Leveraging Partnerships to Increase Technology Use and Enhance Service Coordination within LIP
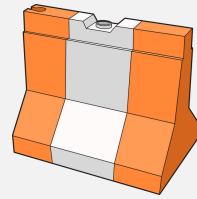
Presenter: Srna Stambuk, TNLIP Manager
JVS Toronto

Who We Are - TNLIP?

The Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership (TNLIP) is a multi-sectoral planning and action table that brings together a wide cross-section of stakeholders to collaboratively identify and address challenges of newcomers settlement and integration in the North Central Region of Toronto.
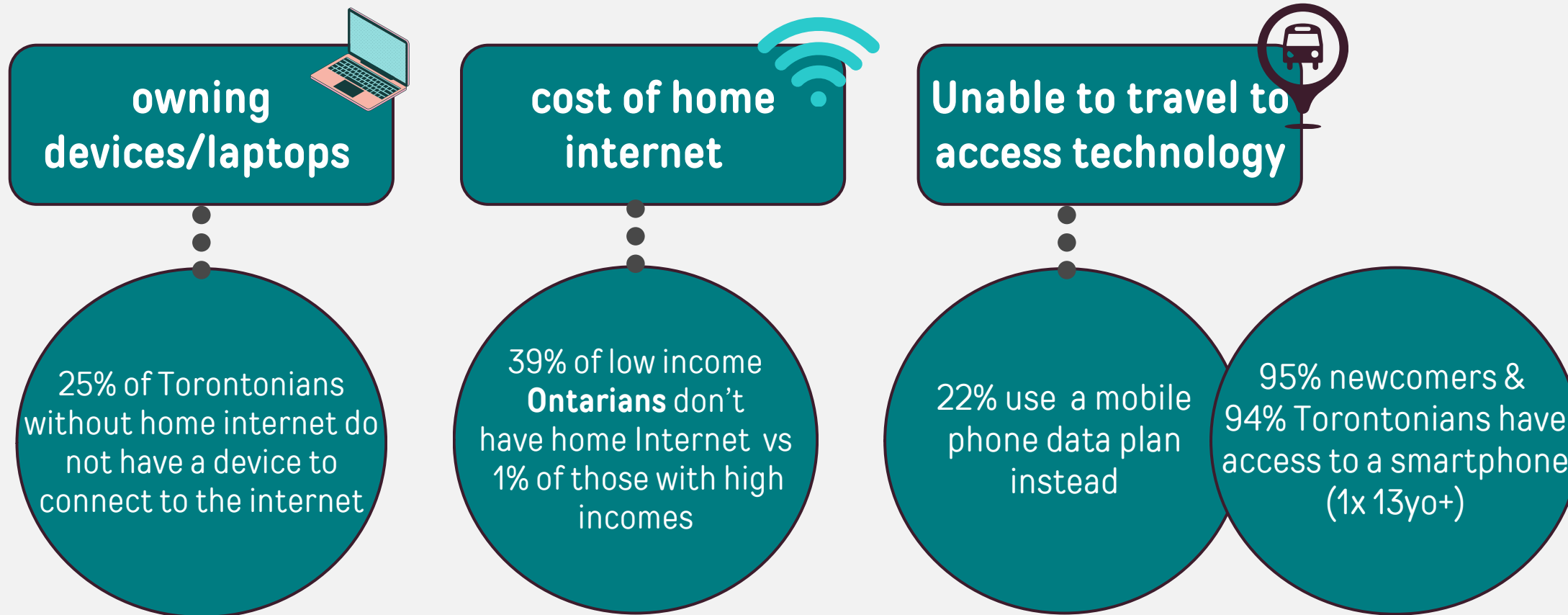
Program Manager

Research & Comm. Coordinator

ELM WG Coordinator

HW WG Coordinator

SL WG Coordinator

Partnership Council of 100 members

The Issue

TORONTO NORTH
Local Immigration
Partnership

34% of **Toronto households** are worried about paying their home internet bills with rates of worry greatest among low-income, newcomer, single parent, Latin American, South Asian, Black and Southeast Asian residents.

Barriers to access to technology among Toronto newcomers:

owning devices/laptops

cost of home internet

Unable to travel to access technology

25% of Torontonians without home internet do not have a device to connect to the internet

39% of low income **Ontarians** don't have home Internet vs 1% of those with high incomes

22% use a mobile phone data plan instead

95% newcomers & 94% Torontonians have access to a smartphone (1x 13yo+)

32% are not aware of free settlement services (IRCC, 2023)

Newcomers prefer to access settlement information online more than any other format

Phone ownership can be a cost-saving alternative for households to access the internet in comparison to incurring costs of an internet subscription in addition to owning the appropriate internet-enabled devices (e.g., computers, laptops, tablets).

The Solution: NewTO Mobile App

"A mobile app that puts the 211 database of community services into the hands of newcomers in Toronto"

TORONTO NORTH
Local Immigration
Partnership

The How: Partnerships

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TNLIP Partnership Council

- Identified the need
- Guided development of app features and content
- Provided app testing and feedback

Newcomer Advisory Council

- Input into app design and function
- App testing and feedback

TNLIP Project Coordinator

TNLIP Team

- Contract management
- Developer relations
- Budget management
- Partner relations
- Strategic direction
- App testing

The Developers

- Requirement gathering
- Full stack code development
- Front end design
- Problem solving with 211
- Debugging
- Google Play Store and Apple Store
- Users, data collection, and reporting

211 Central

- 'Front door' to the complex system of human, social and health services

- The NewTO App uses the 211 application program interface (API) to access the rich data on newcomer focused services

The Data

Employment
Children Services
Food Newcomers
Seniors Care
Classes Transportation
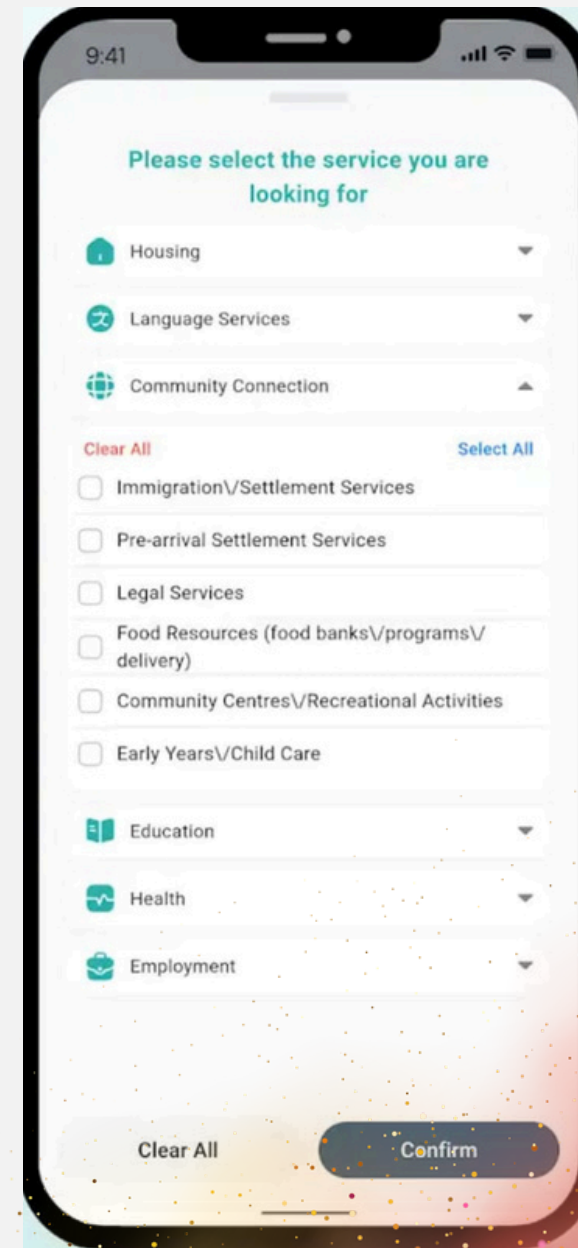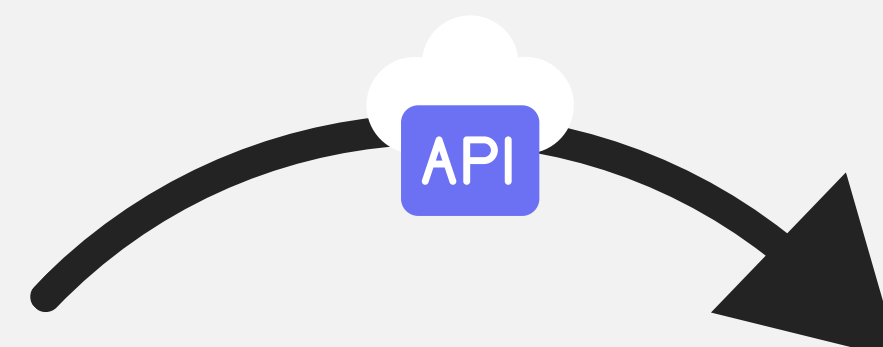Language

2II Central
Serving Toronto and
Durham, Peel and York Regions

Taxonomy Codes

FT-3425.5600
LT-8950
LT-1985
PH-8500
PN-8100.4500-400
PS-8200.2350
RP-1400.8000-260
RP-1400.8000-805
RP-1500.1400-400
TC-5500.4000
TD-1600.3100-400
YK-6500.4050
YS-8500
YT-2400
YX-0300.0125
YX-0300.0185
YZ-4530

data trading agreements

HSIS - Human Service Indexing System
(bilingual Canadian Taxonomy of Human Services)

API

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9:41

Please select the service you are looking for

Housing
Language Services
Community Connection

Clear All   Select All

☐ Immigration\/Settlement Services
☐ Pre-arrival Settlement Services
☐ Legal Services
☐ Food Resources (food banks\/programs\/delivery)
☐ Community Centres\/Recreational Activities
☐ Early Years\/Child Care

Education
Health
Employment

Clear All   Confirm

683 Unique
Taxonomy Codes

6 categories

50 subcategories

2,450 results!

The App

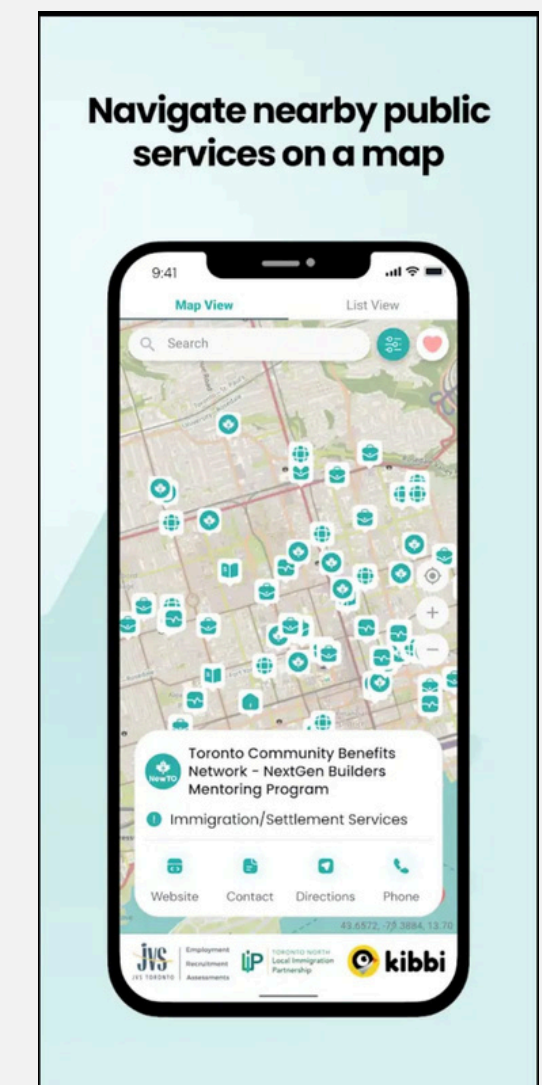*"A mobile app that puts the 211 database of community services into the hands of newcomers in Toronto"*
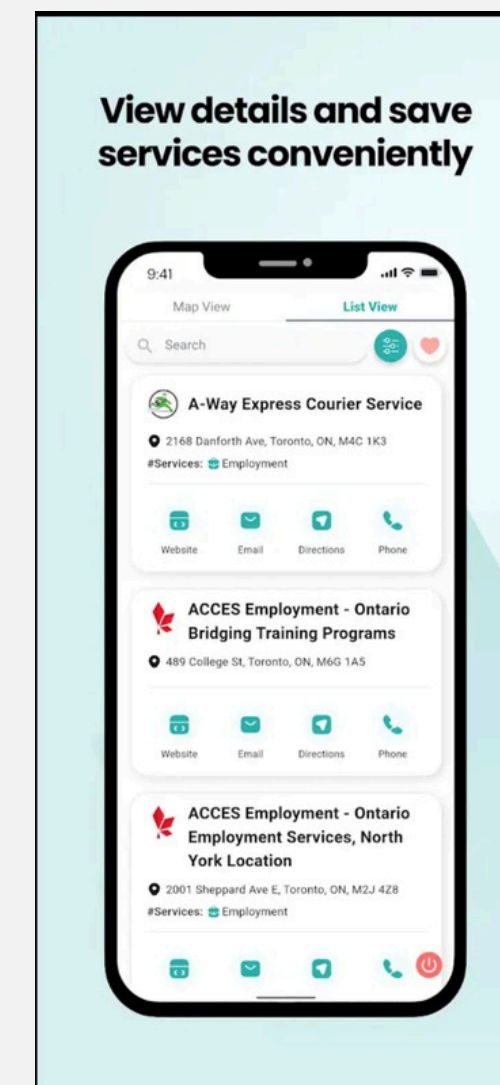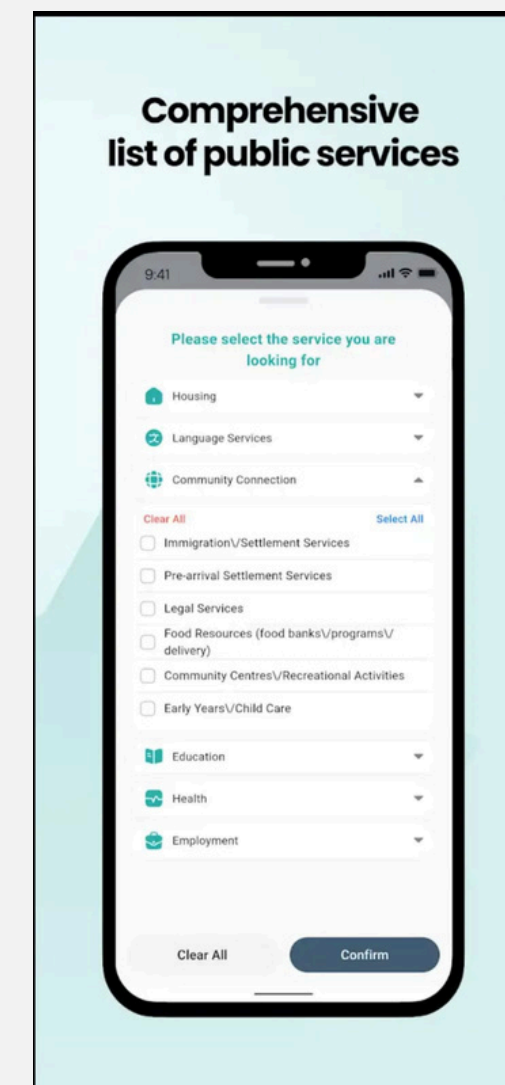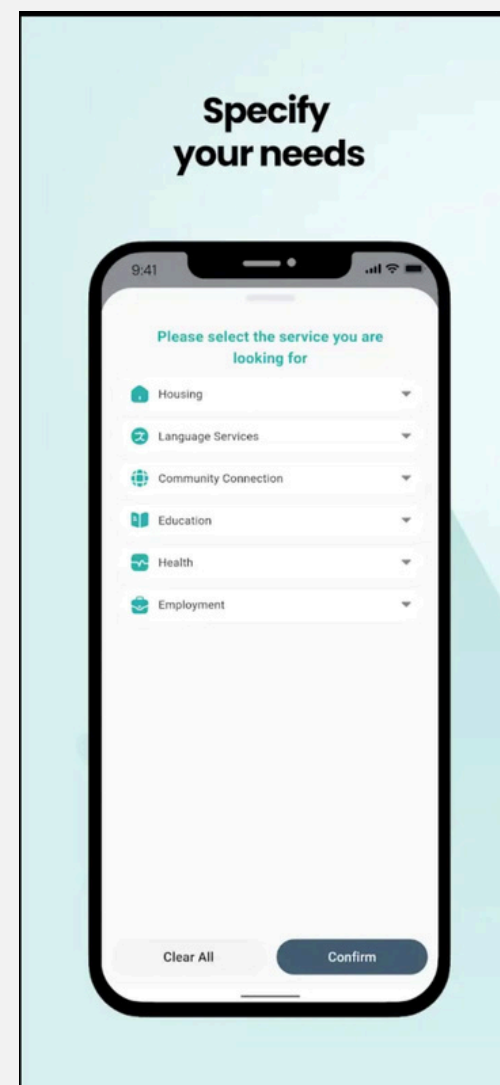
OS: MongoDB, Firebase, Python (Django), openStreetMap

Back End Language: NodeJS, framework: NestJS

App Language: Dart, framework: Flutter, State management: GetX, Structure: MVC

Web Language: ReactJS

Framework: MaterialUI, Redux, GatsbyJS

NewTO App Video

Post Launch

To Do List

Privacy Policies

Build awareness of app

Have and implement a promotion plan

Get users; gather feedback

Get maintenance support

Shop for and secure hosting

Form an advisory group to inform adoption and use of the app

Knowledge transfer

The Impact

Newcomers
- Eliminates barrier to using 211 website
- Provides more categories of services for newcomers
- Quick and easy access on smart phone
- Search across multiple categories - different icons
- Results displayed on a map in relation to users' locations
- Reduction in travel time and costs

Service Users
- Update information on 211 website
- Service coordination with other SPOs in vicinity facilitating better referrals
- Enable delivery of itinerant services (SWIS, Libraries)

TNLIP Team
- Information about immigration status and main needs of app users

Lessons Learned

- Don't collect personal information
- Reality of app development in funded non-profit space
- Importance of business analyst role to collect and translate requirements
- Importance of choosing the right technology partner (understanding non-profit SPOs)
- Importance of documentation and project management of the app development to keep all parties accountable
- Additional challenges posed by staffing changes on developer side and LIP/client side
- Costs can balloon
- Importance of allocating for maintenance and hosting costs
- Post-launch work load and associated costs
- IRCC policy around new app development

Future Potential

- Including (more) grassroots and faith communities

- Natural Language Processing and use of AI to enable keyword vs taxonomy search

  - 211 Canada App API

- Has the app increased use of services?