

The Welcoming Francophone Communities A Government of Canada's Initiative

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)'s Welcoming Francophone Communities (WFC) Initiative is a community-based three-year pilot project in response to Francophone Minorities Communities (FMCs) request expressed in 2015 and 2017 consultations on Francophone immigration. It is designed to support the consolidation of the Francophone Integration Pathway.

The Welcoming Francophone Communities will support partnerships and community initiatives, namely to generate:

1. Awareness and the creation of an environment in which newcomers will feel welcome;
2. Connections between newcomers and the Francophone community;
3. A tailored response to the needs of French-speaking newcomers (women, young people, visible minorities, etc.);
4. Integration and retention (geographic and linguistic) of immigrants in Francophone communities.

This pilot adopts an innovative approach where the members of the Francophone community under the leadership of the *Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIF)* were tasked to identify the communities to pilot the initiative according to their community-based decision making process.

The selected community had to comply with the following criteria:

- Presence of French-speaking immigrants
- Availability of French language services
- The community demonstrates a need to attract and retain French-speaking newcomers
- The community is willing to be involved in the project
- A limited geographic scale

Each selected community will be aiming to make their community more “welcoming”. A Welcoming Francophone Community is defined as an inclusive community where French-speaking newcomers to Canada feel (1) that their identity is valued and (2) that they can integrate into the host community.

Once selected, each Francophone Welcoming Community (urban and rural) will be required to set up a Community Advisory Board whose role will be to develop a community plan to be submitted to IRCC for funding consideration.

The development of the Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative favored a high degree of participation and collaboration between a large spectrum of stakeholders and the implementation will be led “by and for” Francophone communities.

Through community partnerships, communities will be able to implement tailored projects that will allow the community and IRCC to find innovative solutions to meet both community and French-speaking newcomers' needs.