

Measuring and Promoting Welcoming Communities: Updated Characteristics and A New Set of Toolkits

Leah Hamilton, Victoria Esses,
Awish Aslam, & Priscila Ribeiro Prado Barros

November 15, 2022

What Is A Welcoming Community?

- A welcoming community has a:
 - Spatial dimension - a physical location in Canada – a town, city, or region – in which newcomers feel valued and their needs are served
 - Discourse dimension - a community has agency and engages in actions that facilitate the integration of newcomers
- A welcoming community attracts and retains newcomers by:
 - Identifying and removing barriers
 - Promoting a sense of belonging
 - Meeting diverse needs
 - Offering services and supports that promote successful economic, social, cultural, and political integration

Why Is Work on Welcoming Communities Important Today?


- Successful integration of immigrants is essential because:
 - 2022-2024 Immigration Levels Plan means that over 430,000 new immigrants are expected to arrive in Canada each year
 - Canada is depending on immigration to facilitate post-COVID recovery
 - Maintaining the vitality of smaller Canadian communities, and of Francophone Minority Communities, often depends on (Francophone) immigrants




Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative

Come make your life in French in Canada a reality.

14 welcoming Francophone communities are doing everything they can to welcome you and help you feel at home in your new community.

Discover what these 14 communities have to offer and find the one that meets your needs!



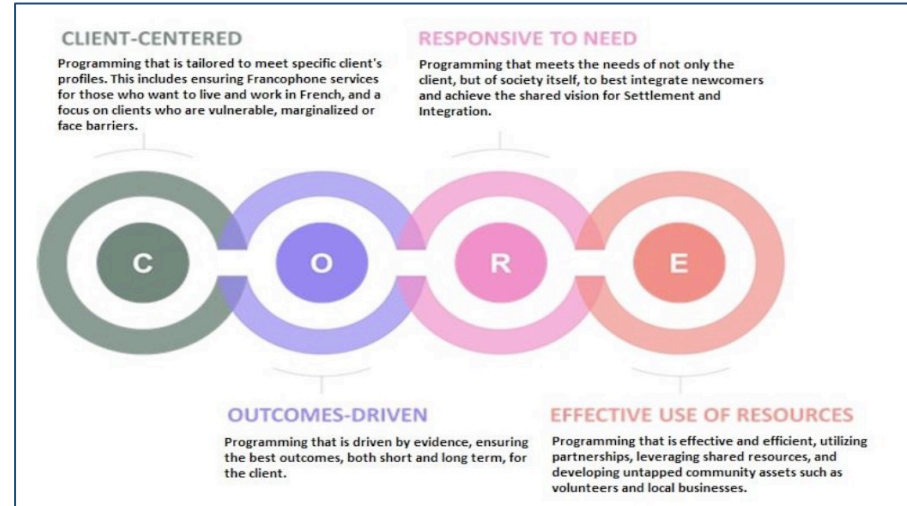
 <p>Évangéline Prince Edward Island</p>	 <p>Clare Nova Scotia</p>	 <p>Haut-Saint-Jean New Brunswick</p>
--	--	--

Why Is Work on Welcoming Communities Important Today?

- Continuing emphasis on outcome measurement, including at the community level

Settlement Outcomes HIGHLIGHTS Report

Summary Findings from IRCC's First
Settlement Outcomes Report 2021



2010

Welcoming Community 1

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Victoria M. Esses, Leah K. Hamilton, Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash, and

Meyer Burstein

Welcoming Communities Initiative

March 2010

This report was prepared for the Integration Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. All correspondence should be addressed to the senior author: Victoria Esses, vesses@uwo.ca, Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario Canada N6A 5C2. Leah Hamilton and Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash contributed equally to this report. We thank Carolyn Camman for her assistance in proofing and formatting.

Funded by:



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

2022-2023





Characteristics of a Welcoming Community



Indicators for Each Characteristic

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

- What characteristics make a community welcoming?
- Characteristics are likely to be mutually reinforcing and may interact in building upon or reducing the impact of each alone
- Importance of each characteristic to a given community will vary somewhat
- Characteristics must take into account the needs of multi-barriered groups (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, LGBTQ+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community: Some Revised From the 2010 Report, Some Brand New

- Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing
- Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities
- Access to Suitable Health Care, **including Mental Health Care**
- Access to Immigrant-Serving Agencies that Meet Immigrants' Needs
- Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Racial, Cultural and Religious Diversity
- Access to Transportation

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community (cont.)

- Educational Opportunities
- **Access to Services and Supports for French-Speaking Immigrants by French Speakers**
- Immigrant-Friendly Municipal Features and Services
- **Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression**
- Coordination and Collaboration Among Community Organizations and Different Levels of Government Working Toward Welcoming Communities
- **Equitable Neighbourhoods**

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community (cont.)

- Opportunities to Form and Join Social and Community Networks
- **Positive Indigenous-Immigrant Relations and Understanding**
- Immigrant-Friendly Police and Justice System
- Access to Diverse Religious and Ethnocultural Organizations
- Civic and Political Participation Opportunities
- Access to Inclusive Public Spaces and Recreation Facilities
- Equitable Media Coverage, Representation, and Content

Your Feedback

- We'd like to come up with a ranking of the characteristics, though as we mentioned earlier, the importance of each characteristic to any given community will vary somewhat
 - While the characteristics are fresh in your minds, please complete this ranking exercise:
 - <https://bit.ly/p2pEN22>
 - <https://bit.ly/p2pFR22>



ENG



FRE

Indicators for the Characteristics

- Essential to examine multiple indicators for each characteristic
 - Some indicators can be measured objectively
 - Some indicators will be based on perceptions
 - Both are important
- Meaningful comparisons are necessary
 - Comparisons to non-immigrants
 - Comparisons to previous waves of immigrants
 - Comparisons among different groups of immigrants, including multi-barriered groups
 - Comparisons between communities
 - Comparisons before and after new initiatives are implemented

Indicators:

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- 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
- Available housing is of adequate quality (e.g., not in need of major repairs or renovations; no infestations)
- Evidence of overcrowded housing (based on age, sex, and number of household members)
- Rate of core housing need (living in an unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable dwelling and not able 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

Indicators:

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- 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

Indicators:

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- Level of satisfaction with:
 - information for immigrants about housing in Canada and tenants' rights and responsibilities
 - current housing situation

Next Steps



- Further consultations with immigrants
- Complete and disseminate the *Measurement Toolkit*
- Provide workshops on the use of the *Measurement Toolkit*

Next Steps



- Develop the *Promoting Welcoming Communities Toolkit*
 - Structures and processes that lead to each characteristic
 - Promising practices for each characteristic
- Disseminate and provide workshops on the use of the *Promoting Welcoming Communities Toolkit*

Questions and Comments about the Project

- Leah Hamilton, lhamilton@mtroyal.ca
- Victoria Esses, vesses@uwo.ca