

# Regional Accountability Models for Settlement in Peel



April 2024

The following report is authored by the Regional Accountability Models for Settlement in Peel project team in April 2024:

Project team	Organization	Role
Jessica Kwik	Peel Newcomer Strategy Group	Director
Cassandra Bangay	Peel Newcomer Strategy Group	Managing Consultant, Research & Policy
Rich Janzen	Centre for Community-Based Research	Executive Director
Ruth Wilson, Dina Taha & Lisa McMurtry	Centre for Community-Based Research	Senior Researchers
Areej Alshammiry	Centre for Community-Based Research	Researcher

## Funding Support

We gratefully acknowledge the funding support provided by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Region of Peel and United Way Greater Toronto.



## **Table of Contents**

1. Land Acknowledgement	4
2. Introduction to the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG)	5
3. Introduction to the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR)	5
4. Acknowledgements	6
5. Preface	7
6. Context in Peel	8
7. Section 1: Model Summary	9
Proposed Regional Accountability Model for Settlement in Peel	12
Overview of Proposed Model	12
Accountability for the Newcomer Journey	14
Accountability for Systems Planning	15
Accountability for Funding	16
8. Regional Accountability Model for Settlement Terms of Reference for Model Host	18
9. Recommended Host	21
10. Future Outlook	23
Readiness to Pilot a Regional Model in Peel	23
Implications of the Model and Next Steps	24
Key Considerations for Implementation:	25
Conclusion	27
11. Section 2: Project Activities	28
Phase 1: Laying the Foundation	29
Phase 2: Environmental Scan	31
Phase 3: Model Development	43
12. Project Evaluation	45
Methods	45
Findings by Method	45
13. Appendices	50
Appendix A: Timeline and Objectives of Advisory Committee Meetings	50
Appendix B: Summary of Community Information Forums	52
Appendix C: Literature Review	54
Appendix D: Baseline Survey	58
Appendix E: Survey of Services Inclusive of Newcomers	64
Appendix F: Focus Groups	68
Appendix G: Host Conversations	75

## **Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that the land on which we live, work and gather is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The land on which the Region of Peel and the Region of Halton operate is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. From the Anishinabek to the Attawandaron, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, the Métis and Ojibway/Chippewa peoples, that these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in Indigenous history.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land, and by doing so, give our respect to its first inhabitants.

We also acknowledge that we are all Treaty peoples, including those who came here as settlers, and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. We pay tribute to the ancestors of those of African-Indigenous origin and descent.

## **Introduction to Peel Newcomer Strategy Group**

The Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is a community collaborative that engages service providers and stakeholders to coordinate services that support newcomers as they settle and integrate into Peel. PNSG originated from a pivotal community visioning session in February 2006. At this session, representatives from service providing organizations serving newcomer called for a central planning table and community collaborative focused on the settlement and social inclusion of immigrant families in the region.

With funding from the federal government, PNSG was officially launched in 2008. In 2010, it became part of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative, developed under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. Today, PNSG is a project of United Way Greater Toronto (funded by IRCC) and the Region of Peel; and it is guided by the collective voices of community stakeholders representing multiple sectors.

As one of over 80 local immigration partnerships across Canada, PNSG conducts community-level strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, communications, research, policy formulation and project management – to improve social and economic outcomes for Peel newcomers, immigrants and refugees.

PNSG's objectives are as follows:

1. Improve access to and the coordination of services that facilitate newcomer settlement and inclusion.
2. Improve access to the labour market for newcomers.
3. Strengthen local and regional awareness and capacity to attract, receive, integrate and retain newcomers.
4. Enhance partnerships and participation of multiple stakeholders in the planning, delivery and coordination of services.

## **Introduction to Centre for Community Based Research**

CCBR is a non-profit organization located at the University of Waterloo, on the traditional and unceded territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee Indigenous peoples. Established in 1982, CCBR's mission is to build more responsive and supportive communities, especially for those with limited power and opportunity. They conduct and promote research that is community-driven, participatory, and action-oriented. Their work builds on community strengths to create awareness, policies, and practices that advance equitable participation and inclusion of all community members.

## Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere appreciation to all the individuals who participated in the focus groups and key informant interviews and shared their experiences, as newcomers, service providers and other stakeholders.

We also thank the project Advisory Committee who guided this project and helped shape and improve its outcome. The Committee consisted of 11 partners from settlement and related organizations. The Committee recruitment process was led by PNSG with the support of CCBR, and the first community forum was used as an opportunity for recruitment.

Advisory Committee	Organization	Role
Mbalu Lumor	Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture	Director
Hala Ghali	Canadian Coptic Centre	Newcomer Services Manager
Francoise Magunira	Centre Francophone du Grand Toronto	Gestionnaire Senior
Priyanka Sheth	Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre	Executive Director
Shalini da Cunha	Peel Halton Workforce Development Group	Executive Director
Naveed Chaudhry	Peel Multicultural Council	Executive Director
Angela Carter	Roots Community Services	Advisor, Strategic Initiatives
Eunice M	African Community Services of Peel	Resource Mobilization/ Programs Manager
Hemangi Tingare	Newcomer Centre of Peel	Director of Finance
Marsha Parry-Folkes	Achev	Vice President, Program & Service Operations
Angela Nijhar	Peel District School Board	Coordinator (Acting), We Welcome the World Centres

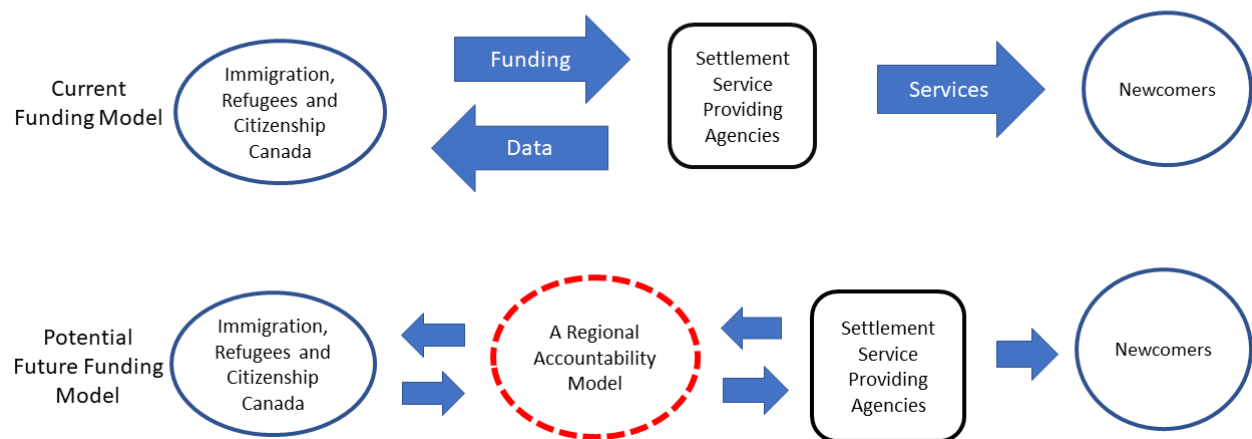
## Preface

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) and the Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIFs) played a key role in local and regional research, coordination and planning to address the challenges of newcomer settlement and integration, and they established over 100 multi-sector community and regional partnerships across Canada. Sixteen LIPs and RIFs were, therefore, selected to support detailed local planning that will assist in fostering collaboration within the sector.

PNSG was one of the LIPS selected by IRCC to develop a regional model through a robust community consultation process. In December 2021, PNSG began laying the foundation to develop a regional accountability model for settlement.

IRCC was interested in funding the development of models of community-based plans that support the understanding that newcomer settlement and integration occurs locally, and that decision-making at the local level may improve the effectiveness of service delivery, leading to better outcomes for newcomers.

### Developing A Regional Accountability Model



## Context in Peel

Peel region has had a diverse population since its formation. Indigenous peoples have lived on the land within what is now Peel region for over 10,000 years. Land treaties between the Mississaugas of the Credit and European settlers began about 240 years ago. Project advisory committee discussions emphasized their hope that this project could support transformation and the potential for Indigenous communities to have influence through a new model for settlement accountability.

Peel is a growing and diverse region, with 51.8% of the population being immigrants (2021 Census). It has the second highest number of newcomers in Ontario: Between 2016-2021, 104,125 newcomers settled in the region, according to 2021 census data. This number continued to grow in 2022 and 2023 with over 17% of all immigrants to Ontario arriving in Peel. (IRCC data) Peel has also seen a doubling in the annual number of permanent resident newcomers: 32,000 came to Peel in 2023 as compared to 16,000 in 2016. There has been an increase every year since 2016, with the exception of 2020 (due to pandemic related travel restrictions). (IRCC data) Peel has the highest percentage of racialized people in the GTA: 69% of people in Peel identify with a racialized group, an increase of 72% since 2006.

Key issues for Peel region across multiple domains (housing, mental health, social service access) include increasing economic vulnerabilities for individuals/families to meet basic needs; inequities and systemic discrimination for racialized newcomers; and gaps in relevant service capacity.

According to a regional municipality estimate, newcomers are 150% more likely to be in need of core affordable housing services. Experiences shared at the Peel resettlement support working group indicate that racialized newcomers are discriminated against when seeking rental market housing. Lack of linguistically and culturally relevant services remain a barrier.

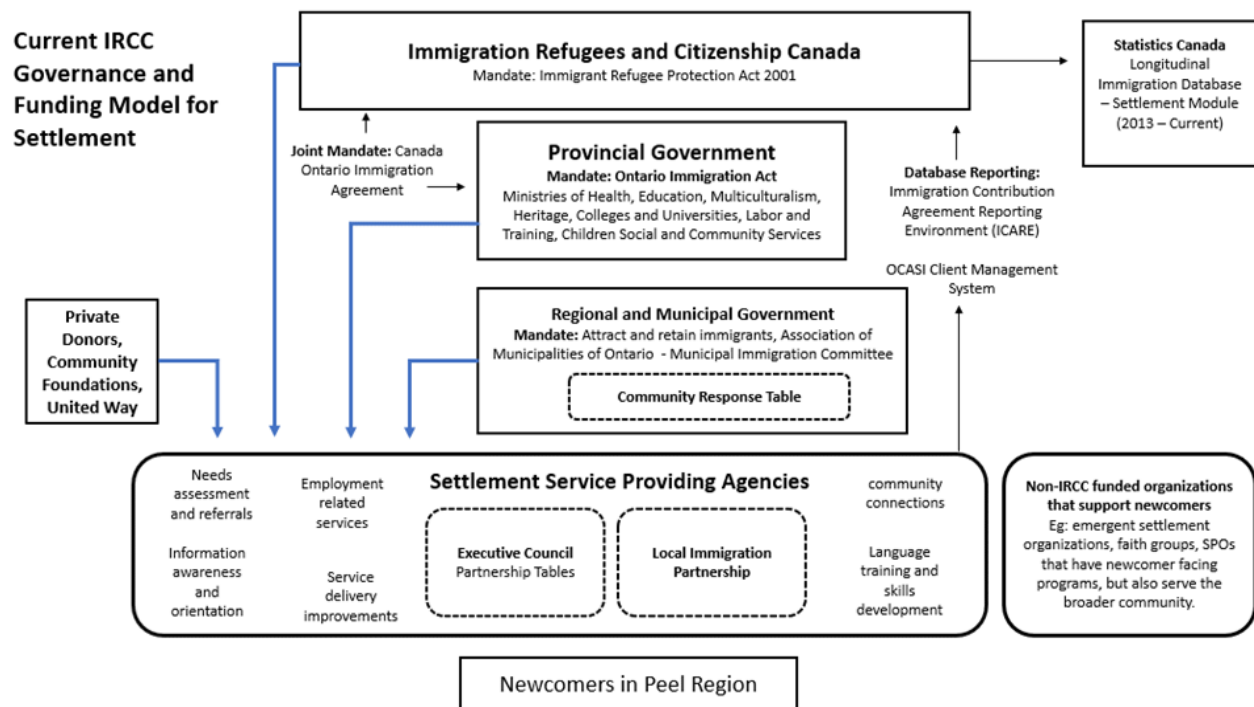
In Peel, there are 28 IRCC-funded agencies with a settlement focus.



## Section 1: Model Summary

### Current model for governing of Peel's settlement sector

The current model of funding and governance, illustrated below, was used as a point of reflection by stakeholders to consider how a regional model could address current challenges and the opportunities with a change.



The blue arrows indicate funding flows and the black arrows indicate how reporting data is used. Boxes indicate funders and rounded boxes indicate agencies. Dotted lines encircle community tables and collaboratives.

A core area for improvement within the current model, identified by stakeholders through the community consultation process, was that some agencies have not been adequately included in the existing model. These include:

- 1) Smaller agencies
- 2) Agencies not funded by IRCC that are providing settlement services
- 3) Adjacent social service providing agencies (e.g. healthcare and employment providers)

Community service stakeholders in Peel region are familiar with the process of regionalizing social service provision management and were forthcoming with insights into how the process should unfold if the model comes to fruition. Though concerns were raised in the wake of the implementation of the Service System Manager host model rolled out by the province to manage employment related service providing organizations, stakeholders became progressively more open to a regional accountability model for settlement throughout the community consultation process. Though some stakeholders still feel that IRCC's current model is the best mechanism for managing settlement funds, others have readily engaged the potential to shape a new regional approach.

### **Benefits of regional model**

Partners have identified the following overarching benefits of a regional model:

- The number of immigrants arriving in Peel is increasing each year and, as a result, the settlement sector is getting more complex. A regional host could consolidate voices across the sector and amplify the collective voice.
- IRCC is a big department, and though individual project officers are well connected with agencies in Peel, they likely have less access to decision makers than staff within a smaller local entity.
- Peel region's demographic characteristics and geographies are unique, and so a regional model could specialize in supporting target populations such as international students, refugees and other demographic groups.
- Stakeholders in Peel could shape the principles by which the model is governed and contribute to regular evaluations to ensure the model host is accountable to these principles. This system of mutual feedback giving does not typically exist in larger scale models.

## Guiding Principles of a New Regional Model

The model development began with a consideration of current system and funding sources (see Section 2: Project Activities) as well as the development of core principles to guide. The following diagram illustrates key principles based on input through a community forum, refined by the project advisory committee and validated with potential hosts and broader stakeholders. The principles are centred around a primary focus on anti-racism, anti-oppression and Truth and Reconciliation for Indigenous Peoples:

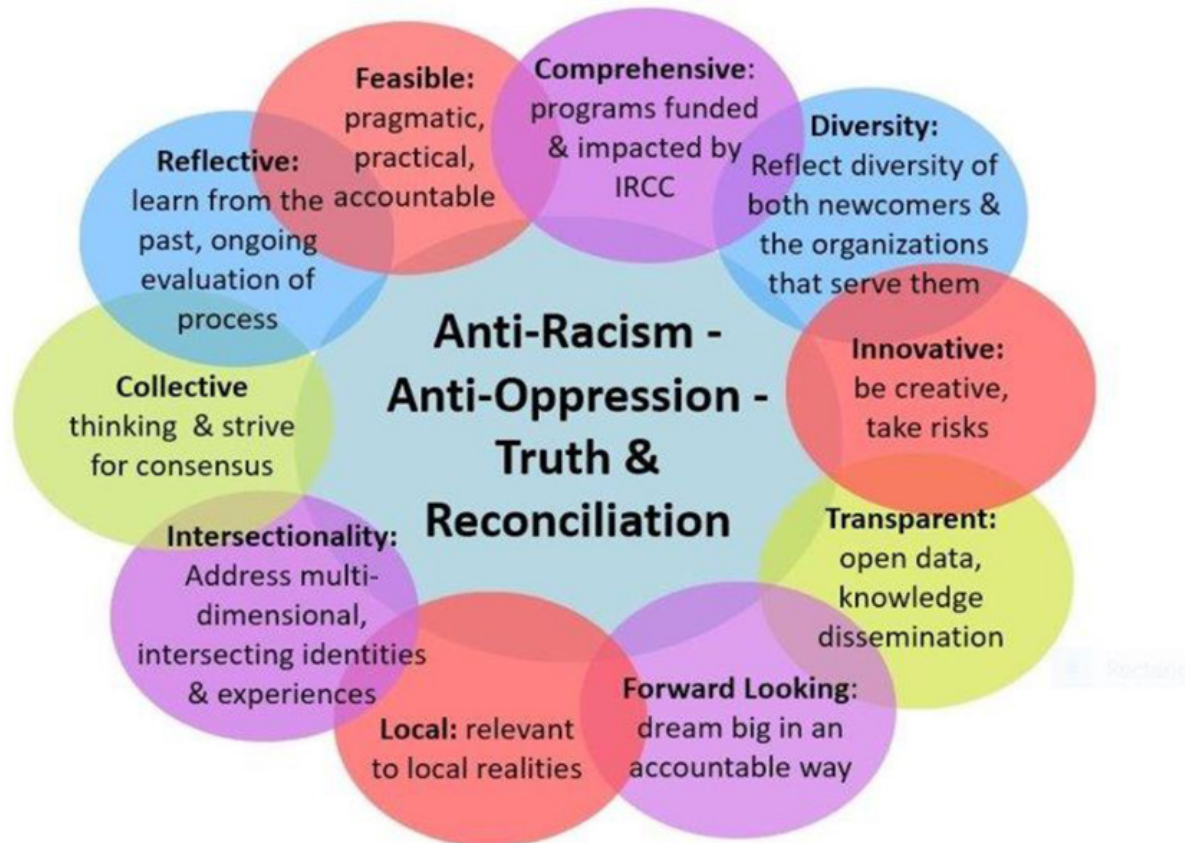


Figure 1: Key principles for a regional accountability model for settlement in Peel

## Proposed Regional Accountability Model for Settlement in Peel

The following model was developed through two years of ongoing community consultations beginning in January 2022 with Peel-based service providing organizations, government entities, foundations and newcomers themselves.

A project advisory committee, environmental scan, focus groups, key informant interviews and meetings with potential hosts were also used as tools to collect the insights that shaped the series of images on the following pages.

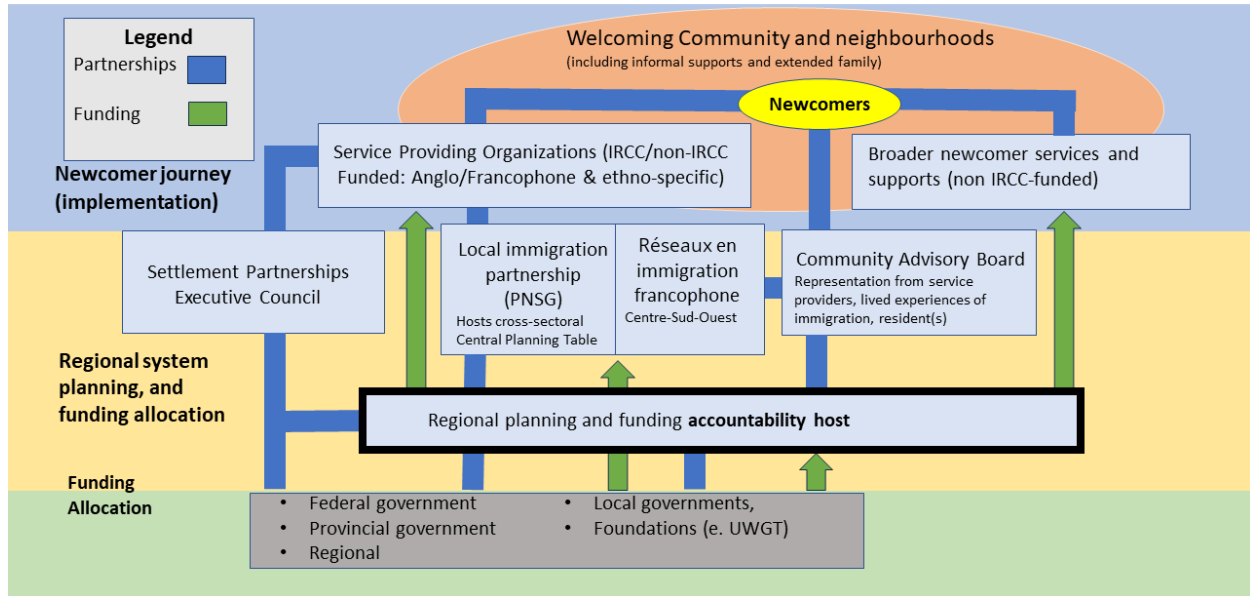
### Overview of the proposed model

The first image below acts as the table of contents slide summarizing the three images that follow. There are three key functional layers of the newcomer service and support system in Peel:

1. The newcomer journey
2. Local planning accountability
3. Local funding accountability

These three layers are labelled on the left side of the image and represented by the three colour bands throughout each image. An orange oval is also used in the images to represent the broader context of welcoming community and neighbourhoods in which newcomers are embedded and informally supported.

# Overview: Regional accountability model



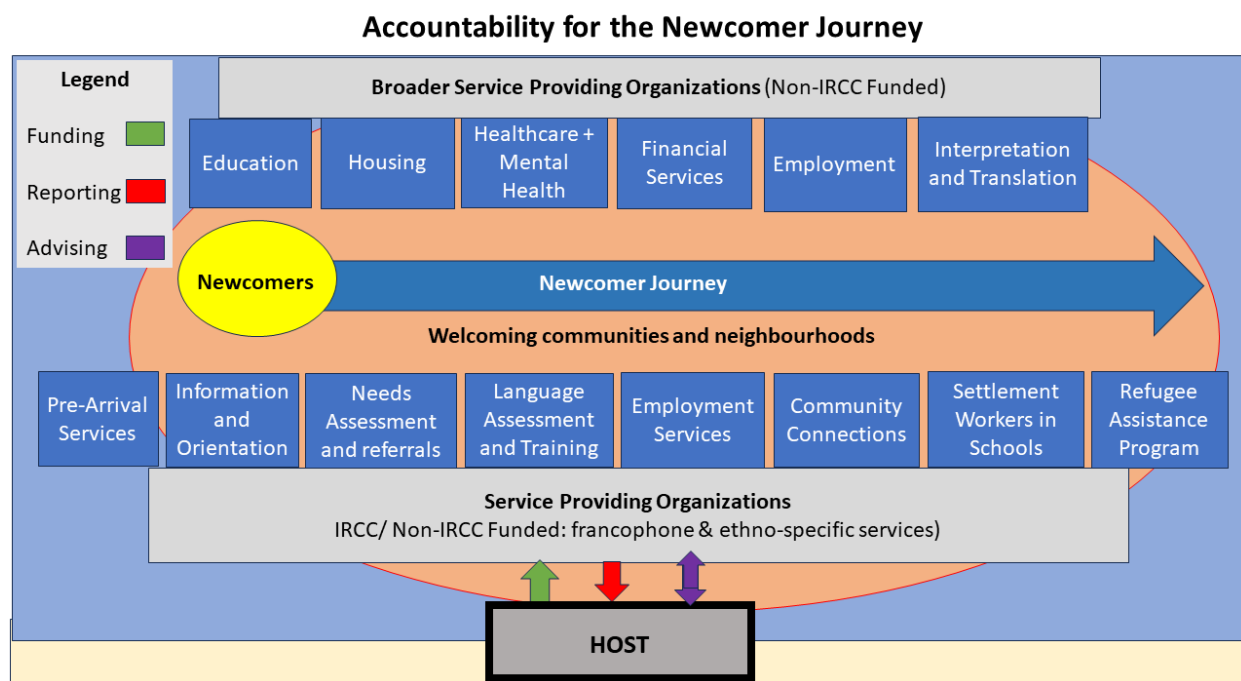
The flow of partnerships and funding are represented in the image by the blue and green arrows.

**Partnerships:** Existing partnerships would be maintained in the proposed model and the host would also create relationships with a series of committees, including a new community advisory board and existing committees of the LIP, RIF and Executive Council of IRCC-funded providers.

**Funding:** Funding would flow from IRCC to: 1) a local host that allocates funds to settlement, francophone, ethno-specific and broader sector partners, 2) the local immigration partnership (LIP), and 3) le réseau en immigration francophone (RIF). The regional host would be responsible for both funding allocation and additional resource development.

## Accountability for the Newcomer Journey

The image below represents the newcomer journey and the relationship between the regional model host and specific service providing organizations accessed by newcomers. This dimension of the model depicts the newcomer's movement across or between a variety of IRCC-funded and non IRCC-funded services, which are represented by the blue rectangles. The flow of funding, reporting and advising between the host and the IRCC-funded service providers is represented in this image using the green, red and purple arrows.



**Funding:** The regional host would fund settlement agencies and create strategies to develop and advocate for resources to support emergent organizations serving newcomers.

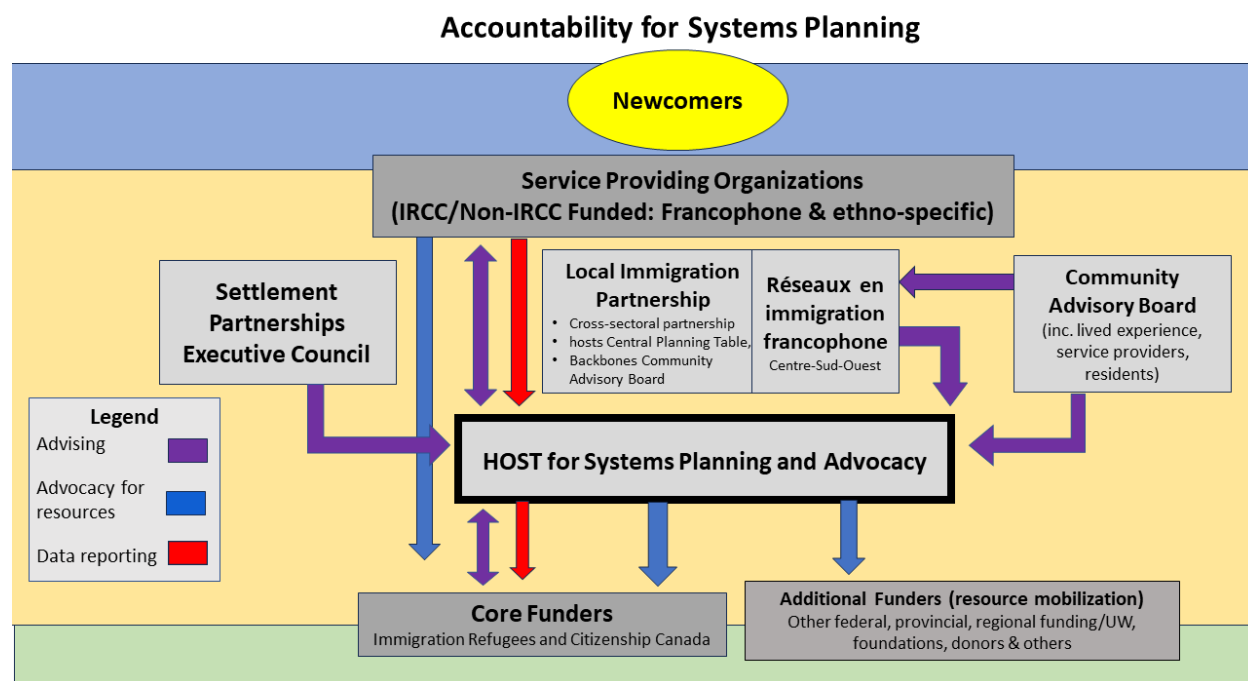
**Reporting:** Settlement agencies would report on outcomes to the host, using a process that would ideally be streamlined and consolidated by the host.

**Advising:** The advising relationship between the service providing organizations and the host would be reciprocal, facilitated by both reporting processes and ongoing committees, wherein key issues and planning implications will be considered.

## Accountability for Systems Planning

The image below summarizes system level planning in Peel by representing the advising, reporting and advocacy relationships between a) service providing organizations, b) committees, c) the regional host, and d) funders.

Systems planning refers to the capacity to anticipate, collaborate and take steps toward strategic changes needed e.g. to create more affordable housing options, or task agencies with particular responsibilities during mass arrivals.



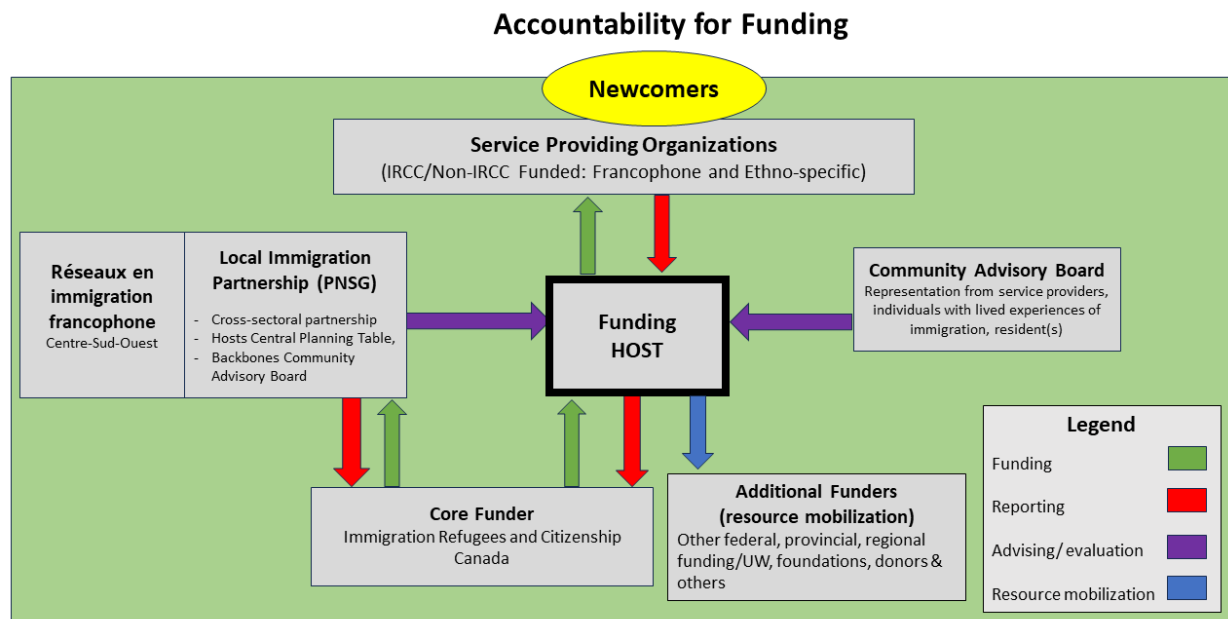
**Advising:** Committees (including the Executive Council, Community Advisory Board and Central Planning Table, as well as the LIP/RIF) would advise and receive advice from the local/regional host.

**Reporting:** Service providing organizations would report to the local/regional host, and the host report would to the funders.

**Advocacy for Resources:** Both the service providing organizations and the local/regional host would advocate to the funder for resources

## Accountability for Funding

The image below summarizes accountability for settlement sector funding in Peel. The core funder remains IRCC, but the funds for service providing organizations would flow through the regional host. The regional host would be responsible for administering the funds and for mobilizing resources from other funding sources. The LIP would facilitate evaluation activities to support accountability of the host to the community.



**Funding:** The primary departure from the current model would be that funding flows from the funder (IRCC) to the local/ regional host which would then distribute funds to the settlement service providing organizations. The LIP and RIF would continue to receive funding from IRCC directly to avoid a conflict of interest when they facilitate evaluation of the regional host.

**Reporting:** Service providing organizations would report to the regional hosts. LIPs and RIFs would continue to report to the IRCC due to the conflict of interest previously mentioned.

**Advising/ Evaluation:** The LIP, the RIF and the Community Advisory Board would support the host in developing meaningful and strategic evaluation of their role and work on behalf of community stakeholders.

**Resource Development and Mobilization:** The host would advocate to mobilize and coordinate resources from funders such as community foundations, the United Way of Greater Toronto, other government entities (such as the province and other federal departments) and private sector partners.



## **Model Host Role Description Terms of Reference**

The following regional model host terms of reference was designed at the request of service providers to outline the duties a host agency would fulfill. It was designed by the project team and shared with the project Advisory Committee for feedback at the final committee meeting, as well during the final community forum, where broader stakeholders were able to contribute feedback.

# **Regional Accountability Model for Settlement**

## **Terms of Reference for Model Host**

### **Background**

The Regional Accountability Models for Settlement in Peel project is a community consultation project to co-design a community-based planning and governance model for consideration by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This model host role description document outlines “job criteria” for a potential host organization in Peel, if the model were to be adopted by IRCC.

### **Value of a regional accountability model:**

- Support the overall newcomer journey with a regional lens: Improve service provision through monitoring and evaluation and feedback to service organizations
- Improve systems planning to ensure continuity across service systems (eg. education, healthcare, employment and supports for mass arrivals) to support newcomers more effectively in Peel region
- Advocate and support coordination of existing and new funding resources to address regional needs for newcomers

### **Qualifications**

The potential host organization should have the following qualifications:

- Knowledge of the challenges that newcomers in Peel face, newcomer-serving sector and the immigration policy landscape
- Experience with, and capacity to manage sector-wide services at this scale (funding distribution and resource development)
- Existing relationships with relevant newcomer-serving stakeholders across Peel, including non-profit organizations, government entities, other sectors and funders

### **Other Considerations**

- Any conflict of interest must be identified (eg. Direct Service Providers may not apply to be host)
- Administrative overhead must be clearly stated – as a percentage of total funds allocated to administer the model
- Single municipalities should not be able to host for equity reasons (City of Brampton, township of Caledon, City of Mississauga)

## Model Host Duties

Regional accountability for settlement services will include the following key functional areas (among others) of service system management in Peel:

**1. Newcomer journey improvements:** Continuous improvement with sector stakeholders for a more seamless newcomer journey

- Undertake a collaborative service system management role that can coordinate services and manage monitoring and evaluation
- Incentivize equitable support of clients with multiple barriers to service.
- Analyse and identify gaps in services in Peel
- Develop a process to integrate and build capacity of informal supports to newcomers
- Manage recruitment and facilitation of a community advisory board (made up of Peel residents, service providers and community members with lived experience of immigration) to include diverse perspectives on decisions and service improvements.
- Report back to the community with aggregated sector data at a regional level, share service reports back to organizations and support data quality improvement
- Dedicated staff to support smaller/ emergent agencies that offer specialized services for newcomers

**2. Systems planning:** Community-based system planning to address emergent and ongoing needs

- Collaborate with IRCC and other levels of government to coordinate essential and timely supports for all newcomers (temporary and permanent residents) in the region (eg. Mass arrivals of refugee/displaced newcomers)
  - Liaise with other sector leads (e.g. school boards, Ontario Health regions/teams, employment service system manager)
- Engage in system improvement strategies for pre-arrival information and services, intake, referral, communications and outreach to newcomers, etc.

### **3. Allocate funding:** Manage IRCC funding distribution and develop new resource streams

- Allocate resources to agencies based on regional needs
- Communicate funding decisions to stakeholders with feedback on how to improve service delivery based on established indicators
- Develop a review process to update core reporting indicators with stakeholders
- Ensure that funds are available for emergent challenges as they arise and administer these funds efficiently to meet the need (eg. mass arrivals)
- Collaborate with IRCC to ensure available funding for core streams meets the newcomer demand for services based on clear aggregate regional reporting data
- Develop and advocate for funding and resources to meet needs of newcomers

#### **Other considerations**

- Administrative overhead must be clearly stated – as a percentage of total funds allocated to administer the model
- Any conflict of interest must be identified

## Recommended Host

The entities that were put forward as potential hosts were discerned through a matrix exercise where factors such as planning capacity, experience with fund administration at this scale and service provider engagement were assessed. PNSG staff created a comprehensive matrix of services that newcomers might access based on discussions with stakeholders through focus groups and mapped which entities or levels of government typically administered them. Through this exercise and continued feedback from the advisory committee, a list of entities was established that had the most experience with planning and capacity development for each service used by newcomers.

Top on the list were community service providers, municipalities, foundations and regional government. At the request of the advisory committee, community service providers were ruled out due to the conflict of interest that might be present if a provider were to administrate funds. In Peel, the short list of entities based on this matrix were Region of Peel, separate municipal hosts (eg. cities of Brampton and Mississauga, Township of Caledon), GTA-wide charitable foundation (eg. United Way Greater Toronto) and a LIP-backed consortium.

The final community forum at the end of the project gave participants a final opportunity to vote on a host for the regional model. The options remained the same as previous poll apart from the addition of Region of Peel, now that the regional government will no longer dissolve in 2025.

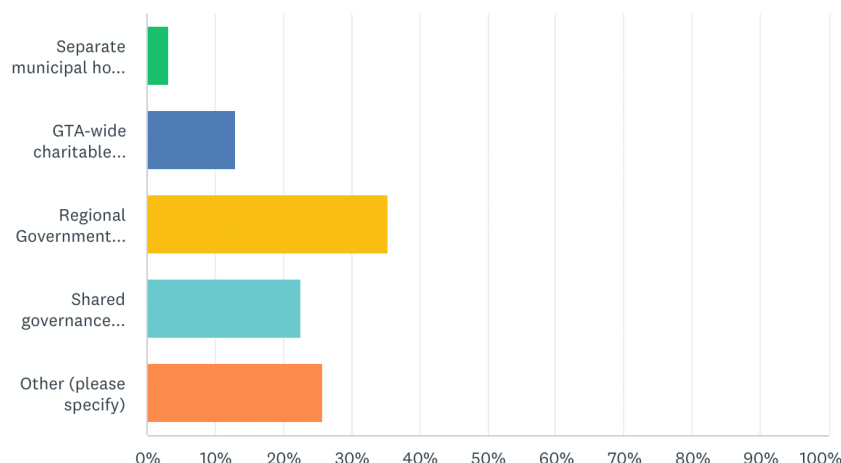
Of the over 50 attendees, only 31 voted. This could be in part because the community raised strong critiques about the benefits of regionalising settlement funding, and so abstaining might have been a means of expressing concern or disagreement.

Of the options listed, Region of Peel received over a third of the votes leading against the shared governance model by four votes. Eight participants also chose the “other” option and listed alternate host options including five for the status quo (IRCC), one for a neutral third-party accounting firm, one for the LIPs, and one deferring the decision to be made by IRCC through a standard call for proposals.

The results of the host poll are displayed in the graph below:

Who might be the best host for the regional accountability model for settlement in Peel? Please select one to indicate your suggestion:

Answered: 31 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Separate municipal hosts (i.e. Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga)	3.23% 1
▼ GTA-wide charitable foundation (e.g. United Way)	12.90% 4
▼ Regional Government (Region of Peel)	35.48% 11
▼ Shared governance consortium (inc. Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga) with administration by host organizations of the local immigration partnership (PNSG) / réseau en immigration francophone (RIF Centre Sud-Ouest)	22.58% 7
▼ Other (please specify) <a href="#">Responses</a>	25.81% 8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>

## Future Outlook

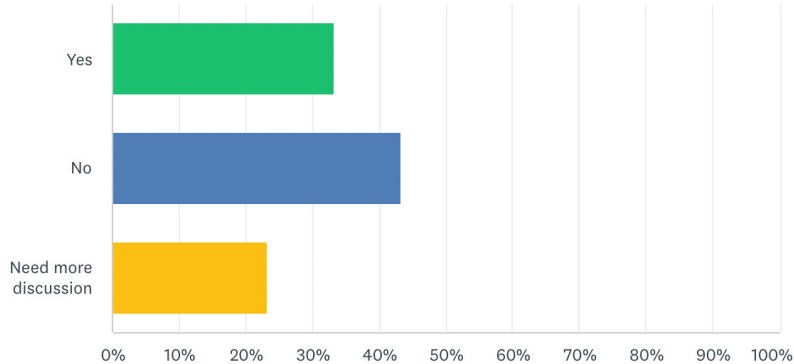
### Readiness to pilot a regional model in Peel

An important part of the RAMS project was to assess readiness to transition to a regional model for settlement should IRCC make the decision to implement the model. To gain clarity on whether Peel-based stakeholders were ready for this transition we asked those in attendance at our final community forum whether they would be willing to volunteer Peel as a pilot geography for regionalizing settlement sector funding and governance.

Thirty respondents of the 65 partners present at the fifth and final community forum voted on whether to pilot a regional model should IRCC wish to implement it. At this time, 13 of the participants felt that Peel is not ready to pilot a regional model though seven are open to further discussions. The results of the poll are displayed in the graph below.

Do you feel Peel is ready to offer to be a pilot community for a regional accountability model?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	33.33% 10
No	43.33% 13
Need more discussion	23.33% 7
TOTAL	30

## Implications of the Model and Next Steps

Collectively crafting the role of the host allowed the stakeholders voice with regards to the model's effectiveness and impact (*see pages 18-20 for a proposed host role description that has been informed by community consultations and validated through the final community forum*). The data gathered by this project helped to envision the characteristics that matter the most for the regional entity host. For instance, the leadership capacity of the host would require subject matter expertise, political trust, demonstrated operational stability, the ability to bring resources to the table, and the ability to influence and bring people together.

These characteristics were considered when evaluating potential candidates for the host position. For example, some of the advantages of appointing a foundation as host would be their nimbleness, community trust and ability to collect information. On the other hand, a disadvantage is that foundations have limited capacity for broad policy formation, as compared to an alternative host such as regional government. There are advantages to each kind of organization that are important to consider. Consequently, some research participants proposed a hybrid hosting arrangement to balance responsiveness and reach, especially considering the geographic size of the region.

Research participants also noted the value of a host having experience managing funds, staffing and capacity building, including resource development. Such experience is seen to be critical to the success of the host given their responsibility for funding allocation and accountability.

The research also emphasizes that a regional model must be cost-effective, avoid duplication, encourage meaningful partnerships and clearly communicate its structure, funding and function.

Change management is an important part of implementing any version of this model. The transition should take place gradually with a phased approach where knowledge transfer between IRCC project officers and model host representatives are transparent and thorough. The value of regionalization should be clearly demonstrated to stakeholders on an ongoing bases as the model is implemented and any improvements to service delivery that can be guaranteed by having settlement funding hosted regionally should be clearly articulated. Given that various community service sectors in Peel region are chronically underfunded, the cost of the model is the biggest concern stakeholders voiced. The administrative budget should be socialized and clearly demonstrate an increased or stable budget allocated to Peel settlement stakeholders after initial implementation costs. Finally, the model should support staff roles focused on supporting small and emergent settlement agencies, and a community advisory board should be formed that includes members with lived experience.



## Key Considerations for Implementation

1. Prior to implementing a regional model, conduct a cost benefit analysis to ensure that funds currently allocated to agencies that serve newcomers are not redirected to cover administrative costs. Various community service sectors in Peel region are chronically underfunded, and so stakeholders need to see a clear indication that the settlement budget will grow or remain stable while keeping up with inflation at minimum.
2. Given that IRCC's project officers have strong existing relationships with agencies and a good understanding of regional issues, more work needs to be done to identify the value add or shifting to a regionally administrated model. It is still unclear to stakeholders what the concrete benefits of regionalizing the model will be.

### **If a regional model is implemented:**

3. Ensure that the model has a community advisory board with lived-experience participation, and a place-based strategic document (like the community plans in the Reaching Home model) that helps the board identify its mission and goals within the regional context.
4. Embed diversity, equity and inclusion considerations in each layer of the model – ensure that a position within the administration is created to provide practical support to small and emergent organizations as they work to secure funds. Ensure that funding rubrics used to determine which agencies are funded award points for diversity of agency staff, board members and specific marginalized populations served.
5. Develop a clear Terms of Reference document for the host (*see example on page 18-20*) that can be used to determine the host's role and relevant accountabilities. Build in an evaluation structure so that community partners are able to give feedback on the model's implementation based on the responsibilities indicated in the Terms of Reference.
6. Consider holding intact areas of work that have functioned well, such as language assessment with the HARTs system.

7. Protect the budget allocated to settlement service providers so that the new level of administration increases rather than decreases Peel settlement sector dollars overall. Determine the administration budget for the model based on fairly costing out administrative positions (in the way that service providers are currently funded), rather than using a percentage-based system (eg. 15% of the total budget goes to the host). Administrative burden at the host level does not increase exponentially as the overall budget increases. Percentage-based systems unfairly allocate funds to the host, that should be allocated to the service providers as the budget increases.
8. Caution using a funding incentive-based approach like the service system management (SSM) model, unless deliverables are naturally very concrete, such as acquiring housing for newcomers. Unlike finding employment, settlement success indicators are much less clearcut and unique to the individual.
9. Enhance program reporting frameworks for settlement programs with the support of agencies and the community advisory board. Identify indicators that will elicit helpful data and feedback for agencies, newcomers and the whole sector. Update these frameworks regularly so that new questions are asked as programs change and evolve. Populate a framework with the specific indicators determined by the committee. Consolidate data regionally prior to sharing it with IRCC and share results with stakeholders.

## Conclusion

In December 2020, IRCC initiated a call for proposal across Canada to select 16 entities that would develop regionalized models for settlement funding and governance. During the pandemic, there were vast differences in the ways newcomers were affected across regions. Similarly, the ways different regions worked to resettle refugees during the humanitarian crisis in Syria varied significantly. These shifting world events caused IRCC to recognize that settlement happens locally and the challenges and strengths of each region are unique. PNSG was one of the organizations selected to develop a Peel-specific model for settlement.

Over more than two years, our community consultation process elicited a model with three levels:

- 1) A newcomer journey level that explored newcomers' movement through the settlement process in Peel, with the support of their communities and service providers
- 2) A strategic planning level that captured the role of an advisory board, the model host, and the LIP/RIF in supporting high level planning on strategies for regional challenges such as temporary accommodation for mass arrivals, affordable housing access, and employment for newcomers
- 3) A funding level that explored how funds would be allocated to agencies across the settlement sector that is currently funded by IRCC

Throughout the project we conducted a robust community-based research process that involved conducting surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews with stakeholders as well as a participatory workshop and four community forums. At the final forum a poll was conducted to identify a potential model host. Responses were diverse with many participants indicating that they would prefer the status quo, but of the options put forward Region of Peel was the top choice.

Discussions with stakeholders who attended these forums elicited comments on the importance of effective change management, should a model like this be implemented, clear values statements articulated by the funder, transparent grant administration process, an opportunity for the host to receive feedback and be evaluated and transparent budgets that showed growth in funds allocated to the settlement sector (no loss to administrative overhead should a new layer of administration be added). Of the stakeholders who voted at the final forum, one-third were keen to pilot the model, over 40 percent were not interested in piloting and the remainder felt that more discussion was required. Should a regional model be implemented, stakeholders in Peel request that IRCC examine the scale of the geography chosen and continue to strive to demonstrate how adopting a regional model will improve service delivery for newcomers given the status quo is reasonably effective.

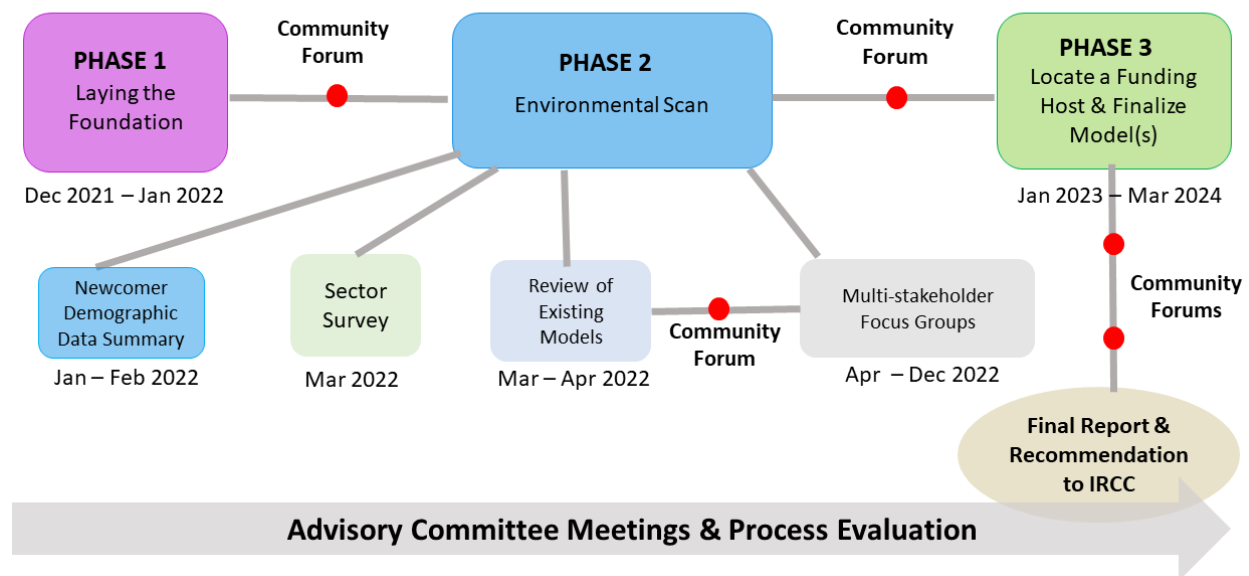
## Section 2: Project Activities

Three phases of project activities led up to the development of the regional model over the project's two-year duration.

1. Laying the Foundation (November 2021 – March 2022)
2. Environmental Scan (April 2022 – December 2022)
3. Model Development (January 2023 – March 2024)

This section describes the process and findings of each phase. Across and throughout the three phases, there were four community forums (plus a participatory workshop focused on model development with similar participants) and nine advisory committee meetings.

### Project Road Map



## Phase 1: Laying the Foundation

(November 2021 – March 2022)

### A Community-Based Approach

The model was shaped from Peel community stakeholders' experiences and understanding of the settlement funding and governance system, the current needs and gaps, settlement trends and future outlook for the settlement sector. The community-based process for model development allowed the project to gain new insights about newcomer services and support in Peel, grounding the model development in the lived realities of stakeholders.

Research results were garnered through community consultation with advisory committee members and at community forums. These results were then used to create a model that included the three layers of governance:

1. Newcomer Journey
2. Systems Planning
3. Funding Allocation

The model would sustain the existing stakeholder relationships in the settlement sector in Peel and foster new relationships mobilized around the regional model host and accountability to newcomers.

### Methods of Stakeholder Engagement

Within a community-based framework, a community is defined as the people who live the issue under study. This means people who have a shared sense of belonging due to a shared experience, identity, interest, and/or geography. In other words, a community is a group of people who are brought together for a common issue. As a collective, these stakeholders have the capacity and resources to collaborate democratically to respond to a particular issue.

Various stakeholders from the settlement community in the Peel region were engaged throughout the project activities and methods to inform the model development (see Table 1).

These stakeholders include newcomers, managers and executive directors of IRCC-funded settlement organizations, government representatives (example: IRCC), community foundation representatives in the Peel Region, frontline staff in the settlement sector, Peel residents, broader community partners (including non-IRCC funded organizations), business owners and employers in Peel and researchers. Stakeholders were involved through advisory committee meetings, community forums and workshops, focus groups, key informant interviews and surveys.

**Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement in the RAMS Project**

<b>Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Methods of Involvement</b>
Service Users	
Newcomers	Surveys, Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews, Community Forums
Peel Residents/Community Members	Surveys, Focus Groups, Community Forums
Settlement Service Providers	
Front-line Staff from IRCC-funded Organizations	Surveys, Focus Groups, Key Informant Interviews, Community Forums
Executive Directors and Managers from IRCC-funded Organizations	Surveys, Focus Groups, Steering Committee, Community Forums
Broader Community Partners (including Non-IRCC organizations, libraries, education, health-care, police, etc.)	Surveys, Focus Groups, Steering Committee, Community Forums
Funders and external stakeholders	
Government Representatives	Community Forums, Host Conversations
Community Foundations	Surveys, Community Forums
Researchers	Surveys, Community Forums
Business Owners/Employers	Surveys, Community Forums

## **Project Advisory Committee**

The RAMS Advisory Committee guided the design and implementation of the project process, met regularly with the project team for updates and feedback and supported the project team in recruitment of participants for data collection and knowledge dissemination to community stakeholders. In this way, the Advisory Committee helped to ensure that stakeholders and community organizations were active partners in the process of model development. *(See appendix A for a table that summarizes the advisory committee meetings and the topics they covered).*

## **Community Forums**

Four community information forums and one participatory workshop were held in Peel throughout the project's duration. The participants in these forums came from multiple stakeholder groups in the settlement sector, including IRCC-funded newcomer-serving organizations, broader community partners (such as non-IRCC organizations, libraries, education, healthcare, police, etc.), government representatives, community foundations, Peel newcomers, residents and employers. *(See appendix B for a summary of the community information forums).*

## Phase 2: Environmental Scan

(March 2022 – December 2022)

In phase two of the project, PNSG and CCBR conducted an environmental scan of the Peel region. The purpose of the environmental scan was to understand the demographic profile of Peel and the existing ecosystem of settlement services.

At the outset of the project, the project team conducted baseline demographic research and additional research on key population groups such as international students and refugees. To help orient the advisory committee, a series of infographics were created by Public Good Initiative (PGI) pro-bono consultants to display the findings of this demographic research. During this phase, the team also took stock of the current model for funding of settlement services and considered how a regional model could intervene.

This phase involved gathering data, analyzing and presenting with stakeholders:

1. Demographic data
2. Literature review (*see appendix C*) reviewing 33 sources for existing regional models in other sectors and/or regions
3. A settlement sector survey to collect baseline data about how IRCC funded settlement organizations in Peel are funded (*see appendix D*)
4. A broader sector survey of mainstream and partner agencies that are not IRCC-funded
5. Focus groups and key informant interviews to gather reflections from settlement stakeholders about the current settlement system and newcomer service provision
6. Host conversations

### 1. Demographic Data

The demographic data in the appendix delineates immigrants in Peel by the pathways through which they immigrated to Canada and the extent to which they use settlement services. This data is useful because immigrants traveling through different pathways encounter unique barriers to accessing services. The model can and should tailor programmatic funding to meet the needs of refugee and family class populations who typically access settlement services more frequently than economic class immigrants.

Immigrant Category	Percentage that used Settlement Services
All adult immigrants to Canada	46.3%
• Refugees	89.4 %
• Dependents of Economic Immigrants	51.0%
• Family Sponsored Immigrants	40.4 %
• Economic Principal Applicants	35.2%

## Newcomer Settlement Service Use (2016 – 2020)

### Breakdown by Immigration Pathways

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/nl/daily-quotidien/220602/dq220602e-eng.htm>



The table above shows 89.4 % of refugees used settlement services from 2016 – 2020. This percentage is significantly higher than the average across all immigration categories (46.3%).

## Peel impacts: Accelerating immigrant admissions

With new targets nationally:

Year	National levels / targets	Peel level/forecast
2021	405,330	39,620 (9.8% of national level)
2022	437,450	29,985 (6.85%)
2023	404,870	30,490 (7.53%)
2024	485,000	34,483 (*forecast)
2025	500,000	35,500 (*forecast)

\*Forecasts were made based on the average % of national immigrant admissions settled by Peel region in the 5 years from 2018 to 2022 (Average % of national admission: 7.1%)

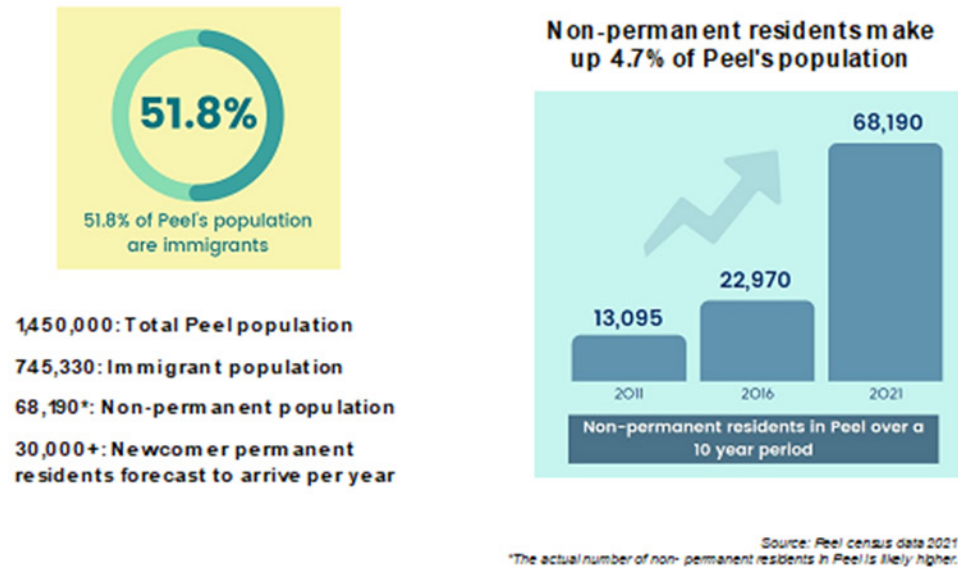
Source of 2021 data: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/1a8171dc-292b-4209-a700-63cb699269ff>  
IRCC Immigration Levels Plan 2023-2025: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html>



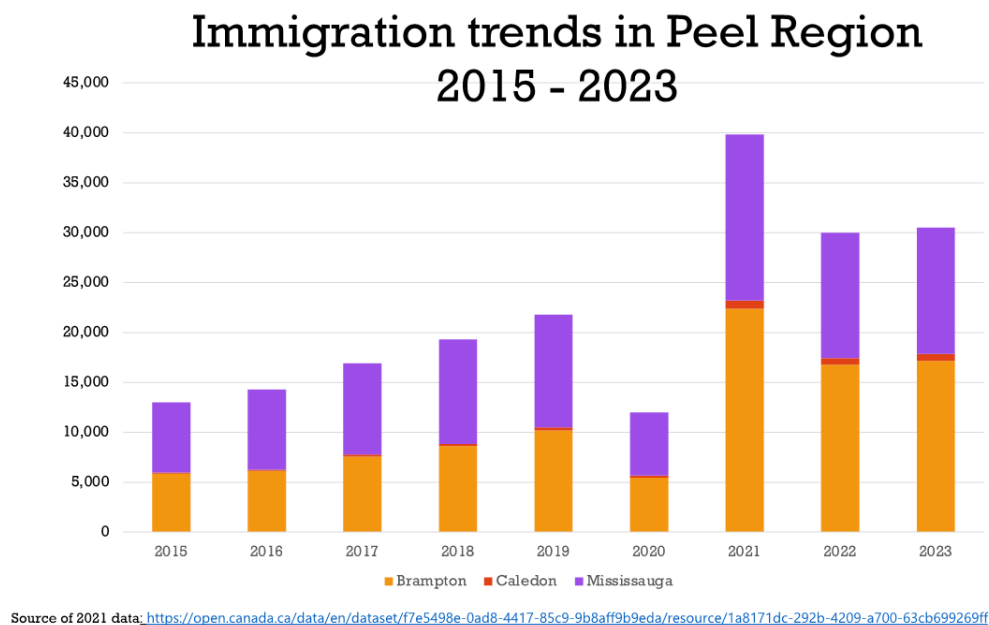
The immigration levels data above indicates the number of clients that will be served by agencies within Peel's Regional Accountability model from 2021-2025. This data can be used to estimate the total amount of funding that should be allocated to serve newcomers in the region in future.



## Immigrants as a proportion of total population in Peel region (2021)



This immigrant population data demonstrates a need for a robust self-sustaining funding model that has the capacity to manage and develop resources as well as manage pools of funding for populations such as temporary foreign workers and other temporary residents who need services.



The above graph shows the immigration level trends across Peel since 2015. With the exception of 2020 due to the pandemic, levels have been consistently each year.

## 2. Literature Review

Findings from the review were used to inform the development of a regional accountability model for settlement in Peel region. Specifically, these findings were used to:

- Build community capacity in regional model development: The project team facilitated a series of discussions for the Advisory Committee (AC). At each AC meeting, the project team presented 1-2 elements, including the range of strategies used to enact each element and key learnings (challenges & successes) from other models. Finally, model elements were presented and discussed at community forums.
- Inform the development of qualitative data collection tools: The model review findings, specifically the model elements, were used to structure the focus group guides with leadership staff, frontline service providers and broader community partners. Our focus group guides were divided into two key discussions. Participants were asked to:
  - 1) Assess the current model in Peel
  - 2) Imagine how a regional model might lead to structural change in Peel.The model elements were used as probes in both their assessments of existing conditions and their visions for regional change.
- Structured participatory model development discussions: Finally, findings from the review were used to support the development of participatory, model development workshops with key stakeholders. Specifically, workshops presented key findings from the model review, surveys, and focus groups, and facilitators used these findings to inspire collaboration around a regional model.

## Case Study 1: Foundation as Model Host

Reaching home is an existing regional model that manages funding for homeless populations in the Greater Toronto Area. In this model, United Way's role is to:

- Implement the Reaching Home Federal Strategy by developing a community plan that is local and specific to York region
- Develop an evidence-base for the homelessness plan activities by conducting research
- Review funding applications from agencies and administers grants
- Create contracts for agencies that are funded
- Monitor ongoing programming by reviewing quarterly reports from funded agencies
- Submit reports to Infrastructure Canada collectively on behalf of agencies
- Deliver marketing campaigns to raise additional funds and promote awareness of housing and homelessness related issues
- Facilitate coordinated systems access across the region that is inclusive of all services connected to homelessness, not just shelters themselves
- Convene an active community board that approves funding calls for applications, along with sub committees that reviews funding

Key components of the community advisory board governing the reaching home model in York are listed below:

- The board is made up of community members across various sectors, and is convened jointly by United Way and the Region
- There is no agency representation on the board because it would be a conflict of interest. Whenever there is a motion, board members should have autonomy to make decisions without needing to consult with their agencies
- The model is based in community consultation, and in York Region community is scoped narrowly, essentially just board members are considered 'community,' through the board has requested broader community consultation in the past
- As the Community Entity, United Way has the authority to make the final decision about how funds will be allocated across the region; however there has never been an instance to date when United Way has needed to override a board decision
- A United Way staff person is a fixed-voting member of the board
- The board approves all calls for funding prior to their release
- There is a subcommittee of the board made up of members with a lived/living experience of homelessness. A local agency has been contracted to support these members with any mental health or related needs that might arise during their term of service

- The board approves community plans and community homelessness reports for Reaching Home
- The board develops terms of reference for its own role, and other Community Advisory Board-related policies and procedure
- In other jurisdictions there has been a required percentage of the board that is Indigenous – for instance, it's 75% in Winnipeg

United Way partners with York region on an 18-member committee (akin to executive council in the RAMS model) to deliver coordinated access to homelessness and affordable housing related services. As coordinated regional access to settlement services with a “no wrong door” approach is a goal identified by settlement stakeholders in Peel, this approach is an important one to consider. The following graphic depicts Infrastructure Canada’s definition of coordinated access.

## Case Study 2: Private Sector Partner as Host

The employment model where WCG is model host is an example of an existing private sector regional host that already operates within Peel region. Within this new system, clients of the employment agencies (newcomers included), are sorted into three categories as shown here:

Client Stream	Description	Job Readiness
A	Strong, job relevant credentials and education	Easy to place
B	Some related credentials, and relevant educational background	Moderately difficult to place
C	Limited relevant credentials and education	Difficult to place

Table 1.b represents the approximate cost an organization absorbs per client in each of the three categories listed in Table 1.a. This cost is based on staff hours per client, resources shared and some minimal start-up costs (e.g. a small budget for purchasing a hard hat or work boots etc.)

Client Stream	Approximate Cost Per Client
A	\$400
B	\$1,000
C	\$2,100

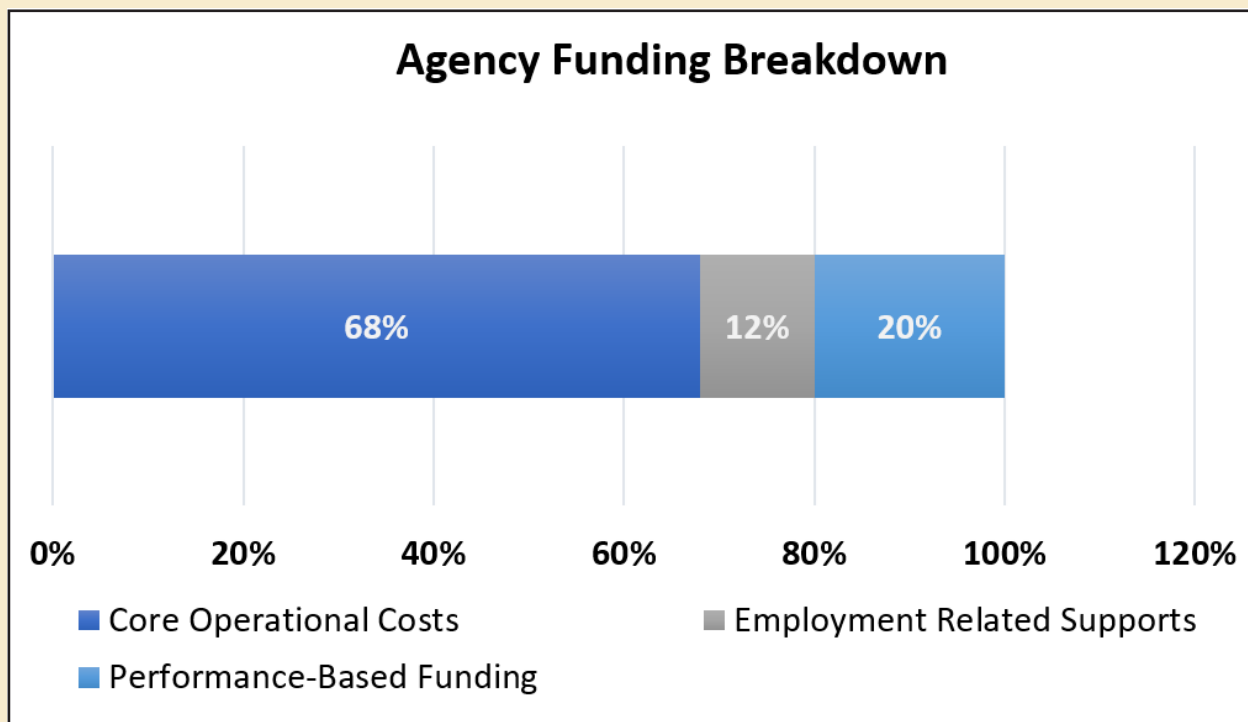
Source: [Trina Foster, ONESTEP Toronto presentation, January 2020.](#)

Table 1.c shows the funding allocation to an agency per client based on the timeline that the client has been employed. The client is not required to be working for the same employer for the duration of the time indicated; however, if there is a break in employment, funds are no longer received by the agency.

Client Stream	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	Total
A	\$0	\$65	\$117	\$162	\$334
B	\$82	\$165	\$330	\$528	\$1,105
C	\$315	\$700	\$990	\$1,225	\$3,230

Source: [Trina Foster, ONESTEP Toronto presentation, January 2020.](#)

The following graph shows the performance-based funding incentive allocation for the service system manager as a percentage of overall funds.



Source: [Trina Foster, ONESTEP Toronto presentation, January 2020.](#)

These funding incentive structures appear to be most effective in contexts where outcomes can be clearly defined (eg. did a client secure, and stay in an appropriate job). Though successful settlement is less clearly measurable overall, and, therefore, harder to incentive – some components of settlement such as securing housing for refugees living in temporary accommodation, or enrolling newcomers in language classes are more quantifiable. An incentivization structure like this could be considered for those particular indicators, however, stakeholders in Peel had plenty of feedback to share about the challenges implementing such a model would entail.

### **3. Baseline survey of IRCC-funded settlement agencies**

The baseline survey (*see results in Appendix D*) represents the current (2022) state of settlement agency funding in Peel. It was useful for stakeholders because it gave SPOs a sense of which funders were the biggest players in the settlement ecosystem at each level of government as well as demonstrating that there is targeted funding and mechanisms of support available for specific sub populations of newcomers, such as youth and, to some degree, international students.

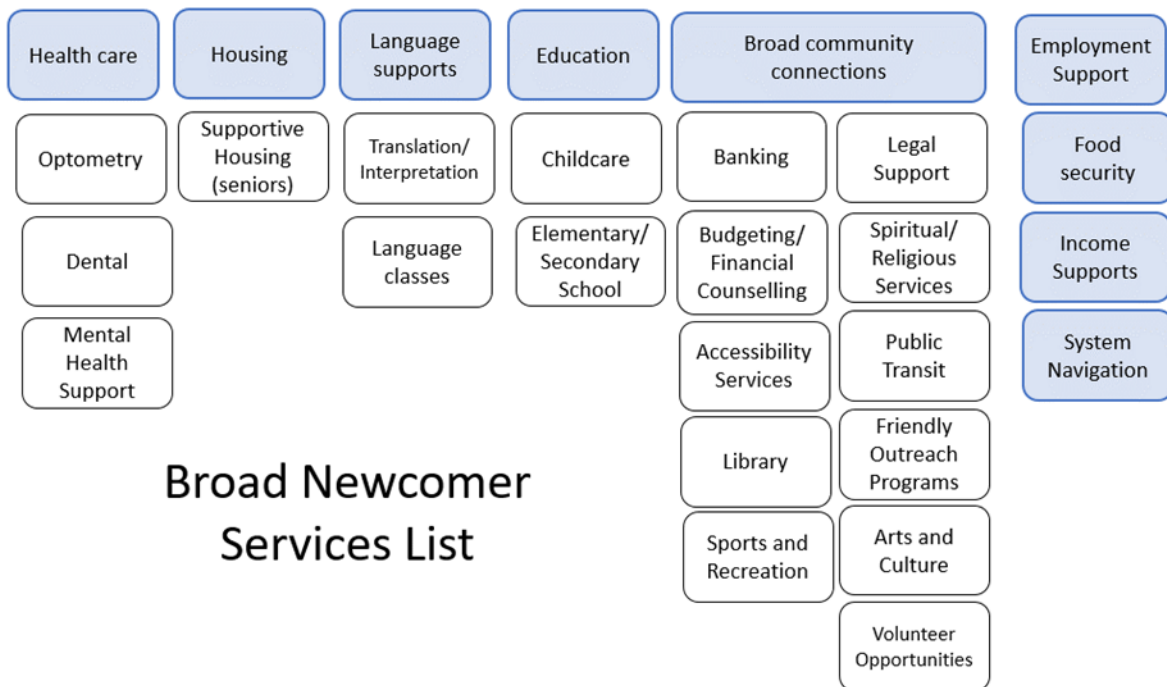
An important funding related takeaway from the survey is that the top funders for settlement in Peel region appear to be: 1) Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2) Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, 3) Employment and Social Development Canada, 4) Region of Peel, and 5) Ministry of Health.

In terms of reporting, monitoring and evaluation – a critical takeaway was the importance of the HARTS database as a source of useful reporting data. Stakeholders that use this database for reporting on programming anecdotally indicated high satisfaction with both the user-friendliness of the interface used for reporting and the usefulness of the data that is shared back with agencies. A recommendation that arises from this section is that perhaps the regional host should take stock of additional information that SPOs are tracking in informally, so that these indicators can potentially be built into formal reporting frameworks.

### **4. Services Inclusive of Newcomers Survey**

The following services map represents adjacent sectors that collaborate with the settlement sector. Though these services are not included in the core services funded by IRCC, the providers support newcomers and immigrants on an ongoing basis. The services map helped the project team to identify stakeholders for a survey of broader sectors whose services were inclusive of newcomers.

**Chart C: Broad/Adjacent Newcomer Services List**



This survey for mainstream service providers that serve newcomers identified gaps, overlaps and duplications in services beyond the settlement sector. The survey highlighted challenges that mainstream service providers face when they serve newcomers and strategies that they use to address them. This survey was used alongside the baseline survey conducted prior to gain a fulsome understanding of the challenges newcomers face and innovative practices that SPOs use to overcome those challenges.

The survey of mainstream service providers assesses their understanding of current services in context to the community and economic norms that impact the settlement and integration of newcomers; and the extent to which mainstream service providers are aware of the different categories of newcomers they serve, what their needs are, and how best to address them. In total, 25 Peel-based organizations from diverse sectors were surveyed.

Service providers in Peel region that are not settlement agencies still often serve majority immigrant populations, and so need to have a deep understanding of immigration patterns in Peel. Participants in this survey seem to have a good sense of the barriers that newcomers face when accessing services. These service providers appear to have taken into account newcomer's unique needs when designing the services that they provide – though to what degree would require further exploration. Some of the needs they identified included: language interpretation, immigration pathway specific needs and cultural needs.



Some gaps in awareness that the survey identified are how best to support newcomers with temporary status in Canada, including international students, undocumented migrants and temporary foreign workers. Overall, mainstream agencies that participated in the survey appear to be less likely than settlement agencies to track what immigration pathway their clients arrived to Canada through.

The main economic or social barrier that these broader service sector stakeholders identified that newcomers face as they settle in Peel was access to affordable housing. This challenge will be unpacked in further depth in the scenario-based section of this report, where the model's applications and benefits are explored through housing-related scenarios.

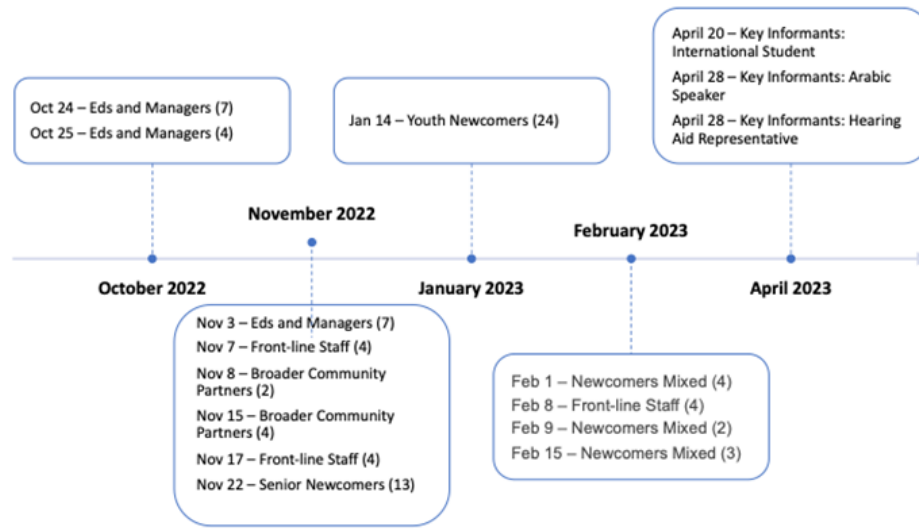
## **5. Primary Data Collection: Focus Groups and Interviews**

In addition to the secondary research described above, the project team facilitated focus groups and key informant interviews to understand the perspectives of settlement stakeholders in the Peel region concerning the current settlement system and newcomer service provision. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather reflections from settlement managers and directors, frontline staff, the newcomers they serve and broader sector partners on the current system of newcomer support in Peel region and how it could be improved. The terms “system of newcomer support” was used in these discussions to refer to the ways newcomer services are managed, funded and coordinated in Peel region. Additionally, the focus groups explored what could be learned from the current system so that those learnings could be applied to a collective vision for a new regional model. The core research question at this stage was: **How do we want newcomer supports to be managed, funded and coordinated in Peel region?**

Participating in focus groups gave newcomers, service providers, and community members the opportunity to help shape the future of funding and governance for the settlement sector by offering feedback and contributing to a collective vision. Newcomers were the most heavily represented in focus groups, with youth, seniors and adults having separate opportunities to share during sessions through established programming at agencies. In-depth key informant interviews were also used to learn more from individuals who had particularly unique perspectives to offer, such as an international student, a representative from the deaf and hard of hearing community and a refugee claimant.

The focus groups and key informant interviews were held between October 2022 – April 2023 (*see timeline image below*). Most of them were held virtually via Zoom, except for the youth and senior newcomer focus groups, which were each held in person in the respective community centres that serve each of these newcomer groups in the Peel region.

## Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews



## 6. Host Conversations

The final qualitative interviews conducted with partners during the research phase of the project were designed to define the ideal role for a regional model host. Interviews were conducted with three important funding partners: the provincial Ministry of Labour Immigration Training and Skills Development, the Region of Peel and the United Way Greater Toronto. The goal of these conversations was to:

- Gain general insights about regionalization of sectors that had previously been managed by provincial or federal governments generally
- Understand each potential host's capacity to manage a model like this

Some of the factors we discussed were to what extent each entity engaged with the settlement sector and supported immigrants in Peel Region, as well as how they identify and tackle the challenges that newcomers face. We then had them offer reflections on the current IRCC managed model and on the proposed new RAMS model. *(See appendix G for a summary of the host conversations)*

## Phase 3: Model Development (January 2023 – March 2024)

### Community Participatory Workshop

The project team drew on the findings of Phase 1 and 2 to draft three iterations of a regional model, which are presented in the following section of this report. Then they held an in-person participatory workshop with 69 community stakeholders in June 2023 to engage stakeholders in designing the draft regional model using the findings generated from the data collection phase.

The workshop involved an introduction to the project purpose and process, situated within the current context of Peel. During the workshop, the potential impact of the region's dissolution on the RAMS project was considered as well as how that would influence the choice of a host.

Three scenarios were presented at the workshop to help participants think about the regional model's feasibility, strengths and weaknesses, and how funding and planning would intersect.

### Francophone Consultation

Representation from francophone minority communities was an important part of our project. The project team included francophone representation as part of our selection process for our advisory committee: Centre Francophone du Grand-Toronto provided input as a member over the two years. Further, other IRCC-funded francophone settlement and employment organizations were invited to our community workshop and forums where case examples with reference to francophone considerations were highlighted. Le réseau en immigration francophone (RIF) Centre-Sud-Ouest was consulted through individual meetings and participation in the community workshop and forums. The project team co-presented with a RIF from Northern Ontario at the 2023 Pathways to Prosperity conference to gather feedback on our models from other LIPs/RIFs.

Based on the workshop discussion, it was agreed that the proposed model should be relevant to what is happening in our community at three main levels:

1. **Newcomer support at the individual level:** the model should support the overall newcomer journey with a regional lens to improve service provision through monitoring, evaluation and feedback to service organizations.
2. **System coordination at the community level:** the model should coordinate services and planning to ensure collaboration in service provision in areas such as healthcare, education, employment and support for mass arrivals.
3. **Resource development at the organizational level:** the model should advocate for equitable resource distribution and allocate funding to address regional needs for newcomers.

### Pathways to Prosperity Conference (P2P)

The project team participated in the P2P Conference for Local Immigration Partnerships and Réseaux en immigration francophone that took place from November 20-22, 2023, in Montreal to present the project and ultimate model. The presentation was included in the session entitled *Exploring models for community governance of newcomer services - L'exploration de modèles de gouvernance communautaire des services aux nouveaux arrivants*. Also presenting was Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone du Nord de l'Ontario (RIFNO), which was exploring a regional model for accountability within their region of Northern Ontario.

The session focused on the key issues Peel region and Northern Ontario face with regards to settlement and how a community-based governance and funding model would improve immigration and settlement services. The backgrounds of both IRCC-funded projects were presented and a discussion with the participants took place to get their feedback on the models and the key issues being faced in both regions. The workshop helped confirm that regional models can be successful (the Reaching Home model was raised) and that a regional model can be helpful to adapt services to local needs.

A key consideration raised was that the relative scope of the region/locale needs to be considered so that the model can be responsive to particular population-based needs. Overall feedback from workshop participants was that the RAMS Model was communicated clearly, and it seemed to be understood by other jurisdictions and communities.

## Project Evaluation

### Methods

CCBR conducted this developmental evaluation by employing surveys after each of four community forums (in January 2022, September 2022, June 2023 and September 2023). The Advisory Committee was also surveyed at three points in time (in June 2022, April 2023 and January 2024) and held a reflective internal discussion annually (in November 2022 and November 2023).

### Findings by Method

**Community Forum Surveys:** Most survey respondents came from IRCC-funded settlement organizations. All (100%) expressed interest in participating in future discussions. There was fairly equal interest in all forms of engagement (i.e. community forums, focus groups, surveys and email updates), with a slight preference for community forums, and 80-92% expressed that they were satisfied or very satisfied overall with the forum itself.

A matrix of questions tested participants' understanding of the project and the value of creating a regional newcomer integration model, with a coordinated approach to planning and funding. A limited number of participants completed the evaluation surveys, but those who did consistently indicated a high level of agreement with, and understanding of, the project's purpose and goals. For instance, consistently 88-96% of respondents said that they believe more collaboration around settlement services is needed in Peel and 60-80% agreed that a regional approach to settlement planning in Peel is needed.

There was a decline in agreement about the value of a regional model and approach at the September 2023 forum which might be attributed to the fact that it was held online, unlike the previous June 2023 forum. Also, the agenda was focused on reviewing model options leaving less time for the exploratory conversations that happened in the previous forums.

Nevertheless, this forum, like the others, showed a high level (96%) of agreement amongst participants that regional collaboration around settlement services in Peel is needed. These findings are summarized in the table below:

I agree/strongly agree that:	Sept 2023 27 respondents /70 registrants	June 2023 31/69	Sept 2022 26/69	Jan 2022 11/40
I understand the purpose of the RAMS project	56%	92%	81%	100%
I understand the potential benefits and challenges of a coordinated approach to planning and resourcing newcomer supports	76%	96%		
I believe we need a regional approach to settlement planning in Peel	60%	80%	77%	
I believe we need a regional approach to settlement funding in Peel	48%	80%	61%	
I believe we need more collaboration around settlement services in Peel	96%	88%	96%	
I believe a regional model will lead to positive change. (Or in Jan 2022: I believe this project will lead to positive change.)	36%	72%	54%	80%

**Advisory Committee Surveys:** About half of Advisory Committee members completed the annual surveys. Of these, all showed a high level of understanding of the ecosystem of newcomer services and supports in the region. Over the course of the project, Committee members also demonstrated an increasing understanding of the impact of economic and social trends, and an improved understanding of newcomer needs. For example, committee members' understanding of stakeholders involved in improving settlement and integration grew by about 30% over the course of the project. A similar increase in understanding occurred for committee members on the topic of how community trends and changes are impacting newcomers.

All findings from the surveys are summarized in the following table:

	June 2022 6/11			April 2023 6/11	
	Good or Very Good Understanding	Moderate Understanding	Poor Understanding	Good or Very Good Understanding	Moderate Understanding
Q1 I understand current stakeholders providing services and supports to newcomers in Peel region.	100%			100%	
Q2 I understand which new or additional stakeholders can be involved in improving newcomer settlement and integration outcomes in a coordinated manner.	67%	33%		100%	
Q3 I understand current funding processes and reporting requirements for IRCC-funded organizations and services.	83%	17%		67%	33%
Q4 I understand many of the needs of newcomers related to settlement and inclusion in Peel region. (Examples of needs include housing, health, mental health, employment, and education.)	83%	17%		100%	
Q5 I understand many of the gaps that need to be addressed to facilitate the settlement and inclusion of newcomers in Peel region.	83%	17%		100%	
Q6 I understand where there is overlap in services and supports for newcomers in Peel region.	67%	33%		83%	17%
Q7 I understand community trends and changes happening in the broader community in Peel Region and the impact on newcomers. (Examples of community trends include shifts in local attitudes towards immigrants, changes to local school policies that impact newcomers, new spaces where immigrants gather, etc.)	83%	17%	17%	100%	

	June 2022 6/11			April 2023 6/11	
Q8 I understand economic trends and changes in Peel Region and the impact on newcomers. (Examples of economic trends include growing investments in affordable housing, labour market shifts, and changes to the local business landscape)	67%	17%	17%	100%	
Q9 I understand both the potential benefits and challenges of a coordinated regional model?				100%	

**Advisory Committee Focus Group Reflections:** The first of two annual reflective discussions were held with the Advisory Group in November 2022. At this time, the Committee felt that the process was working well and that they were building their understanding of what a regional approach to newcomer integration could mean, in terms of giving autonomy to regions and adapting funding and services to better meet regional needs while alleviating the reporting obligations of local organizations. They also indicated that the composition of the Committee itself was inclusive in so far as it involved community partners, non-IRCC organizations and newcomers, and the feedback of each Committee member was accepted and considered by the Committee as a whole.

The Committee also recognized that it was important to consider the meaning of terms like inclusion and integration, especially in the context of Indigenous colonization and the project's limited engagement with Indigenous communities. For instance, the Committee noted that Indigenous communities should be considered as funding hosts. Such comments from committee members reflected critically on the project's implementation of its stated principles regarding Truth and Reconciliation.

A second and final reflective discussion with the Advisory Group on November 17, 2023, shed more light on the role of these principles in the execution of this project. In particular, they spoke to the principle of locality, noting that the project had generated a better view of what is happening in each community in Peel than decision making authorities within IRCC can typically access.



Committee members also spoke to the principles of reflective and critical thinking when they acknowledged that the project allows participants to see what the sector is doing well now, what the community of practice looks like and what could be improved. This was recognized as a benefit to the community to have gained a snapshot of Peel region newcomer settlement 2022-2024.

The project also demonstrated an innovative and forward-looking approach (stated principles) by generating the principles themselves, which represent the best practices community members want the IRCC to uphold in making their decision about the regional model. Committee members see being led by these principles as a way of practicing Reconciliation and as a way of taking a more hopeful approach to settlement planning.

As one member stated, *“It’s good to be in a space where we can imagine things. This is totally different than what settlement was designed to do in Canada historically, so it should change what settlement means going forward.”*

Committee members also recognized much effort was invested in developing these principles through community forums.

On a similar note, members spoke to the value of feasibility and transparency (stated principles) in successfully transitioning to a new model, emphasizing that all related organizations will have to be clearly and consistently informed of how such a transition would be achieved without compromising their existing operations.

Transparency, as it related to the comprehensive and diverse inclusion of different stakeholders and perspectives, was of paramount importance to the Committee members who felt that *“all the different stakeholders have had input and helped to visualize what this [the new model] should look like.”*

The inclusion of IRCC and non-IRCC funded organizations, along with francophone, Indigenous and newcomers’ perspectives, led one Committee member to assert that *“we can have confidence that we can deal with any challenges that arise because we are being inclusive.”*

Nevertheless, the Committee noted that they would continue in future to look for any stakeholders who had “fallen out on the journey”, and ensure their opinions are also accounted for in any future transition process.

## Appendix A: Timeline and Objectives of Advisory Committee Meetings

Number	Date	Objectives of Meeting
AC 1	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing project team and AC members to each other</li> <li>Giving an overview of the project purpose, process, and guiding principles</li> <li>Discussing the first steps (review of existing models, demographic data analysis, and sector surveys) and getting feedback on the process/ data collection tools/research design</li> <li>Explaining the collaborative process with stakeholders, including the role of the AC as guiders</li> </ul>
AC 2	April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing an overview of the models</li> <li>Discussing focus groups objectives and sampling</li> <li>Presenting feedback about baseline survey</li> <li>Presenting the IRCC Performance Measurement Framework for project</li> <li>Presenting infographics on international students and government assisted refugees</li> </ul>
AC 3	June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenting a model case study of (Regional response for Ukrainian displaced persons)</li> <li>Presenting two model elements: 1) formation and investment pathways, and 2) mission and mandate</li> <li>Presenting survey results (IRCC-funded agencies in Peel) in relation to select model components.</li> <li>Getting feedback on the focus group plan</li> <li>Presenting the baseline results of advisory committee project evaluation</li> </ul>
AC 4	August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussing regional trends in settlement and newcomer experiences</li> <li>Reflecting on current model elements</li> <li>Presenting one model element: governance structure</li> <li>Presenting other models</li> <li>Providing an overview of focus group and broader sector survey protocols</li> <li>Validating the community forum agenda for Sept 2022</li> <li>Conducting a reflective process evaluation of the project</li> <li>Presenting a summary of the first two community forum feedback about project process</li> </ul>
AC 5	November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussing census data</li> <li>Updating on focus groups</li> <li>Debriefing about community forum 2</li> <li>Presenting two model elements: 1) funding allocation, and 2) information and referrals</li> <li>Planning conversations with potential hosts for regional accountability model for settlement</li> <li>Discussing baseline results of advisory committee project evaluation</li> </ul>
AC 6	March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving project updates, including focus groups and services inclusive of newcomer survey.</li> <li>Discussing host criteria using policy, planning, implementation roles matrix, and planning upcoming host meetings</li> <li>Discussing the model development approach</li> </ul>

Number	Date	Objectives of Meeting
AC 7	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing how focus group findings inform model elements.</li> <li>• Debriefing on host conversations with MLSITD, Region of Peel and United Way Greater Toronto</li> <li>• Exploring visual representations of model elements for participatory workshop in June 2023.</li> <li>• Planning participatory workshop structure.</li> </ul>
AC 8	September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing findings from June participatory workshop</li> <li>• Reviewing the agenda for community forum 3 in Sept 2023</li> <li>• Discussing possible roles of Advisory Committee in facilitation at the community forum</li> <li>• Introducing the draft model</li> <li>• Discussing different host entities and structures</li> <li>• Getting feedback on the project report outline</li> </ul>
AC 9	November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating on report progress and getting feedback</li> <li>• Updating on community forum 3</li> <li>• Reviewing model summary</li> <li>• Discussing regional transition</li> <li>• Presenting project process evaluation summaries</li> <li>• Conducting final reflective evaluation with AC</li> <li>• Discussing final community forum in 2024</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Summary of community information forums

The first forum was held at the beginning of the project in January 2022 to share the project concept with interested stakeholders. About 40 people registered for this forum. There were multiple objectives for this forum. First, it aimed to present information about the project and explain the process. Second, it was an opportunity to promote the baseline survey to capture the funding and reporting information from IRCC funded settlement organizations in the Peel region. Third, CCBR facilitated a conversation around community expectations and feedback around the project, its outcomes (which included the guiding principles, funding governance, data reporting, host and evaluation), and advisory committee membership. A survey was circulated in the end for participants to capture their feedback on the forum and assess their expectations around project process as part of the broader evaluation that was embedded into the project process. After the forum, the Advisory Committee described above was formed.

The second community forum was held in September 2022. A total of 69 people registered in the forum. In addition to giving a project overview, the Advisory Committee members were introduced at this forum. Further, a discussion about the system issues Peel is facing was held. This included immigration data, trends and other settlement matters. Moreover, a highlight of the baseline survey results of IRCC-funded organizations was presented. The biggest part of this forum was an exploration of model elements discovered during the literature review. Thus, the project team divided the participants into breakout rooms to discuss what structural shifts could lead to better outcomes for newcomers, especially the most marginalized, framing the conversation around the elements. Finally, the team presented the next steps of the project, including the focus groups, using the forum as an opportunity for participant recruitment.

### **Participatory Workshop:**

In June 2023, the RAMS project hosted its third community forum, an in-person participatory workshop with 69 community partners. The workshop was a half day event hosted at Canadian Coptic Centre (a venue provided by an advisory committee member), to explore the geographic scope of the project and apply potential models to scenarios that have arisen in Peel. The goal was to explore with stakeholders how the model could address real challenges that they have faced in the region. Participants gathered around tables to create presentations based on their discussions of the strengths and missing elements of the model, as well as its overall feasibility. The dissolution of Peel had still been legislated at this time and so the bearing this change might have on the project was also discussed. This event was a critical buy-in point for the community as it gave stakeholders the opportunity to advocate for issues they thought were most important for the regional model to address in a public forum.

The fourth community forum took place in September 2023. The participants numbered 69. In this forum, the project team presented a project overview and recap of the June 2023 participatory workshop. Additionally, the team presented the draft model and the participants were broken into groups to discuss each level of three levels of accountability within it. There was also a discussion of different host entities and structures and which host would be the best fit for the regional model. At the end of these group discussions, a debrief was held to determine common elements for a more detailed draft model for the team to make adjustments to it in the final phase of model development.

The fifth and final community forum was held remotely in March 2024. During this forum, 52 Community Partners came together to explore steps towards transitioning to a regional model should one be implemented, to gauge the appetite for piloting a regional model, if IRCC chooses to implement one, and to vote on the potential model host. Overall community members seemed to gravitate towards the status quo, with insights given such as:

- Some agencies serve broader populations that span beyond Peel region, and so the regional geographic boundary is not helpful (eg. Canadian Hearing Society).
- IRCC already has a goal to support smaller more emergent settlement agencies, and so this would not necessarily be a value added by regionalizing settlement.
- Peel region has both rural and urban contexts, and so the argument that the model will address the distinct context in Peel does not apply as clearly as it would if Peel were solely rural, remote or urban.
- Agencies already have established relationships with their IRCC project officers, who understand the local context sufficiently and have longstanding institutional knowledge.
- It is unclear in what ways regionalizing funding and governance of settlement dollars will better serve the most marginalized.

## Appendix C: Literature Review

The literature review explored existing funding and governance models implemented at various levels of government, within community agencies, foundations and independent collaboratives, both domestically and abroad. The review helped the project team to create a high-level typology of models that made the research more accessible for our Advisory Committee and broader settlement stakeholders.

### Search Strategy

Our search for and analysis of models was guided by the following questions:

1. How are community-based and/or regional approaches to system planning and service delivery structured, governed and funded?
  - What is working well and what is not?
  - What are the implications/outcomes associated with these approaches?
2. To what extent and how are diverse stakeholders participating/engaging in these models?
3. How is client data collected and managed? What's working, what's not?
4. How are these models being evaluated and monitored?
5. How are communities and services transforming under these models?

To start, we conducted a preliminary scoping of the literature through Google with an eye to developing a robust list of search terms and to identify potential databases. An initial list of search terms was entered into the Canadian Public Documents and Collections database on Scholar's portal. The goal of this initial search was to validate the search terms, identify new terms, identify index terms and assess the relevance of search results. After search terms were refined, we extended our search to include the following databases:

- Google, Google Scholar
- JSTOR
- Canadian Public Documents Collection (Scholars Portal)
- Harvard Kennedy School Think Tank
- Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstract
- Social Service Abstracts

A final list of search terms can be seen in Tables 1 and 2 below. The search terms noted in Table 1 were used to collect models related to community-based and/or regional approaches to service delivery, system planning and funding. Search terms in Table 1 were then combined with terms in Table 2 to gather assessments, evaluations and critiques of community-based and/or regional models.

*Table 4: Search Terms Used to Collect Models*

OR		OR
Community-based, community-led, collaborative, participatory, community-engaged, integrated community*, community-level, hybrid, government-community, community-government, network, network-based, city-region, connected (connected care)	AND	Service delivery, service planning, systems planning, social care, health care, settlement
		Funding, budgeting, budget planning, grant, granting systems, funding allocation, funding allocation methodology, social finance (ecosystems), micro finance
		Governance, decision making
		Research governance, data-sharing system*, open data system*
Region, regionalization, hybrid (hybrid contracts), decentral*, place-based, city-region, decentralization, hybrid contracts, meta-governance		Models, integrated models, approaches, frameworks

*Table 5: Search Terms Used to Collect Assessments & Evaluations of Models*

	OR
AND	Evaluation (eval*), tracking, monitoring (monitor*), study, review, assessment (assess*), reporting, critical, critique, analysis

## Findings

After duplicates were removed, this search produced 310 documents. Two hundred and eight (208) documents were excluded through an initial assessment of their relevance. These documents fell outside of the scope of the review and/or did not address our review questions (noted above). Of the remaining 102 documents, 54 were discussion articles that allowed us to locate this review in existing definitions of and policy debates about community-based, regional approaches to system planning and funding.

The search produced 57 descriptions of specific regional models; 16 of those models were excluded because the context of the model did not align with the overall purpose of the project. For example, one model outlined a community-based, rural approach to agricultural planning in South America during the 1990s.

The final set of models included in the review represented regional and/or community-based approaches to sector planning and funding in the following sectors:

- Healthcare
- Elder care
- Early Childhood Development/ Child Welfare
- Urban or Place-based Planning
- Resource Management (Land Use)
- Immigration

Within the policy literature, regional approaches to systems planning, accountability and funding were found to be more efficient, equity-based and collaborative. Further, they allow for enhanced stakeholder participation in ways that contextualize decision-making in local realities. In contrast to the current model, a regional model is more horizontal in its decision-making.

In a regional model, IRCC enters into a funding agreement with the host. The host will be responsible to facilitate planning, set the priorities for settlement in the region and determine how funding is allocated in the region. This is done in collaboration and consultation with settlement organizations (both IRCC and non-IRCC funded), as well as other key stakeholders such as people with lived experience, community partners, Indigenous leaders, private sector and public sector (such as education, libraries, healthcare, transportation, etc.).

The model literature review identified 33 existing regional models, categorizing their governance structures into three categories: state governed, independent entities and branches of pre-existing organizations. Eight model elements were identified:

1. Formation and investment pathways
2. Mission and mandate
3. Accountability (governance) structure
4. Funding processes and allocation
5. Client access and referral
6. Information (data) management and data access
7. Research and evaluation
8. Stakeholder and community engagement

These elements were used in the recommended regional model's construction.



*Table 6: Overview of Common Elements in Regional Models*

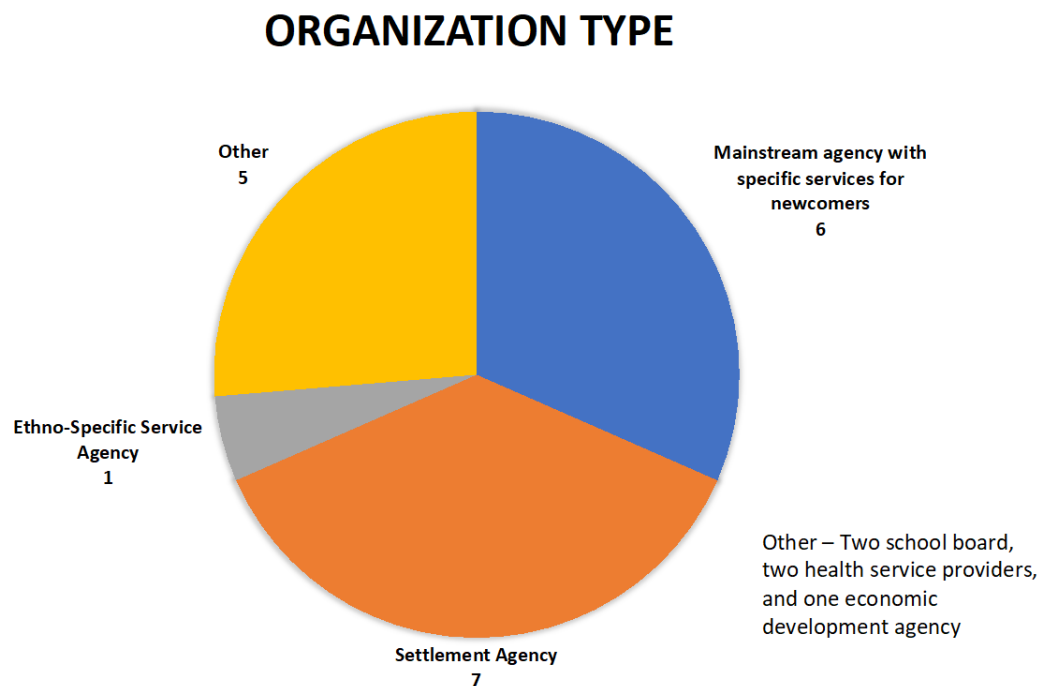
Model Element	Description
Formation & investment pathways	<p><b>Formation:</b> Findings show different outcomes for models that were formed under the directive of the state (top-down) versus models that were initiated by a network of community actors (bottom-up).</p> <p><b>Investment:</b> The range of ways regional and/or community-based models are funded (e.g., multiple, multi-level investment pathways, single core funder)</p>
Mission & mandate	This looks at the principles that guide these models. It also considers the range of roles the regional entity responsible for overseeing the model can play, including stewardship, advisory, evaluator, community educator, planner, etc.
Accountability (governance) structure	<p>This considers how and by whom decisions within the model are made and defines scope of authority and responsibility of roles within the model. This review highlighted three potential structures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional entity as a standalone organization</li> <li>2. Regional entity as a branch of an existing organization</li> <li>3. Municipality as regional entity.</li> </ol>
Funding processes & allocation	Includes approaches to and process around how funding decisions are made (who gets funding and how much). Key approaches noted in the review include competition-based, quality-based, citizen centred and participatory. These approaches reflect different levels of transparency and community participation throughout the process.
Client access & referral	There are various pathways clients/community travel to obtain and navigate services in the region. Coordinated access is a key debate in the review. Many models include a centralized point of access or multiples point of access that follow predetermined standards of care and assessment protocols.
Information (data) management & data access	There are various approaches to record keeping, reporting, data collection and information management across regional models.
Research & evaluation	An exploration of how regional models are evaluated and by whom in relationship to their priorities and targets set through a regional planning process. This section of the also considers how research and data in the region is used and governed.
Stakeholder/community engagement	The review shows various approaches to and mechanism in place that facilitate stakeholder/community engagement. Approaches to engagement range from consultative to participatory.

## Appendix D: Baseline Survey

The baseline survey was designed to consolidate funding and reporting information from IRCC funded settlement agencies in Peel region. By contributing, each organization helped to identify key funders in the newcomer serving sector and map the funding ecosystem. The survey provided a fulsome picture of what departments, ministries and foundations fund services to support newcomers and how programs are monitored and evaluated (including software and monitoring platform preferences). Agencies were also able to identify which minority populations they served, such as refugee claimants, international students and francophone populations. Surveys were delivered in both French and English, and, in total, 18 of the 28 IRCC-funded agencies in Peel region completed the survey. One additional settlement agency completed the survey that was not IRCC-funded. As this agency is on the Advisory Committee, we chose to leave its data in the findings, despite that it does not directly fit within the scope of the survey.

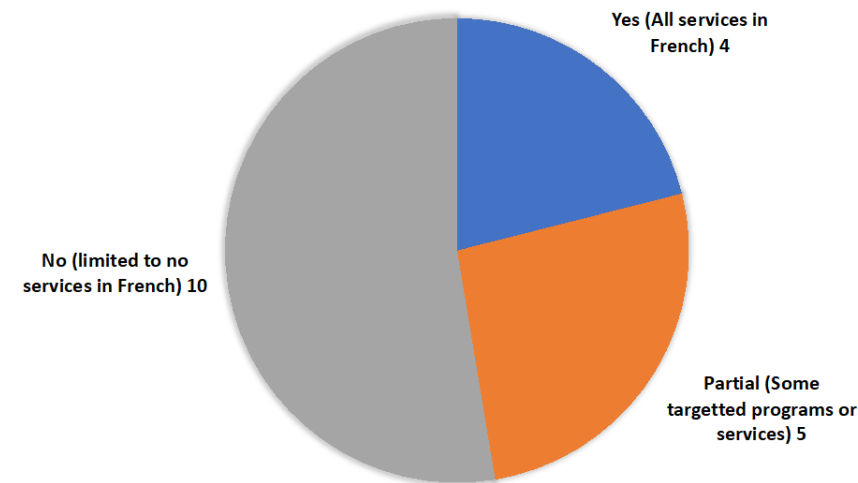
### Findings

The first question was to understand whether each IRCC-funded agency identified as a settlement agency primarily (n=7), or another type of agency such as a mainstream service provider (n=6) or ethno-specific agency (n=1). The other category was also used by (n=2) Schoolboards, (n=2) health service providers, and (n=1) economic development agency.



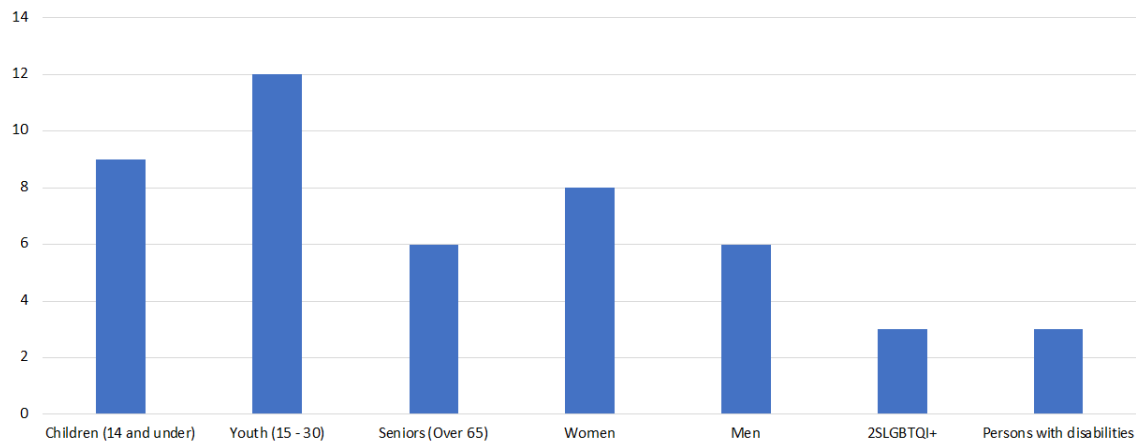
Both francophone and providers where services were primarily offered in English were asked to what extent they offered programs and services in French. The majority of agencies surveyed (n=10) did not offer francophone services, (n=5) offered some programs and services in French, and (n=4) francophone agencies offered all services in French.

### FRANCOPHONE SERVICES NUMBER OF AGENCIES



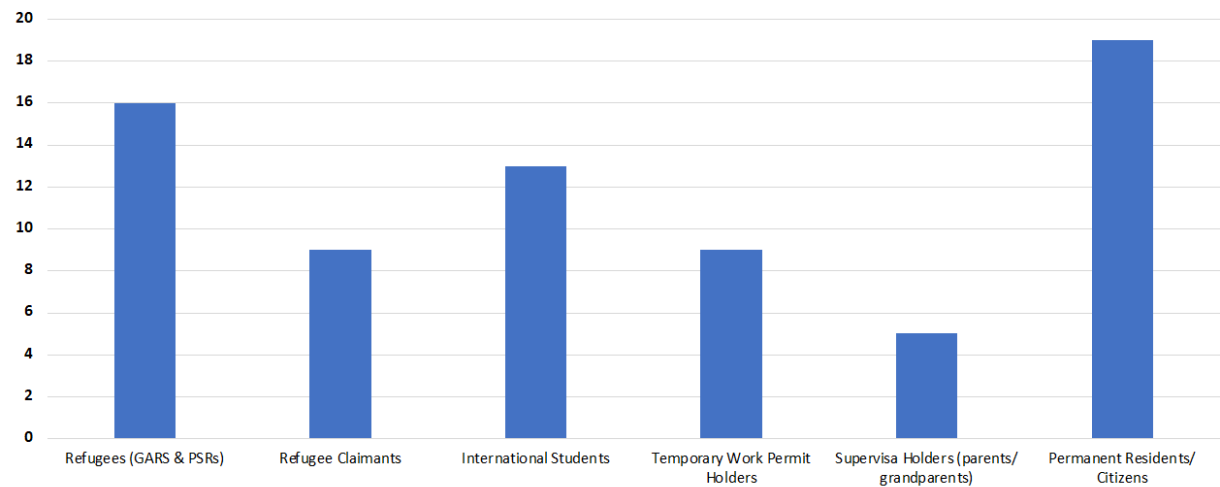
The survey identified of which other demographic groups of newcomers Peel-based agencies received targeted funding to serve. The top three groups identified were youth (n=12), children (n=9) and women (n= 8). Fewer agencies received targeted funding to serve LGBTQ+ newcomers (n=3) and newcomers with disabilities (n=3).

### Number of Agencies that recieve targeted funding for specific populations groups



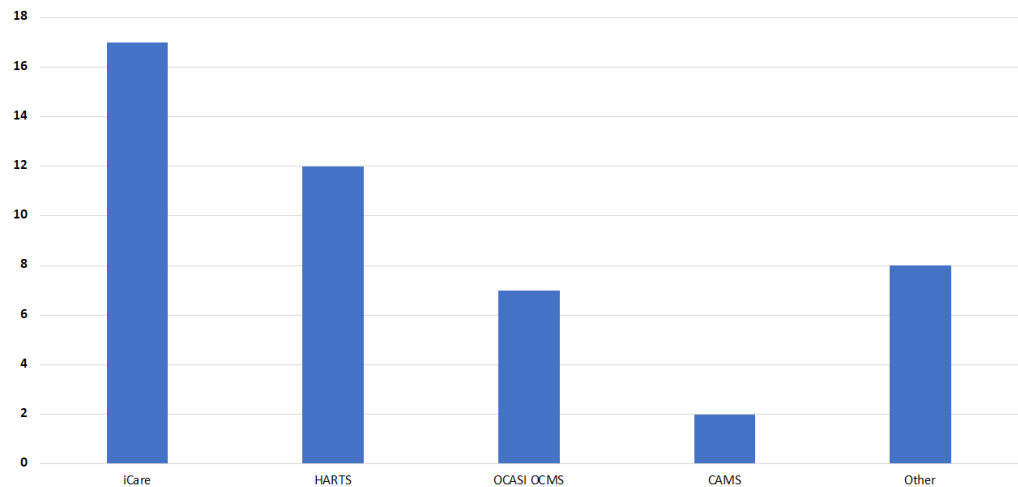
Agencies also offered services for specific categories of immigrants, some of which are funded broadly through IRCC programs, and some that are not. As features of these different groups and demand for services differ significantly, the survey identify which immigration pathways agencies had services and programming for.

### Agencies that offer services for specific immigration pathways



The next section of the survey was on data collection methods. We learned that eight of the 18 IRCC-funded agencies indicated that in addition to iCare, they used an internally developed database. Some were simple spreadsheets to track program attendance, some were used to track race-based data and others were more sophisticated CRMs used to track client intake and screening. The following graph shows how many agencies used each type of database.

### Databases used to track settlement service-use



To understand the broad funding landscape for settlement agencies in Peel region, the following section of the survey identified which additional funders are supporting IRCC-funded agencies and to what extent. An obvious limitation of the survey is that 10 IRCC-funded agencies in Peel did not complete it, and so the overall picture is incomplete. Additionally, many programs are funded partially by two of more different funders and it was administratively difficult for agencies to pull out exact amounts received by each funder for one calendar year.

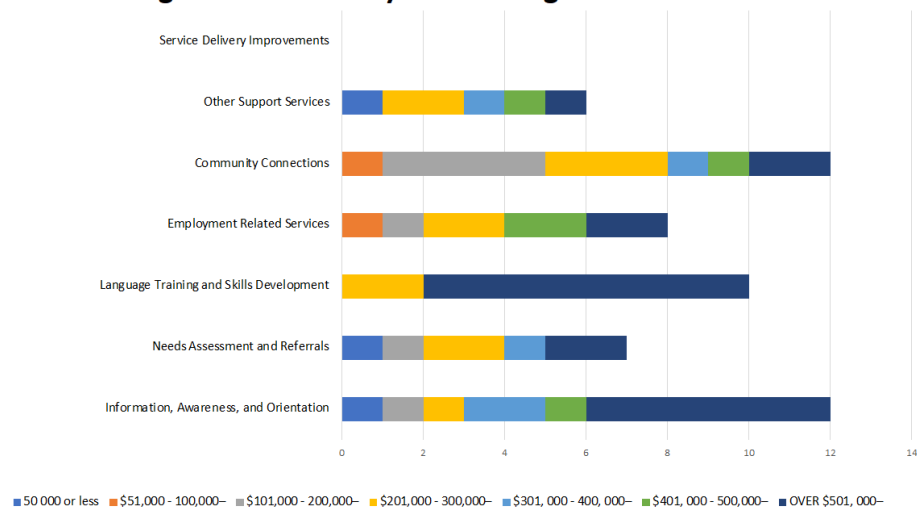
For this reason, the below graphs should be interpreted as estimates made by each agency, not exact dollar amounts. The data is useful because it gives decision makers who may ultimately develop a regional model a sense of which funders are the biggest players in the settlement sector in Peel, and can begin to answer the question: *Which funders need to be at the table when determining the future of settlement services in Peel?*

The graphs below shows both: 1) How many agencies are funded by a particular federal department (along the X axis), and 2) Roughly how much funding was allocated by that funder (indicated by the colours in the legend).

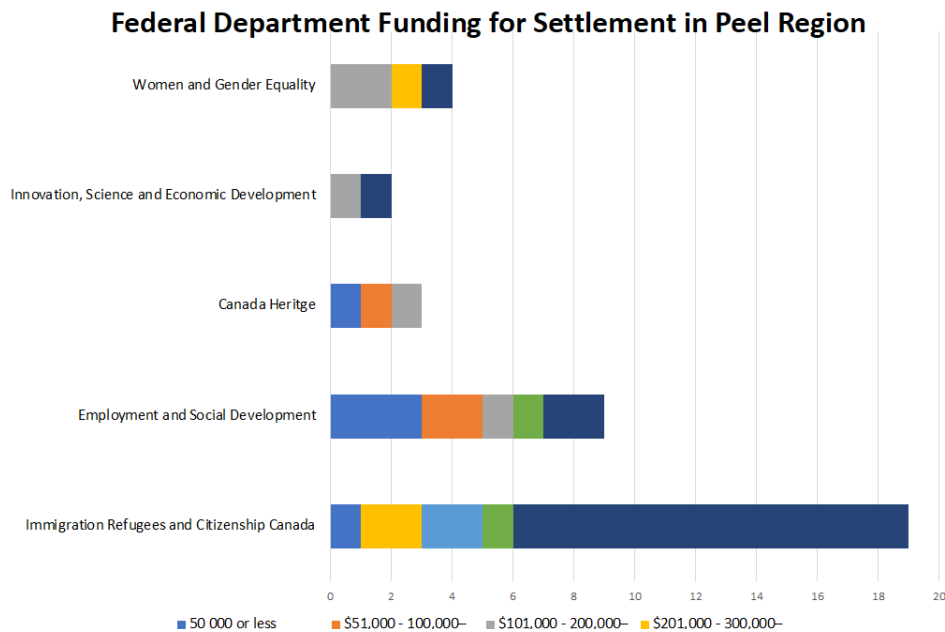
The colours correspond to the amount of funding received as follows:

- Blue: < \$50 000
- Orange: \$51 000 to \$100 000
- Grey: \$101 000 to \$200 000
- Yellow: \$201 000 to \$300 000
- Light Blue: \$301 000 to \$400 000
- Green: \$401 000 to \$500 000
- Navy Blue: > \$501 000

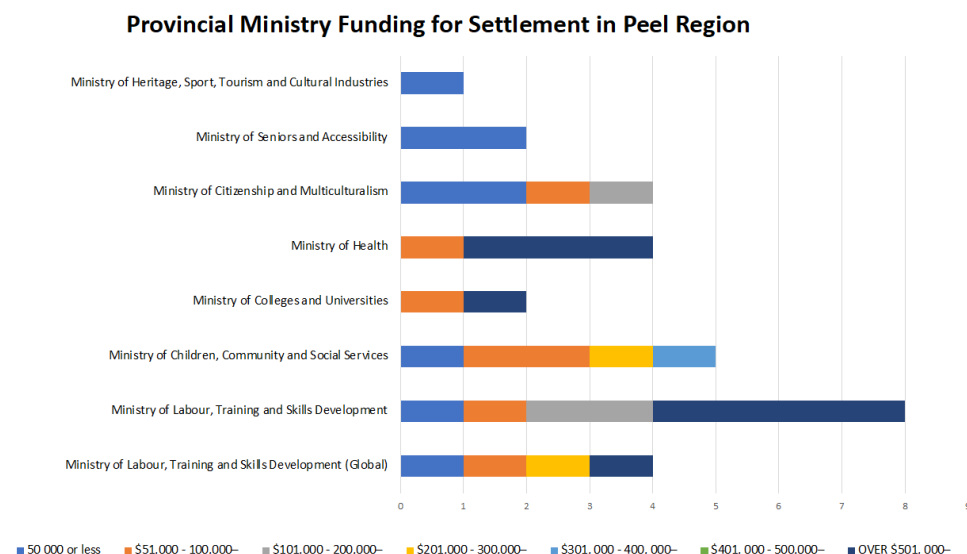
### Agencies Funded by IRCC through each stream



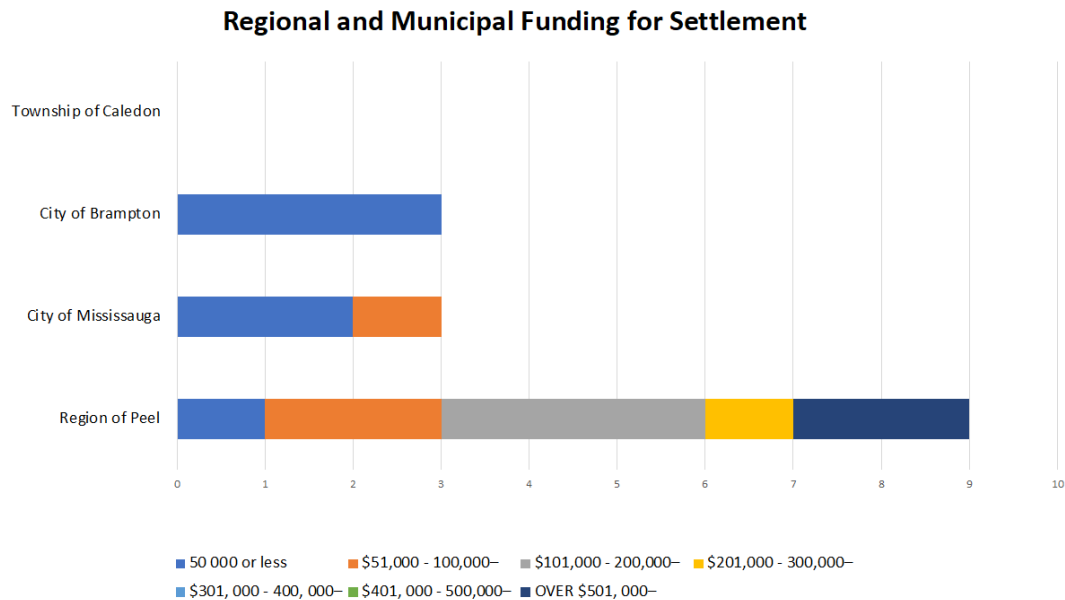
The following graph shows the various federal departments that fund settlement agencies in Peel. Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada obviously funds the most agencies and provides the most funding to these agencies, followed by Employment and Social Development Canada.



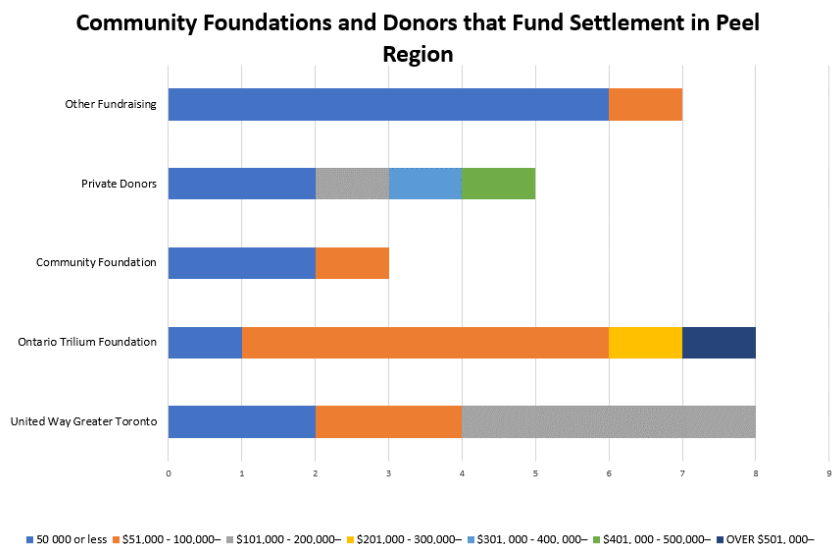
At the provincial level, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development provides the most funding to these 19 agencies, with the ministry of health also contributing over \$500,000 to four agencies. Ministry of Children Community and Social Services also contributes a significant amount to five agencies in Peel.



At the municipal level, Region of Peel contributes funds to nine agencies, exceeding many of the provincial and federal funders. Cities of Mississauga and Brampton each contribute some funds to three of the surveyed agencies and Caledon was not represented in this particular survey.



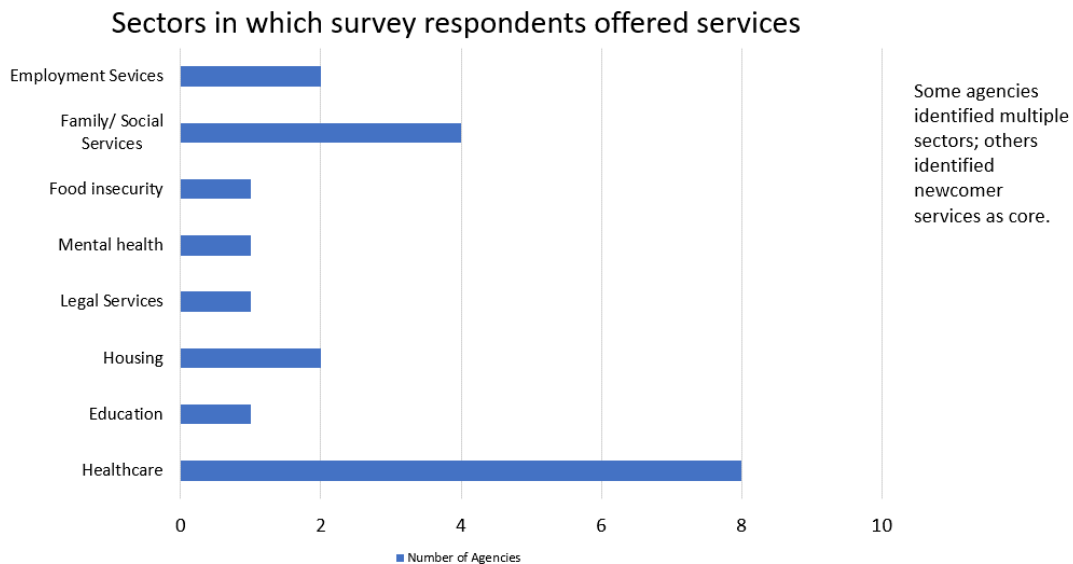
The final graph shows the contributions of Community Foundations and donors. At this level, Ontario Trillium and United Way Greater Toronto provide roughly the same amount of funding to settlement agencies in Peel, with each funder supporting eight of the surveyed agencies.



## Appendix E: Survey of Services Inclusive of Newcomers

### Findings

The graph below identifies which sectors each agency that completed the survey operates in. The largest proportion of participants came from the healthcare sector (n=8) and the second largest came from the family and social services sector (n=4). Eight unique sectors were represented in the findings. The project team deliberately approached agencies with diverse responsibilities to get a broad sense of how non-settlement stakeholders understand newcomers needs, and settlement experiences.



The following word cloud shows the titles of the various participants in the survey. Words that are larger signify that multiple participants had the same title. The goal of this question was to ensure that staff from a diversity of roles responded to the survey.

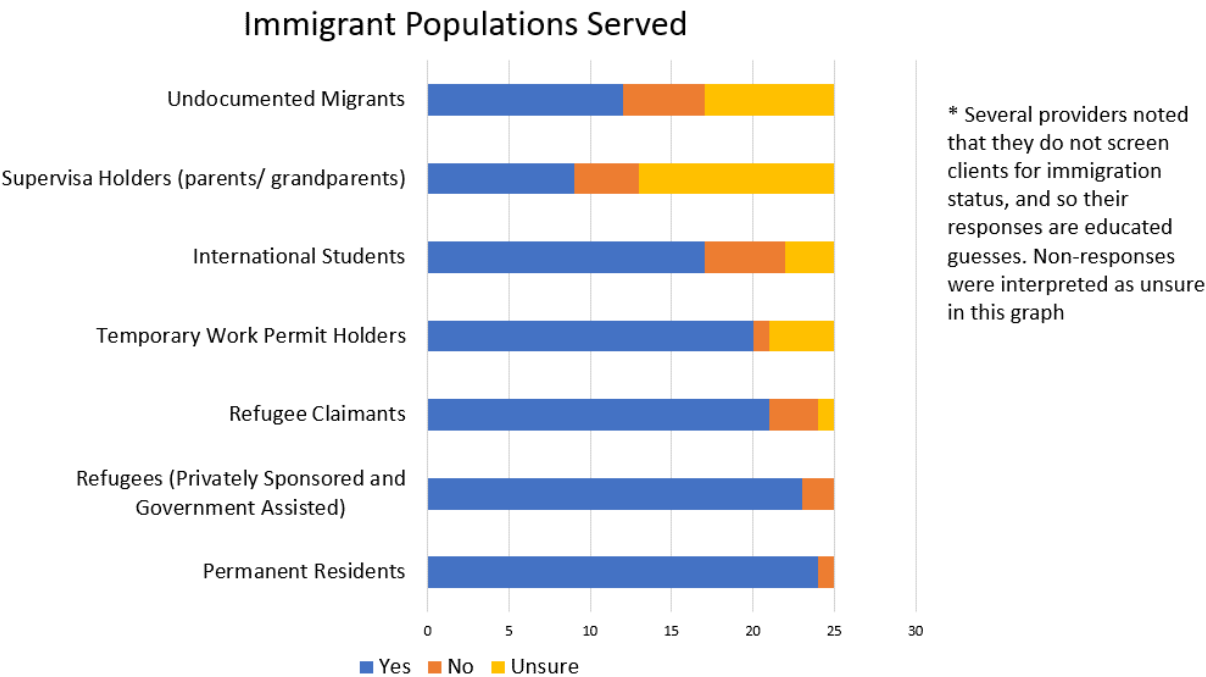
### Job Titles of Survey Respondents





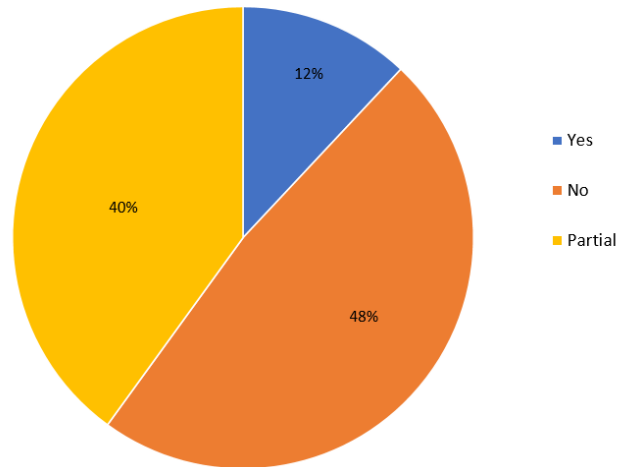
The 25 mainstream agencies surveyed indicated whether they served immigrants from different immigration pathways with varied degrees of certainty. While most participants were clear that they served permanent residents and convention refugee, these mainstream agencies were much less clear whether they served super visa holders, undocumented migrants and temporary foreign workers. Only nine of the 25 agencies were clear that they served super visa holders (the most underserved population group identified in the survey), as opposed to 24 that were certain they served permanent residents (the most clearly served population in the survey).

These results are not entirely surprising as they roughly correspond with the percentage of immigrants arriving to Peel within each category (eg. there are many permanent residents entering Peel, and very few super visa holders). The ‘unsure’ responses are partially due to lack of deliberate reporting on these population groups. Mainstream agencies are overall less likely than settlement agencies to track what immigration pathway their clients arrived to Canada though.



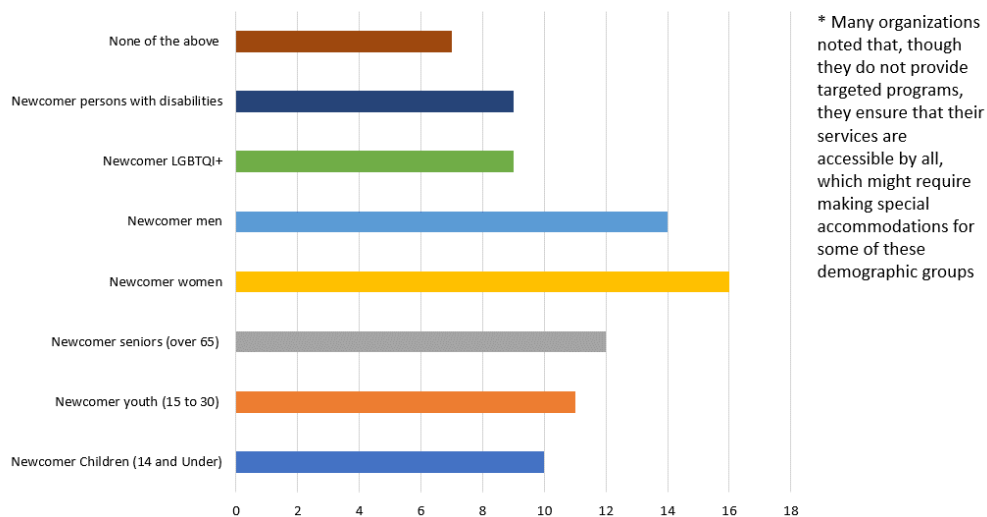
Only 12% of mainstream agencies surveyed offered comprehensive services in French, with 40% offering some of their programs and services in French. The question allowed for participants to indicate 'yes' if they hired external interpretation or had French speakers on staff internally, as long as the services were consistently offered in French. Forty-eight percent of all service providers surveyed indicated that their agencies did not offer services in French.

Services Offered to the Francophone Community



The most common newcomer populations that mainstream agencies delivered targeted programming for were newcomer women (n=16), followed by newcomer men (n=14). Seven of the agencies surveyed indicated that they did not provide targeted programming for any newcomer populations, but instead ensure that the services they offer are accessible to all, which may involve making special accommodations for some of the identified demographic groups.

Targeted Programs for Newcomers



When asked what community and economic trends impact newcomers the most, participants from mainstream agencies identified the challenges listed in the word cloud below. The challenge that was raised the most was difficulties with securing affordable housing for newcomers.



Stakeholders listed the following strategies when asked what might increase service uptake with newcomers.

- Additional translation services
- Free transportation to and from offices
- Stronger referral pathways from partners
- Dispel myths about deportation risks
- Creating a one-stop shop for all ROP services
- Communicate confidentiality policies clearly
- Social media posts about free services
- More community ambassadors with lived experience
- Occupation specific bridging programs and placements
- Culturally appropriate services for black newcomers
- Service awareness campaigns
- Culturally attuned targeted marketing

## Appendix F: Focus Groups

### Findings from focus groups and key informant interviews

Our analysis of the primary data is organized around the model elements that were identified in the literature review.

#### Formation Pathways

Participants indicated that if model development is initiated by IRCC, the transition needs to happen while communicating with stakeholders throughout the entire duration of the project, and having front-line workers and newcomers primarily guide the process considering they are directly impacted by system changes. This would enable them to contribute to the model development in ways that benefit them while highlighting the significant impacts it could cause.

#### Mission & Mandate

Participants expressed the need for the model to consider who the service users are. This point was reiterated by various stakeholders given that some groups (such as asylum seekers and international students) do not qualify for many services, making service provision and access challenging as the criteria is not always clear. They also emphasized that the boundaries between regional and local services are unclear, as some newcomers use Brampton specific services after moving from Mississauga. Understanding when and why that happens is important. Additionally, many small organizations rely on bigger organizations to serve their newcomer clients. A Service System Manager (SSM) model is needed in their case given capacity issues.

Data shows that the mission and mandate of the regional model should be newcomer-centered. It should focus on supporting the overall wellbeing of newcomers, building healthier communities and families and providing increased access to opportunities for better living. It should also support a sense of community pride and connection, which can be seen as key indicators of well-being for newcomer families.

We also heard that a community entity should have data collection and interpretation capacity and take on a regional data collection role. This entity should provide feedback to service providing agencies and work at “arm’s length”.

Other aspects that were proposed to be central to the mission and mandate of the model related to newcomer integration beyond legal citizenship. Considerations such as the political dimensions of settlement and integration, such as civic engagement, are critical. Examples of how this can be achieved include providing newcomers with resources and programs that inform them about policies that impact voting, levels of governance, their role and how they impact society at micro and macro levels.

Finally, the regional model must consider existing trends and issues, planning around existing context rather than an idea of what immigration experiences were at a previous point. These trends and issues include housing, employment, healthcare, etc., which form major concerns for newcomers and their ability to integrate. Given the model's mission and mandate on settlement, the social, political and economic contexts are relevant factors for efficient and effective service delivery.

### **Governance Structure**

Participants talked about the value of employing a human centered system design that follows the journey of newcomers, instead of enforcing a structure on newcomers. They emphasized the need for a more flexible model that reflects the complexities of the newcomer journey rather than a linear approach to settlement that is driven by quantitative measures. They also mentioned how an alignment between local integration and federal planning is essential. This means having all stakeholders involved, not just IRCC funded ones, since many of those not directly involved with IRCC provide significant support services to newcomers within each community.

Currently, there are missing links that can be connected within the new system for better coordination to happen, and to be able to move forward smoothly and for newcomers to be supported in more concrete ways by engaging all stakeholders regardless of funding sources. Such engagement must be built into the very governance structure of the regional model to enable active engagement throughout every layer of the settlement sector. For instance, participants stressed that the new model could include services providers in identifying existing needs more intensively, to better allocate resources to serve all refugees on an ongoing basis, rather than focusing on waves. This process of engagement would be embedded into the governance structure through a community advisory board, making it participatory in essence. This would ensure that community consultations take place while having expertise on the planning table.

Further, some participants suggest engaging stakeholders outside of the settlement sector. This includes private providers of services and resources, such as job training, and significant stakeholders like public libraries, municipal governments, and actors from the telecommunication and transportation industries. Hence, structuring the model around engagement with multiple stakeholders is key to ensuring their involvement.

Finally, newcomers and those with lived experiences of settlement should be a part of the decision-making processes within the settlement system broadly, and be given priority as employees of the settlement system.

## Investment Pathways and Funding Allocation

Participants explained that diversifying funding sources and prolonging its duration and flexibility are helpful. Participants note how more aspirational funding is required, including multiyear funding and more permanency for service providers so that the funding model can allow the sector to do what it needs to do. The regional model must consider funding efficiency and equity while allocating fundings and resources to settlement agencies.

Participants noted how the current budgets are allocated annually or every few years. While sometimes there is flexibility, the current model does not allow for quick responsive decisions when new needs emerge. Hence, as the needs of newcomer populations change rapidly, government funding must be flexible enough to meet those needs. Long-term funding agreements are important for stability and sustainability. However, emergency funding is also critical to enable quick responses.

Another aspect of this element is the information about funding. Findings indicate the importance of communicating about funding and resources to newcomer agencies beyond those directly available by IRCC, considering those widely available by the private sector, city, regional government funding, etc. Emphasis on equitable funding rather than equal funding based on newcomer population needs in the region and organizational capacity is also mentioned as a critical consideration. Having a regional entity that is aware of and engaged with organizations of all types and sizes (like PNSG) is helpful for equitable funding allocation. As stated by one participant: *"We've been there only for two years' time. They tell us you don't have experience. So we don't get the funding. Younger organizations like us, those who are doing a lot of work in the community get overlooked because we are still too young."*

Thus, a regional model is more proximate to the work of younger organizations and knows the value it adds to the community, and understands the challenges they face, making funding allocation based on such factors, unlike a more competition-based model. Findings show that having a clear criterion to meet for organizations applying for more funding is helpful. Participants note that a clear and transparent criterion for expansion and growth is needed, especially for smaller organizations that serve large numbers of newcomers or when massive arrivals happen. Funding for expansion helps to ensure they can meet the needs of big numbers of clients and not worry about capacity issues and budget.

Further, investment in creative and innovative initiatives that enhance newcomer settlement and integration are important. Investing in newcomer initiatives that aim to help newcomer communities and those wanting to come can be beneficial and promotes newcomer initiatives and collaboration from a perspective of lived experience. The benefit of regional model would be that the Region of Peel can fund based on its unique challenges that newcomers might be experiencing. Finally, transparency about funding is important, such as how much funding each organization is getting.

## **Regional Entity**

The data gathered helped envision the characteristics that matter the most for the regional entity host. For instance, the leadership capacity of the host would include subject matter expertise, political trust, demonstrated operational stability, the ability to bring resources to the table, and the ability to influence and bring people together. These characteristics were considered when evaluating potential candidates for the host position.

For example, some of the advantages of having a community-based organization be a host include nimbleness, community trust and the ability to collect information. On the other hand, some of the disadvantages can include having limited access to resources and policies, as compared to an alternative host such as a regional government. Nevertheless, some organizations would be good candidates due to their flexibility and ability to experiment. There are advantages to each kind of organization that are important to consider. Consequently, some participants proposed a hybrid hosting arrangement, to balance responsiveness and reach, especially considering the geographic size of the region.

Other important factors for a host noted by participants included the experience of running programs, managing funds, staffing and capacity building. These were emphasized as critical especially with regards to the funding and accountability aspects of the regional model.

However, doubts were raised as to whether or not the model would add an additional layer between the funders and frontline organizations. Specifically, there were concerns about the addition of extra steps or the facilitation of better access to funding. Moreover, the findings suggest that the new regional model must be cost-effective, avoid duplication, encourage meaningful partnerships and have a clear representation of its structure, funding and execution.

## **Systems Planning**

The primary data suggest that the regional model should have a sustainable and agile system that accounts for other services and sectors (such as health, education and housing) while planning for settlement. The planning should also be transparent, impartial and centered around newcomer needs and should be relevant to the community. The systems coordination aspect of the regional model must also be flexible to meet the changing demands and trends that the settlement sector faces, rather than centered around a rigid funding model or quantitative measures that limit the flow of budget towards new needs. Such flexibility is needed to reflect the actual experiences and journeys of newcomers, which include unexpected developments.

Furthermore, the primary research suggest that organizations must support coordinated system planning with all regional service providers. This support and coordination is integral to serve newcomers effectively. While many organizations would be able to do so, some may not have the capacity to engage and/or collaborate. This makes the alleviation of financial and other capacity issues integral to enable organizations to collaborate, including in streamlining reporting for instance. As such, the regional model must consider the different ways in which organizations are able and unable to engage in coordinated systems planning, which hinge on multiple other factors like financial capacity, organizational size, staff availability, etc.

Another integral point that was raised by the participants is the importance of having the regional model account for secondary migration, within Canada. As trends have shown, many newcomers end up emigrating from Peel shortly after their arrival. This has implications for planning, such as identifying why this secondary migration happens and what the region can do to assist the newcomers who face challenges upon arrival. For example, identifying which entities support international students and temporary foreign workers can assist organizations in properly referring newcomers to the kinds of help they need. This can be combined with a common intake procedure at the regional level that can be used early during the settlement journey.

The data suggests that the settlement sector also needs better planning to scale up and down services when new waves of newcomers arrive. More importantly, to facilitate this planning process, data must be accessible at the grassroots level to all stakeholders in order to have better planning and coordination. This would also increase access to resources and promotion of a variety of programs, services, facilities and opportunities that are available in the region.

The findings also indicate that the current access of services takes a long time due to various factors like understaffing or high numbers of newcomers per service provider, making it less efficient and slow to deliver services. Participants stressed the need to shorten wait times and referrals, while increasing the locations of services within newcomer populated areas.

Additionally, there are existing language barriers within service provision, mainly caused by a shortage of translators and inaccessibility to existing ones, and a lack of staff that speak multiple languages. This not only creates barriers to accessing services, but also hinders service delivery in a timely manner. Moreover, participants noted how key documents must be provided in all languages in order to facilitate information access for newcomers. This is critical to ensure planned services are accessible and coordination is smooth as information access is fundamental to this process and language is critical for it.



In addition to translated documents, settlement agencies must have programs tailored to families since many, if not most, newcomers are families. Considering the family unit is an important part of planning.

Finally, the data shows that planning for the pre-arrival phase is critical. For example, having a pre-arrival website or programs to start the process and conversations about re-settlement helps to alleviate a lot of stress and navigation challenges that occur upon arrival. This can be achieved through a centralized point of access with language interpretation to connect newcomers to the various resources and agencies that can help them ahead of arrival. A combination of online, hybrid, and phone service formats could be used.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The findings indicate that the monitoring and evaluation element of the regional model must include consistent data collection and streamlining of information. This is especially critical during the transition phase from the existing model towards the regional model. There are suggestions that there must be an independent body for complaints and quality assurance, one that is external to the host. Other ways to ensure accountability is to learn from the SSM model and other best practices for oversight and monitoring. Currently, databases like HARTS and OCMS are effective for language and provincial reporting.

Moreover, IRCC-funded agencies use various internal databases for program attendance, client intake, and screening in addition to the IRCC reporting requirements. This suggests there is potential for the regional model to understand better what newcomer experiences and service provision look like, to inform planning and other settlement programming. However, newcomer voices and experiences must be captured in the reporting and data collected by both service providing agencies and IRCC, which is currently a big gap in the existing data. Frequent data collections tools like surveys for user feedback, online forums for complaints and suggestions, and qualitative interviews and focus groups, can be helpful to fill this gap and ensure proper evaluation that centers newcomers' perspectives.

### **Engagement Strategies**

Regarding the engagement strategies element of the regional model, the data shows that engaging informal groups such as faith-based organizations, private sponsors of refugees, Indigenous groups, consultative/participatory employers, etc., is critical to ensuring proper collaboration among stakeholders in the Peel region. This will facilitate building trust with broader sector partners as well, and foster environments for newcomers to socialize, build connections and exchange ideas that are relevant to the settlement sector.

Further, the regional model can create channels for active promotion of services, such as schools and libraries. It can also provide regular professional development and networking opportunities for capacity building, especially for organizational staff.

Suggestions for a central hub for settlement information and services were given to not only enable engagement but also improve accessibility for newcomers and partners to get connected. Finally, participants noted that while a collaboration at the executive level is helpful, it does not always translate to the frontlines level of engagement. Given the size of the region, information does not always travel efficiently to the staff and therefore, practices and referrals to new programs do not always get updated in a timely manner. This requires a community level collaboration and engagement that includes frontline staff and newcomers.

## Appendix G: Host Conversations

**The conversation about the new model included questions such as:**

- What might a regional model of newcomer support in Peel region look like?
- How would you define stakeholders in a regional model? Who should be involved?
- As a potential funding host, how would your organization facilitate structural change in the region?
- What kind of approach would you take? What principles would guide your leadership?
- How do you define the scope of responsibilities of a funding host?
- How would you facilitate the allocation of funding?
- What would reporting look like? How should information be managed?
- How would the model be evaluated? How would your leadership be evaluated? By whom?
- What would the transition from the current model to a regional model look like?
- How would you facilitate a smooth transition?
- How would you ensure that institutional/community memory is carried over from one model to the next?
- How do you imagine the regional approach you described today will affect stakeholders in Peel?
- What might the benefits for stakeholders be? What kind of challenges do you foresee?

**Summaries of each entity's responses are described in depth below:**

### Regional Entity

Region of Peel currently has responsibility to coordinate services for the City of Brampton, the Township of Caledon, and the City of Mississauga. This government was created in 1974 and manages health services, human services and public works. During an informal interview conducted in the environmental scan phase of the project, representatives from the Peel Region Human Services Department estimated that approximately 7 percent of Peel region's budget goes to support settlement services for newcomers in Peel Region. These funds cover the core operating costs of settlement agencies, provide some targeted support for asylum seekers, and collaborate with police services to support victims of human trafficking (many of whom are international students or refugees).

Region of Peel Human Services Managers made recommendations about what should change or remain the same about the current settlement accountability model:

- The Service System management model is still evolving in Canada. The characteristics that qualify entities to fulfill this role effectively are transparency, impartiality (i.e. not delivering services directly), and good relationships with stakeholders in the community.

- Digital transformation in settlement is happening – the new model needs to adapt to a hybrid system so that services can be offered in whichever way is most useful for newcomers. Change management is a part of implementing this transition to digital service delivery smoothly, and so any host identified should be experienced in overseeing transitions at this scale.
- The new model should emphasize bottom-up system planning rather than reporting and fund allocation – a core indicator of success is that the same level of service is accessible to residents across the region, even if that means it may cost more to provide the service in one jurisdiction than another. Consider how services are distributed across geographical boundaries because people move, and services need to be responsive.
- The current model is reactive and the community and municipal governments are saddled with the responsibility of filling gaps in services that are not funded or underfunded. A regional model should establish pre-emptive processes to support mass arrivals and increasing service demand due to immigration levels.
- Methods should be developed to track migration in and out of municipalities – the Peel Data Centre currently disaggregates census data to better understand regional migration trends and demographic data, but more consistent mechanisms of tracking migration flows could be developed if the regional entity had access to local ICare and ILF data and the capacity to analyze it.
- The host should have existing relationships and capacity to identify alternative funders for the sector beyond IRCC.
- The LIP has a good vantage point to convene stakeholders and support regional planning but does not have the administrative capacity to implement a sector-wide accountability system, nor the existing infrastructure to review agency level reports, monitor project budgets, and allocate funds. A co-hosting model could be considered because each entity has strengths and weaknesses.
- Vertical alignment between governments is essential as newcomer settlement at the local level (eg. ability to secure employment and housing) has bearing on federal level planning and immigration target setting. The entity should have established relationships with each level of government. Trust between the regional host and funders is important so that advocacy concerns will be presented in effective ways.
- Contact between the funder and service providers should be reduced to decrease the administrative burden on federal government project administrators. Funding landscape should map clearly so that the host understands which funders are funding each agency at a given time.
- Consider capacity to facilitate cross sector collaboration, and ability to work with both Peel residents and newcomers to ensure that the settlement experience is smooth.
- Implement a circular (as opposed to linear, target driven) approach that is more human centered, sustainable and agile.

Region of Peel Human Services Managers also identified some core areas where it might be advantageous to have a regional host, including:

- Capacity to address emergent immigration related issues more efficiently than federal government because there are administrative funding lags that the region could circumvent. IRCC is in a logical position to set high level policies but is not as familiar with each municipality. Peel region can streamline funding allocation processes and be more effective as a locally driven system manager.
- Region of Peel already has experience supporting asylum seekers and super visa holders – populations that receive limited federal funding given their lack of permanent status.
- Stakeholders have identified securing affordable housing as the biggest challenge that newcomers face. Region of Peel Human Services oversees ongoing housing development, and housing and shelter projects including administering housing subsidies, maintaining the centralized waitlist for housing, and directly managing 70 affordable housing sites in Peel, that provide homes to over 7,100 households.
- Region of Peel is currently the service systems manager for children's services and so can support newcomer families with language related needs who access childcare services.
- Region of Peel collaboratively founded PNSG alongside community stakeholders and has been on the steering committee/ central planning table since its inception.
- Equity is a foundational value underlying all operations at Region of Peel and is also a core value held by settlement stakeholders. Region of Peel is committed to growing its diversity, equity and inclusion strategy and embedding equity considerations into daily operations.

### United Way Greater Toronto

United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) is the largest philanthropic organization administering funding in Peel region, has been in operation since 1951 and has been PNSG's organizational home since the LIP's inception.

UWGT currently administers funding for 83 anchor agencies, 5-10 of them settlement agencies. During the environmental scan phase of the project, interviews were conducted with senior managers at UWGT.

They identified the following **prominent issues facing the settlement sector**:

- Newcomers are facing barriers trying to figure out which door to access services through. Developing a service navigation strategy is a sector-wide priority that should be a function of the model. It is unlikely that there will ever be one single entry point, but a more porous system will ensure that access is equitable and referrals are seamless. For newcomers, this should include deepening knowledge of the different immigration pathways, particularly for newcomers fleeing war and persecution because there are multiple different system

entry points for these clients. Short-term and long-term services currently have different funders, but service access still needs to be seamless after the first year for those needing them.

- Developing digital adaptations for service provision is essential particularly mobile ones
- Cultural adaptation can be a significant challenge for newcomers. A common way to address this is to settle in familiar cultural and religious communities, but this may lead to isolation from the broader community. The role of informal networks fills gaps where the system fails. To improve cultural responsiveness the model host could better understand the diversity in Peel by deepening collaboration with culturally specific service providers.
- More aspirational funding is required, including multi-year funding and more permanency for service providers so that the funding model can allow the sector to do what it needs to do.
- A significant percentage (perhaps 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s) of newcomers do not access IRCC-funded settlement services. It's possible that these individuals do not require supports, but broadening access is something the model could consider
- The solution to service access barriers is not one that service providers can address alone, it's a systemic/policy related issue.

#### **Questions raised by United Way Greater Toronto:**

- Is the region the best geographic scale for the model to serve if we centre the newcomer? For instance, if a newcomer is living in Brampton, would the care what services were available in Mississauga?
- Could a passport model be an effective way of promoting service access? Passports could be used anywhere regardless of geographic boundaries.
- How is advocacy defined? Would the host be able to advocate to address the issues that they see on the ground?
- Is a hybrid model feasible? UWGT has the nimbleness and relationships with SPOs to collect useful data and integrate it into the granting process, but does not have access to resources and policy spaces that regional government does.
- What policies, practices and staffing would increase quality of services for end users?
- How would the operating model be structured and costed?
- Could the model ever be scoped at the provincial level?

#### **United Way's Recommendations for building the model:**

- Centre the community and the newcomer in the model, not the funders or the service providing organizations. People go where there is access regardless of geographic boundaries, so the system needs to account for movement.
- Follow the settlement pathway and think about the 'customer service experience', not the data or the money.

- Do not think of the model as a contained ecosystem – it should be more organic and responsive to newcomers needs.
- Identify pain points as newcomers move through their settlement journey, and then find efficient ways to address these pain points through the model as they arise.
- The host should have a system planning and convening capacity that spans different social service sectors so that programmatic silos do not form.
- The host should have the following core qualities:
  - Settlement expertise
  - Ability to recruit people with lived experience who are interested in taking a leadership role on the Community Advisory Board through existing networks
  - Political trust (with both government and service providing stakeholders)
  - Ability to develop resources for the sector
  - Staffing capacity to have representatives at required tables with the right level of influence
  - Demonstrated operational stability with capacity to manage coordinated planning and more granular level process of funding administration/ grants allocations and reporting
- United Way is the host for the reaching home model in York region. At the time this model was implemented, the department circulated an RFQ for the host role, and the municipalities did not want to step into the ‘service system manager position’ because the administrative budget was not enough to staff it adequately. Consider the size of the administrative budget, and the possibility that the host that is selected initially may change because the model could evolve/ scale up in the future. At this time a different host may be better suited to administrate it.
- United Way is a good candidate due to its flexibility, nimbleness and ability to experiment, but it is important to consider other players, particularly the regional government. A hybrid model may be effective in balancing responsiveness and reach.

### **Reaching Home Model**

Reaching home is an existing regional model that manages funding for homeless populations in the Greater Toronto Area. In this model, United Way’s role is to:

- Implement the Reaching Home Federal Strategy by developing a community plan that is local and specific to York Region
- Develop an evidence-base for the homelessness plan activities by conducting research
- Review funding applications from agencies and administers grants
- Create contracts for agencies that are funded
- Monitor ongoing programming by reviewing quarterly reports from funded agencies
- Submit reports to Infrastructure Canada collectively on behalf of agencies
- Deliver marketing campaigns to raise additional funds and promote awareness of housing and homelessness related issues

- Facilitate coordinated systems access across the region that is inclusive of all services connected to homelessness, not just shelters themselves
- Convene an active community board that approves funding calls for applications, along with sub committees that reviews funding

Key components of the community advisory board governing the Reaching Home Model in York are listed below:

- The board is made up of community members across various sectors, and is convened jointly by United Way and the Region
- There is no agency representation on the board because it would be a conflict of interest. Whenever there is a motion, board members should have autonomy to make decisions without needing to consult with their agencies
- The model is based in community consultation, and in York Region, community is scoped narrowly, essentially just board members are considered 'community,' though the board has requested broader community consultation in the past
- As the Community Entity, United Way has the authority to make the final decision about how funds will be allocated across the region; however there has never been an instance to date when United Way has needed to override a board decision
- A United Way staff person is a fixed-voting member of the board
- The board approves all calls for funding prior to their release
- There is a subcommittee of the board made up of members with a lived/living experience of homelessness. A local agency has been contracted to support these members with any mental health or related needs that might arise during their term of service
- The board approves community plans and community homelessness reports for Reaching Home
- The board develops terms of reference for its own role and other Community Advisory Board-related policies and procedure
- In other jurisdictions there has been a required percentage of the board that is Indigenous – for instance, it's 75% in Winnipeg

United Way partners with York Region on an 18-member committee (akin to executive council in the RAMS model) to deliver coordinated access to homelessness and affordable housing related services. As coordinated regional access to settlement services with a “no wrong door” approach is a goal identified by settlement stakeholders in Peel, this approach is an important one to consider.



## Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Trade and Skills Development became the provincial home for immigration-related projects in 2022 after the dissolution of Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) in 2018. A series of audits determined that the former MCI's mandate overlapped significantly with Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada's, and so, to avoid duplication, a transition plan was put in place. Though provincial government does fund settlement agencies to a degree, the ministry's primary focus is to develop Ontario's labour market.

This history is relevant for the project because whatever model is put in place will involve the province's collaboration, as no distinct system currently exists for provincially-funded settlement related social service management. In the wake of this dissolution, the province is clear that avoiding service duplication is a core cost saving strategy employed by the ministry, and that the regional model should also strive to avoid duplication and unnecessary levels of administration. Additionally, there may be lessons to learn from this recent ministry dissolution, as the Region of Peel faces its own dissolution in 2025.

Though the ministry is not under consideration as a potential host for the regional model, stakeholders indicated that it would be relevant to consider how their different funders would collaborate should the model be implemented. Various ministries of the provincial government are secondary funders for the majority of settlement agencies in Peel, and so an informal interview was conducted with representatives from MLITSD during the environmental scan phase of the project. They shared the following reflections:

### Reflections from MLITSD:

- Currently agencies that are funded by the province receive funds via a competitive call for proposals, or multi-year grants (typically 1 – 5 years). Funding to a central host or service system manager has not been a typical practice and has only been used if unanticipated needs have arisen. They encourage agency partnerships and co-application.
- A new funding coordination role might require MLITSD to remodel their funding system.
- A core immigrant related project managed by the ministry is a bridge training program for highly skilled immigrants that fast tracks them into in-demand occupations and sectors. This project can involve supportive mentoring or a placement for the newcomer to adapt to their new role. There is no federal equivalent funding source for this project – it is entirely provincially run.
- A significant immigration related challenge that needs to be addressed is that Peel region's population is large and growing, as are the other two neighbouring municipalities (Hamilton and Toronto). Newcomers face similar challenges and needs in each municipality (housing, jobs and skills, education, credential validation etc) and so services need to be harmonized between these geographic regions.

- The ministry strives to avoid duplication with IRCC-funded services and Employment Ontario Services, instead working to complement their projects.
- MLITSD's relationship with IRCC might change – currently MLITSD has contractual relationships with IRCC across the province. The ministry and IRCC work side by side on monitoring, consultation, and coordination of funding to ensure that both governments are approaching fund administration using similar strategies. If a regional model is created IRCC and MLITSD will need to align their approach to this new model as well. MLITSD would want to be very closely involved in overseeing the process should this model be implemented.
- The Ministry of Employment recently transitioned some of program administration to a more localized service system manager model – this worked because the Ministry of Employment was a smaller ministry that got overwhelmed by managing thousands of service providing agencies and had already been relying on bigger entities. The transition alleviated pressure on this ministry while simultaneously creating incentives for agencies to support difficult to place clients in accessing employment opportunities.
- IRCC would need to create a new closed call for proposals for the ministry to access funds to support the management of these regional models.

#### **Core questions raised by the Ministry:**

- Would we need to embed this new model in legislation?
- Will the new regional model restrict or boost innovation?
- How might the new model effect the monitoring that the ministry does?
- could the new model assist with streamlining reporting?
- What will be the advantage of implementing this model in place of the current one? It will involve upfront costs, collaboration and trust building with providers to transition both federal and provincial funding/ monitoring/ reporting to a new entity – will the benefits outweigh the costs?
- If the region, or another entity is identified as the SSM, what will the accountability mechanism be for that entity? (Eg: Province, Federal government, LIP etc.)
- Would there need to be staffing changes to manage the implementation of this new model and its management within the ministry?
- Whenever a structural or system change happens, stakeholders request more funding from the ministry to manage this transition. What cost saving mechanisms would be put in place to absorb these start-up costs?
- Executing a model of this scale is monitoring different sized agencies with different levels of experience, project scopes, and target populations. How will the entity conduct comprehensive and timely reporting given these factors?

## **Other Hosts that Were Considered:**

### **Municipalities as individual hosts – Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga**

The potential dissolution of Peel's regional government that was initiated in June 2023 led to conversations with the Advisory Committee and other settlement stakeholders about how the model might look seated within each city's government. There were discussions about the benefits of having a government body host the model, but also challenges raised around agencies that had offices in multiple cities needing to submit funding proposals to multiple different hosts. Ultimately these conversations were halted because, in December 2023, the provincial government notified us that the regional government would not dissolve.

### **District Social Services Boards**

In some regions, commonly rural and northern ones, district social services boards have formed to manage municipal services across multiple jurisdictions. DSSBs are made up of distinct government bodies (eg. municipalities and townships) with decision making power. The function of these boards is to fund and plan for services accessed by all community members (inclusive of newcomers) eg. housing, public health, childcare. There were discussions about a board like this forming to manage services during the time-period when the regional government was projected to dissolve. The regional scale of the work was desirable to stakeholders, but a core challenge flagged was that the processes used to make decisions on boards like these were slow and cumbersome, given the degree of consensus required by multiple parties before changes could be implemented. Ultimately these conversations were halted because the provincial government backtracked on its decision to dissolve regional government in December 2023.



CENTRE FOR  
COMMUNITY  
BASED RESEARCH