

THE ANNUAL STATE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT - YEAR 2 REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

That the May 1, 2023, Community Services report CS01818, be received for information.

Requested Council Action		Information only	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	BELONG, THRIVE and CREATE.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A community of communities Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being Arts and culture Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C529 - Immigration and Settlement Policy • C538 - Diversity and Inclusion • City of Edmonton's Anti-Racism Strategy • Community Safety and Well Being Framework 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 21, 2022, CS00788 Refugee and Newcomer Housing Project Update • August 25, 2021, CR_7220 State of Immigration and Settlement Annual Report 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the August 25, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

THE ANNUAL STATE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT - YEAR 2 REPORT

That Administration continue to work with Refugee/Newcomer/Migrant community members and other stakeholders to build on the foundation and concepts of the year one report in future annual reports on the State of Immigration and Settlement in Edmonton.

Executive Summary

- The following report continues on Community and Public Services Committee's request for information on trends, issues and concerns from Edmonton's newcomer, refugee and migrant communities; The Annual State of Immigration and Settlement - Year 2 report builds upon the first year report that was presented at the August 25, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, Citizen Services report CR_7720.
- The report builds upon foundational elements in the Year 1 report such as the Multidimensional Immigrant Model and Cultural Wealth Model and adds new employment and education themes.
- The report creates a holistic picture of the resilience of ethno-cultural communities, agencies and other stakeholders who support newcomers, refugees and migrants while narrating the challenges many face as they make Edmonton their new home.
- Ideas under consideration to include in the Year 3 report included the private sponsorship system, migrants with precarious status and building upon policy implications and actions from Year 1 and Year 2 reports.

REPORT

The State of Immigration and Settlement in Edmonton Report Year 2 *Dignity in Education & Employment - Creating Opportunities So Newcomers Can Thrive* (Attachment 1) is the second of a series of reports that highlight specific themes within the immigration and settlement sector. The themes for the 2022 State of Immigration and Settlement in Edmonton Report were Employment and Education.

The Year 2 report positions immigration and settlement within a broad context, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the global anti-racism movement and a recent 2022 attack on Black Muslim women in Edmonton¹. The report highlights how international events such as the war in Ukraine and conflict in Afghanistan have impacted Edmonton's immigration landscape.

The Year 2 report attempts to forecast the impact of new federal immigration policies on the City of Edmonton, particularly, the Federal Government's policy to bring in a record number of immigrants in the next 24 months, the majority of whom will be racialized peoples coming from the Global South.

¹ <https://www.nccm.ca/nccm-deeply-troubled-after-another-attack-on-edmonton-muslim-woman-and-her-children-outside-a-mosque/>

THE ANNUAL STATE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT - YEAR 2 REPORT

The Year 2 report was led by two co-chairs from the community and City Administration, supported by a diverse steering committee composed of individuals from 12 local immigrant-serving agencies and social services sector groups.

Four community-based researchers interviewed immigrants, educators and employers living in Edmonton. The community participants were all migrants from different regions of the world and represented a broad spectrum of age, race and gender identities. These interviews and reviews lead to the development of the annual report.

State of Immigration and Settlement Mental Models

One of the objectives of the annual State of Immigration and Settlement report is to provide mental models and lenses of seeing and thinking about immigrants. The report is framed within the context of two specific theoretical models.

Multidimensional Immigrant Model: The idea that communities start to consider immigrants beyond just the traditional one-dimensional measure of immigrants' abilities to either contribute to or take from the economy. The model aims to recognize multiple dimensions such as education, experience of resilience and unique world views that immigrants add to local knowledge base and spur innovation.

Cultural Wealth Model: The report proposes that beyond traditional economic measures of financial wealth, most immigrants come to Canada with the potential to offer new forms of wealth, which are important for business, community building and dealing with the adversities of life. Some of these forms of social capital include:

- Aspirational Capital: The strength and persistence of hope and the inspirational pursuit in the face of barriers and adversity.
- Navigational Capital: The skills of navigating systemic challenges, which are frequently faced and overcome by newcomers and migrants.
- Resistant Capital: The strength, knowledge and skills that come from consistently challenging inequalities, both in countries of origin and in Canada.

Employment Theme and Overview

Employment has been identified as one of the key markers of successful integration into a new country. Education creates resources for immigrants and newcomers to support themselves and their families and afford to pay for essentials such as housing, food and transportation. Gainful employment allows for active participation in community and creates a sense of pride and self worth.

Many newcomers to Canada arriving through the Skilled Worker immigration pathway have specialized and advanced training; however, employers may determine worth with limited measures, such as fluency in English, Canadian work experience and Canadian education. This lens makes newcomers seem less valuable than they are.

THE ANNUAL STATE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT - YEAR 2 REPORT

The Cultural Wealth Model helps employers see the value of experience newcomers offer in terms of employment criteria. Many newcomers arrive with multiple assets, including social capital, linguistic, navigational and aspiration capital, skills and acumen that are highly valuable to employers and the Canadian workforce.

Most newcomers are in the process of building new lives in Canada. The report suggests they tend to be hardworking, loyal and grateful. They are determined to prove their worth, and hence have lower absenteeism and are more resilient in the face of job challenges.

Newcomers interviewed talked about facing racism with regards to hiring, retention and promotion opportunities. Most private employees who were interviewed identified that they do not have equity, diversity, inclusion or accessibility policies.

Education Theme and Overview

It is essential to design an education system for all children, regardless of culture, language, background or ability.

One in four Edmonton school students is a newcomer. In 30 years, that number will be closer to one in two. Both Edmonton Public Schools² and Edmonton Catholic School Division³ have published anti-racism action plans, recognizing the genuine and urgent need to address equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility in schools. The Year 2 State of Immigration and Settlement Report proposes the following findings to assist newcomers with settlement in Edmonton schools, they are;

- **Integrated Learning Model:** In this model, learning is expansive, dynamic, iterative and deeply rooted in relationships, rather than isolated, standardized and repetitive, as often seen in traditional systems. The integrated learning model empowers students and teachers to respond to changing social needs and contexts.
- **Community Partnerships:** Schools function as community hubs, where community, students and school administration can gather, allowing schools to draw on the strengths of the broader community to enhance student learning.
- **Making Culture Visible:** By making diverse cultures visible in schools, students learn vital lessons about the world and how different cultures get along. Promoting culture teaches empathy, enriches intercultural understanding, and combats racism and xenophobia.

Next Steps

The Annual State of Immigration and Settlement Year 3 report will continue efforts to explore the challenges faced by Edmonton's migrant communities. Ideas under consideration to include in the Year 3 report included the private sponsorship system, migrants with precarious status and building upon policy implications and actions from Year 1 and Year 2 reports.

²https://epsb.ca/media/epsb/ourdistrict/topicsofinterest/anti-racismandequity/anti-racism-equity-action-plan.pdf?_gl=1*1rve5cf*_ga*OTc0MjQ3OTE2LjE2NTk4MTY0ODA.*_ga_XVK8L3KTMN*MTY2MDg2MzE5OC40LjEuMTY2MDg2NDI2Ny41My4wLjA.

³ <https://www.ecsd.net/equity-diversity-inclusion-and-anti-racism>

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

A total of 239 individuals participated in focus groups and interviews that focused on lived experience as newcomers and migrants, supporting and advocating for migrant interests and opportunities and challenges faced by City staff as they support newcomers. The learnings heard from these sessions formed the basis for the Year 2 report.

GBA+

The Year 2 State of Immigration and Settlement Report included input from a diverse range of stakeholders with intersecting perspectives and was undertaken with a concurrent review of the immigration and Settlement Policy C529. Community conversations were supported by 10 community animators representing various regions of the Global South where most migrants to Edmonton originate. These included sub regions of Asia and Africa and Latin America. Community animators and participants had wide representation across age, abilities, gender and race spectrums. To ensure marginalized groups were included, members of the two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and plus (other identities) communities were provided with intentional space and a focus group platform, so voices and perspectives could be heard and incorporated into the report.

Many newcomers disproportionately face multiple barriers (poverty, language barriers, racism, discrimination, post-traumatic stress disorder, unemployment, non-recognition of foreign credentials, lack of affordable housing, etc.) therefore information, employment, affordable housing, education, healthcare, programs/services aimed at all Edmontonians often exclude them. If communication is only in English, there are associated costs, as newcomers have to navigate to unfamiliar places and navigate challenges around childcare access or transportation.

These barriers and impacts are more severe for newcomers who are women, youth, seniors, people of colour, 2SLGBTQ+, people with disabilities, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, or other religious minorities in Canada, or any intersection of these identities.

Equity measures taken in development of the Year 2 report include:

- Conducted community engagement sessions through diverse community animators in the first language of their community, at a time, location and format (in-person or virtual) that worked best for the community members. Training and appropriate compensation for the animators was provided. Partner agencies identified and recruited animators to conduct the focus groups independently.
- Outreach to newcomer 2SLGBTQ+ and newcomers with disabilities groups.
- Engaged the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership Community Collaboration Table members (ie. multi-sector representatives of frontline work with newcomers).
- Engaged City employees whose work connects with supporting newcomers.

THE ANNUAL STATE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT - YEAR 2 REPORT

- Conducted engagement with community members, service providers and City employees through an equity lens.
- Expanded the scope of the engagement as project timeline, budget and resources permitted.

ATTACHMENT

1. The State of Immigration and Settlement Year 2 Report