

## Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership

### Minutes

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

TIME: 1:00 – 2:30 PM

**Facilitators:** Muhi Bakini & Sumaiyyah Adam

**Meeting Minutes:** Robyn Garland

#### Guest Speakers

An array of speakers shared their work and lived experience with us:

- Archway's Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada & Access2English (LINC & A2E) program's
- Archways Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)
- Indigenous Elder, offered a Halq'eméylem prayer and told us of her society and all the work done to preserve their society and culture.
- Ukrainian participant, provided perspective on their journey and integration process

#### **Group discussions**

##### **a. Consider the work you are doing with newcomers**

- VanCity opening accounts for newcomers
- ALIP will be creating two new immigrant advisory tables. One for displaced Ukrainians and one for Afghan refugees to help with some of the issues being brought up during this meeting and more.

##### **b. Discuss what is going on within your communities**

- One of the partners mentioned how the library also offers services and can help newcomers with some of the issues being brought up as well as virtual conversation circles and more.
- The library also has ELL materials including books, CD's and tests. Also, brought up that it's amazing that Archway is hiring our newcomers and past students from ATE and LINC.

##### **c. Are any issues or roadblocks arising**

- One of the speakers brought up the need for counseling for newcomers. There are lots of resources available, but not a lot about emotional support and it can be hard to pay for and find the right services for you.
  - o Points raised to developing a resource guide that can list all the resources available (Partner with Fraser Health and others would like to join)

- A partner echoed this, also saying that she would love to bring this to the school board. The school district has counselors but not enough by any means. Need counselors that have cultural competency training for each group that joins us in Canada. How can we bring counselors that already have this training or offer training to current school counselors?
- An Archway participant brought up that Archway now has counseling programs to help with newcomers that are escaping difficult situations.
- One of our partners also mentioned that there needs to be more ways to getting newcomers informed with the ways of knowing and being in community with indigenous people. They would love to see it done right at the beginning of their entrance to Canada.
- Another topic brought to light, was on issues when awaiting your PR. Unable to leave country, join certain groups, work or even more. It's crucial to have childcare for these programs so that moms can attend.
- Archway's brought up that immigrants face two main problems when they first get to Canada. 1. Language 2. Employment. Career and Pathways works with immigrants to achieve their career goals in this new environment and country. They are always on the look out for new clients and new connections in the employers + industry leaders.

#### Questions:

- A member was wondering if there is a way for people who don't have PR or have a visitor visa, is there a way they can do the LINC program? The LINC manager was able to explain the different statuses and how funding is delivered, we must follow rules by ICC
  - o A partner mentioned above that the library also offers services and can help newcomers with some of the issues being brought up as well as virtual conversation circles and more. The library also has ELL materials including books, CD's and tests.
- Rent banks and rent placements for new immigrants; wondering how that is being facilitated by various stake holders.
  - o Archway's Resettlement Assistance Program supports newcomers for up to six weeks, staff help the individuals with; health care, life skills, resources available, filling out essential paperwork and forms as well as connecting them to other settlement services. A housing coordinator works with them to secure long-term housing.  
The Government of Canada provides direct financial support including a one-time start up allowance and monthly income support for up to a year or until the clients can support themselves.  
After the initial support through the Resettlement Assistance Program, refugees will be supported by the Archway Moving Ahead Program (MAP). MAP provides one to one support for immigrants or refugees who are facing multiple barriers to successful settlement into Canada for up to 18 months.
  - o VanCity have aided in this also by bringing banking support to the hotels

- BC Services have also gone to the hotels and provided people with SIN numbers
- Newcomers last year having issues with landlords raising rent by \$100 a month or so. Where (in Archway) can students or newcomers go to find out about renter's rights?
  - **BC Services:** When issuing a new notice of rent increase, a landlord must:
    - Use the approved notice of rent increase form
      - Notice of Rent Increase for Residential Units Form RTB-7 (PDF, 635KB)
      - Notice of Standard Rent Increase – Manufactured Home Site Form RTB-45 (PDF, 270KB)
    - Use the maximum amount for 2023: 2%
    - Give the tenant no less than three full months before the notice takes effect.
      - For example: If rent is due on the fifteenth of each month, notice must be given before October 14, 2022, and the first increased rent payment will be due January 15, 2023
    - Looking into making this resource available for newcomers
- VanCity one of ALIP's partners is wondering about a Financial Literacy Workshop, is this something our program offers? Paula offers that MAP (Moving Ahead Project) has done workshops, but it was all pre-COVID. A complete follow up would be appreciated.
  - Next steps to bring partners together to discuss this further

### **New Immigrant Working Group- Advisory Table**

#### **THANK YOU'S**

Thank you to all who attended and took part in this lively discussion. Thank you to ALL of our amazing and talented speakers!