

2016 / 2019

STRATEGIC PLAN
TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

MARCH 2016

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MESSAGE FROM THE TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP CO-CHAIRS

The Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership (Tri-Cities LIP) is pleased to outline its vision for the development of a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers and long-time residents in the Tri-Cities, British Columbia.

This Strategic Plan provides our community with a roadmap to address key settlement and integration needs of newcomers in the region. Integration is viewed in this plan as a “two-way street” requiring accommodation and adjustments, including responsibilities from both newcomers and the receiving community. Newcomer in this plan refers to a person who has settled in Canada less than five years ago.

As one of the fastest growing communities in Metro Vancouver with high population growth projections, in addition to rapid economic development and rising employment opportunities, it is vital that all residents participate, integrate and are retained in the local economy and community. We envision that the Tri-Cities become a region in which all residents live, work and belong in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The membership of the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership Council will be leaders in the implementation of this plan over the next three years and will work with the community to develop local solutions to support the development of a community where everyone can be welcomed and belong.

On behalf of the Tri-Cities local immigration Partnership.

Sandra Wilking
Director of Operations
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
Tri-Cities LIP Council Co-Chair

Sylvia Ceacero
Chief Executive Officer
SHARE Family and Community Services
Tri-Cities LIP Council Co-Chair

March 2016



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership would like to thank the Government of Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada), for its support of the Tri-Cities LIP. The formation of the Tri-Cities LIP has enabled community service providers, local government and associations in the Tri-Cities to gain an increased understanding of community needs related to immigrant integration and develop community based solutions so that newcomers can settle and fully engage in the social, economic, and political life of the Tri-Cities.

The Tri-Cities LIP would also like to thank the numerous professionals working in various sectors across the Tri-Cities for all their invaluable hours and in-kind contributions that they provided in support of this initiative. These include the municipal governments, settlement and community service providers, libraries, financial institutions, post-secondary, the school district, health, employment services, business, and community associations. We are grateful for the dedication and time of all these organizations including their contributions to this strategic plan.

The membership of the Tri-Cities LIP acknowledges the numerous newcomers, residents, employers and businesses who contributed to the research and consultations that have formed the basis of this strategic plan. Hundreds of individuals took part in the research, surveys and community consultations and their input has contributed to all levels of this plan.

In particular, we would like to thank the Tri-Cities LIP Council and Tri-Cities LIP Strategic Planning Working Group. Throughout the fall and spring of 2015-2016, the members of the Council and the Working Group have provided direction and guidance that has led to the formation of this plan. We also extend our thanks to all the organizations, businesses and employers that participated in the Community Forums and for providing their insights and recommendations to address key settlement and employment integration challenges in the Tri-Cities. The input and feedback provided at the Community Forums were instrumental in forming this plan.

The Tri-Cities LIP is greatly appreciative and thankful for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for funding this initiative, without which this plan would not be possible.

Message from the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership Co-Chairs	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of Contents	4
Executive Summary	5
Overview of the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership	6
<i>Tri-Cities Local Immigration Council and Partnership Membership 2014 - 2016</i>	7
Community Profile	9
<i>Tri-Cities Immigrants and Population Demographics</i>	9
<i>Growth Projections</i>	9
<i>Language</i>	9
<i>Why Newcomers Choose to Settle in the Tri-Cities</i>	10
<i>Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers</i>	11
<i>Settlement and Integration</i>	11
<i>Connection to Community</i>	13
<i>Civic Engagement</i>	13
<i>Newcomers and the Tri-Cities Labour Market</i>	14
<i>Labour Market Needs and Trends According to Tri-Cities Employers</i>	16
<i>Employer Recommendation to Foster Labour Market Integration</i>	16
Vision, Mission and Values	18
<i>Vision Statement</i>	18
<i>Mandate</i>	18
<i>Mission Statement</i>	18
<i>Guiding Values and Beliefs</i>	18
Our Vision, Priorities and Goals at a Glance	19
Tri-Cities LIP Strategic Plan	20
<i>Priority #1: Immigrant Labour Market Integration</i>	20
<i>Priority #2: Newcomers' Knowledge of and Access to Community Information and Services</i>	22
<i>Priority #3: Social Isolation of Tri-Cities Newcomers</i>	24
<i>Priority #4: Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers</i>	26
Tri-Cities LIP Contact Information	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, the Tri-Cities has experienced a significantly higher growth in its immigrant population. Between 2006 and 2011, the total immigrant population grew by 16.7%, with approximately 2,550 new immigrants arriving annually, compared to 9.9% for Metro Vancouver. The Tri-Cities is considered one of the fastest growing communities with a rapidly developing economy and rising employment opportunities. Over the course of 2014-2016, the Tri-Cities LIP conducted research on the civic engagement needs of newcomers, a Tri-Cities labour market scan as well as an environmental scan which highlighted key areas that need to be addressed in order for newcomers to fully engage and contribute to the Tri-Cities community and economy. To this end, the following strategic priorities laid out in this plan regarding the civic engagement and labour market integration of newcomers need to be addressed.

This Strategic Plan is informed by the work of the Tri-Cities LIP including a number of research projects, community consultations and planning sessions. In addition, this plan is informed by the work of the Tri-Cities LIP Strategic Plan Working Group who set the direction for the Strategic Plan and provided detailed recommendations throughout. The results of these activities have led to the following strategic priorities aimed at improving the settlement and integration of Tri-Cities newcomers:

1. Immigrant Labour Market Integration
2. Newcomers' knowledge of and access to community information and services
3. Social Isolation of Tri-Cities Newcomers
4. Civic engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers

To achieve its vision and address these priorities above, the Tri-Cities has identified a number of goals. These goals will not be achieved in isolation, but rather will involve the breadth of the Tri-Cities LIP membership as well as community stakeholders, residents, and newcomers themselves.

GOALS

- 1** Tri-Cities employers are supported in accessing the recent immigrant talent pool to meet their workforce requirements.
- 2** Tri-Cities employers have the knowledge, information and capacity to build more inclusive workplaces.
- 3** Newcomers in the Tri-Cities are aware of and easily access programs and support services that increase their workplace language skills, soft skills and overall employability.
- 4** Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access community, municipal, financial and health care services.
- 5** Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access Tri-Cities settlement services.
- 6** Tri-Cities newcomers are connected in their community and have increased opportunities to connect with other residents.
- 7** Tri-Cities newcomers are civically engaged and actively participate and contribute to social and political landscape of their communities and are aware of the impact that their contributions make to their communities.

The Tri-Cities LIP will work to implement these strategic priorities and the corresponding goals and objectives over the next three years (2016-2019). In 2016-2017, a detailed implementation plan will be created by the Tri-Cities LIP membership which will contain specific actions on how the goals and objectives will be implemented in the community including measurement outcomes.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

The Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership is a multi-sectoral community planning and coordination initiative to enhance community coordination related to integration of newcomers in the Tri-Cities.

Built from a successful track record of previous Tri-Cities collaborative practices and partnerships that have been established by newcomer-serving agencies, the Tri-Cities LIP was established in 2014. Its key purpose is to engage community stakeholders in settlement and integration in order to develop community-wide strategies that will ensure the successful economic and social integration of newcomers in the Tri-Cities.

The Tri-Cities LIP Council is comprised of numerous leaders in the community from diverse sectors including representatives from:

- immigrant serving agencies,
- municipal government,
- family, seniors and community organizations,
- the municipalities,
- financial institutions,
- business and community associations,
- the school board,
- post-secondary institutions,
- libraries,
- employment services, and
- the health authority.

The Tri-Cities LIP Council, comprised of 15 senior representatives from the above organizations, acts as the decision making body that provides final review and approval of all recommendations made by working groups. Over the course of 2014-2016, the Tri-Cities LIP has benefited from the expertise of various working groups that have provided recommendations on specific areas related to the Tri-Cities LIP initiative. These have included Terms of Reference, Membership, Communications, Community Forums, Research, and the Strategic Plan. Membership of the Tri-Cities LIP also encompasses Tri-Cities LIP Partners that ensure diversity of the initiative.

The Tri-Cities LIP is further supported by six Partner Members that include representatives from the provincial government, family services, post-secondary, volunteer services, and library. Tri-Cities LIP Partner and Council members participate in working groups, Community Forums and support work of the Tri-Cities LIP.

TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION COUNCIL AND PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP 2014-2016

TRI-CITIES LIP COUNCIL MEMBERS

ORGANIZATION	NAME	TITLE
S.U.C.C.E.S.S	Sandra Wilking	Director of Operations Co-Chair of the TCLIP Council
SHARE Family & Community Services	Sylvia Ceacero	Chief Executive Officer Co-Chair of the TCLIP Council
	Roxann MacDonald	Director of Programs and Services
City of Coquitlam	Tasha Henderson	Social Planner, Planning & Development, Community Planning
	Geri Briggs-Simpson	Community Services Supervisor, Parks Recreation & Culture
Coquitlam Public Library	Todd Gnissios	Director
	Anthea Goffe	Manager, Community Services
Douglas College	Hazel Postma	Associate Vice President, Advancement & Alumni Relations
	Phil Swann	Associate Director
Fraser Health Authority	Jovana Turkovic	Community Health Specialist, Tri-Cities
ISSofBC	Kathy Sherrell	Associate Director - Settlement Services
School District #43	Krisztine Trumley	Principal - Vanier Centre Encompass K-12 and S.W.I.S. Team
Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce	Michael Hind	Chief Executive Officer
Vancity	Jennifer Taylor	Community Branch Manager, Shaughnessy Station Community Branch Community
	Susan Devlin	Branch Manager, Pinetree Community Branch
Scotiabank	Zak Khokhar	Branch Manager, Coquitlam
	Andrea Nelson	Branch Manager, Port Coquitlam
Avia Employment Services	Araz Rismani Rob Hayre	Employment Services Centre Manager Job Developer
Port Moody Public Library	Lynne Russell	Director
Tri-Cities Seniors Planning Network	King Lum	Chair
Westwood Plateau Community Association	Darlene Hepplewhite	Executive Director

TRI-CITIES LIP PARTNER MEMBERS

ORGANIZATION	NAME	TITLE
Act 2 Child and Family Services	Brad Watson	Executive Director
Ministry of Children and Family Development	Douglas Behm	Manager
Community Volunteer Connections	Stacy Ashton	Executive Director
Simon Fraser University	Matthew Grant	Community Engagement, External Relations
Westcoast Family Centres	Tanya Valois	Program Director- Tri-Cities
Terry Fox Library, Fraser Valley Regional Library	Kimberley Constable	Acting Deputy Library Manager

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Tri-Cities Immigrant and Population Demographics

The Tri-Cities is comprised of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, and two smaller communities, Anmore and Belcarra. While the Tri-Cities has no formal municipal or regional designation it is commonly referred to as a community and treated in service provision and planning as a distinct region.

The Tri-Cities is home to approximately 213,670 people of which 78,850 are immigrants, representing 37% of the total population¹. In recent years, the Tri-Cities has experienced a significantly higher growth in its immigrant population. Between 2006 and 2011, the total immigrant population grew by 16.7%, with approximately 2,550 new immigrants arriving annually, compared to 9.9% for Metro Vancouver.²

Growth Projections:

Between 2011-2014, the population in Tri-Cities increased by 6.3% to 235,654, the highest of all communities in Metro Vancouver.³ Metro Vancouver projects that the Tri-Cities' total population will rise by 65% to approximately 360,000 by 2041. Due to the fact that the immigrant population in the Tri-Cities area increased by 16.7% between 2006 and 2011, notably faster than the 10.8% increase to its total population, it can be expected that the immigrant population in the Tri-Cities will maintain at least parallel growth with the total population. As a result, the immigrant population is projected to rise by 65%, to 130,102 by 2041.

Language:

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, over 70% of the Tri-Cities' recent immigrants speak non-official languages at home.⁴ Korean is the leading non-official language spoken at home for both recent immigrant and total immigrant populations.

The top five source countries for recent immigrants are:

1. Korea (17.2%),
2. People's Republic of China (12.0%),
3. Philippines (10.6%),
4. Iran (10.5%),
5. Taiwan (4.7%)

Korean, Chinese, Filipino and Iranian immigrants make up just over half of the Tri-Cities' recent immigrant population at 50.3%.

The top five non-official languages spoken most often at home by recent immigrants are:

- Korean (16.4%),
- Farsi (11.1%),
- Mandarin (8.5%),
- Chinese n.o.s. (6.5%), and
- Spanish (4.8%).

¹ National Household Survey (NHS), 2011

² National Household Survey (NHS), 2011

³ <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Demography/PopulationEstimates.aspx>

⁴ National Household Survey (NHS), 2011

City	Total Population	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Immigrants Based on the Total Population
Coquitlam	126,456	52,080	41.7%
Port Coquitlam	56,342	16,380	29.4%
Port Moody	32,975	10,390	31.6%

Why Newcomers Choose to Settle in the Tri-Cities:

According to Tri-Cities Newcomers, the top three reasons for settling in the Tri-Cities region are family or friends who are already settled in the Tri-Cities area, affordable housing and a relatively lower cost of living, as well as the perception of the Tri-Cities as a family-oriented area. Also factoring into newcomers’ decision to move to the Tri-Cities are its good schools, safe and quiet neighbourhoods, lower crime rates, and the scenic environment. The Tri-Cities is also viewed by newcomers as not as fast-paced as Vancouver as well as friendlier and more welcoming.

Newcomers view the Tri-Cities as a place where
“People say hi and smile.”

Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers

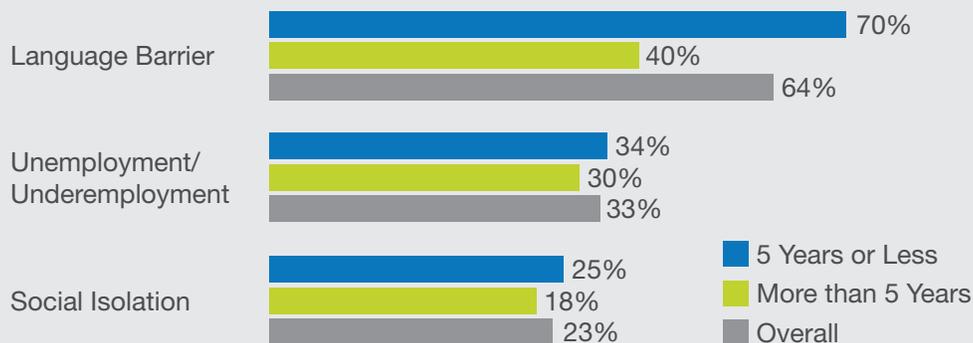
The findings from the Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities research study provides insight on three key areas: Settlement and Integration, Connection to the Community, and Civic Engagement.

Settlement and Integration:

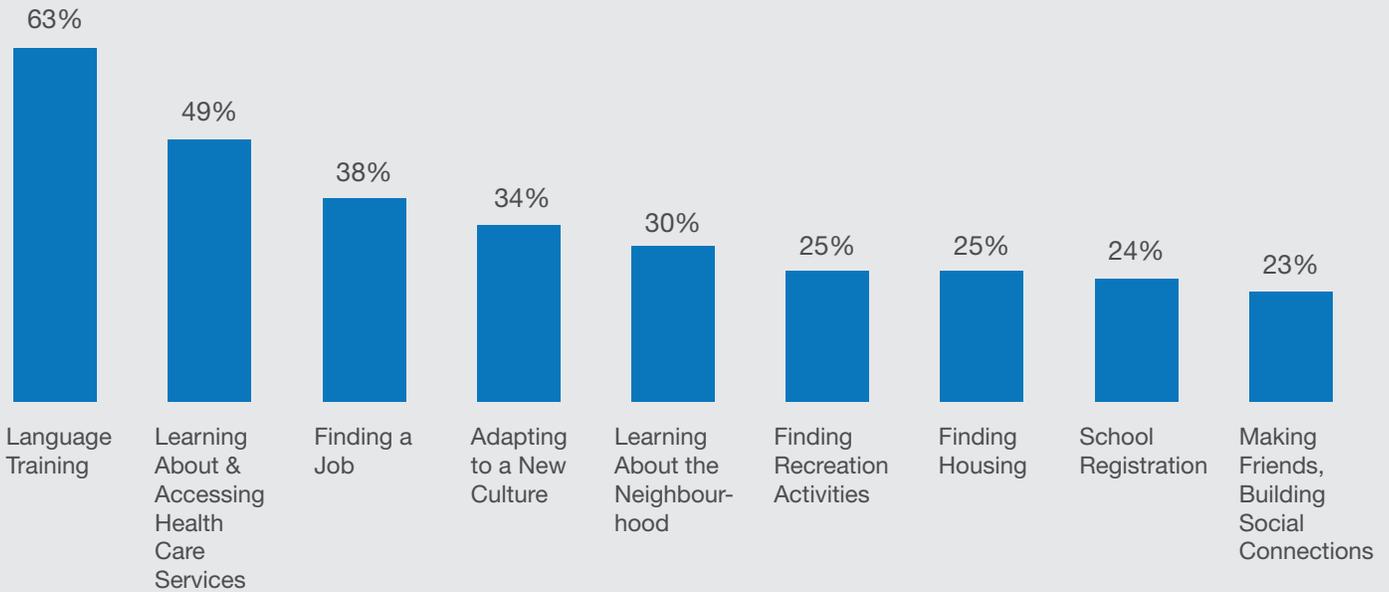
Newcomers' most common needs after arrival in the Tri-Cities are language training, followed by information and access to health care, and finding a job. Key areas where newcomers need help and are not able to receive the help they need is learning about and accessing health services, finding a job and not knowing about the community/neighborhood. Language barriers, unemployment/underemployment and social isolation remains a problem for immigrants regardless of how long they have been living in the Tri-Cities. One third of newcomers state that unemployment/underemployment still affects their daily life. However, length of time in Canada and comfort communicating in English are positively correlated with being employed.

64% of Tri-Cities Newcomers reported that a language barrier continues to pose a challenge in their lives. Unemployment/underemployment still affects 33% of newcomers, and social isolation is an ongoing issue for 23%.

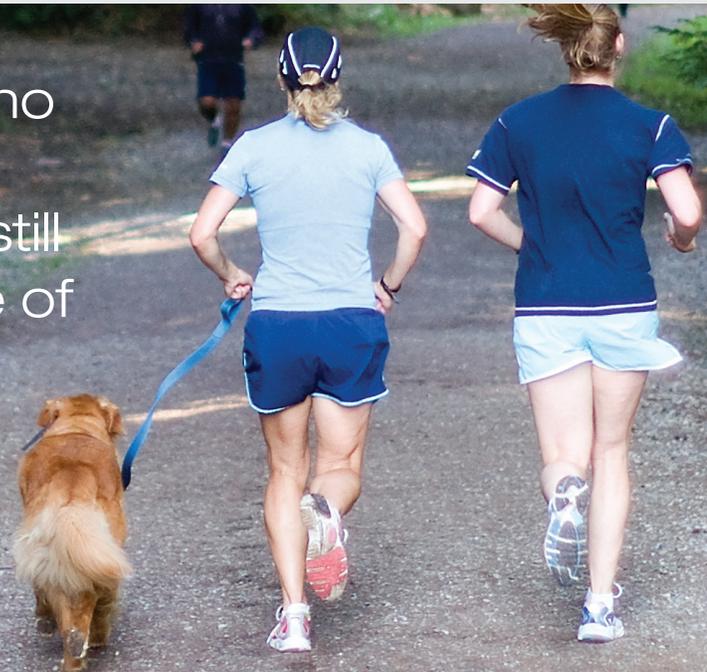
Ongoing Challenges Identified by Respondents



Since Moving to the Tri-Cities Area, Have You Ever Needed Help with Any of the Following?



69% of respondents who have lived in Tri-Cities more than 5 years are still affected by at least one of these challenges.



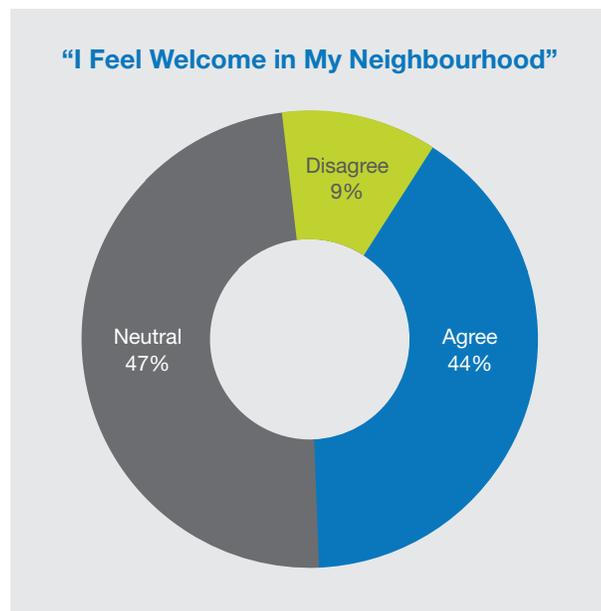
Connection to Community:

Tri-Cities newcomers experience social isolation due to lack of friends and social networks. Research findings indicated that one in four newcomer respondents feel socially isolated. More than a quarter of newcomers find it difficult to make new friends in the Tri-Cities and almost half find it hard to make friends with people from other ethnicities. Newcomers who feel more connected to their neighborhood are more likely to report higher levels of overall satisfaction with their life in the Tri-Cities. A lack of comfort communicating in English results in newcomers feeling less welcome in the neighborhood with an increased challenge in making friends.

Civic Engagement:

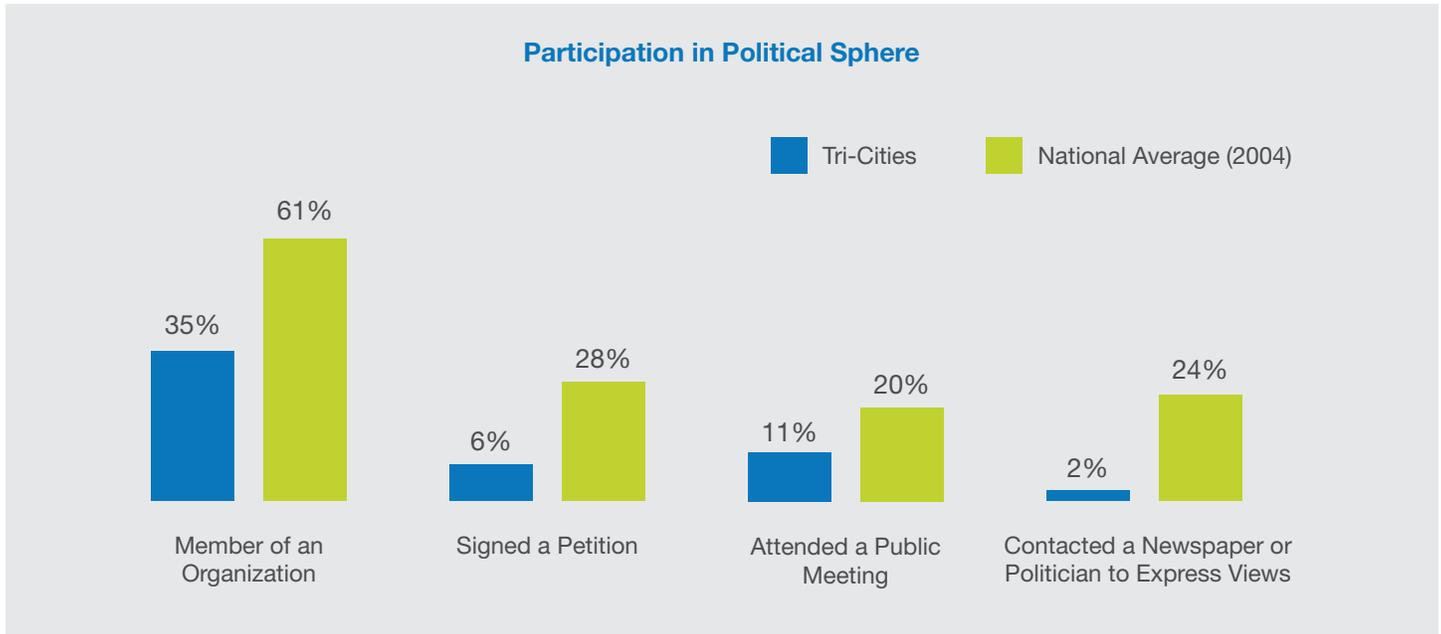
Newcomers' civic engagement occurs primarily in the social and cultural dimensions, while participation in political and economic activities is lower than the national average. Almost half (48%) of newcomers report having volunteered since moving to Canada. Newcomers' primary reason for volunteering is to help others, feel part of the community, gain experience in Canada, and to meet new people. 31% of newcomers report that unemployment or under employment is a challenge that affects their daily life. Newcomers' voting behaviour is high as 71% of those who could vote in Canada had voted. However, only 6% of newcomers indicated that they had signed a petition and only 11% indicated that they had attended a public meeting. Less than 5% of newcomer respondents had written a letter or sent an email to the city and less than 5% are members of or make donations to a political party.

Further, less than 1% of survey respondents have: attended a political meeting, rally, protest, or demonstration; contacted their local elected representative about a community issue; and contacted the media to express an opinion.



“The loneliness is a concern for everyone who moves here, and with the language barrier it’s hard to make friends...”

– Focus Group Participant



Other than voting, newcomers have lower levels of participation in the political sphere.

Newcomers and the Tri-Cities Labour Market

The Tri-Cities labour market scan research findings highlighted local labour market needs as well as the role recent immigrants play in the local labour market including barriers and opportunities for newcomers to participate in the Tri-Cities labour market from local employers' perspectives.

The majority of the workforce in the Tri-Cities is employed in secondary sectors (production and construction) and tertiary sectors (services). Based on 2011 data, immigrants play a significant role in the Tri-Cities labour market. The total immigrant population comprises 26% of the total workforce with recent immigrants comprising 3% of the Tri-Cities workforce. In terms of earnings, immigrants in the Tri-Cities earn on average 13% less than the total Tri-Cities population with recent immigrant incomes fairing 31% below total average.

Research findings indicated that Tri-Cities immigrants, including recent immigrants, have very high levels of education. Close to 84% of respondents have a minimum of a community college degree, and over 50% have an undergraduate or graduate degree. Most newcomers completed their education outside of Canada, while only 7% reported having credentials from a Canadian institution.

The most common occupations amongst newcomer respondents are part of the knowledge sector, including business, management and finance (23%), teaching or education (16%), as well as health care (12%) and public administration (12%). Sales and services, a typical sector for high immigrant employment in the Tri-Cities, was only a trained occupation for approximately 8% of respondents.

Newcomers' work experience is also significantly high. Approximately 61% of respondents have more than 10 years of professional work experience in their country of origin or internationally. Another 25% indicated 5 or more years of work experience.

In terms of being able to find employment, only 34% of newcomers reported that they have found work or continue to be employed. Out of those who found employment, only 34% of newcomers currently work in their occupational field. The majority of newcomers (65%) reported that they have worked or currently work in a different field.

Tri-Cities newcomers are highly skilled with high levels of education and significant previous work experience. The fact that newcomers are earning less than the total average in addition to the reality that more than half of Tri-Cities newcomers are not working in their occupational field, suggests that there is a large pool of skilled talent that is not being utilized or is underutilized in the Tri-Cities economy.



“It is the Canadian cultural context, experience...”

“We have to be confident, that the person’s English skills are at a level that they could work with other people...”

- Tri-Cities Employer, November 24, 2015

Labour Market Needs and Trends According to Tri-Cities Employers:

Tri-Cities employers primarily see a skills shortage in the Tri-Cities not a labour shortage. The top three skills that Tri-Cities employers are missing from applicants are relevant work experience, soft skills (e.g. people skills, communication, etc.) as well as leadership skills. Employers indicated that the top skills that employers will be looking for in the next 3-5 years are strong communication skills and experience, IT/computing skills and experience as well as leadership skills and experience.

Employers indicated that their strongest concerns about hiring recent immigrants are lack of English language skills, understanding of “Canadian” culture and Canadian work experience.

However, employers indicated that they feel more comfortable considering recent immigrant applicants if they have transferable skills, such as relevant work experience or strong soft skills, strong communication skills as well as demonstrated English language proficiency.

Employer Recommendations to Foster Labour Market Integration:

To improve labour market integration of newcomers, employers are interested in stronger communication and information sharing to access the recent immigrant workforce and recognize the value of networking and making connections for recent immigrants in the job search process.

Employers recommend newcomer targeted events such as job fairs or forums and mentorship programs. To support employers in hiring newcomers, employers recommend increased programming and training such as hiring support for employers to better understand recent immigrant credentials and assets, mentorship programs or job shadowing opportunities that connect newcomers with employers, workplace diversity training, as well as English learning programs that train for strong communication skills and cultural knowledge.

“Leadership qualities (...) is something that we will definitely, definitely look at. Are people willing to take on (...) more leadership skills, becoming managers, becoming supervisors?”

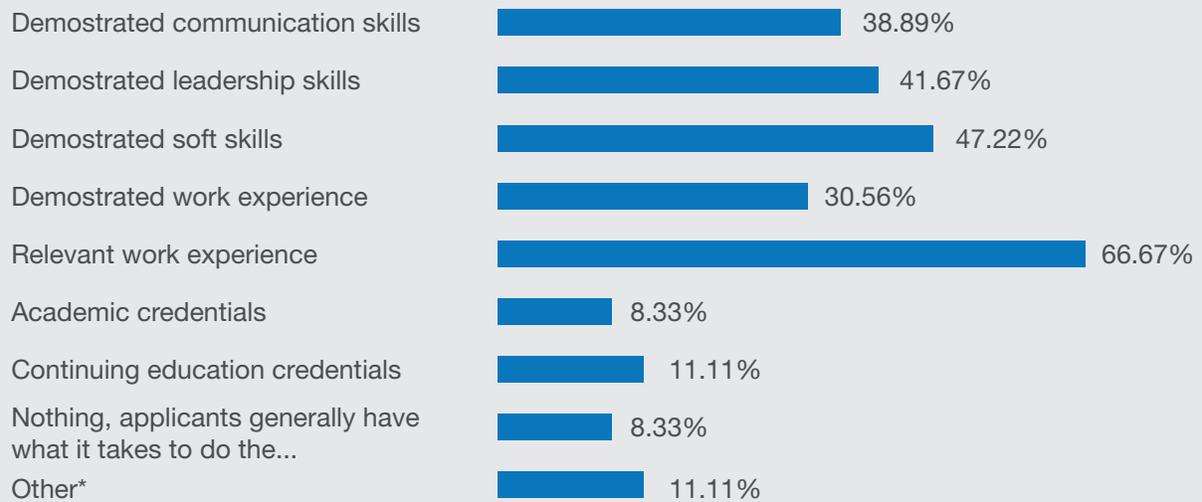
“[Applicants] look really good in terms of education but (...) they don’t have any of the experience along the way to back up the schooling with the soft skills that you would learn in the work force.”

“The soft skills sometimes can be the most important thing the person brings to the job. Their ability to listen, their ability to reflect, their ability to make the person feel comfortable, their ability to engage and to connect with the person...”

– Tri-Cities Employer



Skills and Experience Currently Missing in Applicants



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Vision Statement

All residents live, work and belong in a welcoming and inclusive community.

Mission Statement

The Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership works to set priorities and coordinate services for immigrants and refugees and to create a community where everyone can be welcomed and belong.

Mandate

The mandate of the Tri-Cities LIP is to foster a more welcoming and inclusive community while improving the integration and civic engagement of newcomers.

The Tri-Cities LIP will:

- Enhance collaboration, coordination and planning at the community level in order to foster a more welcoming and inclusive community and improve settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers and the community at large; and
- Work to enhance civic engagement of newcomers.

Guiding Values and Beliefs

The Tri-Cities LIP believes that all residents in the Tri-Cities have a right to a welcoming and inclusive community. The TCLIP values:

- Participation in an environment that promotes acceptance, honesty, accountability, collaboration, trust and fairness;
- Encourages and supports new ideas and creative strategies which will enhance the delivery of services for immigrants in the community;
- Promotes and encourages inclusiveness and diversity in all facets of its work;
- Fostering reciprocity by which immigrant integration is a two-way street between newcomers and the community.

OUR VISION, PRIORITIES AND GOALS AT A GLANCE

VISION

All residents live, work and belong in a welcoming and inclusive community.

1 PRIORITY:

**IMMIGRANT
LABOUR MARKET
INTEGRATION**

GOAL #1:

Tri-Cities employers are supported in accessing the recent immigrant talent pool to meet their workforce requirements.

GOAL #2:

Tri-Cities employers have the knowledge, information and capacity to build more inclusive workplaces.

GOAL #3:

Newcomers in the Tri-Cities are aware of and easily access programs and support services that increase their workplace language skills, soft skills and overall employability.

2 PRIORITY:

**NEWCOMERS'
KNOWLEDGE OF
AND ACCESS
TO COMMUNITY
INFORMATION AND
SERVICES.**

GOAL #4:

Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access community, municipal, financial and health care services.

GOAL #5:

Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access Tri-Cities settlement services.

3 PRIORITY:

**SOCIAL ISOLATION
OF TRI-CITIES
NEWCOMERS**

GOAL #6:

Tri-Cities newcomers are connected in their community and have increased opportunities to connect with other residents.

4 PRIORITY:

**ENGAGEMENT OF
TRI-CITIES
NEWCOMERS**

GOAL #7:

Tri-Cities newcomers are civically engaged and actively participate and contribute to social and political landscape of their communities and are aware of the impact that their contributions make to their communities.

TRI-CITIES LIP STRATEGIC PLAN

1

Priority #1: Immigrant Labour Market Integration:

To support immigrant labour market integration, research findings indicated that employers would like stronger communication and information sharing to better access the recent immigrant talent pool. Employers recognize the value of networking and making connections with recent immigrants in the job search process and recommend newcomer targeted events such as job fairs and forums. According to participants at the Tri-Cities Employer Forum, career fairs and related events would increase communication and networking between Tri-Cities service providers, employers and job seekers. The Tri-Cities LIP research also indicated that employers would like to receive up-to-date information on recent immigrant skills, labour market demands and skill shortages in the Tri-Cities so that they are informed of the recent Tri-Cities immigrant talent pool.

Greater knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in the workplace, including the benefits and best practices of building more inclusive workplaces is also of interest to Tri-Cities Employers. For example, employers see a need for industry and professional associations to work more closely with local stakeholder groups such as Tri-Cities LIP to provide them with better support and understanding of foreign credentials and processes for credential transfers. Employers at the Tri-Cities Employer Forum indicated that they would benefit from assistance in training new immigrants such as webinars and other resources that would give them the knowledge and capacity to better communicate and train newcomers.

To support newcomers' overall employability, employers recommend job shadowing or mentoring programs to support recent immigrants in accessing the labour market. Employers feel more comfortable considering recent immigrants applicants if they have transferable skills, such as relevant work experience and if applicants can demonstrate soft skills, communications skills and English language proficiency. Programs for building more professional English language capacities and connecting newcomers with employers more directly through volunteering positions, mentorship programs or networking events such as job fairs were also suggested through the research, in addition to language training programs geared to increase language proficiency for specific industries. Participants at the Tri-Cities Employer Forum acknowledged that there are many services available to assist with newcomers' labour market integration but

“Need to connect immigrants and employers.”

– Tri-Cities Employer Forum Participant, Tri-Cities Employer Forum, November 24, 2015.

“Language is the major barrier and setback regardless of experience or credentials.”

– Tri-Cities Employer Forum Participant, Tri-Cities Employer Forum, November 24, 2015.

indicated that newcomers lack awareness of existing services and require better access to these services. The creation of an online database / Service Hub of all available Tri-Cities immigrant and refugee services was suggested to enable newcomers to more easily learn of all services available.

GOAL #1: Tri-Cities employers are supported in accessing the recent immigrant talent pool to meet their workforce requirements.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 Coordinate and promote, in partnership with the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, Tri-Cities BIAs forums and other organizations, career fairs, training sessions, forums, workshops and other employment related events in the Tri-Cities to increase communication and networking between service providers, employers and job seekers.
- 1.2 Host sector-specific career fairs to increase communication and networking between services providers, employers and job seekers.
- 1.3 In partnership with post-secondary institutions, recruit post-secondary students to research and compile up-to-date information on recent immigrant skills, labour market demands and skill shortages in the Tri-Cities.
- 1.4 Advocate for increased mentorship programs / job shadowing opportunities for Tri-Cities newcomers.

GOAL #2: Tri-Cities employers have the knowledge, information and capacity to build more inclusive workplaces.

OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1 Develop and maintain an online resource library for employers and newcomers that includes simplified information about employer association and professional and trades accreditation bodies in BC, as well as information that would enable employers to better understand recent immigrant credentials and assets.
- 2.2 Promote and coordinate diversity training resources for employers.
- 2.3 Coordinate and share information from employers, employer associations and other organizations on best practices in implementing diversity programs in the workplace including testimonials on how diversity has supported business success.

GOAL #3: Newcomers in the Tri-Cities are aware of and easily access programs and support services that increase their workplace language skills, soft skills and overall employability.

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1 Develop and promote an online database / Service Hub of Tri-Cities immigrant and refugee services, so that newcomers have a greater awareness and understanding of the services available to support them and work towards newcomers' effective adaptation of that information.
- 3.2 Explore the feasibility of translating the database / Service Hub into the top three Tri-Cities languages.
- 3.3 Work with community stakeholders and partners to address newcomers' lack of access to information on employment services and work to develop informational resources that would increase newcomers' knowledge.
- 3.4 Develop and conduct a communications campaign to raise awareness of immigrant services including language training, employment services, mentorships and internships.
- 3.5 Foster partnerships with language training services to examine the demand and facilitate the development of further English language programming.

2

Priority #2: Newcomers' Knowledge of and Access to Community Information and Services:

The Tri-Cities LIP research findings indicated that newcomers in the Tri-Cities face challenges in learning about and accessing community information and services including settlement services. The most commonly reported unmet need of newcomers is learning about and accessing health services, as newcomers who needed help learning about and accessing health services did not receive the help they needed. Assistance finding a job and learning about the community was also an area that newcomers need help with but are not currently receiving the help they need. Of the reasons for these challenges is lack of information and awareness of the services available in addition to language barriers.

Community Forum Participants recommended the creation of a Tri-Cities newcomer one-stop shop so that newcomers could obtain information on all services available in the community, and access key settlement services in one location. Also, informational resources, such as a local welcome package that provides local information of the various community, municipal, financial and health care services was also suggested to increase newcomers' knowledge. To address newcomers' health service challenges, the need for language support services at medical services was identified as well as the need for informational resources describing how to access medical services in Canada.

GOAL #4: Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access community, municipal, financial and health care services.

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1 Establish partnerships with health care organizations, Division of Family Practice, municipal departments, financial institutions, etc. to develop resources that inform newcomers on how to access services and work towards addressing barriers to the application of that knowledge.
- 4.2 Work with settlement and health care organizations to determine the feasibility of language supports/translation services at medical services facilities in the Tri-Cities.
- 4.3 Work to establish best practices in service coordination among service providers in the Tri-Cities and work towards implementation.

55% of those who needed help learning about and accessing health services did not receive help.

65% of Tri-Cities Community Survey respondents who needed help learning about the community and those who needed help making social connections were unable to find help.

47% of those who needed help finding a job did not receive help.



GOAL #5: Newcomers have the knowledge and information required to easily access Tri-Cities settlement services.

OBJECTIVES:

- 5.1 Conduct research on the feasibility of a Tri-Cities one-stop shop / physical welcome centre so that newcomers can obtain information on all services available in the community as well as access key settlement services in one location.
- 5.2 Work with services providers to develop a newcomer welcome package that provides local information on services available in the Tri-Cities.

“I received my immigration so easily... but once I got here, I found it very difficult to actually work in the field they admitted me for.”

– Focus Group Participant

“We are bombarded with a lot of information when we first come here. But as a matter of fact, it’s not related to what I need at that time.”

– Focus Group Participant

3

Priority #3: Social Isolation of Tri-Cities Newcomers:

Tri-Cities is attractive to many immigrants due to the perception that the cost of living is lower, housing is more affordable, and the area is family-oriented, quiet, and has good schools. According to research findings, the most common reason for deciding to settle in the Tri-Cities are friends or family who were already settled in the area. Despite many newcomers having family or friends in the Tri-Cities, newcomers report feeling socially isolated and struggle to make friends, especially with individuals from other ethnicities. While just under half of Tri-Cities newcomers (44%) report feeling welcome in their neighbourhood, a slightly higher percentage (47%) neither agree nor disagree. In other words, approximately half of Tri-Cities newcomers are neutral about feeling welcome in their community. While newcomers value feeling connected with others in their community, few actually know the names of their neighbours.

Social isolation is an ongoing issue for newcomers in the Tri-Cities. Research findings indicated that one in four newcomers report that social isolation is an ongoing challenge that affects them in their daily lives. 40% of Tri-Cities newcomers say that they are “alone more often than they would like.” This is significantly higher than the Metro Vancouver average of 25%. Social isolation and feeling alone do not appear to improve over time. However, comfort communicating in English results in newcomers being more likely to make friends and to feel connected in their neighborhoods. Research findings also indicated that Tri-Cities newcomers find it difficult to make friends with people from other ethnic backgrounds, even when being able to speak English well. Nearly half of Tri-Cities newcomers (45%) said it is difficult to make friends with people from other ethnicities in their community. Length of time living in Canada or in the Tri-Cities and level of comfort communicating in English did not have any effect on how easily newcomers find it to make friends with people from other ethnic backgrounds. Level of comfort communicating in English is also a predictor for how welcome people felt in their neighbourhood. Those who are comfortable communicating in English are more likely to feel welcome in their neighbourhoods. As a result, newcomers who feel welcome in their neighbourhood are more likely to be satisfied with their life in Tri-Cities.

Social isolation continues to affect immigrants regardless of how long they have been living in the Tri-Cities: one out of every four respondents report social isolation and 40% are alone more often they would like.

“Ability to navigate services is a challenge for both new and more settled immigrants.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

“Lack of information is a challenge for new immigrants as well as how to access programs.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

To address social isolation and ensure that newcomers feel more welcome, Community Forum participants recommended more community events to facilitate intercultural connections and communication. To help integrate newcomers, Community Forum participants recommended having support groups or mentorship programs in order to help integrate newcomers into the community. According to participants, existing welcoming activities and community programs need to be more effectively marketed to reach newcomers. Also, Community Forum participants recommended more events targeting newcomers so that newcomers have increased opportunities to interact with people from other ethnicities.

GOAL #6: Tri-Cities newcomers are connected in their community and have increased opportunities to connect with other residents.

OBJECTIVES:

- 6.1. Develop effective marketing strategies and coordinate the dissemination of existing welcoming activities and community programs so that newcomers are effectively reached.
- 6.2. Leverage off existing partnerships, source and secure additional funding to develop more community events that target newcomers in the Tri-Cities and work to ensure newcomer turnout.
- 6.3. Source and secure additional funding to develop and promote a newcomer ambassador program that partners recent newcomers with long-time residents in the Tri-Cities to help integrate newcomers.

“Need a one-stop shop, a physical welcome centre for newcomers.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

“Loneliness is a concern for everyone who moves here, and with the language barrier it's hard to make friends...”

– Focus Group Participant

While 81% of newcomers recognize their neighbours when they see them, **only 35% reported that they know the names** of their neighbours.

About half of newcomers report that they have either helped a neighbour or received help from a neighbour.

Tri-Cities newcomers who feel welcome in their neighbourhood are **more likely to report being satisfied with their life in the Tri-Cities.**

4

Priority #4: Civic Engagement of Tri-Cities Newcomers:

According to research findings, newcomers have low levels of participation in the political sphere. Of newcomers surveyed, only 11% of newcomers indicated that they had attended a public meeting and only 6% had signed a petition. Less than 5% of newcomers had written a letter or sent an email to the city and less than 5% were members of or make donations to a political party. Furthermore, less than 1% of newcomers participating in the research had attended a political meeting, rally, protest, or demonstration; contacted their local elected representative about a community issue; and / or contacted the media to express an opinion. This is much lower compared to the national average which indicates that 28% report signing a petition, 61% report being members of an organization, 20% report attending a public meeting and 24% indicated that they had contacted a newcomers or politician to express view (see graph below which compares national results to Tri-Cities newcomer participation in the political sphere).

According to participants at the Community Forum, language barriers are primarily the cause of lack of participation in political activities, in addition to lack of awareness, lack of confidence as well as cultural (mis)perceptions of politics. Community Forum participants recommended that newcomers need to be educated on how to participate in public meetings. In addition, Community Forum participants highlighted the importance that newcomers be made aware of their rights in Canada so that any cultural misperceptions to be addressed.

A high rate of newcomers in the Tri-Cities volunteer, just under half (48%) of newcomers have volunteered since moving to Canada and 35% of newcomers have volunteered in the past 12 months, which is identical to the rate of volunteering among Canadian-born citizens. 71% of newcomers indicated that their primary reason for volunteering was to help others. Other key motivators for volunteering were to feel part of the community (59%), gain experience in Canada (58%), and to meet new people (57%). The primary reason for not volunteering according to newcomers is the language barrier. Other reasons that prevent newcomers from volunteering include a lack of information about volunteer opportunities and a lack of

Tri-Cities newcomers' participation in social and cultural activities is on par with the Canadian average.

71% of eligible Tri-Cities newcomers have voted in Canada

“We need more centrally organized festivals to introduce the community to new cultures.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

time. Newcomers indicated that they had a strong desire to volunteer, but they felt that it was challenging to contact organizations about volunteer opportunities. To address this, newcomers suggested that it would be useful to create a resource/reference guide containing a list of organizations that are able to accommodate newcomers who wish to volunteer.

GOAL #7: Tri-Cities newcomers are civically engaged and actively participate and contribute to social and political landscape of their communities and are aware of the impact that their contributions make to their communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- 7.1. Develop informational resources that educate newcomers on their political rights and freedoms in Canada and work to disseminate these resources within TCLIP partner organizations.
- 7.2. Tri-Cities LIP membership will build upon existing resources and programs that educate and empower newcomers to participate in local politics such as signing a petition and attending a public meeting.
- 7.3. In partnership with Community Volunteer Connections, develop an education program on volunteering that educates newcomers on the impact and benefits volunteering has in the community.
- 7.4. In collaboration with TCLIP membership, source and secure funding to develop an educational program that informs newcomers on Canadian political culture, processes and practices so that newcomers possess accurate cultural perceptions that are reflective of Canadian political culture.
- 7.5. In collaboration with Tri-Cities LIP membership, source and secure funding to develop an educational program that informs newcomers on law enforcement in Canada as well as the role of bureaucracy and its supporting function.

Tri-Cities newcomers' participation in the economic and political spheres is lower than average.

“Language is a major barrier for participating in public meetings as well as lack of confidence.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

“Many immigrants in the Tri-Cities come from countries where they don't have a voice so don't engage in Canada...some cultures are not even aware that they can speak at public meetings.”

– Community Forum Participant, March 24, 2015.

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