

Report For

AMSSA Settlement & Integration Sector Priorities Survey 2022

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Sector Priorities Survey 2022	7
Executive Summary	8
Introduction	10
Method	11
Results	12
Respondent Demographic Data	12
Community Engagement	13
Francophone Resources	13
AMSSA Committees and Working Groups	14
Knowledge Sharing	16
Professional Development and Educational Content	18
Programs	19
Service Delivery and Interpretation Services	20
Community Approach	21
SPOs Relationship with IRCC	22
Recommendations	24
Conclusion	26
Appendix A	28
Appendix B	29

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a provincial umbrella association, AMSSA acknowledges that B.C. is on the unceded homelands of First Nations who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

We recognize the privilege that we have as settlers on this land and acknowledge that AMSSA's operations is on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. As an organization, AMSSA is committed to creating a safe space for indigenous voices.

Sector Priorities Survey

2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September of 2022, the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA), with funding from IRCC, conducted its first annual settlement sector priority survey to explore the experiences of and determine the priorities of the B.C. settlement and integration sector at all levels, from frontline workers to CEOs.

Designed with input from both IRCC and a focus group composed of settlement sector representatives, the survey was administered to all IRCC funded organizations across B.C. with the purpose of identifying how AMSSA programming can best support the evolving needs of the settlement sector in the province.

In the wake of the global pandemic, the settlement and integration sector underwent a major shift in its operations. Covid-19 simultaneously increased the number of people reliant on service providing organizations while severely reducing the number of in-person services organizations could offer. In order to continue providing essential services to their clients and also maintain the safety of their staff and volunteers, the sector actively adapted. As the sector's needs and priorities evolved, it became important to ensure that AMSSA was both aware of and responding to these changes.

As a provincial umbrella organization with more than 80 member agencies, AMSSA's network within B.C.'s settlement and integration sector is vast. Through funding from IRCC, AMSSA provides supports to IRCC funded organizations who in turn provide services and supports to newcomers arriving to B.C.. These supports include providing opportunities for professional development, programming and knowledge mobilization, research and policy analysis and participation in and organizing numerous committees, partnerships and working groups. Much like IRCC funded organizations, AMSSA too promptly reevaluated how it could continue to provide relevant services, especially during a period of such turbulence. It was in response to this question that the idea of conducting a sector priority survey emerged.

Being the first time AMSSA would be conducting a survey of this kind and as it was intended to be conducted annually, several months were spent consulting with representatives from the sector as well as IRCC to ensure the survey covered topics central and relevant to the settlement and integration sector. The survey then underwent a detailed review process, before it was finally released in September of 2022. In total, 234 participating organizations completed the sector priority survey, 221 in English and 13 in French. Upon analysis of the results, several key findings emerged.

Knowledge sharing and professional development are both key supports that AMSSA provides to IRCC funded organizations and respondents' answers provided valuable insights. In regards to the former, email, both directly from AMSSA and from Settlement Net Weekly, was viewed as a valuable tool in learning new information and answering questions on a topic. In regards to the latter, webinars and virtual information sessions were the most commonly used platforms for professional development at 68.21% and 45.73% respectively. Language providers additionally highlighted the need to learn more about trauma-informed practices, mental health support and balancing how to help newcomers adapt to Canadian culture while still honouring the culture of their home countries.

Smaller centres have unique service delivery challenges as compared to other service providing organizations. These include how to retain newcomers in their area, how to handle low participation rates of clients as well as how to deliver services that effectively meet the needs of newcomers while struggling with a limited capacity to deliver those services.

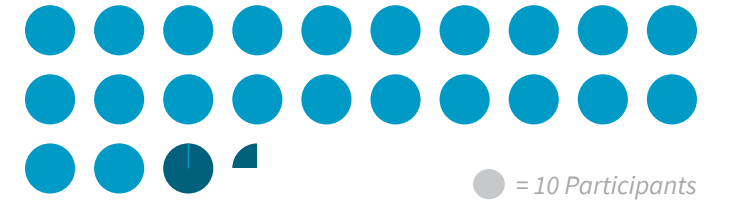
234
participating organizations
completed the sector priority survey

● 221 IN ENGLISH ● 13 IN FRENCH

The effects of the pandemic are still felt in numerous areas, particularly within service delivery. In order to counteract the decrease in in-person service delivery, several IRCC funded organizations significantly increased hybrid and online service delivery. Consequently, the sector priorities survey highlights a strong preference for these delivery models over in-person delivery when it comes to AMSSA programming, with 61.28% of respondents preferring hybrid delivery and 25.56% of respondents preferring virtual access.

Service providers have expressed interest in meeting with and learning from colleagues at organizations who are similar in size and service delivery and are geographically close with 30.40% believing a community approach was extremely important and 45.60% believing it was important. Opinions also emphasized the value of learning from one another regarding how to address similar client issues and best practices in general.

Service providers most commonly interact with IRCC through their IRCC Program Officers. Most respondents indicated having a positive relationship with their Program Officer, highlighting behaviors such as timely and open communication, knowledge of subject matter and providing valuable feedback. In terms of improving service providers' relationship with IRCC, suggestions included decreasing the turnover rate of Program Officers, IRCC representatives displaying better knowledge of organizations' programs and AMSSA increasing their role in acting as a convener between IRCC funded settlement organizations, which encompasses both settlement focused and language focused organizations, and IRCC.



Several insights and recommendations became evident in the analysis of the wide-ranging responses of the settlement sector priorities survey. It was identified that there needs to be increased opportunities for the Anglophone and Francophone sector to collaborate and learn from one another. Additionally, responses highlighted the need for increased professional development opportunities. Particularly, to offer the opportunity to learn about anti-racism strategies, trauma-informed practices, and decolonization approaches. Another valuable insight to emerge from the survey was the desire for increased communication from AMSSA as well as which communication channels the sector found effective and which required improvement. Lastly, it is necessary to highlight the unique challenges that service providers in smaller centres face and to work on improving service provider relationships with IRCC, including increasing AMSSA's role as a convener.

INTRODUCTION

The 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fiscal years brought unprecedented changes and challenges to the B.C. settlement and integration sector. With a global pandemic taking place, the settlement sector had to quickly adapt to a different mode of service delivery to continue providing essential services to newcomers, while ensuring the health and safety of staff and clients.

In addition to providing services in a pandemic, the sector also had to quickly adjust and respond to various world crises including the wars in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, and the increased number of clients in need of support that this brought. In response, AMSSA, a provincial umbrella organization that provides supports such as professional development opportunities, programming and knowledge mobilization to over 80 member organizations as well as all IRCC funded service providers in B.C., adjusted programming to support these emerging needs through focusing deliverables on supporting the settlement sector with COVID specific resources and resources focusing on supporting the various refugee crises (see Appendix A for more about AMSSA).

As we enter the new 2022-2023 fiscal year AMSSA and IRCC are working to ensure that the indirect services we provide continue to reflect the current needs and priorities of the B.C. settlement sector. To achieve this goal, AMSSA conducted a sector-wide survey to evaluate the settlement sector's needs and experiences, with an objective to ensure that the services AMSSA provides reflect the needs and priorities of the B.C. settlement sector.

With the Government of Canada announcing the 2023 to 2025 immigration levels plan with targets of 465,000 permanent residents in 2023, 485,000 in 2024 and 500,000 in 2025 (Government of Canada, 2022), ensuring that settlement needs are met will be crucial in aiding successful integration of these new arrivals; especially in this time of uncertainty, with increased costs of living, lack of affordable housing, rising interest rates, and other systemic issues.

This report summarizes the results of the sector priorities survey and provides recommendations for the future.

METHOD

In August 2022 AMSSA organized a focus group composed of 19 sector representatives (see Appendix B for full list of focus group members).

The purpose of the focus group was to review the draft survey and to ensure that the questions included would successfully capture key information. Participants were asked to provide their feedback on the draft questions and to make suggestions for any additional sections to include.

Following the meeting, AMSSA adjusted the questions according to the feedback received from the focus group members. The final survey was composed of the following sections: Respondent Profile, Service Providing Organizations (SPO) Profile, Community Engagement, Knowledge Sharing, Programs, Communication Approach, SPO relationship with IRCC, and Other Comments.

In September 2022 AMSSA released the sector priorities survey. All levels of staff including frontline staff, managers and senior organizational leaders in B.C. who are funded by IRCC were invited to participate.

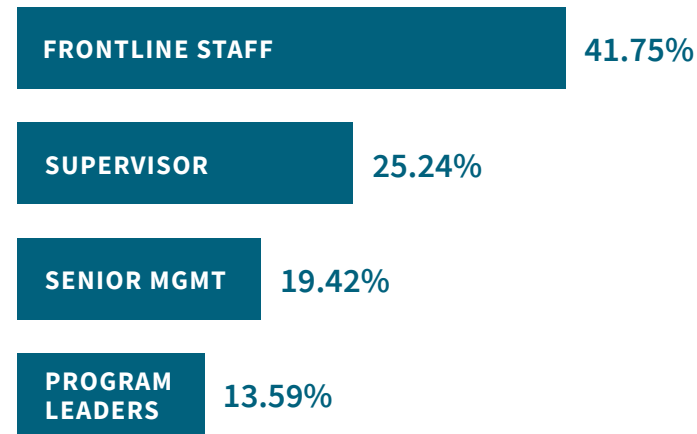
The survey was closed in October, with a total of 234 responses received. The following sections provide more in-depth analysis of the responses received.

RESULTS

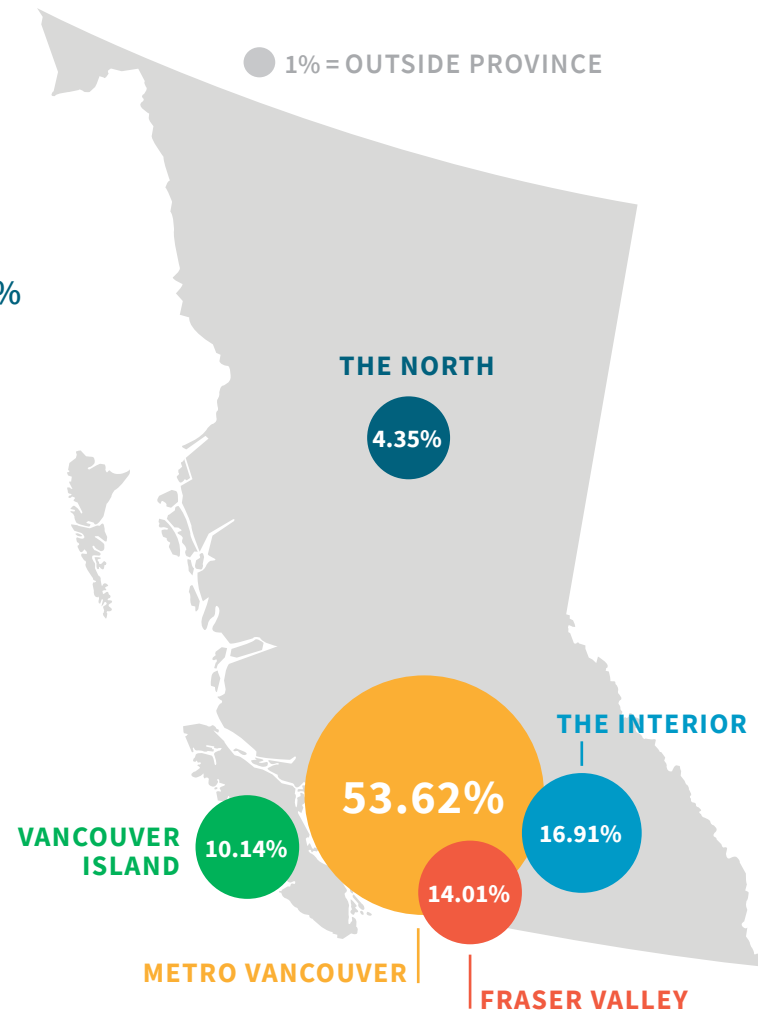
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Of the 234 settlement sector representatives that completed the survey, 82.83% identified themselves as women, with the remaining identifying themselves as men (13.30%), trans (0.43%), two-spirits (0.43%), and 3.00% preferring not to say.

A total of 48.69% of respondents answered, 'yes' when asked if they self-identified as a visible minority which is defined by the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (Statistics Canada, 2021). In addition to general demographic questions, respondents were also asked to indicate their 'position type' within their organization. Of the 4 types listed, 'Frontline staff' was the most prominent response at 41.75%, followed by 'Supervisor' (25.24%), 'Senior/Executive Management' (19.42%), and 'Program Leaders' (13.59%).



With regards to regional representation, just over half of the respondents (53.62%) indicated 'Metro Vancouver' as their primary area of operation. This was followed up by the regions of 'the Interior' (16.91%), 'Fraser Valley' (14.01%), 'Vancouver Island' (10.14%), and 'the North' (4.35%). The remaining 0.97% indicated primary operations outside of B.C..



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In this section AMSSA looked to better understand awareness, satisfaction and engagement with various AMSSA activities and resources including francophone resources and committee and working groups. The following sub-sections provide more insight on this topic.

FRANCOPHONE RESOURCES

AMSSA is an Anglophone organization and the majority of the IRCC funded organizations that took part in the survey are also primarily English-speaking. Nevertheless, it has looked to empower the Anglophone sector to establish connections with the Francophone sector and to support Francophone integration.

Although this has been a topic of discussion within the settlement sector for years, only recently has AMSSA received funding from IRCC to produce resources to address this need which included a toolkit made up of 1 info-sheet and 1 AMSSATalk as well as a webinar. This section of the survey was designed to understand the impact of AMSSA's Francophone resources.

At first glance, according to the results of the sector priorities survey, the overall uptake in AMSSA's Francophone resources was low with only 10.42% of respondents indicating that they had previously taken advantage of the services. Among the respondents that had previously utilized these services, Migration Matters Info Sheets and AMSSATalk were the most accessed at 35.48% and 32.26% respectively, however, the overall distribution between all five resources was relatively even. Among the respondents that had not previously utilized AMSSA's Francophone resources, when asked to specify why this was the case, 41.22% indicated that they did not find the resources relevant to their work, 29.73% indicated that they were unaware of these resources, and 12.16% indicated they were unable to find time to access these resources.

One of the potential explanations for the low uptake of AMSSA's Francophone resources could be related to the fact that AMSSA only recently, since April 2021 started to create Francophone resources. With this being a fairly new activity for AMSSA, the low uptake could be in part explained by settlement organizations not being aware of AMSSA's role in producing these resources, especially as Francophone resources make up only a small portion of the overall resources produced by AMSSA for the sector.

There were a few suggestions as to how AMSSA could better facilitate collaboration between the Francophone and Anglophone sectors, including supporting an increase in the presence of Settlement Workers in Schools to better explain/promote French Immersion Programs, increase connections with established French groups, utilize more varied means of information dissemination etc. However, of all these suggestions, the most consistent response was to increase networking opportunities between the two sectors.

AMSSA COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

AMSSA has five committees and working groups currently active, each with a different focus and member composition.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) which is composed of frontline staff and managers, Local Immigration Partnerships/Réseaux en immigration francophone (LIP/RIF) which is composed of representatives from different LIPs with B.C. RIF joining in 2022, the Smaller Centre Committee (SCC) which is composed of frontline workers and managers, the Settlement Language Working Group (SLWG) which is composed of LINC program managers and Assessment Centre representatives, and the Immigrant Integration Coordination Committee—Steering Committee (IICC-SC) which is composed of CEOs and senior management of 14 organizations.

Overall, there was a high uptake of AMSSA’s committees and working groups with 51% of respondents indicating that their organization was engaged with at least one of the five and another 35.35% indicating ‘Not Sure’.

Among the five committees/working groups listed SWIS and LIP/RIF displayed the highest level of engagement at 26.16% and 25.90% respectively. This was followed by SLWG in third (15.13%), Smaller Centre Committees in fourth (9.74%) and IICC-SC in fifth (9.46%). As noted above, IICC-SC is composed solely of 14 organizations which would explain the lack of familiarity most respondents had with it. In fact, because each of the committees/working groups have such a varied purpose and membership make-up, the engagement numbers cannot meaningfully be compared. For example, the two committees/working groups with the highest level of engagement, SWIS and LIP/RIF, have a numerical advantage in that there are far more SWIS and LIP/RIFs across the province than the other three groups, which not only increases the likelihood of SPOs’ being familiar with them, but more importantly, engaging in a working group directly concerning them.

In contrast, it stands to reason that only those SPOs that self-identify as smaller centres would partake in Smaller Centre Committees and with 53.88% of survey respondents working for organizations in the Metro Vancouver area (the least likely of the 5 provincial regions to host smaller centres), this further limits the number of respondents that could have feasibly engaged with Smaller Centre Committees.

Rather, the more valuable information lies in how effective respondents found each of the committees/working groups. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the committees/working groups they were engaged in on a scale of ‘extremely effective’ → ‘effective’ → ‘somewhat effective’ → ‘not at all effective’. As displayed by the chart below, all five committees/working groups received a rating closest to ‘effective’ and despite relatively lower engagement, Smaller Centre Committees were viewed as the most effective among the five, with the remaining four receiving a similar score.

PROGRAM NAME	AVERAGE EFFECTIVENESS SCORE 4 = extremely effective / 1 = not at all effective
Smaller Centre Committees	2.87
IICC-SC	2.67
LIP/RIF	2.66
SLWG	2.63
SWIS	2.63

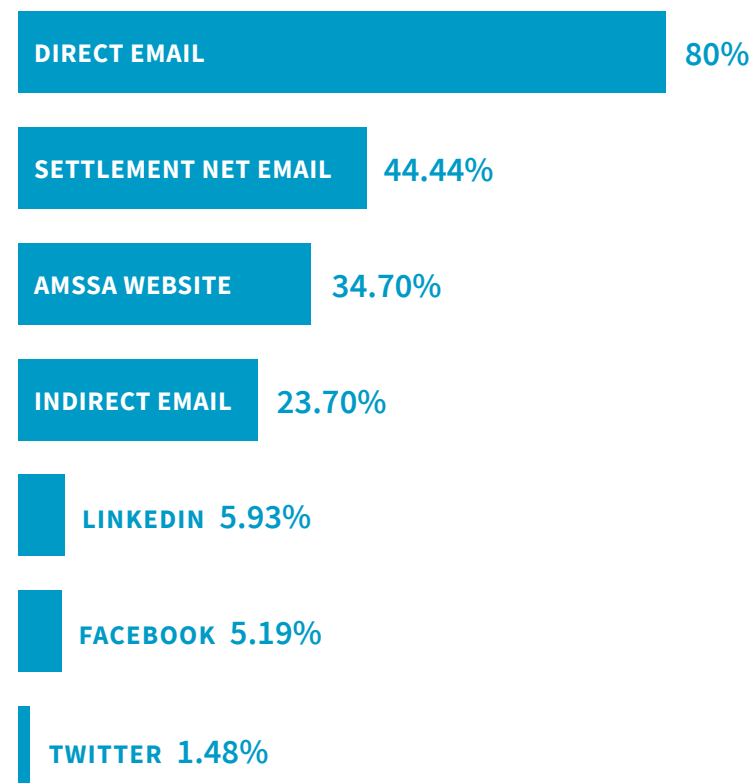
Respondents were also asked to share which topics they would like to discuss during meetings, and while the suggested topics varied for most committees/working groups, with regards to Smaller Centre Committees, the most prominent suggestion was learning/sharing resources. One comment even suggested the creation of a Smaller Centre Guidebook. Finally, when asked how the effectiveness of these groups could be improved, one of the respondents suggested laying out the goals prior to the start of meetings, specifically with regards to LIP/RIF.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

AMSSA is committed to keeping the sector apprised of the latest information and resources through a variety of means including social media, newsletters, email, AMSSA's website and the Settlement Net database. This section was designed to understand what knowledge sharing formats service providers found most effective.

Of the variety of ways that sector updates are received, email arose as a clear preference. 80% of responses indicated a preference for direct emails from AMSSA, 44.44% preferred to receive updates through Settlement Net Weekly emails and 23.70% found indirect emails from AMSSA quite helpful. The AMSSA website was another common source of information with 34.7% of respondents selecting it as their preferred method of receiving sector updates. However, AMSSA's social media was not a highly utilized source with 1.48% using Twitter, 5.19% using Facebook and 5.93% using LinkedIn for updates.

Email, AMSSA's website and the Settlement Net database were the most positively viewed sources of information in terms of the ability to provide valuable information and to answer a question about a topic. In terms of the frequency of use in the past year, Settlement Net weekly emails were used every time and most of the time for 23.48% of the responses. Direct emails were slightly more common as they were used to access resources every time for 31.54% of responses and most of the time for 38.46% of responses. Direct emails were viewed as extremely effective for 31.15% of responses and 53.28% found them as effective in providing valuable new information. 21.31% found direct emails as extremely effective and 40.98% as effective in answering a question about a topic.



The theme of the under-utilization of social media as a source of information and as a future resource was quite prominent in the responses. 68.42% never visited AMSSA's Twitter, 65.66% did not view AMSSA's Facebook and 60.42% did not use AMSSA's LinkedIn page. In rating the level of effectiveness in providing valuable new information, 4.35% found AMSSA's Twitter as effective while 8.6% found AMSSA's Facebook and 7.61% found AMSSA's LinkedIn profile as useful. The percentages were slightly lower as 2.06%, 3.03% and 7.07% viewed AMSSA's Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn respectively as helpful in answering questions about a topic. In terms of whether AMSSA's social media would be used in the future, 9% would visit AMSSA's Twitter, 14.7% would use AMSSA's Facebook and 19.6% would visit AMSSA's LinkedIn page.

There is a clear difference in the levels of use of email, AMSSA's website and social media. According to the results of the survey AMSSA's social media channels do not effectively convey the type of information the sector is interested in acquiring from the organization such as detailed sector updates and language resources. Social media platforms are bound by certain restrictions, character limits for example, that make these types of knowledge disseminations difficult. Moreover, the sector itself seems comfortable engaging with AMSSA's more established communication channels further exacerbating the differences in uptake.

However, the value of social media cannot be completely dismissed, especially as the sector continues to see an uptick in new and young hires and as the pandemic further solidified the overall popularity of platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. From AMSSA's own experience, posting on social media has at times driven engagement for e-learning courses, webinars and even events like the Summit thereby proving to be a valuable addition to more traditional communication channels. This is in part because it reaches a wider audience (stakeholders on the periphery of the settlement sector as well as frontline staff) that are otherwise unreachable via email and Settlement Net communications. As such, the preferred communication channel often depends on the information being sought and the audience that needs to be reached. Taking the feedback gained from this year's survey, AMSSA has the opportunity to re-engage the sector during the next survey to further contextualize these responses and directly inquire as to the type of updates and/or information SPOs' would like to see from communication channels that displayed lower uptake.

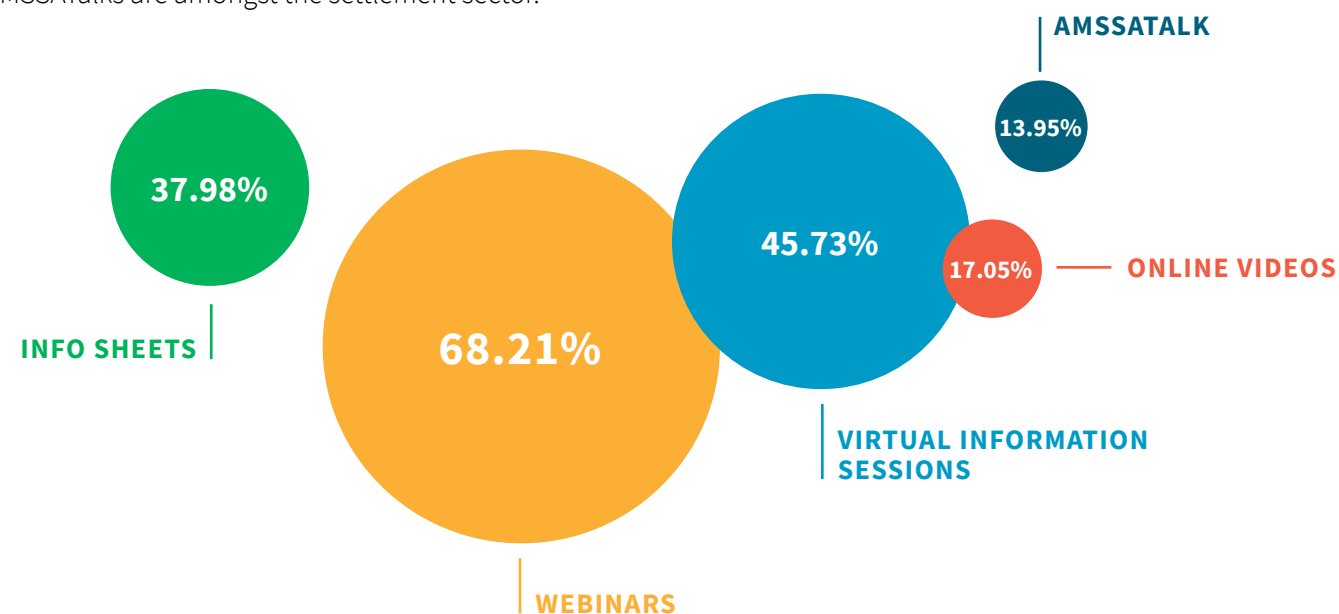
When prompted to suggest topics and priorities to hear more about, the answers ranged widely. Requests included the desire to learn more about trauma-informed, anti-oppression and anti-racism practices. In addition to this, building settlement and Indigenous relations and increased collaborative approaches within the settlement sector were raised as potential topics. A desire for more professional development opportunities and courses as well as further information on topics such as housing, employment, early years, IRCC priorities and immigration trends were also highlighted.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

AMSSA offers a variety of forms of content to support the professional and educational needs of the settlement sector. This section was designed to understand how the sector engaged with these different formats in 2021-2022 and identify future educational needs.

When asked what forms of content respondents accessed previously, the most commonly utilized format from 2021 – 2022 was webinars at 68.21% and virtual information sessions at 45.73%. Migration Matters Info Sheets which covered a range of settlement topics were used by 37.98% of respondents while online videos were accessed by 17.05%. The least utilized professional development content was AMSSATalk at 13.95%. While AMSSATalk was the least utilized resource, it is necessary to contextualize these particular responses. The services and resources created by AMSSA are influenced by contribution agreements with IRCC and what specific services AMSSA is funded to provide. In this context, AMSSA receives a much higher degree of funding to organize and provide webinars in comparison to AMSSATalk, which means the former are held more frequently. Furthermore, AMSSA has often received feedback regarding the difficulties the sector has differentiating between AMSSATalks, webinars and other online AMSSA activities. Both of these factors impact how well-known AMSSATalks are amongst the settlement sector.

Of the professional development content that respondents found most useful to share with staff, responses indicated a variety in preferences. Webinars were considered as the most valuable to share by 68.29% while virtual information sessions and website sources were thought of as helpful by 52.85%. Migration Matters Info Sheets and e-learning courses were considered in a relatively positive manner with 44.72% and 40.65% finding them useful. Respondents who did not access any professional development resources indicated the main reasons why as being new to their role, the need to explore AMSSA resources more frequently and an information overload from so many organizations.

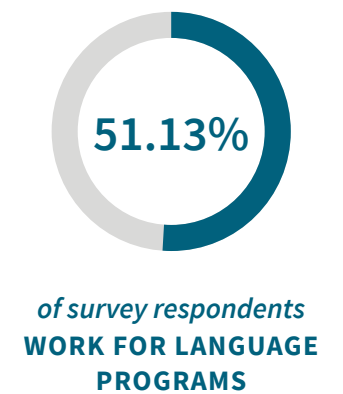
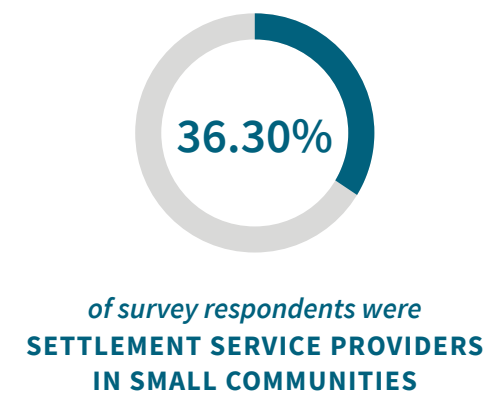


PROGRAMS

Although working in the same sector, there is great diversity in the types of services offered by different settlement service providers and by extension, their needs. This section was designed to better understand the specific needs of each IRCC funded area.

Settlement Service Providers in small communities made up 36.30% of survey respondents. When prompted to describe the challenges and opportunities that small centre providers would like to explore with service provider peers, AMSSA and IRCC, quite a high number of respondents shared a variety of important suggestions. A theme that ran through many of the responses related to the unique struggles that small centres face that urban service providers often have limited experience with. Respondents speculated how they can retain newcomer service users in their area, if small centres have the same target requirements as larger centres, how to handle a limited capacity to deliver services that address the full range of newcomer needs and how to effectively handle low participation from newcomer clients. Some respondents highlighted the need to discuss a likely future increase in client numbers and how to effectively prepare the variety of programs they offer and streamline service delivery. Other respondents emphasized barriers that include transportation support, housing, a lack of funding for early years programs, mental health supports, and obtaining professional speakers for workshops. Answers additionally pointed to the need to explore decolonizing services, anti-racism training and policy as well as creating more inclusive services.

51.13% of survey respondents indicated that they work for language programs. Of the topics that language providers highlighted that they would like to learn more about, several stood out. Specifically, emphasizing the need for trauma-informed practice, mental health support and how to support newcomers as they adjust to Canadian culture while still honouring their own culture. Respondents also pointed out the wish to learn more about blended synchronous classes, how to support newcomers who do not benefit from regular LINC classes, the difference between academic and settlement language, the limitations of conversation circles in language training and increased opportunities for community connections and settlement knowledge.



SERVICE DELIVERY AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

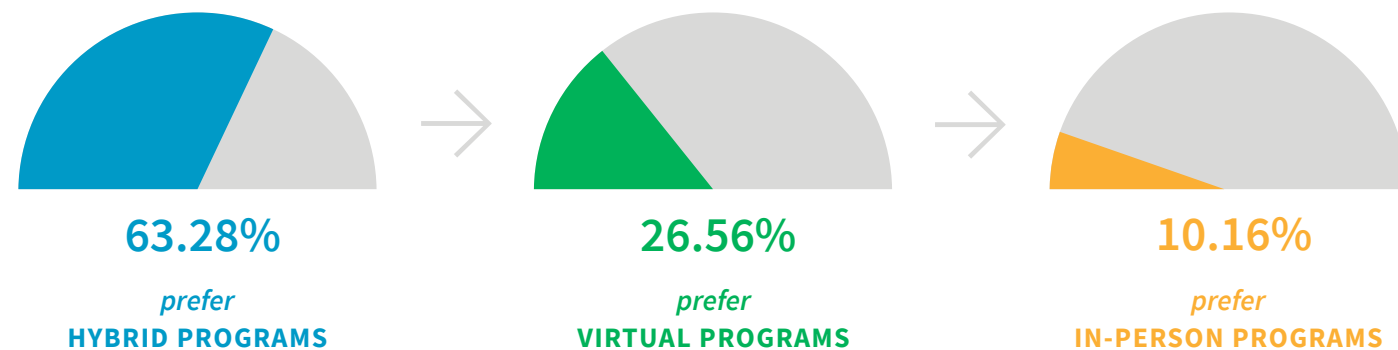
As we are slowly returning to face-to-face interactions, it is becoming increasingly apparent that service providers' preferred mode of service delivery is changing. This section was designed to understand which service delivery methods (in person, hybrid, virtual) the sector would prefer for AMSSA's upcoming activities.

In relation to service delivery improvements, 63.28% of respondents showed a strong preference towards hybrid service delivery of AMSSA programs and services which includes in-person and virtual access options to connect. Virtual access was the second most accessed option with 26.56% of respondents choosing this option and in-person access was the least utilized option with 10.16%.

Interpretation in 2021-2022 was not a highly used service as 65.60% respondents did not utilize interpretation. A key point to make here is that AMSSA services are offered mainly in English. Thus, the language of AMSSA services and programs influences the use of interpretation services. In terms of whether interpretation met sector needs, 16.80% of respondents felt their needs were met and 8.80% expressed their interpretation needs were met some of the time. Several challenges were expressed in the use of these services which ranged from the difficulty in finding interpretation for rare languages and keeping up with language variety as well as finding the right person or volunteers for the situation.

Issues expressed related to the use of interpretation included experiencing language gaps, technical issues and finding translation services time consuming. An additional concern included the difficulties created by needing to see IRCC funding the interpretation aspect of settlement.

It is important to note that the low rating of interpretation meeting needs could stem from the respondents misinterpreting the question asked. The question "Did interpretation meet your needs in 2021-2022?" was intended to be specific to the interpretation that was provided during AMSSA's events. However, as evident from the challenges expressed such as finding services being time consuming, some of the respondents interpreted the question more broadly and included their own experiences with interpretation. Future survey questions on interpretation will need to be more specific.



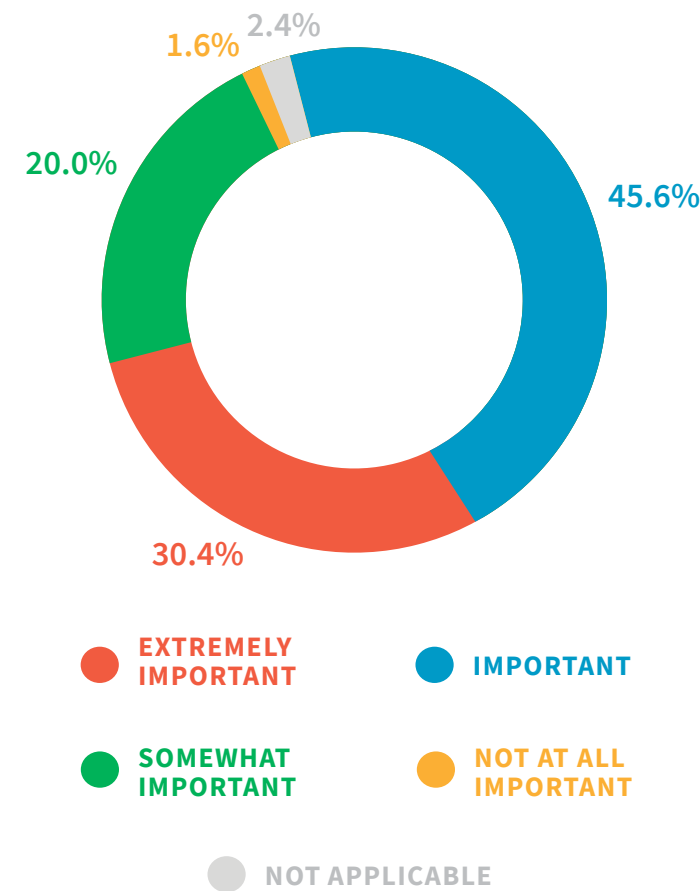
COMMUNITY APPROACH

AMSSA not only strives to maintain regular communication with the sector but also facilitate communication within the sector. This section was designed to assess AMSSA's communication frequency and understand how often service providers would like to receive settlement and integration resources, information, and updates.

Opinions varied slightly when AMSSA asked survey respondents how important it was for them to meet with colleagues who are similar in size and service delivery that are geographically close. Opinions included a preference of 30.40% that felt it was extremely important and then 45.60% who expressed that it was important. On the other hand, 20% only felt that it was somewhat important. A minority of respondents (1.60%) thought that it was not at all important and 2.4% did not think it was applicable.

When asked how often respondents would like to meet with one another, once a year was the most requested option with 55.37% and twice a year was the second most requested frequency. Almost half of respondents (47.54%) expressed a preference for a hybrid meeting while 31.97% would prefer in-person regional meetings and 20.49% felt virtual meetings were a better option. For respondents who preferred in-person regional meetings, 41.84% expressed a desire to meet at a central location in their region while 51.02% preferred the meetings to be in Metro Vancouver. Alternative options proposed was for regional meeting locations to be rotated and take place in a different region each year.

Respondents showed support for the practice of regional meetings and shared support for the opportunity to learn from one another in terms of how to address client issues and best practices. Another respondent pointed out the utility of meeting with other organizations in similar situations and the importance of working as a team to reduce service gaps.



SPOS RELATIONSHIP WITH IRCC

As this survey was specifically intended for IRCC-funded service providers, AMSSA was interested in understanding service providers' experiences and relationship with IRCC as well as identifying what works well and areas where improvement is required.

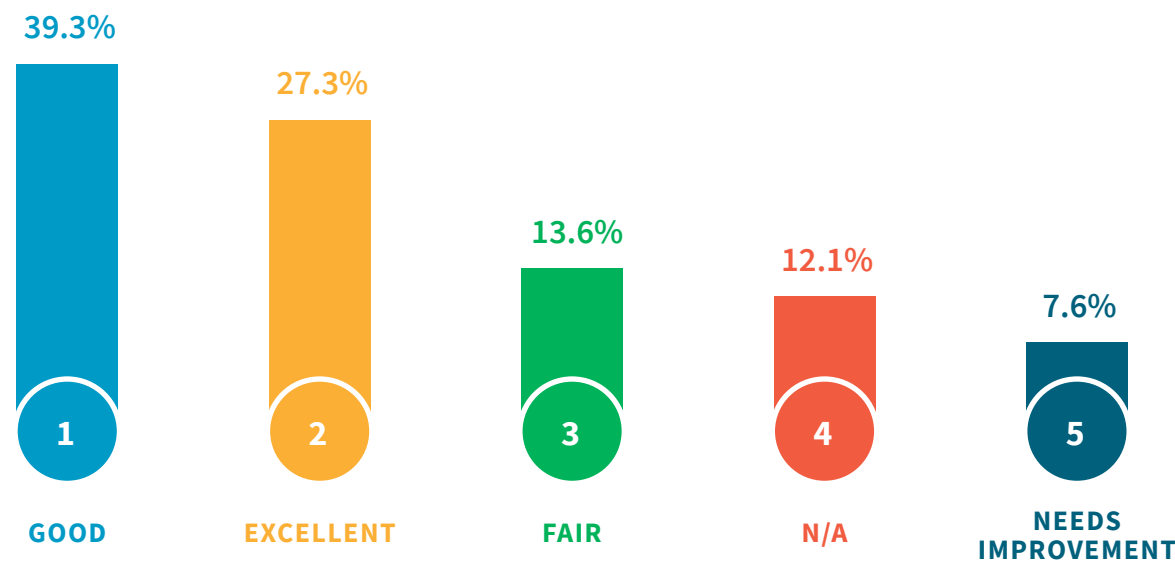
By far, the most common form of interaction organizations had with IRCC was through their Program Officer with 30.23% of respondents directly selecting 'Program Officer' and another 23.26% selecting 'all of the above'. Within the Northern region, this percentage was a staggering 80% with the remaining 20% selecting 'all of the above'.

Most respondents indicated having a positive relationship with their Program Officer, highlighting behaviors such as timely and open communication, knowledge of subject matter and providing valuable feedback. In fact, even in situations where a new Program Officer would take over a file, 52.23% of respondents indicated that their new Program Officer would have moderate to extreme familiarity with discussion and previous actions related to their file.

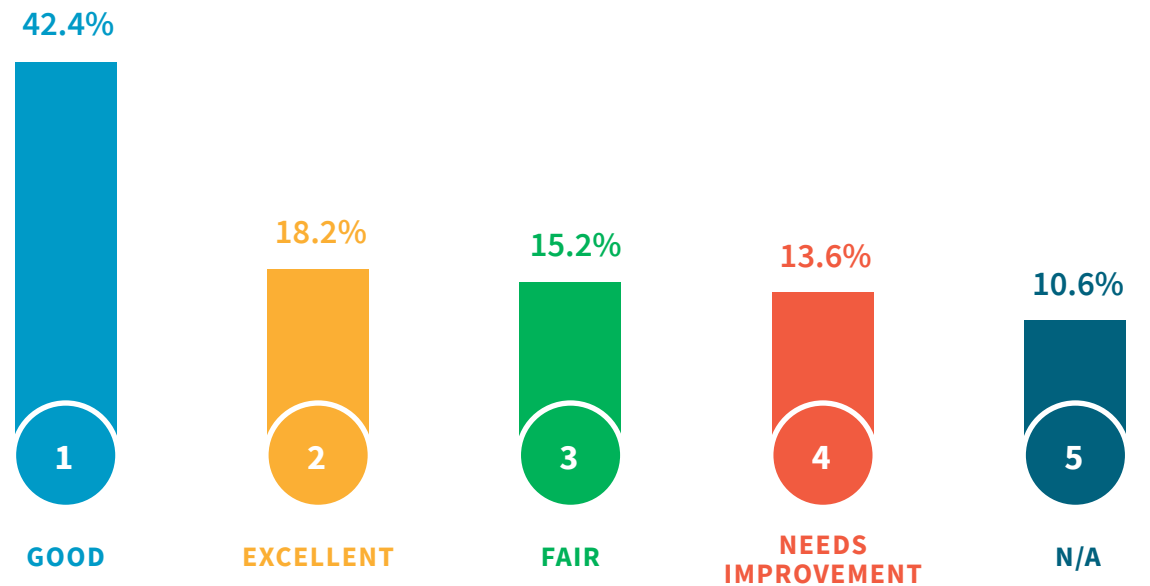
With regards to improving relationships with IRCC, some of the most common responses included, increasing communication and direct contact with IRCC, decreasing the turnover rate of Program Officers and having IRCC representatives display a better understanding of organizations' programs. In terms of AMSSA's role in this process, the most frequent recommendation to emerge was for AMSSA to act as a convener between IRCC and SPOs and increase the number of opportunities to have representatives from both groups together in a room.

Although less frequent, other responses included advocating for smaller centres, continuing to disseminate relevant information and offering workshops and other learning opportunities for various topics.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR IRCC OFFICER'S EXPLANATION DECISIONS MADE IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS FOR NEW ACTIVITIES AND/OR FUNDING?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR IRCC OFFICER'S KNOWLEDGE OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES OFFERED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION?



RECOMMENDATIONS

THERE ARE SEVERAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAME OUT OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE SECTOR SURVEY:

There is a need for increased collaboration between the Francophone and Anglophone sectors.

Suggestions include increasing the presence of Settlement Workers in Schools to better explain/promote French Immersion Programs, increase connections with established French groups, utilize more varied means of information dissemination etc. However, of all these suggestions, the most consistent response was to increase networking opportunities between the two sectors.

Improving AMSSA's communication with the sector.

Through the sector priorities survey, AMSSA learned that the sector would like to see an increase in overall communication as well as which communication channels the sector deemed effective and which required improvement. Based on this information, AMSSA can continue to utilise communication channels that have proven effective (direct emails, Settlement Net, the AMSSA website), while working to improve engagement via less underutilized channels (social media platforms).

Providing professional development opportunities.

When prompted to suggest topics and priorities to hear more about, the answers ranged widely. Requests included the desire to learn more about trauma-informed, anti-oppression and anti-racism practices. In addition to this, building settlement and Indigenous relations and increased collaborative approaches within the settlement sector were raised as potential topics. A desire for more professional development opportunities and courses as well as further information on topics such as housing, employment, early years, IRCC priorities and immigration trends were also highlighted.

Highlighting unique challenges of Smaller Centers.

A theme that ran through many of the responses related to the unique struggles that small centres face that urban service providers often have limited experience with. Respondents speculated how they can retain newcomer service users in their area, if small centres have the same target requirements as larger centres, how to handle a limited capacity to deliver services that address the full range of newcomer needs and how to effectively handle low participation from newcomer clients.

Need for training on trauma-informed practice and mental health support for language providers.

51.13% of the survey respondents indicated that they work for language programs. Of the topics that language providers highlighted that they would like to learn more about, several topics stood out. Specifically, emphasizing the need for trauma-informed practice, mental health support and how to support newcomers as they adjust to Canadian culture while still honouring their own culture. Respondents also pointed out the wish to learn more about blended synchronous classes, how to support newcomers who do not benefit from regular LINC classes, the difference between academic and settlement language and the limitations of conversation circles in language training but increased opportunities for community connections and settlement knowledge.

Improving relationship with IRCC.

With regards to improving relationships with IRCC, some of the most common responses included, increasing communication and direct contact with IRCC, decreasing the turnover rate of Program Officers and having IRCC representatives display a better understanding of organizations' programs.

AMSSA to act as a convener between IRCC and SPOs and increase opportunities for direct communication between both groups.

CONCLUSION

B.C.'s Settlement and Integration Sector has been key to the successful integration of newcomers to British Columbia and will continue to be key with the increased number of newcomers expected to arrive.

As a provincial umbrella organization who aims to support the settlement sector to achieve their mandates, ensuring that the services AMSSA provides reflect the needs and priorities of the B.C. settlement sector and will be essential in the years to come.

Based on the recommendations from the current report, AMSSA will look to adjust services accordingly. In addition, AMSSA plans to continue to reassess the needs of B.C.'s settlement sector through releasing a sector priorities survey yearly and adjusting services according to the needs. Future surveys will be adjusted to account for the limitations of the current survey, which includes clarifying what we mean by rating the interpretation services.

ABOUT AMSSA

AMSSA is a unique province-wide association that strengthens over 80 member agencies as well as hundreds of community stakeholder agencies who serve immigrants and newcomers, and build culturally inclusive communities, with the knowledge, resources and support they need to fulfill their mandates.

OUR VISION

A just and equitable society in which everyone benefits from social and economic inclusion.

OUR MISSION

AMSSA facilitates collaborative leadership, knowledge exchange, and stakeholder engagement to support member agencies that serve immigrants and build culturally inclusive communities.

OUR PURPOSE

AMSSA's purpose is to co-create the conditions of success for our members to build better lives for immigrants and newcomers to B.C..

AMSSA's 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan is an impact-driven strategy focusing on four pillars:

1 SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS

2 STRENGTHEN THE SECTOR

3 DISRUPT SYSTEMS

4 EXCEL AS AN ORGANIZATION

WE VALUE

EQUITY and strive to be the catalyst for change which disrupts systems promoting racial and social injustice.

INCLUSIVENESS and work with our members and stakeholders to place voices that have been marginalized in positions of influence, creating space for all perspectives.

INTEGRITY, striving to always work to the highest standards, encouraging innovation, risk taking and leadership; we are always open to new thoughts and maintain accountability in our work.

DIVERSITY, recognizing our own individual biases and engaging members and stakeholders in meaningful ways that promotes inclusion of all voices and perspectives.

MUTUAL RESPECT by respecting what everyone has to offer within their own context of life experiences, opening our hearts and minds to always listening and learning.

COLLABORATION, engaging in equitable partnerships, mindfully exploring old and new ideas to advance the work of AMSSA and our members.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION, engaging in continuous individual and organizational reflection and collaboration.

SECTOR SURVEY FOCUS GROUP

Thank you to all the members of the Sector Survey Focus Group for their time and contributions to the sector-wide survey.

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