



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Neepawa, Manitoba

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

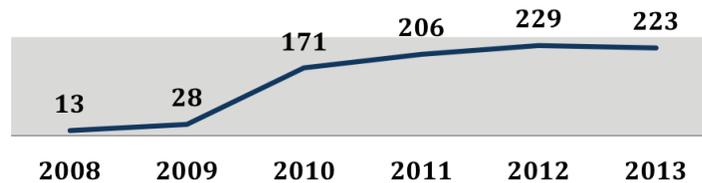


Population (2011): 3,629 residents

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

Permanent Resident Landings Neepawa 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Data sources: 4 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from CIC, provincial and other sources.

- Findings validated locally

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Employment support
- Language training and interpretation
- Information and orientation
- Assistance finding a job, housing and with daily life
- Health and mental health services



Key gaps identified

- Greeting upon arrival
- Mentors
- More information and orientation services needed
- Language training for more types of newcomers
- Transportation support
- Lack of adequate organizational capacities for SPOs



Barriers to access services

- Ineligibility for services
- Language difficulties of newcomers
- Timing and availability of language classes
- Residents' preconceived notions about newcomers



Top services needed

- Language training
- Introduction to community and Canadian culture
- Foreign credential recognition
- Transportation
- Assistance finding housing and with daily life



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Introduction to community and Canadian culture, language training, transportation supports, greeting upon arrival, social supports, assistance starting a business, mentorship

PARTNERSHIPS



Neepawa service providers are partnering with others to deliver services to newcomers.

3 out of the 4 participants were engaged in a variety of partnerships, but opportunities for further partnership development identified (e.g. employers, Chamber of Commerce, the Town)

- Welcoming activities were the most common activities reported in partnership.
- More partnership and coordination is desired.

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



Perceptions vary regarding how easy or hard it is for newcomers to settle and get jobs in Neepawa.

- A strong community and ethno-cultural communities helped, but lack of housing and family doctors and the harsh climate made settlement more challenging.
- Service jobs are plentiful - industry jobs are not.
- Language skills, credential recognition and understanding Canadian workplace culture were cited as the main challenges to find work in Neepawa.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Neepawa, Manitoba

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 Neepawa, Manitoba and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Neepawa by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Neepawa. Data were collected by telephone interview with an organizational representative in October and November 2014 from 4 organizations who serve newcomers in Neepawa. Only two of the 4 participants identified their funding sources; 1 received CIC funding and the other provincial. All 4 participants and 5 additional immigration stakeholders in the community were provided with a draft of the Neepawa community report and offered the opportunity to provide feedback on the accuracy of the report. Three of the four participants and 2 other community stakeholders provided feedback, which was then incorporated in the final community report.

Background

Neepawa is in the southwest corner of Manitoba, west of Lake Manitoba and south of Riding Mountain National Park. Neepawa, which means "Land of Plenty" in Cree, was established in 1870. The city of Neepawa has 3,629 residents in 2011 and has grown 10% between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2014). Neepawa's primary industry is agriculture (food and flowers), but also has a thriving food processing and manufacturing industry. A large food processing plant and health care are the two large employers in Neepawa.

Community Settlement Concerns

All the service provider representatives felt the population of newcomers had increased in the last five years. All four participants cited the employment opportunities at the local processing plant as the main contributor to the growth in the newcomer population. Three participants felt it was somewhat easy and one participant felt it was somewhat difficult for newcomers to settle into the community. The main reasons for citing it was somewhat difficult were housing and medical doctor shortages, the

harsh climate, adjustment to small town life, language, and settlement can be a challenge for the spouse who is not employed. In contrast, settlement was perceived as somewhat easy for the following reasons: a strong community/volunteer network and strong ethno-cultural communities (e.g., Filipino community). In terms of employment, participants varied in their perception of the ease for newcomers to get jobs in Neepawa. One participant felt it was someone difficult and another felt it was very easy, but 2 were right in the middle claiming it was somewhat easy for newcomers to find jobs. In Neepawa, many newcomers find themselves employed in the service industry, which often leaves newcomers underemployed. In addition, there are many newcomer nurses, who have been unable to get jobs in the area because their foreign credentials are not recognized. Other major challenges facing newcomers who are seeking employment were English language ability, ability to count money, and awareness of Canadian and workplace expectations (e.g., timeliness).

Available Settlement Services

Neepawa has a developed settlement and integration service sector with almost all services listed (26 key services – see appendix A) being offered by the participant organizations or someone in the community. The five services reported as not offered by participants or another SPO in the community were greeting upon arrival, transportation, financial support, investment opportunities, and specific services for women, youth and seniors. In Neepawa, greeting upon arrival and providing information and orientation to newcomers had previously been conducted by a volunteer group, but has been taken over by a settlement committee; however, they may not be able to keep up with the number of TFWs currently arriving. Some TFWs may be met by coworkers, but others may be falling through the cracks upon arrival, which is concerning. Several services were provided but were not listed on the inventory (See appendix A), such as, coordinating community donations and spiritual care. Greeting upon arrival, language training to a broader group of people, newcomer mentors, and more information and orientation were identified as needing to be offered or increased. The top services were identified by participants as needed by newcomers were language training and

supports, orientation to both the community and Canadian culture, assistance finding housing and with daily life, foreign credential recognition, and transportation.

In regards to newcomers who are ineligible for CIC-funded services, participants almost unanimously indicated that temporary foreign workers (TFW), new and returning naturalized citizens, refugee claimants and international students were all in need of all settlement services. The inability for ineligible newcomers to access settlement services and the inability for SPOs to provide this population services is frustrating for both parties. TFWs often require settlement assistance, but only qualify once they are permanent citizens, when ironically they are less likely to require the help.

Participants indicated the most needed services for those who are currently ineligible for CIC-funded services were: language training, orientation to the community and Canadian culture, greeting upon arrival, mentors, transportation, assistance starting a business, and social supports. One SPO has offered orientation sessions to ineligible newcomers and found such sessions were not well attended unless the topic of discussion related to acquiring one's permanent residence. In regards to language training, a large employer in food processing does offer EAL classes to their temporary foreign workers (TFW). The employer hires a large number of TFWs and provides them with support until they become permanent residents and then the newcomers turn to Immigration Services. One organization has been brainstorming a potential fee for service program, which would work in conjunction with the employers, to help support the newcomers while they are still TFWs. There was some concern Immigration Services is now the main provider of language training in Neepawa, which limits access to these classes for those newcomers who are not permanent residents.

Several barriers to accessing services were identified by participants. In Neepawa, key barriers were language difficulties, timing and availability of language classes, ineligibility for services, and overcoming Neepawa residents' preconceived notions about newcomers.

Tracking and Planning

Only one of the four participant service providers reported their organization regularly, independently assessed the service needs of the newcomers in their community. These needs assessments, which were conducted on an ongoing basis, were casual in nature, and included stakeholder feedback.

Specific Capacities

In Neepawa, more participants reported not having specific capacities than they reported having adequate capacities. Three organizations identified having inadequate capacity to provide services in both official languages, had financial funding from non-governmental sources, and capacity to communicate with stakeholders. It would appear the Neepawa service providers in this sample are feeling as though they do not have the capacity they need overall to meet the needs of a growing newcomer population. However, at least one organization in this study reported having sufficient organizational capacity in each of the capacities listed in Appendix C. Each of the following capacities were identified by at least 2 participants as currently being adequate: staff, government funding, coordinating services with other SPOs, staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services, and the mobilization of community to support and welcome newcomers.

Partnerships

Three out of the four service provider participants reported being engaged in partnership with other community organizations in Neepawa (see appendix B). One participant reported having extensive partnerships with 85 organizations in Neepawa, either as customer or partner, while another was in partnership with a single philanthropic group to coordinate a welcome BBQ for newcomers. The third organization partnered with other SPOs, language trainers, businesses, and the chamber of commerce. Participants identified there is some room for improvement with stakeholder partnerships in Neepawa. For example, more collaboration between the SPOs and the Chamber of Commerce, employers, town, and rural municipality was desired and is in action in other communities. In addition, one organization reported regularly holding "Welcoming Community" meetings and inviting many of the stakeholders listed in Appendix B, but experience frustration when no one attends. There is a feeling that employers feel settlement services are the sole responsibility of settlement service providers, while SPOs feel employers can also play an effective role in creating a smooth transition to settlement for newcomers.

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). Though integration, settlement and welcoming were all reported as conducted in partnership, welcoming was the most commonly reported partnership activity. It would appear more coordination and partnership is possible in Neepawa, but the service providers have developed a strong foundation and might consider developing a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) in the future.

Research Team

Bill Ashton, Ph.D. (*Principal Investigator*)
Rachael Pettigrew, Ph.D. (*Research Associate*)
Eleni Galatsanou, MSc (*Project Coordinator*)

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University
Tel: 204-571-8513, Ashtonw@brandonu.ca

Lori Wilkinson, Ph.D. (*Chair of Project Advisory Panel*)

University of Manitoba
Tel: 204- 474-8491, Lori.Wilkinson@umanitoba.ca

Appendix A – List of Possible Services

SETTLEMENT

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

ECONOMIC

- j. Help finding a job
- k. Educational upgrading
- l. Recognition of foreign credentials
- m. Investment opportunities
- n. Job-specific language training
- o. Help setting up a business
- p. Occupational/business mentorship and networking
- q. Financial supports

SOCIAL

- r. Childcare
- s. Cultural Events
- t. Recreational services
- u. Legal support/referral
- v. Health Services
- w. Mental Health Services
- x. Social inclusion/ integration support
- y. Services for seniors
- z. Services for women
- aa. Services for youth

Appendix B – Possible Organizational Partnerships

- School/School Boards
- Umbrella organizations
- Newcomers (individuals)
- Housing services
- Settlement service providers
- Health services
- Municipal offices/ EDO
- Civil society groups
- Francophone organizations
- Language training providers
- Children/Family services
- Businesses
- Chambers of Commerce
- Police Force
- Universities/Research Networks
- Ethno-cultural groups
- Religious organizations
- Public libraries
- Foundations

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
- Creation of governing and strategic plan
- Meet reporting requirements
- Provide services in both official languages