



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Lloydminster, Alberta

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

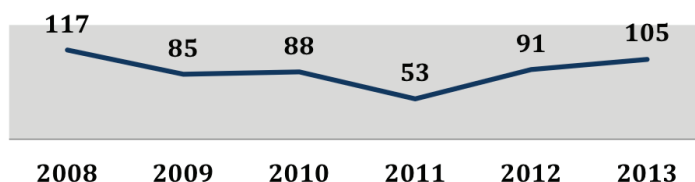


Population (2013): 31,483

Source: Municipal Census, 2013, including SK and AB sides.

Permanent Resident Landings Lloydminster 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



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Data sources: 3 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from CIC, NGOs, Provincial and private sources.

- Findings validated locally

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

A variety of services offered including information and orientation, needs assessment and referrals, interpretation and language assessment and training, help finding housing and with daily life, business mentorship and networking, mental health services, and social inclusion and integration support.



Key gaps identified

- Expansion is needed in the following areas: language training and assessment
- Programs for women and seniors, business mentorship, mental health services, social integration
- Inadequate financial resources among existing SPOs



Barriers to access services

- English language proficiency
- Poor access to public transportation
- Hours the services are offered
- Ineligibility for services
- Confusion about where to get help
- Financial difficulties of newcomers
- Discrimination



Top services needed

- Language training
- Information and orientation
- Social inclusion services
- Affordable childcare
- Welcoming community initiatives



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Language assessment and training, help finding affordable housing, welcoming and social inclusion, and information on immigration issues.

PARTNERSHIPS



Service provider organizations in Lloydminster partner with a diverse network of other community organizations. The most commonly identified partnerships exist with school and school boards, umbrella organizations, SPOs, health services, municipal offices, language training providers, children and family services, Chambers of Commerce, universities and research networks, ethno-cultural groups, and public libraries. Integration and welcoming activities are conducted in partnership.

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



Service providers have a varied understanding of newcomers' settlement experiences and ability to find a job in Lloydminster, ranging from quite difficult to easy. Difficulty is attributed to lack of housing, transportation challenges, and foreign credential recognition issues. However, it may be somewhat easy to integrate based on a vibrant labour market and a number of organizations that can help with settlement such as ethno-cultural groups that extend support in languages other than English.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Lloydminster, Alberta

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 Lloydminster, Alberta and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Lloydminster by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Lloydminster. Data was collected in October and November 2014 from three organizations that serve newcomers in Lloydminster through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. The survey was followed by an electronic consultation with 3 participants which allowed them to offer feedback on the initial survey findings. One organization receives provincial funding, one receives CIC funding, one receives NGO funding, and one receives private funding.

Background

Lloydminster is located on the provincial border between Saskatchewan and Alberta, with part of the city located within each province, but amalgamated as one municipality. The city's economy is driven primarily by the petroleum industry and secondarily by agriculture. The population continues to grow as employment opportunities in agriculture and energy industries attract new residents every year. Lloydminster has a growing population of over 31,000 residents in the municipality, with the majority of residents residing on the Alberta side of the border.

Community Settlement Concerns

All three service provider representatives feel that the number of newcomers settling in Lloydminster has increased in the last 5 years. This growth is attributed to employment opportunities resulting from economic growth and a demand for lower skilled labour. Many temporary foreign workers (TFWs) have been hired to work in Lloydminster, eventually applying for permanent residence and bringing their families to the community. Lloydminster is also experiencing secondary migration from Ontario and Eastern Canada.

There is a mixed view regarding the settlement experience of newcomers. One participant feels that it is very difficult, one feels that it is somewhat difficult for newcomers to settle in Lloydminster due to language barriers, a lack of housing (number of rental units available), high cost of living, poor public transportation, and lack of affordable childcare. The third participant feels it is easy for newcomers to settle because there are plenty of sources for support through community organizations and ethno-cultural groups.

One participant thinks it is somewhat difficult for newcomers to find a job in Lloydminster because of foreign credential recognition difficulties (i.e. employers are uncertain about the foreign credentials of the newcomers), and language and cultural barriers.

As indicated by participants during follow-up consultations, knowledge of the Canadian workforce culture and pragmatics, as well as unfamiliarity with the community are seen as barriers to employment and integration. Employers' lack of diversity awareness and cultural competence and newcomers' lack of "soft" skills are identified as other barriers. One participant feels that newcomers face discrimination based on newcomer status, race or ethnicity. The newcomer phenomenon is new to the community. The other participant feels it is easy for newcomers to find a job because there are plenty of low skill or trade jobs in the community and supports to assist in finding work, including assistance from the many ethno-cultural communities in Lloydminster.

There is also a concern that TFWs face many challenges such as long hours and on-the-job abuses, which are only compounded by the constant changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and associated policies.

Available Settlement Services

The most needed services in Lloydminster include language training, information and orientation, childcare and social inclusions and welcoming community initiatives. The three organizations provide an array of services (12 of the 27 listed in appendix A) to newcomers including assistance with immigration applications, information and orientation, needs assessment and referrals, interpretation and language assessment and training, help finding housing and with daily life, women and seniors' programming, occupational and business mentorship and networking, mental health services, and social inclusion and integration support. One participant feels that such service need to be expanded, while the others feel they are currently adequate.

Participants say they provide services to at least one group of newcomers who are ineligible for CIC-funded services. Ineligible groups include TFWs, new and returning naturalized Canadian citizens, refugee claimants, and international students. The most needed services for ineligible groups include language training and assessment, help finding housing, social inclusion support, and addressing immigration issues.

Several barriers to accessing services were identified by participants. In Lloydminster, important barriers include ineligibility, language, transportation and financial difficulties, discrimination, the hours of the day that services are offered, and confusion about where to get help.

Tracking and Planning

One participating service provider's services conducts regular assessment of service needs for newcomers in Lloydminster, either independently or in partnership with other service providers. These needs assessments are conducted during intake of clients and annually in consultation with the community through surveys.

Specific Capacities

In Lloydminster, the three organizations surveyed struggle with organizational capacity. All participants feel that the financial support from government and other sources is not adequate to maintain current services. In addition, all three participants indicate that they do not have the capacity to provide services in both official languages and to mobilize the community to support and welcome newcomers. The unusual location of the community (between Alberta and Saskatchewan) puts additional pressure on the service providers' ability to provide adequate services to all newcomers including TFWs, and Canadian citizens from Quebec. These difficulties can be tied to the CIC funding model. Only one participant feels that their agency has staff to provide services. Two of the participants feel that they have adequate capacity to communicate with stakeholders, coordinate services with other service providers, have staff skills to deliver and maintain services, create a governing and strategic plan and meet reporting requirements.

Partnerships

Two service providers report being engaged in partnership with other community organizations. The two participants indicated that they are in partnership with 14 of the community partners listed in the survey and other local organizations (see appendix B). These partners include school and school boards, umbrella organizations, settlement service providers, health services, municipal offices, language training providers, children and family services, Chambers of Commerce, universities and research networks, RCMP, Parent-Link Centers, Early Years coalition, Literacy Alberta, Community Learning Network, Regional Learning Council, Alberta works, Instructional Association, Community Future, Sexual Assault Centre, ethno-cultural groups, and public libraries.

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). In Lloydminster, integration and welcoming activities are most likely to be conducted in partnership. One participant's feedback indicates that a clear understanding of different agencies' mandate and willingness among the agencies to collaborate and share resources will help serve all newcomers, including TFWs and Canadian citizens, better. Given the level of partnering and number of partnerships that currently exists in Lloydminster, the community would be a candidate for a LIP.

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Appendix A – 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 B – Possible Organizational Partnerships

1. School/School Boards
2. Umbrella organizations
3. Newcomers (individuals)
4. Settlement service providers
5. Health services
6. Municipal offices/ EDO
7. Language training providers
8. Children/Family services
9. Businesses
10. Chambers of Commerce
11. Police Force
12. Universities/Research Networks
13. Ethno-cultural groups
14. Public libraries
15. Other: Parent Link Centers, Early Years Coalition, Literacy Alberta, Community Learning Network, Regional Learning Council, Alberta Works, Instructional Association, Sexual Assault Centre