations, community and police dialogues, and the Youth Diversity Award initiative (GVPDAC, 2014).

Members of the GVPDAC
• Central Saanich Police Service
• Oak Bay Police Department
• RCMP (West Shore, Sidney/North Saanich Detachments
• Saanich Police Department
• Victoria Police Department
• African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island (AHAVI)
• Baha’i’ Faith Community
• Equity & Human Rights Office, University of Victoria (UVic)
• Francophone Society of Victoria
• India Canada Cultural Association (ICCA)
• Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)
• Ismaili Muslim Community
• Jewish Community Centre
• Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD)
• Victoria Pride Society
• Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)
• Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS)
Focus on Collaboration

Employment and Language Promotion
In December of 2015, the Francophone Immigration Program of BC, Francophone Society of Victoria, ICA and GT Hiring Solutions/Work BC partnered to coordinate the first ever Francophone job fair in Victoria promoting bilingualism. Approximately 85 job-seekers, 10 employers and 7 service providers attended this event.

Recreation and Fitness
The Parks and Recreation department of the District of Saanich has worked alongside VIRCS to support their Enable program, a weekly drop in service for youth run out of the Pearkes Teen Centre. Participants are able to access a variety of exciting recreational activities, build new friendships and foster a sense of belonging as a result of this partnership.

渝安 Parks and Recreation also works with ICA to offer Focus on Fitness, a program introducing adult immigrants to recreational facilities and activities in the CRD. This is a unique opportunity to develop new relationships, and learn more about what the city has to offer while engaging in an active lifestyle. This year, the recreation facility explorations program will be expanded beyond Saanich to include municipalities of Oak Bay, Esquimalt, West Shore and Victoria.

Examples of Multi-sectoral Collaboration in Other Communities
Building trust was something very important to the West Downtown Toronto Settlement Service Strategy Planning Project (WDTSSSPP), which is a collaborative partnership between more than twenty organizations of various sizes. Because larger organizations often take up the majority of available funding, there can be tension between small service providers and those larger ones as they compete for available resources. The WDTSSSPP project is committed to recognizing the value of organizations and the levels of expertise they offer in their services, cultures, and generations through this partnership, learnings on effective collaboration and trust building have been generated.

A further example of successful integration is the LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) coalition in Ottawa. The twelve member organizations have developed a local agenda by sharing information, advocating for each other, and strategically providing common services (to avoid duplication). LASI operates under a shared governance model, with monthly meetings of the twelve executive directors; decisions are made by consensus. Their mission to advance the integration of newcomers in to their community is done through project development, outreach, advocacy, relationship building and public awareness campaigns.

Mechanisms of Collaborative Work
Collaborative work may not always take the shape of formal projects or programming. Sometimes the most valuable collaborative work happens behind the scenes, carried out by front line service providers and during the process of relationship building.

When asked how their agency engages in collaborative work, one service provider gave several concrete examples that exemplify the myriad of options available to service providers who are considering collaborating. They stated that their service “share[s] resources, participate[s] in each other’s programs, [and] advocate[s] in common goals with […] agencies, institutions and other ethno-cultural groups”. This example demonstrates the spectrum of collaborative work that agencies might consider engaging in, from activities that concurrently benefit individual agencies to initiatives that work towards common goals or confronting common challenges.

Referrals
Strong relationships and effective communication are key ingredients to ensuring successful referrals of clients to appropriate programs and services. These ingredients may also be considered a starting point for initiating relationships that ensure effective wrap around services for newcomers.

• Eight service providers identified they provided information and referral to settlement services in the CRD.
• Three service providers identified they referred clients to either general or specific services or programming. This is in addition to the region’s two settlement service providers who annually refer hundreds of newcomers to a range of other agencies.
Focus on Collaboration

Service providers would benefit from thinking creatively about how the process of making client referrals might enrich their own client’s experiences of community, belonging and connection. For example, a senior's group from ICA often collaborates and shares program activities facilitated by the James Bay New Horizons Senior’s group. This reduces the duplication of services and resources, while fostering community, building relationships and sharing knowledge.

Resource Sharing

Resource sharing is a valuable method of building trust, increasing rapport and fostering better communication in practical and meaningful ways. Examples that came forward from interviews and surveys primarily revolved around the use of in-kind donations for co-sponsored events.

For example, in collaboration with the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee, ICA and the Safe Harbour Program recognized youth in the CRD who promoted diversity and inclusion in their schools and communities. The Youth Champions of Diversity luncheon was hosted by the James Bay New Horizons Center, funded by ICA and the GVPDAC and included the participation of the region’s police and a number of secondary schools in the region.

Additional methods of resource sharing for consideration include:

- co-facilitation of a group activity using staff from multiple agencies
- making staff with specialized knowledge in a particular area or procedure available to other agencies or organizations
- lending libraries to increase accessibility of resources and best practices
- attending each other’s workshops, events and celebrations (sharing “presence”)
- co-promotion of events (sharing “audiences”)

Bridging

Those who engage in “bridging” opportunities play a vital role in not only building relationships between sectors and service providers, but also planting seeds for future possibilities. Here! Magazine has been connected with immigrant support groups run by several organizations in order to profile local narratives about the lives of immigrants, newcomers and refugees. In turn, the Community Partnership Network, of which Here! Magazine is a member, incorporates Here! stories into the quarterly CPN newsletter.

Networking

The Community Partnership Network (CPN) is a vital network for community engagement and networking in the CRD.

The CPN:

- Encourages members to share resources, skills and relevant information about diversity and inclusion;
- Supports the development of new ideas and goals for increasing diversity;
- Brings together organizations who are interested in learning more about diversity and inclusion to use the network to connect with each other, while fostering cooperation and collaboration;
- Organizes and delivers educational seminars, workshops and meetings with members to promote and learn about diversity and inclusion.

One focus group participant described the CPN as “NOT parachuting in with answers, but building trust, confidence, supports and partnerships”, which captures the importance of relationship and interdependence to ensure effective collaboration.

The CPN continues to gain new members and greater visibility in community. This network and its members were involved with the formation of the GVLIP. It will continue to provide a strong foundation for the future articulation of the Local Immigrant Partnership Strategy.

Two service providers had these important words to offer:

“Join the CPN and attend every workshop and experience you can! So many friends and connections to be made.”

“It is wonderful to be a member of the Community Partnership Network, to meet members of other local organizations and to communicate and share ideas/strategies for ensuring Victoria is a city that welcomes newcomers and celebrates diversity.”
Focus on Collaboration

Challenges to Collaborative Work
The Best Practices for Settlement Work: Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (2010) identified collaboration as a best practice in serving newcomers. However, multiple factors may constrain an individual organization or community from engaging in collaborative work, and often these factors lead back to concerns related to funding.

Based on feedback from local organizations, there are two main barriers to providing services to newcomers: insufficient funding to create services and insufficient funding to maintain services. Similar non-profits wind up applying for the same grants, which can create tension and competition between local organizations. While it can be a motivating factor in other arenas, competition leads to breakdowns in relationships and trust, which significantly hampers ability (or willingness) to engage in collaborative work. A 2012 study in Hamilton, Ontario also identified concerns around the tension caused by competition amongst agencies for funding; not only were services considered to be impacted by this tension, but also incentive to engage in deeper collaborative work amongst organizations.

Common feedback from service providers in Victoria points to the need for cohesion between sectors. When newcomers’ challenges are treated as separate, isolated factors it can lead to inconsistent standards and duplication in service delivery. Because challenges for newcomers are interconnected and related to a myriad of factors, this requires service providers to address these interwoven pieces using collaborative solutions (see pages 42-43). Coordinated services make it far easier for newcomers to effectively navigate the system, while allowing the organizations involved to reap the many benefits of collaborative work. For example, one service provider survey respondent stated that they “Would like to see more coordination between the services to reduce overlap and better target the services through best practices”. However, coordinating services is easier said than done; often this requires both informal dialogue and planning as well as formal mechanisms that require time, staffing and resources.

Formalizing Collaborative Work
As identified by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the objective of the LIP is “to strengthen the role of regions and communities in the integration of newcomers by; supporting better coordination of integration services; including settlement and language training in local communities; providing a framework to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable local and regional solutions; and supporting the development and implementation of strategies and plans that provide community-specific solutions for achieving better outcomes for newcomers” (IRCC, 2009).

Building on the success of the CPN, the LIP emerges as the most natural ‘next step’ towards integrated partnerships for improved immigrant settlement experiences. The LIP provides an opportunity to formalize the relationships built through existing community work and put them to work. Responses from service providers indicate that there is most definitely an appetite for solidifying partnerships and taking on more purposeful work together.
Moving Forward

This report is intended to serve as a starting point, a “snap-shot”, of the Greater Victoria region and its ability to meet the needs of newcomers and ensure the successful long-term settlement and integration of immigrants. This document will also be a resource for both newcomers and service providers to start to identify and understand the barriers, challenges and successes of the integration process. This report underscores the need for agencies to better understand that in order to better serve the whole population, our community must be more inclusive of immigrants. Lastly, this report will serve as a tool for the GVLIP Advisory Council and Secretariat and LIP Sector Tables as they move forward in the 2016-17 development of the GVLIP strategy.

As the GVLIP continues to develop, further areas for research will be identified and addressed, including areas of research identified throughout this report. Table 4 below highlights key areas for further research and programming, including the possible role of the LIP in each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area/ Sector</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Programming</th>
<th>LIP Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Employment         | Identify best practices in other municipalities and regions for addressing barriers to employment relevant to Greater Victoria | • More free/affordable language training  
• More free/affordable child-care  
• Continue employment support programs | • Facilitate collaboration and information sharing throughout GVLIP structure  
• Co-develop research and share results widely |
| Seniors/ Elders    | Augment the voice of seniors/elders in research activities, including their input on research questions related to their experiences | • Based on research in this area and engagement of seniors/elders, develop more senior-specific programming, services and initiatives | • Increase of seniors/elders within the GVLIP structure  
• Facilitate further discussion relating to seniors with Sector Tables |
| Integration        | • Continue to build on the baseline understanding of newcomer integration in Greater Victoria  
• Broaden research through the use of translators and increase artistic approaches to research  
• Develop opportunities for activities that foster friendship and build community connections | • Use research results to celebrate, modify and improve programming | • Use the network of the GVLIP to reach a broader diversity of participants, including a more central role of research facilitation and interpretation from the GVLIP IAT |
| Best practices for Service Accessibility | • Innovative strategies for no-cost program provision  
• Current and possible development of points of access to information regarding programs and services  
• Use libraries, recreation centres, etc. as points for information distribution for newcomer services  
• Investigate discrepancies between service providers and newcomer assessments regarding quality and effectiveness of services | • Increase community participation in the online map of services, programs and initiatives | • Bridge between sectors to share and build on best practices |
| Community Connections | • Use asset-based Participatory Action Research approach to engage and empower community | • Build and develop more opportunities for one-on-one and longer-term intercultural relationship building  
• Continue and promote strong environment of volunteerism | • Co-develop and participate in the research process  
• Members of the GVLIP structure can foster community connections |
| Multisector Collaboration | • Best practice in Greater Victoria and in other regions  
• Pathways forward in addressing challenges to collaboration in Greater Victoria through a Participatory Action Research approach | • Increase and broaden coordination between the services to reduce overlap and better target the services (see Requirements for building meaningful collaboration on pg. 40) | • Develop Sector Tables (including perhaps a Funders Table) and facilitate communication between Sector Tables, GVLIP Advisory Council and GVLIP IAT |
| Discrimination/ Respect | • Develop further understanding of racism and other forms of discrimination in Greater Victoria through creative research methods of engagement and knowledge sharing | • See recommendations for programming for community connections  
• Provide more opportunities for cultural exchange between newcomers and long-term residents | • Lead by example and showcase/celebrate that example  
• Co-develop and participate in the research process |
# Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership

## Fact Sheet #1

### November 2015

### Canadian Citizenship & Permanent Residency

This fact sheet identifies the differences between permanent residency and Canadian citizenship, including the rights and responsibilities of each immigration class and their associated policies. Each province has specific immigration policies, and this document focuses on immigration in British Columbia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permanent Resident</th>
<th>Canadian Citizen</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone who has applied and been granted permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada, but is not a Canadian citizen. Permanent residents are citizens of other countries.</td>
<td>A person who is Canadian by birth or who has been granted citizenship through application to Citizen and Immigration Canada.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Canada Aims To:

- Attract up to 305,000 new immigrants in 2016
- Increase the 2015 immigration goal by 40,000
- Have skilled immigrants make up 65% of the immigrant population

*Statistics Canada, 2016*

### Immigration Policies for Permanent Residency

**Permanent residents have the right to:**

- Receive most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive, including health care coverage
- Live, work or study anywhere in Canada
- Apply for Canadian citizenship
- Protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

**Permanent residents are not allowed to:**

- Vote or run for political office
- Hold some jobs that need a high-level security clearance

Permanent residents can live outside of Canada, but must live in Canada for at least two years in a five-year period. Otherwise, permanent residence status is lost.

*CIC Website*

Most newcomers to the CRD arrive within the economics and family class programs. The following includes further details on these two classes and on the refugee class blended visa office-referred program.

### Permanent Resident Program: Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)</td>
<td>Family Sponsorship</td>
<td>Start-up Visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in Caregivers Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Express Entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Skilled Worker</td>
<td>Federal Skilled Trade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Immigrant Investor Venture Capital</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pilot Program</td>
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### Family Sponsorship

**A Sponsor must:**

- Meet basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter—for themselves and their family
- Support their relative financially and make sure their spouse or relative does not need to ask for financial help from the government

### Federal Skilled Trade

**Applicants must:**

- Meet language requirements
- Have one-year full-time employment offer from a Canadian employer
- Have two years of full-time experience within the last five years

### Live-in Caregiver (Nanny Program)

**Applicants must:**

- Have at least six months’ training or at least one year of full-time paid work experience as a caregiver or in a related field or occupation in the past three years

*CIC Website*
Permanent residents obtain a permanent resident card, which is an identification card that is required for re-entry into Canada when travelling and expires every five years. After becoming a permanent resident and remaining a permanent resident for at least five years, an immigrant is then eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship. The nearest Citizen and Immigration Canada office for CRD residents is in Vancouver and there are no physical offices that are open to the public for WelcomeBC. This heightens the importance of local service agencies that are providing face-to-face, accurate and up-to-date information about immigration processes.

### Eligibility Requirements to Become a Canadian Citizen

- **Age:** at least 18 years old (parents apply for citizenship for children under 18)
- **Permanent resident status (PR)**
- **Time you have lived in Canada:** at least 3 years (1095 days) of the previous five years
- **Income tax filing:** filing obligations in four taxation years

- **Intent to reside in Canada**
- **Language ability:** adequate knowledge to speak English or French
- **Knowledge of Canada:** history, values, symbols and institutions
- **Prohibitions:** clear criminal history

### Canadian citizenship is not automatically granted by...

- **Marrying Canadian citizen**
- **Adopting a Canadian citizen**
- **Having a refugee claim accepted**

- **Residing in Canada as a permanent resident for many years**
- **Being born outside Canada to Canadian parent(s) on or after April 17, 2009, but neither parent was born or naturalized in Canada.**

The information in this Fact Sheet is, to the best of our knowledge, up-to-date and accurate. Please contact us with any concerns regarding content or any suggestions for future Fact Sheets.
This fact sheet outlines the definition and significance of immigrant integration, including types of services, service providers and program examples available to immigrants in the Capital Regional District. The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Strategy will bring together service providers and newcomers to create a more welcoming and inclusive CRD.

**What Is Immigrant Integration?**

**Integration**

The ability to “bring or come into equal participation in or membership of society”

**Immigrant integration**

is a process through which newcomers participate in the economic, social and civic/political life of the receiving country

**Indications of social integration**

- A sense of belonging/life satisfaction
- Perceptions on discrimination
- Cross-cultural interaction
- Civic participation

**Indication of economic integration**

- Labour market participation
- Employment / unemployment rates
- Income
- Finding a job in one’s profession


When residents are more integrated into their communities, they are more likely to feel a sense of well being and belonging. Through integrating in their community, immigrants are contributing to the economic and social sustainability of the Capital Regional District.

**Newcomers contribute to their communities in many ways**

- Replacing and growing the otherwise declining population
- Decreasing the average age of the population
- Increasing educational enrollment rates
- Creating vibrant neighbourhoods
- Increasing Canada’s cultural diversity and fostering global citizenship and global perspective
- Responding to a need for skilled labour particularly for trades, agriculture, service industries and the retail sector
- Creating employment through entrepreneurship in their communities
- Volunteering in their areas of interest
- Investing in real estate and business and building our competitive edge in global markets
Greater Victoria
Local Immigration Partnership

Services that Support Newcomer Integration

Categories of services that support newcomer integration with examples of organizations and their programs in the Capital Regional District.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Center Society (VIRCS): Healthy Immigrant and Refugee Women
- Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA): Smiles First Dental Program

**LANGUAGE**
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): Translation and Interpretation Services
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC): English language training

**HOUSING**
- Canada Mortgage And Housing Corporation: Guide To Renting A House

**EMPLOYMENT**
- Welcome BC: Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) Program
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): Employment Service

**MULTICULTURALISM**
- Saanich Parks and Recreation: Moon Festival Lantern Celebration
- India Canada Cultural Association: India Mela Festival

**VOLUNTEERING**
- Volunteer Victoria: Youth Volunteer Connection Program
- Employer Volunteerism Program

**EDUCATION**
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): Educational Workshops and Training
- Camosun College: School of Access - Academic Upgrading Programs

**REFUGEE**
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): Sponsorship Agreement Holder
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Center Society (VIRCS): Newcomer Wraparound Support Program

**COMMUNITY SAFETY**
- Victoria Police (VICPD): Block Watch Crime-free Housing
- North Park Neighbourhood Association: Community Safety Committee

List of other organizations offering services to newcomers in the CRD

- Business Victoria
- Hireimmigrants
- STEP's Immigrants in Trades Training
- WelcomeBC
- BC International Professionals Network
- Embrace BC
- Together Against Poverty Society
- Read Society
- Greater Victoria Public Library
- Canadian Council for Refugees

This is not an exhaustive list. There are many organizations and programs supporting newcomer integration in the CRD. Part of the LIP strategy development process will include an on-line map that showcases as many of these supports as possible.

Developed by the Community Partnership Network, Local Immigration Partnership Team (part of the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria) and the Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community University Engagement (at UVic) with the support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Learn more on the ICA website: www.icavictoria.org.

Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership: The First 18 Months
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