

# Community Stakeholder Forum Report

January 20, 2023 | Surrey BC



SURREY  
LOCAL IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP

Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees  
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## Forum Overview and Objectives

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Community Stakeholder Forum took place on January 20, 2022 at the Civic Hotel located in Surrey Central. The objective of this forum was to gather key stakeholders from various sectors in Surrey to exchange ideas and discuss experiences related to the theme of Preparing the Community to Welcome. The forum featured presentations on national settlement policy trends, Surrey LIP initiatives, and an analysis of Surrey's demographics based on the 2021 Census. The event also included a panel of Surrey residents describing their welcoming experiences after migrating to Canada as refugees. Attendees also had the opportunity to network with other forum participants to explore ideas for collective action.

Over 70 community members, including 25 service providers from different sectors and community members across Surrey attended the full-day forum. The event served as a platform for sharing experiences and learning about collaboration, partnership building, community engagement, and anti-racism strategies to make the community more welcoming for newcomers.

## Territorial Acknowledgement

The Surrey LIP Community Forum took place on the ancestral, traditional and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), ḱíćǎ́y (Katzie), kwikwə́łəm (Kwikwetlem), ḱw̓ɑ:ńłə́ń (Kwantlen), qíqéyt (Qayqayt), x̣wməθḳwə́yəm (Musqueam) and the ṣc̣əwaθən məsteyəx̣w (Tsawwassen) First Nations. We recognize the significance of their knowledge, traditions, and ongoing contributions in providing context to the work of the Surrey LIP.

We also acknowledge the importance of reconciliation in building truly inclusive and strong communities. The First Nations have stewarded these lands since time immemorial, and we are grateful to Dennis Leon and Michelle Saul of Kwantlen First Nation for their words and songs of welcome, which highlight the deep connection to the land and the importance of honoring and preserving Indigenous cultures. As we move forward, we are committed to working in partnership and building relationships with the First Nations communities to ensure that their voices are heard and their contributions are valued.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the Surrey LIP Co-Chairs, Brenda Locke, Mayor of Surrey and Neelam Sahota, CEO of DIVERSEcity for their important leadership role in the integration of newcomers to Surrey. Their support in bringing together diverse stakeholders and working collaboratively help the Surrey LIP to address the unique needs and challenges faced by newcomers and promote their full participation and inclusion in Surrey.

We would also like to thank Surrey LIP Council members for their collaboration and dedication to the work of creating a Welcoming Surrey. We would also acknowledge and thank IRCC for their funding and like to support of the Surrey LIP.



# Day-At-Glance

## Welcome and Opening Address

The Surrey LIP Community Stakeholders Forum began with a welcome from **Dennis Leon and Michelle Saul of the Kwantlen First Nation**. Their reminder that gatherings like these are special and that we should listen to one another with both our minds and hearts was a powerful and inspiring message which started the forum in a good way.

**Mayor Brenda Locke**, who serves as co-chair of the Surrey LIP, then delivered her opening remarks. She highlighted how Surrey was on track to be one of the largest cities in Canada with a **current population of 562,565** and emphasized the importance of welcoming newcomers to the community and the challenges that come along with this unprecedented growth.



*Image 1: Opening remarks by Mayor Brenda Locke*



*Image 2: Welcome address from Dennis Leon and Michelle Saul of the Kwantlen First Nation*

With 55% of newcomers to Canada being racialized, and 67% in Surrey alone, Mayor Locke painted a clear picture of the diverse community that Surrey strives to be.

As the forum's theme, "**Preparing a community to Welcome,**" suggests, Mayor Locke challenged all in the room to set Surrey as the gold standard for welcoming newcomers with open arms. She stressed the need for cultural exchange and mutual learning and expressed her goal for Surrey to receive an award in two years' time for Surrey's exceptional efforts in this regard. Finally, Mayor Locke thanked all the NGO representatives in attendance for their dedication in supporting newcomers to the community.

## Networking Session

The facilitated networking session aimed to foster connections between attendees and encourage discussions on topics relevant to Surrey. The primary goal was to provide an overview of the organizations represented at the event, promoting a deeper understanding of each other's work and facilitating seamless referrals. Attendees highlighted several notable aspects of Surrey, including its innovative spirit, strong sense of community, diverse neighborhoods, rich cultural heritage, and proximity to recreational opportunities in nature. However, there are also several challenges facing the community. These include issues with housing, employment, transportation, access to healthcare, and the need for access to assistive technologies. Despite these obstacles, the room was united in prioritizing solutions that can address these challenges. Attendees identified housing, transportation, mental health, and access to services as key areas that require immediate attention. There was also a shared commitment to ensuring that services are accessible to all regardless of their eligibility status, including international students, refugee claimants, and temporary foreign workers.



*Image 3: Networking Session*



# Surrey Local Immigration Partnership Updates

Lenya Wilks, Director of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, provided highlights of the recent work of the Surrey LIP which included a range of projects and community engagements aimed at promoting inclusivity.

## Surrey Services Map

This tool is updated annually to ensure it provides an up-to-date list of available services, listed by topic, for both newcomers and agencies providing services in Surrey.



This map is to show services available to newcomers living in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.  
To use this map, type a keyword to search in the search bar.  
Or, you can browse services by category. Select a check box next to the categories you want to view.  
To change the language, select the dropdown box at the top left of this web page.  
To report outdated information, please email [info@surreylip.ca](mailto:info@surreylip.ca).



## Racism Mapping Tool (RAMP)

This important tool will gather information directly from people who have been the target of hate incidents or have witnessed someone else being discriminated against. The Surrey LIP will increase outreach efforts to bring this tool to the community.

The screenshot displays the RAMP (Racism Mapping Tool) interface. On the left is a dark sidebar with navigation icons for Map, Data, and Activity. The main map area shows a map of Surrey, BC, with a search bar at the top. The map is overlaid with orange lines representing reporting data. A sidebar on the left contains the following sections:

- RAMP** (with a location pin icon)
- Racism Map Surrey, BC**
- General Report** (6)
- Racism Incident Report- Self reporting (this happened to me)** (10)
- Racism Incident Report- Reporting for others (I am reporting for someone else)** (4)
- DATA SOURCES**
- Web** (20)
- LANGUAGE** (dropdown menu)

The map shows various neighborhoods including Fairways at Nelson, Big Bend, Queensborough, Brownsville, Hamilton, Fraserwood, Annacis Island, Sunbury, North Delta, Strawberry Hill, Sunshine Hills, Panorama Ridge, Colebrook, and Crescent Beach. Major roads like Hwy 17, Hwy 91, and Hwy 99 are visible. A yellow plus sign is in the top left of the map area. A search bar is at the top center. A location pin icon is in the top left of the sidebar.



*Image 4: Received BC Reconciliation Award by Neelam Sahota and Lenya Wilks*



### Surrey First People’s Guide for Newcomers-BC Reconciliation Award

In 2022 the guide was the recipient of the BC Reconciliation Award presented by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and BC Achievement Foundation. This award recognizes extraordinary individuals and organizations who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, integrity, respect, and commitment to furthering reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the province of British Columbia, or inspired others to continue reconciliation efforts. The Facilitator Curriculum was also completed in 2022 and the Surrey LIP provided two training sessions for 50 key staff from agencies in Surrey to amplify the knowledge and teachings to the wider community.



## Mental Health Toolkit

This project aims to mitigate barriers to accessing culturally appropriate mental health care services as well as to provide service providers with culturally responsive methods to support the immigrant and refugee community with their mental well-being. Through this project, Surrey Local Immigration Partnership aims to improve settlement and mental health outcomes for populations that have been marginalized by providing access to current and relevant information on best practices, training, and resources. This project is grounded in equity, diversity, decolonization, and justice and will include within its scope the cultural, structural, and societal factors that influence the mental health of immigrants and refugees.

Through a needs assessment and gap analysis the team of consultants identified the scope of the current knowledge, skills, and practices of mental health service providers and use the information to influence the efficiency of the project. Community stakeholders were engaged through a consultation process with an aim to assess community needs and gaps, as well as identify available culturally safe mental health support services and programs available for newcomers. The consultation and findings guided the work to develop a toolkit that includes information, resources, and best practices to support the delivery of culturally safe mental health and well-being services.

An online self-paced training curriculum designed to meet the needs of front-line workers, community stakeholders, and mental health professionals who work with and support newcomer immigrants and refugees with appropriate course materials, assignments, supplementary materials, quizzes, assessments, and instruments for evaluation of learning will be made accessible on an LMS platform shortly and the toolkit resources are accessible here: [Full report](#)





## Community Needs Assessment and Environmental Scan

The Surrey LIP Needs Assessment for Newcomer Services in Surrey is intended to determine the current needs of newcomers and raise awareness of those needs with Surrey LIP members, other partners and stakeholders, and the wider community. Activities were undertaken by the consultants from October 2022 to March 2023, and included an overview of the immigrant demographic profile, a scan of existing services, and several stakeholder engagements. Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews, and Surveys provided information and insights from service providers, newcomers, and other stakeholders, while meetings with the Surrey LIP community provided further context on settlement and non-settlement services for newcomers in Surrey.

During the presentation at the stakeholder forum the consultants, the results of their comprehensive needs assessment for serving newcomers in Surrey were shared.



A person with long dark hair, wearing a white shirt, is holding a large white feather vertically in front of their face. The person's hands are visible, adorned with several rings and white nail polish. The background is a blurred wooden wall. The image is framed by a blue and green header and footer.

## Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing Initiative

The initiative will use the learnings from the co-creation of the Surrey First People's Guide for Newcomers to work collaboratively with the 19 Local Immigration Partnerships from British Columbia and Yukon in developing Indigenous engagement frameworks that will bridge newcomer and indigenous communities in the manner that responds and respects the unique needs of the communities they serve.



## Surrey World Refugee Day Event

Surrey World Refugee Day Event in partnership with the Multi-Agency Partnership BC (MAP BC) on June 20, 2022 at the Surrey City Centre Library . World Refugee Day is an occasion to build understanding for the refugee experience and to recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives. The community came together at this event to share, connect, and celebrate the determination and resilience of refugees living in our community. It was a day of celebration, through art, music, food, and stories, and bringing together of community with community partners Options, PICS and Zaytuna. The event also included a keynote by Saleem Spindari from Muslim Food Bank), a panel of refugees from diverse backgrounds, 2 musical performance (1 dance group from Central America and 1 musician who came to Canada as a refugee claimant).



*Image 5: 2022 World Refugee Day event at Surrey Library*



Image 6: 2022 BCY LIPs Networking event



## British Columbia and Yukon Local Immigration Partnership Networking Event

With generous funding by IRCC, and in collaboration of Western Region LIPs, the Surrey LIP hosted the first annual networking event in which representatives from 18 LIPs met to share knowledge and explore collaboration opportunities.





## Surrey Demographic Data from Census 2021

During the presentation of the **Surrey Demographic Info Sheet** to the community, an engaging quiz was used to help highlight some of the key findings. Here are some of the top takeaways:



Surrey has experienced an unprecedented level of growth over the past five years, with over **51,000** people added to the population



Nearly half **45%** of Surrey's population is made up of immigrants.



Of the immigrant population in Surrey, **46%** come from India.



**67%** a majority of Surrey residents identify as members of a racialized group, highlighting the diverse and multicultural nature of the community

## What is a Welcoming Community? Panel Discussion

The panel discussion delved into the theme of welcome, exploring what makes a community welcoming, reflecting on whether Surrey is a welcoming community, and discussing ways in which we can improve as a community. Three panelists, **Kabat Kanaré, Alyaa Kareem, and Ishaq Faizi**, generously shared their stories, insights, and comments from their unique perspectives as refugees who arrived in Surrey.

During the discussion, **Mr. Kanaré** opened up about the dangers he faced as a journalist in Ethiopia and the cultural differences he experienced upon arriving in Canada. He spoke about the support he received with housing at the airport but also the challenges he faced in finding meaningful work as a

a newcomer. Despite holding a journalism degree from Kenya, he expressed frustration in learning that it would take two years to upgrade his skills at UBC. Initially, he did not connect with any settlement agencies and instead worked in a moving company, which allowed him to explore different parts of British Columbia, such as Whistler and Chilliwack. He faced challenges in finding a one-stop hub for information, and noted that not all information at the airport was translated. Eventually, he connected with an agency and worked at ISS of BC until he lost his job during the pandemic. Today he works as a job developer at Umoja.

**Mrs. Kareem** shared her journey as a single mother of two teenage sons from Iraq, none of whom spoke English when they arrived. She emphasized the importance of connecting with various settlement serving agencies and programs, such as DIVERSEcity, Options, MOSAIC, ISS of BC, Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture, Mount Pleasant Community Centre, and Douglas College. Mrs. Kareem also volunteers for groups such as Zaytuna Services Society and became a certified translator. Today, she works at DIVERSEcity as a Refugee & Immigrant Specialized Experience Program counselor and both her sons are students at KPU.

**Mr. Faizi** described his work as a lawyer at a Canadian woman's organization in Afghanistan and his arrival in Canada one year, one month, and four days ago (at the time of the panel). He shared how Canadian friends helped him and his family get out of the airport in Kabul, and he was assigned a DIVERSEcity case worker upon arrival. Starting as a volunteer at DIVERSEcity, he now works as a Refugee & Immigrant Specialized Experience Program counselor and was proud to share that his wife was learning English.

When asked what they wished people knew about newcomers arriving in Canada, **Mrs. Kareem** emphasized that just because someone does not speak English does not mean they lack knowledge. She also stressed the importance of having a mentor

to help newcomers connect and said she wants to be an example for those who come after her. **Mr. Faizi** wished people knew that newcomers bring culture with them and can help address racism in Canada. **Mr. Kanaré** reminded everyone that immigrants are job creators and are capable of making significant contributions to society. He also called attention to harmful stereotypes and the difficulties of finding stable housing and the fact that some landlords take advantage of newcomers who don't know their rights. He urged people to avoid labelling newcomers as job grabbers or people who take taxpayer's money. He also acknowledged that Canada was the most welcoming place.



*Image 7: Panel Discussion by Kabat Kanaré, Alyaa Kareem, and Ishaq Faizi (From left to right )*

## World Café Community Discussions

During the session, participants had the option of engaging in one of three concurrent discussions to delve into the issues related to fostering a welcoming community (see Appendix 4 for discussion questions). The conversations were rich and informative, resulting in numerous recommendations and initiatives to address the issues at hand.

Overall, the session provided a safe and empowering space for individuals to come together and engage in meaningful dialogue. The following is a summary of the discussions and recommendations, reflecting the passion and dedication of the participants in creating a welcoming community for all.

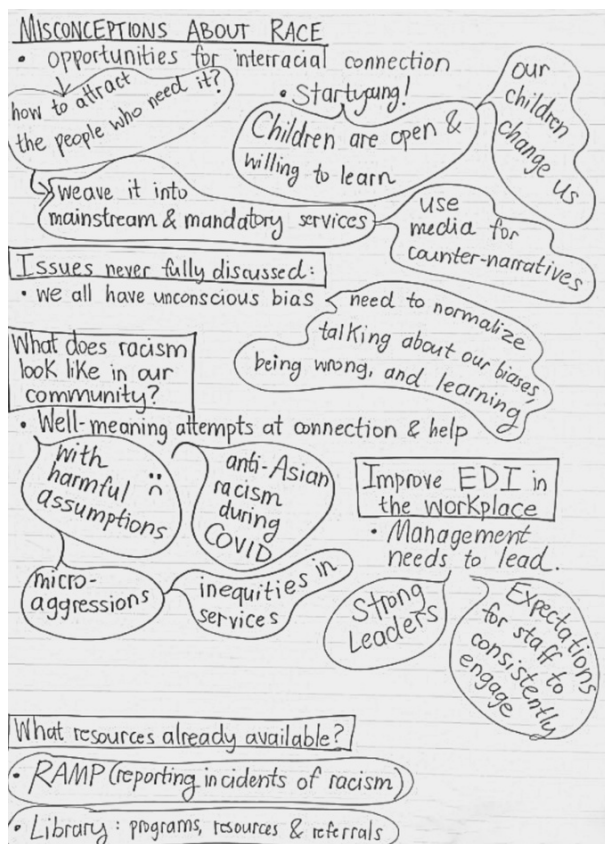


Image 8: Group notes

## Addressing Paths to Employment: Barriers and Employer Engagement

The discussions in this session were engaging and informative with contributors sharing their thoughts on reducing barriers to employment. One suggestion was to connect newcomers with employment agencies that offer translated services, regardless of their immigration status. Other suggestions included recognizing foreign credentials, making credentials easier to achieve, and using HR agencies to validate international credentials. Additionally, reducing job requirements for entry-level positions and providing a service map for employment services were also discussed.

To improve employer engagement in the workplace, the discussions focused on specific onboarding for global talent, on-the-job training, and professional development opportunities aligned with a path for growth. Mentorship, communication skills training, and access to services and benefits were also recommended. Available resources for employers included wage subsidies, incentives, DEI training, and networking events. For employees and job seekers, employment services, language training, volunteer opportunities, credential recognition programs, and upskilling/targeted training were discussed, along with connections to interfaith and cultural communities, libraries, and loans.

Other voices recommended for these discussions included sector associations, certification boards, WorkBC, labor market experts, and digital literacy experts. Community-based initiatives were also suggested, such as mental health supports



specific to cultural groups, literacy and digital literacy initiatives, industry visits to introduce newcomer talent to employers, sharing success stories from employers, job fairs, free foundational training with childcare provided, mentorship and networking events, workplace partnerships with NPOs, a digital map of employment services, city/community-based childcare, a vetted centralized job bank for newcomers vulnerable to scams, multi-sectoral transportation coordination, and reducing the stigma of hiring people with non-Canadian experience/credentials and lowering eligibility requirements for programs and funding.

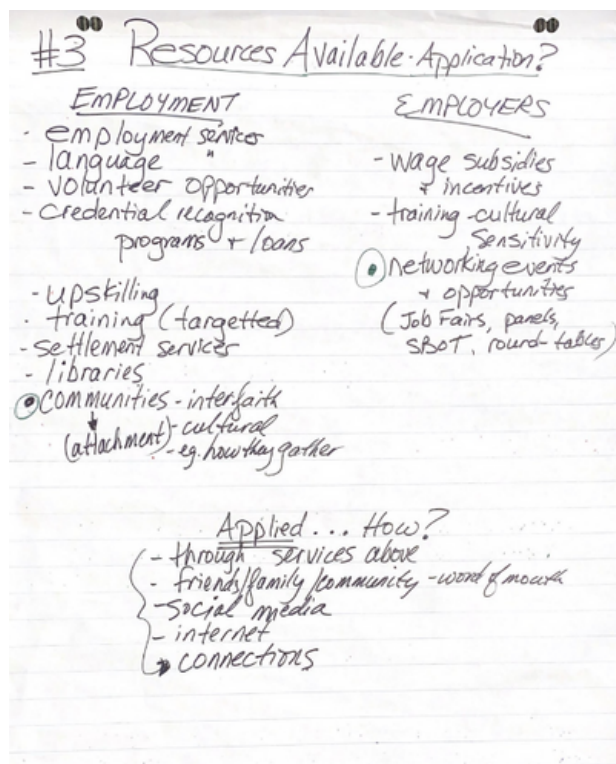


Image 9: Group notes

## Indigenous peoples and newcomers' Collaboration and Engagement



Image 10/11: Indigenous peoples and newcomers' collaboration and engagement session

During the session, Jayme Gabriel-Chan and Dennis Leon from Kwantlen First Nation facilitated a safe space for participants to ask questions and discuss collaborations between Indigenous peoples and newcomers. One community member shared that they had never heard about the Indigenous peoples of Canada before arriving 20 years ago, and that there was no recognition of the fact that the land belonged to someone else, nor were there any teachings about Canada's Indigenous history. Others noted that they are learning more because their children are finally being taught about Indigenous culture, the impacts of colonization, residential schools and land rights in school.

Jayne emphasized that the true history of Canada has been kept from people, and that knowledge of residential schools was not new for the Indigenous community, although the true extent was kept even from younger generations of Indigenous people. She called on all participants to do their homework and learn the true history of Canada. One participant noted that when speaking to an elder, they said everyone wants to know what happened to us, but no one wants to know us. The participant suggested that one way to learn more was to learn about the culture such as celebrations and traditions. Jayme shared that she is also relearning her culture and language as a non-residential school or sixties scoop Indigenous person. The Indigenous community is also learning; for example, Fort Langley had been a symbol of death for the community as a direct tool of colonization, but in the last 10 years Fort Langley has been connecting with the land and people. However, much has been lost, with only 4 language keepers left in Kwantlen.

The discussion then turned to how the community could work with Indigenous peoples. Jayme suggested that it was important to build relationships and step into the world of Indigenous people. It wouldn't work to come to Indigenous people with a ready-made plan. She noted that engagement should be purposeful, and recognized that not all First Nations have the capacity. She suggested that individuals try connecting with Indigenous organizations for their input and to participate in co-design. Participants found this interesting, but were concerned about stretching the capacity of Indigenous Organizations. Jayme suggested that funders

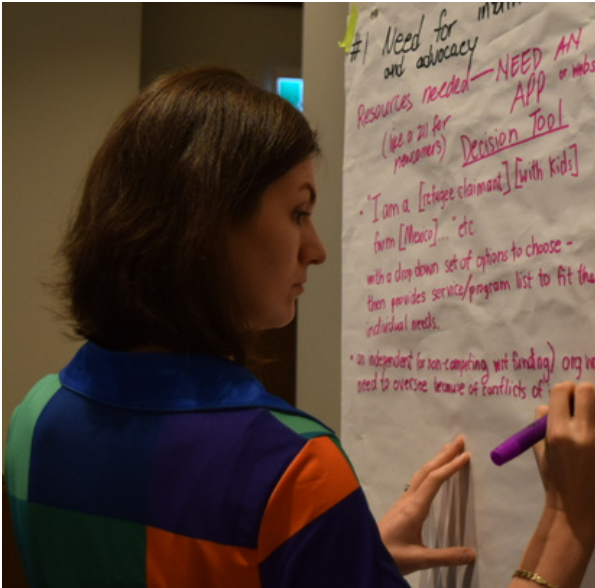
find ways in which Indigenous Organizations and First Nations can apply for low-barrier, unrestricted funds for core funding and capacity building.

Jayne reminded participants that many Indigenous communities don't even know that settlement agencies exist, and emphasized the importance of building a relationship based on strong communication and listening with open ears and open heart. She recommended including Trauma Support Counselors and Indigenous liaisons as part of engagement strategy, and invited all participants to remember that Indigenous people have never felt safe so building trust takes time.

As an important aspect of preparing a community to welcome, bridging Indigenous and newcomer communities serves for people to come together for mutual understanding. The session was a valuable opportunity for participants to ask questions and listen with open ears and open heart to the importance and realities of engaging with Indigenous communities. Participants thanked Jayme and Dennis for their participation and generosity in sharing their perspectives.



## Addressing Oppression and Racism through Collective Action



*Image 12: Participants engaging in the Oppression and Racism session*

The participants of this session engaged in thoughtful discussions about issues of racism in the community. They emphasized the importance of reducing misconceptions about race and bringing people together through events like the Fusion Festival to celebrate culture. They also highlighted the need for listening and understanding the history of racism and its impact, which involves deconstructing assumptions, stereotypes, and biases and accommodating cultural needs with empathy and understanding. To support non-settlement agencies in addressing issues or gaps, participants suggested providing educational opportunities for anti-racism through Local Immigration Partnerships. Prioritizing folks with lived experiences in this work, so they can share, connect and engage to "pop the isolation bubble" was also an important suggestion.

The participants also identified some of the overlooked issues in conversations about racism,

including the impact of colonialism, class and socioeconomic status, various types and levels of privilege, and intersectional gaps such as gender, sexual orientation, and faith. They acknowledged that discussing racism in the community can be difficult due to fear of offending others, but emphasized the importance of implementing BIPOC/lived experience led initiatives, having leadership support education and training, and seeing the community reflected in positions of power and authority.

Various community-based initiatives were suggested, including workshops like the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, models like 'We Belong Surrey' that bring multiple organizations together, Neighbourhood Safety Series (Library) to discuss issues from neighborhoods in a safe space with experienced facilitators, intersectoral partnerships, more events bringing people together, storytelling and story walks, cultural art/ poetry programs, open houses/ doors to organizations, block parties, more forums across populations (not just the usual partners), rewarding/awarding organizations for taking initiatives, an environmental scan of gold standard best practices in policies and programs which LIP can share, a "Bring a Buddy" program to expose/share in learning that they didn't know they needed to know and sponsoring a newcomer or low-income person to forums and events to facilitate learning and growth.

## Needs Assessment Report Back

During the presentation by Flow Society's Andrea Solnes and Marialejandra Reyes, the results of their comprehensive needs assessment for serving newcomers in Surrey were shared. The assessment involved an extensive environmental scan of different groups in Surrey and available programs, services, and resources to support them. Additionally, stakeholder groups were consulted through focus groups, interviews, and surveys to identify key challenges and opportunities.

From this work they identified five challenges:

Challenges	What we heard is needed	Current Surrey LIP initiatives	Opportunities and other considerations
<b>Need for Information and Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collective voice for advocacy</li> <li>• Relevant information</li> <li>• Networking and cross-organizational opportunities</li> <li>• Partnerships from organizations from outside the settlement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings, advisory tables, working groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible shifts in IRCC eligibility</li> <li>• Priority issues: housing, health, food security, language, and digital literacy</li> <li>• Identify the areas that aren't yet being covered</li> </ul>
<b>Navigating Resources and Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Outreach</li> <li>• Info presentation</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Strengthening key contact points</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Institutional Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrey LIP Services Map</li> <li>• Strong membership and relationships between members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on existing communication mechanisms and directories (Surrey LIP, NewToBC, BC211)</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer and faith &amp; culturally sensitive-based models to address lack of institutional trust</li> <li>• Refugee/newcomer communities are very skilled and can support translation in growing communities</li> </ul>

Challenges	What we heard is needed	Current Surrey LIP initiatives	Opportunities and other considerations
Capacity for Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• First language services</li> <li>• Waves of refugees</li> <li>• Complex needs referrals</li> <li>• Targeted programming</li> <li>• Regional approach</li> <li>• Support in supporting others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Recommendations of Needs Assessment</li> <li>• Established connections and relationships between Surrey LIP members.</li> <li>• Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the service referrals system, including non-settlement services</li> <li>• Build on partnerships with libraries and other public services as first contact points for services</li> <li>• Increase newcomer participation in response to need e.g. translation and peer-to-peer model for settlement</li> <li>• Advocacy and honest conversations with funders around capacity</li> </ul>
International Students and Refugee Claimants are underserved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers are increasing</li> <li>• Priority needs</li> <li>• Inequities</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that support awareness e.g. World Refugee Day in collaboration with MAP</li> <li>• Participation of post-secondary institutions in addressing needs of IS</li> <li>• Advocacy vehicle for expanding IRCC eligibility and increasing BCSIS response; corporate and private funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRCC's new temporary measure that will accelerate work permit issuance</li> <li>• BC CHARMS and Welcome to my Refugee Claim websites</li> <li>• IS are a skilled and need/ want to work; opportunity for the public sector</li> </ul>

Challenges	What we heard is needed	Current Surrey LIP initiatives	Opportunities and other considerations
Promoting Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength-based approach</li> <li>• Social connectedness</li> <li>• Representation</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• LGBTQ newcomers &amp; refugee housing</li> <li>• Supporting the community in change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events such as International Refugee Day at the library; today's panel of refugees; conversations about inclusion in Surrey</li> <li>• Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory, African and Caribbean Advisories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International students are a skilled, willing cohort, wanting to work and interested in two-way cultural exchanges. Is this an opportunity for the broader community via public sector initiatives?</li> <li>• Many longer-term "newcomers" facilitate connections between newcomers and the broader community e.g. peer mentors, Library Champions</li> <li>• Recent changes to the City of Surrey department to 'Social Equity and Diversity' signals refreshing the social development strategy</li> </ul>

From these challenges the participants were asked to explore potential actions that the Surrey LIP can take to respond to the challenges. Some suggestions shared were:

- Leverage \$500 Block Party Kits for groups of newcomers to use, bring the Surrey LIP to translate or when needed to attract newcomers.
- Have MP/MLA staff participate in forums and know about referrals and networks as they get calls, and some try to help
- Intelligent referral system which matches needs with available resources e.g. homeless shelter beds vacancy
- Spin vs honest conversations, client centered vs Agency numbers, where resources should go vs. defending own turf
- There are so many organizations to go through- assumed there would be one path and partners. The maze is overwhelming
- Ensure the municipal politicians are briefed and challenged to learn more. To support what the LIP does

Needs Assessment for Newcomer Services in Surrey Report - [link](#)

## Closing Remarks - Excerpts from Surrey LIP Chair Neelam Sahota:

Surrey is growing at an unprecedented rate, adding in 28 new residents each and every day. As we undertake this work to prepare the city, the community to welcome our newest neighbours, the importance of lived experience voices being amplified in decision-making can't be underscored enough. This is where the work of LIP is much more different than our public institutions such as municipal government, health authorities, school boards, etc.

Surrey truly is becoming a cultural mosaic and one that holds incredible potential.

Surrey's incoming and overall populations is younger and more educated. When you merge those statistics along with the diversity of incoming skill sets and emerging industries, there in lies the moment to seize upon.

Each of you represent organizations that are part of the Surrey fabric. Each of us holds a number of responsibilities in order to ensure that the time we are investing in the LIP continues to hold (and grow) in value. We need to ensure individually that we continually advocate for funding and opportunities for Surrey. We need to invoke civic pride. Find ways to share more good stories of the work each of you are doing, the citizens of Surrey are doing and find ways to celebrate that publicly. We need our next generation to feel an immense sense of engagement and pride to call this place home. We need to ensure that we centre the voices of lived experiences from all the diversity of our cultural fabric and use those insights from first hand challenges, all the things that have gone well in a settlement journey and all

the things that really need to change as a continual compass for us. That will be the difference between truly making the impact that will make this work worthy of undertaking – a city where everyone has the best chance to thrive, where we can collectively contribute because we feel invited and collectively take when we need to fill our cup.



*Image 13: Neelam Sahota, CEO of DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society*

## What We Learned and Next Steps

The event feedback survey revealed overwhelmingly positive results, with 94% of participants agreeing or strongly agreeing that the pre-event communication was effective and that the panel discussion was informative. Additionally, 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the event location was adequate, the facilitator engaged participants, and that attendees were able to connect with others in attendance.

Some of the most valuable takeaways for participants included the updated Surrey Demographic Info Sheet, the opportunity to meet in person, the diversity of stakeholders in attendance (not just language and settlement), learnings from the indigenous engagement breakout session, and gaining insight into the challenges faced by newcomers and the actions agencies are taking to support them.

Participants also provided constructive feedback on areas for improvement, including the need for a list of delegates and participating agencies, more time for discussion and better time management, a greater effort to center immigrant and racialized experiences rather than whiteness, improved accessibility for visually impaired and deaf participants, and more concrete ideas shared during the Indigenous collaboration session. Additionally, feedback highlighted the importance of ensuring that discussions of race, racism, and discrimination are embedded throughout the event and not a side discussion.

Looking ahead to next year's event, suggestions included inviting more elected officials, inviting business representatives, hosting an LGBTQ session, extending the event to two days, highlighting local Indigenous non-profit organizations, promoting mental health wellness, starting with a land acknowledgement, facilitating more discussion on privilege and the role of allies, encouraging attendees to bring newcomers or community partners like faith or retail representatives, promoting the event further in advance and doing more outreach to increase community attendance, continuing to include lived experience panels, and hiring interns/international students to organize and support the event.

Additionally, participants suggested bringing in examples of successful solutions from around Canada to inspire and inform attendees.





*Image 14: Surrey Local Immigration Partnership stakeholders*

# Appendix 1- Agenda



SURREY  
LOCAL IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP

## Surrey LIP Community Stakeholder Forum Agenda and Objectives

January 20, 2023 | Civic Hotel

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9:00 - 9:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sign-in, Breakfast</li></ul>
9:30 - 9:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opening and Welcome <b>Jody Johnson and Kwantlen Drummers</b></li></ul>
9:45 - 10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opening address <b>Mayor Brenda Locke - City of Surrey and Co-Chair of Surrey LIP</b></li></ul>
10:00 - 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitated Networking Session</li></ul>
10:30 - 10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Surrey LIP Update <b>Lenya Wilks - Senior Manager, Surrey Local Immigration Partnership</b></li></ul>
10:45 - 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demographic Data <b>Peers Consulting</b></li></ul>
11:30 - 11:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Break</li></ul>
11:40 - 12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small group discussion: What makes a community welcoming? /Q&amp;A <b>Three individuals who migrated to Canada as refugees will share their welcoming experiences. Through this discussion, they will address, What is a welcoming community, Is Surrey, welcoming community, What welcoming means to them, and what we as a community can do better.</b></li></ul>
12:30 - 1:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lunch</li></ul>
1:15 - 2:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concurrent World Cafe: <b>1: Addressing paths to employment barriers and employer engagement</b> <b>2: Indigenous peoples and newcomers' collaboration and engagement</b> <b>3: Addressing oppression and racism through collective action</b></li></ul>
2:30 - 2:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coffee Break</li></ul>
2:45 - 3:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlights of findings to date from the Surrey LIP Needs Assessment Research <b>Flow Society: Andrea Solnes and Marialejandra Reyes</b></li></ul>
3:45 - 3:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closing Address <b>Neelam Sahota – CEO DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society and Co-Chair of Surrey LIP</b></li></ul>
3:50 - 4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forum Wrap-up and evaluation</li></ul>



## Appendix 2- Participating Agencies and Organizations

The Community Stakeholder event was attended by 74 participants from the following agencies and organizations:

- [A Rocha Canada](#)
- [AMSSA](#)
- [City of Surrey](#)
- [DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society](#)
- [Douglas College](#)
- [Flow Society](#)
- [Fraser Health](#)
- [Hogans Alley Society](#)
- [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)
- [KPU](#)
- [Kwantlen Drummers](#)
- [MOSAIC](#)
- [Ministry of Municipal Affairs](#)
- [Options](#)
- [PCRS](#)
- [PICS](#)
- [RCMP](#)
- [SFU](#)
- [SHER Vancouver](#)
- [SUCCESS](#)
- [Surrey Board of Trades](#)
- [Surrey Library](#)
- [The Ismaili Canada](#)
- [UMOJA](#)
- [UNITI](#)
- [United Way BC](#)

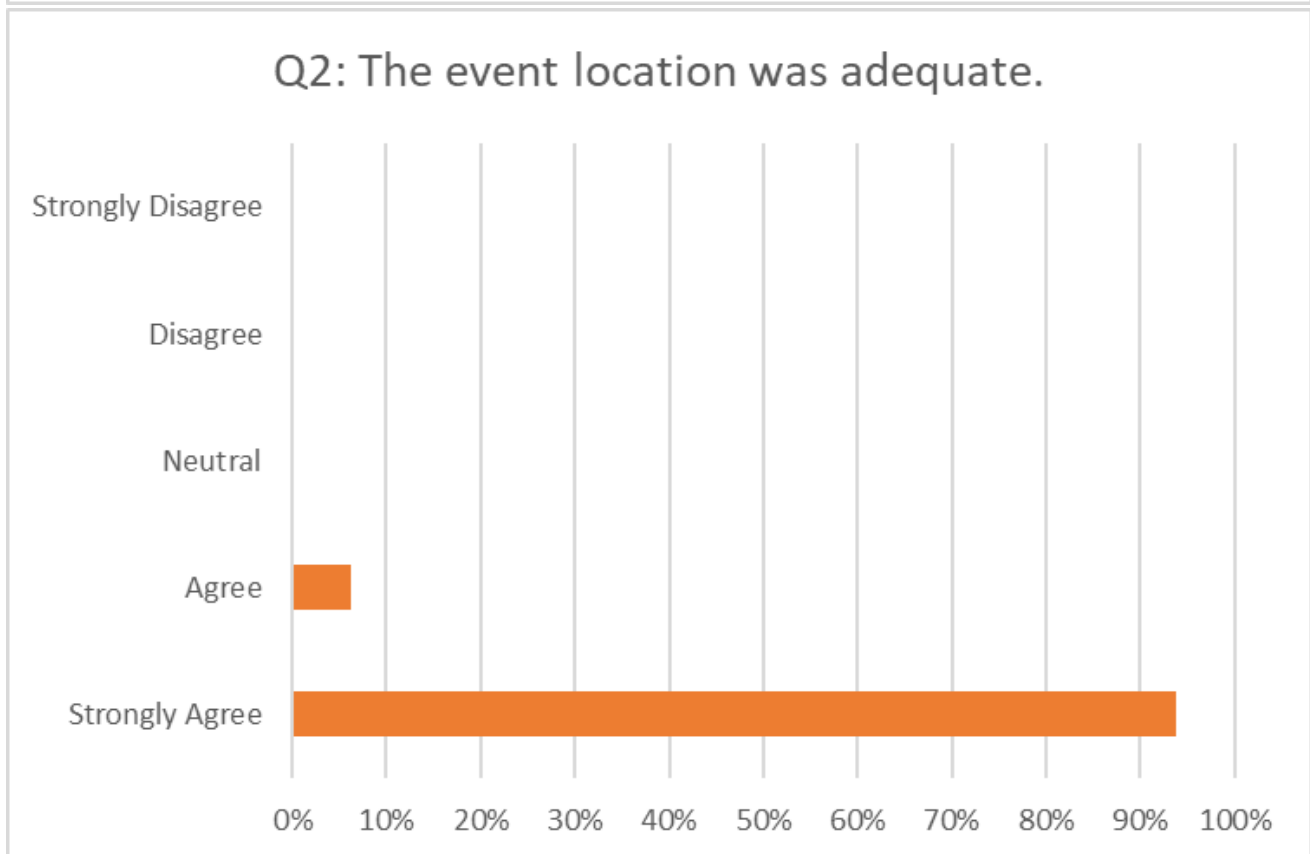
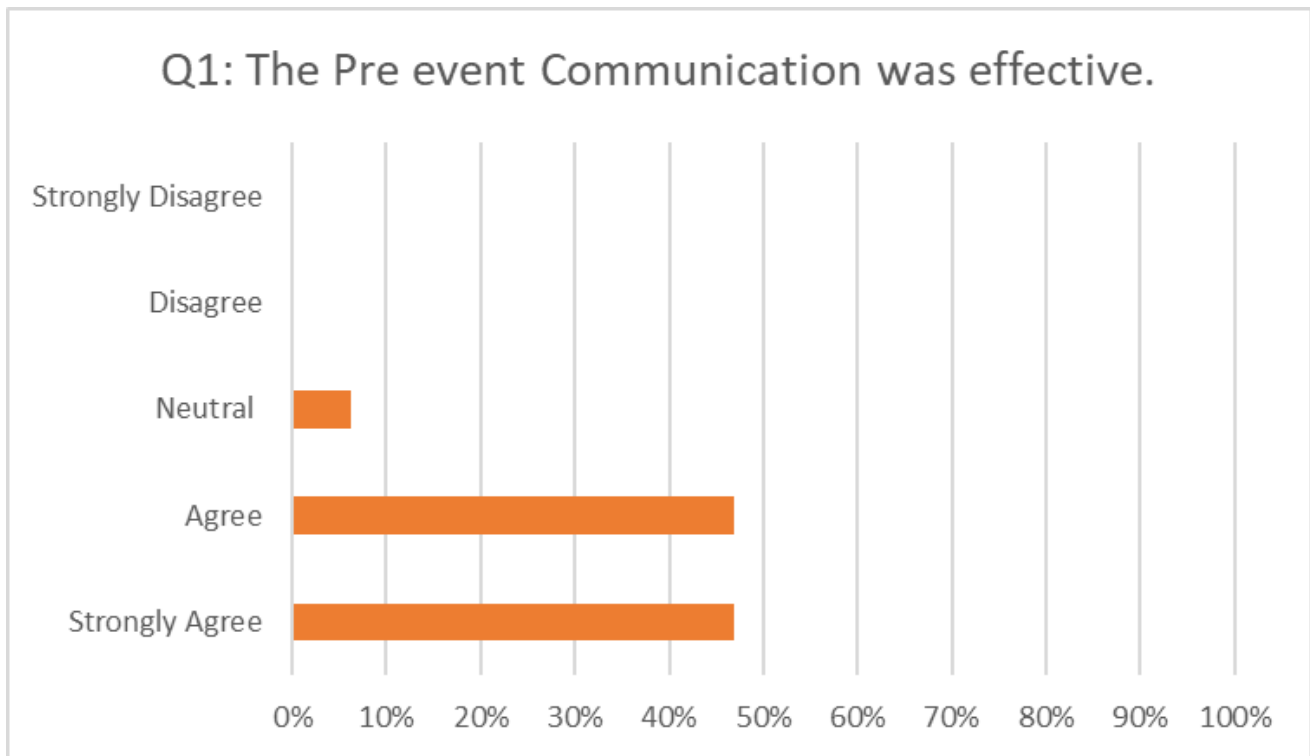
# Appendix 5- Event Evaluation

## Surrey LIP Community Stakeholder Forum Feedback Survey

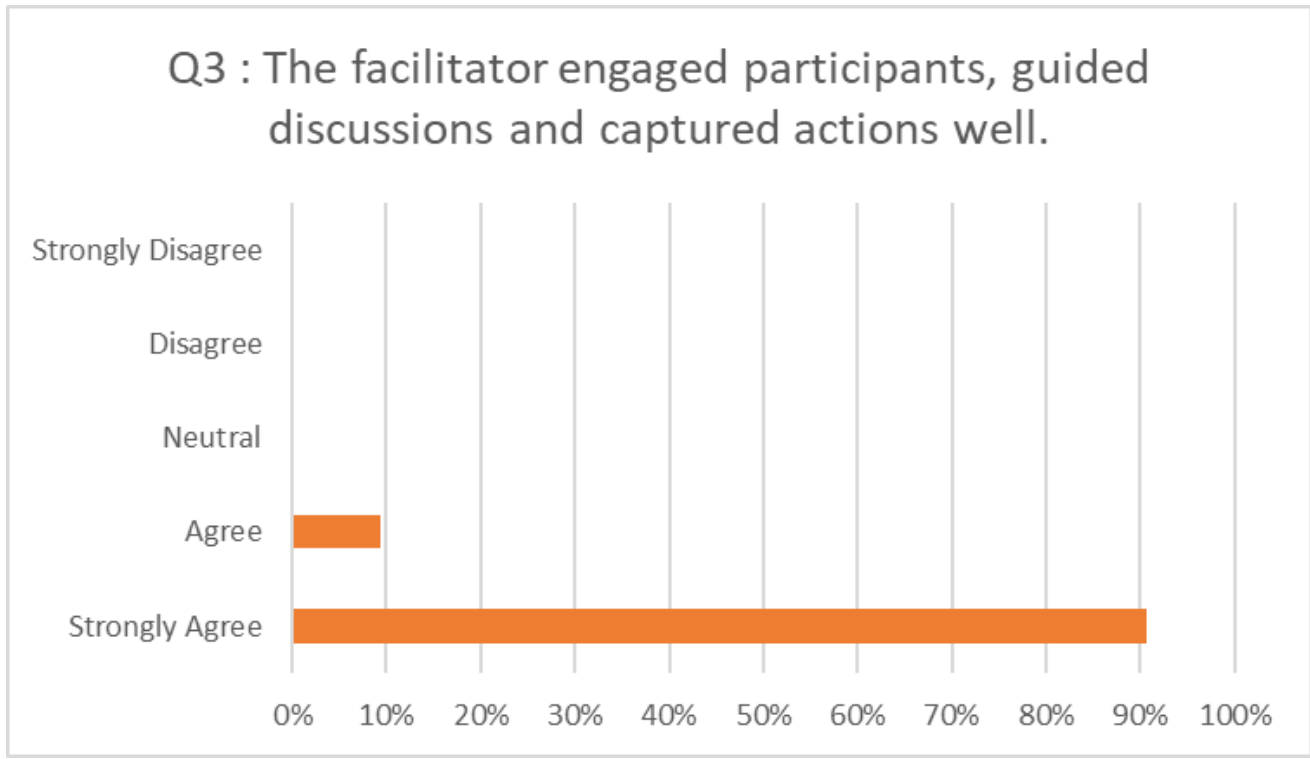
Thank you for taking part in the Surrey LIP Community Stakeholder Forum: Preparing the Community to Welcome event. We appreciate your feedback and will use it to inform the planning for next year's event.

1. The pre-event communication was effective.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
2. The event location was adequate.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
3. The facilitator engaged participants, guided discussions, and captured actions well.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
4. I was able to connect with others in attendance.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
5. The Q&A session with the panel representatives was informative.
- Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
6. What is the most valuable thing that you'll be taking away from the networking event?  
Why?
7. What could be improved or would have made your experience better?
8. Do you have any suggestions for next year's event?
9. Additional Comments:

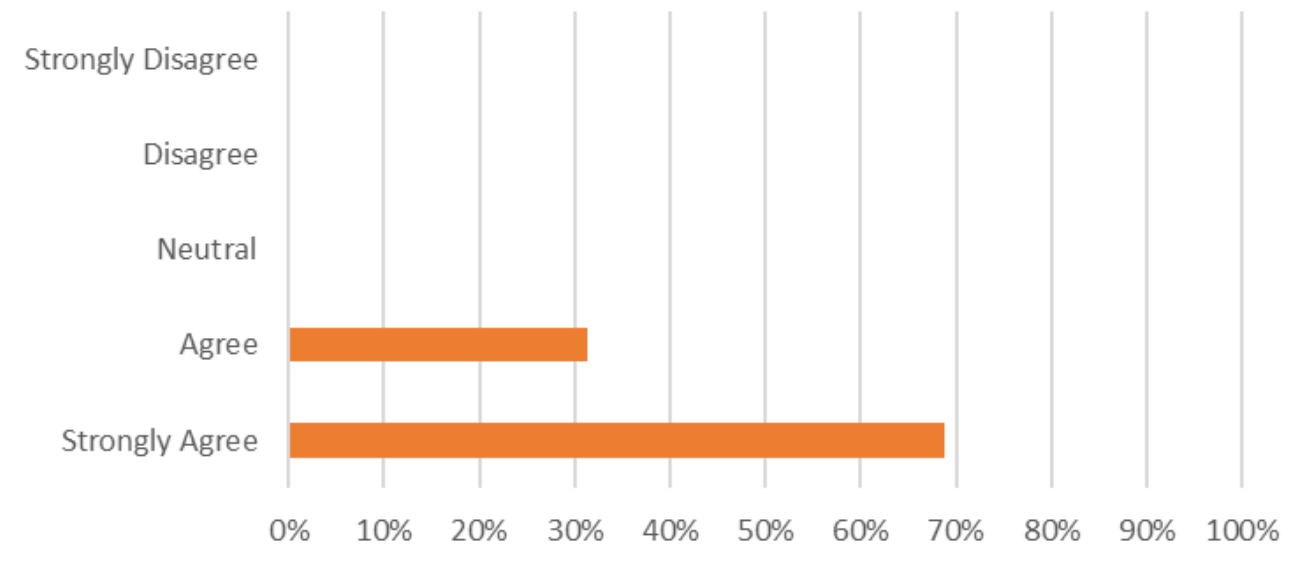
## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation



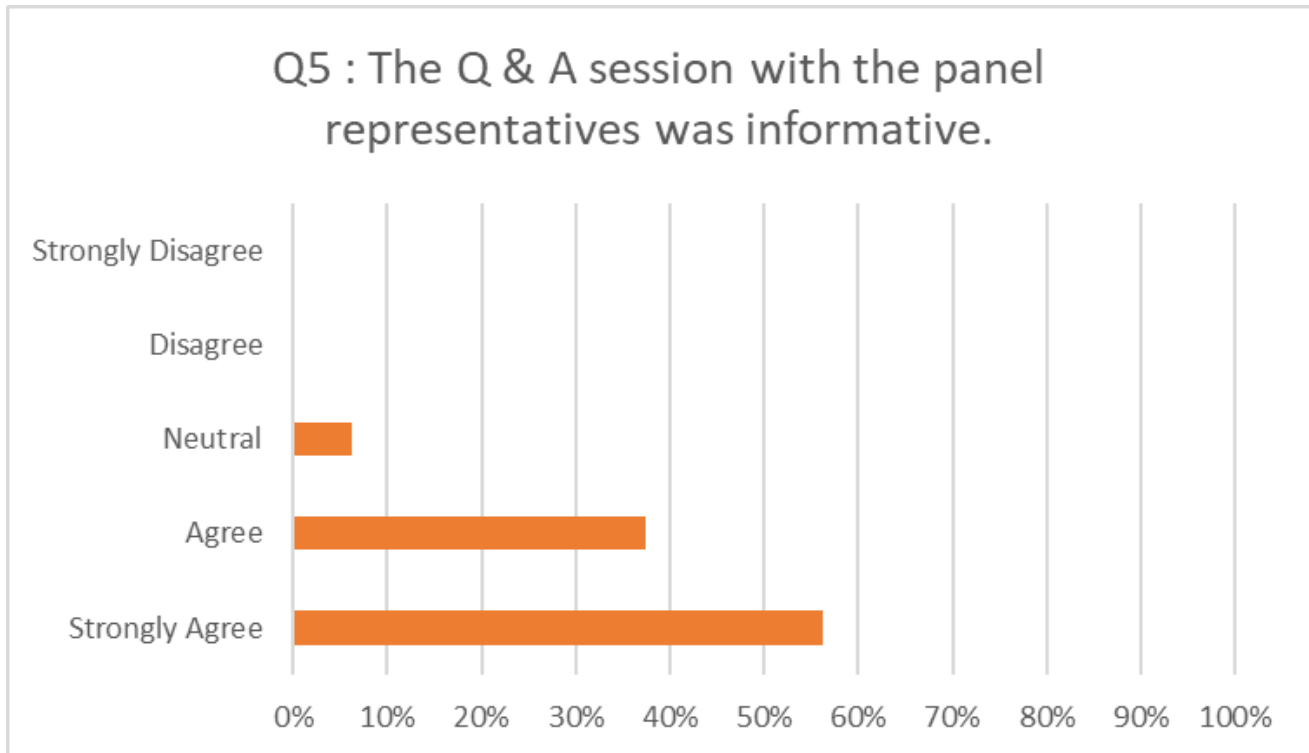
## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation



Q4 : I was able to connect with others in attendance.



## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation



Q 6: What is the most valuable thing that you will be taking away from the networking event? Why?

- All the information shared was so valuable- highlights would be the Stats and understanding the demographic profiles.
- I also loved the stories from panel - hearing the refugees stories was so impactful and really increased my understanding of the journey.
- Meeting with people in the community in person !!!
- Connecting with other service providers/ statistical information about newcomers
- Big ideas at the macro level about how to prepare Surrey to welcome newcomers.
- I don't often get to look at the distant horizon of what's possible with transformative cross-organizational collaboration
- It was good to be in sessions Indigenous Peoples + Newcomer's Collaboration
- Jody was excellent at facilitation, especially enjoyed the Networking Session in the morning.
- Networking with a large number of organizations.
- Statistics.
- Connecting with new people
- Meeting peers in Surrey LIP Network

## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation

- The great work being done by Surrey LIP and the information regarding Surrey is growth as the future largest city of BC
- Diversity of services i.e. they are expanding, not just language, settlement @ the event
- Great commitment of every stakeholder to create better opportunities=constructing together a better community
- How to change anger, frustration, sadness of past negative events/experience to positive action( the breakout group re: indigenous engagement was very valuable
- -that we can be involved with LIP initiatives
- To see the beautiful faces coming from different organizations that help newcomers and exchange ideas on collaborations and partnerships
- It was all good/ Today is fabulous- enhance to connect & reconnect with folks/the demographics were great/stories were amazing /
- the 3 panelists - so amazing.
- Much more need to be done
- Connections with others in the community/ Story of Lived experiences
- Building new bridges/connections-able to invite to my neighbourhood and not the usual suspects-Have Labour Unions as partner with some education first
- and not just "token "people, give responsibility and accountability to report back and bring on site and more
- The connections I gained+ information to inform my work in other tables.
- Learning the work everyone is doing in community. Having a place where the collective voice can be created.
- Updated information / Reconnected with other stakeholders and community partners
- The breakout session in indigenous peoples and newcomers collaboration engagement was informative and thought provoking
- Networking/ Learn more about other organizations
- Connections and conversations with wide variety of agency reps/ and helpful data & resources
- Re-connected with community members and it was great. Learned about fun data. Learned about what LIP is currently up to in Surrey.
- This was a great event even though I wasn't able to attend from the beginning.
- The immigration data + findings are interesting. They were quite eye opening + thoughtful providing.
- Apart from being able to meet and connect with wonderful people from amazing organizations,
- I got to develop my understanding of multiple barriers and possible solutions available for immigrants including PRs, students and temporary foreign workers.

## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation

- Networking with others organizations members and other information about refugees and new immigrants.
- Understanding of what a large and developed area of services for newly arrived, immigrants, a variety of organizations involved in it.
- Communication and the acquisition of new connections which will be very useful for the exchange of experience cooperation, recommendations to achieve a common goal- helping newcomers to Canada.
- All of it- great day.
- Meeting great people. Useful Information. Great Food.

Q7:What could be improved or would have made your experience better?

- As a new staff person I would have loved a listing of the agencies in attendance, I am not familiar with acronyms and so that would have helped.
- Sending out same contents and agenda in advance
- It would have been nice to move around to different rooms for different segments of the agenda beyond/ just the breakout rooms, but other than that, it was a great forum.
- I noticed LIP is operating from a capitalist mindset. Understandable, but I wish it had been acknowledged explicitly, and addresses critically.
- Whiteness was sometimes centered. The same points can be made but in an even better way, taking that time and energy to center the immigrant and racialized experience. White facilitators can reflect on whose voice/experience is being elevated.
- Time management. We were running out of time for many of the agenda time.
- More small group communication
- More time for participants input + interaction
- Small group networking - more please !
- For me, it was perfect. Just we will need a follow up of all the written -agreed proposed ideas. Great if you send email to every assistant to the event.
- List of delegates and contact details indicating who are new members of the LIP
- The cafe sessions on indigenous+ newcomers collaboration and engagement could be more fruitful with some concrete ideas being shared
- Clear communication on parking at venue
- Found myself not as engaged after 2:30, sorry ! The info was great but was tired by then !
- More time to network
- Handouts of presentations to take notes on.

## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation

- White text Fall short - unable to read on fluorescent green, light blue and gold
- Fill full screen to increase size for old eyes and colour blind people, thanks
- Put a prompt pictogram at mic
- Speak into the mic not side ways
- Having website links for follow up and sharing. Send follow up?
- Absent-deaf/ words caption on screen-zoom or other tool ( one tool for those next time )
- None
- Turning the temperature up in the room
- The slider that kicked off the event in the beginning had .....about that made the text extremely hard to read.
- It was good all around
- To explicitly have discussed the different experience and challenges for immigration based on 'where' you came from+ other abilities
- PowerPoint font bigger or turn down lighting
- Great event. well thought out, wonderful food, good flow. Interactive enough to secure attention for the whole day.
- Really enjoyed hearing many different perspectives. Minor suggestions to include agencies name on name tags-for easier viewing
- Nothing- it was a great event!
- Everything was appropriate and wonderful except this time we got to network with other participants.
- We needed more time to discuss the programs and services but we had to end abruptly. And we couldn't get to know even half of the people / organizations in the room.
- Sharing my responsibility with others and get other's ideas about settlement and employment and housing.
- More time for the networking session.
- Need assessment piece-more context on project.
- Can't think of any but definitely I am going to share the knowledge /information gained today in my circle of influence.



## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation

Q8: Do you have any suggestions for next year's event?

- It would be interesting if more selected officials were at the event.
- Invite Attendees to bring brochures of their services and drop off at the sign in-to be displayed for us to take away or take a photo. Passive networking ( In addition to F2F networking )
- Invite some business representatives
- LGBTQ session as part of the day
- None
- Same venue- great !
- 2 day event
- Mental Health wellness and trauma recovery through nature healing
- Highlight local indigenous non-profit organizations that we could collaborate with.
- Yes, need an invite for the next year event too.
- Land Acknowledgement right from the start, not working for indigenous to do it.
- More discussions on privilege + role of allies
- Have everyone come with a newcomer ready to learn with enough English/Bring alternatively a community partner person like faith/retail etc.
- N/A
- Not at this time.
- N/A
- May be helpful to advertise/promote a little bit more ahead of time to ensure folks are able to come./
- Continue having lived experience expressed by panel speakers.
- Hire interns ( international students) to organize and support this event + bring one speaker from each category of those whom are new to Surrey:
  - immigrants, refugees, international students etc.
- Please give more time to network. Kindly add examples from other successful solutions in other cities and provinces of Canada.
- I love to attend the next year event and love to see more activities from each organizations.
- IRCC representative speech. A stand or table where we could leave our program posters and business cards, to collect each other info in order to
  - understand what to offer to our clients.
- Do more outreach to get more attendees from the community.

## Appendix 3- Event Evaluation

### Q9: Additional Comments

- Thank you.
- Thanks for the invite-enjoyed the day
- None, thanks!
- Appreciate and thanks !
- Great to have government reps here
- Grateful for today
- Thank you so much for organizing this wonderful event ! It is very encouraging to meet some of our partners in person and meet others who
- we could potentially collaborate with.
- Thank you for the food.
- Loved it, thanks !
- Today was fabulous MC-just the right amount of humor to stay engaging.
- N/A
- Printed handouts of content+ slides for accessibility
- Race/racism and discrimination should not be side topic or issue rather imbedded across all work for true anti-racism, diversity, equity + justices .
- This would also help support series agenda
- Wonderful MC-ing choice. Jody Johnson us very engaging, funny, deep and compassionate. Felt that she was a very good choice for the event.
- Thank you-this was a great event.
- Want to be a part of youth council , Lenya Wilks mentioned !
- I enjoyed the event. It was very informative and fruitful. I hope next year we came up with answer for the challenges and barriers which refugees and immigrants faces in the area if employment, housing, etc.
- The event was very well organized ! I had an amazing and useful experience of in-person communication and networking.
- Thank you for all the wonderful speeches ! I am honored to be among professionals and sincere people, each of whom makes an incredible contribution to the development of society for the wonderful future of Canada.
- Amazing WORK !! Team LIP !!!