



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Nelson/Trail/Grand Forks, British Columbia

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

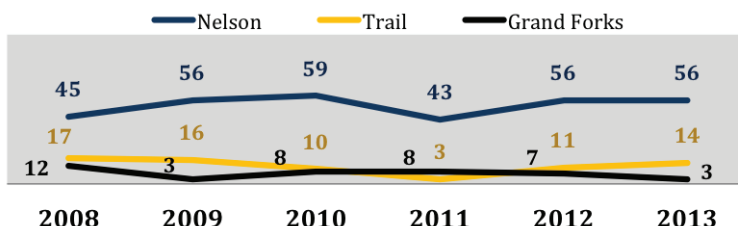


Population (2011): 10,230 residents in Nelson, 7,681 in Trail, 4,100 in Grand Forks.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

Permanent Resident Landings Nelson-Trail-Grand Forks 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Data sources: 3 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from CIC, Provincial, NGO, other federal, municipal, regional district and private sources.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Assistance finding a job
- Information and orientation
- Most of the listed services are offered in the communities, but inadequately.



Key gaps identified

- Lack of an organization that focuses specifically on immigrants.
- Inadequacy of services offered.
- Recognition of foreign credentials, transportation supports, information and orientation.



Barriers to access services

- Low availability of services.
- Lack of readily available information about services available.
- Lack of stable locations to access services.
- Almost all listed concerns about access to services were reported.



Top services needed

Assistance finding a job, foreign credential recognition, language training, interpretation services, greeting upon arrival, information and orientation, and integration supports.



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Assistance finding a job, information and orientation, greeting upon arrival, language training, language assessment, integration support, recognition of foreign credentials.

PARTNERSHIPS



Partnerships identified with umbrella organizations, municipal offices, children/family services, businesses, chambers of commerce, foundations, public libraries, and labour market services.

Settlement and welcoming activities are conducted in partnership.

Partnerships that do not currently exist but are desired: ethno-cultural groups or francophone organizations.



INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY

- Perception: It is "somewhat difficult" for newcomers to settle in the communities. Lack of settlement services and lack of information, lack of public transportation, and challenges of developing social networks are some of the main barriers that newcomers face.
- Perception: It is "somewhat difficult" to access jobs in the communities, with language barriers and lack of recognition of foreign credentials presenting the most important challenges.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Nelson/Trail/Grand Forks, 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 Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks, British Columbia and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks. Data was collected in October 2014 from 3 organizations that serve newcomers in Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. One participant is a CIC funded organisation that also receives provincial, private, and NGO funding. A second organisation receives other federal, provincial, municipal, private, and NGO funding. The third receives other federal, provincial, and regional district funding. Although provided with one week to do so, no participant provided feedback on the preliminary survey findings contained in the draft report.

Background

Nelson, Trail, and Grand Forks are located in the Kootenay Boundary region of southern BC. According to Statistics Canada, Nelson had a 2011 population of 10,230, a 10.5% increase from 2006; the 2011 population of Trail was 7,681, a 6.1% increase from 2006; and Grand Forks maintained a relatively steady population from 2006-2011 of approximately 4,100. CIC figures indicate that from 2008-2013, 315 Permanent Residents (PRs) arrived to Nelson, 68 went to Trail, and 35 arrived in Grand Forks.

Community Settlement Concerns

All respondents reported that the number of newcomers to their area has increased in the past 5 years due to overall population growth and increased labour market demand. However, when asked how easy or difficult it is for newcomers to settle successfully, all respondents indicated that it is "somewhat difficult," with the main reasons being that there is no organization that focuses specifically on immigrants, the lack of stable locations to access services, lack of services, lack of information and confusion about

program eligibility, lack of transportation, and the challenges of developing social networks in small communities that are primarily composed of long term residents.

ACCESSING SETTLEMENT SERVICES

All respondents agreed that that over 25% of newcomers find it difficult to locate the services they need in their community, primarily due to the low visibility of services and lack of readily available information. Respondents were almost unanimous that all of the concerns listed in Appendix A about the ability for newcomers to access services have been raised in their community.

GETTING JOBS

Respondents also agreed that it is "somewhat difficult" to access jobs, with language barriers and lack of recognition of foreign credentials presenting the most important barriers. Respondents explained that many newcomers are highly skilled, but their training is not recognized, and that lower end jobs are easier to come by than those that use newcomers' skills or training. A related problem noted by some respondents is that the spouses and family members of employees brought to the area by local industrial concerns also experience difficulty obtaining employment for the reasons mentioned above.

Available Settlement Services

CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDER CAPACITY

Only one respondent provided detailed information about the number of newcomers served in their organisation. That organisation serves approximately 35 PRs, 2 Refugee Claimants, 16 Naturalized Citizens, and 1 Visitor per month. Another organisation indicated that approximately 12 people whose status is not known receive services each month, and that around 25 people whose status is not known requested but did not receive services in the month prior to the survey.

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

All of the organisations surveyed provide assistance finding a job, as well as information and orientation, while none provide interpretation services, investment opportunities, health services, or mental health services. The remaining

services listed in Appendix B are provided by 1-2 respondents. Respondents indicated that all of the services listed in Appendix B are provided by at least one other local SPO except recognition of foreign credentials, transportation supports, and assistance finding housing.

According to survey respondents, the top needs of newcomers include assistance finding a job, foreign credential recognition, language training, interpretation services, greeting upon arrival, information and orientation, and integration supports. The challenges related to successful settlement may point to the inadequacy of service offerings. Accordingly, at least 1 respondent indicated that each of the services listed in Appendix B needs to expand except assistance finding housing.

NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents indicated that the main settlement needs of ineligible newcomers include: assistance finding a job, information and orientation, greeting upon arrival, language training, language assessment, integration supports, and recognition of foreign credentials. With regard to specific categories of ineligible newcomers, respondents were almost unanimous that Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and Naturalized Citizens experience all of the needs listed in Appendix B. Two respondents indicated that Refugee Claimants experience each of the needs listed, and 1-2 respondents indicated that International Students experience each of the needs listed in Appendix B.

Tracking and Planning

Services for newcomers are guided by an internal strategic plan in 1 responding organization, and in another by a strategic plan created jointly with other SPOs. Similarly, 2 respondents reported that they regularly assess the service needs of newcomers in their community; one assesses needs internally, while the other assesses needs jointly with other SPOs. Assessments are based on information gathered through partner feedback, information from participants, and community planning sessions. Additional sources of information include WorkBC, feedback from community partners, and Welcome Map and Mat websites. One respondent indicated that their agency produces an annual report on settlement achievements and releases it to the community.

Specific Capacities

All respondents reported that they currently have adequate capacity in the following areas: meet reporting requirements, staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services, and staff to provide services. Conversely, none

report adequate capacity with respect to: mobilization of community to support newcomers, creation of governing and strategic plan, and provision of services in both official languages. Respondents were almost unanimous that all of the organizational capacities listed in Appendix C will need to be expanded in the future.

Partnerships

All respondents report active SPO partnerships. All respondents report active SPO 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 respondents provide settlement and welcoming activities in partnership, and two also provide integration services in partnership. All respondents reported that they enjoy partnerships with umbrella organizations, municipal offices, children/family services, businesses, chambers of commerce, foundations, public libraries, and labour market services. In contrast, no respondent partners with ethno cultural groups or francophone organizations, although such partnerships are desired. At least 1 respondent also indicated a desire for partnership with each of the following: school/school boards, newcomers, housing services, health services, civil society groups, police force, and universities/research networks.

Research Team

Miu Chung Yan, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator*)

Jenny Francis, Ph.D. Candidate (*Co-author*)

University of British Columbia
Tel: 604-822-8688, Miu.Yan@ubc.ca

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 – 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