

Pandemic Response Survey Results

OCASI Agency Management¹

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Executive Summary

This technical report documents the responses to a survey of managers from member agencies of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) conducted between November 26 and December 23, 2021. A separate survey of frontline workers has its own report. The survey was undertaken in collaboration with OCASI by the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities / Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain (BMRC-IRMU), a SSHRC-funded partnership. A *Settlement Services Working Group* of community-based and academic members from BMRC-IRMU helped to guide the research. The survey instrument was approved by the Human Participants Review Committee at York University. From the perspective of managers from OCASI member agencies, the survey investigates the impacts of COVID-19 on agency activities and other dimensions of agency operations during the twelve-month period following the pandemic's first wave. Many questions parallel questions from a survey conducted by OCASI that focused on the first wave of the pandemic.

The web-based survey was sent to all OCASI member agencies with a request that one senior member of management complete it. The majority of surveys were completed by the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. Available in English and French, with Francophone agencies receiving the French version, we only report the English responses that make up the vast majority of completed surveys. The number of completed responses in English varied from question to question with a maximum of 49. The response rate is satisfactory, especially given the challenges of conducting surveys during a pandemic.

The report is descriptive, presenting the frequencies of responses for each question and a brief summary of the main responses for each question. The questions focus on four topics:

- 1) Demographics / Organization Characteristics (position of the respondent; revenues of agency; regional location of agency).

- 2) Client services (types of services offered; client groups served; changes in service levels; changes in location and number of clients served).
- 3) Pandemic impacts on the organization over past 12 months (shifts in planning, priorities programming, revenue and staff; communications and information confidentiality; organizational culture; staff management relations; collaborations).
- 4) Looking to the future (building organizational capacity; performance metrics; funding changes and post-pandemic government funding expectations; competition for clients).

The survey provides insights into the experience and reflections of managers in Ontario settlement agencies beyond the first wave of the pandemic. Gaining insight into the agencies' experiences is critical to agencies themselves, and policymakers at all levels of government. The assessment of the health and capacities of the sector's agencies is invaluable. Overall, the data reveal highly resilient settlement agencies that have adapted continuously to serve migrants despite the stress of a global pandemic. The data will be analysed in detail in subsequent reports.