



# Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees to Canada: The Role of Municipalities

Toolkit for  
Inclusive Municipalities  
in Canada and Beyond



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



CANADIAN  
COMMISSION  
FOR UNESCO

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International  
Observatory  
of Mayors  
Living Together

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**The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO)**

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*Launched in 2016, the **International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together** is a platform for the exchange of experiences, knowledge and innovative practices related to social cohesiveness, inclusion and community safety in cities. Created at the request of mayors at the first Living Together Summit (Montreal, 2015), its network includes close to 50 global cities in 25 countries. The Observatory encourages collaboration between cities and universities in order to document innovative practices related to social cohesion in cities. The Observatory central Secretariat is located within the International Relations Office of the City of Montréal. Website: [observatoirevivreensemble.org/en](#)*



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# Foreword

The movement of peoples in Canada and elsewhere in the world has sparked debate on how to best engage and mobilize actors at all levels to provide safe and inclusive environments for newcomers. Municipalities are at the frontline of this action. Their proximity to citizens and capacity to act rapidly are significant assets to achieve these objectives. In response to demographic changes, including those resulting from migration, municipalities confront discrimination, racism and various forms of hate crimes. Diversity and inclusion policies, programs and initiatives at the local level are needed to tackle these challenges head on and create a living environment in which all citizens, including newcomers, can live peaceful lives, access opportunities to reach their full potential, and contribute to the cultural, social, political and economic life of their new home.

Urban areas are attractive to newcomers as they often have established social, economic and community networks; however, the popularity of smaller municipalities and rural areas for newcomers has grown in recent years. The shift in settlement patterns impacts municipalities and their citizens and requires upstream work to plan and mobilize resources to maximize the contribution of newcomers to the local labour market, as well to foster their inclusion in the social fabric of the community through different types of inclusion, equity and diversity initiatives.

Supporting the work of municipalities in the development and implementation of policies, programs and initiatives to create inclusive communities by eliminating racism and discrimination, is at the heart of the mandate of the [Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#) (formerly the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination or CCMARD).

Signatory municipalities of the Coalition undertake Common Commitments that cover areas of municipal responsibility such as housing, service delivery, employment and cultural activities. The Common Commitments inform and guide their work in the development of municipal policies and programs. Moving forward on the implementation of these commitments directly contributes to the improvement of the lives of newcomers. As of May 2019, nearly 80 municipalities in Canada have joined the Coalition.

The Coalition is a part of the [International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities](#) (ICCAR), an initiative launched by the [United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) in 2004, to establish a network of municipalities interested in sharing their experiences to improve their policies against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance, and committed to enhancing social inclusion through policies and programs.

This publication highlights promising practices that are currently being implemented in Canadian municipalities to welcome newcomers. It focuses on initiatives that aim to eradicate racism and discrimination and eliminate the barriers that limit opportunities. The publication also identifies key issues facing municipalities and the supports needed to ensure successful and sustainable initiatives. Examples of strategies and tips for municipalities are included herein along with case studies of two Canadian municipalities (Montreal and Saskatoon). A list of resources (publications, guides, tools, and toolkits) for municipalities is included to help inform the development of policies, programs and initiatives related to welcoming newcomers to Canada.



# Background

## ● International Context

People have always been on the move: to seek economic or labour opportunities, to study, to escape war, conflicts, human rights violations or persecution, natural disasters, etc. In recent years, however, the number of migrants and refugees has rapidly grown. In 2017, the number of migrants worldwide reached 258 million, in comparison to 173 million in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Many of these people settle in urban regions. Such rapid globalization, urbanization and migrations pose challenges to social cohesion, inclusion and security. Strengthened coordination and concerted action at the global, regional and national levels is required, as reaffirmed by the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) and the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), both adopted in December 2018.

Understanding these key trends and their impacts at the local level is crucial to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the contribution of migration to sustainable development. Eleven of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain targets and indicators related to migration.<sup>2</sup> Beyond this fact, migration is a cross-cutting issue relevant to all 17 SDGs and to acknowledge and address the mutually supporting relationships between migration and the Goals.<sup>3</sup> The [New Urban Agenda](#), adopted in 2016 at the UN-Habitat III Conference, complements the Agenda 2030 by providing guidance for achieving the SDGs and serves as a roadmap for building cities that serve as engines of prosperity and centres of cultural and social well-being while protecting the environment.<sup>4</sup>

Local governments have the potential to contribute to advancing the SDGs through their policies, programs and initiatives on issues such as poverty, inequalities, decent work, access to services, etc. They can also do so by ensuring basic services are provided for all citizens, that they have access to equal opportunities and face no discrimination, regardless of their migration status, so that “no one is left behind.”



## Sustainable Development Goals containing targets and indicators related to migration



Source: [Migration Data Portal](#)

# ● Newcomers and Refugees in Canada

Canada's population growth can be largely attributed to the arrival of newcomers. In 2017 alone, three-fourths of Canada's population growth stemmed from international migration. Canada is one of the most popular destination countries for international migrants – ranking 8<sup>th</sup> among the top 25 countries in 2017<sup>5</sup> – and is the second most desired destination for potential migrants.<sup>6</sup> Canada is also perceived as one of the most accepting countries in the world for immigrants – fourth highest according to a Gallup poll in April 2018.<sup>7</sup>



## Did you know

- **7.5 million foreign-born people have come to Canada** through the immigration process, representing over one in five Canadians.<sup>8</sup>
- They have arrived from more than 200 different countries of origin.<sup>9</sup>
- Over **1.2 million newcomers** arrived in Canada over the **past 5 years**, with many arriving from the Philippines (16%), India (12%), and China (11%).



Philippines  
188,805



India  
147,190



China  
129,020



Iran  
42,070



Pakistan  
41,480



United States  
33,060



Syria  
29,945



United Kingdom  
24,445



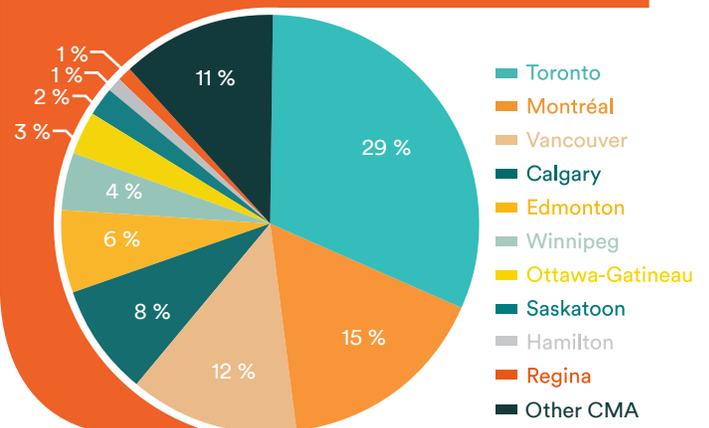
France  
24,155



South Korea  
21,710

- Most newcomers settle in Canada's large urban centres: Toronto (29%), Montréal (15%) and Vancouver (12%)<sup>11</sup> where they have access to good job opportunities with higher incomes, affordable housing and accessible services (healthcare, education, language, utilities, transportation).<sup>12</sup>

Where Recent Immigrants Settle in Canada  
(2011 to 2016)



- **Canada resettled 121,785 refugees** between January 2015 and December 2018. Three in five of these refugees (74,005) intended to settle in Ontario or Québec.<sup>10</sup>

- In recent years, however, an increasing number of immigrants have established roots in prairie cities (Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary and Edmonton), which received 22.6% of new immigrants in 2016/17, more than twice the number from a decade earlier (11.2%).
- A century ago, 90% of Canadian population lived in rural areas. Now it is 18.9%.<sup>13</sup>
- Almost half of all immigrants between the ages of 25 and 64 held a bachelor's degree or higher in 2016, compared to just under one-quarter of the Canadian-born population in the same age group.<sup>14</sup>

### What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee?

An immigrant is someone who *chooses* to leave their country, whether for economic reasons or to search for a better life. They are also welcome to return to their home country. A refugee is someone who is *forced* to flee their home due to persecution, war, or violence. They cannot return home until it is safe, which may not happen for years, or even decades.<sup>15</sup>

### Key Definitions

#### Migrant<sup>16</sup>

While there is no formal legal definition of an international migrant, most experts agree that an international migrant is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status. Generally, a distinction is made between short-term or temporary migration, covering movements with duration between three and 12 months, and long-term or permanent migration, referring to a change of country of residence for a duration of one year or more.

#### Refugee<sup>17</sup>

A refugee is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

#### Asylum Seeker<sup>18</sup>

An asylum-seeker is someone who is seeking international protection, but has not yet been granted refugee status. When an individual fleeing conflict or persecution arrives in a new country, they must submit a formal claim for refugee status. This claim is evaluated by the host country, after which asylum seekers may be legally recognized as refugees.

#### Recent Immigrant<sup>19</sup>

This term refers to landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given census year. For the 2016 Census, recent immigrants are landed immigrants who arrived in Canada between January 1, 2011 and Census Day, May 10, 2016.

## The “Living Together” Approach

“Living Together’ refers to a dynamic process involving various stakeholders in order to foster inclusion and a sense of safety and belonging in the city. Promoting ‘Living Together’ means recognizing all forms of diversity, fighting discrimination and working to facilitate peaceful coexistence. To implement ‘Living Together’, local stakeholders must work together to identify common values that contribute to positive interactions and social cohesion.” - [Standing Committee on Living Together of the Association internationale des maires francophones - AIMF, 2018](#)

In 2019, the [International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together](#) and UNESCO’s [International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR](#) launched the publication [City Policies on Living Together](#). Built on a study conducted for the Standing Committee on Living Together of the AIMF, this document showcases existing Living Together policies and programmes at the municipal level; conducts an operational study on Living Together to strengthen municipal initiatives; and offers guidelines to cities that want to more effectively support Living Together in their respective communities.

### Dispelling myths about refugees

The Canadian Council for Refugees provides facts about refugees and refugee claimants in Canada in their [Did you know...? Facts about refugees and refugee claimants in Canada](#) factsheets. These factsheets dispel commonly held myths about refugees related to crime and public safety, healthcare, social assistance, etc. The [Refugees Welcome Here: Toolkit Resources](#) provides up-to-date facts and information related to advocacy, myth busting, welcoming communities and general resources for refugees and the agencies serving them, celebrating Refugee Rights Day (April 4), etc.

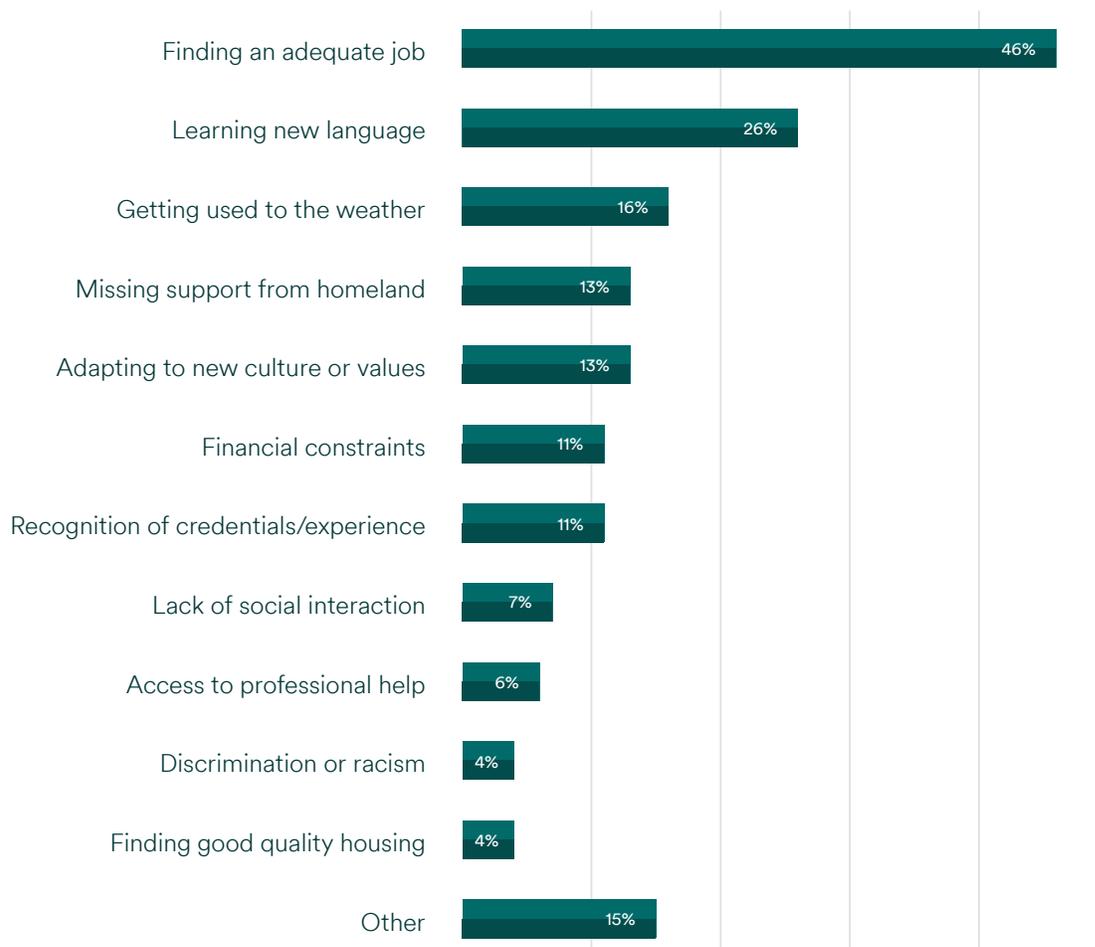
The [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\) – Canada](#) developed a [document](#) dispelling myths about refugees and irregular border crossings in Canada. The [UNHCR-Canada website](#) provides key information for asylum seekers, information on national legislation, statistics and facts, etc.

## ● Barriers Faced by Newcomers

“Canada’s economic future is tied directly to our ability to successfully attract, settle, and retain immigrants and refugees. Still, newcomers face significant barriers to success and are falling behind their non-immigrant counterparts. Welcoming communities, able to provide adequate housing, accessible transit, employment, language and cultural supports and services are essential to providing every opportunity for newcomers to succeed.”

– *Welcoming Communities: A toolkit for local governments, Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

### Greatest difficulties new immigrants faced since arriving in Canada (four years after arrivals)



Newcomers face a myriad of challenges that impact their integration and sense of belonging to Canada. **Finding an adequate job** can be very difficult for recent immigrants: 46 percent cited it as the greatest difficulty they faced four years after their arrival in Canada.<sup>20</sup> Many recent immigrants also have trouble getting their foreign education credentials or experience recognized, which forces them into lower-paying jobs outside of their field of study and expertise. Sometimes they are unable to find work at all and are unemployed. **Language** is another significant barrier for recent immigrants, especially those with limited or no knowledge of Canada's official languages (English and French). Inability to converse in these languages can severely limit the immigrant's job prospects and can hinder access to health and social services in the community.<sup>21, 22</sup>

**Lack of "Canadian experience" in the workforce** can be compounded for newcomers as most employers seek this experience. Qualified applicants may find that the years of experience they bring from their country of origin are not enough to fill in this gap. Many even have to rely on "survival jobs" to pay the bills. Typical survival jobs include cashier, customer service representative, factory worker, taxi driver or data entry operator.<sup>23</sup> In small communities and rural areas, newcomers may be "discounted" for being different in a variety of ways such as language accents, different names, personal presentation and physical appearance, printed presentation (e.g., résumés and letters that might not be consistent with Canadian norms). In light of this situation, employers are increasingly taking guidance from Human Rights frameworks to eliminate the need for direct Canadian experience when it represents a barrier.

**Access to health care** is another concern for newcomers. Lifestyle changes such as having fewer family supports to raise children (which can lead to challenges around daycare), shifts in weather, changes in eating and exercise habits, can negatively affect health and wellbeing of newcomers. They also face challenges such as accessing a regular medical doctor, lacking medical insurance coverage, accessible transportation and/or limited family financial resources to follow interventions prescribed by health care providers.<sup>24</sup> Financial barriers to accessing health care are even more pronounced for refugees.<sup>25</sup>

Newcomers often endure **racism and discrimination** within their host communities. They can also be victims of hate crimes or racial profiling. Studies show that one-fifth of newcomers to Canada face discrimination in various situations after they arrive.<sup>26</sup> According to the 2013 General Social Survey, nearly 36 percent of immigrants in Canada have been a victim of discrimination in the past five years compared to around 28 percent of Canadian-born residents. A March 2017 survey conducted by the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration<sup>27</sup> found that 78 percent of respondents "often or occasionally" hear negative comments about immigrants in Canada.

**Transportation** can be a roadblock for recent immigrants. Public transit can affect where newcomers live and work as well as their connection to the community. For refugees, who have fled persecution and are often suffering from physical and psychological trauma, this connection to the community, including health care, social services and other support networks, is crucial.<sup>28</sup>

Finding **quality, adequate housing** is also a challenging issue for newcomers, who are almost three times more likely to be in a 'core housing need' than non-immigrants. Recent immigrants to Canada are also much more likely than non-immigrants to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and to live in crowded households, in part due to their larger average family sizes and tendency to settle in large, expensive cities.<sup>29</sup>

### Intersectionality and the Immigrant Experience

Canada is recognized internationally as one of the safest and least discriminatory nations in the world for immigrants of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, sexual orientations (LGBTQ2+) or disabilities. In 2015, the Legatum Institute's<sup>30</sup> Prosperity Index ranked Canada as the "freest country in the world" with its tolerance of immigrants, minorities, freedom of expression and beliefs.

Newcomers to Canada represent many different social groups and identities. Intersectionality is an approach to understanding Canadian society that acknowledges these differences and the way that different parts of an individual or group's identity can shape their experiences (e.g., a gay black man who fled his home country due to persecution or a Muslim woman living with a physical disability).

In the context of settlement services, an intersectional approach might be used to gain deeper insight about clients, to better serve clients who have experienced discrimination, and to make services more inclusive.

Strategies that can help cities incorporate an intersectional approach into program and service delivery include:

- 1 building intersectional policies into organizational structures;
  - 2 forming partnerships or coalitions with organizations that serve distinct communities;
- and/or
- 3 collecting and analyzing immigrant data that can be broken down according to various identity markers (e.g., Gender-based Analysis Plus or GBA+)<sup>31</sup>

### Sports and Newcomers

Access to sports and physical activity can be a challenge for newcomers for various reasons (financial, logistical, cultural, etc.). Sport for Life for All Newcomers to Canada – Creating Inclusion of Newcomers in Sport and Physical Activity, released in 2018, outlines the barriers that newcomers may face in their participation of sport and physical activity, and then provides examples of solutions and opportunities that exist, as well as promising practices of work being done across Canada.



# The Role of Municipalities in Welcoming and Including Newcomers

*“Cities are lead actors on the stage of global migration. By organizing around success and action instead of crisis and inaction, local governments can succeed where many national governments are challenged.”<sup>32</sup>*

With the majority of the world’s population living in urban areas, the role cities and municipalities play in international migration has grown in importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), adopted on 11 July 2018, breaks new ground in setting forth new forms of municipal involvement in migration. While nation-states have traditionally been the main actors in these global compacts, cities are becoming increasingly involved and have called for a consultative role in UN discussions on the Compact. After all, “cities are where migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers come face-to-face with the economy, social services and law enforcement. Most of the world’s economic migrants live in cities, as do the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons.”<sup>33</sup> Networks of cities and municipalities hosting refugees are also invited, in [The Global Compact on Refugees](#), to share good practices and innovative approaches to responses in urban settings.<sup>34</sup>

Municipalities are on the frontline when it comes to welcoming and including newcomers. They have a role to play in various areas, including:

- ✓ Attracting and retaining immigrants.
- ✓ Ensuring the integration and social cohesion of newcomers, including refugees, asylum seekers and other groups of immigrants.
- ✓ Welcoming newcomers and familiarizing them with the city’s culture.
- ✓ Providing newcomers with an easy access to vital urban infrastructure and services (e.g. transport, housing).
- ✓ Ensuring, in close collaboration with law enforcement authorities, the safety and security of both newcomers and the host community.
- ✓ Establishing a cultural landscape that not only stands against racism and discrimination, but also addresses underlying systems of injustice and inequity while celebrating diversity.

Despite beneficial local inclusion initiatives, many municipalities remain places where unemployment, poverty and inequality directly impact newcomers. The pressures of changing populations and growing diversity have resulted in exclusion, gaps in service delivery, and threats to social harmony. Discrimination threatens the sustainability of social, economic and political systems, and endangers the full enjoyment of human rights guaranteed to people living in Canada. Racism, discrimination and other forms of exclusion have become increasingly subtle and difficult to identify and address. As a result, they more easily permeate the democratic discourses and structures that inhabitants hold dear.<sup>35</sup>

While municipalities may be at the forefront of welcoming newcomers and refugees, there are many other stakeholders playing a role in the integration process. This includes provincial/territorial and federal governments, financial and educational institutions, law enforcement officials, the judicial system, cultural associations, service provider organizations (SPOs), civil society organizations at all levels, human rights commissions, etc.

To be most effective, municipalities must work in collaboration with key stakeholders to maximize their impact and build safe, sustainable and inclusive communities in Canada.

**“Working at the municipal level provides a collaborative opportunity for various departments such as economic development, planning, social services, and tourism to work together towards creating a welcoming community.”<sup>36</sup>**

**“Behind every migration statistic, there are individuals or families starting a new life in a new place. Local authorities, in co-ordination with all levels of government and other local partners, play a key role in integrating these newcomers and empowering them to contribute to their new communities. Integration needs to happen where people are: in their workplaces, their neighborhoods, the schools to which they send their children and the public spaces where they will spend their free time.”<sup>37</sup>**

– OECD’s Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees (2018)

**FACT: Newcomers (immigrants and refugees) DO NOT increase the crime rate in Canada.**

There is a common misconception that the arrival of newcomers and refugees to Canada creates unsafe environments and increases the crime rate in Canada. In fact, the opposite is true.<sup>38</sup>

**“[In] just about every country, immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than the people who were there before them.”**

– Frank Cormier, professor of criminology  
University of Manitoba

# ● Welcoming Newcomers in Rural and/or Smaller Municipalities



## Did you know

9% of recent immigrants from 2011 to 2016 chose to settle in rural areas (non-CMAs) of Canada. Studies show a growing number of newcomers settling in smaller municipalities and the number is likely to increase in coming years.<sup>39</sup>

Working with newcomers in rural and smaller urban communities comes with its own unique set of challenges and opportunities. Language barriers, social isolation, a lack of adequate support services and transportation are all common challenges for newcomers and refugees settling in less populated areas. Many rural communities also have demographic challenges, such as the migration of youth to urban areas and an aging labour force population, that can adversely impact local economies. For these reasons, many rural areas and small cities across Canada are eager to attract more newcomers, who themselves fair better financially when they reside outside of the country's big cities.<sup>40</sup>

The availability of appropriate and timely social support is critical for social inclusion. Beyond acquiring human capital (i.e., skills, knowledge and experience), newcomers who build social capital (i.e. networks and relationships) in their new communities are more likely to successfully integrate. “When newcomers are able to build social capital, they build increased connections to their community, networks, and supports. Developing and providing opportunities to cultivate social capital through supports and services are crucial to foster social inclusion among newcomers.”<sup>41</sup> Municipalities and service providers can improve the integration process and foster more inclusive environments by preparing in advance for the arrival of new families, rather than “reacting” to emerging issues in these communities. Small and rural municipalities have many unique assets they can use to attract and retain newcomers, such as close connections to the community and proximity to local issues.

### The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot

The [Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot](#) is a five-year pilot designed to boost smaller communities with aging populations and labour shortages, which often struggle to attract and retain new immigrants. The Government of Canada will work with local communities to use immigration to (1) help meet local labour market needs and support regional economic development, (2) test a new pathway to permanent residence in rural Canada for skilled foreign nationals at various skill levels, and (3) and create welcoming environments that encourage and help new immigrants to stay in their new communities.<sup>44</sup>

The [Atlantic Immigration Pilot](#) is a pathway to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers and international graduates who want to work and live in one of Canada's four Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador). It is an employer-driven program designed to help employers in Atlantic Canada hire qualified candidates for jobs they have been unable to fill locally.<sup>45</sup>

### The Role of Local Organizations

Local organizations can contribute to support your efforts to attract and retain newcomers. For example, the [Calgary Catholic Immigration Society \(CCIS\)](#) provides services to help new immigrants settle and integrate into rural communities in **Southern Alberta**. Service delivery includes workshops, information and orientation sessions, and direct client service in either individual or group settings. A wide variety of topics are covered, including housing, employment, education, health care, and English classes. CCIS encourages active participation in the community and facilitates the settlement process by bridging local services. They also help with application forms and documentations, and interpretations and translations.

### Partnering with other levels of governments

In the last two decades, the **City of Morden (MB)** has worked with the federal and provincial governments to substantially increase the number of immigrants moving to the community through the Provincial Nominee Program. Arrangements between the three levels of governments have allowed the [Morden Community Driven Immigration Initiative](#) to adapt immigration selection criteria to hand-pick immigrants who are well-suited for small town life and the needs of local businesses. The initiative has also worked to ensure that settlement, language learning and housing services were available for immigrants when they arrived, and to make connections between local and new residents.



## Newcomers Attraction and Retention

Many small and rural municipalities start their journey to attract and retain immigrants as an economic development strategy designed to address population decreases and the need for new people to fill jobs in the community. Once newcomers arrive, it becomes clear that for them to stay, residents, businesses and services in the community need to be welcoming, inclusive and equitable.

**If your municipality is looking to welcome newcomers, here are a few questions to consider:**

- How can you make the case for working to attract newcomers?  
How will an influx of newcomers benefit your community?
- Are you looking to attract economic immigrants? Refugees? Entrepreneurs?  
Temporary Foreign Workers?
- Who will drive the attraction strategy? What about the retention strategy?  
With which partners can you work?
- How will you ensure newcomers are not exploited by employers, or by landlords and other businesses?  
What happens if they are?
- What supports are available for newcomers once they get here? Think about formal supports like settlement services, as well as informal social networks of compatriots or non-immigrants.
- How do you think the community, as a whole, will respond to newcomers? Are there ways to build relationships and cohesion between current residents and newcomers? Are there processes in place if incidents of racism or discrimination happen?

<sup>42</sup> Source: Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Toolkit for municipalities, 2019, <https://en.ccunesco.ca/networks/coalition-of-inclusive-municipalities>.

### Some resources to inform your work



The **Ontario government** created the Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) toolkit (2011) to help rural communities attract and retain skilled newcomers.



The **Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria** also developed a Toolbox of Ideas for smaller centres to use as they build a strategy to attract and retain new immigrants.



The **University of Guelph** published a guide for Attracting and Retaining Newcomers in Rural Communities and Small Towns, which introduces rural municipalities to the principles of attracting newcomers and helping to ensure their success for long-term sustainability.



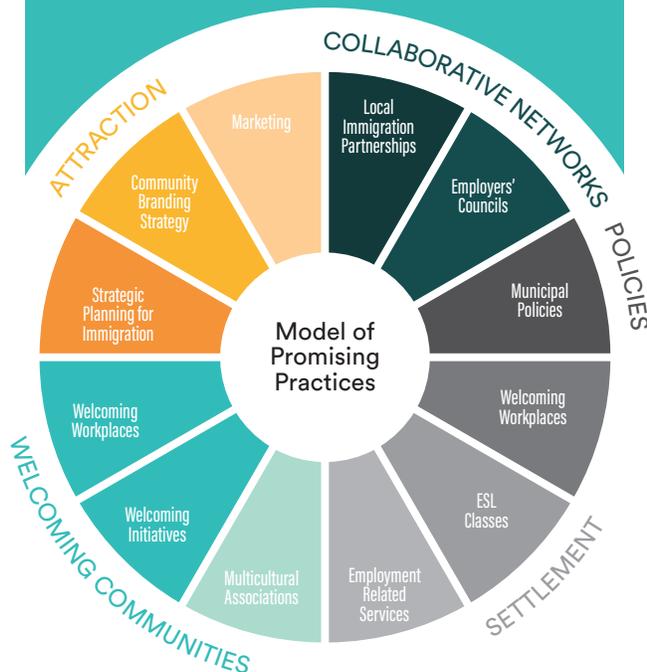
**Welcoming America** published a best practices tool in 2017 called Welcoming Refugees in Rural Communities: Promising Examples from the Field that explores four groundbreaking community-based initiatives in the United States that are engaging, supporting, and welcoming refugees in rural areas. It documents how refugees and immigrants feel welcomed when smaller and more rural communities have created programs, partnerships, policies, and opportunities that engage them.

## Attracting immigrants

Based on a [study of rural municipalities in Ontario](#), researchers from the University of Guelph created a model of promising practices for attracting and retaining immigrants in rural communities.<sup>43</sup> Their research recommends that communities seeking to attract and retain immigrants do the following:

- 1 Work with what you have
- 2 Build and maintain relationships
- 3 Gain political will
- 4 Involve newcomers as key players
- 5 Ensure research-based decision making
- 6 Emphasize process and build capacity
- 7 Plan with a long term horizon in mind

Snapshot of a model of promising practices to help you successfully attract and retain immigrants in rural communities



Source: [Attracting and Retaining Newcomers in Rural Communities and Small Towns](#), p. 8.

## Retaining immigrants

Another research project based in three rural Ontario communities focused on how to enhance newcomer engagement and build social capital to cultivate social inclusion.

The findings suggest newcomers and stakeholders will benefit by focusing on four essential areas:

- 1 Provide intentional community leadership from municipalities and municipal leaders
- 2 Reduce system barriers in employment, culture, transportation, housing, etc.
- 3 Build relationships between newcomers and other community members
- 4 Develop robust support systems like programs and services, faith communities and networks

Source: [Newcomer Engagement and Social Capital in Rural Communities](#)





# Strategies and Tips for Municipalities

There are several strategies municipalities can implement to become more inclusive of newcomers. They include: celebrations of diversity and multiculturalism, engaging community members to participate in cultural events and activities, holding diversity summits, developing anti-racism public education campaigns, and establishing committees and/or positions that directly focus on addressing racism and discrimination in the community, etc. The following are examples of promising practices which are viewed as initiatives that can be adapted by other municipalities.

## Strategy #1 – Centralize information and services

- There is a growing trend in Canada and abroad to centralize information and integration services for newcomers in the community (“one-stop shops”). **Montreal’s** [BINAM \(Bureau d’intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montréal\)](#), **Toronto’s** [Newcomers Office](#) and the [website](#) of the **City of Québec** provide examples of this trend. Other examples can be found in European cities such as [Düsseldorf](#) (Germany) and [Geneva](#) (Switzerland).
- The [Welcome Centres](#) in the **York Region**, the [Newcomer Interagency Network \(NIN\)](#) in the **Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo**, and [Newcomer Welcome Centre](#) in **Regina** are organizations that can support the work of municipalities by providing coordinated services to newcomers and facilitating newcomers’ access to, and use of, a variety of services that meet their needs.

## Strategy #2 – Partner with public libraries

- Public libraries can serve as a “go-to” place for newcomers and can play a key role by facilitating access to knowledge, as well as addressing social inequalities and improving quality of life. The mission of libraries is to democratize access to information, knowledge, culture and leisure. Because of the services they provide, libraries are uniquely positioned to foster social inclusion and enhance the ability for newcomers and the host society to “Live Together”.
- Public libraries in **Pictou and Antigonish counties** were recognized in 2017 as Newcomer Welcome Centres. This initiative provides places for all newcomers to be able to have any questions answered as they settle into the area. It includes [a website](#) that provides community information and resources to newcomers. An online language training tool called Rocket Languages, made possible by a grant from the Municipality of the County of Pictou, is also available. With support from Michelin and Northern Pulp, the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library (PARL) staff was also able to access additional diversity training through the Provincial YREACH program through YMCA Immigration Settlement services. The initiative was made possible through a partnership between the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce, the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce, and PARL, with support from numerous community groups and businesses. Recently, PARL also partnered with TD Bank to purchase a collection of books regarding diversity.
- The [Library Settlement Partnerships \(LSP\)](#) offer a unique and innovative newcomer information service in 11 communities throughout **Ontario**. Services are provided in multiple languages and include one-on-one settlement information and referrals, group information sessions and community outreach. [Toronto Public Library](#) offers many free services and programs for newcomers and has collections in over 40 languages. The [LSP program](#) enables local settlement agencies to work year-round to provide information, referrals and group activities for newcomers.
- The [Liaison Officers in Libraries project](#) promotes diversity and intercultural dialogue while providing a substantial, user-oriented offer of direct services for newcomers to **Montreal** (information, training, support to learn the French language, pre-employability in particular). This project is tailored to meet local needs as contexts may vary from one neighborhood to another. Liaison officers (librarians) are attached to one or more library in each Montreal borough and are highly engaged in their community: they build key relationships, are involved in community events and create complementary partnerships with other actors in the area.
- The **City of Québec**, the Québec Library and the Centre multiethnique de Québec joined forces to welcome and integrate newcomers. [Bibliothèque, terre d'accueil](#) aims to make libraries a place of welcome for immigrants in the heart of neighborhoods and to connect immigrants and members of the host community early in the integration process. The services offered allow immigrants to obtain information on the community and the services offered by various organizations.

### Strategy #3 – Use special international or national dates or campaigns to raise awareness on migration, inclusion and diversity related issues or to celebrate and commemorate specific events or groups

- Link them to an announcement, the launch of an initiative, a policy or a program; participate in a social media campaign, etc.
- They are also a good occasion to organize a local event and engage your community. Ideas can include public symposiums or panel discussions, diversity fairs, artistic or cultural activities, friendly sports events, etc.
- The social media campaign [#ItStartsWithMe](#) coordinated by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO to celebrate the [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) (March 21<sup>st</sup>) can provide your municipality with ready to use materials or key messages to raise-awareness on issues related to racism, inclusion, diversity, etc.
- UNHCR's [#WithRefugees campaign](#) invites cities and local authorities who are working to promote inclusion and support refugees to [sign a statement](#) of solidarity with refugees. You could plan to sign it on [World Refugee Day](#) (June 20)!

#### Examples include

- [International Decade for People of African Descent](#) (2015–2024)
- [International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures](#) (2013-2022)
- [Black History Month](#) (February)
- [Asian Heritage Month](#) (May)
- [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) (March 21)
- [International Day of Living Together in Peace](#) (May 16)
- [World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development](#) (21 May)
- [World Refugee Day](#) (June 20)
- [Canadian Multiculturalism Day](#) (June 27)
- [International Day of Peace](#) (September 21)
- [Human Rights Day](#) (December 10)
- [International Migrants Day](#) (18 December)

### Strategy #4 – Host a welcoming event for newcomers

- The **City of Québec** organizes an annual Welcome Day for Newcomers to mark the arrival and integration of new immigrant families. At the event, newcomers can get information at municipal service kiosks and from service provider organizations.
- The **City of Toronto**'s annual Toronto Newcomer Day event brings together newcomers, community and government agencies and other stakeholders to welcome newcomers, help them access a range of programs and services, and celebrate their contributions to the city. The event promotes Toronto as a diverse, inclusive and welcoming city and strengthens Toronto's reputation as a leader in the settlement and integration of newcomers.

### Strategy #5 – Provide opportunities to connect and learn about other cultures, customs and traditions

- Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW) is an annual series of dialogues, cultural and celebratory events, sports activities, documentary screenings, and other fun events designed to convey the genuine welcome and hospitality of Ottawa residents to newcomers, while providing opportunities for quality interactions between residents, old and new. WOW was initiated by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) and proclaimed by the Mayor of Ottawa.
- The **City of Winnipeg**'s Know Your Neighbours Guide depicts the city's cultural diversity. It is about Winnipeg residents - the history, the people, relationships, building knowledge and connections. This resource can help individuals get to know both the history and the current state of the city. It also contributes to promoting open dialogue and greater cultural awareness.
- The **City of Vancouver** developed First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers, which introduces newcomers to three important topics using clear accessible language: who are the Indigenous peoples (or First Peoples) in Vancouver and Canada; the nature of the relationship between the Government of Canada and First Peoples; and current initiatives and ways for newcomers to learn more about Indigenous peoples in the community.

## Strategy #5 – Provide opportunities to connect and learn about other cultures, customs and traditions (cont.)

- The **City of Brooks** hosts a Taste of Nations event where several cultures within the community are able to represent their nation by showcasing their food, dance and clothing. This is a well-attended event attracting thousands of people during Alberta Culture Days. The celebration provides a fun opportunity for families and people of all ages to come together and experience a wide variety of cultures.
- The **City of Burnaby** and the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table developed the Ways to Welcome campaign, which involved community outreach initiatives and the production of the 100+ Ways to Welcome: Ideas for Residents brochure and guide, providing residents with ideas on how to welcome newcomers to Burnaby (as suggested by community residents). The City won the Safe Harbour Champion Award in 2009 and has since been a Safe Harbour City.

## Strategy #6 – Increase awareness of racism and discrimination

- The **City of Saskatoon** launched I Am the Bridge in 2016, a public education campaign to increase awareness of racism in Saskatoon and develop a better understanding of how to authentically work towards the elimination of racial discrimination. The goal is to spark a dialogue by hearing community members' experiences of racism and inspiring citizens to be the bridge to change the racism landscape in Saskatoon. Citizens were invited to share their experiences of racism and ways to eliminate it by submitting videos to OneStory, a locally-owned online video platform. These videos are now showcased on the City's website as well as their social media and YouTube channels.
- In the Faces of Brooks program, the **City of Brooks** connects with citizens and captures their stories and quotes, which are then displayed on the city's social media platforms. The objective is to exhibit that regardless of our backgrounds, we all have goals, barriers and challenges; yet each individual's goals, barriers and challenges may be different. With this, we are able to see different perspectives while allowing citizens to gain more insight.
- The **City of St. Albert** launched the It Starts with Me campaign in 2015 to promote a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers. The campaign focuses on dispelling cultural myths and stereotypes and creating welcoming work environments. It includes a webpage, paid advertisements, positive social media messages, and training for municipal staff. Three whiteboard animations were also created to highlight key messages and promote St. Albert as an inclusive and welcoming community.

## Strategy #7 – Strengthen local partnerships and coordinate efforts

- The **City of Toronto's** Newcomer Services Kiosk Program is a partnership between the City and five settlement agencies that brings community-based settlement workers into municipal facilities to provide direct services to newcomers. The program aims to increase newcomer access to municipal programs and services. Newcomer Services “kiosks” act as small hubs located in City Hall, civic centres, employment and social services offices, community centres, and shelters where newcomers to Toronto can access settlement specific supports.
- The Newcomer Interagency Network (NIN) is a network of organizations and employers in the **Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo** committed to working together to enhance the lives of newcomers to the community. It was created to share expertise, enhance collaboration between agencies, and support projects and initiatives to better meet the needs of newcomers to the region.
- In **Alberta**, the **Cochrane Community Immigrant Services (CCIS) Committee** formed in 2015 and has become a key stakeholder in creating a more welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers to the Town, and provides support for agencies and newcomers to have a voice. This committee began before the formation of the Town's Social Policy (2016) but the CCIS group has been a vital source of information and partnership that reflects the vision of the Town itself. The municipality helped to lead this by committing Town employees to sit on this committee and coordinate Town administrative functions where relevant.
- With 125 representatives from 80 organizations spanning the government, public, private and civic sectors, the Vancouver Immigration Partnership (VIP) helps newcomers on their paths to becoming Vancouver residents in many ways: by supporting the sharing of community-based knowledge and local strategic planning; by improving accessibility to services; and by creating an overall Vancouver Immigrant Settlement and Immigration Strategy. Through VIP, the **City of Vancouver**, its community partners, and immigrants themselves are collectively addressing the challenges faced by immigrants in the city. In collaboration with its partners, VIP has developed the New Start Strategy (2016-2025) that focuses on four themes: (1) Enhancing Access to Services; (2) Strengthening Intercultural and Civic Engagement; (3) Building Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces; and (4) Government and Public Institutions Addressing Needs.
- **Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)** are municipal/regional coalitions aimed at strengthening local capacity to attract newcomers and improve integration outcomes. They include different stakeholders including immigrant and mainstream service providers, municipalities, employer associations, school boards, and others. The **Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs)** are Francophone immigration networks designed to attract, welcome integrate and retain immigrants to Francophone minority communities. Both initiatives can contribute to advance your municipality's work and are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The Pathways to Prosperity: Canada Website offers a variety of resources on these initiatives including a Promising Practices Corner (tools, measures, and resources on promising practices) and a Library (reports, publications, PowerPoint presentations, and more).<sup>46</sup>

## Strategy #8 – Form a Coalition, Committee or Advisory Group

- The **City of Sherbrooke** has launched a Committee of Diversity and Intercultural Relations to advise the City Council on issues related to the city's Policy on Welcoming and Integrating Immigrants as well as the implementation of its associated Action Plan, which aims at making Sherbrooke a more inclusive and welcoming intercultural city.
- The **City of Victoria** works with a community coalition called the Community Action Plan on Discrimination, and two Councillors sit on its committee. The coalition meets monthly at city hall, and brings forward action items to eliminate discriminatory practices in the city. The City is responsible for working with the CAPD to resolve issues that have been identified.
- On March 21, 2017, the **City of Vancouver** launched the Historical Discrimination Against People of Chinese Descent Advisory Group. On April 22, 2018, Vancouver City Council delivered a formal apology for historical discrimination of Chinese residents in Vancouver to an audience of more than 500 people at the Chinese Cultural Centre, and hundreds more viewing on screens. The apology publically acknowledged past legislation, regulations and policies of previous Vancouver City Councils that discriminated against residents of Chinese descent, along with clear references to key past events and actions of discrimination.

## Strategy #9 – Join a network to share experiences and promising practices

- Join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, one of the regional coalitions that are part of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR, led by UNESCO. Launched in 2005, it is the largest network of municipal governments (nearly 80 as of 2019) working to eliminate discrimination and foster inclusion in Canada. The Coalition, of which knowledge and experience sharing are cornerstones, promotes inclusion by encouraging the integration of equity matters into the policy, planning and programming of a municipal government's work in various areas including housing, employment and cultural activities.
- Become a member of the International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together. The Observatory, launched in 2016, is a platform for the exchange of experiences, knowledge and innovative practices related to social cohesiveness, inclusion and community safety in cities. Created at the request of mayors at the inaugural "Living Together Summit" in Montreal (June 2015), the Observatory network includes close to 50 global cities in 25 countries, including Canada. The Observatory encourages collaboration between cities and universities in order to document innovative practices related to social cohesion in cities.

### Understanding Your Local Reality

Municipalities must have a deep understanding of their local context as well as the needs of newcomers and refugees in order to make the best decisions. To do so, municipalities are encouraged to:

- a) Identify existing service provider organizations and programs in your municipality.
- b) Facilitate a regular and ongoing dialogue with front-line workers and local welcoming organizations to understand the reality and needs of the newcomers.
- c) Involve local partners acting on key issues in the development and implementation of new programs (“sounding board”) – this can include civil society organizations, but also the private sector, schools, police authorities, etc. depending on the type of initiative being developed.
- d) Partner with local organizations to join forces, reduce duplication of efforts in the community, and maximize outreach to newcomers and refugees.
- e) Survey or interview municipal employees and representatives from community-based organizations to find out how to better facilitate the welcoming and integration process.

### Need support for your initiatives?

The Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program supports the mandate of the Department of Canadian Heritage by building on Canada’s strength as a diverse and inclusive society. The Program’s objective is to build an integrated, socially cohesive society by: building bridges to promote intercultural understanding; promoting equal opportunity for individuals of all origins; and promoting citizenship, civic engagement and a healthy democracy. The Program has three funding components: [Events](#), [Projects](#) and [Community Capacity Building](#). It also includes two separate initiatives: [Community Support for Black Canadian Youth](#) and the [Paul Yuzyk Youth Initiative for Multiculturalism](#).



# Promising Practices

The promising practices presented below promote innovative ways for municipalities to welcome immigrants and refugees and help them to integrate into their new communities in Canada. Municipalities across Canada engage in these practices, which are organized according to the categories used in the World Economic Forum's 2017 report [Migration and Its Impact on Cities](#).

The promising practices presented in this section have been provided by the members of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities or adapted from the various examples they shared to help develop this publication. Members' or partners' websites provided additional examples of promising programs and practices that are government-funded and/or operated by local service provider organizations in Canada.



## Education, Training and Employment

Many cities in Canada have employment centres that help immigrants integrate into the workforce through employment, job search training and support, cultural competency building and language training. Mentorship and networking programs linking newcomers to peers in the workplace are also common. Cities offer diversity training to their frontline workers, police and community service providers to maximize the quality and availability of integration services for newcomers and refugees. As access to education or training opportunities can be limited for some municipalities, in particular in smaller and rural municipalities and those far from large urban centres, webinars or online trainings are also options to explore.

### Employment and Skills Development

- The **City of Montreal** offers an [Internship Program](#) that helps newcomers integrate into the city's workforce through on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching. With more than 25,000 employees, the City recognized that "Canadian experience" was a barrier preventing many bright and talented individuals from fully participating in the local labour force. To help newcomers and recent graduates overcome this barrier, the City launched the Professional Sponsorship Program.
- The **City of Calgary**'s [Employment Forums](#) bring hiring managers face-to-face with immigrant job seekers. This initiative promotes employment for newcomers in Calgary while educating them about the careers available with the City of Calgary. The employment forums serve as a "one-stop shop" for new Canadian professionals interested in a career with the City.
- The **City of Québec** offers an [Internship Program for Newcomers](#), who are seeking a first recognized work experience in a field related to their training.

### Entrepreneurship and Small Business Incubation

- In 2017, the **City of Toronto** implemented a [Social Procurement Policy](#) which aims to harness its \$2.6 billion procurement power in order to address economic disadvantage and barriers for suppliers owned by Indigenous persons, or equity-seeking groups which includes, but is not limited to, women, racialized minorities, newcomers, veterans, and persons with a disability by providing them with equal opportunity to do business with the City. By 2021, the City hopes that one-third of contracts valued more than \$5 million will include a workforce development component that includes hiring and training workers belonging to equity-seeking groups.

### Language Training for Newcomers

- A trade union in Canada's construction industry offers language training and certification in the native languages of new members – including Arabic-speaking refugees. The Laborers' International Union of North America ([LiUNA!](#)) [local 506](#) in **Richmond Hill** recognizes that inclusion does not mean treating everyone the same. It means providing the different supports its members need to have equal access to training and employment. For example, offering safety training in native language ensures that members are prepared for safety training, re-certification or more rigorous provincially-mandated exams. Improving English skills remains essential to moving into jobs in other sectors, or with other employers – but members proceed at their own pace.

### Training for Municipal Staff

- The **City of Red Deer** has mandatory training for all staff – Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion. The City's Diversity & Inclusion Specialist also offers optional training on other themes including “Newcomers and Multiculturalism in the Workplace” and “Multifaith in the Workplace”.
- The **City of Medicine Hat** partners with inter-cultural agencies to develop and offer inclusion, diversity and inter-cultural training to organizations and the public. The City worked with Saamis Immigration Services to provide training aimed at dispelling myths around the refugee process. The City also worked with community partners to host a public information and discussion event at the public library as well as presentations for educators working with school-aged refugees and for municipal staff, health services employees and other local professionals.
- In **Wood Buffalo**, all municipal staff complete a “Respectful Workplace” training that encourages the development and maintenance of a workplace free of racism, discrimination and harassment and promotes respect, inclusion, and appreciation of diversity. The training provides important information about the rights and responsibilities of all municipal staff and introduces new staff to the culture of the workplace as one of inclusion and equality.



## Education, Training and Employment (cont.)

- The **City of Ottawa** offers various training opportunities. The “Respectful Workplace” training focuses on: federal and provincial legislation as it applies to human rights in the workplace; the City’s policies on harassment and violence in the workplace; and on the choices we make when we experience or witness disrespectful behaviour. The “Leading a Diverse Workforce” training is designed to provide managers and supervisors with an understanding of their role in leading a diverse workforce. The City’s “Equity and Inclusion (EI) Lens” training is based on a handbook to help employees understand diversity in the community and the workplace and how to consciously use the knowledge in all aspects of their work. The “Intact training for teams” aims to address issues or area of interest identified within a department, branch, or team.
- The **City of Toronto** collaborated with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council to offer [The Mentoring Partnership Program](#) to newcomers in the labour market. The partnership connects skilled immigrants and established professionals, working in occupation-specific mentoring relationships. Mentors provide newcomers with guidelines and skills to be more competitive in the labour market.
- In 2011, the **City of Vancouver** joined forces with the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia, and a host of service providers, including Immigrant Services Society of BC, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society), and MOSAIC to pilot the [MentorConnect Program](#). The program has proved to be a win-win strategy with City staff sharing their knowledge, expertise and professional networks, and providing over 200 mentor matches to newly arrived immigrant professionals. The program has provided the City with the opportunity to demonstrate its leadership and core values of livability and diversity, and to build more culturally competent and confident staff, better able to serve the diverse community. The City of Vancouver has been awarded twice by IEC-BC Employer Recognition Awards as an innovator and leader in the employment of immigrants in B.C.

### Networking and Mentorship Programs

Most highly skilled newcomers face a common challenge when looking for work – a lack of local connections and networks.

- The [Halifax Partnership’s Connector](#) program facilitates networking opportunities that connect established community, business and government leaders with talented newcomers and help them build their professional networks.
- The **Town of Stratford** (Prince Edward Island) continues to maintain a strong relationship with the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce and remains a sponsor of their [PEI Connectors Program](#), which aims to help immigrant entrepreneurs establish businesses in PEI. One-on-one support services are provided to clients in the development and execution of their business plans. Workshops and information sessions are offered to familiarize clients with the local business environment and provide information about support services and programs for business owners. Volunteer “connectors” are established business and community leaders who donate their time to help immigrant entrepreneurs become familiar with the local business environment, and integrate into the Island’s business community.



## Integration and Social Cohesion

Cities are tasked with improving the overall conditions for newcomers and the host society. Immigrant integration is visualized via a “two-way street” metaphor where there is mutual adaptation on the part of the immigrant and the receiving community. Eliminating disparities to societal participation and ensuring equitable access to services are fundamental to integration. The development of cross-cultural skills within organizations is a prerequisite for making services accessible.

- The **City of Gatineau** collaborates with the [Centre for Intercultural Learning](#) to offer its staff professional development training on intercultural effectiveness. Service offerings include on-line training and a pre-departure course to increase the effectiveness of people living and working in a cultural context different from their own. Orientation to Canada is a course designed for international partners, trainees and students coming for short and long-term assignments or studies in Canada.
- The [Montreal Intercultural Program](#) promotes the development of harmonious intercultural relations among residents to fight discrimination and racism. It aims for better understanding and communications between various cultural groups, and seeks to increase Montreal citizens’ awareness of cultural diversity. The program offers financial support to projects fighting exclusion, discrimination and racism, and encourages intercultural dialogue. It also aims to account for greater ethno-cultural diversity in the services they provide by offering cross-cultural training programs to municipal staff and corporate departments.
- The **City of Sherbrooke** has adopted an [Action Plan on Immigration](#) that aims to support the work of frontline workers when tackling the challenges of integration as well as to provide newcomers with strategies to facilitate their harmonious and sustainable settlement in the community. The plan consists of five lines of actions and 13 specific objectives.
- The objectives of the [Newcomer Welcome Policy](#) of the **Regional County Municipality (RCM) of La Vallée-de-l’Or** are to: provide the actors concerned with support, appropriate tools and recommended approaches for welcoming, integrating and retaining newcomers to the region; and mobilize the community around a concerted action strategy that covers all newcomer-related challenges. This strategy is intended for the RCM’s residents, institutions, organizations, employers and elected officials, as well as nearby municipalities.
- Access to services can be a challenge for immigrant families, including summer day camps. The **City of Québec** supports nearly 30 organizations that offer summer activities to children aged 5-12 in about 50 parks. In order to facilitate the inclusion of all young people in these activities, the City supports cultural awareness activities and a training program for instructors responsible for animation and supervision of activities. These aim to prevent discrimination and racism and make all young people attending summer day camps aware of cultural diversity. These initiatives ensure the active participation of immigrant youth and provide all young people attending day camps with a positive experience of leisure and living together. The participation of children with an immigrant background in the day camp also facilitates their learning French, their understanding of Québec culture and transition into the school environment.



## How Inclusive is Your City? Tools for Measuring Inclusion and Integration

- The **Association for Canadian Studies'** [Canadian Index for Measuring Integration \(CIMI\)](#) is a measurement tool used to evaluate the state of immigrant integration across Canadian provinces and CMAs. The CIMI fills an existing knowledge gap by providing a composite measure to evaluate the relative performance of immigrants relative to the Canadian-born in the host society under four key dimensions of integration: economic, social, civic and democratic participation and health.
- The [My City of Migration Diagnostic Tool \(MyCOM\)](#) from **Cities of Migration** Building Inclusive Cities Project is designed to help assess the quality of inclusion in a city: at work, at school, on election day, in health and as a new arrival. The MyCOM tool can be used to build a profile of a city's strengths and weaknesses across ten dimensions of inclusion.
- The **Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)** offers a [Measuring Inclusion Tool](#) allowing a municipality to benchmark how inclusive it is across numerous areas of focus such as leadership, employee engagement, social services, infrastructure, economic development and others. Through periodic evaluations, the Tool helps a municipality to track and measure its progress to reach a culture of inclusion and includes suggested strategies to support the process.
- The [Strengthening Diversity In Your Organization: A Self-Assessment Tool](#), produced by the **Regional Municipality of York**, is designed to help organizations of all types – private, public and volunteer – better meet the needs of diverse communities. Through a series of self-assessment questions, the tool helps to identify potential barriers to serving diverse communities. It also reinforces good practices in the development and implementation of inclusive policies, services and programs.



## Tools for Newcomers: Locating Service Providers

- The **Cities of Migration** [Refugee Portal](#) profiles local solutions that are helping refugees settle and thrive in open, resilient urban communities. Good practices in the Living Together collection showcase work that brings newcomers and receiving communities together in the spaces and places that foster shared identity and belonging. The Municipal Leadership collection shares good ideas about what local governments can do to accelerate integration and build more inclusive communities, from core services such as housing, education and emergency services to employment, sport and recreation, economic development and more.
- The **Government of Canada's** [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#) hosts a website and search engine for newcomers to find free integration services across Canada. Users can look for a job, get a language assessment and register for language classes, find a place to live, learn about community services and more.
- **BC Libraries** partners with immigrant service providers to develop, deliver and promote services and resources that support immigrant settlement and integration in communities across the province. The online tool [NewToBC - The Library Link for Newcomers](#) allows users to find immigrant service providers in their area.



## Safety & Security

Welcoming newcomers does not increase crime in Canada. Some researchers even suggest that welcoming newcomers can actually lower the violent crime rate.<sup>47</sup> Refugees and other seeking protection in Canada are not threats to security – they are seeking security and protection from threats to their own lives.<sup>48</sup> That being said, it is important to develop and maintain relationships with law enforcement authorities in order to build trust, ensure community policing presence, etc.

- The **Alberta Hate Crimes Committee** is made up of volunteers from a variety of government, policing and community sectors who have dedicated their time and expertise to research and education on hate crimes in **Alberta**. The Hate Motivated Crime and Incidents Provincial Strategy Committee was formed in 2002 to develop a province-wide framework that encourages and supports a collaborative, integrated approach to preventing, enforcing and responding to hate and bias motivated activities in Alberta. The [StopHateAB.ca](http://StopHateAB.ca) website was created for Albertans to document hate incidents and help track incidents by community.
- The **City of Grande Prairie** Crime Prevention Program offers, since 2014, the [Cultural Integration Academy](#), a volunteer-based initiative for crime prevention within the City. Its purpose is to enhance the integration of newcomer youth and families by providing education, outreach and support. People who attend the CIA will learn everything from how to interact with police officers, raising children in a new country, and dealing with culture shock. They are also paired with volunteer mentor families who will assist them in their integration journey.
- The **City of Vancouver's** [Access to City Services Without Fear](#) policy addresses some key concerns facing individuals with uncertain or no immigration status living in the City. Vancouver residents who are in such a situation can access City services without fear that the City will ask for and divulge information on the immigration status of individuals to other public institutions or orders of government, unless required by law. The [Diversity & Indigenous Relations Section \(DIRS\)](#) in the **Vancouver Police Department (VPD)** works with specific communities that are experiencing significant public safety issues. The DIRS promotes community safety through diversity in recruiting, cultural competency training, and relationship building with various communities. Members of the DIRS regularly meet with community representatives to develop programming to enhance community safety, and to participate in community forums, workshops, and rallies. The VPD also publishes an internal monthly newsletter about diversity for all staff that captures events and educates/promotes diversity within the VPD.



## Safety & Security (cont.)

- The [Calgary Police Service Diversity Resource Team](#) actively engages with Calgary's diverse communities. The team's specialized knowledge of Calgary's diverse cultures can help obtain successful resolutions to investigations or any other incidents. They assist with investigations or incidents where specific knowledge of diverse populations can help. This includes hate crimes or hate incidents. The team also provides a variety of programs and presentations within the community. For example, the workshop "You and the Law" aims at helping new immigrants learn about the Canadian legal system, how police in Calgary operate and the rights newcomers enjoy as residents of Canada. The workshop is conducted by specially trained police officers and was designed with input from immigrants and several support organizations.
- The [Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence](#) was created in 2015 by the [City of Montreal](#) with the support of the Québec Government. Aimed at preventing violent radicalization and providing support to individuals affected by the phenomenon, the CPRLV offers [training](#) to interested municipalities and their partners (police authorities, frontline workers, etc.)



## Health

Immigrants to Canada arrive in better health than the average Canadian, but their health tends to deteriorate over time.<sup>49</sup> Refugee health is poorer upon arrival than other immigrants and the Canadian-born.<sup>50</sup> This is partly due to challenges related to accessing health care.<sup>51</sup> Connecting with the health care system in Canada is an important part of the settlement process. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights describes accessibility to health in terms of four dimensions: non-discrimination, physical accessibility, economic accessibility and information accessibility. One should also consider the importance of mental health and the particular challenges associated with it (stigma, cultural understanding of mental health, lack of culturally appropriate resources, low awareness, etc.)

- The [City of Ottawa](#) and the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership collaborated on the [Language Learning for Health Project](#) that provides resources for ESL teaching and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Practitioners.<sup>52</sup> Instructors are encouraged to discuss priority health topics with adult learners, providing them with activities that are fun and engaging, while using information that is trustworthy and reliable. Designed and reviewed by a team of Ottawa Public Health and Ottawa-Carleton District School Board staff, this series focuses on three health topics: Physical Activity, Dental Health and Mental Health.
- The [Multicultural Health Brokers](#) (MCHB) in [Edmonton](#) contributes to enhancing the health and well-being of families, and fostering their efforts at building community so they could thrive, and actively contribute to society. MCHB offers innovative programs to help better serve the families in our Edmonton communities.

- An internship program at St. Michael's Hospital in **Toronto** helps hospital staff assess skilled immigrants for jobs. Since 2004, St. Michael's has worked with Career Edge to participate in its [Career Bridge paid internship program](#) for internationally educated professionals (IEP). The structured program includes mentoring and coaching and is an attractive way to tap into diverse talent in a city where almost 50% of its population is born outside of Canada, making global talent a priority.



## Tool for Measuring Immigrant Health

- The [Canadian Health Measures Survey \(CHMS\)](#) is a unique tool for immigrant health research providing direct physical health measures that address data gaps in existing information. The CHMS gathers information related to nutrition, smoking habits, alcohol use, medical history, current health status, sexual behaviour, lifestyle and physical activity, environmental and housing characteristics, as well as demographic and socioeconomic variables. The survey also gathers information to help improve health programs and services in Canada.



## Transportation

Transportation is an immediate need for newcomers and refugees, who are twice as likely as Canadian-born workers to commute by public transit.<sup>53</sup> While public transit is recognized as an immediate need, providing free access to recreation services is also needed to facilitate social integration once immediate settlement needs are met.

- Each year the **City of Gatineau**'s [immigration and cultural diversity program](#) provides a bus tour that takes participants to different sites across the City. The tour stops at services and sites relevant to newcomers' integration such as municipal offices, sports facilities, police station, the regional transportation office, libraries, etc.
- [Welcomed in Halifax](#) is an initiative by the **Halifax Regional Municipality** that aims to facilitate the social and economic integration of refugees by providing free access to public transport and several recreation programs during their first year of settlement. This initiative was developed in consultation with local and provincial partners.
- The **City of Guelph** has introduced the [Welcome to Guelph program](#) available to refugees to help their transition into the city. The program includes a Welcome to Guelph card that gives temporary free access to transit, museums, public swimming/skating in some facilities, etc.



## Housing & Utilities

Access to safe, affordable and quality housing should be viewed as a human right. Immigrants and refugees experience several challenges in accessing and staying in adequate housing – similar to those faced by low-income Canadians.<sup>54</sup> They face a ‘double-burden’ because not only do they spend a lot more on housing than do Canadian-born individuals, but they also earn much less on average.<sup>55</sup>

- The [Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership \(SHIP\)](#) has been working to provide safe, permanent, affordable, appropriate and secure housing for residents of **Saskatoon** since 1999. SHIP works to bring housing to all residents, recognizing the challenges faced by immigrants and newcomers to Saskatoon, who are often those most in need of affordable housing.
- The [City of Lethbridge’s Social Housing in Action \(SHIA\) Committee of Council](#) is the community-based organization dedicated to ending homelessness through a Housing First approach, prevention of homelessness and provision of support services to end homelessness in Lethbridge. SHIA represents a healthy and collaborative cross-section of Lethbridge and community leaders, organizations and includes a range of partners including SHIA an integral part of the provincial [Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness](#).

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### Resources on housing



The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) website provides, in various languages, [housing information for newcomers to Canada](#) on renting, buying, planning and managing a mortgage, etc.



The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness’ [Homeless Hub](#), a non-partisan research and policy partnership among academics, policy and decision makers, service providers and people with lived experience of homelessness offers a library of over 30,000 resources on homelessness. It also published [Housing First in Canada: Supporting Communities to End Homelessness](#) to help communities make the shift to a Housing First approach, a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.



## Toolkits to Develop Welcoming and Inclusive Community Initiatives

- The Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities' [Toolkit for Municipalities](#) (2019) was designed to be helpful to municipalities at all stages of their involvement in the Coalition, whether they are considering becoming a member, developing a plan of action or measuring their results. This resource offers municipalities practical information, useful tools, shares promising practices and identifies additional resources.
- The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's (AUMA) [Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit](#) walks users through the stages of recognizing the issue, building commitment, designing a vision and strategic plan, designating actions and responsibilities, and celebrating the accomplishments.
- The City of Calgary's [Creating Inclusive Communities](#) is a diversity booklet of tips and resources for community groups wanting to involve new Canadians and persons with disabilities in municipal life. The booklet debunks common myths about newcomers to Canada, provides tools to measure how inclusive your city is, and things that cities can do to create inclusive communities.
- In the context of the arrival of Syrian refugees to Canada, the [Welcoming Communities – A Toolkit for Municipal Government](#) developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) builds on lessons learned by over 300 municipalities that have helped to welcome the newcomers. It recognizes the cultural, social and economic value newcomers contribute to our communities and the essential role local governments play in helping newcomers settle into Canadian life by offering, for examples, adequate housing, accessible transit, employment, language and cultural supports and services to help them succeed.

- Developed in partnership with the City for All Women Initiative, the City of Ottawa and Status of Women Canada, the [Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook](#) is an important tool to support the work of City staff, management and Council in efforts to move equity and inclusion forward. This handbook is accompanied by an interactive training for staff.
- The [Building and Sustaining Community Collaborations for Refugee Welcome: A Community Engagement Toolkit](#) was created by Welcoming America (USA) to help organizations and community groups identify their current strengths and consider specific new strategies and tactics for expanding and deepening their collaborations in order to promote welcoming communities.



## Examples of Welcome Guides for Newcomers and Refugees

### [Québec City, a City for Me](#) *City of Québec (2016)*

This practical guide has several facts sheets for newcomers and brings together local partners from the health, education and employment community, as well as other community actors around common actions: adapted information about services, support for immigrants in their integration and coordination of common integration program.

### [Discovering and Experiencing Montreal - Welcome Guide for New Immigrants to Montreal](#) *City of Montreal (2016)*

This document is published by the City of Montreal's Service de la diversité sociale et des sports with the participation of the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion.

### Newcomers' Guide

*Immigration Greater Moncton (City of Moncton, City of Dieppe, Town of Riverview)*

The Guide offers useful information to newcomers on services, housing, communications, employment, transportation, health and safety, education, laws, parks and sport facilities, community aid and support, and more.

### Newcomers Guide to Edmonton

*City of Edmonton (2018)*

The Newcomer's Guide to Edmonton features 63 pages of essential information to help new residents settle in the City. The Guide was produced with the input and suggestions of many people for whom the guide is intended, including newcomers, settlement workers, English-language instructors, and cultural brokers.

### Newcomers Guide to Calgary

*City of Calgary (2018)*

The Newcomers Guide to Calgary provides important information for new residents in an easy to download and print format. It includes a map of all immigrant serving agencies in downtown Calgary, transit information and important phone numbers.

### New Resident Guide

*Town of Cochrane (2017)*

The New Resident Guide offers information of interest to newcomers on different sectors including services, schools, recreation and sports, transportation, health, safety, etc.

### Growing Roots: A Newcomer's Guide to Vancouver

*City of Vancouver (2014)*

Growing Roots: A Newcomer's Guide to Vancouver is an invitation for participation and civic engagement for newcomers to Vancouver. This digital guide provides information on a wide array of services, volunteer opportunities, and important resources in the community. Personal stories from newcomers and long term residents tells the story of how these community resources helped ease the settlement process and feel more at home in their newly adopted city.

### Online Guide for Newcomers to Canada

*PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (2018)*

Intended for new immigrants in Prince Edward Island as well as for institutions and municipalities serving them, the Online Guide for Newcomers to Prince Edward Island provides comprehensive information about the first steps to take upon arrival, essential Canadian documents and how to obtain them, as well as elementary aspects of everyday living in Canada and on the Island. The guide is designed to help newcomers settle more quickly and easier so that they can enjoy their new environment and participate in society to their full potential.

### B.C. Newcomers' Guide – Provincial

*WelcomeBC (2018)*

This guide gives recent immigrants and their families the information they need to settle in B.C. quickly and easily. The guide includes information on finding a place to live, language services and resources to help newcomers settle; using public transportation, registering children in school and opening a bank account; applying for BC Services card, finding medical services, and getting assistance for those needing extra support.



## Reports, Publications and Tools for Municipalities

### Refugees and the City: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Front Line<sup>56</sup>

*Centre for International Governance Innovation  
(2018)*

This research paper assesses the characteristics of the urban displacement crisis and identifies challenges and opportunities confronting cities at a time when 60 percent of all refugees and 80 percent of all internally displaced persons live in urban areas. It challenges myths associated with the “refugee burden” in cities, offering preliminary recommendations for stepping up international, national and municipal cooperation.

### Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees<sup>57</sup>

*Organization for Economic Co-operation  
and Development (OECD), 2018*

This report describes what it takes to formulate a place-based approach to integration through concerted efforts across levels of government as well as between state and non-state actors. It also presents a 12-point checklist to promote more effective integration of migrants with partners and stakeholders.

### Creating Inclusive & Equitable Cities<sup>58</sup>

*UNESCO and Canadian Commission for  
UNESCO (2016)*

This publication prepared by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the UNESCO’s International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities presents five successful strategies from the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (formerly Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination) and makes recommendations for municipalities to address specific challenges.

### Good Ideas from Successful Cities: Municipal Leadership in Immigrant Integration (2012)<sup>59</sup> et Practice to Policy: Lessons from Local Leadership (2013)<sup>60</sup>

*Cities of Migration, Maytree Foundation*

This report series investigates over 80 promising municipal policies and practices across Canada and internationally that promote a better welcome and contribute to immigrant success. Whatever the legal and jurisdictional framework, cities around the world are accountable to their constituents and uniquely positioned to share good practice – through policy instruments (equality, inclusion, nondiscrimination), as service providers, as employers and diversity managers, and as drivers of the local economy.

### Indexing Integration 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: A Review of National and International Models<sup>61</sup>

*A Canadian Index for Measuring Integration  
publication (2016)*

This publication reviews international and national models of indexing integration and concludes that a multi-dimensional, mixed-method index is needed that employs a wide range of quantitative data combined with qualitative measures in order to capture the context and key conditions contributing to immigrant integration.

Information kit for Quebec municipalities  
on issues related to immigration and cultural  
diversity<sup>62</sup>

In French only

*Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité  
et de l'Inclusion du Québec*

The purpose of this information kit is to equip Quebec municipalities with the tools they need to play a leading role in ethnocultural diversity. The kit is designed to: inform municipalities of issues related to ethnocultural diversity; guide municipalities in taking into account ethnocultural diversity in their decision-making process with respect to municipal management and service provision; share municipal expertise in ethnocultural diversity; support municipalities in identifying accessible means and tools for enhancing ethnocultural diversity.

Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants:  
Enhancing Effective Urban Governance  
in an Age of Migration<sup>63</sup>

*UNESCO, M. V. Vardinoyannis Foundation and  
European Coalition of Cities against Racism  
(ECCAR) (2016)*

The study provides international mapping and analysis of “city and migration” issues with a focus on Europe; drawing on a survey of member cities of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), a review of literature and perspectives of international networks on cities and migration. It also identifies an urban governance framework agenda of principles, policy guidelines and actions common across city approaches.





# Case Studies

## ● Montreal

The City of Montreal is a “ville responsable et engagée” (*responsible and engaged city*) committed to welcoming and integrating newcomers. A third of Montrealers were born abroad and Montreal is home to individuals from 120 different nations, who speak nearly 200 languages and dialects.<sup>64, 65</sup>

Each year, the City of Montreal welcomes 35,000 newcomers with permanent status and 68,000 persons with temporary status. This equates to nearly 280 persons arriving daily. Québec processed 24,980 asylum claims in 2017, which was nearly half of all claims made in Canada in 2017 (49,775).<sup>66</sup>

In 2016, the City of Montreal established the Newcomer’s Integration Office, Bureau d’intégration des nouveaux arrivants à Montreal (BINAM), to speed up the process of integrating newcomers to maximize their participation in Montreal society. BINAM promotes the mobilization of partners around the issue of welcoming and integrating newcomers to Montreal. It works with both government ministries and community partners to carry out its mandates. In doing so, it ensures that newcomers receive an effective and meaningful welcome, and that this experience is successful for both newcomers and the host society.<sup>67</sup>

“Montreal Inclusive” – the City’s new Action Plan<sup>68</sup> for the integration of newcomers from 2018 to 2021 calls for the following actions:

- ✓ *Make the City of Montreal exemplary by being open, safe and inclusive.*
- ✓ *Develop an integrated and accessible offer of services for newcomers.*
- ✓ *Improve access to employment services actors and civil society in order to improve their reception and inclusion capacities.*
- ✓ *Increase new immigrant participation in economic life and reduce the gap in (un) employment relative to Canadian born.*
- ✓ *Improve newcomer’s access to quality and affordable housing.*

BINAM has identified **six priority regions** in Montreal to develop collaborative projects with coordinated action plans and integration activities for newcomers and refugees:

- 1 Ahuntsic-Cartierville,
- 2 Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce,
- 3 Montreal-Nord,
- 4 Saint-Laurent/Pierrefonds-Roxboro,
- 5 Saint-Léonard/Anjou, and
- 6 Villeray–Saint-Michel–Parc-Extension.

Actions include hiring six regional partnership advisors, mapping key stakeholders and initiatives in the communities, conducting local needs assessments, proposing collaborative projects to meet local needs and sharing best practices.

## Montreal has a policy framework in place to address migration and integration-related challenges, which includes the following key declarations and policies:

March 21, 1989	The City formally adopted the <u>Montreal Declaration Against Racial Discrimination</u> .
March 21, 2002	Montreal proclaimed March 21 <sup>st</sup> as the “International Day the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination”.
March 22, 2004	Adopted the <u>Montreal Declaration for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion</u> , replacing the <u>Montreal Declaration Against Racial Discrimination</u> . In the Declaration, the City commits to implementing equal opportunity employment programs, engaging a zero-tolerance policy against racism, and adopting measures to ensure human rights.
June 20, 2005	The City adopted the <u>Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities</u> , which came into force January 1, 2006 – the first such Charter in North America. The Charter details the principles and values of the City and various rights, responsibilities and commitments of the City related to democracy, economic, social and cultural life, recreation, physical activities and sports, and environment and sustainable development.
October 31, 2006	Montreal joins the <b>Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities</b> (formerly Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination)
June 10-11, 2015	The <u>Living Together Summit</u> was held in Montreal with mayors of 23 large cities and metropolises around the world. The <u>Montreal Declaration on Living Together</u> was adopted and formed the <u>International Observatory of Mayors on Living Together</u> – an international network of cities and a unique platform for the exchange of experiences, knowledge and innovative practices related to social cohesiveness, inclusion and safety.
September 21, 2015	The adoption of the <b>Montreal Declaration on the Syrian Migration Crisis</b> (Resolution CM 15 1049).

## Resources for Newcomers and Refugees in Montreal

BINAM offers the following innovative programs and resources for newcomers and refugees in Montreal:

 **“Mobilisation-Diversité”**  
The Ministère de l’Immigration, de la Diversité et de l’Inclusion (MIDI) and the City of Montreal invested \$24 million as part of its “*Mobilisation-Diversité*” program for 2018-2021. This investment aims to facilitate immigrant integration into Québec society and to support the implementation of action plans for Montreal and borough initiatives, in collaboration with local partners in the domain of immigration. Areas of intervention include: economic development, employment, housing, living environments, accessibility to public services, and fighting racism, social inclusion, discrimination and xenophobia.

 **“Inclusive Montreal” grant program**  
“Inclusive Montreal” is designed to support local projects of Montreal community organizations that promote the full participation of newcomers in Montreal society, and enhance the welcoming and inclusion skills of Montreal’s population. Actions include developing and offering training to Montreal’s community organizations on how to build strong social impact projects that welcome newcomers, along with funding to implement these projects and evaluate their success.

 **“Integration-Work-Training” Initiative**  
This project aims to accelerate the employment integration path of newcomers, while supporting Montreal’s major employers in adopting innovative processes for recruiting, integrating and retaining newly arrived skilled workers. The City of Montreal offers intercultural communication training to mentors, mentees, managers and HR advisors.

 **Intercultural Training Program**  
The City of Montreal trains municipal staff and corporate services to better take into account ethnocultural diversity through its service offerings. The City aims to increase employee skills in intercultural communication and diversity management. The program creates a workplace that is open to diversity and strengthens its employees’ anti-discrimination and intercultural skills.

 **Syrian Refugee Projects**  
In June 2017, Montreal announced it is providing funding to eight organizations in Québec to implement projects that promote the integration of around 8,500 Syrian refugees. Project activities include: school and labour market integration, a youth day camp, a youth radio program and several other integration efforts in local host communities.

 **“Montreal, a new beginning”**  
The website “[Montreal, a new beginning](#)” provides newcomers with “the right information at the right time” and creates a customized path for the newcomer’s immigration status. This bilingual website is an adaptive and inclusive service that offers recent immigrants a unique portal to access vital information and public services (e.g., housing, employment, health services) as well as key points of contact in the community. The intent is to create a strong connection between immigrants and the welcoming society.

# ● Saskatoon

## Background

Historically, the majority of immigrants to Canada have settled in the largest urban centres of MTV – Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. In recent years, more and more immigrants have been choosing to settle in smaller city centres such as Regina and Saskatoon, Edmonton and Winnipeg. They are lured by promising job prospects and a lower cost of living. The share of recent immigrants in the Canadian prairie provinces has doubled in the past 15 years.<sup>69</sup>

## Demographic Renewal

Saskatoon is one of Canada's fastest growing cities<sup>70</sup> and is the most popular destination for recent immigrants in the province of Saskatchewan, with 18,585 newcomers arriving in the city between 2011 to 2016 (approximately two out of five recent immigrants in the province).<sup>71</sup> This accounts for the city's changing demographics, with the number of visible minorities more than doubling in less than a decade, up to 19.8 percent in 2016 from 6.4 percent in 2006.<sup>72</sup>

## Policy

In 2004, the City of Saskatoon instituted a **Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Policy**<sup>73</sup>, establishing employment equity targets to match the changing diversity of its population, and strategies to make the workplace more welcoming and inclusive. The City hired a Cultural Diversity and Race Relations Coordinator to monitor and provide advice to City Council on issues relating to the policy. The Coordinator oversees various events and activities with the goal of achieving the following outcomes:

- community representation in the workforce and community decision-making bodies,
- a zero-tolerance policy for racism and discrimination,
- increased awareness and understanding in Saskatoon regarding the issues facing newcomers, and
- acceptance of the various cultures that make up Saskatoon.

## Barriers to Employment

To recruit skilled immigrants into public service, the City of Saskatoon recognized it had to overcome the barriers to employment as experienced by newcomers. One of the biggest obstacles to employment is obtaining recognition of foreign credentials, something that must be done before the job application process can even begin. The City of Saskatoon helps potential applicants navigate the pre-employment maze by providing information that ranges from how to get credentials assessed to what additional courses of study may be needed for certification.<sup>74</sup>

## Workforce Development

The City devoted resources to hiring an Immigration Community Resource Coordinator and to developing partnerships within immigrant communities, conducting outreach and information sessions with organizations like the [Saskatchewan Intercultural Association](#) and the [International Women of Saskatoon](#). An action plan was developed to:

- 1 attract more immigrants to Saskatoon,
- 2 effectively address the difficulties facing newcomers in order to improve retention,
- 3 effectively address the challenges facing the community, and
- 4 take full advantage of the many opportunities and benefits that increased immigration can offer.

In 2018, the City of Saskatoon was recognized as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers for the third straight year. Developing a diverse workforce is about more than achieving employment equity targets. Essential steps to creating a welcoming work environment include promoting intercultural awareness, encouraging an attitude of mutual respect and advocating for the use of inclusive language.

Saskatoon is one of three Canadian cities to have signed UNHCR's [Cities #WithRefugees pledge](#).

## Resources for Newcomers and Refugees in Saskatoon

 **Newcomer Information Centre**  
The mission of the [Newcomer Information Centre \(NIC\)](#) in Saskatoon is to welcome and support newcomers by providing information and referrals to services (pre-arrival and post-arrival) and resources in collaboration with the community. The Centre is a [Regional Newcomer Gateway](#) to serve newcomers to Saskatoon and communities within a 150 kilometers radius. The NIC is a partnership initiative with the four main settlement agencies of Saskatoon: [Saskatoon Open Door Society](#), [Saskatchewan Intercultural Association](#), [Global Gathering Place](#), and [International Women of Saskatoon](#).

 **Government of Saskatchewan Settlement Services**  
Saskatchewan has a number of services to help newcomers to Canada settle into the province – from welcome centres across the province to translation services. Settlement Advisors can advise newcomers of appropriate services to meet their specific needs or challenges, such as health and wellness, workplace issues or housing. Even if they do not speak English (or French), Settlement Advisors can help using an interpreter through the Over The Phone Interpretation Program.

 **Saskatoon Open Door Society**  
The [Saskatoon Open Door Society](#) is a non-profit organization that provides programming to meet the needs of newcomers in areas including settlement and employment services, language training and translation services, and family and youth support.

 **Saskatchewan Intercultural Association**  
The [Saskatchewan Intercultural Association \(SIA\)](#) is a non-profit, charitable organization founded in 1964. It has been committed to supporting cultural groups retain their distinctive cultural identity, language and arts. In the last 20 years, SIA has also focused on providing programs and services that empower and relieve barriers for newcomers and Indigenous people in securing employment, language advancement, and cultural understanding. An integral part of SIA has always been to provide anti-racist education and promote intercultural understanding to the general public through workshops, programming and community events.

 **Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan**  
The [Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan](#) has been raising awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity and the dangers of racism since 1975. It currently represents 56 member organizations, which include thousands of volunteers committed to promoting the benefits of multiculturalism.



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