

REGIONAL HEALTH OF THE SECTOR PROJECT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION – FEBRUARY 2021

DESCRIPTION

The regional Health of the Sector research project looks to understand the perspectives of staff working within agencies in the newcomer-serving sector related to their employment experience, organizational strengths and challenges, as well as the opportunities available to them.

The Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) is the umbrella organization representing agencies across Alberta, working to advance the professionalization and organizational excellence of the newcomer-serving sector. AAISA believes that a resilient and professional sector is essential to the settlement and integration of newcomers, and that such resiliency is reliant on the ability of the sector to retain experienced staff and support their continual skill development.

Through this project, AAISA will examine the health of the settlement and integration sector from the perspective of the front-line staff from agencies across the three provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) of the Prairies and Northern Territories (PNT) region, in line with the work of the National Health of the Sector Working Group. Based on the activities of this working group, the following areas will be the focus of a survey to gather front-line staff perspective:

- **Agency policies and practices**
 - Includes consideration of compensation, benefits, and provisions to promote employment equity
- **Agency context**
 - Includes considerations of agency structure and culture as well as the influence of funding models

PROJECT PHASE ONE

The first phase of the project will be conducted in February and March 2021, and involves the following activities:

- **Scan:** This stage of the project will involve a preliminary examination of available sources to provide insight into the areas of focus for the survey. It will examine the factors within each focus area that contribute to the strength of organizations and strong employment outcomes, to then provide recommendations for each section of the survey.
- **Survey design:** A quantitative survey will be designed to gather perspectives from front-line staff
- **Survey launch:** The survey will be launched to the target audience on March 31, 2021

OBJECTIVES

This projects aims to understand how agency context, policies, and practices influence:

- Employee satisfaction and opportunities in their workplace
- Equitable opportunities among employees
- Desire to maintain employment in the settlement and integration sector and/or perceptions of employment in the sector as a viable career
- Challenges or barriers employees face in their daily work as well as in career opportunities and advancement

METHOD AND USE

The project will employ a quantitative survey to gather the perspectives of front-line service providers. Due to the projected size of the sample, and the timeline and budget of the project, gathering qualitative information through the survey would be beyond the scope of the project.

In addition to questions related to agency policies, practices, and context, the survey will gather demographic information (e.g. race, gender, and age) to support analysis of potential variations in the experiences of different employees. This information will be an important to assess the state of employment equity as well as variations in programming.

To support the promotion of the survey by agencies, respondents will not be asked to provide the name of their organization in the survey. Rather, they will be asked to identify the province they live in, the size of the community in which their agency is based, and the program or department they work in. This will support analysis while avoiding the perception that specific employers may be singled out.

The results of the survey will provide foundational information that can be used to inform conversations between the sector, IRCC, and umbrella organizations on the state of the health of



the sector. The results will support the identification of pathways forward to jointly build a resilient, professionalized sector that continues to meet the needs of newcomers across Canada's prairie provinces.

TARGET RESPONDENTS

The Health of the Sector research project will target respondents in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, who are:

- Employees of IRCC-funded agencies serving newcomers and
- Employees of non-IRCC funded member agencies of AAISA, SAISIA, or MANSO
- In front-line service delivery or supervisory roles

This survey will exclude employees in management and senior leadership positions and volunteers.