

# What is a Welcoming and Inclusive Community?

**A Welcoming and Inclusive Community is a community where its citizens and members feel safe, respected, and comfortable in being themselves and expressing all aspects of their identities. It is a place where each person shares a sense of belonging with its other members. It is home.**

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities are based on ideas of integration.

Integration, in contrast to assimilation, is focused on facilitating the process new members of a community, including immigrants, refugees, people moving from reserves and others parts of the province or country, experience beyond settlement to become part of their new communities. The following key concepts of integration are helpful to seeing how welcoming and inclusive communities reflect and engage all their members.

1. Inclusiveness, sense of belonging, feeling of acceptance, making roots and connections, a sense of giving and taking.
2. Ability to contribute to community, free of barriers, where everybody feels safe, where trust is present, and mistakes are learning opportunities.
3. The community recognizes contributions.
4. Cultural identity remains strong and is seen as an asset.
5. The experience and definition of integration is personal.
6. Individuals no longer need specialized programs and services that are different from mainstream.
7. Education for newcomers and established community members on being a welcoming community: it involves attitudes, values, mindsets and correcting wrong or inaccurate perceptions.
8. Having a voice that is taken seriously in a community in which one identifies as belonging and is recognized by all as a true community member.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities offer services in ways that are appropriate to meet the needs of all residents. They create opportunities for members to share their voices. They cultivate mutual respect as they strive to engage people. They acknowledge injustice of the past and present, so that they can move forward with the benefits of everyone's strengths. Welcoming and Inclusive Communities support celebrations of Canada's multicultural identity while cultivating deeper roots of this identity.

## Key players in creating Welcoming and Inclusive Communities:

Municipalities	Urban and rural
Institutions	Schools, health districts, facilities, etc.
Businesses	Big and small
Community-based Organizations	Culture, sport and recreation groups, service organizations, faith communities, etc.

This tool kit will provide accessible ideas to community leaders to build relationships with groups that have not often been seen as leaders, in order to both identify how they see themselves contributing and what, if any, changes need to be made to existing places and processes to make newcomers and Indigenous people feel that there are opportunities for engagement based on mutual respect.

## Toolkit for Smaller Centres in Saskatchewan

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Toolkit provides resources for communities and organizations of all sizes. In Saskatchewan, many smaller centres are seeing increasing diversity as they welcome newcomers and engage with Indigenous people. Smaller communities from Ile a la Crosse to Nipawin to Gravelbourg will find this a user-friendly tool kit. The accessibility of this toolkit for smaller centres and rural Saskatchewan has been a factor in deciding what goes into all of its components. We have, however, highlighted some areas throughout this resource as 'For Smaller Centres in Saskatchewan'.

More can be found at: [www.p2pcanada.ca/best-practices/toolbox-of-ideas-for-smaller-centres/](http://www.p2pcanada.ca/best-practices/toolbox-of-ideas-for-smaller-centres/)

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“What is a smaller centre? That’s for each community to decide for itself. It could be as large as an entire province, or as small as a town. The Maritimes, Saskatchewan and Nanaimo, BC could all be described as smaller centres.” Attracting and Retaining Newcomers: A Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres, 2007 – Government of Canada.

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### What is Diversity?

Diversity is the range of characteristics that make individuals unique. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, dimensions such as national origin, language, perceived race, color, ability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status and family structures.

### What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is appreciating and valuing human differences by creating an atmosphere that promotes a sense of belonging where everyone feels respected and valued for their uniqueness. In an inclusive environment each person is recognized and developed, and their skills are routinely utilized. In an inclusive environment, people are valued because of, not in spite of, their differences so everyone can fully participate and thrive.

### What is Integration?

Welcoming and Inclusive communities create a sense of home and belonging. They recognize the creativity and innovation that arise from bringing different cultural perspectives together and cultivating the unique contributions of all. Integration is focused on facilitating the process new community members experience beyond settlement. It includes seeing themselves and being seen as contributors and feeling welcome to be themselves in many contexts.

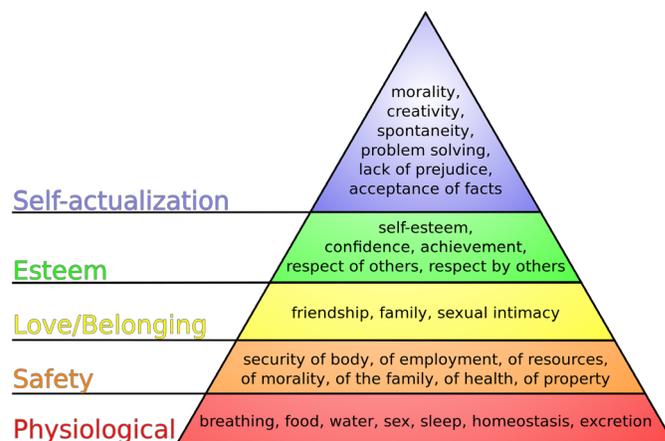
Key Words adapted from Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, Waterloo Region

## FRAMEWORK

### Characteristics of Welcoming Communities Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Physiological (Basic)	Safety and Security	Belonging	Self Esteem (Respect, Confidence)	Self-Actualization
<b>Basic Needs: Suitable and affordable Housing, and Food Security</b>	Suitable Employment Opportunities	Positive Attitudes towards Diversity	Positive Media Coverage. Visible representation in the media	Problem solving without prejudice
	Educational Opportunities	Togetherness of Family. Network of friends.	Visible representation in public services	Able to speak up when faced with difficulties
<b>Services that ensure safety and supervision of underage children after school e.g. child care or baby-sitting</b>	Public Transport	Responsive Municipal Services	Political Participation Opportunities and Civic Engagement	Able to support other newcomers
	Accessible, Affordable Health Care	Recreational Opportunities	Skills development to move to better employment	Able to contribute back to the larger community
	Effective Newcomer Services	Diversity of Religious Organizations	A sense of being heard by the over arching system	No longer require the label of newcomer
	Strong Personal Connections	A general sense of safety	Builds confidence in making own decisions	No longer require special-needs services for newcomers
	Positive relationships with justice system including police and courts	Opportunities to network beyond family and close friends	Have a strong sense of respect with their own identity	A sense of home and belonging

*Adapted from Regina Regional Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP)*



*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: [www.simplypsychology.org/maslow](http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow)*

# SUMMARY OF MCoS WELCOMING & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT





## Learn from the best

Throughout this toolkit, you will find real examples of initiatives and programs that have been successful in creating more welcoming and inclusive communities.

### Research

In 2007, the City of Saskatoon worked with Dr. Joe Garcea and Dr. Ken Pontikes from the University of Saskatchewan and released an “Immigration Action Plan” for the community of Saskatoon. In 2015, a report card on the plan was written by Dr. Garcea entitled, “Capacity for Newcomer Settlement and Integration in Saskatoon: Taking Stock for Taking Action”. Today, this Immigration Action Plan is a priority on the City of Saskatoon’s Strategic Plan under the Strategic Goal of “Quality of Life”. This report is included in the physical toolkit.

## Recognition and Assessment

A successful initiative must reflect a genuine community need.

This section has checklist on how you gather information and what information to gather. It also provides you a diversity lens for assessment.

## Commitment

Addressing any issue takes hard work and commitment from a variety of sources. At this stage it is important to find out who will champion the issue and spearhead the work of your eventual vision and plan. In this section, you will be reminded of Saskatchewan history briefly.

## Vision & Plan

The understanding of community needs, recognition of resources and potential partners creates the foundation for planning. Organizations determine long-term desired outcomes (vision) and steps to get there (plan).

## Action & Data Collection

This sections describes what goes into an effective planning like accountability, education, cultural competency, importance of creating safe spaces and guidelines for working together.

## Reflection & Next Steps

This section explores the evaluation process based on what measures and evaluations tools and methods you planned for in the previous phase.

Utilize helpful tips to start building a diverse community are also included.

## Celebrate Success

Celebrating and recognizing accomplishments not only keeps morale high, but it’s an excellent way to promote your work and potentially attract more support from the community. Celebrations can create opportunities to share diversity at a deeper level.