



Request for Proposal (RFP)

Developing Cultural Competencies in Small Centre Agencies in Alberta's Settlement and Integration Sector

In Brief

The **Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)** is seeking a consultant to undertake a professional development project in collaboration with AAISA staff. Through this project AAISA aims to address the shortage of tailored needs-based professional development and training for Alberta's Small Centre Settlement and Integration agencies and their staff. The project will look to build sector capacity to serve the needs of culturally diverse newcomers who settle and integrate in non-urban regions and communities in the province of Alberta.

The project will include, but is not limited to the following:

- Creating a framework for learning and professional development in Small Centre agencies to better support frontline professionals who serve the needs of culturally diverse newcomers who settle and integrate in non-urban regions and communities in the province of Alberta
- Designing, developing, and facilitating in-person professional development activity-based workshops and relevant learning resources for an online self-paced course in English for frontline settlement and integration professionals who work in Small Centres of Alberta
- Collaborating with AAISA's Professional Development Team in developing above mentioned events and resources
- Evaluating the effectiveness and experience of learning through workshops and the online self-paced course
- Producing a final report that will assist AAISA in shaping the future direction of its professional development work for the settlement and integration agencies in small centres across Alberta

About AAISA

The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) is a non-profit umbrella organization that has represented, supported, and advocated for Alberta's settlement and integration sector since 1980. Collectively, AAISA member agencies offer services to newcomers in over 40 municipalities across the province. AAISA's mandate is to build sector capacity to serve newcomers by providing access to relevant and meaningful professional development



opportunities, engaging the sector on issue-based initiatives, and by undertaking research to build understanding of context and emerging needs.

Context and Professional Development Needs

The Province of Alberta welcomes many newcomers. While most of them decide to reside in Calgary and Edmonton, many others settle in centres outside these two urban centres. These small centres include but are not limited to Banff, Brooks, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, and Red Deer. The settlement needs of newcomers in these small centres are met by agencies in those regions and communities. These agencies are frequently referred to as Small Centre Agencies.

Through multiple site visits and in-person consultations, small centre surveys, and interactions at national conferences in 2017-2018, AAISA has identified that Small Centre Agencies in Alberta experience unique challenges, gaps, and needs. Small Centre Agencies have fewer settlement and integration staff compared to larger urban agencies. They also cater to smaller numbers of newcomers compared to those served by larger SPOs in Calgary and Edmonton. Their challenges, however, are by no means small. Frontline staff working in Small Centre Agencies serve culturally diverse newcomers and work under constrained access to resources, technology, and support. Clients may include Permanent Residents, Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), and Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). Frontline staff serve their clients' needs in relation to Language Training, Housing, Social Supports, Health and Wellbeing, Financial and Employment Services, Access to diverse and specific Communities and Groups, and Legal Support. To effectively offer such comprehensive services to their diverse clients, frontline staff regularly collaborate with volunteers and interpreters from communities to which their clients belong. Client engagement primarily involves face-to-face interactions, requiring frontline staff to be swift, responsive, resourceful, and creative in the face of constraints. There is an acute need for additional professional development to equip frontline staff with relevant knowledge and skills to effectively execute their roles and responsibilities under extremely heavy caseloads.

Small Centre Agencies have expressed a significant need for professional development courses tailored to build the capacities of their frontline staff that often navigate multiple roles to effectively support diverse newcomers. This form of service for newcomers demands a broader skillset. AAISA acknowledges this as a professional development need and intends to address it through specific issue-based courses.

Project Objectives

AAISA is seeking a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to undertake a Course Design Development and Facilitation project in collaboration with AAISA staff. Through this course, AAISA aims to offer frontline staff in Small Centre SPOs of Alberta the knowledge and practical skills required to develop cultural competencies and foster intercultural understanding to better serve culturally diverse newcomers. Furthermore, it will offer vital strategies for developing trusting relationships

between and among practitioners and newcomer clients. Simultaneously, this pre-emptively addresses the communication and cultural gaps that can adversely affect newcomers' settlement and integration prospects. The SME is invited to add to the following list other relevant foci to maximize the capacities of frontline staff in Small Centre Agencies of Alberta.

Knowledge & Understanding: After completing this course, participants will:

- Distinguish between ethnocentric and ethnorelativistic perspectives, and recognize instances of stereotyping, cultural blindness, cultural imposition, and intercultural sensitivity
- Reflect on cultural assumptions, taken-for-granted everyday actions, and underexamined unconscious biases, attitudes, behaviours and communication patterns that can create barriers and distrust in intercultural interactions. Become cognizant of how one's own power, position, authority, and influence may affect interaction with culturally diverse newcomers who may be clients, colleagues, volunteers, and interpreters
- Identify patterns of speech and dynamics of interaction that can be discriminatory, prejudicial, coercive, mistrusting, and ultimately disempowering for culturally diverse newcomers who may be clients, colleagues, volunteers, and interpreters
- Understand principles of equity, inclusion, and diversity, power and influence, and contemporary practices of engaging compassionately and empathetically in healthy, equitable, culturally sensitive ways with newcomers who may be clients, colleagues, volunteers, and interpreters from diverse communities and cultural backgrounds

Skills: After completing this course, participants will:

- Speak, act, communicate, refer, and relate in culturally respectful ways that involve: active listening; empathetic conversational questioning that seeks to understand, clarify, and comprehend; creating safe, comforting, disarming and empowering spaces for engagement with culturally diverse communities
- Utilize practical verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies (gestures, postures, and associated body language) to mitigate physical and verbal violence in conflicts and high-stress situations
- Practice approaches to manage feelings and disagreements, resolve and mediate conflicts while maintaining a welcoming and inclusive work environment

Project Deliverables

The deliverables of the project are outlined below:

1. Design, Development and Facilitation of professional development sessions including:
 - a. One-day in-person workshops to be delivered in Lethbridge and Red Deer in **SEPTEMBER 2019**

- b. Online self-paced course with 5-6 modules and appropriate course materials, assignments, supplementary materials, quizzes, assessments, and instruments for evaluation of learning to be made available on AAISA's Moodle LMS in **OCTOBER 2019**
2. Creation of an Evaluation of Learning Effectiveness for the workshop sessions and self-paced online course modules
3. A development report that provides a summary of workshop and course description, learning objectives and outcomes, learning activities and course structure
4. A delivery report that provides information regarding attendance and participation, number of registered participants from member agencies and non-members, reflection by facilitators on the proceedings of the workshops and activities and possible areas of improvement, and other relevant information for greater accountability
5. A final report that will assist AAISA in shaping the future direction of its professional development work for Small Centre SPOs in Alberta's settlement and integration sector

Project Process Deliverables

The Subject Matter Expert (SME) Consultant will:

- **Conduct** literature review and explore current best practices to identify key areas of focus for the workshops and modules of the online self-paced course
- **Ensure** all workshop and online learning content and resources are developed to align with AAISA's Settlement Practitioner Competency Framework and current contextual needs
- **Provide** pilot drafts of content for workshop and online self-paced course to AAISA's Learning and Professional Development Lead and Learning Technology Specialist for feedback and make revisions as required
- **Incorporate** revisions into the online self-paced course content to reflect feedback received from workshop participants and facilitator (if applicable) after workshop delivery
- **Meet** with AAISA's Learning and Professional Development Lead and Learning Technology Specialist to plan for the development of the online self-paced course
- **Collaborate** with AAISA's Learning Technology Specialist to develop content in relation to AAISA's structure of the online self-paced course
- **Commit to generation** of digital learning resources for online self-paced course (this would include electronic versions of pre- and post- assessments of competencies, discussion board tasks, full course content, descriptions and course outlines, assignments and quizzes, readings and references, and Microsoft PowerPoint slides)



- **Commit to assisting** in the creation of audio and video recording of content for online self-paced course. The SME will require a commitment of an estimated 25 hours (approx. 5 hrs per module) to complete audio and video recording for the whole course. The SME will coordinate with AAISA's Learning Technology Specialist to arrange suitable dates to undertake recordings
- **Send** final versions of full course content of the workshop and online self-paced course to AAISA's Learning and Professional Development Lead as well as Learning Technology Specialist
- **Create** an Evaluation of Effectiveness of Learning for the workshop sessions and online self-paced course modules to AAISA's Learning and Professional Development Lead

AAISA will:

- **Arrange** booking of workshop venues, advertise and promote course on social media, and handle registration, enrolment, and printing of workshop materials
- **Provide** the working space and technology to audio record the voice over for all presentation slides of the content modules for the online self-paced course. These recordings will be done at the AAISA office in downtown Calgary
- **Provide** the working space and technology to video record a short introductory orientation for the online self-paced course. These recordings will be done at the AAISA office in downtown Calgary

Workshop and Online Self-Paced Course Components

- A brief description of the intended learning outcomes for the workshop and online-self-paced course.
- Demonstration of how learner outcomes align with AAISA's Settlement Practitioner Competency Framework.
- Key tasks and activities, including assessment of learnings in workshop and online self-paced course.
- List of resources and references.
- Pre-reading materials to be provided to workshop participants.
- Facilitator guide including notes to facilitators with instructions for delivery and materials required.
- Digital learning resources for online delivery (electronic documents, Microsoft PowerPoint presentation slides, audio, video and other multimedia resources).



- Assessment for learning that can be completed by participants.
- Evaluation criteria that can be used to judge the effectiveness and experience of learning in the workshop and the online self-paced course.

Proposal

We require a detailed proposal with a cost estimate and projected timelines for the project that includes the above deliverables. **PLEASE NOTE that the proposal should not exceed \$8000.**

The project will start no later than **JULY, 2019** and the deliverables must be completed and accepted no later than **NOVEMBER, 2019.**

The proposal should include:

1. Project design: proposed activities, cost estimates, and timeline for the various components (approach to learning/facilitating, learning goals, proposed modules, etc.) of the project
2. Resume of the Project Leader responsible for the development and coordination of the project
3. List of courses/workshops developed/delivered previously
4. Two references, phone numbers and emails of people for whom you have developed/delivered courses or workshops previously.

Responsibilities of Consultant

The successful consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Providing a plan with timeline for each project component and deliverable
2. Conducting project components with input from AAISA staff within the designated timeframe
3. Scheduling regular meetings and providing updates on progress, including the sharing of key documents and drafts
4. Providing AAISA with invoices according to the agreed upon fee schedule
5. Any documents created by AAISA such as the Settlement Practitioner Competency Framework, and Evaluation Framework and other resources offered by AAISA to the consultant are property of AAISA. These documents will be provided to the consultant for reference and can only be used for the purpose of this project.

Selection Criteria & Process

The following are the criteria we will use in the selection process:

1. Detailed plan and timeline (including projected costs for each component).



2. Demonstrated Expertise in Cross-Cultural Competencies Development and Transformative Education, Interpersonal Communication, and in-depth understanding of Workplace Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity and related practices is mandatory.
3. Experience working with adult learners, including facilitation
4. Familiarity with online learning environments preferred (e.g. Moodle, etc.)
5. Evidence of high standards in curriculum design, development, and evaluation
6. Knowledge of Alberta's Settlement and Integration sector is mandatory
7. Compliance with deadline(s)
8. Fluency in English, both written and verbal
9. In your proposal please identify the following information:
 - Learning goals and outcomes
 - Key focus questions
 - Main areas of awareness and attitude

The proposal will be reviewed in detail according to the above criteria. All applicants will be promptly notified when a selection has been made. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide portfolios of their work or examples of previously designed and developed courses and/or workshops, as well as to participate in an interview.

Both individual and collaborative proposals will be considered.

To submit a proposal, please send a letter of intent, curriculum vitae, and proposed fees to: rkarpe@aaisa.ca

Your electronic submission should be sent by 5:00 pm MST on JUNE 19, 2019.

Qualified applicants will be added to AAISA's network for notification of future opportunities.

If you have any questions, please contact **Rohan Karpe**, *Learning & Professional Development Lead* at rkarpe@aaisa.ca.

PLEASE NOTE that AAISA is not obligated to accept the lowest cost proposal. In addition, AAISA need not accept any of the proposals. All decisions of AAISA shall be final and binding.