

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH THE COVID-19 LENS:

HARNESSING INNOVATION AND MOBILIZING BEST PRACTICES FROM THE PANDEMIC



PROJECT GAP

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a rapid shift in the newcomer-serving sector, quickly transitioning services to virtual delivery models. The settlement and integration sector faced an array of challenges and barriers, but were able to implement innovative practices and utilize existing strengths. There is significant opportunity to capture these developments to support the capacity development and future of service delivery across the sector, beyond the scope of the pandemic.

COVID-19 CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the newcomer serving sector. Travel restrictions and quarantine rules resulted in a reduction of newcomers admitted to Canada in 2020, creating the need for increased and sustained capacity for the future. In spite of these rapidly evolving challenges, the settlement and integration sector has displayed great adaptability and resilience.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Build capacity
- Mobilize best practices
- Strengthen the network of settlement and integration service providers

PROJECT FOCUS AREAS

LANGUAGE

Language courses have been shifted to a virtual delivery model but continue to face challenges such as:

- Continual waitlists for access to courses
- Digital literacy and insufficient technological access



EMPLOYMENT

Newcomers are disproportionately overrepresented in precarious employment industries which the COVID-19 pandemic has shown to exacerbate these vulnerabilities. These industries can include:

- Healthcare
- Transportation
- Factory workers
- Agricultural workers
- Meat packing workers
- Cleaning services



COMMUNITY RECEPTION & INTEGRATION

The feeling of community, safety, security and belonging are essential to creating prosperous environments for newcomers and the communities they settle in. The shift to virtual programming has decreased:

- Personal connection that is normally fostered through in-person settings



PROJECT PROCESS

PHASE 1

ENGAGEMENT & RESEARCH

AAISA members will be invited to participate in information gathering focus groups for each of the focus areas (Language, Employment, Community Reception & Integration) to identify the challenges, opportunities, and innovations that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PHASE 2

CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

AAISA will develop multi-media capacity building content tied to AAISA's certification program. A total of 6 resources will be created (two for each focus group), designed to capture the learnings and best practices shared throughout the focus group meetings. This will also include one training video per focus area with an associated quiz for participants to demonstrate their learning, in alignment with AAISA accreditation.

INTENDED AUDIENCE AND PARTICIPANTS

This project is intended for AAISA Members to harness the challenges and best practices observed in the settlement and integration sector throughout the course of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Funded by:

