



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in North Central Region of Saskatchewan

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



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



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Major Urban Centres	Population 2011 Census	Permanent Resident Landings 2009-2013
Prince Albert	42,673	1,149
Warman	7,084	139
Martensville	7,716	72

Data sources: 6 Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from governmental and non-governmental sources.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Reception
- Information on and referrals to services
- Settlement
- Language training
- Economic Integration (employment)
- Social, cultural and sectors orientation
- Social inclusion/integration services
- Advocacy for individual newcomers



Key gaps identified

- Services for newcomers living outside main urban center
- Language assessment and training
- Stable funding for some programs and services
- Coordination between service providers



Barriers to access services

- Absence of service provider agencies in some communities
- Inadequate services in some communities
- Ineligibility for some CIC funded services
- Insufficient information about some services available
- Transportation challenges travelling to community where services exist



Top services needed

Language training, translation and interpreter services, credential recognition, employment training and mentorship, job searches, transportation, housing, health care and social networking.



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Language training, translation and interpreter services, recognition of international credentials, settlement support, health services, social and cultural orientation, family support and financial support services.

PARTNERSHIPS



Partnerships involved settlement and integration service provider organizations as well as other governmental and non-governmental organizations in several major sectors (e.g., employment, housing, education, health, family and child support, justice, culture, recreation, religion, business, and municipal). They also included various agencies of the three levels of government (i.e., federal, provincial, municipal). Whereas some partnerships operated formally, others operated informally. Existing and potential partnerships were valued, and providing them with additional resources to operate them was advocated.

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



Facilitating economic and community integration was a principal goal of most organizations surveyed. Economic integration of a substantial number of immigrants was facilitated by the economic boom, and by the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP), which linked immigrants and employers. Nevertheless, many newcomers faced challenges in economic integration. Similarly, although community integration was facilitated by services provided to newcomers, challenges persisted due to a combination of factors including discrimination.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: North Central Region of Saskatchewan

Introduction

This report is part of a larger project designed to better understand various aspects of newcomer settlement and integration services in Western Canada. This report provides a summary of the findings of a survey regarding the settlement and integration of newcomers in the North Central 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 6 representatives of selected settlement and integration service provider organizations and some other types of service provider organizations in the region. Although 6 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 NORTH CENTRAL REGION

The North Central Region of Saskatchewan includes the following types of communities: three cities, dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and several rural municipalities consisting of hamlets, farms, and small acreages. The three cities in the region are Prince Albert, Warman and Martensville. According to Statistics Canada, the population of Prince Albert in 2011 was 42,673, an increase of 4.7% from 2006. The population of Warman in 2011 was 7,084, an increase of 48.5% from 2006. The population of Martensville in 2011 was 7,716, an increase of 40.5% from 2006.

IMMIGRATION FLOWS TO NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CIC immigration statistics from 2009-2013 indicate the arrival of approximately 1400 permanent residents to this region. They also indicate that of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period most were destined to the three major urban centres in this region, namely Prince Albert (1,149), Warman (139), and Martensville (72). It is important to note that these statistics do not include temporary residents who in this region, as in other regions, constitute a substantial number of newcomers.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS

All respondents indicated that the number of newcomers destined to or living in the community has increased in the past 5 years. They speculated that this was due to four main factors: economic growth and industrial expansion; the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP); the arrival of an increasing number of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and family members sponsored by refugees and other categories of permanent residents; and governmental promotion and marketing efforts abroad.

Community Settlement

EASE OF SETTLEMENT IN COMMUNITIES

In response to the question on ease or difficulty of settlement experienced by newcomers, 3 respondents indicated it was 'somewhat difficult', 1 indicated it was 'somewhat easy', and 1 indicated it was 'easy'. 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 key service factors cited as facilitating settlement included: the existence of proactive settlement organizations including Regional Newcomer Gateways as well as ethnocultural organizations in some communities; the visibility and accessibility of such agencies in some communities (3); flexible client-centered programming schedules (1); eligibility for CIC funded services (e.g., government assisted refugees, temporary foreign workers, international students, etc.) (3); and adequate and accessible information for orienting newcomers to services and communities (2).

The key economic and employment factors cited as facilitating settlement were: availability of jobs due to economic boom (1); and pre-arranged employment and work permits (2).

The key community factors facilitating settlement were: small size of community that makes it easier for people get around the community and orient themselves to various service provider agencies and organizations (1); and in some communities there is a critical mass of newcomers that provide at least an initial base of support for newcomers to socialize and network (1).

The services factors cited as hampering settlement in communities include: insufficient settlement and integration services in smaller urban communities and rural areas (1); insufficient readily and easily accessible information regarding services available in various communities (1); insufficient services to help some newcomers overcome language barriers (4); insufficient transportation services (i.e., public transportation and easily accessible and affordable driver training services) (4); and insufficient services and supports for accessing affordable and adequate housing (3).

The economic and employment factors cited as hampering settlement included: lack of recognition of international education and credentials (1); difficulties obtaining employment beyond the entry level and in their fields of expertise (2); discrimination experienced by some newcomers in hiring processes and in the workplace (1); and health problems of some newcomers (2).

The community factors cited as hampering settlement included: the remoteness of some communities (2); isolation of some newcomers working and living in farms in rural communities (1); the racism that exists in some communities (1); high cost of living in some communities

(1); absence of sizeable ethnocultural groups in some communities (1).

Several respondents indicated more could and should be done to welcome newcomers and to foster better social relations between various newcomer and non-newcomer groups.

FACTORS AFFECTING GETTING JOBS

In response to the question of how easy or difficult it was for newcomers to get jobs in their communities 3 respondents indicated that it was ‘somewhat difficult’, 1 indicated that it was ‘somewhat easy’, and 1 indicated it was ‘easy’.

Respondents noted several barriers for newcomers in getting jobs including: language barriers (1); insufficient international education and credentials recognition (2); industry accreditation standards (1); perception among employers regarding the importance of Canadian qualifications and experience (1); lack of jobs in some fields for which newcomers have the requisite qualifications and training (1); and challenges in accessing transportation between home and jobsite (1). Respondents also indicated that jobs most readily available for many newcomers tended to be concentrated at the entry level in the service sector, but that even those jobs are not readily available for all newcomers (2).

Available Settlement Services

TYPES OF NEWCOMERS SERVED

Respondents indicated their organizations served various types of newcomers. More specifically, 6 served permanent residents; 5 served temporary foreign workers, 5 served international students, 5 served new and returning naturalized citizens, 4 served refugees, and 4 served refugee claimants.

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Respondents identified a broad range of services they provided newcomers. Most of these services fall within the scope of what are broadly defined as settlement services that can be grouped into the following sub-categories: initial welcome and reception services (2); information, orientation and referral services (5); language assessment and training (4); interpretation and translation services (1); employment search and referral services (2); community networking and cultural bridging services (2); student and family support services (2); citizenship application and exam preparation services (1); sectors orientation services (e.g., financial, labour, health, educational sectors); document and application access and processing services (e.g., official documents and application forms);

basic technology services (e.g., computers, copiers, faxes, and internet) (2); and furniture and appliances donations coordination services. A couple of respondents also noted that their organizations had ability to provide some services in both official languages and to some extent also in other languages.

In response to whether the services they provided needed to be expanded either in number or in their availability to a larger number and more categories of newcomers 4 respondents said yes and 1 respondent said no.

SERVICES NEEDED MOST FOR SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Respondents indicated that the services needed most for settlement and integration were those related to: a welcoming reception and community integration (2); information on and access to various settlement and integration programs, but particularly language training (4); interpreter and translation services (2); employment training, mentorship and job searches (3); international credential recognitions for highly trained immigrants (2); accessing, completing and submitting documents and applications required for immigration, settlement, integration, and citizenship (1); finding adequate, appropriate and affordable housing (1); affordable and convenient transportation (1); recreational services for children and youth (1); social networking (1); and support and case management services for newcomers with special needs, especially for those with physical and mental health needs (2).

SERVICES NEEDED MOST BY NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents noted that the services most needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services were: language training; settlement support; credential recognition; family supports; and youth programs. One respondent indicated that more must be done to assist these newcomers upgrade their immigration status (i.e., helping those on visitor visas obtain work permits, or those on work permits to obtain permanent resident status, etc.).

Respondents indicated that among the services most need by this group of newcomers, the following were provided to some extent: language training (4); settlement support (2); information and orientation; employment searches (1); financial support to meet basic needs; medical services (2); and help with various other aspects of daily life.

Assessment of Newcomer Needs

All respondents indicated that their respective organizations regularly assessed the service needs of newcomers, albeit to varying extents and in different ways. Whereas 5 assessed needs internally, 1 assessed needs both internally and jointly with other SPOs. They also indicated that the organizations conducted assessments informally through various means, including: observations and conversations among staff members; consultations with SPOs; newcomer intake forms, interviews and surveys; and program reviews.

Organizational Capacities

All respondents who addressed this issue indicated their respective organizations had adequate capacity to meet the needs of newcomers (5), communicate with stakeholders (5), coordinate services with other service providers (5), and enough financial support from governmental sources to maintain their current services (5). Furthermore, a majority indicated their organizations had the following: adequate staff skills to deliver and maintain services (4); adequate capacity to create governance frameworks and strategic plans (4); adequate staff to provide the various services (3); adequate capacity to provide services in both official languages (3); and adequate capacity to mobilize the community to support and welcome newcomers (3).

Most respondents indicated, either explicitly or implicitly, that their organizations required more financial and human resources to expand the scope of existing services or to offer additional services. In responding to questions regarding the adequacy of financial resources from various sources to maintain services, 5 respondents indicated they were adequate from governmental sources, but none indicated they were adequate from non- governmental sources.

Partnerships

All respondents indicated their organizations were involved in partnerships with other service provider organizations in the region. All respondents working for non-governmental organizations indicated they had formal or informal partnerships with other service provider organizations in the region. Such partnerships involved several different types of organizations including: settlement service agencies at the local and the provincial level (e.g., SAISIA); educational organizations; health organizations; ethno-cultural organizations; religious organizations; literacy organizations; justice organizations; family and child services organizations; organizations serving people with disabilities; media organizations; and business organizations (e.g. hotels, taxi-cab companies).

Respondents indicated they valued the partnerships with all such organizations. Two existing partnerships were mentioned as being valuable. One involved a settlement agency, the local newspaper, and several local businesses and service provider organizations. This partnership produced a bi-monthly paper that focused on newcomer issues and cultural events. Another partnership initiative focused on “cultural bridging” events involving various organizations. One respondent indicated that some organizations were exploring the feasibility and value of developing a broad based local or regional immigrant settlement service partnership for the purpose of developing strategies to attract and retain newcomers.

Of the 5 respondents who answered the question regarding what kind of activities for the benefit of newcomers their organization partnered with other organizations, 5 indicated welcoming community activities, 3 indicated settlement activities, and 5 indicated integration activities.

Research Team

Joe Garcea, Ph.D. (*Co- Principal Investigator*)

University of Saskatchewan
Tel: 306-966-5222, joe.garcea@usask.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