

## SPECIAL EDITION: Local Immigration Partnerships

*This special edition of Migration Matters explores the role of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in coordinating support and planning for newcomers in specific communities and an update on LIP activities across the Province of BC. More information for LIPs can be found on AMSSA's resource page on [Local Immigration Partnerships](#).*

### Introduction

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are collaborations funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to coordinate local community stakeholders in a community partnership model. LIPs are designed to:

- Foster a systematic approach to engage service provider organizations (SPOs) and other institutions to integrate newcomers
- Support community-based knowledge-sharing and local strategic planning; and,
- Improve coordination of effective services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration.

LIPs do not provide direct services to newcomers. LIPs are typically structured with a secretariat housed in a local organization such as a regional or municipal administration, a settlement agency, or another community organization. LIPs include many different types of organizations amongst their membership, such as settlement agencies, municipalities and other levels of government, school boards, employers, health care providers, universities, civil society groups, police services, ethnic or religious organizations, and others.<sup>1</sup>

### Areas of focus

LIPs provide a framework for communities to develop and implement work which supports local community needs and the successful integration of newcomers into the local community. Work emerging from LIPs focuses on a wide range of issues depending on local needs and priorities, including employment, language training, housing, health care, social inclusion, settlement services, immigrant retention, transportation, and more.<sup>2</sup>

### Outcomes

Previous research on LIPs has shown that they support engagement and capacity through:<sup>3</sup>

- Expanding the number of partners engaged in newcomer settlement and integration;
- Gathering expertise of various actors and conducting research to identify needs and priorities; and,
- Leveraging financial and other external resources to support initiatives to address immigration and integration-related local needs.

### References

- <sup>1,3,4</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2014). [Local Immigration Partnerships: Outcomes 2008-2013](#).  
<sup>2,5</sup> Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2013). [Local Immigration Partnerships](#). Powerpoint presentation at the WelcomeBC Regional Meetings.



LIPs have also been found to contribute to a number of positive outcomes including:<sup>4</sup>

- Improving the coordination of services, which in turn facilitates access to services for newcomers;
- Building more welcoming communities by meaningfully engaging non-settlement organizations in newcomer issues; and,
- Informing community planning to ensure the needs of newcomers are represented in program planning and funding decisions.

The LIPs model allows partnership tables to develop and build flexible strategic plans which can be altered to fit local contexts, needs, and priorities. LIPs Partnership Tables can function across a variety of geographic scales, demographic profiles, integration goals, and service landscapes.<sup>5</sup>

### Research on LIPs

- Bradford, N. and Andrew, C. (2010). [Local Immigration Partnership Councils: A Promising Canadian Innovation](#). Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Welcoming Communities Initiative (2012). [Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Priorities and Directions](#). Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Welcoming Communities Initiative (2012). [Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Promising Practices](#). Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Welcoming Communities Initiative (2012). [LIP-Municipal Interactions and CIC's Strategic Interests](#). Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

## LIPs in BC

In 2014, IRCC began funding 19 LIPs across the Province of BC in the following communities:

- Burnaby
- Campbell River
- Central Okanagan
- Chilliwack
- Delta
- Fort St. John and area
- Fraser Valley
- Greater Victoria
- Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows
- Mission and area
- New Westminster
- North Vancouver and area
- Prince George and Williams Lake
- Richmond
- South Okanagan | Similkameen
- Surrey
- Tri-cities
- Vancouver
- Vernon

In May 2016, AMSSA invited BC LIPs to share an update on their activities and progress for the benefit of the rest of the sector. Responses received are presented below. Further information can be found in the links provided and at AMSSA's resource web page on [Local Immigration Partnerships](#). *Please note that the activities and initiatives reported by the LIPs below were funded by a variety of partners in accordance with the LIP model.*

### BC LIP Updates: May/June 2016

#### South Okanagan | Similkameen LIP

The [South Okanagan | Similkameen LIP](#) compiled a regional snapshot related to immigration and integration in the region which was used to inform the LIP's strategic plan. The [strategic plan](#), adopted in March 2015, identifies three key conditions that the LIP seeks to influence:

- Attract and sustain newcomers that meet the workforce and business opportunities of the region.
- Ensure programs and networks are in place to support newcomers.
- Increase awareness of what newcomers contribute to the region and what the region can contribute to newcomers.

Working groups for each condition will develop indicators, identify partners, identify funding and other opportunities, and promote community engagement. The LIP recently held a Welcoming Communities Summit event to reach out to the community with information and directives that all members of the community can influence and to build an inclusive environment for learning, discussion, and growth.

#### Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership

The [Fraser Valley Diversity and Immigration Partnership](#) is mandated to formulate a strategy for newcomer integration in the Fraser Valley and work towards its implementation.

Through strategic planning and collaborative leadership, the Partnership creates and coordinates a range of activities and events that make life better for immigrants and communities as a whole.

The Partnership Council has chosen three focus areas, each of which has a working group:

- Social integration
- Research, policy and practice
- Labour market integration

The Partnership recently created a Strategy and Action Plan for 2015-16 with clear goals, identification of context and existing strengths, strategies, expected outcomes, and measurements of success.

#### Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Katzie LIPs Council

The [Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Katzie](#) LIPs Council, as part of the priorities that came out of its research and strategic planning, has begun the planning and coordination of the creation of 'welcome packages' and a Newcomer Hub that will be located in the Maple Ridge Library and local HUB out of an elementary school. A third priority that was added late is support for refugees. The Council will then begin strategizing for the arrival of second destination refugees most likely in the coming fall.

To date the LIPs Council has created an asset map available on its new website that will add service providers and newcomers in navigating services and programs in our communities. They have also created a brochure of programs and services and a map with their locations on the back. A newsletter is currently being created and will be available online for services providers to connect with each other and learn about current trends and training opportunities.

The LIPs Council also are creating a Newcomer Advisory Committee that will aid them in their deliverables, initiatives and the work they do individually. This committee will meet formally for the first time in July.

### Fort St. John LIP

[Fort St. John LIP](#) was formed in June, 2014. After preliminary meetings and the development of the Fort St John's LIP Council Terms of Reference for the partnership, the first formal meeting was held in September, 2014.

At present, the FSJ LIP Council consists of 14 members, who represent local stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in newcomer integration process. The members represent service providers such as the WorkBC, Fort St. John Literacy Society and Settlement Workers in Schools, as well as the Northern Health, the City, the Credit Union, RCMP, Northern Lights College, Pan-African Caribbean Association and others. Also on board are two major employers in the British Columbia's North Eastern region.

The main achievements of the FSJ LIP since the start of the project are:

- A research project on assets and gaps in the community was conducted as a foundation to build its strategic plan.
- Information packages for newcomers and employers were prepared by researchers and are being distributed in the community.
- The LIP website has been established, thoroughly updated and is upgraded to make it mobile-friendly.
- An additional in-depth research on feasibility of Multicultural Brokerage in Fort St John is in process.

### Vernon LIP Council

The [Local Immigration Partnership Council](#) in Vernon has just launched the implementation of the City of Vernon's Settlement and Immigration Strategy. A number of action teams have begun working on initiatives such as: a joint marketing strategy between local employers; the development of an ambassador's program; grant applications for multicultural festivals; and policy development regarding foreign credentials. A variety of community champions have come forward to take the lead on our action teams including: the City of Vernon; Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce; the Downtown Vernon Association; and Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society.

It is an exciting time for the community as they begin to see how the research and strategy development translates into concrete actions and outcomes.

### Community Collaboration Table—Richmond

Richmond's [Community Collaboration Table](#) (CCT) has continued to gain support from local stakeholders and consists of over 30 community partners. The CCT is in the process of finalizing its settlement strategy and action plan (July 2016). The CCT has conducted extensive community research from newcomers, community organizations, and CCT members.

To update and identify themes and emerging issues from its initial research report, they recently concluded a final round of focus groups which interviewed close to 100 immigrants. Additionally, with the assistance of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, the CCT has created a comprehensive community services inventory and database of programs and services for newcomers as well as community services survey.

In the upcoming implementation phase, the CCT hopes to work on action plan items that include further outreach and recruitment from employers, fostering community connections, coordinate service delivery and promote service accessibility.

### Delta LIP

Building upon the accomplishments of its two first years of existence, the [Delta LIP initiative](#), led by Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) with the support and guidance of Council members, is entering a new exciting phase to develop and implement the Immigrant Settlement Strategy and Action Plan that fits the needs of immigrant newcomers in Delta. The following are key accomplishment of the DLIP program:

- Setting up a 'Partnership Council table,' which includes representatives of 16 local agencies.
- Established 'Socio-economic', 'Child and Youth', 'Health, and Research Working Groups which provide expert advice to DLIP Council.
- Undertaking [Community Assets Mapping](#) and [Research activities](#) that identified newcomers' needs, services utilized, existing gaps in services and recommendations to improve collaboration and service delivery.
- Launch of a Community Forum attended by 60 representatives from local agencies and members of diverse communities of Delta. It provided a space for community consultations, networking and learning about immigrant newcomer needs, and ways to promote their successful integration within the community.
- A strategic planning workshop was facilitated and main priorities selected for the development of the Immigrant Settlement and Action Plan.
- Four Working Groups met several times to address the priorities related to pre-arrival services, centralized point of services, employment and health.
- An 'Immigrant Advisory Committee' was established to support the work of Council members.
- Supporting and connecting organizations and individuals sponsoring Syrian refugees in Delta.

## Vancouver Immigration Partnership

The [Vancouver Immigration Partnership](#) (VIP) initiative aims to improve the settlement and integration experiences of immigrants and refugees living in Vancouver. Since 2014, 120 representatives from 72 organizations worked together to develop the New Start Strategy which sets out a range of priority actions for improvement in four areas: 1. Enhancing Access to Services; 2. Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement; 3. Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces; and 4. Government and Public Institutions Addressing Needs. The Strategy was completed in April 2016 and VIP will be working with diverse partners to implement these actions.

Highlights from VIP include:

- The [Vancouver Immigrant Survey](#) – captured the perspectives of 1,800 immigrants living and working in Vancouver and informed the development of the New Start Strategy.
- [Partnership with Passages Canada](#) - VIP partnered with Passages Canada, a national online story archive, to collect stories from Vancouver immigrants and refugees about their experiences settling in the City. These firsthand accounts draw an intimate portrait of the newcomer experiences which in turn contribute to a greater understanding of the city's rich cultural diversity and heritage.
- [The Belonging Project](#) – produced in partnership with the Immigrant Service Society of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver, the Belonging Video Project asked the question, “What does it take to belong in Vancouver?” This was answered through a series of intimate portraits of Vancouver residents sharing their struggles and strategies for belonging.
- [NewKids Vancouver](#) – Sparked from a discussion between two VIP members, the Vancouver Police Department and the Vancouver School Board, the initiative supports newcomer youth to develop a sense of identity and belonging through education, awareness around law enforcement and mentorship.

## Mission LIP

With the influx of 24 refugees/permanent residents from the Congo and Syria into our community in a very short time span, the [Mission LIP](#) experienced new challenges and opportunities to build strategies to improve the settlement experience in the community. A big part of what worked is the LIP's engagement with faith-based groups in the community who were already involved in a family settlement project.

The LIP-led refugee readiness forum held in late January was attended by 150 people who shared how they were willing to participate and to provide support for our newcomers. By leveraging the passion of the faith groups in Mission, the level of support for new refugees/permanent residents in the community is certainly looking promising.

The Mission LIP has built a working group to focus on refugee readiness. This task force (LIP sub group) will help in identifying sources of and offer provision of reasonably-priced accommodations, furnishings, employment information, transportation and educational (language) opportunities for newcomers.

Of course the LIP's responsibility is not only to refugee efforts. Its focus also remains on the newcomers who arrive in the community through conventional settlement channels. For example, finding employment continues to be difficult in Mission. Two thirds of Mission's population commutes outside the community to work. Developing jobs locally and having immigrants tapped into a local network is an admirable goal, but the LIP is looking to developing access to employment opportunities in rural communities to the east of us on the north side of the Fraser River, specifically in the farming, hospitality and light industry sectors.

## Surrey LIP

In June 2016, the [Surrey LIP](#) released both the 3-year [Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy](#) and the [Surrey LIP Progress Report](#). The 2016-2019 Strategy includes five strategic directions, 20 objectives, and over 80 actions, while the 2014 -2016 Progress Report identifies the eight main objectives of the first phase of the Surrey LIP:

- Enhance community knowledge of issues
- Enhance community collaboration capacity
- Increase participation of mainstream agencies and businesses
- Improve immigrant access to leadership / civic engagement opportunities
- Increase municipal engagement
- Improve newcomer access to services
- Increase local academic capacity
- Enhance community capacity to make Surrey more welcoming and inclusive

In the first two years, the majority of the LIP's activities have been focused on the first two objectives: enhancing community knowledge on newcomer-related issues, and improving community collaboration capacity while developing the Strategy.

In order to meet these objectives, four major community-based research projects were completed, with findings disseminated through the Surrey LIP newsletters, fact sheets, website, and regular e-updates. These research findings informed the development of the Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy.

In the fall of 2016, a Surrey Refugee Settlement Strategy will be finalized and published.

## Welcoming and Inclusive New West (WINS) LIP Council

The [LIP Council](#) has set the direction for the next few years with a Community Settlement Plan consisting of a [Strategic Action Plan](#) (prioritizing Settlement, Employment, Community Inclusion and Receptivity, and Support); an Action Plan of Activities; and a Collaborative Agreement that identifies common ground so local organizations can work together more effectively.

Five Working Groups of community and council members have been developed to focus on:

- Employment and Employers
- Funding
- Communication
- Belonging and Community Receptivity
- Settlement Strategy

Some specific activities for this year include:

- A campaign to dispel myths, end stereotyping and embrace immigration
- A cross-cultural campaign to develop acceptance and mutual respect (based on reflections from a February 2016 newcomer focus group )
- A No Wrong Door policy
- Easing navigation and developing awareness of employment resources to all stakeholders (in partnership with Work BC and other agencies)
- A mentorship campaign for source populations
- Establishing a Housing Working Group
- Developing social media usage

The Council continues to be involved in other areas such the concern around access to health care, planning a one-stop shop where services and information can be housed in a centralized location, and developing community support for refugees.

## Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table

The Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table (BIPT) LIP recently released its three year [Strategic Plan](#) 2016-2019 highlighting four key priorities in the ongoing work to systematically improve settlement circumstances and experiences for newcomers:

- Access to Information
- Employment
- Intercultural Connections
- Cultural Representation and Civic Engagement

This Plan consolidated two years of research and dialogue with newcomers, community leaders, employers, immigrant and refugee serving organizations and community agencies conducted using surveys, focus groups, web scans and consultations.

This year's planned activities will focus on the two key strategic priorities of Employment and Intercultural Connections. The Plan has been shared with members of the BIPT LIP, the Immigrant Advisory Council and also released in the local press such as [Burnaby Now](#) for communication with the local community. BIPT Members' working groups have been formed and the commitment of important stakeholders has been secured for 'Employer Engagement' and 'Developing Intercultural Connections'. BIPT LIP participated in a recent Business Expo organized by the Burnaby Board of Trade and presented employment solutions for increasing newcomers' labour attachment to attending business organizations. The goal was also to develop partnerships and engage employers in this work.

A community forum is planned for September this year to share the strategic plan and implementation updates. The goal is to build additional synergies with local service providers and to collect inputs from the attendees regarding possible next steps in the second half of the year. This will be a networking opportunity to learn about best practices and coordinate next steps.

## Central Okanagan LIP

On June 20th, The [Central Okanagan Local Immigration Partnership](#) (COLIP) celebrated World Refugee Day. The intent was to celebrate refugees' strength, and raise awareness of the many refugees that live in the Central Okanagan and the contributions they make to our communities. In increasing awareness of the journeys many of these individuals and families face adjusting to life in the Central Okanagan, the community is better able to recognize what it can do to improve their quality of life and make them feel more welcome. Attendees were fortunate enough to hear from both newly arrived refugees as well as those who came over 15 years ago. Their stories were heartrending yet hopeful. While each story was personal there were commonalities which ran through them all. Everyone in attendance left having learned something new.

The Central Okanagan Local Immigration Partnership's (COLIP) vision is to further the development of the Central Okanagan as an inclusive, welcoming, and vibrant community where all newcomers can realize their full potential, racism is eliminated, and cultural diversity is valued and celebrated. The COLIP Council and Work Group are currently in the process of developing new awareness events that will highlight the importance of building welcoming and inclusive communities that embrace newcomers.

To follow what COLIP is up to [visit them on Facebook](#).

### Prince George Local Immigration Partnership

The [Prince George Local Immigration Partnership](#) (PGLIP) has in the last few months made a substantial leap. The PGLIP has worked to re-engage Council members. This followed some changes that were effected. These changes are geared towards having Council members buy in into PGLIP project through effective communications. The strategic action plan for Prince George LIP in 2016-2017 includes:

- Increase awareness of and opportunities related to meaningful employment of newcomers
- Create a more welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers
- Have an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of newcomers' experiences and set a foundation for continued actions
- Understand newcomers' needs and assessment of gaps in services in the community
- Develop communications and build community awareness strategy for LIP
- Debunk the myths surrounding newcomers

Three Working Groups comprising council members are up and running to focus on: sustainability and funding; integration and employment; communications and stakeholders engagement; community and media outreach; and research and strategy.

The Council strives to increase members, understand its challenges and strengths, expand outreach to other stakeholders within the community to foster resources and information sharing.

### Immigrant Welcome Centre of North Vancouver Island

The Local Immigrant Partnership project, locally known as the [Welcoming Communities Coalition](#) works as separate entities in both the Comox Valley and greater Campbell River regions.

To date, the Coalition has been very well received in both. We have built a broad based membership in both regions and, working with the membership, have successfully built one set terms of references to be used in both regions, including one for the general membership and function for the Coalition and one for each working group, including Planning Groups, Action Teams and a Steering Committee.

We have completed a needs and gaps assessment for each region and recently, held a members forum in each region to narrow down what issues could be addressed by the Coalition. Needs identified as a priority were:

- Lack of affordable, safe and healthy housing
- Lack of access to transportation
- Limited knowledge of community services available to newcomers and community members
- Limited knowledge of community programs available to newcomers and their families, and community members
- To increase the ability to share resources among service providers

The members have also identified that there are currently active groups working on housing and transportation issues in both regions, so the Coalition will focus on areas not already being addressed by other working groups. The coordinator is presently researching which key stakeholders would be willing to work together to address building awareness of community services, programs and possibly a system to allow members to share resources.

### Tri-Cities LIP

The [Tri-Cities LIP](#) has recently completed its TCLIP Strategic Plan which identifies a number of priority areas, goals and objectives for creating a welcoming and inclusive community where all residents can live, work and belong. The priority areas are based on two research projects conducted on behalf of the TCLIP on the Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers which identified community integration needs of newcomers with regard to their social, political, cultural and economic participation in the Tri-Cities.

A Tri-Cities Labour Market Scan was conducted which identified the role recent immigrants play in the local labour market including barriers and opportunities for newcomers to participate in the local labour market from the perspective of Tri-Cities employers. In addition, the Tri-Cities community including newcomers, businesses, service providers, employers and various community stakeholders, provided direction for the TCLIP Strategic Plan through two community forums which showcased the research findings. Input and feedback was gathered from the community at the forums on addressing the research findings-feedback which has been instrumental in shaping the TCLIP Strategic Plan.

Over the next 3 years, the TCLIP will be working with the community on implementing strategies that address the 4 priorities-Immigrant Labour Market Integration, Newcomers' Knowledge of and Access to Community Information and Services; Social Isolation of Tri-Cities Newcomers; Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers.

The TCLIP will be holding a Tri-Cities Refugee Forum with service providers in the fall of 2016 in order to increase service coordination and planning, share best practices in responding to refugees' needs and identify strategies that ensure refugees have better access to Tri-Cities services.

### North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Partnership (NSIIP)

[NSIIP](#) is the LIP for North and West Vancouver. Co-chaired by the North Shore Multicultural Society and the West Vancouver Memorial Library, NSIIP includes a partnership table of 20+ members in addition to an Immigrant Advisory Council comprised of 14 immigrants who have lived on the North Shore for varying lengths of time.

The North Shore receives approximately 2,100 new immigrants per year. Top source countries are Iran, China, the Philippines, South Korea and the United Kingdom, with the vast majority arriving as economic immigrants.

Recent NSIIP highlights include the completion of several key research & consultation projects in 2015, including an [Employers' Survey](#) that attracted CBC media attention and an on-line survey of more than 400 North Shore newcomers. NSIIP finalized its strategic plan in March which identifies the following priorities and goals for 2016-2019:

- Access to Information and Services: Immigrants and community stakeholders all have access to current and relevant information and resources to facilitate settlement and integration.
- Community Connection and Intercultural Relationships: North Shore residents are engaged in building cross cultural relationships and mutual trust.
- Employment: North Shore immigrants have access to employment that matches their skills, education and experience.
- Representation: Immigrants play a representative role in guiding the development of the communities of the North Shore.

NSIIP is currently establishing working groups to implement actions associated with these priorities.

### Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership

On March 31, more than 80 members of the Community Partnership Network (CPN) and the [GVLIP](#) celebrated the release of the 2016 report: "[Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership: Our First 18 Months](#)". The event was hosted at the Royal BC Museum and included representatives from government, education, health, businesses and community service agencies. The research and report were undertaken in partnership with ICA and the UVic Institute for Studies and Innovation in Community University Engagement (ISICUE). The research included input from hundreds of immigrant newcomers and service providers in the Greater Victoria region to learn about their experiences with the integration of newcomer immigrants in our community. Key findings from the report included:

- Employment: Over 50% of newcomers identified affordable child care, English language acquisition, and education/training opportunities as being key elements necessary to ensure access to meaningful employment opportunities.
- Community Engagement: 27% of newcomers volunteer at their children's school and view this and other volunteer engagement opportunities as a key and important way to feel connected with their new community.
- Housing: More than 43% of newcomer respondents own their homes while more than 47% of newcomers rent their homes. Affordable housing is seen as a concern among many newcomer respondents.
- The over-arching goal of the GVLIP is to foster community collaboration and promote the effective integration of newcomer immigrants and refugees in the Greater Victoria region. The development of a long-term regional immigration integration strategy is the specific long-term goal of the GVLIP.

### Chilliwack Newcomer Connections

Funded by the Federal Government and launched in April 2014, the [LIP in Chilliwack](#) is making a significant contribution to raising the awareness of immigrant issues as well as immigrant services in the community. This work, initiated by a community partnership under the BC Government Welcoming Communities Program, is being carried on by fifteen local organizations functioning as Chilliwack Newcomer Connections. The vision of this dedicated group is "To create awareness of services for newcomers in Chilliwack and build connections and relationships across the community."

The Chilliwack Newcomer Connections calendar of activities includes monthly meetings of the Partnership Council, regular themed community conversations, an annual immigrant services network meeting and an annual public forum. These events are opportunities for the immigrant voice to be heard along with an exchange of information and ideas on a scale that has hitherto been unavailable. In addition, research undertaken over the past two years has served to better understand the local challenges and experience of immigrants, service providers and employers in relation to newcomer settlement. The first project explored [immigrant settlement experiences](#) while the second surveyed [immigrant participation in the local economy](#).

Overall, a Local Settlement Strategy and action plan is the driver of current Partnership Council efforts. These take into account the dynamics of an increasingly diverse community as well as socioeconomic and political factors at play. Housing pressures, investment and business opportunities, and new arrivals to the area, including Syrians, will ensure that Chilliwack Newcomer Connections maintains its focus on improving access to local services, and better coordinated and more accessible immigrant services.