HEALTH OF THE NEWCOMER-SERVING SECTOR IN THE PNT REGION

A SURVEY OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS IN ALBERTA, MANITOBA & SASKATCHEWAN

MARCH 2022

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we collectively strive to understand the historic and ongoing relationship between settlement and the land on which we are located, AAISA respectfully acknowledges that the province of Alberta is comprised of Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 territories, and is the traditional lands of First Nations and Métis peoples.

INTRODUCTION

As immigration remains a key pillar in the population growth, economic development, and social enrichment of Canadian society, the <u>newcomer-serving sector</u> plays a central role in ensuring newcomers are provided with the necessary supports to settle and integrate from the moment they land in Canada. As a sector that is continuously faced with emergent challenges and needs, along with the government's current strategic priority to increase immigration across Canada, the importance and scope of the <u>settlement and integration sector</u> has grown considerably in recent years and is projected to continue to increase (AAISA, 2022). As the sector evolves and grows, it is critical that funders and the newcomer-serving <u>agencies</u> prioritize <u>sectoral health</u> to ensure that the essential work of the settlement and integration is successful and sustainable in both the short and long-term.

In general, sectoral health is defined as a sector's "ability to align around a common vision, execute against that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking" (Gagnon, John & Theunissen, 2022). Regardless of the sector, prioritizing and actively stewarding sectoral health is essential to improve outcomes, align intentions with impact, and facilitate broad sectoral resilience and longevity. Within the newcomer-serving sector, <u>front-line employees</u> are critical in actualizing the daily settlement and integration of newcomers through the multiplicity of roles and responsibilities they encompass. As the driving force of daily settlement and integration work, the health of the newcomer-serving sector thus lies heavily in the health of front-line employees working within agencies that serve newcomers.

While newcomer-serving agencies across the <u>Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT)</u> region are as unique as the clients and communities they serve, one consistency is their shared commitment to support and advocate for the needs and assets of newcomers throughout their settlement experience. Within these agencies, front-line employees are essential in realizing this daily work through not only providing newcomers a variety of services and programs, but also invaluable connection and support. As a result, the work of settlement and integration agencies to achieve equity and positive outcomes for all newcomers largely relies on their ability to meet the needs of their employees. Therefore, in order for the settlement and integration sector to provide high quality services, there is an increasing need to evaluate and measure the gaps, challenges, and strengths of its employees. Consequently, providing a healthy, equitable, stable, and supportive environment for front-line staff in settlement and integration agencies are essential to maintain capacity and deliver high quality programs and services to newcomers.

The <u>Health of the Sector (HOTS)</u> survey was conducted between March 31, 2021, and July 31, 2021, with 912 responses from front-line settlement and integration professionals across the PNT region. The HOTS survey examines the perspectives of front-line staff working within agencies in the newcomer-serving sector to better understand their employment experience, assess organizational strengths and challenges, as well as discern opportunities for growth. The HOTS report highlights findings from the data collected and aspirations to address the challenges and

gaps identified in the report. The findings of this report portray the perspectives of front-line employees in the sector which contains foundational information to inform discussions and potential actions among the various players that comprise the newcomer-serving sector, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), newcomer-serving agencies, and Umbrella organizations. Please note that all underlined terms throughout the report can be found in the **Glossary.**

PURPOSE

The organizational health of the newcomer-serving agencies across Alberta is embedded across all organizational performance markers and should be a strategic priority for the newcomer-serving sector. Through the National Settlement and Integration Council (NSIC) a need was identified to assess and monitor the health of the sector. Consequently, in 2019 the National Health of the Sector Working Group was launched with an objective to conduct a dialogue towards developing a vision and work plan on the health of the settlement and integration sector with a particular focus on the jobs and people working in the sector. These discussions eventually led to inform AAISA's Health of the Sector Survey project.

The health of the newcomer-serving sector is defined as an "organization's ability to align around a common vision, execute against that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking" (Gagnon, John, & Theunissen, 2022). One way of assessing sector health is by evaluating the satisfaction of employees across settlement and integration agencies. Measuring the health of the sector by aggregating the views of front-line employees on organizational practices provides a baseline for determining the broader challenges, opportunities, and overall sustainability of the sector. In alignment with this, the regional HOTS research project examines the perspectives of front-line staff working within agencies in the newcomer-serving sector to better understand their employment experience, assess organizational strengths and challenges, as well as discern the opportunities available to them.

Through this project, AAISA will examine the health of the newcomer-serving sector from the perspective of the front-line staff from agencies across the three provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) of the PNT region, in line with the work of the National Health of the Sector Working Group. Based on the activities of the National Health of the Sector Working Group, AAISA surveyed front-line staff on agency policies, practices, and context. The objective of the HOTS survey is to identify challenges, strengths, and opportunities through a quantitative survey. Akin to other employee surveys, the primary objective of the HOTS survey is to evaluate and accordingly improve staff workplace-related experience in order to deliver quality settlement and integration services across the PNT region. By improving the satisfaction of front-line employees, settlement agencies will retain their competent and experienced employees and promote and encourage their long-term commitment to the organization. While there are several methods to

measure and evaluate the health of the sector, the survey sought to understand front-line workers and their perspectives in five key areas:

- Organizational culture. This assessed the overall evaluation of their organization such as the employees' attachment, connection and commitment to their job, organization's mission and co-workers, and the organizational values and practices in the areas of diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- Compensation factors which are directly tied to employees' satisfaction, productivity, and retention.
- Employee relationship with their manager and leadership team. This encompasses the organizational leaderships' support for employees' wellness, evaluation of performance, and opportunities for growth within the organization.
- Professionalization and professionalism within the sector. Professionalization refers to opportunities within the organization for staff to attain formal knowledge, expertise, training, and access to on-going professional development required to stay up-to-date to offer quality services to newcomer clients. Professionalism within the sector involves the ability to which staff are able to perform their role in a compassionate, ethical, and moral manner (Phillips & Dalgarno, 2017).
- External factors and relationships that impact their current role. External factors on front-line employees' experience and performance include current funding models and programs and other pressures that can impact employees' performance.

The HOTS research project will provide foundational information on the state of the newcomer-serving sector that will inform conversations among the sector, and IRCC, newcomer-serving agencies, and Umbrella organizations. The results will support the identification of pathways forward to jointly build a resilient, professionalized, innovative sector that continues to meet the needs of newcomers across Canada's PNT region.

PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

The regional Health of the Sector project employed a quantitative and qualitative survey to gather the perspectives of front-line workers employed by newcomer-service providers.

The following methodology was used in the implementation of the HOTS Survey project.

Survey Development

In February 2020, AAISA began the development of the HOTS survey. The process was initiated with an environmental scan to understand best practices and avoid duplication with other projects across the region. Following this environmental scan, the survey was then developed in consultation with AAISA's regional Umbrella partners: the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA) and the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations and (MANSO), as well as IRCC. The finalized survey was then

created in both official languages to accommodate both English and French speaking front-line staff. The survey was divided into four parts:

1. **Respondent Details:** This section collected demographic data such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and immigrant status. This section also included the organizational context of the respondents including, their location, the population of the municipality where their organization is located, the official language(s) of their organization, their department and position, their employment status (part-time or full-time), and how long they have been working at their organization.

2. **Organizational Evaluation:** This section of the survey gathered front-line perspectives on organizational alignment, compensation and benefits, diversity and inclusion, work-life balance and wellbeing, management and leadership, and professional growth and stability.

3. **Future Directions:** The objectives of this section were to gain insight into the intentions and perspectives of front-line staff regarding their career plans, motives that influence their decision to leave their current position, and priorities for improvement within their respective organizations.

4. **Closing Section**: Respondents were provided with an opportunity to share their general thoughts in an open-comment section.

For full details of the survey questions and results, please see Appendix I.

Target Participants

The HOTS research project target respondents are front-line employees of newcomer-serving agencies in the PNT region, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northern Territories, who are:

- employees of IRCC-funded agencies serving newcomers; and
- employees of non-IRCC funded member agencies of AAISA, SAISIA, or MANSO.

The HOTS survey targeted settlement and integration service providers with positions typical to front-line service delivery in the settlement and integration sector, including *Practitioner, Counsellor, Supervisor, Manager, Administrator, Case Manager,* and *Assessor.* Survey respondents also had an option to self-identify their position title in a narrative box on the survey. Management and supervisory roles were included in the survey as many management roles encompass key elements of front-line service delivery, including client interaction. Senior management, such as Executive Directors and Board Members, were excluded from the target audience of the HOTS survey due to the executive nature of these roles and associated distance from front-line service delivery. Moreover, volunteers and other unpaid positions were also excluded as the survey did not seek to understand these experiences.

Over the data collection period, the HOTS survey received 912 unique responses from front-line settlement and integration professionals across the PNT region. Upon cleaning of the data, the total sample size was reduced to 756 respondents. The cleaning of the data removed respondents that did not complete the survey, respondents who did not consent to participate in the survey, and respondents who were not the target audience of the HOTS survey, such as respondents that were of the executive level, volunteers, or positions unrelated to the sector. This cleaning of the data ensured that the respondents of the survey were the intended target participants, and that the results of the survey were thus in alignment and representative of the project's purpose. As such, the information contained within this report is informed by 756 responses from front-line settlement and integration employees across the PNT region.

Survey Data Collection Process

Using Survey Monkey, the HOTS survey was created and distributed widely across the PNT region to reach the greatest number of front-line staff. Both the English and French surveys were open for data collection between March 31, 2021, and July 31, 2021.

Throughout this time, agencies in the settlement and integration sector across the PNT region were encouraged to share the survey with their front-line employees. AAISA regularly liaised with its regional Umbrella partners to ensure the ongoing promotion of the HOTS survey across the region via multiple communication modes. Throughout the PNT region, the survey was promoted through regular email correspondence and reminders, sector meetings and stakeholder engagement activities, newsletters and social media, as well as a regional Townhall that AAISA hosted in June 2021. Additionally, IRCC promoted the survey through its regular activity monitors with agencies across the PNT. Throughout the data collection period, AAISA regularly communicated with its Umbrella partners and IRCC to share respondent numbers to promote targeted outreach to ensure frequent and widespread promotion across the PNT to facilitate maximum survey uptake and awareness.

Data Analysis

Excel was used to clean the raw HOTS survey data exported from Survey Monkey. Stata was used to generate descriptive statistics. An intersectional lens and gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) are applied during the survey data analysis and throughout the report. The purpose of utilizing an intersectional lens and GBA+ was to ensure all individuals were represented in the findings, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences of all individuals within the newcomer-serving sector.

Survey data did not collect any information that could have been used to identify the respondents.

Limitations

While the HOTS survey was widely distributed and promoted to the newcomer-serving sector in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories, the respondents that completed the survey were largely from Alberta. Despite having extended the data collection period to allow maximum survey uptake across the region, no significant increase in responses was seen from areas outside of Alberta. As a result, the survey findings will largely be skewed towards the front-line experiences of newcomer-serving workers in Alberta. Given the parallel context among newcomer-serving agencies in the PNT region, AAISA believes that the results have general relevance across this region. Lastly, the survey required all respondents to answer each question although not all questions were relevant to supervisor and manager roles.

BACKGROUND: PNT SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SECTOR AT A GLANCE BASED ON SURVEY FINDINGS

The regional HOTS survey captured demographic information about front-line workers within the newcomer-serving sector, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status, employment status, and organizational context. To provide a broad overview of the demographic information of the respondents to the HOTS survey, this section provides a summary and offers themes present within the demographic information. Throughout the report, the findings regarding demographic information are referenced and discussed in greater detail in conjunction with the organizational evaluation and future directions of front-line perspectives. This section will also provide readers with an overview of the roles of front-line workers in the newcomer-serving sector, which will contextualize the survey findings.

THE NEWCOMER-SERVING SECTOR AND THE ROLE OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS

To orient the content of the *Health of the Newcomer-Serving Sector in the PNT Region* report, this section will outline the general purpose of newcomer-serving agencies and the role of front-line workers within the sector.

The newcomer-serving sector supports Canada's social fabric and labour market by developing official language skills, providing employment-related services, and integrating newcomers into Canadian society through a variety of services. Newcomer services include Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals (NAARS), Information and Orientation (IO) services, language assessments, language training, employment related services, and community and social connection programming. Other services provided by newcomer-serving agencies encompass a variety of other support services such as services aimed at helping address barriers newcomers face in accessing settlement programming, including childcare, transportation, translation services,

interpretation, disability supports, and counselling services (Koltermann & Scott, 2018). Newcomer-service agencies also play a crucial role in advocating for newcomers and immigrant-related issues, community development, and are an active employer for professionals across the country.

Given the multifaceted services newcomer-serving agencies provide, the roles of front-line employees also encompass various skills and responsibilities that can be demanding and far-reaching. Broadly, in the PNT region, IRCC operates through a four-tier community typology which classifies communities based on variables such as population, clients served and/or number of landings, which in turn determine the suite of settlement services IRCC funds in each community (IRCC, 2018). More specifically, the tiering system in the PNT region is made up of Smaller Communities (Tier 1), Small Cities (Tier 2), Medium-sized Cities (Tier 3), and Major Urban Centres (Tier 4) (IRCC, 2018). As a result, newcomer-serving agencies provide a multitude of services based on the tiered system that range from the following (IRCC, 2018):

- **Tier 1: Small Communities**
  - Minimal settlement services: Conversation circles, volunteer English as a Second Language (ESL) tutors, Community Connections, informal Information and Orientation services.
- **Tier 2: Small City**
  - Basic settlement services: Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS), Information and Orientation, Settlement Workers in Schools, Local Immigration Partnerships, Language and Community Connections.
- **Tier 3 – Medium Sized Cities**
  - Full suite of settlement services: Multiple service providers, NARs, Information and Orientation, Settlement Workers in Schools, Language with at least one provider at higher CLBs, Language Assessment, Local Immigration Partnerships, Community Connections.
- **Tier 4 – Major Urban Centres**
  - Complex settlement eco-system: Full suite of settlement and language services and specialized services for vulnerable populations.

Regardless of where settlement and integration services are delivered, front-line workers employ a multitude of skillsets and hold varying degrees of responsibility. For a better understanding, OCASI (2018) outlines the following as roles of settlement workers:

- Assess and refer newcomers' needs, create settlement plans, and provide orientation sessions to newcomers on relevant topics (i.e., housing, employment, education, transportation) and refer service seekers to other programs and service providers.
- Provide newcomers with support related to filling out forms (i.e., Social Insurance Numbers, Health Insurance, Tax Benefits, etc.).

- Accompany newcomers in all aspects of settlement by ensuring newcomers are provided with the correct programs according to their identified assets and needs.
- Advocate on behalf of clients with institutions, employers, or landlords, and other key community groups and service providers.
- Educate clients about their rights and responsibilities under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canada Human Rights Act, the Employment Standards Act, Canadian law, and treaties with Indigenous peoples, amongst others.
- Data entry, such as maintaining client records and program statistics, writing reports, and providing regular updates to supervisors and funders.
- Build capacity at the individual and community level by assessing the needs of the community, and work collaboratively with service seekers, colleagues, and other service providers to meet those needs.
- Recruit, train, and supervise volunteers.
- Participating in staff meetings and committees.

RESPONDENT FRONT-LINE STAFF PROFILE

The following sections will outline the demographic information, employment profiles, and agency profiles of respondents to the HOTS survey. Furthermore, using this data, this section will highlight some general conclusions about the landscape of front-line employees across the PNT settlement and integration sector as informed by the 756 responses which comprise the sample size of this report.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Location Breakdown of Respondents

Of the 756 respondents that completed the survey, 75.8% are from Alberta, 14.6% from Manitoba and 9.7% from Saskatchewan, as shown in *Figure 1*. There were no respondents that completed the survey from the Northern Territories.

Figure 1

Location of Respondents by Percentage
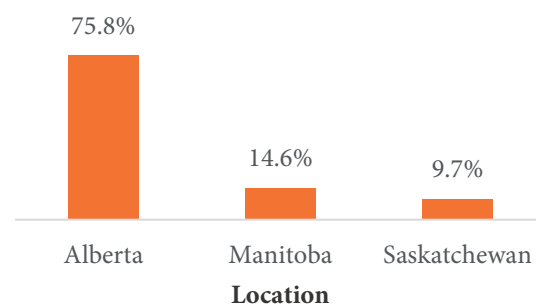
Front-line staff at newcomer-service agencies are predominantly women

Comparable to broader social services, front-line staff within newcomer-service agencies are predominantly women (Lee, 1999; ONN, 2020; Türegün, 2011). Of the 756 respondents, 80.3% were women and 16.7% were men, 2.5% preferred not to disclose, 0.4% were non-binary, and 0.1% were other gender groups as shown in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2
Gender of Respondents by Percentage
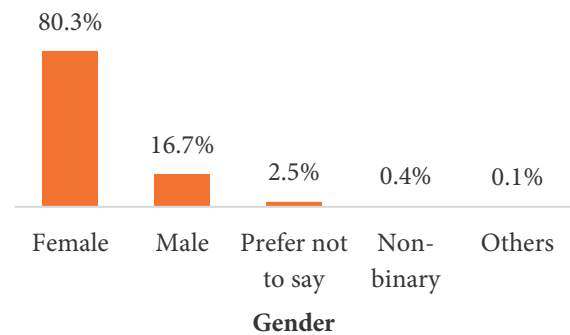
The sector predominantly employs young front-line workers

As illustrated by *Figure 3*, the respondents to this survey are relatively young with 52.1% indicating they are 44 years old and younger, and 47.9% who are 45 years old and older.

Figure 3
Age Category of Respondents by Percentage
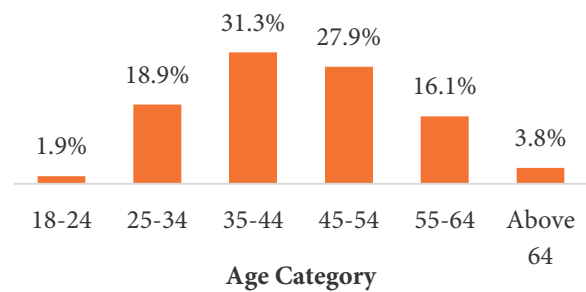
Racialized individuals represent a large majority of front-line employees

Approximately 48.4% of the respondents are from a racial minority group, including respondents who identified as Arab, Black, African, Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Middle Eastern. Whereas 42.2% of respondents are white, and 1.2% are Indigenous as summarized in *Figure 4*. This finding is consistent with other surveys completed throughout Canada as other newcomer-serving agencies are predominantly comprised of racialized individuals (Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Family Service Association of Toronto, 2006; Lee, 1999; Türegün, 2011).

Figure 4
Race and Ethnicity of Respondents by Percentage
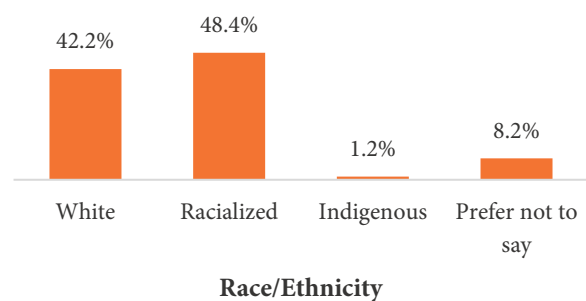
Immigrants represent a large majority of front-line workers in the newcomer-serving sector

Of the respondents, 62.2% are immigrants to Canada, of which 26.4% are recent newcomers in the last 10 years as illustrated in

Figure 5 which is consistent with research in the settlement and integration sector completed in Ontario (Türegün, 2011). Türegün (2011) notes that many immigrant professionals seek employment within the sector often because the settlement sector emerges as a credible and familiar career pathway as many immigrants accessed these services at one point for their settlement and employment needs.

Figure 5

Length of Time in Canada by Percentage
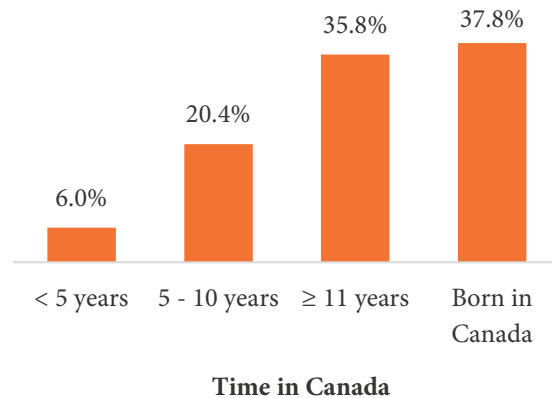
As many immigrants have at one point sought support from newcomer serving agencies, employment within the sector has become a familiar and attractive opportunity to provide genuine support, as well as grow their professional career (Türegün, 2011). The lived experiences brought forth by immigrants working in the sector, in combination with their diverse competencies beyond language and cultural skills, ultimately serves to uniquely enhance and strengthen the settlement and integration of the newcomers they serve. In alignment with this, one HOTS survey respondent indicated:

> *"We value each other in our team. Together, we help to achieve one goal, which is to help our clients and see their own success in settling in this country. I love my job and I am happy meeting different people with unique experiences in life. It's my pleasure to extend my hands to my clients because I was once in their shoes."*

Although it was beyond the scope of the HOTS project to explore the professional journey of settlement workers into their current roles, in their study, Türegün (2011) found that the majority of immigrant service workers initially entered the settlement sector through front-line and non-supervisory positions. In the HOTS survey, one respondent in particular stated:

> *"I have worked at my agency for more than 14 years when my family immigrated to Calgary. It was my first job, and my current job. I love my job, I'm so happy to work. I appreciate having this job."*

The study by Türegün (2011) also found that 72% of their respondents had actively tried to get back into their professional area of practice prior to their role in the settlement sector. However, they encountered a number of concerns that prevented them from continuing their active search in the field they were qualified in for both individual and asset-related reasons (loss or change of

interest, pursuance of further education, lack of English and accent in English, lack of information, network, and other support, personal or family need to survive, and a lack of professional experience) and systemic and situational reasons (differences in professional systems, registration/employment difficulties, discrimination, and other barriers). Additionally, Türegün (2011) shows that many immigrants working in the settlement and integration sector are motivated by altruism and a genuine interest to help newcomers by using, among other skills, their personal experiences in coming to and settling in Canada.

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Many front-line employees work full-time

As shown in *Figure 6,* the respondents to this survey work primarily full-time, with 87.2% indicating full-time and 12.8% part-time.

Figure 6
Employment Status by Percentage
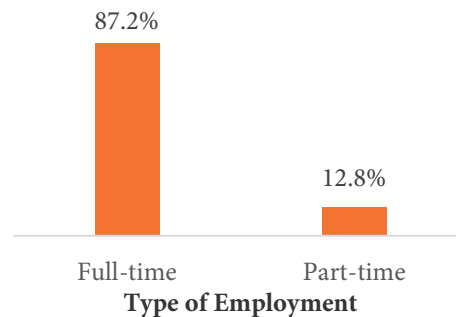
Settlement workers make up for the majority of respondents in this survey

Respondents to this survey generally work in the settlement program or department, language training, employment, and youth programing or settlement workers in school, as shown in *Figure 7.*

Figure 7

Program/Department of Respondents in Agency by Percentage
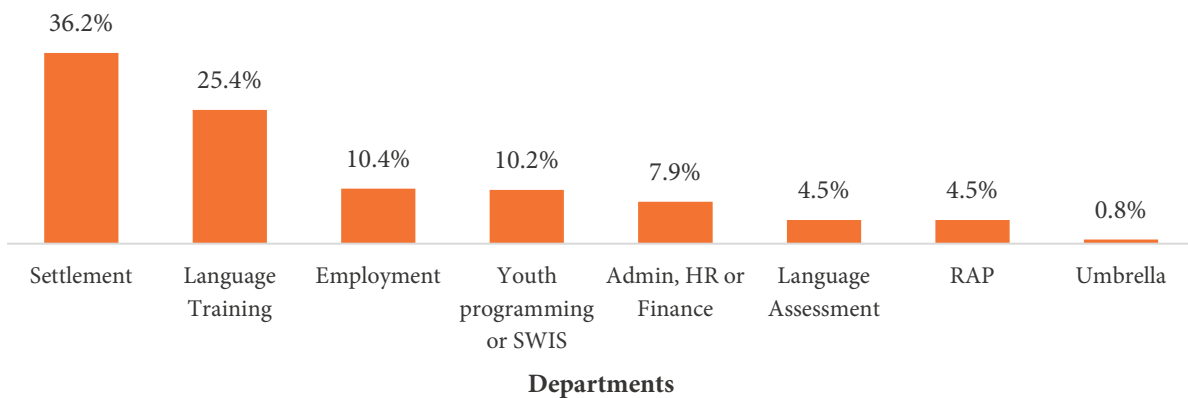
Practitioners and instructors make up most of the respondents to this survey

Front-line employees within the sector have a variety of roles and positions within the newcomer-serving sector. In this survey, 22.6% of respondents are practitioners, 21.3% are instructors, 14.2% are counsellors, 13.5% are supervisors, 12.4% are managers, 9.5% are administrators, 3.7% are case managers, and 2.8% assessors, as shown in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8
Current Position of Respondents in Agency by Percentage

Over three quarters of respondents have worked in their current position for less than 10 years

As illustrated in *Figure 9* approximately 36.5% of respondents have worked in their current position for at least 1 to 4 years, 25.1% for at least 5 to 9 years, and 17.5% for 10 to 15 years.

Figure 9
Length of Service in Current Organization by Percentage
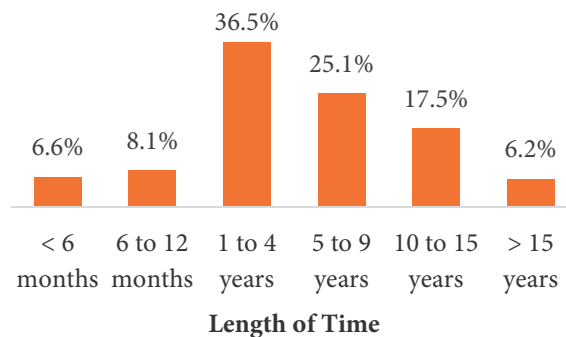
AGENCY PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The majority of newcomer-serving front-line workers are employed in big cities

The survey found that 54.0% of respondents indicated that their organization was in a city with a population of over 500,000 as shown in *Figure 10*.

Figure 10

Municipal Population of Agency Location by Percentage
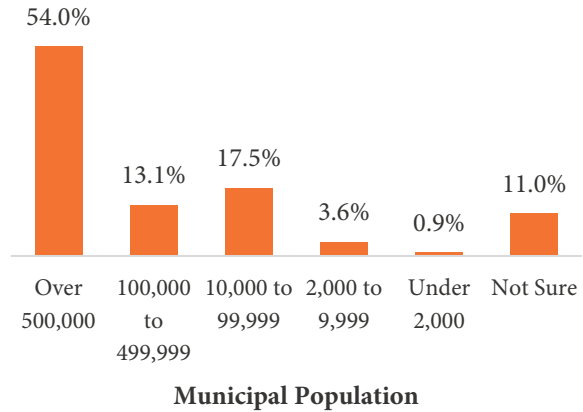
Settlement services are primarily conducted in English

The respondents to this survey reflect the number of settlement services who primarily conduct their services in English or French; 97% of respondents indicated they primarily provided services in English, while 2% offered services in French, as shown in *Figure 11*. Across Canada, approximately 10% of newcomer-serving agencies are Francophone service providers, of which 1% are in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan (IRCC, 2021).

Figure 11

Primary Language of Settlement Service Provider by Percentage
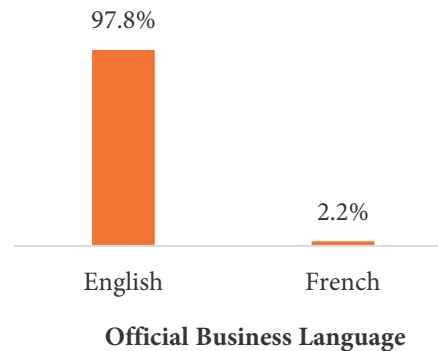
FINDINGS & DISCUSSION: MAJOR THEMES IN THE NEWCOMER-SERVING PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE

The following data analysis illuminates the distinct strengths and challenges amongst front-line employees in the newcomer-serving sector in the PNT region. The sections represent themes present in the data findings collected in the HOTS survey. One the one hand, these results offer reasons to celebrate the diversity of the sector and the resiliency of front-line employees. On the other hand, the results also show some areas of concern for the newcomer-serving sector's future capacity and effectiveness in responding to the evolving and growing needs of newcomer communities across the PNT region.

The following sections have been distilled into six focus areas:

- Front-line employees' intention to work in the sector
- Challenges with compensation levels including salary and other benefits
- The increasing need to prioritize mental health of staff
- Genuine and robust diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and culture
- Challenges that highlight access to professional development opportunities
- Engagement of organizational leadership.

Cross cutting these themes is a strong focus on funding complexities and financial challenges present within agencies that trickle down and impact employee stress and organizational capacity.

PASSIONATE AND VALUE ALIGNED FRONT-LINE STAFF

The data obtained from the regional HOTS survey demonstrates that front-line staff in the newcomer-serving sector are passionate and enthusiastic people who care deeply about their work and are driven by a genuine interest in supporting newcomer integration in Canada. When surveyed, a high percentage of employees, 91.0%, strongly agreed and agreed that their personal values align with their agency's mission and vision (see *Figure 12*).

Figure 12

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their personal values align with the organization's mission and vision.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

1.6% 1.9%
5.3%
50.1%
41.1%
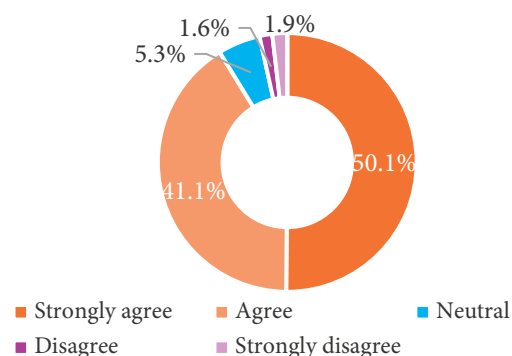
Additionally, 82.3% of respondents also felt a sense of belonging within their agency (see *Figure 13*). Respondents expressed their gratitude for their position in the sector and the joy they feel giving back to the community, with one respondent stating:

> "*Working in the settlement sector is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It makes me feel that my work is a contribution to Canadian society.*"

Front-line workers are dedicated to their work for a multitude of reasons, including their ability to make a difference through contribution of their talents, skillsets, and passion for serving their community and the newcomers who benefit from their programs and services. While these factors are an integral driving force in employee satisfaction, other considerations are more likely to play a role beyond employees personal and genuine interest for serving newcomers which will be further discussed throughout this report.

Figure 13
Percentage of respondents that indicated that they felt a sense of belonging within their organization.

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
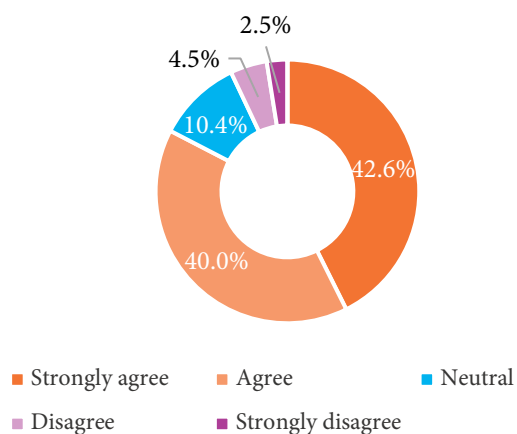
NON-COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION LEVELS: SALARY LEVELS AND STRUCTURES

Compensation within the broader social services sector has been a topic of contentious discussion in which the non-monetary benefits to working in this sector have often been regarded to be sufficient in lieu of robust monetary compensation. As shown in the previous section, while value alignment is prevalent for many front-line employees in the newcomer-serving sector, broader data and evidence indicates that competitive compensation is also a key priority for employees. To garner an understanding of the front-line perspective across the PNT, HOTS respondents were

asked to rate their satisfaction with the compensation provided by their employer and whether their pay is appropriate for their current role.

The findings from the HOTS survey show that:

- 58.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, 20.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 20.6% indicated neutrality to the statement, "I am satisfied with the level of compensation provided by my employer" (see *Figure 14*).

Figure 14

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they were satisfied with the level of compensation provided by their employer.
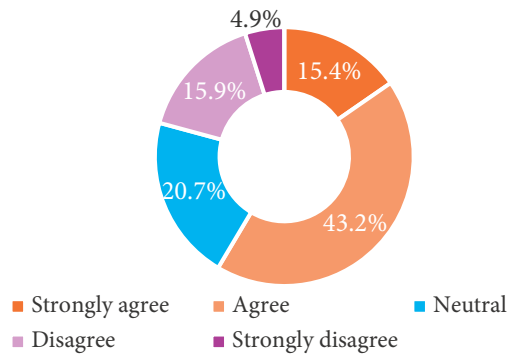
- 52.4% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 26.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I am getting paid appropriately for my current role and job opportunities" (*see Figure 15*).

Figure 15

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they were receiving appropriate monetary compensation for their current role and job responsibilities.
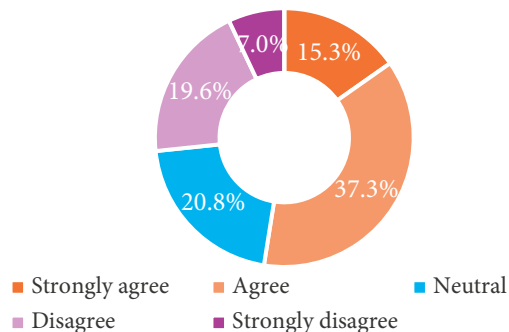
While general satisfaction pertaining to compensation was prevalent, several survey respondents provided additional nuance surrounding pay structures and compensation levels within their agency, as well as compensation levels amongst the broader newcomer-serving sector. The qualitative data showed that 18% of a total of 158 respondents who chose to provide comments at the end of the survey, highlighted issues with compensation levels within the sector. Of these respondents, there were comments that noted that they are actively looking for alternative

opportunities since their agency cannot pay them according to their skills, education, and external personal demands dependent on their salary. One respondent stated:

> *"I recently completed a master's degree, and I am actively looking for other opportunities because my organization cannot pay me according to my skills and abilities. I love where I work and do not want to leave but feel I must because I am the breadwinner of my family. If this were not the case, I could see myself working in the organization for decades of my career. I feel I am a highly valued member of my organization and that they want me to stay but I also know they cannot increase my salary."*

Other respondents were more candid about their low salaries and how this impacts their sense of support from funders:

> *"Salaries in this sector are abysmal. In Manitoba, they are often below the average individual income for the province. What does that say about our funders' view of the importance of our work?"*

When looking at the HOTS survey data across gender, more women (27%) compared to men (20%) indicated that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, "I am getting paid appropriately for my current role and job opportunities" (see *Figure 16*)

Figure 16
Percentage of respondents that indicated that they were receiving appropriate monetary compensation for their current role and job responsibilities by their gender.
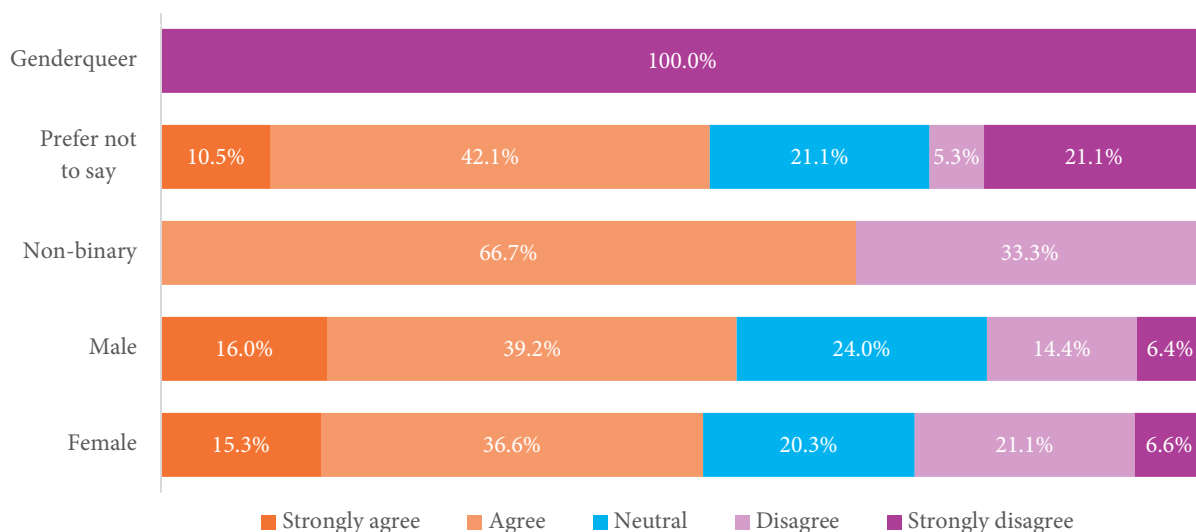
Women's economic inequality exists across all sectors and professional levels, however, in 2015, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee indicated that they are concerned about "the high level of the pay gap, which is more pronounced in some provinces such as Alberta," and "disproportionately affects low-income women, in particular minority and Indigenous women"

(UN Human Rights Committee, 2015). In a similar vein, women in the non-profit sector are compensated at a lower rate than men, known as the "care penalty," despite the fact that the sector is highly educated and experienced (ONN, 2018). A study by Tom Zizys from 2011 found that women earn less than men in the non-profit sector although the level of education for both men and women are exactly the same (ONN, 2018).

The newcomer-serving sector, which largely supports and employs vulnerable groups of people, must also consider the skills, education, and professionalization of its employees, which are often not reflected in their compensation. Newcomer-serving agencies often rely on language skills, immigration and settlement experiences, and cultural capital from immigrant employees to deliver services effectively (Bauder & Jayaraman, 2014). Despite the indispensable skills and qualifications immigrants bring the newcomer-serving sector, many are providing clerical supports that are unpaid in order to acquire Canadian work experience and others are confronted with low pay, long hours, and limited career opportunities to advance (Bauder & Jayaraman, 2014).

Front-line workers feelings towards monetary compensation for their current role and job responsibilities are more nuanced when analyzed by their front-line position. When analyzing how each position rated their satisfaction level, counselors (29.0%), instructors (23.0%), supervisors (22.5%), and administrators (22.2%) are front-line workers who disagree and strongly disagree with the statement regarding the alignment of monetary compensation with their role. (see *Figure 17*).

Figure 17

Percentage of respondents who indicated compensation satisfaction by current position

Position	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Administrator	15.3%	34.7%	27.8%	13.9%	8.3%
Assessor	14.3%	52.4%	19.0%	14.3%	0.0%
Case manager	22.2%	44.4%	25.9%	3.7%	3.0%
Counsellor	10.3%	39.3%	21.5%	19.6%	9.3%
Instructor	14.3%	41.0%	21.7%	18.6%	4.3%
Manager	17.0%	48.9%	17.0%	11.7%	5.3%
Practitioner	19.3%	43.3%	20.5%	13.5%	3.5%
Supervisor	12.7%	49.0%	15.7%	20.6%	2.0%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
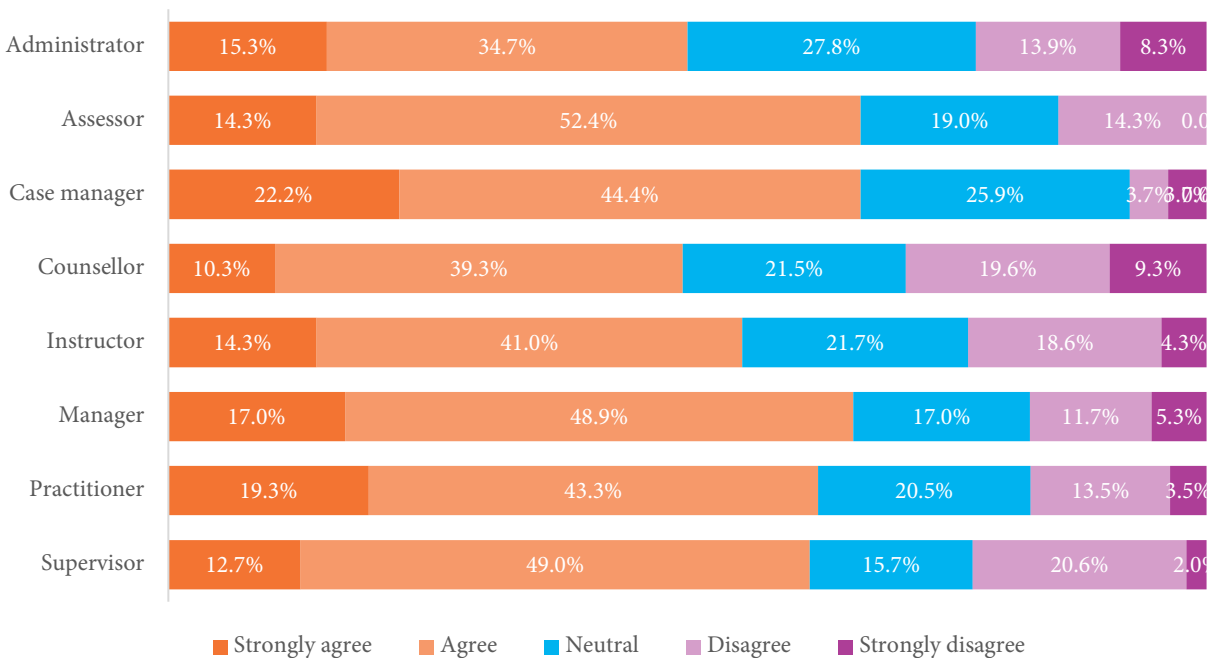
For instance, respondents from the language subsector, particularly the <u>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)</u> program, indicated overwhelming administrative demands and income precarity. Additionally, an overarching issue that impacts front-line employees is the fluctuating nature of funding of the LINC program has been a significant source of stress for employees. This past year, Alberta, the Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island saw their settlement funding allocations decline due to recent declines in newcomer arrivals (El-Assal, 2021). Consequently, the respondents in this survey indicated that this decrease in funding has created some operational challenges for agencies, including laying off employees, which ultimately adversely impacts the quality of service provided to newcomer clients. The challenges in compensation and funding precarity in the language subsector were striking amongst the HOTS survey data. For example, one respondent expressed:

> *"I feel like my organization does have good compensation packages for salaried employees, but as a LINC instructor, we are poorly compensated and unfairly treated. Our jobs, training, and skills are similar to other employees, but we are paid hourly for teaching time only and are not compensated for any prep time, and therefore don't get paid enough hours to qualify for all the benefits everyone else gets. Also, there is no room to 'move up' as an instructor. Other employees get bigger salaries, more vacation, and better titles just for being there longer, but it never changes for instructors. It is frustrating, and we lose good teachers because of it. We are discouraged from speaking out because we are made to feel like we are lucky to have a job and that we can be replaced easily."*

Other respondents indicated that language instructors frequently work uncompensated overtime due to responsibilities outside of teaching hours, such as marking exams, office hours, preparing for class, and creating activities. One respondent stated:

> *"I work at least twice the number of hours that I am paid for due to prepping and marking. The hourly wage does not compensate for that. I continue to do this because I love it and the work is intrinsically rewarding."*

Ultimately, it bears asking whether this "passion bonus" or the "the supposition that low pay can be subsidized by the value of doing good work," is sufficient to retain and attract new employees (Phillips & Wyatt, 2021, 11) to the settlement and integration sector. Although average income was not asked in this survey, in 2017 employees of community non-profits received an average salary of $42,500 (Imagine Canada, 2019), while according to the 2016 Census, the average employment income of full-time, full-year workers in Canada is $67,070 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Compared to other sectors, the average pay scale for the settlement and integration sector is up to 30% lower for positions that require the same skills in comparable sectors (Bauder & Jayaraman, 2014). As mirrored by the results of the HOTS survey, compensation levels within the sector have several intersecting impacts on front-line workers and how they are ultimately positioned in society as a result of these impacts.

While the feedback on compensation holds merit, it is also essential to note that there are larger, macro realities that inform and influence the settlement and integration sector in the region. For example, unexpected challenges such as the pandemic, changing government political situations, and other funding priorities that can often take precedence, are all situations that inform the decision-making processes of the settlement sector. Therefore, while there is more value here, the way forward will be to adopt a holistic approach that considers front-line and macro approaches at work.

Ultimately, funders and agencies alike would benefit from prioritizing how front-line settlement and integration employees are compensated. On a micro level, robust and competitive compensation supports job satisfaction, long-term retention and promotion of talented staff, and facilitates better services and supports for clients. On a macro level, improving front-line compensation supports the broad professionalization and advancement of the settlement and integration sector as a legitimate career comprised of talented, educated, and highly skilled workers at all levels, which will ultimately contribute to better outcomes for newcomers and Canadian society writ large. Functionally, it is evident that front-line workers are essential to the settlement and integration infrastructure across the PNT region. However, front-line roles often transcend function due to the unique knowledge, passion, and humanity that imbues all facets of their work and that is in turn imparted upon their clients. The skills and approach of front-line settlement and integration employees are indispensable to the fabric of the settlement and integration sector and must be compensated at a rate that celebrates the value of their contributions to their agencies, clients, and Canadian society more broadly.

COMPENSATION LEVELS REGARDING BENEFITS, HEALTH INSURANCE & RETIREMENT: DISCREPANCIES AMONGST EMPLOYMENT TYPES

When respondents to the HOTS survey were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction for compensation levels beyond their salary, such as benefits that include retirement plans, supplementary health insurance, drug or dental benefits, and paid sick leave, the results trended towards lower levels of satisfaction.

The survey findings regarding compensation showed that:

- 65.2% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with the level of health insurance provided by my employer" (see *Figure 18*).

Figure 18

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they are satisfied with the level of health insurance provided by their employer.
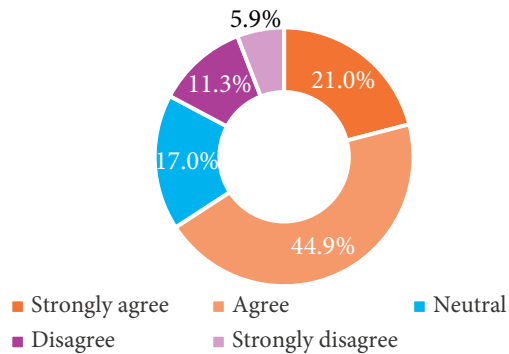
- 55% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my employer's contribution to my retirement fund meets my expectations" (see *Figure 19*).

Figure 19

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they are satisfied with their employer's contribution to their retirement fund and meets their expectations.
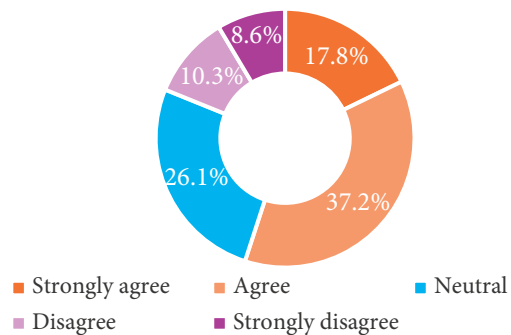
- 74.1% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with the number of vacation and sick/personal days provided by my employer." (see *Figure 20*)

Figure 20

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they are satisfied with the number of vacation and sick/personal days provided by their employer.

Strongly agree — 30.1%
Agree — 44.0%
Neutral — 13.8%
Disagree — 7.7%
Strongly disagree — 4.4%
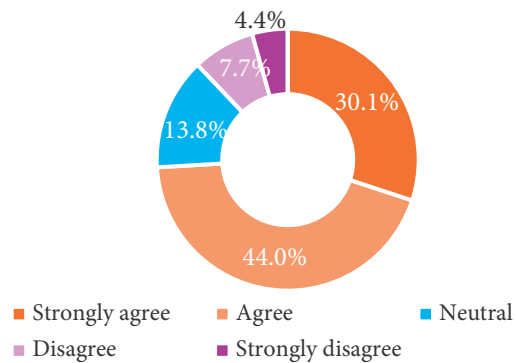
To supplement the survey findings, narrative comments from respondents provided more clarity and highlighted the variations in compensation packages across the different roles and positions of front-line settlement and integration employees.

Drawing upon comments from respondents to the HOTS survey, benefits for front-line employees are often lower than other comparable organizations and sectors. One respondent shared that they were "*surprised to find the overall compensation package*" such as vacation, benefits coverage, and retirement savings, at their current organization, "*significantly below what I had experienced at other comparable organizations.*"

A closer review of the data shows that, respondents in the language training department indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction, with 26.6% indicating that they were not satisfied with the health insurance provided by their employer (see *Figure 22*). Additionally, 19.5% of youth programming or settlement workers in schools are also not satisfied with their health insurance provided by their employer (see *Figure 22*).

Figure 21

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with the level of health insurance provided by their employer across program type.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Administration, Human Resources, or Finance	31.7%	41.7%	10.0%	10.0%	6.7%
Employment	17.7%	50.6%	19.0%	12.7%	
Language Assessment	18.2%	60.6%	15.2%		6.1%
Language Training	18.2%	36.5%	18.8%	13.5%	13.0%
Resettlement Assistance Program	17.6%	52.9%	14.7%	11.8%	2.9%
Settlement	22.3%	46.8%	17.5%	10.0%	3.3%
Umbrella	16.7%	83.3%			
Youth programming or Settlement Workers in Schools	21.1%	42.1%	17.1%	13.2%	6.6%

Amongst part-time workers, 37.9% and 34.7%, strongly disagreed or disagreed with being satisfied by the level of health insurance provided by their employer, and their employers retirement contributions, respectively and as shown in *Figure 22* and *Figure 23*. While, in comparison to all full-time workers in this survey, 69.3% and 58.1% strongly agreed or agreed with the level of health insurance provided by their employer, and their employers' retirement contributions, respectively. Conversely, the survey results indicated that part-time employees are often not eligible for the full suite of benefits that an agency offers to full-time staff, such as health and dental benefits, and when benefits are available for part-time staff, the coverage does not provide the full range of benefits. One respondent indicated that:

> *"Although I am funded through the Federal government, I receive no benefits, sick days, or any contribution to a pension. This really discourages bright and talented people from staying at my organization despite excellent leadership and workplace culture."*

Figure 22

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with the level of health insurance provided by their employer across part-time and full-time employees
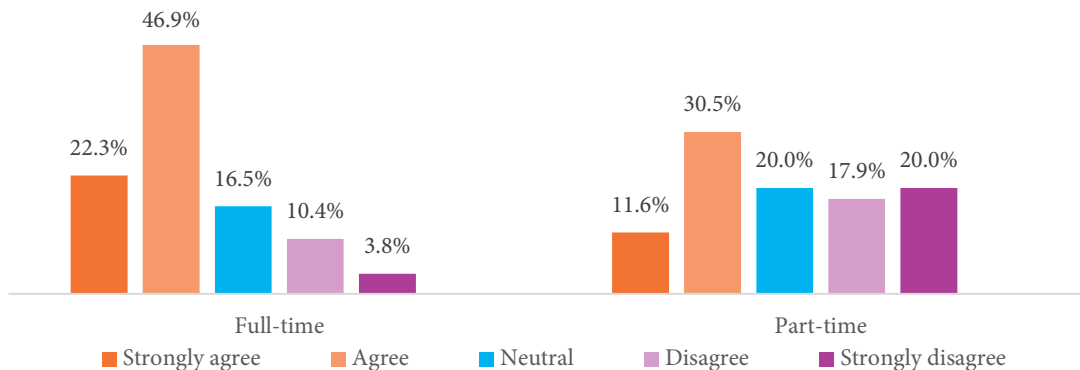
Figure 23

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with the contributions to their retirement fund provided by their employer across part-time and full-time employees.
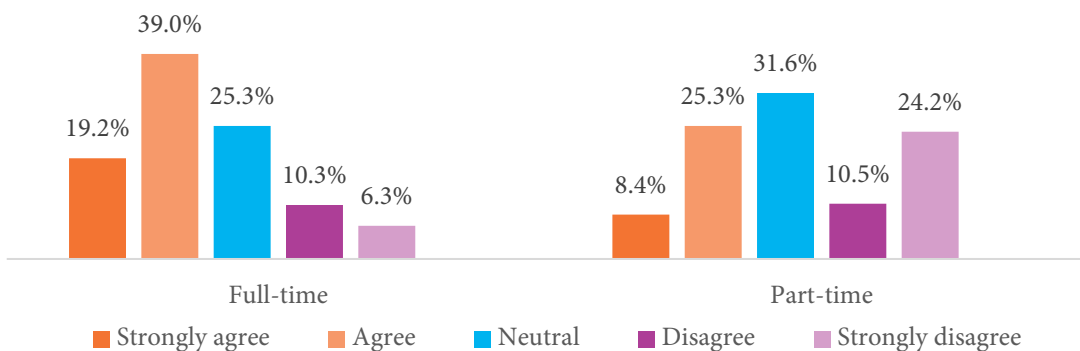
Although levels of employee dissatisfaction vary based on the type of job, the role, and the type of employment within an agency, certain vulnerable workers are more likely to have precarious employment. McIsaac et al (2013) found that the major determinant of benefit access was employee tenure, such as permanent or contract employees, with permanent employees as much more likely to receive health and retirement benefits than contract workers. Another factor that contributes to benefit access is whether the position is full-time or part-time; research has found that full-time employees, regardless of their employment status, have more access to both health and retirement benefits than part-time permanent and contract employees (ONN, 2018). In this study, women were more likely to be concentrated in part-time positions than men, with women 1.49 times more likely than their male counterparts, leaving them less likely to access benefits. More recently, Statistics Canada found that more women, youth, seniors, and workers with no post-secondary education were more likely to work part-time (Statistics Canada, 2018a). This issue is compounded for women who have children; according to ONN (2018), single mothers working

in the sector face an increased risk of not having coverage for their children. Overall, this issue is compounded for women in the sector as they face intersecting challenges that hinder their economic advancement.

Compensation packages and benefits are a key source of workplace protection and staff retention, especially in a sector that is growing with its immigration landing rates and significant resettlement targets (IRCC, 2021d). Furthermore, disagreement on level of satisfaction on health insurance, retirement contributions, and vacation or sick days, was higher amongst part-time employees compared to full-time employees (see *Figure 22* and *Figure 23*). Ultimately, outdated policies that do not provide employees with coverage to take time off work not only puts employees at risk of negative outcomes such as burnout or mental health impacts, but also may not align with the changing nature of employment practices in Canada as precarity of work is higher amongst vulnerable groups (women, youth, seniors; House of Commons, 2019). This sentiment is reflected through the survey results, where one respondent stated that:

> *"A complete lack of vacation or sick days is not in-line with current Canadian values."*

Lastly, while it is valuable to highlight differences between available compensation packages and benefits for full-time and part-time employees, it is also worthwhile to note that compensation packages for full-time employees are more likely to be not as comprehensive within the settlement and integration sector in relation to other comparable sectors, including benefits such as pension plans, supplementary health coverage, drug or dental benefits, and paid sick leave.

In essence, policies that centre employee wellbeing through robust benefits will both improve employee satisfaction while contributing to the success of agencies as they are better able to attract and retain talented staff, and by extension facilitate positive settlement and integration experiences of newcomers. This is an area in which both newcomer-serving agencies, governments, and other funders have a shared responsibility for creating safe and healthy working arrangements.

PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

The newcomer-serving sector is comprised of an extraordinarily diverse workforce as highlighted by the HOTS survey data. Broadly, the PNT settlement and integration sector is woman-dominated, ranges across age groups, comprised of many employees who were at one-point newcomers to Canada, and contains individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (see page 12). The sector is also diverse in its range of work regarding agency size, regional location, and the programs and services provided by agencies (see page 11). To guide newcomer-serving agencies about the health of their front-line employees, the survey questioned respondents on their levels of satisfaction regarding diversity and inclusion policies, along with other factors such as promotion opportunities for employees, reporting of discrimination and harassment incidents, and confidence in leaders to take action on discrimination and harassment. While the results of

the findings can be characterized by higher levels of satisfaction towards policies and procedures regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), participant comments provided a complex narrative.

The HOTS survey results show the following:

- 80.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I am confident the organization has adequate policies and procedures promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace (see *Figure 24*)

Figure 24

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their organizations' policies and procedures promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.
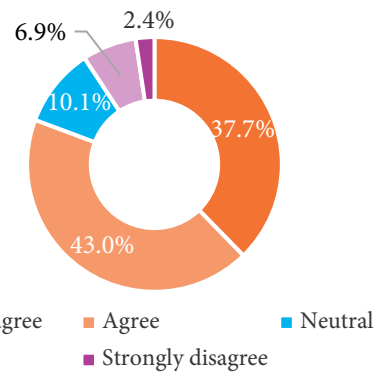
- 81.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "employees of different ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, abilities, and religions are valued equally by this organization" (see *Figure 25).*

Figure 25

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their organizations' equal treatment of employees of different ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, abilities, and religions.
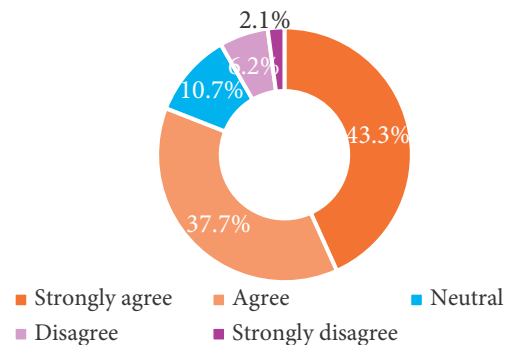
- 65.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "employees are treated fairly in internal promotion processes and equal opportunities are available, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, and religion" (see *Figure 26)*.

Figure 26

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their organizations' equal treatment in internal promotion processes and opportunities regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, and religion.
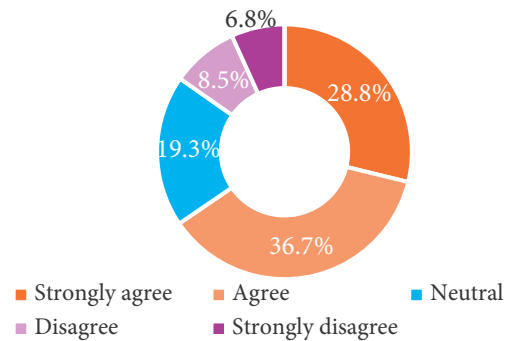
- 76.7% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I am aware of my organizations procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment" (see *Figure 27*).

Figure 27

Percentage of respondents that indicated awareness with their organizations' procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment.
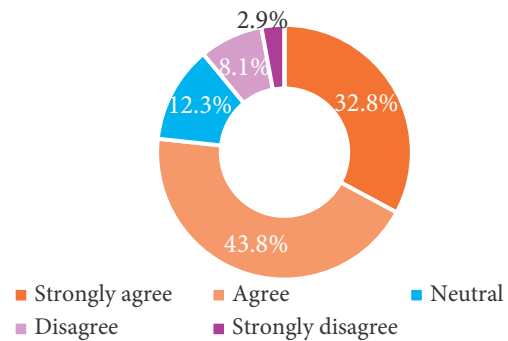
- 67.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel supported to voice concerns about discrimination and harassment without fear of reprisal" and approximately 19.5% of respondents opted for neutrality (see *Figure 28).*

Figure 28

Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their organizations' support to voice their concerns about discrimination and harassment without fear of reprisal.
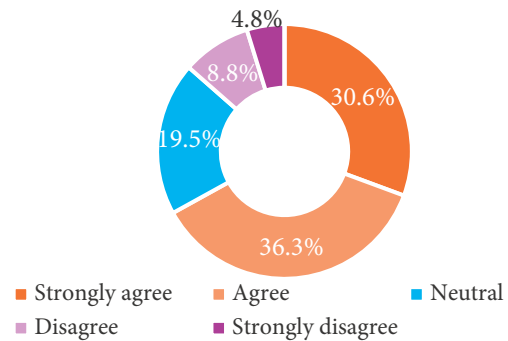
- 71.7% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I believe the organization will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination, bias, and/or harassment" while 11.8% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 16.5% were neutral (see *Figure 29*).

Figure 29

Percentage of respondents that indicated belief in their organization taking appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination, bias, and/or harassment.
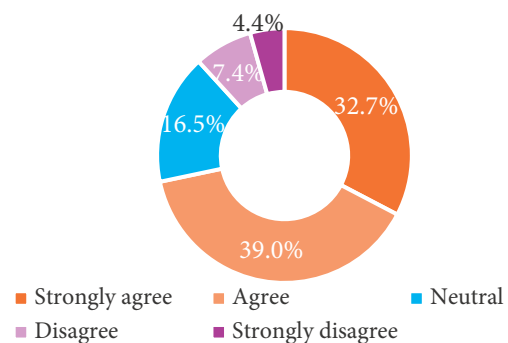
Considering that newcomer-serving agencies are predominantly comprised of women and especially racialized women (see *Figure 2* and *Figure 4*), there is greater intention to meaningfully support and promote diverse individuals. However, diversity and inclusion are nuanced in that diversity must go beyond surface level changes (i.e., tokenization, optics) and focus on specific policies and practices that challenge power structures at all levels of the organization. While HOTS respondents indicated general satisfaction pertaining to DEI across the PNT settlement and

integration sector, women were more 2.37 times more likely to disagree with the statement that their organization treats employees fairly in internal promotion process and equal opportunities for all. Additionally, some important points of reflection were raised in the narrative portion of the survey such as the need for all levels of an organization to robustly embody diversity. One respondent expressed that there should be more diversity in leadership and management levels as there is an overrepresentation of diversity on the front-lines. The respondent further noted that:

> *"The leadership and management team is not reflective of the served populations. Diversity is present in front-line work and unintegral positions of power."*

Therefore, it is unclear who is at the table, who has decision-making power, and on what grounds decisions are being made that take into consideration the diverse communities within the sector.

The Centre for Community Organizations (COCO) graphic was referenced by one of the respondents to describe a situation within their leadership team (see Appendix II for more information). The respondent noted that:

> *"The current leadership team had severely mistreated our previous manager and supervisor, both amazing women of colour in positions of leadership. Both these women were incredible advocates for our staff and youth, role models of inclusive and transformational leadership, and embodied the intersectional lens that is critical in working in this field. This pictorial diagram (referring to COCO's diagram) precisely describes what happened, though the leadership team is diverse, their practices are very westernized and colonial."*

This comment highlights a larger issue that underpins the Western standards of professionalism which are heavily defined by the systemic institutionalized centering of whiteness (Gray, 2019). In that the workplace, these conceptions of professionalism explicitly and implicitly privilege whiteness and discriminate against non-Western and non-white professionalism standards related to dress code, speech, work style, and timeliness which in turn affects hiring, promoting, managing, and firing of employees (Gray, 2019). Western practices do not always favour other practices that are not traditionally Western such as oral practices, developing relationships and trust that form over time, and learning through experience. Ultimately, while the settlement and integration sector are intrinsically diverse, there are persistent, embedded systemic issues that prevent real change and meaningful actualization of DEI.

As the composition of Canada's workforce are expected to evolve, prioritizing DEI is essential to ensure the newcomer-serving sector is a viable and attractive employer. Over the coming years, workforce projections indicate that Canada's labour force growth will primarily rely on immigrants, including young immigrants, as a significant proportion of Canada's population continues to age (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2020). As indicated earlier in *Figure 3*, respondents of the HOTS survey are considerably younger with the greatest percentage of respondents between the ages of 18 to 44 years old. This trend will likely increase with the

increasing immigration targets for upcoming years for economic growth (AAISA, 2022). Given this trend, the changing realities of Canada's workforce has the potential to pose problems for the newcomer serving sector as young workers, especially youth who identify as racialized, are purported to indicate their hesitance to working in the social service sector if decent work, which includes promoting equity and racial justice, are not an organizational priority (Long, 2021). Overall, the greater reliance on immigrants and younger generations in the workforce necessitates prioritizing DEI policies and practices to promote the sector as a professional workforce to newcomers and younger generations and to ultimately support the longevity and viability of the settlement and integration sector.

Where respondents seem to show lower satisfaction levels and higher levels of neutrality are with their organization's demonstrative commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities. Of the respondents, 59.6% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement while 32.7% were neutral (see *Figure 30*).

Figure 30
Percentage of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their organizations demonstrative commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities.
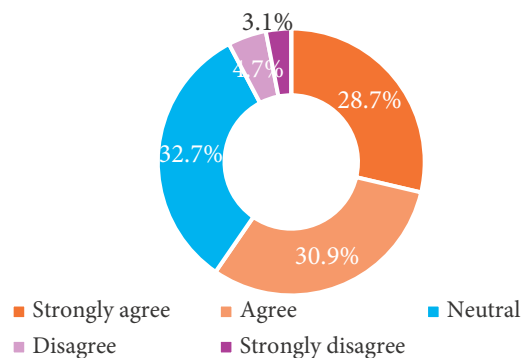
While the responses trended towards satisfaction, the higher level of neutrality suggests that respondents may be unaware of the supports available for people who need assistance as a result of a disability, or that the appropriate supports are not embedded into organizational policy and daily business. The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability conducted by Statistics Canada, determined that one in five (22%) of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over (approximately 6.2 million individuals) had one or more disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2018b). Charity Village (2019) notes that persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed than those without disabilities, even though 39% of unemployed people with disabilities are able to work. Although many organizations across sectors may claim to prioritize diversity, only 4% consider disability in those initiatives (Harvard Business Review, 2021). While many agencies may have formal policies, the neutrality around this question is an important reminder that achieving true DEI must transcend formal accommodation and instead start from a standpoint that is broadly intersectional and actively practices, embodies, and refines DEI in day-to-day operation. The finding in the HOTS survey may also be related to the reason that some people with disabilities do

not require any workplace accommodation; a 2016 CIBC online survey found that 30% of Canadians with disabilities do not require any workplace accommodation and that the average cost of accommodation for those who do is less than $500 (Employment Accessibility Resource Network, 2020).

The success of DEI requires a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up approach, which means that leaders must not just provide a voice for all employees, but also embed a culture of belonging that promotes inclusion while prioritizing making changes. The HOTS survey results provide a critical foundation for ensuring that DEI is actualized throughout all agencies in the settlement and integration sector to support front-line employees and in turn newcomer clients as it provides an iterative account of individual experiences within the sector.

LIMITED ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Investments in professional development opportunities for employees in the workplace provides a multitude of benefits for employers and employees alike. Literature shows that professional development opportunities increase job satisfaction and employees' sense of value and support within their organization when their employer allocates budgets towards their professional development (Wells, 2020). However, according to the respondents from this survey, prioritization of professional development opportunities and leadership development within the sector paint a grim picture for front-line employees.

The survey findings regarding professional development show the following:

- 52.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I believe there are opportunities to advance my career within my organization" while 21.6% strongly disagreed or disagreed (see *Figure 31).*

Figure 31
Percentage of respondents that indicated that they believe there are opportunities to advance their career within their organization.

7.4%
16.6%
14.2%
25.8%
36.0%

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral
■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree
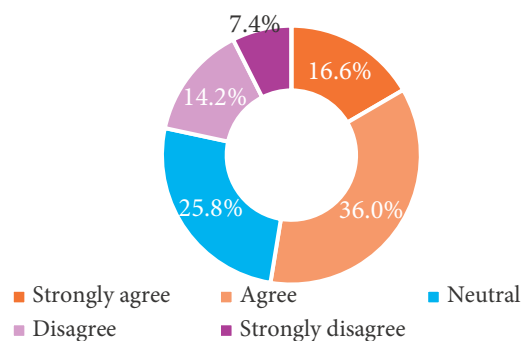
- 47.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel confident about the long-term security of my position within my organization" while 26.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed (see *Figure 32)*.

Figure 32

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they felt confident about the long-term security of their position within their organization.
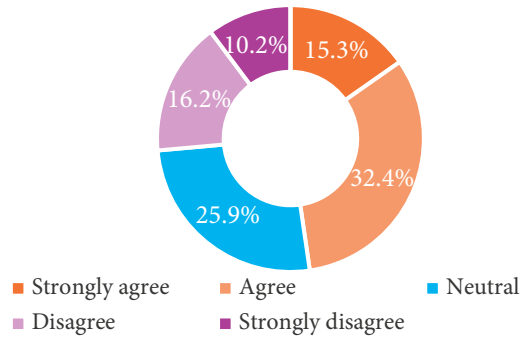
- 73.2% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I receive adequate training and learning opportunities to effectively perform my current job" while 11.2% strongly disagreed or disagreed (see *Figure 33)*.

Figure 33

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they receive adequate training and learning opportunities to effectively perform their current role.
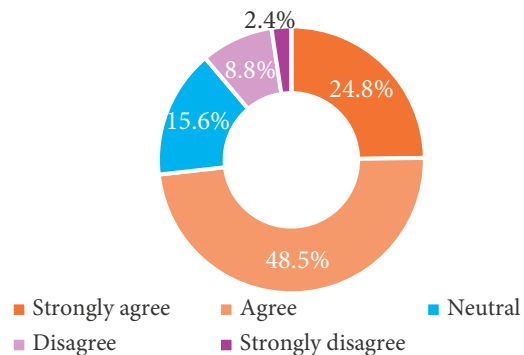
- 68.9% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my current position and responsibilities help me to achieve my long-term career goals and aspirations" while 10.2% strongly disagreed or disagreed (see *Figure 34*).

Figure 34

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their current position and responsibilities help them achieve their long-term career goals and aspirations.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
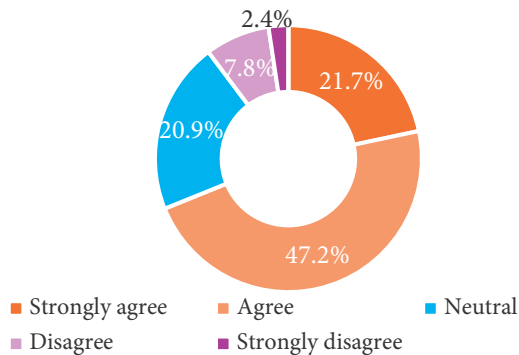
The availability of professional development opportunities for employees within the settlement and integration sector is essential for workers to advance their careers and can lead to more opportunities for innovation. According to the survey findings, there is little confidence in professional development opportunities and stability, which speaks volumes about the opportunities available in the sector and the capacity of the sector to retain and attract talented front-line employees who support and provide quality newcomer services. One respondent expressed:

> "I can't stress how much job stability is lacking in this sector. It feels like a risk to even go to school for education in this field or another field because work opportunities in this sector may not exist in my area when I finish school."

Across position types, instructors and practitioners were more likely to disagree or select neutral for advancing their career within the organization. One respondent indicated that:

> "There is no room to 'move up' as an instructor."

Younger respondents (44 years old or younger) are more likely to disagree or be neutral about the extent to which their current role and responsibilities help them to achieve their long-term career goals and aspirations. Positioning these results in contrast to large employers in the private and public sectors, more investments are seen in which there is more financial commitment to professional development opportunities. (McIsaac, Park, & Toupin, 2013).

The HOTS survey results highlighted other key factors that contributed to barriers in accessing professional development opportunities. Although there may be interest in accessing these opportunities, a key problem relates to the financing available for employees. Challenges with providing professional development compounded with low confidence in job security and stability is a likely result of the shift away from core, operational funding to project funding (Koltermann

& Scott, 2018). Employees within the sector may also not be made aware of professional development opportunities, or they may not have a wide range of professional development opportunities available to them specific to their roles within the sector. For example, one respondent indicated:

> *"A lot of the training I have access to is intended for front-line settlement workers, but as a coordinator this is only somewhat relevant for me. I would love additional access to training opportunities specifically for coordinators on topics like marketing and communications, program design, evaluation, and how to make programs accessible and inclusive."*

Other challenges that arise are realizing the benefits of professional development in how it may move an organization forward. For example, a respondent noted that although there are opportunities available within their organization, the opportunities are decided upon without appropriate consultation and consideration of the entire breadth of organizational needs, particularly at the frontlines.

When asked about the genuine interest displayed by managers/supervisors regarding their employees' professional growth and career advancement:

- 64.3% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my manager/supervisor shows genuine interest in my professional growth and career advancement," while 15.0% strongly disagreed or disagreed (see *Figure 35*)

Figure 35

Percentage of respondents that indicated they were confident in their organizational leaderships' interest in their professional growth and career advancement.

5.6%
9.5%
20.6%
26.6%
37.7%

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
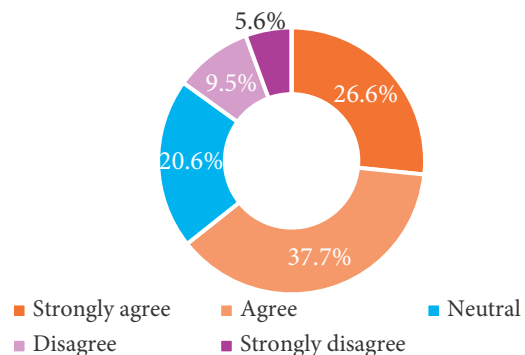
- 67.8% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my manager/supervisor provides me with regular constructive feedback on my performance" while 15.0% expressed the opposite (see *Figure 36*).

Figure 36

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their manager/supervisor provided them with regular constructive feedback on their performance.
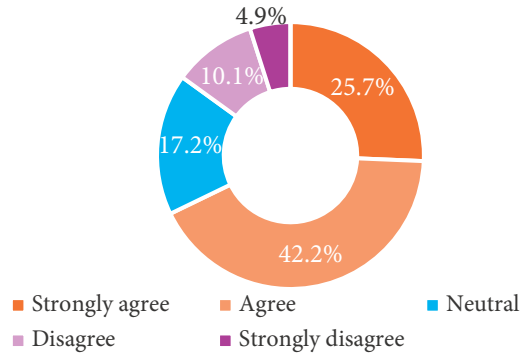
- 73.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my manager/supervisor recognizes and appreciates my outstanding efforts and accomplishments." (see *Figure 37*).

Figure 37

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their manager/supervisor recognizes and appreciates their efforts and accomplishments.
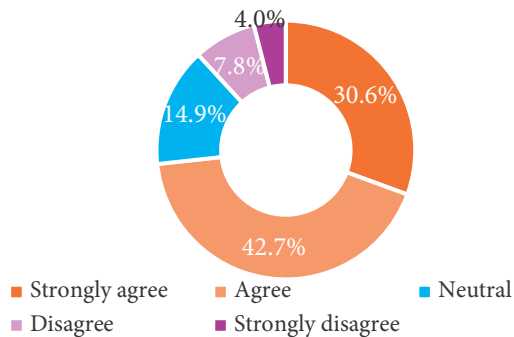
INCREASED EMPLOYEE STRESS AND THE NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Employees who work in the newcomer service sector are often exposed to stressful and emotionally burdening environments (OCASI, 2019). With additional stressors from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is purported that a new mental health pandemic is plaguing Canadians. According to Statistics Canada, "one in four (25%) Canadians aged 18 and older screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in spring 2021, up from one in five (21%) in fall 2020" (Statistics Canada, 2021a). The newcomer-serving sector is also included in this statistic with several stress factors added from their jobs, including layoffs, employment precarity, increasing demand for services, and challenges from remote service delivery (AAISA, 2021; ACS,

2021). As a result, mental health support along with organizational support for employees is essential for stress management, the overall health of employees, and the ultimate wellbeing of communities.

The HOTS survey captured areas of support regarding mental health supports and other factors that play into the mental health of employees in the workplace. Survey respondents' results indicate that front-line employees will need more mental health support from their agencies and leadership along with other measures that will decrease the level of stress such as being able to freely take time off work without added pressure.

The survey found that:

- 62.8% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my organization has well developed policy structures supporting work-life balance and mental health." (see *Figure 38*).

Figure 38

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their organization has well developed policy structures supporting work-life balance and mental health.

4.1%
10.7%
20.0%
22.3%
42.8%

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral
■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree
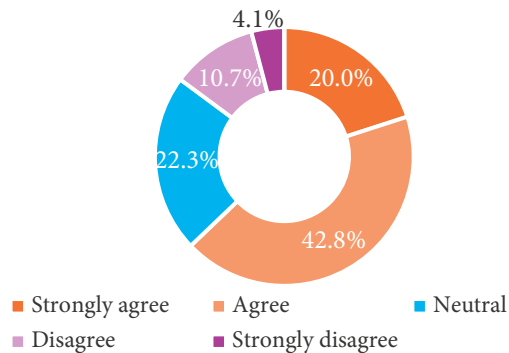
- 63.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my organization takes actions to support employees' mental health and offers adequate resources to help manage stress." (see *Figure 39*).

Figure 39

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their organization takes actions to support employees' mental health and offers adequate resources to help manage stress.

3.6%
10.6%
20.7%
22.3%
42.8%

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral
■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree
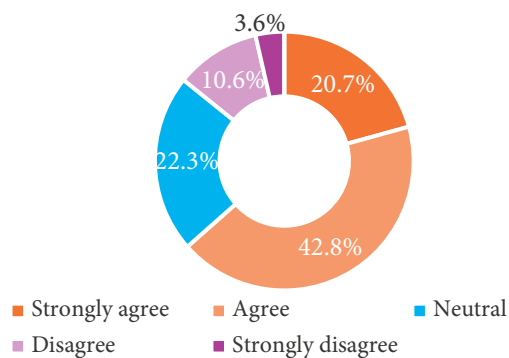
- 60.0% strongly agree or agreed with the statement "the stress level at my work is manageable and does not adversely affect my mental health and work productivity." (see *Figure 40*)

Figure 40

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their work is manageable and does not adversely affect their mental health and work productivity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
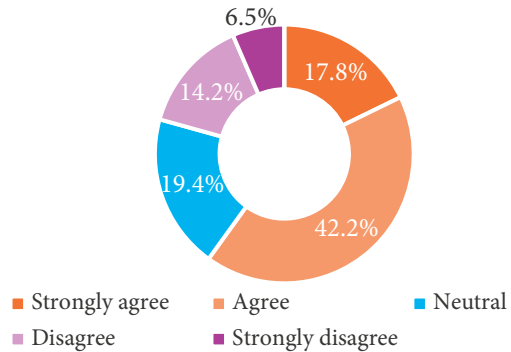
- 78.3% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel confident that I can take time off work when I am sick." (see *Figure 41*).

Figure 41

Percentage of respondents that indicated they are confident they can take time off work when they are sick.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
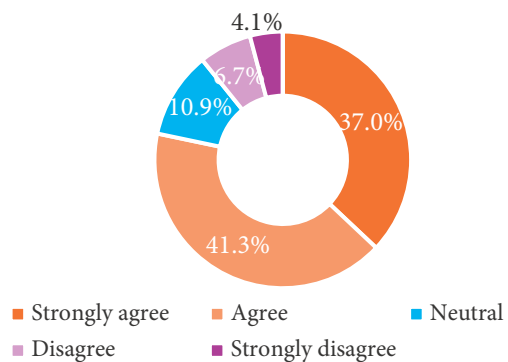
- 59.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I always feel confident that I can take vacations without any additional pressure on my work." (see *Figure 42*).

Figure 42

Percentage of respondents that indicated they are confident to take vacations without any additional pressure on their work.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
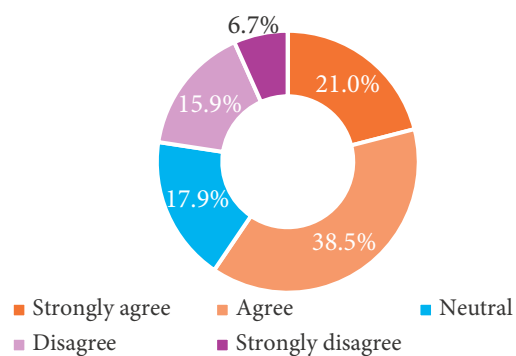
- 80.1% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "managers and organizational leadership encourage staff to use their time off." (see *Figure 43*).

Figure 43

Percentage of respondents that indicated that their managers and organizational leadership encourage staff to use their time off.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
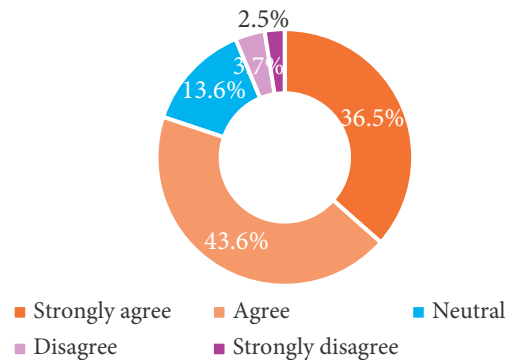
Akin to findings in AAISA's Settlement and Integration Survey (2021) and the Association of Canadian Studies (ACS) (2021) survey which illustrates the surge in demand for services amongst newcomer-serving agencies, HOTS survey respondents reported increased workload due to increased service demands from newcomers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has resulted in front-line workers working long hours while often taking on additional work off the side of their desks due to decreased capacity. One respondent expressed:

> *"Without a doubt the pandemic has impacted the nature of our work and the way we perform it and interact with clients. The pandemic impact on agency employees has been felt in understaffing and lack of clarity and transparency in the communication from senior leadership. Media and communications prepared for public consumption do not always reflect the lived reality and experiences of front-line staff. Federal sector directives related to the pandemic do not necessarily correlate with provincial messaging and local agency management. It's been a confusing and stressful time for clients and front-line staff and the physical and mental effects of the pandemic have had a significant impact on us all."*

While the pandemic has largely impacted and increased the need for more resources for the community, the settlement and integration sectors' experience predate implications brought on by the pandemic. This is supported by relevant data from the *Alberta Annual Settlement and Integration Sector Survey* which aims to understand current funding gaps across the province. Since 2018, agencies across Alberta reported that they are serving more newcomer clients, especially undocumented individuals, temporary residents, refugee claimants, and other community members, even though they are rarely funded to serve them by the sectors' largest funder, IRCC.

Although some organizations have training on how to manage and support their teams, respondents noted that some areas may have been overlooked as the pressures from the pandemic are greater than expected. One respondent conveyed:

"My workplace leadership have undergone extensive training in how to better manage staff over the past five years, however, the pandemic has revealed major areas that have been overlooked. This includes providing adequate mental health supports that consider trauma-informed teaching practices for all instructors. If this is not incorporated into our daily work lives, instructors will crumble, and our students and clients will suffer. I hope this will be taken seriously so our sector can flourish."

From the qualitative responses (sample total of 158), 9% of respondents highlighted the need for more mental health supports for staff. For example, respondents felt that management mishandled the mental health of their staff. In particular, one respondent noted that:

"There needs to be more understanding of stress management and people's mental health and personal needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues arose and were often mishandled because our team was treated like this was any other year, and administration failed to recognize the toll the pandemic was taking on staff. More support needs to be given to administration to understand how to manage a team under extreme stress."

When mental health supports are available for employees, respondents indicated that they have limited time to meaningfully utilize these supports due to their workload. A respondent stated:

"I receive notice of mental health and wellbeing opportunities, but I have no time to attend or learn because of my workload. This is my biggest concern."

Without effective mental health supports in place, a genuine interest in relieving work stresses of employees, and time-off without increased work capacity, employees in the settlement and integration sector will experience physical and mental health problems, which have the potential to lead to burnout and other deleterious impacts. One respondent communicated:

"This last year and a half has been really, really hard. The constant change and pressure to keep up has taken its toll and there is even more change coming our way in the months to come. I have given it my all, but I am very close to burning out. I don't want to leave my organization, but I would like to be able to take a leave and focus on me for a few months and then come back to my current position with no repercussions."

Interestingly, when comparing satisfaction in relation to position types, instructors were more likely to indicate lower levels of agreement with statements regarding their agencies' well developed policy structures supporting work-life balance and mental health (27.7% of all respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed are instructors as shown in *Figure 44*).

Figure 44

Percentage of respondents who expressed agreement regarding their organization's well developed policy structures supporting work life balance and mental health by position type.
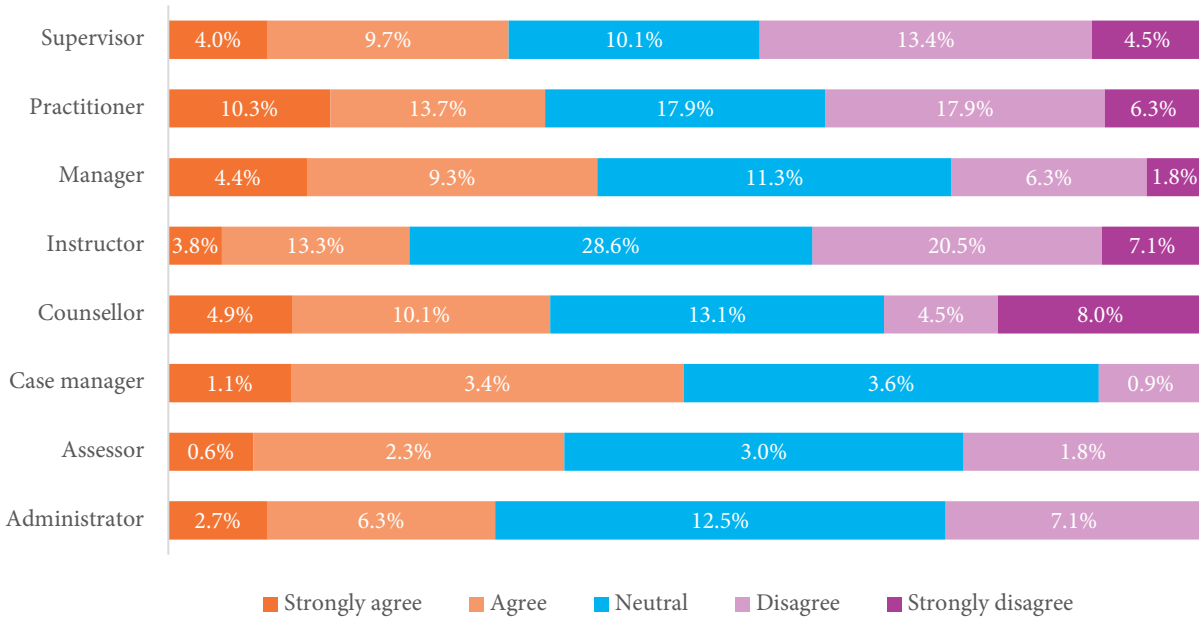
Instructors were also more likely to indicate lower levels of agreement with statements regarding actions taken by their agency to support employees' mental health (15.8% of all respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed are instructors see *Figure 45*).

Figure 45

Percentage of respondents who expressed agreement regarding their organization's actions to support employee mental health by position type.
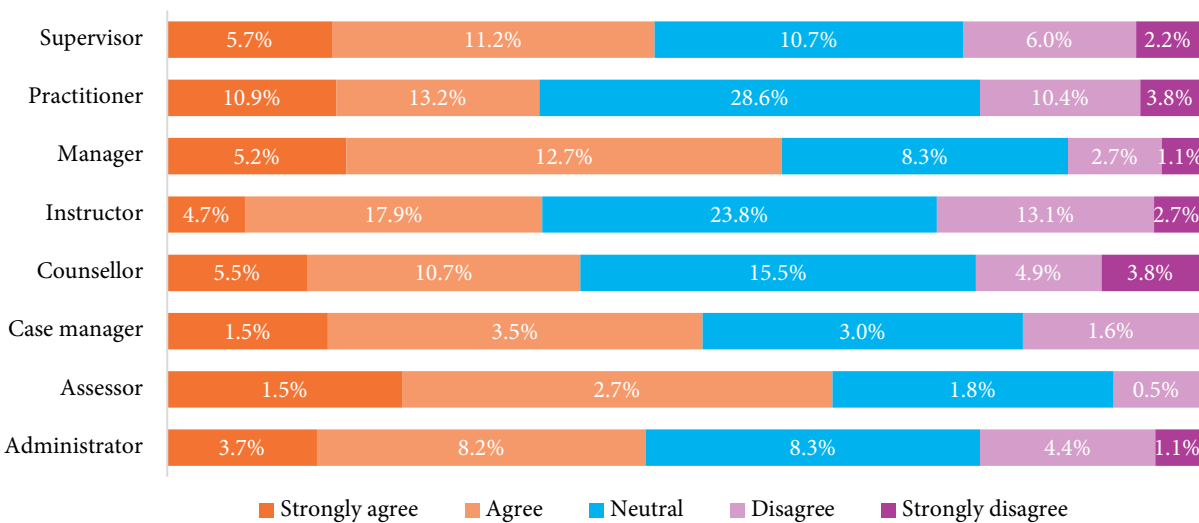
Additionally, instructors were also more likely to note that the stress level at their work adversely affects their mental health and work productivity (27.0% of instructors strongly disagreed or disagreed *Figure 46*),

Figure 46

Percentage of respondents who indicated that their stress level is manageable and does not adversely impact their mental health and work productivity by position type.

Position	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Supervisor	4.0%	10.0%	11.6%	11.5%	2.6%
Practitioner	9.1%	15.5%	19.2%	15.4%	5.1%
Manager	4.2%	6.9%	15.8%	10.3%	2.6%
Instructor	3.8%	15.7%	20.5%	13.5%	13.5%
Counsellor	3.5%	10.8%	14.4%	9.0%	4.5%
Case manager	1.1%	3.1%	4.1%	1.3%	0.6%
Assessor	1.5%	2.2%	2.7%		
Administrator	2.4%	6.2%	11.6%	7.7%	2.6%
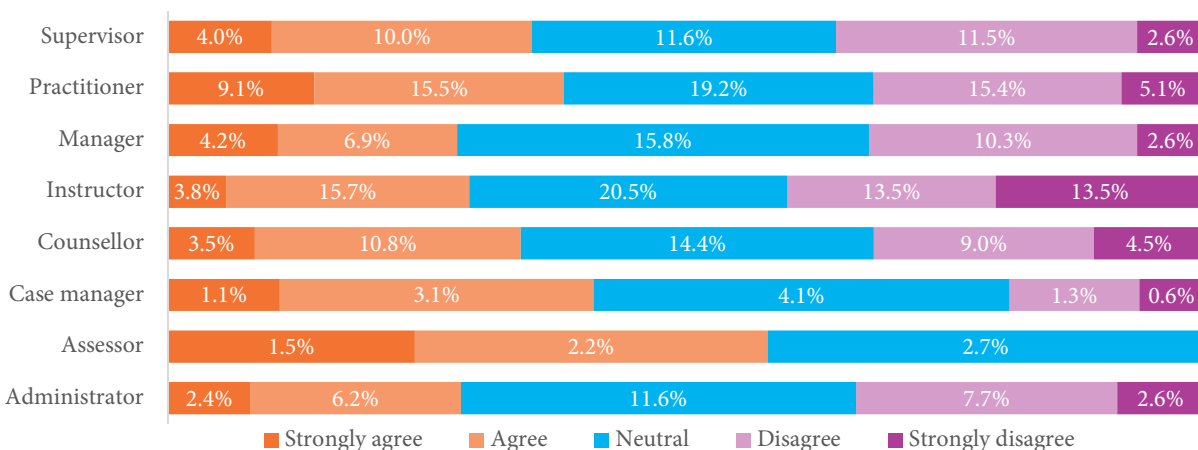
This trend continued when asked about their confidence in taking time off, where instructors were more likely to note that they do not feel confident in taking time off work when they are sick (44.4% of instructors strongly disagreed or disagreed as shown in *Figure 47*).

Figure 47

Percentage of respondents who expressed that they are confident in taking time off work when they are sick by position type.

Position	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Supervisor	8.0%	6.1%	11.0%	7.4%	2.5%
Practitioner	12.8%	11.7%	18.3%	7.4%	7.4%
Manager	6.5%	7.3%	6.1%	3.7%	4.9%
Instructor	6.1%	11.2%	26.8%	25.9%	18.5%
Counsellor	6.8%	7.7%	15.9%	7.4%	2.5%
Case manager	1.7%	2.0%	6.1%	1.2%	
Assessor	1.5%	1.5%	1.2%	2.5%	
Administrator	3.9%	5.1%	14.6%	6.2%	2.5%
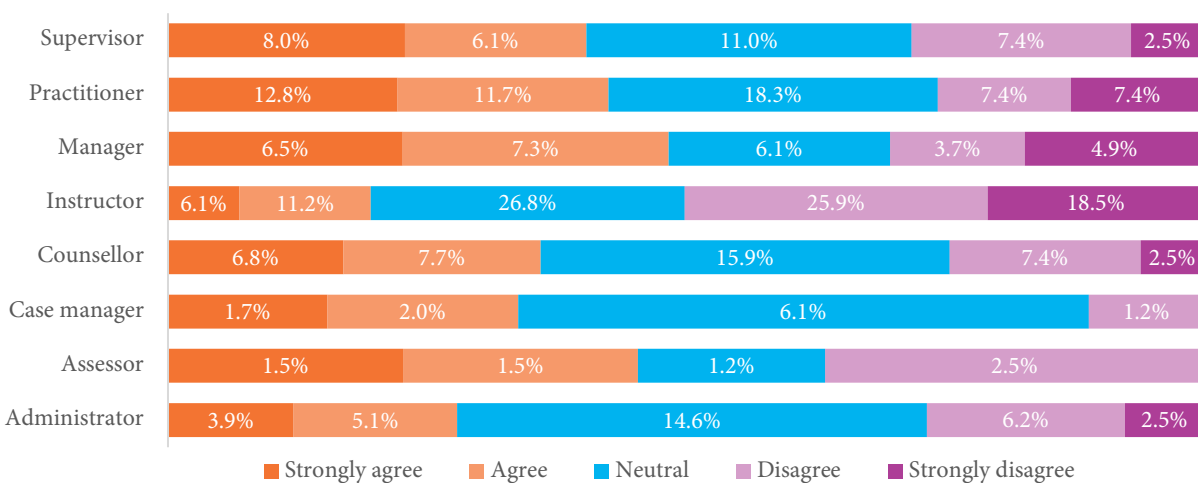
Although nearly 80% of all respondents noted that their leadership team encourages staff to use their time off (see *Figure 43*), there is still hesitancy to take time off work due to added pressures on front-line employees. Of all the respondents, instructors were also more likely to express that they do not feel confident taking vacation without additional pressure on their work (33.7% of all respondents who strongly disagreed or disagreed are instructors see *Figure 48*).

Figure 48

Percentage of respondents who expressed that they are confident taking vacation without additional pressure on their work by position type.
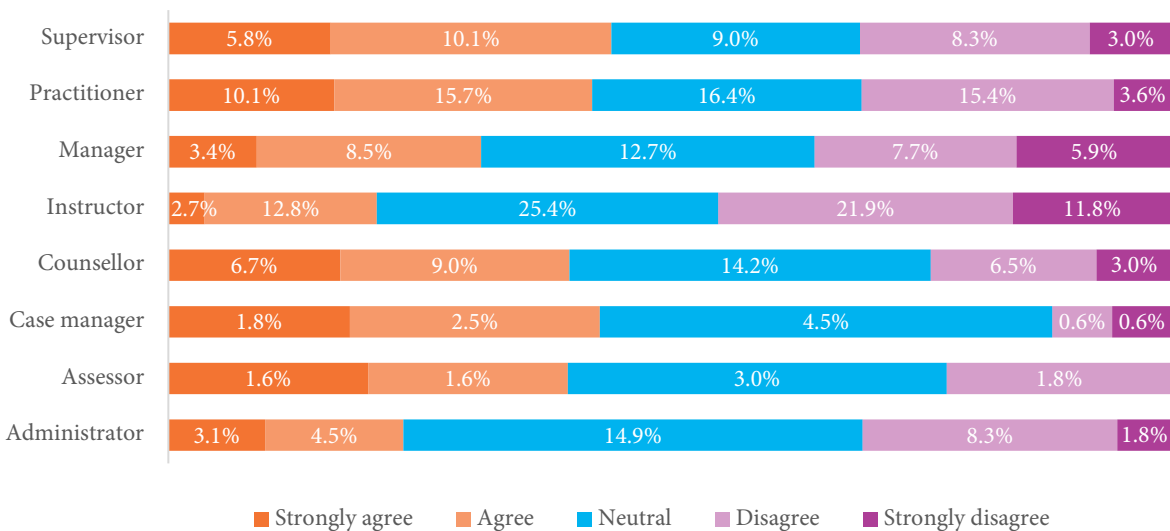
These survey findings are also confirmed by the qualitative data received from respondents who are instructors. Approximately 10% of all respondents who are also part of the Language Department (Language Assessment and Language Training positions) noted a variety of issues in the qualitative data including, funding concerns regarding instability, increased workload and stress, compensation related issues (salary and benefits), and the need for more mental health and DEI supports in the workplace. The adversities felt by instructors can be attributed to longstanding challenges as well as the added pressures from the pandemic, such as virtual language delivery, which has forced instructors to adapt in different ways to provide services to newcomers. For example, instructors have had to learn how to teach through virtual formats, navigate new software and technology, and build online supports for their clients, while also supporting newcomers who have digital literacy issues and barriers in accessing to technology. Regarding virtual language delivery, one respondent expressed:

> "*The present necessity to teach online is having a profound effect on my physical and mental health. Since COVID, I work almost all the time, and even have to do extra work wanted by my organization on my holidays. I don't have enough time to take care of my physical health through exercise and rest because of the stress of learning and implementing new technologies*

and the sedentary nature of online teaching. I may have to start working part-time because I just find this job so unhealthy."

While the pandemic has created new challenges, other challenges experienced by instructors prior to the pandemic continue to be factors that have not been alleviated and require further review. One respondent indicated:

> *"My concerns and stress level with LINC are partly systemic and partly program level. We need more quality, ready to use content and <u>Portfolio Based Language Assessments (PBLA)</u>. Instructors also need to be able to teach the same level for a number of terms in a row to avoid the burnout that accompanies having a full-time job creating curriculum on the spot and also teaching full-time."*

Another respondent noted that:

> *"A lot of the burdensome and superfluous pressures are not just from the organization; many are from national LINC or IRCC policies for LINC and their redundancy or incompatibility with the organization's processes. The LINC program is also so occupied with constant assessment that teaching is hindered. I'd say that is one of the biggest sources of unnecessary stress on most LINC teachers, and it also affects the quality of instruction and learning. The benefits of LINC (of which there are many) would be much better realized if we weren't expected to formally assess over 20 times in a 14-week term. We've been saying this for years."*

Among the lessons to be learned from these findings are the importance of assessing mental health support provided by agencies, along with decreasing other stressors that negatively impact employees. The results show that leadership-modelled behaviors that encourage a healthy workplace, such as taking time off and encouraging employees to take time off, are not sufficient and other actions need to be taken to combat current stressors. To effectively support the well-being of all staff, increase employee confidence with their organization regarding mental health supports, and ensure that all staff are well supported, agencies need to develop stronger and more robust policy structures and actively ensure their implementation and actualization.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT REGARDING LEADERSHIP

Leadership within the newcomer-serving sector is multidimensional and will vary depending on the experiences of leaders at each organization. While the goals of leadership can vary, leadership remains a large determinant of organizational health for all levels of staff. The HOTS survey explored the level of satisfaction with management and leadership amongst front-line settlement and integration employees. Broadly, the survey findings demonstrate that respondents have favorable perspectives towards their agencies' management and leadership. However, there are some areas where meaningful processes are needed to strengthen employees' trust in their leaders.

The findings show that:

- 71.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I believe our leadership team models our organizations mission, vision, and values." (see *Figure 49*).

Figure 49

Percentage of respondents that indicated that leadership models our organization's mission, vision, and values.

■ Strongly agree	■ Agree	■ Neutral
■ Disagree	■ Strongly disagree	
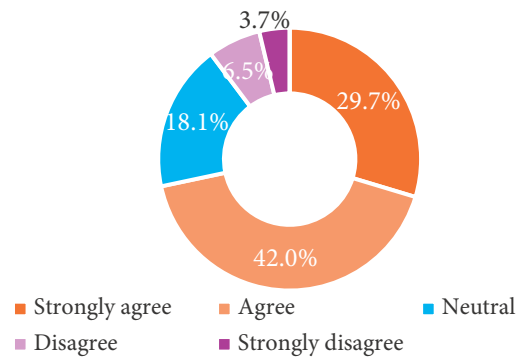
- 72.7% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "our leadership team keeps employees informed of decisions affecting them and the organization" (see *Figure 50*).

Figure 50

Percentage of respondents that indicated that leadership informs employees of decisions affecting them

■ Strongly agree	■ Agree	■ Neutral
■ Disagree	■ Strongly disagree	
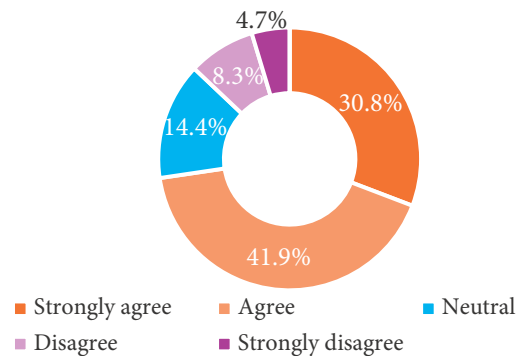
- 61.8% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "my manager/supervisor uses appropriate techniques to effectively resolve conflict among team members" (see *Figure 51*).

Figure 51

Percentage of respondents that indicated that leadership appropriately and effectively resolves conflict amongst team members

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
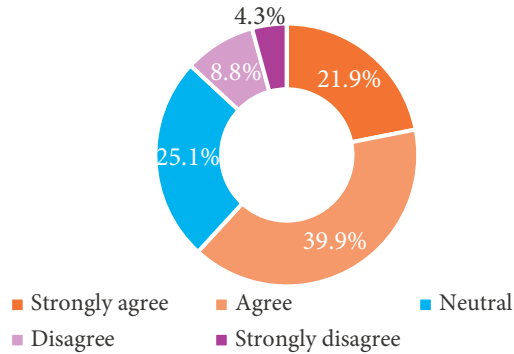
- 73.6% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel comfortable to approach my manager and share my concerns and needs", while 14.6% were neutral, showing signs of vacillation or fear of reprisal (see *Figure 52*).

Figure 52

Percentage of respondents who indicated that they are comfortable approaching their manager to share concerns and needs

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
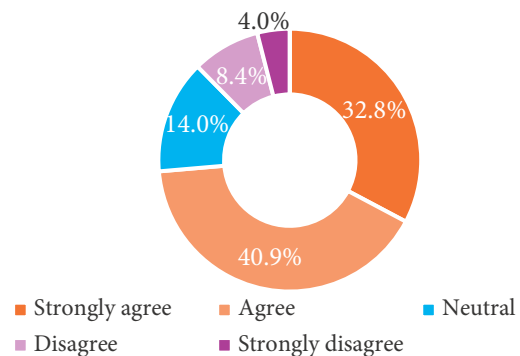
- While the survey data illustrates general satisfaction, the narrative portion provided additional nuance pertaining to front-line perceptions of management. For example, *Figure 50* shows lower levels of disagreement (12.8% of all respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed) to the statement, "our leadership team keeps employees informed of decisions affecting them and the organization." Although not reflective of all respondents, one notable comment stated that:

"Oftentimes decisions are made, and employees are expected to just go along with it. If there are instances where our opinions are asked it is more so out of appeasement than concern."

Additionally, comments from survey respondents also reveal that there is a disconnect between some front-line employees and leaders in management positions. One respondent noted:

> *"It feels as if the executive team is never hearing the front-line staff, and even opportunities to voice these concerns do not change anything. For instance, sometimes front-line staff will need to wait weeks for action items from executive staff while sometimes front-line staff will need to meet demands from the executive team in less than 24 hours turnaround time. This makes the organizational culture very exhausting to never experience any improvement."*

Ultimately, well-informed employees are connected to the organization, are more receptive to change, more motivated in their work, and are more likely to have an opportunity to express different opinions which can often facilitate organizational innovation, and thus improving organizational awareness remain a key priority of newcomer-serving agencies across the PNT.

When analyzing the qualitative data collected from the open-comment responses, some respondents expressed their concerns with some practices within their organization, such as a lack of confidentiality and favouritism, which some respondents cited as a factor that inhibits them from voicing their concerns. Respondents also noted that actions have not been taken to prevent behaviours that cause stress and concern among employees, leaving some employees feeling disenfranchised. For insight, one respondent indicated that:

> *"The workplace dynamics involve favouritism, understaffing, overworking, and bullying to keep people in line. In fact, just writing this worries me."*

Moreover, another respondent expressed:

> *"The manager of whom I report to has created a toxic work environment due to favoritism, lack of compassion, and abusing confidentiality. I have had many struggles with a member of my team not showing up to work, making excuses, and creating an unfair workload for the rest of the team. Many of these actions have gone completely against our policy manual. My trust has been betrayed and I no longer feel safe or appreciated for my years of dedication and hard work."*

Although many respondents are driven by passion and purpose for their work in the sector (see page 17), relying on this notion is not enough to retain and motivate talented employees. One respondent indicated that:

> *"Working in this sector is a privilege, however, it is not acceptable for upper management and leadership to take advantage of this mentality."*

With a higher level of stress reported throughout the survey, it is incumbent upon leaders to provide an environment that prioritizes the wellbeing of staff. While strong policies and procedures are essential to have in place within organizations, it is critical that these policies are meaningfully stewarded, embodied, and actualized by organizational leadership for all levels of

staff. This process can be supported through the creation of transparent and safe channels for staff to report concerns, regular check-ins with staff and leadership teams, and ongoing professional development and training for leaders and staff alike. Ultimately, ensuring the wellbeing of staff is essential as it supports long-term retainment, attainment, and promotion of talented staff which thereby contributes to the success of newcomer-serving agencies and the clients they serve.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES: REASONS TO LEAVE

The survey sought to understand the future of front-line staff within their organization and the overall newcomer-serving sector more broadly. The survey asked respondents if they plan to stay at their current job for at least the next 2-5 years, in which 69.2% indicated they plan to stay, 12.8% do not plan to stay, and 18.1% were neutral (see

Figure 53). To further clarify respondents' intentions and reasons for leaving their current positions, participants were asked to identify those reasons that would compel them to leave their current position. As shown in *Figure 55,* 41.8% indicated that their funding context is too uncertain, followed by their level of compensation and benefits not satisfying their skills and efforts. Moreover, when participants were asked if the expectations of funders align with the realities of their work, 18.1% said it did not (see *Figure 54*).

Figure 53

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they plan to stay in their current job at least for the next 2-5 years.
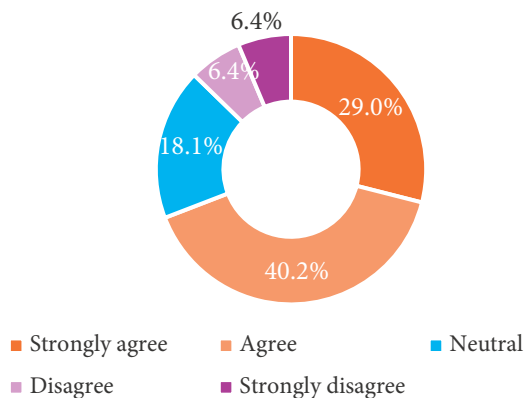
Figure 54

Percentage of respondents that indicated that they believe the expectations of funders align with the realities of their work.
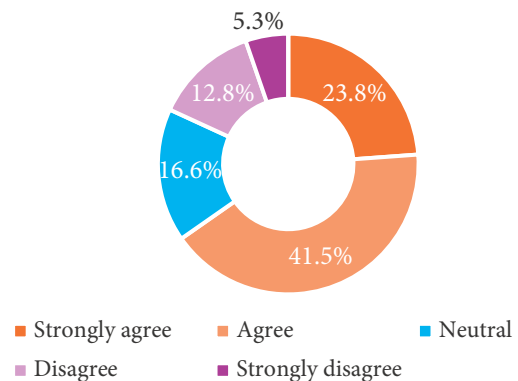
Figure 55

Top indicated reason(s) for leaving current role within the next 2-5 years by percentage of respondents.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT: LOOKING AHEAD

To better understand and steward the health of the newcomer-serving sector, the HOTS survey sought to understand potential priorities for improvement pertaining to organizational capacity, leadership, compensation, and funding, with the findings in this report primarily centring around funding challenges and organizational capacity to the detriment of employees in the sector. Respondents noted that employment stability, general workplace culture, atmosphere, sense of employee belonging, compensation (including salary rates and benefits, such as health and pension), and professional development opportunities should be among the top priorities for improvement in the sector (see *Figure 56*).

Figure 56
Priorities for improvement by percentage of respondents.
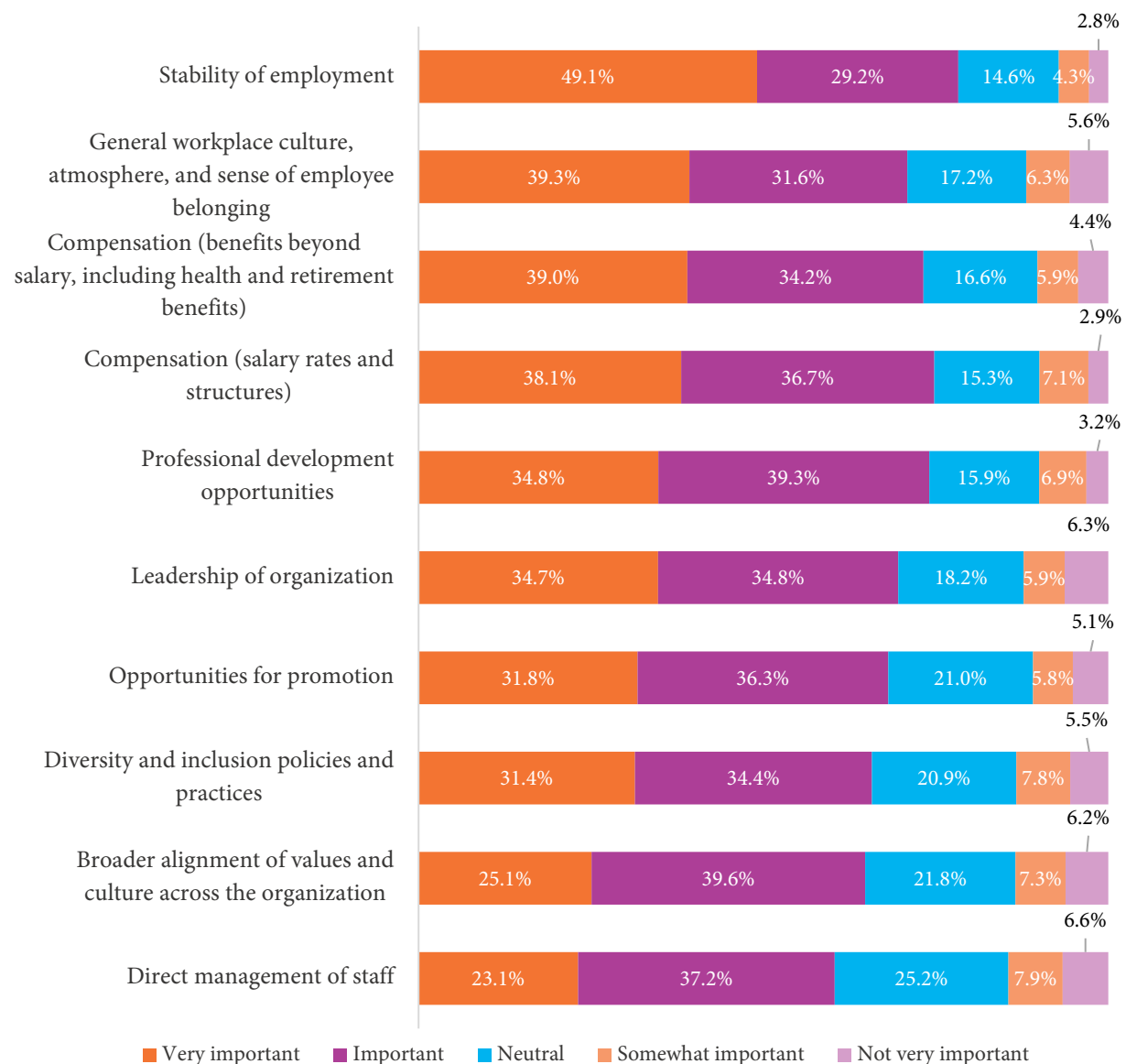
Survey respondents indicated that the top priority for improvement for the settlement and integration sector is stability of employment, which directly relates to stability of funding. IRCC funds settlement services with eligibility restricted to permanent residents that support newcomers to settle and adapt to life in Canada and is the primary funder of immigrant settlement and integration services in Canada through its Settlement Program (IRCC, 2017). IRCC also funds the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) to meet the resettlement needs of Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) after arrival in Canada through financial support and essential services. Each year, the National Settlement Funding Formula determines the level of funding for each province (with the exception of Quebec) based on the share of immigrants in each province and territory, and a capacity building amount for each jurisdiction (Braun, 2019). For this reason, agencies that primarily rely on funding from IRCC for these services have fluctuating funds that may work against their organizational stability. While IRCC is the largest funder for agencies to provide essential newcomer-services based on incoming landing rates, the responsibility of employee health and well-being remains at the purview of agencies as they are employers rather than IRCC. Additionally, IRCC funding does not extend to temporary residents, and as indicated earlier on page 41, many agencies serve more newcomer clients than they are funded to serve, often through diversified funding strategies. With the dramatic increases over the years in temporary entrants to Canada (Esses et. al., 2021), this trend may present a larger challenge for agencies providing more services than they have the capacity to serve newcomers who require services.

IRCC data reveals a decline in funding for newcomer-serving agencies across Canada from 2019 to 2021 with a slight increase in 2021 to 2022 budget year. In 2019-2020, IRCC stated that it funded over $774 million to over 500 newcomer-serving agencies to serve almost 550,000 unique clients, representing a 5% increase over 2018-2019 (IRCC, 2020). An internal memo reveals that in 2020-2021, IRCC national budget allocation for settlement funding was $741.6 million (El-Assal, 2021). For budget year 2021-2022, IRCC allocated $784.4 million (a total of 5.8% increase from budget year 2020-2021) (El-Assal, 2021). Based on the National Settlement Funding Formula, IRCC determined the 2021-22 allocations calculated from immigrant landings in each province and territory in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The internal memo specifies that Alberta would be allocated $124.1 million, which is a decrease of 2.7% from the previous budget due to a decline in landing rates in the province; Manitoba saw a slight increase of 0.2% from the previous budget year totalling $46.6 million; and Saskatchewan would be allocated $41.3 million, which is a slight increase of 1% from the previous budget year (El-Assal, 2021). Although Manitoba and Saskatchewan did not see further declines in funding, Alberta settlement providers may have scaled back their operations to the detriment of front-line workers which may have included laying off staff and a reduction in overall capacity.

The reliance on funding from one funder creates greater precarity for settlement workers with low job security, limited opportunities for advancement, and unclear career paths which creates a challenge for settlement workers. Some agencies have diversified their funding through provincial and municipal government contributions, community foundations, private sector funding, and

self-generated funding through social enterprises (Esses et al., 2021). However, it is unclear whether this has had a positive impact on settlement workers as many are continued to be tied to primary funding from IRCC. Low wages within the sector pose a significant risk for greater turnover rates among employees that are passionate and dedicated to helping newcomers.

Throughout the survey, several respondents provided insightful feedback to funding uncertainties within their organization and its impact, which have often been coupled with the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. There have been several challenges that have changed the dynamic of organizations serving newcomers, including the increase in demand for services, the changing needs of newcomers primarily due to digital literacy and accessibility, the persistent need for mental health service needs for newcomers, and challenges inherent to smaller organizations with lower fiscal capacity (AAISA, 2021; ACS, 2021). The impact of limited funding on organizations results in variety of intersecting challenges for staff in the newcomer-serving sector which are further discussed in the following sections.

Impact on Front-line Staff Mental Health

The detrimental mental health impacts of funding instability underpinned many survey responses and is thus a key factor in the overall health of front-line settlement and integration employees. With staff consistently reliant on contracts that are often not permanent, uncertainty for retaining their position is a constant worry for many employees within the sector. In turn, this often impacts staff morale and their mental health due to the lack of stability in funding. One respondent stated:

> "The constant lack of funding is very stressful. We are always told to take care of our mental health, but that is impossible when we are always scared of losing our job because of reduced funding."

Another respondent expressed worry for their current hourly position:

> "I have recently started and am on an hourly wage until other funding can hopefully be secured. This uncertainty creates a sense of unknown and perpetual anxiety."

Decrease in Organizational Capacity Leading to Employee Burnout

Survey respondents reported an increase in their workload and believe they are being overworked as a result of funding instability. Often, funding restrictions and uncertainty have a direct impact on organizational capacity which ultimately trickles down to front-line employee workload. In alignment with this, survey respondents expressed concern regarding overworking and underpaying staff as a direct result of funding constraints, which can lead employees to burnout, health issues, a move away from the sector, and resentment towards the sector. A respondent shared that:

> "The lack of funding stability is the biggest factor in deciding whether to stay or leave. This is a sector that attracts the most diverse group of people, but even in a sector that we feel safe in we are still relegated to the low paying positions. This should be the sector that leads in equity,

but it is not. The workload we are expected to do is unhealthy and while we don't talk about it enough, we see how often people burnout."

Employee burnout can result in physical and mental health problems, which are associated with decreased job performance, increased absenteeism, high turnover leading to lower levels of organizational commitment, decreased productivity, and reduced client outcomes (OCASI, 2019). Another respondent noted that:

"Compensation is the biggest issue within sector, along with the amount of work from front-line staff to upper management. The IRCC funding formula and constant fluctuations in the budget contributes to high turnover in the sector. The sector and its workers at all levels are stressed out and are always doing more for less. Compensation must be in line with other professions with similar competencies. I think agencies can do only so much in terms of compensation and they are doing the best they can to satisfy and reasonably pay staff."

Another respondent expressed that:

"The chronic underfunding means that staff is overloaded with no expectations of improvement."

As a direct result of funding instability, it can be difficult for organizations to recruit and retain staff due to challenges related to lack of career mobility within their organization and the broad sector, non-competitive compensation levels, and demanding workloads coupled with decreased staff capacity to deliver programs or services. Additionally, as noted earlier, the lack of professional development opportunities available within organizations, and lower wages in relation to comparable sectors can result in employee burnout. As shown by the earlier findings of the HOTS survey (see page 17), the newcomer-serving sector is comprised of passionate staff who find immense value alignment in their organizations and their daily work. However, taken in conjunction, the impacts of funding instability can ultimately lead to a decreased sense of belonging within the organization, which will inevitably contribute to attrition of talented, passionate staff which poses immense risk to the expertise, innovation, and level of service within the sector.

ASPIRATIONS FOR THE SECTOR

The HOTS regional survey results provide AAISA and the newcomer-serving sector with a wealth of information on next steps, improvements, and new opportunities to better support the sector and its employees. Survey findings provided insightful guidance on how the sector can move forward to fill the gaps present and therefore require greater rumination amongst sector leaders and other stakeholders to meaningfully actualize. As an important step towards consistent deliberation on improving the newcomer-serving sector for both employees and newcomers, the following section provides some key recommendations based on the findings, which are broken down for funders and other stakeholders, and the newcomer-serving sector.

These recommendations require a collective effort amongst the newcomer-serving sector, and funders and other stakeholders to implement practices that shift the status quo. It is important to highlight that while these recommendations are separated to serve as a standalone recommendation based on a topic, many of the recommendations cross-pollinate and mutually support one another. Aspirations like these serve as a way to improve the future of the sector, as well as reduce the precarity of work for racialized, as well as women, employees. The key themes identified in this report and the gaps present make a compelling argument on the direction and vision for this sector. Consequently, the aspirations center on organizational and sectoral policy change to enhance the capacity of the sector to serve newcomers and better support communities across Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IRCC AND OTHER FUNDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

1. **Predictable, flexible, and stable long-term funding that ensures benefits, pension, a steady salary for long-term employment, and professional development for all sector employees.**

As the survey findings exemplify, the current context of front-line service delivery has caused a looming crisis where sector staff are experiencing high levels of stress and burnout. The sustainability of the sector is reliant on funding opportunities achieved through collaboration amongst funders and the sector. It is more valuable and beneficial to provide organizations with long-term and flexible funding opportunities that encompass all associated expenses as it will provide security, stability, and increased client and organizational outcomes. The funding flexibility agreements that IRCC provided to contracted service providers at the onset of the pandemic enabled the rapid transition from in-person services to virtual services. The learnings from the pandemic are a testament to the changes that IRCC and other funders should make to allow service providers the flexibility to transfer unexpended revenue from one year to another as it would benefit both funders and the sector (Esses et al., 2021).

It is recommended that funders and stakeholders, in collaboration with the newcomer-serving sector, consider the following when funding agreements are discussed:

- Review the National Settlement Funding Formula to reflect the changing realities and implications of the pandemic.
- Provide flexibility and creative freedom to newcomer-serving agencies to redesignate their funding according to their needs through increased ability to transfer funds across budget lines as agencies see fit, and the ability to transfer any unexpended revenue from one fiscal year to another within their contribution agreement.
- IRCC to continue providing agencies with grant opportunities that are less restrictive and have less reporting requirements. In the spirit of flexibility and agency autonomy, grants can be provided as a supplement to contribution agreements to better meet emergent needs and changing agency realities.

- A greater level of transparent collaboration between the sector and funders to redefine priorities that reflect current sector needs and challenges.
- Funding opportunities should robustly account for all costs, including the health and well-being of staff. Benefits should provide secure and stable employment through compensation that allows for long-term job security, consistent pay structures that reflect skills, tenure, and the cost of living, and retirement plans and options.
- Incentivize agencies by setting standards and requirements in funding proposals and opportunities that promote a healthy sector such as competitive compensation packages (salary and benefits), RRSP and pension contributions for employees, leadership that represents the population being served, collaboration with other agencies that aim to reduce duplication, and overall good employment practices. As IRCC and other funders are not employers of the settlement sector, this recommendation will promote organizational well-being beyond the delivery of services and encourage collaboration amongst settlement agencies rather than promote competitiveness.

Additionally, it is essential that the following considerations underpin all funding agreements to further support the health of agencies and staff:

- Funding opportunities should provide adequate training and professional development opportunities to support front-line employees in achieving their goals and the goals for newcomers identified by the government.
- As part of professional development, provide targeted funding for digital literacy training and digital equipment to settlement service providers in all regions, including small centres and rural communities.
- Fund agencies to develop multi-year anti-racism strategic plans and activities.
- Prioritize mental health needs by increasing the availability of a variety of resources that go beyond supporting the mental health needs of settlement staff, such as increasing wages, addressing systemic issues, making workloads more equitable, and creating safe workplaces.

"Our sector has focused a lot on the health and well-being of clients often to the detriment of the employees. Funding does not often support the areas that need support or enough people to do the work asked of us. More security and stability in this field is needed. Minimum levels of support need to be determined and maintained regardless of funding to ensure adequate training, support and overall health of employees in the field in order to support newcomers in achieving the goals they have for themselves and navigate the paths forward with them leading the way."

2. Increase the professionalization of the newcomer-serving sector.

Professionalization of the newcomer-serving sector is a highly coveted goal for many working in the sector. Professionalization is defined by the process of setting and applying objective standards for the training, accreditation, job performance, and compensation of settlement workers, and ultimately the accreditation and operation of settlement service agencies. The Canadian National Settlement Service Standards Framework defines settlement workers as "anyone who works in the

settlement sector, whether giving direct services or in a supporting role (e.g., management, receptionist)" (CCR, 2000, 29). As shown throughout this report, front-line workers in the newcomer-serving sector deliver several services. However, there are no clear professional standards with a regulated body that provide employees in the sector with clear roles, duties, responsibilities, ethics and accountability, and compensation standards or benefits.

Newcomers are a diverse group of people comprising of different ages, genders, ethnic cultures, race, socio-economic status, varying physical and mental health, and differing experiences, who require curated services, yet front-line settlement workers are expected to deliver services to all newcomers without specific accreditation or training. Moreover, settlement workers are also often expected to provide specialized services that support the settlement and integration of newcomers in Canada's social, economic, cultural and political life (Bhatta, 2017). As shown in this report, a large proportion of front-line workers in the sector are immigrants who bring forth unique skillsets that advance the newcomer-serving sector and Canadian society positively. Professionalizing the sector provides intersectional and holistic recognition of the breadth of credentials and competencies that settlement and integration staff possess, such as lived experience and foreign credentials. However, in the same context, there are also shortcomings to specialized services that require additional training, such as specialized services that deal with trauma and violence. Professionalizing the sector through the expansion of professional development opportunities would address the need for training that further prepare front-line workers on how to move forward in these situations and would ensure consistent competencies across front-line staff in alignment with standardized competencies. Additionally, standardizing roles and positions across the newcomer-serving sector will ensure consistency in salaries, job specific duties, associated competencies, and career trajectories.

IRCC can support agencies towards professionalizing the sector by:

- Creating a national accreditation body consisting of settlement and integration experts with mandatory Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) training and would certify practitioners to maintain high-quality standards in the sector.
- Investing in Umbrella partners to digitalize professional development opportunities for sector employees.

Other funders and stakeholders can support the sector towards professionalization by:

- Developing funding streams for agencies to access professional development dollars for their employees.

There are number of benefits that will stem from professionalizing the newcomer-serving sector including addressing the many gaps and challenges that have been identified in this report. Professionalizing the newcomer-serving sector through an enhanced set of standards that include compensation standards or benefits, clear roles, duties, responsibilities, professional development

opportunities, and ethics and accountability, would lead to higher-quality services to newcomers, reduce turnover rates in settlement work, and reduce the precarity of work in the settlement sector.

"An educational program and registration in a settlement services institution similar to how social workers have to meet certain educational qualifications would really increase job satisfaction and sense of pride working in the settlement sector as a practitioner."

3. Bolster data collection on human resources, DEI, and labour market data in the newcomer-serving sector.

A challenge realized throughout the design, collection, and analysis of the HOTS survey was the lack of standardized data collection focused on the workforce in the newcomer-serving sector. While there are several surveys collected amongst newcomer-serving agencies and Umbrella organizations, these efforts do not fully capture the data void in the sector and do not provide a comprehensive image of sector employee experience, demographic information, compensation, and educational profile of the sector. Data collection on human resources, DEI, and labour market data allows for strategic planning and identification of key gaps, such as pay equity gaps. Additionally, data collected allows agencies to understand how policies are impacting the sector, challenges facing the sector, along with a long-term outlook. Data figures and key facts illuminate the experiences of the newcomer-serving sector and data analysis play an integral role in exploring how decision-makers can shift policies to benefit the sector. It is recommended that the following is considered for better data collection:

- To bolster data collection amongst sector professionals, IRCC in partnership with other funders will benefit from investing in sector technological capacity that will in turn improve efficiency of programs and services.
- The HOTS survey can be further developed to evolve into a standing NSIC item for the purpose of monitoring and assessing the sectors' performance as it relates to its accomplishments, challenges, opportunities, and sustainability in an ever-changing environment.
- An all-encompassing recommendation that would create better data collection and awareness for programs and services is greater transparency and accountability of the sector. The development of communication channels or opportunities that create dialogue between front-line staff and funders, more specifically IRCC, would assist in identifying capacity for a program or service and knowledge mobilization on effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Additionally, updating technology, software, and information management systems will allow the sector to better measure data.

"It's important that we have a general strategy for this sector where we could measure the outcomes and watch the transparency. Also, it's important to have a clear and easy channel to deliver our suggestions and get feedback, especially when it comes to suggestions that would improve the efficiency of the work and reduce the cost at the same time."

"I think there are simple solutions to alleviating some of the stress within the sector, namely in the area of having more standardized, well-communicated practices for data collection that are widely shared among all service providers as opposed to individual organizations having to develop their own practices. This consumes valuable time and effort that could be dedicated to more direct client services, and the training of staff on these concrete practices/strategies. As well, more explicit, direct communication from IRCC regarding key changes to programs that affect our delivery of services would also alleviate stress as would iCARE data collection reflecting IRCC reporting requirements. The work we do is so valuable and life changing. Having more consistent, well-articulated and shared structures and methods of communication would enhance our ability to meet and surpass the many needs and challenges of immigrants."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECTOR

1. Diversify funding sources.

As there are increases in demand for settlement and integration services, along with Canada's ambitious 2021-2024 Immigration Levels Plan that will be welcoming 431 645 new permanent residents in 2022, 447 055 in 2023, and 451 000 in 2024 (IRCC, 2022), creating robust, sustainable funding mechanisms are critical for the overall health of the newcomer-serving sector organization and communities at large. Although much of the funding for permanent residents will be provided by IRCC, additional pressures will be put on newcomer-serving agencies to provide essential services to support the successful settlement and integration for newcomers. Nevertheless, receiving bulk funding from one funder has its disadvantages by creating employment precarity for employees and hindering the long-term sustainability of the organization. Therefore, developing a sustainable funding strategy would benefit the longevity of newcomer-serving agencies, promote employment stability for staff, facilitate increased flexibility to respond to emerging needs, and allow organizations to expand their impact on targeted newcomer populations.

It is recommended that the newcomer-serving agencies and other stakeholders in the settlement and integration sector:

- Seek new funding opportunities from community foundations, private sector funding, and strategies through social innovation and social finance models. In particular, social innovation and social finance models have been a focus for the federal government in that it has developed the Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy for social purpose organizations across Canada (Government of Canada, 2021).
- Coordinate and collaborate with other newcomer-serving agencies to share best practices in applying for and receiving funding from diverse funders and organizations to support broad knowledge mobilization and capacity building.

- Connect with the private sector and diverse community organizations to seek opportunities for partnership and potential funding opportunities while also supporting cross-sectoral learning.

Newcomer-serving agencies can benefit and take advantage of these opportunities and funding initiatives by prioritizing a change to their funding models and approaches. On a programmatic level, diversifying organizational funding can allow service providers to do the following:

- Expand their services to clients' ineligible for IRCC-funded services, such as temporary residents and immigrants that have recently received their citizenship (see page 41 for more information on clients served by agencies and how much they are funded to serve).
- Support specialized programming such as digital literacy needs, mental health services, domestic violence resources, services for vulnerable populations such as women and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.
- Support flexibility of programs in response to emerging needs.
- Facilitate broad opportunities for innovation, support employee retention, and promote organizational longevity and growth through a variety of initiatives. For example, it will allow agencies to develop compensation plans customized to organizational needs and internal structures, employee promotions, and wage increase. Additionally, agencies have more organizational flexibility to improve their staff well-being by providing or increasing health benefits, offering retirement and pension plans, increasing investments for professional development opportunities, and increasing mental health resources

Taken in combination, funding diversification is a key priority in supporting the health of the sector at all levels.

"Dependency on only one major funder is a disadvantage to many organizations. Long-term stability is extremely important for employee goals."

"The lack of funding stability is the biggest factor in deciding whether to stay or leave, especially for those in management. This is a sector that attracts the most diverse group of people but even in a sector that we feel safe in we are still relegated to the low paying positions."

2. Build diversity, equity, and inclusion into the culture of the organization through policies, procedures, and training for all staff, including board members.

The newcomer-serving sector at its core is a sector that empowers newcomers and immigrants through several policies, initiatives, and programs for their employees, clients, and communities. The newcomer-serving sector also works with skilled immigrants and strives to accommodate their needs and remains a place that welcomes and utilizes their unique skills, and education to improve the level of service provided to newcomers. Moreover, as shown from the findings in *Figure 22*, employees within the sector also show higher levels of satisfaction to their level of policies and procedures that promote DEI within their agency. As a sector, the efforts to be diverse, inclusive, and equitable amongst employees and through programs and services, is a cause for celebration. However, research also shows a lack of diversity at the leadership or management level (Clarke &

Wan, 2011). Therefore, although the sector does well to promote and empower individuals within the sector, DEI is an area that requires continuous reflection and improvement to not only act as a vessel for learning opportunities but to promote and empower historically oppressed communities.

While Agencies in the PNT region should consider re-evaluating their agency priorities and policies with the following recommendations:

- Investing in a DEI professional to inform their leadership teams and staff about opportunities their agency could be undertaking to improve DEI within their agency. Encompassing this strategy are the prioritization of meeting the needs of people with disabilities. There are lessons learned from the pandemic that have shed light on accessibility gaps that agencies have had to decipher and implement solutions. Moving forward, strategies that have been utilized to meet the needs of people who do not fit the majority should be a central consideration to ensure accessibility. In this same context, agencies must prioritize and rethink how they utilize technology in accessible ways to meet the needs of their clients and of their employees.
- Ensure that the methods utilized to implement DEI are intersectional and all encompassing, but not performative. While there is a myriad of approaches to DEI, it is essential that these practices should centre the voices of marginalized folks, support Truth and Reconciliation, prioritize decolonization and anti-oppression, and consider all levels of the organization. These methods should regularly be evaluated and actively supported across the organization.
- Agencies should ensure that all policies and practices within their organization are implemented through a DEI lens, including, onboarding and human resources practices, managing day-to-day operation of agencies, liaising with funders, and speaking at, or organizing conferences that include and amplify voices from culturally diverse individuals.

The HOTS survey findings show that the sector has minimal Indigenous representation in the workforce. As a sector, this needs to be acknowledged and addressed as to why the sector does not have greater representation and Indigenous talent. One step towards greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the settlement and integration sector is by agencies committing to aligning their organization and advancing the process of reconciliation through the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission outlines that all actors in society, including governments, large and small corporations, businesses, and non-profit organizations have a responsibility to adopt the reconciliation framework. The reconciliation framework can be created and implemented into organizational policies and practices, including human resources. Large or small steps that centre truth and reconciliation are an essential part of healing and trauma endured by Indigenous people. Agencies are encouraged to prioritize learning and meaningful action in this regard through searching for Indigenous organizations and professionals that can help organizations understand their role in reconciliation through education, models and frameworks that centre Indigenous inclusion. This work should

centre Indigenous knowledge and experiences, provide robust and appropriate compensation for this work, and should be proactively stewarded in daily practice across all levels of the organization. Building models and frameworks centred on Indigenous inclusion may increase Indigenous talent to the sector which brings many benefits for employers and clients alike.

The benefits from hiring Indigenous peoples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Relationship building with local Indigenous communities (LaForme, 2021).
- Investing in Indigenous peoples to support and steward their invaluable talents and perspectives (LaForme, 2021).
- Contributing to reconciliation and improving inclusiveness for Indigenous peoples in the workforce (LaForme, 2021).
- Indigenous employees are more likely to promote a similar career path others where they feel included and valued (LaForme, 2021).
- Informs newcomers and the community at large about their role in advancing reconciliation.
- Fills the knowledge gap of newcomers about Indigenous culture, people, and reconciliation.

"It aches me to say that my organization's framework is one to maintain a status quo of exclusion and assimilation. The quantity of clients served is prioritized over the quality of service. The leadership and management team are not reflective of the served populations. Diversity is present in front-line work and unintegral positions of power."

3. Provide tangible and culturally sensitive mental health and wellbeing supports for all staff.

It is hardly a surprise that front-line workers in the newcomer-serving sector are experiencing increasing levels of stress and burnout in their current roles given the challenges aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in the findings of this report, current mental health supports are not addressing the needs of front-line settlement and integration employees due to varying degrees of gaps at play. The findings indicate that the sector can learn to embed mental health supports into the daily work practices to ensure mental health is integrated and prioritized.

Settlement and integration agencies are encouraged to implement the following recommendations:

- Leaders in the sector must proactively anticipate and address the mental health needs of front-line staff, such as burnout and vicarious trauma. Being mindful and aware of the challenges faced by front-line workers, such as the increase of work that go beyond their capacity, while also proactively providing supports to address these issues can increase mental health and employee morale.
- Leaders should embody practices and lead by example to encourage employees to seek support safely and meaningfully.
- To go beyond the informal practices that promise employees the support they need in their workplace, agencies can also benefit from formalizing mental health through organizational policy that highlight the differing needs and contexts of all employees.

- All mental health practices and solutions should recognize and address the diversity of staff through tailored, intersectional, and culturally competent mental health supports.

"There needed to be more understanding of stress management and people's mental health and personal needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Issues arose that I believe were mishandled because they were treated like this was any other year, or they were mishandled because administration did not recognize the toll the pandemic was taking on them and their own stress levels. More support needed to be given to administration to understand how to manage a team under extreme stress."

"This last year and a half has been really, really hard. The constant change and pressure to keep up has taken its toll and there is even more change coming our way in the months to come. I've given it my all, but I'm very close to burning out. I don't want to leave my organization, but I'd like to be able to take a leave and focus on me for a few months and then come back to my current position with no repercussions."

4. Leaders must embody and demonstrate the sector's values while supporting the development of future leaders within the sector.

In all sectors, leadership strategies play a critical role in promoting employee engagement and well-being at work. Although there are a multitude of leadership practices, no singular approach is effective in all situations and therefore leaders must embody the flexibility and competency to employ different strategies as needed. Given the findings in the HOTS survey on employee satisfaction regarding management, their mental health, and overall job satisfaction, it is vital that leaders across the newcomer-serving sector take note and implement changes within their organization to increase employee satisfaction.

With the significant stressors facing front-line workers in the sector that are often beyond the control of organizations (i.e., funding impacts, and compensation levels influenced by funding arrangements), it is imperative that leaders in the sector, including Board Members, explore, identify, and amend the factors contributing to dissatisfaction among their employees. For this to occur, leadership must prioritize the values inherent within the sector and embody this within their organization. Leading by example has a clear correlation to engaging employees and directly affects the culture of any organization. Organizations that are clear about their goals in serving newcomers, while also supporting their employees in the best way they can, affects the confidence of both newcomers in the quality of services they receive, and the confidence and wellbeing of settlement and integration staff.

From the survey findings, respondents noted that leadership development was a weakness within the newcomer-serving sector. Non-profit data demonstrates that the non-profit sector does not develop leadership from within, as compared to the for-profit sector, thus missing the opportunity to utilize this commitment to mission and provide employees with career advancement opportunities (Weisberg & Dent, 2016). Front-line workers hold a considerable amount of first-hand knowledge and experience that will be beneficial in leading the sector, rather than recruiting

leaders who do not have sector experience. Agencies are encouraged to implement the following recommendations within their organizations:

- Invest in succession planning that supports the development of leaders within the organization to increase employee satisfaction, morale, wellbeing, and sense of belonging. Succession planning and investment in leaders should take an all-encompassing approach that recognizes the strength in diversity, equity, and inclusion of all employees.
- Cultivate an environment that welcomes and celebrates diverse individuals through implementing and actively stewarding diversity, equity and inclusion in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of employees.
- Provide an environment that has continuous learning along with a succession plan that is built into the organization to increase the level of loyalty, stability and creates and environment where employees feel valued for their contributions and commitments (Ritchie, 2019).

Another area that requires greater attention amongst newcomer-serving agencies is the level of transparency within all levels of the organization. To support organizational health, it is essential that front-line employees are informed through robust, genuine, and consistent communication from leadership. An environment that prioritizes transparency facilitates the growth and development of front-line employees and fosters organizational buy-in and a broad culture of trust. Solutions that inform employees can include the following:

- Implementation of policies on human resources that build communication channels for all employees to voice concerns without fear of retribution, create opportunities for employees to voice their opinions and share their thoughts on organizational matters (employee-driven or collective decision-making rather than hierarchical decision-making).
- Show dedication to all staff by showing fairness in dealing with conflict and challenges within the organization.
- Foster an environment that prioritizes continuous learning.

Robust human resources policies built into the work environment ensures that employees are not inhibited from coming forward with concerns or complaints and cultivates a culture of trust that considers all matters honestly and genuinely.

"Working in this sector is a privilege, however, it is not okay for people in positions of power (upper management/leadership) to take advantage of this mentality. Compensation is important but having strong leaders that have the capacity and knowledge to lead staff is more important. We have leaders that do not take care of their staff and as a result, toxic workplaces and burnout increase at alarming rates. We need to look into how ineffective leaders are held accountable for the value and mission of the organization, not merely their personal agendas."

5. Implement innovative and inclusive approaches to work.

There are a wide range of methods to innovate within the workplace depending on the nature of work, and while a few methods are mentioned here, agencies are encouraged to evolve their approaches as they see fit to support the needs of their employees. Methods adopted by newcomer-serving agencies should prioritize the following strategies:

- A balance between work and life responsibilities while also taking into consideration the intercultural approaches to work. This recommendation should also encompass safe workspace that create inclusivity in which employees are empowered and comfortable to bring forward requests and ideas to utilize within their workspace.
- Employers are encouraged to provide opportunities on a regular basis for employees to communicate with senior leaders to highlight issues, co-create solutions, and promote innovation and professional development. These strategies bridge organizational hierarchy while creating a short communication channel to discuss issues in a confidential environment. Establishing communication amongst everyone in the workplace enables discussions that lead to greater understanding amongst each other and therefore builds a truly inclusive workplace that celebrates its diversity to enrich employees' lives, productivity, innovation, and creativity.

In the wake of the pandemic, all sectors have been compelled to rethink their strategies and provide innovative solutions to work while also meeting their respective demands. Strategies that have been adopted thus far and are recommended to continue to adapt to the changing workforce include the following:

- Remote work and virtual service delivery to clients, have been adopted by many settlement service providers. While these methods are now actualized and have resulted in successful implementation, effectiveness, and efficiency for both agencies and clients, it is reasonable to suggest that virtual work and service delivery will flourish and continue through hybrid delivery models into the future. A move towards hybrid-models of providing services has proven to be beneficial towards many newcomer clients, alleviating some home demands and lessening many barriers to service access to the diverse needs of clients (AAISA, 2021). It has created greater flexibility in working structures for employees in the sector without sacrificing the quality of work and productivity (Statistics Canada, 2021b) and has the potential to increase the diversity of employees. However, agencies must ensure that preferences for hybrid delivery models are expressed by their employees and fully align to their work expectations.

While service providers have addressed many of the emergency needs of their staff, there are lingering repercussions experienced by staff at all levels. For this reason, agencies can adopt other strategies that promote a healthy workforce. The following strategies can be employed by agencies to encourage innovation and move their organizations towards an inclusive workplace culture:

- Include employees in decision-making processes. Trust employees to provide feedback on important organizational matters, and programmatic reviews and discussions.
- Implement 360 reviews for leaders within the organization. A 360-leadership review offers employees within the organization to provide bottom-up feedback about their Executive Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and other leaders within their organization. It ensures performance evaluation is taken into consideration from all staff affected by leadership decisions and allows staff to communicate leadership performance as they may not otherwise have the opportunity to do so.
- Weave in decent work practices into the organization. Although decent work practices encompass a wide range of methods including financial rewards and benefits, they also encompass organizational practices and cultures. For example, providing staff with the capacity to plan their non-work activities in advance through decent scheduling promotes healthy work-life balance which can include flexible schedules and allowing staff to use their lieu time accordingly. Other strategies can include opportunities for advancement, processes for resolving conflicts, and encouraging a workplace culture of participation. These strategies can be found on the Ontario Nonprofit Network webpage which provides organizations with several resources to adopt decent work practices (ONN, 2020).
- Adopt practices that foster an inclusive and flexible workplace that promote and embrace cultural and religious diversity. For example, many workplaces have adopted a floating holiday policy that empowers employees to take time off for preferred holidays, religious observances, special events or personal wellbeing needs throughout the year.

A combination of innovative and inclusive approaches in the workplace is a form of indirect compensation that attract and retain employees (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2014). While innovative and inclusive approaches to work in the newcomer-serving sector will most immediately support employee satisfaction and organizational health, the benefits will ultimately reverberate to clients and Canadian society more broadly.

"The majority of organizations also need to place greater importance on supporting LGBTQ2+ clients and staff. Because many organizations were started with Christian values, key players in upper management often retain these values and avoid acknowledging or developing programs for these demographics."

"Funders and management alike need to acknowledge the changing nature of work and encourage more flexibility in employee schedules and greater work-life balance. Encourage employees to work from home part time after the pandemic if it's feasible to do so in their position, acknowledge that not everyone is comfortable having their cameras on in all Zoom meetings, and in general, acknowledge different lived experiences and expectations."

CONCLUSION

AAISA's *Health of the Newcomer-Serving Sector in the PNT Region* research project sought to examine the perspectives of front-line staff working within agencies in the newcomer-serving sector to better understand their employment experience, assess organizational strengths and challenges, as well as discern opportunities for growth. With 912 responses from across the PNT region, the results of the HOTS survey provide uniquely invaluable insight into the realities of front-line service delivery in the PNT region and potential opportunities for improvement in service of broad sectoral health.

In alignment with the project's purpose, the findings from the HOTS research provide a solid foundation for understanding the settlement and integration sector through an equity lens and provides evidentiary results required to craft concrete strategies that will build on the strengths and competencies of front-line employees and opportunities to better enhance professional lives. Furthermore, the findings contain foundational information to inform discussions and potential actions among the various players that comprise the newcomer-serving sector, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), newcomer-serving agencies, and Umbrella organizations.

As discussed throughout the report, the HOTS data produced five key themes: passionate and value aligned front-line staff; non-competitive compensation levels (salary levels and structures); discrepancies amongst employment types with compensation levels regarding benefits, including health insurance and retirement; diversity, equity and inclusion in the sector with opportunities to improve in this area; limited access to professional development opportunities, increased employee stress and the need to for mental health supports in the workplace; and leadership improvements. These themes, and the associated recommendations contained in the report, provide a critical foundation for all stakeholders in the settlement and integration sector to jointly action in service of improved sectoral health for front-line employees, and by extension, better experiences and outcomes for newcomers to Canada.

To modernize and enhance the experiences of front-line employees in the PNT settlement and integration sector, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders to take steps to boldly move in that direction. In alignment with this vision, the HOTs report outlines aspirations for the sector which include recommendations for IRCC to provide predictable, flexible, and stable long-term funding that ensures benefits, pension, a steady salary for long-term employment, and professional development for all sector employees; professionalize settlement workers; and bolster data collection on human resources, DEI, and labour market data in the newcomer-serving sector. The settlement and integration sector also has a stake in addressing the gaps and challenges present by doing the following: diversifying funding sources; building diversity, equity, and inclusion into the culture of their organization through policies, procedures, and training for all staff, including board members; providing tangible and culturally sensitive mental health and wellbeing supports for all staff; ensuring leaders embody and demonstrate the sectors value while supporting the

development of leaders within the sector; and by implementing innovative and inclusive approaches to work to attract and retain employees.

Ultimately, front-line employees in the settlement and integration sector across the PNT region play a crucial role in shaping the lives of newcomers through tailored programs and services and provide unique expertise in Canadian settlement and integration processes. However, as reflected throughout the HOTS report, front-line service providers will often transcend their job descriptions through their deep passion for their work, tireless advocacy for the rights of newcomers, and dedication to providing personalized support for clients. While these contributions of front-line service providers often cannot be quantified, their importance to the lives of newcomers, the objectives of the settlement and integration sector, and ultimately Canadian society cannot be overstated. As such, due to the significant impact and contributions of front-line service providers in the settlement and integration sector, and by extension Canadian society more broadly, it is essential that the systems and supports available to them are regularly studied, evaluated, and improved to address needs and leverage assets. While these actions will support the employment experiences of front-line employees and the overall health and longevity of the settlement and integration sector at all levels, they will ultimately contribute to the social, economic, and cultural enrichment of Canadian society.

GLOSSARY

Agencies: Settlement and integration agencies that provide settlement services, programs, and supports designed to assist the delivery of services to newcomers to Canada. Programs and services provided by agencies range from employment services, language assessment and training, refugee resources and specific programs to help newcomers with daily life among other services. These initiatives delivered by agencies help integrate newcomers into Canadian communities.

Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB): The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) standard is a descriptive scale of language ability in English as a Second Language (ESL) written as 12 benchmarks or reference points along a continuum from basic to advanced. The CLB standard reflects the progression of the knowledge and skills that underlie basic, intermediate and advanced ability among adult ESL learners.

Community and Social Connections: As defined by IRCC, these are services that include activities to support the two-way process of integration and facilitate adaptation on the part of newcomers and their host communities. Examples can include peer support groups, community-based group events, conversation circles, matching newcomers with Canadians, cultural visits, field trips, etc.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): A term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures, and sexual orientations. Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. These individual and group differences include, but are not limited to differences in personality, political orientations, life experiences, learning styles, working styles, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, country of origin, religious affiliations, and viewpoints. Equity refers to fair treatment of everyone that addresses specific needs, barriers and accommodations to ensure all have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society and its benefits. Inclusion is the act of creating environments and a culture in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.

Employment Related Service: As defined by IRCC, these are services provided by settlement and integration service providers aimed to equip newcomers with the skills, connections and support needed to enter the labour market and contribute to the economy. Examples include work placements, resume screening, employment networking, etc.

English as a Second Language (ESL): English as a second or foreign language is the use of English by speakers with different native languages.

Front-line Staff: Employees who deal directly with newcomer clientele and are directly involved in providing programs and services and programmatic development.

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+): Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an intersectional analytical process used to examine how sex and gender intersect with other identity factors (such

as race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability) that may impact the effectiveness of government initiatives. It involves examining disaggregated data and research and considers social, economic, and cultural conditions and norms. GBA+ provides federal officials with the means to achieve more equitable results for people by being more responsive to specific needs and ensuring government policies and programs are inclusive and barrier free.

Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs): Permanent residents in the refugee category who are selected abroad for resettlement to Canada as Convention refugees under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or as members of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class, and who receive resettlement assistance from the federal government.

Health of the Sector: A research project that examines the perspectives of front-line staff working within agencies in the newcomer-serving sector to better understand their employment experience, assess organizational strengths and challenges, as well as discern the opportunities available to them.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): The department of the Government of Canada with responsibility for matters dealing with immigration to Canada, refugees, resettlement, settlement, and Canadian citizenship.

Information and Orientation (I&O) Services: As defined by IRCC, these are services offered to newcomers to provide relevant, accurate, consistent, and timely settlement-related information and orientation that is needed to make informed settlement decisions, as well as promoting an understanding of life in Canada. Examples of I&O include orientation sessions, general labour market information groups, general life skills development activities, etc.

Intersectional Approach: Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to explain how race intersects with gender to produce barriers for Black women. Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. An intersectional approach helps assess the potential impacts – positive or negative – of initiatives based on their multiple identity factors. Utilizing an intersectional approach enables the opportunity to identify risks, and potential challenges at an early stage and create mitigation strategies.

Language Services: As defined by Refugee Alberta, language services include language assessment, language training to help newcomers learn Canada's official languages, and bridging to employment.

Language Assessment: An evaluation of a person's reading, writing, listening and/or speaking abilities in English or French. Assessments are conducted using a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) or Niveau de competence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) based tools to determine the official language ability of newcomers for placement in language training programs.

Language Training: As defined by IRCC, these are services provided by settlement and integration service providers to adult newcomers with settlement content-based language instruction so that they may acquire English or French language skills they need to contribute to the Canadian economy and integrate into their communities. Language Training can be offered in a classroom setting, online, or in a blended environment, etc.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC): Free English language training programs for adult newcomers to Canada. They are funded by the federal government and delivered by school boards, colleges, and local organizations that provide services to newcomers.

The Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO): A non-profit organization that acts as an umbrella organization for settlement service providers in Manitoba. MANSO acts as a voice for the Manitoba settlement and integration sector, as well as supporting members through communication, networking and professional development activities.

Mixed benchmark proficiency: When a language learner has different Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) across the four assessed language skills—listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals (NAARs): A formal review of newcomer needs and assets across a broad spectrum of settlement areas (language, employment, housing, etc.). Referrals are links to specific services that help newcomers settle in Canada. These activities usually result in the development of a Settlement Plan for the newcomer, which outlines a strategy to achieve settlement success based on identified needs and available services and community supports.

National Health of the Sector Working Group: The National Health of the Sector Working Group was launched by the National Settlement and Integration Council in 2019 with an objective to conduct a dialogue towards developing a vision and work plan on the health of the settlement and integration sector with a particular focus on the jobs and people working in the sector. These discussions eventually led to inform AAISA's Health of the Sector Survey project.

National Settlement and Integration Council (NSIC): The NSIC is comprised of delegates from across the nation's settlement sector, provincial/territorial government officials, and the federal government who meet twice a year for collaboration, consultation, and knowledge building. AAISA's work with NSIC is an important avenue for provincial representation, advocacy on key topics, and knowledge mobilization.

National Settlement Funding Formula: The formula allocates funding for each jurisdiction based on the three-year average proportion of immigrant landings by jurisdiction. It also gives additional weight to refugees to account for their unique settlement needs (refugees tend to require more settlement services than economic and family class immigrants). Quebec is not subject to this formula since its grant is calculated based on the formula outlined in the *Canada-Quebec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens* signed in 1991.

Newcomers: Individuals born outside of Canada destined for or living in Alberta, either temporarily or permanently; an individual self-identifies as a newcomer until they identify as integrated.

Newcomer Research Network: The Newcomer Research Network offers a collaborative platform for both researchers and community members to work together to understand and address the needs of newcomer Canadians, including immigrants, refugees and international students.

Naturalized Canadian Citizens: Naturalization is the process through which immigrants acquire Canadian citizenship. Landed immigrants who have met certain criteria are eligible for Canadian citizenship by naturalization. The criteria for acquiring citizenship generally include a residency requirement, knowledge of English or French, and basic knowledge of Canada.

Newcomer-serving Sector: Publicly funded not-for-profit agencies whose mandate is to primarily serve newcomers.

Permanent Resident: Permanent Resident is someone who has been given legal, permanent resident status by immigrating to Canada, but is not a Canadian citizen. Permanent Residents are citizens of other countries

Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT): The geographic location often used to describe the settlement and integration sector in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories in Canada.

Respondents: Persons within the settlement and integration sector in the PNT region who participated in the Health of the Sector Survey in both the English and French surveys distributed between March 31, 2021, and July 31, 2021

Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP): The Resettlement Assistance Program provides immediate and essential support to GARs who are selected overseas on the basis of their need for protection through Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. RAP (which is separate from the Settlement Program) provides a bridge to mainstream settlement and integration services that are available to all newcomers. Under RAP, GARS are provided with immediate resettlement assistance, orientation services, and income support upon arrival in Canada. Financial support is administered by IRCC and delivered directly to clients, while services such as assistance at reception centres, the provision of temporary accommodation, help in finding permanent housing, and orientation to life in Canada are provided by SPOs through Contribution Agreements.

Refugee Claimant: Refugee claimants are outside their home country or the country they normally live in. They are not able to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a social group, such as women or people of a particular sexual orientation. The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada is responsible for accepting/rejecting claims for refugee status.

Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement Integration Agencies (SAISIA): A non-profit umbrella organization for settlement and integration agencies in Saskatchewan established in 1987. SAISIA serves newcomers by providing settlement and integration agencies in Saskatchewan with access to professional development and opportunities to network, as well as links to resources they can use to strengthen and enhance their internal procedures and client programs and services. SAISIA is the voice of immigration and settlement agencies to the federal, provincial and municipal governments, the community, and the public.

Sectoral Health: A sector's ability to align around a common vision, execute against that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking.

Service Provider Organization (SPO): A service provider organization is an agency that provides services for newcomers to Canada. Service provider organizations offer programs that can give newcomers resources and training to live and work in Canada.

Settlement and Integration Agencies: Publicly funded not-for-profit agencies whose mandate involves serving newcomers.

Settlement and Integration Sector: Primarily composed of newcomer-serving agencies, as well as those agencies whose mandate may not be to serve primarily newcomers but who have specialized programming to suit the needs of newcomers.

Small Centre: All territory lying outside of primary metropolitan areas.

Support Services: As defined by Refugee Alberta, these include additional services such as transportation, crisis counselling, provisions for disabilities, and loans and grants for newcomers.

Survey Monkey: A full-featured web survey tool with a wide variety of question types and reporting. This service was utilized to disseminate the Health of the Sector Survey.

Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW): These are individuals hired under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This program allows employers to hire foreign workers to fill short-term labour and skill shortages when no Canadians are available to do the job. A Labour Market Impact Assessment is needed to hire through this program

Temporary Resident: A foreign national who is in Canada legally for a short period. Temporary residents include international students, foreign workers, and visitors, such as tourists.

Umbrella Organizations: These organizations bring together the settlement and integration sector in a given region for training, support, advocacy, and coordination.

APPENDIX I

PART I: RESPONDENT DETAILS

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

1. Where are you located?
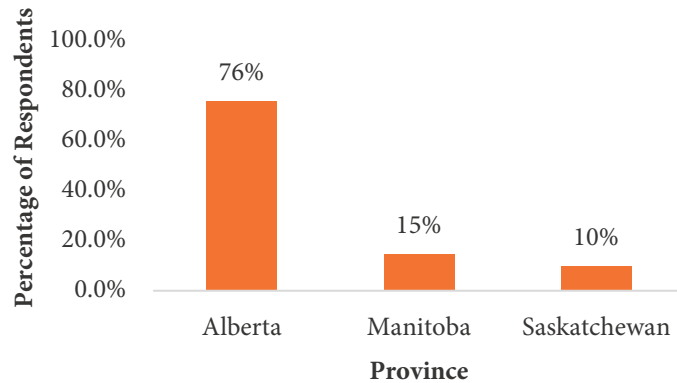
2. What is the population of the municipality where your organization is located?
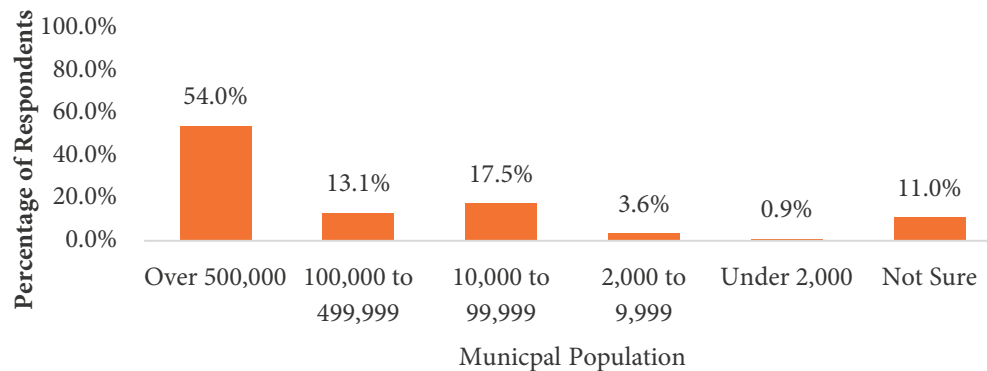
3. In which official language does your organization primarily conduct business?
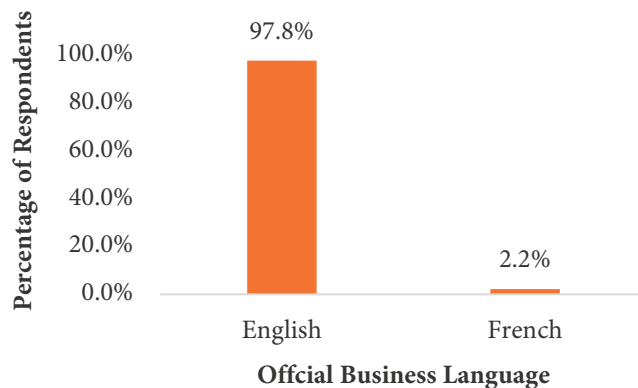
4. In which program or department do you work?
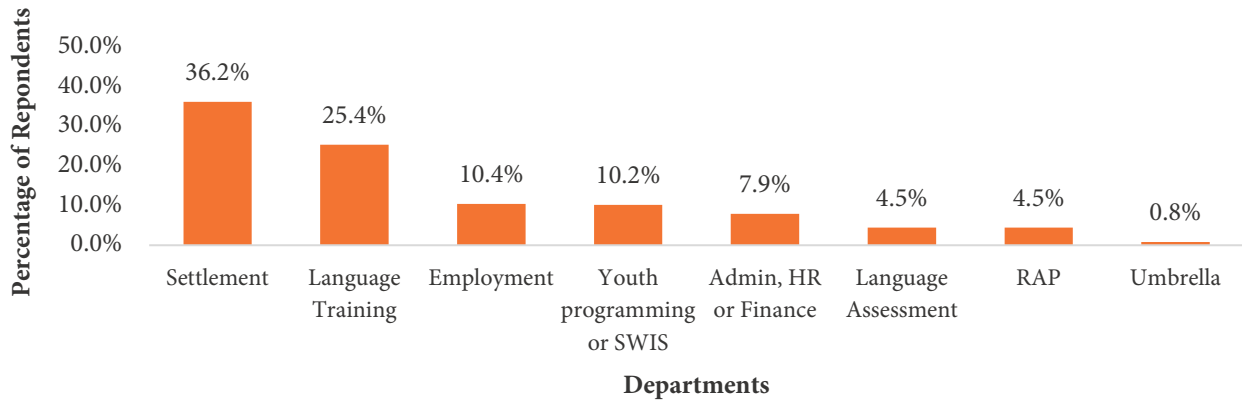
5. What is your current position?

6. Are you employed part-time or full-time?
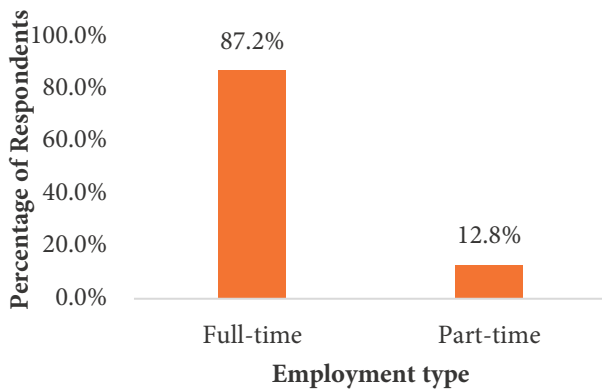
7. How long have you been working in your current organization?

Time spent in current organization
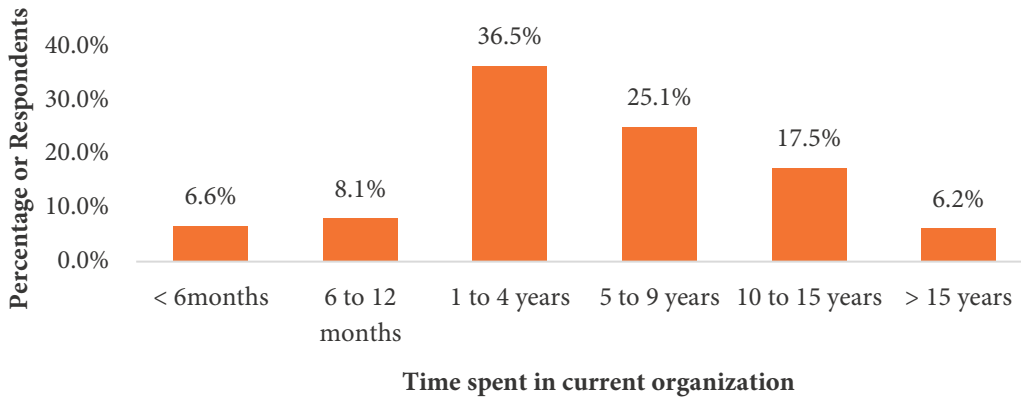
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please select your age category:

Age category

2. What is your gender?

Gender

3. Which of the following best represents your race or ethnicity? Select all that apply.

Percentage of Respondents

White 41.7%
South Asian 11.0%
East Asian 10.2%
Black 9.9%
Prefer not to say 8.2%
Latin American/Latinx 6.6%
Arab 4.6%
South East Asian 2.2%
Middle East 2.1%
Indigenous 1.2%
European 0.5%
African 0.5%
Central Asian 0.5%
Others 0.4%
West Asian 0.3%

Race or Ethnicity

4. How long have you been living in Canada?

Percentage of Respondents

< 5 years 6.0%
5 - 10 years 20.4%
≥ 11 years 35.8%
Born in Canada 37.8%

Time lived in Canada

Organizational Alignment

1. My personal values align with the organization's mission and vision.

| 50.1% | 41.1% | 5.3% | 1.6% | 1.9% |

2. I feel a sense of belonging within my organization.

| 42.6% | 40.0% | 10.4% | 4.5% | 2.5% |

3. I believe the expectations of funders align with the realities of my work.

| 23.8% | 41.5% | 16.6% | 12.8% | 5.3% |

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree

Compensation and Benefits

1. I am satisfied with the level of compensation provided by my employer.

| 15.4% | 43.2% | 20.7% | 15.9% | 4.9% |

2. I am getting paid appropriately for my current role and job responsibilities.

| 15.3% | 37.3% | 20.8% | 19.6% | 7.0% |

3. I am satisfied with the level of health insurance provided by my employer.

| 21.0% | 44.9% | 17.0% | 11.3% | 5.9% |

4. My employer's contribution to my retirement fund meets my expectations.

| 17.8% | 37.2% | 26.1% | 10.3% | 8.6% |

5. I am satisfied with the number of vacation and sick/personal days provided by my employer.

| 30.1% | 44.0% | 13.8% | 7.7% | 4.4% |

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neutral   ■ Disagree   ■ Strongly disagree

Diversity and Inclusion

1. I am confident the organization has adequate policies and procedures promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
37.7%	43.0%	10.1%	2.4%	6.9%

2. Employees of different ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, abilities, and religions are valued equally by this organization.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
43.3%	37.7%	10.7%	2.1%	6.2%

3. I am aware of my organization's procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
32.8%	43.8%	12.3%	2.9%	8.1%

4. I feel supported to voice concerns about discrimination and harassment without fear of reprisal.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
30.6%	36.3%	19.5%	4.8%	8.8%

5. I believe the organization will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination, bias, and/or harassment.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
32.7%	39.0%	16.5%	4.4%	7.4%

6. Employees are treated fairly in internal promotion processes and equal opportunities are available, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability, and religion.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
28.8%	36.7%	19.3%	6.8%	8.5%

7. My organization demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
28.7%	30.9%	32.7%	3.1%	4.7%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree

Work-life Balance And Wellbeing

1. My organization has well developed policy structures supporting work-life balance and mental health.
   - 20.0% | 42.8% | 22.3% | 4.1% | 10.7%

2. My organization takes actions to support employees' mental health and offers adequate resources to help manage stress.
   - 20.7% | 42.8% | 22.3% | 3.6% | 10.6%

3. The stress level at my work is manageable and does not adversely affect my mental health and work productivity.
   - 17.8% | 42.2% | 19.4% | 6.5% | 14.2%

4. I feel confident that I can take time off when I am sick.
   - 37.0% | 41.3% | 10.9% | 4.1% | 6.7%

5. I always feel confident that I can take vacations without any additional pressure on my work.
   - 21.0% | 38.5% | 17.9% | 6.7% | 15.9%

6. Managers and organizational leadership encourage staff to use their time off.
   - 36.5% | 43.6% | 13.6% | 2.5% | 3.7%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree

Management and Leadership

1. My manager/supervisor provides me with regular constructive feedback on my performance.
   - Strongly agree: 25.7%
   - Agree: 42.2%
   - Neutral: 17.2%
   - Strongly disagree: 4.9%
   - Disagree: 10.1%

2. My manger/supervisor recognizes and appreciates my outstanding efforts and accomplishments.
   - Strongly agree: 30.6%
   - Agree: 42.7%
   - Neutral: 14.9%
   - Strongly disagree: 4.0%
   - Disagree: 7.8%

3. My manager/supervisor shows genuine interest in my professional growth and career advancement.
   - Strongly agree: 26.6%
   - Agree: 37.6%
   - Neutral: 20.6%
   - Strongly disagree: 5.6%
   - Disagree: 9.4%

4. My manager/supervisor uses appropriate techniques to effectively resolve conflict among team members.
   - Strongly agree: 21.9%
   - Agree: 39.9%
   - Neutral: 25.1%
   - Strongly disagree: 4.3%
   - Disagree: 8.8%

5. I feel comfortable to approach my manager and share my concerns and needs.
   - Strongly agree: 32.8%
   - Agree: 40.9%
   - Neutral: 14.0%
   - Strongly disagree: 4.0%
   - Disagree: 8.4%

6. I believe our leadership team models our organization's mission, vision, and values.
   - Strongly agree: 29.7%
   - Agree: 42.0%
   - Neutral: 18.1%
   - Strongly disagree: 3.7%
   - Disagree: 6.5%

7. Our leadership team keeps employees informed of decisions affecting them and the organization.
   - Strongly agree: 30.8%
   - Agree: 41.9%
   - Neutral: 14.4%
   - Strongly disagree: 4.7%
   - Disagree: 8.3%

Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | Disagree

Professional Growth and Stability

1. I receive adequate training and learning opportunities to effectively perform my current job.
- Strongly agree: 24.8%
- Agree: 48.5%
- Neutral: 15.6%
- Disagree: 8.8%
- Strongly disagree: 2.4%

2. My current position and responsibilities help me to achieve my long-term career goals and aspirations.
- Strongly agree: 21.7%
- Agree: 47.2%
- Neutral: 20.9%
- Disagree: 7.8%
- Strongly disagree: 2.4%

3. I believe there are opportunities to advance my career within my organization.
- Strongly agree: 16.6%
- Agree: 36.0%
- Neutral: 25.8%
- Disagree: 14.2%
- Strongly disagree: 7.4%

4. I feel confident about the long-term security of my position within my organization.
- Strongly agree: 15.3%
- Agree: 32.4%
- Neutral: 25.9%
- Disagree: 16.2%
- Strongly disagree: 10.2%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

PART III: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Career Plans

1. I plan to stay at my current job at least for the next 2-5 years.
- Strongly agree: 29.0%
- Agree: 40.2%
- Neutral: 18.1%
- Disagree: 6.4%
- Strongly disagree: 6.4%

2. I would recommend employment in my organization to someone else.
- Strongly agree: 37.3%
- Agree: 39.2%
- Neutral: 15.8%
- Disagree: 4.6%
- Strongly disagree: 3.1%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

What would be your most important reason(s) for leaving your current work if you plan to leave within the next 2-5 years (multi-select)

Reason	Percentage
The settlement sector lacks long-term opportunities for professional growth and advancement	25.0%
My level of compensation and benefits are is not sufficient given my skills and efforts	34.0%
My workload is stressful and it has negative impacts on my health and wellbeing	25.8%
My work or suggestions are not recognized or respected by my co-workers and/or manager/supervisor	12.4%
I feel unsupported by my manager/supervisor and/or coworkers	11.8%
I am looking to advance my career in another sector	23.8%
The work is not aligned with my skills, experience, and/or career aspirations	7.8%
I am looking to pursue further education opportunities and/or skills diversification	27.6%
Our funding context is too uncertain	41.8%

For each area covered by this survey, please rate the importance for improvement by your organization:

Priorities for Improvement

Legend: Very important, Important, Neutral, Somewhat important, Not very important

Category	Very important	Important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Not very important
Broader alignment of values and culture across the organization	25.1%	39.6%	21.8%	7.3%	6.2%
Compensation (salary rates and structures)	38.1%	36.7%	15.3%	7.1%	2.9%
Compensation (benefits beyond salary, including health and retirement benefits)	39.0%	34.2%	16.6%	5.9%	4.4%
Diversity and inclusion policies and practices	31.4%	34.4%	20.9%	7.8%	5.5%
Direct management of staff	23.1%	37.2%	25.2%	7.9%	6.6%
Leadership of organization	34.7%	34.8%	18.2%	5.9%	6.3%
Professional development opportunities	34.8%	39.3%	15.9%	6.9%	3.2%
Opportunities for promotion	31.8%	36.3%	21.0%	5.8%	5.1%
Stability of employment	49.1%	29.2%	14.6%	4.3%	2.8%
General workplace culture, atmosphere, and sense of employee belonging	39.3%	31.6%	17.2%	6.3%	5.6%

CLOSING

1. Is there anything else you would like to share? *Comment box.*

APPENDIX II

The Centre for Community Organizations (COCO) developed their own research distributed among non-profits in Quebec and found that approximately 30% of racialized survey respondents indicated they had left their job due to an unwelcoming racial environment (COCO, 2018). However, their data also shows that white respondents provided different reasons as to why their racialized colleagues had left their jobs (i.e., left their jobs because "they got a better job"). COCO adapted a tool by the Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence, to depict the common experiences of women of colour (especially Black women) working in the non-profit sector. The diagram entitled "*The 'Problem' Woman of Colour in the Workplace*" illustrates the process of racialized women in the workplace and their experience as they navigate organizations where the leadership and/or staff are predominantly white. The graphic walks through common experiences faced by women of colour in the workplace and organizational responses, such as denial of racism, retaliation, and targeting and attacking "problem" women of colour. For example, COCO noted that women of colour in the non-profit workplace experience the following: questioning their reason for hire (token diversity hire vs. hired for their skills and experience); racial microaggressions such as racialized clients being referred to them, infantilization by their coworkers, and being referred to as "aggressive" or "angry"; lack of resources available for people of colour; and the expectation to take on all race related matters

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