



# Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Terrace/Kitimat/Smithers, British Columbia

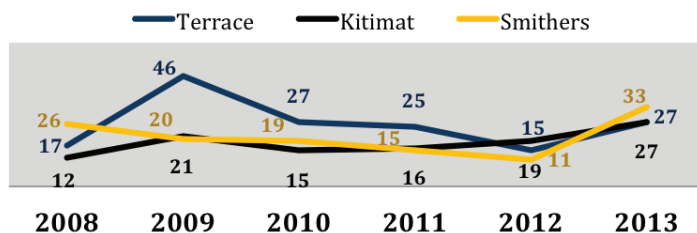
This community report is part of the "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region" study.

Population (2011): 15,569 residents in Terrace; 8,335 in Kitimat; 5,404 in Smithers.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

## Permanent Resident Landings Terrace-Kitimat-Smithers 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Data sources: 7 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from CIC, Provincial, other federal and private sources; one SPO from fees for services.

• Findings validated locally



## SETTLEMENT SERVICES



### Top services offered

- Most of the settlement services are available to some extent.
- Due the sizes of the communities, a large proportion of services are provided on a flexible, ad hoc basis.



### Key gaps identified

- There is an overall lack of resources and most services need to expand.
- Job-specific language training, mental health, foreign credential recognition, assistance finding housing.
- There is a need for up to date demographic information for these communities.



### Barriers to access services

- Lack of services
- Language barriers
- Lack of information about services available and confusion about where to get help
- Remoteness of services in small northern communities



### Top services needed

Language training, information and orientation, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, integration supports, needs assessment and referrals, assistance finding a job and with daily life.



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

Language training, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, integration support, information and orientation, interpretation services, legal supports/referrals, and child care.

## PARTNERSHIPS



Partnerships identified with almost all listed partners, apart from francophone organisations. Settlement, welcoming and integration activities were all reported in partnership, but integration was the least common activity.

Participants reported a desire for a partnership with employers. From their experiences, employers are unwilling to take time away from work to attend settlement meetings.

## INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



- There is a mixed perception of how easy it is for newcomers to settle successfully and find employment in the communities.
- Shortage of affordable housing, lack of information about the local labour market and culture, transportation, isolation from large urban centers and language barriers are some of the main challenges for newcomer settlement.
- It is easier to find low skilled work than other employment in Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers.

# IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Terrace/Kitimat/Smithers, 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 Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers, British Columbia and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers. Data was collected in October 2014 from 7 organizations that serve newcomers in Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. Five survey respondents receive CIC funding and 6 receive provincial funding. One CIC funded organisation receives other federal and private funding. One organization's sole source of income is fees for services. Five survey respondents also participated in a teleconference feedback session to discuss the preliminary survey findings contained in the draft report.

## Background

Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers are located approximately 1-2 hours drive apart in northern BC. According to Statistics Canada figures, their respective 2011 populations were 15,569; 8,335; and 5,404. These figures represent a 1% increase in Terrace, a 7.3% decrease in Kitimat, and a 3.6% increase in Smithers since 2006. From 2008-2013, CIC figures indicate that 157 PRs arrived to Terrace, 110 went to Kitimat, and 124 arrived to Smithers.

## Community Settlement Concerns

Respondents unanimously agreed that the number of newcomers has increased significantly over the past 5 years due to economic development and the greater availability of jobs following a long recession. In the feedback session participants repeatedly stressed that the 2011 population figures do not accurately represent the current population, which has exploded with resource development in the area since 2012. Respondents indicated that the new arrivals include a large number of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) as well as newcomers undertaking secondary migration within Canada.

When asked for their perceptions of how easy it is for newcomers to settle in their community, 4 respondents indicated that it is "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult," while 3 believed that it is "somewhat easy." Respondents in the latter group explained that settlement is eased when newcomers have information about the region before arriving, obtained either online or from a family member living in the area. Difficulties with settlement arise from the shortage of affordable housing in a region with a 0% vacancy rate, lack of information about the local labour market and culture, transportation over long distances during the extended winter, isolation from large urban centers where immigration applications are processed, language barriers, and the challenges of fitting in culturally in a context where there is little available ethnic community support.

## ACCESSING SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Six respondents agreed that, over 25% of newcomers find it difficult to locate the services they need in their community. Reasons given included language barriers, lack of services, lack of information or awareness about services, the remoteness of services in small northern communities and confusion about where to get help. Specific concerns that have been raised regarding newcomers' access to services include all of the concerns listed in Appendix A.

## GETTING JOBS

When asked how easy or difficult it is for newcomers to get jobs, 4 respondents thought it is "very difficult" or "somewhat difficult," while 3 reported that it is "very easy" or "somewhat easy." The main barriers include: language barriers, complex union bureaucracies, lack of social connections given that most jobs are found through word of mouth, and lack of foreign credential recognition. Respondents indicated that it is easier to find low skilled work than other employment.

## Available Settlement Services

### CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDER CAPACITY

Not all of the organisations surveyed provided information about the number of newcomers served from different categories of entry. Based on the limited responses, services are primarily provided to Permanent Residents (PRs), TFWs, Refugee Claimants, and Naturalized Citizens.

## INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Respondents reported that all of the services listed in Appendix B are available to some extent through other SPOs, apart from job-specific language training, which is provided by 2 respondents. At least 3 respondents indicated that they provide: initial reception, information and orientation, needs assessment and referral, language training, assistance finding housing and a job, assistance with daily life, assistance setting up a business, occupational mentorship and networking, integration support, and cultural events. However, none of the organizations surveyed offer investment opportunities, mental health services, childcare, recreational services, or recognition of foreign credentials. In the feedback session, participants explained that in their small communities a large proportion of services are provided on a flexible, ad hoc basis. As one person stated, “in a small community you have to be a jack of all trades.” However, they stressed that such informal service provision is difficult to describe standardized funding reports and applications and that therefore much of the work they do is not reported.

At least 110 PRs and 8 refugees receive services each month from the participating organizations. In addition, at least 1 PR requested service but did not receive it. According to survey respondents, the most needed services for newcomers include: language training, information and orientation, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, integration supports, needs assessment and referrals, assistance finding a job and with daily life. Language training was noted more frequently than other responses. Although these services are available, almost all respondents thought that all of the services listed in Appendix B need to be expanded, with the exception of interpretation services and investment opportunities.

## NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents report that at least 40 Refugee Claimants, 40 TFWs, 6 International Students, and 45 Naturalized Citizens receive services each month from their organizations. At least 3 TFWs, 1 Naturalized Citizen, and a number of Visitors requested but did not receive services in the month prior to the survey. The services needed most by CIC ineligible newcomers include: language training, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, integration support, information and orientation, interpretation services, legal supports/referrals, and child care. Once again, language training stood out as a critical need.

Turning to specific categories of ineligible newcomers, almost all respondents felt that Naturalized Citizens and TFWs experience all of the needs listed in Appendix B, although there was less expectation that TFWs require assistance finding a job and setting up a business, investment opportunities, occupational mentorship, or educational upgrading. Approximately half of respondents (3-4) indicated that Refugee Claimants need all of the services listed in Appendix B. Excepting occupational mentorship and networking, assistance setting up a business, job-specific language training, investment opportunities, and recognition of foreign credentials, over half of respondents (5-6) indicated that International Students experience all of the needs listed in Appendix B.

## Tracking and Planning

Services for newcomers are guided by an internal strategic plan in 4 of the organisations surveyed. In addition, 6 respondents reported that they regularly assess the service needs of newcomers in their community; 4 conduct assessments internally, while 2 assess needs jointly with other SPOs. Assessments are typically done annually, quarterly, or on an ongoing basis, primarily based on client feedback through word of mouth, surveys, and needs assessments. Additional sources of information include provincial reports and meetings with other SPOs. Only 1 respondent was aware of an annual report on settlement achievements which is prepared internally and not released to the community.

## Specific Capacities

With respect to specific organizational capacities, a majority of respondents (4–7) indicated that they currently have adequate capacity in the following areas: staff to provide services, coordinate services with other service providers, meet reporting requirements, and staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services. Similarly, a majority indicated that they lack adequate capacity with regard to: financial support from government and nongovernmental sources to maintain current services, communication with stakeholders, and provision of services in both official languages. Further, at least 3 respondents indicated that additional future capacity will be needed in of the areas listed in Appendix C, except two: meet reporting requirements and provide services in both official languages. In the feedback session participants drew attention to the huge recent growth in the newcomer population and the need for accurate statistics upon which to base funding opportunities.

## 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 of the organizations surveyed report carrying out settlement activities within active SPO partnerships, while 6 respondents provide welcoming activities, and 4 provide integration supports. Almost all respondents reported that their organisation partners with all of the agencies listed in Appendix D apart from francophone organisations which is noted as an existing partnership by 3 respondents, and as a desired partnership by 3 respondents. In the feedback session, participants explained how the overall lack of resources means that collaboration must be done “off the corner of one’s desk,” thereby limiting their effectiveness. None of the organizations surveyed receives core funding. Participants also indicated desire to connect with employers but find that employers are unwilling to take time away from work to attend settlement meetings.

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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
- Meet reporting requirements
- Provide services in both official languages