

# ASIP STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

JANUARY 2021



Funded by:



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## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

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## **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.

This report was authored by Leesha Kanbour, with contributions from Daniella Bagmeijer and Leslie Cramer. The *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* project were conducted with the support of all members of AAISA’s Engagement, Research, and Policy team, including Leesha Kanour, Daniella Bagmeijer, Leslie Cramer, Tihana Radojic, Cameron Dykstra, and Thomas Prince.

AAISA would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the agency representatives from across Alberta, who participated in interviews and focus group sessions. We are grateful for the invaluable information that was provided through your engagement throughout the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* project. AAISA would also like to extend our thanks to the Government of Alberta’s Ministry of Labour and Immigration for their financial support as well as their partnership throughout all stages of this project.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the financial support of the provincial Ministry of Labour and Immigration, the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) conducted stakeholder engagement regarding the Ministry's Alberta Settlement and Integration Program (ASIP) area of focus. The intention of this stakeholder engagement was to facilitate a greater collaborative effort to bring about knowledge generation and building across all stakeholders to ensure that ASIP funding remains responsive and informed by the evolving needs of Alberta's settlement and integration sector, thereby creating improved outcomes for newcomers and society at large.

The information provided in this report was gathered from engagement with 51 newcomer-serving agencies across Alberta from April 2019 until September 2020 through a two-tiered stakeholder engagement approach which included both one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions.

The *Findings* section of this report is presented in alignment with the focus areas of the ASIP funding program which include *Improving Settlement Access; Building Communities' Capacity to Better Serve Newcomers Needs; Responding to Emerging Needs and Under-served Clients; and Supporting Initiatives to Improve Labour Market Integration*. Each section of the *Findings* highlights challenges, best practices, and opportunities for collaboration in relation to the focus areas that were shared by participants throughout the engagement process.

The report concludes with a *Recommendations* section which outlines both programmatic and investment recommendations pertinent to the ASIP focus areas, with specific recommendations tailored to the unique context of Alberta's small centres. Ultimately, through the information and recommendations of this report, AAISA intends to provide knowledge for the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, Alberta's settlement and integration sector, and other key stakeholders to collectively action gaps, address emerging needs, facilitate information exchange, and leverage opportunities for collaboration and joint problem solving.

## INTRODUCTION

The settlement and integration of newcomers is a complex process with critical impacts on the well-being and economic prosperity of communities across Alberta. The reality in which settlement and integration agencies operate is constantly shifting, as emerging needs, gaps, and opportunities greatly influence service delivery. In this context, knowledge building and dissemination are imperative for Alberta's settlement and integration sector to address emerging issues and adapt to changes. In conjunction with its mandate and demonstrated history of supporting Alberta's settlement and integration sector, the Ministry of Labour and Immigration engaged the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) to conduct stakeholder engagement to facilitate knowledge exchange in relation to the Alberta Settlement and Integration Program (ASIP) funding stream to foster a more vibrant and prosperous Alberta. Representing 53 current members, AAISA works with settlement and integration agencies across the province to build capacity through a variety of engagement, research, and professional development activities. In alignment with AAISA's vision to facilitate collaboration and leadership within this sector, the Engagement, Research and Policy department seeks to build and mobilize knowledge amongst key stakeholders to support the unique needs and challenges of Alberta's settlement and integration agencies and the clients they serve.

The Alberta settlement and integration sector is a complex network comprised of various stakeholders, including settlement and integration agencies, all levels of government, wraparound service providers, the private sector, and the community at large. An integral player within the Alberta settlement and integration ecosystem is the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Labour and Immigration, who supports the newcomer-serving sector through ASIP. ASIP was introduced by the Government of Alberta in 2017 after extensive consultation with agencies and is designed to facilitate a settlement and integration sector that is flexible and responsive to emerging needs, while effectively distributing services across the province. Furthermore, ASIP seeks to promote innovation, address gaps through complementary service provision, support rural renewal, and expand services, practices, and collaborative partnerships. For more information on the Ministry of Labour and Immigration's ASIP, please see **Appendix I**.

The following report outlines the results of various stakeholder engagement activities that AAISA conducted in collaboration with the Government of Alberta, with the project running from April 2019 until September 2020. The report begins with an overview of the stakeholder engagement's purpose and methodology, before discussing key findings and trends shared throughout this work. The report concludes with several recommendations for the province, with special nuance for Alberta's small centres and their unique needs and context. Moreover, while this report is oriented in relation to the ASIP area of focus, it also emphasizes the key imperatives of partnership and collaboration across diverse stakeholders in achieving the outlined recommendations, and thereby creating a stronger Alberta for all. Please note that underlined terms throughout the report can be found in the **Glossary**.

## PURPOSE

AAISA is committed to facilitating knowledge exchange and broad awareness across Alberta's settlement and integration sector and across all levels of government. Through AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, AAISA worked collaboratively with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Labour and Immigration to ensure that the needs, gaps, and challenges of Alberta's settlement and integration sector are addressed through ASIP's focus areas (*Improving Settlement Access; Building Communities' Capacity to Better Serve Newcomers Needs; Responding to Emerging Needs and Under-served Clients; and Supporting Initiatives to Improve Labour Market Integration*). Through various engagement activities, AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* sought to increase awareness and knowledge of Alberta's settlement and integration sector amongst service providers and the Government of Alberta. Through this knowledge mobilization and awareness raising, AAISA and the Government of Alberta ultimately seek to ensure that ASIP funding remains responsive and informed by the evolving landscape of Alberta's settlement and integration sector in service of better outcomes for newcomers and society at large.

## PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* was conducted through a two-tiered approach, involving one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions, over an eleven-month period. Following a preliminary scoping meeting in June 2020, these two engagement methods ran from September 2019 until May 2020. All *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities were open to participation to AAISA's membership, which was comprised of 51 agencies across Alberta's settlement and integration sector and were conducted with support from the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

The first method of stakeholder engagement was one-on-one interviews with 31 AAISA member organizations from September 2019 until March 2020. The interviews included fourteen member agencies from Calgary, nine from Edmonton, and eight from Small Centres. Interview participants were first asked three general questions to establish organizational context and determine their top priorities and challenges. Based on these responses, agencies were then asked targeted questions around the ASIP focus area which most aligned with their context and the clients they serve. Participation in interviews was voluntary, open to all relevant staff members at each agency, and were conducted both in-person and over the phone with each interview lasting approximately an hour. For the full suite of interview questions, please see **Appendix II**.

The second form of stakeholder engagement consisted of two rounds of provincial focus groups that were open to all AAISA member agencies. The first round of focus groups took place from October to December 2019 were comprised of five meetings with four that directly aligned with the four ASIP focus areas, and the fifth was an overarching theme (*Connecting Newcomers to the Broader Community*) that emerged across all focus areas. The initial round of focus groups served as an open space for organizations to collaboratively share and discuss their best practices and main challenges surrounding the ASIP focus areas. The second round of focus groups occurred in May 2020 and was comprised of five meetings with the same themes as the October 2019 focus

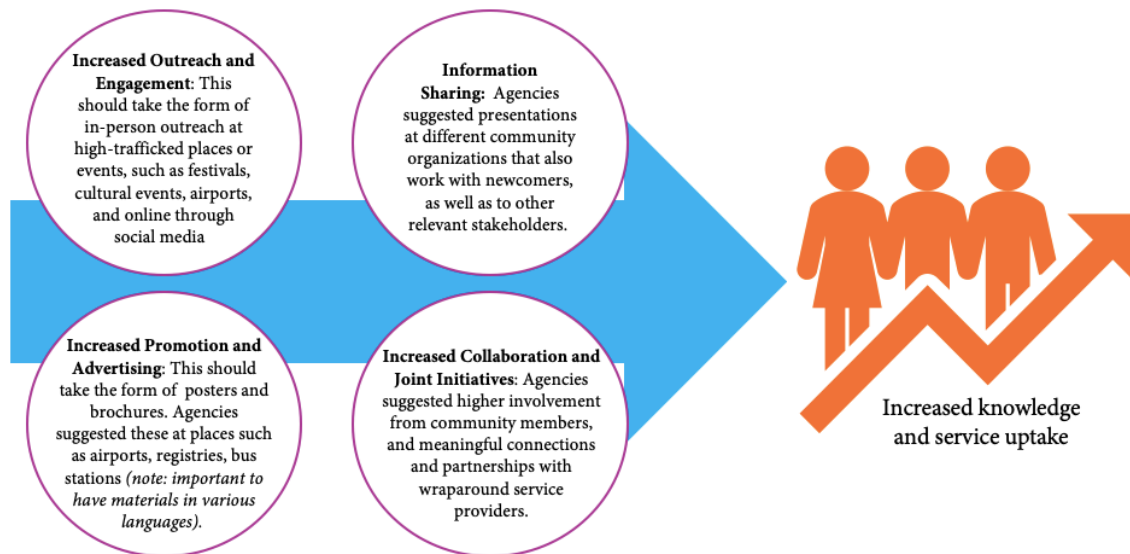
groups. During this round of focus groups, key topics from the ASIP interviews were brought forth to participants as a mechanism to further contextualize and refine the data gathered during the interviews and initial focus groups.

## FINDINGS

This section outlines the findings from AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities in relation to the four focus areas under ASIP, which include: *Improving Settlement Access*; *Building Communities’ Capacity to Better Serve Newcomers Needs*; *Responding to Emerging Needs and Under-served Clients*; and *Supporting Initiatives to Improve Labour Market Integration*. The following findings are presented in alignment with these focus areas. Furthermore, as an overarching theme that underpins all four ASIP focus areas, the findings from the fifth focus group, *Connecting Newcomers to the Broader Community*, are integrated throughout the following subsections. While the findings are organized according to the interviews and focus groups within which they were originally shared, it is important to highlight the mutually supportive and deeply intersectional nature of the ASIP focus areas. As such, many of the findings overlap and inform each other across focus areas.

## IMPROVING SETTLEMENT ACCESS

### Methods Suggested by Organizations to Increase Newcomers’ Knowledge and Uptake of Services



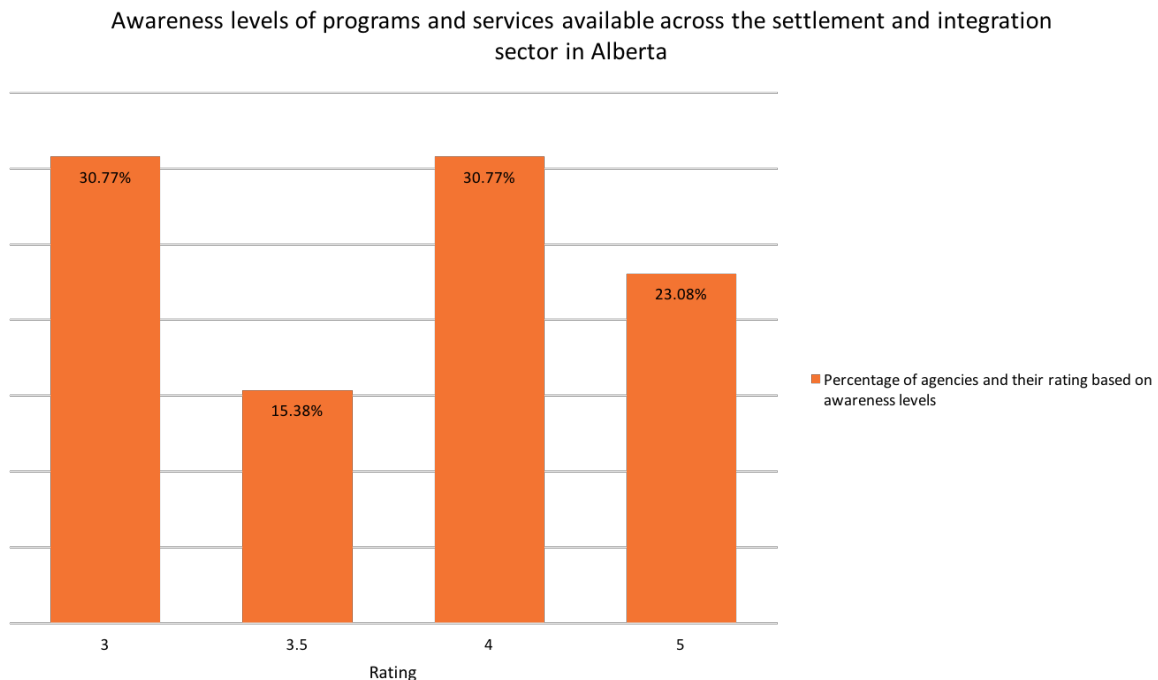
**Figure 1.** *Methods suggested by organizations to increase newcomers’ knowledge and uptake of services*

This ASIP theme refers to increasing the awareness of agencies and newcomers on what services are available across Alberta’s settlement and integration sector to encourage greater accessibility



and program uptake. Throughout AAISA’s interviews and focus groups on this ASIP theme, some key trends emerged surrounding the awareness and knowledge of settlement and integration agencies across the province.

When asked to rate their awareness of available programs and services across Alberta’s settlement sector on a scale of one to five, with one being very unaware and five being very aware, the average response was 3.85, with the majority of participants in AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* rating their awareness between a three and a four, as shown below in **Figure 2**. Although many agencies indicated having strong awareness of services and programs available in their municipality, they highlighted that their knowledge of services across the province as a whole was much lower. While this general trend remained consistent across AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities, a few nuances emerged across regions and official languages. In Calgary and Edmonton, many service providers noted having a very strong understanding of the settlement and integration ecosystem within their city but lacked awareness of services and programs that exist outside of their urban context. While small centre agencies also had the strongest awareness of services available in their communities, many also indicated that they also had a strong understanding of services that are available in their broad region, as well as key services in the nearest urban centre. Another nuance relating to the awareness of settlement and integration programming emerged between Francophone and non-Francophone agencies, where each subsector indicated that they lacked knowledge of services offered outside of the official language that they offered services in predominantly.



**Figure 2.** Awareness levels of programs and services available across the settlement and integration sector in Alberta



To improve newcomers' service knowledge and uptake of settlement services, participants of AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities highlighted four key methods to increase knowledge and uptake of services:

- The predominant method mentioned by participants was to **increase outreach and engagement** with newcomers. Many agencies suggested in-person engagement through presentations at other agencies of the services and programs offered. Also, participants indicated that in order to engage with newcomers, it was important to increase their presence at festivals and community and cultural events.
- The next method indicated by participants was **increased promotion and advertising**. Participants suggested the distribution and placement of brochures and advertising materials at critical community spaces, such as places of worship, registries, and airports, as well as strategic marketing over social media. In addition, several agencies mentioned the importance of information being broadly accessible and appropriate, and ensuring resources are translated into several languages.
- Another key strategy to improve newcomers' service knowledge and uptake of settlement services highlighted by participants of AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities was **information sharing and a need for more transparent communication** between all stakeholders. To improve upon information sharing, agencies suggested more presentations and knowledge mobilization events in the community and amongst key stakeholders, as an important approach to create more awareness and pathways for open communication.
- Lastly, participants mentioned **increased collaboration and joint initiatives**, as well as the need for more active involvement of communities through the facilitation of meaningful connections with community partners, such as faith groups, wraparound service providers, and municipalities, amongst others. Through joint initiatives and increased collaboration with community partners, participants indicated that a wider range of clients could be reached, which would thereby improve the broad awareness and uptake of settlement services.

For additional detail on the methods to improve newcomers' knowledge and service uptake **suggested by** participants of AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, please refer to **Figure 1**.

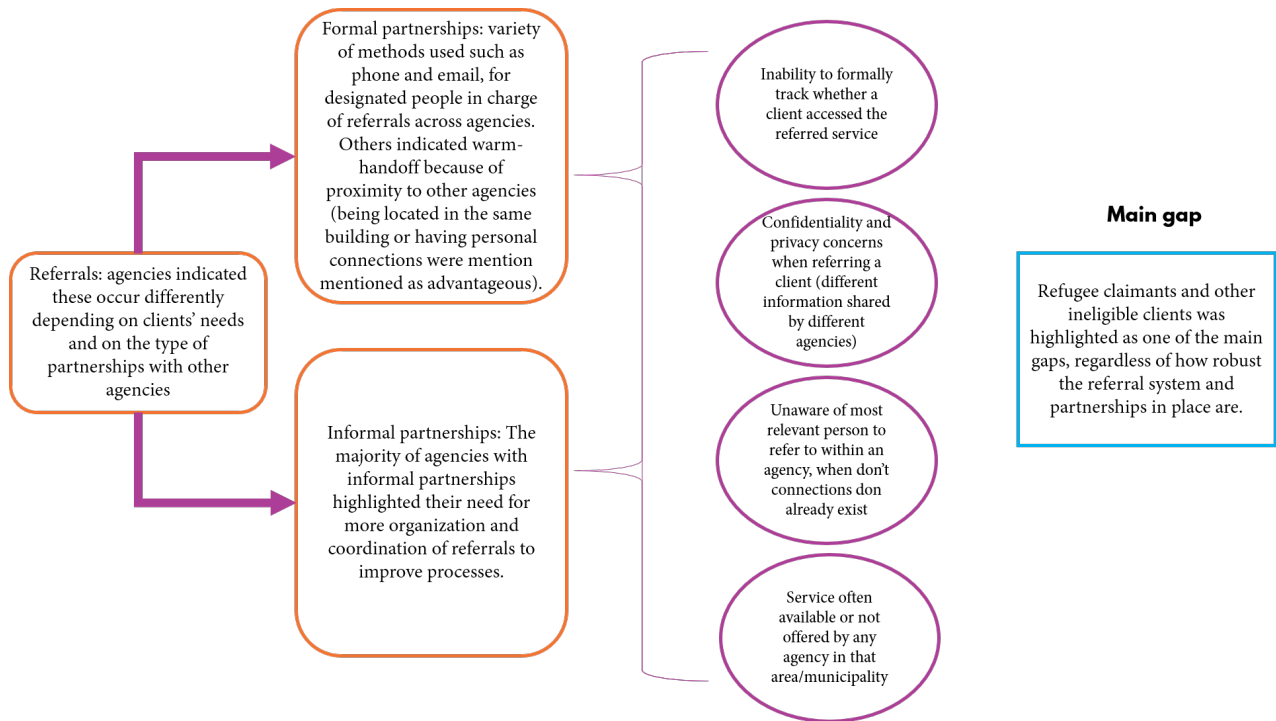
Referrals between a variety of partners and organizations play a key role in improving settlement access for newcomers, and many challenges and best practices surrounding referrals emerged throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*. Across the province, there was variation surrounding the level of coordination and formalization of each agency's referral processes, with seven interviewed agencies indicating that they have no partnerships and a more informal approach to referrals, while 18 agencies indicated formalized partnerships and referral approaches. Agencies with a less formalized approach cited challenges in connecting with the appropriate staff members at other agencies to make meaningful referrals, and many indicated an interest in becoming more formalized and coordinated in their referral approaches. Regardless of how referrals and information sharing are approached, agencies across the province consistently

indicated challenges surrounding client confidentiality and privacy and suggested that this often poses as a barrier in the efficiency and efficacy of the referral process. Additionally, agencies across the province emphasized that while they may make referrals, it can be difficult to find services that are appropriate for the unique context of each newcomer, such as clients with transient employment and living arrangements, or those who have complex mental and physical health needs.

Throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, three key trends emerged surrounding how agencies approach referrals:

- The first strategy reported by participants involves agency staff referring clients to individuals within other agencies that they have a **direct relationship** with, that has been established through personal networking and a proven history of positive experiences. Often, this referral will involve a direct line of contact between individuals to confirm service availability and eligibility. Agencies indicated that while this approach is a bit cumbersome, the customized nature and established rapport between service providers helps to ensure that the client is referred appropriately, and that the client actually accesses the service they were referred to.
- Secondly, agencies shared that they tend to refer to service providers in which they have **formalized agreements and partnerships** with, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which directly outlines referral pathways between agencies. Agencies indicated broad support for this approach as referral pathways are clearly outlined and consistent.
- Lastly, participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* indicated they will typically refer to service providers that are **co-located** within their building, or to agencies that share some geographic contiguity. This approach often involves a "warm hand-off" where individual staff members will directly bring a client to another agency to ensure that the referral is successful. Unless the warm hand-off approach is employed, another challenge indicated by the majority of participants is that they often do not know the result of a referral and are unaware if clients access the service in which they were referred to. Furthermore, many participants indicated that it remains at the purview of an agency to follow-up on an ad hoc basis to see if a client accessed the service that they were referred to.

For more detailed information on referral approaches highlighted throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, please see **Figure 3**.



**Figure 3.** Referral processes, types, and gaps in Alberta's settlement and integration sector

*“Realistically, we cannot provide all the required services and supports to newcomers. As such, it is important to link them to appropriate community services and programs to support their basic settlement and integration needs. Our clients are therefore referred to services and resources in the community based on identified needs to facilitate their social, cultural, and economic integration.”*

*-Participant in AAISA's ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*

# BUILDING COMMUNITIES' CAPACITY TO BETTER SERVE NEWCOMERS NEEDS



**Figure 4.** Approaches to maintain sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse programming in Alberta’s settlement and integration sector

The *Building Communities’ Capacity to Better Serve Newcomers Needs* ASIP focus area refers to **developing the capacity of communities, including workplaces and service providers, to better support the unique needs and contexts of newcomers**. Additionally, this ASIP theme seeks to foster increased capacity within communities to improve public awareness of newcomers, build knowledge and understanding of newcomer needs, facilitate intercultural competencies across an array of community partners, and build mechanisms to combat xenophobia and racism. Throughout AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities, this focus area garnered significant feedback from settlement and integration agencies across Alberta, which led to the emergence of some key themes, challenges, and best practices.

An integral facet of creating a more inclusive, diverse, and prosperous Alberta involves building community capacity to better combat xenophobia and racism. During AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities, settlement and integration agencies indicated key best practices and challenges in the fight against racism and xenophobia. Firstly, agencies outlined that training on diversity and inclusion, anti-racism, and cross-cultural competencies is a crucial element in building internal capacity. Through training staff on these topics, agencies indicated being better equipped to serve newcomers in a sensitive, inclusive, and respectful manner. While diversity and inclusion training for the staff of settlement and integration agencies is quite common across the

province, many participants noted that provision of this training is more inconsistent and less accessible for volunteers, even though they often work very closely with newcomers as well.

Another key strategy outlined by agencies in combatting xenophobia and racism was programming, projects, and initiatives that are targeted to newcomers, racialized individuals, and/or the general public. Throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, many agencies underscored the importance of programming, projects, and initiatives that engage the broad public, mobilize knowledge, engender cultural awareness, dispel myths, and actively celebrate diversity and multiculturalism. However, many agencies also indicated that these programs are often rife with barriers such as a lack of dedicated funding, limited internal staff capacity, and challenges in the willingness of individuals and organizations to engage meaningfully. Lastly, a small cohort of agencies indicated no formal strategies or programs designed to combat xenophobia and racism. Some participants indicated that work around racism and xenophobia is not necessary and issues are only addressed on an ad hoc basis as they arise, while many others expressed interest in combatting xenophobia and racism more actively if their efforts were supported with adequate resources.

In engaging with the private sector to build community capacity to better serve newcomers' needs, agencies across the province outlined several best practices and challenges. Throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, the predominant strategy utilized by settlement and integration agencies involved the development of strategic partnerships and connections with industries and employers, small businesses, and Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) coordinators. To build these strategic connections, agencies usually rely on individual staff members to conduct outreach to build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships. Agencies indicated that strategic partnerships with the private sector are integral in supporting newcomers to build their professional networks and often lead to opportunities for meaningful job placements.

While less common of an approach, some agencies in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* indicated that they engage the private sector in a more ad hoc manner dependent on client needs. This strategy of engaging the private sector is more sporadic, and many agencies who currently employ the needs-based approach expressed a desire to become more intentional and formalized in the future, but often cited a lack of funding and staff capacity as a barrier. Finally, another method of outreach to the private sector utilized by settlement and integration agencies is networking, primarily through job fairs and events, as well as through social media. The networking approach is often used in conjunction with the aforementioned strategies as a pathway for newcomers to facilitate direct contact with employers and job opportunities, while also providing an avenue for mutual exchange and communication between the private sector and newcomer communities.

Building connections with the community and wraparound service providers outside of the scope of the settlement and integration sector is critical in building community capacity to become more responsive and effective in meeting newcomers' needs. Throughout the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities, AAISA's members across the province shared two key strategies to strengthen capacity across diverse service providers:

- The first strategy proposes **stronger integration of newcomer services and perspectives** into all facets of community life. Many agencies suggested that the settlement and integration sector, and newcomers by extension, are often siloed from the greater community. To improve upon this and thereby strengthen the community's broad capacity to serve newcomers, participants suggested that the newcomer-serving sector must work more closely with community partners, such as schools, libraries, the private sector, healthcare providers, municipalities, faith groups, and ethnocultural communities, to better champion the unique needs and context of newcomers. Participants indicated that increased integration between the newcomer-serving sector and other service providers would increase mutual service capacity and awareness, ensure that all newcomers receive appropriate support, and foster communities that actively celebrate diversity.
- Participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* also indicated that **increased communication and information sharing** plays a key role in creating better connections with the community and wraparound service providers. To facilitate increased information sharing and communication, agencies highlighted the importance of networking events such as conferences and town halls, with many agencies underscoring the significance of LIPs and umbrella organizations as integral in facilitating these connections.

To strengthen communities' capacity to better serve newcomers needs, increased access to sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse service and programs is essential. To increase the availability and accessibility of these programs, participants of AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* shared a few points:

- Agencies suggested that settlement and integration programs must **actively address potential barriers** to ensure that access to programs is equitable and timely. Some common barriers that affect newcomers' access to services include language, financial constraints, limited access to technology, lack of childcare, and challenges surrounding transportation.
- While these may represent key barriers, participants emphasized that programming that is truly sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse takes an **intersectional approach** to holistically address the challenges and barriers newcomers experience to ensure that access to services remains equitable regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability, etc.
- Participants across the province highlighted that programming is only effective when it is continuously evaluated to **ensure maximum utility and responsiveness to client needs**, when it is delivered by staff who are equipped with proper training and expertise and is supported by agencies that are well resourced.

**Figure 4** further highlights the main ways in which agencies across Alberta's settlement and integration sector seek to offer sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse programming.



## RESPONDING TO EMERGING NEEDS AND UNDER-SERVED CLIENTS



**Figure 5.** *Methods to better equip agencies to offer sensitive, inclusive, respectful and diverse programming*

The *Responding to Emerging Needs and Under-served Clients* ASIP focus area refers to creating an Albertan settlement and integration sector that is able to better **serve and adapt to evolving newcomer needs, while also effectively reaching diverse clients and regions**. As a sector that faces multi-faceted challenges, this ASIP focus area generated robust feedback from settlement and integration agencies during AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*.

When asked which clients are under-served by Alberta's settlement and integration sector, participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* clearly identified two areas of focus:

- The first group of clients identified by participants as under-served are **highly vulnerable** newcomers. Participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* suggested highly vulnerable clients broadly includes members of the LGBTQ+ community, seniors, individuals with physical and/or cognitive disabilities, survivors of trauma and torture, older youth, low-income and low-literacy women, and individuals with complex mental and physical health needs. Participants shared that the aforementioned client groups often fall through the cracks of Alberta's settlement and integration sector as their intersecting needs and barriers make it very difficult for them to meaningfully navigate the system and access services that are holistically appropriate. While these client categories were noted as under-served across the province, participants indicated that the challenges and barriers



faced by vulnerable clients are exacerbated in Small Centres where there is a more limited ecosystem of supports.

- The second cohort of clients that participants of AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* identified as under-served are clients **ineligible for programs funded by IRCC**, including refugee claimants, naturalized Canadian citizens, international students, and Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs). While supports exist for these clients, participants indicated that funding and eligibility restrictions create a persistent lack of opportunities to meaningfully engage these clients and holistically meet their needs through specialized programming. Furthermore, participants shared that many temporary residents will go on to become Permanent Residents (PRs), and that the lack of services and supports provided to them early in their immigration journey serves to impede their long-term integration and negatively affects their perceptions of their community and willingness to give back.

To better support under-served clients and meet emerging needs, participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* overwhelmingly suggested that programming requires increased flexibility surrounding program delivery and client eligibility. Settlement and integration agencies across the province indicated that programming for newcomers is most successful when it is driven by client needs and has the flexibility to be tailored as challenges and barriers emerge. Furthermore, participants advocated for more bottom-up approaches to be utilized when developing programs and services for newcomers, and for increased autonomy for agencies to adapt programming and serve clients regardless of their immigration status. To further support this more flexible approach, participants suggested that constant conversations between all levels of government and other relevant stakeholders are integral in creating broad awareness, building trust and transparency, and ensuring the maximum efficacy of programs and services for newcomers.

Additionally, participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* indicated that increased program and community integration would better support under-served clients and meet emerging needs. To support more integrated approaches in programs and communities, agencies across the province emphasized that these services need to take a more holistic and intersectional approach to newcomer needs through increased community engagement, development and provision of programming that addresses the multi-faceted needs of newcomers (such as blended language and employment training), and delivery of services in community venues (such as schools, places of worship, community centres, etc.).

Settlement and integration agencies in Alberta's small centres face a unique and ever-changing context, and participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* shared two key strategies to better support under-served clients and meet emerging needs for newcomers in these settings:

- The first strategy proposes **increased utilization of technology and online programming**. Agencies suggested that there is a need for more online programming for newcomers in small centres to increase the availability and accessibility of diverse services. While agencies acknowledged that it may be difficult to offer some forms of specialized programming in small centres due to fewer client numbers, participants indicated that increased online delivery of specialized programs would help to circumvent this challenge. Moreover, participants suggested that more pathways need to be created for larger agencies to

meaningfully share resources with smaller agencies, and that these efforts must be supported with appropriate professional development to increase staff capacity to meaningfully utilize these resources.

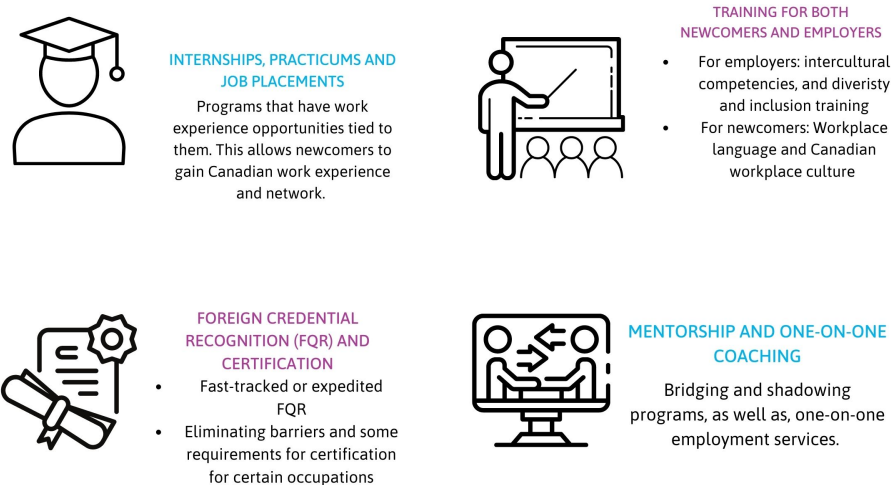
- The other strategy brought forth by participants to better support under-served clients and meet emerging needs in small centres was **increased community connections and outreach**. In alignment with feedback received across the ASIP focus areas, the entrenchment of newcomer services within the community is integral in facilitating positive outcomes for newcomers. Given the unique constraints and contexts faced in Alberta's small centres, participants emphasized that it is paramount that settlement and integration agencies conduct targeted outreach across community service providers to raise awareness to ensure that newcomers are able to access the full breadth of services available in each community.

Lastly, participants AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* highlighted four core areas in how they could be better equipped to deliver sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse programming to multi-barriered and vulnerable clients:

- The majority of participants suggested **professional development** as their main priority to better equip staff to deliver this type of programming. Agencies indicated that there is a need for more funding designated to professional development and learning opportunities, such as conferences, to build the knowledge and skills that's staff require when working with multi-barriered or highly vulnerable clients.
- Agencies also expressed a need for **increased funding to hire additional staff** to increase internal capacity and meet high demand for services. Some agencies indicated that they are very reliant on volunteers to be able to handle the ever-increasing workloads of staff.
- Participants also suggested that to be better positioned to offer more diverse and inclusive programming, agencies would highly benefit from **flexibility and fluidity in funding** to ensure suitability of services and programming.
- Agencies also indicated a desire for more **outreach and partnerships** not only with settlement and integration agencies, but also with wraparound services and the community as a whole.

For more detail on proposed strategies to deliver more sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse programming shared throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, please refer to **Figure 5**.

# SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION



**Figure 6.** *Effective programming to support the labour market integration of newcomers*

The *Supporting Initiatives to Improve Labour Market Integration* (LMI) ASIP focus area refers to **facilitating better outcomes for newcomers seeking to enter the Albertan labour market through improving information sharing amongst employers and the settlement and integration sector, connecting newcomers to appropriate existing resources and programming, and supporting the meaningful workplace integration of newcomers.** Throughout AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, participants shared several key challenges and best practices for increasing and improving newcomers’ LMI.

Participants in AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* identified a lack of job readiness as a key barrier impeding newcomers from joining the workforce, retaining their jobs, and getting promoted. Firstly, participants suggested that newcomers’ lack of job readiness is often attributed to limited Canadian work experience, underdeveloped soft skills (such as adaptability and communication), and limited understanding of Canadian workplace culture and norms (such as resume standards, interviewing practices, and expectations around job attendance). Furthermore, participants emphasized that job readiness is a multi-faceted issue that is deeply informed by the unique context of local job markets, the previous work experience of newcomers, the social capital and networks that newcomers may possess, the age and life experiences of newcomers, and Foreign Qualification Recognition (FQR) processes.

While a lack of job readiness is a key barrier to newcomers’ job acquisition, retention, and promotion, participants in AAISA’s *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* identified a lack of language proficiency as the main challenge affecting newcomers’ LMI. While challenges around language

proficiency and higher-level language acquisition pose a key barrier to the LMI of newcomers, participants suggested that the challenges around language are much more complex. In particular, participants highlighted that there is a persistent lack of specialized language training to support the unique needs of newcomers entering certain industries (such as training in industry specific jargon, health and safety protocols, formal customer service communication, etc.) or looking to build their skills through post-secondary education. Additionally, many employment programs that are currently available for newcomers have rigid language prerequisites. Participants expressed concern over these language prerequisites as this rigidity erases the other skills and attributes that newcomers may bring to a program, poses a challenge for newcomers with mixed benchmark proficiencies, and often prohibits clients from accessing a service that they could derive immense benefit from.

When asked about the most effective programming to support the LMI of newcomers in Alberta, participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* outlined two primary best practices:

- Agencies suggested that **internships, practicums, job placements, mentorship, one-on-one coaching**, and other programming options with a work experience component are the most valuable approach to improve the LMI of newcomers. Participants noted that work experience programming is most successful when it accentuates the unique skills of each newcomer, is tailored to suit client needs (such as language, childcare, schedule constraints, etc.), provides a living wage, and creates meaningful opportunities for newcomers to hone their skills, network in their field, and gain experience in a Canadian work environment.
- Participants also suggested **training** for both newcomers and employers as an integral strategy in supporting the LMI of newcomers. On the employer side, participating agencies in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* shared the importance of training employers in intercultural competencies, diversity and inclusion, and the unique assets that newcomers bring to the workplace. On the newcomer side, participants suggested a variety of training topics, including workplace language, digital competencies, workplace integration and skills development, resume writing, and Canadian workplace culture training.

Ultimately, participants noted that employment is a two-way street and requires buy-in and competency building from both newcomers and employers to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. As one participant in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* indicated, *"It's important to understand both the perspectives of employers and newcomers in order to synthesize a viable long-term solution. Employment-related settlement services are required to orient newcomers, whereas education and professional development services are helpful in encouraging employers to foster inclusive and welcoming environments. Both sides are crucial in establishing common understanding that is the foundation for integration."* Lastly, participants also emphasized the importance of fair and expedient FQR and the broad availability of bridging programs, mentorship, and one-on-one coaching as key elements of a system that robustly supports the LMI of newcomers across Alberta (**Figure 6**).

In supporting the LMI of newcomers, partnerships with a variety of stakeholders play a crucial role for agencies in Alberta's settlement and integration sector. During AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*, participants highlighted partnerships with employers as the most prominent strategy

to increase the LMI of newcomers. Across Alberta, agencies conduct targeted outreach to a variety of employers to help newcomers obtain a meaningful job placement that aligns with their skills and interests, build their social capital and networks, and garner Canadian work experience. While these partnerships directly support the LMI of newcomers, participants also highlighted how it is also beneficial for employers as they are able to attract uniquely skilled staff and build companies with a vibrant and diverse culture, which ultimately supports the broad economic prosperity of communities across Alberta. Next, participants identified that connections with other settlement and integration agencies are essential in supporting the LMI of newcomers. Some agencies acknowledged that employment services are not their specialty, but that they maintain strong partnerships and open communication with agencies who can provide newcomers with appropriate employment supports. Ultimately, participants suggested that collaboration amongst all facets of the settlement and integration sector is essential in ensuring the diverse needs of newcomers are met in a holistic and timely manner.

A key outcome of the ASIP funding program is for newcomers and the agencies that serve them to have current information about LMI in Alberta. When asked how they obtain current information about the Alberta job and labour market, agencies who participated in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* shared two prominent best practices:

- Agencies highlighted that LMI information is obtained through a variety of **partnerships**. Some key partnerships outlined by agencies included: employers, local municipalities, professional associations and certification bodies, local chambers of commerce, other agencies in the settlement and integration sector, and umbrella organizations. Participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* emphasized the importance of building connections that are strategic and informed by local job markets and trends, especially in small centres where the labour market is often built around a few key industries.
- Participants suggested that **research and networking** are key in obtaining relevant information about the Albertan labour and job market. Agencies suggested that subscribing to a variety of employment newsletters, keeping open channels of communication with the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, utilizing online databases (such as alis), tracking economic trends and policies, and attending a variety of local networking events and job fairs as critical in garnering a holistic understanding of the job and labour market. However, many agencies cited that this process is often time consuming and capacity draining. While larger agencies often have staff dedicated to conducting research and staying on top of trends, smaller agencies faced more challenges in staying up to date on current labour and job market information.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With the intention of supporting the Government of Alberta's ongoing knowledge and awareness of the needs, gaps, and opportunities in Alberta's settlement and integration sector, the following section outlines some key recommendations in relation to the Ministry of Labour and Immigration's ASIP funding as shared throughout AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement*. The following recommendations are presented in alignment with the four ASIP focus areas and are



disaggregated into general provincial recommendations and recommendations that are nuanced to the unique context of Alberta's small centres, in alignment with the Government of Alberta's emphasis on rural renewal. Due to the intersectional and mutually supportive nature of the ASIP focus areas, it is important to highlight that while these themes have been assigned to a particular focus area, many recommendations cross-pollinate across several focus areas.

The recommendations outlined in this section fall into two categories: *Investment Recommendations*, which relate to considerations for investment, and *Programmatic Recommendations*, which relate to program-level approaches to address the needs, gaps, and opportunities under each focus area. While the first type of recommendation falls within the purview of activities of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, *Programmatic Recommendations* may also apply to the overarching program of ASIP. Furthermore, *Programmatic Recommendations* additionally draw attention to areas highlighted by participants in AAISA's *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* process where programmatic development would benefit the objectives of each focus area, and where there is agency willingness to expand programming or partnerships to address persistent needs and gaps. The inclusion of these types of recommendations is intended to provide the Ministry of Labour and Immigration additional insight to consider when assessing the priorities under ASIP, application criteria, and targeting investments.

Ultimately, the following recommendations are intended to provide a foundation for both the Ministry of Labour and Immigration and Alberta's settlement and integration sector to collectively action gaps, address emerging needs, and leverage opportunities for collaboration and joint problem solving. The *Investment Recommendations* are targeted at the structure and focus of the broader ASIP investment program, while the *Programmatic Recommendations* are included to highlight areas where there is broad sector agreement and support for particular actions. In this manner, the *Programmatic Recommendations* can serve as a mechanism for agencies to tailor their proposals to these broader needs and recommendations, while also providing the Ministry an understanding of areas to prioritize.

## IMPROVING SETTLEMENT ACCESS

### PROVINCIAL

- Agencies have the strongest awareness of settlement and integration services available in their official language and region, and often lack knowledge of service and programming outside of their official language and region.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Create more opportunities for collaboration and relationship building across regions, municipalities, and official languages through events such as conferences, webinars, and townhalls designed to raise awareness, mobilize knowledge, build transparent communication channels, and facilitate provincial partnerships.

- Direct outreach and engagement with newcomer communities is the most salient strategy in raising awareness of available programs and services, and ultimately improves settlement access.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Support application requests for designated marketing and outreach staff who would coordinate outreach initiatives, such as customized networking events in key community and cultural spaces (such as places of worship and ethnocultural events), and who would also promote events and settlement services strategically over social media.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Prioritize investments that increase the availability of affordable and timely translation and interpretation for agencies to ensure that settlement information is broadly accessible for newcomers.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Improve the availability and accessibility of settlement information in a wide variety of service providers and venues (such as healthcare providers, schools, public transit, airports, and libraries) through onsite settlement staff and/or resources (brochures, booklets, service maps, etc.).
- Referrals between settlement and integration agencies are critical in ensuring that newcomers are able to meet their diverse needs and play a key role in improving settlement access.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Target support for backbone organizations, such as umbrella organizations and LIPs, as they are essential in facilitating provincial and municipal coordination, collaboration, and communication to streamline referrals and communication channels.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Facilitate increased opportunities for networking and information exchange between agencies, particularly for front-line staff, to build staff capacity to foster more informed referrals. Possible networking opportunities may include conferences, site-visits, and regular meetings and communication.
- Many agencies and individual staff already have various partners and collaborative networks that are not being fully leveraged to support information sharing and referrals due to a lack of formalization and coordination.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Direct investment toward staff and other resources needed to create more formalized pathways between agencies through partnership agreements and MOUs to support consistency and transparency in referrals, better protect client confidentiality, and ensure that clients actually access the services they are referred to.

## SMALL CENTRES

- While outreach and marketing are integral in improving settlement access, there is often limited staff capacity and expertise in small agencies.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Improve the availability and accessibility of professional development to support existing staff within small centre agencies to become more effective at marketing and promotion, particularly over social media.



- Partnerships and connections with a variety of stakeholders are especially important in Alberta’s small centres where there is often a more limited ecosystem of supports.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Integrate settlement services and information into local municipal services and wraparound service providers through training and targeted resource development.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Create more avenues for agencies in small centres to connect with agencies in urban centres to share resources, best practices, and facilitate mutual learning through networking events and virtual platforms.

## **BUILDING COMMUNITIES’ CAPACITY TO BETTER SERVE NEWCOMERS NEEDS**

### **PROVINCIAL**

- Combatting racism and xenophobia are essential in building community capacity to better serve newcomers needs and support diverse and inclusive communities across Alberta.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Provide funding and support for agencies to develop, implement, and disseminate anti-oppression policies that are broadly adaptable to a variety of service providers.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Provide dedicated funding to support public engagement events that build bridges and common understanding between marginalized groups, such as newcomers, racialized individuals, and indigenous communities, as well as members of the general public, to foster communication and mutual knowledge exchange.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Create opportunities for community stakeholders, including the non-profit sector, private sector, school system, media, etc., to be engaged to build ownership in activities to address anti-immigration and racist sentiments through public events, media exposure, and the sharing of best practices.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Expand opportunities, both in-person and online, for staff and volunteers of agencies to access professional development and education on how to combat xenophobia and racism both internally and externally.
- Strategic engagement of key players in the private sector is a critical strategy in building community capacity to better serve newcomers, which ultimately supports broad economic prosperity.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Increase networking opportunities between members of the private sector (such as key local industries, small business, chambers of commerce, banks, certification bodies, etc.), settlement and integration agencies, and various levels of government to improve channels of communication and collaboratively meet the employment needs of newcomers and communities at large.
- Mutual capacity building between the newcomer-serving sector and other community service providers is essential to better serve newcomer needs.

- ***Investment Recommendation:*** Support the increased availability and accessibility of training on anti-racism, diversity and inclusion, and intercultural competency building for employers and wraparound service providers (such as schools, healthcare providers, etc.) to ensure that newcomers are treated more empathetically and equitably across the community.
- ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Create more opportunities for mutual knowledge exchange between the newcomer-serving sector and other community service providers to foster increased awareness and collaboration.
- ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Increase the presence of services and information for newcomers in various service providers and venues (such as places of worship, transit offices, libraries, healthcare providers) to better integrate newcomer needs into all facets of the community.
- Holistically addressing the intersectional barriers of newcomers is integral to increase community capacity, and to also ensure access to sensitive, inclusive, respectful, and diverse service and programs.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Encourage ASIP funding applicants to provide substantive details in their proposals on how programming has been client-informed or developed based on newcomer input to encourage the expansion of this best-practice in program development.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Provide more opportunities for consultation with newcomer communities when developing services and programs to mitigate barriers and ensure alignment with needs.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Create more opportunities for professional development for staff in newcomer-serving agencies to ensure that all clients receive equitable treatment (topics may include SOGIE training, intercultural communication, anti-racism and discrimination, trauma-informed care, etc.).

## SMALL CENTRES

- To build capacity in smaller communities, it is essential that all available resources are leveraged, and all service providers are equipped to effectively serve newcomers.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Increase opportunities amongst key community stakeholders, such as local municipalities, schools, healthcare providers, the private sector, and ethnocultural communities, to facilitate more communication, collaboration, and coordination with the newcomer-serving sector to build mutual capacity.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Initiate public awareness and educational campaigns in Alberta's smaller communities to combat xenophobia and champion the invaluable contributions of newcomers to Alberta's small centres.

# RESPONDING TO EMERGING NEEDS AND UNDER-SERVED CLIENTS

## PROVINCIAL

- Clients that are highly vulnerable, multi-barriered, and IRCC ineligible are the most under-served in Alberta's settlement and integration sector and require tailored supports and approaches to better meet their needs and ensure they do not slip through the cracks.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Target funding provision to programs and services that are tailored to the unique needs of highly vulnerable clients, such as: LGBTQ+ newcomers, seniors, older youth, survivors of torture and trauma, single parents, etc.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Mobilize knowledge surrounding which agencies are funded to serve IRCC-ineligible clients (such as TFWs, international students, naturalized citizens, and refugee claimants) and what services are available to them.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Facilitate more opportunities for agencies to share best practices and resources on how to better support highly vulnerable and multi-barriered clients through conferences, town halls, and meetings through LIPs and umbrella organizations.
- Increased flexibility and autonomy surrounding program delivery, in conjunction with increased integration of settlement services into the community, will serve to better respond to emerging needs and under-served clients.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Initiate more opportunities for bottom-up engagement and consultation on services and programs for newcomers to ensure alignment with emerging needs.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Implement increased funding flexibility and client eligibility to ensure that programs can be adapted as needs emerge, and that newcomer-serving agencies remain nimble to evolving contexts.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Lengthen ASIP funding contracts to allow more time to implement, tailor, and sustain programs to ensure optimal outcomes for newcomers, agencies, communities, and funders.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Create regular channels of communication between all levels of government, settlement and integration agencies, and other key stakeholders to share on emerging needs and under-served clients to support mutual capacity building, transparency, and collaborative solutions.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Improve the integration of newcomer services and information across all service providers to better reach under-served clients and raise awareness across communities through increased information sharing, broad provision of training on newcomers and their unique needs, and networking events.

## SMALL CENTRES

- Innovative approaches to delivering programming that is tailored to the unique needs of highly vulnerable and multi-barriered clients is essential in responding to emerging needs and under-served clients in Alberta’s small centres.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Prioritize increased online and itinerant delivery of specialized programming to improve accessibility and availability.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Increase opportunities for training on digital literacy for clients and staff to ensure that virtual programming to improve the utilization and efficacy of online programming.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Facilitate increased provincial collaboration between small centres and urban areas to share best practices and innovative approaches relating to under-served clients and emerging needs.
- Outreach and engagement are paramount in Alberta’s small centres to ensure that the entire community is a cohesive ecosystem that collaboratively meets emerging needs and reaches under-served clients.
  - **Investment Recommendation:** Provide dedicated funding for newcomer-serving agencies in small centres to conduct strategic engagement of key community stakeholders to foster broad awareness of the unique needs and barriers and facilitate community-driven responses.

## SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

### PROVINCIAL

- Job readiness and language are the main barriers affecting newcomers’ labour market integration, and it is critical that programming actively addresses these main barriers to ensure its efficacy.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Work closely with regulatory and certification bodies to improve current processes to expedite newcomers’ labour market integration and ensure that newcomers are able to obtain gainful employment.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Integrate soft skills, intercultural competencies, and digital literacy training into all employment programs to improve upon newcomers’ job readiness
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Work closely with employers to raise awareness on the unique assets that newcomers bring to the Canadian workplace to address the barrier of Canadian work experience.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Increase the flexibility around language requirements for employment programs to allow case-by-case analysis of each newcomers’ unique skills and context.
  - **Programmatic Recommendation:** Support the development of blended employment and language programming and specialized employment language

training, such as industry-specific occupational health and safety language training, etc.

- Programming that provides newcomers with tangible experience in the Canadian workplace is the most beneficial pathway to improve labour market integration when it is appropriately supported by employers.
  - ***Investment Recommendation:*** Direct funding toward the provision of work experience programming for newcomers, including work placements, internships, practicums, job shadowing, etc.
  - ***Investment Recommendation:*** Improve the accessibility of experiential employment programming funded through ASIP through allocating funds to living wages, stipends, flexible scheduling, and childcare when possible and appropriate.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Provide widespread training and develop accreditation for employers to support meaningful diversity, inclusion, and intercultural competencies to create vibrant workplaces that actively celebrate newcomers and accentuates and leverages their unique assets.
- Partnerships both inside and outside the newcomer-serving sector are integral in improving the labour market integration of newcomers.
  - ***Investment Recommendation:*** Direct investment towards creating more pathways for collaboration, communication, and coordination amongst the private sector and the settlement and integration sector to encourage mutual capacity building and awareness through conferences, networking events, and regular meetings.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Mobilize knowledge on which settlement and integration agencies are funded for specific programs to streamline referrals and ensure that newcomers are able to access appropriate and timely employment supports.
- Access to labour market information that is both current and contextually relevant is an integral element in improving the labour market integration of newcomers.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Expand opportunities and increase the access for information sharing and networking across key stakeholders, including the non-profit, private, and public sectors, to improve channels of communication and coordination regarding current labour market trends and needs across Alberta through job fairs, regularized communication (such as newsletters and bulletins), and increase access and expand content of existing online hubs (such as alis).

## SMALL CENTRES

- The labour market and context of each Small Centre is unique, and full community participation is essential in achieving improved labour market integration outcomes for newcomers.
  - ***Programmatic Recommendation:*** Leverage the invaluable expertise of small centre newcomer-serving agencies on the specific employment needs and

challenges of their local communities to guide program development and resource allocation through bottom-up engagement and consultation.

- ***Investment Recommendation:*** Provide dedicated funding for a local employment coordinator to support all small centre newcomer-serving agencies within a community with current research, trends, and policy on local and provincial labour market information.

## CONCLUSION

Alberta's newcomer-serving sector is comprised of a complex and interdependent ecosystem of supports, of which the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Labour and Immigration represents an integral element. The *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement* activities provided an invaluable opportunity for AAISA, its members, and the Government of Alberta, to garner a deeper understanding of the unique needs, challenges, gaps, and opportunities present across Alberta's settlement and integration sector. Furthermore, while this knowledge development and mobilization has the potential to inform future priorities under the ASIP funding stream, the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement Report* holds merit for all stakeholders in Alberta's dynamic settlement and integration sector.

As the umbrella organization for Alberta's settlement and integration system, AAISA is eager to collaboratively address the needs, gaps, and challenges shared throughout the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement Report*. Through ongoing engagement initiatives, research and policy work, and professional development activities, the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement Report* will provide essential context to orient AAISA's multi-faceted work with stakeholders across the province. Furthermore, it is AAISA's intention that the development and dissemination of the *ASIP Stakeholder Engagement Report* engender joint responsibility across Alberta's diverse settlement and integration sector to collaboratively address these gaps, needs, and challenges.



## GLOSSARY

**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.

**Connect:** To make contact with a person, group, or service to gain information, access services or develop a relationship/network.

**Foreign Qualification Recognition (FQR):** The process of verifying that education and job experience obtained in another country are equivalent to the standards established for Canadian professionals. Credential recognition for regulated occupations is mainly a provincial responsibility that has been delegated in legislation to regulatory bodies.

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

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

**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.

**Outcome:** An outcome is the impact or consequence from the products or services produced. It addresses the questions: What has been achieved by the project?

- Immediate outcomes: Generally changes in awareness, attitude, knowledge or skill that result from the products or services produced.  
*Examples: Students feel more confident interacting in English; Clients are aware of their CLB levels.*
- Intermediate outcomes: Changes in behaviour as a consequence of achieving one or more of the immediate outcomes.  
*Examples: Students communicate more successfully outside the classroom; clients access language training appropriate to their needs.*
- Ultimate outcomes: Changes in condition or a state of a broader population  
*Examples: Environmental, social, political changes*



**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

**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.

**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 the Calgary and Edmonton metropolitan areas.


**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.

**Wraparound services:** Programs and supports that are outside of the settlement and integration sector that serve to address the complex and holistic needs of a newcomer.

# APPENDIX I

## OVERVIEW OF THE ALBERTA SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PROGRAM (ASIP)



**Alberta  
Settlement  
Integration  
Program**

**ASIP GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Expand and develop services, practices, and collaborative partnerships
- Be flexible and responsive to changing needs and emerging issues
- Address gaps and complement existing services rather than duplicating services
- Promote innovation
- Promote effective distribution of services across the province
- Use evaluation to build evidence


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### ASIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW


Areas of Focus:

Service Providers Have:


Newcomers Have:




- Improving settlement information accessibility
- Building communities' capacity to better serve newcomer's needs
- Responding to emerging needs and under-served clients
- Supporting initiatives to improve labour market integration



- Greater awareness about services and programs available
- More knowledge of newcomer needs and skills for effective services
- Increased services for unique needs (e.g. seniors, women, LGBTQ, etc.)
- Current information about labour market integration
- Essential skills for unique needs in communities, especially rural
- Increased workplace awareness & responsiveness to needs



- Greater awareness about services and programs available
- More ability to access services and connect with communities sooner
- Current information about labour market integration
- Increased access to sensitive, inclusive, respectful and diverse services and programs



This infographic was developed by the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) to support stakeholder engagement to help inform the Alberta Settlement and Integration Plan (ASIP) call for proposal funded by the Ministry of Labour and Immigration

Retrieved July 30, 2019, from <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/lbr-settlement-integration-program.pdf>

## APPENDIX II

### AAISA'S ASIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Does your organization currently receive funding from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration under the Settlement and Language Programs (SILP) grants?</b>
	<b>If YES:</b>
1	For what program(s) and/or projects?
2	Which clients are eligible?
3	Are the programs and/or projects meeting their intended outcomes as identified in your grant agreement? Why or why not.
	<b>If NO:</b>
1	Has your agency put in a proposal for funding under the Ministry of Labour and Immigration's SILP grants previously?
2	Has your agency submitted a project or program proposal for funding from Labour and Immigration in the past 3 years? Did you receive any funding?
3	Did you request feedback on your proposal? Did the feedback help you understand how your proposal could be improved?
<b>Q2</b>	<b>Based on the context of your agency and the clients you serve, what are the top three most pressing challenges and gaps affecting:</b>
1	Newcomers
2	Your organization
<b>Q3</b>	<b>There are 4 areas of focus in the Ministry of Labour and Immigration's Alberta Settlement and Integration Plan. Identify which area of focus is most pertinent to both your organization and newcomers in relation to the needs, gaps and challenges identified in the previous question.</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Improving settlement access</b>
1	Rate your awareness of available programs and services across Alberta's settlement sector, with 1 being very unaware and 5 being very aware. How did you determine this rating? How could your awareness be increased?
2	What could your organization do to increase newcomers' service knowledge and uptake of settlement services?
3	Does your organization make referrals and share information with other service providers? If so, how do referrals and information exchanges occur? What are some challenges, gaps and best practices?
4	What partnerships does your organization have? Please provide examples of partners your organization works with to deliver settlement services.
<b>B</b>	<b>Building communities' capacity</b>
1	What is your organization doing to combat xenophobia and racism? Do you have any special projects or initiatives underway? What are the challenges and best practices in these efforts?
2	What strategies does your organization use to engage with employers and the private sector?
3	What are some ways that Alberta's settlement and integration sector can build more connections with the community and mainstream services?
4	What does sensitive, diverse, inclusive and respectful programming look like for you? What is needed to make this kind of programming more accessible to newcomers?
<b>C</b>	<b>Emerging needs and underserved clients</b>
1	In your opinion, which client groups are underserved by Alberta's settlement and integration sector? What are some persistent and emerging needs for this/these client group(s)?

2	How can the settlement and integration sector better support underserved clients and respond to emerging needs?
3	What are some ways to improve settlement services to underserved clients in smaller or rural communities?
4	Does your organization have any partnerships to support clients with unique needs?
5	What supports would make your agency better equipped to deliver sensitive, diverse, inclusive, and respectful programming to newcomers?
<b>D</b>	<b>Improving Labour Market Integration</b>
1	What barriers are impeding newcomers from joining the workforce, retaining their jobs and/or getting promoted?
2	What kinds of programs, services, and strategies are effective in the labour market integration of newcomers?
3	Please provide some examples of partnerships your organization has with employers to support the labour market integration of newcomers.
4	How does your organization obtain information about the Alberta job and the Labour market?