

Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership

Strategic Plan For the Period of 2012 - 2015

Funded by:

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Citizenship and
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Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

Vision

Our vision is a Toronto West community where - through a collaborative approach - every newcomer's needs are met, they are fully engaged in our community, integrated, and have access to meaningful employment.

Mission

The mission of the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP) is to:

- Reflect, support and welcome diversity
- Value and involve the talents and experience of newcomers
- Raise awareness of community issues and encourage collective action
- Co-ordinate a service delivery system within TWLIP which is seamless, client-focused and client-led
- Share resources, best practices and opportunities
- Advocate for newcomers and immigrants.

Values

We value:

- A process which is collective, community-based and community-led
- Inclusiveness
- The lived experience of newcomers and established residents
- Perseverance, tenacity and positive resistance as we attempt to influence, negotiate and advocate
- Social justice for all.

Background

In 2008, Citizenship and Immigration Canada launched the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative with a call for proposals in over 30 of cities across Ontario. The federal government's vision for LIPs was the establishment of locally-directed councils, charged with the task of developing and implementing a local strategy for improving settlement and labour market outcomes for newcomers in selected municipalities. In Toronto, CIC took a different approach, awarding contracts to organizations in 15 different communities, each responsible for establishing a council and a strategy in their particular area of the city.

More specifically, the objectives of the LIP initiative were to:

- Create more welcoming communities and improve local capacity to support the integration of newcomers

- Establish a framework for multi-sectoral planning that facilitates collaboration between a wide variety of social service organizations, mainstream institutions and residents' groups
- Develop innovative and coordinated strategies to address the needs of newcomers and the challenges they face during the process of settlement and when accessing the labour market

In Phases I and II, the LIPs established Partnership Councils and identified the vision, values, principles and objectives that would guide the projects. Under the direction of their Partnership Council, each LIP conducted local research and consultation with newcomers, service providers and employers on community needs, key issues, priorities, challenges, and gaps in services. Based on the consultations and research findings, each LIP developed a strategy and action plan for their particular catchment area. Many LIPs developed resources and tools for different stakeholders, such as service directories, websites, maps and collaboration guides. Some LIPS organized outreach events in their community for newcomers, service delivery agencies and employers.

In December, 2011, LIP lead agencies in Toronto were informed that, in the following program year (2012/2013), LIPs in Toronto would transition from the neighbourhood model to a 'quadrant' model. Under the new structure, the 15 existing LIPs would merge into four quadrant LIPs (Toronto East, Toronto West, Toronto North and Toronto South), with each one developing a regional strategy.

As a result of the restructuring, the four former neighbourhood LIPs in the west Toronto area (Black Creek – led by Delta Family Resource Centre, Central South Etobicoke – led by JobStart, North Etobicoke – led by Rexdale Women's Centre and York South-Weston – led by Social Planning Toronto) were amalgamated into one LIP, which is currently known as Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP). TWLIP is led by JobStart, which was also the lead agency for the Central South Etobicoke LIP.

A new TWLIP structure was developed after the amalgamation and four presentations were delivered at each of the local LIP council meetings to inform them about the new structure.

Geographical Area

The geographical area for the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP) extends north from Lake Ontario to Steeles Avenue West and extends west to the Mississauga boundary and Highway 427, and east to the Humber River, Dufferin Street and along the CP rail line (Figure 1.).

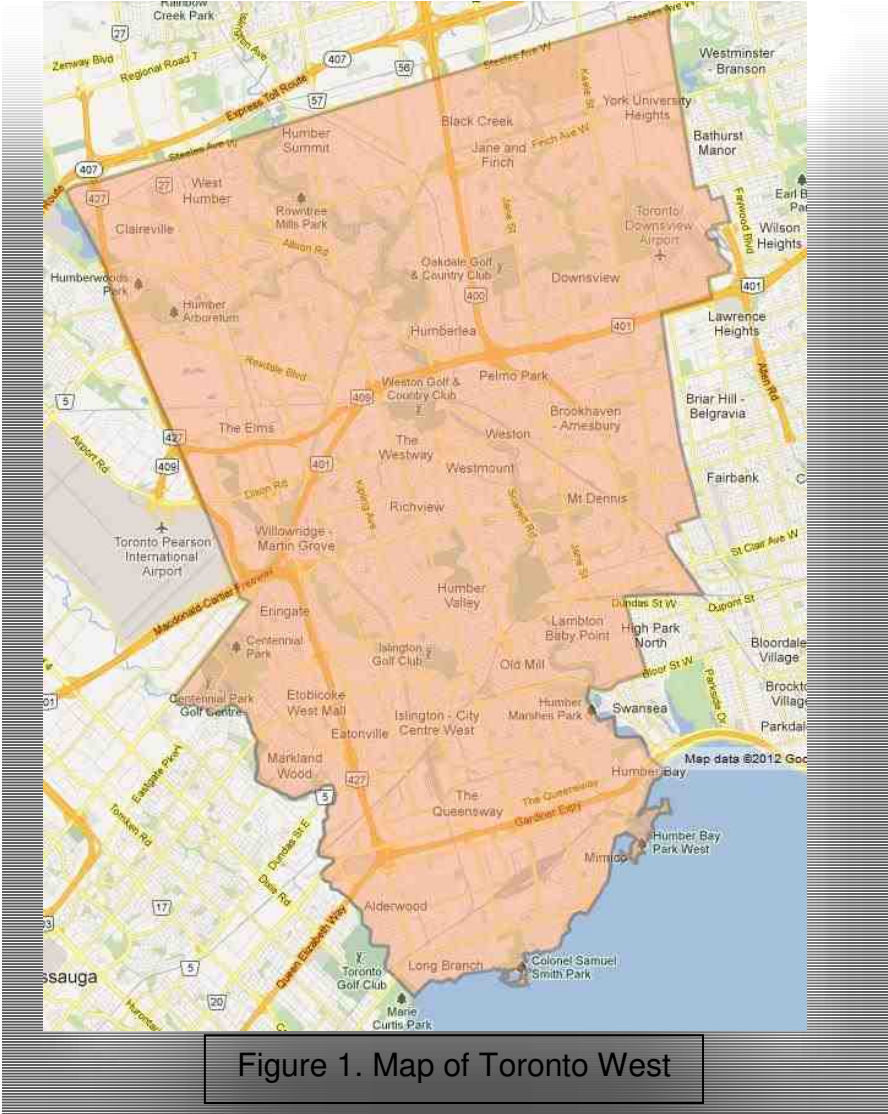


Figure 1. Map of Toronto West

The Development of the TWLIP Strategy

As discussed above, during Phases I and II, each of the former neighbourhood LIPs in the Toronto West area had developed their own structure and processes, as well as different strategies and resources that reflected the needs and demographics of the neighbourhoods within their particular catchment. While each of the Partnership Councils of these LIPs had approached the project in different ways, many commonalities were evident in the issues, strategies and priorities that were identified.

For this reason, one important step in the development of the TWLIP strategy was to identify the successes and achievements each neighbourhood LIP had made in the past and build the new TWLIP strategy upon them.

The following are the major steps TWLIP has been taking to develop the strategy after the amalgamation:

- 1) Review the workgroups/committees of the four neighbourhood LIPs (Figure 2.) and combine them into five topic groups (Figure 3):

Neighbourhood LIP Workgroups

North Etobicoke	Black Creek	York South-Weston	Central South Etobicoke
• Employment	• Communications Committee	• Access to Services	• Welcoming Communities
• Education and Language Training	• Service Integration Committee	• Community Engagement	• Capacity Building/ System Enhancement
• Service Development	• Settlement Workers Committee	• Health and Mental Health	• Employer Engagement
• Outreach and Service Coordination	• Health Resource Group	• Labour Market	
	• Employment Resource Group		
	• Education Resource Group		

Figure 2. Workgroup focuses of former LIPs in Toronto West



Toronto West LIP Topic Groups

- Civic Engagement
- Education & Language
- Health
- Labour Market
- Service Development & Coordination

Figure 3. TWLIP Topic Groups

After the formation of the new topic groups, the members of the former local LIPs were asked to voluntarily join one topic group of their choice through an online polling system. Agencies/organizations were allowed to send more than one representative to participate in the TWLIP topic groups, however, individual members were allowed to join only one topic group.

2) The establishment of the TWLIP Regional Council¹:

The TWLIP Regional Council was established at the TWLIP launch, held on June 27, 2012. There are 30 members on the Regional Council; 25 of them are members of the topic groups (four organizational/individual representatives plus one newcomer representative from each topic group). Members (from the topic groups) were selected through a process of voting, guided by the following priorities:

- Balance of large and small organizations
- Representation from ethno-specific organizations
- Newcomer representation
- Balance of representation from neighbourhood councils
- Representation from youth and seniors

The composition of the membership is as follows:

5 members from each Topic Group	= 25 members (including 5 newcomers)
3 Partner Agencies ²	= 3 members
Lead Agency	= 1 member (appointed co-chair)
Major Stakeholder representative (Toronto Employment Social Services)	= 1 member
Total	= 30 members

¹ Regional Council is the primary advisory body for the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (TWLIP). The members include, but are not limited to service providers, newcomers, businesses and residents and any additional target group identified by the Regional Council serving newcomers in the Toronto West quadrant. The final decision making body is the lead agency, JobStart, in consultation with the three partner agencies.

² Partner Agencies (Delta Family Resource Centre, Rexdale Women's Centre and Social Planning Toronto) are former lead agencies of the former Local Immigration Partnerships that now make up the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership.

Between July and September, each topic group as well as the Regional Council met several times to establish their objectives and Terms of Reference. Additionally, topic group members (with the support of the staff team) reviewed the work that had been done by each of the four former neighbourhood LIPs in their particular topic area, and identified common strategies and issues in order to develop new Strategic Plans that reflect and integrate the priorities of the local LIPs.

3) Participation in the Toronto LIP Network

In addition to engaging the stakeholders in the Toronto west area, TWLIP staff and members actively participate in collaborative meetings and collective discussions with the other three quadrant LIPs³ in Toronto, as well as the City-LIP⁴. The purpose and objectives of these meetings are to establish and maintain good communication among quadrant LIPs and with the City LIP; share knowledge and information relevant to the LIPs and their activities; discuss and plan collaborative activities and city-wide initiatives, such as engagement with the PanAm community outreach team; identify opportunities for coordination or partnerships among quadrant LIPs or between quadrant LIPs and the City LIP.

After a series of meetings, discussions and collaborative planning sessions between the staff team, topic group members and TWLIP Regional Council members, the TWLIP developed its three year strategy. The strategy identifies key challenges in each of the five topic group areas, and describes the strategic actions that the TWLIP will take to address these issues and achieve the stated goals.

TWLIP Strategic Plan

The Strategy presented in this document and the process of its development reflect the TWLIP vision and values. Underlying each strategic area is the goal of creating a cohesive and empowered community where newcomers' needs are met through the delivery of effective, well-coordinated services, and where newcomers are engaged in the life of the community.

The Strategy directly addresses the key issues identified by the former neighbourhood LIPs and prioritizes newcomers' need for effective language instruction, accessible and appropriate health services, meaningful employment, responsive community services and active participation in local events and decision making. Since each of the former

³ Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership is one of four quadrant LIPs in the City of Toronto, the other three quadrant LIPs are: 1) Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership; 2) Toronto North Local Immigration Partnership, and 3) Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership.

⁴ In addition to the four quadrant LIPs, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) also funds a City-LIP in Toronto.

neighbourhood LIPs emphasized the need for greater coordination among agencies and groups that serve and work with newcomers, service coordination has been identified as a central component of the TWLIP Strategy. The Service Development and Coordination group was created to focus on various aspects of service coordination. However, it is important to note that in addition to the strategies planned by the Service Development and Coordination group, the other four topic groups (Civic Engagement, Health, Labour Market, Education & Language) have planned to implement strategies that build or support service coordination in various ways. During the implementation phase, the Service Development and Coordination group will independently plan and carry out activities that relate to their strategic plan, as well as work collaboratively with each of the four topic groups to support the initiatives that they have planned that address issues of service coordination that are relevant to their respective topic areas.

Developed through collaborative, participatory planning processes that draw on the experience and knowledge of a wide range of stakeholders, including newcomer residents, the Strategy provides direction and focus for the TWLIP's current and future activities.

Topic Group 1: Civic Engagement	
1.1 Political Engagement	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers/ immigrants are unfamiliar with the Canadian political system and this has prevented them for integrating more meaningfully into the Canadian society.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To educate/ promote/ empower newcomers regarding the Canadian political system. This includes education about the structure of the three levels of government and the roles and responsibilities of each level.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers/ immigrants become more politically engaged and understand the roles and responsibilities of each level of government.

1.2 Community Engagement	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/immigrants are not able to participate in community events or engage in the community they live in because they do not have the language skills, time, means, understanding or / support (child minding, transportation, etc). to do so.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate collaborative planning and coordinate community events to take place in locations easily accessed by newcomers/ immigrants and provide and/or advocate for necessary supports. • Prepare newcomers/ immigrants with information to help them understand the purpose of community events/ meetings and how to become an active participant.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants will have increased opportunities, ability and support to participate actively in events that affect their communities.
1.3 Information about services for newcomers	Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about services that can be accessed by newcomers is found in many places; it can be hard to navigate and understand.
	Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a community-wide newcomer information dissemination system (including a LIP website that integrates and links to the former LIP websites). • Enhance access to translation and interpretation services.
	Goal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants are able to easily access information about the range of services available in the community. • Language is not a barrier to accessing information about available services.

Topic Group 2: Education and Language	
2.1 Service Coordination among Service Providers	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is challenging for frontline workers to keep track of programs, services, events and supports offered by other groups and organizations related to education and language instruction. As a result, frontline workers do not always have up-to-date information, and there is a lack of consistency in the information and referrals provided by frontline workers. • Lack of accuracy when information is publicized but not updated. • Emails are not effective ways of delivering information as staff members receive an unmanageable number of emails daily
	<p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and information sharing among frontline workers. As an example, activities will include the creation of an online database that contains information and services offered by all agencies in the Toronto West. The database should be accessible to everyone through the TWLIP website.
	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers of all sectors have better understanding of language services available to address the language needs of newcomers. • Service providers know how to access to reliable sources to find accurate information to refer their newcomer/ immigrant clients to the language training programs.
2.2 Program Accessibility	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants face barriers (transportation, child care, stuck in survival jobs, etc) in accessing language training they need. • Limited language skills prevent employed newcomers/ immigrants from acquiring soft skills, such as communication skills they need to integrate fully in their workplace.
	<p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the City-LIP to explore opportunities to seek better transportation support for newcomers/ immigrants (for example, provide bus passes instead of tickets for newcomers/immigrants in the LINC classes so

	<p>they can travel around community as well as to and from classes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the existing language programs (schedules and levels) that offer flexible class time/part-time classes in order to maximize the participation of newcomers/ immigrants’ who face barriers to participation in language programs because of employment or family commitments. • Explore creative solutions (with LINC and ESL providers) to language service delivery for employed newcomers/ immigrants such as combined in-class and online language instruction, so they can advance in the workplace. • Facilitate discussion with stakeholders to explore opportunities for the expansion of the Language Training in the Workplace (LTIW) program.
	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All newcomers/ immigrants have access to language training that suits their needs and this training is provided at no or low cost. • Newcomers/ immigrants gain the language skills required for everyday living and working in Canada. • Newcomers/ immigrants are able to balance work with language training opportunities.
<p>2.3 Support for Newcomer Parents/Students</p>	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect between newcomer/ immigrant parents, youth and school system. Parents do not fully understand what their children are doing at school and how they can help their children. <p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase newcomer/ immigrant parents’ knowledge of opportunities and benefits of participation in their children’s education and participation in school/ school board activities • Collaborate with service providers to identify effective ways for settlement workers in school to engage with newcomer/ immigrant parents. <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomer/ immigrant parents understand how the school system operates in Ontario and are engaged with the school in support of their children’s education.

Topic Group 3: Health	
3.1 Increased Public Awareness of Societal Impacts of Newcomer Health	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health inequities due to the systemic barriers of racism, poverty, unemployment and lack of access to appropriate health care, housing, etc.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased presence on social media to create awareness of the issues. Development of a media campaign to shift public perspective of newcomers/ immigrants to a more positive one.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public is aware of the benefits of increased newcomer/ immigrant health and well-being. Public is aware of how public policy can shape health equity. Increased community mental health and well-being.
3.2 Broadened Scope of Areas for Sharing Best Practices and Collaborating	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge and understanding of work between health and settlement sectors. Lack of understanding of broader definitions of health and the implications of this broader understanding.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of cross-sectoral collaboration and communication. Development of a website portal for sharing of information and best practices
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through best practice sharing, health and settlement sectors understand where the service gaps are and work collaboratively to fill each other's gaps. Community health centres and settlement sectors understand the supports and services provided for newcomers. Stakeholders have broader understanding of the definition of health.

3.3 Information Dissemination	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants, settlement workers and clinicians are unfamiliar with health programs and services available for newcomers, immigrants and other marginalized and vulnerable populations.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase public awareness and meaningful knowledge of available programs, services and resources for newcomers/ immigrants through the creation and development of a website that includes pathways to health resources for newcomers/ immigrants, settlement workers, and clinicians.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A website that is streamlined, up-to-date, and serves as a one-stop shopping for various stakeholders to obtain both local and regional information and resources. • Settlement workers have access to clear, reliable, up-to-date information regarding health services, supports and programs for marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Topic Group 4 : Labour Market	
4.1 Employer Engagement	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some employers are hesitant to hire newcomers; they are not aware of the benefits of hiring newcomers. • Some employers are not aware of services and supports available in the community or in the city.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market the benefit of hiring newcomers and the incentives and supports offered by various levels of government. • Promote the services offered for employers by agencies in the quadrant; facilitate employers' access to information about services and supports.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers are aware of the benefits of hiring newcomers and know how to access supports and information.
4.2 Information and Outreach to Newcomers	Challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wide range of programs and services is complex and hard to navigate. Newcomers are not aware of the services available to them, which will best suit their needs, or how they can benefit.
	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders collaborate to develop resources and conduct outreach to inform newcomers of employment-related programs and supports. • Develop collaborative strategies to promote mentoring programs that offer training in soft skills and Canadian workplace culture.
	Goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers with employment goals have a good understanding of common pathways to employment, available services, who is eligible, which services are best suited for their needs and how they will benefit.
4.3 Information and Knowledge Sharing Among Frontline Workers	Challenge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying up to date on programs offered and best practices in service delivery can be challenging for frontline workers. • There is inconsistency in how frontline workers screen/assess the employment needs of newcomers and inconsistency in information and referral practices.

	<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to information about employment-related programs and supports (esp. soft skills training, workplace culture, mentoring, internships). • Coordinate inter-sectoral knowledge sharing, networking and professional development events for frontline workers. • Facilitate knowledge sharing and learning opportunities to support more consistent service delivery to clients.
	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals and agencies that offer information and referrals to newcomers have a good understanding of employment-related services and who should be referred where. • Greater consistency in how newcomers with employment needs are screened and referred.
<p>4.4 Collaboration with Regional and City-Wide Employment and Labour Market Networks and Initiatives</p>	<p>Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers' job search activity is not limited to the catchment of the TWLIP quadrant; the labour market for most job seekers includes the entire GTA. • Many different groups and initiatives exist to help residents of (west)Toronto access the labour market; these activities include but are not exclusively for newcomers, and the unique challenges faced by newcomers may be overlooked.
	<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Integrated Local Labour Market Planning projects; Toronto City-level LIP; inter-quadrant Labour Market committee; Employment Ontario service delivery networks. • Keep stakeholders updates on TWLIP activities and maintain communication with other networks. • Encourage partners and stakeholder to apply a 'newcomer lens' and incorporate practices that respond to the needs of newcomers with employment goals.
	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWLIP labour market and employment strategies are integrated with and compliment the work of other LIPs, networks, groups and initiatives in Toronto.

Topic Group 5 : Service Development and Coordination	
5.1 Networking, Partnerships and Collaborative Program Development	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many service delivery agencies operate separately, developing and implementing programs in isolation from each other.
	<p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate opportunities for networking/dialogue across sectors (e.g. Employment and Settlement sector etc). • Facilitate the development of partnerships and innovative programming that integrates multiple service providers including large, medium and small organizations. • Engage the “non-Newcomer Serving Sector <i>(defined as those in the local community with a vested interest in newcomers but not with a direct service mandate –e.g. banks, schools, businesses, etc.)</i> and explore potential collaborations.
	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery is strengthened and improved through collaborative planning and partnerships.
5.2 Information and knowledge sharing among frontline workers	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying up to date on the wide range of programs and services and keeping track of system/program changes is challenging.
	<p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for knowledge sharing (e.g. Educational Workshops, Professional Development and Training, Skill Transfer), discuss new services and system/program changes within and across sectors. • Create a new LIP website that integrates and links to the former LIPs’ websites. • Use/develop common software that has all information on settlement services – updated by individual agencies.
	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants receive current, correct information for referrals. • Frontline workers are updated and aware of system/program changes and new services.

<p>5.3 Capacity development and collaboration with grassroots and informal sector</p>	<p>Challenge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, grassroots and informal organizations offer important services in the community but are often not recognized and the wider sector is not always aware of what is offered.
	<p>Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity of emerging and grass-roots organizations by creating more opportunities for access to existing training. • Facilitate partnership development between formal and informal organizations. • Improve service coordination between larger organizations serving newcomers and grassroots/informal sector.
	<p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots and informal organizations are strengthened and sustained through better integration/co-ordination with the wider network of organizations serving newcomers.
<p>5.4 Coordinated referral and tracking systems</p>	<p>Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers/ immigrants are referred to many services but there is little coordination between agencies to ensure clients access the services they need in a time sensitive manner easing the settlement process. • Follow up, tracking and evaluation is done on an agency-by-agency basis with little/no coordination within the network of services for newcomers. It is difficult to evaluate outcomes.
	<p>Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a coordinated intake, assessment and referral system within and across sectors including grassroots and informal organizations as well. • Develop and implement a coordinated tracking/evaluation/ follow-up system.
	<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies are better able to assist/support clients in accessing the services they need. • Client satisfaction and outcomes are monitored in a coordinated and consistent way.

5.5 Information about services for newcomers	Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about services that can be accessed by newcomers is found in many places; it can be hard to navigate and understand.
	Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate a community-wide newcomer information dissemination system (including a LIP website that integrates and links to the former LIP websites). Enhance access to translation and interpretation services.
	Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers/ immigrants are able to easily access information about the range of services available in the community. Language should not prevent or be a barrier to accessing information about available services.