

Toronto East Quadrant Newcomer Settlement Strategy

2017 - 2020



Toronto East Quadrant
Local Immigration Partnership
Working Together for a Diverse & Inclusive Community

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Background

In spring and summer 2017 the Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQ LIP) embarked on a process to develop a renewed Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy to guide the work of the partnership from 2017 – 2020. This document represents the outcomes of this process and outlines the priorities and direction of the new Settlement Strategy.

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) are the mechanism through which Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) supports the development of local partnerships and community-based planning around the needs of newcomers. Through their work LIPs support the development of self-sustaining multi-sectoral partnerships that address and mitigate newcomers' challenges and barriers to settlement and integration.

LIPs seek to engage, on a local level, various community stakeholders in the partnership development process including service provider organizations, employers, school boards, boards of trade, levels of government, professional associations, cultural groups, faith-based organizations and the community services sectors.

Objectives of Local Immigration Partnerships

- Support coordination and collaboration in planning and delivery of services for newcomers
- Provide a framework for development and implementation of sustainable local and regional solutions for the successful integration of newcomers
- Strengthen local capacity to integrate newcomers and support welcoming communities
- Achieve improved newcomer outcomes as indicated by increased economic, social, political, and civic participation by newcomers.

About the TEQ LIP

The Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQ LIP) was established in 2012 by a consortium of four organizations: Catholic Crosscultural Services (lead agency), ACCES Employment, Agincourt Community Services, and Warden Woods Community Centre.

TEQ LIP supports service planning and coordination around the needs of newcomers locally in Scarborough and works in close collaboration with other Toronto LIPs and the Toronto Newcomer Office to address city-wide issues.

TEQ LIP Vision

Organizations and stakeholders across Scarborough are working together to build strong, inclusive and welcoming communities supporting newcomers' settlement success by fostering collaboration, partnerships and equitable participation of all members.

TEQ LIP Mandate

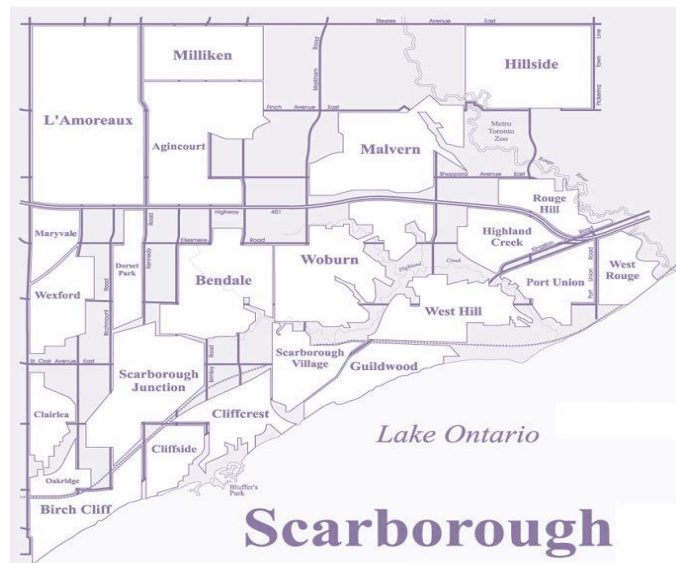
To enhance the capacity of service providers to more effectively meet the current and emerging needs of newcomers in Scarborough by supporting an integrated and collaborative approach to efficient service delivery.

Community Context

TEQ LIP covers the geographic area of Scarborough, a suburb of Toronto, from Victoria Park Avenue eastwards to the Scarborough-Pickering Townline and from Steeles Avenue East southwards to Lake Ontario. As of the 2016 Census Scarborough has a population of 631,884 residents. In the past five years Scarborough's population grew by 1%, at a markedly slower pace than the average population growth of the City of Toronto, which is 4.46%.

Toronto continues to attract a large portion of immigrants to Canada. In 2015 30 % of all immigrants to Canada chose to settle in Toronto¹. The suburb of Scarborough is a popular gateway community for newcomers to Toronto, largely due to its lower-cost housing compared to other parts of Toronto and its diverse communities. The 2011 Census revealed that 59 % of Scarborough's population was born outside of Canada, 18.9% of whom were recent immigrants². Main source countries between 2001 and 2011 included China, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh. Most recently, Scarborough has seen an increase in newcomers from Syria. Since November 2015 nearly 6,000 Syrian newcomers were admitted to Toronto, with an estimated 40 % of government-assisted Syrian refugees settling in Scarborough.

As Toronto's easternmost suburb, Scarborough faces a number of challenges that impact newcomer settlement and service delivery, including a poor public transit infrastructure and lower density of service providers as compared to downtown Toronto. The average household income in Scarborough is lower than that of the City of Toronto, and Scarborough includes eight of 31 City of Toronto Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (Crescent Town, Ionview, Eglinton East, Kennedy Park, Scarborough Village, Woburn, Morningside and West Hill).



¹ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Facts and Figures 2015

² New data from the 2016 Census is not yet available.

Developing the Toronto East Quadrant Newcomer Settlement Strategy 2017 - 2020

For the past five years TEQ LIP implemented the Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy developed in 2012 to guide the work of the project. The 2012 strategy focused on five strategic priority areas, including Employment, Education and Training; Health; Housing and Legal Supports; Settlement and Family Supports; and Engagement of Expansion Neighbourhoods. Details of the activities and outcomes achieved in implementing the 2012 strategy are outlined in the TEQ LIP Strategy Implementation Progress Report released in March 2017.³

After five years of implementation it was necessary to renew the focus and strategic priorities for the TEQ LIP for the coming three years. In spring and summer 2017 TEQ LIP underwent a strategic planning process to identify pressing issues and develop a new Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy that will guide TEQ LIP's work from 2017-2020, in alignment with contractual obligations from the funder, IRCC. This document presents the outcomes of the strategic planning process. It builds on the work being done in the previous five years. The strategy represents a modification and continuation of some of the priorities that remain of high importance, and new focus areas that were prioritized by members.

The strategic planning process included a literature review, two consultation surveys with TEQ LIP members and the community, three strategic planning meetings held between May – July 2017 with Partnership Council, Action Group, Steering Committee and Toronto Newcomer Council members, and additional feedback and input from TEQ LIP members and the TEQ LIP Executive Committee. Key strategic focus areas were identified and prioritized over the course of the planning meetings.

TEQ LIP acknowledges that many priorities were discussed in the planning process. Not all of them could be included in the final strategy. To make the strategy achievable and implementable, members prioritized four main strategic directions important to successful newcomer settlement in Scarborough, and where the TEQ LIP partnership can realistically make a difference over the next three years of implementation. Other focus areas and tools used in the strategic planning process can be found in the Addendum to the 2017 – 2020 Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy, available on the TEQ LIP website.

TEQ LIP impact areas

TEQ LIP does not provide direct services to clients, but strives to contribute to better settlement outcomes for newcomers by working on an indirect, system-level through:

- Supporting collaboration and service coordination among service providers and other stakeholders.
- Creating knowledge and building capacity for a responsive service system.
- Facilitating information-sharing and communication.

³ To read the report, go to <http://www.scarboroughlip.com/resources-publications/lip-resource-database>.

Principles of settlement strategy implementation

The following guiding principles are central to the approach TEQ LIP is taking in all aspects of its work in the development and implementation of the Settlement Strategy:

- TEQ LIP addresses newcomer needs on an indirect and system-level by fostering partnerships, collaboration and a seamless, no-wrong door approach to service delivery.
- TEQ LIP members champion, guide and implement the strategy with support from the TEQ LIP team. The strategy includes and acknowledges the collective vision and effort of stakeholders representing diverse areas of expertise.
- All strategic themes and actions are addressed through an equity lens, recognizing different needs and addressing barriers to access and inclusion for various newcomer groups based on factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race and immigration status.
- TEQ LIP ensures meaningful, continuous involvement of newcomers in development and implementation of the settlement strategy and action plan.
- TEQ LIP strives to have the best available information and evidence to support decision-making in our work and activities.
- TEQ LIP is committed to open, transparent communication.
- The settlement strategy 2017 - 2020 is a living document responsive to changes in the environment and emerging needs.

Strategic Priorities

From 2017 - 2020 TEQ LIP will work on the following strategic priorities to contribute to a welcoming community and seamless service system to support newcomers' settlement success in Scarborough. Some of the focus areas and recommendations below are a continuation and expansion of priorities from the Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy developed in 2012. Others are new focus areas identified as high priority in the strategic planning process.

Priority: ACCESS TO CURRENT AND RELEVANT INFORMATION

Objective

Facilitate service providers' and other organizations' access to current and relevant information, enabling them to share it with newcomers and immigrants when they most need it. This includes support of multiple and connected access points to link newcomers to services and information.

Key issues

- Newcomers are often unaware of the range of services available for different groups or find out too late.
- Newcomers have difficulty in navigating information/services due to language barriers, lack of computer skills, not knowing the system etc.
- Service providers need access to current information on services and eligibility.
- Information needs to be tailored to the different types/groups of newcomers.
- Information/coordination among service providers on emerging issues can be improved.

Recommendations

1. Work with service providers to develop protocols/systems to update, learn and inform on key issues affecting newcomers (service coordination/referral system, effective service provision).
2. Collaborate with information portals, knowledge hubs and online resources, including 211, OCASI, Welcome Centres, and other Ontario LIPs, to enhance access to information and address system navigation issues.
3. Explore the possibility to develop and implement a shared data collection system to help provide more timely information on newcomer settlement trends and patterns in Scarborough and find ways to support groups that aren't accessing information and services.
4. Coordinate with LIP partners and other service provider organizations to support knowledge / information-sharing, and creating or sharing tools and resources relevant to newcomer service delivery.
5. Connect service providers with learning and sharing opportunities for effective service delivery and promising practices among service providers (e.g. outreach, cultural accessibility, Positive Spaces, accessibility (AODA), recognizing & responding to intimate partner violence, introduction to mental health etc.).

Desired outcome

Information on newcomer-related programs and services is well coordinated, current, accurate and easy to navigate. Service providers and other stakeholders have access to and share up-to-date and relevant information so newcomers can easily navigate the system and know about the services available near them when they need them.

Priority: WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR NEWCOMERS TO SCARBOROUGH

Objective

Support service providers, faith-based groups, stakeholders and the community in working together to make Scarborough a welcoming place where newcomers feel connected, supported, develop a sense of belonging and actively participate in community and civic life.

Key issues

- Lack of community and civic involvement of newcomers can lead to social isolation, disconnected communities, prejudice.
- Many organizations focus primarily on service delivery; there is a gap on service providers'
 - o Understanding of the importance and benefits of civic awareness and community building for newcomers
 - o Connection with community and resident groups
- Service providers may not have sufficient understanding of cultural backgrounds and civic involvement contexts of newcomers
- Many newcomers engage in their own ethnic community initiatives – opportunities for bridging to broader community initiatives may be needed.
- Civic and community involvement is not the first priority in the settlement process and newcomers often are not aware of how to get involved.

Recommendations

1. Establish a shared definition among TEQ LIP members and stakeholders of what 'Welcoming Community' means and how each stakeholder can contribute.
2. Create more awareness of what is already happening and how to connect with cultural, faith-based and resident groups (e.g. collaboration with TSNS Resident Advisory Groups).
3. Identify and share best practices and benefits of newcomer community and civic involvement and engage faith-based communities, Toronto Newcomer Council and community leaders in this process.
4. Identify where newcomers are engaged and how to create more linkages among ethnic community groups, mainstream organizations and the larger society.

Desired outcome

Organizations and communities in Scarborough are working together to create an environment that helps newcomers to get to know the neighbourhood where they settle, meet others and participate in civic and community activities, leading to stronger participation, greater inclusion and more connected communities.

Priority: NEWCOMERS' PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Objective

Develop a holistic and family-oriented approach to newcomer health that considers the physical and emotional health of individuals, families and communities from a social determinants of health perspective.

Key issues

- Newcomers face challenges navigating the Canadian healthcare system; lack of information and language issues impede proper care.
- Health is not a main priority for newcomers.
- Mental health support and support for newcomers with complex health needs and disabilities continues to be a challenge, incl. availability of services, unfamiliarity, stigma.
- Not enough accessible, culturally appropriate mental health community services are available (e.g. positive parenting, harm reduction, suicide prevention).
- A more holistic and family-oriented approach to newcomer health is needed.
 - There is a need to address family dynamics and the role of men in supporting and promoting healthy relationships (e.g. intimate partner violence; sexual health; gender roles)
 - Impact of social determinants of health (e.g. housing, employment etc.) on newcomer health outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Support capacity building of service providers to deliver a more holistic, family oriented approach (where relevant) to health services which engages vulnerable and marginalized newcomer groups (disabled, LGBTQ+, Francophones, men/women, youth, seniors).
2. Identify needs and work with service providers and other stakeholders (e.g. refugee sponsors) on solutions to better support newcomers with disabilities and complex health needs.
3. Support peer-led training and capacity-building with immigrant resident groups to destigmatize health issues, build resiliency and support healthy communities.
4. Collaborate with network groups (e.g. Network for the Uninsured, Toronto Newcomer Council etc.) to advocate for a systems level approach to newcomer health issues through identifying gaps in equitable access to health care and providing feedback to the three levels of government.
5. Improve collaboration and service coordination by working with grassroots groups, cultural leaders and frontline staff to facilitate health promotion and literacy initiatives within their communities.

Desired outcome

Service providers are working together, equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to best support newcomers in navigating the healthcare system and proactively taking care of their own health. Organizations support and help to promote a healthcare system that is culturally sensitive, connected and facilitates linkages between newcomers and healthcare providers.

Priority: MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Objective

Contribute to successful newcomer employment pathways by serving as a platform to enhance support for newcomer employment and supporting an informed, responsive and connected network of service providers, employers, businesses and stakeholders in Scarborough.

Key issues

- It remains difficult for newcomers to find employment commensurate with experience, incl. difficulty getting foreign credentials recognized (especially in regulated professions) and validating foreign work experience.
- There is a need for a stronger referral system among organizations to better support clients.
- Not enough knowledge of labour market-related needs of various populations (refugees, refugee claimants, landed immigrants, newcomer youth, international students...) available.
- Lack of diversity among sectors for mentorship opportunities for newcomers
- Cultural competency and lack of awareness on issues such as Canadian workplace culture, workers' rights etc. may impede newcomers' success in the workplace.
- Difference in perspective of newcomer vs. employer expectations (e.g. academic – soft skills, life skills).
- There is a need for on-the-job language training.

Recommendations

1. Enhance availability and accessibility of current information and resources on labour market developments and trends of different industry sectors to assist service providers in providing better, targeted services for newcomers. Share identified gaps and barriers with relevant decision-makers.
2. Increase collaboration and information sharing among service providers, business and employment networks to support newcomer employment and training. This includes working towards a system to increase referrals (incl. joint grants/proposals).
3. Identify capacity-building needs of service providers, coordinate and share capacity-building opportunities to better assist different newcomer groups in employment issues.
4. Enhance outreach strategies, communication, marketing of resources and involvement of employers to support newcomers in accessing and retaining meaningful employment (incl. Canadian Experience policy).
5. Work with service providers, employers and stakeholders to support newcomers' access to economic opportunities (entrepreneurship, self-employment etc.).

Desired outcome

Newcomers to Scarborough are supported in their employment-related needs by a responsive, informed and connected network of service providers, employers and other stakeholders. Timely support and information is available to help newcomers better plan their employment pathways, access and succeed in the Canadian labour market.

Putting the strategy into action

This document provides the framework for the work of the Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership from 2017 - 2020. The strategy will be operationalized through a 3-year Action Plan for Implementation that will be developed by the TEQ LIP membership in fall 2017, implemented through annual work plans established by Action Groups, and reviewed annually by the Partnership Council.

TEQ LIP recognizes that a lot of important work is being done across our communities by organizations and networks such as Neighbourhood Improvement Area Planning Tables and many others. TEQ LIP will use an asset-based approach to implementing the strategy, building on what is working well in Scarborough and identifying areas of improvement. TEQ LIP will continue to work closely together with neighbourhood networks and initiatives to strengthen our collective work, maximize resources and work on shared priorities.

Evaluating progress and outcomes

The Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy sets out the framework for TEQ LIP's activities and intended outcomes. TEQ LIP will use an outcome and evaluation-based approach to implementing the strategic plan. This will be achieved by including, in the implementation plan, clear, time-bound measures for tracking progress and impact made towards achieving the objectives set out in the strategy. Measures to track progress and outcomes will be developed by Action Groups as part of the implementation plan development and comprise of both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Based on these measures the TEQ LIP membership will develop an evaluation scorecard to assist in tracking our work and impact.

Action Groups will report on their work to the Partnership Council on an annual basis. The Partnership Council will conduct an annual review of the strategy and implementation plan to guide activities, ensure progress and make adjustments where needed to achieve our objectives.

Addendum to the Toronto East Quadrant Newcomer Settlement Strategy 2017-2020

A great number of key issues and recommendations related to enhancing successful newcomer settlement in Scarborough were identified in the course of the strategic planning process. To keep the strategy manageable and concise, not all of them were included in the final TEQ LIP Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Strategy 2017 – 2020. For those interested, TEQ LIP has produced an addendum that includes information on additional key issues and priorities identified in the strategic planning process that were not included in the final strategy. This information may be of interest to organizations and stakeholders working on some of those areas.

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