

# New to Canada Participants Strategy





# INTRODUCTION >

QUALITY SPORT AND PHYSICAL LITERACY  
CAN CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING

## CURRENT LANDSCAPE >

New to Canada Participants feel more connected to their community by engaging in quality sport and physical activity opportunities that enhance physical literacy development, optimize opportunities for social connection and enhance their sense of belonging.

**Connecting with Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life's existing networks, and meeting with new organizations, is pivotal.**

New to Canada Participants often focus on employment, housing, health care, education and food and nutrition, which does not provide connection to the community they have arrived to. Structured and unstructured physical activity provides opportunities for connection with said community, and to understand the culture. Though they play a vital role in a sense of belonging, accessing physical literacy and quality sport opportunities is often complex.



# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS >

For this strategy, the term “New to Canada Participant” refers to both Newcomers and New Citizens to Canada, which are defined below:

**Newcomer to Canada:** The legal term means an immigrant who can remain in Canada. An immigrant is a non-citizen who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently or temporarily by federal immigration authorities. This includes those who have come through various immigration pathways, such as:

- refugees,
- international students,
- temporary foreign workers,
- permanent residents, and/or
- visitors.

An individual’s immigration status can be temporary or permanent.

**New Citizen to Canada:** The legal term means an immigrant who has gained citizenship to Canada.



# IMPACT STATEMENT >

This strategy ensures that:

- New to Canada families feel more connected to their community by watching their kids play or volunteering with a team,
- more meaningful social interactions occur in the stands and on the field than at work,
- opportunities to engage in physical activity are valuable for New to Canada families and support their learning around Canadian culture, and
- quality sport is represented as a way to teach elements of Canadian culture that is not learned in books or online such as jargon and slang, humour, how to handle conflict, and acceptable behaviours or gestures.





When New to Canada Participants are not engaged in quality sport and physical literacy, there can be many ill effects including a greater risk of physical inactivity, compared to non-immigrant peers (Pan-Canadian Health Inequalities Data Tool, 2017 Edition; Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2018), and greater risk for chronic health conditions potentially due to assimilation and acculturation (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and depression) (De Maio & Kemp, 2010; Gee et al., 2004; Jin et al., 2017; Salas et al., 2016).

COVID-19 has exacerbated inequities in sport participation among newcomers to Canada, widening the gap in newcomer sport participation, in comparison to non-immigrant peers (Canadian Heritage, 2021; CFLRI, 2022).

Gaps in newcomer sport participation are driven by several factors (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2014):

- financial barriers,
- time commitment and competing interests,
- systemic racism,
- language barriers,
- political and cultural differences,
- unfamiliarity with sports and the Canadian sport system,
- a disconnect from mainstream leagues, and/or
- lack of sufficient information on how to get involved.

As a national, multisport organization with national and international partnerships, Sport for Life recognizes it has a pivotal role to play in positively impacting the entire population and contributing to systemic change. The benefits of engaging New to Canada Participants via quality sport and physical literacy can lead to an increased sense of belonging, social connections, health and well-being, along with competence, confidence and motivation in sport-specific skills.



## OVERVIEW OF THE BARRIERS

According to ICC (2014), many new citizens are not participating in sport, despite a general interest in wanting to. This low involvement is due to several barriers including the following:







## STATISTICS

Immigration accounts for more than 80 per cent of Canada's population growth in recent years. Canada welcomed over 437,000 new immigrants last year— this is higher than the target of 431,645 new immigrants and marks a record for Canadian permanent resident admissions in one year. The previous record was set in 2021 when Canada landed over 405,000 new immigrants ([CIC News Jan, 2023](#)).

By 2030, immigration will account for all of Canada's net population growth. Cities across Canada are being transformed by immigration, and these demographic trends will undoubtedly impact the Canadian sport and physical activity system (Institute of Canadian Citizenship, 2014).



## SPORT FOR LIFE'S EDIA VISION >

Sport for Life is committed to fostering equity, as well as diversity, inclusion and accessibility. We strongly believe that diverse communities must be meaningfully engaged as we create, share and mobilize knowledge. Equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are part of our organization's core values and align with both our mission to develop physical literacy and improve the quality of sport, and our vision for everyone to have the opportunity to participate in quality sport and physical literacy experiences. Our goal is therefore to embed a New to Canada Participant lens into every aspect of our work.



# VISION FOR NEW TO CANADA PARTICIPANTS >

Sport for Life's New to Canada Participant vision is that each of our representatives and affiliates are empowered to contribute to the advancement of quality sport and physical literacy experiences for participants of all genders in a fair, equitable and inclusive manner that embraces intersectionality, such that all participants' unique backgrounds and experiences are celebrated.

This New to Canada Participant Strategy identifies Sport for Life's goals specific to equity and diversity, across many areas (e.g., Values and Culture; Governance and Leadership; Recruitment, Selection and Promotion; Equity and Diversity Across Organization Activities; and Measurement and Tracking Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) in alignment with the [United Nations Refugee Agency Sport for Protection Toolkit](#).

This strategy details the various ways Sport for Life will look to achieve its goals and the key performance indicators that will be used to evaluate progress and drive continuous improvement in this space.

# GOALS >

## SHORT-TERM

1. Identify Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life newcomer-related resources, review them and update them.
2. Identify Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life newcomer-related, existing partnerships.
3. Identify and foster relationships with newcomer-related networks in Victoria (community level), British Columbia (provincial level), Canada (national level) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (global level).

## MID-TERM

1. Develop new resources with Sport for Life's Knowledge Scaling department, such as a New to Canada Engagement workshop.
2. Strengthen partnerships to collaborate and co-create programs.
3. Foster new partnerships.
4. Successfully gain funding to implement pilot projects to create a sense of belonging for New to Canada Participants.

## LONG-TERM

1. Build multi-year initiatives with stakeholders within the sport and physical activity sectors.
2. Have physical activity and sport become part of the inclusion pathway for New to Canada Participants in the eyes of Immigration Canada.





ALIGNMENT WITH  
SPORT FOR LIFE'S  
STRATEGIC VISION >

## **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS RESOURCES, TRAINING AND TOOLS**

1. Formalize a working relationship with newcomer-related organizations such as Canadian Women & Sport, Institute of Canadian Citizenship and ParticipACTION to amplify our resources, so that New to Canada Participants benefit.
2. Review and update the Sport for Life for Every New to Canada Participant 2.0 and eLearning assets.
3. Design a New to Canada Participant workshop, with guidance from the Knowledge Scaling department.

## **INSPIRE AND INFORM POLICY, PROGRAMS AND INVESTMENTS**

1. Foster a relationship with Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to advocate for the importance of sport and physical activity in creating a sense of belonging for New to Canada Participants. This can be mobilized via Local Immigrant Partnerships (LIPs) across the country. These LIPs can be represented on Sport for Life's Physical Literacy for Communities partner tables.
2. Identify research papers and/or projects to further validate the impact statement of this strategy.
3. Participate in research projects to assess the impact of quality sport and physical literacy for the various populations of New to Canada Participants.

## **BUILD AND MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE NETWORK OF PARTNERS**

1. Identify Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life newcomer-related and existing partnerships.
2. Identify and foster relationships with newcomer-related networks in Victoria (community level), British Columbia (provincial level), Canada (national level) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (global level).

**Innovate and evolve Sport for Life's knowledge scaling resources, to ensure the New to Canada Participant perspective is included and focuses on:**

- participants' long-term development,
  - the confidence, motivation and social and emotional learning that derives from developing physical literacy, and
  - the overall connection of sport and physical activity to mental well-being.
1. Identify Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life newcomer-related resources, review them and update them.
  2. With the guidance of the Knowledge Scaling department, design New to Canada Participant assets.
  3. Create a database of New to Canada Participant-related organizations.





**Support organizations and leaders in sport, recreation, health and education to improve the quality and strength of their program design and delivery, particularly regarding New to Canada Participants' perspectives.**

1. Design and develop a framework to ensure New to Canada Participants are included in quality sport and physical literacy initiatives.
2. Amplify initiatives related to New to Canada Participants from our partners through Sport for Life's communications channels.

**Measure the long-term impact of Sport for Life project management, knowledge scaling and resources.**

1. Empower New to Canada Participant organizations to engage in physical literacy and quality sport as ways to foster inclusion.
2. Create meaningful partnerships with:
  - National Sport Organizations (NSOs) & Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs), to actively provide equitable opportunities for New to Canada Participants in their pathways.
  - academic institutions, to collaborate and co-create meaningful research and validate the benefits of New to Canada Participant inclusion.
  - international agencies such as the United Nations and TAFISA, to contribute to their Sport for All initiatives using the principles of quality sport and physical literacy for New to Canada Participants.
  - newcomer serving and supporting organizations such as settlement agencies, welcome centres and multicultural groups.
3. Have the knowledge scaling assets (resources, eLearnings, webinars and workshops) that are specific to New to Canada Participants become tools are used and respected by proponents of equity and inclusion.





# NEW TO CANADA PARTICIPANTS ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES >

All programs and services are to be reviewed with a New to Canada Participant focus:

**1.** Begin with a pilot initiative:

- Review the [Sport for Life for all New to Canada Participant](#) resources and [Welcome to Canada: Engaging Newcomers in Sport and Physical Activity](#) elearning to ensure terms, language and references are up to date.
- Create an Engaging New to Canada Participants workshop.
- Connect with the LIPs' to review their integration plans, as very little is considered surrounding the benefits of quality sport and physical literacy.

## 2. Evaluate the pilot initiative:

- Have newcomer- and new citizen-serving organizations read the updated newcomer resources and take the eLearning.
- Have these organizations provide feedback via a survey.
- Deliver workshops as part of existing Sport for Life and Physical Literacy for Life projects.
- Ensure LIPs understand the benefits of quality sport and physical literacy to a sense of belonging, which can be done via focus groups.

## 3. Apply to other programs and services:

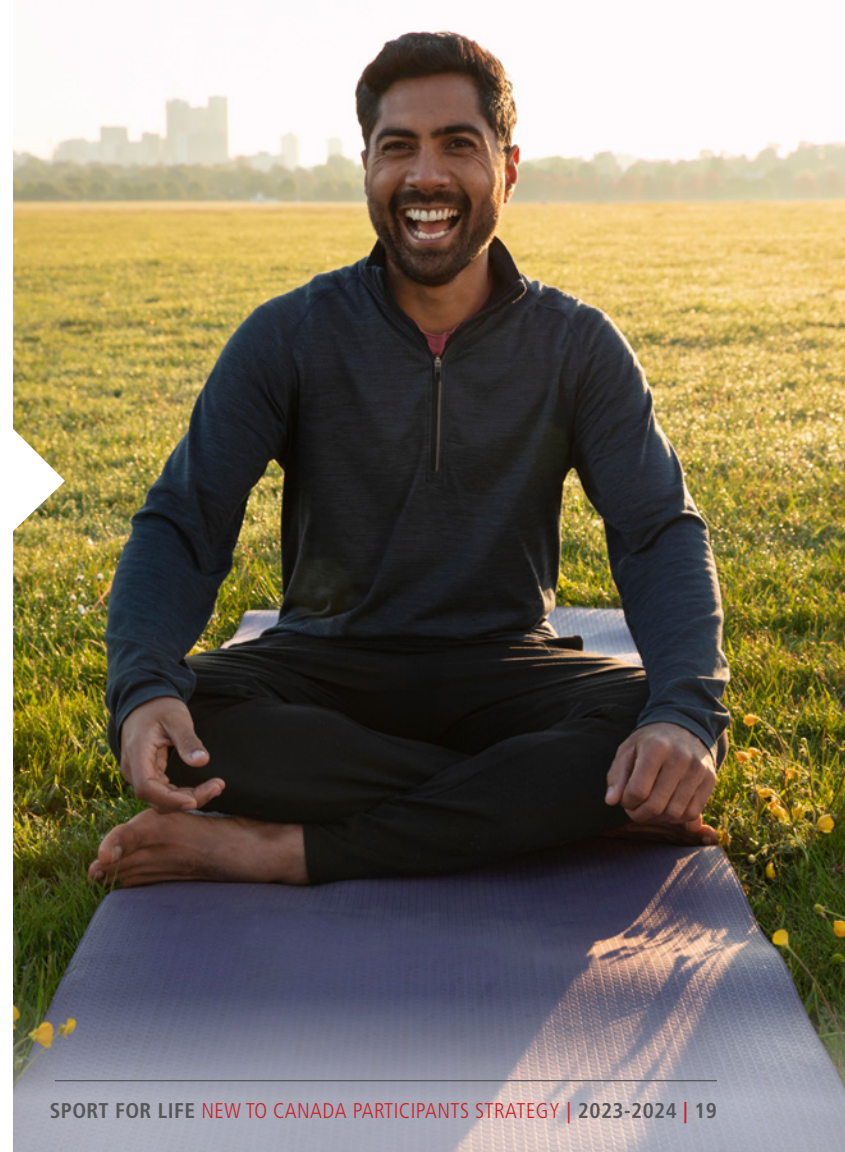
- Share content with NSOs, PTSOs and recreational programs that Sport for Life supports or provides services to.
- Provide New to Canada Participants workshop to settlement agencies and recreation centres, and collaborate with continuous learning institutions for delivery to their clients (e.g., NORQUEST College in Alberta).
- Ensure LIPs directly contribute to the impacts of this strategy.

## 4. Apply to future grants/funding asks:

- Apply for funding through organizations and providers like:
  - newcomer-serving grant providers (e.g., IRCC and Sport Canada),
  - non-traditional grant providers, by showing a connection between Canada's growth via immigration and the benefits of quality sport and physical literacy as a cross-sectoral outcome. (e.g., the Anti-Racism Secretariat of Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada),
  - foundations such as Canadian Tire JumpStart, KidSport Canada, Scotiabank Foundation, MasterCard Foundation, etc.,
  - private sector businesses, and
  - international foundations or organizations such as the United Nations.

# MEASUREMENT AND TRACKING OF NEW TO CANADA PARTICIPANTS >

To achieve the aforementioned strategies, Sport for Life will develop and implement a tracking system that will align with its tracking and measurement of program- and service-specific organizational goals. Tracking will involve both quantitative and qualitative measures.



Quantitative measures will include:

- Sport for Life participant and stakeholder disaggregated data collection (e.g., standardized socio-demographic questions included in all registration forms, and program and service evaluation surveys),
- disaggregated data collection of Sport for Life representative composition and competency across all programs and services (e.g., Sport for Life Diversity Matrix), and
- completion rates of the steps contributing to each of the identified gender equity and diversity strategies.

Qualitative measures will include:

- questionnaires and evaluation surveys associated with both programs and services, and internal strategic initiatives,
- focus groups composed of Sport for Life representatives, and
- additional evaluations from third-party organizations (e.g., INCH Lab, Brock University).

Quantitative and qualitative measures will be actively tracked, analyzed and re-evaluated quarterly to assess progress toward Sport for Life's Strategic Vision. Results will be discussed among both Sport for Life's Leadership Team and the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee, and used to inform existing and future partnerships, along with additional strategies and actions in the spirit of continuous improvement.



**Sport for Life**

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**CREATE. SHARE. MOBILIZE.**