

Vernon Local Immigration Partnerships Council

Quarterly Activity Report

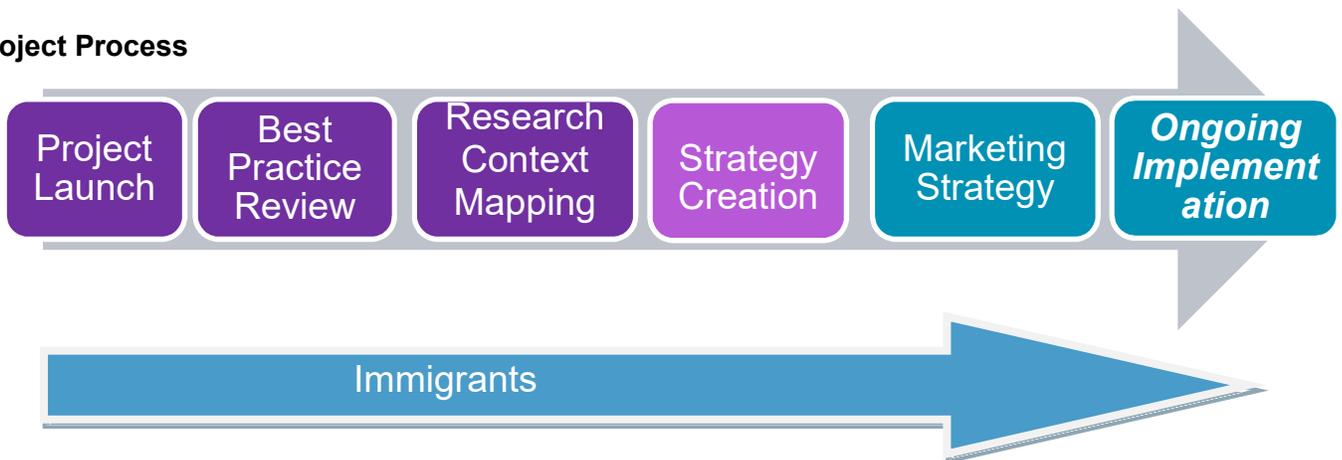
Sept-Dec 2015

A. Project Overview

The goal of this project is to develop an *Immigration and Settlement Strategy* by March 2016 to attract and retain immigrants to Vernon. There is an understanding that immigrants provide important cultural diversity to local communities as well as skills, investment and an entrepreneurial spirit. They can help offset Canada's aging demographic and declining birth rate, and help fuel economic growth.

The Local Immigration Partnerships Council was formed to engage a wide variety of community stakeholders in further developing partnerships and capacity to support the integration of new immigrants. Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan is the project's host agency. Funding has been provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

B. Project Process



C. Quarterly Highlights

1. Draft Immigration & Settlement Strategy: The draft Immigration & Settlement Strategy was circulated and discussed. LIPC members will have additional opportunities for input through a follow up survey.
 - Vision Statement: A strategic vision statement was created based on four key characteristics (**diverse, collaborative, welcoming** and **meaningful opportunities**) LIPC members identified:
Vernon is a diverse and welcoming city where we collaborate to build and share a future of meaningful opportunities.
 - Strategic Priorities: Four strategic priorities have been agreed to:
 - i) *Target and promote immigrant/newcomer engagement in opportunities that enhance economic and investment circumstances locally.*
 - ii) *Ensure Vernon is a welcoming community that supports inclusion and engagement of all newcomers.*
 - iii) *Support newcomers and local citizens at large in their collective efforts to create a healthy and resilient community.*
 - iv) *Promote and foster enhanced newcomer attraction and retention within the Vernon area.*

- Guiding Principles and a list of possible action items, including existing, planned and desired actions are outlined in the draft strategy.
 - Next steps include prioritizing and narrowing down the list of action items.
2. Community Connections Mapping: LIPC members were asked to list all of the professional and personal associations, organizations and other groups they belong to. This exercise will help identify the group's sphere of influence locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally. LIPC members have the opportunity to reflect their knowledge of and experience with immigrants through these connections.
 3. North Okanagan Refugee Committee (NORC): A local committee to support refugees from Syria (and any other country) has been established. The committee will network with sponsoring groups and the community, and will make sure that refugees are connected to services. VDISS is the coordinating group for volunteers. Almost 100 volunteers have come forward from the community. Updates will be posted on a newly created website www.norc.ca Several LIPC members are also on the committee.
 4. B.C. Multicultural Award Nominations: Congratulations to LIPC members Cheryl Bannoya of Club Filipino Okanagan Shuswap and Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce for their nominations in the Individual and Organization categories!

D. Next Quarterly Meeting Date for the Local Immigration Partnerships Council:

Feb 24 2016 Quarterly LIPC Meeting 10-12 am
3rd Floor Boardroom Community Futures 3105 33rd Street

