



2022 IRCC ACTION DAYS

Executive Council Report

Summary Findings, Recommendations and Workplan

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our special thanks to the core Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) Action Day Committee for its dedication to making this day a success.

The committee was comprised of:

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Jessica Kwik	Peel Newcomer Strategy Group
Cassandra Bangay	Peel Newcomer Strategy Group
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Richard Cloke	Halton Region
Vanja Hilson	Halton Region

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we live, work and gather, even virtually, is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississauga's 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.

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Context Setting

The settlement services sector in Canada has been faced with constant changes in the last few years. The pandemic has brought on the need to pivot to alternative delivery models, approaches, and solutions. This year has seen a more sustained return to in-person programming, alongside a continuing online and digital service delivery approach. As challenging as these changes have been, they have led to innovations within the sector and adaptive ways in which service providers have been able to support clients.

In 2021, Canada welcomed over 405,000¹ newcomers, the most in Canada's history in a single year. These targets are continuing to increase year by year, leading to an enhanced need to adapt and enhance the work that the sector is doing to meet the needs of the evolving landscape.

As shared by Christine Charbonneau, Director Settlement Network Ontario, with IRCC, IRCC has been actively working with provinces, territories and settlement organizations across the country to expand services available to newcomers and immigrants, and acknowledges the need to better incorporate the history, perspectives and contributions of Indigenous peoples. This includes recognizing the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) not only for the supports and services provided to clients, but for agencies and service providers themselves.

“Settlement services have been called upon to respond to the diverse needs of migrants through high quality best practice services” – Christine Charbonneau, Director, Settlement Network Ontario, IRCC

The transition from planning to action came as a result of consistent emerging themes from the February 2022 IRCC Planning Days. This led to the IRCC 2022 Action Days, which took place November 3 and 4, 2022. These two days focused on (1) actioning digital and (2) staff recruitment and retention; the top priority areas identified by Executive Council members in an online survey conducted in June 2022.

This roundtable brought together a host of newcomer and settlement support agencies in the Peel, Halton and Northern regions. As an outcome of these discussions, key findings based on immigration trends and settlement experiences, as shared by agency representatives, were presented to the settlement partnership Executive Council. Recommendations included collaborative resource-sharing among settlement agencies, government agencies, and service delivery partners; standardized data collection tools to facilitate consistent service quality and information sharing; strengthening staff recruitment, culturally-relevant staff training,

¹[IRCC News Release, December 2021](#)

retention, and succession planning to ensure newcomers receive high-quality services from qualified staff; and innovations on digital access and post-pandemic service delivery to enable successful client outcomes.

Pre-Event Surveys

To ensure that the event participants got the most out of the 2022 IRCC Action Days, an online survey was developed in June 2022 to help gain a better understanding of the current landscape in terms of projects that are already underway across the settlement services sector, in addition to collecting information on the tools, resources and needs that currently exist across the network. A total of 13 organizations participated in the survey.

Participants were asked to prioritize the themes that consistently arose from the preceding three Planning Days. The responses show the top three identified themes as; leverage technology/digital access, staff supports and retention and cross-sector collaboration

Following survey questions asked participants if they were working on specific projects in these areas; IRCC service delivery improvement projects, other collaborative projects, current digital platforms being used, and digital maturity and access. Survey results and summary responses were shared at an earlier Executive Council meeting.

The results from this survey helped inform themes and topic prioritization for action for both the 2022 Action Days.

Identifying Priorities for Action

The top two themes identified in the June 2022 survey, Leveraging Technology/Digital Access and Staff Supports & Retention, formed the basis for the breakout discussions during the 2022 Action Days. The priorities and specific discussion questions were co-created with the Executive Council. The top three priority action areas identified for Actioning Digital were common intake and referral, online collaborative spaces for Executive Council members and staff, and developing pathways for data insights.

Day 1 – Actioning Digital

The focus for “**Common Intake and Referral**” was to identify steps towards more integrated common intake and referral (through tools such as Compass to Connect) to support the client/family journey, including considerations of the early stages where they may not be aware of services. The discussion would help to identify top areas to focus on, initial steps which need to be taken, identifying existing training and resources which could be leveraged.

For the **“Online collaborative spaces for Executive Council members and their staff”** group, the breakout discussion aimed to identify cases and tools required to enable increased sector collaboration and information sharing with the goal of supporting staff in their role in addition to delivering programs and services to clients. Areas of focus included who currently has tools that work well, and key learnings from use cases to implement for the future.

The focus for **“Developing pathways for data insights from across the sector”** was to discuss steps to ensure data insights from across the sector are surfaced for planning by leveraging tools such as iCare and OCMS. Discussion topics included the best way to approach the work, advocacy work required, the need to work collaboratively from the bottom up, any work in this area which has already been initiated and what can be leveraged.

Discussion Outcomes from Day 1

Common Intake and Referral

This group was able to pull on the experiences of multi-service organizations who were using different platforms, to identify the need for a system where clients could register in a unified system, with client data being accessible by other service partners without the need for multiple registrations or data entries. This could be through a unique identifier, such as Universal Identification Number (UIN).

The importance of distinguishing differences in intake processes on a local, regional provincial level were also highlighted, as well as the need to distinguish between self-intake versus client intake done by staff.

Some recommendations brought forward included the need to hire a consultant to look across the sector and compare different common intake processes and practices currently in place and carry out a sector-wide data audit. The need to ensure relevant data collection practices was identified, as well as the importance of collecting data which is relevant to diverse providers. Client consent was also a topic of discussion, with participants highlighting its importance as well as the ability to withdraw consent.

In conclusion, the group discussed the need for a user-friendly, standardized, centralized data management system which also protects client privacy, through which client data can be onboarded, stored and later retrieved. OCMS, developed by OCASI with funding from IRCC, is an example of a system which currently exists, alongside several others, though different systems are currently being used by different organizations. These multiple systems can be integrated into a single one-stop-shop to service clients across a range of service providers. It was also identified that a dedicated unit specifically to support Francophone Newcomers for intake and referral processes should be created. It is important to note that there may be some organizations within the settlement sector where a common intake and referral

system would not work, hence it is important to ensure that onboarding to such systems are voluntary and as per the need of the specific agency.

Online collaborative spaces for Executive Council Members and their Staff

A critical discussion point for action that came from this breakout group was that online collaborative spaces are important, but what is actually required is a virtual/digital space to complement in-person or live meetings e.g., time constraints in live meetings which do not allow for conversations to be concluded. A space should then exist to be able to continue these conversations in a virtual setting. It was also identified that different service providers have different digital needs, with the need for project management being front and centre. Participants discussed that they required a space where they could share best practices, build together on common tools, have access to a well-categorized file repository with policies and procedures, the need for a common organizational taxonomy, and the need for an interactive site with communication and message archives that can be accessed later for reference.

A community rolodex was also discussed, where experts and content leaders could be accessed and reached out to for advice, support and feedback. This could be in the form of searchable profiles with contact details.

In earlier conversations within the larger group, it was discussed that service providers must account for new and changing technology needs and must reflect these requirements within their budgets in the form of technology expenses, with funders recognizing these evolving and increasing needs. These costs should be identified as program costs, as opposed to the way they are currently being sectioned under administrative costs.

Developing Pathways for Data Insights Across the Sector

This group discussed the need to identify what data is currently being collected by different agencies across the sector and the purpose behind the data collection. It was identified that databases need to minimize data entry that allows for data aggregation, as well as allowing for the compilation of micro and macro-level data for easier analysis. A unified system would allow for easy data sharing and would in turn counteract existing agency silos. There was an emphasis on agencies being able to access the data collected by the sector as a whole, to help inform their own programming and provide insight. Participants also acknowledged that clear definitions need to exist around what is success and what that looks like for different service providers.

Day 2 – Staff support and retention

The top three priority action areas identified for Staff Support and Retention were developing a sector career development track, attracting new staff and retaining existing staff, and pay equity for the sector.

The focus for **“Developing a sector career development track”** was to develop an action plan to create opportunities across the sector, such as building a skills certification program that will give employees recognized credentials to support their career development. Discussion topics included identifying what field/area of expertise within this space was a priority, key components for career development which should be included, using best case from other sectors that are doing this work well.

The focus for **“Attracting new staff/retaining existing staff”** was to identify and prioritize opportunities for attracting new staff and retaining existing staff by beginning to address existing challenges around staff acquisition and retention, including discussions around the implications of a hybrid working model. Discussion topics included what needs to be immediately addressed to ensure success, and what has worked well in the sector.

The focus for **“Pay Equity for the Sector”** was to identify system roles and opportunities to support pay equity within the sector and amongst agencies, particularly considering demographics of the settlement sector’s workforce is predominantly immigrant women. Discussion topics included identifying the best approach to advocate for pay equity, and strategically identifying stakeholders to engage who have the capacity to lead and collaborate around issues of pay equity.

All six groups were requested to identify the desired timeline for launch for the co-created action items, identify who has the capacity to lead on these actions, and who would like to provide support.

Discussion Outcomes from Day 2

Developing a sector career development track

This group identified that core competencies and employee skills need to be mapped and identified for individuals, specifically against different job grades and roles, but also more broadly at an agency level, against a backdrop of intersectionality, including but not limited to DEI, anti-racism, anti-oppression, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

Job descriptions need to be defined and standardized from the onset, as well as expectations from staff and their roles clearly laid out. Transferrable skills need to be identified and staff orientation plans need to account for missing skills and/or additional training needs. Job shadowing needs to be incorporated into orientation and onboarding plans, including mentoring, on-the-job learning opportunities, shadowing etc.

Leadership trainings should be conducted for all new staff coming into senior positions. A leadership training plan can be developed to be replicated across the sector for all leadership. There needs to be a renewed focus on training staff from within, rather than hiring externally. A need for succession planning exists, with clear pathways for employee's growth and professional development.

Customized development tracks need to be developed and include additional components such as mental health, on-the-job needs, case notes etc. Licensing of settlement workers through educational institutions or licensing bodies such as Sheridan College, Toronto Metropolitan Universities should also be prioritized.

Attracting new staff/retaining existing staff

This group came to the shared consensus that, across the board, attracting the right talent with the right skill sets was still one of the biggest issues being faced by the sector. Retention continues to be an issue, especially for those hired during the pandemic, who had the opportunity to work from home. A return to in-person work has posed challenges with regards to hiring. New hires want to have the option to either work from home or have a hybrid work model, which at times is not possible due to the need for in-person service delivery and supports.

Staff are also over-worked due to the ever-increasing number of clients, which has been compounded by hybrid working models; in-person demands continue to exist for staff in addition to the demands brought on by working within an online, remote space. This group was able to discuss and share recommendations, including the need for an onboarding buddy system to help with onboarding/orientation and engaging new staff, weekly huddles and coffee chats led by leadership teams, online engagement surveys, cross agency referral strategies, and the overall need for innovative and out-of-the-box thinking to face hiring and retention challenges within the sector.

“In order to attract new staff and retain existing staff, a proactive rather than a reactive approach is necessary”

– participant quote

Pay equity for the sector

This group identified the need for a common definition around pay equity, defining it as equal work for equal value. Pay equity needs to be considered in three contexts: within your agency, within your sector, in comparison with other sectors. How do agencies identify which pay scales to use and implement? One of the key questions asked was, “who owns this issue”? Is it the funder or the agencies themselves?

The group was not able to reach a consensus but believes it is a critical discussion which needs to take place amongst various stakeholders within the sector. It was discussed that pay equity needs to be viewed through a DEI lens. It was also identified that a sector-wide wage analysis needs to be carried out. The importance of bringing an anti-oppression lens when carrying out a sectoral wage analysis was discussed, and a need to move beyond the scope of just gender, accounting for issues of systemic racism within the sector, as an example. This analysis also needs to include a sector-wide compensation and benefits analysis.

A further comparative analysis may need to be carried out between for-profit and not-for-profit, as well as unionized and non-unionized agencies. Participants recognized that settlement services are a racialized sector, where workers are most definitely under-paid. Pay equity is at the centre of conversations currently taking place at the organizational level around DEI, and hence needs to be taken into consideration and prioritized.

The Road Ahead: Summary of Recommendations Across Priority Areas

Once existing capabilities, resources and tools were identified, the Action Days aimed at focusing on the road ahead, with participants highlighting action items and priority areas for 2023, as well as identifying sector leads and collaborators to support the sector in action and implementation.

The below represents a summary of suggested recommendations as an outcome of the broader group discussions, as well as the conversations which took place in the smaller prioritization groups.

Hiring a third-party consultant

Broader provincial level conversations and solutions need to be explored. Engaging a third-party consultant to not only assess the current landscape, but also understand best practices in other regions and identify opportunities to increase collaboration and efficiency, will be critical as Peel and Halton regions continue to support their clients in their respective communities. Key areas identified are:

Carrying out a current state audit

Current state audits are required in two separate areas:

- 1) *Digital Audit*: an inventory of the digital tools being used is required to identify current technologies being used by various agencies. Organizations from across the sector have differing digital needs with some agencies requiring robust data management systems, whereas others being able to effectively operate with less complex systems in place.

- 2) *Data Collection:* A need also exists to identify what data is currently being collected by different agencies across the sector, its current use and purpose, including which data is being replicated in order to reduce data entry requirements.

The third-party consultant would also provide support in identifying how the current state audit connects to the creation of a unified data management system for the sector, as well as connections to the convening of an online shared project management space.

Creation of a unified system

The need exists for a user-friendly, standardized, centralized data management system through which client data can be onboarded, stored and later retrieved. OCMS, developed by IRCC, is an example of a system which currently exists, alongside several others, though different systems are currently being used by different organizations. Identifying opportunities to streamline multiple systems into an integrated one-stop-shop (as appropriate) in order to service clients across a range of service providers, is critical. A need exists for a single coordinated database which can house data from across multiple agencies, thereby helping to reduce agency silos. This system should be able to compile micro and macro-level data for easier analysis. It was further identified that dedicated tools and resources should be available to support Francophone Newcomers for intake and referral processes.

Convening an online shared project management space

An easily accessible online shared community project management space should be developed where knowledge, best practice information, tools and networks can be shared. This can also be an important tool to coordinate services, supports and act as a shared resource to help identify and search for experts within the sector. An online hub can allow for identifying similar work by partners and where, where shared expertise and knowledge can be leveraged.

Convening a Pay Equity task group

A Pay Equity task group can be convened, with a specific mandate and goal to advocate for pay equity within the sector. This could include an initial pay equity audit to help uncover wage gaps in the sector as well as recent changes and trends, leading to identifying what pay equity means for the sector, and advocating for action towards pay equity to minimizing wage discrimination faced by the workforce.

Agencies need to be strongly recommended, or mandated, to complete annual salary surveys in order to set a representative baseline. The current completion rate is

approximately 50%. A concerted effort needs to be put into encouraging and supporting agencies to participate, with a strong recommendation from OCASI.

A sector-wide wage analysis needs to be carried out. It is important to bring an anti-oppression lens when carrying out a sectoral analysis, and a need to move beyond the scope of just gender. Systemic racism needs to be accounted for when carrying out a sector-wide analysis. This analysis should include a compensation and benefits analysis that takes an intersectional approach to pay equity. A further comparative analysis may need to be carried out between for-profit and not-for-profit agencies.

Convening a staff support working group

A staff support working group can be convened, with a specific mandate and goal to supporting staff within the sector and improving overall retention of workers. Agencies within the sector need to incorporate additional work support arrangements for staff. These could include mentoring plans, learning development plans, infrastructural support within a hybrid work environment, language support for staff, team huddles, social gatherings, coffee chats and informal meetings, additional support during onboarding and increased interaction with HR.

Core competencies and employee skills need to be mapped and identified, generally within the sector as well as specifically within agencies, recognizing the effects of intersectionality, including but not limited to DEI, anti-racism, anti-oppression, gender, sexual orientation, etc. This may include mapping out and standardizing job descriptions for each employee grade/tier across the sector. Staff orientation plans need to be developed and account for missing skills and/or additional training needs. For new hires, job shadowing needs to be incorporated into orientation and onboarding plans, including mentoring, on-the-job learning opportunities, shadowing etc.

Existing staff should also be encouraged to access available trainings (e.g., OCASI). Leadership trainings should be conducted for staff coming into senior positions, with trainings and training content which can be replicated across the sector for all leadership positions. Customized development tracks need to be developed and include additional components such as mental health, career needs, case notes etc.

For the longer term, licensing of settlement workers, either through educational institutions or through licensing bodies such as Sheridan College, Toronto Metropolitan University etc., needs to take place.

From Thought to Action: IRCC Action Day 2023-2025 Workplan

If the recently announced increased immigration targets are hoping to drive economic prosperity within the country, with the settlement sector driving the bulk of this work, the time is ripe for sector-wide advocacy to push for increased funding and budgets to help drive positive outcomes for migrants and newcomers. As it currently stands, the sector needs to identify and rally around collective demands, opportunities and needs, a “shared voice” if you will.

A good place to begin could be around mapping what the way forward looks like. High level recommendations have been listed in the workplan below, followed by examples of activities and tasks, as per the opportunities emerging from discussions during the two Action Days.

IRCC 2022 Action Day Recommended Workplan

High Level Recommendation	Suggested Task(s)
Digital assessment through a third-party consultant	<p>A third-party consultant could provide support/advice in the following areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a current state digital audit • Conducting a current state data collection audit, • Draw on data collected from audits to help build out a system framework • Identifying specific supports needed for Francophone newcomers • Conducting current state research for intake processes and systems used • Conducting a cross-sectoral visioning exercise to help with broad strokes and a consolidated co-created strategy for the sector • Carrying out an environmental scan (provincial as well as regional areas) • Compiling micro and macro-level data for more thorough analysis • Supporting in streamlining databases into a unified single system to allow for data sharing, minimized data entry, removing duplications and enhance overall efficiency and workflow. <p>The third-party consultant could also provide support in developing an online shared project management space and identifying connections to the work above. This could include;</p>

- Creating an adaptive and user-friendly online virtual space to house assets
- Identification and onboarding of network participants
- Standardization of language and identifying a common taxonomy across the sector
- Creation of an interactive chat platform, with search and archival functions
- Developing a community rolodex with profile pages for experts and content leaders
- Ongoing sharing of best-practice information
- Collecting resources, tools, and other assets from across different agencies and settlement service organizations
- Determining technology needs/assets/costs, (to be identified as program costs) and budget accordingly in advance and supplement with asks for additional funding and budgeted for in advance
- Implementing an onboarding buddy system to help settle into the new workplace and provide support

Convening a staff support working group

A staff working group could be convened, providing support and guidance on the following;

- Implementing an onboarding buddy system to help settle into the new workplace and provide support
- On-the-job learning opportunities to be identified and implemented, with timelines and outcomes
- Cross-agency referral strategies to be put in place to counteract staff shortages
- Job shadowing and mentorship plan to be developed for all new hires
- Developing and implementing staff engagement surveys to gain feedback and act as a channel to voice grievances
- Weekly huddles and chats to be led by senior leadership on an ongoing basis
- Job descriptions to be clearly mapped and expectations set from the onboarding stage
- Transferrable skills as well as skill gaps to be identified and help inform training and professional development plan
- Best practice to be researched for enabling and supportive work culture and to be embedded in all training/onboarding/mentoring plans
- Development of leadership trainings, workshops, and opportunities
- Succession plans and pipelines to be developed for agencies at the leadership and senior management level
- Competency and skill mapping, against different job grades and roles

Convening a Pay equity task group

A pay equity task group could be convened, providing advocacy support and guidance on the following;

- Running wage negotiation workshops and building skills around self-advocacy
- Creation of customized development tracks to include additional components such as mental health, on-the-job needs, case notes etc.
- Customized hybrid working model to be developed in conjunction with employee to support their changing needs, and revised on a regular basis
- Coming up with a common definition for pay equity across the sector, for different roles, at different grades
- Planning for conducting a sectoral wage analysis
- Comparative wage analysis research to identify pay equity across four areas: agency-wide, sector-wide, in comparison with other sectors
- Advocating and pushing for increased agency participation in salary surveys, whilst bringing in representation from OCASI
- Support licensing of settlement workers through educational institutions or licensing bodies
- Developing a pay equity framework and plan as an outcome of discussions

Appendix A: List of Participating Organizations

ACCES Employment
Achēv
Afghan Women's Organization
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel
Brampton Multicultural Community Centre
Caledon Community Services
Catholic Cross-cultural Services
Centre for Skills Development
Centre Francophone
Chinese Association of Mississauga
City of Sault Ste Marie
Collège Boréal
Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
COSTI
Cross-Cultural Community Services Association
Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre
Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board
Halton District School Board
Halton Newcomer Strategy
Halton Region
HMC Connections
iCare
Indus Community Services
IRCC
Malton Neighbourhood Services
Moyo Community & Health Services
Newcomer Centre of Peel
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

O TEC

Peel Career Assessment Centre

Peel District School Board

Peel Multicultural Council

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group

Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services

Punjabi Community Health Services

Region of Peel

Sault Career Centre

Sheridan College

Syrian Canadian Foundation

The Cross-Cultural Community Services Association

The Women's Centre of Halton

United Way Greater Toronto

Vietnamese Community Centre of Mississauga

YES Employment

Appendix B: Approach and Format to Action Day 2022

The goal of the IRCC Action Days was to bring representatives from across the sector together to have thoughtful and focused discussions with a view to co-create an action plan designed to impact change across the sector in the areas prioritized by members of the Executive Council: Actioning Digital and Staff Supports and Retention. The virtual sessions were full of action-oriented and robust discussions. Various speakers on both days were invited to share critical insights relevant to the themes of the day. On Day 1, opening remarks were provided by Christine Charbonneau, Director, Settlement Network Ontario, IRCC. This was followed by presentations from iCare, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG). Discussion topics included data utilization by the sector and building digital momentum through collaborative spaces. Day 2 began with opening remarks from Ashley Pettifer from Ryelle Strategy Group, and a de-brief of the main themes and opportunities emerging from the day before. This was followed by presentations from Sheridan College and Punjabi Community Health Services, which focused on staff support and retention, providing insights on existing social service trainings for settlement sector practice and the importance of cultural competency and DEI trainings for senior leadership.

Three breakout rooms on each day were dedicated to creating an action plan for next steps, including roles, accountabilities, timelines and required resources for each of the 6 prioritization areas identified within both themes. These actions were aimed at addressing current challenges, needs and opportunities identified in each of the priority areas.

Event participants on each day, segmented into three groups, were provided the opportunity to speak with one another using the breakout group feature in Zoom. To maximize conversations, worksheets ([Appendix D](#)) were created and distributed in advance of the event. Each group was pre-assigning a facilitator and note-taker to ensure flow of conversation. Note-takers were asked to upload their completed worksheets to a cloud-based program so the input could be fully captured in this report. In addition to recording the large group sessions, participants were also asked to record and upload their breakout room discussions, however, recordings were received from two groups only.

Appendix C: Speaker Summaries

Day 1: Actioning Digital

Importance of Data Utilization for the sector

Azem Halimi, the Chief Data Officer for iCare, shared his insights on how data can be effectively utilized by the sector. He shared how the sector is constantly evolving and changing, and how these shifts not only have a direct impact on data collection practices and requirements, but in turn, how these shifts are reflected back in the data being collected. Reporting and measurement are critical to ensuring that client needs are being met, that programs and services are being delivered in the best possible way, and to ensure the reporting back of best practice as well as challenges. The data collected helps understand who is benefitting from services and where current gaps exist, outcomes against specific newcomer populations, and ultimately how data helps to positively shape programs, services, and delivery models.

“You cannot effectively manage what you do not measure” – Azem Halimi, Chief Data Officer, iCare

Debbie Douglas, the Executive Director of OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants), highlighted the growth of OCMS (OCASI Client Management System) over the last few years and how this growth has led to ever increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees being supported as they enter Canada. Debbie highlighted the importance of measuring and tracking whether service providers are being equitable and truly inclusive, and how attention must be paid to demographic data and its key role in ensuring programs that are diverse, equitable and inclusive. A system that wants to move forward in tracking such outcomes needs to centre around tracking dis-aggregated data.

Digital Skills Development for Staff

Jessica Kwik, Director of the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, shared the importance of fostering new digital skills within new hires as well as for existing employees. Early results of a recently conducted professional development survey for newcomer staff indicated that the top professional development needs, as identified by them, include leadership development and support, staff focused mental health, communication skills, EDI and cultural competency. Digital skills were identified as a major gap in the survey, with an urgent need to increase focus and professional development in this area.

Building Digital Momentum through Collaborative Spaces

Marco Compana, a digital strategy and communications consultant for immigrant and refugee serving organizations, spoke about the need for additional collaborative spaces and an online community of practice where tools, forms, checklists, policies and other resources can be shared and leveraged. He shared that if even 50% of the sector pooled in their resources, how further ahead they would be compared to other sectors. He highlighted the key factors that make online collaboration work well; effective community onboarding which guides and supports users to become active and engaged, community metrics which identify and monitors actions and results, and the importance of a clear community strategy that fits your work model.

Day 2: Staff Support and Retention

Social Service Training for Settlement Sector Practice

This discussion, led by Nazlin Hirji, Johanne Hayes and Michelle McLaren from Sheridan College, emphasized and highlighted the role of community colleges in supporting the needs of community, with Sheridan College aiming to play its part by being a resource hub for local and global communities and employers, building hands-on learning tools and supports, providing skills-based learning opportunities for graduates and workers, and supporting community and industry partners to develop innovative solutions for real-world problems. The talk highlighted some of the courses built by Sheridan College, including the Settlement Practitioner Micro-credential, aiming to support settlement service providers in the GTA. Michelle shared other wrap-around services offered by the College under their Continuing and Professional Studies, including accessible learning supports, opportunity centre services, education and employment pathways, tutoring, online learner support and specialised programming services.

The need for Cultural Competency Training Amongst Senior Leadership

Baldev Mutta, Founder and Director of the Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), spoke about the importance of training leadership (specifically CEO's) in the areas of DEI and cultural competence. He highlighted the role of leadership as a driver for change within an organization, and their critical role in dismantling organizational barriers, especially around DEI. A training outline was also shared with the larger group, which included an overall assessment of the organization to help identify where organizational weaknesses currently exist, an analysis of how change is currently managed, an evaluation of how DEI is imbedded in the strategic plan, and existing reporting on DEI metrics.

Appendix D: Action Day Agenda

IRCC Action Day 1
Thursday November 3rd, 2022
9:00am – 12:00pm

Day 1 Theme: Actioning Digital

Welcome 9:00am – 9:10am
Executive Planning Table Co-Chairs/Ryelle Strategy Group

Remarks from IRCC 9:10am – 9:20am
Christine Charbonneau
Director, Settlement Network – Ontario, IRCC

Presentation from iCare 9:20am – 9:40am
- Philosophy for iCare data collection
- How data can be utilized by the sector

Presentation from OCASI 9:40am – 10:00am
- Philosophy for OCMS data collection
- How data can be utilized by the sector

Digital skills development for staff 10:00am – 10:05am
Jessica Kwik

Building momentum: Digital 10:05am – 10:30am
Marco Campana
- Collaborative spaces

Break 10:30am – 10:45am

Breakout Discussions 10:45am – 11:30am
- Common Intake and Referral
- Online collaborative spaces for Executive Council members and their staff
- Developing pathways for data insights across the sector

Report Back 11:30am – 11:50am
Facilitated by Ashley Pettifer

Day 1 Closing Remarks 11:50am – 12:00pm
Ryelle Strategy Group

IRCC Action Day 2
Friday November 4th, 2022
9:00am – 12:00pm

Day 2 Theme: Staff Support and Retention

Welcome Ryelle Strategy Group	9:00am – 9:10am
Sheridan College Nazlin Hirji, Johanne Hayes and Michelle McLaren - Social service training for settlement sector practice	9:10am – 9:30am
Punjabi Community Health Services Baldev Mutta, CEO - Introduce concept of “Cultural competency training” for executives / senior management	9:30am – 9:45am
Breakout/Group Discussion - Developing a sector career development track - Attracting new staff/retaining existing staff - Pay equity for the sector	9:45am – 10:30am
Break	10:30am – 10:45am
Report Back Facilitated by Ashley Pettifer	10:45am – 11:15am
Requirements to Action Ryelle Strategy Group - Are there significant requirements that need to be addressed in order to action workplans?	11:15am – 11:45am
Day 2 Closing Remarks Dev Maharaj Executive Planning Table Co-Chair	11:45am – 12:00pm

Appendix E: Breakout Group Worksheets Template

IRCC Action Day 1
Thursday November 3rd, 2022
10:45-11:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Common Intake and Referral

This breakout group will discuss steps towards more integrated common intake and referral through tools such as Compass to Connect platform (Achev) to support the client/family journey, including consideration of the early stages where they may not be aware of services.			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to act as a leader?	Who has the capacity to collaborate for support?
What are the top 3 most critical steps we need to take to ensure success?			
Are there any barriers we need to address in order to execute successfully?			
What tools or resources are needed for support?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).



IRCC Action Day 1
Thursday November 3rd, 2022
10:45-11:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Online Collaborative Spaces for Executive Council and their Staff

Discuss use cases and tools required to enable increased sector collaboration and information sharing with the goal of supporting staff in their role in addition to delivering programs and services to clients			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to act as a leader?	Who has the capacity to collaborate for support?
Who currently has tools that work well?			
What are key learnings from use cases that can be implemented in the future?			
What is missing?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).

IRCC Action Day 1
Thursday November 3rd, 2022
 10:45am-11:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Developing pathways for data insights from across the sector

This breakout group will discuss steps to ensure data insights from across the sector are surfaced for planning by leveraging tools such as iCare and OCMS			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to act as a leader/drive a task force for change?	Who has the capacity to collaborate for support?
What are the top 3 most critical steps required to ensure success?			
Has any work already started in this space? If so – where can we leverage? If not, what is our first step?			
Is there knowledge sharing or training required in this space across the sector in order to execute? If so, what?			
What is missing?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).

IRCC Action Day 2
Thursday November 4th, 2022
 9:30-10:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Developing a Sector Career Development Track

Developing an action plan to create opportunities across the sector to build a skills certification program that will give employees recognized credentials to support their career development			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to lead for implementation?	Who has the capacity to collaborate for support?
What field/area of expertise within this sector do we need to start? Where should we prioritize?			
What are the key components for career development that need to be included? Of these – which is the top priority?			
Are there other sectors you've seen do this well?			
What is missing?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).

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IRCC Action Day 2
Thursday November 4th, 2022
9:30-10:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Attracting New Staff/Retaining Existing Staff

Identifying and prioritizing opportunities to address challenges with staff acquisition and retention including discussion around the implications of hybrid working models			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to lead for implementation?	Who needs to be engaged for buy-in to support?
What is the biggest challenge we need to address to ensure success?			
What have you seen work in other sectors? What has been your own experience?			
Are there existing opportunities we can leverage? If so, what?			
What is missing?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).

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IRCC Action Day 2
Thursday November 3rd, 2022
9:30-10:30 am

Discussion Focus Area: Pay Equity for the Sector

Identify system roles and opportunities to support pay equity within, among agencies and with consideration to the labour market to ensure equitable pay, particularly considering demographics of the settlement sector's workforce is predominantly immigrant women			
Discussion Questions	Key Discussion Points	Who has the capacity to lead for implementation?	Which other strategic stakeholders need to be engaged?
What is the best approach to support pay equity within the sector?			
What is currently missing? What are some of the biggest challenges?			
What are the top 3 key messages that need to be communicated?			
What is the desired and most realistic timeline for launch?			

Please upload your completed worksheets to [this link](#).