Needs Assessment: Role of Municipalities in Immigration and Settlement

October 31st, 2012

Submitted to AUMA
Zenev and Associates
Diversity & Equity Consultants

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Alberta's population is becoming more diverse due to immigration. Municipalities have an important role to play in developing policies and practices that result in safe, equitable and liveable communities. AUMA's Come Together Alberta (CTA) initiative aims to support municipalities to gain knowledge about and develop strategies for being welcoming and inclusive of newcomers. This needs assessment was conducted over a three month period in 2012 to determine the current state and needs of municipalities around immigration and working with newcomers. 50 municipalities ranging in population size, geographic region and prior involvement with AUMA's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities (WIC) initiative were surveyed and a list of considerations for future action was created.

70% of municipalities believe they have a role to play regarding immigration, either by attracting immigrants (12%), supporting settlement and integration (24%), or building a welcoming and inclusive community (42%). Municipalities currently fulfill this role using a number of different practices, acting either as a service provider, connector and facilitator, partner and supporter, or catalyst for organizational and community change. The range of strategies used by municipalities can be characterized as one of two approaches – an 'individual approach, in which the focus is on helping newcomers adapt to a host community; or a 'systemic' approach, which aims to transform the municipal organization or the community to be more equitable and inclusive of newcomers. A systemic approach is more in line with AUMA's work to date around diversity and inclusion, and should continue to be encouraged and supported.

Municipalities encounter a number of challenges in this work, including creating a vision, helping newcomers access local services, gathering data on immigrant needs, dealing with resistance from the broader community, interacting with newcomers, and a lack of resources. Other challenges involved communicating and collaborating between organizations, working with municipal leadership, dealing with other levels of government, as well as some challenges related to the conceptual frameworks being used to do the work.

However, there are many ways that AUMA can support municipalities that are interested in attracting immigrants or working with newcomers. Some municipalities requested tools and resources; others wanted access to funding, one-on-one consultation or programs. Still others wanted AUMA to play a role in advocating to other levels of government, facilitating connections between municipalities and external bodies, or conducting research. A number of municipalities made it very clear that AUMA has done good work in the past in the area of diversity and inclusion, and appreciated the open-ended and accessible support that AUMA makes available.

66% of the municipalities surveyed are interested in being involved in the WIC Network, primarily seeing it as a space to learn from other municipalities and find opportunities for collaboration. Municipalities want a WIC Network that is easily accessible, involving both online and face-to-face interactions. Barriers to municipal participation in the Network must be addressed in order to maximize participation. Data was also collected regarding scheduling and content of an online event or 'Virtual Summit' to be held sometime in 2013.

Based on the findings of this assessment, we have developed the following set of considerations for the future activities of AUMA, WIC and CTA:

Tools and Resources

1. Create a step-by-step guide about the immigration process for municipal staff and service organizations that interact with and provide services to newcomers.
2. Create a forum to collect and disseminate information about current initiatives and success stories from Alberta municipalities.
3. Create evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of strategies and activities in meeting goals and objectives of welcoming and inclusive initiatives.

Public Awareness and Education

4. Provide municipalities with links to educators and strategies and materials for public education campaigns.

Coordination and Collaboration

5. Continue to expand AUMA's role as the 'hub' for WIC initiatives.
6. Strengthen the relationship between AUMA and FCSS and use this relationship as an opportunity to enhance the work of municipalities.

Intergovernmental Relations

7. Continue to advocate for the interests of municipalities with regard to immigration and facilitate ongoing communication between all levels of government.

Research

8. Conduct research on effective regional planning approaches.
9. Conduct research on the impact of immigration at varying stages of economic cycles.

Background and Context

Changing labour requirements in Alberta, coupled with complex demographic shifts, have and will continue to result in Alberta's population becoming more diverse due to immigration. Municipalities have an important role to play (along with other levels of government and business) in developing policies and practices that result in safe, equitable and liveable communities. Each municipality will have needs and resources that are unique; however, where there are commonalities, sharing resources, discussing challenges and strategizing for the future will enable cities, towns and villages in Alberta to better serve their citizens. To streamline inter-municipal sharing and collaboration, the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative (WIC) was conceived to:

- Enhance the capacity of municipalities to become more welcoming and inclusive and to combat racism and discrimination in their communities.
- Create and support a network of Alberta municipalities actively engaged in welcoming and inclusive initiatives.
- Improve modes of information and resource sharing amongst Alberta municipalities.
- Develop tools and educational resources.

Since Summer 2011, AUMA's Come Together Alberta (CTA) Project has supported municipalities to gain knowledge about and develop strategies for being welcoming and inclusive of newcomers. Through education, networking, action planning and one on one consultation, a number of municipalities across the province have taken advantage of the Project's offerings to begin or enhance their work around immigration.

As part of this ongoing commitment to ensure that Alberta municipalities are working effectively to support newcomers, AUMA undertook to conduct research to determine municipalities' current and future practices and needs specifically relating to immigration and settlement. The objectives and methods of this research are outlined in the following section.

Research Objectives

During the months of August, September and October of 2012 AUMA undertook a broad-based assessment of municipal needs and issues around immigration and newcomers. Semi structured interviews were conducted with key contacts from 50 municipalities to determine:

- what municipalities are currently doing with respect to immigration and working with newcomers,
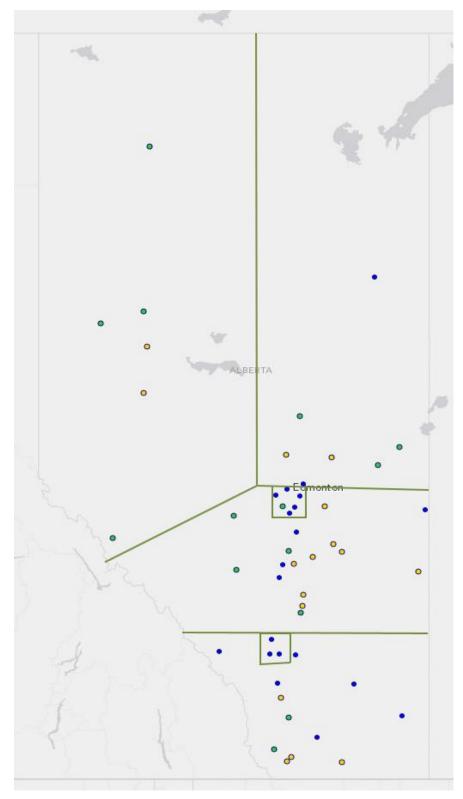- what their ideal vision is for the role they'd like to play,

- and what challenges they've encountered in fulfilling that role.

Respondents were then asked how AUMA and government partners might support them to deal with some of these challenges, including what they would like to see from the WIC Network and the CTA Virtual Summit.

Participating Municipalities

This map represents the municipalities that participated in the assessment, colour-coded by population level.

More detail on the distribution of the sample with respect to geographical region, municipality type, prior involvement in WIC and CMARD as well as the organizational roles of respondents can be found in the Appendices.

Population Level

- ● 0 – 2500
- ● 2501 – 10,000
- ● 10,000+

Discussion of Findings

Section 1: Role of Municipalities, Current Practices and Approaches

In this assessment it was important to establish a sense of the current state of Alberta municipalities with respect to immigration and working with newcomers. This section is divided into three parts: What role do municipalities see for themselves in this work? How do they go about fulfilling this role (i.e. what practices are they using)? and, What broad conclusions can be drawn about the approaches municipalities employ?

The Role of Municipalities

In the question of municipalities' perception of their role, two themes emerged. The first relates to the range of policies and activities that municipalities *could*, theoretically, act on. The second relates to priorities: What is a priority for municipal action, and therefore, what *should* municipalities act on? Both of these themes factor into municipalities' estimation of their role in this area. We have tried to tease out these two themes in the following analysis.

Overall, 70% of the municipalities surveyed believe that they *should* play a role in immigration or working with newcomers (though the degree of involvement and range of approaches imagined varied). In more detail, 12% feel they have a role to play in attracting immigrants to their community or region. 24% believe their role is to support newcomer settlement and integration, and 42% see their role as falling into the category of building a welcoming and inclusive community[1]. 6% believe they do have a role but are unsure of what that role might involve. 30% of respondents feel that their municipality does not have a role to play in this work. These proportions are important to note, as they suggest there is a strong need for the continued work of both the CTA and WIC initiatives at AUMA.

---

[1] We use the phrase 'supporting newcomer settlement and integration' to describe a range of practices aimed at on helping new immigrants get their basic needs met, adapt to the host community, and arrive at full participation in culture and society. The target of this work is the newcomer themselves. We use 'building a welcoming and inclusive community' as an umbrella term for a number of different approaches that involve broad-based change of the community or the municipal organization that address issues of equity and inclusion. Approaches that fall under this umbrella term include: social inclusion, anti-racism, anti-oppression, human rights, and equity. The target of this work is the whole community or organization.

Newcomer Attraction

Most municipalities (88%) believe that attracting newcomers is not part of their role. Some feel that because private companies benefit most from increasing the local labour force, they should be the ones to take a lead in this area. Others feel that attraction is indeed a public sector role, but that it is not under municipal jurisdiction – it is either the role of the Government of Alberta (GOA) or of local economic development authorities/boards. Others see attraction as theoretically part of the municipal role, but don't currently identify it as a priority due to the abundance of workers in the area.

Municipalities that see immigrant attraction falling under municipal jurisdiction, as well as identifying it as a priority (12%), provided the following rationale. Because part of the municipal organization's responsibility is to grow the community economically, attraction of immigrants is seen as one way (or particularly for some small communities, the only way, given the difficulties retaining residents) to increase the number of available workers for local businesses. Attracting immigrants was also cited by one CAO as a possible way to increase the municipal tax base. A few municipalities are also engaged in attracting immigrants to the area via a regional economic development partnership such as the Central Alberta Economic Partnership or one of the other Regional Economic Development Alliances.

Only four municipalities, all of them mid- to large-sized municipalities, talked about immigrant attraction as a way of hiring municipal employees. Reasons cited for using this strategy include the high turnover of municipal staff or the lack of local employees with requisite skills, the desire to create a more diverse municipal workforce, and the need to find committed employees.

The arguments for municipal participation in immigrant attraction are almost exclusively economic. Only one of 50 municipalities cited an increase in cultural diversity itself, and/or the resulting potential increase in community vibrancy or health, as a reason for attracting immigrants. There are also a number of municipalities who said that they would like to be involved in attraction somehow, but have no idea how to go about it due to lack of experience and information.

Supporting Settlement & Integration

Generally, when municipalities feel they have a role to play regarding newcomers or immigration, that role most often falls under the headings of supporting newcomer settlement and integration (n=12; 24%) or building a welcoming and inclusive community (n=21; 42%). Because respondents very often talked about these two elements in tandem, we will discuss them in tandem.

Many municipalities believe their primary role regarding newcomers is to ensure that they have access to basic municipal and social services – by either making current broad-based services accessible to newcomers (e.g. through targeted information provision or offering translation services) or creating particular programs to meet the specific needs of newcomers. Other municipalities see their role as supporting community agencies (such as multicultural associations, libraries or immigrant service organizations) that are already doing work with newcomers. A few municipalities framed their role as that of the 'good neighbour'. This includes being available as the first point of contact to answer questions, provide access to information about services, and help with basic needs. This role of a 'good neighbour' is one example of the way a 'settlement and integration' approach has some overlap with a WIC approach.

Building a Welcoming and Inclusive Community

In the foregoing examples, municipalities see newcomers as the target population for programs, services and policies; therefore the focus of any intervention or initiative is on helping the *newcomer* to adapt to the *community*. Sometimes, however, municipalities aim to transform the community or the municipal organization itself to be more inclusive or equitable. The thinking behind this intent is the recognition that community norms and municipal policies and practices have not (historically) been created with newcomers in mind. This has sometimes resulted in discrimination, exclusion or inequity. One approach for addressing these inequities or exclusions has been through public education for current residents or cultural competency training for municipal staff.

A few respondents identified the municipality as a role model and champion of community change. "It needs to come from the top down," one respondent emphasized. "You can't expect a community to change their ideas and change their ways of thinking about different cultures if you're not modeling it from the top." One respondent asserted that community change should happen in response to community demand, but that they must first be open to listening: "The municipality's role is to ensure that people feel comfortable and have a mechanism to voice their views and wishes about what they want in the community so adaptations can be made." Many municipalities also talked about their role in celebrating culture and diversity in order to make the community more welcoming to newcomers.

Municipalities do not have a Role

Of all the municipalities surveyed, 30% (n=15) do not feel that the municipality has a role to play in immigration or working with newcomers. The primary explanations for not having a role are that there are few newcomers in the municipality or few who have unaddressed needs; that it is not a municipal priority or that there are other more pressing priorities; that there are inadequate resources or expertise to take any action; that other organizations in the

community are already doing the work (e.g. immigrant service providers or economic development committees); or that legislatively, dealing with newcomers is not within municipal jurisdiction. Municipalities who believed they did not have a role in this were predominantly small- and mid-sized centers.

<u>Ambivalence and Struggle</u>

However, often what we encountered was an ambivalence or struggle about whether the municipality in fact had a role to play in immigration, and what that role might be. Some said that they don't have adequate direction from other levels of government about what their role should be and therefore would not take up the issue unless that direction were to change or become more clear. Some haven't had enough experience in the area and thus cannot envision what they might begin to do for newcomers. Others have begun the work, having made an explicit commitment to doing something (e.g. by including a statement on newcomers in their sustainability plan) but are at this point uncertain about the details of what should be done, either because of a lack of information or a lack of organizational commitment to the work (e.g. leadership not approving staff time allocated to planning). Other municipalities were merely in the exploratory or data collection phase at the time of this survey, and will have a more clear sense of their role in the months to come. For AUMA, this experience of ambivalence can be an important place to begin identifying where and how to intervene to support municipalities. Uncertainty and ambivalence around this work will be explored in more detail in Section Two: Challenges Faced by Municipalities.

Current practices

Having outlined the ideal roles that municipalities see for themselves in this work, this section describes in more detail the various practices municipalities are currently using around immigration or working with newcomers. It provides a useful snapshot of the state of immigration-focused work in Alberta municipalities.

<u>Municipality as service provider</u>

As discussed above, many municipalities are in the business of providing services or access to services for newcomers. On the social side, services are often delivered to newcomers incidentally through existing service delivery channels. For example, municipal Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) staff might provide one-on-one support to newcomers applying for family sponsorship, enrolling children in schools, or orienting themselves to the community. One municipality noted that their business development manager sometimes provides individualized support to immigrant businesspeople to grow their businesses or helps ethnocultural or religious organizations to find spaces for community activities. These one-to-one services are generally provided on a case-by-case basis and involve identifying the specific

need(s), meeting those need(s) and concluding the interaction, although they can also offer an opportunity for ongoing support or case management.

One of the most common municipal services cited by respondents is a welcome package, which is generally a print copy of a package containing items such as a community directory, maps and information on schools, health care centres and recreational facilities. Some municipalities have an online version of the package; some have translated the package into multiple languages. Most often these welcome packages are not specifically intended for newcomers to Canada but for all newcomers to the community, although they are often created with the awareness that a large number of users will be recent immigrants. Newcomers might also use existing community programs such as a free income tax clinic or the Parent Link Centre, but like the welcome package, these programs are not specifically designed with immigrants in mind.

Recognizing that newcomers often have specific barriers to accessing municipal services, such as language differences and unfamiliarity with institutional rules, some municipalities have focused on streamlining the connection between services and people. Most often this takes the form of providing information to newcomers about the municipal services available to them. Examples of increasing access to services include adding a 'translate' function to the municipal website, arranging for individualized support in municipal programs, providing or arranging for access to interpretation services, or conducting municipal surveys in places newcomers already frequent, such as the library or parent-teacher nights. A few respondents emphasized the key importance of having a consistent friendly face at the municipality that community members feel comfortable approaching.

Additionally, municipal programs may be designed expressly to meet specific needs of newcomers, such as a buddy program, intercultural parenting classes or a resource kit for immigrant families at a municipality-run daycare center. Or the municipality might not deliver the programs directly, but might contract a community organization to do service delivery for the municipality – for example, an adult learning council to run language classes. The municipality tries to ensure that newcomers are receiving specific services when needed, in order to aid them in their initial settlement or long-term integration.

Municipality as connector and facilitator

In this case, municipalities serve as a conduit for access to non-municipal services, information or resources that already exist – be they local, provincial or federal. This might involve referring individuals to local agencies, providing contacts for Service Canada offices, or connecting newcomers with volunteer opportunities. It might involve hosting events, such an annual meet and greet to familiarize newcomers with community agencies. The welcome package described in the previous section can also serve a 'connecting' purpose. One of the most exciting features

of this strategy was the creativity demonstrated by municipalities who take advantage of opportune moments for making connections between newcomers and local services and programs. For example, in one town, every time municipal utility employees visit a home to hook up new utilities, they use it as an opportunity to register newcomers for the non-municipal volunteer-run Welcome Wagon, which then provides information to newcomers on community amenities and services. In fact, a number of municipalities (14%) have an established connection with the local Welcome Wagon, and either notify Wagon volunteers of new residents in town, or provide them with information about municipal services to pass on to newcomers. Another respondent noted, "You don't want to force it on the immigrant or the newcomer where to get the information from. If they're more comfortable getting it from the church, or the employer, or whoever, you want to make it a seamless experience."

Some municipalities step back from direct involvement with services, and play the role of facilitator for local groups in the development of their own community-based strategies. In these cases the municipality provides resources (e.g. research expertise, meeting facilitation, funds, staff, assistance with visioning) and local people provide the direction and carry out the work. This strategy is sometimes seen as a way to make the work sustainable in the context of shifting municipal priorities and limited resources, or as a way of the municipality supporting work that is already going on in the community.

Municipality as partner and supporter

Overwhelmingly, municipalities emphasized that they by no means did this work alone. Municipal staff often work collaboratively with local agencies and groups, sometimes creating formal partnerships. For example, municipal staff members might sit on a community WIC committee or on the advisory committee of the local immigrant service organization. Three municipalities talked about engaging in partnerships to do research, data collection or strategy development, either with local educational institutions or an immigrant service organization in a nearby major center. These relationships have allowed them to move work forward by taking advantage of local or regional expertise. Municipalities work particularly closely with adult learning councils, who are a main provider of language services for newcomers in smaller Alberta communities, as well as Parent Link Centres, Community Information Volunteer Centers and FCSS Resource Centers. All four are often funded in whole or part by the municipality. Other collaborators include libraries, Boys & Girls' clubs, schools, churches, ethnocultural community organizations and Chambers of Commerce.

Interestingly, a few municipalities pointed out that they are very deliberate in determining their role in these partnerships. Sometimes it is important for the municipality to take a leading role in determining priorities, sometimes the municipality acts more as a facilitator and provider of planning resources, leaving the guidance of the work up to community members. Another

recurring theme was the importance of maintaining open lines of communication between partners, to avoid duplication of services and to ensure that information can be passed back and forth freely and when needed. For example, regular communication allows community agencies to have accurate information on municipal services with which to do referrals, and allows municipalities to keep abreast of community trends and needs through their contact with frontline service providers.

A current trend in the area of partnerships is municipal collaboration with local businesses or industry representatives, particularly in communities where most immigrants are arriving through an economic immigration program[2]. In one town, a representative from the nearby plant sits on the WIC committee and regularly notifies municipal staff when a group of newcomers are set to arrive in town. A few municipalities do presentations on municipal programs and services at employee orientation days at local workplaces. Having a relationship between business and the municipality seems to be easier when there is one major employer in town that is bringing in immigrants to work. The importance of creating relationships with local businesses will be explored in more detail in Section 2: Challenges Faced by Municipalities.

A number of municipalities talked about partnering at a regional level with other municipalities, municipal districts and counties to attract immigrants or work with newcomers. This strategy builds on the long history of intermunicipal collaboration via organizations like FCSS or REDAs[3]. A few municipalities actually go about service provision regionally, for example, a few municipalities have jointly applied for funding for a shared settlement worker who then spends a few days per week in each community. Others are involved in regional economic development committees such as the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) that embark on initiatives to attract immigrant workers, develop resources and study workforce trends.

Municipality as change agent

As mentioned in The Role of Municipalities, some municipalities are very active as catalysts for broad-based change, either within the municipal organization or in the wider community. Change within the municipal organization might be focused on ensuring that municipal services are looked at through a diversity or equity lens to ensure that they're provided in a way that's

---

[2] For example, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program or the Federal Skilled Worker Program.
[3] Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education, "Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs)", http://eae.alberta.ca/economic-development/regional-development/redas.aspx (accessed October 31, 2012).
John Lackey, "FCSS: A Grande Lady With a Colourful Past And An Honourable Future," 2001 FCSSAA Conference, http://www.fcssaa.ab.ca/tools/pdf/History%20of%20FCSS.pdf (accessed October 31, 2012).

fair and respectful to newcomers. Municipalities with this goal might mandate or offer cultural sensitivity training for all frontline staff or for elected officials. Or municipalities might assess their municipal infrastructure, recommending fundamental changes in policies and procedures. For example, one municipality convened an internal committee to take community complaints, such as the physical inaccessibility of sidewalks, to the appropriate department, in this case Public Works. After making the initial connection between the concerned community group and Public Works, the committee worked to build a relationship between the two parties in order to make municipal infrastructure more responsive to community needs in future. Other municipalities are engaged in discussions about housing and city planning – how to develop more affordable or rental housing, or how to create neighbourhoods that are less spread out and hopefully more welcoming to newcomers.

Another strategy for broad change within the municipal organization focuses on hiring recent immigrants as municipal employees and building an inclusive workplace. Strategies that fall under this category include posting job opportunities internationally, providing website resources for international applicants, creating a mentorship program for new hires or an employee awareness campaign about diversity, or offering assistance to municipal departments who are struggling with 'diversity' issues in the workplace. The municipalities that are engaged in internal change work are most often major centers[4].

Municipalities often see themselves as catalysts for change in the wider community as well, sometimes by creating public education initiatives or by building community capacity to be more welcoming, for example, by offering training to community service providers. One municipality noted that because of the work they've done to date on diversity and inclusion, they are now becoming known locally for their expertise – a large company recently invited them to do a presentation on human resources and diversity.

For those municipalities interested in systemic change, actions and initiatives are sometimes accompanied by explicit policy documents that outline their commitment to the work. Some municipalities include a statement in their municipal or social development plan about the need to be aware of changing demographics. 5 of the municipalities we surveyed (10%) have created a specific diversity, social inclusion or immigration policy or action plan. With one exception, these 5 municipalities are major centers.

---

[4] We define a 'major center' as a municipality with a population over 50,000.

Approaches to the work

<u>Individual vs. Systemic</u>

At this point it may be useful to make a few comments about the overall approaches that municipalities seem to be taking in this work. As seen above, there is a wide diversity of opinion about the role that municipalities ought to be playing regarding immigration, as well as how they go about fulfilling that role. As in much contemporary work around diversity, inclusion and equity, distinguishing between 'individual ' and 'systemic' approaches can be useful to demonstrate differences in intent and strategy, as well as to suggest future directions.

In 'The Role of Municipalities' we made the distinction between 'supporting newcomer settlement and integration' and 'building a welcoming and inclusive community,' drawing out some differences between work that aims to help newcomers on an individual basis and work that aims to transform the municipality or community to be more welcoming. In 'Current Practices' we made some similar distinctions between municipalities that provide services, serve as a connector or partner, or act as change agents.

In the context of municipal-level immigration work, the goal of an 'individual' approach would be to serve newcomer individuals and families (or perhaps even ethnocultural communities) by providing them with information, services and resources in order to help them adapt and integrate into the host municipality. An individual approach sees the problem as the newcomer's lack of knowledge, cultural familiarity, skills, or access to resources. Strategies to deal with the problem would include providing municipal services or programs, connecting newcomers to non-municipal services, and generally dealing with issues on a case-by-case basis. For example, through its FCSS resource center, a municipality might help newcomers to fill out forms to apply for a local recreation subsidy, or might even offer a class for immigrants on form-filling. This allows the newcomer to access information and support, and learn how to navigate municipal administrative procedures.

The goal of a 'systemic' approach would be to shift the norms, beliefs, policies and procedures of the municipal organization or community so that newcomers have more access to resources, feel more welcome, and face less discrimination throughout. The intent of this approach is to recognize that mainstream systems that may be inherently – even if unintentionally – unfair to newcomers, and to change them to be more equitable. In the form-filling example above, a systemic approach might involve looking at the forms for the recreation subsidy through an inclusion lens, perhaps discovering that the form is not written in plain language, which might be a challenge to newcomers whose first language is not English. (In the assessment, it might also become apparent that the form is printed in too small a font, making it inaccessible to people with visual impairments. In this way, a systemic approach can often result in

improvements that have a broader reach than initially intended.) It becomes apparent that it's the form itself that is the problem, and steps are taken to alter it as well as the procedures surrounding it, to make it accessible to *all* residents.

This is a simple example, but illustrates the important distinction between the two approaches: *What* is seen as the problem? or even, *Who* might be seen as the problem? *What* needs to change for the best overall outcome? We would suggest that if AUMA is committed to the principles set out by the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities initiative – eliminating discrimination and encouraging the full participation of all residents – it should encourage all municipalities to move towards a systemic approach.

Currently, 28% of the survey respondents are employing primarily an individual approach in the way they address immigration and working with newcomers; for 40%, at least some of their work uses a systemic approach (they may also do some individual-level work as well). The remaining 32% are not currently active around immigration. Examples of some systemic strategies that we encountered in this survey include:

- Hiring an Inclusion Coordinator at the municipality to assess municipal policies and procedures or create a municipality-wide inclusion plan.
- Including a statement in the Municipal Sustainability Plan that refers to the need for immigration to the community.
- Mandating or offering diversity training for all staff.
- Making an official institutional commitment (e.g. via CMARD) to diversity and inclusion.
- Making municipal consultation processes accessible to newcomers, for example, translating surveys into multiple languages or conducting face-to-face surveys on weekends at places newcomers frequent such as the library.
- Looking at neighbourhood development and road planning through an inclusion lens.
- Doing public education with long-time residents to decrease discrimination and promote inclusion.

It must be recognized that one obstacle to taking a systemic approach to working with newcomers is that it requires a longer-term commitment from the municipality, and may involve more resources. Often the most significant barrier, however, is the willingness of municipal leadership and staff to make a departure from 'business as usual' into an area in which, as we have seen, many municipalities are lacking expertise. An individual approach often seems to require fewer resources, but will arguably have both a shallower and narrower impact. There are a few examples in this survey that demonstrate a systemic approach using relatively few resources, for example, meeting with community groups to consult on issues of infrastructure accessibility.

Section 2: Challenges faced by Municipalities

Even though there is much innovative and effective work being done by municipalities across Alberta in the area of immigration and working with newcomers, municipalities face myriad challenges. As discussed above, sometimes these challenges are sufficient to prevent a municipality from embarking on the work at all, but usually the challenges prevent municipalities from attaining their ideal vision for the work. Having a thorough understanding of these challenges as well as their correlation with specific municipal characteristics such as size and geography is a useful way for AUMA to determine how to best support municipalities.

Creating a vision

One of the most common challenges identified by municipalities who are not currently engaged in immigration initiatives is their uncertainty about what to do. For some this is due to a lack of direction from federal or provincial levels of government or from council as to what they *should* be doing; for others, their lack of experience makes it hard to envision what a successful initiative *could* look like. Still others noted that even though they have some idea about what they might do, the lack of defined benchmarks for this work makes it hard to know if they are performing at the level they should be in comparison to other municipalities, or in comparison to the actual needs of newcomers.

Infrastructure and services for newcomers

A number of municipalities talked about the current state of infrastructure and services in the community and the challenges that this presents, both for newcomers and for organizations attempting to serve them. A basic concern is that newcomers often don't know how or where to access community resources, and that municipalities sometimes don't have updated or adequate information to do referrals. One respondent described the chicken-and-egg situation around the lack of locally available settlement and integration or multicultural services. On the one hand, the lack of newcomers in small communities makes it hard to justify funding from the federal government or the GOA for settlement services, but on the other hand, having no settlement services hampers a community's ability to attract newcomers.

Particularly for newcomers living in small municipalities, access to federal and provincial services (e.g. Service Canada, Alberta Works) was also a key issue. "A lot of the services and information and support that we provide in FCSS probably should be being done by provincial and federal agencies," noted one respondent, "but it's not, because they have tight parameters around them." One respondent noted that although Service Canada workers come to town a few times a week to serve clients, FCSS has no idea when they are in town or even where they set up shop, and so is unable to refer newcomers directly to them. Newcomers living in

bedroom communities adjacent to major centers may have transportation issues that make traveling into the city in order to access services impossible. A lack of affordable housing was cited as another challenge, particularly in light of the municipal role in housing and neighbourhood development.

Gathering data

In the vast majority of municipalities, data collection processes around immigration issues have not been formalized, so municipalities are often only working from their intuitive sense that something is needed or from scattered reports from community agencies. In particular, municipalities that do not provide direct service may find it difficult to keep on top of trends in demographics and the needs of newcomers as they do not interact directly with them. Other municipalities noted that they would like to do data collection and research, but simply don't have the money or staff time to allocate to it. A few municipalities facing this last challenge noted that they recognize that it is essential to build any work they might do on a foundation of adequate and accurate data, and are not inclined to commit resources to the project until they have it.

Community perceptions

A large number of municipalities stated that in some way, existing community perceptions towards newcomers pose a challenge for this work. Some deal with resistance about attracting immigrants to work or live in the community due to negative community perceptions about newcomers. For example, a few respondents attributed this explicitly to racism and stereotyping, others to a general apprehension about 'difference' or 'newness'. Other resistance took the form of the perception that newcomers should not receive 'special' services to assist them in integration, particularly from the municipality. One respondent typified some of the community responses around this issue by saying: "[People say,] 'services specifically for newcomers are *exclusive*, not *inclusive*!'" Respondents also described encountering sentiments such as "they shouldn't come if they don't speak English" or "immigrants are taking our jobs!"

In general, municipalities that identified this challenge felt that these forms of resistance might come from isolated instances of personal, negative experiences with newcomers. These particular experiences then become generalized to the broader newcomer community. A few respondents highlighted the importance and challenges of aligning community perceptions and behaviours with municipal commitments: "We call ourselves a Welcoming and Inclusive Community, but is the community really on side with that?"

Interacting with newcomers

Other challenges had to do with actual interactions – or lack thereof – with newcomers. A few respondents noted that overall, it's a challenge to attract and retain immigrants in small

communities because they generally prefer larger centers where there are already established ethnocultural communities. However, the most common theme we encountered was the challenge of engaging newcomers. One person cited language barriers between newcomers and municipal staff as a key challenge, noting that a seemingly simple lack of interpretation services has far-reaching consequences: "If you can't communicate… you've lost that opportunity, and they don't feel welcome, 'cause you're not trying to make that extra effort to try to make connection." Others said that it was more a matter of figuring out how to make the initial connection between the municipality and a newcomer. A few municipalities noted that unless newcomers own homes and come into the municipal office to licence them, the municipality never interacts with them and might never know they have arrived in town. Others expressed difficulties getting newcomers to come to events and programs; still others were trying to find ways to get newcomers to interact and build relationships with current residents.

Lack of resources

As is common throughout the municipal world, resource challenges figured prominently in the responses to our questions. First, municipalities cited a lack of money – for programs, services, staff wages and training. A few said that that small municipalities often compete for funding with larger centers; another interviewee said there seemed to be a lack of funding for Southern Alberta in particular. The need for sustainable long term funding was quite consistently mentioned, although some respondents expressed a desire for project-based funding or funding for capital expenditures such as multicultural facilities.

Lack of staff or staff time was also mentioned as a key challenge; a number of staff respondents noted that they would love to do more municipal work around immigration, but simply don't have the time. Similar to the comment above regarding infrastructure, one respondent linked staff time to the local availability of federal and provincial services, saying that municipal staff wind up stepping in to fill the service gaps created by other levels of government. Another described how their staff sometimes find themselves resolving conflicts between immigrant workers and employers. For both respondents, this demand was a strain on already-stretched staff time.

Another key resource issue relates to expertise and knowledge around topics like immigration regulations, stages of newcomer settlement and integration, or education to combat racism. One respondent described the high cost of this gap – because municipal staff don't have adequate knowledge about the issue, they may be uncomfortable talking about these issues, which can lead to inaction. "I think often times you're not sure … if you don't understand somebody's culture, is it okay to ask?" Staff turnover, which can be high both in municipalities and in community agencies, exacerbates the problem as knowledge is lost when staff leave. One municipality we talked to has a single dedicated settlement worker who provides services

to newcomers, but if described the risk of this – if they leave, "we don't have the knowledge anywhere else in the community." Other resource issues that were mentioned include a lack of volunteers for WIC committees and social programs, a lack of office space to house additional services, and a lack of local educators for service providers and community groups.

Communicating, collaborating and decision making

Because so many municipalities do this work collaboratively, there were a number of challenges that fell into the category of working together. Some respondents spoke about challenges internal to the municipality, such as when departments are not aware of what others are doing in the area and therefore don't work together or share useful information they might have. Another key issue was the need for more collaboration between agencies to ensure a more cohesive response to newcomer needs. "The spirit of collaborating is lacking in the region," noted one respondent who was particularly keen on a regional approach. When starting out in collaborative relationships or groups, there is sometimes a struggle to determine who should take the lead. Alternatively, some community organizations that are already involved in service provision for newcomers make it clear to the municipality that working with newcomers is not in fact within their purview. Finally, one respondent noted that one significant challenge is that they have no immigrants at the decision making table.

A particularly salient challenge for municipalities around immigration work is the relationship with business or industry; most often the challenge involves a lack of connection or communication between the two. Because businesses are not mandated to notify anyone when they are bringing newcomers to a community to work (for example, via an economic immigration program) and because there is no standard structure for business-municipality relationships that might facilitate this communication, municipalities are very often not aware of who is moving to the community for work. Yet municipalities must meet the social, recreational and infrastructure needs of newcomers that fall under their jurisdiction and may, as mentioned above, find themselves dealing with the fallout of a bad employee-employer relationship.

Working with municipal leadership

Over half of our respondents (60%, n=30) were municipal staff who were not CAOs or equivalent. Many of them spoke about the challenges of working with municipal leadership, either senior administration or elected officials. The two most often cited issues were leadership not having adequate knowledge, and leadership not making work with newcomers (or around inclusion more broadly) a priority.

In the eyes of some respondents, many municipal leaders do not seem to have an understanding about the role of policy in changing community behaviour and attitudes

regarding discrimination. Similarly, municipal leaders have to deal with negative perceptions of newcomers or of immigrant attraction held by their staff. Yet other challenges relate to a lack of understanding of what things like 'inclusion' or 'equity' actually entail. At a practical level, many leaders have no prior experience with immigration work and cannot envision what it might look like and therefore face a significant challenge in providing direction or guidance to staff.

Related to the aforementioned challenges is the problem of buy-in. A number of respondents talked about elected officials or senior administration who are resistant either to the very idea of using municipal policy or programming to advance inclusion, or encouraging immigration to the community. This was of particular concern in one large municipality where the respondent noted that although individual departments might come up with great initiatives and programs that respond to real community needs, it is difficult to move them up through the bureaucracy because senior administration (meaning the CAO and department heads) is not supportive. Another challenge is that municipal leadership simply does not see a problem. One respondent noted that perhaps their leadership doesn't realize the imminence of the Alberta labour shortage, or doesn't see that community behaviours towards newcomers are discriminatory and *should* change. In the words of this respondent, "The hardest thing with this entire program is trying to get it to become a priority for people," referring both to municipal leadership as well as the broader community.

In other cases, particularly in small municipalities, immigration or diversity initiatives get shifted down on the list of priorities because other responsibilities under municipal jurisdiction are more pressing, such as physical infrastructure or land use. One municipality we talked to had little to say on the subject of newcomers as they were awaiting the results of a dissolution study. Interestingly, two municipalities emphasized that within the broad area of 'diversity and inclusion' their municipal priority is building relationships with their Aboriginal neighbours – they both see this as more foundational to advancing inclusion within the municipality. The three-year term of councillors was also cited as a challenge in working with elected leadership – it is difficult for staff to ensure full commitment to a ten-year inclusion plan when decision makers change every three years.

Dealing with other levels of government

Given that immigration regulations and services are primarily determined and provided by federal and provincial levels of government, it comes as no surprise that some respondents talked about the challenges associated with the relationships between municipalities and the two other levels of government. As noted above, limited access to federal and provincial services for newcomers in small communities is a problem, particularly if municipalities find themselves filling the gaps to ensure the wellbeing of residents. Municipalities asserted that it

seems that other levels of government are not aware of how they are effectively downloading responsibilities onto municipalities – in fact, this is one key reason that some municipalities stay away from the area of immigration entirely, lest they be given more responsibility than they can carry.

Quite a number of municipalities talked about the challenge of finding information about immigration legislation or regulations, such as the responsibility of employers to newcomer workers, eligibility for the Provincial Nominee Program or funding for language learning. Smaller municipalities in particular talked about how difficult it is to keep up with the seemingly constant changes in regulations: "The small communities have to follow the rules the same as the larger ones, but we have less time and less resources to do it." Economic immigration policies themselves were sometimes cited as a challenge – foreign credential recognition was a barrier for municipalities wanting to hire newcomers with relevant experience but inadequate credential recognition. The amount of paperwork required to bring an immigrant worker to Canada is also prohibitive, making attraction more difficult.

Conceptual frameworks and language

Lastly, a few municipalities talked about the challenges involved in using particular conceptual frameworks or language as a basis for work around immigration and immigrants. The lack of a uniform framework for this work – some municipalities use a social inclusion lens, others anti-racism – makes it difficult to know how to approach it and how to communicate across organizations using different frameworks. One respondent from a major center noted that making systemic change within the municipal organization takes time, as staff across the corporation are at different stages of cultural competence. Another noted that arbitrating between different equity groups focused on ability, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. can be difficult, as each group would like the challenges faced by their particular group to be a priority, yet resources for this work are limited. Another municipality that uses a broad framework that addresses all kinds of diversity and difference noted that this approach will take more time than one that focuses more narrowly on human rights compliance or equity for specific groups.

Section 3: How AUMA can Support Municipalities

Assessing the current state of municipal work around immigration and the ideal vision that Alberta municipalities have for this work, as well as the particular challenges they are facing, allows us to map out what AUMA might do to help municipalities move forward. Municipalities provided a number of suggestions for how AUMA can support them, and the recommendations provided in this report are based on their responses.

First, it is important to note that 10 different municipalities (20%) made a point of emphasizing that AUMA has done good work in the past through WIC, CTA or other initiatives such as the Business Vitality Initiative[5]. Many of these municipalities expressed their appreciation for the open-ended nature of AUMA's support that allows them to access resources when and how they are most needed. Others valued educational opportunities such as the December 2011 CTA conference or the presence of a staff person who is available to provide consultation or education. A number of municipalities stated that even though they hadn't accessed WIC services, they were aware that AUMA offered support around immigration or diversity-related topics and would access them if and when the need arose. A few noted how essential it was for AUMA to continue this work into the future.

26% of municipalities, when asked what kind of support AUMA might provide them, answered that they do not want or need support in this area. For one respondent, it was because there are other priorities that they would rather AUMA act on instead such as brownfields and urban-rural cost sharing. Other respondents said that they don't need support right now – either because immigration is not a priority right now, because they are just starting out and so don't know what they need yet or because they have everything they need to move forward for the time being, although they may need support from AUMA in the future. Speaking more broadly than just about newcomers, a few respondents suggested that AUMA should begin conversations with First Nations communities instead of exclusively focusing on work with newcomers.

74% of municipalities expressed some desire for support from AUMA in the area of immigration or working with newcomers. These municipalities expressed a need or desire for support from AUMA in the following areas: resources (68%), funding (22%), advocacy (22%), one-on-one support (22%), connections (11%), research (8%) and programs (8%).

---

[5] The Business Vitality Initiative (BVI) measures the business-friendliness of a community, then compares results to other communities, and assists in developing actionable local strategies for improvement. See http://www.theciel.com/bvi.php for more information.

Create tools and resources

52% of respondents would like to hear what other municipalities are doing – both the successes and the struggles. They want models, frameworks, good practices and stories. It is particularly important for them to hear from other municipalities in similar situations – from communities that are small, industry-heavy or have limited resources to allocate to the work. A few noted that stories from other municipalities are useful to legitimize and therefore help them make continued arguments to municipal leadership for their own work.

Other suggestions for resources that AUMA should create or make available include: a primer on the immigration process, regularly updated information on changes to immigration programs and regulations, a cheat sheet on the eligibility of Temporary Foreign Workers for various services, information for service providers about immigrant cultures, a toolkit on how to attract developers to build housing suitable for newcomers and a social marketing campaign around diversity. Most felt that AUMA is the right organization to provide this support, although one respondent emphasized that it should actually be the role of the GOA to provide the most up to date information to municipalities. This respondent suggested as an example that the GOA should create and distribute a standard community welcome package containing provincial-level materials, to which municipalities can then add locally specific information.

A few municipalities talked about the usefulness of benchmarking and evaluative tools for their work, both for mapping out action plans and securing commitment from decision makers. Others mentioned the need for staff training around topics such as how to be a community facilitator and how to do intercultural education. In fact, supporting municipalities in public awareness and education activities figured significantly in the responses to this question. Municipalities are looking for assistance in debunking community fears about immigrants, outlining the benefits of immigration, talking about Canada as a nation of immigrants, helping residents adapt to newcomers, and showing businesses how to attract immigrant workers. Overall, it was noted that it is essential that AUMA promote these resources well, not only to municipal staff but also to decision makers.

Provide Access to Funding

Reflecting the emphasis put on a lack of resources in Section 2: Challenges Faced by Municipalities, a number of municipalities stated that funding from AUMA for this work would be of assistance, either for special projects, capital expenses or ongoing service provision. Funding for rural municipalities was specifically requested by a few. However, a significant number of municipalities feel that if funding itself is not available, AUMA can support them by providing information about and access to other funding opportunities.

Advocate for Municipalities

There were two ways in which respondents expressed a desire for AUMA to advocate for their interests – to federal and provincial levels of government, and to municipal leaders themselves. A few municipalities stated that it should be communicated to other levels of government that attraction of immigrants is a provincial responsibility and not a municipal responsibility. However, some municipalities stated that they want other levels of government to connect directly with them in some way regarding immigration while remaining sensitive to the repeated concern about being downloaded responsibilities. This suggested to us that this connection was currently missing or inadequate. Quite a number of respondents would like AUMA to advocate for more accessible federal and provincial services in small communities. There was also a call for the coordination of these federal and provincial services in the first place so that newcomers don't "fall through the gaps," thereby necessitating municipal intervention. Regarding specific immigration programs, one municipality called for the Provincial Nominee Program to be magnified; a number of respondents talked about the need for the numerous issues with the TFW Program to be resolved. One specifically requested that municipalities be involved in a review of the TFW Program.

However, a significant number of municipal staff noted that AUMA can also play an advocacy role with their own municipal leadership – with senior administration, elected officials or in one response, with the provincial FCSS body. A number of municipalities made it quite clear that AUMA is a respected organization in the municipal world, and messages from AUMA about working with newcomers or about the need to attract immigrants can make a significant impact in influencing the priorities of decision makers. Many of the comments focused on the potential of AUMA to encourage elected officials to see working with newcomers as a priority and to set out basic benchmarks for the work. AUMA might go about this by educating leadership about how attracting immigrants creates a responsibility for supporting their long-term integration and what value successful integration brings to a community. Similar to the comments above about how stories from other municipalities can help legitimize this work, a few respondents, mainly in major centers, noted that the 'outsider expert' role that AUMA can play helps to validate what municipal staff are already telling senior administration about what is needed and what strategies are best to achieve it. One respondent suggested that AUMA should set up meetings with senior administration to discuss these points.

Provide One-On-One Consultation and Support

A number of respondents talked about the need for ongoing support from a staff person at AUMA – someone who would be available to consult on strategies, facilitate planning sessions or share tools and good practice stories. A few respondents noted that although the resources that AUMA provides are useful, it is important to have access to a staff person who can refer

them to the appropriate resources. In fact, during these interviews, a few municipalities mentioned that they were in currently in a planning phase and intended to contact WIC staff for this purpose within the next few months for support. Another municipality emphasized the value of having a permanent full time WIC staff person with whom they can build a relationship over time, stressing that WIC using project-to-project contract staff does not meet their needs.

Facilitate Connections

Many municipalities saw AUMA playing the role of a connector and link between municipalities and other external bodies. At a basic level, this included a request for key contact information in government departments that can be passed on to newcomers for their use. However, the role of a 'connector' is closely related to the role of an advocate – if AUMA can facilitate ongoing connections between municipalities and federal and provincial governments, the interests of municipalities can be more easily communicated to those levels, hopefully resulting in decisions that benefit municipalities. One respondent in particular noted that the connection that WIC provides between the Alberta Human Rights Commission and municipalities is rare and important – there are few partnerships that bring knowledge about human rights and the specifics of the municipal context together.

There were a number of requests for AUMA to host or facilitate dialogues and roundtables, either on particular issues or in specific regions. One respondent was particularly keen on interdisciplinary roundtables involving various municipal departments such as police, libraries, economic development, FCSS, infrastructure and planning, and human resources. Lastly, it was noted that AUMA can also support municipalities to celebrate and share with each other the work they are already doing around immigration – the municipal profile videos created through the CTA initiative were cited as an example of this. The role of AUMA in connecting municipalities will be discussed in more detail in Section 4: The WIC Network.

Conduct Research

A few municipalities feel that AUMA should conduct research and disseminate information; for example, AUMA should provide demographic statistics on immigrants in Alberta, or analyse the connections between immigration and new GOA policy frameworks and the implications for municipalities.

Deliver Programs

Few municipalities actually expressed the desire for AUMA to run programs related to immigration, but some talked about wanting the GOA to start programs that would help municipalities attract immigrants, either as private sector workers, municipal employees, or

residents. The Municipal Affairs Planning Intern Program was cited as a good example of a GOA program that effectively supports small municipalities, as it provides them with key human resources and expertise that they would not be able to access locally.

Considerations for AUMA Support

Based on the comments above, we have identified a number of themes regarding the support that AUMA can offer municipalities. It is important that the support provided is flexible in its parameters and outcomes; AUMA's BVI program and the ACE Communities initiative[6] were cited as good examples of this, as the program outcomes were ultimately up to the community to determine according to their needs. Support must be timely and available when needed; one municipality noted that in the past they have requested specific support and WIC has not provided it in time or in the way that was requested. Information and resources provided to municipalities must be up to date and the differences between rural and urban communities must be taken into account. As municipalities are at vastly different stages of their work and at varying levels of readiness for intervention, it will be important to maintain ongoing contact to determine what support might be needed.

Section 4: The WIC Network

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Network is an AUMA initiative that promotes and helps to create welcoming and inclusive communities throughout the province through education, networking and shared resources. The objectives of the provincial network of welcoming and inclusive communities include:

- To provide an opportunity for networking amongst participating municipalities.
- To provide an opportunity for the sharing of best practices and resources.
- To provide support to municipalities as they work to become more welcoming and inclusive.
- To broaden the reach of welcoming and inclusive initiatives throughout the province.
- To increase the number of Alberta municipalities actively engaged in becoming more welcoming and inclusive.

---

[6] The ACE Communities initiative works to enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta by strengthening community leadership, collaboration, and innovation through recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage. See http://acecommunities.arpaonline.ca for more information.

Of all the respondents we interviewed, 66% expressed interest in being involved in the WIC Network. Some of these respondents are have already participated in the Network in its current albeit nebulously structured form; some have not.

Benefits of a network

Many municipalities saw the primary function of the network as a forum for municipalities to share stories about their work with newcomers. In particular, a few respondents saw the network as a great place to learn from other municipalities about how to begin the work. Again, many mentioned that hearing what others are doing helps them to make a case to their own decision makers about what the municipality should be doing. Others see the network as a space for learning, including both formal educational opportunities as well as informal opportunities for sharing and reflection. Many expressed their willingness to send municipal representatives to conferences and events. One municipality suggested that municipalities might be matched up to mentor each other, for example, through a job-shadowing program. The network was also seen by some as a way to find opportunities for municipalities to work collaboratively, particularly at a regional level.

Structure of the network

Some municipalities were very specific about how the network should be structured and should operate for it to be useful and accessible. It should not require a great deal of additional time for municipal staff to participate in, but should be timely and easily accessible. This might involve offering up a choice of online and in-person options for engaging in the network. It should ultimately be driven by participant needs; one respondent suggested that AUMA start by simply providing resources, and then assess participants' needs and respond accordingly. Another municipality stressed the importance of participants taking ownership – perhaps AUMA could initiate a series of regular conversations around the issue, and then after a while pass the responsibility on to individual municipalities to host or facilitate.

A few respondents suggested particular ways in which the network could stay connected – through a listserv that participants could post content to, an online network like LinkedIn, a newsletter produced by AUMA, or through regular in-person or online dialogues on particular issues or in particular regions. Any of these formats would allow municipalities to share learnings as well as information about funding opportunities or changes in legislation.

What municipalities can contribute

A number of municipalities were open to sharing their own stories of success and struggle, although an approximately equal number stated that they were not yet at the point where they

could share anything useful because they did not have much experience in the area. Three municipalities, all major centers with high levels of expertise in municipal work around immigration and diversity, offered to organize and host an event such as a roundtable or meeting, perhaps in partnership with AUMA.

Barriers to participation in the network

34% of municipalities have no interest in the WIC Network – almost all of these respondents were those who feel they have no role in the area of immigration. Other respondents noted that even though they were interested, they could not commit to being involved in the network as they would have to bring it to council or to their WIC Committee to see if participation would be of interest or a priority. Others said that if they were to participate, they would have to sort out which municipal staff person's job it would fall under, and that person would likely be doing the work off the side of their desk. Because of the widespread shortage of staff time in municipalities, one respondent suggested that if AUMA wants municipalities to share stories about their work in the area of immigration, AUMA must go to them to collect the stories, not expect that municipalities will take the time to submit a story. Another critique of the network was that many of the people who would ostensibly meet via the network are already meeting in other venues like the provincial FCSS board or are already connected to other municipalities through individual relationships.

Section 5: Virtual Summit

AUMA is currently considering hosting a 'virtual summit' as part of the CTA initiative in early- to mid-2013. This assessment proved to be a good opportunity to gather information about how to maximize municipal participation in the event.

Scheduling of the virtual summit

The following table summarizes respondents' responses about the most convenient time to hold a virtual summit. For each time period, the number of positive and negative responses is tallied below.

Time	February	March	April	May	June	Summer	Fall
Yes	2	5	7	4	2	0	1
No	0	4	2	2	1	4	2

From the tallies, it seems that March, April and May are popular months – although March also received some opposition – and that summer is most definitely not preferred. Additional requests regarding scheduling include: avoid the public school spring break as well as tax season. Not all respondents noted a preferred time, and many said that they would attend whenever the event was scheduled.

Respondents also had some more general comments about AUMA events, mostly centered on what would make them easier to attend. Conferences should not conflict with other municipal events such as the AUMA Convention; an alternative to this would be to add on an immigration-focused event, either a full conference or just an educational session, to an event like the annual LGAA conference. Others suggested that events should include weekend sessions so volunteers who are doing this work in their community, including some elected officials, can attend, or that the same event be held on a few different dates so people who cannot attend one can make the other. And of course, it was emphasized that plenty of notice should be given for attendees to book off dates well in advance.

Online vs. face-to-face

An interesting unanticipated thread that emerged was the range of reactions to a virtual event. Municipalities were quite polarized in their responses, with some respondents very much in favour and others adamantly opposed. 10% of respondents talked about the benefits of an online event, particularly as it addresses the municipal challenge of lacking funds to send staff across the province. (Although, as one respondent noted, it is not travel costs but registration costs that are prohibitive, so eliminating registration fees might have the intended effect of increased accessibility.)

Exactly the same percentage (10%) of respondents said that they preferred face-to-face events, citing the loss of opportunities for networking, interaction and relationship building in online events. As one respondent noted, the whole point of welcoming communities initiatives is building relationships, and you can't do that at your own desk. Or in the succinct words of one respondent, "I'm sick of my computer!" Others commented that it's a challenge to immerse oneself in an online event when physically still at work. Another cautioned that people are more likely to not show up to online events than in-person events, even if they have registered. Yet another noted that staff in small centers are often happy to leave town and head to the big city for an event.

Respondents provided a number of interesting alternatives to the two main options of an online conference and a single in-person conference for all Alberta municipalities. A number of people said they prefer to attend events that are geographically spread out instead of just in Edmonton or Calgary. In fact, one respondent suggested that having a number of municipalities

host events would allow participants to learn about the particular expertise of that municipality and potentially help to dispel negative perceptions that might exist about the community. In keeping with the increased focus on regional partnerships, a few other respondents noted they would prefer a number of smaller regional meetings instead of one large provincial meeting, thereby helping to facilitate those regional connections that so many are keen on making. Videoconferencing could serve as a middle ground between online and face-to-face mediums; if people assemble in each region at a videoconferencing site, it allows for interaction and relationship building without necessitating long-distance travel.

Suggested topics for the virtual summit

Respondents were interested in hearing about the following topics:
- Success stories, particularly from municipalities 1-2 years into the work
- How to begin the work
- 'From Insight to Action'
- Issues & needs of newcomers
- How to connect newcomers to the community
- How to create opportunities to learn from newcomers
- Alberta demographics
- Pertinent legislation, the immigration process
- Issues regarding the Temporary Foreign Worker Program
- Youth engagement
- Eliminating racism & discrimination
- Welcoming communities
- Funding and resourcing opportunities
- How much do programs cost?
- Basic event planning (as many municipalities do this work through events)
- How to promote the work you're doing
- Using asset-based approaches
- The Brandon, Manitoba model
- How to create effective partnerships
- How to do public education about the need for this work
- What schools are doing around integration
- What kind of cultural change needs to happen in the municipal organization to enable this work?
- Incorporating an inclusion lens into high level policy
- How to deal with Human Resources issues re: newcomer employees
- Speakers from large communities carry more weight
- Need to invite the general public – take it beyond only the agencies

Considerations for Future Action

One of the main objectives of this needs assessment was to determine municipalities' current and future practices and needs relating to immigration and working with newcomers. Respondents from the 50 municipalities we contacted identified a number of processes, resources, tools and strategies that would improve their capacity to do this work. Based on the findings, we have developed a set of possible next steps to provide direction for the future activities of AUMA, WIC and CTA. The following suggestions are provided to reflect some of the ideas presented to us in the interviews with municipalities.

Tools and Resources

Municipalities identified the need for additional tools and resources to support their work. These tools should take into account the varying levels of readiness for change at the municipal and community level, the capacity to take on new initiatives, the availability of human and financial resources, and the different levels of knowledge and expertise within municipalities.

1. One of the challenges identified was a lack of knowledge about the immigration process. To help with self-education, in this area, municipalities said that a step-by-step guide about the immigration process for municipal staff and service organizations that interact with and provide services to newcomers would be helpful to them.

2. Municipalities were curious about what is working elsewhere in the province. To this end the creation of a forum to collect and disseminate information about current initiatives and success stories from Alberta municipalities that have contributed to the creation of welcoming and inclusive communities would support this type of learning exchange. This forum should be intimately connected with the WIC microsite and the WIC Network.

3. Without a lot of experience evaluating the success of current initiatives it is hard for municipalities to know if they are on-track. It would be helpful if there were readily available and easy to use evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness of strategies and activities in meeting goals and objectives of welcoming and inclusive initiatives.

   Examples of tools are:

   • A stage model that describes the levels of progression of a welcoming and inclusive community, and appropriate interventions that can be used to move from one level to another.

   • An equity and inclusion lens (a set of guiding principles and questions) which municipalities can use to review practices, policies and materials. Examples of items that

might be reviewed are welcome packages, municipal websites and other programs and services targeted towards newcomers. The lens can also be used to assess the diversity in municipal employee demographics and human resources practices.

Public Awareness and Education

Increased public awareness and education targeted towards citizens, ethnocultural communities, municipal employees and employees of service organizations would contribute to an enhanced understanding of issues on diversity, inclusion and equity.

4. Municipalities have asked for ways to educate their staff and communities at large with respect to building inclusive communities. Providing them with links to educators who provide this type of programming and information would be helpful. Additionally, providing strategies and materials for public education campaigns that speak to the values of diversity, inclusion and equity in municipalities would help with their welcoming and inclusive communities initiatives.

    Examples of educational materials:

    - Positive stories of newcomers' successes and contributions to help dispel myths and enhance awareness of the benefits of diverse communities.

Connection and Collaboration

The ability to work collaboratively was identified as very important to municipalities as they endeavour to stretch limited resources. Municipalities expressed concern that without AUMA's involvement in WIC, they would lose access to important information and resource sharing. The following recommendations relate to the need to increase and improve networking and collaboration opportunities.

5. AUMA is seen as playing a crucial role in fostering regarding welcoming and inclusive communities. Municipalities articulated their desire for AUMA to continue to expand its role as the 'hub' for WIC initiatives.

    Some possible specific strategies include:

    - Establish a system to track the progress of WIC related initiatives at municipalities so that AUMA can provide appropriate levels of support to municipalities to create and sustain WIC initiatives.

    - Clarify the role, structure, mandate and membership of the WIC Network (to distinguish itself from other municipal networks such as CMARD).

6. Since FCSS appears to play a key role in providing settlement services to newcomers efforts towards strengthening the relationship between AUMA and FCSS would be beneficial. There is much opportunity to enhance the work of municipalities via the provincial FCSS body.

Intergovernmental Relations

There was consistent and strong support amongst respondents for good infrastructure and resourcing for quality services and programs for newcomers; however, a lack of resources at the municipality level was cited as a key challenge.

7. AUMA is seen as having a role to play in one or more of the following areas:
   - Continue to advocate for the creation of a mandate and a specific role for municipalities with regard to immigration.

   - Advocate for increased accessibility of federal and provincial services for newcomers in small communities.

   - Continue to facilitate ongoing communication between all levels of government about issues related to immigration. Municipalities see the involvement and collaboration of all levels of government as essential for determining where these resources should come from and how they should be allocated.

Research

Conversations with the interviewees raised many more questions. Some of these questions could yield research that in turn would be useful in supporting the ongoing work of AUMA and the municipalities.

8. Several municipalities were interested in learning more about effective regional planning approaches with respect to inclusion. Further research into this area would be useful in the development of information for their use.

9. Current impetus for municipal involvement in immigrant attraction most is a response to the perception of an imminent labour shortage. Research to determine the impact of immigration at varying stages of economic cycles, especially during economic downturns, would help municipalities allay concerns articulated by their communities as well as help them think through the implications of shifted community demographics after an economic boom.

Scan of International Municipal Practices

The following is a list of innovative and effective initiatives that have been undertaken by municipalities around the world (excluding Canada) to create more welcoming and inclusive communities. They provide some concrete ideas that municipalities in Alberta can adapt to meet their needs, or use as a starting point to develop their own policies, programs and initiatives.

The initiatives have been organized under the following categories:

- Welcoming Communities

- Service Access and Equity

- Advocacy, Public Awareness and Education

- Inclusion, Participation, Belonging

- Collaboration and Communication

- Municipalities as Employers

- Economic Integration

Welcoming Communities

City, Country	Initiative
London, England	Time Together, a volunteer refugee mentoring initiative aims to address the often overlooked challenges faced by newcomers. Evidence showed that a person's ability to adapt to a new environment is greatly increased by having a companion with local knowledge who can provide support and advice. Time Together has nine dimensions in the mentoring process: confidence, English language, employment, education, isolation, UK culture, becoming familiar with the local area, volunteering, and access to services. Mentoring and befriending schemes illustrate how integration works as a two-way process – both refugee and host community have a role in the relationship, contributing towards stronger, more socially inclusive communities. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/time-together-mentoring-for-daily-life/

Service Access and Equity

City, Country	Initiative

Boston, United States	The Mayor's Office of New Bostonians is a municipal agency dedicated to welcoming the city's newcomers and getting them established. The agency offers centralized coordination of services including a pool of interpreters, free legal advice relating to discrimination, an annual event for immigrants to help them learn how to access city services and a strategy to help immigrants find productive work through employment and support for immigrant entrepreneurship. The agency also conducts research and serves as an advocate for immigrants citywide. It is the go-to place where an immigrant can find help with practically any problem, confident that the city will respond. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/mayors-office-of-new-bostonians/ http://www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians/
Lisbon, Portugal	Migration experts conducted a Europe-wide search to find the best model for immigrant service delivery and it was this Lisbon One Stop Shop model that they selected. The One Stop Shop model streamlines services to immigrants into one service location by providing over 30 different services in one location, including the social security and inland revenue offices, judicial services, banking services, information on schools and sports, electricity, water and internet services and applying for a national health card. Reliable access and accurate information helps build trust in local government and public institutions. Trust promotes attachment and a sense of belonging, both important steps towards active civic engagement and participation. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/one-stop-shop-mainstreaming-integration/
Littleton, Colorado	The Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative (LI3) works to create a community in which all people feel like they belong by supporting services and programs for local immigrant families, bridging language and cultural differences through cultural and informational events, developing a committed donor and volunteer base and initiating fundraising opportunities. Past programs include: • Immigrant Resource Center • International Coffee Hours at the local library where newcomers can socialize and practice their English • Training for community volunteers to assist immigrants English language tutoring by community volunteers

	http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/2011/04/11/littleton-immigrant-integration-initiative-littleton-colorado/
Chattanooga, Tennessee	H.A.N.D.S. (Helping All Nationalities Diversify Society) Across Chattanooga is an outreach program established by the City of Chattanooga's Office of Multicultural Affairs. H.A.N.D.S. fights discrimination due to national origin and works to integrate immigrants into the city. H.A.N.D.S. brings together international newcomers with local agencies and service providers to help these new residents become more acclimated to the community. With the help of three partner agencies, H.A.N.D.S. hosted the city's first-ever Welcome Fair for new international residents to provide information to the city's international newcomers, from essential city services to the health and police department. http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/2011/04/11/h-a-n-d-s-across-chattanooga-chattanooga-tennessee/
Indianapolis, Indiana	The Immigrant Welcome Center (IWC) connects newcomers to resources, services and opportunities within the City of Indianapolis. The non-profit organization coordinates referrals with community partners to help link new immigrants to services that meet basic needs, including transportation, health care, employment and job training, education and legal issues. The main feature of this outreach involves the Natural Helpers Program, where volunteers who live and work in the community mentor new arrivals one on one and can offer culturally sensitive advice and guidance.

Advocacy, Public Awareness and Education

City, Country	Initiative
Barcelona, Spain	The Barcelona City Council launched a public service campaign to dispel rumours, misconceptions and the prejudices about minorities and immigrants and to combat discrimination. They recruited and trained 'anti-rumour agents' to dispel myths and spread the campaign through local organizations and the city's neighbourhoods. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/fighting-fiction-with-facts-the-bcn-anti-rumour-campaign/
Oslo, Norway	OXLO – Oslo Extra Large is an awareness-raising campaign designed to make Norway's capital a more tolerant city through a focused effort on both citizen and municipal activities. Initiatives include:

	• When recruiting, public agencies must interview at least one qualified ethnic minority for the position; • A city-wide crisis management task force provides rapid response to incidents of youth violence and racism; • The Office of Diversity and Integration (EMI) oversees the Campaign and supports consultations with minority groups and NGO service providers; • A proactive approach to city-wide intercultural competence and a consistent effort to recognize and celebrate diversity.
Greeley, Colorado	The City of Greeley uses a monthly talk show, *Images*, to improve relationships within and between diverse sections of the community. Broadcast over the local government access channel, the program has addressed issues including the Holocaust and the local Jewish population, Asian-Pacific rim students, Japanese cultural exchange, Hispanic immigration, Native American culture and the homeless population. In each episode, *Images* provides insight into the cultural diversity and differences that exist within the Greeley community. The host, city staff and Human Relations Commission members regularly receive positive feedback from residents who have seen and appreciate the show's message and intent. http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/Research%20Innovation/Immigrant%20Integration/immigrant-integration-resource-access-cultural-exchange-cpb-apr11.pdf

Inclusion, Participation, Belonging

City, Country	Initiative
Madrid, Spain	Madrid's city council initiated a public space revitalization program to increase the use of public spaces by new immigrants. City outreach agents, promote activities in the city's parks and squares "aimed at promoting neighbourly co-existence." Activities range from exhibitions about racism, to celebrations of particular ethnic or religious festivals, to sports leagues and intergenerational workshops. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/finding-integration-in-madrids-public-spaces/
Barcelona, Spain	In Barcelona, after more than a decade of work, the City Council developed the Barcelona Interculturality Plan to serve as a road-map for the Council's desire to address the challenges of

	"coexistence in diversity in Barcelona." The plan makes interculturalism a fundamental and integrated part of city practice across all departments and services. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/from-neighbours-to-citizens-the-barcelona-interculturality-plan/
Kerpen, Germany	In the city of Kerpen, Germany, a group stakeholders came together for a two-day workshop which led to the development of a comprehensive integration strategy for the city. The success of the initiative was based on involving a range of stakeholders: community-level policymakers in decision-making positions; public administrators at all relevant levels; immigrants and members of immigrant-serving organizations. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/integration-workshops-for-inclusive-cities/
Copenhagen, Denmark	When the City of Copenhagen was updating its local planning documents and policies for immigrant integration in 2010, it engaged the community by holding focus groups and asking for input through a dedicated website. What they found was that people didn't want to hear about integration (which was associated with assimilation), but wanted to use words like inclusion and diversity, and the desire to see Copenhagen as an inclusive, open-minded city. The city developed a Diversity Charter that seeks to actively engage companies, educational institutions and other non-profit organizations who sign the charter and pledge to make diversity the norm in their organization. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/engaging-in-copenhagen/
Greenwich, United Kingdom	The CARE Partnership, collaboration between a UK local authority and professional football club gives young people the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds. Opportunities range from accredited sports coaching qualifications and film production to women's football and digital photography. Sport has enormous potential for building bridges between communities and team sport in particular, can help to develop social networks, forge friendships, and overcome differences by promoting mutual understanding. Art and media can also facilitate contact and friendship between groups. The project provides a platform for cross-cultural communication, which is essential for changing attitudes and values necessary to facilitate positive interaction; all this while helping young people to gain confidence

City, Country	Initiative
	and develop practical skills and qualifications. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/giving-equality-a-sporting-chance-in-greenwich/
Boulder, Colorado	The Immigrant Advisory Committee to the City Manager was developed to encourage immigrant involvement in the city government and to advise the city on issues relating to the immigrant community. The committee serves in an advisory capacity to the city manager in developing policies and services for the immigrant community. The committee likewise encourages the immigrant community to access these city benefits, opportunities and services. The committee members are appointed by the city manager, are all immigrant residents and reflect the demographics of Boulder's immigrant community. http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/2011/04/11/immigrant-advisory-committee-boulder-colorado/
Skokie, Illinois	Skokie hosted an International Leadership Academy for immigrant residents who wanted to learn about taking on greater community leadership roles through volunteerism, service on a board or commission or as an elected official. The event included sessions on leadership; understanding state and federal government systems; serving as a volunteer, appointed official or elected official; and the etiquette, protocol and art of negotiation. The Skokie Police Department hosts an International Youth Police Academy each summer and an International Citizen Academy throughout the year on community policing, the crime unit, canine unit and crime prevention. Skokie also has an Festival of Cultures, a two-day, outdoor festival held each May to celebrate Skokie's diversity with ethnic entertainment, booths and displays, a wide range of food, unique arts and crafts, and international children's games. http://www.unaoc.org/ibis/2011/04/11/immigrant-services-skokie-illinois/

Collaboration and Communication

City, Country	Initiative
Tenerife, Spain	Together in the Same Direction is a network of immigrant associations, government agencies, social organizations and others. The objectives of the network are to improve the civic engagement of the immigrant associations, increase their organizational capacity

	through training workshops, and allow for better communication between the various actors in the field through an online forum and island round tables. Benefits include a feeling of empowerment from participating in the project, improved relationships between associations, and all groups recognizing that they are working together on a shared agenda for integration and social cohesion. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/together-in-the-same-direction/
Rotterdam Netherlands	Since 2001, Rotterdam has held a Day of Dialogue every year, which is partly funded by the municipality. People of different backgrounds, cultures and religions across the city are given the opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions to share thoughts and concerns. Workshops and network meetings are also organised. This initiative has proved very successful in stimulating contact between different people, and it now takes place in 50 municipalities in the Netherlands. http://www.soros.org/sites/default/files/living-together-inclusion-11-eu-cities-20120125.pdf

Municipalities as Employers

City, Country	Initiative
Bremen, Germany	When officials in the City of Bremen investigated why so few young people with a migrant background were applying for the city's many training positions, they learned that civil service jobs were rarely considered an option. To address this issue, Bremen started a new campaign to recruit more young people into the civil service under the slogan "You are the Key…to your Future and your City." It included an easy-to-follow website that provided young people with profiles of the kinds of jobs and careers open to them. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/bremens-key-to-inclusive-hiring/
Hamburg, Germany	The City of Hamburg initiated a campaign to increase cultural diversity among its city workers. The campaign focused on three areas: improved marketing and outreach of training opportunities, a new emphasis on 'intercultural competence' within the city training and human resources departments to open up the applicant pool, and a program of individualized support during the training. Officers

	in charge of training and personnel go through comprehensive training courses on diversity and intercultural competence. The screening test for candidates, as part of the application and selection processes, includes both "culture-open" components and intercultural knowledge questions. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/we-are-hamburg-wont-you-join-us/

Economic Integration

City, Country	Initiative
Munich, Germany	The Migrant Entrepreneurs in Munich (MEM) program seeks to improve the employment prospects of migrant entrepreneurs. The four pillars of the program are: providing assistance, helping with qualifications, creating dialogue, and promoting recognition. MEM is now considered Munich's information and counselling hub for business development in the city's migrant communities, helping small business operators and employers and future entrepreneurs to build bridges with mainstream institutions. http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/reaching-out-to-migrant-entrepreneurs-in-munich/

Appendix

Research Methods

Interviews

The interview questions were developed in consultation with AUMA and an initial draft of the questions was piloted with a staff member from AUMA. Once the questions were edited, 10 initial interviews were held and the resulting data analyzed to determine if any further revisions were required and to surface emerging themes. The remaining 40 interviews were held over an 8 week period. Interviews were conducted via telephone and audio recordings and notes were taken to record the data. Tapes and notes were partially transcribed.

Interview questions

This is a summary of the interview questions. The detailed questions and interview script can be found in the Appendices.

1. What kind of municipal programming do you currently have in the area of immigration and working with newcomers?

2. What kind of role do you envision for your municipality this area?

3. What challenges prevent you from fulfilling that role?

4. How might AUMA and government partners help you overcome these challenges?

5. How would your municipality be interested in participating in or contributing to the WIC Network?

6. What scheduling and content would you like to see for the CTA Virtual Summit?

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted in three phases to determine themes, refine themes and to sort findings into qualitative and quantitative categories. Two methods were used to code the data: word repetition and key words in context. Word repetition refers to coding for terms that are the same or synonymous with one another and may include phrases. Key words in context surfaces categories of meaning that are repeated across interviews.

Review of the literature

The empirical research was augmented by a review of literature pertaining to best municipal practices (international) relating to immigration and settlement policies, programs and procedures. Best practices were sorted and evaluated in consideration main data themes emerging from the research.

Choosing the municipality

Working from a list of municipalities produced by the Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs[7] we eliminated Summer Villages and Municipal Districts, as neither would likely have sufficient population or unified service provision to warrant significant municipal activity around newcomers. This left 224 Alberta municipalities. We decided on 50 (22% of all Alberta municipalities) as our sample size, as it allowed for a reasonable representation of our variables.

In selecting the municipalities to participate for the study, we wanted to ensure we had a sample that was representative of the variety of municipal contexts/situations found within the province. We especially wanted to ensure that small and mid-size communities were adequately represented, as much of the data on municipal activities relating to immigration comes from large centers, although not without good reason[8]. Our second criterion for selection was geographical location – to provide a fair distribution of respondents in terms of primary industry, and proximity to a major center. Particular care was taken to include municipalities far from the Highway 2 corridor (e.g. High Level, Medicine Hat) to ensure that geographical outliers were adequately represented.

The information AUMA currently has on the municipal role in immigration comes primarily from municipalities that already have a relationship with WIC, for example, municipalities who have sought out WIC for support in their own diversity work, or who have signed onto CMARD. Therefore it was important that we survey a mixture of municipalities with no prior contact with WIC, as well as those who have been previously involved. We also took into consideration which municipalities had already been surveyed for prior outcome reporting for the WIC initiative – we did not want to overload municipalities with answering multiple surveys around similar topics.

In most cases, the municipality was contacted via the Chief Administrative Officer (or equivalent, such as the Town Manager). In many cases, particularly for small municipalities, the

---

[7] Population lists and contacts found at http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mc_index.cfm.
[8] Demographically, most newcomers to Alberta from outside of Canada tend to move to the two major centers, Calgary and Edmonton. (Government of Alberta, *Alberta Immigration Progress Report 2011,* 2011, p. 16.)

respondent was the CAO themselves. In other cases, we were referred to other municipal staff. In only one case was the respondent an elected official. In a few cases, when it was quite clear whom at the municipality would be the respondent, and when there had been prior contact with said municipality, the respondent was contacted directly. The following table describes the distribution of the respondent's position at the municipality.

Interview Script and Questions

<u>Introduction/First Call</u>

Hello, my name is _____, and I'm calling on behalf of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. As part of its Come Together Alberta initiative on immigration, AUMA is currently conducting a needs assessment to determine how municipalities are addressing issues related to immigration and working with newcomers, any challenges they may be facing, and suggestions for how AUMA could support municipalities in this area.
What I'm looking for is someone at your municipality to participate in a telephone interview for the survey. Who would be the best person to talk to about this? If you're a small municipality, it might be the CAO; if you're a bit larger it might be someone who works in the area of diversity or community programming?
The kinds of questions I'll be asking are: What is your municipality doing around immigration? What's your vision, if any, for working with newcomers?
[They may refer you to someone else.]
[Do introduction again with new person.]
Are you the best person to talk to at the municipality? Is there a time that would be good for you to do a phone interview? It'll be anywhere from 15 minutes to half an hour.
[Schedule a time.]
I'll send you an information letter that'll give you a bit more of a sense of what we're doing; it also talks about confidentiality and that your participation is completely voluntary. [Get email address.] Let me know if you have any questions or concerns after you read it – my contact information is on the letter too.

Talk to you on [reiterate date].
[Send meeting invitation & information letter.]

<u>Interview Introduction</u>

The interview should only take 10 to 30 minutes, but we may get chatting and go a little bit longer. Is there a particular time that you need to be done by?
I have 6 interview questions, I'll go through them one by one. Feel free to skip a question if you like; just say 'Pass'. Your name, your municipality name, and the specific content of our conversation will be totally confidential; only the aggregated results, with names removed, will be used by AUMA.

While we're talking I'm going to be jotting down some notes, so if you hear pauses on my end, that's what it is. I'd also like to record our conversation so it's easier for me to go back to any of your comments later in case I miss anything in my notes. Are you okay with that?

Okay, let's get started.

[turn on recorder]

I'm speaking with [interviewee name] from [municipality] on [date]. [Name], for the record, are you okay with having this conversation recorded?

Alright, let's start with the questions…

Questions

1. Do you currently do any work/have any municipal programming in the area of immigration & working with newcomers?

   What are your current activities in these areas?
   a. Attracting?

   b. Retaining or integrating newcomers into your municipality? (e.g. building relationships, finding a social/economic/cultural place for themselves in the community)

2. General framing:

   - What's your ideal vision for your municipality, your sense of where you want to be?
   - What kind of role do you envision for your municipality this area?
   - Ideally, what kinds of programs and initiatives would you like to have?

   Alternate framing for large municipalities:
   - Is there a very strongly identified role for the municipality in working with newcomers? What would you say it is?
   - In your opinion and from your experience, is this the role the municipality should be playing?
   - Is there a different role, more or less of a role, it should be playing?

3. What challenges prevent you from fulfilling that role?

4. How might AUMA and government partners help you overcome these challenges?

5. The Come Together Alberta project operates closely with the Welcoming & Inclusive Communities initiative at AUMA. Currently WIC facilitates a network of municipalities

interested in diversity and inclusion work – the network is primarily for information-sharing, mutual support.

What would your municipality be able or willing to contribute to such a network? How would your municipality be interested in participating in the network?
   c. e.g. contribute a case study, speak at a webinar or workshop, mentor other municipalities, attend events

6. AUMA is planning to host a Virtual Summit on these issues. (A Virtual Summit is an online event, kind of like an online conference, with speakers, discussion rooms, information tables, etc for you to attend, browse.) We would like some feedback from you about the timeline and content of this summit.

   d. We are thinking of holding this summit in Summer 2013 – is this a good time? Are there any dates that are ideal? That we should avoid?

   e. What are some topics or speakers you would like to see?

   f. Do you have any other suggestions about this summit?

Thank you for participating in this survey.

[Send follow-up email.]

Profile of Municipalities

The following is a list of the municipalities that participated in the assessment:

Airdrie	Athabasca	Bashaw
Beaumont	Bonnyville	Brooks
Calgary	Canmore	Chestermere
Claresholm	Clive	Clyde
Devon	Drayton Valley	Elnora
Fairview	Falher	Fort Saskatchewan
Glenwood	Heisler	High Level
High River	Hill Spring	Jasper
Lacombe	Leduc	Lethbridge
Lloydminster	Medicine Hat	Nanton
Peace River	Pincher Creek	Ponoka
Provost	Red Deer	Rocky Mountain House
Rosalind	Smoky Lake	Spruce Grove
St. Albert	St. Paul	Strathcona County
Strathmore	Three Hills	Tofield
Trochu	Valleyview	Warner
Wetaskiwin	Wood Buffalo	

The following tables describe the distribution of participating municipalities by population range, geographical region and municipality type.

Population range	Number
0 – 2500	16
2501 – 10,000	14
10,000+	20
Total	**50**

Geographical Region	Number
Northwest	6
Northeast	7
Edmonton Region	6
Central	16
Calgary Region	3
South	12
Total	**50**

Municipality Type	Number
Specialized Municipality	3
Village	8
Town	26
City	13
Total	**50**

In most cases the municipality was contacted via the Chief Administrative Officer (or equivalent, e.g. Town Manager) and in many cases, particularly for small municipalities, the respondent was the CAO themselves. In some instances, we were referred to other municipal staff. In only one case was the respondent an elected official. In most municipalities we spoke to only one respondent; in a few municipalities we spoke to two. The following table describes the distribution of the respondent's role or department at the municipality.

Role	Number
Chief Administrative Officer or equivalent	21
Elected Official	1
Community Services	21
Economic Development	5
Inclusion Coordinator	3
Human Resources	3
Miscellaneous e.g. City Clerk	4

The following table outlines how many municipalities have had prior involvement with the WIC initiative, and which are signatories of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD).

Level of involvement with WIC	Number
None	29
Accessed WIC resources e.g. used website, attended presentations	4
Somewhat involved e.g. attended conferences, participated in network	10
Very involved e.g. regularly in contact with AUMA-WIC	7
Total	**50**

Signatory to CCMARD	Number
Yes	9
No	41
Total	**50**

As of October 2012, 13 Alberta municipalities had signed onto CCMARD. This assessment engaged 69% of Alberta's CCMARD signatories.