

REFUGEE RESPONSE TEAM

Thompson Okanagan & Kootenays

West Kootenay & Boundary Long Term newcomer Housing Discussion

Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Videoconference

Attendees:

Desneiges Profili- CBAL
Carolyn Amantea- CBAL
Alana Murdoch- CBAL
Jennie Yu- CBAL
Kim Pham- CBAL
Joan Exley- CBAL
Melissa Bouilliane- CBAL
Rhonda Palmer- CBAL
Shayna Jepsen- CBAL
Allison Leavens- CBAL
Lisa Bjarnason- CBAL
Janet Morton- Lower Columbia Affordable Housing Society
Meeri Durand- City of Castlegar
Misoon Jang- Selkirk College
Julie Leffelaar- Castlegar Refugee Project
Jocelyn Carver- Kootenay Career Development Society (KCDS)
Katie Dyck- Castlegar & District Community Services Society (CDCSS)
Jill Peacock- WK Friends of Refugees
Colleen Jones- City of Trail
Erin Rooney- Community Futures, RNIP
Rebecca Richards- Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation
Stacey Soffel- SD #51
Aidan McLaren-Caux- Nakusp and Area Development Board
Corinne Svardfeldt- KCDS
Shannon Marshall- City of Castlegar
Becky Quirk- Nelson CARES
Gordon Lucht- CDCSS
Naomi McKimmie- United Way
Nicole Purves- CDCSS
Karen Bennett- CBAL
John Campbell- Habitat for Humanity
Amanda Ovington- Selkirk College
Darren Pratt- Boundary Family Services Society



WelcomeBC

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.



Sandi McCreight- IRIS
Maria McFaddin- City of Castlegar

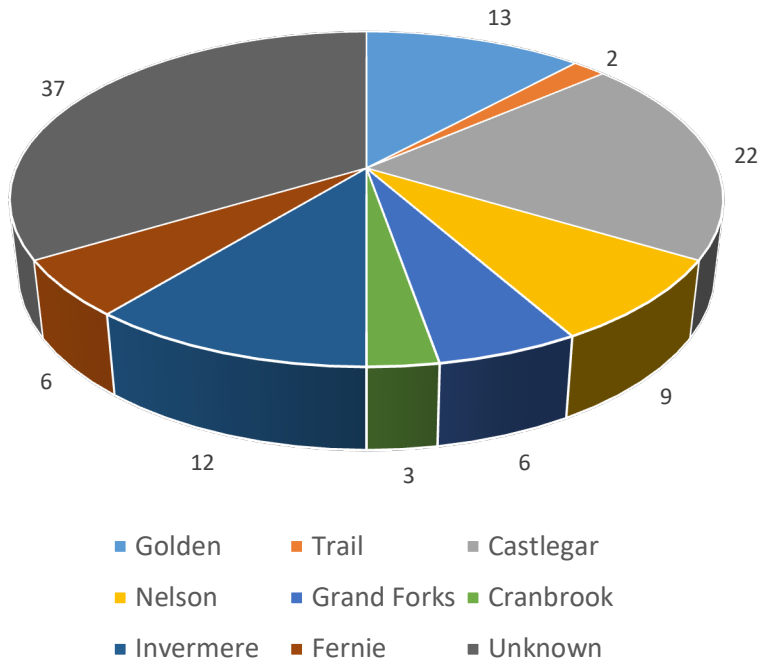
Activity 1- Challenges

The attendees discuss the main challenges for newcomers when seeking housing. Below is a list of the common challenges identified by the attendees:

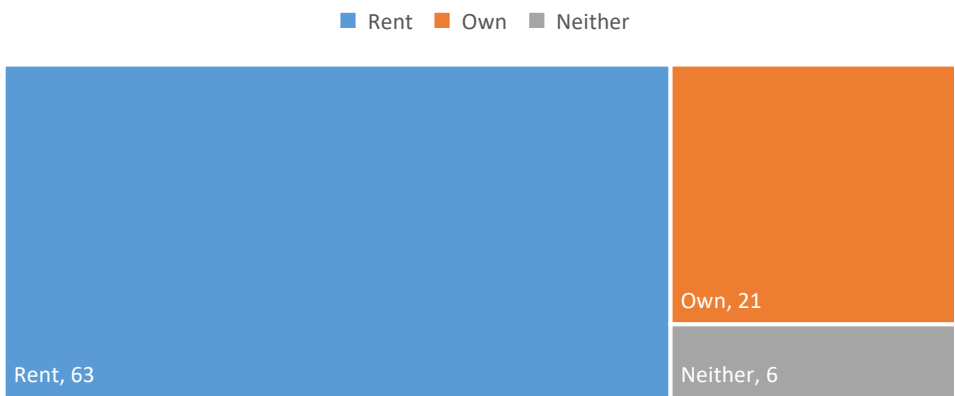
- Lack of housing availability
- Cost of housing
- Lack of references
- Lack of downpayment
- BC Housing restrictions on who can apply
- Limitations placed on renters (types of food to cook, access to amenities, etc)
- Language and cultural barriers
- Pets
- Discrimination/racism
- Access to information on availability, processes and subsidies
- Challenges attracting developers to invest and build more homes
- Location of housing in relation to work, transportation and other key services
- Quality of rentals
- Restrictions on how many people can live in rentals
- Lack of availability for homes to accommodate families
- Short term rentals are discouraged
- Lack of information or awareness of renter rights and landlord responsibilities
- Too much information that is scattered across multiple platforms

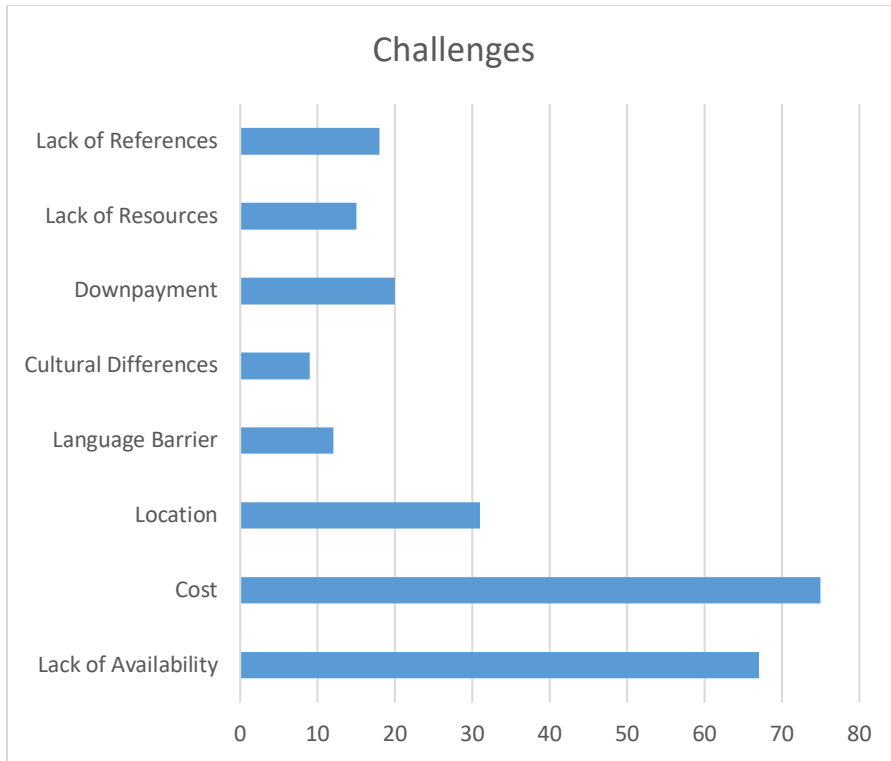
CBAL shared the challenges as identified in a survey of 90 newcomers from across the Basin and Boundary.

Respondent Locations



Rent/Own/Other





Activity 2- Resources

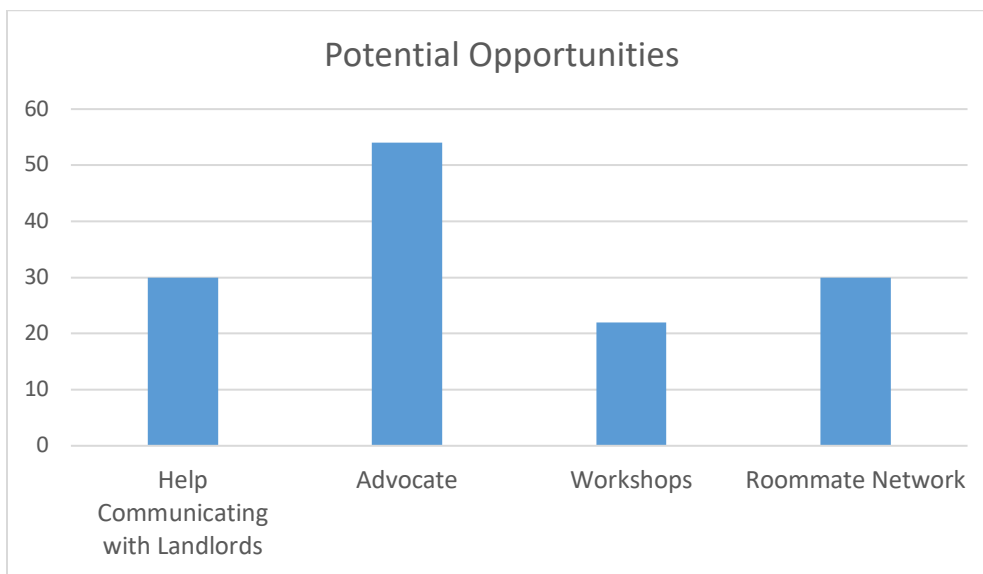
With the wide array of resources available across the region, attendees identified the key resources that are currently available in the region to support newcomers. Below is a summary of the resources:

- Kootenay Family Place (KFP) is creating a new resource for newcomers that will include housing resources
- Castlegar Library Housing Page - <https://castlegar.bc.libraries.coop/about-us/community/housing-resources/>
- New Canada Housing Benefit
- BC211 United way <https://bc211.ca>
- Nelson Library housing page: <https://nelson.bc.libraries.coop/research/explore-your-topic/nelson-housing>
- Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter- Nelson
- Rental Assistance Program
- FetchBC
- Facebook market groups
- Realtors
- Housing Outreach coordinators- CDCSS
- Street outreach workers- Nelson
- Regional Rent Bank- Castlegar
- Getting to Home Program- Career Development Services Trail

- Poverty Law Advocacy- Trail FAIR
- United Way
- KCDS programs providing financial support to participants based on eligibility can include support such as first/last months rent (PEERS), support while in school(WorkBC), etc. kcds.ca
- Affordable Housing Directory- Lower Columbia Region <https://kb.fetchbc.ca/service.html?i=2161>
- Affordable Ownership- Habitat for Humanity Castlegar
- Settlement program- CBAL <https://cbal.org/settlement-services/>
- The RNIP website has a great orientation page: https://www.canva.com/design/DAFNilo34Qo/XtHpW_JE10PpoU4DAAl-9g/view#1

Activity 3: Needs and Opportunities

Understanding there are a wide variety and diverse needs of newcomers, CBAL asked survey respondents to identify actions/resources that would have helped to bridge the gap.



Attendees used breakout rooms based on community to identify potential opportunities or actions that could help to make the difference for newcomers to overcome housing challenges.

The following is a list of cumulative list of potential opportunities that exist. This listing is based on priority as identified in discussions within the breakout session.

Opportunity	Description	Potential Partnerships
Workshops & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide newcomers with a series of workshops focusing on tenancy rights, building relationships with landlords, housing 	Settlement agency, property management, advocacy centres, community services, employment agencies and other local community groups with expertise in these areas.

	<p>research, applying for rentals, caring for home and conflict resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and resources for landlords on cultural agility 	<p>Settlement agency, property management agencies, local community members, municipalities and housing coalitions.</p>
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and resources to newcomers about the housing process • Assist in building relationships between newcomers and landlords, but also access and referrals to other community housing programs 	<p>Settlement agency, local advocacy groups and agencies that have services specific to housing.</p>
Building Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roommate matching and connecting international students with seniors for home stay or rental opportunities 	<p>College, settlement agency and community members.</p>

Follow Up

CBAL will connect with attendees via email and attendees will be asked to complete a survey. This survey will seek to identify those parties willing and interested to take part in future discussions and activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm PST.