



Community Foundations  
of Canada

Fondations  
communautaires  
du Canada

## **Study reveals immigrants trapped by complex web of policy barriers**

### ***Community Foundations ready to take national and local action on recommendations***

**(OTTAWA)** July 12, 2006 – A new research study concludes that Canadian social policy is undermining the success of newcomers to this country, hampering their access to employment and vital services and creating a web of discrimination that makes it harder for immigrants to settle here, even though they are more educated and more skilled than their predecessors.

*Unsettled: Legal and Policy Barriers for Newcomers to Canada* was released today by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC). The research study was conducted as part of the *Community Scholar in Law Reform* Project, a joint initiative of Community Foundations Canada and the Law Commission of Canada. The project was launched last year after both organizations identified a lack of comprehensive research regarding the impact of legal and policy barriers on the settlement of immigrants.

“This is the first time Canada’s community foundations have commissioned this type of research,” said Monica Patten, CEO of Community Foundations of Canada. “We felt it was necessary to have a deep understanding of the issues before we could act. And we did it because immigration is at the heart of the long-term health and well-being of our communities.”

“Immigrants greatly enrich the social, cultural and economic fabric of Canada. In turn we have a duty to ensure that Canada’s laws and policies assist immigrants in settling successfully in this country,” said Yves Le Bouthillier, President of the Law Commission of Canada.

Le Bouthillier also said that the Law Commission welcomed the opportunity to work with Community Foundations of Canada on this research initiative, noting that community-based research brings an essential perspective to work the work of the Commission.

#### Study Makes Seven Recommendations

Supported by the Walter and Gordon Duncan Foundation and written by Sarah V. Wayland, PhD, *Unsettled* identifies seven key barriers and accompanying recommendations for Canada’s policy and law-makers. It also includes suggestions for non-governmental organizations and a compendium of ideas that lists programs already working to overcome the barriers identified in the report.

“The study is crystal clear -- settlement issues cannot be solved by one sector alone,” says Patten. “We need to engage government, business and the community if we want our country to be a place where newcomers thrive.”

The full study is available at [www.lcc.gc.ca](http://www.lcc.gc.ca) or [www.cfc-fcc.ca](http://www.cfc-fcc.ca).

#### Community Foundations Ready to Respond

Community Foundations of Canada has already struck a National Working Group to determine its response to the report on several levels including:

- Increase the amount of money going into programs that help immigrants and promote successful settlement
- Increase the effectiveness of that money, making sure that it’s being used to leverage other dollars wherever possible and that it is achieving maximum impact in the community
- Provide a vehicle, through local community foundations, for mobilizing all sectors of the community around the issue and helping to coordinate the community response, such as in Kitchener-Waterloo
- Explore how community foundations can advocate, in the long-term, for changes to public policy

Vancouver Foundation, Canada's largest community foundation, has already committed to making issues concerning immigration one of its top funding priorities.

"We know that regardless of where policy barriers originate – at the federal or provincial level – immigrants experience their problems as *community* problems. We believe our community foundation can be part of their solution," says Faye Wightman, President and CEO of Vancouver Foundation.

"In Vancouver, so many of our refugee children enter our school system – some as old as 15 – and are placed in age-appropriate classes, but often without prior experience of formal schooling, or literacy in their own language. Previous funding has helped various settlement organizations in a variety of ways: interpreter-assisted homework clubs, art programs, and education for the educators on immigrant and refugee children's needs."

Other foundations are working on programs that address settlement barriers including:

- *The Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation* was one of the earliest funders of Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN), providing significant pre-launch support for the community-wide effort to attract, support and recognize immigrant talent. The foundation also convened a meeting of potential funders that resulted three years of project funding.
- *The Calgary Foundation's* Immigrant Access Fund (IAF) provides loans of up \$5,000 to fund an accreditation process that allows immigrants to work where they are most needed. The funding supports a period of study and examination fees, or short term upgrading to enter their chosen field some capacity, where they can continue building on their qualifications.
- The *Hamilton Community Foundation's* support of "Facilitating Inclusion for Women," which provides leadership training opportunities for women of underrepresented ethnoracial and ethno-cultural communities. With a focus on recently arrived immigrants, the program offers 12 weeks of part time in-class skills training, followed by community development projects. Graduates of the program assume leadership roles and paid employment in the community.

### **Community Foundations of Canada**

Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) is the national membership organization for the 155 community foundations found in cities, towns and rural areas across the country.

Community foundations build and manage permanent endowments to support charities in their area. They use their broad local knowledge to connect donors to the causes and organizations that matter most to them, helping them make a lasting difference in their communities.

### **Law Commission of Canada**

The Law Commission of Canada (LCC) is an independent federal agency committed to engaging Canadians in the renewal of the law to ensure that it is relevant, responsive, effective, equally accessible to all and just. It strives to address the concerns of Canadians by focusing its research on four themes: personal relationships, social relationships, economic relationships and governance relationships.

### **Media Contact:**

Anne-Marie McElrone  
Community Foundations of Canada  
(902) 461-8284  
a\_marie@ns.sympatico.ca