

IMMIGRANT-SERVING AGENCY (ISA)

WHAT IS AN IMMIGRANT-SERVING AGENCY (ISA)?

An immigrant-serving agency is an organization that provides services to immigrants to help with their settlement and integration into their new community.

They are almost exclusively non-profit organizations and are usually run by a volunteer board of directors overseeing a paid staff. Funding comes from a combination of government grants and donations from the public and/or private sector donors. The majority of services are targeted to those with permanent residency but in New Brunswick some services are available for individuals without permanent residency. Their services are free to newcomers.



What services do ISAs offer?

The services that any given ISA can offer will vary depending on the needs of newcomers in its area of operation and the resources it is able to access. However, services that an ISA may offer include:

Needs Assessment, Community Orientation, and Referral

This service involves a settlement worker determining with the newcomer family what steps need to be taken in order for the family to be fully engaged in the community. It includes information on and help with:

- Getting social insurance numbers
- Getting Medicare cards
- Getting a driver's license
- Enrolling children in school
- Knowing where and how to access health care
- Public education can help you prepare your community for the arrival of your immigrant
- Any other steps the family needs to be successfully settled.



Language classes

Many ISAs offer language classes, although the format may vary. Some offer the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, which is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). These classes may be full time (five hours per day, Monday to Friday) or part time. Others may offer less formal language classes such as conversation circles.



Employment Assistance

Some ISAs can offer newcomers, including spouses of the foreign nationals that you as an employer recently recruited, help with creating a Canadian-style resume and assist them with understanding the Canadian job interview process. They may also be able to help the newcomer determine their path to foreign qualification recognition or alternate career paths.

Translation and/or Interpretation Services

ISA staff or volunteers may be able to help with translation of documents, and/or may be able to assist newcomers with interpretation during such events as parent-teacher meetings.

Specialized Targeted Programming

Many ISAs also offer supplementary targeted programming such as programs for children and youth (including summer camps); programming for women, men or seniors; parenting or cooking classes; and so on.

Public Education

ISAs work to educate the public on the importance and benefits of multiculturalism and diversity immigration. They hold social events where newcomers and longtime locals can mix and get to know each other. Most also offer cultural competency training, in which new employees learn how to more effectively communicate and work with people whose ethnocultural background is different from their own.

How can an ISA help me?

How can partnering with an ISA help you as an employer?

- **SETTLEMENT SERVICES** are closely linked to immigrant retention.
- **ISAs SERVE THE WHOLE FAMILY.** Helping to make the entire family happy in their new life is a big factor in keeping people in a community long term.
- **ISAs CAN OFTEN BE FLEXIBLE.** They may be able to work with you to provide services that meet your needs, such as evening language classes for your employees or worksite language training. (The latter may require some financial commitment on your part.)
- **CULTURAL COMPETENCY** training can help improve productivity and help all those in a workplace with cultural diversity to understand their co-workers better and lead to a more harmonious workplace with improved productivity.
- **PUBLIC EDUCATION** can help you prepare your community for the arrival of your immigrant workers and their families, and social events will help them integrate into your community.

For a settlement agency near you, visit:

<http://www.nb-mc.ca/members/>



FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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