



NEWCOMERS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (N.E.E.D.S.) INC.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

APRIL 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

Acknowledgements by CEO Margaret von Lau

On behalf of the agency, I would like to thank:

- All the staff for their ongoing dedication, hard work, and profound impact on our clients
- The Executive and Management teams for sharing their expertise and providing exceptional support
- Our volunteers for their impact and commitment to our agency
- The Board Members for their guiding vision and invaluable contribution
- Our funders for supporting our mandate and making this year such a success

With the hard work, guidance, and support of our entire team, we provided essential and quality settlement services to 3,576 newcomer children, youth, and their families. We are incredibly proud to have had the opportunity to support our clients and to see their individual and collective growth, success, and contribution toward building a more diverse Canada.

I want to give special thanks to Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Province of Manitoba, Service Canada, TD Ready Commitment, and The Winnipeg Foundation for their ongoing financial support.



*N.E.E.D.S. Inc. CEO
Margaret von Lau*

Sincerely,
Margaret von Lau
Chief Executive Officer



Table of Contents

OVERVIEW	03
AGENCY STATISTICS	04
PROGRAM REPORTS	08
SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS (SWIS) SERVICES	08
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	12
PARTNERSHIPS	14
SUCCESSSES & PROMISING PRACTICES	15
CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS	17
KIM THOMAS AWARD OF DISTINCTION	19
GRADUATION CELEBRATION & AWARDS CEREMONY	20
CONCLUSION	21

Overview

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, we provided relevant and appropriate settlement and integration services to **3,576** immigrant and refugee children, youth, and their families.

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Program provided support for school integration to 3073 clients, and the Employment program team supported 755 clients.

A total of 62 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, representing 26 countries of origin, were employed to facilitate programming for newcomer children and youth.

N.E.E.D.S. Inc.'s was a recipient of the Kim Thomas Award of Distinction from General Child and Family Services Authority. This award recognizes community champions who have provided lasting contributions to our community by strengthening our desired positive relationship between child welfare and cultural communities in Manitoba.

Our volunteer program engaged 142 volunteers and practicum students, who provided 13,745 volunteer hours of support. This is 2985 hours more than in 2023-2024.

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. successfully participated in the Government of Canada's initiative to resettle displaced Ukrainians under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) initiative.

Our agency continued to utilize the Continuous Learning and Improvement Program (CLIP) to nurture a learning environment for staff. This program supported staff professional growth and enhanced program improvements.

With support from the Government of the Province of Manitoba and corporate partners, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. expanded its meals program and continued to provide school supplies in the INTRO Program to assist clients transitioning to the Canadian school system.

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. provided interpretation support alongside school partners and stakeholders in 32 languages



Agency Statistics

3,576

Total number of clients served

2,455

Total children and youth clients

1,121

Total family member clients

2,761

Total IRCC eligible clients

815

Total non-IRCC clients

142

Total volunteers and practicum students

13,745

Total number of volunteer hours

62

Total Full Time Equivalent Staff

26

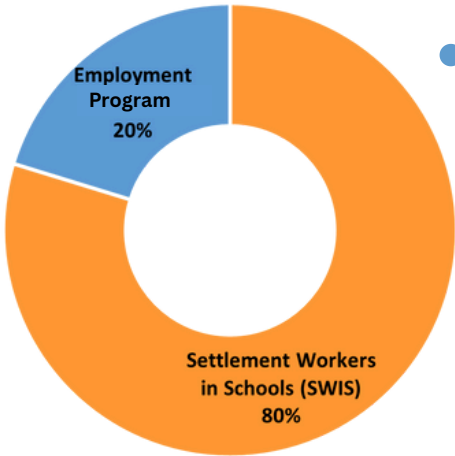
Number of countries represented by staff

32

Number of languages spoken by staff

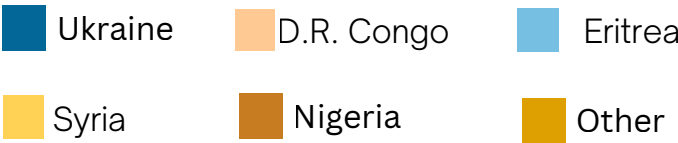
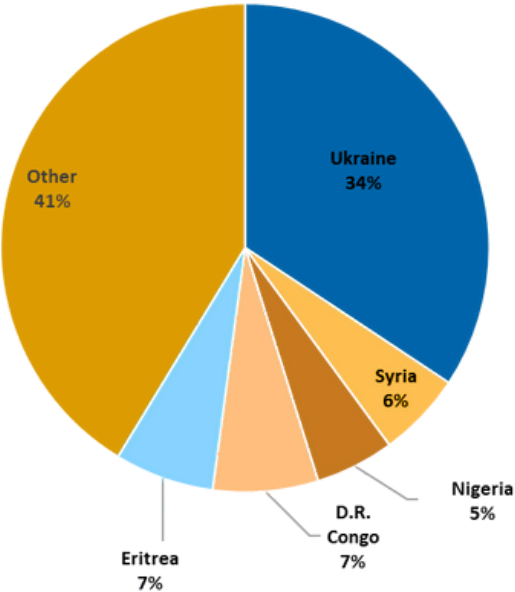
Approximately 80% of our clients accessed Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programs in 2024-2025, with 3073 clients served.

An additional 755 clients accessed Employment Program, representing 20% of the Agency’s clients this fiscal year.

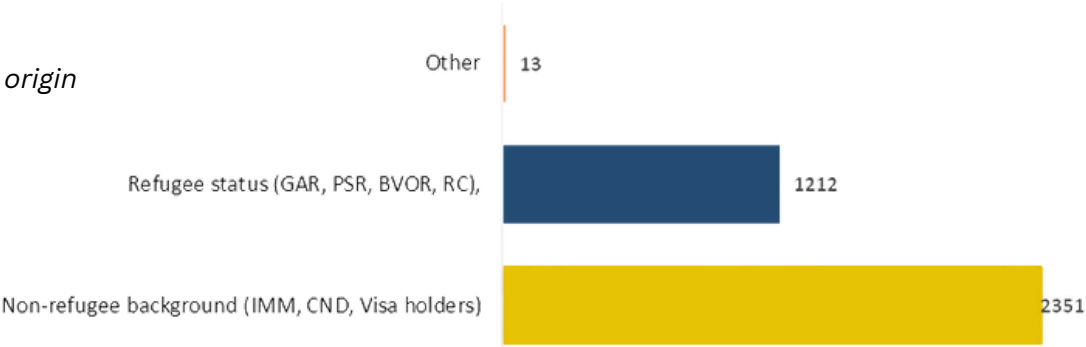


Graph 1: Percentage of clients by program

The demographic composition of our clients remained somewhat the same as the previous fiscal year. Ukraine remained the top country of origin for our clients, with 34% of all clients coming from this country. Other countries of origin include Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Syria and Nigeria.

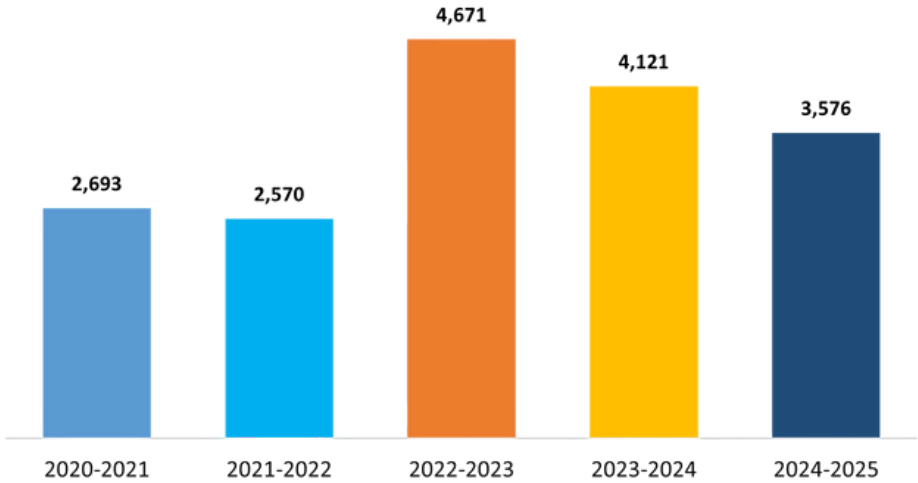


Graph 2: Top countries of client origin



Graph 3: Client Immigration Status

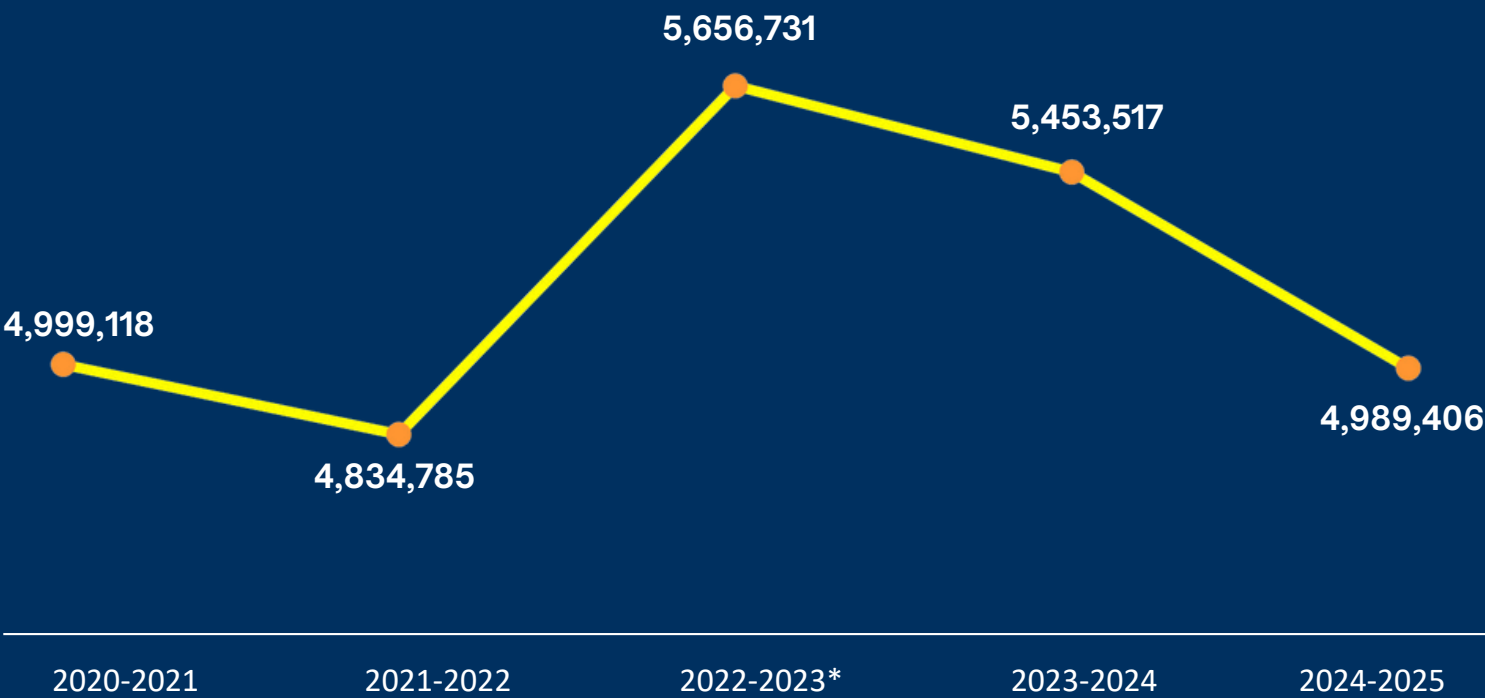
We also served 481 non-IRCC clients, indicating that funding from the Province of Manitoba’s Department of Advanced Education, Skills & Immigration supported non-permanent residents in accessing N.E.E.D.S. Inc. services.



The conflict in Ukraine continued to influence the Agency’s total client number. Client numbers still remained high, but it decreased slightly from 4,121 last year to 3,576 in 2024-2025.

Graph 4: Total clients over previous five years

In 2024-2025, funding decreased from \$5,453,517 to \$4,989,406. Major funding sources included IRCC, the Province of Manitoba, and the Enhanced Wellness Project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada



Graph 5: Funding revenue over previous five years

*beginning of the Ukranian Influx

Additional funding sources

- **Government of Manitoba After-School, Summer, and School Break Nutrition Funding**
- **Purolator**
 - Supported the Healthy Meals and Snacks Program
- **ROGERS Youth Grant**
 - Supported the Healthy Meals and Snacks Program
- **Winnipeg Foundation**
 - Supported The Children and Youth Program for meal, backpack and school supplies.
- **Central Neighborhood Association**
 - Community Incentive Grant to support the Hot and Healthy Meal Program

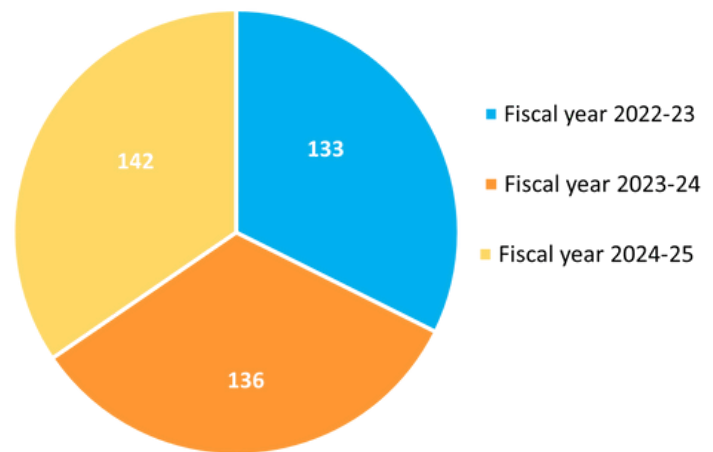
Volunteers Statistics

142

Volunteers
and
Practicum
students

13,745 Volunteer
Hours

A total of 142 volunteers and practicum students provided Remote Homework, SWIS Introduction to Canadian Education (INTRO) Program, SWIS In-School Programs, and Employment Services to clients. Compared to last year the overall number of volunteers and practicum students increased.



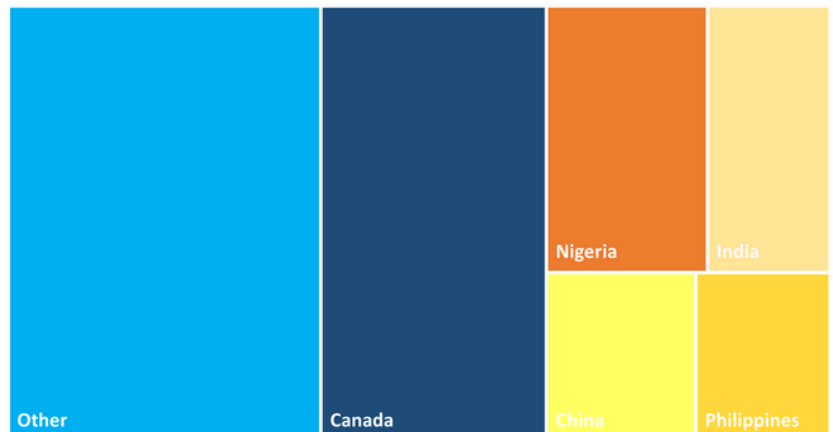
Graph 6: Number of Volunteers & Practicum Students



This year, volunteers and practicum students provided a total of **13,745 hours** to N.E.E.D.S. Inc. programs, representing a **28%** increase from last year's volunteer hours.

Graph 7: Difference in Volunteers Hours: 2023-2024 to 2024-2025

Volunteers and practicum students came from 32 different countries of origin, supporting the cultural and linguistic diversity of our clients. The top countries of origin for the volunteers supporting activities at N.E.E.D.S. Inc. were Canada (27%), Nigeria (11%), India (9%), China (7%), and Philippines (6%).



Graph 8: Top countries of volunteer origin

Program Reports

SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS (SWIS) PROGRAM

SWIS continued to deliver a diverse array of essential services to **3,073** newcomer and refugee children and youth and their families.



Six Core Activities

1,849

Newcomer and refugee children and youth served

3,073

SWIS clients

1,156

INTRO Program clients

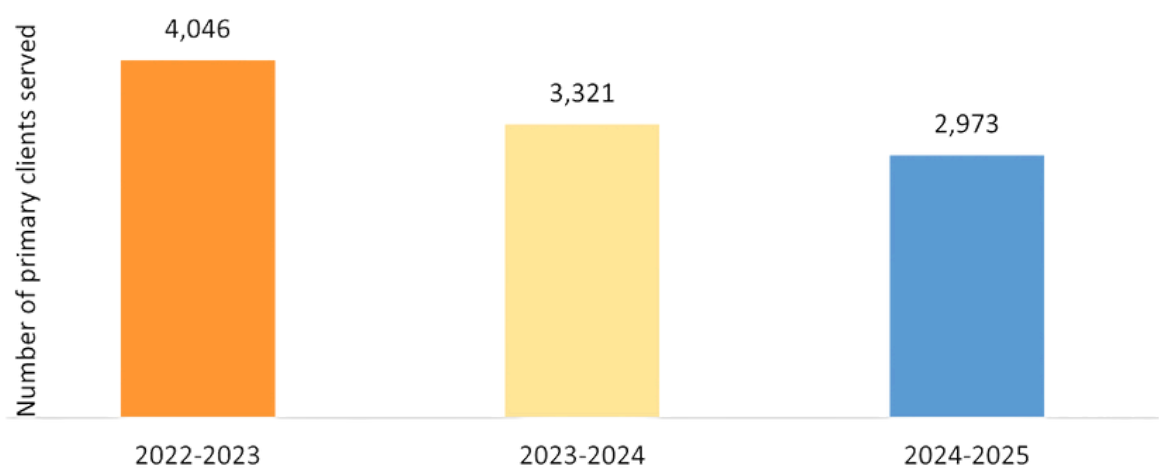
140

Schools across four school divisions in Winnipeg

The program delivered six core activities: Information and Orientation (through our Introduction to Canadian Education Program), Mentorship, Homework support (RAMP), Needs and Assets Assessment and Referrals (NAARS), Enhanced SWIS (PSE), and Orientation Workshops for Newcomers to 1849 primary clients aged 6-21.

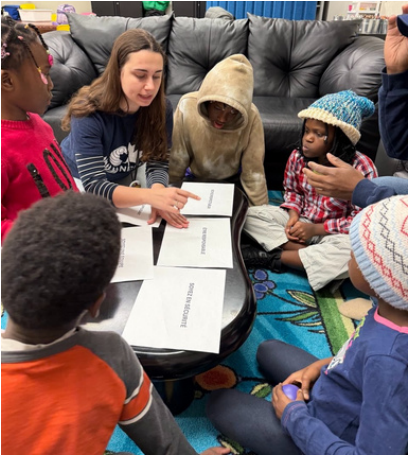
These core activities served a significant percentage of SWIS program clients. Additional support was extended to family members of primary clients, through referrals and community events, addressing themes such as community engagement, safety, multiculturalism, diversity, and human and civil rights in Canada.

SWIS programming operated in collaboration with over 140 schools across Louis Riel, Pembina Trails School Division, St. James-Assiniboia School Division, Seven Oaks School Division, and Winnipeg School Division. These partnerships facilitated access to SWIS services in schools, at The NEEDS Centre, and through remote channels.



Graph 9: Total SWIS clients over previous three years

SWIS clients continued to remain high in 2024-25. There were high numbers of clients in all areas of the SWIS program, including the INTRO Program and in school-based SWIS Program activities. SWIS activities provided essential support to school staff, including interpretation services, cross-cultural awareness initiatives, settlement and cross-cultural events, conflict resolution support, and capacity building in trauma and mental health. In addition, SWIS staff continued to deliver orientation programming in English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes during regular school hours.



Introduction to Canadian Education Program (INTRO)



In 2024-2025, a total of 1,156 clients attended the INTRO Program, which was 48% higher than our projected target for the year.

The INTRO Program classes equipped clients with the knowledge needed to smoothly transition into the Canadian school system. The INTRO Program was also able to equip clients with school supplies as they started school in their new communities.



Other activities and services offered through the SWIS Program



NAARS: Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Service

NAARS provided in-depth needs assessment of clients to triage needs, offer referrals, and document a client's background and potential supports.



Psychosocial Education (PSE) and Enhanced Wellness

These workshops helped participants (ages 6 to 12) understand trauma triggers and the brain and provided coping strategies and emotional literacy for dealing with strong emotions. Additionally individual psychosocial support sessions were provided to clients on an as-needed basis.

Circle of Security Parenting Groups

These parenting workshops promote caregiver confidence in the new Canadian setting, providing insights and tools for raising children from a trauma-informed perspective.

Remote After School Mentorship Programming (RAMP)

The program ran every Monday to Thursday from 4:00-8:00 pm, providing clients with volunteer mentors for one-on-one or small group sessions, offering homework help and English language tutoring. English language clubs provide clients with opportunities to practice and enhance their language skills in English.



Post-Secondary Bridge Program (PSBP)

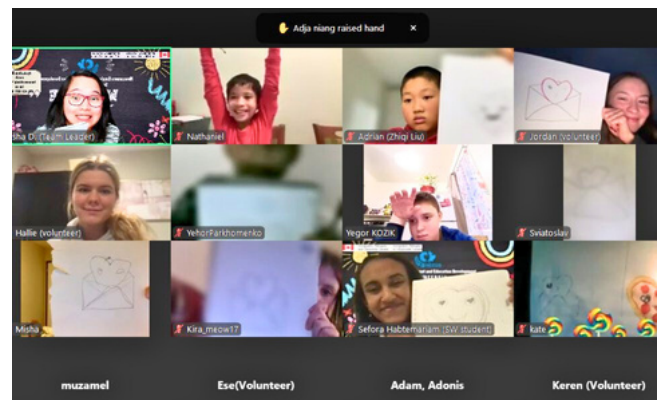
The program helped clients in grades 10-12, and recent graduates, with essential knowledge and skills for transitioning from high school to post-secondary education.

Making Sense of Trauma Training (MSOT)

Making Sense of Trauma (MSOT) training is an accessible and comprehensive program provided to settlement service providers and education staff in partner schools. The program equips participants with skills that help to identify trauma and support clients.

Interpretation Services

Interpretation services remained an essential component of our service delivery providing clients with necessary support to thrive and successfully participate in activities.



Employment Program

Through five core activities, our Employment Program continued to provide essential employment supports to newcomer youth (ages 15-29). Clients received in-depth employability skills training through sector-specific workshops, internships, and individual employment coaching.



69

Workshops and presentations

184

Work placement clients

486

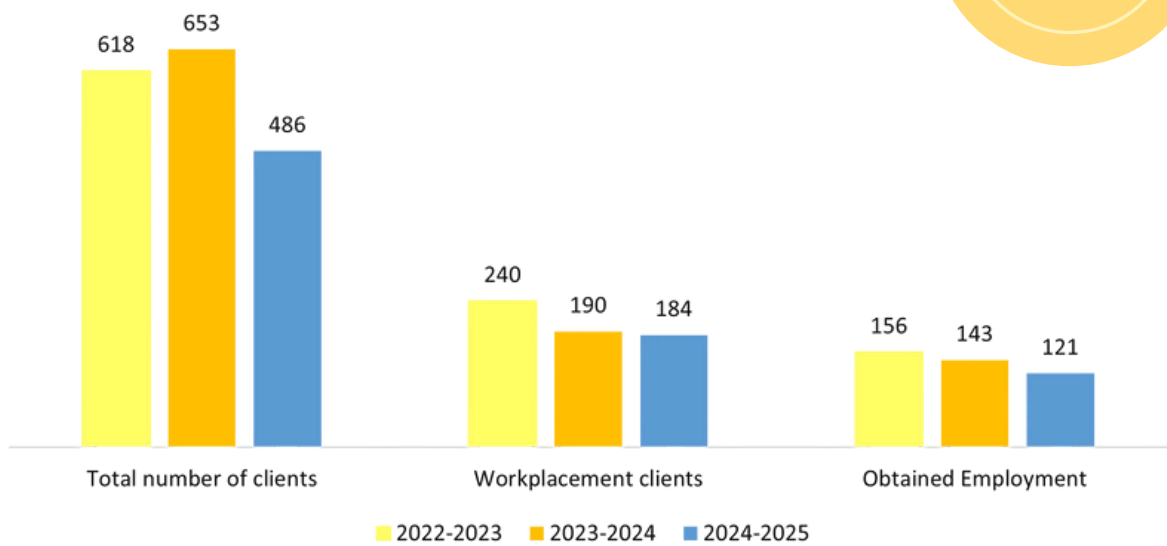
Total number of clients served

121

Clients obtained employment

Employment Program delivered 69 workshops and presentations to prepare clients for employment, covering topics such as moving to Canada, self-discovery, goal setting, career exploration, resume writing, cover letters, job searching, preparing for work, positive work behavior, maintaining employment, money management, and interview preparation. Additionally, our Employment Program staff engaged clients in mock interviews, which helped increase their self-confidence. These sessions took place in ten partner schools.

Workshops in the Youth Employment for Newcomers: Career-Driven Internship (YEN) Program were delivered onsite and at Glenlawn Collegiate, Dakota Collegiate, Seven Oaks School Division, Fort Richmond Collegiate, Oak Park School, and Vincent Massey School. Workshops incorporated the Nine Essential Skills model, which includes social and emotional skills, as central components for labor market preparation.



Graph 12: Employment Services outputs in the previous three years

To facilitate work placements, our agency partnered with 40 employers, arranged job placements, set up interviews, conducted workplace monitoring visits, and scheduled check-ins to support the onboarding and transition of clients into their places of employment.

Notable partners included the City of Winnipeg, Winners Polo Park, and Safeway Madison, with employers consistently praising the quality of candidates.



New partnerships with schools and organizations such as RBC and CRA helped enhance financial literacy and employment readiness. Practical activities like job search field trips and mock interviews, along with internships at Fort Whyte Farms, Safeway, and Sobeys, gave clients real-world experience.



The City of Winnipeg noted that eight of our participants were hired into Recreation Technician positions. These successes are a testament to the strength of our employer partnerships and the effectiveness of our client-centered employment training. Clients demonstrated strong initiative and professionalism, with multiple employers cutting internships short to offer paid employment.

PARTNERSHIPS

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. remains firmly committed to delivering community-rooted services by building and maintaining strong partnerships. Over the past year, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. strengthened existing collaborations and initiated new ones in response to the ongoing arrival of newcomers. These partnerships span service providers, schools, employers, and community organizations to ensure a holistic support system for clients.

Employer collaborations continued to play a vital role in expanding opportunities for clients through job fairs, mentorship, work placements, and on-the-job training. In 2024–2025, we partnered with organizations across multiple sectors, including education, hospitality, retail, personal care, and recreation. Key partners included the City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg School Division, Louis Riel School Division, Pembina Trails School Division, St. James-Assiniboia School Division; New Directions; Humankind International and Fort Whyte Alive.



SUCCESSSES & PROMISING PRACTICES

Notable Successes in 2024-2025

HIGH QUALITY SERVICE FOCUS

In collaboration with four school divisions and their staff, our SWIS program continued to deliver high quality services to newcomers enhancing their integration in to Canadian society. Through many years of experience, our SWIS team developed a comprehensive SWIS model which allowed us to provide effective and consistent programming across all school divisions.

NEW OR STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024-2025, SWIS staff conducted a collaborative review of successes and opportunities with school staff and divisional contacts to enhance the relationships between schools and SWIS. We also value our strong and collaborative partnerships with Manitoba Start, Accueil Francophone, Welcome Place, Naomi House, Family Dynamics, Resilia and others.

RECOGNITION OF POST SECONDARY BRIDGE PROGRAM

A prolific academician from Wilfrid Laurier University recognized N.E.E.D.S. Inc. as unique in Canada for offering specialized post-secondary support to newcomer youth. She invited our Post-Secondary Bridge Program Specialist to co-author future academic publications, underscoring the program's national relevance and innovation.

RAMP CLIENTS' INCREASED INTEGRATION

Our staff noticed marked improvement in clients' English-speaking abilities after a few weeks of participation in the RAMP Program. Clients demonstrated increased confidence in introducing themselves, engaging in conversations in English, and building meaningful friendships. The supportive environment encourages connection, allowing participants to bond over shared experiences and grow together, regardless of language barriers or cultural backgrounds.

PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (YES)

The Employment Program developed new connections with Youth Employment Services to support clients in accessing training opportunities at a lower cost and make it easier for them to secure employment.

SUCCESSSES & PROMISING PRACTICES

Notable Successes in 2024-2025 and Testimonials

HEALTHY AND CULTURAL FOODS

Through the provincial Manitoba Healthy Food in Schools Grant, the NEEDS Centre was able to provide nutritious, culturally inclusive meals and snacks to children and youth participating in our activities. This funding supported the preparation and delivery of balanced meals that reflected the diverse backgrounds of our clients, while also promoting healthy eating habits.

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS INFLUX

In 2024–2025, the province of Manitoba experienced a significant influx of Refugee Claimants, which placed increased demand on newcomer settlement services across the province. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. responded to this growing need by collaborating closely with community partners and adapting their service delivery.

TESTIMONIALS

"This program [enhanced wellness] played a crucial role in enhancing language skills and providing a supportive environment for our Laidlaw students. Many families have shared how much their children benefitted from the additional resources and personalized attention offered. It not only helps improve their English proficiency but also fosters confidence and engagement in their academic journey!"

- Laidlaw School, Pembina Trails School Division

"I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable assistance with my child's enrollment in the English language course, summer camp registration, and finding extracurricular activities that align with their interests. Your dedication and support have made a significant difference for our family. I sincerely appreciate the time and effort you invested in ensuring a smooth process for us. Your guidance and expertise have been instrumental, and I am truly grateful for your commitment to making a positive impact on children's lives."

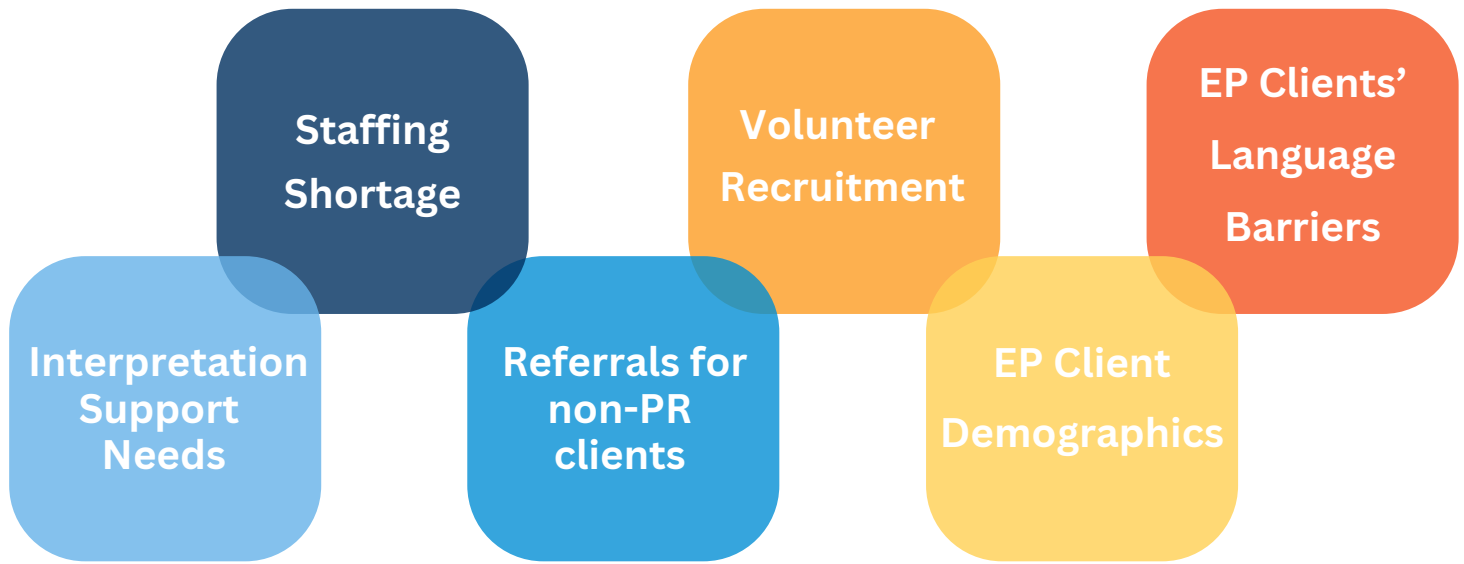
- Email from mother in Louis Riel School Division

"It feels good to know that there is an agency which supports newcomers. I appreciate your time and interpretation support provided which enable us to complete everything within 4 days. Thank you for all the extra information too!"

- Client who was helped with school registration in St. James-Assiniboia School Division

CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS

Notable challenges that arose in 2024-25 are highlighted below:



Staffing Shortage

Staffing shortage was the biggest challenge in FY 2024-25. Assigning clients to SWIS had been a challenge due to staffing shortage. As a result, the waitlist for our SWIS programming went over 1500 clients (including parents and children). In addition, we were not able to accommodate many newcomer families' requests for summer activities. Besides, INTRO duration was shortened from eight weeks to four weeks, often requiring clients to transition out before securing permanent housing, to allow new arrivals to access the program.

Volunteers

In response to high demands for the RAMP programming, recruiting enough volunteer mentors had been a challenge throughout the year.

EP Clients' Language Barriers

Language barriers continued to challenge many of the EP clients. These barriers hindered their ability to connect with employment opportunities which were critical for their success in the Canadian society.

Interpretation Support Needs

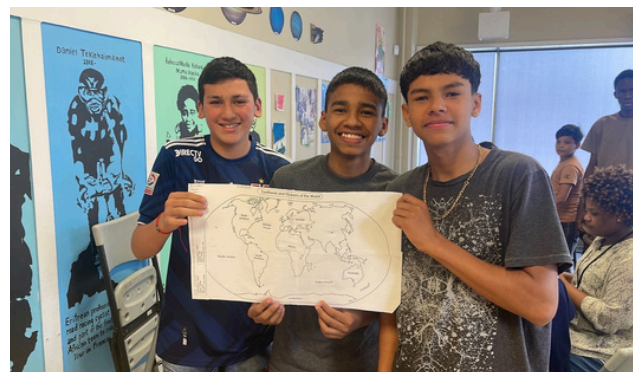
We saw increased client requests for interpretation support, particularly in RAMP and NAARS programs, with high demand for Ukrainian/Russian, Rohingya, Tigrinya, and Kinyarwanda. To manage this, we shared workloads and scheduled interpreters in advance, but challenges remained during peak demand or when certain languages weren't available. In those cases, we issued public volunteer calls.

Referrals for non-PR clients

Supporting clients who do not have Permanent Resident (PR) status has been a challenge. Since most newcomer-serving organizations in Winnipeg are funded exclusively to serve Permanent Residents, there are limited referral options for clients outside this category. This creates significant service gaps, particularly for families who face additional settlement barriers such as missing documentation, financial hardship, and limited English proficiency. These barriers complicate access to essential services like housing, language training, and school registration. Schools also face uncertainty around how to enroll non-PR children, such as refugee claimants, further highlighting the systemic gaps in available support.

EP Client Demographics

During the reporting year, the Employment Program observed a shift in client demographics with higher numbers of clients having professional experience looking for full-time employment. This shift put additional challenges on EP staff as their needs were beyond NEEDS Inc. expertise that focus on helping high-school-aged youth and recently graduated youth navigate their professional pathways to enter the labour market and find entry-level, part-time employment. Supporting individuals with advanced education and experience required EP staff to establish new connections and business partnerships to achieve success.



Kim Thomas Award of Distinction

On September 24, 2024, our agency was deeply honoured to receive the Kim Thomas Award of Distinction from the General Child and Family Services Authority – a meaningful recognition of our service supporting Winnipeg's newcomer and refugee children and youth. This award celebrates the very heart of our mission: creating accessible, services that help young newcomers build brighter futures.

This award holds special significance as it honours the memory and contributions of CFS's late Program Specialist, Kim Thomas, whose pioneering work established the General Authority's New Canadian Awareness and Education Initiative. The award is presented annually to a CFS employee, member of the community, or community organization for their dedication and efforts in working with newcomer children and families.

We're profoundly grateful to the General Authority for this recognition and for their ongoing partnership in creating more inclusive systems. As we celebrate this achievement, we're reminded that our most important work lies ahead – developing innovative programs, strengthening community ties, and ensuring every newcomer children and youth in Winnipeg has the support and opportunities they deserve to thrive!

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building a future where every newcomer and refugee child in Manitoba has the support, opportunities, and belonging they deserve. Thank you to our team, partners, and community for making this mission possible.



N.E.E.D.S. Inc.

Graduation Celebration & Awards Ceremony

On August 29, 2024, we hosted a memorable graduation party to honour the outstanding achievements of our newcomer high school graduates and YEN program graduates. The event was a joyful celebration of their hard work, resilience, and bright futures ahead.



We were honoured to share this milestone with distinguished guests, including Hon. Nahanni Fontaine, Minister of Families; Hon. Malaya Marcelino, Minister of Labour and Immigration; the MLA for Notre Dame; and representatives from our valued employment partners.

The celebration featured inspiring speeches, lively music, delicious food, and engaging activities—all fostering the sense of community and pride that defines our programs. Following the formal proceedings, guests enjoyed a lively BBQ celebration—complete with great music, delicious food, and engaging activities—creating a festive atmosphere that reflected the joy of this milestone.

The event underscored the strength of our community and the bright futures ahead for these outstanding young individuals. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this special day, and above all, congratulations to our graduates. We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments and excited for the opportunities ahead.



CONCLUSION

In 2024-25, we served a high number of clients, echoing a trend that began in 2022 due to the Ukraine influx. Over the years, we have gained the expertise and confidence to serve a high number of clients. We continued to establish new school and employer partners and expanded the coverage and areas of programming. In 2024-25, we introduced Francophone services to enhance accessibility for French-speaking clients, including interpretation, employment supports, and dedicated French-language homework and conversation clubs. We have also introduced the provision of school supplies for clients to properly equip them to smoothly transition to the Canadian school system with a sense of equality and belonging. Thus, 2024-25 was another year of continued expansion of the Agency to meet client needs.

We have been a dependable partner for the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba, as well as for other newcomer-serving agencies in Manitoba. Receiving fundings from different community foundations and corporate organizations indicates greater community recognition of N.E.E.D.S. Inc. as a newcomer and youth serving agency. We embrace the view that continuous learning and dedication to services are essential in responding to community emergencies and meeting client needs.

