

NO: **R185**

COUNCIL DATE: **July 23, 2012**

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **July 18, 2012**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Supporting the Settlement and Integration of Refugees in Surrey –  
Enhancing the Current Strategy**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive as information the current cross-jurisdictional Refugee Settlement and Integration Strategy including recent developments all as documented in this report; and
2. Authorize staff to work with community partners through the Welcoming Communities Program to refine the Strategy by developing a more detailed Action Plan to increase the partners' capacity to support the settlement and integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of Surrey.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to:

- inform and update Council on the current strategy related to the settlement and integration of refugees in Surrey;
- inform Council of the Province's new Welcoming Communities Program and the opportunity that it provides to develop and implement a comprehensive, community-based Action Plan to increase Surrey's capacity to support the integration of new immigrants and refugees; and
- seek Council approval for staff to participate in the Welcoming Communities initiative and proceed to work in collaboration with Community Partners to develop and implement an Action Plan as an extension of the above-referenced strategy that will support the integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of the community.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

Supporting the settlement and integration of refugees is consistent with priorities identified in the:

- Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents;
- Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy; and
- Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

Immigration and settlement programs and services are not a municipal responsibility. The federal and provincial levels of government have the mandate and resources to select new immigrants and refugees, and to design and deliver settlement services. However, the integration of newcomers into the social and economic life of the community is vitally important to the health and vibrancy of the community. Cities tend to bear the brunt of any shortcomings that occur in this regard. Cities can play an important role in helping newcomers integrate into Canadian life.

### **Facts on Refugees**

Each year, millions of people around the world are forced to flee their homelands to escape persecution, war or severe human rights abuses. As part of the international community and to meet its humanitarian obligations, Canada has a long-standing tradition of providing protection and permanent residency to refugees from around the world.

Refugees account for a small share of total immigration to Canada. In BC, over the past decade refugees have represented about 5% of new immigrants. Source countries of refugees change from year to year as world events unfold. In 2008, BC received refugees from 70 different countries.

Income levels of refugees are lower than those of other immigrants immediately after arrival in Canada, and remain relatively low for many years after arrival. However, research shows that the economic outcome of refugees improves with time in Canada. Despite differences in economic outcomes, Statistics Canada's Longitudinal Immigrant Database indicates that refugees are generally more satisfied with their experiences in Canada as compared to Economic Class immigrants.

### ***Classes of Refugees***

Canada's refugee system selects people from other countries for resettlement in Canada. It also accepts refugee claims from people who are already in Canada.

Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) brings refugees to Canada to live as permanent residents. CIC relies on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other referral organizations and private sponsorship groups to identify and refer refugees for resettlement in Canada. These classes of refugees include:

- *Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)*: The Federal government is responsible for the selection and initial resettlement of GARs in Canada.

In 2002, the Government of Canada introduced a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) that shifted the focus away from refugees with an "ability to establish" in Canada to those the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees deems most in need of protection. The IRPA has resulted in significant changes to the profile of GARs selected for resettlement to Canada. Those arriving since 2003 are more likely to have low literacy levels and significant physical and mental health issues. There are more single-parent households and larger families in comparison to prior years.

- *Privately Sponsored Refugees*: Groups or individuals can sponsor refugees from abroad who qualify to come to Canada. Sponsors are responsible for providing financial settlement assistance for refugees once they arrive in Canada. Faith-based organizations are often sponsors in relation to this type of refugee.

In-Canada Asylum Program: Canada also offers refugee protection to people in Canada who are at risk of torture or cruel and unusual punishment in their home country.

- *Refugee Claimants* refers to people who have arrived in Canada and are seeking refugee status. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, an independent administrative tribunal, decides on claims for refugee protection made by persons in Canada.

Between 2004 and 2008, of Refugee Class immigrants who arrived in BC: 43% were GARs; 32% were Asylum Refugees; 13% were Refugee Dependents; and 12% were Privately-Sponsored Refugees.

### ***GARs in Surrey***

Surrey has emerged as a primary destination for GARs arriving in Metro Vancouver. According to ISS of BC information, from 2005 to 2011, 1,536 GARs arrived in Surrey, representing 29% of all GARs that arrived in Metro Vancouver during that period. About half of these refugees are children and youth under 19 years.

The shelter allowance provided for GARs through the federally-funded Refugee Assistance Program is equivalent to Income Assistance shelter rates and so considerably lower than the average cost of rent in Metro Vancouver. The relative affordability of rental units in some neighbourhoods in Surrey is one of the key reasons why GARs choose to settle in Surrey.

Locating GARs together based on pre-existing ethno-specific communities has been found to help to ease the adjustment process. Consequently, GARs tend to be concentrated in specific neighbourhoods and even in specific apartment buildings. Most GARs in Surrey live in the Whalley community, in the northwest part of Guildford, or in central Newton.

### ***Welcoming Communities Program***

The Canada-British Columbia Immigration Agreement states that "integration is a two-way process, which involves a commitment on the part of immigrants and refugees to adapt to life in Canada and on the part of Canadians to welcome and adapt to new people and cultures".

### *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Pilot Project (2008 – 2012)*

In 2008, the Province launched a three-year Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP) pilot program. WICWP was designed to fill a gap in the range of the Province's Welcome BC Services by targeting the host communities rather than the immigrants. The program was focussed on supporting capacity building in communities with a view to better enabling communities and workplaces to be more welcoming and inclusive of newcomers including both economic immigrants and refugees.

In Surrey, the recipients of the WICWP program funding were the Surrey Foundation (welcoming and inclusive communities) and DIVERSEcity (welcoming and inclusive workplaces). WICWP funds enabled a number of projects to be undertaken in Surrey.

### *Welcoming Community Program (2012-2014)*

Based on the results of an evaluation of the WICWP pilot, the Program was redesigned into a new Welcoming Communities Program. Under this new Program, communities will be supported to plan and implement initiatives that increase the capacity of the host community to support the integration of new immigrants including refugees by:

- supporting the development of intercultural relationships and mutual trust;
- supporting welcoming and inclusive workplaces;
- creating welcoming and inclusive spaces in the community; and
- improving access to community services.

The opportunity presented by this new Program will be discussed later in this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Current Strategy for Settling and Integrating Refugees in Surrey**

In recognition of the multi-jurisdictional nature of the responsibilities related to the settlement and integration of refugees, staff has compiled the following information that in essence is the current strategy for addressing the settlement and integration of refugees:

#### ***Settlement Services***

The Federal government is responsible for the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) that supports GARs during their first year in Canada. The Province (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation), under the terms of the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement, is currently responsible for the design and delivery of all other settlement services. In April 2012, the Federal Government announced that responsibility for settlement services in BC will be transferred back to Citizenship and Immigration Canada in April 2014.

Over the past couple of years, the Province has been reviewing and redesigning settlement services.

- In 2010, the Province undertook a comprehensive review of settlement services and programs for new immigrants and refugees. The review resulted in the development of two new complementary programs:

- the Settlement and Integration Program (that started in October 2011); and
- the Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program (that will start in October 2012).
- In 2010 a Refugee Trauma Support Project was initiated to improve mental health services for refugees.
- In 2008, the Province introduced a pilot Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP) to increase the capacity of communities to support newcomers. Based on an evaluation of the pilot WICWP, a new redesigned Welcoming Communities Program will be launched later 2012.

Additional information on these initiatives is outlined in the following sections. Appendix I is a flow chart that illustrates the settlement services that are available to new immigrants and refugees in Surrey.

### ***Settlement and Integration Program***

The Settlement and Integration Program (SIP) provides services and supports to help immigrants understand, settle and integrate successfully. Information regarding SIP is contained in Appendix I. Options, DIVERSEcity, PICS and SUCCESS have been contracted by the Province to deliver the SIP in Surrey.

To make services more accessible to newcomers, the settlement agencies have partnered with Surrey Libraries and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department such that non-profit agency staff provides some settlement services on-site in libraries and in recreation centres throughout Surrey.

The Surrey School District's Welcome Centre (Settlement Workers in Schools Program) is also funded through the SIP. The Welcome Centre assesses and provides supports to assist school age, newcomer children and youth to transition into the Canadian education system. Appendix II provides information on the Welcome Centre.

### ***Vulnerable Immigrant Population Program***

For the past few years, the Province has funded a number of different settlement programs for vulnerable immigrants and refugees. This fall, a new Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program (VIPP) is being launched. It is a single program that will target individuals and families with multiple needs and significant integration barriers. VIPP will provide these vulnerable immigrants, most of whom will be refugees, with a flexible wraparound support service that better targets their specific needs. More detailed information on the VIPP is provided in Appendix III.

### ***Refugee Trauma Support Project***

In 2010, the Provincial Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health, the Provincial Ministry of Children and Family Development, Bridge Clinic, ISS of BC and DIVERSEcity began working together on a Refugee Trauma Support Project. Its purpose is to improve culturally-sensitive trauma counselling services for refugees.

In March 2012, a working document was released entitled *Refugee Trauma Support Project: Developing a Plan for Trauma Support Services and Linkages for Refugee Children, Youth and their Families*. The recommendations of this report are based around five themes:

- *Barriers* – steps to minimize barriers around service provision (e.g. referral processes, assignment of case managers, etc...);
- *Service Access* – ways to improve access to services (e.g. increased Child and Youth Mental Health outreach);
- *Training Issues* – actions for improved training that will increase understanding and awareness around Mental Health service provision;
- *Awareness Campaign* – steps to improve education and have an open information exchange; and
- *System's Issues* – addresses the systemic barriers that are "built into" the framework (e.g. Mental Health waitlists, early identification of trauma, etc...)

Appendix IV provides the detailed recommendations of the Refugee Trauma Support Project report.

### ***City Actions in Relation to Refugee Integration:***

Since 2005 the City of Surrey has been aware of the challenges that refugees, especially government assisted refugees ("GARs"), are experiencing in settling and integrating into the social and economic life of the community. In response, the City has taken a number of actions, including those highlighted below.

First Steps Early Childhood Development Pilot Program: In 2008, in partnership with a consortium of other government and community funders, the City of Surrey contributed 3 years of funding toward the development of a pilot "First Steps – an intensive early childhood development program for refugee children and their caregivers" (March 31, 2008, Corporate Report R052). The First Steps pilot proved to be an effective approach for supporting the healthy development of refugee children. It is now funded by the Province and running in other communities as well as Surrey. In Surrey, the First Steps program is operated by a partnership involving Options, DIVERSEcity and Umoja.

Refugee Housing Study: In 2008-2009, the City of Surrey contracted Immigrant Services Society of BC ("ISS of BC") to conduct a research study on the housing situation of GARs (June 29, 2009, Corporate Report R115). *At Home in Surrey? The Housing Experiences of Refugees in Surrey BC* documents the challenges that GARs face in securing appropriate and affordable housing. The portrait that emerges from the research is one of poverty, overcrowding, and barriers to housing and employment. The study provides a number of recommended actions that are outlined in Appendix V attached to this report.

Refugee Transportation Loan Program: The Federal government requires GARs to repay the cost of their transportation to Canada, pre-entry medical costs and a service fee. The refugee housing study (referenced above) found that the repayment of these loans causes considerable financial stress for families that are already living well below the poverty line. Among the study's recommendations was that the City of Surrey advocate for the elimination of the transportation loans for refugees.

In October 2009, the City of Surrey put forward a Resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities' Annual Convention calling for the termination of the refugee transportation loan program. The Resolution was endorsed by all BC municipalities. In September 2010, the Resolution was adopted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' National Board of Directors. Advocacy efforts are continuing and have included meetings with Members of Parliament and raising the issue in the media.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Inter-governmental Committee: In 2008, the Province established a Committee that involves staff from each of the three orders of government - social planning staff from several Metro Vancouver municipalities, Provincial Immigration Integration and Multiculturalism Branch staff and Federal Citizenship and Immigration Canada staff. This Committee has provided the City of Surrey with an on-going opportunity to monitor and provide input into the redesign of settlement services and the Welcoming Communities Program.

Settlement Services in Recreation Centres: The City of Surrey, through the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, has partnered with DIVERSEcity, Options, PICS, and SUCCESS, on an initiative that welcomes settlement workers and newcomers to Recreation Centres.

Settlement Services in Recreation Centres was created in response to concerns that there was an increased need for newcomers to access settlement services in Surrey. Settlement workers indicated that newcomers did not always feel welcomed, or felt like they belonged in their new community. As a result, the settlement agencies and City representatives worked together to develop opportunities for settlement services to meet with newcomers in recreations centres.

Settlement workers are currently in the following locations for a number of hours per week depending on client needs:

- North Surrey Recreation Centre;
- Fleetwood Community Centre;
- Guildford Recreation Centre;
- Newton Recreation Centre;
- South Surrey Recreation Centre; and
- Cloverdale Recreation Centre.

Throughout this process the settlement workers also conduct facility tours so their clients can start to understand the many benefits of engaging in active, healthy and positive lifestyles. This program is an innovative example of how Parks, Recreation and Culture is building stronger community partnerships that will support and build supportive environments for new comers that are settling in Surrey.

Work with the School District and RCMP on Refugee Youth Issues: In 2011, the City of Surrey, the School District and the RCMP came together to develop a coordinated response to a specific group of refugee youth who were behaving aggressively and becoming engaged in criminal activities. The City's Crime Reduction Strategy Manager identified recommendations for action that resulted in a number of immediate interventions being taken.

The Crime Reduction Manager's project raised awareness of the need to better co-ordinate the community's efforts to support refugees of all ages and all ethnic backgrounds. As a result, a consultant was hired to flesh out a framework for addressing the needs of refugees in Surrey. The

consultant's final recommendations are attached as Appendix VI. It outlines a vision of settlement in Surrey, along with major learnings and recommendations that include:

- To establish a community planning table for refugee integration;
- To hire a settlement services coordinator to assist in integrating refugees in Surrey;
- To compile an inventory of available support services for refugees;
- To develop a means by which to share information regarding refugees between service providers more effectively;
- To promote cultural competence among all service providers so that services are better aligned with cultural needs; and
- To provide training for frontline workers in every service providing information on services that are available to assist in the settlement and integration of refugees.

### ***Continued Work on the Refugee Settlement and Integration Strategy - Guiding Principles***

Guiding principles for further augmenting the Surrey Refugee Strategy are as follows.

- The Strategy will respond to the unique needs of children, youth, and adults;
- The Strategy will reflect the fact that refugees are and will continue to be a diverse group coming from different parts of the world, with diverse cultures, life experiences and needs; and
- The Strategy will recognize and promote the strengths and assets that refugees bring to Surrey.

The following actions along with some broad recommendations are being pursued with a view further refining the above-referenced strategy for addressing refugee issues and needs. This will result in a list of specific actions that will be included in a final Refugee Strategy that will be forwarded to Council for consideration in due course.

- Community Partnership Table – The need for more systematic coordination across settlement services and between settlement services and "mainstream" services is a key gap in Surrey relative to supporting the settlement and integration of refugees. Multiple partners in the community, including the City, the School District, provincial Departments, Fraser Health Authority, community agencies, the faith community and businesses need to be engaged in working collaboratively to assist with the settlement and inclusion of refugees in Surrey. In this regard it is recommended that:
  - a Community Partnership Table be established to facilitate co-ordination and collaboration between the partners to support the settlement and early integration of refugees and immigrants. A well-functioning and productive Partnership Table will require a dedicated facilitator to manage the Partnership Table's activities;
  - the Partnership Table assume a leadership role in promoting cultural competence among all service providers so that services are aligned with the cultural needs of the refugees.
- Building Knowledge on Immigrant/Refugee Issues – Immigration impacts the local economy and fabric of Surrey. It is critical that the community partners understand refugee issues and needs with a view to providing services and opportunities to meet their individual needs more effectively. The needs of refugees range from physical limitations



(disabilities, etc.) to psychological issues (i.e., PTSD, etc.) to limited life skills to marketable work skills and beyond. Actions by the community partners need to be informed by current information about the needs and gaps that the refugees face so that the actions that are taken are effective in responding to the needs and gaps. In this regard it is recommended that:

- City staff continues to participate in inter-governmental committees and consultations; monitor information; and explore opportunities for partnering with academics on research that will increase our knowledge of refugees and immigrants in Surrey.
- Support City and Community-Led Services and Initiatives that are Inclusive of Refugees – The City, the School District and other community partners play an important role in supporting the inclusion of refugees in the community. In this regard it is recommended that:
  - the City take action to reduce barriers that impede refugees' participation in library, recreation and cultural services, as well as explore opportunities to provide programming specifically designed to meet the unique needs and interests of refugees;
  - local economic development initiatives, that will help refugees to integrate into the economy, be introduced. This may include mentorship programs, social enterprise and programs supporting entrepreneurship; and
  - the City and community partners further evolve approaches to orient and inform newcomers about the community. This includes, amongst other things, providing more information to refugees through the School District's Welcome Centre and through the contracted settlement services agencies. The School District's Welcome Centre offers a significant opportunity to connect with and support new refugees since all children who are new to the School District must attend at the Centre to be assessed prior to their assignment to a school. Information on the Welcome Centre is provided in Appendix II to this report.
- Promote the Healthy Development of Refugee Children and Youth – About half of refugees in Surrey are under the age of 19 years. While there are formal settlement services provided for refugee children and youth, further action is required to ensure that these youngsters have on-going access to opportunities and experiences that will enable them to thrive. In this regard it is recommended that:
  - activities and projects be developed by the community partners that focus on refugee children and youth. This includes activities that engage refugee youth in the community and provides them with a voice in identifying needs and solutions.
- Encourage Greater Community Awareness and Support for Refugees – Activities that educate and build awareness of refugees' experiences and issues can help to develop community understanding and support. The City can also play a role in encouraging community members to volunteer to support refugees. In this regard it is recommended that:

- the City of Surrey work with community partners to identify actions that will serve to increase the community's understanding of refugees, and inspire community members to become involved in supporting the settlement and integration of refugees in the community.

### **Resources from the Welcoming Communities Program**

As noted earlier, under the recently announced Provincial Welcoming Communities Program, communities will be provided with financial support to plan and implement initiatives that increase the capacity of the host community to support the integration of new immigrants including refugees by:

- supporting the development of intercultural relationships and mutual trust;
- supporting welcoming and inclusive workplaces;
- creating welcoming and inclusive spaces in the community; and
- improving access to community services.

The new Welcoming Communities Program provides an opportunity to establish the Community Partnership Table, which is referenced above and to develop and implement an Action Plan that will increase Surrey's capacity to support the integration of new immigrants including refugees. While the Welcoming Communities Program is intended to focus on all new immigrants, it will also provide an opportunity to engage community stakeholders in augmenting and refining the current Refugee Strategy.

It is important to note that the Welcoming Communities Program will not support "direct settlement services provided to new immigrants" (e.g. immigrant orientation/tours of civic services). The Program will support "activities that target change in the host community to be more welcoming and inclusive of immigrants" (e.g. cultural competency training for staff at public, non-profit and private sector organizations). This means that the implementation of some of the recommended actions included in the Refugee Strategy may require other funding sources.

In June of this year the Province released a Request for Expressions of Interest ("RFEI") inviting parties, including local governments, interested in participating in the Community Partnership to apply for funding to develop a Welcoming Communities Action Plan for their community. The Ministry expects to follow this RFEI by inviting all interested parties of a community to work collaboratively to identify a Sponsoring Organization. Staff has submitted a letter on behalf of the City of Surrey expressing interest in this opportunity.

Based on preliminary information, the Welcoming Communities Partnership tables in larger communities would be eligible to apply for funding of up to \$275,000 per year for two years. This funding would be used to support the Partnership Table, develop an Action Plan, and undertake activities identified in the Plan to increase the partners' capacity to support the settlement and integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of Surrey.

### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The City's on-going efforts to support the inclusion of refugees in Surrey assists in achieving the City of Surrey Sustainability Charter's scope action item SC5 that is focused on the implementation of the recommendations of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Receive as information the current cross-jurisdictional Refugee Settlement and Integration Strategy including recent developments all as documented in this report; and
- Authorize staff to work with community partners through the Welcoming Communities Program to refine the current Strategy by developing a more detailed Action Plan to increase the partners' capacity to support the settlement and integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of Surrey.

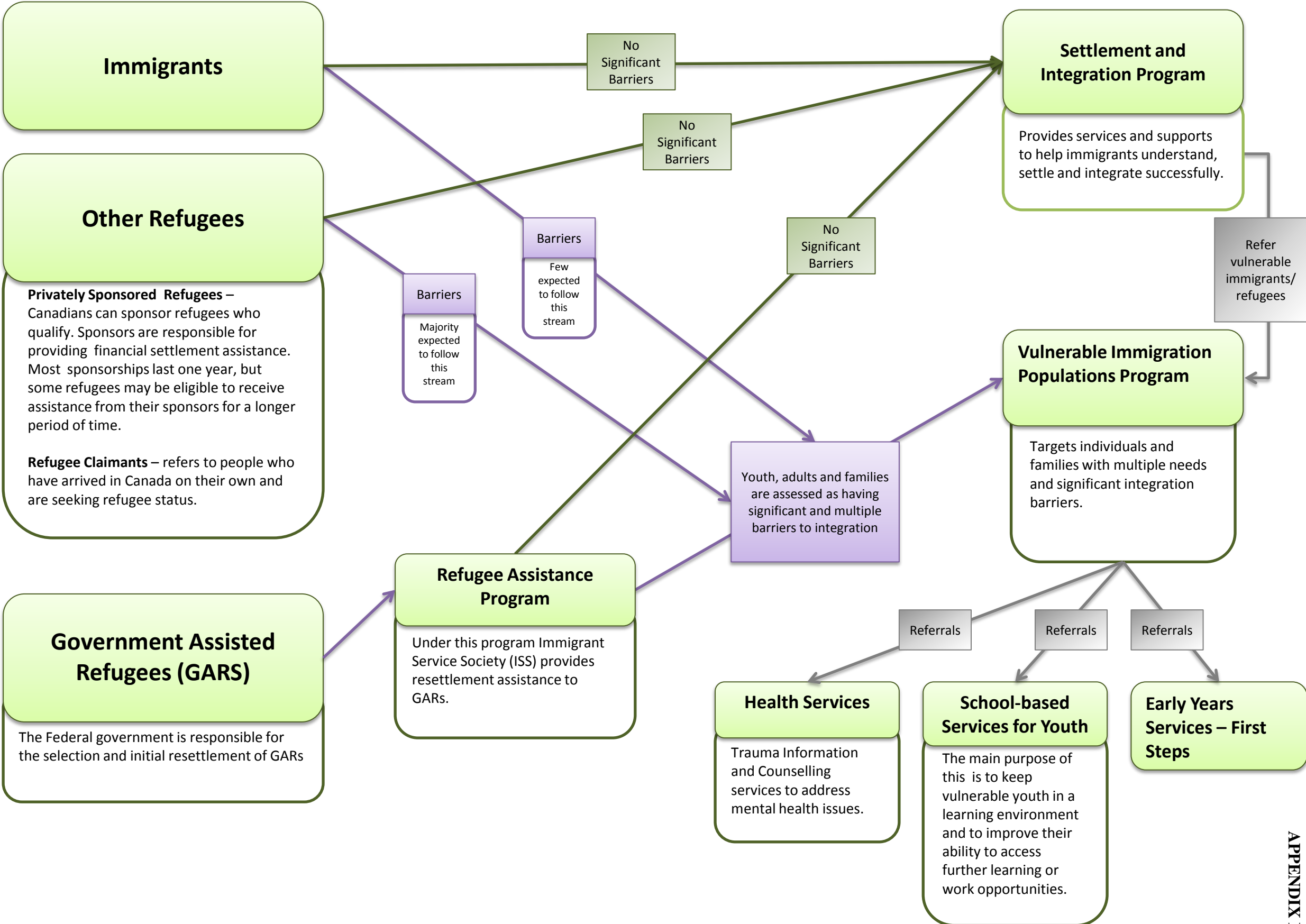
*Original signed by*  
Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager,  
Planning and Development

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Attachments:

Appendix I Settlement Services in BC – Flow Chart  
Appendix II Surrey Schools English Language Learner Welcome Centre Brochure  
Appendix III Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program  
Appendix IV Refugee Trauma Support Project Report  
Appendix V At Home in Surrey - Refugee Housing Study  
Appendix VI Work of Diversity Interagency Working Group

# Settlement Services in BC



## Settlement Services

**Settlement and Integration Program (SIP)** – provides services and supports to help immigrants understand, settle and integrate successfully . Beginning in October 2011, Options, DiverseCity, PICS and SUCCESS have been contracted by the Provincial Government to deliver the SIP in Surrey. The Surrey School District’s Settlement Workers in Schools Program is also funded as part of SIP.

To make services more accessible to new immigrants, the settlement agencies have partnered with Surrey Libraries and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department such that the non-profit agency staff deliver some settlement services on-site in libraries and recreation centres.

**Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program (VIPP)** – in the fall of 2012, WelcomeBC plans to introduce the new program designed to target individuals and families with multiple needs and significant integration barriers. According to the program description, “VIPP clients will obtain a flexible wraparound support service that integrates settlement, educational/training and other specialized supports around the individual with an emphasis on building the client’s capacity to cope with their life situations, function successfully in everyday living, and access regular settlement services, learning opportunities, and other support systems.”

The primary objective of VIPP is to help clients gain the capacity to cope with their issues and associated barriers and to acquire sufficient skills to participate in regular settlement or community services and programs. Another objective is to provide a coordinated support system across service sectors in communities with a critical mass of vulnerable immigrant populations (such as Surrey).

Key Services (all include transportation and child minding supports):

- Client outreach and intake
- Needs assessment
- Wrap-around support services
- One-on-one family services
- Group services
- Transition support and program exit

In the past month, DIVERSEcity (lead agency), Options, Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS) , and Langley Community Services were awarded the contract to deliver the VIPP in Surrey, Langley and North Delta in October 2012 to March 2014. The minimum annual number of unique clients in this area will be 407; the 18-month budget for the VIPP in this area is about \$3.2 million.

**School-Based Services for Vulnerable/At-Risk Youth** – The Province also provides school-based settlement support in the Surrey School District, including specialized programming for at-risk immigrant students. The main purpose of this school-based support is to keep vulnerable youth in a learning environment before school-leaving age and to improve their ability to access further learning or work opportunities. Older vulnerable students who are no longer regularly attending school are expected to be referred from the school to the VIPP.

**Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)** – The Federal RAP provides resettlement assistance to GARs. Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS) is contracted by the Federal Government to deliver the RAP for GARs arriving in BC. ISS settlement counsellors meet GARs at the airport. They are provided with temporary accommodation at Welcome House in downtown Vancouver while a housing search co-ordinator assists in finding them permanent housing. ISS provides new GARs with 30 hours of orientation, in first language, including help filling out forms and opening a bank account. Through RAP, GARs receive one year of financial assistance, approximately equal to provincial social assistance benefits, as well as medical and emergency dental coverage. GARs who do not obtain employment during the first year may transition to provincial social assistance benefits.

The new VIPP is intended to complement and add to the services provided under RAP, but not replace them.



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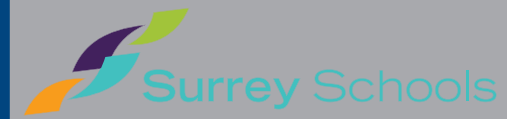
**OFFICE HOURS**  
Monday - Friday  
8:30am - 4:00pm



**TELEPHONE**  
604.543.3060



**FACSIMILE**  
604.592.2139



# English Language Learner Welcome Centre

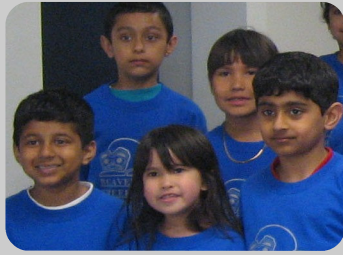


English Language Learner Welcome Centre





## SD36 English Language Learner Welcome Centre



The Surrey School District English Language Learner Welcome Centre is centrally located in Surrey on the main floor of the City Square building at #120 - 7525 King George Boulevard. We are here to welcome English Language Learner (ELL) students and their families and ease their integration into the Surrey school system and community.

The staff at the Welcome Centre is committed to assisting our District's ELL students with their transition to a new school system and community by facilitating effective reception, language assessment, and appropriate placement. The Welcome Centre staff provides registration support, information about the B.C. education system, school programs/services, and community programs/services.

The Welcome Centre staff supports Surrey schools by assisting with ELL student registration and by conducting the initial language assessment. In addition, school staff can access a wide range of resources at the Welcome Centre library to support our English Language Learners with their language needs and integration into the schools.

## Our Goals

For our students and families, the Welcome Centre will provide:

- Initial support from Multicultural and Settlement Workers in Schools for all English Language Learners in the District
- Consistent reception, orientation services, and information about our schools and the B.C. School System
- Links to continuing education opportunities
- Links to community and government agencies and services

For our schools, the Welcome Centre will provide:

- Insight into the ELL students' individual and collective impact on schools, as the data collection centre for the District
- Coherent understanding of diverse populations and community needs
- A more consistent and holistic assessment of student needs, with lead time to prepare for incoming students and to coordinate school-specific support in an effective and timely manner
- A library of resources and Pro-D day workshops for staff who support ELL students and their families



## Our Services - Registration Support

The Welcome Centre staff will assist families in finding their neighbourhood school and completing their registration forms, if necessary. Students whose parents hold work permits, study permits or are refugee claimants may be directed to our District's International Education Department.

At the time of registration parents must bring the following documents to their neighbourhood school:

- Proof of Birth Date for the student (birth certificate or passport)
- Proof of guardianship (parents' or guardians' as shown on birth certificate or other appropriate legal documentation)
- Proof of status in Canada for both the parent and the student (Canadian birth certificate, citizenship card, passport, landed immigrant document, permanent resident card)
- Proof of Residence (purchase or rental agreement, utility bill, etc.)

Documents which are helpful, but not required to register:

- Health Documents (Care card, immunization records, medical condition information)
- Education Background Information (i.e., report cards for the last 2 years)



## Our Services - Assessment

The purpose of the initial language assessment is to identify the English Language Learner's need for English language service. The initial assessment is intended to identify:

- The student's current level of English proficiency
- The student's eligibility for ELL services
- The extent and range of ELL services needed



The holistic language assessment will examine both receptive English (listening and reading) and expressive English (speaking and writing).

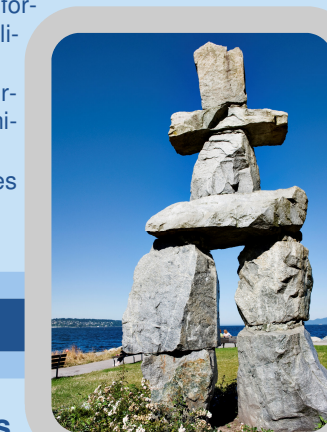
The assessment will address the differences between language used for communication in social settings (the language of everyday use) and the language used for learning in academic settings (the language of the classroom). Therefore, the assessment will include questions related to the appropriate social use of English as well as questions related to subject-specific academic language (Social Studies, Science, and Literature).

Upon completion of the assessment the results will be electronically transferred to the ELL's school where school personnel will meet with the parents or guardian and the student to discuss program and/or placement.

## Our Services - Multicultural Workers

Services provided by our Multicultural Workers in schools are:

- Facilitating communication between home and school through supporting school staff, including arranging meetings and interpreting in academic contexts such as parent-teacher meetings, IEP meetings, etc.
- Enhancing cross-cultural understanding by providing information to schools about family/cultural background to facilitate appropriate educational support for the student
- Facilitating cross-cultural understanding by providing information in the first language to the student and his/her family about Canadian culture
- Assisting school staff with conducting education activities involving ELL students



## Our Services - Settlement Workers in Schools

Services provided by our Settlement Workers in Schools are:

- Outreach services to all ELL families new to the District and community
- Settlement counselling for students, parents, or families through information and orientation sessions
- Organizing and conducting workshops and group activities
- Translation and interpretation in settlement contexts
- Referral and service linking to appropriate school/community programs, workshops, or support groups relating to settlement within the community which may include:

*Canadian Parenting  
Employment Search  
Library Resources  
Subsidized Housing*

*Counselling  
Immigration  
Medical / Dental  
Transportation*

*ELL Classes  
Legal Issues  
Social Assistance  
Volunteering*

**Our staff provides services in the following languages:**

- Arabic
- Azeri
- Burmese
- Cantonese
- English
- Farsi
- French
- Hindi
- Karen
- Korean
- Kurdish
- Lao
- Mandarin
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Rohingyan
- Russian
- Somali
- Spanish
- Swahili
- Tagalog
- Taiwanese
- Turkish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese

If assistance is required in a language that is not listed, the Welcome Centre staff could assist by contacting our community partners who may have service available in that language.

**Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program**

In the fall of 2012, WelcomeBC plans to introduce the new program designed to target individuals and families with multiple needs and significant integration barriers. According to the program description, “VIPP clients will obtain a flexible wraparound support service that integrates settlement, educational/training and other specialized supports around the individual with an emphasis on building the client’s capacity to cope with their life situations, function successfully in everyday living, and access regular settlement services, learning opportunities, and other support systems.”

The primary objective of VIPP is to help clients gain the capacity to cope with their issues and associated barriers and to acquire sufficient skills to participate in regular settlement or community services and programs. Another objective is to provide a coordinated support system across service sectors in communities with a critical mass of vulnerable immigrant populations (such as Surrey).

Key Services are detailed in the chart below. Note that these services are not necessarily listed below in any order of importance, nor in a sequence that reflects how services are to be delivered to a client.

<b>Direct Client Services</b>	<b>Description</b>
1. Client Outreach and Intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A client outreach process that contacts and recruits from Vulnerable Immigrant Population groups</li> <li>• An intake process using immigration status and vulnerability to determine client’s eligibility</li> </ul>
2. Needs Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of needs, barriers, strengths and assets that impact successful Settlement and Integration in relation to a variety of life domains (e.g. family, housing, financial, health etc.)</li> <li>• Formal or informal assessment of competencies and skills (e.g. Literacy, communication skills, workplace knowledge and skills) to determine skill development needs</li> <li>• Referral to clinical assessments, such as mental health or psychological assessment</li> </ul>
3. A Wraparound Support Service for each client	<p>Working with the client, a team of service practitioners and, if appropriate, the client’s family to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set goals/objectives based on findings from the needs assessments;</li> <li>• Case planning for service interventions, and in due course, program</li> </ul>



Direct Client Services	Description
	<p>exit and transition support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate access to multiple service interventions that include a mix of both one-on-one/family services (i below), group services (ii below);</li> <li>• Coordinate with other relevant external services/supports;</li> <li>• Monitor actions/service interventions relevant to client’s personal and family needs and assess progress;</li> <li>• Monitor any changes in skills, knowledge, attitude or behaviours to determine client’s progress and readiness to transition to other services and support systems (Settlement, training, etc); and</li> <li>• Provide follow-up monitoring as the client exits the program.</li> </ul>
<p>i. One-on-one/Family Services</p>	<p>a) Settlement Information and Personalized Counselling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation to the physical environment, Canadian society (e.g. social and cultural norms, gender roles, Canadian way of life, health, legal, school and employment systems, rights and responsibilities) and community and government services;</li> <li>• Counselling clients on social or cultural adjustment and other issues related to the Settlement process; and</li> <li>• Teaching coping skills to manage personal and family adjustment issues, crisis situations or other migration-related stress.</li> </ul> <p>b) Practical Assistance and Supported Access to Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping to apply for available benefits or subsidies;</li> <li>• Helping to locate affordable housing and food, including liaison with landlords, shopping for necessities;</li> <li>• Showing clients how to take public transit;</li> <li>• Helping clients find supportive employment;</li> <li>• Seeking out relevant government and community services that can help to address the clients’ unique barriers and difficulties;</li> <li>• Coordinating service appointments for the clients and accompanying clients to provide language and cultural interpretation;</li> <li>• Seeking out and connecting clients to groups where the client may obtain additional social, cultural or emotional support; and</li> <li>• Any other practical help that assists the client meet basic everyday needs.</li> </ul> <p>c) Visitation and Home Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing support to clients in the home where appropriate (e.g.</li> </ul>

Direct Client Services	Description
	<p>orientation to household operations, street safety, emergency services, child safety); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting/meeting with clients in common spaces in their immediate neighbourhood so that clients feel safe to connect with their community (e.g. at the local library, coffee shop or park close to the client’s home).</li> </ul> <p>d) Peer Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging clients with peer mentors or volunteers for social support and practical assistance where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p>ii. Group Services</p>	<p>a) Social and Emotional Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating support groups to promote emotional healing, confidence, social interaction and a sense of connectedness;</li> <li>• Facilitating group work to support family relations in a new cultural context, engaging family members (including parents, Children, or elders) where appropriate;</li> <li>• Engaging clients in a group setting with peer mentors or volunteers for social support and practical assistance; and</li> <li>• In a group setting, teaching coping skills needed to manage physical/mental health issues, family adjustment issues, crisis situations or other migration-related stress.</li> </ul> <p>b) Life Skills, Literacy and Essential Skills Development (where these hinder everyday living or successful Settlement and Integration)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching Life Skills and basic Literacy necessary to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life within/outside the home and communicate with others; and</li> <li>• Teaching foundational Essential Skills and Employability Skills necessary to function in a learning or work setting</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: The Ministry suggests that limiting group sizes to approximately 8-12 clients at a time would provide the most appropriate level of service.</p>
<p>4. Transition Support and Program Exit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting those clients who have gained sufficient capabilities through this program with another support system such as a regular Settlement service (e.g. to access case management support provided in the Ministry-funded Settlement and Integration Program), an adult education program, or a vocational training program for ESL learners</li> </ul>

Direct Client Services	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating with receiving support system to develop and implement a transition plan for clients</li> <li>• Providing follow-up support service for client in coordination with receiving services/programs if appropriate</li> <li>• Assessing clients for achievement of personal and program Outcomes and readiness to exit this program</li> </ul>

Program Delivery Support Services	Description
1. Program Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing referral protocols with other service practitioners or institutions that also serve or come into contact with Vulnerable Immigrant Populations (such as crisis centres, victims services, health practitioners)</li> <li>• Clarifying program objectives and eligibility with stakeholders; and</li> <li>• Establishing contacts with local stakeholders (such as churches and temples, ethnic businesses or organizations) to seek out isolated and vulnerable clients</li> </ul>
2. Volunteer Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting, training and supervising volunteer/peer mentors</li> <li>• Coordinating, supporting and monitoring activities that involve volunteers</li> </ul>
3. Support Case-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing team meetings to discuss client cases</li> <li>• Maintaining case notes and case files</li> <li>• Preparing reports</li> </ul>
4. Service Bridging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a close network with other agencies or systems to leverage expertise and resources</li> <li>• Maintaining relation with social services, training and educational institutions and any other support systems that will receive clients when they exit this program</li> </ul>
5. Staff and Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing staff with professional development opportunities or training relevant to their work with vulnerable clients</li> <li>• Developing service delivery tools and resources (e.g. teaching resources, curriculum, information materials for clients)</li> </ul>

<b>Program Access Support for Clients</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p>1. Client Transportation Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing clients with transit tickets or bus passes</li> <li>• Chartering shuttle buses</li> <li>• Arranging rides for clients</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: The purpose of this support is to enhance access to direct services described above.</p>
<p>2. Child-minding Care Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring for Children when caregivers are receiving group or one-on-one services under this program as appropriate</li> <li>• Maintaining Child-minding records, as related to the provision of Child-minding services.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: The purpose of this service is to support clients' access to group and one-on-one services as appropriate. Child-minding is <u>only</u> provided during those times when caregivers are receiving services described above. Child-minding is limited to Children 12 years of age and under.</p> <p>NOTE: New legislative requirements for child-minding sessions greater than two hours will be in place for the start of VIPP services (refer to Appendix K) In addition, the WelcomeBC child-minding standards (refer to Appendix L) will be revised accordingly for child-minding sessions and will be provided to the successful Proponents. It is assumed that most children from vulnerable families accessing VIPP services will likely to have higher needs, Contractors may choose to provide child-minding at a lower ratio of up to 1 child-minding staff to 6 units.</p>

**Refugee Trauma Support Project (RTSP):  
Developing a Surrey Plan for Trauma Support Services and  
Linkages for Refugee Children, Youth and Their Families**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Barriers**

- Assignment of case managers to address social support needs of refugees;
- Collaboratively developed transitional plans from first point of contact at ISS;
- A formalized referral process that allows for early identification;
- Assigned system navigators;
- Access to training in “Mental Health First Aid” course must be made available for all frontline staff charged with supporting refugees.

**Service Access**

- Increased Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Outreach presence required;
- Establish Gate Keeping role with Early Childhood Development (ECD) and First Language Agencies;
- Clarify role responsibilities in the service provision continuum for service navigation, support, education, and knowledge transfer;
- Formalize the referral process regardless of current state of readiness as this will present opportunities for creative problem solving and collaborative planning.

**Training Issues**

- Increased Cultural Awareness Training and access to the following modules for settlement workers: “Understanding Trauma, Understanding the Settlement Journey and Needs of Refugees and an Overview of Child and Youth Mental Health Services and Service Delivery Model”;
- Referral sources as the target audience for cross sectoral training and knowledge transfer, such as: settlement workers, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) workers, First Steps outreach and multi-cultural workers, school counsellors and resource classroom teachers, clinicians and therapists;
- Orientation hand-outs made available for the clinical community (i.e. GPs, emergency room physicians);
- A joint systems approach to staff orientation;
- Planned on-going annual community education and information sharing forums are required to provide information and shift mindsets.

**Awareness Campaign**

- Educate staff and the community on CYMH service continuum;
- Establish channels of information exchange;

- Best practice forums for information exchange, community education, sponsorship and a voice for Refugee Trauma Support Project (RTSP) and the work of RTSP can be addressed by the development of an RTSP website;
- Name change from “Mental Health” to “Community Wellness”

### **System’s Issues**

- The Surrey Working Group would like the Service System Partners / and Funders to consider the development of a protocol agreement between Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation (MJTI), Fraser Health, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), School District, City of Surrey and the RCMP as a means of adding support to the current community partnership framework. This will allow for more formalized partnership commitments across mandates and on-going community capacity building;
- More collaborative approaches across potential referring sources for refugees who may be in need of trauma support from their first point of contact at ISSofBC and the Bridge Clinic to the identified receiving community, e.g. for
  - a. support and community integration or possibly,
  - b. a more in-depth New Canadian Clinic Assessment and Triage is essential to improve on community integration and a seamless transition. (*“Refugees require support beyond 8.30 to 4.30 and across many support systems”*);
- Develop a Surrey collaborative planning MH framework for problem solving, e.g. “it is important that the right people are at the table to problem solving issues”;
- Joint collaborative work between CYMH and First Language Agencies is essential for the engagement of refugees and the development of cultural knowledge and expertise as well as knowledge transfer in building a community road map to cultural competence and systems readiness;
- Building the cultural capacity of our staff teams, its cultural competence, knowledge transfer and relationships is best achieved through shared staff training experiences;
- In addition to what is stated above, the basic transition needs of refugees, such as: housing, employment, social/system’s connections, - are basic requirements to issue of readiness for any MH intervention to be successful;
- 3-6 month appointment wait time after spending months on making systems connections with this population group is counter productive

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

### **Immediate Goals**

- To strengthen services for refugees in need of trauma support, given that this population group is not able to mobilize itself through the doors of a community based mental health office due to many issues related to stigma and language literacy, therefore, an incrementally staged process for building cultural competence, systems readiness, trust and credibility may be best acquired by a shift in the current CYMH practice model that allows for an increased outreach capacity of CYMH clinicians working hand in hand with First Language Agency Clinicians / Therapists within a First Language Agency setting where relationships can be forged; trust and credibility within the refugee community and across community and other governmental organizations and front-line workers can be developed and positively impact services, service access and community partnerships.

- Collaborative relationships and strengthening linkages can be improved through designing and establishing of training forums that target all workers providing supports to refugees regardless of their position. This will significantly increase the understanding and awareness of all refugee support workers whether they are system navigators, educators, support workers, case managers, potential referral sources or therapists. This will serve to enrich the community's capacity to improve pathways and linkages that are sustainable and more effective.
- A more clearly defined assessment and referral pathway for refugees transitioning from Welcome House to each community is required if we are to effect greater role efficiency of Settlement Programs and minimize any further opportunities for refugees to fall through the cracks when being transitioned to a community.
- An assigned refugee case manager is required from the point of contact at Welcome House to the community.
- A formalized referral process is required for every refugee family entering the First Steps / Early Years Project / any other settlement programs.
- An assigned gate-keeping role for the identification and referral of refugees should be developed and assigned to a mental health consultant attached to the First Steps / Early Years for the shepherding of these referrals to a joint community CYMH First Language Intake process, e.g., joint CYMH / New Canadian Clinic / First Language Agency / ADMH intake process.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

### **Short Term Goals**

- Annual cross-sectoral training and skill building opportunities for on-going capacity building in the area of cultural sensitivity (planning with sustainability in mind) to increase system's expertise in culturally appropriate service provision.
- Use of referral pathway process/map as a framework and policy guide for sustainability with identified review periods for modification and updating should be considered. This may also include a review of existing protocol agreements.
- Establish an information channel/resource where the data / expertise will be made public knowledge, e.g., for joint reflective discussions and ongoing learning.
- Bring on board cultural media sources to ensure the target audience - refugees will be reached / invited / exposed to new / or basic MH information knowledge relevant to the community and the refugee population group.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY**

### **Long Term Goals**

- Culturally sensitive language considerations for service delivery and bridging the gap across cultural groups. The term "Mental Health" is neither understood, nor well received within mainstream or across other cultural divides, consideration should be given to a possible name change that is more reflective of a "Wellness Model".

**At Home in Surrey? The Housing Experiences of Refugees in Surrey, B.C.  
Prepared by: Kathy Sherrell and Immigrant Services Society of BC, June 2009**

**Key Findings & Recommendations**

**KEY FINDINGS<sup>1</sup>**

High unemployment and increasing layoffs are prevalent among participants in both interviews and focus groups. At the time of the interview only 8 of 24 respondents were employed; three more reported having been laid off in the previous month. Employment and provincial social assistance are the two main sources of household income. Over half of respondents are dependent on some type of government transfer (e.g. social assistance, disability, resettlement assistance program benefits).

The overwhelming majority of respondents (23/34) live in rental accommodations in the private market. While the Karen are concentrated within two complexes in the Cedar Hills area, the Sudanese are more dispersed around the Guilford Town Centre and Whalley Town Centre areas. Both groups exhibit low mobility, with 11 Karen and 6 Sudanese respondents and their families still living in their initial accommodations.

Affordability challenges are widespread, with 15 of the 22 respondents providing affordability information spending upwards of 51% of monthly household income on housing. Alarming, 7 of 22 respondents allocate over 75% of monthly household income on housing, placing them at extreme risk of absolute homelessness. Anecdotal evidence in both interviews and focus groups indicates “sofa surfing” is on the rise.

Difficulties in reconciling low incomes, whether from employment in low-paying, part-time jobs or dependence on insufficient RAP or MHSD benefits, with high rents is aggravated for many by the need to begin repaying Federal Government travel loans (incurred travelling to Canada) one year after arrival.

While the housing is in better physical condition than may be expected by previous research, almost all households are experiencing significant overcrowding (e.g. households of 4 and 5 in a one bedroom unit, or 6-8 in a two bedroom unit). Crowding may be higher even within suites, as families attempt to separate male and female youths and adults.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers and percentages provided in findings refer to individual interviews as detailed information was not collected in focus groups.



Barriers to finding housing include the need to reconcile low incomes and high rents, size of households, and a lack of knowledge (e.g. about how to find housing). In particular, respondents in focus groups and interviews identified a need for information about BC Housing programs, as well as the City of Surrey itself.

The ability to access assistance has been widespread among participants. In addition to ISS<sub>of</sub>BC, existing ethnocultural and church organizations in Surrey have provided help with housing, employment, interpreters and the provision of household goods.

When asked to reflect on their experiences since coming to Canada and identify what would have helped, respondents identified three key needs:

- Improved access to both English language classes *and* job training classes, either pre-arrival or within the first year in Canada.
- Access to a Surrey-based housing search specialist who can provide ongoing support and locally-relevant information; and,
- Having good quality and affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods arranged prior to arrival.

The goals of this research are two-fold: to assess the current housing situations of refugees, and to explore existing supports and barriers to housing that exist in Surrey, BC. The portrait that emerges is complicated. It is one of poverty, overcrowding and barriers to housing and employment. And yet, it is one of hope in the face of these difficulties. Given the current global economic situation and downturns in the local economy, however, the future is uncertain.

The tenuous financial situations in which many respondents find themselves are currently being threatened by downturns in the economy. The tendency for respondents to be employed in construction, hospitality and service jobs places the few who are employed at risk of future layoffs or reduced hours. For those on the edge, the results could too easily become absolute homelessness.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

#### Short-term

- (1) Provide correct information, in first language, about linkages between repayment of **government transportation loans** and ability to obtain Canadian citizenship and/or travel documents.
- (2) **Re-examine initial (furniture) move-in package for GARs.**
- (3) **Increase the number of housing search workers** to provide targeted housing related support during their first year in Canada.

### **Long-term**

- (4) Eliminate **government transportation loans for refugees**.
- (5) **Establish a national shelter rate for the Resettlement Assistance Program**.
- (6) Expand **English and employment training** (pre-arrival or in first year after arrival).
- (7) Provide more **accurate pre-departure information** (e.g. about employment, housing).

## **MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (MHSD)**

### **Short-term**

- (1) **Arrange periodic first language information sessions** for GARs to explain about housing assistance programs, and assist in filling out applications.
- (2) **Translate documents into appropriate languages** (e.g. Po, Arabic, Nuer).
- (3) **Make the assignment of available BC Housing units a more transparent process**.

### **Long-term**

- (4) **Build more social housing**, including larger units, to alleviate waitlists.
- (5) Explore **alternative housing delivery models** (e.g. modular housing models).
- (6) **Eliminate the one-year residency requirement for the BC-Rental Assistance Program**.
- (7) **Convert some of the existing social housing stock into larger spaces** (e.g. by combining two 2 bedroom units).
- (8) **Raise the income support rates** for low income, underemployed BC residents. Include **transportation allowances** for low income families.

## **MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENT (IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION BRANCH - IIB)**

### **Short-term**

- (1) **Explore targeted funding for housing search settlement specialists in key cities in BC**.
- (2) Fund a **discussion paper exploring the feasibility of a 'Family-Host Housing Program'** (FHHP).

### **Long-term**

- (3) Establish a program focused upon **housing and housing support** (e.g. similar to the Ministry's Step Ahead Program).
- (4) Provide **funding to alleviate transportation costs** (e.g. bus tickets) for newcomers accessing English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) classes.
- (5) Provide **funding for pre-employment skill-based training programs** for low skilled GARs

## CITY OF SURREY

### Short-term

- (1) **Increased education** on refugee issues for municipally funded services.
- (2) **Encourage greater community understanding** of the experiences of refugees.
- (3) **Promote the Community Bridging/Host program** (e.g. ISSofBC Host Program for Refugees, DIVERSEcity Host Program) to encourage volunteering to support newcomers.
- (4) Provide newcomers with a **‘Welcome to Surrey’ letter** that can be translated and given to refugee newcomers, as well as posted on the City of Surrey website.
- (5) **Disseminate this report to key stakeholders** including other Metro Vancouver Mayors, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, BC Housing, and the Ministers of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and Housing and Social Development.

### Long-term

- (6) Create and distribute a **Newcomers Guide to Surrey** brochure.
- (7) Create a multilingual “Welcome to Surrey” rotating sign on the City’s website.
- (8) Encourage Surrey’s Mayor and Council to **lobby** the Government of Canada **to eliminate Government Transportation Loans for refugees.**

**THE WORK OF THE DIVERSITY  
INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP  
PRESENTATION TO DIVERSITY INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE:  
JUNE 8, 2012**

**Recommendations/Action Commitments**

1. A community-planning table representative of all stakeholders in the area of settlement/integration is essential to create those community conditions most conducive to the effective settlement of all new immigrant populations. Such a table would target support for newly-arrived refugees, both GAR and PSR.

Organizational Questions:

- Who needs to sit at this planning table?
- What process would be employed to invite community stakeholders?
- What commitment would the stakeholders make to the success of the table?
- What “constitutional guidelines” would govern the work of the planning table?
- Who would chair the operation of the table?
- Is it possible that there be both a broad community planning table as well as more compact and specific groups that target specific areas of intervention?

2. Undertake to inventory all services currently available in support of immigrants in Surrey. This process will require the clarification of service mandates. What, for example, are the roles, responsibilities and processes that clearly demarcate the mandate of the Welcome Centre, and how is its mandate distinct from the mandate of SUCCESS or Options?

3. In developing an inventory of services use an established and well-understood service model to clarify intent of the program. The three-pronged service model (Preventative, Intervention, Enforcement Services) may be well-suited for this purpose, though the Universal Model used within Student Services (Universal, Targetted, and Intensive Services) may work equally well. Given that the Preventative, Intervention Enforcement framework is designed to showcase crime prevention initiatives, the Working Group expressed a preference for the Universal Model that is more reflective of the collective work done by the partners in the service of settlement/integration.

4. Ensure that through the planning process careful consideration is given to the availability and accessibility of programs, given the access challenges faced by vulnerable populations.

5. Settlement service-providers recognize that a major challenge faced by immigrants involves the navigation of pathways to effective services. A central issue in the matter of access is the need for the sharing/exchange of information between and among the various agencies responsible for the delivery of services. Policy guidelines governing issues of privacy and confidentiality of client information need to be established which would allow for the more timely and efficient exchange of information.

6. Develop program to support Cultural Competence among all service providers, so that there can be a common understanding of the history and cultural values of the population being served.

7. Ensure the use of a case management approach that a) provides for the appropriateness and continuity of service and b) develops resourcefulness and resilience among members of the vulnerable population.

8. Hire a Settlement Services Coordinator to work with all partners to support the partnership and ensure that the refugee strategy in support of vulnerable populations is followed.

9. Ensure that the infrastructure that is developed will provide institutional support for current and future agencies dealing with the vulnerable populations by stipulating the conditions under which that support is given.

10. Provide in-service and guidance for frontline workers informing them of services available to support members of the immigrant community across the full spectrum of vulnerability.