

REGIONAL IMMIGRATION INITIATIVE

Presented by: Western Economic Diversification (WD) and
Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS)
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Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada





Outline of Presentation

- **Defining the Regional Immigration Initiative**
- **Guidelines and objectives**
- **Programs supporting regional immigration**
- **Priority Areas 2004/2005**
- **Lessons Learned To Date**





What is the Regional Immigration Initiative?

- **Objectives:**
 - create awareness of immigration as a tool to support socio-economic development outside of the Greater Vancouver Area
 - increase the capacity of these communities and regions to attract and retain immigrants
- **Led by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through the *Agreement for Canada - British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration* and Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Immigration**





Why introduce a Regional Immigration Initiative?

- **In BC, 90% of immigrants settle in the Greater Vancouver Region (36,624 immigrants in 2004)**
- **Estimated average annual immigration to selected communities or regions since 1996 – Victoria (814), Okanagan (511), Nanaimo (145), Prince George (126)**
- **Many rural communities are experiencing economic challenges and declining populations**
- **Share the benefits with communities outside the Greater Vancouver Region**





Guidelines for a BC Approach

- **Regional immigration is one part of a comprehensive approach to community economic development**
- **Must be community driven**
- **Uses range of levers under Fed. and/or Prov. authority to attract and retain immigrants**
- **Requires multiple partners – ministries and departments, municipalities, employers, business organizations, economic development associations, educational institutions, settlement agencies, etc.**



Programs Supporting Regional Immigration

- **British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP):**
 - Business Category
 - Introduced a Regional Component in October 2003
 - Criteria includes \$600,000 PNW, \$300,000 investment, outside GVRD, create 2 new jobs with active management
 - 65 Regional Business applicants approved to date
 - Strategic Occupations (Skilled Workers)
 - Applicant must have job offer
 - 25% of approved Provincial Nominees destined to employment opportunities outside of Greater Vancouver Region
- **Exploratory Projects on Labour Market Attachment**
 - Mission, Nanaimo, Lower Columbia, Lake Country and Victoria (www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/amip/iqp/resources/index.htm)





Priority Areas 2004/2005

- **Eight Community Based Projects**
 - Completion June 2005
- **Member of the Small Centre Strategy Working Group**
 - Toolbox for Small Centres scheduled for distribution June 2005
- **Presentations to raise awareness**
 - Rural Communities Summit, Cumberland Small Cities Conference
- **Support for community planning and consultation**



Eight Regional Immigration Pilot Projects



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Eight Regional Immigration Pilot Projects continued...

- ***Rural Community Immigration Readiness Toolkit - Revelstoke***
- ***Innovative Approaches to Attract and Retain Immigrants - Powell River***
- ***Attracting and Retaining Entrepreneurial Immigrants – Vernon***
- ***Local Labour Market Development - Prince George***
- ***Pathways to the Okanagan - Okanagan***
- ***Welcoming Immigrants to Central Vancouver Island - Nanaimo***
- ***Immigration Strategic Plan - Alberni-Clayoquot***
- ***Immigration Action Plan and Welcoming Community Program – Abbotsford***





Lessons Learned To Date

- **Partnerships are Essential**
- **Need to Leverage Resources (time, money, expertise)**
- **High level of Engagement Required**
 - Community Organizations
 - Municipal, Provincial and Federal Government Departments
- **Must have a Flexible Approach**
- **Long Term Process**

