

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FINDINGS FOR THE YORK REGION IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

The following table summarizes the major themes and key findings across all of the consultations. Each of these themes and findings is explored in further detail throughout the report.

Emerging Themes	Key Findings
Service Use and Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culturally appropriate and responsive programs are required to meet settlement needs 2. Services in one location support successful integration by meeting multiple needs of newcomers 3. Newcomers rely on informal supports but don't always get current information 4. Gaps exist between newcomer needs and available services 5. Mentorship programs and volunteering help meet multiple integration needs 6. Service systems can be overwhelming for newcomers 7. Eligibility restrictions and citizenship limit access to newcomer supports 8. Geographic location of services and transportation affect service accessibility 9. A lack of affordable child care affects social and economic participation 10. Flexible hours would improve access to supports and services
Awareness and Need for Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many newcomers are not aware of available supports and services 2. Outreach is effective in places where newcomers already gather 3. More effective delivery of information is needed upon arrival 4. Need for more effective information sharing between front-line staff 5. Lack of awareness of supports for those who are socially isolated increases their vulnerability
Social Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It takes up to 15 years to integrate socially and economically 2. Lack of time and cost can be barriers to community participation 3. More opportunities are needed for newcomers and long-term residents to interact 4. A lack of familiarity with Canadian norms is a challenge to integration and inclusion
Language Needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language impacts all aspects of a newcomer's ability to settle and integrate 2. Language classes need to provide consistent information and address workplace needs 3. Need for more coordinated, better quality, and cost-effective interpretation and translation
Organizational Capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding and pace of growth impact organizational capacity 2. Mainstream organizations face capacity challenges because of broader mandates 3. Funding structure limits ability to strategically anticipate needs 4. Organizational capacity should be built using inclusive practices and having a diverse workforce
Collaboration and Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnership increases capacity and has potential for knowledge sharing and growth 2. A good foundation for collaboration exists in York Region 3. Meaningful partnerships require time and resources 4. More information and knowledge sharing are needed across sectors

Funding and Government Policy

1. Funding systems make service planning challenging
2. All levels of government have important roles in supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers
3. Funding disparities for settlement services continue to exist between other GTA municipalities and York Region

Welcoming Communities

1. A sense of community is grounded in social connection
2. More education is needed about the benefits newcomers bring to communities
3. Community attitude is a significant factor in creating welcoming communities
4. Living in own cultural community has benefits but narrowed social networks can delay integration

Employment

1. Newcomers need support for soft skill development, networking and accreditation
2. Newcomer entrepreneurs contribute to our economy but need support to succeed
3. Lack of “Canadian Experience” is a barrier for employment
4. Unemployment and underemployment result in loss of skills for newcomers
5. Mentorship and bridging programs are helpful, but there is limited availability in York Region

Employers' Needs

1. Need for more employer education on benefits of hiring newcomers
2. Small and medium-sized businesses have distinct challenges and opportunities in supporting newcomers
3. Employers need more opportunities to coordinate, share information, and connect to potential talent pools

Health

1. Access to health care is challenging because of health services gaps
2. Immigrants' health deteriorates over time
3. Mental health is increasingly an issue for newcomers

Housing

1. Lack of affordable housing in York Region contributes to unstable housing situations
2. Settlement supports need to offer support in finding housing
3. Newcomers need more education about tenants' rights

Women

1. Women face the biggest gaps in programs and services
2. The caregiver role in the family highlights need for child care supports
3. Finding employment is a greater challenge for women
4. Domestic violence further isolates newcomer women

Youth

1. Youth need afterschool programs, peer support groups and safe “hang out” spots
2. Youth have an easier time settling and integrating than their parents
3. Process of integration leads to inter-generational conflict
4. Making friends can be challenging for youth
5. Need to address language and cultural barriers at school

Seniors

1. Seniors are at high risk of facing social isolation
2. Health is a significant and growing challenge for newcomer seniors
3. Social and financial independence are significant issues for seniors
4. Changing family duties has mixed impact on seniors

Francophones

1. Need for language appropriate services
2. Dispersion of Francophone residents in York Region leads to challenges connecting with other Francophones

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