

ALBERTA INTEGRATION SUMMIT



ALBERTA INTEGRATION SUMMIT
Edmonton AB, October 30th and 31st, 2014

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GLOSSARY

AAISA	Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
ABLE	Adult Basic Literacy Education
ACFA	L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta
AUMA	Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
ESL	English as a Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IQAS	International Qualifications Assessment Service
JSTL	Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labor
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
LIP	Local Immigration Partnership
PBLT	Portfolio Based Learning and Teaching
PLAR	Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
TFW	Temporary Foreign Workers
TOFEL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

COMMON LANGUAGE

We have provided some basic definitions of terms commonly used in the report to help facilitate a common understanding and promote dialogue.

- **Collaboration:** Includes a variety of ways that two or more organizations can work together. Options range from: informal networks and alliances; separate organizations that maintain their independence while jointly working on certain activities or functions; organizations with resources or expertise that offer assistance to other organizations; the formation of a new organization to jointly work on some activities or functions; or a group structure where a 'parent' organization governs a group of 'subsidiary' organizations.
- **Immigrant (CIC, definition):** Persons residing in Canada who were born outside of Canada, excluding temporary foreign workers, Canadian citizens born outside Canada and those with student or working visas.
- **Immigrant clients:** Immigrants who seek services and are considered to be rights-bearing individuals.
- **Knowledge mobilization:** It refers to moving available knowledge, like research, into active use to improve policy and practice.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** A cooperative venture which is funded and operated through a partnership of government and one or more private sector companies. It is built on the expertise of each partner, and sharing of resources, risks and rewards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alberta Integration Summit, which was organized by AAISA and supported by CIC, was a part of a series of provincial settlement and integration Summits held across the western region to understand the current priorities for settlement and integration in Alberta. The Summit included participants from all levels of government, the settlement system, the francophone community, the education and health sector, justice representatives as well as non-profit and private actors. The Summit was held in Edmonton, Alberta on the 30th and 31st October 2014.

The first day of the Summit saw a variety of key stakeholders present their views around the current context of immigration and settlement. The second day of the Summit was organized in a discussion format to deeply engage the participants to expand and articulate key priorities. The day was divided into four themes of settlement - Language Training and Assessment, Labor Market Participation, Core Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities.

Language services and programming was one of the four critical themes discussed at the Summit. Participants highlighted that a wide range of services are currently available to meet the needs of immigrant clients. These language programs include: pre-literacy support, bridging programs, LINC, ESL, and specialized employment-focused language training and population-specific language education (e.g. for youth or seniors). The stakeholders highlighted the need to strengthen services both in terms of the model of delivery and the content of teaching. They also discussed the importance of continuing to use a collaborative approach to language services, improving the structure of these services, and standardizing both testing and assessment. Additionally, according to the Summit participants, language services need to remain responsive to policy shifts and become more embedded in the lived experiences of immigrants.

Labour market participation was another key theme explored at the Summit. The participants discussed the strengths of the current system, which include: foreign credential recognition, mentorship, employment support, bridging programs and finally, collaborative models that involve employers, settlement agencies and the government. Stakeholders also offered various strategic inputs to strengthen employment outcomes for immigrants. These suggestions focused on encouraging more multi-sectoral partnerships; using a welcoming community approach across the province to frame strategies; improving employment related services; widening the scope of targeted interventions for vulnerable populations' and knowledge mobilization for evaluating efficacy and impact.

Core settlement services, was the third theme discussed at the Summit. Participants described the role that settlement services play in helping immigrants to adapt and adjust to the Canadian way of life. They highlighted key strengths, which included the wide range of services provided by these agencies; the flexible and holistic approach to service delivery; and the ability of settlement services to foster ethno-cultural linkages to support immigrants from diverse backgrounds. The stakeholders discussed the need to increase the scope of services and to improve the type and focus of collaboration among agencies. They also

emphasized the need to continue developing programs that reflect the cultural diversity of immigrant populations, as well as to expand the professional development of settlement workers.

Welcoming Communities was the fourth key theme discussed at the Summit. The stakeholders shared the importance of collaboration, development of public-private partnerships and the role of public institutions in creating welcoming communities. They spoke about the need to include immigrants in settlement planning and program development; improving services and infrastructure; involving the government more critically at all levels; and finally, developing further research to support the programs associated with welcoming communities.

Overall, the four themes identified a number of common ideas and provided key strategic directions for immigration and settlement work in Alberta. These common strategic themes included: continuing and building a client-focused model of service delivery; mainstreaming integration and settlement to build a welcoming community; supporting more multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborative models of intervention; increasing knowledge mobilization and access to services; incubating new programs using targeted and universal approaches; and developing successful programs to scale.

The report will first provide a brief introduction to the Summit and a description of the methodology. Next, the report will discuss the presentations made on the first day of the Summit. Following this it will detail the dialogue around the four themes of settlement and integration. Finally, the report will provide some concluding remarks and common overarching strategies seen across all four themes.

INTRODUCTION

The Alberta Integration Summit was held on October 30th and 31st in Edmonton, Alberta. This AAISA-led initiative funded by CIC was comprised of an advisory committee of settlement agencies, three levels of government and a number of research networks that focus on settlement in Canada. The Alberta Integration Summit was designed to engage a wide cross-section of settlement stakeholders to understand the current context of immigrants, the status of settlement service use, the impact of settlement programs and programs that serve sizable populations of foreign-born clients, and the gaps in settlement services. This report will help to shape the provincial perspective in the dialogue at the National Settlement Council in December 2014. It will also support the development of priorities both at the national and provincial levels. The Summit highlighted key inputs in the areas of Language Training and Assessment, Labor Market Participation, Core Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities.

The event drew in over 250 participants from 129 organizations from across Alberta and the Northwest Territories. These included actors from the settlement (39 participants) system, private organizations (4 participants), non-profit institutions (59 participants), the health sector (4 participants), the justice system (1 participant), a faith-based organization (1 participant), the education system (17 participants) sectors, as well as all levels of government – federal (13 participants), provincial (18 participants) and municipal (7 participants).

Immigration to Alberta continues to shift rapidly and grow exponentially. The changing landscape of immigration is thus, influencing the nature of settlement services and the emergent priorities for the government. Not only was the Summit designed to provide an opportunity for the reflection and consideration of these emerging priorities, but also for stakeholders to collectively gather the necessary information to ensure better settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers and Alberta's welcoming communities.

The Summit participants reflected both on the status and needs of the settlement system as a whole, as well as the context of the immigrants themselves. This distinction, though blurry, is important to consider while reading the report. Both of these perspectives are essential to the settlement system, as they each have implications on the structure of settlement, the service environment, the policy context and the funding considerations.

The first day of the Summit was comprised of a series of presentations from all levels of government, the settlement sector and researchers who work in the area of settlement and integration. After each panel presentation the audience had the opportunity to raise questions and discuss the issues brought forth by the panelists. These presentations were made accessible across the province through a free live webcast. Viewers of the webcast could also ask questions through Twitter.

The second day of the Summit was organized in the form of a series of discussion groups. This format was adopted in order to encourage in-depth dialogue among Summit attendees on the issues of implementation and evaluation of settlement and integration services. The

discussions were centered on the four key themes of settlement and integration: Language Training and Assessment, Labor Market Participation, Core Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities. AAISA conducted a Pre-Summit survey (see appendix), which asked respondents to highlight key areas under each of the four themes of settlement. The five highest rated responses in each theme helped to form the working groups for the Summit (attached in the appendix). The data gathered from these working groups form the basis of this report and its recommendations.

REPORTING PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Given the scale, importance and complexity of the issues being discussed at the Summit, it was critical to develop a transparent, rigorous and accountable process of reporting. The methodology to develop this report is as follows.

- The Alberta Integration Summit Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from AAISA, CIC, Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour (JSTL), Pathways to Prosperity, Alberta Human Services, Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, Alberta Rural Development Network, Integration Research West to help develop the structure of the Summit and support the reporting process.
- AAISA staff and consultants helped to design the data collection framework for the Summit. Qualitative notes from both the plenary sessions and the discussion groups are the main data sources. In addition, the PowerPoint presentations from the keynote speakers helped to inform the report.
- Participants were divided into eight working groups for each theme (details attached in the appendix) and each of these working groups had approximately 30 members each.
- To facilitate a robust discussion, each working group was further subdivided into two or three smaller round tables composed of approximately 10 participants. The participants at each round table discussed five key questions. These were:
 - a. What is the current situation in your community (identify the strengths, opportunities and needs)?
 - b. What are the gaps in services – direct and indirect?
 - c. Are there issues identified for any specific groups such as youth, Francophone, women, and refugees?
 - d. What makes the issue different in your community or environment (discuss with relation rural/urban settlement or specific geographical needs)?
 - e. Can you identify any specific strategic direction that needs further exploration in this area?
- The participants at the each of the round tables spent approximately fifteen minutes discussing each question. A summary session was held at the end for each working group where a representative from each round table shared key points with the larger group. Facilitators were present at each working group to support the discussions
- To capture the breadth of the dialogue note-takers were assigned to take notes on both days of the Summit. Each round table had a note-taker who was either volunteers from member agencies of AAISA or students from universities in Edmonton and Calgary. Note-takers were given a detailed framework for note taking (attached in appendix) and an orientation on the day prior to the Summit by the organizers and the report writer. All note-takers were also asked to sign a data disclosure statement (attached in appendix). After the Summit, note-takers

- completed, cleaned up, and uploaded the notes to a DropBox account, which was accessible to the report writer (raw data available with AAISA).
- The analysis and writing process of the report involved three stages. During the first stage the report writer carefully reviewed the notes from each of the 44 individual sessions. Next the report writer identified the main arguments for each question, within the four themes, to create a framework for the report. At the second stage the report writer edited, collated and analyzed the data further to identify key themes within the framework created above. The third stage involved reviewing all the data as a whole to identify overarching issues across all four themes.
 - A rough draft of the report was sent to Summit participants who were asked to provide comments and review the content. Feedback was incorporated into the final report.

Limitations:

There are a few limitations in terms of collecting data. In the majority of sessions note-takers were typing or writing notes during the discussions without the assistance of recorders. Consequently, it is possible that the note-takers could have overlooked or missed certain discussion points. Additionally, the report writer has based the report completely on the qualitative notes and was not able to directly witness every discussion. As a result, the report may not completely capture all key issues brought forth by the Summit participants.

SUMMIT DAY 1

Please note that the presentations from the first day of the Summit can be found on AAISA's website: <http://aaisa.ca/Summit/alberta-integration-Summit/>

Welcome and Introductions

The first day of the Summit began with opening remarks from *John Biles, Assistant Director Integration Programs, Alberta and NWT, CIC* and *Marc Colbourne, Manager of Immigrant Settlement, JSTL*. They shared that the Alberta Integration Summit is a part of a series of similar Summits being held across the region. The focus of these summits is on eliciting key issues that impact immigrant settlement and integration within Alberta. They added that the data collected from the Summit will help CIC in developing their call for proposals for the upcoming three-year funding cycle and shape the policy decision-making. The Summit, he further added, will help to encourage dialogue among sectors and facilitate a joint understanding of the settlement system among the actors.

Greetings

Regional Director Diane Mikaelsson, CIC began the panel with greetings from Government of Canada. She shared that the Summit was an opportunity to recognize and strengthen the relationship between CIC, the Government of Alberta, and other actors in the settlement sector of this region. She urged the Summit participants to provide strategic inputs to help develop a region specific settlement and integration plan.

Councillor Amarjeet Sobi, City of Edmonton, was present on behalf of Mayor Don Iveson and the Edmonton City Council to welcome the Summit participants. He highlighted the phenomenal growth of Alberta and the exponential increase in immigration - both internal and external. He pointed to the deep commitment of the municipal government to ensure that immigrants have a positive experience and discussed how settlement and immigration work was critical for the success of the entire community.

Executive Director Fariborz Birjandian, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society spoke on behalf of the settlement sector in Alberta. He pointed out that integration of newcomers to Canada and the creation of an inclusive Canadian society was a complex undertaking; it involved many actors, working together, in both formal and informal partnership arrangements. He also emphasized the need to place newcomers and immigrants at the center of discussions on policy and services. He commented on incorporating greater research and evidence in settlement work and viewing settlement as a process, not an event. He called for developing a collective vision to improve outcomes for immigrants and newcomers.

Deputy Minister Greg Bass, JSTL spoke on behalf of Minister McIver. Deputy Minister Bass provided some concluding remarks for this plenary session. He shared that Albertans from all backgrounds benefit from safe and inclusive communities. He spoke about the rapid speed with which Alberta was growing both economically and in terms of immigration rate. He also highlighted that it was imperative for the province to respond by creating a broader

provincial strategy to address labour challenges and to build Alberta's permanent workforce going forward. Furthermore, he discussed the upcoming federal changes in policy that will require a joint response from all actors. Recent developments signaled greater collaboration between federal and provincial counterparts to ensure that Alberta has an immigration system that is responsive to changing market. He specifically spoke about JSTL working collaboratively to remove barriers for foreign qualification recognition with federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts.

Federal, Provincial and Municipal Government Plenary

Diane Mikaelsson, Regional Director and Natasha Pateman, Policy Director, CIC spoke about the importance of a responsive and comprehensive settlement system. The Summit, they shared, will help to identify key priorities and identify innovation strategies. They discussed the need to reflect on outcome measures and move towards focusing on quality rather than quantity of services. They also shared Alberta specific data on the recent rising trends in immigration and pointed to the substantial increase in funding for settlement services. They highlighted the need for a more strategic approach to settlement with a focus on stronger partnerships and information gathering, to continuously improve planning.

Alice Wong, Director of Immigrant Settlement and Language Programs, JSTL provided an overview of the Government of Alberta's priorities and mandates to demonstrate how the work of different ministries intersected with one another to support immigrants. She also discussed about the existing provincial government policies that provide the strategic direction to ensure a welcoming community. She highlighted that JSTL's priority was to work with key stakeholders for a skilled, adaptable workforce that supports a sustainable, prosperous economy; and working with stakeholders to ensure that Alberta can continue to attract workers from abroad. She noted that there were also challenges in making sure that the current settlement system continues to be comprehensive and responsive. She concluded by saying that government, industry, employers, immigrant serving agencies, professional regulatory organizations, and other important stakeholders need to partner with each other and collaborate to facilitate the successful settlement and integration of new immigrants into workplaces and communities.

Rachel Bocoock, Director of Policy and Advocacy, AUMA spoke about the Welcoming and Inclusive Community initiative that builds partnerships across the community to combat racism and discrimination. The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative is a partnership between the AUMA, the Alberta Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights and Citizenship branch of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit. She highlighted that recent research shows that most municipalities believed that they had a critical role to play in immigration either by attracting immigrants, supporting settlement and integration, or building a welcoming and inclusive community. She detailed the current strategies employed by municipalities to create structures and policies that support immigrant access and integration; she also presented data around the way municipalities acted as connectors and facilitators as well as a change agents to support immigrants. Her presentation emphasized the importance of municipal leadership in setting a tone towards newcomers and immigration.

Perspectives on Settlement Plenary

Bill Campbell, HR Director, Safeway began the plenary session by providing the employer's perspective. He spoke at length about labour shortages, providing information on both geographical and industry related differences. He spoke about the need to swiftly address the demand for labour and respond to the changes in immigration policy. He also added that there was a need for employers to partner with high schools and post secondary institutions; increase the focus on education and training; and implement a diversity and inclusion strategy in the workplace. He highlighted that Safeway has relied heavily on immigrant serving agencies and understands the continuing challenge to ensure that immigrants receive adequate support and training. He advocated for integrated training and bridging programs to improve employment outcomes; encouraged agencies to share best practices and spoke about greater involvement of employers to build a diverse workforce.

Jean Johnson, President, ACFA spoke about the importance of supporting Francophone communities and meeting their settlement and integration needs. He added that social services were integral to the successful establishment of the Francophone immigrants; simultaneously it is also important that the broader community is sensitive to the needs to the Francophone community. In order to address these challenges, he shared, it was important that each level of government works together in conjunction with both non-profit and private stakeholders.

Dale Taylor, Executive Director, Center for Newcomers spoke about diverse perspective to immigration and the implications this has on policy and services. She highlighted the role of the government, settlement sector and umbrella organizations like AAISA in addressing immigrant needs. She also discussed the four themes of the broad settlement envelope – language, settlement, employment, and welcoming community. Given the recent attacks in Ottawa, she spoke about the increasing need to dialogue and discuss the notions of diversity and inclusion in Canadian society.

Dorte Weber, ESL Coordinator, Grant MacEwan University was the last panelist in this session and she spoke about the role of language. She pointed out that language is the primary settlement tool in employment, citizenship, and social connections; immigration is unsuccessful where language needs are not met. She pointed out that the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) are very broad and there are concerns about CLB tests. Employers do not understand the CLB system and these benchmarks do not address academic skills. Furthermore, she shared that it was important to reinforce training and assessment skills for CLB trainers. She detailed the various challenges of the system and advocated for reviewing the current system in order to better fit the needs of immigrants. She added that the language sector needs a stronger voice and work better with the government and other sectors to address these challenges.

Settlement and Integration Outcomes: Research Findings Plenary

Mamady Camara, Research Chair, AAISA began this session by speaking about the vision of AAISA and the focus of its research. He shared that AAISA views settlement programs as critical to meet immigrants' needs; and spoke about their mandate around collaboration and community engagement. He reminded the audience about the challenges to increase service utilization; the necessity to evaluate current practices and understand the efficacy of services; as well as prepare for the changing policy context. He also advocated for the greater use of research and evaluation tools to improve service outcomes.

Victoria Esses, Principal Investigator and Julie Drolet Co-Investigator, Pathways to Prosperity talked about their current research projects related to immigrant concerns, which include, but are not limited to: the Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey, the Western Settlement Outcomes Survey, study on immigrant youth and seniors in Alberta, LIP evaluation models and research on benefits of internships for internationally qualified professionals. They shared their findings from some of their work on the primary difficulties that immigrants experience in using settlement services: lack of information or awareness of services, confusion about who to go to in order to get help and language difficulties. Their work has underscored the role of language in social and economic integration as well as the role of technology in meeting the needs of newcomers and immigrants. Finally, they shared key strategies to support immigrants in different phases of their settlement process.

Lori Wilkinson, MB Academic Lead, Immigration Research West spoke about some of the salient economic trends in Alberta's immigration landscape. She shared data from five datasets collected between 2012 and 2013 and discussed key features of the Alberta labour market. Important results include: 22% of all people who are unemployed are immigrants; immigrants in Alberta find it easy to access job information; and immigrants in Alberta and Saskatchewan report the highest rates of difficulties to finding a job due to credential recognition. Furthermore, the data shows that immigrants in Alberta are among the most satisfied with pre-arrival integration information and that refugees face significant job status declines.

Anna Kirova, AB Academic Lead, Immigration Research West spoke about the Community Consultation Project, which is an applied research project funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Immigration Research West. The primary objective of the research is to understand the extent to which settlement services exist in selected communities across Western Canada. A secondary objective is to examine the efficacy of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) model, in enhancing settlement outcomes for newcomers in Western Canada. The results of the study will be used to recommend changes in policies and practices to better address the needs of newcomers.

SUMMIT DAY 2

The following section the report will discuss each of the four pillars: Language Training and Assessment, Labor Market Participation, Core Settlement Services and Welcoming Communities. In each pillar the report will expand upon the following sections: strengths and opportunities, gaps and needs, special populations, geographically specific needs (rural and urban) and strategic direction. All comments included in this section reflect the views of the Summit participants.

LANGUAGE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT

The Summit participants shared that language proficiency helps to support employment, gain access to resources and cements relationships or build connections for immigrants. The participants differed in their views around the level of language proficiency and the focus of language training required by immigrants. There was also critical discussion around issues of testing, training, assessment and the structure of service delivery.

There were five working groups under this theme, but three topics were repeated to form a total of eight working groups. The working groups for the Language Training and Assessment theme are found below:

- a. Formal and informal language training (repeated)
- b. Language assessment (repeated)
- c. Support services for language training (repeated)
- d. Future Model of delivery
- e. Bridging language training and work placement

The remarks below reflect the views of the Summit participants in each of the eight working groups.

I. Strengths and Opportunities

- **Settlement and language instruction:** Settlement services play a key role in providing language services and supporting language instruction. Currently, the province offers a continuum of services to immigrant clients from pre-literacy training to highly specialized language instruction for employment. Language skills help immigrants capitalize on their capacities and to develop tools to negotiate their new environments. Research and practice shows the long-term positive impact of being bilingual or trilingual on social, economic and cultural well-being indicators. *Settlement actors, educational institutions and other language service providers viewed their role as critical in settlement and integration.*
- **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) supports adult learning:** Given the acute needs of many adult immigrants, LINC classes are able to provide important language instruction both for social interaction and meeting the language requirements for obtaining citizenship. LINC blended programs also offer greater choice and flexibility for immigrant clients.

Summit participants viewed LINC as a key strength in supporting language instruction for immigrants and newcomers.

- **Informal language support:** Settlement agencies, non-profits and other civic institutions discussed the strength of informal language support services. With long waitlists for language classes and a growing demand for instruction, some of these stakeholders have begun ‘conversation circles’. These ‘conversation circles’ have been very successful in helping immigrants improve their language proficiency and as a result, the demand for such informal support is increasing in the community. *For Summit participants, these informal language support services are a useful opportunity for expanding learning and instruction for newcomers.*
- **Helping immigrants access language services:** Community organizations and settlement providers shared that outreach with immigrant communities, as well as utilizing cultural brokers and connectors, are effective methods to improve settlement outcomes. These brokers and connectors are able to penetrate hard to reach immigrant communities and help them access resources that include language services. *Summit participants highlighted the role of outreach, to increase access and awareness of language resources, as an important strength.*
- **Bridging programs:** Many community agencies and settlement service providers currently offer bridging programs which help immigrant clients navigate social, economic and cultural contexts. These programs focus more on building functional skills, addressing training gaps, and preparing students for licensing or professional exams, which in turn helps clients to meet their short-term goals. *For many Summit participants these bridging programs offered a critical opportunity to support under met needs of immigrants and newcomers.*

II. Needs/Gaps

- **Improved distribution of funding for language services:** Stakeholders noted that there is a necessity for a more efficient distribution of funding to meet immigrant language needs. Without properly distributed funding there are likely to be continued lags in acquiring language skills. *Summit participants discussed the need for extending funding support for language acquisition and instruction.*
- **Widening reach, increasing services and improving awareness of services:**

 - a. Stakeholders shared that immigrant clients should be able to access language training at any point in their settlement process. Funding for language training and assessment is limited and often immigrants are unable to access services because they have timed out of their eligibility window.
 - b. Furthermore, groups such as refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers and citizens also require language services but are ineligible to access them. Stakeholders suggested broadening the scope of funding to include these groups in order to improve language skills across a wider section of the population.

- c. With high demand for both language instruction and assessment the wait list period is extremely long. Increasing the number of centers, which conduct language assessment and language training, can help to reduce these wait lists. Stakeholders suggested streamlining the current referral system to improve service delivery and outcomes across all municipalities in the province.
- d. Stakeholders also pointed out that a large number of immigrants are not even aware of the language services that are available. They discussed the need to build awareness among immigrants about availability of language services; the way to access these services; the eligibility criterion; and the required language certification or assessments needed for citizenship and employment.
- e. Summit participants suggested that reviewing and standardizing the information given to each client about language services is an important need. Currently, immigrant clients either receive information from central hubs in certain cities or via individual counselors in settlement agencies. The information usually varies in scope and depth, leading to differing settlement outcomes. To ensure equitable service distribution and better settlement outcomes, stakeholders highlighted the need for equitable access to information.
- f. Although CLB 8 is required to pass the citizenship exam there are far fewer institutions, which provide these higher levels of LINC training. Thus, immigrant clients often struggle to meet the requirements needed for passing the citizenship test. Increasing the availability of these higher-level training courses and scanning the availability of other higher-level language training programs is needed to improve the overall language training environment.
- g. Summit participants discussed the importance to review the overall LINC training system to examine the level of proficiency attained by students and the levels needed for employment or to obtain citizenship. Stakeholders held diverse opinions on these concerns and articulated a need for further dialogue and evaluation.

Overall Summit participants shared the need to increase awareness and access to services in order to improve service utilization and settlement outcomes.

- **Language trainer and language assessor related concerns:**
 - a. Stakeholders discussed the need to improve cultural competencies and cultural sensitivity among both trainers and assessors. Further investment is needed in the professional development of teachers and instructors to provide language instruction in a culturally appropriate and community-focused manner.
 - b. Stakeholders shared that LINC instructors need additional and standardized training in the CLB to adequately support students in improving language proficiency.
 - c. Summit participants highlighted the need to review the training of assessors to improve standardization around testing and assessment.
 - d. Improving the communication between language trainers and assessors can also help to support immigrant students' learning outcomes.

In summary the Summit participants highlighted a number of areas, which need strengthening in terms of training of trainers, professional development and assessment training in order to improve

language related outcomes for immigrants.

- **Content development of language training**
 - a. There is also a need to evaluate current teaching methods and content to review whether it adequately reflects the needs and contexts of immigrant clients. Stakeholders shared that, despite instruction, their immigrant clients often struggle with language in an everyday context. The functional role of language is especially important to help immigrants adjust, find jobs or housing and feel socially connected in Canadian society. Based on feedback from employers, some stakeholders argued that developing clear communication skills is more critical than actual test scores for success in the workplace. This underscores the importance of continually developing language training, which is embedded in immigrants' needs and supports their settlement outcomes.
 - b. The Summit attendees discussed the need for greater support for specialized language needs. The language needs in some professional categories are very specific and require more intense training and support than what is currently available.
 - c. There is also a need to continue supporting clients with disabilities and special needs. This involves timely testing or diagnosis as well as learning assistance for those students who may need help.
 - d. Immigrants who are not computer literate are likely to find greater difficulty in reaching or accessing information if it's only computer-based. It is important to keep this in mind while designing services or providing information to immigrant clients.

Summit participants highlighted the need to review the content of language training and provide greater support for specialized language needs to improve immigrant settlement outcomes.

- **Coordinating between different language training and assessment models:**
 - a. Stakeholders shared that there is a gap in the level of language proficiency between LINC and ESL. It is important to coordinate these two services in such a manner that students are able to smoothly transition, if needed, between the two services.
 - b. Another concern shared by stakeholders was the need to set clearer standards between testing systems such as The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and CLB. This can help to reduce the confusion for immigrants and create provincial norms for evaluating results from these assessment systems.

Stakeholders emphasized the need to increase standardization of training and assessment across different models of language instruction.

- **Structure of services can be improved to reflect needs of immigrant clients:** Many contextual factors impinge upon language classes and learning efficiency. These factors include, but are not limited to: greater support for childcare services while adults are accessing language classes/seeking linguistic support; disability friendly classrooms; increasing the availability of classes, especially during evenings and weekends to help immigrants with jobs access

these resources; and transportation support for clients who are coming for language training.

Summit participants discussed the need to increase external support systems for immigrants, in order to improve their ability to attend and access language instruction/assessment.

III. Special Populations

▪ **Temporary Foreign Workers**

This group may be overlooked because of their visa status even though they may have a job and need language training or skills.

Stakeholders discussed the need to review the needs of this group and expand service access to include them.

▪ **Women**

- a. The lack of enough child-care options for women learners was a critical concern for many stakeholders. Immigrant women are often the primary caregivers and without adequate child-care support they are often unable to use language services.
- b. Certain immigrant cultures may restrict the women of their community to reach outside the home and seek services. Home study in such cases may be a great option but needs further funding support.

Summit participants highlighted that the needs of immigrant women were crucially related to support structures such as provision of child care; it was important to understand their family and cultural context in order to provide effective services.

▪ **Youth and Seniors**

- a. Stakeholders noted that older teens and young adults are not accessing language services as much as other categories of immigrants. Some immigrant students may 'age out' of the available support and may find it difficult to fit into adult learning classes. Immigrant youth report facing stigma for attending ESL classes and as a result there is a high rate of attrition. Students may 'age out' due to a number of different reasons such as poor literacy levels at the time of immigration or immigration as young adults, which would then give them only a few years in the system to gain language proficiency. Without adequate language skills many students fall behind in their education and find it hard to overcome the gap.
- b. Some youth have to work to support their families and lack the time or resources to come for language classes.
- c. There is a need to improve language programming for seniors, in ways that reflects their life experience, pace of learning and their current needs.

Stakeholders discussed the need to better understand the context of youth and seniors to develop learning structures and content that fit their needs.

- **Secondary francophone migrants:** Immigrants from Quebec who do not know English also have similar needs and require LINC classes. They often are unable to access language resources because they may be citizens.
Summit participants argued for expanding the reach of language services to include all groups that may need support.
- **Refugees:** Language needs of refugees are a lot more complex both in terms of content and mode of delivery. Stakeholders shared that often refugees may also need literacy support as well as language training. Additionally, they may have experienced trauma or other issues in relation to their move and this may affect learning outcomes.
Summit participants pointed to the special needs of refugees, discussing the need to create language services and systems, which can build on their strengths and support their settlement process.

IV. Geographically specific needs (rural-urban)

- **Distance acts as a barrier to access in smaller/rural communities:** Often immigrant clients living in smaller towns or cities have to travel to larger cities for language assessment, which is cumbersome for the clients and also puts additional pressure on larger centers. Stakeholders shared the challenges of small towns or rural centers in providing all language services needed for immigrant clients even though the demand for the services may not be as high as larger centers or cities. Conversely, the growing demands for language services in cities and larger centers have left service providers overstretched and under staffed.
- **Literacy needs increasing in rural areas:** In rural areas, some stakeholders suggested that there is a growing need for literacy support. They shared the need to develop a continuum of programming for smaller centers that can meet multiple needs of immigrants from these communities.
- **Shortage of instructors and limits of computer-assisted teaching:** Smaller centers are facing continuing challenges of staffing and retention of staff for their programs. There are also limits of developing computer-based or computer-assisted learning platforms especially for those immigrant clients who are either not literate or lack adequate computer skills.
Summit participants discussed the need to develop continuum of language services in rural or small centers in order to reduce the burden on larger cities to meet the growing demand.

V. Strategic Direction

- **Policy change will bring new shifts in language services:** Express Entry and changes to policy around TFWs is likely to alter the landscape for service delivery.
Research and review of current models is needed in order to prepare for the policy changes.
- **Broader involvement of private sector in supporting language training:** Business establishments can also be incentivized to invest in the language training of immigrant workers. Large corporations in particular have the resources and access to

individuals and organizations that can provide effective training, which can lead to the growth of private-public sector partnerships. Strategies can include:

- a. Employers and employees can discuss the language skills required on the job and the language requirements required for promotions.
- b. Mentorship programs can help to train immigrants as they are working.
- c. Corporations can work with settlement organizations to create a 'soft landing' for recent recruited newcomers so that they integrate more smoothly.
- d. Language training that links immigrants to employment streams will also be useful and employers can play a key role in developing content for training.

Stakeholders highlighted the increased involvement of employers in shaping language services.

- **Using a family-centered approach:** Addressing immigrant issues requires a holistic strategy that also looks at the needs of the dependents of the primary applicant. If the needs of dependents are not addressed the burden is left on the community to meet those needs. This may also become a key issue for express entry applicants.

Summit participants discussed approaching language services using a family-centered approach.

- **Strengthening Services**
 - a. Stakeholders at the Summit emphasized the need for trainers and service providers to be better educated about assessment models, such as CLB and IELTS and set clearer standards to measure the two models against each other, to provide effective support to students.
 - b. Stakeholders highlighted the need to review the entire continuum of language services, i.e. strengthen and standardize assessment tools to place students in the correct program; set realistic yet educationally critical benchmarks to measure progress across all programs; create tools to show students' progress and assess students' capacity at the completion of the class.
 - c. Summit participants discussed the need to develop better standards provincially for assessments across organizations and institutions. Language providers can be collaborating better with licensing bodies to include Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR), which is available as LINC is also moving towards Portfolio Based Learning and Teaching.
 - d. Certificate accreditations from international jurisdictions need to be processed faster and in a more transparent and accountable manner to support learning outcomes.
 - e. Review the content of the language education on a more regular basis in order to reflect the current needs of the immigrants as well as developments in education or instruction. Making language training more practical and functional can help improve students learning, especially by making connections to work skills and relating language to everyday contexts.
 - f. Broadening supports such as child-care and transportation can provide students with more access to and incentive to use language services.

- g. Learners indicate that more occupational-specific grammar and vocabulary should be integrated into programming. Stakeholders suggested that as a part of the intake, learners at a higher level could complete a sector-specific survey so that specific lessons could be planned around these areas.
- h. Revisit the structure and content of LINC to be student oriented and to reflect citizenship requirements. Field trips, experiential learning, and employment driven content would help to make the program more practical. A content framework could be established and adapted to the different CLB levels.
- i. Improve the training of trainers to standardize content delivery and inculcate best practices for teaching across LINC and ESL. Further, a deeper discussion of cultural competency of trainers is needed given the cultural diversity of students accessing these services. Cultural training and sensitivity to community concerns has the potential to positively impact learning outcomes.

Stakeholders provided inputs to strengthen the delivery and content of language services to improve settlement outcomes.

▪ **Building services and collaborations**

- a. Local Immigration Partnerships can help to build multi-stakeholder collaborations to address crucial needs unmet by current services.
- b. Improving information dissemination systems to support better access and service usage. Information sharing is essential in improving service delivery, as there is a need to develop sustainable and collaborative models for this purpose. Language service providers and government institutions can both participate in developing such systems to streamline services and use resources more efficiently. Constantly updating formal referral protocols for use by all the agencies is also helpful in this process.
- c. Multiple options for learning are required to meet different learning needs. Modular programs, which use flexible curriculums and multiple methods, need to be further supported. Integrating modules to enable immigrants to take programs that suit them rather than adapting to a standard framework of learning is helping to improve the content of teaching.
- d. Innovative programs are required for language training. Funding is required to research the needs and trends of language services and to develop new ways to deliver language-training programs, such as e-training, mobile training, and applications on mobile devices. For instance Summit participants suggested looking at a mobile model (like a community bus) to provide services to remote locations. These mobile units could partner with other groups to also teach other competencies such as employment skills, financial literacy, health literacy etc.
- e. There needs to be a better understanding of learner's needs. LINC and ESL programs have identified the need for a higher level of training for highly skilled immigrants. Language training, therefore, needs to be further modified based on skill levels. For instance, some language-training institutions have different streams for their programs, based on targeted needs. Combining skills training with language training for those with lower skill levels, to create blended programs, is another good example of a student-centered approach.
- f. Informal language training can be further supported through funding to help clients to prepare and begin practicing while they wait for more formal training

Stakeholders shared the value of using a collaborative approach to address language needs and continue to build flexible, client-focused and innovative language programming.

- **Language assessment:** There needs to be a reevaluation of the language levels needed to function in Canadian society and standardization of the parameters for assessment.
 - a. Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) assessment is a complex system and there needs to be further clarity as to how it fits with other internationally recognized assessment and testing tools (TOFEL, IELTS etc.).
 - b. There is a need to continually evaluate if there is efficiency in the current programming structure and examine the impact of language training in all spheres- social, economic and cultural.
 - c. Immigrant clients with learning challenges and disabilities require a special approach. There needs to be a better assessment of their needs before guiding them towards different language training services.
 - d. Portfolio Based Language Assessment is an area, which can be explored further both in terms of its efficacy and impact on learning outcomes.

Summit participants provided inputs to improve the testing and assessment structure.

LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION

The success of immigrant clients in the workplace is dependent on a number of different factors: the participation and support of employers, efficacy of settlement services, government regulation and policies around economic driven immigration, workplace context or culture, training assessment and education of immigrants as well as employment support services. Most employers recognize that immigrants have a key role in supporting the growth of Alberta's economy but they are also keen to have an efficient and productive workforce. Further the broader context of immigration policies and labor force dynamics shape the context of labor market participation. Summit participants shared their views about this topic and called for a deeper engagement of all stakeholders to provide sustainable and efficient solutions.

There were five working groups under this theme, but three topics were repeated to form a total of eight working groups. These included:

- a. Foreign qualification recognition (repeated)
- b. Canadian workplace preparation (repeated)
- c. Employer role and engagement (repeated)
- d. Alternative career pathways
- e. Role of academic institutions in integration

These are the key points from the Summit discussions.

I. Strengths and Opportunities

- **Credential Recognition:** Currently there are a number of credential assessment and Credential recognition bodies within the province, which are working to support immigrants' access to meaningful work. International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) assess international educational credentials and compares them to educational standards in Canada. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition also compares prior skills and learning acquired in another country to Canadian contexts. *Stakeholders identified the credential recognition system as key strength in helping immigrants secure employment.*
- **On the job training and supporting immigrants gain Canadian work experience:** Employers in some cases support immigrant employees by providing on the job training opportunities or orientation packets to help them understand the Canadian workplace. Volunteering, internship courses and practicums have helped immigrants gain some local experience and increased their chances of employment. *Summit participants identified a number of programs and services that gave immigrant clients an opportunity to gain Canadian work experience; this was extremely critical in supporting employment related outcomes for immigrants.*
- **Bridging programs and supportive programming:** There are a number of

bridging programs for certain fields such as accounting and engineering, which have been successful in helping immigrants adapt to the work environments in Alberta. Some settlement agencies help immigrants prepare for employment by conducting mock interviews, connecting clients to mentors or sending facilitators to engage employers to seek job opportunities; these strategies have improved the chances of job success for immigrant clients. Further some programs offer specific support services like employment counselling, editing CV's, shadowing peers and networking with employers, which can help immigrant clients navigate the employment context. *Stakeholders pointed out key examples of successful bridging programs, to highlight the current strengths of the settlement system.*

- **Collaborative models and innovative programs:** Stakeholders shared different models of collaboration, which are successfully supporting immigrant employment in the region. For instance, some organizations host programs to promote diversity in the workplace as well as to help connect immigrants with potential employers through networking. Other examples of such programs include conducting events such as 'reverse job fairs'- where employers can meet immigrant job seekers; incentivizing employers who are employing immigrants. *Summit participants focused on the strength of collaborative programming as a key method for improving outcomes for immigrants.*

II. Gaps and Needs

- **Skill transfer:** Transferring skills or assessment of transferrable skills is a challenge for both immigrants and employers. Immigrant clients may often find that their skills or expertise are not recognized in the Canadian context. This may occur because there are global differences in training and expertise or the frame of assessing knowledge is different in each context. In such cases it becomes important to help immigrants address difference in experience and training or help them establish an alternative career path with similar skills. This is particularly difficult for specialized highly skilled professionals such as doctors or engineers. Stakeholders at the Summit discussed the need to continue to grow programs, which can support such skill transfer or skill development. *Stakeholders highlighted the need to continue to support services, which help immigrants adapt their skills or gain new expertise to find meaningful employment.*
- **Foreign Qualification Recognition:** Credential recognition is not universal across Canada and varies with different professions. Stakeholders pointed out that immigrants often find this system difficult to negotiate and that it can also take very long to get correct accreditation and thus skill appropriate employment. There is a need for harmonization and coordination of these assessments and recognition systems both within the province and across the country. *Summit participants shared the need to improve the foreign qualification recognition system and create standards that can be applied across Canada.*
- **Local experience:** Canadian work experience is given special importance by most employers. This can act as a barrier for immigrants, who lack local experience; it

prevents entry into the workplace and reduces chances of success especially for new immigrants seeking employment.

Stakeholders emphasized the need to create more awareness among employers to value international employment and experience; simultaneously they also discussed the need to continue to support programs, which assist immigrants in gaining local experience.

III. Special Populations

- **Francophone communities:** French-speaking migrants may find it equally challenging to find jobs given the language barriers in the work place. Further, these clients may have to repeat assessments of their qualifications and credentials because of the differences across provinces.

Stakeholders highlighted that the current settlement system needed to better support the Francophone community who may have linguistic challenges and barriers in credential transfer as a result of secondary migration.

- **Youth:** Many immigrant youth do not complete their education or training and this can act as a big barrier in terms of employment. This issue is particularly salient among older teens and young adults who struggle to access educational resources or services to help find employment.

Summit participants suggested increasing programming that is specifically targeted towards youth employment outcomes.

- **Refugees:** Stakeholders shared that refugees often have greater vulnerability and are at greater risk than other immigrants both socially and economically. They are more likely to enter into jobs that do not match their skill sets and remain in these positions due to economic scarcity and lack of opportunity to resources/training.

Stakeholders pointed to the need for continued support for refugees to access meaningful employment.

- **Women:** Many immigrant women are facing critical gaps in their education or have limited access to services and resources outside the home. This can limit their opportunities to find meaningful work. Women are often the primary caregivers and without cheap and readily available childcare, finding employment outside the home can often be challenging. There are currently a number programs running across Alberta which support women both directly and indirectly to find and retain jobs, access childcare services, prepare for joining the workforce, get training or education and network with potential employers. However these programs are still only able to reach a select number of clients. They need to be scaled up to achieve adequate impact in the community.

Stakeholders highlighted that education and training, access to resources for child/family care and an empowerment focus in services related to women were key areas that needed further investment.

- **Seniors:** This group also struggles to find suitable employment that matches their experience or skills. They also may be dependent on their families and lack resources to independently seek employment.

Summit participants emphasized the need for supporting programming that targets seniors unique employment related needs.

IV. Geographically specific needs (rural-urban)

- In urban cities there are more specialized supports such as career counseling, mentorship or targeted training. In smaller communities these types of supports are harder to find and fund.

Stakeholders suggested creating a broader continuum of employment related services in the smaller centers and improve coordination among services in the larger centers.

- The employment sector differs quite significantly depending on the community context and this can impact the nature or type of services needed. For instance, according to Summit participants, in some small centers there is a greater focus on micro-skill building or support (such as work culture orientation and building resumes) rather than job placement. However currently, there are no specific models for services for smaller centers or rural areas developed.

Summit participants suggested engaging in further research or evaluation to better understand the approach to service provision needed in smaller centers or rural contexts.

V. Strategic Direction

- **Multi-sectoral partnerships:** A multi-sectoral approach is needed which involves employers, academic institutions, settlement agencies, regulatory organizations, public institutions like libraries and community organizations. Local Immigration partnerships can support the development of such practices within Alberta.
Summit participants highlighted that employment outcomes can improve through multi-stakeholder collaborations, which involve both public and private actors.
- **Welcoming community:** Creating a welcoming community is a broader approach to support immigrants in all spheres of their lives including employment. Stakeholders suggested that in terms of employment this can include strategies such as- connecting immigrants with people from their own community to get information about employment and work culture; provide information about professional growth and career pathways to help new immigrants understand how to navigate the employment landscape; build tools for cultural competency to prepare the Canadian workforce to accept and support newcomers.
Stakeholders discussed that under the broad framework of a welcoming community, mainstream systems and actors, can help to support meaningful outcomes.
- **Policy change readiness:** The changes in policy with regard to Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW's) and Express Entry will likely change the landscape of employment. Settlement agencies and service providers need to re-orient their relationships with employers to address issues such labor shortages or preparation for express entry employees.
Stakeholders highlighted the need for the settlement system to prepare for upcoming policy shifts.
- **Increasing pre-arrival services:** Pre arrival services such as those existing in the Philippines, India, and China can become models for other countries. These programs can help to prepare immigrants to understand the workplace environment in Canada. Accurate and clear information (relevant to different skills and

occupations) can be made available across all government and non-government websites in the province to help immigrants understand the procedures for credential recognition, timelines for the process, identify settlement agencies, which provide support services and other employment related information.

Summit participants focused on developing pre-arrival services and programs that support employment related outcomes.

▪ **Improve and increase resources for employment**

- a. Stakeholders highlighted the need to increase skills assessment services and improve the resources available for immigrants that land in Alberta. There is a need to increase the number of employment counselors who can provide career support or individualized coaching for alternative career paths.
- b. Stakeholders suggested the scaling up of certain employment support services such as employment preparation with a focus on soft skills and workplace culture; internships and job placement services for immigrant clients; and mentorship programs for new immigrant employees to support both hiring and retention.

Summit participants highlighted increasing the reach of programs, which support skill assessment and skill development of immigrant clients.

- **Targeted interventions for specific groups:** Targeting underrepresented populations or immigrants with significant barriers such as people with disabilities or seniors, through specially focused strategies, can be a useful methodology to address specific pockets of unemployment.

Stakeholders discussed a targeted approach to address the employment needs of special or vulnerable groups.

▪ **Knowledge building**

- a. Continuing to build a knowledge base for best practices is an important step to increase immigrant representation in the workforce. Employers can share manuals, materials and strategies with other peers and thus support a more grounded approach to integration. Academic institutions can also help in shaping evidence-based programming, and to improve employment outcomes.
- b. Reviewing of current assessment tools and measures in a consistent manner is important, especially since education systems outside Canada are also constantly changing. Licensing bodies can work with foreign Universities to identify and assess the levels of foreign certifications compared to the Canadian standards. Transparent and standardized assessment and credentialing processes can bring significant changes in the employment landscape.

Summit participants emphasized the importance of continuing to invest in research and evaluation to improve outcomes for meaningful employment.

CORE SETTLEMENT SERVICES

The settlement sector in Alberta plays a critical role to provide services to newcomers and immigrants. They are expected to respond and meet the critical needs of the immigrant population, which is both diverse and complex. Simultaneously the sector must respond to the changes in policy and funding shifts.

There were five working groups under this theme, but three topics were repeated to form a total of eight working groups. These included:

- a. Settlement counseling (repeated)
- b. Needs assessment and referrals (repeated)
- c. Information, orientation and pre-arrival services (repeated)
- d. Newcomer outreach
- e. Ethno-cultural community collaboration

This section discusses the main themes discussed by the participants at the Summit.

I. Strengths and Opportunities

- **Providing a wide range of services:** Settlement agencies provide a number of different services in areas such as language training, employment support and housing. They also address special needs for women, refugees, children and youth and provide overall support to immigrant communities in holistic and flexible manner, adjusting to the community needs. They conduct follow-up and continue to act as a bridge for immigrant clients as they navigate a variety of social systems. *Stakeholders highlighted the strength of the settlement actors in meeting the diverse needs of immigrant clients through a holistic and flexible service model.*
- **Supporting specific ethno-cultural communities:** Settlement agencies are working well with a large number of ethno-cultural communities and have built strong links to both the community itself and their leaders. This is an important strength given the diverse and nuanced needs of each immigrant community. They offer first language services and provide access to cultural support structures. *Stakeholders discussed the key role of settlement service providers in both understanding the socio-cultural context of immigrant clients and helping client access cultural resources.*
- **Education and social support:** Settlement workers work with schools and address related concerns with children and parents. They also link immigrant clients to their cultural communities and help them to navigate the socio-cultural landscape of their new community. *Summit participants emphasized the important strength of settlement providers in helping immigrants access educational and other social services or structures.*

II. Gaps and Needs

- **Service access, delivery and innovation**

- a. Summit stakeholders discussed the importance of streamlining the needs assessment model currently in place. They highlighted the need to develop a system, which protects client confidentiality while reducing the need for repeated assessments of clients who may access services in more than one agency.
- b. There is need to widen the continuum of services offered across the province to meet the critical needs of the immigrant community. Summit participants shared that funding structures are complex and competitive; these funding systems limit the settlement agency's ability to remain flexible and responsive to client needs. However, it was crucial to understand the community and develop services that meet client needs.
- c. Settlement plans are developed to support the settlement and integration needs for clients. However, there is large variation in the way these plans are developed and executed. While stakeholders understood the need to develop a client-focused settlement plan, they also pointed out the value of developing standardized frameworks to support better settlement outcomes. Further, regular training and feedback sessions with settlement workers can help to standardize the implementation of these frameworks.
- d. There is a need to improve disaster preparedness within the settlement system. Currently each agency responds to issues on a case-by-case basis. There needs to be a cohesive and collective response system, which draws on the strength of each agency to address a disaster or crisis.
- e. Calgary and Edmonton have huge shortages in affordable housing and this issue disproportionately affects immigrants. Wait lists are often over a year long, this is a critical concern that immigrant-serving agencies need to address in a more central manner; greater support from the government is needed in this direction. Stakeholders articulated the need for a greater role of the settlement system in housing concerns and this requires greater funding, training and support from the government.
- f. Stakeholders shared that pre-arrival services were not well developed or widespread. Immigrants often have very little information about issues such as housing, cost of living, education systems or employment and are therefore unprepared for life in Alberta. The information that they do receive, through formal or informal channels, needs to be reviewed and become more reflective of the varying needs of immigrants. Orientation should be viewed as an ongoing process instead of a one-time static model. Key settlement information can be organized to reflect this flexible thinking and made available to immigrants at various time points.
- g. Stakeholders shared the need to streamline services in order to develop a comprehensive system of care model for settlement and integration.
- h. Settlement providers shared the need to improve knowledge about services to increase service utilization.
- i. Stakeholders shared that there are also gaps in services in areas such as mental health, sexual health, addictions and disability.

Stakeholders discussed a system of care model for settlement and integration; and pointed out the need to improve access to services and the service delivery system to improve settlement outcomes. They

also shared the need to invest in further training of frontline workers and collaboration among settlement agencies to increase standardization of practices.

- **Evolving the lens of settlement work- empowerment, culturally sensitive and collaborative**
 - a. Stakeholders discussed the necessity to review the current framework of settlement and integration work. This process, they pointed out, would help to critically re-evaluate the underpinnings of the overall strategies and services being offered by agencies. The strengths-based model or an empowerment driven focus were frameworks endorsed by the Summit participants.
 - b. Stakeholders shared their concerns about the ability of settlement agencies to understand the cultural differences and nuances of immigrant communities. Settlement agencies are at times using western models of understanding behaviors or outcomes and this may not map onto immigrant clients' own experience or expectation. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of developing culturally sensitive services.
 - c. Stakeholders mentioned that settlement agencies are working largely in silos. They highlighted the need for more collaboration and talked about adopting a strengths-based approach to foster links between agencies and with other sectors. Currently partnerships are more temporary and often forged between settlement workers rather than sustained collaborative partnerships among agencies. Provincially, stakeholders advocated for better collaborative models and structures to improve settlement outcomes.

Stakeholders drew out the importance of continually reviewing the underlying assumptions and frameworks of settlement work in order to remain relevant and efficient.

- **Settlement workers' related concerns**
 - a. The staff is often overburdened and works under extremely trying conditions. They may have limited access to resources and as a result of restricted funding cycles there is also a fairly high turnover.
 - b. There is also a need to provide the proper training to ensure competencies of personnel working in the settlement sector; there is also a need to include cultural competency training.
 - c. Additionally, there needs to be better role definition for the settlement worker; settlement workers often take on the roles of social workers and therapeutic counselors, instead of encouraging clients to trust other qualified workers to address these concerns.

Summit participants pointed the need for greater training and professional support for settlement workers' in order to improve service delivery.

III. Special Populations

- **Youth and Seniors**
 - a. Immigrant youth need dedicated settlement workers in their school to work actively to help them integrate and address their unique concerns. Immigrant youth have the highest dropout rates from school and are also more likely to enter into criminal activities. Young adults or older teens are at particular risk

as they may lack adequate supports or may time out from services. More outreach is needed to help access 'hard to reach' youth.

- b. The challenges senior immigrants include social isolation, language learning, cultural adaptation and finding suitable employment. Stakeholder also shared that settlement agencies need to have culturally appropriate workers to support seniors and improve settlement outcomes.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for increasing specialized services for improving immigrant youth and seniors outcomes.

- **Women:** Immigrant women have many unique concerns especially those affected by domestic violence, poverty and unemployment. However, stakeholders suggested that it is important to address these concerns in the larger context of the family or community. Services are currently not oriented in such a manner and this may impact settlement outcomes.

Summit participants spoke about developing services with a family orientation to address issues related to immigrant women.

- **Francophone:** The community faces special challenges in relation to language and settlement. Services are often not available in all areas or a limited in their reach.

Summit participants spoke about increasing reach of services to address the needs of the francophone community.

- **Refugees:** Refugees face many challenges including mental health issues (PTSD) as well as housing, employment and social integration barriers. Refugee claimants are facing even harder challenges, as they are not eligible for many services and struggle to adapt or settle.

Stakeholders discussed the need to continue supporting services for refugees and increase the scope of their focus to address all critical needs.

- **Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs):** This group is also not eligible to access resources even though they may face similar challenges in housing, employment, education and language.

Stakeholders highlighted the need to support TFW's settlement and integration needs.

IV. Geographically specific needs (rural-urban)

- Stakeholders discussed the specific needs for rural centers or smaller communities. They highlighted the challenges in resources and funding; the problems in service delivery including longer wait times to access services, lack of adequate information about services and limited specialized services.
- In some small towns or rural centers the immigrant population is transient and this impacts how deeply immigrants get involved in the community or how openly the community accepts them; transient immigrant populations are often socially isolated and have reduced access to services.
- Communities that are large are able to support the diverse needs of many different immigrant groups. They are also likely to have a wider range of services

and better resources to support immigrant communities. However co-ordination of services remains a critical challenge for the urban settlement sector.

Stakeholders highlighted differing needs for small and large centers i.e. focusing on expanding the scope of services and better co-ordination of services respectively.

V. Strategic Direction

■ **Increasing services across different platforms**

- a. Stakeholders suggested increasing the number of services to meet the growing demand for settlement services.
- b. The participants also discussed widening the availability of information about services in different languages through a variety of mediums.

Summit participants shared the importance of widening the scope of services to better meet the needs of immigrants.

■ **Developing a collaborative of service provision**

- a. Participants discussed the importance of developing collaborative models of action and complementing service. The Summit participants spoke about developing a system of care model and increasing dialogue among settlement agencies.
- b. They also spoke about greater support for needed for provincial bodies like AAISA to support these collaborations.
- c. Better communication between immigrant service providers and different levels of government is needed. This can support the development of new services when needed, expansion of current services to newer regions and develop a closer link between non-profit programming and city or municipal initiatives.
- d. Summit participants spoke about streamlining the continuum of services in order to better address critical needs of immigrants at every stage of settlement. They advocated for consistent service across agencies supported by similar standards of care and regular follow-ups to improve service efficacy.

Stakeholders emphasized the need for continued collaboration to improve settlement outcomes.

■ **Adapting to policy change:** With the changes in the immigration system there is the need to adapt services and prepare for the changes as a sector.

Stakeholders talked about improving sector knowledge about policy shifts in order to remain responsive and effective.

■ **Culturally appropriate services:** Stakeholder discussed the importance to have structures and programs, which reflect the diversity and cultural nuances of the immigrant communities.

Summit participants highlighted the need to support and develop culturally appropriate and socially relevant settlement programs or services.

- **Training for settlement practitioners:** Training of settlement practitioners in key areas of practice and standardizing models of care can also support settlement outcomes.

Stakeholders discussed the importance of increasing investment in professional development and training for settlement workers.

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

The notion of a welcoming community is both nebulous and complex. It aims to create mainstream structures and systems that are welcoming and inclusive of newcomers and immigrants. A welcoming community can be defined as a location that has the capacity to meet the needs and promote inclusion of newcomers, as well as the machinery in place to produce and support these capacities (Esses, et al., 2010). The discussion below indicates the broad concerns shared by the Summit participants about the status of welcoming communities in Alberta.

I. Strengths and Opportunities

- **Collaboration between settlement actors:** Stakeholders shared the value of increased collaboration between the federal, provincial and municipal governments; as well as between different settlement actors. This supports both service provision and improves distribution of resources. LIPS, for instance, have the potential to improve build linkages between diverse stakeholders, including mainstream actors, to create a welcoming community.
Stakeholders highlighted the importance of collaboration across different levels of the government and within the sector as a critical opportunity to build welcoming communities.
- **Public-private partnerships:** These types of partnership arrangements can take different forms in practice; they have the ability to bring together a wide range of non-traditional partners both public and private to tackle key projects. It is able to harness the expertise, capital and efficiencies of both sectors; while some stakeholders may view these partnerships as way for the government to ‘shed their burden’ others view it as a ‘shared delivery model’ with important benefits for all.
Summit participants emphasized the strength of public-private partnerships to promote a welcoming community.
- **Role of public institutions:** Public institutions, such as libraries, are increasingly taking on the role of information hubs, program providers and community builders. Other examples include community-based organizations, which serve the community at large and create a welcoming environment through sports, fitness and healthy living.
Welcoming communities, according to stakeholders, draw on the strength of public institutions and actors to shape a positive and healthy environment for newcomers and immigrants.

I. Gaps and Needs

- **Social wellbeing:** Many newcomers feel socially isolated and there is little being done to support the social needs of newcomers. In order to reduce social isolation, it is important to connect clients with the communities of their countries of origin. It was also noted that there is a struggle to provide services that create a sense of inclusion and belonging among newcomers. Additionally, the dialogue around racism and bias concerns needs to be fostered.

Stakeholders discussed the importance of addressing immigrants' social well-being as integral to building a welcoming community.

- **Language needs:** Mainstream institutions and organizations need to account for language diversity. Many immigrants may find it difficult to negotiate and access services or resources as a result of this barrier.

Summit participants identified linguistic support as a key component of a welcoming environment.

- **Legal aid/Civic education:** Immigrants often need support to address legal issues or apply for citizenship. Currently not many communities offer free /low cost legal aid or representation for immigrants. Furthermore, there needs to be greater awareness about the law and legal aspects of living in Canada.

Stakeholders suggested that awareness of rights and knowledge of civic norms are critical for immigrants and newcomers to feel included in community life.

- **Knowledge mobilization:**

- a. Service providers articulated the need for better information and data at the neighborhood level as this can help them better understand the immigrant population distribution and associated needs.
- b. The stakeholders discussed the need to build shared outcomes across settlement providers within the province. By developing shared metrics and measurement tools there can be better coordination and collaboration within the immigrant serving organizations.
- c. There is also a need to improve the joint understanding of critical gaps in resources or services in order to better support integration and settlement.

Summit participants emphasized the value of increasing knowledge around key immigrant related concerns, in order to successfully mobilize mainstream communities for action.

- **Basic Services and Infrastructure:**

- a. With an increasing number of newcomers entering Alberta, affordable housing remains a critical challenge. All regions reported difficulty in placing people in homes and helping them find homes that matched their needs. However, not only is housing difficult to access but also there is limited space which has given rise to a large number of illegal basement suites. These issues get further exacerbated during crises or emergencies.
- b. Transportation is a key need for all immigrants; it supports successful access and utilization of services. Stakeholders reported that immigrants often do not have the resources to use private transportation and thus remain heavily dependent on the public system. However, they struggle to navigate the public transportation system and thus may remain cut-off from critical services or institutions.
- c. Education is another critical need for newcomers and can support settlement and integration. Summit participants shared the importance of education in shaping welcoming communities and engagement with broader systems.
- d. The healthcare system continues to be a crucial challenge for immigrants. Refugees in particular are not accessing healthcare as fast or as easily.

Stakeholders discussed the importance of addressing the basic needs of immigrants and newcomers to form the building blocks of a welcoming space.

▪ **Co-ordination and collaboration**

- a. Better collaboration among stakeholders is needed for addressing crosscutting concerns. Public-private partnerships are increasingly being formed as a way to address multi-system changes. However, these partnerships continue to evolve and their methods can be strengthened.
- b. There is a critical need for greater alignment and collaboration among funders; competing funding priorities fuel service confusion and service overlaps. The divisions between the federal and local government for instance, sets up different requirements for agencies and places limits on programming, which can then act as a barrier.
- c. Institutional flexibility is crucial for the sector especially as it becomes more centered on immigrants' needs. For instance, changing the timings of services can help expand the reach of services.

Summit participants detailed the need for better and more efficient co-ordination and collaboration between settlement agencies, public and private institutions as well as all levels of governments.

II. Special Populations

▪ **Women**

- a. Many immigrant mothers face issues with accessible and affordable child-care.
- b. Immigrant women often arrive with low literacy levels and are isolated for a long time while their spouses receive services. Providing social support, employment advice and skills training is critical for women.

Stakeholders shared that women play a huge role in the integration process of families and therefore their needs remain critical for improving settlement outcomes and building welcoming communities.

▪ **Youth and seniors**

- a. Immigrant youth struggle with cultural adaptation, which can potentially lead to conflicts both at home and school. These students also face issues in school such as navigating the institutions without any advice on registering for courses and exams. School integration also becomes a problem given the stressful home conditions of many immigrant youths. For example, many older immigrant children have family responsibilities, such as babysitting their younger siblings, and as a result are unable to take part in after school programs.
- b. Youth above the age of 18 years are especially vulnerable because they may not qualify for certain school supports or they have timed out of the existing programs. There are few transition programs in the schools for newcomers. Special programs such as in-school settlement programs for immigrant communities and francophone youth in particular can be helpful.
- c. Broader issues of housing and economic stability also impact the everyday lives of youth. If they do not have the education they have difficulty in finding employment,

- placing them at risk for risky behavior. This contributes to overrepresentation of immigrant youth in the criminal justice system.
- d. In small cities there is growing need for mentorship/recreational program for youth.
 - e. Some of the most critical needs of seniors include – language competency, employment support, social support, transportation and health literacy. Seniors are particularly vulnerable as they often dependent on their families to seek resources and gain assistance.

Meeting the targeted needs of youth and seniors can create a welcoming community for immigrant families.

- **Francophone:** French-speaking newcomers have difficulty assessing services in French. These services are needed across all community and not only concentrated around the specific institutions like schools.

Supporting francophone communities across the province remains an important priority for building a welcoming community.

- **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT):** It is important for settlement workers to receive training, on serving LGBT immigrant clients. Such training could include education on appropriate terminology around sexual orientation. It would also be beneficial for settlement workers to be aware of and connect with nearby LGBT support centers to provide referrals to their LGBT clients.

Supporting LGBT immigrant clients through a list of Alberta-specific resources, training on serving LGBT clients, and building relationships with the LGBT community and centers, will help promote a welcoming environment.

- **Refugees:** Refugees face complex concerns that may need special expertise and support as compared to other immigrants. For refugee claimants the biggest issue is that their claims can take years, and that there is no support for them during this time. Refugees have special needs that are not being met currently, which includes but is not limited to: psychological residual trauma and stress in addition to other needs such as housing, employment and language services.

Developing special support structures for refugees and refugee claimants needs to be considered in designing a welcoming environment.

III. Geographically specific needs (rural-urban)

- **Rural or smaller communities** have a unique set of needs and issues, which require special attention.
 - a. In smaller communities, there are fewer agencies providing settlement services and it is critical to expand services and their reach. If the immigrant communities are small it becomes more difficult to provide specialized services.
 - b. Issues such as transportation become critical because of the paucity in infrastructure and difficulty in accessing or reaching all immigrants.
 - c. It is harder to integrate immigrants into communities with large temporary migrant populations. Immigrants work and leave, and never get a sense of

investing in the community.

- **Urban or larger communities** also shared their specific concerns:
 - a. While garnering funding itself may not be as big of a challenge as it for smaller communities, it is more critical to coordinate and coordinate services. Better collaboration with federal and provincial systems is also critical for urban centers
 - b. Furthermore, while services may be available, the focus is to educate and train newcomers in accessing these services.
 - c. Stakeholders also articulated a critical need to dialogue with employers and connect immigrants to labor resources and settlement services.

Stakeholders discussed the varying contexts of urban/larger and rural/smaller communities highlighting the need for adopting a specialized approach in the development of a welcoming community.

V. Strategic Direction

- **Greater involvement of immigrants in all spheres:** Engaging immigrants in volunteerism and participating in civic life is critical, because immigrants need to be connected. Engaging immigrants politically (maybe running for an office or general political engagement) is another area of opportunity that needs to be explored more fully. The settlement sector in particular can involve immigrants more actively not only in program planning and implementation but also at the level of policy or decision-making. Some stakeholders discussed the need to frame immigrants as rights bearing and productive individuals who are contributing to the Canadian society. Most times, settlement agencies and government, according to stakeholders ‘do for the communities instead of with them’.

Stakeholder argued for greater participation and inputs of immigrants’ in designing and developing both strategy and services.

- **Developing new services or improving services:** There were a variety of suggestions to develop new services or improve current services.
 - a. Improve immigrants’ access to current immigrant services including increasing collaboration among immigrant serving agencies. Link social services in a way that incentivizes the collaboration and minimizes the competition or duplication.
 - b. Expanding reach to new immigrants through key sites such as airports. Increase awareness among immigrants about the services that are available through better communication strategies, web-based platforms and information hubs.
 - c. Investment in the LIP model in other cities and communities within Alberta. This will extend settlement and integration work into the broader community.

Stakeholders discussed the need to expand the reach of services through partnering with mainstream actors and increasing the number of LIP interventions.

- **Developing research and knowledge mobilization:** Stakeholders shared a variety of areas which need strengthening

- a. Support the settlement sector to develop more evidence-based services and research.
- b. Mapping the geographical location of immigrants' residence and resource availability.
- c. Focusing on well-developed outcome measures and a results oriented framework.
- d. Sharing a common strategic direction among different agencies working with immigrants.
- e. Develop community plans articulate a common vision for the community as a whole and reflect diverse perspectives.

Summit participants advocated for increasing knowledge mobilization, evaluation structures and outcome focused strategies around key immigrant concerns; to shape the activities of both service providers and mainstream community actors.

- **Government involvement at all levels:** Involving local government and municipalities to work more closely with the federal government to shape welcoming communities. For instance, MLA's can be strong advocates to the province on behalf of their municipalities. The message is stronger and carries more weight when coming from city representatives. This collaboration among the different levels of government can extend in terms of funding as well.
Summit participants highlighted the role of government in supporting the development of a welcoming community.
- **Development of Infrastructure:** Better urban and rural planning for transportation, language and housing can help in both preparing and serving the needs of immigrants.
Stakeholders also emphasized the need to build basic infrastructure to support immigrant development and to create a welcoming environment.

OVERALL SUMMIT CONCLUSIONS

The report began with the analysis of the four key themes of integration and settlement. The final section will draw out the common concerns across all four themes. These can support strategic thinking, research, policy and practice. The reflective comments in this section are based on the analysis of the views and discussions of the Summit participants.

- **Supporting an immigrant client driven perspective – a ‘client first’ model:**
Service providers shared the importance of placing immigrant clients at the center of their work. This includes fully understanding client needs and recognizing clients’ ability to make choices for themselves. However, some Summit participants argued that their agencies are limited by the policy and funding environment and consequently, their services cannot remain flexible to the client’s needs. Service providers also shared that immigrant clients must often adapt their expectations to the services available rather than the other way around.
The ‘client first’ model has implications both at the micro clinical level and at the macro service level. At the micro level the model can involve helping immigrant clients to identify and address critical needs; developing a holistic understanding of the client; empowering clients to adapt and negotiate their environment; and navigating clients across multiple systems to foster growth and development in all spheres. At the macro level the model can involve shaping services that are connected; sharing information to support meeting multiple client needs; involving clients in designing services and policies that affect them; and finally, encouraging the participation of immigrants in all levels of systemic change.
- **Mainstreaming integration and settlement:** Summit participants discussed the notion of mainstreaming immigrant issues, i.e. adapting and educating mainstream institutions and systems to develop an immigrant-centered perspective or an immigrant-focused lens. The stakeholders argued that mainstreaming is complicated both in terms of methodology and implementation.
The key challenges to mainstreaming include operationalizing the notions of equity and access across a variety of systems; competing views, between the government, non-profit and private sector, around the definition and scope of an ‘immigrant-centered perspective’; and adapting the policy framework to allow for these shifts. Furthermore, the immigrant serving sector organizations may view these changes as a challenge to their mandate and it requires the development and use of different tools and measures than are currently used to evaluate immigrant outcomes. Mainstreaming is also a long-term approach, which requires significant community engagement and open dialogue about developing an immigrant perspective. Despite steep challenges to mainstreaming, this approach shifts the onus from the immigrant to the broader system to become more inclusive and welcoming.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships:** For most Summit participants, multi-stakeholder partnerships were identified as a critical resource to support integration and

settlement in Alberta. Stakeholders called attention to the LIP model as a good example of a multi-stakeholder partnership. While these partnerships, in practice, can be difficult to manage and sustain, their continued value lies in the ability to bring a diverse set of world-views together in order to generate innovative solutions for the community at large. It helps to challenge commonly held assumptions in each sector while creating an environment that fosters collaboration and change. Summit participants discussed the necessity to set standards and to create tools for organizations that engage in these partnerships. Participants also noted that in these partnerships, the roles of each partner organization should be clearly defined, as well as created with each partner's strengths in mind. On the whole, these partnerships are critical in helping to catalyze community change and improve outcomes for immigrants.

- **Developing a collaborative model of thinking and co-ordination in services:** Both co-ordination and collaboration were salient in most discussions at the Summit. The stakeholders shared their concerns around overlapping services, lack of awareness about other services or programs, information silos, and gaps in the continuum of support for immigrant clients. Summit participants shared a number of different ways in which co-ordination and collaboration could be enhanced, which included: creating a unified framework or a system of care model; developing common measures and indicators for change and outcomes; and planning services across the settlement and integration platform using a strengths-based approach.
- **Knowledge mobilization and access:** One of the other main points of the Summit was around knowledge mobilization and information access. Many discussions focused on the need to support better use of evidence based research in practice; share best practices among agencies; develop knowledge that can support interventions; and increase access to information for both service providers and immigrant clients. Another key element of this discussion was focused on setting good program monitoring and evaluation standards within the sector. Many stakeholders articulated the need to revisit current practices or measures and re-evaluate their services using standardized tools. The role of knowledge management is equally pressing, as Summit participants outlined the everyday challenges of recording and organizing data. The necessity for setting sector standards in these areas was reiterated in many Summit sessions.
- **Incubating new programs using 'targeted' and 'universal' intervention approaches:** Summit participants pointed to adopting a targeted intervention approach, i.e. a focus on specific targeted groups with specific goals for behavioral change. Immigrant groups such as women, seniors, older youth and refugees are considered most at risk in terms of social and economic measures. By understanding their key needs and points of leverage for intervention, stakeholders argued, the settlement sector could increase their impact on the settlement outcomes of immigrants.

Simultaneously, there was broad discussion around creating universal interventions, which could support all immigrants irrespective of their risk factors. These interventions would aim to impact a wider range of measures and address multiple needs. Overall, by adopting a dual approach, i.e. by serving both high risk and general clients, settlement services can meet multiple goals for improving settlement outcomes.

- **Developing programs to scale:** Summit participants shared their concerns around the large-scale impact of their programming. They pointed out that despite the presence of good programming or innovative services, immigrant communities continue to face challenges. The stakeholders highlighted the need to scale up certain successful programs or services in order to see the impact on community outcomes. To scale up interventions or programs there are a number of critical requirements: setting strong programmatic guidelines and technical standards; developing specific indicators or milestones; understanding service utilization; and availability of infrastructure. Additionally, it is important to have a well-developed project management framework, which details the implementation plan.

Conclusion

Alberta is one of the fastest growing provinces in Canada, attracting record number of immigrants from across the globe. The province is growing exponentially, in terms of infrastructure, services, economic and social opportunities. Immigrants are an important resource, adding value and dynamism to the culture of Alberta.

The Summit provided a unique opportunity for a wide range of actors to provide inputs and to help identify priorities for settlement and integration in Alberta. The discussions around the four major themes of settlement brought forth key strengths, gaps, and issues relating to vulnerable populations and strategic directions for the future.

The Summit participants highlighted the need for developing a comprehensive, well-coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach to settlement and integration. They articulated a vision where immigrants will be socially, economically, culturally and politically integrated. According to the Summit participants it was important to view settlement as a process rather than a static event; and it was crucial to place clients at the center of this process-driven approach. Stakeholders also reflected on the unique diversity of immigrants and geographical needs of the province to call for a multi-pronged strategy to meet their needs.

Drawing on the strengths of public and private stakeholders, as well as institutions, will be an important element for successful settlement. Knowledge mobilization, developing standards for services and involving immigrant communities actively in program planning are other key elements that will support settlement and integration in Alberta.

REFERENCES

Esses, V. M., Hamilton, L. K., Bennet-AbuAyyash, C., & Burstein, M. (2010). Characteristics of a welcoming community. Retrieved November 10th, 2014 from <http://p2pcanada.ca/library/characteristics-of-a-welcoming-community-report/>

APPENDIX

I. Summit Rationale: Alberta Integration Summit

Statement of Purpose

The Integration Summits are designed to engage a wide cross-section of critical actors in the settlement systems within each jurisdiction to facilitate partnership, ensure that the most current information on immigrant landings, settlement service use, current settlement programs (and programs that serve sizable populations of foreign-born clients) and gaps can yield an informed discussion to guide the development of priorities for future work at both the local and national levels.

Outcomes

If the Summits are to be successful, all of the participants must both contribute to, and benefit from, the information exchange and focused discussions on broad settlement thematic such as language training, labour market participation, welcoming communities, and core settlement services amongst others.

To ensure this outcome CIC has asked the settlement umbrella organizations hosting these events to establish advisory committees that shape the agenda of the Summits to ensure success. At minimum invitations should be extended to CIC (NHQ and regions), provincial/territorial governments, municipal umbrella organizations, relevant research networks, and other relevant actors.

At a minimum CIC requires two concrete outcomes:

- 1) A wide cross section of settlement system actors be brought together for the Summit, including all organizations funded by CIC within the jurisdiction; and
- 2) The reports that are produced following the individual Summits provide empirically grounded priorities at the local level in the broad areas of language training, labour market participation, welcoming communities, and core settlement services. This will ensure sufficient consistency to guide a national conversation at the National Settlement Council in December 2014

Logistics

There is an Alberta Summit Advisory Board actively managing the oversight of Summit logistics, including invitee lists, speaker identification, and working group topics. The Alberta Integration Summit Advisory Board is comprised of 11 members representing settlement, provincial, federal, and academic stakeholders:

- Milton Ortega (Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies)
- Deniz Erkmén (Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies)
- Christina Nsaliwa (Edmonton Immigrant Services Association)
- Fariborz Birjandian (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)
- Alice Wong (Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour)
- Marc Colbourne (Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour)
- John Biles (Citizenship and Immigration Canada)
- Julie Drolet (Pathways to Prosperity)
- Pat Firminger (Alberta Human Services)
- Ida Kamariza (Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta)
- Dee Ann Benard (Alberta Rural Development Network)
- Anna Kirova (Integration Research West)
- Bruce Leslie (Summit Board of Canada)

The Summit will be hosted in Edmonton on October 30 and 31, 2014. The Summit will host between 185 and 250 guests representing stakeholders from various sectors actively participating in the Alberta settlement system.

II. Pre-Summit Survey

1. My organization is best described as:
 - Government (Municipal, Provincial or Federal)
 - Public Institution (School Board, Post-Secondary Institution, Library)
 - Not for Profit (Primarily focused on serving newcomers)
 - Not for Profit (Serves broader population including many newcomers)
 - Private Sector
 - Other (please specify)

2. My organization primarily provides services in
 - Major Urban Centres (population 100,000 or more)
 - Small Urban Centres (population 99,000 or less)
 - Rural/Remote communities
 - Province wide
 - Other (please specify)

3. My organization primarily serves the following clientele
 - Refugees
 - Francophone
 - Immigrant Women
 - Immigrant Youth
 - Immigrant Seniors
 - International Students
 - Internationally Trained Professionals
 - All Newcomers
 - Other (please specify)

4. The top four overall priorities for settlement programming in Alberta should be (no specific order of importance and list themes/headings only)

5. Please select and rank the TOP 4 labour market programming priorities (1 being most important, 4 being least)
 - Overseas Information and Orientation

- Foreign Qualification Recognition
- Labour Market Information
- Job Search Skills
- Mentorships
- Apprenticeships/Internships
- Employer Engagement
- Occupation-specific
- Language training
- Alternative career
- Information and pathways
- Orientation to Canadian
- Workplace Culture
- Effective Workplace Communication
- Other (please specify)

6. Please select and rank the TOP 4 language training and delivery priorities (1 being most important, 4 being least)

- Language Assessment
- On-line language training
- Bridging Programs
- Combining language
- Training and work placements
- Blended language programs (on-line and in person)
- Informal language training (e.g. conversation circles)
- Formal classroom-based
- Language training
- Support services for language training (e.g. transportation and child minding)
- Access to French as a second language programming including training
- Literacy Classes
- Professional Development for Instructors
- Other (please specify)

7. Please select and rank the TOP 4 priorities for core settlement services (1 being most important, 4 being least):

- Information/orientation
- Needs Assessment and Referrals
- Settlement Counselling

- Case management for multi-barriered clients
- Interpretation/translation
- Newcomer outreach
- Ethno-cultural community collaboration with settlement agencies
- Other (please specify)

8. Please select and rank the TOP 4 priorities for welcoming communities (1 being most important, 4 being least):

- Neighbourhood connections
- Labour market connections
- Social connections
- Civic participation
- Opportunities to practice official language skills
- Engaging a wider cross section of society in settlement and integration
- Engaging employers in settlement and integration
- Engaging broader range of government departments in settlement and integration (e.g. more than those with direct immigration and integration responsibilities)
- Other (please specify)

III. Post-Summit Evaluation

On behalf of the Summit Advisory Committee, we would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in the evaluation of this Summit. Your comments will enable us to better plan and execute future Summits and tailor them to meet your needs.

1. What sector do you most accurately represent?

- Government (Federal, Provincial, Municipal)
- Non-profit
- Settlement
- Private
- Language Training
- Research/Academia
- Education
- Francophone
- Other (please mention)

2. The objective of the Summit, was to seek the participation and contribution of all Summit attendees. Thus, participants must have both contributed to, and somewhat benefited from, the information exchange and focused discussions on broad settlement thematic areas. Based on the information above, and your own experience at the Summit, do you believe that these objectives were met?

- Yes Absolutely
- Yes But not to my full extent
- No

3. If this objectives was not fully addressed/met, what improvements, based on content and format only, would you recommend? (you may mark more than one)

- Invite a wider range of actors
- Change the format of the working group discussion sessions
- Increase time for discussion
- Ask different questions to guide the discussion
- Give more time for interaction among actors
- Change/improve the topics on the first day of the Summit
- Allow participants to select the working group of their interest
- Other (please specify)

5. Which thematic discussion section was most useful?

- Welcoming Communities
- Core Settlement Services
- Language Training and Assessment

- Labour Market Participation
- Reason _____

6. What was the most beneficial aspect of the Summit?

- Plenary Speakers
- Working Group Discussions
- Informal networking
- Lunch Presentation (Express Entry)
- Other
- (please specify)

7. Which plenary session were you most interested in listening to?

- Greetings (Government of Alberta, CIC, City of Edmonton, AAISA)
- Federal, Provincial and Municipal Government (CIC, JSTL, AUMA)
- Perspectives on Settlement (Safeway, ACFA, AAISA, MacEwan University)
- Research Findings (AAISA, P2P, IRW)

8. Please indicate your overall satisfaction with this Summit

(Very Satisfied; Somewhat Satisfied; Neutral; Somewhat Dissatisfied; Very Dissatisfied)

- Learning and training
- Registration Process
- Administration and support
- Summit materials
- Group Sessions
- Plenary Speakers
- Facilitators
- Venue

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this evaluation.

IV. Note-takers roles and responsibilities, note-taking framework and data disclaimer.

A. Note-takers: General Instructions

- At each round table one note-taker will be present and be taking notes. No digital recorder will be present.
- The goal of the note taking is to keep track of the important discussions, key ideas and critical action items that will be discussed in the sessions.
- Each note-taker will be presented a broad framework for note taking. The notes must be clear, easy to understand and not include any abbreviations. In case that the note-taker cannot understand a term or if a participant uses an abbreviation unknown to the note-taker, the session facilitator must be consulted after the session to clarify any concerns. In the case that the note-taker is not able to find the meaning behind an acronym, they must ensure to make special mention, at the end in the footnotes.
- The summary discussion will be at the end of the session and all note-takers will take notes of the summary session.
- After completing the notes from each session, the note-taker will upload the digital recordings onto the Dropbox account set up by AAISA. The account will have separate files with the name of each note-taker

B. Note Taking Framework

Name of Note-Taker:

Date:

Time:

Session Name:

Room Number:

Number of members in the round table

Notes:

- What is the current situation in your community (identify the strengths, opportunities and needs)?
- What are the gaps in services – direct and indirect?
- Are there issues identified for any specific groups such as youth, Francophone, women, and refugees?
- What makes the issue different in your community or environment (discuss with relation rural/urban settlement or specific geographical needs)?
- Can you identify any specific strategic direction that needs further exploration in this area?
- Other Observations/Footnotes

C. Note-takers data disclaimer

Data Disclaimer

This is to certify that all data or materials collected for the purpose of the AAISA Summit is the property of AAISA. All data must be handed over in its entirety to AAISA once the note taking is complete. All copies of the data will be erased from personal computers/ digital recorders. No data (whole or in part) can be used by any note-taker for any purpose other than the specific role of compiling notes. All data is confidential and cannot be shared in any form without prior permission from AAISA.

_____ (Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)

V. Facilitator Instructions

The Facilitator is responsible for the execution and management of their designated working group session. The Facilitator will be responsible for overseeing the participation of up to 35 working group members, divided into 5 roundtables. Please note that all Facilitators must be registered for the Summit.

The tasks of the Facilitator are listed below:

- Direct all round tables to discuss each question for the allotted time
- Engage and inform participants, in order to enable more cohesive and thoughtful discussion
- Ensure that the session is concluded on time
- Moderate the joint summary session after each round table has concluded their discussion
- Provide any additional feedback on note taker's session notes immediately after the session has concluded
- Communicate any additional notes or comments about session to AAISA organizers

VI. Summit pre-reads, abstracts and presentations are available here:

<http://aaisa.ca/Summit/alberta-integration-Summit/>