



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Kamloops, British Columbia

This community report is part of the "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region" study.

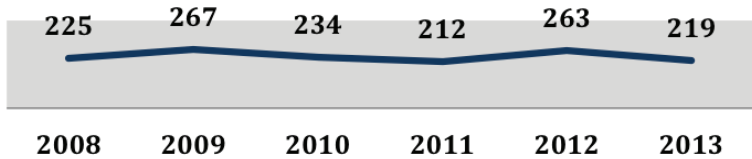


Population (2011): 98,754 residents

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

Permanent Resident Landings Kamloops 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Data sources: 3 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from Provincial, CIC, other federal sources. One SPO receives tuition from students

- Findings validated locally

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Information and orientation, interpretation services, language training, cultural events, assistance finding a job, recreational services, and help with daily life.
- Almost all services were indicated to be offered to some extent in Kamloops.



Key gaps identified

- A large number of services require expansion
- Lack of adequate organizational capacities for service provider organizations



Barriers to access services

- Lack of information about services available and where to get help
- Ineligibility for services
- Language and financial difficulties of newcomers
- Discrimination because of being a newcomer
- Transportation difficulties



Top services needed

Assistance finding a job, educational upgrading, occupational mentorship and networking, language training, interpretation services, greeting upon arrival, information and orientation.



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Language training, educational upgrading, assistance finding a job, information and orientation, integration support, foreign credential recognition.

PARTNERSHIPS



Kamloops service providers partner with other SPOs to deliver services to newcomers.

Most participants were engaged in a limited number of partnerships.

Participants reported a desire for a partnership with most of the listed partners.

Provincial funding was more effective than current CIC funding in promoting partnership and collaboration among SPOs.



INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY

- Perception: It is "somewhat difficult" for newcomers to settle in Kamloops due to language barriers and discrimination.
- Low levels of English, lack of information about the Canadian job market and employer discrimination make it "somewhat difficult" for newcomers to find jobs in Kamloops.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Kamloops, British Columbia

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to better understand the settlement and integration services available to newcomers and to explore the service gaps and opportunities in Kamloops, British Columbia and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Kamloops by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Kamloops. Data was collected in October 2014 from 3 organizations that serve newcomers in Kamloops through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. All of the organizations receive provincial funding. In addition, one receives funding from CIC, one receives tuition from students, and the third receives other federal funding. One participant provided feedback by telephone on the preliminary survey findings contained in the draft report.

Background

Kamloops is located in the interior of British Columbia. According to Statistics Canada, the 2011 population was 98,754, a 6.4% increase from 2006. CIC figures indicate that 1,420 Permanent Residents (PRs) arrived to Kamloops from 2008-2013.

Community Settlement Concerns

Survey respondents unanimously agreed that the number of newcomers living in or near Kamloops has increased in the last five years, and speculated that possible reasons for this could include increasing numbers of international students choosing to study in Kamloops, and the tough economic situation in the lower mainland that may have led some newcomers to seek work in the BC interior where the cost of living is slightly lower. However, when asked how easy it is for newcomers to settle in Kamloops, 2 respondents indicated that it is "somewhat difficult" due to language barriers and perceived cultural differences among newcomers and long term residents.

ACCESSING SETTLEMENT SERVICES

In terms of accessing services, 2 respondents agreed that over 25% of newcomers to Kamloops find it difficult to locate the services they need, either because services are not available or because newcomers lack accurate information about available services. Further to this, respondents indicated that a number of concerns have been raised about the ability of newcomers to access services, including: confusion about where to get help, not being eligible for services, language difficulties, financial difficulties, and discrimination because of being a newcomer. Two respondents also mentioned transportation difficulties, hours of the day that services are offered, and discrimination based on race or ethnicity.

GETTING JOBS

All respondents reported that it is "somewhat difficult" to find jobs. Low levels of English and lack of information about the Canadian job market are considered to be key factors. Discrimination by employers is another concern. Employer discrimination tends to be based on perceived cultural differences and not speaking English as a first language.

Available Settlement Services

CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDER CAPACITY

One respondent provided information about the number of newcomers they serve. That organisation serves 30 PRs, 8 Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), 2 Refugees, 3 International Students, and 15 Naturalized Citizens. In addition, in the month before the survey was carried out, 6 Visitors requested but did not receive services.

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

All of the organisations surveyed provide the following services: information and orientation, interpretation services, language training, cultural events, help finding a job, recreational services, and help with daily life. The only service listed in Appendix A that is not provided by any respondent is investment opportunities. However, 1 respondent indicated that this service is provided by another SPO. Overall, every service listed in Appendix A was indicated by at least 1 respondent to be offered to some extent in Kamloops.

Respondents reported that the most needed services for newcomers are related to employment (help finding a job, educational upgrading, and occupational mentorship and networking), language (language training, interpretation services), and initial settlement (greeting upon arrival and information and orientation). Although these services are thought to be available to some extent in Kamloops, in many cases respondents lacked specific information about the adequacy of the services available. However, there was general agreement about the need to expand the following services: services for women and seniors, integration support, mental health services, health services, legal support, childcare, job-specific language training, educational upgrading, help finding a job, transportation supports, help finding housing, and language assessment. The large number of services requiring expansion seems to point to an overall inadequacy of services for newcomers.

NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents reported that the services most needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services include: language training, educational upgrading, help finding a job, information and orientation, integration support, and foreign credential recognition. Turning to services needed by specific groups of ineligible newcomers, almost all respondents indicated that almost all of the services listed in Appendix A are needed by TFWs, Naturalized Citizens, Refugee Claimants, and International Students.

Tracking and Planning

Two respondents reported that their services for newcomers are guided by an internal strategic plan and that they regularly assess the service needs of newcomers in their community using staff and client feedback, CIC reports, and internal reports. Additional sources of information include reports released by other local SPOs. One organisation indicated that they are aware of a report on settlement achievements which is released by Kamloops Immigrant Services every 2-3 months.

Specific Capacities

For the most part, respondents felt that their organisations currently lack adequate capacity for all of the capacities listed in Appendix B, and that additional future capacity in all areas will also be needed. The feedback participant emphasized the mismatch between the need for flexibility in funding criteria for service provision and the rigid protocols that characterize CIC funding, including damaging penalties on admin fees, and onerous reporting requirements that, together with the competitive funding environment, ultimately undermine capacity for collaboration and service delivery.

Partnerships

The activities conducted in partnership were categorized into three groups; settlement (e.g., getting jobs and housing, daily functioning), integration (e.g., teaching labour rules and human rights), and welcoming (e.g., orientation to community, civic events). All survey participants reported that their organization partners with other community organizations to provide welcoming services, and 2 organisations provide integration and settlement services in partnership. Looking at specific partnership relations, at least 1 responding organisation partners with each of the potential partners listed in Appendix C except for Chambers of Commerce, although 2 organisations desire such a partnership. At least 1 respondent also mentioned that partnerships are desired with labour market services, public libraries, universities/research networks, businesses, children/family services, language training providers, civil society groups, municipal offices, health services, housing services, and school/school boards. In feedback, the participant stressed the need for effective support for the partnerships that already exist while avoiding the imposition of formal, micromanaged processes that lead to agency burnout and create friction among SPOs. It was noted that in the absence of adequate funding for administration, a formalized structure such as a LIP is wholly impractical in Kamloops. In contrast to current CIC funding, provincial funding was more effective in promoting partnership and collaboration, and more cost effective in terms of realistic support with regard to the time and management required by the agencies involved.

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Appendix A – Possible Concerns about Access to Services

- Lack of services in community
- Confusion about where to get help
- Not being eligible for services
- Language difficulties
- Lack of childcare
- Transportation difficulties
- Hours of the day that services are offered
- Financial difficulties
- Discrimination because of being a newcomer
- Discrimination because of race or ethnicity

Appendix B – List of Possible Services

SETTLEMENT

- Greeting upon arrival/initial reception
- Information and orientation
- Needs assessment and referral
- Interpretation services
- Language assessment
- Language training
- Help finding housing
- Help with daily life (e.g., registering for school, getting a bank account)
- Transportation support

ECONOMIC

- Help finding a job
- Educational upgrading
- Recognition of foreign credentials
- Investment opportunities
- Job-specific language training
- Help setting up a business
- Occupational/business mentorship and networking
- Financial supports

SOCIAL

- Childcare
- Cultural Events
- Recreational services
- Legal support/referral
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Social inclusion/ integration support
- Services for seniors
- Services for women
- Services for youth

Appendix C – Possible Organizational Capacities

- Staff to provide services
- Financial support from government sources to maintain current services
- Financial support from non-government sources to maintain current services
- Communication with stakeholders
- Coordinating services with other service providers
- Staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services
- Mobilization of community to support and welcome newcomers
- Creation of governing and strategic plan
- Meet reporting requirements
- Provide services in both official languages