

# IMMIGRATION FOR BC'S FUTURE

A CALL FOR ACTION  
TO STRENGTHEN  
NEWCOMER INTEGRATION



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**A Call for Action to Strengthen  
Newcomer Integration**

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## Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary	7
2.	Objectives	10
3.	Historical Perspective	13
4.	Consultation	19
5.	Recommendations	
i.	Creation of a Comprehensive Multi-Pronged Five-Year Immigration Strategy	20
ii.	Reinstate a Provincial Ministry of Immigration and Multiculturalism	21
iii.	Creation of an Attraction and Retention Strategy	23
iv.	Creation of a Comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy for Newcomers	25
v.	Seek Settlement Sector input into Memorandums of Understanding Regarding Immigration	27
vi.	Enhance Settlement Sector Capacity to Engage in Policy	29
vii.	Increase Investments and Eligibility to Immigrant Integration	29
viii.	Creation of Public Awareness Campaign	31
ix.	Incentives for Mentoring and Occupation-Specific Language Training	32
x.	Better Alignment Between K-12 and Post-Secondary Education	33
xi.	Access to Free Education Regardless of Immigration Status	34
xii.	Create Policies to Retain Post-Secondary international students who Study in BC	35
xiii.	Areas for further discussion	36
6.	Conclusion	42
7.	Appendix A - List of IICC Members	43
8.	Appendix B – Organizations involved in the Stakeholder Consultation process	44
9.	Appendix C - Stakeholder Consultation Meeting Info Sheet	46
10.	Appendix D - List of Survey Questions	49



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2014, when the federal government repatriated the transfer of settlement funds from the provincial Government of BC to the national settlement program, there was a shift in the way that organizations serving immigrants and refugees interacted with the provincial government. An open and collaborative relationship had been valued by the sector and now under federal oversight for all federally eligible newcomers, there was a disconnect between how the settlement sector provided services, engaged in policy discussions, and planned programming for future needs of newcomers served under provincial funding. In this past year, the settlement sector has seen a shift in the approach that the provincial Government of BC is taking towards recognizing the needs for newcomers to our province to settle in BC, integrate into their communities, and fill much needed job vacancies.

With this positive shift, AMSSA is capitalizing on the opportunity to engage with the Province of BC to share the valuable insights of the settlement sector as well as other key stakeholders in immigrant settlement, integration, and employment. This report is a culmination of extensive consultations in which participants with expertise in settlement, integration, and employment shared their ideas for ways in which the Province of BC can enhance their engagement and plan for the future.

The mission of the Provincial Engagement Strategy is to develop a Call for Action to the provincial Government of BC to formulate a multi-year strategy on how immigration will be managed over the next three to five years.

The Provincial Engagement Strategy looks to fill the following three main objectives:

- To identify key gaps in services and/or policies between what is currently being supported by the federal Government of Canada and the provincial Government of BC, with the actual needs of newcomers to BC.
- To identify what strategies have been successful in providing support to newcomers in BC.
- To use the gaps and best practices identified to formulate specific recommendations on how the provincial Government of BC can enhance co-managing and co-planning of immigration with the federal government, the municipalities and the settlement sector.

According to the evaluation of IRCC's Settlement Program, BC was the province of destination for approximately 15% of all newcomers, making BC the second most popular of Canada's provinces and territories. According to 2016 Census data, a total of 1,292,675 immigrants and refugees have made BC their home, representing 17.1% of the total Canadian population. Most immigrants (80%) to BC have made Metro Vancouver their home. Vancouver has been the top destination for 26.2% of immigrants, while Surrey has been a destination for 25.5% of immigrants.

Consultations across BC resulted in the development of 12 recommendations, with 4 key recommendations standing out as the focus of this report.





In November 2017, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) released their multi-year Immigration Levels Plan. Recognizing the slowing labour force growth and an ageing population, the federal government created a three year levels plan to increase immigration levels, addressing the labour shortage while continuing with humanitarian commitments and family reunification.

On behalf of the settlement sector in BC, AMSSA is strongly encouraging the provincial Government of BC to engage in the same or similar process:

- look ahead and identify how newcomer integration into urban and rural areas will be enhanced through an attraction and retention strategy;
- provide initiatives or programming for workplaces on intercultural communication and unconscious bias to increase integration of the workforce;
- have a dedicated Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism who can work on behalf of all newcomers and the settlement sector to unite the various Ministries that intersect with newcomer issues on a regular basis;
- and most importantly, work collaboratively with those that are dedicated to settlement and integration to make a multi-year plan that outlines how the collective “we” can work together to successfully attract and retain newcomers in BC.

I wish to thank all those who contributed to the inception, funding, creation, and distribution of this report. On behalf of the Board of Directors, AMSSA Members, and the AMSSA team, we proudly present [Immigration for BC's Future - A Call for Action to Strengthen Newcomer Integration](#) to the provincial Government of BC;

The Honorable **John Horgan**, Premier of BC;

The Honorable **Bruce Ralston**, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology;

**Mr. Fazil Mihar**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology;

**Mr. Rob Mingay**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Workforce, Immigration and Major Investments,  
Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

Katie Rosenberger



Executive Director, AMSSA

## 2. OBJECTIVES

### Who is AMSSA

The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA) is the provincial umbrella association for agencies serving newcomers. The organization strengthens over 70 member agencies, as well as hundreds of community stakeholder agencies that serve newcomers and build culturally inclusive communities, with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to fulfill their mandates. AMSSA provides support to a broad range of settlement service providers (including settlement language, employment, etc.) and other stakeholders in BC.

AMSSA's policy recommendations are guided by: the Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee (IICC); collaborations with service provider organizations (SPOs); and other community stakeholders.

The IICC was established in 1992 as a standing committee of AMSSA, with a mission to strengthen the immigrant, refugee and settlement language service sector and improve immigrant integration and refugee resettlement in BC. Today, IICC is a network of non-profit, community-based agencies, that provides integration, language, settlement, and resettlement services to immigrants and/or refugees throughout the province.

#### THE IICC IS COMMITTED TO:

- Coordinating immigrant integration, refugee resettlement and multiculturalism services
- Advocating for necessary change in the areas of immigration, resettlement and multiculturalism
- Developing community-centered and client-centered policy regarding immigration, resettlement and multiculturalism
- Facilitating effective consultation on immigration, resettlement and multiculturalism
- Developing professional standards for service delivery in the areas of immigration, resettlement and multiculturalism.

This report provides a Call for Action and recommendations that the immigrant and refugee settlement sector and other stakeholders in BC believe are key to strengthening BC's economy.

#### DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this report:

- "Newcomers" includes all permanent residents, refugees, refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers (TFW), naturalized citizens, and Post-Secondary international students that have been in Canada, from one day to five years
- "Newcomers ineligible for services" are

newcomers who are generally ineligible for one or more of the settlement services funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), including TFWs, Post-Secondary international students, Provincial Nominees awaiting Permanent Residence (PR), naturalized citizens, and refugee claimants.

## RELATIONSHIPS

AMSSA and its IICC member agencies, value its strong and collaborative relationships with the Government of BC. AMSSA welcomes the opportunity to work together to harness the sector's expertise and insights, and assist in creating policies that strengthen BC's economy and improve supports for newcomers. Assistance is needed to help newcomers settle as quickly as possible and become contributing citizens of the province, which strengthens the economy, by bringing vital skills to the labour market.

## IICC MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Please see Appendix A for a list of IICC member organizations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AMSSA acknowledges that BC is home to 198 First Nations. AMSSA acknowledges the traditional territories of the First Nations in which this engagement strategy occurred, and in particular, the Coast Salish peoples, and the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations whose unceded territories AMSSA's operations are located on.

First and foremost, AMSSA is grateful to the more than 229 individuals who participated and contributed their voices and experiences to this report.

AMSSA extends special thanks to the Advisory Committee and its members Chris Friesen, Jim Brennan, Queenie Choo and Tahzeem Kassam, for their valuable leadership and feedback towards the development of the Provincial Engagement Strategy.

AMSSA would also like to thank the Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee whose idea it was to undertake this project, and who collectively decided to self-finance this report. Their trust, dedication and support through the years are greatly appreciated.

This report would not have been possible without Sabrina Dumitra whose tremendous efforts led the project from start to finish. In addition, the research and policy expertise of Sara Sehic, who undertook this project for her practicum at AMSSA, was instrumental. AMSSA is grateful for their crucial work in developing this report.

AMSSA is guided by a Board of Directors. The dedication, time and knowledge they contribute to AMSSA are invaluable. Particular appreciation is extended to Jean McRae, President of the Board, for her leadership over the years.

Lastly, as an organization's strength is based on the dedication of its staff, AMSSA acknowledges its staff members for their contributions to the project and their commitment to strengthening diversity in BC.

## Objective of the Provincial Engagement Strategy

The mission of the Provincial Engagement Strategy is to develop a Call for Action to the provincial Government of BC, to formulate a multi-year strategy on how immigration will be managed over the next three to five years.

The Provincial Engagement Strategy looks to fill the following three main objectives:

1. To identify key gaps in services and/or policies between what is currently being supported by the federal Government of Canada and the provincial Government of BC, with the actual needs of newcomers to BC.
2. To identify what strategies have been successful in providing support to newcomers in BC.
3. To use the gaps and best practices identified to formulate specific recommendations on how the provincial Government of BC can enhance co-managing and co-planning of immigration with the federal government, the municipalities and the settlement sector.

## Funder Acknowledgements

AMSSA would like to thank and acknowledge the Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee members for their financial contributions to this Provincial Engagement Strategy.

AMSSA would also like to thank and acknowledge the Vancouver Foundation's financial contribution.

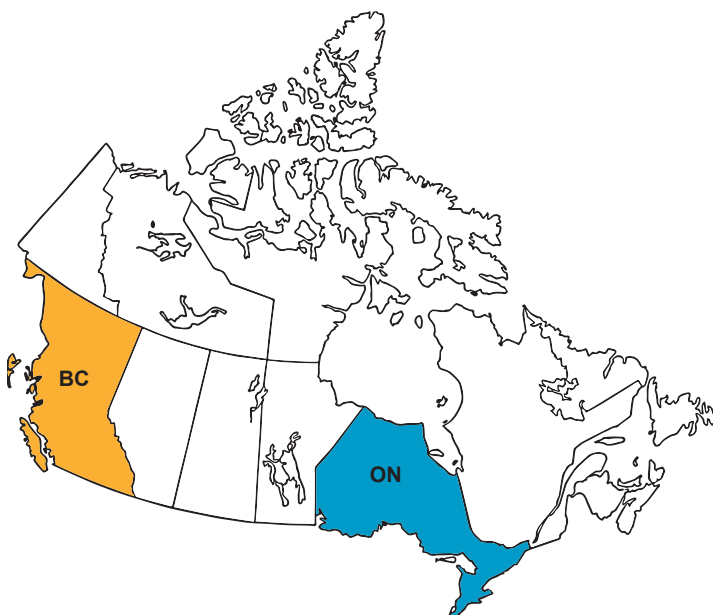


### 3. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Between 1998 and 2014, the Government of BC oversaw the design and delivery of newcomer settlement and integration programming, with federal funding transferred from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, now “Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada” (IRCC). In April 2014, the federal government repatriated this responsibility.

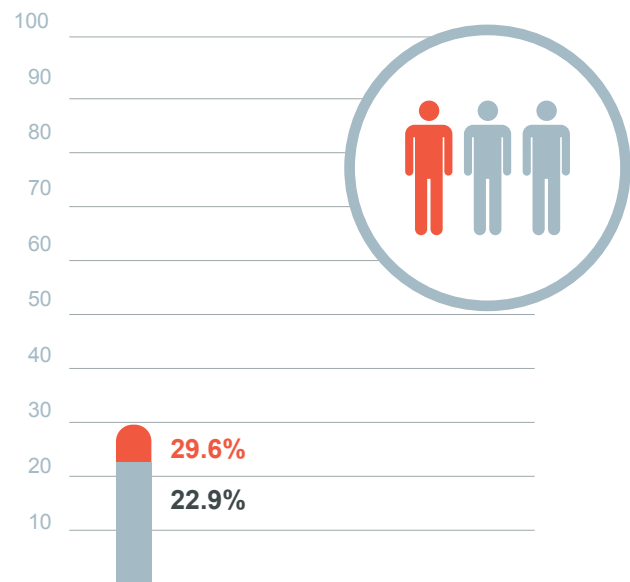
During this transition, service provider organizations (SPOs) experienced a vacuum of engagement and support for immigrant and refugee settlement services, despite 28.3% of BC residents being immigrants. This made BC the province with the second highest proportion of immigrants in Canada, after Ontario.<sup>1</sup> In addition to having a high newcomer population, BC is home to a large population of second generation immigrants (22.9% of BC residents).<sup>1</sup>

BC is also home to a population with significant linguistic diversity. Approximately one in three (29.6%) of BC residents has a mother tongue other than English or French, which exceeds the Canadian average of 22.9%.<sup>2</sup> The most common immigrant language mother tongues are Punjabi, Cantonese, and Mandarin.<sup>3</sup>



MAP OF CANADA

-  Highest proportion of immigrants
-  Second highest proportion of immigrants



MOTHER TONGUE OTHER THAN ENGLISH OR FRENCH

-  BC
-  Canadian Average

1. Statistics Canada (2017). Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census.  
2. Statistics Canada (2017). Language (including language of work). Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census.  
3. Statistics Canada (2017). Proportion of mother tongue responses for various regions in Canada, 2016 Census.

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This made BC the province with the second highest proportion of immigrants in Canada, after Ontario. In addition to having a high newcomer population, BC is home to a large population of second generation immigrants (22.9% of BC residents).

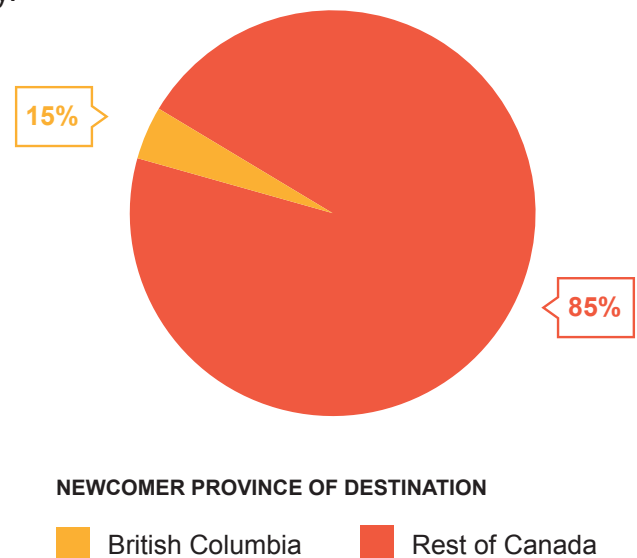
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Prior to 1971, 77% of immigrants to BC came from the European continent. The percentage decreased to 14% between 2006 and 2011.<sup>4</sup> During this timeframe, 78% of newcomers to BC were identified as “visible minorities.”<sup>5</sup> Funding for multiculturalism and anti-racism projects has not kept pace with this change. In 2015/2016, BC invested \$800,000 in multiculturalism and anti-racism (\$300,000 through the Multiculturalism Grant Program and \$500,000 for anti-racism contracts) to help build capacity in communities and address racism locally.<sup>6</sup> During the same timeframe, \$47 million was invested over three years in an anti-racism strategy in Ontario.<sup>7</sup> Although the Province of Ontario has a population that is 2.8 times larger than the population in the Province of BC, they made an investment that is 58 times the size of the investment made by the Province of BC.<sup>8</sup>

## CASE FOR A BC MULTI-YEAR IMMIGRATION STRATEGY

Immigration has tremendous impacts on the province. The impacts are noticeable in provincial economic growth and public institutions, and in the growth of rural and urban centres. Immigration provides opportunities, which necessitate the need for a clear and strategic vision for immigration, social inclusion, and economic growth. Provincial leadership and active engagement with the settlement sector is needed to harness the positive impacts that immigration has on society.

According to the evaluation of IRCC’s Settlement Program, BC was the province of destination for approximately 15% of all newcomers, making BC the second most popular of Canada’s provinces and territories.<sup>9</sup> According to 2016 Census data, a total of 1,292,675 immigrants and refugees have made BC their home, representing 17.1% of the total Canadian population.<sup>10</sup> Most immigrants (80%) to BC have made Metro Vancouver their home. Vancouver has been the top destination for 26.2% of immigrants. Surrey has been a destination for 25.5% of immigrants.<sup>10</sup>



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4. Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada. Analytical Document. National Household Survey, 2011.  
5. Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada. Analytical Document. National Household Survey, 2011.  
6. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2016). Twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of States parties due in 2015: Canada. United Nations CERD/C/CAN/21-23.  
7. Yang, Jennifer (2017 Mar 7). Ontario government unveils 3-year plan to battle racism. Toronto Star.  
8. Statistics Canada (2016). Census Profile, 2016 Census. [Author’s calculations]  
9. IRCC (2017). Evaluation of the Settlement Program.  
10. NewToBC (2018). Vancouver Immigrant Demographics.

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According to 2016 Census data, a total of 1,292,675 immigrants and refugees have made BC their home, representing 17.1% of the total Canadian population.

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Newcomers provide an enormous contribution to the province. Although the economic classes are selected specifically for their ability to contribute economically, the reality is that newcomers of all classes and skill levels (economic, family, refugees, refugee claimants, TFWs, international mobility program, Post-Secondary international students, and others) help BC's economy grow. For example, recent research indicates that refugee earnings converge with the earnings of the Canadian-born population about 15 years post-resettlement.<sup>11</sup> Research further indicates that an estimated 1% increase in ethno-cultural diversity is associated with a 2.5% increase in organizational revenue.<sup>12</sup> Not only do newcomers fill gaps in the labour market, over the long term, they contribute demographically to future population growth.

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### Newcomers provide an enormous contribution to the province.

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Economic growth in BC, which was the highest amongst the provinces in 2015 and 2016, accelerated even further in 2017.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the newly released 2018 BC Labour Market Outlook forecasts 903,000 job openings between 2018 and 2028 with 68% of these openings occurring due to retirement and 32% due to the creation of new jobs.<sup>14</sup> Of the predicted job openings, 9% are expected to be in the science

and technology sector according to the Emerging Economy Task Force.<sup>15</sup> The 2018 BC Labour Market Outlook is expecting 11.8% of the job opening to be in the professional, scientific and technical services. It is expected that employment numbers in BC will reach 2.8 million by 2028.<sup>14</sup>

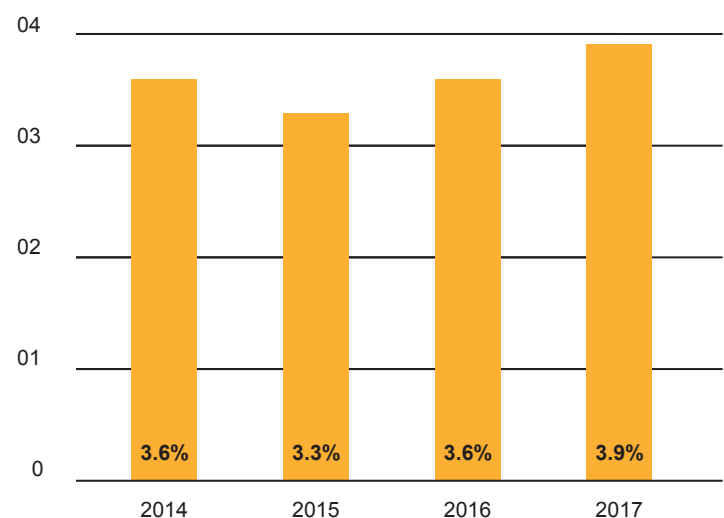
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### Estimated 1% increase in ethno-cultural diversity is associated with a 2.5% increase in organizational revenue.

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At the same time, the gross domestic product (GDP) in BC increased to 3.9% in 2017 after some steady growth to 3.6% in 2016, which built on 3.3% growth in 2015 and 3.6% growth in 2014. Employment in BC increased at a faster pace than at the national level and in the central provinces in 2016 and 2017.<sup>16</sup> This growth spurt enabled BC's labour forces to expand by 74,700 persons in 2016 and 68,400 persons in 2017, to reach 2.6 million.<sup>16</sup> Immigration, particularly to Vancouver, accounted for 50% of the overall labour force increase in 2016.<sup>16</sup>

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) IN BC



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11. Wilkinson, Lori and Garcea, Joseph (2017). The economic integration of refugees in Canada: A mixed record? Migration Policy Institute.

12. Momani, Bessma and Stirk, Jillian (2017). Diversity Dividend: Canada's Global Advantage. Centre for International Governance Innovation, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.

13. Richards, E. (2018). "Recent Economic Developments in British Columbia." Economic Insight, no. 081

14. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

15. Government of BC (n.d.). Emerging Economy Task Force to guide BC's economic strategy

16. Richards, E. (2018). "Recent Economic Developments in British Columbia." Economic Insight, no. 081

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## The 2018 BC Labour Market Outlook forecasts 903,000 job openings between 2018 and 2028.

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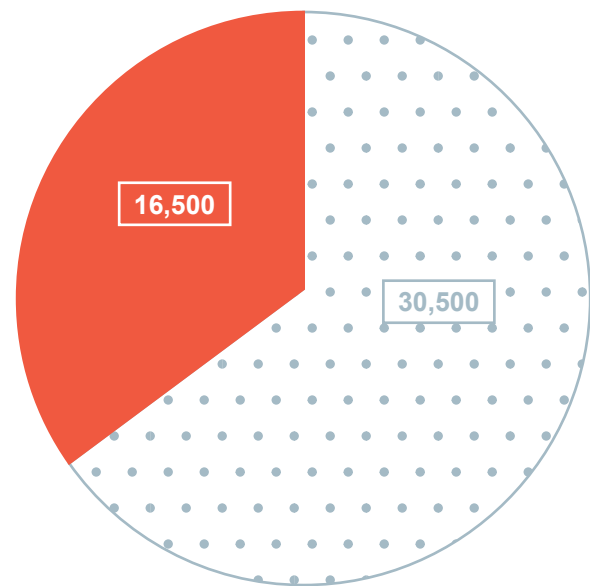
The GDP of a region grows when there are either more workers available, or when existing workers have become more productive. Without newcomers to support the growth of BC's economy, many industries would start to notice a weakening that would lead to an economic decline. During times of economic decline, it is challenging for governments to pay for social priorities such as health care, without raising taxes. It is also challenging for businesses to provide investments to a region.<sup>17</sup> Atlantic Canada has demonstrated that weak population growth, weak economic growth and a lack of public and private sector investments are interconnected in a causal nexus reaction.<sup>17</sup>

For BC to maintain its economic growth, consideration is needed on where to find the workforce needed to fill these 903,000 job openings. It is estimated that 27% of these vacancies will need to be filled by 24,300 immigrants each year.<sup>18</sup> Between 2011 and 2016, immigration accounted for 90% of the labour force growth.<sup>19</sup> The Conference Board of Canada is calling for an immigration rate that reflects 1% of the population, and suggested that without this, Canada's economic growth will slow down due to unfavourable demographic changes.<sup>19</sup>

The high technology sector in BC has seen a rise in its GDP, which grew 3.5% in 2016 to almost \$14.6 billion. At the same time, the employment

numbers grew by 4.1% to 106,430.<sup>20</sup> The sector now accounts for 5% of BC's workforce, which exceeds the combined workforce of the mining, oil and gas, and forestry sectors.<sup>20</sup> Compared to other Canadian provinces, the tech sector in BC ranks third in terms of GDP, revenue and employment numbers, even though BC led the country in 2016 in terms of job growth within this sector.<sup>20</sup>

This expansion of the tech sector will result in the demand for more than 47,000 additional workers by 2021.<sup>21</sup> When examining current employment growth, only 16,500 of these tech sector job openings will be filled by qualified workers, leaving more than 30,500 vacancies.<sup>21</sup>



JOBS IN TECH SECTOR IN 2021

- Jobs Filled
- Jobs Vacant

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17. Alexander, Craig and El-Assal, Kareem (2018 May 3). To value newcomers, imagine Canada without them. The Globe and Mail

18. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

19. El-Assal, K. & Fields, D. (2018). Canada 2040: No immigration versus more immigration.

20. BC Stats (2017). Profile of the British Columbia Technology Sector: 2017 Edition.

21. BC Tech Association (2016). 2016 TechTalentBC Report.

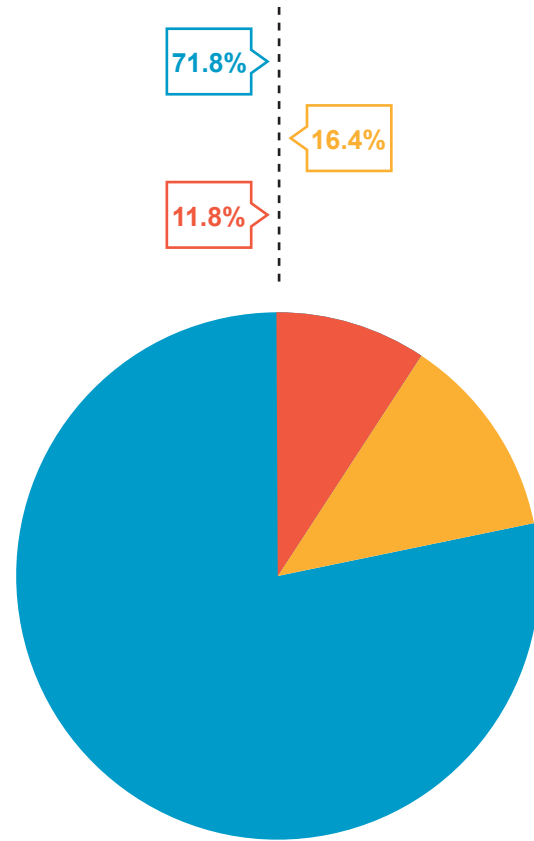


The BC Tech Association recommends that one of the three available sources to fill these job openings is immigrant talent, and recognizes that “8,500 more immigrants than are currently projected to arrive by 2021 will be required to meet the sector’s needs”.<sup>21</sup>

It is estimated that 77% of the jobs that need to be filled by 2028, will require at least some form of post-secondary education or training.<sup>22</sup> The need for a highly qualified workforce requires a commitment from BC, to provide job-readiness training and industry specific language training for newcomers. Their innovative ideas, and diverse perspectives can contribute significantly to existing structures.<sup>23</sup>

While there is a need to fill job openings in many different sectors, there are two industries that expect high vacancy rates. It is anticipated that of the 903,000 job openings predicted between 2018 and 2028, 16.4% will be in the healthcare and social assistance sector, while 11.8% will be in the professional, scientific, and technical service sector.<sup>22</sup> For immigrants to fill these jobs, there is a need for better foreign credential recognition, more skills-training courses, improved access to education and industry-specific language training, as well as a strategic plan to attract and retain talent to BC.

In addition to contributing to the labour market by filling job openings in needed sectors, immigrants are more likely than non-immigrants to become self-employed. In the late 2000s, about 19% of immigrants were self-employed, compared to 15% of the Canadian-born population.<sup>24</sup>



**JOB OPENINGS PREDICTED BETWEEN 2018- 2028**

- Professional, Scientific and Technical Service Sector
- Healthcare and Social Assistance Sector
- Other Sectors

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The BC Tech Association recommends that one of the three available sources to fill these job openings is immigrant talent, and recognizes that “8,500 more immigrants than are currently projected to arrive by 2021 will be required to meet the sector’s needs”.

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21. BC Tech Association (2016). 2016 TechTalentBC Report.

22. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

23. Kukushkin, V. and Watt, D. (2009). Effective Practices for Attracting, Integrating, and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces. The Conference Board of Canada

24. Hou, F. and Wang, S. (2011). Immigrants in Self Employment. Statistics Canada

In particular, immigrants who have been in Canada for longer than ten years are more likely than Canadian-born citizens to be owners of private incorporated businesses (5.8% vs. 4.8%).<sup>25</sup> The following industries make up over half of all immigrant-owned businesses in Canada: professional, scientific, and technical services; retail trade; real estate; accommodation and food services; transportation and warehousing; and construction.<sup>25</sup> According to the Conference Board of Canada, “Immigrants tend to be motivated individuals willing to take risks in search of greater opportunities, which should predispose them to being innovative.”<sup>26</sup>

An additional economic benefit of family class immigrants is that they look to share their cultural heritage and language knowledge with family members. This leads to strengthening BC’s business and cultural ties to the rest of the world, through increased interaction and exchange; particularly with Canada having signed various trade agreements with all members of the G7.<sup>27</sup> Also noted, is the size of foreign direct investments in Canada, which has been greater from the countries that newcomers arrive from.<sup>26</sup>

BC is experiencing significant economic and demographic shifts, and must actively formulate a provincial immigration strategy to ensure economic and social sustainability. Statistics Canada projects that by 2036, one in two people in Vancouver and Abbotsford-Mission will be either a first or second generation immigrant<sup>28</sup> and that international immigration will be the main driver of population growth over the next 25 years.<sup>29</sup>

It is therefore extremely important that the province has a strategy to realize their economic potential. Newcomers face a variety of barriers to achieving their maximum potential, which the province has a significant role to play in helping them overcome.

Economic contributions are only one of the many benefits that newcomers bring to BC. Newcomers contribute to the province’s cultural capital as leaders, artistic creators, and volunteers. BC’s civic and cultural values are renewed and strengthened through the participation and inclusion of newcomers. BC’s diverse society promotes resilience and strengthens the capacity to respond to multiple challenges.

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“Immigrants tend to be motivated individuals willing to take risks in search of greater opportunities, which should predispose them to being innovative.”

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Newcomers tend to become more politically aware and active than Canadian-born individuals, and actively participate in voting processes, strengthening the country’s democratic systems.<sup>30</sup> Newcomers make other significant contributions to society, such as artistic and literary contributions. Proportionally, more newcomers have won literary and performing arts awards than Canadian-born artists.<sup>26</sup>

Newcomers’ contributions, both economic and otherwise, can be maximized through settlement supports, which require investments from all levels of government.

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25. Green, D. et al. (2016) Immigration, Business Ownership, and Employment in Canada. Statistics Canada

26. Parkouda, M. (2010) Immigrants as Innovators Boosting Canada’s Global Competitiveness. The Conference Board of Canada

27. El-Assal, K. & Fields, D. (2018). Canada 2040: No immigration versus more immigration.

28. Statistics Canada (2017). Immigration and Diversity: Population Projections for Canada and its Regions, 2011 to 2036. Demosim team.

29. Statistics Canada (2015). Population Projections for Canada (2013 to 2063), Provinces and Territories (2013 to 2038). National Population Projections team.

30. Uppal, S. and LaRochelle-Côté, S. (2012). Factors associated with voting. Statistics Canada

## 4. CONSULTATION

This Provincial Engagement Strategy aims to identify key gaps in services and/or policies, between what is currently being supported by the federal Government of Canada and the provincial government of BC, and the actual needs of newcomers to BC.

The settlement sector in BC is aiming to bring forward views and recommendations to the Province of BC for consideration that have arisen from the perspective of the settlement sector through lived experience and working directly with newcomers as well as working with employers, Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPS), academia, libraries, school districts and many other stakeholders. These recommendations are anchored in over 40 years of experience and expertise in delivering settlement, resettlement, multi-culturalism and anti-racism work in the province.

This project used multiple methods to gather information including interviews with individual stakeholders, consultation meetings in the five regions of the province, and an electronic survey:

- 12 key stakeholders from across the country, provided insights into the strategy from a BC and a pan-Canadian perspective (in one-to-one interviews); and
- 149 individuals participated in stakeholder consultation meetings in Vancouver, Surrey, Abbotsford, Kelowna, Nanaimo and Prince George.

The settlement sector sought to expand the consultation process beyond the settlement sector and participants from the following types of organizations attended: settlement and settlement language organizations, Local Immigration Partnerships, refugee claimant serving agencies, health authorities, academia, private sponsorship groups, libraries, literacy organizations, school districts, the private sector, and LGBTQ+ newcomer supporting agencies. (See Appendix B to view a list of organizations who took part in the consultation process. See Appendix C to view a list of questions participants were asked to consider prior to attending the consultation sessions.)

After each consultation meeting was held, a survey was circulated to stakeholders in the area. Individuals were invited to share the survey with other stakeholders, who were unable to attend the session. A total of 68 responses were received in a 10-day period. (See Appendix D to view the list of survey questions considered by survey respondents.)

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### CREATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-PRONGED FIVE-YEAR IMMIGRATION STRATEGY

#### RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Province of BC develop a comprehensive, multi-pronged, five year immigration strategy that: receives the support and cooperation from all provincial ministries; and, outlines the shared responsibility of all levels of government and intersections with provincial ministries, in consultation with the settlement sector and the general public. Increased broader consultations are needed between the Province of BC, other key provincial ministries, regulatory bodies and the settlement sector.

The Government of BC and industry need to collaborate to fill the 903,000 job vacancies anticipated by 2028. There is an expectation that 27% of these vacancies will need to be filled by 24,300 immigrants to BC, each year.<sup>31</sup>

The federal Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) expressly commits to cooperate with the provinces and territories on a variety of matters, including agreements to coordinate and implement immigration policies and programs. Under Section 8 of the IRPA, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has the

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“A five-year BC-specific immigration strategy, with a multi-pronged approach, created in consultation... will leverage supports for the successful integration of newcomers to BC.”

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authority to sign agreements with provinces and territories that will facilitate the coordination and implementation of immigration policies. The Province of BC to this effect has signed Canada-British Columbia Immigration Agreement in 2015 which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each regarding immigration.<sup>32</sup>

Having a five-year BC-specific immigration strategy, with a multi-pronged approach, created in consultation with the settlement sector, business sector, regulatory bodies, municipalities, academia, economists, members of the public and a wide range of provincial ministries, will leverage supports for the successful integration of newcomers to BC. A “whole of society” approach is needed to ensure that newcomer integration is strengthened, and at the same time, a “whole of government” approach is needed to ensure a stable, long-term immigration plan is in place.

Without the support of the public, governments are limited in their abilities. As such, a broad public consultation, in collaboration with other key ministries is needed, as part of the evolving process of creating a five-year provincial immigration strategy that is linked to clear deliverables and targets. Developing a mechanism for the public to track the progress of the different components of the strategy, such as the website created by the Province of Nova Scotia<sup>33</sup>, will keep the province accountable,

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31. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

32. Government of Canada (n.d). British Columbia – Federal-Provincial/Territorial Agreements

33. One Nova Scotia (n.d.). One NS Dashboard

and the public interested in the progress of the strategy outcomes.

Currently, the target allocation for 2018's Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is 6,250<sup>34</sup>, however as part of the creation of a multi-year immigration strategy, the province needs to set its own target number for Permanent Residents (PR) as this will also allow for greater cross-ministerial planning of other services, such as education and healthcare. Having a dedicated strategy with set PR target numbers will benefit the province when it comes to the calculation of health and social transfer payments from the federal government, which are calculated based on the per capita number of residents that each province has. Federal transfer payments are linked to the number of Canadian citizens and PRs living in each province. Without the federal transfer payments, the province would not be able to provide the current level of funding for health care and social programming. Without the proper planning and population forecasting, services on the ground are impacted and stretched beyond capacity, which leads to increased wait times and limitations on services.

By developing a BC immigration strategy, the province is demonstrating that it values the perspectives and innovative ideas that newcomers can offer, and the diversity that people from other cultures bring to BC. Further, the province is affirming that it values the contributions that newcomers make to the economic, social, and cultural development of our province and that residents want to support all who call BC home. Immigration will only be possible if there are supportive policies and proactive initiatives, and if government, the business community, the general public and communities are supportive.

One crucial part of this recommended immigration strategy is to include policies and a “welcoming community” strategy.

Having an immigration strategy that aligns with the BC Economic Development Strategies can help address some of the demographic and economic challenges that some regions outside of Metro Vancouver are (or will be) experiencing.

## REINSTATE A PROVINCIAL MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

### RECOMMENDATION #2:

That the Province of BC reinstate the provincial “Ministry of Immigration and Multiculturalism”.

Immigration will be a key component to filling the various job vacancies that the province will experience.

### BC is currently the most ethnically diverse province in the country.

As immigration contributes to the nation-building of Canada and to the shaping of BC, the responsibility for immigration is shared by the federal government and the provincial/territorial governments, in accordance with Canada's constitution. BC is currently the most ethnically diverse province in the country.<sup>35</sup>

34. WelcomeBC (n.d.). Invitations to apply.

35. Government of BC (n.d.). Multiculturalism

Having a provincial ministry dedicated to immigration will allow the province to allocate the resources required to ensure that newcomers to BC receive the support they need. It will also connect the settlement programs with labour market needs (one of the strengths of the provincial government prior to repatriation).<sup>36</sup>

Having a Ministry of Immigration and Multiculturalism could allow for a faster mechanism for communications between the settlement sector, provincial ministries, other stakeholders and the federal government. The settlement sector would be able to provide technical and strategic input directly into provincial decision-making processes. Currently, various responsibilities for issues related to immigration and multiculturalism are spread across multiple ministries which poses a challenge to the settlement sector in providing holistic services to newcomers. This dedicated ministry will also be able to take the lead by setting targets for ministries and accountabilities for immigrant inclusion and diversity.

Some key elements related to immigration, are part of the jurisdiction of multiple provincial ministries. In reviewing the mandate letters recently published by Premier Horgan<sup>37</sup>, the settlement sector noted that responsibilities for issues related to newcomers and multiculturalism, were spread across the following ministries:

- The Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology (responsible for immigration policy and integration)
- The Ministry of Labour (responsible for the protection of temporary foreign workers)

- The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (responsible for transforming the mental health-care system, a key need for many newcomers)
- The Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (responsible for the Multiculturalism Act)
- The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Training (responsible for English Language Learning programs)

Each of these areas and issues are deeply intertwined. As such, segmenting them into various ministries does not create a holistic, integrated approach to immigration, particularly as BC is looking to newcomers to help fill expected employment vacancies.

Decisions on funding and policies are made during meetings of the Executive Council (comprised of Cabinet Ministers). Without having a dedicated minister representing immigration at those meetings, decisions and policies may not always be made with newcomers in mind. Other provinces including Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Ontario, have utilized the strategy of having a provincial immigration ministry, to support greater alignment and collaboration.

With the arrival of 108,300 immigrants to Saskatchewan in the last ten years, from over 170 source countries, immigration has been a key driver of the province's population growth.<sup>38</sup> The Province of Saskatchewan created a Ministry of Immigration and Career Training to demonstrate a renewed recognition of the important contributions of immigrants, to the future of Saskatchewan.<sup>38</sup> The vision of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

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36. Dikson, H., Lindquist, E., Pollard, B. & Yan, M. C. (2013). *Devolving Settlement Funding from the Government of Canada: The British Columbia Experience, 1998-2013*.

37. BC NDP. (n.d). Read Premier John Horgan's mandate letters to the new BC NDP government ministers

38. Government of Saskatchewan (n.d). Plan for 2018-2019 Ministry of Immigration and Career Training

is to “attract, integrate and retain immigrants to the province, by taking a lead role in engaging and working with partners to ensure Nova Scotia is well-positioned for growth”. The office releases a business plan each year outlining the priority areas of focus for the province, related to immigration.<sup>39</sup> Establishing the ministry enabled the province to partner with federal government on initiatives such as the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) Program. It also facilitated collaboration with the Department of Health and Wellness, and the launch of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) Physician Stream, which created an immigration pathway to attract foreign-trained doctors to the province.<sup>40</sup> The Office of Immigration provides the province with dedicated insight, flexibility and capacity to take part in partnerships.

The Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FMRI) is a federal/provincial/territorial decision-making table that discusses immigration policies and programs.<sup>41</sup> BC is represented at this decision-making table by the Honorable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Jobs, Trade and Technology with the immigration file being one of his areas of responsibility; however having a dedicated minister of immigration participate in these strategic decision and policy creation meetings, could allow for greater consultation with the settlement sector.

Having a dedicated Ministry of Immigration and Multiculturalism would allow for greater inter-ministerial collaborations than already occurring. The ministry would have the dedicated and flexible capacity to participate on these tables and take the lead. By reinstating the ministry, the province can become more pro-active in planning, consulting and evaluating the impact that immigration has

on different ministries, the business sector, municipalities and the settlement sector.

## CREATION OF AN ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGY

### RECOMMENDATION #3:

That the Province of BC create an attraction and retention strategy for newcomers to BC as part of an overarching immigration strategy, that aligns with BC's Rural Economic Development Strategy.

Immigration has a tremendous impact on our province and is noticeable in BC's provincial economic growth, public institutions and in the growth of rural and urban centres. Currently, the settlement sector is aware of which communities Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) are being destined to and are able to plan and coordinate accordingly. This is however not the case for other newcomer categories – having better insight into who is coming to BC and to which community will allow the settlement sector and government ministries to better plan and coordinate services. Understanding the immigration trends and patterns of newcomers to the province will assist to provide more insight into long-term community planning and the ability for strategic and targeted investments to take place.

The opportunities that immigration provides to the province necessitate a clear strategic vision for immigration, social inclusion, and economic growth. Provincial leadership and

39. Government of Nova Scotia. (n.d.). Business Plan 2016-2017 Office of Immigration.

40. Government of Nova Scotia. (n.d.). Business Plan 2018-2019 Office of Immigration.

41. FMRI. (n.d.). About

active engagement with the settlement sector is needed to harness the positive impact that immigration has on the province. The settlement sector has identified the need for more BC specific pre-arrival information to be created, that addresses the differences and uniqueness of each region for newcomers, and links them to settlement organizations after their arrival. The settlement sector would welcome more data on newcomers arriving to BC, how destination communities are selected, and the method of the newcomers' arrival.

Although most of BC's newcomers continue to settle in Metro Vancouver, immigration to some smaller centres is on the rise.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it is important to be mindful of the differences between urban and rural service delivery when designing immigration policy and programs to support innovation and job growth in rural and remote communities. Provincial decision makers need to visit smaller centres/remote communities to learn first-hand the challenges that newcomers face, as well as the challenges that the community faces in welcoming newcomers.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP), an employer-driven pilot program, funded by IRCC, operates in collaboration with the government of the four Maritime provinces, and seeks to attract and retain newcomers to the province based on the needs of employers.<sup>43</sup> A model similar to this may benefit rural and remote communities in BC. A targeted attraction and retention strategy may assist in overcoming the regional disbursement challenges that are currently being faced, and provide opportunities to these communities.

The Province of Ontario has a Municipal Immigration Program (MIP), which seeks to attract, retain and integrate newcomers to various local municipalities, based on Ontario's Immigration Strategy.<sup>44</sup> The MIP seeks to support municipal government to promote best practices and create welcoming communities. The MIP also seeks to develop and enhance local immigration websites and online initiatives that deliver local immigration information, promote municipalities as an attractive destination for settlement, help newcomers integrate into the community, and highlight local labour market gaps.<sup>44</sup> Having such a program in BC would allow for municipalities to strengthen their role in immigration. Furthermore, integration would enable them to be more proactive in attracting and retaining newcomers to their communities.

A new strategy would need to align with BC's Rural Economic Development Strategy for capacity to be built, so that rural communities could attract and retain the people who will support economic growth and diversify rural economies to improve community resilience. Prior to creating this strategy, it is important for government decision makers to visit remote communities and smaller centres to learn first-hand the newcomer experience in those communities and the challenges of the settlement sector to assist in integrating them into the community. Rural communities have been advocating for the provincial government to understand their unique challenges to work together and address solutions.<sup>45</sup> According to research conducted by Immigration Research West (IRC) and the Rural Development Institute, each rural community

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42. BCStats (2017). BC Regional District Development Region Migration Components. Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services.

43. Nova Scotia Immigration (n.d.). AIP and Prospective Immigrants.

44. Province of Ontario. 2017 CFP - Municipal Immigration Program

45. Province of BC (2016). BC Rural Economic Development Strategy Building on our Rural Advantages.



is different, and faces unique and specific challenges, making a “one-size fits all” model for integration impossible.<sup>46</sup>

The regional economic outlook also needs to be taken into consideration when creating this strategy, as each region of the province has different labour market conditions and a distinct economy.<sup>47</sup> The Vancouver Island region for example, has the lowest labour force participation amongst all regions, and expects to see 153,820 job openings in the next ten years.<sup>47</sup> The Thompson-Okanagan region on the other hand, has below-average workforce participation. Many individuals living in the region find labour market opportunities in other regions of the province or in the Alberta oil fields.<sup>47</sup> These two examples highlight that each region of the province is unique in regards to the economic outlook which impacts newcomer settlement within a region and thus an regional perspective needs to be taken on attraction and retention, for individual regions of the province.

## CREATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR NEWCOMERS

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### RECOMMENDATION #4:

That the Province of BC: create a “Comprehensive Workforce Development Strategy” for newcomers, focused on a competency-model for unregulated professions; and task a Fairness Commissioner to oversee foreign credential assessments processed by the various regulatory bodies, for regulated professions. Encouragement, support and incentives are needed for employers, employees and the settlement sector, to take part in training and education initiatives on intercultural communication, unconscious bias and labour laws and regulations. As well, employers need easier mechanisms to connect with the settlement sector

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According to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada’s economy would benefit from better integration of newcomers into the labour market.

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Securing employment is one of the most important steps for newcomers arriving to BC, as it provides the newcomer and their families with an income, enabling them to be active members of society. There are however, many different obstacles that newcomers face when looking to secure employment, such as lack of a network, language proficiency levels and recognition of foreign credentials. Simultaneously, the province loses nearly \$4.7 billion in economic activity and \$616 million in provincial tax revenue, due to the misalignment of education and skills that businesses need.<sup>48</sup> According to a report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada’s economy would benefit from better integration of newcomers into the labour market.<sup>49</sup>

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46. Ashton, W., Pettigrew, R., Galatsanou, E. 2015. Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Western Region

47. WorkBC (2017). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2017 Edition

48. IEC-BC (2016). Employer Forum: Unlock Bias, Leverage Global Talent

49. OECD (2018). OECD Economic Surveys: Canada 201.

The Province of Ontario created the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC), responsible for the administration of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act.<sup>50</sup> The office looks to assess the “registration practices of certain regulated professions and trades to make sure they are transparent, objective, impartial and fair for anyone applying to practice his or her profession”.<sup>51</sup> The Fairness Commissioner looks to ensure that the office meets its mandate, by requiring professional regulation bodies to review their own registration processes and implement recommendations for improvement provided by the Fairness Commissioner’s office.<sup>51</sup> As well, the OFC creates free online learning modules that assist regulated professions in orientating and training their staff about the fair access law.<sup>52</sup>

The OFC has been instrumental in ensuring several professional regulators such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the College of Dietitians of Ontario introduce objective, structured competency evaluations (OSCE) for internationally trained newcomers.<sup>53</sup> Having a similar body in BC would support internationally trained newcomers in filling a numerous number of the 903,000 job vacancies that the province anticipates between 2018 and 2028.<sup>54</sup>

Having a body in place that ensures that a fair process exists for other regulatory bodies to recognize foreign credentials will assist

newcomers in receiving a fair compensation package for the skills and talents that they bring to the employer. Many job titles are controlled by licensing bodies. An employer may not use a job title to describe the work of an individual, which can impact the individual’s pay grade.<sup>55</sup>

This leads to the frustrations and unfulfilled expectations that newcomers have, when arriving to Canada<sup>55</sup> as well as the underemployment or unemployment of many. 48% of internationally educated newcomers who had a post-secondary degree, reported working in their trained or similar occupation, compared to 67% for their Canadian-educated colleagues.<sup>56</sup> This number has increased to 70% for Canadian-born workers with post-secondary Canadian degrees.<sup>55</sup> According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), challenges that newcomers face when entering the labour market not only affect the themselves when looking for employment, but the whole family unit, including second-generation newcomers who will often have a higher level of education and income than other Canadians.<sup>57</sup>

Newcomers to BC were the fourth lowest among all provinces and territories, in terms of their likelihood of having a job that matched their education.<sup>55</sup> The odds of having a job that matched newcomers’ education decreased for those living in rural areas with a population of less than 100,000.<sup>58</sup>

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50. Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, S.O. 2006, CHAPTER 31

51. Office of the Fairness Commissioner (2013). Mandate.

52. Office of the Fairness Commissioner (2014). Online learning about fair access.

53. Office of the Fairness Commissioner (2017). A ten-year journey to fair access: Annual Report 2016-2017.

54. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

55. IEC-BC (2018). Employer Challenges in Attracting and Integrating Immigrant Talent into BC’s Tech Sector.

56. Plante, J. (2011). Integration of Internationally-educated Immigrants into the Canadian Labour Market: Determinants of Success.

57. OECD (2018). OECD Economic Surveys: Canada 2018.

58. Plante, J. (2011). Integration of Internationally-educated Immigrants into the Canadian Labour Market: Determinants of Success.

Focusing solely on foreign credential recognition is not the only route to ensuring that newcomers are matched with the appropriate job opportunities. It is important for newcomers to receive an early labour market attachment, ideally prior to their arrival. This can be done by focusing on a competency model for professions that are not regulated, to assist employers in understanding the roles and skills that the newcomer employee has.

Unconscious bias in the hiring process is one area where additional training and education is needed. Studies have shown that resumes with English-sounding names are more likely to proceed to the interview stage than resumes with names of Indian or Chinese origin.<sup>59</sup> This unconscious bias contributes to the newcomer not feeling welcome. Businesses lose out on hiring immigrant talent, contributing to the loss of revenue to the business and ultimately the economy.

Communication skills are one of the soft skill areas where employers in the tech sector have stated there is a “mismatch” between the skills that newcomers have, and the expectation of employers according to a report release by the Immigration Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)<sup>60</sup> By operating from a competency-based model, targeted employment training can be offered to newcomers, to bridge gaps. One way for employers to be more equipped to leverage the skills of newcomers and to successfully integrate and retain them is by providing diversity and cross-cultural training to all staff.<sup>61</sup>

According to a report created by IEC-BC, employers want to connect with newcomers who arrive to BC, however many employers do not have an understanding or awareness of settlement services that can be utilized to connect to newcomer talent nor have the knowledge of the supports that the settlement sector can provide to their newcomer staff members.<sup>62</sup>

## SEEK SETTLEMENT SECTOR INPUT INTO MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING IMMIGRATION

### RECOMMENDATION #5:

The settlement sector requests the Province of BC seek settlement sector input into memorandums of understanding and agreements on immigration reached between other levels of government.

The success of newcomer integration is contingent on a successful collaboration between many different contributors, including the federal, provincial and municipal governments. All three levels need to work collaboratively with the settlement sector. The settlement sector when working on the ground assisting newcomers is not always aware of the complexities and intersections regarding government areas of responsibility when looking to support newcomers. Settlement

59. Oreopoulos, P. & Dechief, D. (2011) Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir? New evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver

60. IEC-BC (2018). Employer Challenges in Attracting and Integrating Immigrant Talent into BC's Tech Sector

61. IRCC (2017). The Employer's Roadmap: Hiring & Retaining Internationally Trained Workers

62. IEC-BC (2017). Mapping Refugee Skills and Employer Needs in Surrey and Abbotsford

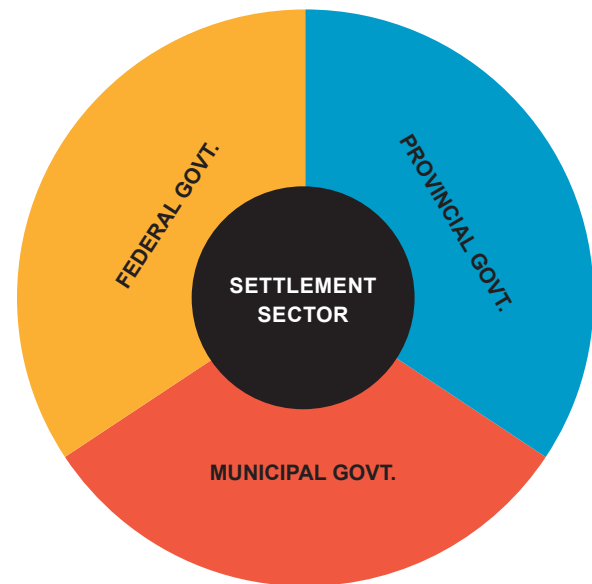
service providers look to bring forward to different levels of government various gaps and challenges that they have identified and experienced that newcomers face often to hear that the area where improvement is needed is the mandate of another level of government. Having clear memorandums of understanding where the settlement sector is able to provide input will allow for greater clarity when discussing key issues facing newcomers.

The Government of Ontario passed the Ontario Immigration Act (Bill 49) in 2015 which provides the provincial Minister of Immigration more governance to establish and govern provincially funded immigration programs and recognizes that municipal governments and employers are key partners to collaborate with.<sup>63</sup> Bill 49 allowed the provincial government to advocate to the federal government for increased immigration investments as well as enhanced funding for provincially funded settlement programming.<sup>63</sup>

Another mechanism utilized in Ontario to help achieve common federal, provincial and municipal collaboration, is the Municipal Immigration Committee (MIC). The MIC brings together the three levels of government as partners, to attract, retain and settle newcomers to the province.<sup>63</sup> The Province of BC recently created an Inter-Governmental Committee with representatives from IRCC and municipalities in the Metro

Vancouver area, to discuss and collaborate on areas of settlement.

#### SUCCESS OF NEWCOMER INTEGRATION



The current shift to the provincial Government of Ontario may bring changes that will impact provincial policies regarding immigration. The Province of BC and its residents have the opportunity to continue to demonstrate that BC welcomes newcomers and its residents continue to have positive views in regards to immigration and refugees.<sup>64</sup>

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63. Association of Municipalities Ontario (2017). Municipal Government and Immigration: A Primer for AMO Members

64. Focus Canada (2018). Canadian public opinion about immigration and minority groups

## ENHANCE SETTLEMENT SECTOR CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN POLICY

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### RECOMMENDATION #6:

That the Province of BC provide the settlement sector with the capacity to take part in coordinated immigration related policy discussions, including with the related provincial ministries and the settlement sector.

In 2015, in a response to the global humanitarian crisis in Syria, the Province of BC announced the creation of a \$1 million fund to assist Syrian refugee resettlement to BC.<sup>65</sup> The fund enabled the creation of five Refugee Readiness Teams (RRT) across the province, tasked with assisting in coordinating, training and identifying the needs of communities where Syrian refugees would be resettled.

The Province of BC was able to host and participate on these RRT tables where inter-ministerial collaboration occurred, which greatly benefitted the settlement sector. The intersection between settlement and integration and other provincially mandated ministries, was positive. The concept of intersectionality refers to “the ways race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, status and other markers of differences intersect to inform individual realities and lived

experiences.”<sup>66</sup> Newcomers arriving to BC utilize services and intersect with other provincial ministries. Viewing their integration from a holistic governmental approach, will keep immigrant settlement from operating in a silo.

Collaboration and coordination is also needed for the settlement sector, to leverage funding dollars and services. It is important for other government ministries to be able to learn about the specific needs of newcomers and how these intersect with their provincial ministries.

## INCREASE INVESTMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY TO IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

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### RECOMMENDATION #7:

That the Province of BC increase its investment in immigrant integration for all immigration categories, and expand eligibility for services to all, as the investment benefits the entire province, economically.

We suggest that the Government of BC advocate with the federal government as part of the joint planning process for a needs-based eligibility to settlement services. All newcomers, including those not currently eligible for the IRCC funded settlement program, could access services based on their needs, not their immigration status.

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65. Government of British Columbia. (n.d.). New provincial fund to help Syrian refugee settlement.

66. Mason, C. N. (n.d.). Leading at the Intersections: An introduction to the intersectional approach model for policy and social change. NYU Wagner: Women of Color Policy Network.

Each year, BC becomes home to newcomers who arrive through one of Canada's immigration streams. The immigration stream of arrival determines an individual's (and their family's) eligibility for accessing settlement supports. Settlement services are critical to the integration of newcomers, regardless of their pathway, to feeling welcomed, informed and supported in becoming successful in society. Settlement agencies provide services such as English classes, job search classes, and community orientation.<sup>67</sup>

According to Canada's Constitution, immigration is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Sharing the responsibility requires shared planning and shared funding responsibilities, as these ultimately benefit the future of the country and the province. Ontario's provincial government invested over \$110 million in settlement programming for newcomers in 2017,<sup>68</sup> compared to the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology's \$7.5 million for BC Settlement and Integration Services (BC SIS) and the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants program.<sup>69 70</sup> This means that while Ontario receives between two to three times more newcomers than BC,<sup>71</sup> it is directly investing more than 14 times the amount that BC directly invests. On March 15, 2018, the Government of Ontario announced further investments of \$121 million over 236 projects, to support its newcomers.<sup>72</sup>

Settlement and integration requires a "whole of society" approach to be successful. Collaboration, innovation and the ability to make referrals are key for ensuring newcomers receive the full suite of services they require to feel welcomed and included in their new communities. The settlement sector looks to meet these growing needs, but lacks capacity to focus on innovation, particularly in a "competitive funding environment."<sup>73</sup>

Prior to the repatriation of settlement services from the provincial government to the federal government, the settlement sector in BC had the flexibility and capacity to develop and implement innovative and outcomes-focused settlement service delivery models. The funding model was extended to include currently ineligible clients to this more holistic, inclusive and innovative approach.<sup>74</sup> By adapting a needs-based funding model, we are moving to a more equitable and just approach to settlement service offerings.

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Settlement and integration requires a "whole of society" approach to be successful.

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67. WelcomeBC (n.d.). Welcome to British Columbia: Information for Temporary Foreign Workers in British Columbia.

68. Province of Ontario (2017). Ontario Providing More Opportunities for Diverse Communities to Thrive. Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration news release.

69. Province of BC (2018). Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology. 2018/19-2020/21 Service Plan.

70. Assistant Deputy Minister Rob Mingay (2018) Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (letter to Settlement Stakeholders, March 12, 2018, Ref: 140261).

71. Statistics Canada (2017). Number of non-permanent residents, Canada, provinces and territories. CANSIM table 051-0020. [Author's calculations]

72. Government of Ontario (n.d). Ontario Making New Investments in Newcomer Success

73. Purpose Capital (2016). Social Finance Models for the Settlement Sector in Canada

74. Dikson, H., Lindquist, E., Pollard, B. & Yan, M. C. (2013). Devolving Settlement Funding from the Government of Canada: The British Columbia Experience, 1998-2013.

## CREATION OF PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

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### RECOMMENDATION #8:

That the Province of BC, in conjunction with the settlement sector, promote the benefits of immigration so that a more favourable environment is created in which to address labour market shortages through immigration.

According to a survey conducted by the Environics Institute, newcomers to Canada are the seventh happiest in the world, in regards to their well-being compared to other countries. This can be partially attributed to the overall positive attitude that the public has towards immigration.<sup>75</sup> To continue to attract newcomers to BC, the general public's attitude towards immigration needs to remain the same or improve.

Multiculturalism and immigration are strongly interconnected. Canada is widely viewed as a country that celebrates its ethnic and cultural diversity.<sup>76</sup> BC, according to public opinion, is a province that welcomes newcomers and continues to have positive views related to immigration and refugees.<sup>76</sup> The reality in Canada however, is that discrimination is prevalent based on an individual's race, ethnic background, cultural practices, religion and/or gender.<sup>76</sup>

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Canada is widely viewed as a country that celebrates its ethnic and cultural diversity. BC, according to public opinion, is a province that welcomes newcomers and continues to have positive views related to immigration and refugees.

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The BC government and industry need to collaborate to fill approximately 903,000 job openings by 2028. It is estimated that 9% of the job openings will be in the science and technology sector.<sup>77</sup> There is an expectation that 27% of these vacancies will need to be filled by 24,300 immigrants to BC each year.<sup>78</sup> Immigration between 2011 and 2016 has already accounted for 90% of the labour force growth.<sup>79</sup> "Immigrant talent is critical to economic growth and employer success", according to the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC).<sup>80</sup>

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**"Immigrant talent is critical to economic growth and employer success", according to the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC).**

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Often, instead of focusing on the positive benefits that newcomers bring (such as international experience and education, advanced skills and an understanding of different cultural contexts)<sup>80</sup> there is a focus on their deficiencies, including a lack of Canadian workplace experience or recognition of foreign credentials.<sup>80</sup>

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75. Moczulsk, J.P. (2018 Mar 22). Canadian attitudes toward immigrants, refugees remain positive: study. The Globe and Mail.

76. Focus Canada (2018). Canadian public opinion about immigration and minority groups

77. Government of BC (n.d.). Emerging Economy Task Force to guide BC's economic strategy

78. Government of BC (2018). British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

79. El-Assal, K. & Fields, D. (2018). Canada 2040: No immigration versus more immigration.

80. IEC-BC (2016). 2016 Employer Forum: Unlock Bias, Leverage Global Talent.

When actually compared with the rest of the country's working-age population, immigrants (who mainly arrive during their prime working years), have a high employment rate of 63.3% for 2017 compared to 61.7% for the general population.<sup>81</sup>

Without immigration, the Canadian government would have a smaller tax base to access. The reduction would pressure all three levels of government, to cut spending on social services, which would be particularly noticeable in small and rural communities that are already experiencing a population decline.<sup>81</sup>

Immigration, regardless of the pathway, needs to be positioned as an asset for communities. With that in mind, attraction and retention goals of newcomers to BC need to be highlighted. According to the Conference Board of Canada, if Canada were to suddenly become a country that no longer welcomed immigrants, the GDP of the country would slow to an average of 1.3% annually<sup>82</sup>, compared to the current BC GDP growth of 3.9% for 2017.<sup>83</sup> Although the economic classes are selected specifically for their ability to contribute economically, the reality is that newcomers of all classes and skill levels (economic, family, refugees, refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, international mobility program, Post-Secondary international students, and others) help the BC economy grow. Not only do they fill gaps in the labour market, but over the long term, they contribute demographically to future population growth.

## INCENTIVES FOR MENTORING AND OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TRAINING

### RECOMMENDATION #9:

That the Province of BC promote the benefits of supporting and hiring newcomers, through incentives for employers to invest in: mentoring newcomers; and offering occupation-specific English language training for newcomer employees either for the workplace or in the workplace.

Language learning is a key to integrating into a new community. The national Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs incorporate the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC's) nine Essential Skills profiles. The profiles describe the skills that workers require, and their level of difficulty. The Essential Skills profiles are used for devising career options and learning plans, and to prepare newcomers for the workplace.<sup>84</sup>

Given the vast client demographic for LINC classes and the broad reach of program elements (i.e. citizenship preparation, curricular themes, and supports for English as an Additional Language (EAL) literacy learners), targeted supports for each learners' own employment goals are limited, if not absent.

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81. El-Assal, K. & Fields, D. (2018). Canada 2040: No immigration versus more immigration.

82. El-Assal, K. & Fields, D. (2018). Canada 2040: No immigration versus more immigration.

83. Richards, E. (2018). "Recent Economic Developments in British Columbia." Economic Insight, no. 081

84. Work BC (2017). Essential Skills and Literacy.



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BC loses out on as much as \$4.7 billion in economic activity, due to skills shortages. BC also loses out on \$616 million in provincial tax revenues annually, as a result of under-utilized foreign skills and unrecognized credentials.

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More than 60% of new immigrants to Canada have literacy skills below the Level 3 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) category.<sup>85</sup> According to a report commissioned by the TD bank, established immigrants, who have been in the country for more than ten years, have only a slightly smaller proportion (60%) compared to recent immigrants (63%) in the lower PIAAC literacy levels.<sup>84</sup> The Level 3 score is considered a suitable minimum for surviving the demands of Canada's high-literacy focused society. As such, with the majority of newcomers falling below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) literacy average, the economy erodes.<sup>86</sup>

BC loses out on as much as \$4.7 billion in economic activity, due to skills shortages. BC also loses out on \$616 million in provincial tax revenues annually, as a result of under-utilized foreign skills and unrecognized credentials. BC and newcomers would both gain from concerted liaison efforts with employers; the availability of employment-specific language training options<sup>77</sup>; and limited occupation-specific terminology. Idiomatic speech and cultural humility in the interview stage may prevent some newcomers

from securing employment.

The Province of Nova Scotia offers an “English in the workplace program” that allows businesses to offer free on-site English classes to newcomers.<sup>87</sup> The Governments of Alberta, Ontario and Quebec have established programs dedicated to provincially-funded language training for newcomers.<sup>88</sup> The Government of Alberta offers funding for “innovative approaches to language training”<sup>88</sup>, while the Government of Ontario offers language training delivery, assessment services, and occupation-specific language training.<sup>88</sup>

## BETTER ALIGNMENT BETWEEN K-12 AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### RECOMMENDATION #10:

That the Province of BC create better alignment between the Ministry of Education-funded K-12 programming and post-secondary education programming and assessment, including newcomer adult language training.

Better alignment is needed of English Language Learning (ELL) skills evaluation offered in K-12 with LINC and Adult Basic Education (ABE)/English as a Second Language (ESL)/Adult Special Education (ASE) skills evaluation. This will support the transition for school-leaving age

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77. Government of BC (n.d.). Emerging Economy Task Force to guide BC's economic strategy

84. Work BC (2017). Essential Skills and Literacy.

85. TD Economics (2013). Canada's Literacy and Numeracy Challenge Worsens.

86. Statistics Canada; Employment and Social Development Canada (2013). Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Minister of Industry

87. Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (n.d.-a). English in the workplace program

88. Dominique C. (2018) University of Alberta (personal communication, June 28, 2018)

newcomer youth, as well as parents of K-12 youth, currently navigating the two different systems.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) and their French counterpart, Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC), have been used in Canada since 1998, as an assessment tool to measure Canadian official language proficiency. The CLB/NCLCs create better pathways for domestic immigrant students and Post-Secondary international students, who may eventually want to make BC their home. The Public Post-Secondary Institutions (PPSI) offering English language training are articulated to the CLB/NCLCs. These measures support entry into the labour market and promote Canadian values, unlike the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which is reportedly being used in some BC K-12 contexts, but is not Canadian.

AMSSA's work with the Ministry of Education has been positive. Interest has been expressed in mapping a CLB-aligned pathway between K-12, PPSIs, IRCC-funded language instruction and in cross-ministry collaboration. A concerted effort to make this initiative a priority is required to move ahead.

## ACCESS TO FREE EDUCATION REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

### RECOMMENDATION #11:

That the Province of BC change its policy to specifically state that all children should have access to free education in BC regardless of their immigration status. The Province of BC should create more resources for newcomer youth aging out of the school system, and transitioning to adult newcomer programming.

Approximately 34% of all newcomers to Canada are under the age 25.<sup>89</sup> Approximately 12% of all people under age 25 in BC were born outside of Canada, the highest proportion among all Canadian provinces and territories.<sup>90</sup>

The settlement sector continues to recognize that the needs of young people are different and distinct from the needs of children and adults; therefore, youth-specific programs are much needed and have become more common in recent years.<sup>91</sup>

Each school board across the province reviews every child's registration in the school district, based on Section 82 of the BC School Act. School boards determine on a case-by-case basis, if the document provided to them by the parents or guardians supported that they are ordinary

residents of BC and thus eligible for free K-12 education.<sup>92</sup> The settlement sector believes that each child, regardless of immigration status, should be eligible to receive free education. Such policies currently exist in Ontario and Quebec. The sector would support the Province of BC adopting a similar policy.<sup>93</sup>

89. Statistics Canada (2011). Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada.

90. Pottie, K. et al (2015). Health Profile on Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada. In The Health of Canada's Children and Youth: A CICH Profile

91. Bernhard, J.K. et al (2010). Meeting the Needs of Immigrants Throughout the Lifecycle. Region of Peel Immigration Discussion Paper

92. Board of Education Burnaby School District 41. Access to Services for Residents with Uncertain or No Immigration Status

93. Government du Quebec (n.d.). Bill 144 – Free Educational Services and Compulsory School Attendance

## CREATE POLICIES TO RETAIN POST-SECONDARY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO STUDY IN BC

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### RECOMMENDATION #12:

That the Province of BC create policies that will assist to retain Post-Secondary international students who study in BC; give increased financial support to provide services to Post Secondary international students; and create policies so that Post-Secondary international students have greater access to provincially-funded services. Greater investments are needed by the province to ensure that Post-Secondary international students receive the supports required when studying in BC, so that they have a strong educational experience, as students who return to their country of origin become champions for the city, province and country where they studied.

Post-Secondary international students brought in \$2.7 billion to the BC economy through direct and indirect impacts in 2016<sup>94</sup>, and benefited Canada by contributing \$15.5 billion to the overall economy.<sup>95</sup> Post-Secondary international students also contribute to the internationalization of Canadian universities, which benefits all students by providing them with an enriched academic experience. From an immigration perspective, Post-Secondary international students are increasingly viewed as a source of “temporary

workers and a pool of potential permanent residents”.<sup>96</sup>

In 2016, 23% of the 268,000 international student program participants were destined for BC, making the province the second most popular destination for Post-Secondary international students after Ontario.<sup>96</sup> At the same time, the number of work permits issued to college graduates increased 158% between 2015 and 2016, with 24,000 post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) being approved.<sup>96</sup>

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Post-Secondary international students brought in \$2.7 billion to the BC economy through direct and indirect impacts in 2016, and benefited Canada by contributing \$15.5 billion to the overall economy.

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Former Post Secondary international students are increasingly electing to stay in Canada following their studies, with over 30,000 former study permit holders becoming permanent residents in 2016 and 70% of PGWP holders becoming permanent residents within five years.<sup>96</sup>

Due to the temporary status that Post-Secondary international students face, combined with often being in transition across cultures, their challenges vary widely depending on their age, knowledge of Canadian culture and country of origin.<sup>97</sup> Common adjustment issues of international university students can include educational concerns, language difficulties, financial problems, social isolation, interpersonal challenges, homesickness, worries about extended family and differences in social customs.<sup>96</sup>

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94. Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc. (2017). Economic Impact of International Education in Canada- 2017 update.

95. Pathways to Prosperity (2018). Profile of Canada’s International Student Movement: From Temporary to Permanent Residents

96. Bernhard, J.K. et al (2010). Meeting the Needs of Immigrants Throughout the Lifecycle. Region of Peel Immigration Discussion Paper

97. N. Popadiuk and N. Arthur, ‘Counseling International Students in Canadian Schools’, International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, p. 127.

Post-Secondary international students are currently not eligible to receive IRCC funded settlement supports. The Province of BC has not taken the lead in providing funding for these clients; however the funding amounts for this population group do not meet the need nor does it reflect the economic benefit that the province receives monetarily from Post-Secondary international students.

## AREAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

In addition to the recommendations, other themes emerged from the consultation that we would like to highlight as areas for further discussion and exploration.

### IMPROVE COST AND ACCESSIBILITY OF TRANSIT

Transportation and the cost of transportation, affects newcomers across the province. In certain regions, the cost of transportation is a barrier that newcomers face, while in others, the lack of transportation is a barrier. Although this is not a problem that solely affects newcomers, this heavily impacts them, when combined with other barriers.

One model that the settlement sector would like to see replicated in the lower mainland is the Low Income Transit Pass program, which the City of Calgary implemented. Calgary's program provides youth and adults, who are on a reduced income, with a low cost monthly transit pass.<sup>98</sup> The minimum discount of the program is 50%, calculated based on income, on a sliding scale.<sup>99</sup>

For clients taking part in federally-funded settlement programming, one of the largest needs they face is transportation support, to attend medical and school appointments.<sup>100</sup>

Newcomers face many barriers when moving to a new home. One of them is access to transportation. This barrier can take on many different forms, such as a person's driver's license from their home country is not recognized in BC. Language can impact a newcomer's ability to apply for a driver's license, and understanding how local public transit works. Travelling between communities, which is often needed to access services, amenities and connect with members of the same faith or cultural community, can be a great challenge.

Residents, including newcomers, First People's and other members of the general public living in rural and remote communities, will be impacted by the July 8, 2018 announcement by Greyhound Canada that the

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98. City of Calgary (n.d.-a). Fair Entry.

99. City of Calgary (n.d.-b). Fair Entry: Fee Reduction Application.

100. IRCC (2017). Evaluation of the Settlement Program.

company will no longer be offering services in BC with the exception of a route travelling from Vancouver to Seattle.<sup>101</sup> Newcomers living in the affected areas will no longer be able to seamlessly travel between Prince George and Smithers. The 400-kilometer journey will now take two days using BC Transit and will require an overnight stay in Burns Lake.<sup>102</sup> Newcomers living in communities such as Prince Rupert or the northeast of BC, extending from Prince George to Dawson Creek, are unable to access BC Transit service that links the communities.<sup>102</sup>

## IMPROVE ALIGNMENT OF PRIMARY IDENTIFICATION

The Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC) is a provincial crown corporation responsible for issuing driver's licenses to individuals living in BC. When applying for a driver's license an individual must present a primary and a secondary piece of identification. This can be a challenge for newcomers who have limited Canadian identification options that are accepted as primary identification.

One of the identification documents that newcomers have is their confirmation of permanent resident IMM5292 or IMM5688 documents, which are not accepted as primary forms of identification - only a permanent resident card is accepted.<sup>103</sup> This is a particular burden for newcomers, as there is an additional cost per person to apply for the government permanent resident card.

## REDUCE HOUSING BARRIERS FOR NEWCOMERS

Housing and housing affordability are concerns for all BC residents, particularly those living in the Metro Vancouver area. The area is currently experiencing the worst affordability levels ever recorded in Canada, with the cost of owning a home accounting for 85.2% of a typical household's income.<sup>104</sup> Approximately 81.2% of all newcomers to BC call Metro Vancouver home.<sup>105</sup>

Finding suitable and affordable housing is a struggle for everyone in BC; in particular, newcomers who have been in Canada for five years or less, are three times more likely to be in "core housing need" (29.6%) than non-immigrants (11%). Newcomers generally improve their housing situation the longer they are in Canada.<sup>106</sup> Newcomers do not elect to be in core housing as these dwellings are considered unsuitable and inadequate to the needs of the household.<sup>107</sup> Approximately 17.6% of households in Vancouver and 14.2% of households in Victoria are in core housing, which is well above the national average of 12.7%.<sup>107</sup>

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101. Dickson, Janice (2018 July 9). Greyhound Canada to end routes in Prairies, BC Global News.

102. Kurjata, Andrew (2018 Feb 21). Greyhound is leaving northern British Columbia: Here's what you need to know. CBC News.

103. ICBC (n.d.). Accepted ID.

104. RBC (2018). Housing Trends and Affordability.

105. NewToBC (2018). Vancouver Immigrant Demographics.

106. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (2014). Canadian housing observer 2014

107. Statistics Canada (2018). Core housing need, 2016 Census.

A newcomer's immigration category and country of origin play a role in successfully being able to secure suitable, stable and affordable housing. Visible minority newcomers face greater barriers and challenges than newcomers of European origin.<sup>108</sup> Refugee claimants are particularly impacted in finding housing due to their precarious immigration status, lack of a Canadian credit history or a social insurance number (SIN). Settlement organizations for the most part are limited to supporting clients based on their immigration status and are often not able to support refugee claimants in their search for housing as this falls outside of the scope of the funding they receive.<sup>109</sup> Through BC Settlement and Integration Services (BC SIS) funding, select organizations will be receiving funding for 2018/19 to support refugee claimants in securing housing.

In a recent survey of 311 refugees who arrived in BC between October 1, 2016 and December 31, 2017, 84 (27%) claimed they utilized 51% to 75% of their monthly income on shelter, while 75 (24%) claimed that over 75% of their income was utilized for housing purposes.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, many were not experiencing housing stability, as 251 of the 311 (81%) survey respondents claimed they had moved at least once and 62 respondents claimed they had moved three or more times.<sup>110</sup>

Research has shown that few newcomers make use of shelter systems for homelessness, but instead stay with relatives or friends, which results in "hidden homelessness" - something that refugees and refugee claimant populations are more likely to experience, partially due to having smaller social networks.<sup>111 112</sup>

Newcomers to BC face additional barriers to finding housing in an already difficult market, due to English language barriers, a lack of Canadian references and the lack of a Canadian credit rating. These barriers are compounded by family size and financial constraints when looking to secure appropriate housing.<sup>111</sup>

While the province has been active in trying to create additional housing units,<sup>113</sup> more work needs to be done to prevent hidden homelessness and to ensure that BC remains a destination of choice for newcomer talent.

## INCREASE INTERPRETATION ACCESS IN HEALTHCARE

Research indicates that most newcomers to Canada are able to successfully access the healthcare services they require.<sup>114</sup> However, some newcomers experience barriers to accessing health care at the system, provider or individual level.<sup>115</sup> The most common reasons for newcomers being unable to access health care, are: long wait times, the cost of services, language barriers and the inability to find a doctor accepting

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108. Wayland, S. (2007). The Housing Needs of Immigrants and Refugees in Canada. A Background Paper for the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association

109. Multi-Agency Partnership (2018). A Forum Focused on Solutions: Addressing the Urgent Shelter and Housing Needs of Refugee Claimants in BC.

110. ISSofBC (2018). Refugee Claimants in BC: Understanding Current Irregular Arrival Trends.

111. Francis, J. and Hiebert, D. (2014). Shaky foundations: Refugees in Vancouver's housing market. *The Canadian Geographer* 58: 63–78.

112. Bergeron, J. and Potter, S. (2006). Family members and relatives: An important resource for newcomers' settlement? *Canadian Issues Spring*: 76-80.

113. BC Housing (n.d.-a). Facts & Stats.

114. Statistics Canada (2003). Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, progress and prospects.

115. Pottie et al. Preparing for Diversity: Improving Preventive Health Care for Immigrants. *Our Diverse Cities*.

new patients.<sup>116</sup>

The importance of language in ensuring adequate access to health care cannot be overstated. Some research suggests that language, rather than cultural beliefs and practices of patients, may be the most significant barrier to initial contact with health care service providers.<sup>117</sup>

The Provincial Health Service Authority's (PHSA's) Provincial Language Service (PHS) does provide "interpreting services to health-care professionals who work for any agency or service under the BC health authorities and private physician offices".<sup>118</sup> There is disparity across the province in terms of access and usage of interpretation services in health care, as they are provided to Interior and Northern Health staff on a fee-for-service basis.<sup>119</sup> This disparity and lack of clarity on the rights of a patient to access interpretation services, is an additional barrier newcomers face.

PHSA's information for clients states, "Doctors and other health care professionals in BC are not required to use health care interpreters. In some cases they may not be aware that these services exist. Newcomers can mention to their doctor or health care provider that professional interpreters are available, if they are comfortable doing so."<sup>120</sup>

## ADOPT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION (SOGIE) GUIDELINES

Between 2013 and 2015, 2,234 refugees claimed asylum in Canada, based on their sexual orientation.<sup>121</sup> The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) adopted new guidelines on sexual orientation and gender identity, to promote a greater understand of these cases and the potential harm that individuals face.<sup>122</sup> While there are still many gaps and a need for improvement, there is general recognition that these guidelines break new territory and that in many areas, they provide a "model of good practice for other authorities and jurisdictions".<sup>123</sup> One positive aspect is that the guidelines recognize the intersectionality between SOGIE and race, ethnicity, religion, faith or belief system, age, disability, health status, social class and education.<sup>123</sup>

In 2016, federal government amended the Canadian Human Rights Act by adding "gender identity or expression" as protected grounds. Even though BC has a bill that explicitly protects against discrimination based on gender identity or expression, there is still more work that needs to be done.

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116. Statistics Canada (2003). Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, progress and prospects.

117. BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (2014). Bridging Settlement and Health. BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre

118. Provincial Health Services Authority (n.d.-a). Spoken Language Interpreting Services.

119. Provincial Health Services Authority (n.d.-a). Spoken Language Interpreting Services.

120. Provincial Health Services Authority (n.d.-b). Information for your clients.

121. Bielski, Z. (2017, April 30). Burden of proof.

122. Government of Canada (2017, May 1). Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Announces New Guideline on Proceedings Involving Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression.

123. Dustin, M. & Ferreira, N. (2017, December). Canada's Guideline 9: improving SOGIE claims assessment?

## INCREASE ACCESS TO CHILDCARE FOR NEWCOMERS

According to the 2016 Census, young children up to 14 years of age, make up 14.9% of BC's population and 16.6% of Canada's population. In BC, 3.6% of young children are newcomers.<sup>124</sup> Newcomer children are the most vulnerable, with 44.9% living in poverty compared to 18.4% of all children in the province, aged one to 17.<sup>125</sup>

The Government of BC provides a childcare subsidy for low income families, so that children can attend care in a licensed family home, group childcare centre or preschool.<sup>126</sup> However, the rate available to parents does not cover childcare fees for toddlers in Vancouver, as the fees average \$1,292 per month.<sup>127</sup> The Province of BC is looking to improve access to childcare and will be changes will be coming into effect September 1, 2018 through the Affordable Child Care Benefit which will replace the Child Care Subsidy.<sup>128</sup>

The fees are not the only barrier that families face when accessing childcare; the waitlists to access childcare are long, as demand for childcare outweighs availability in most instances, especially for infants and toddlers.<sup>127</sup>

For newcomer parents, the lack of available childcare is one of the many barriers to accessing settlement services.<sup>129</sup> As well, refugee claimants are not eligible for subsidy programs, further reducing the already limited childcare options.<sup>130</sup>

When looking at all available licensed childcare in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), there is a 65% coverage gap, meaning that 62,000 of the 116,000 children living in the area reside in a postal code zone that could qualify as a "childcare desert".<sup>131</sup> The situation is particularly dire in Surrey, which has a total immigrant population of 220,155 representing 43% of the community<sup>132</sup>, but only has 7,325 licensed childcare spaces available for the 29,080 children (newcomer and Canadian) in Surrey.<sup>131</sup>

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124. Statistics Canada. 2017. British Columbia [Province] and Canada [Country] (table). Census Profile of 2016 Census.

125. First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. 2017. BC Child Poverty Report Card.

126. British Columbia (n.d.-a). Financial assistance for childcare.

127. Macdonald, D. & Friendly, M. (2017). Time Out: Childcare fees in Canada 2017. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

128. Province of British Columbia (n.d). Child Care Subsidy - Information for Parents.

129. Ashton, B., Pettigrew, R., & Galatsanou, E. (2015). Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Western Region. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

130. ISSofBC (2018). Refugee claimants in BC: Understanding Current Irregular Arrival Trends.

131. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2018). Child Care Deserts in Canada.

132. NewToBC (2018). Immigrant Demographics Surrey, BC.



Parents cannot use their childcare subsidy to support the cost of child-minding programs so that they can attend language learning or employment preparation courses.<sup>133</sup> As well, the cost and lack of availability of childcare spaces imposes additional burden on newcomers seeking employment.<sup>134</sup> Expanding and increasing the childcare subsidy will assist newcomers and ineligible clients in accessing childcare, which in turn will allow newcomer parents to access education and training programs to improve their language skills and labour market outcomes, so that they are fully able to participate in the economy.

## SUPPORT INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

The settlement sector in BC is cognizant of society's roles to understand, honour and look to improve the historic relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples; and, to ensure that newcomers to BC communities have the opportunity to learn, understand and create relationships with the Indigenous peoples of the land, which BC residents inhabit.

Each part of society, from civil society to government, must commit to implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). A key component of their implementation, is keeping each other accountable and learning about reconciliation.

The Government of Alberta recently committed to moving towards reconciliation by providing public servants with the opportunity to attend in-person training on Indigenous histories, the residential school system, treaties, and current issues, to discuss how they can implement this learning into their work.<sup>135</sup>

Initial steps have been taken by the Government of BC, by providing funding for a guide for newcomers that introduces them to Indigenous people.<sup>136</sup> More work needs to be done and expanded on, in consultation with Indigenous peoples.

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133. Childcare Resource and Research Unit (2006). Early childhood education and care in Canada.

134. ISSofBC (2018). Refugee claimants in BC: Understanding Current Irregular Arrival Trends.

135. Government of Alberta (2018, June 18). Public servants to take Indigenous training.

136. Wilson, K., & Henderson, J. (2014). First Peoples: A guide for Newcomers.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Newcomers provide an enormous contribution to the province, and have helped shape and form the BC that many call home.

Moving from “newcomer settlement” to “newcomer integration,” and creating welcoming communities, requires collaboration with all three levels of government, the settlement sector, the business community, academia, law enforcement and civil society.

The settlement sector and its partners, is calling on the Province of BC to strengthen its commitment and focus to newcomer integration, so that the province can prosper economically, socially and culturally. This is an important time in history where collaboration is critical. A federal government commitment to multi-year immigration planning, presents an ideal opportunity to align provincial commitments to immigration and multiculturalism, which can assist the province’s growth, economically.

The settlement sector would like to thank the Province of BC for their many years of partnership in ensuring that BC is a welcoming home for newcomers. The sector looks forward to a renewed focus, commitment, and engagement, and welcomes a strengthened collaborative effort moving forward.

## APPENDIX A - LIST OF IICC MEMBERS

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### IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE

#### Membership List

#### METRO VANCOUVER

1. Collingwood Neighbourhood House
2. Immigrant Services Society of BC
3. Inland Refugee Society
4. Jewish Family Services Agency
5. Kiwassa Neighbourhood Services Association
6. Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
7. MOSAIC
8. Multicultural Helping House Society
9. North Shore Multicultural Society
10. Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
11. Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
12. Richmond Multicultural Community Services
13. South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
14. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
15. YMCA of Greater Vancouver

#### FRASER VALLEY

16. Abbotsford Community Services
17. Chilliwack Community Services
18. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
19. Langley Community Services Society
20. Mission Community Services Society
21. OPTIONS Community Services Society
22. Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society

#### VANCOUVER ISLAND

23. Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
24. Cowichan Intercultural Society
25. Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
26. Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
27. Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association of North Vancouver Island

#### NORTH

28. Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society

#### INTERIOR

29. Kamloops Immigrant Services
30. Kelowna Community Resources
31. South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services
32. Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Services

## APPENDIX B – ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS

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Representatives from the following organizations look part in the consultation process:

- Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Abbotsford Community Services
- Abbotsford Police Department
- ACS
- Adler University
- Anglican Diocese of B.C.
- Aimhi
- ARAISA - Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
- Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC
- Back in Motion
- BC TEAL
- BC Women's Hospital
- Burnaby Hospital
- Burnaby School District
- C. Wishart Consulting
- Camosun College
- Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
- Capital Regional District
- Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House
- Chilliwack Community Services
- Cowichan Intercultural Society
- City of Nanaimo
- City of Prince George
- City of Surrey
- Clearbrook Public Library
- College Educa Center
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
- Constituency Assistant-MLA Mike Morris
- Continuing Education Coquitlam
- Cottage Neighbourhood House
- Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
- Decoda Literacy Solutions
- Delta Community College
- DIVERSEcity
- Douglas College
- English Language & Multicultural Services
- Fraser Health
- Go2HR
- Hecate Strait Employment Development Society
- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)
- Immigration Advisory Table
- Immigrant & Multicultural Services Society (IMSS)
- Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)
- Inland Refugee Society of BC
- Integration and Outreach Supervisor
- ISSofBC
- Kelowna Community Resources (KCR)
- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
- Langley Community Services Society
- Langley School District

- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
- Economic Development - City of Prince George
- MANSO - Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations
- Migrant Workers Center
- Multicultural & Immigrant Services Association of North Vancouver Island (MISA)
- MLA-Shirley Bond's Office
- MOSAIC
- Mothers Matter Center
- Mount Pleasant Family Centre Society
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- Multicultural Heritage Society
- New Directions English Language School
- New to BC
- North Labour Law Corporation
- North Shore Multicultural Society
- Ocana Law Firm
- Okanagan Regional Library
- Pacific Community Resources Society
- Peace Geeks
- Prince George and District Elizabeth Fry Society
- Prince George School District-director learning pathways
- Project Literacy Kelowna
- RCMP E division
- Richmond Multicultural Community Services
- Richmond School District
- Ridge Meadows Multicultural society
- SAISIA - Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- School District #43 Coquitlam
- Settlement Orientation Services
- Shuswap Settlement Services Society
- Skeena Diversity Society
- South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- Surrey Language Assessment
- Surrey school district
- UBC
- Umoja Operation Compassion Society
- United Way
- University of Alberta
- University of Victoria
- Vancity
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Foundation
- Vancouver Police Department
- Vancouver School Board
- Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
- Western ESL services
- Work BC
- YMCA of Greater Vancouver
- YWCA

### PROVINCIAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (PES) STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION MEETING Info Sheet

#### **What is the mission of the Provincial Engagement Strategy (PES)?**

The mission of the Provincial Engagement Strategy is to develop a call to action to the provincial Government of British Columbia to formulate a multiyear immigration strategy on how immigration will be managed in the province in the next 3-5 years.

#### **What specific objectives does the PES intend to achieve?**

PES has three main objectives:

1. To identify what the key gaps in services and/or policies are between what is currently being supported by the federal Government of Canada and by the provincial Government of BC and the actual needs of the newcomers in BC
2. To identify what strategies have been successful thus far in providing support to newcomers in BC
3. To use the gaps and best practices identified in formulating specific recommendations on how the provincial Government of BC needs to get involved in co-managing immigration along with the federal government, the municipalities and the settlement sector.

#### **Why your input is important?**

You as the front-line individual interacting with and providing various supports to newcomers in BC hold integral information on the challenges faced by this population. With this being said, we need your input to be better able to formulate recommendations to the provincial government that are more in accordance with the actual needs present.

## Questions to Consider Prior to Attending

**We ask that you come to the meeting having formulated your answers to the following questions:**

1. What gaps in services/policies have you witnessed/heard about between what the federal Government of Canada and/or the provincial Government of BC currently supports and the actual present needs of newcomers (immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers, Post Secondary international students etc.) in BC?

- Examples of themes to consider:

- i. Disconnect between Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) policies and what you actually see happening on the ground in your interaction with newcomers

- ii. Gaps in services between what is currently being funded by the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) or by the BC provincial government and the need present

- iii. Challenges/barriers encountered by newcomers in BC

- iv. Challenges/gap in job readiness training and the integration of newcomers into the Canadian job market

2. What strategies/approaches have you found successful in providing support to newcomers?

- Examples of themes to consider:

- i. Looking back at what worked prior to repatriation (funding for immigration reverted back to the federal government from the Province)

- ii. Considering the recent influx of refugees and even more expected to come

- iii. Keeping in mind strategies that would work with an aim of attraction and retention of newcomer in BC

- iv. Strategies aiding newcomers in improving job readiness and securing employment

3. What do you see the provincial government's role as being in the provision of immigration/refugee services?

- Examples of themes to consider:

- i. Considering intersections of different BC ministries (education, health etc.) with the provision of support services to newcomers

- ii. Working together with the municipalities

- iii. Intersections of employment programming with other aspects of a successful integration



## APPENDIX D - LIST OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

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### LIST OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

AMSSA is conducting BC wide consultations with stakeholders to express their thoughts and opinions regarding the challenges/gaps experienced in the provision of services to newcomers, the best practices that have worked thus far in supporting newcomers, and lastly what the provincial governments' role should be in supporting newcomers in BC.

Your answers to this survey will help in formulating specific recommendation to the Province and ultimately a call for action to the provincial Government of BC to determine how immigration will be handled in BC in the next 3-5 years.

This survey should only take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your answers to this survey will be kept completely confidential and anonymous.

We really appreciate your input!

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

#### Demographic Information

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. What type of organization do you work for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Settlement Service Provider Agency</li><li>b. Community Center/Recreational Centers</li><li>c. Library</li><li>d. Religious Organization</li><li>e. Public Education Institution</li><li>f. Other Mainstream organization (not specifically for newcomers)</li></ul> | <p>2. Type of services/supports your organization offers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Employment services</li><li>b. Language services (assessment, training and/or translation)</li><li>c. Health and wellness services</li><li>d. Education</li><li>e. Legal Services</li><li>f. Housing</li><li>g. Orientation and Information Services</li><li>h. Other (please specify)_____</li></ul> |
|--|--|

3. What region is your organization located in?
- Northern BC
  - Vancouver Island
  - Fraser Valley
  - Interior of BC
  - Metro Vancouver

4. Identify the client type(s) that your organization encounters/attends to?  
(Check all that applies)
- Permanent residents (family class and economic class)
  - Refugee claimants
  - Government Sponsored Refugees
  - Privately Sponsored Refugees
  - Shared Sponsorship Refugees
  - Temporary foreign workers
  - Post Secondary international students
  - Naturalized citizens
  - Others (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

### Challenges/Gaps

5. What gaps in services/policies have you witnessed/heard about between what the federal Government of Canada and/or the provincial Government of BC currently supports and the actual present needs of newcomers that your organization supports?

6. Identify the client type that most represents the challenge(s) and/or gap(s) your organization is experiencing.  
(Check all that apply)
- Permanent residents (family class and economic class)
  - Refugee claimants
  - Government Sponsored Refugees
  - Privately Sponsored Refugees
  - Shared Sponsorship Refugees
  - Temporary foreign workers
  - Post Secondary international students
  - Naturalized citizens
  - Others (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

7. Describe any challenges/gaps in the integration of newcomers into the Canadian job market that you are aware of?

8. Identify the client type that most represents the challenge(s) and/or gap(s) your organization associates with successful integration into the Canadian job market.  
(Check all that apply)
- Permanent residents (family class and economic class)
  - Refugee claimants
  - Government Sponsored Refugees
  - Privately Sponsored Refugees
  - Shared Sponsorship Refugees
  - Temporary foreign workers
  - Post Secondary international students
  - Naturalized citizens
  - Others (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

## Best Practices

9. What strategies/approaches have you found successful thus far in providing support to newcomers?

10. What strategies/approaches are you aware of specific to successful integration of newcomers into the Canadian job market?

11. What strategies/approaches could help the provincial Government of BC attract and retain more newcomers to BC?

12. What benefits are there for the provincial Government of BC to attract and retain more newcomers?

13. What intersections are you aware of between immigration and other provincial ministries (health, education etc.)?

## Recommendations

14. What do you see the provincial Government's role as being in supporting newcomers in BC?

15. What do you see the municipal government's role as being in supporting newcomers in BC?

16. What does a culturally aware provincial immigration strategy look like to you?

**Satisfaction levels of service providers regarding current working conditions** (*for settlement service provider agencies who choose option a) in question 1)*

17. Rate your overall level of satisfaction with the current working conditions as a service provider to newcomers?

- a. Very satisfied
- b. Satisfied
- c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- d. Dissatisfied
- e. Very Dissatisfied

18. What recommendations do you have to better the current working conditions of the service providers to newcomers?





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## Expanded Info on AMSSA

AMSSA is a unique province-wide association that strengthens over 70 member agencies, as well as hundreds of community stakeholder agencies who serve immigrants and newcomers, and build culturally inclusive communities, with the knowledge, resources and support they need to fulfill their mandates.

## Vision:

A just and equitable society in which everyone benefits from social and economic inclusion.

Mission: AMSSA facilitates collaborative leadership, knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement to support agencies that serve immigrants and build culturally inclusive communities.

## Values:

Inclusiveness, integrity, mutual respect, equity, diversity and collaboration.

## Experience:

Since 1977 AMSSA has been providing a diverse range of settlement and integration support and capacity building services including developing and facilitating networking and training events and producing highly relevant information resources. AMSSA also convenes a broad range of BC interest and stakeholders groups to discuss and collaborate on immigration, economic and BC community inclusion issues. AMSSA is also one of the first organizations in the sector to frequently use technology as a cost effective, highly accessible engagement model to distribute information and promote dialogue. All of our settlement and integration capacity building activities are infused with innovative approaches, and are based on AMSSA's deep values of inclusiveness, integrity and collaboration.





