

Chapter 3

Section 3.13

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Settlement and Integration Services for Newcomers

1.0 Summary

In the last five years, more than 510,000 immigrants settled in Ontario as permanent residents. These newcomers may need help getting settled, with anything from finding a home, getting a job, or accessing health care to registering their children in school.

The federal government is the primary funder of services to help newcomers settle in this province, but the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) also has a mandate to successfully settle and integrate newcomers in Ontario, and funds settlement and integration services that include:

- adult English- and French-language training;
- newcomer settlement services, including orientation sessions and referrals to community and government services; and
- education and training through its bridge training programs to help internationally trained immigrants obtain certification and employment in regulated and highly skilled professions.

Ministry services are primarily delivered by contracted service providers that include, for example, public and Catholic school boards, universities, colleges and non-profit community organizations. In 2016/17, the Ministry provided approximately

\$100 million to service providers to deliver settlement and integration services. These organizations provided services to over 80,000 individuals who accessed settlement services, over 68,000 participants in language training, and almost 6,000 individuals who participated in education and training through bridge training programs.

Between November 2015 and May 2017, Ontario welcomed over 20,000 Syrian immigrants in response to the global Syrian refugee crisis. As a result of this influx of newcomers, the Ministry launched the Refugee Resettlement Services Initiative to facilitate the resettlement of refugees in Ontario, and to support the successful integration of newly arrived refugees. By the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year, about 11,300 people had received services through this initiative.

Our audit looked at whether the Ministry has effective systems and procedures in place to make sure that the service providers they fund provide newcomers with appropriate, timely and effective services. It also considered how the Ministry allocates funding to service providers to ensure the funding is based on the needs of the people they serve. We further assessed the way the Ministry monitors, measures and reports on the success of the settlement services it funds.

We found that the Ministry's bridge training program is helping many internationally trained newcomers get the training they need to gain

employment. Bridge training service provider contracts completed in the last three years indicate that an average of 71% of those completing their bridge training program obtained employment in their field or in a related field. The Ministry has also recently taken steps to improve its services for newcomers, including introducing standardized assessment tools for its language training program to help increase the consistency of program delivery and assess learners' language progression.

However, we also found that there has been limited co-ordination between the Ministry and the federal government, which also funds settlement services in Ontario, to avoid duplication of the services they provide. For example, we found that approximately 60% of the Ministry's language training clients in the 2015/16 school year (the most recently completed) were also eligible for federally funded language training. Thus, the extent that the Ministry also needs to fund this service for these individuals is unclear, particularly since the average enrolment in the Ministry's program has declined in each of the last five school years. We estimate that in 2016/17, approximately \$30 million in Ministry-funded services provided to newcomers duplicated services already funded by the federal government.

Similarly, we found that Ministry co-ordination with other Ontario ministries that provide services that can help newcomers to settle and integrate in Ontario has been limited. While several ministries provide services to newcomers that include education, employment supports and health services, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration does not have formal arrangements in place to obtain information from these ministries on the number of newcomers they serve or their outcomes. As well, we were advised that the overall cost of providing services that can help newcomers to settle and integrate in Ontario has not been quantified by either this Ministry or any other ministry.

While the Ministry's objective is to successfully settle and integrate newcomers in Ontario, we found that it has not defined what constitutes a

successfully settled and integrated newcomer. The Ministry has not established settlement and integration milestones for newcomers and related time frames so that it can assess whether it is meeting its objectives for newcomers, or whether newcomers require more help. We found that some newcomers still require the Ministry's services even after many years in Canada—for example, 25% of the newcomers attending the Ministry's language training program had been in Canada for more than 10 years.

The following are some of our significant findings:

- **The Ministry does not allocate its funding for services based on the actual settlement and integration needs of newcomers.** The Ministry advised us that funding allocations for each service are determined separately and are not based on a comparison of relative need. We noted that the Ministry has not assessed the service needs to help determine the appropriate mix of services to allocate its funding. Based on our review of service and expenditure data reported by service providers we noted that funding is not always allocated to the services most needed by newcomers. For example:
 - **The need for language training has declined.** We noted a decline in the average enrolment for Ministry-funded language training in each year over the last five school years from almost 17,200 in 2011/12 to just over 14,900 in 2015/16. As a result, the amount spent for the language training program during this five-year period totalled \$24 million less than what was budgeted.
 - **Funding for bridge training has decreased despite successful program results.** Service provider bridge training contracts completed in the last three years indicate that an average of 71% of those who have completed programs obtained employment in their field or in a related field. Although baseline Ministry funding

for this program has been consistent over the last five years at \$16.2 million per year, funding above the annual baseline has fluctuated based on the Ministry's ability to secure time-limited contributions from both the provincial and federal governments. We found that overall funding for bridge training has declined by about one-third over this period, from a high of \$34.4 million in 2012/13 to just \$23 million in 2016/17. As a result of the instability in year-to-year funding, and the overall reduction in the program's funding, the Ministry funded only five new programs focused on getting a job or getting a licence in a regulated profession over these years, compared to 75 new programs between 2009 and 2011.

- **The Ministry does not consistently select and fund service providers best able to deliver services to newcomers.** We found that the Ministry did not establish minimum scores that applicants were required to achieve to qualify for bridge training and newcomer settlement funding. As a result, the Ministry approved and funded several proposals with a score of less than 50%. These included bridge training programs that subsequently reported that between just 26% and 32% of those who completed the programs obtained employment. In addition, the Ministry did not always select and fund bridge training and newcomer settlement proposals that scored highest, in favour of continuing to fund existing service providers that may not have scored as high. For example:
 - **All existing newcomer settlement service providers were renewed regardless of their proposal score.** We noted that all 95 service providers already receiving newcomer settlement funding that submitted a proposal for funding in 2015 were awarded a contract to continue to provide services in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 fiscal years.

Conversely, we found just two of 100 new applicants were awarded a contract even though the top 20 scoring applicants that were rejected received an average score of 81% from the Ministry, which was significantly higher than the bottom 20 scoring approved applicants, whose average score was just 53%.

- **New applicants to provide bridge training are rarely awarded contracts regardless of their qualifications to deliver services.** In response to the most recently completed call for proposals (in 2013) for bridge training programs focused on getting a job or getting licensed in a regulated profession, 17 of 18 proposals to renew an existing bridge training program were approved, compared to just five of 53 applications for a new program. We also noted that the Ministry's prior request for proposals (in 2012) was limited to existing program providers already receiving funding.
- **The Ministry does not assess significant differences between service providers' costs to ensure they operate cost-effectively.** We found that the actual cost per client visit in the newcomer settlement program, and the cost per client employed in the bridge training program, differed significantly between service providers. However, the Ministry does not compare service and financial data reported by service providers to assess whether differences are reasonable and service providers are operating in a cost-effective manner. For example, based on service provider bridge training contracts completed in the last three years, the average cost per individual who completed bridge training and obtained employment ranged from a high of \$106,100 in one service provider's program to a low of \$3,600 in another provider's program.
- **The Ministry does not consistently monitor the outcomes of service providers and newcomers to facilitate taking corrective**

action. We analyzed outcome information and noted significant differences in newcomer outcomes that should be followed up, including:

- **Language learners at some school boards do far better than learners at other school boards.** About half of all language learners who received at least 100 hours of language training demonstrated some progress in learning English or French in the 2015/16 school year. However, results at individual school boards differed substantially, ranging from no learners demonstrating progress at one school board to 78% of learners at another.
- **Differences in success of bridge training between service providers are not compared.** While the average employment rate among all bridge training program contracts completed in the last three years was 71%, we noted significant differences between the programs. For example, many programs reported that less than 40% of those who completed training obtained employment. As well, while the percentage of clients who became licensed in their regulated profession after completing their bridge training program was 48%, many programs reported that less than 30% of those who completed training became licensed.
- **Language learner progress is still low among participants who received more instruction.** Across all school boards, only 27% of English learners who received at least 500 hours of language training progressed by an average of one Canadian language benchmark across reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- **Ministry performance indicators are not sufficient to monitor newcomer settlement and integration outcomes.** The Ministry's performance indicators to measure the successful integration of newcomers focus on employment, language skills and the number of newcomers still living in the province after five years. However, these indicators are not sufficient to monitor the settlement and integration outcomes of the newcomers it serves. For example:
 - **Ministry performance indicators for newcomers do not measure key aspects of integration including health, housing and education.** The Ministry does not have performance indicators to measure the progress of all newcomers in settling and integrating in key areas such as health, housing and education. Conversely, in 2017 the Ministry's former Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat developed a performance measurement framework to measure the progress of Syrian refugees across four dimensions: settlement and integration, health, education, and economics.
 - **There is no indicator to measure the number of newcomers receiving social assistance.** The Ministry has not established an indicator to measure what happens to newcomers who do not obtain employment. In 2016/17, the Ministry of Community and Social Services provided Ontario Works social assistance benefits to almost 120,000 cases where the primary applicant was born outside of Canada. These cases involved more than 240,000 recipients, and total benefits paid amounted to almost \$850 million. Over the last 10 years, those born outside of Canada have accounted for about one-third of all Ontario Works cases and received approximately 40% of all Ontario Works benefits paid.
 - **Ministry learning targets for language training provide little insight into whether newcomer language training goals are met.** The Ministry has set a target for 2018/19 for 60% of language learners

who receive at least 100 hours of training to progress by one Canadian language benchmark in at least one skill area. However, it has not put in place performance indicators and targets to determine whether learners are making sufficient progress to meet their academic and employment goals.

- **Newcomers with limited language skills may not be aware of available services as the Ministry's websites are only in English and French.** The Ministry provides information on two websites about the settlement and integration services it funds for newcomers, including services offered and where they are located. However, because the websites are available in only English and French, newcomers who are not proficient in either language may not find them useful to get the information they need.

This report contains 10 recommendations, consisting of 23 actions, to address our audit findings.

Overall Conclusion

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) did not have effective systems and procedures to ensure that the service providers it funds consistently provide newcomers with effective services. The Ministry could not demonstrate that it allocates funding to its different services and service providers based on the needs of those they serve and commensurate with the value of the services provided. While the Ministry does collect and measure some program outcomes, these outcomes are not consistently assessed and are not currently reported publicly, nor are they sufficient to monitor newcomer settlement and integration outcomes.

OVERALL MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) thanks the Auditor General and her staff for their work in examining the Ministry's Settlement and Integration Programs for Newcomers. We value the observations and recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the Ministry's settlement and integration programs. Helping newcomers and their families achieve success is a key objective in the Ministry's strategic plan, *A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy*.

The Ministry invests over \$100 million annually in programs to help newcomers improve their English- or French-language skills, become licensed and employed in their profession or trade in Ontario, and find the information and supports they need to settle successfully in their communities. The Ministry recognizes the importance of modernization, performance measurement and data management, and is committed to building on work already begun to address the recommendations in the Auditor General's report.

The Ministry has taken significant steps to increase collaboration and co-ordination with the federal government. The Ministry is finalizing a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement that provides a framework for joint planning on shared priorities. The Agreement includes a related Memorandum of Understanding designed to improve information and data sharing to support performance measurement and research on immigrant outcomes, and a Settlement Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate bilateral co-ordination in the delivery of settlement and integration programs in order to maximize investments, reduce duplication and address service gaps.

To modernize its core business practices, the Ministry is enhancing its data analytics capacity and is implementing a strategy to develop a data culture and quality data to

support evidence-based decision-making. The Ministry has also created an evaluation and performance measurement unit to focus on program relevance, performance, efficiency and effectiveness.

We look forward to working with our partners to continuously improve our programs for newcomers to help them succeed in Ontario. The Auditor General's report will help sharpen our focus as we work to strengthen our programs.

2.0 Background

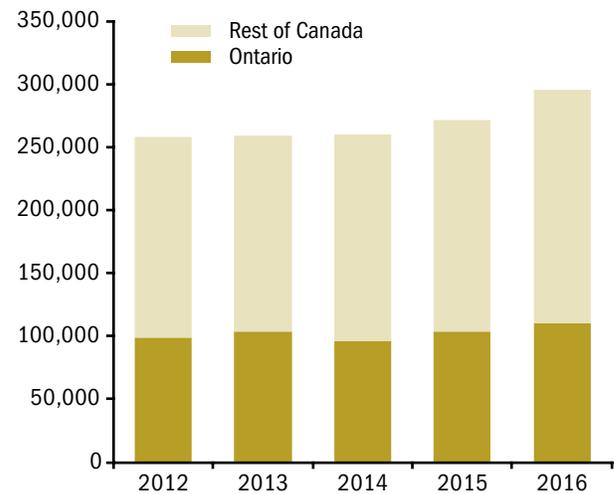
2.1 Immigration in Ontario

In the last five calendar years (2012–16), approximately 1,345,000 immigrants settled in Canada as permanent residents, including more than 510,000 permanent residents who settled in Ontario. **Figure 1** illustrates the number of permanent residents who settled in Ontario and Canada over the last five calendar years. Permanent residents generally fall under four categories:

- **Economic immigrants**—people selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy.
- **Family class immigrants**—people sponsored by close relatives, such as spouses, children, parents and grandparents, who are legal residents of Canada.
- **Refugees**—people forced to flee from their home country who have been selected by the federal government for resettlement to Canada, and sponsored by either the federal government or private citizens. People who seek asylum after arriving in Canada and who have had their claim approved by the federal government are also classed as refugees. Asylum seekers who have not yet had their refugee claim approved are not considered permanent residents. **Section 2.3** discusses refugees.

Figure 1: Number of Permanent Residents Arriving in Canada, 2012–2016

Source of data: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



- **Other immigrants**—people admitted to Canada for a number of other reasons, including those selected on humanitarian or compassionate grounds.

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of permanent residents arriving in Ontario by category.

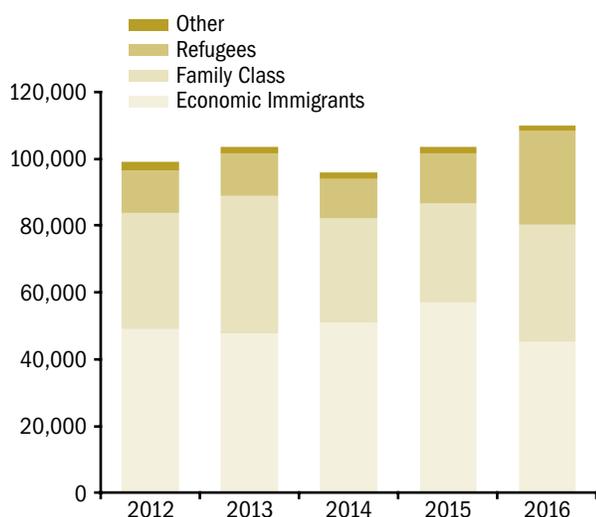
The federal government holds the primary responsibility for immigration in Canada, including setting annual immigration levels and conferring or revoking Canadian citizenship.

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has a mandate to maximize the benefits of immigration by providing services to successfully settle and integrate newcomers socially and economically. In 2012, the Ministry released *A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy* to set a new direction on how it selects, welcomes and helps immigrants to the province. The objectives of the strategy include (but are not limited to):

- attracting a skilled workforce and building a stronger economy;
- helping newcomers and their families achieve success; and
- leveraging the global connections of our diverse communities.

Figure 2: Number of Permanent Residents Arriving in Ontario by Category, 2012–2016

Source of data: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



2.2 Settlement and Integration Services

Newcomers often require supports to help them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario.

The federal government is the primary funder of such services. It funds settlement services that include information and orientation sessions; assessment of needs and referrals to community and government services; English and French language training; and employment-related supports.

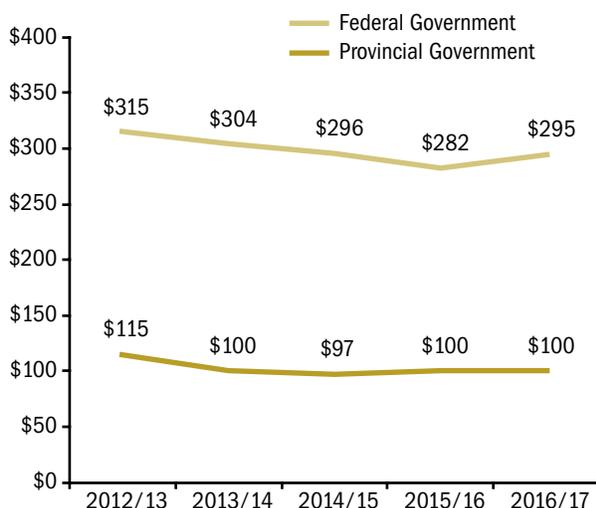
To help achieve its settlement and integration mandate, the provincial ministry also provides services to help meet the needs of newcomers and the goals identified in its immigration strategy. These goals include:

- improving job prospects for immigrants;
- achieving employment rates and income levels for immigrants that are in line with other Ontarians; and
- increasing employment rates of immigrants in fields that match their education and experience.

In 2016/17, the Ministry provided approximately \$100 million in transfer payments to service providers such as public and Catholic school boards, uni-

Figure 3: Federal and Provincial Funding for Newcomer Settlement Services, 2012/13–2016/17 (\$ million)

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



versities, colleges and other non-profit community organizations to provide settlement and integration services to newcomers to help meet these goals. The federal government committed \$295 million in the same year to fund newcomer settlement services in Ontario. **Figure 3** shows the amount of funding contributed by each level of government for these purposes.

Although both the federal government and the Ministry fund the delivery of settlement and integration services, eligibility for these services differs. Generally, only newcomers with permanent resident status are eligible for federally funded services. Ministry-funded services are available to permanent residents as well as to asylum seekers and naturalized Canadian citizens (newcomers who have obtained their Canadian citizenship). **Figure 4** illustrates eligibility for federal and Ministry-funded settlement and integration services.

The following sections describe the Ministry's key programs under which these services are delivered. In addition, **Figure 5** shows the breakdown of Ministry funding by program, and **Figure 6** illustrates the number of individuals who accessed Ministry-funded programs.

Figure 4: Eligibility for Federal and Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration-Funded Newcomer Settlement Services

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

Service Funding Source	Permanent Residents			Other Residents			
	Economic Immigrants	Family Class	Refugees	Naturalized Canadian Citizens	Asylum Seekers	Temporary Residents	No Residency Status
Ministry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No*	No
Federal Government	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

* Temporary residents (such as international students and temporary foreign workers) are only eligible for Ministry-funded Newcomer Settlement and Global Experience Ontario services.

2.2.1 Language Training

The Ministry's language training program funds public and Catholic school boards to deliver English/French-as-a-second-language (ESL/FSL) training to adult immigrants so they can gain the language skills they need to live and work in Ontario. In the 2016/17 fiscal year, the Ministry funded over 30 school boards on a fee-for-service model. The fee is based on a rate established by the Ministry of Education for adult education programs multiplied by a school board's enrolment for the year. In the 2016/17 school year, the rate was \$3,368 per 950 hours of instruction provided to students.

Starting in 2013/14, all adult immigrants interested in accessing funded language training programs must have their English or French language proficiency assessed against standard Canadian language benchmarks. The assessment is conducted through the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System, jointly funded by the Ministry and the federal government. Once assessed, language learners are referred to the appropriate language courses funded by either the federal government or the Ministry.

Through its language training program, the Ministry also funds school boards and other service providers for projects to develop resources and tools, and to pilot new program delivery approaches.

2.2.2 Newcomer Settlement

The Ministry's newcomer settlement program funds almost 100 non-profit community agencies to deliver services to newcomers in over 90 languages in more than 30 communities across Ontario. These service providers deliver core services that include:

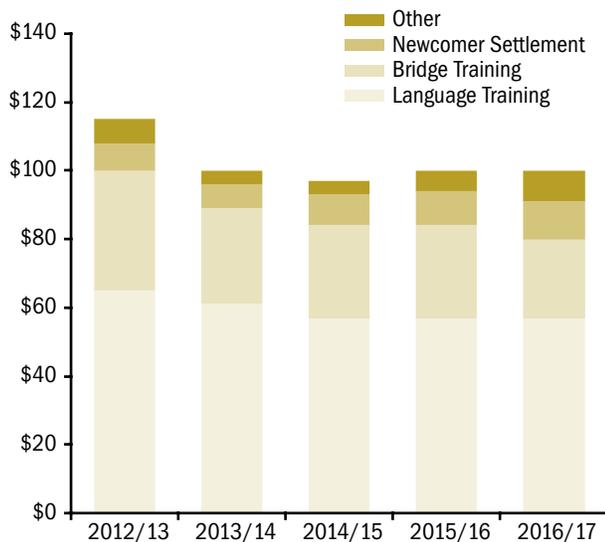
- assessment of newcomer needs and referrals to community and government services (such as school enrolment, getting a health card and social insurance number, and employment services);
- language translation and interpretation services (such as help with filling out forms, translation of documents and booking appointments);
- orientation sessions to help newcomers integrate into Canadian society (including learning about banking, legal rights and available local services); and
- connecting newcomers with social and professional networks (such as recreational and social clubs, mentoring groups and professional associations).

The Ministry also funds professional development for settlement workers working with newcomer youth, refugees, isolated women, seniors, and newcomers living in rural communities. It also funds an initiative to raise awareness about sexual violence and harassment among newcomer communities and improve supports for victims.

The Ministry awards funding to service providers through a call for multi-year proposals (typically, two-year contracts) that are evaluated

Figure 5: Ministry Payments to Service Providers by Program, 2012/13–2016/17 (\$ million)

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



Note: Other Funding in 2016/17 includes \$5 million for Refugee Resettlement Services Initiative.

by Ministry staff against a range of criteria. These include the service provider's organizational capacity to provide the program (based on the applicant's experience in delivering the proposed services); submitted budget (including whether the expenses are reasonable and the budget is detailed); demonstrated need for the proposed services; and proposed targets for services.

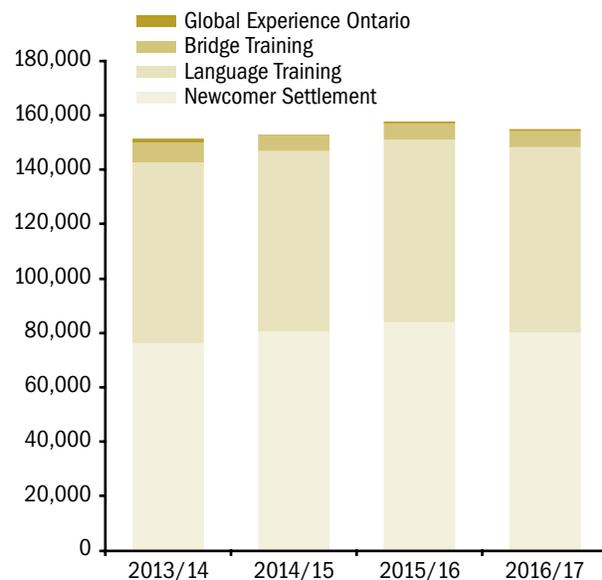
2.2.3 Bridge Training

The Ministry's bridge training program funds service providers to help internationally trained immigrants gain employment without duplicating their previous training and education. Service providers include colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies, and non-profit community agencies that provide training and services under the following three categories:

- **Getting a licence**—training to help internationally trained immigrants obtain certification in regulated professions.
- **Getting a job**—training to help internationally trained immigrants gain employment

Figure 6: Number of Unique Individuals Served by Ministry Program, 2013/14–2016/17

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



Note: For 2016/17, the number of individuals served is estimated for language training as complete data is not yet available. Data on individuals served is not available for all programs prior to 2013/14.

in both regulated and highly skilled, non-regulated professions.

- **Changing the system**—creating system-wide changes to improve the integration of internationally trained immigrants into the Ontario labour market (such as tools and resources for employers to better understand and assess immigrants' skills and experience).

The Ministry awards funding to service providers through a call for multi-year proposals (typically, two- and three-year contracts) that the Ministry evaluates against criteria that include the service provider's organizational capacity to provide the program (based on the applicant's experience in delivering the proposed program), and the submitted budget (to ensure expenses are reasonable and the budget is detailed). The evaluation also looks at the specific gaps in skills, knowledge and/or experience of participants the project will address and the proposed targets for the services. In 2016/17, the Ministry funded almost 40 service providers to provide bridge training programs.

2.2.4 Global Experience Ontario

The Ministry directly delivers services under Global Experience Ontario, a call and information service to help guide internationally trained individuals through licensing and registration processes in non-health professions and trades regulated by the Ontario College of Trades. This service was established under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006*. Global Experience Ontario is the only newcomer settlement and integration service that the legislation requires the Ministry to provide. In 2016/17 the Ministry provided information and referral services to more than 600 clients.

2.3 Refugee Resettlement

Refugees are permanent residents who fall under four main categories:

- **Government-assisted refugees**—people who have been selected and sponsored by the federal government for resettlement to Canada (while still outside Canada). The federal government provides direct income support to this group of refugees for their first 12 months in Canada.
- **Privately sponsored refugees**—people who have been selected for resettlement to Canada by the federal government (while still outside Canada) who are sponsored and financially supported for the first 12 months by private organizations or individuals.
- **Blended sponsorship refugees**—people who have been selected for resettlement to Canada by the federal government (while outside Canada) who have been sponsored by private organizations or individuals. The federal government provides up to six months of income support, and private sponsors provide another six months.
- **Refugees landed in Canada**—people who entered Canada on their own and sought asylum after their arrival, whose refugee claim

has been approved by the federal government. Refugees landed in Canada do not receive income support from the federal government.

As noted, refugees are eligible for both federal and Ministry-funded settlement and integration services. The federal government also provides reception services (such as meeting and greeting refugees upon arrival, providing winter clothing, and providing transportation to their destination) and temporary accommodation (as well as help in finding permanent accommodations) to refugees. The following section describes additional services provided by the Ministry.

2.3.1 Ministry-Funded Refugee Services

Between November 2015 and May 2017, almost 46,000 Syrian refugees resettled in Canada, including more than 20,000 in Ontario, as illustrated in **Figure 7**.

In September 2015, in response to the global refugee crisis, the Ministry launched the Refugee Resettlement Services Initiative to facilitate the resettlement of refugees in Ontario, and to support the successful integration of newly arrived refugees. The specific objectives of these services include:

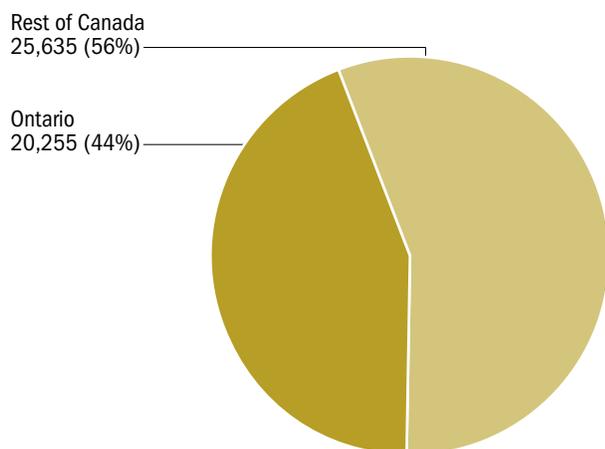
- increasing the number of privately sponsored refugees to Ontario;
- enhancing settlement services to help settle and integrate new refugees; and
- encouraging fundraising to support refugee resettlement.

Funding for these services was \$2.1 million in 2015/16 and \$5.0 million for 2016/17, the first full year these services were offered. By the end of the 2016/17 fiscal year, services had been provided to about 11,300 unique clients. Services are available to government-supported refugees, privately sponsored refugees and private sponsors of refugees. Non-profit community organizations provide these services. They include the following:

- **Refugee settlement and integration**—includes first language settlement services

Figure 7: Number of Syrian Refugees Settled in Ontario and Canada, November 2015–May 2017

Source of data: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



and case management; specialized services for refugee women and youth (such as homework help, mentoring, co-ordination of access to mental health services, guidance on parenting in a new culture, and support for victims of domestic and sexual violence); housing assistance; and employment preparation supports.

- **Sponsorship supports**—include sponsor recruitment and training; matching sponsors with refugees overseas; training for lawyers and law students to prepare sponsorship applications; and training and assistance for sponsors to help them settle newly arrived refugees.
- **Capacity building**—includes public education to promote welcoming communities and combating racism, and training for settlement workers on refugee trauma and mental health.

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat

In addition to these refugee resettlement services, the Ministry was also responsible for the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (Secretariat). The Secretariat was initially established by Cabinet Office as a temporary unit in November 2015 (and subsequently transferred to the Ministry in February 2016) in response to the federal govern-

ment's launch of a national plan to resettle Syrian refugees. Its purpose was to lead cross-government efforts to support the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in Ontario by working with the federal government to ensure that the relevant stakeholders, including other ministries, municipalities and service providers in Ontario, were aware of how many Syrian refugees were coming and when. This would enable them to respond appropriately with key services such as health services and educational supports for children.

The Secretariat was also tasked with developing a performance measurement framework to evaluate the resettlement and integration outcomes of Syrian refugees. In addition, the Secretariat consulted with organizations and individuals that were involved in resettling Syrian refugees in Ontario to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement in service delivery, and to make recommendations to address such concerns. Other Ontario ministries, newcomer settlement agencies, school boards, municipalities and focus groups of Syrian refugees were among those consulted.

Although the Secretariat wound down in May 2017, it was replaced in June 2017 by the Refugee Resettlement Secretariat, which has a broader mandate that focuses on all refugees. The Refugee Resettlement Secretariat's budget for the 2017/18 year is \$1.2 million; its responsibilities include implementing the previous Secretariat's performance measurement framework and following up with other Ontario ministries to determine their progress toward addressing its recommendations. The Refugee Resettlement Secretariat is currently expected to cease operations in March 2019.

2.4 Oversight and Performance Measurement

The Ministry enters into multi-year contracts with service providers delivering its newcomer settlement and integration services. Obligations in the contracts include reporting requirements, service targets and allotted funding. The Ministry

has implemented a number of oversight activities to assess whether service providers are meeting their contractual obligations, including risk assessments, progress reports and audited financial statements. These oversight activities are described in **Appendix 1**. In addition to these activities, the Ministry may conduct ad hoc reviews and site visits in response to specific concerns about a service provider. The Ministry has also commissioned external evaluations of the programs it funds to assess their alignment with its own mandate and strategic objectives.

Over the last five years, the Ministry has not had a consistent set of performance indicators to assess its own performance or the performance of the settlement and integration services that it funds. However, in a 2017/18 planning report to Treasury Board, the Ministry identified new performance indicators it intended to track and report on in the future—complete with baseline values and targets, and target dates to achieve specific results. **Appendix 2** describes the four performance indicators the Ministry implemented as a result of this process.

2.5 Services Provided by Other Ontario Ministries

Although the Ministry's mandate is to successfully settle and integrate newcomers in Ontario, other ministries also provide services to newcomers that can assist in their settlement and integration. They include:

- **Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development**—provides (through Employment Ontario) employment training, literacy and basic skills, labour market programs and services to help newcomers to find employment.
- **Ministry of Education**—provides elementary and secondary education to students in Ontario (including newcomers). It also provides educational supports, including English language acquisition, special education and mental health services. The Ministry

has also provided funding for summer school opportunities that include newcomers from a refugee background.

- **Ministry of Community and Social Services**—provides social assistance to low-income families in Ontario (including newcomers), as well as supports for victims of domestic violence, and supportive services for adults and children with developmental and/or physical disabilities.
- **Ministry of the Status of Women**—funds programs for women (including newcomers) that prevent violence against women and promote women's economic security, including counselling, and entrepreneurial and employment training. It also funds public education campaigns that reach newcomer communities to provide information on family law (legal information about women's rights under Ontario and Canadian law) and raise awareness about violence against women.
- **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**—funds, through Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks, 75 Community Health Centres to provide primary health care and community health programs to individuals who face barriers accessing health-care services, including refugees, new immigrants, and individuals who do not have health insurance.
- **Ministry of Children and Youth Services**—funds services for children and youth that include child protection, special needs, healthy child development, youth justice, and mental health. To support the recent arrival of Syrian refugees, it funds a specialized immigration team that provides training and consultation, as requested, to Children's Aid Societies, and private sponsorship groups about immigration-related issues and to settlement agencies to support and educate Syrian newcomers about Canadian laws and parenting. In addition, it has also funded youth outreach workers to provide one-on-one supports to high-risk Syrian refugee youth.

- **Ministry of the Attorney General**—funds Legal Aid Ontario to provide legal aid services to low-income individuals throughout Ontario, including newcomers. For newcomers this includes legal aid to asylum seekers to assist with their legal proceedings for the determination of their refugee status.

3.0 Audit Objective and Scope

Our objective was to assess whether the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that service providers provide newcomers in need of settlement and integration services with appropriate, timely and effective services in accordance with signed agreements; funding is allocated to service providers based on the needs of those they serve and commensurate with the value of the services provided; and the Ministry's program outcomes are measured, assessed and publicly reported on. We did not include the Ministry's Provincial Nominee Program in our audit because we completed an audit of that program in 2014.

Before starting our work, we identified the audit criteria we would use to address our audit objective (see **Appendix 3**). These criteria were established based on a review of applicable legislation, directives, policies and procedures, internal and external studies, and best practices. Senior management at the Ministry reviewed and agreed with the suitability of our objective and related criteria.

We focused on the Ministry's activities in the five-year period ending March 2017. We conducted our audit between January 2017 and August 2017, and obtained written representation from Ministry management on November 10, 2017, that it has provided us with all the information it is aware of that could significantly affect the findings or the conclusion of this report.

Our work included detailed discussions with appropriate staff at the Ministry involved in the design, funding, delivery, oversight and performance measurement of the Ministry's settlement and integration services for newcomers. We also reviewed and analyzed applicable files, including policies and procedures, and service, financial and performance results reported to the Ministry by service providers that deliver the services it funds. In particular, our audit focused on three settlement and integration programs funded by the Ministry—language training, bridge training and newcomer settlement—that together account for approximately 90% of Ministry funding.

We also met with senior staff at the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants—an organization that serves as a collective voice for immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations in Ontario—to identify and discuss concerns and challenges agencies face in their delivery of settlement and integration services to newcomers. In addition, we visited and spoke with representatives from school boards to obtain their perspective on the delivery of language training, and we surveyed all school boards (and received responses from more than 85%) that deliver English- and French-language training to newcomers to obtain feedback about the timeliness and accessibility of their training. We also visited newcomer settlement service providers to obtain their perspective about the challenges newcomers face in obtaining the services they need to successfully settle and integrate. As well, we contacted other Canadian provinces regarding funding, performance measurement and best practices related to settlement and integration services in their province.

We reviewed the relevant audit reports issued by the province's Internal Audit Division in determining the scope and extent of our audit work.

4.0 Detailed Audit Observations

4.1 Ministry Funding of Newcomer Services Is Not Allocated Based on Assessment of Need and Cost-Effectiveness, and Not Always to Highest Scoring Service Providers

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has not allocated funding to its settlement and integration services based on the assessed needs of newcomers. In addition, its processes for allocating funding are not always effective in ensuring funding is allocated to the services and service providers that can best address the settlement and integration needs of newcomers efficiently and effectively.

4.1.1 Ministry Funding Overlaps with Federally Funded Services

While the Ministry is aware that the settlement and integration services it funds often overlap with services provided by the federal government, it has not assessed the need for this duplication of services and taken action to minimize it.

In 2016/17, \$68 million—more than two-thirds of total Ministry transfer payments to service providers—went to the delivery of language training and newcomer settlement services, which are also funded in Ontario by the federal government. Although the Ministry also provides these services to individuals who are not eligible for federally funded services (refugee claimants and naturalized Canadian citizens), we found that more than 60% of language training clients in the 2015/16 school year and 25% of newcomer settlement clients were permanent residents and therefore eligible for federally funded services (as illustrated in **Figure 8** and **Figure 9**). We estimate that for 2016/17, approximately \$30 million in language training and newcomer settlement services was funded by the Ministry when such services are already provided and funded by the federal government.

Figure 8: Percentage of Language Training Clients by Immigration Status, 2015/16

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

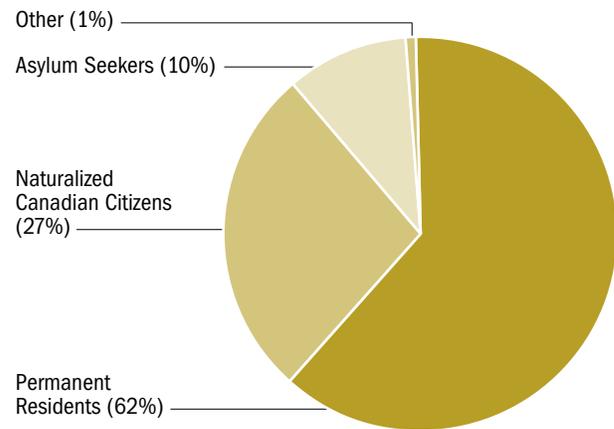
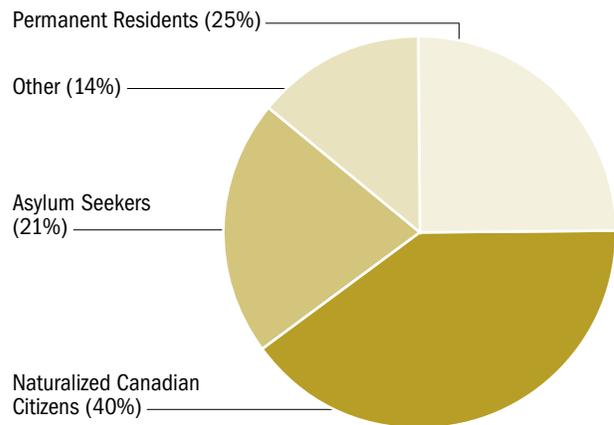


Figure 9: Percentage of Newcomer Settlement Clients by Immigration Status, 2016/17

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



4.1.2 Ministry Does Not Allocate Funding to Services Based on Actual Needs of Newcomers

The Ministry advised us that funding allocations for each service are determined separately and are not based on a comparison of the relative need for each service or its success in meeting newcomers needs. Senior Ministry staff we spoke to indicated that pooling all program funding together and allocating funding to individual programs based on evolving newcomer needs would be beneficial.

In addition, the Ministry has not assessed the needs of newcomers to help ensure that its limited funding is distributed to the appropriate mix of services. As **Figure 10** shows, \$91 million—or about 90% of the Ministry’s funding in 2016/17—was allocated to service providers to deliver the language training, bridge training and newcomer settlement programs.

Based on our review of service and expenditure data reported by service providers, we confirmed that funding is not allocated to the services most needed by newcomers. For example:

- **Declining need for language training services is an opportunity to reallocate funding.**

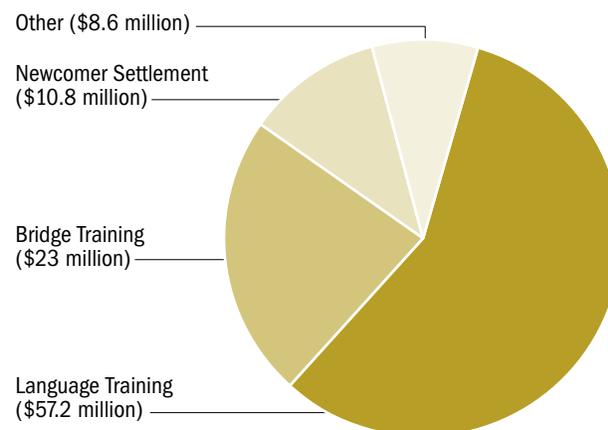
We noted a decline in the average enrolment for Ministry-funded language training in each year over the last five school years from almost 17,200 in 2011/12 to just over 14,900 in 2015/16. As a result, the amount actually spent for the language training program during this five-year period was \$24 million less than budgeted. The unused language training budget was either not spent, or spent to fund other Ministry settlement services and priorities. As well, a review of the limited wait-list data captured by the Ministry indicated that the list of those waiting for Ministry-funded language training is short, amounting to less than 2% of clients served.

- **The level of need for Ministry-funded newcomer settlement services is unclear.**

In response to increased demand for newcomer settlement services, in the last five years (2012/13–2016/17) the Ministry reallocated unspent funds from other services to settlement services, and in 2015/16 it also increased base funding for newcomer settlement services by \$3.5 million. Funding requested by newcomer settlement service providers in 2015 for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 fiscal years was more than twice the amount they were given by the Ministry. We noted the Ministry does not have the necessary information (such as wait-list data

Figure 10: Transfer Payments by Program, 2016/17

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



from service providers) to help determine the extent and need of services. The service providers we visited told us that they were generally able to provide services to newcomers who sought help in person on the same day, and could accommodate newcomers who arranged appointments in advance within three weeks.

- **Bridge training is successful in integrating many immigrants into the workforce, but funding has decreased.** As described in **Section 4.3.3**, the majority of participants who completed bridge training obtained employment in their field or a related field. Although baseline funding for bridge training has been consistent over the last five years (2012/13–2016/17) at \$16.2 million, funding above the annual baseline of \$16.2 million has fluctuated based on the Ministry’s ability to secure time-limited contributions from both the provincial and federal governments. We found that overall funding for bridge training has declined over this period from a high of \$34.4 million in 2012/13 to \$23 million in 2016/17. We noted that as a result of the instability of funding from year to year, and the overall reduction to the program’s funding, the Ministry only once solicited new proposals for bridge training programs and

funded only five new licensure and employment programs. This is significantly lower than the 75 new proposals awarded funding between 2009 and 2011.

RECOMMENDATION 1

In order for the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to use its resources cost-effectively so that it best meets the settlement and integration needs of newcomers to Ontario, we recommend that the Ministry:

- evaluate the need for provincial funding of services also funded by the federal government and, where appropriate, minimize the duplicate funding for these services; and
- assess the actual needs of newcomers to confirm the appropriate mix of services it should fund and allocate funding based on this need.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and is working to assess newcomer needs and to reduce service duplication, where appropriate.

The Ministry is committed to continuing to work with the federal government to minimize duplicate funding of settlement and integration services, where appropriate. Co-ordination with the federal government will be enhanced through the Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum) being negotiated as part of the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. The Memorandum will guide bilateral collaboration over the next five years in areas such as sharing of information on needs, best practices and outcomes to support effective co-ordination of federal and provincial programs to maximize investments, improve service delivery, reduce duplication and address service gaps.

The Ministry is committed to ongoing assessment of newcomer needs and services to confirm the appropriate mix of services needed

to meet the settlement and integration needs of newcomers. The Ministry will review its approach to program evaluation, needs assessment and information use to optimize program design and delivery, and to allocate funding based on need. In addition, in 2017, based on the program's success, a \$7 million annual increase was approved for the Ontario Bridge Training Program.

4.1.3 Ministry Does Not Consistently Select and Fund Service Providers Best Able to Deliver Services to Newcomers

Unlike language training where the vast majority of funding is provided to school boards based on the number of clients each board enrolls in its courses, funding for bridge training and newcomer settlement is awarded to service providers based on the Ministry's assessment of their submitted proposals. These proposals are assessed against a number of criteria that include the applicant's experience in delivering the proposed services; budget (including whether the budgeted expenses are reasonable and how resources will be used); summary of program activities; demonstrated need for the proposed services; and proposed targets for services. Newcomer settlement proposals include targets for the unique number of individuals to be served and the number of client visits. Bridge training proposals include targets for the number of participants who apply, access, complete and obtain employment after completing the program.

Based on our review of assessed proposals for bridge training and newcomer settlement, we found that the Ministry did not always select and fund the proposals that scored highest, in favour of continuing to fund existing providers that may not have scored as high. The Ministry did not consistently provide an appropriate rationale for why it funded lower-scoring service providers. Our specific concerns relating to each program are described in the following sections.

Newcomer Settlement

- **All existing service providers were renewed regardless of their proposal score.** We noted that all 95 service providers already receiving newcomer settlement funding that submitted a proposal for funding in 2015 were awarded a contract to continue to provide services in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 fiscal years. Conversely, we found that just two of 100 new applicants were awarded a contract even though the top 20 scoring applicants that were rejected received an average score of 81%, which was significantly higher than the bottom 20 scoring approved applicants, whose average score was just 53%.
- **Explanation for not funding high-scoring proposals from new applicants was unclear.** In some instances, higher-scoring proposals to provide newcomer settlement services in similar geographic areas were rejected in favour of lower-scoring proposals. We noted there was no clear rationale documented to demonstrate why these decisions were made, and the Ministry was unable to provide us with an explanation. We noted that scoring discrepancies were in some cases significant. For example:
 - One new applicant to which the Ministry assigned a score of 84% was not awarded a contract, whereas four other service providers in a similar geographic area that scored between 54% and 75% were awarded a contract—all four were already under contract providing newcomer settlement services.
 - Another new applicant to which the Ministry assigned a score of 75% was not awarded a contract, whereas two other service providers in a similar geographic area with scores of 55% and 56% were awarded a contract—both were already under contract providing newcomer settlement services.

- **The Ministry did not establish minimum scores required for applicants to qualify for funding.** Based on our review of proposals, we found that five proposals were approved for funding with an overall score of 50% or less, including one proposal that scored as low as 29%. In all five cases, the service provider submitting the proposal was already under contract providing newcomer settlement services. We noted that in the case where the service provider scored 29%, the Ministry ceased funding only after the municipal government pulled its funding from the service provider. At the time the service provider's proposal was evaluated, the Ministry assigned the proposal just 24% for its capacity to deliver newcomer settlement services.

Bridge Training

- **New applicants to provide bridge training are rarely awarded contracts regardless of their qualifications to deliver services.** In response to the most recently completed call for proposals (in 2013) for programs focused on employment and licensure, 17 of 18 proposals to renew an existing bridge training program were approved, compared to just five of 53 applications for a new program. We noted that the Ministry's prior request for proposals (in 2012) was limited to existing program providers already receiving funding.
- **The Ministry did not establish minimum scores required for applicants to qualify for bridge training funding.** Similarly to newcomer settlement, the Ministry had not established a minimum score that proposals for bridge training had to achieve to be approved for funding. The Ministry advised us that it did not set a minimum threshold to give it flexibility to consider additional factors, including geographic priority areas and demographic groups (such as francophones, identified as a targeted demographic group

in Ontario's 2012 Immigration Strategy). Our review of approved proposals found that five of the 17 approved proposals to renew existing programs scored less than 50%, including one that received a score of just 27%. The Ministry did not provide a clear rationale for renewing this program, even though the evaluators identified that the applicant did not demonstrate significant employment outcomes and the budget was confusing. Following its approval, just 27% of those who completed this program obtained employment commensurate with their education and experience in their field. A total of 32% obtained employment, including employment in a related field, compared to the average of 71% among all bridge training program contracts completed in the last three years. The Ministry renewed another program to which its evaluators assigned a score of just 37% and noted that there was no evidence of employer commitment to the program, and that employment outcomes were weak. Although the Ministry advised us that it renewed the program because there were no other bridge training services in that geographic area, a clear rationale to support the renewal of the program was not documented. Following its approval, just 18% of those who completed the program obtained employment commensurate with their education and experience in their field (32%, if those who obtained employment without completing the program are considered), and a total of 26% obtained employment, including employment in a related field (40%, if those who did not complete the program are considered).

- **High-scoring new applications were not funded in order to renew lower-scoring proposals.** We found that some applications for new bridge training programs were not funded and were instead placed on a wait list that was dependent on the availability of further funding, even though they scored

higher than existing applicants whose training programs were renewed. For example:

- Two new applicants that Ministry evaluators scored at 55% and 68% were put on hold and not funded due to concerns related to duplication of existing bridge training programs. However, it was unclear whether existing programs were successfully meeting the training needs of newcomers in those fields. As previously noted, five of the 17 existing bridge training programs the Ministry chose to renew scored less than 50%, including one that scored just 27%.
- In another instance, one application that was not funded was scored 73% by the Ministry, and its evaluators assigned it a good score for its demonstration of labour market demand and strategies to mitigate risk, including concerns about adequate settlement of newcomers in its geographic area. However, we noted that the rationale for not funding the program at that time was inconsistent with the Ministry's scoring of the application, specifically highlighting concerns about labour market demand and the ability of the program to attract a sufficient number of participants in its geographic area.
- **Service providers have little time to prepare new proposals for bridge training programs.** We found that both in 2017 (when our audit fieldwork was concluding) and in 2013 when the Ministry last requested proposals for new bridge training programs that target employment and licensure, the Ministry provided only two months for applicants to prepare and submit proposals for new programs. The service providers we spoke to expressed concerns, including that the time provided was not sufficient, the timing of the requests for proposals (which were issued in the summer) made preparation more challenging, and that it would be helpful if the

Ministry provided notice in advance of issuing a request for new proposals. Ministry management similarly agreed that it would be helpful to provide advance notice and more time to prepare proposals for new programs.

4.1.4 Funding Decisions Do Not Consider Cost-Effectiveness of Programs

While the Ministry's criteria for assessing proposals for bridge training and newcomer settlement funding include an assessment of the quality of the budget submitted by each applicant, the Ministry does not assess the cost-effectiveness of proposals against pre-established targets. We found that service costs per person vary significantly among providers delivering these services, as described in the sections that follow.

Newcomer Settlement

We reviewed the contract targets and approved funding for newcomer settlement service providers, and noted that the contracted average cost per client visit across all core service providers in 2016/17 was \$61. However, we found that the contracted cost differed substantially across service providers, from a low of \$19 to a high of \$354 per visit. The Ministry advised us that because of geographic differences and differences in client needs between service providers, it does not compare the differences in costs per client visit to assess their reasonableness when it contracts service providers.

Bridge Training

We also reviewed targets and approved funding for bridge training program contracts that included training for participants and that had expired in the last three years. We identified that, based on dividing the total contract amount by the targeted number of participants expected to obtain employment, the average cost per participant was targeted at \$11,900. We noted that the cost differed substantially across different programs, from

a low of \$3,100 to a high of \$44,700. It should be noted that bridge training programs target different occupations and differ in their complexity, length of training, and thus cost. Because of these differences, the Ministry advised us that it does not compare the participant costs of programs. However, since bridge training funding is limited, programs with higher participant costs limit the number of newcomers that the Ministry can assist. Therefore, the Ministry should try to analyze these costs to ensure value for money is achieved with the available funding.

RECOMMENDATION 2

To better ensure that it allocates funding to the highest scoring service providers based on the needs and outcomes of the newcomers they serve, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:

- establish a minimum score that all service providers have to exceed to be eligible for continued or new funding so that funding is not provided where significant concerns have been identified;
- document the rationale for its selection and non-selection decisions;
- extend the length of time between notification and submission of bridge training proposals to provide service providers with sufficient time to prepare proposals for programs that address the employment and licensure training needs of newcomers; and
- include criteria in its assessment of service provider proposals for funding that assess whether the requested funding is commensurate with the value of services to be provided.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and the need to ensure that funding is allocated based on newcomer needs and outcomes.

The Ministry will review its funding and call for proposals process to provide adequate time to prepare bridge training proposals. The Ministry will also review its assessment tools, processes and criteria to include minimum thresholds to be eligible for funding, value-for-money and cost-effectiveness factors, and service priorities such as geographic distribution, priority populations and service continuity in areas with demonstrated need.

Staff training will also be enhanced to ensure effective use of application assessment tools and processes, including better documentation of decisions.

4.2 Ministry Does Not Consistently Monitor Service Providers to Confirm That Services Are Delivered Cost-Effectively

We found that the Ministry does not validate the accuracy of service data and most financial information it collects and uses to monitor and fund service providers. In addition, we found that the Ministry does not sufficiently monitor whether newcomers have access to services, and it does not consistently monitor whether service providers meet their contracted service targets. The Ministry also does not compare service provider-reported service and financial data to assess whether providers are operating in a cost-effective manner, or follow up in instances where they may not be.

4.2.1 Ministry Does Not Validate Service Data and Most Financial Information Received from Service Providers

While the Ministry collects service and financial data from all service providers, it does not have sufficient processes in place to validate the accuracy of this data. Specifically, we found that:

- The Ministry has not addressed issues identified in a 2013 Ministry review surrounding concerns about the accuracy of service and

financial data collected from service providers. An internal Ministry review and analysis conducted in 2013 identified concerns about the quality and accuracy of data collected from service providers. The review noted that data integrity was questionable, since there were no validation or verification processes in some program areas. It also noted that the Ministry did not have data collection standards, and does not have any standards or processes in place to enable it to know that service information reported by service providers is correct. The Ministry has not yet implemented steps to address these identified concerns.

- The Ministry does not validate the accuracy of any of the service data reported by service providers. The accuracy of service data is important because the Ministry could reduce funding for service providers who fall significantly short of their service targets (as funding is provided to service providers in increments during the course of their multi-year contracts). For example, with respect to language training (which accounted for almost 60% of total Ministry funding to service providers in 2016/17), the majority of funding is provided to school boards based on the enrolment they report to the Ministry multiplied by a set rate. However, the Ministry does not have a process in place to audit the enrolment numbers reported by school boards. By comparison, as identified in **Chapter 3, Section 3.08** of our report, although we identified weaknesses, the Ministry of Education does have a process to audit the reported enrolment information it uses to fund school boards, and these audits have resulted in significant funding adjustments.
- The majority of expenses reported by service providers are not audited. While service providers in all of the programs we reviewed are required to report revenues and expenditures to the Ministry, only service providers delivering bridge training programs are required

to provide audited program-specific revenues and expenses to enable the Ministry to assess whether funds are spent for their intended purposes. Language training and newcomer settlement service providers that received almost 70% of total Ministry transfer payments in 2016/17 do not have to provide audited program-specific revenues and expenses. As a result, we noted the following concerns with respect to the accuracy of information reported to the Ministry:

- We found that in 2016/17, about 45% of newcomer settlement service providers reported expenditures that directly matched the funding provided by the Ministry. While effective budgeting can minimize differences between revenues and expenses, a direct match is unrealistic. One of the newcomer settlement service providers we visited told us that it reported expenses that directly matched funding provided by the Ministry instead of actual expenditures because that is what it believed the Ministry expected.
- As identified in **Section 4.2.4**, the surplus/deficit position school boards reported in delivering language training differs significantly even though they are funded based on their enrolment multiplied by a set dollar amount. These substantial differences in unaudited school board revenues and expenses highlight the need to validate revenues and expenses and/or enrolment.

RECOMMENDATION 3

So that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry) has accurate and reliable information to monitor the settlement and integration services it funds and can make informed decisions on its programs, we recommend that the Ministry implement a process to periodically validate the accuracy of service and financial information reported by service providers.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation.

Recognizing the importance of monitoring its transfer payment programs effectively, the Ministry has placed increased focus on program accountability with the recent creation of the Program Evaluation and Performance Unit. The Ministry will explore best practices and implement a process to periodically verify the accuracy of the service and financial information reported by service providers.

4.2.2 Ministry Does Not Have Sufficient Information to Properly Monitor Access to Services

With the exception of the language training program, the Ministry does not collect wait times for the services it funds to help assess if newcomers are served on a timely basis.

Although the Ministry has the ability to produce reports on wait lists for language training, it advised us that it can only do so at a specific point in time and cannot produce reports demonstrating average wait times over a period of time. For example, it cannot determine the average wait time for learners in the most recent school year. Based on the limited point-in-time information the Ministry does collect (as described in **Section 4.1.2**) and feedback from the school boards we surveyed, wait times do not seem lengthy.

While the Ministry does not regularly collect specific information on the accessibility of its settlement and integration services, service providers we visited that deliver newcomer settlement services indicated that they were generally able to provide services to newcomers who sought help in person on the same day, and they accommodated newcomers who arranged appointments in advance within three weeks.

However, recent reports, including Ministry-commissioned external evaluations of its language

training and newcomer settlement services, identified accessibility concerns. For example:

- A Ministry-commissioned external evaluation of its language training program identified that newcomers face multiple barriers to accessing training, including a lack of child care, transportation and appropriate class times. Specifically, 76% of school board representatives surveyed as part of the evaluation indicated that a lack of child-care services was likely a barrier for immigrants who wish to attend language training, and 74% indicated that lack of transportation to attend class was also a barrier.
- An external evaluation of newcomer settlement services commissioned by the Ministry identified that only 8% of newcomer settlement service participants indicated they experienced problems getting service. Although 8% seems low, the evaluators cautioned that the actual proportion is likely greater, as those surveyed were the individuals who were able to access and get services. The most commonly cited problems were transportation issues, lack of child care, inconvenient hours and wait times.
- A 2012 study commissioned by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants identified that 62% of surveyed newcomers reported encountering problems getting settlement services in their area. A lack of transportation and distance to service providers were the most commonly identified problems.

4.2.3 Ministry Does Not Consistently Follow Up with Service Providers Who Fail to Meet Targets

Although the Ministry has processes in place to monitor whether service providers meet their service and performance targets for both the bridge training and newcomer settlement programs, we found that it did not consistently follow up with

service providers when they fell short of their targets, to assess if corrective action was needed. We describe our specific concerns about each program in the following sections.

Newcomer Settlement

Newcomer settlement service providers are required to provide a rationale when they fail to meet their service targets (such as the number of unique individuals served) by 10% or more, and Ministry staff are expected to review such differences and assess the rationale provided. We found that in 20% of the cases we reviewed, service providers missed their service targets by more than 10%, but there was no evidence to demonstrate that the Ministry followed up to determine whether the reasons for the variances were reasonable. For example, one service provider that provides services at multiple locations did not report the number of individuals served at one of its locations, and did not provide an explanation. The Ministry did not identify this on its review form.

Newcomer settlement service providers are also required to provide client profile data to help the Ministry better understand the composition of the newcomers it is serving, including a breakdown by gender, citizenship status, and number of years in Canada. We found that, in 45% of the cases we reviewed from 2015/16 and 2016/17, service providers provided either incomplete profile data or no profile data at all. There was no evidence that the Ministry followed up to obtain this data.

Bridge Training

Bridge training service providers are required to report on the status of their service targets, including the number of participants who have completed their program, obtained employment in their field or in a related field, and obtained licences in their profession. We reviewed the status reports submitted to the Ministry by a sample of service providers in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and identified that service providers often missed their

targets, but the Ministry did not always follow up to assess if the results were reasonable or if corrective action was needed. Specifically, we found that:

- 90% of the programs in our sample missed their employment and/or licensure targets by more than 10% in 2015/16, but there was no evidence that the Ministry followed up to assess the reasonability of the results, and/or to take corrective action. For example, three bridge training programs missed their employment target by more than 50%, but there was no evidence that the Ministry assessed these results to determine if they were reasonable.
- Although the Ministry implemented a process in the 2016/17 fiscal year that required Ministry employees to review whether bridge training programs were meeting their employment and licensure targets, and to ensure that reasonable explanations and plans to address shortcomings were obtained when they were not, we found this was not always the case. More than 75% of bridge training programs in our sample missed their employment and/or licensure targets by more than 10%. In more than 40% of these cases, the Ministry obtained adequate explanations from service providers. However, in the rest of the cases we evaluated, either the Ministry had yet to complete its review, or it had not obtained an adequate explanation for the results. For example, one bridge training program had missed its employment targets by 33% over the last three years, but there was no evidence the Ministry identified and assessed these results to determine if they were reasonable or required follow-up and/or corrective action.

4.2.4 Ministry Does Not Compare Service Providers to Confirm That They Operate Cost-Effectively

The Ministry does not compare service and financial data reported by service providers to assess

whether they are operating in a cost-effective manner, and to follow up in instances where differences suggest that they are not. In addition, the Ministry is not utilizing its information systems to enable it to undertake such comparisons.

Ministry Does Not Sufficiently Utilize Information Systems to Help Assess the Cost-Effectiveness of Service Providers

With the exception of language training, where detailed service information is recorded in the Ministry's IT systems, including with respect to individual learner progression in learning English or French, the Ministry is not sufficiently using its IT systems to aggregate service and financial information reported by service providers. As a result, the Ministry is not able to generate reports that compare service and financial information between service providers to identify significant differences.

Ministry Does Not Follow Up on Significant Cost Differences between Service Providers

Although the Ministry had manually aggregated much of the service and financial information reported by service providers, we found that it does not use this information to identify and assess significant cost differences between service providers to help identify opportunities to improve the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of its services.

We reviewed service and financial information aggregated by the Ministry at our request, and identified significant cost differences between service providers that should be followed up on to determine whether they are reasonable or where corrective action should be taken. Specifically, we found that:

- **The cost per client visit between newcomer settlement service providers differs substantially.** In 2016/17, the average cost per client visit for core newcomer settlement services was \$47, and ranged from a low of \$12 to a high of \$216.

- **The cost per participant differs drastically between bridge training programs.** Based on contracts completed in the last three fiscal years that included a training component for participants, we found substantial differences between bridge training program costs when comparing total Ministry transfer payments to the number of individuals who completed training; obtained employment in their field or in a related field after completing training; and became licensed in their profession after completing training. These differences are illustrated in **Figure 11**.
- **School board expenses differ significantly even though they are funded based on a set rate.** School boards are funded to deliver language training based on the enrolment they report multiplied by a set rate, irrespective of the revenues and expenses they incur. We analyzed revenues and expenses for language training reported by school boards for the 2015/16 school year and identified substantial differences in the financial positions of different school boards. Specifically, we found that:
 - the percentage of each school board's surplus/deficit ranged from a high of a 35% surplus to a low of a 53% deficit;
 - across all school boards, non-staff-related expenses reported averaged 19% of total expenses, and ranged from a low of 0% to a high of 67%; and
 - the surplus or deficit position of some school boards fluctuated wildly between years. For example, one school board's deficit ranged from a low of 1% to a high of 42% between the 2011/12 and 2015/16 school years. During this same period, another school board's financial results ranged from a deficit of 34% to a surplus of 40%.

Figure 11: Average Participant Costs by Bridge Training Program

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Bridge Training Programs	Cost per		
	Individual Completing Training (\$)	Cost per Individual Employed (\$)	Cost per Individual Licensed (\$)
Average	6,800	11,200	15,200
High	40,000	106,100	123,800
Low	1,800	3,600	3,400

RECOMMENDATION 4

So that settlement and integration services provided to newcomers are cost-effective, accessible and timely, and effectively meet the needs of newcomers, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:

- periodically collect relevant information (such as on wait times and barriers to accessing services) from service providers, newcomers and other relevant stakeholders and, where necessary, take corrective action;
- record all relevant service and financial information in its information systems to enable periodic monitoring of services and service providers;
- identify instances when service providers do not meet their contracted service and financial targets, follow up to assess the reasonableness of deviations from targets, and take corrective action where necessary; and
- periodically review and assess the significant differences between service provider costs to assess their reasonability, and to take action when they are not reasonable.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and acknowledges the need to assess cost-effectiveness, accessibility and timeliness of services. As a result, the Ministry is taking steps to enhance data analytics, performance measurement, accountability and oversight.

The Ministry is implementing a multi-year data analytics strategy that will guide collection and use of data from existing data sources, service providers, newcomers and other stakeholders. The goal of the strategy is to incorporate timely, reliable and quality data to support evidence-based decision-making to achieve better outcomes.

In the next year, the Ministry will be developing plans and systems for maximizing use of its IT and data collection systems for recording and analyzing service information (including on wait times and accessibility), and financial information for all its transfer payment programs. This will enable the Ministry to identify unmet targets and take corrective actions as needed. The Ministry will review and enhance its business processes, including mechanisms for escalating issues of poor performance, and will enhance staff training to ensure understanding and adherence to the Ministry's monitoring procedures.

The Ministry will also explore options and models for assessing service provider costs with a view to determining reasonable cost ranges by program/service type against which service providers will be periodically assessed.

4.3 Performance Measurement Is Insufficient to Enable Management to Make Informed Decisions and Assess Whether Newcomers Are Successfully Settled

The Ministry has not defined what constitutes a successfully settled and integrated newcomer to enable it to assess whether it is meeting its objective to successfully settle and integrate newcomers. In addition, the Ministry does not collect sufficient performance information about its services, and does not always analyze the performance information it does collect, to assess whether they are working. It also has not maintained consistent per-

formance indicators from year to year to enable it to measure the progress of newcomers, as well as the effectiveness of its services in helping newcomers to settle and integrate.

4.3.1 Ministry Has Not Defined What Constitutes a Successfully Settled Newcomer Who No Longer Needs Services

Although the Ministry's goal is to successfully settle and integrate newcomers socially and economically, it has not established milestones and time frames to determine when this goal is reached. In other words, the Ministry has not determined at what point a newcomer is settled and integrated, and thus no longer "new." We noted that while the federal government has also not defined what constitutes a successfully settled and integrated newcomer, it does not fund settlement services for immigrants who have obtained their Canadian citizenship. Its rationale is that, generally, newcomers should be settled and integrated by the time they obtain their citizenship. Conversely, naturalized Canadian citizens are still eligible for Ministry-funded settlement services because the Ministry believes that many newcomers still require integration services after they have become Canadian citizens.

Ministry management indicated that establishing appropriate milestones (and associated time frames to achieve them) would be helpful in periodically measuring the progress of newcomers in settling and integrating. Similarly, the newcomer settlement service providers we visited agreed that it would be beneficial to periodically measure the settlement and integration progress of newcomers. Having these measures would also highlight that it can take a long time for newcomers to become settled, and some newcomers need more help to do so. For example, we noted that:

- **Many immigrants require language training even after many years in Canada.**

Twenty-five percent of newcomers who attended Ministry-funded language training

in the past school year had been in Canada for more than 10 years, and 45% had been in Canada for five years or longer.

- **Almost half of newcomers taking language training who were in Canada long enough to apply for citizenship did not have the English and French language skills to do so.** Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least four out of six years before applying for citizenship—three out of five years as of October 2017. However, we found that in the 2015/16 school year (the most recent completed), just 52% of language learners who met these criteria were at the level of listening and speaking proficiency (Canadian language benchmark 4) required to obtain citizenship.
- **Many immigrants still require the assistance of newcomer settlement agencies after many years in Canada.** Forty-six per cent of clients served in newcomer settlement services in 2016/17 had been in Canada for more than five years, and 40% of clients had already obtained their Canadian citizenship.

4.3.2 Performance Indicators That Measure Progress of Newcomers and Effectiveness of Services Have Changed from Year to Year

The Ministry has not had consistent performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of its settlement and integration services. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15, the Ministry had no performance indicators at all; in 2015/16 it had 27 performance indicators; and it had just one performance indicator in 2016/17. In addition, these performance indicators did not always include targets, and the indicators changed from year to year, limiting the Ministry's ability to measure its progress.

We noted that as part of its 2017/18 plans, the Ministry established four new performance indicators it intends to track results on in the future. They are described in **Appendix 2**. The Ministry has identified targets and time frames for these

indicators, but it will take at least two years to begin to assess whether any of its targets have been achieved. However, as described in the following section, we found that the performance indicators will not sufficiently monitor the settlement and integration outcomes of newcomers.

4.3.3 Ministry Does Not Consistently Monitor the Performance of Its Services and Service Providers to Facilitate Corrective Action Where Needed

The Ministry does not consistently monitor the performance information it collects from service providers that deliver settlement and integration services to identify instances that require follow-up and corrective action.

As noted in **Section 4.3.2**, the Ministry has not had consistent performance indicators to help measure the effectiveness of its settlement and integration services. Nevertheless, we noted that Ministry staff responsible for individual services have been collecting some performance information from service providers. However, the Ministry has not established a systematic process for collating and analyzing this information and could not demonstrate that senior management was using this information to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the Ministry's settlement and integration services and make informed decisions.

We reviewed the performance information and results for language training, newcomer settlement and bridge training programs and found that the Ministry did not always monitor performance to identify areas that clearly required follow-up and/or corrective action. We identify our specific concerns relating to each program in the following sections.

Language Training

Although the Ministry collects detailed information from school boards on learner progress in attaining proficiency in English and French, it is not using

this information to identify, follow up, and determine if action needs to be taken where significant performance differences exist.

The Ministry has two performance indicators in place for language training focused on learner outcomes:

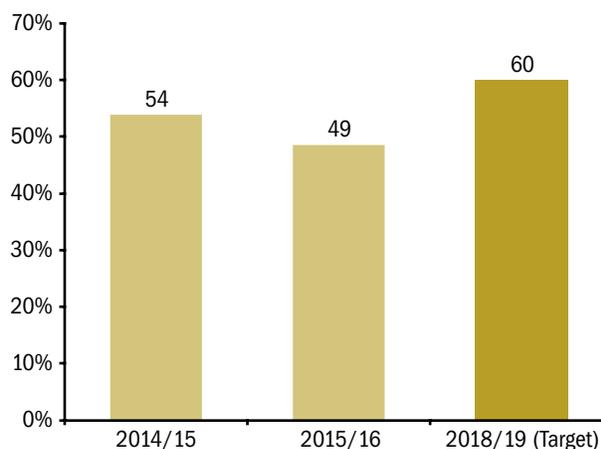
- percentage of learners attending at least 100 hours of training who progressed by at least one Canadian language benchmark level in at least one skill area (reading, writing, listening or speaking) within a school year; and
- percentage of learners surveyed who found language training helpful in achieving their goals.

The Ministry cautioned about the use of the data it collects, noting that learner progress assessment practices can differ between instructors and school boards, and that full implementation of its standardized assessment practices is not due until the 2017/18 school year. However, our analysis of Ministry data as well as client feedback obtained through surveys still identified learner results that should be followed up, including the following examples:

- **Less than half of all learners are showing progress in learning English or French.** The Ministry's target is for 60% of learners who received at least 100 hours of language training in a school year to progress by at least one Canadian language benchmark in at least one skill area within a school year by 2018/19. However, in the most recent school year (2015/16), just 49% of learners met this target, compared to 54% in 2014/15, as illustrated in **Figure 12**.
- **Learner progress at individual school boards differed substantially**, ranging from no learners who received at least 100 hours of language training progressing in a school year at one school board, to 78% progressing at another school board. At one in three school boards, we found that less than 40% of learners progressed by at least one Canadian language benchmark in a school year.

Figure 12: Percentage of Learners Progressing by One Canadian Language Benchmark in One Skill Area

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



Note: The Ministry has set a target for 60% of language learners who received at least 100 hours of language training in a school year to progress by one Canadian language benchmark level in at least one skill area (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in a school year by 2018/19.

- **Learner progress is still low among participants who received more instruction.** The Ministry measures learner progress based on the percentage of learners attending at least 100 hours of training who progressed by at least one Canadian language benchmark level in at least one skill area (reading/writing/listening/speaking) within a school year. However, in a 2016 external evaluation of the language training program commissioned by the Ministry, school board representatives reported that the mean time to progress in English in each of the four skills areas was significantly longer and ranged from 200 to 250 hours. We found that in the 2015/16 school year, across all school boards, just 21% of English learners with 250 or more hours of instruction progressed by an average of one Canadian language benchmark level across the four skill areas. Furthermore, we found that learner progress differed across school boards, ranging from no learners progressing by an average of one Canadian language benchmark to 71% of learners progressing. At almost half the school boards, less than 20%

of learners progressed by an average of one Canadian language benchmark. Some school boards we spoke to told us that achieving this result can take longer than 250 hours. Nevertheless, we found that across all school boards only 27% of English learners with 500 or more hours of instruction achieved this result. As well, we found that just 33% of English learners with 800 or more hours of instruction progressed by an average of one Canadian language benchmark.

- **Many language training learners report their objectives have not been met.** The last Ministry survey of language training learners (in 2013) reported that 88% of learners found language training helpful in achieving their goals. However, current and past language learners surveyed as part of a 2016 external evaluation of the language training program identified that the satisfaction rate may not be a good indicator of whether language training helped them meet their education and employment objectives. For example, only 58% of English learners and 37% of French learners indicated their language improved enough to get a job. In addition, only 59% of English learners and 41% of French learners indicated their language improved enough to get more education or training.

Newcomer Settlement

The Ministry does not periodically measure and monitor the effectiveness of its newcomer settlement services. It has just one outcome-based performance indicator related to newcomer settlement services—the percentage of clients surveyed who reported being better able to make informed decisions about life in Ontario after receiving settlement services.

The last time clients were surveyed (in 2013), 89% reported being better able to make informed decisions after receiving settlement services. However, no surveys have been conducted since then.

Bridge Training

Although the Ministry collects information on participant completion, employment and licensure outcomes from bridge training service providers, it does not always use this information to identify and follow up on significant differences in client outcomes to assess if they are reasonable and/or require corrective action.

The Ministry's service-specific performance indicators for bridge training focusing on client outcomes include:

- percentage of clients that completed a bridge training program who become licensed in their regulated profession; and
- percentage of clients that completed a bridge training program who get a job in their field or in a related field.

Our review of data collected by the Ministry on these indicators identified the following:

- **The Ministry does not compare the results of bridge training programs to one another.** We identified significant differences in the results among bridge training service provider contracts completed in the last three years that the Ministry has not followed up on to assess if they are reasonable. We noted the following differences:
 - **Employment rates between bridge training programs differ significantly.** While the average employment rate among all bridge training programs was 71%, this includes several programs that do not include actual training for participants. Instead, these programs include a variety of supports to assist participants to obtain employment, such as referrals to employment services and licensing bodies, peer mentorship, and encouragement of employers to hire newcomers. Thus, results are not directly comparable. The average employment rate among programs that did include training for newcomers was 61%. However, one in five of these programs

reported that less than 40% of those who completed training obtained employment.

- **Licensure rates among participants completing bridge training programs are low and differ significantly between programs.** We found that the average licensure rate among all bridge training programs that include training was 48%, although one-quarter of bridge training programs reported that less than 30% of those who completed training obtained their licence. Ministry explanations for this discrepancy include that participants often require a significant amount of time to obtain a licence after completing their program, and also that when participants obtain their licences after they complete the program the Ministry may no longer be obtaining information on their outcomes. However, while these explanations are reasonable, such differences should be followed up on to assess if they indicate problems at certain service providers. We also noted that these results are significantly lower than the 64% who were found to have obtained their licence after completing their bridge training program in a 2016 external evaluation commissioned by the Ministry. This evaluation, however, captured results from participants who completed the programs before the end of 2014 and thus may have allowed them more time to obtain their licences.
- **Information reported on employment and licensure results does not provide sufficient information to accurately measure results.** The Ministry collects employment and licensure results from service providers based on the number of individuals who have completed their course and obtained employment and/or licensure each fiscal year, instead of consistently collecting results at set intervals after participants complete training (such as one year and two years after comple-

tion). As a result, the percentage of those who are reported to have obtained employment or licences can be misleading, as they are not necessarily the same participants who completed training that year. The Ministry does not continue to collect information on employment and licensure from programs once contracts expire, and thus it does not have the complete employment and licensure outcomes of the program's participants.

4.3.4 Ministry's Performance Indicators Are Not Sufficient to Monitor Settlement and Integration Outcomes

As described in **Appendix 2**, the Ministry has put in place four new performance indicators including the rates of newcomer employment and unemployment relative to other Ontarians, acquisition of language skills, and Ontario's retention of newcomers. However, these indicators may not be sufficient to monitor the settlement and integration outcomes of the newcomers it serves. Specifically:

- **Ministry performance indicators do not measure key aspects of integration, including health, housing and education.** As noted in **Section 4.3.1**, the Ministry has not established settlement and integration milestones and time frames for their achievement for all newcomers. Conversely, we noted that the Ministry's Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (now Refugee Resettlement Secretariat) developed a performance measurement framework with performance indicators that it plans to track specific to Syrian refugees, to measure this group's settlement and integration progress with a broader lens. Although targets, time frames and definitions for these indicators have yet to be established, the Secretariat plans to measure refugee progress across four dimensions: settlement and integration, health, education, and economics (as described in **Appendix 4**). Cabinet expects the Ministry to implement this framework and

measure the progress of Syrian refugees for a minimum of five years, and report back to Cabinet on the effectiveness of the framework and its applicability to other vulnerable populations. The Ministry's senior management agreed that their performance indicators are lacking, and additional performance indicators for all newcomers similar to those included in the Secretariat's framework would be useful. In addition, Ministry management indicated that performance information on services provided to newcomers by other Ministries would also be useful to help measure the settlement and integration successes of newcomers.

- **Ministry employment targets are not detailed enough to monitor newcomer employment and inform policy and programming decisions.** The Ministry has a set target for the rate of unemployment among immigrants landing in the last 10 years: it is to be no more than 40% higher than that of their Canadian-born counterparts. However, we noted that the Ministry has not set targets that monitor the difference in the unemployment rate at different dates. For example, we noted that in 2016 the unemployment rate among Ontario newcomers who had been in Canada for five or fewer years was 80% higher than that of those born in Canada. By comparison, the unemployment rate for Ontario newcomers living in Canada for more than five to 10 years was just 40% higher than those born in Canada.
- **The Ministry's performance indicator for newcomer employment does not include their income levels.** According to the 2011 National Household Survey, almost 34% of Ontario newcomers who had been in Canada for less than five years were classified as having low incomes. In contrast, just 19% of Ontario newcomers who had been in Canada for five to 10 years had low incomes, and just 12% of Canadian-born Ontarians had low incomes.
- **There is no indicator to measure the number of newcomers receiving social assistance.** While the Ministry has established a performance indicator that compares employment rates of newcomers to their Canadian-born counterparts, it has not established an indicator to measure what happens to newcomers who do not obtain employment. As described in **Section 4.6**, over the last 10 years, those born outside of Canada have accounted for about one-third of all Ontario Works social assistance cases and received approximately 40% of all Ontario Works benefits paid.
- **Ministry learning targets for language training provide little insight into whether newcomer language training goals are met.** The Ministry is targeting 60% of language learners who took at least 100 hours of language training to progress by one Canadian language benchmark level in at least one skill area in a school year by 2018/19. However, it has not put in place performance indicators and targets to determine whether learners are making sufficient progress in language training to meet their academic and employment goals. Ministry management agreed that measuring whether newcomers make sufficient progress in their language training to meet their specific academic and employment goals would be helpful.
- **Ministry language training indicators do not track the dropout rate and reasons for it.** The Ministry has not established a target for course completion. A survey of language training participants by an external evaluator found that 52% of English and French language learners did not complete their courses, for reasons that included not having enough time, or working; family responsibilities; classes that were boring; classes that were too easy; and transportation challenges.

RECOMMENDATION 5

To help determine whether the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's (Ministry's) settlement and integration goals for newcomers are met, and to enable the Ministry to assess the effectiveness of the settlement and integration services it funds, we recommend that the Ministry:

- establish settlement and integration milestones for newcomers and reasonable time frames for achieving such milestones to measure against;
- establish performance indicators and targets that provide sufficient information to help the Ministry measure the progress of newcomers and the outcomes from specific services provided to newcomers in helping them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario; and
- consistently monitor the performance of its services and service providers to identify and take corrective action where targets and expectations are not being met.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with the Auditor General's recommendation to establish settlement and integration milestones and time frames against which to measure newcomers' integration progress.

The Ministry notes that integration progress varies according to individual circumstances with factors such as age, family and social networks, and past experiences. The Ministry will study this recommendation and will build on the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Performance Measurement Framework being implemented by the Refugee Resettlement Secretariat, and leverage inter-ministerial and federal, provincial and territorial work under way. The Ministry will identify and establish settlement and integration milestones for newcomers, and reason-

able time frames for achieving such milestones. The Ministry will also establish performance indicators and targets to measure the settlement and integration progress of newcomers.

The Ministry also agrees there is a need to develop a performance and outcomes measurement framework to measure newcomer outcomes from specific services. The Ministry is developing a multi-year data strategy and a new performance management strategy to help assess the effectiveness of its programs. The Ministry will work with the federal government, through the Settlement Memorandum of Understanding being negotiated as part of the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, to develop a joint evaluation framework for assessing outcomes of specific services.

The Ministry will use a risk-based approach to enhance the monitoring of its services and service providers to enable early warning signals for corrective action where targets and expectations are not being met.

4.4 Some Newcomers Are Not Aware of Available Settlement Services

Although the Ministry provides information on the settlement and integration services it funds on its websites, it does not have a formal communications strategy and has not assessed the effectiveness of its communications efforts to determine if it is meeting the needs of newcomers. We reviewed external evaluations commissioned by the Ministry on its settlement and integration services, spoke with newcomer settlement service providers, and reviewed Ministry service data on language training, and we noted that newcomers may not always be aware of the services available to them. Specifically:

- **Awareness of language training can be improved.** All the school boards that responded to our survey indicated that newcomers were somewhat or very aware of the

language training programs available at their school board. In contrast, a recent (2016) external evaluation of language training commissioned by the Ministry identified that both service providers (school boards) and learners noted that in many cases immigrants who have access to language training do not know about it, do not know they are eligible for it, and do not know that it is free of charge. For example, 60% of school board representatives surveyed indicated that lack of awareness of language training services was likely a barrier for immigrants who wish to access such services.

- **Newcomer settlement service providers report that awareness could be improved.** Four out of five newcomer settlement service providers we visited informed us that awareness of settlement services could be improved. One service provider estimated that 40% of newcomers were not aware of settlement services available. All the service providers we spoke to indicated that they primarily rely on word of mouth for outreach, and that further outreach activities would be helpful in reaching newcomers.
- **Newcomers may not be aware of services available to them because the Ministry's websites are only in English and French.** The Ministry provides information about the settlement and integration services it funds for newcomers, including services offered and their locations, on two websites. However, because the websites are available in only English and French, newcomers not proficient in either language may not find them useful to get the information they need. Our review of language training data collected from school boards further identified that language barriers may contribute to newcomers not being aware of available services. We analyzed language learner data collected by the Ministry and found that almost 30% of those enrolled in language training in the 2015/16 school year (the most recent completed) were at an

average Canadian language benchmark level of two or less on a 12-level scale, indicating a very low level of language proficiency. As well, the 2016 external evaluation of language training included a survey of school board representatives and identified that 74% of respondents indicated that lack of information promoting language training services in the first language of newcomers is a reason why learners lack awareness of the program.

- **The Ministry has not assessed the effectiveness of its communications efforts to identify gaps and help ensure newcomers are aware of services available to them.** The Ministry does not have a formal communications strategy or a process in place to assess the effectiveness of its efforts to promote newcomer settlement services. For example, the Ministry supports the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants with funding to develop and provide information online about relevant services available, such as health care, education and social services. However, similar to its own websites, the Ministry has not assessed the effectiveness of this arrangement along with the content being used in ensuring that newcomers are aware of the settlement and integration services available in Ontario. The Ministry also expects service providers to promote their settlement and integration services, but does not have a process in place to assess the effectiveness of the service providers' efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 6

To help ensure that newcomers are aware of available services that can help them successfully settle and integrate in Ontario, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration:

- translate its relevant website and other key information about its settlement services into languages that are understood by newcomers;

- assess the effectiveness of its communications efforts to identify and take action on areas of weakness; and
- work with service providers to identify opportunities to further improve newcomer awareness of services in Ontario.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and recognizes the importance of newcomers having access to information in their first language that could assist them in their settlement and integration efforts, or to become aware of the programs and services available to them. The Ministry will take steps to assess the effectiveness of its communication efforts to identify opportunities to improve newcomer awareness.

Going forward, the Ministry will assess and translate key general immigration information for the government's website, and work with service providers to increase outreach efforts to raise awareness of services among newcomers pre- and post-arrival.

4.5 Silos in Service Delivery Keep Provincial and Federal Programs from Realizing Their Full Potential to Help Newcomers

Although the Ministry and the federal government both provide similar services to help settle and integrate newcomers, there has been limited co-ordination to date to avoid duplication of the services they both provide.

Over the years, the Ministry has worked with the federal government in some instances to co-ordinate the settlement and integration services they provide to newcomers. For example, the Ministry collaborated with the federal government to fund language assessment centres that initially assess the language skills of all newcomers interested in language training and refer newcomers to both federal and Ministry-funded language training. In addition,

the Ministry has worked with the federal government to secure over \$40 million in federal funding between 2011/12 and 2016/17 for its bridge training programs. However, the Ministry and its federal counterpart do not exchange information on the services they provide, such as funding for specific programs, number of individuals served, wait times, and outcomes to help minimize duplication of services and to meet the needs of newcomers.

The Ministry previously had an agreement with the federal government to co-ordinate their respective settlement and integration services, although it expired in 2011 and has not been replaced. While the Ministry is negotiating a new agreement with the federal government, both parties advised us that the primary reason for the delay in reaching an agreement has been conflicting views on which party should be responsible for managing federal funding in Ontario. In the absence of an agreement, the Ministry advised us that action has yet to be taken on some key priorities identified by both parties, including:

- assessing current needs and determining priorities to develop a joint plan to guide services to newcomers;
- exploring ways to harmonize the delivery of federal and provincial settlement and integration services to eliminate duplication and respond to emerging needs; and
- developing and implementing a performance measurement strategy to guide ongoing joint performance data collection, and ensure that information is available to support future evaluation activities.

As noted in **Section 4.1.1**, a significant proportion of Ministry-funded language training learners and newcomer settlement clients are also eligible for federally funded services. Services to these individuals account for approximately \$30 million, or 30% of Ministry funding provided to service providers to deliver settlement and integration services. In many cases, the same service providers deliver both federal and Ministry-funded services, indicating an opportunity for cost efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION 7

To improve the efficiency of its settlement and integration services and the outcomes of the newcomers they are provided to, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration work with the federal government to:

- put in place as soon as possible an agreement to co-ordinate their settlement and integration services to minimize duplication of services; and
- identify and share best practices in the delivery of settlement and integration services for newcomers.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry welcomes this recommendation. Canada and Ontario have completed a Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, which will be signed in winter 2017–18. This framework agreement is legally binding and is a first step in creating better alignment and building a stronger partnership in the areas of planning, policy, operations and information sharing. The Agreement formalizes the collaboration between Canada and Ontario, and joint efforts in advancing shared priorities.

Co-ordination with the federal government will be enhanced through the Settlement Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum) being negotiated as part of the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. The Memorandum will guide bilateral collaboration over the next five years, in areas such as sharing of information on needs, best practices and outcomes, to support effective co-ordination of federal and provincial programs to maximize investments, improve service delivery, reduce duplication and address service gaps.

4.6 Co-ordination between Ministries Has Been Inadequate to Help with Overall Integration of Newcomers

Even though other ministries provide services that may contribute to the settlement and integration of newcomers in Ontario, we noted that the Ministry has done little to formally co-ordinate with them, with the exception of a few cases. For example, the Ministry is participating in a new Adult Education Strategy led by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development through actions that include its commitment to sustaining funding for its bridge training program. In addition, the Ministry's former Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (Secretariat) led cross-government efforts to support the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in Ontario. As described in **Section 2.3.1**, the Secretariat consulted with organizations and individuals involved in resettling Syrian refugees to identify and make recommendations on opportunities for improving service delivery to the Ministry as well as other ministries. Although the Secretariat advised that specific action has yet to be taken, identified gaps and recommendations included:

- **Employment**—The Secretariat noted that refugees experienced numerous challenges in securing employment. It identified that Syrian refugees require innovative language, training and employment solutions for adults with low skills, limited literacy and language skills, and limited comfort with classroom learning. It recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development evaluate pathways to service for its Employment Ontario programs and examine potential opportunities to support low-skilled refugee newcomers with low language skills to access targeted employment supports sooner.
- **Housing**—The Secretariat identified that accessing affordable housing has been a key challenge for refugees. It notes that in many cases housing costs exceed monthly income

support from the federal government and/or financial support from private sponsors. It has recommended that the Ministry of Housing consider the needs of refugees as part of a long-term affordable housing strategy and in future program design.

- **Health**—The Secretariat also identified that Syrian refugees had difficulty navigating the health-care system in Ontario. As well, it noted that those with low language skills lack an understanding of Ontario’s health system. The Secretariat recommended that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care evaluate the effectiveness of existing pathways and explore potential alternatives to support refugee access to primary and specialist health care.

However, with the exception of the Secretariat’s work surrounding Syrian refugees, we found that Ministry co-ordination with other Ontario ministries (as described in **Section 2.5**) that provide services to newcomers that can help them to settle and integrate has been limited. The Ministry is also not aware of the total spending related to newcomers across all ministries in Ontario, and advised that no one ministry has this information. As well, the Ministry does not have formal arrangements in place to receive information from other ministries on the number of newcomers they serve and their outcomes. The Ministry’s senior management agreed that such information could assist in determining the degree to which newcomers are settling and integrating. The information could also assist the Ministry to identify barriers newcomers are facing and encourage them to take further advantage of available services.

We contacted several ministries and identified a number of services they provide that can contribute to the successful integration of newcomers. Several ministries provided us with information about the number of newcomers (individuals born outside of Canada) they serve and, where available, service outcomes. For example:

- The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development identified that:
 - because clients self-identify their residency status, it does not know whether almost three-quarters of its Employment Ontario clients were born in or outside of Canada;
 - where it did have records it identified that in 2016/17, of the 23,500 clients who self-identified as newcomers to Canada who had completed their Employment Ontario services (such as literacy and basic skills, and employment services to assist in finding a job), more than 8,500, or 36%, found full-time employment at the time their services were completed. This was in line with the 38% rate achieved by their Canadian-born counterparts; and
 - between December 2015 and July 2017, more than 2,100 Syrian refugees accessed Employment Ontario services, and 36% of those who completed their services had obtained full-time employment.
- The Ministry of Education identified that for those who began high school in the 2011/12 school year, 89.3% of the almost 22,000 students born outside of Canada graduated high school. This was greater than the 86% average for Canadian-born students. In addition, 85.1% of students living in Canada for five or fewer years graduated high school. While the Ministry of Education told us that it does not track the cost of serving newcomers, it did on a one-time basis track the costs to serve Syrian refugee children in 2015/16 and found it incurred costs that totalled almost \$16 million.
- The Ministry of the Status of Women funds a number of services for women including newcomers. For example, in 2016/17 it funded employment training for approximately 280 women who identified themselves as being abused and/or at-risk. Approximately one-quarter of these women identified themselves as immigrants, and most had been in

Canada for five years or more. However, it did not capture program outcome results for newcomer women. This Ministry also funded a campaign for family legal education for women (about women's rights under Ontario and Canadian law) that reached over 236,000 women in 2016/17 through workshops, webinars, website visits and social media. However, the Ministry does not break down the results into the number of newcomer women reached under this program.

- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Ministry of Health), through Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), funds Ontario's 75 Community Health Centres (CHCs) to provide primary health care and community health programs and services to individuals, including those who face barriers accessing health-care services, such as refugees, new immigrants and people who do not have health insurance. As of March 31, 2017, these health centres were serving approximately 500,000 clients, about 10% of whom were newcomers who had been in Canada for 10 or fewer years. Meaningful outcome data for clients of CHCs (including newcomers) is not collected by either the LHINs or the Ministry of Health.
- The Ministry of the Attorney General funds Legal Aid Ontario to provide legal services to low-income individuals in Ontario, including newcomers. Legal Aid Ontario identified that in 2016/17 approximately 10%, or almost \$23 million, of its total expenditures for certificate services (vouchers for legal services, such as to pay for a lawyer to represent a client in court) were for newcomers. In most of these instances, the expenditures related to asylum seekers to assist them with their legal proceedings for the determination of their refugee status. The Ministry could not provide outcome data on the number of asylum seekers granted refugee status.

Newcomers who are not able to successfully integrate economically may require financial support from the Ontario Works program administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In 2016/17, it provided Ontario Works benefits to almost 120,000 cases where the primary applicant was born outside of Canada (including almost 40,000 cases involving primary applicants who had arrived in Canada since 2012). These cases involved more than 240,000 recipients, and total benefits paid amounted to almost \$850 million. Over the last 10 years, those born outside of Canada have accounted for about one-third of all Ontario Works cases and received approximately 40% of all Ontario Works benefits paid. Over this same period, the average length of time on Ontario Works (based on the duration of the client's most recent term) for recipients born outside of Canada was 25 months, compared to 18 months for their Canadian-born counterparts.

In addition, a 2012 presentation by the Ministry of Community and Social Services on the profile of immigrants on social assistance in Ontario identified that these immigrants were more educated than their Canadian-born counterparts. While 29% of immigrants on social assistance had 14 years or more of education, just 17% of Canadian-born social assistance recipients had attained that level of education.

RECOMMENDATION 8

To help meet the needs of the newly arrived Syrian refugees, we recommend the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Refugee Resettlement Secretariat work with the other ministries it has provided recommendations to on services that include employment, health and housing, in order to establish timelines for their implementation, and to periodically report on their progress.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and is committed to working across the Ontario Government, with other levels of government, and across the sector to address the lessons learned during the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

The Ministry will work with ministries on the recommendations provided by the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat to establish timelines for their implementation and report on their progress. The Ministry will provide a report on progress to resettle Syrian refugees that highlights the unique whole-of-government approach that was taken to mobilize and co-ordinate multiple ministries, the federal government, municipalities, settlement agencies, school boards, community groups and individual Ontarians. The report will also highlight lessons learned from the resettlement efforts, and will identify next steps to address gaps.

RECOMMENDATION 9

To help meet its goal to successfully settle and integrate newcomers, we recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration work with other ministries that provide services that can contribute to the successful integration of newcomers to:

- obtain and use information on the number and outcomes of newcomers served in these programs, to help the Ministry assess the degree to which newcomers are settling and integrating; and

- identify and explore opportunities to increase the use of services that demonstrate a significant contribution to the settlement and integration of newcomers.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation and recognizes the importance of inter-ministerial collaboration to improve services for newcomers. The Ministry will build on the work of the Refugee Resettlement Secretariat to leverage existing partnerships and explore opportunities to enhance information sharing with other ministries on the number of newcomers they serve and their outcomes, and to identify opportunities to increase the use of services that successfully contribute to newcomer settlement and integration.

RECOMMENDATION 10

We recommend that the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration collect relevant information to further inform its discussions with the federal government, which is responsible for immigration in Canada, with respect to the federal government's allocation of funding to the Province.

MINISTRY RESPONSE

The Ministry agrees with this recommendation.

The Ministry will work with partner ministries, stakeholders and service providers to collect relevant information to further inform its discussions with the federal government on federal funding of settlement services in Ontario.

Appendix 1: Ministry Oversight of Service Providers

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Oversight Activity	Description
Risk assessment of service providers	<p>The Ministry assesses risks at the service provider in the following categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance 2. Program delivery and services 3. Stakeholder satisfaction 4. Financial 5. Legal 6. Technology 7. Information 8. Human resources <p>A five-point scale is used to rate risk in each category and an overall risk score is determined. The higher the score, the higher the risk. High-risk service providers are monitored more closely than medium or low-risk providers. For example, Ministry staff may visit or engage in more frequent communication with the service provider or undertake an audit of the services it funds.</p>
Progress reports	<p>Service providers submit progress reports to the Ministry that detail actual expenditures and service volumes, compared to contracted targets. The reports include explanations for significant variances between the actual and contracted services and/or financial targets.*</p> <p>The Ministry reviews the reports and follows up with service providers where concerns are identified.</p>
Organizations submit audited financial statements	<p>Organizations that provide Bridge Training and Refugee Resettlement Services are required to include in their financial statements service specific disclosures.</p>

* School boards that only deliver Language Training report revised and final enrolment figures, as well as annual program expenditures. They are not expected to explain variances between actual and budgeted targets.

Appendix 2: Ministry Performance Indicators

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Key Performance Indicator	Baseline Value	Target Value	Year to Achieve Target
Ratio of immigrant to Canadian-born unemployment rates*	1.50 (based on 2015/16 results)	1.40	2020/21
Percentage of immigrants still living in Ontario five years after arrival	93.3% (based on 2013/14 results)	96%	2020/21
Percentage of internationally-trained individuals who completed an Ontario Bridge Training Program and obtained a licence in their regulated occupation	63.7% (based on 2014 survey results)	68%	2020/21
Percentage of learners progressing by at least one Canadian Language Benchmark level within a school year	54% (based on 2014/15 results)	60%	2018/19

* The Ministry has set a target for the rate of unemployment among immigrants landing in the last 10 years to be no more than 40% higher than that of their Canadian-born counterparts by 2020/21.

Appendix 3: Audit Criteria

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario

1. Settlement and integration services and programs are accessible, timely, and appropriate to the needs of newcomers and delivered in compliance with legislative, policy and program requirements.
2. Performance measures and targets are established, monitored and compared against actual results to ensure that the intended outcomes are achieved and that corrective actions are taken on a timely basis when issues are identified.
3. Information systems provide complete, accurate and timely information for program performance measurement and reporting.
4. Funding allocations are applied to service providers based on established needs, commensurate with the value of services to be provided, and evaluated on a regular basis.
5. Effective processes are in place to co-ordinate efforts and the sharing of best practices between the Ministry and the federal government, as well as other ministries that provide services that can help settle and integrate newcomers.

Appendix 4: Former Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat Performance Measurement and Outcome Indicators

Source of data: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Domain	Targeted Outcomes	Performance Indicators
Settlement and Integration	Refugees live in suitable housing and feel socially connected to their communities and Canada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of belonging to local community • Housing (adequacy, affordability and suitability)
Health	Refugees have high levels of physical and mental health and have access to health-care services at rates similar to other Canadians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good physical health • Good mental health • Rate of access to health-care services
Education	Refugees have access to education and training at an equitable rate that supports their personal potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language (English/French) at conversational level • Progressing through post-secondary and apprenticeship
Economics	Refugees enjoy levels of income on par with other Canadians over time and do not rely on social assistance for long-term economic security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment or self-employment (that matches education) • Income (other than social assistance) • Receipt of social assistance