

## *Transforming Settlement and Integration Services During a Pandemic*

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### Abstract

Settlement services are key to Canada's success welcoming and integrating immigrants. Offered mainly in person prior to COVID-19 by non-governmental agencies reliant on and regulated by government funders, services were forced online and delivered by staff working remotely. We document this transition between September 2020 and September 2021 in Ontario, Canada and the factors that influenced it. Surveys completed by workers and managers at member agencies of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants reveal how agencies provided services and stabilized organizational resources and capacities. Their success is evident in staff satisfaction with management's responses to the pandemic. While our findings underscore the resilience of the agencies and their workforce, they also challenge many tenets of New Public Management. The survey and discussions with managers suggest that sustained and flexible funding, rapid and respectful communication between agencies and funders, and collaborations with other agencies were key to overcoming pandemic challenges.

**Keywords:** Settlement and integration services, COVID-19 pandemic, New Public Management, Online service delivery, Resilience, Ontario Canada