



# Mission Local Immigration Partnership Action Plan 2019-2020

## SUMMARY

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After the influx of some 30 refugees in the community two years ago from Syria and The Congo and the massive community support that was required and the basic language issues which became prevalent, the dynamics of immigration is changing again in Mission.

The Mission Local Immigration Partnership recognizes the influx of immigrants to the community is returning to the traditional streams of skilled workers and family-class newcomers.

Demands for Levels 1 and 2 LINC English training for newcomers who arrived with no English are reduced now that English skills are improving and the need for Levels 3 and 4 English rises, Level 4 being conducive to successful job searches.

Now changes in training are being requested through the language services provided by Abbotsford Community Services at the Mission Community Services Society office. Mission LIP partner, Literacy in Motion's language support through conversation circles and special programming for women newcomers is strong, and LIP partner Mission Library of the Fraser Valley Regional Library system is going out of its way to provide diversity programming for children and the community at large.

The Mission LIP is excited to see merchants and members of the public are displaying #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper stickers and a local sponsor has paid for the LIP-launched campaign and mobilized its volunteers to distribute the stickers.

The LIP is also encouraged to see Mission Young Learners Group based at Mission Community Services continue to grow and engage in special ways in the community. Newcomers teens are working through job-readiness programs and are volunteering at events, including Mission Farmers Markets, local seniors programming and helping set up and serve the public ethnic food at the annual Festival of Light: Diwali. This has encouraged participation from other family members in local events.

The Mission LIP, funded through IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) focuses its attention on the social and economic integration of immigrants, and reaches 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 continues to be employment and language. Securing accommodation in the expensive and tight rental housing market for newcomers has been challenging.

This year the LIP appeared as a delegation to District of Mission Council again this year after receiving last year a public statement on its views on immigration and the benefits of having newcomers settle in the community. Part of that statement said:

*“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.*

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

The LIP has asked that the statement, which was revealed at an immigration forum last year involving the Mission LIP, be made part of its public website and incorporated into public policy. A response is forthcoming.

Since Mission Community Services launched its Welcoming Communities project in 2013-2014 to now with the Mission LIP, services to newcomers and awareness of immigration in the community improved.

## WHAT THE LIP DISCOVERED (KEY POINTS)

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1. As the LIP partners take more responsibility for special projects, like teaching diversity for children and the public at Mission Library, looking to host a July 1 citizenship ceremony at Fraser River Heritage Park or developing Mission Literacy in Motion language sessions through gender-specific sessions and adult conversation circles, or Prospera Credit Union sponsoring and distributing #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper stickers throughout the community through our connections with our newcomers, the load is not all on the LIP coordinator’s shoulders. In a survey of LIP Council partners after this year’s term, one comment was: “I believe I have an increased understanding with the collaboration of all of the different organizations and people on the ground with different perspectives, challenges and solutions are shared and discussed. The process definitely helps newcomers as all of the different aspects/organizations/people involved with integration to Canada. All of them working towards the same common goal.”
2. After engaging with the LIP through one of our immigration forums in 2018, Kevin Tatla became a member of LIP Council table. He represents the federal government and is an immigration specialist for Member of Parliament Jati Sidhu. Tatla has provided us with the latest immigration trends and requests through his experiences at his office for the riding of

Matsqui-Mission-Fraser Canyon and is helping us work with IRCC and the Mission Mayor to set up a July 1, 2020 citizenship ceremony at Fraser River Heritage Park. His participation in our LIP was an unexpected boost. He is also chairing the quarterly LIP meetings. After Afton Schindel of Mission Library was on sick leave for a year, she returned with new enthusiasm and launched a diversity education project using the library's own funding, resources and facility.

3. Mission School District continues to sit on our LIP after providing some very special support in past years to specific groups of newcomers. 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, and our LIP representative reports this information directly to Mission School District management.
4. Through our strong relationships with all levels of governments, for example Member of Parliament Jati Sidhu's office went out of its way to have the Mission LIP and MCSS apply for a special federally-funded project in March 2019 after it heard about the good work we do. Sidhu had the LIP complete the eight-page Rural and Northern Pilot Community Community Interest Form for the project, which if approved (now to be considered for next term) would provide economic development and settlement opportunities for newcomers in the Matsqui-Mission-Fraser Canyon federal riding. Supporting documents and letters were quickly supplied before deadline by LIP member, District of Mission Economic Development Department, and other community leaders.
5. Our LIP Council still believes strong marketing is required to keep our settlement programming top of mind. Those in leading positions in various organization have left to be succeeded by new leaders who 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. Support from people like MLA Simon Gibson who appeared on a special short video praising our #AllAreWelcomeHere efforts can be showcased on social media and on our now upgraded LIP web page on the Mission Community Services Society website ([missioncommunityservices.com](http://missioncommunityservices.com)).
6. Mission's new mayor, Pam Alexis, who has asked to continue as a member of our Mission LIP Council, said publicly: "Thank you for everything you do. When considering partnerships for Mission LIP and settlement team and their value, it truly reflects who we are as a community. When we are faced with challenges we all work together. I remember the night a few years ago when we knew we were having refugees arrive in Mission and we asked the community (through the MCSS settlement department forum) if there was something they could help with and we had 150 people show up. That is unheard of. It speaks to who we are and how we embrace diversity. Kudos to all the work that MCSS LIP and settlement team does, and we can never let our guards down. We need to continue to educate and lead in this way. Thank you very much." Her support and history with Mission settlement in general has been very helpful.
7. With Mission's population expected to double from 40,000 people in the coming decades, and some voices in the community saying "there's no more room for immigrants," we have a strong stance from which to promote newcomers. Where will these new people come from? Mission LIP is working with Chris Hartman of Polygon Developments to keep it apprised of LIP activities and the opportunities involving newcomers through employment and accommodation.



**Above: Newcomers in Mission enjoy a number of activities promoting social integration. This photo shows a group of Mission newcomers participating and learning in Mission cultural experience at Clarke Theatre. Activities like these encourage newcomer parents and other family members to get involved in community.**

## **THE PLAN: TIME-BOUND LIP ACTIVITIES**

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- 1. ACTION: Strengthen our ties with organizations:** Now that Maximus has won the WorkBC contract in Mission as of April 1, 2019, LIP will rebuild its relationship with new WorkBC contractor and existing personnel at 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. We will continue to engage with and Mission's Economic Development office to be regularly kept apprised of employment opportunities in the community and promote entrepreneurial opportunities for immigrants through North Fraser Community Futures and Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce and its

membership. Mission LIP council will also develop stronger relationships regionally with Abbotsford and Chilliwack LIPS with support from the University of the Fraser Valley to establish CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) standards for our LIPs in the future to ensure program quality and accountability.

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. This year, as the need for levels 1-2 beginner English is reduced, levels 3-4 LINC programming will be provided.
3. **ACTION: Seek leveraged funding** opportunities through the LIP, in particular with agencies interested in enhancing services to newcomers. Mission's social development department, Mission Library and local businesses like traditional media, Prospera Credit Union and Swing Optical, have been leaders in helping the Mission LIP with in-kind and funding opportunities. \$3,000 is target 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 and now we have asked the District to post its statement on its website and include it in policy for the public to see. The LIP will also seek 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, participating in relevant forums, producing online video, posting on social media and LIP page on MCSS website to convey messages related to immigration and issues that help educate the public on acceptance/diversity/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.



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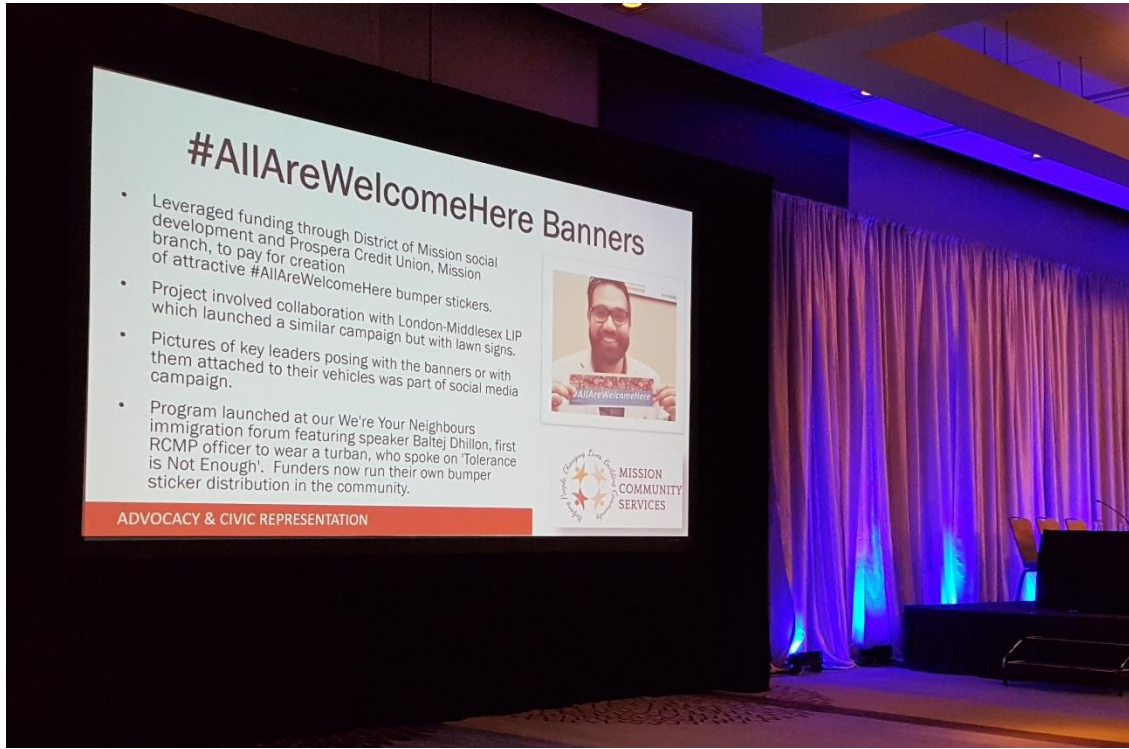
PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION, TIMELINES, OUTCOMES

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p><b>Optimize employment/economic development opportunities for newcomers since employment is one of the highest needs expressed by our new-to-Canada clients.</b></p>	<p>LIP coordinator will continue to connect, collaborate with economic/employment leaders including Maximus (new WorkBC contractor), Mission Chamber, Mission Community Skills Centre, North Fraser Community Futures, and Mission Regional Chamber of Commerce.</p>	<p>This process is ongoing, with meetings set with economic organizations an average of <i>once every quarter</i>. Will continue to keep the lines of communication open with volunteers offering to support 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 pathways locally and in the region.</p>



**Above: Mission LIP this year launched and will continue its #AllAreWelcomeHere bumper sticker and social media campaign welcomed by business, service club leaders and public supporting positive message through the public for Mission newcomers. It is funded by local business.**

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p><b>Increase the relevance and accessibility of language training.</b></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 LINC. Develop and implement strategies to boost English training and lobby to bring more LINC programs here, including Levels 3 and 4 LINC English at the Mission office.</p>	<p>This action point is already launched as MCSS negotiates with Abbotsford Community Services on upgrading to higher levels of English through LINC before <b>March 31, 2020.</b></p>	<p>Increased English proficiency and improved speed at which newcomers are ready for employment, encouraging employers to hire them.</p>



**LIP pre-conference in Montreal: Sharing our Mission activities with other LIPS nationally.**

ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p><b>Continue to leverage funding</b> through the LIP with a target of \$3,000 negotiated with partners this year. Action involves connections with potential funder and collaboration with partners willing to undertake projects without funding from IRCC.</p>	<p>LIP coordinator will connect with District of Mission Social Development and through private and government sponsors. Networking with potential funders, sponsors is key.</p>	<p>This action point will include critical meetings when mutually convenient. Target expected to be reached by the end of this term, <b>March 31, 2020.</b></p>	<p>The target of leveraged LIP funding, while daunting, will assist the Mission LIP secretariat in its annual activities and operations.</p>



ACTION POINT	IMPLEMENTATION	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
<p><b>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.</b></p>	<p>LIP presents as an annual delegation to council, outlining combination of immigration, settlement and LIP activity in the community. The LIP will also engage in other public speaking opportunities in Mission and in others to share the benefits of this community and the value of immigration to create empathy for newcomers who settle here: Be it through standard 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 <b>before March 2020</b>. 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><b>Continue to build on Mission LIP guerilla marketing and public relations efforts.</b></p>	<p>In addition to advertising in What's On! Mission Magazine, Mission Record and Punjabi Patrika and participating in public events, the LIP will be engaged in newsworthy events to ensure a welcoming community. Flyer and poster distribution on our business sector and through non-profits will also raise awareness. Our updated LIP page on MCSS 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 opportunities in local media will be actively pursued. 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>



Video message from 2018-19 Mission Local Immigration Partnership Council on LIP web page.

## LIP COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND MEETING SCHEDULE

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Encouraging more time for strategic discussion and independent action by its partners, the LIP coordinator expects continued participation by keen influencers around the Mission LIP Council table in 2019-2020. Two retirements are marked this year by LIP members, including **Jean Hooge** from the office of our MLA Simon Gibson and **Pia Ritch** of Mission Community Skills Centre. The LIP is working to replace these valued individuals as soon as possible.

The 10-member Mission LIP Council represents important sectors of the community from business and economic development to education and literacy. Expertise in employment, social systems and government is 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 **Donna Gibson**, Mission Library representative **Afton Schindel**, former District of Mission community advocate **Joan MacLatchy**, regional immigration specialist **Kevin Tatla**, **Doug Paille**, small business specialist with VanCity Credit Union, Mission Arts Council rep **Annie Charker**, Mission City Mayor **Pam Alexis**, manager of social development for the District of Mission, **Kristen Hargreaves** and Mission School District district principal **Joe Heslip**.

The LIP coordinator expects to have a strong LIP Council membership for its first meeting of the second term on June 20. A quorum consists of five members. That schedule will include four LIP meetings with the tentative schedule of Thursday, **June 20**; Thursday, **Sept. 19**, Thursday, **Nov. 21** and Thursday, **March 5**.