The Immigrant Centre's 2017 Grant Application.

BACKGROUND:

Winnipeg has been a destination city for many newcomers to Canada, and even more progressively in recent years. From 2000 to 2016 over 160,000 Permanent Residents settled in Winnipeg and in these years we have doubled the amount of Permanent Residents that have settled in our City from 6,191 in 2005 to 12,383 in 2015.

The Immigrant Centre Manitoba provides services that are an important part of the strategy to retain new immigrants following their arrival in Winnipeg. This is our 69th year of delivering quality, innovative Settlement Services that empower immigrants to connect, integrate and fully participate in Canadian society. In the last fiscal year we served a total of 15, 545 clients and introduced a new program that delivers pre-arrival services to immigrants and refugees who are in the process of immigrating to Manitoba. During the last year we also received 20,889 calls to our front desk and had over 52, 000 visits from 155 countries to our website. This year we project that even more newcomers will come through our doors seeking immigration and settlement assistance, including many of the Syrian refugees that Winnipeg has welcomed over the past year into our community.

Our city has counted on immigrants to replace retiring workers, keep our businesses growing and bring innovative ideas to our workforce. Because of an aging population and slowing birth rates, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada predicts that in from now until 2020 that nearly 100% of our labour growth will come from new immigrants. Therefore, we must continue to welcome newcomers into Winnipeg and provide them with services that allow them to succeed.

INITIATIVES:

Last year, with the support of the City of Winnipeg, the Language Bank provided 841 interpreter services, 49 of which were for City of Winnipeg departments, including the Winnipeg Police Service. The majority of our interpreter services were in Arabic, Mandarin, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrigna and Vietnamese. In addition to the interpreter services, the Language Bank team led by the Language Bank Manager, Rosa Maria Menjivar, who is here with me today completed 3213 Translation/Notary Public services in over 50 different languages. In total, with your financial support, the Language Bank department delivered 4054 services that provided accessible language services for Winnipeg's newcomer community.

We anticipate an even greater need for interpreter services in our City as our newcomer population continues to increase, especially for Arabic language services from our new Syrian population. Between October 2015 and September 2016 Winnipeg has welcomed over 1000 Syrian refugees. From those who had their language assessed 75% are between the language levels of Literacy and CLB 3. Consequently, we have seen an increased demand for Arabic interpreters, including increased requests from the City of Winnipeg departments. In the past year Arabic has been one of our most requested languages for all services and we anticipate this to continue well into the future.

Thanks to the City of Winnipeg's long-term financial support, your departments have 24-hour, 7-days-a-week access to our bank of interpreters. Tiger Tel, part of Stericycle Communications, matches police and

other civic departments with emergency interpreters from the Immigrant Centre language bank database on evenings, weekends and holidays.

We have over 400 registered interpreters and translators who offer their services in over 80 languages and dialects. Many interpreters are immigrants themselves and working with us gives them the opportunity to further develop skills, which are useful for finding employment and a way to give back to their community. Acquiring specific skills, such as legal interpreting or translations, can be a steep learning curve, but as a grateful client told the program manager: *"No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care"*. The professionalism and willingness to help of the interpreters ensures continued service to both clients and the community at large.

New interpreters are recruited and trained on an ongoing basis to meet the changing language requests. We run two 8-week free training courses each year for volunteer interpreters. Our most recent training course finished in September of this year and we had 20 successful volunteer interpreters complete the course who between them can interpret more than 25 languages.

Multiple City departments utilize the Language Bank on a regular basis. Since the beginning of this year we have already received 50 interpretation requests from different departments within the City of Winnipeg. These have been successfully fulfilled by highly trained and culturally sensitive Interpreters, often with a very quick turnaround.

As part of the long-term funding partnership between Immigrant Centre and the City of Winnipeg, we are always available to assist City of Winnipeg services when needed. Previously, the Language Bank Manager worked closely with the Winnipeg Police Service to arrange for the translation of a large document regarding the rights, systems and processes involved with drug related crimes. This document was translated from English into several languages including Vietnamese, Japanese, Chinese and Mandarin.