



1st Annual Ottawa Immigration Forum: *Valuing & Leveraging Immigrants' Contributions for Greater Prosperity, Vitality & Inclusion*

Why Am I Here?

“Why am I here?” Participants of the 1st Annual Ottawa Immigration Forum give their reasons for participating in the forum. Articulated in different ways, the reasons reflect enormous interest in and commitment to helping immigrants start and build lives as fully integrated and productive members of Ottawa community. The responses fall into 10 broad categories:

1. I want to explore ways of making Ottawa a welcoming and inclusive city; to see how I could do my part to make Ottawa a welcoming and inclusive city
2. I want to help improve service delivery and coordination of services to immigrants, newcomers and other client groups
3. I want to enhance partnerships for immigrants in Ottawa; connect with other organizations that serve immigrants
4. I want to learn more about immigrant contributions
5. I want to promote business/entrepreneurial partnerships
6. I want to help facilitate access of newcomers to employment opportunities
7. I want to participate in forum discussions on leveraging immigrants' cultural contributions
8. Because I am proud to be part of a diverse and inclusive city – Ottawa!
9. Because Ottawa is my home now; other personal reasons.
10. Because I believe in and want to support OLIP's great work.

Below is the list of the individual statements of forum participants, explaining why they were at the 1st Annual Ottawa Immigration Forum.

I want to explore ways of making Ottawa a welcoming and inclusive city; to see how I could do my part to make Ottawa a welcoming and inclusive city

1. Immigrants are the future of our city and an integral part of our community. What can we do to make this a welcoming and inclusive city for all? - *Jennifer Benedict, United Way Ottawa*
2. Learn how I can help other immigrants.

3. Learn more about issues that immigrants face.
4. Immigrant contributions are very important for Ottawa as a community. Highlighting the challenges and barriers are crucial to understanding how we can do more.
5. I am here to witness history. I am so privileged to be part of such a thriving community and want others to feel that they belong.
6. My vision is for all Ottawans, whether born here or immigrant, to truly believe in, and be a part of the city culturally, socially and politically.
7. I am here today because I believe this is a very important event for both immigrant and 'mainstream' populations. It is always good to develop a sense of togetherness, to erase the line between 'immigrants' and 'mainstream', when we all contribute to the same city and same people – Ottawa and the Ottawans.
8. I want to participate in undertakings and initiatives for newcomers to help their integration into Ottawa.
9. I moved here 8 years ago and feel so welcome. And want to make the transition just as smooth for others.
10. Bringing people together to create a welcoming community that provides adequate health care, housing, social settlement support to newcomers.
11. Building a welcoming community together. - **Mengis Tsegabe**
12. I work hard to see Ottawa become an even more inclusive city.
13. I want to learn how the city of Ottawa is coming together to include and help immigrants.
14. My wife and son immigrated to Ottawa 5 years ago. I hope that opportunities are made accessible to them [*immigrants*].

I want to help improve service delivery and coordination of services to immigrants, newcomers and other client groups

15. We want to improve health services for French speaking newcomers.
16. I am here because I coordinate LICN/ESL child care centers and am always looking to learn more about how the city supports newcomers.
17. To learn more about the new immigrant communities; in this way I can be better informed about possible gaps within the programs I administer through the City of Ottawa.
18. Better coordination of services.
19. I am here because I am a community developer for the African, Caribbean and Black Canadian (ACB) communities in Ottawa. I am interested in advancing and improving access to services by the ACB communities.
20. Giving immigrants an opportunity to support community development – help us raise funds that they direct to important causes for them.

I want to enhance partnerships for immigrants in Ottawa; connect with other organizations that serve immigrants

21. To strengthen partnerships.
22. I am here to network with others interested in integration and physical activity.

23. Networking.
24. I am here to connect with community organizations that serve the newcomer population of Ottawa. - *Michael Kelly, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration*
25. Connecting and harvesting the potential to make us all great.
26. I am here to share experience and get information.

I want to learn more about immigrant contributions

27. Learn more about the wonderful contributions from our immigrant community in Ottawa.
28. Interested in hearing what and how immigrants do to integrate into Ottawa.
29. Immigrants are the lifeblood of Ottawa. It is so important to recognize and celebrate their contributions to our cultural and economic vibrancy. - *Jessica Brichta, The Conference Board of Canada*
30. It is important to understand the positive and valuable participation of immigrants in the Ottawa area.
31. To broaden my understanding of both the contributions of newcomers to the Ottawa area and the challenges newcomers face. - *Peter Atkinson, Superintendent of Continuing and Community Education, Ottawa Catholic School Board*

I want to promote business/entrepreneurial partnerships

32. Hoping for the fashion community to evolve and include more cultures
33. I am here to connect with other resources and organizations who support new immigrant entrepreneurs. – *Danielle Kuczer, Community Micro Loans Coordinator, Alterna Savings*

I want to help facilitate access of newcomers to employment opportunities

34. Vision for Ottawa: My dream is to have every newcomer integrated fully into their community – with full employment in a meaningful job that builds on their skills and experience! - *Corinne Prince-St-Amand, Citizenship and Immigration Canada*
35. I came because this was a great opportunity to network with other organizations that specialize in employment for newcomers.
36. I am here because the integration of immigrants into the Ottawa labour force and community are important for the city.
37. I am here from the City of Ottawa. I am here to help leverage contributions and integrate newcomers into the workforce.

I want to participate in forum discussions on leveraging immigrants' cultural contributions

38. I was inspired to participate when I saw the lecture on 'Cultural theory and Culturalism in the Arts' – *Leveraging Immigrants Cultural Contributions*.
39. I am here to discuss the participation of immigrants in the cultural life of Ottawa, and how to improve and increase it [that participation]. - *Elbagir Osman, visual artist/MASC CNCAC*

40. Because I want new Canadian artists and cultural workers to have a voice that is heard! -
CNCAC (Coalition of New Canadians for Arts and Culture; mania@cncac.ca)

Because I am proud to be part of a diverse and inclusive city – Ottawa!

41. I am proud to be a part of this event. I am a proud Canadian immigrant. Keep up the great work!
- *Manali Haridas*
42. I believe in Ottawa's excellent potential to be the #1 city in Canada for immigrants.
43. Continue with our wonderful diverse and inclusive vibrant community.
44. We are all immigrants to Canada...and that is what makes this so beautiful.
45. We are here to celebrate immigration and mostly Francophone immigration to make Ottawa the most diverse capital of the world.
46. I am here because we are recognizing the beautiful diversity and complexity of our great city and that we are a collaborative awesome city. - *Manjit*
47. I am honored to see such vibrancy and community participation. Ottawa rocks! - *Samantha*

Because Ottawa is my home now; other personal reasons

48. I am here because Ottawa is home now.
49. Ottawa is my home.
50. I am here because I have dreams and I believe they will come true!
51. Because it is important and because my parents are immigrants. - *Kwende Kefentse*

Because I believe in and want to support OLIP's great work.

52. I'm very supportive of the great work OLIP has done and hope to help contribute to its future success particularly in the field of labour market integration and skills development. – *Shareef Korah, HSRDC*
53. Recognize leadership within the immigrant community and show my support for OLIP.
54. Provide national directions on the development of local immigration partnerships across Canada.
55. Achieve better outcomes for immigration.