



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 – 2027

## Vision

**Empower immigrant women.  
Enrich Canadian society.**

## Mission

**National leader in transitioning immigrant  
women to success in Canada.**

## Values

<b>Equity</b>	<i>Fair access to customized resources and opportunities.</i>
<b>Excellence</b>	<i>An agile and proactive leader in every aspect of our work.</i>
<b>Collaboration</b>	<i>Working with and supporting others improves impact.</i>
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	<i>Advocate of immigrant women's success and committed to doing the right thing.</i>
<b>Empowerment</b>	<i>Uplift our clients, colleagues, and partners through compassion and empathy.</i>

## CIWA's Story

Established in 1982, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association ("CIWA") is a **culturally diverse settlement agency** that recognizes, responds to, and focuses on the unique concerns and needs of immigrant and refugee women, girls, and their families. CIWA's uniqueness is based on its **gender specific mandate**.

A provincial and national leader in **outcome-based gender-specific settlement services**, CIWA offers programs and services using a holistic approach to support clients in the following areas: settlement and integration; literacy and language training; employment support and bridging programs; family violence; parenting; individual counselling; in-home support; civic engagement; health; housing; and community development. All clients have access to childcare and first language support during group sessions and individual appointments.

Currently CIWA offers over 60 programs and services. Our annual budget is over \$15 million. Our level of organizational capacity enables us to serve thousands of new clients and provide livelihood for over 200 CIWA staff (over half of which are former clients/volunteers) with a senior leadership team comprised of 10 individuals. CIWA's Board consists of a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 15 Directors, at least two thirds of which are required to be immigrants to Canada.

Programs and services are offered in four core areas:

- **Settlement and Integration Services** provide various forms of support and assistance to help clients meet their needs and requirements for their adaptation into Canada. Our programs provide immigrant women with access to information and connection to community resources, volunteer opportunities, legal services, tax service, financial literacy training and information, and community engagement groups.
- **Language Training and Childcare Services** provide language and literacy classes to clients in order to help them achieve proficiency in English at any level. Childcare is provided for our students' children.
- **Employment Services** offers a suite of bridge to work programs serving newcomers with low-skills, mid-skills as well as professionals. These programs prepare immigrant women to secure employment in: childcare, retail, food service (fast food and cook positions), security, customer service, administration, accounting, interpretation and translation, and much more. Participants build occupational skills, essential skills, and learn about Canadian workplace culture and the labour market. Participants develop job search and networking skills.
- **Family Services** provide support for parents and families adjusting to a new culture and life in a new country. Immigrant parents, youth and seniors have access to parenting related information and support, afterschool-based programming, leadership opportunities and individual counselling support.

Through its vast suite of services and programs, CIWA will play a key role in our country's economic recovery through its mission of being a "**national leader in transitioning immigrant women to success in Canada**" with the vision to "**Empower immigrant women. Enrich Canadian society**".

## CIWA's Journey

Our transition to this new Strategic Plan will shape the direction for our future. We are embarking on the start of this new strategic plan in 2022, the year that marks the **40th anniversary of CIWA**. Over the decades, CIWA has undergone major growth and expansion, increasing programs and services exponentially to address the growing number of immigrants seeking settlement support.

The previous 5-year strategic period resulted in many unique accomplishments that contributed to the growth and recognition of CIWA as the biggest settlement agency in Canada focused on gender-based supports. Some of the most notable accomplishments were:

- **Economic Integration of Immigrant Women**  
CIWA provided employment support to 7,500 immigrant women of which an average of 75% surveyed transitioned to employment. Employment needs of immigrant women were supported through partnerships with hundreds of business partners, customized employment training programs for immigrant with different levels of skills and educational and professional backgrounds, skills development training for youth and innovative projects that responded to pandemic circumstances, changing labour market and growth of the gig economy.
- **Equitable Access to Services**  
CIWA focused on reducing barriers to accessing services for immigrant women by providing clients with access to childcare, first language and transportation supports, delivering services in the community and providing access to all immigrant women regardless of their immigration status. As a result, CIWA provided support to 5,000 immigrant women ineligible for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada services through fundraising initiatives, delivered programs and services in 130 community locations and provided services in over 65 languages.
- **Basic Needs Support**  
Nearly 12,000 immigrant women received settlement and integration supports to address their basic settlement needs. During the pandemic, the settlement team enhanced their scope of services to address the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant women by providing curbside deliveries of care packages, basic essentials, groceries, gift cards, and diapers. A total of over \$1 million in in-kind donations were distributed to support clients' settlement and integration in the community.
- **Gender Based Violence Prevention and Intervention**  
Gender based violence against immigrant women continues to grow in Calgary. Since 2017, over 3,000 clients accessed services to address gender-based violence issues. In the last 5 years we offered equitable counselling, case management, health relationships education, gender-violence prevention education for immigrant youth, counselling for secondary victims of violence as well as emergency housing support. A total of 125 immigrant families received emergency housing support through CIWA's Find Me a Home initiative which is aimed at preventing homelessness among immigrant women fleeing domestic violence and families at risk of eviction. In an effort to fully support immigrant women, CIWA engaged all family members affected by gender-based violence. A total of 430 immigrant men and 412 children received supports in addressing gender-based violence issues.
- **Supports for Clients with Disabilities**  
CIWA supported immigrant women and families experiencing physical and cognitive disabilities through learning support services for struggling learners, cross cultural parenting programs for immigrant families with children with disabilities and LINC classes for learners with special needs. During the previous 5-year strategic period, CIWA provided learning support services for 208 learners enrolled in CIWA's language training classes. Additionally, CIWA expanded LINC services to provide LINC classes for learners with special needs. A total of 84 clients with disabilities also received support through other CIWA programs.

- **Community Giving**

CIWA clients and staff focused their efforts on giving back to the community by sharing knowledge and skills with local businesses through workplace experience, interpretation and translation services, volunteering support, resource and knowledge sharing and mentoring, which valued at \$7.7 million. This includes 424,000 hours CIWA clients and volunteers contributed to local employers through job placements, as well as 1,000 hours CIWA of mentoring and sharing best practices with services providers.

All the above-mentioned examples of innovation and impact were achieved through our commitment to contributing not only to client outcomes, but to community building, inclusion and appreciation of diversity through:

- Partnerships with over 200 community partners
- Collaborations with over 400 business partners on 1,800 initiatives to support the labour market participation of immigrant women
- Participation in over 200 consultations and projects with community members, service providers, government officials, researchers, university students, etc., to advocate for immigrant women and raise awareness of the issues and challenges immigrant women face
- Engagement on international, national, provincial and municipal initiatives to impact policy towards gender equality and equity

## CIWA's Key Achievements

CIWA has experienced significant growth over the last 5 years as well as achieved several key accomplishments since the last strategic plan update, including:

- Key award-winning leader in the sector
- Innovative response to COVID, including curbside and contactless services, virtual services, outdoor services, hybrid services
- Outcomes Measurement & Impact
- Technological capacity, including, agency servers, case management system, well-equipped classrooms)
- National leader in employment outcomes
- Focus on Social Return On Investment (SROI) for clients
- Effective and collaborative response to domestic violence
- Expanded funding during budget cutbacks
- 10% of clients served in 2016/17 accessed services in 2021/22
- Considerable growth since 2017 as outlined in the table below

Fiscal Year	Operating Budget (\$ millions)
2016-2017	11.5
2017-2018	13.4
2018-2019	14.4
2019-2020	14.6
2020-2021	14.3
2021-2022	15.6

## CIWA's Approach to Strategic Planning

CIWA invested considerable time in visioning and developing a 5-year Strategic Plan for April 2022 to March 2027, which was approved by the Board of Directors in January 2022. CIWA's strategic plan sets our intention, articulates our mission, vision and values, builds on our key success factors, and sets priorities and goals to be achieved in the future.

CIWA has created a culture of adherence to the Strategic Plan in all aspects of our work: governance and operations. Annual goals and objectives for the Board, CEO, Management and all staff are aligned to the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is supported by a comprehensive Business Plan, developed by Operations.

CIWA's Outcome Measurement System for all programs flows into the priorities of the Strategic Plan, so that all the work we do can be measured in line with strategic outcomes and community impact. Management reports progress on the Business Plan to the Board of Directors on a regular basis and CIWA's Strategic Plan is reviewed each year at the annual Board retreat to ensure it is current and relevant.

The strategic planning process to develop the 5-year Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 was iterative and included many engagements and sessions held with various stakeholders, including partners, funders, board members, clients, and staff, over several months to gain input, stress test key concepts and refresh as required. The process included an assessment of the environment in which CIWA is operating, the organization's key strengths, weaknesses, and distinctive attributes, CIWA's mandate and unique position within the immigrant-serving sector, client needs, and a refreshment of its strategic framework (i.e., values, vision, mission, strategic priorities and goals).

CIWA thank our funders, stakeholders, community and corporate partners, volunteers, clients, staff, donors and supporters for helping us through the process, giving us advice and recommendations, ideas and suggestions in developing this strategic plan.

## CIWA's Future 2022-2027

The next five years we strive to build off of the strong foundation CIWA has built over the last 40 years, and increase our breadth, by reaching out nationally to support immigrant women across Canada. We will strengthen our capacity and our revenue streams to ensure we can support that important work.

Three strategic priorities were identified for focused action over the next 5 years:

### Strategic Priorities



## CIWA's Strategic Implementation Plan

Key goals and implementation initiatives have been identified to advance each Strategic Priority.

### Strategic Priority 1: Capacity Building *Elevate CIWA's capacity to grow and expand*

- 1.1. Acquire and maintain professional accreditation.
- 1.2. Optimize organization-wide culture to innovate, measure, manage our impact through technology resources and dynamic dashboards.
- 1.3. Enhance holistic approach to client services through a spectrum of supports aligned with the Social Determinants of Health.
- 1.4. Attract, build, and retain a strong leadership team aligned with CIWA's vision and values.

### Strategic Priority 2: Diversify Revenue *Effectively diversify the organization's revenue to deliver innovative programs*

- 2.1. Explore strategic options for developing innovative hub(s) for social connections, services, and resources that generate diversified revenue.
- 2.2. Build brand awareness to reach new markets conducive to revenue diversification.
- 2.3. Increase alternative revenue models.
- 2.4. Engage in partnerships with other community agencies to enhance service delivery, attract referrals and contribute to sustainability.

### Strategic Priority 3: National Visibility *Expand the reach of CIWA's services to immigrant women across Canada*

- 3.1. Collaborate and convene to build national networks of agencies to strengthen their capacity to serve immigrant women.
- 3.2. Expand client services to be accessible virtually across Canada.
- 3.3. Build national awareness and visibility of CIWA's brand.
- 3.4. Understand evolving client segments and their unique needs, and proactively serve them well.
- 3.5. Collaborate with a network of global leaders, educational institutions, and professional associations for the advocacy of immigrant women.

# CIWA's Strategic Implementation Plan

Key Success Factors are conditions that when properly maintained or managed significantly impact CIWA's ability to achieve its vision. CIWA has identified five Key Success Factors:

## 1. Client-centric

- Client segments and their unique needs are well defined and understood
- Workflows, policies, practices, and programs are aligned to best serve clients

## 2. Lived experience of staff

- Female-focused approach
- High performing, happy staff who want to help others

## 3. Diversified revenue

- Unrestricted funds enable CIWA to be flexible as well as trial initiatives in new areas
- Fund development strategy and mindset embrace new ways of growing networks, donations, revenues, and supporters

## 4. Relationship management

- Intentional collaboration with sector partners, Subject Matter Experts, government bodies to co-create solutions, programs, policies
- Extensive local, provincial, and national network of partners
- Influence other organizations regarding immigrant women's needs

## 5. Strategic leadership

- Engage in collaborative endeavours to advance the sector
- Engage in collaborative endeavours to advance CIWA and the sector
- Highly trained and functioning Board
- Intentional impact on key priorities
- Organize and work to strategic priorities