

REPORT FOR

AMSSA Settlement & Integration Sector Priorities Survey 2023

March 2024



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Sector Priorities Survey 2023

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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 xʷməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. As an organization, AMSSA is committed to creating a safe space for indigenous voices.

Sector Priorities Survey

2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July of 2023, just 10 months after launching the first sector survey, the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA), with funding from IRCC, conducted its second annual settlement sector priority survey. The purpose of this survey is to explore the experiences of and determine the priorities of the BC settlement and integration sector at all levels, from frontline workers to CEOs. Designed with input from both the IRCC and a focus group composed of settlement sector representatives, the survey was administered to all IRCC funded organizations across BC for the purpose of identifying how AMSSA programming can best support the evolving needs of the settlement sector in the province.

As this was the second year the sector priorities survey was launched, part of the focus of this year's survey was also on comparing the findings to the previous year. As such, while there was a definitive effort to make improvements to the survey questions, the base structure remained similar enough for comparisons to be valid. The findings of the second annual sector priorities survey are as follows:

Community engagement is a key aspect of AMSSA's work. The sector survey examined the uptake and impact of four of AMSSA's working groups/committees: Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), Local Immigration Partnerships/Réseaux en immigration francophone (LIP/RIF), the Smaller Centre Committee, and the Settlement Language Working Group (SLWG) and found that when compared to the year prior, the impact of each grew. Additionally, based on the results of last year's survey, AMSSA is in the process of developing an Early Years Working Group. Respondents were asked if they would be interested in participating in the new working group and 30.61% indicated yes.

Equally as important as community engagement is the knowledge sharing and professional development supports that AMSSA provides. In regards to the former, direct emails continued to be the most popular form of communications with 71.26% of respondents indicating it was their preferred format to receive updates from AMSSA. When it came to social media specifically, LinkedIn emerged as number one with 50% of respondents selecting it as their preferred AMSSA social media platform. Related to the latter, webinars (70.24%), virtual information sessions (54.76%) and info sheets (45.24%) emerged as the most accessed form of professional development and educational content. Webinars also emerged as the most valuable professional development format to share with others at 64.20%.

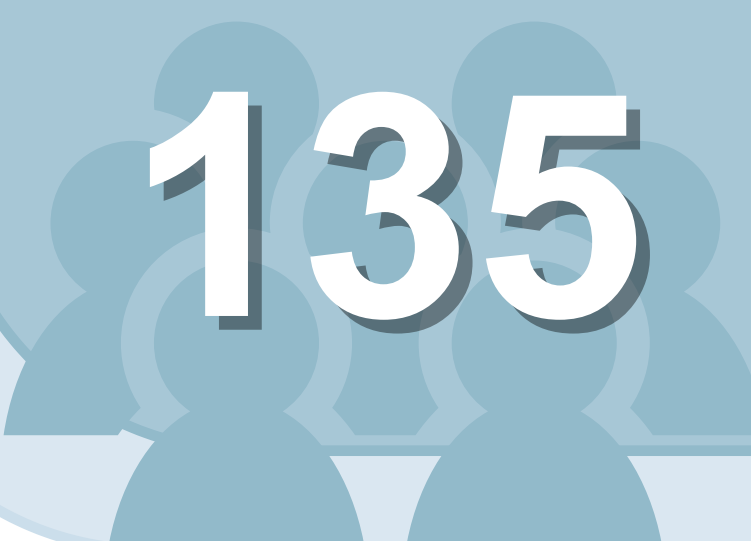
Following the 2-year COVID-19, the settlement and integration sector, like most other industries, had to shift their service model toward online and hybrid services. Even with the pandemic behind us, preferences for hybrid services remain, with 54.21% of respondents preferring hybrid service delivery as compared to 32.94% selecting virtual services and 12.94% selecting in-person services. These results indicate similar preferences to last year's survey with a slightly less than 10% reduction in preference for hybrid events and an increase of 6.38% for virtual events and an almost 3% increase in preference for in-person events.

INTRODUCTION

The 2022/2023 fiscal year has been an interesting one for BC’s settlement and integration sector, especially as it related to IRRC-funded service providing organizations (SPOs). It marked the third year of a 5-year funding agreement, the first two of which contained a global pandemic and two major humanitarian events. SPOs were simultaneously re-adapting to in-person services while carrying over the online services and work habits that many had initially thought to be temporary measures. This was the canvas on which the second annual Sector Priorities Survey took place.

As the provincial umbrella organization supporting all IRCC funded SPOs in BC, AMSSA remains committed to staying abreast of the needs and priorities of the sector and ensuring that the services they provide help address those needs (see Appendix A for more about AMSSA). One of the best ways in which to do so is through the Sector Priorities Survey. First developed in the 2021/2022 fiscal year, the purpose of the Sector Priorities Survey is to examine the priorities and experiences of IRCC funded SPOs in BC. AMSSA is then able to utilize the findings to reflect upon their own services and make adjustments accordingly.

It is important to note that although this year’s Sector Priorities Survey was conducted in 2023/2024 fiscal year or year 4, it covered the 2022/2023 fiscal year or year 3. Moreover, as this is the second year that the survey was undertaken, this report not only focuses on summarizing the results of this year’s sector priorities survey and providing recommendations for the future, it also draws comparisons between the results from the previous year.



135

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS
COMPLETED THE SECTOR PRIORITY SURVEY

METHODS

In May 2023 AMSSA organized a focus group composed of 13 sector representatives (see Appendix for full list of focus group members).

As this was the second year that the sector survey was launched, the Focus Group was asked to reflect on the previous year's survey and discuss how the questions could be improved. Participants provided feedback on the clarity and structure of the questions, any redundancies they may have noticed and questions that needed to be either added or removed.

Some of the suggested changes included more options under questions related to the region of the respondent and key client groups served, using more descriptive language to explain AMSSA's resources and events, and more clarity on the purpose of AMSSA's different communication platforms (Including Settlement Net, direct and indirect emails, AMSSA website, etc.). Finally, based on findings from last year's survey, new questions were added to gather information to prepare for a new Early Years working group.

Following the meeting, AMSSA adjusted the questions to better reflect the feedback received from the focus group members. The final survey was composed of 10 sections including: Respondent Profile, Service Providing Organizations (SPO) Profile, Community Engagement, Knowledge Sharing, Programs, Communication Approach, SPO relationship with IRCC, and Other Comments.

In June 2023 AMSSA released the sector-wide survey. All levels of staff including frontline staff, managers and senior organizational leaders in BC who are funded by IRCC were invited to participate. The survey was closed in July, with a total of 135 responses received.

There were a number of factors for the lower response rate. To start, the 2022/23 Sector Priorities Survey was released in July instead of October (as was the case in the 2021/22 fiscal year) in order to avoid any overlap with the IRCC Call for Proposal (CFP) set to be released later in the year. As it has been less than a year since the last survey, less responses were anticipated. Moreover, summer marked a time when SWIS workers and a number of Smaller Centres went on break, which further contributed to a lower response rate. Nevertheless, all levels of staff participated from IRCC-funded SPOs, including frontline workers, managers, and senior organizational leaders.

The second Settlement Sector Priorities survey represents an important opportunity to not only understand the experiences and thoughts of staff across the sector, but also to explore similarities and differences between last year's and this year's results. The following sections provide more in-depth analysis of the responses received.

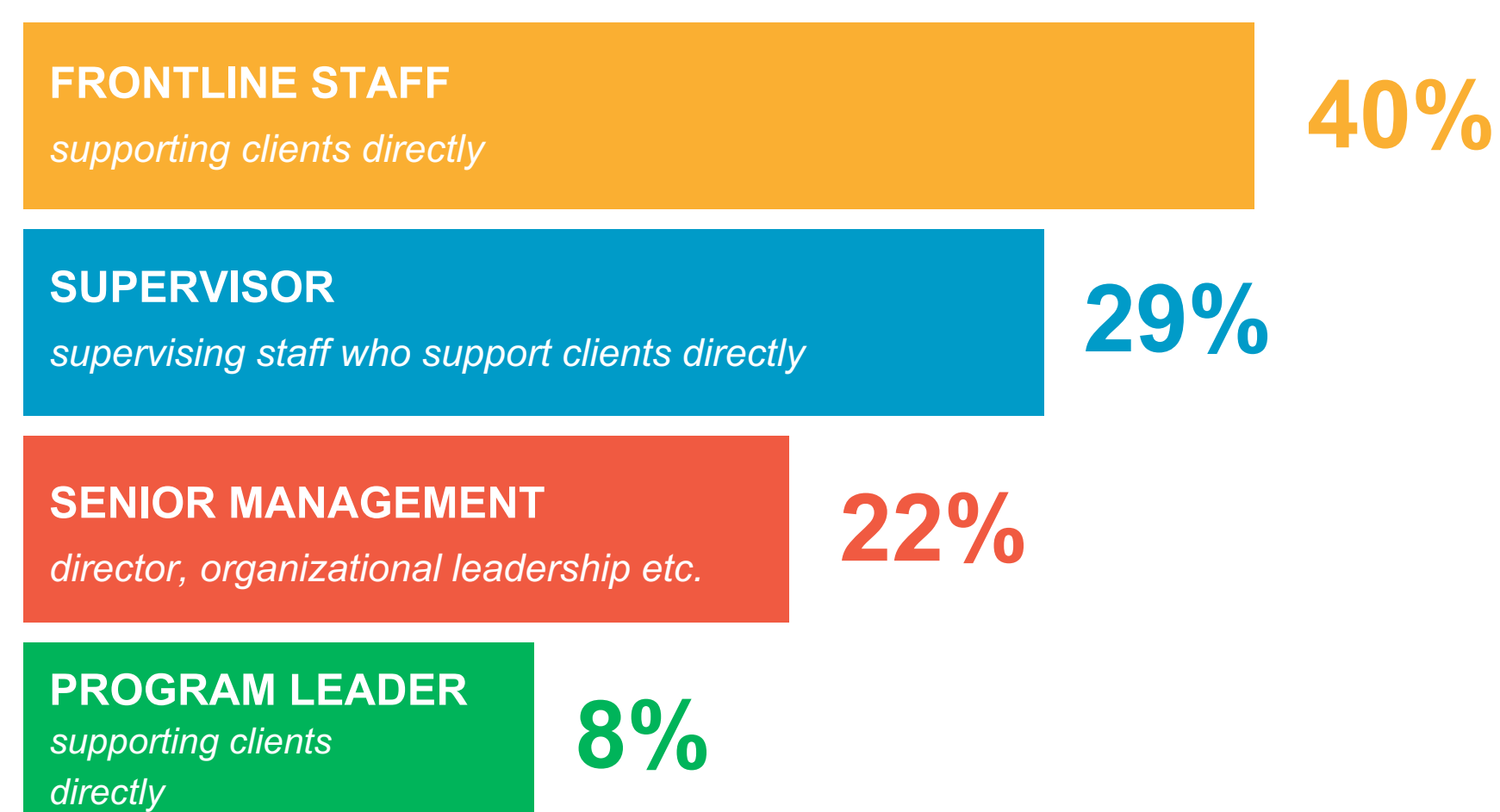
RESULTS

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

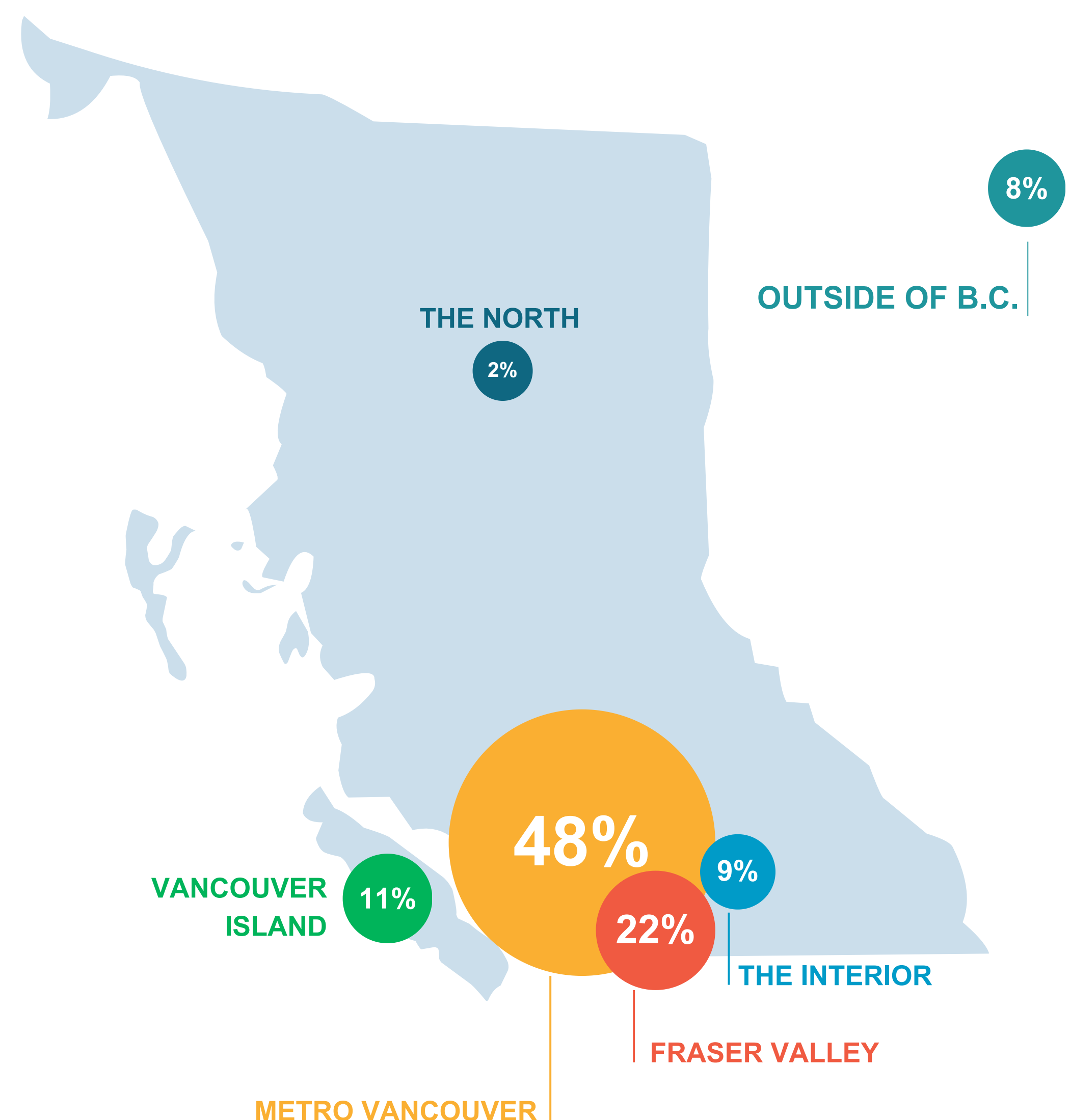
Of the 135 settlement sector representatives that completed the survey, 78.52% identified themselves as women and 17.78% identified themselves as men. The remaining 3.70% either preferred not to self-identify or identified as gender not listed in the options provided.

This year, great care was taken to update the language around racial and ethnic identity. Whereas last year, respondents had been asked whether they self-identified as a 'visible minority' largely in keeping terminology utilized by government entities, this year the term was changed to 'racialized person' and/or 'person of colour.' A total of 49.25% of respondents answered 'yes' with an additional 6.72% preferring not to say. A further 1.5% of respondents also identified as an Indigenous person.

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 40.31%, followed by 'Supervisor' (29.46%), 'Senior/Executive Management' (22.48%), and 'Program Leaders' (7.75%).



With regards to regional representation, just under half of the respondents (48.06%) indicated 'Metro Vancouver' as their primary area of operation, a 5% drop from last year's survey. This was followed up by the regions of 'Fraser Valley' (22.48%), 'Vancouver Island' (10.85%), 'the Interior' (8.53%), and 'the North' (2.33%). The remaining 7.76% was split evenly between province-wide organizations and organizations that also operated outside of BC.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In this section AMSSA looked to better understand the 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

In order to ensure that the work AMSSA undertakes remains focused and relevant, AMSSA operates under the guidance of four strategic priorities, one of which is to empower the anglophone sector to support the francophone integration pathway. To that end, in 2021 AMSSA began developing Francophone resources to better facilitate collaboration between the anglophone and francophone sector.

The most accessed AMSSA resource was the 'Francophone Integration Pathway Info Sheet' (20.69%), followed by the 'Webinar: What does it mean to be a minority language?' (11.21%), the 'Francophone Integration Pathway E-learning Course' (8.62%), and the 2022 Summit In-person concurrent session 'Co-building partnerships with French and English-speaking communities' (6.90%).

Overall, while these percentages are not overwhelmingly large, when considering additional factors, they are proportionate, if not promising. For example, the most and least accessed Francophone resources, the Info Sheet and the 2022 Summit In-person concurrent session respectively, are partially a reflection of their disproportionate accessibility. While the Info Sheet was shared sector-wide and to multiple individuals within organizations, the Summit session was in-person and could only be accessed by people present at the event itself.

From the demographic breakdown, we know that 40.31% of the survey respondents were frontline staff which make up a very small percentage of Summit attendees.

When asked how AMSSA could better support collaboration between the Anglophone and Francophone sector, the most popular response was to increase opportunities for networking, which was also the most frequent response to emerge following last year's survey. Other suggestions included, creating a map of Francophone organizations and resources with up-to-date contact information, increasing the number of Francophone workshops and incorporating basic French vocabulary and French pronunciation into sector outputs.

AMSSA'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS – CURRENTLY ACTIVE

AMSSA has five active committees and working groups, 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 as well as the BC RIF, 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.



However, only four were included in the 2023 Sector Priorities Survey. Because the composition of the IICC-SC is so specialized, its impact cannot be properly reflected in such a broad survey. Even if every single Steering Committee member were to complete the sector survey, they would simply be outnumbered by the amount of respondents that are not a part of the IICC-SC and the resulting percentage would be more so an indicator of the figure of IICC BCY funded organizations that are a part of the IICC SC rather than a measure of impact.

With that in mind, the results are as follows: This year, the uptake and awareness of AMSSA's committees and working groups grew with 56.69% of respondents indicating that their organization was engaged with at least one of the five as compared to 51% last year. An additional 32.28% indicated that they were 'Not Sure'.

Among the four committees and working groups listed, respondents indicated the highest level of familiarity and uptake with SWIS (31.86%), followed by LIP/RIFs (22.86%), SLWG (22.55%) and Smaller Centre Committee (12.62%). When comparing these percentages to the previous year's results, three out of the four committees demonstrated and increase in uptake, SWIS growing from 26.16% to 31.86%, SLWG growing from 15.13% to 22.55% and the Smaller Centre Committee growing from 9.74% to 12.62%. Only LIP/RIFs experienced a slight decline from 25.90% to 22.86%. While these figures are not an adequate measure of engagement, they do indicate an increase in awareness of AMSSA's committees and working groups.

Of course, measuring awareness paints only half the picture, and the other, arguably more valuable, half lies in measuring the effectiveness of each committee/working group. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the committees they were engaged in on a scale of 'extremely effective' → 'effective' → 'somewhat effective' → 'not at all effective'.

As displayed by the chart below, not only did all four committees/working groups receive a rating closest to 'effective', every single committee/working group also scored higher than the previous year's survey.

Respondents were also asked to share which topics they would like to discuss during meetings. Some of the most prominent topics included employment rights and balancing workloads for the SWIS Working Group; sharing relevant data and statistics for the LIP/RIFs Committee; sharing experiences, expertise and best practices as it relates to funding, finance, employment etc. for the Smaller Centres Committee; and updating LINC guidelines, PBLA best practices and CLBPA implementation for the SLWG.

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP	AVERAGE EFFECTIVENESS SCORE 2023	AVERAGE EFFECTIVENESS SCORE 2022
SWIS	3.04	2.63
LIP/RIF	2.67	2.66
SLWG	2.95	2.63
SMALLER CENTRE COMMITTEES	3.18	2.87

AMSSA'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS – IN DEVELOPMENT

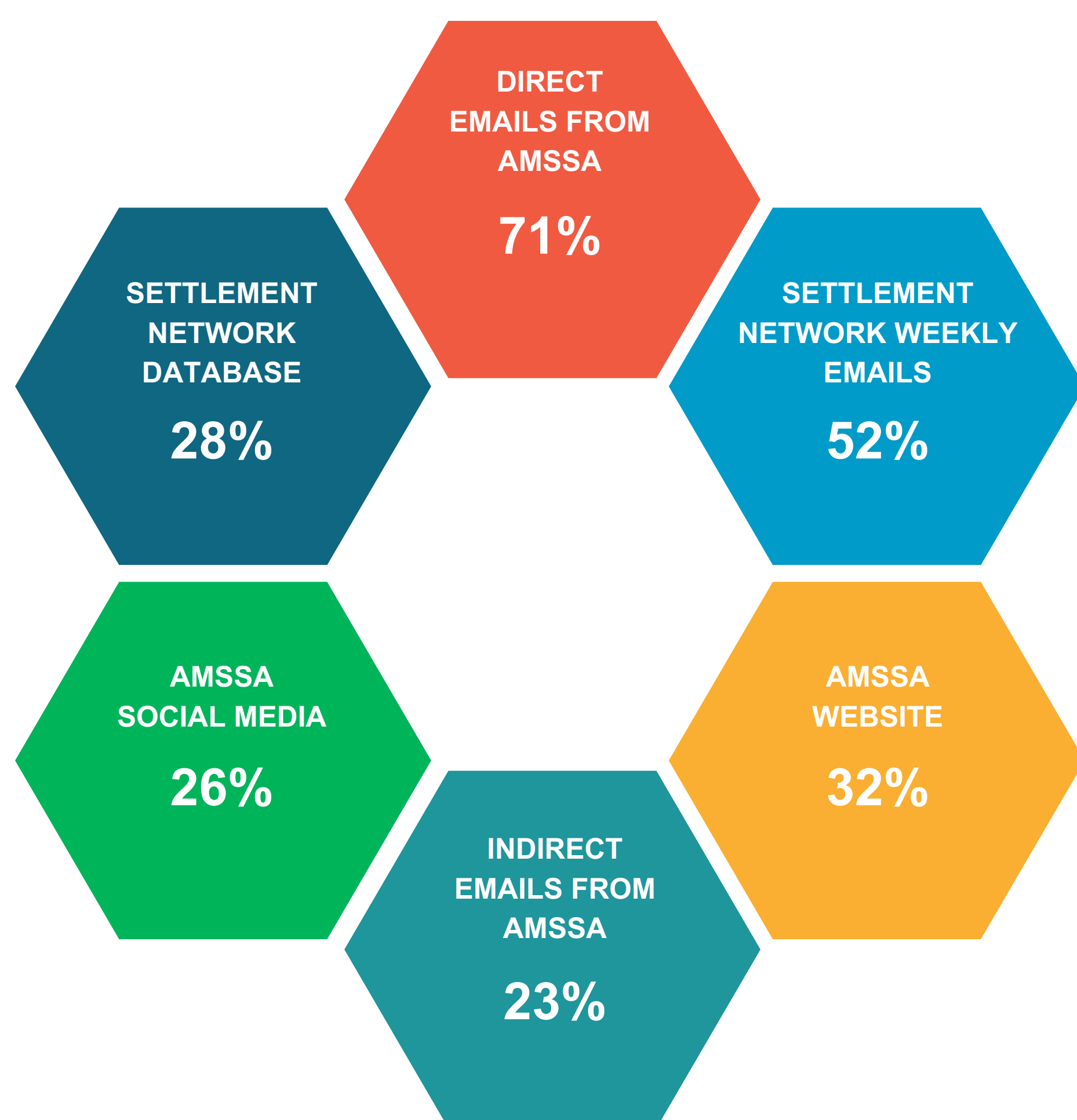
In response to the feedback received during last year's survey, AMSSA is in the process of developing an Early Years Working Group. Respondents were asked if their organizations offered early years programs, defined as services that respond to the unique needs of families, parents and children (0 - 5), including childminding services to which 67% indicated 'yes'. When prompted to answer whether they would be interested in joining AMSSA's Early Years Working Group, 30.61% said 'yes' while 53.06% responded 'not sure'. Based on some of the longer responses, respondents belonging to the latter category may have indicated so because they didn't feel privy to decisions made by senior leadership.

When asked which discussion topics they would like to see in the Early Years Working Group, responses ranged from training and certification to trauma-informed care.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The following section details what knowledge sharing formats service providers found more effective. AMSSA is dedicated to ensuring the settlement and integration sector is provided up-to-date information and resources through a wide variety of formats, including social media, email, newsletters, AMSSA's website and the Settlement Net database. Thus, service provider organizations are able to access relevant information in a timely manner through a variety of formats.

Direct emails continue to be the preferred format for respondents to receive sector updates as 71.26% of respondents selected this option while 51.72% preferred Settlement Net weekly emails, 32.18% chose the AMSSA website and 27.59%, 26.44% and 22.99% selected the Settlement Net database, AMSSA social media and indirect emails from AMSSA, respectively. When asked how often respondents utilized various AMSSA formats, direct emails and Settlement Net weekly emails were preferred by the highest amount of respondents either every time or most of the time. Indirect emails forwarded by colleagues or supervisors and the AMSSA website were selected by the highest number of respondents as used sometimes.

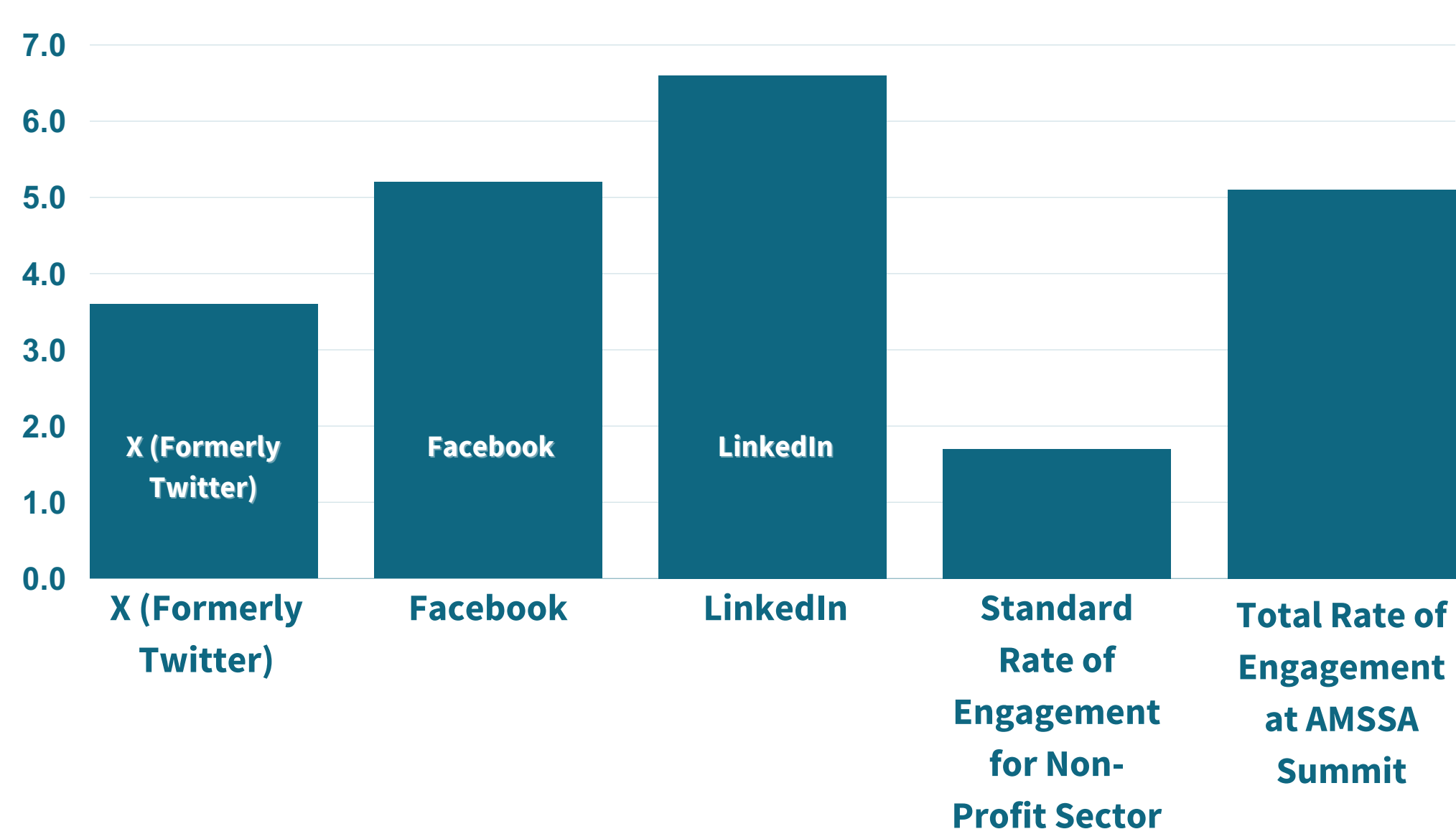


AMSSA's social media platforms, LinkedIn, Facebook and X (Formerly Twitter) had low engagement relative to other communication formats. However, when asked which social media platforms the respondents used most frequently, 50.00% of respondents preferred LinkedIn, 33.33% selected Facebook and 16.67% X (Formerly Twitter). In terms of the level of effectiveness of AMSSA's social media, respondents found AMSSA's social media effective in providing information about AMSSA activities/updates, reports and surveys, educational content, and professional development opportunities.

In this context, it is critical to ensure that a complete picture is provided so that the purpose and level of engagement for AMSSA's social media is fully understood and contextualized. Social media is an optimal format to share brief informational updates, resources, event details and engage with the sector. In comparison, emails, as a result of its format, are able to be longer and can be used to share information that cannot be shared on a public platform. Certain information may not be appropriate for social media as there may be a need for more space to fully contextualize the information or there may be a preference to share the information on more secure platforms such as through emails.

Through social media, external partners and stakeholders are kept up-to-date with the sector, the ever-evolving landscape of immigration and important reliable and accurate perspectives on immigrant and the settlement sector. Individuals viewing AMSSA content on LinkedIn, for example, can see their colleagues interacting with content. Thus, social media opens up opportunities to show support for content such as events, professional development training, sector updates and current news. In addition, it is helpful to highlight that social media is quite a visual medium. On LinkedIn, Facebook or X (Formerly Twitter), AMSSA can share photos and videos during events as well as provide updates of what is happening in the AMSSA office. This provides the BC settlement sector with a more in-depth view of the work that AMSSA does and situates the sector within the context of the public and other partners.

Furthermore, one must consider average rates of engagement on social media in the non-profit sector. During the BC/Yukon Summit: Collectively Envisioning the Future of Settlement and Integration, the engagement rate with AMSSA's social media platforms was above average. The total engagement rate for the summit was at 5.1%. In terms of the individual platforms, X (Formerly Twitter) engagement rate stood at 3.6%, Facebook was at 5.2% and LinkedIn's rate was at 6.6%. In comparison, 1% – 2.2% is the rate of standard engagement in the non-profit sector.



In relation to how effective various formats were in providing valuable new information, direct emails and Settlement Net weekly emails were deemed the most effective. The AMSSA website, AMSSA emails sent indirectly by colleagues or supervisors and the Settlement Net database were deemed mostly effective. For answering questions about a topic, direct emails were preferred by the highest number of respondents while the AMSSA website and Settlement Net weekly emails were each selected as effective by a similar level of respondents.

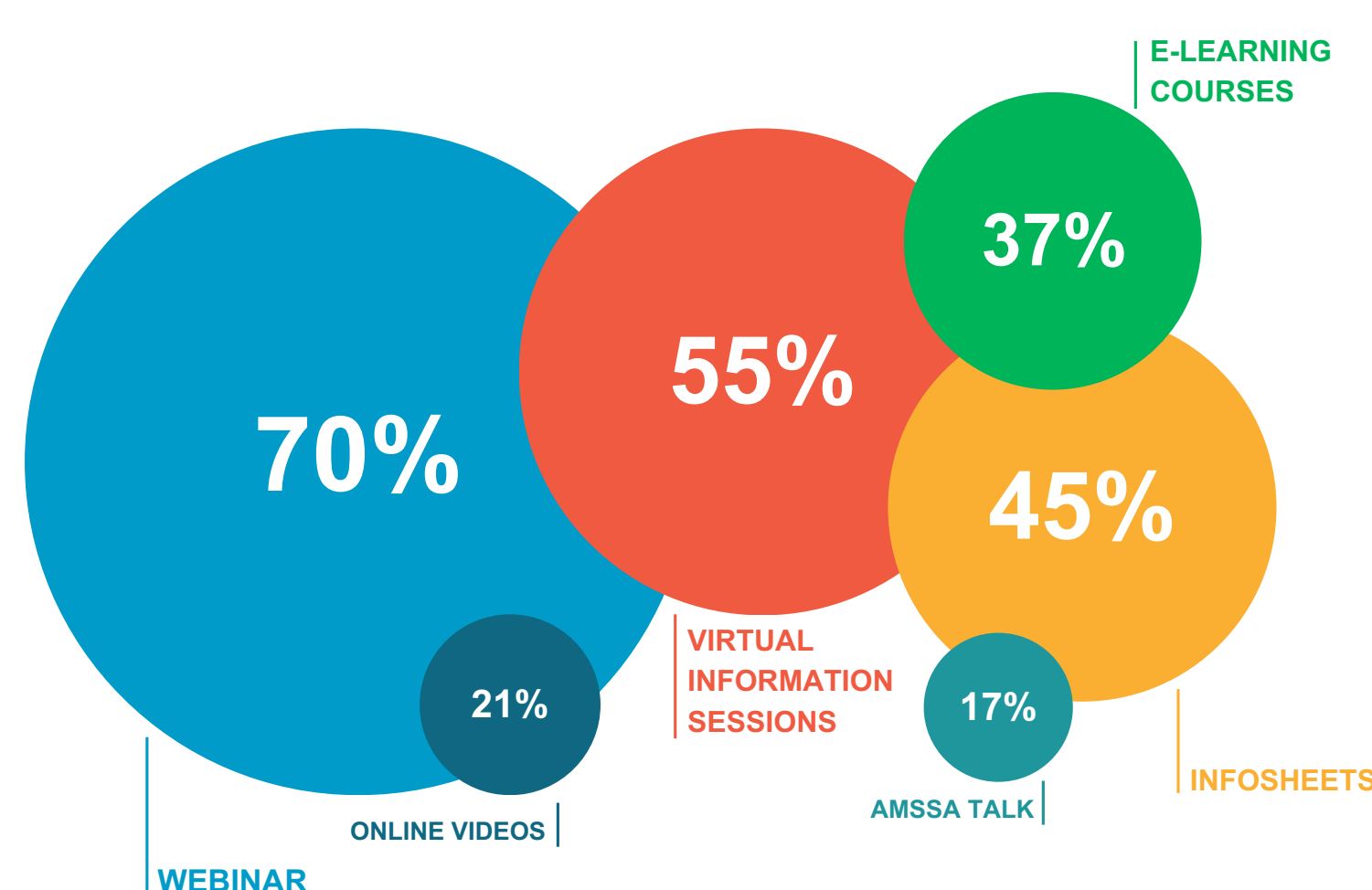
Respondents showed a healthy interest in utilizing a variety of AMSSA formats again with 89.47% selecting direct emails, 76.47% choosing the AMSSA website, 68.57% preferring Settlement Net weekly emails, 61.19% selecting the Settlement Net database, 57.81% choosing indirect emails and 39.06%, 34.92% and 20.63% preferring AMSSA LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, respectively.

Respondents suggested a variety of interesting topics and priorities they would like to hear more about, these topics ranged from housing, mental health, decolonization, non-traditional family lives, best practices, development of sector capacity, operating in a post-COVID environment, working with clients of varied world views and practical information such as LIP resources, toolkits, professional development opportunities, and datasets or factsheets. Respondents also emphasized the desire to hear more about the upcoming IRCC funding procurement, immigration levels, IRCC priorities and further funding and grant opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

AMSSA provides various forms of knowledge and resources to support the professional and educational needs of the settlement sector. Each medium that AMSSA utilizes for these purposes provides opportunities for different types of discussion and to share a wide range of educational content. This section is intended to understand how the sector accessed different formats in 2022 – 2023 in order to better identify future needs.

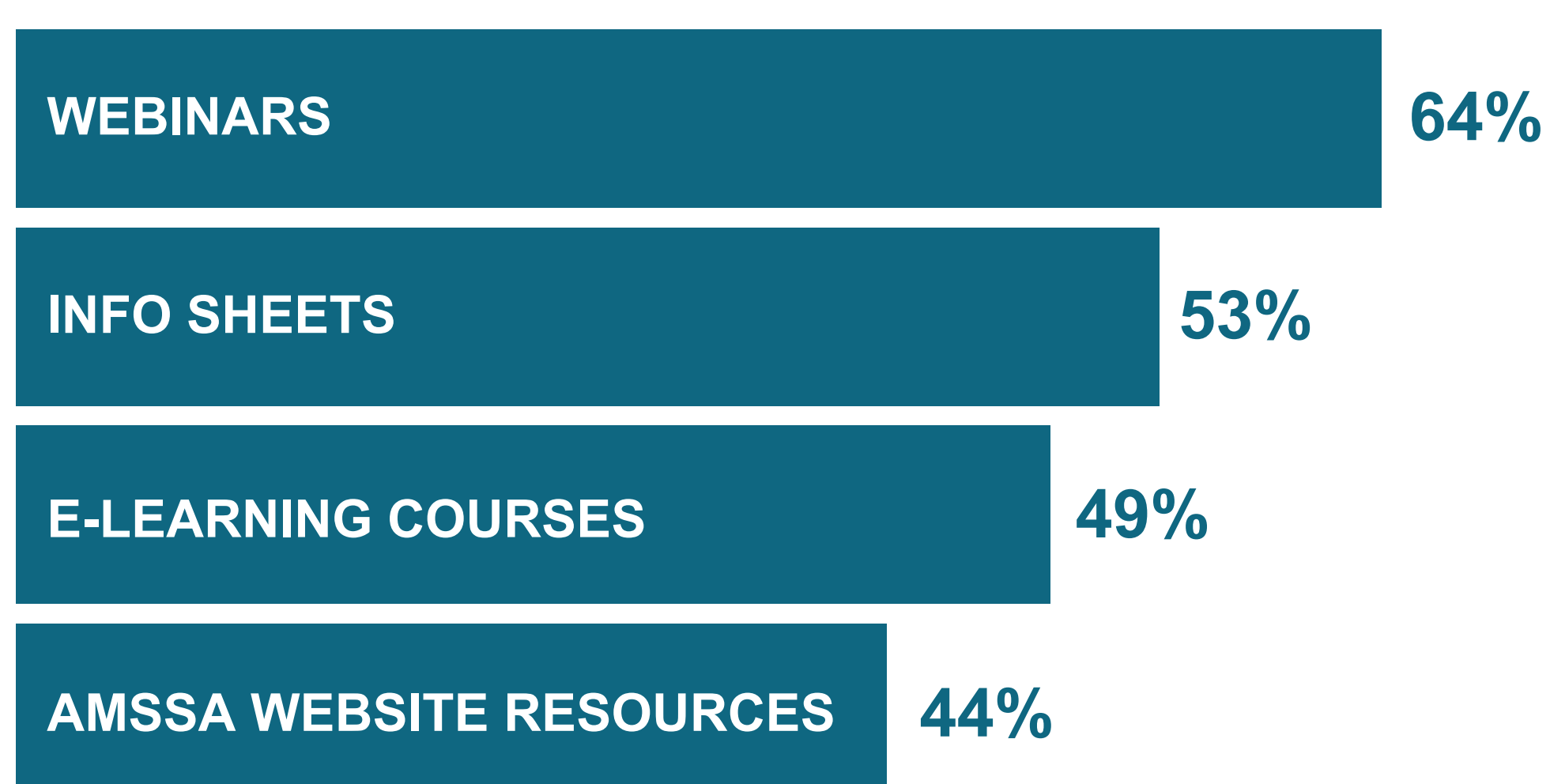
In terms of what forms of professional development and educational content the sector accessed over the last year, 70.24% of respondents selected webinars, 54.76% selected virtual information sessions and 45.24% used info sheets. Less utilized resources included e-learning courses at 36.90%, online videos at 21.43% and AMSSATalk at 16.67%.



It is relevant to note that the nature of each medium provides opportunities for different types of learning and discussions. For example, webinars are more interactive and share factual, educational information while AMSSATalk engages in a more high-level thought discussion on topics of interest for the sector. Info sheets also share high-level information but in a condensed manner as well as in a written form about general topics. Online courses provide the chance for individuals to learn in a more in-depth manner about a topic over a period of time. Virtual information sessions provide information for individuals that are either new to a topic or have limited information on it and online videos are an easily shareable format of useful and relevant information. In addition, online videos include recordings of past events which provides the opportunity for individuals that could not attend the event to still benefit from the information provided.

The level of funding for each medium is another factor to consider as it affects the frequency that each medium is utilized throughout the year. AMSSATalk receives a lower level of funding and, as a result, is produced only once a year. Since there are less AMSSATalk videos in comparison to other mediums such as webinars or virtual information sessions, it is understandable that this particular resource is accessed by a lower number of people.

Survey respondents selected webinars as the most valuable professional development format to share with others at 64.20%, while info sheets, e-learning courses and AMSSA website resources were also found quite useful at 53.09%, 49.38% and 44.44%, respectively. Formats shared less often included infographics at 34.57%, online videos at 24.69% and AMSSATalk at 14.81%. When considering the different resources respondents prefer, it is important to highlight the impact of contribution agreements on the frequency of releases and level of funding AMSSA has to deliver each service. While AMSSATalk is the least utilized resource, it also receives a lower level of funding and, subsequently, is released less frequently. A higher level of funding means AMSSA is able to organize and provide these resources more frequently.



When asked why respondents did not access any professional development resources, 59.46% felt this question was not applicable to them while 18.92% indicated that they had not heard about AMSSA's resources. 13.51% could not find the time to utilize these resources and only 5.41% felt they were not relevant to their work. One reason for not feeling that the professional development and educational resources were not relevant to their work was due to their focus on frontline work. Thus, executive level staff would have less reasons to utilize these types of resources. Other reasons included that the respondent was new to their work. While there were slight percentages in preference to use or share the professional development resources, there were no significant shifts in preferences from last year.

PROGRAMS

The settlement and integration sector is inherently diverse, both in the types of services offered and their needs as a part of supporting newcomer clients. This section is intended to improve our understanding of the Francophone, language and smaller centre areas of IRCC funded services.

Francophone settlement organizations represent an important part of the sector, ensuring that French speaking newcomers are supported as they adjust to life in BC. AMSSA supports these efforts through activities that provide anglophone organizations with information that empowers them to better understand the Francophone Integration Pathway and make referrals to Francophone service providers. In addition, AMSSA provides inclusive programming so that staff of Francophone organizations can join committees, take part in virtual, in-person or hybrid, events selecting the official language of their choice.

Respondents evaluated last year's Summit Francophone Workshop, the 'What does it mean to be a minority language today' webinar, the Francophone Integration Pathway info sheet and the e-learning course, the Francophone Integration Pathway equally, finding each one valuable. When asked how AMSSA can encourage organizations to refer French speaking clients to Francophone organizations, respondents indicated that this can happen through knowledge sharing by connecting French speaking managers with other organizations and forwarding the contact details of settlement agents and LINC assistants. In terms of what the Francophone sector would like to learn more about in the Anglophone sector, community connections, family literacy, employment supports, housing and LINC/Language training were the most selected options.

The challenges, issues and opportunities that respondents would like to explore in the next year with service provider peers, AMSSA and IRCC fell into four main themes, including employment, funding, the cost of living and service availability.

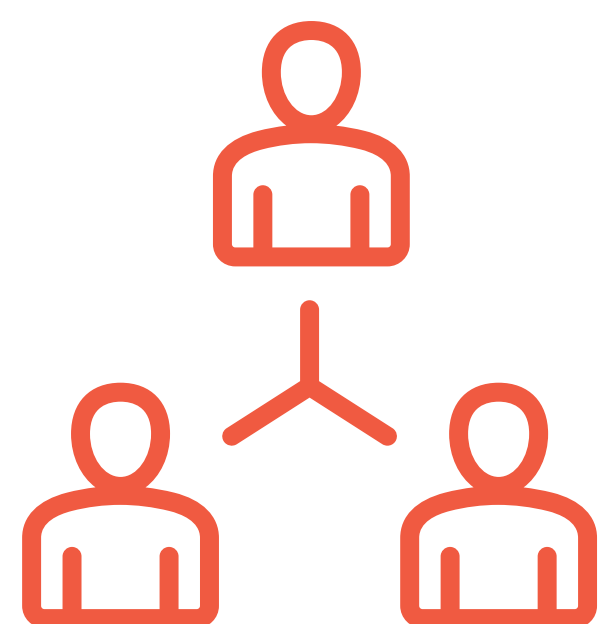
A respondent highlighted struggles in attracting and retaining qualified staff as well as accessing career growth opportunities within the sector. In addition, a desire to explore funding struggles was described in terms of limited options for increasing the level of current funds or accessing other supports and the need for more administrative funds. Suggested topics related to the cost of living ranged from issues common to many communities to issues that are often unique to smaller centres such as the lack of affordable housing and childcare, transportation alternatives, and reliable internet. It is important to mention here that although the increasing cost of living is an issue that affects communities of many sizes, there are aspects that are unique to smaller centres as they can experience even higher costs as a result of limited options of where to go for services and products.

Opportunities to explore with peers, AMSSA and IRCC include increasing connections with the Francophone sector and increasing the level of remote services for smaller centres. One respondent described a desire to explore how to make the process of learning about Francophone services easier and how to facilitate connections and collaborations with Francophone service providers.

This respondent suggested the creation of a service map of Francophone organizations to help Anglophone organizations navigate their services in addition to enabling the initiation of partnerships and connections. Additionally, respondents highlighted that co-created events or programs between the two language groups would help encourage more collaborations. Another opportune topic to explore relates to increasing the levels of remote services, including interpretation support through the telephone or online as well as increasing the amount of LINC levels available for online classes.

FRANCOPHONE ORGANIZATIONS

one respondent suggested the creation of a service map of Francophone organizations



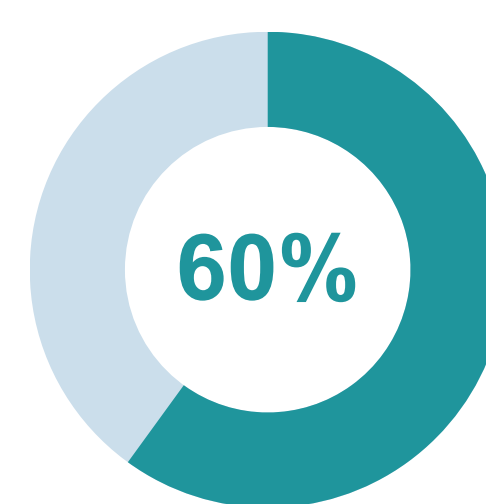
SMALLER CENTRES

Respondents expressed a desire for funding for at least a part-time Francophone Community Coordinator to provide support for community connections and resources.

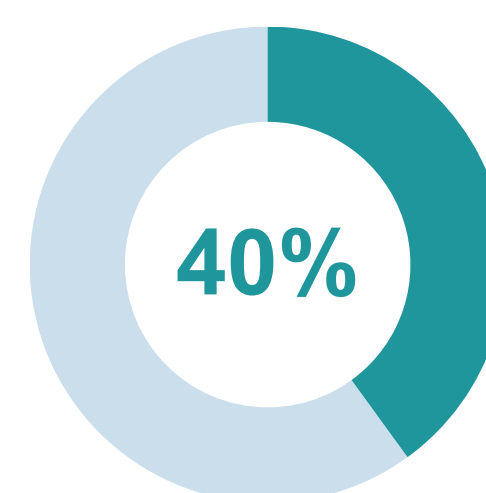
In terms of the needs of smaller centres for Francophone supports, the need for increased online Francophone services was pointed out due to the difficulty in travelling large distances to access this service. Respondents also expressed a desire for funding for at least a part-time Francophone Community Coordinator to provide support for community connections and resources. Other respondents highlighted a need to better understand what the needs are in relation to Francophone support services as the community itself is quite diverse as well as better access to resources created by Francophone service providers.

For language providers, respondents highlighted a wide range of settlement and integration topics to learn more about such as housing, employment, mental health, domestic violence, trauma-informed care, LGBTQ+ issues, Indigenous peoples, particularly for lower levels and addressing differing settlement experiences between displaced Ukrainians and Afghan refugees. Additional interesting topics to address include exploring the role of Avenue (Online learning platform for interactive LINC classes with student profiles and English language resources) and clients' experiences using it as well as comparing student experiences between online, hybrid and in-person classes and data-based estimations on the length of time students take to complete a level. Language provider respondents also evaluated the value of previously offered topics in 2022 – 2023 where 60% valued the 'Supporting Settlement and Integration Frontline Staff in Wellbeing: A Webinar for Management and Leadership', 40% found 'LINC Program Networking Event and Professional Development on "Stress and Trauma-Informed Care"' valuable, 36.67% enjoyed the 'LINC Virtual Workshop: Teaching in a Diverse Multi-level Classroom' and 35% selected the LINCed-Up Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 editions.

LANGUAGE PROVIDERS



valued the 'Supporting Settlement and Integration Frontline Staff in Wellbeing: A Webinar for Management and Leadership'



found 'LINC Program Networking Event and Professional Development on "Stress and Trauma-Informed Care"' valuable

SERVICE DELIVERY AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

AMSSA delivers its programs and services through a variety of different methods to support the settlement and integration sector in BC. This section focuses on events that occur throughout the year, including workshops, information sessions, meetings, summits, etc. where there is the option to meet in-person, virtually or hybrid. The objective here is to understand and stay up-to-date on sector preferences in this regard.

Survey respondents showed a clear preference for services delivered in a hybrid manner with 54.12% selecting this option. This has the benefits of increasing the accessibility and range of AMSSA events by enabling participants to either attend in-person or virtually at their convenience. On the other hand, 32.94% preferred virtual services and 12.94% chose in-person services. An influential consideration brought up by a respondent in regards to attending in-person events related to difficulties justifying the use of funding to travel to the centre from rural areas when the budget is already stretched. However, another respondent highlighted the utility of annual in-person regional or provincial meetings and conferences as a way to make connections.

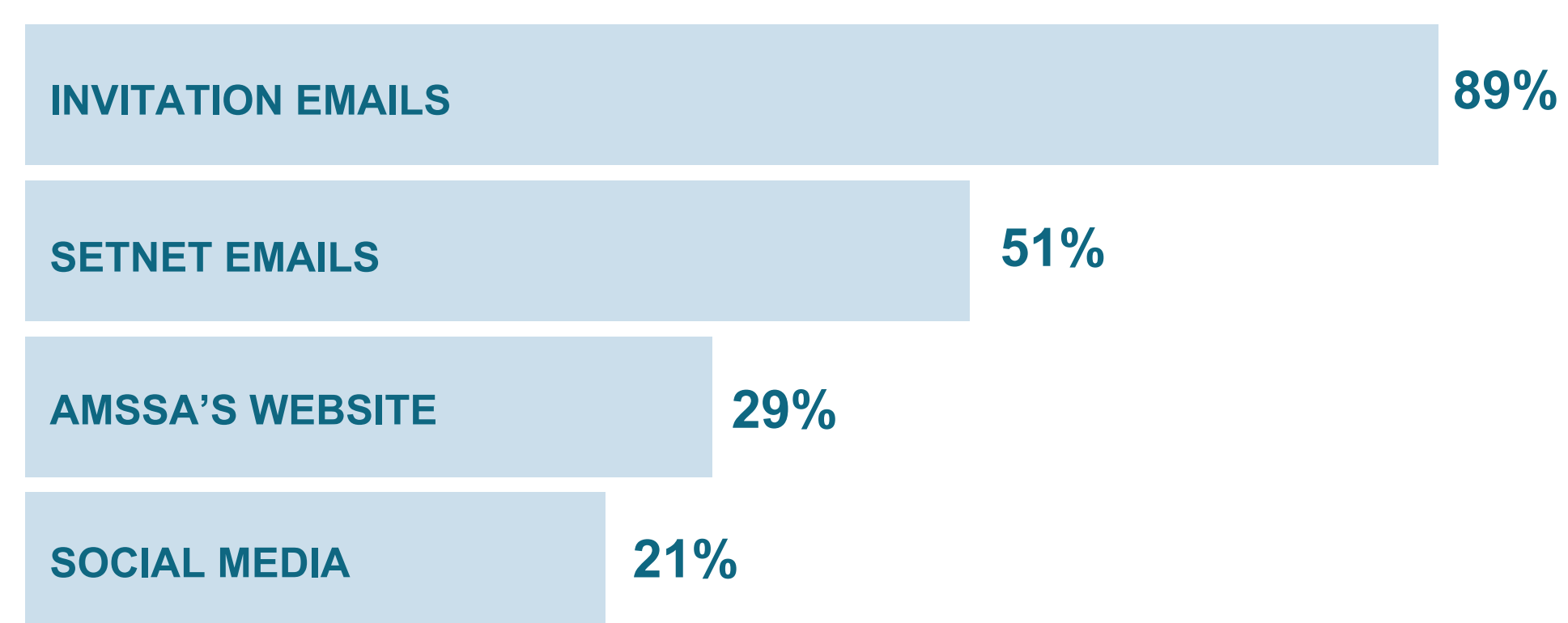
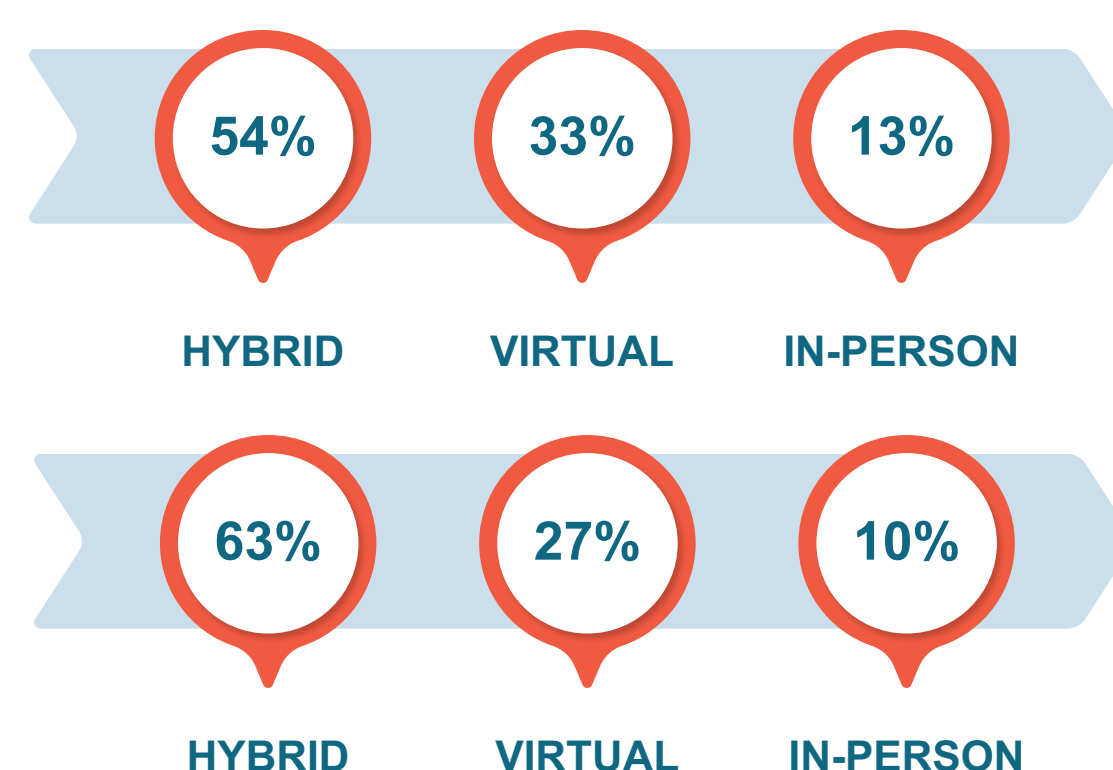
These results indicate similar preferences to the previous Settlement Sector Priorities survey with a slightly less than 10% reduction in preference for hybrid events and an increase of 6.38% for virtual events and an almost 3% increase in preference for in-person events.

In terms of the interpretation services provided at AMSSA events, of the respondents that utilized this service, the majority indicated that the French/English interpretation met their needs every time or some of the time. As AMSSA events are mostly in English, it is logical that 72.84% of respondents indicated that they did not use interpretation services in 2022 – 2023.

2022/2023

compared to

2021/2022



COMMUNITY APPROACH

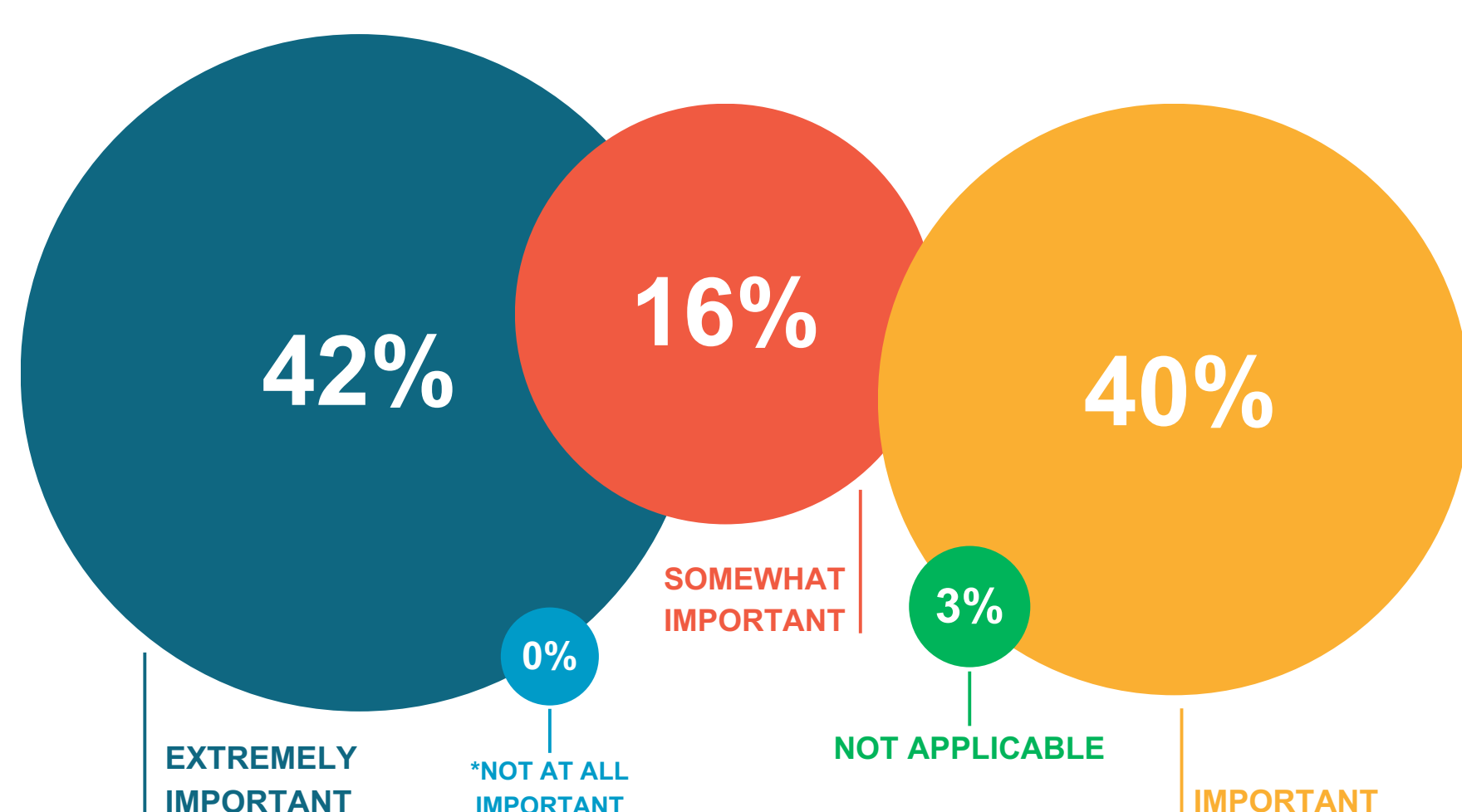
AMSSA strives to not only engage in regular communication with the sector but also to facilitate communication within it. The following section aims to assess the frequency of communication and understand how frequently service providers would prefer to receive settlement and integration resources, information and updates.

The form and frequency of updates related to AMSSA settlement and integration support resources is a helpful way to stay up-to-date on issues relevant to and what is happening in the sector. When asked how respondents would prefer to receive updates, 88.75% indicated a preference for direct contact through invitation emails and 51.25% selected Settlement Net emails. In terms of social media updates, 21.25% chose this option while 28.75% preferred AMSSA's website. When asked for preferences for how often respondents would prefer to receive updates, results were slightly mixed with 40.51% preferring updates as needed, 25.32% wanting updates biweekly, 16.46% selecting 1 – 3 times a month and 15.19% choosing weekly updates. As we have seen over the pandemic and the recent humanitarian crises, the sector is required to adapt quite quickly at times. Thus, these results seem to indicate a balance between updates as needed without being too frequent.

When asked how important it was to meet colleagues who are geographically close or similar in size that deliver similar services, 41.56% of respondents felt it was extremely important and 40.56% felt it was important. Only 15.58% indicated that it was somewhat important. This shows quite clearly a desire to learn from colleagues within the sector. This theme was supported by a respondent who shared that they have more in common than not when it comes to challenges and successes, and they highlighted the opportunity to learn and take from others in their region instead of reinventing the wheel on their own is what they gain from making connections. In terms of how often they would like to meet regional peers, 41.89% chose once a year while twice a year was the second most requested option.

For regional meetings, 44.00% of respondents supported the preference to meet in person while 34.67% selected the option for a hybrid meeting and 21.33% indicated a wish to meet virtually. For respondents open to meeting in person, 59.32% want to meet at a central location in their region while 37.29% prefer to meet in Metro Vancouver. When considering the location of where to meet, one respondent pointed out the necessity to consider that if they are meeting colleagues from organizations of similar sizes, it is likely that some would be from outside of their region.

HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO MEET COLLEAGUES WHO ARE GEOGRAPHICALLY CLOSE OR SIMILAR IN SIZE THAT DELIVER SIMILAR SERVICES



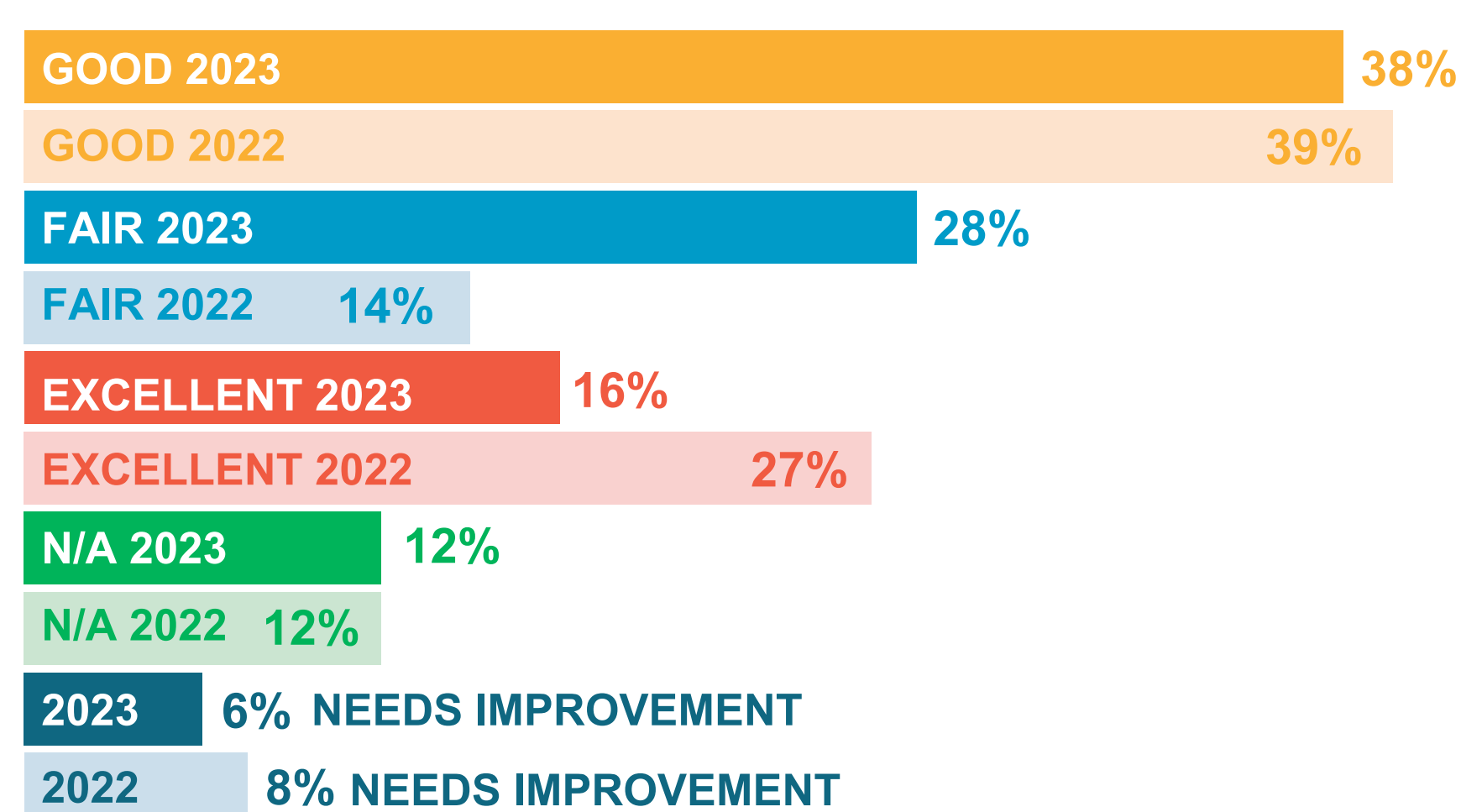
SPOS RELATIONSHIP WITH IRCC

A key part of this survey, as it is intended for IRCC funded service providers, is for AMSSA to better understand service provider experiences and relationships with IRCC. AMSSA is committed to identifying what is working well and where improvement is needed.

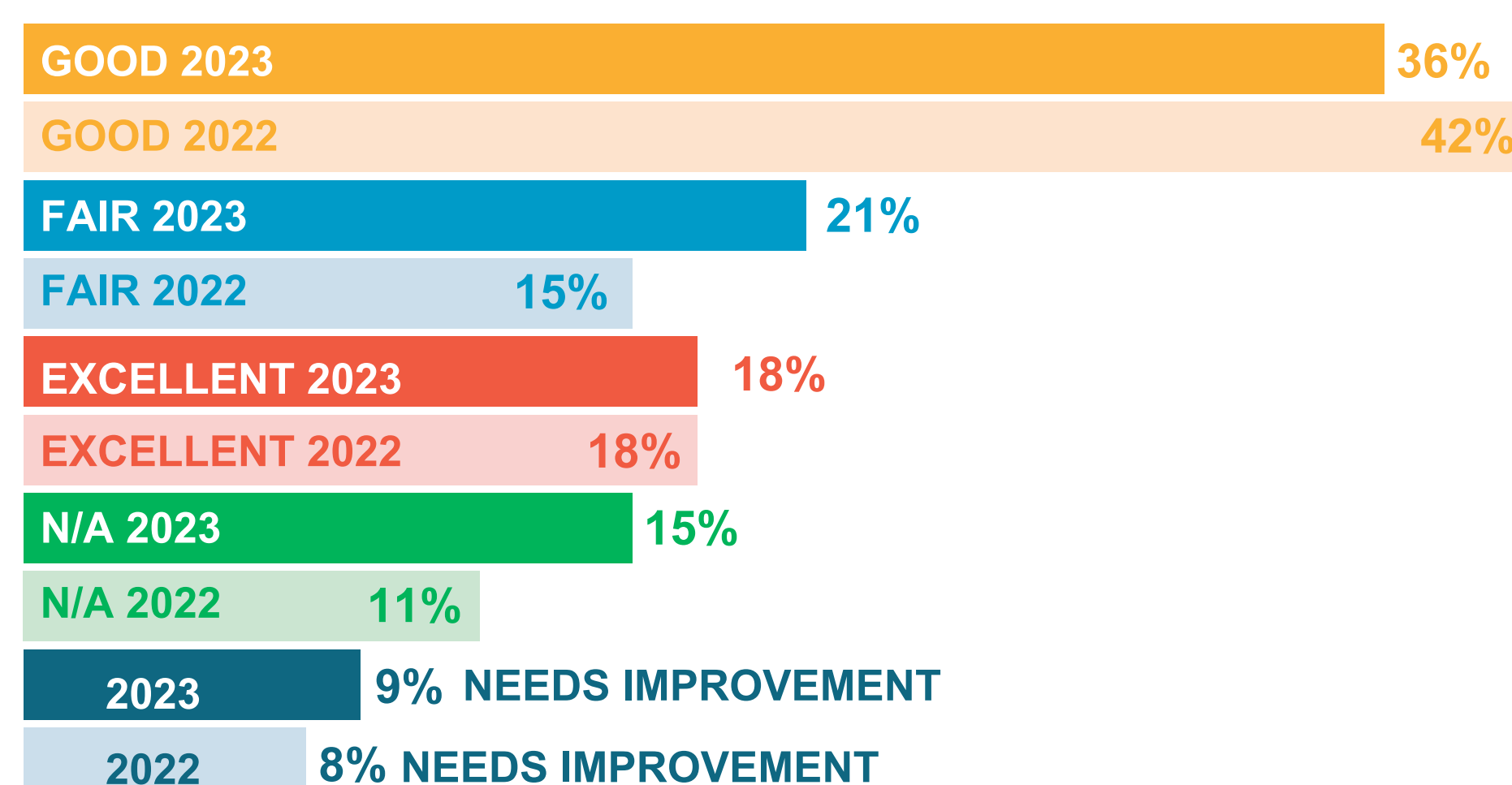
When the IRCC officers overseeing the respondent's program(s) changed during a file transfer in the past year, 43.75% of respondents indicated that the new officer arranged to meet them within one week while 15.63% indicated that they were not contacted within one week. In terms of familiarity of discussions or action items with the previous Officer, 6.25% of officer's were extremely familiar, 21.88% were very familiar, 28.13% were moderately familiar, 15.63% were slightly familiar and only 3.13% were not at all familiar.

In terms of satisfaction with answering inquiries, providing valuable feedback on proposals or troubleshooting challenges, explaining why decisions are made and feeling comfortable contacting management when an Officer is not available, respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction. When rating their IRCC Officer's explanation of decisions in response to proposals for new activities and/or funding, the majority of respondents felt it was either good (37.50%), fair (28.13%) or excellent (15.63%). A similar level of satisfaction was expressed when rating their Officer's knowledge of settlement services offered by their organization. Additionally, IRCC Officers were rated as responding promptly to a wide range of topics and clearly explaining their decision and rationale.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR IRCC OFFICER'S 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?



When asked what topics respondents would like IRCC to address over the next 3 years, housing and funding related topics were the most suggested. Specifically, respondents would like to hear more about navigating contribution agreements, funding priorities, eligibility of expenses, budgets with increased flexibility, wage increases, accounting for inflation, information on the upcoming CFP, increased funding for administrative duties and templates which provide guidance on areas of repeated demand.

This could include budget templates that match IRCC expectations and include calculations for use of space, rent, overhead costs, and calculations for incremental increases over the life of a contribution agreement. Additional topics suggested include LGBTQ+ issues, reconciling past injustices against Indigenous peoples and minority groups, issues of single mothers, Express Entry and Family Reunification categories, capacity building, implementation of successful SDI projects and understanding the targets IRCC sets in conjunction with exploring the depth of services clients require.

In the vein of improving their relationship with IRCC, respondents highlighted a desire for less turnover of Officers, good transfers of information when Officers change as well as direct communication, regular check-ins and more frequent updates. One respondent highlighted their struggles when dealing with multiple officers for various contracts with different levels of experience and training. This respondent expressed an area of improvement in terms of consistency of decision making and interpretation of policies across their Officers.

In terms of AMSSA's role in convening the relationship between IRCC and the settlement and integration sector, suggestions included providing increased opportunities for meaningful discussions. In addition, respondents requested AMSSA advocate for and share common challenges faced by sector organizations, providing more networking opportunities, clarifying financial guidelines, increased funding for admin, IT and wages as well as advocating for more flexibility when responding to IRCC requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several recommendations that came out of analysis of the sector priorities survey:

Bridging the knowledge gap in understanding the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ service providers and clients.

Responses from staff for the Settlement Sector Priorities survey who identify as within the 2SLGBTQ+ community have been very low this year and last. Thus, we have limited data on the experiences of both 2SLGBTQ+ staff and clients. More efforts need to be made to better understand the needs of 2SLGBTQ+ newcomers.

Increase the amount of networking opportunities between the Anglophone and Francophone sectors.

There is a continued desire for more connection between the Anglophone and Francophone sectors, most notably through increased networking opportunities. This is especially true for smaller centres who have more limited access and connection to the Francophone sector. To that end, an additional facet of this recommendation is to:

Facilitate increased collaborations between smaller centre and Francophone organizations.

Ideas for collaboration include the creation of a service map of Francophone organizations to help Anglophone organizations navigate Francophone services and co-developing events or programs.

Continue to improve communication with the sector by diversifying communication channels and better utilising strengths of specific platforms when sharing information.

Communication continues to be a key aspect of AMSSA's role as an umbrella organization and one that the sector continues to rate highly. As this was the second year the sector priorities survey was completed, there is better understanding of the sector's preferred communication methods as well as a more robust understanding of the effectiveness of different communication platforms. Based on this knowledge, improvements can be made with communication outreach and knowledge dissemination.

Create strategies for organizations in how best to communicate with multiple IRCC officers for different contracts.

Respondents indicated struggling to communicate with multiple IRCC officers for different contracts. While increased training could improve uniformity across officers, there is also an opportunity to create strategies to support service providing organizations (SPOs) in handling multiple contracts and officers.

AMSSA continues to act as a convener between IRCC and the sector, increasing opportunities for meaningful discussions.

CONCLUSION

BC's Settlement and Integration Sector continues to play a integral role in the integration of newcomers to the province.

As the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan signifies, Canada is set to welcome nearly 1.5 million new permanent residents in the next three years and expertise and experience of the sector will be needed more than ever. As the provincial umbrella organization for BC's settlement and integration sector, the findings reflected in the annual Sector Priorities Survey will be key in highlighting the ways in which AMSSA can further improve their programming and services to better reflect the priorities of the sector.

Furthermore, the annual nature of the survey allows AMSSA a unique opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis across demographics, key findings and priorities each year and better establish trends and central needs.

ABOUT AMSSA

AMSSA is a unique province-wide association that strengthens over 90 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 BC.

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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