REPORT: RRLIP ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM, 2025-2026

Forum Date:	Forum Title:	Report Prepared by:
November 17, 2025	**RRLIP Annual Community Forum**	**RRLIP Staff**

PURPOSE OF FORUM

Each year, the **Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP)** hosts a community forum. For 2025-2026, RRLIP hosted the Annual Community Forum on November 17, 2025.

The event aimed to reflect on RRLIP's achievements and milestones over the last decade and planning for the fiscal year 2025/2026. Additionally, it engaged community members and partners in meaningful discussions about key priorities for RRLIP, community needs and strengths, and opportunities for introducing new initiatives, strengthening existing collaborations and seeking new partnerships to enhance RRLIP's impact.

The goals of the forum were to:

- Review/Highlight on RRLIP's key accomplishments over the past year
- Present the preliminary findings of the Newcomer Survey 2025-2026
- Engage community members and partners in discussions on the topics mentioned above

PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF FORUM

The RRLIP team undertook extensive planning to ensure a meaningful and well-organized Annual Community Forum. Preparations included booking the venue, coordinating the hybrid format, and developing presentations and materials to share during the event. The team also arranged catering, coordinated logistics, and ensured all technical requirements were in place to support both in-person and online participation.

In the weeks leading up to the Forum, the RRLIP engaged community members through its working group meetings and gathered feedback and ideas to help shape the event. The team facilitated interactive group activities, encouraging members to share memories, experiences, and messages that were highlighted during the Forum.

The 2025 RRLIP Annual Community Forum was delivered in a hybrid format, allowing participants to attend either in person or online via Zoom. The in-person portion of the event took place in the library room at the mâmawêyatitân centre, 3355 6th Avenue, Regina, SK. Offering both formats supported broader community participation and ensured accessibility for all interested attendees.

WHO ATTENDED?

A total of 49 participants attended the event, with 31 joining in person and 18 participating virtually. The attendees represented various organizations and agencies, including:

- Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF)
- City of Regina
- Diocese of Qu'Appelle
- East Central SK Immigration Partnership
- Government of Saskatchewan
- Habitat for Humanity SK
- International Women of Saskatoon (IWS)
- Immigration Partnership Saskatoon (IPSK)
- Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCOS)
- North Central Community Association
- Prairie Skies Integration Network
- Regina Early Learning Center (RELC)
- Regina Housing Authority
- Regina Open Door Society (RODS)
- Regina Police Services (RPS)
- Regina Public Library (RPL)
- Regina Public Schools
- Rental Housing Saskatchewan
- Réseau en immigration francophone de la Saskatchewan (RIF-SK)
- Rooted Connections
- RRLIP Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) members
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)
- Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA)
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Saskatchewan Safety Council
- Saskatoon Open Door Society
- Service d'Accueil et d'Inclusion Francophone-SK (SAIF-SK)
- SK Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA)
- SK PSR Network members
- Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre
- United Way of Saskatoon and Area
- UR International (University of Regina)
- World Education Services (WES)

FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

The Forum Agenda included:

- **Introduction**: Welcome and Land Acknowledgement; Introductions of RRLIP Staff; Purpose of Forum
- **What is a LIP? Past Highlights and Recent Updates:** Powerpoint Presentation on some major highlights of RRLIP achievements and updates for 2024-2025
- **Presentation of RRLIP's Newcomer Survey's** preliminary results
- **Small Group Activity:** Envisioning RRLIP's Next Two Years
- **Thank you and closing remarks**

Details of the forum program included:

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Opening Remarks:** RRLIP Assistant Manager, Sonika Chaudhary, who served as the emcee for the event, welcomed participants to the Annual Community Forum. She opened the gathering with a land acknowledgement and introduced the RRLIP team: Cindy Hopper, New Project Manager, and Elvira Daliva, Community Partnership and Engagement Coordinator. She expressed RRLIP's gratitude for the ongoing support from community members and partners, acknowledging their collaboration in helping newcomers settle and integrate in Regina. Special appreciation was extended to RRLIP's host agency, the Regina Open Door Society, and to its funder, IRCC, for their unwavering support. She then recognized the community members, partners, and guests in attendance. Afterwards, she announced the names of the working groups, inviting members to give a wave as their group was mentioned.

2. **What is a LIP? Past Highlights and Recent Updates:** RRLIP Assistant Manager, Sonika Chaudhary, delivered a PowerPoint presentation that included an introduction to the RRLIP project, key highlights from 2014–2024, and updates on ongoing activities for 2025–2026, which were shared by RRLIP's Project Manager, Cindy Hopper.

   The Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP) is guided by a multi-sectoral Partnership Council, informed by an Immigrant Advisory Table, and works with the community to address newcomer priorities through surveys, events, and working groups.

   Past highlights of the project (2014-2024) included:

   - Key highlights of the project from 2014 to 2024 reflect the steady growth and evolution of RRLIP as a collaborative, community-driven initiative. The project began in September 2014 with the hiring of a Project Manager, followed by the addition of a second staff member in November 2014. In 2015, RRLIP launched its website (www.rrlip.ca), enhancing communication and information sharing. The formation of the Partnership Council and Immigrant Advisory Table in 2015–16 strengthened community governance and newcomer representation. During 2016–17, RRLIP established its first working group, the Canadian Housing Advisory Committee (CHAC), hosted 13 community forums, conducted large-scale research in partnership with the University of Regina, and adopted its first Community Plan in 2017. From 2017 to 2019, RRLIP focused on implementing the initial plan and expanded its work through new working groups addressing emerging priorities such as anti-racism and discrimination, labour market integration, and

mental wellness; a third staff member joined in 2017 to support increasing project demands. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, RRLIP transitioned meetings to virtual formats in March 2020 and joined the Saskatchewan LIP Peer Support Network the same year. Between 2019–20, 2022, and 2023–24, RRLIP conducted multiple large-scale newcomer and community surveys, including a Mental and Emotional Wellness Survey in 2023–24. Most recently, RRLIP supported the NAARS Evaluation Project in collaboration with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada during 2023–24, and in 2024, welcomed a new Project Manager and Assistant Manager following leadership retirements.

RRLIP Updates: Ongoing Activities (2024-25):

- **Regular Meetings and Engagement**
  - Convenes monthly, bi-monthly, and quarterly Working Groups and committee meetings
  - Attends the LIP Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT) Quarterly Meeting and the Sask LIP Peer Support bi-monthly meeting
  - Participates in SAISIA Urban + Rural Quarterly meetings (e.g., Housing presentation by RRLIP)
- **Information Sharing and Community Outreach**
  - Publishes blog posts to disseminate information about community events and local developments related to immigration and (re)settlement
  - Shares input on local initiatives and serves on community partner committees
- **Event Participation**
  - Engages in Career Settlement and Community Fairs
  - Participates in local cultural events, informational sessions, and networking opportunities
  - Attends professional development sessions and conferences at local, provincial, regional, national, and international levels
- **Strategic Partnerships**
  - **2023–2025:** RRLIP is one of five Canadian communities partnering with World Education Services (WES) and local employment service providers to help employers address labour market challenges by hiring and retaining local immigrant and other recent/past newcomer talent in meaningful employment
- **Key Initiatives**
  - **Nov. 7, 2024:** Organized the Refugee Hiring Event (RHE) with the Labour Market Working Group (LMWG) to connect refugees and displaced persons with local employment opportunities
  - **NAARS Evaluation Project:** Coordinated the Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS) evaluation for Saskatchewan and Manitoba in collaboration with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Managed the NAARS report and facilitated the presentation of key findings in 2024
- **Staffing Update**
  - **2025:** Mussarat resigned; Cindy Hopper joined as Project Manager in November 2025
- **Resource Sharing**
  - RRLIP staff shared examples of resources available on the website's resource page, which provide valuable information related to local immigration and settlement, with most resources updated in 2025
    - Newcomer Welcome Videos
    - Mental and Emotional Wellness Resources
    - Housing-related Resources
    - Everyday and Emergency Resources

- Cultural Awareness Resources
- Resources for Private Sponsors of Refugees

3. Preliminary Results from the Newcomer Survey 2025-26

The RRLIP Newcomer Survey 2025–26 was launched online in mid-July 2025 and promoted through a coordinated outreach effort by RRLIP and community partners. Promotional strategies included blog posts, social media updates, email campaigns, phone calls, and in-person outreach at community events, ethnic grocery stores, and multicultural faith-based organizations. Settlement agencies played a key role in sharing the survey with clients, while virtual and in-person orientation sessions encouraged participation. The survey officially closed on October 10, 2025, with 214 Regina residents aged 15 and older who were born outside Canada participating.

Most respondents were recent newcomers, with 43.93% in Canada for 1–3 years, 16.36% for less than six months, and 12.62% for six months to one year. The majority had arrived through the Provincial Nominee Program (40.65%), followed by international students (14.95%), temporary foreign workers (12.62%), family class (8.88%), and refugees (7.01%). Respondents were primarily working-age adults (35–44: 37.38%; 45–54: 28.50%; 25–34: 20.56%), with a larger proportion identifying as female (64.49%) and married (73.36%). Linguistic diversity was high, with 48 languages spoken at home, including English, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Arabic, Yoruba, Bengali, Tagalog, and Spanish. Participants represented 37 countries, with India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Ghana, and the Philippines most commonly represented.

While respondents were highly educated (over 71% holding undergraduate or graduate degrees), employment challenges were prominent: 37.40% were unemployed, and 4.70% were employed below their skill level. English proficiency was generally moderate to strong, with 46.73% reporting CLB 8+ and 42.99% CLB 5–8; 66.36% reported no knowledge of French. Household incomes varied, with over 40% earning below $30,000 or choosing not to disclose. Housing was primarily rental (72.43%), with fewer homeowners (17.29%) or those living with relatives/friends (7.94%). Settlement services most frequently accessed included settlement support (45.27%), employment services (37.31%), language services (28.86%), and childcare (8.46%).

Survey findings identified **employment as the most significant settlement barrier**, reported by 83.13% of respondents, followed by **housing** (43.93%) and **healthcare** (35.51%). Other challenges included **transportation** (18.69%) and **driver education** (17.29%). These results indicate that newcomers in Regina face the greatest difficulties entering the workforce, securing stable housing, and accessing healthcare services, highlighting the importance of continued support in these areas.

Comments received during Forum about Survey:

- Can the survey be translated into different languages?
- Need to take into consideration if RRLIP can have an influence over these results
- Does the length of time the newcomer has been in Canada make a difference?
- How does the newcomer survey sample compare to the population?
- The newcomer survey did not have enough people to answer - can STATS Canada numbers be included as a comparison?
- Was the survey sample biased?
- Should the demographic be included for all?

4. **Envisioning RRLIP's Next 2 Years**:

The RRLIP team facilitated a small-group discussion with both in-person and Zoom participants, focused on identifying RRLIP's key priorities for the next two years, the most pressing community needs, potential new initiatives, and community strengths, assets, and opportunities for partnership and collaboration. Following the event, participants were invited to complete the RRLIP Community Annual Forum Feedback Survey to provide additional input and reflections.

Over the next two years, the focus should be on strengthening and expanding services that enhance newcomer well-being, support community safety, and build a more inclusive and equitable society. Key priorities include:

For the 2026–27 fiscal year, community feedback indicates that RRLIP should continue building on its existing priorities while placing a strong emphasis on **employment and economic integration** as the foundation for successful settlement. This includes expanding job-matching initiatives with local employers, organizing career fairs and networking opportunities, developing mentorship programs, supporting credential recognition such as WES assessments, and offering job-readiness workshops and guidance on upgrading qualifications. **Housing stability** was identified as another critical priority, with a focus on advocating for affordable housing, sharing housing registration lists, budgeting tools, and multilingual information, and providing targeted support to vulnerable groups, including refugees. Participants also emphasized the importance of **health, mental, and emotional wellness**, recommending increased awareness among healthcare providers about newcomer needs, improved access to information on clinics accepting new patients and languages spoken, and expanded mental health and wellness programming. **Anti-racism and community inclusion** remain essential, with calls to strengthen advocacy efforts, improve newcomer sentiment among community partners such as health services, police, and businesses, and create cultural bridging initiatives and platforms for newcomer voices. Additional priorities include **education and language support**, through expanded language training for adults and children, guidance on educational upgrading for professional employment, and basic life-skills training such as driving and public transit navigation. Across all areas, participants stressed the need for **data-informed planning and resource sharing**, including ongoing community research, newcomer surveys, and regularly updated multilingual resources. Finally, **advocacy and policy engagement** were highlighted as key roles for RRLIP, particularly in addressing food insecurity, supporting civic inclusion such as municipal voting rights for permanent residents, and fostering unity among stakeholders to collaboratively address newcomer challenges.

To better address community needs in the 2026–27 fiscal year, participants proposed a range of new initiatives that strengthen early intervention, practical support, and systemic advocacy. Key recommendations include expanding **mental health and emotional wellness support** through peer-led Community Wellness Circles and proactive, culturally responsive mental health awareness initiatives. **Parenting and education supports** were identified as important, with suggested programs to help newcomer parents navigate the school system and build meaningful connections with teachers and other families. In the area of **employment and economic integration**, proposed initiatives focus on accelerating credential recognition, offering mentorship and employer education, hosting on-the-job training hiring events, and delivering job-readiness boot camps to support newcomers while they work toward professional equivalency. Participants also emphasized the need for stronger **housing advocacy and education**, including multilingual toolkits on tenant rights and responsibilities and coordinated advocacy with landlords and housing authorities. Additional priorities include expanded **language and communication support** through ESL and workplace English programs, a centralized multilingual

resource hub, strengthened **anti-racism and community inclusion efforts** through national campaigns and intercultural storytelling, and enhanced **food security and financial literacy** initiatives. Finally, participants recommended advancing **advocacy and policy engagement**, including improved pre-arrival information and systemic rule adaptation, alongside stronger **community engagement and resource navigation** through volunteer-led mentorship and clearer communication with partners.

Community feedback highlights Regina's strong foundation for newcomer settlement and integration. As a **small, connected, and welcoming community**, Regina offers easier access to services, shorter commute times, and a safe environment that supports family life and social connection. A strong multicultural presence, along with well-established cultural and faith-based organizations, contributes to an inclusive atmosphere and provides important social support for newcomers. Compared to larger urban centres, Regina continues to offer relatively **more affordable housing**, despite ongoing challenges.

The community also benefits from significant **assets**, including a wide range of newcomer services and programs, accessible language-learning opportunities, free recreational and educational activities, and a well-funded public library system. Strong collaboration among service providers and proximity to provincial decision-makers further enhance advocacy and coordinated responses to newcomer needs. Looking ahead, opportunities exist to better **leverage partnerships** to deliver events on housing, financial literacy, education, and employment; strengthen volunteer networks to support housing access; improve promotion of existing resources and free activities; and capitalize on the growing diversity of the local economy. Centralizing multilingual digital resources and positioning RRLIP as a key information hub were identified as important opportunities to maximize community impact.

Community feedback emphasized that strengthening RRLIP's impact requires deeper collaboration, clearer communication, and more strategic partnerships. Existing collaborations can be enhanced by working with agencies to deliver **training on cultural safety, anti-racism, and newcomer needs**, offering orientation sessions for newcomers, and hosting **regular in-person partner meetings** to share updates and address intersecting issues such as housing, employment, and health. Participants encouraged moving beyond consultation toward **co-creation of programs and strategies**, breaking down silos through community hub connectors, and increasing visibility by having partners such as public libraries, neighborhood centres, and local businesses actively promote RRLIP resources. Highlighting collaborative successes through newsletters, social media, and community events was also identified as an effective way to strengthen engagement.

To further expand impact, participants recommended building **new partnerships** with ethno-cultural organizations to improve outreach and information sharing, the **private sector and small businesses** to create mentorship, short-term work placements, and volunteer opportunities, and **technology-focused partners** to support digital literacy and access to online services. Additional opportunities include collaborating with community hubs to create accessible spaces for newcomer engagement, working with municipal and policy leaders to improve immigrant sentiment across departments, and developing sector-specific partnerships in education, transportation, and housing to address systemic gaps in newcomer settlement and integration.

5. **Thank you and closing remarks:** RRLIP expressed gratitude to all participants for their valuable insights during the discussions, noting that these ideas will be carried forward and integrated into RRLIP's Community Plan. A final thank-you was extended to everyone involved, including attendees, partners, funders, volunteers and other guests.

EVENT EVALUATION

Following the Community Forum, RRLIP staff distributed a virtual Event Evaluation Survey via email. All registrants, regardless of their attendance, were asked to complete the survey. The responses gathered were as follows:

- The survey results indicated that 68.75 % participated in-person and 31.25 % joined via Zoom.
- 93.33 % attendees reported that they did not encounter difficulties that affected their participation in the event.
- All 100% of attendees found it valuable to hear RRLIP highlights and recent project updates.
- 73.43 % found the Small Group Activity - Envisioning RRLIP's Next 2 years to be valuable.
- 30.77% of attendees rated the program implementation including registration, program flow, and logistics as excellent. Meanwhile, 46.15% rated it good, and 23.08% rated it fair.

Suggestions and additional comments from attendees

- Great inclusive of all idea based on data on cold weather period and public transportation
- I believe that the group activity should be the main focus as there is so much more value in that.
- It would have been good if there was time to flush out the ideas and thoughts through that activity and if it would have been nice to have time to be introduced to help with the community connections aspect of an event like this.
- Guest speakers are always a great idea as that can help to create more awareness for the guest and maybe help connect some dots for them.
- We need to invite newcomers to share their stories how they settle in the country and what challenges they might have faced
- The delay in starting was confusing and not explained.
- More preparation is needed for the virtual attendees, as we have lost sound or visibility a few times.
- It's much better engagement in person, and it would be nice to see the community forum get more people together to discuss and maybe have some educational portion to it.
- It would be great to hear more about the findings from the group activities.
- I think that statistics for your program needs to be shown prior to our meeting as most of the questions were about this while we were online.
- Connect more volunteers within the community to support newcomers with their past experiences how they settle in the country.
- Sonika is a good facilitator, and I learned more about immigration and the realities of getting a good job in your field. Housing, etc is not discussed or not researched well enough before coming.
- More interaction among people would be useful.
- It would be good to apply scientific research principles (sampling, questionnaire design, analysis) for next year's survey.
- Good luck and contact your agencies to help your clients settle within Regina.
- Group Picnic in summer for social gathering or Potluck during the meeting from different cultures.

Suggestions and additional comments from non-attendees

- Group activities would be great! In-person meetings are always preferred but offering a hybrid meeting is most popular today.
- More collaborative efforts for the newcomers with health professionals.
- Newcomer job fairs with on-site interviews (in-person). Housing-information sessions with landlords and housing experts (hybrid). Digital literacy workshops for using essential online services (virtual). Mental-health and well-being sessions with cultural mediators (in-person). Youth leadership and recreation days (in-person group activities). Cultural celebration nights featuring newcomer communities (in-person). Employer inclusion and anti-bias training sessions (virtual or in-person). Private sponsorship Q&A with experienced sponsors and RSTP trainers (virtual). Community networking mixers for agencies, volunteers, and newcomers (in-person). Orientation sessions for newly arrived families on local services and schools (hybrid).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION GAINED FROM THE COMMUNITY FORUM?

This report will be shared with the Annual Forum participants. Additionally, it will be widely disseminated to the broader community through the RRLIP project blog, on the RRLIP website, through email, and in meetings with stakeholders. The information gained from and shared at this forum will inform ongoing discussions and future activities of the RRLIP.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RRLIP staff would like to extend our gratitude to everyone involved in the Annual Forum 2025-26, all the participants; community partners, especially the City of Regina and mamaweyatitan Centre; RRLIP working group members, IAT volunteers, RRLIP's host agency, and our funder, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The RRLIP's work is focused in the community now known as Regina, on Treaty 4 land, which is the traditional territory of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Nahkawe (Saulteaux/Anisinaabeg), Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis/Michif Nation. It is important that we recognize that we all have benefits and responsibilities under the Treaty agreements. We acknowledge the harms and injustices of the past and present. We dedicate our efforts to working together in a spirit of collaboration and reconciliation. Thank you for joining us for the Annual Community forum 2025-26.