

# Communities Supporting Family Immigration

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### A look at Winnipeg's Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement Programs

By Tayeb Meridji

Immigration in Winnipeg today is predominantly family immigration. To integrate the growing numbers of families into Winnipeg, networks at the neighbourhood level are the focus as newcomers try to live in neighborhoods that have a higher percentage of people from the same ethnic background.

Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement Programs offer multifaceted support to recent immigrants including:

- Social stabilization - provides a familiar setting to enable newcomers to adjust to their new social environment, while maintaining earlier lifestyles and pursuing habitual cultural activities.
- Accessible neighbourhood education - learning English is a key factor in determining integration into society and the labour market. This is especially significant for women.
- Resource Centre - familiarizes recent immigrants with the local labour market, community resources and civil society.

Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement Programs are crucial for new families in Winnipeg to help them overcome settlement challenges and to increase their comfort level in a new environment. In some cases, newcomers are negatively affected by housing issues as well. If they cannot afford to live in areas that support their communities, then they may be geographically separated from their community. Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement Programs try to ensure that spatial separation does not lead to the exclusion of immigrants from society.

Immigrant families have a great deal to offer the city of Winnipeg. And as a city with a growing newcomer population, we need to ensure that supports are in place to make their transition to life here is as positive as possible. Currently there are ten Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement Programs throughout Winnipeg that provide services by neighbourhood. A complete listing can be found online at <http://www2.immigratemanitoba.com/browse/agencies/agencies-settle-neighbour.html>

***About the author:** Tayeb Meridji was born and raised in Algeria and came to Canada in 1978 where he graduated from the University of Montreal with a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master's Degree in Political Science. Tayeb has worked with Success Skills Centre for over a decade, where he is on the front line of the integration process. Since 2009, he teaches Immigration and the Inner City course at the University of Winnipeg.*

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