



# Langley Service Providers Provide Their Insights

On September 22nd, 2021, the Langley Local Immigration Partnership convened 45+ attendees representing government and 18 different Langley service providing organizations. These representatives gathered to review and provide input to current immigrant settlement and integration barriers and issues and what needs to be done to make Langley more welcoming and inclusive of its newest residents. The following is a summary of the observations, ideas and perspectives shared by participants. This input, along with research and input collected from Langley immigrants and from community leaders, will be used to inform the development of the Langley LIP's Settlement Strategic Plan.

## Recent shifts, changes and trends in immigrant integration and immigration to Langley

In recent years, Langley has experienced tremendous growth in its immigrant populations; in the last Census (2011 – 2016), its immigrant population growth was one of the highest per capita amongst all communities in BC. 2021 Census data has yet to be released but we know this growth has continued and has brought shifts, changes, and new trends. Here's what Langley's service providers have observed.

1. Increase in the number and diversity of immigrants including:
  - Wider range of source countries
  - Broader range of education and skills
  - More families with young children
  - More youth
  - More Spanish-speaking immigrants
  - More migrants from other provinces
  - More Middle Eastern newcomers
  - Wider range of wealth
  - Increased number of immigrant families with special needs children
  - Shifts in immigration pathways – more Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and international students wanting to pursue permanent residency
2. More immigrants needing mental health support in their home language
3. Anticipating influx of new immigrant to BC and to Langley post-COVID as we have all the resources, services and supports
4. More resources are being developed and more collaboration is happening to address the needs of immigrants in Langley
5. More positions have been created to address the needs of the various ethno-cultural communities
6. Establishment of the Langley LIP with a website to cater to the needs of the service providers
7. Increased demand for virtual and hybrid services and support
8. Increased demand for interpretation and translation
9. Increased demand for digital literacy training
10. Need for more public education related to multiculturalism and immigration in Langley
11. Need for affordable housing, especially for larger families; e.g. Syrian and now Afghan refugees
12. More welcoming and inclusivity has resulted from COVID – businesses receptive to all and any customers

## Critical issues, barriers and challenges faced by immigrants in Langley

Often with change comes challenge. Newcomers to Langley face similar settlement and integration barriers and challenges as do immigrants in communities across Canada. The following are some of the community specific challenges identified by attendees.

- Lack of awareness and access to information and services
- Low English language skills creates barriers to accessing information and services, obtaining education and meaningful jobs, and participating in local initiatives
- Employer assumptions and biases around language and accents; e.g. even if work does not require a high level of English, employers are reluctant to onboard lower English language speakers
- Due to the rapid speed in which Langley is changing, it is very difficult for service providers and programming to keep up
- Lack of meaningful employment due to difficulties related to foreign credential recognition, lack of Canadian experience, and the local labour market
- Lack of access to childcare
- Lack of understanding of local society and Canadian culture
- Limited public transit hinders access to services, education, and employment opportunities
- Discrimination and racism
- Lack of affordable housing
- COVID impacts on employment – employers, employees, and job seekers have all been impacted: issues include everything from increased anxiety to labour supply and the need for workplace accommodation

## What's working well in Langley?

Fortunately, Langley has a strong base of service provision and supports in place to assist new immigrants settle and integrate. But its not just the services themselves: its how they work together, how they're evolving and adjusting and how they're communicating out to the community.

1. Collaboration and strong partnerships being formed within the sector, across the community and with local businesses
2. More and improved information sharing – the Langley LIP and the Library Champions cited as examples
3. Existing programs and services fit immigrants' needs
4. Effective marketing strategies and approaches
5. Dedicated organizations and staff members in this sector who are keen to reach out and serve immigrants
6. Inclusive and welcoming public resources and places available in Langley

## What else should be done?

With Langley's growing population, and its immigrant population growth outpacing most other communities in BC, it is clear that there is more to do and that changes are needed. The service providers in attendance had many and some very specific suggestions. These have been organized and categorized into five prevalent themes.

1. More promotion and outreach to distribute information of programs, services and opportunities – some suggestions:
  - A brochure with all Langley services for newcomers placed in strategic locations
  - A version of Welcome Wagon; build the welcome kit in a range of languages
  - A volunteer job board posted on the Langley LIP website
  - A Comprehensive list of programs, services and resources that is periodically updated to ensure currency
  - Share principles of Plain Language
  - Regularly provide front-line workers with listing of current programs and services to enhance referrals and collaboration



## Priorities for the Langley LIP

- Develop a list of interpretation and translation services
  - Develop and offer a “chat feature” on the Langley LIP website where settlement and community questions and needs can be posted and responded to
2. More public education and outreach to ALL stakeholders on benefits of immigration and integration
    - More events and initiatives to celebrate cultural diversity and engage all ethnic groups
    - Engage employer and business communities to support immigrant integration
    - Engage media to support public education and program promotion
  3. More activities, events, and opportunities to develop stronger partnerships and collaboration within the sector and with all stakeholders
    - Provide more opportunities for service providers to network and collaborate, e.g. more in-person events, formal and informal networking opportunities
    - Need a community liaison to bring us together
  4. More support and services to help immigrants access meaningful employment
  5. More programs and resources tailored to specific groups, i.e. women, children, and youth

In follow-up to the information shared and the key points discussed, the service providers in attendance were asked to confer and identify what they saw as the key priorities to improve the settlement outcomes for immigrants to Langley. The following priorities are not presented in a ranked order, but rather as a full listing to be considered in the Langley Local Immigration Partnership’s 2022 Strategic Planning process.

1. Dissemination of information on services and programs
2. Enhance existing collaborations and partnerships
3. Access to meaningful local employment opportunities
4. Enhance immigrant understanding of the Canadian workplace and connections to local workplaces
5. Increase Digital Literacy to ensure more equitable participation
6. Advocate for improved public transit
7. Advocate for and improve access to affordable housing

## About the Langley Local Immigration Partnership

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to develop and implement plans to improve immigrant settlement and integration. There are about 80 LIPs across Canada. The Langley LIP (LLIP) was established in 2020 and is comprised of senior representative of more than 20 community

agencies and institutions. To learn more about the Langley LIP, go to: [www.langleylip.ca](http://www.langleylip.ca)

In the fall of 2020, the LLIP began a community research and consultation process which included focus groups and a survey of immigrants living in Langley, consultation with community

service providers, and a forum with community leaders. The finding and results will be used to inform the development of a three-year Settlement Strategic Plan for Langley.

For more information contact **Jody Johnson** at **778 808 6252** or at [jody.johnson@shaw.ca](mailto:jody.johnson@shaw.ca)