



Langley Leaders Provide Their Perspective

On November 23rd, 2021, the Langley LIP brought together 19 leaders representing Langley municipal government(s), community agencies and organizations, education, and employers. Their input is an important part of a comprehensive engagement strategy that has also canvassed community service providers and immigrants. The input collected will inform the development of a Settlement Strategic Plan for the City and Township of Langley.

Barriers and Challenges

Highlights from the 2020-21 Langley Immigrant Survey and Focus Groups were shared with this group of leaders, as well as highlights gleaned from the Fall 2021 Langley Settlement Service Providers' Forum. The Leaders responded and cited numerous barriers and challenges faced by immigrants settling in Langley including:

1. Lack of awareness and access to information and services
2. Limited availability and issues related to interpretation and translation
3. Low English language skills which impede access to information and services, education and meaningful jobs, and inhibit participation in local initiatives
4. Lack of understanding of local society, its norms and requirements, and overall Canadian culture and expectations
5. Low digital literacy within in some new immigrant / refugee populations further limiting access to the growing number of services and supports available virtually
6. Lack of adequate local public transit limits access to services, education, and employment opportunities
7. Lack of affordable housing within both the ownership and rental markets
8. Parents not getting information they need because they're not connecting with school
9. Isolation compounded by COVID which has further limited opportunities to network and connect with others
10. Cost of living
11. Lack of visible minorities and newer immigrants in government offices, service centres, boards, committees, etc.
12. Competition amongst service providers result in inadequate referrals and confusion amongst clients
13. Many regional contracts are run out of Surrey and as a result Langley gets under-served
14. Inadequate supports for immigrant seniors
15. Service providers don't always fully understand the needs of immigrants
16. Negative perception / stigma that some immigrants have regarding mental health and mental health services
17. Limited awareness of the receiving community of our newest residents – their contributions and assets, their needs and barriers
18. Difficult or limited access to volunteering; organizations have limited capacity to conduct the outreach and to onboard newcomers

What's working well in Langley

Langley is not a blank slate when it comes to assisting immigrants to settle. In fact, the leadership in attendance pointed to several existing and emerging strengths that signal many positive and evolving supports already in place in the community, these include:

- **Collaboration and strong partnerships** being formed within the sector and with local businesses. Service providers are passionate and work well together, but so do local institutions like the libraries, and consortia like the Children's Committee.
- **The existing and growing service mix** is working to meet the needs of immigrants and are well used – expanded staffing, increased employment programming and the establishment of the Langley LIP are all examples of recent growth in service provision.
- **Growing use of marketing strategies, approaches and use of virtual tools** such as social media and virtual communication tools (WeChat, Zoom, Telegram, etc.) are enhancing our abilities to connect to newcomers.
- **Dedicated organizations and staff members** the settlement sector and within the school district who are working very hard to reach out and serve immigrants in Langley.
- **The development of more inclusive and welcoming public resources and places** – efforts to enhance the welcoming nature of public spaces are being made, e.g., Douglas Park, the opening of T&T, etc.

Priorities for the Langley LIP

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

1. Leveraging community leadership and stakeholders to advocate on immigrant settlement and integration issues
2. Addressing the impact of the pandemic and floods
3. Increasing access to interpreters and translated materials
4. Leveraging the community and its citizenship to support the newest members of community
5. Raising awareness and building understanding to reduce discrimination and racism
6. Supporting Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) to transition to Permanent Residents
7. Enhancing access to information and services for newcomers
8. Tackling the lack of meaningful local employment opportunities for newcomers
9. Increasing opportunities to connect with local workplaces and community, e.g. mentorship and volunteering
10. Enhancing newcomers' digital literacy and access to virtual services
11. Improving Public Transit
12. Increasing English language services for new immigrants especially for specialized populations and new ethno-cultural groups arriving in Langley
13. Dealing with service coordination and competition amongst service providers
14. Supporting the community to heighten our comfort and confidence in understanding the needs of newcomers

About the Langley Local Immigration Partnership

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

In the fall of 2020, the LLIP began a community research and consultation process which included focus groups and a survey of immigrants living in Langley, consultation with community service providers, and a forum with community leaders. The finding and results will be used to inform the development of a three-year Settlement Strategic Plan for Langley. For more information contact **Jody Johnson** at **778 808 6252** or at jody.johnson@shaw.ca