



# CALP Survey Report

Rural CALPs (Community Adult Learning Programs) as Immigrant-Serving Organizations

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is based on the responses of 21 survey participants, covering roughly 19 different areas of service. All respondents represent rural CALPs (Community Adult Learning Programs)—that is, those who serve communities outside the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. True to the mission of CALPs, the following programs were offered by at least 75% of respondents. Bolded items indicate that these services were also noted to experience higher demand across the general client base.

- **English Language/Literacy Training and Programs**
- Foundational Life Skills Programs
- **Computer Literacy Programs**
- Numerical Literacy Programs
- **Educational Upgrading (such as GED programs, collaborative efforts with colleges, etc.)**
- Assistance with forms, general information, agency referrals

While only roughly half of CALP respondents provide continuous, dedicated Newcomer services, all CALPs report receiving immigrant and newcomer clients. Many of these clients are multi-barriered, as the majority are unable to read, write, or speak English confidently. Moreover, a significant number of respondents report that more than half of these clients lack a Grade 12 education or its equivalent. That said, two programs most often indicated as in-demand among immigrant and newcomer clients is **English Language Services** and **Newcomer/Settlement Services**. **Community/Social Connectivity**, however, was also highlighted, implying CALPs also working to improve the social integration of these clients into the communities. Understandably, the programs in high demand among newcomer/immigrant clients appear to differ from those that are highly-demanded in general.

Regardless, many immigrant clients appear to be more foundational in their learning needs, especially in respect to language skills. Consequentially, CALP programs have a “laddering” tendency to build up essential skills (for example, immediate settlement needs like housing, then English programs, numeracy or driving, and then a workplace-destined program) that equip clients with the means and ability to meet milestones like stable and commensurate employment or home ownership.

Some respondents expressed difficulties in their ability to deliver quality programs that met the needs of these clients, including insufficient resources and insufficient training/numbers of staff. Notably, there were common challenges that emerged as potentially unique to rural contexts. These included difficulty finding numbers to justify programs, the lack of resources in rural communities, geographical isolation, training/staffing needs, and the particular relevance of word of mouth in small towns.

Although a few respondents noted a decrease in their Newcomer/Immigrant client numbers in the past few years, the majority noted that their numbers have increased or remained relatively stable. Half of all respondents, in fact, noted an increase in numbers. In comparison, reports on fluctuations in general client numbers appear fairly evenly split. In terms of demographics, respondents commonly report that many of their recent clients were born in the Central/South American, Middle Eastern, Asian (not including Middle East), and African regions.

The “one-stop shop” nature of many CALPs may lead to individual employees adopting diverse informal roles to meet client needs, but it’s difficult to overstate the value of these supports to newcomer/immigrant clients. These services not only facilitate their journey on the road to financial and social independence but also shape their lasting perception of the community and its people.

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## a. BACKGROUND

According to the 2016 census, Alberta's share of immigrants to Canada has grown. Statistics Canada reports that from 2001 to 2016, the percentage of Canadian immigrants settling in the prairies rose from 6.9% to 17.1%—a growth rate that outpaces even British Columbia. The vast majority, however, choose Calgary and Edmonton of their destination of choice; 45% and 38% of the 207,790 immigrants settling Alberta, respectively, (see Table 1, below)<sup>1</sup>. Based on more recent data from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) regarding the settlement patterns of Permanent residents, it's clear that this trend has not abated<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 1, below).

Table 1: Immigrant Populations in Alberta, Canada. (Source: Statistics Canada, adapted from Focus on Geography Series, 2016. 2016 Census Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001)

	Total population	Immigrant population		Recent immigrants (attained landed status 2011 to 2016)	
Geography	Number	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Alberta</b>	<b>3,978,145</b>	<b>845,220</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>207,790</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Calgary	1,374,650	404,700	29.4	93,255	6.8
Edmonton	1,297,280	308,605	23.8	78,515	6.1
Brooks	23,410	5,240	22.4	2,345	10.0
Wood Buffalo	73,210	15,875	21.7	4,995	6.8
Canmore	13,580	2,405	17.7	660	4.9
Red Deer	98,480	14,680	14.9	5,235	5.3
Lethbridge	113,920	15,365	13.5	3,400	3.0
High River	13,325	1,775	13.3	755	5.7
Lloydminster	34,090	4,490	13.2	2,370	7.0
Okotoks	28,520	3,695	13.0	855	3.0
Wetaskiwin	12,205	1,320	10.8	430	3.5
Grande Prairie	62,055	6,655	10.7	2,450	3.9
Lacombe	12,710	1,240	9.8	315	2.5
Camrose	18,215	1,605	8.8	620	3.4
Medicine Hat	74,665	6,325	8.5	1,375	1.8
Cold Lake	14,620	1,210	8.3	475	3.2
Strathmore	13,395	1,095	8.2	260	1.9
Sylvan Lake	15,145	885	5.8	230	1.5

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (2017) *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Data products, 2016 Census.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, Drew. "UCP immigration plan would try to lure 10,000 newcomers a year to rural Alberta." *CBC News*. Feb. 25, 2019.

## Admissions of permanent residents to Alberta by intended destination: Annual average from 2015 to 2018

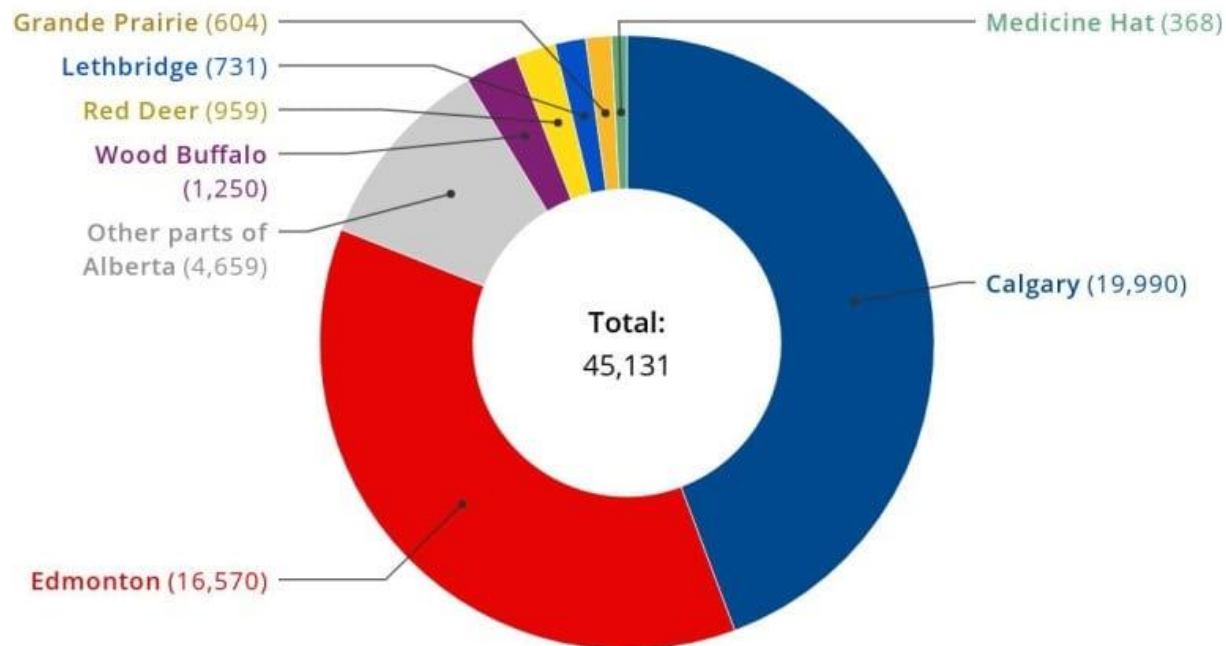


Chart: Robson Fletcher / CBC • Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



Figure 1: Admissions of permanent residents to Alberta by intended destination: Annual Average from 2015 to 2018 (Source: "UCP immigration plan would try to lure 10,000 newcomers a year to rural Alberta." CBC News. Feb. 25, 2019)

While the term "rural" lacks a clear definition and varies by agency, for the purposes of this report, "rural" refers to all communities outside the municipal borders of Edmonton and Calgary. That said, individual community contexts vary considerably. One of these variations includes the presence of dedicated immigrant-serving agencies within a community's borders; this may not be the case for many rural communities. This may be a contributing factor to a 2013 study's finding that rural immigrants were less likely to access settlement services than those in Calgary and Edmonton—39.5% of rural respondents versus 48.7% of urban respondents. Notably, less than 20% of the study's 1,006 respondents were rural residents, underscoring the relative lack of research focus on rural communities<sup>3</sup>. It may be unsurprising then, that numerous respondents to our CALP (Community Adult Learning Program) survey expressed difficulties along the lines of "finding enough numbers to run a class" and concerns that potential clients often leave remote communities in favor of larger urban centres.

<sup>3</sup> Esses, Victoria M. Meyer Burstein, Zenaida Ravanera, Stacey Hallman, and Stelian Medianu. 2013. Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey. *Pathways to Prosperity Partnership*. Ottawa, ON: Alberta Government.

There are, however, just about a hundred CALPs in Alberta, as of November 2019, most of which are located outside the municipal borders of Edmonton and Calgary. Even if their mission is not purely to serve immigrant populations, many provide services relevant to immigrants and newcomers. In fact, this relevance is cited several times in the 2018 CALP Guidelines<sup>4</sup>. As a result, many of these CALPs become immigrant-serving agencies in some capacity.

## **b. METHODOLOGY**

This report is based on a brief and relatively informal survey of rural CALPs, examining their experiences in serving newcomer and immigrant clients. Included in the survey were questions that covered participant demographics, general services provided, services tailored specifically to newcomer/immigrant populations, and client bases/demographics. In respect to their experience in serving newcomer and immigrant clients, we also requested feedback on the challenges encountered in providing services, successes, thoughts for improvement, and future plans. Questions included multiple-choice, Likert scale, checkbox, short answer, and long answer questions.

CALPs' primary mission is not immigrant settlement, although many play a crucial role in the process, especially in rural communities. Unfortunately, their efforts receive relatively little attention. In this survey, our intent was to capture at least a piece of the experience of CALPs in respect to this work. We hope the resulting information draws attention to and encourages a greater understanding of the work, experiences, and needs of CALPs.

Of the 99 CALPs in Alberta, 96 are located outside the municipal borders of Edmonton and Calgary. Of these eligible CALPs we received 21 responses, for a response rate of roughly 21.9%. To combat redundancy, we requested that while we welcomed the feedback of multiple CALPs serving the same area, only one representative from each CALP should respond to the survey. We administered the survey digitally through the CALP forum, an aspect of the online CALP forum—a central resource and networking hub for registered CALPs. The survey was open to responses for roughly two weeks, from 7 October 2019 to 22 October 2019. As an incentive, we advertised that each respondent would be entered to win a \$50 gift card, granted they responded to the survey and provided their CALP email address. Prior to distributing the report to non-participants, a draft of this report was sent to all respondents who provided their email, offering the opportunity to make adjustments, changes, and suggestions, especially where their long answer stories are involved. None made any requests.

With only 21 respondents, we opted to solely examine frequencies, as the number is insufficient for correlations. Our immediate need for the data was to supplement our own experiences as a rural provider, which was the focus of our presentation at the 2019 AAISA Settlement and Integration Conference. As previously stated, however, we also hope that the information is useful in shedding some light on the experiences of rural CALPs as immigrant-serving organizations. That said, while it has not been published, this report has been shared among CALPs and potentially other key stakeholders.

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<sup>4</sup> Alberta Advance Education. (2018) *Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Government.

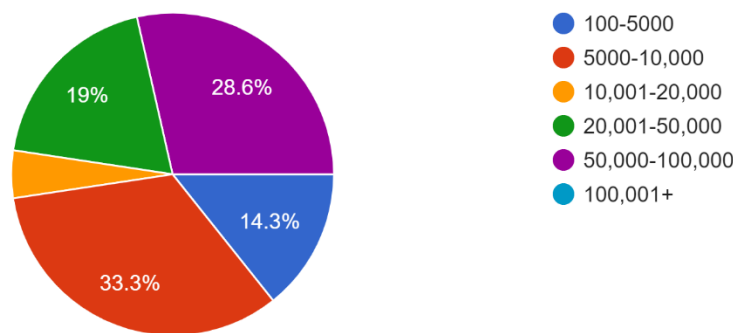
### **c. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### ***Organizations and Communities***

Of the 21 survey respondents—all of whom represent rural CALPs servicing communities outside the Calgary and Edmonton areas—the vast majority have been in service for over two decades, with the youngest programs being 6-10 years old. The term “rural” covers a wide variety of communities, which range in populations of 100-5,000 to over 100,000. Figure 2, below.

What is the size of the community that you serve? (General population, the number you might find in census data)

21 responses



*Figure 2: Sizes of rural communities served by CALPs*

Despite the range in the sizes of the general communities, nearly three out of four CALPs report serving 50-250 unique clients in the past 12 months. See Figure 3. No CALP reported more than 750 unique clients. Most indicated that the number of clients they serve hasn't changed much over the years, save for a few who reported seeing somewhat of a decrease in the clients they serviced. Conversely, the same number of respondents saw increases, two of whom reported sharp increases. See Figure 4, next page.



In the past 12 months, roughly how many unique clients have you served?  
 An estimate is fine, but should at least be based on records.

21 responses

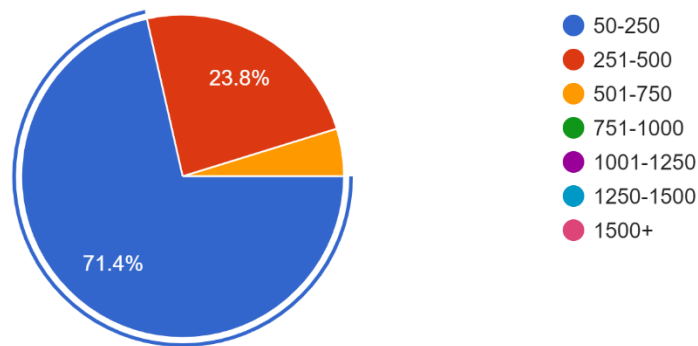


Figure 3: Rural CALP General Client Bases

Compared to previous years, has there been a change in the general number of clients you receive?

21 responses

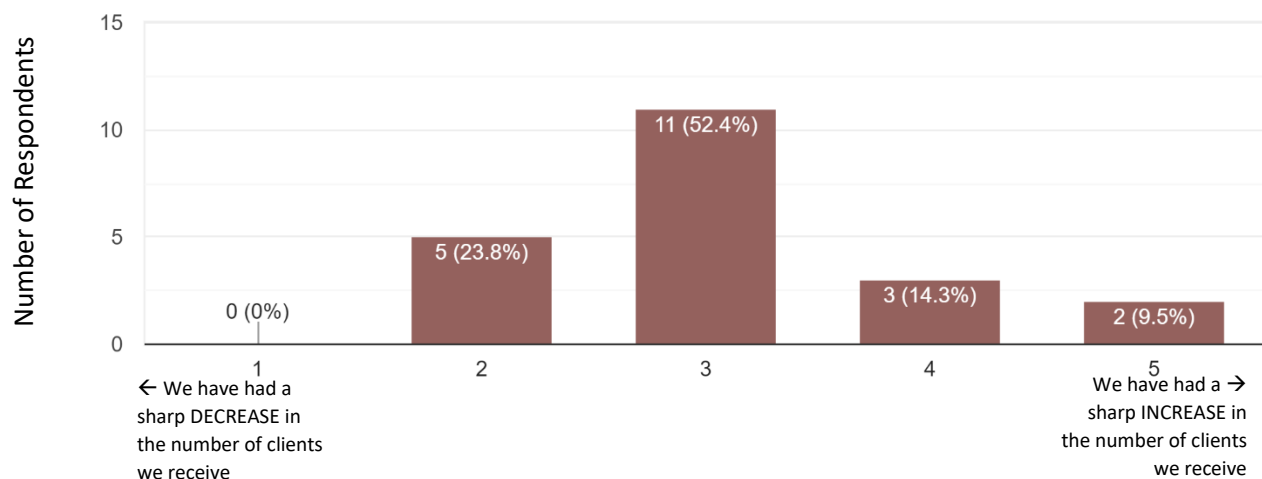


Figure 4: Changes in rural CALP client numbers

### Services and Demand

True to our mission as CALPs, the vast majority of respondents (all respondents in the case of English Language/Literacy Services) report providing the following services:

- English Language/Literacy Training and Programs
- Foundational Life Skills Programs
- Computer Literacy Programs
- Numerical Literacy Programs
- Educational Upgrading (such as GED programs, collaborative efforts with colleges, etc.)
- Assistance with forms, general information, agency referrals

Roughly half indicate offering Employment Services/Programs and Newcomer Services. Few respondents report supporting FNMI Services and Youth Programs. Two additional responses included Test Prep (CELP and IELTS) in the “Other” response section.

Which of the following services do you currently offer? Check all that apply.

21 responses

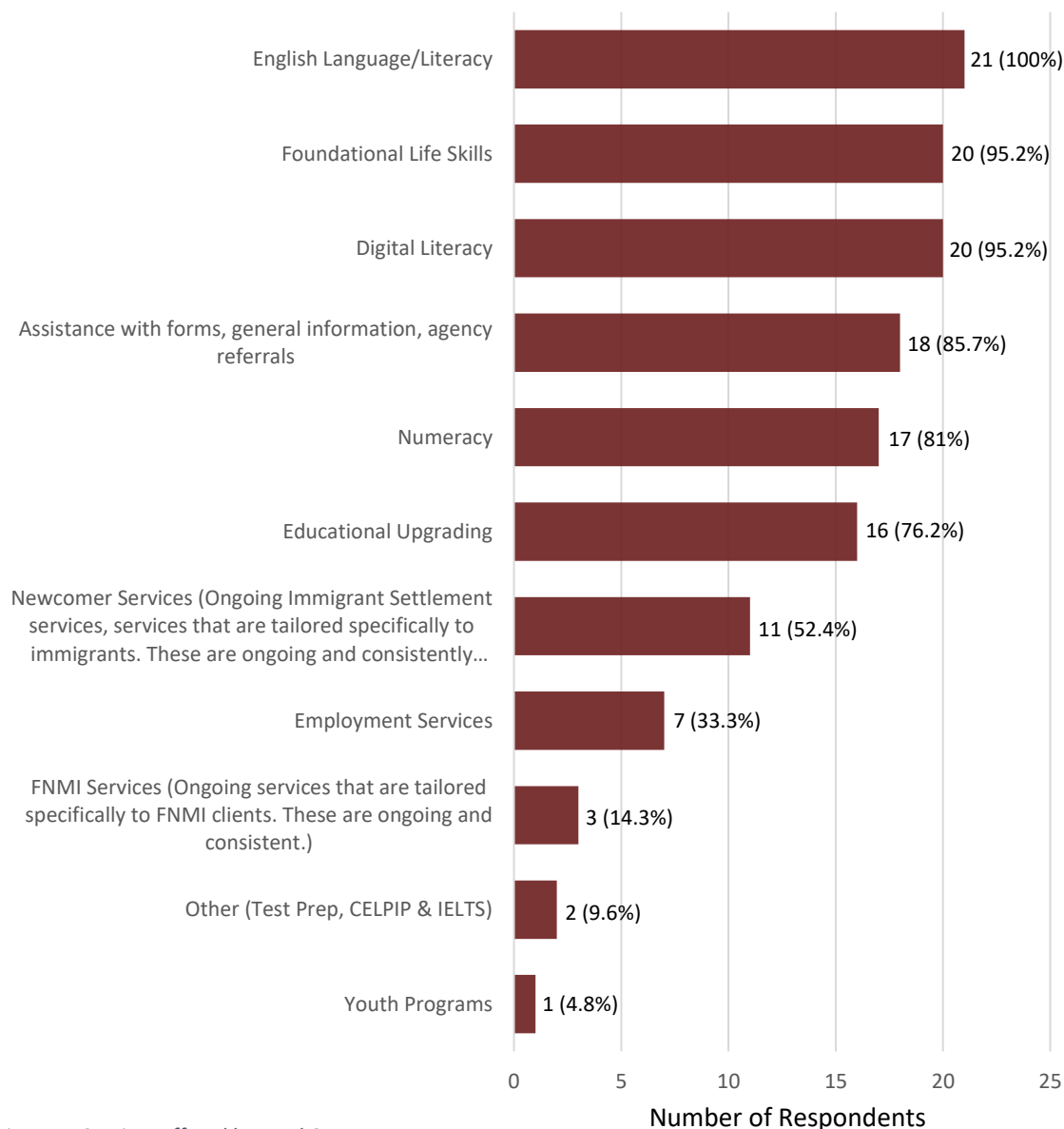
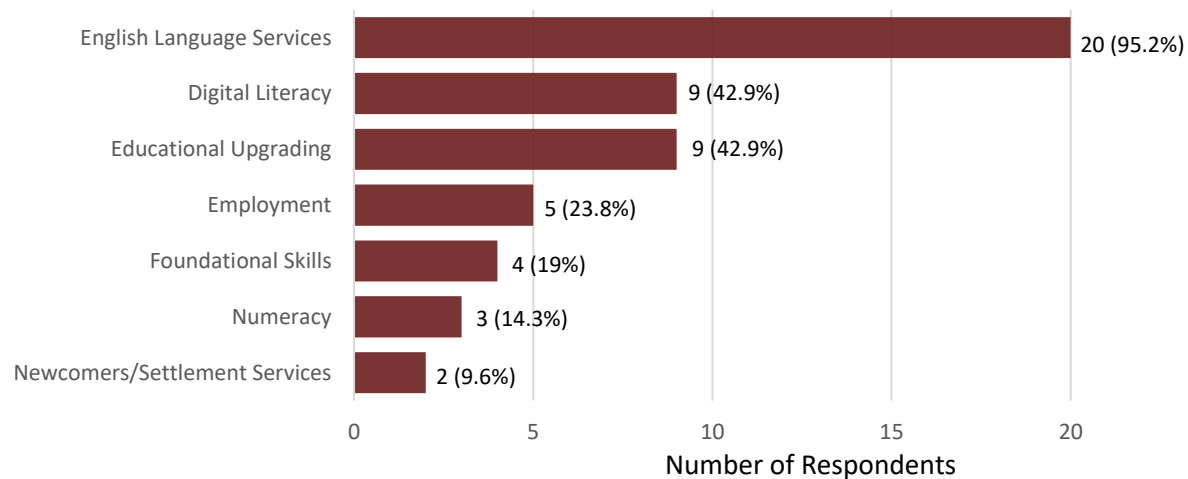


Figure 5: Services offered by rural CALPs

When asked to name up to three services that experience the highest demand in general, nearly all respondents ranked English Language/Literacy Training programs as the most in-demand. Roughly half indicate that their Digital Literacy Programs experience high demand, as well as Educational Upgrading services. Some indicate that their Foundational Skills Programs, Employment, and Numeracy programs are popular among their general client base. Only two indicated high usage of the Newcomer/Settlement Services. Other services named as popular include: Learner Services, Tutoring, Mental Health First Aid, Test Prep, Community Capacity Building: Computers and Bookkeeping, and Class 7 Workshops.



*Figure 6: High Demand programs among rural CALPs*

#### **d. CALPS AS IMMIGRANT-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS**

While not all CALPs reported providing Newcomer/Settlement Services, all reported receiving at least some immigrant clients. Most report that between 20-50% of their client base are immigrants. Interestingly, while a few respondents indicated that they saw somewhat of a decrease in the number of immigrant clients they serviced over the past five years, half of the respondents indicated an increase to some degree. The remaining third reported that their numbers remained relatively stable.

Of these immigrant clients, all CALPs report that at least some are newcomers, or immigrants who have lived in Canada for 10 years or less. The most common response, however, was that 20% or less of the immigrant clients were newcomers, implying that most of these respondents' immigrant clients had lived in Canada for many years.

Regardless, several respondents answering the written prompts made note of challenges in finding numbers to justify their programs, especially when many newcomers opt to move to communities with more resources. Part of this challenge is innately tied to the essence of rurality; newcomers and providers alike lament the lack of varied resources, geographical distance from major government service centres, and limited provider manpower—which results in the same people adopting diverse roles, usually informally. It's important to highlight, however, that low enrolment numbers do not

diminish the need for such programs. Later sections underscore the value of CALP programs in guiding and building up newcomer/immigrant clients' confidence, skills, independence, and ability to thrive.

Rough estimates are fine, if you don't know the exact answer.

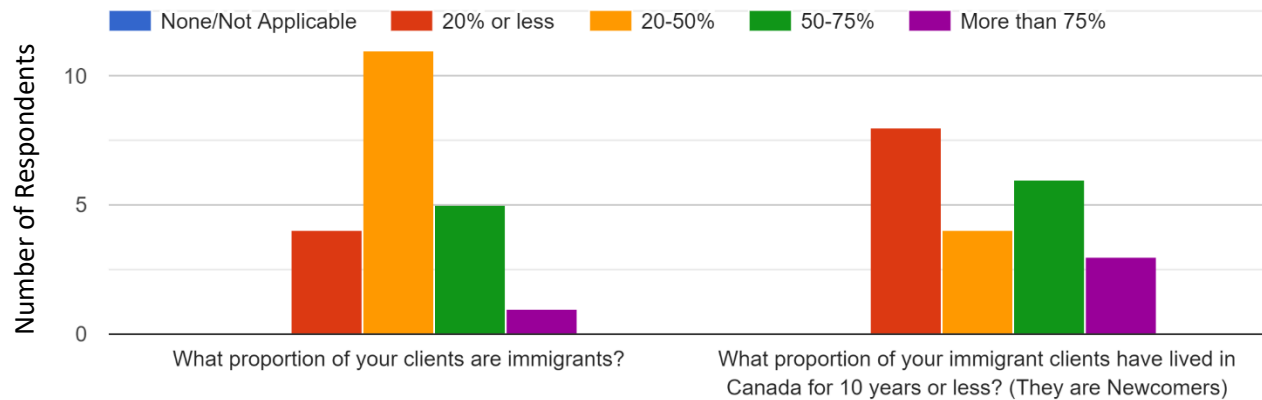


Figure 7: Rural CALP immigrant/newcomer clients

In the past 5 years, have you experienced a change in the number of immigrants/newcomers that you serve?

21 responses

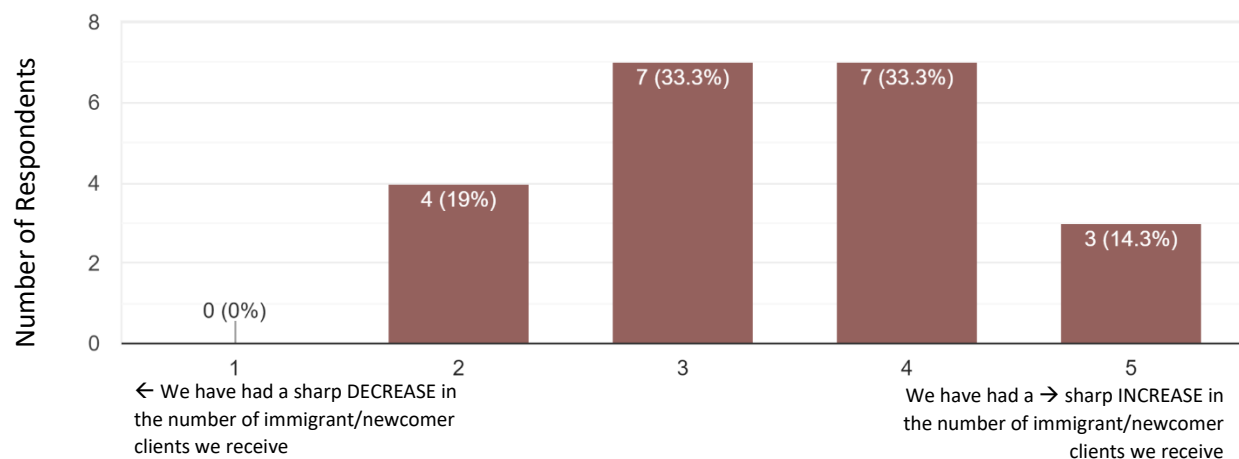


Figure 8: Rural CALP changes in immigrant client numbers

### Snapshot of Immigrant Client Base

Most CALPs reported that the majority of their immigrant clients had completed a Grade 6 education, although there was a near-even split in reports of immigrant clients with Grade 12 educational attainment; 11 report that less than half of their immigrant clients have a Grade 12 diploma or its equivalent. It's worth noting that this snapshot differs considerably from the educational attainment of immigrants to Alberta in general, based on the 2013 study; only roughly 10% do not have a Grade 12 education, as compared to the 12 CALPs who said at least half of their immigrant clients fall into such a category. Furthermore, over half of Albertan immigrants have a Bachelor's degree or higher<sup>5</sup>.

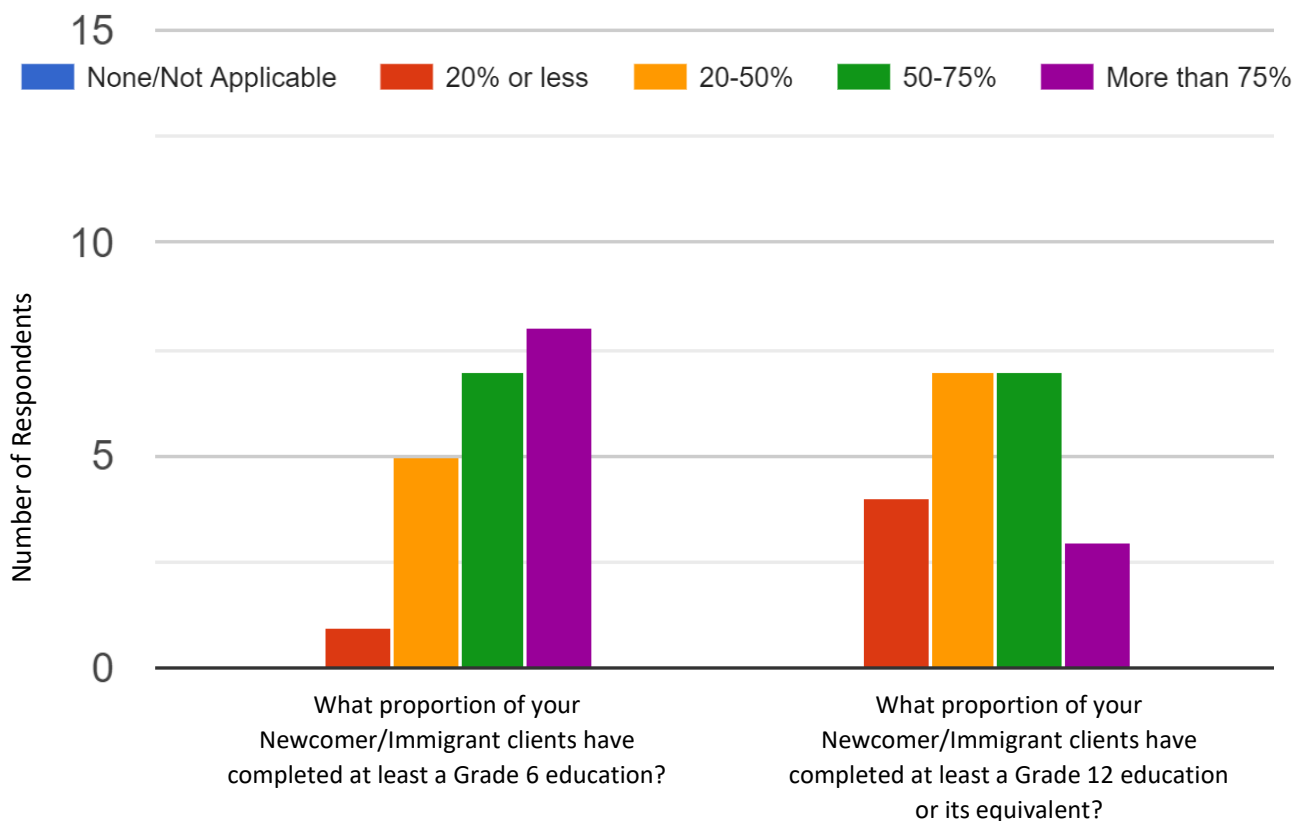


Figure 9: Rural CALP immigrant client educational attainment

When asked about common regions of birth for their Newcomer/Immigrant clients, most indicated that they saw many clients from Central and South America. Asia (excluding Middle East), the Middle East, and Africa were also notable regions of origin. Not many saw significant numbers of clients from Europe, and none reported servicing significant numbers from North America or Australia. That said, it would seem that within the past five years, most CALPs have experienced somewhat of a shift in the demographics of Newcomer/Immigrant clients coming through their doors. Compared to a 2016 snapshot of Alberta as a whole, most of the province's immigrants came from the countries of the

<sup>5</sup> Esses, Victoria M. Meyer Burstein, Zenaida Ravanera, Stacey Hallman, and Stelian Medianu. 2013. Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey. *Pathways to Prosperity Partnership*. Ottawa, ON: Alberta Government.

Philippines, India, the UK, China, the US, Pakistan, Vietnam, Germany, and Poland. There was also somewhat of a province-wide shift, as the top source countries of recent immigrants listed the Philippines, India, China, Pakistan, the UK, Nigeria, the US, Mexico, South Korea, and Ethiopia<sup>6</sup>. It's worth mentioning that there have been even more shifts in the demographics of recent Albertan immigrants, especially with the recent influx of Syrian refugees.

*In the past 12 months, which regions of birth did significant numbers of your Newcomer/Immigrant clients come from? You determine what is a significant amount, based on your client base. Check all that apply.*

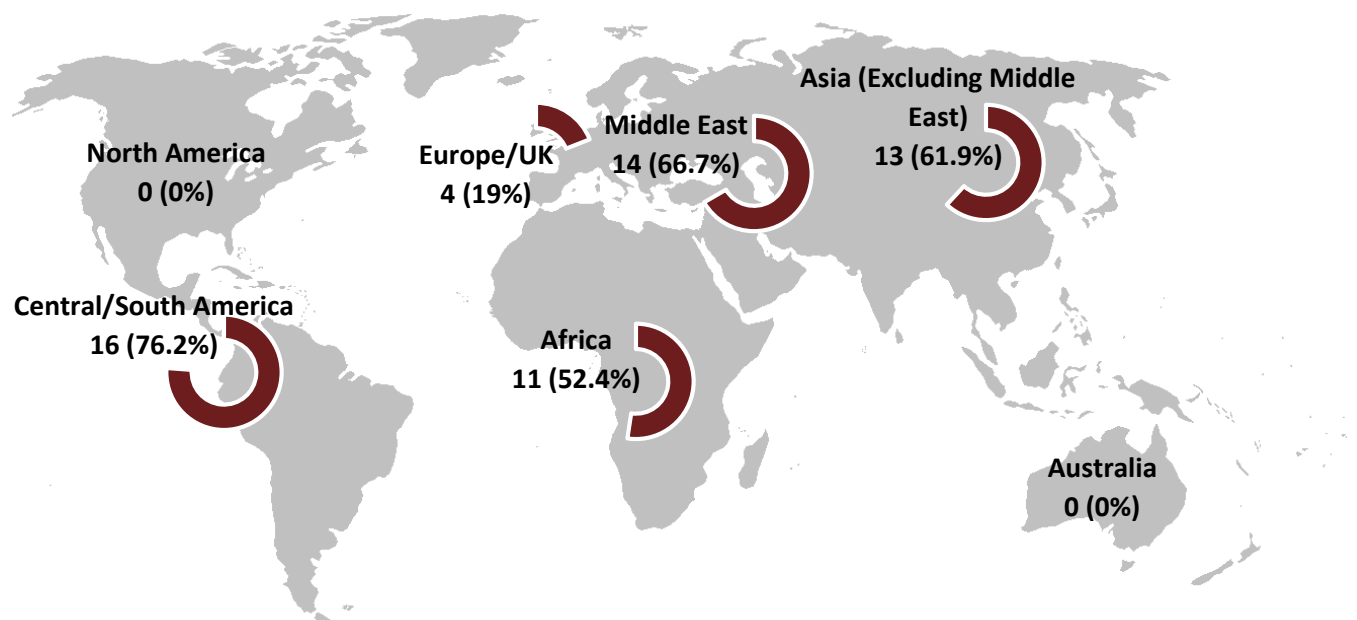


Figure 10: Rural CALP immigrant clients' regions of origin

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. (2017) *Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada. Data products, 2016 Census.

## In the past 5 years, have you experienced a shift in the demographics of the newcomers/immigrants you serve?

21 responses

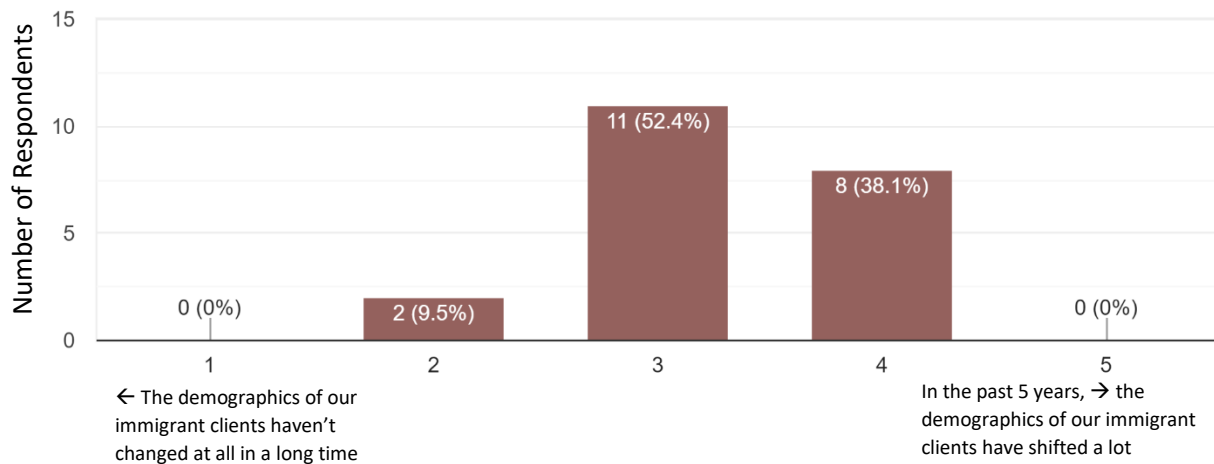


Figure 11: Rural CALP immigrant client base demographics shifts

Nearly all CALPs indicated that most of their immigrant clients could not confidently speak, read, or write English, prior to accessing CALP services. Understandably, most CALPs also report that their immigrant clients face multiple barriers, like illiteracy, minority status, etc. Accordingly, some respondents noted difficulties in communicating with their client base, as well as helping clients lacking either confidence in their English skills or English-language proficiency to communicate with other providers like government. For some, translators did not appear to be a viable option—perhaps due to the absence of multilingual individuals and/or financial constraints—and these providers relied on more creative solutions. One provider, for instance, gave out their personal cell number and asked clients to message them in the clients' native languages. The provider would then use a translation app to help bridge the language barrier.

Moreover, more respondents report that most of their immigrant clients are un/deremployed than not. Fortunately, despite our rural contexts, most report that the majority of their clients do not find transportation to be a significant barrier to accessing CALP services. This is not to say that it was not an issue at all. The difficulties related to transportation emerged more in the written prompt responses, as many noted that while clients could usually access their CALP services, there were far more transportation barriers to accessing other services, like Service Canada or IRCC/Immigration Services. Respondents noted that they didn't have such resource hubs available in their communities. Even when they were available, they were seldom open or public transit systems were insufficient/nonexistent. While having staff or local volunteers personally transport clients was named as a solution, it was also recognized as unsustainable in terms of both time and money.

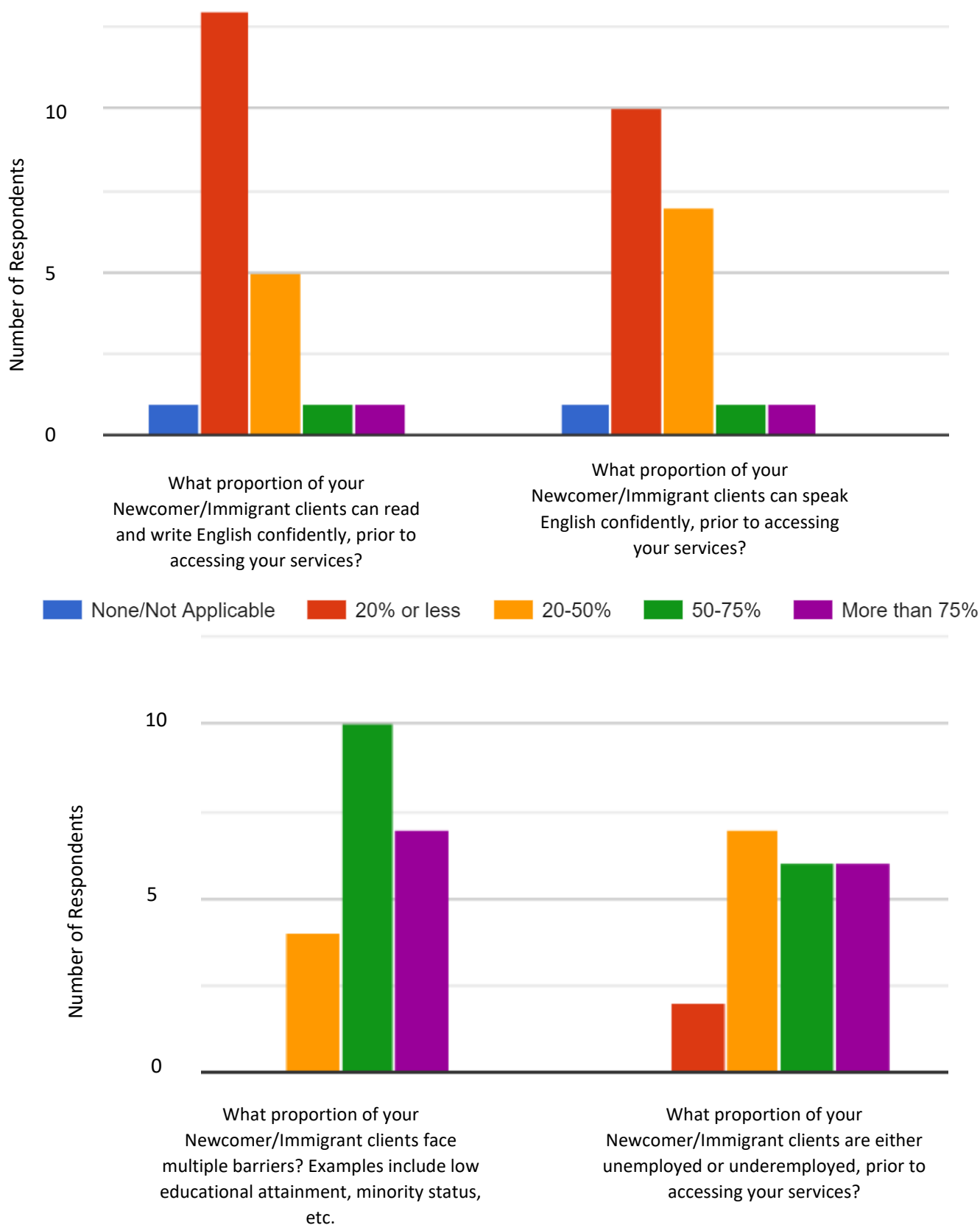
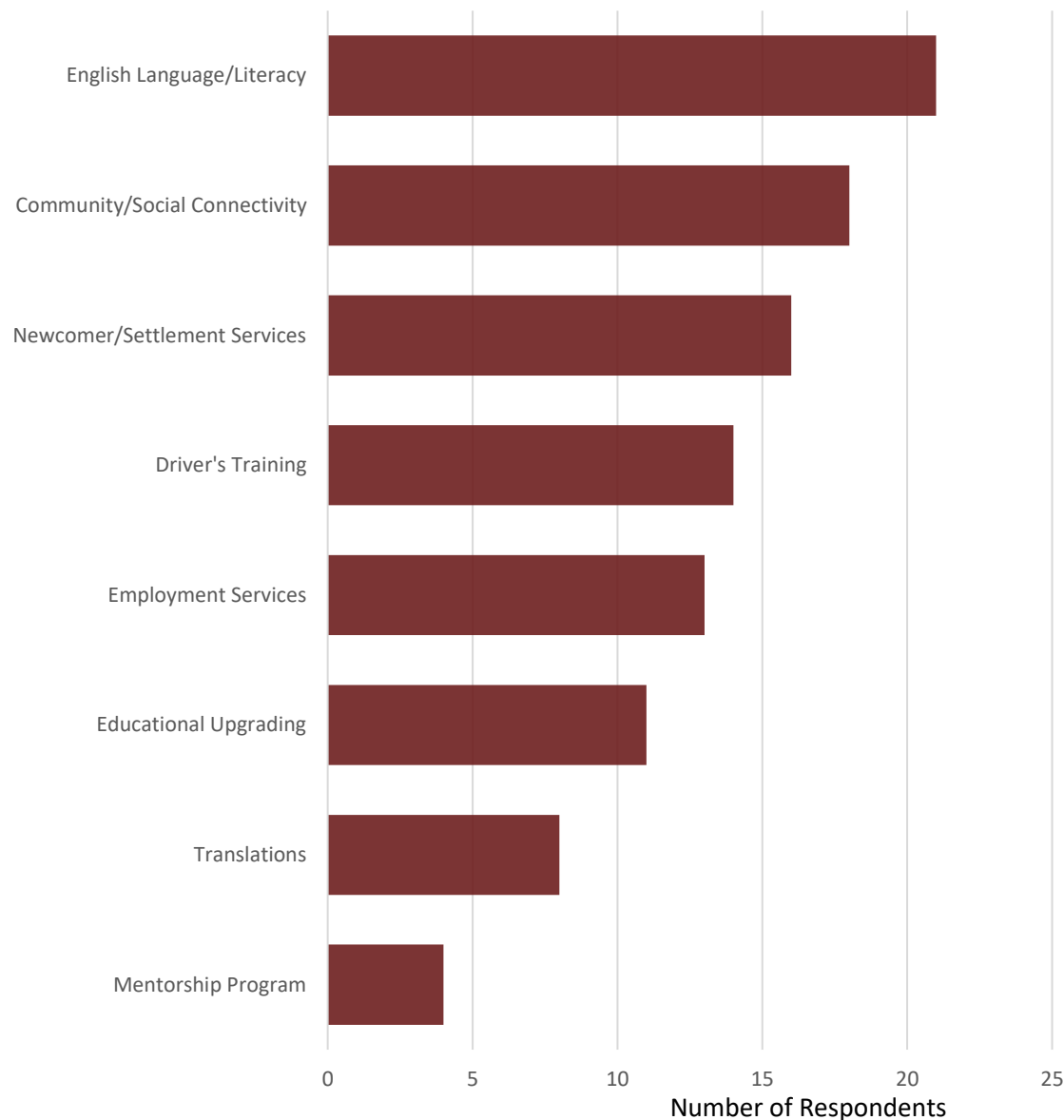


Figure 12: Rural CALP immigrant clients' barriers and challenges



### ***Immigrant Client Services and Demand***

All CALPs reported that English Language Services were in high demand among immigrant clients. Community/Social Connectivity and Newcomer Services were also reported to be in high demand. A little over half also marked Driver's License Training, Employment Services, Educational Upgrading and Transportation Services as high-demand services. Translation Services and Mentorship Programs were marked by less than half. One respondent added that the Food Bank was a commonly requested service.



*Figure 13: High demand services among immigrant/newcomer clients*

When compared to the 2013 study of Albertan immigrant settlement needs, English Language services are yet again underscored as vital, while employment services and community connections were significantly more in-demand among University-educated immigrants as compared to those lacking a

Grade 12 education. Interestingly, the 2013 report found that Community/Social connectivity was far more popular among more educated migrants, and rarely utilized by those with less than a high school education or limited English<sup>7</sup>. According to rural CALPs, however, Community/Social connectivity is a rather popular service, despite the more foundational nature of many CALP immigrant clients.

The 2013 report also indicates that those with Moderate-Good English language skills are most likely to utilize most services (with the exception of interpretations and translation). The researchers speculate that those with very limited English face increased barriers while those with excellent English skills have little to no need<sup>8</sup>. The barriers to access presented by insufficient dominant-language skills are well documented in the realms of settlement services, health services, and employment<sup>9</sup>. In our survey, rural CALPs made note of other barriers preventing potential clients from accessing services. As previously mentioned, transportation was not a very prominent issue when it came to accessing CALP services, but some indicated that the lack of public transportation or husbands taking the car to distant seasonal work hindered participation rates. Finding childcare is a consistent concern, with some respondents finding success in relying on volunteers.

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<sup>7</sup> Esses, Victoria M. Meyer Burstein, Zenaida Ravanera, Stacey Hallman, and Stelian Medianu. 2013. Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey. *Pathways to Prosperity Partnership*. Ottawa, ON: Alberta Government.

<sup>8</sup> Esses et al. Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey.

<sup>9</sup> e.g. Pottie, K., Ng, E., Spitzer, D., Mohammed, A., & Glazier, R. (2008). Language Proficiency, Gender, and Self-Reported Health: An Analysis of the First Two Waves of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 6, 5-11.; Houle, R., Maheux, H., & Corbeil, J.-P. (2017). *Linguistic integration of immigrants and official language populations in Canada: Census of Population 2016*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

### **e. ORGANIZATION CAPACITY, NEEDS, CHALLENGES, AND SUCCESSES (IN CONTEXT OF IMMIGRANT CLIENTS/SERVICES)**

As CALPs, we are all funded by the Alberta Government. Some, however, have found other sources of funded to help support their programs. The most common additional source was reported to be income from course registrations or other paid services provided, although less than half of respondents indicated this. Few noted that they received funding from Federal Government, Municipal Government, and Private Sponsors/Donors. Only one reported gathering financial resources via Fundraisers.

Who provides you with financial resources to supply services for newcomer/immigrant clients? Check all that apply.

21 responses

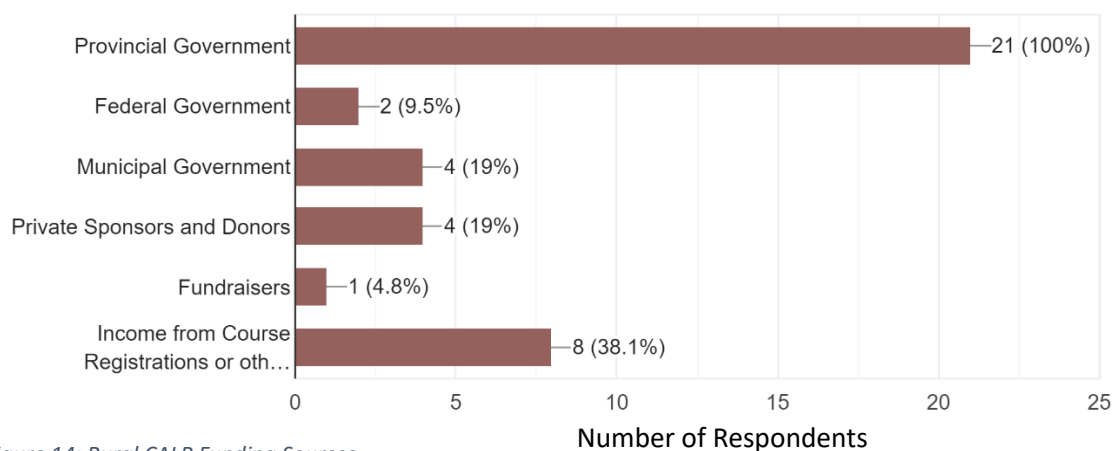


Figure 14: Rural CALP Funding Sources

In a similar vein, only roughly half of respondents were inclined to agree with the statement that they had enough resources to provide quality services for Newcomer/Immigrant clients. Agreement on whether participants' organizations provided enough services for Newcomer/Immigrant clients was similarly split.

About a third also disagreed with the statement that they had enough skilled employees to provide quality services. Expanding on this, the theme of training emerged several times in written responses, specifically regarding working with newcomers, cultural competence, training for mental health care, and teaching ELS classes for those without a background in education. While this makes a Professional Development conference and/or association tailored to rural immigrant service providers seem like a potential solution, it appears that many of the training challenges are also rooted in lack of finances, suggesting conference fees and travel may not always fit within budget constraints. As one respondent says, "A CALP could never do it without extra funding and resources. We are in a great position to provide the services, but a great deal of training is necessary and extra support staff would be needed." As it stands, some employees appear to resort to self-training through reading manuals and learn on the job.

Nonetheless, all respondents felt that they were making a difference in their Newcomer/Immigrant clients' lives. Moreover, most also said they wanted to expand their services for Newcomer/Immigrant

clients, even given their current resources. It's clear that CALPs also often work with other local stakeholders to provide services for their clients. For some, this meant working with available settlement agencies. For others, this meant coordinating with volunteers and local providers of other services or running referral services. One respondent suggested the use of Chromebox to increase connectivity across rural communities.

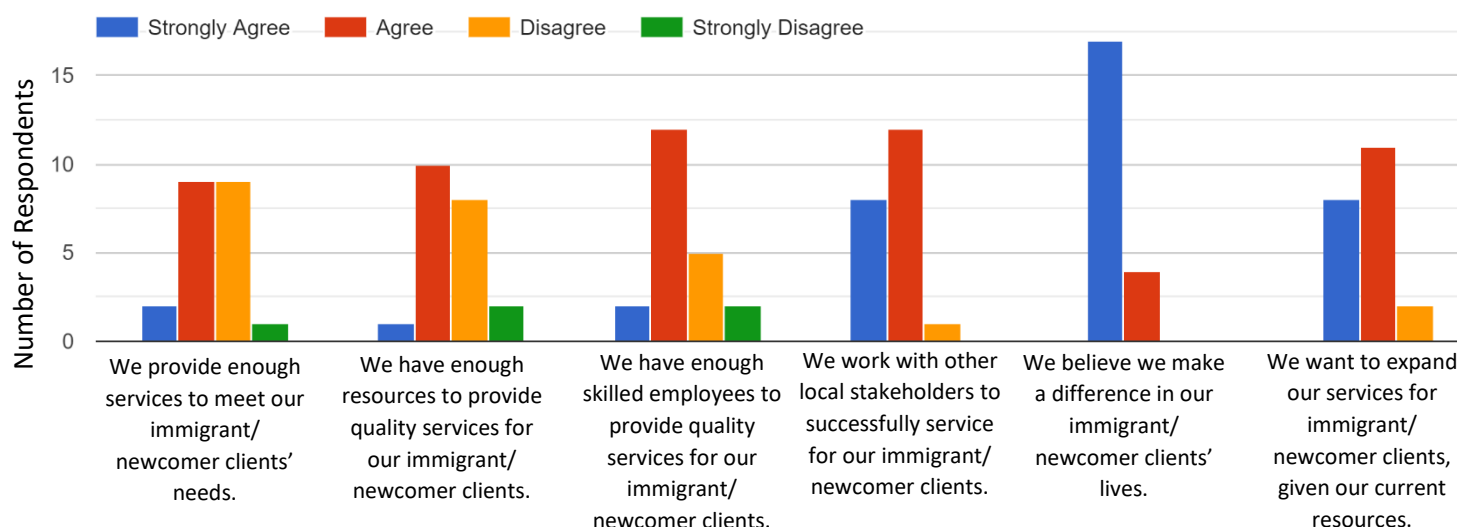


Figure 15: Rural CALPs' capacities as immigrant-serving providers

## f. CONCLUSION

It's clear that CALPs serve many foundational learners of various backgrounds. As a result, many stories of success entail "laddering" services that build on previous successes of the client. For example, the responses to the Immigrant Client Success Stories prompt followed a pattern similar to first addressing immediate settlement needs like finding housing or acquiring a healthcare card, then building confidence/English language skills, building critical skills like driving or numeracy, and finally transitioning to milestones like home ownership or an employment/education program that marks the clients' successful "graduation" from the CALP services, so to speak. Although they may intermittently return, they become more successful in social and economic realms of community life—arguably more independent and able to lead a more satisfying life, rather than just surviving—as a result of the building blocks established through CALP programs.

Isolated rural CALPs are particularly crucial to immigrant clients who are foundational learners, as many serve as "one-stop shops" for information and services for many barriered learners, given that "there is nowhere to send people for help." That being said, being situated in small rural communities means more limited access to most resources. These include financial resources, professional development opportunities, networking beyond the community, and the ability to access/refer clients to formal supports, especially in the legal, immigration, and governmental fields. In addition to providing the usual CALP services, many providers adopt the (usually) informal roles of advocate, social worker, counsellor,

consultant, settlement practitioner, and teacher. Furthermore, living in small, rural communities often means easing into the additional roles of friend and confidant. Despite the challenges associated with being a rural provider and strains on resources, there is an overwhelming consensus that rural providers make a difference in their clients' lives.

It is important, however, that the limited scope of this report is addressed. The survey on which it is based is not a comprehensive study; it is not based on a specific framework, it was conducted in a very short timeframe, and is limited to 21 respondents. Furthermore, while it captures the provider's perspective on impact and the experience, it does not include the clients' perceived impact.

Nonetheless, the providers' perspectives do give voice to experiences that have historically received relatively little attention. Indeed, until the recent pickup in interest, rural immigrant settlement experiences have been arguably understudied, compared to urban experiences<sup>10</sup>. Despite this, it's difficult to overstate the value of such services, especially in rural areas, where there are fewer places to turn to for help. Integrating into a new community is a highly challenging process, and the assistance and compassion offered by organizations like CALPs have the potential to not only improve a newcomer/immigrant client's wellbeing by equipping them with essential skills to navigate economic markets and social systems but also their perception of the community and its people. In sum, your work can help people find that your community is one that they would be glad to call home. As one respondent put it, "I love to see newcomers embrace their community knowing that I played a small role in that happening."

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<sup>10</sup> Radford, P. (2007). A Call for Greater Research on Immigration Outside of Canada's Three Largest Cities. *Our Diverse Cities*, 3(Summer), 47-52.; *Canadian Perspectives on Immigration in Small Cities*. (2017). Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.; Williams, A. M., Kitchen, P., Randall, J., Muhajarine, N., Newbold, B., Gallina, M., & Wilson, K. (2015). Immigrants' perceptions of quality of life in three second- or third-tier Canadian cities. *The Canadian Geographer*, 59(4), 485-504.

**g. APPENDIX: RESPONDENTS' STORIES OF CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES**

*While we try to keep editing/censoring to a minimum, some entries have been edited for clarity and/or to better protect the anonymity of client cases. Please email [newcomers@taberadultlearning.com](mailto:newcomers@taberadultlearning.com) if you have any questions, concerns, or modification requests. Where specific clients are mentioned, they have been assigned single-letter designations A-F.*

*There were 5 success stories submitted, 11 accounts of challenges, and 7 comments on what it meant to be a rural CALP that serves newcomer/immigrant clients.*

***Are there any specific newcomer/immigrant client success stories you would like to share?***

**Provider Success Story 1:**

We have had many success stories. **A** started with basic English, as she never went to English school, just German school. She has now gone through all levels of Basic English, then Adult Upgrading, and has successfully completed her Health Care Aid Certificate.

**B** had no English school, only German. He was told he would never drive because of his eyes. We referred him to a specialist. He was then referred to get eye surgery in Mexico and now has been given the go ahead to get his Learners and then drivers. **B** started with basic level one English and is now completing his 4<sup>th</sup> level before entering Adult Upgrading.

**Provider Success Story 2:**

I worked with this particular family in a home visitation program for newcomers. When I first started with them, **C** was at home due to having small children and was not attending LINC classes. She had also injured her back in a fall and was unable to sit for long periods of time. The family had 7 children ranging from 2 years to 16 years of age. Her husband, **D**, was attending LINC classes but was struggling as he only had a grade 5 education in his country. **C** had a grade 9 education.

After working with the family for 2 years the both **C** and **D** completed their CLB Level 4. **C** was continuing her ELL at the local college and **D** was trying to get a job but not successfully. **C** also wanted to get her driving license.

I was able to use a partner agency that had an employment program for newcomers and enrol **D** the program. After he completed it, he had a full-time job. I was also able to help **C** with her driving skills and she was able to get her class 5 driving license. The family no longer is in our program because they are doing very well.

**Provider Success Story 3:**

Of the many, I think **E's** is the most powerful. She came to our building three times before she built up enough confidence to come in the doors. We paired her with a wonderful tutor who worked with her for many years teaching her to speak English, read and write. (cont. next page)

As her confidence built, she started joining classes. As she started coming here more and more, in order to spend time with his wife, her husband started coming to classes. Based on what they learned in one class, they successfully bought their first home (after 30+ years of marriage).

With her husband as an advocate, they convinced one of their daughters-in-law to join our program. Now all three are actively learning English, take every class they can, volunteer for us wherever they can - and advocate in the LGM (Low German Mennonite) community. Thanks to them, we now have 15+ LGM learners in our program.

#### Provider Success Story 4:

We did have a learner, F, that came into our program for a short time that was seeking help with English Language Learning. She was here visiting her family on a tourist Visa and decided that she wanted to settle here in our community for the long term.

She started working with a tutor and was making great strides, but unfortunately her Visa was not going to be extended. In the short time that she was here, F's spoken English skills improved steadily and quickly and she was more confident and better able to communicate with other English-speakers. In this particular case, F was highly educated in her own country and wanted to be able to contribute back to our community once she relocated here, but the language barrier/Visa process was holding her back.

#### Provider Success Story 5:

We had a session on Provincial and Federal Senior's programs and services, our LGM (Low German Mennonite) staff invited people they knew were of age and provided translation during the presentations.

The next day, one of the couples had come in about their OAS (Old Age Security) application from 5 years ago. They had applied, received a letter back, didn't know what it said or what they had to do. Our LGM settlement staff worker called in for them, sent in the necessary information and they received a cheque for thousands of dollars in back pay.

***Are there any specific challenges you would like to share, pertaining to servicing newcomer/immigrant clients? How did you overcome them, or what is preventing you from overcoming them?***

#### Provider Challenges Account 1:

Our greatest challenge is offering babysitting so that the mothers can attend English classes. The men usually go to the bush to work for the winter and they usually have only one vehicle.

#### Provider Challenges Account 2:

The biggest challenge we had was building the trust with the clients so that they would want to come to our program. We overcame this by building a strong partnership with our local settlement agency and went to programs that they offered in order to get to *(cont. next page)*

know the clients. We also did a home visitation program in partnership with the settlement agency where we went to them and worked on English Language Learning and parenting in Canada in their homes.

Once they became comfortable with this they would tell their immigrant friends and this helped to grow the attendance in our programs.

Provider Challenges Account 3:

I was unable to communicate with the Newcomers in my area because they were not coming into the office due to either work schedules or not being able to speak English.

I started giving out my cell phone number so they could use a text translation app. This is useful to let them know what I do—and don't do—and also to clarify information if the language barrier proves too much.

Provider Challenges Account 4:

We had many people who could not attend specific classes due to child care needs. Due to budget restraints, we could not hire child minders; due to financial barriers, students were unable to hire baby sitters; due to isolation issues, students did not have family/friends close by who were willing to look after their children.

In attending Monica SD's session at the 2018 Symposium, I learned she was using volunteers for child minding. After bringing this solution to management, we now have 7 volunteer child minders who are usually able to fill the needs of students.

Provider Challenges Account 5:

Establishing dialogue and working relationships between departments is important and can help.

Developing a map of who to contact, in rural communities, would help connecting clients to correct programs. The immigration office is only open once a week, and only if the roads are clear.

Provider Challenges Account 6:

When newcomers come to our community they feel it is very small and there are not enough services. In instances where they are able, they will usually choose to move to a big city where there are more people with the same culture and values, as well as more access to services and transportation.

This is not something our little organization can change but we do our best to support our learners in meeting their goals, whether it be learning goals or moving on to the next part of their life journey goals.



Provider Challenges Account 7:

The biggest challenge for our learners by being in our remote location, is access to proper immigrant support systems such as Canadian Immigrant Services, or Service (cont. next page) Canada locations that do not require travel to destinations for learners who do not know how to navigate our cities.

Many times, immigrants need to rely on other volunteers in our community who are solid, reliable and willing to commit to getting them from point "A" to "B" in order to have transportation to any city centre to attend their appointments, or seek government services specifically for their needs. With us being so remote and depending on what the immigration services require of them, it is not always possible or easy for the learners to attend. Financially speaking, it is not feasible for us to provide transportation for them to get to these appointments as the expense would become astronomical (sometimes the learner needs to access services in the bigger centres multiple times per week).

Another challenge for us is accessibility. We are located in a farther corner of our community, and when immigrant clients need help accessing services, we can sometimes provide transportation via the community bus. However, this service is only available to our community on specific days/times of the week. Being that we are a fair distance away from the hub of our community, we will make a point of meeting the learner in a place closer to them if possible.

Provider Challenges Account 8:

There are many challenges in providing newcomer/immigrant services. In our office we have nearly a hundred client files for whom we have third party authorization and are allowed speak on their behalf, because they don't have the ability to communicate and comprehend in English. There isn't a day that goes by without someone being on hold for over an hour waiting for a government agency to respond.

Immigration and settlement can be very complicated, lots to learn; in rural areas like ours there is nowhere to send people for help.

Provider Challenges Account 9:

Although LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) is available as a part time study option, it would be beneficial for newcomers who speak very little English to be able to take more regular classes somehow. We can't currently provide daily classes but it would be very beneficial to the students if it were possible. (I know some LINC classes are full time but I'm not sure where those are)

Provider Challenges Account 10:

Training staff to be prepared for all the situations newcomers experience and the PTSD they are going through. Providing compassionate care training and mental health training so staff can do their jobs efficiently.

Provider Challenges Account 11:

While this is most certainly not always the case, when there is a longstanding absence of cultural diversity in rural communities, it can be particularly challenging to educate the general public on the topics of diversity, inclusion, and newcomers.

There are often more resources and efforts dedicated to addressing these subjects in larger urban centres. Rural CALP resources may already be spread thin, but it's important to remember that encouraging a welcoming and inclusive environment is incredibly important to newcomers' wellbeing/integration and having a supportive community as a whole.

***Is there anything else you'd like to add about what it means to be a CALP that serves newcomer/immigrant clients, the services we offer, or what you'd like to see in our future?***

Provider Comments 1:

If we can ease even one of the many challenges that new immigrants can face, we have done well. If we can ease more than one challenge, I feel we have gone above and beyond what they expected. We know we can help in many ways to ease their challenges, but they don't know how much we can offer till they walk through our doors.

Provider Comments 2:

I would like to see much more training in working with Newcomers.

Provider Comments 3:

This is the best job ever. I have worked here since 2005 and not once have I been yelled at. I am willing to bet there are very few people who can say that. Our clients are so appreciative of the help we can give them that often they become good acquaintances/friends. Often, I bump into them in the community and they know I am a "safe" person to ask for help - my grocery shopping trips take a while, as does my daily walk. I love to see newcomers embrace their community knowing that I played a small role in that happening.

Provider Comments 4:

Rural communities have the challenge of finding enough numbers to run a class. I would like to see classes being hosted over the Chromebox. We could connect to other communities and have the numbers to run programs.

Provider Comments 5:

A CALP could never do it without extra funding and resources. We are in a great position to provide the services, but a great deal of training is necessary and extra support staff would be needed. If we lost the funding from Alberta Labour for newcomer supports we would not be able to provide the services we now do.

Provider Comments 6:

Training specifically for people who do not have a teaching degree, on how to teach ELL, etc. An actual class. Not a binder or a book to look at and figure out yourself. Give a better foundation so later on, a person CAN figure it out for themselves from that point on.

Provider Comments 7:

We are going to see more newcomers moving to the rural areas and we need to be better prepared to serve them