

# 2021 PRAIRIES AND NORTHERN TERRITORIES SUMMIT

February 23, 24, 25, 2021

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

## Connect, Collaborate and Grow

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**2021 PRAIRIES  
& NORTHERN  
TERRITORIES  
SUMMIT**  
**SOMMET DES  
PRAIRIES ET  
DES TERRITOIRES  
DU NORD 2021**

Connect. Collaborate. Grow  
Connectez-vous. Collaborez. Grandissez.

**FEBRUARY 23-25, 2021**  
**FÉVRIER 23-25, 2021**

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## Acronyms

AAISIA	Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
CFP	Call for Proposals
FMRI	Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration
FTP	Federal Provincial Territorial
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
LGBTQ2	Abbreviation that stands for: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and two-spirited
PTs	Provinces and territories
PR	Permanent Resident
MANSO	Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations
SAISIA	Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies
SPOs	Service provider organizations
SWG	Settlement Working Group
SWIS	Settlement Workers in Schools

## Introduction

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) facilitates the arrival of immigrants, provides protection to refugees, and offers programming to help newcomers settle in Canada. It also grants citizenship and issues travel documents (such as passports) to Canadians.

(<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship.html>).

This report presents a summary of the presentations and participation of the 2021 Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT) Summit held virtually on February 23, 24, and 25, 2021. The purpose of the Summit was to bring together IRCC, provincial government agencies, umbrella organizations, service provider organizations (SPOs), and partner agencies providing service to the PNT region.

This was the first-ever PNT Summit which provided the opportunity to connect across the five jurisdictions: **Manitoba (MB)**, **Saskatchewan (SK)**, **Alberta (AB)**, **North West Territories (NWT)**, and with IRCC. IRCC provided funding and strategic direction to the Summit. The facilitating agencies in each province were **Manitoba** Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), **Saskatchewan** Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), and **Alberta** Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISIA). Members from the **Northern Territories** settlement communities also attended.

## Format

During COVID times, the Summit was held virtually with most participants in their homes or home offices. Overall, there were 570+ who attended (Appendix B). The conference was held in webinar style.

The delivery of the Summit was contracted to Spark Event Collective, Calgary, which provided the format and system to engage all those who wished to participate. Spark provided live and recorded sessions of video presentations with chat and messaging, panel discussions, breakout sessions, comment and question options, written documents including questions and answer sessions, session slides, and resources. The chat function was used to ask questions and provide feedback. Presentations utilized Zoom. All content was available for 60 days after the 2021 Summit to all participants and their organizations. There were multiple opportunities for questions provided to large group (e.g., panels) and small groups.

Most of the sessions were provided in English and could be accessed immediately after the Summit and all sessions were provided in French within two days of the Summit. Simultaneous translation was available during the Summit and copies of slides were available in both official languages.

The daily facilitators were the executive directors of the non-profit umbrella organizations for settlement and integration agencies in each province (MANSO, SAISIA, and AAISA). These facilitators provided an overview of the day, housekeeping and virtual location information, and summaries of sessions. This was a great support to the conference participants.

*This is an inspiring and rewarding conference to be a part of. Thank you for having the vision and energy to create this event.*

Most facilitators and presenters acknowledged the history and land of where they were located, namely, of the Indigenous and Metis peoples. The purpose of the land acknowledgement is to provide a moment for reflection and appreciate the gifts and people of the lands. All other participants are newcomers to this country at some point in time.

*I especially liked the opening part of Day 2 where an indigenous person was a part of the program. I thought it was very significant. Great job*

## Welcome

### **John Biles, Director of Settlement Integration for the PNT, IRCC.**

John welcomed everyone to the Summit and thanked everyone responsible for the opportunity for the participants to come together. He thanked participants for their efforts and their attendance to assist with the multi-year plan laid out in Parliament for immigration and Settlement sector. There are many opportunities for the sector, and this is the start of a conversation. The Summit provided an evidence-based pulse of what is happening in the region and what will be valuable to shape the sector ahead. Everyone rose to the occasion of Operation Syrian Refugee and will continue to evolve the ecosystem across the nation. There will be pathways to contribute to communities. The issue of racism is not new but is of particular importance in these days. It requires broad-based systemic change that must be considered during the Summit and in every day of our lives. The opportunities at this Summit allowed participants to identify what they are doing well and how they may change and adjust. He encouraged all participants to recharge and take time for themselves during this Summit.

John thanked the organizing committee and Summit advisory committee for pulling this event together.

### **Dedication to Dr. Joe Garcia**

Dr. Joe Garcia passed in November 2020. SAISIA Board President, Abdur Rehman Ahmad, presented a dedication to Dr. Garcia. Joe moved from Italy to Alberta in 1965 and became an associate professor in the Department of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan. He published articles on immigration, settlement, public administration, and local government and was a great ally to the sector. He provided a great deal of shared teaching and learning with the settlement sector.

## Specific Themes of the Summit

The Summit was designed around three main themes:

- Collaboration (focus of day one).
- Possibilities and Shifts (focus of day two).
- Moving Forward and Service Improvement (focus of day three).

### Collaboration

Collaboration was informally the theme of Day 1 presentations. The federal government through IRCC and provincial government representatives gave an overview of the status of immigration and settlement at this time. Manitoba and the NWT were not able to provide an overview.

The afternoon cluster sessions were simultaneously conducted with co-leaders from the IRCC and a related regional agency. Each cluster described their current collaboration or their intent to begin to collaborate to meet the needs of clients in each priority area. Participants chose which cluster session to attend. All clusters provided a five to ten-minute summary to all virtual participants at the end of the day.

#### *Provincial and Territorial Perspective Panel*

**Panelists:** IRCC , Alberta, and Saskatchewan

**Panelist: IRCC. John Biles, Director of Settlement Integration for the PNT.**

John described how the contribution agreements manage themselves and the burden of accountability and funding. However, there are flexibilities built in. Monies have moved because travel and professional development was not feasible in the last year. A lot of those dollars have been invested in lending libraries and upgrades of capital so that staff could work at home.

The second year of the agreement will see similar pressures. The first choice is not to remove slippage but to find necessary and eligible investments. Many agreements had capital purchases built in; dollars can be re-employable. Discuss financial opportunities with your program manager. All financial agreements have been taken over by financial experts in IRCC not the settlement officers.

IRCC is interested in your opinions of the narrative and other reporting structures. Are they improved or do they need further refinement? A national committee has been assembled to do this monitoring. With the wrap-up of Phase 1 of the reset exercise and a relaunch and prioritization for the new fiscal cycle starting in the new fiscal year, there is always space for continuous improvement. What can IRCC do now and what can be completed in 2024?

There has been a committee reviewing the relationships between the umbrella organizations and IRCC. A survey of umbrella front-line settlement staff was completed to get a good sense of where the sector should be going. IRCC is doing the same exercise with their staff. The goal is a more productive environment.

A goal is to have a client-centred space. What has been learned about programming from COVID, from Operation Syrian Refugee, and before that time? For example, a critical area moving forward is that of standardized questions for a needs and asset assessment. Settlement is well positioned to move forward on this.

The incoming classes of clients have shifted dramatically and will shift from temporary to permanent streams projected by the numbers of 401 000 for calendar 2021 and beyond. This will mean significant conversions from temporary to permanent status in several streams. Settlement agencies need to focus on newcomers at the front end. What is the best needs assessment? What kind of shifts in programming does IRCC need to meet the needs of those newly arrived populations? Needs assessments of these clients are critical and is a shift from traditional focus. Settlement must ensure newcomers are well served as well as the traditional incoming populations.

The needs of traditional clients and the programming mix have shifted because of the pandemic. The needs of a third population are those who have been in the country for some time but have not

naturalized and are resurging to settlement. They wish to access additional settlement services and labour market supports, many of whom are women.

There has been considerable interest from the settlement communities around welcoming communities and anti-racism initiatives. They are looking to the settlement sector to decolonize settlement and to assist newcomers into the communities into which they are settling. It is important to “lead from the front.” It is important to provide ideas to the umbrella organizations to develop an action plan to address anti-racism. There will be ongoing dialogue on how to move forward.

There is an enhanced initiative to increase the number of francophones to Canada in connection to the labour market. Particular initiatives such as French-as-a-second language instructors will be needed. Our colleagues in the francophone sector have done a great job, but the work is not done. There needs to be support outside the five urban sectors and into the smaller centres. Newcomers should be aware of the francophone services upon arrival.

Resettlement. It is anticipated that 12 500 GARS will arrive in 2021 after only 35 percent of the target arrived in 2020. This is a significant increase for settlement services and other programs such as SWIS. We need to ensure that we can use every one of the spaces possible. Are we able to take people from dangerous situations on short notice and move them into safety? Outcomes with clients and settlement agencies must be positive, and we welcome ideas to enhance other alternatives. We have experience in large and small communities in the PNT.

IRCC is looking forward to working with everyone in the sector to enhance the system further.

**Panelist: Government of Alberta. Alice Wong, Director Newcomer Integration Unit. Alberta Labour and Integration.**

When COVID first started, umbrella organizations collaborated with each other and the province. There were challenges, but they worked with AAISIA to shift to online services. Programs and timelines had to be adjusted to meet deliverables. AB issued a call for proposals to support activities and to enhance the capacity of service providers in response to COVID conditions. As a result, AB is finalizing that review and approval process and can inform partners of its findings within a few weeks.

AB works with IRCC to provide services to those who do not have access to IRCC services. AB continues to provide settlement services to naturalized Canadian citizens, temporary residents with a pathway to permanent residency, and refugee claimants. They provide language assessments to newcomers and ESL training to those who cannot access regular ESL programs. They do not overlap with IRCC support and they work closely with them to deliver services. Alberta’s goal is to maximize our investments. Immigration a central part of Alberta’s social and economic development and is a central part of the recovery plan.

Newcomer needs are a priority and several initiatives have been implemented. Two new immigrant nominee streams have been initiated. If interested, visit the new Opportunity Alberta web page.

1. International graduate entrepreneur immigration stream. International students from AB educational institutions that intend to launch business startups.
2. Foreign graduates from outside Canada stream for those who intend to launch an enterprise in AB.



The AB government is reviewing the capacity of rural communities to integrate newcomers and to revitalize urban and rural communities. Another project to support these communities is the [Alberta mentorship project](#) which supports programs aimed to work on careers and the integration of newcomers. Several new immigrants and employers have been matched.

The Fairness to Newcomers Branch opened last fall to assist newcomers with licensure and credential recognition. It also offers several low-interest micro-loans to assist newcomers to help with expenses related to occupational licensing and certification and to address critical and emerging skills gaps.

AB has delivered a series of workshops for employers focusing on intercultural communications and integration of newcomers into a workplace.

The government has addressed several gaps in immigrant service agencies to support the integration of newcomers. Several workshops have been funded.

**Panelist: Government of Saskatchewan. Doug Rain, Regional Director Labour Market Services, Saskatchewan. Director of Program and Partnership Unit**

There are various branches that work with the settlement of newcomers: immigration services, intergovernmental relations, and labour market services (focus on supporting individuals in the labour market). Doug is the primary liaison with the provincial service providers. This branch provides assistance to gateway services, settlement advising and services, language programs with federal funding, employment language programs, and employment services.

COVID has had a significant impact on programming. The resilience of the sector and the response of the service providers was exceptional. SK worked with the service providers to determine the next steps. They did not want to panic any agencies and assured them that no agreements would be impacted. They worked to insert some flexibilities while maintaining service and capacity, and the service providers responded. SPOs moved to alternative service delivery while working in a safe environment to support clients.

Demand has been low but SK is trying to determine what are the takeaways for another year. What have they been able to do together? Everyone had to use technology and increase technology capacities. They have been learning how to work with the required digital literacy skill sets.

SK worked with service providers to give them top-up funding to deal with issues they could not address such as safety issues, technology, PPE, and others. Service providers have done an amazing job.

Looking ahead 2021. SK is planning to review and renew settlement services in the province; this includes Gateway services, settlement services, language delivery, and employment services. What is the impact of IRCC programs and how can SK collaborate? How can SK maximize service delivery in the province? This planning is to be done in the summer and fall 2021. SK will continue to work with the service providers.

*It was good to have the opportunity to ask questions directly to provincial and federal representatives.*

Panelist: IRCC. **Angie Barados., Director of governance and engagement settlement and integration policy, IRCC Federal co-chair of the federal – provincial territorial working group**

Catherine Cooke, MB, Co-chair of the federal – provincial territorial working group. **Manitoba** has been a great partner.

**Settlement Working Group (SWG) Overview.** The multi-lateral FPT forum reports to senior level committees that deal with settlement, namely the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FRMI). All provinces/territories (PTs) are members except Quebec who is an observer. It is a forum to share information and provide input mutually on policies, programs, and research on the settlement of immigrants and refugees across Canada. It also undertakes joint work on priorities either of their own initiative or as directed by the Minister or Deputy Minister's table of FRMI. One important role is that of a space for information sharing and collaboration. There is great value to have this space and to share perspectives. All of this can add up to valuable collaboration among governments such as a pre-arrival example.

A second role is to support the bilateral working relationships between IRCC and the PT representatives. John Biles and his group has done a great job to improve the working relationships with AB, MB, SK, and **NWT**. Even without an MOU with **Alberta**, they maintain a positive working relationship. Different levels of governments fund different levels of support especially in health and social services. In 2016, IRCC developed bilateral MOUs with PTs. These MOUs developed local working groups and envisioned enhanced bilateral service mapping of federal and PT settlement programs.

The SWG's role was to explore lessons learned from bilateral service mapping across jurisdictions in 2019, and they began exploring multilateral baselines. There are currently different approaches in different parts of the country to service mapping, and there is potential to expand this work such as sharing IRCC data and information from other regions.

A third role for SWG is joint collaborative work. For example, in 2018, they were directed by the FMRI to explore newcomer mental health. The group organized a panel to share perspectives, key issues and gaps, and current best practices. This will help shape future group work. It is an issue that is growing, especially in the pandemic. It will be kept on the agenda in the future.

Priorities of the SWG. In 2020 they were directed by FRMI to undertake service gaps for temporary workers. Over the next year, the SWG will be gathering needs and gaps including postsecondary institutions and employers. SWG will be sharing information and data on government's ambitious immigration and refugee initiation. The work completed on service mapping and coordination will serve us well going into the new times.

The SWG is also working on the use and measurement of outcomes in settlement programs and newcomer employment (importance cannot be understate in economic recovery).

This is a summary of the questions asked by participants in the session.

- Funding. Who funds what based on federal/provincial jurisdictions and needs?
- Collaboration: There are several collaborative pilots going on in the PNT region on naturalized citizens and international students, on youth with interrupted school, on language training for those on temporary visas.

- Improvement of IRCC reporting, e.g., narrative reports. Narrative and financial reports. – Any way to improve them? Take too long? Reduce the frequency?
- Health care for newcomers. There are bilateral and multilateral agreements will be determined. Vaccinations will be ensured.
- Credential recognition. Provincial jurisdictions in many cases but IRCC monitors the situation as well.

### *Clusters.*

The afternoon sessions focused on the seven active clusters given the current environment and, on the need, to maximize resources. A PNT steering committee works with joint co-leads (an IRCC representative and a SPO) to develop and implement a workplan for the cluster. Participants chose to attend the cluster of their choice while representing their agency.

The clusters prioritized (in no order) at this time are as follows. Other clusters exist and will continue in alternative groups.

- SWIS
- Case Management
- Employment and mentorship
- Information language training (under Community Connections)
- Newcomers with disabilities
- Gender based violence
- LGBTQ2

At the start of each cluster, the co-leaders explained the purpose and needs of a cluster to prepare for CFP 2024 and for the anticipated surge of newcomers to Canada. All information and questions were consistent across the seven groups. Group participants were asked about the status of the theme, and about their perceptions which could lead to mid-term and long-term planning. If a cluster had not yet been assembled, the notes from the cluster group would be provided to the cluster. Sessions in English could be accessed immediately after the Summit and in French within two days of the Summit.

### *Case Management (CM)*

The cluster information was presented by the IRCC and SPO co-leaders. This cluster is considered a successful cluster and was started in 2017 and 2018. During this time, it held three events in SK, MB, and AB. After the launch of the 2020-2025 agreement, several changes were rolled out because of the work of this cluster; and the work is continuing. This cluster has completed an environmental scan, proposed a client – worker ratio; envisioned three to four tiers of CM; and has regional strategies with different levels of CM. CM is being delivered in all major urban and some small centres. The cluster working group is moving into CM triage and the adoption of a definition at different levels.

During this Summit, cluster time was spent providing feedback on a CM indicator tool. Facilitators read scenarios, and the participants determined if a family should go to CM for triage (urgency) or for an assessment. This tool has 14 domains and is divided into 3 classes. Each class is weighted differently. The tool was initially developed and used in [Winnipeg](#). It can be used for refugees as well as all immigrants.

**Vision ahead.** IRCC is looking for further feedback. When levels of immigration increase in this next fiscal year, CM will be impacted. The work completed so far and in the next couple of years will impact the next CFP process in 2024. This is the start of a conversation. Moving forward this cluster will further determine what success looks like.

#### Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)

The SWIS cluster has started its collaboration; however, it is waiting for the results of an SWIS evaluation to be completed in 2021 – 2022. There is a youth subcluster within SWIS across the PNT. There are different levels of SWIS including enhanced SWIS and travailleurs d'établissement dans les écoles (TEE). The participants believed there is good PNT collaboration now with 25 to 30 agencies participating in the cluster. However, they want to strengthen this collaboration and provide more leadership.

SWIS is a learner- and education-centred program in collaboration with local school boards, the families, and the settlement agency. The settlement workers ensure the students are integrated into the school system with family support.

**The medium-term planning.** The SWIS cluster is looking for core criteria; the criteria must be multifaceted to allow for flexibility to meet the urban/rural needs, the refugee/immigrant needs, language needs, and others. The settlement workers must be able to customize the criteria. They would like to network with settlement practitioners in all regions to overcome challenges and coordinate support. The participants suggested that research, design, and projected utilization of criteria be developed.

School boards are the main SWIS partners. There are many issues of concern such as waiver forms and school board agreements and expectations. SWIS workers are key persons in schools who also provide multilingual services. There needs to be more consultation with school boards in this cluster. They would also like to know the role of the regional SWIS/TEE coordinator. They are working toward determining success.

**Longer-term planning.** The cluster would like to see outcomes and impacts developed for SWIS. They want to know how the program impacts youth. They have seen the youth transition from SWIS to mentoring roles and eventually transition to postsecondary education. How can these transitions be measured?

**Looking forward.** The cluster is looking forward to the results of the evaluation and is seeking consistency and improved outcomes.

#### Employment and Mentorship

This cluster is established. During the CFP 2019, the co-leaders and the cluster was asked to:

- differentiate between general employment-related information and orientation and programs designated to assist newcomers' access to the labour market;
- pilot blended language and employment programs; and
- Identify and address gaps.

Their accomplishments to date are:

- improved access to employment information for newcomers and agencies;
- increased access to professional development opportunities for employment counsellors; and
- the creation and implementation of blended language and employment-related programming for newcomers.

**Medium-term planning.** The referral system must meet the client's needs. How can that be ensured?

The cluster suggested that identification of employment education and training needs to be improved.

- There is a training gap between arrival and when newcomers first seek employment
- There are employer training needs. Counsellors must customize the approach to educate the employers about the newcomers. Anti-racism and cultural employer training is beneficial.
- Clients need to be educated about the culture of the workplace during pre-arrival and upon arrival. Topics could include human resource processes, policies such as harassment, and others.

Different categories of newcomers have special needs. One high-need group are those who require credential recognition as this can be a very long process. There is an initial model for international health credential recognition that could be utilized. The cluster participants would like to have more connections with other provinces as it is hard to find the right resources for newcomers.

**Longer-term planning.** The group recommended that the keys to getting newcomers back into their professions prior to arrival in Canada are credential recognition and financial support such as loans, bursaries, and scholarships. The pathway to their employment recovery should be visible.

They wondered if IRCC can assist with the development of provincial credential recognition system to reduce the cost to organizations and make recognition more transparent.

**Maintaining momentum/ Looking Forward.** A lot of newcomers have lost their jobs during COVID. How can they be retrained? Employment services require more specialized services to identify training opportunities. Clients require financial support such as loans, bursaries, and scholarship to be more visible. Employment counsellors need this information as well.

[Informal Language Training \(Community Connections related to language development\)](#).

The cluster was identified in 2017, but it was not prioritized until 2021. The informal language training cluster to date could report the following.

- The CFP 2019 shift was to ensure progression is built into informal language training. This does not seem evident.
- Conversation circles are the most common.
- Most informal language training has been done online during COVID.

The participants have started to identify and address gaps in the training, but there has been little guidance from IRCC since 2017. Guidance could include basic information on how to conduct a conversation circle. The SPO in **NWT** works alone with very little support. Transportation and cold winters are a challenge to these clients and they find it difficult to get out in the winter.

During COVID the program was delivered online. One comment suggested that the necessity of participating online limits participations. Another group member found that when she offered programming to complete a craft or an activity, the numbers of online participants gradually increased. Generally, the popular activities are quite basic – cooking, arts, learning instruments, and others.

There are limitations to the programming as identified by the cluster participants. Programming is offered solely by volunteers and the SPO facilitator may only be a .5 FET support worker. Another limitation is the requirement that the volunteers have an educational background. This restricts the numbers and the capacity of volunteers to work in the program. Is this essential?

**Edmonton** has a partnership with a public library with typically with 50 to 52 sessions per week. During the pandemic, they moved online but they only have participation for 14 to 15 sessions per week. This agency anticipates continuing with a hybrid model in the future.

**Winnipeg** is training volunteers in partnership with the University of **Manitoba**. The train volunteers in the communication lab and at the immigration centre. They also have partnerships with several agencies to assist clients on how to talk with employers and members of the public. They have developed different lesson plans that volunteers can use to meet their needs.

**Medium-term planning.** The programming between SPOs is varied. It is hard to have a discussion when there is little structure to the program. The service providers are developing their own programming. This Summit and this cluster will be useful to share ideas and provide a general guideline of expectations.

The SPOs were encouraged to connect with their settlement officers to assist with the process.

**Longer-term planning.** The group wants more guidance on what programming should look like across the PNT and across the country. The cluster will determine what it wants to achieve as a group; collaboration is necessary.

SPOs are looking for creative programming approaches to topics such as working in the arts, working with seniors, adults, and youth. There were 21 participants in this cluster which is a good number. They wished to share a directory and work together. The cluster members suggested that they would like IRCC to facilitate:

- A quarterly/online video call and occasionally an in-person event to stay connected.
- Accessible training for SPOs to conduct programming even on how to conduct a conversation circle.
- A forum to share best practices and resources.
- The provincial umbrella agency could incorporate calls within their province and a PNT event at least once a year.

**Looking forward.** Collaboration with SPOs is essential. The group believes that they will utilize a hybrid delivery model of informal language training. Success at this time would be an increase in client participation. However, it would be useful to have proven markers/indicators to ensure there is language progression.

### Newcomers with Disabilities.

This cluster has not been established. There will be a callout for cluster participants to take place soon. Notes from this session will be given the cluster upon development.

The current session is to get a better understanding of what programming is currently being offered and what standard of services can be expected in major centres of the PNT. Acknowledgement of the supports available and the pathways to those supports will vary across jurisdictions which can make standardization an issue. There are very few newcomer-specific programs available for newcomers with disabilities.

There were two short presentations from key resources who shared their programs and knowledge with the cluster participants.

- **Tracy Robertson, Manitoba Possible.** This agency has a newcomer navigation and support unit to help newcomers connect with services and supports to enhance their daily living and eliminate barriers. It formally began in 1997 and provides case management for newcomers to navigate the system. The agency deals with people with disabilities and includes all newcomers from children to adults. Using a cultural framework, they work with families using a mentorship approach until newcomers become confident to employ the system. Currently they have 280 clients with 20+ languages. They also work with service providers and provide training courses to frontline staff and others. There are major cultural barriers.
- **Michael Farr – EmployAbilities for Newcomers. Edmonton.** This is a not -for-profit agency supporting those with disabilities. The agency partnered with IRCC to provide support to newcomers with disabilities and enable employability for newcomers. There are many privacy issues surrounding newcomers with disabilities. In general, 22 percent of all Canadians have a disability. What Canada identifies as a disability, entitles many newcomers for support. Newcomers must be encouraged to disclose their disabilities and to learn about their newcomer rights. EmployAbilities show newcomers how to access supports and options for training that lead to employment. This new program started in the summer of 2020 and addresses wide spectrum of disabilities. Each service provider should realize they are serving with newcomers with disabilities now, and that they should learn to recognize those disabilities. New programs can be put in place for current and incoming newcomers.

The cluster co-leaders asked how can the cluster can promote existing IRCC funding for those with disabilities and continue to share information and knowledge. A goal is to reach out to as many community partners as possible including school divisions. Newcomers do not require medical documentation.

The cluster participants agreed that promotion and collaboration between agencies is essential. SPOs must reach out as well. Agencies such as the two described above are available in most urban centres. A goal is to bridge the services with the newcomer programs.

Concerns: Newcomers are reluctant to disclose disabilities. It is imperative to educate them about their rights and available services. They may need a medical examination and if that cost is over a certain amount, it is not covered during their early years of arrival. They have not disclosed disabilities during pre-arrival, and they are hesitant to do so upon arrival and before permanent residency. Many need



services right away; for example, a learning disability may be identified early during language training. ESL training has recognized the need for services for a long time.

**Medium-term planning.** Sharing and networking is the key for service providers. The cluster could identify key resources and a centralized cluster location in each province. These resources and information could be shared with the PNT. How newcomers receive service should be known. There are few services in rural communities. How can this be accommodated?

Training is required for all settlement staff but particularly frontline staff. They can identify disabilities at an early stage and refer clients to the most suitable resources.

The cluster will determine the key disabilities and agency resources in each region.

**Longer-term planning.** The interim newcomer health program needs to be more responsive. How can it be improved? There is a distinction between federal and provincial governments' provision for the accommodation of disabled clients. Service providers must be clear on where to find the appropriate resources.

Outcomes need to be developed for both short-term and long-term/impact, but this is complicated as there are different needs for different abilities. Language assessments often identify disabilities quickly. What is the process required for these assessments, and what can be the results? Perhaps this is a model to review.

#### [Gender-based Violence Session and Related Services.](#)

The cluster has not yet been established but it has been identified as a priority, especially during COVID. Notes from this session will be provided to the cluster when established. The callout for participants for this cluster will be help after this Summit.

**Current landscape.** There are differences in need between provinces.

The International Women of [Saskatoon](#) (IWS) deliver programming in [Saskatoon](#) and [Regina](#). IRCC funds programs for language and needs assessments but community grants fund women-only programs. They are often left out of IRCC discussions. They are helping women with multiple issues including gender-based violence. They would like funding for these programs. If they receive no funding, they would like to participate in the cluster.

The [Calgary](#) Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) is well funded for gender-based violence by IRCC. IRCC has always been associated with immigrant women everywhere in Canada. In the past CIWA was funded by United Way and by municipal funding. All women's agencies funded by IRCC have formed a cluster in [Calgary](#), and they now invite all women's organizations to participate from the PNT. They have created a network of organizations to deliver services. They create mentorship circles including those who have been dealing with these issues for a long time. This helps other organizations make connections to address client's issues and get funding. They have both urban and rural agencies in their cluster.

Gender-based violence is an issue and several federal ministers are aware of the issues (Safety, Women, and IRCC for example).



The Sexuality Education Research Centre (SERC) in [Winnipeg](#) provides counselling to many newcomer women experiencing severe trauma. The challenges for SERC is to receive information about vicarious, secondhand trauma. Clients feel safe and are willing to share after several sessions. It is hard for the staff to deal with such counselling on an ongoing basis. SERC also delivers sessions about relationships in a new culture. Many couples dissolve their marriages after coming to Canada when women learn about their rights and support structures. Women would like to stay in their marriages and separation is not desirable for the immigrant family. There is an epidemic during COVID times. Men feel a loss of power and there are educational sessions for both men and women. They also have community-based programs for female and genital mutualization.

Kamal, a Lloydminster IRCC immigration partnership coordinator, is also the Chair of the Africa Centre in [Edmonton](#). This is the largest African Centre in Western Canada and represents 54 countries. The Centre has served over 4 000 immigrants and 90 families in the last few months. The Centre uses pastors, imams, and community leaders to assist with programming. The gender-based violence programs are not funded by IRCC in [Edmonton](#) but are funded by the United Way and the City. The City wishes to increase the funding for these programs. They noticed an increase in gender-based violence during the COVID food distribution. The Centre is starting programs with youth to discuss this topic. Many men are going through a lot of stress due to role and financial changes. Many men are highly educated and are stressed because they are not working. Racial inequality also brings stress to the home as well.

Several members of the cluster group agreed that numbers have increased during COVID, especially in large families. The lockdowns, home-based learning for children, and unemployment has caused violence to increase. There are few French resources and programs for clients needing service.

**Medium-term planning.** Training around gender-based violence and its associated issues need to be a requirement of all settlement staff but particularly frontline staff who identify clients and refer clients to the most suitable resources. Determine more precisely the needs of women. What services should be prioritized?

There is a lack of understanding around the rights and responsibilities of family members and around Canadian culture. There is considerable stress on the families. Violence is a learned behaviour and helping families adapt to Canada is essential.

Francophones should receive these services in their language of choice.

What is the approach for IRCC to follow? There is a national strategy to end gender-based violence taking place now. The engagement sessions have started in each province. Funding is from the Status of Women. Can this cluster (co-leads/members) participate in this strategy? IRCC is supporting and investing in this strategy.

**Longer-term planning.** This could become a community of practice, elevated from a cluster to include the mentorship of new and smaller agencies.

A more systematic approach is needed to address these issues. Before newcomers come to Canada, address this issue along with the rights, responsibilities, and culture in Canada. Emphasize the dangers of gender-based violence in pre-arrival information. Women often do not have the competencies to enter the workforce. What is their pathway?

## LGBTQ2

LGBTQ2 is an abbreviation for: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), and two-spirited. This cluster has not been established but has been identified as a priority. Notes from this session will be given to the cluster when it is formed.

The goal of this cluster is to integrate LGBTQ2 newcomers and to develop an action plan to integrate LGBTQ2 members into the settlement sector. An evaluation after the PNT conference in 2017 was completed and a copy of the evaluation results was prepared in 2018.

**Current Landscape.** There are few programs available to service providers.

Rainbow Resource Centre in **Winnipeg** does provide service. This centre has had funding from IRCC in the past, but it did not continue. They found it did not meet the needs of the newcomers. The centre has a social support group for newcomers and serves within the existing newcomer programs in **Winnipeg**. They are trying to meet the needs of the clients, and they feel that they are doing so currently.

MANSO has collaborated with Rainbow and collected persecution data based on the client's sexuality. They have also contracted with Rainbow for resources and training.

**Barriers.** Currently the newcomers arrive and need to feel safe before they want to be outed to the newcomer community in Canada. International students and others in Canada on a temporary basis do not feel it is safe to come out. Privacy issues are a huge concern for clients.

Some cluster participants said that no one has requested these services in the last two years. They wonder why they are not coming across this issue.

Community organizations that service LGBTQ2 clientele often get referrals from schools. In **Winnipeg**, Rainbow provides some training to instructors about how to provide more space for the newcomers and how to provide materials and resources for use in class. Teachers are reluctant and do not know how to respectfully integrate this concept.

**Funding.** **Calgary and Edmonton** are receiving some funding. They are also asking the province to develop a different definition of the LGBTQ2 community. **Saskatoon** does referrals but they are asking for funding for awareness programs; LGBTQ2 has a vibrant community and would be willing to work with the Newcomer Welcome Centres.

**Medium-term planning.** There is a lack of awareness of LGBTQ2 and services available across the PNT. The cluster needs to be clear on their needs and current resources available.

Cluster participants would like IRCC to complete a service mapping. Where are the services now and where are there gaps?

This cluster suggests to formalize programming with IRCC for newcomers and provide funding for resources.

**Longer-term planning.** What is the vision across the PNT for LGBTQ2 cluster? Outcomes could include:

- Data collection policies to potentially vulnerable newcomers so that they do not face additional barriers.

- Strong safe places need to be offered to LGBTQ2 newcomers.
- Success would mean that organizations and staff support the LGBTQ2 community.

*The cluster working group sessions were very informative. I participated in the SWISS/TEE session which was engaging and constructive. The session on antiracism by Manuela Castro was so interesting and dynamic as was the panel discussion with Corinne Prince.*

## Possibilities (Day 2)

### PNT Senior Management Arm Chair Session.

This session provided participants with an opportunity to ask questions of the PNT management team. Panel members included: John Biles, Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Grace Van Fleet, Assistant Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Melanie Holmgren, Assistant Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Donna Wall, Manager (Small Centers, Language, LIPS, and SDI); Yann Legrand, Manager (RAP, PSR, OLMC, and the North); Kelly Sims, Manager (Urban Centers).

**Overview: Caitlin Imrie, DG of Settlement Integration Policy Branch and Co-chair of the National Settlement and Integration sector provided a welcome from the government.**

Immigration levels for 2021 and beyond. Despite all challenges, the sector has had the capacity to work together and move forward. Numbers are set at 401 000 for 2021 and will increase in subsequent years. The sector needs a clear plan and a pragmatic approach to meet the immigration levels. Francophone immigration is a key priority for government. The goal is 4.4 percent of francophones outside of Quebec by 2023. The transition of moving international students and temporary residents to PRs will be a priority as well. Changes have been made to express entry.

There are excellent programming examples of collaboration and communities of practice in the PNT.

In the next three years, GARS are planned to increase and the sector must find solutions to meet their needs. The GAR working group is working on this.

The longer-term objectives are to address long-standing issues in the settlement. There are some acute areas. The stability of the five-year funding is in place. Funding will not be decreased based on reduced levels in 2020. The principles to be used to prioritize funding will be guided by commitment to priorities and as needs arise. IRCC is committed to continued service improvement. The national settlement sector group has been focused on many of the issues that the service providers have raised.

The sector is asked to play a role in anti-racism work. Federal activities are taking place as well.

Thanks to all for your commitment and excellent service.

The Panel answered questions as they were submitted. Questions generally centred around the following concerns.

- Numbers were down in 2020 but funding will not be adjusted. However, numbers will increase soon and dollars can be used for client pressures in 2021.
- Need for resources for high-need clients. Resources will be more widely dispersed in the new year.
- Looking to expand iCARE to track clients. Currently it generates data sets in areas of case management. Looking at multiple ways to track clients.
  - How many NARs can be completed for one client? This becomes part of the urban transformation.
- Divorce and separation is hard on families. Non-accompanying spouses and non-supporting spouses is an immigration issue not a settlement issue.
- Treasury Board does not allow for slippage. There is no way to do this legally.
- How can IRCC attract, settle, and retain newcomers in small centres. It is not IRCC role to attract immigrants to any location. There are pilots underway to assess needs and settlement needs outside of large centres. IRCC will support organizations in small centres to support newcomers once they have arrived. The vast majority of newcomers are privately sponsored refugees or provincial nominees that become PRs. IRCC has a small centre team to support ensure supports are in place.
- What is the best way to connect with people who write policies? Work with the umbrella organizations to develop information/evidence and suggest policy.
- Estimates for the landing of GARS. IRCC cannot always predict this. Estimated numbers were shared in January. Other streams of newcomers are controlled by immigration and can be found online through the open portal through provincial nominees and others.
- Rural literacy needs; how do newcomers apply for these programs? IRCC teams can explore those needs. Can set up pilots.
- Language pilots (blended methods) will continue. There is a wide online language model.

#### [Inclusive Innovation for Newcomers](#)

**Dr. Wendy Cukier, Professor, Entrepreneurship & Strategy, and Founder & Academic Director, Diversity Institute, Ryerson University. Co-Author of *Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership from Java to Jurassic Park*.**

Innovation was referred to many times throughout the Summit. Dr. Cukier focused on innovation and innovative strategies that could be employed in the settlement sector. Innovative approaches were introduced and associated issues around risk management. She approached innovation to drive inclusion by doing things differently. COVID has precipitated more change than anything in the last 30 years. What changes have been made in settlement?

Considerations in innovation can focus around social innovation and diversity. For example, indigenous people are usually tied to community benefit as opposed to making money for the individual. Community charters can be used to integrate newcomers.

Better define and assess skills that will be used by the employers. There is a huge pool of internationally trained workers who have the skills but maybe not the tools (communication, workplace tools) to work in Canada. Rethink the assumption about who can do the job.

Send newcomers to the training they need instead of training they do not need. For example, do not send a Master of Engineering with English skills through language training and then to Walmart to stock shelves. Let's do a better assessment of immigrants and refugees.

Develop new partnerships and collaboration with employers and utilize employer-centred training. There are new models of collaborative program delivery, for example, work integrated learning.

Move to more innovative approaches of strategy versus bureaucratic structures and complicated reporting.

Final thoughts. Understand the system and the innovation process. Who does what? What works? Replicate and scale.

[Program evaluation at IRCC. An overview.](#)

**David Kurfurst, Director of Evaluation and Performance Measurement, Research and Evaluation Branch, IRCC.**

This Branch evaluates IRCC policies and provides evidence to every level of programming. Are we achieving results and what improvement and changes can be made?

Evaluation and performance measurement provide management with evidence of what works and what changes can we make. How is IRCC achieving results? Continuous needs assessment and ensuring the programs remain relevant are essential to meet the needs of communities and stakeholders.

There are lots of good reasons to evaluate: reallocate resources; reduce reporting by aligning requirements and time; adjust targets and staff; identify areas that need more attention; anticipate and meet emerging needs; and demonstrate sound financial and human resource management.

Evaluation is an essential management and financial function.

It was difficult to evaluate programs during COVID. Data collection was difficult but virtual focus groups were utilized along with existing data and information as part of a mixed methods approach.

Most evaluations have settlement aspects. Settlement is complex and providing service is complex. Complexities mean the services work for different clients in different ways. We can benchmark; we can improve; and regional differences will be noted. Focus on results.

Evaluations give recommendations to government. There will be recommendations in all evaluations and discussions on how IRCC is addressing them.

All evaluations are published on the IRCC website and a list of upcoming evaluations is included. The language services evaluation will be completed shortly. This is a foundational evaluation and is the basis of much policy work. The scope was large and it responded to many outcomes on the IRCC logic model.

[Moving from multiculturalism to anti-racism: the necessary shift for settlement agencies.](#)

**Manuela Valle-Castro, Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network.**

This is a coordinated anti-racism group working out of the [Saskatchewan Intercultural Association](#), which is a settlement organization based in [Saskatoon](#).

Ethnicity depends on where you live. Manuela arrived in Canada from Chile, and she was informed that she was ethnic. Race is a social construct. Racial categories are not based on biology but reflect a social and political realities. Whiteness is the invisible centre.

Anti-racism addresses the discourse, practices, and policies that reproduce racial inequalities. Multiculturalism is cultural awareness and responsiveness and celebrates cultural diversity with engaging the concept of race or culture.

Anti-racism addresses hierarchies and power relationships. It is a teaching concept that attempts to shift attention from other cultures to the mainstream. It is a transformative process and encourages white or settled people to become allies.

She suggested to those who work in settlement that instead of talking about race, talk about racial categories and behaviours. This does not mean that Caucasians have the superior behaviours. It is noted that the Irish, Polish, and Ukrainians were not considered “white” when they arrived in Canada.

Newcomers feel they should not criticize governments because they have had the opportunity to arrive in Canada. Newcomers have much to contribute; they are model minorities. Quietness is not peace. Encourage newcomers to speak up because they are here to make Canada a better place.

There are many techniques to support newcomers and move to an anti-racism environment.

[Immigration Levels in the Age of COVID.](#)

**Dr. Dan Hiebert, Professor / Policy Liaison / Executive Committee Member  
Geography, University of British Columbia.**

Dr. Hiebert provided insights into immigration levels in Canada and advises in many roles but one is to the Deputy Minister of Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada Advisory Council.

**Looking backward**, especially to the recession of the 1990s, the onset of crises was quick and the recoveries were slow. Groups in precarious positions suffer the most. Immigrants who arrive during a recession suffer at arrival (lower employment rates and wages) and suffer more in the longer term. This is amplified for the more skilled and educated immigrants (higher-level expectations). Research showed that earning gaps did not narrow over 20 years after arrival. This should not be repeated with new arrivals expected in 2021 and beyond because the government has responded quickly and with massive spending. This recession had border closures and massive health care needs. This has elevated the need for frontline workers and revised the concept essential workers. Workplaces are scattered; people are working from home and online. The result was reduced immigration and temporary worker admissions.

**Data from Canada Labour Force Survey.** Statistics provides valuable information. There are uneven economic impacts across the labour market. The levels of unemployment are higher for immigrants, especially women. Racialized groups are facing added pressure. Youth has been surprisingly impacted.

**What has happened to migration during Covid, temporary and others.** There is an immigrant gap in unemployment for those who have arrived less than five years prior to 2020 to 2021. It is compounded by a gender gap; more immigrant women (ages 25 – 54) are unemployed than males. The gap has narrowed in recent months.

**Data on racialized groups.** The total Canadian unemployment rate was 9.4 percent. The rates are much higher for racialized groups from 20 percent for Southeast Asians down to about 11 percent for Chinese. **Manitoba** and **Saskatchewan** unemployment rates are a bit less.

**The employment job loss.** Most of the jobs lost in the last few COVID months are those under the age of 25. If all the jobs lost are counted, there are nearly 4 million Canadians who are working less or laid off. Newcomers will be entering the job market where about 4 million Canadians are unemployed.

#### **Recent immigration and migration patterns.**

- Temporary immigrants: labour migration is less affected and student migration is down about one third.
- Permanent immigrants: the levels are down by about half and the composition is a small shift toward the economic class and less toward family class. The sources of permanent immigration are about the same but there is a major emphasis on temporary residents transitioning to permanent residents (inland migration).

The numbers of temporary residents showed a few changes. Caregivers are drastically reduced, agricultural workers have increased, and few changes in the other areas. There are eight categories of temporary workers. There have been increases in post-graduate work permits and international mobility programs who are workers of Canada's interest such as health care workers and other essential worker categories. The number from 2020 are not that different from 2019 except they increased toward the end of the calendar year.

The study-permit levels in 2020 did not look much different from 2019. The sources of students were consistent from 2019 to 2020, but the number of students has dropped off to a fraction of previous years.

The immigration levels of asylum claims have dropped off in the early part of COVID.

In the prairie provinces, the temporary residents saw a large spike in late 2020 and early 2021. The bulk of immigrant admissions are the provincial nominees. Student/study permits are down by about 20 percent. In **NWT** and Nunavut, there are similar drops in temporary movement.

Inland immigration is the transition from temporary residents to permanent residents. Canada reached inside – those already in Canada and granted permanent residency.

**Alberta** has the greatest number of immigrants coming in. In total across the prairies permanent immigration is down about 56 percent. On the temporary side, there was not much of a reduction except in **Saskatchewan** (-60%).

**Summary.** The immigration disruption continues. IRCC is trying to fill ministerial goals. Will it succeed? The labour market situation is troubling: there are employment gaps for newcomers and women and major gaps for racialized minorities and youth. The vaccination rates are low which means longer recovery period. How can we prepare for this and do better than in the 90s?

- Start by acknowledging the issues: bringing a high number of immigrants into high unemployment. Newcomers should have this information.

- Settlement. Enhance partnership with immigrant employment councils, LIPS, private sector; start thinking about how to support newcomers; prepare Canadian employers and develop and use more labour market intelligence (StatsCan and others) and share information.
- 2021 and 2022 will be tough on newcomers.

*Better times are ahead.*

### Moving Forward, Possibilities and Service Improvement (day 3)

Introduction to Day 3 by two Assistant Directors of Integration, Settlement Network in the PNT: Grace van Fleet and Melanie Holmgren.

Overview of the Summit to date:

Day 1 focused on collaboration and included various levels of government and on the cluster groups to start identifying areas of collaboration to work toward in preparation for the 2024 call for proposals (CFPs).

Day 2 focused on possibilities. The pandemic has shifted how settlement does its work and how they serve clients. Looking forward, the safety measures (pandemic) will be around for a while. With the increased levels, the mix of new PRs will likely shift and settlement workers will have to proactively prepare for changes while meeting clients' needs. There are many possibilities in the future.

Day 3 focused on programs and delivery and partnerships inside and outside the sector.

#### [A Flexible Strategy and a Francophone Integration Pathway](#)

This session informed participants of services available and reviewed the francophone strategy. After the panel presentation, the floor was open to questions. The panel was conducted in French with simultaneous English translation.

Panelists: **Corrine Prince Director General, Francophone Immigration and Official languages, IRCC.**  
**Aileen Clark Director of the Continuing Education Division, Université de Saint-Boniface**  
**Alphonse Ahola Executive Director, Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle (FRAP), Edmonton**  
**Déborah Chevalier Bi Lingual Urban Coordinator, SAISIA .**  
**Chantal Morin CFA Coordinator, Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF)**

The objectives of a flexible strategy and francophone integration pathway are:

- To increase francophone immigration to reach a 4.4 percent target of French speaking immigrants outside Quebec by 2023.
- To support successful integration and retention of French-speaking newcomers.
- To build the capacity of communities.

The strategy is based on five pillars.

1. Selection favouring francophone candidates.
2. Attraction, promoting and support for recruitment in Canada.
3. Collaboration with all government and community partners.



4. Services enhanced resettlement and settlement pathway.
5. Results – consistent policies support by relevant evidence and results.

The success to integrate large numbers of immigrants including francophone immigrants will depend on partnerships with the provinces, territories, and employers to engage francophone immigration and integration agencies and jurisdictions to raise their awareness of the importance of prioritizing Francophone immigration such as to:

- Establish a francophone integration pathway. As evidenced in a study in 2017, newcomers did to know the francophone agencies and services available to them.
- Support French speaking clients and francophone communities.

To implement this vision, IRCC must provide services, settlement services, and resettlement and integration in collaboration with settlement agencies and partners. The goal is to strengthen the francophone settlement sector by providing direct services and tools.

**To date**, the inclusion of “par et pour les francophone” approach was included in the 2019 CFP and increased the number of francophone service providers from 50 to almost 80. New language training services in English and French are adapted to the needs of clients in a francophone minority context. The National Francophone Settlement Advisory Committee has been created to information a renewed model. A one-stop shop for francophone pre-departure services has been launched.

The success of the Francophone Integration Pathway will require commitment and collaboration from all players in the settlement and resettlement sector.

**At the Université de Sainte Boniface, Aileen Clark**, has committed to multi-dimensional approach. In 2019 IRCC announced commitment to meeting francophone strategy by 2023. This allowed francophone service providers be the main actors. The Université offers French language training to the public, all online currently. Service providers are provided with a file of the client’s needs. They are working with IRCC to reduce wait lists.

Using French in daily life and as a native language enhances Canadians and increases employment opportunities. Equal access to citizenship in two languages puts French-speaking immigrants on an equal footing with English-speaking immigrants.

Breakout sessions A:

[Building efficiencies with iSTEDY Software in LINC Programs in Manitoba.](#)

**Debra Schweyer, Winnipeg English and French Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC).  
Queehyung Nam LINC provider, Anna Janik-Kelly, Red River College.**

ISTEDY is language software used to build efficiencies into LINC programming. It was custom designed to meet the LINC and CLIC training needs in Winnipeg. It conducts data tracking, reporting (iCARE and others), and ensure confidentiality. WELARC is the base of the program whereby when an SPO sends in a request for language training, and the client is referred to a LINC or CLIC program within Winnipeg. A needs assessment is then conducted and the client referred to the services they require.

Queehyung is a LINC service provider in Winnipeg and uses WELARC. They run 27 LINC classes with 4 on-site child care services. Anna is at Red River College where there can be up to 600 students at one time with 500 on a wait list. They would like WELARC to “bucket” students based on their needs and the supports required. For example, if they have a group of engineers waiting for language training, they could be “bucketed” together.

Teachers have access to their own class lists. Program administrators can see all students. Each SPO can see their own clients.

#### [Customized Supports through Innovative Partnerships](#)

**Celestina Akinkunmi, Calgary Immigrant Women Association (CIMA).**

To meet the needs of immigrant women and girls, the innovative project improves integration between settlement services and health care agencies. It allows clients to access, understand, evaluate, and communicate with health care agencies. Health literacy is key. The goal of the program is to improve the knowledge and skills of the individual and to reduce the barriers and literacy demands of the health system.

They address the needs of three groups: health care professional, ESL literacy practitioners, and literacy learners. Resources are free on their web site.

#### [Vaccine intentions among Newcomers](#)

**Lori Wilkinson, Professor in Sociology and Criminology, University of Manitoba.**

Lori has conducted research into vaccination adoption among immigrants, refugees, and those without status. There are commonalities between research with First Nations, Metis, Inuit and with immigrants. Data was collected in Canada, US, and Mexico. There are many valid reasons for vaccine hesitancy like those that we are familiar with.

There are differences in the health services areas based on racial and ethnic disparities. Immigrants and refugees are often working in industries where there are large COVID breakouts. Suggested actions to encourage newcomers to become vaccinated are some of which we know already: bring vaccines to the people; educate newcomers in their language; reach out to newcomer community agencies; and find resources and more information for distribution to newcomers.

#### [Breakout Sessions B: Covid Lessons Learned.](#)

##### [Employment Service Delivery, Regina Open Door](#)

**Pranika Shrestha, Manager, Employment Services, Regina Open Door Society (RODS)**

In March 2020 Employment Services transformed to a digital platform. They had the tools in place to do so: a virtual meeting platform, an online registration system, work collaborations, virtual private networks (VPNs), working in the “cloud,” and Google classrooms were established. The transition was quite smooth.

Some of the highlights of service delivery during the pandemic included the following.

- Youth Employment Skills and Strategy (YESS) program inception
- Occupational Specific Sources Library (OSRL)
- Webinars (533 organizationally)

- Virtual reality similar referrals
- Learning events
- Networking lounge
- Virtual Job Fair in April 2021
- Virtual Hackathon in the summer of 2021
- An online though coding camp

Client feedback on the OSRL was very positive. It is a one-stop resource about occupations in Canada. There was enough information for clients to make decisions regarding their careers. It was easy to use and all the information was in one place.

RODS employment services programs include: employment readiness, youth employment counselling and computer literacy, settlement online pre-arrival contracted by ISANS, career bridging on workplace culture and soft skills as well as an eight-week work placement; English for employment (industry specific language training and job shadowing; and youth employment skills and strategy (YESS) with six-week work placements.

Future directions for Employment Services included the following.

- A hybrid teaching model
- Virtual reality simulations
- A Technical library for those with no access to technology.
- Digital literacy classes for clients
- Revisit the use of traditional methods and increase the available of services (bots, assessment tools, database enhancement, and others).

#### [Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative \(CENC\)](#)

#### **Dr. Sally Zhao, CEO of the Immigrant Education Society (TIES),**

This service was a zonal approach of a community model created by IRCC for the inclusion of **all** newcomers in [Calgary](#). The purpose was to coordinate outreach and support for newcomers. There are 17 agencies who meet daily to update on how to meet client's needs and emerging needs. There are more than 10 000 newcomers supported. There are over 100 community agencies supporting newcomers through this model. There is a call centre that provides service in 22 languages.

The requests come into the Gateway data base and are referred to the appropriate agency. The SPOs:

- Provide immediate relief and support to those in quarantine /isolation.
- Address barriers and aggravating factors that contribute to vulnerability of racialized communities.
- Deliver community-based prevention through engagement, education, and awareness.

Some of the main concerns during COVID were obtaining food, income support, employment and benefit support, mental health, vaccinations (although only about 40 percent are vaccinated – hesitancy), language, and others. Staff often experience burnout and are provided Zoom sessions on topics such as mindfulness.

[Community Connections, Global Gathering Place, Saskatoon](#)

**Afton Tolley, Program Manager.**

The Global Gathering Place has been offering service to refugees and immigrants for 20 years. The pandemic has not affected the quality of services but has developed innovations and best practices in the last year. Their clients lack computer skills as well as literacy skills. They sought outside funding for accessible technology: online platforms, internet access, preloading tablets with software and created email accounts to provide remote support.

Using technology, they were able to conduct conversation circles on a weekly basis. They used Zoom breakout rooms where volunteers and clients communicated. Connecting from home provided more opportunities to share cultures in invaluable ways.

The programming was multifaceted. Global provided take-home kits, facilitated self-guided independent visits with maps and routes, and provided follow-ups with clients to discuss their experiences.

They provided homework help using Zoom. There were two formats: volunteers provided one-on-one support with children, and group sessions were provided four times a week to provide for social interaction. Keeping learning interactive and interesting was important.

Nearly one in five families required childcare support and could not leave their homes. Activity and craft kits were delivered to the homes for children.

Canada Connects builds meaningful relationships and foster a sense of belonging. There is flexibility of when and which technology can be used.

Many of the long-term volunteers were resistant to use technology but they converted over time. Students continue to assist as volunteers, and they can participate online from anywhere. One volunteer was from Harvard, completing his practicum for his program.

Regular staff meetings were held to ensure the support and mental health of staff to enable them to support clients. Staff were encouraged to take time for play and to be creative and innovative.

An approach to offering Community Connections during a pandemic must be multifaceted. The program manager sees a blended method of program delivery in the future.

[Building Caregiver Resilience in Uncharted Times.](#)

**Kari McCluskey, Vicarious Trauma and Resilience Facilitator.** Kari provides workshops and support for settlement service providers who are committed to creating positive transition and integration experiences for Canadian newcomers.

Kari described the role of the service provider/helper as being one of a dedicated, compassionate person, empathic to the needs of the clients, in this case newcomers. The service provider plays many roles such as counsellor, mediator, resource liaison and others. The caregiver acts as a mentor and coach to the clients.

However, the caregiver must be conscious of taking care of themselves. COVID has made the provision of services to newcomers even more difficult. The caregiver may feel they are missing the available energy for motivation and the ability to focus. There are many feelings that a caregiver can experience

such as worry, fear, uncertainty, anger, frustration, and others. Research shows that service providers share similar experiences.

Stress affects the service provider's ability to function. Peak performance occurs with an optimal amount of stress. Unresolved stress causes emotional exhaustion over time. There are many stress release strategies such as physical activity, positive social interaction, affection, and even meditation and prayer.

Caregivers develop vicarious resilience over time. The positive effectiveness of helping professionals is when they witness learning, recovery and the resilience of persons who have survived severe trauma. Resources and suggestions for support was given to service providers.

#### Resettlement Discussion

**Fairborz Kirjanian Fairborz Birjanian Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Calgary Catholic Immigration Society**

**John Biles, Director of Settlement and Integration for the PNT, IRCC.**

The main reference for this session was the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Clients who come to Canada have often experienced trauma and may have mental health concerns. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2001 is the legislation from which RAP clients come. The resettlement is a distinct program from settlement, designed 20 years ago and was intended to support refugees for their first 6 weeks in Canada with income assistance for the first year. The rest of the funding must come from Settlement. Canada recently brought in refugees from Syria and the Yazidis and others are coming.

The needs of refugees now are different from those of 20 years ago. Only 1 of every 20 000 refugees can come to Canada.

RAP clients often have long-term needs, extended beyond the first year of arrival. As a service provider, Fairborz discussed the needs of RAP clients in the broader settlement context. He suggested developing settlement plans for each family but this concept would require the support of IRCC.

There is the need to increase capacity, especially in the urban centers, which will be linked to funding. In a recent RAP survey, two main issues need to be addressed: staffing and acquiring temporary accommodation to meet increased capacity in the next 10 months. Although added funds helps, some providers cannot increase their capacity by much. Therefore, they need to think "outside the box" on how capacity can be increased in certain regions. Can there be satellite offices in rural areas, or looking at different temporary accommodation models such as apartments.

Ask the questions:

- What do you have in place and what would be better?
- Not every refugee needs the same level of assistance – there must be a multifaceted approach
- How do we engage the community partners to assist with the settlement system, for example, getting kids into schools and into the health system?

A goal would be to look for a pathway for refugees through the settlement continuum and ensure other newcomers can join that pathway when necessary.

On average, to meet this year's targets, Immigration is looking at having 245 GARs land in the region per month. The settlement sector must be ready for the influx. Settlement has the experience of the Operation Syria so the capacity concerns have been experienced,

We need to ensure the following.

1. Hotels are full as often as possible. Get people into temporary spaces with partnerships and with settlement staff. Families leave resettlement at their own pace. If supports are not in place, they tend to stay longer in temporary housing.
2. Remove obstacles and barriers. Update what income support looks like in various regions. What support is there for large-scale immigration while providing safe and reliable housing.
3. Consider broadening the footprint of resettlement across the regions. There is a good map in urban and rural settings, but there are still many communities that have no settlement services but an appetite for GAR's skills e.g., Brooks, High River, and others. The small communities have the capacity. The sector must ensure they are connected to settlement services such as language training, housing, and others.

Settlement needs to develop relationships to meet the regions' needs and get newcomers off to a good start. From the experience of Settlement, adapt the footprint now and into the future.

[Settlement 3.0 Innovation and technology in a changing sector.](#)

**Jennifer Freeman Chief Executive Officer, Peace Geeks Society.**

The Settlement 3.0 research began with Settlement 2.0 and learned, from providing to receiving services, and what conditions need to be in place to encourage innovative and collaborative work in the sector. Through regional consultations, the project is assessing various possibilities in the current settlement sector environment (with its existing limitations) by exploring opportunities and generating insights on ongoing innovative work that can be built. In considering both digital and non-digital innovation, the project seeks a strategy for a brighter future for the sector that prioritizes empowering newcomers to be agents in their own settlement journey and which builds the overall capacity of the sector to embrace innovation towards more successfully and sustainably supporting newcomers over time.

Peace Geeks is a technology, non-profit who supports the settlement sector in Canada and humanitarian and peace building around the world. It collaborates with partners to create digital tools to support connection, peace, and safety for those who have been displaced and for all newcomers in Canada. It received funding from IRCC to develop a vision and action plan in 2018 for how technology and innovation can best facilitate settlement outcomes. Peace Geeks has representatives from settlement and IRCC on their advisory board. The work and research is ongoing.

Innovation can be described as developing something new not just with technology and iteration is refining what works to make it work better. Ask these questions.

- What do newcomers need as a whole – not just the needs currently being met?
- Recentre the client.
- What are some shifts in geographical programming?
- In what ways is innovation change the eligibility requirements?

- What collaboration is taking place between internal and external partners?
- How can investments support a new system?
- What are the consequences of using technology with the settlement sector?
- Are interventions making a difference?
- What are the unique needs and opportunities of smaller centres?

Peace Geeks has conducted in-depth consultations in the Vancouver area. It identified the importance of three parts to innovation. Some new themes emerging from those consultations are listed below.

- COVID. Created trauma and challenges. The sector is inherent in nature to be client centric and has committed to coming up with Settlement 3.0, a new innovative wave. The current context has pushed organizations and staff to the breaking point.
- There is a “new normal.” There are new budgets and technologies to meet technological needs (digital literacy, regional nuances, emerging technology). They will not revert to what happened before. The short-term response to the pandemic has caused IRCC to respond in a positive way. There is ongoing communication and partners are listening to each other. IRCC is aware of what is going on at the ground level. Partners have created solutions and there is more trust between the partners. The sector is more agile. It has shifted from audit to support.
- Innovation information has been captured and data shared within the sector, mainly from smaller centres. Strategies need to be developed to bridge the gap between rhetoric on innovation and the reality of digitization and how to operationalize it. There is further need for active collaboration.

The key recommendations to IRCC were as follows. The presenter encouraged all interested persons to read the report.

- Invest in technology access, literacy, and infrastructure as it evolves and as clients’ use of it changes.
- Engage in conversations with the settlement sector about how funding structures might shift to better encourage, support, and incentivize innovation and collaboration practices, processes, to continue to make effective use of resources, and further build trust between funders and funder agencies.
- Build a sector-wide capacity building approach for on existing professional development efforts and which is open an exploring innovation approach from other service-providing sectors.
- Create opportunities to formalize and implement knowledge mobilization efforts and practices.
- Ground settlement work in communities to support newcomers in bridging their settlement journey from the early stages to when they feel ready to call Canada their home.
- Pursue asset-based languages, programming, and outreach across the sector and beyond.
- Engage the broader Canadian community in conversations about immigration and settlement.

There has been success in the sector. The most promising practices are taking place in the [Edmonton](#) community of practice, [Calgary](#) East Zone Newcomers Collective, Mothers Matter, and many more across the country. Transformational changes have and are taking place.

The move to digitization has created challenges and opened frontiers. Creative and innovative practices have developed. Geography has blended; silos have been broken down to create a new horizon. New

leaders have emerged in the digital transformation. Internal processes and organizational practices and processes are changing and responding to change.

#### Impacts of the Pandemic and COVID Lessons Learned.

The pandemic caused more upheaval and change to the resettlement and settlement sector than anything in the last 30 years. Within a short period of time, umbrella organizations and SPOs had to find ways to serve their clients. The needs of **traditional clients have shifted and the programming mix has shifted**. Those who have been in the country for some time but are not naturalized are accessing settlement services and labour market supports, many of them women.

The Federal-Provincial **Settlement Working Group (SWG)** was established to share perspectives and has addressed many of the issues and gaps identified during the pandemic.

Some of the main concerns during the pandemic are those of obtaining food, income support, employment and benefit support, health and mental health, language training and others.

The [Alberta](#) umbrella organizations collaborated with each other, the province, and with IRCC. There were challenges, but they worked with AAISIA to shift to online services as quickly as possible. Programs and timelines were adjusted to meet deliverables. [Alberta](#) issued a call for proposals to support activities and enhance the capacity of service providers in response to COVID.

Labour Market Services in [Saskatchewan](#) worked with service providers to determine next steps. The resilience of the sector and that of the service providers was exceptional. The province wanted to ensure the sector that no agreements would be impacted. SPOs moved to alternative service delivery while working in a safe environment.

The case management cluster group is working to identify and prepare a standardized question for the needs and asset assessment. If everyone is assessing on the same criteria, service providers and services can be more easily identified. The breakout session of [Calgary](#) East Zone Newcomers Collaborative describes how a zonal approach benefits from standardized needs assessment.

Lots of newcomers lost their jobs during COVID as did many Canadians. The labour market situation is troubling. There are **employment** gaps for newcomers and especially women. There are also major gaps for racialized minorities and youth.

Some clients may look for retraining either during COVID or as the economy reopens. Clients may need access to loans, bursaries, and scholarships. Employment services and counsellors require more specialized services to meet the needs of their clients.

The breakout session of employment services, [Regina](#) Open Door Society, highlights the employment service delivery during the pandemic. This program was well prepared for online services prior to March 2020.

Inform or make newcomers aware of the high unemployment situation in Canada to alleviate some frustrations upon their arrival. Settlement agencies can enhance partnerships with employment councils, LIPS, and others to prepare employers for the newcomers along with their skills and abilities. This can include the possibilities of mentorship or training opportunities for newcomers.



Anti-racism awareness and training is a transformative process that encourages white or settled people to become allies to newcomers. It has been identified as a priority with IRCC and their partners and can be built into employer and employment discussions as well as with the public.

**Informal language training**, Community Connections) moved to online services and learning during the pandemic. These programs have requested more assistance from IRCC both for service delivery and for resources to meet the needs of their clients. The necessity of online learning during COVID limited the participation of the clients and the volunteers that service these clients. Clients could not visit community resources as they had done in the past. For example, a SPO in [Edmonton](#) had up to 50 sessions per week at the public library. During COVID there could only be 15 sessions per week. Child care for clients was virtually impossible. Technology and digital skills were a challenge. However, there were some bright spots. A volunteer from Harvard was able to work virtually with clients. Clients did not have to leave their homes in the winter/cold weather. The program sees a hybrid model of program delivery in the future.

**Gender-based violence** has been identified as a priority, especially evident during COVID. Service providers noticed an increase during COVID food distribution and in discussions with youth. During lockdowns, children have been learning at home. Many men are going through stressful times due to loss of jobs and family role changes. Several members of the cluster group agreed that numbers have increased, especially in large families.

The biggest impact was the immediate need to use technology to link clients with service providers and information during COVID to meet their needs. Many clients lacked digital and literacy skills. Many programs sought outside funding or utilized existing funding to obtain technology for their clients. These included online platforms, internet access for clients, preloading tablets and computers with software and even creating email accounts to provide remote support. Some programs had technological capacities established; others did not.

Using technology, service providers were able to conduct programs on a weekly basis. Programs were often multifaceted using take-home materials, self-guided program resources, using Zoom or similar software for video conferencing, and others to foster support and trust with their clients.

Housing and health needs changed as one or two members of a family contracted COVID. Children were learning at home often in a household with large numbers of individuals. Families had to find computers and tablets to meet their learning needs.

There are differences in the health services based on racial and ethnic disparities. One is around vaccination rates. Newcomers are more hesitant than Canadians who have experienced vaccines since birth. Immigrants and refugees are often working in industries where there have been large COVID breakouts. Settlement agencies can make newcomers aware of the benefits and safety of being vaccinated. This may require educating them in their languages and finding resources and information for distribution.

The upcoming years are going to be tough on newcomers and service providers for some of the reasons stated above. Service providers must be conscious of taking care of themselves as well. Settlement agencies will play a huge role in their naturalization process. The sector is inherent in nature to be client centric and has committed to a new innovative wave.

## Recommendations

The themes of the Summit and the information provided in all presentations lead to the following recommendations. All readers of this report are encouraged to read or review the information provided at the Summit. There are many suggestions and resources that can be utilized.

Change has and is happening in the settlement sector. COVID has been an accelerator, but change was happening prior to the pandemic. Collaboration and structures were being established. Operation Syrian Refugee precipitated change on the front lines. Technology was being integrated but not as fast as it has been during COVID. Good evaluations provided valuable information and identified gaps and defined improvements. Generally, the sector is resilient and adapts well to precarious conditions. From this resilience and experience, the sector will move forward to meet the immigration challenges of the next few years.

Some recommendations are offered by presenters and some broader-scope are suggested by the writer. Is your organization participating so that efficient, effective, and economical programming can take place? Working in silos is no longer the norm. Collaboration is the key.

- Use the information and recommendations that have been collected for the PNT.
  - iCARE and past and current program evaluations provide valuable information about where changes can be made.
  - Peace Geeks has made recommendations for the integration of technology.
  - Pilots have been or are taking place with successful outcomes (case management, [Calgary East Zone Community Collective](#) and others).
  - Federal/provincial working groups have either identified or are responding to priorities.
  - Clusters and priorities such as francophone services outside Quebec and anti-racism strategies are in place.
- Technology is a key to meeting the needs of clients during a surge of arrivals. Funds for infrastructure and training are crucial. Most service providers are suggesting that a hybrid program delivery model will follow the pandemic. There have been many efficient and effective practices identified.
- Collaborate through regional, provincial, or federal (IRCC) pathways to access solutions to meet clients' needs. Provincial partners are taking advantage of temporary worker programs and are more engaged in immigration in the PNT. Many structures are in place. Pilots are taking place. What works? What does not work?
  - IRCC can ensure that the umbrella groups facilitate collaboration on a quarterly and yearly basis on specific priorities/topics such as the clusters or anti-racism. Regional differences must be taken into consideration. Communities of practice could be established across the PNT.
  - A Summit such as the 2021 Summit could be held again when the pilots are nearing their end such as in mid-2023 or early 2024 to facilitate the preparation of the new funding agreement. Successes can be shared. Challenges can be identified. The virtual platform gave access to the "experts" and allowed for good sector participation (internal and external, regionally and nationally).

- There is a well-thought-out logic model for settlement. Are leaders, managers, and frontline workers aware of the intended outcomes for their programs? Build innovation into inputs, processes, and outputs to meet outcomes.
- Establish service delivery to those whose needs are not being met. For example, francophone newcomers, gender-based violence newcomers, those with specific learning needs (disabilities), and those who require credential recognition. These needs have been identified. Meeting these needs are examples of how to fast-track newcomer integration.
- Leaders can encourage flexibility in program delivery. Encourage settlement providers to find solutions to problems and innovate to provide more efficient and effective service delivery.
- Set/develop program standards and criteria, general and specific where needed and allowing for regional differences. There were several suggestions that more direction is required for services providers. There are good standards for language training and case management is currently validating criteria for an assessment tool. However, other clusters are trying to identify “what is success?” Perhaps IRCC can provide some general guidance/training on how to establish criteria and to formulate baseline standards.
- IRCC funding is fixed for the five-year period. Financial experts in IRCC control budgets; however, the Director of Settlement for the PNT did note that flexibilities are built into funding agreements. Contact your program officer for discussion to allow for innovations and strategies to meet challenging client needs. CFP 2024 is the next “big window” for systemic change.

Generally, this was a very productive and informative Summit. Again, collaboration is the key. The virtual delivery infrastructure was very good and participants were active during sessions.

*I found it inspirational, engaging and motivating as well as informative.*

*It is a wonderful learning opportunity for everyone. We learn from others and from their experiences. There was such a wonderful wide range of topics and discussions.*

*Just a thank you to each of the presenters/speakers/facilitators and the time put in to organizing this summit. It was also very appreciated that the registration restrictions were lifted to allow for more individuals to attend.*

Take care of staff and ensure the health and safety of everyone.

Prioritized IRCC and Sector Suggested Work Plan: Prior to 2020 to January 2025 (Call for proposals completed)

Prior to 2020	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	New funding 5-year agreement				All pilots completed	
		PNT Summit		PNT Summit		
		Assemble and focus technologies in preparation for surge of immigrants and refugees.				
		401 000 immigrants 12 500 GARs	401 000+ immigrants 12 500 GARs	401 000+ immigrants 12 500 GARs	401 000+ immigrants 12 500 GARs	
		Redefine re-settlement (RAP) to better integrate into settlement programming				
	Settlement Working Group (SWG) working with provinces and territories.					
		Action plan for anti-racism strategy		Implement anti-racism strategy		
		AB finalizing support activities and enhance capacity				
		SK review support activities and changes				
2018 SWG review of newcomer mental health						
	SWG review of service gaps to temporary workers, postsecondary institutions, and employers.					
2017→ Cluster: Case management. Changes implemented. Continue to refine.						
	Cluster: SWIS started and waiting for evaluation results.					
2019 Cluster: Employment and Mentoring						
2017 Cluster: Informal Language training but not prioritized until 2021.						
		Cluster starting: Newcomer disabilities				
		Cluster starting: Gender-based Violence				
		Cluster starting: LGBTQ2				
	Develop francophone pathway . Target 4.4% francophones outside of Quebec.					
	Innovate and develop partnerships to deal with incoming newcomers.					
	Increase digital literacy and technology utilization for program planning and delivery.					
	More flexible programming to better meet clients' needs.					
Innovate and Collaborate						

## Appendix A: Registrations

### Total Registration by Province/Territory

Province	# Registrations	
Alberta	275	48%
Saskatchewan	114	20%
Manitoba	164	29%
NWT	7	1%
Nunavut	1	0%
BC	4	1%
Ontario	7	1%
Quebec	1	0%
Totals:	573	

### Registrations by Date of Registration and by Organization

Date	Percent
12-Feb	2%
13-Feb	1%
14-Feb	1%
15-Feb	4%
16-Feb	25%
17-Feb	12%
18-Feb	8%
19-Feb	4%
20-Feb	1%
21-Feb	1%
22-Feb	25%
23-Feb	12%
24-Feb	3%
25-Feb	1%

## Where are you from?

Province	Organization	#
Alberta		2
Alberta	AAISA	7
Alberta	Accès Emploi	2
Alberta	Action for Healthy Communities	5
Alberta	Agape Language Centre	1
Alberta	AIMGA	7
Alberta	Alberta Labour and Immigration	1
Alberta	ASSIST Community Services Centre	3
Alberta	Association Francophone de Brooks	1
Alberta	BCIS	4
Alberta	Bow Valley College	7
Alberta	Bow Valley Immigration Partnership	1
Alberta	Boys & Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area Society	1
Alberta	Bredin Centre for Career Advancement	1
Alberta	Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth	6
Alberta	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	28
Alberta	Calgary Catholic School District	1
Alberta	Calgary Immigrant Women's Association	5
Alberta	Calgary Local Immigration Partnership	1
Alberta	Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council	5
Alberta	Catholic Social Services	8
Alberta	CCIS	3
Alberta	Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association	3
Alberta	Central Alberta Refugee Effort	12
Alberta	Centre D'Accueil pour Nouveaux Arrivants Francophones	6
Alberta	Centre for Newcomers (CFN)	8
Alberta	Cité des Rocheuses	1
Alberta	Columbia College	1
Alberta	D. E. Systems	1
Alberta	Diversecities	1
Alberta	ECSD	3
Alberta	Edmonton Immigrant Services Association	3
Alberta	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	15
Alberta	Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council	1
Alberta	Employability's	1
Alberta	Equilibrium International Educational Institute	1
Alberta	FLEXIBILITY LEARNING SYSTEMS LTD	3
Alberta	Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle (FRAP)	2
Alberta	Gateway For Newcomers	1

Alberta	Government of Alberta	4
Alberta	Grand Prairie Council for Lifelong Learning	1
Alberta	Grande Prairie Centre for Newcomers	1
Alberta	Immigrant Services Calgary	6
Alberta	IRCC	39
Alberta	Jasper, Department of Community and Family Services	2
Alberta	Keyano College	2
Alberta	Lethbridge College	1
Alberta	Lethbridge Family Services - Immigrant Services	13
Alberta	Lloydminster Local Immigration Partnership	1
Alberta	Making Changes Association	1
Alberta	Maple Leaf Academy	3
Alberta	Medicine Hat College	1
Alberta	Metro Continuing Education, Edmonton Public Schools	1
Alberta	Multicultural Family Resource Society	3
Alberta	NorQuest College	7
Alberta	PNT Summit	1
Alberta	Portail de l'immigration Association de Calgary	4
Alberta	REACH Edmonton	1
Alberta	RIFA	1
Alberta	SAAMIS	3
Alberta	Solomon College	1
Alberta	Somali Canadian Women & Children Association (SCWCA)	3
Alberta	SPEC Association for Children & Family Services	1
Alberta	Taber and District Community Adult Learning	1
Alberta	Talent Pool	1
Alberta	The Immigrant Education Society	2
Alberta	Trellis	1
Alberta	University of Calgary	1
Alberta	YMCA Calgary	1
Alberta	YMCA of Northern Alberta	1
British Columbia	IRCC	3
British Columbia	PeaceGeeks	1
Manitoba	A & O - SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS	2
Manitoba	Accueil francophone	2
Manitoba	ALTERED MINDS INC.	1
Manitoba	Assiniboine Community College	2
Manitoba	Aurora Family Therapy Centre	4
Manitoba	Bilal Community & Family Centre	1
Manitoba	Canadian Muslim Women's Institute	1
Manitoba	Churchill Community Immigration Initiative	1
Manitoba	COMMUNITY FUTURES NORTH CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT (Thompson Newcomers Settlement Services)	1

Manitoba	Conflict and Resilience Research Institute, Canada (CRRIC)	1
Manitoba	DLS Consulting Inc - Winnipeg English Language Assessment & Referral Centre (WELARC)	1
Manitoba	EDGE Skills Centre, Inc.	3
Manitoba	Elmwood Community Resource Centre	1
Manitoba	English Online Inc.	5
Manitoba	Eupraxia Training	1
Manitoba	Family Dynamics	1
Manitoba	Food Matters Manitoba	1
Manitoba	Government of Manitoba	3
Manitoba	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba Inc.	1
Manitoba	Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc	5
Manitoba	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	19
Manitoba	JEWISH CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE	6
Manitoba	Louis Riel School Division	3
Manitoba	Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)	7
Manitoba	Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology	4
Manitoba	Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc	5
Manitoba	Manitoba Possible (formerly Society for Manitobans with Disabilities)	2
Manitoba	Manitoba Start	4
Manitoba	MOSAIC - Newcomer Family Resource Network INC.	3
Manitoba	Neepawa and Area Immigrant Settlement Services, Inc. (NAISS)	1
Manitoba	New Journey Housing	1
Manitoba	NEWCOMERS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (NEEDS)	5
Manitoba	North West Regional Immigrant Services Inc.	5
Manitoba	Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner	1
Manitoba	Pembina Valley Local Immigration Partnership	1
Manitoba	Portage la Prairie Local Immigration Partnership (PLIP)	2
Manitoba	PORTAGE LEARNING AND LITERACY CENTRE	7
Manitoba	Rainbow Resource Centre	1
Manitoba	Red River College	4
Manitoba	Regional Connections Inc.	1
Manitoba	Réseau en immigration francophone du Manitoba	1
Manitoba	River East Transcona School Division	3
Manitoba	SEED Winnipeg	1
Manitoba	Seven Oaks School Division	5
Manitoba	Sexuality Education Resource Centre MB, Inc.	8
Manitoba	Success Skills Centre	6
Manitoba	Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED) Winnipeg Inc	3
Manitoba	TESL Manitoba	1
Manitoba	The North End Women's Centre (NEWC)	1
Manitoba	The Salvation Army - Barbara Mitchell Family Resource Centre	1



Manitoba	The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg	3
Manitoba	The Winnipeg School Division	5
Manitoba	Université de Saint-Boniface	2
Manitoba	Waverley EAL Consulting Inc. o/a Enhanced English Skills for Employment	1
Manitoba	YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg Inc.	2
Northwest Territories	Collège nordique francophone	2
Northwest Territories	La Fédération Franco-ténoise2	2
Northwest Territories	LA FEDERATION FRANCO-TENOISE (FFT)	1
Northwest Territories	NWT Literacy Council	2
Nunavut	Carrefour Nunavutt	1
Ontario		1
Ontario	Government of Manitoba	1
Ontario	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada	5
Quebec	Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)	1
Saskatchewan	Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (A.C.F.) inc.	1
Saskatchewan	Battlefords Immigration Resource Centre	2
Saskatchewan	Carlton Trail College	2
Saskatchewan	City of Saskatoon	3
Saskatchewan	Cumberland College	1
Saskatchewan	East Central Newcomer Welcome Centre Inc.	5
Saskatchewan	Global Gathering Place Inc.	17
Saskatchewan	Great Plains College	1
Saskatchewan	INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF SASKATOON	8
Saskatchewan	IRCC	10
Saskatchewan	Moose Jaw Multicultural Council Inc.	4
Saskatchewan	Newcomer Information Centre	1
Saskatchewan	North West College	1
Saskatchewan	Northeast Newcomer Services	1
Saskatchewan	Prairie Skies Integration Network	1
Saskatchewan	Regina Immigrant Women Centre	9
Saskatchewan	Regina Open Door Society Inc.	6
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA)	5
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan Intercultural Association Inc.	2
Saskatchewan	Saskatoon Industry Education Council Inc	1
Saskatchewan	Saskatoon Open Door Society	9
Saskatchewan	Southeast Advocates for Employment	1
Saskatchewan	Southeast College	1
Saskatchewan	Southwest Newcomer Welcome Centre Inc.	3
Saskatchewan	The Humboldt Regional Newcomer Centre	6
Saskatchewan	Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Saskatchewan	6
Saskatchewan	YWCA Prince Albert Inc.	7

## Appendix B Summit Agenda/Program

Tuesday, February 23

9:30 to 11:40 Welcome and Dedication to Dr. Joe Garcea

Provincial and Territorial Perspectives Panel – Part 1

Provincial and Territorial Perspectives Panel

The panel represented those from the Alberta and **Saskatchewan**, governments for a discussion about programs and priorities. IRCC will also participate, lending a federal perspective to topics. This is a unique opportunity to gain insights on what other provinces are doing and learn from their stories. It is also an opportunity to hear from provincial governments on priorities and inform decisions for the future.

Following a short presentation from each panelist, the floor was open to questions from the audience and participants were encouraged to share your ideas and challenges in the spirit of collaboration.

10:40 AM - 10:55 AM MST // 11:40 AM - 11:55 AM CST - Stretch Break

10:55 AM - 11:40 AM MST // 11:55 AM - 12:40 PM CST

Provincial and Territorial Perspectives Panel - Part 2

11:40 Lunch and Work Break

12:55 Cluster Working Groups

- Case Management
- SWIS
- Community Connections: Informal Language Training
- Employment and Mentorship services
- Gender Based Violence
- LGBTQ2
- Newcomers with Disabilities

2:00 Networking Break

2:30 Bringing it all Together: Summary Session

Wednesday, February 24

9:30 – 10:30 Welcome Day 2.

PNT Senior Management Arm Chair Session

Welcome and an opportunity to ask the PNT management team questions. Speakers will include: John Biles, Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Grace Van Fleet, Assistant Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Melanie Holmgren, Assistant Director of Integration, Settlement Network; Donna Wall, Manager (Small Centers, Language, LIPS and SDI); Yann Legrand, Manager (RAP, PSR, OLMC, and the North); Kelly Sims, Manager (Urban Centers).

10:30 – 10:40 Break

10:40 – 11:20 Inclusive Innovation for Newcomers. Evidence Based Strategies, Programs, and Policies.

Wendy Cukier, Founder & Academic Director, TRSM Diversity Institute, Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH), Academic Research lead.  
Professor, Entrepreneurship & Strategy, Ryerson University

11:20 – 12:35 Lunch and Work Break

12:35 Evaluation at IRCC – An Overview

David Kurfurst, Director of Evaluation and Performance Measurement, Research and Evaluation Branch, IRCC.

Will provide an overview of Evaluation at IRCC - the function, its approaches, and upcoming plans. David will also highlight some key, relevant findings from recent evaluation reports in the settlement space, and discuss resources and capacity-building towards strengthening data collection and outcomes reporting.

1:20 Stretch Break

1:30 Moving from Multiculturalism to anti-racism; the necessary shift for settlement agencies.

Manuela Valle-Castro, PhD. Facilitator & Educator. [Saskatoon](#), Treaty 6 Territory

2:20 Networking Break

2:35 Immigration Levels in the Age of COVID

Dan Hiebert . The presentation will speak to the background context of what Canada has done with respect to immigration policy during economic recessions in the past, what is happening to immigration in this crisis, and the short-term challenges associated with the ambitious 2021-23 immigration plan announced by the Canadian government.

Thursday, February 25

9:30 Welcome Day 3.

Settlement 3.0: innovation and technology in a changing settlement sector.

Speakers: Sarosh Rizvi, Executive Director, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies.

Grace Van Fleet is an Assistant Director in the Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT) Region with the Settlement Network.

Melanie Holmgren is an Assistant Director in the Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT) Region with the Settlement Network.

9:40 Stretch Break

9:45 A Flexible Strategy and a Francophone Integration Pathway

Speakers: Corinne Prince, Director General, Francophone Immigration and Official Languages.

Dr. Aileen Clark (PhD, University of Ottawa) is Director of the Continuing Education Division, the Language Enrichment Service, and the Centre for French Legal Resources, of Université de Saint-Boniface (USB)

Alphonse Ahola, Executive Director, FRAP, the Francophone Settlement Agency in [Edmonton](#) and Fort McMurray.

Déborah Chevalier, Bi Lingual Urban Coordinator, SAISIA

Chantal Morin, CFA Coordinator, Assemblée Communautaire francasquoise (ACF)

10:50 Breakout A: \* Building efficiencies with iSTEDY software in LINC programs in [Manitoba](#)

The session will provide insights from iSTEDY software users, a language assessment and referral centre (WELARC), and two LINC program providers, MOSAIC and Red River College. The panelists will share insights on efficiencies gained in managing information flow, program operations, iCARE reporting as well as future goals for the software.

\*Customized supports through innovative partnerships

This session will provide participants with an opportunity to hear from an organization that has delivered a Service delivery improvement (SDI) project. SDI projects test new ways of improving settlement programming to make it more responsive to newcomers' circumstances. The presenter will share a short presentation on the project and provide insights in their SDI experience. Participants were then provided with an opportunity to ask questions.

\*Vaccine intentions among newcomers.

Starting March 20 2020, our international research team, in partnership with the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and Leger Marketing, have collected weekly surveys from a representative sample of Canadians, Americans and Mexicans with the purpose of better understanding how the government imposed regulations due to the coronavirus pandemic have affected the socioeconomic status, mental health and wellbeing of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, Indigenous peoples and racialized individuals in Canada, USA and Mexico. The topic of today's talk examines the extent to which immigrants and refugees are willing to accept a vaccination for COVID-19 and the reasons for not accepting the vaccine among those who are vaccine hesitant. Results indicate that newcomers in Canada and USA are more likely to accept the vaccine when it becomes available than people who were born in the US or Canada. Among those who are hesitant, the reasons range from distrust in science or government, feel the vaccine is rushed, or for personal preference. The presentation ends with some ideas for helping educate newcomers about the vaccine and its importance to social and individual health.

Speakers: Anna Janik-Kelly Language Training Centre Red River College

Celestina Akinkunmi Manager Settlement and Integration Department, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Debra Schweyer has been with **Winnipeg** English & French Language Assessment and Referral Centre, **Winnipeg**, (WELARC). as assessor, regional trainer, and executive director.

Queehyung Nam LINC Program Coordinator, Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network

Lori Wilkinson Professor in Sociology and Criminology, University of Manitoba

#### 10:50 Breakout B: COVID Lessons Learned

In this breakout session three different organizations shared stories of how they adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants learned about ideas and tactics on language programs, community connection, and working with the current labor market.

##### **Bridging Cultures & Strengthening Community in a Pandemic**

When the pandemic hit, Global Gathering Place (GGP) pivoted overnight to mainly online programming while continuing to connect one-on-one with the most vulnerable and isolated clients. GGP is proud that the pandemic has neither reduced the quality nor scope of its programs and services and continues to be a lifeline to its clients. Join us to learn about some of the lessons learned through Community Connections from this COVID-19 experience.

### **Service Delivery during the COVID-19 Pandemic at Employment Services of Regina Open Door Society, SK**

This presentation will focus on changes made to the service delivery of employment programming at the Regina Open Door Society during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it highlights some new initiatives, lessons learned, and future directions.

### **Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative (CENC)**

As numbers of COVID-19 positive cases started to peak in late November and early December 2020 in Calgary, Alberta, it became clear that more needed to be done to support those testing positive in the Alberta Health Services (AHS) designated hotspots in NE Calgary – a small group of the agencies working in the NE and Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP) had been meeting regularly over the year and during one of our regular 30 minute catch-ups, we came up with the idea to dramatically expand and connect two existing programs to create something new – the Centre for Newcomers had been tasked by IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) to create a “Calgary East Zone” collaborative of agencies and organizations to better coordinate outreach and referrals for newcomer communities – ActionDignity has a strong network of Community Brokers working in dozens of ethno-cultural communities in the NE, they speak the language, know the culture and are connected to community leaders – by bringing these together with the research expertise of TIES and the data management potential of the new ISC Gateway database, the NE crisis response, Calgary East Zone Newcomers Collaborative (CENC), was born – The province and the City of Calgary, Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), Alberta International Medical Graduates Association (AIMGA) and AHS all jumped in with ideas, funding and support and at this point, more than 10,000 people directly affected by COVID-19 have been supported in first language advice and have been given food, financial and employment supports as well as being connected to mental health and wellness resources. And that is in less than 3 months. CLIP convenes monthly community meetings for the initiative, updating the community and engaging wider community organizations including the 17 community organizations in Calgary east zone, who have resources and are willing to help. Over 100 social services agencies, faith based, ethno-cultural and grassroots groups are actively participating in supporting the CENC work.

Speakers: Pranika Shrestha, Manager of the Employment Services Unit, Regina Open Door Society

Afton Tolley Program Manager, Global Gathering Place, Saskatoon, SK.

Dr. Sally Zhao Chief Executive Officer, The Immigrant Education Society (TIES), Calgary, AB.

11:30 Lunch and Work Break

12:40 Building Caregiver Resilience in Uncharted Times.

Kari McCluskey Vicarious Trauma & Resilience Facilitator, Aurora Family Therapy Centre, Winnipeg, MB

The past year has offered many challenges as service providers and caregivers adapt to ongoing changes in a time where many things feel beyond our control. Sustainable wellness

is a necessary priority and conversation if we are to continue caring for others in meaningful ways. This session will facilitate a dialogue tuning in to our common humanity as we share struggles and triumphs of navigating a pandemic.

1:25 Stretch Break

1:30 Resettlement Presentation

Fairborz Birjanian Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

John Biles Director of Settlement and Integration for the Prairies and Northern Territories Region (PNT), Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

2:15 Networking Break

2:30 Settlement 3.0: Innovation and technology in a changing settlement sector.

Sarosh Rizvi, Executive Director, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies.

Jennifer Freeman. Chief Executive Officer, Peace Geeks Society,

3:10 – 3:30 Closing Session.

Sarosh Rizvi, Executive Director, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies.

## Appendix C: Event Feedback and Summary (as provided from SPARK)

**Stephanie Barkley, CMP**, Principal, SPARK EVENT COLLECTIVE has provided a comprehensive summary of the PNT Summit evaluation feedback to the PNT event coordinators. A summary report can be obtained from:

Ahmad Majid (He/Him)  
Executive Director | SAISIA  
#104 – 407 Ludlow Street [Saskatoon](#) | SK S7S 1P3  
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There were 37 respondents to the Evaluation of 2021 PNT Summit - Virtual Conference/Sommet des Prairies et des Territoires du Nord 2021 - Évaluation de la Conférence Virtuelle.

Of the respondents, 62 percent were from umbrella organizations (AAISA, MANSO, and SAISIA). About 10 percent were from IRCC. The remaining respondents were from settlement agencies invited to the Summit.

*Thank you for the opportunity to attend virtually and for all your efforts in bringing forward important topics to newcomers.*

Most found the virtual delivery platform above average and excellent. Almost 80 percent of the respondents said the overall quality of the PNT Summit as above average and excellent.

There are always improvements to any event and mainly the comments were around having a virtual versus a fact-to-face meeting. When asked about being able to hold their interest, most said they agreed (60%) while only 20 % strongly agreed. Some participants had problems with bandwidth and technical issues.

*Too many days of screen time, would recommend breaking it up.*

Ninety-five (95) percent of respondents said they would recommend the Summit to friends and colleagues. The benefit of a virtual summit to the entire PNT region was the wide accessibility to a range of pertinent topics during a pandemic.

*Ongoing learning is valuable.*

Generally, it worked well. This was portrayed by comments such as these.

*Excellent organization. I loved the way summit has organized.*

*Great conference overall. I enjoyed the flexibility of the schedule which allowed session to run overtime.*