REGIONAL IMMIGRATION INITIATIVE

Presented by: Western Economic Diversification (WD) and Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) April 28, 2005





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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Objectives:

- create awareness of immigration as a tool to support socioeconomic 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







- 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



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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.



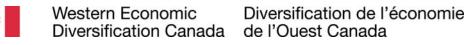


Programs Supporting Regional Immigration

- 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.mcaws.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







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



