



Immigrant Advisory Table

Terms of Reference

February 2018

1. INTRODUCTION TO IMMIGRANT ADVISORY TABLE

Immigrant Advisory Table is a formal collective of immigrants and refugees in Abbotsford convened by Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) to inform current and future strategic directions related to immigration outcomes of the community. Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) is a parallel network to the Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership Council (ALIP).

1.1. BACKGROUND

Abbotsford's Local Immigration Partnership Council (ALIP) formed in 2014, and is a multi-sectorial partnership spanning the Abbotsford region on Sto:lo Territory. The mandate of ALIP is to formulate a strategy for newcomer integration in the region and work towards its implementation. In doing so, the partnership's intention is to help improve the integration of immigrants in Abbotsford as well as to strengthen the community's ability to better integrate immigrant needs in social, economic and political planning processes. The Partnership had originally chosen 3 focus areas:

- Social Integration
- Research, Policy & Practice
- Labour Market Integration

The Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) is a diverse and inclusive table that informs the work of the Partnership Council. IAT members will bring lived experience to the role, ensuring newcomers perspectives inform the work and decisions of the ALIP Partnership Council and its respective Working Groups.

Through strategic planning and collaborative leadership, the Council and Immigrant Advisory Table create and coordinate a range of activities and events that make life better for immigrants and our communities as a whole.

1.2. GOVERNANCE MODEL

- The Immigrant Advisory Table will consist of foreign born community members willing to champion the ALIP and promote its vision, mission and objectives.
- Immigrant Advisory Table will elect a Chair, a Co-Chair and Project Management Staff.
- Immigrant Advisory Table members are encouraged to participate in Working Groups (WG) that are tasked to support the vision and activities of the Partnership. WGs report back to the Partnership Council regularly on their progress and challenges.
- The Immigrant Advisory Table, along with the Partnership Council and Working Groups, will be supported by the ALIP Project Management Team.

2. VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE

2.1. VISION: To shape Abbotsford as a community where newcomers become engaged and succeed.

2.2. MISSION: To solicit the voices of diverse and passionate newcomers to inform, advise, and support ALIP by sharing their lived experience.

2.3. PURPOSE: The IAT works on the following objectives:

- To foster discussion and collaboration on issues effecting immigrant inclusion and integration;
- To enhance, provide insight and inform the Partnership's current and future strategic directions which work towards our vision of a welcoming and inclusive community;
- Act as a reference group that increases knowledge about newcomer needs, strengths and local strategies for support, including convening for specific projects and information gathering;
- Ensure a variety of ethno-cultural communities are represented in the work of ALIP by fostering social inclusion and engaging with the community;
- Initiate projects and community events that respond to the work of the ALIP Partnership;
- Promote welcoming attitudes and increase the full participation of newcomers in the Abbotsford community.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1. VALUES

The ALIP creates enabling conditions for immigrant integration and success in Abbotsford according to the following values:

ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMITMENT

- Represent the vision and mandate of the Local Immigration Partnership first and foremost, as well as promoting the values and intentions of the Local Immigration Partnership within their organization/ association and within the greater community whenever possible;
- Demonstrate organizational and personal engagement, dedication, and responsibility in all decisions and initiatives of the council;
- Demonstrate unity as a group both in and out of meetings, for example endorsing council decisions.
- Embrace a collective approach to discussing ideas, issues and solutions;

TRANSPARENCY

- Engage in honest and respectful communication. Share information and exchange varying opinions to build trust, rapport and collegiality;
- Agree to share contact information with other IAT members, for networking purposes;

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

- Ideas generated collectively offer fresh thinking and new models of action. Be open to the opportunities presented through collaboration and coordination;
- Encourage and support new ideas and creative strategies which will enhance the delivery of services for newcomers.

INCLUSIVENESS, EQUITY AND RESPECT

- Embrace an affirmative attitude. Create an enabling collective space in which everyone is valued, their voices are heard, and feedback is shared positively;
- Seek out contributions from and perspectives of newcomers in the community;
- Understand that each IAT member, with individual knowledge and expertise, must be respected by all other members.

3.2. ETHICS

The members of IAT shall adhere to the ACS Code of Ethics (See Appendix A).

- Relationships and contacts accessed through IAT membership will not be used for reasons not related to the purposes of ALIP and IAT;
- Respect the confidentiality of all IAT business.

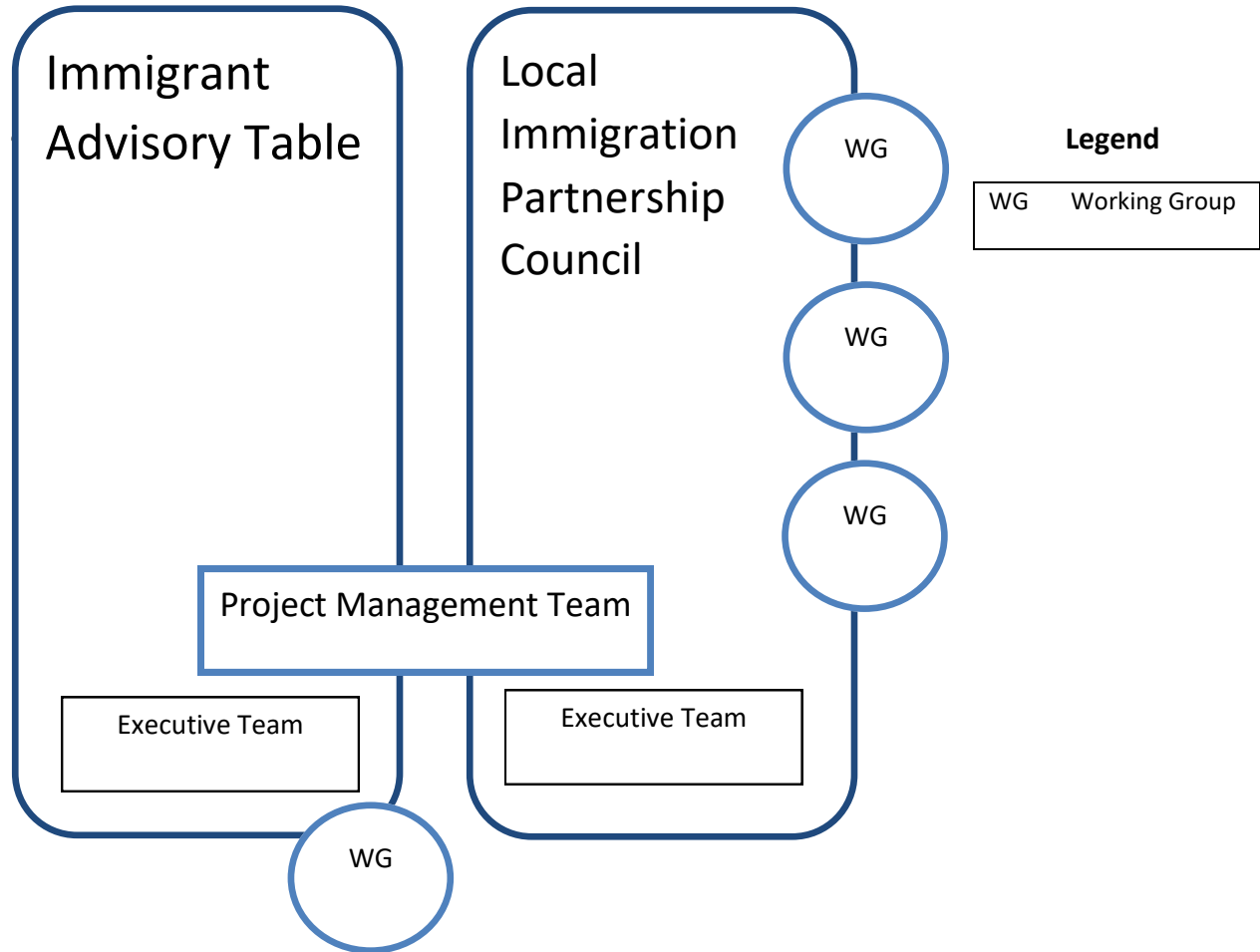
3.3 MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Members should forward all media requests relating to ALIP and IAT to the project management staff.

- 2018- 2020 Communications Strategy:
IAT members are expected to participate in and adhere to the Partnership's Communications Strategy, which is currently being devised. The Communications Strategy will include an explicit agreement of roles and responsibilities when it comes to media and communications processes.

4. STRUCTURE

The Immigrant Advisory Table is an advisory body to ALIP as reflected in the Partnership Council Structure Matrix.



This image visually represents the organization of the Partnership Council and its relationship with other groups. The Executive and the Project Management Team are Partnership Council members. Working Groups consist of Partnership Council members and external participants as designated. The Immigrant Advisory Table is a parallel network tasked with advising and informing ALIP and its Working Groups.

5. MEMBERSHIP

IAT will be comprised of 8 to 12 members with diverse backgrounds in terms of language, country of origin, age, ability, education, skills, profession, immigration category, length of time in Canada, religion, and gender.

Members serve in a voluntary capacity without remuneration¹.

5.1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Immigrant Advisory Table members are to:

- Attend meetings regularly². Regular meetings last 2 hours. If individual members are unable to attend a meeting, an official notice must be provided to the Project Management Staff members through phone or email;
- Prepare for meetings in order to actively contribute. Members are expected to allocate additional time for meeting preparation, which might include up to 3 hours of research/reading or presentation preparation time;
- Respond to email and telephone communications outside of meetings as required;
- Champion the vision and mission of IAT.
- Participate in Partnership activities when available. This might include joining a working group or providing consult to WG activities on a regular basis, participate in event planning committees, volunteer to speak at community events, convene a focus or consult group for research needs, etc.
- Share ALIP/AIT promo materials and messages with the greater community

Two Co-Chairs/ Executive Team will be responsible for:

- Facilitating meetings;
- Assisting the Program Management staff in setting and distributing meeting agendas;
- Approving draft minutes;
- Liaising with other areas within the Partnership Council Structure Matrix;
- Provide in-person representation, whenever possible, at the ALIP Partnership Council and respective working group meetings.
- Orienting new members.

¹ Members may be reimbursed for authorized direct and appropriate expenses incurred in the fulfillment of Partnership Council responsibilities and activities.

² Members who are unable to make meetings on a regular basis or who miss three consecutive meetings may be declared removed without cause.

Project Management (PM) Staff will be responsible to:

- With input from the IAT Chairs, PM will develop the draft agenda, based on recent work, meeting discussions, new developments, etc.;
- Send out the *draft agenda*, for member feedback, 2 weeks before the meeting; Send out the finalized agenda 1 week before the meeting;
- Send out meeting minutes to members 2 weeks after meeting, as well as be responsible for posting the minutes to the website and storing in their appropriate location;
- Organize location bookings and additional events planning, with the assistance of the Chair and Co-Chair.

5.2. MEMBERSHIP TERM AND RENEWAL

- Members and co-chairs will be appointed for two year terms. To ensure continuity of leadership and representation, the departure of the first cohort and co-chairs will be staggered;
- Once the IAT is established, the application and selection of new members will be facilitated by the co-chairs and Project Management in conjunction with IAT Members;
- The Project Management Team is available to assist the IAT with membership, communications and logistical needs when requested;
- IAT membership will be reviewed annually to assess the representation of the group.

5.2. MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION

Members will leave the Immigrant Advisory Table: (1) by giving written notice, (2) by being declared removed after missing three consecutive meetings without valid cause, or (3) by being declared removed by a 2/3 vote of council for reasonable cause (e.g.- not embracing a collaborative approach).

6. PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

6.1. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Immigrant Advisory Table's meetings are held approximately 4 times a year with dates agreed upon by members.

Meetings will be approximately 2 hours in length. Additional meetings may take place as members decide. Working group meetings or project activities beyond the IAT or Council will be organized and agreed upon by those members.

6.2. DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Deliberations and major decisions will be made by consensus as per the ALIP consensus guidelines. See appendix B. In cases where a decision is time sensitive and a consensus is not able to be reached, a majority vote will be used to reach a decision.

Members agree to indicate any agenda items in which they feel they might be in a conflict of interest, and to excuse themselves from discussion of that agenda item if deemed appropriate.

6.3. RECORDING AND COMMUNICATION

A member of the Project Management Team will attend IAT meetings to assist in taking minutes and answer questions.

Minutes will be made available to the public and posted on the Partnership website.

6.4. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Abbotsford Local Immigration Partnership Council would like to thank the members who participated in the development of the Immigrant Advisory Table: Nicola Mooney, Ghizlane Laghzaoui, Kanta Naik, Bibi Dilmahomed, Gugan Sidhu, Lia Bishop and Eyerusalem Abebe.

The ALIP Council would like to thank its partners:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



8. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY SERVICES CODE OF ETHICS

Abbotsford Community Services CODE OF ETHICS

RESPONSIBILITY TO OTHER INDIVIDUALS AND SELF

I Affirm That:

I will regard the well-being of the individuals, the groups and the communities I serve as my primary duty.

I will fulfill my obligations and responsibilities with integrity.

I will be competent in the services and duties that I undertake.

I will respect the intrinsic worth of persons I serve in my relationship with them.

I will not use my position to further my religious, political, or personal objectives.

I will ensure that outside interests do not jeopardize my professional judgment, independence, competence or ability to do my tasks.

RESPONSIBILITY TO COLLEAGUES AND OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

I Affirm That:

I will respect the rights and views of my colleagues and treat them with fairness, courtesy and good faith.

I will not engage in or condone any form of harassment or discrimination.

When I am in a position to represent a colleague, I will act with consideration for the interest, character and reputation of my colleague.

I will extend respect and congeniality to colleagues of all professions.

I will not use my position to further my religious, political, or personal objectives.

RESPONSIBILITY TO ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY SERVICES (Project Management Team)

I Affirm That:

I will maintain an awareness and openness to learning about discrimination, diversity, and human dignity issues.

I will respect the mission, vision, values and culture of Abbotsford Community services

I will maintain respect for Abbotsford Community Services policies, procedures and management decisions.

I will accurately represent my education, training, experience and competence as they relate to my work.

I will bring to the attention of Abbotsford Community Services any issues that I believe will have an adverse effect on Abbotsford Community Services or the Council.

I will maintain respect for confidential information during my membership and thereafter. I will disclose such information only when properly authorized or when obligated legally or professionally to do so.

APPENDIX B – ABBOTSFORD LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP CONSENSUS GUIDELINES

CONSENSUS GUIDELINES:

- A clear proposal is put forth in advance of the meeting (with background material when possible).
- Adequate time is set aside for meaningful discussion.
- All parties are expected and encouraged to participate. If any party chooses not to participate, they give license to the group to make the decision for them and they commit to endorsing that decision.
- There may not be 100% agreement; rather, consensus means that all parties are able to “live with” the decision provided there is the opportunity to review it after the decision has been implemented.
- If more than one person participates in the meeting from a member agency, only one person shall have voting power.
- WHERE THERE IS DISAGREEMENT, THERE IS A COMMITMENT TO:
 - Discuss the underlying assumptions
 - Seek differences of opinion to gain understanding
 - Consider different points of view
 - Clarify the issues; for example, identifying the real issues from surface issues
 - Listen carefully to identify interests
 - Look for “win-win” outcomes
- Where there is a disagreement and a decision needs to be made (time sensitive issues), a vote will take place with the majority vote being the group decision; a quorum is the members that are present for the meeting.
- Where time is of the essence, an email canvas may be held between meetings. The Chair will email an outline of the decision to be made. Members will be given a date by which they must respond with their perspective/decision. No response will imply consensus. Any such decisions will be entered into the minutes of the next meeting.
- If time is not an issue, the decision may be deferred to a later date and will go through the consensus process after Council members have had time to consider the issue.
- The opinions of all parties will be treated with respect.