

Newcomer Inclusion

ACCORDING TO THE 2016 census, about one in four Winnipeggers have lived experience as immigrants or refugees to Canada.¹ This percentage is only anticipated to grow as an economic forecast conducted by the City showed that Winnipeg will have a population increase of over 200,000 people, or around 8,100 annually.² This population growth will be driven mainly by international migration.

Winnipeggers who have lived experience as immigrants and refugees make up 26 per cent of the city's workforce.³ They pay taxes, raise their families, volunteer and contribute to the economy and culture of the city. However, they encounter many barriers to settling into Winnipeg, such as: accessing needed services, learning a new language, finding suitable housing, accessing culturally appropriate mental health services, discrimination and securing jobs. Integrating into the labour market and barriers to credential recognition are particular challenges. Many newcomers to Winnipeg also experience poverty: 32.6 per cent of Winnipeg's recently arrived immigrant and refugee population live below the Low-Income Measure (after taxes). Recently arrived immigrants and refugees experience much higher levels of food insecurity than the average household.⁴

The City adopted the Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy in February 2020. The Policy aimed at making Winnipeg more welcoming to newcomers by better meeting their distinct needs, improving newcomer access to City services, and increasing public awareness and education on human rights, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Policy was developed through a

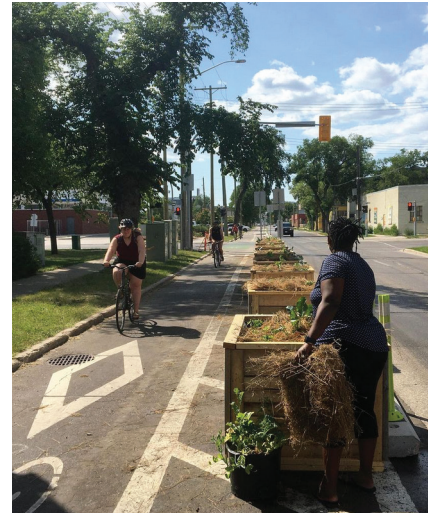
co-creation model with Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, and included conducting research; holding consultations with newcomer youth, ethnocultural leaders, settlement services providers, and francophone community members; and consultations with various City departments. As part of the Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy and Strategic Framework, there are five Strategic Priorities:

1. A Welcoming City: Work to ensure all newcomers to Winnipeg are welcomed and supported;
2. A City Without Racism: Address racism and discrimination in the city and work to eliminate inequities through education, public awareness and leading by example;
3. Equitable and Accessible Services: Work to provide City services that are equitable, responsive to community need, and accessible for all, through partnerships, social cooperation and advocacy;
4. A Representative Workforce: Strive to build a City workforce that represents the population it serves;
5. Active Implementation: Implement through collaborative inter-departmental and intergovernmental relations, multi-stakeholder partnerships, communication and advocacy.

While the Policy intends to cover a lot of ground, it does not include an Access Without Fear component that would ensure all Winnipeggers, no matter their residency status, can access city services without fear of being detained or deported. The fear of undocumented immigrants increases their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation and puts them at greater risk of poverty and poor health. Additionally, the policy does not include any efforts to get permanent residents the right to vote in municipal elections. These are two actions that the community have been calling for and were put forward in consultations for the Policy.

Following a recent City of Winnipeg trend with social policies, the Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy was passed without any dedicated sustainable funding for implementation. This has limited the ability of the City to implement substantial and systemic change needed to make the City more welcoming and inclusive for Winnipeggers with lived experience as immigrants and refugees.

We are proposing that the Alternative Municipal Budget build on the recommendations laid out in the City's own second phase of the Newcomer



Winnipeg Trails Association

Welcome and Inclusion Policy report, which did not receive funding. Winnipeg needs to invest money if it genuinely wants to make Winnipeg a more welcoming and inclusive city.

New Expenditures:

- Full-time permanent position at Community Services to oversee the implementation of the Newcomer Policy: \$108,200
- Programming for Community Services for multilingual communications: \$20,000
- Full-time temporary position at the Indigenous Relations Division to support bridge-building activities between Indigenous and newcomer communities: \$76,900
- Programming in the Indigenous Relations Division to support the bridge building initiatives: \$15,000

In addition to the City's own recommendations for funding, we are proposing that the City develop an Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy and provide grants for newcomer settlement agencies to support the settlement and integration of newcomers into Winnipeg:

- Support for the Equity Office to develop an anti-racism and anti-oppression policy (some of these funds would go to the community for consultations): \$70,000

Annual grants to support newcomer settlement agencies:

- \$150,000 annually

Total new expenditures: \$440,100

Endnotes

1 Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

2 City of Winnipeg (2016). "Population, Housing and Economic Forecast". <https://winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/2016PopulationHousingAndEconomicForecastPresentation.pdf>

3 Immigration Matters (2019). Economic Profile Series: Winnipeg, Canada. <https://lipdata.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2020/02/Winnipeg-Economic-Profile-2019.pdf>

4 Adekunle, B., J. Cidro, and G. Filson. 2015. "The Political Economy of Culturally Appropriate Foods in Winnipeg: A Case of Refugee Path Immigrants (RPIs)." Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved April 6 2018 from <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2015/12/Cultural%20Foods.pdf>