



## Edmonton Police Service

# Framework for Building Police Legitimacy in Edmonton's Emerging Communities

May 2016

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## I. Background

### I.1 Introduction

This document is intended to guide the work of the already established Community Operations Support Unit (COSU) and is not seeking additional resources. The development of the Edmonton Police Service's *Emerging Communities Framework* is a crucial element of the organization's commitment to community policing and engaging in a proactive style of policing that recognizes the value of prevention and intervention activities. Through the document, the organization will gain an understanding of what emerging communities are; why an engagement framework is necessary; what strategies and actions will be undertaken; and ultimately, how success will be measured. By providing a structured and consistent approach through this framework, it is anticipated that the EPS can successfully meet its objective as outlined below with regards to its approach with emerging communities.

### I.2 What is an Emerging Community?

In defining a framework through which to build relationships with emerging communities, it is important to establish a consistent understanding of what defines an emerging community. This will ensure the application of approaches outlined in this document is consistently applied across the range of communities that fall under the definition.

The term "emerging community" is relatively new within the Edmonton Police Service- and in the broader Edmonton community- and although there are references to it through other public organizations such as the Edmonton Public School Board<sup>1</sup> and the City of Edmonton<sup>2</sup>, there has not been an adequate or robust definition developed through either of these cited programs. In researching the term, a considerable amount of material was found from various Australian sources- both governmental and non-governmental – that are engaged in integrating and building relationships with emerging communities. From this scan, a suitable definition emerges from the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia, which states:<sup>3</sup>

*New and emerging communities are defined as being small in number, newly arrived and have all or a combination of the following characteristics:*

- *Significant increase in numbers over the last five years*
- *Often lack established family networks, support systems, community structures and resources, relative to more established communities*
- *Can be more vulnerable than established communities as they are often from a refugee background and have experienced displacement due to civil unrest*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epsb.ca/media/epsb/ourdistrict/policies/studentawards/Community-EdmontonRefugeeandEmergingCommunityAward.pdf> . Accessed March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.edmonton.ca/programs\\_services/funding\\_grants/grant-emerging-immigrant-refugee-communities.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/funding_grants/grant-emerging-immigrant-refugee-communities.aspx). Accessed March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewjhxoizv6L LAhUI1mMKHecGB7oQFgg4MAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fecca.org.au%2Fimages%2Fstories%2Fpdfs%2Fpolicie\\_s\\_2007035.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEuDpBzxy5Ipli9cV\\_CMIOP6xzolA&sig2=sDKhsx5PCd9Prxx2aViq0Q&bvm=bv.115946447,d.cGc](https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewjhxoizv6L LAhUI1mMKHecGB7oQFgg4MAU&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fecca.org.au%2Fimages%2Fstories%2Fpdfs%2Fpolicie_s_2007035.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEuDpBzxy5Ipli9cV_CMIOP6xzolA&sig2=sDKhsx5PCd9Prxx2aViq0Q&bvm=bv.115946447,d.cGc). Accessed March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

- *Comprise individuals with low levels of education and skill due to displacement*
- *Comprise individuals who do not have English language skills*
- *Comprise individuals who are unfamiliar with mainstream government services that are available in Australia and are less likely to be able to locate services that can help them meet their basic needs*
- *Tend not to have community infrastructures and organisations that can attract funding.*

### 1.3 *Why is this framework necessary?*

The presented definition indicates a number of barriers and challenges that members of emerging communities might face during their integration into a new environment. This applies generally to integration within society more broadly, but also specifically to establishing positive productive relationships with law enforcement. As noted by the Government of Western Australia's Office of Multicultural Interests "[p]eople from emerging communities are sometimes identified as "high needs clients" due to the length of time they have spent in refugee camps, their lack of personal support networks in Australia and the additional assistance and resources needed to address the settlement challenges they face"<sup>4</sup>.

More specifically to establishing police legitimacy amongst emerging communities in Canada, work has been carried out by Dr. Sara Thompson of Ryerson University that highlights the importance of pursuing an appropriate approach when establishing relationships between law enforcement and emerging communities. Although Dr. Thompson's writing is specifically in relation to the current situation in Canada with the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees, the standards discussed therein are applicable to a broader framework for relationship building with emerging communities. In her piece entitled *Facilitating the intake of Syrian refugees in Canada from a policing perspective* Dr. Thompson argues:

*The establishment of trust with communities is often a delicate balance – and this is particularly the case with refugee groups coming from a place where levels of police legitimacy (along with the perceived legitimacy of state-based institutions more generally) are likely subterranean. This is why it is crucial, particularly during the arrival and immediate settlement phase, that police focus their efforts on relationship-building with refugee communities, by engaging in two-way dialogue, assisting in connecting refugees to relevant social services, and generally working to establish trust and the understanding that police agencies in Canada are "helping" organizations. We know from a large body of research that positive perceptions of the police are associated with an increased likelihood of calling the police in times of need, co-operation in police investigations, and compliance with the law - so as with any community, the establishment and maintenance of police legitimacy in the eyes of refugee populations is in everybody's best interest.<sup>5</sup>*

The approach noted by Dr. Thompson also forms a portion of the RCMP's *Canadian Police Newcomer Engagement Strategy*, and they have also engaged her to develop education and awareness material for their members in relation to the recent influx of Syrian refugees.

In addition to the important reasons noted through government and academic literature, the EPS has specific past experience with emerging communities that have, in a very tangible operational way,

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/resources/publications/community\\_profiles/New\\_and\\_Emerging\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/resources/publications/community_profiles/New_and_Emerging_Communities.pdf). Accessed March 2, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Provided as Appendix A of Edmonton Police Service Briefing Note for tracking sheet 7989. Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

highlighted the organizational risk of not having an established integration framework for building relationships in emerging communities. Specifically, a dearth of relationships in Edmonton's Somali community and a lack of established trust around 2011 made the investigation of several homicides and other crimes within that community very difficult and caused challenges to investigators seeking information or productive conversations with community members. Such a scenario results in the police being able to only mount a reactive response to incidents as opposed to being proactive before incidents occur.

By pursuing the consistent application of an emerging community framework, the EPS will move along the continuum away from reactive policing and toward proactive policing. This is directly in alignment with the EPS' organizational mission by emphasizing prevention and intervention activities, and aligns with several core values including respect, innovation, and community.

#### 1.4 Current migration trends into Edmonton

While the importance of this document and having a consistent approach to emerging communities transcends immediate settlement trends in that there will always be new emerging communities, it is worthwhile to consider the current migration trends into Edmonton to provide some context for EPS' immediate requirements.

As has been well reported in the media, as of February 2016 the Canadian government has reached its target of resettling 25,000 refugees into Canada. Various media outlets<sup>6,7</sup> have reported expectations that Edmonton will be home to approximately 1,500 of the resettled refugees. In the near term, this would indicate that the current emerging community priority for the EPS would be to begin the process of establishing relationships and police legitimacy with this specific group of newly arrived Syrian refugees.

## 2. Framework Objective

A framework objective is put forward to serve as a guide for all strategies and activities employed under this framework. The guiding principle for any actions taken under this framework will be to ensure that they contribute to the objective:

***To create working strategies and actions that will guide the Edmonton Police Service to establish legitimacy, trust and relationships with Edmonton's emerging communities.***

## 3. Strategic Alignment

This framework aligns with the EPS Organizational Strategy and upholds the core values of *Community* and *Respect*. It also assists in achieving two of the organization's strategic goals:

1. *Commitment to professionalism* through building police legitimacy and relationships with diverse emerging communities; and
2. *Investigative Excellence* through ensuring reciprocal information sharing between potentially marginalized and vulnerable communities and the EPS.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/refugee-agencies-in-alberta-prepare-to-welcome-3-000-syrians-1.3318732>. Accessed March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

<sup>7</sup> <http://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/paula-simons-edmonton-pulls-together-to-prepare-for-syrian-refugees>. Accessed March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

## 4. Strategies to Achieve the Objective

### 4.1 Internal Training and Awareness

Activities under this theme will work to provide members with accurate information, address misconceptions, and understand the context and experiences of those in Edmonton's emerging communities. Such information is imperative especially for members who are interacting with individuals from Emerging communities. Specific activities include:

- Internal and ongoing messaging, as required, through EPSnet to provide staff with education as well as information pertaining to current issues and trends.
- The creation of educational videos and other communication tools to address the following:
  - Understanding the impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the refugee experience
  - Understanding the immigration process as it relates to security and community safety
  - Addressing myths and stereotypes about emerging communities and police
  - Establishing police legitimacy within new and emerging communities
- Optional educational sessions for both sworn and civilian EPS staff that address any of the topics noted above as well as provide opportunities for collaboration and information sharing across other public service sectors (i.e. Health, Education, Housing, etc.), law enforcement agencies (i.e. RCMP and other Municipal Police Services), various levels of Government (City of Edmonton, Multicultural Relations Section, Human Services Alberta, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)) as it relates to policing, community safety and emerging communities.

### 4.2 Outreach and External Communications

Activities under this theme will ensure that the Edmonton Police Service approaches its objective by engaging with a variety of external partners and ensuring that relationships are reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Specific activities include:

- The forthcoming emerging communities liaison committee/working group which will focus on building relationships specifically with agencies that provide frontline services to emerging community members, (i.e. Catholic Social Services (CSS), Islamic Family and Social Services of Alberta (IFSSA), Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN))
- Host/participate in community events with emerging communities to build police legitimacy and trust
- Developing and maintaining strategic community partnerships. Some partnerships include: Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Catholic Social Services, Multicultural Health Brokers, Islamic Family Social Services Association
- Developing and maintaining strategic governmental and law enforcement partnerships. Partnerships include: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Human Services, City of Edmonton, Canada Border Services Agency, and RCMP

- Developing and delivering a standardized newcomer orientation presentation for newly arrived community members on community safety and the role of policing in Edmonton.
- Working with the City of Edmonton Multicultural Relations Section on the development and implementation of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)<sup>8</sup> as it relates to community safety

#### 4.3 Support for Police Operations

Activities under this theme will work to ensure that the relationships developed through strategies and actions above provide a direct benefit to supporting EPS' frontline and investigative police operations. Specific activities include:

- Leveraging partnerships to support police operations and investigations. For example, bridging communication and trust gaps between police and community to increase reporting on crime and victimization
- Establishing a robust and sustainable Interpreter Program to reduce barriers to communication thereby ensuring equitable access to police services. (See Business Case for development of an EPS Interpreter Program)
- Increase internal awareness of the operational support role that EDHR Units can provide to help members navigate amongst diverse and emerging communities
- Collaborate with various internal units to support police operations and investigations through various strategies including leveraging community relationships to respond to specific incidents of crime and victimization, increasing understanding of geo-political contexts that could be impacting a local issue, navigating internal community politics and dynamics, and accessing community animators<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Key Risks

There are a number of organizational risks that exist if the proposed *Emerging Communities Framework* is not supported and implemented. The chart below summarizes and explains these risks.

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<sup>8</sup> LIPs focus on what is currently available to newcomers within a Municipality, and make recommendations on how to strengthen the system to promote settlement and inclusion for all newcomers. LIPs exist across Canadian municipalities (Regina, Bow Valley, Surrey, Calgary and Waterloo) and are created to engage various stakeholders in a locally driven strategic planning process to identify assets and gaps within the immigration and settlement experience.

<sup>9</sup> The Community Animator builds bridges within the community, among different communities and with organizations and institutions that are impacting community life.

- Connects multicultural communities on common needs and concerns
- Links multicultural communities with the broader Canadian society
- Represents the interests of his/her community

| Risk Analysis |   | Mitigation  |
|---------------|---|---|
| <b>HIGH</b>   | <p><b>No police legitimacy amongst emerging communities to contact police</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges to investigations with people not coming forward with information</li> <li>Reduced ability to achieve organizational goals including <i>Commitment to Professionalism</i> and <i>Investigative Excellence</i></li> <li>Reduced ability to meet desired performance goals.</li> <li>No / decreased impact on crime and public safety amongst emerging communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consequence:</b> Major<br/><b>Likelihood:</b> Possible</p> |
| <b>HIGH</b>   | <p><b>EPS frontline responders are inadequately trained to deliver culturally safe (including adequate interpretation for effective communication) and bias aware servicing to emerging communities</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to detect various issues and behaviours related to the challenges of re-settlement including PTSD.</li> <li>Police unable to provide fair and equitable police services to potentially marginalized and vulnerable communities because of lack of understanding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Consequence:</b> Major<br/><b>Likelihood:</b> Possible</p>  |

|               |  |  |  |
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| <b>MEDIUM</b> | <b>EPS fails to maintain strategic partnerships with agencies who serve diverse and emerging communities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed opportunity to share resources towards a common goal</li> <li>• Reduced ability to connect with emerging communities outside of traditional police relationships.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the City of Edmonton on the development and implementation of the Local Immigration Partnership</li> <li>• Work with agencies through the forthcoming emerging communities liaison committee</li> </ul> |
|---------------|--|--|--|

6. Outcomes

Consideration was given to outcome measures during the creation of this strategy; however it was evident that consistent data sources for outcome measures did not currently exist. To measure the outcome of a relationship based strategy, the best approach would be to capture perceptions of those involved, particularly EPS members and members of emerging communities. Given that there is not a current process or data set to collect the specifics needed for such an outcome measure, this strategy’s success while in large part be measured by the following output measures:

- Successful implementation of training and awareness materials within EPS.
- The successful creation of the emerging community’s liaison committee/working group and committed involvement with the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership.
- Successful instances of EDHR engaging with operational members to assist in active files involving emerging or diverse communities.

Going forward, consideration will be given to adequately capturing outcome measures, which could include the following:

- Increased cooperation in investigations and compliance with the law by community members
- Increased trust and understanding from newcomer serving agencies related to police roles in achieving community safety (for example, reduced hesitation by newcomer servicing agencies to involve police in matters relating to crime and victimization)
- Emerging communities do not experience or perceive barriers to communicating with police. This may result in a potential increase in rates of reporting victimization and crime initially; demonstrating trust and comfort citizens have in reporting occurrences and information to the police
- Long-term reduction in crime and victimization in emerging communities

7. Conclusion

As noted, by pursuing the consistent application of an *Emerging Communities Framework*, the EPS will move along the continuum away from reactive policing and toward proactive policing. This is directly in

alignment with the EPS' organizational mission by emphasising prevention and intervention activities, and aligns with several core values including respect, innovation, and community.

The *Emerging Communities Framework*, will focus on internal training and awareness, outreach and external communications, and support for police operations that involve emerging communities. Through effective and meaningful engagement with emerging communities in Edmonton, the EPS will develop positive relationships of trust, establishing police legitimacy within these communities. Police legitimacy will result in an increase of calls to police during times of need, cooperation in investigations, and overall compliance with the law; which are essential in the EPS obtaining its vision of becoming the safest major city in Canada, and a leader in policing.

## 8. Review and Approval Process

### Framework Signoff

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- Supported  
 Not Supported

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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- Supported  
 Not Supported

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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- Supported  
 Not Supported

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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- Supported
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**Recommendation(s) are**

- Supported
- Not Supported

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Recommendation(s) are**

- Supported
- Not Supported

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_