



Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers

2017 Value-for-Money Audit

Why We Did This Audit

- In the five calendar years between 2012 and 2016, more than 510,000 immigrants settled in Ontario as permanent residents. Many newcomers need help to get settled and integrate in Ontario.
- Although the federal government is the primary funder of settlement services in Ontario, the provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has a mandate to successfully settle and integrate newcomers. In 2016/17 it paid service providers about \$100 million to deliver such services.

Why It Matters

- Many newcomers rely on Ministry-funded settlement and integration services. For example, in 2016/17, service providers delivered settlement services to over 80,000 individuals, language training to more than 68,000 individuals, and education and training programs (bridge training) to almost 6,000 individuals.
- Timely and effective services can help newcomers successfully settle and integrate in Ontario.

What We Found

- There was 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 estimate 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 needs to fund these services is unclear.
- The success rates of bridge training programs, which help internationally trained immigrants obtain certification and employment in regulated and highly skilled occupations, varied among service providers. Among bridge training program contracts completed in the last three years, an average of 71% of graduates found employment. However, some programs reported that fewer than 40% of their graduates found jobs.
- There were also significant differences between school boards in outcomes for language learners. About half of all language learners who received at least 100 hours of training demonstrated some progress in learning English or French in the 2015/16 school year. However, results at individual school boards ranged from no learners demonstrating progress at one board to 78% demonstrating progress at another. The Ministry did not follow up on these significant differences to see if corrective action was needed.
- The Ministry does not assess significant cost differences between service providers to ensure they operate cost-effectively. For example, based on bridge training contracts completed in the last three years, the average cost per individual who completed training and found a job ranged from a high of \$106,100 in one service provider's program to a low of \$3,600 in another provider's program.
- The Ministry has not established minimum scores that prospective service providers must achieve to qualify for funding. The Ministry approved and funded several proposals from service providers with a score of less than 50%. These included bridge training programs where providers subsequently reported that between just 26% and 32% of those who completed the programs obtained employment. Ministry funding allocations to each of its settlement and integration services are not determined based on a comparison of the relative need for each service.
- We found funding is not always allocated to the services most needed by newcomers. For example, we noted a decline in the average enrolment for Ministry-funded language training in the last five years, and the amount spent on the program during this period was \$24 million less than budgeted. At the same time, funding for the Ministry's bridge training program has decreased over the last five years, from \$34.4 million to just \$23 million in 2016/17, even though the majority of people who completed bridge training programs found jobs.

Conclusions

- The Ministry did not have effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that the service providers it funds consistently provide newcomers with effective services.
- The Ministry could not demonstrate that it allocates funding to its different services and service providers based on the needs of those they serve, and commensurate with the value of the services provided.
- The Ministry does not consistently assess program outcomes and does not currently report outcomes publicly. In addition, outcome information collected is not sufficient to monitor newcomer settlement and integration outcomes.