

Backgrounder

July 2016

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 Partnerships Program (LIPs).

Changing Face of New Westminister

In 2013, New Westminister had a population of 68,280. By 2021, the population is projected to increase to 79,061, and by 2031, the population is projected to increase to 92,098. Immigration is a significant driver of population growth. Between 2006 and 2011, increases to the immigrant population comprised 61.3% of total population growth in New Westminister.

New Westminister is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2011, 33.4% of the population was comprised of immigrants, with 21.0% of immigrants having less than five years of Canadian residency. In both 2010 and 2012, about 5% of Government Assisted Refugees entering British Columbia settled in New Westminister. In 2011, 34.8% of the population reported visible minority status and 3.2% of the population reported Aboriginal identity.



In 2011, 32.8% of the population reported a mother tongue other than English or French. Of this population, the top five mother tongues were: Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) (19.5%), Filipino (Tagalog) (11.9%), Punjabi (11.8%), Spanish (5.1%) and Korean (4.8%)

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.



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 is primarily focused on the host or recipient community, including community members, employers, institutions and organizations. More specifically, it is designed to raise awareness, enhance intercultural relations and reduce systemic barriers to inclusion.

The WIN Working Group, now the WIN 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.

The Table (now the Local Immigration Partnerships Council) included representatives from the following organizations, as well as community members.

- City of New Westminster;
- Century House;
- Douglas College;
- Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association;
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver;
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver;
- Fraser Works Co-Op Employment Services Centre;
- Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia;
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society;
- Ministry of Children and Family Development;
- MOSAIC;
- New Westminster Chamber of Commerce;
- New Westminster English Language Centre;
- New Westminster Family Place;
- New Westminster Public Library;
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society;
- School District #40 (New Westminster);
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.;
- Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op; and
- Western Society for Children.



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

Local Immigration Partnerships Program



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. Since this announcement, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (now Immigrants, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) and the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training have completed a transition plan.

Currently, IRCC administers Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in a number of Provinces. LIPs are the mechanism through which IRCC supports the development of community-based partnerships and planning around the needs of new immigrants. LIPs seek to engage various stakeholders in a locally-driven strategic planning process, including different levels of government, boards of trade and chambers of commerce, community and social service sectors, employers, ethno-cultural groups, faith-based organizations, and school boards. LIPs are steered by broad-based partner-

ship councils comprised of key community organizations. The partnership council's main goal is to oversee the development of a local settlement strategy and targeted action plan to produce a more welcoming and inclusive community.

The WINS Local Immigration Partnership Council developed a proposal under LIPs and IRCC announced in April 2014 that this proposal has been approved. The proposal included the following deliverables:

- develop a Five-Year Strategic Plan;
- develop a Local Settlement Strategy;
- conduct research and planning related to a Welcome and Integration Centre; and
- prepare an Evaluation Plan.

This work is now underway, and enables the Council to build on the solid foundation that it has established; continue its work on creating a receptive, welcoming and inclusive community; and facilitate agency collaboration and service integration. This will benefit both the host/receiving community and new immigrants.

Contacts

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