



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in South East Region of Saskatchewan

This community report is part of the “Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC’s Western Region” study.



The South East Region of Saskatchewan includes the following four major urban centres together with dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and dozens of rural municipalities consisting of farms, small acreages and small hamlets.



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Major Urban Centres	Population 2011 Census	Permanent Resident Landings 2009-2013
Yorkton	15,669	667
Estevan	11,054	796
Weyburn	10,484	525
Melville	4,517	25

Data Sources: 14 Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from governmental and non-governmental sources.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Information, orientation and referrals related to settlement services
- Language assessment and training
- Career planning and employment search and referrals
- Training in accessing and using technology
- Orientation to communities and various sectors
- Accessing and processing documents and applications



Key gaps identified

- Information on and access to settlement and integration programs
- Language training at all levels
- Career planning and employment training and searches
- International credential recognition
- Services for spouses and for newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services
- Accessible and affordable transportation and driver training



Barriers to access services

- Absence of settlement and mainstream service provider agencies in smaller communities
- Insufficient information on availability and eligibility for services
- Transportation challenges (e.g., lack of public transportation)
- Ineligibility by some newcomers to access some services



Top services needed

- Language training
- Career planning, job searches, and job related training
- International credential recognition
- Community and sectorial orientation
- Family support services for daily living
- Orientation and support for social networking



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

- Reception/welcoming and community orientation
- Accessing, completing and submitting applications
- International credential recognition
- Language training
- Health and dental
- Education and training for employment purposes

PARTNERSHIPS



- Most, but not all, organizations are involved in partnerships.
- Partnerships exist in all three functional areas (i.e., settlement, integration, and warm and welcoming communities).
- Partnerships include settlement service provider organizations as well as other non-governmental and governmental organizations in several major sectors (e.g., employment, housing, education, health, family and child support, justice, culture, recreation, religion, business, and municipal).

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



- Perceptions of the ease and difficulty for newcomers to integrate vary, but generally fall within the somewhat easy to somewhat difficult range.
- Economic and community integration are facilitated or hampered by a combination of three sets of factors:
 - The extent to which newcomers are able to access settlement and integration services,
 - The aptitudes and attitudes of newcomers, and
 - The ways community members view and treat newcomers.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: South East Region of Saskatchewan

Introduction

This report is part of a larger project designed to better understand two aspects of settlement and integration services in Western Canada. This report provides a summary of the findings of a survey of settlement and integration services for newcomers in the South East Region of Saskatchewan.

The report has four principal foci: the factors affecting the settlement and integration of newcomers in this region; the existing and needed settlement and integration services for newcomers; the capacities of service provider organizations to offer those services and what may be required to increase those capacities; and the existing and potential partnerships in planning and providing services for improving the settlement and integration prospects of newcomers.

The information for the report was collected through interviews conducted in November and December 2014 with 14 representatives of selected settlement and integration service provider organizations and some other types of service provider organizations in the region. Although 14 interviews were conducted, the actual number of respondents to each question in this report may vary because not all interviewees responded to all questions.

Background Information

PROFILE OF SOUTH EAST REGION

The South East Region of Saskatchewan includes the following types of communities: four cities (Yorkton, Estevan, Melville, and Weyburn), dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and dozens of rural municipalities consisting of small hamlets, farms, and acreages. The four cities in the region are Yorkton, Estevan, Weyburn and Melville). According to Statistics Canada, the population of Yorkton in 2011 was 15,669 compared to 15,038 in 2006. The population of Estevan in 2011 was 11,054 compared to 10,084 in 2006. The population of Weyburn was 10,484 in 2011 compared to 9,433 in 2006. The population of Melville was 4,517 in 2011 compared to 5,149 in 2006.

IMMIGRATION FLOWS TO SOUTH EAST REGION

CIC of immigration statistics from 2009-2013 indicate the arrival of approximately 2000 permanent residents to this region, which constitutes approximately 4% of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period. They also indicate that of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period the majority were destined to the three major centres in that region namely: Estevan (796), Yorkton (667), and Weyburn (525).

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS

All respondents indicated that the number of newcomers living in the community increased in the past 5 years. Almost all speculated that this was due to the economic boom and the resulting extensive opportunities for employment in the resources and services sectors. One respondent also indicated that it was due to the perception among newcomers that the community provided a safe environment in which to raise a family.

Community Settlement

EASE OF SETTLEMENT IN COMMUNITIES

The fourteen respondents were divided on their perception of how easy it was for newcomers to settle in their community. Whereas 67% of the respondents reported it was either 'somewhat easy' (6) or 'easy' (2), 43% reported it was 'somewhat difficult' (6). Despite those differences on the ease of settlement, the general consensus among respondents was that many newcomers faced a wide range of challenges in settling and that services are needed to facilitate their settlement.

FACTORS AFFECTING SETTLEMENT

Respondents highlighted several factors that either facilitated or hampered settlement. Interestingly, in some cases the same factors facilitated some aspects of settlement but hampered others (e.g., size of the community). Similarly, in some cases the existence of a particular factor facilitated settlement, but its absence hampered it (e.g. adequate and affordable housing). In other words, some factors are 'Janus-like' in that they have both positive and negative characteristics or effects, and other factors are essentially 'two sides of the same coin'.

The three major sets of factors cited as facilitating or hampering settlement in various communities are what might be referred to as services factors, economic and employment factors, and community factors.

The services factors cited as facilitating settlement in communities include: the readily available information on settlement services provided (1); the existence of newcomer information centres and settlement organizations (3); and the proximity and accessibility to some settlement services (1).

The economic and employment factors that facilitate settlement identified by respondents include: the economic boom and the resulting large number of jobs available (1), the skill sets newcomers have (2), and the willingness of newcomers to take whatever jobs are available (3).

The community factors identified by respondents include: smaller communities are easier to settle in because, among other things, people are willing to help all neighbours, including newcomers (2); settlement supports provided by employers (1); many newcomers who come to the region know some other newcomers who had already settled there (1); and some, though not all newcomers, find members from their own ethnocultural communities who provide them with support and help them establish social networks (1).

Respondents also identified several related factors that hampered the settlement of newcomers, including the following: the paucity of settlement service agencies and settlement services provided (3); the relatively ad-hoc manner in which newcomers are referred from one agency to another, without any tracking of where they have been or where they are being referred, which sometimes results in an unproductive, confusing and frustrating circular services search for newcomers (1); the challenges of unemployment or underemployment faced by some newcomers (2); the paucity of adequate and affordable housing (2); the difficulties in establishing social groups for a variety of reasons including language barriers and 'culture shock' (1); the transportation challenges to access various types of services due to long distances between smaller rural and urban communities and larger urban centres (2); and the absence of members of newcomers families or ethnocultural communities (1).

When asked what issue or barrier makes it most difficult for newcomers to settle successfully in their communities, respondents pointed to the following: the paucity or absence not only of readily available information on settlement services, but also of readily available and accessible settlement services and other services (e.g. health care) (5); the shortage of adequate and affordable housing (4); the inability of some newcomers to access

convenient or affordable accessible transportation (1); and the cultural differences and insufficient mutual acceptance both by newcomers and non-newcomers (2). A key point made in relation to the last factor by one respondent was that in some cases there was insufficient acceptance of newcomers by the community and in some cases there was insufficient acceptance of the community by newcomers.

Although respondents indicated that each of those factors constituted major barriers to settlement in communities, it is important to note that many, though by no means all, stem from the fact that many newcomers with a wide range of needs are living in smaller urban and rural communities that do not have either the various types of services or the community contexts required to meet those needs.

FACTORS AFFECTING GETTING JOBS

Of the 14 respondents who commented on the degree of ease or difficulty faced by newcomers in getting jobs, the majority indicated that was either easy (7) or somewhat easy (5), and the minority indicated that it was difficult (2).

Respondents also noted that the barriers that made it most difficult for newcomers in getting jobs include: inadequate language skills (10); challenging or inappropriate accreditation standards and inadequate international credential recognition (6); insufficient information and supports in finding jobs (1); transportation challenges for some newcomers (2); lack of awareness by employers who need employees of existence of unemployed newcomers (1); prejudice among employers (1); newcomer pride which gets in the way of accepting some entry level or non-professional jobs (1); and the inappropriate visa status for eligibility to work (1).

Some respondents underscored that the effects of various factors on the prospects newcomers getting jobs vary among individuals. Others noted that while most principal applicants are able to find jobs, their spouses often find it more difficult to find jobs. Some respondents also indicated that employment opportunities for newcomers tend to be concentrated in entry level positions in the service sector which do not pay high wages, and added that this makes it difficult for such newcomers to afford living in some areas where others are making very high wages (e.g., areas with industries in the natural resources sector).

One respondent also noted that some newcomers miss employment opportunities that arise over time because they either stop searching for jobs through formal and informal networks, or they stop applying for some types of jobs.

Available Settlement Services

TYPES OF NEWCOMERS SERVED

The respondents of service provider organizations indicated their organizations tended to serve five major groups, namely: permanent residents (12); temporary foreign workers and their families (13); refugees (4); refugee claimants (3); new and returning naturalized Canadian citizens (8); international students (4); and none (1).

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES PROVIDED

Respondents identified a broad range of services they provide newcomers. The list of services includes the following: initial settlement needs assessment and counselling (1); information, orientation and referral (2); language assessment and training (6); interpretation and translation (1); career planning and employment search and referrals (4); adult basic education (1); community networking and cultural bridging (e.g., community suppers) (1); student and family support (1); child care (2); citizenship application and exam preparation (1); sectors orientation (e.g., financial, labour, health, education sectors) (2); document and application access and processing (e.g., official documents and application forms) (2); and training in using and access to basic technology (e.g., computers, copiers, faxes, and internet) (3).

Whereas 8 of respondents indicated that in some communities an expansion of settlement services provided is required, 4 indicated that an expansion is not required. Some of those who indicated an expansion of services was required pointed out that more human and financial resources would be required to facilitate the expansion.

It must be noted that whereas in some cases those responses focused only on expanding the number or scope of some services, in other cases they also focused on their expansion in making them available to larger number of newcomers who are either eligible or ineligible for CIC funded services. For example, at least one respondent indicated that community businesses and organizations should consider doing more to provide supports for settlement of many other categories of newcomers comparable to what is sometimes provided for professionals in the health care sector.

SERVICES NEEDED MOST FOR SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Respondents indicated that the services needed most for settlement and integration are: language training at all levels (open to all and accessible at various times through the entire week during days and evenings) (10); career planning and employment training and searches,

especially for the unemployed and lower skilled newcomers (5); information on and access to various settlement and integration programs (4); finding adequate, appropriate and affordable housing (3); international credential recognition (2); affordable and convenient transportation (1); more easily accessible health services (1); religious services (1); support and case management services for newcomers with special needs (1); health services (1); and assistance on immigration matters (1).

Furthermore, some respondents noted that to ensure the availability and accessibility of many of those services within some local communities, it is imperative to do the following: establish and support some organizations (e.g., settlement service agencies, newcomer welcome centres, and Regional Newcomer Gateways) (4); centralize settlement services (1); establish offices either within or very close to communities in the region that could deal with immigration issues faced by newcomers (1); increase the involvement by municipal governments in settlement and integration (2); and establish an “immigrant leadership program” (1).

SERVICES NEEDED MOST BY NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents noted that the services most needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services are essentially the same as those needed by newcomers who are eligible for such services. This includes: language training (7); reception/welcoming and community orientation (3); accessing, completing and submitting application forms related to various matters (e.g., immigration, citizenship, education and training, etc.) (2); health and dental services (2); career training (1); international credential recognition (1); and education and training (1).

Some respondents identified temporary foreign workers and refugee claimants as two distinct groups that should be eligible for some settlement and integration services (e.g., applications related to their legal status and their rights to live, work, and receive services and social benefits in Canada) (3).

Several respondents indicated that they provide as many services as possible to anyone who needs them regardless of whether they are considered eligible for federally funded programs or services, and that they are able to do this partly because they receive some funding from the provincial governments and to a lesser extent also from other sources.

Most, if not all, of the services most needed by this group of newcomers are more readily accessible in the larger centres with full-fledged settlement service agencies than in smaller communities.

Assessment of Newcomer Needs

Respondents were relatively evenly divided between those who indicated their organizations assessed the needs of newcomers on a regular basis and those who indicated they did not assess those needs on a regular basis. A total of 10 organizations conducted such assessments either on a regular or irregular basis. Of those organizations 6 indicated that they assessed those needs on their own, and 4 indicated they assessed those needs jointly with other SPOs. Furthermore, respondents also indicated their organizations conducted such assessments in several different ways including: weekly/monthly staff meetings; preparation of quarterly business plans; annual board meetings; conducting surveys of newcomers using Survey Monkey; discussions and information-sharing with other service provider organizations; and reliance on various types of assessments conducted by governmental funders.

Organizational Capacities

Responses to the question on whether organizations had adequate capacity to perform various functions were mixed. In the case of each function some organizations indicated they had enough capacity and some indicated they did not. The four areas in which the majority of organizations indicated they had sufficient capacity are: the staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services (8 yes and 5 no); staff to provide services (7 yes and 6 no); creation of governing and strategic plan (7 yes and 6 no); meet reporting requirements (8 yes and 4 no).

The areas in which the majority of respondents indicated their organizations did not have sufficient organizational capacity include the following: communication with stakeholders (6 yes and 7 no); mobilization of community to support and welcome newcomers (5 yes and 7 no); coordinating services with other service providers (5 yes and 8 no); and provide services in both official languages (5 yes and 8 no).

In the case of level of financial support from various sources, the respondents were relatively divided on whether they had sufficient financial resources from governmental sources to provide services (8 yes and 5 no), but very few indicated they had sufficient financial resources from non-governmental sources to provide services (2 yes and 7 no).

Partnerships

Approximately two thirds of respondents indicated their organizations had partnerships with other organizations, and approximately one third indicated they did not.

Their responses indicate that organizations involved in partnerships are relatively evenly divided across the three functional areas in which partnering occurred: settlement (7), integration (7), and warm and welcoming communities (5).

They also indicated that organizations for which settlement service provision has not been either their sole or principal responsibility, but have been involved in partnerships include various types of local and regional mainstream service organizations in several major sectors (e.g., business, employment, economic development, housing, education, health family and child support, justice, culture, recreation, religion, business, and municipal). Within the economic development sector they identified some key organizations such as what are known as community development agencies and the Immigrant Access Fund.

Two notable examples of partnerships are those developed in the region during the past decade. The first was the East Central Community Settlement Committee (ECCSC), which was established in 2008 to provide an advisory role for Partners in Settlement and Integration services agency in Yorkton. The second was the Weyburn Newcomers Advocacy Committee (WNAC), which was established in 2013 to provide advice and coordination for the development and delivery of settlement and integration services in Weyburn. Both partnerships consisted of representatives of various non-governmental and governmental community service providers in various sectors (e.g., education, health, etc.), individual and umbrella ethnocultural and multicultural associations, employers, and labour).

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