

The AMSSA Info Sheet series has been created to inform and support settlement service providers and key stakeholders across British Columbia. The Info Sheets cover a wide range of topics and highlight important facts and trends from across Canada and BC. Our goal is to assist organizations in navigating the rapidly changing landscape of the BC settlement sector.\*

## Pre-Arrival Settlement Services

To facilitate faster settlement and economic integration of new immigrants and refugees to Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) funds a number of pre-arrival settlement services. Beginning April 2015, CIC will expand the current offerings of pre-arrival programs, with services anticipated to reach up to 75,000 immigrants and 8,500 refugees annually.<sup>1</sup> This issue of Migration Matters reviews the objectives, best practices and evaluations of three pre-arrival services initiatives.

### Faster Social and Economic Integration

Pre-Arrival Settlement services are online and in-person services that exist to ensure consistent information is shared with new immigrants and refugees before they arrive in Canada. These services allow for a broad range of clients to more rapidly integrate socially and economically in Canadian society.

Pre-Arrival orientations have two objectives:<sup>2</sup>

1. To provide newcomers with relevant, accurate, consistent and timely information that is needed to make informed settlement decisions and access settlement services; and
2. To promote a contextual understanding of life in Canada, including laws, rights, and the democratic system.

In 2012, roughly 6% of those arriving to Canada annually received pre-arrival orientations.<sup>3</sup> In Fall 2014, CIC announced that it would fund expanded pre-arrival settlement services, with added focus on online services.<sup>4</sup> As a result of this additional funding, upwards of 30% of those arriving to Canada each year are expected to have received pre-arrival services.

### Three Components of Overseas Services

All pre-arrival Services have three components, including:<sup>5</sup>

- Factual information about Canada (e.g. geography, climate, demographics, rights and laws)
- Assistance in developing skills needed to succeed (e.g. find accommodation, getting a job)
- Information on the attitudes necessary for successful integration (e.g. flexibility, open-mindedness, initiative).

Ultimately, the objectives of pre-arrival services are to manage expectations/fears, provide immigrants with general information, and to provide economic immigrants with specific labour market information related to their chosen career paths.<sup>6</sup>

### Information Needs Vary by Immigration Class

Research has shown that immigrants have different reasons for leaving their homeland. As a result they arrive in Canada with different motivations and resources, and face different challenges during the settlement process. Therefore, the information required by those coming to Canada varies significantly by immigration category.<sup>7</sup>

**Refugees** are admitted to Canada primarily on humanitarian rather than economic grounds, and the circumstances surrounding their migration are often traumatic in nature. As a result, refugees require basic information and orientation assistance, such as housing support, language training, and other information that can help reduce anxiety in the first few weeks after arriving in Canada.<sup>8</sup>

**Economic Immigrants** are selected based on their ability to contribute to Canada's economy, and often arrive with higher levels of English or French ability, high levels of education, and due to recent reforms in the Federal Skilled Worker program, are younger in age. The needs of economic immigrants focus much less on traditional cultural orientation (geography, public transportation, finding housing), and more on labour market information. Economic immigrants are likely able to find general information on their own, and often require specific information related to credential recognition/accreditation, opportunities for connecting with employers, and other occupation-specific employment services.<sup>9</sup>

**Family Immigrants** are those who are sponsored to come to Canada by a family member, and their need for pre-arrival orientation services varies widely by country of origin. According to a recent survey on pre-arrival services, these immigrants often have family living in Canada who are able to provide them with information that is traditionally provided by settlement agencies. However, it is important to note that such word-of-mouth information, particularly labour market information, may be outdated or otherwise inaccurate.<sup>10</sup> As well, family class immigrants often have language training needs that cannot be adequately addressed by their family's assistance.

1. Government of Canada, 'Funding Guidelines: Call for Proposals 2014 Pre-Arrival Settlement Services', September 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EhYq3>.  
 2, 3. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 14. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EuTP6>.  
 4. Government of Canada, 'Funding Guidelines: Call for Proposals 2014 Pre-Arrival Settlement Services', September 2014. Available at: <http://ow.ly/Ei6gH>.  
 5, 6. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 14. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EuTP6>.  
 7, 8, 9, 10. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 15. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/Ei9kM>.

## Existing Overseas Programs

As of 2014, there are three overseas programs in operation. The programs vary substantially in target client group, information shared, and the format of the orientation.

- **Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA)** is the largest overseas service, with operations in over 40 countries. COA primarily provides information about initial settlement in Canada, with little emphasis on labour market preparation. Services are delivered through 1–, 3– or 5-day in person group orientations. COA is delivered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>11</sup>
- **Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP)** is the most recently established overseas service, with operations in South Korea and Taiwan. AEIP provides a wider scope of information, and informs clients on both initial settlement in Canada and labour market integration. Services are delivered through in person 2-hour group orientations as well as topic specific workshops. AEIP is delivered by the British Columbia-based settlement agency S.U.C.C.E.S.S.<sup>12</sup>
- **Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP)** is delivered almost exclusively to Federal Skilled Workers through group orientations and one-on-one training sessions in four countries. CIIP primarily focuses on the labour market, job search skills and how to have foreign credentials recognized, with little emphasis on general settlement in Canada. CIIP was designed and is managed by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan).<sup>13</sup>

### Coordination of Pre– and Post–Arrival Services

A 2012 survey of Federal Skilled Workers found that those enrolled in pre-arrival settlement services were much more likely to access settlement services once in Canada. The vast majority, 87% of respondents, agreed it was helpful to know how to contact settlement organizations once in Canada.<sup>14</sup>

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has identified pre– and post–arrival service coordination as a best practice in migrant orientations. The IOM calls for the establishment of coordinated content and training methodology, as well as for potential client challenges to be identified for post-arrival follow-up.<sup>15</sup>

## Summary of Current Overseas Programs<sup>16</sup>

Program Name	Start Date	Country Served	Annual Clients	Client Groups Served (2011)
Canadian Orientation Abroad	1998	40+ Countries	~13,000	Federal Skilled Workers (36%) Refugees (34%) Family Class (16%) Live-in Caregivers (14%)
Active Engagement Integration Project	2008	S. Korea, Taiwan	~850	Federal Skilled Workers (56%) Business Immigrants (21%) Provincial Nominees (13%) Family Class (6%) Live-in Caregivers (4%)
Canadian Immigrant Integration Program	2007	India, China, Philippines, U.K.	~1,900	Federal Skilled Workers (98%) Provincial Nominees (2%)

## Gaps in Existing Overseas Settlement Services

The 2012 evaluation of pre-arrival settlement services found while most clients believed the data they received was accurate, a number of service delivery gaps existed.<sup>17</sup> The programs all had different target groups and regions, and therefore could not be accurately compared to each other. However, some issues were common among all initiatives, including:

- Lack of awareness of pre-arrival services
- Weak linkage between pre– and post–arrival services (particularly among Live-in Caregivers)
- Inadequate level of labour market information (particularly for highly skilled workers)

Additionally, despite low levels of difficulty on initial settlement in Canada, information from the evaluation showed that pre-departure orientation participants desired more settlement-related information. For example, Live-in Caregivers reported that their greatest challenges upon arrival in Canada were:<sup>18</sup>

- Difficulty speaking with their employer (e.g. working extra hours, additional duties)
- Cultural differences (e.g. diet, child discipline);
- Finding information on settlement services, and;
- Finding a family doctor / seeing a doctor.

11. International Organization for Migration, 'Canada Orientation Abroad'. Available at: <http://www.iom.int/cms/coa/about-coa>.

12. S.U.C.C.E.S.S., 'Active Engagement and Integration Project'. Available at: <http://www.aeip.successbc.ca>.

13. Colleges and Institutes Canada, 'Canadian Immigrant Integration Program'. Available at: <http://www.newcomersuccess.ca>.

14. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 40. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/Eif9J>.

15. International Organization for Migration, 'Best Practices: IOM's Migrant Training / Pre-departure Orientation Programs'. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EifFj>.

16. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 2. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EiiWZ>.

17, 18. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 'Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives', p. 41. July 2012. Available at: <http://ow.ly/EijqL>.