



# **Alberta Immigrant Serving Sector Compensation Project Report**

October 2016

**Prepared by: Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)**

Under the guidance of the Sector Compensation Committee

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The purpose of the report is to provide the AAISA membership, funders, and other interested stakeholders, an updated review of the Sector Compensation Committee's initiatives through the years 2007 to 2014. The Sector Compensation Committee's intent in producing this report is to highlight the positive progress made through the project's research, to the advances made in achieving equivalent salaries for settlement and integration practitioners, in comparison to other human service professionals working in both government and other non-profit sectors.

The report includes a description of the settlement and integration practitioners' history and evolution as a profession. Today, the profession is recognized as having equivalent competencies to those who work in other human service positions, outside the sector. This acceptance leads to building the case with funding partners of working towards equivalent salaries across job bands, in the settlement and integration sector, comparable to similar job categories in other non-profit sectors and governmental positions.

This recognition was achieved through AAISA's work in developing the Job Standards Framework for the settlement and integration sector. The Framework provides the basis for the development of AAISA education and training programs by which new and experienced workers continue to learn and develop in their efforts to provide high quality, consistent services and support, to culturally diverse immigrants throughout the province.

The project originated from the 2007 Boland Compensation Survey review, where it was observed that the salaries in the sector did not adequately compensate staff, for the level of skills and complexity of the work that they perform.<sup>1</sup> Comparison of AAISA member agencies salary practices to the Select Sample and its sub samples revealed consistent results showing that an average **salary gap of from 13.6% to 19%** existed between the immigrant serving sector and the non-profit sector in general.<sup>2</sup>

### Accomplishments

The Sector Compensation initiative produced several key accomplishments.

1. Development of a long-term funding strategy and settlement agency awareness of the need for staff salary adjustments to be competitive in the marketplace to attract and retain settlement and integrations practitioners through the **2007 Immigrant Sector Compensation Review** research project.
2. Increased membership consensus for the go-ahead to develop a job classification system/salary grid, and created buy-in to establish short-term and long-term funding strategies with the development of the sector's human resources through the **2008 Action Plan: Toward Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant Serving Sector** report.

3. Start of a provincial settlement and integration job classification system to enable the development of a salary grid which allowed for market comparisons of the similar positions in the mainstream sector, namely, government and not-for-profit human services agencies through the **2009 – 2010 Job Classification Framework – Settlement and Integration and Career Practitioners** research project.
4. Established basis for province-wide comparisons and the development of a provincial Job and Salary Standards Framework, completed in 2013, through the **2012 Settlement and Integration and Career Practitioners' Job Market Comparison** research project.
5. Established additional job family categories with salary ranges in the Job and Salary Standards Framework through the **2012 Client-facing Support Job Evaluation and Market Comparison** research project.
6. Classified equivalent positions, in the sector, into 5 bands based on years of experience to develop the salary grid for each band through the **2012 The Alberta Settlement and Integration Provincial Profile of Jobs** research project.
7. Established additional job family categories with salary ranges in the Job and Salary Standards Framework through the **2013 Supervisory and Leadership Job Evaluation and Market Comparison** research project.
8. Established province-wide Job and Salary Standards Framework<sup>i</sup> produced by AAISA as a guide to agencies and funders in negotiating agreements. The Framework is intended to support AAISA member agencies and funders in ensuring standards with respect to the competencies, qualifications, skills and responsibilities for jobs in settlement and integration sector, and to support the application of consistent compensation across the province.
9. Negotiated with funders new salary rates for the Settlement Practitioner and Career Development Practitioner professions for the financial year 2013-14.

AAISA established the province-wide **Job and Salary Standards Framework** as a guide to agencies and funders in negotiating funding agreements. The Framework is also intended to support AAISA member agencies and funders in ensuring standards with respect to the competencies, qualifications, skills and responsibilities for jobs in settlement and integration sector, and to support the application of consistent compensation across the province.

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<sup>i</sup> Appendix J. AAISA Job Standards Framework 2014-2015

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended to continue sustainable efforts toward sector professionalization, job classification, and fair compensation through the following actions:

1. Continuous support to AAISA membership in the application and utilization of developed compensation tools.
2. Updating the Job Standards Framework when additional job families are developed in the sector to reflect current services.
3. Utilizing AAISA Job Standards Framework as a competency and compensation tool to negotiate funding during the call for proposals process.
4. Annually updating the Salary Grid taking into account the inflation rate and other labour market aspects to maintain an attractive and fair compensation.

## **Strategic Recommendations**

1. Gain provincial recognition of the Settlement and Integration profession as an occupation - The committee recommends to pursue provincial recognition of the Settlement and Integration sector professions in the Alberta Labour Market Occupational Profiles.
2. Use a collaborative approach in addressing the Sector's compensation issues - The committee recommends promoting an ongoing dialogue with Government funders and non-profit service providers to discuss new approaches in conducting the working relationships between the stakeholders in managing human resources for the non-profit sector.
3. Continue supporting the sector through learning and professional development to increase competency and to receive increased recognition for the profession.

## **Conclusions**

The Compensation initiative significantly advanced the goal of an overall compensation correction (increase) for the sector.”<sup>ii</sup> In answering the questions of whether or not the Sector as a whole has met the strategic objectives put forward in the Action Plan from the 2008 Report - Toward Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant Serving Sector, the response was:

### **Did the Sector develop a:**

- ✓ Sector-wide position classification structure – Yes, but additional job classifications need to be worked upon to have a complete framework.

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<sup>ii</sup> Email Communication, Compensation Report – Conclusions, Oct. 14, 2016, Milton Ortega, Provincial Manager, AAISA

- ✓ Market competitive salary structure linked to the position classifications – Yes
- ✓ Develop a formal accreditation process in association with a post-secondary institution - No
- ✓ Develop a sector wide communication strategy - Yes
- ✓ Develop a strategic plan for the sector - Yes
- ✓ Increase compensation - Yes
- ✓ Develop a funding strategy - Yes

**In conclusion this project has been a success.** The AAISA Sector Compensation Committee will continue to ensure that all settlement practitioners receive the recognition and compensation that reflects their skills, and practical and theoretical knowledge required for the work that they perform.

## **About AAISA**

The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) is a regionally and nationally recognized leader in the settlement and integration sector. As an umbrella organization, AAISA's mandate is to build sectorial capacity by providing member agencies that serve newcomers access to relevant and meaningful professional development opportunities, to act as a liaison with stakeholders, and provide a centre for knowledge, expertise, and leadership. Our member agencies provide services to assist newcomers in becoming fully integrated members of Alberta society. Examples of services include orientation, interpretation, counselling, employment services, educational assistance, and programs for immigrant youth.

## **Acknowledgements**

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### **AAISA Staff and Volunteers**

Milton Alfonso Ortega, Karen Sadler, Caroline Hemstock, Rennais Gayle\*

### **AAISA Sector Compensation Committee**

#### **Current members**

Frank Bauer, Christina Nsaliwa, Alice Colak, Anila Lee Yuen, Erick Ambtman

#### **Past members**

Dale Taylor, Sarah Aimes, Din Ladak, Beba Svirig

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## Introduction

### Overview

This report captures and reflects upon the progress AAISA's membership has made to close the salary gap between the settlement and integration service positions relative to other human service jobs, in both the public and non-profit sectors. It is intended to showcase the progress to date in achieving the goal of comparable salaries for settlement practitioners in relation to other human service professionals, with the ultimate outcome of improved retention of employees and gaining recognition for the profession.

This report is a summary of this multi-year initiative, led by the AAISA's Sector Compensation Committee, between the years of 2007 and 2014. This report provides:

- Background information on how the initiative was developed and the need
- Brief descriptions of the work projects undertaken and the results
- Major accomplishments
- Recommendations for the future
- Conclusions of the project's success

Through this AAISA project/research review, the report provides a record of the progress made to fulfill the Compensation Sector Committee's mandate: to ensure that settlement practice receives recognition and compensation that reflects the skills, and practical and theoretical knowledge, required for the work that practitioners perform.

### Methodology

The project researcher used secondary research to formulate this report. The report connects a series of research projects undertaken by AAISA and provides the conclusions and recommendations from these reports. The project researcher synthesized and analyzed the data from 10 different AAISA led projects/reports to highlight the progress to date of achieving comparable salaries for settlement Practitioners.

Methodology used in the specific projects were:

- **Settlement Practitioner Position Classification** - identifies the primary functions and roles of each position, also formal education and skills to perform the position
- **Settlement Practitioner Position Profiles** - provides detailed job descriptions which elaborate on the position classification
- **Settlement Practitioner Position Evaluation** - rank-orders positions and jobs with respect to their value or worth to the organization

- **Identification and Development of Settlement Practitioner Position Competencies** - allows defining required and critical competencies and skills
- **Salary Benchmarking** - a process of comparing positions and the existing salaries with equivalent positions in other sectors through a market review
- **Development of Salary Grids** - development of new salary values to establish the range of salary for each position and determine how and at what rate incumbents move through the range.<sup>3</sup>

This report also synthesized compensation data researched by Boland and Associates Inc. This consultancy firm used primary research in completing the projects. Peter Boland commented upon his research methodology below from the 2007 AAISA project salary review:

“Accurate comparison of AAISA salary practices to the broader non-profit sector requires data that are both current and representative of the jobs found in AAISA members and in the community at large. The Boland Survey of Not for Profit Salaries and Human Resource Practices (Boland Survey) has been conducted annually in Alberta since 1996 and provides reliable statistics on 43 positions, including those in management, administration, and front line human services. The Boland Survey data was viewed by the project team as the most reliable and comprehensive source for the data necessary to meet the project objectives.”<sup>4</sup>

Boland had further comments with respect to methodology in the report, *Assessing the Relative Value of Settlement Practitioners and Career Practitioners to Similar Work in Government and Other Human Services Sectors*, in 2012.

“Similarities exist between the AAISA members’ jobs and roles within Alberta Social Services, Catholic Social Services in Edmonton, and Alberta Employment and Immigration (Employment Counsellors).<sup>5</sup> To compare unlike positions rigorously requires the use of an objective tool such as a common job evaluation system. Fortunately the Government of Alberta provides considerable information about its job evaluation methodology, enabling us to estimate the value of the AAISA positions within the Government structures.”<sup>6</sup>

## Background

### Historical Perspective on the Development of the Settlement and Integration Practitioner Profession

The history of the settlement practitioner profession provides a context to assess the wage disparity between settlement workers and other individuals working in the human service field. From the initial beginnings of assisting newcomers to adjust, find work, and live in Canada, a perception developed that helping immigrants and refugees settle is charitable work. And with this perception of the work being charitable, the position was associated with volunteerism or unpaid work.

“For the first immigrants to what is now Canada, there were of course no settlement services. Settlement referred to the establishment of new communities, often displacing the original inhabitants -- the native peoples -- in the process. Well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, immigrant settlers continued to stake out new claims in the West. Settlement intensified during the late 1800s and early 1900s, as the Canadian government mounted extensive campaigns to attract immigrants to Canada.”<sup>7</sup>

“Before the First World War, there were few organizations specializing in serving immigrants. Newcomers relied heavily on family members or others from the same ethnic community or religion to assist them with initial adjustment. Much of this help was offered informally, although support might also be available from ethnic associations, benevolent societies, religious institutions and self-help groups of various kinds, many of them relying entirely or largely on volunteers.”<sup>8</sup>

“Important developments in the conception and delivery of services came after the Second World War. The arrival of significant numbers of Displaced Persons, including survivors of the Holocaust, focused attention on the needs of the traumatized. At the same time the development of the notion of the welfare state and of social work had its effect in the immigrant and refugee sector. The Jewish Immigrant Aid Society developed specialized social services and hired for the first time professional social workers. ...Many new organizations were created specifically to respond to the needs of newcomers.”<sup>9</sup>

“The inclusion of the refugee category into the 1976 Canadian Immigration Act, as well as the arrival of the "Boat People" beginning in the late 1970s, and subsequently of large numbers of refugee claimants, have focused attention on the needs of refugees. Some organizations and services were developed specifically to respond to the needs of the newly defined "refugee" class.”<sup>10</sup>

The federal department of Citizenship and Immigration, now known as the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada started supporting governmental and non-governmental agencies facilitating the integration of newcomers. “The Citizenship Branch emphasized education (including language and citizenship classes) as the means to integration;”<sup>11</sup> this continues to be one of the main priorities today. In 1974, the Citizenship Branch started funding provision for settlement services. In 1992, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) was started. The HOST program (matching Canadian volunteers with government-assisted refugees) became a permanent program in June 1991.”<sup>12</sup>

From these initial beginnings, the settlement and integration sector developed as a response to the arrival of refugees and immigrants to Canada. Due to the historical importance of volunteerism and the ethno-cultural character of the service, the settlement and integration sector did not emphasize compensation for workers. It was seen as doing charitable work or as helping your community to which you belonged.

Over time, however, the range of expertise needed within the sector in delivering educational programs, counselling services, career and community development and training, created the need for increased competency in a professional sector.

### **Role of the Settlement and Integration Service Providers Today**

Currently, the settlement and integration sector provides a large spectrum of professional services including:

- initial reception for refugees,
- core settlement services,
- language and employment services,
- community services, and
- support services for immigrants and refugees.

“Over the past decade, the Settlement, Multicultural and Language sector has evolved dramatically. Not only has it grown in the number of workers who contribute to the sector, its steady growth also reflects an increase in the diversity and quality of services provided, the number of immigrants served, and a mounting recognition by government policy makers and community leaders of the **vital contribution the sector makes to sustaining the social, economic and cultural cohesion of the province.**”<sup>13</sup>

“As Canada, (...), continues to attract talented immigrants from around the world, Settlement, Multicultural and Language Service workers are poised to play an even greater role in contributing to the overall vitality of the province in the future. Their work will continue to facilitate the empowerment, adaptation and integration of even larger numbers of culturally diverse immigrants into (...) communities. And, as a **sector they will provide vital and critically important leadership to enhance the integration of newcomers into Canada and support the development of welcoming and inclusive communities.**”<sup>14</sup>

“This steady change in the sector has led to a growing recognition that the sector itself needs to ensure the:

- Quality
- Consistency
- Relevance

of the services it provides – and the desired outcomes it supports and promotes for individual immigrants, their families and communities.<sup>15</sup>

Of necessity, this suggests that the **sector needs to evolve as a profession, ensuring that all workers meet provincial standards of good practice.**<sup>16</sup>

The Alberta Framework of Competencies for Settlement Workers was, and still is, the foundation tool by which to support the development and evolution of the settlement practitioner profession. The Framework provides the basis for the development of AAISA education and training programs by which new and experienced workers continue to learn and develop in their efforts to provide high quality, consistent services and support, to culturally diverse immigrants throughout the province.

### Chronological Time Frame of Events in Establishing Settlement and Integration Work as a Profession

Time Period	Activity	Result
1980	AAISA opens its doors. Mandate is to build sectorial capacity by providing member agencies that serve newcomers access to relevant and meaningful professional development opportunities, to act as a liaison with stakeholders, and provide a centre for knowledge, expertise, and leadership. <sup>17</sup>	Awareness by service providers and others of the need to establish professional standards for settlement workers through training and development.
1985	AAISA passes a resolution to develop a plan for the settlement workers' profession.	AAISA distributed a survey to the membership and the analysis of the feedback identified training needs and barriers to training. It became evident that there was a need for settlement worker training.
1989-1993	AAISA and Grant MacEwan Community College (GMCC) jointly developed and took joint ownership for new curriculum material, with GMCC supervising the project. The training offered was modeled after the college's social work training program and supplemented by materials specifically addressing the issues faced by settlement workers.	Training was offered in Calgary (Feb 1989 – Dec 1990) and Edmonton (Mar 1989 – Nov 1990) with 75 participants. The course was 206 hours long and consisted of seven topics. Participants who successfully completed this course received a certificate from Grant MacEwan College. <sup>18</sup>
1993	The curriculum used in the GMCC training was re-organized into nine courses and published.	Limited viability for a sustained formal certificate programs for settlement workers due to the small number of candidates, limited growth in the numbers of candidates in the future and the wide variation in settlement worker learning needs, reflecting the diversity of their backgrounds and job descriptions. <sup>19</sup>

1998	AAISA conducts an additional training needs assessment. Priority was placed on job-specific training. A secondary emphasis was placed on certificate or diploma programs.	A majority of respondents felt that some form of recognition by post-secondary providers was important.
1998	The Canadian Council for Refugees stressed the importance of developing national standards for settlement services.	Recognition and agreement from the service providers of the need for addressing competencies of settlement workers.
1999	AAISA developed and ratified the <b>Alberta Framework of Competencies for Settlement Workers</b> (based on the British Columbia framework). <sup>20</sup>	Competencies from this framework were clustered to reflect <u>training topics</u> and the basis for the <u>accreditation model</u> .
1999	<u>A three-stage training model</u> was considered appropriate, knowing settlement workers might want to move through levels of expertise as they gained education and experience in the field.	Consultants were hired to develop a policy on the equitable delivery of training to ensure it was accessible, flexible and cost-effective. Recommendations for the use of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and its application to training and accreditation were also developed.
2001-2002	AAISA sought to have training modules delivered and evaluated by post-secondary institutions.	Not pursued due to similar factors that earlier served as a barrier to formal certificate programs: the limited number of candidates; difficulty in determining clear areas of responsibility and ownership; wide variation in needs of settlement workers; and the limited cost-effectiveness.
2003	After a series of re-iterations, AAISA created a finalized list of training modules that addressed the different competencies in the Alberta Framework of Competencies for Settlement Workers	Delivered training to standards agreed upon by the AAISA membership.
2004	The first settlement practitioners being officially certified by AAISA. <sup>21</sup>	Recognition for the profession.
2005 - present	Continued professional development of settlement practitioners with AAISA training, based on best practices identified by professionals in the sector.	Brought legitimacy and professionalism to the practice of settlement in Alberta.
2005-present	Continued offering of the only Certification program in Canada that provides accreditation to qualified Settlement Practitioners.	Provided the foundation to bring awareness and recognition to the Settlement Practitioner profession as a viable career option.

2007	AAISA's Job Classification and Standards Project began. <sup>22</sup>	Initiated the case for comparable salaries for comparable work across the human service sector.
2010 - present	AAISA's Sector Compensation Committee, consulted with key funding partners, and Human Resource consulting firms to research and develop Settlement Practitioners job classifications, salary grids, and standards.	Created five Job Classification Bands (2010-14), Human Resource Ranking Tool (2013-14), a Job Standards and Salary Framework (2013-14), as well as a communication strategy between its members and key funding partners. <sup>23</sup>

The goal of AAISA training and accreditation is to bring legitimacy and professionalism to the practice of settlement in Alberta. This program contributes to the greater community and other sectors recognizing settlement as a credible, professional field.

*"It aims for the recognition of the settlement practitioner work as a **legitimate and recognized career** in Canada."<sup>24</sup>*

*"A large number of stakeholders identified that the training and accreditation process **standardizes services and settlement practice across Alberta.**"<sup>25</sup>*

The availability of the training and accreditation program to employees of settlement agencies creates opportunities for professional development. This is a contributing factor to increased retention of employees in the settlement sector which, in turn, allows experienced employees to act as mentors to others entering the field.

The establishment of AAISA's Alberta Framework of Competencies for Settlement Workers and the Training and Development Curriculum of Settlement Workers was key in laying the foundation for the Compensation Sector Committee to establish equitable pay for settlement workers.

In collaboration with key federal and provincial settlement funders in Alberta – Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and Immigrant Settlement and Language Programs of Human Services – AAISA developed this framework to support the application of consistent job standards, and appropriate compensation, for settlement practice in Alberta. This framework is intended to support AAISA member agencies and funders in ensuring standards with respect to the competencies, qualifications, skills and responsibilities for jobs in settlement agencies, and to support the application of consistent compensation across the province.<sup>26</sup>

## **Importance of Settlement Workers as a Key Success Factor in Newcomers' Settlement Process**

The well documented demographic diversity of newcomers to Canada has produced varied settlement and integration needs, as related to the timing of entry, place of residence, and a host of other factors.<sup>27</sup>

The explosion of different entry statuses in recent years has made the picture even more complex. Most notably, migrant workers and international students are fast becoming part of the Canadian immigration discourse with their growing numbers, unique needs, and aspirations for permanent residence.<sup>28</sup>

How communities receive newcomers in all their diversity is also a varied experience; welcoming communities remain as an ideal in many places and jurisdictions. Canada may have the most comprehensive system of settlement and integration services anywhere in the world but the system is increasingly under strain with the multiplication and diversification of needs.<sup>29</sup>

### **This leads to the necessity of having fully equipped and trained settlement and integration workers to assist the diversity of newcomers, with varying needs, settle into Canada.**

Another layer of the story is the increased demand of frontline settlement and integration workers, to assess, understand, and refer those clients with mental health issues.

“According to the Canadian Mental Health Association study, newcomers face challenges that can threaten their mental health such as:

- a drop in their socio-economic status
- inability to speak the language of the host country
- separation from family and friends
- a lack of a friendly reception by the host population and
- limited access to an ethno-cultural community to provide social support.”<sup>30</sup>

“These challenges may be more pronounced for specific age groups (e.g., those who migrated during adolescence or after the age of 65). Newcomer youth are twice as likely to suffer from depression in comparison with individuals aged 35 and older. Women and seniors may suffer from a greater loss of social support and independence than others. Some newcomers may have experienced man-made disasters such as war, torture or repression. Furthermore, newcomers who need mental health services may be reluctant to seek such assistance due to the stigma attached to this type of illness as well as cultural and linguistic barriers.”<sup>31</sup>

Para-Counselling services aim to assist newcomers by helping them to define their problems and identify resources available to them. At the same time, however, SPO activities under para-counselling were reported as:

- clinical counselling
- specialized referral
- crisis counselling
- counselling on problems related to adaptation, anger management, family mediation
- providing emotional support
- addressing problems such as post-partum blues and/or depression, assault issues, post-traumatic stress, and family/domestic violence (reported by all SPOs).<sup>32</sup>

“...Immigration-Contribution Accountability Measurement System data - iCAMS (government performance management database for SPOs) indicated **a 64% growth in the provision of these services by SPOs between 2004/05 and 2008/09**, the most significant growth among all ISAP services... . More than half of ISAP clients surveyed reported they used para-counselling services (59%).<sup>33</sup>

The ability to communicate, refer, and para-counsel those individuals under duress requires a highly competent and skilled workforce. Problems fester and the integration process is delayed, if these issues are not addressed at the beginning of the settlement process. An unsuccessful adaptation process is a possible outcome of clients not receiving the support they need. This can lead to the client never fully integrating into society. It cannot be stressed enough the importance of settlement workers in helping newcomers adjust to living in Canada.

“A key challenge is integrating into the economy and labour market, which often results in high levels of poverty for new immigrants. This is due, in part, to the fact that foreign credentials may not be recognized; language barriers; and the stigmatization of visible minorities due to discrimination. Typically, newcomers also face mental health issues, such as stress and anxiety, due to financial insecurity, family separation, and discrimination.”<sup>34</sup>

## **Rationale for Compensation Research of Settlement Practitioners**

### **The Need**

Considering the heightened demand for settlement services, AAISA's membership began to see signs that they were having trouble recruiting and retaining the staff they needed. The same thriving economy that was drawing newcomers to the province was also expanding opportunities for existing Alberta residents, including those employed by newcomer-serving agencies.<sup>35</sup>

*“We were losing talent, and we suspected that it was because our compensation was not competitive,” said Dale Taylor, Past Executive Director of Calgary’s Centre for Newcomers and then-chair of AAISA.*<sup>36</sup>

Consequently, the immigrant service sector, together with several of its funders, sought to validate the assumption that sector salaries were low relative to the broader non-profit sector and to determine the size of the suspected salary gap. It was intended that such information could support efforts to increase funding, which could in turn be used to increase salaries.<sup>37</sup>

In 2005 AAISA members participated in the Boland Salary survey. A Supplementary Report was produced isolating the AAISA salary and other compensation data from the broader sector. While the 2005 study did not, at the time, analyze the AAISA data in relation to the broader sector, it did however give a strong indication that average salaries were lower.<sup>38</sup> In 2007, the Immigrant Sector Compensation Review Project was undertaken to:

- (1) Identify if there is a gap between salaries in the immigrant service sector and those in the broader non-profit community, and
- (2) Identify possible strategies to address such a gap.

From the 2007 Boland Compensation Survey review, it was observed that the salaries in the sector did not adequately compensate staff, for the level of skills and complexity of the work that they perform.<sup>39</sup> Comparison of AAISA member agencies salary practices to the Select Sample and its sub samples revealed consistent results showing that an average **salary gap of from 13.6% to 19%** existed between the immigrant serving sector and the non-profit sector in general.<sup>40</sup>

This prompted further action to address issues regarding compensation of settlement practitioners in Alberta. The timeline of events were:

- June 2008 - A joint service provider/funder committee was established to address issues regarding compensation of settlement practitioners in Alberta.
- May 2009 - AAISA mandated a committee to review, research, and advocate with funders on the issue of equitable compensation.
- December 2010 – the HR Compensation committee assumed its mandate. At the time, this AAISA committee was referred to as the HR Compensation Committee but its name has since been modified to reflect the committee’s role of acting on behalf of the entire settlement sector in Alberta.

### **Development of the Compensation Sector Committee Initiatives**

AAISA established the Sector Compensation committee in response to an identified need to research and advocate for more equitable compensation of settlement practitioners.

**The role of the Compensation Sector committee is to** promote, do research and lead initiatives in support of the settlement sector to ensure that settlement practice receives recognition and compensation that reflects the skills, and practical and theoretical knowledge required for the work that practitioners perform:

- equity
- accountability
- positioning and
- visibility.<sup>41</sup>

From the 2007 Compensation Review Project<sup>42</sup> recommendations, the Sector Compensation Committee focused not only on short-term funding adjustments, but also on long-term funding strategies and Human Resources system development.

**Specific recommendations, from the 2007 Compensation Review project, included:**

1. **AAISA members, service agencies and funders should together establish protocols to guide immediate funding adjustments.** Such protocols could include choosing the same comparison market and setting salary targets by position type for funding adjustment proposals. For example,
  - Position classification, profiles, and evaluation
  - Development of position competencies
  - Salary benchmarking
  - Development of salary grids
  - Identification and Development of Core Services in the Immigrant Sector.
2. **The Settlement and Integration sector develops appropriate HR systems which take into consideration other related initiatives.** Specific recommended activities included:
  - The immigrant sector uses its Provincial organization (i.e. AAISA) and takes a provincial approach in the strategic and HR development of its sector and in advocating with government to address funding and sector development issues.
  - AAISA takes a leadership role in engaging local funders in other cities and regions to become part of this process.
  - The immigrant sector seeks opportunities to learn about, connect and work collaboratively with other local, provincial, and national HR-related initiatives in order to be aware of developing opportunities, and to inform these other initiatives about the particular issues facing the immigrant sector.

After a series of consultations to discuss the recommendations, with stakeholder partners, the **committee developed an action plan and presented this plan in the 2008 report**

**Towards Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant Serving Sector.**<sup>43</sup> The action plan concentrated on the development of a:

- Sector-wide position classification structure
- Market-competitive salary structure linked to the position classifications
- Formal accreditation process in association with post-secondary institutions
- Sector wide communication strategy
- Strategy to increase compensation
- Funding strategy<sup>iii</sup>

AAISA, serving as a provincial catalyst in strategic and HR development of the Alberta sector, under the guidance of the Sector Compensation Committee<sup>iv</sup>, was given the go ahead from the AAISA membership to lead a number of projects as described in the **Action Plan**.

### Completed Sector Compensation Projects and Results

From the implementation of the Action Plan, a series of research and technical projects were undertaken. This section describes the projects and the results.

#### Job Classification Model for the Immigrant Serving Sector (February, 2010)

In June 2009 AAISA members agreed that the initial phase of the job classification model should be undertaken and two career streams, representing a significant number of positions within the sector, were selected for analysis. The two career streams were **Settlement Practitioner** and **Career Practitioner**. In addition to developing career profiles for each of the two jobs identified, the process is intended as a template for development of additional profiles over time.<sup>44</sup>

#### RESULTS:

Three levels of competency were identified for the two streams of **Settlement Practitioner** and **Career Practitioner**.

- **Developmental level** - includes most of the elements typical of the job but assumes that during the developmental period the incumbent will benefit from closer supervision or oversight of activities by a more experienced practitioner.
- **Fully Qualified level** - the incumbent is presumed to be able to function independently with minimal supervision or oversight.
- **Guide level** - is included to enable recognition of those practitioners whose depth of experience is such that, while they are not in a supervisory role, they may carry informal responsibility for mentoring other staff and contribute in a significant manner to the development and monitoring of policies and procedures.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>iii</sup> Appendix C. Appendix 1 of Toward Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant Serving Sector: Compensation Review Implementation Options

<sup>iv</sup> Appendix D. Sector Compensation Committee Terms of Reference

In this job classification model the core responsibilities were stated in the first column. The second, third and fourth columns list additional skills needed for those key job elements related to core area for the developmental, fully qualified, and guide positions. Job elements are added and responsibilities increase as one moves to the right, i.e. those responsibilities shown for “Fully Qualified” are additional to or performed with greater independence than those shown at the Developmental level.<sup>46</sup>

**For example:**

**Settlement Practitioner**

**General description:** To assist newcomer immigrants and refugees in their adaptation into Canadian society through education and orientation to life in Canada; to understand community development approaches; to facilitate self-help; and to encourage active participation of immigrants and refugees in community initiatives by linking them with communities, organizations and agencies.<sup>47</sup>

<p><b>Core Responsibilities</b></p>	<p><b>Developmental</b> - At this level responsibilities and duties will typically be performed under the guidance of a more experienced Practitioner or supervisor. (List of job elements)</p>	<p><b>Fully Qualified</b> - All Developmental responsibilities plus: (listing of additional responsibilities)</p>	<p><b>Guide</b> (non-supervisory) - All Fully qualified level responsibilities plus: (listing of additional responsibilities)</p>
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**OUTCOMES:**

This created the start of a provincial settlement and integration job classification system to enable the development of a salary grid. A section titled “Salary Grades” was included at the end of each model. This was developed further as this process evolved, from this initial work and report in 2010. This research established a basis for province-wide comparisons and the development of a provincial Job and Salary Standards Framework, completed in 2013.<sup>48</sup>

**Settlement Practitioner Job Market Comparison (2012)**

From the creation of the settlement and integration job classification system, further work was conducted to compare the settlement sector jobs to those positions with similar job elements and responsibilities. By comparing settlement and integration jobs with both the Alberta Social Services and Alberta Employment and Immigration, an estimated salary range could be developed for positions within the sector.

**RESULTS:**

The consultants, Peter Boland and Associates, were able to calculate a close estimate of the value of the AAISSA positions within the Government salary structures. With reasonable confidence the consultants identified equitable job matches between AAISSA positions and

Alberta Government jobs and were able to calculate a close estimate of the value of the AAISA positions within the Government salary structures.<sup>49</sup>

The positions chosen as the best match to the Settlement Practitioner was the Family Support Outreach Worker. This position is classified within the Provincial Government system as a code O64CC. For reference, this code is one rank below that assigned to a Team Leader.<sup>50</sup>

The Employment Counsellor job within AAISA matches reasonably well to the Career and Employment Counsellor position within Alberta Employment and Immigration with some differences.<sup>51</sup>

The findings indicate that the AAISA salaries fall below the Alberta Government range for equivalent positions by 32% to 45%. When compared to Woods Homes the AAISA median values lie within the salary range and are 20% - 23% below the Woods Homes range maximum.<sup>52</sup>

### **OUTCOMES:**

The immediate outcome was the creation of the Settlement and Integration Practitioner and Career Practitioner Competency Frameworks in December 2012. These frameworks are the provincial standards for these non-supervisory Practitioner job families.

This research also established a basis for province-wide comparisons and the development of a provincial Job and Salary Standards Framework, completed in 2013.<sup>53</sup> In January of 2013, an agreement with key funders on job and salary standards for three key job families was established.<sup>54</sup>

### **Client-facing Support Job Evaluation and Market Comparison (2012)**

Following the successful development of position profiles and relative values for Settlement Practitioners and Career Practitioners a similar analysis for **client facing support workers** (Band B) was performed. The objective was to determine the characteristics of these positions and identify market values within government and other providers of human services.<sup>55</sup>

The **Group B** positions were identified in three groups:

- **Outreach** – Providing outreach and community support services, e.g., Healthy Start Access Worker/Parent Group Facilitator
- **Facilitation** – Planning and facilitating group or community focused programs, e.g. After School Program Facilitator, Community Seniors Program Facilitator
- **Intake** – Client intake and assessment, e.g. Intake Counselor, Resource Service Provider/Client Information Worker<sup>56</sup>

A comparison of job environments, educational requirements, and responsibilities was completed for the client support positions between the Settlement and Integration Sector and the Government of Alberta. The relative value of client facing support positions in the sector was identified. An estimated evaluation **places intake positions** in the sector **two grades below the Settlement Practitioner positions**<sup>57</sup>.

**RESULTS:**

The benchmarking to the Government of Alberta (GoA) positions for the Band a (Support) and B positions (Client Support), within AAISA, was challenging due to a lack of direct position matches. In general terms, the relativities established in the AAISA structure are supported by the GoA benchmarking. Also, the AAISA Intake positions appear to have a range of responsibilities and there is reason to believe there may be more than one level of these positions within the AAISA structure.<sup>58</sup>

**OUTCOMES:**

The Job Standards Framework and Salary Grid were updated to reflect the research and the Association communicated with funders to notify them of the updates.

**The Alberta Settlement and Integration Provincial Profile of Jobs (2012)**

The project’s purpose was to further identify other settlement and integration positions within the sector, not already classified, and then categorize the positions according to similar job elements into different job bands. The information gained from this project was used to develop the Salary Grid<sup>v</sup>.

**RESULTS:**

The profile represents the classification of the positions in the sector according to the band system developed through the survey of the immigrant serving agencies<sup>vi</sup>. The following band system was utilized in the salary grid.

<b>BANDS</b>	<b>POSITIONS</b>	<b>Job Examples</b>
<b>A</b>	Client Facing Support positions or Administrative Staff	Administrative assistants, data entry positions, support officers, and junior positions in various settlement program departments.
<b>B</b>	Client Services positions, or Administration and Facilitation	Intake services, client support services, mid-level administrative staff, and facilitators.
<b>C</b>	Settlement Practitioner positions, or Specialist	Settlement workers, direct client services in facilitation, basic

<sup>v</sup> See Table 1. Salary Grid 2013 – 2014

<sup>vi</sup> 2013 Alberta Settlement and Integration Provincial Profile

		counselling, interpretation, support to development of organization.
<b>D</b>	Career Practitioner and other Specialized Staff	Employment, career, counselling, senior accountant, and senior interpretation, and other specializations.
<b>E</b>	Supervisor/Coordinator	Positions that provide leadership, direction, training and support to positions in Bands A-D. Supervisors generally do not carry responsibility for funder relations and contract management.
<b>F</b>	Operations/coordination/implementation positions	Senior Management, Mid-level Management, and Direct Coordination Staff (i.e. ED, Manager, and Coordinator/Team Lead). This band positions usually report to the Top Executive or Director of Operations/ Senior Manager and supervises one or more program coordinators and/ or specialist staff.

## Ranking Tool

AAISA member agencies participated in a ranking exercise that involved 268 positions being assessed by 16 agencies' Human Resource staff. Points were attached to the ranks based on the:

- number of years in the same role or related role
- certification as a Settlement Practitioner
- degree related to the field and
- performance requirements<sup>vii</sup>.

## RESULTS:

From this data a Salary Grid consisting of five step levels, was developed.<sup>viii</sup>

## OUTCOMES:

The majority of the proposed salaries was accepted by the funders, with further recommendations for research on additional positions. The membership was informed about the proposed Salary Grid and AAISA Job Standards Framework.

<sup>vii</sup> Appendix H. Ranking Tool Example

<sup>viii</sup> See Table 1. Salary Grid 2013 – 2014

## Supervisory and Leadership Job Evaluation and Market Comparison (2013)

The purpose of the research was to define characteristics of AAISA members' management positions to similar work in the Non-profit and Government sectors and assess the relative value of the positions.<sup>59</sup>

The research defined job categories in AAISA's members' management, and then indicated which positions, from the Boland non-profit survey 2013, aligned with the different management levels of AAISA's membership. The consultant then did the same process with the Alberta government positions. A range of salaries was provided for both the government and non-profit management positions, but an average salary comparison with the AAISA membership was not conducted.

The three levels of management identified within AAISA member organizations were:

**Top Executive** – Accountable to a board of directors for achieving the mission of the organization. Functions within a planning horizon of at least 5 years.

**Level 2 – Department/Divisional leader** – Positions at this level generally report to the Top Executive and are typically responsible for achieving significant operational outcomes, including the development, delivery, and evaluation of multiple programs. The planning horizon is seen as 3 to 5 years.

**Level 3 – Program Leadership** – Positions at this level will typically report to a Level 2 manager and be accountable for the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes of a single large or several smaller programs. At this level the focus is on the client to ensure that program deliverables are met. Budget responsibility will be limited to authorizing expenditures within an assigned program budget and overall monitoring of the program budget.

**Group 4 – Task Leaders, Functional Specialists and Project Leaders** – There is a recognition that, in addition to the formal management responsibilities defined above, there are roles in most agencies where elements of management are exhibited but where the focus is primarily on task. Within this group are positions that are delegated responsibility for task leadership, including assigning and scheduling work and the mentoring of less experienced staff members. The need for this "level" is often dependent on the volume of work. In some cases limited expenditure authorizations may be delegated.

The compensation level for positions in Group 4 will vary with the nature of the role and the level of authority assigned. Functional Specialists will typically be considered peers at level 2 or 3.<sup>60</sup>

### RESULTS:

The project researcher reviewed the management salary grids for both the non-profit (excluding AAISA members) and the government management positions and correlated the

information to the AAISA's members' management levels to give an indication of the estimated salary ranges.

<b>AAISA Members Management Levels</b>	<b>Other Non-profit Management Levels</b>	<b>Other Non-profit Median Salaries All Operational Budgets</b>	<b>AB Gov't Management Levels</b>	<b>AB Gov't Salary Ranges</b>
Top Executive	101 Chief Executive Officer	\$119,000	Executive Director Human Resource Services (AB Employment & Immigration)	\$119,704-\$157,300
Level 2+ (no equivalent categories)	102 Top Finance & Admin	\$92,700	Area Manager Human Resources and Employment (AB Employment & Immigration)	\$83,590-\$127,816
	121 Executive Manager – Functional Area or Division	\$96,390		
	116 Director of Operations	\$86,510		
Level 2 <b>Department/ Divisional leader</b>	105 Program or Functional Manager	\$70,505	Service Delivery Manager (Alberta Employment & Immigration)	\$64,038-\$102,752
	113 Top Human Resources	\$84,425		
Level 3 <b>Program Leadership</b>	106 Program Supervisor	\$59,000		
	130 Program Coordinator	\$48,983		
	316 Supervisor Clinical Services	\$68,821		

### **OUTCOMES:**

The work was used as a reference for the AAISA Salary grid and proposed salaries in 2013-2014.

### **Major Accomplishments**

The Sector Compensation initiative produced several key accomplishments<sup>ix</sup>:

1. Development of a long-term funding strategy and settlement agency awareness of the need for staff salary adjustments to be competitive in the marketplace to attract and

<sup>ix</sup> Appendix I. Timeline of the Sector Compensation Initiative (2007-2015)

retain settlement and integrations practitioners through the **2007 Immigrant Sector Compensation Review** research project.

2. Increased membership consensus for the go ahead to develop a job classification system/salary grid and created buy-in to establish short-term and long-term funding strategies with the development of the sector’s human resources through the 2008 Action Plan: Toward Sustainability in Alberta’s Immigrant Serving Sector report.
3. Created the start of a provincial settlement and integration job classification system to enable the development of a salary grid which allowed for market comparisons of the similar positions in the mainstream sector, namely, government and not-for-profit human services agencies through the 2009 – 2010 Job Classification Framework – Settlement and Integration and Career Practitioners research project.
4. Established a basis for province-wide comparisons and the development of a provincial Job and Salary Standards Framework, completed in 2013, through the 2012 Settlement and Integration and Career Practitioners’ Job Market Comparison research project.
5. Established additional job family categories with salary ranges in the Job and Salary Standards Framework through the 2012 Client-facing Support Job Evaluation and Market Comparison research project.
6. Classified equivalent positions, in the sector, into 5 bands based on years of experience to develop the salary level for each band through the 2012 The Alberta Settlement and Integration Provincial Profile of Jobs research project.
7. Established additional job family categories with salary ranges in the Job and Salary Standards Framework through the 2013 Supervisory and Leadership Job Evaluation and Market Comparison research project.
8. Established the province-wide Job and Salary Standards Framework<sup>x</sup> produced by AAISA as a guide to agencies and funders in negotiating agreements. The Framework is intended to support AAISA member agencies and funders in ensuring standards with respect to the competencies, qualifications, skills and responsibilities for jobs in settlement and integration sector, and to support the application of consistent compensation across the province.
9. Negotiated with funders new salary rates for the Settlement Practitioner and Career Development Practitioner professions for the financial year 2013-14.

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<sup>x</sup> Appendix J. AAISA Job Standards Framework 2014-2015

**Table 1. Salary Grid 2013 – 2014<sup>xi</sup>**

Job Family	Bands	Number of Years of Experience and Annual Compensation				
		1	2	3	4	5
Support	A	38,600/	39,565	40,554	41,568	42,607
Client-facing Support	B	43,675	44,767	45,886	47,033	48,209
Settlement Practitioner	C	49,200	50,676	52,196	53,762	55,375
Career Practitioner/Language Assessor	D	52,000	53,560	55,167	56,822	58,526
Supervisors/ Coordinators/ Specialists	E	60,355	62,166	64,031	65,952	67,930
Managers+	F	74,500	76,735	79,037	81,408	83,850

The settlement and integration service providers and the funders used this grid as a point of reference in assessing salaries based on the agency’s current positions and employees. **It was the first salary grid in the Settlement and Integration Sector used in funding negotiations.**

### Recommendations

Despite the fact that “there has not been a formal assessment conducted as of yet”, the anecdotal data points out that “the project significantly advanced the goal of an overall compensation for the sector”<sup>xii</sup>. The Committee acknowledges the important contributions, from the feedback received, from AAISA members, funders and other stakeholders, in the many initiatives and research projects undertaken, to assist in fulfilling the Committee’s mandate.

The AAISA Sector Compensation Committee is committed to continuing the work to ensure that settlement practitioners receive the recognition and compensation that reflects the skills, and practical and theoretical knowledge required for the work that they perform.

<sup>xi</sup> Amounts Based on an average full-time work week of 37.5 hours excluding health and other benefits

<sup>xii</sup> Email Communication, Compensation Report – Conclusions, Oct. 14, 2016, Milton Ortega, Provincial Manager, AAISA.

To determine the next course of action, the Committee reviewed the, **2008 Report Toward Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant Serving Sector**, to assess if the report's strategic objectives are still relevant in today's settlement and integration environment. From this review, the committee recommends these future actions.

### Practical Recommendations

It is recommended to **continue sustainable efforts toward sector professionalization, job classification, and fair compensation** through the following actions:

1. Continuous support to AAISA membership in the application and utilization of Compensation tools developed, i.e. job classifications and salary grids.
2. Updating the Job Standards Framework as additional job families are developed in the sector to reflect current services. For example, one group that emerged during the research is the Language Provider job category. This involves the creation of standards for assessors, counsellors, instructors, teaching assistants, and management staff in this job category. In order to provide a clear market comparison, organizations providing language services, certifying bodies, and funding partners need to participate in the preliminary research (i.e. sharing job descriptions, salary information, and requirements for employment and/or certification).
3. Utilizing AAISA Job Standards Framework as a competency and compensation tool to negotiate funding during the call for proposals process.
4. Updating the Salary Grid annually taking into account the inflation rate and other labour market aspects to maintain an attractive and fair compensation.

### Strategic Recommendations

#### **1. Provincial Recognition of Settlement and Integration Professionals as an Occupation**

The committee recommends pursuing provincial recognition of the Settlement and Integration sector professions in the Alberta Labour Market Occupational Profiles. As part of this goal, it is recommended to research the process of placing new profiles for the settlement sector under the occupational profiles under the Government of Alberta's Learning Information Service (ALIS) framework.

Currently, no reference is made to immigrant and refugee service, or settlement and integration professions in the occupational profiles on the ALIS website.

The Government of Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)<sup>61</sup> provides information for more than 550 occupational profiles. Each profile includes information about: Working conditions; Personal characteristics; Educational requirements; Employment and advancement; Salary; and other sources of information. The profiles currently listed on the system are immigration officers and consultant profiles.

## **2. Use a Collaborative Approach in Addressing the Sector's Compensation Issues**

The committee recommends promoting an ongoing dialogue with Government funders and non-profit service providers to discuss new approaches in conducting the working relationships between the stakeholders in managing the human resources for the non-profit sector.

From the research, the suggested approach to government and non-profit partnerships is to develop a more equal footing in managing relationships in developing sector-recommended practices for job classifications and salary bandwidths<sup>62</sup>.

## **3. Continue supporting the sector through learning and professional development to increase competency and to receive recognition for the profession.**

The committee recommends seeking recognition for the settlement practitioner occupation by reviewing the feasibility of pursuing post-secondary credits for AAISA's training courses.

It is recommended to work jointly with the Settlement Practitioners Training and Accreditation (SPTA) Committee to consider post-secondary accrediting bodies' standards in order to tailor the Settlement Practitioner training and certification to enable partnerships with post-secondary institutions in Social Work education. If AAISA's goal is to receive recognition and credit for the training modules it will need to meet the set standards of the different evaluation bodies.

## Endnotes

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Boland. Defining Characteristics and Assessment of Relative Value of AAISA Management Positions to Similar Work in the Non Profit and Government Sectors. 2013.

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<sup>62</sup> Peter Boland. *Towards Sustainability in Alberta's Immigrant-Serving Sector* 2008