

Creating Spaces and Services that are Accessible and Welcoming to Newcomers

INTRODUCTION

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Creating and implementing accessible spaces and services for newcomers is essential in order for agencies and community groups to better serve newcomers, and to build a socially inclusive community. By involving the considerations of new Canadians experiences, and by following the suggestions and best practices provided below, the unique needs of newcomers will be better met.

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Accessible and Welcoming Spaces for Newcomers

In order to create a space that is accessible and welcoming to newcomers, the organization and/or workplace must develop organizational cultural competency. This can be achieved through the following:

Training front line staff and management in cross-cultural communication and diversity
Completing board diversity training:

- Developing and implementing immigrant-friendly policies and procedures, including anti-racism and board diversity policies
- Ongoing assessments of the impact of trainings and policies
- Engaging newcomers in conversations around making the organization and/or workplace more accessible and welcoming

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Accessible and Welcoming Services for Newcomers

It is essential to provide services that are accessible to newcomers. Below are some tips on creating accessible services:

Use plain and clear language on all of your materials and literature

- To evaluate the accessibility of the language being used in your materials and literature, and for helpful tips and guidelines, please see the web tool Clear Language and Design at: <http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/readingeffectivenessstool/>

Use visuals, such as pictures, instead of words whenever possible

- For example, the picture displayed below indicates that there is an inclusive washroom. This particular example includes text as well. However, depending on the nature of the message, a picture alone might be sufficient.

Provide organizational materials and literature in different languages

- See attached posters in English and Spanish

Provide visuals (posters and general signage) in top nine languages

- The top nine languages are Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Taglog, Korean, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi and Somali

In your organization, put up posters in different languages stating “If you are having difficulty reading this, please contact the New Canadians Centre at (705) 743-0882, faye@nccpeterborough.ca, or stop by at 205 Sherbrooke St. Unit D”

Whenever possible, have multilingual front-line staff

Make your website immigrant-friendly

- For tips and guidelines, please see the resource on “How to make your website more immigrant-friendly”

Provide Google translate on website

- <http://translate.google.com/#>
- http://translate.google.com/translate_tools?hl=EN

Provide New Canadians Centre (NCC) brochures at you organization

- <http://www.nccpeterborough.ca/>

Become member of Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII)

- <http://ppcii.ca/>

Provide translation and interpretation services

- Prioritizing when and how to provide depends on each organization; should have a policy and, ideally, a budget (NCC can help to create policy). In general, what an organization feels to be essential services, where communication has been tried without an interpreter.
- Determining funds for free translation services: For example, free interpretation related to domestic violence (for ex, a woman who left an abusive relationship could have free interpretation for consulting a family lawyer).
- Free interpretation is available from CEO Translation & Interpretation (brochures available at NCC).
- Volunteer vs. pay outline: up to each organization to determine
- In general, a certified interpreter is needed when:
 - The interpretation involves sensitive issues where confidentiality is a concern (this is an especial concern in a small community such as Peterborough) and/or

- Exactness of interpretation is especially important (e.g. during a medical examination)
- When using an interpreter, keep the following tips in mind:
- Could there be a conflict of interest?
- How comfortable is the individual? If they look uncomfortable, stop. Arrange for another interpreter.
- Talk to the individual, not the interpreter
- Do not try to understand what they are saying in their own language
- Use short sentences
- Do not use summaries or discussions
- Answer proportionally to the question
- Check instructions
- If possible, keep one interpreter throughout process
- Explain your role
- Explain process
- Explain other people who may be involved
- Explain next steps, how to get in touch

NCC can assist in the following ways

- Staff are generally not able to provide interpretation services but may do so in emergency situations (the current staff speak Spanish, Hungarian, and Mandarin)
- Provide a list of volunteer interpreters; however, there are many problems with volunteer interpreters that must be kept in mind:
 - May not be able to provide quickly or for some languages
 - Not trained; accuracy may be compromised or
 - Problems with confidentiality, especially in a small community such as Peterborough
 - Provide information on certified interpreters through Central Eastern Ontario Translation and Interpretation Services (free for victims of domestic violence)
 - Train staff in multicultural communication
 - Work with organization to develop interpretation policies/materials

For information on translation and interpretation services, please visit Central Eastern Ontario Translation and Interpretation Services at <http://www.quis-immigration.org/translate.html>

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Resources

Central Eastern Ontario Translation and Interpretation Services

<http://www.quis-immigration.org/translate.html>

Clear Language and Design:

<http://www.eastendliteracy.on.ca/clearlanguageanddesign/readingeffectivenessstool/Literacy>

Community and Race Relations Committee of Peterborough

www.racerelationspeterborough.org

www.anti-racism.ca

New Canadians Centre
<http://www.nccpeterborough.ca/>

Ontario Centre South (LOCS)
<http://www.locs.on.ca/>
http://www.locs.on.ca/C_peterborough_county.htm

Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration
<http://ppcii.ca/>

Workplace Integration Centre
www.workplaceintegration.ca

Youth Friendly/Accessible Language
<http://www.fvkasa.org/resources/files/history-language.pdf>

Additional Tools and Resources

1. ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR:

1.1 Building Welcoming Communities: Advocating for Attraction and Retention of Newcomers

Guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration
Integration-Net.ca

Tips for Organizing a Multicultural Diversity Event
Integration-Net.ca

Quiz: What am I Doing to Welcome Diversity
Integration-Net.ca

1.2 Immigrant-Friendly Workplace Policies

An Organizational Checklist for Racial Equity
Pillar Nonprofit Network

A Place for All: A Guide to Creating an Inclusive Workplace
Canada Human Rights Commission