Citizenship and Immigration Canada | Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

Live in Canada

Settlement Information Renewal Exercise (SIRE): A New Integrated Approach by CIC

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Canada

Introduction

"Information is a source of learning. But unless it is organized, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision making, it is a burden, not a benefit."

William Pollard

"Information Provision is a key component of social inclusion. The ways in which newcomers and immigrant communities locate and access content in forms that are understandable and usable to them is essential to their integration in society."

Caidi and Allard, 2005: p314

OVERVIEW

- Background to the Settlement Information Renewal Exercise
- Summary of approach and main steps
- Conceptual challenges
- Future directions

BACKGROUND

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) provides newcomers with ***practical settlement information*** on a wide range of topics
- CIC info covers ***needs expressed by newcomers*** and ***GOC messaging***
- ***Target audience:*** all new permanent residents
  - Federal information complements more localized information provided by provinces/territories, municipalities and immigrant-serving organizations

BACKGROUND

- ***Settlement Information Renewal Exercise*** (SIRE): project to renew the settlement info CIC provides to newcomers
- Goals:
  - To generate a ***dynamic repository*** of new settlement info for use in CIC information products and for sharing with partners
  - To optimize the information in terms of its ***clarity, relevance and usefulness to newcomers***
  - *To **refer** newcomers to* sources of further information and settlement support services
  - To ***align*** the new content with information for newcomers offered by other federal departments

APPROACH AND KEY STEPS

Necessity to develop an ***approach*** to information renewal based on ***evidence*** and ***consultations***

i. ***Analysis of surveys and research*** on newcomer information needs

ii. ***Expert meeting*** on newcomer information needs

iii. ***Consultations*** with government stakeholders (federal & provincial)

iv. ***Development of information architecture & writing of new content***

MAIN TOPICS

1. Checklists: Important things to do before and after arriving in Canada
2. Canada: A Brief Overview
3. Sources of Settlement Information
4. Rights and Freedoms in Canada
5. Canadian Law and Justice
6. Important Documents
7. Improving English or French
8. Employment and Income
9. Education
10. Housing
11. Healthcare
12. Money and Finances
13. Transportation
14. Communications and Media
15. Community Connections
16. Becoming a Canadian Citizen

*Sections are 2-8 pages in length

APPROACH AND KEY STEPS

v. ***Plain language editing*** of the draft content
   - Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
   - Canadian Language Benchmark 5

vi. ***Newcomer focus group consultations*** to obtain feedback & input on the draft information
   - Diverse sample of 76 newcomers consulted over 5 sessions held in different cities across Canada
   - Feedback solicited on: clarity, relevance, selection of topics, organization of material, level of detail, reading level, and usefulness of referrals.

CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

1. ***Building an evidence base*** on newcomer information needs

- Most surveys & research provide ***limited basis for developing settlement info*** with broad relevance
- Need to identify ***cross-cutting themes***
- ***Further research***:
  - How can information provision help overcome settlement barriers in particular domains?

CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

2. ***Choosing an organizing principle***. Options:
   a) Organization according to the needs of different ***segments*** of newcomer population
   b) Organization according to info needed at different settlement ***stages***
   c) Organization by information ***topic***

- ***Option (c) chosen*** because a clear, well-organized topical organization ***affords newcomers the agency*** to choose what information is most important to them throughout their ***personal settlement continuum.***

3. *Level of detail*

- Too much detail overwhelming, too little leads creates confusion and requires searching out further information
- Decision: provide ***comprehensive intro*** to most topics – enough to ***enable decisions*** and ***inform action*** items

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The new info will be used selectively to ***inform the content of settlement information products and orientation services***
  - Whenever it is used, the information will be ***adapted or complemented*** in light of the aims and target audience of the product or service in question
- Continual improvement – content must be ***responsive to changing needs and priorities*** in information provision
  - Further stakeholder consultations
  - Continue developing evidence base
- Incorporating ***settlement stories*** to illustrate newcomer experiences and the importance of key information

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