



Refugee
Response Team
FRASER VALLEY

EMPLOYMENT FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS

Summary Report



DIVERSECITY
community resources society



BRITISH COLUMBIA | WelcomeBC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview 3

Key Findings and Recommendations 7

Appendix I – Agenda 15

Appendix II – Overview of Syrian Refugee Arrivals In The Fraser Valley 16

Appendix III – Refugee Reference Group Findings 17

Appendix IV – Evaluation 23

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Similar to other newcomers, refugees bring skills, knowledge and experience when they come to Canada and need to find meaningful employment, when ready, to settle well into their new lives.

In June 2016, the Refugee Response Team – Fraser Valley (RRT-FV) organized three facilitated discussions on employment supports and labour market attachment for refugees in the Fraser Valley. The purpose was to bring together service providers and stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees to share information, develop a coordinated approach to refugee-specific employment supports, and facilitate labour market attachment for refugees. These discussions were informed by research conducted by the RRT-FV, including focus groups with refugee clients and an online survey of local service providers and stakeholders. A total of 40 individuals took part, representing 27 organizations from different communities of the Fraser Valley. Input gathered from these discussions was summarized and organized and is presented in the following report.

Background

In March 2016, the RRT-FV was established to develop and implement a *Community Refugee Response Action Plan* to address urgent, short-term needs and issues in support of refugees, and to act as a local resource for information and communication about refugee resettlement in the Fraser Valley. That same month, the *Community Refugee Response Action Plan* was developed through a community consultation process with input from 25+ stakeholders involved in the resettlement of refugees in the region. Six priority issues were identified for the action plan, including employment and labour market attachment. During the action planning process, RRT-FV members identified the need to bring together various stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees in the Fraser Valley to share information about successful models for refugee labour market attachment and to explore opportunities for service development and implementation. As a result, three Employment Facilitated Discussions were held across the region.

Project Overview

The first facilitated discussion took place on June 13 at Abbotsford Community Services with stakeholders from Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission. The second facilitated discussion took place on June 14 at Newton Library with stakeholders from Delta and Surrey. The third facilitated discussion took place on June 17 at Douglas Recreation Centre with stakeholders from Langley, Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. Each discussion was facilitated by Jody Johnson and Trevor Van Eerden of PEERs Employment and Education Resources. The agenda that guided the discussions can be found in *Appendix I*.

The goals of the facilitated discussions were:

- » Increase understanding of the employment service and support needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley
- » Build stronger connections between stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees in the Fraser Valley
- » Contribute to the development and/or improvement of employment services and workplace supports that will better meet the needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley

To provide context and background, each facilitated discussion started with a presentation of refugee arrival data to the region (the *Overview of Syrian Refugee Arrivals in the Fraser Valley* has been included as *Appendix II*), as well as key findings from two RRT-FV projects:

- 1. Refugee Reference Group:** Two focus groups were conducted to learn about the employment readiness, needs and experiences of refugees, including experiences accessing local employment services. Input was gathered from 15 refugee clients from various backgrounds who have been in Canada for various lengths of time. A detailed summary can be found in *Appendix III*.
- 2. Online Survey:** An online survey of service providers and stakeholders was completed to better understand the service needs, challenges and issues of refugees in the Fraser Valley. Input was gathered from 74 individuals representing 41 organizations / private sponsor groups and two local residents. The *RRT-FV Online Survey: First Quarter – Key Findings and Recommendations Report* can be found at fraservalleyrrt.ca.

Following the presentation, participants were divided into small groups. The following three questions were used to guide small group discussions:

- 1.** What are the employment service challenges in working with refugees?
- 2.** Are there any examples of employment service / labour market attachment practices that are working well?
- 3.** What would improve Fraser Valley employment services for refugees?

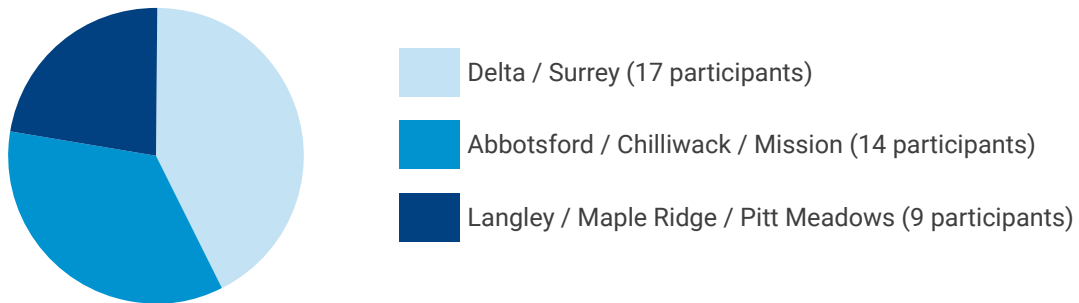
Each group discussion was guided by a facilitator and key themes and points were captured by note-takers.

At the end of each facilitated discussion, an on-site evaluation was conducted. For a detailed summary of the evaluation, please see *Appendix IV*.

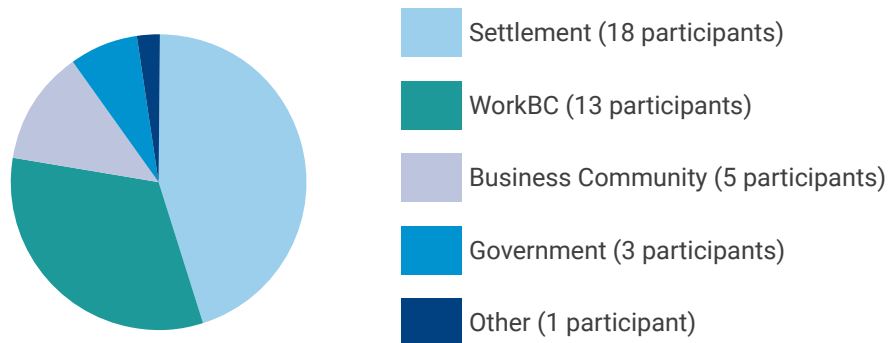
Participants

Over 55 invitations were sent to stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees in the Fraser Valley, including WorkBC Centre managers and staff, immigrant career facilitators and case managers, employers and employer associations, private sponsors with experience assisting refugees in finding employment and post-secondary institutions. A total of 40 individuals representing 27 organizations took part in the facilitated discussions.

By Community



By Sector



Organizations

1. Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce

2. Abbotsford Community Services

3. BC Construction Association

4. BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training (Canada-BC Job Grant)

5. BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (Employment and Labour Market Services Division)

6. Chilliwack Community Services

7. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society

8. Douglas College

9. Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce

10. ISSofBC

11. Langley Community Services Society

12. Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce

13. Mennonite Central Committee of BC

14. Mission Community Services

15. Office of MP Jati Sidhu

16. Pacific Community Resources Society

17. Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)

18. SUCCESS

19. WorkBC: Abbotsford

20. WorkBC: Chilliwack (Chilliwack Community Services)

21. WorkBC: Chilliwack (GT Hiring)

22. WorkBC: Maple Ridge

23. WorkBC: Mission

24. WorkBC: Surrey Cloverdale

25. WorkBC: Surrey Fleetwood / Guildford

26. WorkBC: Surrey Newton

27. WorkBC: Surrey Whalley

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants had the opportunity to share their perspectives on employment service / labour market attachment challenges and practices in working with refugees. The observations, ideas and recommendations were summarized and organized and are presented below.

1. What are the employment service challenges in working with refugees?

Participants were asked what they thought were the key employment service challenges in working with refugees. They shared their perspectives and experiences about known employment service barriers and gaps. The following summarizes many of the key issues identified by participants.

Employment Service Barriers

Multiple Barriers

Many recently arrived refugees, including Syrian refugees, face multiple barriers that impact / impede their participation in settlement programs and/or the workforce, including English language proficiency, complex physical / mental health issues, access to childcare (costs and logistics) and access to transportation.

English language proficiency

Many recently arrived refugees, including Syrian refugees, speak little to no English (pre-literacy to Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 2). Some refugee clients were anxious about finances and got jobs right away, only to lose these jobs because their level of English was too low. Lack of English is both a communication and safety issue in the workplace. While employers are interested and willing to hire refugees, safety is a primary concern. Refugees who obtain employment (using their first language) before learning English tend not to learn English and may sacrifice long-term self-sufficiency and integration.

Language training model

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs often require extensive classroom time that is challenging for many refugees. For example, many Syrian refugees have only attended school up to grade 4/5, and it can be a challenge for adults to focus for hours in a formal classroom setting. There is also significant absenteeism in LINC classes when refugee clients are placed too early in the settlement process. Health, housing, childcare and schooling, as well as management of daily needs, must be dealt with before they are able to settle into a classroom learning environment. There is a need to be more creative in how language services are delivered so that refugees are fully supported to build their English language skills.

Employment readiness

While there is a genuine desire to participate in the workforce, the majority of refugees are not yet employment ready. In most cases, language needs overshadow employment needs. It often takes refugees longer to settle and become employment ready than immigrants, as they arrive under very different circumstances and with more complex needs. This is especially the case for government assisted refugees (GARs), who are selected based on vulnerability rather than settlement potential.

Recognition of work experience, credentials or qualifications

Many recently arrived refugees, especially Syrian refugees, were employed in low skilled jobs or in trades, or were self-employed. Some of these jobs, such as certain types of construction, do not exist in Canada. There is concern about how to identify and/or evaluate transferable skills, as BC credentials / qualifications are typically localized.

Employment Service Gaps

WorkBC

The majority of WorkBC Employment Services Centres have not seen refugee clients. There is a mismatch between the services offered / available and the employment service needs of refugee clients. While WorkBC is meant to serve “everyone”, they do not have the time or capacity to serve those who are not “employment ready” and/or with lower levels of English. In some cases, refugee clients became upset because they were not eligible for some services, such as case management. The fee-for-service model also prevents staff from spending the time needed to support these clients. Settlement agencies are currently providing employment supports to refugee clients rather than WorkBC. There is a need for more investment and changes so that WorkBC is better able to serve this client group. One exception is the Surrey Fleetwood Guildford WorkBC Employment Services Centre, which has seen 35 refugee clients to date. They have hired two Arabic-speaking staff – a case manager and a job developer – and are now better prepared to serve refugees.

Income Assistance

One of the conditions for accessing Income Assistance is participation in WorkBC. However, as stated above, many refugee clients do not have sufficient English language skills and these programs are not appropriate for their employment service needs.

Pre-employment services

There is a need for pre-employment services before employment services can be accessed. Focus needs to be on addressing settlement and pre-employment issues, such as mobility, transportation and childcare. While settlement agencies are currently providing pre-employment services to refugee clients, more investment is needed in this area. An important consideration is how to support and provide opportunities for those refugees wanting to work, but who are not yet employment ready, so that they remain motivated and feel as though they are contributing members of society.

Employment programs / supports

Some refugees with English language skills are interested in rebuilding their careers so that they can support their families. However, they do not know how to proceed, as there are no / limited employment programs available to support their needs. For example, several refugee clients are interested in starting their own home-based or small business, as they were self-employed before coming to Canada. It would also allow for accommodation of special needs, such as childcare and transportation, and could meet some of the emerging service needs, such as halal catering, hairdressers for hijab-wearing residents, etc. However, refugee clients are unable to access the self-employment program under WorkBC, as it is only available to clients with Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility.

Coordination between settlement and employment services / integrated program models

Settlement, language and employment services continue to operate in silos. There is a need to develop a mechanism for better coordination between settlement, language and employment services, including integrated program models, so that refugee clients have access to the services needed.

Other Employment Service Challenges

Employer engagement

Some employers are experiencing skill shortages and looking to fill vacancies, and might be interested in hiring refugees. However, they are too busy to locate potential refugee candidates or obtain support from refugee service providers. There is an opportunity to work with local chambers of commerce to build awareness and help bridge these gaps.

Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is needed both for refugees and employers. There are differences between workplace culture in Canada and other countries. Refugees have little sense of workplace culture in the Canadian context, and employers need a greater understanding of refugees' cultural norms. For example, Canada is a time-based culture and punctuality is very important. However, refugee clients coming from cultures that are not time-based are often late for appointments. Gender also plays an important role. In one case, a volunteer practicum was set up for a young female refugee client with a local employer, but her family did not permit her to participate in the work experience.

Interpretation / Translation

Once refugee clients are ready to access employment services, they will likely require some translation / interpretation services. Interpretation / translation services are also needed for employers hiring refugees to facilitate their concerns around safety and ensure that refugee workers have a thorough understanding of safety issues and protocols. In some communities, only a small group is able to provide this service, and there is concern that burnout will become an issue.

Undocumented jobs

Some refugees are working in undocumented jobs because of rules around financial assistance. There is a concern around safety of these workers, but service providers are unsure how to address these situations or issues when they are made aware.

Limited availability of opportunities / resources

Some communities have few employment opportunities and community resources available. Employment opportunities that are available may be a challenge to access by transit, such as the saw mills in Maple Ridge. It can be a challenge for service providers to manage expectations around employment and other resources needed.

Additional Observations

Refugee resettlement is a humanitarian effort

It is important to remember that the resettlement of Syrian refugees is a humanitarian effort. Government assisted refugees (GARs), which make up the majority of Syrian refugees to the Fraser Valley, are selected based on vulnerability rather than settlement potential. As with other refugee groups, it will take time for them to address their settlement needs and become employment ready.

Small number of employment seekers

It is important to consider that only a small number of recently arrived refugees are employment ready or will be seeking employment in the near future; some may never enter the workforce. For example, amongst Syrian refugees, it will mostly be male refugees of core working age who will be looking for work, and they represent only 20% of recent refugee arrivals to the area. Many refugee clients come from cultures where traditional gender roles prevail; that is, women stay at home to raise children and care for their families. That said, the majority of recently arrived refugees have large families, and one income will not be enough to cover living costs in the area. There is a shift in thinking that is starting to happen, and some refugee clients are realizing that women will also need to find jobs, though, in most cases, part-time jobs in specific sectors. This is an important consideration when enhancing or developing employment services.

Diversity amongst refugees

Refugees are not a homogenous group. Beyond culture and language differences, they arrive with their own experiences, needs, skills, beliefs, attitudes, etc. There are also variances in the settlement needs and timelines of different types of refugees, such as GARs, privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) and blended visa office referred refugees (BVORs).

Language vs. employment

Refugees are experiencing a dynamic where they need to choose between English language learning and employment. Their English language learning often stalls at CLB 3 because they have enough English to secure a job. For some, they are never able to reach their full potential because of their limited English language skills. By choosing employment over language training, opportunities for future jobs beyond the skill level of their first job are reduced, as well as integration into the community. Incentives could be offered to refugees and/or employers so that refugees continue to learn English when work is found.

Population growth projections in Langley

The population of Langley is projected to double within the next five years. Some big Vancouver-based employers are moving businesses / offices east where staff and, increasingly, the population live. This needs to be considered when developing new services in this community.

2. Are there examples of employment service / labour market attachment practices that are working well?

Participants had the opportunity to share examples of employment service / labour attachment practices that they felt were working well in the region, including promising practices and successes involving refugees and employers. The following lists many of the practices cited by participants.

Specialized employment programs / supports

- » Skills Connect for Immigrants Program for high skilled refugees with a CLB 5 or higher
- » Job Options, which provides in-class and job placement / maintenance support
- » Canada-BC Jobs Grant to support skills training and job readiness for employees
- » Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS) Youth Employment Program, which provides essential life skills training and incentives
- » DIVERSEcity Future Leaders Program, funded by Service Canada, which prepares new immigrant youth for employment in the fast food / retail industry
- » MOSAIC employment program, funded through the Canada-BC Jobs Grant, that provides training for employment / onboarding for clients with limited English language skills
- » Surrey Fleetwood / Guildford WorkBC Employment Services Centre has a life skills workshop as part of their WorkBC services
- » Habitat for Humanity provides volunteer opportunities that combine social integration and skills development and provide access to the hidden job market (open to Income Assistance clients)

Employment services in first language

- » Surrey Fleetwood / Guildford WorkBC Services Centre has two Arabic-speaking staff – a case manager and job developer

“Pod” model for GARs

- » British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) model that integrates government assisted refugees (GARs) in the BC construction industry. Where possible, employees work in cohorts. One employee has a high level of English and the others have lower levels. The employee with the high level of English helps with communication between the other employees and employer.

Individual job-client matching

- » Abbotsford Community Services is working with employers and refugee clients to place them in appropriate jobs
- » Options Community Services works with employers to match and support clients, particularly youth, in entry-level positions

Refugee-specific job fairs

- » ISSofBC organized a job fair that resulted in 3–4 hires

Self-employment and entrepreneurship programs

- » Sumas Regional Consortium for High Tech (SRCTec) – Venture Accelerator Program and Self-Employment Program
- » Women’s Enterprise Centre
- » Small Business BC
- » Community Futures

Self-generated, co-operative groups

- » A group of Iraqi women came together to support each other in starting their own businesses (e.g. catering / food truck)

Training in first language

- » Information skills certification in Arabic (e.g. First Aid, Food Safe)
- » Options Community Services holds workshops for clients to prepare them for certification exams
- » SUCCESS uses English language instructors and interpreters to help clients with certification exams
- » Arcteryx hired 7–8 clients, who were supported through on-the-ground translation¹

Specialized workshops for refugee clients

- » Job coaching
- » Resume writing
- » Interview skills

Strategies to engage difficult-to-reach client groups

- » Soccer used to engage men in settlement programs

Stakeholder consultations / engagement

- » Bringing together different stakeholders can provide opportunities for learning, relationship-building and partnership development. In Abbotsford, a proposal was submitted to bring together employers who have successfully integrated newcomers to share learnings and best practices.

¹ This is understood to mean on-the-ground interpretation, as translation refers to the conversion of written material from one language to another, while interpretation refers to the same task orally.

3. What would improve Fraser Valley employment services for refugees?

Participants had the opportunity to share their opinions and perspectives on what would improve employment services for refugees in the region, including adaptations to existing employment services, identified challenges and barriers, and engagement and involvement of different stakeholders.

Pre-employment supports

- » Provide opportunities for pre-employment supports for refugees
- » Develop culturally sensitive / first language pre-employment services
- » Incorporate a financial incentive for clients when developing pre-employment services

Access and/or adaptations to language programs / supports

- » Provide opportunities for workplace-based English language training
- » Provide opportunities for English language learning in non-traditional ways, including blended program models
- » Provide immersion opportunities in English-speaking employment environments for refugees in a supportive way

Access and/or adaptations to existing employment programs / supports

- » Provide refugees with access to all existing employment programs (e.g. WorkBC Self-Employment Program)
- » Employment programs developed for clients with disabilities could be adapted and piloted with refugees

Access to self-employment programs / supports

- » Provide refugees with access to WorkBC Self-Employment Program even if they are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI)

Access to interpretation / translation

- » Provide and/or increase access to interpretation (verbal) / translation (written) supports to refugees for WorkBC and other services

Specialized employment programs / supports

- » Fund job developer positions specifically for refugees
- » Fund an employment facilitator who specializes in connecting refugees and employers (knowledge of programs and funding supports available for refugees, someone employers can contact when opportunities become available)
- » Develop a specialized, long-term case management model that is inclusive of language supports, wage subsidies and work practicums / placements
- » Fund the creation of work placement opportunities for refugees that combine language and work experience to assist clients in developing realistic plans and prepare them for work when they are ready
- » Fund the creation of unpaid work experience opportunities for refugees that they can access if they are on Income Assistance and are eligible for wage subsidies
- » Provide job maintenance supports to refugee clients
- » Provide longer-term training and services for refugees

Mentorship opportunities

- » Develop an employment mentoring program and other mentorship opportunities for refugees

Services in different languages

- » Provide information skills certification classes and exams in different languages
- » Provide job search workshops in different languages

Coordination between settlement and employment services

- » Improve coordination around pre-employment information / workshops for refugees
- » Improve understanding of different positions / roles
- » Develop a mechanism to introduce / connect staff and clients from pre-employment and employment services
- » Organize regular information sharing / networking opportunities between settlement and employment services to facilitate connections between different organizations and workers, such as settlement workers and job developers / case managers who work with refugees
- » Expand ISSofBC bi-annual networking sessions for frontline Arabic-speaking settlement workers to employment case managers

Employer engagement and education

- » Engage employers who are keen to hire refugees
- » Provide education to employers to improve expectations of refugee employees

Information about eligibility requirements for employment services

- » Build awareness about access and eligibility requirements for employment programs / supports available in the region
- » Develop factsheets for refugees, immigrant service providers and employment service providers

Information about Canadian workplace culture

- » Incorporate information about Canadian workplace culture in lower level LINC classes

Cultural competency / sensitivity training

- » For refugee clients to prepare them for the Canadian workplace
- » For WorkBC staff to improve their understanding of the challenges faced by refugees
- » For employers to build awareness about the cultural requirements of refugees

Other training / supports

- » Provide training on impact of trauma on successful employment
- » Provide opportunities for immersion into English language environments

APPENDIX I – AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER
1. Meeting Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Welcome and Introductions » Overview and purpose of the consultation 	PEERs
2. Fraser Valley Region – Refugee Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fraser Valley Refugee Demographic / Arrivals data » Input from the RRT-FV Service Needs / Challenges / Issues » RRT-FV refugee employment / employment service survey summary 	PEERs / All Jennifer Basu
3. Consultation Question 1 – Round Table Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What are the employment service challenges in working with refugees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Perspectives and experiences from all stakeholders » Are there employment service gaps for refugees? » What barriers are not being addressed? 	PEERs / All
4. Consultation Question 2 – Round Table Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Are there examples of employment service / labour market attachment practices that are working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identification of best practices and successes » Examples of Fraser Valley employer involvement and successful practices. 	PEERs / All
5. Consultation Question 3 – Round Table Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What would improve Fraser Valley employment services for refugees? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adaptations to existing employment services » Identified service challenges and barriers » Engagement and involvement of stakeholders – who else needs to be involved? 	PEERs / All
6. Closing Comments, Next Steps and Evaluation	PEERs
7. Lunch	

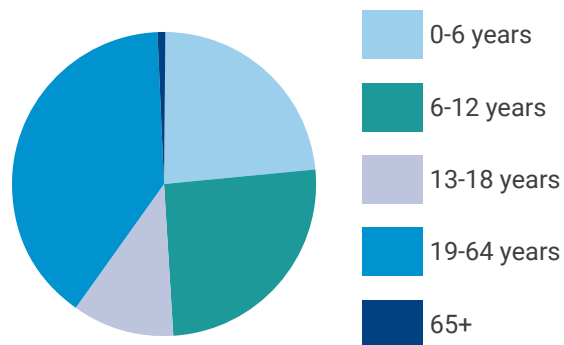
APPENDIX II – OVERVIEW OF SYRIAN REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN THE FRASER VALLEY

Syrian Refugee Arrivals to BC (November 4, 2015 to May 24, 2016)

Total

Syrian GAR individuals	1,874
Syrian GAR units	439

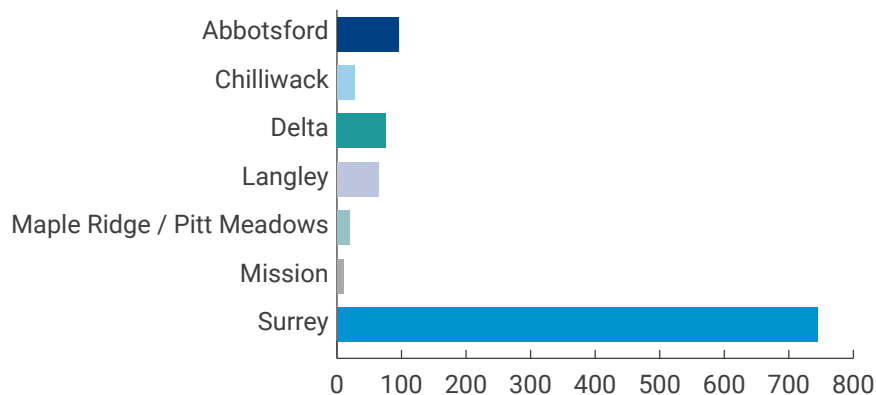
Age of Syrian GARs on Arrival in BC:



Syrian Refugee Arrivals to the Fraser Valley (November 4, 2015 to May 24, 2016)

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs):	1,088 (91% of Syrian refugee arrivals to the Fraser Valley)
Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs):	63 (5% of Syrian refugee arrivals to the Fraser Valley)
Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) Refugees:	44 (4% of Syrian refugee arrivals to the Fraser Valley)
Total:	1,195 (49% of total Syrian refugee arrivals to BC)

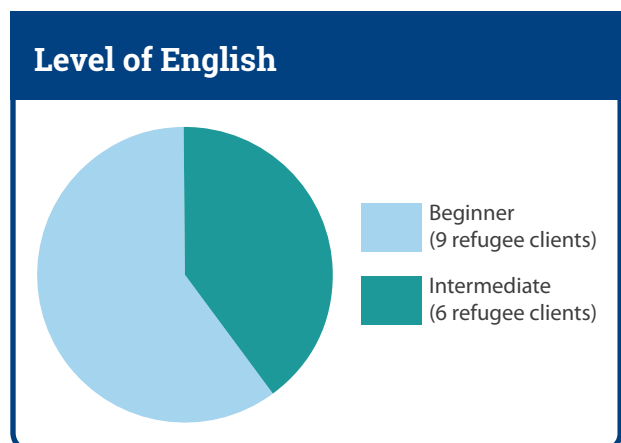
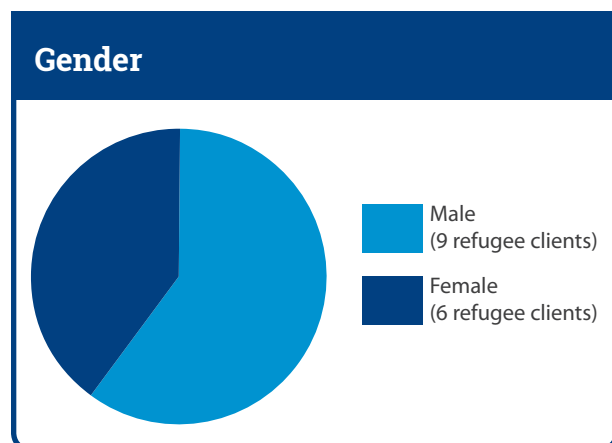
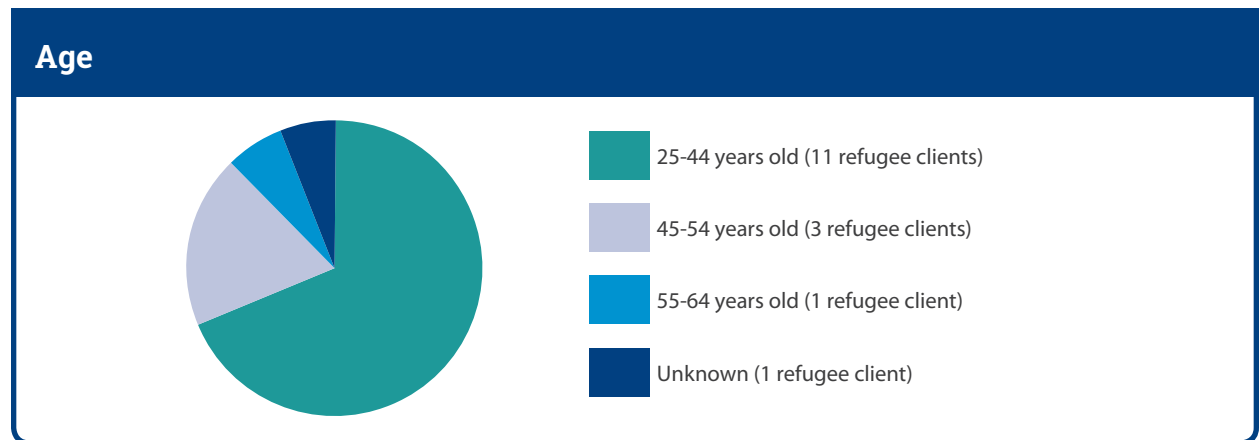
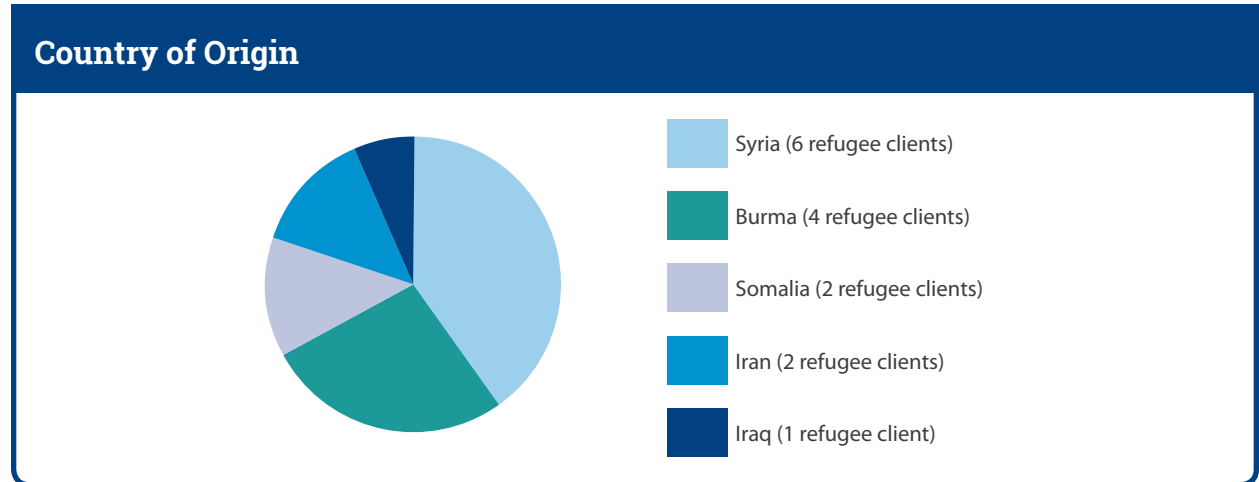
Syrian GAR Settlement Patterns in the Fraser Valley (November 4, 2015 to May 24, 2016)



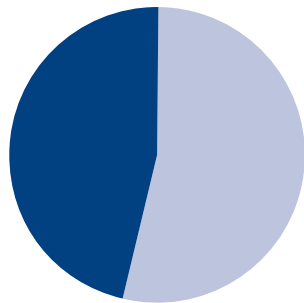
Source: ISSofBC "Refugee Readiness Fund Newsletter #10" and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada #WelcomeRefugees.

APPENDIX III – REFUGEE REFERENCE GROUP FINDINGS

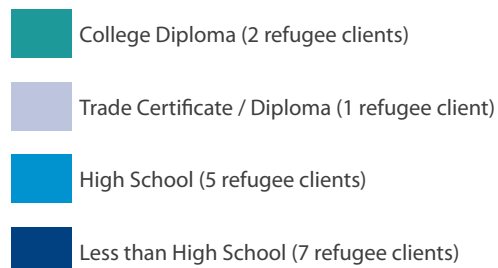
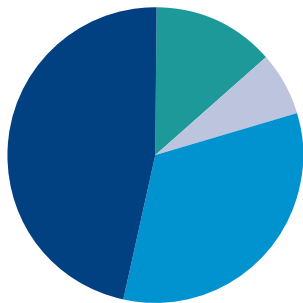
Background Information



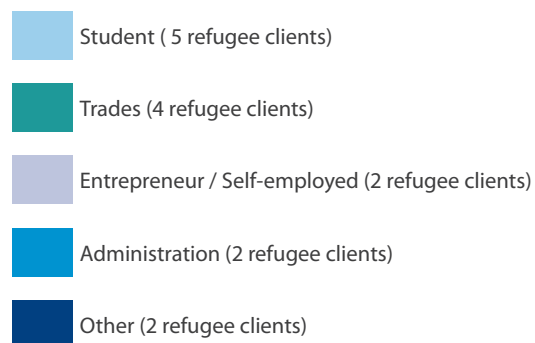
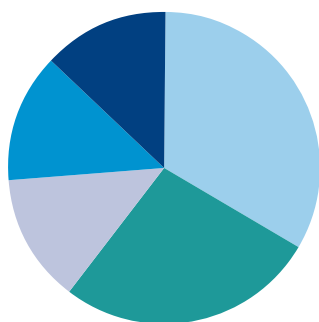
Length of Time in Canada



Level of Education



Occupation Before Arrival to Canada



Settlement

Top Settlement Needs Upon Arrival in Canada

- » Good future for my children (6)
- » Education / Training (6)
- » Learn English (4)
- » Safety and security (3)
- » Financial security (3)
- » Settle in new country (3)
- » Find a job (3)
- » Find a good home (2)
- » Learn about Canadian culture (2)
- » Access to healthcare services (2)
- » Freedom of movement (1)
- » Learn how to use public transportation (1)
- » Learn how to access community services (1)
- » Make friends (1)
- » Obtain Canadian passport (1)
- » Sponsor family member (1)

Top Current Settlement Needs

- » Learn / improve English (9)
- » Find a (good) job (8)
- » Education / Training (5)
- » Access to healthcare services to address health needs (4)
- » Learn how to find / get a job (3)
- » Get a driver's license (2)
- » Pay for housing (2)
- » Education for children (2)
- » Access occupation-specific language training (1)
- » Access to transportation (public transit / car to go to work) (1)
- » Access BC Housing (1)
- » Access to permanent housing (1)

Employment / Labour Market Attachment

Currently Employed

- » 4 participants (26.7%)

Occupation

- » Customer service (2)
- » Worker in recycling plant (1)
- » Worker in aluminium plant (1)

Do you like your job? Is it as expected?

- » Yes (2)
- » No (2)

How did you find your job?

- » Settlement organization (Moving Ahead Program (MAP) / Future Leaders)
- » Family members / friends
- » Networking in the community

Currently Unemployed

- » 11 participants (73.3%)

Looking for a Job

- » Yes (3)
- » No (8)

Reasons for Looking for a Job

- » Income assistance isn't enough / doesn't cover all my costs (3)
- » Support my children / family (3)
- » Want to be independent (3)
- » Want to say thank you / give back to Canada (2)
- » Build skills (1)
- » Help feel settled (1)
- » Support my family who lives overseas (1)

Reasons for NOT Looking for a Job

- » Lack of English (3)
- » Transportation challenges / inadequate transit system (2)
- » Not ready (2)
- » Health issues / too sick to work (2)
- » Lack of knowledge about job search / labour market in Canada (1)
- » First need to find permanent housing (1)
- » Struggling as a single mother (1)

Challenges Experienced While Looking for a Job

- » Lack of English (6)
- » Lack of education (1)
- » Physical disability (1)
- » Unable to find “legal” work (1)

Supports Needed to Find / Keep a Job

- » English language training
- » Access to education / training programs, especially in first year in Canada
- » Access to specialized training programs (e.g. occupation-specific, programs that combine English and skills training, self-employment)
- » Support for certification courses (e.g. FOODSAFE, First Aid)
- » More opportunities for part-time / flexible employment (so that can learn English / access training at the same time)
- » More opportunities from employers, especially in low-skilled jobs
- » Access to on-site mentors
- » Cultural orientation
- » Information about employment standards
- » Assistance with resume writing
- » Interest-free loan to start a small business
- » Assistance finding permanent housing
- » Better transportation options
- » Childcare
- » Community support
- » More time to get settled

Employment Services

Have you used employment services?

- » Yes (6)
- » No (9)

Reasons for NOT Accessing Employment Services

- » Not yet ready (1)
- » Lack of English (1)

Experiences Accessing Employment Services

- » Tried accessing employment services through WorkBC, but lack of English language skills / interpretation services was a barrier to accessing services (5)
- » Tried accessing employment services through WorkBC, but did not receive a response (1)
- » Pressure from WorkBC case worker to find a job as soon as possible (1)
- » Unable to access services through WorkBC because physical disability (wheelchair) could not be accommodated (1)
- » Invited to attend workshop in Vancouver, but too far / level of English too low (1)

APPENDIX IV – EVALUATION

Combined

Total participants = 40

Total responses = 33

Response rate = 83%

1. Please rate the following:

	1 STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 DISAGREE	3 NEUTRAL	4 AGREE	5 STRONGLY AGREE
I had the opportunity to participate and provide input in the discussion.	0	0	1	6	26
	0%		3%	97%	
I had the opportunity to meet and connect with other stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees.	0	0	2	13	18
	0%		6%	94%	
I have an increased understanding of the employment service and support needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley.	0	1	5	15	12
	3%		15%	82%	
I will consider implementing changes in my workplace and/or employment services / supports to better meet the needs of refugees.	0	2	5	15	11
	6%		15%	79%	

2. Please rate the following:

	1 NOT EFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 NEUTRAL	4 EFFECTIVE	5 EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE
Pre-meeting communications and organization	0	2	4	12	15
	6%		12%	82%	
Organization of the day	0	0	2	11	20
	0%		6%	94%	
Facilitation of the discussion	0	1	0	8	24
	3%		0%	97%	
Overall effectiveness	0	1	0	13	19
	3%		0%	97%	

Employment Facilitated Discussion #1 (Abbotsford)

Total participants = 14

Total responses = 11

Response rate = 79%

1. Please rate the following

	1 STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 DISAGREE	3 NEUTRAL	4 AGREE	5 STRONGLY AGREE
I had the opportunity to participate and provide input in the discussion.	0	0	0	2	9
	0%		0%	100%	
I had the opportunity to meet and connect with other stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees.	0	0	1	3	7
	0%		9%	91%	
I have an increased understanding of the employment service and support needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley.	0	0	2	4	5
	0%		18%	82%	
I will consider implementing changes in my workplace and/or employment services / supports to better meet the needs of refugees.	0	0	3	5	3
	0%		27%	73%	

2. Please rate the following:

	1 NOT EFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 NEUTRAL	4 EFFECTIVE	5 EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE
Pre-meeting communications and organization	0	1	2	5	3
	9%		18%	73%	
Organization of the day	0	0	0	4	7
	0%		0%	100%	
Facilitation of the discussion	0	0	0	3	8
	0%		0%	100%	
Overall effectiveness	0	0	0	3	8
	0%		0%	100%	

3. What is the most valuable thing you will be taking away from this discussion?

- » The challenges and opportunities for refugees appear similar in the region.
- » Ideas for best practices and new programs. Greater understanding of issues facing newcomers.
- » Group discussion information.
- » That the process to employment is much longer for refugees than for new immigrants. Need funding for resources to address refugee employment needs.
- » Networking – contacts.
- » The need for more specialized services and funding needed.
- » Was able to provide insight and thoughts.
- » The information I received in regard to what refugees are dealing with when they come to Canada. Very interesting to hear about the programs already in place.
- » The timeline needed for settlement and the process seems that it needs adaptation.
- » Suggestions made.
- » Connections, Ideas.

4. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

- » Leave it the way it is. Good.
- » More...all good.
- » Continue meeting as a group to discuss and problem solve issues.
- » Well managed. Consultants very informed on this topic to provide insight.
- » None.
- » More time available.
- » Better outreach and identification of employers interested.
- » None.
- » More conversation time – seemed pretty quick. However very effective.
- » More focus on regional-based issues.
- » Questions were emailed to participants.

5. Additional thoughts or comments

- » Thank you for the opportunity!
- » Lunch discussion was also very helpful. Thank you for lunch.
- » Great initiative!
- » Train-the-trainer – open to all WorkBC staff. Create greater understanding for clients' needs.
- » Well done and very interesting.
- » Employers should participate in some way to give feedback on what works and what barriers they are able to work with at an entry level employment.
- » Follow up meeting. Thank you!!

Employment Facilitated Discussion #2 (Surrey)

Total participants = 17

Total responses = 15

Response rate = 88%

1. Please rate the following

	1 STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 DISAGREE	3 NEUTRAL	4 AGREE	5 STRONGLY AGREE
I had the opportunity to participate and provide input in the discussion.	0	0	0	4	11
	0%		0%	100%	
I had the opportunity to meet and connect with other stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees.	0	0	0	9	6
	0%		0%	100%	
I have an increased understanding of the employment service and support needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley.	0	0	2	9	4
	0%		13%	87%	
I will consider implementing changes in my workplace and/or employment services / supports to better meet the needs of refugees.	0	1	0	8	6
	7%		0%	93%	

2. Please rate the following:

	1 NOT EFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 NEUTRAL	4 EFFECTIVE	5 EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE
Pre-meeting communications and organization	0	1	1	7	6
	7%		7%	87%	
Organization of the day	0	0	1	7	7
	0%		7%	93%	
Facilitation of the discussion	0	0	0	5	10
	0%		0%	100%	
Overall effectiveness	0	0	0	9	6
	0%		0%	100%	

3. What is the most valuable thing you will be taking away from this discussion?

- » New thoughts and ideas to practice to improve employer awareness and cultural transparency.
- » Need to communicate / reiterate what we already provide and link settlement with WorkBC.
- » Challenges and barriers. Stats. Resources that came up during discussions.
- » Getting more connected with services in the community. Getting more insight and learning good practices.
- » Speaking with settlement worker and understanding pieces that may be missing prior to employment readiness, re: young women not allowed to work as per family.
- » Making personal connections.
- » Importance of ESCs working closely with settlement services.
- » Best practices / examples that work.
- » Connections of refugee staff workers.
- » Affirmation of overall challenges. Promote further thoughts / considerations / future planning.
- » Great sharing.
- » Valuable input from different providers. Clear summary from the facilitators.
- » Best practices and successes.
- » Various services and supportive operations to serve refugees.

4. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

- » Have all participants bring information outlining programs, services and eligibility.
- » ELT providers should be included.
- » None.
- » MORE best practices / examples.
- » None.
- » More of the same, including delicious lunches.
- » Including some participants or their reps and hearing their concerns they are practically facing.
- » Well organized.
- » Invite various stakeholders groups.

5. Additional thoughts or comments

- » Jenn – Great job!!!
- » Discussions about mental health for refugees and resources.
- » Very nice discussions and all meeting stayed on time and focused.
- » None.
- » Thank you! This was extremely valuable!
- » Overall very informative session.
- » Thanks.

Employment Facilitated Discussion #3 (Langley)

Total participants = 9

Total respondents = 7

Response rate = 78%

1. Please rate the following:

	1 STRONGLY DISAGREE	2 DISAGREE	3 NEUTRAL	4 AGREE	5 STRONGLY AGREE
I had the opportunity to participate and provide input in the discussion.	0	0	1	0	6
	0%		14%	86%	
I had the opportunity to meet and connect with other stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees.	0	0	1	1	5
	0%		14%	86%	
I have an increased understanding of the employment service and support needs of refugees in the Fraser Valley.	0	1	1	2	3
	14%		14%	71%	
I will consider implementing changes in my workplace and/or employment services / supports to better meet the needs of refugees.	0	1	2	2	2
	14%		29%	57%	

2. Please rate the following:

	1 NOT EFFECTIVE	2 SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	3 NEUTRAL	4 EFFECTIVE	5 EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE
Pre-meeting communications and organization	0	0	1	0	6
	0%		14%	86%	
Organization of the day	0	0	1	0	6
	0%		14%	86%	
Facilitation of the discussion	0	1	0	0	6
	14%		0%	86%	
Overall effectiveness	0	1	0	1	5
	14%		0%	86%	

3. What is the most valuable thing you will be taking away from this discussion?

- » The opportunities to educate employers, some of the challenges faced, mainly they are a diverse group with a varied level of skills.
- » We all want to help. Other resources available.
- » Issues in accessing / funding services to help refugees become employment ready.
- » The interest of refugee employment.
- » Collaborations of service providers.
- » The services available for employment opportunities in the area (the new ones).

4. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

- » Love the start time at 10:00 am and NOT 9:00 am.
- » Nope – very well done.
- » More space for participation / discussion and more time.
- » Set up a committee to flesh out other funding and create an action plan.

5. Additional thoughts or comments

- » Thank you for including us to be a part of the discussion.
- » Thank you.
- » Thank you for inviting me! I will use this information to help guide more communication in BC with refugees!
- » Diversity of the employment sector.
- » It is a shame not all members that were supposed to send a representative did not attend.