



## AGENDA

Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership Council  
Archway Community Services  
Virtual Meeting  
Thursday, April 8, 2021 – 2-4 pm

Attending		Regrets
Manpreet Grewal (co-chair)	Sharon Crowley (Literacy Matters)	Camilla Boisvert (FHA)
Alison Gutrath (Project mgt)	Sherry Wang (IAT)	Kanta Naik (SWIS)
Kyle Nelstead (MCC)	Stephen Piper (UFV)	Ghizlane Laghzaoui (UFV)
Michael Spuls (VanCity)	Katerina Anastasiadis (Chamber of Commerce)	Natalia Deros (Project mgt)
Adrian Bontuyan (UFV)	Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch)	
Balbir S. Gill (FVRL)		
Amrit K Gill (FVRL)		

### 1. Meeting Opening and Introductions

#### a. Land Acknowledgement

On the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the Matsqui and the Sumas Nations, of the Stó:lō nation.

### 2. Agenda Review & Approval

### 3. Acceptance of Minutes January 7, 2021

### 4. Presentation: Food Justice Program with Alicia Diaz-Pappas

Started end of January. Looking at food justice with an equity lens across the community. Project – Fraser Valley Food Connection, equitable food system and heightened awareness across the Fraser Valley. Food Justice Council (with Archway staff attending, in the future also meets regularly. Hope to have a central location with community kitchen, support advocacy work, training/education programs, inviting and inclusive place to gather over food (once allowed).

Bulk buy collective, members can join focusing on those with a financial need. They buy food at wholesale prices, and then distribute at a reduced cost. Based on what members would want to have in their baskets. Healthy food, that is culturally appropriate. Next project to facilitate a lived experience table, share their point of view and where they see gaps in the food system. Important to get the voice of newcomers at this table. Prioritizing temporary foreign workers who are producing our food but have food insecurity. Pilot program starting with archway clients first. Flyer was just finalized today; need a certain number of people to begin.

Comments/Questions:

- Adrien shared UFV students struggling with food insecurity, not just international. Alicia will add to their list of groups who need help.



- How does food bank fit in with the program? At the moment these are separate programs, in the future may be under the same program however have some differences in how services are designed and approached. Food Justice Program meet with Food Bank regularly to collaborate and work together.
- Food banks seem to focus on items such as 'kraft dinner', it is hard to find culturally relevant items/ingredients. Food Justice Program will only be purchasing fresh food for people at this time. It has been a long time coming to have the Seva Pantry to provide culturally relevant foods for specific ethnocultural groups including South Asian and Middle Eastern (such as Syrian immigrants; some who are Muslim and require halal items).
- Working primarily with 'Food Mesh' which provides apps, programs and services that helps businesses and charities safely donate, claim donations, buy and sell products.

**Action Item:** For more information or questions contact Taelyr with the Food Justice Program at [taelyr.keeley@archway.ca](mailto:taelyr.keeley@archway.ca).

## **5. Previous Business**

### **a. Follow-up on proposal for IRCC Service Delivery Improvement**

Alison updated that we were not successful in receiving funding for this project.

## **6. Working Group Updates**

### **a. Social Integration**

Newcomer video series featuring local resources in our community is underway. The stakeholders involved are looking at the COVID plans for the various locations. It has taken time to get the scripts prepared by the various stakeholders, effort is being made that these videos will be useful post-covid19 restrictions. The videographer company, Colla films, is operated by Matej and Dasa who are also immigrants and have given a discount on their services for this project. Language speakers are lined up to translate the scripts and then be recorded narrating the videos. Filming is commencing next week.

### **b. Research, Practice and Policy**

At the recent RPP meeting the members provided suggestions for Paul's program evaluation being implemented with ALIP Council and Working Group members. All members should have received an email from Paul with a link to the online survey. His findings will be compiled before the end of April and can be discussed by RPP and ALIP Council at a future meeting to reflect on possible ways of addressing feedback from this evaluation.

Celebrated the Stories of Immigration completion and submission for review by a publisher.

Discussion around the difference between the RPP and SI, and what their mandate is. Some wish for more hands-on research, however there is limited funding and available time of members. This will be a continued discussion at the next meeting.

### **c. Labour Market Focus**



Recent meeting welcomed Mei Chen, the new coordinator for the Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants program. LMF working group was planning to have an in-person networking event for sector specific local employers looking to hire employees and interested newcomers for this May (with the hopes that covid19 restrictions would allow this). Knowing the ongoing restrictions on public events and gatherings, it was decided to hold off on this networking event until 2022.

The Chamber of Commerce will host a lunch and learn for local chamber members and other employers on the Archway employment programs for newcomers in October 2021. This will be an online event and will allow for all of the current programs including Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants, Employment Mentors Program, Job Connections for Immigrants, Migrant Workers Program, etc.

#### **d. Immigrant Advisory Table**

At a recent meeting, the IAT had great discussion which was more of an emotional quality, members were expressing how happy and cathartic it is to discuss issues around newcomer needs and racism, with others who understand. They have a desire to meet in person and connect; and look forward to doing this when restrictions allow.

#### **7. Group Discussion: What recent trends, barriers and/or observations have you made within your professional work and the broader community regarding newcomer needs in Abbotsford?**

- With the borders being closed, Inasmuch have not seen any new refugee claimants. Planning for a potential influx once the borders open, not necessarily all at one time but there could be a number of individuals and families that will make their way across the border. Multi-agency partnership surveying, bringing together a plan in the event that something like this could happen.
- International students dealing with stress, isolation, depression, Global aired a story about suicide incidents with international students. Stephen mentioned an international student who he is very concerned about. UFV International provides support when students are referred for it or reach out for it. Adrian can receive referrals, it's hard when students don't want to accept the support.  
<https://globalnews.ca/news/7745098/pandemic-takes-tragic-toll-on-international-students-with-rising-deaths-by-suicide-report/>
- Invite Dan Heibert from Metropolis to present on current data of immigrants trends, etc.
- Vaccine plan information available in different languages to make sure that everyone has enough information and access it when available
- Sherry was part of a meeting with Dr Bonnie Henry yesterday re: vaccine communications and the information that isn't available in languages; language barrier might also to misunderstanding as to how the vaccine works. Can information be sent home with children/youth in school to take home to their



families in languages used at home?

- Confusing even to people who read and understand English re: registering to receive an appointment for the vaccine
- Trends in banking/credit union for newcomers; opening a new account is over the phone and then a very short meeting in the bank to receive identification and sign items. There's a gap, very difficult for a newcomer who has a language barrier to open an account over the phone, where if it is in person, they can communicate more easily with pointing to things, etc. Don't want to leave others behind. Not a lot of newcomers arriving at this time. Education about financial literacy and credit in Canada were done in person so how can this be done now? Not many would access online.
- Balraj has been hired additional staff (international student success/support coordinator) with UFV International
- From Kanta – seeing students who arrived in Canada with trauma, having more difficulties with mental health during Covid19; how can we address this now? What will this affect in the long term for youth and families? How will we be able to address mental health with culturally appropriate services?

#### **Action Items:**

- Natalia and Alison will share mental health resources available for professional development, and for families.
- Alison will check with Kanta re: the possibility of sending information to families about vaccinations in languages spoken at home with children/youth from schools.
- Manpreet will give contact information to Natalia for Dan Heibert from Metropolis to invite to a future ALIP Council meeting.

#### **8. Round Table Updates /Upcoming Event**

- Storybook walks in Abbotsford (Elwood park near fish trap creek and mill lake near the pool have children's stories; hoping to have one at Sumas nation as well.
- Learn About Session with counselors from school district and mental health on Monday, April 13 at 10am how to support your school age child.

#### **Upcoming ALIP Council Dates:**

- LIP Council Meeting- Thursday, June 10th, 2-4 pm.