



# Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Sunshine Coast, British Columbia

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

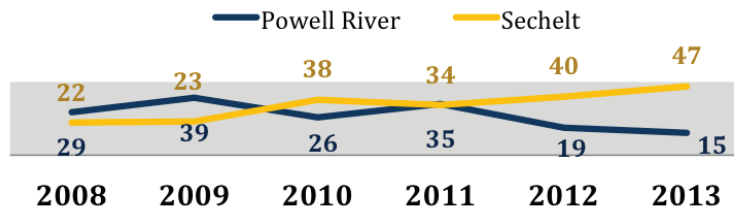


Population (2011): 13,165 residents in Powell River and 9,291 in Sechelt.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

## Permanent Resident Landings Sunshine Coast 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



**Data sources: 5 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs)** receiving funding from CIC, Provincial, NGO, other federal and private sources.

- Findings validated locally

## SETTLEMENT SERVICES



### Top services offered

- All of the listed services are available to some extent on the Sunshine Coast.



### Key gaps identified

- Lack of awareness among SPOs about the services offered on the Sunshine Coast
- Recognition of foreign credentials and transportation supports.
- A large number of services need to expand.



### Barriers to access services

- Services on the Sunshine Coast are highly decentralized, making it difficult to obtain accurate information.
- Transportation difficulties
- Almost all listed concerns about access to services were reported.



### Top services needed

Legal support, assistance finding housing and with daily life, language training, integration support, information and orientation.



### Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

Legal support, language training (including job-specific language training), help finding housing, integration support, childcare, investment opportunities, health services (including mental health) and information and orientation.

## PARTNERSHIPS



Settlement, integration and welcoming activities are conducted in partnership, but welcoming was the least commonly reported.

Partnerships that do not currently exist but are desired: foundations, religious organizations, housing services, francophone organizations, and police force.

CIC funding is based on an urban model of service delivery that does not sufficiently account for rural realities and does not encourage partnerships.

## INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



Perceptions vary regarding how easy or difficult it is for newcomers to settle successfully in Sunshine coast. Ease of settlement depends strongly on language ability. Confusion about where to get help and lack of jobs are the main challenges reported.

Perception: It is "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult" for newcomers to find jobs in Sunshine Coast, due to lack of jobs and language barriers.

# IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Sunshine Coast, 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 on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of the Sunshine Coast by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services on the Sunshine Coast. Data was collected in October 2014 from 5 organizations that serve newcomers on the Sunshine Coast through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. Two organizations receive funding from CIC, with one receiving additional provincial funding, and the other receiving both private and provincial funding. A third agency receives provincial, private, and NGO funding, while the fourth receives funding from other federal, private, and provincial sources. The fifth agency did not provide information about funding. One survey respondent took part in a teleconference to provide feedback on the preliminary survey findings contained in a draft report.

## Background

The Sunshine Coast<sup>1</sup> comprises a string of small coastal communities located one or two ferry rides north of Vancouver, with a total regional population of approximately 31,000. Powell River is located 175km north of Vancouver with a 2011 population of 13,165 (a 1.6% increase from 2006), and Sechelt is located 70km north of Vancouver, with a population of 9,291 (a 9.9% change from 2006). From 2008 to 2013, CIC reports the arrival of 163 Permanent Residents (PRs) to Powell River and 204 PRs to Sechelt.

## Community Settlement Concerns

All respondents believe that the number of newcomers to the Sunshine Coast has increased in the last 5 years due to expansions in the Provincial Nominee (PN) Program, the lower cost of living (including housing) compared to Vancouver, increases in the number of International Students, and investment opportunities. Three respondents felt that it is “somewhat difficult” to settle successfully, while

2 reported that it is “somewhat easy.” Ease of settlement depends strongly on language ability. Respondents identified confusion about where to get help and lack of jobs as key barriers to successful settlement. The feedback participant emphasized the differences between doing immigrant settlement work in a rural community compared to an urban area due to the small number of diverse, high needs newcomers who are scattered over a large geographical region and struggle with social and physical isolation, lack of ethnic community support, and transportation difficulties.

## ACCESSING SETTLEMENT SERVICES

In response to the observation that over 25% of newcomers find it difficult to locate the services they need in their community, 3 respondents agreed and 2 disagreed with the suggestion. Respondents emphasized that settlement experiences depended on language ability and one's geographic location, noting that services on the Sunshine Coast are highly decentralized, making it difficult to obtain accurate information. Almost all respondents noted that all of the concerns listed in Appendix A have been raised in their community.

## GETTING JOBS

All respondents reported that it is “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” for newcomers to find jobs in their community, which they attributed to lack of jobs and language barriers.

## Available Settlement Services

### CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDER CAPACITY

The 3 respondents who provided information about the numbers of newcomers served in their organisation indicated that they primarily serve PRs, with at least 90 PRs receiving services each month.

### INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Overall, respondents reported that all of the services listed in Appendix B are available to some extent. It is important to point out, however, the large number of responses indicating “don't know” regarding services offered by other SPOs, which may point to a lack of communication

1 Gibsons, also located on the Sunshine Coast, received 227 PRs from 2008-2013. However SPOs from Gibsons did not participate in the survey.

among SPOs. At least 3 respondents indicated that their organisation provides services for women, services for seniors, social inclusion/ integration support, legal support/ referral, cultural events, educational upgrading, assistance with daily life, language training, language assessment, and needs assessment and referral. Transportation supports are provided by only 1 respondent and not by another SPO.

Survey respondents indicated that the most needed services for newcomers include: legal support, assistance finding housing and with daily life, language training, integration support, and information and orientation. Most respondents reported that the following services need to expand: greeting upon arrival, language assessment, interpretation services, information and orientation, transportation supports, and language training. Recognition of foreign credentials is needed but not offered.

### **NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES**

At least 10 International Students, 10 Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), 25 Naturalized Citizens, and 3 people whose category of entry is not known receive services through the responding organisations each month. In the month prior to the survey, 12 newcomers (Live-In-Caregivers, PNs, and parents of international students) asked for, but did not receive services. Respondents reported that the most needed services for CIC ineligible newcomers are: legal support, language training (including job-specific language training), assistance finding housing, integration support, childcare, investment opportunities, health services (including mental health) and information and orientation. Specifically, all respondents indicated that TFWs and Naturalized Citizens experience all of the needs listed in Appendix B. Three or 4 respondents indicated that Refugee Claimants and International Students experience all of the needs. The feedback participant emphasized that their small community includes many ineligible newcomers with significant settlement needs, especially PNs who do not yet have PR, Naturalized Citizens who do not speak English and may also struggle with literacy, people on temporary work visas, and even people in the investor class.

### **Tracking and Planning**

Two respondents indicated that their services for newcomers are guided by a strategic plan. All reported that they regularly assess the service needs of newcomers either internally (1) or jointly with other service providers (4) using informal observation and feedback from clients, as well as meetings with other SPOs. Census data provides an additional source of information. Respondent were not aware of an annual report on settlement achievements.

### **Specific Capacities**

At least 3 respondents indicated that their organisation currently has adequate capacity in the following areas: meet reporting requirements, create governing and strategic plan, staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services, communicate with stakeholders, coordinate services with other service providers, and financial support to maintain current services from government sources. Conversely, at least 3 indicated that they lack adequate capacity in the following areas: provide services in both official languages, mobilize community to support newcomers, financial support to maintain current services from nongovernmental sources, and staff to provide services. All respondents reported the need for enhanced future capacity with regard to financial support from government sources to maintain current services, staff to provide services, and staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services.

### **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 report active SPO partnerships in their community: 4 organisations provide settlement and integration in partnership, while 3 provide welcoming services. At least 3 respondents partner with all of the agencies listed in Appendix D except foundations, religious organizations, housing services, francophone organizations, and police force. At least 2 respondents expressed a desire for partnerships with foundations, religious organizations, housing services, francophone organizations, and police force. One respondent stressed that under Welcoming Communities funding there had been a table focused on immigration that brought together a large number of SPOs, but when the funding dried up, the partnerships also withered away. Overall, respondents noted that CIC funding is based on an urban model of service delivery that insufficiently accounts for rural realities, discourages partnerships, and entails onerous reporting requirements.

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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