

MAP Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 23, 2021 - 9:30AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees: Jenny Lam (Options), Richard Belcham (inasmuch), Thanh Lam (MPNH), Patricia Lim (LABC), Teresa Fuller (JHC), Andrew Bauman (JHC), Brad Kinnie (JHC), Vanessa Roth (JHC), Doug Peat (JHC), Barry Growe (JHC), Ricardo Rocha (JHC), Roberto Ortega (JHC), Sharan Johal (IRCCO, Carillon Kinley (IRCC), Kanwar Singh (IRCC), Savleen Kaur (Options), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC), Jackie Sarvini (MOSAIC), Lucia Hernandez (MOSAIC), Khim Tan (MOSAIC), Daniel Michael (MOSAIC), Adrienne Bale (DIVERSEcity), Monika Isaak (Archway CS), Geeta Bhardwaj (Archway CS), Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA), Jerry Wu (SWIS – VSB), Inas Elmenbbawl (SWIS-Richmond), Devinder Chattha (PICS), Raminder Kang (PICS), Winnie Lee (ICAGV), Anastasia Gaisenok (PIRS), Nazanin Moghadami (Rainbow Refugee), Maria Cervino (Kiwassa), Rainer Nicdau (MSDPR), Paige Levirs (MSDPR), Valentina Stanciu (MSDPR), S. Teigen (Covenant House), Ryan Reid (Kinbrace), Loren Balisky (Kinbrace), Joni Rose (MUNI), Tammy Johnson (inasmuch), Catherine Janzen (Inasmuch), Roberta Bower (Inasmuch), Derek Chu (Kinbrace), Wilfred Thariki (Kinbrace), Fran Gallo (Kinbrace), Sophia Underhill (Ready Tour), Mahak Mahmoodi (Red Cross), Mahi Khalef (SOS-ISSofBC), Sadiq Mohabi (ISSofBC), Julia Wu (bc211), Samuel Chan (SUCCESS), Kiran Johal (PCRS), Sara Lopez (VAST), Diana Barry (Vancity), Sireen El-Nashar (Zaytuna), Ali Mustafa (Independent), Yola Vargas (Independent), Wen Ren (LMNH), Rana Hazarat (Lawyer – BC4Afghans), Richard Soo (ECC), Imtiaz Popat (SAH/FH), Samia Tecle, Jenny Moss (MAP)

Regrets: Ann Barnard Ball (New Hope), Masha Rademakers (NSMS), Gulalai Habib (BNH)

Welcome from Co-Chair: Richard Belcham

Richard acknowledged and thanked the Sto: lo peoples from whose traditional unceded territories he was speaking. As well as other traditional territories where our members are situated, and where we do much of our work.

Richard also **acknowledged the generous funding from Ministry of Municipal Affairs (formerly MJEDC)** that makes MAP's work possible.

Richard welcomed participants from **36 MAP member agencies**.

First time introductions:

- Catherine Jantzen – new settlement worker at Inasmuch
- Subi Teigen – Covenant House
- Rana Hazarat – works as a lawyer responding to Afghan and at BC4Afghans.
- Roberto Ortega – JHC Settlement Supervisor
- Wen Ren – Little Mountain NH
- Andrew Bauman – settlement worker now at Journey Home Community
- Patricia Lim – Legal Aid BC Publications – back from maternity leave
- Ricardo Rocha – Meanwhile Spaces at Journey Home Community
- Imtiaz Popat – South Asian Health (Fraser Health)
- Khim Tan – now at MOSAIC

- Kanwar Singh - Settlement Network in IRCC. Sitting in for Leanne Hodaly.

The **Agenda** was outlined, meeting protocol and breakout rooms described: 1) Afghanistan 2) Settlement 3) Housing

The **June 24, 2021 meeting Minutes** were approved with the following changes:

- ADDED BY IRB: Counsel/claimants can email the scheduling team at x-rpd.scheduling.WesternRegion@irb.gc.ca
- Corrected by CBSA ATD Program: client moved to Kinbrace in July (not June)

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Meeting in person or online** – we are continuing to follow public health orders but wish to find out how everyone views the prospect of meeting in person in the future - please answer poll at end of meeting
- **Afghanistan disaster – Assistance/role of MAP BC – Thanh Lam (MPNH/ MAP Co-chair)**

Three announcements regarding the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan:

- 1) While our mandate is to support refugee claimants because of the huge number of requests for information and help MAP has received we have agreed to do our part to provide information to the public and to member agencies that is clear, accurate and transparent. As well as directing inquiries to agencies that have a mandate to respond. Updates are either sent out urgently or are at the front of the bulletin weekly.
- 2) There have been many questions from Afghan community members re: sponsorship for their family members. In response **BC Refugee Hub** is hosting a Sponsorship webinar on September 27 which will be available on the hub website soon.
- 3) MAP Information working Group is working in the area of public education by organizing an In Focus lecture on October 5th titled 'Afghans in Search of a Home'. It will provide a context to the current crisis via the history and culture of Afghanistan as well as highlighting campaigns and responses here in Canada, and specifically BC for those who want to help more.

Tuesday October 5th, 7pm online

REGISTER: <https://mapbc.org/afghans-in-search-of-a-home-crisis-awareness-and-welcoming-refugees-to-a-brighter-future/>

CHAT comment from Rana Hazarat: BC4Afghans is looking for a volunteer Logistics Coordinator that will report to the Volunteer Coordinator. The description of the volunteer position is attached. Interested candidates can email bc4afghans@gmail.com. At a high-level, the Logistics Coordinator will essentially help find specific items on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace (etc) for the Afghan newcomers. The Logistics Coordinator will then refer to a roster of volunteer drivers and organize the pick-up and delivery of those items to a designated donation centre. Any assistance in circulating this volunteer position is appreciated.

AND we are looking for a safe space to store and distribute donations that have been collected for the Afghan newcomers (i.e., a warehouse, general facility, garage, religious institutions, etc.). I am looking for a

location that can be easily accessible by a select group (i.e., a very small group) of volunteers at any time. A location in Surrey would be most ideal, but a location in Vancouver or Richmond would be great too.

Presentation: A Refugee Claimant Reception Centre - Research and Findings Report

Presenter: Brad Kinnie, Executive Director - Journey Home Community

Brad has worked with Journey Home Community for the past 12 years, primarily in the area of Program Management, overseeing the Settlement, Housing and Volunteer Programs. Over these 12 years, he has remained connected with and has a deep appreciation for the MAP community, even having the privilege of serving a term as MAP Co-Chair. Brad has recently been appointed to the role of Executive Director at Journey Home Community.

Contact: brad@journeyhomecommunity.ca

Loyal Mackeroff was also to present alongside Brad but sends his regrets.

Loyal has been interviewing many community and government partners to gather pertinent information and collate the survey into a report.

Background:

The 2019 Housing Forum –provided a wealth of information captured in the report ‘Towards a Housing Solution for Refugee Claimants’ (<https://mapbc.org/know/housing/>). The report made several recommendations including the possibility of a refugee claimant reception center.

Project question is **What if on arrival every refugee claimant who is needing immediate support is provided with a bed, a short term stay, proper orientation, introduction to all the sector services and then properly transitioned out to safe, more permanent housing?**

Journey Home has always had a keen interest in this project – talked to other housing partners to see if others were interested, so JHC decided to go ahead and do a concept design – to research the idea. Funding acquired to hire Loyal from Scala Design – a housing development company – the development company has been part of this design too.

See Presentation Slides attached for research format and results of interviews and focus groups

Brad encouraged attendees to put their questions and comments in the chat.

The overall feedback – total endorsement for the idea.

Numbers: Assuming from 2019 numbers they would need to create space for 75 single men and 75 women/families.

The research looked at the following:

If an RCRC was launched, what would be required?

ORIENTATION for refugee claimants, Including ideal length of stay

SERVICES that should be on-site

STRUCTURE that would be most ideal, Including where should the structure be located

VULNERABILITY – how to create safety

Orientation Services were ranked as seen as important by respondents (Slide 9)

? Are Employment services important at this stage?

Maybe an orientation rather than full employment services appropriate.

? Are special services for LGBTQ+ residents important?

Brad asked participants about their **preferred overall design** as the research had shown a 50/50 split: Should the site be: – one building, or a hub, or more scattered?

(Scala mentioned that with office space available JHC could rent a hub space for offices and then have men's residence and family residence in neighbourhood.)

POLL: Single unit: 19%

Unified multiple sites: 25%

Neighbourhood model with 3 locations: 56%

The following are responses from participants in the Chat to the questions posed above:

- I think Employment Support ~ assistance with resumes / job search / connection with temp agencies etc. would be really helpful. From what we've often seen, lack of employment is often the biggest barrier to housing / or often people's best chance to be able to rent something.
- I think that the way that the layout physically happens should take into consideration the LGBTQ+ community so they feel welcomed and safe.
- There are a lot of issues around confidentiality that are very important for LGBTQ. Safe housing for LGBTQ should be a high priority. Private bathrooms a must.
- VAST provides online/phone individual counselling and groups sessions. That means clients don't need to pay transit fares; this has been helping our clients to access mental health support.
- How long is the ideal/average stay at the centre? Because for me this impacts on whether employment is included or not.
- Regarding another point: what about childcare so that families can take the time attending various sessions/appointments/etc?
- It's usually too early to discuss employment at this stage of RC settlement process.
- We all know that there are many clients that arrive in Canada without money, and they are not allowed to get welfare till they go through eligibility interview. So, having a money source during this time relieves the pressure.
- I think that a lot of Refugees come having work as a focus and priority and while this is important, we know that the process for them getting their work permit is at several month process. Meanwhile there are many other important things that need to be done before they can even get to the possibility of working. I do not think that it needs to be a primary focus in the first several weeks of being in Canada. However, I do think that refugees need to be educated on this in the RCRC.
- Just to add to my early comment, I hadn't realized people would only stay 3 weeks. That does change priorities and I wonder where the majority of the 75+ people would go after 3 weeks if they don't have access to income or other funds they've come with to be able to afford rent for a few months?
- Library - for access to free computers - would be a useful thing to introduce people to in the neighbourhood.
- So it's more of pre-employment support/preparation rather than actual employment opportunities.
- Might consider envisioning the reception area as different than community building space.
- I echo what's been mentioned - the structure to address the physical and emotional safety needs of LGBTQ2+ folks (washrooms, safer spaces identified clearly as gender inclusive).
- Central location may be easier for management/logistics. What makes refugee claimants feel most welcome?
- Medical clinic on site is not necessary, I think. Partnerships with neighbouring medical clinics is necessary.
- Have a look at the Storeys Project in Richmond - it's this kind of Hub/residence model.
- Being close to a variety of relatively safe shelters may be helpful if people need to leave after 3 weeks. Maybe they can still come back to access some services while they're in the process of

making their claims. If you're doing a new build, housing on top would definitely be a good use of space.

- What is the expected beds capacity for the RCRC?
- Single males, though at first glance seem to be less vulnerable than the other groups, are prone to homelessness, couch surfing, and a likelihood of getting involved with drugs and gangs.
- Although it would take careful thought, I just wanted to say that at Kinbrace we do see many examples of benefits of single men living in community with families and children.
- Is there a RCRC model in Canada or elsewhere that you look at and are inspired by? / I think the report would benefit from having the consultant reach out to other reception centers working with refugees to get their feedback on their experiences and challenges.

Vulnerability: providing services correctly and also referring according to a shared scale of vulnerabilities. The top factors were fairly predictable.

Also looked at vulnerability from the claimants perspective as to what makes them feel safe.

Next steps – final report from all the research with recommendations.

Will be presented to stake-holders including MAP, potential funders, Provincial government.

Will include costs.

MAP next steps: short follow up questions to refine some of the answers for key stakeholders

Please send comments to Brad at brad@journeyhomecommunity.ca

Final report will be brought to MAP HWG to evaluate.

Brad's responses to specific issues:

They have looked at other models in Canada: Christie Refugee Welcome Centre in Toronto – it is a shelter model, but it is more long term (4-6 months).

Mahi – look at ISS Welcome Centre – in terms of challenges that arise – setting expectations – once persons get a space that increase their expectations for more help although they need to move on to release space for others.

Khim: how did you decide on 3-6 week duration? Hard to imagine achieving much in such a short time.

Brad – length of time is a key question. Need to balance how many beds you need – the longer claimants can stay then the more beds you need to respond to flow.

Would aim to move them out but only to a supported situation – access to services.

Richard thanked Brad and encouraged MAP members to contact Brad with more comments.

BREAK: The participants divided into 3 groups: Afghanistan, Settlement & Housing

MAP Emergency Plan report and Next Steps – Richard Belcham

Richard shared report from Emergency Survey which included everyone's responses

Timeline:

- April – May MAP Meetings: Emergency Planning discussions where we learned about priorities under a potential major arrival of claimants
- May – June created the survey to provide qualitative and quantitative data from agencies

- The report was written over the summer, circulated and comments received that were then incorporated
- The report was then sent to government (MUNI – our contact ministry)
Richard invited Joni to cover the response from government:
Joni Rose (MUNI): we are here to listen and definitely monitoring the situation. Because of pandemic controls at the border and the continued use of the STCA we are not seeing any signs of a surge right now, but we are looking at MAP's recommendations with great interest.

Next steps for MAP:

- Create a small task force – with expert emergency planners
- Continue dialogue with all levels of government, if possible.
- Create webinars and agency training to assist agencies plans and put best practices in place. MAP will provide a forum to share best practices and collaborations.
- Work with agencies to share resources, stay connected and feel connected.

Invitation for others to join task force for planning – please email Jenny at info@mapbc.org if you are interested.

Quantitative and qualitative update on Refugee Claimants in the Lower Mainland

There was no report this month as Bahar was not available.

Update on BC CHARMS - Housing Referral & Data Management System

Jackie Sarvini and Marzieh Nezakat

Marzieh explained the staff changes at MOSAIC and introduced Jackie as the Acting Coordinator of BC CHARMS, and she will provide the monthly report at MAP.

Jackie: Centralized Housing Referral System

- Since July BC CHARMS team has been meeting weekly with Apricot – and right now they are in the internal testing phase and are planning a demo for everyone interested soon.
- Report book – graphic designer now working on first draft.
- Innovative housing solutions research – interviewed a number of candidates for a team to lead this project. After choosing the successful team they are looking forward to seeing the results.
- Refugee website – meeting with the designer to move forward on this resource for new arrivals.

Loren (Kinbrace) – asked about refugee website – do you have a brief on that you can share?

Jackie – can send out a brief, it is a website where new claimants can find information/referrals they need on first arrival to use as a single-entry point.

Update from MUNI on outcomes for allocated funds for refugee claimant housing

Joni Rose, MUNI

There was no response to the RFP for refugee claimant housing which was very disappointing.

As a result the Procurement Office cancelled the call.

The government is assessing if there are feasible alternative options – we will let MAP know when there is news and will discuss in a little more detail with MAP HWG.

Government is also interested in hearing about other contingency plans as they relate to claimant housing so, please stay in touch.

Richard mentioned that MAP HWG would be meeting at 1pm after the MAP meeting for further discussions.

May be linked to Emergency Planning too

Richard – join HWG

Barry (JHC) – from CHAT – **BC CHARMS** – do you have a UX specialist to vet the web interaction?

Richard replied: Software company provides everything needed to make the system user friendly.

Agency Updates –

- **Fraser Health COVID-19 Update** – Imtiaz Popat

Working with **South Asian Health Institute** – outreach to places of worship – IS, RC's migrant workers etc. – these people have many barriers.

Placed many of the clinics at places of worship

Imtiaz sends out notifications of upcoming vaccination clinics via MAP

Biggest issue is **getting registered** especially if the person speaks a language other than the official languages on the hotline. There are only a few languages offered and you have to wait online a long time for assistance. So Imtiaz appreciates the help agencies are giving with registration assistance.

Vaccine card – many people do not understand the purpose of the Vaccine card; and it is very difficult for those with language barriers to get their card,

SAH has information in Punjabi and English, but need it in other languages.

Agencies can help clients print the card – take care not to bend QR code as otherwise it won't work.

If you have any questions please contact Imtiaz Imtiaz.popat@fraserhealth.ca

See useful **videos on YouTube** that Fraser Health has provided in many languages including webinars:

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus/translated-resources#.YUzZNvnMI2x>

Question:

My QR code does not lead anywhere!!! It says invalid although the passport was downloaded so I am confused!!!

Response: There have been many issues – sometimes individual records have not been updated.

Each person's is individual, so you need to call and report the problem: 1-888-268-4319 – states that service is available and in 110 languages from 7:30 am – 8:00 pm.

You can also submit a form online: <https://www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca/>

Richard reminded everyone to check the bulletin for important news and opportunities, and to submit information to Jenny at MAP for inclusion.

Also, bulletins, Minutes and other internal documents are housed in the very useful Member's area of

mapbc.org – for which you need to register and be approved.

- **Rana Hazarat – BC4Afghans**

a) The group is looking for safe storage space for donations for newly returned Afghans.

If you have any please email Rana at ranahazarat@gmail.com

b) Also need a Volunteer Logistics Coordinator – see bulletin for PDF

Applicants may email: bc4afghans@gmail.com

Agency Updates from the CHAT:

Sara Lopez VAST support group for refugee claimants *Getting Through It*, Every Wednesday 10 am - 12 pm.

Via Zoom with interpreters provided, for more info referrals@vast-vancouver.ca

If you want to refer a client for counselling services, please:

1. Go to vast website <https://www.vastbc.ca/>

2. Click on Make a Referral.

3. Fill out the online referral form and save it. Our intake team will connect with the client according to the language

SAVLEEN KAUR (Options) - Women's Professional Development Group: Sept 28 at 10 am

Link to register - <https://bit.ly/3DevE4T>

Options Community Services. Food Hub Project - Food pick up every Monday for claimants. Please connect at 604.809.7618

Sophia Underhill (Kinbrace)

1) We are starting a project to revise, update, and reformat our Refugee Hearing Preparation Guides (available currently on www.refugeeclaim.ca). This will be a yearlong project, with the end result being an interactive, mobile-friendly website, and a shorter printed guide that is more overview/orientation focused.

Here is a link to the project explainer for our Refugee Hearing Preparation Guide project -

<https://kinbrace.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RHP-Guide-National-Project-Explainer-2021-09-23.pdf>

2) READY Tours are continuing - our next one is next Wednesday September 29th. Please email me with referrals (sophia@kinbrace.ca)

Anastasia Gaisenok (PIRS) <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus/translated-resources#.YUzFYbhKguU>

Samuel Chan: SUCCESS BCSIS.

Refugee Claimant Employment services (resume / cover letter review, mock interviews).

We continue to have more online workshops which you can see here <https://www.successbcsis.com/>

We are increasing our in-person appointment services in our Vancouver / Richmond / Tri-Cities / Surrey

offices.

Any questions, please reach us at bcsis@success.bc.ca

Sabrina Dumitra: AMSSA is organizing a webinar with the PHO office to share information about the vaccine passport. The invite will be shared shortly.

Monika Isaak (Archway) Workshop on Resume Writing for Refugee Claimants. Online, tomorrow (Sep 24) from 10-11am. To register, call 778-344-5415 or e-mail refugeeclaimants@archway.ca

Julia Wu (BC211) Uber has provided promotional codes to reduce costs of using Uber to access vaccine appointments. It's to give \$15 discount each way. So if the barrier is transportation but your clients have the ability to use their app, then please contact me directly and I can provide a bunch of codes to service providers so you can then give one to your clients as needed. Uber is unfortunately not available in all areas of the Fraser Valley; I think they have a map of the coverage area on their website though.

Raminder Kang (Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) Society: Please contact or refer to seek assistance for Refugee Claimants at 604-596-7722 Ext. 140 or settlement.reception@pics.bc.ca

Jenny Lam hosted a **farewell program** for Richard Belcham as he leaves for UK

Thank you speeches were provided by Jenny Lam (Options / MAP Co-chair), Marzieh Nezakat (MOSAIC BC CHARMS), Joni Rose (MUNI), Tammy Johnson (Inasmuch) and Jenny Moss (MAP)

Richard thanked everyone and promised to stay in touch. 'I'm letting go of Canada – but gently'
He encouraged everyone to support MAP and make refugee claimants the priority they deserve. He thanked the co-chairs and everyone for their work that makes Canada's refugee claimant support system so good.

Messages collected before the meeting were shared with Richard via virtual cards – thanks to Thanh. And other comments in the CHAT were collected.

A feedback poll was launched re: this MAP meeting – thank you everyone for your participation.

Special question: are you ready to return to in person meetings later this fall?

45% - yes

27% - no

27% - unsure

Adjourned 12:00 PM.

Next Meeting: October 28 online: focusing on needs of LGBTQ+ claimants

ADDED post meeting on request from the IRB:

Referrals

For the period April 1, 2021 to Sept 30, 2021 there were 694 principal (1053 total) referrals with a VABC location code, as follows:

VABC Referrals	Principal	Total
Apr	67	96

May	93	152
June	109	175
July	128	191
Aug	148	228
Sept	149	211
Total	694	1053

Top countries:

Country	Principals
IRN	217
IND	177
MEX	52
AFG	28
Other	220
Total	694

*** Note that these statistics are for your information only and are intended to help with your planning, please do not share or publish. Requests for official stats can be sent to bridget.bell@irb-cisr.gc.ca*

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