



BRANDON  
UNIVERSITY

# Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Western Region

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	3
Profile of the Selected Communities .....	6
Research Design and Methods .....	10
Key Findings .....	14
Newcomer Arrival & Integration .....	14
Employment .....	16
Settlement Services and Gaps .....	17
CIC ineligible Newcomers .....	19
Barriers to Accessing Services .....	21
SPO Capacity for Delivering Services and Meeting Needs .....	22
Community Partnerships .....	23
Conclusion .....	25
Future Research .....	29
Research Team .....	30
Appendices .....	32

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Rural dwellers service use by western province .....	4
Figure 2: Percentage of Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in the 4 western provinces .....	7
Figure 3: Percentage of Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in other Canadian provinces .....	7
Figure 4: 29 selected communities across western provinces .....	8
Figure 5: 29 selected communities by population in descending order .....	9
Figure 6: Permanent Resident arrivals 2009-2013, in the 29 selected communities .....	9
Figure 7: Permanent Resident arrivals (2009-2013) as a percentage of population in the 29 selected communities .....	9
Figure 8: Reasons related to the increase of newcomers living in the communities as mentioned by participants .....	14
Figure 9: Reasons related to the increase of newcomers living in the communities as mentioned by participants. Participants that mentioned employment as a reason were excluded .....	15
Figure 10: Canada: Transition from Temporary to Permanent Residence, 2003-2012 .....	20
Figure 11: Rural dwellers: Reasons for not accessing services by western province .....	21
Figure 12: Types of activities conducted in partnership .....	23

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 2004-2013 .....	3
Table 2: Rural dwellers least likely to access services .....	4
Table 3: Method used for allocation of the communities sampled by Province .....	12
Table 4: Communities sampled by Province and number of surveys completed and feedback received .....	13

# Executive Summary

This study called “Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC’s Western Region” was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through Immigration Research West (IRW) at the University of Manitoba and was directed by the Rural Development Institute (RDI) of Brandon University. Significant research efforts have focused on examining settlement services in large centres across Canada. With more immigrants selecting small centres and rural areas, this project is intended to provide a preliminary examination of settlement services and partnerships. As a result, the primary objective of this project is to inventory the extent to which settlement services exist in selected communities across Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) and to identify gaps, barriers and needs. As a secondary objective the applicability of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) model was examined as one option to enhance settlement services outcomes for newcomers<sup>1</sup> in Western Canada. This regional report is part of the “Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC’s Western Region” study and synthesizes the findings of the four provincial reports for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

This project is made possible through partnerships with many individuals and organizations. Five co-Principle Investigators (co-PIs), active immigration researchers from western Canadian Universities facilitated the planning, and research activities across the western provinces; Dr. Miu Chung Yan (University of British Columbia); Dr. Anna Kirova (University of Alberta); Dr. Joe Garcea (University of Saskatchewan); Dr. Lori Wilkinson (University of Manitoba); and Dr. Bill Ashton (Rural Development Institute, Brandon University). For the purpose of this project a governance structure was set up for all aspects of the study.

Twenty-nine rural communities and urban centres across the four western provinces were selected by provincial advisory panels to participate in this study. The term “community” is conceptualized in geographic terms as either a “local community” that consists of a single municipality, or a “regional community,” comprising two or more neighboring municipalities and/or areas that are not incorporated as municipalities. To be eligible for selection, the communities must not have had extensive examination or evaluation of settlement services and must

be receiving increasing numbers of newcomers. For this reason, large centres like Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg were excluded from the study. Data for this project was collected by telephone interviews with 147 settlement service provider representatives in the 29 different communities. Those communities sampled (Figure 4) represented different geographic regions of the four provinces, varied in size and number of newcomers receiving, and had at least one CIC funded organization<sup>2</sup>. The participants were recruited using mainly a snowball technique and are senior officials, knowledgeable members of SPOs within each of the selected communities. Once data collection was completed, 29 community reports were compiled presenting the research findings in each community. Participants and additional immigration stakeholders provided feedback on the reports to ensure accuracy. In total, 80 participants and immigration stakeholders in 26 communities provided feedback. Upon finalizing the community reports, four provincial reports were compiled each one for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The provincial reports (Appendices B-E) summarize the findings across the communities sampled in the four western provinces and provide an overview of the settlement services, identified key gaps, barriers to accessing services, and described the extent of community partnerships.

This regional report synthesizes common themes emerged across the four provinces. Additionally, this report suggests a strategic direction for the actions needed in order to address the gaps identified and improve the delivery of settlement and integration services in rural areas across western Canada.

The key findings of this report are summarized under three themes of Settlement and Employment, Services and Gaps and Partnerships. The findings related to settlement and employment identified issues regarding community based concerns, while the findings related to settlement services and gaps and SPO partnerships discuss issues that are within CIC’s purview.

Based on these key findings, three strategic directions are suggested for Citizenship and Immigration Canada aimed at supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers into rural areas and smaller centers in western Canada.

1. For the purposes of the study, “newcomers” are defined to include all Permanent Residents, Refugees, Refugee Claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), Naturalized Citizens, and International Students that have been in Canada from 1 day to 5 years.

2. Although the criteria was to have at least one CIC funded organization in the communities sampled, a broader range of SPOs participated that either cost-share funding with CIC or are solely funded by other federal, provincial, municipal, NGO, private and other sources.

## **1. Expanding the availability and accessibility of newcomer services**

CIC is asked to expand existing settlement services so SPOs can provide better services that match the needs of newcomers in rural communities. In addition, SPOs want to improve access to existing services to include other newcomers, those whom CIC considers ineligible. Moreover, settlement services need to be offered in other nearby locations to overcome the larger distances in rural areas. Equally important, existing integration services need to increase so they are more accessible and suitable to the newcomers, including addressing cultural differences.

## **2. Enhancing Organizational Capacity and Funding at the Agency Level**

CIC is asked for more flexible policies that serve diverse group of newcomers in rural areas. CIC is also asked for core funding of SPOs. The rural SPOs have fewer choices, fewer funding options, and fewer staff options than some of their urban counterparts. Multi-year funding would stabilize their operations for more flexible funding policies to enable SPOs to address the rural issues of distance and low densities when providing services. SPOs also want to be able to benefit and learn from practices others are using in the delivery of similar settlement services.

## **3. Fostering Partnerships to increase organizational capacity in the communities**

CIC is asked to enable the LIPs program in western Canada to develop capacity for partnership and enhance and build upon existing partnerships. Many rural and small centres are already involved in various types of partnerships. The LIPs program can add substantively to existing working relations. In rural communities that are just starting out with few newcomers, a LIP program can help realize a regional approach with key stakeholders. LIPs are also a strategic investment in more established SPOs where recruiting and involving employers, municipal leaders, and others expand existing partnerships. CIC needs to ensure the LIPs program reflects and supports the provincial differences regarding partnerships.



# Introduction

More immigrants (Table 1 and Figure 2) are choosing to migrate to rural areas in Canada yet we know very little about the extent to which settlement services are available to them. The availability of services and types of services offered is quite well documented in metropolitan areas, but more information is required to better understand what is currently happening in rural areas with regards to settlement services. Just over 130,000 permanent residents chose to move to non-urban centers between 2004 and 2013 (Table 1). This combined with the fact that

newcomers are mainly going to few rural communities in each province, is a significant number of newcomer arrivals for small centers (Figure 7). Settlement is the first step towards integration and assists newcomers to overcome barriers related to the immigration experience so they can participate in social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada. A strong settlement sector especially in small rural communities is a key asset for the community to attract, welcome, and retain newcomers.

**Table 1. Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, 2004-2013**

Permanent Residents living outside the big cities	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Manitoba (less Winnipeg)	1,517	1,905	2,327	2,468	3,065	3,547	3,462	2,560	2,236	1,986
Saskatchewan (less Regina & Saskatoon)	485	646	739	988	1,368	2,268	1,872	1,957	2,790	3,286
Alberta (less Calgary & Edmonton)	1,970	2,203	2,449	3,071	3,642	4,799	5,533	5,441	7,293	6,176
British Columbia (less Vancouver & Victoria)	3,262	4,067	4,518	4,735	5,035	5,331	5,332	4,541	5,371	5,511
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,234</b>	<b>8,821</b>	<b>10,033</b>	<b>11,262</b>	<b>13,110</b>	<b>15,945</b>	<b>16,199</b>	<b>14,499</b>	<b>17,690</b>	<b>16,959</b>
<b>Cumulative total</b>	<b>131,752</b>									

Source: CIC Facts and Figures, 2013

This research project aimed to explore settlement services<sup>3</sup> available to newcomers in rural communities across the four western provinces (i.e., British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba) and to identify potential gaps and opportunities in services offered, together with partnerships that are in place to better serve newcomers. This research offers a current snapshot of the settlement services offered in the selected communities, based on knowledge and opinions of a sample of representatives of SPOs. This research is not a comprehensive review of all the services offered in the 29 selected communities and has not attempted to evaluate the performance of settlement services.

It should be acknowledged that a significant portion of newcomers never access services and, therefore, do not come in contact with SPOs. It is likely that the SPOs' perceptions<sup>4</sup> of newcomer needs, challenges, ease of settlement and finding work, are only based on those newcomers with whom they have had contact (newcomers that either accessed services or asked for services but did not get them). A recent<sup>4</sup> study completed by Immigration Research West (IRW) reveals that less than one third (1/3) of newcomers in rural areas across the 4 western provinces accessed services (Table 2). The same study identifies that there are provincial differences with regards to use of settlement services by newcomers in rural areas, with Manitoba's percentage being the highest at 39.7% (Figure 1).

3. Settlement services in general, regardless of the organization that is funding them.

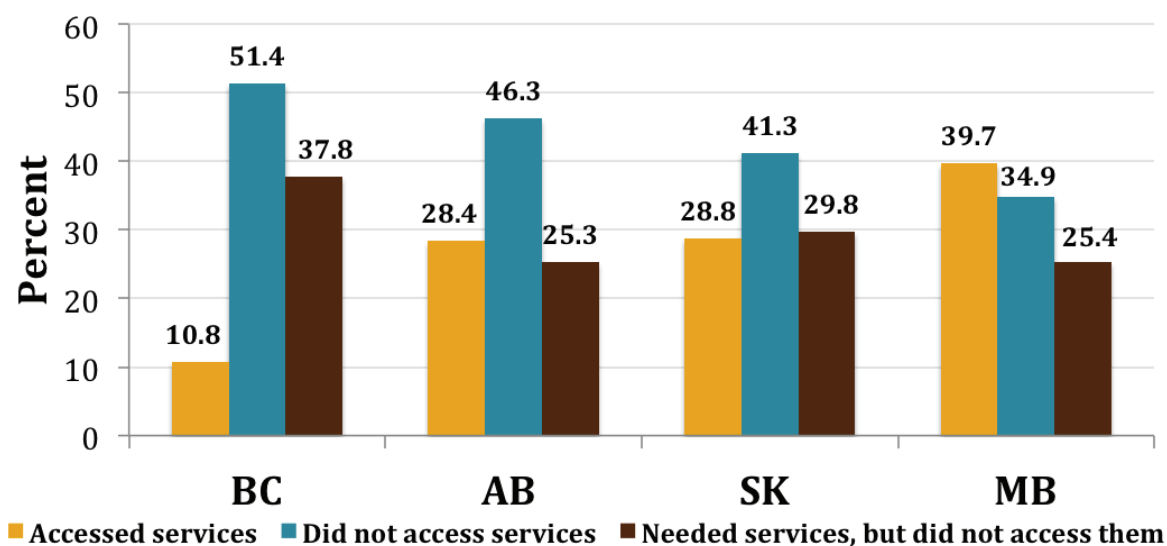
4. "What do we know about service use among newcomers to Canada's western region" by Lori Wilkinson, Jill Bucklaschuk, Jack Shen, Iqbal Chowdhury, Pallabi Bhattacharyya and Tamara Edkins at University of Manitoba.

**Table 2. Rural dwellers least likely to access services.**

	Rural or Urban		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Accessed services	28.9%	37.5%	1044 (36.6%)
Did not access services	42.6%	35.8%	1043 (36.5%)
Needed services, but did not access them	28.5%	26.7%	768 (26.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>305 (100%)</b>	<b>2550 (100%)</b>	<b>2855 (100%)</b>

Source: IRW, University of Manitoba. WCSS, 2013 ( $\chi^2 = 9.361, df=2, P \leq 0.009$ )

**Figure 1. Rural dwellers service use by western province**



Source: IRW, University of Manitoba.

For the purposes of the study, “newcomers” are defined as all Permanent Residents, Refugees, Refugee Claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), Naturalized Citizens, and International Students that have been in Canada from 1 day to 5 years. “Newcomers ineligible for services” are defined as those newcomers who are generally ineligible for one or more of the settlement services funded by CIC, including TFWs, International Students, Naturalized Citizens, and Refugee Claimants. These definitions were created and approved by the co-PIs and advisory panels after discussion.

This study called “Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC’s Western Region” was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through Immigration Research West (IRW) at the University of Manitoba and was directed by the Rural Development Institute (RDI) of

Brandon University. For the purpose of this study a governance structure was set up for all aspects of the project.

Twenty-nine communities across all four western provinces were chosen to participate in this project. In each community, data was collected from representatives of Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) that were invited to participate in a telephone survey. In total 147 representatives of SPOs participated in the survey. The survey results in each community were compiled into 29 community reports, which sought feedback from the participants and immigration stakeholders in the 29 communities. 80 participants in 26 communities provided feedback and this feedback was integrated into the community reports to ensure accuracy and improve validity. Upon completion of the community reports in

each province, findings were synthesized to create four provincial reports, one for each western province. Each provincial report summarizes the findings across the communities sampled in each province and provides an overview of the settlement services provided and needed, identifies key gaps, barriers to accessing services, and describes the extent of community partnerships.

This regional report is the overall summary report for the western Canada study that synthesizes the findings across the four provinces and identifies the common themes that emerged. This report describes the sample of communities and the research design and methods used. Then the report summarizes three concepts related to newcomer arrival, which are settlement, integration, and employment. In addition, a review of the settlement services provided in rural locations and also a description of the service gaps and barriers to accessing settlement services is provided. The report will then move to SPO capacity for the delivery of services, meeting needs of newcomers and identifying the community partnerships undertaken by SPOs in this sample. Finally, conclusions are drawn and suggestions for action are made.



# Profile of the Selected Communities

To fulfill the purpose of this project, 29 communities were selected by provincial advisory panels to be studied across the four western provinces: 10 in British Columbia, 8 in Alberta, 5 in Saskatchewan and 6 in Manitoba (Figure 4). The term “community” is conceptualized in geographic terms as either a “local community” that consists of a single municipality, or a “regional community,” comprising two or more neighboring municipalities and/or areas that are not incorporated as municipalities. Saskatchewan adopted a broader “regional community” approach for all 5 sampled communities in Saskatchewan and each “regional community” covers a region that includes cities, medium to small size towns and villages and rural municipalities consisting of farms, small acreages and hamlets (for more details see the Saskatchewan provincial report – Appendix D)<sup>5</sup>. In British Columbia 5 communities were perceived as clusters of 2 or 3 different communities and in Manitoba this was the case in one community. All the other 18 communities are individual cities or towns.

The 29 communities were selected by the provincial advisory panels based on the following criteria:

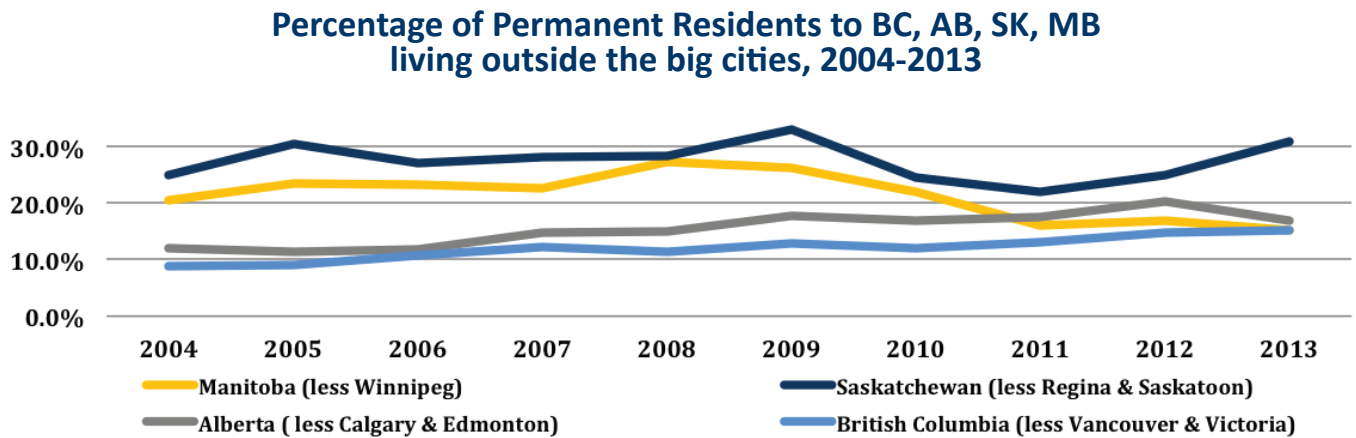
- the community receives newcomers annually
- the community does not have an established Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)
- there is at least one CIC funded Service Provider Organization (SPO) in the community
- must be a small/rural community that reflects rural Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia
- must be from different geographical areas to represent different regions of the province
- the collection of selected communities should provide a representative range of the provinces’ smaller cities and rural areas

The 29 selected communities represented different geographic regions of the four provinces and varied in size and number of newcomers receiving. The total population in these 29 communities (2011 census) is 1,191,228 and they have received a total of 37,330 permanent residents over the period from 2009-2013. The population ranges from 1,761 in Arborg – Ashern, Manitoba to 104,109 in Langley, British Columbia (Figure 5). The number of permanent residents (PRs) that have arrived in the selected communities during the 2009-2013 period also ranges from 88 in Virden Manitoba to 4,320 in Brandon, Manitoba (Figure 6). It is important to note that in some of the selected communities the ratio of the PR arrivals for the 2009-2013 period over the population is significantly high, as for example in the cases of Neepawa, Manitoba (24%) and Brooks, Alberta (19%) (Figure 7).

Figure 2 shows that in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba the percentage of PRs living outside the big cities was historically greater than that in British Columbia and Alberta; with some years being almost double. After 2009 there was a decrease for both Saskatchewan and Manitoba that continued until 2011. In 2011, the percentage of PRs living outside big cities in Saskatchewan started to increase again while the percentage in Manitoba leveled off. British Columbia and Alberta on the other hand seemed to have a steady increase in PRs living outside big cities over the period from 2004-2013. By comparing the western provinces against the rest of Canada (Figure 3), it seems that similar trends occur. The percentage of PRs living outside big cities in the largest provinces like Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia is less than the same percentage in smaller provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, but Prince Edward Island is the exception. Also, the rate of PRs living outside of big cities in the largest provinces seem to follow a steady trend, while this rate in smaller provinces is more volatile.

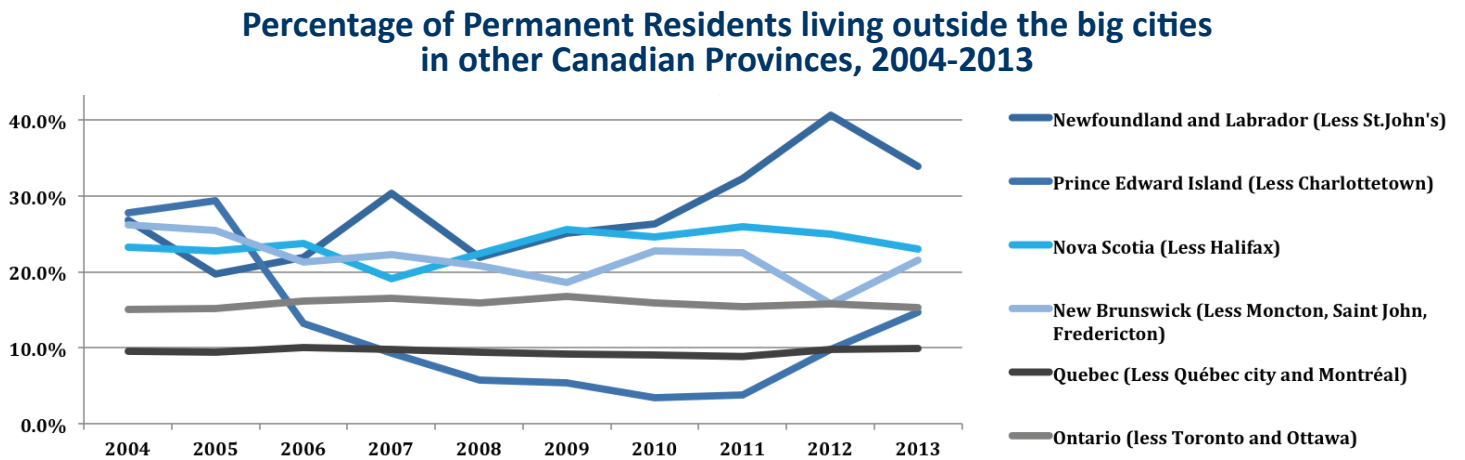
5. In Figures 5,6,7 the number of permanent resident arrivals and population numbers in Saskatchewan “regional communities” represent the number of people in the major urban centers of the regions and do not include the smaller towns, villages, farms etc.

Figure 2. Percentage of Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in the 4 western provinces.



Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2013

Figure 3. Percentage of Permanent Residents living outside the big cities in other Canadian provinces.



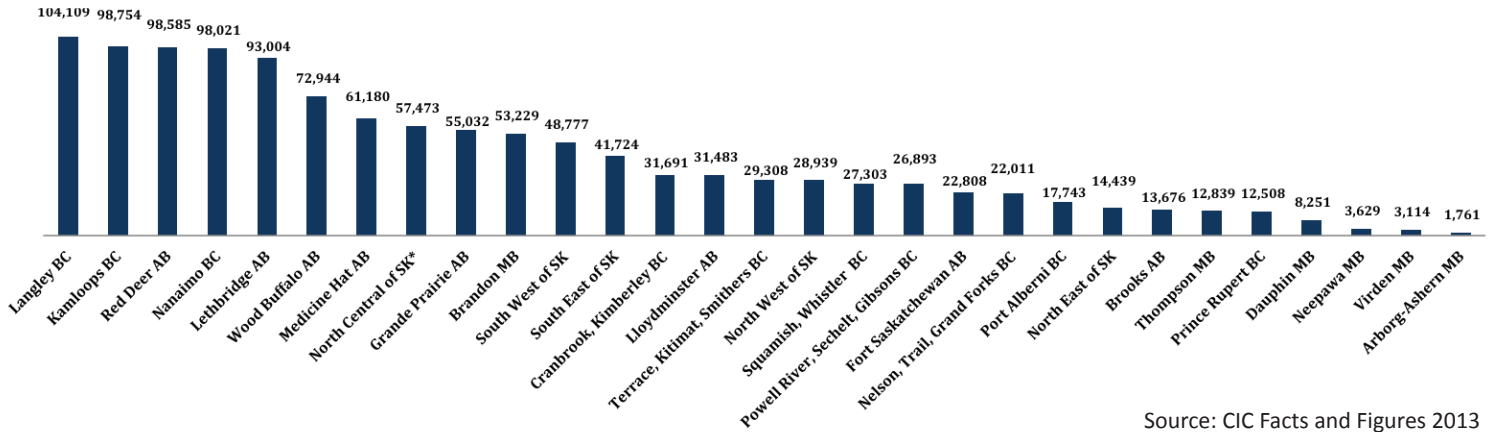
Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2013

Figure 4. 29 selected communities across western provinces



Figure 5. 29 selected communities by population in descending order

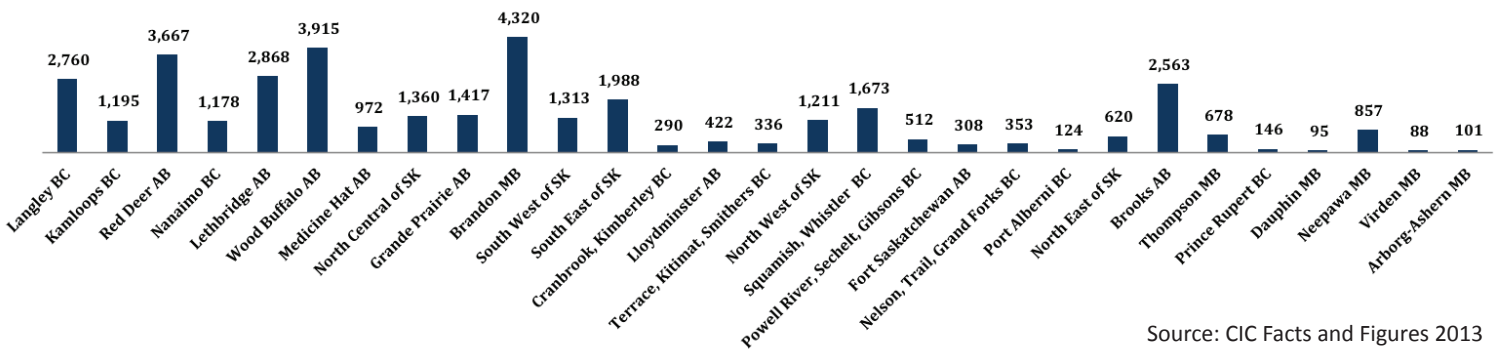
### 29 Selected Communities by Population in Descending Order



Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2013

Figure 6. Permanent Resident arrivals 2009-2013, in the 29 selected communities

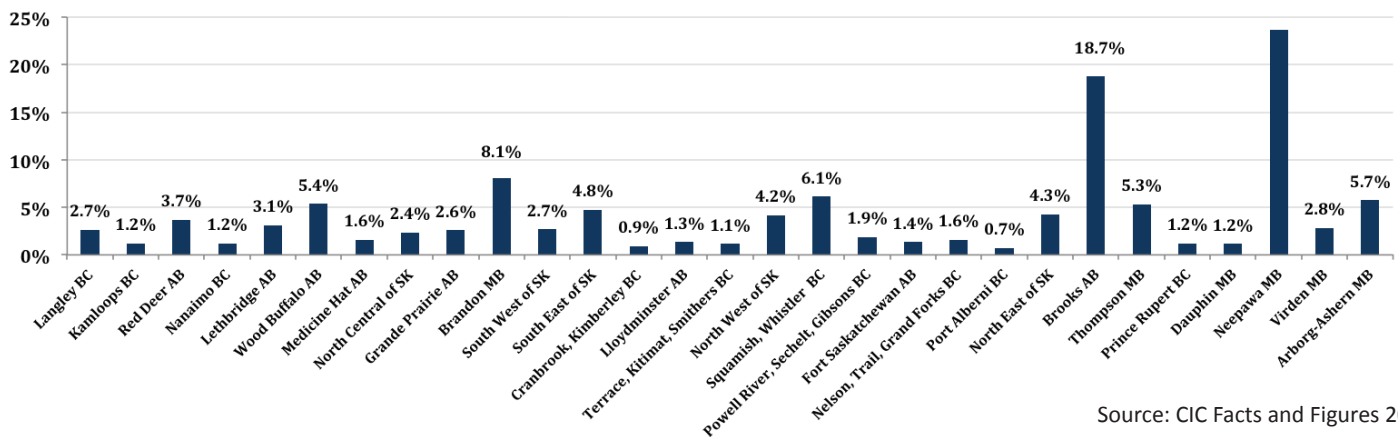
### Permanent Resident Arrivals 2009-2013, in the 29 Selected Communities



Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2013

Figure 7. Permanent Resident arrivals (2009-2013) as a percentage of population in the 29 selected communities

### Permanent Resident Arrivals (2009-2013) as % of Population in the 29 Selected Communities



Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2013

# Research Design and Methods

The purpose of this project was to determine the settlement services available to newcomers, gaps in services and needs in CIC's Western region and to explore the existence and complexity of partnerships among Service Provider Organizations (SPOs).

To fulfill this purpose a diverse case study approach was taken and 29 varied communities were selected across the four provinces in the Western region (i.e., British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba). The total population (2011 census) of the selected communities was 1,191,228 and the number of newcomers they have received (2009-2013) was 37,330. The communities varied in population size from 1,761 in Arborg – Ashern, Manitoba to 104,109 in Langley, British Columbia and two were considered northern and remote (namely Smithers/Terrace/Kitimat in British Columbia and Thompson in Manitoba). The communities also varied in the number of newcomers received (2009-2013), which ranged from 88 in Virden Manitoba to 4,320 in Brandon, Manitoba. This diversity strengthened any findings that were common across several communities; and if findings were common across most or all of the communities, these findings are arguably the strongest.

This project is made possible through partnership with many individuals and organizations. One of the first steps taken was to establish governance structure for the project overall, within provinces and to recruit co-Principle Investigators (co-PIs). Co-PIs are active immigration researchers from Western Canadian Universities and facilitated the planning and research activities across the western provinces. Namely, Dr. Miu Chung Yan (University of British Columbia), Dr. Anna Kirova (University of Alberta), Dr. Joe Garcea (University of Saskatchewan), Dr. Lori Wilkinson (University of Manitoba), and Dr. Bill Ashton (Rural Development Institute, Brandon University).

A Project advisory panel (Appendix A) was established with the goal to provide assistance to the research team and a strategic direction for the project. Four additional Provincial advisory panels were established with a purpose to provide guidance to the research team on issues related to the specific province. The panel members were immigration stakeholders, knowledgeable of the settlement services and integration sector in Western Canada and were representatives of CIC, provincial and municipal governments, provincial umbrella organizations for settlement, and IRW. Each co-PI was the chair of each provincial advisory panel and all co-PIs were members of the project advisory panel.

Data collected for the purpose of this project were about the availability of settlement services, the gaps in services offered, the barriers for newcomers to access services, and the newcomer needs for settlement services. Additionally, data were collected relative to existing partnerships among SPOs, SPO organizational capacity and the ease of settlement and finding work for newcomers together with the challenges that they face. The survey tool created by the research team received feedback and suggestions by panel members in all provinces and was then finalized to reflect this feedback.

The allocation of the number of communities to sample across the four western provinces was proportionate to the number of permanent residents the province received outside the major metropolitan areas. Out of the target number of 30 communities to be studied for this project BC and AB were allocated  $\pm 10$  and SK and MB  $\pm 5$  (Table 3). In each province the provincial panels selected the communities for inclusion. The sample of communities for some provinces was higher than the projected allocation and others were slightly below, with a final sample of 29 communities participating from the four western provinces.

In each community data were collected from organizations that serve newcomers in the community. Telephone surveys were completed by senior officials from the CIC funded SPOs.

A snowball technique was then used to identify and interview a broader range of SPOs in the selected communities that either cost-share funding with CIC or are solely funded by other federal, provincial, municipal, NGO, private and other sources.

In total, data were collected from representatives of 147 service provider organizations that participated in telephone surveys in October, November, and December of 2014 (Table 4). Survey participants were knowledgeable members of SPOs within each of the selected communities and mainly included senior officials such as general managers, directors, and program coordinators.

Fluid Surveys was used to store and analyze the survey. Halfway through the data collection process, participants raised two concerns regarding the survey tool that led to subsequent revision. Participants felt the survey tool was mainly applicable to CIC funded organizations and organizations that have a primary mandate to serve newcomers. Other smaller organizations who were not primarily newcomer settlement service providers had difficulties answering surveys questions, as for example the

number and the type of newcomers they serve, the services offered in the community by other SPOs, and their organizational capacities. The second concern raised was the time needed for participants (approximately 45 minutes) to complete the survey, which caused recruitment challenges. In order to address these concerns the co-PIs, together with the chair of the project advisory panel met and decided to use an abbreviated version of the survey where lower priority questions were removed and open-ended questions replaced some of the structured ones. This led to a slight loss of detail in the data but information regarding the key research questions remained unchanged. This has also caused a timing issue since extra time was spent in converting the long surveys into short in order to ensure comparable results in the data. In British Columbia, all surveys were completed with the long survey tool and in Saskatchewan all with the short version. Manitoba and Alberta are the two provinces that collected data with both survey versions and in these cases data from the long form was converted to short form to simplify analysis.

Data for each of the 29 selected communities were compiled into a Community Report, drafts of which were submitted to survey respondents and in some cases additional immigration stakeholders in the communities for feedback. Eleven communities had the opportunity to provide feedback via teleconference and three via a face-to-face feedback session. Participants from the other fifteen communities, together with participants that were not able to attend the feedback sessions had the opportunity to provide feedback via e-mail (Table 4). In total, 80 individuals in 26 communities provided feedback.

The feedback led to revisions in the community reports to ensure validity and improved accuracy of the reports. Information from the community reports was combined to create the four Provincial reports. The provincial reports provide an overview of the settlement services offered and needed, identify key gaps, barriers to accessing services, and describe the extent of community partnerships (For specific information about each Provincial report see appendices B-E).

Finally, findings from the four provincial reports were synthesized to create this regional report that identifies the common themes that emerged across the four western provinces and concludes with actions needed to improve the delivery of settlement services in the rural areas of western Canada.

## LIMITATIONS

There are three caveats to take into consideration while reviewing the findings presented here.

First, the results are from 29 communities, which were purposefully selected to maximize diversity, so they were not randomly selected nor were the selections exhaustive (or a census). However, communities were selected by each of the provincial advisory panels to represent a variety of community sizes (i.e., excluding large centres), at various stages in the development of settlement services, and were geographically dispersed throughout the province. The findings, therefore, should be taken in this context and, since not all rural communities were included, there were some communities with well-developed settlement services networks that were strategically not included.

Second, this research did not speak to newcomers themselves about services, integration, and partnerships. Data was collected exclusively from representatives of service provider organizations for this research. It is possible that newcomers might have a different perception of the settlement service strengths and gaps in their communities, but this component was left to another research undertaking and suggestions for future research are discussed at the end of this report. In addition, it should be acknowledged that a significant portion of newcomers never access services and, therefore, do not come in contact with SPOs, which means that the SPOs perceptions' of newcomer needs are only based on those newcomers with whom they have had contact. It is possible that newcomers' service needs might be different if all newcomers (e.g., those who seek services and those who do not) were considered.

Third, as previously mentioned, there were two versions of the survey (i.e., long and short) used in this research. British Columbia completed all their interviews using the long survey, which could have influenced the findings. For example, the long form survey provided more detail and though this was converted to the short form, may have lead to the finding that British Columbia offers a broader range of services.



**Table 3. Method used for allocation of the communities sampled by Province**

<b>Permanent residents living outside the large cities by province</b>	<b>PRs outside the big cities 2013</b>	<b>PRs living outside the big cities in each province as % of the total</b>	<b>Proportionate allocation of the 30 communities to the number of PRs living outside the big cities</b>
<b>British Columbia</b> (less Vancouver & Victoria)	<b>5,511</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>± 10 communities</b> (30 x 32.5%)
<b>Alberta</b> (less Calgary & Edmonton)	<b>6,176</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>± 10 communities</b> (30 x 36.4%)
<b>Saskatchewan</b> (less Regina & Saskatoon)	<b>3,286</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>± 5 communities</b> (30 x 19.4%)
<b>Manitoba</b> (less Winnipeg)	<b>1,986</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>± 5 communities</b> (30 x 11.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,959</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>± 30</b>

**Table 4. Communities sampled by Province and number of surveys completed and feedback received.**

Community names	Number of surveys Completed	Number of people providing feedback
<b>British Columbia – 10 communities</b>		
Nanaimo	3	1
Langley	6	2
Kamloops	3	1
Cranbrook, Kimberley	4	2
Terrace, Kitimat, Smithers	6	5
Squamish, Whistler	6	5
Powell River, Sechelt, Gibsons	5	1
Nelson, Trail, Grand Forks	3	0
Port Alberni	2	0
Prince Rupert	5	0
<b>Total for British Columbia</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Alberta – 8 communities</b>		
Red Deer	4	3
Lethbridge	4	4
Wood Buffalo	5	3
Medicine Hat	3	2
Grande Prairie	5	3
Lloydminster	3	3
Fort Saskatchewan	6	3
Brooks	7	2
<b>Total for Alberta</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Saskatchewan – 5 regions</b>		
North Central of SK	5	2
South West of SK	12	1
South East of SK	13	2
North West of SK	9	2
North East of SK	7	3
Multiple regions	2	1
<b>Total for Saskatchewan</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Manitoba – 6 communities</b>		
Brandon	4	6
Thompson	2	6
Dauphin	3	5
Neepawa	4	5
Virden	4	5
Arborg-Ashern	2	2
<b>Total for Manitoba</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>80</b>

# Key Findings

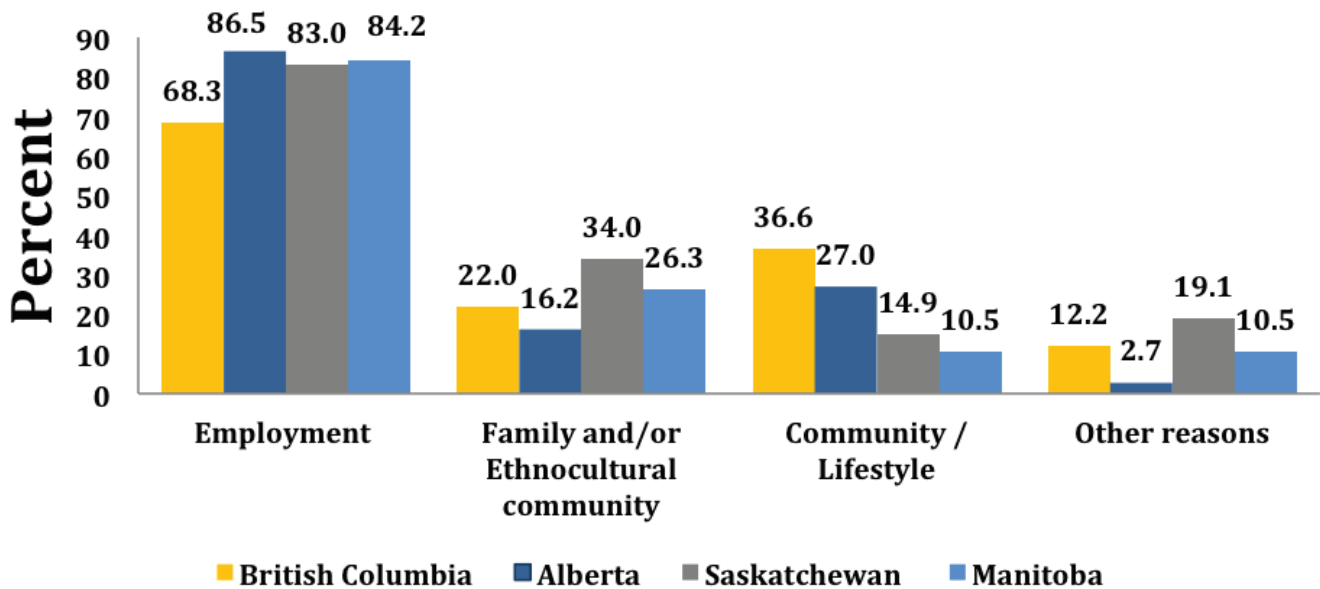
The following section will summarize the findings from the surveys completed by 147 participants, from 29 rural communities across the four western provinces. This section will begin by reporting participants' perceptions regarding how easily newcomers can settle and find employment within their communities. An inventory of settlement services is discussed, as well as highlighting those services frequently offered and service gaps in the western region. In addition, the report lists the potential barriers newcomers face in rural communities when trying to access services. Finally, SPOs capacity to deliver services and their reported partnerships with other SPOs and community stakeholders will be discussed.



## NEWCOMER ARRIVAL & INTEGRATION

More immigrants are choosing to reside in rural communities and 94% of the participants reported seeing an increase in the number of newcomer living in their communities. The majority of participants in all four provinces felt that employment is the main reason for this increase. Other possible reasons are the existence of family members in the community and/or the existence of large ethnocultural groups (e.g. Pilipino community); the community itself and the lifestyle that it offers to its residents; and other reasons such as provincial nominee program, local college or university attracting international students etc. (Figure 8). It should be noted that if we exclude the participants that mentioned employment as a reason, the percentages of participants only mentioned the rest of possible reasons drop significantly.

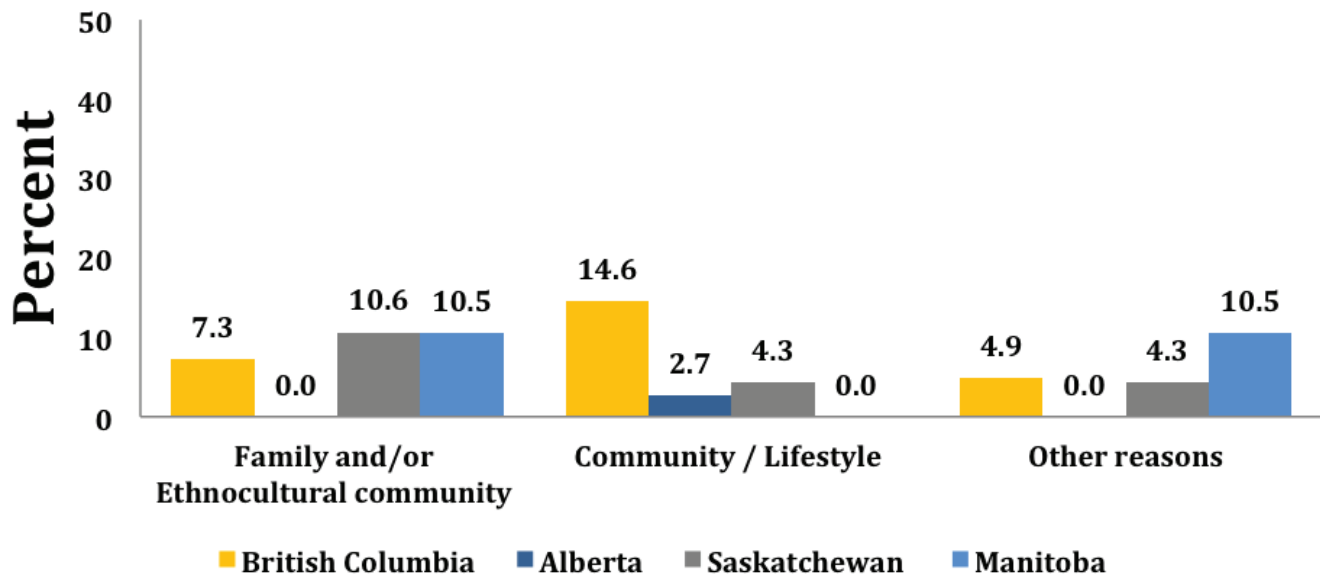
Figure 8. Reasons related to the increase of newcomers living in the communities as mentioned by participants.



Upon arrival, newcomers aim to settle into their new community, which includes finding a job, affordable<sup>6</sup> housing, understanding the available resources within the community, and adapting to daily life in a new country. Integration, on the other hand, is more than simply finding a job or a house, but feeling involved as a member of the community. In other words, settlement might be viewed as finding a house and integration as feeling at home.

Both settlement and integration are crucial for the health and well being of not only the newcomers, but also the community at large since both affect newcomer retention. However, settlement and integration into the community are processes with different timelines and urgencies, and often depend on different services and resources.

**Figure 9. Reasons related to the increase of newcomers living in the communities as mentioned by participants. Participants that mentioned employment as a reason were excluded.**



Understanding the settlement and integration of newcomers in rural communities is crucial because less is currently known about how well this is working; yet newcomers are moving to these areas. Participants across the provinces were asked how easy or difficult they felt it was for newcomers to settle in their community. More than half of participants in 3 of the 4 provinces felt that it was somewhat difficult, difficult, or very difficult for newcomers to settle, with the majority of Manitoba (52%), Alberta (58%) and British Columbia (59%) participants reporting settlement was difficult. Saskatchewan was the one exception with the majority of respondents (61%) reporting that settlement was somewhat easy, easy, or very easy. However, there were regional differences within Saskatchewan with 3 of the 5 regions reporting the ease of settlement, but the remaining 2 reporting this as difficult. Themes emerged across the 4 provinces regarding the settlement challenges newcomers face and language ability, lack of affordable housing and childcare, the challenges of transportation, and acceptance by local

residents in rural areas were identified as common concerns. The challenges newcomers face are, in some cases, related to shortcomings in community infrastructure (i.e., childcare, affordable housing, public transportation) and in others are related to settlement service shortages (i.e., help finding housing, childcare for attending services) or the personal skills or knowledge (i.e., language ability) of newcomers themselves. There are two factors regarding services that the research participants identified and ought to be differentiated; the infrastructure service (provided by the municipalities or other levels of government) and the support service provided by the SPOs. For example, in all 6 communities sampled in Manitoba, the shortage of housing was identified as a major challenge faced by the newcomers who decided to reside in these communities. On the other hand, help finding housing was reported as being offered by SPOs in all communities. In this case, the support service that SPOs offer becomes inefficient when there is shortage in housing infrastructure. These infrastructure issues were evident in all 4 provinces and

6. Affordable does not necessarily mean low income housing.

especially in the areas of housing, childcare, and transportation. At the CIC's 4 western region Settlement Summits some of these settlement concerns were identified as affecting immigrants arriving in larger centres as well; however, the rural and remote locations of the communities sampled in this study can magnify these challenges experienced by newcomers. For example, for newcomers settling in northern British Columbia transportation is not simply learning how to navigate public transportation, but a complete closer of roads between communities (e.g., Kitimat and Prince Rupert).

Those participants who suggested settlement was easy often reported an effective settlement service networks in small towns. Though confusion about where to find services was cited as a possible barrier to settlement in many of the communities, other participants indicated that referrals in small, rural areas was actually facilitated by the fact that residents were more aware of what services were offered. Rural communities can be, in some cases, more insular in nature and wary of newcomers, but can also be quite welcoming and supportive of those who choose to reside in their community. However, integration requires that newcomers develop social networks and supports, which can be challenging when there are not others from a group with which one feels familiar or comfortable. This was particularly evident in rural areas receiving small numbers of immigrants and from different source countries. Some of the newcomer settlement success stories seem to appear for those who move into communities where there is already a large ethno-cultural community with which they identify or family who has already settled in the community.

Settlement and integration into one's community is a crucial step in the immigration process for newcomers. However, the research participants predominantly see settlement, as difficult for newcomers in rural communities in western Canada. Though small rural communities offer strengths in familiarity with services and referrals, there are also challenges: community infrastructure not keeping up with growing demands (i.e., childcare, housing), challenges associated with size of community (e.g., lack of public transportation), and communities' potentially wary of newcomers.

### Summary

- In rural western Canadian communities, settlement was seen by more than half the participants in 3 of the 4 provinces as difficult for newcomers. Main reasons for the settlement challenge include language ability, lack of affordable housing and childcare, the challenges of transportation, and acceptance by local residents in rural areas.

- Small rural communities offer both benefits and challenges to newcomers. In small communities there is familiarity with the services available, facilitating referrals, but it can be hard for newcomers when there is a lack of childcare, affordable housing, and public transportation. In addition, small rural communities can be insular and potentially wary of newcomers.



### EMPLOYMENT

Employment is a necessary part of the settlement process because income is needed to provide for oneself and one's family. There were provincial differences in the reported ease of finding employment. The majority of participants from British Columbia (88%) reported that finding employment was very difficult, difficult, or somewhat difficult for newcomers, while the majority of participants from Saskatchewan (80%), and Manitoba (72%) reported it was easy, somewhat easy, or very easy. A more mixed response from Alberta's participants, with just over half (54%) reporting finding employment was difficult on some level, with an exception of Brooks where the majority of participants felt it was easy. Many rural prairie communities (e.g., Brandon and Neepawa, Manitoba; Brooks, Alberta) have food processing or manufacturing jobs available that offer employment opportunities to newcomers. In Saskatchewan, apart from the availability of jobs due to the economic boom, the vast majority of newcomers have arrived through the PNP or TFW program, both of which have a pre-arranged employment component.

Two challenges for newcomers seeking gainful employment emerged in all four western provinces: English language proficiency and foreign credential recognition. These were challenges that were also mirrored in the CIC's western region Summits. Given that there is a variety of community sizes represented in this data, this finding was further analyzed by community size to see if community size had an impact on the employment challenges faced by newcomers and no difference was found. In other words, language proficiency and foreign credential recognition are both key challenges for newcomers in communities of all sizes in rural western Canada. In addition, other concerns reported were transportation, availability of childcare to cover work hours, lack of jobs, and potential employer discrimination. Some of these concerns are directly related to the inability of community infrastructure to keep up with growing demand, which has an impact on both longtime residents as well as newcomers, and the increase in newcomers can strain these shortages (i.e., childcare and housing). However, the challenge of getting one's foreign credentials recognized and struggles with language have a direct

impact on the streaming of many newcomers, despite educational background and skill level, into entry level or service roles. This distinction between a job and a career emerges as a common challenge. Though many newcomers come to Canada expecting to work an entry-level position, those with degrees or professional experience may not expect the difficulty and expense of getting foreign credentials recognized. Newcomers who expected to continue in the pre-arrival career may face disappointment if they are unable to get their credentials recognized and are under employed. Most SPOs who identified that newcomers could easily get jobs qualified this statement with an understanding that these jobs are most likely entry level. Jobs for newcomers that are not entry level or service roles are more challenging to find, especially in small rural towns across the western region.

In addition, the rural, and in some cases remote, locations investigated in this study aggravate the challenges newcomers face with regards to employment. In many instances educational upgrading is necessary to move from an entry-level job to a career or mid level job; however, small towns offer fewer opportunities to newcomers for upgrading their education. For example, though not the case for all, some smaller communities do not have community colleges and newcomers need to travel to larger centres in order to upgrade education.

Employment is necessary in order to settle and integrate into a community. Participant responses would suggest that newcomers looking for employment potentially have an easier time in the prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, a more challenging time in Alberta, but a difficult time in British Columbia. English language ability and foreign credential recognition, along with several other issues, play a role in both finding employment and the quality of those positions.

### Summary

- Finding employment is a crucial step in the settlement process. More than 75% of participants from Manitoba and Saskatchewan felt finding employment was easy for newcomers, while participants from British Columbia (88%) and Alberta (54%) felt it was difficult.
- Two key issues identified in finding employment were the challenges associated with foreign credential recognition and English language proficiency. Other issues, such as, transportation, availability of childcare to cover work hours, lack of jobs, and potential employer discrimination were also mentioned as impacting newcomers' employment.



## SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS

One of the key purposes of this research was to inventory the settlement services<sup>7</sup> currently offered in rural communities in western Canada by asking settlement service providers in these communities. Each community in this sample, with an exception of Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta, had at least one settlement service provider that was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the vast majority of the communities also had other<sup>8</sup> settlement service providers and community stakeholders who supported newcomers in some capacity.

Language proficiency is an essential skill and is a core-funded service from CIC. Language training was offered in every one of the 29 rural communities sampled from western Canada and this was the only service offered by all communities in the sample. However, some communities only offered entry-level language training and the services are not always sufficient to meet newcomers' needs. The challenge of language for newcomers can be having sufficient English skills to meet the basic requirements for entry-level positions, but can also be progressive English language skill development in order to proceed to mid-level positions or work within one's field of experience and education.

Three other services were offered in more than 90% of the communities and were social inclusion/integration support, help with daily life, and help finding a job. Given how fundamental these services are to the adjustment of newcomers it is not surprising that they are offered so commonly.

Though services related to settlement are offered most often, there needs to be more continuity between settlement and integration. Settlement services focus heavily on the settlement of newcomers, likely because they receive core funding for these activities, but taking settlement one step further and ensuring newcomer integration is also a necessary step in the settlement process especially in rural communities where newcomer integration assists newcomer retention. Successful settlement provides a strong foundation for the potential integration, without successful settlement integration will be nearly impossible. Integration can take forms, perhaps a soccer league for newcomer women or a mentor family initiative would be helpful. Programs such as these are offered in some areas, but a more consistent focus on following up settlement services with integration efforts would facilitate newcomers feeling part of the community and expanding their social networks.

7. For a list of possible settlement services offered in the communities see Appendix G.

8. The non-exclusively CIC funded organizations receive their funding from other federal, provincial, municipal, NGO, private and other sources such as fees, donations or are based on volunteers. Additionally the sample included SPOs that are partially funded by CIC.



Though all services listed in the questionnaire were offered somewhere in western Canada, the services reportedly offered in the fewest number of communities were investment opportunities (offered by 48%), financial supports (55%), recreation services (55%), and services for seniors (58%). Although these services were offered in some communities they were not broadly identified as needed. However, there are exceptions to this by region and by community where there were specific calls for services for seniors (e.g. Fort McMurray, Alberta; Brandon and Thompson, Manitoba) or financial supports (e.g. in Saskatchewan, financial/income support to meet basic need especially for the ineligible newcomers). All other services listed in the survey were offered by the majority (between 60 – 90%) of the communities in the sample, but in some cases, as for example in Terrace/Kitimat/Smithers, British Columbia, services are provided on a flexible ad hoc basis, which is difficult to describe in standardized funding reports. However, in 24 of the 29 communities in the sample it was suggested that there was some confusion about what services were available within their communities. In some cases, participants were unable to identify other settlement service providers in the community, or did not know that specific services were actually offered by other SPOs in the community, which would suggest referrals might be challenging in such situations. A more detailed description of settlement services offered by province and by community can be reviewed in the community and provincial reports (Appendix B-E).

There were provincial differences in the number of services offered. For example, British Columbia and Alberta service providers reported offering a much broader array of services, while the list of services offered in Saskatchewan and Manitoba was not as exhaustive. This may simply be a result of the maturation of services in provinces that historically have received more newcomers or a result of the usage of the long form survey utilized by British Columbia, which provided more detail on services offered. In any case, there were exceptions to this, for example, the community of Port Alberni, British Columbia and Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta. Participants in Port Alberni noted that in their community there is no SPO that focuses on serving newcomers and as a result newcomers tend to rely on family members for support. Fort Saskatchewan currently lacks a centralized CIC funded settlement agency that could meet the needs of a growing bedroom community. It should be noted that communities were strategically chosen to represent different sizes and range of experience with newcomer settlement and in some cases communities with more developed settlement services and experience were

not included in the sample (e.g., Steinbach, Manitoba). Therefore, these findings should not be generalized to all rural communities in each respective province.

All of the communities sampled across western Canada identified that all or most of the services offered in the communities needed to expand in order to meet demand. Although settlement services are offered to some extent in all communities, participants almost unanimously suggested the expansion of services is needed such as: specific services (currently offered) need to be offered more often; the definition of who is eligible for services needs to be broadened; and services need to be located in more communities within given geographic regions.

The services currently offered that were identified as requiring expansion to meet demand were advanced and job specific language training, help with foreign credential recognition, within community transportation, childcare during service delivery (i.e., during English language class). There is a specific need for rural communities to expand the types of English language training classes offered and to include more advanced language training and training specific for certain employment roles. In some cases expansion is required in the method of delivery (e.g. more flexible hours, weekend classes, distance delivery), or that a class currently offered needs be offered additional times per week to meet increased demand and reduce long waiting lists.

Participants also wanted the definition of which newcomers are eligible to be expanded to include those who are currently ineligible, in order to better meet the needs of the entire newcomer community, which will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section of this report.

Additionally, services need to be offered in more communities within specific geographic regions. For example, in the case of Saskatchewan where a regionalized service network system was established (i.e., Regional Newcomer Gateways), services are offered within the broader region, but need to be offered in more communities within the region. The distances within the region in some cases (e.g., 150 kms) are too large to travel and inhibit newcomers from accessing services. These issues were evident across the four western provinces. An additional example, in Thompson, Manitoba language assessment is currently offered once per fiscal year, by an agency visiting the community from Winnipeg since there is no local assessor. However, in order for the English language classes to be organized and students to enroll it is essential for assessments to be completed on an ongoing and as needed basis.

Therefore, the location of the communities, rural or remote, studied had an impact on the delivery of settlement services. As mentioned, not all services are available in remote locations. Rural SPOs need to be effective problem solvers, partner effectively, and be creative with their resources in order to match limited services with the needs of newcomers. If a need is identified, it is often supported on an ad hoc basis, which can be hard in some cases to inventory or quantify. In Thompson, Manitoba for example a participant mentioned that their organization serves newcomers in other northern Manitoba communities by providing advice and assistance over the phone. Rural SPOs have fewer resources or stakeholders at their fingertips, which makes referrals more challenging. As mentioned, some clients need services that can only be found in urban areas, which requires travel or doing without. Future settlement service policy should be sensitive to the unique needs and constraints of offering services in rural and remote areas and allows for policy flexibility, which can adapt policy to the needs of the location, rather than a one size fits all policy approach.

### Summary

- A broad range of settlement services are offered in rural communities in western Canada. However, results indicate that services offered need to expand to offer certain services more often, offer more services, offer services to more people, and offer certain services in more communities within a larger geographic region.
- The services reported most often are directly related to newcomers' actual settlement and functioning within their new community. Social inclusion/integration support, helping with daily life, and help finding a job were all offered in 90% or more of the communities.
- Language training was offered in all 29 communities, yet this is mostly the case for basic language training. More advanced and job specific language training needs to be offered in order to help newcomers advance their language skills and qualify for better employment opportunities.
- The majority of services offered focus on the settlement of newcomers, which is necessary. However, more emphasis should be placed on also integrating newcomers into the community, which will require more services and support.
- The delivery of settlement services can be impacted by the community location, with remote locations facing more challenges in addition to those experienced by rural communities.



### CIC INELIGIBLE NEWCOMERS

Mentioned above is the inventory of services offered, but what services do newcomers, both eligible and ineligible for CIC funded services, need? Those newcomers who are eligible for CIC funded services include refugees and permanent residents and those who are not eligible for CIC funded services include refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, new or returning Canadians, and international students have extremely similar needs. It is clear from the responses that newcomers' key needs, as identified by the SPOs, were language supports, help finding housing and employment, information and orientation, and social inclusion/integration support. However, the assessments reportedly undertaken by the SPOs in this sample were fairly informal in nature and it would be interesting to see if the list of necessary services would be different if needs assessments were more formalized or if newcomers were directly surveyed.

Participants across all four provinces felt strongly that the definition of those who are eligible for services should be broadened to include some of those newcomers who currently do not have access to CIC funded services. Service providers do not seem to differentiate between those whom are eligible and those who are not, they are simply all newcomers whom are in need of help. In many cases, SPOs report a moral dilemma at having to refuse to help ineligible newcomers, while some strain their resources in order to provide help, and others seek municipal, provincial, or private funding in order to ensure that they can provide support for those who are not serviced by CIC. Many participants reported that not meeting the needs of newcomers who are ineligible has a negative impact on the long-term well-being of the community, delay integration for those who stay<sup>9</sup> (Figure 10), and increase potential frustration experienced by both newcomers and SPOs. Newcomers who access a variety of services early in their settlement experience a smoother adjustment and higher propensity for a successful settlement. Support for this group, especially for some core services or for the ones in transition to becoming permanent residents, needs to be provided, as not doing so may lead to an experience of alienation and have negative impact on the adjustment, sense of community integration, and social inclusion the newcomer has, which hurts both the newcomer and the community in the long run.

Certain groups of newcomers are currently ineligible for services funded by CIC. Participants in the study felt

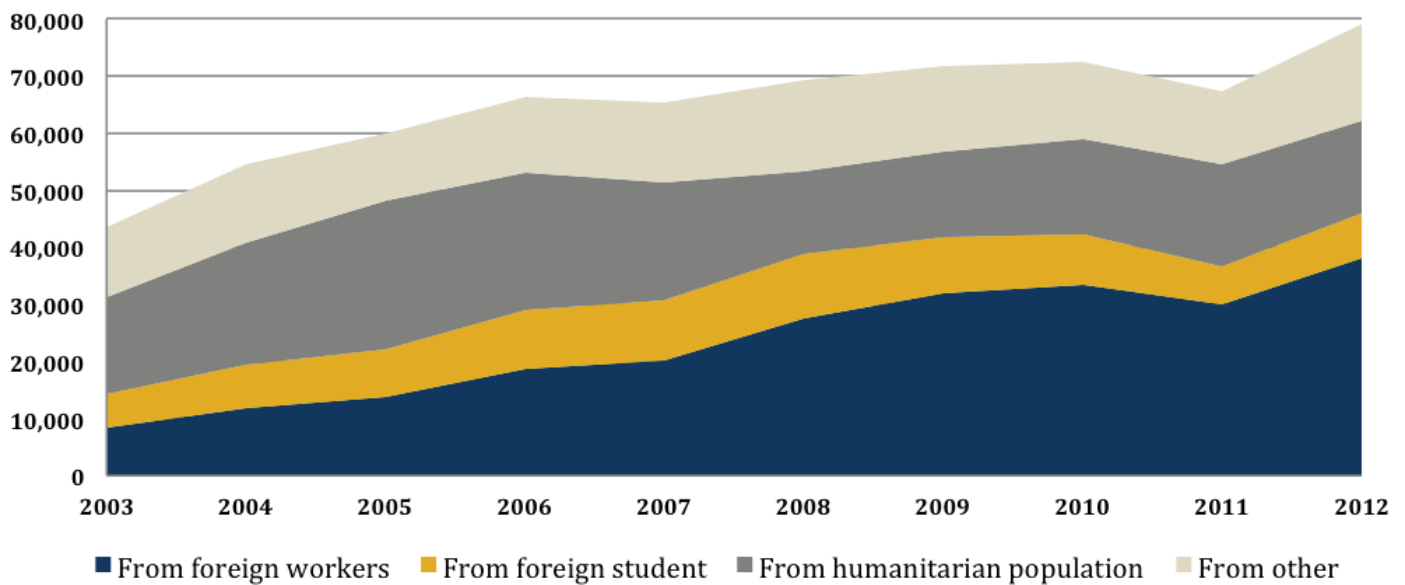
9. Figure 10.: The number of temporary residents that become permanent residents has almost double from around 40,000 in 2003 to approximately 80,000 in 2012. Note: Canadian figures available only.

strongly that the definition for eligibility should be broadened to permit more newcomers to access services. Only supporting certain types of newcomers and not others is a challenge for SPOs, especially when the need is so great. The long-term health of the community and adjustment of the newcomers are the key concerns and the justification for the expansion of the definition of eligibility.

**Summary**

- The needs of newcomers, either eligible or ineligible for CIC funded services, are very similar and participants from across western Canada felt that services should be extended to a broader range of newcomers, who currently do not qualify.
- New policies that support those who are currently considered ineligible are crucial for the long-term health of both newcomers and communities.

**Figure 10. Canada: Transition from Temporary to Permanent Residence, 2003-2012**



Source: CIC Facts and Figures 2012 - Immigration Overview



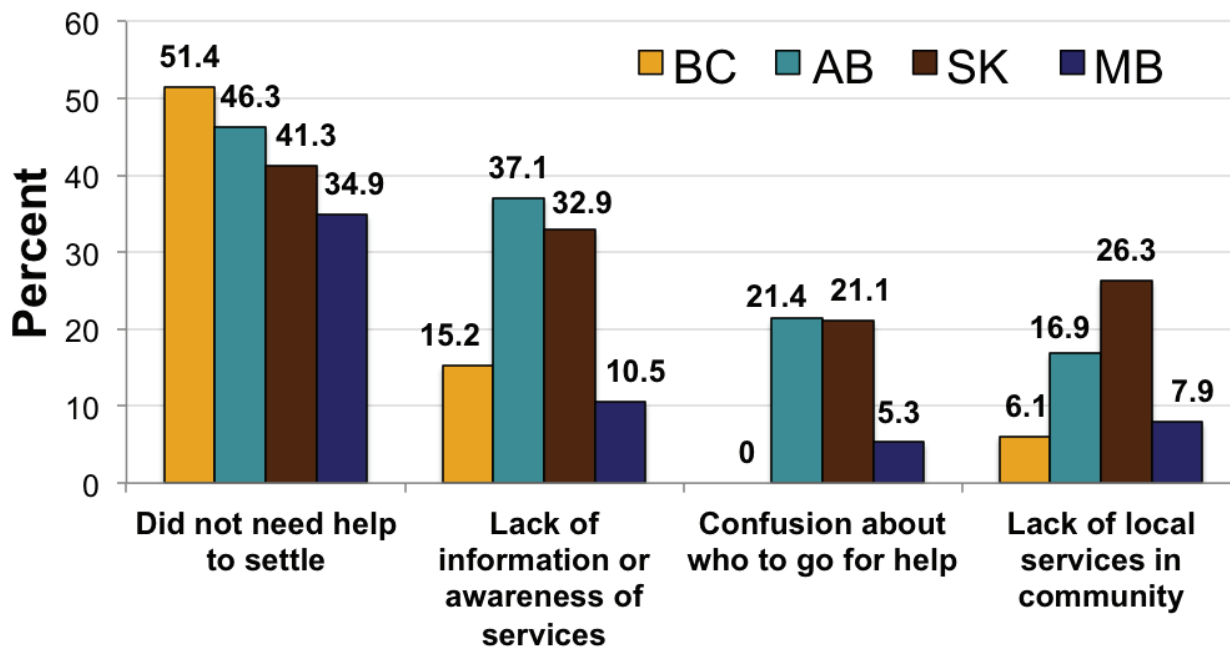
## BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

Though services are readily available there are circumstances that inhibit newcomers from seeking or access services. Participants in this study identified several barriers that newcomers face (for a list of possible concerns about the ability of newcomers to access services see Appendix F), such as language ability, ineligibly for services, access to childcare during services, challenges with transportation to services, and confusion as to where to access services. Based on participants' perceptions, a poor command of the English language can make newcomers hesitant to seek help or struggle to find information about services. As mentioned earlier, a key barrier to accessing services is eligibility, with certain types

of newcomers not qualifying for services. For those with small children, a lack of childcare during service delivery (e.g., English classes) may reduce the likelihood that they will attend. In rural areas, population is widely spread out, public transportation is often not available or limited and this may make getting to the SPO offices more challenging, especially in the winter months when the climate can be harsh. Identifying these barriers is the first step in addressing them.

It should be acknowledged that a significant percentage of newcomers do not need to access services. As Figure 9 reveals (source: IRW)<sup>4</sup> this percentage ranges by province and can be as high as 51% in the case of British Columbia.

Figure 11. Rural dwellers: Reasons for not accessing services by western province.



Source: IRW, Univeristy of Manitoba.

Newcomers face a number of challenges when accessing or choosing to access services. Barriers to accessing settlement services for newcomers are language proficiency, having small children and the SPO do not offer childcare, and having limited access to public transportation. However, as mentioned, not all newcomers need to access services.

### Summary

- In some cases, services are available, but newcomers face barriers in accessing those services. Key barriers identified were language proficiency, having small children and the SPO do not offer childcare, and having limited access to public transportation.

## SPO CAPACITY FOR DELIVERING SERVICES AND MEETING NEEDS

Participants were asked if their organization had enough capacity to perform a variety of functions (for a list of possible organizational capacities see Appendix I) and they indicated if their capacity was adequate or not. The majority of respondents from all four provinces indicated that they had adequate capacity to communicate with stakeholders and meet reporting requirements. All but British Columbia reported that they had sufficient capacity to coordinate with other service providers in their community. In contrast, the majority of respondents from all provinces, except British Columbia, indicated that they had insufficient staff or staff skills to deliver services. However, all provinces reported a lack of adequate capacity to deliver settlement services in both official languages and all could use more financial support from both governmental and non-governmental sources. SPOs need core funding in order to have a stable financial base from which to develop programs and offer services effectively. Finally, the lack of capacity to offer services in both official languages may actually reflect the demand for this capacity in the rural communities sampled, rather than a capacity deficiency.

British Columbia seems to report adequate capacity in staff skills and staff, ability to create governing documents and strategic plans, whereas in other regions these are seen as inadequate. British Columbia welcomes the largest number of newcomers out of the four provinces and perhaps their settlement services are more established and developed, compared to the Prairie Provinces. Although there were some communities in each province with more developed capacity that were not included in the sample.

As mentioned earlier, rural areas have to be more flexible and creative with their resources and sometimes this means an informal delivery, which is hard to inventory. In addition to small organizational size, rural SPOs also report staff turn over and difficulty finding skilled employees with experience with settlement services. In relation to staff skill development, professional development opportunities are often offered in larger centres, which would require the use of vital funds for staff to travel, especially since many of the service providers lack core funding. SPOs express an interest in availing these professional development opportunities to rural communities. Rural Service provider organizations would like to have access to professional

development opportunities and would like to see an increase of the knowledge dissemination from CIC. This dissemination, might take several forms, perhaps a computer portal for SPOs to access, where notification of policy changes, help, information, or where SPO success stories or best practices could be shared. Also, an initiative where SPOs from rural areas could come together to discuss, without the concerns of SPOs from major centres dominating the discussion, would enable information sharing and the opportunity to address the unique challenges rural communities face in relation to newcomer settlement and integration. SPOs, especially the rural agencies in this sample, would like more direct and personalized contact with CIC. For example, rather than having to call the 1-800 number to access information, perhaps having an allocated CIC support contact at the provincial level would be helpful in ensuring service delivery is consistent, informed, and accurate. All of these capacity concerns relating to location are confirmation that there is not a one size fits all method of service delivery and knowledge dissemination. This is a call for a new innovative model of service delivery that accounts for rural realities and accommodates the diversity of SPOs and locations across western Canada.

### Summary

- The majority of respondents from all four provinces felt they had adequate capacity to communicate with stakeholders and meet reporting requirements, all but BC, felt that they had insufficient staff or staff skills to deliver services. All provinces reported a lack of adequate capacity to deliver settlement services in both official languages and the need for more financial support (i.e., governmental and non-governmental), especially core funding.
- Working within rural communities can be a challenging and it is clear that a one size fits all policy for settlement service delivery is not effective. To improve this situation SPOs desire a closer relationship with CIC, more professional development opportunities accessible by rural communities, and a means for knowledge dissemination among communities to share best practices and success stories.





## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

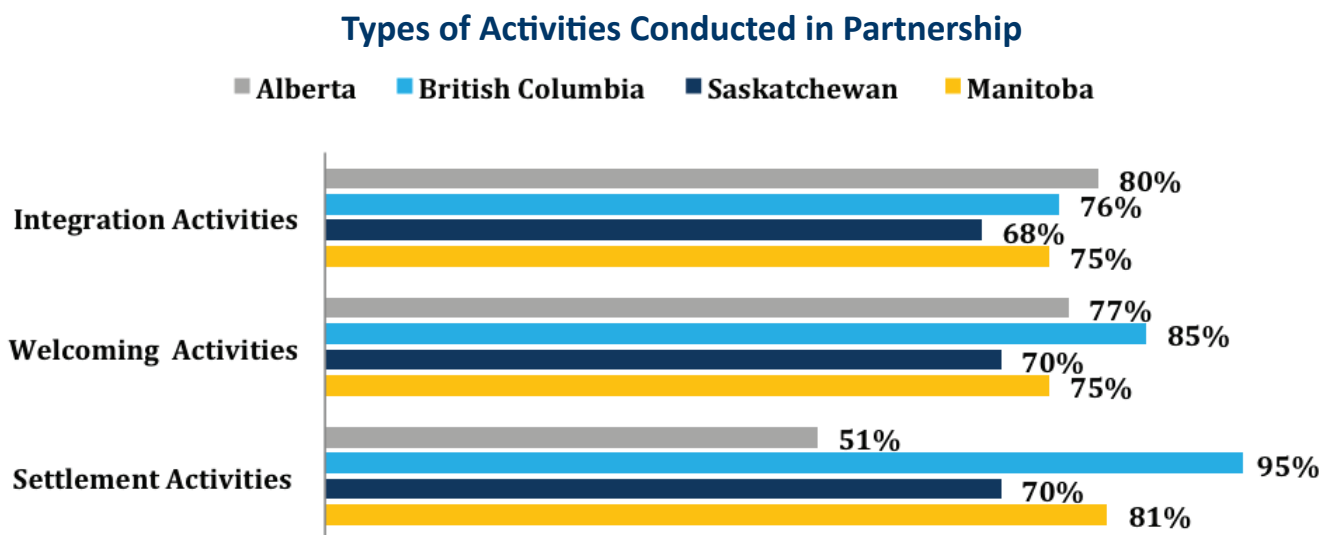
Settlement service providers often partner with other SPOs or community stakeholders in order to provide services to newcomers and also to use their resources as efficiently as possible. For the purpose of this report, partnership was broadly defined and meant working in cooperation with another stakeholder either formally or informally. In other words, a SPO might indicate a partnership with another SPO because they jointly submit grant applications (i.e., formal partnership) or a SPO might indicate a partnership with the local library because they allow them to use their conference room to offer an EAL class once a week (i.e., informal partnership). The majority of partnerships, with some exceptions, reported in this study were ad hoc and informal in nature.

There were provincial differences in the SPOs propensity to partner. All SPOs (100%) from British Columbia reported working in partnership and nearly all (97%) of the participants from Alberta reported doing so. Manitoba (84%) and Saskatchewan (77%) had similar reports, with more than 75% of the participants reporting working in partnership. The most common partnerships were with other SPOs, school/school boards, libraries, and housing services. The partnerships reported the least often were with francophone organizations, the police force, and ethno-cultural groups (For a list of possible community partnerships see Appendix H).

Participants from all provinces expressed a desire to improve their coordination with local businesses and employers. Local employers are often the reason why newcomers move to these rural areas, yet in many cases the employers do not engage with the settlement services sector as much as the SPOs would like. SPOs would like to see employers at the table helping to establish supports and strategies to support newcomers. Other partnerships that were desired or needed to expand were with Chambers of commerce, police force, and municipal and provincial governments. In many cases, participants wanted to reestablish the partnerships they had with provincial governments that are no longer available since the transition of settlement services from the province to CIC.

Participants were asked which of the following types of activities were conducted in partnership: settlement, integration, or welcoming. All provinces reported partnership activity in all three types of activities. SPOs from Manitoba and British Columbia both reported more partnerships relating to settlement than the other activities; however Alberta was the only province whose reported level of partnership in settlement activities was the lowest among the three categories (Figure 10). Saskatchewan was the one province that reported very similar rates of partnership activities in all three areas, while Alberta showed more fluctuation between the types of reported activities conducted in partnership.

Figure 12. Types of activities conducted in partnership





The communities chosen for inclusion in this study were purposely selected so they were not currently in active LIPs. The idea of the creation of a LIP was received differently across the four western provinces. In British Columbia, SPOs were leery of LIPS and emphasized the desire for partnerships to happen organically or out of necessity, rather than prescribed for them. British Columbia reported a preference for more flexible funding, which they previously had under the provincial model (Welcoming Communities funding). They felt that this model promoted authentic partnerships and cooperation more effectively than the LIP model. In contrast, all participants from Alberta expressed an interest in the creation of LIPs in their communities. Saskatchewan has considerable existing partnerships with their gateway networks but Saskatchewan participants seem to be open to any partnership model that advances their respective goals. Manitoba has potential for the development of more partnerships; especially in areas where greater numbers of newcomers are arriving. Participants across western provinces felt that partnerships should build upon existing partnerships, rather than building new partnerships.

It is clear that communities in this sample are at a variety of stages of development and maturation with regards to their settlement services. Therefore, it is expected that LIPs may play different roles in communities that are at different stages of service and partnership development and would either aid in the creation or strengthen existing service networks. For example, in communities with extensive experience receiving newcomers, well-developed services and partnerships, and organizational capacities, the role of the LIP would be to strengthen and expand the partnerships and realize more effective strategies for service delivery. While in communities who are less experienced and have historically received

fewer newcomers, LIP funding would help accelerate partnership development and enhance service delivery in quality and variety.

These findings would suggest that there are strong, active partnerships in place, with most communities reporting that they are currently working in partnerships, albeit informal in nature. Though some communities, with more newcomer arrivals and more settlement service experience, are ready for more structured coordination (e.g., LIP), many organizations are not quite ready for this step, especially if they are only just beginning to provide settlement services or have no existing partnerships. In these cases, perhaps support can be provided to develop the settlement service foundation and meet client demand effectively to provide a framework for possible LIP development in the future.

### **Summary**

- The majority of participants from all 4 provinces reported working in partnership with other SPOs or community stakeholders. 100% of British Columbia participants reported working in partnership, followed by 97% in Alberta, 84% in Manitoba, and 77% in Saskatchewan.
- Participants from all provinces expressed a desire to improve their coordination with local businesses and employers.
- There were provincial differences with regards to the development of LIPs, the idea is viewed with some hesitance in British Columbia who desired more organic partnerships, but supported in Alberta.
- LIP development and funding may eliminate competition between SPOs for funding, while also improving coordination and leveraging the strengths and capacities within the partnership.

# Conclusion

The major findings emerging from this research are summarized and strategic directions identify critical actions. Further research is proposed that builds on this foundation of work.

Overall, this research has identified challenges that are faced by both SPOs and newcomers in rural and remote communities from the perspective of rural SPOs. Rural communities are experiencing both an increase in newcomers and the arrival of newcomers with more diverse backgrounds. This growing diversity of countries of origin or ethno-cultural backgrounds means service delivery needs to be more nuanced and is potentially more complicated (i.e., interpreter services for six languages, not just one). In addition, in some areas newcomers are spread over large geographic areas or have settled in remote areas (i.e., geographically isolated or a great distance from a major centre), both of which complicate settlement service delivery. In such communities, settlement services can be limited and newcomers may face infrastructure challenges, such as limited childcare, lack of public transportation, and availability of housing. These challenges already exist for residents of rural areas but the extent of the challenge is often greater for newcomers. Though childcare and housing can be challenging in larger centres as well, the rural setting can exacerbate the service delivery concerns for newcomers, when all factors are considered. Lack of or inadequate public transportation can be an additional challenge due to harsh winter climate, which is not often a concern in larger city centres where public transportation is more likely to be available. The findings of this report would indicate that newcomer and SPO experiences are impacted by location and that there should be a clear distinction between rural and remote communities and the issues they face, with remote locations compounded challenges due to distance. In other words, rural communities are not homogenous and can differ based on distance from major centre (i.e., rural, remote) and population density.

## KEY FINDINGS

The 14 key findings are summarized under three themes of Settlement and Employment, Services and Gaps, and Partnerships. The findings related to settlement and employment identified issues regarding community based concerns, while the findings related to settlement services and gaps and SPO partnerships discuss issues that are within CIC's purview.

### ***Settlement and Employment***

- Settling newcomers a challenge across much of western Canada. In rural and small centres across western Canada, settlement of immigrants was seen by more than half the participants in 3 of the 4 provinces as difficult for newcomers and the fourth province (SK) had some regional differences in relation to ease of settlement.
- Small rural communities offer benefits to newcomers but lack key services. In small communities there is familiarity with the services available and facilitating referrals. At the same time, it can be hard for newcomers when there is a lack of childcare, affordable housing, and public transportation. In addition, small rural communities can be insular and potentially wary of newcomers.
- Finding employment is harder in the regions that are farther west. Employment is a crucial step in the settlement process and for retaining newcomers. More than 75% of participants from Manitoba and Saskatchewan felt finding employment was easy for newcomers, though mostly in entry-level jobs, while participants from British Columbia (88%) and Alberta (54%) felt it was difficult.
- English language proficiency and foreign credential recognition are common issues. A variety of issues were identified that create challenges of newcomers seeking employment and the two most commonly mentioned issues were English language proficiency and foreign credential recognition. Other issues mentioned were transportation, availability of childcare to cover work hours, lack of jobs, and potential employer discrimination were also mentioned as impacting newcomers' employment.

### ***Services and Gaps***

- The needs of newcomers similar across western region. The needs of newcomers, either eligible or ineligible for CIC funded services, are very similar. Participants from across western Canada wanted services to be extended to a broader range of newcomers, who currently do not qualify. This will enable better services for more newcomers and also benefit the community at large.

- Expanding services needed across western region. Several gaps in services were identified and expansion is needed in the following ways: specific services need to be offered more often; the definition of who is eligible for services needs to be broadened; and services need to be located in more communities within given geographic regions.
- The range of language services can be quite limited (i.e., basic language skills). Increased offerings of advanced language training, job specific language training, and literacy training is necessary in rural communities. Social inclusion/integration support, helping with daily life, and help finding a job were all offered in 90% or more of the communities.
- Settlement services are necessary and integration services needed. The majority of services offered focus on the settlement of newcomers, which are necessary. More emphasis should be placed on integrating newcomers into the community, which will require more services and support.
- Secure funding critical in serving the growing population of newcomers in rural areas. A reliable form of funding (i.e., core funding) is needed for SPOs to support the organizational capacity required to provide effective settlement services.
- Remote communities face additional service provision challenges. Newcomers and SPOs in remote communities face additional challenges regarding settlement, accessing services, and service delivery, largely due to low population density and large distances.
- Language a barrier to accessing services. In some cases, services are available, but newcomers face barriers in accessing those services. Key barriers identified were language proficiency, having small children and the SPOs do not offer childcare during services, and having limited access to public transportation.

### **Partnerships**

- Partnerships are key to service newcomers in rural and small centres. The majority of participants from all 4 provinces reported working in partnership with other SPOs or community stakeholders. 100% of British Columbia participants reported working in partnership, followed by 97% in Alberta, 84% in Manitoba, and 77% in Saskatchewan.
- LIPs are supported, but need to build upon existing organizational partnerships. There are provincial differences with regards to the development of LIPs. LIPs will work best when they built on existing partnerships and leverage partner capacities by pooling resources.

- Private sector partnerships and involvement desired. Participants from all provinces expressed a desire to improve their involvement and coordination with local businesses and employers.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA**

Based on these key findings, three strategic directions are suggested for CIC and others involved in supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers in rural communities. These focus on expanding the availability and accessibility of newcomer services, enhancing organizational capacity and funding at the agency level, and fostering partnerships to increase organizational capacity in the communities.

### **1. Expanding Availability & Accessibility of Newcomer Services**

Though a wide variety of settlement services are offered in the 29 communities sampled it was reported that significant expansion is needed to meet the needs of both the newcomers currently residing in the communities and those yet to arrive. Failing to meeting newcomers' settlement needs not only delays newcomer integration and the retention of newcomers in the community, but also has a negative impact in the long-term wellbeing of the community. This is especially the case in smaller communities where in proportion to the population the impact is greater. Newcomers live and work alongside other long-term community residents and in order to ensure a positive experience for all, sufficient settlement, integration, and welcoming supports must be in place.

For most respondents services need to expand in four ways to meet newcomer needs in the communities:

- Existing services need to expand: For example, a language class offered once per week needs to be offered 3 times per week to meet demand and more advanced services need to be offered. Although language training is offered in all 29 communities, it is often offered as basic language training; however, there is a need for more advanced language training, job specific language training, and literacy training. Expanding the language courses offered would enable newcomers to increase their language skills and, in turn, the types of jobs for which they might qualify.
- CIC's eligibility criteria needs to expand: Broadening the CIC definition of those who qualify was repeatedly called for by participants. At least for some basic services or for ineligible newcomers in transition to becoming permanent residents. At the community level, SPOs, in many cases, clearly do not differentiate between those who are eligible or ineligible, they simply see them all as

newcomers in need of services and help. Though some SPOs provide services out of pocket or receive funding from other sources to provide support to those who are ineligible, a reliable source of funding (i.e., CIC, municipal, or provincial) is necessary to consistently support this group. Participants stated that not supporting this group of newcomers not only causes frustration among SPOs and newcomers, but hurts the community as a whole. Ensuring that newcomers, of differing statuses, receive support is crucial to avoid the experience of alienation and social isolation, which weakens communities and negatively impacts newcomer integration and well-being.

- Integration services need to expand: The bulk of the services offered focused on the settlement needs of newcomers, which is crucial, but integration needs to receive more attention and funding. Integration happens when newcomers feel involved and welcomed. Newcomers involved in recreational activities, family mentoring, and social networks are more likely to feel like a part of the community. Settlement develops personal sustainability, while integration builds stronger communities where newcomers feel included.
- Services need to be located in more communities within specific geographic regions: In some rural cities it is a short distance to settlement services. In other rural areas the closest service can be more than 100km away. Newcomers in smaller towns need not be penalized for their geographic location and services, such as language assessment, should be accessible to them.

## **2. Enhancing Organizational Capacity and Funding at the Agency Level**

SPOs in rural western Canada are working hard to meet the needs of newcomers arriving in their communities but face unique challenges with regards to capacity and service delivery. Most of the SPOs are smaller organizations that are called to serve diverse newcomers. In addition, their services are often provided across a large geographic area, which strain SPO capacity. Compounding these issues, SPOs in rural areas are faced with staff related concerns, such as staff shortage, staff turnover, staff qualifications and skills, and lack of adequate and core funding. SPOs in rural areas report lack of information from CIC and desire a closer connection or minimally a dedicated contact within CIC.

We need to ensure that these organizations in rural western Canada can meet current and future newcomer needs, are able to facilitate better newcomer integration and retention, and support well-being of the community as a whole. With this focus in mind, recommendations for improving organizational capacity are described below.

- More flexible policies, which consider rural issues, are needed from CIC: Policies and practices that are effective in larger urban centers are not always effective in rural areas. A one size fits all policy model cannot uniformly meet the needs of all communities. A more innovative and flexible policy and funding model is needed that can take into consideration the unique challenges of service delivery in rural communities. For example, the policy that newcomers are required to have their language skills assessed before being permitted to register for language training classes makes sense if language assessment is offered on a regular basis within the community. However, if the newcomer has to travel (often more than 100km – or in the case of Thompson, Manitoba 750km) or needs to wait months or a year in order to have their language assessment, then special accommodations are needed or modifications to the policy to address this issue. Therefore, a more flexible policy is needed to ensure newcomers in remote areas have the same access to services as others do. If this is not possible, then waiving assessments or funding travel may be a first step in supporting newcomers in these rural and remote communities. Supporting newcomers equally is important for retaining newcomers in these rural communities and maximizing the skills and abilities of newcomers.
- Sharing information and beneficial practices: Promoting organizational capacity through the development of knowledge and staff skills is key to improving services and settlement of newcomers. Opportunities for SPOs in rural areas to meet and discuss issues relating specifically to rural settlement service delivery is very much needed. Although workshops and information sessions are already held in larger centres, SPOs from rural areas are often outnumbered by SPOs from urban centers and the events tend to focus on settlement service delivery in urban centres. Opportunities for rural communities to discuss rural issues and problem solve would be of great benefit.

Learning from other SPOs' successes and challenges, and focusing on rural specific information was identified as something that would benefit SPO staff and the settlement service sector in rural areas. The use of technology to reach SPOs in rural areas might facilitate this kind of communication and perhaps a provincial discussion board or forum around rural issues is a first step in coordinating this communication. In addition, some SPOs suggested access to an electronic forum where SPOs can share success stories or practices, perhaps in a SPO portal or some other information sharing technology.



In regards to dissemination of new CIC policies and practices, a suggestion for webinars or other technological tool to disseminate knowledge to rural service providers would be appreciated together with a dedicated contact within the CIC at a provincial level.

Keeping SPO staff abreast of policy changes and facilitating rural SPOs ability to learn from one another will result in better support of newcomers in an efficient and knowledgeable way.

- **Core funding is needed for SPOs:** It is often assumed that settlement services are being provided under the watchful eye of a larger organization and that core funding for administration and other tasks are not necessary. However, in rural areas this is not always the case. Many of the SPOs in rural areas are small, part-time, and are struggling to meet the needs of newcomers without core funding to cover the costs of the operation and staff. Core funding would allow SPOs to invest more time in meeting the needs of newcomers and professional development of staff. On SPOs tight budgets paying for time or travel for professional development opportunities for their staff in many cases is out of the question. A reliable source of funding would mean smoother, more consistent, and reliable service delivery, especially in the rural areas, where SPOs are often small and cash strapped. In addition, it was discovered that needs assessment of newcomers conducted by the participants in this study were quite informal in nature. Core funding helps provide the capacity to formally assess the needs of newcomers on a regular basis.

### ***3. Fostering Partnerships to increase organizational capacity in the communities***

The majority of participants from all 4 provinces reported working in partnership with other SPOs or community stakeholders. The results clearly indicate that partnerships help rural SPOs creatively maximize sparse resources and use capacity efficiently, but in some areas the development and improvement of partnerships is necessary and desired. For towns with less developed settlement service networks LIPs enable a more coordinated approach and encourage needs assessments. In communities with well-established settlement service networks, LIPs may enhance or formalize existing partnerships, and strategically and efficiently support the needs of newcomers. It is clear that there is room to expand the partnerships that exist and create new partnerships in the rural communities. Partnerships help small SPOs pool their resources and use them efficiently, while also reducing competition and increasing cooperation between rural SPOs. The development of LIPs should be

structured using existing and thriving partnerships in the community, thus avoiding duplication. There are provincial differences with regards to LIP development.

Participants from all provinces expressed a desire to improve their coordination with local businesses and employers. Since many of these employers are the organizations recruiting newcomers arriving in these communities SPOs would like to see more communication, planning, engagement, and referrals from employers. LIPs can be a way to engage local employers and include them in the planning and support of the settlement services network that supports their employees.

# Future Research

Building on the research with service providers presented here, future work would benefit from hearing directly from newcomers in rural and small centres. There are three potential areas of exploration with newcomer participants. First, asking newcomers about their personal perceptions of settlement services (e.g., accessing, availability, usage), which would enable researchers to compare newcomers' perceptions with the SPOs' reports summarized here. This comparison would allow for the exploration of the other side of the settlement service story and assess the accuracy of the SPOs perceptions of services in their community. Second, asking newcomers about their general settlement experiences in these rural areas, which has not been adequately explored in previous research (i.e., Canadian Settlement Survey). Third, asking newcomers about their employment within these rural areas, which would allow for an analysis of the types of jobs newcomers' are filling, but also a comparison of jobs held with newcomers' skills and educational backgrounds. Hearing directly from newcomers on all three topics will provide greater detail about settlement needs and challenges, which can only be inferred from this research (i.e., reason for moving to a small town, strengths and weaknesses of this choice, employment opportunities, experience with discrimination or welcoming).

In addition, though newcomers land in one community, some migrate to other communities after arrival. Future research should explore the inter and intra provincial migration of newcomers. This could be achieved by using Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB)<sup>10</sup> to track the longevity of newcomers in specific rural areas, which would allow researchers to determine how long newcomers stay in rural communities or the frequency of relocation. Understanding if there are areas where newcomers stay, where they relocate from and to could provide insight into policy development and settlement service needs and challenges.

Finally, more research is needed to understand the impacts of economic driven pattern of immigration in rural communities across western Canada. Research projects would explore the influence of newcomers on rural communities and the economic implications of their arrival.

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10. <http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5057>



# Research Team

**Bill Ashton**, Ph.D. (*Principal Investigator*)

**Rachael Pettigrew**, Ph.D. (*Research Associate*)

**Eleni Galatsanou**, MSc (*Project Coordinator*)

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Tel: (204)-571-8513, Ashtonw@brandonu.ca

**Joe Garcea**, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator*)

University of Saskatchewan

Tel: (306)-966-5222, joe.garcea@usask.ca

**Anna Kirova**, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator*)

**John McCoy**, Ph.D. (*Co- author of the Alberta communities and provincial reports*)

University of Alberta

Tel: (780)-492-0913, akirova@ualberta.ca

**Miu Chung Yan**, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator*)

**Jenny Francis**, Ph.D. Candidate (*Co-author of the British Columbia communities and provincial reports*)

University of British Columbia

Tel: (604)-822-8688, Miu.Yan@ubc.ca

**Lori Wilkinson**, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator and Chair of Project Advisory Panel*)

University of Manitoba

Tel: (204) 474-8491, Lori.Wilkinson@umanitoba.ca

Reference: Ashton, W., Pettigrew, R., Galatsanou, E. 2015. Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Western Region<sup>11</sup>. Brandon Manitoba. Immigration Research West and Rural Development Institute

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11. Special thanks to Miu Chung Yan and Jenny Francis, University of British Columbia; Anna Kirova and John McCoy, University of Alberta; Joe Garcea, University of Saskatchewan; Lori Wilkinson, University of Manitoba.



# Appendices A-I

# Appendix A

## Project Advisory Panel Members

Organization	Name
<b>Academics</b>	Lori Wilkinson (Chair), University of Manitoba Bill Ashton, Rural Development Institute, Brandon University Joe Garcea, University of Saskatchewan Anna Kirova, University of Alberta Miu Chung Yan, University of British Columbia
<b>Representatives from Service Provider Umbrella organizations</b>	Laurie Sawatsky, MIRSSA Getachew Woldeyesus, SAISIA Fariborz Birjandian, AAISA Lynn Moran, AMSSA
<b>Representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada</b>	Xiaoyi Xan, Director, Research John Biles, Special Advisor to DG, Integration and FCRO Nita Jolly, Director, Integration, Prairies/NWT,NU Sophia Lee, Director, Integration, BC/YT Lucy Swib, Integration Manager/Sophia Lee, Director, Integration, BC/YT
<b>Representatives from Provincial Governments</b>	Liz Robinson – Manitoba Tim Helfrich – Saskatchewan Alice Wong – Alberta Keith Godin/Vicki Chiu/Dominic Fung/Chris Garcia, British Columbia
<b>Immigration Research West Executive member</b>	Robert Vineberg

## Appendix B

### British Columbia Provincial Report

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications/immigration-services-and-gaps/>  
and [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports\\_IRW.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports_IRW.html)

## Appendix C

### Alberta Provincial Report

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications/immigration-services-and-gaps/>  
and [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports\\_IRW.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports_IRW.html)

## Appendix D

### Saskatchewan Provincial Report

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications/immigration-services-and-gaps/>  
and [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports\\_IRW.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports_IRW.html)

## Appendix E

### Manitoba Provincial Report

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications/immigration-services-and-gaps/>  
and [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports\\_IRW.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/reports_IRW.html)

## Appendix F

### List of possible concerns about the ability of newcomers to access services

- Lack of services in community
- Confusion about where to get help
- Not being eligible for services
- Language difficulties
- Lack of childcare
- Transportation difficulties
- Hours of the day that services are offered
- Financial difficulties
- Discrimination because of being a newcomer
- Discrimination because of race or ethnicity

# Appendix G

## List of possible services/needs

### Settlement

- Needs assessment and referral
- Information and orientation
- Greeting upon arrival/initial reception
- Interpretation services
- Language assessment
- Language training
- Help finding housing
- Help with daily life
- Transportation support

### Economic

- Help finding a job
- Educational upgrading
- Recognition of foreign credentials
- Investment opportunities
- Job-specific language training
- Help setting up a business
- Financial supports
- Occupational mentorship and networking

### Social

- Childcare
- Cultural Events
- Social inclusion/ integration support
- Legal support/referral
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Recreational services
- Services for seniors
- Services for women
- Services for youth

# Appendix H

## List of possible community partners

- School/School Boards
- Umbrella organizations
- Newcomers (individuals)
- Housing services
- Settlement service providers
- Health services
- Municipal offices/ EDO
- Civil society groups
- Francophone organizations
- Language training providers
- Children/Family services
- Businesses
- Chambers of Commerce
- Police Force
- Universities/Research Networks
- Ethno cultural groups
- Religious organizations
- Public libraries
- Foundations

# Appendix I

## List of possible organizational Capacities

- Staff to provide services
- Financial support from government sources to maintain current services
- Financial support from non-government sources to maintain current services
- Communication with stakeholders
- Coordinating services with other service providers
- Staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services
- Mobilization of community to support and welcome newcomers
- Creation of governing and strategic plan
- Meet reporting requirements
- Provide services in both official languages





Lower Concourse, McMaster Hall Complex  
270-18th Street, Brandon, MB R7A 6A9

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