

**HAMILTON IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As it undertakes a process to develop a new 5-year strategic plan, the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) has engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to consult with immigrants and refugees in Hamilton to help inform the priorities of that plan. This reflects HIPC's recognition of the importance of placing the voices and experiences of immigrants and refugees in Hamilton at the centre of their work. HIPC's strategic planning process will result in a renewed Immigration Strategy for the City of Hamilton.

The consultation team gathered input from 73 community members, almost all of whom are immigrants or refugees, through a mix of focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Key findings are discussed under the themes of employment, income supports, language, and service access and integration.

Employment - This was by far the most prominent theme among participants, particularly the common experiences of not being able to secure employment in one's own field and commensurate with one's education and experience. Child care was perceived as a significant barrier to employment, as well as barrier to accessing some services.

Income supports - Many participants were accessing social assistance and expressed frustration with the limits on employment income while receiving this income support.

Language - Participants who had greater facility with English tended to have more positive experiences having their needs met through formal service providers. Participants with limited or no English language facility tended to experience greater isolation, including significant barriers to accessing appropriate health care.

Service Access and Integration - Many participants expressed frustration or confusion around what services they could access and called for greater coordination between services. The benefits of a centralized source for information about services were discussed by several participants.

Options for action are organized under four themes:

- **Strengthening Connections with Newcomers**, focusing on outreach and information sharing activities with faith groups and ethnocultural associations.
- **Strengthening HIPC's Profile**, which includes opportunities for HIPC to raise its public profile and influence locally and nationally.
- **Integrating Employment Experiences and Programs**, which offers ideas for enhancing or creating specific programs to improve newcomers' connections to supports and employment.
- **Research and Measuring Progress**, focusing measurement efforts on outcomes rather than outputs, impacts of immigration policy changes, and economic impacts of unsuccessful settlement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

The Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) brings together leaders including service providers, local government representatives, businesses, and media in pursuit of its vision, which is:

Hamilton is an inclusive community where the talents and experience that immigrants and refugees bring are valued and they are integral to making Hamilton the best place to raise a child.

Its mission is to oversee implementation of the Immigration Strategy for Hamilton in order to support the attraction, settlement, retention and economic participation of immigrants, and the creation of a welcoming community for newcomers. The current Immigration Strategy is built around four priorities:

1. Building collective and collaborative leadership in pursuit of Hamilton's immigration vision
2. Strengthening the delivery of immigrant and refugee settlement services
3. Creating a safe and welcoming community and thereby the conditions that encourage immigrants to both settle and stay in Hamilton
4. Creating and disseminating foundational knowledge of immigration and immigrants in Hamilton

As it undertakes a process to develop a new 5-year strategic plan, HIPC has engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to consult with newcomers (immigrants and refugees) in Hamilton to help inform the priorities of that plan. This reflects HIPC's recognition of the importance of placing the voices and experiences of immigrants and refugees in Hamilton at the centre of their work. HIPC's strategic planning process will result in a renewed Immigration Strategy for the City of Hamilton.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of this consultation exercise is to inform the Immigration Strategy's 5-year plan by exploring the following:

- Newcomer integration and settlement needs

- Local service gaps and challenges that need to be identified and addressed
- Community assets and opportunities that need to be captured and/or strengthened
- Ways to achieve better outcomes for HIPC and the newcomers that its partners serve as well as ways to measure short and long-term outcomes
- Ways the City of Hamilton can be a more welcoming community
- Analysis of local needs, assets, and gaps in relationship to HIPC's strategic priorities and overall *Immigration Strategy and Action Plan*

1.3 Methodology

To meet this objective, the consultation team gathered input from 73 participants, primarily through focus groups, and complemented by interviews and surveys to reach more participants (see Table 1 below). SPRC staff, with direction from HIPC's Strategic Planning committee, facilitated consultations with the following five groups:

1. Immigrants and refugees in the Riverdale neighbourhood (East Hamilton)
2. Immigrants and refugees in Beasley neighbourhood (Hamilton Downton core)
3. Immigrants and refugees in Rolston neighbourhood (Hamilton Mountain)
4. Mohawk College LINC¹ and ELT² students
5. Community leaders with either lived experience as an immigrant or refugee, or extensive experience working with immigrants and refugees in Hamilton, and representing a diverse range of sectors

For the neighbourhood consultation sessions, posters and flyers were circulated electronically through service provider networks, and hard copies placed at the locations where focus groups were held and in nearby institutions and services. Community Developers and other service providers working directly with community members in the three neighbourhoods supported outreach efforts by advising the consultation team on common languages spoken in the neighbourhoods, connecting with interpreters and note takers, and outreach and promotion activities. Food and drink, child care, interpretation, and \$10 grocery gift cards were provided at the neighbourhood sessions as supports to encourage participation and as thanks for participants' time.

The session with Mohawk College English language students was promoted and convened by Mohawk staff. Food and drink and \$10 grocery gift cards were also provided at the Mohawk College session.

Prospective participants for the community leaders' session were identified as individuals not already being consulted as part of HIPC's strategic planning process (i.e. working group members), relative prominence in the community, and either personal experience as an

¹ Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

² Enhanced Language Training

immigrant or refugee or extensive experiences supporting immigrants and refugees through their work. Community leaders were invited by email, and participants were provided with lunch in thanks for their participation.

Target Group	Languages Available	Number of Participants
Riverdale	English, Arabic, Urdu	29
Beasley	English, Arabic, Somali	14
Rolston	English, Arabic, Somali	3 ³
Mohawk College ESL and ELT students	English	15
Community Leaders	English	10 ⁴
Immigrant and refugee survey respondents	English	2
Total		73

A consent statement was read aloud and discussed with participants before focus group questions were asked (see Appendix B). Focus groups were audio recorded where possible, and recordings were reviewed by members of the consultation team and key excerpts were transcribed.

Participants were asked to complete a demographic survey (Appendix C). Questions yielded between 38 and 56 responses.

Focus groups were facilitated and notes were taken by a combination of members of the consultation team (SPRC) and community member interpreters, depending on language needs. Initial focus group questions were revised based on interpreter and note taker feedback. Both initial and revised focus group questions are included in Appendix D. Participants were also invited to write their answers if it was more comfortable. Discussion notes were translated into English and given to SPRC staff for analysis. The following section explores those findings.

³ The focus group held in Rolston did not draw any participants. The consultation team connected with individual immigrants and refugees through the community resident interpreters and note-takers, and focus group questions were asked in a survey format either in person or by telephone.

⁴ Nine (9) community leaders took part in the focus group, and a tenth participant who was unable to attend the session gave input through an individual interview.

2.0 KEY FINDINGS

2.1 Highlights of Participant Demographics

Among community member participants, demographic characteristics included the following:

- Ages ranged from 19 to 76
- Median age was 40, and the average age was 43 (see Appendix A for a complete summary of participant demographics.)
- 64% were female-identified, 36% male-identified
- 65% were Permanent Residents at the time of consultation
- 47% were Permanent Residents at their arrival in Canada; 43% were varying classes of Refugees
- Time in Hamilton ranged from less than 6 months to over 10 years. The most common period of time in Hamilton was 2-5 years, which was the case for 27% of participants.
- 26 countries of origin
- 10% were employed, with 7% indicating they were employed in their field (not including community leader participants)

Participant story

One participant came to Canada as a federally skilled worker, bringing with her a PhD and 15 years of experience. She said she was chosen by the government to live and work in Canada based on her skill set, and she was excited for the new opportunity. After arrival she learned that her degrees and experience did not qualify her to get a similar job in Canada. She is currently employed part-time outside of her field. She expressed feeling misled, a feeling commonly shared amongst the immigrant participants with whom we spoke; “why did you bring us here?” one participant asked.

2.2 Employment

Finding employment in one’s own field was the leading barrier to settlement for immigrants consulted. This challenge was experienced by some participants who arrived in Canada as dependents as well as others who arrived as federally skilled workers. Some of the highly skilled immigrants we spoke with have 10 to 18 years of experience in their profession and described feeling demoralized and belittled by having to upgrade their qualifications, enrol in costly courses or programs, or take expensive exams, only to face rejection from prospective employers. Many participants attended English language classes, had their credentials assessed, upgraded their qualifications, and sometimes spent thousands of dollars in order to earn their professional licences in Canada, but still could not find work in their field. Many feel that the barriers they face stem from stigma and discrimination around foreign credentials and experience, a lack of “Canadian experience,” and a lack of Canadian references.

Only two out of 63 community member participants shared that they gained employment in their field, as illustrated by Table 9 in Appendix A.

Most participants were not employed, despite most living in Hamilton for 2 or more years. Many immigrant participants shared that they came from higher socio-economic backgrounds with high levels of education and experience, and arrived to Canada with plenty of motivation and excitement. However, after arriving they felt discouraged and frustrated by the barriers around “Canadian experience” and not having their credentials recognized. Many shared that not being employed negatively impacts their self-esteem, their motivation to stay in Canada, and their motivation to socialize because they feel unsuccessful.

Overarching barriers to employment in particular and to settlement in general were also shared by participants. Many participants discussed childcare as a barrier to employment, as well as to attending services, courses, and to perform daily tasks. They requested having affordable or free childcare for newcomers in order to make their settlement more successful. One community leader discussed racism as a broader barrier for newcomers seeking employment, an issue he says that no one likes to talk about. Another leader stated that many of these issues are not specific to newcomers, but rather are societal.

2.3 Income Supports

Many participants described feeling trapped while receiving social assistance (such as Ontario Works). Most participants said they do not want to be dependent on the government, would prefer to earn income through employment, and that they want to integrate and be part of society and the community. However, due to barriers in securing employment, many newcomers must rely on social assistance. These income supports have limits on how much one can earn per month before the assistance is decreased, which participants felt creates an added barrier for seeking employment. For example, for every dollar earned over \$200 per month, Ontario Works deducts half of that amount from an individual’s assistance (mcss.gov.on.ca). One participant expressed feeling like she was in “jail” as a result of her experiences in this system: having to attend English classes in order to receive income support only to spend it all on housing and food, without means or an opportunity to change her situation.

Participant story

One participant spent tens of thousands of dollars in Canadian upgrading to cover costs of courses, programs and exams, which comes after having an upwards of 18 years of experience in their field in their home country. The participant gained employment in his field as a result of the internship offered by his academic program; the company offered him a part-time position around the time he earned his Canadian licence. This was his second attempt at trying to settle in Canada. Upon his initial arrival, he described being overwhelmed by the amount of work and financial cost required to gain employment, and as a result he returned to his home country. He shared that if he did not find work in his field after having invested time and money, he would have returned back to his home country even if it meant living and working in war. He indicated that many newcomers he knows have returned to their home countries because of this very issue, as well as because they were not able to rent an apartment because of not having a required co-signer.

2.4 Language

We found that language is the leading barrier to settlement for refugees and is a barrier for some immigrants. Due to the structure of most of our discussions (interpreters facilitating discussions in languages not spoken by members of the consultation team), we were not able to follow-up with participants to learn more about this barrier. However, there was one group of immigrants with whom we were able to explore the barrier of language. They shared that they were not aware of language classes, and that those who were aware only learned of the classes through a friend or community member. Many of the immigrant participants expressed generally that they were not aware of available services and programs, whereas refugee participants were told by their caseworkers of services offered such as language classes and of service providers.

Participant story

One participant who arrived as a dependent has a computer science background and has not been able to secure employment for 11 years. She enrolled in a post-secondary program to upgrade her qualifications. After graduating, she learned of another program run by a service provider that she thinks could have helped her getting connected with an employer in her field. She felt that she was no longer eligible for the program because of her university degree. She expressed feeling disappointed and unsuccessful in her life in Canada.

2.5 Service Access and Integration

Immigrant participants shared that they did not receive much or any information from the government upon arrival about services offered to newcomers. If they had family, friends, faith and/or cultural communities, they were able to learn about available services and supports through them, and some found information using the internet. Immigrants who were more socially isolated had an added level of complexity to their settlement, particularly by those who struggled with English. Many of the participants preferred the support of their community over service providers.

Immigrants who had greater English facility generally felt that service providers were helpful in their settlement. Many immigrants and refugees with little to no English facility felt that service providers were not as helpful in their settlement for a number of reasons:

1. Lack of integration and collaboration between service providers
2. Not receiving fulsome information about services and programs available by other providers and institutions, or receiving misinformation
3. Feeling as though they are “not allowed” to access other settlement agencies
4. Having limited access to workers who speak their language
5. Participants proposed a service where someone walks with them around the city or their neighbourhood to learn more about their environment, a service only one participant has received from a service provider
6. Some participants need support around daily tasks, such as shopping, accessing transportation, assistance with understanding the banking system and opening an account, etc., which very few participants received as part of their settlement.

Participant story

One participant disclosed that her partner has “not had a shower or bath in nine months” as a result of his physical disability coupled with not receiving homecare, which is a result of not having a modified social housing unit. She has also injured herself while trying to care for him. This participant has been living in Hamilton for three years and continues to struggle due to unmet health needs and a language barrier. She shared that she has not received adequate support from the settlement agencies she has accessed, and so she has relied on one particular community member for support, advocacy, and guidance but that still she and her partner are suffering.

Many participants felt that service providers were not working collectively, that participants received misinformation about services, programs, and events in Hamilton by the service provider they accessed. Participants stated strongly that integration of services, not just amongst settlement agencies but also with the three levels of government, social housing, social assistance, employment services, bridging programs, etc., is a crucial gap in the settlement system, broadly defined. This idea was mirrored within the community leaders’ discussion, where although the consensus was that services needed to be better integrated with each other, there was also acknowledgement of the funding model that does not necessarily support the depth of integration needed. The lack of integration between systems was most stark for several participants experiencing health challenges, where language barriers were often not addressed in conjunction with appropriate health care.

Another major concern about accessing services was that some language groups, such as Somali speakers, are under-served by service providers in their language. Some participants shared that they feel safe in Hamilton versus the countries and refugee camps they arrived from, but feel isolated and overlooked by services in the city. Many participants expressed feeling disconnected from the rest of the community, and that they struggle a great deal in their settlement. These participants expressed that their cultural community is their main source of information and support.

Many participants described the benefits of a “one-stop shop” model of service. Many referenced SISO (Settlement and Integration Services Organization) as a system that worked well for them for the following reasons:

1. The amount of conflicting information shared with newcomers was limited.
2. Newcomers could receive assistance for a number of needs within one visit (legal, education, employment, housing, language, etc.) rather than visiting multiple agencies, which can be costly and time consuming.
3. Newcomers could be better connected to non-settlement services, programs, and institutions.

Like newcomer community members, the community leaders consulted also discussed the strengths of a “one-stop shop” model. They felt that the model had many strengths, including that clients could receive direct support from a caseworker or be referred to non-settlement services and institutions. With support from other participants, one community leader called for a centralized role or “organization that is responsible for all needs of their clients.”

Participants widely expressed that being part of the community, being integrated into Hamilton, and interacting with “mainstream Canadians” “held numerous benefits to personal growth, awareness” and would support successful settlement. They believe that living together “creates

cohesion” by helping each other and by learning from one another. They also said that they became aware of services not through the providers they accessed but through their cultural community members. Some participants shared that they currently do not take initiative to be part of larger communities outside of their cultural and faith groups because either they do not feel welcomed or feel embarrassed that they are not employed. These participants indicated that being employed would allow them to feel like an equal member in the larger community, make them feel independent, and encourage them to explore outside of their cultural and faith circles.

In all of our discussions in the community consultations, participants asked if there were more group discussions like it and asked when the next one will be held. They expressed a desire for more opportunities to discuss their experiences, seek support from others on similar journeys, to learn from one another, and to learn more about Hamilton and about services that can be accessed as well as how to navigate them. Participants developed a recommendation for a ‘newcomer hub’, where they can meet and support other newcomers. They would like to have this group available by neighbourhood, and accessible to all newcomers regardless of race, cultural background, religion, or gender. In discussing this idea further, they would like to have access to up-to-date information produced by settlement agencies as a resource for this hub. This model could help reduce social isolation, increase newcomer capacity, build newcomer involvement in the wider community, reduce dependence on service providers, and offer a complementary, more personalized and more intensive form of support to newcomers than most service providers are able to provide.

This recommendation was supported by community leaders, as one leader stated that we need an asset-based approach to settlement. Other leaders stated that both service providers and community groups have a responsibility to share with each other up-to-date information on their services. One community leader posed the question of what the economic loss of unsuccessful settlement is, referring to those skilled immigrants who cannot find work, of foreign experience not recognized, and of those immigrants and refugees who have unmet health needs.

3.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

Building on the findings outlined above, this report offers the following menu of options for action for HIPC and its members to consider as priorities and actions for the next five years are established.

Strengthening Connections with Newcomers

1. Consider hosting meet-and-greet gatherings in Riverdale, Beasley, and Rolston to meet newcomers and distribute this report's findings.
2. Convene regular opportunities for faith groups (e.g. mosques, churches, synagogues, etc.), ethnocultural associations, and formal service providers to share up-to-date information about services and supports.
3. Encourage HIPC member service providers to enhance outreach to share service information with faith groups and ethnocultural associations. This could include sharing and distributing eligibility, schedules and locations of ESL/LINC classes with childcare to immigrants and refugees.
4. Develop strategies to engage and support newcomer participation in decision-making within HIPC itself and its member institutions.
5. Develop a coordinated strategy for building outreach to newcomers, especially those who are more likely to be isolated by experiences of multiple and intersecting barriers such as compromised health, language, and accessibility.
6. Look for opportunities to expand the wrap-around or case management model where one staff person is able to connect clients to resources and services to meet a range of needs (e.g. school, credentials, language, legal, housing, etc.)
7. Explore possibilities for developing newcomer hubs, where newcomers can meet each other in their neighbourhood, learn more about Hamilton, learn how to meet daily needs and tasks, gain navigational support, and to learn which providers offer what services in which languages, etc. Public spaces such as libraries (i.e. not connected to particular service providers or faith groups) were suggested by several participants as preferred spaces at which such groups might gather.
8. Explore promoting the establishment of "welcome to the neighbourhood" committees where neighbours greet new immigrants and refugees. Such efforts could be connected with City's Neighbourhood Action Strategy and/or neighbourhood associations.

Strengthening HIPC's Profile

9. Identify and encourage a political champion to demonstrate leadership around newcomer integration.

10. Strengthen HIPC's voice by including a presentation of accomplishments (and dilemmas) from HIPC's chair in reports to City Council. Such presentations could also include deputations from other community leaders supportive of HIPC and its mandate.
11. Promote a pro-immigration agenda by presenting to Boards of Education, health services corporations, and other institutions to broaden the sense of responsibility and accountability for newcomer integration.
12. Consider restructuring working groups to include focused efforts on: Public Education, Outreach, Policy, and Research.
13. Consider relocating HIPC from Community Services into Economic Development within the City of Hamilton in order to frame newcomer integration as a rich and under-used resource to build on rather than a social service cost.
14. Broaden sector involvement, building membership among labour and employers/private sector in particular.
15. Explore options for diversifying funding base in order to support aspects of HIPC's mandate outside of direct settlement service work (e.g. public education).
16. Explore ways to expand HIPC's capacity to inform and advocate to the funder (e.g. challenges, best practices). This could include advocating that Local Immigration Partnerships have more collective decision-making power about funding allocations.

Integrating Employment Experiences and Programs

17. Incorporate information about available community services and supports into language training classes.
18. Advocate to governments to:
 - a. Expand Bridging programs that help newcomers secure employment in their field or help newcomers start a business.
 - b. Offer incentives for private and public sector employers to connect newcomers to positions in their field at a living wage, increasing opportunities to gain "Canadian experience" and local professional networks.

Research and Measuring Progress

19. Focus efforts to measure success on outcomes rather than outputs. Examples of the latter could include population level unemployment and salary levels.
20. Monitor ongoing changes to immigration legislation and their impacts on newcomers to Hamilton. This could be undertaken by HIPC itself, or in partnership with Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, and/or local academics and researchers studying immigration.
21. Investigate the economic loss of unsuccessful settlement for the community as a whole. This indicator broadens the focus on success beyond individual organizational mandates and drivers (e.g. funding by number served).

APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 - Age range

Age range	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
19-29	7	13%
30-39	20	37%
40-49	10	19%
50-59	13	24%
60+	4	7%
Total responses	54	

Table 2 - Gender

Gender	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Female	36	64%
Male	20	36%
Transgender	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total Responses	56	

Table 3 – Current Immigration Status

Current Immigration Status	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Permanent Resident (PR)	34	65%
Convention Refugee	2	4%
Government-Assisted Refugee	2	4%
Refugee Protection Claimant (UN Refugees)	4	8%

Privately Sponsored Refugee		0%
Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)		0%
Economic Immigrant		0%
Business Immigrant		0%
Foreign Student		0%
Foreign Worker		0%
Canadian Citizen	10	19%
Other		0%
Total Responses	52	

Table 4 – Immigration Status at Time of Arrival

Immigration Status at Arrival	# of participant	% of participant
Permanent Resident (PR)	25	47%
Convention Refugee	4	8%
Government-Assisted Refugee	5	9%
Refugee Protection Claimant (UN Refugees)	12	23%
Privately Sponsored Refugee	2	4%
Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)	0	0%
Economic Immigrant	0	0%
Business Immigrant	0	0%
Foreign Student	0	0%
Foreign Worker	0	0%
Canadian Citizen	2	4%
Other	3	6%
Total Responses	53	

Table 5 – Time in Canada

Time in Canada	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Less than 6 Months	9	16%
6-12 Months	5	9%
1-2 Years	8	15%
2-5 Years	13	24%
5-10 Years	10	18%
10+ Years	10	18%
Total Responses	55	

Table 6 – Time in Hamilton

Time in Hamilton	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Less than 6 Months	10	19%
6-12 Months	8	15%
1-2 Years	7	13%
2-5 Years	14	26%
5-10 Years	8	15%
10+ Years	7	13%
Total Responses	54	

Table 7 – Countries of Origin

Country of Origin	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Afghanistan	1	2%
Bhutan	1	2%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	2%
Canada	2	4%
Congo	2	4%

England	1	2%
Egypt	3	6%
Eritea	1	2%
Ethiopia	3	6%
India	1	2%
Iran	3	6%
Iraq	10	20%
Jordan	1	2%
Myanmar	1	2%
Nepal	1	2%
Pakistan	4	8%
Palestine	2	4%
Sierra Leone	1	2%
Somalia	1	2%
South Yemen	1	2%
Syria	3	6%
Thailand	1	2%
Ukraine	1	2%
Venezuela	1	2%
Vietnam	1	2%
Yemen	1	2%
Total Responses	49	

Table 8 – Employment (Community Member Participants)

Employed	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Yes	4	10%
No	36	90%
Total Responses	40	

Table 9 – Employment in Field of Study (Community Member Participants)

Employed in field of study	# of participant responses	% of participant responses
Yes	2	7%
No	25	93%
Total Responses	27	

APPENDIX B – CONSENT STATEMENT

Consent to Participate in HIPC Focus Group

You have been asked to participate in a focus group hosted by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

The purpose of the group is to learn more about the needs, strengths, and challenges of immigrants and refugees through learning about your personal settlement experiences. As a thank-you for your time, you will receive a \$10 gift card.

The information learned in the focus group will be used in a report and shared with the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council to develop a plan to make Hamilton more inclusive, welcoming, and supportive to newcomers.

You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and stop at any time without negative effects. We will give out gift cards at the end of the session, but if you wish to leave before the end of the session, please see Carla to get your gift card. If you feel that some of the questions are embarrassing or upsetting, you don't have to answer them if you are not comfortable doing so. You can skip any of the questions you do not wish to answer.

Although the focus group will be tape recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the report. Participating (or not participating) in this focus group will not affect service you receive from any agency.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone.

In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group.

I would like to take some time now to talk about confidentiality. The purpose of this meeting is for you to tell us about your settlement experience. What you wish to share with us may appear as quotes in our reports. I am asking that everyone keep this discussion confidential. I am also requesting that what we learn about one another's experience today remain confidential, including the identities of those around the table. Having said this, having made these requests, you know that we cannot guarantee that the request will be honoured by everyone in this room. So I am asking you to make only those comments that you would be comfortable making in a public setting; and to refrain from comments that you would not say publicly.

If you have any questions or concerns about the focus group, please contact Shahzi Bokhari at (905) 522-1148, Ext. 130 or Carla Borstad Klassen at (905) 522-1148, Ext. 120, from the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton.

APPENDIX C – DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

(Formatting has been adjusted for ease of presentation.)

We'd like to know a little about you:

a. What is your age?

b. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Transgender

Other:

c. What is your current status?

- Permanent Resident (PR)
- Economic Immigrant
- Convention Refugee
- Business Immigrant
- Government-Assisted Refugee (GARs)
- Foreign Student
- Refugee Protection Claimant
- Foreign Worker
- Privately Sponsored Refugee
- Canadian Citizen
- Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)
- Other

d. What was your status when you first arrived to Canada?

- Permanent Resident (PR)
- Economic Immigrant
- Convention Refugee
- Business Immigrant
- Government-Assisted Refugee (GARs)
- Foreign Student
- Refugee Protection Claimant
- Foreign Worker
- Privately Sponsored Refugee
- Canadian Citizen
- Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)
- Other

e. How long have you lived in Canada?

f. How long have you lived in Hamilton?

g. What is your country of origin?

h. Are you employed? Yes No

i. Are you employed in your field of studies? Yes No

APPENDIX D – FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Initial Focus Group Questions

1. Opening question/Icebreaker: What is one goal that you would like to accomplish in your lifetime? Or, what are you most proud of in your life?
2. What help or support did you need in your first year in Canada?
 - a. What help or support was received?
 - b. How did you come to learn of supportive services? (e.g. employment, education, health care/systems, transportation, housing process, community/cultural hubs, etc.)
3. What experiences have helped your settlement experience and what made it difficult?
 - a. What makes a city welcoming?
 - b. What was welcoming about Hamilton when you first arrived?
 - c. What could the city do to become a more welcoming community?
4. Newcomer involvement in the community
 - a. What does being a part of a community mean to you?
 - b. What would make you want to be involved in the community?
 - c. What could Hamilton do make it easier for newcomers to be more involved in the community?
5. How do you define success for immigrants and refugees?
6. Was there anything else that you wanted to share with us that we haven't talked about?

Revised Focus Group Questions

- What was good about living in Hamilton in your first year?
- What was bad about living in Hamilton in your first year?
- How did you learn about supports and services? (For example, family, friends, community, service providers, government officials, etc.)
- What kind of help do you need that you are not getting now?
- What do you hope for in your life in Canada?
- What does being part of a community mean to you? (For example, helping others, knowing neighbours, taking part in community events and programs, knowing where to go for daily needs or support, etc.)
- What needs to change to make life easier for immigrants and refugees coming to Hamilton?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us that we haven't talked about?