

## *BC Coalition for Immigrant Integration*

### **Guiding Principles regarding the BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch (MCAWS) Policy Directions of 'Adaptation vs. Integration' & 'Client Prioritization'**

July 15, 2002

*The following Guiding Principles were developed by BCCII regarding the BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch's proposed 'Adaptation' and 'Client Prioritization' bases for settlement service design and eligibility. These Guiding Principles were developed through a facilitated workshop for BCCII core representatives that explored issues and established a common stance, followed by regional consultations with settlement service agencies for further consideration and refinement.*

*The Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for the BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch (MCAWS), Pradeep Khare, met with BCCII representatives on February 25 of 2002. At that meeting he requested that BCCII agencies provide ideas and input to assist in meeting the task of increasing service effectiveness during a time of decreasing financial resources.*

*This document is intended to provide the basis for a dialogue between the BC Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch and the BC immigrant settlement services sector toward the ongoing development of a 'Made in BC' immigrant service spectrum.*

NOTE: When the terms 'clients' or 'immigrants' are used in this document, they refer to immigrants, assisted refugees, and refugee claimants.

#### **General Statement**

The agencies represented by the BC Coalition for Immigrant Integration recognize that the immigrant settlement process is most accurately described as a continuum. It is difficult to delineate where 'adaptation' ends and 'integration' starts. Developing policy and services based on this artificial cut-off may negatively influence the effectiveness of service outcomes, as differentiation of 'adaptation' and 'integration' is a false dichotomy.

There is not one point of entry or one point of exit for immigrant settlement. For each individual, family unit, or immigrant group, the rates of movement along the settlement continuum, and effective outcomes of service provision, vary. 'Prioritization' of clients for service provision should not be based on any single criterion (eg: 'labour market destined', or length of residency), but rather should be based on multiple factors determined through *direct, front-line* needs assessments.

BCCII reaffirms 1.2 e, Annex B, of the Agreement for Canada – BC Cooperation on Immigration: "*Priority (for service) will be given to those facing significant barriers to integration, and who are deemed most in need within the community*".

It is most effective to sustain and further develop responsive, client-centred services that promote progress along the continuum, rather than to define limited and inflexible criteria for service provision and expected outcomes to be applied to all immigrants.

The success of immigrant settlement services necessarily includes recognition of the *two-way* nature of the settlement process. Settlement agencies must have the capacity and flexibility to focus activities on both the immigrant and the community.

## **Common Ground – Tenets for Service Provision**

### *Service Boundaries*

- The bridging of immigrants with 'mainstream society', so they can act with self-sufficiency in society, is an economic and social necessity. Without bridging, service outcomes will be neither efficient nor effective.
- If the immigrant adaptation process is sufficient and effective, the natural outcome will be social and economic integration. Integration is a necessary final outcome for successful immigrant settlement.

### *Service Flexibility and Effective Outcomes*

- The 'cookie-cutter' approach does not maximize service goals – all immigrants are not the same in needs, goals, or rate of knowledge and skills acquisition. The focus of service provision ought to be based on individual need.
- Client choice is an important factor in effective service delivery. Funders and agencies should ensure that individual clients play meaningful roles in determining their particular service needs.
- Based upon shared agreement on outcomes (settlement practitioner, client, funder), agencies can then determine the design and mix of services to meet individual client needs and attain identified outcomes. Enhanced flexibility in service provision would help to attain those outcomes.
- Where agencies recognize a 'critical mass' in client service need, agencies could deliver services that are currently outside of service guidelines, provided they aid clients in meeting identified goals. For example, if a large enough group would benefit from ELSA levels 4 or 5 instruction in order to find employment, agencies should be able to provide that level of instruction within current funding restrictions (instead of an ELSA 1, 2 or 3 class).

### *Performance Outcomes Indicators*

- Performance outcomes indicators must be developed to be qualitative and quantitative, short-term and long-term, and reflective of the multiple variables that determine immigrant settlement. Existing medical models measure the range of service inputs, and measure multiple outcomes over time. The BC Ministry of Health has developed nuanced performance indicators, providing a potential model for the development of BC immigrant settlement service performance measurement.
- Structurally, 'outcomes-based service provision' should be designed to ensure that agencies are not forced to 'cherry pick' clients who are most able to quickly meet inflexible outcomes. Outcomes indicators must be flexible to ensure that all immigrants receive effective services to meet their individual needs and rates of learning (e.g.: immigrants with 'non-romantic' first languages may learn English more slowly).

### *Client Prioritization / Client Ineligibility*

- If innovative approaches to service provision are developed (eg: developing service streams and flexible service provision timelines), BC can safeguard against certain clients / groups experiencing restricted eligibility for services. Some 'prioritized' clients may receive expedited or specialized services, but all immigrants needing settlement services should remain eligible (see Service Streams).

#### *Intake and Assessment*

- Immigrant settlement agencies have expertise in determining effective service provision. Settlement practitioners, through reinforced intake and assessment processes, can identify individual needs and share in the process of determining expected service outcomes. In this way, agencies and clients can reach initial and ongoing agreement about the service mix needed, and project an 'exit point' that is most appropriate for the client. Reinforced intake and assessment may work together with flexible service provision guidelines to ensure outcomes are met.
- The balance between information provision and more intensive interventions should be established based on individual need as determined through agency client assessment. Agencies must continue to examine their services to ensure that they promote client independence as quickly as is reasonable. There will always be a percentage of clients requiring intensive interventions, and agencies must have the capacity to assist those clients in meeting effective settlement outcomes.

#### *Efficiencies through 'Service Streams'*

- 'Service Streams' may be developed, so that different mixes of services can be delivered to clients based upon their particular needs and goals (eg: employment focus vs. general settlement focus for ELSA or counselling).
- Depending upon client goals (eg: 'labour force destined' vs. 'stay at home parent') determined through intake and assessment, the applied 'service stream' may be designed to be compressed and quick, or flexible and gradual. For example, a 'stay at home parent' may receive part-time settlement and ELSA services, designed to be applied through their daily activities (a 'real life practicum'), while a 'labour force destined' client may receive intensive, compressed services designed to expedite workforce attachment.
- Through the development of service streams, agencies will be able realize efficiencies through mixing individual and group service delivery, as appropriate to the service type and client need.

#### *Meeting Local Community Needs*

- Agencies require flexibility in designing services based on the needs of their communities. Rural areas and smaller centres have very different realities compared to urban areas, and may best serve their respective communities' needs through different client eligibility criteria and mixes of services.
- An assessment of existing community capacities for immigrant settlement may provide the basis for determining the specialized services appropriate to smaller centres. If there are currently no accessible social supports that an immigrant can access in a smaller centre (e.g. no cohesive ethnic groups), then agencies should be able to provide those

supports, or play a role in developing community capacities, in order to meet client and community needs.

- Agencies should be encouraged to work with local institutions and businesses to determine the economic and demographic needs of their respective communities, so that services may be specifically designed to meet those needs. BCCII reaffirms 2.1 d of the Agreement for Canada – BC Cooperation on Immigration, Annex B: *(A purpose of the Agreement is to) “encourage community involvement in identifying local settlement and integration priorities”*.

#### *Fee for Service*

- BCCII agencies already provide ranges of ‘fee-based services’, based on the identification of service needs, and agency entrepreneurial initiatives. The BC immigrant settlement sector has developed a high level of expertise in designing and delivering fee-based services.
- Agencies may consider expanding ‘fee for service’ based on client service need and ability to pay. ‘Fee for service’ should be designed to complement existing services, not to replace services already provided. ‘Fee for service’ structures should be designed to ensure that no immigrant is unable to receive needed services due to a lack of financial resources. The BC immigrant-serving sector should work in concert to determine which settlement services are ‘essential’ (no fees charged), so clients are treated fairly and consistently throughout the BC immigrant service sector.
- Some agencies primarily serve clients who are financially unable to pay fees. Such agencies should not be penalized by government funders for their inability to generate extra income.

#### *Support for Agencies During Change*

- During a time of transition, agency staff professional development and organizational development will be needed to ensure that new models and new approaches to service provision meet the intended outcomes.