

Mission Local Immigration Partnership Action Plan 2018-2019

SUMMARY

Mission is making new history with the arrival of newcomers, be they through the traditional settlement stream or for humanitarian reasons.

The Mission LIP, funded through IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) focuses its attention on the social and economic integration of immigrants, and once more reached out into the community to respond to identified community needs using the knowledge of its LIP Council, the support of its community partners, and the resources offered by citizens and other organizations.

The top needs for all newcomers in Mission are employment and language. And finding accommodation in the expensive and tight rental housing market for newcomers has also been challenging.

This year the LIP appeared as a delegation to District of Mission Council with a specific ask in mind: To offer a public statement on its perception and benefit of newcomers settling in the community. The positive result was this:

“There are over 5,000 people in Mission today who weren’t born in Canada. We are a diverse community.

“The diversity of our backgrounds means we all bring unique experiences and perspectives to our common belief and shared commitment to fostering a healthy and welcoming community.

“In coming together we build networks that are stronger, more resilient, adaptable, and vibrant.

“We share the belief that everyone deserves opportunities to thrive. Together, we can work to make sure that everyone truly is welcome here.”

This statement was read at a March 17 immigration forum in Mission lead by the Mission LIP with support of the Mission Community Services Society settlement team. During that forum, compelling newcomer stories were told, presentations were made by federal and municipal government representatives, and a keynote speech was presented by Baltej Dhillon on “Tolerance is Not Enough.” Dhillon is the first RCMP officer to be permitted to wear a turban. The event was received with much appreciation and enthusiasm, (according to immediate response and respondents to forum survey) and was an opportunity for the LIP to launch its public #AllAreWelcomeHere campaign which continues this year.

From the time Mission Community Services engaged influencers and the general community through the development and promotion of its findings in its Welcoming Communities project in 2013-2014 to now with the LIP, many immigration-related successes have been noted. Services to newcomers and awareness of immigration in the community have been improved.

WHAT THE LIP DISCOVERED (KEY POINTS)

1. Through our connections with our newcomers, we continue to see that securing employment is the biggest challenge for them. More language training is always needed for those who come to Canada from countries where English is not the first language. West Coast Express train transportation access to community employment opportunities west of Mission continues to be a benefit since two thirds of Mission’s population commutes outside the community to work.
2. Having a representative from the Mission School District (this year district principal **Joe Heslip**) on our LIP has helped maintain our strong relationship with the school district. This year a hub for Arabic-speaking students was created at Silverdale elementary school and free bus transportation for students was provided. Mission settlement workers have timely access to information on new students arriving from other countries who may require settlement services. Now the school district is acutely aware of newcomer families with children arriving in the community.
3. By inviting the right people to our LIP events, for example realtor **Manny Deol** to a March 17 immigration forum, connections to employment opportunities are heightened. One Syrian father in Mission is now employed as a decorative rock face applicator for luxury homes in Mission because of this type of interaction. Our Connector and Ambassador programs, which were launched by the LIP several years ago, continue to help those who decide to participate.
4. Our LIP Council still believes strong marketing is required to keep our settlement programming top of mind. Those in leading positions in various organization at times can be likened to a revolving door and new people need to be made aware of what we do. We continue to keep telling our story in the community through mainstream media and social media.
5. Working collaboratively with other LIPs is beneficial. Mission LIP Connected with **Huda Hussein** of London-Middlesex LIP in Ontario and received free artwork for the Mission #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper sticker campaign. Instead of launching a more expensive campaign featuring lawn signs, Mission LIP modified the initiative to feature bumper stickers. Hussein’s LIP is now looking at adopting the bumper sticker program in her communities.

6. By hosting the LIP Council meetings at various venues outside of Mission Community Services, it gives partners an opportunity to showcase their work in an introduction as part of the meeting. VanCity Credit Union, Literacy in Motion and Mission Economic Development Department have been kind in donating their boardroom space.

LIP secretariat is realizing the importance of expanding its reach to other boards and organizations as an active participant. The LIP coordinator, by invitation of LIP Council member and District of Mission social development department manager **Kirsten Hargreaves**, attended and participated in a March 12 Poverty Reduction workshop. Low incomes can be experienced by immigrant populations, and the workshop organizers wanted to hear the Mission LIP's input as an additional challenge faces by communities tackling the issue of poverty. LIP also honours champions of diversity by sitting on the Fraser Valley Cultural Diversity Awards organizing committee table.

7. With Mission's population expected to double from 39,000 people in the coming decades, and some voices in the community saying "there's no more room for newcomers," we have a strong stance from which to promote newcomers. Where will these new people come from?



Above: Newcomers in Mission enjoy a number of activities that promote social integration. This photo shows a group of Mission newcomers about to board the annual West Coast Express Santa Train to Vancouver where new sights and experiences amazed them.

THE PLAN: TIME-BOUND LIP ACTIVITIES

1. **ACTION: Strengthen our ties with organizations**, including WorkBC and Mission Community Skills Centre, to provide valuable information to employers and potential newcomer employees to drive the message focused on the benefits of hiring immigrants. Continue to engage with SRC-Tec and Mission's Economic Development office to be regularly kept apprised of employment opportunities in the community and in the tech sector. Promote entrepreneurial opportunities for immigrants through North Fraser Community Futures and Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce and its membership. Find opportunities for the LIP to share with other community boards.
2. **ACTION: Increase the relevance and accessibility of language training** for newcomers by continuing to work with Mission Literacy in Motion to help ensure programming around conversation circles and where identified, job-specific language training. Increase referrals to English language training and support programs. We wish to help improve the speed at which newcomers are ready for employment and encourage potential employers to hire them.
3. **ACTION: Seek leveraged funding** opportunities through the LIP, in particular with agencies interested in enhancing services to newcomers. Mission's social development department has been a leader in helping the Mission LIP with funding opportunities. Target is \$3,000 this term.
4. **ACTION: Engage with District of Mission Council** through annual LIP delegation to council to update on immigration and LIP activities. Council provided its positive public written statement on immigration in the previous LIP term following a specific ask/delegation in early 2018. The LIP will also engage in other public speaking opportunities in this community and in others to share the benefits of Mission and the value of immigration to create empathy for newcomers who come here through the regular immigration channels or for humanitarian reasons.
5. **ACTION: Build on our marketing and public relations efforts** in the next 12-month period to promote LIP Action Plan components, in particular ones that assist in enhancing positive public perceptions about newcomers in the District of Mission, including messaging around its #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper sticker/social media campaign. LIP will continue to communicate with public through media relations, promoting and engaging in other forums, producing online video, posting on social media and MCSS website to convey messages related to immigration and issues that help educate the public on quelling racism.

MISSION COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY

Connector Program



- Business is all about making connections and the same is true for people moving to Mission from other countries.
- Establishing these networks can take a long time but we want to speed up this process and help our newcomers to connect sooner. The Connector Program allows for business and professional people to meet informally with our clients and find out about their skill set and goals.
- Our Connectors then introduce our clients to three more people. Those three then introduce our client to three more and before you know it, our clients have a starting network of people they can go to for help and advice.



Contact Rick Rake for more details :
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PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION, TIMELINES, OUTCOMES

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p>Optimize employment/economic development opportunities for newcomers since employment is one of the highest needs expressed by our new-to-Canada clients.</p>	<p>LIP coordinator will continue to connect, collaborate with economic/employment leaders including Mission Chamber, Mission Community Skills Centre, North Fraser Community Futures, SRC-Tec, and Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce.</p>	<p>This process is ongoing, with specific economic meetings set for an average of <i>once every quarter</i>. Will keep the lines of communication open with volunteers offering help through our Connector Program.</p>	<p>Employment opportunities and information sessions will be coordinated and enhanced for our newcomers. The path to getting employment will offer more ease locally and in the region.</p>



Above: LIP this year launched its #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper sticker and social media campaign with the support of London-Middlesex LIP which provided the basic artwork free of charge.

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p>Increase the relevance and accessibility of language training.</p>	<p>Working with Mission Literacy in Motion to help build programming around conversation circles and where identified, job-specific language training. Increase referrals to English language training and support programs, including link. Develop and implement strategies to boost English training and perhaps bring more LINC programs here.</p>	<p>This action point is already launched as soon as possible with critical meetings, with the target realized by the end of this term, March 31, 2019.</p>	<p>Increased English proficiency and improved speed at which newcomers are ready for employment, encouraging employers to hire them.</p>



RCMP Insp. Baltej Dhillon was keynote speaker at We're Your Neighbours immigration forum led by the Mission LIP in conjunction with MCSS Settlement team.

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p>Continue to leverage funding through the LIP with a target of \$3,000 negotiated with partners this year. This will not include the Festival of Light: Diwali under the LIP umbrella this year since priorities have changed.</p>	<p>LIP coordinator will collaborate with District of Mission Social Development and through private and government sponsors. Networking with potential funders, sponsors is key.</p>	<p>This action point is will include critical meetings when mutually convenient. Target expected to be reached by the end of this term, March 31, 2019.</p>	<p>The target of leveraged LIP funding, while daunting, will assist the LIP secretariat in its annual operations.</p>

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p>Increase engagement with District of Mission Council to ensure settlement in Mission continues to be recognized as a positive activity. Continue to promote LIP activities through public speaking opportunities.</p>	<p>LIP will present as an annual delegation to council, outlining immigration, settlement and LIP activity in the community. The LIP will also engage in other public speaking opportunities in this community and in others to share the benefits of Mission and the value of immigration to create empathy for newcomers who come here through the regular immigration channels or for humanitarian reasons.</p>	<p>A formal presentation by LIP coordinator to update District of Mission Council on LIP activities is set before March 2019. Speaking dates will be set as opportunities at public forums or events arise.</p>	<p>District of Mission support/update provision with the settlement programs and LIP in Mission is seen as a form of acceptance and welcoming in the community. Engaging and compelling talks help in engaging the public when there are questions about culture, integration and employment in the community.</p>

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p>Continue to build on Mission LIP guerilla marketing and public relations efforts.</p>	<p>In addition to advertising in the Mission Visitor Guide, Mission Record and Punjabi Patrika and participating in public events, the LIP will be engaged in newsworthy events immigrant forums and myth-busting sessions to ensure a welcoming community. Flyer and poster distribution on our business sector and through non-profits will also raise awareness. Our website will also carry images and stories about LIP activities. And will be promoted through social media. #AllAreWelcome bumper sticker/social media campaign continues.</p>	<p>This process will continue through the next 12-month term. Advertising in the Visitor Guide is already secured for this year. Patrika advertising and flyer/poster creation are reliant on the timely needs of the program.</p>	<p>Raising awareness levels of our LIP activities will be measured through feedback forms through our CARF systems of efficiency, effectiveness and satisfaction through our LIP Council members and members of the public. With political support, the LIP has an opportunity to share features of local immigration in local promotional material for the community ranging from current events to economic development and employee recruitment.</p>



2017-18 Mission Local Immigration Partnership Council.

LIP COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING SCHEDULE

Encouraging consistent attendance and more time for strategic discussion, the LIP coordinator expects continued participation by keen influencers around the Mission LIP Council table in 2018-2019.

The 10-member Mission LIP Council represents important sectors of the community from business and economic development to education and literacy. Expertise in entrepreneurship, employment, social systems and government was also shared around the table to identify gaps, opportunities, challenges and solutions to help make settlement and integration a better experience for newcomers.

Continuing with the LIP are District of Mission economic development officer **Stacey Crawford**, Mission Literacy in Motion coordinator **Candie Thorne**, **Pia Ritch** (with alternative **Ron Smith**) from WorkBC, Mission Library representative **Afton Schindel**, former District of Mission community advocate **Joan MacLatchy**, executive assistant **Jean Hooge** from the office of Abbotsford-Mission MLA Simon Gibson, regional immigration specialist **Kevin Tatla**, **Doug Paille**, small business specialist with VanCity Credit Union, Mission City Councillor **Pam Alexis**, manager of social development for the District of Mission, **Kristen Hargreaves** and Mission School District district principal **Joe Heslip** (who is overseeing new immigrant hub at Silverdale elementary school).

The LIP coordinator expects to have an active LIP Council membership for its first meeting of the second term on June 21. A quorum consists of five members. That schedule will include four LIP meetings with the tentative schedule of Thursday, **June 21**; Thursday, **Sept. 20**, Thursday, **Nov. 22** and Thursday, **March 7**.