



Immigration Partnership Funds  
**Grant Impact Report**  
2023 - 2024



**IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP**  
WATERLOO REGION

\*Grants closed as of September 2023

## Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant and Refugee Initiatives

### Church of the Transfiguration, \$20,000 Grant 20221003

The Church of the Transfiguration was funded to develop its Family Support Club to assist Ukrainian families displaced to Waterloo Region by the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The investment supported staffing, consultants and supplies for four programs: Childcare (25 classes for 22 children), Mental Health for Women (25 meetings for 30 women), Welcome to Canada Discover Ukraine (14 events with more than 350 participants).

The Church and these programs provided hundreds of Ukrainian newcomers with assistance, stability, and a sense of home during an incredibly difficult time in their lives. Ukrainian families were able to develop connections, support each other, work through their trauma in their native Ukrainian language, and overcome isolation, anxiety, and uncertainty. The Church created a safe space for Ukrainian children in which they established new friendships, spoke in their native language, learnt and spent time in a familiar environment, while becoming more confident and less stressed. The Church also provided Ukrainian women a forum for supporting each other with emotional support, educational opportunities, job hunting support, revealing their inner abilities and talents and restoring some confidence. This grant aligns with the Immigration Partnership's three strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.



## Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. Sophia, \$5,000 Grant 20221004

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. Sophia was supported to hold a series of seven one-hour lectures for newcomers from Ukraine. The lecture series focused on the life and experiences of previous waves of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada and facilitated interactions and connections between new Ukrainian arrivals and the existing Ukrainian Canadian community. Ukrainian newcomers were able to learn how previous waves of Ukrainian immigrants successfully integrated into Canadian society and their significant contributions to their new homeland. This support provided new Ukrainian arrivals in Waterloo Region with a friendly and informal setting in which they could pose questions to speakers and interact with fellow Ukrainians from various regions of Ukraine. The lecture series were recorded and made widely available on YouTube, and the Church is fielding requests for additional lectures from Ukrainian newcomers. This grant aligns with two of the Immigration Partnership's strategic pillars: settle and belong.

## Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing

### Project Up (Unleash Potential), \$17,500 Grant 202230

Project Up (Unleash Potential) was supported to implement an internship program with targeted supports to youth of East African background aged 16-18. The investment covered staff, operational and programming costs. Through this targeted internship program, five young Muslim women were provided weekly skills-development sessions in 5 phases: Introduction and Team Building, Research (What is the Biggest Challenge Facing Black Youth in KW), Proposal and Presentation, Event Planning, and Evaluation and Reporting. Numerous community leaders spoke with the youth to help them develop practical skills and provide career and educational advice.

Importantly this project aimed to help equip youth with the skills to thrive in the future. Through this program, Project Up was able to support five youths to take the first steps in developing their careers and plan and host a career-focused event that benefited 25 peers. Several youths involved in the program were able to use the skills they gained from the internship to obtain jobs that now improve their economic wellbeing. This grant aligns with two of the Immigration Partnership's strategic pillars: work and belong.

"This internship has been a crucial stepping stone towards nurturing the next generation of youth leaders in Kitchener-Waterloo. I have improved my communication skills, developed my problem-solving skills, and deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by the youth in our community. In addition, having the chance to collaborate closely with mentors, community members, and other interns has given me a sense of purpose and a passion for making a difference. Even though there is always space for improvement, I feel prepared and more self-assured than ever to start a leadership journey aimed at empowering and supporting the youth of Kitchener-Waterloo."



## Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant and Refugee Initiatives

### The Working Centre, \$19,040

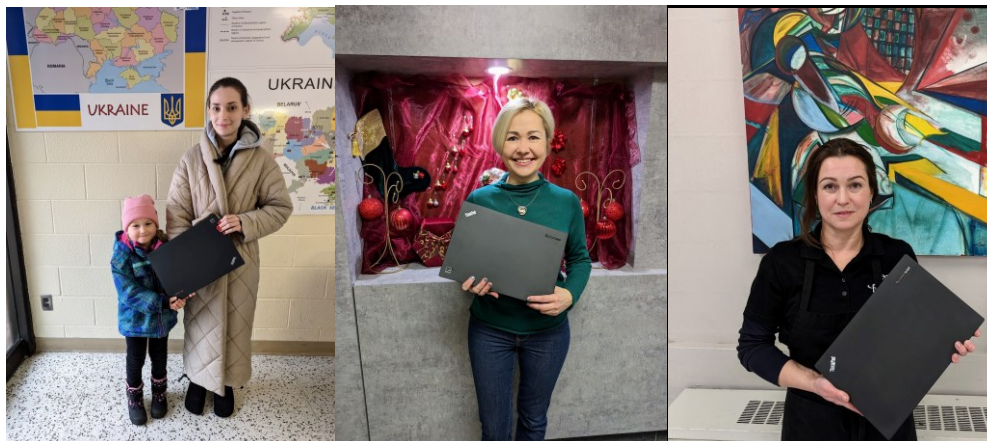
#### Grant 20220901

The Working Centre received funding to assist in paying rent for up to 3 people per month at the Ontario Works rate (\$390/month), addressing the urgent need for housing and support among refugees in Waterloo Region. This grant facilitated the conversion of The Working Centre's Louisa Street House into a supportive environment for 13 individuals for a combined 62 months housed. With an average stay of under five months per recipient, this funding enabled The Working Centre to foster stability and community integration among refugee claimants from Mexico, Venezuela, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Colombia, and Ecuador, many of whom were experiencing trauma. This grant aligns with two of Immigration Partnership's strategic pillars: settle and belong.

### Ukrainian Canadian Congress, \$5,000

#### Grant 20220902

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Waterloo Region was funded to help Ukrainian newcomers settling in the region access essential technology, with a focus on single mothers, families with multiple children and older adults. With this funding, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress was able to provide computers to 17 Ukrainian families. Recipients were empowered to improve their language skills and access services, and experienced enhanced integration and reduced isolation in the community. With this funding, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress was able to strengthen partnerships and collaboration and expanded the initiative to distribute additional computers to Ukrainians fleeing war. This grant aligns with IP's three strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.



## Woolwich Community Health Centre, \$25,000 Grant 20221006

The Woolwich Community Health Center received funding to assist Ukrainian newcomers living at the St Jacobs Guesthouse with language training and transportation. Twenty-three Ukrainian newcomers were provided access to transportation, enabling their mobility and ability to access community resources. Fifty-seven individuals received English as a Second Language training. Through structured language training sessions, participants were equipped with essential communication skills to facilitate their integration into the local community and workforce. By addressing language barriers and transportation challenges, Woolwich Community



Health Centre was able to foster a sense of belonging and community integration among Ukrainian newcomers living in the rural townships. As a result, dozens of Ukrainian newcomers are better equipped to participate in community activities, engage with local institutions, and build meaningful connections with fellow residents. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.

## Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre, \$15,000 Grant 20221007

The Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre received funding to support refugees claimants without access to Ontario Works meet their essential needs. With this funding, the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre provided refugee claimants with 300 two-way bus tickets and 130 \$100 grocery vouchers. This grant aligns with IP's settle pillar.

## Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region, \$20,000 Grant 20221008

Muslim Social Services Kitchener Waterloo received funding to implement its Healing through Art program. This program supports the mental health and cultural integration of immigrant and refugee children in Waterloo Region, using art as a medium for healing and expression for adults and children facing resettlement challenges. More than 40 immigrants participated in 14 art sessions, providing them with a creative outlet and a platform to develop language skills while enhancing community belonging. Adult and child participants benefited from skilled facilitators, project coordinators, art supplies, and snacks, realizing notable improvements self-esteem and integration, newfound confidence and community connection. Muslim Social Service's advocacy has played a pivotal role in raising community understanding about refugee experiences. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.



## Community Healthcaring KW, \$20,000 Grant 20221010

Community Healthcaring KW received funding to address the increasing complexity of patient needs in Waterloo Region due to high refugee influx, including Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, rising healthcare demands, financial constraints impeding access to essential services for many refugees. With this funding Community Healthcaring KW supported over 100 high-needs refugee patients through various healthcare provisions, including specialized testing, medications, chiropractic, physiotherapy, dental, and eye care. Additionally, a sustainable program providing access to medical devices was established. This support significantly improved access to healthcare for refugees and other newcomers, addressing their diverse needs, promoting health equity and ability to be economically active. This grant aligns with IP's settle and work pillars.

## Canadian Arab Women's Association, \$10,000

### Grant 20221011

The Canadian Arab Women's Association (CAWA) received funding to support the community integration of Arab immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region. CAWA supported approximately 70 Arab newcomer women with Arabic/English language sessions, workshops and social gatherings, facilitating their settlement and smooth transition into Canadian society. The program covered crucial topics such as employment, small business establishment, mental health, and Canadian citizenship preparation, ensuring a holistic approach to newcomer support. Partnerships with local organizations enhanced the program's effectiveness, allowing for the delivery of diverse workshops tailored to participants' needs. The program benefited Arab seniors by providing accessible content on Canadian history in Arabic, addressing a gap in available resources. This impact highlighted the importance of inclusivity and tailored programming to diverse community needs. This program aligns with the IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.

## Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo, \$10,000

### Grant 20221012

Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo (NIROW) received funding to build capacity to effectively support significant membership growth. In 2023/24, NIROW membership grew from 902 to over 1500 members as a result of Nigerian international students, and refugee claimants and other individuals relocating to Waterloo Region. In 2023 and early 2024, NIROW organized airport pickups, orientation tours, monthly workshops, webinars, and programs addressing the diverse challenges of its members.

Over 800 Nigerian newcomers participated in initiatives like the Tax Clinic, Mental Awareness sessions, and employment workshops, acquiring essential skills and knowledge for successful integration. NIROW enhanced program quality and outreach through strategic partnerships with Waterloo Region Community Legal Services and Libro Credit Union. NIROW improved communication and engagement efforts with refugees and newcomers, providing comprehensive employment, cultural adaptation, mental health, and financial literacy supports. Workshops and seminars facilitated networking and skill-building, fostering a sense of community and

"Thanks NIROW for the resume-building workshop, I was able to revamp my resume and highlight my skills effectively. The facilitator shared some very helpful tips, and I feel more confident going into interviews. I hope that soon I will land my dream job."

"Attending the interview preparation seminar was a game-changer for me. I learned valuable techniques for answering tough interview questions and presenting myself confidently. Blessing is a wonderful facilitator, kudos NIROW!"

"The financial literacy workshop provided me with essential knowledge about budgeting, saving, and investing. I hope to apply these principles and manage to save enough for a down payment on my first home!"

empowerment among members. Throughout the funding period, increased service demand and participant dependency on NIROW staff surfaced, necessitating resource reallocation and structural adjustments to sustainably meet evolving community needs. Despite challenges, feedback indicates very positive impacts on NIROW members' job search efforts and community integration. This program aligns with the IP's three strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.



## Reception House Waterloo Region, \$15,000 Grant 20221013

Reception House Waterloo Region received funding to assist government-assisted refugees (GARs) resettling in Waterloo Region access healthcare and essential medical devices. Many refugees arrive with complex pre-existing health conditions due to limited healthcare in refugee camps. This funding enabled government-assisted refugees to purchase or rent necessary assistive devices, dental care, medications, and medical supplies not covered by their public health insurance. Reception House also facilitated the hiring of occupational therapists and established partnerships to enhance support for refugees with complex medical needs. Through this work, Afghans and other refugees in Waterloo Region received more comprehensive health care, ensuring safer conditions and access to necessary equipment for their integration. This grant aligns with the IP's strategic pillars: settle and belong.

## Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing

### AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area, \$55,000 Grant 202206

AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA) received funding to support immigrants and refugees who discover their HIV status during resettlement, easing their transition to Canadian life and supporting their economic wellbeing. With this funding, ACCKWA provided emergency financial and other assistance to clients. ACCKWA was able to hire a bilingual Practical Support Navigator to help clients access a range of essential supports. This was especially significant during pandemic-related clinic closures, and enhanced engagement and retention of program participants facing language barriers. Partnerships with clinical and settlement-focused organizations ensured referrals and improved capacity to support marginalized people living with HIV by coordinating healthcare access and tailored supports. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.

### Kinbridge Community Association, \$69,959 Grant 202207

Kinbridge Community Association received funding for its Family Newcomer Outreach Program, focusing on community integration and economic empowerment. The program built community connections, provided employment supports to immigrants, and partnered with local employers on newcomer hiring and retention. Through this program, Kinbridge established partnership with 55 local employers, including Toyota and RBC, and assisted more than 130 immigrants on their journey to economic success. Through employment readiness workshops and job fairs, participants developed their employment readiness and numerous participants were hired for new jobs. Kinbridge worked closely with local organizations including The Literacy Group, Workplace and Immigrant Network, and Little Mushroom Catering, which further enhanced program effectiveness. This grant aligns with IP's three strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.



## Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin, \$71,975

### Grant 202210

The Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin (WPF) received funding to pilot the establishment of an Immigration Talent Hub called Workplace Immigrant Network Waterloo Region (WINWR). With this funding, WPB hired key staff and implemented workshops and networking events benefiting over 100 temporary residents living in Waterloo Region. Responding to gaps in employment services funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, non-IRCC eligible clients were provided specialized supports such as coaching, career planning, and personalized assistance by Talent and Employer Liaisons. Service collaborations were established with the Region of Waterloo, Conestoga College, Lutherwood, YWCA, YMCA, KWMC, CAWA, WILL Immemploy, and Camino Wellbeing. WINWR organized job seeker workshops attended by 25 individuals and a job fair in collaboration with Kinbridge with 89 participants. In the pilot period, seven non-IRCC eligible clients secured full-time employment, six of whom returned to their original professions, and others were referred to career development practitioners including International Credential Assessment Service of Canada and World Education Services. Promotional support was launched through WINWR, and the Hub created a supportive and inclusive environment, particularly for women by offering services tailored to their specific needs, including the provision of child-friendly spaces. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and work.

## Canadian Aweil Youth Association, \$23,340

### Grant 202217

The Canadian Aweil Youth Association (CAYA) received funding to support African newcomer families with sustained assistance and structured programs, regular meetings, biannual events, community connections and cultural affinity. With this funding, CAYA was able to hire a part-time coordinator who oversaw programming and volunteer engagement. CAYA was able to facilitate access to essential services like healthcare, education, and employment resources, enhancing immigrants' economic prospects and overall well-being in Waterloo Region.

CAYA provided resume building workshops, introductions to local organizations, and assistance with navigating systems, thereby promoting integration and economic empowerment while fostering a more inclusive community for newcomers. This program aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: work and belong.



## Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team, \$71,975 Grant 202218

The Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team (CFFM) received funding to assist refugees from Afghanistan, Ukraine, and elsewhere with establish and maintain essential health services, including interpretation support and integrated care coordination. CFFM supported over 500 patients with complex health needs to stabilize their health and move on to ongoing community-based primary care. On-demand interpretation services were provided, ensuring linguistically and culturally sensitive care for diverse patients.

By ensuring access to essential health services, the Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team enhanced the economic integration opportunities of over 500 medically complex refugees living in Waterloo Region while fostering a welcoming and inclusive community. The impact of this work goes beyond immediate beneficiaries, laying the foundation for ongoing support and collaboration to address the evolving needs of newcomers in the region. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.

## Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo, \$71,975 Grant 202220

Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo (NIROW) received funding to its services for Nigerian newcomers, international students, and refugee claimants in Waterloo Region. This funding enabled NIROW to provide essential support to over 500 Nigerian community members through workshops, mentorship programs, housing assistance, and community outreach initiatives. NIROW was able to employ project managers and a program assistant to plan, implement, and evaluate programs effectively and address the diverse needs of its constituents, facilitating their successful integration into Canadian society. NIROW has actively engaged with community agencies and formed strategic partnerships to leverage resources and expertise to sustain support for Waterloo Region's growing Nigerian community. This grant aligns with IP's strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.



## Ontario Learning Development Foundation, \$28,935

### Grant 202221

Ontario Learning Development Foundation (OLDF) received funding to assist new immigrants and refugees overcome food insecurity in Waterloo Region. OLDF covered the costs of volunteers and an outreach coordinator, ensuring which ensured the program's success and impact on the community. OLDF supplemented the existing food offerings from food banks with culturally appropriate food items, addressing a critical gap for immigrant families. During the program period, OLDF distributed 384 culturally appropriate food boxes due to overwhelming need in the community, one third higher than anticipated. OLDF enhanced food security and economic wellbeing for many immigrants through this work. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: settle and belong.

A single mother of three, new to Canada, received one of the food boxes during the Christmas season. She expressed her gratitude, stating that the box helped her provide a special holiday meal for her family. She shared that she was worried about how to afford a festive meal but was relieved and thankful for the support.

A family of five, including three young children, faced financial difficulties due to job loss. They received food boxes during the Back to School season, which helped alleviate some of the stress of providing nutritious meals for their children. The parents expressed relief and gratitude for the support during a challenging time.

An elderly couple, both immigrants, received a food box during Easter. They shared that they often struggled to make ends meet on a fixed income and appreciated the variety of food items in the box, including some traditional ethnic foods that reminded them of home.

## The Working Centre, \$71,975

### Grant 202223

The Working Centre received funding to provide employment programs to refugees and immigrants in Waterloo Region. The Working Centre assisted immigrants in overcoming language, cultural, and educational barriers to employment through pre-employment support services, workplace language training, initial workplace integration, and other efforts to assist refugees and immigrants from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Grant supported employment counsellors spoke multiple languages and provided first language service in Ukrainian, Farsi, Tigrinya, Arabic, and other languages. The Working Centre established partnerships with local employers and service providers to enhance job opportunities for refugees and immigrants.

This work has a positive and transformative impact on the lives of refugees and immigrants in the Waterloo Region, empowering them with skills and opportunities to thrive in their new community. The success of this employment program demonstrates the importance of targeted service and collaboration in facilitating solidarity and support among clients, volunteers, and staff, enhancing resilience and

community connection. The grant had a significant impact on the employment outcomes of refugees and immigrants in the Waterloo Region. Of the 1287 people supported by The Working Centre, 841 (65%) were educated outside of Canada, with limited English language skills. At program exit, 67% were employed or in training. This grant aligns with IP's three strategic pillars: settle, work, and belong.

### **Canadian Arab Women's Association, \$50,000 Grant 202227**

The Canadian Arab Women's Association (CAWA) received funding to address the recurring employment challenges faced by Arab women in Canada. By expanding services and hiring specialized staff, CAWA effectively supported nearly 90 Arab women in their job search endeavors. The employment specialist offered personalized guidance on resume writing, cover letters, interview preparations, and facilitated referrals for educational upgrades. Additionally, CAWA addressed language proficiency barriers by enrolling 29 women in an English Conversation Circle, enhancing their skills for successful integration into the Canadian workforce.




Funding supported various activities, including job fairs, partnerships with educational institutions like Trios College, and facilitated support platforms such as WhatsApp groups and weekly job search club sessions. These initiatives aimed to provide easy access to job opportunities, career-related information, and tailored guidance to help participants successfully adapt to the Canadian job market. The majority of program participants were refugee claimants and permanent residents of Arab origin, but Ukrainians and other refugees were also indirectly supported, demonstrating the broader impact of CAWA's services on diverse immigrant communities. This grant aligns with IP's strategic pillars: settle, work and belong.

### **Adventure4Change International, \$72,245 Grant 202228**

Adventure4Change International (A4C) received funding to build its organizational capacity to support the economic wellbeing of immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region. With this funding A4C developed a strategic plan titled "Our Pathway to a Sustainable Future," enhancing organizational effectiveness and clarity in operations and creating a safe and welcoming environment at the A4C Hub, a vital community space for programs and support services for immigrants.

The funding facilitated office space maintenance, human resource capacity building, staff recruitment, procurement of equipment, and website enhancement. The improved organizational capacity resulting from this support significantly benefited the refugee community, comprising over 70% of A4C's



beneficiaries, by providing tailored programs and support, safe spaces, and opportunities for growth and integration.

New staff bolstered program efficiency and prevented burnout. A part-time staff member transitioned to a full-time Community Engagement Coordinator, reflecting the personal growth and empowerment A4C's initiatives facilitate. A4C increased engagement with organizations like the Immigration Partnership, leading to its successful application for federal funding to expand its scope and impact. This grant aligns with IP's two strategic pillars: work and belong.

\*Grants closed as of November 2024

## Immigration Partnership Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing

### Muslim Social Services KW, \$65,000 Grant 202215

This fund supported the Al-Nour Project, which aimed to address the mental health challenges and employment barriers faced by young newcomer and immigrant women in Waterloo who often experience isolation, low self-esteem, and difficulty navigating the job market, compounded by cultural stigma surrounding mental health and limited access to career development resources.

This program ran for 20 weeks and benefited 40 women. It was designed to empower young women aged 14-30 by building self-confidence, leadership skills, and emotional resilience through more than 60 hours of workshop and other programming. This initiative extended its impact to over 350 people through community workshops. Participants were given the tools to navigate personal and professional challenges through mindfulness practices, career development workshops, and open discussions about mental health. With support from Starling, the program also helped with employment in delivering job readiness sessions including resume writing, interview preparation, job and search strategies. It also included a job fair to connect participants with employers, helping them overcome barriers such as language skills and limited professional networks.

The program created a strong peer support network among participants, fostering a lasting sense of community and mutual encouragement. This helped reduce feelings of isolation and created a sisterhood that extends beyond the program. Many participants expressed a desire to volunteer or mentor future participants and become leaders in their own communities. This grant aligns with two of the Immigration Partnership's strategic pillars: work and belong.



## YWCA, \$55,209 Grant 202216

The YWCA was supported to carry out the Canadian Career Pathways for Newcomer Women program, which aimed to improve economic wellbeing for immigrant women by offering financial incentives, which increased program participation and retention. The funds also expanded the YW Thrift Boutique to create the Mosaic Market, giving participants a space to launch their entrepreneurial ventures.

The program provided comprehensive support through workshops focused on mental health, career development, and trauma recovery, offering art therapy and introducing participants to local mental health resources. This support helped participants focus on learning and building business skills without financial burden. The Mosaic Market has become a hub for participants to promote their businesses, and many participants reported improved confidence, career progress, and a desire to give back to the community.

The funding helped newcomers from various countries and helped bridge gaps in mental health and employment support. This grant aligns with two of the Immigration Partnership's strategic pillars: work and belong.

"Thanks to you both you and Emily I was able to open both [my business] and [my charity project]. Both have had clientele since 2023 and are operating so thank you so very much for pushing me to never give up on this. Furthermore, thank you for all the guidance on this journey. [My business] got to clean for [my clients] when they first opened up which was just wonderful. [My charity] is already delivering a warming program and community housing program in collaboration with [another organization]."



## Business and Education Partnership of Waterloo Region, \$40,000 Grant 202214

Business and Education Partnership of Waterloo Region (BEP) was funded to address the challenge of newcomer youth's unfamiliarity with the local labour market and the need for career guidance. BEP produced nine informational videos in 2022-2023, featuring local speakers discussing career paths, necessary training, and tips for success, with captions and voiceovers in various languages, including Arabic, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Ukrainian. These resources were integrated into local schools, where ESL teachers used the videos in classrooms and shared links for at-home viewing, ensuring accessibility. Additionally, BEP organized "Explore Your Future Career Expo" specifically for newcomer youth, attended by over 125 participants. The event featured exhibitors discussing career options, offered translation services, and was promoted in multiple languages.

This program helped bridge language barriers and made career guidance accessible to newcomer families. This grant aligns with Immigration Partnership's work pillar.



Building community through immigration

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