

# MEASURING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES: A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM



## **Authors:**

Victoria M. Esses

Leah K. Hamilton

Awish Aslam

Priscila Ribeiro Prado Barros

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW WELCOMING COMMUNITIES TOOLKITS

More than a decade after the original Characteristics of a Welcoming Community report was released,<sup>1</sup> we are pleased to provide a new set of toolkits for measuring and promoting welcoming communities. Similar to the original report, these toolkits focus on (1) what characteristics constitute a welcoming community and how we can go about measuring them, and (2) how we can promote communities that are more welcoming. In response to feedback we have been receiving, these toolkits are practical in nature and provide specific guides for action. These guides will allow communities to engage in a process of self-evaluation and work to make their communities more welcoming.

Toolkits for measuring and promoting welcoming communities are particularly important at this time for several reasons. First, Canada is following an ambitious plan to admit record numbers of immigrants per year in order to support our post-COVID recovery and fill extensive labour market needs.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the integration of these newcomers must be systematically supported to achieve the intended goals of the Canadian immigration program. To do so requires tools for determining gaps in the welcome experienced by immigrants and systematic, evidence-based strategies for filling these gaps. Second, increasing emphasis has been placed on regionalization – the attraction and retention of immigrants in communities outside of the large metropolises – in order to maintain the vitality of smaller Canadian communities.<sup>3</sup> Increasing emphasis has also been placed on the need to actively maintain and build Francophone minority communities through immigration.<sup>4</sup> To do so requires that these communities actively work to establish themselves as welcoming communities for immigrants. This includes an assessment of communities' current situation using specific measurable indicators, an identification of targets for change based on this assessment, consideration of the optimal strategies for promoting this change, and subsequent research to evaluate the success of these strategies. Finally, creating welcoming communities is a social justice issue in that, as Canada works diligently to attract new immigrants to this country, it has a moral obligation to provide them with the welcome they require in order to thrive.

But why invest in the design of new toolkits, rather than depending on the 2010 report? New toolkits are required in order to respond to emerging research and awareness of what makes a community welcoming, and to the increasing emphasis on outcome measurement within our ecosystem, including at the community level (i.e., community impact). This is essential to ensure that the work we are doing to support the settlement and integration of immigrants and to promote more welcoming communities is having an impact. New toolkits are also needed in order to take advantage of the many new promising practices in settlement and integration that have been developed and evaluated over the past decade. Many of these new promising

practices have an evidence base for asserting their effectiveness, providing assurance to those who use them.

Toolkit I: Measuring Welcoming Communities, provided here, addresses the first of these needs by presenting a new evidence-based list of characteristics of a welcoming community – some similar to the original list, some based on the original list but revised, and some brand new – and a comprehensive list of indicators for each characteristic from which communities can select those that they would like to, and are able to, measure. Toolkit II: Promoting Welcoming Communities, to be completed later in 2023, will address the need for identifying and sharing promising practices that can be used to boost each of the characteristics of a welcoming community. This second toolkit will allow communities to select those features of promising practices that can be applied in their own communities in order to replicate success.

### **A Five Step Approach for Working Toward Welcoming Communities**

In order to systematically work toward creating a welcoming community, we propose a five-step approach:

Step 1: Assessment of the current state of the community – using Toolkit I

Step 2: Creation of short-term and long-term goals – using Toolkit I

Step 3: Implementation (adjustment) of policies and programs that are designed to target gaps and weaknesses and work toward these goals – using Toolkit II

Step 4: Systematic research to evaluate the effectiveness of these policies and programs – using Toolkit I

Step 5: Ongoing assessment of the state of the community – using Toolkit I, and feedback to Step 2

Step 1. To begin to work toward creating a welcoming community, it is necessary to know where a community currently stands in terms of its welcome, and the gaps and opportunities that may exist. Toolkit I can be used to identify priorities for the community and to assess the current state of the community in terms of those priorities. Toolkit I describes the characteristics that make up a welcoming community and provides indicators for each characteristic. Using this toolkit, communities can determine priority characteristics for their community and then use an array of the indicators provided to assess gaps and opportunities in these characteristics. Importantly, this assessment provides an essential baseline as a point of comparison against which later progress can be measured, with the indicators also pointing to specific targets for intervention.

Step 2. Next, it is necessary to create short- and long-term goals that the community can realistically pursue. Once again, it is important to focus on indicators at this stage, as provided in Toolkit I, because they provide concrete information about the types of policies and programs that are likely to be successful in reaching these goals. For example, the goal of retaining more immigrants who come to a community does not tell us how to go about doing so. In contrast, the goal of increasing the availability of housing that is of adequate quality or the goal of reducing the unemployment rate for immigrants suggest the types of policies and programs that should be implemented. The promising practices to be presented in Toolkit II will provide strategies for meeting specific goals.

Although we have suggested that it is useful to assess the current state of the community before creating goals, it is important to note that Steps 1 and 2 are likely to be interactive, influencing each other in a variety of ways. For example, although an assessment may highlight gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed in the goals for the community, it is also the case that the goals are likely to drive the key indicators that are measured during the assessment stage. Thus, the first two steps may involve an iterative process, with the initial assessment driving the establishment of goals, and these goals then driving further, more detailed, assessments.

Step 3. Following the completion of the first two steps, it is appropriate to systematically introduce targeted programs and policies (or to adjust existing policies and programs) to fill gaps and achieve goals. As mentioned, using specific indicators to assess the strength of the welcome of a community as well as to set community goals facilitates the identification of policies and programs that specifically target these indicators. Toolkit II will provide a variety of promising practices that target the specific characteristics and their indicators, and will describe key structures and processes that make up these promising practices. These policies and programs may be introduced at the local, regional, or national level. Irrespective, on-the-ground work is essential for identifying gaps and needs, and for determining the policies and practices that will most effectively achieve desired outcomes.

Step 4. This is the step at which the process often breaks down. Without further measurement to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs, money may be spent on interventions without knowing whether they are indeed achieving desired outcomes or are responsible for outcomes that can be observed. Thus, it is essential to go beyond implementing new policies and programs that address gaps and goals to systematically evaluating their effectiveness. Such evaluation can, once again, make use of the indicators associated with particular characteristics of a welcoming community provided in Toolkit I in order to provide a metric for success. Further adjustments can then be made to improve the quality of these programs and policies and to

eliminate those that are falling far short of the mark. Repeated assessments over time are also useful for determining whether policies and programs are continuing to be effective despite changing circumstances and conditions in the community.

Step 5. While evaluation of specific programs and policies is essential, it is also the case that ongoing assessments of community characteristics using Toolkit I are a crucial component of working toward welcoming communities. By comparing such assessments to initial baseline conditions, it is possible to determine whether short- and long-term goals are being met, whether new goal setting is required, and the overall extent of progress that has been made. An iterative process may then be established in which the various stages of working toward a welcoming community are revisited.



## **MEASURING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES: A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM**

This toolkit (Toolkit I) is designed to assist communities and those who support them in assessing their degree of welcome to immigrants and identifying potential gaps that will need to be filled. Importantly, it can also be used to determine whether new policies and programs implemented to promote a more welcoming community are having their intended impact. It contains a description of 19 key characteristics of a welcoming community, based on a thorough review of the current state of knowledge concerning welcoming communities. For each characteristic we also provide a comprehensive list of indicators that can be used for measuring the community's degree of welcome on that characteristic.

This toolkit also includes the following practical guides: <http://p2pcanada.ca/library/measuring-welcoming-communities-a-toolkit-for-communities-and-those-who-support-them/>

- A presentation deck to facilitate conversations within a community
- Tool 1 – A set of questions that can be used to conduct an environmental scan and identify crucial features of a community that may influence approaches to assessing and working toward a more welcoming community
- Tool 2 – A checklist to rank order the importance of the 19 characteristics for a given community and determine which are a priority for measurement
- Tool 3 – A checklist to select which indicators will be used to assess selected characteristics and what comparisons will be made using these indicators

### **What is a Welcoming Community?**

In defining what we mean by a welcoming community, two key dimensions must be considered. First, a welcoming community has a geographic dimension – it is a town, city, or region in which immigrants feel valued and their needs are served. Within this geographic dimension, the focus may be on a specific group of immigrants, as is the case for a Francophone minority community. The second dimension of a welcoming community is a discourse dimension focusing on the responsibilities of the receiving community. The discourse dimension reinforces that communities have agency and can engage in actions that facilitate the integration of immigrants. For some communities, being a welcoming community is a crucial component of efforts to attract and retain immigrants. A welcoming community attracts and retains immigrants by identifying and removing barriers, promoting a sense of belonging, meeting diverse needs, and offering services and supports that promote the successful economic, socio-cultural, and civic-political integration of immigrants.<sup>5</sup>

Building on these dimensions, **we define a welcoming community as a collective effort to design and sustain a place where immigrants feel that they belong and that supports immigrants’ economic, socio-cultural, and civic-political integration. A welcoming community has structures, processes, and practices in place to meet the needs and promote the inclusion of immigrants in all aspects of life, and actively works to ensure these are effective.**

Throughout this toolkit, when we use the term immigrants, we are referring to individuals born outside of Canada from diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, and their intersections, who may have entered Canada under different immigration streams and whose needs may vary. We must also consider the policy context of two official languages in Canada – English and French – and the specific needs of French-speaking immigrants and of Francophone minority communities. It is important to keep in mind the Canadian vision that French-speaking immigrants have an opportunity to settle and thrive in French, and to contribute to Canadian society and to the vitality of Francophone minority communities.<sup>6, 7, 8</sup> This is particularly urgent as Canada often falls far short of its annual target of French-speaking immigrants constituting at least 4.4% of new permanent residents destined outside Quebec.<sup>9, 10</sup> Of note, however, Canada did meet its target for French-speaking immigrants outside of Quebec in 2022.<sup>11</sup>

## **Characteristics of a Welcoming Community**

Working toward welcoming communities requires identification of the key characteristics that constitute a welcoming community. Building on our original list of 17 characteristics and the current state of knowledge concerning welcoming communities, we identified 19 characteristics of a welcoming community for the current toolkit. Some of these characteristics are similar to, or revised versions of, those in the earlier report,<sup>12</sup> and some are new characteristics reflecting enhanced awareness of issues that impact immigrants and the communities in which they reside.

The rank ordering of the importance of the 19 characteristics shown here was developed based on several sources. We turned to our earlier report and the updated literature on welcoming communities to develop a tentative rank order. Then we polled 259 key informants from all levels of government, the settlement sector, postsecondary institutes, Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIF), and others working in the area of immigrant integration as to the relative importance of the 19 characteristics. These polls were offered in both English and French. Looking across these various sources, we identified the following rank order of the characteristics of a welcoming community:

### Cluster A

1. Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing
2. Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities
3. Access to Suitable Health Care, Including Mental Health Care
4. Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants of All Racial, Cultural and Religious Backgrounds
5. Access to Immigrant-Serving Agencies that Meet Immigrants' Needs

### Cluster B

6. Access to Transportation
7. Educational Opportunities
8. Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression
9. Access to Services and Supports for French-Speaking Immigrants by French Speakers
10. Immigrant-Responsive Municipal Features and Services

### Cluster C

11. Coordination and Collaboration Among Community Organizations and Different Levels of Government Working Toward Welcoming Communities
12. Equitable Neighbourhoods
13. Opportunities to Form and Join Social and Community Networks
14. Immigrant-Responsive Police Services and Justice System
15. Access to Inclusive Public Spaces, Facilities, and Programs
16. Positive Indigenous-Immigrant Relations and Understanding
17. Access to Diverse Religious and Ethnocultural Organizations
18. Civic and Political Participation Opportunities
19. Equitable Media Coverage, Representation, and Content

Developing this final rank-ordered list of characteristics was somewhat challenging. We found a lot of consensus that the top 5 characteristics (Cluster A) are the core, most important characteristics of a welcoming community; we found some consensus that the next 5 characteristics are also important (Cluster B); and we found some consensus about the lower importance of the last 9 characteristics (Cluster C). However, within clusters, opinions about the ranking of characteristics was less consistent. Thus, the clustering of characteristics and ordering of the 3 clusters is more definitive than the ranking of the characteristics within each cluster.

It is important to emphasize that the rank ordering of characteristics provided here is a generalization that may not apply to all communities. The importance of each characteristic for

any given community will depend on several factors. These include, but are not limited to: community size and location (e.g., smaller versus larger community, proximity to other communities); regional and local economies, and labour and housing markets; community demographic composition and trends (e.g., current percentage of immigrants, community history of immigration, levels of socio-cultural diversity); and unanticipated events that may significantly impact a community (e.g., COVID-19, climate emergencies). The importance of each characteristic for a given community is also expected to change over time. Communities are constantly evolving. Thus, when using this toolkit to assess the extent to which a community is welcoming, each community should use the checklist (Tool 2) to determine their own rank order of the characteristics' importance.

Below we describe each of the 19 characteristics individually. However, interested parties should keep in mind that the characteristics are likely to be mutually reinforcing and may interact in building upon or reducing the impact of one another. For example, educational opportunities and employment/entrepreneurship opportunities may together have a larger impact than the additive effects of each alone, demonstrating an interactive effect. In terms of mutually reinforcing effects, opportunities to form and join social and community networks may facilitate employment/entrepreneurship opportunities. At the same time, employment/entrepreneurship opportunities may facilitate access to social and community networks.

Finally, it is critical for communities to take into consideration the intersecting needs of multi-barriered immigrants such as racialized women, youth, seniors, refugees, persons with disabilities, members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community, and those who have experienced trauma.

### **Indicators to Assess the Characteristics**

The indicators provided here are quantitative and qualitative measures that can be used to assess the level of each characteristic in a community. Baseline indicators will provide information to communities on where they currently stand in terms of the characteristics of a welcoming community and where efforts to improve particular characteristics are most needed. When new policies and programs are then implemented to promote a more welcoming community, the indicators can be used to measure whether the policies and programs are having their desired impact on particular characteristics, and in this case would be termed outcome indicators.

For each characteristic, we have provided a comprehensive list of indicators that can be used to assess the degree to which a given community fits the criteria of a welcoming community.

Similar to rank ordering the characteristics, each community should select from the lists provided those indicators that are most useful and feasible for them to assess at a given point in time (see Tool 3 for a checklist). It is essential, however, to examine multiple indicators for each characteristic as no single indicator can capture the full breadth of each characteristic. An assessment of multiple indicators will provide a much fuller and more accurate depiction of the state of the characteristic. For example, knowing that unemployment rates and underemployment rates within a community are low paints a much different (and rosier) picture than knowing that unemployment rates are low without any information on underemployment. Some indicators can be measured objectively (e.g., housing affordability) while others are more subjective and based on people's perceptions and experiences (e.g., level of satisfaction with current housing situation). Both types of indicators are important to assess as together they provide insight into the state of the community and the impact on immigrants.

Moreover, efforts should be made to understand what accounts for the current indicator level within a particular context. For instance, positive attitudes toward immigrants may exist in a community because previous cohorts of immigrants were economic migrants. These positive attitudes may change if future cohorts comprise people immigrating under non-economic categories.

When using the indicators, meaningful comparisons are necessary (see Tool 3). Many of the indicators will need to be measured for immigrants in comparison to non-immigrants. Comparisons between current and previous cohorts of immigrants can also be useful. Moreover, comparisons can be made among different groups of immigrants (e.g., by age, gender, racialization, linguistic background, admission category), including multi-barriered immigrants. Importantly, comparisons can also be made before and after new initiatives are implemented to determine their effectiveness. And of course, comparisons can be made among communities. The selection of specific comparisons will depend on the key issues being considered and the purpose of the comparisons. For example, if a particular community wishes to determine whether it is making progress toward building a welcoming community, a time series analysis within the community would seem most useful, while potentially taking into account the regional, national, and global context (e.g., economic recession).

Communities and those who support them are encouraged to keep these considerations in mind and to use this toolkit in a way that serves their needs and goals.

# Characteristics of a Welcoming Community and Their Indicators

## Cluster A

### Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

Searching for and securing a place to live is a crucial first step immigrants must take when arriving in a new community.<sup>13, 14, 15</sup> With the passing of the *National Housing Strategy Act* in 2019, Canada officially recognized housing as a human right and committed to achieving equitable housing outcomes.<sup>16</sup> Affordable, adequate, and suitable housing is not only a basic need; for immigrants, it is one of the most consequential routes to social and economic inclusion in the receiving community.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup>

Research shows that housing is a conduit to schools, jobs, and key services and amenities that support the settlement process.<sup>20</sup> Institutional and systemic barriers to accessing suitable housing have a varied impact among and within different immigrant groups and regional contexts, particularly with the changing geographies of immigrant settlement patterns.<sup>21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26</sup> Meeting immigrants' housing needs in small and rural communities can bolster regionalization policies intended to attract and retain immigrants to help address skill shortages and revitalize the population.<sup>27, 28</sup> While (sub)urban areas must continue to develop sustainable solutions to immigrants' housing needs, broader regional distribution can ease the pressure on the absorptive capacity of large urban centres, where immigrants traditionally prefer to settle, but where they are more likely to experience overcrowding<sup>29</sup> and live in core housing need (dwellings considered unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable).<sup>30, 31</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Housing affordability: percent of before tax household income (from all sources) spent on housing (aiming for less than 30%)
- Availability of subsidized, non-profit, and co-op housing
- Availability of housing that is of adequate quality (e.g., not in need of major repairs or renovations; no infestations)
- Evidence of overcrowded housing (based on age, sex/gender, and number of household members)
- Rate of core housing need (living in an unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable dwelling and unable to afford alternative housing in the community)
- Rate of supply and vacancy of suitable housing (e.g., availability of rentals/homes for purchase that are accessible by transit and adequate in size)

- Evidence of housing stability
- Rate of homeownership
- Rate of unsheltered homelessness/unhoused
- Rate of “hidden homelessness” (e.g., involuntary “doubling-up,” couch surfing, sharing accommodations)
- Evidence of discrimination in acquiring and living in housing (from property managers, landlords, and/or real estate agents)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about housing markets in Canada and tenants’ rights and responsibilities
- Level of knowledge about the housing market and how to obtain housing in Canada
- Level of knowledge of rights and responsibilities as tenants and homeowners
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - information for immigrants about housing markets in Canada and tenants’ rights and responsibilities
  - one’s current housing situation

## Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities

Evidence suggests that employment and entrepreneurship opportunities are important characteristics of a welcoming community.<sup>32, 33, 34, 35</sup> Indeed, the presence of such opportunities is a key factor in attracting and retaining immigrants to particular destinations.<sup>36, 37, 38</sup> Employment (including self-employment and entrepreneurship) is important for several reasons. First, it is the primary source of income through which most individuals and families meet their basic needs for housing and food.<sup>39, 40</sup> Second, employment facilitates social connections, language skills, and other dimensions of integration.<sup>41, 42, 43</sup> Third, many immigrants to Canada (especially those who immigrated under the Economic Immigrant category) arrive with the expectation that they will be able to obtain employment commensurate with their education, competencies, and prior work experience.<sup>44, 45</sup> When these expectations are not met, incentives to remain in particular communities – and in Canada – are reduced.<sup>46, 47</sup> The shrinking domestic labour pool and significant need for workers across the country increases the urgency to integrate immigrants into the Canadian labour market in a timely fashion.<sup>48</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Rate of employment of working age immigrants
- Rate and duration of unemployment of working age immigrants
- Rate of underemployment: percent overqualified for the work they do, rate of employment in lower skilled jobs
- Evidence of wages commensurate with education and experience
- Rate of promotion within organizations commensurate with qualifications
- Rate of employee turnover
- Rate of participation in professional organizations
- Evidence of discrimination and exploitation perpetrated by employers (in hiring and at work)
- Evidence of discrimination and exploitation perpetrated by other people at work (e.g., coworkers, customers)
- Evidence of inclusive and accommodating workplace policies and practices
- Evidence that workplaces are equitable and inclusive, including of French-speaking immigrants
- Level of job satisfaction
- Rate of self-employment
- Rate of success among entrepreneurs in both the short and long term



- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about workers' rights in Canada
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about supports and services available for immigrant employment and entrepreneurship
- Level of knowledge of workers' rights in Canada
- Level of knowledge of supports and services available for immigrant employment and entrepreneurship
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the availability and quality of local French- and English-speaking labour market opportunities
  - the extent to which workplaces are equitable and inclusive
  - the availability and quality of entrepreneurship opportunities in the community
  - information for immigrants about workers' rights in Canada
  - information for immigrants about supports and services for immigrant employment and entrepreneurship

## Access to Suitable Health Care, Including Mental Health Care

Canada ranks above most other countries in the world when measuring population-level indicators of health, but inequities in health status and access to suitable services and care providers across social groups, including immigrants, are widely recognized.<sup>49, 50, 51, 52</sup> For instance, recent immigrants are considerably less likely to have regular access to a primary health-care provider when compared to more established immigrants.<sup>53</sup> Importantly, although immigrants generally show an initial health advantage over the Canadian population on arrival in Canada (the “healthy immigrant effect”), research suggests that immigrants’ physical and mental health deteriorate with longer residence in Canada.<sup>54, 55, 56</sup> This is due, in part, to the difficulties and stressors they encounter as they adapt to their new environment. Thus, access to suitable health care services and providers is vital to maintaining immigrants’ physical and mental well-being and fostering a welcoming community.<sup>57, 58</sup>

Although Canada is lauded for its universal health care system, equitable access to services and care providers for immigrants is impeded by systemic barriers, including language barriers, long wait times to access services, transportation challenges, high costs of services and medications, and stigma for seeking services (particularly for mental health).<sup>59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64</sup> These (and other) systemic barriers make certain groups of immigrants (e.g., refugees, racialized women, 2SLGBTQI+, youth, seniors, immigrants with disabilities) more vulnerable to receiving inadequate and/or untimely care, putting them at greater risk for unmet health care needs, though targeted programming can help mitigate these challenges.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup> Without culturally responsive and respectful services and care providers, Canada’s health care system is ill-equipped to meet immigrants’ needs, and this will only become a more pressing matter as the ethnocultural and religious diversity of Canada’s immigrant population continues to grow.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, improving access to quality care that is responsive to the diverse health needs of immigrants is necessary to reduce inequities and create a welcoming community.

### Key Indicators

- Self-perceived physical health
- Rate of self-perceived unmet physical health care needs
- Evidence of physical health outcomes (e.g., mortality rate, disease incidence, conditions that require hospitalization)
- Self-perceived mental health
- Rate of self-perceived unmet mental health care needs
- Evidence of mental health outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety)
- Rate of addictions

- Availability and accessibility of suitable health care services and providers, including mental health services and providers (e.g., access to a regular health care provider/family doctor, wait times between making appointments and at facilities, availability/wait for specialists)
- Availability of (mental) health care services in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals, and interpretation and translation services
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about how to access (mental) health care services in the community
- Level of knowledge about (mental) health care services in the community and how to access them
- Availability and accessibility of specialized services to meet the (mental) health care needs of multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about how to access specialized (mental) health care services for multi-barriered groups in the community
- Evidence of effectiveness of specialized services in meeting the (mental) health care needs of multi-barriered groups
- Health care providers' level of awareness and understanding of mental health symptoms among immigrants
- Rate of coverage for prescription drugs, paramedical specialists (e.g., physiotherapy, counselling), medical devices, and dental and vision care
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the approachability of the health care system and health care providers, including mental health services and providers
  - the quality of health care services provided, including mental health services
  - the administrative delivery of (mental) health care services
  - interpersonal quality of care (e.g., courtesy and respect, language/communication barriers, ability to engage in treatment decisions, experiences of interpersonal discrimination, trust in health care provider, adequate time spent with patient, culturally responsive, trauma informed)
  - the delivery and quality of specialized services in meeting the (mental) health care needs of multi-barriered groups
  - information for immigrants about how to access (mental) health care services in the community, including specialized services for multi-barriered groups

## Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants of All Racial, Cultural, and Religious Backgrounds

Positive attitudes can be seen in feelings, opinions, and behavioural intentions toward immigrants of all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds, and their intersections. This includes French-speaking immigrants, who are important contributors to Francophone minority communities and to the larger society in Canada.<sup>69, 70</sup> Positive attitudes are important because they can determine the public's behaviour toward immigrants, and affect their reactions to immigration policies and practices.<sup>71, 72, 73, 74, 75</sup> It is also easy to see how positive attitudes are likely to affect other characteristics and indicators of a welcoming community, such as employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; access to affordable, adequate, and suitable housing; and an ongoing commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression. Besides these effects, it is important to note that experiences of prejudice and discrimination have a strong negative impact on immigrants' mental and physical health.<sup>76, 77, 78, 79, 80</sup> Thus, while positive attitudes represent an important characteristic of a welcoming community in themselves, their presence can also act as a facilitator of other characteristics of welcoming communities.

**Key Indicators** – note that French-speaking immigrants are an important consideration in assessing each of the indicators for this characteristic

- Evidence of positive attitudes toward immigration and toward racial, cultural, and religious diversity in the community
- Evidence of positive attitudes toward immigrants of all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds, and their intersections, in the community
- Rate of hate crimes targeting immigrants across all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds in the community
- Rate of discrimination toward immigrants across all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds in the community
- Evidence of social cohesion among immigrants and non-immigrants of all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
- Evidence of sense of inclusion within the community among immigrants of all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
- Evidence of mainstream organizations and institutions making reasonable efforts to be inclusive and accommodating of immigrants from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
- Evidence of support by community leaders across a variety of sectors (e.g., business, civic, social) for the concerns and interests of immigrants from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds

- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the degree of respect and value community members give to immigrants from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds in the community
  - mainstream organizations' and institutions' efforts to be inclusive and accommodating of immigrants from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
  - the support by community leaders across a variety of sectors (e.g., business, civic, social) for the concerns and interests of immigrants from all racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds

## Access to Immigrant-Serving Agencies that Meet Immigrants' Needs

Immigrant-serving agencies are the primary point of contact for many immigrants upon arrival to Canada, and they are a pillar of any welcoming community. These agencies provide settlement services and supports, with the objective of orienting immigrants to daily life in their local community.<sup>81</sup> Services and supports typically offered include information, programming, and referrals related to employment, education, language assessment and training, housing, obtaining official documents, and accessing community and mainstream social services (e.g., health care).<sup>82, 83, 84</sup>

In 2017, IRCC completed a formal evaluation of its Settlement Program, which funds immigrant-serving agencies through service provider agreements.<sup>85</sup> The evaluation included a survey of more than 15,000 immigrants across Canada to capture high-level information about their settlement outcomes.<sup>86, 87</sup> The findings showed not only a growing demand for services, but they also captured evidence of the effectiveness of immigrant-serving agencies in meeting immigrants' needs.<sup>88</sup> For example, a robust majority of clients (96%) who received services reported positive outcomes, such as finding employment, improving English or French language skills, and building community connections.<sup>89</sup> Support services, such as transportation, child care, and translation, were identified by respondents as crucial to facilitating access to agencies, and women and refugees were most likely to report that they rely on these enabling services.<sup>90</sup> Immigrant-serving agencies also deliver school and employment supports for children and youth, and extra-curricular and recreational programming, all of which have demonstrable benefits for their social inclusion.<sup>91, 92</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Availability of immigrant-serving agencies with a variety of services (e.g., needs assessment, information and orientation, language training, employment-related services) – in person and/or online – provided in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about immigrant-serving organizations in the community, the services they provide, and how to access them
- Level of knowledge of immigrant-serving agencies in the community, the services they provide, and how to access them
- Evidence of effectiveness of immigrant-serving agencies in meeting immigrants' needs
- Evidence that services are delivered in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive manner, giving consideration to the needs and specificities of immigrants' diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Evidence of intercultural competency among agency staff

- Availability of specialized services to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about specialized services to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups and how to access them
- Evidence of effectiveness of specialized services in meeting the needs of multi-barriered groups
- Availability of supports that facilitate the use of immigrant services (e.g., childcare, transportation, translation, interpretation, flexible service delivery options and timing)
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the delivery and quality of services provided by immigrant-serving agencies
  - the delivery and quality of specialized services for multi-barriered immigrants provided by immigrant-serving agencies
  - interpersonal treatment from agency staff (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)

## **Cluster B**

### **Access to Transportation**

Access to public transportation is imperative to creating a welcoming community. It affects people's ability to get to school, work, take part in leisure and recreational activities, access services (e.g., health care), and meet their daily needs (e.g., shopping for food).<sup>93, 94, 95, 96</sup> This is particularly true for immigrants, who are more than twice as likely as non-immigrants to commute using public transportation.<sup>97</sup> Of note, research finds that among immigrants, women are more likely to rely on public transportation than men.<sup>98</sup> The availability and accessibility of public transportation is, therefore, also conducive to immigrant women's equitable participation in society.

Underdeveloped public transportation systems are a common barrier to attracting and retaining immigrants,<sup>99</sup> and those who reside in suburbs, small centres, and rural areas, where public transportation may be inadequate or virtually non-existent, are more likely to be put at risk for transportation-related social exclusion.<sup>100, 101, 102</sup> In these settings, private transportation (e.g., owning a vehicle) may be required, but this can be expensive, and immigrants may not qualify for loans if they do not have an established banking history in Canada.<sup>103</sup> Even in metropolitan areas where multi-modal public transportation infrastructure is highly developed, however, cost to access public transportation can be prohibitive, and concerns about safety and interpersonal discrimination when using public transit can deter usage.<sup>104, 105</sup>

### **Key Indicators**

- Availability of transportation options for access to regularly needed sites and services (e.g., employment, schools, settlement services, cultural and religious organizations, health services, recreational)
- Availability of accessible transit services for immigrants with disabilities
- Proportion of monthly income spent on transportation
- Evidence of sense of safety when using public transit
- Availability and accessibility of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about public transit
- Level of knowledge of transportation services locally and regionally
- Level of satisfaction with:



- public transit service quality and ease of navigation, including factors such as: availability, inter- and intra-municipal coverage, frequency, hours of service, reliability, price structure, comfort, accessibility
- ease of mobility and access to regularly needed sites and services
- the availability and quality of multi-modal transit choices: public transit, car share programs, private transportation
- interpersonal treatment from transit operators and staff and from other passengers when using public transit (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)
- the delivery and quality of accessible transit services for immigrants with disabilities

## Educational Opportunities

There is consensus among welcoming community proponents and government agencies that educational opportunities are a key characteristic of a welcoming community.<sup>106, 107, 108, 109, 110</sup> For adult immigrants, such opportunities may include language and workplace-ready classes, educational upgrading/bridging programs, and (re)training options available through post-secondary schooling.<sup>111, 112, 113</sup> Because internationally trained immigrants often face difficulty having their credentials recognized in Canada, many choose to pursue some form of Canadian education to find suitable work and improve their labour market outcomes; thus, proximity to educational institutions is important.<sup>114</sup> For immigrants living in small and rural communities who have to travel long distances to access such opportunities, flexible delivery options (e.g., virtual/hybrid) and times can improve accessibility.<sup>115, 116</sup> Supports for childcare, transportation, and financial aid have also been shown to improve access to educational opportunities for adult immigrants.<sup>117, 118, 119, 120</sup>

Because schools play a pivotal role in their social inclusion, educational opportunities that address the needs of immigrant children and youth are also vital to a welcoming community.<sup>121</sup> These may include the availability of schools for French speakers in the local community, comprehensive English-Language Learner and French-Language Learner programs in schools, the availability of translators and interpreters in schools to bridge communication with parents/caregivers, homework clubs, and opportunities for extra-curricular involvement.<sup>122, 123, 124</sup> In schools, the rise in ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity among immigrant children and youth is also garnering more attention and highlights the need for an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive education system that promotes the academic and social inclusion of students from all backgrounds.<sup>125, 126, 127, 128</sup>

### Key Indicators

#### *Adults*

- Availability of educational opportunities (e.g., language, computer, job skills, and workers' rights classes; programs for upgrading education levels; post-secondary options), offered in both official languages, that support social and economic inclusion
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about educational pathways that fit the needs of immigrants and lead to desired careers (e.g., credential recognition/equivalency certificates, educational opportunities for upgrading and (re)training, post-secondary programs)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about educational opportunities in the community

- Level of knowledge of educational pathways and of educational opportunities in the community and how to access them
- Availability of supports that improve access to educational opportunities (e.g., childcare, transportation, loans and scholarships, flexible delivery options and timing, help accessing international credential and degree recognition)
- Availability of educational supports and programs for multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Geographic proximity to educational institutions offering equivalency, upgrading, and (re)training in both official languages
- Level of knowledge of supports that facilitate enrollment in educational opportunities
- Rate of enrollment in educational programs
- Rate of attendance in educational programs
- Rate of completion of educational programs
- Evidence of effectiveness of educational programs in achieving curriculum objectives (e.g., increased level of language fluency, bridge training)
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - educational programs in achieving curriculum objectives (e.g., increased level of language fluency)
  - information about educational pathways and about educational opportunities in the community
  - the availability and quality of supports that facilitate enrollment in and improve access to educational opportunities
  - the availability and quality of supports and programs for multi-barriered groups

### *Children/Youth*

- Rate of school attendance
- Rate of secondary school completion
- Availability of schools for French speakers in local community
- Availability of Settlement Workers in Schools
- Availability of trained translators and interpreters in schools to bridge communication
- Availability of comprehensive and well-supported English-Language Learner programs and French-Language Learner programs in schools
- Availability of educational supports and programs for immigrant children and youth with disabilities
- Availability of educational supports and programs for refugee children and youth
- Availability of breakfast/lunch programs in schools
- Availability of outerwear programs in schools

- Availability of reliable information for parents/caregivers in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about the local school system(s)
- Level of parental/caregiver engagement and awareness of children’s educational and social opportunities and experiences
- Level of academic achievement and classroom engagement
- Evidence of effectiveness of educational supports, resources, and opportunities in schools to support student learning
- Evidence of social inclusion through participation in extra-curricular activities
- Evidence of sense of safety in school settings
- Evidence of social exclusion through discrimination, racism, bullying, conflicts, and violence in school settings
- Evidence of equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive school leadership, curriculum, and pedagogy
- Evidence of equitable and inclusive school environments, including policies and programs that consider cultural and religious norms, practices, and dietary restrictions
- Evidence of intercultural competency among teachers and staff
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - information about the local school system(s) as provided to parents/caregivers
  - the delivery and quality of educational programs
  - the availability and quality of educational supports, resources, and opportunities in schools to support student learning (among parents/caregivers and children)
  - the availability and quality of supports and programs for immigrant children and youth with disabilities
  - the availability and quality of supports and programs for refugee children and youth
  - responses to and condemnation of incidents of discrimination, racism, bullying, conflicts, and violence in school settings
  - intercultural competence among teachers and staff

## Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

The structural nature of racism and other intersecting systems of oppression pervade every aspect of immigrants' settlement and long-term outcomes in Canada, including employment, housing, education, and health.<sup>129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137</sup> The long-standing need for communities to establish an ongoing commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression has garnered increasing attention as public manifestations of White supremacy perpetually devastate communities of all sizes, and members of racialized groups continue to experience discrimination in their daily lives.<sup>138, 139, 140, 141</sup>

Communities can take steps to mitigate the structural and individual level impact of racism and other systems of oppression by developing and committing to local anti-racism and anti-oppression strategies.<sup>142, 143</sup> Because social groups and individuals experience harm in different ways, it is crucial to take an intersectional approach that considers how aspects of immigrants' identities – such as immigration class, gender, sexuality, , religion, age, and disability – intersect with racialization.<sup>144, 145, 146, 147</sup> Any steps taken to identify and address underlying and systemic racism and other interlocking systems of oppression in the local context should also take a community-driven approach (i.e., the communities directly impacted are involved in all stages). Such an approach prioritizes the needs of the community before the needs of institutions, and should ensure transparency, including monitoring and publicly reporting measurable outcomes.<sup>148, 149</sup> As stated in descriptions of other characteristics of a welcoming community, immigration will continue to help Canada's ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity flourish, and an ongoing commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression is fundamental to maintaining a strong and united social fabric, which is indispensable to any welcoming community.

### Key Indicators

- Evidence of a community-driven approach (i.e., the communities directly impacted are involved in all stages) to identifying and addressing underlying and systemic racism and other interlocking systems of oppression in the local context
- Evidence of effectiveness of the community-driven approach to addressing racism and oppression
- Evidence of ongoing public commitment and transparency around anti-racism and anti-oppressive initiatives, including monitoring and reporting measurable outcomes
- Evidence of effectiveness of ongoing public commitment and transparency around anti-racism and anti-oppressive initiatives
- Evidence of anti-racism and anti-oppression messaging through public education and awareness campaigns

- Evidence of effectiveness of anti-racism and anti-oppression messaging through public education and awareness campaigns
- Evidence of ongoing initiatives to create awareness of and celebrate diverse racial, cultural, and religious traditions of immigrants
- Evidence of effectiveness of ongoing initiatives to create awareness of and celebrate diverse racial, cultural, and religious traditions of immigrants
- Evidence of ongoing initiatives to develop understanding and build solidarity between diverse racial, cultural, and religious communities
- Evidence of effectiveness of ongoing initiatives to develop understanding and build solidarity between diverse racial, cultural, and religious communities
- Evidence of easily accessible avenues to report racism and other intersecting forms of discrimination
- Rate of reporting of racism and other intersecting forms of discrimination across available avenues
- Evidence of responses to and condemnation of incidents of racism and other intersecting forms of discrimination by municipal and community leaders
- Evidence of effectiveness of responses to and condemnation of incidents of racism and other intersecting forms of discrimination by municipal and/or community leaders
- Availability and accessibility of ongoing anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources across organizations and institutions that provide public services (e.g., education, health, civil service, housing, transportation, social services, recreation)
- Evidence of effectiveness of ongoing anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources across organizations and institutions that provide public services (e.g., education, health, civil service, housing, transportation, social services, recreation)
- Availability and accessibility of anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for employers and employees
- Evidence of effectiveness of anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for employers
- Availability and accessibility of anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for local media
- Evidence of effectiveness of anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for local media
- Availability and accessibility of anti-racism and anti-oppression training and resources for members of the general public
- Evidence of effectiveness of anti-racism and anti-oppression training and resources for members of the general public
- Level of satisfaction with:

- the community-driven approach to address racism and oppression
- ongoing public commitment and transparency around anti-racism and anti-oppressive initiatives
- anti-racism and anti-oppression messaging through public education and awareness campaigns
- ongoing initiatives to create awareness of and celebrate diverse racial, cultural, and religious traditions of immigrants
- ongoing initiatives to develop understanding and build solidarity between diverse racial, cultural, and religious communities
- responses to and condemnation of incidents of racism and other intersecting forms of discrimination by municipal and community leaders
- ongoing anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources across organizations and institutions that provide public services (e.g., education, health, civil service, housing, transportation, social services, recreation)
- anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for employers and employees (among employers and employees)
- anti-racism and anti-oppression policies, training, and resources for local media
- anti-racism and anti-oppression training and resources for members of the general public

## Access to Services and Supports for French-Speaking Immigrants by French Speakers

The federal government recognizes that immigration is a valuable mechanism for maintaining the vitality and enhancing the development of French-speaking minority communities across Canada (outside of Quebec).<sup>150</sup> An increasing number of municipalities are also recognizing the cultural, demographic, and economic benefits of supporting Canada’s French-speaking community and have declared themselves bilingual in an effort to foster a welcoming and inclusive society for French-speaking immigrants.<sup>151</sup> Accordingly, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s 2017 evaluation of the *Immigration to Official Language Minority Communities Initiative* highlights the need to implement service delivery “by and for” French speakers. This includes (a) services delivered by Francophone organizations; (b) formal consultation mechanisms and respect for Francophone community architecture; (c) taking into account the expertise of Francophone communities in the design of policies and programs; and (d) separate funding streams for Francophone services (e.g., the Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative).<sup>152, 153</sup>

Following consultations with French-speaking immigrants, community members, and over 350 interested parties (including the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) and the Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario (AFO)), in 2018, IRCC launched l’initiative des communautés francophones accueillantes/the Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative.<sup>154</sup> Consultations confirmed that one of the most pressing barriers impeding French-speaking immigrants’ access to settlement supports and services is the shortage of French immigrant-serving agencies.<sup>155</sup> When French-speaking immigrants are referred to English settlement services or those that offer services in both official languages, these agencies often have little to no understanding of the unique needs and strengths of French-speaking communities and institutions.<sup>156</sup> Moreover, agencies delivering services in both official languages tend to offer an uneven distribution of provisions, favouring English-speaking immigrants.<sup>157</sup> Thus, a “par et pour” (by and for) French-speaking institutions and communities approach to designing and delivering integrated services and supports is an essential element for ensuring an inclusive and welcoming community.<sup>158</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Availability of French immigrant-serving agencies with a variety of services – in person and/or online (e.g., needs assessment, information and orientation, employment-related services)
- Availability of reliable information about French immigrant-serving organizations in the community, the services they provide, and how to access them



- Level of knowledge of French immigrant-serving agencies in the community, the services they provide, and how to access them
- Evidence of effectiveness of French immigrant-serving agencies in meeting French-speaking immigrants' needs
- Availability of specialized services by French agencies to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Availability of reliable information about specialized services by French agencies to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups
- Evidence of effectiveness of specialized services by French agencies in meeting the needs of multi-barriered groups
- Availability of supports that facilitate the use of French immigrant services (e.g., childcare, transportation, flexible service delivery options and timing)
- Perceptions of connections (formal and informal) between recent French-speaking immigrants, the more established French-speaking immigrant community, and the French-speaking non-immigrant community
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the delivery and quality of services for French-speaking immigrants
  - the delivery and quality of specialized services for multi-barriered French-speaking immigrants
  - interpersonal treatment from agency staff (e.g., courtesy and respect, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)
  - connections (formal and informal) between recent French-speaking immigrants, the more established French-speaking immigrant community, and the French-speaking non-immigrant community

## Immigrant-Responsive Municipal Features and Services

Evidence suggests that municipalities play an important role in attracting and retaining immigrants.<sup>159, 160, 161</sup> The more prepared municipalities are to meet the needs of immigrants, especially those who face multiple barriers to navigating the Canadian landscape, the higher the likelihood of attracting and retaining them.<sup>162, 163, 164, 165</sup> This is particularly challenging for small and rural centres where municipal administrations historically faced more difficulty in balancing the demands of immigrants and the receiving community.<sup>166, 167</sup> In addition, reports on the evaluation of settlement services and supports have demonstrated that the needs of immigrants and immigrant groups may change as they become established in a community.<sup>168, 169, 170, 171</sup> Municipalities must therefore continually assess, evaluate, and adapt their immigrant-related features and services in order to address the needs of their unique communities.<sup>172, 173</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Availability of features and services sensitive to the needs of immigrants – in person and online (e.g., information available in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals, information available in different formats, services specifically for immigrants)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals on municipal services and how to access them
- Presence of structures, measures, regulations, programs, and services that consider the needs and specificities of immigrants, including French-speaking immigrants
- Level of knowledge of municipal services and how to access them
- Rate of use of municipal services
- Perceptions of the effectiveness of services (e.g., easy to access, available, meet their needs)
- Evidence of effectiveness of services in supporting immigrants' settlement and integration
- Evidence of intercultural competence among municipal employees
- Municipal staff's perception that they are able to meet immigrants' needs
- Evidence of positive messaging about immigrants and their contributions to the community
- Evidence of effectiveness of positive messaging about immigrants and their contributions to the community
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the delivery and quality of services
  - interpersonal treatment from municipal staff (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)
  - municipal portrayals of immigrants

## **Cluster C**

### **Coordination and Collaboration Among Community Organizations and Different Levels of Government Working Toward Welcoming Communities**

Coordination and collaboration among community organizations and different levels of government involved in immigrant settlement and integration is an important characteristic of a welcoming community for several reasons.<sup>174, 175, 176, 177, 178</sup> First, coordination and collaboration promote the integration of actors invested in immigration and immigrant issues across sectors (e.g., settlement services, government, researchers, religious and ethnocultural organizations, health, and education).<sup>179, 180, 181, 182</sup> A joint approach heightens actors' awareness of the community's strengths and gaps in meeting immigrants' needs and may allow for innovative solutions to address shortcomings together, while avoiding duplication.<sup>183, 184, 185, 186, 187</sup> Second, coordination and collaboration strengthen the exchange of information between interested parties and minimize competition for funding and resources as actors coordinate their efforts and leverage joint assets and resources in pursuit of common goals (e.g., joint applications for funding; integrated process of assessments and referrals).<sup>188, 189</sup> Third, the participation of a range of actors in the decision-making process may trigger new and unexpected partnerships among different levels of government and community organizations.<sup>190, 191, 192, 193, 194</sup> Thus, coordination and collaboration are critical because they ensure that community organizations and different levels of government work together and optimize the use of their resources and assets to ensure that immigrants receive the supports they require to successfully integrate into Canadian society.<sup>195</sup>

#### **Key Indicators**

- Rate of referrals among organizations serving immigrants within a community
- Level of service duplication among organizations serving immigrants within a community
- Availability of mechanisms for consultation and exchange of information among organizations serving immigrants (organizations providing both direct and indirect services), and with mainstream organizations and all levels of government
- Perceptions of organizations serving immigrants regarding the availability and accessibility of opportunities to form and join collaborative arrangements at the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels
- Rate of participation of organizations serving immigrants in consultation initiatives at the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels

- Level of representation of organizations serving immigrants in consultation initiatives (e.g., availability of seats for these organizations) at the local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national levels
- Rate of participation of organizations serving immigrants in collaborative decision-making initiatives (including local, regional, provincial/territorial, and national collaborative initiatives/partnerships/projects/programs)
- Evidence of effectiveness of coordinated collaborative initiatives (e.g., sharing of financial/technological resources, sharing knowledge, more effective services)
- Perceptions of organizations serving immigrants regarding inter-/intra-sectoral competition over funding and resources
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the rate of referrals among organizations serving immigrants
  - mechanisms for consultation and collaboration
  - participation and representation in consultations and collaborations
  - coordination and collaboration initiatives

## Equitable Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood characteristics play a fundamental role in making immigrants feel welcome in their new communities.<sup>196, 197</sup> Choosing one's neighbourhood goes beyond finding affordable housing, transportation, and schools.<sup>198, 199</sup> Evidence suggests that immigrants are increasingly concerned about quality of life, which includes proximity to key services and facilities, and safe neighbourhoods that are well maintained.<sup>200, 201, 202</sup> Having services and facilities in or close to their neighbourhood is especially important for single mothers, who lack the time and mobility to search for services outside their neighbourhood.<sup>203</sup>

Before arriving in a community, a major concern among immigrants is finding a place to live near their workplace, schools, transportation, and health care.<sup>204, 205</sup> As they acclimatize to their new environment, immigrants look for additional services and features nearby, such as playgrounds, libraries, and grocery stores.<sup>206, 207, 208</sup> Providing immigrants with these amenities and services in their neighbourhoods can be challenging.<sup>209, 210</sup> Nonetheless, communities need to ensure that neighbourhoods in which large numbers of immigrants settle are safe and have the features, amenities, and services to support immigrants' quality of life and integration. Indeed, equitable neighbourhoods have a powerful influence on immigrants' decision to remain in the community.

### Key Indicators

- Evidence of neighbourhood safety
  - Crime rates
  - Injury rates
  - Evidence of safety infrastructure (e.g., bike lanes, lighting)
  - Level of satisfaction with:
    - sense of safety in one's neighbourhood
    - safety infrastructure in one's neighbourhood
- Evidence of environmental justice
  - Rates of biological and chemical hazards
  - Availability of and access to clean water
  - Rates of neighbourhood maintenance (e.g., snow removal, street cleaning)
  - Level of satisfaction with
    - environmental safety
    - neighbourhood maintenance
- Evidence of food security
  - Food desert rates
  - Level of satisfaction with:

- availability and access to food in or close to the neighbourhood
  - availability of culturally appropriate and nutritious food in or close to the neighbourhood
- Evidence of neighbourhood public facilities and community organizations
  - Availability of public facilities in or close to the neighbourhood (e.g., public library, recreation centre, playground)
  - Evidence of public facilities implementing inclusive and accommodating practices that consider the needs and specificities of diverse immigrants
  - Evidence of infrastructure that promotes accessibility (e.g., sidewalk ramps, parks with accessible equipment for children with disabilities)
  - Availability of community-based organizations close to the neighbourhood (e.g., family support services, childcare, places of worship)
  - Evidence of community-based organizations implementing inclusive and accommodating practices that consider the needs and specificities of diverse immigrants
  - Level of satisfaction with:
    - the availability and quality of public facilities in or close to the neighbourhood
    - the availability and quality of community-based organizations in or close to the neighbourhood
    - infrastructure that promotes accessibility

## Opportunities to Form and Join Social and Community Networks

Evidence suggests a strong positive relationship between opportunities to form and join social and community networks and individuals' sense of belonging to a community.<sup>211, 212, 213</sup> Though they may overlap, the difference between social and community networks pertains to the nature of the ties that hold them together. Social networks are formed through interpersonal relationships, such as kinship and friendship, whereas community networks derive from a common interest, geographical location, occupation or profession, and/or hobby.<sup>214, 215</sup>

The existence of networks, along with the prospect of building them, is instrumental in immigrants' decisions to move or stay in a community. This is true for both large and small cities and towns.<sup>216, 217, 218, 219</sup> Social and community networks can be informal or formal. Informal networks help immigrants learn about their new community and establish friendships through shared activities, such as Neighbour Day and community gardens.<sup>220, 221, 222, 223</sup> Formal networks are instrumental in forging partnerships between immigrants and the receiving community in terms of financial support, job searches and referrals, and establishing businesses.<sup>224, 225</sup> Social and community networks are thus important determinants of well-being and economic integration, influencing one's mental health, health behaviour, and the ability to access supports and services.<sup>226, 227</sup> For these reasons, social and community networks are a crucial characteristic of a welcoming community.

### Key Indicators

- Rate of participation in:
  - neighbourhood activities (e.g., Neighbour Day, community gardens)
  - other local events and activities
  - local online community groups
  - local events and activities pertaining to immigrants', including French-speaking immigrants', diverse racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
- Perceptions of intercultural understanding between immigrants and members of the receiving community (from the perspective of immigrants and members of the receiving community)
- Perceptions of intercultural understanding between French-speaking immigrants and French-speaking members of the receiving community (from the perspective of immigrants and members of the receiving community)
- Perceptions of connections (informal and formal) among recent immigrants, more established immigrants, and non-immigrants (from the perspective of immigrants and non-immigrants)

- Perceptions of connections (informal and formal) among recent French-speaking immigrants, more established French-speaking immigrants, and French-speaking non-immigrants (from the perspective of immigrants and non-immigrants)
- Evidence of sense of belonging to local community
- Evidence of sense of inclusion within the local community
- Evidence of sense of social isolation
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the availability and quality of neighbourhood activities, other local events and activities, and online community groups
  - the availability, quality, and openness of social and community networks, including immigrant networks
  - intercultural understanding in the community
  - connections between immigrants and members of the receiving community
  - connections between French-speaking immigrants and French-speaking members of the receiving community



## Immigrant-Responsive Police Services and Justice System

Immigrant-responsive police services and justice system are central characteristics of a welcoming community.<sup>228, 229, 230</sup> Evidence suggests that a lack of knowledge about the police and justice system in Canada, together with language and cultural barriers, are main reasons why immigrants fear police and the justice system.<sup>231, 232, 233</sup> Immigrants have reported difficulty understanding police services, including how to use 911 emergency services, how to report a crime, and how to identify financial scams, identity theft, and internet crimes.<sup>234, 235</sup> Thus, immigrant-responsive police services, of which immigrants have knowledge and which immigrants have support to access, promote increased and more appropriate use of police services.<sup>236, 237</sup>

Lack of familiarity with the justice system in Canada is another challenge for immigrants, especially when they need to access legal services.<sup>238, 239</sup> Once again, knowledge of legal services available to them and supports to access these services are likely to lead to a more immigrant-responsive justice system.<sup>240</sup>

In both cases, immigrant-responsive services also require that staff and professionals in these sectors are sensitive to the needs of immigrants and culturally responsive in their interactions with immigrants.<sup>241, 242, 243</sup> In this way, immigrant-responsive police services and the justice system are understood, valued, and used by immigrants where needed.

### Key Indicators

#### *Police Services*

- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about police services in the community and how to access them
- Perceptions of the police, including:
  - trust in the police
  - level of knowledge/understanding of the role of the police in Canada
  - confidence in the police
  - comfort in contacting the police
- Rate and quality of police services across different neighbourhoods, including those with a high proportion of immigrants, and across different immigrant groups (e.g., call response times, police stop rates, excessive use of force, police homicide)
- Availability of supports that facilitate utilization of police services (e.g., interpreters, translation)
- Police officers' perceptions that they are able to effectively serve immigrant communities
- Rate of immigrant involvement in police work, including volunteer work

- Evidence of police efforts to build trust and goodwill among immigrants from diverse racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds
- Evidence that police services are delivered in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive manner
- Evidence of intercultural competence among police
- Evidence of racism and discrimination by the police
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - police services
  - information about police services in the community and how to access them
  - the availability, quality, and openness of police support services
  - interpersonal treatment from police (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)

### *Justice System*

- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and top languages of new arrivals about the justice system and how to access it
- Level of knowledge/understanding of the justice system, including rights and responsibilities in Canada, Canadian law, and the legal system
- Evidence of positive perceptions of the justice system, including trust in the legal system
- Evidence of intercultural competence among legal/judicial staff and professionals
- Evidence that legal services are delivered in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive manner
- Affordability of judicial/legal services
- Rates of sentencing
- Rates of legal processes (claims, disputes, hearings)
- Rate of immigrants involved in judicial professions
- Availability of supports that facilitate use of legal and court representation (e.g., referral services, legal aid, translation, and interpretation)
- Perceptions of availability and appropriateness of legal/judicial services
- Court and legal representatives' perceptions that they are able to effectively serve immigrant communities
- Evidence of racism and discrimination within the justice system, including by legal/judicial staff and professionals
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the accessibility and quality of legal services
  - information about legal services in the community and how to access them

- the availability, quality, and openness of legal support services
- interpersonal treatment when navigating the justice system, including by staff and professionals (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)

## Access to Inclusive Public Spaces, Facilities, and Programs

Public spaces, facilities, and programs are by definition open and accessible to all community members.<sup>244</sup> They include: 1) indoor and outdoor public spaces, such as government buildings, libraries, community centres, playgrounds, green spaces, town squares, hiking trails, and beaches, 2) public recreation facilities, such as municipal aquatic and recreation centres, arenas, arts centres, golf courses, leisure centres, skateparks, and tennis courts, and 3) public programs such as festivals and registered recreation, arts, and library programs for children, youth, and seniors.

The use of public spaces, facilities, and programs by immigrants is important because they provide opportunities for intercultural exchange and the formation of social connections that can ease integration into the community.<sup>245, 246</sup> This may be particularly important for youth, as use of public facilities to participate in recreational activities fosters positive social and physical development, as well as identification with peer groups.<sup>247, 248, 249</sup> The use of public spaces and facilities has been increasingly associated with well-being and individuals' sense of belonging. This is especially the case in small and rural communities where the availability of inclusive public spaces and facilities (e.g., recreation facilities) is an important asset for attracting and retaining immigrants.<sup>250, 251, 252, 253</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Availability of inclusive public spaces, facilities, and programs (e.g., culturally appropriate public spaces and facilities, diverse calendar of activities/modalities, programs and facilities for immigrants), including for multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about public spaces, facilities, and programs (general programs and programs for multi-barriered groups)
- Level of knowledge of public spaces, facilities, and programs in the local community (general programs and programs for multi-barriered groups)
- Rate of usage of public spaces, facilities, and programs by immigrants (including immigrants from multi-barriered groups)
- Evidence of sense of inclusion in public spaces, facilities, and programs (including among immigrants from multi-barriered groups)
- Evidence of intercultural competence and understanding of immigrants' needs (including immigrants from multi-barriered groups) among administrators and staff of public spaces, facilities, and programs

- Level of satisfaction with:
  - the availability and quality of public spaces, facilities, and programs, including for multi-barriered groups
  - information about public spaces, facilities, and programs, including for multi-barriered immigrants
  - interpersonal treatment from administrators and staff of public spaces, facilities, and programs (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)
  - interpersonal treatment from other members of the public while using public spaces, facilities, and programs

## Positive Indigenous-Immigrant Relations and Understanding

Until recently, immigrants received little information about Indigenous peoples upon arrival in Canada and often had little knowledge of Indigenous history, relations with settler Canadians, and immigrants' responsibilities as new settlers.<sup>254</sup> Similarly, there were few opportunities for immigrants and Indigenous peoples to come together and learn about one another's histories and cultures. Misunderstandings and stereotypes are known to result from such situations.<sup>255, 256, 257</sup>

This has started to change, particularly with the release of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada in 2015.<sup>258</sup> The report specifically emphasizes the need to present immigrants to Canada with "a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools," and to recognize the importance of Indigenous peoples' role in decision-making surrounding issues that might affect them, which we would argue includes immigration and immigrant integration.<sup>259, 260</sup> In recognition of these recommendations and the potential for immigrants and Indigenous peoples to come together for increased mutual understanding and common cause, positive Indigenous-immigrant relations and understanding must be considered an important characteristic of a welcoming community.<sup>261</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Evidence of positive mutual attitudes between immigrants and Indigenous peoples in the community
- Rate of discrimination and conflict between immigrants and Indigenous peoples in the community
- Availability of reliable information for immigrants in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about Indigenous peoples' history, languages, knowledge, cultures, traditional practices, contributions, and rights in Canada
- Level of immigrants' knowledge of and respect for Indigenous peoples' history, knowledge, languages, cultures, traditional practices, contributions, and rights in Canada
- Evidence of safe spaces for intercultural understanding between immigrants and Indigenous peoples (e.g., workshops and meetings to discuss and work on issues of common interest)
- Evidence of Indigenous peoples' role in decision-making and activities to welcome immigrants to the community
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - information for immigrants about Indigenous people's history, languages, knowledge, cultures, traditional practices, contributions, and rights in Canada

- safe spaces for intercultural understanding between immigrants and Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous peoples' involvement with immigrants (from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and immigrants)
- immigrants' knowledge about and involvement with Indigenous peoples (from the perspective of immigrants and Indigenous peoples)

## Access to Diverse Religious and Ethnocultural Organizations

Through formal and informal programming and services, religious/faith-based and ethnocultural organizations have and continue to play a vital role in creating welcoming communities.<sup>262, 263, 264, 265, 266</sup> As immigrants grow Canada's ethnocultural and religious diversity, these organizations have become increasingly important in making them feel at home.<sup>267, 268</sup> Religious and ethnocultural organizations provide immigrants with the opportunity to build bridges with the receiving community and increase their sense of inclusion and participation in community life.<sup>269, 270, 271</sup> The availability of cultural and religious amenities (e.g., shops, restaurants, social clubs/associations, recreational activities, language schools, places of worship) have also been shown to influence immigrants' attraction to and retention in communities.<sup>272, 273</sup> More than ever, the presence of religious and ethnocultural organizations should be considered when describing the characteristics of a welcoming community.

### Key Indicators

- Availability and accessibility of diverse religious and ethnocultural organizations
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about religious and ethnocultural organizations in the community, the services/programming they provide, and how to access them
- Level of knowledge of religious and ethnocultural organizations in the community, the services/programming they provide, and how to access them
- Availability and accessibility of religious and ethnocultural services and amenities in the community (e.g., shops, restaurants, social clubs/associations, recreational activities, language schools, places of worship)
- Availability of information in both official languages and top languages of new arrivals about religious and ethnocultural services and amenities in the community
- Level of knowledge of religious and ethnocultural services and amenities in the community
- Level of involvement in local religious and ethnocultural communities
- Evidence of sense of attachment to local religious and ethnocultural communities
- Evidence of social connections and support between recent immigrants and co-ethnic and co-religionist immigrants with longer residence as well as co-ethnic and co-religionist non-immigrants
- Availability and accessibility of information, programs, and services to assist with immigrant settlement and welcoming offered through religious and ethnocultural organizations in both official languages and top languages of new arrivals
- Evidence of effectiveness of information, programs, and services to assist with immigrant settlement and welcoming offered through religious and ethnocultural organizations



- Availability of specialized services and supports to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups within religious and ethnocultural communities (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)
- Evidence of effectiveness of specialized services and supports to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups within religious and ethnocultural communities
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - information, programs, and services to assist with immigrant settlement and welcoming offered through religious and ethnocultural organizations
  - specialized services and supports to meet the needs of multi-barriered groups within religious and ethnocultural communities
  - information about religious and ethnocultural organizations in the community
  - interpersonal treatment by diverse religious and ethnocultural organizations, including by non-immigrant members and those in leadership positions (e.g., courtesy and respect, patience with language/communication barriers if seeking assistance, experiences of interpersonal discrimination)

## Civic and Political Participation Opportunities

Civic and political participation can take many forms. Participation may involve becoming a citizen, being actively involved in electoral processes, volunteering in community organizations, or taking up leadership positions in the community.<sup>274, 275</sup> Evidence suggests that active civic and political participation raises the likelihood of immigrant retention, in part because participation fosters feelings of inclusion.<sup>276, 277</sup> However, immigrants need support to learn about Canada's political and civic landscape.<sup>278, 279</sup> This is particularly the case for those arriving from countries with different civic and political participation expectations.<sup>280</sup> By providing support, communities can help immigrants navigate their rights and responsibilities in Canada, and effectively take part in the decision-making process of issues that affect them.<sup>281, 282</sup> As a result, immigrants become empowered citizens with a legitimate voice in civic and democratic life.<sup>283</sup>

### Key Indicators

- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about civic and political participation opportunities
- Level of knowledge of civic and political participation opportunities
- Rate of citizenship acquisition
- Rate of participation in political processes (e.g., attend council meetings, attend candidate/voting information sessions, actively support candidates)
- Voter registration rates in local, provincial, and federal elections
- Level of political representation at all levels of government
- Rate of participation in community organizations, clubs, and social service organizations
- Rate of volunteering in immigrant-specific and general service agencies
- Rate of participation in political activism (e.g., protests, demonstrations, petitioning elected officials, etc.)
- Percentage of immigrants in leadership positions and on boards in community organizations
- Evidence that opportunities for civic and political participation are made available in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive manner, including for French-speaking immigrants
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - services to support citizenship
  - political participation opportunities
  - civic participation opportunities
  - immigrant representativeness in community organizations
  - the openness of community organizations, clubs, and social service organizations

- opportunities for leadership positions and positions on boards of community organizations

## Equitable Media Coverage, Representation, and Content

“Media” is best described as a medium where information is widely shared and communicated, such as through radio, television, newspaper, and internet sources.<sup>284</sup> Media is used for the purpose of both disseminating and exchanging information. Mass media’s impact on immigrants rests on its ability to: (1) provide immigrants with critical information about settlement and the receiving community more broadly, (2) influence perceptions of immigrants and immigration among members of the receiving community, and (3) act as a tool that immigrants can use to gauge society’s perceptions of immigrants (i.e., an indicator of how welcoming a community is).<sup>285, 286</sup>

Evidence suggests that equitable media is a key factor that influences immigrants’ sense of inclusion by: (1) helping to overcome language barriers through providing content in languages commonly spoken by immigrants; (2) including content produced by immigrants, increasing the representation of immigrants within media channels; (3) dedicating programming to issues of interest to immigrants; and (4) most importantly, disseminating fair and positive messaging about immigrants and their socio-cultural, civic-political, and economic contributions to the local community.<sup>287, 288, 289</sup> For this reason, equitable media coverage, representation, and content is an important characteristic of a welcoming community.

### Key Indicators

- Availability of local media in languages commonly spoken by immigrants (in addition to both official languages)
- Rate of local media coverage of issues related to immigration, immigrants, and racial, religious, and cultural diversity
- Rate of immigrants’ involvement in local media production
- Tone of local media coverage of issues related to immigration, immigrants, and racial, religious, and cultural diversity
- Evidence of bias, racism, and negative stereotyping in the local media (e.g., use of terms that reinforce negative sentiments about immigration and immigrants)
- Level of satisfaction with local media coverage, representation, and content relating to immigrants and immigration

## Accompanying Materials

<http://p2pcanada.ca/library/measuring-welcoming-communities-a-toolkit-for-communities-and-those-who-support-them/>

### Presentation

- This presentation deck can be used for interested parties/community engagement forums at the start of a measurement process
- It provides an overview of the purpose and procedure for measurement, and walks the audience through the 3 tools described below for assessing the extent to which a community is welcoming
- Prior to the presentation, the presenter(s) should read the full Toolkit so that they are able to elaborate on key points and answer questions
- The Toolkit can also be distributed to participants in advance of a forum

### Tool 1: Environmental Scan

- Tool 1 is designed to help identify features of your community that may impact your approach to creating and promoting a welcoming community
- By working through the 12 questions collectively, a common base for thinking about your community will be established

### Tool 2: Characteristics Ranking Exercise

- Tool 2 is designed to help decide on priority characteristics for making your community more welcoming
- Thinking about the unique features of your community identified using Tool 1, rank the 19 characteristics of a welcoming community from 1 (most important) to 19 (least important) in terms of their importance for your community
- This exercise can be done individually (with an average across participants then calculated) or collectively (if a consensus-driven approach is preferred)

### Tool 3: Choosing Comparators and Indicators

- Tool 3 is designed to help select comparisons to be made and indicators to be used to measure the extent to which your community is welcoming
- Based on the purpose of the assessment and the needs of your community, check off the comparison(s) to current immigrants in your community that should be made at this time

- For each priority characteristic identified in Tool 2, check off those indicators that are most relevant and feasible for this assessment. It is recommended that multiple indicators be used for each characteristic, with a mix of objective and subjective indicators for each

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