
Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies



Annual Report

2005 – 2006

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Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

Serving Immigrants and the Communities that Welcome Them

Most of the 16,500 immigrants and refugees that Alberta welcomed in 2004 were served, and continue to be supported by the organizations represented in Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies. Today, immigrants arriving in Alberta from international points of origin, as well as from other Canadian provinces, are choosing to settle in communities across Alberta, where settlement agencies provide services to assist newcomers to adapt to their new life in Canada and to become fully integrated members of Alberta society. As a provincial forum, AAISA members collaborate to identify issues and understand the context in which immigrant-serving agencies are working, so that immigrants and all Albertans will benefit as much as possible from new people making Alberta their home.

Active since 1980 and incorporated in 1987, AAISA is an umbrella organization for 20 immigrant-serving agencies from eight communities across Alberta. AAISA works very closely with all levels of government, mainstream agencies, ethno-cultural communities, and business communities across Alberta.

With the numbers of immigrants and refugees to Alberta expected to dramatically increase in the coming years, Alberta's immigrant-serving agencies will continue to play a vital role in enabling newcomers reach their full potential and to contribute to the overall success of Alberta's communities.

2005/06 AAISA Areas of Activity

This report will highlight how the activities undertaken by AAISA in the past year have advanced the organization's goal of addressing the needs and concerns of immigrants and refugees within Alberta, through a collaborative approach among those who work directly with the immigrant community.

- Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary
- Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation
- AAISA 2005 Provincial Settlement Conference
- HOMES Database Development Project
- *Welcome to Alberta* Translations
- Communications
- Operations
- Partnerships

MISSION

Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies provides an association by and through which the members can work towards addressing the needs of immigrants, the agencies that serve them, and the larger community, which welcomes them.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

This is a very active time to be part of the immigrant sector of civil society. AAISA has operated in the midst of many significant events. The year ahead promises to continue to be a time of change and opportunity.

In the past year we have seen the Province of Alberta introduce its first policy framework on immigration and new initiatives are underway to achieve the goals of that document. A new federal government has delivered a budget with the first federal funding increases for settlement work in ten years. The immense labour market challenges in Alberta have surrounded us with implications for our work.

AAISA is recognized as a key organization in Alberta. Funding support from the Province has enabled us to keep developing our leadership in settlement practitioner training and accreditation and we are nationally recognized in this area. The first accredited people are now “on the job” in our organizations. We are frequently invited to offer input to a wide range of consultations by all orders of government. We presented an excellent provincial

conference, welcomed a new member organization, completed translations of “Welcome to Alberta” into eight languages, and taken a significant role in the beginning of a new national settlement organization. Much of the ability of AAISA to do such work is due to having a provincial coordinator. It is good to have the funding for such a position. It is even better to have a person of the skill and commitment of Jessica Garland in the position.

I have been honoured to serve for two years as chair of AAISA. Thanks to each member and associate for your patience with me over that time. I am particularly grateful for the huge commitments of time made by members of the executive committee and the Settlement Practitioners Training and Accreditation committee. This report is full of interesting information about the past year. And the commitment and energy of all of us will ensure that the year ahead is another when AAISA keeps making a positive contribution to the lives of immigrants in Alberta.

Jim Gurnett
AAISA Chair

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation

AAISA Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation continues to expand in fulfillment of AAISA's long-term commitment to facilitating the recognition of settlement and integration work as a profession.

This comprehensive training and accreditation program for service delivery staff of settlement agencies in Alberta is the only such program currently offered in Canada.

2005-06 Highlights

Training

Based on current education needs within the settlement sector and dynamic situations confronting practitioners, four AAISA training modules were selected for delivery in 2005-06 from the AAISA calendar of courses. Two of the four modules identified had not yet been offered, resulting in the expansion of AAISA curriculum.

Under the direction of the Training & Accreditation Committee, modules were developed and revised by adult education experts possessing extensive experience within the settlement sector. This process included rigorous oversight by the Committee, which is composed of senior management staff of AAISA agencies. The outcome was four high quality modules that reflected current knowledge

and best practices, and emphasized practical applicability of key concepts.

Participant evaluations for all modules were predominantly positive. Significantly, a majority of participants indicated the courses provided practical skills that would make a difference in how they perform their roles as settlement practitioners. Participant, facilitator, and Committee feedback on modules was collected and analyzed, and resulting recommendations pertaining to course content, structure, and logistics are being integrated for future delivery of training modules. Several agency Executive Directors also noted the high quality of the training provided. This year 186 people completed AAISA training modules.

2005/06 Training Modules Delivered	Dates of Delivery	
	Calgary	Edmonton
3C: Community Development Processes	Part A: September 28 – 30 Part B: October 24, 2005	Part A: September 28 – 30 Part B: October 26, 2005
2A: Professional Role and Ethics	January 9 – 10, 2006	January 12 – 13, 2006
2D: Settlement and Transition Processes	February 13 – 14, 2006	February 16 – 17, 2006
2C: Immigration Processes	March 13 – 14, 2006	March 16 – 17, 2006

Accreditation

AAISA is the only accreditation body for settlement professionals in Canada. In 2005-06, AAISA accredited ten settlement practitioners in member agencies, who are among the first in Canada to be awarded this distinction.

Candidates for accreditation received on-going support and consultation from the Training and Accreditation Committee and the Provincial Co-ordinator. Throughout the year, accreditation standards were implemented or strengthened, and the accreditation process was streamlined.

Promotional activities in support of accreditation included the distribution of application packages to all AAISA agencies and participants in AAISA training modules. A presentation providing an overview of the process was also developed for agency use.

Operations

The AAISA Training & Accreditation Committee convened throughout the year to review program progress and advise on future directions. To better reflect the program's operations and objectives, the title of this important initiative was changed from Settlement Workers Training Program to *Settlement Practitioners Training and Accreditation*. The improvement of operational procedures included establishing training registration protocols, defining clear eligibility requirements, strengthening data management and reporting procedures, clarifying accreditation standards, and enacting a Committee succession plan. These strategies will ensure that the growth of the program remains manageable as the demand for training and accreditation opportunities continues to increase.

The 2005 Provincial Settlement Conference provided an excellent forum in which to promote AAISA Training & Accreditation to the primary target audience of the program: settlement practitioners. Activities at this event included an accreditation ceremony that honoured those who had successfully completed the accreditation process, the revision and distribution of the program brochure to all conference participants, and a training module held in conjunction with the conference.

AAISA Accredited Settlement Practitioners & Mentors

Level 2 – Practitioner

**Lorinda Brinton
Eveleen Guirgis
Anna Steinberg
Jean Wang**

Level 3 – Practitioner

**Janeth Alonso
Eveleen Guirgis
Myra Mackay
Tatjana Milojevic
Tu Nguyen
Elena Oursou
Dulari Prithipaul
Bozana Sljuka
Rowena Zwicker**

Mentor

**Marichu Antonio
Diane Fisher
Surinder Uppal**

In addition, AAISA continued to work with its partners across the country to strengthen organizational capacities to provide exceptional services to Canada's growing immigrant population. A Canadian Council for Refugees motion to support a national process resulted in the National Settlement Sector: Professionalization Project. In 2005-06, AAISA Training and Accreditation Committee Chair Edna Sutherland and Member Diane Fisher were represented on the Task Force on Professionalization. Ms. Fisher, an accredited AAISA Mentor, serves as Co-Chair on this important body.

2005-06 Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation Committee

Edna Sutherland, Chair

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Shokoofeh Moussavi

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Esau Torres

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society

Surinder Uppal

Catholic Social Services

Christina Nsaliwa

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Diane Fisher

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

HOMES Database Development Project

The creation of a common databasing tool utilized by agencies in the immigration sector to produce standardized data and reports is the principal objective of this important AAISA initiative. Recognizing the value of such a resource for both agencies and their shared funders, AAISA has partnered with the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute (CORI) to work with member agencies to develop the Hull Outcomes Monitoring and Evaluation System (HOMES) for the immigrant-serving sector.

Initial activities focused on the determination of the critical data elements and recommendations for design requirements to the HOMES system. Specific recommendations were made to the developer in order to increase the ease of use and effectiveness of the HOMES system for the immigration sector. The project's pilot phase has been on-going in this reporting period, during which six AAISA member agencies have been trained and supported by the contractor in implementing the system in selected program areas.

Piloting agencies have worked with their local CORI trainer to become familiar with the system and to provide feedback on the design of the system, and required customizations to the database that will meet the needs of the agency and sector.

While progress continues to be made in the development of HOMES, collaborators have encountered challenges associated with implementing a universal system for several agencies that differ in terms of needs, current platforms, and technical capacities. While training and implementation activities require large investments in staff time, the end product is anticipated to improve efficiency in data collection and reporting.

As AAISA transitions into the training phase of the project, AAISA users will continue to provide feedback to CORI to ensure the data collection and reporting tools meet the needs of AAISA members.

AAISA 2005 Provincial Settlement Conference

In September 2005, over 240 participants convened at the Chateau Louis Hotel & Conference Centre in Edmonton, Alberta to take part in the 2005 AAISA Provincial Settlement Conference. The objective of this bi-annual conference is to provide settlement agency representatives with a forum to facilitate networking, share experiences, and to build working relationships with others closely tied to providing essential services for Alberta's immigrants.

This year's event honored Alberta's Centennial with the theme *Homesteading to High Tech: A Century of Immigration to Alberta*. Settlement staff, representatives from funding agencies, academics, and those partnered with the settlement sector gathered for two days to discuss initiatives within their own organizations and to collaborate on ways to improve the vital services offered to Alberta's immigrant community. A broad range of topics demonstrating trends and best practices in the settlement sector were addressed in the conference's twenty workshops. Topics included youth, gender, community development, seniors, health, career and employment, housing, education, and several others.

Settlement Practitioners Training sessions were offered in conjunction with the AAISA Conference. At this year's conference, nearly 60 settlement practitioners participated in *Module 3C: Community Development Processes*, which was developed specifically for Alberta settlement practitioners.

An extra day of training was provided in advance of the conference to accommodate the high level of interest in the training opportunity.

Other highlights of the event included multicultural entertainment, a federal issues forum in including representatives from three federal parties, an historical storytelling performance on the plight of immigrant women employed in a clothing manufacturing plant, and an address by Mr. Satya Das, a renowned author, journalist, and human rights advocate.

The 2007 AAISA Provincial Settlement Conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta.

Provincial Settlement Conference Planning Committee

Blythe Campbell

Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women

Igor Cesar

Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton

Annette Kreider

Catholic Social Services

Pauline Mukashema

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Dulari Prithipaul

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Theresa Saffa

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Surinder Uppal

Catholic Social Services

Jing Jing Zhao

ASSIST Community Services Centre

Jessica Garland

AAISA Provincial Coordinator

Cathy Harvey

Cana Events Inc.

Jim Gurnett

AAISA Executive Consultant

Translations of *Welcome to Alberta*

The publication *Welcome to Alberta*, produced by the Government of Alberta, provides information on a wide range of settlement issues, and is targeted specifically to immigrants who chose to settle in Alberta. This comprehensive resource tool provides essential information to new arrivals, addressing such topics as employment, education, health care, and local resources. As it is accessible on the internet, *Welcome to Alberta* also serves as an information portal to those who are seeking information specific to the province from outside Alberta.

To make this valuable resource more accessible to people arriving in Alberta with limited literacy in English, AAISA oversaw the translation of *Welcome to Alberta* into eight high-demand

languages. These include: French; Arabic; Spanish; Mandarin; Punjabi; Farsi; Dinka; and Amharic.

These eight languages were specifically chosen to complement the current language needs of those arriving in Alberta. Not only do the languages reflect the increasing diversity in population groups immigrating to Alberta, but they also target those who are most at risk of experiencing isolation from the community and services due to language barriers. The information contained in this 15,000-word publication is critical for newcomers during the settlement process, and having access to *Welcome to Alberta* in their own language will contribute to immigrants' successful transitions and integration.

BIENVENUE en Alberta

BIENVENIDO a Alberta

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The original English language document can be found on the Government of Alberta web site: <http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/welcometoalberta/home.asp>

AAISA's web site hosts the eight translations of *Welcome to Alberta*: <http://www.aaisa.ca/>

Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary

The Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary (ISCC) is a multi-stakeholder collaboration that aims to facilitate the timely and equitable integration and settlement of immigrants in Calgary. The ISCC is composed of settlement service providers, ethno-cultural groups, funding bodies, and public sector organizations.

In the past year, the ISCC's activities focused on improving understanding and communication within and outside of the immigrant-serving sector. In 2005, communication process workshops were held and resulted in identifying members' common issues and interests, as well as developing a shared understanding of the roles of each stakeholder group. In early 2006, the ISCC contracted a communication consultant to develop a joint, strategic communication plan for the ISCC. Three workshops were held with the goal of identifying key issues, key messages, understanding public policy processes and creating a vision of how the issues should be addressed. In the year ahead, the ISCC will focus on developing and implementing the communication strategy, thereby positioning the ISCC to play a significant role in the policies and practices that affect immigrants in Calgary.

In February 2006, the ISCC published a third reprint of the Services for Immigrants in Calgary brochure. The ISCC printed a total of 39,500 multilingual brochures and 10,000 bilingual brochures. As of March 31, 2006, the ISCC distributed 68% of the multilingual brochures (26,906 copies) and 65% of the bilingual

brochures (6,512 copies). The brochure has been widely distributed to points of contact accessed by immigrants. For example, the brochure is available at major airports across Canada and at stands located in all Calgary Co-ops, Safeways, Sobeys, recreational centres, pools, hospitals and libraries in Calgary. The brochure has also been made available to social service organizations, public sector, ethno-cultural, and faith organizations in Calgary. To increase awareness about the brochure, a public launch was held on February 24, 2006 in conjunction with a citizenship ceremony at the Calgary Public Library. The launch attracted 300 individuals including new Canadian citizens and representatives from immigrant-serving/social service/public sector organizations and the media. The success of the brochure is made possible with grants from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, City of Calgary, and United Way of Calgary and Area.

AAISA supports the work of the ISCC by providing administrative resources. These resources include a staff person (Implementation Coordinator) to support the work of the Council, office space, and information technology. AAISA is also the fiscal agent for the Council and administers all funds for the ISCC.

2005 Funding (January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005)

- \$27,777 - The City of Calgary, Family and Community Support Services
- \$39,590 - United Way of Calgary and Area

2006 Funding (January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006)

- \$36,524 – The City of Calgary, Family and Community Support Services
- \$37,987 – United Way of Calgary and Area
- \$20,000 – Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- \$17,000 – Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Reports/Publications

- Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, *Progress Report and Future Directions*, 2005
- Services for Immigrants in Calgary Brochure (Multilingual Version and Bilingual Version)

ISCC 2005-2006 Membership

The ISCC is an association of organizations whose mission relates to the priorities of the Council. Organizations are invited to become members of the Council based on their commitment to settlement/integration of immigrants, their ability to effect change, and/or their ability to bring different perspectives or expertise to the table.

Amal Umar, ISCC Co-Chair

Canadian Heritage

Hadassah Ksienski, ISCC Co-Chair

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society

Yared Belayneh and Barbara Schleifer

United Way of Calgary and Area

Percy Cummins

Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Jason Luan and Elizabeth Schnitzler

City of Calgary, FCSS

Melanie Holmgren and Monique Watson

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Krista Poole

Calgary Learns

Dale Taylor

Centre for Newcomers

Harry Yee

Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth

Fariborz Birjandian

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

Edna Sutherland

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Salim Sindhu

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society

Anne-Marie Pham

Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary

Anoush Newman

Calgary Multicultural Centre

Anna Steinberg

Jewish Family Service Calgary

Julie Plourde

Centre d'accueil pour les nouveaux arrivants francophones

Carolyn Wilkinson

Calgary Board of Education

Maria Steinborn

Calgary Catholic School District

Beverly Fournier

Calgary and Area Child and Family Services

Delaine Johnson

Calgary Health Region

ISCC Staff: Rosalind Kang, ISCC Implementation Coordinator

Communications

Directory of Services for Immigrants in Alberta

Last published in 2000, the Directory of Services for Immigrants in Alberta is an easy-to-use and comprehensive referral guide for service providers who are seeking information on services available to immigrants in Alberta. Work began this past year on a significantly revised and expanded edition of the Directory.

This resource includes up-to-date immigrant-targeted programming that is available from immigrant-serving agencies throughout Alberta.

AAISA Web Site: www.aaisa.ca

An essential communications tool for a local and global audience, AAISA's web site serves both the internal community of AAISA members and external stakeholders. Representatives of funding agencies, ethno-cultural communities, mainstream organizations from within and outside the settlement field, and immigrants refer to AAISA's web site.

Over the past year www.aaisa.ca has been continually maintained and up-dated by a volunteer web master. To increase awareness of the web site, the address is included on all of AAISA's hard copy and electronic

The directory contains specific information on a full spectrum of services, including those related to employment, children and youth, health, family, community outreach, language training, legal assistance, and many others.

When published, printed copies of the Directory will be obtainable from AAISA or an electronic version will be accessible at www.aaisa.ca

communications, and is often suggested as a resource for people seeking information on AAISA and Alberta's settlement community.

The web site generates requests for information from people in other provinces and countries. They are able to direct inquiries to AAISA or to specific member agencies spread across the province, demonstrating the web site as a useful information portal to those abroad.

The AAISA web site has registered over 8,600 visitors to date.

Operations

AAISA operations benefited significantly this year from funding that enabled full-time staff support. With the exception of the Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary, which is separately staffed, all AAISA operations were coordinated from a central office. Staffing and centrally housing AAISA activities has benefited AAISA operations through improved consistency and

efficiency. The AAISA staff person coordinates project activity, facilitates and implements the work of AAISA Committees, and manages administrative functions of the non-profit organization. Strengthened organizational capacity contributes to AAISA's overall objective to act as a provincial leader within settlement the community.

Partnerships

CISSA-ACSEI

Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance- Alliance Canadienne du Secteur d'Établissement des Immigrants (CISSA-ACSEI) was created in 2005 in response to the growing need for a distinct national voice to articulate and promote the issues and challenges of Canada's settlement community. The national body's mission is to represent the issues and expertise of the immigrant settlement sector to advance public policies and programs that enhance the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Canada.

New Horizons for Seniors Program

An initiative of Social Development Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program provides funding for community-based projects across Canada. Projects encourage seniors to continue to play an important role in their community by:

- helping those in need;
- providing leadership; and
- sharing their knowledge and skills with others.

To ensure that the specific contributions of immigrant seniors are recognized within the community development projects, Jim Gurnett

Alberta Local Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI)

The goals of the CVI are to encourage Canadians to volunteer; improve the capacity of organizations to involve volunteers; and enhance the experience of volunteers. The Alberta Local Network of the CVI has been hosted by Volunteer Alberta since 2003.

In 2005 – 06, resource activities included an on-line photo gallery for use by non-profit organizations to assist with volunteer recruitment; an on-line insurance toolkit; silicone bracelets for volunteer recognition; and Basics of Risk Management for Volunteer programs.

AAISA contributes two representatives to the 18-member body, whose membership consists of representatives of provincial, regional, and national umbrella associations. Jim Gurnett, AAISA Chair, serves on CISSA-ACSEI's inaugural Executive Committee as Vice Chair. Fariborz Birjandian, AAISA's second representative, is a member of CISSA-ACSEI's Infrastructure Committee.

For more information, please visit the website at www.cissa-acsei.ca

has represented AAISA on the New Horizons for Seniors Regional Review Committee. Christina Nsaliwa has been the alternate. In 2005, twenty four Alberta seniors projects received a total of \$398,716 in federal funding through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Further information can be obtained from Social Development Canada:
<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/isp/horizons/process.shtml>

Capacity building initiatives included a Fall round table focussing on sustainability and adaptability of the voluntary sector in Alberta; and professional development activities in support of volunteer centres. Seven projects have been funded in Alberta through Knowledge Development Centre and Community Support Centres (CSC).

Funding for the CVI ends June 2007 and current reviews and consultations will inform the renewal process. For more information: www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca

AAISA MEMBER AGENCIES, DIRECTORS & STAFF

AAISA Members & Directors

Edmonton

ASSIST Community Services Centre
Jeff Huang

Catholic Social Services
Alice Colak

Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton
Georges Bahaya

Changing Together: A Centre for Immigrant
Women
Josephine Pallard

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Christina Nsaliwa

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Jim Gurnett

Indo Canadian Women's Association
Miriam Thomas

Calgary

Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
Harry Yee

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
Fariborz Birjandian

Calgary Immigrant Aid Society
Hadassah Ksienski

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society
Salim Sindhu

Centre for Newcomers
Dale Taylor

Jewish Family Service Calgary
Bev Sheckter

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
Edna Sutherland

Brooks

Global Friendship Immigration Center
Doreen Medway

Lethbridge

Lethbridge Family Services – Immigrant
Services
Sarah Amies

Fort McMurray

YMCA of Wood Buffalo – Immigrant
Settlement Office
Helen Duncan

Grande Prairie

Immigrant Settlement Services
Lena Bengtsson

Medicine Hat

SAAMIS Immigration Services Association
Linda Gale

Red Deer

Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.)
Committee
Veena Chandra

Executive Committee

Chair

Jim Gurnett
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel: 780.424.7709
E-mail: jgurnett@emcn.ab.ca

Vice-Chair

Georges Bahaya
Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel : 780.669.6004
E-mail: georgesbahaya@acfaedmonton.ab.ca

Treasurer

Dale Taylor
Centre for Newcomers
Calgary, Alberta
Tel: 403.569.3325
E-mail: d.taylor@centrefornewcomers.ca

Secretary

Sarah Amies
Lethbridge Family Services – Immigrant
Services
Lethbridge, Alberta
Tel: 403.320.1589
E-mail: samies@theboss.net

Director-at-Large

Linda Gale
SAAMIS Immigration Services Association
Medicine Hat, Alberta
Tel: 403.504.1188
E-mail: sis@telusplanet.net

Staff

AAISA Provincial Coordinator

Jessica Garland
Tel: 403.290.5758
E-mail: contact@aaisa.ca

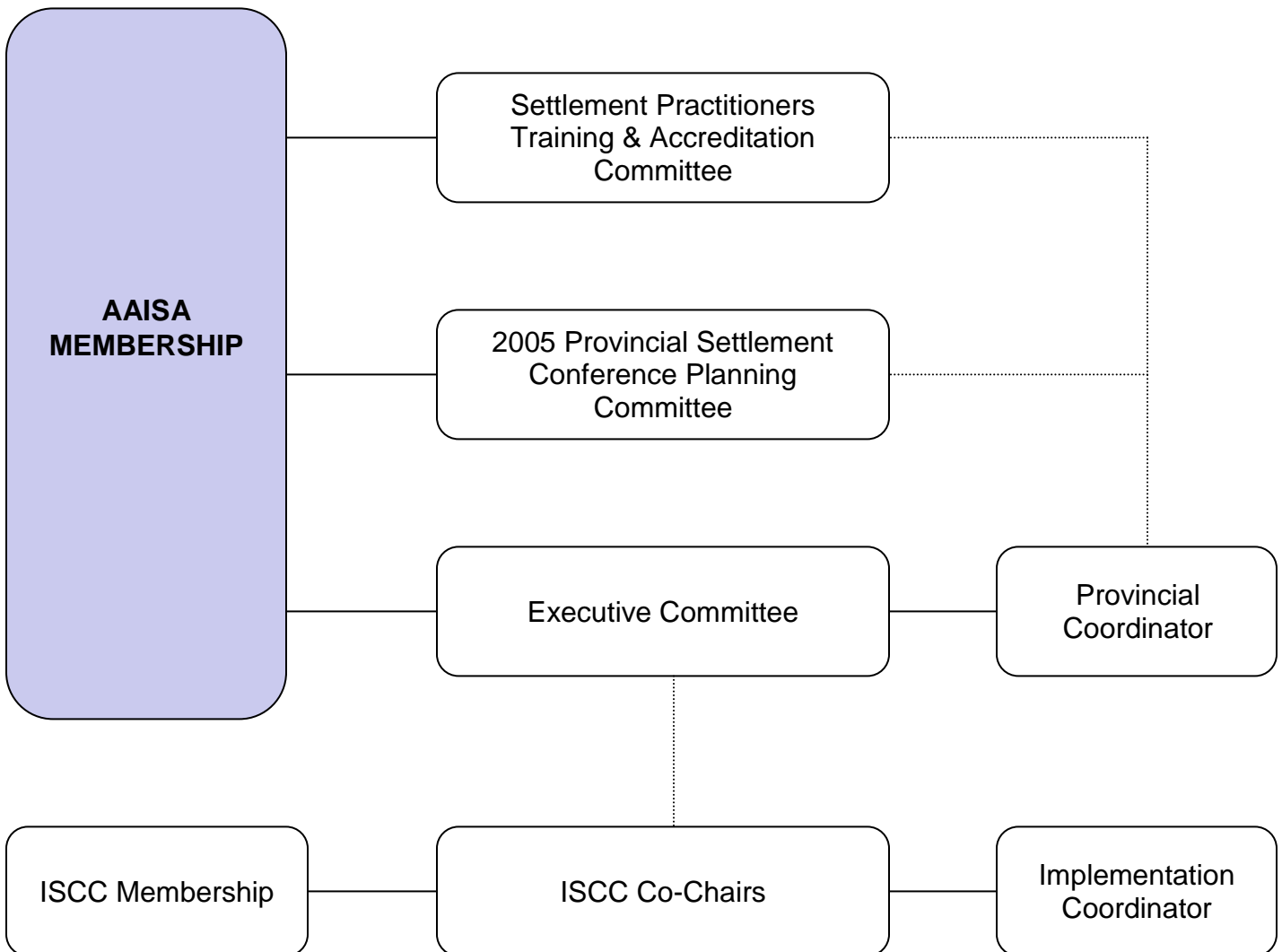
Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary Implementation Coordinator

Rosalind Kang
Tel: 403.263.1881
E-mail: iscc@aaisa.ca

AAISA Welcomes New Member

In 2005, AAISA welcomed its newest member: **Global Friendship Immigration Center**. Located in Brooks, GFIC is the only settlement agency within the southern Alberta community, which is host to 3500 immigrants and refugees. GFIC works closely with the newcomers and community-at-large to create an environment where immigrants and refugees can succeed. Not only is GFIC's unique perspective an asset to AAISA discussions and initiatives, but since becoming an AAISA member, GFIC settlement staff have participated in AAISA Settlement Practitioner Training opportunities. The addition of GFIC strengthens AAISA's ability to achieve its vision of bettering the lives of immigrants and refugees within Alberta.

AAISA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



The Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary (ISCC), through the Co-Chairs, contracts with AAISA to provide a staff person, office space, and information technology.

Summary of AAISA Projects

- Settlement Practitioners Training & Accreditation
- 2005 Provincial Settlement Conference
- HOMES Database Development Project
- Translations of *Welcome to Alberta*
- Communications: Directory of Services to Immigrants and AAISA website

AAISA PARTNERS

AAISA programs are made possible through funding provided by:

Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Government of Alberta

Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Government of Canada

Family and Community Support Services, City of Calgary

United Way of Calgary and Area