

Keeping Current: the Settlement and Integration NEWS BULLETIN



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Earlier this month, Michael Adams of Environics wrote in *The Globe and Mail* that [“increasingly, Canadians see their country’s approach to migration and diversity as our main contribution to the world.”](#) That makes the work of IRCC’s Settlement and Integration staff, provincial and territorial partners, and service providing organizations across the country, seem pretty central to Canada’s unfolding national story.

A few things are front of mind for our teams here at IRCC right now.

Our ambitious first ever Expression of Interest intake process is no longer a concept but a reality getting ready to deliver results. We are advising proponents of our decisions, and will then move to an intensive period of negotiating contribution agreements for about 100 new projects in support of service delivery improvements and our Minister’s signature priorities. More about that and our process below. It is important to reinforce that those we are choosing not to fund are not “bad proposals” — simply, through that competitive process, they did not rank highly enough against our funding goals, innovation objectives, thematic priorities, and our assessment of value.

We are now moving swiftly to the next items on our to-do list: opening a call for letters of interest for a re-shaped Pre-Arrival settlement services program (see below); early planning for consultations on and deployment of new funding that will flow from Budget 2018 for Francophone immigration initiatives and in support of accessing employment by visible minority newcomer women; finalizing phase one of a re-set of contribution agreement administration (less can be more!); and getting ready for the National Settlement Council Plus here in Ottawa in June.

And thinking a lot about communicating the immigrant settlement and integration story well, in a way that is positive but without glossing over the real challenges and difficulties. It’s a deeply human story, full of hope and dashed hope, fears and fears overcome, ambition and despair, setbacks and steps forward. If Canada’s approach is indeed “our main contribution to the world,” best get back to work.

David Manicom

When immigrants succeed, Canada wins.



Service Delivery Improvements Update

With spring in full bloom, the assessment process for IRCC's first Expression of Interest under a new Service Delivery Improvement fund is coming to a close. In late December, the Department invited the proponents of the most promising Letters of Interest to submit full funding proposals and subsequently hosted phone conversations with each applicant to explain the purpose of the funding and provide feedback.

Each proposal was assessed by a team of two, with additional input gathered from subject matter experts and regional staff. The full package of 140 assessments was provided to a Director-level oversight committee for review, and further analyzed by a Director General committee. Recommendations were then submitted to the Assistant Deputy Minister for final decision.

70% of proposals at stage 2 of the process were successful. Decision letters are now being sent via email to all stage 2 applicants. For applicants whose proposal was approved for funding consideration, negotiations will begin in the coming weeks, with the aim of having the first agreements in place starting in May 2018.

Pre-Arrival Expression of Interest Process

The Department launched its first Expression of Interest (EOI) process on November 14, 2017. It intends to conduct approximately two EOI processes a year to meet priorities that emerge between national Calls for Proposals.

With this in mind, we are launching a new EOI process on pre-arrival settlement services that addresses priorities based on consultation findings and outcomes from the pre-arrival evaluation, as well as needs that have emerged since the expansion of the pre-arrival program. Further details are available on our [funding page](#).

Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023

[The March 28 launch](#) of the [Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023](#), led by Heritage Canada, announced \$499 million in funding to support Canada's official languages. As a part of this commitment, the Department is expected to receive \$41 million over five years and \$10 million ongoing to support Francophone immigration outside of Quebec.

What does this mean for the Settlement and Integration Sector? The majority of expected funding will be provided to Francophone communities through the Department's Settlement Program, with the objective to:

- build the capacity of the Francophone settlement sector;
- create a new Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative;
- increase the availability and accessibility of official language training adapted to the needs of French-Speaking newcomers.

The Department is currently working through the Treasury Board submission process to gain access to the funding, while at the same time beginning planning as to how best to deploy the amounts likely to be available this year.

To ensure the success of this new Action Plan, the Francophone settlement team will be engaging policy and operation colleagues to put in place the Francophone Welcoming Communities initiative, as well as co-planning activities with Francophone communities.

Newcomer Language Advisory Board

On December 4-5, 2017, the Newcomer Language Advisory Body (NLAB), a national forum with expertise in adult immigrant and newcomer language assessment and training for the purpose of successful settlement and integration, held its annual in person meeting in Ottawa. Discussions focused on topics of national scope: workplace-based language programming; Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA); and language training waitlists.

Existing small scale programs that deliver employment related language training have a positive impact. NLAB members therefore identified key considerations for program design, measuring success, and opportunities for large scale, integrated language and work programs.

PBLA, a standard feature of the IRCC funded settlement language training program, provides a framework for maintaining consistency across regions. NLAB members highlighted and discussed key PLBA administrative challenges and provided recommendations to the Department on possible solutions.

Lastly, in the overall interest of improving program efficiency, NLAB members shared national perspectives on the nature of language training waitlists and the extent to which waitlists are a true reflection of current needs and gaps in the system. NLAB members expressed support for a robust discussion on what a national referral system could look like as well as the continuation of conversation circles as an integral component of the language program.

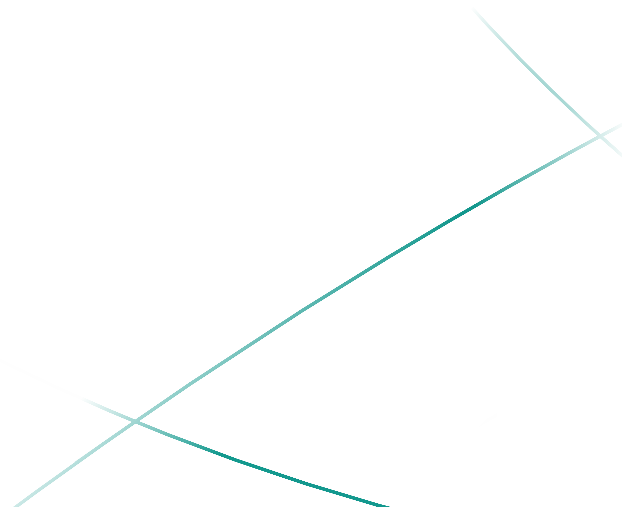
Western Region Language Learning Event

On February 21 and 22, 2018, NorQuest College and Alberta Teachers of ESL (ATESL) hosted the Western Region Language Training Learning Event with support from IRCC. This professional development event brought together 900 Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) / Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC) teachers and program managers from over 60 organizations across the Prairies and Northern Territories region, with a number of providers from the British Columbia-Yukon, Ontario and Atlantic Regions also in attendance.

A survey of over 600 LINC/CLIC staff was used to guide the development of the agenda and the selection of subject matter experts to lead sessions. As a result, the 2 days of sessions and workshops were highly-oriented towards the needs of LINC/CLIC teachers and supporting their work with clients in a settlement context. Participants also heard from the Government of Alberta, as well as IRCC representatives from Settlement and Integration Policy, Strategic Management and Coordination, Research and Evaluation and Prairies-Northwest-Territories (PNT) Regional Management.

The Learning Event schedule, recordings of key sessions and documents for all presentations are available on the [event website](#).

Feedback survey results of the event will be used to inform the planning of future language training cluster opportunities in PNT.



Upcoming Event: [Francophone Communities and Official Languages at the Intersection of Identities: 400 Years of Immigration and Diversity](#)

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Library and Archives Canada, Canadian Heritage, and the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada invite you to join in on a reflection on the role and effects of immigration on Canadian Francophone communities and their vitality, and the consequences of diversity on the future of official languages.

The event will be primarily in French, with simultaneous English interpretation. It will also be webcast.

Program:

- historical retrospective on Francophone immigration
- first-hand account from a Francophone immigrant
- panel discussion on the consequences of diversity in a context of linguistic duality, and on ways to preserve the vitality of French in minority communities

Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2018

Time: 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario

Cost: free

[Register here](#). Please note that space is limited. We hope you can join us!

Metropolis 2018

[The 20th National Metropolis Conference](#) was held in Calgary March 22-24, 2018. 800 participants celebrated two decades of bringing together the leaders of the immigration and settlement system. Representatives from government, civil society, and academia gathered to share best practices, identify emerging issues, forge new partnerships, and devise innovative solutions.

Four high level plenary presentations considered the main drivers for change in settlement and integration for the next few years. More in-depth discussions on specific topics ranging from settlement programs for youth, to supporting entrepreneurship took place in the dozens of specialized workshops.

Workshops offered perspectives from multiple stakeholders which covered important themes highly relevant to the Department's mandate and Strategic Objectives, including the integration of newcomer youth, migrant protection, and Syrian refugees.

This year's conference highlighted the implications of migration issues at the three different levels of government, including Calgary and Alberta's roles and experiences. The Conference considered international, national, and local contexts, emphasizing collaboration with Europe, the U.S., and Mexico, and discussed the future of immigration and settlement.

Keen interest is already evident for the 21st event to be held in Halifax in March 2019.

Annual IRCC Employer Awards for Newcomer Employment

The Settlement and Integration Policy Branch recently awarded the Department's annual Employer Awards for Newcomer Employment to three businesses that have gone above and beyond in hiring, training and retaining newcomers in their organizations.

Nominations were sought from Immigration Employment Councils, the National Settlement Council, Provinces/Territories and Service Provider Organizations funded to deliver employment-related services across the country. A total of 48 nominations were received from 9 different Provinces.

2018 winners: [Danby Appliances](#) (ON), [Paramount Fine Foods](#) (ON) and [St.Amant](#) (MB).



Danby Appliances (Ontario), photo credit: Neil Valois

Winners were announced at Hire Immigrant Ottawa's annual Employer Summit at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of IRCC, highlighted the important role that employers play in Canada's integration story, and along with ADM David Manicom, presented the award trophies and certificates.

Settlement Evaluation

Findings of the five-year [evaluation of the Settlement Program](#) were posted online March 21, 2018. We are pleased with the overall findings of the evaluation. They show that the Settlement Program has been effective at meeting a growing demand as service usage has risen over recent years, and that newcomers are receiving referrals and services that meet their needs.

A clear majority of settlement clients were gaining knowledge about life in Canada, improving their language ability, using official languages, acquiring knowledge about working in Canada, finding employment, forming connections to communities and public institutions, and participating in their communities.

IRCC agrees with the seven recommendations put forward in the evaluation, which point to areas where improvements can be made. In response, IRCC has developed an action plan which will be used to inform and guide Settlement Program development over the next three years, including future program improvements and the next Call for Proposals process.