

# Understanding the Current Service Landscape within the Immigrant Settlement Sector



November 2011

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background Information

The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries is a non-profit organization that actively participates in building and strengthening our community through research, analysis, facilitation and education, fostering innovation and positive social change.

United Way works with local partners to identify our community's key social issues and then mobilizes resources - funds, people, partnerships, time - around those issues to create sustainable and lasting social change.

Given the importance of immigration to this community and the extent of services provided by immigrant serving agencies, the Social Planning Council and United Way wanted to solicit the views of program managers and those who support them on the current environment in which they operate. In particular, we wanted information on how immigrant serving organisations are funded generally and the impact that shifts in funding and demand for services is having on these organisations and their clients. It is our hope that this information will promote dialogue among stakeholders within the immigrant serving sector and, ultimately, help in better supporting local organizations in the future.

## 1.2 Aims of the Research

Our aim was fourfold:

- To gain an overview of funding for immigrant serving organizations.
- To examine the extent to which local immigrant serving organizations have or have not experienced shifts in funding.
- To identify what impact, if any, shifts in funding have had or are having on these organizations and their ability to provide services to immigrants and refugees.
- To identify needs that are not currently being met and gather ideas on how we as a community could move forward.

## 1.3 Methodology

It was decided that a mixed methods approach would be used. A quantitative survey was employed to collect data. This was followed up by qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into the findings. This report summarizes the results of our inquiry.

A questionnaire was drawn up by the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries and distributed to immigrant serving organizations. A number of strategies were used to encourage response. In July 2011 organizations received a link to 'survey monkey' along with a request to fill out the on-line questionnaire. This was followed up by a reminder e-mail two weeks later urging organizations that had not already done so to participate in the study. In August, a third request was sent out. The survey was closed in September 2011. In the end 19 out of the 31 organizations that received the survey link completed the survey, representing a 61% response rate. Together, these organizations provide a range of services and supports along the settlement/integration continuum.

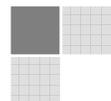
The research was augmented by in-depth interviews with 8 immigrant serving organizations and 2 funders operating in Waterloo region. These interviews took place during the months of September and October 2011. In selecting specific agencies we tried to be as representative of the types of agencies in the local immigrant serving sector as possible.

It is important to note that the information and opinions gathered were from the persons interviewed and may not reflect the views of all settlement-service providers.

### Immigration Facts and Trends:

- Immigrants comprise 22.3% of the total population in Waterloo Region.
- From 2001 to 2006 the immigrant population in the Region grew by 13.6%, almost twice the growth seen in the non - immigrant population.
- The number of immigrants who arrived in the five years between 2001 and 2006 was similar to the number who arrived in the ten years between 1981 and 1990.
- As a percentage of the total population outside of the GTA, Waterloo Region is the fourth most popular destination for immigrants.

(Source: Region of Waterloo Planning, Housing and Community Services – 2006 Census Bulletin #6)



## 2. Profile of Respondents

### 2.1 Overview of Survey Respondents

A breakdown by type, size and age of respondents' organizations follows.

**Table 1 Type of Organization**

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	RESPONSES	
	N	PERCENTAGE
Community Organization	14	70%
Health Centre	1	5%
School/School Board	2	15%
Post-Secondary Institution	2	10%
Total	19	100%

Organizations were for the most part locally based and locally focused but we also heard from some that were provincial, and even national, in scope and service.

**Table 2 Age of Organization**

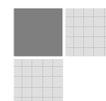
AGE OF ORGANIZATION	RESPONSES	
	N	PERCENTAGE
<5 Years	2	11%
5 – 1- Years	2	11%
> 10 Years	14	78%
Total	18	100%

The majority of organizations were well established and had been providing services in Waterloo Region for more than ten years.

**Table 3 Current Annual Operating Budget**

OPERATING BUDGET	RESPONSES	
	N	PERCENTAGE
<\$100,000	1	6%
\$100,000 - \$1,000,000	4	25%
>\$1,000,000	11	69%
Total	16	100%

Sixteen respondents answered the question related to current annual operating budget. The majority of these respondents were from fairly large organizations with annual operating budgets in excess of \$1,000,000.



## 2.2 Organization Activities

Table 4 demonstrates the types of services responding organizations provide to newcomers to Waterloo Region. The majority are providers of multiple services. The most commonly reported categories were settlement services (58% of respondents), language programs (47% of respondents) and job search services (37% of respondents). Specific programs and services identified by respondents included interpretation and translation, language assessment and referral, tutoring, childcare, employment assistance for internationally trained individuals, computer skills, mentoring, counselling and trauma support, housing, sports and recreation, social and life skills, health care, health promotion, youth engagement programming, and bridge programs.

**Table 4 Types of Services Provided**

TYPE S OF SERVICES	RESPONSES	
	N	PERCENTAGE
Settlement and Adaptation Programs (orientation, information, referrals, etc.)	11	58%
Language programs	9	47%
HOST programs matching newcomers with Canadian volunteers to help them integrate	6	32%
Enhanced language programs, offering occupation-specific English	3	16%
Job search workshops (training in resume writing, job hunting, interview skills)	7	37%
Library Settlement Partnership program: deploys settlement counsellors at libraries	2	11%
Settlement Workers in Schools program	2	11%
Other	13	68%

In most cases organizational mandates were inclusive; that is, they served the needs of all immigrants. Three organizations reported providing services specific to refugees.

Collectively these organizations reported serving over 150,000 people annually. The main nationalities among service users were: Chinese, Afghani, Iraqi, Somali, and Colombian.

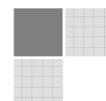
Respondents reported more than 20 languages among service users, reflecting the growing diversity of our community. The top five languages other than English or French were: Persian languages (Farsi, Dari), varieties of Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), Arabic, Spanish, and Serbo-Croat (Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian).

## 2.3 Sources of Funding

Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of their 2010 Immigrant Services budget derived from various sources. Federal and provincial ministries were by far the most commonly reported funders. They were also major funders, with seven programs/service providers deriving more than three-quarters of their immigrant services budget from federal ministries, and two deriving more than three-quarters of their funding from provincial ministries. Only six respondents reported receiving funding from municipalities, six from foundations and five from the United Way. Other sources of funding included churches, donations, and agency fundraising events.

**Table 5 Percentage of 2010 Immigrant Services Budget Derived from Various Sources**

Source of Funding	% of I.S. Budget	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	>75%	Response Count
Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)		27.3% (3)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	63.6% (7)	11
Other Federal Ministries		80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5
Provincial Ministries		50.0% (5)	30.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (2)	10
Crown Corporations		100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	1
Municipalities		83.3% (5)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6
United Way		80.0% (4)	20.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5
Foundations		66.6% (4)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	6
Other		50.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	12.5% (1)	37.5% (3)	8
Answered question						19



### 3. Funding Shifts among Immigrant Serving Organizations

#### 3.1 Shifts in Funding

The results of the survey show that thirteen programs/service providers experienced recent shifts in at least one funding source. Of these, eleven reported receiving less funding as a result. Cuts ranged from a “slight reduction” to a 15% cut in 2011 compared to 2010. One provider of language instruction, whose funding is based on the number of clients attending classes, reported a small increase in funding per client. One respondent reported experiencing a shift in funding but did not elaborate on the nature and direction of the shift.

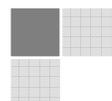
Several organizations experienced cutbacks from multiple funders in the past couple of years – three respondents reported cuts in two funding sources and one reported cuts in three funding sources.

#### Changes to the CIC Funding Allocation Process

- 10 respondents who completed the survey reported receiving some form of funding through Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Of these, 7 experienced cuts for 2011 ranging from “a slight reduction” to a 15% decrease
- 3 reported no changes
- Projects that received a funding cut included those that provide the following services:
  - Information and resources for internationally trained professionals
  - LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) classes
  - Child-minding for parents attending LINC classes
  - Host program matching newcomers with Canadian volunteers to help them integrate
  - ISAP (Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program)

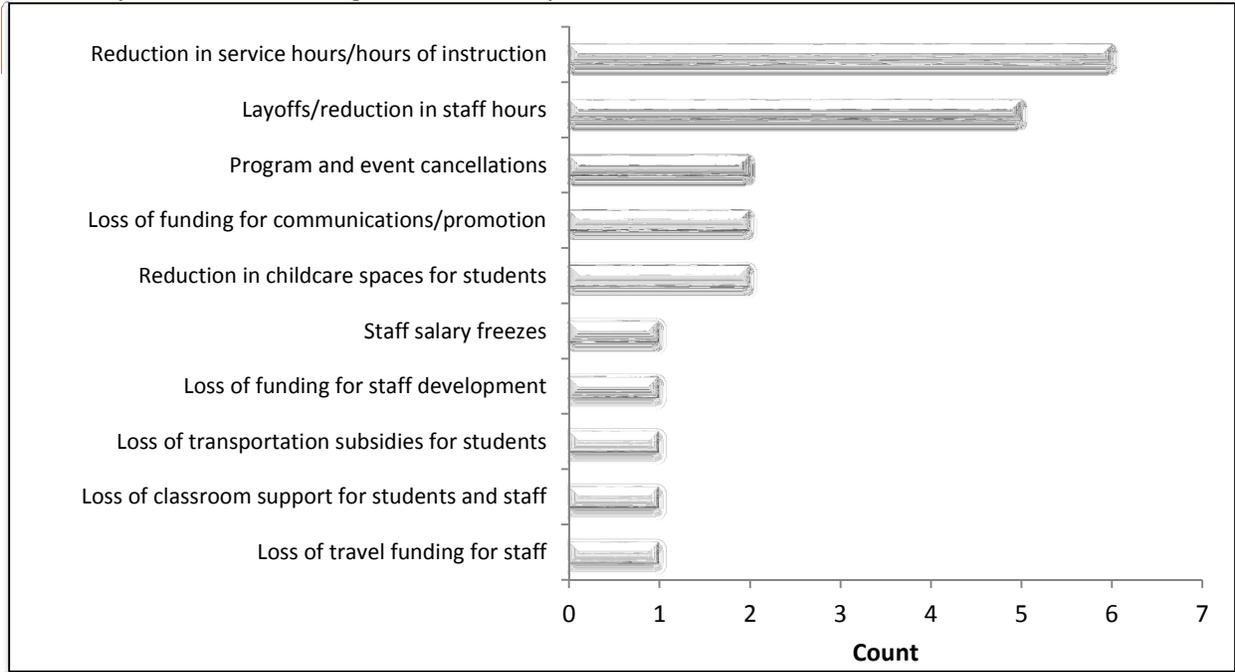
#### Other Funding Shifts

- 9 respondents who completed the survey reported shifts in other funding sources including:
  - United Way
  - School Board Contracted Services
  - Foundations
  - Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
  - Ontario Ministry of Education
  - Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Projects that received a funding cut included those that provide the following services:
  - One-on-one tutoring to teach new Canadians English
  - Immigrant/newcomer settlement support and counselling
  - Employment services (provided elsewhere in the province)
  - Childcare services (unrelated to immigration settlement)
- Project that received an increase in funding:
  - ESL (English as a Second Language) program



### 3.2 Extent of Impact for Organizations

**Chart 1: Impact of Reduced Funding on Service Delivery**



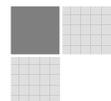
**Impact on services offered**

Funding cuts have affected organizations in different ways. Some organizations cancelled programs entirely, others reduced service hours, and still others were able to continue offering much the same services to clients. These changes, in turn, have affected clients in various ways. One provider of language programming had planned to begin offering more personalized service to students but in light of funding cuts was unable to implement those plans. Another respondent reported that the loss of some programming in her agency had resulted in gaps in service for a clientele that requires extra supports.

Despite the challenges, several respondents said they felt relatively “lucky”, noting that recent federal funding cuts had not been as drastic in Waterloo region as they had been in other parts of the province. As well, it was noted that the cuts had been handled differently here. Local agencies appreciated that they had been given some discretion in terms of what was cut. As one interviewee shared, “the effect of cuts on [our] program delivery was minimal because of how we did it”. Whenever possible organizations made cuts that they felt would have the least impact on core services, choosing instead to cut “nice to have, not essential to have” things like budgets for professional development, resource teachers, and child care. One organization reported utilizing synergies with other organizations so as to reduce costs and ensure that programs continued to be delivered to clients. Another organization decided to fund the program internally until another funding source could be secured. The end result was that in a number of cases programs and services continued to be offered with clients noticing minimal changes, if any.

*“Waterloo Region continues to welcome a large number of newcomers and settlement issues remain complex. The timing of cuts for this region is not in sync with our reality”*

Several organizations we spoke with anticipated further cuts in 2012-13, a prospect they found concerning and unfortunately timed. As one respondent observed, “The demands from funders and community for immigrant services to prepare immigrants for the job market increase, while funds are cut that make those demands more difficult to achieve.”



**Impact on organizations internally**

Nearly half of the organizations that experienced funding cuts reduced staffing costs in one way or another. Responses included decreasing staff hours, salary freezes, temporary layoffs, and even letting staff members go. One organization was able to reduce its staff complement through attrition. Respondents noted that these measures had negative consequences in that they added to workloads, increased stress and a created a sense of insecurity among remaining staff members.

*“Our agency has a culture of being resourceful and working with what we have. It is easy to measure tangibly how funding cuts affect organizations internally but more difficult to measure the real impact these cuts will have on the newcomers we serve”*

Some respondents were concerned about the risk of losing experienced, skilled staff due to reduced hours. As a result, in at least one case, staff members in affected programs were given other positions within the organization. However, this in turn created unneeded stress on the organization’s budget. Ultimately, respondents felt that the same level of quality and service could not be maintained with reduced staff hours.

Respondents noted that not only had there been funding cuts; there had been operational changes as well. Some of these changes were seen in a positive light. For example, it was agreed that CIC’s shift from separate program streams to one single settlement program allowed for greater flexibility in program design and better collaboration. As one respondent noted about her own organization, “We are now speaking with one voice, not four”. Even so, many changes took place in a relatively short period of time and agency staff are still struggling to adjust.

**Alternate Sources of Funding**

The ability to find alternate sources of funding varied greatly among organizations. One respondent reported that due to increased grant writing efforts her organization’s budget had actually increased. Additional income was also generated through fee-for-service work and fundraising events. There were also organizations we spoke with who expressed little hope of being able to make up the funding lost.

**Multiple funding pressures**

Respondents spoke about financial instability and the many financial unknowns for organizations trying to make a commitment to newcomers and plan for the years ahead. Specifically, they talked about:

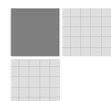
**Threats to funding continuity:** CIC cutbacks and changes to the Employment Ontario model have created a “chaotic” impact for immigrant serving agencies. The Federal Government’s cutbacks have forced settlement services to run much leaner than they should be. Funding reductions have also come from United Way organizations and from foundations that have had fewer dollars to award than in the past. This lack of funding continuity makes it difficult for agencies to respond to the settlement needs they see in the community.

**Lack of long term funding:** Programs often survive on short term funding cycles. Those that do receive multi-year funding are not given enough flexibility and become locked into the initial plan with deliverables that may or may not fit changing needs.

**Eligibility criteria:** The priority of local agencies is to provide the best possible services and programs to all immigrants. Some felt the current system of funding needs to be changed to reflect the realities of different subgroups of immigrants. Refugees should be served as fully as other classes of immigrants but they’re not. Even though the number of temporary foreign workers is growing and they may live and work in Canada for up to four years they are ineligible for federally-funded settlement services including language training.

*“We let [refugee claimants] in, so they need services”*

**Federal funding formulas:** CIC has developed and implemented its new funding formula for the allocation of settlement funding to each province. This has resulted in reductions in settlement funding locally. However, Waterloo Region receives secondary



migrants from other communities and local agencies are actually seeing an increase in service numbers. The new federal funding allocation model doesn't, but perhaps should, include a consideration of secondary migration.

## 4. Community Strengths, Needs, and Opportunities

The people we spoke with were asked whether they were aware of any needs among immigrants that were not currently being met. They were also asked whether they had any ideas of how these needs could be met or, in other words how we could make Waterloo Region a better place for immigrants. The following points were raised:

1. Opportunities should be created for sharing/collaboration within the immigrant serving sector so as to enhance the coordination of services. While respondents had a broad understanding of the kinds of services offered by other organizations, they didn't know the details. Some felt it would be helpful to have informal gatherings that offered networking opportunities in order to increase awareness of the programs and services offered locally, increase collaboration between organizations, and build sustainable partnerships.
2. Funding must be revisited. Funders must help stakeholders better understand how funding is allocated and also ensure that funding is flexible, stable, and maximized to support long-term goals.
3. Programs need to be geared to those who need them most. Services should be designed to better meet the needs of certain groups such as refugees, people with low English skills, and temporary foreign workers. It was felt that a better job could be done of credential assessment and clear pathing of opportunities for foreign trained professionals. Other service gaps identified include:
  1. The need for interpretation/translation services in an increasing number of languages.
  2. The challenge of adapting and delivering services in ways that meet the needs of a culturally diverse and growing population.
  3. The need to improve the quality and availability of mental health services for people from diverse backgrounds including all categories of immigrant.
4. More can be done with regard to employer engagement. While WRIEN went a long way in creating community conditions that would make successful immigrant employment more likely in Waterloo region, its success can be built on further. More can be done in terms of connecting with employers who will be seeing increasing numbers of newcomers in the future, and engaging them and assisting them to prepare for this.
5. Respondents expressed a desire for Waterloo Region to become an even more welcoming and inclusive community and envisioned a number of different ways to accomplish this. One of these was to establish a welcoming centre, a sort of one-stop-shop that could connect newcomers with existing programs and services. Other ideas included ongoing education with service providers about the populations they are working with, and better representation of the immigrant community in all aspects of community life, including policy-making and planning processes.

