

DREAM IN COLOUR

Victoria Welcoming City Action Plan



City logo in blue?

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Victoria's Welcoming City Action Plan

The work of the Welcoming City Task Force, the City of Victoria, consultants, and community partners along with public input has led to the co-creation of the following actions to help make Victoria a more welcoming city. The Welcoming City Action Plan accompanies the Welcoming City Strategy and contains a series of recommended actions and targeted timelines for completion. It also provides a framework for accountability to measure progress using the Welcoming Standard as a guide while remaining unique to Victoria.

The City of Victoria is well positioned to continue to lead in the shared vision of Victoria as a city where newcomers are warmly welcomed and well supported. Increasing cultural literacy, combined with a commitment to a shared responsibility for inclusion amongst community partners, will lead to all residents benefiting from a deepened understanding and welcoming of diversity.

Framework for Accountability

The framework for accountability measures progress to determine how the recommended actions make life better for newcomers and long-term residents. Monitoring progress can be achieved through annual targeted surveys that track key population and program-based metrics year over year based on the welcoming outcomes defined in this plan.

Identifying whether anyone is better off as a result of this work, is the most challenging part of the Action Plan. In all cases, measurements will indicate how particular policies, programs, and processes as well as changes in practices, make a difference to the lives of newcomers. Results will determine if adjustments are necessary to achieve defined goals. It is expected that the City will seek to engage in partnerships with organizations that have already established, programs, events and initiatives which are aligned with the recommendations of the Welcoming City Action Plan. It is important to note that the community driven outcomes themselves are goals to achieve a more welcoming city and may need to be further refined as baselines are established and each recommended action is defined, developed, and delivered.

This approach will allow the City to meet the objectives of the Welcoming City Strategy, support community partner organizations that already do this work, and ensure that the target audience of newcomers and immigrants are benefiting from these actions.

Partnerships, Policies, Programs and Practices identified in the Welcoming Strategy

The Welcoming Strategy outlines partnerships, policies, programs, and practices required to achieve the community's vision for a welcoming city. These recommendations reflect the informed desires of the community translated into practical, implementable actions that can be accomplished ***in partnership*** and ***in community*** over the next five years.

In its leadership role, the City of Victoria will identify and define the community partner relationships required to achieve the community's desired outcomes through these actions.

Primary Actions:

- The City to continue to provide access to municipal **programs** and services regardless of immigration status.
- In **partnership** provide education on City bylaw, law enforcement, justice, and legal systems.
- Incorporate Indigenous leadership and communities in all municipal welcoming **practices, programs, and events**.
- Implement Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and Anti-Racism **policies and programs** at the City of Victoria.
- In **partnership** develop a visual identifier for businesses, organization, partners, institutions, and schools which are recognized as being inclusive and welcoming.
- In **partnership** with law enforcement, safety agencies and emergency services provide policies and programs for greater EDI education and accountability.
- In **partnership** create mentorship opportunities for pairing newcomers and long-term residents
- The City to establish a Welcoming Leadership Committee to support community **partnerships, events and activities** that highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and inclusion.
- The City to advocate for access to subsidized transportation services and **programs**.
- In **partnership** support **programs** that bridge the gap in settlement services for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons without access to critical services.

Secondary Actions:

- In **partnership**, Parent Advisory Councils establish and advocate for newcomer family needs and create safe spaces for children in schools.
- The City increase newcomer youth and young adult social **programs**.
- The City to increase **programs** that bring together long-term residents and newcomer to co-develop and co-deliver community events and projects.
- The City EDI **Policy** to include newcomer representation on Council Advisory Committees.
- In **partnership**, establish a centrally located newcomer information centre that includes a reporting structure to provide confidential support for incidents of racism, fearmongering, discrimination, and barriers to access.
- The City to establish a newcomer classroom where students can learn about the role of municipal government, city services and **programs**.
- In **partnership** create opportunities for informal connections and information sharing between law and Bylaw enforcement and newcomers.

Additional Actions:

- The City advocate for increased access to health care services and **programs** for newcomers.
- The City to develop an employment readiness **program** for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons.
- The City to expand community liaison and develop positions to include creative and arts-based **programs** for community building.
- The City to establish a **practice** of hosting an annual welcoming event for newcomers to promote and celebrate social, economic, and cultural benefits and contributions that newcomers bring and officially welcome those who have recently called Victoria home.
- In **partnership** create multiple opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to share stories and life experiences.

This Action Plan further defines targeted timelines for these actions in short (1-2 years), medium (2-3 years) and long-term (3-5 years) implementation steps based on ease of execution, resource

requirements, the need for collaborative development with community partner organizations, and necessary measures for success.

Implementation Plan

These recommended actions are organized under the seven key impact areas outlined in the Welcoming Standard which was used as the guidebook for assessing Victoria as a welcoming city.

Government Leadership

In welcoming places, the local government implements systems and programs that strengthen community efforts and embed inclusion within government agencies.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
1.1 City Council to implement comprehensive Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism policies aimed at changing systemic practices and processes across local government and agencies.	1 - 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City-run EDI programs and practices include a review and reporting process. ● Diverse representation across government and agencies is tracked and reported.
1.2 City Council to implement a policy that ensures municipal services, programs and supports are available and accessible to all newcomers without fear, regardless of their immigration status, and everyone is treated with respect and dignity.	1-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City programs and services are being accessed by newcomers. ● Information on municipal programs and services easily accessible to newcomers. ● Newcomers experience barrier-free access to all City services and programs (including police services). ● Fewer reports from newcomers of disrespectful or undignified treatment.
1.3 The City to include Indigenous leaders and communities in all welcoming activities, events, and programs to ensure greater education and understanding of Indigenous rights, history, traditions, and culture amongst newcomers.	< 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indigenous leaders and community members participate in all welcoming city decisions, activities, and events.
1.4 Transition the Welcoming City Task Force into an advisory body to Council and City staff for the first three years of the Welcoming City Strategy implementation.	< 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community leaders collaborate and provide in-kind support to community groups for events and activities that highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and inclusion. ● Progress is made on the Welcoming City Action Plan as determined at quarterly meetings of the Welcoming City Task Force.

<p>1.5 In partnership, the City to develop or support an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Business Certification Program based on user reviews to recognize excellence in EDI practices via a visual marker such as a poster or sticker that can be displayed on their premises.</p>	<p>2 - 3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local businesses participate in a program where their EDI practices are acknowledged by the residents of Victoria. Fewer newcomer reports of disrespectful or undignified treatment when interacting with businesses, organizations, partners, institutions, schools, and employers. The Chamber of Commerce recognizes members of the Business Certification Program.
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Equitable Access

Welcoming places work to ensure community services and opportunities are available to all residents, including immigrants.

<p>Recommended Actions</p>	<p>Targeted timeline</p>	<p>Community Desired Outcomes</p>
<p>2.1 In partnership, the City to establish a centrally located information hub for newcomers that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access free, confidential services in multiple languages and media formats. a confidential reporting structure to record (and address) incidences of racism, fearmongering, and barriers to access, discrimination, violence, or any other personal affront. 	<p>2- 3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on programs, services, events, and activities for newcomers is collected regularly, coordinated and easily accessible via one access point. Newcomers experience fewer incidents of racism, fearmongering, barriers to access, and discrimination. The City and community partners report ease of access to their programs and services because of the information hub. The City’s website includes a webpage providing a list of community resources to assist newcomers to Victoria.
<p>2.2 In partnership, the City to coordinate, develop and support Welcome Programs that educate newcomers on City Bylaw and law enforcement practices, the justice and legal systems, access to legal services, social services and supports, worker rights and issues, local government and political systems including elections, public programs, facilities, services, and events, etc.</p>	<p>1 - 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers influence educational program needs and development. Newcomers participate in Welcome Programs. Newcomers are satisfied with the Welcome Programs.
<p>2.3 The City to develop or support community partner programs that bridge the gaps in settlement services</p>	<p>2 - 3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers influence the need and development of programs that bridge the gaps in settlement services.

for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons without access to critical services prior to having Permanent Resident status.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers participate in programs that bridge gaps in settlement services.
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Civic Engagement

Welcoming communities actively ensure that residents, including newcomers, fully participate in civic life by increasing access to leadership and democratic spaces.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
3.1 All Council advisory committees to include newcomers to ensure diverse perspectives in civic engagement, increase access for newcomers to city leaders and encourage newcomer participation in civic life.	< 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased newcomer representation on Council Committees. Increased newcomer participation in municipal elections.
3.2 The City to host or support an annual Welcoming Event for newcomers to promote and celebrate the social, economic, and cultural benefits and contributions that newcomers bring to the city and welcome those who came within the previous year.	< 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Welcoming Event for newcomers added to Canada Day programming. Newcomer participation, recognition, and celebration at Welcoming Event. Welcoming Event is well attended by newcomers and long-term residents. Programing showcases newcomer cultures and promotes inclusion In partnership, the City supports organizations with established events and initiatives that promote and celebrate the social, economic, and cultural benefits and contributions newcomers bring.
3.3 The City to develop a grant program that brings long-time residents and newcomers together annually to co-develop and co-deliver a community project such as adding picnic tables to a gathering space, creating a community public art project, restoring, or upgrading a playground, etc.	2 - 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff administer City grant programs that encourage partnerships between newcomers and long-time residents to collaborate on placemaking and community events. Newcomers and long-term residents participate in co-created events and projects.

Connected Communities

Welcoming communities build connections between newcomers and long-time residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
4.1 The City and community partner organizations to develop and deliver social connection programs, events and activities for newcomer youth and young adults.	2 – 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomer youth and young adult interests are reflected in City and community partner programs. • Newcomer youth and young adult participate in City and community partner programs. • Newcomer youth and young adults inform these programs, events, and activities.
4.2 The City and community partner organizations to create regular opportunities (programs, activities, or events) for newcomers and long-time residents to share stories and life experiences.	3 – 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers and long-term residents participate in, and influence the development of City and community programs, activities, and events designed to bring newcomers and long-time residents together to share stories and life experiences.
4.3 In partnership, the City to develop and support mentorship programs that pair newcomers and long-time residents to create community connections that help with settlement concerns and provide opportunities to learn about each other and share life experiences.	1 - 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers identify mentorship needs and influence opportunities and programs for mentorship. • There are sufficient mentorship pairing opportunities for newcomers with long-time residents. • Newcomers and long-time residents participate in community mentorship programs. • Long-time resident mentors include both immigrants and Canadians by birth. • Peer to peer mentorship between recent newcomers and newcomers with a few years in the community is established.
4.4 Expand community liaison positions to include community cultural development across government and agencies.	3 - 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts-based community projects encourage community building and builds trust between newcomers and government and agencies. • More creative interactions occur between newcomers and community liaisons across government and agencies.

Education

Welcoming communities strive for an educational system that ensures all students have the support they need to succeed in school and the education they need to succeed in the workforce.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
<p>5.1 The City to implement a program/classroom for newcomers to learn about: the role of Government and duty to residents, civic service and what happens at City Hall, City departments and their responsibilities, City programs, Human Rights, Indigenous Communities/Truth and Reconciliation, civic responsibility, and opportunities to participate.</p>	<p>2 - 3 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers identify needs and inform educational programs (classroom) offered by the City. • Newcomers attend educational programs offered by the City. • Newcomers are satisfied with the education programs offered by the City.
<p>5.2 Parent Advisory Councils to establish Newcomer Support Committees in schools to address newcomer family needs and provide mentorship, advocate for systemic change at the school and with the Ministry of Education, create safe spaces for children in school, and form connections across schools (PAC to PAC) to address shared issues.</p>	<p>1 - 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Advisory Councils implement programs for newcomer families in schools. • Youth mentorship programs are offered in partnership with Parent Advisory Councils. • Children experience less racism at school. • Newcomer parents are supported by the school community. • Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion education is available for Parent Advisory Councils, educators, support staff and administration. • Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion education is available for all families as part student orientation.

Economic Development

Welcoming communities harness the full potential of all residents. Immigrants have the skills and assets to thrive, and economic development systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
<p>6.1 In partnership, the City to develop or support a community partner program(s) to address employment readiness for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons.</p>	<p>1 - 2 years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers inform employment readiness programs developed and/or delivered by the City or in partnership with community organizations. • Newcomers participate in employment readiness programs. • Sustained funding is available for community partner programs. • Newcomers are satisfied with the employment readiness programs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomers are getting jobs.
6.2 In partnership, the City to ensure subsidized transportation services are available for newcomers in need.	4 - 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income newcomers have access to a fee subsidy program for transportation services.
6.3 The City to advocate to the provincial government to extend health insurance to newcomers who demonstrate financial need as a barrier to receiving medical care.	4 - 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing assessment of medial support required to meet the needs of newcomers without access to healthcare. • Medical assistance funding and programs to assist newcomers in need.

Safe Communities

Welcoming communities foster trust and build relationships between residents, including newcomers, and local law enforcement and safety agencies.

Recommended Actions	Targeted timeline	Community Desired Outcomes
7.1 Police and City By-law to create regular opportunities for informal connections and information sharing with racialized newcomers and those from countries where contact with enforcement personnel was traumatic.	1 - 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing opportunities for police and City bylaw staff to connect with newcomers to share stories, improve trust, build relationships, and improve understanding. • Newcomers participate in opportunities to connect with police and City bylaw staff to share stories and life experiences.
7.2 Law Enforcement, Safety Agencies and Emergency Services to implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies and processes to address human resource practices, anti-oppression and cultural safety training, restorative justice, bias recognition screening, and legal limitations to enforcement and safety services.	2 - 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of law enforcement, safety agencies and emergency services EDI programs and practices. • Fewer newcomer reports on incidents of racism, fearmongering, barriers to access and discrimination. • Diverse representation across law enforcement, safety agencies and emergency service. • Ongoing review and updating of accountability structures to support EDI related human resource practices in law enforcement, safety agencies and emergency service.

Recommended Actions by Timeline

Timeline	Action
< 1 year	<p>1.3 The City to include Indigenous leaders and communities in all welcoming activities, events, and programs to ensure greater education and understanding of Indigenous rights, history, traditions, and culture amongst newcomers.</p> <p>1.4 Transition the Welcoming City Task Force into an advisory body to Council and City staff for the first three years of the Welcoming City Strategy implementation.</p> <p>3.1 Council advisory committees to include newcomers to ensure diverse perspectives in civic engagement, increase access to leadership and encourage newcomer participation in civic life.</p> <p>3.2 The City to host or support an annual Welcoming Event for newcomers to promote and celebrate the social, economic, and cultural benefits and contributions that newcomers bring to the city and welcome those who came within the previous year.</p>
1 – 2 years	<p>1.1 City Council to implement comprehensive Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism policies aimed at changing systemic practices and processes across local government and agencies.</p> <p>1.2 City Council to implement a policy that ensures municipal services, programs and supports are available and accessible to all newcomers without fear, regardless of their immigration status, and everyone is treated with respect and dignity.</p> <p>2.2 In partnership, the City to develop and support Welcome Programs that educate newcomers on City Bylaw and law enforcement practices, the justice and legal systems, social services and supports, worker rights and issues, local government and political systems including elections, public programs, facilities, services, and events, etc.</p> <p>4.3 In partnership, the City to develop and support mentorship programs that pair newcomers and long-time residents to create community connections that help with settlement concerns and provide opportunities to learn about each other and share life experiences.</p> <p>5.2 Parent Advisory Councils to establish Newcomer Support Committees in schools to address newcomer family needs and provide mentorship, advocate for systemic change at the school and with the Ministry of Education, create safe spaces for children in school, and form connections across schools (PAC to PAC) to address shared issues.</p>

	<p>6.1 In partnership, the City to develop or support a community partner program(s) to address employment readiness for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons.</p> <p>7.1 Police and City By-law to create regular opportunities for informal connections and information sharing with racialized newcomers and those from countries where contact with enforcement personnel was traumatic.</p>
<p>2 – 3 years</p>	<p>1.5 In partnership, the City to develop or support an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Business Certification Program based on user reviews to recognize excellence in EDI practices via a visual marker such as a poster or sticker that can be displayed on their premises.</p> <p>2.1 In partnership, the City to establish a centrally located information hub for newcomers that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access free, confidential services in multiple languages and media formats. • a confidential reporting structure to record (and address) incidences of racism, fearmongering, and barriers to access, discrimination, violence, or any other personal affront. <p>2.3 The City to develop or support community partner programs that bridge the gaps in settlement services for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons without access to critical services prior to having Permanent Resident status.</p> <p>3.3 The City to develop a grant program that brings long-time residents and newcomers together annually to co-develop and co-deliver a community project such as adding picnic tables to a gathering space, creating a community public art project, restoring, or upgrading a playground, etc.</p> <p>4.1 The City and community partner organizations to develop and deliver social connection programs, events and activities for newcomer youth and young adults.</p> <p>5.1 The City to implement a program/classroom for newcomers to learn about: the role of Government and duty to citizens, civic service and what happens at City Hall, City departments and their responsibilities, City programs, Human Rights, Indigenous Communities/Truth and Reconciliation, civic responsibility, and opportunities to participate.</p> <p>7.2 Law Enforcement, Safety Agencies and Emergency Services to implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies and processes to address human resource practices, anti-oppression and cultural safety training, restorative justice, bias recognition screening, and legal limitations to enforcement and safety services.</p>

3 – 4 years	<p>4.2 The City and community partner organizations to create regular opportunities (programs, activities, or events) for newcomers and long-time residents to share stories and life experiences.</p> <p>4.4 Expand community liaison positions to include community cultural development across government and agencies.</p>
4 – 5 years	<p>6.2 In partnership, the City to ensure subsidized transportation services are available for newcomers in need.</p> <p>6.3 The City to advocate to the provincial government to extend health insurance to newcomers who demonstrate financial need as a barrier to receiving medical care.</p>