

# SHARING SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PRACTICES THAT WORK CULTURAL BROKERAGE PROGRAM

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society  
Calgary, AB

## **Area of Practice:**

Supports for Youth and Addressing Intergenerational Issues

## **Video:**

<https://youtu.be/BBTEY6Q578w>

A Pathways to  
Prosperity Project

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**PATHWAYS TO  
PROSPERITY**  
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



**VOIES VERS LA  
PROSPÉRITÉ**  
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

## **BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPETUS FOR THE PROGRAM**

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Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization based in Calgary, AB. Founded in 1981, it provides settlement and integration services to immigrants and refugees in Calgary and surrounding areas. The Family and Children's Services Division of CCIS has specific expertise in facilitating the integration of families and children into the community, enhancing the provision of services to newcomers in the community, and promoting the healthy development of children using a holistic strengths-based approach.

The Cultural Brokerage Program was developed at the request of the Government of Alberta's Children's Services (Children's Services) in 2014. Children's Services had completed a shift in practice in their work with Indigenous populations and were now reviewing their diversity portfolio. They recognized that they needed to do a better job of supporting newcomer families in care. They also recognized that Children's Services staff did not have the specialized knowledge and community connections needed to ensure that resettlement-related risk factors were adequately addressed for newcomer families. There was a need for more culturally responsive interactions with culturally diverse families.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM**

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**Name:**

Cultural Brokerage Program

**Description:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program supports newcomer families involved with Children's Services. Children's Services is responsible for ensuring that children in the Calgary region are safe as they grow and develop, intervening to protect children when there is concern for their safety. The purpose of the Cultural Brokerage Program is two-fold: to support newcomer families in understanding how the system works, and to support the system in understanding the resettlement challenges and barriers faced by newcomer families in Canada. Cultural brokers offer culturally responsive support by working alongside caseworkers to interpret cultural issues and deliver culturally relevant services; build bridges by facilitating cross-cultural communication between caseworkers, service providers, and clients; and support successful integration by raising awareness of supportive resources in the community. Through the Cultural Brokerage Program, CCIS provides direct supports, services and referrals to newcomer families involved with Children's Services, ensuring that newcomer children are safe and families are able to flourish in Canada.

**Goal(s):**

The goals of the Cultural Brokerage Program are: to support to families who are engaged with child protective services; to engage ethnocultural communities in supporting families through information and education on the role of Children's Services; and to create a more culturally responsive child protection system.

**Target Client Group(s):**

Newcomer families who are engaged or potentially engaged with child protective services, as well as community partners who serve these families.

**Delivery Partner(s):**

The Cultural Brokerage Program was co-created and is co-delivered with Children's Services. Other delivery partners include referral service providers addressing family violence, parenting, counseling, police and justice, basic needs, housing, faith groups, and other relevant organizations.

**Human Resource(s):**

The Cultural Brokerage Program has a team of 12 staff. The Program Coordinator, Community Diversity Outreach Advisor, and Family Violence Broker work out of the CCIS office, while Cultural Brokers are co-located in Children's Services offices in neighbourhoods with high immigrant populations. Cultural Brokers need to be specialists in resettlement and child services.

**Funding:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program is funded by Children's Services. Some additional resources are provided by the Calgary Foundation for enhancements in the area of family violence.

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**KEY FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BEING A PROMISING PRACTICE**

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**Effective:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program is a true partnership between CCIS and Children's Services. There is shared responsibility, mutual trust, open communication, and respect between these partners. The program also uses a shared staffing model; that is, staff are part of both the CCIS and Children's Services teams.

**Efficient:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program has clearly defined roles, boundaries, and scope of service, thus reducing inefficiencies. This is especially important as the program is embedded within the child protection system.

**Relevant:**

The resettlement process is stressful and complex, and can lead to disturbed functioning, family conflict, and other family challenges. This understanding is built into the Cultural Brokerage Program; when an intervention takes place, the root cause is examined and addressed. This has resulted in better outcomes for newcomer families involved with Children's Services, including fewer apprehensions.

**Sustainable:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program has reputation capital; that is, much effort has been invested into building mutually beneficial and respectful relationships between CCIS, Children's Services, and other delivery partners and funders.

**Transferable:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program could be replicated in other communities across Canada. It would need to be delivered by organizations with resettlement expertise, such as immigrant serving organizations, in partnership with child protection services. The model could also be replicated for other populations of immigrants (e.g., disabilities, LGBTQ+) where a bridge or broker is needed to assist in navigating one or more systems.

**Innovative and Forward Thinking:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program uses an innovative partnership model. The program was co-designed and co-developed by CCIS and Children's Services. The organizations share staff, data, accountability, and other resources.

**Differs in Definable Ways from Other Similar Practices:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program is embedded within Children's Services and the child protection system; cultural brokers are involved from the time Children's Services staff are in contact with the newcomer family until after the Children's Services file is closed. It is also focused on the client *and* the system, allowing for more flexibility and opportunities to effect systemic change.

**High Client Uptake:**

The Cultural Brokerage Program does not need to attract or draw in clients; it serves all newcomer families involved with Children's Services.

**High Client Retention:**

The ultimate goal is *not* to retain clients. Most clients do not come back; staff carefully review any cases that are re-opened.

**Strong Evidence of Successful Outcomes:**

Since its inception, the Cultural Brokerage Program has been evaluated on an ongoing basis by an external credentialed evaluator. The data have shown that the program is creating positive outcomes for newcomer families. For example, based on the 2017/18 exit survey completed by clients, 99% of respondents felt they had benefited from the Cultural Brokerage Program; 99% of respondents felt that they had learned or somewhat learned about resources that they could access in the community; 99% of respondents felt or somewhat felt that they could get what they needed for themselves and their family because of involvement with the program; and 98% of respondents felt more comfortable or somewhat more comfortable with government systems in Canada after having worked with a Cultural Broker. The strong data recently led to receiving ministerial consent for a Family Violence Specialist for the Cultural Brokerage Program.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STRATEGY**

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Initial funding for the Cultural Brokerage Program included capacity for evaluation. In 2014, a program logic model and data collection matrix were developed at the same time as the program itself. Both were developed using external evaluation expertise and internal stakeholder voices to articulate the social change that should be created by the program. The logic model was reviewed with Children's Services and Cultural Brokerage Program staff in June 2016 and updated in 2017 and 2018 to reflect emerging program outcomes and learnings.

The 2018 Cultural Brokerage Program evaluation was conducted using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research techniques to gather information on outputs and outcomes, including records of client demographic information, records of program activities (e.g., number of contacts, number of referrals, community development events), client rated outcomes exit survey, interviews with clients (families), and interviews with Children's Services staff. Information is also gathered by Cultural Brokers on an ongoing basis, which is housed and reported using a customized database.

Strong data and evaluation components are built into the whole Cultural Brokerage Program. All decisions are evidence-based and practice-informed.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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### **CCIS**

<https://www.ccisab.ca>

### **CCIS Cultural Brokerage Program**

<https://www.ccisab.ca/families/cultural-brokerage-program.html>

### **CCIS Family Violence Specialist and Apartment 1310 Developmental Evaluation Report**

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e8067dd2b857a31e18826c/t/5c51cd1a1ae6cf3f7b84733f/1548864795990/CCIS+Family+Violence+Specialist+and+Apartment+1310+Developmental+Evaluation+Report+01-14-2019.pdf>

### **The CCIS Cultural Brokerage Program: Creating Positive Outcomes Over Three Years**

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e8067dd2b857a31e18826c/t/5a8c877df9619a789cce2af4/1519159239147/Cultural+Brokerage+Program+Evaluation+over+3+years+01-22-2018+Revised.pdf>