



Community Votes Are In: \$50,000 will Support Seven Projects for Newcomers to Victoria

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – The votes have been counted and \$50,000 is being awarded to seven community-led projects in the City of Victoria's 2020 Participatory Budgeting initiative.

This year's theme was projects that benefit newcomers, defined as immigrants and refugees to Canada who have settled in Victoria. The initiative received an overwhelming response from the community with a record breaking 26 projects going out for community voting. More than 2,500 residents voted for the projects they wanted to see funded.

Projects to receive funding this year range from food sustainability to gardening, financial literacy, programs to build relationships between newcomers and Indigenous community groups, an app to make it easier for newcomers to access healthcare, and workshops to educate the community on how they can help combat racism by being stronger allies to visible minorities.

"This is what empowering the community looks like in action," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "We're so proud of the volunteer Steering Committee and how they have engaged our community to first come up with 26 projects to improve life in Victoria for newcomers and then facilitate a voting process so that residents ultimately get to decide which projects are funded."

"A community-led Participatory Budgeting takes dedication and is the sign of a very healthy democracy and a community that cares about its newcomers," said Councillor Sharmarke Dubow. "We can't wait to see these seven projects come to life in 2021. I expect they will have meaningful impacts on many newcomers to our city."

Participatory Budgeting is an innovative, democratic process that gives the entire community the opportunity to participate and decide how to invest a portion of the City budget. The process was run by a volunteer Steering Committee who engaged with the community to encourage project submissions and ensured the process was transparent, fair, and inclusive.

"The Participatory Budgeting process is such a success because it is community driven in many ways," said Adina Israel, who served on the community-led Steering Committee for the initiative. "I'm eternally grateful to the volunteer members of our Steering Committee who gave their time and talents to make 2020's process a triumph, particularly amidst so much change and uncertainty."

2020 Participatory Budgeting funding recipients:

- ICA's Tools for Equity – Bystander Intervention Training - \$30,000
This program aims to combat racism and help create safe, inclusive communities by teaching participants practical skills they can use to support people of colour.
- Anti-Racist and Culturally Competent Healthcare App - \$10,000
An app focused on improving health outcomes for newcomers.
- Planting Home - \$2,000
This program aims to help families and individuals connect to culture & community through the joyful cultivation of food.
- Financial Literacy for YOU (FLY) - \$1,580
This program empowers youth through financial literacy training.
- Being Together & Being Here: Newcomer Integration Through Indigenous Partnership and Education - \$1,943
This training program for youth promotes learning and builds relationships between newcomers and Indigenous community groups.
- Culturally Safe Intake for Rock Bay Landing Shelter -\$1,930
This program enhances emergency shelter intake service to accommodate the needs of our multicultural, non-English speaking population.
- Coming Home to the Garden: Sustainability Workshops and Resources for Newcomers - \$1,566
A series of gardening workshops that focus on food security and sustainability.

Read more about these projects and the 2020 Participatory Budgeting initiative: victoria.ca/participatory-budgeting

The next round of Participatory Budgeting, which will focus on neighbourhood spaces will kick-off in early 2021.

Backgrounder attached.

— 30 —

For More Information:

Bill Eisenhauer
Head of Engagement
City of Victoria
250.858.1061
beisenhauer@victoria.ca