CCIS Southern Alberta Rural Resettlement Services Evaluation Results

April 2022

CCIS

Our Community
Our Future

This evaluation was conducted with support from Constellation Consulting Group.

Acknowledgements

We would like to sincerely thank all of the clients, partners and staff who participated in the evaluation of CCIS rural resettlement services in Southern Alberta. We appreciate the time you took to share your experiences and value the perspectives you shared as part of this evaluation.

Executive Summary

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants and refugees in Southern Alberta. Recognizing that newcomers who settle in rural Southern Alberta communities often have unique experiences and service needs, CCIS provides specialized services for newcomers in rural communities through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS. From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, 1,372 unique newcomers were supported. This included 742 clients supported in Brooks (57%), 233 clients supported in High River (18%), 105 clients supported in Rockyview County (8%), 89 clients supported in Okotoks (7%), 80 (6%) clients supported in Willow Creek District, 39 clients supported in Strathmore (3%), 11 clients supported in Drumheller (1%), 5 clients supported in Hanna (<1%).

To ensure continuous program improvement and deep understanding of the impact of the rural services offered by CCIS, in 2022 research and evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group were hired to evaluate CCIS' rural service offering. The evaluation involved multiple stakeholders and used mixed methods to garner robust results. The evaluation examined the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, and found that services offered through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS are creating positive social outcomes for newcomers across Southern Alberta, including increased ability for newcomers to integrate within their communities and feel a sense of belonging in Canada. Specifically, the evaluation found:

100% of newcomer clients felt the services they received were good or excellent. Based on the high level of satisfaction with the services they had received, **100%** of clients indicated that they would access BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS services again in the future if they needed further support.

100% of clients indicated that they would say positive things about their service experience to others. Clients described service staff using words such as 'friendly', 'supportive', 'accommodating', 'professional', 'respectful', 'encouraging', 'approachable', 'understanding', 'collaborative', and 'kind'.

Community and staff stakeholders felt that the services offered by CCIS for newcomers in rural areas fill a number of key service gaps without creating duplication of services.

Community and staff stakeholders highlighted the benefits of CCIS' contribution to community collaboration and inclusion for newcomers living in rural Southern Alberta.

Community partner and staff stakeholders highlighted the positive impacts of CCIS services in rural Southern Alberta, including impacts on both newcomers and communities. Stakeholders had observed clients integrating into communities more smoothly due to the support they received, and ultimately gaining a sense of belonging in Canada as a result. Stakeholders also indicated that their communities were positively impacted – becoming more inclusive, welcoming, and diverse as a result of CCIS' presence in their communities.

Staff felt that providing or facilitating services in first languages was a key best practice in their support for clients. Other best practices identified by staff included:

- Being flexible and accommodating.
- Undertaking community outreach efforts.
- Having a friendly and caring approach.
- Connecting clients to volunteer opportunities.
- Building strong community partnerships.
- Providing a wide range of services and referrals.

While all stakeholders expressed a high level of satisfaction with BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS services, they also provided thoughtful suggestions for service improvement. Based on the suggestions from stakeholders and overall learnings from the evaluation, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue to provide services and supports for newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities, and service expansion opportunities.
2. Seek opportunities to have a physical presence in more rural Southern Alberta communities.
3. Seek opportunities to support all newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities, no matter their immigration status.
4. Seek opportunities to offer services outside typical 9:00am to 5:00pm office hours.
5. Continue to collaborate within communities.
6. Continue to build strong relationships with local employers in rural Southern Alberta communities.
7. Continue to collect data from clients, with attention paid to ensuring data is collected consistently across all domains.
8. Seek opportunities to engage newcomer seniors within rural Southern Alberta communities.
9. Build on pandemic-related learnings and experiences to advance effective practices.
10. Continue implementing identified effective approaches and seek opportunities to share learnings about best practices.

Contents

1.0 Introduction & Background

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization that provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants and refugees in Southern Alberta, offering a wide variety of specialized services that are designed to aid and enhance the integration process.   With a vision of a society where immigrants and refugees can reach their potential, CCIS' mission is to effectively partner within the community to empower immigrants and refugees to successfully resettle and integrate.

Recognizing that newcomers who settle in rural areas often have unique needs and barriers to service access, CCIS seeks to provide accessible services for newcomers across Southern Alberta communities, including specialized services for newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities. To increase the accessibility of services within these rural communities, CCIS has local presence in:

- Brooks, serving the communities of Brooks & Newell County through Brooks and County Immigration Services (BCIS).
- High River, serving the community of High River and surrounding areas through Foothills Community Immigration Services (FCIS).
- Okotoks, serving the community of Okotoks and surrounding areas through FCIS.
- Strathmore, serving the community of Strathmore through FCIS.

- Rockyview, serving Airdrie, Chestermere, Cochrane, and the county of Rockyview through Rockyview Immigration Services (RVIS).
- Claresholm, serving the Municipal District of Willow Creek, Claresholm, Stavely, and Nanton through Willow Creek Immigration Services (WCIS).

Additionally, CCIS is moving towards offering services locally in Drumheller and Hanna.

Understanding that services offered to newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities can have significant impact, in 2022 research and evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group were hired to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the service offering provided through CCIS in these communities. The objectives of the evaluation were:

1. To understand the value of CCIS' offering of settlement services in rural communities.
2. To understand the settlement service gaps filled by CCIS services in rural areas.
3. To understand ongoing settlement service gaps not currently filled by CCIS' in rural areas.
4. To provide recommendations for future directions for CCIS in rural areas.

The current report presents findings from the evaluation along with recommendations for future directions.

2.0 The Context

While most newcomers to Alberta resettle in one of the province's two major hub cities (Calgary or Edmonton), there are a growing number of newcomers arriving in, or moving to, the province's smaller communities and rural or remote areas. [1] This is in part due to an increased recognition that newcomers can support the economies of rural communities if these communities experience decreased human capital due to declining and/or aging populations. The increasing number of newcomers in Alberta's rural communities is expected to continue in future years, bolstered by government plans aimed at encouraging immigrants to settle outside of Calgary and Edmonton (the *Rural Renewal Stream* and the *Rural Entrepreneur Stream).* [2]

Although there can be challenges for newcomers resettling in rural areas, research suggests that successful resettlement often results in positive attitudes about their experiences within smaller communities, including:[3]

- Perception that health services are more efficient and effective in smaller communities (e.g. shorter wait times).
- Higher satisfaction with resettlement services received.
- Perception that the community is approachable, friendly, trustworthy, welcoming.

- Perception of higher social capital base from which to draw within the community.
- Belief that learning English comes more quickly within smaller communities (often due to necessity).
- Feeling that smaller communities are safer.
- High satisfaction with lower cost of living .
- High satisfaction with housing options (e.g. more opportunity to have things like housing with a yard).

Further, research amongst the Canadian-born community members of small communities receiving an influx of newcomers has demonstrated that they also see benefits to the incorporation of newcomers into their community, including increased community diversity, increased exposure to new cultures, and increased community cohesion in supporting the needs of others.[4]

While all newcomers to Canada have unique pre-migratory journeys and identities that ultimately impact their immigration experience, research indicates that there are common challenges that often impact resettlement experiences in small communities and rural areas, including:[5]

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[1] See the Government of Alberta's 2021 fourth quarter update on population, available online at: https://www.alberta.ca/population-statistics.aspx

[2] See for example the *Rural Renewal Stream* and the *Rural Entrepreneur Stream* under the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program: https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-advantage-immigration-program.aspx

For further discussion of rural resettlement supports see: Irshad, H. (2013)

[3] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Caxaj & Gill (2017); Haugen (2019); Hellstrom (2020)
[4] Haugen (2019)
[5] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Caxaj & Diaz (2018); Caxaj & Gill (2017); Cohen & Caxaj (2018); Depner & Teixeira (2012); Hanley et al (2015); Haugen (2019); Hennebry et al (2016); Patel et al (2019); Sethi (2012); Teixeira & Drolet (2016); Whalen (2019)

- Lack of social connections and increased risk of social isolation.
- Language barriers and lack of English language learning opportunities.
- Lack of services available in first languages or interpreters to translate to first languages.
- Little awareness of available health services or how to access them.
- Health issues (incl. chronic health, mental health, dental health).
- No accessible cultural activities.
- Lack of transportation or barriers to accessing available transportation.
- Insufficient income and financial support.
- Little access to employment opportunities.
- Low understanding of local context and services.
- Low stock of affordable housing.
- High cost of living.

Although all newcomers to rural areas may experience these challenges to varying degrees, research suggests that there are specific groups of newcomers who experience greater challenges and vulnerability. These include:

- Newcomers who are women. Research suggests that these newcomers have a higher risk of isolation and exclusion from services based on the likeliness they have primary caregiver and/or homemaker responsibilities. In addition, newcomer women face the risk of domestic violence and present with unique health-based needs.[6]
- Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) These newcomers often form a large proportion of newcomers in rural areas, when they are employed on farms or in industrial jobs. TFWs can be at risk of exploitative employers and poor working conditions, which negatively impact their mental and physical health. Long work hours and distance from services can make TFWs extremely isolated and vulnerable, and they are often a hidden and underserved population.[7] Further, their temporary status can mean they are not eligible for available services, particularly resettlement services funded through the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada.[8]
- Refugees These newcomers often have traumatic pre-migratory experiences which increase their risk for complex mental health and trauma symptoms. Within rural communities specialized services to address these complex mental health issues may not exist, increasing this group's vulnerability.[9]

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[6] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Patel et al (2019); Sethi (2012); Sethi (2015);
[7] Caxaj & Diaz (2018); Cohen & Caxaj (2018); Depner & Teixeira (2012); Hanley et al (2015); Hennebry et al (2016); Waegemakers et al (2016)

[8] Canadian Council for Refugees. (2016); Flynn & Bauder (2015); Propenko & Hou (2018); Canadian Council for Refugees. (2010); Canadian Council for Refugees. (n.d.)
[9] Waegemakers et al (2016)

A study conducted with rural settlement service organizations in Western Canada demonstrated that in remote, small and medium-sized communities, organizations felt that while they had sufficient capacity to communicate and coordinate with local stakeholders and work in partnership to meet the needs of newcomers. At the same time, identified challenges for service providers included: [10]

- Inadequate funding for services.
- Inadequate staffing and expertise among staff (e.g. first language speakers).
- Difficulties mobilizing the local community.
- Difficulties encountered in the creation of governing and strategic plans.

Related to these challenges, research in rural communities suggests that there are ongoing service gaps for newcomers, including:[11]

- ESL classes that meet the diverse needs of all newcomers (i.e. varying levels of difficulty, different teaching techniques, hours of availability).
- Specialized health programming (e.g. female doctors, specialists, mental health support, disability support).
- Cultural community centres and access to cultural activities/food.
- Vocational/employment training programs.
- Affordable housing.

- Appropriate service hours (especially for TFWs that work long hours during the day).
- Adequate transportation systems.

Even when adequate services exist, newcomers in rural areas may nevertheless encounter personal barriers to accessing services. One study conducted with newcomers in a rural region of Ontario, identified personal barriers such as: [12]

- Not knowing where to find available programs and services.
- Financial constraints.
- Time constraints.
- Communication problems.
- Transportation constraints.
- Lack of affordable child care.
- Frustration with long wait lists.
- Experiences of discrimination.
- Low digital literacy.
- Perception that staff did not have the necessary skills to support them.
- Discomfort with the cold climate.

Further, while many newcomers move to rural areas in the pursuit of employment opportunities, there may nevertheless be barriers to entry into employment, including: [13]

- Language barriers.

[10] Ashton, Pettigrew & Galatsanour (2016)
[11] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Caxaj & Gill (2017); Haugen (2019); Hellstrom (2020); Patel et al (2019); Sethi (2012); Wiginton (2012)

[12] Sethi (2015)
[13] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Hellstrom (2020); Patel et al (2019); Rural Development Institute, Brandon University (2015); Wiginton (2012)

- Lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience.
- Lack of social connections.
- Lack of cultural accommodations or culturally appropriate employment opportunities. (For example, a common job for newcomers is working in the poultry/meat industry, but this can be challenging for Muslim newcomers who have halal requirements. Jobs in the agricultural sector have also become more mechanical and technical, meaning newcomers often don't have the language skills or certifications needed for employment in the sector.)[14]

Confronted with service gaps and barriers, rural communities often lean on the prosocial behaviours and volunteer activities of local community members to meet the needs of newcomers arriving in their communities.[15] While the community can play a large role in supporting newcomers, professional services are needed to ensure positive integration experiences and long-term community sustainability. Overall, it is suggested that "a new, innovative model is needed that can address rural realities in ways that permit the creative and flexible delivery of services, while also fostering and supporting the organic partnerships that characterize small communities and make them pleasant and desirable places to live."[16] This is important as the literature suggests that "newcomers who access a variety of services early in their settlement experience a smoother adjustment and higher propensity for a successful settlement. Support for this group, especially for some core services or for the ones in transition to becoming permanent residents, needs to be provided, as not doing so may lead to an experience of alienation and have negative impact on the adjustment, sense of community integration, and social inclusion the newcomer has, which hurts both the newcomer and the community in the long run."[17]

CCIS has attempted to respond to identified needs and gaps in settlement services in Southern Alberta by offering a wide array of services, partnership opportunities, community capacity building supports, and community development initiatives. The current evaluation assesses the impact of these activities.

[14] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021)
[15] Agrawal & Sangapala (2021); Haugen (2019)
[16] Rural Development Institute, Brandon University (2015b)
[17] Rural Development Institute, Brandon University and Immigration Research West. (2015a). Pg 19

3.0 Evaluation Objectives, Questions, and Methods

3.1 Evaluation Objectives and Questions

The objectives of the current evaluation were:

1. To understand the value of CCIS' offering of settlement services in rural communities.

2. To understand the settlement service gaps filled by CCIS services in rural areas.

3. To understand ongoing settlement service gaps not currently filled by CCIS' in rural areas.

4. To provide recommendations for future directions for CCIS in rural areas.

The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

- What role does CCIS play in rural communities overall?
- What, if any, gaps in service is CCIS filling?
- What, if any, gaps in service is CCIS not filling and could be?
- Is CCIS reaching all potential clients, and if not, who is being missed?
- Is CCIS creating desired outcomes for clients? (e.g. integration, connection to employment, etc.)
- What is the overall impact of offering services to newcomers in rural communities?
- What 'best practices' has CCIS developed for serving newcomers in rural communities?
- To what extent are clients satisfied with the services that they receive?
- What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on service access and need among clients?
- To what extent are rural-based staff satisfied with CCIS?
- What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on staff wellbeing and ability to perform their work effectively?
- In what ways could CCIS rural services be improved?

3.2 Evaluation Methods

The evaluation examined Southern Alberta rural services facilitated through CCIS for the 2021-2022 fiscal year (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022). The evaluation employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to garner robust results. Methods included:

An online survey for community partners of BCIS/FCIS/ RVIS/WCIS. Partners were also given the opportunity to participate in a short interview instead of the online survey. Surveys were distributed to approximately 45 partners. In total, **30** responses were received from partners serving clients in Black Diamond, Brooks, Chestermere, Claresholm, Conrich, County of Foothills, Crowsnest Pass, Eden Valley, High River, Indus, Langdon, Nanton, Strathmore, Taber, Turner Valley, Vulcan, and Wheatland County.

An online survey for newcomers in Southern Alberta (some of whom may have been BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS clients). This survey was facilitated by Insightrix as part of a Community Assessment and Marketing Strategy project being undertaken simultaneous to the rural service evaluation. In total, **65** responses were received from newcomers living in Southern Alberta. **97%** of the survey respondents had been or were currently clients of BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS.

An online survey for BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS staff. Staff were also given the opportunity to participate in a short interview instead of the online survey. All 30 rural Southern Alberta staff were invited to participate in the evaluation and **24** staff ultimately shared their perspectives through a survey or interview.

Interviews with recent BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS clients. In total, **6** recent clients provided feedback via an interview. Interviews were conducted in first languages by trained interpreters, if necessary. Interview languages included: Spanish, English, Amharic, and Tigrinya. Four client contacts were also invited to participate in Arabic and Tagalog, but no response was received.

Review and analysis of information recorded on an ongoing basis by BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS staff and stored in the CCIS database. Data from the 2021-2022 fiscal year was analyzed, however analysis of comparative data from previous years was not possible as older data was not recorded by year of service.

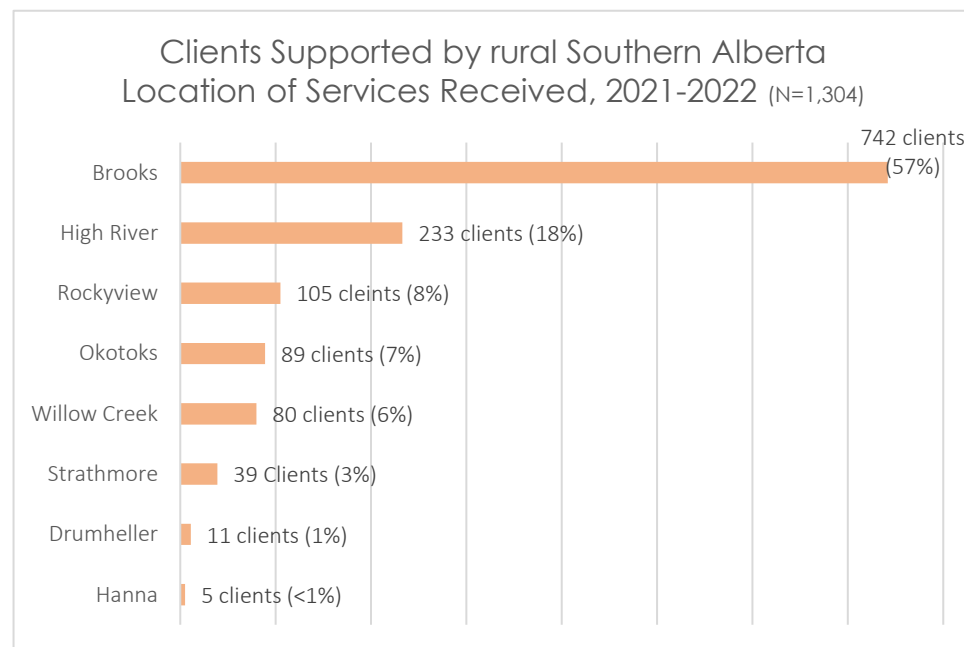An in-depth interview with the CCIS Director of Community Development and Rural Alberta.

See Appendix A for survey and interview questions.

4.0 Client Demographics and Service Outputs

from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022 CCIS supported numerous newcomer clients across Southern Alberta through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS. These clients received services including information and orientation services, needs assessment and referral services, community connection services, resettlement services for refugees, employment services, and/or a combination of available services. These services and supports were aimed at supporting successful resettlement and integration within communities. In total:

1,372 unique individuals were supported through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS and WCIS. This included **742** clients supported in Brooks (57%), **233** clients supported in High River (18%), **105** clients supported in Rockyview County (8%), **89** clients supported in Okotoks (7%), **80** (6%) clients supported in Willow Creek District, **39** clients supported in Strathmore (3%), **11** clients supported in Drumheller (1%), **5** clients supported in Hanna (<1%).[18] While statistics on the total number of newcomers in each community is not available, the higher number of newcomers supported in Brooks and High River is likely influenced by the total number of newcomers in those communities as well as the length of time services have been available (e.g. in Brooks services have been available for a significantly longer period of time than in Hanna or Drumheller).

Clients Supported by rural Southern Alberta
Location of Services Received, 2021-2022 (N=1,304)

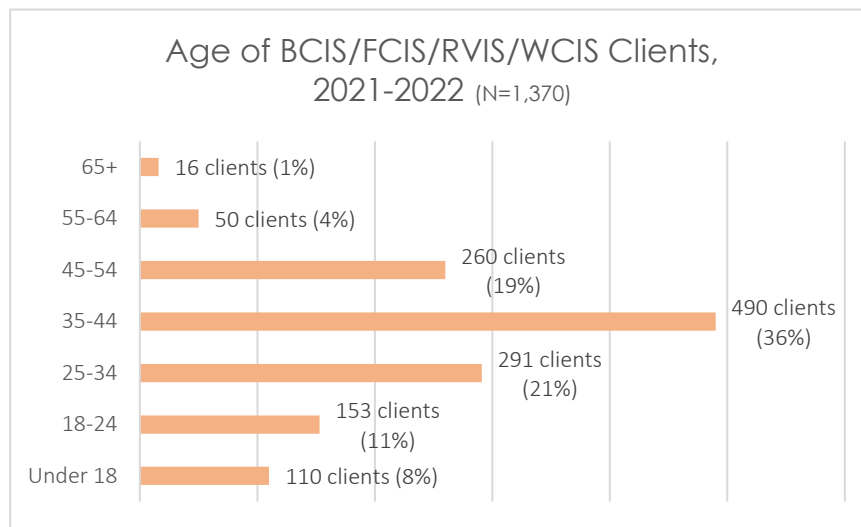| Location	
Brooks	742 clients (57%)
High River	233 clients (18%)
Rockyview	105 cleints (8%)
Okotoks	89 clients (7%)
Willow Creek	80 clients (6%)
Strathmore	39 Clients (3%)
Drumheller	11 clients (1%)
Hanna	5 clients (<1%)

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[18] N=1,304 client records indicating the location of service received. Note: The Drumheller and Hanna service locations are relatively recent additions to the service offering and have thus had a shorter time for engaging and serving clients.

Of those clients comfortable sharing their gender identity, **53%** of clients identified as female and **47%** of clients identified as male.[19] This relatively equal gender split suggests equity in service access, however information on non-binary gender identities, which has not been recorded/reported could reveal additional insights about the gender inclusivity of services. The slight female skew in the gender breakdown of clients overall was observed in each service community, except in the community of Brooks where there were more male than female clients served.[20]

Gender of BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS Clients, 2021-2022 (N=1,346)

Male 47%

Female 53%
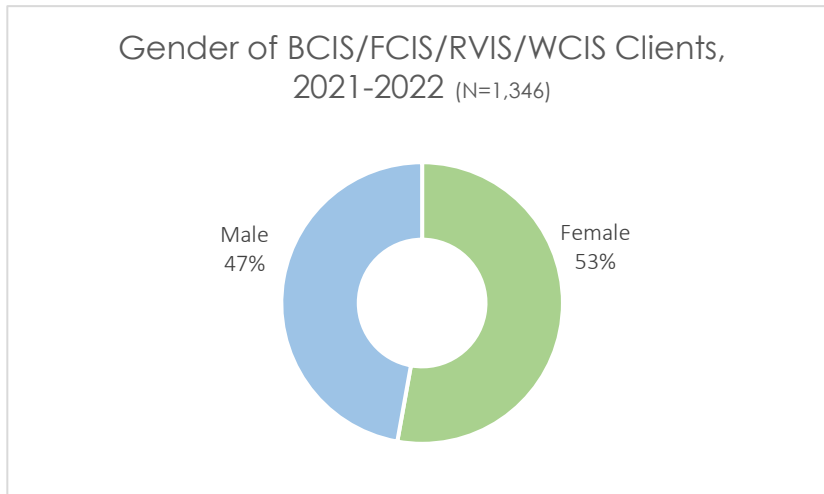
76% of clients were in their prime working years (ages 25 to 54), with only **1%** of clients aged 65 and over and only **8%** of clients under the age of 18. This age breakdown suggests that most clients have the potential to contribute to their communities through employment. Further assessment of newcomer demographics may be needed to better understand whether the low proportion of older and younger clients is a result of a lower proportion of newcomers in these age ranges in Southern Alberta communities in general, or whether it has resulted from less engagement by these demographics with available services due to barriers, lack of appropriate services, and/or lack of awareness of services.

Age of BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS Clients, 2021-2022 (N=1,370)

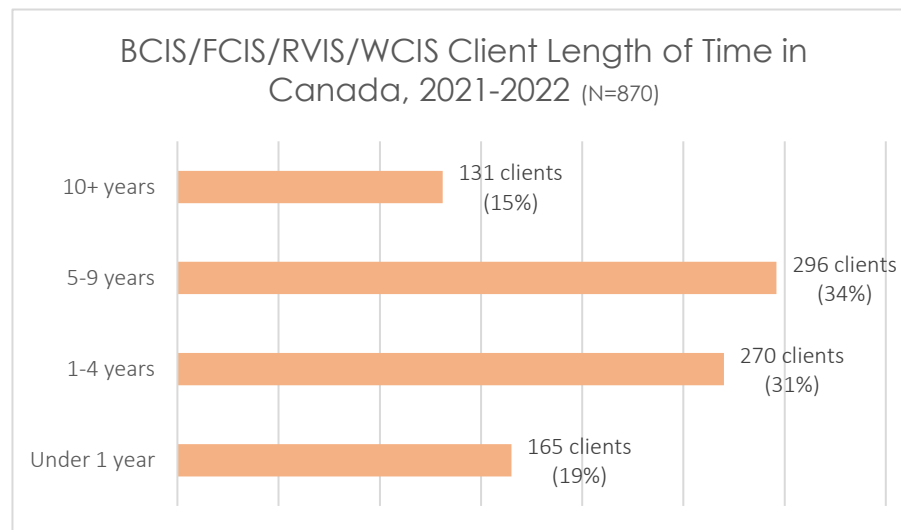| Age	Clients
65+	16 clients (1%)
55-64	50 clients (4%)
45-54	260 clients (19%)
35-44	490 clients (36%)
25-34	291 clients (21%)
18-24	153 clients (11%)
Under 18	110 clients (8%)

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[19] N=1,281
[20] N=1,346

The average length of time clients had been in Canada was just over **5** years and the longest length of time a client had been in Canada was **45** years.[21] In total, **19%** of clients had been in Canada less than one year, **31%** of clients had been in Canada one to four years, **34%** of clients had been in Canada 5 to 9 years, and **15%** of clients had been in Canada 10 years or longer. [22] This suggests that BCIS/FCIS/ RVIS/WCIS are reaching clients at a critical point in their resettlement journeys and supporting their integration and resettlement in their communities. At the same time, the non-negligible proportion of clients who had resided in Canada 10 years or longer when they received service suggests that resettlement can take a long time and newcomers may need supports even after residing in Canada for a significant length of time.

BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS Client Length of Time in Canada, 2021-2022 (N=870)

Length of Time	Clients
10+ years	131 clients (15%)
5-9 years	296 clients (34%)
1-4 years	270 clients (31%)
Under 1 year	165 clients (19%)

Clients had **66** different countries of origin. The most common countries of origin were:

1. Philippines (36% of clients)
2. Ethiopia (12% of clients)
3. Eretria (12% of clients)

Other countries of origin included: Somalia (7%); Mexico (4%); Syria (4%); India (3%); Sudan (3%); and Columbia (3%), among others.[23] The top three countries of origin varied somewhat between offices, with High River serving a greater proportion of clients from Mexico, Okotoks serving a greater proportion from India, Rockyview serving a greater proportion from Afghanistan, India, and Mexico, Strathmore serving a greater proportion from Korea, and Willow Creek serving a greater proportion from Ukraine.

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[21] N=870

[22] N=870

[23] N=1,311. Other countries of origin included: Republic of the Congo; Costa Rica; Cuba; Djibouti; Guinea; Haiti; Iran; Iraq; Ireland; Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire); Jordan; Kazakhstan; Laos; Lebanon; Morocco; Poland; Portugal; Rwanda; Senegal; Sierra Leone; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Uganda; Venezuela; Zimbabwe; Burundi; Dominican Republic; Guatemala; Indonesia; Israel; Jamaica; Liberia; Nicaragua; Vietnam; Belize; Chile; Egypt; Germany; Kenya; Algeria; England; Ghana; United Kingdom; United States; Brazil; Cambodia; Zambia; Honduras; Nigeria; Korea, Republic of (South Korea); China; Afghanistan; El Salvador; Ukraine; South Sudan; Pakistan; and Democratic Republic of the Congo.
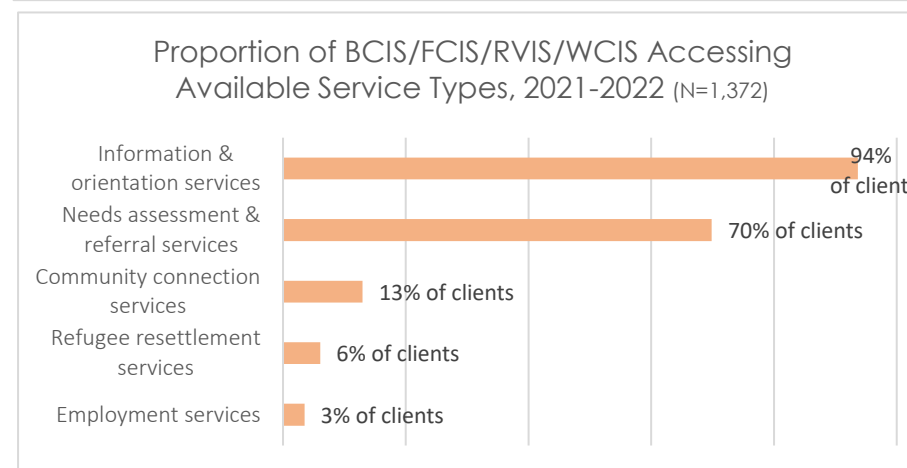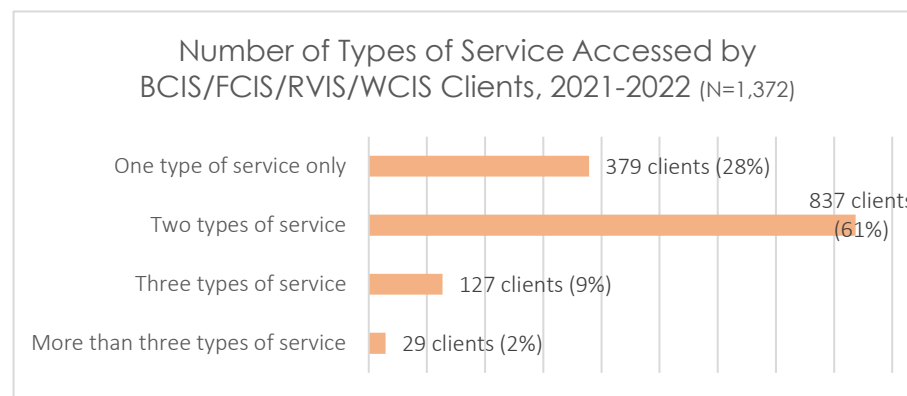
The BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS branches of CCIS in rural Southern Alberta offer key services and supports for newcomers, including: information and orientation services; needs assessment and referral services; community connection services; resettlement services for refugees; employment services; and/or a combination of available services. From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, clients accessed, on average, approximately **2** types of service each. In total, **28%** of clients received only one type of service, **61%** of clients received two types of service, **9%** of clients received three types of service, and **2%** of clients received more than three types of service.[24] The most common service types received by clients were:

1. Information and orientation services (94% of clients)
2. Needs assessment and referral services (70% of clients)
3. Community connection services (13% of clients)

Most services (**57%**) were received through the Brooks office, which is also the most long-established office.

Number of Types of Service Accessed by BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS Clients, 2021-2022 (N=1,372)

- One type of service only — 379 clients (28%)
- Two types of service — 837 clients (61%)
- Three types of service — 127 clients (9%)
- More than three types of service — 29 clients (2%)

Proportion of BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS Accessing Available Service Types, 2021-2022 (N=1,372)

- Information & orientation services — 94% of clients
- Needs assessment & referral services — 70% of clients
- Community connection services — 13% of clients
- Refugee resettlement services — 6% of clients
- Employment services — 3% of clients

Unfortunately, accurate data on client immigration status was not available, so additional analysis based on immigration status was not possible. This is an area of challenge for many newcomer-serving organizations as some newcomers are reluctant to share their status. Moving forward, efforts to capture this important information may be needed to enable further analysis of client demographics.

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[24] Across 1,372 clients.

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5.0 Perspectives from Stakeholders

Beyond analysing service use and client demographics, key stakeholders, including clients and prospective clients, community partners, and staff were engaged in the evaluation to gain a fulsome understanding of the impact of the supports provided
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5.1 Client Perspectives

In total, **6** clients were interviewed as part of the evaluation and **65** newcomers living in Southern Alberta (97% of whom were clients) completed an online survey facilitated by Insightrix as part of a Community Assessment and Marketing Strategy project being undertaken simultaneous to the rural service evaluation. Additional questions related to the evaluation were added to the newcomer survey to obtain information related to the evaluation.

100% of newcomer survey respondents indicated that they had heard of BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS, with **98%** of hearing about these services via a friend or family member, and under **10%** hearing about the services (or also hearing about the services) via social media, printed materials (e.g. brochures or posters), other service providers, and/or an internet search.[25] This suggests that word of mouth is the primary way in which newcomers in rural Southern Alberta learn about available services and supports. Spreading their own knowledge and experience, **87%** of newcomer survey respondents indicated that they had told someone else about BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS.[26]

When asked where they would prefer to receive information about services, the top five most common responses were:[27]

1. Facebook (49%)
2. Email (48%)
3. Family/friends/coworkers (38%)
4. Posters in the community (28%)
5. Websites (25%)

Within different respondent demographic groups, the top five places where they would prefer to receive information were similar, however younger respondents were more likely to want to hear about services via word of mouth, and recently arrived newcomers (in Canada less than 1 year) were the only demographic with 'newspapers' as a top five preferred option.

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[25] N=65; Note: Respondents could choose more than one source.
[26] N=60
[27] N=65

When asked which types of services they had accessed, the three most common service types selected by newcomer survey respondents who were BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS clients were:[28]

1. Assistance with forms/applications (83% of clients).
2. Learning about Canada and/or their local community (30% of respondents).
3. Language support (e.g. English classes, translation, etc.) (24% of respondents).

While assistance with forms/applications was the most commonly accessed service across demographics, clients of different ages indicated accessing slightly different services.

Younger clients (under the age of 35) were more likely to have accessed employment services; clients in the 35 to 44-year-old age range were more likely to have accessed services related to their children; and clients who were 45 or older were more likely to have accessed volunteering opportunities. This may indicate that different age demographics are seeking different types of support from newcomer services in their communities. Similarly, the length of time spent in Canada appears to impact the type of services most needed, with individuals who recently arrived (within the last year) being more likely to have accessed services related to their children, clients who had been in Canada for 1 to 4 years being more likely to have accessed volunteer supports, and clients who had been in Canada 5 years or longer being more likely to have accessed employment supports.

Overall, **100%** of newcomer clients felt the services they received were good or excellent.[29]

Based on the high level of satisfaction with the services they had received, **100%** of clients indicated that they would access BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS services again in the future if they needed further support.[30] Further, **100%** of clients indicated that they would say positive things about their service experience to others.[31] Clients described service staff using words such as 'friendly', 'supportive', 'accommodating', 'professional', 'respectful', 'encouraging', 'approachable', 'understanding', 'collaborative', and 'kind'.

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[28] N=63; Note: Survey respondents could choose more than one service type.
[29] N=63; 89% of clients rated the services as 'excellent' and 11% rated the services as 'good'. In each community, 100% of clients rated services 'excellent' or 'good', however the breakdown of excellent/good was slightly different in different communities.
[30] N=63; 95% of clients said they would be 'very likely' to access services again, and 5% of clients said they would be 'somewhat likely'.
[31] N=63; 97% of clients said they would be 'very likely' to say something positive about the services to others, and 3% said they would be 'somewhat likely'.

In their own words, clients said:

They answered my questions and other concerns, especially in my first month here in Brooks, and told us about our privileges as newcomers. They even answered our emails about our problem with the child benefit and called personally to direct us what to do.

FCIS has been supportive from the moment my family arrived and even after. It has made adjustment a lot easier for us. [The staff] has especially been very helpful. Big thanks to FCIS High River!

[WCIS] were my backbone, they helped every step of the way. If they didn't have answers they would source it to give it to me. I can call on them any time. They stand up and encourage me when I feel hopeless. I am very happy to be part of the WCIS family.

BCIS made a big difference in my life. I was able to bring my mom to Canada; she is now at home. BCIS gave me the best tools to navigate the process, to find solutions – all of this helped me a lot.

I appreciate what they do, and I think they are heroes. Maybe some people think it's not a big deal, but it is a big deal. If you have to [fill out immigration forms] on your own, and you make a mistake, then that makes a difference…without help it's hard.

I am happy with most service, and especially at reception people are very humble and ready to help and personally, I appreciate it.

The community was very friendly, which helped me.

When asked what could be improved about newcomer services offered in rural Southern Alberta communities, clients had thoughtful suggestions that can be used to create even better service experiences and outcomes for clients moving forward. Suggestions included:

- Ensuring newcomers are made aware of available services soon after they arrive.
- Providing clearer information about services for potential clients.
- Having a wide range of translators available so clients can access services in first languages (e.g. Tigrinya).
- Offering more language learning opportunities for newcomers in rural areas.

Clients also had thoughtful suggestions about services that could be added to the offering to bolster the support received by newcomers in rural Southern Alberta and expedite their ability to integrate and feel at home in their communities. Suggestions included:

- Information about utilities.
- Housing support.
- Hospital/health service navigation and access support.
- Connecting with the community library.
- Transportation.
- Technical jobs training.
- Socializing opportunities.
- A 'welcome wagon' with community connection and local community information.

5.2 Community Stakeholder Perspectives

In total, **30** community stakeholders, including referral partners and other stakeholders in the community, completed a survey to share their perspectives about BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS. Community stakeholders involved in the evaluation reported serving clients in Black Diamond, Brooks, Chestermere, Claresholm, Conrich, County of Foothills, Crowsnest Pass, Eden Valley, High River, Indus, Langdon, Nanton, Strathmore, Taber, Turner Valley, Vulcan, and Wheatland County.
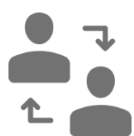
86% of community stakeholder survey respondents indicated that they had referred clients to BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS in the past year (2021-2022).[32] Of those who did not refer clients, their reasons included: they were providing services to newcomers themselves in their local community (e.g. Taber), they were not encountering newcomers, and being new to their role.

When asked how they had heard about BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and/or WCIS services, most respondents said they knew about the services because local staff had reached out to them via email, presentations, in-person or online connections, etc. Community stakeholders also commonly reported hearing about services through meetings such as advisory, interagency, or community meetings.

Community stakeholders indicated that they felt the services provided through CCIS in their communities are filling important service gaps for newcomers including, providing information, supporting systems navigation, supporting temporary workers, enabling community connections, providing referrals, supporting language translation and interpretation, and providing parenting information. These stakeholders also indicated that CCIS plays a key role in fostering community collaboration by offering newcomer perspectives within key committees and meetings, as well as connecting with local employers and community groups to ensure newcomers and these local actors have mutual understanding and mutually beneficial relationships.

When asked about the impact of BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS services in their communities, most community stakeholders said the services were supporting newcomers in successfully resettling and integrating in their communities. They felt that newcomers accessing the services were having positive experiences and gaining greater trust and connection within their communities. Community stakeholders also highlighted that they felt it was beneficial for their own organizations to have a trusted place to refer newcomer clients to for expert specialized supports and services. Overall, community stakeholders felt that CCIS is contributing to increased community awareness of newcomer issues and experiences and enabling better community responses to and supports for newcomers, while simultaneously providing practical supports and information to enable newcomer integration.

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[32] N=29

In their own words, community stakeholders said:

Support for newcomers is essential. When moving to a new country, there are so many steps, challenges, and procedures to get started and FCIS fills this gap by making sure newcomers are not alone in navigating their life in a new country.

They provide someone to help people navigate through the immigration process, offer referrals to other local organizations to support integration, and provide continued support to individuals and families.

[BCIS] plays a vital role in the community because it is the first point of contact in the community where newcomers and immigrants ask for help to settle smoothly.

Newcomers are not alone in navigating the challenges that come with moving to a new country because of the presence of FCIS. FCIS staff provide some education on the challenges that newcomers face...so that [other organizations] can make sure to also build their competency when offering services. Their impact is also well known in schools, making sure children and youth can go to [FCIS] when they need support.

We have appreciated being part of the advisory meetings. The topics are very enlightening. We have also brought in speakers from CCIS who present to our staff and we learn more about understanding how newcomers adapt to their situations. Thanks for being there for us!

We are extremely pleased to have settlement services in a rural area.

When asked whether they felt any potential clients were missing out on available services, many community stakeholders said they didn't know. Others suggested that certain newcomers either didn't have the right specialized services for their needs or weren't accessing the services available. These included newcomers such as:

- Newcomers and/or newcomer families who are not Permanent Residents (incl. individuals with no status, and Temporary Foreign Workers).
- Naturalized Canadian Citizens and/or newcomers who have been in Canada longer than 5 years.
- Newcomers without access to computers or internet.
- Seniors.

When asked how underserved newcomers could be reached, stakeholders suggested:

- Reaching out through employers (e.g. visiting workplaces, providing information to employers).
- Having simple/clear marketing materials.
- Reducing barriers to service access (e.g. providing transportation, expanding office hours so employed clients can access services when they are not working).
- Enabling access to computers and/or the internet.
- Reaching out through local schools (e.g. visiting schools, providing information to schools).
- Leveraging community collaboration/partnerships for referrals.
- Reaching out through past clients (e.g. creating a mentor program, having networking events).

When asked whether they felt there were any remaining gaps in service for newcomers in their communities, stakeholders identified several areas where they felt services might still be missing, including:

- Language services (including language learning classes as well as translators/interpreters).
- Mental health services.
- Transportation.
- Community education (e.g. dispelling myths about newcomers).
- Housing supports.
- A directory of services available to newcomers.
- More community connection opportunities.

While community stakeholders had very positive things to say about BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS staff and services, they also provided thoughtful suggestions for improvement, including:

- Having local service staff spend more time in the community supporting collaborative efforts.
- Providing more training/education to the community about newcomer issues and supporting newcomers.
- Increasing service availability/office locations/hours.
- Increasing efforts to reach all newcomers.
- Providing more programs for newcomer youth.
- Increasing newcomers connections to their local cultural groups.

5.3 Staff Perspectives

In total, **24** BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS staff provided perspectives about the impact of their work on clients and communities as well as their personal experience of their work.

Staff felt the services they provided for newcomers filled key local service gaps including:

- Supporting systems navigation (incl. navigating application processes, credential recognition, banking, education, employment, etc.).
- Encouraging community involvement (e.g. volunteer opportunities).
- Providing transportation.
- Supporting service delivery in first languages through translation or interpretation.
- Providing youth programs.
- Providing referrals (incl. referrals to legal, health, income support, and social supports).
- Supporting affordable housing searches.
- Offering socialization and social-emotional learning opportunities.

Staff also indicated that their work helps foster community collaboration and greater understanding of newcomer needs, contributions, and perspectives within their communities.

When asked whether they felt there were any remaining gaps in service for newcomers in their communities, staff identified several areas where they felt services might be missing, including:

- Language services (incl. language learning classes, translators/interpreters, employment-specific language learning opportunities).
- More community participation activities (e.g. volunteering opportunities).
- Information/orientation related to health care in Canada and Canadian rights and laws.
- Mental health services.
- Transportation.
- Childcare.
- Housing supports.
- Seniors' programming.
- Youth programs.
- Outreach services.
- Engaging newcomer families with schools.
- Supporting digital literacy and access to technology.

Staff were also asked whether they felt any potential clients were missing out on available services. While some staff felt that all potential clients were being reached, others indicated that certain newcomers either didn't have the right specialized services for their needs or weren't accessing the services available, including:

- Newcomers migrating from other provinces or communities (i.e. not initially 'landing' in their current community when first arriving in Canada).
- Newcomers without access to digital technologies or internet.
- Temporary Foreign Workers.
- Newcomers without transportation.
- Seniors.
- Newcomers in remote locations.
- Newcomers who work during service hours.
- New Naturalized Canadian Citizens.
- Internationally trained immigrants.
- Entrepreneurial immigrants.

When asked how underserved newcomers might be reached in their communities, stakeholders suggested:

- Marketing available services (incl. via social media, print media, radio, a website).
- Reaching out through places of employment (e.g. having on-site services within workplaces).
- Reaching out through community partners/networks.
- Undertaking community outreach efforts.
- Hosting promotional community events (e.g. meet and greet events, informational events).
- Having a physical office location.
- Reducing barriers to service access (e.g. providing transportation, expanding office hours so employed clients can access services when they are not working).
- Phoning potential clients.
- Lifting pandemic-related restrictions.

One staff person also mentioned that reaching potential clients might be a matter of ensuring adequate staffing so that there is time to reach out to potential clients.

Staff felt that fostering a sense of belonging among newcomers in rural areas hinges on supporting community connections through events, connections to cultural communities, volunteers, and welcoming committees, etc. They indicated that, when newcomers encounter supportive and culturally aware staff within service provider agencies they are more likely to move more quickly towards a sense of belonging in the local community.

Staff felt that providing or facilitating services in first languages was a key best practice in their support for clients. Other best practices identified by staff included:

- Being flexible and accommodating.
- Undertaking community outreach efforts.
- Having a friendly and caring approach.
- Connecting clients to volunteer opportunities.
- Building strong community partnerships.
- Providing a wide range of services and referrals.

In their own words, staff said:

I think that BCIS, RVIS, and FCIS do a great job of supporting all types of newcomers upon arrival – with language, adapting to the culture/schools/workplace, getting connected to the community in various ways. I think BCIS, RVIS, and FCIS go beyond that as well, and try to connect with the community, schools, and employers, so that other groups might have a better understanding of what newcomers need too.

BCIS has employees who speak different languages so most clients have a high chance that they can be provided services in their first language. We also have volunteers who speak various languages so they are a great resource to be a bridge between a counsellor and client.

I've seen clients receive support services of all kinds. Clients are made to feel welcomed. They are connected to community resources to better serve them.

Our agency provides support to newcomers that they would not otherwise have in a local context. Without our services, newcomers in the rural areas would have to travel to receive settlement services or not receive them at all.

If [newcomers] feel they are welcome and involved, it goes a long way to foster their sense of belonging. Engagement in activities to help foster community connections and knowing they have someone to call on and help support them, finding answers or solving problems and validating their experience.

Clients are always very thankful for our services.

Reflecting on the impact of their work and the outcomes they had witnessed clients experiencing, staff indicated that the most common outcomes observed among clients were:

1. Increased ability to integrate into the local community.
2. Increased sense of belonging in Canada.
3. Improved English language ability.
4. Increased feelings of support and wellbeing.
5. Increased knowledge and awareness of resources and Canadian norms/culture.

Staff also provided thoughtful suggestions for improvement, including:

- Seeking ways to have better communication between programs/staff/clients.
- Seeking more or deeper partnerships and community collaboration opportunities.
- Having dedicated office space and a physical location for clients to receive services.
- Returning to in-person work.
- Increasing staff salaries.
- Having more staff.
- Having more training for staff.
- Having a dedicated website.

Thinking about their own experience, **92%** of staff survey respondents indicated that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their work. [33] Among those who were satisfied, comments indicated that they found their work rewarding and that they enjoyed their team. For those who were somewhat satisfied, pandemic-related factors had often decreased their level of satisfaction (e.g. stress related to pandemic, working from home). For the staff survey respondents who indicated they were somewhat dissatisfied, a lack of communication and a feeling of being micromanaged contributed to their lower levels of satisfaction.

Staff indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their work in many ways. They highlighted that limited possibility for in-person service delivery meant that many clients were unable to access services (e.g. due to low digital literacy or lack of technology access). Beyond interactions with clients, staff felt that the pandemic also limited their ability to collaborate and work with partners in their communities. For staff themselves, several individuals noted that working from home and navigating the stresses of the pandemic had been challenging. On the flip side, some staff felt that the pandemic increased their resiliency, created new knowledge about using digital technologies to deliver services, and increased access to service for clients with higher digital literacy and/or access to digital technologies.

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[33] N=24; 58% indicated they were 'very satisfied' and 33% indicated they were 'somewhat satisfied'.

6.0 Learnings and Recommendations

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants and refugees in Southern Alberta. Recognizing that newcomers who settle in rural Southern Alberta communities often have unique experiences and service needs, CCIS provides specialized services for newcomers in rural communities through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS. To ensure continuous program improvement and deep understanding of the impact of the rural services offered by CCIS, in 2022 research and evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group were hired to evaluate CCIS' rural service offering. The evaluation involved multiple stakeholders and used mixed methods to garner robust results. The evaluation examined the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, and found that services offered through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS are creating positive social outcomes for newcomers across Southern Alberta, including increased ability for newcomers to integrate within their communities and feel a sense of belonging in Canada.

Review of client data revealed that the services offered to newcomers in Southern Alberta's rural communities are being accessed frequently by a high volume of clients who most typically receive information, orientation, needs assessment, and referral support. The client data suggests that an appropriate group of newcomers is being reached (e.g. an equal gender breakdown, most clients in their working years,

etc.), however ongoing meticulous data collection can help deepen understanding around service reach.

Perspectives shared by clients as part of the evaluation indicated that they are very satisfied with the services offered through BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS, and that they are experiencing positive social outcomes as a result of accessing these services.

Perspectives shared by community stakeholders indicated that CCIS is effective in engaging partners in rural communities to advance the wellbeing of newcomers and create more welcoming and inclusive communities for all. These stakeholders felt that CCIS plays a key role in Southern Alberta's rural communities in terms of collaboration as well as positively impacting community perspectives towards newcomers (including approaches within mainstream services).

Perspectives shared by BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS staff revealed that, while most staff are satisfied with their work, the COVID-19 pandemic presented novel challenges that ultimately impacted staff and client experiences. Moving forward from the pandemic, positive aspects emerging from the experience can be leveraged towards ongoing effective service delivery for newcomers in rural areas. Staff also shared positive perspectives about the outcomes they had observed clients experiencing due to the services that they received.

Overall, all stakeholders indicated that the services for newcomers offered by CCIS in Southern Alberta's rural communities are filling an important service gap without duplicating existing services. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of supports for newcomers coming to rural communities and the positive impact these individuals and families can have within their new home communities. Further, all stakeholders recognized the collaborative role of newcomer services in rural Alberta communities and the benefits of working in partnership within those communities.

While all stakeholders expressed a high level of satisfaction with BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS services, they also provided thoughtful suggestions for service improvement that have been shared throughout this report. Based on the suggestions from stakeholders and overall learnings from the evaluation, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue to provide services and supports for newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities, and service expansion opportunities. The evaluation revealed that the services offered by CCIS in rural Southern Alberta are frequently used and provide a key opportunity for newcomers to receive the supports they need for positive integration experiences that foster a sense of belonging in Canada. Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that current services continue and that opportunities to expand services to other

underserviced communities are sought in order to expand the benefit of the offering.

2. Seek opportunities to have a physical presence in more rural Southern Alberta communities. While CCIS already has a physical presence in numerous communities, stakeholders indicated that a physical presence in more communities would increase accessibility of services to all newcomers and ensure that fewer newcomers miss out on available services.

3. Seek opportunities to support all newcomers in rural Southern Alberta communities, no matter their immigration status. While staff indicated that they often do not distinguish service provision based on immigration status, eligibility requirements dictated by funders nevertheless can limit the capacity of staff to fully support all types of newcomers. It is recommended that funding opportunities are pursued that would enable full support for all types of newcomers. Additional funding to serve newcomers not currently eligible for all services could also help prevent staff burnout from providing services to unfunded client types.

4. **Seek opportunities to offer services outside typical 9:00am to 5:00pm office hours.** Several stakeholders mentioned that typical 9 to 5 office hours can be challenging for newcomers who also work during these hours. It is recommended that opportunities to offer or continue to offer flexible and extended hours are pursued in all office locations to ensure all newcomers who need services can access them without missing work.

5. **Continue to collaborate within communities.** Stakeholders highlighted the importance of community collaboration in rural communities and the effectiveness of CCIS' efforts towards collaboration to date. It is recommended that a collaborative approach is continued moving forward.

6. **Continue to build strong relationships with local employers in rural Southern Alberta communities.** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of connecting with newcomers in their places of work, and while BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS have had strong relationships with employers to date, it is recommended that efforts to maintain and advance these connections continue, particularly in the wake of the CIVD-19 pandemic, which may have weakened established connections.

7. **Continue to collect data from clients, with attention paid to ensuring data is collected consistently across all domains.** Data collected from clients is key to understanding who is accessing services and, just as importantly, who is *not* accessing services. It is recommended that record keeping continue, with attention paid to ensuring fulsome records are gathered (e.g. ensuring immigration status is captured). There may also be opportunities to expand data points collected to increase understanding of the client base (e.g. capturing whether there are children in the client's household), however any expansion in data collection will need to be limited to ensure staff and clients are not overburdened by data collection efforts.

8. **Seek opportunities to engage newcomer seniors within rural Southern Alberta communities.** Analysis of current client data suggested that older adults access BCIS/FCIS/RVIS/WCIS services less often than younger newcomers. While this may be reflective of the overall demographic makeup of newcomers in the communities served, several stakeholders also identified services for newcomer seniors as a remaining service gap within their community. It is recommended that this gap is explored, and if feasible/appropriate, addressed by CCIS.

9. **Build on pandemic-related learnings and experiences to advance effective practices.** The pandemic offered a unique opportunity to test the implementation of digital service delivery across service domains. While challenges arose due to the rapid transition to digital service delivery, some clients and staff benefitted from a digital service offering. Moving forward, it is recommended that digital service delivery remain an option for clients and/or staff who benefit from this mode, and that challenges related to digital service delivery are addressed in case in-person service delivery restrictions are required again in the future.

10. **Continue implementing identified effective approaches and seek opportunities to share learnings about best practices.** The evaluation revealed that BCIS, FCIS, RVIS, and WCIS have developed effective approaches to working with newcomers in rural communities. These effective approaches should be shared with other groups seeking to support newcomers in rural areas such that the community of practice can advance to the benefit of rural-based newcomers and rural communities.

Appendix A: Evaluation Tools

Staff Survey Questions

Constellation Consulting Group have been hired by CCIS to evaluate the rural settlement services delivered via BCIS, RVIS, WCIS, and FCIS in Southern Alberta. We would like to ask you a few questions about your perspectives and experiences so that we can make recommendations for continuous service improvement. Your responses will go directly to Constellation Consulting Group and will not be shared with your name or any identifying information attached. You are not obligated to complete the survey and your responses or decision to complete the survey or not will not affect your employment in any way. If you have any questions or would rather have a short phone call with someone, please contact Anne Miller at 403-923-7611 or anne@constellationconsulting.ca.

1. Your name (for survey tracking purposes only – you can skip this question if you want, but we may then send you reminders to fill out the survey when you have already filled it out)

2. From your perspective, what gaps in service does BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS fill for newcomers in Southern Alberta communities?

3. From your perspective, what gaps in service for newcomers in Southern Alberta communities still exist that BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS could play a role in filling?

4. Is BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS reaching all potential clients, and if not, who is being missed?

5. What strategies would you suggest for reaching clients who have not been able to connect with BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS services?

6. How often would you estimate that you reach out to community partners?
   - ❑ Every week
   - ❑ Every other week
   - ❑ Every month
   - ❑ Every half year
   - ❑ Every year
   - ❑ Less often
   - ❑ Never

7. How do you typically reach out to community partners? (Please select all that apply)
   - ❑ E-mail
   - ❑ Text message
   - ❑ Phone call
   - ❑ Social media
   - ❑ In-person
   - ❑ Via presentations
   - ❑ Via posters
   - ❑ Via brochures
   - ❑ Networking

❑ Other (please specify)_____

8. Approximately how many referrals would you estimate you receive from community partners each year?

    ❑ 0
    ❑ 1-5
    ❑ 6-20
    ❑ 21-50
    ❑ 51-100
    ❑ More than 100

9. What are some of the 'best practices' used by BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS when serving clients? (e.g. providing service in first languages, doing outreach to isolated newcomers, providing childcare along with services, etc.)

10. What supports or strategies do you feel are best for fostering a sense of belonging among newcomers in rural areas?

11. What types of outcomes have you seen BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS clients experience? (e.g. improved language ability, increased ability to integrate into the community, greater sense of belonging in Canada, etc.)

12. What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on your work?

13. Overall, how satisfied would you say you are with your work?

    ❑ Very satisfied
    ❑ Somewhat satisfied
    ❑ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
    ❑ Somewhat dissatisfied
    ❑ Dissatisfied

    Please explain:

14. What could be improved about BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS services to improve staff and/or client experiences?

15. Is there anything else you would like to share today?

Community Partner Survey Questions

CCIS offers key services and supports for newcomers in rural areas through BCIS, RVIS, WCIS, and FCIS. Constellation Consulting Group have been hired to help evaluate the impact of this service offering and to identify areas for improvement moving forward. We would like to invite you to participate in a short survey to share your perspectives about services for newcomers in Southern Alberta. Your responses will go directly to Constellation Consulting Group and will not be shared with any identifying information attached. If you have any questions about the evaluation, or would prefer to participate in a short interview to share your perspectives, please contact Anne Miller at anne@constellationconsulting.ca or 403-923-7611. Thank you for your time and willingness to share your perspectives!

1. Your name (for survey tracking purposes only – you can skip this question if you want, but we may then send you reminders to fill out the survey when you have already filled it out)

2. Which community or communities do you serve? (Select all that apply)
   - ❑ *Airdrie*
   - ❑ *Cochrane*
   - ❑ *Chestermere*
   - ❑ *Strathmore*
   - ❑ *Okotoks*
   - ❑ *High River*
   - ❑ *Claresholm*
   - ❑ *Drumheller*
   - ❑ *Hanna*
   - ❑ *Brooks*
   - ❑ *Other: _____*

3. *In the past year, have you referred newcomer clients to BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS?*
   - ❑ *Yes*
   - ❑ *No*
   - ❑ *Can't remember*

SKIP LOGIC → 'Yes' to Q3

    Approximately how many newcomer clients would you estimate you've referred?
   - ❑ *0*
   - ❑ *1-5*
   - ❑ *6-20*
   - ❑ *21-50*
   - ❑ *51-100*
   - ❑ *Over 100*
   - ❑ *Don't know*

How did you hear about these BCIS / RVIS / WCIS / FCIS programs and services? (Please select all that apply)
   - ❑ *Advisory meetings*
   - ❑ *FCIS/BCIS/WCIS/RVIS staff talks to us, e-mails, or gives a presentation*
   - ❑ *FCIS/BCIS/WCIS/RVIS newsletter*
   - ❑ *Brochures*
   - ❑ *At a church/masjid*
   - ❑ *At ethnic grocery stores*

❑   *Online/Google search*
❑   *Local websites*
❑   *Social media (Facebook groups, etc.)*
❑   *Posters in town*
❑   *Family / friends / ethnic community*
❑   *Somewhere else: _____*
❑   *Can't remember*

SKIP LOGIC ➔'No' to Q3

   Why have you referred no clients to BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS?

4.   *From your perspective, what gaps in service does BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS fill for newcomers in Southern Alberta communities?*
5.   *From your perspective, what gaps in service for newcomers in Southern Alberta communities still exist that BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS could play a role in filling?*
6.   *Is BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS reaching all potential clients, and if not, who is being missed?*
7.   *What strategies would you suggest for reaching clients who have not been able to connect with BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS services?*
8.   *What impact has the presence of BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS had in your community?*
9.   *What could be improved about BCIS, RVIS, WCIS and/or FCIS services to better respond to your community's needs?*
10. *Is there anything else you would like to share today?*

Client Interview Questions

Hello,

I received your contact information through BCIS in Brooks. Our group has been hired to interview people about their experience with the settlement services provided by BCIS so the services can be improved. If you have about 15 minutes, there are a few questions I have for you. Anything you share will be private and won't be shared with your name attached. We're just looking for feedback so we can help BCIS do a good job.

You don't have to do the interview if you don't want to, and your relationship BCIS will not change based on whether you do the interview or not, or what you say in the interview.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1.   What settlement services did you use?

   Interviewer prompt: Did you get help with your immigration application? Did you get connected to other services? Did you go to language classes? Did you get help with finding housing?

2. What difference, if any, did these services make in your life?
   Interviewer prompt: Did they help you feel more at home in Canada? Did they get you connected to other services that you needed? Did they help you know your community better? Did they help you with your resettlement in Canada?
3. Were there any services that you thought BCIS could have provided and didn't? If yes, could you let me know what those services might be?
4. How do you prefer to hear about information about our services?
   Interviewer prompt: e-mail? regular mail? facebook,? Instagram? Phone? what's app? at workshops? Paper flyers or posters? Word of mouth (e.g. friends and family, people you know)? At school? Through work? On the internet? other?
5. Do you know any newcomers who needed services and weren't able to connect with BCIS?
   If yes, what would have made it possible for them to get the services they needed?
6. Overall, how happy were you with the services from BCIS?
7. Have you told friends or family about BCIS services?
   If yes, approximately how many people have you told?
8. Do you have any ideas for making BCIS services better?
9. Is there anything else you wanted to share today?

Appendix B: Resources Consulted

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