

# **Companion Document to the An Equity Approach to Policy Change: Reviewing C529 Policy on Immigration and Settlement**

**Part One: Working Towards Equity: What We Heard from City of Edmonton Staff (p.2)**

**Part Two: Our Voices: Engaging Migrants on Belonging and Inclusion**

**Working Towards Equity:  
What We Heard  
from City of Edmonton Staff**

**Lucenia Ortiz and Kate Gunn  
August 2022**

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>City Engagement Process</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What We Heard Highlights</b>	
- At a Glance	7
<b>Intentionality</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Addressing Barriers</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Sharing Power</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Equity Framing/Data</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Policy Implications</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>40</b>

**We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the 58 staff from across the City of Edmonton who took part with enthusiasm in this series of online conversations about their work in the summer of 2022. Their passion for change - and their determination to help build a more equitable, inclusive City and community - inspire us. We hope we have captured their insights closely about how the City can engage and work in new ways with newcomers and migrants in Edmonton.**  
**~ Lucenia Ortiz and Kate Gunn August 2022**

## Introduction

### An Opportunity to Reframe

This Policy Review, directed by Edmonton City Council in late 2021, is an opportunity to revisit, rethink and reframe the City’s role around newcomers, integration and inclusion. And to do it at a time when Edmonton continues to welcome refugees and immigrants from around the globe.

The existing C529 Immigration and Settlement Policy was approved in 2007. Since that time the world has changed in many ways, the landscape has shifted significantly and the strategic directions and priorities of the City of Edmonton have evolved. In summer 2021 Edmonton City Council directed City Administration to review and revise this existing policy by fall 2022 using the grounding concepts of the 2021 State of Immigration and Settlement Report.

### An Equity Approach

This Report focuses on the City Staff Engagement - what we heard about how their work intersects with newcomers, their challenges and aspirations. It captures input gathered from City staff through a series of online conversations held in summer 2022.

This process of engagement was inspired by the foundational principles of equity, belonging and community cultural wealth. An Equity Tool was developed to provide a set of questions to determine the equity mindedness evident in City initiatives being reviewed with City staff. The process was also grounded in the core concept of people-informed policy that centres people, in particular those most impacted by a policy. Collective insights gathered from these City staff conversations, together with those from a concurrent community engagement process, have informed the Policy Review Report scheduled to go to Edmonton City Council in November 2022.

### Participants and Initiatives Reviewed

A diverse cross section of city staff were identified as those whose work most likely seemed to intersect with newcomers and migrants. A purposive sampling approach was used as additional initiatives and staff were identified to include during the course of the engagement. The interview scope, while diverse, was not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive, but aimed to capture a representative cross section of current City initiatives involving and impacting newcomers. City participants represented staff from almost all City departments, most of whom were front line staff up to and including Director level.

### Department Breakdown of Interviewees and Initiatives

City Department	# of Staff Interviewed	# of Initiatives Reviewed
Community Services	38	28
Urban Planning and Economy	7	4
Employee Services	5	2

Communications and Engagement	3	3
City Operations	1	2
Financial & Corporate Services	1	1
Office of the City Manager	3	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>

## Working Towards Equity: Engaging City of Edmonton Staff

### People Informed Policy

Policy is about strategy, direction and about leadership on critical issues of importance to a community and its residents. Policy shapes how we work, how we live together, how we build our cities. It reflects and guides the decisions our political and municipal leaders make and it impacts daily life.

When it comes to Immigration, Settlement and Inclusion, policy is all around us. It is clear that policies, particularly those at the city level, can not only create and maintain entrenched social structures, siloes and norms, but can also have a direct and immediate impact on people, equity and community well-being.

The Review of Policy C529 (2007) and its dual engagement processes with migrant community members and City staff aspires to model a people informed policy approach. Specifically, this Report captures what we heard from City staff whose work intersects with newcomers, reviewed through an equity lens. This approach is intended to spark greater understanding of the impact of policy and how big structural systems are trying to catch up to emerging demographics and changing social realities.

### Guiding Concepts

The following transformational ways of thinking that underpinned that 2021 Belonging Report report ([State of Immigration and Settlement in Edmonton Annual Report \(2021\)](#)) guided City staff engagement in the C529 Policy Review:

- Equity, social inclusion and anti racism
- Community Cultural Wealth
- The Multidimensional Immigrant

### Goals

The engagement of City staff as part of the Policy Review of C529 aimed to:

1. Tap into the insights and experience of City staff as to how their work contributes to a city that works well for everyone, and in which everyone has a strong sense of belonging
2. Explore how a diverse cross section of City initiatives involving newcomers aligns with 2021 State of Settlement and Immigration Report core concepts

3. Help determine to what extent the existing 2007 C529 policy is relevant to the role of the City related to newcomers and immigrants today
4. To identify policy implications to inform the revision of policy C529

## Method

Conversational, online, small group or one-on-one interviews

## An Equity Tool : Guiding Questions

A set of Guiding Questions was developed as a practical conversation-based Equity Tool for Analysis, drawing inspiration from a range of intercultural, equity-based assessment tools and anti-oppression tools. The City of Edmonton's GBA+ as an example of an equity tool was also referenced to ensure that the analysis aligns with City's expectations. This approach helped deconstruct policy, grounding it in a conversation of the everyday and how newcomers may experience and be impacted by it. ( See Appendix 1)

The Equity Tool provided a set of guiding questions asked of City Staff and included the following key components of equity-centred, anti-oppression analysis:

1. Identification of population impacted - *Who benefits and who is excluded?*
2. Description of differential impacts on population - *How does this program or initiative affect different population groups? What are safeguards to prevent negative impacts on population groups?*
3. Participation of population impacted by the policy - *Does the policy invite people to provide input and feedback on the policy?*
4. Structural analysis - *What organizational and institutional practices may be creating barriers in this program or initiative for various population groups?*
5. Equity framing in data collection - *Is data disaggregated to show disparities in progress and outcomes?*

## Theming

Once staff interviews and conversations were complete and documented, a process of review began to identify key themes or common ideas expressed by participants. This involved a three step process:

1. We used four key Focus Areas aligned to the four key elements of equity analysis that linked to the Guiding Questions: **Intentionality, Addressing Barriers, Sharing Power and Equity Framing/Data**.
2. We reviewed the conversation notes, looking at responses in each of these four Focus Areas, and then clustered similar ideas as **emerging themes** or key ideas under each area.
3. We have added a short summary under each focus area about what we heard related to Systems Barriers, Gaps and Opportunities for Change in relation to that Focus Area.

## Validation

We shared these key themes, along with draft Guiding Principles, with all participants in August inviting their comments, specific or overall and any additional insights they might have to offer. We received a few responses, indicating positive support of the themes, along with further ideas that have been incorporated into our findings.

### **What We Heard**

This Report tries to capture in all its richness the ideas and input shared by City staff. Input was sorted into the four focus areas of equity and described in the following format:

- Introduction - an overview of input in this focus area
- Questions Asked - questions asked of staff in this focus area from the Equity Tool
- Emerging Themes - key ideas highlighted, illustrated by participant quotes
- Systems Barriers and Opportunities- specific institutional barriers identified and how they might be addressed
- Promising Practices- related examples of City initiatives that hold promise in terms of systems change around engaging and impacting newcomers
- Provocative Questions- thought provoking questions about how what was heard can provide insight to C529 policy revisions

### **Final Policy Report and Recommendations for Change**

City staff also provided input on how their work aligns with the foundational concepts of the 2021 Belonging Report and on the evolving role of the City. That input will be included in the Final Policy Report that goes to Edmonton City Council in November 2022.

## What We Heard Highlights: At a Glance

### Intentionality

Intentionality lies at the core of equity mindedness. Participants reflected an interest in beginning to explore more targeted, intentional work with equity-seeking groups like newcomers. Awareness of the City mandated GBA+ tool to help identify barriered populations was widespread. Some continue to focus on the idea of serving “all citizens” and many still use deficit language that frames newcomers as needy or vulnerable.

- Universal terminology continues to be used in 25% of initiatives reviewed across the City to identify the intended targets of programs. Language used to describe impacted groups like newcomers is still commonly deficit based.
- About 80% of those interviewed provided some explicit identification of the specific groups they are trying to reach.
- GBA+ was widely recognized among 65% of participants as a tool to help identify specific populations that encounter the most barriers to access

Systems Barriers and Gaps	Promising Practices Highlighted
Lack of tools and resources for building strong community engagement and relations  Lack of awareness of a source of current comprehensive local data on newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Election 2021- Office of the City Clerk</li> <li>● Business Friendly Edmonton</li> <li>● Sustainable Procurement</li> </ul>

### Addressing Barriers

City staff participants indicated they have tried to identify roadblocks, both institutional practices and systems barriers, facing newcomers. Some specific institutional barriers that the City could address were noted including: bureaucratic processes that are daunting and further complicated by language and cultural barriers, communications and awareness barriers and the economic inequities facing newcomer youth, among other issues. Addressing these different systemic barriers, both operational and attitudinal, in culturally sensitive ways is important but not always easy to achieve.

- Over 90 % of City staff interviewed indicated they have considered and tried to identify barriers facing newcomers they intend to address in their programs.
- City staff interviewed identified a number of specific institutional practices or systems barriers - process, operational and attitudinal - that impact newcomers.

Systems Barriers and Gaps	Promising Practices Highlighted
Lack of diversity on City staff teams  Language and communications barriers that reach newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Waste Cart Roll-Out</li> <li>● Women, Girls and Transgender Inclusive Swim Program</li> </ul>

### Sharing Power

In this time of transition, the City appears to be moving to a more relational approach in its work. The concept of welcoming and involving newcomers in city building seemed to resonate with City staff interviewed. Participants also shared examples, both big and



small, in which they are attempting to bring intercultural awareness to their work. Despite this, it appeared that beyond initial stages of program development, power is in fact less frequently shared with community through implementation and evaluation stages.

- Approximately 70% of those interviewed specifically acknowledged the value of a relational approach in working with newcomer communities.
- Only about 55% of those interviewed indicated they regularly invite meaningful participation, input and feedback through ongoing involvement during the implementation and evaluation stages.
- Of those interviewed, about 60% of City staff indicated they have begun to consider or try implementing culturally diverse approaches and ways of working.
- City staff shared a growing appreciation of the expertise and lived experience ethnocultural members and partner organisations bring to complex issues - although this rich community resource continues to be underutilised.

<b>Systems Barriers and Gaps</b>	<b>Promising Practices Highlighted</b>
Lack of common direction and shared vision about newcomers and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities Cultural Community Engagement</li> <li>• Edmonton Youth Economic Ecosystem Collaborative</li> <li>• COVID Rapid Response 2021</li> </ul>
Lack of support for sustained inclusion and intercultural learning opportunities	
Challenges around hospitality and creative new approaches to engage newcomers	

### Equity Framing/Data

In conversations held with City staff about the intersection of their work and newcomers, a picture emerged of a disconnected, incomplete picture of data collection at the City. While work is underway in some areas, there is a long way to go. Staff expressed strong interest in learning more about data but shared concerns as well.

- Fewer than 10% of those interviewed indicated active work or plans to collect disaggregated data. Many collect data of a more operational nature, with some exceptions.
- There is recognition among most City staff of the value and potential impact disaggregated data can bring to City work. And there is an appetite to learn more about data, including disaggregated data, and how they can use it to reach and impact equity seeking groups like newcomers.

<b>Systems Barriers and Gaps</b>	<b>Promising Practices Highlighted</b>
Concerns and lack of understanding about human rights, privacy and their expertise or capacity to collect this kind of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing Needs Assessment and Newcomer Housing Proposal</li> <li>• Equity Specialist, Bylaws</li> </ul>
A gap was identified around where City staff can find the latest City demographic data/ socio economic trends impacting newcomers in Edmonton	

## I. Intentionality: Equity Mindedness

### What We Heard

Intentionality lies at the core of equity mindedness. Participants reflected an interest in beginning to explore more targeted, intentional work with equity seeking groups like newcomers. Awareness of the City mandated GBA+ tool - in particular to help identify barriered populations - is widespread among those interviewed and many were able to identify the target groups they hope to reach, and the resulting benefits. Some concerns exist about its lack of sustained use past the initial planning stage, and about the possibility of it devolving into a simple checklist approach.

While there seems to be growing awareness that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work, and that newcomers experience systemic barriers, some continue to focus on the idea of serving "all citizens" and many still use deficit language in regards to newcomers that frames them as needy, vulnerable or hard to reach. Six themes emerged from these conversations using the Equity Assessment tool, ranging from use of a universal and deficit language, to a call for a more proactive City stance in reaching newcomers.

### The Questions

The Equity Assessment Tool used in City interviews included the following questions that explored intentionality with City staff:

- *Does the program/initiative identify the population impacted?*
- *Are target equity seeking groups you intend to reach, particularly newcomers, specifically mentioned?*
- *Have you identified any specific benefits or negative impacts for these groups?*

### Emerging Themes

The following six themes emerged during conversations with City staff about intentionality in identifying the population impacted.

#### 1. Serving everyone

**In over 25% of initiatives reviewed, universal terminology continues to be used to identify the intended targets of programs and services.** When it comes to identifying who programs and services target, universal, service based terminology is still prevalent, echoed in phrases like "everyone in Edmonton" and "the general public". This universal language may be grounded in the underlying municipal context and paradigm about "serving all citizens" and making "access" available to everyone.

- *We serve the general public, all Edmontonians.*
- *We want to make sure programs are for everyone in Edmonton.*
- *The action plan did not identify or prioritize any specific population. It called for increased access to services, but didn't identify who this would be for.*
- *The low income population is the target, those who are historically on the margins. Newcomers and immigrants, although not explicitly noted, fall into this group.*

#### 2. Words matter

**Language used to describe impacted groups like newcomers is commonly deficit based.**

When it comes to equity-mindedness, words matter. Newcomers and others impacted by systemic barriers are often still referred to using terms like “vulnerable” or “at risk” . This language frames newcomers as needy recipients of services, rather than as valuable contributing members of the community. Terms like “hard to reach” , beg the question about from whose perspective are they “hard to reach”, in a subtle way focusing on the limitations of the individual that makes them hard to reach.

- *We are exploring in person engagement for hard to reach groups such as newcomers and those struggling with/experiencing social issues ie homelessness, refugees , those with disabilities.*

Terms like “equity seeking” or “equity led” groups, on the other hand, reflect a strength based, social justice lens and encompass agency, focusing on the ability of newcomers and groups to advocate for themselves. These terms convey a sense of control by diverse individuals over their lives. In interviews, while deficit language of vulnerability is still commonly used, a shift is in the early stages as awareness grows around the power of terminology to support equity- especially as applied to newcomers often disproportionately impacted by systemic inequities. There is still work to do in this area. A shift is needed from the deficit focus to one on system challenges.

- *We hope that instead of using language that is focused on deficits and needs, we can include more language that acknowledges the gifts and resilience of those living rough. Vulnerability is a shared human condition and the people who need help also have a lot to give.*

The growing awareness about how language is shaped by our mental models and how it in turn shapes City work and outcomes is growing across City departments. Understanding of deficit language has been noted in areas like mental health, gender language and even the ideas of “community standards” and how newcomers may understand that term.

Just as words matter, so too does how communication with newcomers bridge gaps of isolation and awareness. Unilingual approaches to service are one of the key systems barriers newcomers encounter in accessing and connecting with mainstream institutions. City staff shared insights about the need for enhanced communication with newcomers, the importance of authentic, two way dialogue and use not only of translation and interpretation, but of new platforms and points of connection familiar to newcomers.

### **3. Being specific**

**About 80% of those interviewed provided some explicit identification of the specific groups they are trying to reach.** It appears that many City initiatives across the corporation are beginning to consider and explore more intentional, targeted work with equity seeking groups like newcomers. They are acknowledging that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work well for everyone, realizing that there are some groups like newcomers who experience distinct systemic barriers.

In some cases, strategies or initiatives that began initially a few years ago with focus on “all citizens” or “the marginalized”, are now being revisited to include a more explicit identification of newcomers and other targeted groups.

There is a clear sense that City staff are beginning to understand and see the need for more intentionality in identifying who their programs will impact. It is notable that those staff already exploring the identification of specific target groups are quick to acknowledge they are just embarking on this approach, and most expressed interest in learning to do this better.

- *We do identify different groups but not as much as we could. We could go more granular, it's not ingrained in our process as yet, but we are looking beyond generic Edmontonians to identify different personas.*
- *Anti Racism grants must address a BIPOC community identified need and demonstrate BIPOC community involvement, and they include an explicit focus on BIPOC youth.*
- *We broke down the population targeting BIPOC and Indigenous. That's an area that needs development in our City. I wish I had broken it down more. We adjust as we go.*

**4. Benefits identified and shared**

**Most City staff interviewed, from across departments, were able to identify the benefits that result from identifying newcomers and other target groups in their work.** Articulated goals or identified benefits are a key element of a more intentional approach to working with newcomers and other groups experiencing systemic barriers. The City’s mandating of GBA+ also plays a role in raising awareness of not only the need to intentionally identify certain groups, but of the benefits of doing so.

These benefits include both operational and aspirational impacts/outcomes and most interviewed expressed the belief that the benefits are experienced not only by newcomers, but by all Edmontonians. Some key benefits that come from explicitly identifying newcomers are highlighted below.

**Benefits of Explicit Identification**

Easier access to applications, services and participation by newcomers, removing barriers and opening up opportunities for growth and participation	A feeling of welcome, comfort, safety and belonging that supports increased diversity of visitors, participants and programs offered
A richer, fuller and more innovative suite of programs that are culturally responsive to meet the unique aspirations and needs of newcomers	Increased civic participation by newcomers that fosters enhanced well being to benefit the entire community, including the empowerment of newcomer youth

Some specific comments are listed below on the benefits of this intentional identification of targeting newcomers and other equity seeking groups. They reflect how everyone benefits from enhanced focus, access and inclusive services:

- *The COVID Rapid Response provided timely, multilingual, trusted dignified support with a cultural basis around isolation options, food and mental health.*

- *A richer, fuller story of Edmonton will emerge as newcomers are engaged in sharing their stories and journeys, their history in Edmonton.*
- *Enhanced diversity of visitors and program at the centre emerge, as newcomer and other groups use the space for their events and activities*
- *Newcomers and refugees benefit from greater collaboration, communication and collective voice platforms.*

## 5. GBA+ awareness grows

**GBA+ is widely recognized among City staff as a tool to help identify specific populations that encounter the most barriers to access, with 65% of those interviewed referencing it.** This level of awareness was reflected in their feedback indicating they are starting to use GBA+, an equity tool mandated in 2019 by Edmonton City Council, in the initial stages of their work, or have been expected to complete a GBA+ analysis as part of a Council report.

A few participants described the powerful impetus a high level corporate commitment such as the one to GBA+ can be to advance change. They related how this corporate strategic direction provided a kick start platform for their business unit or Branch work to further explore and articulate who they are reaching - and who they are not.

While awareness and use of GBA+ as a tool up front is taking root in the City, there appears to be a gap in the continued application of equity and GBA+ tools through the life cycle of a program or initiative. Several participants shared concerns that this useful tool may be seen increasingly as a checklist, a one-and-done kind of exercise, used in early program development, but not pursued through implementation and evaluation as intended. More on-the-ground experience using GBA+, along with the important support of GBA+ coordinators and further training, will embed GBA+ and other equity considerations into the full spectrum of City work.

- *We are just waking up to the GBA+ lens , trying to learn how to use it.*
- *We need to change our processes, including use of a GBA+ lens, to expand engagement beyond the usual groups, to broaden the intersection of people of various identities.*
- *GBA+ is used as a guiding policy but often it seems to be more about checking a box and this is missing the mark.*
- *There's a disconnect between policy and city directives for work and the day to day rollout. Why is the City so rigid about how this has to be?*

## 6. Reactive vs Proactive

**Some of those interviewed called for the City to be more proactive, as evidence of its intentionality, in serving and engaging newcomers.** They shared how in their work they are taking a less passive and more proactive role when it comes to reaching newcomers, seeking new opportunities to reach beyond the usual suspects and engage ethnocultural communities and newcomers in new ways.

- *We are often reactive and need to take opportunities to be proactive to reach newcomers, inform and engage them. The City has to be nimble and responsive to the needs of our community especially the newcomer population.*
- *We can't just expect them to come.*

### Systems Barriers and Gaps

Participants clearly noted some systems barriers and gaps at the City in addressing greater intentionality in reaching and engaging newcomers:

Systems Barrier or Gap Identified by Staff	Opportunity for Action
<p>Staff don't have exhaustive best practices/standards about how to build and sustain strong community and partner relationships beyond the initial GBA+ review stage. Relational work with newcomer communities takes time and resources.</p>	<p><b>Cross Silo Learning and Sharing</b> Sustained learning and opportunities for staff to share successes/ lessons learned across departments are something many staff want to see. A focus on building staff capacities to use GBA+ as one tool in the intercultural toolbox will foster inclusion and efforts to engage newcomers in new ways.</p>
<p>Frustration was expressed by a few about the disconnect between corporate policy directives for City work and the day to day rollout, seeing a lack of alignment when it comes to reaching and communicating in ways most accessible to newcomers.</p>	<p><b>A Responsive City</b> An intentional commitment to agility , and responsiveness, to emerging needs. The need to strike a delicate balance between overall coordination and front line ability to proactively address equity needs of newcomers across all City departments.</p> <p>Coordination and integration are not enough to fix the problem. Better business management practices, often seen as the panacea, will only go so far. A deeper culture shift in the language used, and how newcomers are viewed.</p>
<p>Intentionality requires current City and local Edmonton data on who is being reached, who is not, and specifics about the newcomers and newcomer communities targeted. Staff are not aware that such a body of local data exists at the City.</p>	<p><b>A Go To Hub</b> Connected to the existing Data Gap, the development and resourcing of a City team/hub of information about newcomers in Edmonton would also support greater intentionality on the part of City staff. A dynamic body of local, current information/trend would inform City efforts to reach and engage newcomers.</p>

### Promising Practices

#### Intentionality : Election 2021 - Office of the City Clerk

During the 2021 municipal election, the Office of the City Clerk developed a set of inspiring values to guide their work on the election: **accessible, inclusive, equitable, ethical and safe**. They brought this lens to every decision, and felt it provided them the flexibility to move beyond pure logistics and operations, to a more strategic, inclusive and people-focused approach.

*“We targeted 5 groups: Indigenous, newcomers, seniors, disabilities and youth. These were groups we were aware we haven’t been reaching. Many encounter barriers to voting, some*

*of which are systemic , and don't have a history of voting and Canadian elections to draw upon."*

The aim was to make newcomers and others feel more comfortable, informed and welcome- to encourage them to vote and make it as accessible as possible. They also worked to recruit a more diverse election workforce that more closely reflects community demographics. This pilot is now having a systemic ripple effect as they apply what they learned about engaging diverse people to their ongoing City work with civic engagement agencies and committees.

### **Intentionality: Business Friendly Edmonton**

Taking inspiration from Edmonton's Economic Action Plan, the Business Friendly Edmonton team works with community partners to use a GBA+ process to help identify barriers for newcomers and other equity seeking groups. The Economic Action Plan Action #3 specifically calls for the City to provide intentional support that builds capacity for entrepreneurs from those communities like newcomers, who have faced historical institutional barriers.

Some of these barriers include: costs, lack of understanding on how to open a new business, financial support and help navigating the business landscape and the City system. Equity groups in particular need start-up capital and connections. Business Friendly Edmonton offers information, connection and navigation of City processes through one on one support and small group workshops about technical issues like zoning and permits. The team sees business owners and entrepreneurs, newcomers in particular, as job creators and community builders and, in keeping with the Economic Action Plan, see their work as helping to diversify Edmonton's economy and provide tools and support for newcomer businesses to thrive.

This initiative is a powerful example of how the City can, with intention, shift attitudes about the gifts migrants bring to Edmonton, in this key area of the Inclusive Economy. At the same time, it profiles a team looking for ways to consider cultural values, provide services and materials in languages other than English and make City processes more agile and user friendly.

### **Intentionality: Sustainable Procurement**

Leveraging the purchasing power of the municipality to create social and environmental impacts is very much aligned with the concept of intentionality in the equity approach. It brings a conscious focus to making intentional positive impacts on the community, aligning City spending with its values and commitments, such as climate change, poverty reduction and building healthy communities.

While many aspects of City social procurement are restricted by rigid trade agreements, the City's Sustainable Procurement team looks to provide opportunities by potential vendors from under- represented groups. They have intentionally identified Indigenous, youth, women, people on low income, people with disabilities and those who live in substandard housing as those they hope will benefit from employment agreements. In terms of diverse suppliers, they hope to reach immigrants and newcomers who own a business, realizing that City processes can be daunting to

newcomer applicants.

They acknowledge that the City needs to do a better job of communicating with immigrant businesses, how to engage them, understand their capacity and find opportunities for their increased participation. They recently developed an Indigenous Procurement Framework, for example, under the banner of Social Procurement and have learned a great deal from that work, lessons that may be applied to other groups such as newcomers. One lesson learned is the importance of relationship building before the contracting process begins.

*“We know the City needs to do a better job of communicating with immigrant businesses: how we understand their capacity and how to better engage them; how to find opportunities and how they can participate.”*

### **C529 Provocative Questions**

How might a revised C529 drive greater intentionality at the City? How might it provide an overarching direction for an intentional, whole-of-city approach to advance innovative new ways of working with newcomers that bridge corporate siloes? How might it articulate a clear mandate to look at the composition of the community the City serves through an intersectional lens and reflect that in City decision making, programming and evaluation?

## **II. Addressing Barriers: Systemic Roadblocks**

### **Introduction**

Knowing, identifying and addressing barriers is central to an equity approach. Barriers may fall into one of two categories: barriers that describe individual/group limitations or challenges and those that highlight institutional practices that inhibit access and participation by newcomers. Looking at barriers is part of a structural analysis related to equity mindedness. It involves reflecting on what organizational and institutional structures (policies, practices or procedures) might be creating barriers in this program or initiative for newcomers.

City staff participants indicated they have tried to identify barriers facing newcomers in their programs. Both institutional practices or systems barriers and individual barriers were identified, depending on the program involved. Some specific institutional barriers that the City could address were noted including: bureaucratic processes that are daunting and further complicated by language and cultural barriers, communications and awareness barriers and the economic inequities facing newcomer youth, among other issues.

They identified some understanding of the multiple layers of roadblocks newcomers face as they cope with individual challenges as well as intersecting barriers posed by institutions like the City. In conversation, it was clear that addressing these different systemic barriers in creative, culturally sensitive ways is important to their work but not always easy to achieve. Finally they shared how a range of mindsets and attitudinal barriers inhibit City work to support newcomers including experiences of bias, fear of doing something wrong, comfort in working with the familiar and the ease of getting lost in the rules.



## The Question

The Equity Assessment Tool used in City interviews included the following question that explores barrier identification and elimination:

- *Does the program/initiative identify any specific barriers or disadvantages it intends to address?*

## Emerging Themes

The following three themes arose from staff conversations about barriers

### 1. Naming the Barriers

**Almost all City staff interviewed indicated they have considered and tried to identify barriers facing newcomers they intend to address in their programs.** They also shared insights about existing barriers newcomers may encounter in their programs. Both institutional practices or systems barriers and individual barriers were identified, depending on the program involved. In conversation, it was clear that addressing these different systemic barriers in creative, culturally sensitive ways is central to their work but not always easy to achieve.

### 2. Identifying challenges individual newcomers face

**Most City staff identified some barriers impacting individual newcomers in their area of work.** These areas of work ranged from affordable housing for newcomers to transit, from financial empowerment to City recruitment, waste management, sustainable procurement and multilingual communications.

**An overarching challenge noted by staff is that newcomers often face the central issue of multiple layers of challenge, as they cope with individual challenges as well as systemic barriers posed by institutions including the City and other orders of government.**

Individual barriers identified cluster into four key areas:

- Lack of literacy, awareness and accessible information about City and other services
- Lack of resources and opportunity
- Fear and distrust; stigma; grief
- Lack of connection/isolation

A number of City programs and services reviewed in these conversations address individual barriers that centre on the critical **Lack of Resources and Opportunity** for newcomers:

- Lack of access or limited access to resources for wellbeing
- Lack of meaningful work and income
- Chronic lack of affordable, accessible culturally suitable housing for newcomers
- Lack of funds to cover costs for space/facility rental rates, as fees and program charges, even with discounts can be too high
- Lack of opportunity for newcomer / BIPOC youth to be engaged in leading change - lack of empowerment.

Two specific examples of barriers that were highlighted in conversation with City staff:

**a. Lack of awareness:** The lack of awareness of City services, or how to access them, is a critical gap for the City to address. Newcomers may not be aware of the City's role, its services or how to navigate its systems due to a lack of information or insufficient or ineffective outreach methods and approaches.

- *311 takes calls and offers live/translation services but people have to call in and request it and may not be aware of it, or may be reluctant to call. How are we supplying folks with the info they need?*
- *Barriers are lack of knowledge and understanding of the system and authority in Canada. People don't understand if a crime is committed- there is no conversation.*
- *We are not good at sharing tremendous knowledge. I often learn more from newcomer community members, from their wisdom and expertise, than I provide, but we don't give them a platform.*

**b. Economic inequities for newcomer youth:** Barriers to economic security unique to newcomer and racialized youth in Edmonton also surfaced during conversations. Greater awareness of these needs of newcomer youth have emerged from some collaborative work with the community the City is currently involved in.

The obstacles youth face are distinctly different from those facing older individuals. The need for broader connections and networking skills emerged as a way to level the playing field. This included welcoming youth leadership in policy making at organizations like the City, making opportunities for youth mentorship, volunteer/job experience and peer support programs available.

- *The main objectives have been to support youth-engaged and youth-led solutions in addressing youth unemployment ...especially youth systematically excluded (refugee, immigrant, 2SLGBTQAI+, youth in care, youth involved in the justice system, and homeless youth).*

### **3. Institutional Barriers at the City**

**City staff interviewed identified a number of specific institutional practices or systems barriers- process, operational and attitudinal - that impact newcomers.**

They also provided insight on City processes that create barriers that could be intimidating to newcomers, and others, noting it is frequently difficult for people to navigate the City's bureaucracy. When those roadblocks occur, or are unidentified or unaddressed, some City staff ask, are these services truly "accessible"?

- *The procurement process itself is a barrier, the process scares people away. We need to engage differently and try to help how we can, reaching out to Community Leagues, BIAs and others.*
- *There is a lot in the City that contributes as a barrier in different situations for newcomers and people on low income.*
- *We need to study the impact of the system and see who it is really working for ... Systems often don't help people in distress by keeping those with power and privilege in place. Often people don't know the rules, don't know they are breaking the rules, as they don't understand them. We can be more thoughtful about how our system interacts with different demographics, and be more effective.*

**A.Operational Institutional Issues:** Some institutional barriers centre on City operational issues that pose as a challenge newcomers as they attempt to access services or support:

- Operational barriers such as limited and traditional platforms to provide information, costs applied to services, navigational challenges in what are sometimes complex bureaucratic processes
- Barriers to access to social services and programs that are culturally relevant and accessible to newcomers or not delivered in spaces welcoming to them
- Chronic lack of suitable community space for newcomer groups to gather, celebrate, showcase and host events - an important element of building community in a new home
- Verification and eligibility requirements, such as need for a permanent address or the need to reapply after a certain time. These steps may also include backlogs of the post pandemic period, adding further challenges for newcomers already unfamiliar with “the system”
- Post migration challenges linked to professional integration are well known issues. Many newcomers are skilled workers, but resort to unskilled “survival” jobs due to lack of credential recognition, and the requirement of Canadian experience

### **Space challenges persist**

A lack of suitable space for newcomer groups to gather, celebrate, showcase and host events is a chronic issue in Edmonton, despite the creation of a number of successful and significant cultural hubs in various parts of Edmonton in the past 15 years.

Staff shared that cultural access to space matters - space that is safe, welcoming and culturally familiar. A cultural facility is seen as an opportunity to achieve successful settlement, intercultural engagement, social cohesion and ultimately benefit not just newcomers, but all Edmontonians. Accessing space for rent by emerging newcomer groups in Edmonton is also often made more difficult due to inflexible booking systems and high costs and even the resulting competition fostered among ethnocultural groups looking for space.

- *Space is an issue. It is costly; they need large spaces for intergenerational gatherings. Space sounds small but it is huge.*
- *Cultural space is a different space, not the same as mainstream facilities. Newcomers who won't go to mainstream spaces, will go to the Edmonton Intercultural Centre.*
- *Space is challenging for newcomer groups. Insurance costs are a barrier and groups don't have funds for that. Space is limited.*

**B. Mindset and attitude issues:** Some institutional barriers identified focused on entrenched mindsets and attitudes:

- City workplace silos and attitudes that limit coordination and integration of services
- Lack of a diverse workforce that reflects the population and helps the City understand different cultures
- Attitudes and mindsets, including fear of risk, that limit staff ability to explore creative ways to reach and work with newcomers and implement GBA+ actions
- Systems that don't begin with people, but commit to solutions before understanding the problem
- Prevailing assumptions about newcomer response to authority, uniforms and

trauma triggers

- Lack of understanding of people's higher order needs such as purpose, respect and connection and the important role they play in well-being

City staff shared their insights about how a range of mindsets and attitudes inhibit City work to support newcomers. The quotes below reveal just how complex this intersectional, mindset-shifting work is and how it is made more challenging by budget constraints, the tension that comes with a time of transition, and the reality that there is no silver bullet. It is important, however, to recognize amidst the concerns expressed, the notes of hope staff echoed as they look for new ways of working.

- *Biases that have existed or still exist. Attitudinal barriers have been significant, the team is working on shifting mindsets.*
- *While some City staff understand the human perspective, others get lost in the data or rules. Can we change the City role, can we look for creative solutions?*
- *Often City staff is comfortable working with certain partners and players, and so we see many of the same people at the table. This lack of diverse perspective has ripple effects on the recommendations implementation and action. We can do better.*
- *GBA+ reports reveal inequities and point to the need to do something. The data tells us, but some ask: "Are we allowed to do this?" We hear they think this tool is amazing but at the same time it could be a lot of extra work and they don't have the budget.*

### **A foot in the workplace door**

One area of opportunity where barriers persist is that of employment. Post migration challenges linked to professional integration are issues of paramount importance to newcomers. Many are skilled workers, but resort to unskilled "survival" jobs due to lack of credential recognition, and the requirement of Canadian experience.

As the City's Talent Diversification Team leads the work to diversify the City workplace and recruit diverse new employees, City departments also have substantial opportunity to address the systemic barriers newcomers and newcomer youth in particular face when it comes to economic equity. City staff shared ways in which the City is attempting, within its own workplace, to model intentional opportunities it can make available to newcomers, including youth. These opportunities, scattered across the corporation, are a beginning, offering newcomers and youth a chance for some basic Edmonton based work experience, a chance to build networks and equip newcomers with job search and workplace skills.

While there is much to do in this area of recruitment, City staff shared stories of new energy in making opportunities around work experience, volunteering and internships available to newcomer families and youth.

- *We had a Newcomer Internship Program last year that was successful. We are looking again at the need and process this year, building on our learnings. It may not have targeted those groups experiencing racism. We want to do it right and open doors for all.*
- *There are great opportunities for student capstone projects and to put young people on the path to employment with us- to be our next generation of City employees!*

- *Our Intergenerational Volunteering is an opportunity for newcomer families to volunteer, as well as our Junior Volunteer program.*

One area at the City that leads the way in breaking down barriers are the civic advisory councils that are making headway in terms of intentionally addressing barriers as they recruit and engage diverse newcomer and racialized youth for committee membership.

**Systems Barriers and Gaps**

Overall City staff provided comments on several key systems barriers that include engaging newcomers in creative, more effective ways, looking at diversity in representation, and looking at new, mutually responsive City/Community models of partnership.

Systems Barrier or Gap Identified by Staff	Opportunity for Action
<p>A lack of diversity on City staff teams is a barrier to new solutions and approaches. Participants shared the idea that systems are at ease with who and what they are most familiar with. City staff recognize the comfort of working with certain known partners and players, with the same faces at the table.</p> <p>They stressed how this lack of diverse perspective has negative ripple effects on the work and outcomes. A number of staff described the new range of strengths, energy and creativity that having a diverse workplace or partner committee brings to the table and to the work of the City with newcomers.</p>	<p><b>Recruiting that Reflects the Community</b> Continued efforts to recruit diverse, talented City employees, will bring diverse perspectives to teams. This will also enhance innovation and creative thinking and embed diverse cultural approaches in the way the City works.</p> <p>In tandem with the commitment to increased diversity, is the community expectation of transparency. Openness about progress in recruiting and sustaining a more diverse workforce at all levels of seniority is an important piece of the puzzle.</p>
<p>Language barriers are seen as critical ones to address. While using symbols or icons, and plain language, and new forms of technology, can also help make information more accessible, the barrier is challenging to overcome for newcomers.</p> <p>Newcomers may not read mainstream traditional media but might be better reached via community and E/C publications, blogs, social media. They are currently engaging in conversations about this with local alternate media</p>	<p><b>Enhancing Communication</b> Encourage the support for an emerging Multilingual Framework in 2023-26 budget. A key part of a more complex intentional effort to ensure City staff have direction, support and resources to ensure they can share information and communicate with newcomer communities more effectively.</p>
<p>Several City staff spoke about the barriers and challenges of formal (often mainstream Western) and informal community systems, each having its own challenges and strengths. And the need to find a balance. They spoke about the systemic focus on clinical or</p>	<p><b>An Evolving Understanding of the Role of Community</b> Share success stories from across the corporation of community involvement and people grounded support in programming, policy development and decision making.</p>

<p>systemic solutions, and the lack of understanding of the power of community - not just in programs and people-grounded support- but in policy development and decision making.</p>	<p>Spark new understanding of the expert and informed roles that community plays.</p>
---	---

**Promising Practices**

**Data/equity Framing : Waste Cart Roll Out**

The Waste Cart Roll Out was the largest and most significant change in this area at the City since recycling was introduced in the 1980s. In the lead up to the roll out, City staff did an initial pilot of door knocking on 8000 homes. This doorstep experience was powerful in terms of helping the City to understand the challenges, barriers and opportunities to engage newcomers- and other Edmontonians- in this work.

It was noted with interest, for example, that waste handling by citizens is a social behaviour as much as an environmental one. There are many social and cultural factors that are a part of the household setting and these need to be considered- such as how women may do the food preparation and cooking in some households, some may be isolated and others may not speak English. Like others, newcomers want to contribute to their community, to do the right thing, but need to understand the process first. And language can be a barrier.

Videos were facilitated by ethnocultural communities, connected through Community Services multicultural team, in their own language and visuals using simple icons used in written or digital materials. How the City responds to grassroots learnings and is able to be proactive in reaching out to newcomers is a critical indication of its ability to bring an equity lens to engaging newcomers. The Waste Cart Roll Out, in its effort to speak directly with newcomers, is an example that highlights the benefits of community outreach and insight to inform a more equitable service.

**Addressing Barriers: Women, Girls and Transgender Inclusive Swim Program**

Initially launched by Edmonton’s Recreation Facilities as the “Women Only” Swim program at Eastglen Pool, the name was changed in summer 2022 to more accurately and inclusively reflect its intended audience. The initial impetus for the program came from a group of immigrant women from the Muslim community who spurred the City to recognize an unmet community need. It also offered a unique opportunity to meet that need at Eastglen, a pool facing the threat of closure located in a neighbourhood with changing demographics.

This program saw facility design accommodation to offer this group of women, girls and transgender persons a sense of privacy and dignity, in alignment with cultural and faith values. This includes blind coverings on windows and female only staff. Uptake to date will see an expansion of this targeted program to a southside location at Confederation Recreation Centre with similar offerings in summer 2022. This experience illustrates how the City can begin to move beyond its mainstream, service for all approach, to offer culturally dignified programs that model how barriers can be broken down to better meet the needs of diverse Edmontonians, especially newcomers. Furthermore, it

illustrates a capacity to think from a different perspective and to test out adaptations to public spaces and infrastructure that start to incorporate cultural responsiveness.

### **C529 Provocative Questions**

How might a revised Policy C529 address systemic barriers facing newcomers? How might it balance the need for immediate outcomes for newcomers and the importance of long term shifting of systems in order to break down entrenched barriers?

## **III. Sharing Power: Working Differently**

### **Introduction**

Policy review through an equity and anti racism/oppression lens involves asking questions about how those most impacted by systems barriers and policies are involved in City processes - and attempting to address power imbalances.

Sharing power can take many forms and involves disruption of entrenched organizational approaches and ways of working that have been in place for many decades. It's about the place of people and of culture within systems and can spark new approaches that attempt to begin to shift the balance of power and address structural inequalities facing newcomers when they interact with institutions like the City.

In this time of transition, as the City moves to a more relational approach in its work, this concept of welcoming and involving newcomers in city building seemed to resonate with City staff interviewed. While not representing a power shift in itself, it reflects greater awareness among participants of the newcomer experience of inclusion and belonging. Participants shared examples, both big and small, in which they are attempting to bring intercultural awareness to their work. Despite this, it appeared that beyond initial stages of program development, power is in fact less frequently shared with community thorough implementation and evaluation stages.

### **The Questions**

The Equity Analysis Tool question guide included two key questions for City staff that address involving those most impacted and sharing power:

- *How have you incorporated diverse cultural values and ways of doing in the implementation of this project/initiative?*
- *Can you share how diverse people impacted by the program have been engaged or involved in the development, implementation and/or evaluation? How can people give input about how it affects them?*

### **Emerging Themes**

The following four themes emerged from staff conversations about their work that intersects with newcomers and sharing power:

#### **1. Building in ongoing participation and co-development**

Early Input

**Only approximately 55% of those interviewed indicated they regularly invite meaningful participation, input and feedback through ongoing involvement during**

**the implementation and evaluation stages.** It appears that power is less frequently or regularly invited or shared beyond the initial stages of City initiatives and program development.

Most City staff indicated that feedback from users and their active involvement is seen as important in order to identify needs, interests and barriers to participation in the early stages. Most make that intentional effort up front, but less frequently was it reported during the ongoing life cycle of a program or service. Some intentional efforts to reach out and involve newcomers in City facilities and initiatives are happening.

- *This is something we need employees to embrace. To ask : Who do I need to talk to? They can't solve it on their own and even if they could, the solutions generated when others have input are stronger. Employees need to broaden their knowledge and share it. There are different ways of knowing, academic and interpersonal human knowledge.*
- *Yes, we are reaching out to those cultural groups that want to engage with us, to help us adjust our facility experiences in a way that welcomes and includes them.*
- *A diverse demographic of people and organizations will be invited over the course of the year to identify issues , solutions and approaches to advance this work.*
- *How do we engage newcomer communities in helping to share their incredible contributions at our sites and facilities ? It's not an either/or. It's both/and - all stories are significant.*

#### Challenges to Full Participation

Those staff who have capacity and resources tend to use surveys and anecdotal evidence to inform their work as they go . Surveys noted by participants about program experiences generally don't address the cultural component, but explore more operational or client satisfaction issues.

Some corporate tools, like the growing Insight Survey tool, may reach a certain demographic but may not be targeted to or accessible for newcomers. There is growing awareness and interest in being more intentional in gathering diverse participant input with a number of recent initiatives focusing on different engagement methods and approaches.

Recent Council direction in relation to some projects has seen Administration encouraged to ensure people who may have not been part of the planning process, who may have limited awareness about this work or who have historically been excluded, are a focus of stakeholder input gathering. Effort in this direction will build consistent, meaningful engagement of newcomers throughout the program life cycle.

Some staff also reflected on the realization that the City needs to hear not only from participants in City services and programs but also - importantly for newcomers- from those who are **not** using these services or who may not even know about them. The question about who is being excluded is important and one that needs work.

- *You don't know who you are not reaching.*
- *We would love to have a diverse audience but the challenge is how to reach them. The City needs to invest in engaging them better.*
- *The need is clear for targeted engagement to reach those we often have not.*



- *We do surveys through Insight when we are doing changes but I don't know if we are reaching a diverse audience.*

## 2. Welcoming and Lived Expertise: It's all Relational

### A Relational Approach

**Approximately 70% of those interviewed specifically acknowledged the value of a relational approach in working with newcomer communities.** There seems to be a growing realisation that City building, no matter what the business area, needs to be grounded in relationship building, and that this is integral to working with newcomer (and other) equity seeking communities.

- *We emphasize relationship building to make engagement accessible and inclusive.*
- *We provide support in non-traditional ways that are not the conventional case management- it's a range of support that responds to the individual's unique needs, a relational approach is an essential part of the support we provide.*
- *Growing relationships with various cultural groups to explore inclusion strategies for the various experiences we make available - more proactively- will result in more welcoming facilities and programs and collaborative programs.*
- *Shift from law enforcement to community support is one major shift, from enforcement to prevention in the first place. Understanding that trust and relationships are important.*

### Welcoming and Belonging

**An emerging focus on making people welcome was frequently heard in the interviews from City staff across departments.** One staff member noted that, regarding immigrants and refugees, in this decade of global migration, “*We will only be successful as a city, if we create spaces and make them welcome.*”

In this time of transition, as the City moves to a more relational approach in its work, this concept of welcoming seems to resonate with City staff. While not representing a power shift in itself, it reflects greater awareness among staff of the newcomer experience of inclusion and belonging.

- *We need to make it easy to put down one's roots, feel welcome and belong in this city.*
- *We are responsible for offering experiences at our facilities, and emerging priorities around being welcoming to all, not just those we have always attracted. We can't just expect them to come, we want to be welcoming.*
- *What do we need to do to make you feel welcome at our facilities and to learn?*

### Being Hospitable

**A number of participants noted that part of a relational approach is the importance of face to face interactions, sharing of physical space and seeing food as a universal connection.** Some mentioned the key role played by the invitation to meet, to listen and to share meals as part of relationship building with newcomers. While new ways of connecting on-line were explored during the pandemic and were even found to reach new audiences, staff reinforced the primacy of in person community gatherings and conversations.

- *Our welcome approach is all about making people feel welcome and being*

*hospitable. Our work is based on relationships - sharing food and cultural experiences enhance good relationships.*

- *The whole idea of face to face conversations, sharing a physical space and the importance of invitation to participation is important. Placing a high value on invitation to sharing meals is important as food is a global phenomenon - related to engaging on a personal level.*

Valuing Community and Lived Experience

**City staff shared a growing appreciation of the expertise and lived experience that ethnocultural members and partner organisations bring to complex issues - although this rich community resource continues to be underutilised.** This begins to shift the power dynamic away from entrenched attitudes such as the-City-as-expert mental model. At the same time, there is the recognition that the expertise of lived experience is currently a gap.

There seems to be a lack of awareness or understanding of community expertise in engagement, underuse of cultural animators or local community leaders in the ethnocultural communities, who could connect City staff with newcomers. A few examples of outreach to ethnocultural community leaders and learning from elders did emerge.

- *People closer to the lived experience... we need to get that input.*
- *Lived experience input is a gap, we don't have surveys of those with lived experience.*
- *We bring in elders to support connection via their relationships with young people.*
- *Community leaders have been invited from the Somali community to speak about their culture with staff; we learned a lot from that process.*

### 3. Doing things differently

Culturally diverse approaches

**Of those interviewed, about 60% of City staff indicated they have begun to consider or try implementing culturally diverse approaches and ways of working.** City staff are beginning to explore how to incorporate culturally diverse ways and approaches in their work with people they serve.

There is an emerging understanding of the limited scope of traditional existing engagement platforms that often target certain mainstream demographics and do not reach the people City staff intend to impact. These include: using alternate meeting structures, acknowledgement of cultural celebrations, recognition of the importance of food sharing to building relationships, staff name tags indicating languages spoken and alternative language translation.

- *As funding partner liaisons we try to be culturally responsive and respectful of cultures, to know protocols and to be as inclusive as possible. This heightened awareness may look like doing a land acknowledgment to open a meeting, an elder blessing to begin a meeting, or to be aware of not scheduling meetings on cultural holidays.*
- *This was the first time to do these virtual sessions, produce multi language materials and to intentionally seek out a more diverse election workforce.*

There is an appetite among participants to explore non-traditional, more culturally diverse ways of engagement to reach newcomer audiences, such as pop up markets, faith community gatherings, neighbourhood based conversations and arts based activities, use of real world photos with cultural components in graphic materials.

New initiatives are embarking on creative, alternative ways of working that can be seen as sharing power with ethnocultural and other communities. This might involve looking at cultural frameworks of newcomers in relation, for example, to financial empowerment or to experiences of grief and loss. Others are testing less traditional partnerships with ethnocultural communities in favour of more flexible, community driven approaches where communities guide, even lead, program development and delivery.

- *It's important for City staff to understand the cultural backdrop and differences when it comes to money, saving, budgeting and debt for newcomers. We could do more in this regard, to understand the mainstream system and underlying concepts when it comes to money and employment, and not assume newcomers understand that system, but have different approaches.*
- *We explore cultural frameworks of grief and loss, experienced by many newcomers and others on the margins,- as the loss of language, culture.*
- *Traditionally we maintain custody of objects and artifacts in displays, but in this case, we are exploring , with newcomer communities, less formal , traditional partnerships in favour of more customized , flexible, community centred approaches.*

The strength of diverse workplaces

**A number of participants shared their awareness that diverse staff teams, including those of newcomer and immigrant backgrounds, spark more culturally diverse ways of working and serve the needs of a diverse city more effectively.** A diverse staff team brings different perspectives, relationships and cultural knowledge to problem solving and programming in the City workplace. Diversity in the workplace is seen as an asset. And the value of building staff intercultural capacity was noted by many, something that shows up in asking challenging questions, confronting personal biases, engaging in meaningful job interviews and identification of linguistic assets newcomers bring as cultural wealth.

- *We look at hiring staff that best represent the community we serve, so they can speak the language, understand cultural norms and practices.*
- *When we hire we designate as an asset speaking languages other than English and having lived and experienced living in other cultural settings.*
- *Having staff with diverse perspectives ensures our staff meetings are really impactful and makes sure we are making a difference.*
- *We have people whose name tags say, " My name is...and I speak ..." and we have welcome signs up in different languages. We can try on the spot to find someone who speaks a language to help out navigate a newcomer to our facilities.*

#### **4. A Time of Transition**

Conversations with City staff reflected that this is a time of transition at the City of Edmonton, with new approaches and new concepts of leadership beginning to evolve. And these include a new emerging attitude to community partnership, involvement and even co-creation.

Shifts to new models and approaches

**A few teams across the City are modelling shifts in culture and thinking that align with City Plan and the guiding values of social inclusion and cultural community wealth.** These include indications of a starting shift from:

- a process focus to relationship based;
- reactive to proactive community outreach;
- enforcement to a prevention approach;
- a western services lens to a culturally sensitive focus on dignity; and
- traditional fund development approaches to more community informed investment.

There is a sense of a City in the early transition to a new more community driven, culturally focused approach, particularly involving engagement of newcomers and other equity seeking groups. The value of a proactive City, agile and responsive, was shared by a number of participants. Several City teams related how they have been inspired by high level City direction and City Plan, to develop their own guiding set of values for decision-making and action-taking to shift how they work. These guiding values speak to incorporating culturally diverse ways and involve using an inclusion lens which will strengthen the engagement and impact of newcomers.

- *We brought this [inclusion] lens to every decision, and felt we had the flexibility to move beyond pure logistics and operations, to a more people focused, inclusive and strategic approach. To try some innovative stuff.*

Appreciation of the power of pilots and prototypes to shift systems, perceptions and entrenched ways of working also appears to be growing as City staff see how they can push systems boundaries to meet the aspirations and needs of newcomers. As one staff person said, *“We need to do things differently, share diverse perspectives, build a level of trust and create something.”*

- *The way we frame problems is often to boil them down to materials needs. But they are about more than basic needs, but about the lack of connections and dignity. We need to cut through habitual ways of looking at problems and at people and address what’s at the root of the problem.*

**New Concepts of Leadership**

A number of participants from across the City shared insights on new models of leadership and new understandings of the role of the City and of the community that align with working with newcomers and immigrants and other equity-seeking groups.

- *We are used to thinking in a common way. We need to do things differently: I try not to be a leader, but a facilitator, an advocate and a catalyst. I try to recognize my limitations and bring on others with those strengths. I try to take a back seat and be helpful to leverage relationships, but they lead.*
- *Letting them take the lead is huge. What is culturally appropriate for you? They know what they need.*

**Systems Barriers and Gaps**

City staff insights highlighted some City barriers and challenges to practising culturally diverse ways/norms that could engage newcomers. These systems barriers or gaps, and some opportunities for action are outlined below:

<b>Systems Barrier or Gap Identified by Staff</b>	<b>Opportunity for Action</b>
<p>City staff shared many examples of how they are adapting their approaches to welcoming and engaging newcomers in new ways. The work, however, appears to be happening in pockets across the corporation, in isolation and without a robust sense of coordination or common purpose. While this approach supports diverse efforts tailored to each business unit, it is scattered and may feel unsupported.</p>	<p><b>A Whole of City Commitment to Welcoming Newcomers</b>                      City Plan and other recent significant strategies provide strong strategic guidance as to belonging and inclusion. A more intentional commitment to inclusive community building practices will support newcomer involvement and co-creation, not just in the initial planning stages, but through implementation and evaluation, across all City departments.</p> <p>Embedding key policy directions and guiding principles in a revised City Policy C529 on Immigration and Settlement can provide a robust, whole-of-City approach to welcoming, engaging and including newcomers. This will also support a new understanding of leadership.</p>
<p>Staff talked about systems barriers that impact newcomers, notably restrictions on hosting/hospitality expenses and limited mainstream communications practices.</p> <p>Given that sharing of food is central to relationship building, hosting expense restrictions are seen as posing a barrier to the all important building of connections with newcomers and ethnocultural communities.</p> <p>A lack of diverse, non mainstream platforms and creative language and translation options to support dialogue with newcomers, and the resulting lack of awareness among migrants about the role of the City and its services, were frequently cited by participants as challenges to building trust and reaching newcomers in Edmonton.</p>	<p><b>Connecting and Building Community</b>                      Staff noted how hosting and hospitality can build needed trust with newcomer communities. Support for enhanced budgetary flexibility for teams will support this essential element of newcomer engagement.</p> <p>An intentional effort to enhance “access” and two way communication with newcomers will help inform migrants in ways that reach them best. Support is needed to advance initiatives like a newcomer web portal, the proposed Multilingual Framework and other creative approaches to engage newcomers where they are at. This includes the need to work with traditional and emerging local ethnocultural media connect the City to newcomers through multilingual, community- driven platforms they know.</p>
<p>Lack of access/ support to engage in sustained learning about intercultural practices to support change. Staff teams who had the chance to take part in extended intercultural coaching indicated the positive value this has had for their work with newcomers.</p>	<p><b>Learning Deeply</b>                      An intentional investment in working differently, in changing the language, concepts and ways of working across and with other cultures, will spark and sustain the culture shift needed.</p>

## **Promising Practices**

### **Sharing Power: Cultural Community Engagement Initiative- City Archives/Facilities**

A new initiative being launched in fall 2022 by City Facilities and Archives involves engaging ethnocultural communities in creative new ways. Ethnocultural communities will work alongside City Archives and City Facilities like the Zoo and John Janzen Nature Centre. They will be looking at the curation of artifacts, exhibits and cultural heritage programs using a cultural community lens- creating mini museums, where cultural community members share their stories and deliver new programs with City support. The community-centred approach of this two-year pilot will be based on community cultural values, stories and beliefs *important to the community*. In terms of systems change, it will explore new models, agreements and ways of partnering that are more customized and flexible.

### **Sharing Power: The Edmonton Youth Economic Ecosystem Collaborative**

The collaborative involves the City and other community partners working intentionally with diverse youth Edmontonians, 15 to 30 years of age. It aims to support youth engaged and youth led solutions about youth unemployment. By fostering equitable and meaningful economic opportunities, including entrepreneurship, it will involve and impact those young people who are systematically excluded from economic opportunities, specifically including refugee and immigrant youth.

The groundwork for this collaborative saw a survey, co created and delivered with BIPOC youth, reach 140 young people with disaggregated data collected. Systemic barriers for diverse immigrant and refugee youth revealed include: a lack of networks and connections, age and skill sets, transportation and the lack of inclusion policies of employers to support diverse recruitment and workplaces.

It was noted that while many initiatives attempt to address youth challenges and the work intersects, it is not always connected, nor is it youth-led. This collaborative effort intends to change that. Insights from this community driven pilot can be used to inform City policies and opportunities for youth, around practicum and internship guidelines, hiring practices and scaling up untapped potential for meaningful volunteer/employment opportunities at City facilities.

### **Intentionality : COVID Rapid Response 2021**

This collective response to pandemic challenges specifically impacting newcomer communities centred dignity in support, providing an inclusive, multilingual and culturally appropriate model of emergency response in Edmonton. With funding from the Government of Alberta, the City provided strong support working alongside twelve diverse community partners and leaders. This massive year-long effort was about raising awareness about COVID 19 and protocols in place, delivering care packages to those testing positive and connecting newcomers and other Edmontonians with culturally appropriate community supports.

The creation of Community Outreach Tables in COVID was central to a Community Engagement plan to provide targeted support to communities experiencing COVID. It was about intentionally leveraging local knowledge and networks in a collaborative effort, to reduce COVID numbers and prevent community transmission. Perhaps equally

important, this rapid response recognized and leveraged the importance of community culture, the role played by faith community leaders as beacons of trust and used cultural media and social media channels to reach newcomers more effectively.

### **Policy C529 Provocative Questions**

How might a revised C529 address the critical step of sharing power? How might it provide direction for a city-wide commitment to working with newcomers, emphasizing the importance of lived experience expertise in City decisions? How might it advance a new model of leadership, based on mutual learnings, as the City learns from newcomer communities and their expertise, not the other way around?

## **IV. Equity Framing: The Data Gap**

### **Introduction**

Equity framing in data collection is important, as disaggregated data can reveal disparities in progress and outcomes in relation to equity seeking groups including newcomers. This field of data collection is evolving world wide, even our understanding and definition of what constitutes “data” is still emerging. The importance of race-based data to help dismantle systemic practices and systems, better understand intersectional needs and inform policy change is recognized but brings complexity and challenges for both collectors and users.

In recent years a number of equity indices and tools have emerged at the City, including GBA+ and the City Plan itself that specifies equity goals and objectives. Data is intended to help city decision makers identify priorities for investment and action. It is an evolving area of knowledge, with new understandings of different kinds of data emerging.

In conversations held with City staff about the intersection of their work and newcomers, a picture emerged of a disconnected, incomplete picture of data collection at the City. While work is underway in some areas across the City to pursue disaggregated data, there is a long way to go. Staff participants expressed strong interest in learning more about data and how it can strengthen and inform City initiatives, with a few identifying data team efforts in their areas. At the same time, many shared concerns they and their community partners have about it, the resources and capacity needed to collect it, and the complexities around privacy.

### **The Questions**

The Equity Assessment Tool used in City interviews included the following questions that explore equity framing and data:

- *Have you been reporting and/or collecting data on progress and outcomes of the project?*
- *Do you collect or have you access to data that is disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio economic status, abilities?*

## Emerging Themes

Fewer than 10% of those interviewed indicated either active work on disaggregated data or plans to advance this in their work at the present time. Four themes emerged from City staff conversations about their work and how it intersects with newcomers and data collection.

### 1. The data dilemma: it's complicated

**While most City staff interviewed do not collect disaggregated data, particularly around race and ethnicity, due to perceived and real challenges, they do collect extensive data of a more operational nature.**

Staff concerns about disaggregated data are plentiful. Key challenges mentioned were:

- This data is considered private information and should be voluntary
  - Will people be comfortable sharing this information?
  - Not enough resources to collect data at this level
  - Reaching out to these groups is the bigger challenge
  - How is data being used meaningfully once collected?
- 
- *We have not really thought through the issue of data.*
  - *We keep data on numbers only.*
  - *We want to be able to quantify numbers of newcomers helped through this work, but we are not there yet.*
  - *Because of FOIP concerns, specialized data is not collected. Data is messy.*
  - *We don't ask for gender or ethnicity. There are no current plans to collect data by race or ethnicity. We focus on postal code, family size and qualification method.*
  - *We collect data...but the challenge is it is voluntary and not the whole picture. There will be more efforts to understand this.*

Data that is collected at the City can be extensive, but is often focused largely on operational outputs, like numbers of visitors or programs, sometimes including gender or age breakdown. Most indicated that what is collected does not include race-based data about who has been reached or impacted, but focuses largely on basic statistical numerical data, repeat visitation or client satisfaction. There was some indication staff are beginning to see the value in collecting more than numbers, in gathering more qualitative insights into program or service impact.

Some teams of data analysts support City work in this field, which may include gender, but in which demographics may still be inconsistent. Communication of data based impact through dashboards that share progress was noted by a few participants.

- *We have a team of data analysts; we collect lots of data - how many tickets, warning, offences; it is not disaggregated - gender only; but demographic data is inconsistent.*
- *Yes, we disaggregated and left room for open ended responses and no comment, etc in all our demographic data. We reached out to and came to specific communities and community leaders, organisations etc. in order to reach the intended groups.*
- *We have data on groups using our space; there is a team who does this - age, gender, and other demographics that allow us to have a picture of who's using our services. We also need to include qualitative data - perceptions and experiences of people.*



- *Community development work includes stories beyond numbers and decision-makers have little time to read or even watch a video - so building empathy is hard; a community-focused dashboard is being explored but it too only offers numbers.*

And even though data collecting tools, such as corporate Insight Surveys, have a growing reach in terms of numbers, those engaged by this platform represent particular demographics. There appears to be interest in changing that and increasing awareness that newcomers are not reached by mainstream corporate approaches and platforms.

- *We are not doing a great job of surveying and hearing from people who are NOT using our services.*
- *What we don't do well is find out how our services make you feel. How are we doing? And how can we do better? We haven't dug into that really.*
- *Our section hasn't done an impact report or demographic survey that includes race/ethnicity data. We have not asked people to self identify.*
- *We do surveys on Insight but we understand identity information is really taboo. Maybe it's evolving.*

## **2. Looking at data differently**

**Some staff provided insight about the exploration of new ways of looking at data and understanding the different kinds of data collected.**

City staff noted that evaluation of impact overall currently tends to focus on reports to Council or senior management, annual reports, anecdotal evidence and outputs primarily in terms of numbers. But some City staff shared their experiences about testing new approaches to data, involving new understandings.

These include recently revised City funding programs and significant collective initiatives involving newcomers which are exploring developmental evaluation, common outcomes and looking at approaches to collecting data with more specificity and deeper qualitative impact. There was reference to some initial work underway around exploring how data can be disaggregated, using identity characteristics and measures, in order to reveal the diversity of who are using City programs. But these were the exceptions.

- *There is big data, the numbers, the identity factors. The kind of things you find in census information. There is also thick data, the stories of people. This is much deeper and richer and helps us to really understand what is going on. It can challenge our assumptions...and help us see another perspective.*
- *We don't have a way to track participation; but the new Economic Action Plan is exploring collecting data to include identity characteristics and measures. It will provide a framework for collecting data that can capture the diversity of who are using the programs.*
- *Data is limited, especially racialized data, but we can see the importance of collecting data and information from participants, to ensure diverse folks are getting served.*

Some innovative work at the City looks at data differently, considering data segmentation through different lenses, such as motivation, as opposed to identity. It is important to note that this innovative approach to data brings its own challenges around data ethics. The concern was raised about looking at narrative and story as data - and talking about who owns that data. This process of gathering narratives for insight

needs to be grounded in relations, not seen as a hard transaction that extracts story data. Consent is huge, as is the issue of how data is used once collected.

- *We have data on people involved, but we segment not on identity but on motivation, based on their context and realities. Yes, it's good to collect data around race and ethnicity. However, when designing programs, we need to segment people along other factors, such as motivation, aspirations and common stressors.*
- *An important question is: how is data being used meaningfully once collected?*

Overall, the collection of disaggregated data holds potential to bring about more equitable service, but its use is still a long way off.

### **3. Using data better for measuring impact**

**There is recognition among most City staff of the value and potential impact disaggregated data can bring to City work. And there is an appetite to learn more about data, including disaggregated data, and how they can use it to reach and impact equity seeking groups like newcomers.**

First, some staff noted good data means stronger asks of other orders of government and more effective advocacy. It can help detail clearly the impact of programs to investors and support continuous improvement of City programs for greater results. Staff reflected on the shortcomings of reports to City Council that do not provide the kind of insight disaggregated data offers. And, conversely, they noted how data can significantly strengthen Administration progress reports to City Council.

- *We are users of this data since we can use them in our advocacy efforts. Good data means stronger asks of other orders of government , more effective advocacy.*
- *We can use a GBA+ lens to reach diverse people and interests, but how we stand in front of Council and give details on progress without that data is not clear.*

Secondly, a few staff highlighted the need to understand that we do not assess impact solely through numbers and quantitative data. They see the opportunity for the City to lead here, exploring and advancing how we learn and track impact through narrative and through Indigenous - and other- cultural ways of knowing.

One City staff member captured this challenge in this way, “ *The questioning of who is included (and excluded!), how they are included, what knowledge we seek and how, what 'counts' as valid knowledge and data, what 'counts' as valid ways of displaying and sharing results, and what assumptions underlie the entire process - is so critical to what we currently know and don't know.*”

Thirdly, most City staff also expressed interest in learning about disaggregated data and how to collect it despite the issues of challenges that may be involved. They indicated the need to know more about what kind of capacity is required and the resources involved, as well as how they might build on other platforms that are already collecting population data.

- *It's something we want to know about as we are not able to collect this kind of data now. We have to figure it out as it's important for this project. How can we say we have moved the dial unless we can show the impact has resulted in increased attendance by newcomers?*
- *Our project has not been launched yet but we would welcome tools for collecting this data.*

**4. Show me the data**

**A number of City staff shared a lack of awareness about the existence of a current local data source within the City about diverse newcomers in Edmonton and their unique needs.**

There appears to be a lack of awareness about where to find and access current local demographic information about newcomers. Along with emerging immigration trends and issues, they know this data is vital to inform their work and ensure it reaches, impacts and involves newcomers. This information is dynamic and evolving and needs intentional support to ensure City staff have the tools and resources they need to target newcomers and engage them creatively in their programs, plans and initiatives.

- *Does newcomer information exist? If it doesn't exist - we reach out to Community Services to get some insight. But it is a gap.*
- *We haven't really thought through the issue of data. We can see how population increases on maps, but need recent data that is accessible to inform our engagement.*
- *We rely on our business areas to collect data. We rely on subject matter areas such as immigration data to tell us what we should be keeping an eye on.*

**Systems Barriers and Opportunities for Action**

The table below lists three key systemic barriers or gaps related to data and equity framing shared by staff, related to newcomers, along with suggested opportunities for action.

Systems Barrier or Gap Identified by Staff	Opportunity for Action
<p>Staff shared common concerns about collecting the kind of data that will inform programs impacting newcomers, including tensions about human rights and privacy, and the lack of resources or capacity to collect data at this level. While lack of understanding of disaggregated data exists, and many perceptions cloud the City stance on this, participants expressed interest in learning more about it.</p>	<p><b>Learn about Data</b>                      The City has identified in the Anti Racism Strategy, approved by City Council in 2022, how critical it is for the City to explore and improve its capacity regarding data, particularly related to equity seeking groups including newcomers.                      Senior leadership can leverage the appetite of City staff to learn about data, impact evaluation and disaggregated data by facilitating cross corporate opportunities for staff to connect, share challenges and learnings across City siloes.</p>
<p>A gap appears to exist for City staff around where to go for the latest City demographic data, statistics, issues and socio-economic trends impacting newcomers in Edmonton.</p>	<p><b>Resource a Go To Corporate Hub for Info on Newcomers</b>                      Identification and adequate resourcing of an internal City go-to source of current Edmonton data on newcomers. Whether scaling up an existing business team, or creating a new locus, this would ensure City staff have access to data and connections they need to inform their work with newcomers through an equity lens.</p>

<p>Ethnographic research is a deep skill that takes time and training to acquire, involving spending time with people in their own environments and studying their day to day lives and activities. The unique capacity for this promising new approach to data through narrative does not exist currently at the City, and budgetary challenges may limit sustained exploration into this valuable approach.</p>	<p><b>Lead the Exploration of Diverse Data</b>                  The City of Edmonton can play an intentional leadership role by sustaining and growing its early investment in diverse approaches to data and human centred design in its work engaging and co-creating with newcomers.</p>
---	---

**Promising Practices**

**Data/Equity: Affordable Housing Needs Assessment and Newcomer Housing Project**

In the fall of 2022, the City’s Affordable Housing and Homelessness section will bring an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment forward to Edmonton City Council. It will further reveal the systemic housing barriers faced by newcomers among 13 impacted priority groups, including newcomers, and inform opportunities for effective systems change. This data is intended to inform affordable housing conversations with other orders of government, to serve as a resource for other agencies and strategic partners and will be regularly updated using an online dashboard for public use.

The team noted that disaggregated data can reveal structural inequities and is key to addressing injustice. An equity and inclusion lens was centred in this work, that includes quantitative census and other data as well as qualitative data collected through one on one interviews with 47 community organizations about the groups they serve. Engagements were also held with individuals with lived and living experiences. Some gaps identified include some of importance to newcomers, such as the lack of affordable units for large families, wrap around supports and the need for a human centred approach. These gaps are also central to an innovative Newcomer Housing Project proposal led by partners Right at Home, the Multicultural Health Brokers Coop and the Newcomer Health Centre. It outlines a model of a co-located, accessible and affordable housing and health development, and a business case is underway.

**Data/Equity Framing: Equity Specialist, Bylaws**

Bylaws in Community Standards recently hired a full time Equity Specialist, whose role is more about community support than the traditional bylaw enforcement approach. This is part of a focused effort by this Branch to be more proactive and community focused, with this new position responsible for asking the critical questions about the work around community standards, and how they think about diverse audiences. *“It is less about rigid enforcement and more about social inclusion and preventing problems before they happen.”* This new position signals strong leadership commitment to equity work and culture change, and may be a model for other parts of the corporation.

**Policy C529 Provocative Question:**

How might a revised C529 Policy address the data gap? How might it identify and support the need for better, richer and current local data, in all its diverse forms, to ground City efforts to engage and support newcomers?

## Policy Implications : An Equity Approach to Policy Change What We Heard - City Staff

This Report offers a snapshot of the perspectives of the City staff whose work intersects with newcomers that will help inform the revision of the 2007 policy C529 on Immigration and Settlement.

### Overall Observations

- *An Appetite for Change:* City Staff participants engaged in conversations with enthusiasm, insight and openness, displaying a passion for their work and the intention to learn more about equity informed approaches in working with newcomers and migrants.
- *A Time of Transition:* While examples of emerging equity-minded approaches to work with migrants and newcomers were shared, it is clear that the corporation is in a powerful state of transition and has a long way to go in all four equity areas. A time of great opportunity, it is impacted by the pull of entrenched, systemic practices and challenging budget scenarios.
- *The Ripple Effect:* Participants who have begun to implement an equity-minded approach described the positive ripple effect that staff team diversity and varied perspectives brings to every aspect of their work. They reflected on how this has propelled them beyond traditional operational roles and catalysed more creative, impactful efforts to engage and impact newcomers and migrants.

### Core Themes - Collective Insights

Core themes that emerged from City staff conversations aligned with the four equity areas of analysis in the Equity Tool.

### Intentionality

Intentionality lies at the core of equity mindedness. Participants reflected an interest in beginning to explore more targeted, intentional work with equity seeking groups like newcomers. While there seems to be growing awareness across City departments that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work, and that newcomers experience systemic barriers, some continue to focus on the idea of serving "all citizens" and many still use deficit language in regards to newcomers that frames them as needy, vulnerable or hard to reach.

Awareness of the City-mandated GBA+ tool to help identify barriered populations is widespread among those interviewed and many were able to identify the target groups they hope to reach, and the resulting benefits. Some expressed concerns, however, that GBA+ might become a checklist exercise and not fully develop its potential to impact ongoing, daily work of the City beyond initial planning stages or reporting.

- *We hope that instead of using language that is focused on deficits and needs , we can include more language that acknowledges gifts and resilience.*
- *Yes, we are reaching out to those cultural groups that want to engage with us, to help us adjust our facility experiences in a way that welcomes and includes them.*
- *We are often reactive and need to take opportunities to be more proactive to reach newcomers, inform and engage them.*

### Addressing Barriers

City staff participants indicated they have tried to identify barriers facing newcomers in their programs. Both institutional practices or systems barriers and individual barriers were identified. They identified some understanding of the multiple layers of roadblocks newcomers face as they cope with individual challenges as well as intersecting barriers posed by institutions like the City.

Specific City institutional barriers noted include: daunting bureaucratic processes and procedures, lack of diversity on City staff teams, language/communications barriers and lack of awareness of City service and access, as well as economic inequities facing newcomer youth, and issues of affordable, adequate cultural space for ethnocultural groups. In conversation, it was clear that City staff acknowledge the urgent need to address existing systemic barriers- both operational and attitudinal- in creative, culturally sensitive ways to support migrants and newcomers.

- *We need to study the impact of the system and see who it is really working for. We can be more thoughtful about how our system interacts with different demographics, and be more effective.*
- *While some City staff understand the human perspective, others get lost in the data or rules. Can we change the City role, can we look for creative solutions?*

### Sharing Power

In this time of transition, as the City moves to a more relational approach in its work, the concept of welcoming and involving newcomers in city building seemed to resonate with City staff interviewed. While not representing a power shift in itself, it reflects an emerging awareness among City staff of the newcomer experience of inclusion and belonging. Participants shared examples, both big and small, of how they are attempting to incorporate intercultural awareness and different approaches in their work. Despite this, it appears that beyond initial stages of program development, power is in fact less frequently shared by the City with community members through the implementation and evaluation stages.

- *We need to change our processes, including use of a GBA+ lens, to expand engagement beyond the usual groups, to broaden the intersection of people of various identities.*
- *Yes, we are reaching out to those cultural groups that want to engage with us, to help us adjust our facility experiences in a way that welcomes and includes them.*
- *We brought this inclusion lens to every decision, and felt we had the flexibility to move beyond pure logistics and operations, to a more people focused, inclusive and strategic approach- to try some innovative stuff.*

### Equity Framing/Data

In conversations held with City staff about the intersection of their work and newcomers, a picture emerged of a disconnected, incomplete picture of data collection at the City. City staff also acknowledged the need for data, in all its diverse forms and complexities, as essential to inform greater intentionality when it comes to working with newcomers. While work is underway in some areas across the City to pursue better data and disaggregated data, there is a long way to go.

Staff expressed strong interest in learning more about data of different kinds and how it can strengthen City initiatives. Some identified data team efforts but also shared their

concerns about disaggregated data, the resources and capacity needed to collect it, and the complexities around privacy.

- *Data is limited, especially racialized data, but we can see the importance of collecting information from participants, to ensure diverse folks are getting served.*
- *We have data on groups using our space... but we also need to include qualitative data, perceptions and experiences of people.*
- *We are not doing a great job of hearing from people who are NOT using our services.*

### **Implications for Policy Change**

City staff insights suggest three overarching implications for the C529 policy review that all support a transformational change in the way the City works. It was expressed by one participant in these words: “*We can do things differently. The policy needs to encourage staff to work differently.*”

#### **#1 A Bold Leadership Commitment**

**A bold, whole-of-City commitment in the revised policy will proclaim the City’s intent to create equitable and welcoming conditions for migrants and newcomers to thrive.**

A strong policy commitment will provide the foundation for the City and newcomers and ethnocultural communities to work in new ways together, to actively partner to build a resilient, diverse and equitable community.

City staff highlighted the powerful impetus a high level corporate commitment brings and how it can kick start new City efforts, support innovation and risk taking. A strong policy - centering around shared leadership of the City with newcomers and increasingly robust ethnocultural communities - will support new approaches across the entire City to working towards equity with migrants and newcomers in an evolving, complex municipal context. It will also provide a foundation for effective advocacy to other orders of government. Two additional leadership-related points include:

- The need for explicit identification of a corporate steward to be accountable for regular reporting to Edmontonians on progress and a deliberate involvement of community voices in the governance/oversight model.
- City staff noted the need for the revised policy to feature the links between newcomer and migrant communities and Indigenous communities and reconciliation.

#### **#2 An Intentional Intersectional Lens**

**A revised C529 Policy will centre and support a city-wide intentional intersectional approach.** Growing a deep and robust GBA+ / equity minded approach across City departments, a process just getting underway. Support intentional identification of newcomers and help address barriers, and enhance access and opportunities for newcomers and migrants across all City services. Implementing this intentional intersectional approach may focus on several areas of opportunity flagged by City staff:

- *Workplace recruitment* - of diverse staff, including those of newcomer and immigrant background, to better reflect the needs of an increasingly diverse city. Creating and promoting meaningful opportunities for migrant newcomers, especially young people, as volunteers, workplace paid interns and student placements.

- *Address the data gap* - by supporting the creation/enhancement of a robust go-to corporate hub, with the needed human and financial resource capacity, to provide data and skills in support of equity work with migrants.
- *Infuse cultural diversity in communications and engagement strategies* - expliciting targeting newcomers. Using creative, innovative approaches, and engaging at the local neighbourhood and district levels, break down language barriers, grow awareness about the City and use new cultural platforms and models.

### **#3 A System Shift**

**To power a whole-of-City commitment and nourish an intentional intersectional approach that impacts newcomers and migrants, mindset and system shifts are needed.** The Policy Review conversations with City staff reflected a sense of a City in the early stages of transition to a new more community driven, culturally focused approach. It is also evident that a core group of City staff are already beginning to make this shift, considering and testing how they might embed equity in their daily work. They are clearly eager to learn more and do this better.

This move towards equity and sharing power with newcomers and migrants is an essential policy direction for a revised C529. Some tangible opportunities emerged that will foster shifts in attitude and systems across the corporation:

- Commitment to deep intercultural learning and everyday use of equity tools, along with support to work in new ways and to share both challenges and successes across City siloes.
- Model and celebrate positive strength- and equity- based language, grounding City work in the core concepts of Community Cultural Capital, the Multi-dimensional Immigrant and equity.
- Encourage and support innovative approaches, new responsive, shared leadership styles and partnership models of working with newcomers - where the City learns from newcomers, not the other way around.
- Explore further and bridge the work with newcomers with that of the City's commitment to advance Reconciliation with Indigenous communities. A revised C529 policy can underpin further dialogue.

### **Conclusion**

The revision of C529 needs to provide a strong, future-focused City policy commitment to work with migrants, newcomers and ethnocultural communities using an equity and inclusion lens for the next decade, and beyond. The important policy implications shared by City staff members, as well as those gleaned from concurrent community conversations with migrants, will shape this people-informed policy review. In conclusion, some final thoughts from one City staff member:

***It's time for this kind of work to be done.***



## Appendix 1

### C529 Policy Analysis Tool for Programs/Projects/Initiatives

#### Why are we doing this

We want to examine the extent to which these programs/projects/initiatives address and align with the concepts in the SIS Report - social inclusion and community cultural wealth and emerging concepts of racial equity and justice.

#### What is this tool

The Policy Review Tool is a working guide in conducting an equity-centered scan of programs/projects/initiatives that have been identified as reflective or demonstrative of the seven policy areas of C529.

This policy analysis tool was developed from a range of intercultural, equity-based assessment tools and anti-oppression tools.<sup>123</sup> The City of Edmonton's GBA+ as an example of an equity tool was also referenced to ensure that the analysis aligns with City's expectations.

This policy analysis tool includes the following key components of equity-centered, anti-oppression analysis:

1. Identification of population impacted - who benefits and who are excluded
2. Description of differential impacts on population - how does this policy affect different population groups? What are safeguards to prevent negative impacts on population groups?
3. Participation of population impacted by the policy - does the policy invite people to provide input and feedback on the policy?
4. Structural analysis - what organizational and institutional practices are creating barriers in this policy for population groups?
5. Equity framing in data collection - is data disaggregated to show disparities in progress and outcomes

---

<sup>1</sup> Protocol for Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy. January 2017. Rossier School of Education. University of Southern California.

[https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/CUE-Protocol-Workbook-Final\\_Web.pdf](https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/CUE-Protocol-Workbook-Final_Web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework for Reviewing and Developing Policy. 2008. United Way and the City of Toronto.

<http://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Intersectionality/integrated-tool-for-policy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> A Guide for Using the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment Instrument. 2006. National Center for Cultural Competence. Georgetown University.

**C529 Policy Analysis Tool- Guiding Questions for City Staff Interviews**

**Name of Policy/Program/Initiative:**

**Program Time Frame:**

**C529 Policy Area: (Please encircle all that apply)**

1. Economic integration
2. Intergovernmental Relations
3. Service Equity and Access
4. Planning and Coordination
5. Communication, Education and Awareness
6. Community Building and Inclusion
7. Immigrant Women

Policy Review Lenses	Findings/Observations (What are Strengths/Gaps/Barriers?)
<p>1. Does the program/project/initiative identify the population impacted?</p> <p>Indicate if the program/project/initiative has explicitly mentioned specific populations it intends to reach.</p>	
<p>2. Does the program/project/initiative identify how different people may be affected?</p> <p>State whether the program/project/ initiative explicitly mentions how each population will be affected by the program in terms of benefits and adverse impacts.</p>	
<p>3. Does the program/project/initiative mention barriers or disadvantages that it intends to address?</p> <p>Indicate whether the program/project /initiative includes a range of physical, economic, social and cultural barriers.</p>	
<p>4. Does the program/project/initiative explicitly recognize or identify inequities in terms of access, participation or outcomes?</p> <p>State whether this program/project/ initiative presented evidence of any disparities in terms of how different populations are using and participating in this program/project/initiative. Look for any documentation of how benefits or outcomes are distributed to different populations.</p>	
<p>5. Does the program/project/initiative include diverse cultural norms and values?</p> <p>Indicate any evidence of incorporating diverse cultural</p>	

<p>ways of doing in the implementation of this program/project/ initiative such as use of multiple languages, protocols, engaging cultural resource persons, etc.</p>	
<p>6. Does the program/project/initiative state how people can give input or feedback about how it affects them?</p> <p>Evidence of reaching out, connecting and engaging people from diverse backgrounds, marginalized populations in the development, implementation and evaluation of the program/project/ initiative.</p>	
<p>7. Is data being collected in reporting progress and outcomes of the program/project/initiative?</p> <p>Look for evidence of data being disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic, abilities, etc.</p>	

**What are your observations and conclusions?**

The following guide questions may help you in forming your observations and conclusions:

- What are gaps in the program/project/initiative that you have seen based on the questions in the tool?
- What can you suggest to address these gaps or are there already plans underway or being explored to address gaps?
- Are there any other observations that you wish to share that are not covered in the previous questions?

**Reflections on the grounding concepts of the SIS Report 2021**

The following questions may help you in looking back at the SIS Report 2021 and how the program/project/initiative aligns with the grounding concepts of the SIS Report 2021:

- Does this program have the potential or intent to enhance social inclusion and a sense of belonging among newcomers in Edmonton? In what way?
- Is it designed or delivered in a way that speaks to the multidimensional immigrant concept, and builds on aspects of the vast community of culturally wealthy newcomers to Edmonton? How so?
- Is it grounded in the idea of migrants as significant contributors to the social and economic vitality of Edmonton, as city makers ? If so, how?
- Does this program or initiative speak to advancing the dimensions of integration the SIS Report 2022 is featuring, employment or education, in some way?

**OUR VOICES:  
ENGAGING MIGRANTS on  
BELONGING and INCLUSION**

**Kate Gunn and Lucenia Ortiz**

**August 2022**

## I. NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US, .... IS FOR US<sup>4</sup>

"Nothing About Us Without Us" ("*Nihil de nobis, sine nobis*") means that no policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy<sup>5</sup>. Rooted in history<sup>6</sup>, this has become a powerful slogan for groups that are often marginalized from political, social, and economic opportunities.

The review of the City of Edmonton's C529 Policy on Immigration and Settlement is anchored on this core tenet: to engage people who are most affected by the policy.

The people most impacted by this policy are migrants - newcomers from all immigration categories, those who have been in Canada for a long time and their children, those in precarious migration status as well as those who are still in the process of obtaining permanent residency. Their stories of struggles and hopes are vital in grounding policy intended for them.

In July, 2020, a series of focus group discussions were held online with migrant communities. The focus groups are spaces for migrants to come together, share their stories of how they arrived, settled and lived their lives in Edmonton. Most importantly, they bring to light the wisdom from their experience that will inform the next version of C529 - one that truly reflects the concerns, sentiments and aspirations of migrants and how the City of Edmonton can support them in their journey to find a better life in the new homeland.

This report documents the full process of engaging migrants from recruitment of participants, engagement methods used, drawing common themes from the discussions and validating emerging themes with participants. A special section is devoted to the Rainbow Refuge Group discussion to acknowledge their distinct and unique experience.

The report concludes with key insights and their policy implications that will inform the recommendations for updating the C529 Policy.

## II. RECRUITING COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

It is essential that the participants in the focus groups reflect a diverse range of context, realities and circumstances of migrants in the city. The recruitment of participants to the focus groups was a three-step process:

1. Selection of 10 migrant communities to reflect demographic diversity by source countries - started with identifying top/bottom three source countries of permanent residents and refugees; geographic distribution (Asia, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Latin/Central America); small communities least heard of and degree of vulnerability and precariousness. This was a collaborative process between the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition. The ten participating communities come from the

---

<sup>4</sup> Nothing about us with- out us is for us. Based on a slogan popularized by South African disability rights and youth activists. Centre for the Study of Political Graphics; Scottish Council for Voluntary Organizations. [<https://scvo.scot.nhs.uk/p/13499/2016/09/05/nothing-about-us-without-us-is-for-us>]

<sup>5</sup> Nothing About Us Without Us. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing\\_About\\_Us\\_Without\\_Us](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_About_Us_Without_Us)]

<sup>6</sup> "Nothing about us without us is for us" originated in Poland's 1505 constitutional legislation, *Nihil novi*, which first transferred governing authority from the monarch to the parliament. It subsequently became a byword for democratic norms. It is also a long-standing principle of Hungarian law and foreign policy, and was a cornerstone of the foreign policy of interwar Poland. In modern times, It has been the battle cry in the disability rights movement in the 1990s and later on framed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2004. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing\\_About\\_Us\\_Without\\_Us](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_About_Us_Without_Us)]

following countries: China, Eritrea, French-speaking Africans, India, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

2. Recruitment of community members with lived experience to participate in the focus groups to reflect diverse identities - age, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, migration status, length of residence and geographic distribution across the city.
3. Engagement of the Rainbow Refuge Group of LGBTQ+ newcomers

The community discussions also engaged those who are in leadership roles in the community such as members of civic committees and community collaboratives such as WAVE, ECYC, AAC, ELIP and EPE.<sup>7</sup>

### III. ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS: THE COMMUNITY ANIMATION PROCESS

Community animation is a process by which people are inspired, encouraged and moved to undertake a range of actions and activities: to help their communities, to realize their potentials, to articulate needs and concerns and to feel a sense of belonging to a community<sup>8</sup>. The focus group discussions were led and facilitated by the *community animators* who are bilingual and bicultural members tasked with the following:

- Recruit and invite a diverse range of participants from their community
- Organise focus groups in their community
- Facilitate discussions in the *first language* of the participants

Community documentors fluent in the participants' first language took notes of the focus group discussions and translated them in English.

One of the unique features of the community animation process is creating a space for first language conversation crucial in creating an inclusive, safe and comfortable space for participants in sharing their ideas and feelings about their challenges, concerns, sentiments and aspirations. Community animators from their own cultural community and speak their language can effectively establish rapport, familiarity and a level of comfort with participants especially when discussing difficult topics. They are also familiar with communication styles of the participants and can easily incorporate cultural nuances in asking the questions and probing for more details in the focus groups.

The Edmonton Multicultural Coalition, which has an ongoing community animators program, was contracted to organize the community focus group discussions in 10 migrant communities through its pool of trained community animators.

---

<sup>7</sup> WAVE (Women's Advocacy and Voice in Edmonton), CEYC (City of Edmonton Youth Council), AAC (Accessibility Advisory Committee), ELIP (Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership) and EPE (EndPovertyEdmonton).

<sup>8</sup> Community Animators Guide. 2014. Edmonton Multicultural Coalition.

### **Focus Group with Community Animators and the Rainbow Refuge Group**

The Community Animators themselves also participated in a focus group discussion as part of their orientation by experiencing how a community focus group is conducted and facilitated.

A group of newcomer refugee LGBTQ+ called the Rainbow Refuge Group hosted by out of the Edmonton Centre for Newcomers participated in a focus group of their own to highlight their unique experience and realities from other migrant communities.

### **Focus Group Discussions with Community Leaders**

The focused conversations with civic committee and community collaboratives were led by the consultants using a set of questions that relate to their perceptions and observations of the core issues in immigration and settlement and their insights on a municipal policy supporting newcomers.

## **IV. THEMING AND VALIDATION OF THE COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS**

Once the English documentation of the focus group discussions were completed, themes were extracted to show patterns of responses from the participants. The theming process entailed:

1. Searching for similar ideas in the conversations and putting them together in clusters or groups.
2. Identifying how best to describe these clusters to make sense of the ideas expressed and presented in the conversation.
3. Naming these clustered themes to reflect the key idea or insight

It is important in a participatory engagement process that we bring back what we heard to the participants. These themes were shared among all the participants to generate feedback using the following questions: Did we get it right? What is missing? Do you have anything more to add?

Only a few participants provided comments; most of the feedback was positive and supported the themes while others added new insights to the themes.

## **V. A PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 181 individuals participated in the community focus groups distributed as follows:

- Migrants lived experience community focus groups - 101
- Community animators focus group - 12
- Rainbow Refuge Group - 15
- Civic committees and community collaborative - 53

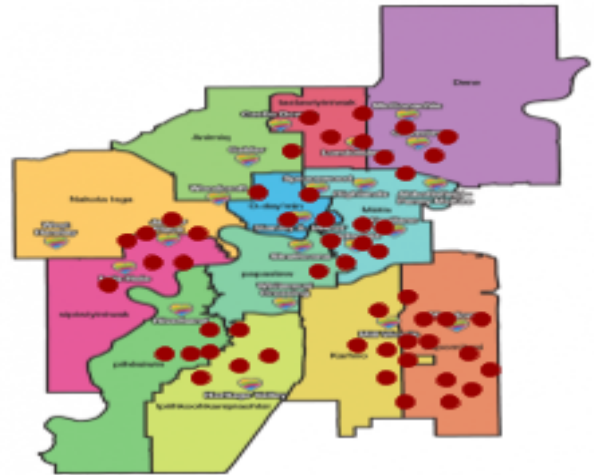
Demographic data was collected from migrant community focus groups and the Rainbow Group through the individual consent forms. Participants provided this information on a voluntary basis. Close to 25% chose to share this information.

### **Community participants**

Community participants included those who took part in the 10 migrant community focus groups and the community animators for a total of 113 participants. Of those who responded, one can see that they vary in terms of where they live in the city, who they are and their migration status.

### Geographic diversity: where they live

Almost all the 12 wards in the city are represented by those who participated in the community focus groups. The majority live in the southeast neighbourhoods; a third of the participants reside in central and northeast/ northwest Edmonton and few live in the west end.



### Age, Gender and Sexual Orientation N= 113

Age (in years)	Female	Male	Non-Binary	Trans-gender	Another Gender	No Answer	Total
17 -20	2						2
21-30	5	4					9
31-40	11	4					15
41-50	2	2					4
51-60		5					5
60 Above							
No Answer						78	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>				<b>78</b>	<b>113</b>

### Migration Status and Length of Residence in Edmonton N=113

Migration Status Upon Arrival	Length of Residence in Edmonton (in years)				Total
	<1	1-5	6-10	> 10	
Skilled Worker	1	4	5	2	12
Family Class	2	1	3	3	9
Refugees (Government Assisted, Privately Sponsored and Refugee Claimants)	1	5	2	3	11
Student	1				1
Temporary Foreign Worker		1			1
Born in Canada				7	7
No Answer	2	25	22	23	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>113</b>



### **Civic committees and community collaboratives**

The community landscape embodies collectives of people in leadership roles that all contribute to the overall development of communities - as civic committees augmenting the governance of local governments and community-based coalitions to advocate for social issues. Many of these organized groups have different mandates but have been invited to participate in the discussions to determine their intersections, reach and connections to newcomers and settlement issues and opportunities.

The civic committees and community collaboratives that shared their work and ideas include the following:

- Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) - advocating for women's issues and well being (5 participants)
- City of Edmonton Youth Council (CEYC) - youth participation in policy development (7 participants )
- Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)- inclusion for people with disabilities (2 participants)
- EndPovertyEdmonton - addressing systemic barriers to tackle and end poverty (2 participants )
- Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership - ( ELIP) city and community partnership to address newcomers issues and support newcomer integration in the city (37participants)
- Anti-Racism Advisory Committee - presentation only without discussion (12 members)

## **VI. WHAT WE HEARD: EMERGING THEMES FROM COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS**

The community discussion centred on five key policy areas of the C529 Policy: economic integration, service equity access, communication, awareness and education, immigrant women and community building inclusion. The set of questions in the focus groups was intended to capture their lived experience in these areas and their insights on how their current situation can be improved. It included questions on: pathways to a secure future in employment and access to services and supports and

The participants spoke with clarity and honesty about their experience, expressed genuine concerns about how persistent issues could be truly addressed, especially by the City of Edmonton and felt hopeful about opportunities for change.

### **A. Pathways to a Secure Future**

Numerous research shows that many newcomers experience challenges in finding suitable employment - that values our education back home and gives decent income. Many migrants are still struggling to find services for daily and special needs. The group discussion focused on the participants' lived experience as newcomers and migrants and their ideas about how a pathway for a secure future for migrants can happen. These are themes that resonate with the discussions in the community focus groups.

#### **Let's talk about race in employment- perception and reality**

There is a widespread perception that identity is a key factor in accessing opportunities for employment.

*I tried fighting for a practicum in order to get some work experience but because of racism, when people see that my name is (Muslim name), they don't choose me*

*(We want) Freedom from barriers of race and language(in looking for work).*

*Many of our children are not hired by the city due to racism and prejudice*

The City of Edmonton is essential in demonstrating that it is leading the fight to end racism starting from its own recruitment and hiring practices.

*The city must recognize the reality of racism and must develop mitigation strategies to integrate visible minorities in their work force.*

### **Employment: Supports to get the right job**

In all the focus groups, nearly all of the participants expressed their disappointment and frustration that their education and home country experience are not recognized in Canada for employment. The lack of recognition and the devaluation of foreign credentials remain the most persistent and chronic barriers to the search for suitable employment, a decent income and health and well-being for newcomer migrants. These are the supports participants identified to attain their employment aspirations.

- **Experiential learning opportunity** to understand the Canadian workplace from the formal requirements of the job (skills and capacities) and unwritten norms around interacting with supervisors and managers and communicating/relating with co-workers. These learning opportunities can be delivered through:

- Mentorship - a hand to hold when navigating the complexity of workplace structures and hierarchies as well as the specific expectations from the job

*Someone who can guide me to learn about good jobs I would be eligible for but don't know about.*

- Experiential workplace opportunities such as internship and apprenticeship to demonstrate one's skills beyond the traditional hiring process; many newcomers feel that resumes and interviews do not fully capture what they can offer in the workplace.

*Provide work experience specific for newcomers so they can get experience and get a job; Create programs for internships and apprenticeships, hire co-op students, 2-year program internship for recently graduated students.*

*Fit in - The way you fit is important. I have experienced people who will hire if they feel comfortable with you.*

- **Networking** means structured and interactive opportunities for newcomers to get information, learn more about potential employment in one's field, see where and how they can fit in and make connections with employers.

City has a role in organizing networking opportunities geared to newcomer needs and interests. They have the widest connections with employers including themselves; their leadership can leverage employers' involvement in creating conditions for newcomer inclusion in the job market.

*More professional networking (any organization that would help extend personal network); Don't know where to start - would be helpful to learn from other newcomers who have had successful experiences so perhaps having facilitated networking sessions where other individuals can share their experience and we can learn from*

them.

- **Job/career specific employment training** rather than generic employment training especially for technical and professional occupations. It could range from targeted resume writing, interview abilities geared towards language and practice in specific professions.

Training suggested to be more interactive, more practice sessions on interviewing, holistic that includes communication and relational skills.

*Need to get some training to improve our knowledge about the specific job applications criteria, process. Providing opportunities to learn soft skills- interpersonal skills.*

- **Connections** mean getting to know individuals who work in the sector that newcomers intend to get employment in. It could be an insider in the organisation or business who knows how to navigate the recruitment and hiring process. It could be someone who can give the person a good reference.

There is a strong perception among newcomers based on what they have heard from others or their own experience that people get hired because they know somebody "from the inside".

*Connections are needed for anyone to get positions, 99% of the people who work where I work with got there with connections whether they're competent for the job, for my parents when they moved here, they used their connections*

*If you do not know a lot of people (in the workplace) it's hard to navigate resources, and to inform you of jobs, and speak to their managers and supervisors for you, it just makes it easier.*

- **Community-based support** emphasises the role of ethnocultural communities beyond the traditional settlement services in welcoming and supporting the integration of newcomers in all aspects of their life in the community. It includes the following:
  - Initiating cultural bonds with newcomers as they arrive and settle in the city, easing their sense of loneliness and isolation; seen as an essential first step to settlement (bonding)
  - Helping to find basic practical support for settlement - housing, school and cultural connections (linking)
  - Introducing newcomers to others outside of their cultural community (bridging)
  - Opening personal connections to employment and orienting them to the Canadian workplace from lived experience (bridging)
  - City has a role in creating opportunities for community-based support by engaging ethnocultural communities in welcoming and providing settlement support
  - Collecting data about employment context with communities to learn more about barriers and community perspectives to address barriers

*The city should engage with the community through different community organisations, and learn about career concerns and collect data about the kind of career profiles the newcomer/ immigrant communities have so that they can find ways to align those with the existing jobs or help people with bridging courses to align their profiles with jobs in the city.*

- **Accountability in employment: inclusion of newcomer migrants**

There is an urgent call for the City of Edmonton to demonstrate commitment to inclusion especially on employment, communicate to ethnocultural communities the progress it has made and steps to ensure full inclusion.

Act of diversity and inclusion policy - It remains as lip service, but no meaningful and sincere policy.

*I would add accountability, clear policy to integrate visible minorities in the workforce*

*The City of Edmonton needs to look at itself in the mirror and compare with other major cities. After the Black Lives Matter, many cities developed programs to integrate visible minorities in their workforce, but no action was taken by the city of Edmonton.*

### **Experience Applying at the City of Edmonton**

Out of the 113 participants in the community focus groups, nearly a third (28.9%) have applied to the City of Edmonton. They shared their experience in the application process and/or the reasons why they did not attempt to apply for jobs at the City of Edmonton. Those who applied for City positions tried many times; only two had a positive experience. None got hired.

- **Tough!**

Several attempts at applying for City positions usually end in disappointment because they were not successful as well as feeling frustrated in not being able to receive feedback about their application.

Getting feedback about one's application is very important to newcomers because they all want to learn from this experience to help them improve their application the next time. It must be disheartening for anyone applying for work for the first time in a new country not to know what happened to their application and missing a learning opportunity.

*Applied for a driver job with the city but was never contacted about it, got the relevant licence needed but maybe I didn't have it for long enough, I have no idea because I didn't get any calls back to tell me that I didn't get the position*

*After so many unsuccessful attempts, I finally gave up to focus my applications with the Government of Alberta where I have been working since 2015. It would be nice to know why your application is being rejected or tell me what I needed to improve.*

Without feedback from the City, many participants are left to conclude that their racial identity must have something to do with their unsuccessful application. solely relying on their own observation and what they hear from others. Participants feel that they are unwelcome to apply for jobs at the City; that it is very difficult to penetrate the City and that there is a perception of racism in the hiring process.

*I applied at least five times and got to the interview stage only one time. I applied for summer student jobs and I never got a position, while my friends, most white have always summer jobs with the city. I do not understand why. I have asked my Somali fellow student and they have the same experience*

*Our community feels that the city hires only certain ethnic groups*

*(white people and other ethnic groups), but not visible minorities.*

The City is known in the newcomer community as a difficult place to apply for a job because of its rigorous requirements and whether you have connections in the City. Participants were discouraged to apply for City jobs because they already know that they are limited by language barriers and the lack of insider knowledge.

*Our young people stopped to seek employment with the City of Edmonton. They strongly believe white people will not hire you. The city of Edmonton is not ready to diversify their workforce.*

*Many of our children are born here, they have Canadian education, they speak English fluently, and they are not hired. I do not understand why? Our people are not successful in getting jobs with the City.*

There are obvious disadvantages of being a newcomer that need to be overcome such as the lack of or limited cultural experiences and socialisation in the Canadian culture compared to those who have the privilege of being born here.

*There's a social structure to knowing these jobs exist, like if you went to school here, you're raised in certain ways that make you aware of these jobs and other people wouldn't necessarily know about them.*

- **More action and less talk**

Participants feel a sense of urgency that it's time for the City to demonstrate what it must do to show that it truly values diversity and inclusion. They need to see a policy that is transparent in showing outcomes of advancement of migrants in all aspects of their life in the city - economic, social and civic outcomes.

*Diversity and inclusion of the City of Edmonton is just lip service, but not a truly and meaningful action.*

*The city must have a measurable and trackable policy of hiring visible minorities.*

### **Job satisfaction**

Job satisfaction among migrants means working in a job that recognizes the education and work experience that one brings to Canada as well as earning a decent income to support essential needs. Job satisfaction is related to productivity and better physical and mental health. Nearly half of the participants who are working full-time and part-time indicated that they are not satisfied with their current jobs.

- **Feeling marginalised in the workplace**

Participants felt that they are ignored and not heard and passed up for advancement in the workplace. The reasons they cited are:

- Having an accent, English as a second language and differences in communication styles adversely affects the way they communicate and relate to co-workers and supervisors
- Cultural differences in behaviors in the workplace
- Supervisors and managers who are not culturally aware when dealing with workers from different cultures
- Lack of diversity among managers and supervisors ("the hidden glass ceiling")
- Perception and/or experience of workplace discrimination and racism

*Sometimes I feel ignored and not heard and I feel my accent is a barrier in communication*

*Some workers encounter the bottleneck in career, feel inadequate opportunities to break through as a minority. For example, lots of managers and directors are the majority. I assume there are hidden glass ceilings in the working place.*

- **Disappointment and unhappiness: "I feel like I failed."**  
Working in a job that falls below one's education and prior experience often named as "survival jobs" is a source of disappointment and unhappiness sometimes leading to perceptions of failure.
- **Not enough to survive and enjoy life**  
Those working in "survival jobs" are earning minimum wage and struggling to make ends meet within the current situation of high prices, job insecurity and uncertain economy. Participants are aware that the Alberta economy is dependent on oil and gas that limits the economy to be resilient when oil prices are down again.
- **A job that I love**  
Some participants have found jobs that they truly enjoy and love. The types of jobs they have found satisfaction with were those that involved working with newcomers, children and serving people.

*I love working with newcomers too, because I'm studying to become a teacher. Working with newcomers has shown me an entire new love of working with newcomers and newcomer children.*

### **Entrepreneurship**

Only a few (13%) participants stated that they have thought about starting a business stemming from their inability to find suitable employment and some had businesses back home and wanted to continue. Of those who knew of someone who had started their business in Edmonton, they observed that many start home-based small businesses such as catering ethnic meals. It is interesting to note that ethnic business reflects gender distinctions. Many women open retail ethnic stores to meet the cultural needs of the community while men tend to open restaurants.

- **Survive and thrive**  
Many participants indicated that they have thought about starting a small business in Edmonton; some are still in operation and some have closed. The primary motivation for all of them is to survive in the new homeland and hoping that the business will prosper. Challenges experienced by newcomers who have started running a small business include:
  - Keeping up with business regulations such as health permits
  - Too much taxes
  - Cost of getting business license and other permits
  - Not being able to access City contracts
  - Difficulty getting business loans from financial institutions
  - Lack or limited information about how to navigate the Canadian business landscape, including limited English skills
  - Difficult to compete with local businesses who are familiar with how the business works such as finding buyers and vendors, suppliers, etc.
  - Lack of connections in the business sector
  - Balancing demands of running a business and looking after children and family

*We are not benefiting the city's contracts and procurement. I applied for a service contract with the city and my application was not considered. I also applied for a cleaning service contract. The city*

*needs to evaluate how to reward contracts and procurement services.  
This is the most unfair practice*

- **Risky business: setting-up a business takes a lot of risk and hard work**  
Most of the participants shared their concerns and anxieties about setting up a business in Edmonton. These include the following:
  - They did not have the energy and strength, time and determination to get involved in a complicated process of starting a business.
  - There are a lot of risks associated with running a business such as an uncertain economic situation, costs and lately COVID.
  - Getting an education to find a suitable job is a much preferred and less risky option.
  - They never thought of themselves as going into business.
  - Edmonton is perceived by many newcomers "the worst place" for business start-up.
  - Community support for ethnic businesses is important as many of these businesses were set-up to meet community needs.

*I consider Edmonton to be one of the worst places to support small business start-ups.*

*In European countries, Chinatown is a place for successful businesses. It is famous and attractive to people from all over the world. Unfortunately, Chinatown in Edmonton is a place with crime, drugs and other unpleasant places. A better Chinatown will benefit both the local economy and Asian community.*

*Community support is important to building businesses. Community organisations can help members with resources and information about grants and support and communities help businesses grow. It would be great to have some training or workshop on developing business initiatives.*

## **B. Access and Equity to Services**

A city that is welcoming ensures that basic and essential services for daily living are accessible, especially those who are new to the city and finding their way around. The majority of the participants identified transit, recreation centres, parks and libraries as City of Edmonton services that are frequently used. Some are familiar with street cleaning, snow removal and waste management. Overall, most participants are not aware of the full range of municipal services that they actually interact with such as paying property taxes and utility bills, police and local festivals. Some participants are not fully aware of the differences of the three levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) and the types of services that each provides to citizens and residents.

### **A positive experience with City services**

Those who had a positive experience with City services are impressed with the physical look of the facilities and most of all, their interaction with staff. City staff in facilities and front-line services were amiable and helpful with information and directing them to the right place and people for the services they need or providing them access to equipment such as computers and printers.

*It was a very good experience, it's a nice recreation centre, and if you have the pass nobody asks or hassles you about it. Staff are very helpful and friendly*

*One time I was struggling to pay property tax and I have been given extension and opportunity to pay on monthly basis*

*I really appreciate the service and the information from the information desk. They directed me to the right people*

### **Issues with City Services**

Participants experienced some issues with City services such as:

- Waiting time was too long or no response
- Language interpretation is not consistently available; they were asked to bring an interpreter with them
- Transit safety is a concern as well as reliability of bus schedules as people experienced long wait times that makes it difficult during winter
- City services are expensive - recreation facilities and programs

*Staff told me to bring an interpreter, instead of calling someone who speaks my language. I needed an interpreter and was not available. The city should hire people from our community who can help them.*

*Waiting time was too long for calls to be responded to; It's the response that is an issue. --- deal with city complaints and etc. response time is too long*

### **Communication is a big issue**

Most of the participants indicated that they receive little or no information about what the City does - from services and programs to events and activities. This is because nearly all information is in English delivered online or in print. They suggested that the use of all forms of communications media must be pursued to reach a diverse audience, including ethnic media. It must include print, social media, online and audio-visual materials in top languages spoken by newcomers.

*hard for newcomers and individuals to get info from the city*

*I did not know about these programs until some people informed me. City do have excellent programs, what the city needs to do is how to get newcomers' attention. I suggest the city pay attention to the CONNECTION with newcomers.*

### **Ways for newcomers to have better access city services**

Participants offered a wealth of ideas for the City of Edmonton to improve how they can better communicate and deliver services to reach newcomers and migrant communities.

- **Interactive and relational approach**

The most important principle in reaching newcomers so that they will have better access to City services is genuine and sustained engagement with cultural communities. It must be interactive which means that there is a vibrant and robust two-way exchange of information and learning between communities and the City. It must nurture consistent and enduring relationships that can only result in an engaged citizenry. This is the sentiment expressed by many participants calling the City to try creative ways to interact with cultural communities such as:

- Initiating a robust volunteer program from migrant communities
- Ethnocultural organizations as community liaisons between communities and the City
- Organizing multicultural information and sharing events
- Improving presence and visibility City Council, particularly Councillors with ethnocultural communities
- Making City Hall a first portal for newcomers to get to know the city better but it has to be a welcoming place

*The city should hire people from our community to assist them in terms of language, cultural connections and we feel comfortable to*



*ask our questions.*

*Community representatives doing outreach in the community, although they may be ignored it is still beneficial to reach people who might not be as willing to read a booklet The city can hire volunteers and employees from immigrant communities.*

*Community organisations can act as a liaison between newcomers and the city- information about its services can be passed on from the community organisations to the people.*

*City hall looks nice and efficient but it is a cold place; sometimes nobody is there to talk to and no paper/info in city hall*

- **Civic education for newcomers: a "City Hall School for Newcomers"**  
Learning about a municipality is more than just programs and services. Newcomers are interested to know how the municipality works - how it is relevant in meeting newcomer needs and aspirations as well as the responsibilities of newcomers in their new home.

*Make workshops and information sessions available about how the city works*

*Seminars on how to adjust to living in Edmonton such as winter living in Edmonton, navigating transit), even online seminars would be very helpful and accessible*

*We have no connection with elected officials of the city.*

- **A place where information starts to flow**  
Newcomers upon arrival will always ask the first question: where can I get information on how to start my life in this city? Participants suggested obvious yet unexpected spaces where newcomers could find information about city services such as:
  - Airports - a welcome kiosk to provide information about the City of Edmonton
  - Registry offices - this is the first place newcomers go to get their health cards, drivers licence and others to get their life started in the city
  - Service Canada
  - Malls
  - Schools
  - Immigrant-serving agencies

#### **Dual responsibilities: City and community**

Participants recognize that working toward equity and access to services is everyone's responsibility - not just the City of Edmonton but citizens as well, especially migrants..

- **The City need to work with and across jurisdictions**  
One participant put it clearly: newcomer migrants pay taxes that go to all three levels of governments and thus the need for all of them to work together. This collaboration can only be felt and experienced by every newcomer at the place where they live, work and play. Municipalities should be at the centre of integration efforts.

*the division between sponsors and organisations, at the federal, provincial and city level, newcomers are newcomers and all of the money comes from taxpayers including immigrants and so the money should be used as a whole, not causing division.*

- **Citizen responsibility**

Participants realise that they too as newcomers and migrants have a responsibility in the integration process. These include:

- Learning about the culture of the city, especially about the history and experience of Indigenous people
- Learning the language spoken in the city which is English
- Learning about how to communicate and interact with Edmontonians

*Of course you need the municipalities help, but it must start from you and if you are stuck and need help them reach out to the municipality, the door is open for everyone but my knowledge is quite limited about municipality*

## **C. Conversations about a Sense of Belonging and Inclusion**

When newcomers move to a new place, they look for that feeling of being home. For many migrants it seems hard when they do not feel welcomed or safe in a community. In this conversation participants spoke about their experience about belonging in the city and their thoughts on how Edmonton could be that city where migrants feel included and accepted.

### **Experience moving into the neighbourhood for the first time**

A newcomer's first experience of belonging happens in the neighbourhoods where their new homes are. The experience participants of moving into their neighbourhood upon arrival was mixed; some were able to connect with neighbours right away, impressed by wide spaces, clean streets and nice houses and being introduced to people from their own culture. Others had to contend with offensive language and derogatory remarks.

- **A sense of freedom**

Most of the participants were excited and elated to arrive in Edmonton. For a long time in their lives, a sense of freedom was felt by many- away from the turmoil in their home country. It was a happy day.

*"I felt like dancing the whole day".*

- **A warm welcome**

Many participants were able to connect with their neighbours and formed relationships especially when they saw so many people who come from their culture and immediately found friends.

*We had our own community of Pakistani newcomers and friends;we first lived in Mill Woods when we first moved here which is a heavily brown community, so it was nice.*

Some participants experienced being treated warmly by staff and service providers they first met and who were helpful and patient with them as newcomers to Edmonton.

*Most of the people always make the effort to understand you and try to repeat the information until everything is fine and understandable.*

Some appreciated the support of sponsors as well as pairing newcomers with volunteers who served as a guide to help them become familiar with the city.

- **Bias and prejudice: an unsafe place to be**

The most painful experience that can happen to a newcomer in the city is to be told to go back to where they come from. Many participants recalled being called names, children attacked and just ignored. Many did not feel safe in their neighbourhoods and have seen theft and shooting. There was a lack of trust in their neighbours and most kept to themselves.

*My neighbour talked to my father and said do not bring drug dealers to the neighbourhood.*

*I have been told to go back to your (my) country; someone threw tomatoes on our doors.*

*I remember while the parents were at work the neighbourhood kids came and stole stuff from our house.*

- **Lost and isolated**

Not being able to speak English fluently, missing their families, lack of information about services all contributed to some participants who felt isolated and lost in the big city. While being with people from their own culture made them feel at ease, they longed to reach out to other communities and be acknowledged. The open wide spaces did not help in making connections in the neighbourhoods.

*I feel scared and nervous in the downtown area, especially in Chinatown. I went shopping in Chinatown a few times. It was messy, dirty, and lacked safety for me.*

- **"It was a cold day"**

Winter for the first time to some was a lonely and difficult experience especially just getting by daily such as taking the bus, going to the grocery, meeting friends

*A huge change because I arrived in winter and everything was white, I was not used to seeing the white' winters so many times my bus stop just passed forward.*

### **Participation in social, cultural and civic life**

One of the markers of social inclusion is participation of migrants in social and cultural life, civic engagement, political participation and representation in decision-making positions. Participants were asked about whether they have been involved in activities that relate to these areas of social inclusion, the challenges they experienced living in the city and their perceptions of whether they have a voice in the city.

### **Civic engagement: activities migrants participated in the most**

Majority of the participants were involved in school-based activities such as volunteering for their children's field trips and events followed by community events and celebrations and voting by less than half of the participants.

Of particular interest to the City, there were more participants engaged in electoral participation such as voting and campaigning for a candidate than in public engagement. It is also worth noting that of the 10 participating ethnocultural communities, four communities had neither knowledge of nor participated in public engagement which accounts for 91 (80.5%) participants including those who said "no" in the other groups.

Activities	Number	Percentage (N=113)
1. School-based activities	61	53.98%
2. Community Events and Celebrations	51	45.13%
3. Voting	51	45.13%
4. Church group membership	41	36.38%
5. Membership in organizations	36	31.85%
6. Volunteering	35	30.97%
7. Advocacy	24	21.23%
8. Campaigning for a candidate	23	20.35%
9. Public Engagement	22	19.46%
10. Sports and recreation	11	9.73%

**Note:** This is a multiple response question and the total will be more than the number of participants. The % indicates the proportion of participants who said that they have participated in these activities.

### Most challenging experience living in the Edmonton

There are many insights one can draw from the responses of the participants. From their experience of moving into their neighbourhoods for the first time, participants still spoke about recurring and persistent challenges that they are still struggling with since they first arrived in the city. These challenges ranged from deep-seated social problems to coping with daily living.

- **Basic problems: underemployment and poverty**

Participants spoke about underemployment and poverty as the twin issues that have persisted over time for many racialized newcomers. Working in low-paying or "survival" jobs as a result of the devaluation of their foreign credentials and not enough to afford decent housing. What distresses most newcomers is when they are not able to send money to families back home with so little income.

*Poverty and underemployment for visible minority*

*Unaffordable housing and living in crowded homes*

- **Racism is alive and well**

Many participants lived through daily experiences of racism in their neighbourhoods, schools, and public places. In their own words:

*I was one of very few black kids at my school..there was a lack of respect from teachers, I corrected my teacher and said that I did not like the nickname she gave me, and she kept calling me that.*

*As a Muslim women and visible minority, I have been attacked in broad day light.*

*I was on the bus one day and a man spat at the bus screaming at me and my friends for being immigrants.*

*When I needed medical assistance in the beginning, they did not want to attend to me because of how I look, until they saw my husband (Canadian) they paid attention and assisted me.*

*Racism exists- sometimes it is not very apparent, but it does, making it difficult for us to navigate social lives and personal lives.*

*My parents were verbally abused by a passing vehicle, they threw garbage at them and cursed them in bad words. I feel sad and shocked.*

*I lived in Edmonton for more than 20 years, it is unfair and painful to be discriminated against because of my Asian face.*

- **Living with winter**

Participants said that it is not just about the cold weather but the services to make winter less challenging that is frustrating for them. They cannot understand the system for snow clearing and why it takes so much time to serve neighbourhoods.

*Surviving the winter is the most challenging; No reliable system for cleaning the snow.*

*It's definitely a public health risk; I walked from my work to a bus stop and got frostbite on my ears, it can get dangerous.*

- **Transportation as a determinant of newcomer integration**

Research shows that low-income communities and communities of color often do not have access to the benefits our transportation system can provide.. Participants spoke about walking long distances to the nearest bus stop, unreliable bus schedules, too much time it takes riding in the bus for a short route and most of all safety in the transit stations especially for racialized individuals.

*The job I have makes me cautious of my mother and other family taking the LRT, safety in public, I always tell her I'd rather take her especially with recent incidences, being visibly an immigrant makes her more vulnerable, things like wearing a hijab, I would feel terrible if something would happen to her and I didn't do anything to mitigate it.*

*Commuting was quite challenging for me when I did not have a car. I have to walk a long distance before I get a bus station*

*Transportation when I was in school was such a pain, especially when there was construction on the bridge, the commute time was insane, I would not go to class in my last year just because it was so hard*

- **Perception of lack of support for ethnocultural organisations**

Community organisations are a great source of strength for newcomers yet they don't feel that they are supported by the municipality. Accessing grants by smaller organisations who don't have the capacity to fulfil city expectations in proposal development. Yet how can they build their capacity to participate if they are not given an opportunity.

*Community organisations can be a great source of strength for newcomers/ immigrants-but funding is a main challenge for community organisations to work effectively.*

- **Safety: perception and reality**

While many participants felt safe in their neighbourhoods and only heard

about crime in the news, there is still fear and anxiety. Stereotypes and biases about certain groups of people such as the homeless and drug addicts make them feel unsafe especially when they are in certain parts of the city known to be places where violence is reported. Seniors are the most vulnerable so many of them just stay home.

Although some have seen shootings in their neighbourhood, they also said that they did not experience any incidents in their neighbourhoods which they found quiet and safe. A few of them have met homeless people and found them to be nice and harmless.

*We knew immigrant women, children, youth, and seniors that feel safe in certain neighbourhood, but we also know areas in the city that are not quite safe. They feel safe in my neighbourhood, but I know there are bad ones especially downtown neighbourhoods like Alberta Avenue, so much is done for that area, but it still doesn't feel safe even in the day, most new immigrants hear from their friends' what areas to avoid*

*I do hope the city can organise more activities to mitigate misunderstandings, especially during pandemic. I do hope the city can stand up, give correct information about the virus, and help citizens equip our minds with correct information.*

## **VII. RAINBOW REFUGE GROUP: DISTINCT AND UNIQUE CONTEXT**

The Rainbow Refuge Group is composed of participants from the Edmonton Centre for Newcomers (ECN) Rainbow Refuge Program, which is the first LGBTQ+ program in Edmonton's settlement sector. This program offers culturally relevant, affirming support for LGBTQ+ newcomers to help ease their settlement in the city, provide employment and mental health services, connect them with communities and advocate for their best interests, including assistance in for refugee claimants to apply for refugee status so that they can proceed to become permanent residents of Canada.

Refugees, whether they are government and privately sponsored, generally experience greater integration challenges stemming from their pre-migration history of war and trauma. These challenges are exacerbated when one is a refugee claimant seeking Canada's protection at our borders, or within the country. The refugee claim process is complex and long with numerous documents to prepare, requires appearing before a Canadian court and entails costs related to one's stay in a country where you have no friends and relatives.

For those who have the courage and ability to go through this process especially when one is faced with gender loss or conflict, they are faced with navigating complicated settlement systems, isolation, lack of culturally-relevant activities and supports within LGBTQ+ community and/or newcomer services. Many are not connected or are hesitant to "come out" within their ethnocultural communities, especially if they experienced discrimination back home. LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers face unique settlement challenges, are often dealing with trauma, and need connection and safe support throughout their settlement journey or asylum process. This is the context for many participants in the Rainbow Refuge focus group discussions.

### **The Rainbow Refuge Group Participants**

Nearly all of the participants (15) indicated that they were refugees when they arrived - from government and privately sponsored as well as refugee claimants.

They are all newcomers with most of them having lived in the city for less than five years. Most of them are between the ages of 26-35 years. An equal number declared female and male gender, one was non-binary and one was transgender.

The participants in the focus groups were candid, animated and open with their stories of struggles and hopes. There were few opportunities for them to express their thoughts and feelings about their experience migrating to Canada.

### **The experience of LGBTQ+ newcomers: Emerging themes**

Once a refugee claim is accepted and the application for permanent residence is initiated, the refugee claimant can access a range of services to survive in Canada from obtaining a work permit, enrolling for school, social assistance and legal aid among others. However, accessing these support and services can be an arduous process. The participants share their experience:

#### **Our struggles and pain in surviving**

- Getting a job is key to our survival but it is the hardest hurdle. Being a Refugee Claimant puts one in a precarious situation because of their temporary status with minimal support

*Because work permits are centralised, it makes it very hard to get them, have to wait 3 months or more, let them be decentralised, if I live in Edmonton I should get my work permit from Edmonton without having to wait*

- Devaluing our skills and prior learning.. Many of those who had advanced degrees in their home country or those who have studied here still find themselves struggling to get a suitable job. Many end up in low paying minimum wage jobs barely enough to cover daily living. When employers ask for Canadian experience in job interviews, most participants perceive this as an unfair disadvantage for those applying for work the first time and especially for many who had fled their country as refugees.

*Employers ask an immigrant coming from my country (Uganda) - with a BA, a Masters, experience - for Canadian experience; they can't compete.*

*While working at low income jobs, I started computer training. I had a first interview for a job with a company, then at the second interview they said I had no Canadian work experience in the field, but I had related experience from home; then I was discouraged to go for similar work.*

- Navigating a complex system of job search. From looking for job postings, writing resumes, acquiring trade tickets and preparing for interviews (if you are lucky enough to get one!) presents a series of challenges one after the other. This also requires money which many participants do not have.

*Trade tickets (First Aid, WHMIS, etc.) are very hard to know where to get, agencies who give them out are out of funds & newcomers can't get them*

- Coping with personal circumstances - some participants have to cope with personal circumstances such as having a baby, getting cancer and experiencing domestic violence or a family with illness back home. Being temporary residents, social service support is limited and financial assistance is not adequate to cover rent and food

*I have a BA and MA in physics and was going for my PhD when I got cancer, so I didn't finish; being lesbian in my country, I wanted to leave and be safe and focus on my career*

### **Applying for a job at the City of Edmonton**

All of the participants have applied for jobs at the City of Edmonton and none of them have been successful. Since none of them received feedback about why they were not hired, they concluded:

*"The City doesn't employ Refugee Claimants because they're perceived as only being here temporarily"*

*People with PhDs, experience can't even get interviews in the City.*

*If you're not well connected in Edmonton, you can't get a job. "What are they looking for that I don't have???"*

### **Most important supports in getting a job**

The participants identified a wish list of supports that would increase their chances of getting a decent and suitable job for them:

- Regionalize processing of work permits in the area where the applicant lives to reduce costs and length of time to get them
- Employment agencies as well as employers need to help prepare newcomers who are looking for jobs for the roles and what is expected, both their formal roles as well as expectations in the workplace. It would help newcomer applicants if they are given the questions they'll be expected to answer to help the applicant frame their responses in English and most of all to create confidence in how to answer questions in interviews
- Asking for Canadian work experience for first time job seekers should be considered a discriminatory question
- Address discrimination on basis of non-anglo sounding names
- Develop a training program for new LGBTQ newcomers to train them for better employment opportunities

### **Equity and access to services and support**

*"Anyone who comes to Edmonton is a citizen of Edmonton and should be regarded as such. No questions should even be asked about immigration status."*

According to the participants, refugee claimants are the most underserved immigration class yet are the most vulnerable. Some of their experiences in accessing services and support are:

- Adequate and affordable housing is the biggest issue. They have experienced living in shelters and applying for rental housing.

*We wished that there were shelter and housing options for LGBTQ newcomers that are safe and culturally appropriate with adequate space and meals.*

*HOPE Mission is the worst, has the worst conditions, and treats people badly. Why doesn't the City look at how to fund organisations who know immigrants, to have their own shelters?*

*Newcomers won't have credit rating (to apply for rental housing), not having one damages their financial reputation before they even have a chance*

- Health care is difficult to access. Clinics need to verify our status before they can provide service; sometimes when they can't reach the Immigration office (busy or outside office hours), they can't be served.

*Medications are expensive when you have no or limited income or drug*



coverage. We also have to pay for medical exams required for immigration applications.

- Many opportunities and services are not available because of their Refugee Claimant status

*When I moved from first year Refugee Claimant to a student, I no longer qualified for it [Ride Transit Program] and U of A wasn't providing bus passes due to COVID.*

### **Our intersectional identity is an asset yet our biggest barrier**

*"Lived experience should count as work experience; and emotional intelligence - we already have this and it is a huge asset."*

Participants are proud of the diversity they bring to the city - their talent, their culture, their experiences as LGBTQ newcomers and their worldviews. They enrich the city yet their intersectional identities layered over each other has created multiple barriers and a difficult life. Whether they are looking for employment or accessing services and support, they have experienced being judged by their colour, their accent, their sexual orientation/gender identity and their immigration status. It was not a life they expected of Canada as a humanitarian country, and Edmonton with its reputation for being supportive of LGBTQ individuals.

*Policy makers have a very linear way of looking at these things; they should ask what brought this person here, the human aspect, look at intersectionalities (i.e. female, pregnant might face specific barriers).*

### **A voice to be heard and our presence to be visible**

Participants believe that they do have a voice since they were asked to participate in the focus groups; it means that someone wants to hear their voice. But they also want to see actions coming from this conversation, not just a document.

*The fact that we have this tonight means someone wants to hear our voice. But the proof will be in when we see it implemented, not just a transcript of what we said.*

To have a voice, participants also want to see themselves represented at City Council. They would also like to be invited to speak at the City Council.

*Can Council invite people from immigrant agencies to speak to them, to represent clients and speak to them about the challenges they face, or have people come down to hear our issues?*

### **What the City can do**

Participants spoke clearly about how the City should be **intentional** in addressing the needs of LGBTQ+ newcomers and Refugee Claimants because they are residents of Edmonton regardless of their status. The way to do this includes:

- Engaging them by reaching out, working with them to identify their needs, sentiments and aspirations
- Educating City staff about Refugee Claimants and the process involved to get their claim approved to find out how they can support and work with them
- Creating pathways to support their employment in the city such as:

A diverse and inclusive volunteer program so they can introduced to City programs and services

An orientation program for newcomers applying to the City with a special focus on LGBTQ refugees that also includes a multilingual employment hotline

- A municipal ID initiative to cover the two ID requirements for many refugee claimants looking for services
- There needs to be more education within City offices, Alberta Works, Registry, to understand the needs and circumstances of immigrants especially those with precarious situations

Lastly, the participants want to see that the City is a strong advocate for those who are unseen and unheard, to create awareness among the larger Edmonton community of their cultural wealth and contributions they bring to the city and to elevate their struggles and issues to higher levels of government.

## VIII. CIVIC COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

Focus group sessions were scheduled with each civic committee and community collaboratives<sup>9</sup> to tackle questions on emerging trends in the last 5-10 years that impact newcomers, how their work intersects with newcomers, core challenges of newcomers and their views on potential policy actions to address these challenges.

The conversations with members of these civic and community groups showed a high level of awareness of newcomer issues and the systemic roots of these issues. Many of the participants underscored the role of municipalities, the City of Edmonton, in particular in addressing these issues.

### Emerging Themes

#### Intersection of their work with newcomers

All of the civic committees believe that their work intersects with newcomers within their own specific mandates. The areas where they impact newcomers are: civic participation, employment, education, communication, food security, collection of disaggregated data and access to support for integration.

- Encouraging immigrant women to learn about political participation through partnerships with immigrant-serving agencies to provide education and mentorship opportunities.
- Advocating for holistic wrap-around services for immigrant women and youth who are adjusting to the new city
- Elevating food security issues relevant to immigrant youth and families such as the need to have culturally appropriate food in social support programs
- Initiating a demographic survey of youth that captures diversity of newcomer youth on an ongoing basis
- Engaging the disability communities to explore how we welcome newcomers with disabilities and how we view people with disabilities from a cultural perspective
- Advocating for an inclusive economy that should benefit newcomers who aspire to work in jobs that pay a decent income, recognizes their talents and skills and encourages them to be creative and enterprising

#### Changes and trends in the immigration and settlement sector in the last ten years

Participants shared their observations based on data available to them and their own perception of changes and trends in their areas of work.

- **Sustained growth of immigrant population**  
There is a general observation that the immigrant population, particularly

---

<sup>9</sup> WAVE (Womens Advocacy and Voice in Edmonton), CEYC (City of Edmonton Youth Council), AAC (Accessibility Advisory Committee), ELIP (Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership) and EPE (EndPovertyEdmonton)

skilled migrants, continues to grow despite a slowdown in arrivals in 2020-2021 due to COVID. This sustained immigration is needed by Canada to address an aging population and labour shortage.

In Edmonton, there is steady growth of the newcomer Francophone community. Although there seems to be an increased movement to smaller cities, most newcomers still settle in larger cities primarily because of easier access to employment and other services.

- **COVID amplified existing inequities**  
Low income, barriers to access health and social services and racism are inequities experienced by many migrants prior to COVID. The pandemic further showed how these inequities have resulted in increased risk to infection, experiences of hate incidents and loss of jobs.
- **Racism focuses attention on systemic problems**  
The resurgence of the anti-racism movement makes an anti-racism/racial equity lens compelling in how we view the world. Immigration and settlement are no longer seen from a program and service perspective but to view newcomer barriers and challenges from its systemic roots and the inequities experienced by racialized migrants.
- **Inequities in emergency response to refugee issues**  
The federal, provincial and municipal response to the Ukrainian refugees has been overwhelming. This level of support has not been observed for many other refugees such as the Afghans and Syrians.
- **Declining support for community-oriented initiatives in migrant communities**  
There is an observed increase in funding for programs and services to support newcomers while funding for community development initiatives for migrant communities seems to be decreasing. There seems to be more funding for direct front-line services to individuals rather than funding for community-based initiatives to ethnocultural organizations, community economic development etc to build their capacity to implement their own solutions to community issues.
- **Focus on newcomer living with disabilities**  
Since 2018, Canada's immigration admission system has been updated to adopt a new policy on medical inadmissibility that balances the protection of its publicly funded health and social services and updating the policy to bring it in line with current views on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.<sup>10</sup> It considers migrants living with disabilities to have as many skills to bring to Canada. Yet, settlement services have not been well-prepared to support them. There have been situations of acquired disabilities particularly for those who have temporary status. There is a need to increase attention on how we welcome and support newcomers living with disabilities.
- **A hopeful change in our communities**  
There is an emergence of strong grassroots organisations in migrant communities who have stepped up to advocate for themselves, to participate in public decision-making and to focus attention on the needs of their communities.

### **Core issues immigrants still struggle with**

Participants discussed the many challenges, barriers and issues that migrants struggle with in their daily lives. They also offered their own understanding and

---

<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. April 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2018/04/government-of-canada-brings-medical-inadmissibility-policy-in-line-with-inclusivity-for-persons-with-disabilities.html>

analysis of the roots of these issues and challenges.

- **Overarching problem: Inequity and racism**

Participants believe that the problem that newcomers face is inequity rooted in racism historically entrenched in Canada's immigration policies. It starts with an unfair immigrant selection system focusing on skills that will not be recognized in the Canadian employment sector. This inequity is extended once the newcomer starts to access services and support needed for settlement and integration - from language barriers to cultural differences to discrimination. This inequity is aggravated when a newcomer has disabilities where access to employment is further limited.

*Inequity is a big overarching theme*

*For example inequity in hiring practices. Often immigrants don't have equitable access to employment. We often don't value international experience. It's an unreasonable ask for people who are skilled workers to run around and gather Canadian experience.*

*Adding to comments on inequities: In the past, things were so precarious. They (newcomers) get support, but just enough to get them afloat and survive. That's been the approach for most of our policies in the past. Just enough to keep them afloat. With COVID we realized just how precarious it was and how dangerous that precarity is. So I think about how we do things in a way that are sustainable and resilient?*

*Newcomer families with family members with disabilities is always top of mind for me in terms of folks who arguably face the greatest inequities in service delivery and quality of life in Edmonton.*

The City as an employer is expected to be transparent in its employment practices as a public institution. For example, data on hiring practices are not well understood and create undue barriers to newcomers looking for employment at the City. The City needs to ramp up and improve its hiring practices, to help newcomers understand them, but also it needs to be open and transparent about reporting regularly to Edmontonians on progress and/or challenges in advancing diversity in the workplace

*How this plays out with the City of Edmonton is troubling. They have never shared data about their hiring practices. If we are championing the work among newcomers, they need to be more transparent about their hiring practices, who is in their management positions, and how they acquire contracts.*

- **Long-term underemployment of migrants: chronic and persistent impacts**

The devaluation of foreign credentials which includes education and work experience create the conditions for prolonged employment in low paying jobs for many newcomers that have multiple impacts: loss of opportunities, mental health issues, poverty and many others. It underlies the challenges that migrants struggle with on a daily basis such as:

- Housing affordability due to increasing rent, limited subsidised housing and inability to own a house
- Affordability for essential services such as transit, daycare, activities for children and youth
- Risk of being exposed to financial fraud
- Mental health issues from daily stresses of earning a living

- Domestic violence related to gender role conflicts, stress of daily living and lack of knowledge about available support for women in abusive situations
- **Migrant youth challenges**  
Youth adjusting to their new life in Canada and in Edmonton find themselves grappling with different norms and structures in the school system and in the community. They struggle to speak a new language, experience bullying, see their parents striving to understand how the school system works and searching for a community to connect with.

*ESL experience can be difficult. Can be pulled out of the classroom to learn English and this can make it hard to be included.*

*Refugee youth don't have resources in their first language, parents don't have opportunities to learn how their children are doing in school due to lack of translators, appropriate support, curriculum translated into other languages.*

- **Search for a space and opportunity to build connections and community**  
Loneliness and isolation are foremost in the newcomer experience. A space for gathering is the primary need but it has to come with resources for opportunities to bring people into migrant communities - first to build social bonds within the same cultural communities where newcomers can find comfort and familiarity and then to foster connections with other cultural communities and networks.

*The importance of space, both physical and virtual spaces, as a platform for connection and showcasing talent, skills, and knowledge on many levels is very important. It is interesting to think about how a policy(ies) might support such a vision for supporting many ethnocultural communities*

### **A policy perspective to guide actions to tackle immigration and settlement issues in the city**

#### **An intentional approach to reveal and confront inequities**

This means that there is a clear purpose and focus in revealing the differential impacts and disparities that migrants are experiencing in the immigration and settlement process, including the markers of how these disparities are being addressed.

*What is the City's role in upholding the dignity of people who live here and those who are at their most vulnerable??? Can a policy be one pathway to that?*

*Intersectionalities of racism and exclusion may play a factor in the need to have this policy addressed.*

*Every time a new policy or initiative is developed: how are you considering how newcomers will be impacted?*

#### **A systemic lens in identifying actions**

Participants mentioned promoting the use of racial equity assessment tools in identifying gaps in systemic practices that create disparities and to incorporate racial equity and justice in putting forward recommendations for actions.

*How are we transforming systems to be more inclusive and to meaningfully address some of the barriers that newcomers face in schools, employment organisations, post-secondary institutions, other orgs etc.*

*We should be doing racial-equity assessments on any program started. Raise the standard for all.*

*The city is doing interesting work with GBA+ and anti-racism. How do we ensure that whenever there is a new policy or initiative, that they take it through a lens that considers immigrants, indigenous, and anti-racism? Because I get afraid that new trends will shift the focus away*

### **A participatory process to engage and empower newcomers in thoughtful and innovative solutions**

Lived experience matters! Meaningful solutions come from the people closest to the problem. Engagement with people and communities should be the anchor to ground the policy directly from people's realities and aspirations.

*Ensuring that all city initiatives are Community-driven and informed by community. Very little inclusion at this time. Mostly unpaid opportunities and engagements.*

*A lot of initiatives done by the city are often ill-advised when it comes to newcomers*

*Funding from the city is lacking in a few areas: allocating things that are spiritually and culturally relevant to the community they are targeting, multi-year resources that are more sustainable. Broader issue in our sector: we are often fighting for scraps as non-profits. Little emphasis on innovative practices. So focus on innovative practices that are changing the game. And research-driven work. Showcase that there is a community need.*

### **Trust-building with migrant communities: Transparency and accountability in following through policy actions**

Trust is essential in building relationships with migrant communities who have feelings of distrust with governments because of long standing inaction of many issues experienced by newcomers. There is a strong desire that there should be transparency in how the City develops actions in the policy and to ensure that there are mechanisms for accountability of the actions implemented.

*To be aware the CoE is organic, how to make sure these issues are codified so that it does not matter what we say today, but these are going to be the benchmarks, retained for future generations of employees, not just those who hear us now. How do we keep the CoE accountable to ourselves and Edmontonians?*

*Transparency and accountability: make sure we build that in. Evaluation of these services. It needs to be closing a loop and coming back. How have we addressed the gaps? We need to hold governments accountable.*

### **Role of the City: Champion and model in welcoming newcomers**

As one of the primary destinations for migrant newcomers, the City of Edmonton should make welcoming newcomers a priority. It has a responsibility to work collaboratively with other orders of government to advocate for increased and sustained support for newcomers and bring issues relevant to newcomer integration beyond its municipal mandate to other orders of government.

*Immigration and welcoming newcomers need to be a City priority.*

*CoE can play a role in times of inclusion by not only staying on the policy documents but ensuring that these are reflected in the municipal services (existing and new) the way cities are built, design of programs, naming of facilities, art work we show, street names, etc. - we are missing the ACT of inclusion.*

***Make the language strong on Edmonton municipal role in the policy. Care for those who live here. It protects Edmontonians . Very strong last words to wrap up.***

## IX. OUR COLLECTIVE INSIGHTS TO INFORM C529 REVIEW

The wealth of knowledge gathered from the experience of the four groups participants in the community discussions was dense and thick in content and emotions. Within the context of the C529 Policy Review, the intent is to extract the most essential elements of their lived experience and breadth of insight so that it informs the design of an updated policy in ways that truly puts forward the **people**, most especially those who will be impacted by the policy. These three themes seek to capture their deepest yearnings of what could lead to a better life in the city.

### **Decent and suitable employment remains the singular, persistent and most elusive aspiration of many newcomers.**

The ability to work in a job that makes use of one's talents and skills and one that allows you to earn an income that tends to the needs of daily living seemed to elude many newcomers as well as those who have lived here for many years. The promise of immigration contradicts the realities of settlement and integration that bred underemployment and unemployment of racialized migrants. The multiple and layered impacts on migrants - from inadequate housing options, food insecurity, family dysfunctions are expressed in data about precarious physical and mental health of migrants.

While employment is a multi-jurisdiction and multi-sector responsibility, the City of Edmonton is the face on the ground among public institutions interacting with newcomers arriving in the city throughout the year. For one, the City stands out as one of the largest employers in Edmonton and therefore has the capacity and resources to lead and model promising ideas from those who are experiencing the impacts of underemployment and unemployment presented in this report. The City of Edmonton as a public institution committed to advancing social goals and the best interests of its citizens, it is an expectation that its residents will hold the City accountable for.

### **An urgent call to action and accountability to foster migrant newcomers' path to a sustainable and prosperous future in the city**

"We've waited long enough!" The racial equity and justice movement that has awed the world in the last two years is a pressing call for real action to tackle the roots of inequities. People are looking for the strongest commitment from the City that they genuinely value newcomers and migrants. A policy represents the highest level of collective commitment from the City and a gateway to actions and resources. It must embody clarity in its intention to change an inequitable system beyond addressing its cracks and margins and more importantly assign responsibilities and accountabilities.

Participants spoke about **data for action** - data that exposes the disparities of access and reveals outcomes for racialized migrants, becoming portals to meaningful solutions. In this way, outcomes can be monitored in truthful ways that will renew people's faith and belief in governments and institutions.

### **A strong and mutually reinforcing community-city partnership builds trust and confidence between community and municipality**

The strength of governments and institutions lies in the trust and confidence of the people. Participants are looking at beyond one-way consultations to authentic collaboration and co-development of solutions to address migrant challenges. It enjoins the City to have confidence in communities, valuing cultural ways of doing things and acknowledges ambiguity in embracing a relational approach. This is a first step to sharing power - a fundamental tenet of equity.



## **X. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

These core themes discussed earlier identified three broad areas of policy development to consider in the work to update the C529 Policy.

### **From economic integration to inclusive economy**

Economic integration, which is considered the bedrock of immigration policy and a core expectation of newcomers, has been fraught with problems with receiving cities as well as employers. The shift towards pinpointing systemic roots of migrant newcomers' disheartening economic outcomes suggests a just and equitable approach to equip cities with the vision, values and tools to welcome newcomers with dignity and respect.

An inclusive economy is one in which there is expanded opportunity for more broadly shared prosperity especially for those facing the greatest barriers to advancing their well-being. A primary principle of inclusive economy is that people are part of the equation of business decision making which means that conditions are created to achieve parity of opportunities for those with the most barriers. The municipality is the best arena by which this can be done; it is the jurisdiction most closest to the people. When you leave no one behind, the city benefits overall.

### **The continuum of inclusion: access, voice, control**

The inability of the city to reach migrant communities from communicating about city services and programs to consulting them on city policies and decisions presents an inclusion issue. It calls for a radical approach beyond the traditional ways the City has been conducting public engagement. The City has to address issues of access - how it uses its resources to open doors for migrants to feel welcome to express themselves; how it creates conditions by which their voices are meaningfully heard and how it is opening portals for sharing power to make people and community at the centre of decisions and actions.

### **Equitable and inclusive innovation starts with the people most impacted**

Great ideas come from people with lived experience! Their personal knowledge from direct experience enables ideas that matter most to them. These focus group discussions showed the wealth of potential and promising ideas for actions to improve their lives. Community members not only shared their experiences, highlighted barriers, but provided a spectrum of actions that fall under the City role and mandate, ways the City can address their challenges and with them, build a more inclusive city. These include, among others:

- Interactive, experiential and targeted learning support for newcomers seeking employment in the city for the first time rather than the traditional cookie cutter employment training
- Co-designing city programs and initiatives such as recreation and public engagement among others with migrant communities to incorporate culturally responsive ways and build relationships with them
- Migrants as cultural brokers and liaisons between the city and their communities to achieve effective communication and awareness

The City only needs to learn from them and let these ideas grow. A policy creates the conditions for inception and support. Lastly, the challenge is for these ideas to blossom into real alternatives that can be embedded in a policy so that the work of welcoming newcomers in a city built on equity and justice can happen. It is possible and it is necessary.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 - Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the hard work and passion of the community animators and documentors for capturing the lived experience of the community participants in the various focus groups across communities.

1. **China- Mian Wang and her Documentor- Sally Xu**
2. **French/Francophone- Salamane Yameogo and his documentor- Anna Ouedraogo**
3. **Eritrea- Sabrina Gebreyesus**
4. **Mexico- Alejandra Diaz Flores**
5. **Nepal- Priyanka Sharma and her Documentor Manira Gautam**
6. **Pakistan- Amna Zafa**
7. **Philippines- Nicole Nebril and his Documentor- Roanne Andaya**
8. **Sierra Leone- Martha Sellu and her Documentor- Kai Ngegba**
9. **Somalia- Abdi Omar and his Documentor Mulki Ali**
10. **India- Simran Gulati and her Documentor Gauri Bhardwaj.**

We also acknowledge the skillful coordination of the community focus groups and support for the community animators and documentors:

**Tania Ymbi**  
**Community Animator Coordinator**  
**Edmonton Multicultural Coalition**

**Dr. Mitali Banerjee**  
**Executive Director**  
**Edmonton Multicultural Coalition**

Our sincerest appreciation to the leaders and members of the various civic committees and community collaboratives who provided us with their insights on having worked with newcomers and migrants.

More importantly, we are humbled by the stories and wisdom that participants in the community focus groups and the Rainbow Refugee Group. We will strive to make your stories live and grow so that equity can become a reality.

## APPENDIX 2 - Community Focus Group Agenda and Questions

Time	Topic	Speaking Notes
5 Min	Welcome Land Acknowledgement	<p>Suggested Land Acknowledgement in your own language:</p> <p>This land has been welcoming guests for tens of thousands of years.</p> <p>We wish to thank the Indigenous peoples of Treaty Six Territory: the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others.</p> <p>We are indebted to their grace, hospitality and sacrifice. And for the weaving of the rich fabric of histories, languages, and cultures of this place.</p> <p>May we fall in love with this land, continue the grace we have received for all peoples and celebrate the unity that grows out of our diversity.</p>
10 Min	Introductions Ask participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Your name</li> <li>● How long have you lived in Edmonton</li> <li>● Which neighbourhood do you live in?</li> </ul>	
10 min	Why Are We Here? Overview of the Focus Group	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2007 the City of Edmonton adopted a policy on immigration and settlement that has guided the work of the city to welcome and support newcomers.</li> <li>● There have been a lot of changes since 2007. (Can you think of what those are?) We want to make sure that this policy is still relevant to what migrants are experiencing today.</li> </ul> <p>Our focus group discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For today's discussion we want to hear about your experience: about how your life has been in Edmonton from the time you arrived until today.</li> <li>● Your thoughts and ideas will help inform how the City of Edmonton can continue to support you as you seek a better future for you and your family.</li> </ul> <p>Our Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will ensure that this is a safe place for you to share your stories and your ideas. Please feel free to leave if at any time you feel uncomfortable to continue.</li> <li>● Our conversations will be recorded. Please raise your hands if you have any concerns about being recorded.</li> <li>● You will remain anonymous which means that your name will not appear in a report or any statement attributed to you or any particular community.</li> </ul>

		<p>How we participate and contribute in this discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One person speaks at a time</li> <li>● Raise your hand if you have something to say</li> <li>● Listen to what other people are saying</li> <li>● No mocking or challenging other people's ideas</li> <li>● Respect each other</li> </ul>
<p>40 Mins</p>	<p>Conversations about Pathways to a Secure Future</p>	<p>We know from our lived experience and from numerous research that many newcomers experience challenges in finding suitable employment - that values our education back home and gives us decent income. We also know that many migrants are still struggling to find services for daily and special needs. Our conversation will focus on your lived experience and ideas about how a pathway for a secure future for migrants can happen.</p> <p><u>On employment:</u>  <b>Orienting/Warm-Up Questions</b>          Ask for a show of hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How many of you are currently working?</li> <li>● Full time?</li> <li>● More than one job?</li> <li>● Self-employed?</li> <li>● Currently looking for work?</li> </ul> <p>Core questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What would be one significant or important support you need to get the right job for you? <i>Why is this so?</i></li> <li>● Have any of you ever tried to apply for a job at the City of Edmonton?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>If not, why?</i></li> <li>○ <i>If yes, what was your experience?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Have any of you thought of setting up your own business? Do you know any newcomers who have set-up their own business?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>If yes, what was their experience?</i></li> <li>○ <i>If not, why?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Would you say you are happy or satisfied with your current work? <i>Why or Why not?</i></li> </ul> <p><u>On access to services</u>  <b>Orienting/Warm-Up Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can you tell me what programs and services you know about that the City of Edmonton provides to its residents?</li> </ul> <p>Core questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which of these programs and services have you used? How did you learn about these programs and services?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Probe: Do you get information from the City of Edmonton? What kind of information? How is it delivered - language, mails, email</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>,etc?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you seek out information from the City of Edmonton on your own? For what? How?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What was your experience accessing and using these programs and services?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe for: Did it meet your needs? How were you treated by staff?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can the City best reach out and encourage newcomers to learn about and access its services?</li> </ul>
<p>30 Mins</p>	<p><i>Conversations about Sense of Belonging and Inclusion</i></p>	<p><i>When we move to a new place, we look for that feeling of being home. For many migrants it seems hard when we do not feel welcomed or safe or part of a community. In this conversation we want to hear about your thoughts on how Edmonton could be that city where migrants feel included and accepted - a sense of belonging.</i></p> <p><b>Orienting/Warm-Up questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think about when you first moved into your new home in the city?</li> <li>● How did you feel? Did you meet people in your neighbourhood?</li> <li>● Who are you friends with (work, neighbourhood etc)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Core questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What activities have you participated in your community and/or neighbourhood:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Events - what kind of events</li> <li>○ Membership in organisation (what organisations)-</li> <li>○ School based activities or programs</li> <li>○ Volunteering - what and where</li> <li>○ Public engagement - what, when</li> <li>○ Voting</li> <li>○ Campaigning for a candidate or political party</li> <li>○ Church group or religious organisation</li> <li>○ Advocacy for a social issue</li> <li>○ Sports and recreation</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What has been the one most challenging experience for you living in the city?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Probe: Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood? Why or why not?</li> <li>○ Probe: Do you know if immigrant women, children, youth, seniors feel safe in your neighbourhood? Why or Why not?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you feel that you have a voice (or that migrants can influence decisions) in this city? If yes, how so? If not, why?</li> <li>● Would you like to have a City staff contact you or</li> </ul>

		your group to provide more information about City programs and services?
5 Mins	Closing and Wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thank the participants for their participation, insights and wisdom.</li> <li>● You will receive a gift card in the mail as our way of saying thank you.</li> <li>● Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or additional ideas that you want to share.</li> <li>● We will ensure you are informed of the work and reports based on these conversations and our research that go to City Council this fall.</li> </ul>