

# Access to Settlement and Other Service Information in Langley

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A Langley LIP Research Report



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## Executive Summary

The Langley Local Immigrant Partnership Research project: Access to Settlement and Other Service Information took place from November 2021 to March 2022 and explored these two questions:

- What hinders new immigrants from accessing information about settlement and other services?
- How to improve immigrant access to information?

The Langley Local Immigration Partnership (LLIP) initiated the research in response to findings emerging from the immigrant survey, focus groups and service provider forum undertaken in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. One third of the respondents in the survey reported not accessing settlement related services, and the survey and focus groups further revealed that newcomers are experiencing challenges related to accessing information about health, transportation, education, and other key settlement areas.

Having identified *improving access to information about settlement and other services* as a central point of consideration to improve immigrant and refugee settlement and integration in the City and the Township of Langley, four key research activities were developed to explore and identify mechanisms to enhance access to information and services:

1. Consultation with key community stakeholders (LLIP membership)
2. Web scan to identify promising practices in newcomer access to information
3. Newcomer Focus Groups (3)
4. Key informant interviews (6)

Together these activities provided a broad range of perspectives and recommendations to better understand how newcomers are currently accessing information about settlement and other services in Langley, how settlement and non-settlement service providers are providing information and services to newcomers, and how key stakeholders perceive information channels might be improved.

Key findings from the research include:

- **Information that newcomers need** includes banking, housing, education, health, schools, and language. Information that newcomers indicate is difficult to find is primarily around finding settlement and language services and information related to their health care.
- **Key resources, community services and service providers in Langley** are settlement services offered by Langley Community Services Society (LCSS), ISSofBC and Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS). New Directions is the main English language service. Libraries and community centres are also seen as key resources in providing information to newcomers.
- **Newcomers are accessing information primarily through family and friends** who have settled before them, and settlement and community providers including libraries.
- **Gaps in information provision** include initial confusion about where to access settlement services, lack of information about first language services, and information around health.
- **First points of contact and other critical information points** for newcomers reveal the

importance of information being available at the time newcomers need it in their settlement journeys and provide through different channels. A network of critical information points includes pre- arrival information, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) / schools, settlement programs, language classes and libraries.

- **Multi-stakeholder approaches and hubs** were supported in all research, including development of physical and virtual information and service hubs. Hubs were seen as a centralized way to provide information to newcomers and serve as the much-needed coordination of information and services between service providers.
- **Tools to compliment a “hub” approach** and improve access to information for newcomers include development of a website listing organizations and services in various categories, social media platforms, an app for Langley services, brochures as part of a physical hub, and larger events that support a two-way information flow between newcomers and the broader community.
- **Need for more targeted settlement and service information** highlight the need to hire more staff and provide more translated materials to meet the needs of newcomers coming to Langley with increasingly diverse languages. The need for staff training to created professional standards and provide effective referrals was also indicated.

Based on these findings, this report offers five recommendations. The identified relevant strengths currently existing in the Langley settlement landscape, identified promising practices, and the strategic alignment with LLIP’s direction support each recommendation.

1. **Improve information flow between service providers and other associations** in order to better provide information and services to newcomers and avoid gaps and duplication of services.
2. **Build a digital hub for newcomers and service providers** including a variety of digital tools and ways to support newcomers in accessing technology.
3. **Build an in-person hub (or multiple hubs) for newcomers** that offers in-person support to newcomers at various points in their settlement journey.
4. **Engage and support newcomers as information-providers** to ensure that services are responsive to the needs of newcomers, and to leverage the significant trend of family and friends being the most common (62%) source of information for newcomers.
5. **Build capacity in languages and standard of service** to improve organizations’ abilities to provide first-language services and information to an increasing diversity of newcomers, and to ensure a professional standard of service and referral processes.

# Introduction

## Purpose of Research

This research project, Access to Settlement and other Service Information, was undertaken from November 2021 to March 2022 to explore these two questions:

1. What hinders new immigrants from accessing information about settlement and other services?
2. How to improve immigrant access to information?

The Langley LLIP, established in April 2020, initiated this research in response to an immigrant survey, focus groups and service provider forum conducted in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, [Focus Groups and Survey of Immigrants Living in Langley](#). One third of the respondents in the survey reported not accessing settlement related services, and the survey and focus groups further revealed that newcomers are experiencing challenges related to accessing information about health, transportation, education and other areas critical in the settlement process.

The Langley LLIP membership identified improving access to information about settlement and other services as a central point of consideration in the LLIP's mandate to improve immigrant and refugee settlement and integration in the City and the Township of Langley. Thus, the purpose of the research is to:

- better understand how newcomers are currently accessing information about settlement and other services in Langley
- illuminate how settlement and non-settlement service providers are providing information and services to newcomers
- investigate how key stakeholders perceive that information channels might be improved, and
- provide recommendations on how access to information about settlement and other services can be improved.

## Background

### *Immigration and Growth Trends in the City and Township of Langley*

The City and the Township of Langley are amongst the fastest growing communities in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The current population of the region is 141,000 and this is expected to grow to 249,000 by 2041. Much of this growth will be due to immigration.

In 2016, the Township had the highest immigrant population growth rate in BC at 21.5% and the City was fifth at 15.5%. Although more recent data on numbers of immigrants to the region will not be available until the fall of 2022, according to population data pulled from BC Stats, the Township is second only to Surrey in overall population growth among communities in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. Since 2015, the City and the Township have received about seven new residents per day.

Growth to the region from immigration is expected to continue. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada recently released its updated Immigration Levels Plan that aims to welcome the most immigrants in Canadian history. Based on recent arrival rates, BC is estimated to receive about 56,000 to 60,000 new immigrants annually for the next three years. It is anticipated that a good portion of these will choose Langley as their new home.

### *Langley Local Immigration Partnership Research, Summer 2021*

Through Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, the Langley LIP consulted with immigrants from the City and the Township of Langley. The intent of these consultations was to gain an understanding of the immigrant experience in Langley. In a survey of 365 Langley newcomers from varying backgrounds, participants responded to questions related to:

- Immigration and Settlement
- Access to Services
- Training and Education
- Employment
- Volunteering
- Connection and Belonging

About one third of respondents reported not accessing settlement related services, for a variety of reasons. A significant portion indicated that they were not aware of, were confused about, or could not find settlement services. Slightly more than one-third (36%) of the respondents that did not use settlement services indicated that they did not need settlement assistance. IRCC research also reports more than half of the immigrants they surveyed did not use any settlement services. The following represents the types of challenges / problems survey respondents faced:

- 54% - hard to find a family doctor
- 47% - hard to access public transportation
- 11% - hard to find information on education
- 11% - hard to find information on legal services
- 7% - hard to find information about health care services

Focus groups with immigrants and consultations with service providers and community leaders were also conducted in 2021 to better understand current immigrant settlement and integration barriers and issues and what needs to be done to make Langley more welcoming and inclusive of newcomers. The survey and focus groups with immigrants and the findings from the community service providers and leaders identified access to information about settlement and other services and employment as critical issues requiring further examination. This report outlines the research undertaken to understand the first of these issues: how newcomers are accessing information about settlement and other services, and how that can be improved.

### [The Langley Local Immigration Partnership](#)

This research was guided and informed by the Langley Local Immigration Partnership (LLIP), whose function is to develop and implement plans to improve immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. The Langley LIP was established in April 2020, when Langley Community Services Society received five-year funding to establish and coordinate a local immigration partnership for the City and

the Township of Langley. The Langley LIP work is supported by a core Membership Council made up of community agencies and institutions representing local government, settlement and community agencies, health, education, business, parks, recreation and culture, policing, libraries, volunteerism, and others. Members convene to support local research and planning to build capacity of Langley to be welcoming and inclusive and to ensure newcomers have opportunities to fully participate economically, socially, politically, and culturally.

The Langley LIP is also supported by an Immigrant Advisory Council comprised of twelve immigrants who represent the City and the Township of Langley, a range of countries of origin and length of time in Canada, occupational backgrounds, ages, and genders. The Immigrant Advisory Council supports the work of the LLIP through providing feedback, sharing promising practices and research, and reaching out to ethno-specific communities. As such, it was instrumental in both informing this research, as well as providing introductions to other newcomer research participants.

## Methodology

The research for this project was comprised of four key activities undertaken to explore and identify mechanisms to enhance access to information and services:

1. Consultation with key community stakeholders (LLIP membership)
2. Web scan to identify promising practices in newcomer access to information
3. Newcomer Focus Groups (3)
4. Key informant interviews (7)

Guided by the Langley LIP membership, key research activities were designed to better understand how newcomers are currently accessing information about settlement and other services in Langley, how settlement and non-settlement service providers are providing information and services to newcomers, and how key stakeholders perceive that information channels might be improved. A scan of best practices was undertaken so that Langley could benefit from the multitude of relevant examples and learnings that communities across Canada have implemented and tested.

### Online Scan of Promising Practices

A scan of Promising Practices in Information Sharing and Dissemination was undertaken as the initial stage of this research. The scan is provided as an addendum to this report: ***A Scan of Promising Practices in Information Sharing and Dissemination***. The scan focused on the following areas of practice within the settlement sector across Canada: one-stop shop for information and referrals; word of mouth; services in partnership with cities, libraries, and schools; services in partnership with professional bodies, collaboration within the sector, and the use of multimedia. A broad range of promising practices were identified within each of these areas, several of which are referenced as part of the Recommendations towards the end of this report.

### LLIP Consultation, Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

LLIP Consultation, Focus Groups for Newcomers and Key Informant Interviews were guided by the LLIP and designed in response to the Summer 2021, Langley Local Immigration Partnership Research, as well as the information identified in the promising practices scan undertaken for this project. Combined, they were intended to provide a broad range of perspectives based on the experiences and knowledge of newcomers, settlement and non-settlement service providers, and community leaders in Langley.

Questions for the Consultation, Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews were developed to hone in on details and experiences related to access to information including the type of information newcomers need, where they are accessing information, what information newcomers are finding difficult to access, the current state of service provision to newcomers, what approaches and tools might improve access to information about settlement and other services, and the feasibility amongst service providers and community leaders to implement new tools and approaches.

The following descriptions provide an outline of each research element, including the specific objective, a description of the activity, the dates, the number of participants, and the questions asked.



### *Consultation with Langley Local Immigration Partnership*

Consultation with the Langley LIP membership explored and identified mechanisms to enhance access to information for newcomers to Langley. The consultation took place within the regular LLIP Meeting, on November 19, 2022. 23 people participated from 18 organizations. Questions for the consultation are included as **Appendix 1**

### *Focus Groups for Newcomers*

Focus Groups with Langley Newcomers were intended to gather newcomers' perspectives in exploring and identifying mechanisms to enhance access to information for new immigrants to Langley.

Recruitment for focus group participants included targeting newcomers from a range of backgrounds, including those who had not accessed settlement services.

Three focus groups were conducted. Participants in the focus groups ranged in when they immigrated to Canada, their countries of origin, how long they had been in Langley, and their fields of occupation. The first Focus Group comprised of members of the Langley LIP Immigrant Advisory, while the second and third Focus Groups were newcomers recruited from the City and the Township through the advisory. A total of 20 participants with a variety of experiences settling in various communities and most recently Langley provided informative and insightful information covering a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

All Focus Groups were conducted online over Zoom as follows:

- November 28th, 2021, 6:00-7:30 – 8 participants
- December 8th, 2021, 6:00-7:30 – 5 participants
- December 14th, 2021, 6:00-7:30 – 7 participants

Participants of the three Focus Groups were guided in sharing their experiences as newcomers to Canada and Langley through a set of 10 questions. The full list of questions is included as a part of **Appendix 1**.

### *Key Informant Interviews*

The Key Informant Interviews (KII) further explored and identified mechanisms to enhance access to information for newcomers and built on the input of the LLIP Consultation and the Newcomer Focus Groups. Stakeholders were targeted to provide a range of experiences from settlement and non-settlement providers, as well as from stakeholders involved in community policy and planning. The following objectives were identified for the KIIs:

- Explore the role of non-settlement providers in improving information access
- Identify key distribution points (online & physical locations)
- Explore and identify what tools can be used
- Gauge interest, appetite, and feasibility of taking on new approaches.

Seven key stakeholders participated in the Key Informant Interviews, including representation from School District #35 - Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), local settlement service providers, municipal senior leaders, Parks and Recreation, and the Fraser Valley Regional Library. Care was taken to ensure representation from both the City and the Township of Langley was garnered. Stakeholders

were also selected in direct response to some of the key issues identified in earlier research. For example, a representative from the Langley Division of Family Practice was invited as a response to the difficulty newcomers experience in finding a family doctor upon arrival, a well-known issue of primary concern, and as identified in the Focus Groups.

Interviews took place on Zoom from January 31, 2022, to February 15, 2022, and ran for 40-60 minutes. All key informants were encouraged to share their experiences and insights as service providers and leaders within Langley, in response to a list of five key questions, and several sub-questions. The full list of KII questions is included as a part of **Appendix 1**.

## Key Findings: Consultation, Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

Information from the LLIP Consultation, the Newcomer Focus Groups and the Key Informant Interviews were organized and synthesized into summary reports. Upon completion of these three research elements, information from the summary reports was further analyzed. While each of the research elements provided different perspectives (LLIP members, newcomers, service providers, and community leaders), there was strong consistency amongst the ideas that each group presented and supported. The research provided information and insights related to the types of information that newcomers need, how information is currently being provided and accessed both within and outside of settlement services, how information sharing *between* organizations could be improved, and approaches and tools that could improve newcomer access to information about settlement and other services. The following sections provide a synthesis of the information collected.

### Information that newcomers need

The information gathered from the Focus Groups for Newcomers and settlement service providers consistently indicated the key types of information that immigrants need. Upon first arriving, they need information related to banking, housing, education, and health. Being connected to schools for their children, settlement services, including Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) where families with children can receive information and services, and language classes for adults were seen as priorities. With regards to health, specific mention was made of the importance of accessing information about finding a family doctor, walk-in clinics and how to get prescriptions filled. Finding information about employment (e.g., WorkBC), how to use public transportation, and city-related information such as how to recycle, disaster management and how to access libraries and recreational programs were also seen as important areas for access to information. Information to connect to faith organizations was indicated as important to many newcomers.

### Information that newcomers report is difficult to find

#### *Settlement and language services*

Several participants in the Focus Groups for Newcomers shared the challenges they had accessing information from and about settlement services. They found exploring settlement-related websites challenging, and commented that with “so many different agencies, it is difficult to know who offers what”. Some participants at the time of the Focus Groups did not know where to find settlement services in Langley. Other participants found accessing information about how to register for English language classes confusing and difficult to find.

#### *Health-related information*

Health-related information was also difficult for newcomers to find, including finding a family doctor, how to find translators for medical appointments and information about filling prescriptions. Difficulty finding a family doctor and translators was corroborated in a Key Informant Interview with the Executive Director of the Langley Division of Family Practice who said that there is a shortage of doctors, nurses, access to mental health and home health in Langley. She also said that health practitioners are often relying on settlement workers or children from the family to interpret which can be challenging and

result in fragmentation of care. Further, she said that they often hear that new immigrants had understood Canada will take care of all their health care needs and they are confused and disappointed when they realize that this does not include medications or dental care.

## Key resources, community services and service providers

### *What's available*

Participants in the Focus Groups for Newcomers indicated a number of key resources and community and settlement services that they had accessed and / or were familiar with. Respondents from the Key Informant Interviews provided further details as to what programs and services they were offering to newcomers.

Settlement services offered by Langley Community Services Society (LCSS) and ISSofBC are recognized as the IRCC-funded settlement services in English, while College Educa Centres is available to support Francophone clients. Settlement services are providing newcomers with information related to all areas of settlement, including employment. New Directions is the key English language services provider and provides LINC classes for adults. LINC classes not only provide language services, but as part of the curriculum offer information about employment (WorkBC career fairs, training opportunities), ICBC (how to report an accident) banking, health, and the medical system. School District #35 through the Settlement Workers in Schools program also provides IRCC-funded settlement services including one-on-one sessions, group sessions, and wrap-around services for high needs. The SWIS program tries to reach out to every immigrant family that registers at school. Their services are not restricted to newcomers in schools but also focuses on newcomer families with kids in school. They also refer newcomer families with young children to LCSS' early childhood education program.

Libraries and community centres are also seen as key resources in providing information to newcomers. Libraries support newcomers who come to the library with getting a library card and finding programs and services. The Library Champions Project is seen as a successful program and trains immigrants to conduct outreach and provide information to other new immigrants. The NewToBC website provides library and settlement information specific to Langley. Libraries also play an important role in improving access to settlement services by providing space in the library for providers to offer services (e.g., ISSofBC Tax Clinics). Community centres and other departments within the municipalities of the City and the Township of Langley provides information on their websites, on flyers and brochures, and through staff referrals to organizations such as LCSS and ISSofBC.

In addition to its aim to attach all newcomers with family doctors and nurse practitioners (as above) the Langley Division of Family Practice also provides health care services and information on the health care system through LCSS, and work with organizations such as LCSS and New Directions to reach unvaccinated populations, answering COVID questions and providing doctors for their on-site vaccine clinics.

BC211 is also regarded as an important source for community, health, and government information, available in 150 languages.

### *Where newcomers are accessing information*

Focus Group participants indicated two primary sources of information: relatives, friends and colleagues from the same country that have already settled in Canada; and the internet, e.g. "I just

googled immigrant services”. Secondary sources of information included settlement and community service agencies, libraries, and information boards at grocery stores (though “most of the information was not free – such as private lessons”). Several participants indicated that faith communities were key sources of information, for example the Filipino community through the Catholic Church.

It was also noted that the personal connections that exist or emerge for privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) result in better support and access to information and services than those who are government assisted (GARs).

### *Gaps in providing information*

Many newcomers report that they did not receive the information they needed when they arrived. As indicated above, many newcomers must self-discover, relying heavily on friends and family. Health-related information, as indicated above is significantly lacking or misunderstood.

The LLIP Consultation and Key Informant Interviews indicated other gaps in providing information: paramount amongst them is the lack of ability to provide first-language settlement services for the increasing number of languages that newcomers are arriving with. Settlement, Community and Library providers expressed a limited ability to provide translated information on websites, brochures, and event posters.

Other gaps included the following. Location of services was seen as a barrier in reaching newcomers, especially those who live in the Township, as most settlement services are located in the City. Eligibility criteria can also pose barriers, as with SWIS clients being asked for a Permanent Residency (PR) card, which can create suspicion and reluctance to engage with workers, as well as with temporary foreign workers who are not eligible for many services. Providing information to newcomer clients with digital literacy barriers is also a challenge, especially during COVID when many services were online.

### First points of contact and other critical information points for newcomers

Many research participants highlighted the importance of information being available as newcomers need it. For example, many (including at least three newcomers) expressed that in the first days of arriving, a lot of information such as that provided by the Community Airport Newcomers Network (CANN), is overwhelming, and newcomers do not have the time to pay attention to it. This being so, discreet responses to “firsts point of contact” were not provided; rather participants offered a number of places that information should be available. They include pre-arrival information (through webinars and Zoom meetings), SWIS / schools, settlement programs and language classes, libraries, community centres, Service Canada, grocery stores and other shopping areas, food banks, neighbourhood & business associations (e.g., realtors) and ethnic community groups & faith organizations.

### Multi-Stakeholder Approaches & Hubs

In all of the research activities, participants offered and supported ideas around multi-stakeholder approaches to supporting newcomers and the development of physical and virtual information and service hubs. These included ideas around coordinating information and services between service and community providers, as well as physical places and websites where both newcomers and service

providers could go to find information. Research participants shared the opportunities and challenges around the following:

### *Information-sharing across service and community providers*

Information gathered from the LLIP Consultation and Key Informant Interviews strongly indicated support for a centralized place where providers can find what programs and resources are available. Organizations would need to be responsible for regularly updating information.

Several examples of effective information-sharing that already exists across providers in Langley were cited. They included settlement outreach workers providing services and workshops in libraries and community programs, and SWIS workers working more collaboratively with schools and in some cases being physically located in schools. Community tables such as Ministry of Children & Family, the LLIP, and Literacy Groups are spaces where providers are meeting and sharing information related to newcomers, programs, and services.

Suggestions for possible development for increased sharing included: more engagement of ethnic community groups to get accurate information out to newcomer groups, especially minority languages; wider engagement of the community in LLIP e.g., representation on health issues, employment etc., and new stakeholders such as construction associations and insurance providers who want to support newcomers. Government offices were also seen as having a role in sharing information with providers and newcomers about the services available through the various departments.

### *Multiple access points for newcomers*

Findings in all research elements indicated support for multiple points for newcomers to access information. Both digital and non-digital points of access were considered important. It was recognized that each newcomer has different needs, abilities, and goals, that people need to access the right information at the right time, and that people need to see the same information many times. There were multiple mentions of the need for service providers to be more active in getting information out to newcomers, rather than expecting newcomers to find them.

### *Physical hub model*

The Key Informant Interviews surfaced a number of ideas around a physical hub model, including multiple hubs placed in neighbourhood that newcomers are already accessing, a mobile hub that moves from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, and a “Welcome Centre” model where one centralized and physical space provided a key role in supporting newcomers with information, services, and referrals. Three specific spaces were offered as primary locations for a physical hub model:

- SWIS is currently working with IRCC with a view towards opening a Welcome Centre in the school within a few years. At a minimum, this would be a hub for English Language Learning (ELL) testing, initial information for families, and meeting with SWIS worker in person. It would be located within the schools, in Willoughby area (where most of the immigrants are).
- Libraries could serve as a physical hub or multiple hubs, one within each community.
- LCSS, as a primary settlement provider and LLIP host, could be seen as a hub centre, with schools, libraries, volunteer bureau, food bank etc. as spokes.

### *Digital information hub*

A centralized digital hub was also seen as important for both information sharing between providers and

for newcomers to access settlement-related information. A digital referral system that has searchable categories (e.g., English Language Learning) and a clear indication of why newcomers would access it (e.g., route to citizenship) was suggested. Links to City and Township websites, settlement organizations, community providers and all other organizations providing information and services for newcomers could be accessed digitally, through a website or app (see Tools below).

### *In person contact*

This research highlighted that in providing information to newcomers, it is important to recognize that online services do not work for a lot of clients, especially refugees. In addition to addressing digital literacy barriers, in-person connection to people and physical spaces helps newcomers to build trust and overcome fears and creates a stronger sense of community for all. Past opportunities for physical connection to places include LINC instructors bringing learners to community centres or libraries to introduce them to the facility and programs. Challenges include providing these opportunities consistently, as they rely heavily on staff knowledge and connections.

## Tools

Newcomers in the Focus Groups and Key Informants provided several examples of tools that providers were currently using, and suggestions for developing additional tools that could improve access to information for newcomers.

### *Website listing organizations and services in various categories*

Developing a stand-alone website such as the BC211 website or expanding an existing community-based website was strongly supported. It would serve as an information source for organizations to provide referrals to newcomers, as well as a centralized source of information where newcomers could go for all their information needs. The NewToBC inventory of programs and services was cited as starting place, with functions for referrals, in-person follow-up to newcomer questions, and translation services to be developed.

### *Social media*

The opportunities offered by social media were highlighted in all research elements, particularly the Focus Groups for Newcomers, where one participant noted “not many people go to websites to explore”. Social media platforms were seen as a way for organizations to reach a wide range of newcomers, and to post updates that are easy to share via popular social media apps. Specifics included: Instagram for youth; WeChat in Mandarin; WhatsApp for Arabic; Facebook for the Filipino community. Social media was also seen by newcomers as a good place for informal discussion group / forums, both pre- and post-arrival.

### *Apps*

An app for Langley (like Arrival Advisor) could also be developed and possibly hosted by LLIP. Apps were seen as particularly important for reaching youth and young adult newcomers and could include catchy information such as ‘10 things you need to know about Langley’.

### *Brochures as part of physical / centralized information hub*

Brochures and other hand-held tools such as posters and other publications were also seen as important amongst service providers and newcomers alike. Brochures from each organization could be available as part of a physical hub for information for newcomers, as well as an information tool used as part of staff

training for referrals. Programs like LINC could access information here to use when the topic arises in the curriculum.

### *Events*

Larger, in-person events were also seen as important tools for getting information to newcomers. Examples included: the City of Langley's Community Day where organizations set up booths to share information and connect with newcomers; the Library Champions program that hosts events that bring together immigrants who are interested in learning about and promoting the services of libraries; other opportunities such as those provided by LLIP for newcomers to connect, give feedback, share information, and learn about their community.

## Organizational requirements for targeted settlement and service information

While all settlement and non-settlement Key Informants were supportive of developing approaches and tools to improve newcomer access to information about settlement and other services, they also indicated a range of organizational requirements to provide more targeted settlement and service information. Several of these have been indicated above, as they relate to gaps in newcomer access to information and information sharing between service providers. Significant consistency emerged around these requirements:

### *Funding to respond to growth and language diversity*

Several organizations recognized a need to hire more staff to be able to provide settlement services in first languages, as well as respond to the overall growth in the number of newcomers settling in Langley. More funding is also needed for translation services for brochures, websites, posters etc.

### *Staff training*

Key informants from libraries, community centres and settlement services all indicated a need for staff training to create and maintain professional standards for settlement workers, as well as for staff to be able to use information for making targeted referrals. More opportunities are also needed for staff to present at library staff meetings, at the LLIP and at other community tables.

### *Organizational considerations*

Some key informants indicated a need for organizational or funder permission, for example to take on the role of coordinating services or serving as a hub. City systems including Parks and Recreation programmers would benefit by a system that supports them in knowing the ongoing needs of newcomers. The City of Langley would require a system that facilitated organizations in making requests to release information, as required by City operations.

## Further thoughts and recommendations from research participants

Participants from the LLIP Consultation, Focus Groups for Newcomers and Key Informant Interviews offered a number of ideas that fell outside of the models and tools above, and require a broadening of who is considered stakeholders in newcomer access to information and services. Some ideas, such as a Welcome Basket for newcomers delivered through realtors, was mentioned several times. Others, such



as a communication campaign to let businesses and community members understand more about immigrants coming to Langley are in alignment with other community initiatives, and important for creating two-way learning opportunities and building an inclusive and welcoming community for all Langley residents.

## Recommendations

Building on the Key Findings above, this section provides five recommendations that the Langley Local Immigration Partnership, service providers and community leaders can consider in moving forward to improve access to information about settlement and other services in Langley. Along with the key findings in this research, each of the recommendations expands on existing structures and strengths within the City and the Township of Langley, offers examples of related models or practices drawn from the Promising Practices scan undertaken as part of this research, and is aligned with the priorities, goals and objectives of the LLIP Strategic Plan.

### Recommendation 1: Improve information flow between service providers and other associations

Many newcomers are not accessing settlement services; others do not know where to find information or find it confusing. Service providers often do not know what other organizations are offering. Improving connectivity between, and with a broader range, of service providers will facilitate better referrals, and avoid gaps and duplication of services.

#### *Current strengths to build on*

Settlement service and community providers in Langley are already collaborating in innovative and resourceful ways. Examples include settlement workers from ISSofBC holding workshops and clinics in libraries, SWIS workers located within school buildings, and Langley Division of Family Practice holding vaccination clinics at LCSS. Organizations are also gathering regularly at community tables (MCFD, LLIP, Literacy) where information is exchanged. A broader range of partnerships should be engaged or expanded upon, including WorkBC, other employment-related training bodies, professional associations, and Fraser Health.

#### *Possible tools and approaches*

Tools should be developed to centralize information so that providers, employers, and community members can find what programs and resources are available; organizations would be responsible for updating information regularly. Tools for improving information flow between service providers should include:

- digital formats (stand-alone website, or a website housed within an existing organization),
- physical formats (newcomer's guides, brochures, or publications to be found within physical information hubs for newcomers and service providers), and
- an ongoing guest speaker / presenter series at existing community tables.

These tools should be developed in conjunction with the recommendations that follow.

#### *Related promising practice(s)*

A promising practice related to effective information sharing between service providers and a professional association is [the Immigrant Public Legal Education and Information Consortium \(IPC\)](#) - Community Asset Maps, a collaborative venture partnering twelve Lower Mainland justice agencies with immigrant service providers. The project's goal was to provide legal education and information directly to immigrants and

refugees as well as to settlement agencies and legal service providers by means of community and cross sectoral workshops organized around priority themes. Evaluation of the project indicated that communication among frontline organizations had improved markedly and that agencies were providing more consistent legal information and had a better understanding of where to refer newcomers with legal issues.

### *Alignment with LLIP strategic priorities and goals*

This recommendation aligns with Langley LIP Settlement Strategic Plan Priority #1: Ensuring Settlement Success Goal #1:

- Information and services available in Langley are well-known, well-coordinated and accessible

and Priority #3: Developing Capacity, Objective 1:

- Ensure services and supports meet the needs of immigrants in Langley

## Recommendation 2: Build a digital hub for newcomers and service providers

Newcomers are better supported when information is available in a variety of ways and at several points in their settlement journey. Information needs vary with each individual and should be provided from multiple points of contact as a network, rather than at any one point of contact. Multiple sharing of the same, quality information in as many ways as possible is suggested and is supported by improved flow of information between service providers, other organizations, and associations.

A vast majority of immigrants are accessing information in digital formats. Many of those, especially refugees, are accessing information from phones, rather than computers or tablets. Development of a variety of digital platforms and supporting newcomers in accessing technology should be prioritized in improving access to information about settlement and other services.

### *Current strengths to build on*

Most settlement and community service providers in Langley as well as the City and the Township of Langley have informative websites that provide information about their services and programs. While the Langley libraries rely on the Fraser Valley Regional Libraries website, their Facebook pages are effective in providing community-specific information. The building of a digital hub of settlement information should create a network between these websites, as well as include a wide range of websites offering information vital to newcomers, such as information about health, childcare, and legal issues. A digital hub could also connect to information sources that exist beyond Langley's geography, including BC211, NewToBC, WelcomeBC and the IRCC settlement service database.

### *Possible tools and approaches*

Tools to build a digital hub include websites, social media platforms and apps. They should be developed in conjunction with improving information flow between service organizations and other associations (Recommendation #1).

The Langley Local Immigration Partnership should be considered as a host of a digital hub for the City and the Township of Langley, working closely with its membership, as well as reaching out to a broader range of information providers.

### *Related promising practice(s)*

Promising Practices for a data hub for service providers include the [Knowledge Hub](#) (Toronto), the first stage in a two-stage data hub model. This online platform bridges organizations with resources, opportunities to share data, and access data support. An example of the type of topic-specific platforms that should be part of the hub is [Here to Help](#), a website with information and referrals for various mental health issues.

### *Alignment with LLIP strategic priorities and goals*

This recommendation aligns with Langley LIP Settlement Strategic Plan Priority #1: Ensuring Settlement Success, Goal #1 and #2:

- Settlement information and services available in Langley are well-known, well-coordinated and accessible.
- Immigrants have better access to (information about) adequate housing, healthcare, childcare, and transportation

## Recommendation 3: Build an in-person hub (or multiple hubs) for newcomers

This recommendation builds further on the understanding that newcomers are better supported when information is available in a variety of ways, at various points in their settlement journey, and from multiple points of contact.

Providing information in-person and from a physical location is imperative in reaching the greatest number of newcomers. Language, digital literacy, and access to digital devices are significant barriers to accessing information for many newcomers. In-person contact to provide services and information, as well as to provide digital access, is important to many newcomer groups, especially refugees. Supporting people in-person also builds trust and a sense of community.

### *Current strengths to build on*

The City and the Township of Langley have several points that are already functioning in different ways as physical hubs. They include:

- SWIS, as a hub already attached to schools, and receiving new families for ELL testing, providing initial information for families and meeting with SWIS workers in person, and
- Libraries as a network of hubs, with locations in each community, and already providing physical space for settlement organizations.

These and other organizations should be further investigated for their organizational capacity to build on their notion of a hub and how well it aligns with the vision of other providers and the Langley LIP. The LLIP and its fullest expression of the membership should be central players in coordinating a physical hub to ensure that hubs are accessible to the greatest number of newcomers (e.g., can be visited by LINC classes) and at critical points along the settlement journey (e.g., health information is available when it is needed).

### *Possible tools and approaches*

Tools for a physical hub include newcomer's guides, brochures or indexed publications and should be developed in conjunction with tools developed to improve information flow between service providers and associations (Recommendation #1) and tools for a digital hub (Recommendation #2).

### *Related promising practice(s)*

Promising Practices include the [Welcome Centres](#) in York Region, Ontario where they provide coordinated services to newcomers and facilitate newcomers' access to, and use of, a variety of services that meet their needs. Two types of partners are included: lead partners who are joint tenants of the Centre and deliver core services to newcomers, and associate partners who rent space at the Centre and provide additional services to those being offered by the lead partners.

### *Alignment with LLIP strategic priorities and goals*

This recommendation aligns with Langley LIP Settlement Strategic Plan Priority #1: Ensuring Settlement Success, Goal #1 and #2:

- Settlement information and services available in Langley are well-known, well-coordinated and accessible.
- Immigrants have better access to (information about) adequate housing, healthcare, childcare, and transportation.

## Recommendation 4: Engage and support newcomers as information-providers

According to the Langley LLIP 2021 Survey, regardless of gender, age group, education background and length of time in Canada, friends, and family (62%) were reported as the most common source of information about services. Immigrants are knowledgeable, many are seeking ways to “give back”, and their ongoing input is essential to responsive services. An effective multi-stakeholder approach to improve access to information should allow for a two-way information flow between service providers and immigrants. Engaging immigrants as stakeholders both informs development of services and enhances immigrant' understanding of the settlement service infrastructure in Langley, so that they can pass on better information.

### *Current strengths to build on*

[Library Champions](#), a NewToBC program offered through the Fraser Valley Regional Libraries including those in the City and the Township of Langley, trains newcomers to conduct outreach to other new immigrants. It is based on a knowledgeable friends / peer support model and has been highly successful, training 83 Library Champions in Langley alone, and helping a total of 3,259 (on average 40 per Champion) other newcomers find the information they need to overcome challenges and reach their goals.

The LLIP Immigrant Advisory Council is another foundational piece in growing opportunities for Langley to draw on the strength and experiences of its newcomers. Engaging immigrants in information gathering activities to inform service delivery development, connecting them to associations and initiatives where they act as advisors, and leveraging their experience, knowledge, and connections to reach a broader range of newcomers are ways that the LLIP Immigrant Advisory Council and other newcomer advisory committees can further foster greater information access for newcomers.

### *Possible tools and approaches*

Exploring ways to engage ethnic communities, holding larger events such as community fairs that are inclusive and welcoming for newcomers, and including immigrant leadership in the planning and decision-making are recommended for supporting a two-way sharing of information between

newcomers and other community members. Digital and physical tools should be developed in conjunction with other recommendations in this report.

#### *Related promising practice(s)*

A 2021 research report, [Envisioning the Future of the Immigrant Serving Sector](#), provides some hopeful practices around: harnessing the use of informal newcomer networks for distributing information about available services through anecdotal testimonies within their communities; creation of WhatsApp groups for specific communities, such as Arabic-speaking communities; and organizing a volunteer network to be spokespersons for their community.

Other promising practices to engage and support newcomers as information sources can be found in Alberta's Urban Municipality Association's work on [Engaging Ethnocultural Communities](#) as stakeholders.

The City of Coquitlam's Open House, an annual event to introduce city services, open to both residents who are new to Coquitlam and Canada, as well as long-time residents, provides an example of an event to support the needs and to highlight the strengths and contributions of newcomers, as well as help build an overall welcoming and inclusive community.

#### *Alignment with LLIP strategic priorities and goals*

This recommendation aligns with Langley LIP Settlement Strategic Plan Priority #2: Building Belonging, Objectives 2 and 3:

- Expand opportunities for immigrants to volunteer in the community and in workplaces
- Identify and promote events and activities that actively engage participation from across cultures.

### Recommendation 5: Build capacity in languages and standard of service

#### Language:

Langley's immigrant population is growing, and along with it the range of languages that newcomers are coming with. Settlement services, including SWIS, lack the current language capacity to provide first language support for some groups. Settlement and other community service providers including libraries are also limited in providing brochures, posters, etc. in first languages that are common to Langley newcomers. Newcomers often rely on their children for interpretation which can lead to challenges including incorrect information and fragmentation of health services. For service providers to build capacity to provide first language support, translation and interpretation services, funding, technological solutions, and ways to address interpretation needs should be considered.

#### Standard of service:

Service providers should be offering consistent, high quality (current, accurate) information. At present, there is no one standard training or specific qualification requirement for settlement workers. According to key informants within the sector, settlement and community providers would benefit with more professional development opportunities to ensure that information provided to newcomers is consistent, a professional standard of service is provided, and effective referrals can be made. Additional funding for professional development should be considered, as well as development of ongoing guest speaker / presenter series at existing community tables, as mentioned in

Recommendation #1.

### *Current strengths to build on*

First-language services: SWIS and other settlement providers are providing first language services in most cases and are resourceful at finding workarounds e.g., using staff and associates who have linguistic competencies to help. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this can be problematic in ensuring valid and accurate information is provided, especially if related to health or legal issues.

Existing funding: Organizations receiving funding from IRCC, and other sources should be clear on the language needs of the clients they are serving, and budget and advocate as needed for additional staffing and translation and interpretation services. Professional development should be considered a priority in all settlement-related programming, and include elements such as trauma-informed practices, cultural humility, and self-care.

### *Possible tools and approaches*

Technological solutions such as a translator app to enhance translation services should be investigated and developed alongside building a digital hub for newcomers and service providers (Recommendation #2).

Additional ways to meet the unmet or unanticipated need for interpretation may be considered. Community language banks that draw on the linguistic skills of staff, volunteers and newcomers in the community should be explored for matters that are not legal and health-related.

### *Related promising practice(s)*

A promising practice that includes a catalogue of translation materials, uniform use of translation, and increased funding for interpretation services was part of the Toronto LIP Coordinated Actions. The [Toronto Newcomer Initiative](#) study reported that the Toronto LIP project helped improve and enhance newcomer information materials. In the same study, it also addressed information dissemination gaps, better referrals in the settlement sector, and coordination of settlement services and other topics directly improving access to information.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. runs a [Volunteer Language Bank](#) that can be investigated further for consideration of a model where community members and organizations request the services of an interpreter to help with newcomer access to programs and services.

### *Alignment with LLIP strategic priorities and goals*

This recommendation aligns with Langley LIP Settlement Strategic Plan Priority #3: Developing Capacity, Objectives 1 and 2:

- Ensure services and supports meet the needs of immigrants in Langley
- Enhance professionalism within the settlement and community services sectors

## Conclusion / Next Steps

Based on the Consultation with the Langley LIP membership, Focus Groups for Newcomers and Key Informant Interviews, this report represents overall support for the Langley LIP to move forward with the recommendations herein. It is further informed by the promising practices offered for each of the five recommendations and in accordance with the current Langley LIP Strategic Plan. Together these recommendations offer a multi-faceted approach to improving access to information for newcomers as well as tools and suggestions for initiatives that support the City and the Township of Langley in continuing to create a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents.

Langley's growing and increasingly diverse population is an opportunity. Continuing to engage immigrants in information gathering and dissemination processes, building on the strong partnerships already in place between providers, and calling on the fulsome support of the City and Township leadership and staff are key ingredients to meeting the needs and building on the strengths and skills of newcomers. Capacity building initiatives that support newcomers' first language needs and settlement and community providers' ability to work together in continuing to provide current and high-quality information services are also of key importance.

While it is clear from the findings and recommendations of this report that there are many considerations and determinations to be made as the Langley LIP membership works towards providing an integrated plan for improved access to information about settlement and other services, it is equally clear that all participants support and indeed are already prioritizing some of the recommendations. The participation and statements offered by the stakeholders and community participants in this research are a testament to the will, experience, generosity and optimism of the collective in creating a strong, connected and inclusive community within the City and the Township of Langley.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Consultation, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Questions

#### Consultation with Langley Local Immigration Partnership

1. What information do you think immigrants to Langley need in their first few months / to settle?
2. What are your impressions of current provision of information to immigrants coming into Langley?
3. What specific resources, services, and community and settlement providers for immigrants are you aware of?
4. Where do you think the first points of contact should be for new immigrants seeking settlement information and services in Langley? How do we get information to the greatest possible number of arrivals as quickly as possible?
5. Are there other critical information distribution points that should be considered?
6. What tools and approaches are your agency currently using to promote / share information about settlement and other services with immigrants?
7. In your opinion, how could information be better channeled to immigrants?
8. Are there tools and approaches that this research should explore? Have you seen promising practices or examples that should be explored?
9. Closing – do you have any ideas for better providing information that you would like this research to explore?

#### Newcomers Focus Groups

1. What information do immigrants to Langley need in their first few months / to settle?
2. What information is needed right away?
3. Where did you find this information?
4. What information was difficult to find?
5. Where do you think the first points of contact should be for new immigrants seeking information and services in Langley?
6. Are there other critical information distribution points that should be considered?
7. How can we get information to the greatest possible number of new arrivals as quickly as possible?
8. In your opinion, how could information be better channeled to immigrants?
9. Are there tools and approaches that this research should explore? Have you seen promising practices, examples or creative approaches / ideas that should be explored?
10. Closing – do you have any ideas for better providing information that you would like this research to explore?

#### Key Informant Interviews

1. The research conducted so far reveals that a multi-stakeholder / network approach is crucial to reaching the greatest number of new immigrants with settlement and service information.
  - a. Where do you think the first points of contact should be for new immigrants seeking information and services in Langley?
  - b. Beyond settlement service providers, what other organizations do you see as the “critical” distribution points of settlement and service information for new immigrants?
  - c. Are you aware of any barriers or challenges that these organizations face in information provision and dissemination to new immigrants?

- d. Do you have suggestions for how these barriers might be addressed?
2. In addition to a network of settlement service information partners, many best / promising practices emphasize a centralized hub of information, both for newcomers and stakeholders alike.
  - a. Do you have any thoughts or considerations on this notion of an immigrant information hub in Langley?
  - b. Do you have recommendations for a location or host of such a hub in Langley?
3. In our research it seems that many different types of organizations take an active role in disseminating settlement and service information to new immigrants.
  - a. In what ways does your organization currently provide settlement and service information to new immigrants?
  - b. Are there ways approaches to providing settlement and service information to new immigrants that your organization could participate in? Are there additional approaches you have considered or have tried or want to try? Please describe.
  - c. What would be required for your organization to provide targeted settlement and service information to new immigrants? E.g., prepared content, funding, training, human resources, translation support, organizational permission, etc.
4. There are numerous tools and approaches for information provision and dissemination including websites, social media, print handouts / facts sheets, Apps, program directories, brochures and posters, etc.
  - a. Are there specific tools and approaches that you would recommend to reach the greatest number of new immigrants and stakeholders?
  - b. What tools and approaches would be most effective / readily adapted for your organization's participation in information provision and dissemination?
5. Do you have any further thoughts or recommendations on improving access to information about settlement and other services in Langley?