



NEWS RELEASE

WELCOMING OTTAWA WEEK: JUNE 17-30, 2024

Ottawa, June 17, 2024 – The 2024 edition of [Welcoming Ottawa Week](#) (WOW) was launched today at a breakfast reception co-hosted by OLIP and Mayor Mark Sutcliffe. WOW 2024 will be celebrated in Ottawa and Lanark-Renfrew counties from June 17th to 30th, with 140+ free available in both English and French, highlighting the rich diversity and inclusive spirit of our community.

WOW aims to foster connectivity, solidarity, and a shared civic identity between newcomers from around the globe and long-time residents of Ottawa. To that end, the WOW 2024 calendar has something for everyone. Attendees can immerse themselves in Ottawa's history, savor multicultural traditions and art, participate in various sporting events, learn about volunteering, gain valuable entrepreneurship tips, indulge in international cuisines, among many other activities. These events are just a small sample of what WOW has to offer. For a detailed event lineup, please visit the [WOW calendar](#).

A highlight of WOW 2024 is the recognition of six Ottawa residents who have been nominated by immigrants for their kindness and support in aiding their settlement and integration journeys. Presented by the mayor, the Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors Award celebrates the unsung heroes whose efforts have made a significant impact on newcomers' lives. You can read stories of the 2024 Welcoming Ottawa Ambassadors on [the WOW website](#).

"We are thrilled to celebrate the 2024 Welcoming Ottawa Week, a testament to our city's commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are particularly grateful to our event hosts whose dedication and hard work make WOW possible," said Dominique Denney, OLIP Chair. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the WOW Ambassadors, whose kindness and support have made a significant impact on the lives of newcomers. Their dedication to fostering a welcoming environment embodies the spirit of WOW and strengthens our community bonds."

The 2024 Welcoming Ottawa Week launch event featured a discussion on the theme "Planning Together for Welcoming Spaces: Prioritizing Retention and Integration." Our distinguished speaker Daniel Bernhard, CEO, of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, shared invaluable insights on how immigrants are welcomed, the immense skills they bring, and the importance of retention. This conversation highlights OLIP's dedication to collaborative planning and local initiatives aimed at enhancing Ottawa's retention rates, a crucial element for immigrant integration. With retention rates declining in major cities for various reasons, understanding these trends over time is essential. By doing so, we can develop strategies to address these challenges and further improve immigrant integration.

Background

WOW is an annual series of free events and activities such as dialogues and town halls, cultural and celebratory activities, sporting events, documentary screenings, guided tours, storytelling sessions, book launches, food tastings, and other fun and engaging events intended to convey Ottawa's genuine welcome and solidarity to newcomers.

The first WOW was held in June 2013 when the Ottawa Mayor proclaimed the last week of June of every year to be the Welcoming Ottawa Week, a time when Ottawa residents would express their genuine welcome to newcomers.

In 2014, WOW was recognized by the federal government as a best practice initiative in forging a welcoming city. As a result of this recognition and thanks to the success and growth of WOW, the model has been replicated in several Canadian cities. In 2022, WOW expanded to neighboring communities in Lanark-Renfrew. The growth of WOW is testament to Ottawa's increasing capacity and commitment to attract and integrate immigrants.

WOW is presented by [Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership](#) (OLIP), a partnership of 80+ organizations working together across five sectors to build Ottawa's capacity to attract and integrate immigrants. OLIP was co-founded by the City of Ottawa and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI), in October 2009. The Partnership is funded primarily by IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada).

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