Manitoba Settlement Strategy

New vision and commitment to help immigrants integrate

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy supports the province’s objectives for immigration and integration as identified in the Action Strategy for Economic Growth by strengthening its partnerships with employers, educators and communities.

- Flowchart illustrates range and interconnection of settlement services (Flowchart is at the end of this document)

Background

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy improves social services and expands programs to assist immigrants in settling and succeeding in our province. The province’s plan to double immigration over the next 10 years highlights the need for a wider range of effective supports for refugees and skilled workers after they have arrived in Manitoba.

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy was born from consultation with the community. The strategy responds to identified needs and builds on the strength of current services.

Needs assessment and research consultations

To develop the settlement strategy an extensive needs assessment was conducted through focus groups and consultations with over 120 immigrant and refugee newcomers, ethnocultural community leaders, service providers and others working directly with immigrants and refugees.

What you told us

Participants in the needs assessment identified the following themes in relation to service gaps to receive priority attention in the settlement strategy:

- employment and labour market supports and opportunities to address newcomer frustration at not being able to use their skills
- early reliable settlement information and orientation
- confusion and lack of knowledge on where to go for particular settlement assistance
- advice, assessment and guidance to plan their settlement
- social isolation and lack of outreach to inform or include newcomers
supports that recognize the importance of family, including the challenges faced by children and youth

- decent affordable housing

- follow-up assistance and longer-term supports

- language interpreters

- increased skills and expertise among service providers

- inappropriate or insensitive service delivery including approaches that inadvertently lead to conflicts in communities

- evaluation of settlement services

- greater consultation and input from newcomers and community members

- greater support, responsiveness and maintenance of cultural values to support effective integration

- information to support decision-making and policy changes on critical issues such as eligibility and access to financial assistance for training, affordable housing options, federal transportation loans

**Acting on your suggestions**

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy outlines the key service areas as well as the systemic supports that effectively respond to the settlement and integration needs of newcomers to Manitoba.

These include:

- pre-arrival Information

- centralized initial information and orientation

- centralized assessment and referral

- settlement and community supports

- employment supports

- recognition of foreign professional and academic qualifications

- specialized programs

- field development

- service-delivery supports

**Settlement programming principles**

The Immigration and Multiculturalism Division of Manitoba Labour and Immigration followed crucial guidelines in the formation of its settlement
Foremost, the Manitoba Settlement Strategy is *not* intended to replicate all existing services provided to Manitobans.

Rather, the strategy is designed to help permanent residents gain better access to existing services, and to help existing services become more accessible.

Accordingly, these are some of the principles followed in the formation of the strategy:

- proactive service and program development
- addressing needs to foster independence
- having focused and specialized services
- building expertise and minimizing duplication
- fostering collaboration among agencies
- developing common service-delivery standards including quality assurance and continuous improvement
- facilitating input from newcomers in development of new programming
- growing partnerships and best practices among stakeholders including all levels of government
- enhancing communication among stakeholders
- ensuring services and their delivery are appropriate for all ethnocultural communities

**Strategic outcomes**

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy includes reporting measures on key outcomes so that the strategy evolves alongside trends and issues in immigration and settlement.

Key outcomes include:

- increased pre-arrival information available at key points in the immigration process
- expanded centralized orientation including tailored orientation and follow-up supports
- individualized information, assessment and referral guidance
- increased communication to improve understanding of services available among immigrants, service providers, sponsors and within communities
- improved accessibility and effectiveness of provincially funded programs
Strategic implementation

The implementation of the Manitoba Settlement Strategy was designed to follow a staged approach to ensure funding deliverables to current and new service providers are consistent with the strategy.

Programming decisions build on existing expertise to ensure that information and continuous communication takes place to improve the overall delivery system.

Key service areas addressed by settlement strategy

Pre-arrival information

Provision of accessible, clear, targeted information for prospective immigrants and those preparing to migrate including enhanced website, improved communication with provincial nominees and better information for those supporting migrants such as family, sponsors or community members.

Centralized initial information and orientation

An expanded and more accessible Entry Program for all newcomers was identified as critical. The strategy moves the Entry Program beyond its current four-week sessions to include a shorter intensive program, evening sessions and special topics.

Better information to family, sponsors and community members enables them to provide complementary supports and to direct newcomers to the Entry Program for language learning, orientation, assessment of needs and referral to appropriate services.

Centralized assessment and referral

The Manitoba Settlement Strategy prioritizes the creation of a new central point of contact for information, assessment and referral to settlement, employment, education and health supports. Identified as the most accessible location was with the Language Assessment Centre in downtown Winnipeg.

Through a centralized service, individual newcomers are assisted in identifying the steps and resources that guide them in their settlement activities. The strategy calls for providing adult newcomers with assistance in developing a personal settlement plan.

Settlement and community supports

The strategy was designed to ensure funding to a range of programming central to the settlement process on an ongoing basis.

Program areas include:
• **Documentation and applications**: assistance with completing forms, documents and applications such as SIN, health, immigration, citizenship, income benefits

• **Refugee settlement**: initial and ongoing settlement assistance to assist refugees with their integration; enhanced follow-up and life-skills supports

• **Children and youth**: programs focused on school-aged children such as after-school, tutoring, computer access, workplace internships, liaison with schools, summer activities and extracurricular classes such as guitar, knitting, theatre, art, chess, homework clubs

• **Social networking**: activities that assist newcomers to develop social networks through programs such as host and volunteer programs, conversation circles, social clubs special events

• **Newcomer classes**: co-ordinated delivery of classes such as citizenship preparation, cooking and nutrition, driver’s education, workshops on special topics such as income tax, finances and consumer issues

• **Interpretation and translation**: enhanced capacity to provide language interpretation and translation services

• **Regional and strategic programming**: expansion and development of current and new settlement programs outside Winnipeg through planning, funding and co-ordination based on immigrant intake as needed as well as targeted support provided to groups involved in immigration strategies

• **Neighbourhood networks**: development of new and existing neighbourhood capacities to meet the needs of newcomers and immigrants in their neighbourhood, including active outreach to new families to ensure they have information, opportunities and support to connect with resources such as libraries, schools, recreation, health services

**Employment supports**

The strategy ensures the continuation of efforts by Manitoba Labour and Immigration to work with Competitiveness, Training and Trade in further developing newcomer employment supports.

The Labour Market Strategy for Immigrants (LMSI) was implemented to: help newcomers take advantage of opportunities in our labour market; secure and keep jobs, and enhance their long-term employment prospects.

Beyond programs for employment readiness, employment maintenance, workplace exposure and career development, Manitoba Labour and Immigration has set its sights on ensuring that newcomers receive:

• basic workplace orientation and training

• specialized job training opportunities

• specific occupational information and advice from content experts

• enhanced employer connections and communication within relevant parts of the system

**Support for the recognition of academic and professional credentials**
In addition to academic assessment and financial supports, Manitoba Labour and Immigration has the lead in setting and planning qualifications recognition initiatives including work resulting from the Fair Registration in Regulated Professions Act.

- For more information see the Immigration and Multiculturalism document Framework for a Manitoba Strategy on Qualifications Recognition PDF 1.3mb.

Items recognized as qualifications recognition (“QR”) priorities were:

- consolidating information, advice and assistance for those in regulated and non-regulated occupations by expanding orientation and work experience opportunities

- establishing a pool of expert advisors and creating profession-specific resource guides

- development and delivery of ongoing demonstration projects including gap and bridge-training that supports the recognition of qualifications and labour-market entry of internationally educated professionals

**Specialized settlement programs**

The settlement strategy identifies the need for project-based activities to meet the specific needs of immigrant and refugee groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities and vulnerable populations.

This includes a range of programs that address psycho-social needs related to adaptation, family violence, intergenerational communication, parenting, youth development and crime prevention, with an eye to growing partnerships with ethnocultural communities, systems and stakeholders.

**Service-delivery supports**

The strategy notes the integral role of training and co-ordination to increase the skills and expertise needed for settlement programs and activities.

In partnership with other stakeholders the strategy establishes pools of resource people to provide interpretation, life skills assistance, community work and intercultural training.

**Field development**

Field development supports the advancement of the Manitoba Settlement Strategy through:

- ongoing stakeholder consultation

- program advisory committees that involve the recipients of services

- support that offers much-needed training and professional development activities

- enhanced monitoring to identify trends and emerging issues and challenges while having in place mechanisms to respond and thus
strengthen the strategy

- the development of materials and resources that support the information needs of immigrants and service providers

**Systemic change and policy development**

The Immigration and Multiculturalism Division is mandated to continue to lead the implementation of the province’s qualifications recognition strategy and to actively contribute to the labour-market integration strategy (LMSI) and other related horizontal initiatives.

This includes the continuation of interdepartmental communication and co-ordination with expanded information, evaluation and research for decision-making.

**Resources**

- Winnipeg Map for Newcomers (PDF)
- Framework for a Manitoba Strategy on Qualifications Recognition (PDF)

**Additional Resources**

Intercultural training for employers
Oct 30, 2009-Dec 30, 2012

Manitoba appoints new immigration minister
Nov 03, 2009

Manitoba hires first fairness commissioner for immigrants
Oct 23, 2008

Manitoba releases immigration report
Sep 24, 2008

This document can be viewed online at:
http://www2.immigratemanitoba.com/browse/regionalcommunities/print,settlement_strategy.html