



Rural Immigration & Health

**Exploring the impact of service
gaps on newcomer health in 4
Alberta communities.**

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The information in this report was informed by representatives in each community, in addition to our team's own research. However, engaging directly with newcomers and consulting all service providers in each region was outside of the scope of this project. We recognize that the information in this report may not fully represent all services available in each community or challenges faced by newcomers.

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Summary of Findings

Challenges Newcomers may face when moving to rural Alberta

- Learning new traditions, customs, and culture
- Literacy or language challenges (ex: information only available in English)
- Weather
- Lack of social Network
- Discrimination and/or racism
- Changes in gender roles and expectations
- Lack of public transit in rural communities
- Recognition of educational background and professional skills

Main Challenges Services May Face

- Funding and policies
- Difficulty expanding services
- Difficulty promoting services
- Lack of culturally sensitive services

COVID-19 Considerations

- Services moving online may be a challenge for newcomers
- Some of our Key Informants believe access to services is decreasing
- Newcomers have different levels of comfortability with technology and accessing services online
- Social isolation is exacerbated
- Many services are discovered through word of mouth and referrals
- Newcomers may still want to access services in person, where safe

4 Rural Communities

Strengths and Service Gaps

4 Rural Communities	Strengths	Service Gaps
Brooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize being welcoming and inclusive• Brooks has adapted to create locally made solutions for the high number of newcomers moving to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing• Transportation
Hinton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing industries and economy• Many opportunities for newcomers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Settlement Services• Anti-discrimination services and training
Claresholm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New settlement service• Working to ensure that the community is welcoming and supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing• Childcare
Strathmore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family services to aid the community's social well-being• Established healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing• Employment services

Introduction

Objective

With provincial and federal programs working to increase immigration to rural communities, RDN, along with community partners, identified the need for improved understanding of the current available services in rural Alberta. The purpose of this document is to report on the current gaps in services for newcomers in four rural Alberta communities: Brooks, Hinton, Strathmore and Claresholm. These findings can be used to better inform future projects and proposals under RDN's rural immigration initiative, provide support to the communities by identifying where service gaps exist, and inform new and existing programs for our key informants and the organizations they represent.

In addition to mapping the available services in the selected communities, we sought to understand how the characteristics of the communities and availability of support services might impact the health of newcomers. Overall, we sought to better understand the needs and challenges faced by newcomers in the rural setting and to consider how rural service providers might address those needs.

Scope & Methodology

This report has mapped services across Brooks, Hinton, Strathmore and Claresholm with the aim of identifying service gaps in each community. The mapping was primarily completed through an online search, in addition to consultation with key informants in each area to further inform and verify the results of our search. As we did not engage directly with all service providers listed in the service scan, we recognize that the full service scan of each region may not represent all available organizations or services in the area. Furthermore, while we did consult with the key informants about their perception of the experience of newcomers in their communities, we were not able to consult directly with newcomers. We recognize that this is a shortcoming of our report and do not claim that the statements made in this report fully represent the experience of newcomers in rural Alberta, nor that all newcomers share the same experiences. As this project has been directed by RDN, our findings are designed to support and inform their future initiatives, as well as the work carried out by our key informants.

The process for the environmental scan began with the identification of key governmental sources related to health equity and social determinants of health. Recent work by the Public Health Agency of Canada and several partners on health inequalities in Canada and publications from the National Collaborating

Centre on Determinants of Health were key initial sources. These sources pointed to peer-reviewed research related to topics of health equity, social determinants of health, rural immigration, and immigrant health. Several universities with a focus on rural immigration and rural issues were identified through this process, including Brandon University (Rural Development Institute), University of Guelph, University of Alberta, and University of Waterloo. There is growing interest in rural settlement and immigrant health, including recent work to examine the state of Canadian literature on health impacts of immigrant migration to rural areas. The work concluded there is a significant gap in the literature on the impact of rural life on the health of immigrants.

Environmental Scan Summary

Immigration to rural Alberta

1 in 7 immigrants
will live outside Calgary and
Edmonton CMA by 2036.

-Statistics Canada, 2017

**Top 3
characteristics
of a welcoming
community**

**Employment Opportunities,
Social Capital, and
Affordable Housing.**

-Esses et al., 2010, p. 10

Experience welcoming newcomers varies across rural Alberta

with some communities having more immigrants arriving in the past decade.

Brooks
Pop. 23,410

5,245

Number of Immigrants

22%

% of total population

45%

% immigrants arrived in
2011 - 2016

Claresholm
Pop. 3,505

280

Number of Immigrants

8%

% of total population

11%

% immigrants arrived in
2011 - 2016

-Statistics Canada, 2016

Environmental Scan Summary

Voices of Immigrants

**40% of immigrants
in smaller AB communities used
settlement services.**

-Esses et al.,
Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey, 2013

Immigrants with moderate language ability, refugees, and skilled workers were more likely to use settlement services. Refugees experience the greatest barriers related to use of settlement services.

Temporary foreign workers have limited access to settlement services.

Challenges experienced when getting help

- **Confusion about where to go**
- **Language barriers**
- **Lack of awareness (service availability)**
- **Financial costs**
- **Transportation**

-Esses et al.,
Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey, 2013

Barriers to non-use of services

Family class and refugees are more likely to report **language barriers** prevent use of services.

Refugees are also more likely to report **financial difficulties and discrimination** due to *immigrant status* as barriers.

50+%

had not used
settlement
services.

45+%

of non-users
did not need
help.

- Esses et al.,
Alberta Settlement Outcomes Survey, 2013

Social Determinants of Health

Social conditions

that interact to influence risks to our health and well-being and affect how vulnerable we are to disease and injury.

Examples: Early life conditions, Food security, Housing, Ethnicity, Social exclusion.

-National Collaborating Centre for Social Determinants of Health, 2012, p. 1



50%

Socio-economic factors



25%

Health Care



15%

Biology



10%

Physical Environment

-Senate Subcommittee on Population Health, 2009

Healthy Immigrant Effect

Immigrants are in relatively better health than native-born Canadians.

This gap in health status narrows over time in Canada to native-born levels. Healthcare costs for refugees are 10% of other Canadians as a result of the Healthy Immigrant Effect.

-McDonald and Kennedy, 2004; Lu and Ng, 2019;
Canadian Council for Refugees, 2013

Double Burden of Health Inequalities

Rural

Extra costs to access health care in distant cities; Increased mortality risks from circulatory diseases, injuries and suicide

Immigrants

Increased prevalence of diabetes; Increased likelihood for poor quality housing and working poor

-DesMaules et al., 2006; PHAC, 2018

Social Determinants of Health

Employment and Working Conditions	Housing	Early Childhood Life	Access to Culturally Relevant Services
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2x Working poor

among recent immigrants than among Canadian-born people



- Mental health impacts of precarious employment
- Reduced access to health influencing conditions (housing, food, health care)

2x Housing below standard

among recent immigrants than among Canadian-born people



- Chronic diseases
- Infectious diseases
- Injuries
- Poor mental health
- Adverse child development

2.2x % of children living in low income families

among recent immigrants than among Canadian-born people



- Reduced access to health influencing conditions (housing, food, health care)
- Unfavourable physical and mental health outcomes

Barriers

Language
Cultural
Transportation
Financial
Time
Information



- Reluctance to seek care
- Reduced access to preventative care, e.g. screening
- Lower quality of care and treatment

-PHAC, 2018; Patel et al., 2019; Beiser, 2005; McGibbon, 2009



Understanding Community Service Scans

Community Description

This section provides a brief background of the community, providing some context to the reader about the community and its history of immigration.

Community Statistics

This data provides the reader with information about the characteristics of current newcomers in the community and historical immigration trends.

Service Scan

The service scan is a summary of all accessible services in the community. See the table below for further detail about the service categories identified.




Key Gaps Identified


This section provides more detailed discussion about the nature of the services available in the community and prominent gaps, with recommendations made.

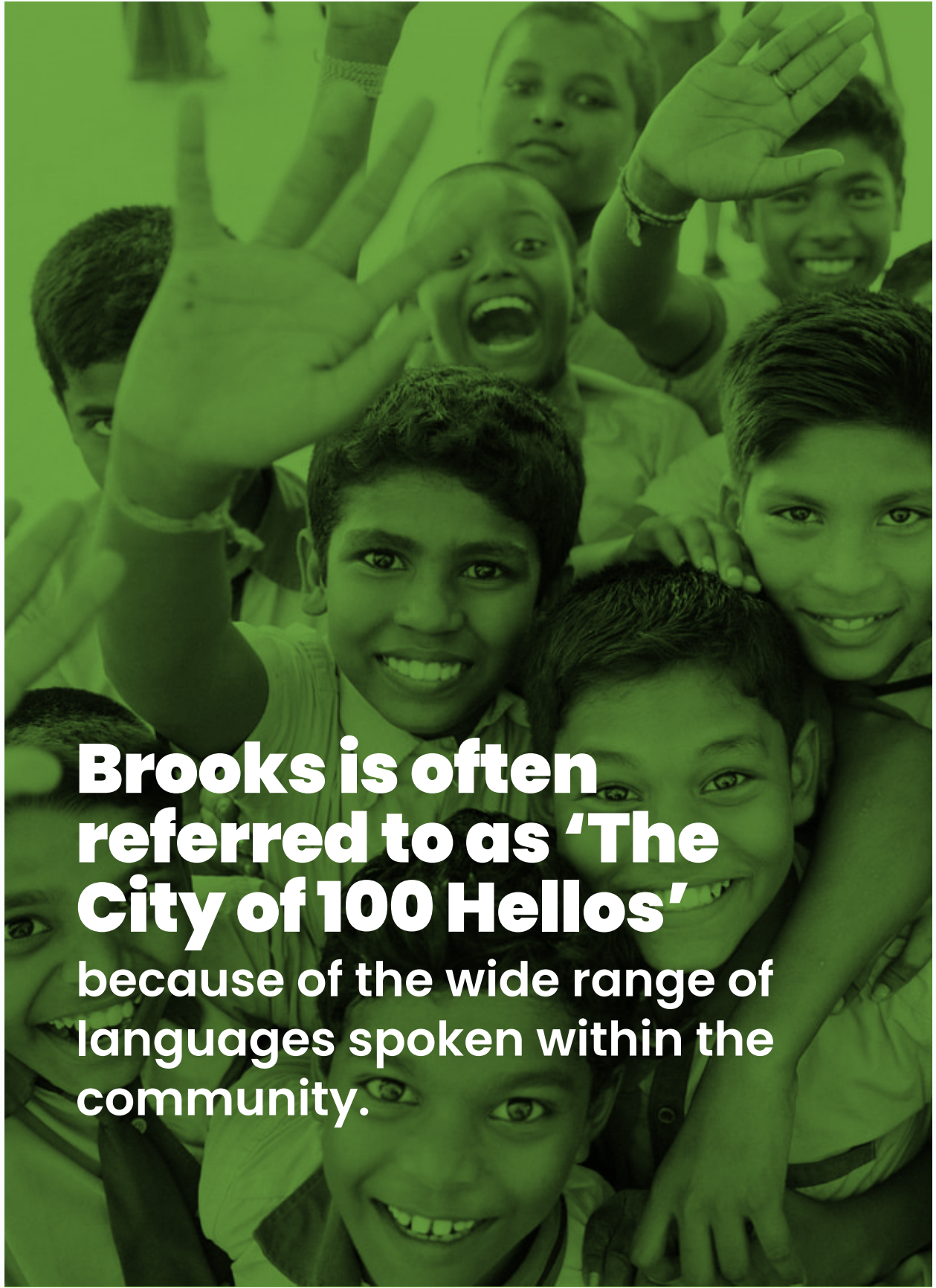
How to Read the Service Scan:

- [i] Category of service. Refer to the table for types of services included in each category.
- [ii] Number of available services in that category
- [iii] If a check mark is present, indicates that service has been designed with newcomers in mind

Traffic Light Legend:

-  Services which are **not present** or have been identified as needing significant development.
-  Services which are **present** but could use further development
-  Services which are **prominent** and already serve newcomer populations

Available Services	General Description	Specific to Newcomers?
EX: Settlement[i] (1)[ii]	Services specifically designed for newcomer populations	 [iii]
Healthcare	Clinical health, mental health and/or community health services	
Housing	Services or programs that provide affordable housing or help provide access to housing	
Employment	Services that help individuals access employment or provide programming to aid in professional development	
Education, learning, and language	Services for adult learning, literacy, ESL/ELL & language assessments	
Family	Services that provide childcare or general family support	
Transportation	Services that provide access to transportation (e.g. shuttle, bus)	
Legal	Services that aid in assistance with applications or provide access to legal services at a reduced cost	
Anti-Discrimination	Services or training that address discrimination and racism and/or promote inclusivity	



Brooks is often referred to as 'The City of 100 Hellos' because of the wide range of languages spoken within the community.

Brooks Community Profile

Community Description

Brooks is a rural community in Southern Alberta with 23,410 residents as of 2016. Statistics Canada data (2016) shows that 22% of the population is composed of immigrants, moving to Canada from a wide variety of countries (Statistics Canada, 2016). Within the county of Newell, Brooks is a one-hour drive away from Medicine Hat (107 km). The Brooks community is often referred to as 'The City of 100 Hellos' because of the wide range of languages spoken within the community. The established community of immigrants, refugees, and temporary foreign workers makes Brooks a unique rural community within Alberta. As Brooks began to have increased immigration into the area, the community members made it a priority to ensure that Brooks adapted to become a welcoming and supportive community for newcomers. One of Brooks greatest strengths is how they have been adaptable and have worked together over time to assess the needs of newcomers, and used that information to implement locally made solutions in the form of services, supports, and community events. The main industry that attracts newcomers into the community is the JBS meat packing plant, which provides Brooks residents with a plethora of employment opportunities.

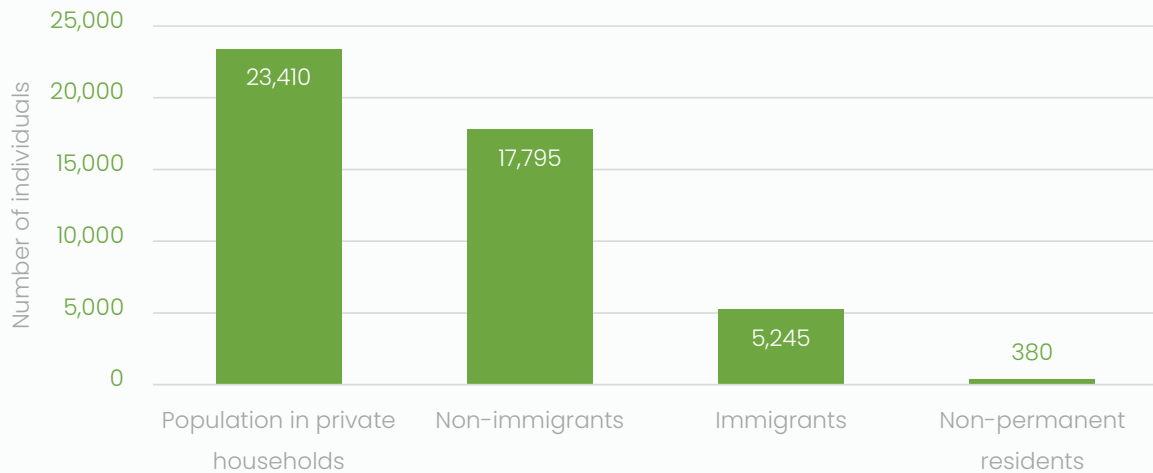
Brooks Immigration Statistics

Brooks (CA): Immigration Trends Over the Years



Alberta Open Data. (2020). [Link](#)

Brooks (CA): Population



Statistics Canada. (2016). [Link](#)

Brooks Service Profile

Available Services	General Description	Specific to Newcomers?
● Settlement (1)	Well-established settlement service available to newcomers	
● Healthcare (8)	AHS and community-based physical and mental health services available, as well as newcomer specific mental health services	
● Housing (3)	Subsidized rental housing and low-income seniors housing	
● Employment (3)	JBS plays an important role in newcomer employment within Brooks	
● Education, learning, and language (6)	ESL/ELL services, adult learning and literacy courses, language assessments	
● Family (3)	Case management and newcomer supports, In-home family supports, variety of social programs	
● Transportation (1)	Trips between Brooks and Medicine Hat, as well as a minibus between Brooks and County of Newell, No public transportation	
● Legal (2)	Lawyers for hearings, strategic planning, and advice for newcomers, as well as assistance with forms and claims	
● Anti-Discrimination (1)	Workshops on intercultural relationships and problem solving	

Key Gaps Identified

As a result of the established newcomer community and support services within Brooks, there are no glaring gaps in services. The gaps that do exist are discrete which made the key informant interviews essential in understanding the on-the-ground realities for newcomers in Brooks. As indicated in the service profile table above, the main service gaps for newcomers in Brooks are related to housing, anti-discrimination, and transportation.

Although there are some affordable housing options, there is a shortage of large family housing. Newcomers and non-English speakers in particular, are often taken advantage of by landlords, leading to unsafe living conditions. The lack of accessible, public transportation is a challenge for Brooks' residents as taxis are heavily relied on for day-to-day transport. The main gap that exists with anti-discrimination services within Brooks is the lack of cultural capacity training within the workplace. To minimize this training gap, Global Village has recently started online workshops for service providers to build inter-cultural understanding, relationships, knowledge and skills.

English language services in 2021 are meeting the need for language training with overall demand for services down. Funding levels are currently adequate and the economic environment and a reasonably stable work force at JBS has resulted in less new demand for labour and, therefore, less demand for expanded language services. However, an increase in need for English language services may be expected to correspond with any increased labour demand.



Hinton is well-known as the “Gateway of the Rockies”

**uniquely located on the
Yellowhead Highway 15 minutes
east of the Jasper National Park
gates.**

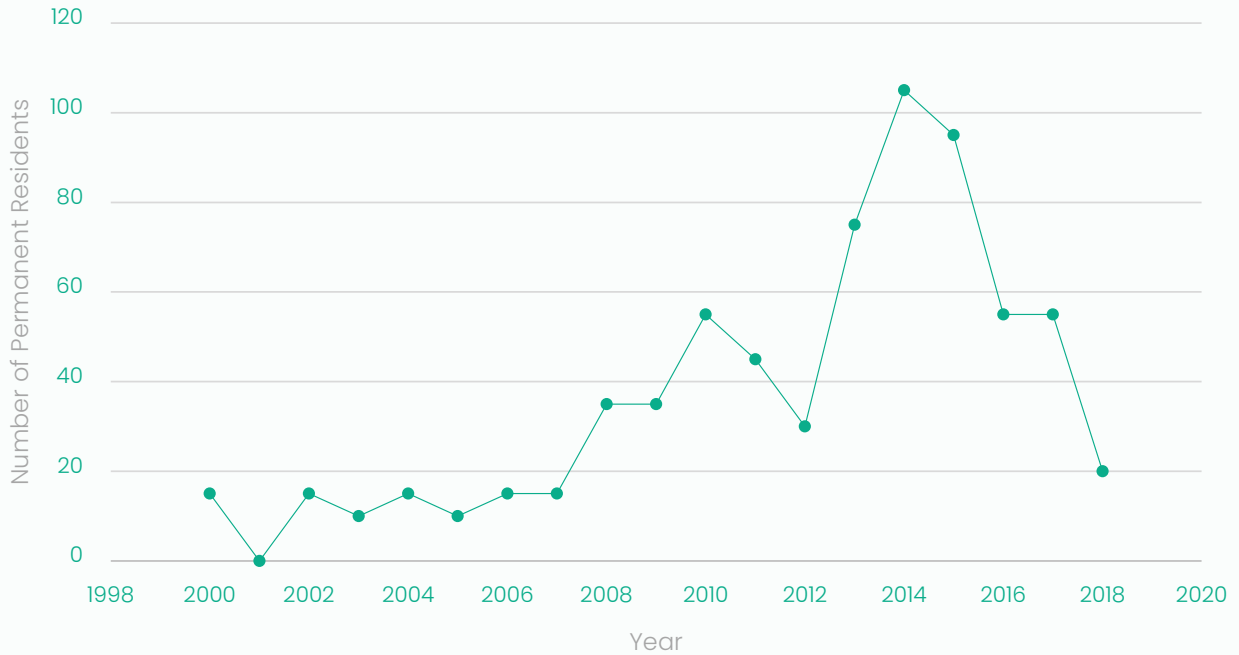
Hinton Community Profile

Community Description

Hinton is uniquely located on the Yellowhead Highway 15 minutes east of the Jasper National Park gates and 300 km west of Edmonton and is well known as the “Gateway to the Rockies”. Hinton’s economy thrives off of various industries, including timber, oil and gas, coal and other accompanying industries and services, including tourism (Town of Hinton Strategic Services, 2020). Hinton has a large working age population that allows different industries and businesses to thrive. Hinton’s population is currently estimated around 10,380 people, with projections to become much larger (Town of Hinton Strategic Services, 2020). Beyond the thriving economy, Hinton boasts an incredible culture and recreation scene with stunning natural landscapes and many festivals. Many newcomers have come to Hinton for the reasons listed above, based on data from Statistics Canada, between 2011-2016, 360 newcomers came to Hinton with the majority of individuals coming from the Philippines and Jamaica, and to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom, India and South Africa (Statistics Canada, 2016). As Hinton continues to grow and welcome newcomers and immigrants the services grow as well. The large industries in Hinton draw people in, however, newcomers’ skills and certifications are often not recognized and create barriers for individuals working in these industries.

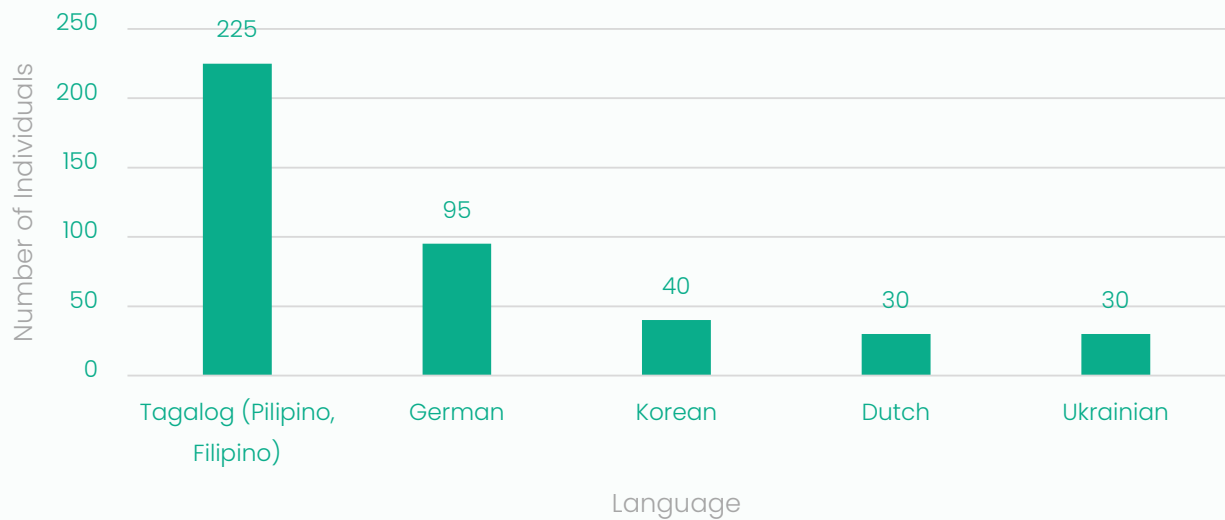
Hinton Immigration Statistics

Hinton (CA) Immigration trends over years





Alberta Open Data. (2020). [Link](#)

Hinton (CA): Top 5 Languages (mother tongue)



Statistics Canada. (2016). [Link](#)

Available Services	General Description	Specific to Newcomers?
● Settlement (0)	No specific settlement services within Hinton	
● Healthcare (3)	AHS, community-based physical & mental health services; harm reduction programs available for those who use substances; sexual health services	
● Housing (1)	Subsidized rental housing for low-income renters	
● Employment (1)	HELP offers many programs for newcomers such as job skills programs and employment workshops	
● Education, learning, and language (3)	ESL/ELL services, adult learning/literacy courses, language assessments	
● Family (2)	Hinton's Family Resource Network enhances the social well-being of individuals, families, and communities through various programs. FCS also supports families, including caregiver education and support	
● Transportation (3)	Three services exist within Hinton and provide infrequent travel to Edmonton and Jasper as well	
● Legal (1)	The Legal Aid Society provides publicly funded legal aid across Alberta to those who need it and below a specific income criteria	
● Anti-Discrimination (0)	No specific services available	

Key Gaps Identified

Key service gaps for newcomers in Hinton are both apparent and subtle. Although Hinton has most categories of services, many of the services are not specifically tailored to newcomers. The only organization that offers services specifically for newcomers is Hinton Employment and Learning Centre (HELP), although this is not their main focus. A major gap is settlement and pre-arrival services within Hinton, and this is especially important as Hinton is relatively remote and about 3 hours from Edmonton. This long distance is a difficult barrier because to access settlement services, individuals have to find a way to the city, which has its own challenges of reliability and cost of transportation services. The second gap is services within anti-discrimination services in Hinton. No services or training of this kind exist in nearby areas, and as Hinton continues to welcome newcomers this becomes more important. As per the subtle gaps, although healthcare, housing, employment, and family services and legal services exist within Hinton, they do not address the specific needs of newcomers in multiple areas including language, culture and religion. Lastly, from interviews with key informants, there are gaps in services addressing learning about the Canadian context or life in Hinton, including topics such as winter driving, vehicle maintenance, wildlife, Canadian culture, banking and more.



Strathmore has many healthcare services, physicians, and diagnostic services

which is unique for a rural community, and is one of Strathmore's strengths.

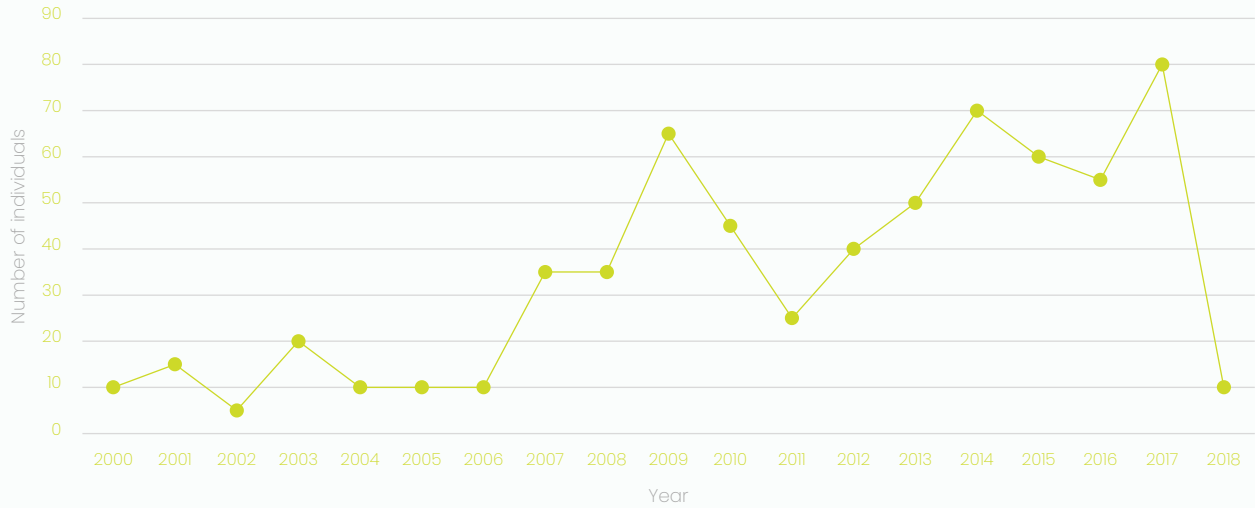
Strathmore Community Profile

Community Description

Strathmore is a town located along the Trans-Canada Highway in southern Alberta, within Wheatland County. It is approximately 50 kilometers east of Calgary. According to the 2016 Census, the Town of Strathmore recorded a population of 13,756. Today, the town is an important agricultural community. Oil and gas exploration is a growing interest in the area and as the largest business industry in Strathmore, the real estate sector is booming. Of the total population residing in Strathmore, 2,575 work locally in the town. Many residents commute daily from Strathmore to Calgary. Strathmore has seen considerable growth in commercial development, with many franchise restaurants, retail shops and a few big-box chain stores opening within the community. The largest influx of immigrants to Strathmore was prior to 1981, where 375 individuals called Canada their new home. The majority of the population speaks English only, making up 96.12 percent of the population. Strathmore has many healthcare services, physicians, and diagnostic services, which is unique for a rural community, and is one of Strathmore's strengths.

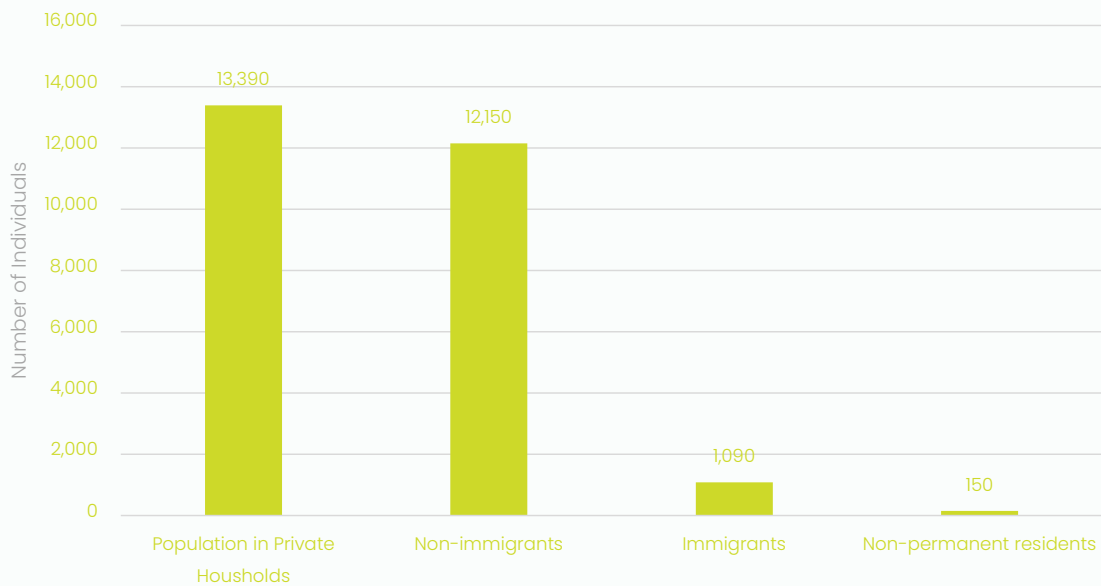
Strathmore Immigration Statistics

Strathmore (CA): Immigration trends over years



Alberta Open Data. (2020). [Link](#)

Strathmore (CA): Population



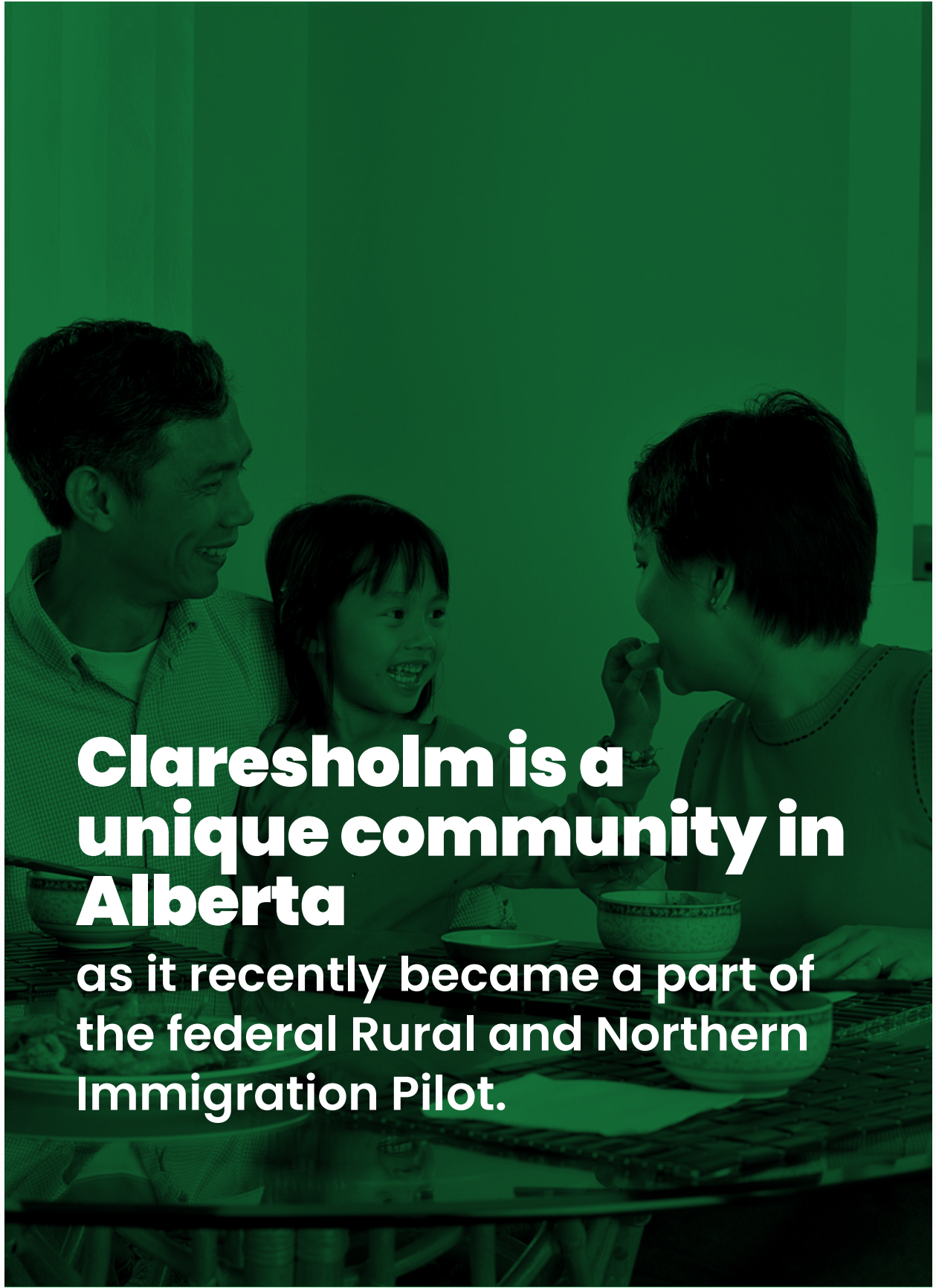
Statistics Canada. (2016). [Link](#)

Available Services	General Description	Specific to Newcomers?
● Settlement (1)	Established settlement services available for newcomers	
● Healthcare (9)	AHS & community-based physical; mental health services available with medical diagnostic services. Senior care facilities	
● Housing (3)	Subsidized & emergency rental housing, specific senior housing available	
● Employment (3)	Employment service and training with options for business loans, coaching & networking events	
● Education, learning, and language (3)	Literacy courses, college programs, English training, adult training programs & workshops	
● Family (6)	Community-building workshops, activities to aid social well-being of individuals residing in Strathmore	
● Transportation (2)	City taxi, carpooling services & airport shuttle are available with special rates for seniors. No public transport to commute within Strathmore. Public bus service from Calgary to Strathmore daily	
● Legal (1)	The legal aid society functions across Alberta to provide publicly funded legal aid to those who are in need & fall below specific income criteria	
● Anti-Discrimination (2)	Victim support, workshops & training against violence and abuse	

Key Gaps Identified

Strathmore offers a wide variety of services, but most of these services are not focused on newcomers. The town is fortunate to have an ample number of healthcare and diagnostic facilities, in addition to mental health, counseling, and senior care services. Settlement services are primarily offered by Foothills Community Immigrant Services (FCIS)– a subdivision of Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) operating in Strathmore, who also provide school support services and essential workshops and group sessions to newcomers. The town has events across the year to integrate the community with many family and welfare services.

With Strathmore located close to Calgary, many individuals prefer to work in the city. Though this is improving in recent years with more jobs offered in the retail industry, employment remains a key concern to retain the newcomers. While there is a community bus service between Calgary and Strathmore, there exists a lack of public transportation to move within the town. Strathmore lacks affordable housing, as our key informants have informed us of the troubles to obtain family housing has continued to be an issue. In terms of senior housing and temporary shelter, there are options at subsidized rates. There are services offered for anti-discrimination, legal access, and literacy-related, but some not-so-evident gaps exist for newcomers. Covid-19 has shifted most services online; the service providers have adjusted to the change, but one of the critical constraints is low-quality internet connectivity. A key limitation is the newcomers' troubles to access the services due to the sudden switch.



Claresholm is a unique community in Alberta

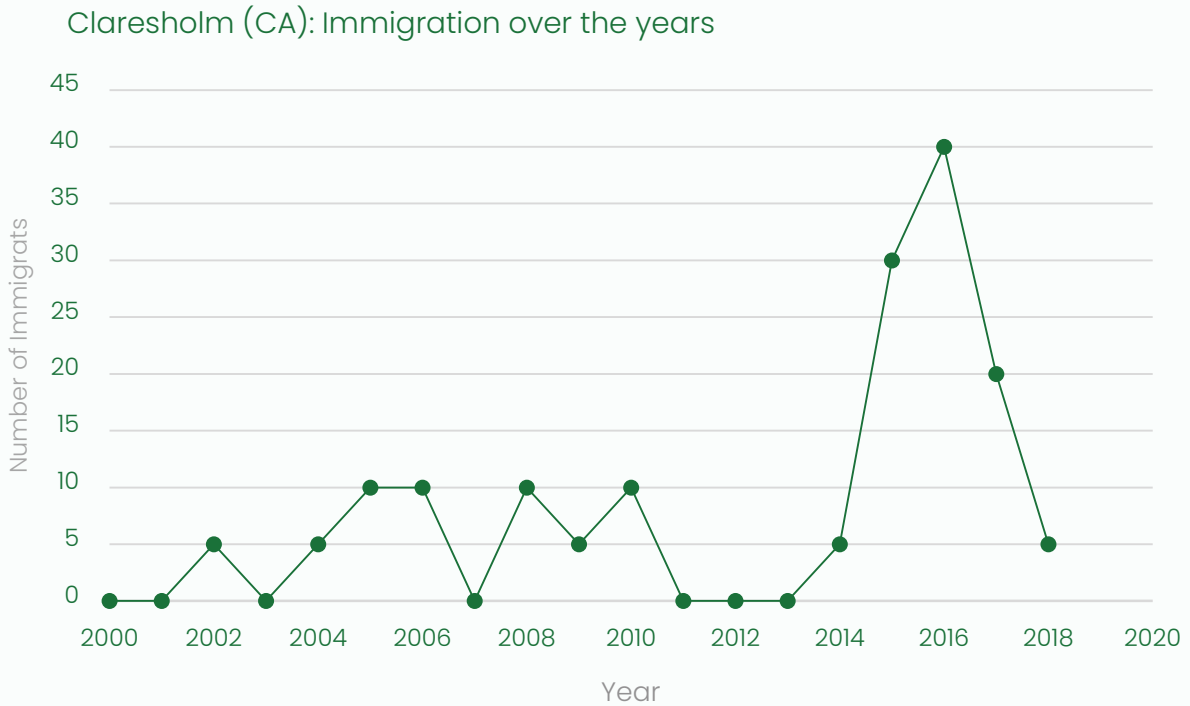
**as it recently became a part of
the federal Rural and Northern
Immigration Pilot.**

Claresholm Community Profile

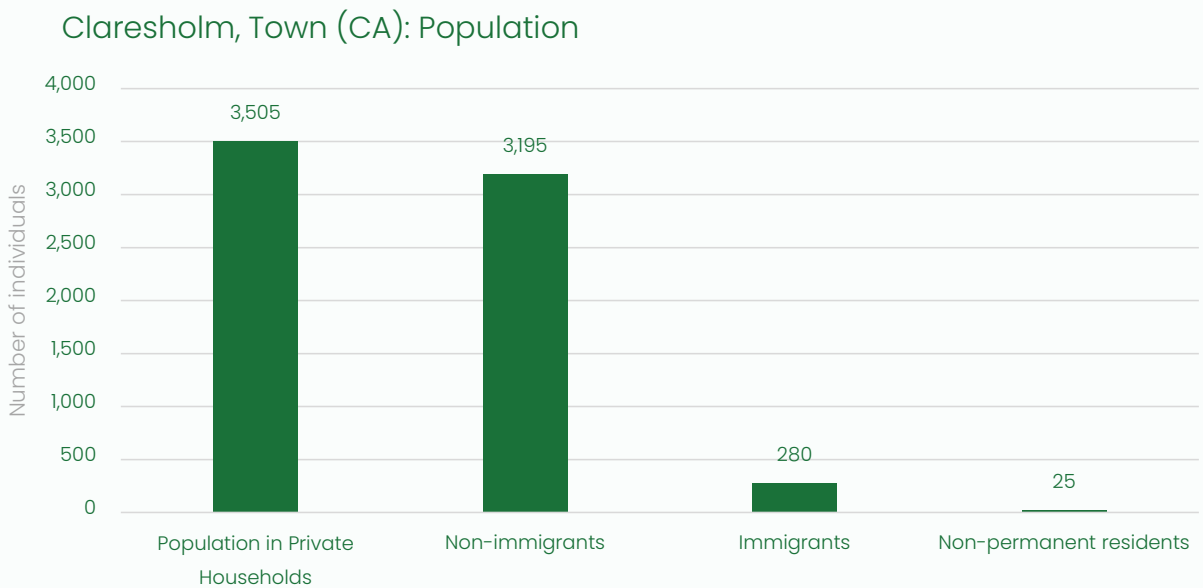
Community Description

Claresholm is a Southern Alberta community, located on Highway 2 between Calgary and Lethbridge. Home to 3,505 residents, Claresholm is a unique community in Alberta as it recently became a part of the federal Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot is a federal program that is designed to drive economic immigration and growth in smaller and rural Canadian communities, in an effort to fill employment gaps in the community and provide a fast-track to permanent residency for newcomers. It is expected that Claresholm will see approximately 20 newcomers in the first year of the program, which is a dramatic increase in growth. From 2011 to 2016, Statistics Canada reported that the community saw the arrival of 30 newcomers, all from the Philippines. As Claresholm continues to grow and diversify, it must ensure that it embraces its newcomers' arrival and provides services that support their social and economic success.

Claresholm Immigration Statistics



Alberta Open Data. (2020), [Link](#)



Statistics Canada. (2016) [Link](#)

Available Services	General Description	Specific to Newcomers?
● Settlement (1)	Newly established settlement service available to newcomers	
● Healthcare (5)	AHS and community-based physical & mental health services available	
● Housing (1)	Housing authority available for low-income seniors & families	
● Employment (2)	Includes computer and literacy classes for adults; subsidies available	
● Education, learning, and language (3)	ESL/ELL services; subsidies available	
● Family (2)	Daycare/childcare services offered for children aged 0-12 years of age; FCSS present as well, offers many different types of programs	
● Transportation (1)	Affordable & accessible service for seniors & persons with disabilities	
● Legal (1)	The Legal Aid Society provides publicly funded legal aid across Alberta to those who need it and below a specific income criteria	
● Anti-Discrimination (1)	Settlement services engages with city council and community members to establish a welcoming environment for newcomers	

Key Gaps Identified

Claresholm does not have as large of a newcomer population compared to other communities in this report. As such, there are relatively few services available specifically for newcomers. In the past, newcomers would have to travel to High River, Lethbridge, or Calgary to access settlement services. However, due to the new federal immigration pilot, Claresholm has been fortunate to see the very recent arrival of a new settlement organization, Willow Creek Immigration Services, which operates through the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. This organization will provide a variety of services to not only help newcomers adjust to life in a small, Southern Alberta farming community, but also ensure that the community fully embraces the arrival of its newcomers.

Some of the major gaps in Claresholm are housing and childcare services. As noted by our key informant, Claresholm lacks housing for all residents, including newcomers. Furthermore, while Claresholm does have childcare services available for children up to age 12, these services are limited as a result of COVID constraints during this period of time, which limits the number of children able to access childcare services in the community. This may present a barrier for newcomer families with working parents and young children. While Claresholm is fortunate to have several healthcare services, including a mental health and addictions centre, these services are not designed with newcomers in mind. For newcomers to feel welcome in their new community, it is suggested that services should not only be available to newcomers, but culturally appropriate.



Many rural communities are only just starting their journey

in creating a welcoming community, developing newcomer support services, or embracing even more newcomers than before.

Future Recommendations

Learning From Each Other

This project brings together four unique communities, with their history with newcomer populations. While communities like Claresholm have not seen high levels of immigration, Brooks has an established community of newcomers, immigrants, Temporary Foreign Workers, and refugees, in addition to a higher number of support services available for welcoming newcomers. Other rural communities are only just starting their journey in creating a welcoming community, developing newcomer support services, or embracing even more newcomers than before.

We believe that all communities can learn from each other in their quest to create supportive, welcoming, and inclusive communities. From the literature, online searches, and conversations with key informants, here are some takeaways about how to create welcoming communities that not only draw newcomers but support their health and well-being.

These suggestions speak to the importance of creating opportunities for strong connections between newcomers and the local community, increasing sense of belonging and reducing isolation (Esses et al, 2010).

- It is important to **welcome newcomers** when they first arrive in the community to ensure that the individual or family feels a sense of belonging and can begin to build social ties and get connected to services as soon as they arrive.
- It is essential to **prioritize community-wide events** that increase knowledge and appreciation of different cultures. For example, the City of Brooks hosts a festival called The Taste of Nations annually to share different culture's traditions, foods and help the community members build relationships with each other. Another example comes from Hinton, where the Föhn Festival offers an opportunity to celebrate the region's historical significance, connect with neighbours, generate community pride, and showcase Hinton's rich diversity to new residents as well as visitors.
- In rural communities where the newcomers speak a plethora of languages, it is crucial to **provide information in multiple languages**, and to promote services for English Language Learners within the community.
- **Encourage newcomers to volunteer** within the community. This can have a multi-fold benefit, as it helps newcomers to build relationships and gain Canadian work experience, while creating community engagement and a sense of belonging.

- In rural settings, informal relationships and word-of-mouth are essential to spread information. Service providers are more effective when they **partner and work together** to serve their diverse populations. These relationships create a web of connection to support newcomers, facilitate referrals to appropriate services and ensure that work is not duplicated.

The Importance of Social Determinants of Health

Challenges or barriers experienced by newcomers in accessing health influencing resources such as quality housing and stable employment have impacts that accumulate through their life course and into future generations. Initiatives to reduce health inequalities can have a positive impact, particularly during important periods of life, such as early childhood (Mantoura and Morrison, 2016). Community service organizations can consider what types of early interventions might change pathways for newcomer individuals and families and use this as a guide for priority-setting activities.

It is important to recognize the importance of the social determinants of health, which are underlying causes for visible disparities that can create substantial differences. Two social determinants that stood out in each of our four communities was income and employment. Employment prospects attract newcomers and lack of fulfilling work may cause them to leave (Esses and Carter, 2019). Income and employment affect services such as childcare, transportation, language learning and integration. This is an area that should be focused on in order to improve newcomers' health, targeting work opportunities as well as appropriate training, courses, or competency exams.

Services Alone Aren't Enough, They Must Be Culturally Appropriate

Newcomers may experience gaps in services either because they are not available in the community or because they may not be culturally relevant to their needs. Community service organizations need to have cultural sensitivity within staff and programs which acknowledges and responds to cultural differences in a respectful way (Esses et al, 2010; Patel et al, 2019). Community service organizations can consider making a commitment to learning about cultural differences from newcomers and being open to new ways of approaching program delivery. Culturally appropriate services are essential to not only welcome newcomers to the community, but also make them feel at home and encourage them to stay long-term.



“A common understanding is that a welcoming community is a healthy community.”

Esses et al., 2010, p. 9

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Appendix 1: Public Health Resources

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