

British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program (BCSAP)

Settlement Reference Group Meeting

September 21, 2010

FINAL REPORT

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
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Executive Summary

Purpose and Process

On September 21, 2010 a one-day Settlement Reference Group Meeting was held, sponsored by the Immigration and WelcomeBC Branch (IWBC) of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (the Ministry) and with support from the Association of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) of BC.

The objectives of the Reference Group Meeting were to:

- Identify key service delivery principles that have been used to guide the delivery of current services;
- Assess how well the current service activities offered support newcomer clients to achieve positive outcomes; and
- Explore potential service activity modifications, additions and/or enhancements to improve client outcomes.

The Reference Group Meeting was held to review three services that target similar client groups, offer similar types of service activities, and derive similar client outcomes: (1) Information and Support Services, British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program (BCSAP) Stream 1 – excluding the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative and Trauma Counseling Services); (2) Community Bridging Services (BCSAP Stream 2); and (3) Immigrant Seniors Demonstration Projects.

The agenda provided for multiple small group discussions and exercises, opportunities for the groups to report back on discussions and exercises, as well as one “open floor” discussion. Participants were provided with both work sheets and flip charts to record their responses to the exercise questions. They were also encouraged to leave individual feedback on the exercise worksheets.

Successes and Challenges

Participants identified that current British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program programming generally corresponds to the draft service delivery principles, and that there are multiple client groups who are well-served by current programming. However, participants acknowledged the need for some additional services, and also identified a number of challenges within current programming.

The most frequently made success and challenges comment was the need for the Ministry to recognize that there are many gaps in services and challenges for effective service delivery, as well as barriers for clients in service delivery. These gaps, challenges and barriers include the need for: better inter-agency relationships; more training; increased

staffing hours; more public/employer education training and marketing; IWBC to take a proactive, leadership role in information dissemination; program evaluation models that are out-come-based; an understanding of the challenges faced by smaller centers; more specialized services; distinct outreach services; review of the intention of the RFP process; standardized forms; increased capacity to manage contracts; and, a review of client surveys.

Conclusion

The participants were attentive and dedicated to the exercises and discussions throughout the meeting. The focused conversations, in-depth feedback, and comprehensive summary reports by each group demonstrated that although there are multiple challenges, service providers have: a strong understanding of current programming; a desire to improve current programming; the conviction that current programming can be enhanced to better-serve all clients; and, an authentic desire to serve immigrant, refugee and newcomer clients with their settlement-related needs.

Overall, the feedback indicated that although there is room for improvement, programming generally corresponds to the service delivery principles, and that the service principles are sufficient to embrace the intent of current programming. It also noted that although many clients are well-served, a large number are not, and as a result there is a need for more specialized services, and attention paid to the challenges of smaller service centers. Further, it confirmed that the current mix of services is good, and although most services work well, they are not entirely adequate to achieve the final outcomes.

By addressing the feedback and recommendations made by participants, and detailed in this report, the Ministry hopes to significantly improving service delivery, better support their dedicated service providers, and achieve more positive outcomes for clients.

Introduction

Background

A substantial increase in federal settlement funding from \$36 million in 2005/6 to \$114 million in 2010/11 has allowed the Ministry to increase the breadth and depth of settlement and integration services available under WelcomeBC. New and innovative services have been introduced, along with greater opportunities for collaborative initiatives with a broad range of services partners.

Given the recent growth in funding and initiatives, and considering that many of the current contracts for settlement services expire in June 2011, the Ministry is undertaking a

comprehensive program and procurement planning process to ensure that funds are being invested in a way that best supports newcomer clients in achieving positive outcomes. These planning processes will have an impact on future programs and procurement strategies for 2011/12 and beyond.

In May of 2010, IWBC hosted the WelcomeBC Consultation – *Planning for the Future*, with key stakeholders and sector representatives to assist the Ministry in defining strategic priorities, program direction and models of delivery.

As a follow up to the May consultation, IWBC hosted a The September 21 Reference Group Meeting to review three services that target similar client groups, offer similar types of service activities, and derive similar client outcomes: (1) Information and Support Services, British Columbia Settlement and Adaptation Program (BCSAP) Stream 1 – excluding the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative and Trauma Counseling Services); (2) Community Bridging Services (BCSAP Stream 2); and (3) Immigrant Seniors Demonstration Projects.

Agenda and Process

The agenda included four different small group exercises, each of which was followed by a summary report-out by each of the five discussion groups. Participants were provided with both work sheets and flip charts to record their responses to the exercise questions. They were also encouraged to leave individual feedback on the worksheets, if desired. The meeting agenda is provided as Appendix A.

In the morning, the groups were organized by region. In the afternoon, the groups were organized by urban and rural areas.

An introduction by the consultant as well as a presentation by the ministry helped to set the context for the day.

With each exercise designed to build upon the other, the process enabled participants to:

- Assess how well BCSAP programming corresponds to the draft service delivery principles.
- Identify both well-served and under-served clients, make recommendations to improve current programming, and tell us how they prioritize their clients and needs.
- Review current service activities/methods and assess their ability to support the achievement of final outcomes.
- Provide “open floor” input/feedback on anything else they thought the Ministry needed to know regarding newcomer immigration, settlement and integration.

Participants and Feedback

The composition of the reference group was determined by IWBC in consultation with AMSSA, to ensure appropriate representation from different regions and service streams. Participants were selected from a representative sample of BCSAP service provider agencies.

There were 38 participants in attendance, including the facilitator. 27 Staff represented 19 different immigrant service organizations, large and small, as well as urban and rural, from all regions of the province. 10 IWBC staff members attended as well.

A detailed list of attendees is provided as Appendix B.

Based on a summary of the 19 participant evaluation forms collected, almost all participants (94%) agreed that the session was well organized. Most (79%) agreed the exercises were clear and understandable. Almost all (94%) agreed the exercises were focused on the appropriate areas, and all (100%) agreed that participation was encouraged, and the venue was suitable.

When asked “what were the three most important things discussed today?” the combined participant feedback was:

- There needs to be a centralized/central database to support client tracking and monitoring (against outcomes), as well as streamlined reporting
- Higher quality services and specialized programs are required for the under-served client groups
- Programming and resource allocation should consider/address the different needs and services in urban/rural locations
- More resources/funds for partnerships, community partnerships, services, capacity generally, educational workshops
- IWBC should take the lead and do more marketing, out-reach and education of both the public and employers
- There is a need for pre-landing services (i.e. information & referral)
- Better inter-ministry/inter-governmental communication and coordination of services could help with program delivery (referrals) and outcomes
- There needs to be a balance of quality and quantity when it comes to reporting outcomes

Suggestions for improvements included:

- More time to discuss in greater depth
- Discuss fewer issues to get better results/input
- Different split of time/groups/assignments to allow time and therefore more in-depth feedback

- Make information available before sessions
- Balance of focus, less on Stream 1, more on Stream 2

The most notable trend in the feedback, as it related to specific regions and/or geographic differences, was the need for the Ministry to better-support service providers in smaller centers. Participants identified that service providers in smaller centers may have more connections, or be able to partner more closely between agencies, however, there still remains a huge challenge for them due to the lack of available community partners/services/resources (number of and different types of services required). They are also faced with the challenge of connecting with geographically isolated clients, meaning, those who live in remote areas where no service provider is present.

Throughout this report, specific comments made in relation to specific exercises are noted in those sections.

A complete summary of all session evaluation feedback (and the evaluation form) is provided as Appendix C.

Recommendations

Participants provided many recommendations. The most frequently mentioned recommendation was the need for recognition that there are many gaps and challenges for service providers, as well as barriers for clients in service delivery (as detailed in the previous section). The gaps and challenges faced by service providers can impede their ability to help clients meet intended final settlement and integration outcomes.

All participant recommendations are presented below at a high-level.

Recommendations: All Feedback¹

1. Pursue and establish better inter-agency (WelcomeBC Service Providers, other service providers, federal, provincial and municipal governments, and business) relationships to ensure programs are complimentary, coordinated and integrated.
2. Provide more training and allocate more staff hours.
3. Recognize the need for more public/employer education training and marketing.
4. IWBC to take a proactive, lead role in information dissemination (Research, privacy legislation, federal/provincial legislation and policy, citizenship requirements).
5. Find a new way to look at program outcomes, create evaluation models that are outcome-based, ensure monitoring is outcome-based.

¹ These recommendations were derived from participant feedback (all exercises). Since the last exercise allowed for comments that were out-of-scope for the meeting, so too are a couple of the recommendations. This information is organized in order of most frequently mentioned (1 = most frequently mentioned)

6. Understand there is a huge challenge in smaller centers due to the lack of available community partners/services/resources and how this impacts outcomes.
7. Recognize and support need for specialized services.
8. Make outreach a distinct service.
9. Recognize that the RFP process contributes to a competitive environment which is not always conducive with three of the service principles.
10. Create either a standardized intake form or an intake and assessment database with program-specific access to protect privacy.
11. Increase the ministry's capacity to manage contracts, and ensure contract managers maintain flexibility.
12. Revisit the idea of client surveys. Investigate other ways to obtain feedback from clients.

Note: Other exercise-specific recommendations will be found on ensuing pages of this report.

Setting the Context

The day began with the consultant welcoming the participants on behalf of the Immigration & WelcomeBC Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. They were reminded that the event was been planned by IWBC in collaboration with AMSSA. To help set the context for the meeting, Ben Pollard, Director of Program Management and Evaluation Unit, presented client service usage data.

Participants were reminded that, in-keeping with materials sent out in advance, the session would be focused on the review of three current services:

- Information and Support Services (BCSAP Stream 1), excluding:
 - Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative and
 - Trauma Counseling Services
- Community Bridging Services (BCSAP Stream 2); and
- Immigrant Seniors Demonstration Projects

Participants were also reminded that the information gathered in the session would help inform the design of services moving forward.

It was pointed out that the exercises were designed to build upon one another. The draft service delivery principles representing how we *intend* to deliver services; then, looking at the current programming and how we are delivering services now; and linking that to the achievement of final outcomes – How are we doing? What needs to change? The final exercise asked if there was anything else we needed to know. Participants were asked to think creatively, the way current programming might look if there were no resource or other limitations.

The consultant then reviewed the agenda, addressing the four exercises they would be completing that day.

The consultant then introduced Ben Pollard, Director of the Program Management and Evaluation Unit whose presentation included an overview of service information (contracts by stream or project); usage data (immigration categories, status in Canada and age groups); and, client outcomes (areas of strength and areas needing improvement) which was directly related to the programming under review that day. A copy of the full presentation is provided as Appendix D.

Detailed Results

❖ Exercise #1: Service Principles

For the first exercise, attendees were split into five groups, by region.

Groups were asked to complete an exercise which was focused on draft service delivery principles, and were asked to determine how well BCSAP programming corresponds to the service delivery principles. They were reminded of the following:

- 1) service delivery principles were draft, and that the definitions were working definitions,
- 2) the principles were developed with input from the sector; and,
- 3) they are rating BCSAP, not individual service providers and as such they were asked to think about the questions broadly.

The exercise required them to rate the principle, and then identify constraints and solutions, including potential new principles. The specific questions asked were as follows:

1. Rate the draft service delivery principles based on how well BCSAP programming corresponds to them. The scale provided was 1 = does not correspond, 2 = slightly corresponds, 3 = generally corresponds, 4 = mostly corresponds, and 5 = completely corresponds.
2. Constraint = If a principle was rated less than 5, identify the constraints (i.e. what factor(s) prevent the ability to adhere to the principle).
3. Solution = Indicate how to address the factor(s)/constraint(s) that prevent adherence to the principle.
4. New = Identify any principles the group may determine are missing.

Question #1 - On a scale of 1-5, rate how well current BCSAP programming corresponds to each of the identified principles.

The consolidated feedback on the first question indicates that although there is room for improvement, with an overall average rating of 3.21, current BCSAP programming generally corresponds to the principles. No “missing” principles were identified.

A summary of ratings for Questions #1 is provided in Appendix E.

Question #2 - For any principle rated less than 5, please indicate the factors(s)/constraint(s) that prevent adherence to the principle.

Question #3 - Please indicate how to address the factor(s)/constraint(s) that prevent adherence to the principle.

The following table is a summary of the feedback received for questions #2 and #3. A detailed table of all feedback is provided in Appendix E.

Draft Service Delivery Principle	Constraints	Possible Solutions
<u>Evidence/Research-based</u> <i>Settlement programming that draws on information about immigration and integration trends, best practices and research results.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are challenges with accessing or even having knowledge of what research² IWBC has available to service providers. • There is a desire to have IWBC drive (obtain, prepare and disseminate) research to service providers. • There is a need for better, specific, research as it relates to smaller/localized centers/communities/rural areas. • There is a lack of time, funds, expertise and training for service providers to conduct their own research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better dialogue/communication between the branch and service providers as it relates to the research that is available to them. • IWBC should be the central repository/distributor of research information (periodic stats & information). • If service providers are to maintain this responsibility they will need resources/training for staff. • Some information/research is available from community partners; it's possible to seek funds from/partnerships with,

² Research was generally defined in comments as: global and national trends, i.e. "big picture," changes in immigration trends, best practices, secondary migration data, immigrant patterns, and inter-provincial migration.

		<p>organizations to perform specific studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract managers need to be flexible.
<p><u>Accountable & Transparent</u></p> <p><i>Settlement programming that assures accountability and transparency in the administration, delivery and evaluation of settlement and integration services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client surveys are problematic in many ways (<i>too simplistic, based on numbers vs. outcomes, timeframes for completion, client availability, they don't address urban & rural realities, don't capture quality only quantity of clients served, language barriers for clients completing surveys</i>). • Service providers have a lack of both the time and funds required to do this well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lead agencies with more support to enforce accountability (vs. sub-contractors). • Conduct site visits/evaluations of all agencies (face-to-face). • Contract managers and service providers need to be open and flexible; and the ministry needs to increase their capacity to manage contracts. • Surveys and timing thereof, need to consider urban and rural realities. • Evaluation models should be outcome based. • Create consistent reporting across regions.
<p><u>Integrated & Coordinated</u></p> <p><i>Settlement programming that is integrated and coordinated in order to best serve the needs of newcomers from settlement through to full integration.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a huge challenge in smaller centers due to the lack of available community partners/services/resources within a reasonable distance. • It's easier to integrate services within an agency, but more difficult to do between agencies – challenges include information sharing, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an RFP process that is dedicated to rural areas. • Provide specific budget information to assist with better responses. • More partnerships between service providers could be established in order to increase access to services. • Ministries need to agree

	<p>different case management models (<i>other reasons addressed in next section, partnership and collaboration</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency capacity (time, resources – financial/human). • BCSAP doesn't address the full range of needs therefore more key partnerships are required in order for clients to be able to access services offered by others (especially true in rural areas). 	<p>on case management model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help staff learn how to build community partnerships through training.
<p><u>Partnership & Collaboration</u></p> <p><i>Settlement programming that supports the establishment of community partnerships to support local coordination, referral and linkages of programs for newcomers and create opportunities for capacity building in BC communities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP Process creates a competitive environment which is not conducive to collaboration or the establishment of partnerships. • Time is required to create authentic partnerships. • Diverse visions (various organizations) impede collaboration – e.g. senior's organizations serving Canadian citizens but don't understand the needs of immigrant seniors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow service providers flexibility in the delivery of services. • Move away from the RFP process in order to entice cooperation and stability, and achieve a balance of quality/price. • Integrate all logic models and focus on where they converge. • Government to take the lead on addressing this via policy (e.g. with MHSD).
<p><u>Holistic</u></p> <p><i>Settlement programming</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is restricted by lack of available programs and staff not accessing 	

<p><i>that is holistic and centered/focused on the needs of the client and/or client family, and best suits the individual client/client family.</i></p>	<p>alternative programming.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are lots of gaps/limitations in programming (i.e. eligibility, transportation, child care, domestic violence), which impede the achievement of this. • Difficult to achieve when one agency does not provide all services, partnerships/collaboration are challenging to establish and take time to develop. • Performance measurement based on numbers vs. outcomes conflicts with the holistic approach. 	
<p><u>Client Empowerment</u></p> <p><i>Settlement programming that enables immigrant clients to access information, services and BC systems independently.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's difficult to achieve with multiple challenges/barriers present (i.e. language, culture, technology, complex and confusing systems, shortage of staff competencies and training). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the guided pathways model. • Broaden the scope of settlement services. • Create specialized training and involve other ministries. • Ensure systems are accessible (e.g. telephone)

<u>Responsive & Flexible</u> <i>Settlement programming that is responsive to changing demographics and new emerging client needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and data comes too late to be useful. • The contracts limit what service providers can achieve. 	
<u>Other Principles</u> Participants were asked to identify other potential service principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None were identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None were identified

Question #4 - Add any "missing" principles at the end and rate them as well.

None of the groups identified any new, potential, service delivery principles.

Exercise #1 – Summary of Results

Since none of the groups identified the need for additional service delivery principles, it is reasonable to surmise that the current principles are sufficient and embrace the intent of current programming.

Participants indicated that some of the principles are at conflict with government procurement policy and practice. For example, *partnership and collaboration*, and *integrated & coordinated* are challenging because of Request For Proposals (RFP) processes which create competition among service providers, thereby impacting their ability to establish partnerships and relationships. Ultimately, they indicated, those same challenges will also impact their ability to deliver programming that is *holistic*.

Participants indicated that the intent of all principles was difficult to achieve due to either imposed or situational limitations. Some of these were input related, for example: available service funding; rigid contract terms and conditions; lack/lateness of information/research required for responsive service delivery; inadequate staff training/knowledge-base; and, lack of a case management model/system. While others were services/activity related: availability of alternative programming/support services (sometimes related to geographic location); the gaps/limitations of the programming itself (needed specialized services will be detailed further along in this report).

A compilation of service delivery principles can be thought of as a type of framework which help to guide and support the delivery of services, and ultimately the achievement of final outcomes. Having clearly articulated principles and outcomes is important. However, if there is no consistent tracking of what happens to clients after they receive the services, it's difficult to know whether or not services have had any impact, and therefore whether or not final outcomes have been achieved. Many participants noted that although the logic models are outcome-based, service provider performance is currently being measured based on numbers. Participants recommended this be changed.

❖ Exercise #2: Well-Served and Under-Served Clients

After the break, the second exercise was introduced and the groups remained the same. It was explained that this exercise was to help determine, from their perspective, how well current BCSAP programming is meeting the needs of clients.

The participants were asked the following questions:

1. Given the draft service delivery principles discussed in the previous activity, which client groups are well-served by current programming? In what ways are these clients being well-served? (e.g. services are accessible)
2. Given the draft service delivery principles discussed in the previous activity, which client groups are under-served by current programming? How are these clients under-served by current programming? (e.g. lack of child care supports, client group is not targeted by current programming). What recommendations and/or modifications would you make to current programming to better serve these clients?
3. How do you prioritize clients and needs? (given the current/available programming, capacity and resources)

Question #1 - Given the draft service delivery principles discussed in the previous activity, which client groups are well-served by current programming? In what ways are these clients being well-served? (e.g. services are accessible)

Based on the feedback gathered, the following is a ranked based on the total number of groups out of 5 who identified the same/similar client type as well-served. There were no notable trends resulting from regional/geographic location.

The majority of groups (scores of 3 or more out of 5) identified the following client groups as well-served:

- the 19 to 54 age group,
- families,
- educated clients, and

- skilled workers.

The remainder (scores of 2 or less out of 5) identified the following client groups as well-served:

- seniors in specific service areas only (settlement, ESL blended),
- government assisted refugees,
- Canadian citizens,
- major language groups or well-established ethnic communities,
- those with very high or very low English language skills,
- those with basic needs,
- youth (with strong family support),
- immigrant employers, and
- children aged 0 to 6.

Only one group responded to the second part of question #1, identifying *the ways* the well-served clients are well-served. Their feedback was that for adults, there are a variety of services that meet their needs and there are a lot of referral resources for this group. For family class, stream 1 and 2 responds to their needs. For skilled workers there is labour market mentoring, and for immigrant employers there is labour market information, and employment standards legislation.

Question #2 - Given the draft service delivery principles discussed in the previous activity, which client groups are under-served by current programming? How are these clients under-served by current programming? (e.g. lack of child care supports, client group is not targeted by current programming). What recommendations and/or modifications would you make to current programming to better serve these clients?

The majority of groups (scores of 3 or more out of 5) identified the following client groups as under-served:

- youth (without strong family support),
- refugees,
- seniors,
- temporary foreign workers,
- in Canada applicants, and
- families.

The remainder (scores 2 or less out of 5) identified the following groups as under-served:

- Illiterate clients,
- women,

- foreign trained professionals,
- international students,
- live-in caregivers,
- children,
- small ethnic/language groups,
- men requiring services,
- secondary migrants,
- clients in outlying communities,
- fundamentalist faith individuals,
- newcomers looking for work,
- mail order brides,
- agricultural workers,
- those with mental and physical disabilities, and
- non-E.I. eligible clients.

With respect to the second part of question #2: How are these clients under-served by current programming? (e.g. lack of child care supports, client group is not targeted by current programming), one group identified that all under-served client groups generally have limited services and resources in Northern communities and remote areas. Two groups identified the following specific ways in which clients are under-served:

- temporary foreign workers are not eligible for services;
- the issues or circumstances of live-in-caregivers are not understood by service providers;
- children suffer from a lack of available programming (child care);
- there are gaps in programming for teenagers/youth, especially those who attend schools without SWIS workers, there are also age and continuity of services (eligibility) issues;
- there is a lack of resources for immigrant women who need domestic violence information or support and cultural competencies generally;
- seniors face a 1-3 year limitation, they are also often hard to reach;
- families also have access to very limited time and expertise of a Settlement Worker, there are a lack of specialized services to support families and a lack of child care, by-laws also define families of 4 in Canada where the normal average might be 8 in other countries, and this creates problems with BC Housing;
- and finally, there is inconsistent eligibility requirements for refugee claimants.

A detailed break-down of well-served and under-served clients, how often each client group was identified as such, is provided in Appendix F.

Five client groups were identified in both under-served and well-served categories as follows:

- Youth – Youth was the highest rated under-served group, mainly due to ineligibility and the challenges that presents, especially those who are multi-barriered. Those who identified youth as well-served also qualified that they were only well-served if they had strong supplemental family support.
- Refugees – There were indications that government assisted refugees were better served than refugee claimants, resulting in placement in both categories.
- Seniors – The feedback indicates that immigrant seniors are served, but not well, and they are better served in Stream 1 (ESL blend).
- Families – Families are well-served if they are 4 or less, and not well-served if they are larger and don't meet that by-law requirement. Also, families headed by women are disadvantaged, normally due to child care (and sometimes, transportation) challenges.
- Children – Children were noted as under-served due to a lack of programming, noting that child care isn't their only need. In-school children were also identified as under-served do to the lack of available "out-of-school" programming. When they were noted as well-served, they were qualified as 0-6 age category and receiving enhanced childcare.

Recommendations on how to better serve the under-served are provided below.

When asked for recommendations and/or modifications to better serve the under-served clients, every group (generally and across the board) identified a need for one or more specialized services, and/or the need for more of a particular specialized service. They are as follows:

- Emotional support services
- Pre-arrival/pre-landing information/resources/services to prepare client for realities of immigration
- Family education, understanding Human Rights, and that children and/or women have rights, etc.
- Mental health support
- Health education and awareness
- Literacy programs – something that can help reduce the language barriers
- Something that will empower caregivers to teach the child (e.g. "ECE for dummies")
- For professional class, assistance in networking & meeting those in their field
- Special dedicated program for small groups with specific languages - employment services

Other recommendations for all services and programs:

Provide for more child care services

More child care services are needed/required.

Expand programs and eligibility criteria

Expand program services and expand eligibility criteria to 5 years. Make temporary foreign workers and international students eligible for some services (e.g. rights, equality, job search, stream 2). Change the intake assessment so that it's needs-based, not time-based. Make the employment action plan work for both services. Integrate program "add-ons" into regular stream 1 services (e.g. seniors, childcare, etc.)

Provide increased and sustainable funding

Provide increased and sustainable funding to support higher/more capacity and provide funding for marketing.

Work towards better integration with government services

The ministry should take the lead on integration with other government services (municipal).

More staff time and training

Provide more training for staff. Increase the hours of Settlement Workers so that they have time to accompany clients to other services, for example.

Put more emphasis on quality of services, not quantity

More emphasis on quality (vs. quantity)

Recognize transportation barriers/challenges

Question #3 - How do you prioritize clients and needs? (given the current/available programming, capacity and resources)

The feedback from the five groups did not demonstrate any notable trends or differences based on geographic location. The Vancouver & Metropolitan Area (Fraser Valley) was the only group to identify "hard to reach and geographically isolated clients" as a priority. The most common response was: We prioritize clients based on available community supports, connections and/or resources (e.g. host volunteers).

The next most common responses included: Immediate needs; eligible clients; women and children; client groups and trends (e.g. religion, demographics); language specialty of either staff or sub-contractors; and, temporary foreign workers.

The other responses included: Those suffering from culture shock, or appear to be susceptible to it; professional/skilled workers; clients who are "falling through the cracks;" refugees; non-eligible clients; youth with multiple barriers; and, based on available funding.

A table showing detailed feedback by group and region is provided as Appendix E.

Exercise #2 – Summary of Results

Overall, participants identified 12 client groups as well-served, and 22 client groups as under-served. Of those, 5 were identified in both categories (as detailed above).

The most notable recommendation from all participants, as it related to under-served clients, was: *There is a need for more specialized services*. To accentuate that comment it was also noted that smaller centers faced even more challenges to deliver specialized services due to the lack of available community partners/services and resources. This feedback aligns with the most common answer to the last question pertaining to how clients are prioritized. That answer being: *We prioritize clients based on available community supports, connections and/or resources (e.g. host volunteers)*.

It should be noted that recommendation above speaks to current programming (i.e. mix of services/activities - the need for more, which is specially addressed in the next exercise), and does not suggest that the service delivery principles are wrong, or incomplete. Principles are typically seen as guide, or framework within which decisions are made about *how* services will be delivered, vs. what is actually offered.

❖ Exercise #3 – Current mix of services and service activities/methods

After the lunch break, the groups were re-organized. Staff from different agencies and across regions were grouped by common community profile – 2 groups represented smaller rural centers and 3 groups represented larger urban centers.

This exercise asked participants the following 3 questions:

1. Question #1 – Given the results from the previous two exercises; is the current mix of services adequate to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify any additional services (if any) that would support the achievement of final outcomes.
2. Question #2 – Are the current mix of services working well together to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify the ways in which they are not working well, and solutions to these challenges.
3. Question #3 – Given the results from the previous exercises, are the current common and specific service activities/methods adequate and sufficient to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify any additions, enhancements and/or modifications to existing service activities/methods that would support the achievement of final outcomes, and the supports (if any) required to implement the proposed changes.

A reference document was provided (see Appendix G). This document identified the current mix of services, common and specific service activities/methods and the final outcomes, which were provided as follows:

- *Immigrants have equal access to services and opportunities as other Canadians.*
- *Immigrants participate in the broader community.*
- *Immigrants can develop and contribute their skills and abilities to society.*
- *Immigrants have a sense of belonging and well-being in Canada.*

The feedback received is summarized below.

Question #1 – Given the results from the previous two exercises; is the current mix of services adequate to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify any additional services (if any) that would support the achievement of final outcomes.

After reviewing the current mix of services, participants identified that the current mix was not adequate to achieve the final outcomes and that there was a need for the following, additional types of services. They also indicated there was a need for more specialized services, generally.

- Post-service follow-up – there is an assumption that clients who don't return are "settled"
- Emotional support and well-being
- Community capacity activities - engaging newcomers in current programming or working in partnership to develop activities that will engage
- Pre-arrival/pre-landing information/support
- Peer support groups (for both women and men)
- Accompaniment - the ability to accompany clients to other services
- A volunteer program for stream 1 to do community orientation, etc.
- Educational workshops on non-traditional settlement-related topics
- Client advocacy
- Needs-based programs (based on needs assessments)

(Note: Some of the above feedback is similar to the feedback received in Exercise #2, when the groups were asked for recommendations on how under-served clients could be better served).

Question #2 – Are the current mix of services working well together to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify the ways in which they are not working well, and solutions to these challenges.

The majority of the feedback received on this question mimicked that of the first exercise – i.e. the constraints/factors that limited the ability to adhere to the principles. The feedback was also very sparse due to the time limitations on the exercise. The following is a summary of the feedback received. A table providing the raw feedback received is provided in Appendix G.

Intake & Assessment – The recording of services should be standardized and objective. To support this there should be an intake database (with program specific access), or ministry-created, standardized intake forms.

Information & Referral – When clients don't return, it is assumed they are "settled" which is not always the case. A global database (with limited access) would help with the tracking of actual client progress (and therefore reporting against outcomes). This way information could be shared between service providers. Participants recognized that this requires effective partnerships and relationships as well.

Settlement/Adjustment Support – Participants recognize that their role is transitional support, and therefore clients shouldn't be coming back or becoming dependent. The challenge is measuring final outcomes when clients leave services. Although the mix of services is good, and work very well, most are focused on short-term goals leaving service providers with no control over final outcomes.

Outreach – This service was identified as an "other service" that needed to be added. The participants recognize how important it is to reach isolated (geographically, transportation-wise, financially, language) clients. Recognizing that this does happen to some extent, but isn't a formal service, some of the recommendations as to how this could be done included: advertising/marketing, use of technological solutions (interactive Internet-based), attendance at community events, word-of-mouth communication, education of employers, and a dedicated volunteer program.

Question #3 – Given the results from the previous exercises, are the current common and specific service activities/methods adequate and sufficient to achieve the final outcomes? If not, identify any additions, enhancements and/or modifications to existing service activities/methods that would support the achievement of final outcomes, and the supports (if any) required to implement the proposed changes.

Each group reviewed two assigned services. The following is their feedback.

(Services 1 & 2) – Smaller Centers/Rural

Intake & Assessment

There is a need for the creation of either a standardized intake form, or an intake and assessment database with program-specific access to protect privacy. There is also a need for more staff hours and increased capacity to perform outreach, and more time/education to recruit volunteers. They felt it was important for the ministry to publicize all settlement services (not only ELSA) using mainstream media.

Information & Referral

There is a need for more education (and therefore resources) of and within the community, which includes both mainstream and other immigrant-focused service providers, on how to better treat newcomer clients group, and how to deliver client-centered and culturally competent services. The suggestions on how do to this included more community-oriented events, more access to multilingual information and resources, more funding for partnership building and the sharing of information, referral resources and best practices between service providers on some form of information portal (e.g. database). It was also suggested that a comprehensive and fundamental training package be developed that could be used by settlement service providers to present to mainstream service providers.

(Services 3 & 4) – Smaller Centers/Rural

Settlement & Adjustment Support

The activities/methods are not adequate to achieve the final outcomes. All listed services should be common with the exception of workplace mentoring. This group suggested more discussion was required.

Training

The activities/methods are not adequate to achieve the final outcomes and training should be provided/common across all programs.

(Services 5 & 6) – Urban Regions

Community Connections

The activities/methods work well for stream 2 youth programs. However, there is a desire for greater flexibility in order to respond to changing needs and goals of the client. For example, many clients need accompaniment, and the mentorship program has a strong focus on clients, but is not adequate for employers. It would be nice to be able to shape the programs accordingly.

Ongoing Monitoring & Support

No response recorded.

(Services 6 & 7) – Urban Regions

Ongoing Monitoring & Support

Follow-up time needs to be taken into account. Targets for Settlement Workers could be created with follow-up/monitoring included. To help ensure follow-up is relevant to the client, a unified database could be utilized for ongoing monitoring as clients progress/move from service to service. Monitoring should be outcome-based. There is also a need for increased recognition for host volunteers.

Service Bridging

More resources and incentives are required to engage non-engaged sectors (i.e. business), motivate partnerships and to support intra-sector networking and information sharing. Active collaboration with other service providers is also required and can help to avoid service duplication.

(Services 7 & 8) – Urban Regions

Service Bridging

Outreach should be a distinct service (identified in question #1). The goal would be to find new and isolated individual or groups and follow-up with them. We also need to seek opportunities to develop and maintain shared lists of resources and services that are available. Government could provide resource and service information to support us.

There is a need to ensure childcare and transportation is available and visible so that clients can readily access the required/referred service.

A framework needs to be developed, and information and resources need to be provided by the government to support service providers with bridging activities. This could include a tracking system that supports broad client needs assessment (triage model).

Inter-agency program referrals/relationships should be encouraged/established (i.e. provincial/municipal governments); when there are barriers to service bridging the onus is put on settlement service providers to figure it out. Networking and formal linking of staff and others, or partners targeting ethno-specific groups, demographics, or service delivery should be encouraged and supported.

Current Stream 2 participant training could also expand to Stream 1 (i.e. curriculum with workshops, formal sessions, community-based).

Support for Service Delivery

There needs to be a formal mechanism to support follow-up and therefore, accountability. Consistent client confidentiality consent forms need to be developed (government/service provider joint effort).

There could be a better/formal use of champions/leaders to support staff training/mentoring. Training could also help address the development of a common language around partnership development and management.

Exercise #3 – Summary of Results

Participants determined that although the current mix of services is good, and most work very well, they are not adequate to achieve the final outcomes for two reasons, (1) most are focused on short-term goals, which are not conducive with the realization of the final outcomes, and (2) there is a need for more specialized services.

There were a number of services identified as *required*, (detailed above), however, the most frequently mentioned was the need for outreach *as a distinct service*. This is a very practical recommendation as all of the final outcomes require immigrants to first access the services, and then for all of those providing services to be aware of one another, and to promote that access.

❖ **Exercise #4 – Open Floor**

After a brief summary of the information gathered in the session up to that point, the final exercise began. During the last fifteen minutes the participants were asked the questions – What else do we need to know? What have we missed? What else would you like to tell us? They were asked to provide any/all comments they had even if they were out of scope, i.e. did not pertain to the specific services under review that day.

The following is a summary of that feedback.

- They would like IWBC take a proactive role in communicating changes/updates to privacy legislation and policy, both provincial and federal. Also, any changes to citizenship requirements, federal legislation of all types and immigration consultation legislation.
- All services are provided in the newcomer's native tongue with the exception of the immigration test. It presents a great barrier and doesn't make sense. It would be nice to see that changed.
- More marketing needs to be done with the goal of educating employers. Letting them know the assets immigrants can be and the skills sets available in the community.
- More resources could be made available to ensure a broad understanding of the benefits of immigration.
- Direct working relationships need to be established between provincial and municipal governments. They likely have services that we aren't aware of that may be of benefit to clients. Service Providers aren't always aware of what's going on, the provincial government should have better insight and ability to make the connections.
- There needs to be a new way to look at program outcomes.
- They would like to know what the new model for employment services (Ministry of Housing & Social Development) is going to look and work in relation to immigrants.
- There needs to be more marketing of client success stories.

Conclusion

The participants were attentive and dedicated to the exercises and discussions throughout the meeting. The focused conversations, in-depth feedback, and comprehensive summary reports by each group demonstrated that although there are multiple challenges, service providers have: a strong understanding of current programming; a desire to improve current programming; the conviction that current programming can be enhanced to better-serve all clients; and, an authentic desire to serve immigrant, refugee and newcomer clients with their settlement-related needs.

Overall, the feedback indicated that although there is room for improvement, programming generally corresponds to the service delivery principles, and that the principles are sufficient to embrace the intent of current programming. It also noted that although many clients are well-served, a large number are not, and as a result there is a need for more specialized services, and attention paid to the challenges of small centers. Further, it confirmed that the current mix of services is good, and although most work very well, they are not adequate to achieve the final outcomes.

By addressing the feedback and recommendations made by participants, and detailed in this report, the ministry will be significantly improving service delivery, supporting their dedicated service providers, and achieving positive outcomes for clients.