



RRLIP PROGRESS REPORT 2019 - 2020

ABOUT THE REGINA REGION LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (RRLIP)

The RRLIP is a community initiative that...



- **Convenes** a multi-sector **Partnership Council**, diverse **Immigrant Advisory Table** and **Working Groups** to support the community's settlement and integration priorities
- **Strengthens** the local capacity to integrate newcomers
- **Increases** knowledge about newcomer needs, contributions and local strategies for support
- **Promotes** welcoming attitudes and increases the full participation of newcomers in the community

Vision: Regina welcomes newcomers, values and celebrates diversity and supports the integration of all residents.

Mission: The Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP) and its member organizations will educate, collaborate and partner for the benefit of newcomers in Regina.

For more information about the project visit www.rrlip.ca

PURPOSE OF PROGRESS REPORT

This report provides an opportunity to share updates about the progress of the Local Immigration Partnership's work in the community and its impact on strengthening the community's capacity to welcome, settle and integrate newcomers.

COUNCIL, IMMIGRANT ADVISORY TABLE & WORKING GROUPS

The RRLIP convenes a variety of groups, all with the intent of strengthening the community's response to welcome, settle and integrate newcomers. These groups convene quarterly and include:

- ❖ **Partnership Council** is a multi-sector table that oversees and guides the activities of the RRLIP. Table members include the following sector representatives:
 - federal, provincial and municipal governments
 - public library
 - education
 - healthcare
 - safety
 - settlement
 - protective services
- ❖ **Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT)** is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who were once newcomers to Canada. The IAT informs the local and emerging priorities of the RRLIP and supports a broad range of community stakeholders with the knowledge and connections gained through lived experience.

- ❖ **Canadian Housing Advisory Committee (CHAC)** is comprised of housing, settlement and related sectors. CHAC members identify local housing challenges and barriers and develop solutions to reduce them, in order to enhance the integration and settlement of newcomers into Canadian housing.
- ❖ **Labour Market Working Group** (formerly Newcomer Employment Week Working Group) is comprised of settlement, municipal, provincial, library and other related sectors. The Labour Market Working Group collaborates to plan and deliver an annual week-long event that highlights the skills and education of newcomers and enhances awareness of local employment programs and services.
- ❖ **Private Sponsorship Group Network** is comprised of individuals and groups who support, or are interested in supporting, the private sponsorship of refugees into the community. Group members discuss challenges related to private sponsorship and identify solutions to support one another in their work with sponsored refugees.

Short-term working groups and/or committees are also convened to respond to singular or special circumstances arising in the community. The RRLIP Partnership Council provides direction and guidance when these circumstances occur.

LOCAL PRIORITIES/ACTION PLAN ACTIVITIES

The RRLIPs annual activities are guided by priorities which are identified in collaboration with local stakeholders. Newcomers, newcomer-serving agencies and other local supports contribute to the identification of emerging and longer-term priorities. During the period of April 1st, 2019 to March 31st, 2020, **the RRLIP and its community partners** focused on these identified priorities:

- ❖ Information and Resource Support
- ❖ Communication and Awareness Building
- ❖ Labour Market Access and Connections
- ❖ Coordination Support
- ❖ Newcomer Health and Wellness
- ❖ Canadian Daily Living
- ❖ Organizational Strength

Read more about the local priorities below.



INFORMATION & RESOURCE SUPPORT

How to Ride Regina Transit Guide

Activity: The RRLIP conducted a survey to determine what resources would augment and support the settlement and integration process. Service providers responded and the most requested resource topic was local transit information.

Output: **How to Ride Regina Transit** resource was developed, based on the survey results and through collaborative partnership with Regina Transit, and input from a select group of service providers. The guide is available on the project website under '**Latest Project Resources**' <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>

Outcome: Newcomers and service providers are well-informed throughout the settlement and integration process.

COMMUNICATION & AWARENESS BUILDING

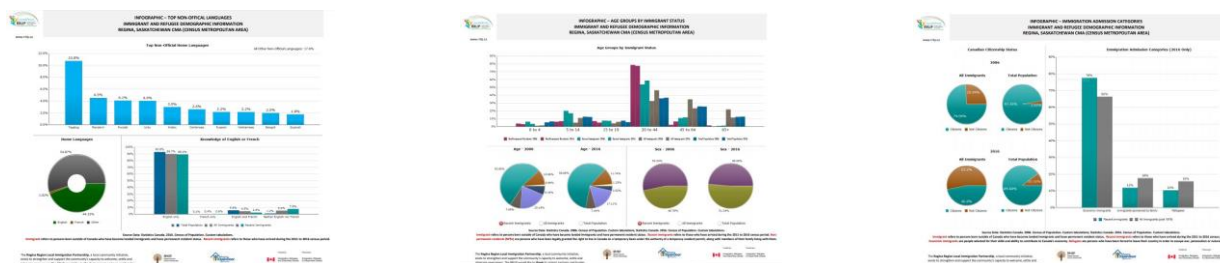
Series of Infographics

Activity: The RRLIP engaged with a group of community members with experience in graphic design. The working group was comprised of 4 individuals, 3 with lived experience as newcomers to Regina. Topics of interest were determined, along with a design and layout best suited for ease of viewing by community members.

Output: A series of 5 infographics were produced, highlighting these topics of interest: top non-official languages, immigration admission categories, housing standards, labour market activity, and age groups by immigrant status. They highlight key information about the needs/challenges of newcomers, and their contributions to the Regina community. The infographic series has been shared with community partners and stakeholders at community events and meetings. The series is available on the project website under '**Latest Project Resources**'

<http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>

Outcome: Community members are more aware of the needs, strengths and contributions of newcomers.



LABOUR MARKET ACCESS & CONNECTIONS

Newcomer Employment Week Event / Semaine pour l'emploi des nouveaux arrivants - May 6-10, 2019

Activity: The RRLIP conducted a survey to determine how to bring awareness about the benefits of newcomer talent and enhance connections between newcomers, service agencies and employers.

Outputs: The second annual Newcomer Employment Week occurred in May, 2019.

- ❖ The *NEW/SENA Regina Event Launch* was held at the Regina Public Library - Central Branch. Mayor Michael Fougere attended the launch event to acknowledge the importance of NEW/SENA.
- ❖ Activities during the week included: 2 Career Fairs (one in English and one for Francophone newcomers), Diversity Strategies Panel for Employers, Workshops and Information Sessions on: How to Start a Business; Understanding the WCB Program; Workplace Stress Management; Sask Polytech's Career Enhancement Program; Online Application Process for City of Regina Jobs; Benefits of Filing Your Income Tax; Job Fair Preparation; and a Networking Session for Professionals (Accounting/Finance, IT and Engineering fields).
- ❖ In addition to RRLIP's existing blog and Facebook page, a separate *NEW/SENA Regina* Facebook page was revived and messaging was shared on it each day of the event week.



LABOUR MARKET ACCESS & CONNECTIONS (CONT'D)

- ❖ In collaboration with community partners, the RRLIP developed a one-page **Networking Tips Handout** which was shared with participants at the networking event and posted on the RRLIP blog and Facebook page. The handout is available on the project website under '**Latest Project Resources**' <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>
- ❖ Newcomer Success Stories from City staff were shared and the RRLIP highlighted these on blog posts and Facebook pages each day of the week.

Outcomes: Employers are more aware of newcomer talent and the benefits of a diverse and inclusive workplace. Newcomers are better connected to services and have more opportunities for learning and career advancement.

Platform to Promote Employment Events in the Community

Activity: In response to an identified gap for consistent and consolidated employment events information in the community, the RRLIP researched existing platforms that highlight such events, as well as identified capacity challenges around the development and continued support of such a platform.

Output: A user-friendly on-line platform that captures upcoming employment events was developed (e.g. job fairs, networking events, training sessions, etc.). The platform, proposed by IAT members and well-received by employment service providers, is housed on the RRLIP website. Service providers and other community stakeholders are asked to complete an online submission of employment events that would be of interest to newcomers.

Outcome: Since implementation in the fall of 2019, the *Employment Events Page* has received submissions from 8 different community partners promoting over 30 different events. The platform can be found on the RRLIP website at <http://rrlip.ca/pages/employment-related-events>.

COORDINATION SUPPORT

Interagency Coordination Support to Address Health Care Challenges in Vulnerable Populations

Activity: Through information obtained from the South Primary Health Care Network (Sask Health Authority), the RRLIP learned of two areas in the city that experience low immunization rates within the newcomer population, compared to other neighbourhoods. The South Primary Health Care Network identified the need for an inter-agency approach to this, and other health care challenges, experienced by vulnerable populations. In collaboration with the Network, the RRLIP examined the process of coordination required to develop an inter-agency approach.

Output: A coordinated service provider meeting was convened to discuss a variety of challenges vulnerable populations face, in Regina downtown and south areas. All attending members agreed that an inter-agency approach to addressing service-access challenges would be beneficial, and would like to meet regularly to do so.

Outcome: Newcomer needs and service gaps are better understood, and the group will work towards the goal of developing coordinated services to support them.

NEWCOMER HEALTH & WELLNESS

Mental Health Resources for Service Providers Working with Newcomers

Activity: The RRLIP examined existing resources to support newcomer health and wellness service provision.

Output: After discussing the specific needs for support with a sampling of local service providers, a pamphlet was developed and designed as a quick reference to training opportunities, multilingual resources, Canadian research, toolkits, and other pertinent topics aimed at those providing services to newcomers.

The ***Mental Health Resources for Service Providers Working With Newcomers*** can be found on the RRLIP website under '***Latest Project Resources***' <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>

CANADIAN DAILY LIVING

On-going Coordination Support to Housing Sector Stakeholders

Activity: The RRLIP provided on-going coordination support to housing sector stakeholders, whose goal is to identify and discuss challenges and barriers newcomers face when finding, adapting to and retaining appropriate housing in the community.

Output: Although the major goal of this fiscal year's coordination support was the implementation of a housing and life skills education program designed to increase housing stability, the RRLIP and its Canadian Housing Advisory Committee met with some challenges that delayed the adoption of that program. Regardless, the CHAC Committee continued to meet quarterly to discuss newcomer-related barriers and challenges related to housing, and to work together to identify solutions.

Outcome: Due to unforeseen delays, the ***RentSmart Certificate Program*** was not operational in Regina by the end of the fiscal year (March 31st, 2020). Future anticipated outcomes include: newcomers experience more successful tenancy and home ownership outcomes and relationships are improved between landlord and tenant.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

In Addition to Locally Identified Community Priorities, the RRLIP Focused on Maintaining Organizational Strength. To facilitate this, the RRLIP...

- ❖ Hosted a third annual community forum to update the community on the project's progress and to examine and discuss stakeholders' most requested forum topic – Cultural Bridging. The ***Community Forum Report - 2020*** can be accessed on the RRLIP website under '***Project Reports***' <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>
- ❖ Collaborated with a broad range of stakeholders to strengthen the community's capacity to welcome, settle and integrate newcomers (e.g. newcomer-serving agencies, government ministries, health authority, protective services, municipal government, libraries, etc.).
- ❖ Received in-kind support (e.g. hospitality and facility space for meetings), from community partners.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH (CONT'D)

- ❖ Negotiated a 5-year Grant Agreement contract with IRCC for the on-going funding support of the RRLIP Project (April 1st, 2020 – March 31st, 2025).
- ❖ Conducted an annual evaluation with primary stakeholders (RRLIP-convened table members) and other community partners to measure the project's impact and identify areas of needed improvement.

Results from the **primary stakeholder survey** included:

- **97% of respondents believe it is important to have a Local Immigration Partnership in the community.**
- **83% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the RRLIP Action Plan advances the needs of diverse people through planning and delivery.**

“We welcome and are appreciative of the partnership with RRLIP. We very much value the connections that we have made through RRLIP. Thank you.”

~Survey Comment~

Respondents representing **local organizations** were asked about their involvement in the RRLIP and its impact on their organization. The following statements yielded the respective answers below:

- My organization now has better access to resources to help with newcomer integration.
79% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to this statement.
- My organization now has better connections with other organizations working with newcomers.
89% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- My organization is committed to the vision and mission of RRLIP.
74% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- My organization now has a better understanding of strategies and practices that support newcomer integration.
79% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

“Good resource if I have a question or need an idea for how to work with/support newcomers.”

~Survey Comment~

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

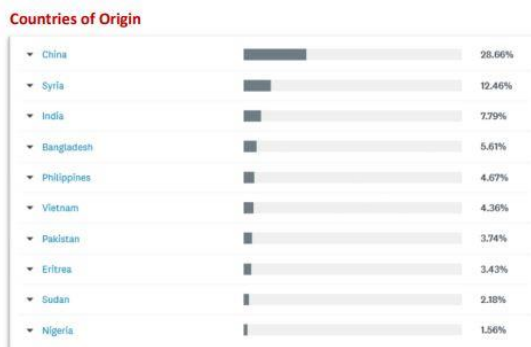
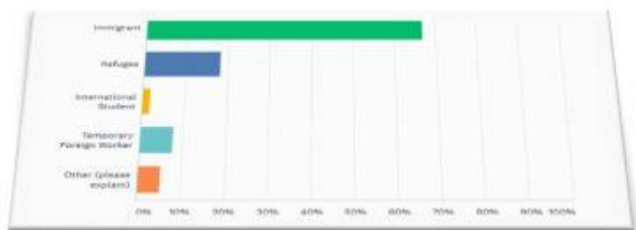
The RRLIP also supported the community through involvement in working groups and committees

- ❖ Vital Signs Community Advisory Council
- ❖ Early Years Family Centre Working Group
- ❖ Nutrition for Newcomers Working Group
- ❖ Food Regina Working Group
- ❖ COVID-Response Tables (beginning in March 2020)
- ❖ Local Immigration Partnership Related Working Groups (e.g. Data Group, Evaluation Framework Group, Basecamp which is an on-line platform utilized by LIPs across the country)
- ❖ AI Ritchie Interagency Group
- ❖ Campaign for Grade-Level Reading Working Group
- ❖ Saskatchewan Private Sponsorship Group Network
- ❖ Regina Human Services Committee

RESEARCH

The RRLIP conducted two major surveys in 2019-2020

The RRLIP worked with a research consultant to develop a **Newcomer** and **Community Survey**. Input was gathered from the project's community partners and as a result, the survey content was robust and reflected important questions that community partners were interested in. 325 newcomers completed the Newcomer Survey, and 61 individuals completed the Community Survey.



Major Findings – Newcomer Survey:

- ❖ When looking for employment, the respondents identified lack of Canadian experience (68%) and language barriers (66%) as their biggest obstacles in securing appropriate employment.
- ❖ 90% of respondents consider Regina to be a friendly city. About 78% feel a 'sense of belonging' to the community in Regina.
- ❖ Family members and friends have supported the newcomers most (69%) when settling in the community of Regina.
- ❖ 88% think it is important to have organized events or opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and newcomers to come together and 86% of respondents would be willing to attend an event where newcomers and Indigenous Peoples can talk about reconciliation.
- ❖ Among the top 3 health care challenges experienced by the survey respondents were: language barriers, a lack of available doctors, and high costs for medication.
- ❖ 68% of respondents reported not having experienced a mental health challenge such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, etc., since coming to Canada. 22% report having experienced a mental health challenge. Friends and family have been the main supports for respondents experiencing mental health challenges (86%), whereas a smaller percentage have relied on religious and cultural communities (24%), and counsellors (10%).
- ❖ 22% of the survey respondents feel additional mental health supports are needed in the community.
- ❖ According to the respondents, language barriers (48%), transportation challenges (33%), and the lack of awareness about programs (32%) have been the major challenges in accessing language and settlement services.
- ❖ 70% describe the police service in Regina as friendly and helpful, 68% think the same about the Regina fire department. 62% 'always feel protected' by police in Regina and 66% by the fire department.

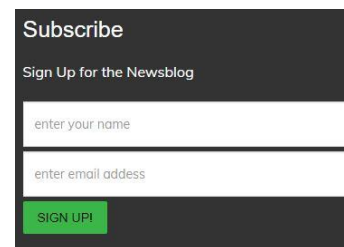
- ❖ Most respondents believe that emailing (69%) is the best way for service providers and other support services to connect with newcomers. For respondents who chose 'other', places of worship were most often cited.
- ❖ While seeking appropriate housing, respondents have experienced high costs (66%), struggled with inappropriate housing size and condition (30%) and experienced language barriers (28%).
- ❖ Lack of information (56%) and language barriers (39%) are the main challenges respondents face in accessing a domestic violence shelter.
- ❖ Safety and security (62%), employment matching past skills and education (54%), access to language instruction (47%), immediate job opportunities (46%), and a welcoming community (41%) were the top 5 most important factors to survey respondents, when settling in Regina.

The results of both surveys will inform the local priorities to address in a future RRLIP Community Action Plan beginning in 2020, as well as advise the day to day initiatives of the project. The results can also be used to support the community's capacity to plan programs, develop policy, create awareness campaigns and develop engagement strategies centered on newcomers. The **full reports** are available on the project website under '**Project Reports**' <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-resources>

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The RRLIP Informs and Connects with the Community Through Varying Methods

- ❖ Website www.rrlip.ca (on average, between 1500 to 2000 unique visitors per month)
- ❖ Blog posts (once - twice weekly; 179 total posts throughout 2019-2020) <http://rrlip.ca/blogs>
- ❖ Newsletters <http://rrlip.ca/pages/project-newsletters>
- ❖ FaceBook Page <https://www.facebook.com/RRLIP/>
- ❖ RRLIP - convened and other community stakeholder meetings and events



Highlights:

- Each **Blog Post** is also shared on the RRLIP **Facebook page**. Among the most popular posts this past year were: Newcomer Employment Week Calendar (36 Fb shares); RRLIP Cultural Bridging Forum (20 Fb shares); Employment Standards for Newcomers Webinar (19 Fb shares); Windmill Microlending Program (16 Fb shares); RRLIP Immigrant Advisory Table Member Recruitment (11 Fb shares); Local Strategies to Support Immigrant Business and Local Prosperity Webinar (9 Fb shares).
- **Newcomer News** is a plain-language publication providing easy to understand information about services and programs of benefit to newcomers. In 2019-2020, 27 community agencies, programs or resources were highlighted. Newcomer News is being utilized and distributed by settlement agencies, ESL teachers, refugee sponsors, etc., and is sent to an extensive email list including community agencies, churches, cultural groups, individuals and many newcomers. New editions are also featured in a blog, and all editions are available on the website.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to the newcomer community for your resilience and determination, and your sincere desire to contribute to your new community.

Thank you to all RRLIP community partners (Partnership Council, Immigrant Advisory Table, Canadian Housing Advisory Committee, Labour Market Working Group, Private Sponsorship Group Network and **many others**) for your efforts in strengthening the warmth of our welcome and our ability to settle and integrate newcomers.

Thank you to newcomer-serving agencies and other supports, for all the work that you do every day.

Thank you to the community of Regina, for through this work we recognize community members to be warm and welcoming, and genuinely wanting to assist others.

Finally, thank you to the RRLIPs project partners and funder, for without your support, this work would not have been possible.

