

# HALIFAX

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**Item No. 15.1.8**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**July 12, 2022**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Original Signed by 

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** March 8, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Municipal Immigration Strategy - Part 2

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## **ORIGIN**

As part of the regional business plan for the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs, there is a commitment to produce a municipal immigration strategy. This new strategy will build on the first Immigration strategy, Welcoming Immigrants Action Plan 2013-2017.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39, subsections 7A, 34(1) and 34(3) provide:

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to:

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

34 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer is the head of the administrative branch of the government of the Municipality and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of the affairs of the Municipality in accordance with the by-laws of the Municipality and the policies adopted by the Council.

34 (3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve and adopt the updated Immigration Strategy as set out in Attachment 1.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since 2014, Nova Scotia has seen an unprecedented rise in immigration. Between 2018 and 2020, Nova Scotia welcomed approximately 17,000 immigrants in a number of different categories including economic, family, and refugee classes<sup>2</sup>. These numbers align with the province's efforts to attract and retain more immigrants, as reflected in the number of immigration streams launched by Nova Scotia Immigration and Population Growth (NSIPG).

Immigrants often settle in cities and they depend on their local government and communities to make where they land their permanent home. Cities are where the bulk of settlement services are typically located, as well, existing cultural networks are more readily available in urban centres. For these reasons, the municipality needs coordinated and integrated efforts to contribute to the successful integration of immigrants in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

## **DISCUSSION**

The municipality is committed to supporting immigrant integration and talent retention. For this reason, the municipality continues to develop and expand services specifically targeted to immigrants. The municipality has continued to build strategic partnerships across communities and sectors to better understand both immigrant needs and strengths.

In 2013, Halifax Regional Council approved hosting the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP). The HLIP was a three-year project funded by Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada. In April 2017, the project was renewed for three additional years and, in 2020, the project was renewed for five more years with funding to 2025. The creation of the HLIP has helped to strengthen internal services for immigrants and to align and coordinate efforts within and between immigrant communities and immigrant-serving organizations. The HLIP strategically uses available resources to build capacity amongst settlement organizations and other service providers through an intentional approach to partnership development. Since its establishment, the HLIP has been providing opportunities to enhance the current settlement and integration services networks and to expand these strategic partnerships to better serve the interests of immigrants in the municipality. The HLIP has also worked on the promotion of internal services directed to immigrants, such as the Welcomed in Halifax program, which provides immigrants arriving under the humanitarian refugee program as well as asylum seekers municipal cards for free access to public transit and municipal recreational facilities during the first year after their arrival.

In 2013, the HLIP created the Welcoming Immigrants Action Plan 2013-2017. The action plan integrated services geared towards immigrants by various business units into one document. The plan encompassed 30 strategic actions to improve immigrants' access to municipal services. The implementation of this action plan is annually updated. The actions developed were based on the following five major outcomes:

- Develop municipal communication tools to serve and represent diverse groups
- Leverage programs and services meant to support a welcoming community
- Celebrate cultural diversity
- Maximize opportunities to retain immigrants in the region
- Train municipal staff to value diversity and better serve diverse clients

Making Halifax Regional Municipality a truly welcoming community for immigrants must be a long-term and primary solution to increase immigrant retention. This strategy affirms the Halifax Regional Municipality's statement of valuing Diversity and Inclusion. The key goal is providing services that are accessible and meaningful to immigrants. The strategy has been developed in alignment with the Diversity and Inclusion Framework. The strategy draws from the promising practices achieved by the municipality and Halifax Local Immigration Partnership and employs the Diversity and Inclusion Framework Strategic Objectives as its guiding principles.

The strategy has five main goals and 34 actions to be taken by business units to ensure the retention and integration of immigrants and newcomers including international students, refugees, and temporary foreign workers. The main goals are:

1. Ensure public service is inclusive, reflective, and accessible to immigrants
2. Create a workplace that encourages new and innovative ideas to flourish
3. Attract and retain immigrants' talents
4. Build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants
5. Provide timely and accessible information for immigrants

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications at this time.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Immigrant communities are mobile communities, without intentional and coordinated efforts to retain immigrants who arrive in Halifax, we are running the risk of losing them to interprovincial or international migration.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

External and internal engagement were conducted in 2020 and 2021 as outlined in Attachments 2 and 3 of the report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Regional Council could choose not to approve the recommendation and request an alternative plan to support the municipality's work with immigrant communities.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Immigration Strategy 2022-2024  
Attachment 2: Immigration Strategy - Community Engagement  
Attachment 3: Immigration Strategy - Internal Engagement

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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# Immigration Strategy

2022-2026

**Welcoming Immigrants and  
Valuing their Contribution in  
the Community**



Prepared by Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
Halifax Regional Municipality



# Executive Summary

Due to the sustained increase in immigration to the Halifax region since 2016, it is essential for the municipality to have a strategy that can help new residents feel at home as soon as possible. It is due to this increase in immigration that Halifax has seen an unprecedented population growth within the past 6 years that has helped to shape a more diverse and vibrant community. In a globalized economy, the attraction, retention, and successful integration of internationally trained and connected workers is crucial for our local economy's development and growth.

There have been plans towards more immigrant friendly municipal service delivery in Halifax since 2005. This strategy, however, is the first that Halifax will be adopting to have an integral internal approach towards contributing to making Halifax a home for new residents.

This strategy aligns to the HRM Diversity Framework, which is meant to guide the work of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The 34 actions outlined in this strategy are aligned to the Framework's 5 strategic objectives. These actions are meant to foster:

- the delivery of an inclusive public service for new residents;
- the provision of a safe work environment for immigrants and migrants;
- the development of equitable processes of attraction and retention in the HRM workforce that encourages and includes immigrant and migrant talent;



- the continuous building of meaningful partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations as well as with immigrants, migrants and new residents; and
- the provision of timely and accessible information to new residents in Halifax.

There was significant input in the development of this strategy, both internally and externally. This included two consultation sessions which were held with new immigrants, asylum seekers and migrants as well as one session with immigrant-serving organizations where the strategy was presented and feedback was gathered. Also, there was a survey on immigrant services distributed internally to HRM's Business Unit Coordinators. Input from the Business Units was invaluable in drafting the strategy. Lastly, the strategy has been reviewed by the Executive Directors and pertinent staff across all Business Units.



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# Rationale

Immigration is key to social and economic sustainability in Canada. This is especially true in provinces facing challenges with population decline and a shrinking workforce. The future of Nova Scotia largely depends on the province's ability to attract and retain talent from around the world. This is only possible by embracing diversity and by striving to create an inclusive and welcoming community at all levels.

Immigration plays a central role in the future of Halifax. Its economic growth, social prosperity, and workforce development largely depend on the Municipality's capacity to leverage its strengths to retain immigrants and newcomers who chose to make Halifax their home.

Within the last five years, Halifax has welcomed almost 80% of the total new immigrants who have arrived in the Province. Moreover, Halifax is home to almost 89% of migrants, or non-permanent residents, living in Nova Scotia, a number majorly comprised of international students plus temporary foreign workers.

Also, most of the resources available for the integration and settlement of immigrants in the province, including programs and community organizations, are concentrated in the Municipality. The Municipality has everything at hand to be the home for new immigrants, international students, and temporary foreign workers.



# Immigrant Service in Halifax Regional Municipality

Since 2014, Nova Scotia has seen an unprecedented rise in immigration (Statistics Canada, 2021). Between 2018-2020, Nova Scotia welcomed about 17,000 immigrants<sup>1</sup>. New immigrants come in different immigration categories, including economic, family, and refugee classes. These numbers align with the province's efforts to attract and retain more immigrants, as reflected in the number of immigration streams launched by then Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI), now Nova Scotia Immigration and Population Growth (NSIPG). Therefore, the province and the Municipality have joined efforts to contribute to the successful integration of immigrants in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

In terms of the immigration streams offered by NSIPG, the federal government has significantly increased the number of spots allocated to the province to nominate potential permanent residents through the Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Program. In 2016, 1,350 spots allocated for provincial nominees were made permanent by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

This number was increased by nearly 60% through the introduction of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP)<sup>2</sup>. Through this program, Nova Scotia

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) "Accountability Report 2020-2021", 3510 new immigrants settled in Nova Scotia within that fiscal year despite the pandemic.

<sup>2</sup> AIP is an initiative driven in partnership between IRCC and the Atlantic Provinces to address key labour shortages in the region.

created 2,310 additional spots for 2019-2020, making 2,700 spots since its conception in 2017. Employers can fill these spots by hiring immigrants and/or international graduates<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, the NSOI opened two additional streams in 2016 to attract entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial international students. Nova Scotia was the first Province in Canada to launch such programs for international entrepreneurs to obtain their permanent residency.

The Accountability Report 2020-2021 released by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration indicated the number of immigrants to Nova Scotia continued to steadily rise. In 2020, the province welcomed 3,510 newcomers to the province, down from 7,580 in 2019 due to the pandemic, through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, as well as other streams.

However, Halifax still faces challenges in terms of immigrant retention. Interprovincial migration remains one of the main challenges in Halifax and the province at large. Between 2013-2015, Halifax saw considerable talent lost to other provinces; many of those who left were in their prime working age<sup>4</sup>. Evidence suggests a lack of pathways towards meaningful employment is the main driver behind out and interprovincial migration<sup>5</sup>. Although Nova Scotia still holds the highest retention numbers in Atlantic Canada at 72%, this number is still below the national average.

The Municipality is committed to supporting immigrant integration and talent retention. For this reason, the Municipality continues to develop and

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<sup>3</sup> Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (2021). Accountability Report 2020-21.

<sup>4</sup> Halifax Partnership (2015). The Halifax Index: An economic gut check with insights for action.

<sup>5</sup> Ramos, H. and Yoshida, Yoko (2011). Why Do Recent Immigrants Leave Atlantic Canada? Atlantic Metropolis Centre ~ Working Paper Series, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

expand services specifically targeted to immigrants. We have continued to build strategic partnerships across communities and sectors to better understand both immigrant needs and strengths.

## Halifax Immigration Partnership

In 2013, Halifax Regional Council approved hosting the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership (HLIP), now Halifax Immigration Partnership (HIP), within the Municipality. The HLIP started as a three-year project funded by Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The project has been renewed three times since then. The creation of the HIP has helped to strengthen internal services for immigrants and disseminate them within immigrant communities and immigrant serving organizations. The HIP strategically uses available resources to build capacity amongst immigrant settlement organizations and other service providers through an intentional approach to partnership development. Since its establishment, the HIP has been providing opportunities to enhance the current settlement and integration services networks and to expand these strategic partnerships to better serve the interests of immigrants in Halifax. The HIP has also worked on the promotion of internal services directed to immigrants, such as the Welcomed in Halifax program, which provides immigrants arriving under the humanitarian refugee program with municipal cards for free access to public transit and the Municipality's recreational facilities during their first year of the arrival.

In 2013, the HIP coordinator created the Welcoming Immigrants Action Plan 2013-2017. The action plan integrated services geared towards

immigrants by various business units into one working document. The plan encompassed 30 strategic actions to improve immigrants' access to municipal services. The action plan has been annually reviewed and updated since then. The actions developed were based on the following five major outcomes:

- Develop communication tools to serve and represent diverse groups
- Leverage programs and services meant to support a welcoming community
- Celebrate cultural diversity
- Maximize opportunities to retain immigrants in Halifax
- Train staff to value diversity and better serve diverse clients

Below are a few examples of the initiatives that took place that supported the Welcoming Immigrants Action Plan.

## **The Mayor's Welcome Party for International Students**

The Municipality, through the Mayor's Office, hosts this event to welcome international students and to showcase services available to them, including municipal, provincial, and community organizations with which they could engage during their studies in Halifax. As identified by the Halifax's Economic Strategy, international students are an invaluable resource to help build a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.<sup>6</sup> Halifax is in a good position to realize that vision, as it has the highest number of post-secondary institutions per capita in Canada. Through this event, the Municipality recognized the economic, cultural, and social wealth that

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<sup>6</sup> Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-2021. Action Plan: Years 1 and 2.

international students bring to our region. This has been a successful and popular event. Between 2014-2019, over 2,000 students and more than 30 exhibitors participated in the Mayor's Welcome Reception.

## **Welcomed in Halifax**

In March 2016, the Municipality launched its 'Welcomed in Halifax' (WIH) program, which provides one-year free transportation and access to recreation facilities and programs in the Municipality owned and operated facilities to refugees recently arriving in Halifax. The program is meant to support the integration of the most vulnerable population amongst immigrants. All eligible refugees get a WIH card with a one-year expiry date to access these services. The card is distributed through a partnership with Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and its implementation is coordinated by the HIP. Other HIP member organizations have also partnered with the Municipality to offer free access to their services upon producing the card. These organizations include the Canada Games Centre; the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic; and the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. In November 2017, this program was extended to cover asylum-seekers and other unprotected persons living in Halifax. These cards are distributed through a partnership with the Halifax Refugee Clinic.



## A Vision for the Municipality

Increasing retention of immigrants in HRM requires concerted efforts that foster and promote a cultural shift in the Municipality to cultivate welcoming attitudes and behaviours towards immigrants. Making Halifax a truly welcoming community for immigrants must be a long-term and primary solution to increasing immigrant retention. Strong bonds with the community will likely translate into greater retention numbers and meaningful connections which, in turn, will lead to finding meaningful employment<sup>7</sup> and into further diversifying and enriching the Municipality's social fabric.

Research suggests that there is an increased awareness in Atlantic Canada around the value of immigration, and that most Atlantic Canadians are ready to accept immigrants in their communities.<sup>8</sup> It is crucial for Halifax to leverage this readiness in its population and to continue embracing and spreading positive values amongst its residents. Halifax Regional

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<sup>7</sup> Dobrowolsky, A. Ramos, H (2014)/ Expanding the Vision. Why Nova Scotia Should Look Beyond Econocentric Immigration Policy. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

<sup>8</sup> Ramos, H. and Yoshida, Yoko (2011).

Municipality needs to continue to celebrate successes of immigrants while also acknowledging and working on addressing the challenges that they face.

It is crucial to collect data and evidence to better understand immigrant integration and the main drivers behind welcoming communities. The Municipality can be instrumental in supporting these efforts by creating and implementing policies that embed immigration into the its social, cultural, and economic priorities.

This strategy comes to affirm the Halifax Regional Municipality's statement of valuing Diversity and Inclusion. The key goal is providing services that are accessible and meaningful to immigrants. The strategy is in alignment with the Diversity and Inclusion Framework, and it draws from the promising practices achieved by the Municipality and HIP. This strategy employs the Diversity and Inclusion Framework Strategic Objectives as its guiding principles.





# Diversity and Inclusion Framework

## Objectives

- 1 Inclusive public service**

To ensure inclusive and equitable access and benefits of municipal services, programs, and facilities.
- 2 Safe work environment**

To have a diverse and inclusive workplace free of harassment, discrimination, and systemic barriers.
- 3 Equitable employment**

To have a skilled workforce that reflects the diverse residents of the Municipality.
- 4 Meaningful partnerships**

To develop positive and respectful internal and external partnerships that contribute to inclusive decision making.
- 5 Accessible information and communication**

To communicate, both internally and externally, in a way that demonstrates, exemplifies, and embodies our municipal diversity and inclusion values.



# Immigration Strategy

## Objectives

- 1 Inclusive public service**

To ensure that municipal services are inclusive, reflective of, and accessible to immigrants and newcomers
- 2 Safe work environment**

To create a workplace that embraces and facilitates equal participation and equitable growth for all immigrants and newcomers.
- 3 Equitable employment**

To attract and retain immigrant and newcomer talent into HRM's workforce.
- 4 Meaningful partnerships**

To initiate and build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants, newcomers, and immigrant serving organizations
- 5 Accessible information and communication**

To provide timely and accessible information to newcomers and immigrant communities about municipal programs and services.



# Implementation Plan

This strategy outlines what the Municipality should do, and how to do it<sup>9</sup>, to ensure inclusivity of services and programs for immigrants and newcomers. The strategy comes to life through implementation and evaluation plans created by individual business units and divisions. Business units are encouraged to collaborate with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and leverage its established networks of immigrants and immigrant-serving organizations to be part of their annual planning and evaluation teams.

Proposed actions are derived from the engagement sessions held with immigrants and immigrant-serving organizations in 2020, as well as internal engagement achieved via a survey conducted in 2021. However, we are aware that this list of 34 actions is not exhaustive of all that business units can do to ensure providing municipal services that are inclusive of immigrants and newcomers needs. Business Units are encouraged to implement the listed actions, which are guided by the Diversity and Inclusion Framework goals. These are:

- 1) Inclusive public service
- 2) Safe, respectful, and inclusive work environment
- 3) Equitable employment
- 4) Meaningful partnerships
- 5) Accessible information and communication

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<sup>9</sup> See appendix A for detailed how to guide on page 27



Furthermore, the Immigration Strategy will be supported by the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the Diversity and Inclusion Champions' Table and guided by the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Working Group.

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion will lead the rollout of the Strategy. The Office will support business units in the development and implementation of action plans. It will also work with business units to advise on best practices and support community engagement initiatives, as well as to analyze roadblocks to success and help develop roadmaps to overcome such obstacles.

The Leadership Working Group will advise the Halifax Regional Municipality on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services on diverse communities through the monitoring implementation of the Immigration Strategy.

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion in collaboration with the Leadership Working Group will ensure that:

- Business Units are proactive in providing public service to immigrants and newcomers
- Business Units will work to increase immigrant representation at public consultations to ensure service delivery that addresses their needs
- Business Units will increase immigrant and newcomer civic engagement in municipal politics and civic services
- Business Units will provide employment opportunities for immigrants and newcomers in alignment with the municipal Employment Equity and Fair Hiring policies

- The Municipality will celebrate the contributions of immigrants to the life of the community

Overall this strategy will give the Municipality some tools to facilitate immigrant and newcomer integration in the community. It has been shown that increased visibility of immigrants in all public areas, through fair and positive portrayals, leads to the successful integration of immigrants and newcomer and to vibrant productive communities (Bloemraad 2014)<sup>10</sup>. Thus, this Immigration Strategy will work on the following strategic objectives. Each objective has a number of and actionable items and proposed success measures.



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Big Thinking 2014 April: Irene Bloemraad<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2CfNZnfxWg>



## Goal 1 Ensure that municipal services are inclusive of immigrants and newcomers' needs

### 1.1 Build internal capacity to respond to immigrants and newcomers' needs

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct annual inventory and evaluation of municipal services geared towards immigrants and newcomers</li> <li>2. Hold staff awareness events (Diversity Cafés awareness sessions)</li> <li>3. Continue providing Diversity and Inclusion training modules</li> </ol>	<p>Office of Diversity and Inclusion (supported by all Business Units)</p> <p>Office of Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Office of Diversity and Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and impact of services geared to immigrants and newcomers</li> <li>• Number of participants' satisfaction</li> <li>• Number of participants in D&amp;I training sessions</li> <li>• Percentage of participants' satisfaction</li> </ul>

### 1.2 Collaborate and contribute to city-wide planning

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Incorporate immigrant and newcomers' voices in the development of new plans, policies, and programs through community consultations</li> <li>5. Continue providing Welcome in Halifax (WIH) transit and recreation pass</li> <li>6. Create and implement client satisfaction survey about the use of the WIH</li> <li>7. Schedule consultation meetings in spaces immigrants are comfortable at and times that accommodate their diverse needs</li> </ol>	<p>All Business Units(supported by Office of Diversity and Inclusion)</p> <p>Transit, Parks &amp; Rec, ISANS (supported by Office of Diversity and Inclusion and ISANS)</p> <p>Transit, Parks &amp; Rec (supported by Office of Diversity and Inclusion and ISANS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased participation in community consultation sessions</li> <li>• Number of initiatives started</li> <li>• Percentage of satisfaction</li> </ul>



	All Business Units (supported by Office of Diversity and Inclusion)	
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**1.3 Support settlement sector to integrate priority Refugees and International Students**

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
8. Annually host Mayor’s International Students’ Reception. 9. Facilitate access to the affordable access program 10. Facilitate access for registration in recreation programs (MyREC)	Mayor’s Office  Transit, Rec, Finance  Parks & Rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of passes used</li> <li>• Percentage of clients’ satisfaction</li> <li>• Number of students and business units participating in the Mayor’s Welcome Reception</li> <li>• Percentage of satisfaction</li> <li>• Increased access to recreation programs</li> </ul>



**Measure diversity!  
Measure inclusion!**

**What gets measured gets done!**

## 2.1 Review and strengthen internal policies and standards to ensure a workplace supportive of diversity and inclusion, free of harassment, discrimination, and systemic barriers

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
11. Review existing policies and practices to ensure that Diversity and Inclusion are supported and systemic barriers preventing immigrants and newcomers' inclusion are addressed 12. Remove barriers that prevent immigrants' participation in programs and services 13. Provide resources for employees to ensure awareness of policies related to diversity, inclusion, and systemic barriers as it related to immigrants	All Business Units  All Business Units  Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of reports submitted by BUs on their policy reviews</li> <li>• Distribution, use, and evaluation of resources</li> <li>• Development of immigration and newcomer's information booklet</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Embed diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the work of the organization

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
14. Staff at all levels of the organization participate in Diversity and Inclusion training 15. Diversity and Inclusion are highlighted within the	All Business Units  Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased participation in corporate diversity and inclusion training (benchmark 2021 number).</li> </ul>





organization through an internal communication plan		
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**2.3 Create and host a collaborative community of practice for partners related to services to immigrants and newcomers**

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
16. Partner with Local Immigration Partnership to host collaborative community-based events that support ongoing relationships with newcomer service groups 17. Host cultural competency sessions offered by ISANS and other immigrant serving organizations	HLIP/ All Business Units  Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of cultural competency sessions held</li> <li>• Number of participants</li> <li>• Percentage of satisfaction</li> <li>• Increased number of external partnerships established to support services for immigrants</li> </ul>

**Unlock immigrants' talent through inclusive hiring!**





## Goal 3 Attract and retain immigrant talent

### 3.1 Contribute to the successful integration of immigrants and newcomers by providing access to employment opportunities

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
18. Promote immigrants and newcomers' participation in municipal work placement opportunities 19. Continue reaching out and holding information sessions on job opportunities within the Municipality 20. Ensure municipal representation at job fairs and community events geared towards immigrants	All Business Units  Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of immigrants who benefit from the work placement program (e.g. ISANS work placement program)</li> <li>• Percentage of satisfaction as they exit the program</li> <li>• Number of immigrants (via self-identification/ racialized persons) hired within the Municipality</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Encourage, celebrate, and promote immigrants' entrepreneurship

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
21. Collaborate with the Halifax Partnership and ISANS, to create publications celebrating immigrants and newcomers' communities and their impact on the Municipality's economic development	Office of Diversity and Inclusion Communication, HLIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tools created and distributed internally and externally</li> </ul>





## Goal 4 Build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants

### 4.1 Develop strong partnerships that support service provision and delivery for immigrants and newcomers

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
22. Establish/ maintain partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations to help ensure the successful integration of immigrants 23. Identify opportunities for the Municipality to work with community partners to create an accessible, welcoming, and inclusive Municipality 24. Encourage initiatives aiming to enhance immigrant talents	Business Units/ Office of Diversity and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased external outreach</li><li>• Increased municipal engagement in community initiatives targeting immigrants</li><li>• Number of new partners and maintained ones</li></ul>

**If Diversity is about counting heads,  
Inclusion is about making those heads count!**





## Goal 5 Provide timely and accessible information to immigrants

### 5.1 Provide timely information about municipal services and programs for immigrants and newcomers

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
25. Update, maintain, and promote the immigrants' portal on Halifax.ca 26. Ensure the use of plain language in communication 27. Translate and promote information on municipal services 28. Provide entrepreneur immigrants with information on municipal regulatory requirements for start-up business 29. Reduce regulatory barriers for immigrant businesses by creating a human-centred customer approach to navigating services	Office of Diversity and Inclusion    CAO/ Government Relations and External Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access/hits to the newcomer portal</li> <li>• Number of articles acknowledging and promoting immigrants' contribution in the hub</li> <li>• Ongoing evaluation on the plain language use and translated materials</li> <li>• Annual inventory of new businesses established by immigrants</li> </ul>

**Immigration is the main driver of the population growth in Halifax!**



## 5.2 Promote Halifax as a welcoming community

Actions	Lead	Success Measures
30 Participate in the development of a pathway to immigration tool kit for international students	Office of Diversity and Inclusion (supported by all Business units)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access/hits to the newcomer portal</li> </ul>
31 Support community events aiming to welcome immigrants and newcomers such as the Annual Welcome BBQ, SupperNova	All Business Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of articles acknowledging and promoting immigrants' contribution in the hub</li> </ul>
32 Continue hosting recreational activities and events that support immigrants' integration.	Parks & Rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing evaluation on the plain language use and translated materials</li> </ul>
33 Work with ISANS and other immigrant serving organizations to create recreation programs based on community interest	Parks & Rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual inventory of new businesses established by immigrants</li> </ul>
34 Promote the Fire Safety program for immigrants	Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of participants in programs</li> <li>• Percentage of satisfaction</li> </ul>



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## Appendix A

# How to Action the Strategy

This section gives a detailed roadmap to action the strategy.

### **Goal 1 Ensure public service is inclusive, reflective, and accessible to immigrants**

Given the increasing number of immigrants and newcomers in Halifax, and their substantial contribution to the economy, the Municipality's service delivery has to reflect their needs and preferences. Thus it contributing to immigrants' retention and integration. Halifax Regional Municipality will continue to improve the accessibility of its programs and services and leverage its strategic position to respond to the needs of the newcomers that call Halifax home and will continue supporting community initiatives that cater for immigrants and newcomers. Here are a few actions the Municipality can take:

#### **1.1 Build internal capacity to respond to immigrants' needs**

Halifax Regional Municipality offers a number of excellent programs and services that are often underutilized by immigrants and newcomers. An example of this is the affordable access program for low income residents. Newcomers are mostly unemployed or underemployed yet, there was a low number of applicants from the immigrant communities to access these programs. To increase newcomers' participation in such programs, municipal staff has to reach out to immigrant communities to get some insight to better plan and deliver programs and services that are helpful to



newcomers' integration and settlement. This will increase the awareness about the Municipality's initiatives for immigrants and help spread information to them.

*Halifax Regional Municipality will contribute to the successful integration of immigrants by improving accessibility to its programs and services.*

## **1.2 Collaborate and contribute to city-wide planning**

The increased number of immigrants settling in Halifax, opens an opportunity to better coordinate and align service delivery. In this sense, there is a greater need to have a systematic and coordinated approach to the settlement and integration of immigrants in Halifax. This poses an opportunity for the Municipality to assume a lead role in supporting and collaborating with immigrant settlement and integration agencies within Halifax.

*Halifax Regional Municipality will lead and coordinate immigrants' settlement and integration processes.*

## **1.3 Support the settlement sector to integrate refugees and international students**

We need to recognize the large variation of immigrants' needs, as they transition towards settlement and integration. There is an increasing number of refugees settling in the Municipality every year. That brings to the forefront the need to prioritize the settlement processes for this group, as some of them may have higher needs than others, and their successful integration depends on a holistic approach to addressing their needs.

Another group to consider to is the international students group. International students are a major source of skilled and educated workforce that is needed in the region. Most of the international students in the province study and live in Halifax. It is crucial to benefit from their strengths. Retention of this group is a priority in the Municipality's economic strategy. Since 2004, the number of international students coming every year to Halifax has more than doubled (Halifax Index). A holistic approach to their needs is also desirable. International students are proficient in English and many of them may be bi/multilingual. This should be showcased and celebrated as an asset to help them transition successfully into the workforce.

**Halifax Regional Municipality will support the settlement sector to integrate refugees and international students.**

## **Goal 2 Create a workplace that facilitates the equal participation and growth for immigrants and newcomers**

A safe workplace is a the place where everyone feels respected, values, and where different perspectives are encouraged and supported. In Halifax Regional Municipality, we are aware that we need to make our workplace safe for everyone; especially for people of diverse backgrounds including immigrants. We need to create an environment that encourages and facilitates equal participation equitable growth, a one that allows for new and innovative ideas to come forward and flourish. A workplace in which everyone feels ownership for, will attract more immigrant talents. In such place immigrants will feel valued by what they do. When the Municipality supports immigrants' integration and value their intercultural experience this will have positive impact on organizational practices and

workplace culture. Thus both immigrants and the organization can grow, flourish, and prosper.

## **2.1 Review and strengthen internal policies and standards to ensure a workplace supportive of diversity and inclusion, free of harassment, discrimination, and systemic barriers**

Inclusive practices emerge from inclusive standards and are guarded by inclusive policies. A comprehensive review of existing policies and practices must be conducted to ensure that there are no current systemic barriers preventing immigrant talent to join the Municipality's workforce, or to immediately eliminate barriers once they are identified.

Awareness is the first step towards successful change, and it is important to ensure proper tools and training are put in place both for senior leadership and staff. Upon reviewing existing standards and policies, resources will be identified and produced to raise awareness, strengthen inclusive practices, and support strategic change.

**Halifax Regional Municipality will strengthen its policies and practices to ensure a workplace that values diversity and inclusion.**

## **2.2 Embed diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the work of the organization**

Making inclusion part of the organization's work culture requires a shared understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion. Participation in training from all levels in the organization will be instrumental in facilitating spaces for shared understanding and values that will promote inclusive practices across the Municipality.

An aligned message that allows for diverse interpretations and views must be clearly communicated to and among all the Municipality's employees. A shared vision about what an inclusive municipality looks like will become the focus of a communications plan that will allow for the creation of diverse paths towards the implementation of practices that both align to an inclusive message and lead to a shared vision.

***Halifax Regional Municipality will embed diversity and inclusion values in all policies, practices, and communication.***

### **2.3 Create and host a collaborative community of practice for partners related to services to immigrants and newcomers**

A few divisions within the Municipality are providing great services to immigrants and building strong relationships with immigrant servicing organizations. Those divisions should connect with each other and exchange learnings and best practices in engaging with immigrants and newcomers. As well, the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership has well established networks within the immigrants communities and organizations. Business units can leverage these networks to benefit both immigrants and the organization. Activities such as hosting collaborative community-based events will go along way in supporting relationships with newcomers and organizations serving them. Existing communities of practice must be identified and reached out to, in order to foster inclusive dialogues and open conversations that help inform pathways towards implementing a shared vision of a diverse workforce thriving in an inclusive workplace.

***Halifax Regional Municipality will support collaboration between internal communities of practice and foster inclusive dialogue between them and external networks.***

### **Goal 3 Attract and retain immigrant talent**

Immigrants are making Halifax more diverse and prosperous with their contribution in private and public sectors. It is a well-researched fact that diversity has a direct correlation with innovation. A diverse workforce is a place that is reflective of the community it serves at all levels. The Municipality needs to include immigrant talent in its operations and ensure that employment opportunities reach immigrant communities. That can be done by creating a platform for immigrants to learn about employment opportunities in the organization so that they can:

- better understand the organizational procedures before applying
- receive mentorship and guidance that help them reach their potential and move up inside the organization
- have their needs not only properly accommodated but also fairly understood

It is documented that immigrants are twice more likely than Canadian-born to start a business in Canada. The Municipality can take a lead in supporting immigrant entrepreneurs. *Celebrating is promoting*. This is particularly true for Halifax Regional Municipality because of its visibility and credibility. The Municipality has an instrumental role in supporting the success of immigrant entrepreneurs by supporting mechanisms that

celebrate them and that, in consequence, makes them visible in the community and promotes them.

### **3.1 Contribute to successful integration of immigrants by providing access to employment opportunities**

Employment is consistently defined as the most important factor in the attraction, integration, and retention of immigrants and yet, the most challenging. The Municipality needs to lead by example in making employment within it attainable for immigrants. Activities to be considered include workplacement; pathways towards gaining Canadian experience; increased representation in community (i.e., job fairs); more proactive recruitment (partnership with ISANS, universities, etc.)

We need to explore some good practices proven to be helpful in providing local work experience. An example of these is the Welcome to Canada Program which is a paid work placement Immigration Museum, Pier 21 provides for permanent residents. This initiative proved to be helpful in breaking the barrier of gaining local work experience and successfully integrating immigrants into the workforce (Allies 2015). This kind of placement offers more time for employers to fairly assess the employees' potential and the employee to further develop soft skills as they familiarize with their new workplace.

***Halifax Regional Municipality will take all necessary steps to ensure employment within THE MUNICIPALITY is attainable to immigrants***

### **3.2 Encourage, celebrate and promote immigrants' entrepreneurship**

A recent study has shown that immigrants are more likely to start a business than Canadian-born citizens (ISANS). Thus immigrants provide

employment opportunities for the communities where they live. Entrepreneurship plays a great role in the economic growth of the Municipality (Halifax Economic Growth Plan). Supporting entrepreneurs also aligns with the Municipality's Strategic Plan 2021-2026. Celebrating immigrant entrepreneurs is an opportunity to increase their visibility and reward equitable, community-oriented, innovative practices. We can do that by developing proper channels (publications, online presence, etc.) to make these celebrations visible and to keep them relevant.

*Halifax Regional Municipality will support immigrants' integration through celebrating immigrant entrepreneurs.*

#### **Goal 4 Build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants**

Collaboration is the key to collective success. Intentional and strategic collaboration means the creation of and participation in networks where the Municipality's voice is represented, and where its resources are made available for partners. With the emphasis that diversity and inclusion has been given in the organization within the recent years, there is an increasing number of internal networks in the organization that could be better supported through the strategic development of external networks that respond to a shared vision.

As public service, the Municipality's presence in the community is key to developing relations and build trust among residents that can result in increased participation and greater civic engagement. This presence will result in better informed decision-making and more inclusive service delivery.

#### **Goal 4 Build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants**

There are a lot opportunities for the Municipality to collaborate with government agencies and community organizations to inform community-based service provision and programming for immigrant. A great example of those is the Halifax Local Immigration Partnership collaboration with external partners for wider and stronger public impact. Working together is essential to focus efforts and share learning.

*Halifax Regional Municipality will develop strong partnership with immigrants, government agencies, and immigrant serving organizations to respond to their needs and provide service accordingly.*

#### **Goal 5 Provide timely and accessible information to immigrants**

A major objective identified by research and consultation related to immigrants' integration is providing timely access to information and improving information sharing. There is consensus amongst stakeholders that better communication in these two areas will lead to better and faster integration for immigrants.

A community's ability to attract and retain immigrants is influenced by access to basic needs and services, participation in community life, public safety, and having a welcoming community. Halifax is a prosperous, healthy, and safe city with abundant natural beauty, good job opportunities, and world renown post secondary institutions. Halifax Regional Municipality needs to promote its best qualities through timely providing and sharing information to attract immigrants and newcomers.



## 5.1 Provide timely information about municipal services and programs for immigrants and newcomers

The primary reason for immigrants not accessing settlement and community services is the lack of awareness about their availability. It is reported that obtaining concise, timely, and easily understandable information plays a major role in immigrant integration (Esses, et al, 2010).

*Halifax Regional Municipality will provide timely information about services available to immigrants.*

## 5.2 Promote Halifax as a welcoming community

With the increase of allocation for the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), and the growing emphasis on the attraction and retention of international students and entrepreneurs, plus the establishment of the Atlantic Immigration Program, post-secondary institutions and employers are playing an active and important role in the settlement process of immigrants. This highlights the need for an integrated approach with post-secondary institutions and employers to develop community-wide promotional tools that showcase Halifax as a welcoming environment to study, work, create a business, raise a family, create community connections, and celebrate the value of diversity.

*Halifax Regional Municipality will promote its position as a welcoming and prosperous community.*

**We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour.**  
**Maya Angelou**

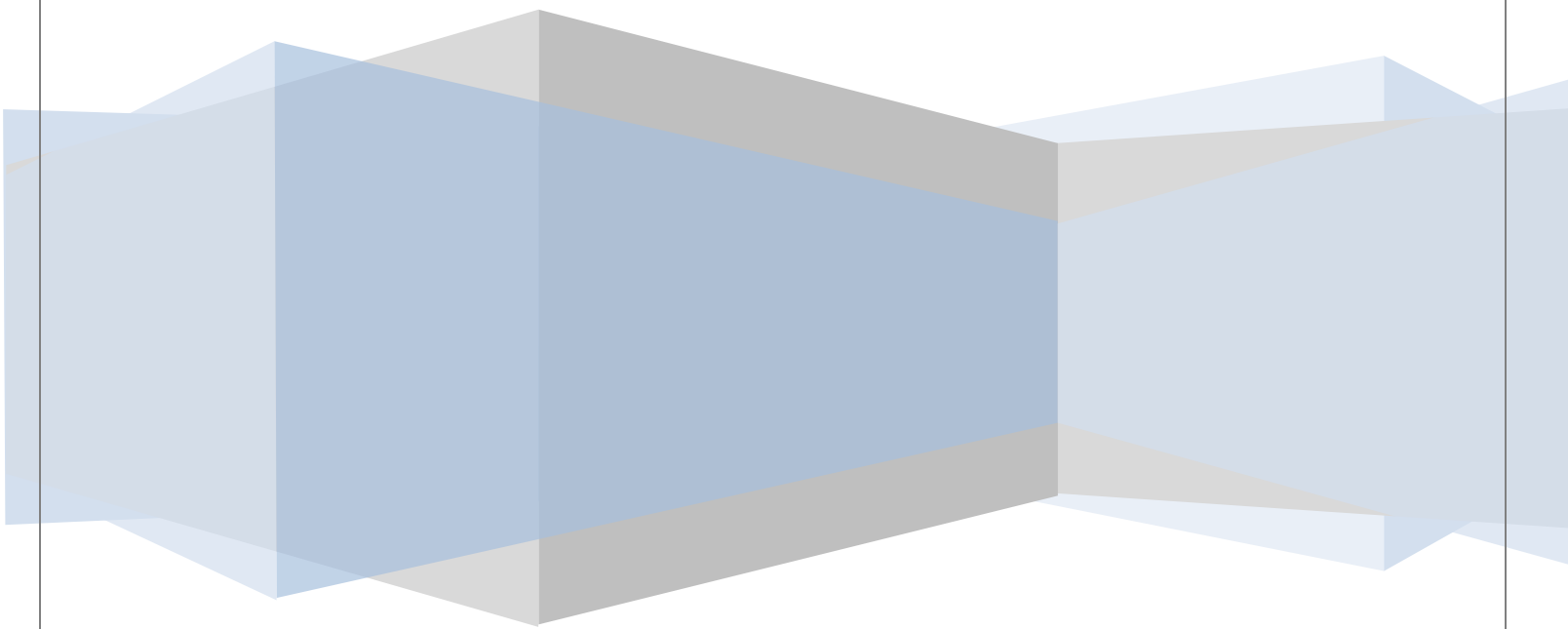
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# Halifax Immigrant Strategy Engagement

## Engagement Sessions with Immigrants + Newcomers

Louise Adongo

January 2020



# Halifax Immigrant Strategy Engagement

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*“Moving to another country makes you feel invisible.  
You lose confidence. You don’t know social norms or  
your rights. It is hard to have a voice.”*

*- Session Participant*

## Engagement Sessions Overview

Halifax, through the Diversity and Inclusion Office, has drafted an immigrant strategy to fulfil intentions to promote actions known to benefit integration of immigrants and newcomer and to create vibrant productive communities. Two consultations took place with immigrants in community, while a third session involved service providers.

Engagement sessions with community members who identify as immigrants and newcomers were hosted in January to present the objectives of the strategy and gather feedback on areas of enhancement and the priority of implementation.

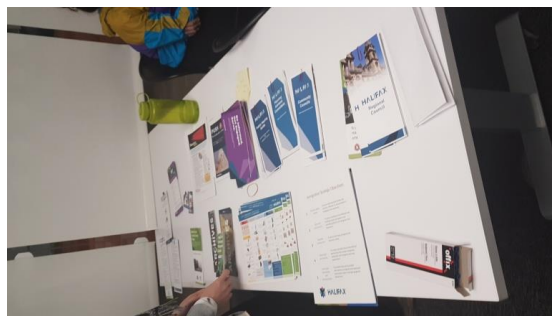
The feedback provided will be used by staff to revise the draft strategy before presentation to council. The information sessions were engaging and provided an opportunity to hear directly from the community members impacted by and intended to be supported through the strategy.

Although avenues for ongoing feedback were provided (and contact information was shared), there is an intention for follow-up in a year`s time with those who participated to determine how well the intentions of the strategic actions are being met.

The strategy, in alignment with the DAIO objectives addresses 5 key areas of focus that cover:

1. Inclusive Services (Inclusive Public Service)
2. Safe workplaces (Safe work environment)
3. Employment (Equitable employment)
4. Partnerships(Meaningful Partnerships)
5. Accessible Information (Accessible Information and Communication)

*\*See DAIO objectives and attached handout from Info sessions for more details*



*“We should be having these sessions more regularly”  
- Pooja (session participant)*

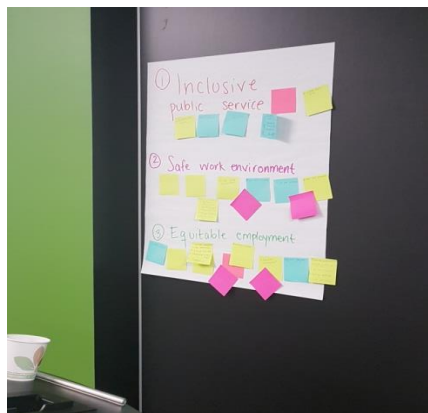
## Information Presented

The evening began with welcome and introductions followed by a short presentation on the purpose for the session. This included an overview of HRM structure and business units including examples of services like transit, police, libraries, fire services and planning and development etc.

- Participants invited to review municipal boards and committee recruitment materials

The intent of the strategy is to provide services and opportunities that are accessible and meaningful to immigrants and newcomers while reducing barriers to accessing opportunities in the city<sup>1</sup>.

The engagement sessions provide an opportunity for immigrants and newcomer residents of Halifax to provide input on the upcoming Immigrant strategy. Strategy objectives were discussed under the 5 areas previously identified. Each area was discussed for up to 20 minutes by participants who sat at tables provided by each venue. Light refreshments (tea, coffee, cookies and fruit were served).



*“City staff should be the easiest but are not easy to deal with”  
- Session Participant*

## Participation

There was a clear balance of newcomers and longer term immigrants. Participants at first sat at 3 tables (+ 3 note takers). However, some guests left at which time we consolidated the group to two tables.

The people present discussed the 5 priority areas to varying degrees based on the table at which they sat. There was a clear balance of newcomers and longer term immigrants. At the end of the night, the group ranked the priorities as follows (using ‘dotmocracy’ with post-it-notes): **1<sup>st</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Pg 11 “The strategy is based on the Diversity and Inclusion Mission: *to remove barriers and create opportunities for full participation of all Halifax residents and municipal employees.*”

Equitable Employment, Accessible Information, Safe Work , Meaningful Partnerships and **lastly**, Inclusive Public Service.

Priority Area	Session 1 Ranking	Session 2 Ranking	Overall Ranking
Inclusive Public Service	5	3	3 (12)
Safe work environment	4	5	4 (11)
Equitable employment	1	1	1 (55)
Meaningful Partnerships	3	4	5 (9)
Accessible Information and Communication	2	2	2 (31)

*\*~ Numbers in brackets the last column, denote the total number of post-it notes*

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> priority were easily determined by having majority votes in both sessions.

The order was determined by total # of votes overall; while there were significantly more participants in the second session , the results show that votes did not necessarily skew the results in their favour.

## Participants' Ranking of Priority Areas

The first two areas ranked were unanimous across participants of both sessions. The remaining priorities were less clear from one session to the other and were ranked base on the total number of votes across both sessions.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Equitable Employment

The participants in Session 1 mainly discussed this item from the perspective of jobs and employment. While there were those in the second session who also considered this from the angle of business enterprise as business owners and employers. Feedback was provided on aspects of recruitment, hiring and retention:

- Set targets for diversity groups
- Online process for hiring may be a barrier

Participants who have previously attended job fairs suggested more value-add to these fairs. “It would be good to have a career fair for immigrants with hiring managers present to help with mock interviews (or at least interview people for jobs on the spot.)”

In terms of small business, feedback was provided on fairness in tendering contracts, transparency in systems for permits and so on:

- Procurement contracts need to come to newcomer small businesses and start-ups
- Provision for opening a small business in residential spaces.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Accessible Information and Communication

The discussions under this item focussed on both information (one way) s well as communication (two way) with the city.

### Information

Many in both sessions felt that information was too complicated and needed to be provided in plain(er) language with more visuals (infographics):

- Government language is too sophisticated for some
- Programs and services need to be communicated with the ethnocultural communities and organizations:
- 311 information in different languages is already available but not always easy to access as the caller needs to listen to the English message first
- Brochures, Guides and other information resources by the city are too complicated
  - Simpler forms to disseminate information
  - Bus, transit information is complicated
  - Garbage collection information is difficult to understand
  - Need step by step instructions, more infographics

Specific to Interpreter services, there was feedback that these services were too important not to standardize and offer as part of the city's services.

- Cultural interpretation should not be by volunteers, this is a much-needed service and should be 'professionalized'.
- Volunteers should not have to bear the burden and trauma of providing interpretation services for family and close community members in vulnerable circumstances.

### Communication

Many provided feedback on the benefits of more avenues for two-directional information-sharing between the city and members of the immigrant and newcomer communities whether through individual interaction or community associations.

Some asked that city staff recognize that there is potential for trauma when communicating with newcomers and immigrants. Particularly for refugees and asylum seekers but with all groups and that patience and clarity were essential.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Inclusive Public Service

The topics covered under this discussion included transit, recreation, garbage collection, sidewalks and snow removal. The distribution and quality of services for residents was discussed. Participants in both sessions identified several issues specific to transit

- Bus routes in accessible formats
- Weekend transit that serves new immigrants who typically work retail and need 24/7 transit for a 24/7 work week.

Transport and Roads in general were also discussed

- Make it easier to access recreational and public spaces.

- Easier commutes - effective roads that connect all residential zones where the city is growing
- Transportation is costly compared to larger cities (Cabs/ taxi are also too costly)

Costs of recreational facilities were also discussed:

- Sports and Recreational services are too costly for new immigrants
- Public spaces are needed for communities to assemble; costs of booking are too expensive for new immigrants.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Safe work environment

Topics covered under this priority included what safety meant to participants. Some spoke of safety in terms of physical safety and returning to families safe from harm. Others raised mental health (psychosocial safety) and how that might be impacted by unwelcoming work environments that are not accepting of diverse backgrounds (cultural, religious, etc.) Some participants linked unfair hiring processes and workplaces that had few, if any immigrants to safety. For example, it was pointed out that the fire department has mostly Caucasian employees and may seem to be less safe for immigrants + newcomers.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Meaningful Partnerships

Discussion under this item addressed what meaningful partnerships look like for immigrants + newcomers. Many spoke about better connections to cultural associations:

- Create, or act as, a common ground for cultural associations.
- Connect and participate in cultural associations
  - Be a connector amongst groups that represents cultures/ethnicities,
  - The city should have an updated directory of associations

Some discussed stronger relationships with universities, start-up incubators and the business community to provide employment opportunities for immigrant jobseekers.

Yet others spoke of the need for better connections across services and levels of government:

- Build relationship with relevant provincial services (income assistance, tenancy board, housing, etc)
- Provide “Right avenues” into the city. Identify the right people to connect with for addressing needs

#### **\*HOUSING**

Although Housing is a shared responsibility and primarily falls under the provincial government, participants in both sessions had quite a bit to say about housing under the discussion on inclusive public services:

- We need affordable housing
- We need Barrier-free housing - access to a home, renting, leasing or owning; it is very hard to find rental units for new immigrants.
- How are tenants protected? Immigrants and newcomers don’t know their rights
- Unused public spaces: work with zoning and incentives



## Immigrant + Newcomer Feedback

### Session One

**Date:** Monday Jan 20, 2020

**Time** 6:00 pm to 8:30 (session started at 6:15 to give an opportunity for later arrivals)

**Location:** Halifax Central Library, Room 301

**Number of participants:** 10 (plus 3 interpreters - Arabic, Mandarin, Tigrinya)

Priority Area	Ranking
Inclusive Public Service	5
Safe work environment	4
Equitable employment	1
Meaningful Partnerships	3
Accessible Information and Communication	2

*“The city should encourage immigrant applications. I am intimidated to apply for a city job.” - Session Participant*

### Session One Summary<sup>2</sup>:

Priority Area	Highlights of Comments from participants
Inclusive Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immigrants need a central list of services for them</li><li>• Libraries are a great place to get information and meet people</li><li>• Language is a fundamental piece for accessing services</li><li>• Immigration status is also important accessing services—temporary residents cannot access (<i>settlement</i>) programs</li><li>• Transportation barriers.</li><li>• Transit - where do we buy tickets? Bus drivers do not wait for people with disabilities; give more time at stops for passengers to get to the bus or to get on board.</li><li>• Operation hours of service - means we have to choose between taking off from work or public services.</li><li>• There is an overload of newcomer services that we need to access. ESL has a six month wait for example.</li></ul>
Safe work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Permanent status is a prerequisite to employment</li><li>• Safety has many definitions including environmental, emotional, cultural considerations, and identity-based considerations</li></ul>

<sup>2</sup> Note, text in italics are added by the facilitator for clarification

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having secured status (PR versus visitor or asylum seeker; contract t versus casual employment)</li> <li>• Communication and teamwork, Focus on work not people</li> <li>• How to know our rights, where to find support for when we are bullied at work because we are immigrants. Bereavement leave for example- what are our rights - how do we benefit from bereavement leave?</li> <li>• Where do we get help? Who can we go to for safety and to remain safe?</li> <li>• No judgement towards cultural differences (food, clothing, etc.)</li> <li>• Lighthearted, harmonious, you can be yourself</li> <li>• Hiring practices have a lot to do with safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “There is only white people in the fire department”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Equitable employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It’s hard to find work in Halifax—many newcomers create businesses to fill this gap</li> <li>• Internship programs with universities ; Upskilling and retraining people on income assistance (<i>scope of the provincial government</i>)</li> <li>• We should be empowered to ask for fairness.</li> <li>• Language barrier is usually interpreted as being less skilled or less educated.</li> <li>• Adverts are too vague and too intimidating. <i>A lot of information and requirements</i></li> <li>• Opportunities for employment search that can be accessed</li> <li>• Useful information on jobs needs to be accessible</li> <li>• It is difficult for immigrants to find jobs. Employment agencies can facilitate making people ready for the work culture realities</li> <li>• We need program to help newcomers and immigrants find employments with the city (internships, short term positions, etc.)</li> </ul>
Meaningful Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good communication? Good understanding between the local government and the people - it should be open for people.</li> <li>• Good communication to facilitate understanding between the local government and the newcomers</li> <li>• Government should be open as it works for the people</li> <li>• Some cultural groups are <i>invisible immigrants</i> (i.e. Irish, North American, European) don’t get information through ethnocultural groups</li> <li>• HRM should be modeling programs and policies to other regions of the province</li> <li>• Partnership with provincial museums<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Support organizations or small business to connect with the immigrant community</li> <li>• Cultural Associations should be more involved in disseminating information from the city</li> </ul>
Accessible Information and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to information from different sources not just the internet</li> <li>• We find out about what is available in the city from word of mouth through local residents</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Welcome in Halifax (WIH) - access to museums, the letter says that newcomers and immigrants have access but museum staff do not even know about the WIH program.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is two way - listen to people, <i>the city's</i> policy should be open to the citizens</li> <li>• Information in a person's preferred language helps reduce barriers</li> <li>• City should fund ongoing interpreter services. They are important as language is a barrier to accessing programs and services. Interpretation also helps with understanding the culture</li> <li>• 311 information in different languages is already available but not always easy to access as the caller needs to listen to the English message first</li> <li>• How do you reach out and engage with cultural associations?</li> <li>• What about leveraging museums, so much more information can be provided there - they can offer so much more.</li> <li>• Consider words - engaged versus involved or participate. Engaged can lead to misunderstanding about the purpose (engaged to be married?)</li> </ul>
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*(See attachment for more detailed responses)*

*“I felt threatened by my boss - re immigration papers. This is a reality especially when you are stuck in a job trying to get you PR. We don't know what to do and especially in HRM which is so small and you can get a bad reputation as a trouble maker that affects future job opportunities.”*

*- Session Participants*

## Session Two

**Date:** Thursday Jan 23, 2020

**Time:** 5:30 pm to 8:30

**Location:** Keshen Goodman Library, Thomas Raddall Room

**Number of participants:** 31 (plus 3 interpreters - Arabic, Mandarin, Tigrinya)

Priority Area	Ranking
Inclusive Public Service	3
Safe work environment	5
Equitable employment	1
Meaningful Partnerships	4
Accessible Information and Communication	2

### Session Two Summary<sup>4</sup>:

Priority Area	Highlights of Comments from participants
Inclusive Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First thing is advertising, I have never heard about most of these services</li> <li>• Transit               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confusing language on the different bus tickets. And not clear how much to pay for the bus tickets.</li> <li>○ Bus transfers not long enough; in NY they last much longer. In the UK it is a day pass.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recreation is not inclusive or accessible. Community centres programs are not similar across HRM.</li> <li>• Library + Community programs are in the morning, you cannot attend while working. Lunch and learning and morning programs are for seniors.</li> <li>• Lack of affordable fitness centres.</li> <li>• Child care support is insufficient for job-seekers. A drop-in service is important</li> <li>• More English courses are needed. It takes six months wait to get into English classes.</li> <li>• Garbage collection courses should be available in libraries for example. Even the garbage collection app could be improved; you need to know the name of the item to enter it in the system for the app to work. What if you could take a picture? Should be in more languages (including Portuguese)</li> </ul> <p><u>Public works</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of sidewalks, sometimes you have to walk on the street, it is not safe.</li> <li>• Who is supposed to clean the sidewalks? HRM? Homeowners? We though homeowners do their driveway only.</li> <li>• There is a lack of sidewalks (especially in Fairview Clayton Park). Sidewalks often end abruptly, there are big streets where it is difficult to walk (like Chain Lake Drive)</li> </ul> <p><u>Affordable Access</u></p>

<sup>4</sup> Note, text in italics are added by the facilitator for clarification

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Affordable access form is complicated if you are a newcomer. the form is complicated</li> <li>• additional barriers hard to report income (last tax season, new comers don't have that)</li> <li>• If you have not filed taxes how can you apply?</li> <li>• If you don't go to ISANS, how can you know?</li> </ul>
Safe work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate Canadians that HRM wants diversity. Benefits from immigration. And that there are not as many immigrants. Misunderstanding causes bitterness.</li> <li>• Locals are not used to working in with immigrants. D&amp;I in the workplace should be common practise at all levels of government and private sector.</li> <li>• Difficult to have a voice, we need to know our boundaries and labour rights.</li> <li>• People often work overtime without knowing we can say no</li> <li>• Lack of safety protection, don't know it is the law. There are differences (e.g. beard in food service or garbage sorting without gloves)</li> <li>• Inclusive facilities e.g. prayer rooms</li> </ul>
Equitable employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you apply for a job? You cannot apply for a job with foreign experience. Job ads are targeted to specific groups.</li> <li>• Having a job workshop - how to get started?</li> <li>• Bargaining unit positions are a huge barrier.</li> <li>• Most people come with international student visa and are highly educated. We want jobs, we want to stay and settle here. We have no desire to move if we have jobs.</li> <li>• Lots of knowledge as IT engineer, has to start from beginning, no opportunities for immigrant to enter their fields easily, even when they can offer lots of knowledge and experience it is foreign experience.</li> <li>• Immigrants start with survival jobs, no opportunities, no way to grow.</li> <li>• Too much requirements for entry jobs. Keep questions in interviews accessible.</li> <li>• Too much barriers asking for years of experience of Canadian experience, not good.</li> <li>• If your degree is recognized by WES (?) why certificate has no value? There are lots of barriers for certification, lots of money spent on translation etc.</li> <li>• Even with knowledge of IT or engineering but because of being a new immigrant you "start from zero"</li> <li>• Hiring process should be known, simplified and shared. There are long questions in interviews that may be a barrier.</li> <li>• An independent body monitoring to ensure there is fair treatment, fair promotion system, and opportunities to grow professionally.</li> </ul>
Meaningful Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural associations have valuable input, they should be consulted.</li> <li>• Informal immigrant groups to partner with to facilitate community building,</li> <li>• Create community funding grants that are not too onerous (paperwork)</li> <li>• Lack of support especially for recreational activities e.g. soccer or cricket fields. <i>(Perhaps barriers to accessing traditional institutions like Sports NS?)</i></li> <li>• Lack of space for planning or organizing community events/ meetings</li> <li>• Need platforms/ spaces for learning about other cultures <i>(or one's own if multigenerational immigrant)</i></li> <li>• City should have small community association grants fund for gatherings</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example the Brazilian association is small and faces barriers in booking meeting space, or reasonable financial support for annual events. E.g. to participate in multicultural festivals (Mosaic, etc, this is at own cost)</li> </ul>
<p>Accessible Information and Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information is hidden on the city website. Websites need upgrades, they are not intuitive. Very difficult to find - even with search. It looks like a maze. Not interactive or intuitive. Make it simple.</li> <li>● Make information accessible - it is not now.</li> <li>● Accessible language for all - aim for grade 6 English level in any brochures</li> <li>● Less text and more graphics - more upbeat designs (info graphics)</li> <li>● More step by step instructions</li> <li>● Diverse communication channels tailored to different communities</li> <li>● Need for multiple languages. Information is shared based on immigration stream - there may be gaps in this model.</li> <li>● Need accessible information to <u>all</u> the immigrant groups <i>and various streams of entry</i> (refugees, skilled workers, TFW, economic stream, etc)</li> <li>● Create an immigrant and newcomer portal with all the relevant information</li> <li>● The city's newcomer page is not advertised</li> <li>● Create a centre for newcomers (all services in one place) check out the Seoul Korea Model (Global Centre)<sup>5</sup> free services legal, therapist, language etc</li> </ul>

(See attachment for more detailed responses)

*“Give us more time to prove ourselves in work environments, give us lots of opportunities to prove ourselves while developing language and Canadian experience” - Session Participant*

*“A safe workplace environment is when there is a good balance between work and personal life. Includes coming back to your family safely.”  
- Session Participant*

*“People/immigrants are looking at settling in the East coast because of housing affordability but translation services are not keeping pace. “  
- Session Participant*

**“How do we make things easier? ” – Service Provider Session**

<sup>5</sup> Link added by facilitator <https://www.seoulculturalcenter.com/en/>

# Service Provider Feedback

**Date:** Thursday Feb 20, 2020

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 3:00

**Location:** City Hall, Downie Wenjiak room

**Number of participants:** Less than 10 (though more than 20 people were invited)

Members of the service provider community were invited for an engagement session on the Immigrant Strategy. Service providers who were invited to participate in the session included members of the Halifax Local Immigrant Partnership (Halifax LIP) network and other service providers.

This session took place a few weeks following the sessions with immigrants and newcomers so that some of the feedback from those sessions could be shared with service providers. In this instance, the session began with an overview of the Diversity and Inclusion Office (DAIO) and then a brief summary of the business units. A summary of the Halifax Local Immigrant Partnership (Halifax LIP) was also provided as the connection of Halifax LIP to HRM’s DAIO for the purposes of strategy implementation was deemed important.

Questions were asked by participants that led city staff to provide some additional context for the strategy. These questions included what metrics would be associated with the strategy, how success was defined and who was accountable for the strategy. City staff responded that the approval from Council would precede any accountability. However, once approved, the accountability for delivering on this strategy would occur through directives to each Business Unit. Additional context for the strategy was stated thus; there currently exists:

- A leadership table for diversity and inclusion (directors)
- A diversity champions table (coordinators and managers)
- Actions in the strategy become directives with the requirement for regular updates.

City staff spoke about working with the business units to get their input as well will enable them to create and meet their goals. Service providers thought this was a good way to proceed with this work and getting buy-in from city staff.

In addition to asking questions of their own based on the information presented, service providers also gave their perspective on initiatives that would address some of the feedback from immigrants on the 5 priority areas of the strategy. Additionally, the service providers were also asked to rank the priority areas. For this stakeholder group, the order of priorities was slightly different and “Equitable Employment” fell to second place.

Priority Area	Ranking
Meaningful Partnerships	3
Safe work environment	5
Accessible Information and Communication	1
Inclusive Public Service	4
Equitable employment	2

## Session Three Summary<sup>6</sup>:

Priority Area	Highlights of Comments from participants
Inclusive Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RE services based on immigrant status- Eligibility for services can reduce access for people. We need to not look at status of information.</li> <li>• Educating organizations and service providers on barriers and removing them.</li> <li>• Inclusive Public Services can not be achieved without the following 3 priorities (Meaningful Partnerships, Accessible Information and Communication as well as Equitable Employment It is the umbrella).</li> </ul>
Safe Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments specific to this goal but the theme of safe work environment recurred throughout the session under other goals.</li> </ul>
Equitable Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City can be a leader in changing the culture of hiring. Become a more inclusive culture. How to build resources that can be shared city can be a model to champion.</li> <li>• Mock interviews, what is a situational interview? If someone ask you x, they mean y and a.</li> <li>• Employment is a huge need. That is essential to retain newcomers. Bring HR people to attend such engagement sessions. HR and all employees need training.</li> <li>• Change that culture of hiring, how to make interviews more inclusive and more accessible for immigrants, not enough to do mock interview.</li> <li>• This whole thing of Canadian experience, how do we surface unconscious bias? How do we recognize home country experience - and soft skills?</li> </ul> <p><u>Specific feedback on Volunteering</u>            Volunteering problematic for immigrants, they need to spend resources to volunteer. Volunteering concept explaining, get something from your volunteering. As a volunteer coordinator, it is a reality that volunteering as the gateway to employment. If people expect to get a job after volunteering that is a good thing. Volunteering concept in a different way. If it is focused and if seen as an investment. Can HRM tap in NS Start employment program... as employer to get money from NS Labour and Employment. Should be tied to what jobs they are looking for.</p>
Meaningful Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross references and referrals. New partnerships between business units and service providers. Build on existing partnerships and also new partnerships among the service providers.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for networking with service providers</li> <li>• Look into internal partnership among the city's business units (e.g. free recreation combined with free transportation) How can business units work more with each other?</li> <li>• Q: How would you help HRM implement the strategy? A: (1) We can help HRM disseminate the information that we receive. (2) We can share our expertise in each of these priority areas.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Note, text in italics are added by the facilitator for clarification



<p>Accessible Information and Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement is a continuum it does not end after 5 years.</li> <li>• Can the information for immigrants be centralized for 211?</li> <li>• Accessible information and communication - quit using vague language</li> <li>• Educate not only immigrants but also service providers of municipal services</li> <li>• Combine priority areas 1 and 5 together</li> <li>• Consider processes [and paths] when developing information resources, such as where to start training, placement, then how to assist [immigrants + newcomers] in retaining jobs</li> </ul>
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**Questions About the Strategy**

1. “Are there success metrics - impact of diversity in business units?”
2. What does “strategy has not been launched “mean? It means there is no unified document and approach for action
3. What does business unit mean? (Examples were given.)

*Service providers were told that previous engagement sessions included a presentation about Business Units with clear examples (and photos) to help scope the level of government this strategy was directed towards.*

Additional Comments on Strategy Implementation

*“This reminds me of 2005 NSOI immigration strategy. Where is the provincial government’s revised strategy? The province has advanced from the stage of needing a single immigration strategy. Immigration pieces are integrated into other government strategic direction.”*

*“This plan at city of having a strategy and asking business units to take ownership of the actions is a good one. It enmeshes the plans within the organization.”*

*“[WE need] More advocacy on how organization benefit from immigrants’ contribution. What we can do different to shift the culture? What is the 6<sup>th</sup> invisible priority here to shift the culture”*

## APPENDIX Detailed Notes & Verbatim Comments

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Details on ranking process

Priority Area	By # of post it notes		Rank	
	Session 1	Session 2		
Inclusive Public Service	6	6	12	3rd
Safe work environment	9	2	11	4th
Equitable employment	11	44	55	1st
Meaningful Partnerships	5	4	9	5th
Accessible Information and Communication	7	24	31	2nd

Notes and verbatim comments have been sent as separate attachments

# Immigration Strategy Internal Survey

Conducted Oct 5-19/ 2021

Prepared by: Immigration Services Team

Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
December 2021



**HALIFAX**

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The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has conducted an internal survey to gauge what Business Units are doing to ensure they are providing equitable services that support integration of immigrants and newcomers in Halifax Regional Municipality. The survey also aims to explore barriers that may prevent immigrants to fully access those services and ways to remove those and improve services to immigrants and newcomers. The survey was sent to the Business Units on Oct 5 and remained open until Oct 19, 2021. Most Business Units responded to the survey, with some providing multiple answers based on the different divisions they have and the multiple programs and services they provide to residents. Overall, 42 responses were received. This report is a summary of Business Units and divisions answers.

## **Q 1. Do you offer any programs specifically to immigrants/newcomers?**

11 respondents indicated that they offer programs specifically for immigrants and newcomers. 32 answered that they do not have specific programs for immigrants and newcomers, but they have a lot participation from immigrants and newcomers in programs and services they offer to HRM residents.

### **Programs offered specifically to immigrants and newcomers**

#### Human Resources

- HR participated in over 18 job fairs for immigrants
- Championed work placement program offered through ISANS
- Maintained partnership with immigrant serving organizations (ISANS, YMCA, YWCA, Halifax Partnership, Pier 21
- Helped immigrants with resume review and interview practice in partnership with ISANS
- Staff sit on Employer Council for ISANS

#### Programs offered in partnership/ Parks and Recreation, Halifax Transit, & Finance

- Affordable Access program that provides discount to services such as recreation program, buss passed, and property tax
- Affordable Access Application was reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure easy application process for all residents including immigrants



## Parks and Recreation

- Rec has a discount built in the system to allow easy access to discounts recommended through ISANS for immigrants
- Discounted student memberships for international students in many Rec facilities across HRM
- Working with ISANS to create recreation programs based on community interest

## Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency

- Created Fire Safety Program for newcomers
- Participated in job fairs and newcomers/immigrants' events when possible to share public education and build relationship
- Maintained partnerships with immigrant serving organizations and attended newcomer events (ISANS, YMCA, YWCA and faith-based organizations, Pier 21, libraries, etc.) advising of HRFE roles, resources, and services
- Interacted with the immigrant community through many internal resources such as the Assistant Chief of Workplace Culture, D&I Partner, Community Outreach committee, and Cultural Advisory Committee as well as front line staff attending community events such as block parties etc.

## Transportation and Public Works

- Translated waste management sorting guide into Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French
- Provide waste management education to immigrants and newcomers through partnering with ISANS and universities
- Provide signage interpretation and parking education through partnership with religious institutions

## Halifax Transit Services

- Translated "How to ride guide" into different languages

## Halifax Regional Police

- HRP interacts with the immigrant community in collaboration with different internal police resources - Diversity Officer, Community Resource Officers, Victim Services, and Francophone Officer



- Internal police units have additional training, resources and external service provider connections to assist in delivery of police services
- HRP has offered information sessions through ISANS to immigrants about the police roles, resources, and services

**Q 2. Are you aware of any barriers that may limit access to immigrants and/ or newcomers to the services and/or programs that your Business Unit offer?**

23 respondents indicated that they are aware of barriers whereas 18 indicated that they are unaware of barriers preventing immigrants from accessing municipal programs. Respondents mentioned barriers and suggestions to address them. Here are some details:

Parks & Recreation

Barriers	Suggestions to remove barriers
Ways to ensure immigrants awareness of programs such as affordable access program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize partnership with community organizations</li> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Provide high level of customer service-training to Frontline staff</li> <li>• Staff from park ground and outdoor playground assets participate in professional development on Diversity and Inclusion matters to widen their lens on park planning and development</li> <li>• Improve program promotion to immigrants</li> </ul>
Availability of services in multiple languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 311 provides services in multiple languages</li> </ul>
Language barrier/ no translation budget (recurring issue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize HRM staff when possible as well as other organizations</li> <li>• Use google translate as needed</li> </ul>
Difficulty accessing registration for programs - not easy to log in MyREC (due to internet access, low awareness about programs, other factors). That results in missing registration as programs get filled fast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with ISANS to find ways to ensure easier access to myREC and offer assistance with creating myREC account</li> <li>• Provide education and resources to directly support registration</li> <li>• Create targeted programs for immigrants/newcomers</li> </ul>





## Chief Administrative Office

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
Challenge to accessing information on municipal regulatory requirement, especially for new start-up businesses including those of immigrants who do not understand how regulations work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Regulatory Modernization Project works with Business Units to reduce red tape and regulatory barriers for businesses</li> </ul>
Language barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide translation services to address language barriers</li> </ul>
Immigrants have little or no access to business networks in Halifax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newcomers fall into that category of Municipal customers who require a human-centered customer service approach to help them navigate services</li> <li>Work closely with community partners to better understand immigrants' needs and how to better support them</li> </ul>

## Planning & Development

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide translation and interpretation services</li> </ul>
Inaccessible or unfamiliar meeting locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider accommodation by holding meeting at varying locations closer to targeted community</li> </ul>
Meetings conflicting with religion observance or cultural events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold meetings at varying times and varying dates</li> </ul>
Lack of childcare provision	
Culturally inappropriate meeting structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek guidance from community leaders</li> </ul>
Bureaucratic terminology, technical jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide background information about subject area/ <i>use plain language</i></li> </ul>
Unfamiliarity with community information consumption habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek guidance from community organizations</li> </ul>



Online engagement and the digital divide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Internet access at public facilities</li> <li>• Provide additional offline opportunities to participate</li> </ul>
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Corporate Customer Service

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language line provides interpretation services through 311</li> <li>• When in person, agents use google translate</li> </ul>

Finance and Asset Management

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
Awareness of opportunities to engage with the municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower immigrants to tell us what they want/need in terms of services and programs</li> </ul>
Accessibility to services that we offer such as Resident Survey and other public engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with the Office of Diversity &amp; Inclusion to review materials and ensure that they are both inclusive of their experience, and worded to make them easier to understand</li> <li>• Use connections within D&amp;I to broaden the reach of the survey, and to inform and encourage immigrants and newcomers to participate</li> <li>• When doing community engagement directly, we have tried to arrange events that are specific to newcomers/immigrants and to meet them where they live / in their communities. We will continue to do this going forward.</li> </ul>

Transportation & Public Works

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
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Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering changes to how to notify residents of services/ as these are typically written in English</li> <li>• Immigrant serving partners often provide interpretation</li> <li>• Offering waste management sorting in multiple languages</li> <li>• We simplified the language overtime, but it is not typically graphic in nature nor available in other languages</li> <li>• Will add sorting guides in additional languages as needed</li> </ul>
Language barriers re traffic signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve/ simplify or offer right of way signage in other languages</li> </ul>
Pay stations and permit website are only offered in English and French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find ways to help drivers understand the motor vehicle act and interpret posted signage</li> </ul>

Halifax Fire & Emergency Service

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Suggestions to remove barriers</b>
Language barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources for Fire Prevention are picture heavy</li> <li>• We also provide links to the NFPA website for fire safety resources in multiple languages</li> </ul>



## Human Resources

Barriers	Suggestions to remove barriers
Language and cultural barriers in the hiring and interview process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added additional material to hiring manager certification to show how we can better support these candidates</li> <li>• Offered accommodations to the application and recruitment process</li> <li>• Eliminated any Canadian experience or education requirement beyond provincial licensing</li> <li>• Continue hosting regular engagement and information sessions to share information on how to be successful in our recruitment processes</li> </ul>

## Halifax Regional Police

Barriers	Suggestions to remove barriers
Preconceived ideas about police that immigrants may bring with them from previous experiences with police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police outreach to immigrants through ISANS to inform new immigrants on police services and reduce fear of police through these information sessions</li> </ul>
Cultural barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRP has made diverse hiring a priority and ensured diverse hiring panel</li> <li>• HRP has officers who reflect the multicultural realities of Halifax</li> <li>• HRP has a full time Diversity Officer who is responsible for communicating and assisting with the diverse communities of HRM</li> </ul>



<p>Language barriers are also a roadblock to immigrants accessing police resources or services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having multilingual police officers with more access to languages other than English and French are a resource that any officer can access while performing regular patrol duties</li> <li>• HRP has a contact with a translator company to ensure smooth communication with immigrants and newcomers</li> <li>• HRP's Francophone Officers also have the provide services to the Francophone community which includes French speaking immigrants</li> </ul>
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### **Q 3. What support do you need to ensure that your services/programs are accessible for immigrants and/or newcomers?**

#### Human Resources

- Maintains strong partnerships and communications with ISANS, YMCA, YWCA, Halifax Partnership, NS Works, Teamwork Cooperative, Pier 21 Welcome Home to Canada Program, etc.
- Partners to offer support and one on one assistance
- HRM to consider how we support immigrants who are employed with the municipality and how we can assist them to apply for their PR status

#### Parks and Recreation

- More support around translation services, for both staff and clients
- Train frontline HRM staff on Affordable Access program and procedures
- Better communication tools
- Availability of translator for registration and in programs
- Programs that help newcomers understand the registration process and help to set up myREC accounts.
- Translators /Technology available



- Marketing materials, partnerships and translated material
- Corporate Customer Services
- Corporate communications translation
- Easy access to information online
- Additional supports for language barriers at Customer Service Centres
- Ensure the immigrant community is aware of our services

#### Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency

- Continued outreach, networking within business units
- Awareness and different media strategies
- Language interpretation and translation material in different languages

#### Chief Administrative Office

- Customer service expertise and new technologies and service options are needed for HRM to deliver regulatory services to newcomers and/or immigrants
- A dedicated "Business Navigator or Business Ambassador" position in HRM would be very worth-while not just for newcomers and/or immigrants but for the entire business community including diverse businesses and entrepreneurs
- Translation and interpretation services
- Support for job search
- Support for affordable housing and childcare

#### Finance and Asset Management

- Having the Office of Diversity & Inclusion to provide input, insight, and to facilitate access to these communities is invaluable
- Great help from the D&I team in supporting engagement / improving access to surveys
- Having a D&I resource that understands these communities, has contacts / knows how to communicate with them is a huge benefit to our engagement work

#### Transportation & Public Works

- Translation services for notifications to be sent in other languages



- More detailed discussions with D&I Office to see if there are other things, we could be doing
- Training on immigrants/ newcomers needs
- Links to community organizations that can utilize our services (we may need to promote our services to these groups)
- Data on languages spoken by newcomers so we know when we need to include a new language into our planning
- A corporate mandate to offer services in multiple languages-
- Funding to support translation for all of our materials and resources
- Better signage system
- More/larger street signage
- Reaching out to raise awareness about the municipal government and how it impacts their daily lives, what services we have to offer, how they can participate as residents etc.
- Signs in other Languages on the main service providing facilities
- Any programs that help with integration into HRM as a whole and to build community within HRM as a support structure
- A welcome to HRM gift basket program that includes everything immigrants need to know to live here, such as Hospital locations, blood donation locations, how waste works, expectations on home ownership, and local business information

#### Halifax Regional Police

- Build strong relationships with immigrant communities
- Support programs serving immigrants to better understand their needs
- A strong communication line with immigrants and support programs
- Strong relationships with service Organizations such as ISANS and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion



## **Q 4. Are there any additional programs and/or services that you feel HRM should make available to immigrants and/or newcomers?**

### Parks and Recreation

- Help with promotion of existing ESL classes in HRM
- Check with immigrant/newcomer communities on what they need from HRM/ maybe through surveys, focus groups, community outreach, support organizations...
- Organize “Try it” days for immigrants/ newcomers
- Develop programs that take in consideration cultural differences
- Program partnerships, for example offering newcomer swimming lessons, basketball, etc
- Ready for Rec types programs that help newcomers to feel comfortable in rec settings

### Corporate & Customer Services

- Pop up sessions at places like ISANS to educate newcomers on HRM services such as 311, customer service, transit (How to take the bus, read the schedule), how to complete services online, job information and how to apply, etc
- More advertising to the immigration community - getting out into the community for awareness of services offered at 311 and Customer Services

### Human Resources

- Interview support sessions

### Chief Administrative Office

- Attainable housing regulations and programs that are designed and delivered with a newcomer and/or immigrant lens
- Affordable housing support
- Mentorship programs for immigrants searching for jobs
- Community building and social connection building programs for new immigrants





## Planning & Development

- Translation services in all public engagements (written and oral) in the main spoken languages in the region

## Finance & Asset Management

- Continue to build a network of contacts
- connections to these communities to allow us to be informed
- engage with them on topics that are important to them

## Halifax Transit Services

- HRM could start hiring from outside the country allowing for immigrants to arrive with a job to HRM. This would also allow HRM to explore a wider talent pool and fill in positions faster

## Halifax Regional Police

- Halifax Regional Police will be looking to build other partnerships similar to the partnership with ISANS, for example with Greater Halifax Partnerships

## Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency

- Continue support existing ESL classes in HRM
- Continue to meet and build partnerships/relationships with the newcomer community (Post COVID)
- Continue recruitments efforts and partnerships that helps create a more diverse and representative workforce

## **Q 5. Anything you want to add?**

### Finance & Asset Management

- Continue to build the immigrant/ newcomer networks
- Let communities know that we are interested in hearing from them and want to make things better/ easier
- Continue working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to ensure access to immigrant/newcomers' communities



### Chief Administrative Office

- Work with the Province to remove as many regulatory obstacles as possible to ensure welcoming new businesses, supporting, and celebrating the diversity of products, services, and community that newcomers and immigrants bring to Halifax

### Parks & Recreation

- We provide grants to multi-cultural events including a festival for newcomers. It has grown over the past years and we will continue to fund

### Halifax Regional Police

- We will focus on and grow our specific services offered to immigrants and newcomers as the COVID pandemic subsides and as we develop our Diversity Office work plans

