



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

**PROMOTING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY  
THROUGH SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

**Report of the Standing Committee on  
Citizenship and Immigration**

**David Tilson  
Chair**

**JUNE 2015**

**41st PARLIAMENT, SECOND SESSION**

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# **THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

has the honour to present its

## **SEVENTH REPORT**

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied Promoting Economic Prosperity through Settlement Services and has agreed to report the following:





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## PREAMBLE

On 19 February 2015, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (the Committee) agreed to:

Undertake a study on ways of promoting economic integration through settlement services in order to ensure that immigrants and refugees are able to use their skills and experience to secure employment and reach their full potential; and in order to assess activities of settlement services across Canada and abroad as well as employment councils.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteen witnesses appeared before the Committee and several written submissions were received in the course of this study.

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1 Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Meeting no. 38, 19 February 2015.



# PROMOTING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH SETTLEMENT SERVICES

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## INTRODUCTION

Immigrants have a valuable contribution to make in helping to address Canada's labour market challenges. Yet, data shows that immigrant unemployment and underemployment persist, despite the fact that most recent immigrants are highly educated. The phenomenon of immigrants with medical degrees driving taxis in Canada is so well known that it is the subject of both a film<sup>2</sup> and a report by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).<sup>3</sup>

The federal government has at its disposal different policy instruments that have been shown to impact on immigrant economic outcomes. These include selection criteria for immigrants and refugees, the number of immigrants admitted annually and the percentage allocated between family class, humanitarian, and economic class categories, and services delivered for the specific purpose of facilitating integration into Canadian society.

Some of these policy levers have been recently applied. For instance, the selection criteria for applicants to the Federal Skilled Worker program were changed in 2012 to emphasize characteristics — such as youth and advanced official language skills — associated with economic success. Similarly, the Express Entry system that came into effect in January 2015 scores and ranks prospective economic class immigrants against criteria known to lead to economic success, giving considerable weight to job offers and support from provinces. The government has also shifted the proportion of immigrants in different categories, so that the economic class accounts for 60% of new entrants.

While many of these policy instruments focus on criteria for entry into Canada, this study is focused on economic integration through settlement services, which are federally funded services to help newcomers integrate into Canadian society. As noted in the study terms of reference, economic integration is achieved when “immigrants and refugees are able to use their skills and experience to secure employment and reach their full potential.”

In addition to agencies funded to deliver settlement programs, other actors also play an important role in improving immigrant economic outcomes in Canada. For instance, Immigrant Employment Councils have formed to help employers attract and retain skilled immigrants. Some regulatory bodies for professionals have streamlined foreign qualification recognition processes and even allow immigrants to begin this

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2 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM), [Evidence](#), 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 10 March 2015, 1000 (Margaret Eaton, Executive Director, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council).

3 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, [Who Drives a Taxi in Canada?](#) March 2012.

process while in their countries of origin. Within cities and communities across Canada, stakeholders from a range of sectors have come together to devise and implement a plan for successful immigrant integration.

As Audrey Andrews, of the Regional Municipality of Durham, stated before the Committee, “we are all in the business of settlement”.<sup>4</sup> She went on to say:

It is my experience that the economic integration and subsequent success of immigrants is most likely to happen when traditional CIC-funded settlement services and non-CIC-funded services, in other words, the broader community, work in tandem to create an environment that lends itself to immigrant success.<sup>5</sup>

As will be illustrated in this report, each stakeholder has a role to play in successful immigrant economic integration. The report begins by outlining “who does what” in settlement services related to economic integration, explaining CIC’s Settlement Program as well as other related programs. The following section puts forward four promising practices in settlement services, which the Committee believes can strengthen immigrant economic integration. This section describes each approach, how it makes a positive difference for immigrant economic integration, and what further action, if any, the Committee recommends. The third section provides a brief summary of gaps in the current settlement model identified by witnesses. In the conclusion, the Committee affirms that “we are all in the business of settlement” and puts forward some principles to guide the Government of Canada in making its contribution to immigrant economic success through settlement services.

## WHO DOES WHAT IN SETTLEMENT SERVICES RELATED TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

CIC funds the Settlement Program, which is delivered primarily by some 700 service provider organizations outside Quebec.<sup>6</sup> As explained by CIC, the Settlement Program:

... assists immigrants [permanent residents] and refugees to overcome barriers specific to the newcomer experience (such as a lack of official language skills and limited knowledge of Canada) so that they can participate in social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada. The program focuses on four areas: information and orientation; language training and skills development; labour market access; and welcoming communities.<sup>7</sup>

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4 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0900 (Audrey Andrews, Manager, Diversity and Immigration Program, Regional Municipality of Durham).

5 Ibid.

6 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 February 2015, 0915 (Catrina Tapley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Program Policy, Citizenship and Immigration Canada). Under the terms of the [Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens](#), the Quebec government is responsible for immigrant integration as well as other aspects of immigration in the province. The Quebec government receives a single transfer for these responsibilities from the federal government; in 2014, the transfer amounted to \$319,967,000 according to the [Public Accounts of Canada 2014](#), Volume III, Section 6 – Transfer Payments.

7 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, [Funding: Settlement and resettlement](#).

CIC's settlement program also funds "support services", which facilitate participation in the other services. Eligible activities under support services include child care for program clients and assistance with transportation.

Service provider organizations bid on Settlement Program funding through a request for proposals process and may include all four program areas or just one. In 2014, CIC distributed \$572, 212,198 in transfers under the settlement program.<sup>8</sup> CIC also hosts a website profiling "[best practices](#)" in settlement services, selected by a national panel of experts from government and settlement agencies.

Debbie Douglas, of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, explained that with respect to economic integration, settlement agencies in Ontario "support clients with credentials recognition, occupational language training, bridging, apprenticeship, job search, job development and employer engagement, mentoring, internship, entrepreneurship, professional networking, and ongoing support for job retention and career advancement".<sup>9</sup> She indicated further that most "services related to economic integration are funded by the provincial government and other sources of funding, and supported by hundreds of volunteers."

CIC also provides funding for pre-arrival orientation services delivered overseas by third parties, including the International Organization for Migration, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) (formerly known as the Association of Canadian Community Colleges), and S.U.C.C.E.S.S. As indicated in Table 1, each of these programs has a different reach in terms of location(s) where services are provided and in terms of eligible clientele(s). [The Canadian Orientation Abroad](#) program originated as an orientation program for refugees being resettled to Canada, whereas the [Canadian Immigrant Integration Program](#) originated as a program focused largely on economic integration and was targeted to economic class immigrants, such as those coming to Canada through the Federal Skilled Worker Program.

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8 Public Works and Government Services Canada, [Public Accounts of Canada 2014](#), Volume III, Section 6 – Transfer Payments.

9 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0855 (Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants).

**Table 1: CIC's Long-standing Pre-arrival Programs**

Program Name	Provider	Start Date	Countries Served	Clients (2010–2011)	Client Groups Served (2010 – 2011)
Canadian Orientation Abroad	International Organization for Migration	1998	40+	13,192	Federal Skilled Workers (30%) Refugees (49%) Family Class (12%) Live-in Caregivers (9%)
Active Engagement and Integration Project	S.U.C.C.E.S.S.	2008	South Korea, Taiwan	1,147	Federal Skilled Workers (51%) Business Immigrants (26%) Provincial Nominees (13%) Live-in Caregivers (4%) Family Class (6%)
Canadian Immigrant Integration Program	Colleges and Institutes Canada	2005	India, China, Philippines, United Kingdom	3,462	Federal Skilled Workers (98%) Provincial Nominees (2%)

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Evaluation of the Overseas Orientation Initiatives, July 2012, pp. 2–4.

In order to address gaps in service, CIC issued a request for proposals for fiscal year 2015–2016 for pre-arrival services targeting economic and family class immigrants, as well as refugees, which is “a first step toward ensuring that a greater number of newcomers have access to such services either in person or online when possible, no matter where in the world they are originating”.<sup>10</sup> Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander announced \$24 million in funding to expand pre-arrival services 13 April 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Through the “welcoming communities” stream of Settlement Program funding, CIC supports Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), which are local collaborative initiatives that bring a wide range of stakeholders together to develop a local settlement strategy with the ultimate goal of facilitating immigrant integration and better outcomes for newcomers. LIPs were first created in Ontario, as part of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. A similar model, called “Welcoming Communities” was developed in British Columbia when the province had responsibility for settlement services there. Now there are more than 30 LIPs in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia.<sup>12</sup>

LIPs do not provide settlement services. Rather, their core function is to prepare communities, institutions, and organizations for newcomers by convening stakeholders to work together to make host communities more welcoming to immigrants. Though each LIP is unique, workplace integration is a common theme among them, with a focus particularly

10 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 February 2015, 0900 and 1005 (Catrina Tapley).

11 Government of Canada, [Increasing overseas immigration services for faster integration into Canadian communities](#), 13 April 2015.

12 Pathways to Prosperity: Canada, [Local Immigration Partnerships and Place-based Initiatives](#).



on recruitment and bridging programs, recognition of international credentials, and changing organizational culture.<sup>13</sup>

Other collaborative initiatives that receive some settlement funding are Immigrant Employment Councils. Immigrant Employment Councils are local multi-stakeholder groups, which formed to tackle the problem of skilled immigrants' poor economic integration. Formally, they exist in 12 cities or regions across Canada.<sup>14</sup> Though each council is unique and location-specific, they do undertake similar activities. Generally, their focus is on equipping employers and immigrants, through activities such as mentorship, connecting skilled immigrants to employment opportunities, and helping companies to better recruit and retain skilled immigrants.

A related area of federal government programming and funding is foreign qualification recognition. Foreign qualification recognition is the process of "verifying that the knowledge, skills, work experience and education obtained in another country is comparable to the standards established for Canadian professionals and tradespersons".<sup>15</sup> The federal government has provided leadership on this issue by working together with provincial governments to establish the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, which is a joint federal-provincial commitment to timely credential recognition in targeted occupations.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is the lead federally on the Pan-Canadian Framework. ESDC also administers the Foreign Credential Recognition Program, which provides project-based funding for provinces, territories and other stakeholders, such as national associations and regulatory bodies, to improve the credential recognition process for internationally trained individuals. CIC plays an important role in informing prospective immigrants about credential recognition through pre-arrival services and the [Foreign Credential Referral Office](#).

Finally, CIC administers the [Resettlement Assistance Program](#) (RAP), which provides assistance to resettled refugees. The RAP includes income assistance for eligible refugees and provides some initial orientation tailored to this group, who then often use services available through the Settlement Program.

## **PROMISING PRACTICES TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

In the course of the Committee's study, four areas stood out as promising practices in settlement services to support immigrant economic integration: starting early (before immigrants have arrived in Canada), addressing barriers to employment, engaging

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13 Citizenship and Immigration Canada presentation entitled [Local Immigration Partnerships](#), WelcomeBC regional meetings April 3, 5, 8 and 12, 2013.

14 According to the [ALLIES website](#), the complete list includes Fredericton and Monton, Halifax, Waterloo Region, London, North Bay, Montréal, Niagara, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, British Columbia, and Edmonton.

15 Forum of Labour Market Ministers, [Report: A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications: November 2009 to December 2010](#).

employers, and supporting established collaborative initiatives and those in emerging settlement centres.

## A. Starting early

Witnesses stressed the importance of reaching out to immigrants in their countries of origin in order to help them shape realistic expectations and make informed decisions about immigrating and career prospects in Canada. Immigrants themselves have also indicated through survey research that they would have liked to receive more settlement information prior to arrival.<sup>16</sup>

Several witnesses spoke highly of the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP) in particular. This program, offered by Colleges and Institutes Canada, consists of a group orientation session combined with one-on-one meetings where prospective immigrants develop an individualized action plan, including employment and settlement steps to be taken pre and post arrival in Canada. CIIP also refers prospective immigrants to advisors in Canada (such as immigrant-serving organizations or colleges) and provides them with the opportunity to participate in webinars and online workshops.

CIIP participants generally have positive economic outcomes; within three months of arrival in Canada 47% of CIIP graduates were employed, 63% of those working in their field of expertise.<sup>17</sup> Margaret Eaton, of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), also praised CIIP for helping prospective immigrants make smarter choices on where to settle in Canada, saying:

One of the great successes of the very good programs — the CIIP overseas program run by colleges — is in directing people to the appropriate city. People may be thinking if they are going to be doctors, they will come to Toronto. What the program tries to do is say the person might have an easier time of it by going to P.E.I. instead. That pre-arrival piece is key.<sup>18</sup>

Witnesses were in support of providing more information to as many immigrants as possible before they come to Canada, with one witness going so far as to suggest that “settlement programming should be restructured so that more is delivered pre arrival and less post”.<sup>19</sup> In terms of what information would be helpful to immigrants pre-arrival, witnesses highlighted labour market information, the process for the recognition of foreign qualifications, and connections to Canada-based settlement services in particular.

Information on the Canadian labour market was proposed as a means of, first of all, helping immigrants decide whether or not to come to Canada. Witnesses suggested that information on job opportunities across Canada in a given field would allow immigrants to

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16 Victoria M. Esses, Written Submission dated 15 May 2015, p. 2.

17 Colleges and Institutes Canada, Written Submission dated 27 March 2015, p. 4.

18 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1025 (Margaret Eaton).

19 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0935 (Kelly Pollack, Chief Executive Officer, Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia).

identify settlement locations with the best personal economic prospects. Professor John Shields of Ryerson University specified exactly the type of labour market information that would be helpful for prospective immigrants: “We need to know how many jobs in particular sectors are available within a particular region, with a profile of the population that is within those jobs, where the potential gaps are emerging, and age profiles. Ideally, we need fairly detailed information regarding that.”<sup>20</sup>

Doing more to inform prospective immigrants about the recognition of foreign qualifications was also stressed by witnesses, as this would allow immigrants to come prepared and even to take some steps toward recognition of their credentials while still in their country of origin.<sup>21</sup> According to these witnesses, having more pre-assessment or pre-qualification carried out in the country of origin shortens the period to licensure in Canada.<sup>22</sup>

Some witnesses suggested that the government could venture even further down this vein by designating additional professional bodies to conduct the education credential assessment required under Express Entry.<sup>23</sup> [Express Entry](#) is the new application intake process for all Federal Skilled Worker, Federal Skilled Trades, and Canadian Experience Class applications, and a portion of Provincial Nominee applications as well. As part of their application, Express Entry candidates have to submit an assessment (conducted by a designated body) of the equivalency of their foreign diploma, certificate, or credential to a Canadian educational credential. Kim Allen, of Engineers Canada, indicated that his organization was trying to obtain this designation so that prospective immigrants in the engineering field would be directed to them, as many prospective engineers do not currently take advantage of information and opportunities available in order to seek recognition of their credentials.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, witnesses felt it was important that immigrants be connected with Canada-based settlement agencies while still in their country of origin, in order that they may know where to access support upon arrival. Witnesses spoke of offering “seamless support”, stretching from the country of origin to establishment in Canada.<sup>25</sup> Research by Professor Victoria Esses found that immigrants to Canada were “confused about who to go to in order to get help” and that they “lack information about and awareness of settlement services”.<sup>26</sup> She recommended the creation of a central repository of all

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20 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0955 (John Shields, Professor, Ryerson University, Department of Politics and Public Administration, as an Individual).

21 Moy Wong-Tam, Centre for Immigrants and Community Services, Written Submission dated 24 March 2015, p. 3.

22 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0930 (Kim Allen, Chief Executive Officer, Engineers Canada).

23 Currently the Medical Council of Canada and Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada are the only regulatory bodies designated for education credential assessment under the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations](#), s. 75(4).

24 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0930 (Kim Allen).

25 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0945 (Debbie Douglas).

26 Victoria Esses, p. 2.

settlement services available in different locations, to be made available in a variety of formats, including online.

The Committee is encouraged by the positive contributions of pre-arrival services in the improvement of immigrant economic outcomes and is pleased to note that the Government of Canada is taking steps to expand access to these overseas programs. In order to maximize the government's recent investment and make the greatest improvement in economic outcomes for the most immigrants, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, as it takes measures to improve labour market data, ensure that detailed labour market information is available to prospective immigrants online and through pre-arrival services.**

#### **Recommendation 2**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of both established pre-arrival services and any new initiatives to measure results achieved and identify best practices.**

#### **Recommendation 3**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada review pre-arrival services available to prospective immigrants to ensure that as many immigrants as possible are able to benefit from these services.**

### **B. Addressing barriers to employment**

A number of barriers to immigrant employment have been identified, both in the literature and in testimony before the Committee. These include inadequate access to child care, poor mental health, inadequate soft skills, lack of connections and problems with foreign qualification recognition, among others. Each of these barriers is explored in turn below.

#### ***Child Care***

Finding suitable child care was a barrier brought to the Committee's attention, in particular with regard to immigrant women's economic integration. For instance, Ms. Douglas pointed out that "Regardless of where women arrive in Canada, child care continues to be critically important to their labour market participation."<sup>27</sup> Some witnesses

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27 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0900 (Debbie Douglas).

also mentioned the importance of the family reunification immigration program, which can bring grandparents to Canada to provide child care at home.<sup>28</sup>

Witnesses also raised the issue of adequate access to child care in order to attend settlement services, such as language classes. They suggested that CIC-funded child care for settlement service participants is crucial for women's participation and recommended that, where possible, these child care opportunities be expanded so that more women could benefit.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Recommendation 4**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to provide supports, including child care, to immigrant women to facilitate their uptake of settlement services.**

#### ***Mental Health***

Witnesses mentioned that for some newcomers, poor mental health is a barrier to employment. Sherman Chan, of the Canadian Council for Refugees, for instance, stressed the “importance of mental health and psychosocial support services, especially [to] refugees and other newcomers in vulnerable situations, such as abused spouses and newcomer youth, since without addressing mental health issues, all aspects of integration and prosperity are slowed.”<sup>30</sup> As another witness observed, some vulnerable newcomers may need different support — such as trauma counselling — to get “job ready”.<sup>31</sup>

While CIC-funded settlement services provide some limited counselling, typically the role of settlement agencies in such situations is to refer clients to other community resources with the required expertise. Through this collaborative approach with other community services, the federally-funded settlement program is able to maximize its service to immigrants by promoting synergy with existing provincially-funded community health resources.

#### ***Inadequate Soft Skills and Lack of Connections***

A number of witnesses identified soft skills as a barrier for immigrants in obtaining or retaining a job.<sup>32</sup> Professor Shields explained that soft skills are “cultural understandings

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28 For example, CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0920 (Sherman Chan, Executive Committee Member, Canadian Council for Refugees).

29 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0930 (Kelly Pollack).

30 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0920 (Sherman Chan).

31 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1035 (Margaret Eaton).

32 For example, CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 February 2015, 0940 (Nooralhoda Hussein, Project Coordinator, London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership).

of the workings of the Canadian labour market” and suggested that more money could be invested in these programs as well as in mentoring.<sup>33</sup>

Catrina Tapley, from CIC, suggested that having community connections and establishing networks are factors of effective immigrant integration and settlement, saying “the establishment of effective professional, personal, or societal networks are also pretty key to an immigrant's success and really help to overcome that sense of isolation or loneliness that can sometimes happen when new immigrants come to Canada”.<sup>34</sup>

Settlement agencies are experts at meeting immigrants’ needs to improve soft skills and form networks through programs targeted to employment readiness, as well as mentoring and bridge training programs. In the words of Professor Shields:

One of the most valuable things that non-profit settlement services provides is connection. They link immigrants to other people, to other members of Canadian society, and increasingly importantly, to employers. In short, they build immigrant social capital. Establishing these people networks is absolutely crucial to success in the modern labour market. This can be very clearly shown in immigrant employment programs that deal with such things as job mentoring and skills bridging.<sup>35</sup>

Several witnesses highlighted mentoring as a particularly successful program for immigrants, and as a good example of partnership between settlement agencies, Immigrant Employment Councils, and employers themselves. In a mentoring program, skilled immigrants are placed in mentoring relationships with established professionals in their field. As Ms. Eaton explained, “Only about 80% of jobs are ever advertised, so we all rely on our personal networks in order to get that job or promotion. ...Mentoring helps immigrants to build a professional network, and that’s what gets you the job”.<sup>36</sup>

According to Kelly Pollack, of the Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia, immigrant participants in the mentoring program in British Columbia have an 85% success rate at finding employment in their field of work.<sup>37</sup> Ms. Eaton explained that in her experience, the mentor also benefits from participation in mentoring, with 95% of mentors in the Toronto program reporting that they are more likely to interview or hire a skilled immigrant due to their experience.<sup>38</sup> Such overwhelmingly positive results no doubt explain why witnesses recommended that “mentoring be integrated into all employment initiatives” and that it receive greater investment.<sup>39</sup>

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33 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0930 (John Shields).

34 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 12 March 2015, 0930 (Catrina Tapley).

35 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0925 (John Shields).

36 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1045 (Margaret Eaton).

37 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0920 (Kelly Pollack).

38 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1000 (Margaret Eaton).

39 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0900 (Debbie Douglas); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 930 (John Shields).

Ms. Eaton also told the Committee that her organization is already involved in two projects which are significantly expanding access to mentoring.<sup>40</sup> In conjunction with LEAP: The Centre for Social Impact, TRIEC is expanding its Greater Toronto Area mentoring program from 1,300 mentor matches annually to 6,000. TRIEC is also working with other Immigrant Employment Councils to create a national mentoring program for skilled immigrants.

The Committee is impressed by the testimony concerning the positive impact of mentoring programs for all participants and encourages CIC and other stakeholders to continue investing in and promoting such programs.

### **Recommendation 5**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada encourage successful mentoring programs to make a submission to the CIC hosted “[Best practices in settlement services](#)” website as a way of promoting these programs.**

### ***Foreign Qualification Recognition***

In terms of successful programs that address foreign credential recognition, witnesses identified bridge training programs.<sup>41</sup> According to Colleges and Institutes Canada, bridging programs help newcomers fill the gaps in their competencies and build a “bridge” to licensure and/or employment. In their written submission to the Committee, CIGan explained that bridging programs “ideally offer a combination of classroom and practical experience as well as cultural and language integration courses, and are offered in flexible formats through Canadian colleges and institutes”.<sup>42</sup> However, another witness explained that “bridging programs tend to be offered sporadically, move between institutions, and, at times, are discontinued once pilot funding ends, contributing to a lack of accurate and comprehensive information on current bridging programs”.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly these witnesses recommended that the Government of Canada provide secure funding for bridging programs and create a national registry of all such programs currently available.<sup>44</sup>

Witnesses noted that while significant work has been done to improve the process for the recognition of foreign qualifications, more remains to be done. Specifically, Ms. Eaton recommended that the government encourage additional regulated professions to develop a national standard,<sup>45</sup> Ms. Douglas mentioned the need for more internship or

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40 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1000 (Margaret Eaton).

41 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0930 (John Shields); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0910 (Tracey Vaughan-Barrett, Director, Recreation and Culture, Town of Ajax).

42 CIGan, Written Submission, p. 5.

43 Victoria Esses, p. 2.

44 CIGan, p. 6; Victoria Esses, p. 2.

45 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1030 (Margaret Eaton).

residency positions to deal with the bottleneck at this stage of the process,<sup>46</sup> and Moy Wong-Tam of the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, recommended that the government examine, with some regulatory bodies, the potential for mutual recognition agreements from the top source countries of immigrants.<sup>47</sup>

### C. Engaging employers

Witnesses emphasized the importance of engaging with employers, as “ultimately, they have to be willing to hire more immigrants into meaningful employment”.<sup>48</sup> While some witnesses suggested that some employers actively discriminate against people on the basis of foreign education or skin colour, others suggested that employers’ barriers to hiring immigrants may also be more subtle.

For instance, Ms. Pollack informed the Committee that many small and medium enterprises were overwhelmed at the prospect of hiring immigrants.<sup>49</sup> Further, she stated that many employers do not recognize barriers to successfully integrating skilled immigrants in their workplace, such as those related to workplace culture. Nor do they realize that continuing with traditional recruitment practices such as advertising on online job sites like Workopolis will not necessarily reach new skilled immigrant audiences. Also, according to some witnesses, some employers still do not see the “business case” for diversifying their workforce and are not yet motivated to make changes to the above on their own.

Employers will soon have unprecedented access to prospective immigrants as the Job Bank is integrated with the Express Entry immigration application system. Employers will be able to search the pool of immigrants who meet the criteria of at least one current economic class program and make them a job offer. Prospective immigrants will also be able to search job openings and contact employers directly.

Ms. Pollack noted:

As our country moves and refines our immigration system to become more demand-driven, so too must we refine our settlement services to engage more employers in the system. Express entry and the Canada jobs bank are key tools in the new system, but in order for employers to use these tools, they have to be informed, educated, and supported.<sup>50</sup>

Many stakeholders are already providing the kind of information, education, and support employers require in order to consider hiring new immigrants. Resources have been developed in order to help shift attitudes, support employers in surmounting barriers

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46 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0945 (Debbie Douglas).

47 Moy Wong-Tam, p. 3.

48 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0855 (Kelly Pollack).

49 Ibid., 0915.

50 Ibid.



related to foreign credential recognition and to review how they recruit, hire, retain, and promote immigrants.

The Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia provides an excellent example, whose activities include convening community forums on immigrant employment, connecting immigrants to employers in smaller communities, building partnerships with business and industry associations, connecting settlement agencies to the business community, and linking employers to professional immigrant networks.<sup>51</sup> Another good example is the Ajax Pickering Board of Trade, which is working with the Durham Local Immigration Partnership to develop a diversity engagement plan, “which is a first step towards business representatives acknowledging that it is in their best interest to understand the effects of immigration, Express Entry, changing demographics and their impact on business, practices, employers, employees and customers”.<sup>52</sup>

As Express Entry came online this year, employer engagement became a strategic focus for CIC as demonstrated by outreach initiatives undertaken by the department toward the business community in both the early development and lead up stages of implementation. CIC also created the Employer Liaison Network to help employers navigate the Express Entry system.<sup>53</sup> The goals of this network are to increase employer awareness and use of the Express Entry system and to facilitate matches between employers and immigrants.

Settlement agencies also work directly with employers, especially turning to them for placements and networking opportunities for their immigrant clientele. Some witnesses felt that these partnerships are increasingly significant as employers become more involved in immigrant selection,<sup>54</sup> and there could be more intersections between settlement agencies and employers. Rob Henderson of Biotech Canada even went so far as to suggest that funding be contingent on collaboration between immigrant-serving organizations and employers, as a means of ensuring that settlement agencies transcend silos.<sup>55</sup>

Some employers are on the forefront, having already developed and refined promising practices that could be widely shared. Other employers may need an incentive to change practices; Ms. Wong-Tam recommended that the government provide a tax break for employers who provide immigrants in regulated occupations with their first job, internship, or apprenticeship.<sup>56</sup>

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51 Ibid., 0900.

52 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0905 (Audrey Andrews).

53 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, [Notice – Express Entry questions and answers](#).

54 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0930 (John Shields).

55 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1025 (Robert Henderson, President and Chief Executive Officer, BioTalent Canada).

56 Moy Wong-Tam, p. 3.

Recognizing that getting hired (and promoted) is a critical aspect of economic integration, the Committee is encouraged by the good work already underway to engage employers in recognizing internationally trained talent and making the necessary changes to their workplace practices. The Committee supports this work and feels it should be widely promoted. However, the Committee also notes that many different stakeholders are involved in employer engagement and feels that there would be some value in a common vision and clearly defined roles.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support Immigrant Employment Councils in their outreach to employers.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada create a new category of best practices for “collaborative initiatives” as a way of profiling partnerships between settlement agencies and employers on the website “[Best practices in settlement services](#)”.**

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada develop a broader employer engagement strategy, so that a common vision could be developed with clear responsibilities for each stakeholder: Immigrant Employment Councils, settlement agencies, Local Immigration Partnerships, and CIC.**

### **D. Supporting established collaborative initiatives and those in emerging settlement centres**

The Committee heard that Local Immigration Partnerships have been very successful at making communities more welcoming, which is important for immigrants to achieve economic success and for communities to retain the immigrants who settle there. According to witnesses before the Committee, LIPs have made a difference by changing attitudes, leveraging funding, and strengthening linkages between sectors.

In terms of changing attitudes, Ms. Andrews gave the example of the city of Ajax, which has been “adapting policies, expanding recreation programs, and reviewing board recruitment policies to ensure that they are barrier-free, meet the needs of all residents and create pathways to becoming part of the Canadian family”.<sup>57</sup>

Ms. Andrews also described how, in her experience, the Durham Region LIP has been able to mobilize other stakeholders to share a vision of collective responsibility and contribute financially to learning or information-sharing events. She said, “Leveraging dollars in the community for our mutual event is a huge return on investment for CIC, as

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57 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0900 (Audrey Andrews).

far as I can see. We take those primarily staffing dollars, to be frank, and we turn them into a lot of deliverables that change how the community feels about newcomers and what its responsibility is.”<sup>58</sup>

LIPs are engaged in changing attitudes and forging new ways of working. As noted by several witnesses, this type of systemic change takes time.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, witnesses asked that LIPs continue to be funded, a recommendation the Committee also supports.

## **Recommendation 9**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support Local Immigration Partnerships.**

### ***Emerging Settlement Centres***

Witnesses suggested to the Committee that immigrants could do very well settling in smaller centres, rather than in large cities. Researcher Kristen Frank found that immigrants living in Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver experienced less employment success than those in smaller communities.<sup>60</sup> Reasons for this include competition for jobs by new Canadian-born labour market entrants in urban areas, and certain settlement advantages of smaller communities, such as greater opportunities to establish social networks, pressure to become proficient in English or French, and the importance of immigrants to small communities’ economic survival or official language minority presence.<sup>61</sup>

However, these smaller centres are not always well equipped to support immigrants. They may not be “welcoming communities”, in the sense of intentionally reducing barriers for newcomers because of their limited experience with immigration in the past. As Tracey Vaughan-Barrett, of the City of Ajax noted:

The challenges faced by fast growing second- and third-tier cities are many and can include working to overcome the attitudes low population diversity has fostered over time, a lack of awareness or sensitivity in some public institutions, and limited programs and service options available for our residents.<sup>62</sup>

Smaller centres without a history of immigration are also unlikely to have a settlement infrastructure or the range of services available in larger centres. Limited access to settlement services in smaller communities also affects immigrants with special settlement needs, such as women. For instance, settlement agencies might not be

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58 Ibid., 1040.

59 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 February 2015, 0855 (Nooralhoda Hussein); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0915 (Tracey Vaughan-Barrett).

60 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0905 (Kristyn Frank, as an individual).

61 Ibid.; CERIS, [Final Report: Settlement and Integration Research Synthesis 2009 – 2013](#), reference document provided by Professor Shields.

62 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0910 (Tracey Vaughan-Barrett).

able to make child care available or offer the full range of services available in larger centres, such as language classes at lower levels, due to low enrolment.<sup>63</sup>

Lacking CIC-funded settlement services, employers in smaller, emerging settlement centres sometimes find themselves providing orientation and settlement support to a newcomer new hire and her family. Mr. Henderson informed the Committee that some big employers like Irving have developed impressive settlement supports, but other employers were ill-equipped to play this role, especially in terms of reaching beyond the primary applicant to address the settlement needs of spouses and dependents.<sup>64</sup>

Because of these barriers, either in attitude or in resources, immigrant retention can be a problem for these smaller communities.<sup>65</sup> As Mohamed Al-Adeimi, of the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre noted, it is:

not enough [for successful integration] that a person gets a job. It's important that a person feels that his children are safe, that his family gets the support they need, that they have a place where they can spend their recreational time, a place where they can feel at home, a place that makes them think, "This is my community. I belong here. I am part of it."<sup>66</sup>

Ensuring that immigrants have success in smaller or emerging settlement centres takes creativity and collaboration. It is important that these communities develop a strategic plan along the lines of those developed by Local Immigration Partnerships; something Ms. Pollack reported many small communities are motivated to do, recognizing the need to work on immigrant retention.<sup>67</sup> A strategic plan could also help the community to better support employers or identify gaps that may be filled through other means.

For instance, public institutions in the host community (such as a library) could provide newcomers with access to technology (i.e., computer, Wi-Fi, video conferencing) that would enable them to connect with settlement service providers in another city. The use of technology and putting more services online are strategies settlement agencies are exploring to expand their reach, though these means have their limits; for example, they would not be universally available or substitute for in-person services.<sup>68</sup>

## Recommendation 10

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada fund research on promising practices to support innovative settlement services.**

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63 Ibid., 1020.

64 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1020 (Robert Henderson).

65 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 1035 (Margaret Eaton).

66 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 February 2015, 0905 (Mohamed Al-Adeimi, Coordinator, Newcomer Settlement Services, South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre).

67 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 10 March 2015, 0855 (Kelly Pollack).

68 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 1030 (John Shields and Debbie Douglas).

## WITNESS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDED SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Witnesses made a few suggestions concerning how settlement services could be expanded to allow more people access or to address needs currently going unmet.

In the view of some witnesses, the current restriction on access to settlement services only for permanent residents should be reassessed. Some proposed that temporary residents should be eligible for services because they often acquire permanent residency and stay in Canada and they exert pressure on settlement agencies to respond to their needs.<sup>69</sup> Others suggested that citizens should also be eligible, noting that this restriction poses a barrier for women in particular, who often delay their own process of qualification recognition while providing for their family as their partner becomes economically established in the short term.<sup>70</sup>

In terms of unmet needs, Mr. Shields pointed the Committee's attention to the "growing literature examining immigrants' experiences in the informal labour market, particularly in self-employment and entrepreneurship".<sup>71</sup> These avenues of economic integration have become increasingly important to immigrant women as well.<sup>72</sup> Mr. Shields explained that the literature points to unique barriers facing immigrants trying to establish in these sectors, such as the lack of strong networks and little Canadian legal and financial knowledge. Further, he argued that mainstream support for entrepreneurs is often not sensitive to the needs of newcomers. In his opinion, settlement agencies would be well positioned to help entrepreneurial immigrants to overcome these barriers through legal support, financial and loan process support, business knowledge, and mentorship and networking opportunities.

Finally, without much elaboration, Ms. Douglas suggested that there was room for improvement to settlement services for francophone immigrants outside of Quebec, recommending that they "be expanded and brought up to par".<sup>73</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Committee was greatly encouraged throughout the course of this study, not only by all of the promising initiatives underway to improve immigrant economic integration, but by the multitude of actors who have taken ownership over making immigrants succeed in this country. Immigrant economic success is not only a matter for the federal government, settlement sector, and the individual immigrant; rather Immigrant Employment Councils, Local Immigration Partnerships, provincial regulatory bodies, employers, and all levels of government have something to contribute.

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69 Mohamed Souлами, *Actions Interculturelles*, Written Submission dated 31 March 2015, p. 8.; Moy Wong-Tam, p. 3.

70 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0950 (Sherman Chan).

71 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 0930 (John Shields).

72 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 26 March 2015, 1045 (Debbie Douglas)

73 *Ibid.*, 0900.

In such an environment, it is important that CIC take a strategic approach — making a contribution where the department is uniquely positioned to do so (e.g., through funding pre-arrival orientation), where their funding can be leveraged to engage others (e.g., through LIPs) or where they can build capacity through research, coordination, and promoting successful practices and programs. The Committee believes that when “we are all in the business of settlement”, we all stand to benefit.

# LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, as it takes measures to improve labour market data, ensure that detailed labour market information is available to prospective immigrants online and through pre-arrival services. .... 10

## Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of both established pre-arrival services and any new initiatives to measure results achieved and identify best practices. .... 10

## Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada review pre-arrival services available to prospective immigrants to ensure that as many immigrants as possible are able to benefit from these services. .... 10

## Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to provide supports, including child care, to immigrant women to facilitate their uptake of settlement services. .... 11

## Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada encourage successful mentoring programs to make a submission to the CIC hosted "[Best practices in settlement services](#)" website as a way of promoting these programs. .... 13

## Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support Immigrant Employment Councils in their outreach to employers. .... 16

## Recommendation 7

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**Recommendation 8**

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**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support Local Immigration Partnerships. .... 17**

**Recommendation 10**

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# APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p><b>Department of Citizenship and Immigration</b></p> <p>Jean-Marc Gionet, Acting Director General, Refugee Affairs</p> <p>Ryhan Mansour, Acting Director, Horizontal Policy and Programs, Integration - Foreign Credentials Referral Office</p> <p>Natasha Pateman, Acting Director General, Integration and Foreign Credentials Referral Office</p> <p>Heather Primeau, Director General, Integration Program Management Branch</p> <p>Catrina Tapley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Program Policy</p>	2015/02/19	38
<p><b>Colleges and Institutes Canada</b></p> <p>Denise Amyot, President and Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Cynthia Murphy, Director, Canadian Immigrant Integration Program</p> <p><b>London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership</b></p> <p>Nooralhoda Hussein, Project Coordinator</p> <p><b>South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre</b></p> <p>Mohamed Al-Adeimi, Coordinator, Newcomer Settlement Services</p>	2015/02/26	39
<p><b>As an individual</b></p> <p>Kristyn Frank</p> <p><b>BioTalent Canada</b></p> <p>Robert Henderson, President and Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Engineers Canada</b></p> <p>Kim Allen, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia</b></p> <p>Kelly Pollack, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p><b>Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council</b></p> <p>Margaret Eaton, Executive Director</p>	2015/03/10	40
<p><b>As an individual</b></p> <p>John Shields, Professor, Ryerson University, Department of Politics and Public Administration</p> <p><b>Canadian Council for Refugees</b></p> <p>Sherman Chan, Executive Committee Member</p>	2015/03/26	42

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Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
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**Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)**

Debbie Douglas, Executive Director

**Regional Municipality of Durham**

Audrey Andrews, Manager,  
Diversity and Immigration Program

**Town of Ajax**

Tracey Vaughan-Barrett, Director,  
Recreation and Culture

# **APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS**

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## **Organizations and Individuals**

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**Actions interculturelles**

**Bloemraad, Irene**

**Centre for Immigrant and Community Services**

**Colleges and Institutes Canada**

**Esses, Victoria M.**

**Frank, Kristyn**

**London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership**

**Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)**

**South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre**



# REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 38, 39, 40, 42 and 51](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

David Tilson

Chair



## **NDP Supplementary Report on the CIMM Study on PROMOTING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH SETTLEMENT SERVICES**

*Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe, MP for Pierrefonds-Dollard*

*Irene Mathyssen, MP for London-Fanshawe*

*Jasbir Sandhu, MP for Surrey North*

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM) has looked at ways to promote the economic integration of immigrants through the integration services available in Canada and abroad. According to the NPD, the CIMM's report does not reflect the entirety of the comments and recommendations made by the experts that testified before committee.

### **Services targeted to immigrant women**

In answer to a question about whether access to better child care services at a low cost help immigrant women enter the labour market, Ms. Kristyn Frank, a research sociologist whose primary research interests relate to issues of immigrant integration in Canada, stated that: "Often that is one of the main things immigrant women cite when they talk about difficulties in accessing programs and services, so based on what immigrant women themselves have said, I would imagine that would be helpful. [A] lot of times with immigrant women what we see is that they have skills. They come to Canada with education and skills, but they aren't able to access the same kinds of services that others access due to their status often as family members, dependants. Some of what immigrant women have talked about in terms of accessing these services is quite different from what immigrant men would say." <sup>1</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada improves access to affordable childcare services.**

### **Better pairing of qualifications and employment**

Ms. Kelly Pollack, Chief Executive Officer, Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia, testified, before this committee that: "Mr. Allen spoke to the process of regulation and foreign qualification recognition. It is an extraordinarily complex one in this country. We have hundreds of regulators across Canada who are provincially regulated, who have different practices in terms of assessing qualifications. For newcomers, it is a challenge."<sup>2</sup>

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada works closely with educational institutions, provinces and professional bodies to abolish obstacles to the recognition of newcomers' qualification; such as unpredictable funding for transition programs, the absence of national standards, or insufficient number of internships and residencies.**

### **Access to integration services**

Mr. Sherman Chan, executive Committee Member of the Canadian Council for Refugees has testified that: "For immigrant women, we see that many of them may not access services in the beginning because they have many family responsibilities which they think are important for them to look after first. By the time they feel it's time to integrate, to become economically engaged in a job or language improvement,

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<sup>1</sup> CIMM, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 10 March 2015, 0930 (Ms. Kristyn Frank, as an individual).

<sup>2</sup> CIMM, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 10 March 2015, 0951 (Ms. Kelly Pollack, Chief Executive Officer, Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia).

for example, they may be already at the end of their permanent resident status and they may become Canadian citizens. That means they are not eligible for many of the services that are provided by CIC.”<sup>3</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada amends the restrictive criteria for access to settlement services, including the criteria for immigration status and time spent in Canada, in order to ensure better access to services for those in need.**

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<sup>3</sup> CIMM, Evidence, 2nd Session, 41st Parliament, 26 March 2015, 1010 (Mr. Sherman Chan, executive Committee Member, the Canadian Council for Refugees).