Refugee Readiness Fund (RRF) for the Afghan Refugees
Provincial Consultation Meeting
November 17, 2021
As a provincial umbrella association, AMSSA acknowledges that BC is on the unceded homelands of First Nations who have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We recognize the privilege that we have as settlers on this land. We acknowledge that AMSSA’s operations is on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱wməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, Territorial Acknowledgement – Katie Crocker, AMSSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10 a.m.</td>
<td>Consultation Survey Results Presentation – Katie Crocker, AMSSA</td>
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<td>10:25 a.m.</td>
<td>BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Immigration Policy and Integration Branch Presentation and Q&amp;A Session – Joni Rose, Senior Program Advisor</td>
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<td>11:05 a.m.</td>
<td>Breakout Groups – Facilitated by AMSSA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Existing strengths that we can capitalize on</td>
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<td>• Direct and indirect service gaps</td>
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<td>• Opportunities we can leverage through the RRF</td>
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<td>12:05 p.m.</td>
<td>Roundtable Debrief of Breakout Sessions and Q&amp;A</td>
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<td>12:25 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing Remarks and Next Steps</td>
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<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Meeting Adjourned</td>
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Canada will resettle 40,000 Afghan refugees.

Some refugees are arriving through private sponsorship groups.

The federal government developed a special immigration program for Afghans who assisted the Government of Canada.

Afghan nationals arriving under this program fall under the Government-Assisted Refugees Program.

Through this program, Afghan refugees will be resettled in 1 of 34 communities where there are existing IRCC-funded resettlement Service Provider Organizations.
British Columbia is preparing to welcome thousands of families and individuals over the coming months and years.

Between August 23 and November 12, British Columbia has received 390 individuals including 110 family units.

So far, all government-sponsored refugees have settled in the Metro Vancouver area.

Future arrivals will also settle in a wider range of communities.
Afghan Refugee Provincial Data

**First Language**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dari</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>2%</td>
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**Gender**

- Male: 49%
- Female: 51%

**Age Distribution**

- 0-4: 17%
- 5-12: 29%
- 13-18: 10%
- 19-64: 43%
- 65+: 1%

**Settlement Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Ridge</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Coquitlam</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>

Over 50% of government sponsored refugees are in permanent housing.
To support the resettlement of Afghan refugees in the province, the B.C. Government is developing the Refugee Readiness Fund (RRF)

The RRF is a one-time investment of $2-million to ensure that B.C. communities are ready to welcome and respond to the needs of refugees from Afghanistan.

It will complement services already in place and support community capacity to successfully welcome Afghan individuals, families and children.

A procurement notice will be posted on BC Bid in early December.
This consultation meeting will help to determine how the fund can best be used to support the Afghan refugees.

It is an opportunity to understand emerging issues and challenges in communities.

Breakout sessions will provide an opportunity for input about the proposed procurement plan, model and timeline.
Refugee Readiness Fund (RRF) for the Afghan Refugees

Pre-Meeting Participant Survey Results
- 38 respondents total
- 58% (n=22) Settlement Service Providers
- Other:
  - Community services organization
  - LGBTQ refugee serving organization
  - Multi-service charity
  - Francophone organization
  - Employment services
  - Legal advice & advocacy
  - Neighbourhood house
  - Faith community convener
Metro Vancouver: n=31
Fraser Valley: n=4
Thompson Okanagan: n=2
Vancouver Island/Coast Region: n=1
Ranking RRF Priorities

- Trauma & mental health
- Housing
- Coordination of resources & network building
- Community capacity building & creating a welcoming environment
- Employment supports & credential recognition
- Language training
- Translation & interpretation
- Staff professional development & information sharing
- Public education
- Private sponsor support
- Coordination of volunteers & donations
- Legal supports
- Data collection
- Other
Suggestions by respondents

Other RRF Priorities

- Financial literacy and coaching
- LGBTQI and trans competency training
- Gendered violence prevention and response
- Gender-specific programming
- Children and youth services
- Liaising with families
- Physical health resources
Other RRF Comments

Comments by respondents

- Ensure that gender and LGBTQI/SOGIES diversity are considered in all initiatives – safer reception centres, employment supports, language training, etc.

- Intersectional approach when deciding on the RRF priorities to ensure that critical pieces – such as gender, age, sexual orientation and religious affiliation, to name a few – are front and center.

- Have specific streams determined to capitalize on the existing competencies and focus of existing providers. Take into consideration regional approach and organization experience providing support to refugees.

- It would be helpful for the ministry to provide a data collection system to support service providers, rather than each organization creating a system on its own.

- Although it was important to rank these priorities based on stakeholder perception, it is imperative that the Afghan refugee perspective is also taken into consideration to better understand what their priorities are.
Existing Strengths

What can the Ministry capitalize on through the RRF?

Leverage existing collaborations and partnerships:

- Fund/resource existing partners and programs adequately
- Ensure that new partnerships are coordinated and don’t duplicate efforts

Leverage existing collaborations and partnerships

- Orgs have knowledge and expertise serving particular communities
- Community orgs willing and eager to support
- Past experience of sponsors
- Networks (AMSSA, LIPS, MAP) can support cross-sectoral coordination
- Funding can enhance existing resettlement assistance programs
- Many "lessons learned" can still be accessed from staff, communities, etc.
- Experience with Syrian refugees – systems already in place
Existing
Strengths

• Specific resources/partnerships to leverage: BC Housing, AMSSA, LIPS, MAP, pro bono legal clinics, Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program, language services.
  • Current multi-service organizations (for example that operate local food banks, provide mental health services) can be heavily relied upon to deliver efficient and effective services.
  • Keep housing, mental health and language needs as primary supports.

• Ensure the existing Afghan community is meaningfully involved. They can support the work being done, but will also need support as they step in to directly assist newcomers. Community engagement and buy-in are necessary to build trust.

Other comments
Existing Gaps

How can existing gaps be addressed?

More on collaborations and partnerships:

- Be strategic about funding allocation and focus
- Consult and coordinate: tap into substantial existing knowledge, and help agencies work more efficiently alongside each other

More collaborations and partnerships: use knowledge/support with adequate resources

- Collaboration – don’t duplicate services
- Consult the people with the expertise
- Sufficient funding for priority supports
- Target funding where no funding currently exists – don’t overstretch funds
- Support coordination between settlement agencies
- Support knowledge sharing/best practices
Existing Gaps

Other comments

• Affordable housing.
• Funding: language, trauma, counselling, employment, pro bono legal services, mental health, food/nutrition.
• Extend funding to groups beyond settlement agencies (for example grassroots organizations in communities); work directly with the Afghan community.
Specific Resources

- Recent housing research was conducted on the needs of LGBTQI newcomers; results could be useful.
- Adding more staff that speak the refugees’ native language, particularly for priority supports (for example, mental health).
- Explore opportunities with BC Housing to provide accommodations.
- Engage teachers colleges to help make schools more welcoming.
- Systems navigators: significant opportunity to help newcomers navigate the many services and supports available, and expedite their ability to connect meaningfully in their communities.

Take a Strategic Approach to Partnerships

- Capitalize on each agency’s specialty, as well as on existing programs and services that can be expanded and adequately funded. Also take advantage of organizations’ scheduled capacity-building and training initiatives, which could be expanded to support a broader audience.
- Encourage existing government-funded programs to be flexible re: client eligibility.
- Host knowledge-sharing roundtables and/or regular support meetings to build capacity for workers and organizations at all levels, not just managers/directors.
- Explore multiple agencies and organizations delivering one contract together to avoid duplication of services. Prioritize integrative services and a coordinated approach.
Recap

Key themes yielded from respondents

- **RRF Priorities**
  - Trauma & mental health; Housing; Coordination of resources & network building
  - Also: carefully consider how identified priorities match existing partner areas of expertise; how ultimately are the priorities determined - considering refugees’ perspectives? Intersectional approach?

- **Strengths/Gaps**
  - Existing partnerships and collaborations will be crucial – they constitute the greatest existing strengths (expertise, experience, regional distribution) and the greatest potential to address gaps (avoiding duplication of services, adopting a coordinated approach, knowledge sharing, allocating funding to what is proven to work).

- **Opportunities**
  - Respondents have a number of specific resources and ideas that can immediately inform the Ministry’s approach to the RRF.
  - Although the number of service agencies in B.C. can be overwhelming, respondents believe that the coordination of these agencies (and their funding contracts) represents a significant opportunity.
Joni Rose, Senior Program Advisor - Strategic Projects

Immigration Policy and Integration Branch
B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Breakout Sessions

Breakout groups (4) which will be recorded for minute-taking purposes

Each with a mix of stakeholders and AMSSA facilitator using Jamboard

60 minutes to cover 3 topic areas
Breakout Session Discussions

#1 Existing strengths that we can capitalize on

#2 Direct and indirect service gaps

#3 Opportunities we can leverage through the RRF
Breakout Sessions
Breakout Sessions Debrief
Q & A Session
Closing Remarks

Next Steps
Strengthening Diversity in BC

Thank you!