

Immigrant-support groups to share millions from Ottawa

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Groups that offer services and support to immigrants in Fredericton have been given \$3 million in federal funding to sustain their efforts.

Tobique-Mactaquac Tory MP Mike Allen made the announcement Tuesday in Fredericton. The money will be distributed to the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, the New Brunswick Multicultural Council and the University of New Brunswick to help immigrants succeed in their new home.

The funding is intended for services that will help newcomers adapt to life in New Brunswick and succeed, Allen said.

The Multicultural Association of Fredericton will get \$2.7 million to deliver services. The services include language training, translation and interpretation, referrals to community resources and a volunteer program that matches newcomers with a local friend. The funding also covers a youth-settlement workers who will work with young newcomers.

The New Brunswick Multicultural Council will get \$300,000 to deliver job-specific language training to prepare newcomers for work in Canada that matches their skills and qualifications.

The University of New Brunswick will receive \$7,500 to provide language testing services for newcomers applying for language training programs.

Dexter Noel, president of the Multicultural Association of Fredericton, said the three years of funding is good news.

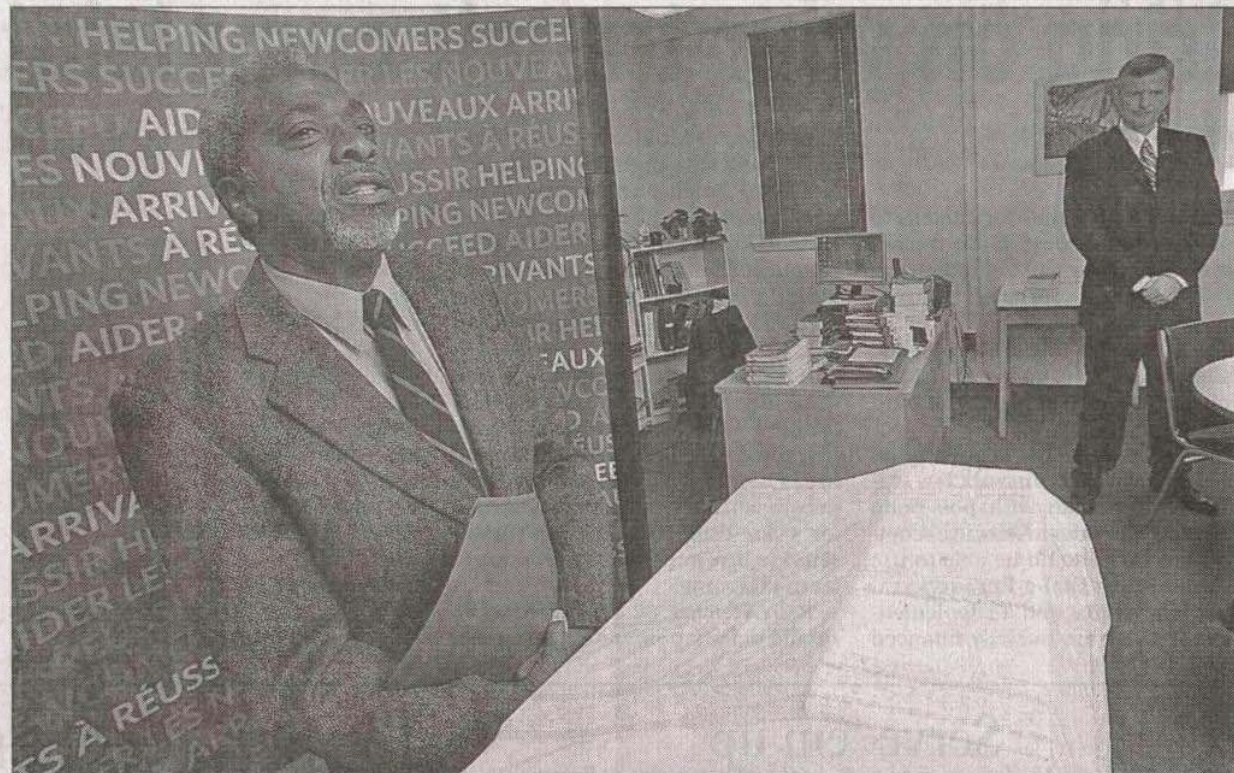
"It gives the association stability and it gives the staff some more security," he said.

It means the association can devote more focus on delivering services, he said.

In the last year, the association has helped 186 people from 26 countries who are now calling the Fredericton area home.

It's important for a province that is putting more emphasis on population growth, Noel said.

"Canada is a country of immigrants and it needs immigrants to succeed," he said.



THE DAILY GLEANER/STEPHEN MACGILLIVRAY PHOTO

MONEY TO HELP IMMIGRANTS: Dexter Noel, president of Multicultural Association of Fredericton, left, spoke at an immigration-funding announcement Tuesday. In the background is Tobique-Mactaquac Tory MP Mike Allen.

The federal government is in the third year of a five-year settlement program that will provide \$1.4 billion in settlement funding to provinces and territories. New Brunswick will receive more than \$2.7 million in basic settlement funding this year, an increase of more than \$900,000 from

the previous year.

Allen said efforts are underway to shorten the time it takes newcomers to navigate the immigration process. There are cases where families wait up to six years for a response, he said.

"In Australia, it takes six months," he said.

Canada risks losing some of the most sought-after immigrants.

Under the proposed new system, immigration officers would be instructed to match skilled immigrants with jobs that need to be filled in Canada so the immigrants can be brought to Canada more quickly.