



**Delta**  
Local Immigration  
Partnership

# One Delta: Many Voices, Shared Future Community Forum Report

Understanding the Immigration Landscape:  
Gaps and Opportunities in Delta

**February 19, 2026**



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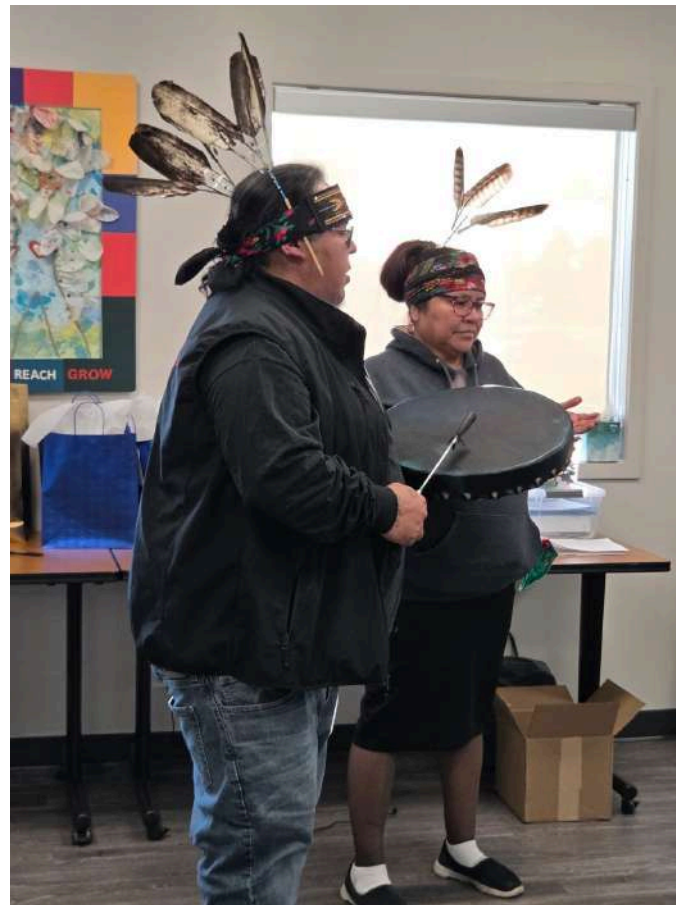
# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the Delta Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Inaugural Community Forum, held on February 19, 2026, took place in Delta, on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the scə́waθən (Tsawwassen), x̣ẉməθḳẉéỵəm (Musqueam), and other Coast Salish Peoples. We deeply value the knowledge, traditions, and ongoing contributions of Indigenous communities, which are integral to our work. Delta LIP is committed to reconciliation as a vital part of building truly inclusive and strong communities.

As uninvited guests, we are committed to deepening our understanding of the Host Nations and encourage others to learn about the rich histories, cultures, and stewardship of the Indigenous Peoples who have cared for these lands since time immemorial.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Executive Councillor Chemkwaat (Valerie Cross) for offering a warm and meaningful welcome to open the forum. We also thank Queekemosot (Angeline Splockton) and Wopeeoh (Frank Campbell) for sharing a beautiful welcome and song with all attendees.

Your words and presence inspire us to deepen our commitment to supporting newcomers in our communities.



# Message from the Chair

## Message from the Chair

It is my privilege, as Chair of the Delta Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), to introduce the One Delta: Many Voices, Shared Future Community Forum Report.

Our first Delta LIP Community Forum brought together a diverse group of partners, residents, newcomers, and community leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue about the future of our community. This report reflects the insights, experiences, and perspectives shared during that gathering – highlighting both the strengths we can build on and the gaps we must address together.

Local Immigration Partnerships play a vital role in convening communities, aligning efforts, and strengthening systems so that newcomers – and all residents – can thrive. In Delta, this work is grounded in the understanding that immigration is not only about settlement, but about shaping a more inclusive, connected, and resilient community for everyone.

The conversations captured in this report reinforce a shared commitment to collaboration, equity, and belonging. They will directly inform the development of Delta's Community Plan and guide our collective actions moving forward. I extend my sincere thanks to all who participated in the forum and contributed their voices to this important work. Together, we are building a Delta where diversity is celebrated, inclusion is intentional, and everyone has the opportunity to belong.

Sincerely,

Neelam Sahota  
*Chair, Delta Local Immigration Partnership*



# Thank you!

We extend our sincere thanks to REACH Child and Youth Development Society for graciously providing space for the inaugural Delta LIP Community Forum.

Thank you to the following community partners for their leadership and participating as panelists at the forum:

- Camille Netherton - Executive Director, REACH Child and Youth Development Society
- Mary Daniel - Head of the LINC Program, Delta Community College
- Olga Shcherbyna - Social Planning Manager, City of Delta

To Karmanpreet Kaur, a member of the Delta Youth Newcomer Advisory Table, for sharing her experience immigrating to Delta, BC.

We also extend our appreciation to the government leaders who joined us at the forum:

- Executive Councillor Chemkwaat (Valerie Cross)
- Mayor George V. Harvie
- Councillor Alicia Guichon
- Councillor Daniel Boisvert
- Councillor Jennifer Johal
- Councillor Rod Binder
- Sonya Sangster MLA Ian Paton's Senior Constituency Advisor

Special thanks to Maryam Ghargharechi of Limitless Home Chef for catering the event. Food is an integral part of community, offering a meaningful way for people to connect and share experiences. As an immigrant from Iran, Maryam's contribution reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the communities we serve.

Finally, thank you to all attendees. Your presence was greatly valued and contributed meaningfully to the discussion.

# Executive Summary

The Delta Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) held its inaugural community forum in Delta, BC, on February 19, 2026, bringing together over 50 community members across diverse sectors to discuss the evolving immigration landscape in Delta.

The forum provided an opportunity to:

- Build relationships and strengthen connections with local organizations.
- Share key information about the immigration landscape in Delta.
- Hear diverse perspectives through a community panel.
- Provide feedback to inform the Delta LIP Community Planning Process.

The forum also helped validate emerging priorities that will guide the Delta LIP's future work, including community engagement and belonging, language and communication support, employment and economic integration, and health and well-being.



# Background

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society was funded to manage the Delta Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) in 2025 supported by funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The Delta LIP is a collective of community partners united in the vision of cultivating a fair and inclusive city where all immigrants, refugees, and citizens thrive. Through dialogue and research, Delta LIP members collaborate on innovative and community-driven initiatives to meet the changing needs of the City of Delta. They leverage their diverse perspectives, their expertise and pool resources to develop and deliver on strategies that prepare the community to welcome and fully include newcomers, immigrants and refugees.

## The Delta LIP Project Management Team Includes:

- Neelam Sahota – Chair of the Delta LIP & CEO, DIVERSEcity
- Lenya Wilks – Director, Community Inclusion & Health Equity
- Diana Ospina – Senior Manager, Partnership & Collaboration
- Angela Sheenmar – Manager, Delta LIP & BC-Yukon LIP/RIF Network

The Delta LIP also has an active Delta Youth Newcomer Advisory Table, which aims to bring youth newcomer and racialized voices into the projects and initiatives led by the LIP.

## Delta LIP Community Partners:



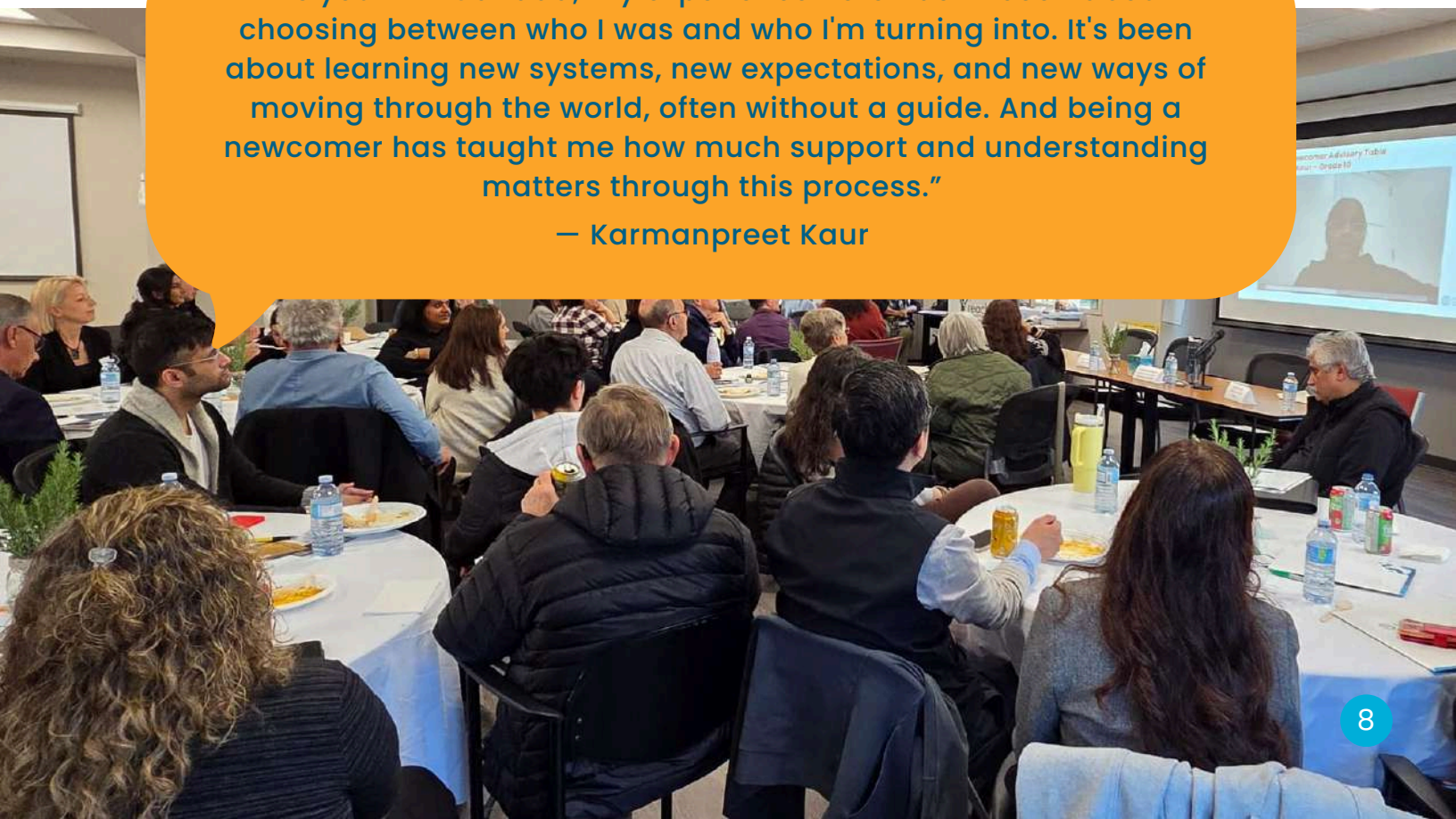
# Welcome & Opening Remarks

The forum began with a warm welcome and territorial acknowledgment from Executive Councillor Chemkwaat (Valerie Cross), followed by a song from Queekemosot (Angeline Splockton) and Wopeeoh (Frank Campbell) of Tsawwassen First Nation. Their words and song grounded us in the lands we live on, particularly as we work to welcome newcomers. It is important that we continue to respect and care for these lands, which have been stewarded since time immemorial.

Following the opening, remarks were shared by the Honourable Mayor George Harvie, Chair of the Delta LIP; Neelam Sahota, CEO of DIVERSEcity; and Karmanpreet Kaur, a member of the Delta Youth Newcomer Advisory Table. This advisory table, an initiative of the Delta LIP, is dedicated to ensuring youth voices are included in LIP projects and initiatives. Karmanpreet, a 15 year old who moved to Canada in 2024, shared her experience as a newcomer to Delta.

**“As youth in Canada, my experience here hasn't been about choosing between who I was and who I'm turning into. It's been about learning new systems, new expectations, and new ways of moving through the world, often without a guide. And being a newcomer has taught me how much support and understanding matters through this process.”**

**— Karmanpreet Kaur**



# Delta's Immigrant Demographic Profile – A Data Lens

Angela Sheenmar, Manager of the Delta LIP provided an overview of the local immigrant population, including languages spoken, education, employment, commuting patterns, and how language proficiency influences earnings and the ability to afford basic needs such as housing.

## Key statistics presented include:

- As of the 2021 Census, Delta has a total population of **108,455**, including an estimated **36,000 immigrants**, with nearly **900 newcomers** arriving each year.
- The top three countries of origin for all immigrants in Delta are **India, China, and the United Kingdom**.
- Among recent immigrants, the leading countries of origin are **India, China, and the Philippines**.
- **Punjabi, Mandarin, and Cantonese** are among the most commonly spoken languages by immigrants in Delta, both at home and in the workplace.
- Recent immigrants are less likely to work from home and more likely to have **no fixed workplace**.
- They are **more than twice as likely** to take public transit to work compared with other residents.
- Recent immigrants (2016–2021) are **more likely to work in Surrey** than other groups.
- Census 2021 shows that approximately **4,300 Delta residents speak neither English nor French**.
- Lower income levels and settlement barriers can affect housing stability, affordability, and access to suitable living conditions.

Please find the full factsheets on the Delta LIP website at [deltalip.ca/factsheets/](https://deltalip.ca/factsheets/)

# Community Partner Panel – Initiatives Supporting Newcomers to Delta



Panelists included Mary Daniel, Head of the LINC program at Delta Community College; Olga Shcherbyna, Social Planning Manager from the City of Delta; and Camille Netheron, Executive Director of REACH Child and Youth Development Society. The discussion on community initiatives supporting newcomers in Delta was moderated by Lenya Wilks, Director of Community Inclusion, Health & Equity at DIVERSEcity.

**Delta Community College** supports newcomers through accessible education and skills development programs, including the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, adult basic education, digital literacy, and pathways into career-oriented programs. While not a dedicated settlement service provider, the College serves as an important entry point for newcomers and connects learners to community supports.

**The City of Delta** provides information, community engagement, and service coordination through initiatives such as the Newcomers Guide to Delta, settlement brochures, surveys of newcomer and racialized residents, and Welcoming Week pop-up events. These efforts aim to connect newcomers with local services and foster inclusion. The City has also developed significant event programming to help foster a more welcoming community.

# Community Partner Panel – Initiatives Supporting Newcomers to Delta

**REACH Child and Youth Development Society** offers inclusive, family-centered programs across Delta and surrounding communities. Supports include early intervention services, family programs, and initiatives like the Punjabi Parent Support Group, which has grown into a strong, peer-supported community. These programs emphasize culturally responsive approaches to help newcomer families access services and build community connections.

**Overall, the panel highlighted that recent immigration to Delta has increased demand for programs such as LINC and culturally responsive initiatives. Stronger service coordination through initiatives such as the Delta Local Immigration Partnership, along with increased government funding, is essential to sustain and expand these efforts and ensure newcomers continue to feel welcomed and supported.**



# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta

In the final component of the forum, attendees now equipped with a strong understanding of Delta’s demographic context and the work of community partners heard from Angela Sheenmar, Manager of the Delta Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), who shared the ongoing process of developing the Delta LIP Community Plan.

The development of the Delta LIP Community Plan began with the LIP’s inception in April 2025. Early engagement included one-on-one meetings with community partners to better understand their observations, experiences, and how increased immigration to Delta has impacted their programs and services.

In September 2025, a survey was distributed to community partners to help identify and rank priority areas, while also gathering input on the LIP’s mission, vision, guiding principles, and areas requiring further development. This process provided valuable insights into emerging needs and sector perspectives.

At the December 2025 LIP meeting, community partners further refined these priority areas. In January, two focus groups were also conducted: one with LINC students at Delta Community College and another with the Delta Youth Newcomer Advisory Table, to better understand the perspectives of newcomers and racialized youth.

Through these engagement activities, three key priority areas emerged:

1. Community Engagement and Belonging
2. Language and Communication Support
3. Employment and Economic Integration



# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta

While there was strong alignment across these priorities, a consistent theme identified through focus groups with newcomers was the need for improved coordination of health and well-being services for newcomers in Delta.

The February forum provided an additional opportunity to validate these findings and further engage the community in shaping the plan's direction.

Following the presentation, Fatima Al-Samak of Vantage Point facilitated an interactive session to deepen the community planning process. Participants were invited to join table discussions aligned with one of the emerging priorities.

Each group explored key barriers to achieving the assigned priority and collaboratively identified actions the LIP could take to address them.



**Vantage Point is a Vancouver-based non-profit organization that supports a strong and connected non-profit sector. It delivers training, resources, and advocacy to foster collaboration, innovation, and impact across communities.**

# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta – Findings

## ***Findings from the roundtable discussions:***

### **Community Engagement and Belonging Barriers to Newcomer Inclusion and Connection:**

- Limited awareness of available services, programs, and community events
- Challenges navigating systems and finding reliable information
- Lack of community and “third spaces” (e.g., neighbourhood houses, community centres)
- Libraries often serve as the only accessible gathering space
- Transportation barriers impacting access to services and events
- Limited time due to employment or job search commitments
- Lack of locally based settlement services, requiring travel outside Delta
- Need for more in-person, one-on-one support despite availability of online resources
- Feelings of isolation and invisibility among newcomers
- Language barriers and limited access to translation and interpretation

### **Suggested Actions for the LIP to Strengthen Belonging:**

- Establish a “city navigator” or Welcome Centre model in Delta
- Develop neighbourhood houses or dedicated community spaces
- Increase opportunities for cultural celebrations and inclusive community events
- Facilitate more community conversations and engagement opportunities
- Create peer-to-peer support initiatives (e.g., mentorship, human library models)
- Expand volunteer opportunities for newcomers, particularly those not yet employed
- Improve access to translation and interpretation services
- Leverage partnerships with existing service providers to deliver programs within Delta
- Create welcoming spaces with accessible resources, even if not always staffed
- Strengthen collaboration with faith-based organizations
- Advocate for new or improved community infrastructure (e.g., community centre in Tsawwassen)

# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta – Findings

## Language and Communication Support

### Language and Communication Barriers for Newcomers in Delta:

- Limited translation and interpretation services, especially for specific languages (e.g., Somali)
- Long wait times for interpreters; children often asked to translate for family members
- Materials translated into formal or inaccurate language; not in plain, accessible language
- Diversity of newcomer backgrounds creates different communication needs for adults and children
- Cultural and generational gaps impact understanding (e.g., adult newcomers unaware of children’s school experiences)
- Excessive written materials (pamphlets, signs) in English creates confusion
- Services often located outside Delta, creating isolation due to lack of transportation
- Childcare, trust, and cultural assumptions (e.g., police, service providers) affect access
- Difficulty finding information independently; newcomers often do not know how or where to access services
- Confidence and comfort in using English or other languages varies among newcomers

### Suggested Initiatives for the LIP to Improve Language Access and Communication:

- Develop plain-language resources, reducing jargon and acronyms
- Provide multilingual translation (human translators, videos, phone support)
- Centralized city-wide resource hub or website (e.g., DeltaKids.ca) with translated and accessible information
- Use technology and AI responsibly to support learning and access
- Peer-led programs or mentorship connecting newcomers with Canadian-born residents
- Practical workshops for language, navigation, and employment skills
- Community cultural celebrations, “culture crawl” events, and recreational programs to build belonging
- Simple, consolidated brochures or guides in multiple languages
- Volunteer-based translation support using skilled community members (e.g., retired teachers, UBC volunteers)
- Explore hub models that provide in-person support and access to multiple services

# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta – Findings

## Health and Well-being

### Barriers to Newcomer Access to Health and Wellness Services in Delta:

- Difficulty finding a family physician or accessing primary care
- Challenges navigating Medical Services Plan (MSP) eligibility and coverage
- Privately sponsored refugees and newcomers can fall through the cracks
- Lack of awareness of available services or “safe” resources like Health Navigators
- Limited translation and interpretation services, especially for non-English speakers
- Long wait times and inaccessible or siloed services
- Financial barriers and competing priorities limit access to care
- Cultural differences and low cultural awareness among service providers
- Limited senior care and gender-affirming care; inadequate government funding
- Health services geographically divided, with few clinics within Delta
- Large regional health authorities (e.g., Fraser Health) create bureaucratic challenges
- Lack of coordination between health, settlement, and community services

### Suggested Actions to Improve Newcomer Health and Wellbeing:

- Create a centralized resource hub or directory for all health and wellness services
- Establish local navigators to assist newcomers in accessing care
- Promote inter-agency collaboration and share information widely across services
- Develop neighborhood-based networks and volunteer registries to connect newcomers
- Expand multilingual and culturally responsive services, including urgent care centers
- Integrate health services with community centers, settlement services, and schools
- Use technology (QR codes, translated phone lines, online directories) to improve access
- Advocate for more local clinics, primary care, and senior care services
- Engage newcomers at key touchpoints (housing, schools, community programs)
- Encourage community-based cultural awareness and education initiatives



# Identifying the Gaps and Opportunities in Supporting Newcomers to Delta – Findings

## Employment and Economic Integration

### Barriers to Newcomer Employment in Delta:

- Difficulty navigating immigration, provincial, and business paperwork
- Challenges with forms, resumes, and job application processes
- Limited awareness of local job opportunities and employment resources
- Language and communication barriers, particularly for English as a second language
- Discrimination in hiring or workplace environments
- Transportation and access challenges limiting participation in jobs or training
- Economic conditions affecting availability of suitable work
- Lack of tailored support and guidance (resume help, interview coaching, job connections)

### Suggested Actions to Improve Newcomer Employment Outcomes:

- Establish a Welcome Centre or neighbourhood house as a hub for employment support
- Organize job fairs and networking opportunities with local employers
- Collaborate with WorkBC, Chambers of Commerce, and other employment organizations
- Provide practical support: resume and cover letter assistance, interview coaching, and emotional support
- Leverage newcomers' skills and highlight their contributions through community campaigns
- Integrate access to health and social services (e.g., through Family Physicians or social workers)
- Advocate for employer supports such as healthcare benefits, travel allowances, and culturally inclusive workplaces



# Reflections & Next Steps

As a result of the engaged discussions at the forum, the Delta LIP has gained a deeper understanding of the needs of newcomers in Delta and how to address the four identified and emerging priorities. Roundtables have been established and will meet to determine key action items for the upcoming fiscal year. A formal community plan and action plan will be released in May 2026.

These insights and discussion findings will help guide the Delta LIP's next steps, ensuring that initiatives remain responsive, collaborative, and informed by both data and community perspectives. This process also reflects the value of ongoing dialogue and collective engagement in shaping meaningful and inclusive supports for newcomers.



# Appendix

## Agenda

### One Delta: Many Voices, Shared Future

Understanding the Immigration Landscape: Gaps and Opportunities in Delta

**Date:** Thursday, February 19, 2026

**Time:** 4-7:30 pm (Doors at 4 pm)

**Location:** REACH Child & Youth Development Society  
5050 47 Avenue, Delta, BC

4-4:30 pm	<b>Doors Open: Dinner &amp; Networking</b>
4:30-4:50 pm	<b>Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgment &amp; Opening Remarks</b> <b>Angeline Splockton, Frank Campbell &amp; Executive Councillor Valerie Cross</b> , Tsawwassen First Nation <b>Mayor George V. Harvie</b> , City of Delta <b>Neelam Sahota</b> , Delta LIP Co-Chair & CEO, DIVERSEcity <b>Delta Youth Newcomer Advisory Table</b>
4:50-5:15 pm	<b>Delta's Immigrant Demographic Profile – A Data Lens</b> <b>Presented by: Angela Sheenmar</b> , Manager, Delta LIP
5:15-5:45 pm	<b>Community Partner Panel: Initiatives Supporting Newcomers in Delta</b> <b>Camille Netherton</b> , Executive Director, REACH Child & Youth Development Society <b>Mary Daniel</b> , Head of the LINC Program, Delta Community College <b>Olga Shcherbyna</b> , Social Planning Manager, City of Delta  <b>Moderated by: Lenya Wilks</b> , Director of Community Inclusion, Health & Equity, DIVERSEcity.
5:45 - 6 pm	<b>BREAK</b>
6-7 pm	<b>Identifying Gaps &amp; Opportunities to Strengthen Newcomer Support in Delta</b> Facilitated session led by <b>Fatima Al-Samak</b> of Vantage Point.
7 - 7:30 pm	<b>Final Reflections &amp; Closing</b>



# Appendix

## Poster



## One Delta: Many Voices, Shared Future

### Understanding the Immigration Landscape: Gaps and Opportunities in Delta

Join us for an evening to discuss the immigration landscape in Delta, community experiences and opportunities to better respond to newcomer needs. Dinner will be provided.

-  Thursday, February 19, 2026
-  4 pm – 7:30 pm
-  REACH Child & Youth Development Society  
5050 47 Avenue, Delta, BC



**REGISTER NOW!**

Questions? Please email [deltalip@dcrs.ca](mailto:deltalip@dcrs.ca).



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# Appendix

## Organizations Attended

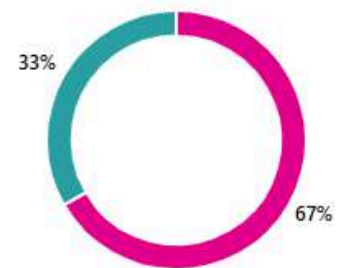
1. Benediction Lutheran Church
2. City of Delta
3. Delta Police Department
4. Delta School District
5. Deltassist
6. DIVERSEcity
7. Fraser Health
8. Fraser Valley Regional Library
9. Kyndred Community Services Society
10. Light Speed
11. MLA Ian Paton Office
12. Moving Forward Family Services
13. Options Community Services Society
14. Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)
15. REACH Child and Youth Development Society
16. Rotary Club North Delta
17. SHER Pride
18. Soroptomist International Delta
19. Sources
20. South Delta Division of Family Practice
21. Surrey-North Delta Delta Division of Family Practice
22. Tsawwassen First Nation

# Appendix

## Post-Event Survey

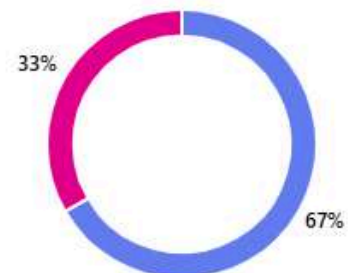
1. Which best describes you?

● Newcomer/Immigrant/Refugee	0
● Community partner / Service provider	6
● Community Member (neither a newcomer, immigrant, refugee or community partner)	3
● Other	0



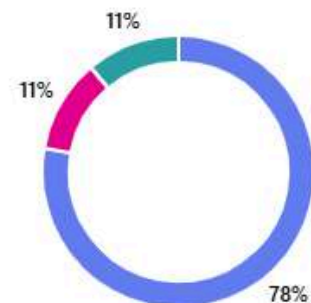
2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the forum?

● Very satisfied	6
● Somewhat satisfied	3
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0
● Somewhat dissatisfied	0
● Very dissatisfied	0



3. How clear was the data presentation and materials (ex: factsheets, posters)?

● Very clear and helpful	7
● Somewhat clear and helpful	1
● Neutral	1
● Somewhat unclear or unhelpful	0
● Very unclear or unhelpful	0

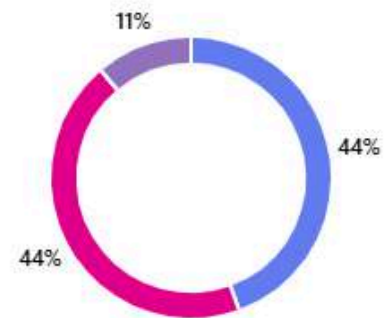


# Appendix

## Post-Event Survey

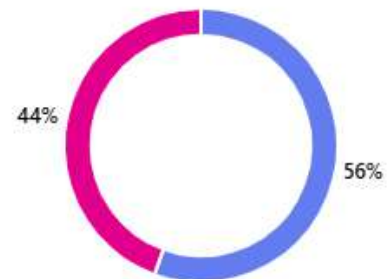
4. How useful did you find the panel discussion?

● Extremely useful	4
● Somewhat useful	4
● Neutral	0
● Somewhat not useful	1
● Extremely not useful	0



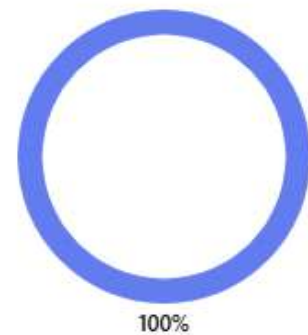
5. How effective was the facilitated session for you?

● Very effective	5
● Somewhat effective	4
● Neither effective nor ineffective	0
● Somewhat ineffective	0
● Very ineffective	0



6. After attending today's forum, I have a better understanding of the immigration landscape in Delta, BC

● Yes	9
● No	0



# Appendix

## Post-Event Survey

### Open-Ended Question: What did you find most valuable about today's forum?

- The data and meeting other community partners
- Statistics - WOW!
- Learning about DLIP
- Demographics, for a better understanding of the immigration situation.
- Data landscape
- Everyone is helping each other's even the most vulnerable people are there for help them
- population data
- learning the facts about immigration in Delta; fabulous dinner; meeting others
- Seeing there were so many agencies involved in supporting newcomers to the city of Delta.

### What could we do to improve future forums?

- A bigger space and maybe stage so we could see panel
- I liked how the questions in groups were targeted and not too broad
- I'm not sure
- Updated demographics/ clearer content.
- Including some of the direct settlement service providers and having a little more future oriented
- More classes
- Provide information on where assistance is most needed.
- build on the work of this forum
- There seemed to be a lot of paid employees reporting out on their jobs. I didnt need to know all of the details of their job. Also the audio at times was poor .

### Any additional comments or suggestions?

- Continue the momentum!!
- Well done Angela!!
- Nothing to add today
- Loved it!
- Great first forum!
- You guys are amazing God bless you
- A very informative forum
- was pleased to attend
- Questions from the public could be collected ahead of time to be considered and/or answered ahead of time. Also please followup on the the confusing misnomer of the Delta Community College. Change it to Adult Learning Centre for ELL (English Language Learners) Also please consider in future programming setting up an assessment support centre for Newcomers in Ladner and/or Tsawwassen. Most of the services are based in Surrey.