

Backgrounder

March 4, 2019

Introduction

This backgrounder is intended to provide summary information related to the Welcoming and Inclusive New West (WINS) Local Immigration Partnership Council (previously known as the WINS Working Group and the WINS Community Partnership Table). It provides an overview of the changing face of New Westminister, the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP), the Welcoming Communities Program (WCP) and the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative.

Changing Face of New Westminister

New Westminister is experiencing significant growth and development. In 2016, the city had a population of 70,996; which represented a 7.6% increase since 2011.

New Westminister is also becoming increasingly diverse. Between 2006 and 2011, increases to the immigrant population comprised 61.3% of total population growth and between 2011 and 2016, increases to the immigrant population comprised 69.7% of total population growth.



In 2016, 34.3% of the population was comprised of immigrants, with 14.4% of immigrants having less than five years of Canadian residency. Between 2011 and 2016, the top three source countries for immigrants were the Philippines (23.3%), China and Hong Kong (13.3%) and India (9.1%). In 2017 and 2018, about 7.0% of refugee claimants settled in New Westminister.

In 2016, 38.9% of the population reported visible minority status and 34.7% of the population reported a mother tongue other than English or French. Of those who speak an unofficial language at home, the top five languages were: Mandarin (7.3%), Tagalog (4.9%), Punjabi (4.0%), Cantonese (3.8%) and Korean (2.9%).

Settlement and Integration Challenges

Based on the *New Westminister Immigrant and Refugee Survey Report and Action Plan (2014)*, which involved 224 respondents, recent immigrants and refugees face a number of settlement and integration challenges, including locating or securing:



- employment and training (70%);
- housing (53%);
- information about available services (39%);
- child care (30%);
- English language services (10%); and
- school for their children (10%).¹

This report provides evidence of increasing awareness and use of civic, settlement and social service organizations in New Westminster. It also provides evidence of enhanced satisfaction levels with the services offered by these organizations. The major service gap, as identified by respondents, is a Welcome and Integration Centre, which could offer centralized information, meeting and program spaces, and referral services.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program

In June 2007, the Province of British Columbia announced Welcome BC. As part of this initiative, a new program entitled Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces (WICWP) was launched. The primary goal of this program was to work towards communities where immigrants can realize their full potential, racism is eliminated, and cultural diversity is valued and celebrated.

As a first step to becoming a more welcoming and inclusive community, a representative body was established – i.e., the Welcoming and Inclusive New West (WINS) Working Group. The first task of this body was to develop a Community Partnership Development (CPD) Charter, which incorporated a shared vision, indicators of success, and a preliminary action plan.

Based on the charter, the working group gained funding approval for *Reach Out New West: Greet, Inform and Connect*. This demonstration project included a Community Gateway (Welcome Ambassador) Initiative (Greet), a Newcomers' Guide to New Westminster (Inform) and an Immigrant Mentorship Program (Connect). Two other initiatives were also funded – i.e., a *NuYu (Cultural Youth) Popular Theatre Project* and a *Changing City, Changing Minds through Knowledge Development and Exchange*.

The WICWP involved multiple agencies, which contributed to increased agency collaboration and enhanced service coordination. The funded initiatives complemented each other and assisted new immigrants to more successfully integrate into the community. They also raised community awareness about the challenges faced by new immigrants and the benefits of immigration, which contributed to a more receptive, welcoming and inclusive community.



¹ In most cases, respondents identified more than one challenge, thus the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Welcoming Communities Program

In August 2012, the Province of British Columbia posted a Request for Proposals for the Welcoming Communities Program (WCP). The purpose of this program was to “increase the capacity of the community to support the integration of new immigrants.”

Whereas WICWP was primarily focused on new immigrants and assisting them in their integration, WCP primarily focused on the host or recipient community, including community members, employers, institutions, and organizations. More specifically, it was designed to raise awareness, enhance intercultural relations and reduce systemic barriers to inclusion.



The WINS Working Group, now the WINS Community Partnership Table, selected the Lower Mainland Purpose Society as the Lead Organization. It then developed a Community Action Plan, which was funded for \$267,000. This plan, which involved multiple organizations in its implementation, was carried out between April 2013 and March 2014 and included activities and events under the following three areas: Inclusive Workplaces, Welcoming Spaces, and Receptive Communities.

Specific outcomes under the three broad areas included but were not limited to:

- To increase awareness of the needs, opportunities and contributions of new immigrants.
- To build intercultural relations and mutual trust.
- To create more welcoming public spaces.
- To enhance recruitment, hiring and retention practices related to new immigrants.
- To increase capacity to support the integration of new immigrants in organizations and workplaces.
- To reduce systemic barriers to organizational inclusion and employment for new immigrants.

Similar to WICWP, plan implementation contributed to agency collaboration and service coordination, while realizing a more receptive, welcoming and inclusive community.

Local Immigration Partnership Initiative



In Canada’s Budget of April 2012, the federal government announced that it would resume the administration of federally funded immigrant settlement services in British Columbia on April 1, 2014.

Currently, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) administers Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) across Canada. LIPs are the mechanism through which IRCC supports the development of community-based partnerships and planning around the needs of new immigrants and

- New Westminster Schools;
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society;
- Spirit of the Children;
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.;
- Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op; and
- Western Society for Children

Contacts

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