

Chapter 29

Immigration and Career Training – Co-ordinating English-Language Programs

1.0 MAIN POINTS

As of February 2019, the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (formerly part of the Ministry of the Economy) made some progress in implementing the three recommendations we made regarding co-ordinating English-language programs.

Saskatchewan’s regional colleges deliver English-language programming on behalf of the Ministry. The regional colleges’ business plans set out outcomes that they expect to achieve when delivering this business. The Ministry approves these plans.

The Ministry still needs to work towards:

- Updating its method to assess demand for provincially-funded English-language programs
- Assessing whether regional colleges meet the Ministry’s expectations for delivering English-language programming

Without a clear assessment of program needs, and whether provincial programs meet those needs, the Ministry may not know if provincial English-language programs are sufficient and/or necessary, and effective in assisting immigrants in improving their English-language skills.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Ministry of Immigration and Career Training is responsible for attracting immigrants to the province, and for assisting and facilitating their settlement and integration into Saskatchewan communities and workplaces.^{1,2} The ability to understand and speak English is integral for immigrants to become self-sufficient in Saskatchewan. It is important that the Ministry co-ordinates English-language programs so that Saskatchewan immigrants can secure jobs and contribute to the province’s economy.

The overall goal of English-language programs is to help new immigrants integrate into Saskatchewan life and secure employment. Both federally and provincially funded English-language programs for immigrants exist in Saskatchewan to give immigrants over the age of 18 the opportunity to gain or improve their English-language skills. The Ministry provides these programs to immigrants at no charge.

¹ Immigrants include all residents who were not born in Canada. There are two types of these residents: non-permanent and permanent residents. Non-permanent residents include temporary residents and international students.

² *The Ministry of Immigration and Career Training Regulations*, section 3.



During 2018-19, the Ministry provided approximately \$0.6 million in funding to six Saskatchewan regional colleges to deliver English-language programming.

2.2 Focus of Follow-Up Audit

This chapter describes our second follow-up of management's actions on the recommendations we made in 2015.

In 2015, we assessed the Ministry's processes to co-ordinate English-language programs. Our *2015 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 8 concluded that the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training had, other than the areas of our five recommendations, effective processes for coordinating English-language programs that assist in employment and settlement of recent immigrants over the age of 18 in Saskatchewan.³ By January 2017, the Ministry implemented two of the five recommendations.⁴

To conduct this audit engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (CSAE 3001). To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To perform our follow-up audit, we discussed actions taken with management, and reviewed relevant documents (e.g., procedure manuals, regional college funding letters, service agreements, program reporting documents, etc.).

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation, including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at February 28, 2019, and the Ministry's actions up to that date.

3.1 Forecasting Demand for English-Language Programs Needed

We recommended that the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (formerly the Ministry of the Economy) develop a formal methodology, including regional analysis, for assessing the demand for English-language program needs. (2015 Report – Volume 1, p. 70,

Recommendation 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Partially Implemented

³ The original report regarding these recommendations can be found at www.auditor.sk.ca/publications/public-reports. We reported the original audit work in *2015 Report – Volume 1* (Chapter 8, pp. 63-76).

⁴ *2017 Report – Volume 1* (Chapter 16, pp. 213-219).

While the Ministry continues to use various data, such as immigration data and regional analysis, it has not yet completed documenting its methodology to help identify when a community should receive classroom-based English-language instruction.

To assist in directing funding to address needs, in 2017, the Ministry began using a Request for Proposal process to contract with agencies, including regional colleges, for the provision of English-language programming. This programming is specifically for learners who are not eligible for federal programs. During 2018-19, it has signed agreements with two regional colleges to provide specific English-language programming.

Periodic reviews of existing methodologies help identify opportunities to make refinements and to develop a formal methodology.

3.2 Monitoring of Program Delivery Needed

We recommended that the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (formerly the Ministry of the Economy) sign agreements for the delivery of English-language programs with regional colleges that deliver these programs. (2015 Report – Volume 1, p. 73, Recommendation 4; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Intent of Recommendation Implemented

Starting in 2018-19, instead of the Ministry including performance targets in funding letters to colleges, the regional colleges have specified them in their business plans. The business plans include providing English-language programs.⁵ These plans set out expected outcomes (e.g., students will have the English-language skills needed to independently perform day-to-day interactions within their community) and acceptability levels (e.g., percentage of students will achieve growth in at least one language skill level). The outcomes and acceptability levels are consistent across the regional colleges that are delivering these programs. We found that the Ministry had reviewed and approved each of these business plans.

Inclusion of the expected outcomes and acceptability levels in Ministry-approved related business plans of regional colleges will help ensure colleges deliver English-language programs as expected by the Ministry. In addition, it will help the Ministry determine whether the colleges deliver these programs as expected.

We recommended that the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training (formerly the Ministry of the Economy) formally assess whether regional colleges that deliver English-language programs meet its expectations as set out in its Regional Colleges' policy manual. (2015 Report – Volume 1, p. 75, Recommendation 5; Public Accounts Committee agreement September 15, 2016)

Status – Partially Implemented

⁵ Between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the Ministry used funding letters for the regional colleges' delivery of English-language programs. The funding letters included performance targets that it expects the regional colleges to achieve.



At February 2019, the Ministry was starting to set out a review process that would include assessing whether regional colleges meet Ministry expectations when delivering English-language programs. The Ministry expects to establish this process and complete its review by September 2020.

Not actively monitoring and assessing whether the regional colleges' English-language programs meet its expectations means the Ministry does not know if its annual program funding achieves its expected results.