

Economy, COVID-19 and Regional Immigration:
Some evidence from Atlantic Canada

COVID 19 – SETTLEMENT SECTOR CHALLENGES

Outline

Introduction

New Challenges

Organizational Challenges

What Worked Well

Our Vision

A community where all
can belong and grow

Our Mission

Helping immigrants build
a future in Nova Scotia



Mi'kma'ki - Land of the Mi'kmaq
We acknowledge we are on unceded traditional Mi'kmaq territory and we are grateful for the Peace and Friendship treaties. At ISANS, as we work to settle newcomers to Nova Scotia, we honour and respect the Indigenous people of this land. We are all Treaty people.

Organizational Overview 2019/2020

746

ISANS
Volunteers

33,507

Volunteer Hours

10,636

Clients

4,423

New
Clients

27,615

Visits to 3 ISANS
Offices

126,104

Visitors to isans.ca

21,494

Number of Calls to ISANS

COVID in Atlantic Canada



Atlantic Bubble: July 3 – present

More restrictions initially

Numbers lower than other regions

New Challenges

Immigration process not continuing smoothly - led to more inquiries to which we could not always respond.

Temporary residents confused re: their situation

Pre-arrival clients uncertain re: requirements, options for arrival

Some eligibility issues unclear, for both programs such as CERB as well as for settlement services.



What has worked well - partnership

Support of funders

- Contracts ongoing through fiscal year
- Flexibility, trust

National relationships

- e.g. RAP working group – developed processes and advocated for and received more PPE
- Recognizing long/deep experience, raising issues that have national impact

New Challenges

Supporting vulnerable clients digitally

- Much of our work is essentially relational
- Some clients have limited digital resources – internet access, devices, experience

Social capital is being drained – with clients and among our teams



New Challenges

Mental health challenges

- Massive rapid lockdowns
- Traumatic incidents in Nova Scotia
- Clients' financial/employment worries
- Immigrants - clients and colleagues - anxious re: family overseas



New Challenges

Diversity of client needs and programs in COVID

- Wide range of client needs and programs made COVID response more challenging – not “one size fits all”



What has worked well – building on our strengths

Attitude/motivation of being responsive to client needs

- Settlement service providers are client-centred, always doing needs analysis, caring

Experience of being responsive to external factors

- Work changes regularly, impacted by world events – different groups of clients, different arrival numbers e.g. Syrian family arrivals
- Dynamic sector

Organizational Challenges

Adjusting to working from home

Equipment, IT support

Digital literacy for teams



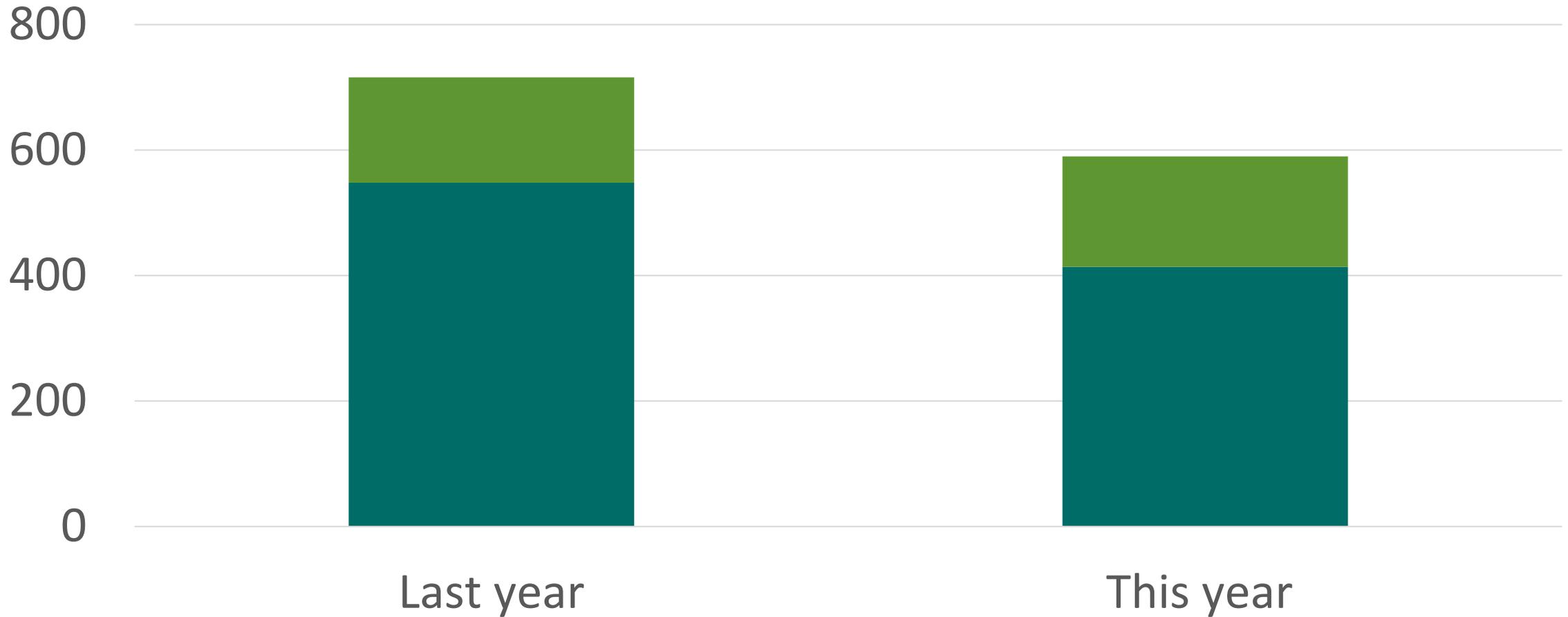
What has worked well – client services

Continuing service delivery online wherever possible

Adapting to meet the challenge – new modes that can continue

What has worked well – website access

ISANS Clients Secured Employment, Mar – Nov



Employment sectors for ISANS clients

Many of the same as in 2019

- Accounting, finance
- Healthcare (CCA, nursing, patient attendants)
- Construction work
- IT
- Engineering
- Administration – HR
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Government
- Education and ECE



Decrease in some sectors:

- Hospitality
- Food services
- Transportation
- Government (provincial & municipal)

Long-term outcomes?

Many unknown elements

- The course of COVID? Will the Atlantic have a large second wave?
- Arrivals in 2021 and beyond?
- Funding and services?
- Economic conditions?
- Impacts of mental health challenges?

