



CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH THE COVID-19 LENS

HARNESSING INNOVATION AND MOBILIZING BEST PRACTICES FROM THE PANDEMIC

PROJECT NEED AND GAP

March 2020 marked a rapid shift in the newcomer-serving sector due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In accommodation of public health orders, settlement and integration services were quickly transitioned to virtual delivery models, dramatically reducing in-person program delivery. The newcomer-serving sector faced an array of challenges and barriers when transitioning to virtual programming and were able to implement innovative practices and utilize the existing strengths within their organizations to adapt programs and services to meet the evolving needs of newcomers in this unique time. There is significant opportunity to capture the developments and learnings organizations have acquired in order to support the capacity development across the sector, and to positively transform the future of service delivery to newcomers beyond the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROJECT PURPOSE

With the financial support of the Government of Alberta through their Community Capacity Grant, AAISA is seeking to capture, engage with, and promote innovative practices and service delivery approaches that have been developed by newcomer-serving organizations at a provincial level. Additionally, there is a need to build connections and foster dialogue between organizations across the province to ensure that the opportunity to share learning, refine practices, and build collective capacity are not lost.

OBJECTIVE

This project aims to build capacity, mobilize best practices, and strengthen the network of service providers in relation to responding to newcomer needs emerging from the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



PROJECT PROCESS

This project will be conducted through two phases commencing from September 2021 and concluding in March 2023. This project will be divided into three focus areas: Language, Employment, and Community Reception and Integration. Through these three focus areas, AAISA will first seek to engage representatives from organizations in Alberta's newcomer serving sector to develop an understanding of best practices in relation to service delivery in the COVID-19 context. Each focus area will engage two focus group meetings, resulting in the creation of two multimedia resources based on the content and practices gathered from the focus groups. Finally, each focus area will yield one video describing the best practices and approaches that have been developed by the newcomer-serving organizations. Each video will be hosted on [AAISA's Toolkit](#) platform and associated with AAISA's certification program.

PHASE 1: ENGAGEMENT & RESEARCH

The first phase of the project will involve information gathering from stakeholders through focus group discussions with AAISA members. There will be three program-specific focus groups (Language, Employment, and Community Reception and Integration). The focus groups represent service areas that are critical to newcomer settlement and integration in Alberta where the pandemic has brought about distinct challenges, opportunities, and innovation.

PHASE 2: CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

Once focus groups have concluded, AAISA will develop multi-media capacity building content, including both resources and video training content tied to AAISA's certification program. First, AAISA will develop a total of six resources, two for each focus group. These resources will include infographics, research briefs, or step-by-step guides that capture the learnings and best practices shared throughout the focus group meetings. Next, in collaboration with AAISA's Professional Development team, one training video per focus group will be developed. These videos will be based on the information and best practices gathered during focus groups. Each video will be designed in alignment with AAISA's certification program and will have an associated quiz for participants to demonstrate their learning in alignment with AAISA accreditation.