



As the Sponsor or lead agency, the City's role was to establish a Welcoming Communities Committee and, by means of the Committee, to develop and implement a Welcoming Communities Action Plan. The MOU with the Province had a term from January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee (the "Committee") included approximately 25 members representing diverse sectors of the community including the City, Surrey School District, business community, education sector, and non-profit agencies. The list of organizations is provided in Appendix I of this report.

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Action Plan was based on the Committee's assessment of Surrey's needs and the barriers for new immigrants and refugees to feel welcomed and included in Surrey. The Action Plan focussed on:

- Access to Employment;
- Intercultural Understanding, Relationships & Trust;
- Creating Welcoming Spaces & Services; and
- Limited Understanding of Refugees.

The Action Plan was formally approved by the Province on March 1, 2013.

Corporate Report No. R017 (January 28, 2013) and Corporate Report No. R065 (April 8, 2013) provide further information about the Welcoming Communities Program and Action Plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Action Plan was implemented from March 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. Under the guidance of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee, all of the activities outlined in the Action Plan were successfully completed.

Under the terms of a two-year Contribution Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Surrey will now embark on a Local Immigration Partnership project.

### **Surrey Welcoming Communities Program**

Under the guidance of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee, youth, the business and education sectors, service providers, and the community-at-large were engaged in activities to make Surrey more welcoming and inclusive of new immigrants and refugees.

#### ***Refugee Myth Busting Campaign***

The Refugee Myth Busting Campaign included a multi-faceted series of events and activities to raise awareness of the refugee experience as well as refugees' contributions to the community.

- Information & Resources – Based on research and focus groups with refugees, a number of resources were developed.
  - *Global Voices Newsletters* – Four newsletters were produced focussing on the themes of: refugees (summer 2013) government refugee transportation loan (fall 2013); youth (December 2013) and employment (March 2014);

- *Refugee Newcomers in Surrey – Changing Faces and Neighbourhoods – 2010-2013* – This report provides information on refugees at the international, national, provincial and local level, as well as maps of settlement patterns of government assisted refugees in Surrey; and
- *Refugee Newcomers in Surrey, Approaches to build a more welcoming and inclusive community* – This report highlights the results of a scan of promising practices that support refugees' community integration and summarizes the findings of the refugee focus groups.
- Education Sector Training & Resources – Over 600 education sector staff (elementary, high school and post-secondary) participated in training. Three different types of training sessions were offered.
  - Expressive art therapists used art produced by refugee children to create an art installation. This was used as a focal point for sessions delivered to elementary school staff. The children's art and stories were also compiled into a book;
  - An expressive art therapist provided sessions on refugee trauma. *A Resource Guide for Supporting Children with Refugee Experience* and a 12-minute video were also developed; and
  - A group of six refugee youth developed and delivered a workshop for secondary and post-secondary teachers and support staff. A video was made of interviews with some of the youth involved in developing the workshop.
- Museum Exhibit – The Surrey Museum created a portable exhibit on *Surrey – A Place of Refuge*. The exhibit was presented at Surrey Central Library, Surrey City Hall, School District, SFU Surrey Campus, Kwantlen Surrey Campus, and RCMP Surrey Detachment.

### ***Welcoming Spaces and Workplaces Reviews***

Newcomers were recruited and trained to "review" spaces and places in Surrey. The places represent various services or spaces a newcomer would use or visit while settling in Surrey, ranging from service to education, recreation and retail. The reviewers were asked to look for best or promising practices.

In total, the reviewers visited 30 organizations and, using a standardized assessment tool, provided their perspectives and opinions on the welcoming nature of each location. Individual reports were prepared for each participant organization or business. A final report was prepared that summarizes the key findings both in terms of promising and best practices that were identified across the 30 spaces, and recommendations that can be adapted for a range services or organizations in Surrey.

### ***Youth Projects***

Three WCP projects focussed on engaging youth in better understanding and taking action to welcome and include their newcomer peers.

- Surrey Leadership Action Conference and Projects – A weekend Surrey Leadership Youth Action Conference was held in October 2013 with over 100 youth in attendance. As a follow-up to the conference, youth developed and conducted seven community service projects. In addition, 17 refugee/newcomer youth from Umoja are being supported to attend a YMCA Youth Leadership Development Conference on the Sunshine Coast;

- Refugee Youth Social Media Project – A group of refugee youth created three films about their experiences settling in Surrey. To date, the films have been showcased at four community conferences/events, as well as being posted online and on various Facebook accounts;
- City of Surrey Volunteer Program Review & Pilot Project – The City of Surrey's volunteer application process requires applicants to complete a Volunteer Criminal Record Check. The Criminal Record Check requires a five year minimum residency in Canada in order to process. This project explored strategies for reducing the barriers and increasing the inclusion of refugee youth who want to become volunteers and have been living in Canada for less than five years.

Three focus groups were held with refugee youth to gain an understanding of their interests relative to volunteering. Based on the youths' feedback, the City recruited and trained seven government assisted refugees as volunteers for a spring day camp program. Since the youth were not able to complete a Volunteer Criminal Record Check, an alternative process and procedures were developed that included additional training and orientation, and the pairing of each refugee youth with an experienced City volunteer. The volunteer experience proved to be rewarding for all the youth involved.

### ***Employer and Business Presentations and Forums***

Through a partnership with the Surrey Board of Trade, a number of short presentations were made to the business/employer community at Board of Trade events throughout the year. In addition, in February 2014, a "*Business and Immigrant Workforce Strategies – A Leadership Surrey Dialogue*" was held. This event brought together employers and skilled immigrant job seekers to dialogue on issues related to immigrant workforce integration.

### ***Service Provider Welcoming Communities Events***

Two events for immigrant serving and mainstream service agencies were organized – a networking event in June 2013 and a conference in February 2014. These events provided networking and information sharing opportunities, as well as training on current demographics, new programs and services, and changes to immigration policies. Resources and "learnings" from the Welcoming Communities projects were also shared.

### ***Dialogues Inspired By Cooking and Food***

Six cooking dialogues were held. Each dialogue focussed on a specific ethnic cuisine including: Korean, Indian, Pilipino, Chinese, African, and Middle Eastern. At the sessions a local chef led an interactive cooking demonstration of an appetizer, main course and dessert related to the region profiled. During the cooking demonstration participants learned about the origins of the ingredients, recipes, preparation traditions and the histories of the people who created them. The dialogues were facilitated by a diversity and inclusion specialist who infused the sessions with information and guided discussion.

## **Websites**

Two websites were regularly updated throughout the project:

- [www.wicsurrey.org](http://www.wicsurrey.org) - This site, which was developed by SurreyCares (formerly the Surrey Foundation), served as the main website for the project; and
- [www.getintheknow.ca](http://www.getintheknow.ca) - This site, which was developed by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, provides information related to welcoming workplaces.

## **Local Immigration Partnership**

On April 1, 2014, responsibility for immigrant settlement services in British Columbia transitioned from the provincial to the federal government. Citizenship and Immigration Canada ("CIC") has a Local Immigration Partnership program that is intended to "enhance collaboration, coordination and strategic planning at the community level".

According to CIC, Local Immigration Partnerships are community-based partnerships that:

- Systematize local engagement of service providers and other institutions in newcomers' integration process;
- Support community-level research and strategic planning; and
- Improve coordination of effective services that facilitate immigration settlement and integration.

While the Local Immigration Partnership has similarities to the BC Welcoming Communities Program, a key distinction is that the Local Immigration Partnership does not fund the implementation of strategies and action plans.

## ***Surrey Local Immigration Partnership***

In response to a Call for Proposals in July 2013, the City of Surrey submitted an application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for a Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. The application was successful and on March 26, 2014, the City signed a two-year Contribution Agreement ("Agreement") with the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism for:

- \$313,000 in 2014-2015; and
- \$292,512. in 2015-2016.

According to the Agreement, over the next two years the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership will:

- Establish a partnership council that is broad-based, diverse and representative of the community;
- Conduct research on newcomers needs and services, as well as the community's assets and gaps, and raise awareness of these needs;
- Develop a local settlement strategic plan identifying key priorities in the community; and
- Develop an action plan.

Updates on the Local Immigration Partnership will be provided to Council. A final report and local settlement strategic plan will be forwarded to Council at the completion of the project in the spring of 2016.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Welcoming Communities Program and Local Immigration Partnership assist in achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly the following action items:

- SC5: Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents; and
- SC12: Adapting to Demographic Change.

## **CONCLUSION**

The successful settlement and integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of the community is of vital importance to the on-going health and vitality of Surrey.

Over the past year, the Surrey Welcoming Communities Program was successful in establishing a multi-sector Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee and developing and implementing a Welcoming Communities Action Plan. A range of interesting and innovative events and activities were organized, and resources were developed that enhance Surrey's capacity to welcome and include new immigrants and refugees. Surrey will now build on the work of the Welcoming Communities Program and establish a Local Immigration Partnership.

*Original signed by*  
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General Manager,  
Planning and Development

AM:saw

Attachment:

Appendix I Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee Representatives

## Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee

Surrey's Welcoming Communities Committee includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Alexander Neighbourhood House
- City of Surrey – Planning Department, Surrey Libraries, Parks Recreation and Culture Department, and Human Resources
- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- Douglas College
- Fraser Health Authority
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre (formerly Kla-how-eya)
- Immigrant Services Society of BC
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society
- Options Community Services Society
- Pacific Community Resource Society
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services
- RCMP
- Semiahmoo House Society
- Simon Fraser University
- Sources
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Surrey Board of Trade
- Surrey Cares (Surrey Foundation)
- Surrey School District
- Umoja
- YMCA