



PROVINCIAL ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE PROGRESS BRIEF

AAISA's Provincial Engagement Initiative (PEI) is comprised of 50 different participants across three regional committees in Calgary, Edmonton, and the Small Centres. Through the PEI committees, AAISA seeks to identify systems-level challenges and facilitate collaborative solutions in service of a provincially shared vision of settlement and integration for newcomers in Alberta.

The most recent round of PEI meetings for all three committees occurred in-person in November 2019. In all three committees, AAISA identified two key provincial challenges based on AAISA research and previous engagement across the province's settlement and integration sector. While these challenges are provincial in nature, each committee brought forth regional context which serves to nuance and inform a broader provincial position. The following outlines the key themes of the discussions across the three committees:

Refugee Claimants: Since 2016, Alberta has received an increasing amount of refugee claimants. The increasing numbers of refugee claimants, in conjunction with the limited availability of services for this vulnerable population, has created many complex challenges for agencies across the province. As these challenges continue to persist, the three PEI committees will seek to:

- Emphasize the need for collaboration and communication within the settlement and integration sector and with broader community partners to better serve and refer refugee claimant clients and create a streamlined network of supports
- Explore strategies to support the creation of a streamlined network of supports for refugee claimants, through service mapping, engagement of community partners, and sharing of best practices with service providers across the province

Language: Language training accounts for the bulk of IRCC's investment in settlement services and represents an integral element in meaningful integration of newcomers. As agencies across the province experience new funding realities, it is critical that language providers continue to collaborate and communicate to ensure that the unique language needs of clients are being fulfilled. Over the forthcoming meetings, the PEI committees will seek to:

- Continue discussions surrounding collaboration between language providers and other key partners across the province
- Pursue coordination of language providers as a conduit to ensuring newcomers achieve their desired language objectives
- Explore new strategies and creative solutions to support higher level language acquisition



In addition to the aforementioned topics, each committee discussed emergent challenges that are currently impacting their work and the clients they serve. These emergent challenges included:

- Section 91 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) surrounding *Representation or advice for consideration*
 - Agencies discussed their experiences with this section of the IRPA and the implications it has had on their work.
- Recent cuts to the Government of Alberta’s ParentLink Program
 - Agencies discussed potential gaps and challenges that this change to ParentLink programming may create and possible solutions and opportunities for collaboration
- Programming gaps and challenges related to older newcomer youth clients
 - Agencies discussed the difficult settlement pathway faced by older youth newcomers and current best practices when supporting this client group

Through upcoming PEI meetings, AAISA will seek to facilitate collaborative solutions to these provincial challenges while still recognizing regional realities and context. Moreover, as the work of these regional committees progresses, AAISA looks forward to continuing to foster productive relationships across our PEI agencies and with IRCC in service of a provincially shared vision of settlement and integration for newcomers in Alberta.