

# REGIONAL IMMIGRATION INITIATIVE

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

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



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## 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](http://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**

