



# 2023 Needs Assessment Report

WORKBOOK



## What is a Welcoming Community

It takes a community to welcome newcomers



A welcoming community has a **strong desire to receive newcomers** and to create an environment in which **they feel at home**.



A welcoming community ensures newcomers are able to **participate fully in all aspects of community life**.



A welcoming community ensures newcomers have **access to a full range of services** and programs and can find **meaningful employment opportunities**.

What's a welcoming community for you? How would YOU define it?

Based on your definition of a welcoming community, which services do you think are available and which are missing in your community?

What can you and your organization do to fill those gaps?

## Welcoming Community Coalition Mandate

The WCC works with the community to create more welcoming and inclusive spaces by:



Supporting community-level research and strategic planning



Raising awareness around newcomers' needs and engaging a wide range of local actors



Identifying barriers facing newcomers



Collaborating with the community to reduce them



Improving accessibility and coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration

What could you do to support WCC? Write your ideas here:

## Purpose of the Needs Assessment Survey

- To learn more about the barriers and gaps to the full integration of newcomers to our community
- To improve the quality of policy and program decisions in organizations throughout our region
- To improve our local programs and services to better support international newcomers as well as others in our community

## Research Methodology

The data collection strategies used included:

- surveys
- in-depth interviews
- focus group discussions

from stakeholders including:

- newcomers (5 years or less)
- settled citizens (more than 5 years)
- service organizations

between April and September 2023.

{Settlement and integration  
require a “whole of society”  
approach to be successful.}

AMSSA

(Affiliation of Multicultural  
Societies and Services Agencies  
of BC)

## Newcomers Study Participants

**Newcomers** were defined as immigrants who arrived in Canada within the past 5 years.



Survey Respondents: total of 94 respondents to an online survey

Focus Group Participants: a total of 24 people participated in 5 separate focus groups answering questions about their immigration experiences and feedback on what could be improved.



Identified as  
White 41%



Identified as  
Women 72%



48% live in  
Campbell River



39% were between  
35-44 years old

# 1

Do you know any newcomers?

# 2

Have you ever talked with them about their experience of living here?

YES

NO

# 3

If yes, what did you find out that you didn't know before? Did they ever mention their needs or struggles? What are they?

## Findings: Use of Community Services by Newcomers

Which community services do you think are the most used by newcomers? List them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How would you feel if you lived abroad, and wanted to use the services you just listed? What would be helpful if you didn't speak the local language? And even if you spoke the language, what would be helpful to better understand the cultural nuances of how things work? Journal your thoughts here:





## Findings: Use of Community Services by Newcomers

According to survey responses, the top 4 services used by participants and/or their families were Financial, Health, Recreation services (e.g., Pool, sports fields, yoga classes), and Arts & Culture.



Services that were the least used include interpretation services, mental health services, and small business supports.

**1**

Did you guess the top four services that are the most used?  YES  NO

**2**

How many did you guess right? Which one surprised you for making the top four?

**3**

Do you or your organization offer any of those services? If yes, how could you improve them and make them more accessible?

## Findings: Sense of Belonging in the Community

How would you describe your sense of belonging in the community?

2

1

1. Very strong
2. Somewhat strong
3. Very weak
4. Somewhat weak
5. I don't know/no opinion

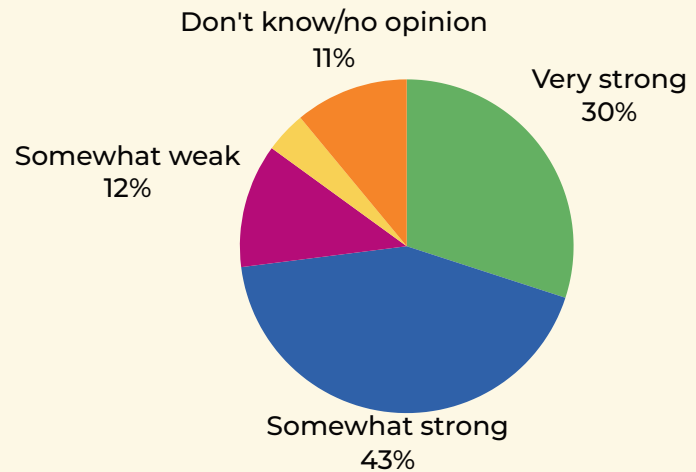
Explain why here.

Which one do you think is the top survey result for newcomers? Why?

3

## Findings: Sense of Belonging in the Community

Survey's results:  
How would you describe your  
sense of belonging in the  
community?



Are you surprised by the results?

YES

NO

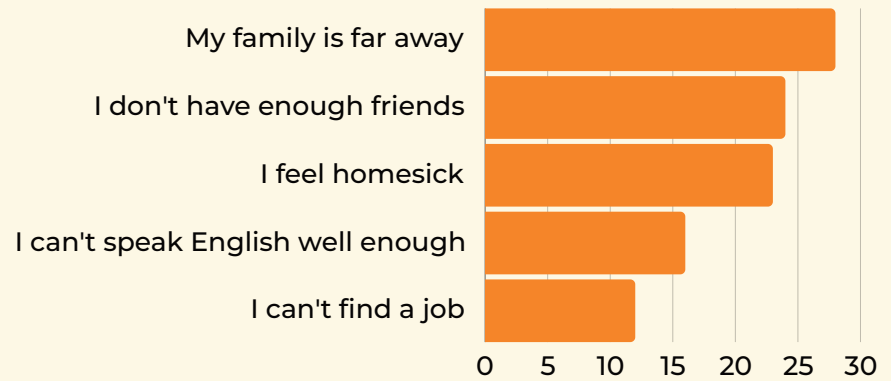
Why do you think newcomers feel this way? List some of the reasons.

What could you or your organization do to improve newcomers' sense of belonging? List 5 simple actions.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Findings: Sense of Belonging in the Community

Newcomers who said they feel isolated listed these top 5 reasons:



Are you surprised by the results?

YES

NO

Based on the survey's responses, what could you or your organization do to help newcomers feel less isolated?

## Findings: Biggest Challenges facing Newcomers

We asked newcomers: What were the biggest challenges they have experienced in the last year in the community? Their answers were:

1. Living costs/affording services
2. Finding work
3. Learning where and how to do things
4. Accessing English language programs that meet my needs
5. Making friends or social connections
6. Accessing health care
7. Receiving public or social services
8. Adjusting family life in a new culture
9. Mental health struggles
10. Expensive/limited transportation
11. Discrimination/Racism
12. Understanding my children's teachers
13. Receiving PR card



If you were a newcomer, which do you think would be your top 5 challenges?



## Findings: Biggest Challenges facing Newcomers

If a newcomer asked for your help with one or more of those challenges, would you know where to direct them, and which services are available in town? If you don't, do a bit of research and create your help list here.

### My Help List!

Need help with:

Where to go:

Contact info:

## Community Resident Survey

The **community resident** survey was distributed to the general population and immigrants who have been residents in Canada for over five years.

A total of 210 residents drawn from the Campbell River and Comox Valley regions submitted replies to the online survey.



The community residents' perceptions say that **19% of the citizens** don't agree that "immigration has a positive impact on our city".  
Try to list some of the reasons why they think so, even if you don't agree with them!  
Maybe you've heard this conversation before.

## Findings: Community Resident Perceptions

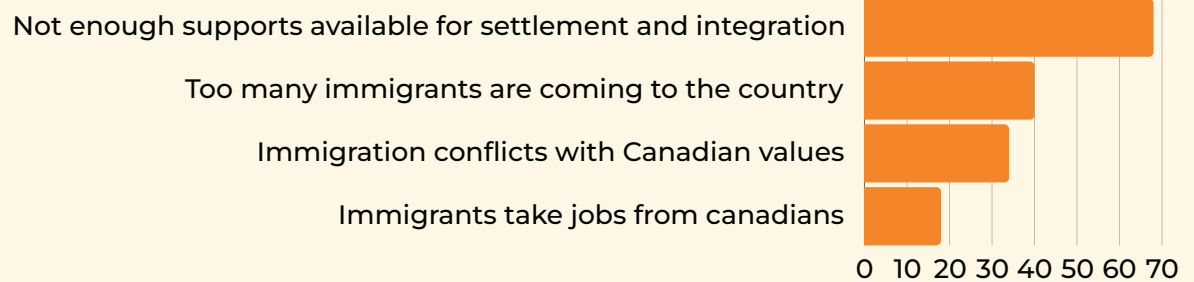


Now, for every reason you have listed, see if you can find data to **prove it wrong**.



## Findings: Community Resident Perceptions

We asked community residents if they agree or disagree with the statement: "Immigration has a positive impact on our city." This is what people who disagreed said:



Based on the survey's results, can you **prove them wrong**?  
List your thoughts and resources here:

## Findings: Community Resident Perceptions



Why do you think immigration has a positive impact on our city? Journal your thoughts here.

## Findings: Community Resident Perceptions

Let's talk about what the community needs more of for the settlement and integration of newcomers. Can you think of 10 or more services/ideas/options?



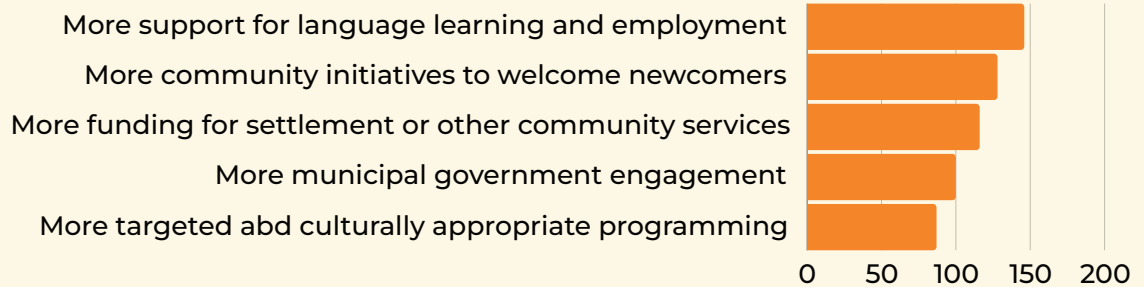
If your organization works with newcomers, what does it offer to help them to thrive? What else could you do? Brainstorm ideas here.



## Findings: Community Resident Perceptions

We asked community residents: “What does the community need more of for settlement and integration of newcomers?”

These are the top 5 results:



Do any of your top 10 services for newcomers from page 19 match the survey's results?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

If you or your organization offer services that match those top 5 needs, can you think of ways to improve them?



## Recommendations: How can the community better help newcomers?

The Immigrant Welcome Centre helps newcomers settle, adapt, and thrive in Campbell River, the Comox Valley, and northern Vancouver Island. A few examples of how our services are linked to previous surveys' results are:

**Fostering a sense of welcoming and belonging:** ongoing social programs in both Campbell River and the Comox Valley

- CV International Family Recreation, two events/month
- CR International Family Recreation, one event/month
- CV Conversation Groups, three events/month
- CR Conversation Group, one event/month

**Helping with housing and necessities:** in winter 2024, we offered a series of info sessions in the Courtenay office to talk about housing, taxes and life affordability.

**Education:** ongoing English classes in both Campbell River and the Comox Valley. These classes are called LINC, Language Instruction Newcomers Canada.

**Employment support:** in the last two years, we have partnered with RBC to launch the Workplace Language and Culture Hub, a program to help employed newcomers improve their workplace language skills. We also have employment counsellors from NIEFS Campbell River and from WorkBC Centre Courtenay offering employment support to our clients.

**Accessibility of services:** our settlement practitioners not only provide help with documents and forms, they also refer clients to local service providers, acting as a trusted connector.

## Your Resources



Journal here any additional thoughts and resources - part 1

## Your Resources



Journal here any additional thoughts and resources - part 2

The WCC would like to thank the following individuals, organizations and funders for their contributions and support:

Principal Researchers and Project Managers, Ann McLeod, Julie Keumbehdjian and Kristine Salzman for their insight and leadership on this project. Heba Elgharbawy, Research Assistant for her analysis and creation of the report.

Special appreciation to the staff of IWC and members of our Steering Committees and Working Groups.

The survey, focus group and interview participants, individuals and organizations that shared their time, experiences, and expertise with this project.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada who provided funding for this project.

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada