


# Vernon Local Immigration Partnership

Activity Report  
2021-2022



Social Planning Council  
for the North Okanagan

  @spcvernon | [socialplanning.ca](https://socialplanning.ca)

With gratitude and respect for the land and its people, we acknowledge that our work is within the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Syilx Nation. We know that there is much to learn (and unlearn) about the impact of colonization on Indigenous people and the ongoing trauma that continues today. The Social Planning Council has made a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and this includes ensuring that newcomers understand the devastating history of European settlement on Indigenous people who for thousands of years have and continue to live and care for this land.

## Acknowledgements

Accomplishments in 2021-22 were possible thanks to the involvement, guidance, and collaboration of our partners in the Vernon Immigration Partnership Council and with funding from the Government of Canada, and additional project funders. As well, we are appreciative of the many staff hours of the member organizations in exploring new opportunities and contributing to many of the projects and resources developed during the past year. It is especially noteworthy that during another year where personal connections have been limited due to the ongoing pandemic, these initiatives were possible because of the support from the community and their deep commitment and understanding of the importance of this immigration, settlement, anti-racism and allyship work.

### Funder:

Immigration, Refugees and  
Citizenship Canada

### Sponsor:

Social Planning Council  
for the North Okanagan

### Staff:

Annette Sharkey, Executive  
Director, Social Planning Council  
for the North Okanagan

Lorelei Fiset, LIPC Coordinator  
Vernon Local Immigration

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Social Planning Council  
for the North Okanagan  
3105 – 33rd St  
Vernon BC V1T 9P7

### Partner Organizations 2021-2022

- British Columbia – Regional Economic Representative
- City of Vernon – Economic Development Division
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Vernon
- Community Futures North Okanagan
- Downtown Vernon Association
- Family Resource Centre for the North Okanagan
- Interior Health
- Museum and Archive Vernon
- Nexus BC Community Resource Centre
- Okanagan College – Vernon Campus
- Okanagan Regional Library – Vernon
- Vernon Public Art Gallery
- Regional District of the North Okanagan
- Rural & Northern Immigration Partnership Vernon
- School District #22 – Vernon
- Vernon & District Immigrant and Community Services Society
- Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

## A Message from Annette Sharkey

*Executive Director Social  
Planning Council, host  
organization for the Local  
Immigration Partnership*



The LIP Council strives to address gaps and achieve outcomes that make our community better for newcomers. Attracted by the local opportunities, our collaborative efforts can help support newcomers to stay, which enhances the region's cultural, social, and economic future. We are guided by the City of Vernon's Settlement and Immigration Strategy and inspired by our partners, local businesses, volunteers, families, and mentors, who are making a significant contribution in helping integrate and support immigrants, foreign workers, and international students settle in our community.

Despite the challenges of the last few years, we have been able to accomplish many goals including: sharing cultural, anti-racism, and multilingual resources; creating a video that showcases grass-roots initiatives; offering training in diversity and inclusion; researching community capacity, public opinion, and housing options; and perhaps most importantly, enhancing new and existing relationships between organizations and practitioners in our community. Together we are building our community's capacity to create, to respond and to grow in new ways.

There is more to do, and with the continuing engagement of the partners in the Local Immigration Partnership, we know we will continue to make a difference and to fulfill our vision of being a diverse and welcoming place where we collaborate to build and share a future of meaningful opportunities.

*Annette Sharkey*

Immigration Strategies	Activities	Intended Outcomes
Newcomer Attraction & Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program in Vernon (RNIP)</li><li>• What's in Vernon Brochure</li><li>• Community Collaboration</li><li>• Ukrainian Support Team</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance the economic growth and social vibrancy of our community through immigration</li></ul>
Supporting Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Website development</li><li>• e-Newsletter</li><li>• Diversity Award</li><li>• Anti-Racism Video</li><li>• Recognition of Community Action</li><li>• DEI Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workshop</li><li>• Multiculturalism Survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness of benefits of immigration</li><li>• Newcomers voices are included</li><li>• Equity centered design practices are strengthened</li></ul>

# Newcomer Attraction & Retention

## What's in Vernon for Me?

To help newcomers and their families feel welcome in our community, we produced a brochure to highlight key aspects of the community. A few copies were made available in print for our partners as well as uploaded to our website and promoted to employers for their use and for the public. This brochure supplements the [MovingToVernon.ca](http://MovingToVernon.ca) website which is now hosted online by the City of Vernon.



**The Vernon and District Immigrant and Citizenship Services Society** is a central resource for new immigrants, providing settlement services, English language classes, employment services, referrals, and more.

This non-profit society offers many services for newcomers, immigrants, refugees, visible minorities and first-generation Canadians, helping with their settlement and integration into Vernon.

**Transportation**

Our public transit services run regularly on the City and connect to smaller and larger centers across the region, including Kelowna, the College and University. Private transportation can get you to the airport, up to Silver Star Mountain Resort and to more lakes and wineries in town.

Vernon has taxis, tour buses, senior buses, handicapped, and school buses taking children to nearby and special program schools.

We're also just an airport away from the Kelowna airport (YVR) which has direct routes to major hubs in Canada and select US destinations. Vernon also has a commercial airport with an active flying club and businesses offering general aviation services, manufacturing, business and logistics.

**Health Care**

Vernon boasts a newly expanded hospital as well as other health services including mental health and substance use services, public health nursing, Indigenous health, home and community care programs, residential and assisted living facilities as well as laboratory and diagnostic services.

There are convenient to help you find a family doctor, nurse practitioner, chiropractor, dentist and other health professionals. To apply for your Medical Services Card, visit the BC Service Centre at 3201 St. Bernard Street.

**Kids Activities**

Vernon has many groups for children and youth, outside of school including Boys & Girls Club, sports organizations and weekend programs at Silver Star Ski Resort. Plus, pick up your copy of the Active Living Bulletin at the Recreation Centre to learn about a variety of activities, groups and places for children to explore.

**Shopping**

With over 500 retail and service shops, department, food, and specialty stores, you will find everything here for your home, family, and entertaining needs. Be sure to visit our art stores, craft and lifestyle shops and outdoor and outdoor markets to find something unique and local. Vernon offers a diverse downtown, neighborhood, and mall shopping areas.

**BC IDENTIFICATION & DRIVING**

To get BC identification and driving licenses, visit the BC Service Centre at 3201 St. Bernard, in downtown Vernon. You have 90 days to switch to a BC driver's license. You have 30 days to register your vehicle after arrival. Insurance plates can be transferred when you get your insurance at an ICBC or private insurance agency.

**Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan**

For something extraordinary, experience the Spectacular Winery, the Okanagan Rail Trail, the Alouette-Brown Nature Centre and Silver Star Mountain Resort in both summer and winter just minutes from downtown Vernon.

**Within 30 minutes, 10 BEACHES, 7 golf courses, 3 lakes, 100 AREAS, bike trails, walking paths, fitness centres, spas, WINERIES, galleries, international airport, attractions, parks, AND MORE.**

Visit [TourismVernon.com](http://TourismVernon.com)

Funded by: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Financé par: Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

**WELCOME TO VERNON**

Vernon is a city with a population of 44,000 situated on the traditional, unceded and unextinguished territory of the Okanagan First Nation. The North Okanagan region offers an exceptional, relaxed quality of life with a mix of urban amenities, world-class resorts, and stunning recreational opportunities all within a natural setting. Vernon is a great place to live and work for all ages.

**ACTIVATE YOUR LIFE**

**Recreation**

Outdoors and indoors, you can enjoy an active lifestyle in Vernon. Lakes, golf courses, and ski areas are nearby, while right in the city are gyms, swimming pools, tennis courts, tennis, bike park and urban walking. Check out the Active Living Guide booklet available at the Recreation Centre for activities for all ages.

For something extraordinary, experience the Spectacular Winery, the Okanagan Rail Trail, the Alouette-Brown Nature Centre and Silver Star Mountain Resort in both summer and winter just minutes from downtown Vernon.

**Culture**

Vernon is an active hub for all kinds of cultural activities. We have art galleries, studios, live stage sites and organizations, performing arts centers, live music venues, an interactive museum and library.

**Dining**

Eating out in Vernon is a treat! We have many different styles of food to choose from as well as unique locations on the waterfront, on the top of a hill, in a castle or on the beach. There is something for every taste bud in your group!

Plus, you may enjoy samples from our area wineries, cafes, distilleries and meadery.

**SOCIALIZE & GET INVOLVED**

Making new friends can be fun for all ages and helps you get to know your neighbors and community better. Some ways to start connecting is to look for groups, groups interested in such as multicultural groups, faith groups, fitness groups, environmental groups and political organizations. As well, check out drop-ins at the library, recreation centre, or senior centers.

Download the City's events app called Vernon Connect! Keep your app close to discover activities through your smartphone. Also, look for events and activities on Facebook, and on posters around the city, especially in coffee shops.

You can also meet face-to-face people by joining in with activities and food events to support your favorite cause.

**Work Volunteer**

Vernon has many fine services that can help you find employment or start a business. Connect with Community's Future of the North Okanagan and Vernon BC for assistance.

A great way to make your skills known and meet people is to volunteer. Check out the opportunities online at [volunteerokanagan.ca](http://volunteerokanagan.ca).

**Find a home**

Vernon has a variety of home types and locations close to community amenities. Some people start by renting while others connect with a realtor to purchase a home before retiring.

When searching online for homes for sale, visit realtor.ca. For rentals, try kijiji.ca or compare rent websites.

Consider the benefits of various styles of apartments, townhouses, single family homes, multi-family homes, as well as homes on acreages for farming, ranching or recreational use such as beachfront.

The CMHC housing market information portal offers information online about the average rental and buying costs.

**GET SETTLED**

**Learning**

Like most cities, Vernon offers a variety of educational options for pre-school and kindergarten through Grade 12 including specialized sports, language and outdoor programs. Many neighborhood schools are within walking distance or on school bus routes.



# Community Collaboration

## Local Immigration Partnership Council Meetings

These meetings, held three times each year, are content rich with opportunities for council members to share information, seek input, and promote collaboration in addressing gaps. With a diverse cross-section of partners at the table there is often far-reaching benefits to this sharing. For example, the Family Resource Centre was doing research to support vulnerable women and was able to enhance their research by reaching out through the LIPC.



## Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot

The Local Immigration Partnership Council and individual members have been supporting the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Vernon – North Okanagan in working with the organizational network and employers in hiring and welcoming newcomers to the community. This includes promoting RNIP employment and mentoring opportunities and success stories through our social media channels and through the multicultural newsletter.

## Collaboration with Partners

We have had discussions with partner agencies, VDICSS, Canadian Mental Health Association Vernon, and the Family Resource Centre on how to support the newcomer experience, especially related to awareness and access to services. Opportunities to highlight services through events and outreach are actively sought and being developed.

## Government Assisted Refugees

LIPC has participated in research, led by Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Services Society (VDICSS), to better understand the community's capacity to support government assisted refugees, especially those arriving to our region from Afghanistan, and to assess the community's capacity to support individuals experiencing racism.

## North Okanagan Cultural Homestay

Through research to support newcomer access to housing in the community (especially through the RNIP pilot) a memorandum of understanding was signed with a private organization to facilitate a new homeshare initiative in the North Okanagan. This collaboration will be run from March 2022-December 2022 with a possible extension based on the number of qualifying homes found and the number of placements made.

The online platform which accepts and matches home owners with newcomers is [happipad.com/rnip](https://happipad.com/rnip).

## Economic Development Committee

The City of Vernon in 2021 hosted an economic development committee meeting on the topic of immigration. This resulted in an opportunity for an orientation to the work being done in the community to attract and retain Immigrants to Vernon. The meeting featured in-person presentations and a question-and-answer session by members of the LIPC (including Community Futures North Okanagan and the RNIP pilot) and an introduction to the potential development of a homestay pilot.

# Supporting Inclusion

## Educational Opportunities:

24 individuals from local employers, service agencies and the public took part in 2-afternoon workshop sessions on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, conducted online by experienced professionals of diverse backgrounds from Kelowna Community Resources. The workshop was offered through a partnership with the Vernon branch of the Okanagan Regional Library and funded by IRCC.

Additional workshops related to Human Rights and Active Bystander (funded by the Province of BC), will be offered in April and May 2022 to round out a series that aims to promote anti-racism awareness and action.



## Anti-Racism Video

The **Allyship in Action** video was shot in Vernon over the summer of 2021. Using an interwoven documentary-style, the video tells the stories of three different community groups taking action to increase awareness and address racism in Vernon.

The six-and-a-half-minute video begins with the story of an early morning paddle boarding excursion to Stand Up Against Racism. The video continues by telling the stories of school-age students celebrating their diversity in self-portraits, and the interactive presentation about becoming an ally by two Indigenous educators.

Released in December 2021, the Social Planning Council and the LIPC are grateful for the funding provided by the Province of British Columbia and for support of the individuals, groups and partners who took action against racism and allowed us to tell their story in the video. These partners include the Filipino Association of Vernon, School District 22 – Beairto School, Vernon Public Art Gallery, the Okanagan Regional Library – Vernon Branch, and CMHA's Restorative Justice Program.

The intention of the video is to inspire more community members to consider how they might become an ally in the fight against racism.



To promote the video a news release was issued to local media, it was promoted in our newsletter, in social media and was embedded on our webpage (which also provides numerous links to additional resources for the public, educators and service providers).

### Anti-Racism Video /[watch on vimeo](#)

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 770 | Web page visits "Allyship – What can you do to Combat Racism?" (April 1 – Feb 15) |
| 206 | Views times on Vimeo in the 3 months since launching December 2021.               |

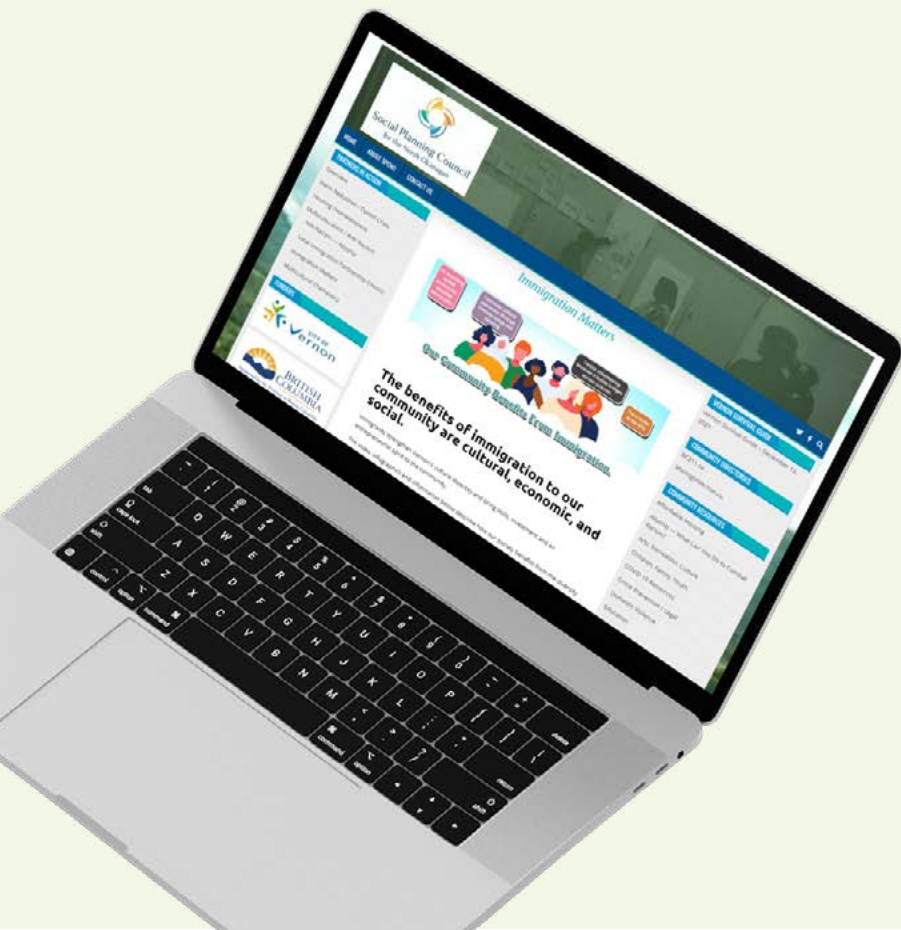
## Diversity Excellence Award

Through LIPC advocacy a new award to recognize Diversity in the business community was introduced and embraced by a LIPC partner, the Vernon Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, the award was sponsored by a long-time LIPC member, Kal Tire. The criteria for the award is an employer that has undertaken significant change within the last two years, in areas such as: reviewing or implementing diversity, inclusion and/or equity policies, processes and practices; progressive hiring and on-boarding practices to recruit, retain and develop diversity groups; showcasing diversity in customer attraction and marketing diversity; providing training and education in diversity to staff; and, offering mentorship and/or supporting connections in the community.

With a field of seven nominees in 2021, its inaugural year, it was awarded to Tolko Industries, while Interior Health received honourable mention.





# Public Communications

## Social Media



**Twitter** /spcvernon

228 Followers  
1189 Tweets since 2016  
29700 Impressions in 2021  
82 Average Impressions/day



**Facebook** /spcvernon

461 Page likes (61.8% from Vernon)  
5,639 Post reach in 2021

## Social Planning Website Development:

Google Analytics were added to the website in late March 2021, providing insight into visits and information sought. Since then, the website (socialplanning.ca) has had 1,900 different visitors with most from Canada.



### Website Visitors

969	Canada
316	China
240	US
157	Philippines
32	India



### Most Viewed Pages

707	Allyship page -anti-racism
493	Multicultural Champions
421	Contact us
391	Immigration Matters page
375	About SPCNO

## Multicultural Connections Enewsletter

Multicultural Connections Enewsletter is focused on immigration news, research, resources and services, multicultural events and opportunities. It is published each month and often includes multilingual graphics for reuse, registration, links and related promotional materials highlighting community, cultural and/or governmental organizations and activities.



### E-Newsletter

128	Audience/Contacts
119	Subscribers
68%	Engagement (often or sometimes open our newsletters)
12	Issues published in 2021



**21%** of total  
Canadian **ARTISTS**  
are immigrants.

Hill Strategies, Statistical Profile of Artists in  
Canada in 2016



**30% OF WORKERS** in  
Vernon are over the age of  
55, meaning that over 9,500  
could retire by 2026.

Statistics Canada 2016 Census



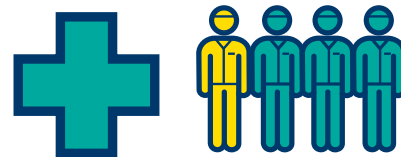
**33% of all businesses  
with paid staff**

are owned by Immigrants  
creating important  
local jobs



Statistics Canada 2016 Census

**Immigration matters to Canada's  
health-care sector**



Immigrants make up **1/4** of the health-care sector  
workers, including:

**36% of Physicians**  
**23% of Registered Nurses**  
**37% of Pharmacists**


Statistics Canada 2016 Census



Over the past **5 years**, immigration has  
accounted for over **3/4 of Canada's total  
population growth.**

2021 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration ([canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca))





Year after year, Canada has maintained its enduring tradition of welcoming newcomers from every corner of the globe and offering protection to some of the world's most vulnerable.

We have long recognized that immigration provides essential contributions to Canada's culture, economy, and population growth. Their contributions enrich Canadian communities and the lives of everyone who lives here.

**The Honourable Sean Fraser,**  
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship



## Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan

3105 – 33rd Street, Vernon, BC V1T 9P7

Funded by:

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Immigration, Refugees  
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