



AAISA's
Annual Report
2016



About us



The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) is a nationally and provincially recognized leader in the settlement and integration sector. As an umbrella organization, AAISA's mandate is to build sectorial capacity by providing member agencies access to specialized professional development and training opportunities, to act as a liaison with stakeholders, and provide a centre for knowledge, expertise, and leadership. AAISA's mandate is enacted through a responsible governance model with effective communication between all stakeholders supporting the delivery of settlement services provided by members and Alberta's communities.



Vision Mission & Values

Our Vision

An inclusive, welcoming and engaged society.

Our Mission

Facilitate collaboration and leadership within the settlement serving sector.

Our Values

Integrity

Collaborative

Proactivity

Accountability

A Year of Learning and Opportunity

Message from the Chairperson

The past year marked a time of excitement, change, and progress for the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) and its member organizations. In 2015-2016, the political environment in Alberta, and across Canada, was changed drastically by the election of new federal and provincial governments, ushering in major changes in the policies and practices related to immigration, settlement, and integration. In addition to the new government directions related to immigration and refugee resettlement, Alberta continued to experience an economic downturn that significantly impacted newcomers in our province. The decision on the part of the federal government to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees, and the active participation of the provincial government in resettling over 3,500 Syrian refugees in over 15 locations, provided AAISA and its member agencies with opportunities to build upon their existing partnerships, expand the scope of their services, and step up as leaders in bringing together the community, organizations, public institutions, and thousands of volunteers to ensure that the settlement of Syrian refugees in Alberta remains a positive experience for everyone involved.

Most importantly, this initiative provided us with the opportunity to raise awareness among Albertans about the challenges faced by refugees, and to rally communities in welcoming newcomers to our province. We can be proud that as a result of open communication, proactive planning, and collaboration, Alberta has been recognized as one of the provinces that achieved positive outcomes in the initial resettlement of Syrian refugees.

AAISA has also expanded its membership. New member organizations mean more experience and best practices can be shared. As a result, we have increased our capacity and our ability to create an even more positive impact on the settlement and integration of newcomers in Alberta.

Regionally and nationally, AAISA's involvement in the areas of professional development, policy research, and program design, have provided opportunities to contribute to the national and provincial discussion on all aspects of immigration, as well as opportunities to learn from others and improve our future business practices.

AAISA's Board, staff, and member agencies are very committed to making every possible effort to create a welcoming community where immigrants and refugees can settle and become contributing members of our province. Our achievements could not be possible without the support of our funders, volunteers, partners and member agencies. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our hard working and dedicated staff at AAISA, our funders for their generous financial support, our member agencies and, in particular, the AAISA Board for their dedication, and for the trust and confidence they have instilled in me as their Chair.

Fariborz Birjandian
AAISA Chair

Message from the AAISA Management

Each year AAISA faces unique challenges and opportunities, this year was no exception. We want to share and celebrate with our valued stakeholders, the improvements and successes we've seen across the organization. This year, AAISA has consistently showcased leadership in the settlement and integration sector, particularly in the areas of professional development, research, policy, and stakeholder engagement. This leadership has been exemplified by our role in the coordination of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Initiative--which drew from expertise in the aforementioned areas to support and build the capacity of organizations in Alberta as they resettled a large number of refugees over a short period of time.

Noteworthy examples of our ability to build organizational and sectoral capacity were the creation of an online learning community for settlement and integration professionals, professionalizing the sector through certification, offering timely and meaningful professional development to meet the needs of the sector, developing and mobilizing client-centred research and policy knowledge on a variety of issues such as refugee resettlement, Temporary Foreign Workers, sexual health, and housing, as well as the coordination of our signature 8th Biennial Settlement Conference. During this event we brought together hundreds of diverse stakeholders in order to provide a strategic learning and networking experience for professionals working to advance the inclusion of newcomers. During this event AAISA partnered with Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) for a pre-conference workshop. This workshop was the first of its kind in Western Canada. In addition, AAISA amended its by-laws and has been actively engaging diverse stakeholders as prospective members. Along with these successes comes the challenge of creating a sustainable organizational structure and building the capacity of a broader membership base. We are confident that AAISA's Board, staff, volunteers, members and partners are up to the task.

Looking to the future, AAISA will continue to adapt and expand its operations in order to further enhance coordination and collaboration across Alberta.

Milton Alfonso Ortega, MPA
Provincial Manager



Board Members

Chair	Fariborz Birjandian	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Vice Chair	Christina Nsaliwa	Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Treasurer	Marty Hornstein	Jewish Family Services
Secretary	Mamady Camara	Centre d'Accueil des Nouveaux Arrivants Francophones (CANAF)
Member-at-Large	Alice Colak	Catholic Social Services – Immigration and Settlement Services
Member-at-Large	Antonio Samayoa	SAAMIS Immigration
Member-at-Large	Jennifer Best	YMCA of Wood Buffalo
Member-at-Large	Sally Zhao	Calgary Immigrant Educational Society
Member-at-Large	Frank Bauer	Central Alberta Refugee Effort

Committee Chairs

Governance Committee	Jennifer Best	YMCA Wood Buffalo
SPTA Committee	Christina Nsaliwa	Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Finance Committee	Marty Hornstein	Jewish Family Service Calgary
Sector Compensation Committee	Frank Bauer	Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E)

Membership Base

ACFA Regionale de Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
Action for Healthy Community	Edmonton
Alberta Integration Centre (AIC)	Calgary
ASSIST Community Services Centre	Edmonton
Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth	Calgary
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	Calgary
Calgary Immigrant Educational Society	Calgary
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association	Calgary
Catholic Social Services	Edmonton
Central Alberta Refugee Effort	Red Deer
Central Alberta Immigrant Women Society	Red Deer
Centre Accueil Nouveaux Arrivants Francophones (CANAF)	Calgary
Centre d'accueil et d'établissement du nord de l'Alberta	Edmonton
Centre for Newcomers	Calgary
Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women	Edmonton
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association	Edmonton
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Edmonton
Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council	Edmonton
Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary	Calgary
Immigrant Services Calgary	Calgary
Indo Canadian Women's Association	Edmonton
Jewish Family Service Calgary	Calgary
Lethbridge Family Services – Immigrant Services	Lethbridge
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
Rehoboth Alliance	Fort McMurray
Saamis Immigrant Services Association	Medicine Hat
Southern Alberta Language Assessment Services Ltd.	Lethbridge
The Spec Association For Children and Families	Brooks
YMCA of Wood Buffalo - Immigrant Settlement Services	Fort McMurray

Advancing Alberta's Settlement & Integration Sector

Provincial Projects

Economic Well-being: Indicators of Success for Newcomers to Alberta

Responding to the need for evidence that builds a strong case for the impact employment programming can make in the lives of immigrants and refugees and as a basis for future learning and professional development in the settlement and integration sector. This project explores outcomes measurement models and promising practices; and strategies for province-wide implementation well as further action research and professional development around outcomes measurement.

Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program Project (AINP)

Funded by Pathways to Prosperity (P2P), this project aims to address a gap in knowledge on provincial economic integration strategies by more deeply understanding the impact and alignment of Canada's

federal policy changes on Alberta's provincial nominee program (PNP) and the flow of provincial nominees to labour markets and communities.

Provincial Refugee Coordination

AAISA has provided strategic leadership during an influx of refugees through a governance model with effective communication between all stakeholders supporting the delivery of settlement services provided by members and Alberta communities.

Information Hub Website for Refugees in Alberta

Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we are working in collaboration with the Government of Alberta, settlement agencies, and municipalities to develop an informational website to communicate refugee information for Alberta citizens, settlement agencies, and newcomers. Coming in soon.

refugeealberta.ca

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Community Needs Assessment

AAISA has conducted a Refugee Resettlement Community Needs Assessment. As part of this assessment, we are surveying organizations that work with refugees (including, but not limited to Syrians) to better understand programs and services designed to support their settlement and integration in Alberta. The report seeks to serve as a valuable resource for Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) Providers, settlement and integration service providers, community organizations, Sponsorship Agreement Holders, health providers, community members and funders.

Provincial Needs Assessment: Improving Refugee Resettlement in Alberta Report

This year AAISA undertook a provincial needs assessment that examined the current and future resettlement needs of refugees, the programs and services that support their success, and considered existing organizational and provincial capacity. The report's findings allow us to better understand the process and environment of resettlement, so we can better develop recommendations that enable organizations to support refugee success in Alberta.

Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund (HREMF) Reducing Racism and Discrimination Barriers for Newcomers

AAISA developed an online Learning Community which houses resources, tools and information to support professionals working with newcomers to address race-related barriers. AAISA also delivered training on human rights, multiculturalism and anti-racism, in-person and through the Learning Community.

Provincial Job Standards and Sector Compensation

AAISA's Job Classification and Standards Project's main objective is to evaluate the competencies, roles, and responsibilities of professionals working in settlement who support the application of consistent job standards for settlement practice across the sector. Through AAISA's Sector Compensation Committee, consultations with key funding partners, and Human Resource consulting firms, AAISA has created Job Classification Bands, Human Resource Ranking Tool, a Job Standards and Salary Framework, as well as a communication strategy between its members and key funding partners.

Regional Reach

Western Region Working Group (WRWG)

The Western Region Working Group (WRWG) has a total of eight members representing the umbrella organizations in British Columbia, Yukon Territory, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba while AAISA has served as the Fiscal Agent. The group has been established to represent the western region settlement and integration sector by working in a collaborative interprovincial/territorial effort.

Pre-Arrival Services

The WRWG, in partnership with Immigration Research West (IRW), developed a pivotal study on pre-arrival services in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This initiative sought to produce an inventory, report, poster presentation and webinar. The WRWG anticipates this initiative, through increasing the sector's knowledge and awareness of pre-arrival services in Western Canada, will promote further collaboration and more streamlined service delivery.

National Reach

NGO Role in Supporting Temporary Foreign Workers

This has been a collaborative project developed through the National Settlement Council and having as main partners the Canadian Council of Refugees (CCR), the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC (AMSSA), the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA). This project's main is to get a detailed picture of how TFWs are being supported in different regions, and of service providers' perspectives regarding TFWs' service needs, and the impact of services. The report's conclusions are intended to inform a settlement sector response to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the current situation of TFWs in Canada.



Volunteers and Community Engagement

Over 25 volunteers for the 8th Biennial Settlement Conference and 7 interns throughout the year supported our mission. These dedicated volunteers have worked with AAISA this year to make our events such as the 8th Biennial Settlement Conference and other projects a success.

We are sincerely grateful that you have donated your time, heart, hands, and head to making AAISA a better organization.

From all of our member agencies, staff, board, funders, and partners...

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Professional Development - Empowering Alberta's settlement sector

AAISA proudly offers the only Settlement Practitioner Certification program in Western Canada. Through continuous collaborative partnerships and initiatives, AAISA has been able to respond to the need to expand not only its core curriculum but also to respond to the growing demand for training and professional development for sector professionals who fill roles beyond the functions of Settlement Practitioners and the unique contexts that arise for this work.

AAISA provided:



A total of **201** settlement practitioners completed AAISA training modules.



Completion rate of 91%
(201 of 220 participants)



Settlement practitioners participated in **120 hours of AAISA training**



Nine training sessions were delivered this year:

- Working with Refugees with Complex Needs
- Volunteer Management
- Professional Roles and Ethics
- Multiculturalism, Human Rights and Antiracism
- Working with Immigrant Seniors
- Organizational Behaviour and Change



Five management training sessions, in total of **67.5 hours**



\$5,200 in bursaries for Management Training

Highlights

AAISA is currently building an online learning community to support professional development and networking for sector professionals. A new AAISA Learning Management System will provide a long term solution to meet current and future sector professional development needs.

AAISA also held two management training sessions to support the ongoing professional development of managers in the area of program evaluation. Ninety five percent (95%) of attendees indicated that this training changed the way they would look at projects, programs, and reporting in future and wanted their staff and peers to undertake this training to make the shift department and organization-wide.

“ I can see the process better from the point of view of our agency as a working tool. It seems more practical to me now.

“ The session gave me a broader perspective about how to secure buy in’s from corporate bodies into non-profit projects.

“ Changed my understanding completely it made me realize that the whole process requires good planning and understanding of the project.

AAISA and Calgary Sexual Health Centre worked in collaboration to co-develop and co-facilitate a Management Training session entitled “Creating a Culture of Respect for LGBT People”.

“ Bravo for AAISA in taking the lead on this important topic! This training should be mandatory for all (frontline and managerial) staff in the sector. In-person training (perhaps supplemented with online learning) is key to build relationships and allow for opportunities to ask questions. Keep up the great work!

20 certifications were awarded this year for settlement practitioners that were successful in demonstrating the experience and professional competency required for AAISA Certification.



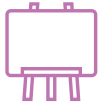
Evidence Based Research and Knowledge Mobilization

AAISA continues to advance the knowledge of the settlement and integration sector, inform public decision makers, and support the development of project with evidence-based research that is designed to inform policy development and program design.

 | I've learned I can be an agent of change.

1. International Students in Alberta
2. Services d'établissement et d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants francophones en Alberta: Une Brève Présentation
3. Settlement and Integration Services for Francophone Newcomers in Alberta: A Brief Overview
4. Federal Election 2015
5. Barriers of Racial Discrimination for Foreign Credential Recognition
6. Courage to Begin: Building Capacity of Immigrant Service Providers and Sexual Health
7. HREMF Reducing Racism and Discrimination Barriers for Newcomers
Federal Election 2015
Alberta Budget 2015-2018
8. Immigrant and Refugee Housing Program





Presentations at Conferences

1. Refugee Policy and Alberta Labour Market Outcomes at the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) at Ryerson University
2. Breakout Session Presentation at P2P's 3rd Annual Conference: Responding to a Changing Immigration Environment
3. "Reflections on the Importance of Local Research and a Lack of Resources and Interest by Funders", P2P's 3rd Annual Conference: Responding to a Changing Immigration Environment
4. Panel Presentation on the Role of Researchers in Multi-stakeholder Partnerships at AAISA's 8th Biennial Settlement Conference P2P Pre-Conference on Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Support Newcomer Integration: Structure, Engagement and Collaboration
5. Presentation on "Building Readiness and Sexual Health Capacity in the Settlement and integration Sector: Experiences from Alberta" at the 2016 Metropolis Conference
6. Presentation on "Knowledge Management through AAISA's Learning Community" at the 2016 Metropolis Conference





Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaborative Initiatives

1. University of Alberta
2. University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work
3. Talent Pool Hub
4. Calgary Sexual Health Centre
5. The Canadian Council of Refugees (CCR),
6. The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
7. Pathways to Prosperity (P2P)
8. Immigration Research West (IRW)
9. Alberta Women's Science Network Advisory Committee
10. WeEmploy Inc.
11. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Calgary Branch
12. Talent Pool Hub
13. Mount Royal University – Policy Studies

Communications and Outreach

AAISA pro-actively builds sector capacity by sharing information with existing Members, settlement agencies, settlement practitioners, newcomers, funders, volunteers, and the general public.

AAISA's communications efforts have expanded this year with the intention of reaching more stakeholders by clarifying messaging and providing more opportunity to effectively communicate. We are doing this by continuing the roll-out of the new branding and launching new tools and initiatives.

Monthly Hits: 381,927 hits

Twitter followers: 530 - and total more than 1,095 tweets published, with daily interaction increased by 200% since 2015.

Facebook followers: 360 - with a weekly reach of approximately 800.

Events

8th Biennial Settlement Conference - 2015

AAISA brought together a variety of settlement and integration stakeholders such as settlement and career practitioners, counselors, academics, policy-makers, leaders, supervisors, and management staff from diverse organizations across Alberta and the Western Region. The "Engaging Minds, Creating Sustainability: The Future of Settlement" conference was attended by more than 350 stakeholders from public and government institutions, settlement and integration, academia, social services and non-profit organizations.

AAISA Funders

- Immigration, Refugee Citizenship Canada
- Alberta Human Rights Commission
- Alberta Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training, and Labour
- Alberta Culture
- United Way of Calgary
- City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), and Private Foundations

Staff Members

Provincial Manager

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Sharlene Torres

Research and Policy

Caroline Hemstock
Deniz Erkmen
Stephanie Kot

Administration

Pradnya Yadav

Contact Us

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The logo consists of a stylized, multi-colored shape resembling a folded paper or a fan, with segments in orange, blue, and teal.

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