



HALIFAX

# Immigration Strategy 2022-26

Welcoming immigrants and  
valuing their contributions  
to the Halifax Regional  
Municipality

Immigration plays a central role in the future of the Halifax Regional Municipality and helps to shape our vibrant and diverse communities. Our region's economic growth, social prosperity and workforce development largely depends on our capacity to retain immigrants and newcomers. In recent years, an increase in immigration to the Halifax region has contributed to unprecedented population growth.

In response, and to help newcomers feel at home, the municipality has launched the Immigration Strategy 2022-26. Approved by Halifax Regional Council on July 12, 2022, the Immigration Strategy is an updated version of the Welcoming Newcomers Action Plan developed in 2016. The updated strategy reflects a modern-day landscape and lays the foundation for more immigrant-friendly service delivery in the Halifax region for years to come.

To gather feedback on the proposed strategy, the municipality conducted two consultation sessions with new immigrants, asylum seekers and migrants. A third session engaged immigrant-serving organizations. Additionally, a survey on immigrant services was shared with business units in October, 2021, to collect input from municipal employees. The feedback received from both internal and external stakeholder groups was instrumental in the development of the strategy.

The **34 actions** outlined in the Immigration Strategy are aligned to the five goals of the municipality's Diversity & Inclusion Framework, which guides the work of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office.



# Diversity & Inclusion Framework

The five key objectives of the Immigration Strategy align with the five goals of the Diversity & Inclusion Framework:

Goals of the Diversity & Inclusion Framework		Objectives of the Immigration Strategy
1	<b>Inclusive public service</b>  To ensure inclusive and equitable access and benefits of municipal services, programs and facilities.	To ensure that municipal services are inclusive, reflective of, and accessible to immigrants and newcomers without substantial barriers.
2	<b>Safe, respectful and inclusive work environment</b>  To have a diverse and inclusive workplace free of harassment, discrimination and systemic barriers.	To create a workplace that embraces and facilitates equal participation and equitable growth for all immigrants and newcomers.
3	<b>Equitable employment</b>  To have a skilled workforce that reflects the diverse residents of the municipality.	To attract and retain immigrant and newcomer talent into the municipality's workforce in a variety of positions.
4	<b>Meaningful partnerships</b>  To develop positive and respectful internal and external partnerships that contribute to inclusive decision making.	To initiate and build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants, newcomers and immigrant-serving organizations.
5	<b>Accessible information and communication</b>  To communicate, both internally and externally, in a way that demonstrates, exemplifies and embodies our municipal diversity and inclusion values.	To provide timely and accessible information to newcomers and immigrant communities about municipal programs and services.



## **The municipality's mission for diversity, inclusion and equity:**

To remove systemic barriers that prevent the full participation of our residents, businesses, visitors and municipal employees in municipal programs and services.





# Immigration Strategy and Implementation Plan

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion/ANSAIO (D&I/ANSAIO) will lead the implementation of the strategy, supported by individual business unit action plans. D&I/ANSAIO will work with business units to support the development and implementation of the action plans by advising on best practices, supporting community engagement initiatives and helping to develop roadmaps to success.

## Through business unit action plans, D&I/ANSAIO will support business units to:

- provide public service to immigrants and newcomers
- increase immigrant representation within municipal public engagement initiatives
- prioritize immigrant and newcomer engagement in the delivery of municipal services
- provide employment opportunities for immigrants and newcomers in alignment with the municipality's Employment Equity Policy and Fair Hiring Policy
- celebrate the contributions of immigrants throughout the community



# Action Item Summary

## Inclusive public service

### Goal 1:

Ensure that municipal services are inclusive of immigrants and newcomers' needs.

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

1. Conduct annual inventory and evaluation of municipal services geared towards immigrants and newcomers
2. Hold employee awareness events (e.g. diversity cafés, awareness sessions)
3. Continue providing diversity and inclusion training modules
4. Incorporate immigrant and newcomers' voices in the development of new plans, policies and programs through community engagement
5. Continue providing Welcomed in Halifax (WIH) transit and recreation passes
6. Create and implement customer satisfaction survey about the use of the WIH pass
7. Schedule public engagement initiatives in spaces where immigrants are comfortable and during times that accommodate their diverse needs
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)



## Safe, respectful and inclusive work environment

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### Goal 2:

Create a workplace that facilitates the equal participation and growth for immigrants and newcomers.

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

11. Review existing policies and practices to ensure that diversity and inclusion are supported and systemic barriers preventing the inclusion of immigrants and newcomers are addressed
12. Identify and reduce barriers that prevent the participation of immigrants in programs and services
13. Provide resources for employees to ensure awareness of policies related to diversity, inclusion and systemic barriers for immigrants
14. Employees at all levels of the organization participate in diversity and inclusion training
15. Diversity and inclusion are highlighted within the organization through internal communications
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 Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and other immigrant-serving organizations

## Equitable employment

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### Goal 3:

Attract and retain immigrant talent.

***The Halifax Regional Municipality will take all necessary steps to ensure employment within the municipality is attainable to immigrants.***

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 toward immigrants
21. Collaborate with the Halifax Immigration Partnership and ISANS to create publications celebrating immigrant and newcomer communities and their impact on the municipality's economic development





## Meaningful partnership

**Goal 4:** Build internal and external partnerships that include immigrants.

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

- 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 talent



## Accessible information and communication

### Goal 5:

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

***The Halifax Regional Municipality will provide timely information about services available to immigrants and promote the Halifax region's position as a welcoming and prosperous community.***

25. Update, maintain and promote the immigrant portal on halifax.ca
26. Ensure the use of plain language throughout communications
27. Establish a protocol regarding the translation of materials used to communicate information about 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-centered customer approach to navigating services
30. Participate in the development of a pathway to immigration tool kit for international students
31. Support community events aiming to welcome immigrants and newcomers (e.g. Annual Welcome BBQ, Supper NOVA)
32. Continue hosting recreational activities and events that support immigrants integration
33. Work with ISANS and other immigrant-serving organizations to create recreation programs based on community interest
34. Promote the Fire Safety program to immigrants





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