

## Chapter 1

### Section 1.13

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

# Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers

Follow-Up on VFM Section 3.13, *2017 Annual Report*

#### RECOMMENDATION STATUS OVERVIEW

	# of Actions Recommended	Status of Actions Recommended				
		Fully Implemented	In the Process of Being Implemented	Little or No Progress	Will Not Be Implemented	No Longer Applicable
Recommendation 1	2		1	1		
Recommendation 2	4		1.5	2.5		
Recommendation 3	1		1			
Recommendation 4	4	0.5		3.5		
Recommendation 5	3		1	2		
Recommendation 6	3			3		
Recommendation 7	2	2				
Recommendation 8	1			1		
Recommendation 9	2			2		
Recommendation 10	1			1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Overall Conclusion

On June 29, 2018, the Ontario government announced that as part of a realignment, the former Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration would be integrated into the new Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). In addition, the government announced that the immigra-

tion training programs would transfer from the former Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). The transfer of these programs was completed in November 2018. Following a re-alignment between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, effective October 21, 2019 the program area responsible for the

bridge training program is now within the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

As of October 3, 2019, MCCSS and MTCU had fully implemented or had made significant progress in implementing 31% of the recommended actions in our *2017 Annual Report*. For example, the former Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration formalized the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement in November 2017 with the federal government. In addition, MCCSS has acted to identify service providers it funds to provide services to newcomers that do not meet their contracted service and financial targets, and to take corrective action. As well, MCCSS has completed draft guidelines for allocating funding, which require service providers to receive a score of at least 60% on their proposals to be eligible for new or continued MCCSS funding. It plans to finalize and implement these in January 2020.

However, MCCSS and MTCU have made little progress toward implementing the remaining 69% of the actions we recommended. They informed us they would need more time to implement these actions, including:

- recording all relevant service and financial information in their information systems to enable periodic monitoring of the services and the service providers they fund;
- reviewing and assessing significant differences between service provider costs to take action where these are not reasonable;
- assessing the effectiveness of communication efforts intended to ensure that newcomers are aware of available services, in order to identify and take action on areas of weakness; and
- obtaining and using information on the number of newcomers served in programs provided by other Ontario ministries, and on the newcomers' outcomes, to help MCCSS assess the degree newcomers are settling and integrating in Ontario.

The status of actions taken on each of our recommendations is described in this report.

## Background

Between 2012 and 2016, more than 510,000 immigrants settled in Ontario as permanent residents. Many of them needed help getting settled—everything from finding housing and work to accessing health care.

The federal government is the primary funder of newcomer settlement services in this province, but the former Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) also had a mandate to successfully settle and integrate newcomers.

The Ministry-funded settlement and integration services that include language training, newcomer settlement services, and bridge training programs to help internationally trained immigrants obtain certification and employment in regulated and highly skilled occupations.

These services are primarily delivered by contracted service providers that include, for example, public and Catholic school boards, universities, colleges and non-profit community organizations.

On June 29, 2018, the Ontario government announced that as part of a realignment, the Ministry would be integrated into the new Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). In addition, the government announced that the Ministry's immigration training programs, including bridge training programs, would transfer to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). The transfer of these programs was completed in November 2018.

MCCSS provided approximately \$110 million in 2018/19 (\$100 million in 2016/17) for over 89,000 individuals to access settlement services (over 80,000 in 2016/17), more than 70,000 participants in language training (more than 68,000 in 2016/17), and over 5,300 individuals who participated in education and training through bridge training programs (almost 6,000 in 2016/17).

We noted in our 2017 audit that the Ministry did not have effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that its service providers consistently provided effective services, although we found that its bridge training program did help many internationally trained newcomers get jobs.

The following were some of our significant findings:

- There had been limited co-ordination between the Ministry and the federal government, which is the primary funder of settlement services in Ontario, to avoid duplication of services. We estimated that in 2016/17, about \$30 million in Ministry-funded newcomer services were provided to individuals also eligible for services funded by the federal government. The extent to which the Ministry also needed to fund these services was unclear.
- Ministry funding allocations to each of its settlement and integration services were not determined based on a comparison of the relative need for each service by newcomers, and funding was not always allocated to the most needed services. For example, we noted a decline in the average enrolment for Ministry-funded language training in the previous five years, and the amount spent on the program during this period was \$24 million less than budgeted. In contrast, funding for the Ministry's bridge training program had decreased over the previous five years, from \$34.4 million in 2012/13 to just \$23 million in 2016/17, even though the majority of people who completed bridge training programs found jobs.
- The Ministry did not establish minimum scores that service-provider applicants were required to achieve to qualify for bridge training and newcomer settlement funding. As a result, the Ministry approved and funded several proposals to which it had assigned scores of less than 50%.
- The actual cost per client visit in the newcomer settlement program, and the cost

per client employed in the bridge training program, differed significantly among service providers. However, the Ministry did not compare service and financial data reported by providers to assess whether differences were reasonable and providers were operating in a cost-effective manner.

- While the average employment rate among all bridge training program contracts completed in the three years prior to our audit was 71%, we noted significant differences between programs. For example, many reported that fewer than 40% of their graduates found jobs.

We made 10 recommendations, consisting of 23 action items, to address our audit findings.

We received commitment from the Ministry that it would take action to address our recommendations.

## Status of Actions Taken on Recommendations

We conducted assurance work between April 2019 and October 2019. We obtained written representation from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services that effective October 31, 2019, it has provided us with a complete update of the status of the recommendations we made in the original audit two years ago.

### Ministry Funding of Newcomer Services Is Not Allocated Based on Assessment of Need and Cost-Effectiveness, and Not Always to Highest Scoring Service Providers

#### Recommendation 1

*In order for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to use its resources cost-effectively so that it best meets the settlement and integration needs of newcomers to Ontario, we recommend that the Ministry:*

- *evaluate the need for provincial funding of services also funded by the federal government*

*and, where appropriate, minimize the duplicate funding for these services;*

**Status:** In the process of being implemented by April 2021.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that while the Ministry was aware that the settlement and integration services it funds often overlap with services provided by the federal government, it had not assessed the need for this duplication of services and had not taken action to minimize it. We estimate that for 2016/17, approximately \$30 million in language training and newcomer settlement services was funded by the Ministry when such services were already provided and funded by the federal government.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS (formerly the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) had signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in December 2017 with the federal government on settlement and integration, to establish a framework for working collaboratively on planning, design and delivery of settlement services for newcomers. A joint priority of the MOU is to reduce duplication of services and address service gaps.

MCCSS advised us that a mapping of all federal and provincial settlement and integration services across the province has been completed. In addition, MCCSS completed a review of its language training program in September 2019 that identified opportunities to reduce duplication with services funded by the federal government. For example, MCCSS advised us that it is working with the federal government to develop referral protocols in order to reduce the number of permanent residents who are eligible for federally funded services enrolled in provincial language training classes. It advised us that by the end of 2019 it plans for language assessment centres to refer permanent residents to federally funded language training on a priority basis. MCCSS also advised us that it expects to implement further opportunities to reduce duplication with federally funded services by April 2021.

- *assess the actual needs of newcomers to confirm the appropriate mix of services it should fund and allocate funding based on this need.*

**Status:** Little or no progress.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry's funding allocations for each service was determined separately and was not based on a comparison of the relative need for each service or its success in meeting the needs of newcomers. In addition, the Ministry had not assessed the needs of newcomers to help ensure that its funding was distributed to the appropriate mix of services.

In our follow-up, MCCSS informed us that as of April 2019, all transfer payment funding for settlement and integration programs had been consolidated into one program funding envelope to provide flexibility to allocate funding based on the demand and need for each of its services. MCCSS also completed a review of its language training program in September 2019, which included an analysis of the demand for the program. In addition, MCCSS advised us that it was reviewing the newcomer settlement program and expected to complete the review by the end of 2019. MCCSS noted it would use these reviews to determine the future direction of the programs, including the optimal mix of services to better meet the needs of newcomers, and anticipates that any changes to funding would occur after April 2021.

#### Recommendation 2

*To better ensure that it allocates funding to the highest scoring service providers based on the needs and outcomes of the newcomers they serve, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:*

- *establish a minimum score that all service providers have to exceed to be eligible for continued*

*or new funding so that funding is not provided where significant concerns have been identified;*

**Status:** In the process of being implemented by MCCSS by January 2020. MTCU has made little or no progress.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that funding for bridge training and newcomer settlement is awarded to service providers based on the Ministry's assessment of their submitted proposals, and that the Ministry had not established minimum scores required for applicants to qualify for funding. For example, our review of approved proposals for bridge training found that five of the 17 approved proposals to renew existing programs scored less than 50%, including one that received a score of just 27%.

In our follow-up, MCCSS advised us that it had reviewed its assessment tools and standards for awarding funding to service providers. In March 2019, MCCSS completed the development of draft guidelines requiring service providers to receive a score of at least 60% to be eligible for new or continued MCCSS funding. MCCSS intends to finalize and implement these guidelines by January 2020.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that the vast majority of the bridge training projects it is currently funding ended the first year of a three-year cycle on March 31, 2019. MTCU also advised us that to address the recommendation, it will determine the means by which it will select the service providers it will fund, and then establish a robust scoring process to determine who qualifies for funding. It plans to implement this recommendation by November 2020.

- *document the rationale for its selection and non-selection decisions;*

**Status:** In the process of being implemented by MCCSS by January 2020. MTCU has made little or no progress.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry did not consistently provide an appropriate rationale for why it funded lower-scoring service providers of bridge training and newcomer settlement. For example, we found that in some instances, higher-scoring proposals to provide newcomer settlement services in similar geographic areas were rejected in favour of lower-scoring proposals. We noted that there was no clear rationale documented to demonstrate why these decisions were made, and the Ministry was unable to provide us with an explanation.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had developed draft guidelines for the allocation of funding to service providers. These guidelines specifically require staff who assess a service provider's proposal for funding to provide a clear and detailed written rationale to support the funding recommendation. MCCSS intends to finalize and implement these guidelines by January 2020.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that the vast majority of the bridge training projects it is currently funding ended the first year of a three-year cycle on March 31, 2019. MTCU also advised us that to address the recommendation, it will determine the means by which it will select the service providers it will fund, and then establish a robust scoring process for their selection, which is to include documenting the rationale for selecting or not selecting a service provider. It plans to implement this recommendation by November 2020.

- *extend the length of time between notification and submission of bridge training proposals to provide service providers with sufficient time*

*to prepare proposals for programs that address the employment and licensure training needs of newcomers;*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry provided only two months for applicants to prepare and submit proposals for new bridge training programs. The service providers we spoke to expressed concerns, including that the time provided was not sufficient, the timing of the requests for proposals (which were issued in the summer) made preparation more challenging, and that it would be helpful if the Ministry provided notice in advance of issuing a request for new proposals. Ministry management similarly agreed that it would be helpful to provide advance notice and more time to prepare proposals for new programs.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that the vast majority of the bridge training projects it is currently funding ended the first year of a three-year cycle on March 31, 2019. MTCU also advised us that to address the recommendation, it will determine the means by which it will select the service providers it will fund, and ensure enough time is provided to prepare proposals. It plans to implement this recommendation by November 2020.

- *include criteria in its assessment of service provider proposals for funding that assess whether the requested funding is commensurate with the value of services to be provided.*

**Status: In the process of being implemented by MCCSS by January 2020. MTCU has made little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that while the Ministry's criteria for assessing proposals for bridge training and newcomer settlement funding included an assessment of the quality of the budget

submitted by each applicant, the Ministry did not assess the cost-effectiveness of proposals against pre-established targets. We found that service costs per person varied significantly among providers delivering these services. For newcomer settlement service providers, we noted that the contracted average cost per client visit across all core service providers in 2016/17 was \$61. However, we found that the contracted cost differed substantially across service providers, from a low of \$19 to a high of \$354 per visit. For bridge training, the average cost per participant expected to obtain employment was targeted at \$11,900. However, we noted that the cost differed substantially across different programs, from a low of \$3,100 to a high of \$44,700.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had updated its proposal assessment criteria and incorporated specific value for money and cost-effectiveness criteria such as cost per unit of service, cost per client, and cost per outcome in the draft guidelines for allocation of funding that it plans to use to assess service provider proposals and inform funding decisions. MCCSS plans to finalize and implement these guidelines by January 2020.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that the vast majority of the bridge training projects it is currently funding ended the first year of a three-year cycle on March 31, 2019. MTCU also advised us that to address the recommendation, it will determine the means by which it will select the service providers it will fund, and put in place criteria to assess whether the funding is commensurate with the value of the service to be provided. It plans to implement this recommendation by November 2020.

## Ministry Does Not Consistently Monitor Service Providers to Confirm That Services Are Delivered Cost-Effectively

### Recommendation 3

*So that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has accurate and reliable information to monitor the settlement and integration services it funds and can make informed decisions on its programs, we recommend that the Ministry implement a process to periodically validate the accuracy of service and financial information reported by service providers.*

**Status: In the process of being implemented by MCCSS by March 2021.**

**MTCU has made little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry did not have sufficient processes in place to validate the accuracy of service data and most financial information it collected and used to monitor and fund service providers. We also found that the Ministry had not addressed issues identified in a 2013 Ministry review about the accuracy of service and financial data collected from service providers.

In our follow-up, MCCSS advised us that as a result of the recent transfer of settlement and integration programs to MCCSS from the former Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, it is currently reviewing existing tools and resources that guide the monitoring and validation of reporting in other MCCSS transfer payment programs. MCCSS advised us that it has revised contracts with newcomer settlement service providers and was in the process of implementing revised contracts with language training service providers by the end of 2019 to require project-specific audited financial information. MCCSS also identified that it plans to implement new procedures for the validation of service information, including guidelines for site monitoring activities to validate service information reported by transfer payment recipients, by April 2020. MCCSS advised us that these guidelines

will be used to validate service information starting in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that that it is reviewing and assessing the bridge training program to address the issues raised in our 2017 audit, and plans to take steps to implement this recommendation by March 2021.

### Recommendation 4

*So that settlement and integration services provided to newcomers are cost-effective, accessible and timely, and effectively meet the needs of newcomers, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:*

- *periodically collect relevant information (such as on wait times and barriers to accessing services) from service providers, newcomers and other relevant stakeholders and, where necessary, take corrective action;*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that with the exception of the language training program, the Ministry did not collect wait times for the services it funded to help assess if newcomers were served on a timely basis. Although the Ministry had the ability to produce reports on wait lists for language training, we were informed that it could only do so at a specific point in time and was unable to produce reports for average wait times over a period of time. We also noted that recent reports, including Ministry-commissioned evaluations of its language training and newcomer settlement services, identified accessibility concerns.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had made limited progress toward implementing this recommendation. MCCSS had undertaken analysis of language training wait-list data and identified opportunities to address issues by following up with

those providers who have the longest wait lists to discuss options and to implement corrective action. MCCSS also advised us that it planned to enhance its wait list information to track wait lists by individual course by the end of 2019.

MCCSS also participated in consultations and focus groups in 2018 and 2019 with service providers and newcomer clients to better understand the needs of newcomer clients and the barriers they face. As well, for 2018/19, MCCSS has added a question related to client barriers and wait lists that service providers are to report to it on. MCCSS advised us that is currently analyzing information from these reports, and plans to complete its analysis by the end of 2019. MCCSS noted that it plans to implement changes related to any issues and barriers that it identifies that can be addressed quickly by January 2020, and determine a timetable to implement changes that will take considerably more time after it completes its analysis.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that that it is reviewing and assessing the bridge training program to address the issues raised in our 2017 audit, and plans to take steps to implement this recommendation by March 2021.

- *record all relevant service and financial information in its information systems to enable periodic monitoring of services and service providers;*

**Status:** Little or no progress.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that with the exception of language training, where detailed service information was recorded in the Ministry's IT systems, the Ministry was not sufficiently using its IT systems to aggregate service and financial information reported by service providers. As a result, the Ministry was not able to generate reports that compare

service and financial information between service providers to identify significant differences.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had made limited progress toward implementing this recommendation. MCCSS advised us that, as was the case at the time of our 2017 audit, procedures are in place to record relevant service information in its database to track language training services. However, for the newcomer settlement program, service and financial data is being recorded and aggregated in spreadsheets. The Ministry was unable to provide a timetable for when it plans to begin to record information for the newcomer settlement program in its information systems. However, it noted that it is participating in a cross-ministry transfer payment modernization initiative that aims to develop common business, data collection and reporting processes utilizing its IT systems.

In November 2018, responsibility for the bridge training program was transferred to MTCU. To date, MTCU has not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU advised us that that it is reviewing and assessing the bridge training program to address the issues raised in our 2017 audit, and plans to take steps to implement this recommendation by March 2021.

- *identify instances when service providers do not meet their contracted service and financial targets, follow up to assess the reasonableness of deviations from targets, and take corrective action where necessary;*

**Status:** MCCSS has fully implemented this recommendation and MTCU has made little or no progress.

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry had processes in place to monitor whether service providers met their service and performance targets for both the bridge training and newcomer settlement programs, it did not consistently follow up with service providers when



they fell short of their targets, to assess if corrective action was needed.

In our follow-up, MCCSS informed us that for the 2018/19 fiscal year, it had taken follow-up and/or corrective action in 94 instances where service providers did not meet contracted service or financial targets. These actions included changes to payments and requests for additional financial and service information to address discrepancies between approved budgets and reported targets. MCCSS indicated that effective fall 2018 reporting templates were updated to reflect new procedures implemented to support consistent follow-up with service providers who fail to meet targets.

In our follow-up, we found that MTCU had undertaken some steps toward implementing this recommendation but significant work remained outstanding. MTCU informed us that since assuming responsibility for the bridge training program in 2018, it has reviewed program delivery and accountability practices and provided training to regional staff on how to review reports submitted by service providers. At the time of our follow-up, MTCU noted that it was collecting and reviewing service and financial information reported by service providers for the 2018/19 year to assess service provider performance and evaluate whether corrective action is necessary. However, MTCU noted that to fully implement the recommendation, it also plans to develop monitoring tools to better track performance, and take steps to emphasize performance by monitoring and reducing funding to service providers that do not meet their contracted targets. MTCU was planning to fully implement this recommendation by March 2021.

- *periodically review and assess the significant differences between service provider costs to assess their reasonability, and to take action when they are not reasonable.*

**Status:** Little or no progress.

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry had manually aggregated much of the service and financial information reported by service providers, it did not use this information to identify and assess significant cost differences between service providers to help identify opportunities to improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of its services. From a review of service and financial information, we identified significant cost differences between service providers that should be followed up on to determine whether they are reasonable or, if not, where corrective action should be taken.

In our follow-up, MCCSS advised us that it was in the beginning stages of benchmarking the services it funds against similar services, as well as analyzing cost differences between the service providers it funds to assess the reasonability of their service delivery costs. MCCSS expects to begin taking corrective action based on this analysis by the end of March 2020.

In our follow-up, we found that MTCU had not made progress toward implementing this recommendation. MTCU noted that it was collecting and reviewing service and financial information reported by service providers for the 2018/19 year. MTCU advised us that it plans to fully implement the recommendation by March 2021.

## Performance Measurement Is Insufficient to Enable Management to Make Informed Decisions and Assess Whether Newcomers Are Successfully Settled

### Recommendation 5

*To help determine whether the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's (Ministry's) settlement and integration goals for newcomers are met, and to enable the Ministry to assess the effectiveness of the settlement and integration services it funds, we recommend that the Ministry:*

- *establish settlement and integration milestones for newcomers and reasonable time frames for achieving such milestones to measure against;*  
**Status: In the process of being implemented by March 2020.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry's goal was to successfully settle and integrate newcomers socially and economically, it had not established milestones and time frames to determine when this goal is reached. We noted that Ministry management and the newcomer settlement service providers we visited agreed that this would be helpful in periodically measuring the progress of newcomers in settling and integrating.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had started to develop settlement and integration milestones for newcomers and time frames to reach such milestones. Work completed to date includes a literature scan to identify models for measuring settlement and integration outcomes; a jurisdictional scan of federal, provincial and territorial approaches to settlement and integration programming and performance measurement; and the development of a draft milestones framework. MCCSS has developed sample milestones that plot various time frames against potential outcomes for areas of integration that include language and communication, economics, education, housing and health. It plans to complete the framework by March 2020.

- *establish performance indicators and targets that provide sufficient information to help the Ministry measure the progress of newcomers and the outcomes from specific services provided to newcomers in helping them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario;*  
**Status: Little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry had established four new performance indicators, they may not have been sufficient to

monitor the settlement and integration outcomes of the newcomers it serves. We found that Ministry performance indicators did not measure key aspects of integration, including health, housing and education. As well, we found that performance targets were not detailed enough to monitor newcomer employment and inform policy and programming decisions.

In our follow-up, MCCSS informed us that the future direction of its settlement and integration services is currently under review. MCCSS noted that it is exploring options for future program design and delivery and it expects to decide on a program framework by the end of 2019. It plans to establish a performance measurement strategy by February 2020 following decisions on a future program framework and direction.

- *consistently monitor the performance of its services and service providers to identify and take corrective action where targets and expectations are not being met.*  
**Status: Little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry did not consistently monitor the performance information it collected from service providers that deliver settlement and integration services to identify instances that required follow-up and corrective action. As well, we found that the Ministry did not have consistent performance indicators to help measure the effectiveness of its settlement and integration services. We found that the Ministry had not established a process for analyzing performance information collected from service providers and could not demonstrate that senior management was using this information to assess the effectiveness of its settlement and integration services.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had made little progress toward implementing this recommendation. MCCSS advised us that it planned to analyze language training data to review learner progression results in order to identify instances

where its expectations are not being met, and to bring such instances to the attention of service providers for corrective action by the end of 2019. However, as at the time of our 2017 audit, MCCSS did not periodically measure and monitor the effectiveness of its newcomer settlement services.

We found that MTCU had made some progress toward implementing this recommendation, but significant work remained outstanding to fully implement it. MTCU informed us that since assuming responsibility for the bridge training program in 2018, it had provided training to regional staff on how to review reports submitted by service providers. At the time of our follow-up, MTCU noted that it was collecting and reviewing information reported by service providers for the 2018/19 year to assess their performance and evaluate whether corrective action is necessary. However, MTCU noted that to fully implement the recommendation, it also plans to develop monitoring tools to better track performance, and take steps to emphasize performance by monitoring and reducing funding to service providers that do not meet their contracted targets. MTCU was planning to fully implement this recommendation by March 2021.

## Some Newcomers Are Not Aware of Available Settlement Services

### Recommendation 6

*To help ensure that newcomers are aware of available services that can help them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:*

- *translate its relevant website and other key information about its settlement services into languages that are understood by newcomers;*  
**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that MCCSS's two websites that provided information on its settlement and integration services were available only in

English and French. Therefore, newcomers not proficient in either language may not have found them useful to obtain the information they need. A 2016 external evaluation of language training included a survey of school board representatives and identified that 74% of respondents indicated that lack of information promoting language training services in the first language of newcomers is a reason why learners lack an awareness of the program.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had migrated to one primary website. We reviewed the website during our follow-up and found that MCCSS had translated the content of the website's landing pages that identify key services for newcomers, including MCCSS settlement programs, into 26 languages. MCCSS advised us that it selected these languages because they are commonly spoken in Ontario. However, MCCSS advised us that due to cost constraints it had not translated the supporting information within the website links, including its own program information on language training and newcomer settlement services. As a result, newcomers may still lack awareness of available services that can help them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario. MCCSS advised us that it is currently reorganizing the site's content and developing a new landing page, which it intends to complete by the end of 2019.

- *assess the effectiveness of its communication efforts to identify and take action on areas of weakness;*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry provided information on the settlement and integration services it funds on its websites, it did not have a formal communications strategy, or a process in place to assess the effectiveness of its communications efforts to identify gaps, help ensure newcomers are aware of services available to them and determine if it is meeting the needs of newcomers. We reviewed external evaluations

commissioned by the Ministry on its settlement and integration services, spoke with newcomer settlement service providers, and reviewed Ministry service data on language training, and we noted that newcomers may not always be aware of the services available to them.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had made limited progress toward implementing this recommendation. To date, MCCSS has been collecting metrics, such as average visits per month, from its website and social-media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook. MCCSS plans to begin regularly evaluating the effectiveness of its content in 2020.

- *work with service providers to identify opportunities to further improve newcomer awareness of services in Ontario.*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, the newcomer settlement service providers we visited reported that newcomer awareness of settlement services could be improved. One service provider estimated that 40% of newcomers were not aware of available settlement services. All the service providers we spoke to indicated that they primarily rely on word of mouth for outreach, and that further outreach activities would be helpful in reaching newcomers.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had taken limited action toward implementing this recommendation. It advised us that it has worked with select service providers to conduct focus group meetings with newcomers in order to receive input on newcomer settlement needs and experience, and that these discussions generated recommendations about opportunities to improve newcomer awareness of services in Ontario. It advised us that decisions regarding whether and how to further engage service providers in discussions are pending and expected by the end of 2019.

## Silos in Service Delivery Keep Provincial and Federal Programs from Realizing Their Full Potential to Help Newcomers

### Recommendation 7

*To improve the efficiency of its settlement and integration services and the outcomes of the newcomers they are provided to, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration work with the federal government to:*

- *put in place as soon as possible an agreement to co-ordinate their settlement and integration services to minimize duplication of services;*

**Status: Fully implemented.**

#### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that although the Ministry and the federal government both provide similar services to help settle and integrate newcomers, there had been limited co-ordination to avoid duplication of the services they both provide. We also noted that the Ministry previously had an agreement with the federal government to co-ordinate their respective settlement and integration services, but the agreement had expired in 2011 and had not been replaced. At the time of our audit the Ministry advised us that it was in the process of negotiating a new agreement with the federal government.

In our follow-up, we found that in November 2017, Canada and Ontario had signed the five-year Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA), which formalizes the federal-provincial partnership on immigration matters.

MCCSS also informed us that Ontario had signed three related memorandums of understanding with the federal government intended to enhance the sharing of best practices, improve co-ordination of settlement and integration services, and reduce duplication.

- *identify and share best practices in the delivery of settlement and integration services for newcomers.*

**Status: Fully implemented.**

### Details

In our follow-up, we found that in December 2017, Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Settlement and Integration Memorandum of Understanding with the federal government to work collaboratively and share newcomer program and service information, as well as best practices.

In our follow-up, we also found that MCCSS had taken action to identify and share best practices, through its participation in Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Groups (Groups) that were established to advance work on common priorities related to newcomer integration and to share information, research and best practices. The Groups include representation from the federal government as well as other Canadian provinces and territories. Recently, the Groups have focused on newcomer pre-arrival supports, mental health supports, social media, newcomer employment, literacy and employment-related language training, and performance measures for settlement outcomes. MCCSS advised us that this information would help inform its future program directions and changes.

## Co-ordination between Ministries Has Been Inadequate to Help with Overall Integration of Newcomers

### Recommendation 8

*To help meet the needs of the newly arrived Syrian refugees, we recommend the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Refugee Resettlement Secretariat work with the other ministries it has provided recommendations to on services that include employment, health and housing, in order to establish timelines for their implementation, and to periodically report on their progress.*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry's former Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (Secretariat), established in response to the federal government's launch of a national plan to resettle

Syrian refugees, consulted with organizations and individuals involved in resettling Syrian refugees to identify and make recommendations on opportunities for improving service delivery to the Ministry as well as other ministries. The Secretariat identified gaps and made recommendations related to issues that include employment, housing and health. However, it advised us that specific action had yet to be taken to address these gaps and recommendations. In June 2017, the Secretariat was replaced by the Refugee Resettlement Secretariat, which had a broader mandate that focused on all refugees.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had not made significant progress toward implementing this recommendation. MCCSS informed us that the Refugee Resettlement Secretariat concluded its mandate on March 31, 2019, but noted that it plans to continue the work started by the Secretariat. MCCSS plans to create an inter-ministerial policy framework by March 2020 that includes several Ontario ministries to build a whole-of-government approach to addressing immigrant and refugee settlement and integration goals.

MCCSS also noted that it has started to develop a settlement and integration milestones framework for newcomers and time frames to reach such milestones. MCCSS plans to complete its milestones framework by March 2020 and to begin reporting on the achievement of milestones in 2020/21, including those related to housing, education, health care and employment.

### Recommendation 9

*To help meet its goals to successfully settle and integrate newcomers, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration work with other ministries that provide services that can contribute to the successful integration of newcomers to:*

- *obtain and use information on the number and outcomes of newcomers served in these programs, to help the Ministry assess the degree to which newcomers are settling and integrating;*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that with the exception of the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat's work surrounding Syrian refugees, the Ministry's co-ordination with other Ontario ministries that provide services to newcomers that can help them to settle and integrate had been limited. As well, we noted that the Ministry did not have formal arrangements in place to receive information from other ministries on the number of newcomers they serve and their outcomes.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had not made significant progress toward implementing this recommendation. However, MCCSS noted that it plans to create an inter-ministerial policy framework by March 2020 that includes several Ontario ministries to build a whole-of-government approach to addressing immigrant and refugee settlement and integration goals.

MCCSS also distributed a survey to other Ontario ministries in 2019 to identify programs and services supporting newcomer integration, and to identify whether they collect information on use of services by newcomers. MCCSS plans to use the information from the survey to identify ministries with which an ongoing collaboration should be developed to review programs, data and outcomes of immigrants. MCCSS advised us that it is difficult to estimate an implementation date for this recommendation due to the collaborative nature of the work.

- *identify and explore opportunities to increase the use of services that demonstrate a significant contribution to the settlement and integration of newcomers.*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry's co-ordination with other Ontario ministries that provide services to newcomers that can help them to settle and integrate had been limited. We contacted several ministries and identified a number of services they provide that can contribute to the successful integration of newcomers. In addition,

several ministries provided us with information about the number of newcomers they serve and, where available, service outcomes.

In our follow-up, we found that MCCSS had not made significant progress toward implementing this recommendation. MCCSS advised us that it surveyed different ministries in 2019 on the programs and services they provide that contribute to newcomer integration. The Ministry advised us that it plans to use the results of the survey to begin collaborating with the relevant ministries in order to identify opportunities for increasing services that demonstrate successful settlement and integration of newcomers.

### Recommendation 10

*We recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration collect relevant information to further inform its discussions with the federal government, which is responsible for immigration in Canada, with respect to the federal government's allocation of funding to the Province.*

**Status: Little or no progress.**

### Details

In our 2017 audit, we found that the Ministry was not aware of the total spending related to newcomers across all ministries in Ontario, and advised us that no one ministry had this information. As well, we found that the Ministry did not have formal arrangements in place to receive information from other ministries on the number of newcomers they serve and their outcomes.

MCCSS informed us that it distributed a survey to other Ontario ministries to identify programs and services they provide that support newcomer integration. MCCSS plans to work with ministries that provide such programs and services to identify cost and service information in order to inform bilateral discussions on cost-sharing for expenditures with the federal government. MCCSS also informed us that it has had two discussions with the federal government to discuss service costs associated with refugee claimants.