



**Toward an Ottawa Immigration Strategy:  
A Compendium of Sectoral and Horizontal Strategies**

**September 2010**



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## **Employment Integration Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Help immigrants navigate towards employment goals

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- Map the 'pathways' for accessing particular occupations in key sectors (clustered according to trade, skill sets, or professional aspirations).
- In the federal sector, the pathway should identify requirements such as skills, security clearance, citizenship, bilingual capacities, and how to navigate the application process and examinations.
- Identify the services that are available to newcomers to help them meet the demands they encounter along the federal employment pathway. As part of this, enlist the federal government in efforts to enhance immigrants' access to federal government jobs.
- Map the pathways for accessing jobs in key (non-federal) sectors, such as the health and education, as well as specific trades such as construction.
- Identify the services that are available to newcomers to help them meet the demands they encounter along other employment pathways.
- Map the pathways for business start-ups (SME).
- Identify the services that are available to immigrant business start-ups, including training, access to advisors, and assistance in accessing capital.
- Examine the pathways (maps) to identify systemic issues and challenges that will need to be addressed through changes in policy or through program supports.
- Investigate the potential in various sectors for implementing one-on-one bridging programs, including mentoring, temporary placements, etc.
- Ensure the mapping information is widely available and accessible to immigrants, employers and key institutions such as the City of Ottawa, the Chamber of Commerce, Hire Immigrants Ottawa, Service Canada, etc.

### **2. Strategic priority**

Enhance access to employment in small and medium sized enterprises

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- Create concise, simple information products that offer clear, employer friendly advice and reduce the complexity of recruiting and hiring immigrants
- Develop clear, easily accessible guides that help employers to integrate newcomers into the workplace.
- Create a one-stop shop for employers run by the City. In conjunction with this proposal, investigate the appetite among employers for a 'premium service' to assist them with immigrant recruitment, workplace integration and promotion. (Such a measure has been successful in the United States. This proposal may be more apt for larger employers)
- Investigate the feasibility of developing an on-line system (similar to the 311 system) to support employers wishing to hire immigrants (a means of advertising services that help employers).

- Persuade/educate/work with employers to access qualified immigrant candidates using new methods (such as on-line inventories of immigrants seeking work) in place of traditional recruiting methods and sources.
- Identify and 'advertise' hiring/recruitment practices that have yielded positive results.
- Market (to employers) the idea that immigrants are assets: carefully analyze how to frame immigrant hiring as a 'value added proposition' for small and medium-sized employers; identify appropriate incentives; and investigate whether the notion of immigrant hires as a value proposition can be introduced at the point where employers seek access to business loans, government permits, etc.
- Undertake research to identify sectors that are approaching a 'tipping point' where domestic sources of labour supply are about to become exhausted and employers will need to access immigrant (and foreign student) labour; tailor the 'value added proposition' and advertising to these sectors.

### **3. Strategic priority**

Encourage entrepreneurship among newcomers

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Make immigrant entrepreneurs aware of the training opportunities that are available to help them start and run small businesses
- Examine and, where possible, reduce the obstacles that immigrant entrepreneurs face when trying to access capital and loans.
- Investigate the accessibility, utility, and scale of existing business support programs (offered by all levels of governments) for immigrant entrepreneurs.
- Develop networking opportunities to link immigrant entrepreneurs into larger business networks (including OCRI, Chambers of Commerce and other business coalitions).
- Investigate the possibility of making business networks more accessible to immigrants by reducing membership and participation fees, as well as other thresholds.

### **4. Strategic priority**

Improve coordination among agencies involved in immigrant economic integration and rationalize competing activities.

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- Build on the OLIP inventory to prepare a detailed map of what various actors (including the city) are doing: the map should clearly identify the scope of services or actions being undertaken.
- Develop a calendar of proposed agency events and/or actions.
- Coordinate and limit the demands on employers by coordinating and limiting the number of workshops targeting employers; also by making the workshops more accessible and more appropriate (in terms of length and materials).

- Develop a small task force comprised of economic integration agencies and charge the taskforce with developing proposals to promote collaboration and to manage competition for funds and clients.

## **5. Strategic priority**

Improve Ottawa's capacity to attract and retain newcomers, both immigrants and students.

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Investigate whether the "Manitoba model", which showed enormous success in attracting immigrants, can be emulated by the City of Ottawa. Ottawa will collaborate with the "Welcoming Communities Initiative" (the research initiative affiliated with OLIP), with representatives from London, Hamilton and North Bay, and with other agencies to evaluate the idea and develop a follow up plan.
- In collaboration with universities and colleges identify ways to reduce the barriers faced by foreign students wishing to remain in the city.
- Develop a plan for attracting and retaining francophone immigrants and supporting their integration into a Francophone work milieu.
- Develop effective and target approaches to make Ottawa better known abroad – the goal should be to "brand" Ottawa in key markets.
- Carry out research to better understand the characteristics and motivations of emigrants (out-migration), including graduating students, with a view to altering their behaviour.
- Develop a clear plan for attacking discrimination and promoting pluralism so as to ensure that Ottawa is seen as a welcoming community.

## **6. Strategic priority**

Clarify misconceptions and myths about immigrant employment

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Clearly articulate for the general public the importance of immigration for Ottawa based on solid economic and demographic arguments and evidence.
- Invest in visioning for Ottawa's future economic picture, including predicting the impact of workforce retirement and job availability, by sector, in 10 years time.
- Develop a public education plan that targets key sectors and delivers sector-specific messages regarding the need to progressively engage more immigrants. Begin with sectors experiencing, or about to experience, critical shortages.
- Engage "expert ambassadors" in an outreach strategy that focuses on face-to-face relationship building with employers.
- Work collaboratively with the City of Ottawa to influence key industry sectors, making them more aware of the need to hire immigrants and of the tools available to them.
- Develop machinery for influencing the media and generating more favourable press treatment of immigrants.

- Develop an asset based approach that articulates the business case for recruitment and retention of immigrants.

## **7. Strategic priority**

Increase the 'return' on innovation

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Analyze existing and recent pilot projects with a view to scaling up and mainstreaming promising ideas
- Assess the scale of successful programs in relation to need and devise strategies for scaling up and mainstreaming effective support services.
- Support HIO and the Ottawa Job Match Network in their efforts to persuade employers to hire more immigrants and improve the matching of immigrants with vacancies

## **Settlement Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Ensure that Ottawa is – and is seen to be - a welcoming community

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Proactively engage the mainstream and ethnic media to create a positive image of immigration as an asset for the City of Ottawa; provide evidence to counter myths; develop closer relations with the media, providing a readily accessible ‘bank of information’, facts to back up stories about immigrants and immigration, and access to experts. (Enlist the WCI to assist.)
- Enlist community leaders – from the public and private sectors as well as voluntary and faith-based institutions – to create a more receptive environment for newcomers both within their own organizations (bringing about positive changes in staff attitudes and behaviours) and in the city at large. (Need to promote an asset based view of immigrants.)
- Promote the use of CIC’s modernization initiative to develop programs and projects that create a more welcoming environment and foster a sense of belonging among newcomers.
- Develop a more robust and proactive anti-racism plan that is linked to the media and leadership strategies cited above.

### **2. Strategic priority**

Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of settlement agencies

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Promote inter-agency collaboration in dealing with complex cross-cutting issues such as addressing the challenges facing youth, including shared projects and partnerships that take advantage of agency specialization and location.
- Make better use of the existing coordination infrastructure to plan and develop collaborative projects and activities. This could include structural measures such as designating a rotating chair so that leadership is shared between organizations, or bringing in an external facilitator.
- Advocate for opportunities to promote cross-government collaboration in policy and program design (because services do not exist in isolation and must be combined to address problems); effective advocacy will require investments in Ottawa’s ability to evolve coordinated positions and to sustain a dialogue with funders and decision makers about gaps and problems.
- Collaboratively establish shared needs assessment facilities.
- Leverage additional resources or assistance to service currently ineligible populations in order to avoid accountability problems and unflattering program evaluations.
- Invest in improving the skills and knowledge of settlement workers so as to increase the professionalism of the sector. (There is a need for certification in order to boost credibility.)
- Lobby governments to reduce the administrative burden on settlement agencies (in the case of CIC, by immediately implementing the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon panel) and to coordinate their reporting and accountability demands.

### **3. Strategic priority**

Create a better alignment between the migrants who settle in Ottawa and the funding that the settlement sector receives.

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Make use of CIC's modernization initiative to align services in a manner that addresses the unique challenges of Ottawa's new immigrant population and achieves key integration outcomes; the challenges include the need for additional capacity to assist Francophone immigrants and to build capacity so as to better serve children and youth, seniors, as well as immigrants with disabilities.
- Adjust agency plans to build capacity around anticipated policy directions which include more multi-challenged refugees, growing numbers of labour market entrants with low to mid-level skills, a greater emphasis on high-skilled, fully fluent applicants, and a greater reliance on students as a source of high skilled talent.
- Develop services for francophone immigrants that are appropriate to the needs of francophone immigrant communities (as opposed to simply duplicating existing English services in French).
- Promote services for populations that are ineligible by virtue of having acquired citizenship, notably, promote the extension of language training for target populations such as women and seniors.
- Assess the needs of temporary workers and foreign students as well as those of the host population with a view to providing appropriate services.

### **4. Strategic priority**

Improve the ability of mainstream organizations to assist and provide services to immigrants.

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Develop collaborative working relations between immigrant service providers and key mainstream service organizations based on mutual respect and careful, joint analysis of immigrant needs and service provider capacity.
- Enlist the settlement sector's leadership cadre in a targeted effort to promote awareness by mainstream organizations of the fact that settlement agencies are essential partners for addressing the needs of their clients. (Creating reciprocal opportunities for settlement agencies to describe the work they undertake and to hear about what takes place in mainstream organizations will help 'legitimize' the role of settlement agencies and provide them with a better understanding of how and where to intervene.)
- The settlement sector should seek opportunities to participate in the strategic planning and environmental scanning exercises conducted by mainstream organizations.
- The settlement sector should promote cultural awareness and cultural competency training for mainstream organizations (including municipal institutions and not-for-profit organizations).
- Promising practices used in Ottawa (such as the library program) and in other cities to improve the capacity of mainstream organizations and mainstream structures to interact with newcomers should be examined and promoted.



- The settlement sector should initiate a project, in collaboration with the City of Ottawa and key funders, on how best to support the participation of immigrant service provider executives on boards and advisory structures operated by mainstream organizations. (Participation currently operates on a pro bono basis.) An initiative might be piloted in respect of youth issues.
- The settlement sector should examine and seek additional support for expanding the use of multicultural liaison officers.

## **5. Strategic priority**

Promote innovation and excellence within Ottawa's settlement sector

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Develop a collaborative process among Ottawa's settlement agencies for identifying, analyzing, documenting and disseminating best practice information. Extend this process to the examination of pilot projects with a view to identifying practices that might be scaled up and 'mainstreamed'.
- Develop a collaborative process among Ottawa's settlement agencies for examining practices and policy directions employed by other provinces and cities and determining what ideas could be replicated in Ottawa.
- Take advantage of Ottawa's unique position – which provides access to both National Headquarters where policy is developed as well as to Ontario region – to gain influence with the federal policy community. To optimize this advantage, service provider organizations and the City will need to agree on strategic interests, coordinate their approach to policymakers, and disseminate information about the consultation outcomes. As well, local organizations will need to systematically cultivate relations with key policy officials.
- Strengthen the partnership with the Welcoming Communities Initiative in order to improve the settlement sector's analytic, research and planning capacity.

## **6. Strategic priority**

Promote the attraction and retention of highly trained students by Ottawa.

### **Key actions**

- The City of Ottawa should work collaboratively with universities and service providers to brand Ottawa and to develop a strategy for enhancing the City's ability to attract and retain international students.
- Service providers and the City should enlist the help of major employers to enhance employment opportunities for international students.
- Settlement service providers should work collaboratively with the City and with local education institutions (colleges and universities) to organize and enhance access by students to essential services (including language training, counselling and educational services).

## **Education Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Develop neighbourhood, or school catchment area, plans for emulating the Pathways to Education Model in city schools with a high proportion of immigrant students

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Extend the OLIP inventory project to determine the (non-financial) resources that exist and could (in theory) be mobilized to recreate the core elements that Pathways has identified as crucial for school success.
- Initiate discussions with school boards, the Education Foundation, immigration service providers (SPOs), community health and resource centres, ethno-cultural groups and other not-for-profit organizations regarding their willingness and ability to coordinate their services and to deliver or support the core elements identified by Pathways.
- Initiate discussions with the community – in collaboration with SPOs and ethno-cultural associations - to ascertain the help that parents would need to support the process.
- Examine other educational coordination initiatives – including the Youth Summer University and Success by 6 – in order to build on existing efforts and relationships.

### **2. Strategic priority**

Improve the ‘fit’ in immigrant-intensive neighbourhoods between schools and teachers, on the one hand, and communities of interest, on the other (where the ‘community of interest’ is understood to consist of students and parents from minority ethno-cultural communities prevalent in the school catchment area).

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Expand the number and quality of cultural competency training programs for Ottawa teachers and ensure that competency training is mandatory in teachers colleges and is integrated into the hiring process. Engage immigrant settlement organizations in the provision of cultural competency training.
- Involve community leaders in screening potential candidates for principal positions and in monitoring their performance.
- Create incentives for superintendents to improve student achievement in low performing schools and to end the practice of sending the best teachers to the highest performing schools.
- Enlist settlement service provider organizations in creating opportunities for face-to-face contact between teachers and school administrators, on the one hand, and members of minority ethno-cultural communities, on the other. The contact would occur at events (such as workshops) aimed at promoting understanding of social, cultural and neighborhood factors shaping the lives of immigrant students. It would also bolster teacher expectations regarding achievement levels.
- In order to better reflect local dynamics, increase the hiring of minorities into the school system by making greater use of Ottawa-based settlement organizations to identify and steer potential

candidates in the direction of the education system; also, enlist the support of unions, regulatory bodies and settlement organizations to help minority, foreign trained professionals acquire the certification needed to teach in Ottawa.

- Support local organizations in their efforts to help school boards implement the Ministry of Education's Equity and Inclusion Strategy.
- Increase access by students and parents to counselling resources available in schools and in the community at large (from settlement service providers and ethno-cultural groups) to support teacher initiatives.
- Reposition schools as community hubs, particularly for youth, in order to create bridging relationships; work with service provider organizations and the City of Ottawa to insert cultural and recreational services into schools in order to boost minority community participation.

### **3. Strategic priority**

Evaluate the impact and efficacy of the metrics and funding formulas used to allocate educational resources in Ottawa relative to the needs of neighbourhoods, particularly low-income neighbourhoods, with high proportions of at-risk immigrant children.

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Assess the impact of discretionary board funding decisions on the type and level of services available to support immigrant children. In particular, assess the extent to which discretionary board decisions impact the availability of language training for immigrant students (language training comes from designated and non-designated apportionments, the latter category being susceptible to cuts based on contingencies).
- Assess the extent to which school board and community allocations accurately reflect the needs of schools with large immigrant populations.
- Assess the impact of the metrics used to assess 'at risk' student programs on the allocation of resources to immigrant students (who may fall well below the threshold for achieving scholastic success).
- Assess the disproportionate impact of Ottawa's substantial refugee and Francophone populations on school support needs.
- Work with local school boards to introduce better metrics - more testing data, test performance scores and monitoring of dropout rates - as a basis for assessing the efficacy of interventions and building accountability relations involving schools and communities.

### **4. Strategic priority**

Develop an integrated neighbourhood approach that is structured around support for schools and parents so as to better address the needs of at-risk students in areas with high immigrant populations

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Ensure that there are structures at the neighbourhood level to support education by channelling and coordinating services that impact educational attainment and aspirations. The structures

should have the ability to promote access to services and involvement by immigrant service providers, housing agencies, language training and interpretation agencies, justice-related organizations, and (mental) health services as well as community organizations, school administrators (principals) and school boards (trustees).

- Increase the volume and quality of interactions between parents, on the one hand, and schools and teachers, on the other, by improving the availability of language training and interpretation.
- Create and disseminate tailored information for parents (in plain language and with regard to literacy) about education and the supports that are available in the community.

## **5. Strategic priority**

Increase participation by minority parents and by minority ethnic associations in schools and in the larger education system.

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Expand the production and dissemination of information aimed at parents in plain language and in multiple languages – employing a variety of media - about how to engage with schools, how to register a child, how to read report cards, conflict resolution, etc.
- Enhance access to translation and interpretation services by parents and schools. (See the language sector priorities.)
- Build community awareness and understanding of how the public education system works through outreach programs based on partnerships between service provider and minority ethno-cultural organizations; incorporate measures to address parents who speak neither English nor French and where literacy is an issue.
- Promote community engagement and empowerment by profiling successful initiatives (such as Somali Mothers Association and REPFO) at the community level.
- Ensure the availability and deployment of Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs) to assist in community outreach and to serve as cultural interpreters. There is a need to stabilize support for MLOs by ensuring that funds allocated to school boards (for this purpose) are dedicated to MLO functions; alternatively, with a view to creating a more sustainable platform, financing of MLOs could be organized through settlement service provider organizations who would then ‘place’ the MLOs in designated schools.

## **Immigrant Health and Wellbeing Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Improve access by immigrants and refugees to health services, including mental health services, prevention and health promotion services.

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- Undertake a comprehensive analysis and consultation process to identify the health service delivery model that will best serve immigrants and refugees in Ottawa.
- Clarify the services and service pathways available to newcomers who enter Canada in different immigration categories (as immigrants, government sponsored refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugee claimants, students or temporary workers). Disseminate this information to newcomers, health providers, settlement agencies and ethno-cultural agencies.
- Improve coordination and referrals among health agencies, placing the onus on agencies, as opposed to on newcomers and ethno-cultural organizations, to coordinate their services in an orderly and efficient manner in response to community and individual needs.
- Promote harmonization between federal and provincial health services by identifying gaps in eligibility and coverage that result in inequities and complicate administrative processes. As well, a coordinated effort is needed to effect a smooth transition between agencies providing ‘special’ services and the regular health care system (with appropriate supports).
- Use outreach and inter-agency exchanges to locate culturally sensitive health services, including primary care, as close as possible to where immigrants and refugees live.
- Promote collaboration between health care providers and settlement organizations in order to provide ‘navigators/brokers’ and cultural and language interpreters (at the point of intervention) to help immigrants, refugees and communities access health services.
- Improve collaboration between settlement and ethno-cultural organizations and health care providers in order to help refugees access mental health services and ancillary health services. (Note Ottawa’s high concentration of refugees).
- Work with health care agencies, with other service providers, and with ethno-cultural communities to devise culturally appropriate medical protocols that reconcile health service standards with cultural realities.
- Build capacity and knowledge through public or neighborhood forums aimed at sharing information and improving service coordination for refugees and immigrants.
- Primary care providers and health services organizations should collaborate in a sustained effort to transfer non-clinical services to settlement agencies (prevention, promotion, counseling/education and assistance relating to family members with disabilities or requiring chronic care). The goal would be to facilitate coordination (including coordination of ancillary services such as interpretation and translation), to locate services closer to newcomer populations, to increase service uptake and to control costs (without compromising care).

## **2. Strategic priority**

Enhance health literacy among immigrants and refugees in regard to primary care, disease prevention, health protection (e.g. vaccination and immunization) and promotion (e.g. exercise, healthy food), and navigation of the health care system.

### **Key actions to support priority**

- Health care providers and settlement organizations should collaborate with ethno-cultural communities to promote health literacy, including information about social determinants, preventive practices, and early intervention. Information also needs to be communicated about the organization of the health system and how different services can be accessed. This will require both passive (written material) and active (outreach) communications, adapted to the understanding of clients.
- Health providers and settlement organizations need to collaborate in providing accurate health information in a manner that is readily accessible by cultural communities (equipped with different levels of sophistication, language skills and literacy) making use of venues where immigrants and refugees congregate, including language training classes.
- Health workers must be trained in health literacy concepts and effective communication skills to enable them to better serve immigrant and refugee clients.
- Agencies need to develop a more effective and collaborative approach to sharing scarce interpretation and language services
- Service providers need to work with ethno-cultural communities to educate immigrants and refugees about mental health and the services that are locally available to support families.
- Fora and communications vehicles should be developed so health service providers are able to share challenges, solutions, knowledge and best practices. Supporting the Immigrant Health Network would facilitate this process.
- Settlement service providers should collaborate with the City to provide incentives so grocery stores in poor neighborhoods stock and offer better, more nutritious food.

## **3. Strategic priority**

Improve the quality of and access to health and population data for Ottawa immigrants and refugees and promote research on pressing and practical health matters.

### **Key actions to support priority**

- Analyze the impact of processed food, poor nutrition and socio-economic integration problems on the decline in immigrants' physical and mental health.
- Conduct needs assessments with respect to particular immigrant and refugee cohorts, notably women, seniors and youth.
- Analyze the consumption of medical services by immigrants and refugees who entered Canada in different immigration categories.
- Carry out research at a neighborhood level focusing specifically on immigrant and refugee populations and subpopulations (defined by demographic and ethnic characteristics).
- Undertake research on the efficacy of particular interventions.

- Conduct research on the needs and treatment of immigrants and refugees with disabilities.

#### **4. Strategic priority**

Ensure that health workers in Ottawa reflect the diversity of the population and that staff are adequately trained to effectively serve immigrants, refugees and ethno-cultural communities.

##### **Key actions to support priority**

- Improve organizational and individual responses by introducing cultural competency training for agencies providing medical and health services. Cultural sensitivity training should be introduced into the curriculum of local universities, colleges and training facilities.
- Health and medical service providers should adopt proactive recruitment practices to increase the number of health workers from ethno-cultural communities.
- The Ottawa medical and health practice community should continue to look for innovative ways to introduce and make better use of internationally trained health workers in Ottawa's health system. For example, health organizations should collaborate in developing opportunities for foreign trained professionals to serve as lay workers in the capacity of health advisors, community educators, nutritionists and so on.
- Enhance the knowledge that local practitioners (including family medicine practitioners) have of tropical medicine and illness that more frequently affect Ottawa's immigrant population. The changes should permeate teaching at local universities and colleges.

## **Language Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Enhance the quality and availability of French language training in Ottawa

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Coordinate representations to both the federal and provincial governments by Ottawa voluntary agencies and the City regarding the importance of bilingual language training in Ottawa; in addition, contact COIA committees (Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement) and other federal structures aimed at promoting Francophone minority communities outside Quebec.
- Support the French school boards in developing and delivering an improved language training program aimed at increasing the number of French language trainers.
- Promote collaborative efforts to improve standards and guidelines relating to French language training in order to parallel English language instruction (i.e. bring students and instructors to the same level in either language).
- Promote collaboration among service provider organizations to apply for additional funding in order to increase CLIC training numbers (French language training).
- Encourage SPOs and LINC providers to develop a capacity to deliver CLIC.
- Develop agreements among the various school boards allowing them to swap teachers so that language classes can be offered in the ‘other’ official language. (Where demand is sufficient, the trainers would travel instead of the students; boards would make space available to teachers from other boards.)
- Conduct research to determine if New Brunswick and Manitoba are delivering bilingual training in a manner that can be emulated by Ottawa.

### **2. Strategic priority**

Improve the planning and deployment of language training courses so as to better match the needs of Ottawa immigrants; as well, harmonize federal and provincial language training programs so they are complementary and mutually supportive.

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Conduct research/analysis to determine the volume and type of language training required by Ottawa immigrants; extend this analysis to a mapping of employer needs.
- Systematize the collection of data from key assessment nodes such as the Language Assessment and Resource Centre operated by the Y; develop an analysis plan.
- Promote collaboration among different language training providers with a view to sharing and analyzing administrative data about training needs and outcomes (to be modeled through course subscription rates which provide information about course desirability, including course length, level, location, and volumes).
- Explore ways to systematize benchmarking and accreditation for language training so that course completion is recognized by educational institutions and employers.



- Encourage federal and provincial governments to employ similar standards in their language training programs.
- Encourage federal and provincial governments to modify access rules so immigrants can navigate among courses (and languages) in order to self-design programs that more closely fit their training needs, permitting optimization of both English and French skills.
- Encourage federal and provincial governments to harmonize criteria for accessing language training, adopting the broadest possible criteria based on the fact that an ability to communicate is fundamental to securing employment, exercising citizenship and fostering belonging. (The federal prohibition on language training for citizens needs to be relaxed.)
- Encourage the development of French language training programs that offer the same degree of flexibility as is available in the English stream.
- Enhance access by immigrants to city language programs by amending the requirement that applicants have a strong capacity in one of the official languages.

### **3. Strategic priority**

Increase access and reduce wait times for immigrants seeking to obtain specialized, work-related language training

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Encourage local colleges, in collaboration with (employment-related) service provider organizations, to apply for and deliver more bridging programs (such as those at Algonquin which provide diplomas in one year, in place of three.)
- Collaborate with universities and colleges to allow immigrants to sit in on classes related to their field of expertise (at nominal rates) so as to equip them with relevant language skills.
- Conduct a market study of the (potential) demand for specialized, self-funded, high quality language training for immigrants (closely linked to labour market needs). (If warranted, develop paid language instruction.)
- Collaborate with employer organizations to offer on-the-job language training and related mentoring services.

### **4. Strategic priority**

Promote special language programming for populations at risk of exclusion

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Encourage the federal and provincial governments to expand language programs where literacy issues must be addressed (a significant problem in Francophone communities).
- Systematize and tailor the training of language instructors to meet the needs of students with varying levels of literacy and ability. This requires an understanding of the diverse dimensions of literacy and language among immigrant and refugee populations.

- Provide training and accreditation for language instructors that includes cultural competency training; also encourage the training and hiring of instructors from the same cultural and linguistic groups as their students.
- Encourage collaboration between ethno-cultural organizations and organizations offering language training to ensure that language training is responsive to the needs of the changing immigrant and refugee population in Ottawa.
- Encourage service provider organizations to partner with ethno-specific agencies to develop programs and to seek funding for language services for elderly immigrants and for women who are (or have been) at home minding their children.
- Encourage service provider organizations to partner with ethno-specific agencies to develop initiatives that enhance the linguistic and cultural capacity of parents to participate in the education system (and to interact with schools, in particular).

## **5. Strategic priority**

Increase immigrant awareness of language training options, including opportunities to acquire on-the-job language training

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Develop a comprehensive mapping of the federal, provincial and municipal agencies that are involved in the design, funding/purchase and delivery of language training services and interpreter services (reflecting policy objectives, target populations, and mode of delivery). Build on the OLIP inventory that has been developed in collaboration with the WCI.
- Ensure that service provider organizations and ethno-cultural associations are fully aware of language training options so they are able to counsel their clients.
- Inform immigrants of the loss of eligibility for language training following the acquisition of citizenship.
- Create mechanisms to ensure that francophone immigrants are aware of the services, supports and structures available to them in French to help them settle, live and work in Ottawa as francophones.

## **6. Strategic priority**

Improve and extend access to interpretation services for a broad range of legal, justice, health and social related services

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Develop a collaborative approach to the province (involving the language training sector and the interpretation sector) aimed at promoting expanded access by vulnerable populations to translation services; also ensure that interpretation and translation services are available from French to other languages.

- Encourage federal and provincial governments to develop standards for interpreter training as well as standardized testing procedures. The common standards will also need to address ethical concerns, particularly in relation to vulnerable populations.
- Encourage collaboration between the language training sector and the interpretation sector to develop common standards for interpretation and to attract more people into interpreter training in both official languages.

## **Inclusion and Integration Capacity Sector: Strategic priorities and key actions**

### **1. Strategic priority**

Create structures and relationships to help service providers design better programs that target services to cultural/ethno-specific communities and sub-groups, including francophone immigrants, visible minority communities, women, girls, youth and seniors at a more 'granular level'.

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- Support and build on the City of Ottawa's equity/inclusion lens so it is universally adopted by city institutions; promote the training of city staff in the use of the lens.
- Create and support an umbrella ethno-cultural coordinating/associational body that will facilitate contact with cultural communities (this can borrow from models like the Ethno-cultural Council of Calgary).
- Enlist the support of settlement service provider organizations to create opportunities (workshops or town hall sessions) that would allow cultural communities to meet local decision makers and program staff (to address issues of common concern to communities).
- Extend the use of translation and interpretation services to improve access by immigrants, refugee and ethno-cultural communities to the city's services.
- Continue to increase the representativeness of key city institutions (important services, boards, leadership positions, advisory structures) through active recruitment and talent management programs, drawing on the help of settlement service organizations.
- Develop a structured relationship with researchers to provide analyses, assessments and best practice advice on matters of concern linked to policy and program design. (In particular, build on OLIP's relationship with the Welcoming Communities Initiative – WCI.)

### **2. Strategic priority**

Create bridging opportunities for ethno-cultural communities by promoting collaborative and inclusive cultural and recreational activities as well as enhancing access to inclusive services/activities.

#### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Where possible, provide alternative pathways to services, either by supporting access and utilization of mainstream services or by providing specialized (transitional) services.
- Enlist the support of service provider organizations to deliver services to cultural communities, directly or in association or partnership with ethno-cultural organizations.
- Ensure the availability of public spaces such as parks and pools for informal use by newcomer communities; avoid focusing exclusively on formal recreational activities and facilities and find out what communities themselves want. (Bear in mind the special needs of women, seniors and youth.)
- Break down barriers that impede cultural communities from accessing public facilities such as parks or pools by reducing financial requirements, simplifying financial assistance procedures, providing instruction (for example, swim lessons) and facilitating transportation.

- Develop a media strategy that results in more favourable treatment of cultural communities and improves receptivity by other consumers of public services.
- Build on initiatives, such as the Community Cup, which are community-focused as opposed to immigrant-focused in order to engage cultural communities and to foster broader community and civic links. Caribana in Toronto is an example of an ethno-cultural event that has transcended cultural boundaries.
- Use cultural and recreational activities, particularly sports, organized at a community level to promote bridging among children and youth and among their parents. This creates networking opportunities for participants involved in playing, organizing and attending.
- Adopt specific measures to promote the engagement of immigrant girls in sports and recreation. (Note the existence of a research partnership between the Boys and Girls Club and the University of Ottawa on girls' participation in recreational activities.)
- Make greater use of '40 hour' school obligations to create bridging opportunities for youth, helping youth to build networks that link them to employers and to public institutions. Where possible enlist youth in offering services to other youth.

### **3. Strategic priority**

Promote and scale-up programs that are collaborative, involve multiple impacts and which create value for cultural communities and for the city. In particular, focus on youth.

#### **Key actions to support priority**

- For example, expand the Youth University project (connecting youth to employers; providing time away from the job to attend summer university; providing participants with leadership training and bringing back 'graduates' as role models and mentors) by:
  - Working with local employers and employer associations to continually expand the number of participating employers in order to expand the potential placements available to the City.
  - Working with local universities and colleges to continually expand the number of placement opportunities available in those institutions for summer instruction.
  - Enlisting the support of settlement service providers to ensure that participating youth have the necessary (soft) job skills and supports to fully benefit from the experience (through training and counselling).
  - Enhancing the size and capacity of the Youth University secretariat that is responsible for promoting the 'youth university' and expanding employer and educational participation.
  - Developing programs and projects for youth participants to undertake that, on the one hand, create value for cultural communities and, on the other, create bridging opportunities to mainstream institutions and the City.

- Investigating and, where possible, linking the Youth University project to other successful youth undertakings (such as the Pathways initiative, youth employment initiatives organized by postal code and Job Fairs).

#### **4. Strategic priority**

Enhance the quantity, accuracy and ‘understandability’ of information available to ethno-cultural organizations

##### **Key actions to support priority**

- Produce information for ethno-cultural communities in plain language and in multiple languages (employing a variety of media) describing the services that are available, how to access them and how to get involved in providing feedback and communicating needs. Ensure that this information is available at a street level in the locations that members of ethnic minority communities frequent (including public and commercial facilities).
- Extend the use of informal gathering sites such as libraries, parks community events to gather and supply information (library computers, facilitators for town halls);
- Develop structured, collaborative initiatives between the City and service provider organizations to communicate and interpret information to ethno-cultural groups.
- Make increased use of faith organizations as hubs for information sharing and connect formal communication structures with ethno-cultural associations.
- Create ‘one-stop shops’ located at the community/neighbourhood level to offer information on key services and policies.
- Extend the use of community liaison officers, outreach officers and leaders/trainers (such as those used by CAWI) to build awareness of local services and opportunities for engagement. (Linked to the role of Outreach coordinators and Multicultural Liaison Officers.)
- Enhance the scope and accessibility of translation and interpretation services.
- Build community awareness and understanding of how support services are organized and delivered (how the system works) by means of outreach programs based on partnerships between service provider and ethno-cultural organizations.
- Build on information systems – such as the 311 and 211 systems - to communicate information about available services. Ensure these systems are accessible to newcomers and that newcomers are aware of the systems and how to use them.

#### **5. Strategic priority**

Assess and develop the capacity of ethno-cultural organizations to advance the interests of their communities and to communicate with mainstream institutions and with service providers. Similarly, assess and develop the capacity of the Canadian-born host population to welcome new immigrants and diverse populations.

### **Key actions to support priority**

- Build leadership capacity by creating mentorship opportunities for established service provider organizations to help ethno-specific associations. Ensure that this strategy has a youth component.
- Prioritize and promote engagement by ethno-cultural communities in the democratic process. This includes increasing the representation of immigrants and racialized people in political structures and increasing voter turn-out by immigrant and/or racialized communities. Projects such as Pinecrest-Queensway’s plan to increase neighbourhood voter turn-out by 5% should be explored as models for action.
- Explore the dimensions of exclusion and access that result from issues of safety and security among racialized ethno-cultural communities. Promote activities that build trust between communities and authorities and encourage representation by at-risk community members in key institutions.
- Work with communities to generate an improved understanding of the barriers and challenges facing racialized ethno-cultural communities, in particular youth, related to safety, security, justice and marginalization.
- Enable the leaders of ethno-cultural associations by equipping them with relevant information and by helping them to carry out organizational essentials such as preparing contract bids, managing finances and maintaining data and securing meeting space and access to computers.
- Create opportunities for ethno-cultural associations to partner with established settlement service providers, Community Health and Resources Centres and other relevant organizations around projects that bolster links between mainstream institutions and ethno-cultural groups and that help to build capacity and expertise.
- Create and support an umbrella ethno-cultural association that will focus on identifying and advertising capacity building opportunities.
- Create additional “capacity building opportunities” for cultural communities by increasing their access to public space and to underutilized space (such as schools after-hours).
- Promote outreach that extends to the entire Ottawa community and equally involves all Ottawa residents. For example, conduct outreach activities in both diverse and less diverse neighbourhoods.
- Extend the inventory of newcomer services and supportive structures undertaken by the Welcoming Communities Initiative and OLIP to include service and gaps in respect of ethno-cultural communities. (Ensure that the exercise has a geographic component so that needs and resources can be mapped at a community level.)
- Promote policy that ensures equal access to public spaces (for meetings, recreation etc) for all members of the community and community groups. This should be supported by up-to-date and accessible information about what spaces are available to the community.

## **Horizontal Priorities**

Two types of horizontal priorities can be distinguished:

- i. Targeting priorities designed to create a focus on particular themes or groups;
- ii. Cross-cutting priorities aimed at developing or improving capacities that impact or implicate several sectors.

The choice of targeting priorities is based not only on ‘technical’ considerations but on anticipated public perceptions and key stakeholder support.

### **i. Targeting priorities**

The Executive Committee and Secretariat have proposed two targeting priorities:

- a. Economic development
- b. Social inclusion

In addition, it is recommended that the economic development priority emphasize youth employment and labour market incorporation while the social inclusion priority should emphasize refugees and visible minority youth. These groups were cited frequently in the initial thematic conferences and the sector-specific workshops that followed.

The recommendations reflect the need to engage the public and to ensure balance:

- Economic development and inclusion were identified at the outset by OLIP as critical considerations in respect of immigration to Ottawa. Economic development is universally perceived to be in the public interest; hence the importance of associating immigration management with Ottawa’s growth prospects. Inclusion is essential because fairness is a fundamental value and growth must benefit all Ottawa residents, not just a lucky few.
- Ottawa’s migrant intake is characterized by a disproportionate number of refugees. Current policy directions suggest that these flows will increase with a further tilt in the direction of persons with multiple challenges.
- Youth are linked to the city’s economic development because it is anticipated that international student numbers will rise (including Francophone students) – Ottawa is well endowed with educational institutions – in response to both federal and provincial interest in promoting student flows; as well, visible minority youth represent an inclusion challenge that Ottawa will need to take seriously.

### **ii. Cross-cutting priorities**

#### **1. Strategic priority**

Develop a closer working relationship with the City of Ottawa that is mutually advantageous and supportive.



**Key actions to support the priority**

- Enlist the support of the City’s key management cadre.
- Share OLIP plans with city managers and work with managers to ensure that the City of Ottawa’s planning and priority process advances OLIP priorities and supports key strategies.
- Assist City of Ottawa managers to deliver on their plans insofar as they intersect with OLIP priorities.

**2. Strategic priority**

Ensure that a “francophone lens” is applied across the sectors and through all of OLIP’s work to ensure that the unique experience of francophone is recognized.

**Key actions to support the priority**

- Continue to strengthen OLIP’s connections with the francophone community, including the Réseau de soutien de l’immigration de l’est de l’Ontario.
- Work deliberately with community partners to promote and increase francophone immigration and retention in Ottawa

**3. Strategic priority**

Increase the level of financial support available to Ottawa for the economic and social integration of immigrants.

**Key actions to support the priority**

- Take advantage of the October WCI-LIP (Welcoming Communities Initiative) conference in Ottawa to identify common interests and partners among the other LIP projects.
- Establish a process for collaborating with other LIPs in order to enlist support from an expanded set of federal and provincial ministries for common strategic directions
- Analyze Ottawa’s share of federal and provincial allocations in the Strategy sectors, including education, health, employment and settlement. Examine the link between Ottawa’s ability to access public resources and the number and capacity of local institutions applying for grants.
- Identify and meet with potential non-government funders to raise awareness of the Ottawa Immigration Strategy. To support this, catalogue the funding priorities of each organization and ask sector leads to identify interventions that will complement established federal and provincial funding boundaries.

**4. Strategic priority**

Develop a communications strategy with two thrusts: strengthening OLIP bonds and improving public receptivity and support for OLIP initiatives.

**Key actions to support the priority**

- Develop a website to serve as a repository and central referral point for all OLIP initiatives.

- Establish a process for providing regular feedback to sectoral partners and collaborators as well as providing timely information and updates to stakeholders using multiple communication channels.
- Enlist the support of key local leaders (from the city, from public and quasi-public institutions and from major industry sectors) to promote positive attitudes towards newcomers within their circles of influence. (This action should be linked to the HIO Council of Champions network.)
- Establish contact with mainstream and ethnic media in Ottawa to enlist support for a regular series of articles featuring OLIP activities.
- Create target communication materials for key audiences, such as industry HR departments.

## **5. Strategic priority**

Establish baseline welcoming community indicators and performance measures for all OLIP activities.

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Work collaboratively with other LIPs and the WCI to develop baseline welcoming community indicators and performance measures.
- Work to establish a shared process (with other LIPs) for promoting innovation and adopting promising practices. (Note that common indicators are essential for distinguishing the quality of practices.)
- Work with strategy sector teams to establish performance measures (outputs and outcomes) for strategic priorities adopted by Council.

## **6. Strategic priority**

Establish a robust analytic capacity to underpin the ongoing operations of the OLIP

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Work collaboratively with other LIPs and the WCI to establish a research relationship that supports the development of the LIPs.
- Work with the other LIPs and the WCI to establish common research needs.
- Establish a joint planning and environmental scanning process in order to create a shared strategic platform for all LIP sectors. In support of this, promote inter-agency cooperation (collaboration) in developing strategic plans.
- Create a shared data repository for use by the LIPs. In support of this, establish a process for capturing, and making available, administrative data. Enlist the WCI to support this venture.

## **7. Strategic priority**

Create a centralized needs assessment, client routing facility

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Major settlement, language training and employment organizations need to work collaboratively to identify the appropriate scope of a centralized needs assessment facility.

- Organizations need to work collaboratively to identify the resource implications of developing a shared assessment facility; organizations should prepare a joint application to government for support in creating such a facility.

## **8. Strategic priority**

Expand the OLIP partnership to develop a collaborative relationship with the City of Gatineau, in recognition of the fact that the labour markets of the two cities are highly intertwined and there is extensive newcomer mobility across the two cities.

### **Key actions to support the priority**

- Enlist the help of the City of Ottawa in establishing a relationship with Gatineau. Also, obtain the assistance of Ottawa-based Francophone associations.
- Negotiate a partnership with the City of Gatineau to address a specified set of challenges.

## **8. Strategic priority**

Improve the capacity of ethno-cultural organizations to advance the interests of their communities and to communicate with mainstream institutions and with service providers. Conversely, expand the capacity of the Canadian-born host population to welcome new immigrants and diverse populations.

### **Key actions to support priority**

- Build leadership capacity by creating mentorship opportunities for established service provider organizations to help ethno-specific associations. Ensure this strategy has a youth component.
- Work with communities to generate an improved understanding of the barriers and challenges facing visible minorities and ethno-cultural communities, in particular youth, in the area of safety, security and justice.
- Enable the leaders of ethno-cultural associations by equipping them with relevant information and by helping them to carry out organizational essentials such as preparing contract bids, managing finances, maintaining data, securing meeting space and accessing computers.
- Create opportunities for ethno-cultural associations to partner with established settlement service providers, Community Health and Resources Centres, Schools and School Boards, and other relevant organizations around projects that bolster links between mainstream institutions and ethno-cultural groups and that help to build capacity and expertise.
- Create and support an umbrella ethno-cultural association that will focus on identifying and promoting capacity building opportunities.
- Create additional “capacity building opportunities” for cultural communities by increasing their access to public space and to underutilized space (such as schools after-hours). Develop up-to-date, accessible information about spaces that are available to community groups.
- Extend the inventory of newcomer services and supportive structures undertaken by the Welcoming Communities Initiative and OLIP to include services and gaps in respect of ethno-cultural communities. (Ensure that the exercise has a geographic component so that needs and resources can be mapped at a community level.)

- Prioritize and promote engagement by ethno-cultural communities in the democratic process. This includes increasing the representation of immigrants and visible minorities in civic and political structures and increasing voter turn-out by immigrant and visible minority communities. (Projects such as Pinecrest-Queensway’s plan to increase neighbourhood voter turn-out by 5% should be explored as models for action.)
- Promote activities that build trust between communities and authorities and encourage representation by at-risk community members in key institutions.