

Update: Multiculturalism

Initiative Title:	Multiculturalism
City Council Lead(s):	Mayor Mandel and Councillor Sohi
Department Lead(s):	Lyall Brenneis, Community Services

Objective:

Encourage and champion inclusive municipal activity and projects that welcome newcomers to Edmonton, recognize their contributions, increase the ethno-cultural diversity of Edmonton and the City workforce, and achieve intercultural learning and harmony.

Key Outcomes, Projects or Activities and their Status as of May 2013:

- 1) Continued development and delivery of municipal services that welcome newcomers to Edmonton and that support their settlement, social and economic inclusion and contributions, and likelihood of permanent residency – consistent with City Policy 529 Immigration and Settlement.

Space access and development

- Continued consultation with multicultural communities regarding the anticipated opening of the Claireview Community Recreation Centre, which contains a Multicultural hub. Proposed governance models are in development, and the public art process is becoming realized. Anticipated opening late spring and early summer 2014.
- Partnership development work is ongoing with the South Edmonton Multicultural Centre located in Ellerslie (slated to open early summer 2013); and a proposed Central Downtown location is being explored to provide new space and programming services for community based groups under a shared services model.

Emerging Immigrant and Refugee Grant Program

- Community Services continues to provide entry level grant funding for Community Events, Cultural Heritage Projects, and Space Rental Subsidies. The Program Delivery Partnership Grant continued in 2012 and 2013 and encourages collaboration between newer ethnocultural community organizations and established service organizations/agencies to address gaps and barriers in existing programs and services to newcomer communities.

Organizational Development support to community based organizations

- Core to the department's efforts is the ongoing support provided to ethnocultural community organizations by staff around broad based capacity building: board, organization, and leadership development; funding sources; project development and implementation; networking and partnerships; and accessing space and

other resources. Retasking community based social workers to focus on city-wide social issues that newcomer communities face was a change made in spring 2012.

Developing and adapting programs and services to meet diverse cultural needs

- Community Services continues support to the Africa Centre as a hub for African community organizations, programs, and events. The Africa Centre staff and City staff participated in a provincial wide panel at an immigration and settlement sector conference this past spring 2013 showcasing best practices in integration and community development.
- Community Services staff continue to assist groups to develop and/or adapt recreational programs to meet their community and cultural needs.
 - The Female Swim Program at Eastglen Leisure Centre designed to meet the specific cultural needs of women continues and is well attended.
 - The Rising Youth Program for African Youth offers recreation, leadership, and volunteering experience and mentorship through a full time African Outreach Program Coordinator.

2) Partnership initiatives and programs that help Edmontonians establish greater intercultural and interracial understanding, respect and harmony.

- The Community Services department successfully hosted with the leadership of Mayor Mandel, two *Women's Symposiums on Building Leadership and Community* in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013. It brought together over 550 women from a diverse range of service and business sectors, cultural backgrounds and ages to discuss issues of concern and relevance to women in the Edmonton community.
- A third Youth Career Day (March 2013) attracted close to 350 students, parents, exhibitors, and presenters from diverse multicultural communities.
- The City continues to support various events that are relevant to the multicultural communities; a) Daughter's Day event focusing on women and girls of all cultures (September) b) Annual RISE Awards hosted by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers celebrating the accomplishments of immigrants and employers (May), c) Nagar Kirtan Parade and PARIVAAR Family Violence Initiative in South Asian Communities of Edmonton (May), d) Africa Day and All-African Soccer Tournament celebrating Pan-Africanism in Edmonton with a soccer tournament and dinner and dance, are examples of a few.
- Staff provided support to *Alberta Cultures Days Dialogue of Drums* bringing together groups from the Aboriginal, Asian and African communities to celebrate the percussion sounds of each culture. The event was hosted in the Prince of Wales Armoury.

3) Continued implementation of Racism Free Edmonton commitments to prevent and address racism in all partner institutions, in key service sectors and in the community – consistent with the Council-approved Racism Free Edmonton Action Plan.

- Racism Free Edmonton commissioned a benchmark survey measuring Edmontonians perception on racism and discrimination using results from 2010 University of Alberta Population Lab survey and publicly released the report at an open event held in City Hall, June 2012. Partner groups have been using the report in presentations, and plans are underway to collect data for comparisons in 2014 for analysis and anticipated release in 2015.
- Educational sessions continued to be delivered to over 150 participants from various RFE partner institutions and community organizations in 2012 & 2013.
- Racism Free Edmonton partnered with the John Humphrey's Centre for Peace and Human Rights to host its inaugural Gall Conference on the state of Human Rights in Alberta, and hosted a community forum the next day on the status of free speech legislation in Alberta and Canada.
- Racism Free Edmonton joined with the Centre for Race and Culture, Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action and Kings University College to recognize March 21 as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, by hosting a noon hour awareness event at City Hall, and a community forum in the evening on the U of A Campus.

Future Steps:

- Multicultural Relations area will continue to engage multicultural communities and work collaboratively with internal business units as emerging issues of concerns to newcomers arise. The provision of services relevant to supporting the settlement, social and economic inclusion and contributions, and likelihood of permanent residency of newcomers will continue to be a focus for the Community Services department as growth trends indicate only newcomers will grow Canadian populations in the future years.
- An application was put forward by the City of Edmonton to Citizenship and Immigration Canada in summer 2012 for the development of a "Local Immigration Partnership" of which the entity would create a platform for the coordination of the Immigration and Settlement Sector to plan, prioritize and harmonize services for newcomers in the community. An announcement is still forthcoming from the Federal Government, however the "Local Immigration Partnership" was identified as the Western Canadian Regions highest priority focus for developing projects and initiatives in the "National Call for Proposals".
- As not-for-profits feel the worldwide effect of the slowdown of economies, increased pressure from reduced funding for programs and services is placing pressure on municipalities to provide resources such as space or additional supports. The provision of space for newcomer and multicultural communities such as the development of "Multicultural Centres" means assisting groups to navigate complex systems of multi-tenant, multi-usage facility access and negotiate cooperation and collaboration around service provision to addressing complex social issues.
- Administration will continue to work with current Racism Free Edmonton partners and other community stakeholders to review and revisit the mandate of the Initiative, examining the scope and focus. Consideration of the expansion to include other forms of discrimination more than racism will be explored.