

Building a More Welcoming & Inclusive Community

How The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College plan to work towards the inclusivity of international newcomers to the community.

February 2007



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▶▶ Acknowledgement

The City of Red Deer, Red Deer College and the research team would like to thank all international newcomers and employees of both institutions who took the time to participate in surveys and attend focus groups. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. Another big thank you goes to the local organizations and agencies that support international newcomers in the community. Your input to and guidance on the Welcoming & Inclusive Communities project was greatly appreciated.

▶▶ Foreword

The following report uses the term “international newcomer,” which refers to anyone living in Red Deer who was not born in Canada. The project name, “Welcoming & Inclusive Community,” describes an ideal where all international newcomers feel welcomed to the community through support services and resources. More than an organization and agency approach to inclusivity, the project aims to create a community approach that will celebrate and support the inclusion of international newcomers. The long term goal is to provide newcomers with a welcoming community where they feel at home.

Statements made in this report are based on the research gathered through interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, and may reflect perceived rather than actual conditions within the community.



▶▶▶ Executive Summary

The history of Red Deer, like that of Canada, is heavily influenced by immigration from all parts of the globe. While initial immigration advanced the settlement and establishment of the community, subsequent immigration continues to build Red Deer economically, socially and culturally.

As the “face” of the community becomes more ethnically diverse, organizations and agencies in Red Deer celebrate different cultures and build partnerships that support the needs of international newcomers. With increasing numbers of international newcomers, the resources of these agencies and groups are stretched.

To help guide and support a community approach to the integration of international newcomers, The City of Red Deer (The City) and Red Deer College (RDC) realized the need to first look at their own policies and practices. In June 2006 the two joined forces to research and evaluate the extent to which each institution was deemed “welcoming and inclusive.” Results of the study will be used to help The City and College to more effectively meet the needs of international newcomers. In addition, it is hoped the study’s recommendations will be a starting point for stakeholder dialogue aimed at creating a more welcoming and inclusive community in a community-based, collaborative manner.

Study Methodology and Methods

Employees and leaders of each institution were surveyed to understand the extent to which they felt equipped to provide services to international newcomers. The international newcomer community and service agencies were surveyed to learn the extent to which they feel welcome and served in their interactions with the two institutions. The responses provided insight into the perceived effectiveness of the services. A total of 326 people participated in the research process between June 1 and August 30, 2006.

Data Collection Methods

Three data collection strategies were used in the evaluation: focus groups, surveys and literature review.

Did you know?

Red Deer College anthropology instructor Dr. Richard Roth and his students were responsible for gathering data for the Welcoming & Inclusive Communities project.

The students also wrote the first draft of the report which was later summarized in this report.

Thanks to James Stanger, Moses Bonyi and Jennifer Voysey.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with City and College staff and leaders, international newcomers in the community, and members of various agencies.

Surveys

Open-ended or combined forced-choice/open-ended surveys were conducted with City and College employees, international newcomers in the community, and members of various agencies. Some surveys were completed in an interview format.

Literature Review

A best practice review of international newcomer services and supports in other Canadian municipalities was conducted. The current practices review focused on policy and service delivery.



Results

Overall, feedback was very positive. For the most part, City and College employees and leaders felt their institutions were making significant attempts to be welcoming and inclusive. From the perspective of international newcomers, there was an overall endorsement of the efforts that were being made by both institutions to serve their needs.

The research synthesized themes from the data into recommendations for The City and College.



Recommendations

◆ Core Recommendations to Build a More Welcoming & Inclusive Community

- Market a welcoming community for international newcomers
- Effectively distribute information to international newcomers
- Promote cultural diversity and understanding, and celebrate ethnic heritage in the community

◆ Recommendations Specific to The City of Red Deer

- Assist ethnic communities to find relevance within the social, political and cultural landscapes of Red Deer
- Become more welcoming and inclusive in specific public service delivery areas
- Advocate for additional resources for international newcomer support agencies
- Facilitate the development of adequate housing

◆ Recommendations Specific to Red Deer College

- Expand the College's International Centre's mandate and services
- Develop a policy regarding equity among students who have difficulty with English
- Become more welcoming and inclusive in specific service areas

◆ Recommendations for Continued Collaboration between The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College

- Facilitate a community-based initiative to provide coordinated delivery of English language and literacy skills for all international newcomers
- Work with agencies to offer enhanced cross-cultural education and training to the Red Deer community
- Offer community orientation sessions for international newcomers, including international students
- Work towards the inclusivity of other marginalized groups in Central Alberta
- Work with other orders of government and community stakeholders on immigration issues including professional credentials/educational equivalencies



▶▶ Recommendations & Responses

The research report recommendations were presented to Senior Administration at The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College. In both institutions, interdepartmental committees were established to review the recommendations. The responses contained in this report are the results of this review.

Sharing the recommendations with other relevant stakeholders in the community was identified as an immediate strategy by the project steering committee. Considerable potential exists for effective community collaboration that will enhance opportunities for international newcomers.

On February 5, 2007 The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College will host a meeting of a wide range of stakeholders including community institutions, social and economic partners, the business community, funders and other orders of government. The results of the research project will be shared, as will the considered response of the two organizations. Participants will be asked to share their experiences from within their organizations and discuss, with others, their vision for partnered and collaborative action within the community.



► **Core Recommendations to Build a More Welcoming & Inclusive Community**

I. Market a welcoming community for international newcomers.

The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College must work to build the type of community that international newcomers will choose to make their home. The institutions must also appropriately market themselves and the community to better attract and retain newcomers.

Research indicates newcomers arrive with a set of expectations – generated through marketing and informal channels – that may not hold true in reality. The findings suggest that when expectations are not met, newcomers leave the community and tell others of their disappointment.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Define a vision of diversity	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> RDC’s core value of inclusiveness emphasizes the importance of honouring diversity. RDC will determine a vision and definition for diversity. A Diversity Committee will work on an action plan based on that vision.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> Inclusion and diversity are inherent to The City’s Cornerstone Values and Guiding Principles. Additionally, the Strategic Plan identifies “community diversity” and the engagement of new Canadians. The Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2007. During this process, a more articulated vision of diversity will be developed. Early in 2007, The City will also extract a statement of diversity and inclusion from the foundation and planning documents that guide the organization, and communicate the statement internally and externally.</p>
Market Red Deer to potential immigrants	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> RDC has joined with The City, the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce and Red Deer County in Red Deer Regional Economic Development (RDRED). One of the issues for economic development is the attraction and support of international newcomers.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City’s Land & Economic Development department is already involved in marketing to international newcomers. This department manages The City’s role in RDRED and the Central Alberta Economic Partnership. Interdepartmental activity related to this research project and the connection to other community stakeholders will enhance current marketing strategies.</p> <p>The City is already committed to developing a relocation package in 2007 and will use the recommendations from this research project and community input in the development of this package.</p>
Form a Community Advisory Committee (CAC)	<p>◆ ◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> To discuss the potential of a Community Advisory Committee (CAC), including the composition, function and support of such a committee with other stakeholders in the community.</p>
Expand websites to aid in attraction	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The RDC website for international students, launched in 2004, has substantial information for international newcomers. The site is reviewed and updated each year.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> Departments have begun to review their web pages from the perspective of newcomer attraction and retention. An overall City website review is planned for 2007 and the recommendations related to attraction and retention will inform that review.</p> <p>◆ ◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> To explore increased linkages between the two websites to enhance information available for international newcomers. To pursue resources to undertake a collaborative translation project, involving a number of languages and a number of media, including website and written materials. Other stakeholders will be invited to participate.</p>



► **Core Recommendations to build a more Welcoming & Inclusive Community**

2. Effectively distribute information to international newcomers.

Although information regarding essential services in Red Deer and at Red Deer College is available, it is not always easily accessible to international newcomers. Many research respondents indicated newcomers feel they lack necessary information to successfully integrate into the community. Having information readily accessible will aid in attracting and retaining international newcomers. Knowledge and awareness increases the ability to participate more fully in a community.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Develop printed or web resources for employees</p>	<p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City uses tools, including an intranet and website, to help employees access City services information. New employees are given an orientation session and manual. A new intranet tool “Who do I call?” is expected to be launched on the external website. Several departments use technology to manage and direct citizen questions. The City is investigating similar technology to expand this function throughout the organization. All tools will be reviewed, enhanced or designed to ensure employees can respond to international newcomers.</p>
<p>Determine the languages spoken and age distribution of international newcomers</p>	<p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> In the 2007 City Census, a question will be asked relating to “language spoken at home.” The information will help plan community services. Information related to language, immigration and citizenship from the 2006 Federal Census will be available in November 2007. The City’s Community Researcher will assist in interpreting the data for use in the community.</p>
<p>Common language translation and improved distribution of information</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> A full pre-arrival package was designed and sent to new incoming international students in 05/06. The length of international student orientation was expanded and additional effort undertaken to invite international students to the College’s General Orientation.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An international employee mentorship program has been developed and will be formalized by the Personnel department in 2007. The City may engage community agencies or a CAC to assist. • Work with RDC and other stakeholders to pursue resources for a translation project. • Work with settlement service agencies and stakeholders to determine if and how The City could assist in distributing information to newcomers including possible tours of City facilities to talk about services. • Create a list of City speakers/presenters and initiate a stakeholder discussion to develop a community list of speakers for international newcomer and ethnic community groups. • Initiate a discussion about a collaborative human resource network for the spouses of international employees through the network of Human Resource Professionals and the stakeholder meeting. • English mentoring/tutoring will be explored. The Personnel department will investigate Second Language Training for employees. The City will assess other language options based on interest and resources. • Potentially create a diversity position. The evaluation of current work, commitment to the community and employees, and legislative analysis will be considered during budget 2008.
<p>Create a community interpreter list</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> RDC has a list of interpreters and will work in collaboration with Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) committee to expand their interpreter list.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City has an internal list of employees who speak languages other than English. Interpreters will be invited to have their names placed on the community list maintained by C.A.R.E.</p>
<p>Establish a single point of contact for international newcomers.</p>	<p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> Various non-profit agencies assist international newcomers to adjust to the community. Efforts will be made to direct newcomers to these agencies. The community also has other non-profit agencies assisting international newcomers to adjust to the community. All the agencies are stretched to their limits to meet the needs of the increased number of newcomers. The City, through the Social Planning department and in collaboration with other stakeholders, will assist agencies in obtaining appropriate resources, including financial and governmental policy support.</p>



► **Core Recommendations to build a more Welcoming & Inclusive Community**

3. Promote cultural diversity and understanding, and celebrate ethnic heritage in the community.
 The research indicates newcomers to Red Deer enjoy Canada’s multiculturalism. Respondents expressed appreciation for the ability to become part of Canadian society without having to sacrifice their cultural heritage and connection to their ethnic community. The City and College will be attuned to the dynamics of the ethnic diversity in Red Deer by interacting routinely with the ethno-cultural communities.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Increase community awareness of cultural diversity</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> Currently the International Centre at RDC develops special events twice a year: International Student Days (November) and International Education Week (February). International newcomers and new Canadians assist in programming these events, which are open to the public. In November 2005 the International Centre began publishing a newsletter to communicate more effectively with the rest of the College community. The newsletter recognizes and celebrates the international activities of faculty, staff and students.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City incorporates ethnic entertainment in many events such as Alexander Way celebrations and conferences. Through consultation with community agencies and ethno-cultural organizations The City will increase efforts to incorporate multicultural celebrations into City events. Similarly, when working with initiatives such as community festivals, The City will continue to encourage and support multicultural opportunities including Canada Day organized by the Red Deer Cultural Heritage Society.</p> <p>The City staff newsletter, Civic Spirit, recently featured articles about several ethno-cultural celebrations. The newsletter and the internal website will be used to provide information and highlight cultural celebrations to enhance the knowledge of the employees.</p>
<p>Enrich citizenship ceremonies</p>	<p>◆ ◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> Community stakeholders, including RDC and The City, are participating on a local committee for the Institute of Canadian Citizenship, which extends the function of citizenship ceremonies to include opportunities for new and established Canadians to talk about citizenship, and to celebrate this milestone for new Canadians.</p>
<p>Increase Red Deer College cultural diversity and encourage international newcomers to experience and learn Canadian culture.</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College has established the following strategic direction: “Create a dynamic environment that attracts and engages a diverse community of learners.” This includes aboriginal groups, international students and immigrant groups. Program and service areas will build strategies to accomplish this in their individual plans. • The International Coffee House program provides students a place to meet and practice language skills. Peer tutors are trained to work with ESL students. International Centre staff will review opportunities for connecting with ethnic communities. • The departments of Humanities and Social Sciences and Continuing Education have collaborated to twin an Anthropology class with an ESL class with the intent of helping international newcomers to better integrate into college and city life. In many cases, the interactions extended beyond course expectations and students continue to meet to work together, take part in activities or to build friendships. • The Central Alberta Diversity Association (CADA) and C.A.R.E. have been active contributors to course and program content at Red Deer College as requested by instructors. • The Red Deer International Education Alliance (RDIEA) is a partnership between the College, the Red Deer Public School Division and the Red Deer Catholic Regional Division. It was officially launched in December 2005. RDIEA, designed to foster cooperation among the three partners, provides a complete central Alberta profile for international educational services from kindergarten to post-secondary. • Continuing Education at the College has developed a series of courses to assist businesses to better understand the needs of international newcomers in the workplace and beyond. C.A.R.E. has been involved in this as a collaborating partner.



► **Recommendations Specific to The City of Red Deer**

1. Assist ethnic communities to find relevance within the social, political & cultural landscapes of Red Deer.
The research indicates a desire among certain ethnic communities to become more involved in civic participation and to have the ability to communicate their needs to local government.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Communicate regularly with ethno-cultural groups and help them feel a part of civil society</p>	<p><i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> City representatives will meet with leaders of the ethno-cultural groups for input on responding to the recommendations. The City will endeavour to engage the ethno-cultural groups in the 2007 civic election process.</p> <p>If a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is formed, The City will participate in this process to assist ethnic communities.</p>
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2. Devise strategies to become more welcoming and inclusive in specific public service delivery areas.
The research respondents identified a number of City departments and affiliates including the Recreation, Parks & Culture department, Red Deer Transit, RCMP, Emergency Services, and Red Deer Public Library. While the services were highlighted as a positive experience, respondents also had suggestions for change.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Create strategies to make services more inclusive and increase communication and marketing of these services</p>	<p><i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> In many cases, work is already underway to address the issues or ideas coming from the research. In a number of situations the research indicated that international newcomers lacked knowledge of certain services. Based on this, there may be a need for more communications and marketing.</p> <p>An interdepartmental committee of The City will prepare a checklist related to multi-cultural awareness, inclusivity and diversity. Representatives from the community will be consulted in preparing the checklist. Each department will use the checklist to do an internal review and consider what actions are required to improve the Department's approach and/or communicate what services and supports are in place.</p> <p>The City will use Brown Bag lunch sessions to improve communication internally and to provide appropriate learning opportunities including multi-cultural awareness and sensitivity.</p>
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► **Recommendations Specific to The City of Red Deer**

3. Advocate for resources for agencies that support international newcomers.

Community agencies providing settlement and related services are an asset. With increasing numbers of newcomers and the introduction of programs to address labour shortages (e.g. Foreign Worker program), the demand for services is greater than the capacity of the agencies. To stabilize newcomer families and communities, existing support agencies need to be adequately funded and equipped as the demand for their services intensifies.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Advocate for newcomer support agency resources</p>	<p><i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The Social Planning department will facilitate and support strategies to increase resources for the agencies. In the drive for additional resources, the department will collaborate with other City departments, orders of government, local funders, the private sector, community stakeholders and the agencies.</p> <p>The Red Deer and District Community Foundation Vital Signs project, which already involves The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College, and other evaluative initiatives will be used as a means of supporting collection and dissemination of information that will help agencies to better support funding requests.</p>
<p>Join the UNESCO Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination</p>	<p><i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City respects and supports the community agencies who are very deliberate in their work against racism and discrimination. The Social Planning department and the RCMP participate in a coalition of agencies, churches, and citizens in Red Deer who established the Anti-Racism Response Fund (AARF) to quickly and effectively respond to racially-related incidents as they arise.</p> <p>The City is examining the possibility of joining the Canadian Coalition Against Racism and Discrimination. The decision to engage will largely be determined by the staff resources required to participate and the impact of the Coalition requirements on available City and local resources.</p> <p>The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association has prepared a toolkit available for municipal response to racism and discrimination, and The City will use the tools that are appropriate.</p>

4. Facilitate the development of adequate housing.

Finding affordable housing in Red Deer is increasingly difficult for newcomers, as well as for long term residents. Property price increases and decreased rental vacancies are a substantial barrier to newcomer retention. Red Deer may attract new immigrants because of the job market but if newcomers cannot find a place to live, they will not stay.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Facilitate the provision of adequate housing for varied budgets</p>	<p><i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City is engaged with the community and the other orders of government in addressing the housing issues on a variety of fronts. The City participates in the Red Deer Housing Committee, a long-standing multi-sector committee that monitors the status of housing in the community. The Committee also researches, communicates, and initiates planning related to housing from homelessness to affordable housing. This group is involved in the development of a Community Housing Plan, the Cold Weather Response and engaging with MLA Mary Anne Jablonski in the potential housing development on the Michener Services site. The City facilitates these initiatives as required.</p> <p>The City provides leadership through the Mayor’s Task Force on Ending Homelessness and in the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy that considers the municipal role through the relevant departments in the provision of affordable housing in the community.</p>
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► **Recommendations Specific to Red Deer College**

1. Market Red Deer College as a prime destination for international students.

With its goals of internationalization, community-building and inclusiveness, Red Deer College could become a model of inclusivity for other institutions and organizations. The College must appropriately market itself to become established as one of Canada’s prime destinations for international students, acknowledging the enhanced level of service required to build and maintain this reputation.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Celebration of diversity	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> Red Deer College has established a Diversity Committee to support the goal of creating a campus where sensitivity and respect are encouraged and demonstrated by increasing awareness and celebration of diversity on the Red Deer College campus.</p>
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2. Expand the International Centre’s mandate and services.

The International Centre provides services to new Canadians that they are not mandated to provide. New Canadians form a growing segment of the College population and, based on report recommendations, should be formally recognized. International newcomer services should be officially consolidated as a significant step towards integrating international and immigrant students at the College.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Include new Canadians and international students in the International Centre strategic plan	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The inclusion of new Canadians in the services offered by the International Centre will be reviewed and discussed when updating the Red Deer College Strategic Plan for Internationalization in January 2007. Discussions will include resource and funding implications.</p>
Explore government funding opportunities to better equip the International Centre to meet the needs of new Canadians	<p>The College will investigate the potential of clustering or co-locating similar services such as the International Centre and some student support services to meet the needs of international students and new Canadians more effectively.</p>
Ensure the location of the International Centre is well known	<p>The College will work more closely with community agencies providing settlement services and support for new Canadians in order to develop an interface for providing effective service to new Canadian students.</p>
Create a mentor program aimed at international newcomer students	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> In 2006, the College launched a pilot project called “Connectors.” New students are matched with a College staff member who acts as a resource and provides support. International students in targeted programs are included in the College’s Connectors program. In 2007 the program will be expanded to cover all students in credit programs.</p> <p>Student volunteers provide peer support to new international students by attending the international student orientation session, connecting with the new students and providing friendship and support during their transition to College life. Staff will explore additional mentoring and matching opportunities for international students.</p>
Implement an international faculty exchange program	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The International Centre will review resources and support for faculty exchange programs.</p>



► **Recommendations Specific to Red Deer College**

3. Develop a policy regarding equity among students who have difficulty with English.
Instructors working with students who have difficulty with English reported they are often unsure of the proper procedure for instruction, evaluation and equity for these students, resulting in inconsistency from classroom to classroom.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Develop a college policy regarding equity in the classroom and standards regarding the evaluation of students with ESL in the classroom.	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> Red Deer College will plan professional development sessions for faculty on working with international students. The sessions will build awareness and start a dialogue on how to support international students in the classroom. The College will explore a review of the admissions process with a view to promoting student success when a student's first language is not English.</p> <p>College staff will contact other institutions throughout Canada to determine the range of options currently practiced when working with ESL students who need academic accommodations. Staff will then explore ways to apply the information at the College.</p>
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4. Devise Strategies to become more welcoming and inclusive in specific service areas.
Suggestions for improvements in specific areas were highlighted by research participants. The areas identified include the international differential fee, promotion of services, the Bookstore, the College Library, Student Success Services, Intramural Recreation, Food Services, Residence, Childcare, Information Technology Services, Arts Centre and the English as a Second Language Program.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Create strategies to be more welcoming and inclusive in service areas	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The Bookstore plans to order a greater variety of dictionaries and other materials appropriate for ESL students. The Human Resources department supports non-discrimination in hiring and welcomes applications from all qualified candidates. The department plans to evolve recruitment material to more specifically attract and welcome a diverse pool of applicants. Several areas of the College will explore training to assist staff in working more effectively with international students and new Canadians (student support, counselors, child care workers, instructors).</p>
Develop courses to attract and retain international newcomers, and move toward advanced skill level programs and degree granting	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> Red Deer College is developing plans for degree-granting in Business and Arts. Degree granting is an opportunity to consider student outcomes that reflect global and intercultural competencies. The College will offer a global citizenship course beginning in September 2007 and is renewing efforts to internationalize the curriculum. The College is planning additional programs (English for Academic Purposes, English for the Workplace) that will contribute to attracting and retaining international newcomers while providing cross-cultural education and awareness to the community.</p>
Review issues raised by RDC ESL students (services, testing, marginalization)	<p><i>Red Deer College Response:</i> RDC Continuing Education staff will initiate discussions to explore ESL student concerns regarding marginalization, clarify student issues and look for the best solutions. Continuing Education staff will continue to work with C.A.R.E. on the transition of new Canadian ESL students. International Centre staff will explore the relationship between services for new Canadians and international students.</p> <p>The College is streamlining the placement test for ESL and working with community agencies to coordinate referral for appropriate services for students.</p>



► **Recommendations for continued collaboration between The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College**

1. Facilitate a community-based initiative to provide coordinated delivery of English language and literacy skills for all newcomers in the community.

One of the primary barriers to integration for international newcomers is language. Some do not have a basic understanding of English or may be lacking basic literacy skills.

Training offered through various institutions and agencies in Red Deer responds to varied English language abilities. Research respondents indicated gaps in service currently include basic literacy, literacy for professionals who derive from non-Latin alphabet regions, spousal and family ESL, and workplace-related ESL.

Financial limitations restrict some international newcomers from obtaining the language training they need to further their education, seek professional accreditation or attain employment. Coordinated English language skill opportunities for all newcomers will significantly enhance the integration of newcomers as participating members of the community. Building on the quality services currently provided, The City and Red Deer College can have a significant role in coordinating improved literacy and ESL programming for Red Deer.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Explore and encourage a coordinated, community approach to ESL delivery</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The College has done some work with community agencies to identify gaps in ESL programming. College staff are participating on a community Literacy Task Force to address ESL literacy needs. The College is exploring workplace needs for English language training.</p>
<p>Ensure ESL training is accessible and includes appropriate literacy programs</p>	<p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The issue will be raised at the 2007 stakeholder meeting to determine potential partners in this initiative. The City will participate through relationships with RDC, community agencies, Red Deer Public Library and others to initiate the discussion and determine the lead organizations. Meetings with the funders of ESL will include identifying current assets and the steps to develop a coordinated and comprehensive system.</p>
<p>Create Red Deer centred ESL course material to provide relevant civic education</p>	

2. Work with existing agencies to offer enhanced community cross-cultural education and training.

The research indicated international newcomers feel discriminated against and employees of both institutions do not feel fully equipped to interact cross-culturally.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Develop community cross-cultural education and training courses, workshops and programs; share the information with stakeholders</p>	<p>◆ ◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> The community agencies, particularly C.A.R.E. and CADA are significant providers of cross-cultural education and awareness, and currently provide many hours of service to diverse sectors of the community. As part of advocating for increasing resources for the community agencies, The City and RDC will engage other stakeholders in the discussion to build on this community strength.</p> <p>Communication and marketing of the cross-cultural training services will be required but the potential of increased demand for service must be balanced with the resources to expand.</p>
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► **Recommendations for continued collaboration between The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College**

3. Offer community orientation sessions for international newcomers.

The purpose of orientation sessions is to introduce international newcomers to Red Deer and provide them with the information they need to integrate into the community. Sessions could be conducted in various languages.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Consult with support agencies and examine gaps and needs in international newcomer orientation	<p>◆◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> Organizations such as Catholic Social Services, C.A.R.E. and the Central Alberta Immigrant Women’s Association provide orientation and settlement support to international newcomers. The City and Red Deer College will consult with the community agencies providing settlement services, other stakeholders and employers of international newcomers regarding the specific assets, gaps and needs from their perspective.</p> <p>The 2007 stakeholder meeting will explore the need, organizational capacity and shared responsibility in building on the quality work currently undertaken by the settlement services.</p>
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4. Collaborate and work towards the inclusivity of other marginalized groups in Central Alberta.

The research tools used for this study could be modified to examine the extent to which inclusivity is achieved with other demographic groups in Central Alberta.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

Work toward the inclusivity of other marginalized groups	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The involvement of local students in such projects is an invaluable opportunity to enrich their educational experience. The College will explore opportunities to collaborate further with The City.</p> <p>◆◆ <i>The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College Response:</i> The City is involved in or has access to significant research related to marginalized populations in the community. Both RDC and The City are involved in the Red Deer and District Community Foundation Vital Signs Project which will serve to inform future research directions. The City will explore opportunities to collaborate further with the College.</p>
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► **Recommendations for continued collaboration between The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College**

5. Work with other levels of government and community stakeholders on immigration issues including professional credentials/educational equivalencies.

A barrier to feeling welcomed in the community may be related to Canadian Citizenship and federal/provincial immigration policies.

Recommended Actions & Responses:

<p>Lobby for a Red Deer immigration office or officer</p>	<p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City, with settlement service agencies and other stakeholders, will examine the potential for a Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) office or representative in Red Deer. The current community initiative with the Institute of Canadian Citizenship provides an opportunity for starting the discussion with the Government of Canada.</p>
<p>Engage in provincial and national efforts aimed at determining the Canadian equivalency for and recognition of foreign education and credentials</p>	<p>◆ <i>Red Deer College Response:</i> The College collaborates with the International Qualifications Assessment Service. College staff will participate in at least one workshop each year regarding recognition of foreign credentials and will continue to participate in initiatives in collaboration with the International Qualifications Assessment Service.</p> <p>◆ <i>The City of Red Deer Response:</i> The City will explore the current level of activity related to equivalency for and recognition of foreign education and credentials with settlement service agencies and other stakeholders to determine appropriate City action.</p>



▶▶ Conclusion

International newcomers are making increasingly important contributions to the diversity and growth of our community – economically, socially and culturally. The City of Red Deer and Red Deer College are committed to further explore and pursue the recommendations contained in this report. We also encourage members of the community to engage in thought about how each one of us can support an ethnically diverse Red Deer.

If your organization would like to be involved in building a more welcoming and inclusive Red Deer, please contact:

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