



NEWCOMER
Interagency Network

NEWCOMER NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

MAY 2017

HABITUS
Consulting Collective Inc.

616 Sifton Blvd SW, Calgary, T2T 2K7

403.587.0281

habituscollective.ca

Think. Innovate. Create.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Newcomer Interagency Network would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support:

NIN Steering Committee:

Keyano College (Fiscal Agent & Member), Glenda Little-Kulai
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo, Jamie Desautels
Wood Buffalo Regional Library, Nicole Greville

YMCA of Northern Alberta, Eliana Urrea
Centre d'accueil et d'établissement du Nord de l'Alberta, Kouame Adie
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Caitlin Downie

Research Team: Habitus Consulting Collective

Overall Project Management and Reporting: Dr. Gayatri Moorthi; Lisa Elford; Amanda Weightman; Erika Lemon; Dr. Careen Khoury; Dania El Chaar

Project Supervisors: Maria Puentes & Nada Al-Khaladi

Data Collectors:

Amanda Liu
Li Zhou
Lul Mohamed
Marc-Andre Provencher
Mariam S. Ahmed
Mary Aruar

Meriem Bekkouche
Noira Lozano
Noshi Malik
Ram Marcaida
Soumaya Aghneim
Sukhdeep Atwal

Tagay Muktar
Tsedale Tadesse
Vivianne Leon
William A. Reech
Ziandica June Rangga-Mibulos

Data Collection Support: Special thanks to the following organizations and their staff who assisted in the data collection.

Chinese School
The Hub Family Resource Centre (Downtown)
The Hub Family Resource Centre (Timberlea)
Keyano College
Mosque- Markaz-ul-Islam

Sikh Community Prayers
Syncrude Sports and Wellness Centre
YMCA of Northern Alberta (Downtown)
YMCA of Northern Alberta (Thickwood)

Other organizations that supported the survey:

SuperStore
Dollar Store (Downtown)
Sobeys
Wood Buffalo Food Bank
Fort McMurray Boys & Girls Club

Mediterranean Grocery Store
Medicine Shoppers pharmacy
Holy Trinity School
St. Paul's Catholic Church

We are most of all grateful for the support of all the participants of the Newcomer Survey and the community of Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Funded By:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

KEY TERMS

Newcomer

The Newcomer Interagency Network (NIN) defines the term ‘newcomer’ to include anyone that is not born in RMWB or has not spent most their life here. This includes both internal migrants (Canadian born) and immigrants (born outside of Canada). This broad definition was chosen to include all those who may not be fully settled.

Immigrant

This report defines immigrants broadly to include all foreign-born individuals, including foreign workers, refugees, and students. IRCC funded programs however, are only targeted at immigrants who are Permanent Residents (PRs) and refugees. This excludes Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW’s), student visa holders or visitors. Immigration is complex process and settlement in a new community can often take years or even generations. The report acknowledges that the boundaries between immigrant and non-immigrant can be dynamic and ever-changing.

Permanent residents (PR)

People who have been granted permanent resident status in Canada (IRCC, 2015). Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least 730 days (two years) within a five-year period or risk losing their status. Permanent residents have all the rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms such as equality rights, legal rights, and mobility rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. They do not, however, have the right to vote in elections.

Refugees

Refugees are people who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality and are unable to or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (IRCC, 2015). Throughout this report, “refugee” is used to describe both convention refugees (persons accepted as refugees by the Canadian government) and refugee claimants (asylum seekers who are waiting for their refugee claims to be decided on by the Canadian government).

Government-assisted refugees (GAR)

Permanent residents in the refugee category who are selected abroad for resettlement to Canada as Convention refugees under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or as members of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class, and who receive resettlement assistance from the federal government. Under the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) Program, refugees are referred to Canada for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or another referral organization (IRCC, 2015). Individuals cannot apply directly. A GAR's initial resettlement in Canada is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or the province of Quebec. This support is delivered by non-governmental agencies called service provider organizations funded by IRCC.

Private-sponsored refugees (PSR)

Under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program, refugees are referred to Canada for resettlement by a private sponsor (IRCC, 2015). Being a privately sponsored refugee means that a group of people in Canada have volunteered to support the refugee. The sponsorship group will support all settlement needs including housing, clothing, and food for one year after arrival or until they can support themselves, whichever comes first.

Blended Visa Office-Referral refugees (BVOR)

The Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) Program matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) with private sponsors in Canada (IRCC, 2015). The UNHCR identifies the refugees. The Government of Canada gives up to six months of income support. Private sponsors give another six months of financial support. They also give up to a year of social and emotional support. The Interim Federal Health Program and provincial health care also cover refugees for the length of the sponsorship (one year).

Economic immigrants

Permanent residents selected for their skills and ability to contribute to Canada's economy. The economic immigrant category includes skilled workers, business immigrants, provincial or territorial nominees, caregivers and Canadian Experience Class (IRCC, 2015).

Integration

Integration is a two-way process of mutual adjustment that requires all residents of Canada (immigrant and non-immigrant) to make accommodations, without losing cultural integrity (Berry, 2008; CIC, 2001). Li (2003) discusses that often the term integration is used to imply conformity to the dominant/mainstream culture and cultural difference can also be considered as deviations from established 'norms'. Immigrants

may struggle to integrate while balancing their own cultural identities and norms (Ravanera, Esses, & Fernando, 2013).

Welcome-ability

The term welcome-ability, as an aggregate-level concept, is used to reflect the characteristics of communities that enables them to welcome and integrate newcomers (Ravanera et al., 2013).

Intersectionality

Multiple dimensions—such as race, class, gender, age, visa status, sexuality, and disability—intersect uniquely to impact or influence newcomers' participation in society, access to resources, and social relationships (Hancock, 2005; Holvino, 2010).

Well-being

Well-being refers to the ability of people to develop their potential, engage in meaningful and productive work, develop strong and positive ties with others, and contribute to their community's transformation (Marks, 2008). It is a complex concept and involves meeting a variety of human needs, including economic, political, social, cultural, educational, security, and health (OECD, 2011, 2013b). It is composed of **material well-being**, which includes income, employment, housing, and **quality of life**, which encompasses categories of social well-being and physical well-being or health. These two elements of well-being are closely inter-linked and shape each other.

Social determinants of health

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

Permanent Population

The permanent population refers to people whose usual place of residence is within the Municipality (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2015).

Shadow Population

The shadow population refers to temporary residents who work in the Municipality for a minimum of 30 days a year (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2015).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1
- KEY TERMS 2
- KEY SUMMARY FINDINGS 11
- INTRODUCTION..... 12
- REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO: SETTLING NEWCOMERS..... 14
- IMMIGRATION CONTEXT OF CANADA 16
- OUR APPROACH 17
 - NIN Survey Tool..... 19
 - Conducting the Project..... 19
 - Data Process and Analysis 20
 - Challenges in Data Collection & Limitations 20
- DEMOGRAPHICS..... 21
 - Gender 21
 - Age..... 21
 - Country of Birth..... 22
 - First Language..... 22
 - Ethnicity..... 22
 - Visa Status in Canada..... 22
 - Newcomer Status..... 22
 - Number of Children 23
 - Residence 23
 - Length of Stay in RMWB..... 23
- INCOME & EMPLOYMENT..... 29
 - Household income 29
 - Income by Immigration Status..... 30
 - Income by Age..... 30
 - Income by Length of Stay..... 30

Financial Situation.....	30
Financial Situation by Employment	30
Employment.....	30
Employment by Age	30
Employment by Income.....	31
Employment by Gender.....	31
Employment by English Language Fluency	31
Employment by Immigration Status.....	31
Employment by Length of Residence	31
Underemployment	31
Underemployment by Gender	31
Educational Requirements of Current Job by Educational Qualifications.....	32
Services to find employment	32
Services by Employment Status	32
Challenges in Employment	33
Challenges by Age	33
Challenges by Gender.....	33
Challenges by Length of Residence.....	33
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME BASED ON NEWCOMER NEEDS.....	42
EDUCATION & LANGUAGE.....	44
Education.....	44
Education by Gender	44
Education by Length of Residence	44
English Fluency.....	45
English Fluency by Immigration Status.....	45
English Fluency by Gender	45
English Fluency by Length of Residence	45
Language Classes and other Language Training	45

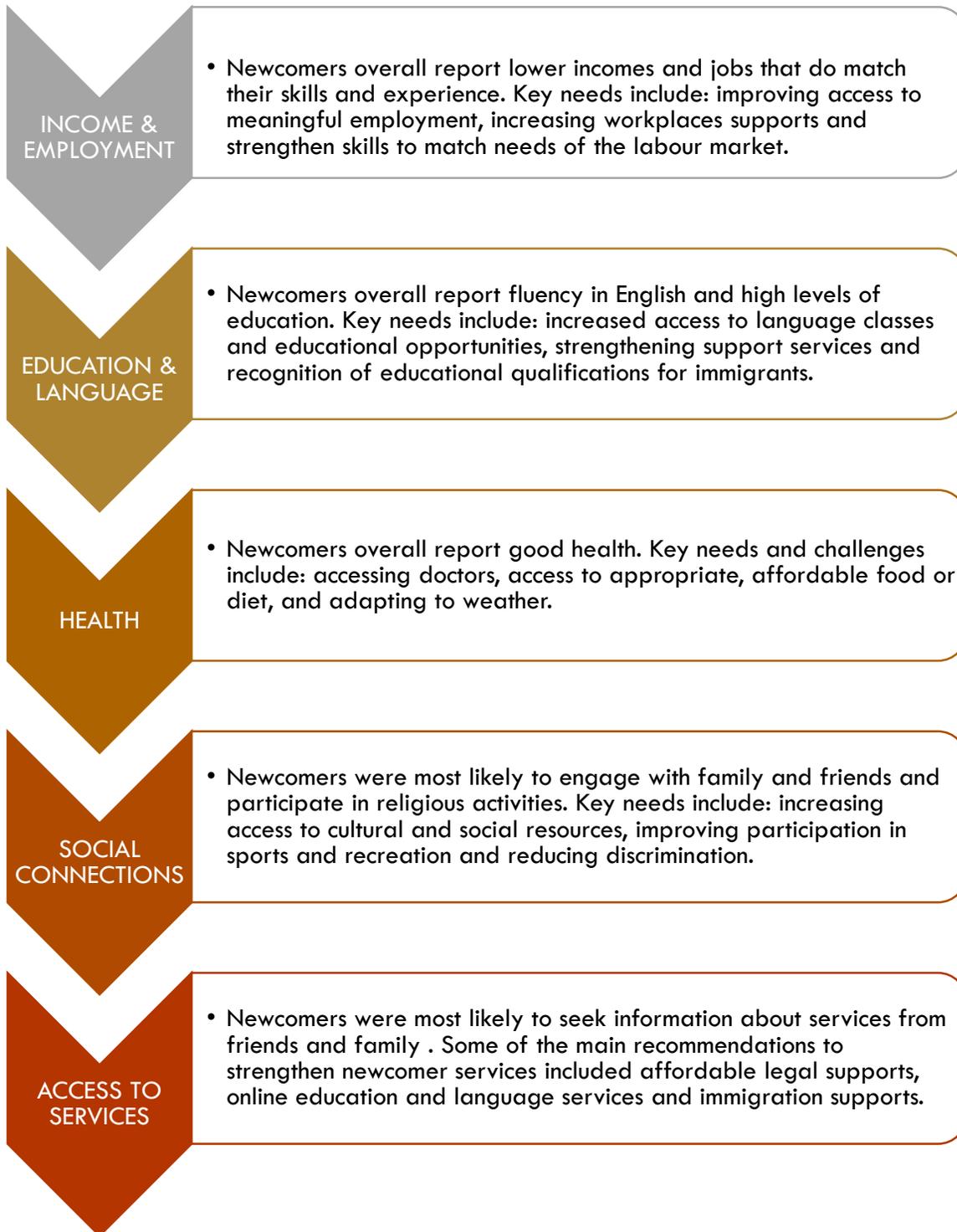
Attending English/French Classes by Immigration Status	45
Attending English/French Classes by Gender	46
Attending other English Training by Gender	46
Language Training by Length of Residence.....	46
Professional Training Courses: Majority had not attended any course.....	46
Attending Professional Programs by Gender	46
Attending Professional Programs by Income	46
Attending Professional Programs by Number of Children.....	47
English Language Learning Strategies	47
Language Learning Challenges.....	47
Language Challenges by Gender	48
Language Challenges by Length of Residence	48
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE BASED ON NEWCOMER NEEDS	56
HEALTH	58
Overall Health	58
Health Rating by Income.....	59
Health Rating by Age.....	59
Health Rating by Length of Residence.....	59
Seeking Help for Health Concerns.....	59
Seeking Help by Gender	59
Health Challenges	59
Health Challenges by Length of Residence.....	60
Environmental Challenges	60
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS	68
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS.....	70
Most Important to Adjust to the New Environment.....	70
Engagement with Family and Friends.....	70
Religious Activity.....	71

Physical Activity	71
Recreational Activity	71
Educational Activity	71
Cultural Activity.....	71
(All) Activities by Gender	71
Participation in Activities (all) by Length of Residence	72
Sense of Belonging.....	72
Sense of Belonging by Length of Residence	72
Sense of Belonging by Race	72
Challenges - Social Adjustment.....	72
Challenges-Family	73
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS.....	81
ACCESS TO SERVICES	83
Seeking Services.....	83
Utilization of Services by Gender	83
Utilization of Services by Length of Residence	83
Utilization of Services by Employment Status.....	83
Utilization of Services by Income	83
Utilization of Services by Education	83
Information about Community Services & Supports.....	84
Information about Community Services or Supports by Gender	84
Challenges-Transportation.....	84
Recommendations for services to be added or strengthened	84
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESS TO SERVICES BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS.....	88
CONCLUSION.....	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91

Figure 1 Age Distribution; Source: NIN Survey	24
Figure 2: RMWB Census 2015; Source Census.....	24
Figure 3: Country of Birth; Source: NIN Survey.....	25
Figure 4: Ethnicity; Source: NIN Survey Sample.....	25
Figure 5: Visa Status in Canada; Source NIN Survey, 2017.....	26
Figure 6: Residence; Source NIN Survey	26
Figure 7: Length of Stay; Source: NIN Survey.....	27
Figure 8: Household Income; Source: NIN Survey, 2017.....	35
Figure 9: Financial Situation; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	35
Figure 10: Financial Situation & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey.....	36
Figure 11: Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey	36
Figure 12: English Fluency & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	37
Figure 13: Visa Status & Employment; Source: NIN Survey 2017	37
Figure 14: Employment Status & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	38
Figure 15: Underemployment; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	38
Figure 16: Education Requirement & Educational Status; Source: NIN Survey	39
Figure 17: Services & Strategies to find employment; Source: NIN Survey, 2017.....	39
Figure 18: Service Strategies & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	40
Figure 19: Employment Challenges; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	40
Figure 20: Challenges by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	41
Figure 21: Education; Source NIN Survey,2017	49
Figure 22: Education & Gender; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	50
Figure 23: Education by Length of Residence, Source: NIN Survey 2017.....	51
Figure 24: English Fluency & Residence: Source: NIN Survey, 2017	51
Figure 25: English Language training by Length of Residence; NIN Survey, 2017.....	52
Figure 26: Professional Courses;Source: NIN Survey, 2017.....	52
Figure 27: English Learning Strategies; Source: NIN Survey	53
Figure 28: Challenges; Source: NIN Survey	53
Figure 29: Language Challenges by Gender: NIN Survey, 2017	54
Figure 30: Challenges in Language by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	55
Figure 31: Overall Health; Source: NIN Survey.....	61
Figure 32: Income and Health; Source: NIN Survey	61
Figure 33: Age and Health; Source NIN Survey.....	62
Figure 34: Health rating & length of residence; Source: NIN Survey.....	62
Figure 35: Health Service Provider; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	63
Figure 36: Helpful Service; Source: NIN Survey 2017.....	63

Figure 37: Seeking Help by Gender; Souce: NIN Survey, 2017	64
Figure 38: Health Challenges; Source: NIN Survey 2017	64
Figure 39: Health Challenge by Length of Residence: Source: NIN Survey, 2017.....	65
Figure 40: Environmental Challenges: Source: NIN Survey, 2017	66
Figure 41: Important to settle; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	74
Figure 42: Friends & Family activity; Source; NIN Survey, 2017	74
Figure 43: Religious Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017	75
Figure 44: Physical Activity; NIN Survey 2017	75
Figure 45: Recreational Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017	76
Figure 46: Educational Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017	76
Figure 47: Cultural Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017	77
Figure 48: Frequent participation & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	77
Figure 49: Sense of Belonging; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	78
Figure 50: Sense of Belonging & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	78
Figure 51: Sense of Belonging & Race; NIN Survey, 2017	79
Figure 52: Challenges Social Adjustment; Source: NIN Survey 2017	79
Figure 53: Family Challenges; Source: NIN Survey 2017	80
Figure 54: Visiting newcomer services; Source: NIN Survey, 2017.....	85
Figure 55: Visiting newcomer services by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	85
Figure 56: Information about Community Services & Supports by Gender; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	86
Figure 57: Challenges Transportation; Source: NIN Survey, 2017	86
Figure 58: Recommendations: Source: NIN Survey 2017.....	87

KEY SUMMARY FINDINGS



INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, the Newcomer Interagency Network (NIN) commissioned Habitus Consulting Collective to assess newcomer needs, gaps and services in order to provide a baseline understanding of their settlement outcomes in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB).

This project is funded by Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC). It engaged over 700 newcomers and over 40 different organizations, institutions, businesses, and programs.

One of the key drivers of this project was to gather evidence that would help stakeholders working with newcomers to understand the needs and challenges of settlement.

The NIN identified **critical priority areas** of settlement such as employment, language, health, and social connections. Additional priorities included: access to services, childcare & transportation. Within each area key questions were developed jointly by the research team and the NIN. These questions focused on needs, challenges, gaps and successful strategies for newcomers.

The report is organized around these priority areas and included data both from the NIN Survey, interviews with key stakeholders, and secondary data where relevant. Overall **the report will help identify future priorities and support long-term planning for the NIN and other organizations working with newcomers in the RMWB.**

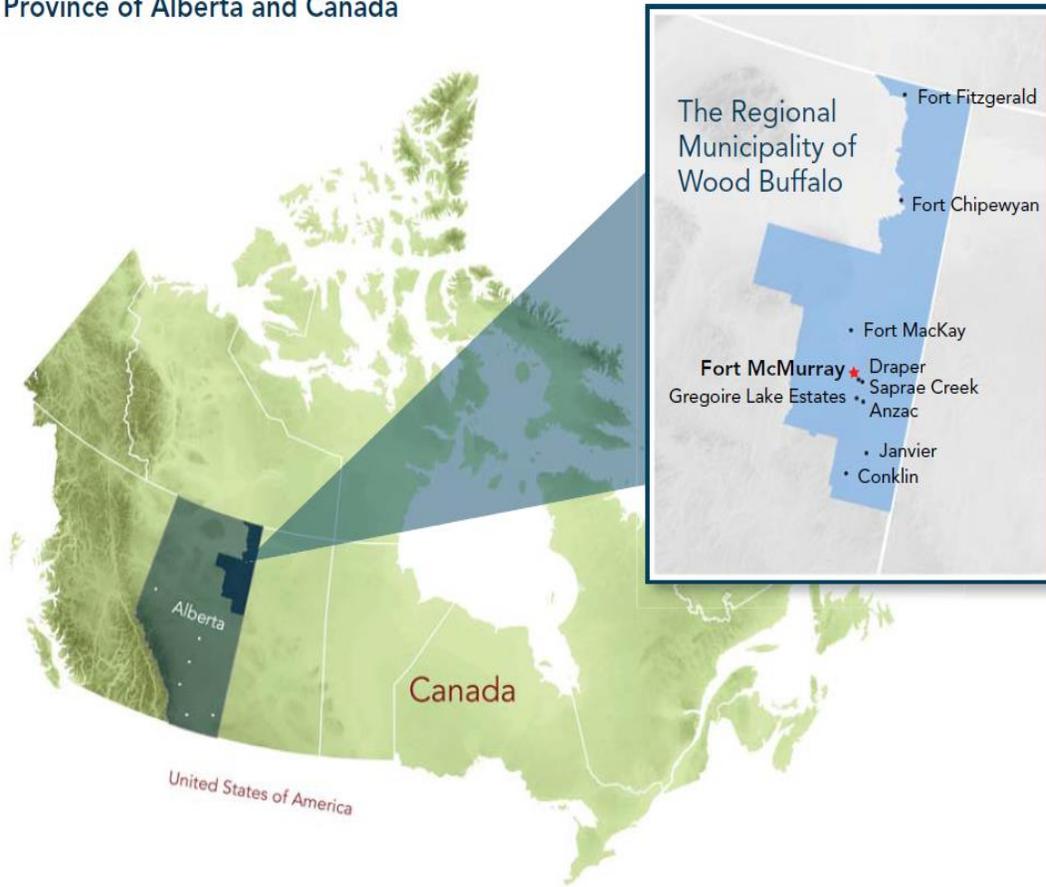
A final point, this data was collected in the aftermath of the wildfires in Alberta that impacted approximately 50,000 hectares. According to both news reports and stakeholder interviews, almost 90,000 people were forced to evacuate, many of whom were yet to return at the time of this study (Guardian, 2016). This has shifted the demographic composition and newcomer population, though exact

Project objectives:

- Understand the **needs of newcomers** in key areas such as employment, language, education, residence, health and social connections.
- Identify the **key barriers** to accessing programs and services and provide insights into specific trends related to different demographics.
- Highlight **areas of priority** to support NIN action planning and build community knowledge about newcomers that can support service providers, community organizations and policy-makers in their work.

figures will not be available until the next Census. The full extent of the impact of the fire is still unknown, especially in terms of the economic, psycho-social, and health implications on the residents.

Map 1: Location of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in relation to the Province of Alberta and Canada



Source: (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2012)

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO: SETTLING NEWCOMERS

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is a specialized municipality located in northeastern Alberta and is the second largest municipality in Alberta by area. With a population of 125,032 (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2015)¹ it is home to the Athabasca Oil Sands, helping to make the region one of the fastest growing industrial areas in Canada. The oil industry attracts newcomers both from within Canada and globally making it one of the most diverse regions of the country. Fort McMurray is unique place as majority of its population are not born and raised in the region.

Given the influx of newcomers in the region, educational institutions, community services, newcomer programs, ethno-cultural resources, and city infrastructure have had to adapt, align and customize to meet the growing and diverse needs of this population.

The population in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has grown every year during the period from 2000 to 2015. The overall increase in population during this 15-year period is 143%. While the permanent population has increased at a stable pace by 82% from 2000 to 2015, the shadow population is more sporadic but exponential in its growth and increased by 580% (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2015).

In the census, 85.4% identified Canada as their country of origin (56% from Alberta) while 14.6% stated their origin was from another country. Among residents who identified Canada as their country of origin, 56.2% are from Alberta. Newfoundland and Labrador (15.2%), Ontario (7.8%), and British Columbia (6.5%). Among those who identified other countries of the world as their country of origin, 56.3% are from Asia and the Middle East, 15.4% are from Africa, 13.3% are from the Americas and the Caribbean, 13.1% are from Europe and 1.9% are from Oceania (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2015).

This report defines newcomers as anyone who has not spent the majority of their life in RMWB – including both those who have arrived from outside of Canada or relocated from within Canada.

This broad definition was chosen because the NIN wanted to understand the varied and diverse perspectives of newcomers to better serve their needs. The settlement needs of newcomers vary in terms of their country of origin, visa, race, gender, family composition, education and income. These needs evolve with time and yet are not time bound.

Stakeholders who contributed to the report highlighted that the term **newcomer can be both useful and problematic**. It can be useful because it helps identify those people who may need help or services and helps shape the identity of those new to the region, even helping creating cohesion among newcomers. It can also be problematic as it can become a label to differentiate those new to the region, creating a feeling of exclusion.

¹ According to the RMWB Municipal Council the population levels have dropped significantly.

Stakeholders also pointed out that often settlement needs continue to exist for those who may not be considered as a newcomer, by virtue of the length of time they may have spent in the region and/or the rate at which they integrate into the community.

Another set of perspectives from stakeholders highlighted the **nuances of the term newcomer as it applied to migrants who relocate from within Canada and those who may be new to Canada**. These two groups may have very specific needs that may or may not overlap.

A stakeholder from the **Centre d'accueil et d'établissement** spoke about complexities within the definition stating that:

"You cannot combine them (migrant and immigrant), there needs to be a segregation between those two groups of people in order to find the best solution to be able to support and guide"

While another stakeholder from the **Wood Buffalo Regional Library** highlighted the differences of this definition depending on the sector:

"In the employment world immigrants are not the only newcomers. If you are moving to Fort McMurray you are a newcomer. That was the point to be inclusive in terminology – Newfoundland to New Zealand".

A stakeholder from the **Catholic School Board** shared the perspective from education:

"Our organization defines it based off the Alberta education model which looks at them through a narrow lens—whether they are ESL learners or not ESL learners and how long they have been in Canada (needs to be less than 5 years)"

From the **RMWB Municipal perspective**:

"I think that generally the city and the public would see newcomers as immigrants and refugees only. But there is an understanding that everyone is new to the community."

IMMIGRATION CONTEXT OF CANADA

One out of five people in Canada's population is foreign-born

According to the first data from the 2011 NHS, Canada had a total of about 6,775,800 foreign-born individuals who arrived as immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2013). They represented 20.6% of the total population. Immigration is one of the major causes of demographic change and growth in Canada. The country admitted **271,845 new permanent residents in 2015**, the highest admissions level since 2010. Of those, 62.7% were economic immigrants (along with their spouse/partner and dependants), 24.1% were in the family reunification category and 13.2% were in the humanitarian category (including refugees) (IRCC, 2015).

Asia the largest source of immigrants

Unlike previous waves of immigrants who mainly came from Europe recent data shows that over **200 ethnic groups are represented in Canada's population** (Statistics Canada, 2013). **Philippines, India and China continue to be the top three source countries** (IRCC, 2015). Adding to the diversity of Canadian ethno-cultural makeup is linguistic diversity. More than 200 languages were reported as a home language or mother tongue in the 2011 National Household Survey.

Immigrants are more likely to live in urban areas

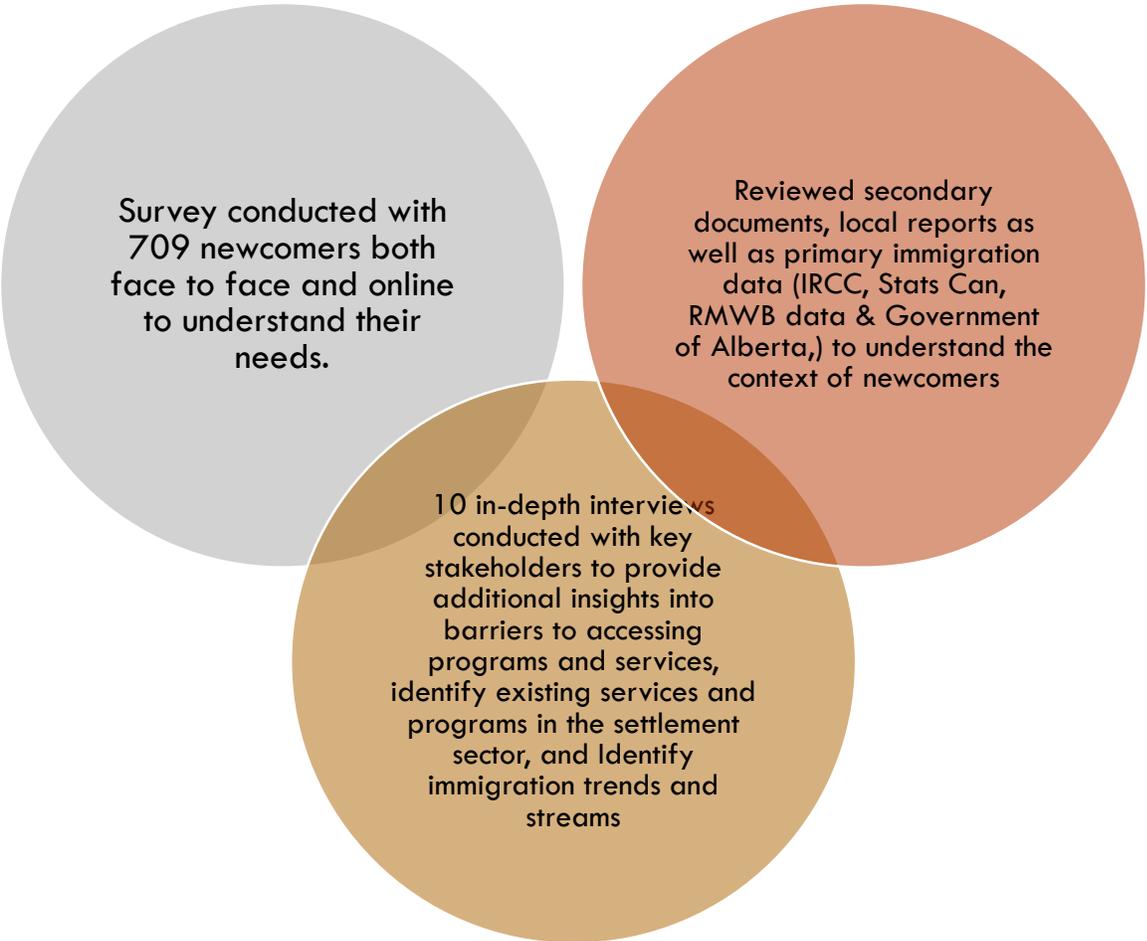
In 2011, **the vast majority (94.8%) of Canada's foreign-born population lived in four provinces:** Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta. (Statistics Canada, 2013). Immigrants, especially recent arrivals, were much more likely to live in the nation's largest urban centres than people born in Canada.

One out of every five people a visible minority

In 2011, nearly 6,264,800 people identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population on the NHS questionnaire. They represented about 1 out of every 5 people (19.1%) in Canada's total population (Statistics Canada, 2013). In the RMWB, 24.1% are visible minority (Municipal Census, 2012)

OUR APPROACH

The consultants used several methodologies to understand the needs of newcomers. The current research design was chosen to achieve the goals of the research within a limited time frame. The data collected in this study will be a source of baseline data and triangulated with other available research data to provide a picture of newcomer settlement. It will also help to identify priorities for the NIN and support their strategy for future work.



SURVEY

Data collection- February 17- March 17, 2017.
709 surveys collected (Quicktap & Survey
Monkey)



The research team included 18 data collectors who were fluent in 14 different languages including English.

Languages included: Amharic; Arabic; Berber, Dinka, French, Hindi, Mandarin, Nuer, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog & Urdu



Sites included: Libraries; Recreation centers; Religious sites; Educational institutions; and Public events. These sites were frequented by newcomers and would provide access to a geographically varied sample from across the RMWB. Each site was also likely to serve different needs of newcomers or provide diverse services, thus providing access to a wide range of immigrants. .



Data collectors approached individuals they encountered and asked them to participate in the study. They were usually positioned in a high traffic areas at the site and approached most the clientele accessing the site. Data collectors were also given the opportunity to recruit participants through their own personal networks for the survey.

NIN Survey Tool

The survey examined the current needs, challenges/barriers and identified areas for strengthening services or programs. The survey questions were based on discussions with the NIN steering committee and their goals, an extensive literature review, analysis of gaps in current knowledge on newcomers and review of similar surveys conducted by other organizations. The survey questions mainly focused on key domains such as demographics, language and education, access to services and information, health, financial context and employment and social connections. The results of the survey present key findings in each of the domains. Additionally, the report details analysis on the way gender, household income, length of stay, and visa status

Conducting the Project

After recruitment, the data collectors reviewed the informed consent with each participant. Participants were required to provide either oral or written consent without which the survey could not proceed. Participants who completed the survey in person were given a small gift and in some cases, food for their participation. The inclusion criteria for the study was as follows: resident of RMWB (part or full time), above the age of 18, has not spent majority of their life in RMWB, all newcomers including TFW's, International Students and PR (immigrant or refugee) were eligible to participate. Individuals with a super visa, visitor visa, Canadian

impact each of the above domains. Secondary data was used to provide a comparable data point or add to the knowledge about the area of work.

The survey was designed in English; however, the data collectors conducted the survey in the preferred languages of the participants when possible. The data collectors translated the survey on-site based on the translation previously agreed upon during the training session. The research team worked with various language groups to maintain the standardization of translation and to use language that was simple and accurate. The online survey was available only in English. The survey tool is available in Appendix 1.

citizenship (born inside or outside of Canada), or no legal status in Canada were not eligible for the survey.

For the interviews, the NIN helped to identify the key stakeholders within each sector such as employment, city services, recreation and education. Each interview lasted for about an hour and was conducted over the phone. Stakeholders were asked questions about the definition of newcomers, needs of newcomers, challenges, services and programs that support newcomers and the broader context of settlement in RMWB.

Data Process and Analysis

The data collected through the online and offline methods were merged into one data set. All paper surveys were entered on QuickTap and then merged with the main data set. The data was then exported to SPSS for analysis. All incomplete surveys or erroneous data were removed from the data set. The research team

developed frequency graphs and conducted some cross tabulations to understand the influence of race, education level, gender, income, length of stay and visa status on settlement outcomes. All frequency tables and additional graphs are available in a technical appendix.

Challenges in Data Collection & Limitations

Some of the challenges in collecting data and limitations included:

- The sample in certain demographic characteristics did not reflect the larger population of newcomers. However, given the unique definition of newcomers adopted for this project, comparisons with a larger population are challenging to make (more information provided in the demographics section.)
- At some of the sites there was not enough clients or foot traffic for successful recruitment of participants.
- At a few sites, the data collectors were not given permission to approach participants, participants needed to approach them, and this posed a challenge in reaching out to the participants.
- The lack of adequate incentives also posed as a challenge in recruitment of participants.
- The survey was lengthy and it took about twenty minutes to complete. This was a challenge for some participants who were short on time.
- The survey was only available in English online (budget and time restrictions) and this may have been a challenge for those participants whose first language was not English. The presence of multi-lingual data collectors to collect the data was aimed directly at mitigating some of these challenges.
- Given the short time span of the project and challenges in accessing participants, the sample size was smaller than originally planned. Site-based and network-based sampling restricts the nature of the sample, i.e. participants were limited to those accessing or using the sites included in the study.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section describes the survey sample of newcomers and will compare it to the broader population of newcomer data to highlight similarities and identify any key differences. The NIN Survey of newcomers, includes both foreign born- immigrants, temporary foreign workers, students and refugees as well as Canadian born migrants who are newly settled. This is a unique population of newcomers that cannot be compared directly with existing population level statistics, as both federal and local government use different inclusion criteria to collect data. This report will (*only*) make comparisons to Permanent Residents database (2015) from IRCC statistics as well as the Census data from the RMWB² to establish some baseline comparisons.

Gender: More Females in NIN Survey sample

The NIN Survey sample consisted of 65% females and 35% male newcomers. This skew is partly explained as a majority of data was collected in the city and not on work sites where many males worked. IRCC statistics also show that there is a slight skew towards females (51%) as compared to males (49%) in the Permanent Residents category (IRCC, 2015). This may reflect the **increasing feminization of migration**, where women now comprise more than 50% of migrants (Health Canada, 2010). However, the Municipal Census data for RMWB was skewed towards males (55%) as compared to females (45%) (Census, 2015). When compared to the overall NHS 2016 data 54% were males and 46% were females³.

Age: Majority of NIN Survey sample of working age

68% of the NIN Survey sample were in the age range of 25-44 years, which is higher than the 58% of the same age group in broader RMWB population (Census 2015)⁴. In all other age categories, the NIN Survey sample was fairly comparable to the Municipal Census sample (Figure 1; Figure 2). This data reflects NHS 2011 statistics which shows that immigrant newcomers are relatively young. In 2011, 58.6% of people who came to Canada since 2006 were in the core working age group between 25 and 54.

² The Municipal Census 2015 enumerated all residents in the Urban Service Area of Fort McMurray, the rural communities (often referred to as rural hamlets), and project accommodations (works camps) and other temporary facilities dispersed throughout the Municipality. This reflects a broader population as compared to NIN Survey, which was mainly focused on the urban areas. Additionally, comparisons have been made with the 2012 Census in those categories which were not included in the 2015 Census.

³ The gender analysis in the report may be skewed due to the skew in sample.

⁴ Children below 19 population was subtracted from the total before calculating the percentage.

When compared to the overall NHS 2016 data the average age of the population is 33 years. 77% of the population was between 15-64 years of age.

Country of Birth: Majority belonged to Philippines, China & India

95% of the NIN Survey sample was born outside RMWB, as compared to only 5% born inside it.

The top four countries of origin for the NIN sample were: Philippines (18%), China (9%), India (9%) and Somalia (6%) (Figure 3). This is reflective of the national trend of immigration (IRCC, 2015) and is reflective of the top 5 ethnicities of RMWB (Census 2012). The NIN Survey sample was similar to the top countries of origin of the general population of RMWB 25% from South Asia, 21% from Southeast Asia and 6.8% from Eastern Asia (Census 2012).

First Language: Tagalog, Urdu and Arabic were top three languages

The top three first languages spoken among the NIN Survey participants besides English (18%) was Tagalog (14%), Urdu (11%) & Arabic (10%). Only 21% of the sample population had one of Canada's official language as their first language. This was reflective of the broader population of RMWB where the top three languages besides English and French were Hindi, Chinese, Spanish and Arabic (Census 2012).

Ethnicity: Black, South Asian and South-east Asian were top three ethnicities

The NIN survey sample consisted primarily of Black (20%), South Asian (19%) and Southeast Asians (16%) (Figure 4). The other top ethnicities were Caucasians (12%), Arab/West Asians (10%) and East Asian (9%). According to the 2012 Census the ethnic distribution in RMWB population, Caucasian (76%), Native Aboriginal (6.8%), South Asian (5.9%), Asian-Pacific (3.3%) & African (2.7%) (Census, 2012).

Visa Status in Canada: Majority were either PR or Citizens

The NIN survey sample consisted of 43% Permanent Residents and 43% Canadian citizen, while Temporary Foreign Workers and international students contributed to 7% and 6% respectively (Figure 5).

Newcomer Status: Half of the sample perceived themselves newcomers

48% considered themselves to be a 'newcomer' and 42% did not consider themselves as newcomers. 10% were not sure if they were newcomers or not. Newcomer as a word, may entail many meanings, temporary foreign workers, immigrants and refugees new to Canada may consider themselves to be newcomers. In addition, participants born in Canada, who may be moving to RMWB from other areas in Canada may identify themselves with the term newcomer as well.

Number of Children: *Majority had no children living with them currently*

43% of the NIN Survey sample families had no children living with them currently while 40% had one or two children under the age of 18. 17% had children more three or more children. According to stakeholders, many residents of the RMWB live only part-time in the area and often come to work to the region leaving their families in other provinces, this may account for the low number of families with children. According to the Census 2015 (0-24 year old) children and youth population is approximately 24%.

Residence: *Majority had lived outside of RMWB*

Within the survey population, participants were divided almost in half, with 54% participants having lived somewhere else in Canada before coming to RMWB, and 46% who had not lived in any other place besides RMWB. Within the NIN survey sample 35% lived in Timberlea, 18% in Lower Townsite, and 13% in Thickwood Heights, 9% lived in Eagle Ridge, 2% each lived in Parsons Creek, Stoney Creek and Gregoire (Figure 6). Those numbers were comparative to the results of 2015 Census, where (44%) lived in Timberlea, (23%) in Thickwood, and (14.5%) in Lower Townsite communities (Census, 2015).

Length of Stay in RMWB: *Majority lived for less than 5 years*

63% of the survey participants have been in RMWB for less than 5 years, with 28% who have been living for 1-3 years. 16% of the samples had lived in the region for 4-5 years and 19% have been living in RMWB for less than a year (Figure 7). Since the survey is focused on newcomers, the high percentage of those who have been living in RMWB for less than 5 years is reflective of the inclusion criteria for this survey.

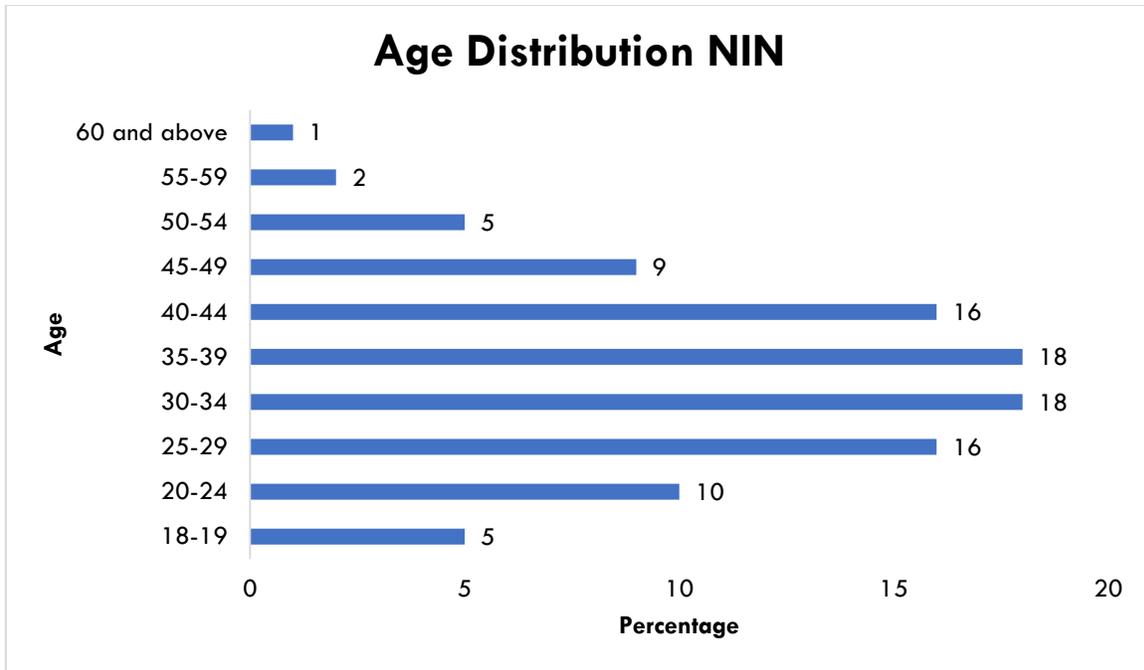


Figure 1 Age Distribution; Source: NIN Survey

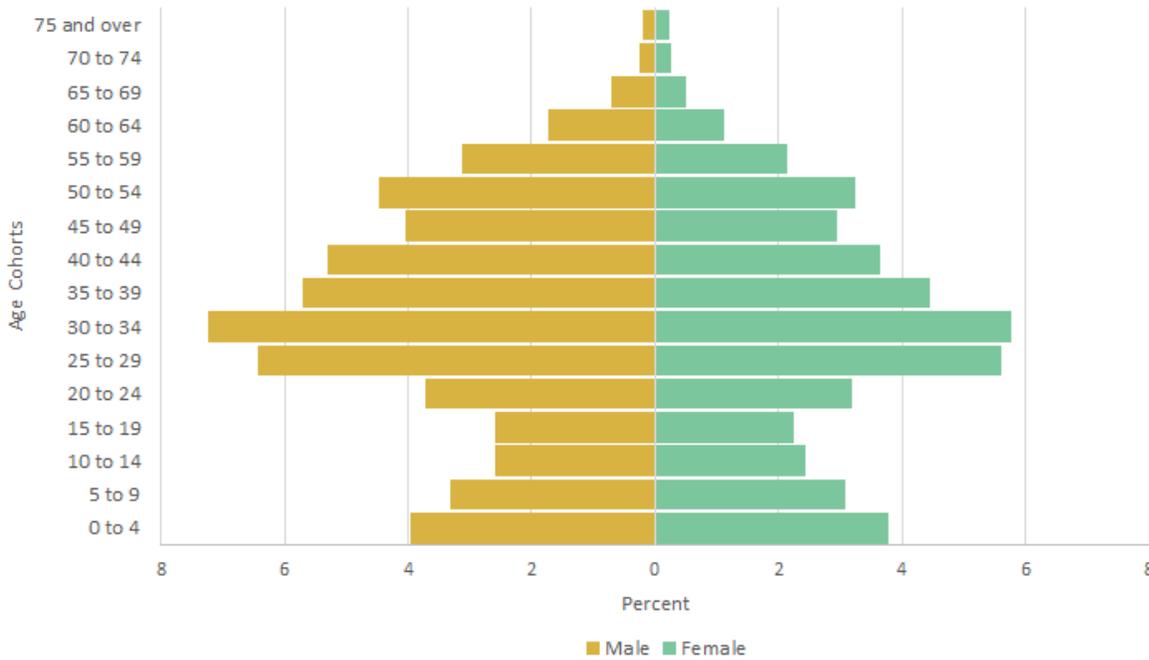


Figure 2: RMWB Census 2015; Source Census

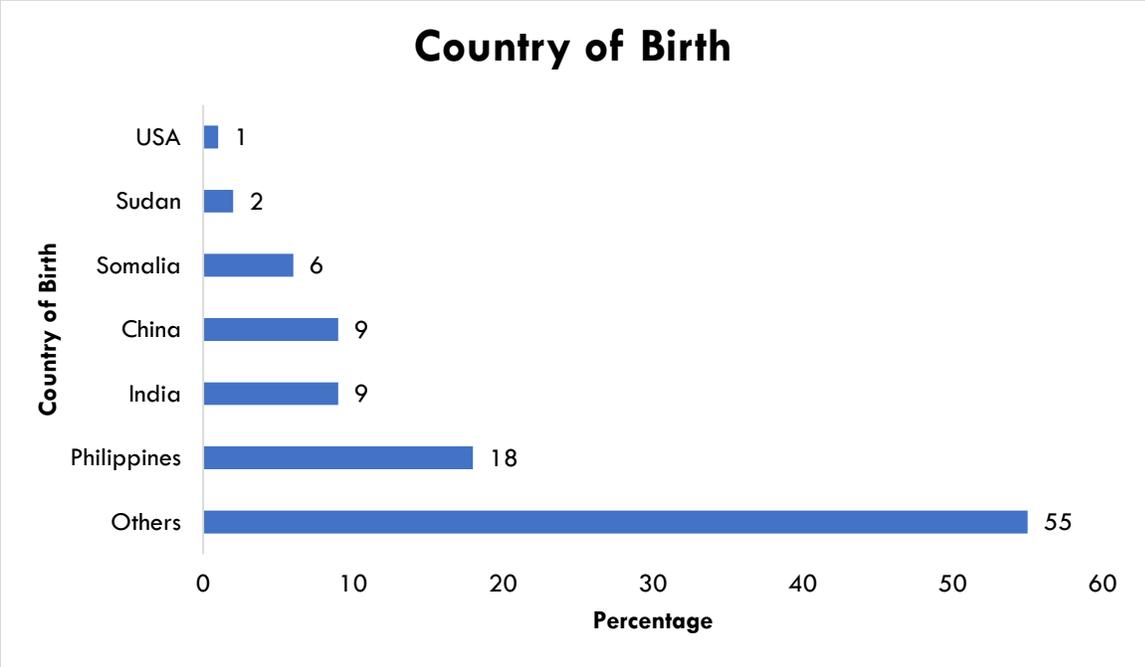


Figure 3: Country of Birth; Source: NIN Survey

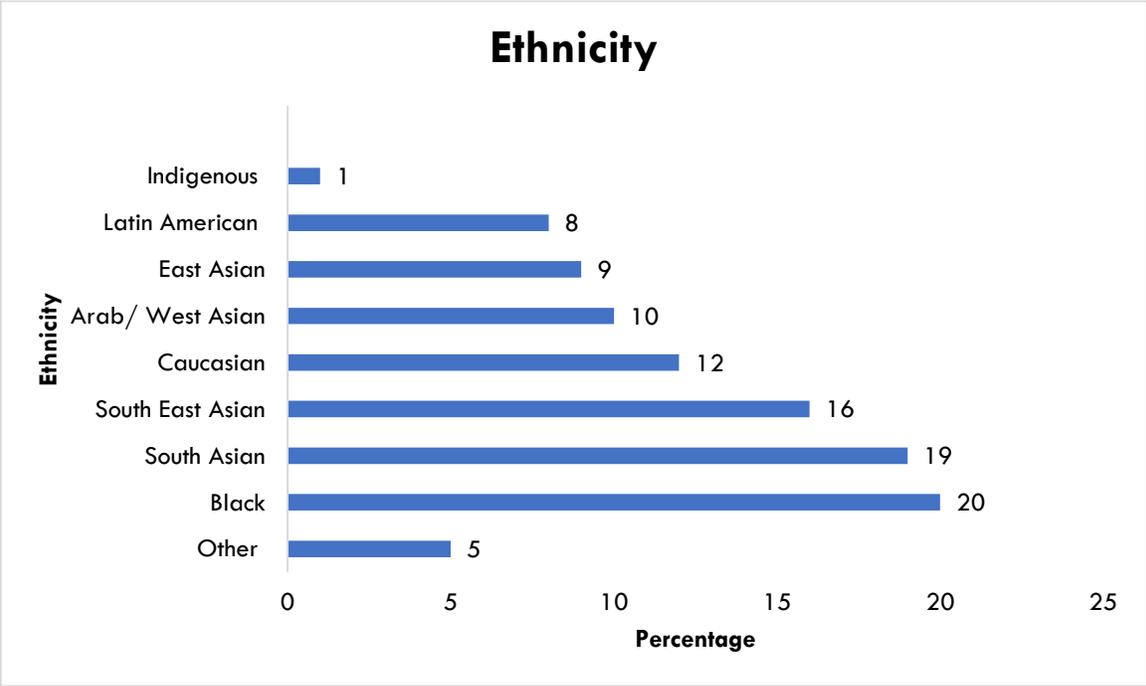


Figure 4: Ethnicity; Source: NIN Survey Sample

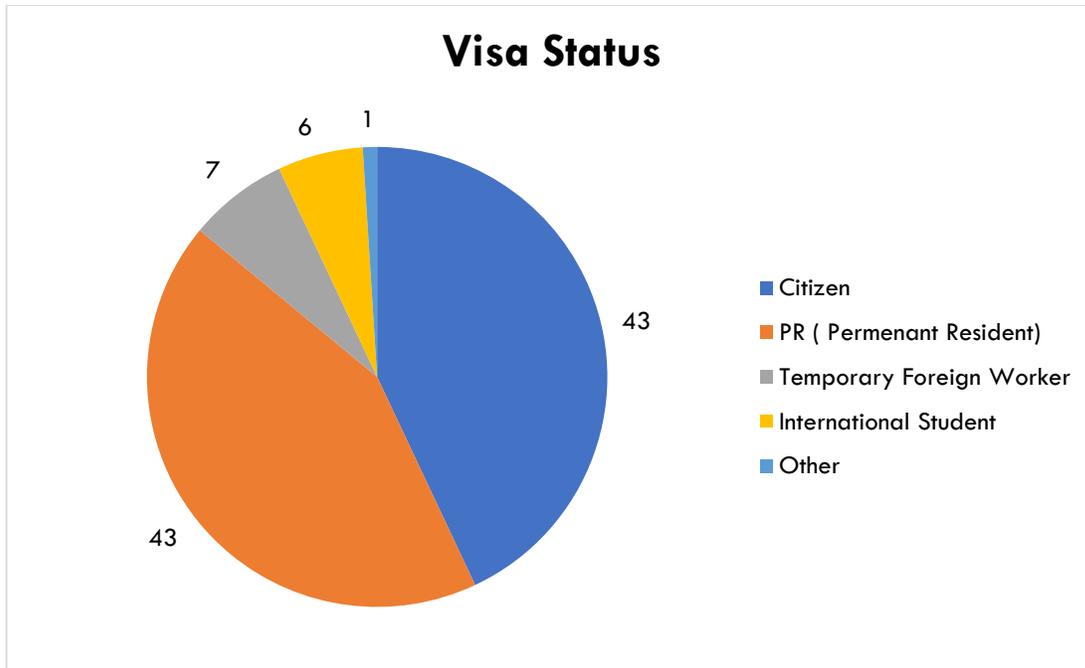


Figure 5: Visa Status in Canada; Source NIN Survey, 2017

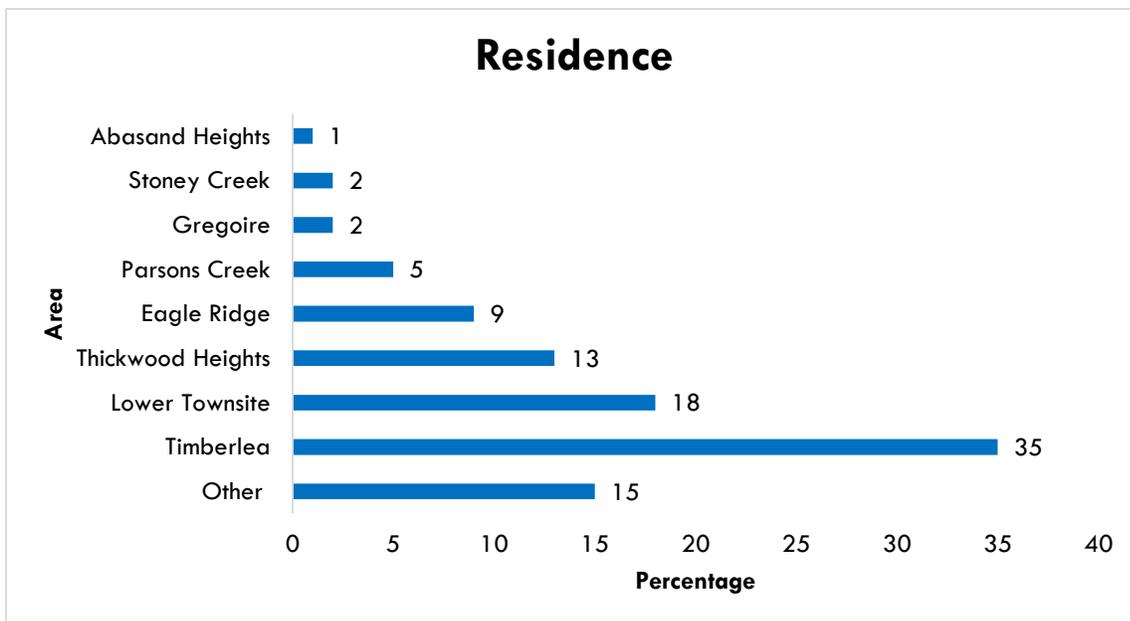


Figure 6: Residence; Source NIN Survey

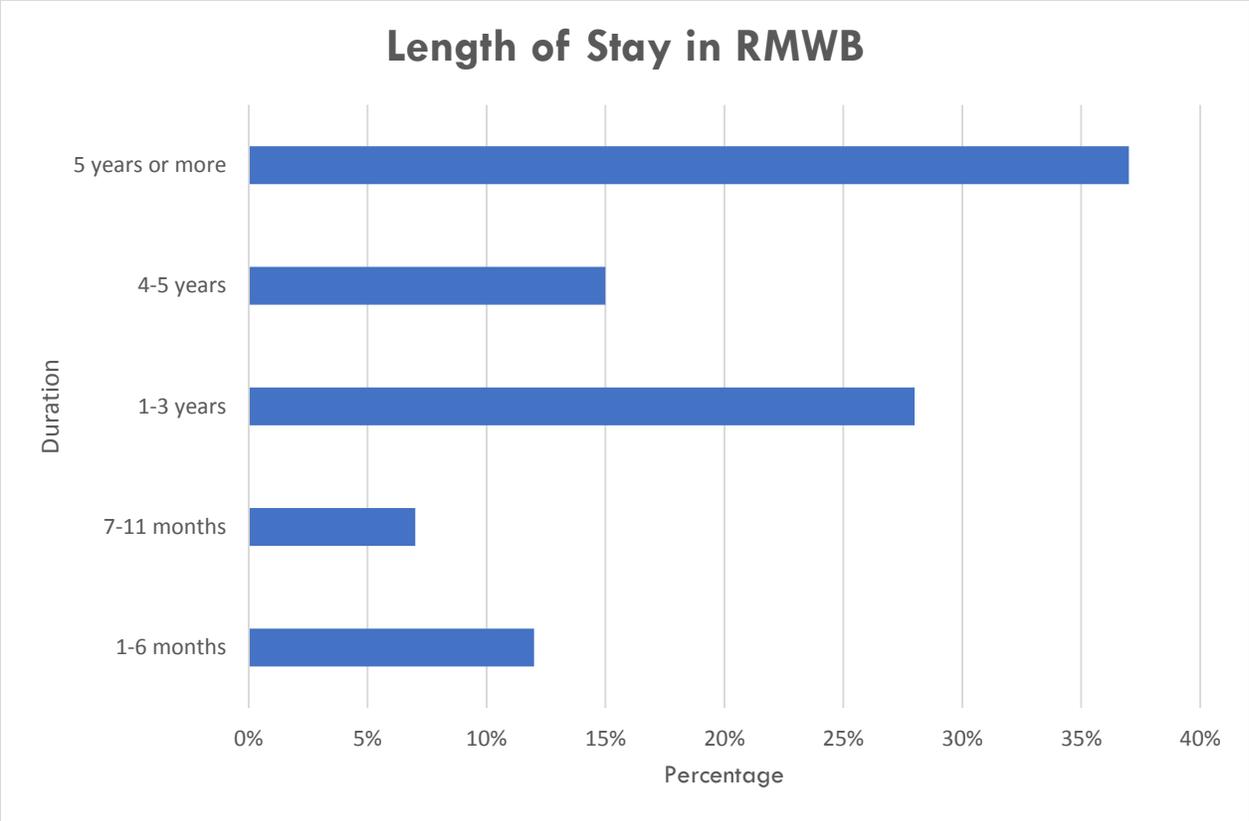
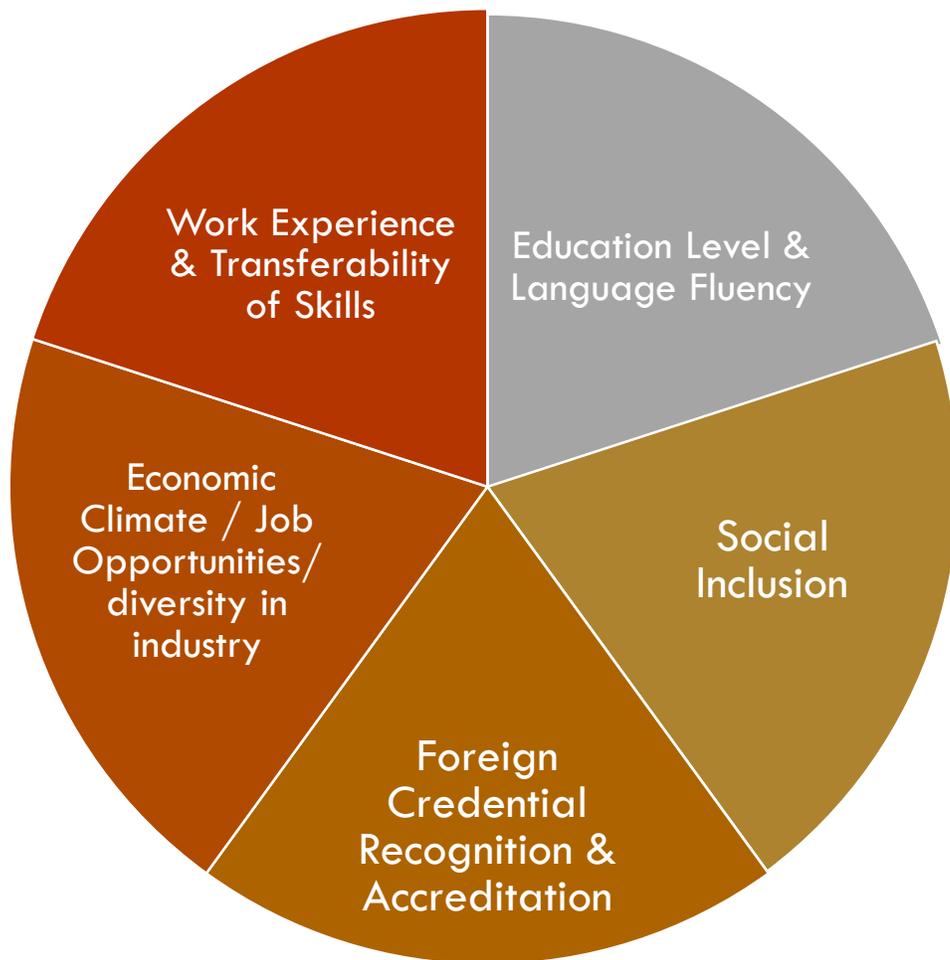


Figure 7: Length of Stay; Source: NIN Survey

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT



INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

Newcomers overall report lower incomes and jobs that match their skills and experience. Key needs include: improving access to meaningful employment, increasing workplace supports and strengthening skills to match needs of the labour market.

Income and employment are key attributes to understand the context of newcomer settlement within the RMWB. Previous years saw significant growth in the region because of the oil sands activity bringing an influx of workers from both Canada and beyond. However, because of the recent downturn in the oil markets and the wildfires in the region, the economy has witnessed a significant slow down. Stakeholders suggested that newcomers have many challenges finding stable and long-term employment. One respondent from the YMCA Employment Link program stated:

“What we have seen is a slight reduction of clients coming to look for work in Fort McMurray (15% less clients on average). Also we noticed we are seeing less clients with higher education. The majority of clients we see now are semi-skilled and looking for entry-level positions. We also have seen skilled professionals who were working in the oil sands sites and are now unemployed. It is very difficult now to find work here if they have been laid off from their work.”

The survey explored key areas of income, financial stability, employment status, underemployment, challenges to find employment and successful strategies to find employment.

Household income: Majority had a household income below \$60,000

One third of the survey sample (34%) reported an approximate household income of \$30,000, while (15%) had a total income of \$30,000-\$60,000, and 13% had an income of \$60,000-90,000. In comparison with the general population, according the RMWB Census 2015, about 25% of the population has an annual income above \$250,000 (Figure 8). The average household in RMWB (based on 2012 data) earns about \$189,458 and the average cost of living is about 10.3% higher than the national income (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2017). In comparison average newcomers were earning below \$90,000, almost half of the general population, and this underscores the financial precariousness of newcomers.

NIN survey sample highlights that newcomers are potentially earning less as compared to the general population.

Income by Immigration Status

Of all the visa categories, citizens were the most likely to have higher incomes. About 28% of citizens had a household income of about \$120,000 or more, as compared to 11% of PRs and 3% of TFWs. 73% of TFWs had household income of \$30,000 or less, as compared to 25% of PRs and 10% of citizens. *As visa status became more temporary incomes also reduced.*

Income by Age

Majority of those earning \$120,000 or more were in the 30-44-year age group as compared to those earning below \$60,000 were below 30 years.

Income by Length of Stay

Among those earning less than \$30,000 about 44% had lived in RMWB for 1-3 years. In fact, 69% of those earning less than \$30,000 had lived less than 3 years. In the \$120-150,000 income bracket 47% had lived for 5 years or more. In the \$150-200,000 bracket 65% had lived for 5 years or more. *Long term newcomer residents were more likely to earn higher incomes as compared to those who had recently arrived.*

Financial Situation: *Income met the needs for most survey participants*

The survey asked participants about their financial situation *and majority participants (39%) said that their income met their needs.* 18% are not able to meet needs and 2% were on social assistance. For 24% of participants their income met their needs and they could save money and 9% send money home (Figure 9).

Financial Situation by Employment

Those with employment whether full time or part time, were more likely to meet their needs, save money and send money home. Interestingly, there were about 32% of those who were struggling to meet their needs who had full time employment (Figure 10).

Employment: *Majority had either full-time or part-time employment*

44% were of the participants were employed full-time and 15% were employed part-time. 13% were unemployed and looking for work (Figure 11).

Employment by Age

Among those who were employed full-time majority (approximately 50%) were in the age group 30-44 years. Among those who were unemployed majority were in the age group 25-29 years.

Employment by Income

Those **employed full-time were more likely to have higher annual incomes** as expected, those with part-time jobs were more likely to remain in the lower income brackets.

Employment by Gender

Employment statistics were skewed towards males - of all males 73% had either full-time or part-time employment as compared 48% of all females. 10% among all males were unemployed looking for work compared to 13% of all females. It is important to note that significant women were working at home.

Employment by English Language Fluency

Only 45% of those who could speak, read and write in English had full-time employment, indicating that a majority with language proficiency continued to struggle with employment (Figure 12). Stakeholders who were interviewed also spoke about the employment challenges are particularly prominent for those with low communication skills, low education, low literacy and computer skills.

Employment by Immigration Status

Highest full-time employment rates were seen among TFW's, followed by citizens and permanent residents (Figure 13). This is understandable given that most TFW's come for work on this visa category.

Employment by Length of Residence

The longer that newcomers stayed the more likely they were to have full-time or part-time employment (Figure 14). Of all those who were employed 40% had stayed 5 years or more. Among those with part-time employment 33% had stayed for 1-3 years.

Underemployment: Majority of employed had more experience and education than current job required

Out of the full-time and part-time employees, 41% noted that they were employed in jobs matching their education and work experience. In comparison, **48% felt that they were either overqualified or were overexperienced in terms of their current job requirement** (Figure 15).

Underemployment by Gender

When comparing across genders **women were less likely than men to be employed in jobs matching their education and experience**; and more likely to have educational qualifications and work experience than their current job requires.

Educational Requirements of Current Job by Educational Qualifications

Almost half of the jobs (44%) required low level of education with 22% requiring no formal education, and 22% requiring a completion of secondary school. When comparing the educational requirements of the job with the educational qualifications of the survey participants, it once again becomes evident that newcomers were most likely more highly educated than their job required (Figure 16). This was a sentiment that was also echoed by stakeholders during interviews.

Stakeholders suggested that there is also a mismatch between the skills offered by the labour pool and the skills required by employers. The RMWB has a labour market that heavily demands higher tiered tradespeople, experienced bus and truck drivers or red seal certified tradespeople, and other oil and gas related occupations (for example: power engineering, non-destructive testing technicians). Most of these positions cannot be attained by someone who is new to Canada within a year of arriving. For example, even if they wanted to become an apprentice they would have to find an employer that supported them to become an apprentice or if they wanted to become a truck driver they would have to transfer their license. Some companies would not want to take the risk since insuring a new driver to Canada is expensive and risky. Many occupations in demand within RMWB take time to move into which means that people need other employment in the meantime. According to the employers in the RMWB Newcomer Employment Challenges and Options Report (2014) many newcomers were unable to meet verbal, comprehension and knowledge levels required by industry and this led job loss or lack of mobility.

Services to find employment: Resume help, networking and volunteering were considered the most useful strategies

To find employment, people use many services and strategies. Resume help (17%), networking online or face-to-face with possible employers (12%), volunteering (11%) and job search (11%) were the top four strategies (Figure 17).

Services by Employment Status

When comparing those with full time and those with part-time employment it is evident that those with full-time employment were more likely to utilize various strategies in some cases twice as more as compared to those with part-time employment. However, when comparing those with no employment (but looking for work) and those with part-time employment not much difference is seen in terms of utilization of strategies. Given the economic downturn in the region this data may impact the efficacy of these strategies in finding full-time employment.

Challenges in Employment: Accessing employment, maintaining work-life balance and making enough money to meet expenses were the key challenges

The top three challenges in employment included accessing employment (12%), work life balance (10%) and making enough money to meet expenses (10%). The other key challenges included work schedule (8%), childcare (7%) and the lack of training and education (7%) for the job market (Figure 19).

According to the employers in the RMWB Newcomer Employment Challenges and Options Report (2014) newcomers faced work-related challenges such as verbal communication, written literacy, numeracy, cultural practices, and religious practices.

Challenges by Age

In terms of accessing employment 40-44 year olds had major challenges as compared to other age groups (23%). Lack of work life balance, work schedule, and level of English was a top challenge for 35-39 year olds. Making enough money to meet expenses was an important challenge for 25-29 year olds (22%). Foreign qualifications not matching their current jobs were a key challenge for 35-39 year olds (29%). Discrimination at the workplace was most likely noted by those in the 35-44 year age group.

Challenges by Gender

Overall females tended to report more challenges than males in all categories (in some cases twice as compared to men). Some of the key challenges for women included: childcare, skills don't match opportunities in Canada, training and education, and lacking education and experience. Men on the other hand, reported issues such as: accessing employment, lack of work life balance, discrimination at workplace and lack of information about how to find employment or manage.

Challenges by Length of Residence

When we compare over length of residence it is evident that the longer people stay the more likely they are to report challenges (Figure 20). The main challenges during the 1-6 months are around training, language fluency, experience and transportation. 7-11 months these challenges around education, experience, transportation and language remain critical. 1-3 year mark challenges around finding jobs that match their skills, qualifications or experience and lack of diverse work opportunities emerge as important. 4-5 year mark work schedule, skills not matching jobs and discrimination at workplace are key challenges. 5 years and above challenges around finding information about where to find work (given the downturn), training and education, childcare and work schedule emerge as key. This reflects the trajectory of employment needs of newcomers - as they move from survival jobs at arrival to seeking jobs that will match their qualifications and education.

Over time we see that two peaks in the graph, first at the 1-3 year mark and second, at the 5 years or more mark. The 1-3 year mark has been noted by other researchers as well as being critical time point in settlement with newcomers reporting increased challenges (CLIP, 2015). This time-period also coincides with when many government supports are withdrawn and newcomers need to adapt to systems on their own. The 5 year and above mark is also an important signal as newcomers potentially have met their basic needs and now are seeking meaningful employment, better work-life balance and better working conditions and this increases the types of challenges they may face. Related to this are the statistics around discrimination are important to consider - as newcomers stayed longer they were more likely to report discrimination.

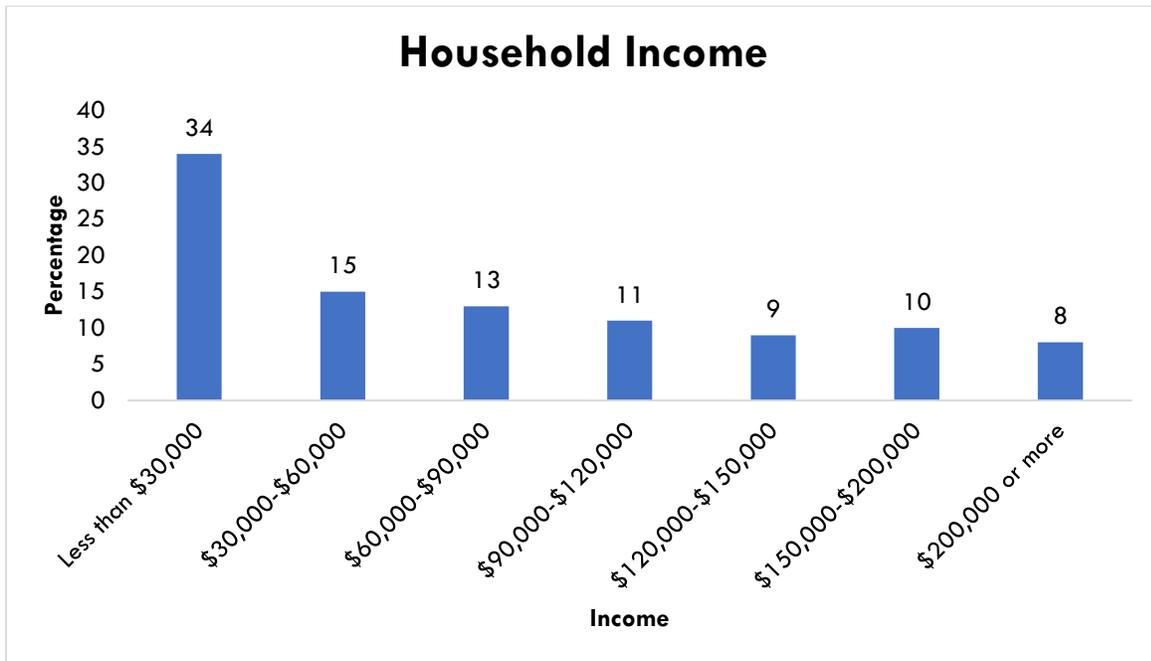


Figure 8: Household Income; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

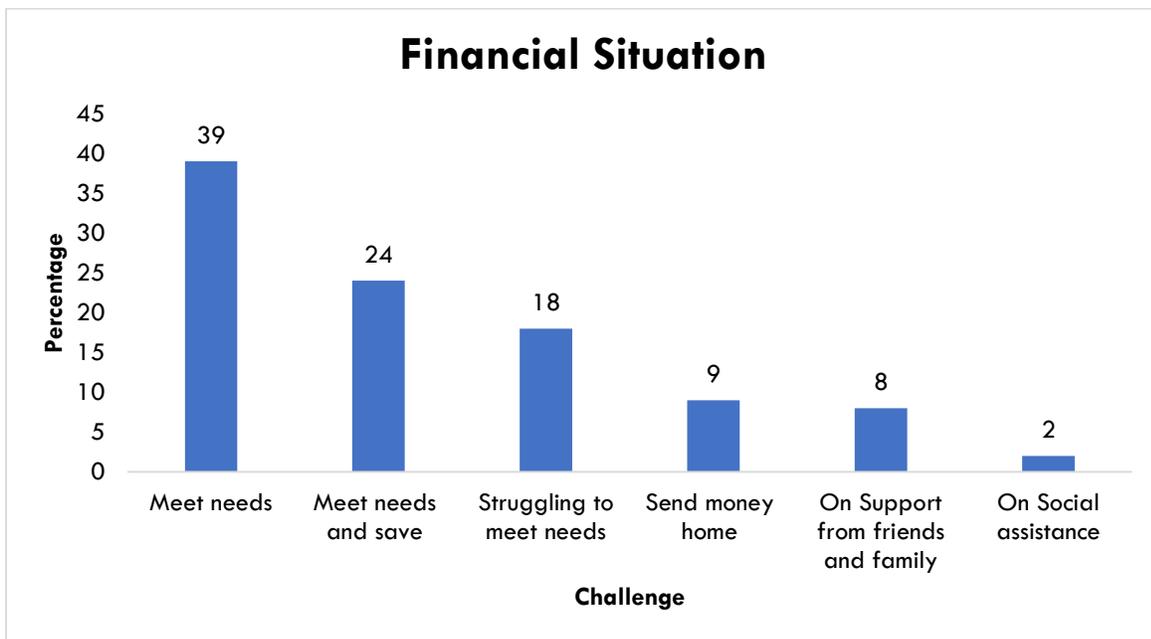


Figure 9: Financial Situation; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

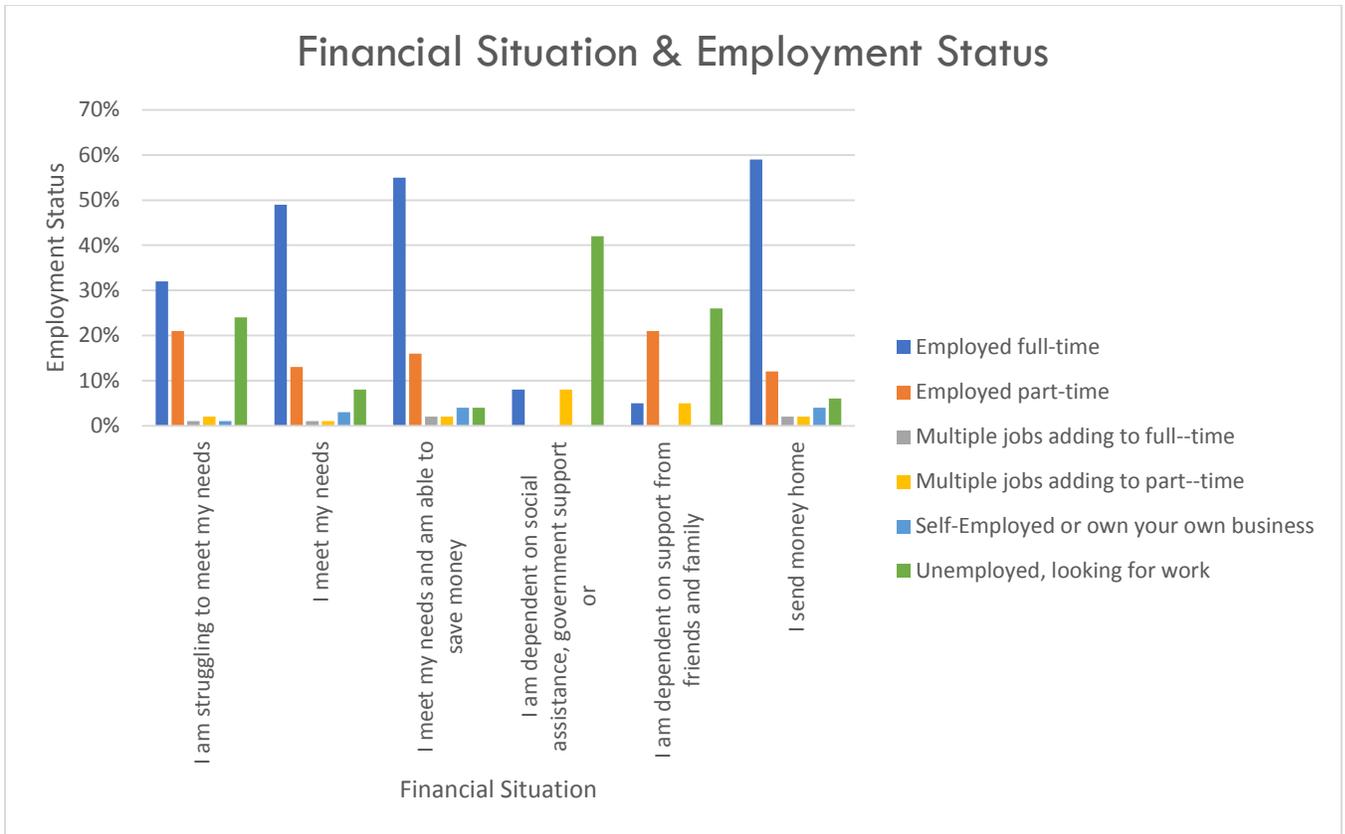


Figure 10: Financial Situation & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey

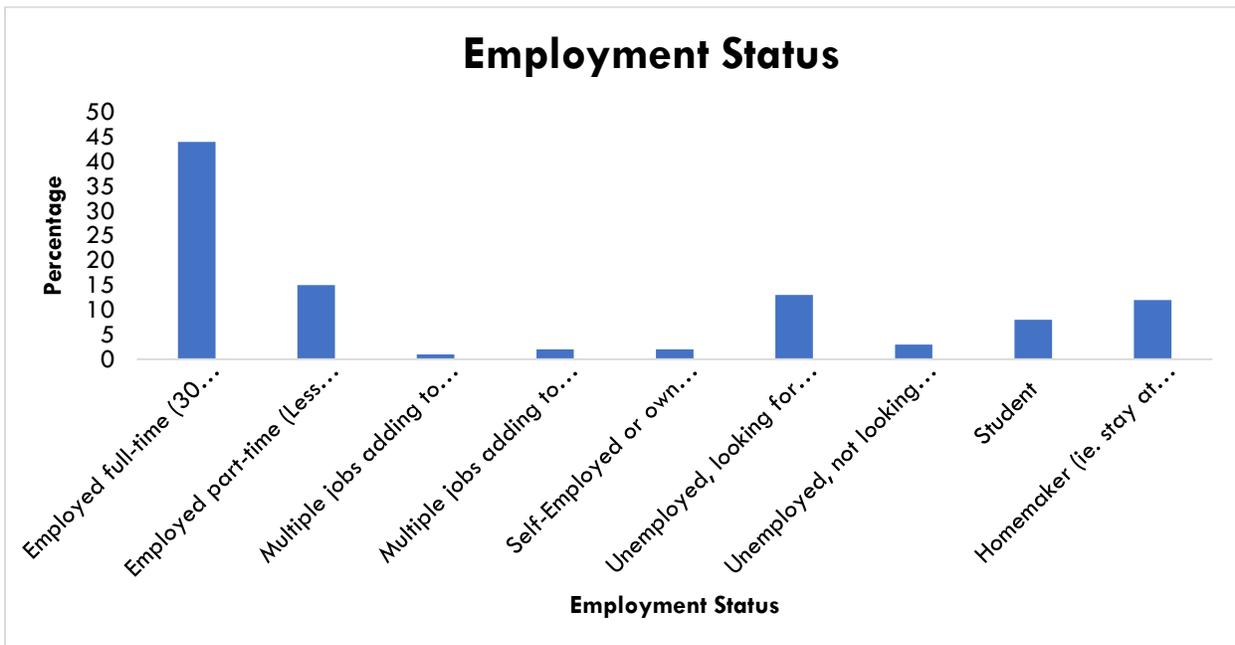


Figure 11: Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey

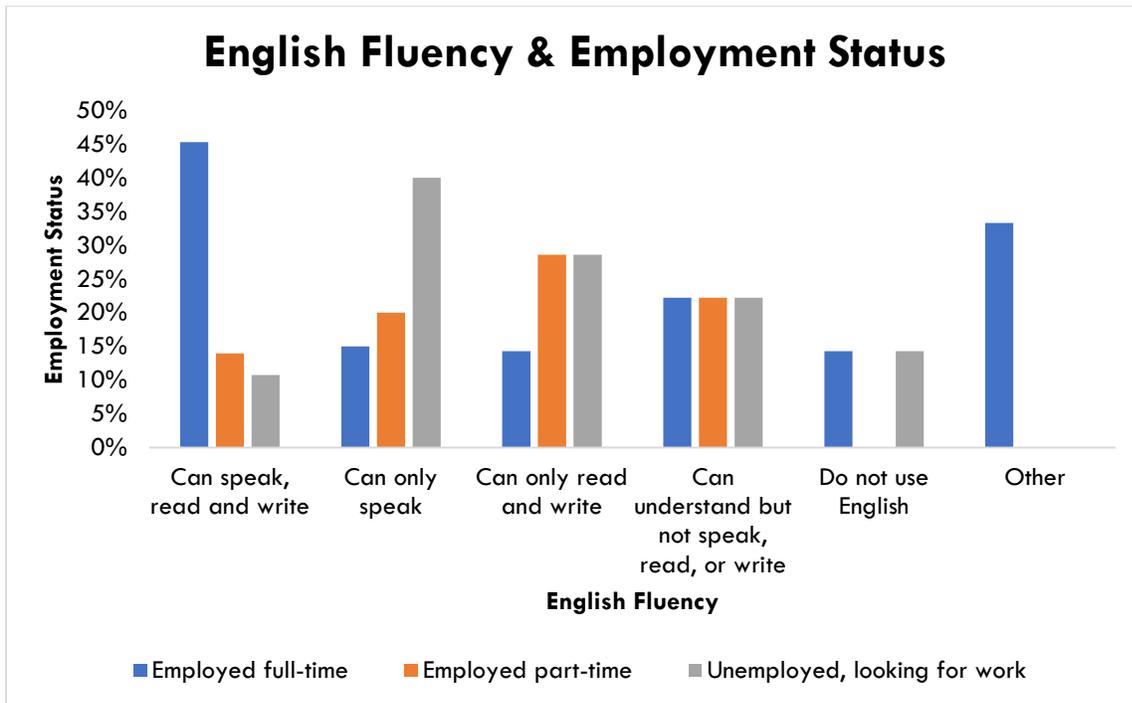


Figure 12: English Fluency & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

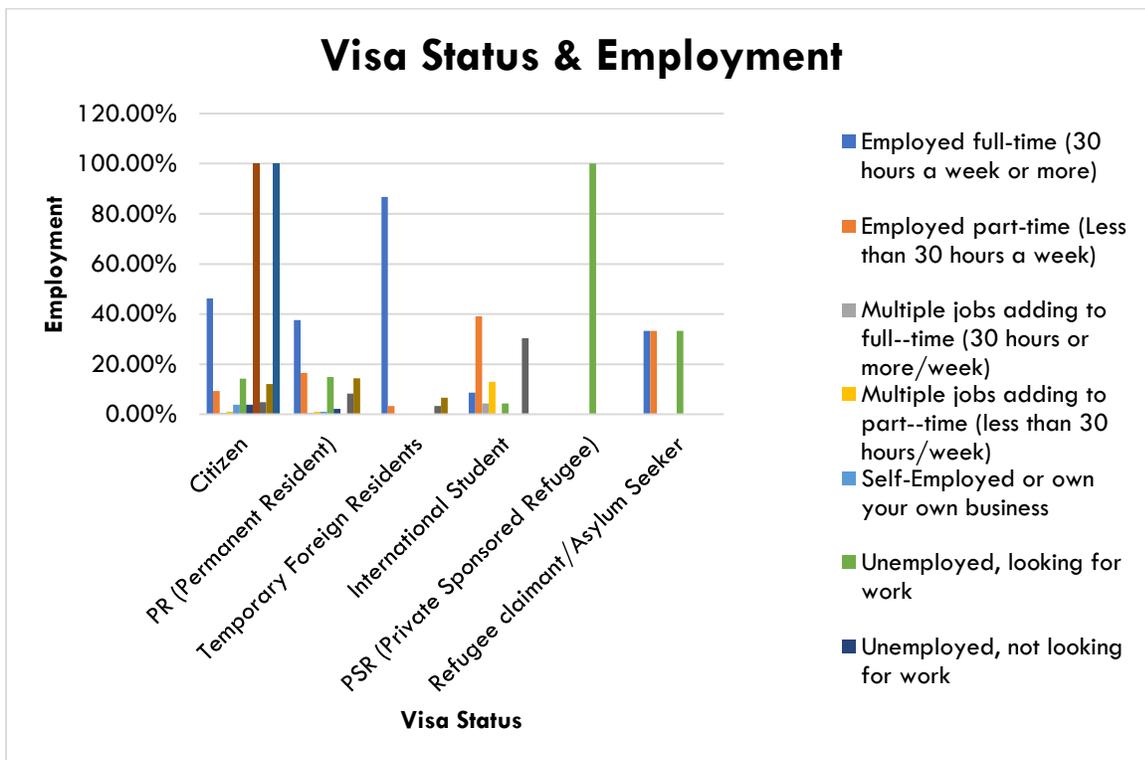


Figure 13: Visa Status & Employment; Source: NIN Survey 2017

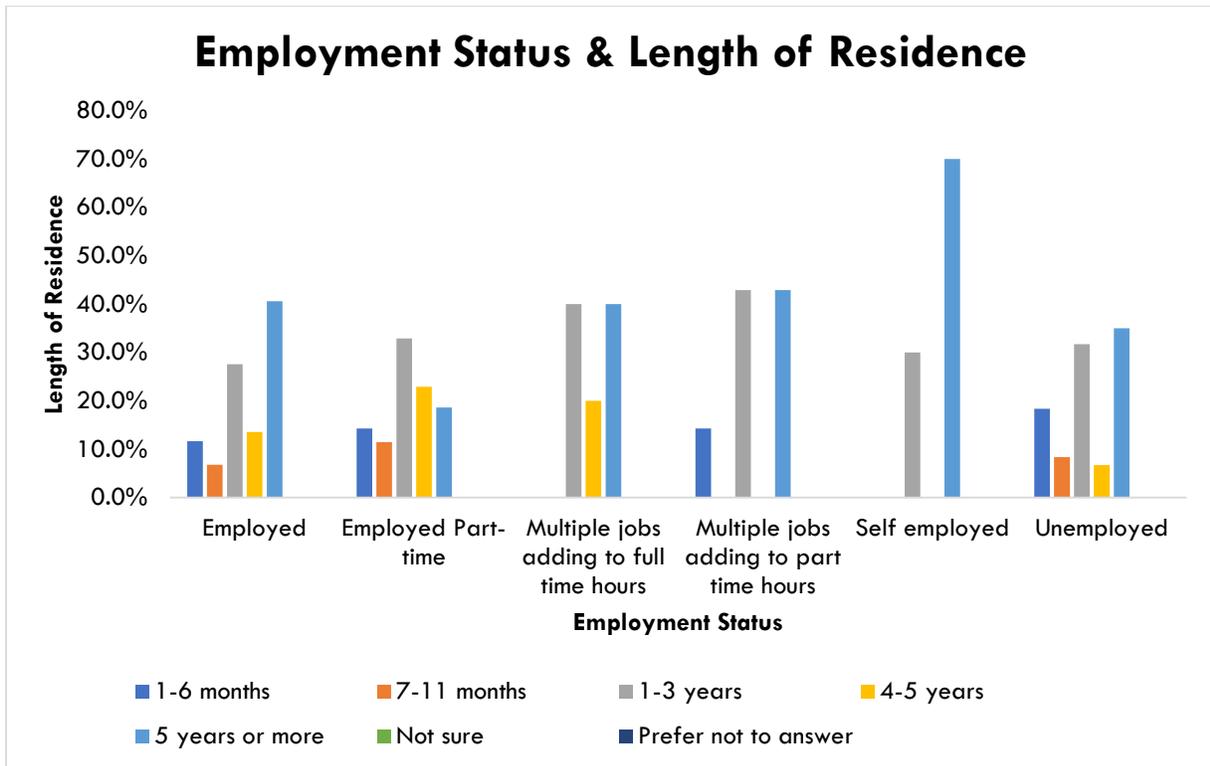


Figure 14: Employment Status & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

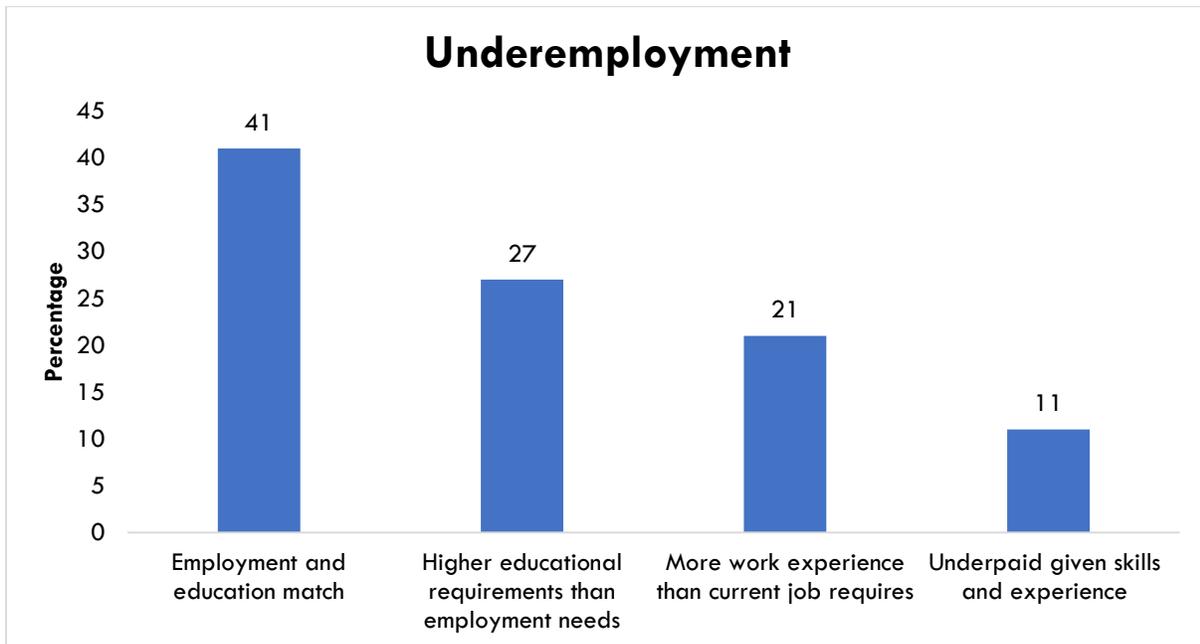


Figure 15: Underemployment; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

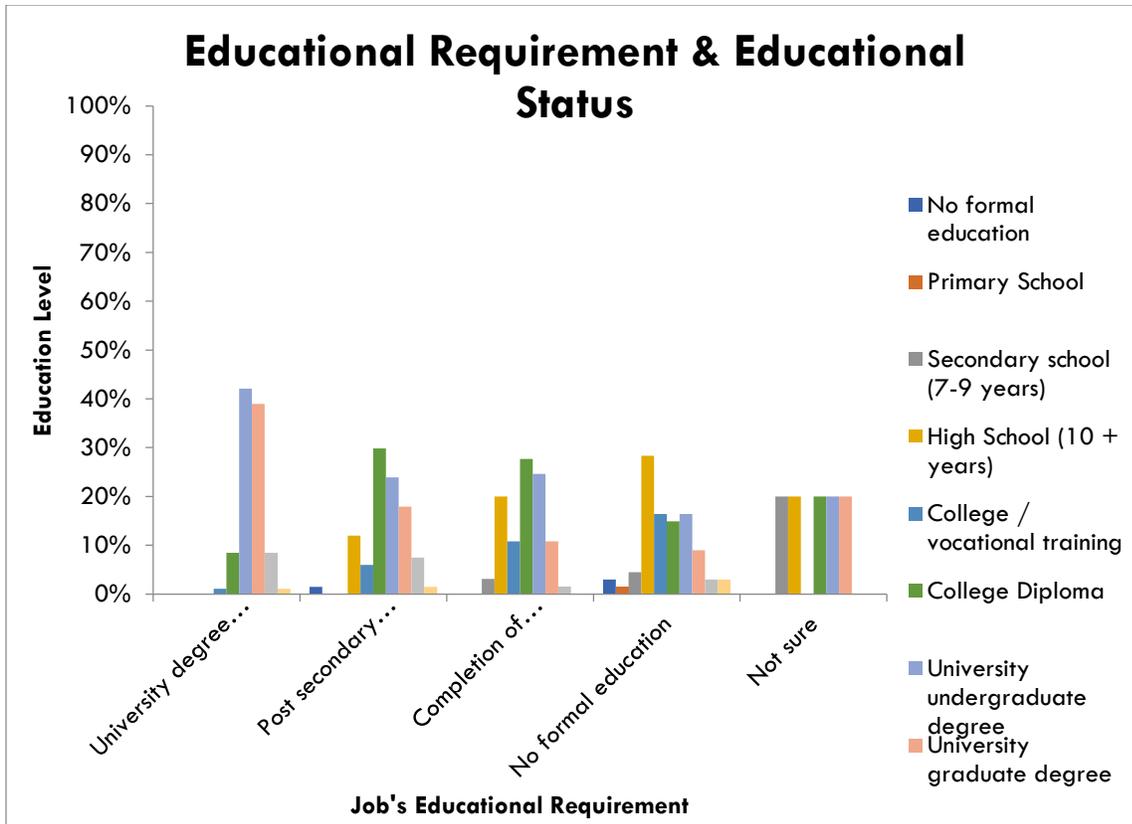


Figure 16: Education Requirement & Educational Status; Source: NIN Survey

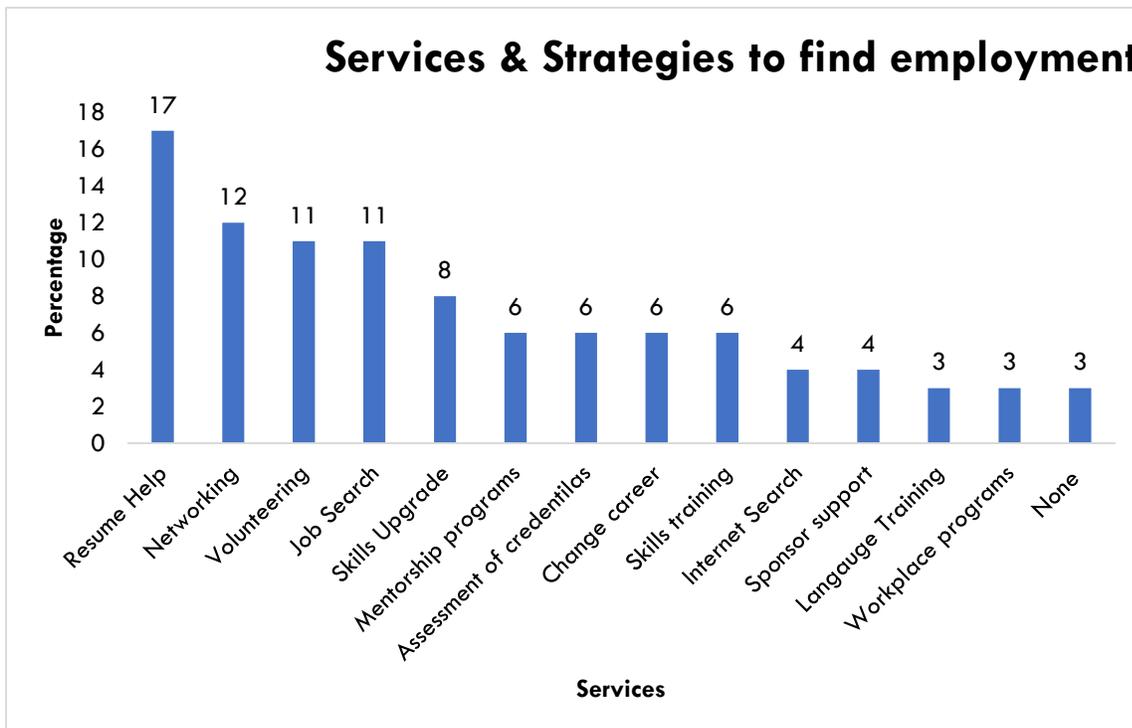


Figure 17: Services & Strategies to find employment; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

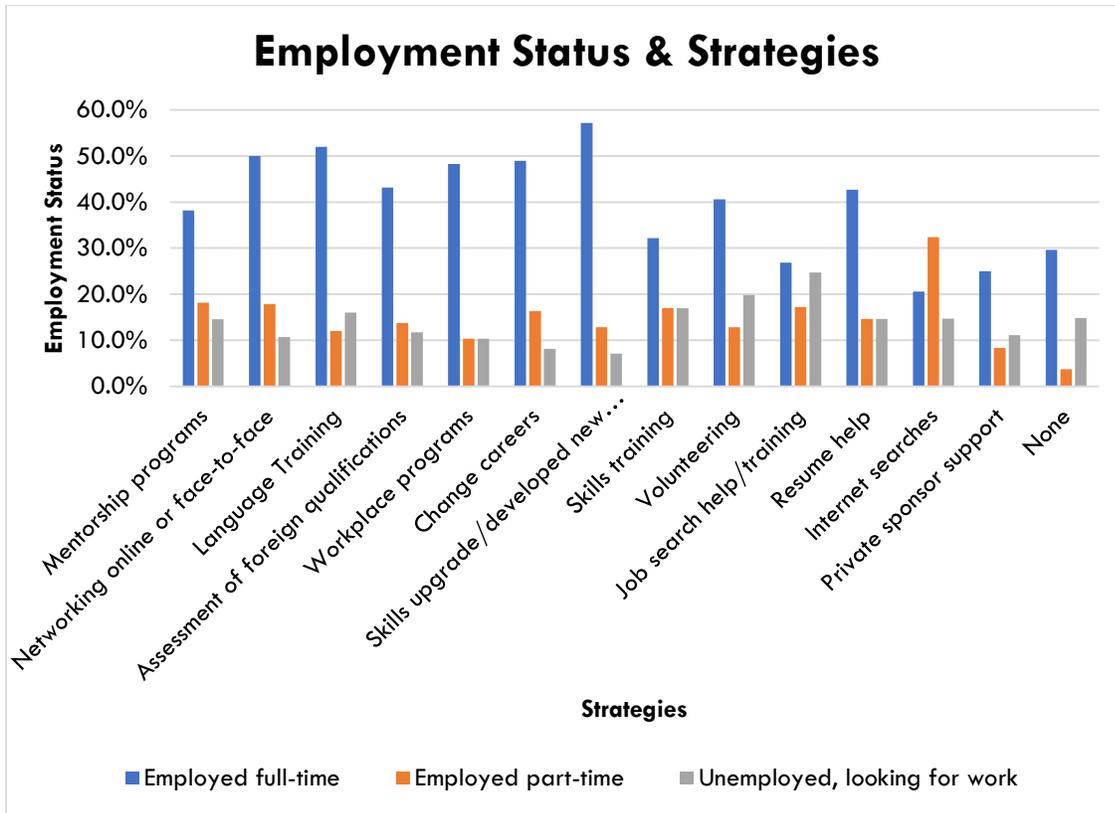


Figure 18: Service Strategies & Employment Status; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

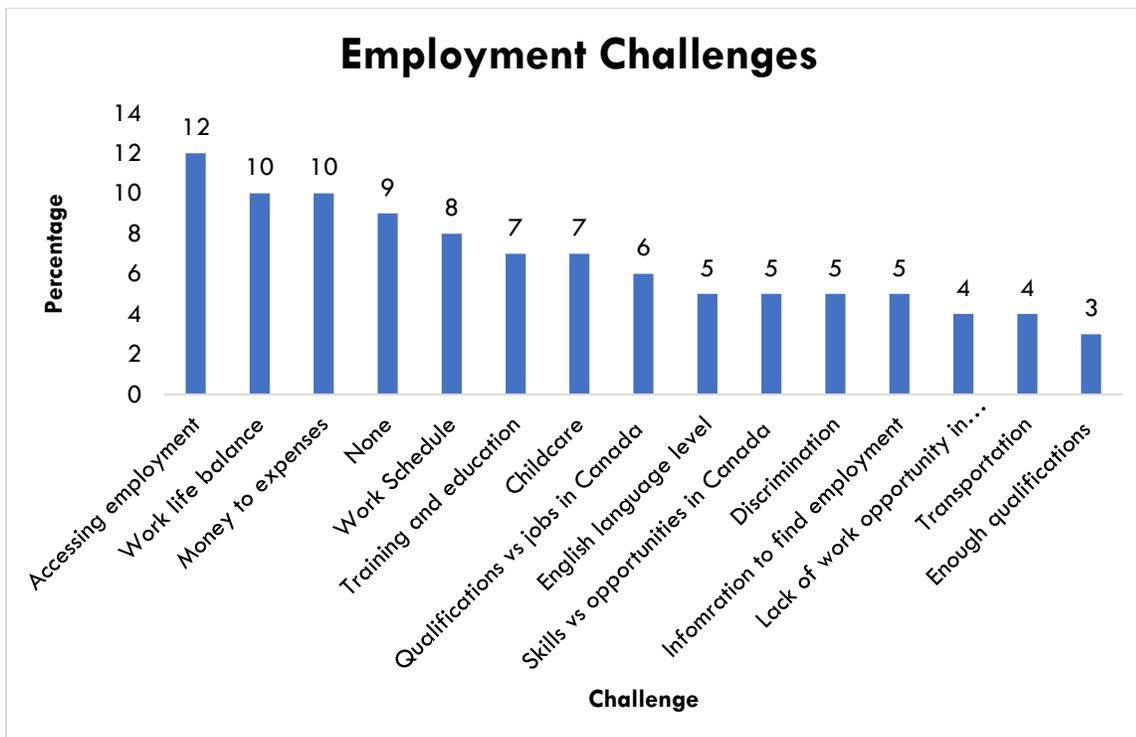


Figure 19: Employment Challenges; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

Challenges by Length of Residence

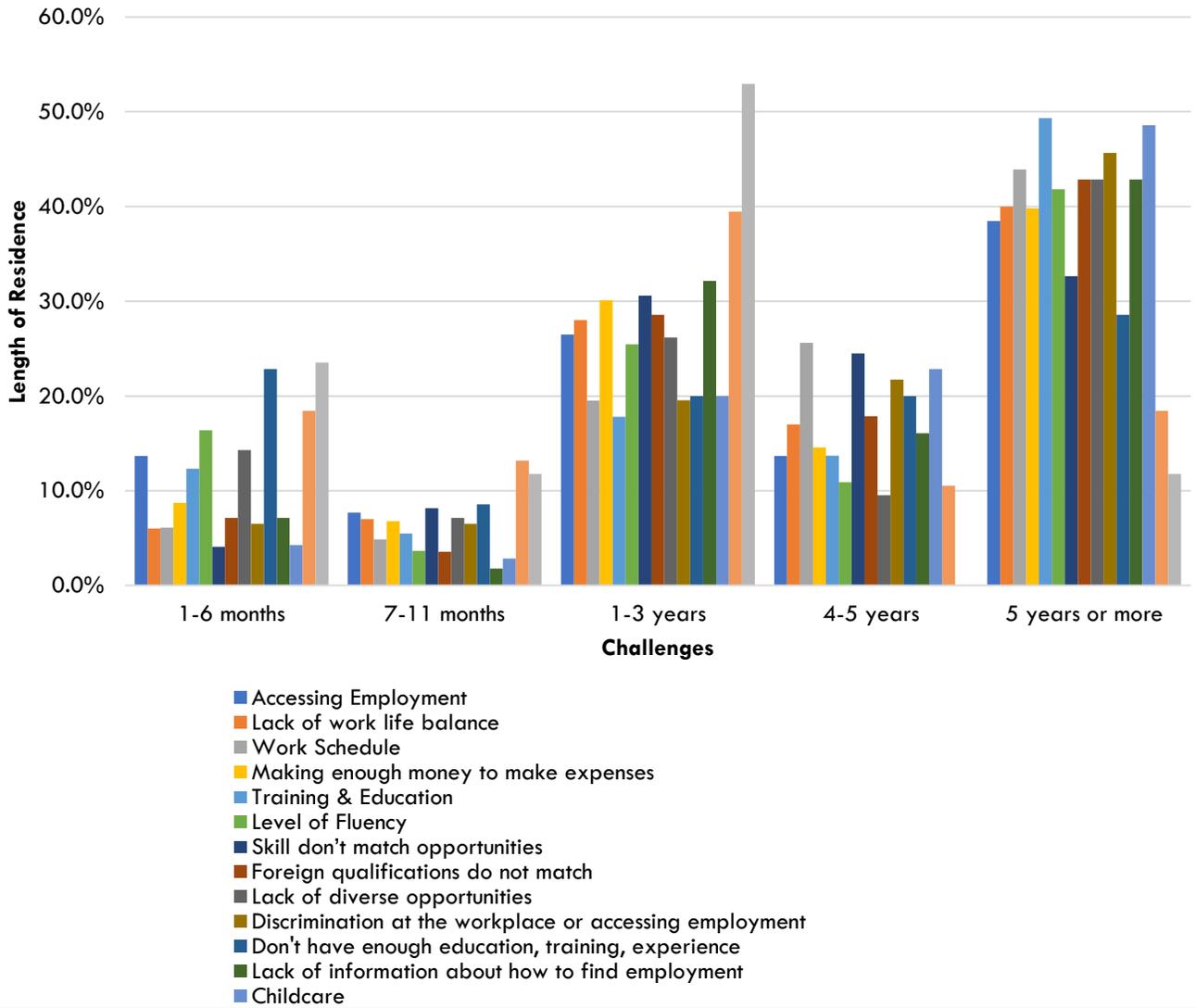


Figure 20: Challenges by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME BASED ON NEWCOMER NEEDS

Finding employment that matches experience and education: tailoring to meet client needs

- Newcomers highlighted the **challenges of finding jobs that match their educational qualifications and experience.** Newcomers were highly qualified and experienced, with high levels of English fluency yet were underemployed. The downturn in the RMWB economy has further exacerbated this context.
- **Potential actions:** Increase supports for newcomers to upgrade or transfer skills, seek accreditation and strengthen soft skills to adapt to the Canadian job market. Provide more pre-arrival information about employment to ease transition to RMWB. Use technology more to connect workforce to programs in larger cities to reduce infrastructure and training costs. Build/strengthen online and networking groups to increase communication among job seekers.

Working with employers

- Newcomers used a **variety of strategies to find jobs however, often these strategies were not met with success.** To support employment among newcomers it is critical to work with employers.
- **Potential actions:** Better information from industries about labour market needs, so that short-term training programs can be in place to provide the skills/ certifications needed for labour market shortages. Review human resources policies to support shifts in hiring practices of employers. Create awareness among employers to support the hiring of newcomers. Reduce workplace discrimination to improve recruitment, retention, and growth for newcomers.

Meet the labour market needs of RMWB

- Newcomers struggled with **finding meaningful employment, especially** given the economic downturn and the fire in the region. To support newcomers in this context, organizations, employers and the workforce will all need to adapt to best meet the market's needs.
- **Potential actions:** Develop programs that are designed to train and provide work placements to individuals who want to start careers in the trades, hospitality, childcare and other areas where there is a high demand for workers. Support a better flow of information and dialogue between employers, assessment bodies, and newcomers. Gain a stronger understanding of hiring, mobility, growth, and leadership in terms of newcomer employment.

EDUCATION & LANGUAGE



EDUCATION & LANGUAGE

Newcomers overall report fluency in English and high levels of education. Key needs include: increased access to language classes and educational opportunities, strengthened support services and recognition of educational qualifications for immigrants.

One of the fundamental cornerstones of settlement and integration, both in terms of developing social connections and participation in the labour force, are language skills. English language learners with significant gaps in their education may encounter delays in acquiring new language skills and have difficulty expressing themselves. Within RMWB there are few services, both formal and informal, that provide language instruction and support. These include LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada), ESL (English as a Second Language) community classes and conversation groups. The majority of these services are restricted to 'eligible participants', i.e. PR and citizens, stakeholders highlighted the needs of other newcomer populations such as TFW's and international students who may also need these services. This survey explored questions around education, English fluency, attending language classes and professional courses and key challenges.

Education: Newcomers were highly educated

47% of the survey sample had either a graduate or undergraduate degree as compared to 22% in the general population (Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 2012); 16% had a college diploma as compared to 26% in the general population and 8% had taken a college/vocational training⁵ (Figure 21).

Education by Gender

The majority of both men (62%) and women (64%) had education above the college level. There were comparable levels of education across both gender (Figure 22).

Education by Length of Residence

Overall newcomers were highly educated. When looking at university undergraduate education and above, the highest proportion of respondents had lived 5 years or more within the RMWB. College

⁵ Canada may not recognize the education levels as reported by participants as international standards differ.

degrees and diploma levels are also the highest after the 5 year mark of residency within the region (Figure 23).

English Fluency: Majority reported fluency in English

Even though only 20% reported that English was their first language, 90% reported an English fluency in speaking, reading and writing. As a result, the survey results showed that more than three quarters of the sample population (83%) are not currently attending language classes, only 17% reported attending classes. According to stakeholders, this statistic may not accurately reflect the actual level of English proficiency.

English Fluency by Immigration Status

97% of all citizens could speak, read and write as compared to 81% of PR's and 97% of all TFWs. High levels of fluency was seen across immigration categories.

English Fluency by Gender

Among all men, 94% reported knowing how to speak, read and write in English as compared to 88% among all women. There was little variation between genders across all categories of fluency.

English Fluency by Length of Residence

English fluency tends to increase with length of residence. Among those who can speak, read and write, the majority (38%) have lived for 5 years or more in the region and 43% have lived for 1-5 years (Figure 24).

Language Classes and other Language Training: Small proportion attending classes

Out of the participants attending English language classes currently, (n=83) the majority (81%) were attending the government funded Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes at Keyano College. 11% reported attending classes in other locations, 5% at the library, 2% with a private tutor and only 1% at YMCA.

Attending English/French Classes by Immigration Status

Only 7% of all citizens attended language classes as compared to 30% of PRs and about 10% of TFWs.

Attending English/French Classes by Gender

Among all those who said **yes to attending English/French classes, 63% (52) were female and 36% (30) were male**. Women were twice as likely to attend classes; women were also over represented in the sample, which may likely explain this skew. Even though little difference existed among the genders in terms of fluency, there was a difference within the language skill development efforts between the two genders.

Participants were asked if they have taken any English language training courses, or educational programs, such as conversation groups or professional language learning other than English classes, since their arrival. **Only 25% of the sample had attended such training** and more than three quarters (75%) of the sample did not attend any English language training.

Attending other English Training by Gender

Among all those who said **yes to attending English/French classes, 66% were female and 32% were male**.

Language Training by Length of Residence

Over time newcomers were more likely to engage with language learning outside of formal classes (Figure 25).

Professional Training Courses: *Majority had not attended any course*

When asked whether they have attended any professional courses, since they arrived to RMWB, **more than half of the population sample (64%) reported that they did not attend any course**, while 36% attended at least one professional course since their arrival (Figure 26). By professional training courses, the survey looked at training courses other than English, which helped professionals enter into the labor market in RMWB.

Attending Professional Programs by Gender

Similar to attending classes, women (67%) were twice as likely as compared to men (33%) to attend professional courses.

Attending Professional Programs by Income

Among those who said yes (N= 126), about 30% were earning below \$60,000, approximately 15% were earning between \$60,000-150,000 and about 19% were earning above \$150,000.

Attending Professional Programs by Number of Children

Among those who said yes, almost 83% had 2 children or less. 45% had no children at all. Only 16% attending classes had 3 children or more.

English Language Learning Strategies: *Daily interactions and formal classes were useful to learn the language*

When asked about the most helpful strategies in language learning, **more than the half (52%) of the participants stated that daily interactions were most useful, followed by formal classes (12%),** and English conversation groups (10%) (Figure 27). Learning on their own, media and other had 7% each and finally having English classes specific to the profession were chosen by 5% of participants.

Language Learning Challenges: *Learning the language and using the language in everyday life were key challenges*

The top four major challenges for English language learners were learning the language in general (15%), using English for daily use (13%), lack of information to improve language (12%), and transportation to get to their classes (12%) (Figure 28). Stakeholders similarly echoed these struggles, stating that many newcomers had **difficulties accessing language courses due to barriers such as transportation or childcare.**

Other stakeholders highlighted the need to **expand LINC and other English language classes or conversation groups.** For example, the region only has one LINC program that goes up to Level 6. This may increase wait times for newcomers who are waiting to access these classes and in turn can cause delays in language learning. Stakeholders also highlighted the need to expand translation services and disseminate translated materials for the ease of newcomers. They also highlighted that there is a need to strengthen ESL services within the public education system, as there is a large body of students who need ESL services. Another issue identified by stakeholders was **the low literacy levels among students.** This made language acquisition even more challenging and also impacted their involvement with the education/ language learning system in Canada.

Recognition of educational qualifications was another key challenge for newcomers. Many had advanced degrees or specialized education, however, this did not always match with Canadian requirements. As a result, newcomers do not always have the ability to utilize their knowledge or apply for jobs that match their qualifications.

Stakeholders spoke about the need to strengthen the education system and adapt to the needs of newcomers. They spoke about the barriers for some newcomer parents who may not understand the education system and who required support to navigate through challenges.

Language Challenges by Gender

Overall women were twice as likely to report challenges in language learning as compared to men, even though they were more likely to take courses or attend classes. **Women's challenges were mainly around support services for language as compared to men whose challenges were mainly around language acquisition.** Both genders reported lack of information to improve language/education as a key challenge. Some of main challenges for women were transportation and childcare followed by work schedule. Men reported challenges around using English and level of English for work (Figure 29).

Language Challenges by Length of Residence

The 1-3 year mark of residency in the region sees an increase in all challenges for language and education (Figure 30). Learning English and the level of English needed for work had some of the highest proportion of responses for this time period. The 5 years or more residency category also shows high levels of challenges being reported. This can be partly explained by the sample spread (see Demographics sections), but also highlights that some of the challenges around language and education continue well beyond initial settlement.

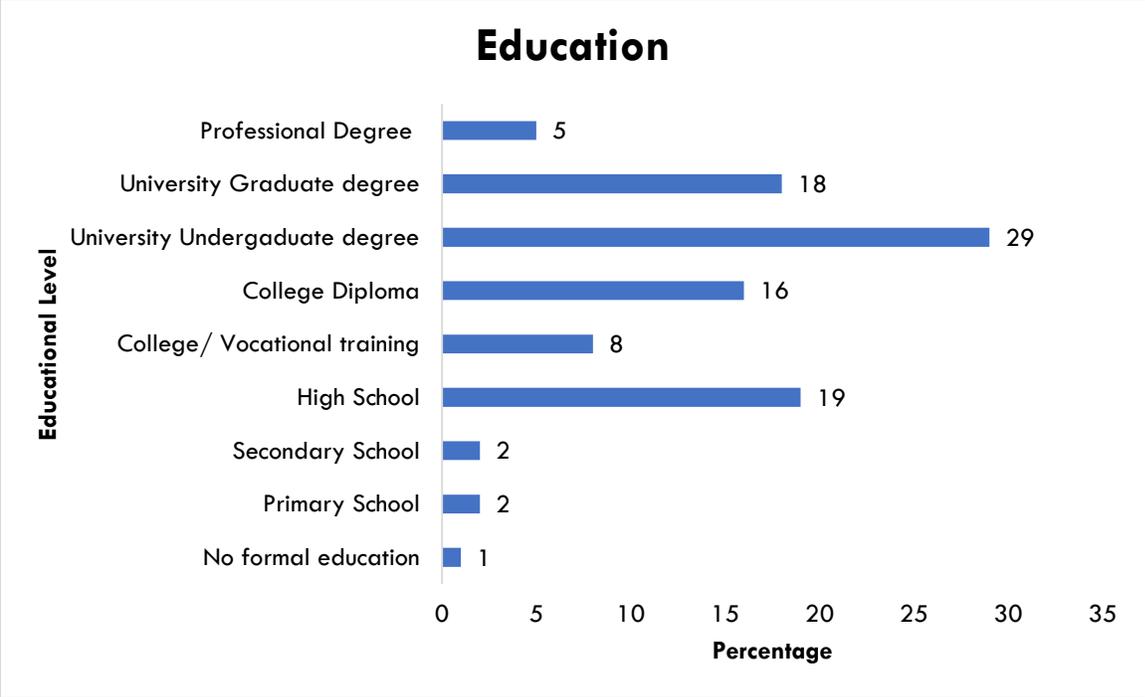


Figure 21: Education; Source NIN Survey,2017

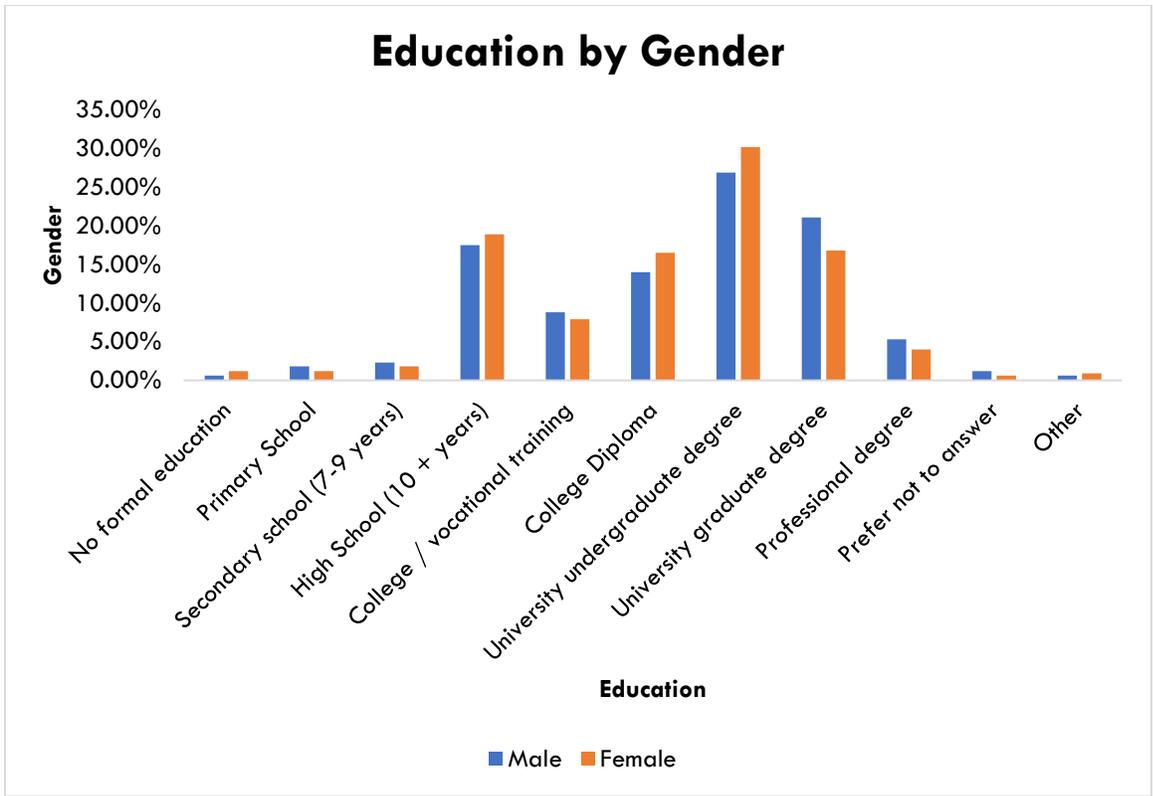


Figure 22: Education & Gender; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

Education by Length of Residence

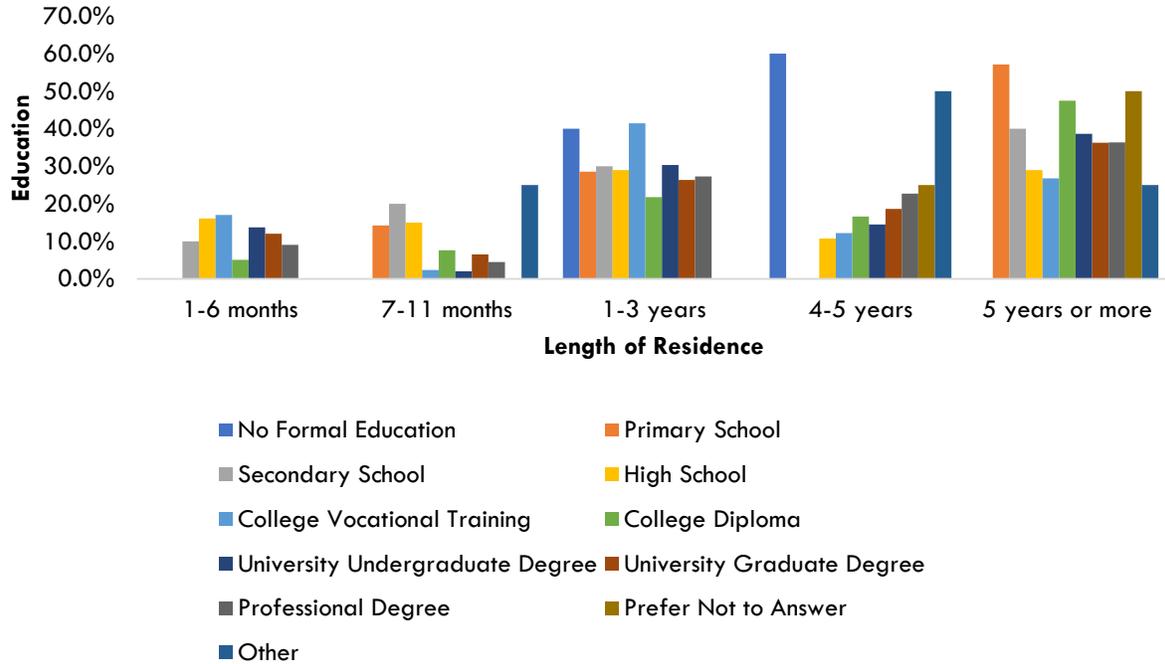


Figure 23: Education by Length of Residence, Source: NIN Survey 2017

English Fluency & Length of Residence

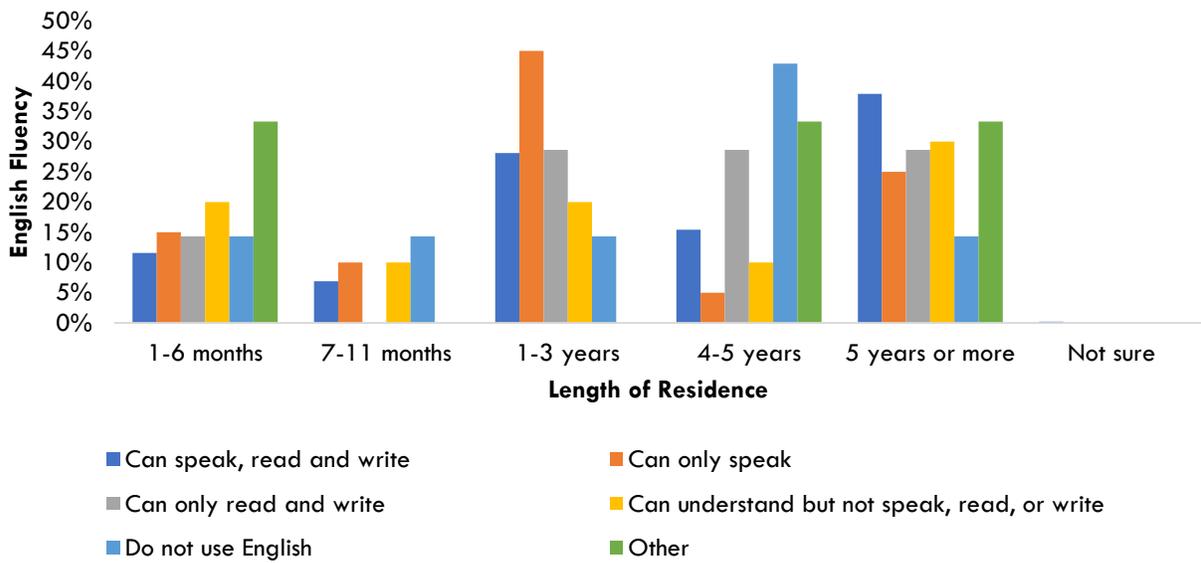


Figure 24: English Fluency & Residence: Source: NIN Survey, 2017

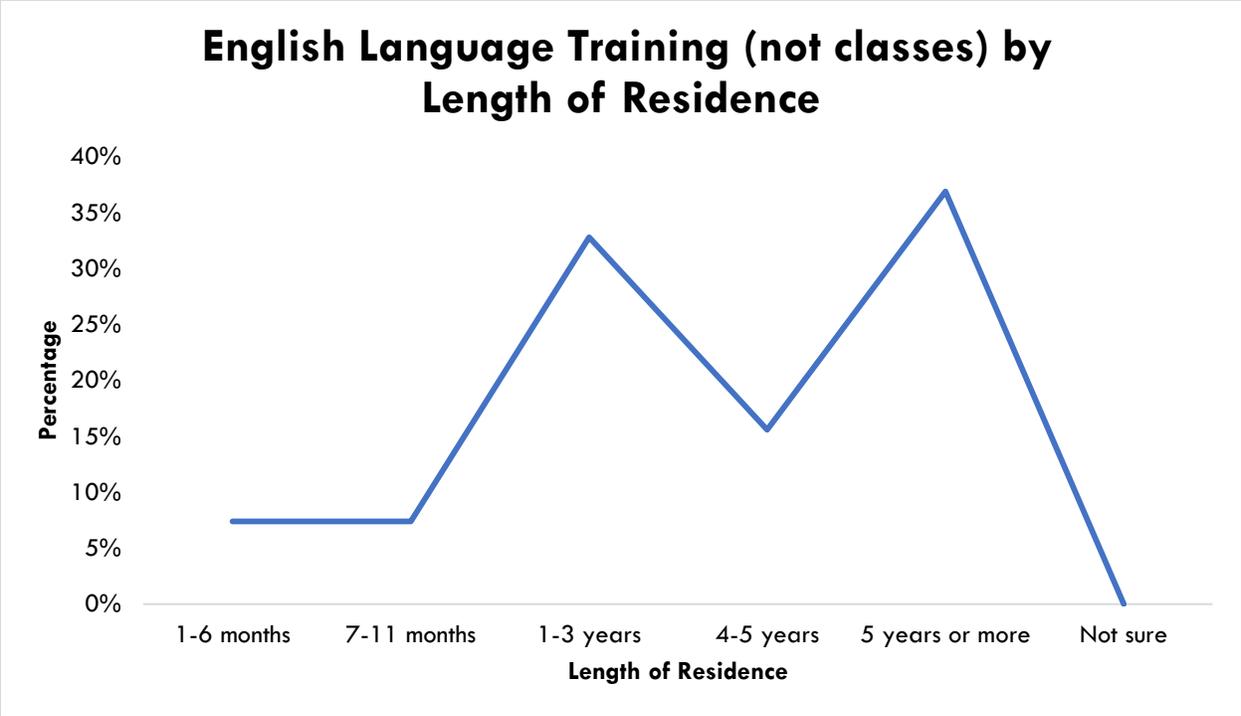


Figure 25: English Language training by Length of Residence; NIN Survey, 2017

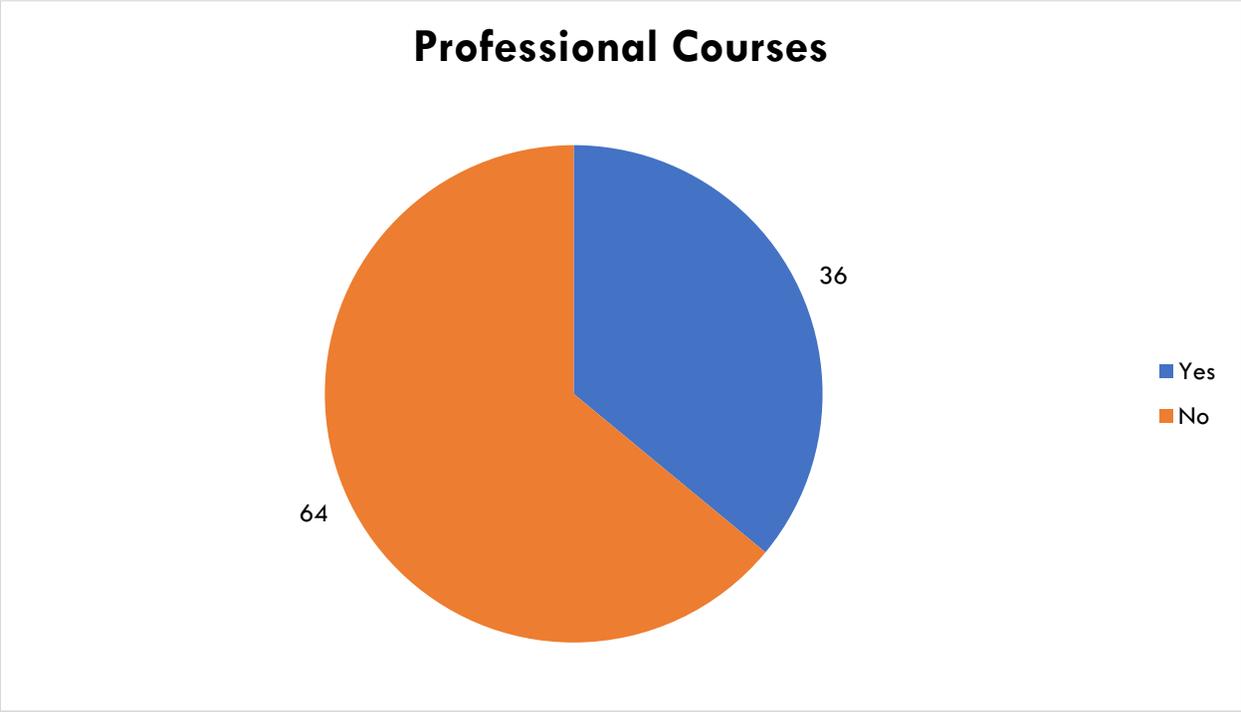


Figure 26: Professional Courses;Source: NIN Survey, 2017

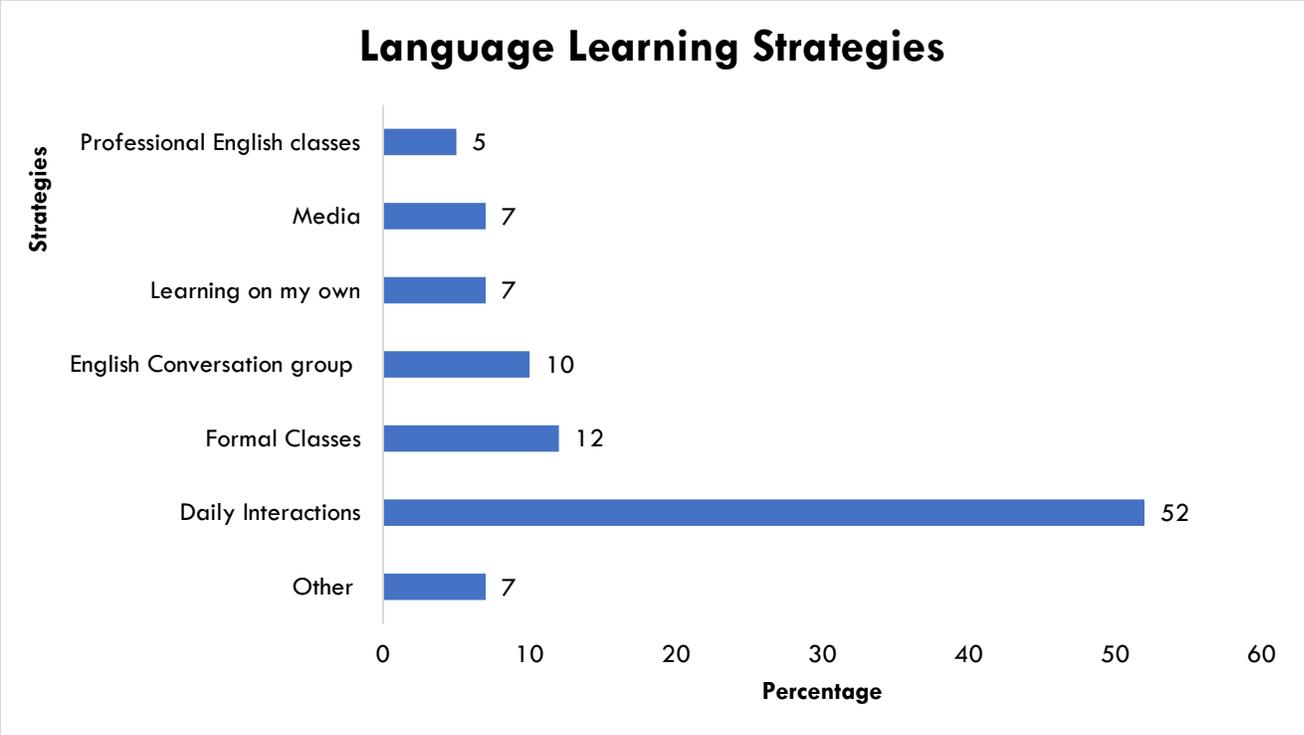


Figure 27: English Learning Strategies; Source: NIN Survey

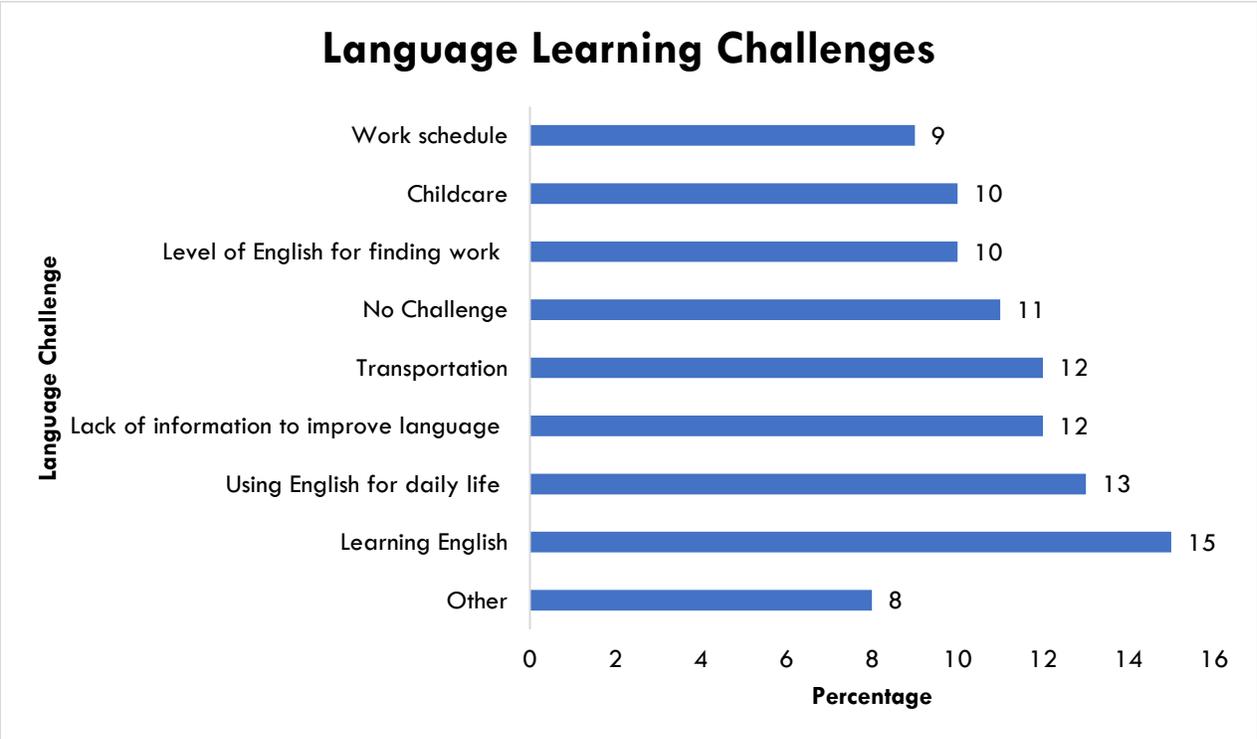


Figure 28: Challenges; Source: NIN Survey

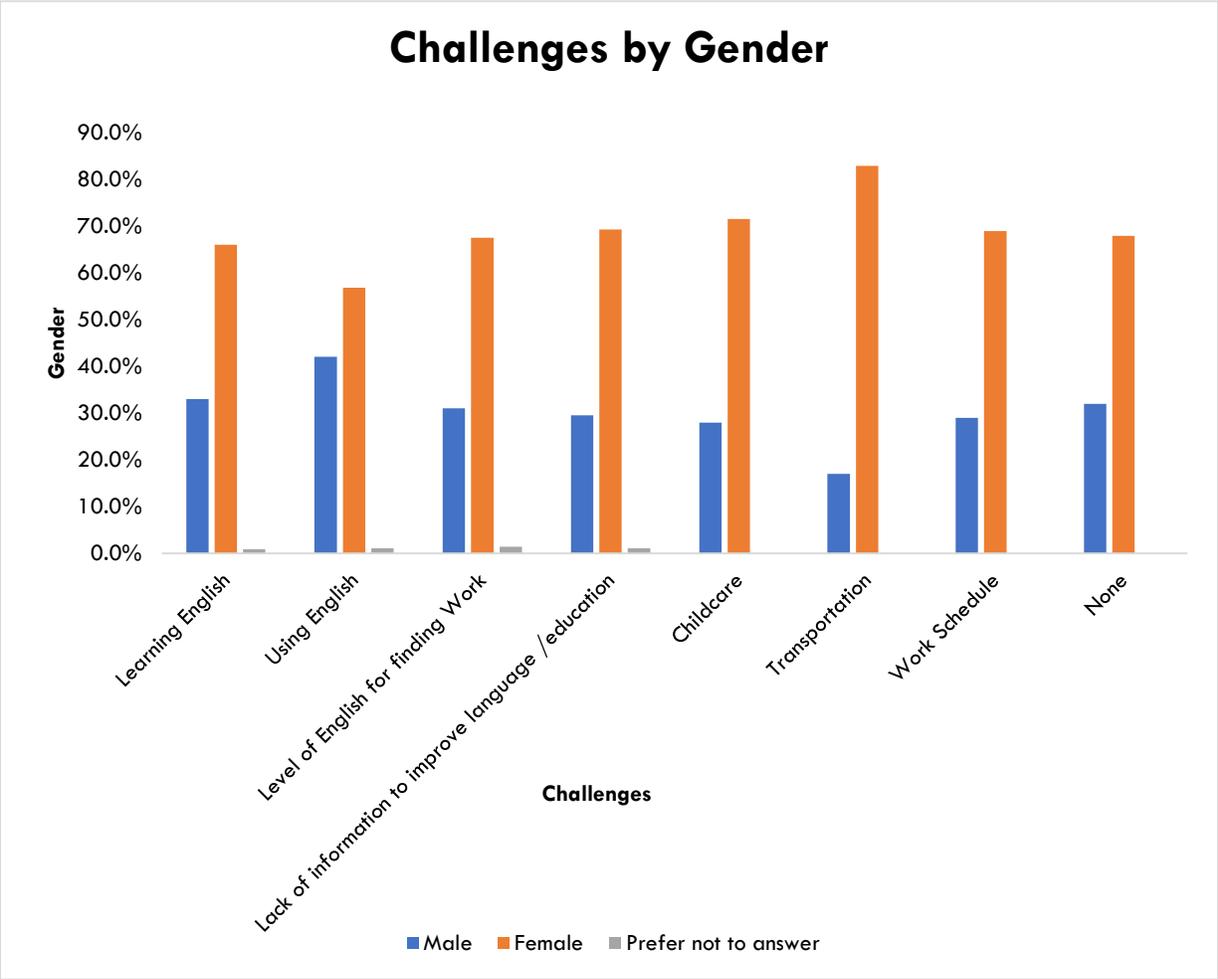


Figure 29: Language Challenges by Gender: NIN Survey, 2017

Challenges in Language by Length of Residence

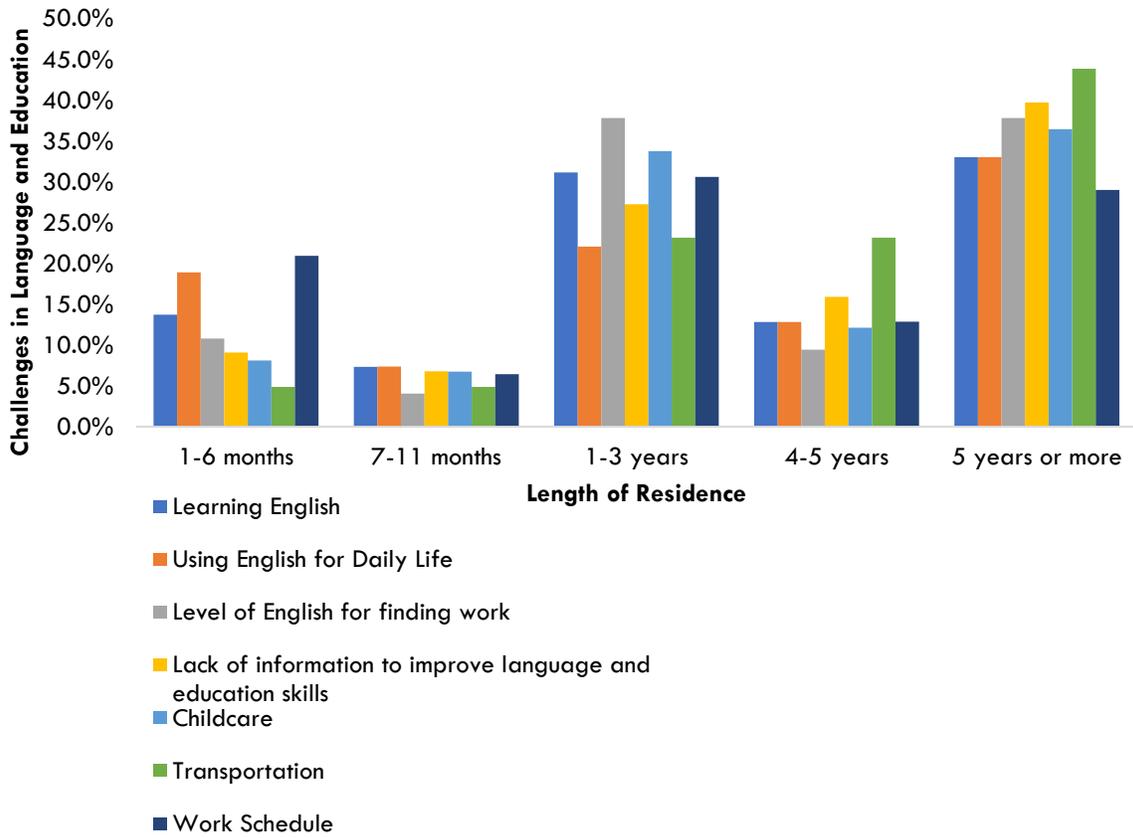


Figure 30: Challenges in Language by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE BASED ON NEWCOMER NEEDS

Increasing access to services

- Newcomers had **challenges around accessing services either due to limited availability or lack of support services**. This created lags in language acquisition and impacted all other aspects of their social life.
- **Potential actions:** Increase number of LINC classes especially in the higher LINC levels; expand professional language courses or employment focused language learning. Use technology more for teaching to reduce infrastructure and training costs. Build/strengthen online and networking groups to increase communication among language learners. Increase support services such as childcare and transportation as well as offer flexible class hours, as this may all be helpful for newcomers.

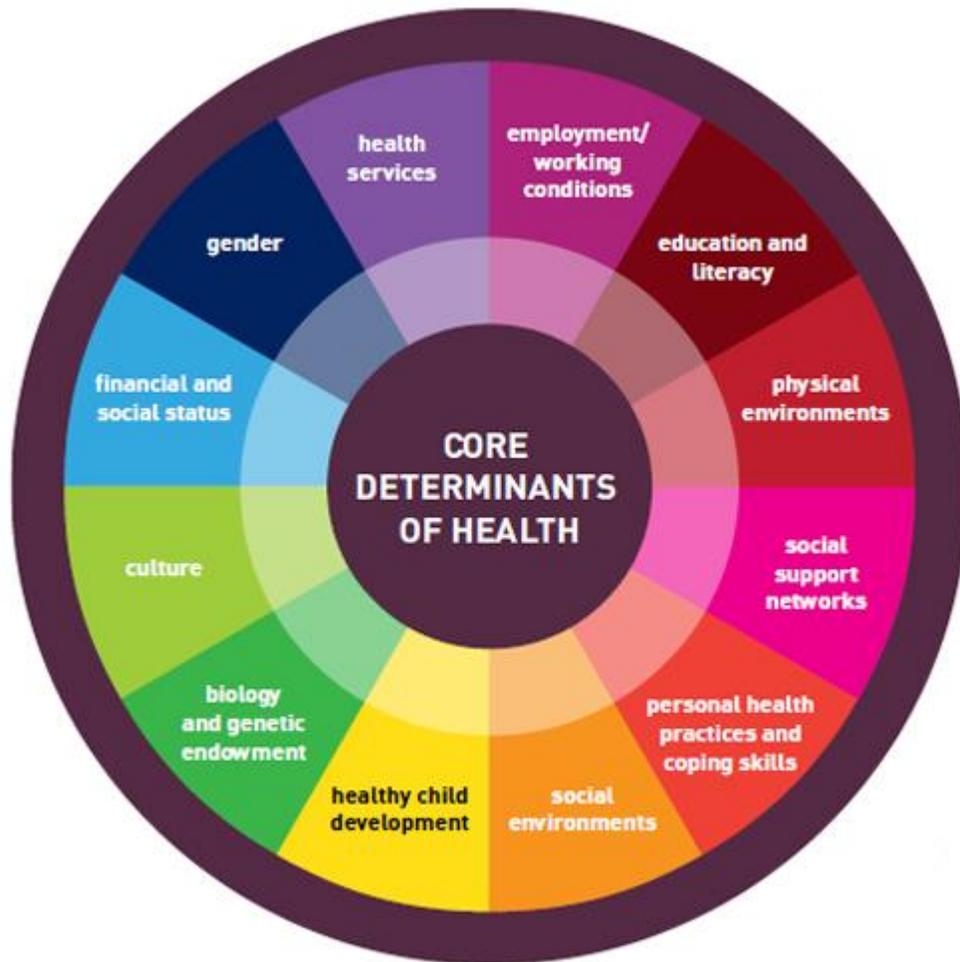
Providing diverse opportunities for language learning embedded within informal contexts

- Newcomers pointed to the lack of adequate opportunities to **practice their language skills outside of the classroom, especially in 'real world' contexts**.
- **Potential actions:** Develop further links with ethno-cultural groups and community associations to create informal language learning opportunities in the community. Continue to strengthen strategies for language learning that focus on comprehension and utilization. Adapt language learning techniques to match learner needs.

Supporting newcomers to enhance, transfer and match skills to improve employment and settlement outcomes

- Newcomers shared their **needs around education- especially pointing to the challenges around accreditation, transferability of skills and adapting their expertise for the local context**.
- **Potential actions:** Work with provincial collaboratives around concerns of accreditation and transferability of skills; strengthen stakeholder knowledge around different education systems (globally) and their Canadian equivalency to support immigrant newcomers' transition. Strengthen support services for those accessing further education through childcare, workplace supports, transportation and scholarships.

HEALTH



Source: Government of Canada (2017)

HEALTH

Newcomers overall report good health. Key needs and challenges include: accessing doctors, access to appropriate, affordable food or diet, and adapting to weather.

A good **overall health of a population in general is an indicator of healthy community** thriving in all aspects of living – social, educational, and financial, among other aspects. Each of these factors interacts with one another in different ways to lead to different health outcomes. Without good health, it can become challenging for a person to remain economically productive, engage in social or cultural activities, or participate fully in society.

Even though universal health care is available through Alberta Health Services, health equity, (i.e. absence of disparities among newcomers and long-term residents), is in fact a critical issue for organizations working with newcomers. **A welcoming community is one where newcomers should be able to gain equitable access to the health services when needed and receive adequate care** (Esses, Hamilton, Bennett-AbuAyyash & Burstein, 2010).⁶ Factors such as one’s socio-economic conditions pre-migration, age at the time of immigration, language fluency (necessary for navigating the health system), and employment and immigration category (economic, family, or refugee) may all influence post-immigration health outcomes (Ng & Longitudinal Health and Administrative Data Research Team, 2011).

Overall Health

Participants were asked to self-rank their overall health on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being very good. **87% of survey participants rated their overall health as good or very good**, an indicator for a healthy community within the RMWB (Figure 31). For key health statistics of the RMWB area see health statistics in Table 1.

For immigrant newcomers, studies show that, in general, immigrant populations are healthier than the Canadian-born population when they first arrive. Over time, however, this advantage declines (Ng & Longitudinal Health and Administrative Data Research Team, 2011; Ng, Wilkins, Gendron, & Berthelot, 2005). This is known as the **“healthy immigrant effect”** (Alberta Health, 2014; Health Canada, 2010)⁷.

⁶ This study did not examine the impacts of the 2016 wildfire as several other studies are focusing on this issue.

⁷ Health screening at the time of immigration ensures only relatively healthy persons enter the country. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Minister of Justice, 2001) can refuse a person’s (permanent or temporary) entry into Canada on medical grounds if they deem the burden to be excessive on the public health system or social services. Given the stressors of immigration, often only healthy individuals are able or willing to immigrate.

Additionally, given that a majority of newcomers come to RMWB to find work they are likely to be healthy and fit to work.

Health Rating by Income

The project looked at social determinants of health such as income and found that the majority of those who reported poor or very poor health earned less than \$30,000 or \$30,000-\$60,000 (Figure 32). The **lower the income the more likely they were to report poor health**. This statistic would suggest that those with lower incomes faced greater challenges with their overall health.

Health Rating by Age

Of **those who reported poor health, 77% were in the age range of 30-39 years**. Figure 33 compares the health rating of 1 and 5 to show the distribution across age.

Health Rating by Length of Residence

Of those who provided a low rating, a majority had stayed for 1-3 years and 5 years or more within the RMWB as compared to newly arrived newcomers (Figure 34).

Seeking Help for Health Concerns

When asked where people were most likely to seek help for a general health concern, **the majority (79%) reported visiting a family doctor** (Figure 35). When asked about the most helpful health service **when they have a health problem, 66% reached out to a doctor or a nurse** (Figure 36). Overall, newcomers to Alberta consider the province's health services effective in terms of ease of access and use (Esses et al., 2013).

Seeking Help by Gender

Both genders were most likely to seek help from a family doctor. Men did not cite approaching a nurse for help. Women were twice as likely to seek help of an after-hours clinic, or family doctor but less likely to go out of town to seek medical help (Figure 37). Important to note these services aren't always offered in the community.

Health Challenges

For **19% of participants, one of the main challenges was accessing a doctor** – whether for themselves, or for their children. An additional 8% found it challenging to find a doctor of the same gender (Figure 38). During the interviews, several stakeholders spoke about the challenges newcomers faced when accessing

health services. They pointed to the shortage of family doctors and nurses, especially those who may be culturally sensitive to the needs of newcomers and be able to provide services in different languages. The shortage of interpreters can be a challenge for newcomers who may not speak English.

A stakeholder from Centre d'accueil et d'établissement highlighted the lack of linguistic supports with regard to mental health:

"They don't have all the services here, they may have (some French-speaking) doctors and our organization, but the rest of the services, like mental health issues, where do you go if you don't speak English? A lady comes from Calgary once in a while that is francophone, but it is only one or two days and it isn't sufficient. This is critical and risky, people are having mental health issues within the community and don't have support...It is not about francophone. It is about human rights. It is about Canadian. How do we not care about our own people? They pay taxes, they are involved in the community, they pay everything they have to pay to the government, but on the other hand they don't have services. We need to be fair with them to help them have a better life within the community"

Stakeholders highlighted the need to build awareness around mental health concerns and increase mental health supports. Given the context of the recent fire there were increased mental health supports, for example the municipality offered drop in sessions and the francophone community brought in a psychiatrist; however, this is a key issue that requires continued efforts.

Food and diet was another key challenge with 24% reporting concerns including finding culturally appropriate and affordable quality food.

Health Challenges by Length of Residence

Like previous sections there is a peak in challenges at the 1-3 year time point and 5 years and above category (Figure 39). While, as mentioned before, some of these trends can be explained due to sample distribution, they do however highlight a critical time point in the newcomer settlement process. Certain challenges like affording health care, getting a health card and struggling with previous experiences in home countries are acute during the first year. Over time challenges around accessing quality and culturally appropriate food and facing racism and discrimination become more critical.

Environmental Challenges

When survey participants were asked about environment related challenges, 97% of respondents spoke about challenges related to weather and daylight hours and 36% noted challenges of adjusting to living in a remote area (Figure 40).

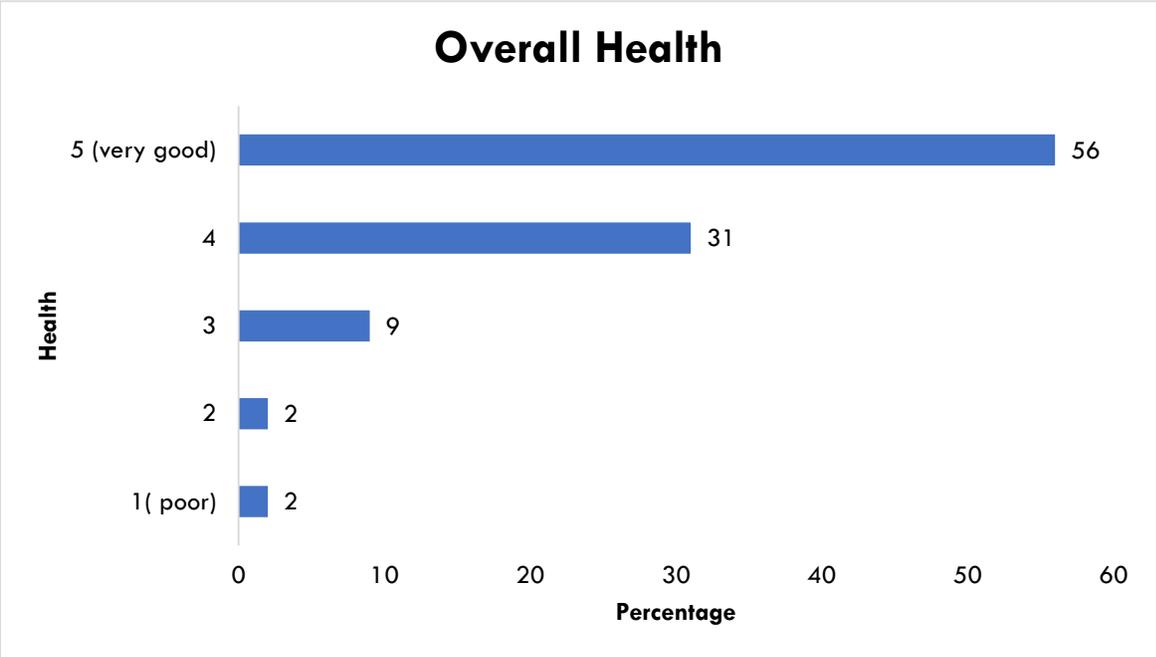


Figure 31: Overall Health; Source: NIN Survey

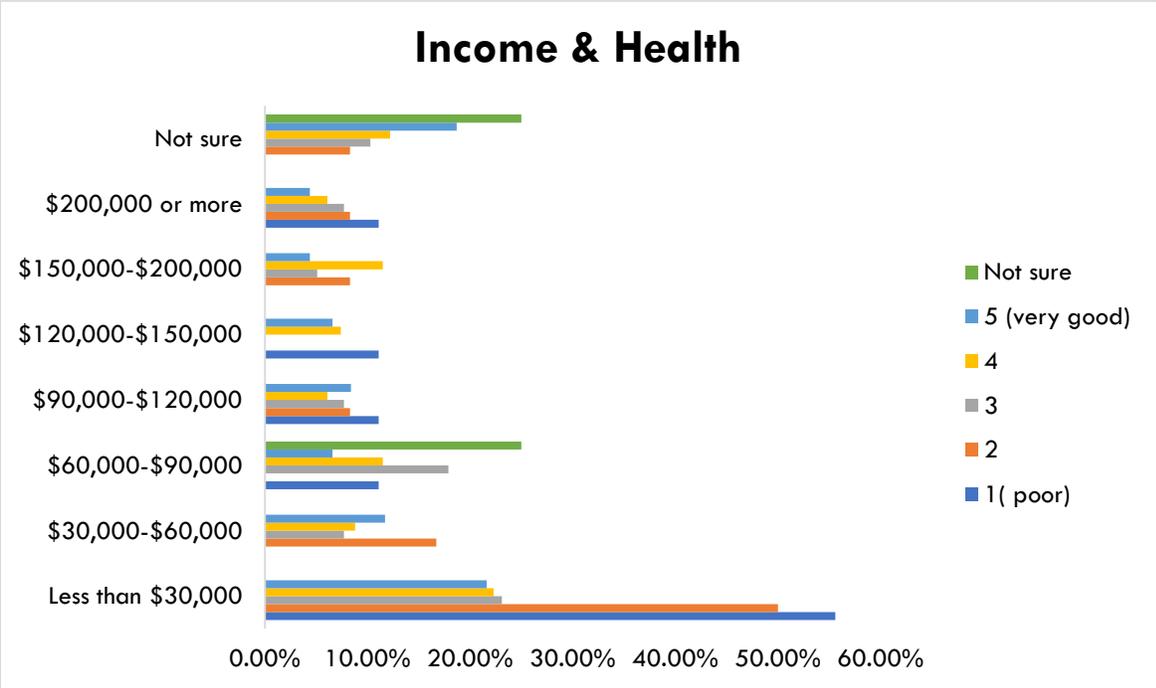


Figure 32: Income and Health; Source: NIN Survey

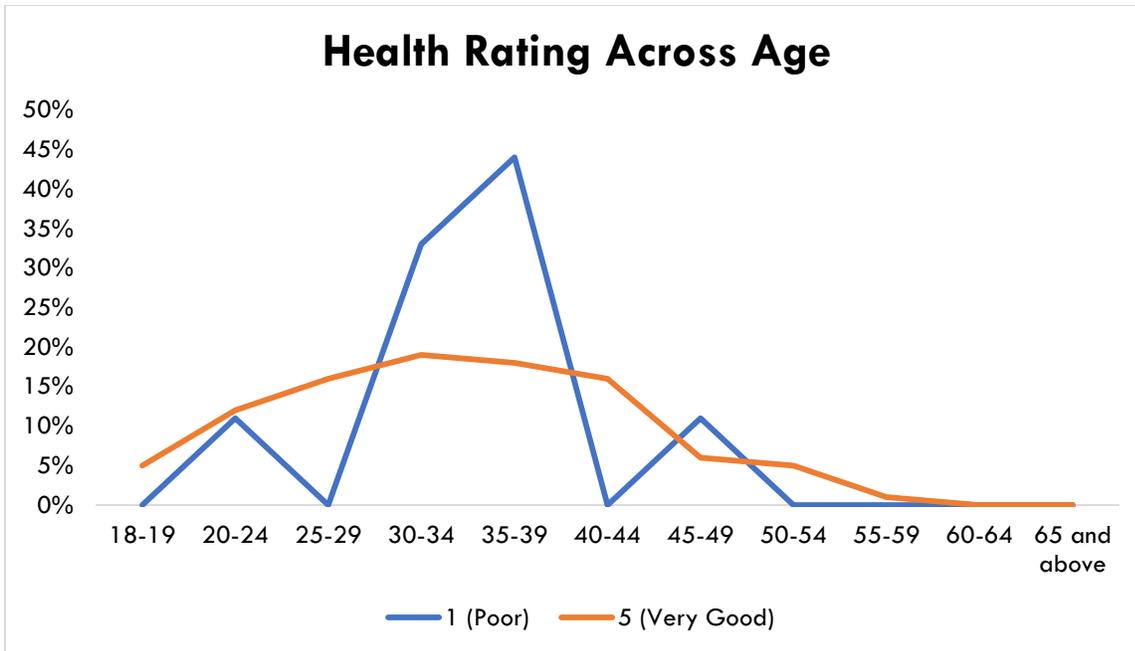


Figure 33: Age and Health; Source NIN Survey

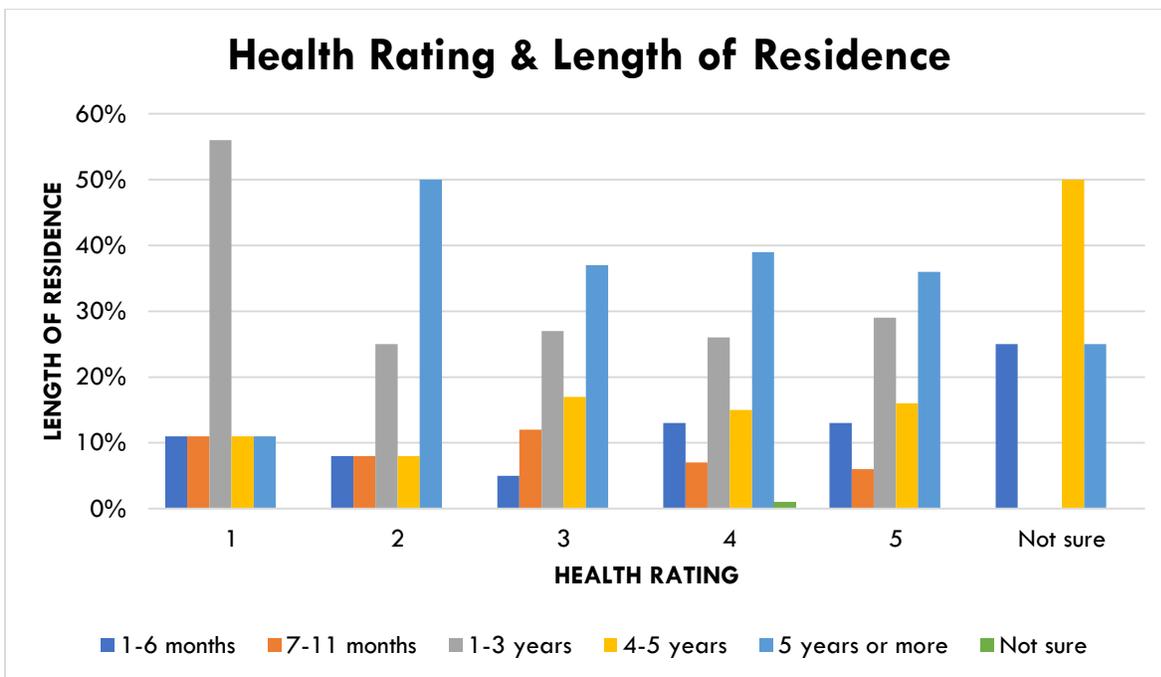


Figure 34: Health rating & length of residence; Source: NIN Survey

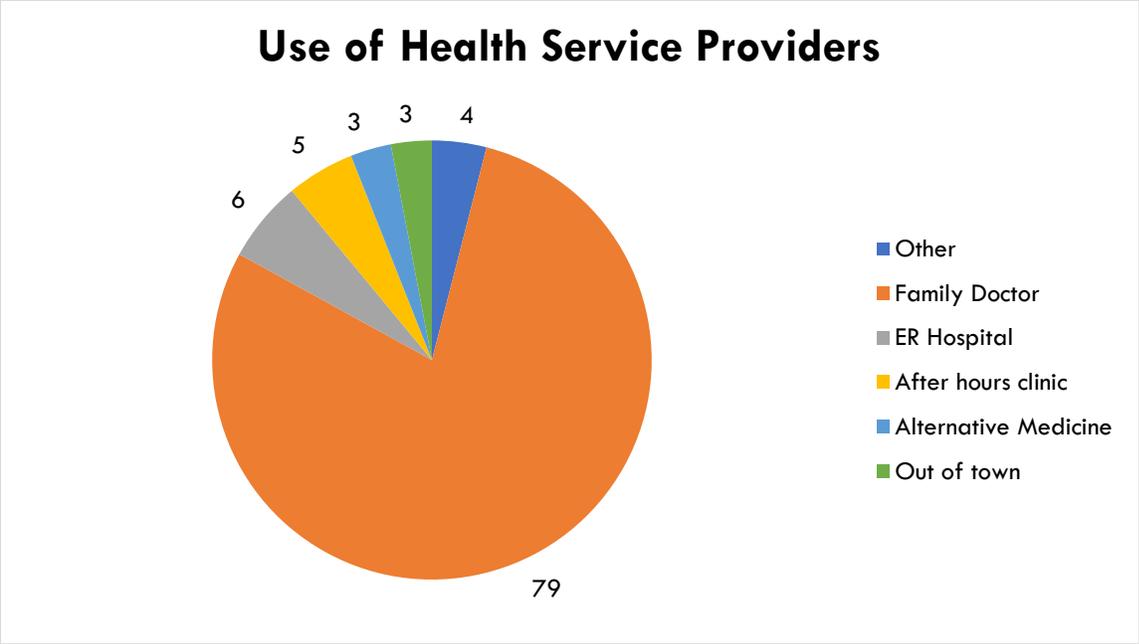


Figure 35: Health Service Provider; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

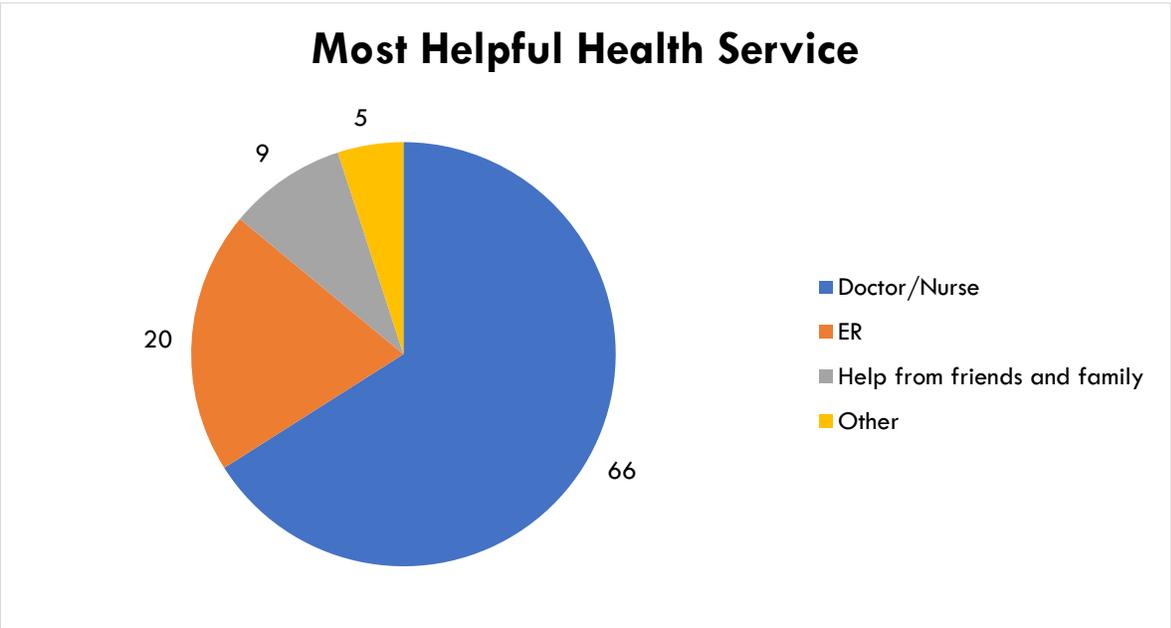


Figure 36: Helpful Service; Source: NIN Survey 2017

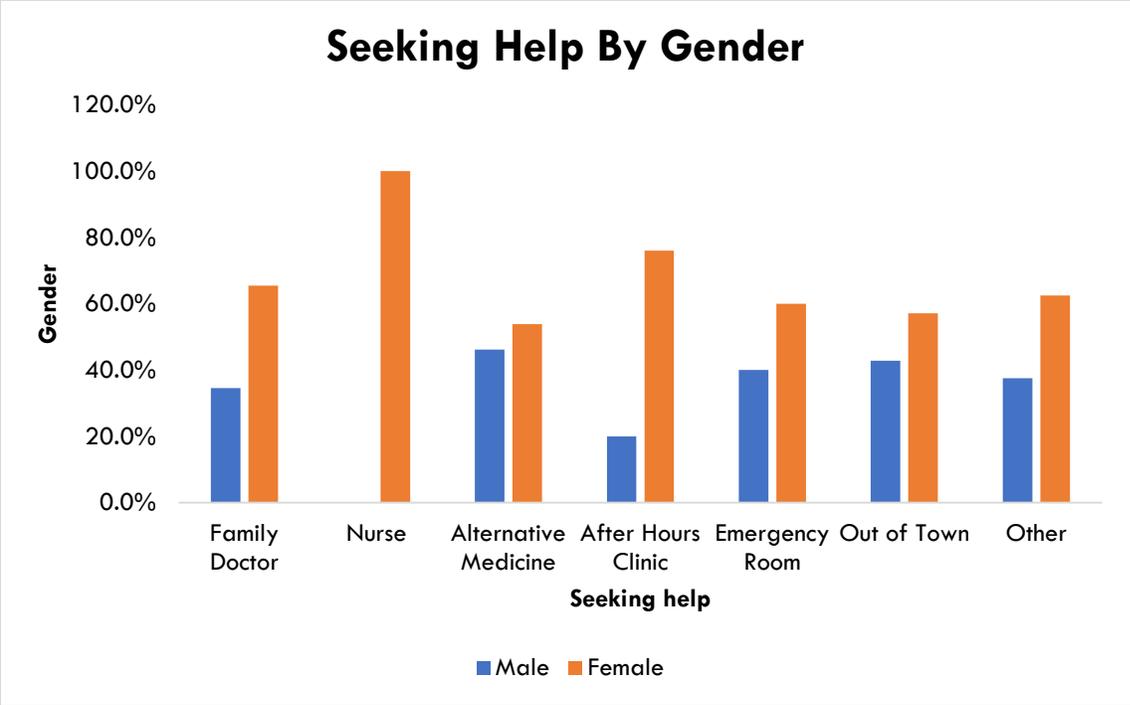


Figure 37: Seeking Help by Gender; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

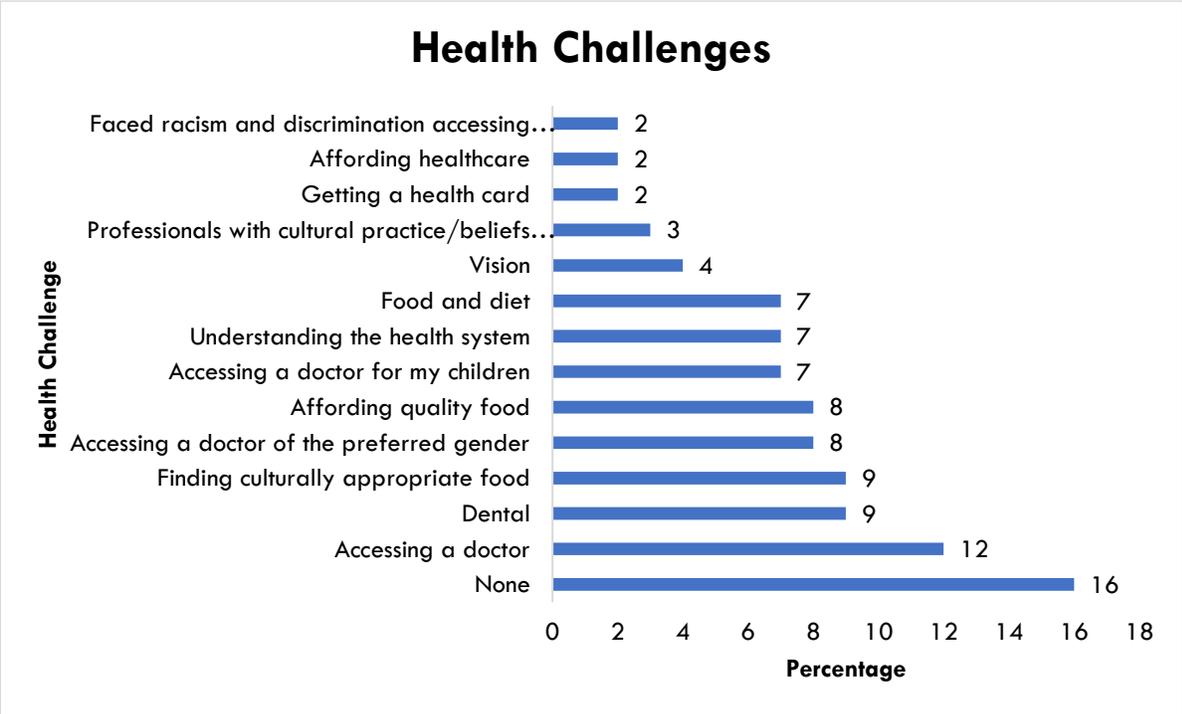


Figure 38: Health Challenges; Source: NIN Survey 2017

Health Challenges by Length of Residence

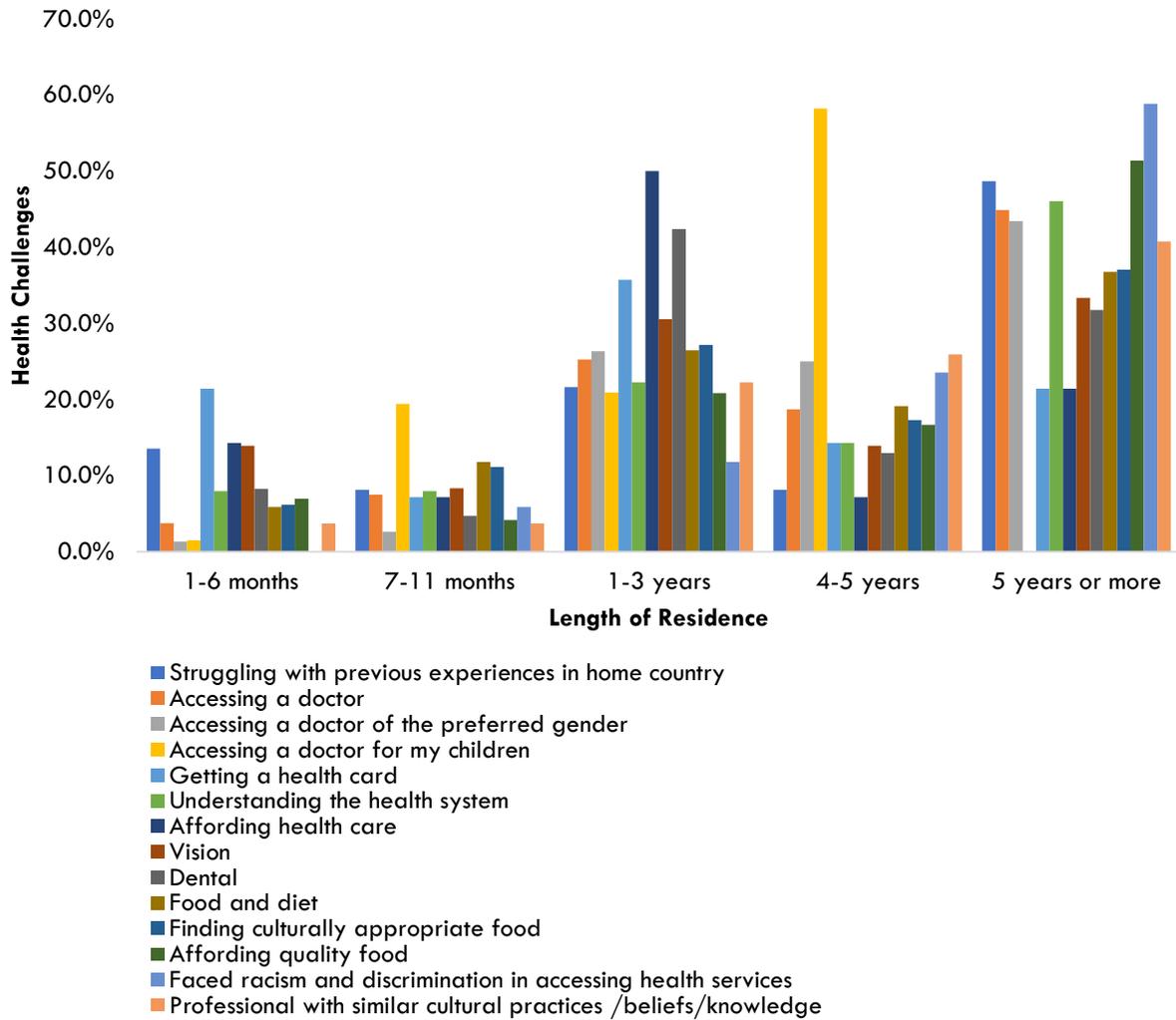


Figure 39: Health Challenge by Length of Residence: Source: NIN Survey, 2017

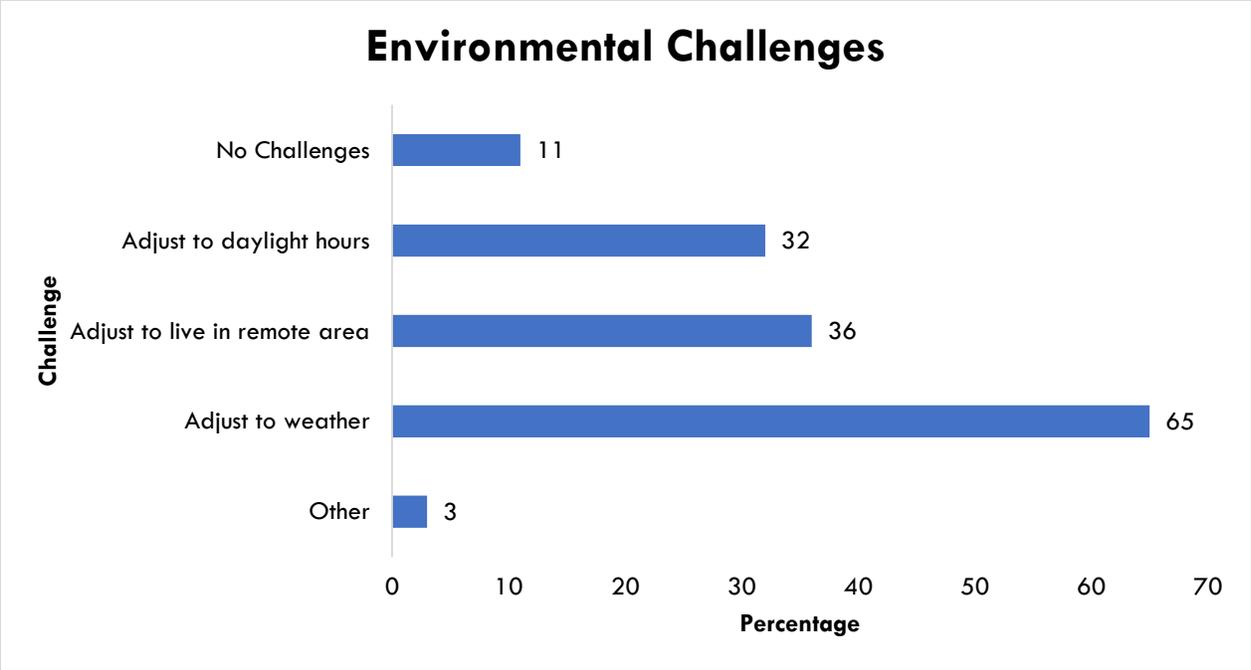


Figure 40: Environmental Challenges: Source: NIN Survey, 2017

TABLE 1: FORT MCMURRAY HEALTH STATISTICS

HEALTH STATUS & ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES STATISTICS (2015)	
UTILIZATION INDICATORS	
Chronic Diseases	In 2012, the Fort McMurray prevalence rate for hypertension per 100 population was 1.1 times higher than the corresponding rate reported for the province (13.2 vs. 12.3 AB). In addition, Fort McMurray showed prevalence rates higher than the provincial rates for diabetes & Ischemic Heart Disease.
Communicable Diseases	Fort McMurray's highest STI rate per 100,000 population in 2011/2012 - 2013/2014 was reported for chlamydia and this rate was higher than the provincial rate (514.4 vs. 377.0 AB). Syphilis & Cervicitis rates in Fort McMurray were higher than the provincial rates for STIs in 2011/2012 -2013/2014.
Emergency Service Utilization	The volume of emergency visits for patients residing in Fort McMurray increased by 6.6% between 2011/2012 and 2013/2014. The rates as a result of the wildfire last year have not been included in this statistic.
Ambulatory Care	Fort McMurray's separation rate for ambulatory care sensitive conditions (per 100,000 population) was 1.1 times higher than the corresponding urban provincial rate (682.1 vs. 610.2 AB urban), indicating difficulty in access to appropriate primary care.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS

Culturally/ Linguistically Sensitive Service

- Newcomers highlighted **the need to have access to both physical and mental health services that are sensitive to their culture, gender and language.**
- To develop culturally competent interventions that are suited to specific ethnic and cultural communities, health practitioners can adopt a cultural safety framework that focuses on making clients feel respected and safe. Only the client can judge whether a place/service is safe for them. This concept is related to self-determination and choice for the client. (Papps & Ramsden, 1996).
- Potential actions:** Provide training to AHS staff around culturally diverse practices; increase availability of translators in health care settings; translate key health information in different languages; strengthen links between newcomer serving agencies and health providers.

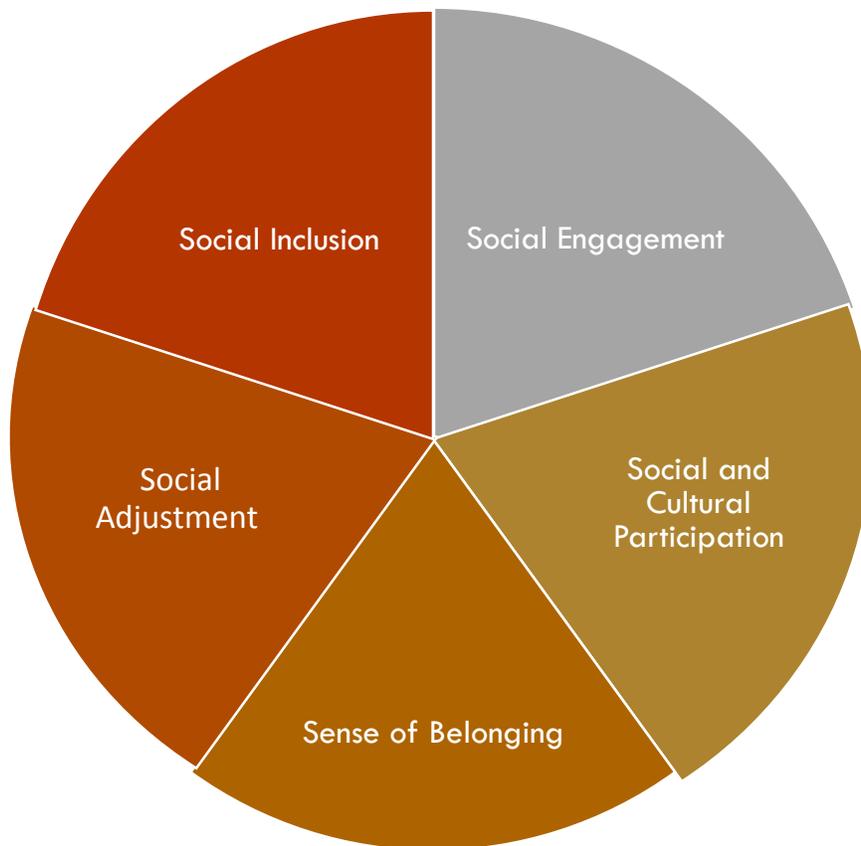
Client-Centered Care

- Age, length of stay, race and visa status can all make a difference when accessing health care services and for health outcomes.** For newcomers to have better health it is critical for them to have services that 'meet them where they are at'.
- Client-centered care promotes building systems and programs that adapt to the needs of the client/patient. Health systems can take a similar client focused approach to increase reach and become more effective.
- Potential actions:** Conduct outreach within ethno-cultural communities; adapt culturally sensitive approaches to intake, health promotion and counseling; review sites for health clinics, increasing access to isolated communities; adjust timings and availability of health professionals to meet client needs; adopt a wrap-around case-based model of care.

Trauma - Informed Care

- For many newcomers, especially refugees and immigrants, **mental health is a key challenge.** The context of the economic downturn and wildlife have added to the mental health stressors.
- A trauma-informed lens for work with newcomers can be a critical approach at the client, staff, agency, and system levels. The core principles of this lens are: trauma awareness, safety, trustworthiness, choice and collaboratio, and the building of clients' strengths and skills. Trauma can be defined in terms of: child abuse, neglect, witnessing violence and disrupted attachment, as well as later traumatic experiences such as violence, accidents, natural disasters, war, sudden unexpected loss and other life events that are out of one's control and potentially devastating (BC, TIP Guide, 2015).
- Potential actions:** Review health systems, programs and interventions to adopt a trauma-informed lens.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Newcomers were most likely to engage with family and friends and participate in religious activities. Key needs include: increasing access to cultural and social resources, improving participation in sports and recreation, and reducing discrimination.

Social connections and community engagement are among the main factors affecting the settlement and integration of newcomers in Canada. Full participation in the social, cultural and political aspects of community life is not only key to newcomer integration, but robust citizen engagement and strong social connections benefit individual and societal well-being, economic growth, and the functioning of political institutions (OECD, 2013a; Stolle & Cruz, 2005). Frequent social participation is important to one's quality of life (Gilmour, 2012). When individuals are socially engaged or involved in meaningful activities and close relationships, this has positive outcomes on general well-being, health, and integration. Participation in society reflects individual commitments or attachments to that society. This is also one of the dimensions, along with sense of belonging, through which social integration can be measured (Reitz, 2009). The following section discusses social connections and engagement within the community through different indicators such as the frequency of gathering with friends and family, religious, physical, recreational, educational, as well as cultural activities.

Most Important to Adjust to the New Environment: *Family and friends were the most critical resource to support settlement*

55% of respondents ranked family and friends as the most important in helping them settle. Ethno-cultural communities and religious or faith-based organizations were next at 9% and 8% respectively (Figure 41).

Engagement with Family and Friends: *About half the sample met family and friends at least once a week*

Approximately half of the sample participants (51%) met at least once a week with family and friends, while 24% reported gathering at least once a month (Figure 42).

Religious Activity: More than half engaged in religious activities once a week

Frequency of religious activity was about the same percentage as gathering with family and friends gathering. A little more than half (53%) went to religious-based activities at least once a week and 18% went at least once a month (Figure 43).

Physical Activity: Weekly physical activity was much lower per week as compared to other activities

One third of the survey participants engage in physical activities at least once a week, while 21% reported participating in physical activity at least once a month and 14% at least once a day.

Furthermore, a significant quarter of the sample (26%) reported that they never participated in physical activity (Figure 44).

Recreational Activity: A significant proportion engaged in recreation activities once a month

When asked about their engagement in recreational activities, 32% participated at least once a month. In addition, almost a third (28%) mentioned that they engaged in recreational activities at least once a week (Figure 45).

Educational Activity: Majority had limited regular activities related to education

Participants were asked how often they attended educational activities involving other people, such as attending courses. A third of the sample (31%) had never attended educational activities, while 20% attended at least once a day and 21% attended at least once a year (Figure 46).

Cultural Activity: Low engagement with cultural activities among newcomers

Among all the social connection activities, cultural activity posed as the least one frequented – with 43% reporting they had never been engaged in cultural activity. Almost a quarter (26%) of the sample population participated at least once a year, 20% once a month, and only 10% reported engaging in cultural activities at least once a week (Figure 47).

(All) Activities by Gender

Among men the top 3 activities undertaken at least once a day were: religious, sports and educational. Among women the top 3 activities undertaken at least once a day were: educational, sports and gathering with family and friends. Men were twice as more likely to participate in religious activities daily as

compared to women, whereas women were two times more likely to gather with family and friends on a day to day basis. Participation in sports or physical activity was comparable across genders. When comparing the two genders, the report found that men were more likely than women to participate in recreation activities at least once a day; women were more likely to participate in educational activities than men and not likely to participate in cultural activities daily.

Participation in Activities (all) by Length of Residence

Comparing frequent participation⁸ in all activities by length of residence highlighted the shifts of social engagement over time (Figure 48). During the first year of settlement, participation in educational activities, engagement with religious and faith-based organizations and family or friends was low. During the 1-3 year period, there is a peak in all of these activities. Then, from the fourth year of settlement onwards there is greater engagement with cultural, sports and recreational activities almost 40%.

Sense of Belonging: *Majority of newcomers felt a sense of belonging*

73% of the respondents felt a sense of belonging to RMWB. Only 16% felt no sense of belonging (Figure 49).

Sense of Belonging by Length of Residence

Over time sense of belonging increased among newcomers, low levels of sense of belonging during the first year were noted. The sense of belonging saw a slight dip in the 4-5 year time frame (Figure 50).

Sense of Belonging by Race

Some of the highest levels of belonging were reported in the South Asian, East Asian and Latin American racial groups. Lower sense of belonging was reported among Black and Arab racial community groups (Figure 51).

Challenges - Social Adjustment: *Newcomers struggled with making social connections, adjusting to their residence and cultural adjustment*

17% struggled with social connections, 15% had difficulties adjusting to their residence area and 14% each had difficulties with cultural adjustment, and accessing cultural food (Figure 52).

⁸ Frequent participation was considered as once a day or once a week.

Challenges-Family: Newcomers had challenges related to schooling and finding childcare

The most significant childcare challenge was finding affordable and quality childcare (30%). 13% of participants reported having difficulty with children's schooling or helping children adjust and 12% of participants reported finding appropriate childcare was a key challenge (Figure 53). 51% of the participants had childcare related issues (finding childcare, access to childcare, affordable childcare and quality childcare).

Stakeholder interviews highlighted some of the key challenges around social and cultural settlement. Concerns such as social isolation, cultural differences, discrimination and social participation were discussed by various stakeholders. For residents of RMWB adjusting and adapting to those new to the community can be also challenging. It is a two-way process that requires building cultural competency both from residents and newcomers. Accordingly, to some of the stakeholders, the current downturn in the economy may even exacerbate these issues and concerns. One respondent from the RMWB social planning stated:

“But I think that there is more competition for jobs, for housing, for basic needs so that does affect attitudes towards minorities (newcomers) in general”

Stakeholders also discussed challenges such as lack of time to participate, costs, or difficulties accessing due to challenges with transportation. The interviews highlighted that many people come to the region ostensibly to work and don't necessarily consider engaging in recreation, sports or social and cultural opportunities.

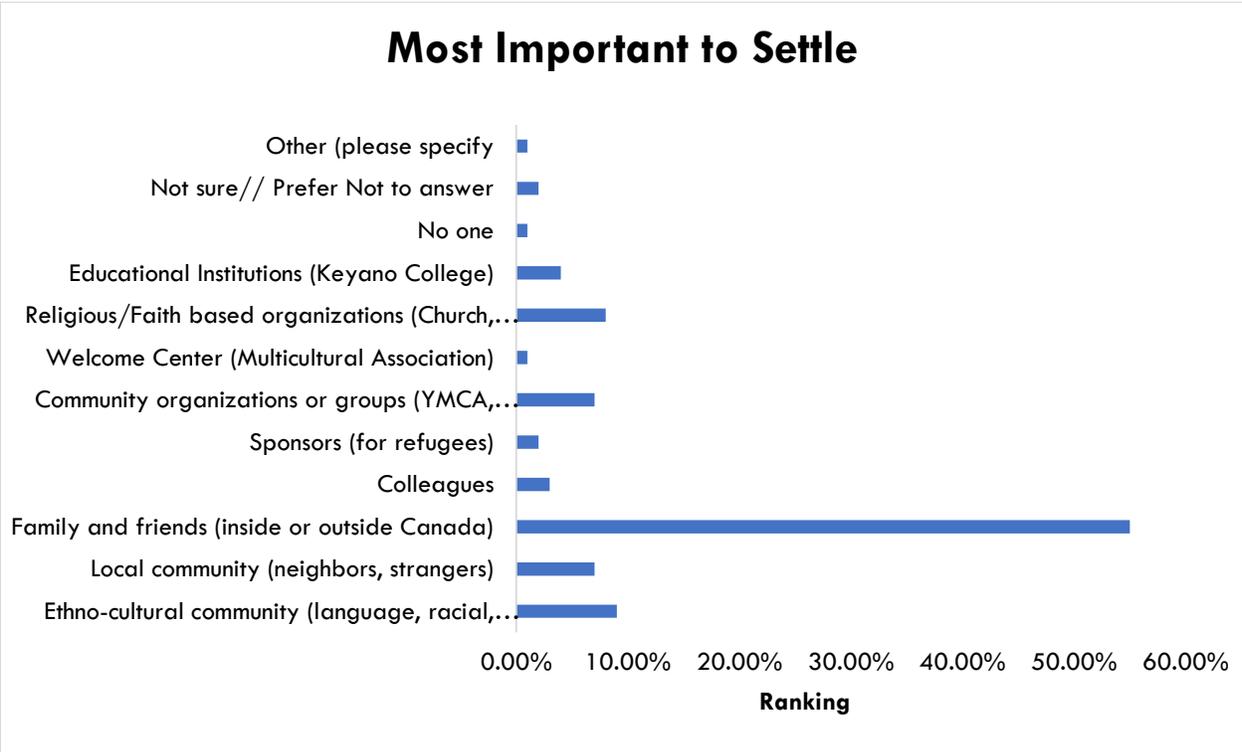


Figure 41: Important to settle; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

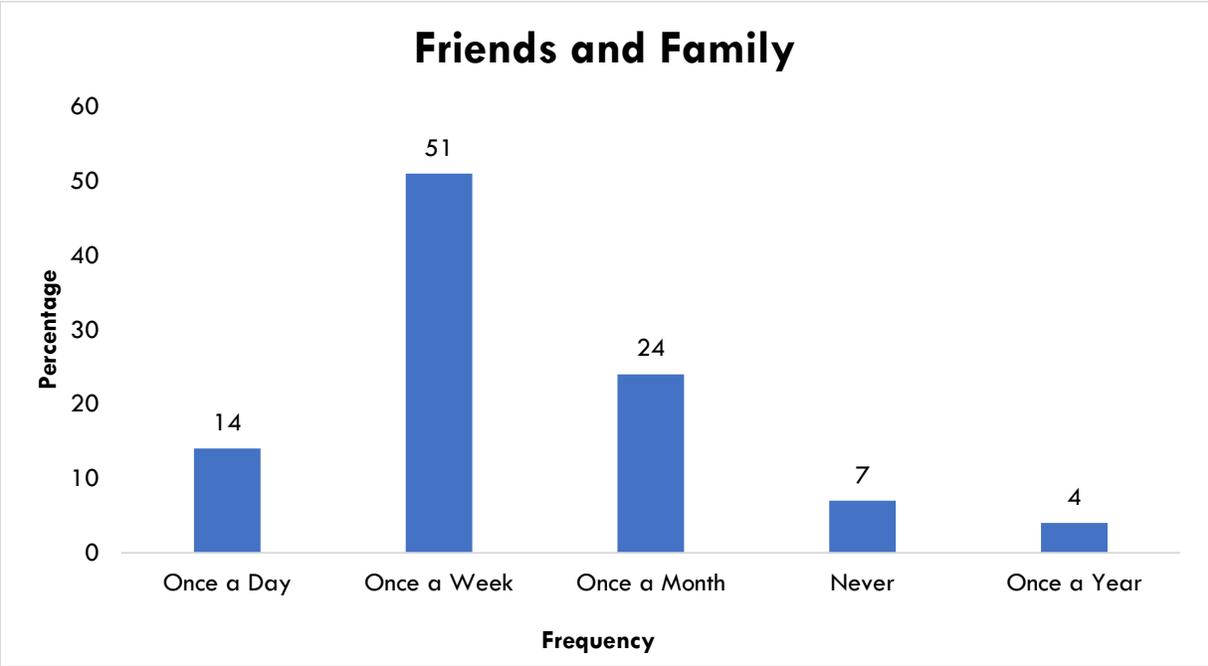


Figure 42: Friends & Family activity; Source; NIN Survey, 2017

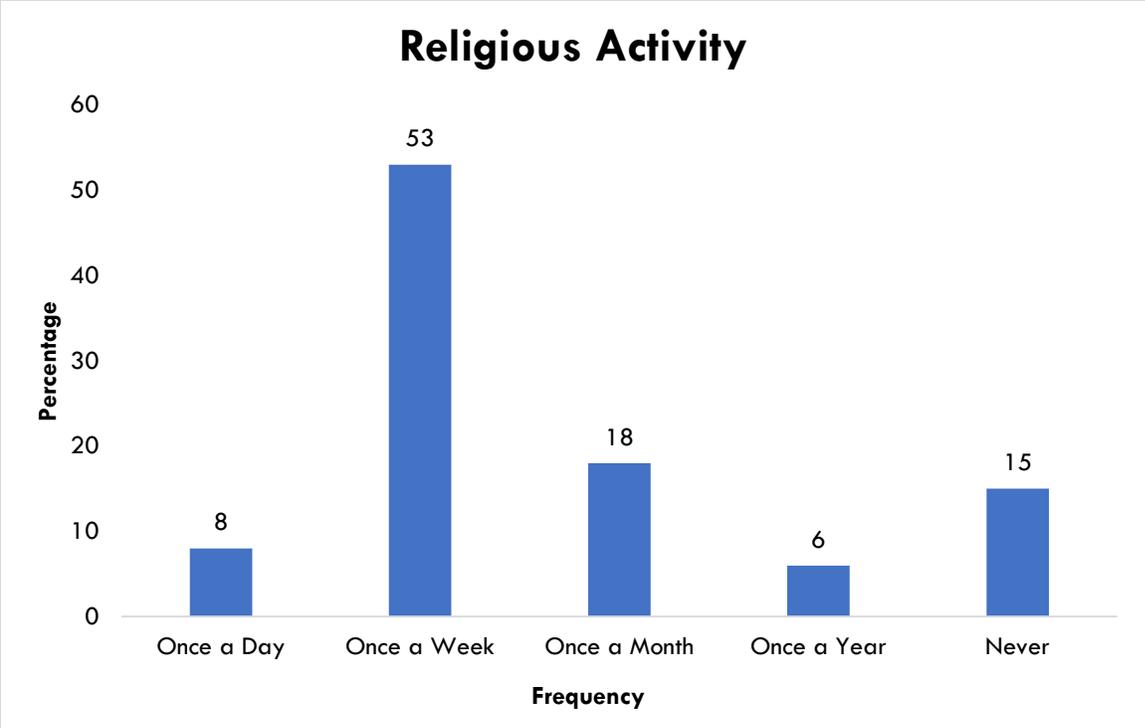


Figure 43: Religious Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017

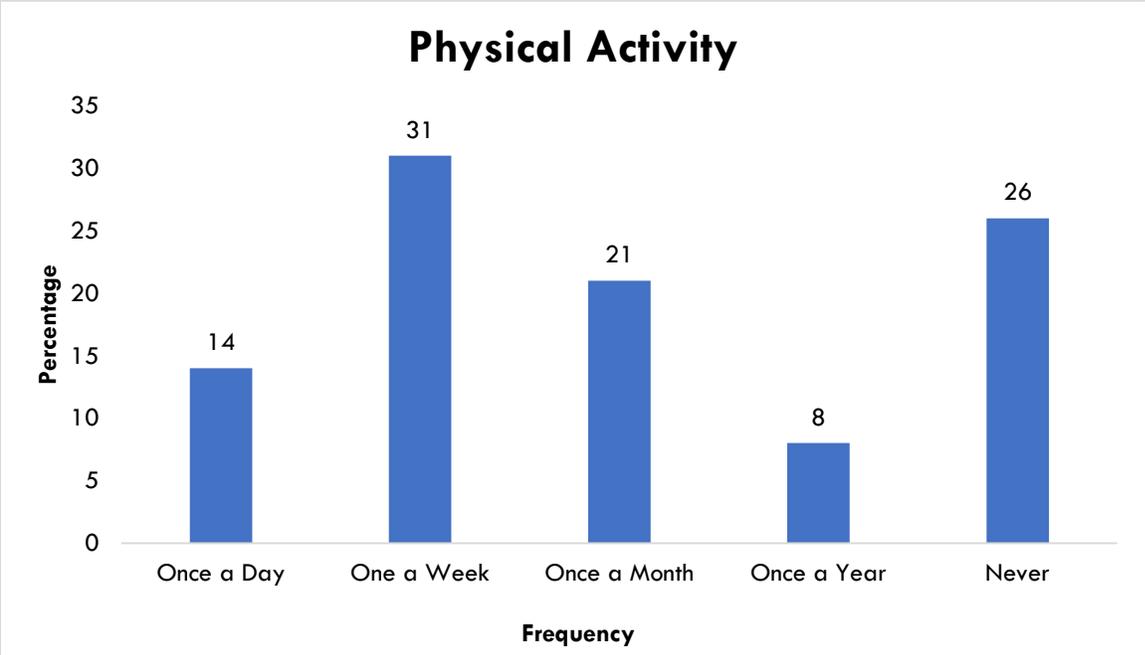


Figure 44: Physical Activity; NIN Survey 2017

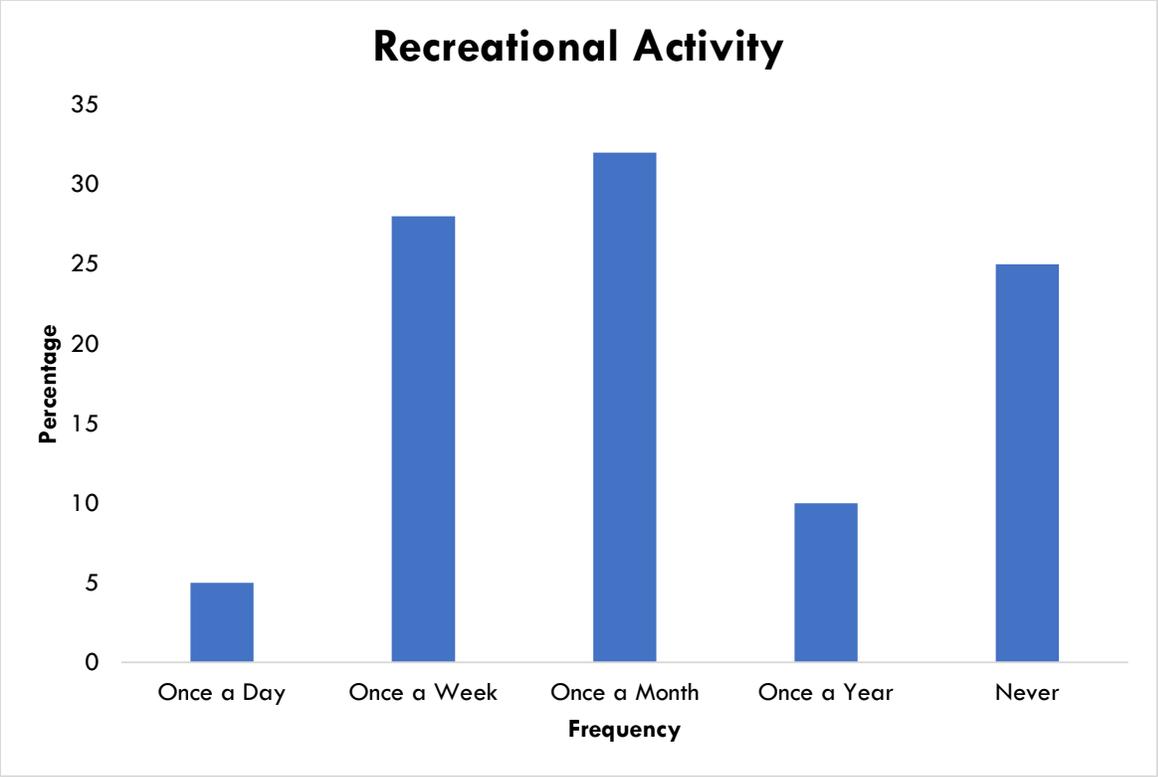


Figure 45: Recreational Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017

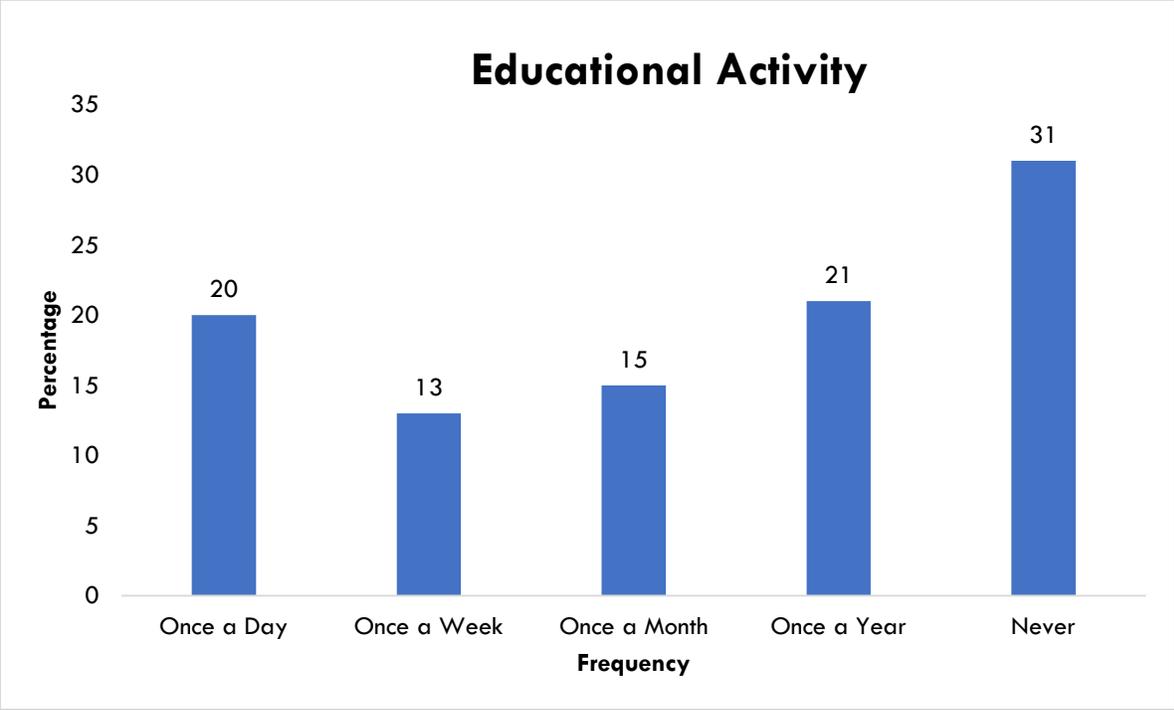


Figure 46: Educational Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017

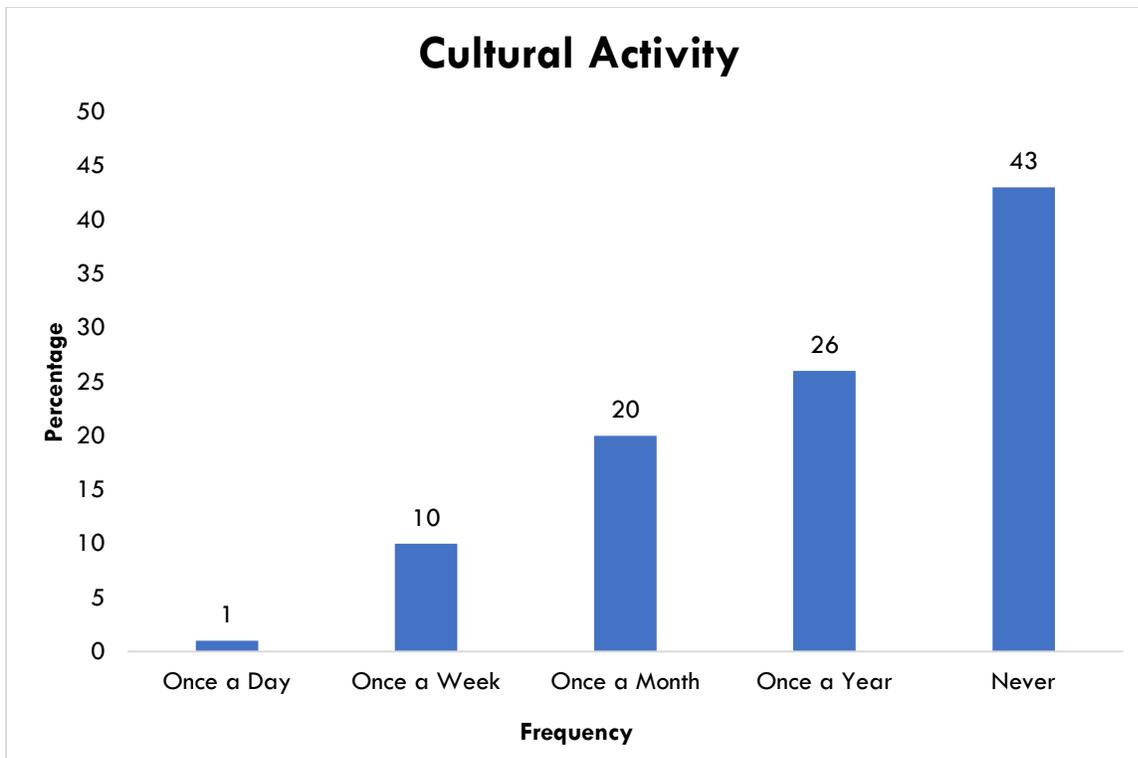


Figure 47: Cultural Activity; Source: NIN Survey 2017

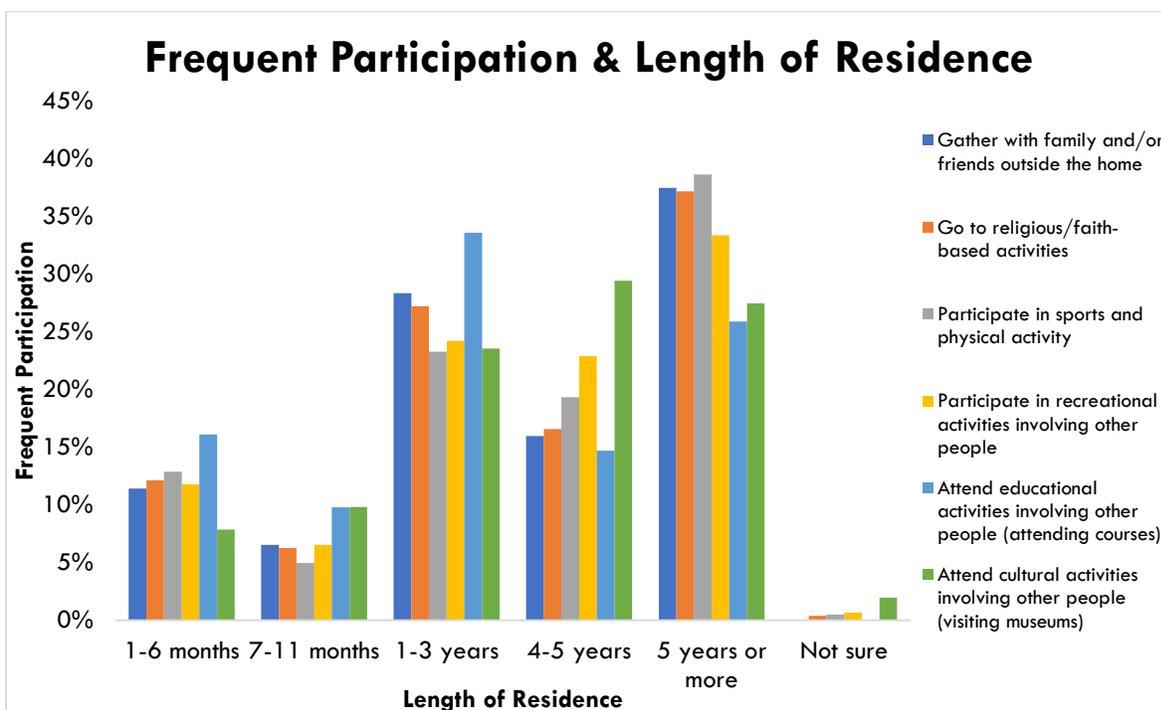


Figure 48: Frequent participation & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

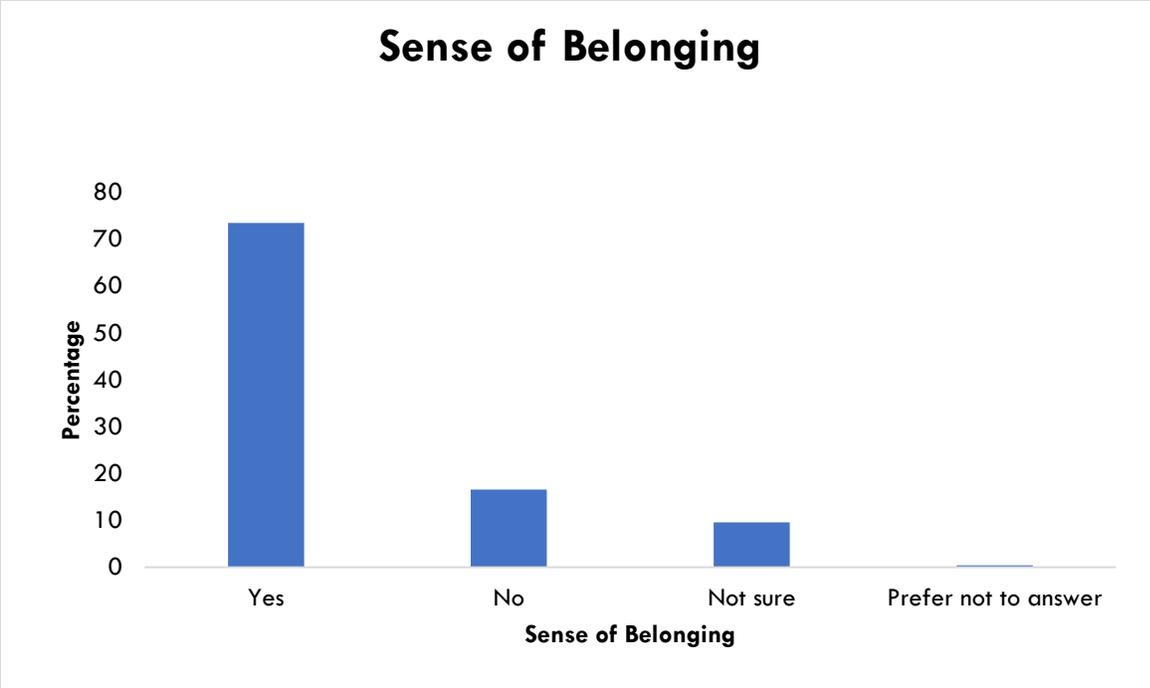


Figure 49: Sense of Belonging; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

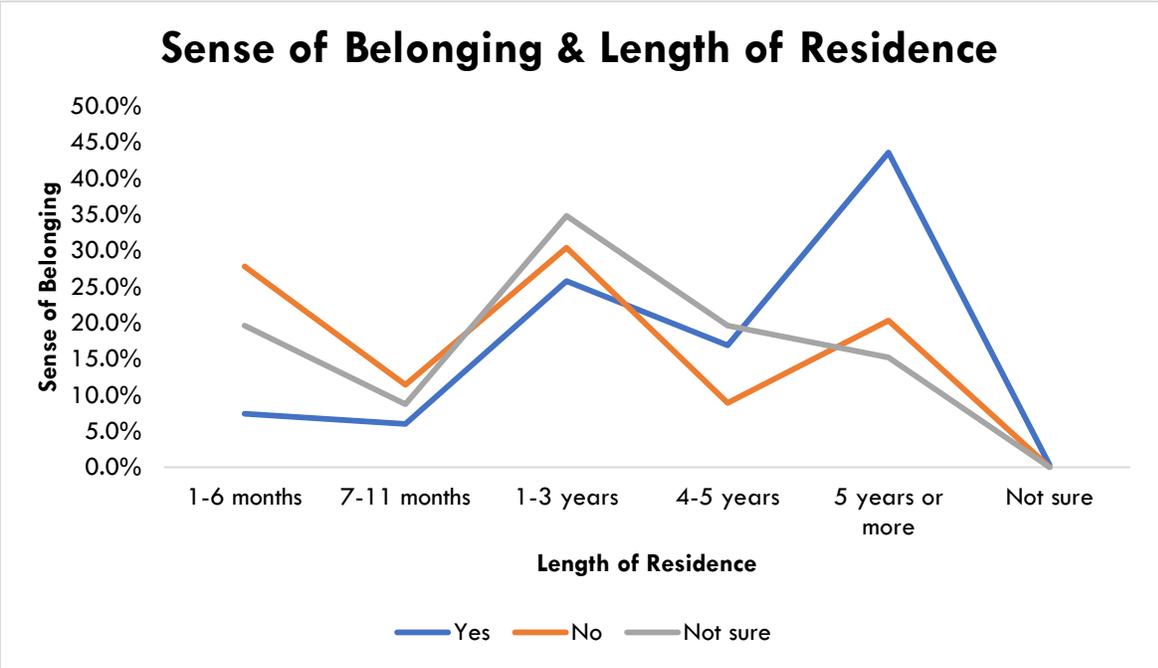


Figure 50: Sense of Belonging & Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

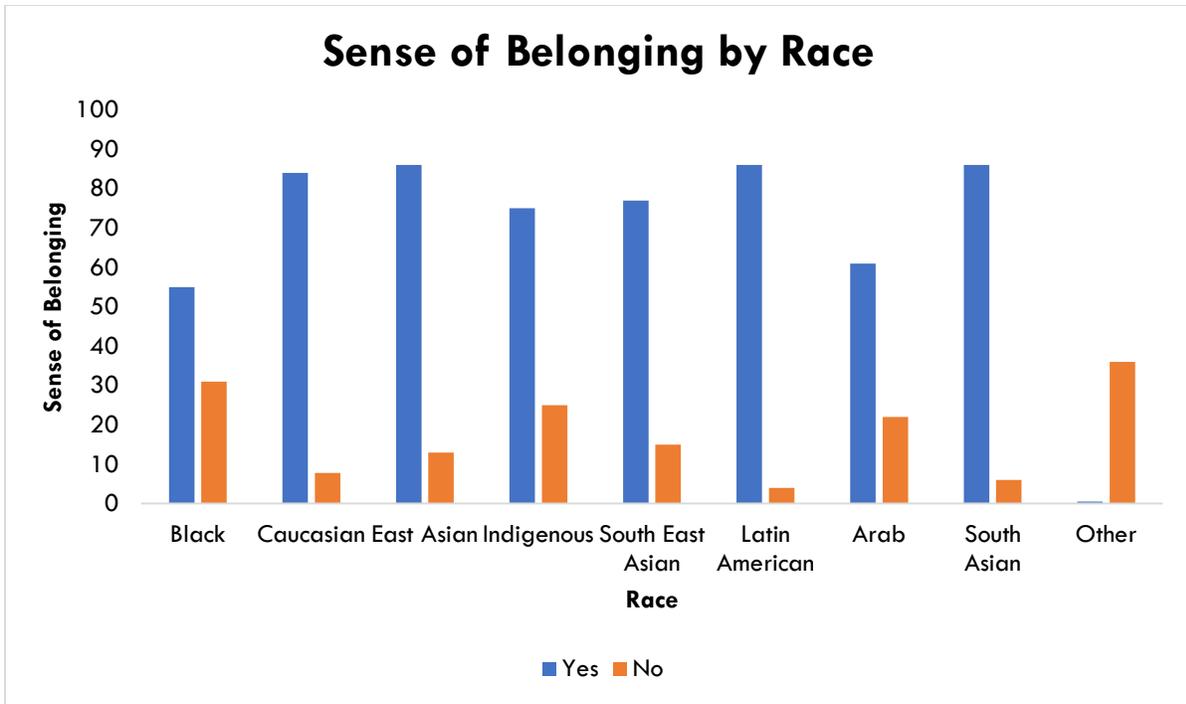


Figure 51: Sense of Belonging & Race; NIN Survey, 2017

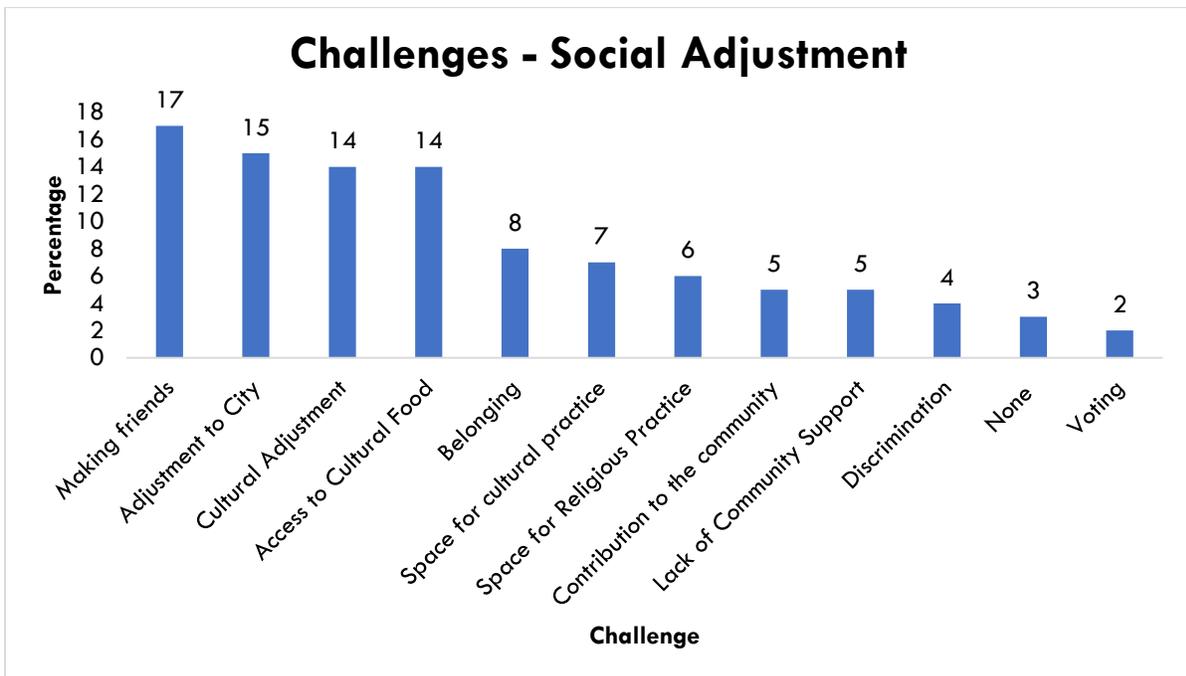


Figure 52: Challenges Social Adjustment; Source: NIN Survey 2017

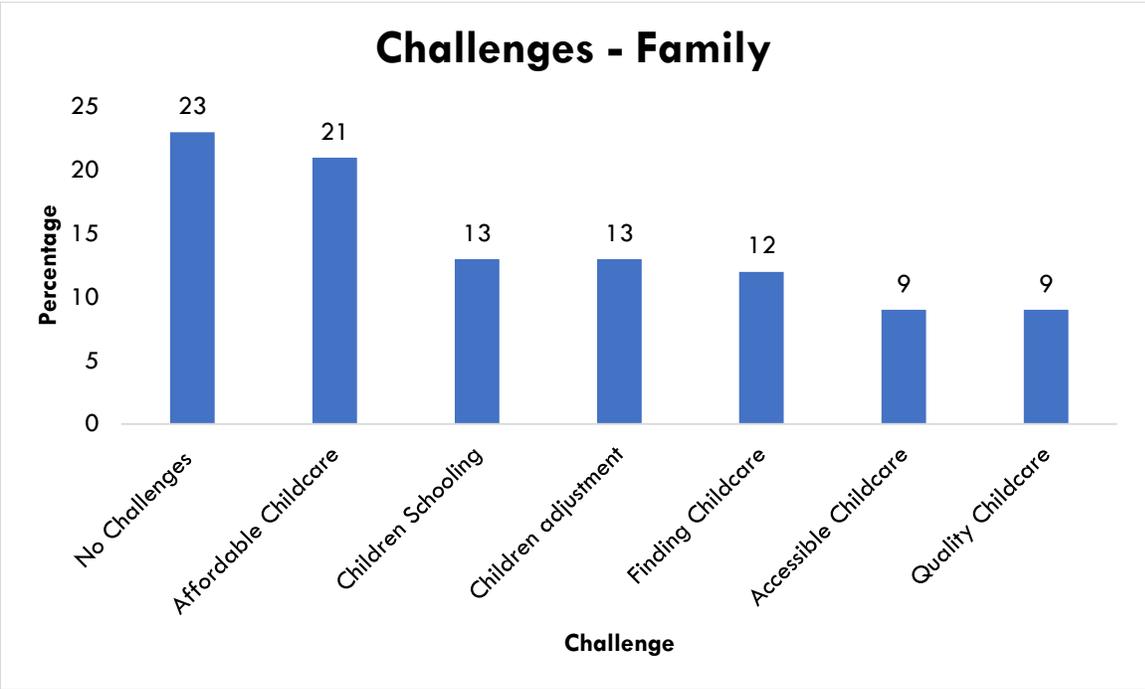


Figure 53: Family Challenges; Source: NIN Survey 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS

Strengthening Social and Cultural Participation Opportunities

- Newcomers highlighted that **participation in social and cultural activities was limited**. Given the recent wildfire some of these local resources have to be rebuilt and newcomer communities need to be re-engaged.
- Potential actions:** Involve community associations and neighborhood organizations to better understand and address the needs of their diverse communities. Support and promote the development of cultural hubs across RMWB to foster diverse cultural expression. Strengthen and promote the arts and culture of different newcomer communities; broaden outreach to engage newcomers. Provide supports to encourage participation such as childcare or transportation. Expand opportunities for newcomers to learn about Canadian culture in order to engage newcomers and support settlement as well as provide opportunities for newcomers to practice their own culture.

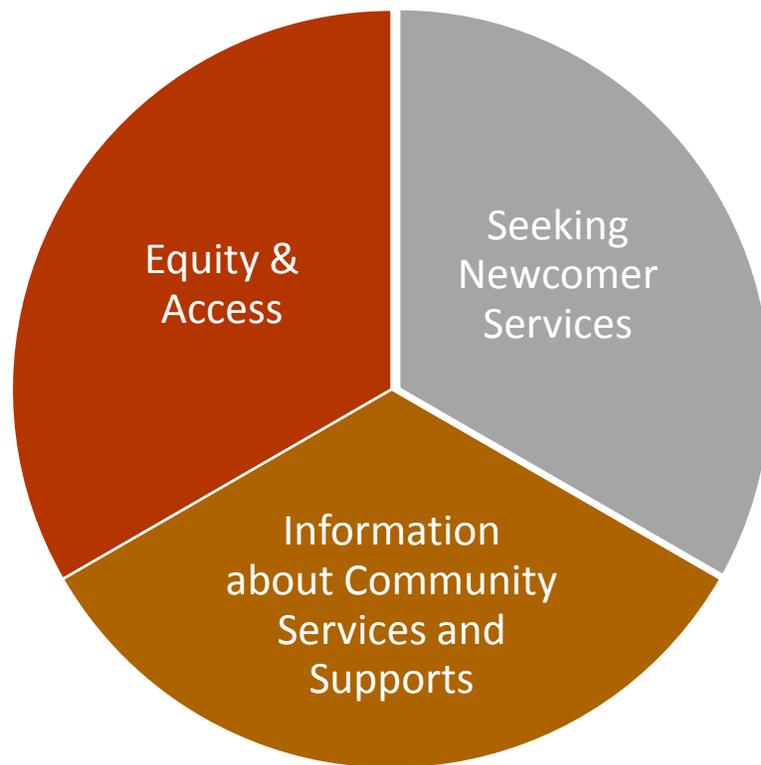
Increase Participation in Sports and Recreational Activities

- Newcomers highlighted **that participation in sports and recreational activities was limited**. For some newcomers the lack of time and resources, access to opportunities and the lack of supports acted as a barrier.
- Potential actions:** Continue to promote diversity-focused events and support newcomer participation through incentives in ongoing public fairs, events, and celebrations. Create programs specifically targeted at newcomer communities to increase participation in sports. Provide supports to newcomer families through economic incentives, flexible timings as well as coaching and guidance in sports or recreational activities.

Social Inclusion and Addressing Discrimination

- Newcomers highlighted that addressing discrimination and racism was critical**. The longer that newcomers stayed the more likely they were to report such concerns.
- Potential actions:** Engage with organizations, institutions and programs across the region to dialogue and address issues of discrimination or racism. Strengthen community awareness and build on strategies to combat these concerns as they emerge.

ACCESS TO SERVICES



ACCESS TO SERVICES

The survey asked participants questions around access to services to understand utilization and access to newcomer oriented services.

Seeking Services: Equal proportion had visited and not visited sites providing newcomer focused services

The sample respondents were divided equally with 51% who had visited organizations to utilize services specifically focusing on newcomers and 49% who did not seek such services (Figure 54).

Utilization of Services by Gender

Of all those who said yes to using newcomer focused services, 71% were women and 29% were men. Women were more than twice as likely to access services.

Utilization of Services by Length of Residence

Of all those in residence for 1-6 months, 44% had visited a newcomer-focused services in contrast to the majority 55% who had not visited such a service or program (Figure 55). Among the 7-11 month category only 35% visited a newcomer focused service. As length of residence increases the more likely newcomers use services it is to see newcomer service utilization.

Utilization of Services by Employment Status

Among all those who said yes, approximately 55% had either part-time or full-time employment. 13% were unemployed and 16% were homemakers.

Utilization of Services by Income

Of all those who said yes, 35% earned less than \$60,000 and only about 12% of those who utilized the services earned above \$120,000.

Utilization of Services by Education

Of those who utilized these services, the majority had an undergraduate or graduate degree (35%). 19% had completed high school.

Information about Community Services & Supports: *Community organizations and family friends were the two most common sources of information*

When looking for information about community services or supports such as employment, housing, language services, social or cultural information, as well as legal services, the survey sample was divided into almost four major sources⁹.

Community organizations were the most prominent source of information (28%), next was friends and family (23%), followed by the internet (20%).

Information about Community Services or Supports by Gender

Women were more likely to seek information from educational institutions, friends and family and the Internet. Men were more likely to seek information from the Internet and religious institutions (Figure 56).

Challenges-Transportation

36% of survey participants found navigating the city or community roads a challenge. The same percentage found understanding the transportation or transit system as a key challenge (Figure 57). In addition, 23% of the survey sample was not able to afford private transportation. Only 5% had no challenges as far as transportation was concerned.

Recommendations for services to be added or strengthened

Opinions were widely divided when it came to recommendations, however the top five recommendations were: providing affordable legal support (11%), setting online courses (10%), Canadian culture workshops (10%), cultural events (10%), and finding help with immigration offices (10%) (Figure 58).

⁹ The Welcome Center has only been open for few months before data was collected. It was shut due to the fire. This may impact the responses to this question.

Whether Newcomers Sought Services

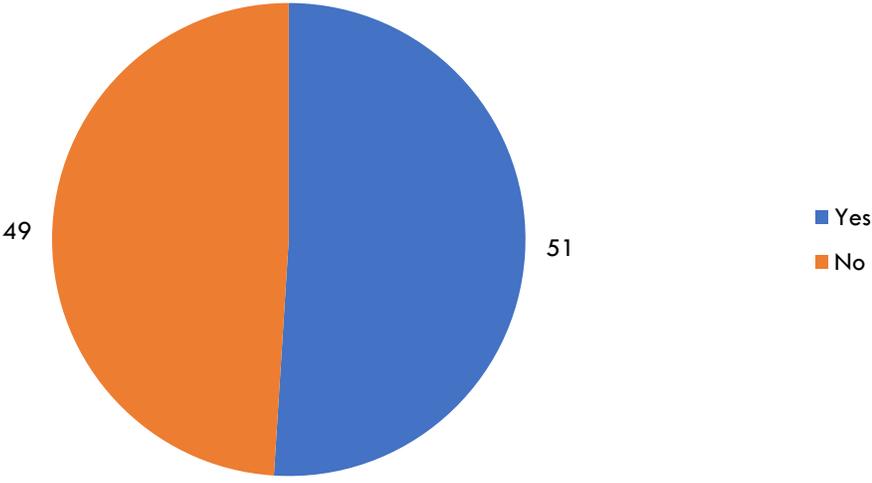


Figure 54: Visiting newcomer services; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

Visiting Newcomer Services by Length of Residence

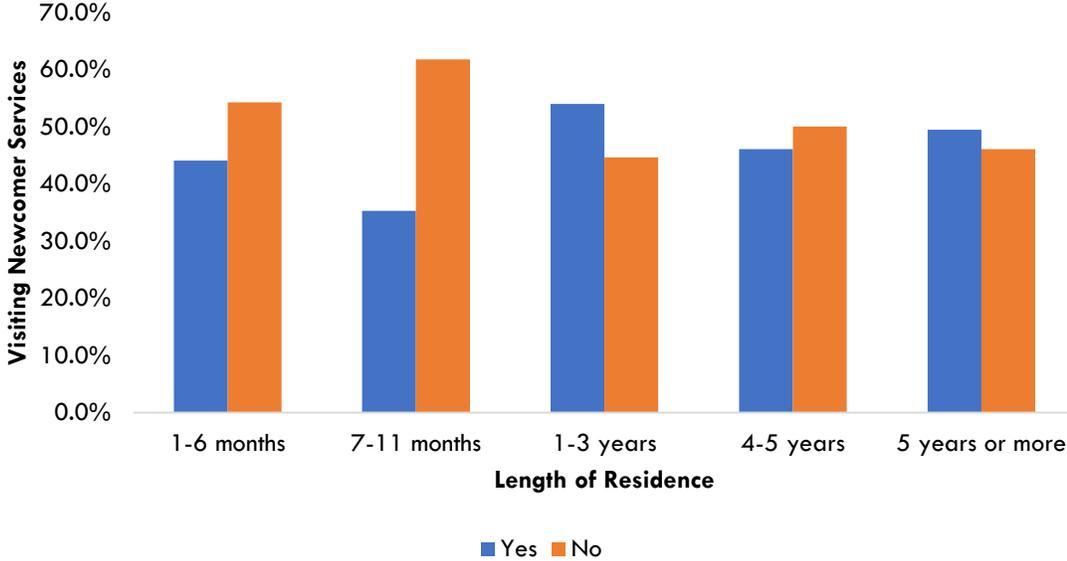


Figure 55: Visiting newcomer services by Length of Residence; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

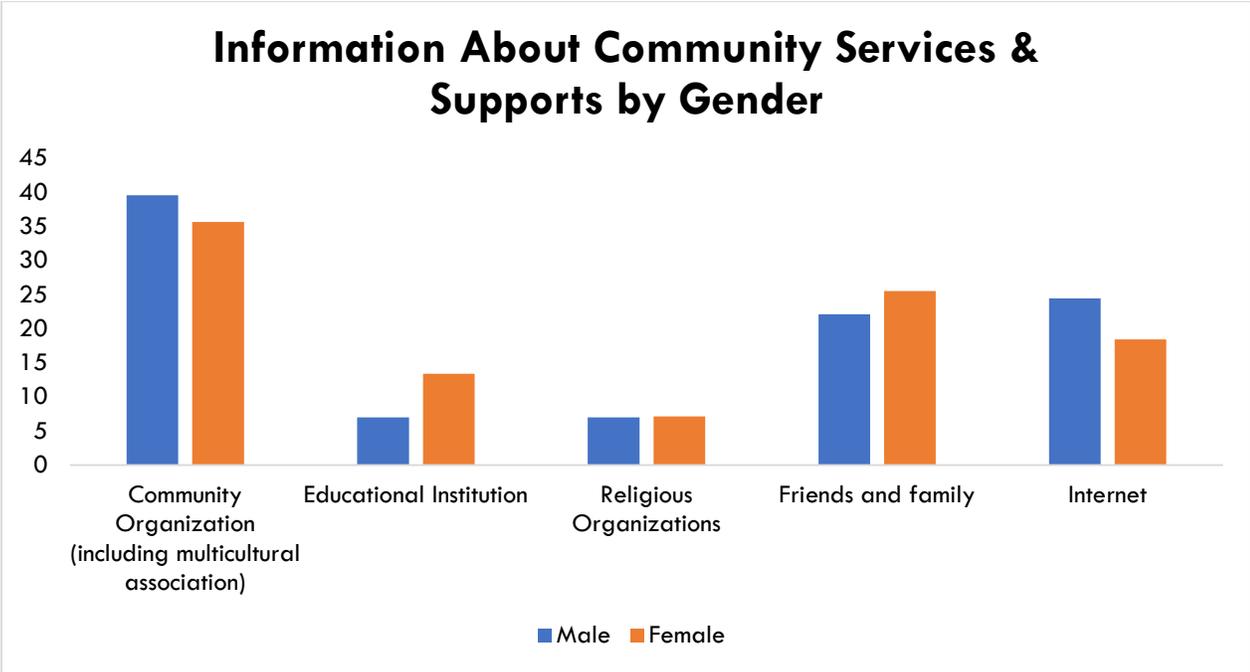


Figure 56: Information about Community Services & Supports by Gender; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

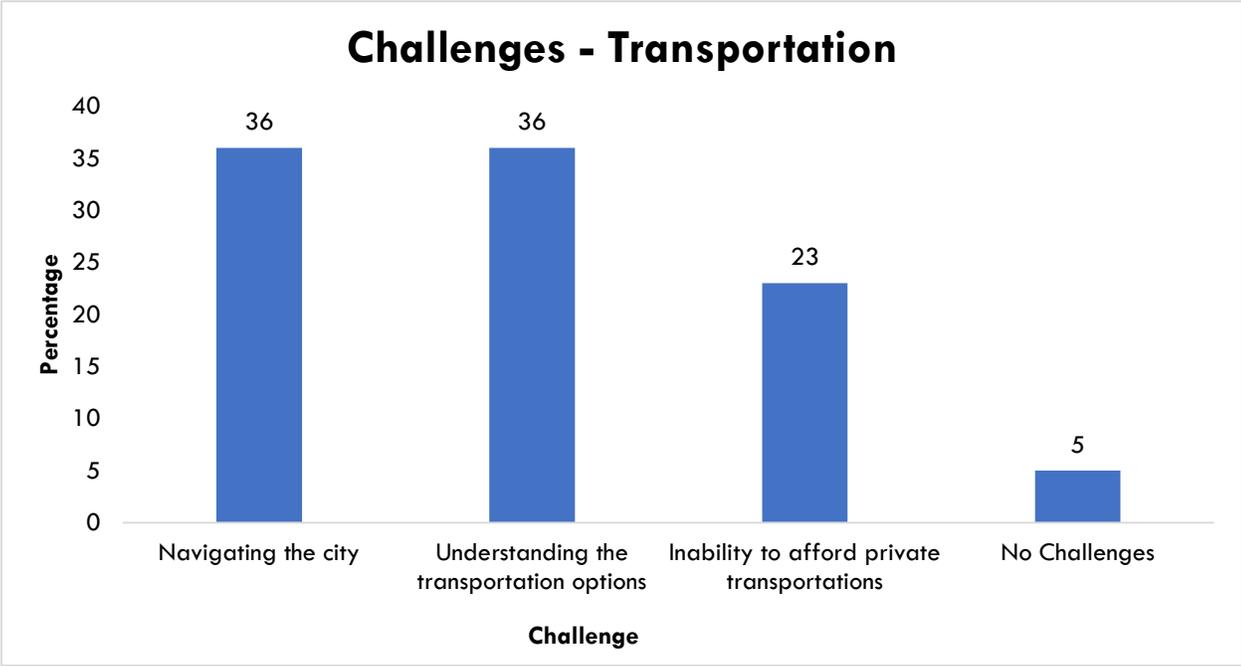


Figure 57: Challenges Transportation; Source: NIN Survey, 2017

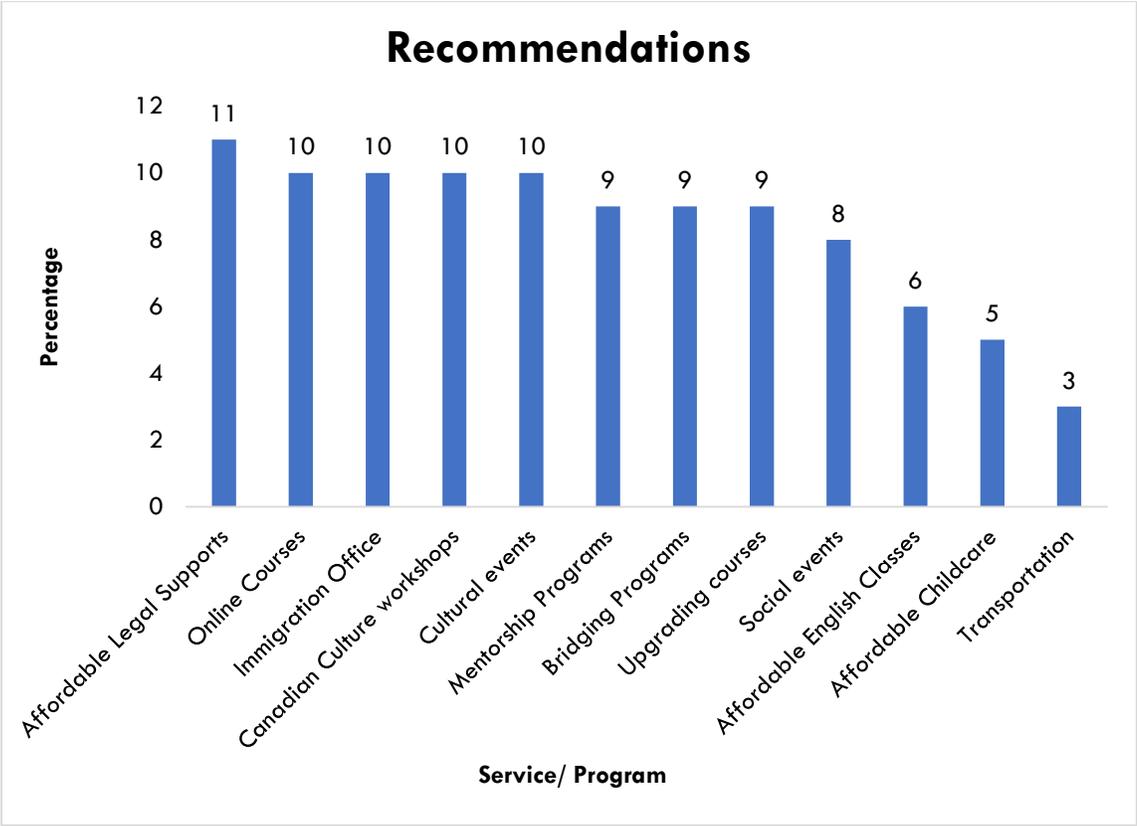


Figure 58: Recommendations: Source: NIN Survey 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESS TO SERVICES BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEWCOMER NEEDS

Increasing Access to Information

- Newcomers highlighted that increasing information about services is critical to increase service knowledge and utilization.
- Potential actions:** Involve community associations and neighborhood organizations to increase dissemination of information. Utilize social media and internet to increase reach. Create more events and expand opportunities for newcomers learn about settlement services.

Increase Support Services

- Newcomers emphasized the need to increase support services such as childcare and transportation. Newcomers and stakeholders also highlighted the need for legal support services, an immigration office within the RMWB and Canadian workplace workshops.
- Potential actions:** Create supports within existing programs to reduce barriers to access. Provide supports to newcomers through innovative programs that may allow children to attend or locate them within community sites that are easily accessed. Use technology to provide services to reduce the burden on newcomers to travel.

Increase Newcomer Services

- Newcomers require significant supports in many areas and by increasing the number of services for newcomers they can be served efficiently.
- Potential actions:** Increase the capacity of current organizations and reach of newcomer focused services; work across sectors to build collaborative programs and secure funding; regularly collect data on newcomer needs.

CONCLUSION

RMWB is a diverse and rich community that welcomes a growing number of newcomers each year. Newcomers to the region come from across Canada and the globe. The region has traditionally attracted both long term residents that live full-time in the community and shadow populations that work temporarily in the region. With ever changing needs of the local community has had to adapt by both creating new programs or services as well as refining or re-shaping previously existing ones. Instead of only preparing newcomers to enter the mainstream, it is now important to prepare systems that adapt to newcomers. But this process of mutual adjustment or integration is continuous, complex and long-term. **The challenges of integration are truly challenges for the whole community and requires a collaborative approach.** Local Immigration Partnerships across Canada have been able to achieve such collaborations. This also highlights the continued need of the NIN.

Overall, the report provided some important direction around the work with newcomers. The term newcomer itself has a broad meaning and this report highlighted that the needs of **newcomers vary significantly in terms of age, gender, race, visa status and length of residency, and rate at which they integrate into the community.** For organizations and systems that work with newcomers this means that a 'one size fits all' strategy may not necessarily meet the needs of newcomers. Instead a **'diversified, client-centered and context-specific'** approach can be adopted. This means **tailoring programs, services and systems to be flexible and adaptive to the needs of newcomers.**

The NIN developed this project to understand the needs of the newcomer community and to identify some key priorities for future action. While newcomers come with strong qualifications and skills, they often find it difficult to find jobs that match their experience or education. Simultaneously, other reports suggest that employers may struggle to find adequately qualified workers who are fluent in English and possess adequate experience. In fact, newcomers, our study shows, reported a high-level of language proficiency and only a minority claimed to utilize language or education services. This points to an inherent gap between labour market needs and workforce skills.

This issue of unemployment is particularly heightened by the economic downturn – newcomers were earning significantly less than the average resident of the RMWB. Lower incomes, a higher cost of housing and a higher cost of living together created a trifecta effect that was likely to keep newcomers from upgrading their skills and educational qualifications. Support services such as childcare and transportation as well the lack of access to information about such services may further compromise service utilization.

Newcomers were more likely to engage with family and friends as well religious institutions to gain information and socialize. Sports, recreation and cultural or community engagement levels only increased the longer that newcomers stayed within the region. For many newcomers the cost, lack of work-life balance, and childcare support made it difficult to participate in these activities. It is likely that newcomers may have a small social network with many members from their own ethno-cultural or religious groups.

Research shows that social participation has an important impact on health and social adjustment. Newcomers reported good health; however, pointed to challenges around structural factors such as accessing doctors and nurses or food and diet that is affordable, that matches their cultural norms and is of good quality.

For instance, gender differences were shown to be critical in different settlement needs and outcomes. Organizations that work with newcomers may consider developing gender specific or gender focused programs or services that understand and cater to gendered concerns. Another example of this approach is shaping programs to meet the needs of newly arrived residents in comparison to those who may have lived in the region for some time. By continually collecting data, stakeholders can understand the changing needs of the newcomer population. The report highlighted that the length of time newcomers may have spent in the region impacts their settlement. By developing materials, trainings, programs or services that are specific to 'immediate' newcomer needs and those newcomers who have been settled in the region for some time, organizations can streamline information and strengthen service quality while remaining client-focused.

This report strongly demonstrated that **context matters, without equity newcomers will continue to struggle to settle**. It is not enough to provide services for newcomers unless these services are accessible. The report highlighted that newcomers often struggled to get information about services and programs. Newcomers also often lacked adequate support services such as childcare or transportation. Context also plays a key role in terms of supporting newcomers to succeed in their new environment through social inclusion and reducing discrimination or stigma. By providing structural support for newcomers, systems can create equitable access.

This report is a foundational document to understand the needs and challenges facing newcomers in RMWB. It helps to identify broad trends in newcomer well-being and the direction of the relationship between key influencing factors. This report lays out key priorities for newcomers that can help shape a strong, inclusive, and welcoming community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alberta Health and Wellness. (2011). Immigrant Health in Alberta. Retrieved 22 March, 2015
<http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Immigrant-Health-Alberta-2011.pdf>
- Berry, J. W. (2008). Acculturation and adaptation of immigrant youth. *Canadian Diversity*, 6(2), 50-53.
- Esses, V. M., Hamilton, L. K., Bennett-AbuAyyash, C., & Burstein, M. (2010). Characteristics of a Welcoming Community. Retrieved January 7, 2015 <http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Characteristics-of-a-Welcoming-Community-11.pdf>
- Gilmour, H. (2012). Social participation and the health and well-being of Canadian seniors. Retrieved February 5, 2015 <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2012004/article/11720-eng.htm>
- Government of Alberta. (2014). Alberta Labour Force Profiles 2013: Immigrants in the Labour Force 2013. Retrieved March 7, 2015 <http://work.alberta.ca/documents/labour-profile-immigrants.pdf>
- Guardian, T. (2016, August 30). The return to Fort McMurray: residents rebuild lives in city scarred by wildfire. Toronto.
- Hancock, A.-M. (2005). W.E.B. Du Bois: Intellectual Forefather of Intersectionality? *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, 7(3-4).
- Health Canada. (2010). Health Policy Research Bulletin. Retrieved March 16, 2015 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/hpr-rpms/bull/2010-health-sante-migr/index-eng.php>
- Holvino, E. (2010). Intersections: The Simultaneity of Race, Gender and Class in Organization Studies *Gender, Work and Organization*, 17(3), 248-277.
- IRCC. (2015). *Facts & Figures*. Ottawa: IRCC.
- IRCC. (2015). *Facts and Figures*. Government of Canada.
- Li, P. S. (2003). Deconstructing Canada's Discourse of Immigrant Integration. *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale*, 4(3), 315-333.
- Ng, E., & Longitudinal Health and Administrative Data Research Team. (2011) Insights into the healthy immigrant effect: Mortality by place of immigration and birthplace. Health Research Working Paper Series. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Ng, E., Wilkins, R., Gendron, F., & Berthelot, J.-M. (2005) Dynamics of immigrants' health in Canada: Evidence from the National Population Health Survey. Vol. Healthy Today, Healthy Tomorrow? Findings from the National Population Health Survey (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 82-618). Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- OECD. (2011). Measuring well-being and progress. Retrieved January 20, 2015
<http://www.oecd.org/std/Measuring%20Well-Being%20and%20Progress%20Brochure.pdf>
- OECD. (2013a). How's Life? 2013: Measuring Well-Being. Retrieved March 19, 2015, from OECD Publishing
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201392-en>

- OECD. (2013b). OECD Framework for Statistics on the Distribution of Household Income, Consumption and Wealth. Retrieved March 2, 2015, from OECD Publishing <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/302013041e.pdf>
- Ravanera, Z. R., Esses, V., & Fernando, R. (2013). Integration and "Welcome-ability" Indexes: Measures of Community Capacity to Integrate Immigrants. *Population Change and Lifecourse Strategic Knowledge Cluster Discussion Paper Series*, 1(1), Article 6. Retrieved from: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/pclc/vol1/iss1/6/>
- Reitz, J. G. (2009). Assessing Multiculturalism as a Behavioural Theory. In J. G. Reitz, R. Breton, K. K. Dion, & K. L. Dion (Eds.), *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity* (pp. 1-47).
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (2012). *Census*. Fort McMurray: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (2015). *Census*. Fort McMurray: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- Statistics Canada. (2013). National Household Survey Profile: 2011 Census. Retrieved March 16, 2015 <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/index-eng.cfm>

Newcomer Study (Newcomer Interagency Network)

Survey Questions Date: _____

Location: _____

Data Collector Name _____

INTRODUCTION & CONSENT

This survey aims to understand the challenges and needs of newcomers in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. We are particularly interested in **learning about your experiences in terms of employment, language, education, housing, health, as well as social and cultural aspects.**

Newcomer Interagency Network (NIN) in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is conducting this research. Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is funding this project. The purpose of this research is to help organizations/stakeholders develop better programs, stronger policies and strengthen the community. This survey will take 15 minutes of your time.

If you are taking this survey **face-to-face with a data collector, we will give you small gift** by way of appreciation when you complete the survey.

We will be **unable to give you a gift** if:

- 1) you are ineligible to participate
- 2) you decline to answer more than 5 questions
- 3) you withdraw from or do not complete the survey
- 4) you are government employee or a volunteer member of a board or other form of government

Please note, this is voluntary. You can withdraw from the survey at any time.

Answers you give will be **anonymous and confidential, meaning it will not be possible to link your identity with the answers you give in any way.** But we will ask you some basic questions about yourself such as your age, status in Canada, field of employment, and annual household income.

Only members of our research team will have access to the data. Data will be used for the purposes of this project alone. **Participation is voluntary.** You have the option to **refuse to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable with.** If you have any questions or concerns you can contact the Project Supervisors: **Nada Al Khaladi** : nada.alkhaladi@gmail.com; **Maria Puentes**: mariaesther26@gmail.com.

Please be advised that this survey is not linked to any site where this data is collected.

Yes, I agree to participate _____. I have provided oral/written consent to participate in this survey.

I do not agree to participate _____

If you agree to participate then please proceed. If not, thank you for your time.

_____ (Signature of participant) _____ (Date)

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION (This is for the data collectors only. Do not ask the participant)

1. Date: _____

2. Who is conducting the survey?

- Survey participant and I am doing the survey myself online
- Data collector entering for the participant

3. Data collector name (ONLY if the person is a data collector please answer question 3) _____

4. Where are you doing the survey? (ONLY if the person is a data collector please answer question 4)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Centre D'accueil et D'etablissement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YMCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Mosque |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyano College | <input type="checkbox"/> Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicultural Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Gurubwara |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Mental Health Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Public event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waypoints | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community center | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ | |

ELIGIBILITY (Say this: Before we begin we want to know if you are eligible to participate in the study)

5. Are you a resident of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)?

- Yes, lived here the entire year
- Yes, lived here at least part of the year
- No

If you answered No, then please go to the last page. Sorry you are not eligible

6. Are you 18 years of age or older?

- Yes
- No

If you answered No, then please go to the last page. Sorry you are not eligible

7. Were you born in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)?

- Yes
- No

8. Have you spent the majority (more than half) of your life in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes, then please go to the last page. Sorry you are not eligible.

9. Do you have Super visa (parent visa) or Visitor visa?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes, then please go to the last page. Sorry you are not eligible

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

10. What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) _____

11. What is your age? (based on the Municipal census)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-19 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-49 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-59 |

60-64

65 and above

Prefer not to answer

12. Were you born in Canada?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

13. If no, what country were you born in?

Canada

USA

India

China

Somalia

Sudan

Philippines

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify) _____

14. If you were not born in Canada, what is your current status in Canada? (please select all that apply)

Citizen

PR (Permanent Resident)

Temporary Permanent Resident

International Student

GAR (Government Assisted Refugee)

PSR (Privately Sponsored Refugee)

BVOR (Blended Visa Office-Referred Program)

Refugee claimant/Asylum Seeker

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify) _____

15. What is your first language?

Amharic

Arabic

Bengali

English

French

Mandarin

Somali

Spanish

Tagalog

Urdu

Gujrati

Hindi

Punjabi

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify) _____

16. How many children, 18 years of age or younger, do you currently have that are living at home with you?

0

1-2

3-4

5-7

More than 7

Prefer not to answer

17. If more than 7, please specify _____

18. What racial background do you identify with? (please select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal) | <input type="checkbox"/> South-East Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laos, Malaysian) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black (anyone who identifies as Black) | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab /West Asian (Iran, Afghanistan) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean only) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

19. If 'other', please specify _____

20. Do you consider yourself to be a 'newcomer' (self-definition)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

RESIDENCE

21. Where do you currently live?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abasand Heights | <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Townsite | <input type="checkbox"/> Janvier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beacon Hill | <input type="checkbox"/> Parsons Creek | <input type="checkbox"/> Sapræe Creek Estates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thickwood Heights | <input type="checkbox"/> Saline Creek | <input type="checkbox"/> First Nation 468 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gregoire | <input type="checkbox"/> Anzac | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eagle Ridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Conklin | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stone Creek | <input type="checkbox"/> Draper | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Millenium Gate | <input type="checkbox"/> Fort Chipewyan | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Timberlea | <input type="checkbox"/> Fort MacKay | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterways | <input type="checkbox"/> Gregoire Lake Estates | |

22. Did you live somewhere else in Canada before this?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

23. How long have you lived in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)? Please give an approximate count based on total number of months.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-6 months | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-11 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 years | |

LANGUAGE & EDUCATION

24. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No formal education | <input type="checkbox"/> University undergraduate degree (e.g., B.A., B.Sc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary School (1-6 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> University graduate degree (Master's or Ph.D.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school (7-9 years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree (e.g., Medicine, Law, Engineering) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School (10 + years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College / vocational training | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Diploma | |

25. What is your current level of English fluency?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can speak, read and write | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can only speak | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can only read and write | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can understand but not speak, read or write | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not use English | |

26. Do you go to English /French classes now?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

27. If yes then where do you attend?

- LINC (at Keyano College)
- YMCA
- Library
- Private Tutor
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) _____

28. Have you taken any professional training, courses or educational programs (for example, nursing) other than English classes since you have arrived?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

29. Have you taken any English or French language training, courses or educational programs (could include conversation groups, professional language learning) other than English/French classes since you have arrived?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

30.. What has been most helpful to you in learning English?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily interactions | <input type="checkbox"/> My sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formal classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV, reading or listening to the radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English conversation group (ie. at the library or a church) | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning on my own | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English classes specific to my profession/job | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

31. Now think about your overall experience and identify, what, if any, were your main challenges since arriving in terms of language learning and education (**please select all that apply**):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning English | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using English for daily life | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism and discrimination in language learning settings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Level of English for finding work | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information to improve language/education skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to practice English | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |

32. If 'other', please specify _____

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION

33. Have you visited any organizations to utilize services that specifically focus on newcomers (going to the welcome center at the Multicultural Association, newcomer groups at the library or The Hub)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

34. Where are you most likely to find information about community services or supports (eg. Employment, housing, language services, social cultural information, and legal services) (**select all that apply**):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome center (Multicultural Association) | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends and family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community organization (YMCA, Library, The Hub, Food Bank) | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational organization (Keyano College) | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious/faith-based organization (Church, Mosque, Gurudwara) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

35. If 'other', please specify _____

HEALTH

36. When you have general health concern where do you most likely seek help?

- Family doctor
- Nurse
- Alternative medicine
- After hours clinic
- Emergency room (hospital)
- Out of town
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) _____

37. Rate your current overall health (1 being poor and 5 being very good)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
-
- 5
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

40. What has been most helpful when you have a health problem or issue?

- Your doctor/nurse
- Emergency room
- Informal help from friends and family
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify) _____

38. What, if any, environmental challenges have you experienced since arriving in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)? **(please select all that apply)**

- Adjustment to the weather
- Adjustment to living in a remote community
- Adjustment to hours of daylight
- None
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

39. If 'other', please specify _____

41. What, if any, health challenges have you experienced since arrive in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)? **(please select all that apply)**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Struggling with previous experiences in home country | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and diet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessing a doctor | <input type="checkbox"/> Finding culturally appropriate food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessing a doctor of the preferred gender | <input type="checkbox"/> Affording quality food |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessing a doctor for my children | <input type="checkbox"/> Faced racism and discrimination accessing healthcare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting a health card | <input type="checkbox"/> Professionals with cultural practice/beliefs knowledge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding the health system | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affording healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

42. If 'other', please specify _____

FINANCIAL CONTEXT & EMPLOYMENT

43. What is your approximate household income (total income of all household members before taxes for the past year). If you have been here less than one year then you provide a broad estimate?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000-\$200,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000-\$60,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-\$90,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000-\$120,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$120,000-\$150,000 | |

44. Which best describes your financial situation? **(please select all that apply)**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am struggling to meet my needs | <input type="checkbox"/> I send money home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I meet my needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I meet my needs and am able to save money | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am dependent on social assistance, government support or private sponsor support | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am dependent on support from friends and family | |

45. If 'other', please specify _____

46. What is your current employment status?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time (30 hours a week or more) | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed, not looking for work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time (Less than 30 hours a week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple jobs adding to full-time (30 hours or more/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple jobs adding to part-time (less than 30 hours/week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker (ie. stay at home to care for children) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed or own your own business | <input type="checkbox"/> Informal income (panhandling, under-the-table/cash work) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed, looking for work | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify) _____

47. (This question is not meant for those who are unemployed, retired, homemaker, student not sure or prefer not to answer). Which statement(s) reflect(s) your current work situation? **(please select all that apply)**

Employed in a job matching education/work experience.

I am underpaid given my skills and experience.

I have more educational qualifications than my current job requires.

None of the above

I have more work experience than my current job requires.

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

48. My current job requires (if you have more than one job answer for the job you consider most important):
wat

49. People use many services/strategies to find employment. What has been most helpful? **(please select all that apply)?**

Mentorship programs

Change careers

Resume help

Networking online or face-to-face

Skills upgrade/ developed new skills attending Canadian

Internet searches

Language Training

Institute

Private sponsor support

Assessment of foreign qualifications

Skills training

None

Workplace programs

Volunteering

Not sure

Job search help/training

Prefer not to answer

Other (please specify) _____

50. What, if any, employment/financial challenges have you experienced since arriving in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)? **(please select all that apply)**

Accessing Employment

Lack of work life balance

Work schedule

Making enough money to pay expenses

Training and education

Level of English comprehension or fluency

Skills don't match the opportunities available in Canada

Foreign Qualifications don't match jobs that available

Lack of diverse opportunities of work in my community

Discrimination at the workplace or accessing employment

I don't have enough education, training or experience

Lack of information to find employment/manage finances

Childcare

Transportation

None

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

Other

51. If 'other', please specify _____

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

52. Now think about your settlement and tell us how what/who has been **most important** to help you settle/adjust to a new environment.

This is a ranking question – please tell us your top 3 choices. I will first read out all choices to you and then you can decide.

- _____ Ethno-cultural community (language, racial, ethnicity, region, country of origin)
- _____ Local community (neighbors, strangers)
- _____ Family and friends (inside or outside Canada)
- _____ Colleagues
- _____ Sponsors (for refugees)
- _____ Community organizations or groups (YMCA, Library, The Hub, Food Bank)
- _____ Welcome Center (Multicultural Association)
- _____ Religious/Faith based organizations (Church, Mosque, Gurubwara)
- _____ Educational Institutions (Keyano College)
- _____ No one
- _____ Not sure
- _____ Prefer not to answer
- _____ Other (please specify) _____

53. Do you feel a sense of belonging in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community)?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

The next set of questions ask you to consider the following:

How often do you participate in the following activities? (You can go to the activity alone, but it must involve other people while doing it).

54. Gather with family and/or friends outside the home

- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once a year
- Never
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

55. Go to religious/faith-based activities (ex: services, committee, religious text studies, choirs, etc.)

- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once a year
- Never
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

56. Participate in sports and physical activities

- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once a year
- Never
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

57. Participate in recreational activities involving other people

- At least once a day
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- At least once a year

Never

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

58. Attend educational activities involving other people (attending courses)

At least once a day

At least once a week

At least once a month

At least once a year

Never

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

59. Attend cultural activities involving other people (visiting museums)

At least once a day

At least once a week

At least once a month

At least once a year

Never

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

For the following questions think about your overall experience settling/adjusting to life in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray or rural community). What, if any, challenges did you experience in social connections since arriving? **(please select all that apply)**

60. Social Adjustment

Cultural adjustment

Having spaces for my cultural practice

Having access to my cultural food

Having space for my religious/faith-based practice

Contributing to and volunteering within the community

Participating in political life- voting

Adjustment to the city, town or community

Feeling like I belong

Lack of community support

Making friends, meeting people and social connections

Discrimination or racism

None

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

Other

61. If 'other', please specify _____

62. Transportation

Navigating the city/community- roads or routes

Understanding the transportation options or transit system

Inability to afford private transportation

None

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

Other

63. If 'other', please specify _____

64. Family

Children's schooling

Helping my children adjust

Finding childcare

Access to childcare

Affordable childcare

Quality childcare

Not sure

Prefer not to answer

Other

65. If 'other', please specify _____

66. What kinds of services would you like to see improved/added that would help support your needs? **(please select all that apply)**

- Mentorship Programs
- Bridging Programs
- Online Courses
- Upgrading courses
- Immigration Office
- Affordable English Classes
- Affordable Legal Supports
- Affordable Childcare
- Canadian Culture workshops
- Cultural events
- Social events
- Increased frequency of transportation
- Other

67. If 'other', please specify _____

68. Would you have any other comments/suggestions about needs and challenges of newcomers:

