

Clause embodied in Report No. 4 of the Community Services Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on May 30, 31 and June 1, 2001.

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Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework

(City Council on May 30, 31 and June 1, 2001, amended this Clause by adding thereto the following:

“It is further recommended that the City of Toronto reiterate its opposition to any fees that have a discriminatory impact.”)

The Community Services Committee recommends:

- (a) the adoption of the report dated April 19, 2001, from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services, subject to:**
 - (i) amending Recommendation No. (3)(a) to read as follows:**
 - “(3)(a) improved pre-migration information be made available to all classes of immigrants, and general information be made available to all persons arriving at ports of entry; and**
 - (ii) deleting Recommendation No. (3)(c); and**
- (b) that the City of Toronto encourage the Provincial and Federal Governments to reach a new immigration settlement agreement, and that it include a fair share of funding to adequately support immigration settlement in Toronto.**

The Community Services Committee reports, for the information of Council, having:

- (1) referred back to the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services Appendix B, with a request that a number of the statistics and statements referred to therein (pages 1, 3 and 5), be reviewed, corrected, and the source noted; and further that Councillor Michael Prue be consulted in regard thereto;
- (2) directed that the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, be requested to provide the Community Services Committee by September 2001 with an outline, including costs, of the services that the City of Toronto funds or provides that would be considered “settlement related services”

- (3) directed that the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services be requested to discuss with both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board ways to address settlement issues; and
- (4) directed that the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism be requested to review the Parks and Recreation programs provided to communities to ensure that as the demographics of the community change the differing program needs are being met, and report thereon to the Economic Development and Parks Committee; and further that Councillor Suzan Hall be advised when this matter is considered by the Committee.

The Community Services Committee submits the following report (April 19, 2001) from the Commissioner of Community and Neighbourhood Services:

Purpose:

This report seeks Council's approval for a policy framework, including the goal, strategic directions and actions on immigration and settlement for the City of Toronto.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The goal and strategic directions and actions contained in this report have no 2001 budget implications. Financial implications for subsequent years will be reported out, by departments, as part of an annual budget process, as required.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) Council adopt Appendix A of this report as the City's policy framework for immigration and settlement;
- (2) because of its pre-eminence as the primary destination for immigrants and refugees to Canada, the City of Toronto continue to meet with senior representatives from the federal and provincial orders of government to address:
 - (a) the City's formal representation in discussions of immigration and settlement policy;
 - (b) appropriate levels of program funding to ensure adequate provision of settlement services located in Toronto, particularly in the area of supports to employment;
 - (c) federal and provincial transfer payments that recognize Toronto's expenditure for social services, emergency shelter and health as essential to successful settlement;
 - (d) the role that Toronto plays in providing the above services; and

- (e) the types of training and education required for successful newcomer settlement that is now and can be provided in future by agencies, school boards, colleges and universities using federal and/or provincial resources;
- (3) the City of Toronto continue to work in partnership with communities and agencies to advocate to other orders of government for:
- (a) improved pre-migration and arrival information available to all classes of immigrants and refugees;
 - (b) expedited refugee process;
 - (c) rescinding of fees attached to the immigration and settlement process;
 - (d) access to appropriate training, assessment of credentials and access to trades and professions;
 - (e) broadening of access to settlement services supported by appropriate funding;
 - (f) reinstatement of government services previously provided in Canada to assist immigrants and refugees with the process of immigration;
 - (g) recognition of the respective roles of ethno-specific and multicultural agencies and programs; and
 - (h) funding to increase the supply of affordable housing;
- (4) staff of the Social Development and Administration Division, Strategic and Corporate Policy Division and Corporate Communications Division report to Council by December 2001, on the content and costs of a Toronto communications strategy that will further support successful settlement and integration of immigrants into the economic mainstream;
- (5) the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department, working with all City departments, report on all aspects of immigration and settlement as part of the regular process of social monitoring in order to provide the City with information regarding the progress of immigrants in Toronto (e.g., economic indicators, health indicators) as well as progress of departments in implementing policies and programs to support them and to identify future trends so that the City can continue to develop policies and strategies to support successful settlement; and
- (6) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In June 2000, Council adopted a terms of reference for the development of a City of Toronto immigration and settlement policy framework to “guide the government of the largest municipality in Canada in efficiently and effectively implementing its mandate as a regional government, including support for continued, broad-based physical, economic and social development.”

This report is based on those terms of reference and provides a policy framework for City policies and programs regarding immigration and settlement.

According to the Terms of Reference, the immigration and settlement policy framework will:

- (1) inform Council’s decisions regarding City policies and programs relating to immigrants and refugees;
- (2) provide a strategic platform for proactive intergovernmental relations regarding immigrants and refugees;
- (3) allow consistent responses from the City when issues related to immigrants and refugees arise in public;
- (4) recognize the contributions of immigrants and refugees and the significant role of the City in responding to their needs;
- (5) be consistent with the City of Toronto Strategic Plan, the Social Development Strategy, the report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity, the Official Plan and the Economic Development Strategy; and
- (6) inform all aspects of departmental policy, planning and service delivery throughout the City government.

The continuation of current programs to support successful settlement and the development of new activities are important parts of meeting the goals of Toronto’s Strategic Plan. The theme areas for the City’s goals for the community, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, are social development, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, good governance and city building. The realization of the goals embedded in these themes, particularly goals such as:

- (1) “Individuals and groups have a collective sense of belonging and contributing to the city and have the capacity to participate in the city’s social, economic and cultural life”;
- (2) “Individuals have access to an adequate standard of living, including income, health, nutritious food, housing and clothing”;
- (3) “Resources and opportunities are available to respond to the unique needs of different communities”; and

- (4) “Toronto’s workforce has the skills, education and knowledge demanded in an evolving and competitive economy”,

depends on the ability of all who live here, including newcomers, to fully engage in all aspects of life in Toronto. Coherent strategic directions will assist City Departments in strengthening the participation of immigrants and refugees in all areas of City life, thereby better realizing the full potential of immigration to the City.

As stated in the Social Development Strategy Consultation Document adopted by Council in August 2000: “A cohesive community benefits everyone because people who feel a part of a larger community have an investment in the public good”. The City’s human rights, access and equity policies and programs help build a cohesive community by creating a welcoming climate, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity among all residents. The City’s Economic Development Strategy identifies Toronto’s linguistic and socio-economic diversity as “key competitive strengths upon which the City must build.” Urban planning provides a context for investment and reinvestment to ensure a vibrant city with healthy, diverse and supportive communities. This includes responding to the housing, employment and community needs of newcomers.

In addition, the framework relates to Toronto’s ongoing exploration regarding a new relationship between federal and municipal governments. The City should be able to negotiate directly with the federal government in the area of immigration policy to improve the supports available to newcomers and to develop policies and programs specific to Toronto’s economic and social context.

This report was developed by a workgroup consisting of staff from the Social Development and Administration Division, Access and Equity Unit, City Planning Division, Toronto Public Health, Parks and Recreation Division, Economic Development Division, Social Services Division and the Shelter, Housing and Support Division. One hundred and twenty-five participants attended five consultation sessions on the topics of: recent newcomers/emerging issues; economy, education and training; housing; health and other social services and recreation. Staff held interviews with 10 key informants from non-governmental organizations and agencies, orders of government, universities and research organizations. The Workgroup on Immigration and Refugee Issues provided advice and direction to the report at a staff presentation. Material in a bibliography developed as a part of this initiative was used for background information.

Comments:

Immigration and Settlement Context for Toronto:

Toronto’s motto is, “Diversity our Strength”. Toronto’s diversity includes the general urban demographic, economic and social mix and, more than any other city in Canada, it includes people who have come from other countries to live here. Immigrants have been and remain fundamental in shaping the diverse economic, social, cultural and political landscape of Toronto. Considered to be one of the most multicultural cities in the world, Toronto realizes profound benefits from the many ethno-racial communities that call this City home.

Within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the City of Toronto continues to be the primary destination for new arrivals. In 1999, more than 75 percent of all newcomers to the GTA settled in the City. With more than 8 percent of Canada's population, Toronto annually receives 25 percent of the nation's newcomers.

This trend is not expected to slow down. By 2001, it is projected that immigrants will comprise half of Toronto's population. Newcomers are vital to Toronto's future. To sustain a high-value economy, Toronto will have to compete with other cities, provinces and countries for skilled labour. With deaths overtaking births by 2020 and as people continue to relocate to the rest of the GTA, without immigration, the City would lose population. The "smarter growth" described for Toronto in the Directions Report of the Official Plan will not be possible if the City does not attract newcomers.

Toronto's profile shows that the Skilled Workers Class comprises just over one-half of all newcomers to the City. Family Class – spouses, children and other relatives of the skilled newcomers – make up over 28 percent. Refugees make up almost 11 percent and Business Class less than 5 percent of immigrants to Toronto.

The post-war patterns that saw a majority of new immigrants originating in Europe are no longer the norm. Since 1980, the largest number of immigrants to Toronto come from Asia (most commonly the Peoples' Republic of China, India and Pakistan) followed by Africa and the Mid-east, the United States and Latin America. The majority of recent immigrants are members of visible minorities and more than 20 percent were age 14 and under.

Overall, newcomers to Toronto have strong educational backgrounds – over 80 percent are secondary school graduates and of these, 40 percent have completed university or other post-secondary programs. Nationally, 72 percent of Skilled Worker Class immigrants in 1999 had university degrees, a higher percentage than that found in the Canadian-born population. Family and Refugee Class immigrants are less likely to have completed high school, with over 50 percent having 12 or fewer years of schooling, partly because this class includes children. Immigrants contribute to Toronto's economy. For example, research completed by York University comparing the immigrant tax contributions in 1995 to the benefits they receive from social assistance and Employment Insurance, found that they indeed contribute more in taxes than they use. An analysis of the tax benefit data based on length of time in Canada shows that immigrants who have been here longer and those with higher education tend to pay more taxes and collect fewer benefits.

Settlement Issues:

In the settlement continuum, the primary settlement issue identified by immigrants and refugees is the need for support to enter the economic mainstream. This may take the form of:

- (1) improved pre-migration and arrival information on labour adjustment in Canada;
- (2) English classes (in some cases, profession-specific), credential assessment and access to trades and professions or upgrading to enter trades and professions;

- (3) recognition of experience in country of origin by Canadian employers;
- (4) opportunity to acquire Canadian experience;
- (5) non-discriminatory employment practices; and
- (6) child care and access to student loans.

Costs occur when the inability to access appropriate settlement supports leads to underemployment or unemployment. Some of these costs include:

- (1) increased social assistance and social services expenditures;
- (2) losses to employers when they are unable to find employees with needed skills;
- (3) costs to government, employers or individuals of unnecessary retraining;
- (4) loss of potential tax and other revenue; and
- (5) increased costs of maintaining physical and mental health.

The federal government has legislative and policy responsibility for immigrant selection. In partnership with the provinces, it funds settlement services that are often delivered by community agencies. Although municipalities do not fund or provide settlement services, Toronto provides a huge web of services for all who live in the City, including newcomers. They have unique needs and may face challenges such as language or a lack of information regarding access to service, as well as systemic barriers such as racial discrimination. If the City of Toronto is to be effective in supporting successful settlement, the following issues require resolution:

- (1) fair funding from the federal government to support settlement services delivered by community organizations. Currently, settlement funding to Ontario is less per capita than for any other province;
- (2) resources for other specific services related to newcomers (e.g., income support due to sponsorship breakdown);
- (3) a federal/provincial settlement agreement for Ontario; and
- (4) inclusion in discussions with other orders of government regarding immigration policy and programs for all of the above as they affect Toronto.

The City most recently asked for resolution of these issues when it was invited to make a presentation on Bill C-11, the proposed amendments to the federal Immigration Act, to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

Government Roles in Immigration and Settlement

Federal Government:

Although immigration is constitutionally an area shared with the provinces, the federal government is responsible for immigration and refugee policy and legislation. In addition, it has sole responsibility for the management of the refugee determination system and is the signatory on international agreements such as the United Nations Geneva Convention on Refugees.

The federal government funds settlement services provided by community agencies. Much of the funding decrease for settlement initiated by the federal government in the 1990s has been reinstated, although many agencies are concerned that new funding is now allocated on a project rather than a core program basis. In 1997, an additional \$35.5 million was added to Ontario's settlement allocation. However, at \$864.00 per immigrant arrival (compared with Quebec at \$3,252.00), Ontario does not receive its fair share of settlement funding.

Settlement services are specific (e.g., reception and orientation, language training) and are funded via two programs: the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). The federal government describes ISAP as funding "organizations to provide immigrants with the essential bridging services to facilitate their access to community services." Funds under ISAP are provided for service to immigrants who have been in Canada for one year or less. LINC funds organizations to provide basic language instruction to newcomers in either English or French.

Refugee claimants are not able to access either of these programs until they have been granted permanent resident status via the refugee determination process, a period which may now take an average of 10 months.

Provincial Government:

Ontario is the only Province that does not have an immigration agreement with the federal government. The federal-provincial immigration agreements provide a structure for federal funding and can allow increased provincial policy and program autonomy. Some provinces, in return, have agreed to take a larger role in settlement service delivery. Provincial funding in Ontario for settlement services was cut by 20 percent in 1995 and has not been increased.

Through the Newcomer Settlement Program, Ontario funds community agencies to provide settlement services and umbrella organizations that support the settlement sector. Under Access to Professions and Trades in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, newcomers may receive profession-specific counselling and, for a fee, obtain credentials assessment through the World Education Service which works under contract with the government.

The City of Toronto:

While it has no formal policy or management powers regarding immigration, and does not fund or provide primary settlement services, the City of Toronto:

- (1) advocates with other orders of government for equitable treatment of immigrants;
- (2) addresses specific immigrant needs within the context of the development and provision of broad-based municipal services, especially since one of the explicit goals of federal and provincial settlement funding is to link immigrants with services in the community;
- (3) works with other orders of government and community agencies to ensure that newcomers have equitable access to the services required to promote successful settlement and integration;
- (4) provides grants and other supports to community agencies working with immigrants;
- (5) helps build community networks and coalitions;
- (6) builds a receptive climate for immigrants with measures that include anti-discrimination/anti-racist policies; and
- (7) develops strategies, on its own and with other partners, to facilitate the full participation of immigrants in the City's economic, social, cultural and political life, including civic decision-making.

Toronto is a City that welcomes immigrants, encourages participation in all aspects of civic life, removes barriers to services, information and employment, responds to the special needs of communities, and is a leader in advocating for equitable and effective programs and policies to support newcomers. This policy framework affirms and builds on past and present policies and programs while setting the stage for the future. It includes but is not limited to the following principles, goal, directions and actions.

Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework:

Guiding Principles:

Toronto's policies and programs supporting immigration and settlement will be based on the ideal of full engagement by all that live here in all aspects of life in the City. The framework is guided by the same principles adopted in Toronto's Strategic Plan: advocacy, community participation, equity, effectiveness, leadership, partnerships and sustainability.

Goal:

The goal for the policy framework is to enable the City, within its mandate as municipal government and service provider, to work with all other orders of government, all sectors that make up the economic, social and cultural web of the City and immigrants to ensure that it continues to: (a) attract newcomers and (b) provide supports to enable them to develop a sense of identity and belonging and fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life in the City.

Implicit in this goal is the recognition that:

- (1) immigrants are the source of real and potential contributions to the economic, social and cultural life of the City;
- (2) immigrant settlement is a continuum involving newcomers and all sectors in the community; and
- (3) successful settlement benefits everyone.

Strategic Directions and Actions:

The strategic directions that will support successful settlement are placed in six theme areas: economic integration, intergovernmental consultation and collaboration, service access and equity, planning and co-ordination, advocacy and public education and building community capacity and civic participation. The strategic actions support current initiatives taking place in a variety of City departments and provide a foundation for continued advocacy and service-related actions in support of successful settlement.

(A) Economic Integration:

Strategic Direction:

The City of Toronto promotes the full integration of newcomers into the City's economic mainstream.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Build bridges in a variety of ways (e.g., communications strategies, roundtables, links with immigrant economic development organizations, support of economic research) with business, labour, all levels of the education system and professional organizations to ensure that newcomers are able to enter the economic mainstream as soon as possible.
- (2) Support mentoring programs in City departments to assist in the provision of Canadian experience to newcomers.
- (3) Continue to support access to immigrant business in the City's tendering and purchasing processes.
- (4) To ensure optimal integration of immigrants into business and workplaces, advocate for higher-level and profession-specific language training as a part of settlement services.

(B) Intergovernmental Consultation and Collaboration:

Strategic Direction:

Toronto confirms that its participation in formal discussions and decision-making are essential when immigration policy and programs developed by other orders of government impact the City.

Toronto will seek the funding from other orders of government necessary to support services to newcomers.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Elected City representatives and senior staff will meet with the federal Minister of Citizenship, the provincial Minister of Citizenship, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Minister of Education and relevant Deputy Ministers to:
 - (a) discuss formal municipal participation in the development of immigration and settlement policy; and
 - (b) continue to request fair funding to support the community-based activities and services that meet the needs of newcomers as well as those municipal services such as emergency shelters and social assistance that are available to support newcomers when needed.
- (2) The City of Toronto will continue to advocate with the other orders of government on behalf of immigrants and refugees to obtain the supports necessary for economic, social, cultural and political engagement in society's mainstream.

(C) Service Access and Equity:

Strategic Direction:

As a support to successful settlement, immigrants will continue to have equitable access to all City of Toronto programs and services.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Ensure that immigrants and refugees have equitable access to municipal services within a multilingual/multicultural context.
- (2) Include identification of client needs and provision of service related to immigration and settlement (e.g., ESL, credentials assessment, multi-lingual/multicultural service) in departmental service plans.

- (3) Through the Shelter, Housing and Support Division, continue to support housing for at-risk groups such as refugees.
- (4) Support Parks and Recreation outreach to immigrant communities and agencies in order to ensure representation on community centre advisory committees, access to existing programs and establishment of new programs.
- (5) Continue to recognize ethno-specific agencies as well as multicultural agencies for granting purposes.
- (6) Support a National Children's Agenda that includes a full range of early childhood education, development and care programs.

Planning and Co-ordination:

Strategic Direction:

To ensure corporate coherence, Toronto's policies and programs relating to immigrants will:

- (1) be consistent with this framework, the City of Toronto Strategic Plan, the Official Plan, the Toronto Economic Development Strategy, the Social Development Strategy and the Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity; and
- (2) support inter-departmental and inter-governmental collaboration.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Integrate immigration and settlement considerations into departmental policy and planning, service delivery, communications, human resources, training and development and civic participation.
- (2) Continue to advocate for increased intergovernmental, interministerial and interdepartmental as well as government/agency planning and activities at all orders of government to support successful immigration and settlement.

(E) Advocacy and Public Education:

Strategic Direction:

Advocacy, public information, communications, staff development and research will support successful settlement by providing information needed to assist settlement and promoting a welcoming and immigration-positive municipal and public climate.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Develop an ongoing communications and information strategy, including information technology options, that will support the settlement process and provide a foundation for a receptive climate for immigrants and refugees coming to Toronto (Corporate Communications, Community and Neighbourhood Services, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Access and Equity, Toronto Public Health). This strategy will be co-ordinated with current broad information initiatives and any that are in the development stages.
- (2) Support anti-racism training for City staff and the staff of City agencies, boards and commissions.
- (3) Ensure that immigrant and refugee communities have access to information on the City's human rights and harassment policies that apply to all who use City services.
- (4) Work with interested partners in the community to support research in the area of immigration and settlement.

(F) Building Community Capacity and Civic Participation:

Strategic Direction:

Immigrant and refugee communities will be able to participate in all aspects of municipal life.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Continue to involve communities, particularly newcomer groups that may be marginalized by factors such as race, gender or age, to provide advice regarding the decisions that affect their settlement in Toronto.
- (2) Continue to support community capacity-building and civic engagement in immigrant communities through public education and information on community participation in government and by equitable appointments to agencies, boards and commissions.
- (3) Continue to provide organizational support such as meeting space and multi-lingual signage to immigrant organizations.

Conclusions:

Toronto's task is to do what we can as a municipality to remove barriers to and provide support for the full economic and social engagement of immigrants. Our main direction should be to work and advocate with other orders of government, all sectors involved in making Toronto an economically, socially and culturally vibrant city, and newcomers themselves to ensure that we continue to live and work in a cohesive community.

Successful settlement means taking action to strengthen economic and social inclusion. Failure to do so will mean a risk of poverty, poor health, low educational attainment and social and economic marginalization for individuals. Toronto, as a city, will risk underutilization of human resources, an underachieving economy and less-than-healthy communities.

Each of the broad municipal initiatives adopted by Council to date: the City of Toronto Strategic Plan, the Social Development Strategy, the report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity, the Official Plan and the Toronto Economic Development Strategy are consistent in their emphasis on a diversity that is supported by inclusivity and social cohesion. Cohesive societies in which all participate are best positioned to accommodate and support diversity. In adopting this report and recommendations, Council will establish a policy framework that will support City actions in the area of immigration and settlement as well as the directions and actions in the broader initiatives.

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List of Attachments:

Appendix A - City of Toronto Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework
Appendix B - Background Paper: The City of Toronto – Immigration and Settlement
Appendix C - Report on Focus Groups – Key Themes and Recommendations
Appendix D - Charts

Appendix A

Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework

Guiding Principles:

Toronto's policies and programs supporting immigration and settlement will be based on the ideal of full engagement by all that live here in all aspects of life in the City. The framework is guided by the same principles adopted in Toronto's Strategic Plan: advocacy, community participation, equity, effectiveness, leadership, partnerships and sustainability.

Goal:

The goal for the policy framework is to enable the City, within its mandate as municipal government and service provider, to work with all other orders of government, all sectors that make up the economic, social and cultural web of the City and immigrants to ensure that it continues to: (a) attract newcomers and (b) provide supports to enable them to develop a sense of identity and belonging and fully participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life in the City.

Implicit in this goal is the recognition that:

- (1) immigrants are the source of real and potential contributions to the economic, social and cultural life of the City;
- (2) immigrant settlement is a continuum involving newcomers and all sectors in the community; and
- (3) successful settlement benefits everyone.

Strategic Directions and Actions:

The strategic directions that will support successful settlement are placed in six theme areas: economic integration, intergovernmental consultation and collaboration, service access and equity, planning and co-ordination, advocacy and public education and building community capacity and civic participation. The strategic actions support current initiatives taking place in a variety of City departments and provide a foundation for continued advocacy and service-related actions in support of successful settlement.

(A) Economic Integration:

Strategic Direction:

The City of Toronto promotes the full integration of newcomers into the City's economic mainstream.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Build bridges in a variety of ways (e.g., communications strategies, roundtables, links with immigrant economic development organizations, support of economic research) with business, labour, all levels of the education system and professional organizations to ensure that newcomers are able to enter the economic mainstream as soon as possible.
- (2) Support mentoring programs in City departments to assist in the provision of Canadian experience to newcomers.

- (3) Continue to support access to immigrant business in the City's tendering and purchasing processes.
- (4) To ensure optimal integration of immigrants into business and workplaces, advocate for higher-level and profession-specific language training as a part of settlement services.

(B) Intergovernmental Consultation and Collaboration:

Strategic Direction:

Toronto confirms that its participation in formal discussions and decision-making are essential when immigration policy and programs developed by other orders of government impact the City.

Toronto will seek the funding from other orders of government necessary to support services to newcomers.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Elected City representatives and senior staff will meet with the federal Minister of Citizenship, the provincial Minister of Citizenship, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Minister of Education and relevant Deputy Ministers to:
 - (a) discuss formal municipal participation in the development of immigration and settlement policy; and
 - (b) continue to request fair funding to support the community-based activities and services that meet the needs of newcomers as well as those municipal services such as emergency shelters and social assistance that are available to support newcomers when needed.
- (2) The City of Toronto will continue to advocate with the other orders of government on behalf of immigrants and refugees to obtain the supports necessary for economic, social, cultural and political engagement in society's mainstream.

(C) Service Access and Equity:

Strategic Direction:

As a support to successful settlement, immigrants will continue to have equitable access to all City of Toronto programs and services.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Ensure that immigrants and refugees have equitable access to municipal services within a multilingual/multicultural context.
- (2) Include identification of client needs and provision of service related to immigration and settlement (e.g., ESL, credentials assessment, multi-lingual/multicultural service) in departmental service plans.
- (3) Through the Shelter, Housing and Support Division, continue to support housing for at-risk groups such as refugees.
- (4) Support Parks and Recreation outreach to immigrant communities and agencies in order to ensure representation on community centre advisory committees, access to existing programs and establishment of new programs.
- (5) Continue to recognize ethno-specific agencies as well as multicultural agencies for granting purposes.
- (6) Support a National Children's Agenda that includes a full range of early childhood education, development and care programs.

(D) Planning and Co-ordination:

Strategic Direction:

To ensure corporate coherence, Toronto's policies and programs relating to immigrants will:

- (1) be consistent with this framework, the City of Toronto Strategic Plan, the Official Plan, the Toronto Economic Development Strategy, the Social Development Strategy and the Report of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity; and
- (2) support inter-departmental and inter-governmental collaboration.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Integrate immigration and settlement considerations into departmental policy and planning, service delivery, communications, human resources, training and development and civic participation.
- (2) Continue to advocate for increased intergovernmental, interministerial and interdepartmental as well as government/agency planning and activities at all orders of government to support successful immigration and settlement.

(E) Advocacy and Public Education:

Strategic Direction:

Advocacy, public information, communications, staff development and research will support successful settlement by providing information needed to assist settlement and promoting a welcoming and immigration-positive municipal and public climate.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Develop an ongoing communications and information strategy, including information technology options, that will support the settlement process and provide a foundation for a receptive climate for immigrants and refugees coming to Toronto (Corporate Communications, Community and Neighbourhood Services, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Access and Equity, Toronto Public Health). This strategy will be co-ordinated with current broad information initiatives and any that are in the development stages.
- (2) Support anti-racism training for City staff and the staff of City agencies, boards and commissions.
- (3) Ensure that immigrant and refugee communities have access to information on the City's human rights and harassment policies that apply to all who use City services.
- (4) Work with interested partners in the community to support research in the area of immigration and settlement.

(F) Building Community Capacity and Civic Participation:

Strategic Direction:

Immigrant and refugee communities will be able to participate in all aspects of municipal life.

Strategic Actions:

- (1) Continue to involve communities, particularly newcomer groups that may be marginalized by factors such as race, gender or age, to provide advice regarding the decisions that affect their settlement in Toronto.
- (2) Continue to support community capacity-building and civic engagement in immigrant communities through public education and information on community participation in government and by equitable appointments to agencies, boards and commissions.

- (3) Continue to provide organizational support such as meeting space and multi-lingual signage to immigrant organizations.

Toronto's task is to do what we can as a municipality to remove barriers to and provide support for the full economic and social engagement of immigrants. Our main direction should be to work and advocate with other orders of government, all sectors involved in making Toronto an economically, socially and culturally vibrant City, and newcomers themselves to ensure that we continue to live and work in a cohesive community.

Successful settlement means taking action to strengthen economic and social inclusion. Failure to do so will mean a risk of poverty, poor health, low educational attainment and social and economic marginalization for individuals. Toronto, as a City, will risk underutilization of human resources, an underachieving economy and less-than-healthy communities.

Appendix C

Report on Focus Groups – Key Themes and Recommendations

- (1) Introduction:

The Social Development and Administration Division, with the support of an inter-departmental staff group, organized seven focus groups during the week of July 17, 2000. The purpose of these focus groups was to receive community input in developing the Immigration and Settlement Policy Framework.

A total of 125 participants contributed to the discussions covering five themes:

- (a) economy/employment/education;
- (b) new newcomers/emerging issues;
- (c) housing;
- (d) public health/social services; and
- (e) recreation/culture.

The Division and staff workgroup acknowledge the valuable contribution of time, ideas and experiences from the participants and thank them for assisting the City of Toronto in developing the Policy Framework on Immigration and Settlement.

This report reflects the voices from the participants. While each focus group had its own theme, common concerns and directions surfaced in the discussions. Newcomers are faced with many challenges. The City in collaboration with community organizations and other orders of governments must take action to meet these challenges.

(2) Access to Information and Orientation Programs:

- (a) Information should be available through embassies and consulates to help people make an informed decision whether to immigrate or not, to reduce false expectations and prepare immigrants psychologically.
- (b) There is a lack of timely, up-to-date arrival information and appropriate orientation.
- (c) Information may be available, but not accessible due to language barriers. Information is also not well organized and presented.
- (d) Multilingual information from community agencies should be available at ports of entry to all newcomers. The schedule of orientation programs should also be advertised at ports of entry.
- (e) Immigrants and refugees have different information needs, and they must be addressed differently.
- (f) Newcomers need information of Canadian values compared to values from other cultures.
- (g) Information is key. Newcomers need to be informed of human rights and workers rights.
- (h) Immigrant parents need information and education to understand their children's development and acculturation to "mainstream" culture.

(3) Employment and Economic Opportunities:

- (a) Newcomers are unemployed or get low-income jobs. The economy is improving, but newcomers cannot get jobs that match their expectations and qualifications.
- (b) Employers do not recognize the professional and technical background and work experience from other countries.
- (c) Government and employers do not have common ground. Immigration has a set of selection criteria for skilled workers, and employers have their own hiring criteria.
- (d) We have no argument with professional standards. We need a bridge linking us, the selected skilled workers to trades and professions when we arrive in Canada.
- (e) Assessment and evaluation agencies and regulatory bodies are out of sync. Regulatory bodies do not accept the evaluations.
- (f) Language is an issue. Employers judge an immigrant by how well he/she speaks English, not by the immigrant's technical expertise or educational attainment.
- (g) Systemic racism is evident in reasons for not hiring, e.g., over-qualification, and lack of Canadian experience. Simply put, employers do not want to hire immigrants!

- (h) “Canadian experience” is a paradox. Employers look for it and refuse to hire someone without it. But how can anybody get “Canadian experience” when no one is willing to give it?
- (i) “Canadian experience” is a bad term. It should be called “work exposure” instead.
- (j) Newcomers need to know where and how to start with job search, how to write a resume and how to deal with interviews.
- (k) Cultural background is an issue. Immigrants do not understand Canadian culture, e.g., eye contact, handshake and life style.
- (l) New immigrants are not well connected. Managers refer candidates to each other and would hire those that have been spoken about vis-à-vis a very qualified new immigrant who is on his own.
- (m) Inter-ministerial (between Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resource Development Canada) and intergovernmental (between the federal and provincial governments) co-ordination is crucial.
- (n) Government should also provide access to training opportunities for the unskilled and non-professional newcomers.
- (o) Federal Employment Insurance training excludes newcomers. Need to review Human Resource Development Canada employment centre services.
- (4) Housing:
 - (a) Language is a barrier to finding housing.
 - (b) No job, no landlord is willing to rent.
 - (c) Discrimination – vacancy is not a vacancy when they sense that you are an immigrant. The province has relaxed rent control. The loopholes in government rules and regulations and shrinking housing supply make the landlords bolder in discriminating. Landlords can reject applicants on the basis of prejudice.
 - (d) Newcomers cannot access affordable housing because of long waiting lists.
 - (e) Welfare payment is so small. One can hardly survive after paying rent.
 - (f) The rules on the number of bedrooms based on family composition are culture-based. It is acceptable in the countries of origin to have children of mixed genders to share bedrooms, but in Toronto, they have to be separated. A family would require a bigger apartment, and pay higher rent, which they may not be able to afford.

- (g) In the case of a family breakdown, the sponsored spouse or child may not be able to obtain welfare in time, and get housing.
- (h) The federal government should speed up the refugee claimant identification process. It is this government that holds back the process forcing refugees to live in shelters. But we have a crisis in shelters.
- (i) The federal government is only concerned with population and labour supply. The province is doing just a little bit. The City is still not taking full responsibility for immigrants and refugees. The province can clamp down on the City's strategies.

So the question is where we bring forth the issues. This is important in relation to advocacy.

- (j) Overburdened agencies assisting immigrants are working much harder to help clients.
- (k) In homelessness initiatives, individual solutions are not helpful and “one size fits all” approaches do not apply.

(5) Health And Social Services:

- (a) Newcomers, especially refugee claimants, face a range of mental health challenges: social isolation, depression, healing, and establishing trust, a sense of belonging and a sense of self-worth. The Interim Federal Health Program limits refugee claimants' access to health services, e.g., mental health programs. The three-month waiting period for OHIP coverage for immigrants is also causing a lot of problems.
- (b) Refugee claimants lack access to settlement services, and their children have difficulty getting admitted to schools.
- (c) Interpretation is not as available as before. The Province has cancelled the Multicultural Access funding for interpretation.
- (d) There is a lack of subsidized and affordable childcare. This is a big impediment for women who want to work.
- (e) Youth from war-torn countries need support in their settlement.
- (f) Seniors are not provided adequate settlement support. Services geared to employability are not accessible to immigrant senior citizens. Seniors who do not acquire English cannot access appropriate health care.
- (g) Unemployment gives rise to family problems.
- (h) Small agencies have difficulty accessing City grants.

- (i) The direction of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's funding is problematic. It provides project rather than core funding. It does not support small ethno-specific agencies.
- (j) The City should consult existing agencies when making decisions to fund new projects. These new projects should not be funded at the expense of reducing support to existing agencies.
- (k) Small agencies also need access to office space and other in-kind support.
- (6) Recreation:
 - (a) Recreation has a social purpose. It helps prevent culture shock and isolation. It helps young immigrants learn traditional values and stay away from trouble. The Ethiopian Association has soccer tournaments and plans for providing youth and children recreation, but lacks space and resources.
 - (b) New communities need access to cultural/community centres to enable them to bring together community members scattered across the City to have a sense of community.
 - (c) The Ethiopian community is made up of first-generation immigrants, and less than twelve years old. Its members have to adapt to the "mainstream". Their main concern is to be economically viable. There is little time left for recreation. The City should use community organizations to disseminate information about its recreation programs.
 - (d) The Chinese professionals in the Chinese Professional Association look for jobs first, but still need recreation. They have no idea what facilities the City offers and how to book City facilities. They want to organize cultural activities to enrich culture in Canada. They want to find ways of getting space for these activities. The City needs to improve access to their different locations.
 - (e) Immigrant women do not feel connected because of language barriers and the lack of transportation, childcare and basic information. Many immigrant women in Rexdale are Muslim women. Immigrant men in Rexdale set up their sports groups and get space permits, and do not join City programs. The men sports are gender-based.
 - (f) Immigrant communities need access to information, access to space, a fair share of recreational resources and access to planning and decision-making. Relationship building and engaging communities in dialogue has just started in Rexdale.
 - (g) Recreation staff need training and development, and they should reflect the communities they serve.
 - (h) Recreation fee is an issue.

(7) Role of Community Organizations:

- (a) Befriending and mentoring programs build healthy communities. These community-based programs should receive ongoing government support.
- (b) Community agencies are the first contact points for newcomers and can provide appropriate linkages to services. The City should recognize community agencies as experts in the field and provide them with support.
- (c) Refugee-specific housing programs, such as Sojourn House, and NGOs serving refugee claimants need City's support.
- (d) The optimal relationship between the City and community organizations is one of equitable partnership.
- (e) Credit should be given to agency participation in City committees and policy development.

(8) Roles of Government:

- (a) Government should provide an information kit, translated into different languages, and establish a hotline for new immigrants.
- (b) All levels of government should make a concerted effort in clarifying their respective roles and ensure the continuity of services in immigration and settlement.
- (c) Provide core funding to community-based agencies to enhance their ability to provide information and education programs to immigrants.
- (d) There should be a policy, with an advocacy component, for validating overseas experience. A government agency should assess work experience from other countries. Government should also work with professional regulatory bodies in accreditation.
- (e) Develop central access points for credential evaluation and job directions.
- (f) Government should give incentives, such as grants to companies that hire new immigrants.
- (g) All governments should provide sensitivity training to front-line staff.

(A) City of Toronto:

- (a) Bring the federal and provincial governments to the table to address immigrant and refugee issues. City needs the services and infrastructure to support the immigrant population. Lobby other levels of government to address these needs.

- (b) Be proactive, monitor the settlement renewal process and be identified as a key stakeholder.
- (c) Clarify what the City is responsible for in immigration and settlement.
- (d) Set up a dedicated body within the City government to look after immigrant and refugee issues, review trends and developments and identify challenges proactively in partnership with other levels of government.
- (e) Advocate: the need to provide information in different languages to newcomers at Pearson Airport and ports of entry, access to OHIP coverage for refugees, sensitivity training for immigration officers and the continuation of the Settlement and Education Partnership in Toronto (SEPT) project to be led by communities.
- (f) Raise public awareness of newcomers' contribution and educate the public about the opportunities and challenges of immigration and the rights of newcomers to be treated equally.
- (g) Address racism and the impact of racism and inequities on newcomers, especially refugees, within the City and in society.
- (h) Dialogue with the business community to deal with employment and economic development issues affecting newcomers.
- (i) Take more responsibility in providing Canadian work experience to new immigrants, e.g., contract compliance, placements and paid internships.
- (j) In partnership with the federal government, the City should develop strategies to retain the highly skilled immigrants.
- (k) City Parks and Recreation, libraries, TTC and Public Health are information access points to newcomers. The City's website should also provide information to newcomers.
- (l) The City should give a welcome package with information regarding the City of Toronto to newcomers at Pearson Airport, ports of entry and embassies.
- (m) Provide clear information on City grants to new communities, and monitor the implementation of the anti-racism, access and equity guidelines.
- (n) Look at how the City defines groups and communities in setting grants eligibility criteria. The City needs to recognize the internal differences within a community, especially groups from conflict areas, and listen to the communities regarding these concerns.
- (o) Facilitate a communication network for community agencies to share common concerns.
- (p) In homelessness initiatives, individual solutions are not helpful and "one size fits all" approaches do not apply.

- (q) Public Health nurses should continue to provide services to refugee shelters.
- (r) Increase affordable childcare.
- (s) Provide recreation services that meet newcomers needs.
- (t) Build accountability in the City's Policy Framework on Immigration and Settlement.
- (B) Federal Government:
 - (a) Should be held accountable for the money collected from the Right-of Landing Fees.
 - (b) Give a fair share of funding to services and infrastructure that support newcomers.
 - (c) Take up more responsibility in settlement, such as facilitating economic integration of newcomers, encouraging public-private partnership in training and providing loans for retraining.
 - (d) Speed up the landing process for Convention refugees and determination process for refugee claimants.
 - (e) Remove the economic barriers such as the head tax and medical loans which hinder settlement.
 - (f) Provide pre-migration information, e.g., through orientation sessions.
- (C) Provincial Government:
 - (a) Review the three-month waiting period for OHIP.
 - (b) Extend OSAP eligibility to newcomers.
 - (c) Use leverage on self-regulating professional bodies to address newcomers' access to professions.
 - (d) Provide funding for newcomers services and infrastructure within the provincial jurisdiction.

(A copy of each of the Appendices B and D, referred to in the foregoing report, was forwarded to all Members of Council with the agenda of the Community Services Committee for its meeting on May 10, 2001, and a copy thereof is on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

Councillor David Miller, Ward 13, Parkdale-High Park, appeared before the Community Services Committee in connection with the foregoing matter.