



The Welcoming Communities Coalition
A North Vancouver Island Local Immigration Partnership

COMMUNITY PLAN

2025 - 2028

We are honoured to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish Peoples, on whose traditional and unceded territories we conduct our work.

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



What is the Welcoming Communities Coalition (North Vancouver Island Local Immigration Partnership)?

The Welcoming Communities Coalition North Vancouver Island Local Immigration Partnership (WCC NVI LIP) was established in 2016 and operates within the Immigrant Welcome Centre (IWC), which has offices in the Comox Valley, Campbell River and Mount Waddington region.

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) have been funded in Canada by the federal government through the department of Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) since 2008. LIPs support communities to develop and implement plans to improve the settlement experiences of immigrants and refugees. IRCC also funds Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs) to support the settlement outcomes of Francophone newcomers.

As of 2024, there are 19 federally funded LIPs and RIFs in the British Columbia and Yukon region.



LIPs engage with multiple organizations, support community-level research and planning, and help ensure services meet the needs of newcomers. LIPs do not deliver services directly to immigrants. Instead, they prepare the community to welcome newcomers.



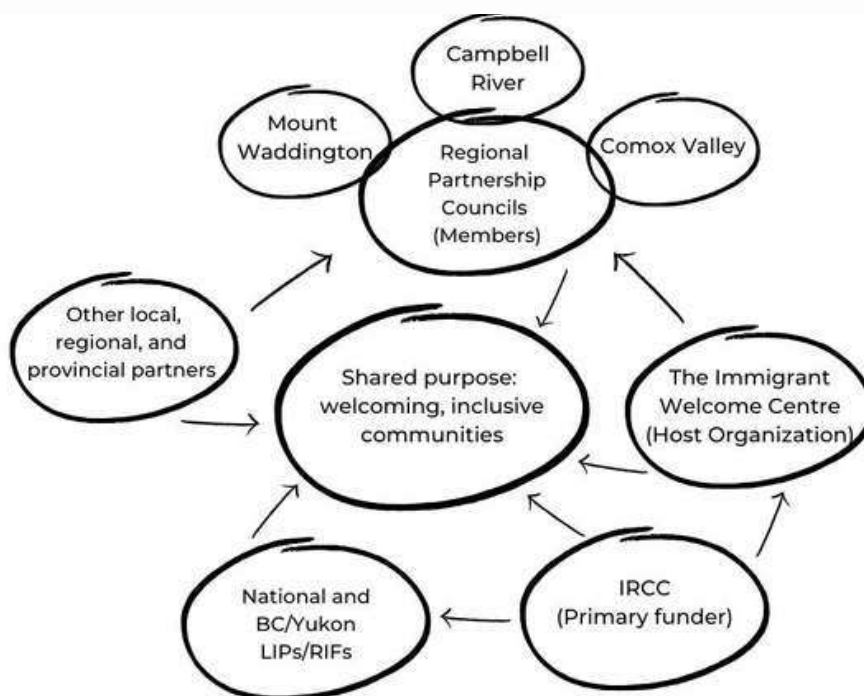
How we do our work

Community-based research projects and community consultations guide the priorities, raise awareness, build allyship, and engage the community at large. The WCC (NVI LIP) provides opportunities in the Comox Valley, Campbell River, and the Mount Waddington region to gather community input and sector-specific expertise that is then woven into our work.

The WCC (NVI LIP) also draws upon Statistics Canada census data and other demographics research to provide localized planning context.

Project outcomes and evaluations are laid out in our Action Plans, which are guided by Regional Partnership Councils (and working groups when needed). The WCC (NVI LIP) reports performance measures annually to IRCC.

WCC Ecosystem



Recent research projects:

- 2020 Needs Assessment Report - Campbell River and the Comox Valley
- 2021 Language Support Research - Campbell River and the Comox Valley
- [2023 Needs Assessment Report](#) - Campbell River and the Comox Valley
- 2024 Exploratory Research Report - Mount Waddington

VISION

A North Vancouver Island region that embraces diversity and inclusivity while actively engaging with the vibrant cultures in the region, and where newcomers feel welcome, safe and respected.

PURPOSE

The Welcoming Communities Coalition (North Vancouver Island Local Immigration Partnership) fosters inclusive and welcoming communities. The WCC (NVI LIP) works collaboratively with community partners and service providers to improve intercultural awareness and access to newcomer services through coordinated education, leadership and engagement initiatives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sustainable Planning

Ensure community leaders, decision-makers, and immigrants guide the development of our planning and activities.

Create opportunities for knowledge sharing and build capacity to advocate for change.

Community Education

Increase community awareness of immigrants' contributions to the region.

Prepare a supportive environment for our communities to embrace immigration, empower newcomers, and celebrate diversity.

Inclusive Collaboration

Develop a broad-based, diverse membership for planning and setting Coalition priorities.

Share resources and increase communication between members, partners and newcomers.

Respectful Engagement

Engage the community and newcomers to ensure services meet the intersectional needs of current demographics.

Gather information about local immigrant needs through community forums, dialogues and research.

PRIORITY 1

Sense of Belonging

GOAL: Newcomers make community connections, build cross-cultural relationships, and feel safe participating in local events and activities.

The WCC (NVI LIP) aims to:

- Increase awareness of immigrant settlement and participation barriers
- Reduce public misconceptions around Canadian immigration
- Increase education around anti-racism and racial discrimination
- Build connections between newcomer residents and local Indigenous communities

PRIORITY 2

Access to Information & Services

GOAL: Newcomers and community organizations have access to relevant information and services.

The WCC (NVI LIP) aims to:

- Improve the coordination of services at the community level (as also mandated by IRCC)
- In particular, improve coordination around key issues identified in our Needs Assessment reports: transportation, housing, food security, and English language learning
- Enhance local capacity to address the demand for English language learning beyond Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2023 Needs Assessment Report:

- 15% of respondents to the Immigrant Survey said they “Always” or “Often” feel isolated or alone in the community, while 27% said “Sometimes.”
- 22% of respondents said they experienced discrimination or have been treated unfairly by others in the community.

Pathways to Prosperity Partnership toolkit:

- “In recognition of [the Truth and Reconciliation Commission] recommendations and the potential for immigrants and Indigenous peoples to come together for increased mutual understanding and common cause, positive Indigenous-immigrant relations and understanding must be considered an important characteristic of a welcoming community.”

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2023 Needs Assessment Report:

- The top four challenges newcomers experienced in the past year in the community were: “living costs/affording services,” “finding work,” “learning where and how to do things,” and “accessing English language programs that meet my needs.”
- 48% said their household income is not quite enough for the needs of themselves and their families

PRIORITY 3

Meaningful Employment

GOAL: Employers and businesses have the knowledge and tools to offer inclusive workplace environments and embrace immigration.

The WCC (NVI LIP) aims to:

- Establish partnerships with businesses, industries, and government to improve workplace equity, diversity and inclusion
- Increase educational opportunities around workplace equity, diversity and inclusion and awareness of the contributions of immigrants in creating a vibrant economy
- Enhance coordination and connections between the business community and newcomers

PRIORITY 4

Sustainable Leadership

GOAL: The WCC (NVI LIP) has a diversity of members, partners and resources to sustain its initiatives, and its role is clearly understood in the community.

The WCC (NVI LIP) aims to:

- Increase public and interest holder awareness and support of the WCC NVI LIP's purpose and role in supporting newcomer inclusion
- Deepen the collaboration, commitment, and diversity of the WCC NVI LIP membership (as also mandated by IRCC)
- Diversify WCC NVI LIP funding

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2023 Needs Assessment Report:

- 38% of employed respondents to the Immigrant Survey said that their current job is lower than the level of their skills and experience or not related to their skills and experience.

Statistics Canada:

- Among those employed in 2006, 62% of the Canadian-born were working in the regulated profession for which they trained compared to only 24% of foreign-educated immigrants.
- From 2001-2021, employment in lower-skilled occupations contracted by 500,000. "As Canadian-born workers moved out of this skill level in a substantial way, immigrant workers and TFWs were increasingly employed in these lower-skilled jobs."

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At our June 2024 Community Planning meeting, Elarton Point Strategies facilitated a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.

It became clear that a significant weakness is a lack of clear communication and general public awareness around the role of the WCC (NVI LIP). Limited resources (staff and diverse funding sources) and rising anti-immigration sentiment in Canada were also identified as a barrier to our work. The LIP also lacks representation from local Indigenous organizations and the private sector.

Regional Partnership Councils

The WCC (NVI LIP) regional Partnership Councils represent multi-faceted perspectives around community issues that impact newcomers' well-being in Campbell River, the Comox Valley, and Mount Waddington. Sectors include: settlement and community services, newcomers, education, local government, employers and employer bodies, health, media, ethnocultural and francophone organizations, umbrella organizations, libraries, and more.

Signing a Membership Letter indicates an individual's or organization's willingness to participate on the Partnership Council, to offer expertise and feedback in a manner that corresponds with their organization's capacity, and to work with each other to create a dynamic, diverse, and welcoming community.

This list of members was last updated in March 2025.

CAMPBELL RIVER

- Jenelle Pasiechnik, Campbell River Art Gallery
- Mary Ruth Snyder, Campbell River Chamber of Commerce
- Michaela Arruda, Campbell River Community Foundation
- Brenda Wagman, Campbell River Early Years Council
- Meg Maskell, Campbell River Food Bank
- Shakila Manzoor, Campbell River RCMP
- Royce Pritchard, City of Campbell River - Recreation & Culture Department
- Chrystal Arnet, Habitat for Humanity Vancouver Island North
- Jeff Groat, Greenways Land Trust
- Donna Desmet, North Island Employment Foundation Society
- Natalie Meredith, John Howard Society North Island
- Joy Wilson, PacificCARE CCR Campbell River
- Sarah Wright, PLAY Campbell River
- Kim Stix, SD72
- Missy Christensen, The Centre for Inspired Living
- Nicole Veerman, Campbell River Division of Family Practice
- Joelle Samson, Vancouver Island Regional Library
- Nadir Hammou, Association Francophone du Centre de L'île
- Mary Catherine Williams, Campbell River Seniors Network
- Vicky Reddish, Rivercity Inclusion
- Megan Tomlinson, Island Health
- Ye Huang, community member
- Minda Tagana, community member
- Helen Sun, community member

Regional Partnership Councils

COMOX VALLEY

- Jennifer Casey, CV/Arts
- Janet Fairbanks, World Community Education Development Society
- Chris Bate, Comox Valley Senior Support Society
- Maurita Prato, LUSH Valley Food Action Society
- Twila Skinner, Comox Valley Farmers' Market Association
- Betty Tate, Comox Valley Social Planning Society
- Peter Bazoysky, Comox Valley Lifelong Learning Association
- Amanda Fortier, Jumpstart Refugee Canada
- Arzeena Hamir, community member
- Barb LePage, Creative Employment Access Society
- Ramesh Lad, Step by Step Accessibility Consulting
- Caitlin Bryant, First Credit Union
- Karen McKinnon, Comox Valley Community Justice Centre
- Artur Ciastkowski, The Comox Valley Record
- Coun. Wil Cole-Hamilton, City of Courtenay
- Susan Bullock, Comox Valley Regional District - Recreation Department
- Sarah & Joanne Kingstone, Elarton Point Strategies
- Coun. Nick Ward, Village of Cumberland
- Danika Lawson, Comox Valley Community Health Network
- Angie Price, North Island College - Office of Global Engagement
- Tanya Massa, Experience Comox Valley
- Josie Jiang, SD71 International Student Program
- Kam Singhania, Comox Valley Diversity & Cultural Awareness Society
- Anna Rambow, Lake Trail Community Education Society
- Karin Kratz, Comox Valley Jewish Community Connection

- Dean Couttenier, Costco
- Janine Scheffler, Comox Valley Pride Society
- Janette Martin-Lutzer, Comox Valley Ukrainian Cultural Society
- Rebecca Barton, Comox Military Family Resource Centre
- Bhagya Rajasekara, community member

MOUNT WADDINGTON

- Laura Kaminker, Vancouver Island Regional Library & Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society
 - Leslie Dyck, Island Health & Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society
 - Louisa Bates & Naomi Heath, District of Port Hardy
 - Kelly Anderson, Mount Waddington Family Literacy Society
 - Sarah Levcoe, PacificCARE BC
 - Laura Dean, K'awat'si Economic Development Limited Partnership
 - Robin Folvik, Tourism Port Hardy
 - Cara Arnault, Port Hardy Chamber of Commerce
 - Chris Woo, Town of Port McNeil - Community Development & Engagement Department
 - Jackie Challis, Regional District of Mt. Waddington - Economic Development
 - Donna Merry, North Island College
-