

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 4/15/2025

Subject: **Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program Summary (2020-2025)**

Submitted By: Danielle Manton, City Clerk

Prepared By: Stephen Aboagye, EDIA Supervisor

Report No.: 25-021-CRS

File No.: C11

Wards Affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 25-021-CRS Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program Summary be received.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In March of 2020, Council approved a new collaborative program funded entirely by an awarded Settlement Grant from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to create a Newcomer Outreach Program. The City of Cambridge partnered with Kinbridge Community Organization to help develop and deliver the Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program (CNOP) at the neighbourhood level, with services focusing on newcomer youth and newcomer seniors.

The Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program was launched as a pilot program from September 2020 to March 2025 to assess and enhance the effectiveness of municipal services for newcomers. CNOP aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Cambridge's growing newcomer population by identifying service gaps, testing innovative approaches, and developing a long-term strategy. As the Waterloo Region continues to attract newcomers, Cambridge recognizes the importance of fostering a welcoming community. CNOP directly addresses key challenges by partnering with Kinbridge Neighbourhood Association, which provides on-the-ground support to newcomers. The program aligns with broader initiatives like Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), ensuring a coordinated approach to immigrant integration at municipal, provincial, and national levels.

By gathering insights from CNOP, Cambridge can strengthen its municipal and community services, ensuring newcomers can access the resources they need to thrive. Supporting newcomer integration is not just about meeting immediate needs; it is about fostering long-term economic, social, and cultural inclusion. In collaboration with local organizations, municipalities play a critical role in attracting, supporting, and retaining newcomers, ultimately building stronger, more connected, and sustainable communities.

Purpose

This report provides an update to Council on the transition of the Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program (CNOP) from a City-led initiative to being fully managed by Kinbridge Community Association. The City has been proud to support and guide CNOP over the years, helping it grow and positively impact the community. Now that the program is well-established, we are confident that Kinbridge is ready to take it to the next level and expand its reach. As a result of the grant being initiated in 2020, the City hired a contract newcomer program coordinator to oversee the program from the City's perspective and in coordination with Kinbridge. With the dissolution of the City's involvement, the contract position will no longer be in place. Moving forward, the City is dedicated to supporting newcomers by actively promoting, collaborating, and enhancing efforts that align with our equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) goals.

Key Findings

The City of Cambridge is supported by a strong network of service providers and community partners who collaborate to deliver a wide range of programs that help newcomers succeed.

Newcomer Trends and Program Impact in Cambridge

- In 2022, about 1,000 immigrants sought permanent residency status in Cambridge, marking the largest increase among all municipalities in the Waterloo region over the past four years, according to a recent report.
- From 2018-2022, the number of immigrants seeking permanent residency grew by 138%.
- Many newcomers settled in Cambridge for economic opportunities, with this factor increasing by 310% during the period. Family reunification was the second most common reason, cited by 43% of immigrants.
- Key challenges for newcomers include income, housing, and employment, with 15% of recent immigrants living below the low-income threshold.

CNOP Impact and Achievements

- Under the IRCC’s agreement, the CNOP was expected to hold five community connection events for 700 participants over five years. Instead, the program surpassed expectations, hosting 11 events with a total of 4,080 participants.
- Support services expanded significantly, meeting the growing demand for newcomers.
- Transportation assistance was crucial, particularly for those with mobility or financial challenges. A total of 448 transportation services were provided, with the highest demand in 2023–2024.
- Translation and interpretation services helped bridge language barriers. Over five years, CNOP provided 164 translation services and 116 interpretation services, ensuring newcomers could access programming in a language they understood.
- The most participants came from Syria, India, Ukraine, and Pakistan, reflecting broader settlement trends in Cambridge. Other engaged communities included Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Brazil, and Egypt.
- Youth participation was highest among Syrian and Indian newcomers, followed by Ukrainians and Pakistanis.
- The program also ensured that newcomers from lesser-represented nationalities—such as Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, and Brazil—received the support needed for successful integration.
- Over \$1.4 million was spent over the five years to support initiatives and events to enhance the newcomer experience in the city.

This program has strived to help newcomers in Cambridge feel welcomed, valued and connected as integral members of the community. The City is committed to fostering inclusion by ensuring fair and accessible municipal services. However, as newcomer needs evolve, expanding resources for service providers can enhance collaboration, simplify service navigation, and improve impact assessment. While many newcomers rely on informal support networks, there is an increasing demand for stronger, government-funded settlement services to support a smoother integration process.

Financial Implications

This program has been entirely funded by the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) award of the Settlement Grant to the City of Cambridge. The city established a contracted newcomer coordinator role and fully funded it through the grant funding. The funding has covered 100% of the costs of coordinating, developing, and delivering the Newcomer Outreach Program, with no financial contributions from the City. Kinbridge has made arrangements to secure grant funding.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

☒ Strategic Action

Objective(s): WELLBEING - Connect people to services that support individual and community wellbeing

Strategic Action: Enhance equity and inclusion efforts

OR

☒ Core Service

Program: Accessibility & Inclusion Services

Core Service: Community Neighbourhood Organizations

BACKGROUND:

Even in a city as diverse and welcoming as Cambridge, the immigration experience can be challenging. Many newcomers arrive from difficult circumstances like conflict, war, or violence, while others come from countries with political systems, civic institutions, and services that differ from those in Canada. Despite these challenges, newcomers show remarkable resilience as they work to adjust to their new environment. Upon arrival, they often first connect with local governments and community-based organizations that provide essential support. Municipalities play a vital role in helping them integrate by offering various services and resources. These services are crucial for newcomers in establishing stability and successfully adapting to their new community.

Launched in 2020, the Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program (CNOP), funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), is dedicated to supporting permanent residents, convention refugees, and Ukrainian Temporary Residents, with a particular focus on youth and seniors within the newcomer population. The program's main goal is to enhance integration and foster community connections in Cambridge. This initiative is a collaborative effort between the City of Cambridge and the Kinbridge Community Association to ensure newcomers feel welcome, supported, and connected in their new community.

The City of Cambridge was responsible for monitoring and overseeing the program budget, consolidating data, and reporting on trends to support continuous improvement. The Newcomer Outreach Program Coordinator was the primary contact for the program, collaborating closely with Kinbridge Community Association to assist newcomers and ensure effective reporting and evaluation of the program to IRCC.

Improving newcomers' understanding of life in Canada, focusing on their experiences in Cambridge:

CNOP helps newcomers settle into life in Canada, particularly in Cambridge. The program provides essential support, offering everything from cultural orientation to information about local customs and ensuring newcomers understand their rights and responsibilities. The goal is to empower them, helping them feel confident and ready to embrace their new life in the community.

Expanding access to and knowledge of available community support services:

CNOP connects newcomers with critical local services and resources, including support for youth and seniors. The program helped newcomers understand and access services, breaking down barriers and supporting their smooth integration into the community.

Strengthening community connections to broaden social networks:

CNOP includes newcomers in planning and creating community events and initiatives, giving them a say in shaping the services that impacted them. This involvement helped them feel more connected to the community and ensured the initiatives met their needs and experiences.

Engaging newcomers in the planning, developing, and implementing community-based events and initiatives:

CNOP involves newcomers in planning and creating community events, allowing them to have a say in shaping services that are meaningful to them. By including them in decision-making and event planning, the program gives newcomers a sense of ownership and control, ensuring that the initiatives are aligned with their needs and experiences.

Promoting civic engagement and encouraging active participation:

The program encourages newcomers to get involved in local events, volunteer, and participate in civic life. This involvement helped them feel more connected to the community, gave them a sense of purpose, and provided a better understanding of local governance and cultural activities.

Enhancing newcomers' sense of empowerment, belonging, integration, and overall well-being:

CNOP empowers newcomers by offering resources and opportunities for involvement, helping them feel valued and supported. This empowerment strengthens their connection to the community, increases their confidence, and improves their overall well-being, all of which are essential for their long-term success and integration into Cambridge.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

There is no existing policy/by-law.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This program has been entirely funded by the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada award of the Settlement Grant to the City of Cambridge. The city established a newcomer coordinator role, but the grant funding funded it. The funding has covered 100% of the costs of coordinating, developing, and delivering the Newcomer Outreach Program, with no financial contributions from the City. The CNOP will continue to be entirely run by Kinbridge and funded by a new grant through the IRCC award of the Settlement Grant.

PUBLIC VALUE:**Leadership:**

CNOP has contributed to helping Cambridge be a welcoming City. Through creative citywide events and recreational programming, CNOP has brought residents together, celebrated the unique character of different neighbourhoods, and encouraged active participation in local culture.

This initiative has made Cambridge stand out as a city that values the public good and is embedded in unity, diversity, and inclusion. It reflects our commitment to supporting community-building efforts, including neighbourhood events organized by our partners. This approach aligns with the city's core values and keeps the well-being of our community at the forefront of our goals.

Collaboration:

CNOP highlights how collaboration is central to our city's values. By partnering with organizations like Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Kinbridge Community Association, we've created an inclusive environment for newcomers. This collaboration has been key to CNOP's success and will continue to grow as we continue to work with agencies that support newcomers. This ensures that newcomers' needs are met through joint efforts in outreach, program development, and service evaluation. This keeps our teams working across departments to ensure that services adapt to the community's evolving needs.

CNOP reflects Cambridge's commitment to inclusivity and collaboration, creating an environment where all residents, especially newcomers, feel supported and connected. This collaborative spirit is vital to the public value we aim to promote.

CONCLUSION:

The transition of the Cambridge Newcomer Outreach Program (CNOP) marks an exciting new phase as Kinbridge Community Association takes the lead in continuing this important work. We are pleased to confirm that Kinbridge will retain the CNOP name as they move forward, having received ongoing funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to independently sustain and grow the program.

The City of Cambridge is proud to have supported and guided CNOP's development over the five years, helping to create a strong foundation for its continued success. Kinbridge's growth and capacity to manage this program independently reflect the strength of our partnership and the shared commitment to fostering inclusion in our community.

As Kinbridge takes this next step, the City remains fully committed to supporting this new direction by amplifying the program's impact. We look forward to continued collaboration with Kinbridge and other agencies to ensure that CNOP's goals continue to align with our equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) goals.

We recommend that Council receive this report and join us in celebrating this next chapter for CNOP and Kinbridge our ongoing commitment to supporting newcomer initiatives in Cambridge.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

When naming attachments please use the following format: