



# CCIS Cultural Brokerage Program 2019 Evaluation Report

DRAFT February 2020



Prepared with Support from Constellation Consulting Group

## Executive Summary

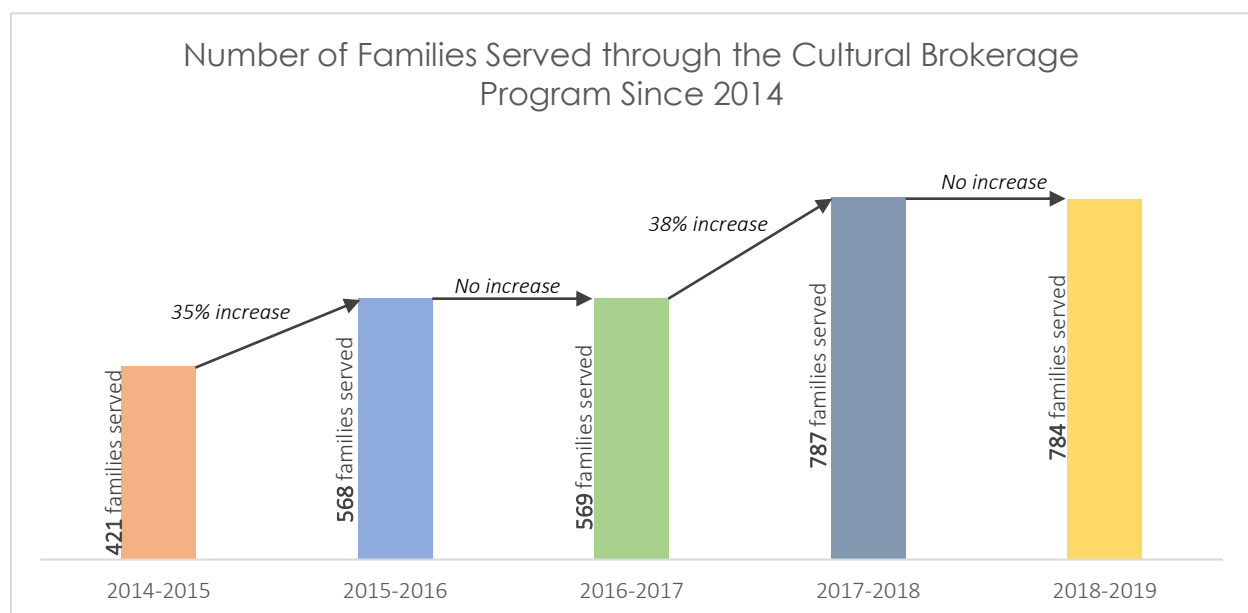
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization with expertise in providing settlement and integration services to immigrants and refugees. The Family and Children's Services (FCS) Division of CCIS works to facilitate the integration of newcomer families and children into the community, enhancing the provision of community services for newcomers, and promoting the healthy development of children using a holistic strengths-based approach.

Since 2014, the FCS Division has supported culturally diverse children and families involved with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services (Children's Services) through the Cultural Brokerage Program. The program is funded through Alberta Human Services and responds to an identified need for enhanced, culturally competent, services for culturally diverse families. The Cultural Brokerage Program offers cultural supports for Children's Services and families with the aim of bridging the relationship between Children's Services and culturally diverse families so that both can experience positive outcomes.

Since its inception in 2014 the Cultural Brokerage Program has been evaluated by external evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group. Over the last five years, evaluation of the program has revealed that it is an impactful initiative for supporting culturally diverse families. The current evaluation report covers the period from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019. This year, the evaluation revealed:

The Cultural Brokerage Program supported **784** culturally diverse families, representing **2,751** individual family members, including children.

This represents a relatively consistent demand for service since last year and an 86% over five years.



Overall, **93%** of Cultural Brokerage Program work in 2018-2019 happened at the assessment and brief services level, contributing to Children's Services preventive work.

This preventive work is key for ensuring culturally diverse families do not become chronically involved with Children's Services. Ultimately, by working in a preventive manner, the Cultural Brokerage Program supports healthy child development and long-term positive social outcomes for children and families.

Beyond initial preventive work, Cultural Brokers are in a unique position to support families after their Children's Services involvement has ended (after their Children's Services file has been closed). This support helps families make long term change that can reduce the likelihood of future encounters with Children's Services.

In 2018-2019, **36%** of Cultural Brokerage Program clients continued to receive support through the Program or CCIS after their Children's Services involvement had ended.

This year, the supports most frequently provided through the Cultural Brokerage Program were:

- |  |   |   |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>1.</b> Cultural interpretation  | <b>2.</b> Consultation with Children's Services                                     | <b>3.</b> Information & resources for clients                                       | <b>4.</b> Education for clients  | <b>5.</b> Information gathering for Children's Services                               |

Children's Services are often not able to provide these supports themselves (e.g. cultural interpretation), and providing these specialized supports for families through the Cultural Brokerage Program often enables Children's Services to conduct culturally responsive assessments, close cases more quickly, and when child safety is assured, avoid apprehensions. These culturally responsive supports also help families avoid Children's Services involvement in the future.

From clients' perspectives, an exit survey completed as part of the evaluation revealed that clients feel they are experiencing positive results because of the program:

In total, **95%** of families that completed a 2018-2019 Exit Survey felt that their family benefited from the Cultural Brokerage Program.

- **95%** of families felt that, through the Program, they learned about resources they could access in the community.

- **94%** of families felt that they connected with people in their community because of the support they received through the Program.
- **95%** of families felt that they could get what they needed for themselves and their family because of their involvement with the Program.
- **95%** of families felt more comfortable with government systems in Canada because of the support they received through the Program.
- **95%** of families felt they had a goal or plan of action after their involvement in the Program.

Qualitative feedback from clients was also very positive. Clients said that the Cultural Brokerage Program was helpful for their family in:

- Educating the family around topics such as the impacts of violence, child brain development, and good communication within families
- Explaining Children's Services' role and the changes that the family needed need to make to comply with Children's Services' requests
- Connecting the family to helpful culturally responsive resources (e.g. psychologist)

*"I learned lots. We are happy now. Things still come up, but we learned how to handle issues and have better communication."*

*"Without [the Cultural Broker] I would be lost and stuck. I have friends but nobody helps me the way [the Cultural Broker] has helped me."*

*"[The Cultural Broker] helped me. It was really good. I got lots of information. She taught me about violence and child brain development."*

*"I think things would've gotten worse, if we didn't get help at that time."*

Staff from Children's Services also highlighted positive outcomes from the program for families, Children's Services as an organization, and themselves personally. These included:

- Having better communication between Children's Services and families based on the cultural interpretation provided by the Cultural Broker
- More nuanced understanding by Children's Services staff of families' situations
- Decreased fear, anxiety and resistance/increased understanding, acceptance and trust from families
- Decreased recidivism, and quicker closing of Children's Services files

*"Families are gaining the skills and feeling supported, so we don't end up seeing those families again."*

When asked what could be improved about the program, clients and Children's Services staff had very few suggestions besides continuing and expanding the program.

Based on the positive results created by the Cultural Brokerage Program over the last five years, in 2019 the program achieved several key milestones of recognition, including being:

- The only Alberta-based program selected by Pathways to Prosperity Canada as a Promising Practice program with demonstrated effectiveness in creating impactful positive change for newcomers to Canada
- Presented at the Metropolis Conference in Ottawa
- Deeply integrated within the Children's Services system in Calgary with opportunities for all Cultural Brokers to participate in Triage and Consultation across Children's Services offices in Calgary and with the Cultural Brokerage Program now embedded into Basic Orientation training for all new Children's Services staff in the area.

Since 2014, evaluation of the Cultural Brokerage Program has demonstrated that the program is impactful for families, Children's Services and communities. The 2018-2019 revealed ongoing success in creating positive outcomes and has highlighted key opportunities for program improvement. Based on this year's evaluation results, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue the program.
2. Seek opportunities to share the positive results of the Program to enable replication, where appropriate.
3. Seek opportunities to expand the program.
4. Seek opportunities to establish an interpretation contract directly between Children's Services and CCIS.
5. Seek opportunities for greater in-home and community-based Cultural Brokering.
6. Seek opportunities for Cultural Brokers to undergo further training.
7. Advocate for the Cultural Brokerage Program's Cultural Thinking Framework workshop to be mandatory for all Children's Services staff.

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## 1.0 Introduction and Background

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) is a non-profit organization with expertise in providing settlement and integration services to immigrants and refugees. The Family and Children's Services (FCS) Division of CCIS works to facilitate the integration of newcomer families and children into the community, enhancing the provision of community services for newcomers, and promoting the healthy development of children using a holistic strengths-based approach. With a vision of a society where immigrants and refugees can reach their potential, CCIS' mission is to effectively partner within the community to empower immigrants and refugees to successfully resettle and integrate.

With funding from Alberta Human Services, in 2014 the FCS Division of CCIS established the Cultural Brokerage Program to address an identified need for enhanced, culturally competent, services for culturally diverse children and families involved with the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Children's Services (Children's Services). Children's Services seek to ensure that children in Alberta are safe as they grow and develop, intervening to protect children when safety concerns arise. When there is a concern for a child's safety, Children's Services assesses the situation to determine what can be done by the family to increase the child's safety. If concerns for the child's wellbeing are grave, Children's Services may apprehend the child to ensure their safety.

Research has shown that, while there is no evidence of a higher risk of child maltreatment within immigrant and refugee families, recently settled newcomers often experience specific risk factors related to their immigration status and to the challenges of resettlement in a new country, which may impact their ability to parent to the best of their ability.<sup>1</sup> Further, because of differences in culture, governments in different countries and English-language ability, when Children's Services become involved with a culturally diverse family it may be particularly confusing, alarming, and stressful. At the same time, Children's Services may have greater difficulty resolving protection concerns if they lack a nuanced understanding of families' culture, or if families have difficulties communicating and expressing themselves in English; and Children's Services workers may not have the specialized knowledge and community connections to ensure the resettlement-related risk factors for newcomer families are adequately addressed.

The Cultural Brokerage Program helps to bridge the relationship between Children's Services and culturally diverse families. Supports provided through the Cultural Brokerage Program include:

- Cultural interpretation (including language interpretation)
- Referrals and information about community services (e.g. parenting programs, support for resettlement, etc.)

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<sup>1</sup> LeBrun, A., Hassan, G., Boivin, M., Faser, SL, Dufour, S., & Lavergne, C. (2015).

- Follow-up support and individual case management for families
- Information for families about Canadian expectations and laws
- Support for addressing family violence (including support for both perpetrators and victims)
- Cultural Thinking Framework workshop for Children's Services staff
- Support for capacity building within cultural communities

In 2019, the Cultural Brokerage Program team included 12 staff from diverse cultural backgrounds. Together, they speak seventeen languages other than English, and have access to CCIS' Interpretation and Translation social enterprise. This means that even when a Cultural Broker does not speak a client's language, they can nevertheless assure high quality translation and cultural interpretation for families.

To ensure continuous program improvement, the Cultural Brokerage Program is evaluated on an ongoing basis with support from an external Credentialed Evaluator. Since 2014, evaluation of the Cultural Brokerage Program has revealed that the most prevalent concern leading to Children's Services involvement has been family violence. In response to the high prevalence of family violence amongst clients, in May 2017 the program expanded, with support from Alberta Human Services, to include a Family Violence (FV) Specialist role, and in 2019 with support from an anonymous donor, a second FV Specialist was added to the team. Recognizing the gendered nature of family violence, one FV Specialist is female and the other is male. Together, they work with both victims and perpetrators of family violence to increase understanding around the impacts of family violence, responses to family violence, expectations around family violence in Canada, and available community resources/options.

Starting in 2018, the innovative Apartment 1310 Program was launched to further support the Cultural Brokerage Program in responding to specific identified challenges faced by newcomer families with family violence concerns and where Children's Services mandate a period of separation between family members. The Apartment 1310 Program provides temporary accommodation and immediate programming for perpetrators of family violence. When Children's Services has a concern related to family violence and requires the family to separate, a Cultural Brokerage Program FV Specialist offers to support male perpetrators in leaving the family and staying temporarily at the Apartment 1310 Program. Immediately after settling into the apartment, the perpetrator begins working with an FV Specialist to understand the impacts of their actions and expectations in Canada, while being connected to culturally responsive services that support learning and behaviour change related to healthy relationships and parenting. Simultaneously, an FV Specialist works with the victim(s) to ensure both parties



receive high quality and congruent information about the impacts of family violence, expectations in Canada and ways to create and maintain safe and healthy relationships.<sup>2</sup>

With learning, reflection and growth as central values at CCIS and within the Cultural Brokerage Program, evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group have continued to evaluate program outputs and outcomes in 2019. The current report presents findings from the 2018-2019 Cultural Brokerage Program outcome evaluation along with recommendations for future directions.

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<sup>2</sup> The FV Specialists and Apartment 1310 Program are evaluated separately from the Cultural Brokerage Program and results are available through an annual evaluation report.

## 2.0 Evaluation Methods

Since the initiation of the Cultural Brokerage Program in 2014, a Program Logic Model and Data Collection Matrix have guided the evaluation of the program. These frameworks were initially developed using external evaluation expertise and internal stakeholder voice to articulate intended program outcomes, and were updated collaboratively in 2016 to reflect emergent learnings from the program (see Appendix C). Separate Program Logic Models were developed in 2017 and 2018 for the FV Specialist and Apartment 1310 Program components.

The 2019 Cultural Brokerage Program evaluation examines the period from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019. By using a mixed-method approach, rich data has been gathered that fosters a holistic understanding of the Cultural Brokerage Program, including areas of success and challenge, as well as outcomes and impact. Information gathered by Cultural Brokers on an ongoing basis is housed and reported using a database that was custom-designed by Ci2 Group Inc. for the Cultural Brokerage Program. Data sources included:

Data Collection Method	Sample
Records of client demographic information	784 families
Records of program activities (e.g. # contacts, # referrals, community development events, etc.)	784 families
Client rated outcomes exit survey	499 surveys
Interviews with clients (families)	13 families
Interviews with Children's Services staff	13 staff

Cultural Brokerage Program and Children's Services staff also shared their perspectives on program benefits, developments and learnings during a collaborative program planning meetings in January 2019 and November 2019.

See Appendix B for survey and interview questions.

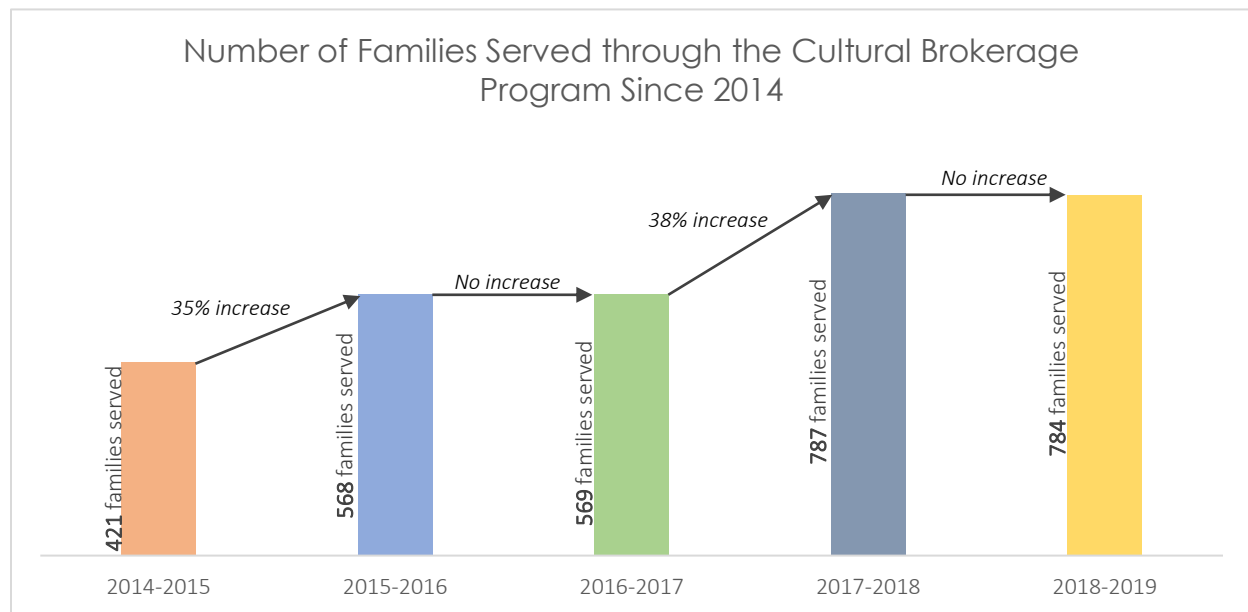
## 3.0 Cultural Brokerage Program Outputs

### 3.1 Total Number of Families Supported

From November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019, the Cultural Brokerage Program supported:

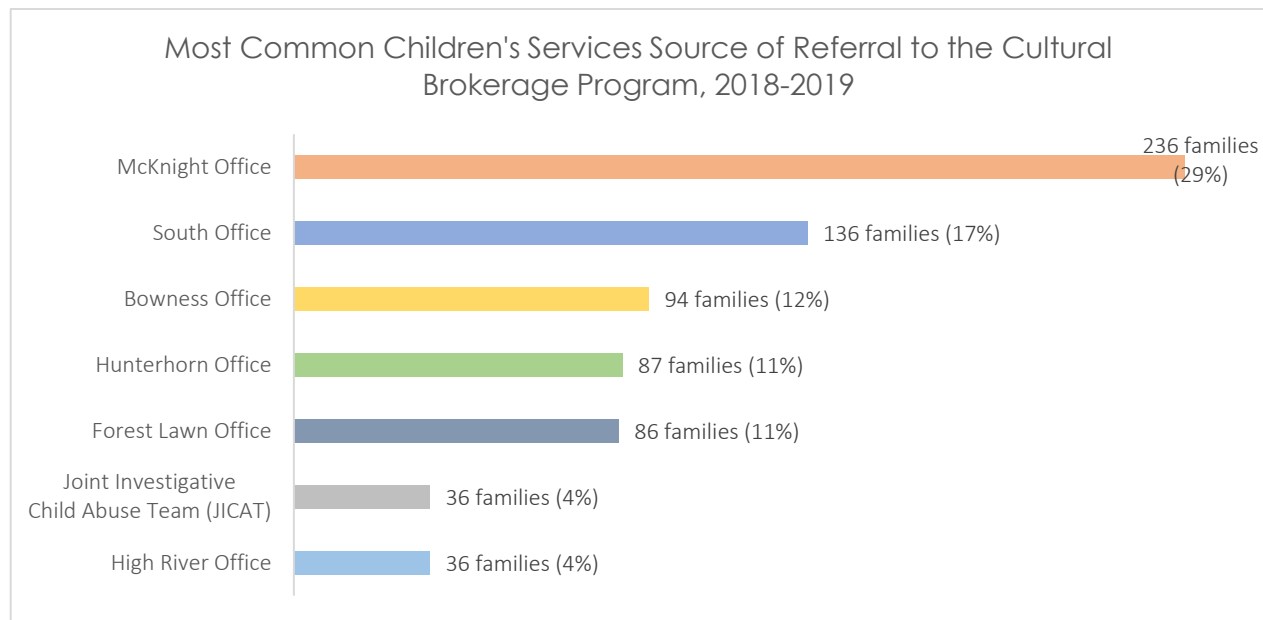
**784** culturally diverse families, representing **2,751** individual family members, including children.

This represents a relatively consistent demand for service since last year and an 86% increase over five years.



These output statistics align with the program's developmental journey wherein the program was initiated in 2014 and underwent a period of implementation and awareness-building before reaching its typical program uptake in 2015-2016. With the addition of the FV Specialist to the team in 2017, an increased number of families were served from 2017 to 2018, with a consistent number of families served from 2018 to 2019. This demonstrates that the program is in high demand and further team expansion would likely result in further increases in the number of families served.

Most families (88%) involved in program from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019 were connected via one of the following seven Children's Services offices in Calgary:



In 2018-2019, referrals were also made through the following Children's Services teams/offices:

Children's Services Office or Team	# of Families Referred
Dover office	26 families
Alberta Vulnerable Infant Response Team (AVIRT)	25 families
Youth at Risk team	18 families
Airdrie office	17 families
Child at Risk Response Team (CARRT)	5 families
Strathmore office	4 families
After-Hours Team - Calgary (formerly SSRT)	3 families
Aboriginal team	2 families
Richmond office	2 families

### 3.2 Cultural, Linguistic, and Faith Backgrounds

Families had a plethora of cultural backgrounds from **72** countries around the world. The five most common cultural backgrounds of family members supported were:<sup>3</sup>

1. South Asian (27%)
2. South East Asian (24%)
3. Chinese (10%)
4. Hispanic (9%)
5. Eastern African (8%)

<sup>3</sup> NOTE: Families may be composed of multiple cultures, so information reported about cultural background, languages spoken and country of origin are recorded and reported by individual family member. N=2,768

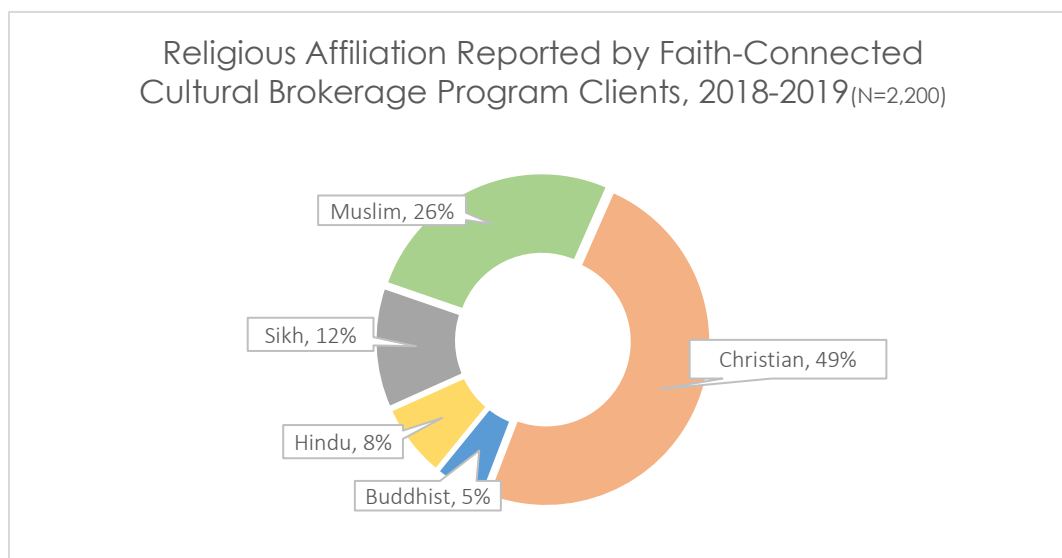
The five most common countries where family members had been born were:<sup>4</sup>

- |                                |                           |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Philippines</b><br>(15%) | <b>2. Canada</b><br>(12%) | <b>3. China</b><br>(10%) | <b>4. India</b><br>(10%) | <b>5. Pakistan</b> (6%)<br>Vietnam (6%) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|

In total, Cultural Brokerage Program clients in 2018-2019 spoke a total of **37** languages other than English. Even when a Cultural Broker does not speak a family's language, high quality cultural interpretation and language translation is available for families via CCIS' Interpretation and Translation Service social enterprise, that offers free services to clients of the program.<sup>5</sup> The five languages, besides English, most often spoken by clients in 2018-2019 were:<sup>6</sup>

- |                            |                            |                            |                           |                        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>1. Tagalog</b><br>(15%) | <b>2. Punjabi</b><br>(12%) | <b>3. Mandarin</b><br>(9%) | <b>4. Spanish</b><br>(8%) | <b>5. Urdu</b><br>(7%) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|

Faith can be a central element of culture for many, informing family decisions and action. In total, 20% of clients in 2018-2019 reported no religious affiliation or faith connection.<sup>7</sup> For those clients indicating a connection to a faith background, the most common faith connection in 2018-2019 was Christian, with 49% of religion-affiliated clients indicating they were Christian.<sup>8</sup> Most other major faith groups are also represented within the clients served in 2018-2019:



While each year the program supports a slightly different profile of families, overall, year-on-year client demographics are similar in terms of cultures, countries of origin, languages spoken, and religious affiliations.

<sup>4</sup> N=2,751

<sup>5</sup> For more information or to access the Interpretation and Translation Service visit:  
<https://www.ccisab.ca/families/interpretation-translation-service.html>

<sup>6</sup> N=2,751

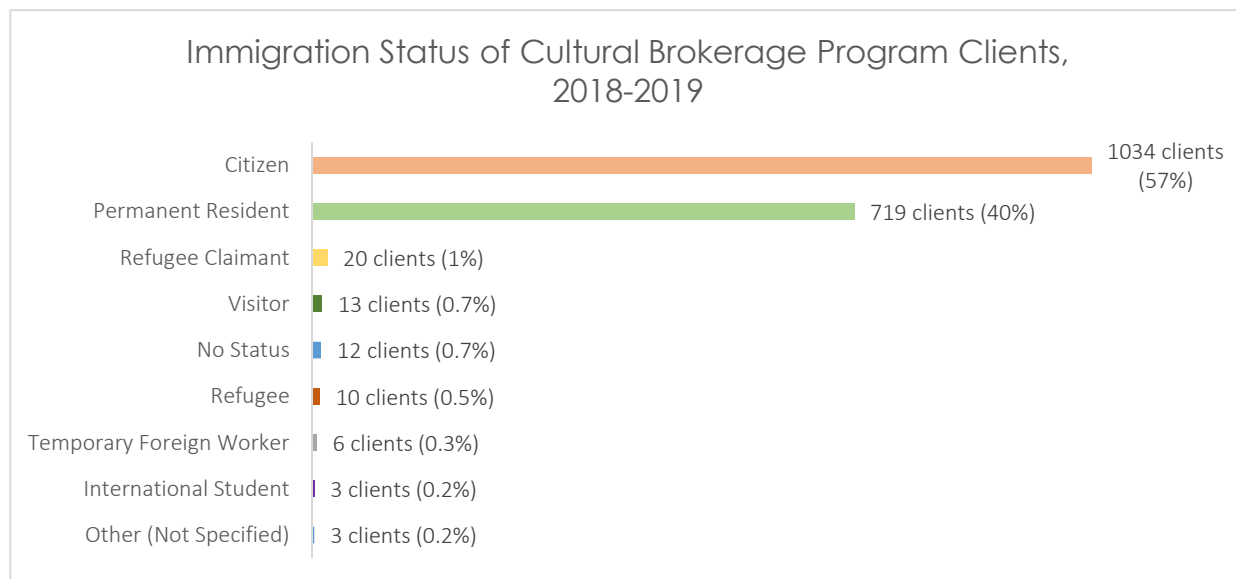
<sup>7</sup> N=2,751

<sup>8</sup> N=2,200 individuals listing a religious affiliation

### 3.3 Immigration Status

When Children's Services becomes involved with a family, immigration status concerns can elevate the level of stress within the family due to unfounded anxiety over Children's Services involvement impacting immigration status. Further, when one family member has been sponsored by another, an unequal power dynamic can emerge that can exacerbate issues within the family. For individuals who have been sponsored as an immigrant to Canada by another family member, the implications of reporting abuse or leaving an abusive relationship can be unclear, with fears related to immigration status often compounding barriers to seeking help.<sup>9</sup> The Cultural Brokers and FV Specialists support families in understanding the separation between Children's Services and Canada's immigration process, de-escalating immigration-related fear and enabling families to make informed choices about their next steps.

In 2018-2019, 57% of Cultural Brokerage Program clients were Canadian citizens while 40% were permanent residents. The remaining 3% of clients were Refugees, Refugee Claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers, Visitors and International Students. There were also twelve family members who had no immigration status.<sup>10</sup> Overall, sponsorship was a concern within 25% of families served. Of families with whom Children's Services indicated concerns over family violence (356 families), 54% were in a situation where sponsorship played a role in the family dynamic.<sup>11</sup>



### 3.4 Concerns Resulting in Children's Services Involvement

According to Alberta's *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, Children's Services may become involved with a family if concerns are raised about any act of maltreatment of a child by

<sup>9</sup> Alaggia, R., Regehr, C. & Rishchynski, G. (2009)

<sup>10</sup> N=1,820 adult clients

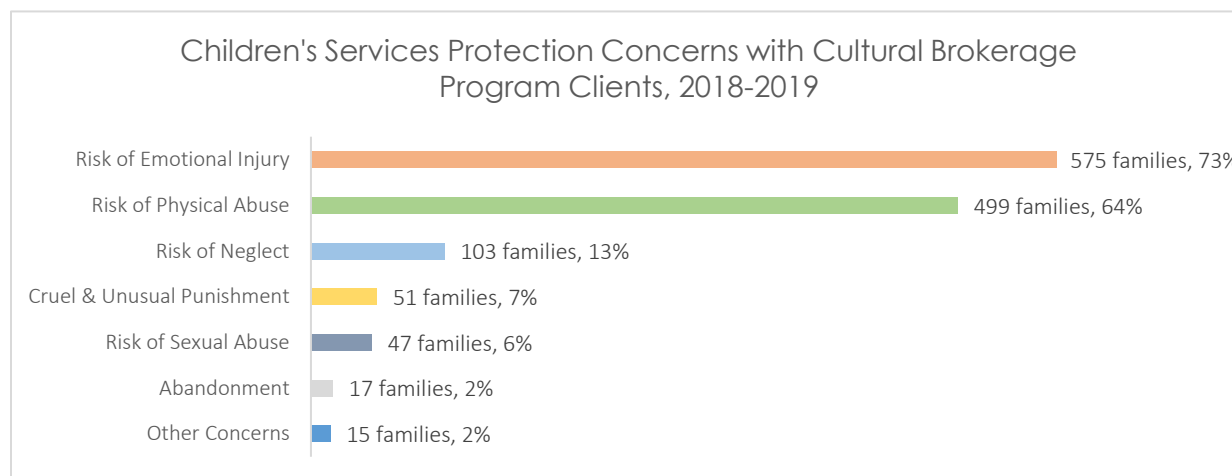
<sup>11</sup> N=356

a parent/guardian that results in injury or harm to the child.<sup>12</sup> These concerns are called ‘protection concerns’. During a Children’s Services assessment, there may be more than one protection concern present in a family. The primary types of harm with which Children’s Services are concerned are:<sup>13</sup>

Neglect                      Emotional                      Physical                      Sexual  
   Injury                      Abuse                      Abuse

This year, families supported through the Cultural Brokerage Program were involved with Children’s Services due to all possible types of protection concerns. In total, 1,307 protection concerns were recorded across the 784 families. The most common protection concerns were:

- 1. Risk of emotional injury**  
(73% of families experienced)
- 2. Risk of physical abuse**  
(64% of families experienced)
- 3. Risk of neglect**  
(13% of families experienced)



While some signs may point to abuse and raise protection concerns with Children’s Services, the family may also be facing other issues that can be ‘related concerns’ for Children’s Services. These include issues like violence between parents, parental drug and addiction issues, mental health concerns, and parenting issues, among others.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the protection concerns that resulted in Children’s Services involvement, 1,064 related concerns were recorded across the 784 families served through the Cultural Brokerage Program in 2018-2019.

Since 2014, the most prevalent related concern within families supported each year has consistently been family violence. This trend has continued in 2018-2019 with 46% of families experiencing family violence issues that were considered concerning to Children’s Services. While children in these families may not be victims of violence themselves, witnessing violence

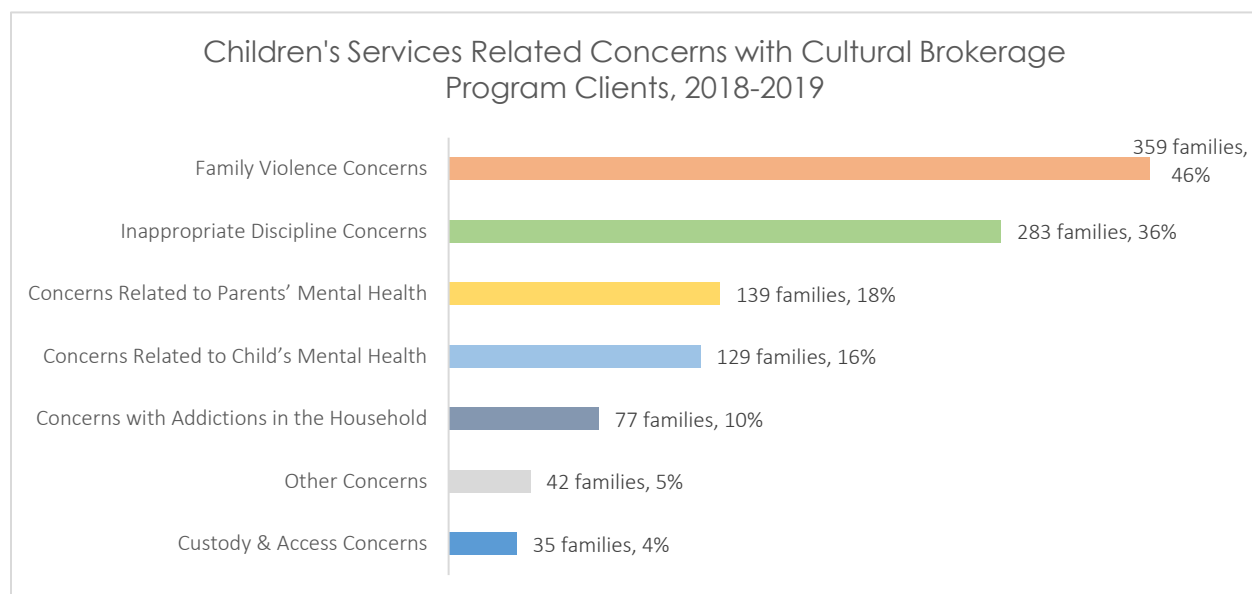
<sup>12</sup> Available online at: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> For more information see: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/14841.html>

in the home can result in negative outcomes for children including developmental delays, behavioural problems, psychosocial issues, increased likelihood of experiencing violent relationships or becoming perpetrators of violence in relationships, and ongoing PTSD symptoms.<sup>15</sup> The ongoing prevalence of family violence concerns suggests a continued need for the FV Specialist component of the program.

The second most prevalent related concern within families in 2019 was ‘inappropriate discipline’. This was a concern for Children’s Services within 36% of families. In many cultures, physical discipline of children (e.g. spanking, slapping) is considered acceptable. For families coming to Canada from cultures where physical discipline is acceptable, a lack of knowledge and awareness about positive parenting techniques and expectations in Canada can lead to Children’s Services involvement. The high prevalence of ‘inappropriate discipline’ concerns suggests a need for parent education to support positive changes in parenting practices and alignment with Canadian parenting expectations.



Since Children’s Services is focused on ensuring the safety of children, they are often unable to support families in addressing some of the underlying issues that may contribute to Children’s Services protection concerns. Research has shown that culturally diverse families may experience intersectional challenges and discrimination related to language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, social isolation, poverty and unaddressed mental health issues/trauma that can impact their ability to parent to the best of their ability.<sup>16</sup> Further, for many culturally

<sup>15</sup> See for example Holt, S., Buckley, H., & Whelan, S. (2008).

<sup>16</sup> LeBrun, A., Hassan, G., Boivin, M., Faser, S., Dufour, S., & Laverne, C. (2015).

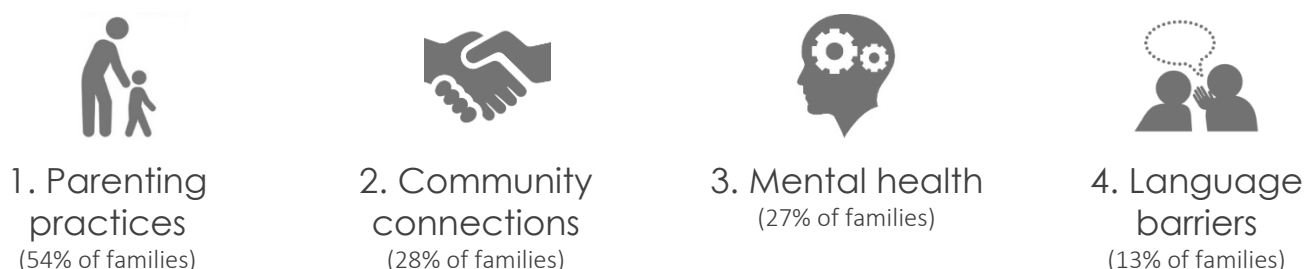


diverse families, immediate resettlement needs exacerbate stressors and issues with the family that can contribute to increased likelihood of Children's Services involvement.<sup>17</sup>

Embedded within the established resettlement expertise of CCIS, and keeping abreast of the most culturally relevant services available in the community, Cultural Brokers are able to provide the information, referrals and connections to specialized resources for culturally diverse families that Children's Services staff may not be experienced in providing. By supporting families in addressing underlying issues that have resulted in Children's Services involvement, the Cultural Brokerage Program helps to decrease the level of involvement of Children's Services in the long term and increase families' ability to provide safe and supportive homes for their children to grow and develop in Canada.

In total, 1,410 underlying issues were recorded for the 784 families served in 2018-2019.

'Parenting practices' was the most prevalent underlying issue contributing to Children's Services involvement, pointing again to the need for culturally responsive and tailored parenting information and education. Across all families served in 2018-2019, the four most common underlying issues were:



See Appendix D for a full chart of underlying issues experienced by families, and Section 4.2 for a list of supports and connections provided by Cultural Brokers.

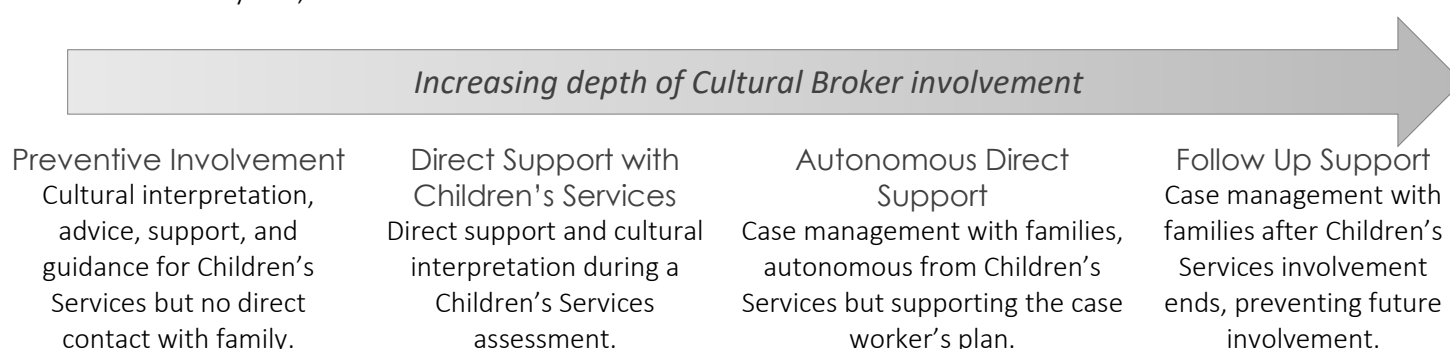
<sup>17</sup> Yick, Alice G., and Jody Oomen-Early. (2009); Mason, R., Hyman, I., Berman, H., Guruge, S., Kanagaratnam, P. and Manuel, L. (2008); Ben-Porat, Anat (2010); Asia & Pacific Islander Institute on Family violence APIA Health Forum (2010)

## 4.0 Cultural Brokerage Program Activities

### 4.1 Types of Involvement

The Cultural Brokers support Children's Services in working with culturally diverse families in a number of ways, including:

- Upstream involvement with Children's Services to consult and provide guidance regarding culture and culturally diverse families
- Direct support for culturally diverse families paralleling Children's Services assessment and involvement
- Ongoing case management with culturally diverse families outside of, and possibly beyond, Children's Services involvement



This year, most families were supported with assessment or brief services. In total, 52% of families were supported during the Children's Services assessment process and 41% received brief services, such as referrals, cultural interpretation and information.

Overall, **93%** of Cultural Brokerage Program work in 2018-2019 happened at the assessment and brief services level, contributing to Children's Services preventive work.

This preventive work is key for ensuring culturally diverse families can move on from their encounter with Children's Services to provide the most safe and caring homes for their children. For some families, however, deeper intervention is required to ensure the wellbeing of children in the household. In 2018-2019, the Program also supported:

- **8** Temporary Guardianship Orders (TGOs) through a foster family
- **1** TGO through kinship care (i.e. having a child stay with a relative temporarily)
- **2** Permanent Guardianship Orders (PGOs) through a foster family
- **3** PGOs through kinship care
- **1** PGO through a group home
- **11** emergency intervention situations

- **2 Supervision Orders**

In 2019, through the Apartment 1310 Program, the Cultural Brokerage Program was also able to support **13 families** through a period of family separation (connected to Children's Services involvement) by providing temporary accommodation and immediate case management support for perpetrators of family violence.<sup>18</sup>

Cultural Brokers are in a unique position to provide support for families beyond their involvement with Children's Services (after their Children's Services file has been closed). This support helps ensure families can make long term change that can ultimately reduce the likelihood of future encounters with Children's Services.

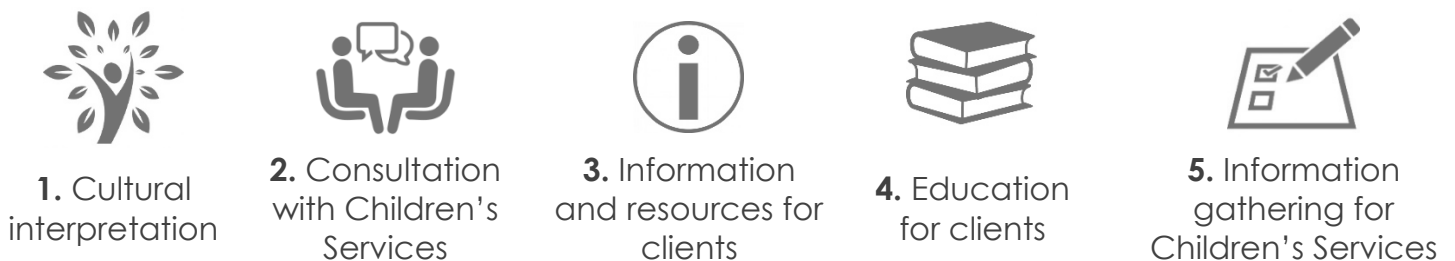
In 2018-2019, **36%** of Cultural Brokerage Program clients continued to receive support through the Program or CCIS after their Children's Services involvement had ended.

## 4.2 Services Provided

When Cultural Brokers work with a family, they provide cultural interpretation to bridge understanding between Children's Services and the family. Beyond cultural interpretation, Cultural Brokers provide case management support for families, which can include:

- Cultural interpretation
- Language interpretation
- Consultation with Children's Services workers
- Information gathering for Children's Services
- Education
- Information on resources
- Referrals to community resources
- Assistance in accessing community resources
- Court support
- Follow up support
- Support for case logistics
- Other support

This year, the top five most frequently provided supports were:



These are supports that Children's Services workers often cannot provide themselves (e.g. cultural interpretation) or that are more effectively provided by a Cultural Broker who is familiar with community services available for newcomers (e.g. information on resettlement supports). This support enables Children's Services to close cases more quickly, conduct culturally

<sup>18</sup> For more information on the outputs and outcomes from the Apartment 1310 Program and client work with the CCIS Family Violence Specialists, see the parallel 2019 evaluation report for these programs.

responsive assessments, and when child safety is assured, avoid apprehensions. Ultimately it helps ensure that families avoid Children's Services involvement in the future.

## 5.0 Cultural Brokerage Program Outcomes

### 5.1 Client-Rated Outcomes

In total, 499 families completed the Client Rated Outcome Exit Survey as their involvement with the Cultural Brokerage Program came to a close. Families who did not complete a survey during the evaluation period may still be involved with the program, or they may not have wanted to provide their feedback in this format.

In total, **95%** of families that completed a 2018-2019 Exit Survey felt that their family benefited from the Cultural Brokerage Program.<sup>19</sup>

- **95%** of families felt that, through the Program, they learned about resources they could access in the community.<sup>20</sup>
- **94%** of families felt that they connected with people in their community because of the support they received through the Program.<sup>21</sup>
- **95%** of families felt that they could get what they needed for themselves and their family because of their involvement with the Program.<sup>22</sup>
- **95%** of families felt more comfortable with government systems in Canada because of the support they received through the Program.<sup>23</sup>
- **95%** of families felt they had a goal or plan of action after their involvement in the Program.<sup>24</sup>

These results suggest that the Cultural Brokerage Program is providing a high quality and impactful service for culturally diverse families who are involved with Children's Services. The results have been similar since the inception of the program in 2014, suggesting high program effectiveness and client satisfaction. See Appendix E for more details.

### 5.2 Perspectives from Families

To gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of the outcomes experienced by families, individual interviews were conducted with 13 families. The interviewed families came from a variety of cultural backgrounds, worked with different members of the Cultural Brokerage team and had various different concerns that resulted in Children's Services involvement. Contacts for the families were provided by the Cultural Brokerage Program team and two interviews were conducted by trained interpreters in the family's home language.

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<sup>19</sup> N=374 (82% agreed and 13% somewhat agreed that their family benefitted)

<sup>20</sup> N=378 (85% agreed and 10% somewhat agreed that they learned about resources)

<sup>21</sup> N=366 (80% agreed and 14% somewhat agreed that they connected in the community)

<sup>22</sup> N=372 (80% agreed and 15% somewhat agreed that they could get what they needed)

<sup>23</sup> N=373 (80% agreed and 15% somewhat agreed that they had a plan of action after the program)

<sup>24</sup> N=353 (60% agreed and 11% somewhat agreed the outcome happened for them)

Interview feedback from clients revealed that families are having very positive experiences with the program and feel grateful to have cultural support when navigating their Children's Services involvement. When asked about the specific ways in which the Program had benefited their family, clients said that because of the Program:

- They had a better understanding of Children's Services' role and the changes that the family needed to make to comply with Children's Services' requests
- They were less fearful of Children's Services, the police, and other systems in Canada
- They were able to connect to services and resources to enhance the wellbeing of their family (e.g. psychologist)
- They learned about healthy family dynamics and ways to promote a healthy and safe environment for their children (e.g. healthy boundaries, expectations, avoiding family violence, positive parenting, conflict resolution, communication)
- They were supported in problem solving with respect to systems, settlement and basic needs issues (e.g. applying for Alberta Works, connecting to counselling)
- Their family gained a greater awareness of forms of abuse, impacts of abuse and strategies for decreasing abuse in the home

*"I learned lots. We are happy now. Things still come up, but we learned how to handle issues and have better communication."*

*"[The Cultural Broker] helped me. It was really good. I got lots of information. She taught me about violence and child brain development."*

*"[The Cultural Broker] was a bridge between my culture and the local culture. She helped and was a good emotional support."*

*"I was scared, but [the Cultural Broker] supported me and helped me."*

When families were asked to speculate about what their situation might have looked like if they did not have access to a Cultural Broker they felt they would have experienced greater fear and anxiety, that they wouldn't have been able to communicate as easily with Children's Services and that the issues in their family may have perpetuated or escalated. Specifically, clients speculated that, without the program:

- They would have had difficulty communicating with and explaining their situation to Children's Services
- They would have been scared and anxious
- They wouldn't have had the right information to address Children's Services' concerns
- They wouldn't have been able to make the necessary changes in their family to mitigate future issues and Children's Services involvement

*"Without [the Cultural Broker] I would be lost and stuck. I have friends but nobody helps me the way [the Cultural Broker] has helped me."*

*"I think things would've gotten worse, if we didn't get help at that time."*

Most families felt they did not experience any challenges related to the Program or the Cultural Brokers and only two families made suggestions for improvement. They suggested that more in-home support (including in-home counselling support) would have been beneficial for their family.

*"I'm grateful that we have Cultural Brokers here. I couldn't imagine if I didn't have this opportunity."*

*"I would say congratulations for the amazing workers that you have. They give everything they have. It is clear to me that they love what they do and love helping people."*

### 5.3 Perspectives from Children's Services Staff

In total, interviews were conducted with 13 Children's Services staff to better understand outcomes from the program. Both frontline and managerial staff were interviewed, including staff from different Children's Services office and staff with experience working with different Cultural Brokers. Children's Services staff highlighted the many benefits they felt families involved in the Cultural Brokerage Program experienced in 2018-2019, including:

- Feeling more comfortable with Children's Services, systems and resources in Canada
- Having shorter and less-involved Children's Services interventions
- Having greater understanding between families and Children's Services (cultural interpretation)
- Being connected to culturally responsive resources in the community
- Having support and connections to services after Children's Services is no longer involved
- Having greater understanding of, and comfort with, Canadian norms, laws and rights
- Feeling less fear and anxiety around Children's Services' involvement
- Having emotional support through a difficult situation
- Gaining connections to cultural communities and supports within communities
- Developing effective and culturally responsive safety plans

*"Involving Cultural Brokers shows families that we care about cultural issues and we care about understanding the differences."*

*"Families feel that they are understood – beyond language."*

*"Families are gaining the skills and feeling supported so we don't end up seeing those families again."*

*"The Program helps a lot with issues of domestic violence."*

Children's Services staff also described the benefits they witnessed for Children's Services as an organization, including:

- Gaining a better understanding and awareness of culture and the impact of culture on how families behave and interact
- Having better communication with families and getting better and more accurate information on what is going on within families that helps avoid misunderstanding
- Better collaboration with families to find solutions that work for both families and Children's Services
- Being able to close cases more quickly with less involvement from Children's Services
- Decreased recidivism and apprehensions (i.e. increased preservation of the family and strengthening of the family)
- Putting 'a face' to the Ministry and making Children's Services less 'scary'

*"I think that without this program, we wouldn't be able to do our jobs adequately with families that are culturally diverse."*

*"[The Program] is not only supporting the family in terms of their culture; it helps Children's Services. It helps me understand that family's perspective, what kind of lens they're looking through."*

*"The Program has become a necessity. Calgary is known for being a 'white city' and it's not. This Program is a good acknowledgement of that."*

Children's Services staff were also asked to reflect on the ways in which their own approach and perspectives had changed based on their interactions with the Cultural Brokers and trainings provided through the Program. Positive outcomes that Children's Services staff felt that they had personally experienced included:

- Being more likely to ask for help and involve a Cultural Broker to provide cultural interpretation
- Having a better understanding of families' experiences, cultural connections and beliefs and why they might act as they do
- Having a better understanding of how Children's Services staff might be perceived by culturally diverse families (e.g. fear at government becoming involved in the family)
- Experiencing personal growth and deeper understanding of the impacts of culture

*"I always go in as non-judgmental, but I learn from the Cultural Broker as well. It helps my understanding."*

Overall, Children's Services staff indicated that, over the past five years, the Cultural Brokerage Program has become embedded in the way they do their work, with staff feeling that the Program is an essential for effective work with culturally diverse families.



*“We couldn’t do without the Program now. They are our colleagues now.  
The Program is invaluable.”*

*“Now I don’t want to go out without a Cultural Broker – it’s very hard to  
overcome the barriers without them.”*

*“The Program is amazing! I have been working here for over 20 years, and the  
difference between before and after the Cultural Brokers is huge.”*

*“The Brokers are such a natural part of the office now. At most sites the Program  
is so embedded now.”*

Most staff said that they had experienced few or no challenges working with the Cultural Brokers. Others felt there were some challenges with:

- Broker availability (e.g. not available after-hours)
- Boundary setting by some Brokers
- Having consistency across Brokers around the amount of time and support a family receives
- Brokers not fully understanding PSECA legislation

Overall, 75% of staff said the Cultural Brokerage Program could be more effective if there were more Cultural Brokers. Specifically, they suggested expanding the team to include:

- After hours/emergency support
- A Nigerian Cultural Broker
- A Somali Cultural Broker
- Two Sudanese Cultural Brokers
- A Farsi-speaking Cultural Broker
- A Cultural Broker for Calgary’s Child Advocacy Centre

Other ideas for improvement from staff included:

- Having a direct interpretation contract with CCIS to facilitate cultural interpretation when the culture/language is not available through the Cultural Brokerage team
- Providing more training for Cultural Brokers around working with extreme cases, trauma, self-care, and safety protocols (possibly including the Cultural Brokers in Children’s Services onboarding and safety training sessions)
- Continuing to engage with cultural communities to facilitate the work of Children’s Services and the Cultural Brokers
- Having the Cultural Brokerage Program’s Cultural Thinking Framework workshop set as mandatory for all Children’s Services staff and possibly extending it to caregivers (e.g. foster parents)
- Continuing to support Cultural Brokers in effective self-care strategies

## 5.4 Celebrated Moments from 2019

Several developments in 2019 were highlighted by the Cultural Brokerage team and Children's Services staff as achievements to be celebrated.

In 2019, the Program became increasingly embedded with Children's Services, speaking to the strength of the partnership and the tangible value of the program. Specifically, the Cultural Brokerage Program is now included in Basic Orientation training for all new Children's Services staff. Further, Cultural Brokers have been invited to attend Triage and Consultation sessions at different Children's Services locations on a rotating basis, enabling growth in Children's Services' cultural capacity with staff learning from all Brokers, not just the Broker assigned to their office.

In 2019, the Cultural Brokerage Program was also recognized nationally at the annual Metropolis conference in Ottawa, where details of the Program were presented and stakeholders from across the country engaged in dialogue about the Program. Beyond the conference, Pathways to Prosperity Canada highlighted the Cultural Brokerage Program as a 'promising practice' in 2019, profiling the Program nationally through a video production and brief on the program.<sup>25</sup> Pathways to Prosperity identified the Cultural Brokerage Program as a 'promising practice' based on its:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Relevance
- Sustainability
- Transferability
- Innovative and forward-thinking approach
- Uniqueness compared to other program models
- High client uptake
- High client retention
- Strong evidence of successful outcomes achievement

The Cultural Brokerage Program was the only program from Alberta selected as a national promising practice in 2019.

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<sup>25</sup> Brief: <http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2019/05/DEB-Nominations-Brief-CCIS-EN.pdf>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBTEY6Q578w&feature=youtu.be>

## 6.0 Learnings and Recommendations

The 2018-2019 evaluation of the Cultural Brokerage Program revealed that the Program is continuing to serve a high volume of culturally diverse families and that most families involved in the Program experience positive outcomes as a result. Positive outcomes for families included decreased fear and anxiety in interacting with Children's Services, increased family capacity (including increased parenting capacity, resolved resettlement issues, etc.), and improved outcomes with respect to Children's Services involvement (e.g. decreased recidivism). Beyond the outcomes experienced by families, the 2018-2019 evaluation revealed that the Program is creating important positive outcomes for Children's Services as a system as well as individual Children's Services staff. With 2018-2019 being the fifth year of the Program, evaluation results suggest that it is now deeply embedded and valued within the Children's Services system in Calgary.

While the results from the evaluation were very positive, opportunities for improvement nevertheless exist. In particular, Children's Services staff indicated that they recognize the value of the Program and would like even more support in working with culturally diverse families.

Based on the evaluation results and suggestions for improvement from Children's Services staff and culturally diverse families, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue the program. Based on the positive evaluation results, it is clear that the Program is effective in creating positive outcomes for newcomer families involved with Children's Services. Continuing the program will enable ongoing positive outcomes for families and deeper learning within Children's Services about working at the intersection of child protection issues and diverse cultures.
2. Seek opportunities to share the positive results of the Program to enable replication where appropriate. With the Cultural Brokerage Program recognized as a promising practice nationally, there is an opportunity to further disseminate the positive results of the program and provide guidance for others who wish to pursue a similar program partnership model in their own jurisdiction.
3. Seek opportunities to expand the program. Based on the positive evaluation results and comments from staff and clients, it is recommended that the program seek opportunities for expansion. Specifically, it is recommended that the program seek opportunities to include:
  - After hours/emergency support
  - A Nigerian Cultural Broker
  - A Somali Cultural Broker
  - Two Sudanese Cultural Brokers

- A Farsi-speaking Cultural Broker
  - A Cultural Broker for Calgary's Child Advocacy Centre
4. Seek opportunities to establish an interpretation contract directly between Children's Services and CCIS. While the Cultural Brokerage team are able to support with cultural interpretation in seventeen different languages, when families need support in other languages it would be most efficient and effective for Children's Services to have a direct contract with CCIS to provide interpretation. This would ensure quick connection to appropriately trained interpreters that can be supported by Cultural Brokers.
  5. Seek opportunities for greater in-home and community-based Cultural Brokering. While most families interviewed as part of the evaluation felt that nothing could be improved about the program, two families suggested that additional in-home or community-based support from Cultural Brokers (or something similar) would be beneficial. This could be provided through an expansion to the Cultural Brokerage Program or in partnership with CCIS more broadly and would likely enhance families' experience and further advance positive outcomes for families.
  6. Seek opportunities for Cultural Brokers to undergo further training. This could include training on working with extreme cases of child maltreatment/abuse, training on trauma informed practice and vicarious trauma, training on self-care and/or training on safety protocols. Opportunities may include co-training with Children's Services staff, where appropriate.
  7. Advocate for the Cultural Brokerage Program's Cultural Thinking Framework workshop to be mandatory for all Children's Services staff. Children's Services staff have highlighted the benefits of the workshop and feel that participating should not be optional. In particular, it is recommended that Children's Services staff participate in the workshop as part of their Delegation Training before working with families in the community. While additional resources may be needed to implement Cultural Thinking Framework workshop in a mandatory way, it may ultimately create better interactions for culturally diverse families involved with Children's Services.

## Appendix A: Resources Consulted

- Alberta Human Services (2015). *Child Abuse*. Available online at: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/14841.html> (Accessed December 21, 2016)
- Brown, J., George, N., Sintzel, J., St. Arnault, D. (2009). Benefits of Cultural Matching in Foster Care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(9), 1019-1024.
- Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act. (2000, current as of December 17, 2014) Available online at: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf> (Accessed December 21, 2016)
- Holt, S., Buckley, H., & Whelan, S. (2008). The Impact of Exposure to Domestic Violence on Children and Young People: A Review of the Literature. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 32(8), 797-810.
- Jezewski, M. and Sotnik, P. (1990) The Rehabilitation Service Provider as Cultural Broker. *Centre for International Rehabilitation Research and Exchange (CIRRIE)*
- LeBrun, A., Hassan, G., Boivin, M., Faser, SL, Dufour, S., & Lavergne, C. (2015). Review of Child Maltreatment in Immigrant and Refugee Families. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 7:(Suppl. 2), eS45-eS56.

## Appendix B: Data Collection Tools

### Client Rated Outcomes Section – CCIS Cultural Broker Program Exit Form

<i>With my Cultural Broker I.....</i>	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
1. Learned about resources I can access				
2. Have been able to connect with people in my community				
3. Feel like I can get what I need for myself and my family				
4. Feel more comfortable with government systems in Canada				
5. Feel like I have goals or a plan of action				
6. Feel like my family has benefited overall				

### Interview Questions for Child and Family Service Frontline Staff

In 2014 Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) established the Cultural Brokerage Program to address a need for enhanced culturally competent services for immigrant children and families involved with Calgary Children's Services. The overall objective of the program is to work together with Children's Services to increase collaboration, engagement, and partnership with culturally diverse communities in Calgary, and strengthen community capacity within Calgary's multicultural communities.

Last year, an external evaluation of the program revealed that it is having significant impact. CCIS has engaged Constellation Consulting Group again this year to build on last year's learnings and uncover learnings from the program this year. To this end, we are currently seeking your feedback as a stakeholder in the implementation of the program.

The interview shouldn't take more than 15 minutes to complete and your responses will be kept confidential with the external evaluator. All data will be reported in an aggregate manner without identifying any individual respondent. Some quotes from interviews may be included in the final report, however no names will be attached to quotes. You can stop the interview at any point, and if you decide after the interview that you do not want your views included in the evaluation you can let us know and we'll remove your responses. Before we start, do you have any questions about the evaluation?

1. How long have you worked with Children's Services? Have you had the same role the entire time?
2. In a typical month, how many culturally diverse families would you estimate you work with? Which cultural backgrounds are they primarily from? How many would you estimate are newcomers to Canada?
3. When working with culturally diverse families have you ever involved a Cultural Broker? How often would you estimate you involve a Cultural Broker in a typical month?
4. What are the reasons why you might choose to involve a Cultural Broker?
  - [Prompts]
  - a. What benefits do you see from the involvement of a Cultural Broker?
  - b. In what ways does Children's Services as an organization benefit from the Cultural Brokerage Program?
5. For you personally, do you feel like the availability of Cultural Brokers has changed your approach or perspective when working with culturally diverse families?
6. What challenges have you faced with respect to the involvement of Cultural Brokers?
7. What could change to make the Cultural Brokerage Program even more effective?
8. Do you have any stories you could share about the impact of the Cultural Brokers?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share?

If you think of anything else that you would like to include in the evaluation, or if there is anything that you said that you would like to change or remove, please feel free to call me at 403-923-7611 or email me at [anne@constellationconsulting.ca](mailto:anne@constellationconsulting.ca). The evaluation report is being prepared for December 2016 and results can be shared with you once the evaluation is finalized.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to the evaluation of CCIS' Cultural Brokerage Program.

### Interview Questions for Cultural Brokerage Program Clients

We want to know how well the Cultural Broker program for families like yours. We also want to know what could be done better in the program so that families like yours will have a good experience. We would love to hear about your experience working with Cultural Brokers and Child and Family Services (Children's Services).

Your responses will be kept confidential – they will not be shared with the Cultural Brokers or Child and Family Services (Children's Services). Any information you share will not affect your relationship with the Cultural Brokers or Child and Family Services. Any information that is reported will not have your name or any other information about you included, so no one will know that the answers are yours.

1. How did the Cultural Broker\* **help** your family?  
[Prompts]
  - a. What sorts of services did they connect you with?
  - b. Did they help you understand what was going on?
  - c. Were they able to help Child and Family Services understand you (your views, your culture, your position, etc.)?
2. Can you tell me about what you think would have happened if the Cultural Broker wasn't involved?  
[Prompts]
  - a. What would your situation be if the Cultural Broker didn't help?
3. What could be **improved** about working with the Cultural Broker?
4. Were you involved with Child and Family Services (Children's Services) before you had a Cultural Broker? If yes, do you feel like your work with Children's Services was different once you had a Cultural Broker? (If no, skip to last question) What was different?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share about the Cultural Broker Program?

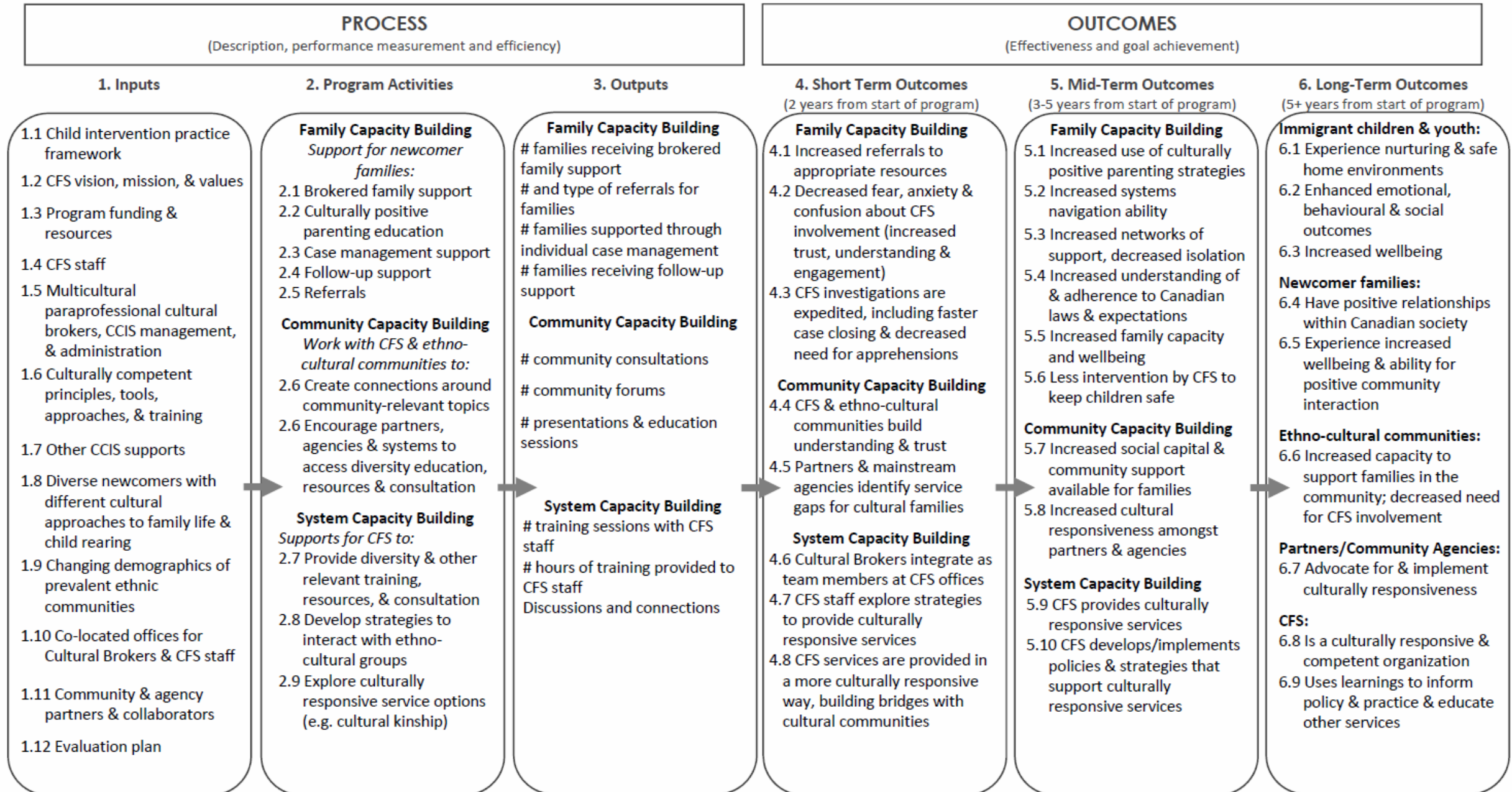
\*Note: may insert Broker name for clarity with family

If you think of anything else that you would like to include in the evaluation or if you would like to change or remove any of your answers please feel free to call me (Anne) at 403-923-7611 or email me at [anne@constellationconsulting.ca](mailto:anne@constellationconsulting.ca). The evaluation report is being prepared for December 2016 and results can be shared with you once the evaluation is finalized.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to the evaluation of CCIS' Cultural Brokerage Program.

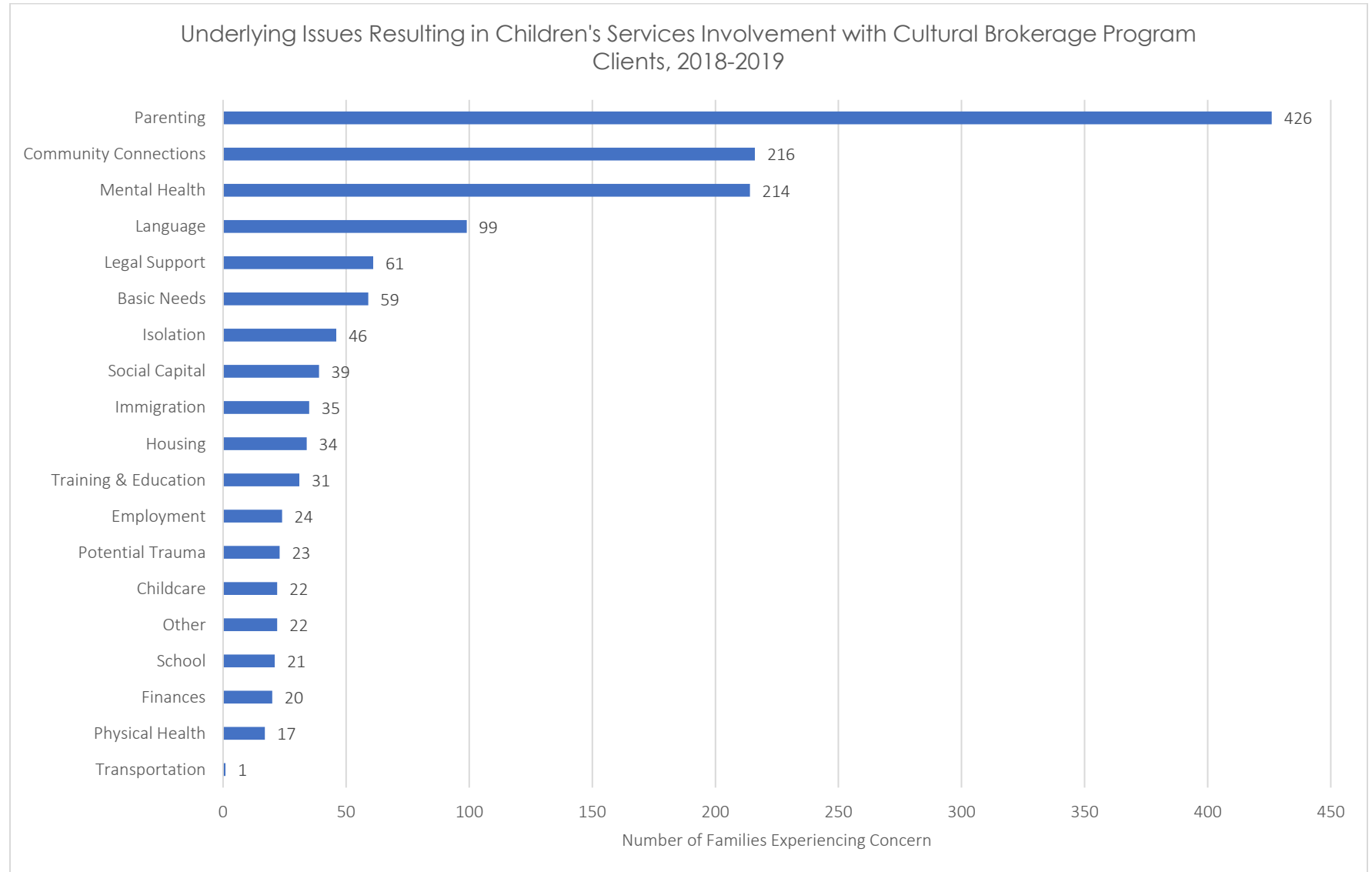


## Appendix C: Program Logic Model





## Appendix D: Underlying Issues Experienced by Families



## Appendix E: Client Rated Outcome Exit Survey Responses

Outcome question	N	% Disagree	% Somewhat disagree	% Somewhat agree	% Agree
Through my Cultural Broker I learned about resources I can access	378	0%	4%	10%	85%
Through my Cultural Broker I have been able to connect with people in my community	366	1%	5%	14%	80%
Because of my Cultural Broker I feel like I can get what I need for myself and my family	372	0%	5%	15%	80%
Because of my Cultural Broker I feel more comfortable with government systems in Canada	374	0%	5%	14%	80%
With my Cultural Broker I feel like I have goals or a plan of action	373	0%	5%	15%	80%
Because of my Cultural Broker I feel like my family has benefited overall	374	0%	5%	13%	82%