

Inclusive and Welcoming Practices: The Role of Settlement Agencies in Alberta



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Edmonton Immigrant Services Association(EISA)

AUMA Come Together Conference

Edmonton,

MAY 17, 2018



Overview

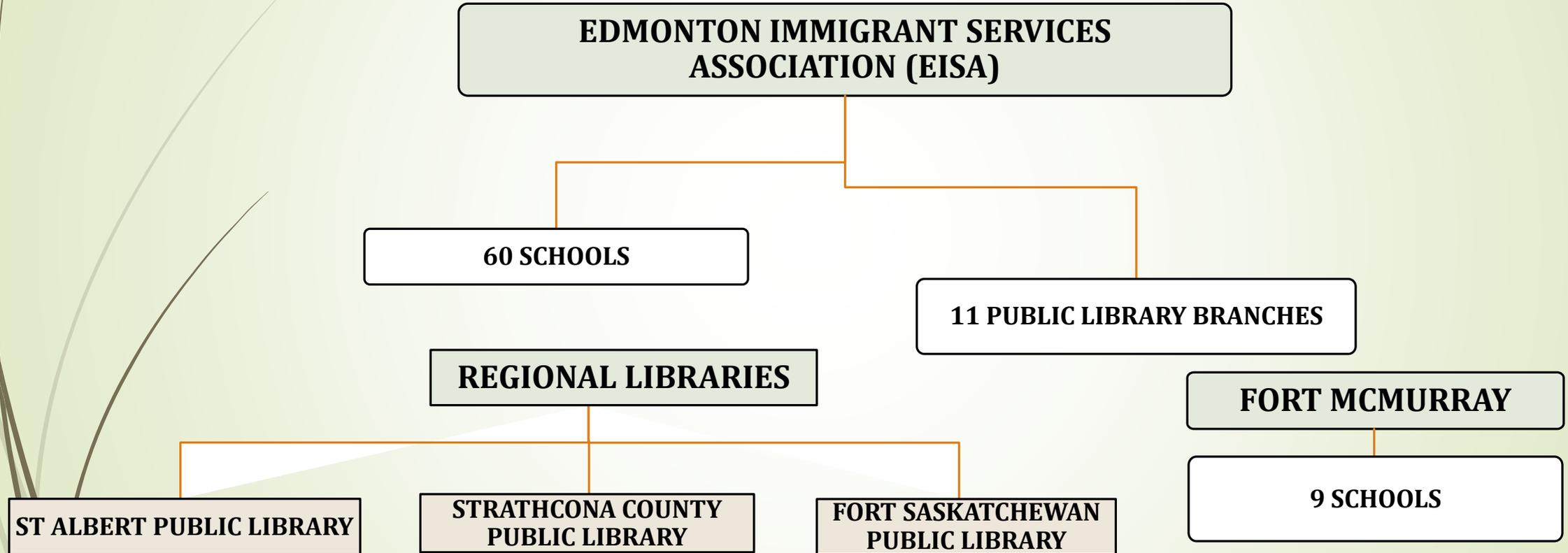
- EISA – Agency background
- Understanding Social Inclusion/Exclusion
- Barriers to Belonging
- Characteristics of Inclusive communities
- Inclusive Settlement services and Inclusive Practices
- Conclusion

EISA Background



- ▶ **Founded in 1976, as a registered not-for-profit organization.**
- ▶ **Provides numerous settlement services to newcomers**
- ▶ **A staff of 60 staff and numerous volunteers**
- ▶ **Partners e.g. Schools Boards, Public Libraries, City of Edmonton, GOA, GOC, LIPs**
- ▶ **In 2017-2018, supported 8,172 immigrants and refugees.**

83 OFF-SITE SERVICE LOCATIONS



Languages Spoken @ EISA

Afan Oromo	Afrikaan	Akose	Albanian	Amharic	Arabic	Armenian	
Azerbaijani	Belarussian	Bengali(Bangla)	Benin	Bicol	Bosnian		
Bulgarian	Cantonese	Croatian	Czeck	Danish	Dari	Dinka	Dutch
Edo	English	Farsi(Persian)	Filipino	French	German	Greek	
Gujarati	Harari	Hebrew	Hindi	Hinko	Holion	Hungaraian	
Iiokano	Indonesian	Ishan	Italian	Japanese	Kamba	Karen	
Kashimiri	Kikuyu	Kinyarwanda	Kirundi	Kizikuwa	Korean	Kurdish	
Lingala	Luganda	Macedonian	Malayalam	Malaysian	Malinke		
Mandarin	Marathi	Nepali	Newar	Norwegian	Pashtu	Polish	
Portuguese	Punjabi	Romanian	Russian	Rutooro	Serbian	Setswana	
Shangaan	Shona	Sinhalese	Slovak	Somali	Spanish	Swahili	
Swedish	Tachelchit	Tagalog	Tajiki	Tamil	Thai	Tigrinya	
Turkish	Turkmen	Twi	Ukrainian	Urdu	Uyghur	Uzbek	Venda
	Vietnamese	Visaya	Woloff	Zarma			

Core Settlement Services at EISA

Needs Assessment and Referrals

- Screening
- Assessment/Goal Setting/Service Plan
- Monitoring
- Evaluation



Information/Orientation

- One-on-one sessions
- Group sessions
- Family sessions

Community Connections

- After-school programming
- Social/recreational activities
- Volunteering opportunities
- Mentorship
- English Conversation Circles
- Computer Classes for Newcomer parents



Support Services

- Transportation
- Interpretation
- Translation
- Crisis Counseling



Programs/Services at EISA

- **In-School Settlement Services**
- **Library Settlement Services**
- **Children and Youth program**
- **Language Bank (Interpretation/Translation)**
- **Conversational Circles**
- **Camps (Spring & Summer)**
- **Newcomer Community Integration Project**
(Refugee Claimants & Naturalized Citizens)
- **Commissioner for Oaths**
- **New Neighbors**
- **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

Funders



Government of Canada

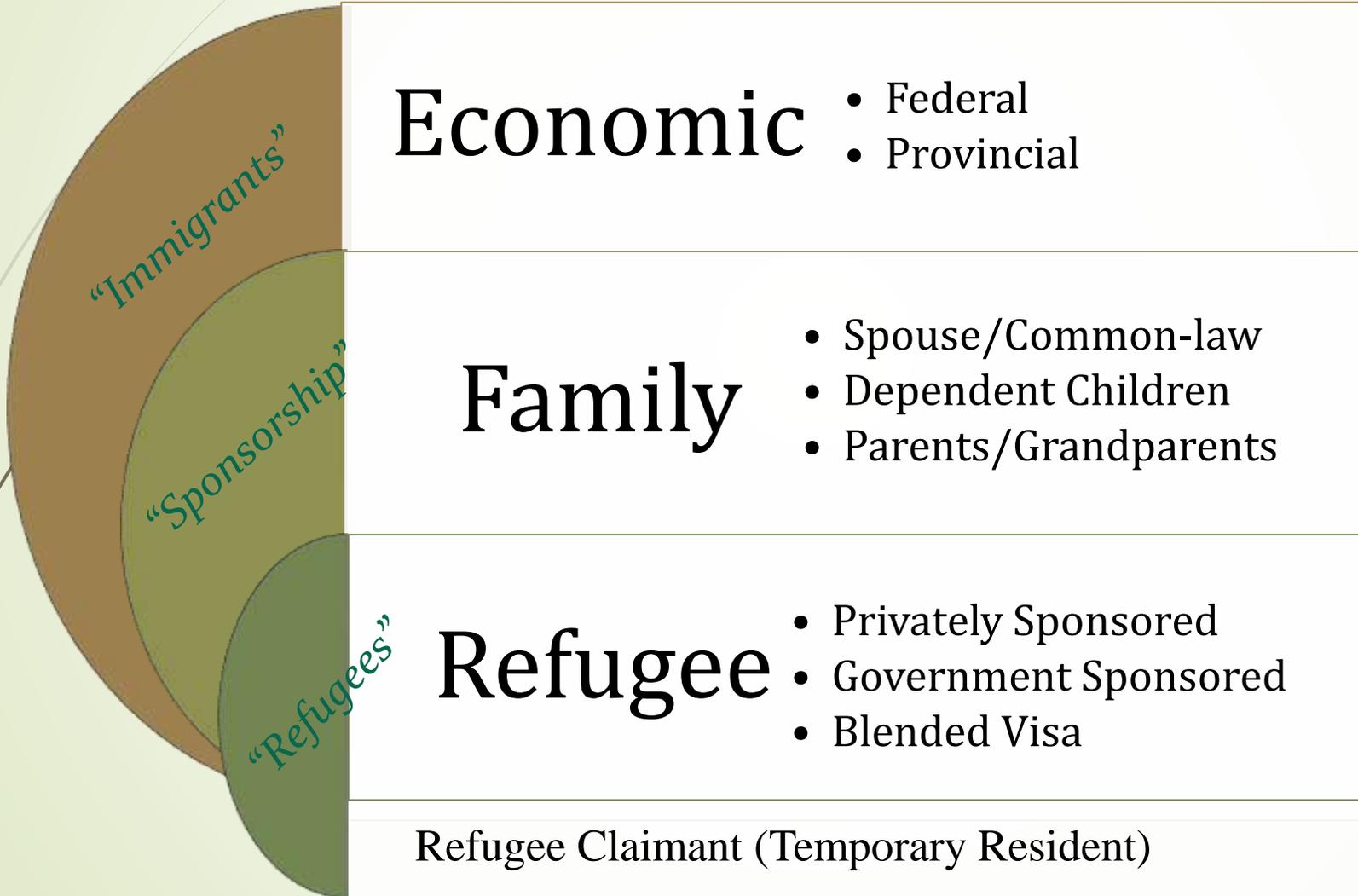


Government of Alberta



City of Edmonton

Our Primary Clients



Immigration Targets 2016-2017

Immigration Category	Category	2016 Target	2017 Target
Economic	Federal Economic- High Skilled	58,400	73,700
	Federal Economic- Caregivers	22,000	18,000
	Federal Economic- Business	800	500
	Provincial Nominee Program	47,800	51,000
	Quebec Skilled Worker	26,200	29,300
	Economic Total	160,400	172,500
Family	Spouses, Partners & Children	60,000	64,000
	Parents & Grandparents	20,000	20,000
	Family Total	80,000	84,000
Refugees & Protected Persons	Protected Persons in Canada & dependants in abroad	10,000	15,000
	Government-Assisted Refugees	24,600	7,500
	Blended Visa Office- Referred	2,400	1,500
	Privately Sponsored Refugees	17,800	16,000
	Refugees & Protected Persons Total	54,800	40,000
Humanitarian and Other	Humanitarian and Other	3,600	3,500
Overall Total		300,000	300,000

Canada's Immigration Plan for 2018 to 2020

- ❑ In 2018, the Government of Canada adopted a multi-year levels plan
- ❑ Ranges for 2019 and 2020 will be updated and announced by November 1 of the preceding calendar year (*November 1, 2018 for the 2019 calendar year*).

	2018		2019		2020	
Projected Admissions - Targets	310,000		330,000		340,000	
Projected Admissions - Ranges	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Federal-selected Economic Programs, Provincial/Territorial Nominees, Family, Refugees, Humanitarian Entrants and Permit Holders*	262,100	300,100	268,500,	316,500	278,500	326,500
Quebec-selected Skilled Workers and Business**	27,900	29,900	31,500	33,500	31,500	33,500
TOTAL	290,00	330,000	300,000,	350,000	310,000	360,000

Immigration Trends 2001-2016

	Before 2001	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2016	Total
Canada	4,343,720	928,940	1,056,090	1,212,075	7,540,830
Alberta	381,370	109,145	146,915	207,790	845,220
Ontario	2,426,240	490,560	463,175	472,170	3,852,145
Quebec	553,855	140,170	182,110	215,170	1,091,305
British Columbia	795,880	147,730	173,505	175,555	1,292,675

Source: StatsCanada, 2016



Defining Social Inclusion

- A multi-dimensional, relational process of **increasing opportunities** for social participation, **broadening** social ties of respect and recognition, **enhancing** social bonds, cohesion, and integration.
- To understand the dynamics and challenges of newcomer settlement in Canada today from a social inclusion perspective, it is essential to recognise that immigration is largely, an urban phenomenon.

Social Inclusion: The Albertan Context

- Newcomers to Canada face multiple and intersecting structural barriers to social, political and economic integration.
- Historical, structural, institutional and everyday barriers prevent immigrants and refugees from accessing resources and opportunities.
- Removing barriers to community public services is critical to the full participation of newcomers in their communities and may contribute to their overall social inclusion.

Defining Social Inclusion

- Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional process.
- It involves a lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas.
- It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole.

Dimensions of Social Inclusion

1. Disengagement;

- Disengagement can be characterised by a lack of participation in social and community activities.

2. Service exclusion;

- Service exclusion occurs when people are unable to access key services.

3. Economic exclusion

- Economic exclusion occurs when people have restricted access to economic resources and a capacity to derive an income.

Barriers to Belonging

Economic Isolation

- Immigrants and refugees generally face greater challenges in securing employment that corresponds with their skills. Therefore, they have higher levels of unemployment.
- Getting foreign credentials assessed, learning and understanding the language, culture and workplace communication styles.



Barriers to Belonging

Social Isolation:

- Research reports point to lower levels of political engagement compared to those born in Canada.
- Lack of information and knowledge about their community and the engagement opportunities available within it.
- Lack or limited language skills.

Recommendation:

- Provide broad-based information about community norms, formal social support services within the community, and opportunities to participate in community activities.

Housing Challenges

- Access to affordable and suitable housing is a major concern for newcomers to Canada.
- Housing is important because it affects newcomers' ability to access schools, jobs, and key services in their community.
- Racism and discrimination can be major barriers for immigrants in their search for housing.

Recommendation:

- Provide newcomers with more comprehensive housing information in several languages. Such housing information should include: *(a) housing types, and average prices and rents; (b) vacancy rates and locations; (d) how to obtain loans or mortgages.*
- Provide immigrants and landlords with information on the legislated rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants to prevent discrimination and other abuses.

Health Challenges

- ▶ Language/ interpretation. Lack of understanding about the health care system due to language barriers.
- ▶ Lack of cultural interpretation, awareness and understanding of diverse health beliefs and expectations between provider and client during interaction.
- ▶ Limited access to healthcare due to poverty and transportation.

Recommendation:

- ▶ Equip providers with culturally competency training.
- ▶ Provide health promotion information in a culturally sensitive way.
- ▶ Provide cultural brokers/interpreters.

Educational Barriers

- Lack of sufficient access to resources in order to sustain specific post-secondary education pathways.
- Delay or lack of recognition of foreign credentials.
- High drop out rates of high school prior to graduation by immigrant/refugee youth.

Recommendation:

- Fast tracking the credentialing process so that the assessment is done prior to arrival in Canada.
- Early intervention to develop language skills is necessary so that youth can succeed at school
- Providing immigrant parents and students with information about language programs and their importance for academic achievement.

Money & Finances

- Lack of credit history can be a significant barrier to newcomers' financial security.
- Many immigrants/refugees have little or no information on credit history or on how to obtain loans before landing in Canada.
- Consequently, when immigrants apply for business or personal loans, most of them are surprised to be rejected because of a lack of credit history in Canada.

Recommendation:

- Provide newcomers with literature and online information, prior to their arrival, as well as after arrival on the Canadian financial system and how to build a credit history.

The Justice System

- ▶ Immigrants/refugees are particularly vulnerable upon arrival in Canada, especially if they are not proficient in English or French.
- ▶ Many are not aware of their rights as newcomers/sponsored persons, nor are they aware of the responsibilities taken on by their sponsors.
- ▶ Their chances to overcome these barriers partly depend on the legal, institutional and social frameworks of the host country.

Recommendations:

- Provide information to immigrants/refugees about their rights in the event of maltreatment.
- Deliver this information in first languages.
- Increase funding for legal aid.
- Provide cultural sensitivity training to criminal justice personnel and those who work in justice-related services.

Characteristics of a welcoming & inclusive communities

Esses et al. (2010) 17 characteristics for a welcoming community.

1. Employment opportunities
2. Fostering of social capital
3. Affordable and suitable housing
4. Positive attitudes toward immigrants/refugees, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community
5. Presence of newcomer-serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers.
6. Links between main actors working toward welcoming communities
7. Municipal features and services sensitive to the presence and needs of newcomers
8. Educational opportunities
9. Accessible and suitable healthcare
10. Available and accessible public transit
11. Presence of diverse religious organizations
12. Social engagement opportunities
13. Political participation opportunities
14. Positive relationships with the police and the Justice System
15. Safety
16. Opportunities for use of public space and recreation facilities
17. Favorable media coverage and representation



Programs, Services and Practices

Library Settlement Services



- Initiated in June 2009 as a partnership between EISA and EPL.
- Current partners include: **Edmonton Immigrant Services Association**, and the municipalities of **Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert and Strathcona County Public Libraries**.
- Currently has 9 full-time Settlement Practitioners.
- Operates in **14 locations** and serves about **2400 clients** per year
- The program is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Why Schools/Libraries?

- Schools/Libraries are one of the first places newcomers visit soon after their arrival in Canada.



- Act as arenas of acculturation where immigrant and refugee children and youth adapt to societal norms and build lifelong inter-personal and community social bonds.

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Services

- A school-based settlement service established in February 2009 and offered in **Edmonton** and **Fort McMurray**.
- Involves partnership between EISA and School Boards.
- Currently operates in more than **70 schools** with **30 full-time** staff who speak more multiple languages.
- The program is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

SWIS Programs Across Canada



□ 70 schools (EISA)



SWIS National Scale and Reach

Western Region

- ❑ **Alberta** – SWIS services are available in more than 200 schools.
EISA – 70 Schools (Edmonton and Fort McMurray School Boards)
- ❑ **Saskatchewan** – In-school settlement services are available in approximately 100 schools.
- ❑ **British Columbia** – SWIS is present in 21 school districts.

Eastern Region – SWIS-type programming is available in nearly 100 schools.

Ontario Region – SWIS is present in more than 1500 schools.

SWIS Clients

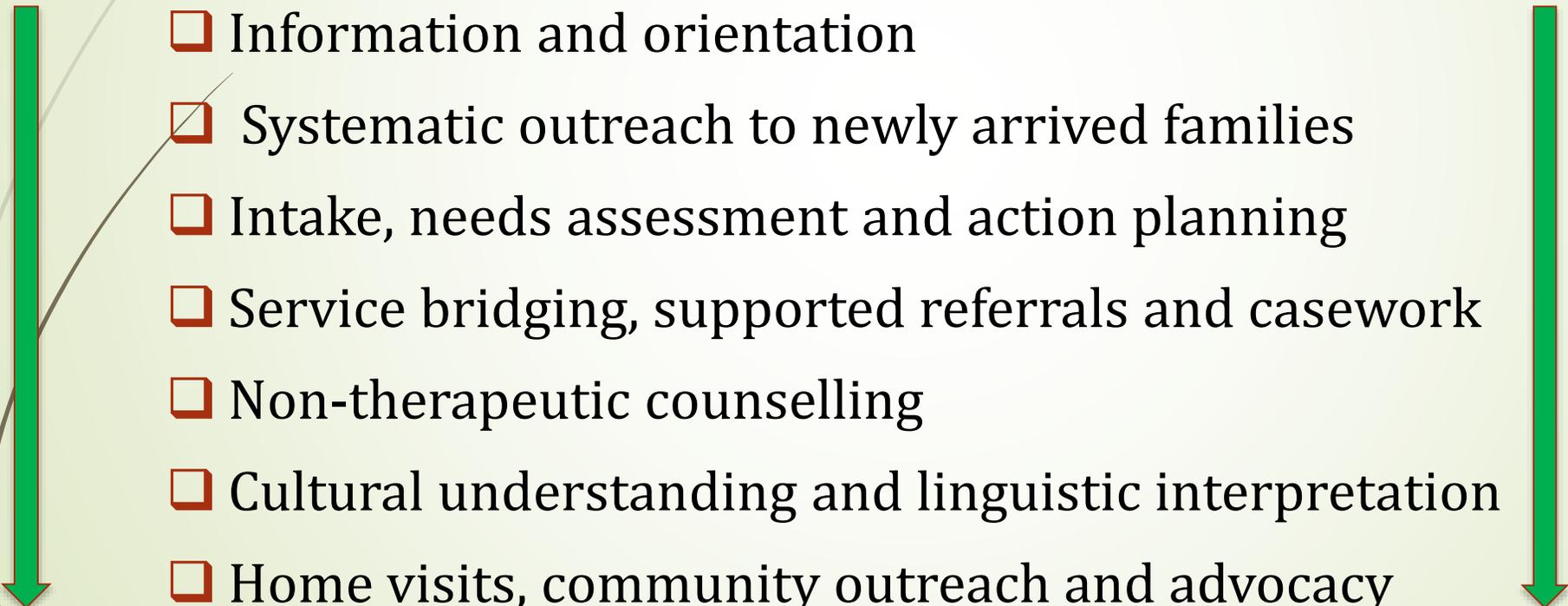
SWIS serves three distinct client groups:



1. SWIS assists **students** in learning about the school setting and empowers them to reach their full potential and succeed in Canada.
2. SWIS helps **families** understand the school system and support their children, and provides information and referral on other aspects of life in Canada.
3. SWIS supports **school staff** to see the school and its requirements through the eyes of the newcomer and sensitizes staff to newcomer issues.

Spectrum of Support /Services

- ❑ **SWIS projects include a mix of services designed to meet newcomer needs. At a basic level, information and orientation is provided.**

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- ❑ Information and orientation
 - ❑ Systematic outreach to newly arrived families
 - ❑ Intake, needs assessment and action planning
 - ❑ Service bridging, supported referrals and casework
 - ❑ Non-therapeutic counselling
 - ❑ Cultural understanding and linguistic interpretation
 - ❑ Home visits, community outreach and advocacy

Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)

NOW

- **NOW** is a three-day orientation event offered in summer shortly before schools open in fall.
- Goal: To prepare newly arrived students for their first weeks in Canadian high school.
- Orientation is led by student volunteers known as Peer Leaders.
- Peer Leaders have to undergo an intensive 3 day train-the-trainer.

5 High Schools



Children and Youth Settlement Services

➤ Services offered in this program include:

- *Currently offered in 17 schools*
- *Academic supports*
- *Recreational and social activities*
- *Information and Referral Services*
- *Supportive and Solution focused Counselling*
- *Camps – summer and spring*



New Neighbours Program - 2017

869 Program Participants

391 Family Units

294 (0-17 years old)

Matching Service

Average of 80 volunteers every year (past and current)

English Conversation Circles

2 Program Staff

Field Trips/
Social/
Recreational Events



Enhancing Intercultural Understanding

- In 2013, EISA partnered with Edmonton Public Library and City of Edmonton to deliver information sessions to newcomers.
- In 2014, we followed up with 4 intercultural dialogues (February, March & April 2014).



Indigenous and Newcomer Connections

Purpose

To create opportunities for Indigenous and Newcomer youth to have dialogues and develop greater understanding and respect for each others' cultures.



Conclusion

- **If we are to build and sustain inclusive and welcoming communities, we need to:**
 - have a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home;
 - ensure newcomers are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life;
 - ensure newcomers have access to a full range of services and programs and can find meaningful employment opportunities.
 - Partner with all stakeholders involved with various levels of services to newcomers (levels of government, community organizations and members of public)



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