



**National  
Capital Region**

Wired: Evaluating  
Settlement Online (WESO)

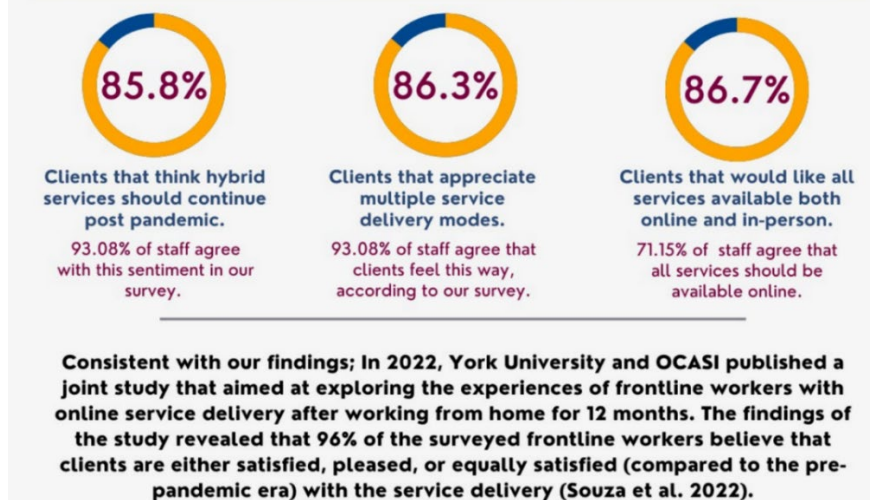
# Hybrid Settlement Services: Perspectives of Clients and Staff in Evolving Service Landscapes

## Wired: Evaluating Settlement Online (WESO)

*The WESO Program offers research, infographics, and practical recommendations to improve hybrid settlement service delivery.*



## Are Hybrid Services Here to Stay?



This infographic illustrates the sector's increasing reliance on technology, challenges faced during the pandemic's early days, and the ultimate success in delivering satisfactory services in the online realm. The story is one of adaptation, innovation, and resilience in the face of change. The results of our client and staff surveys show that both staff and clients agree that online services should continue post-pandemic. The information is based on data collected between June and September 2022.

A 2019 PeaceGeeks report emphasized the emergence of technology as an increasingly vital tool for newcomers. This report identified the untapped potential of technology in the settlement sector, calling for innovative solutions and a more effective use of technology. The pre-pandemic era was seen as a time of promise, urging the settlement sector to invest in technology to provide online services and explore novel service delivery methods (PeaceGeeks, 2019).

Fast forward to 2020, just a month into the remote working scenario brought about by the pandemic, a report jointly authored by North York Community House, Department of Imaginary Affairs, and Campana captured the initial reactions of settlement service providers to the shift online. In this early phase, settlement service staff found themselves thrust into an environment where quick and dramatic changes were essential. The report identified a significant challenge – the newcomer digital divide. Staff struggled to adapt to remote work, juggling the demands of work with family responsibilities (North York Community House, Department of Imaginary Affairs, and Campana, 2020).

Moving ahead to 2022, a study conducted by York University in collaboration with OCASI surveyed frontline workers in the settlement sector who had been working from home for a year since the pandemic's onset. The study's findings were quite heartening, with a remarkable 96% of surveyed frontline workers reporting that clients were either satisfied, pleased, or equally satisfied with the services provided, compared to the pre-pandemic era (Souza et al. 2022).

### Sources:

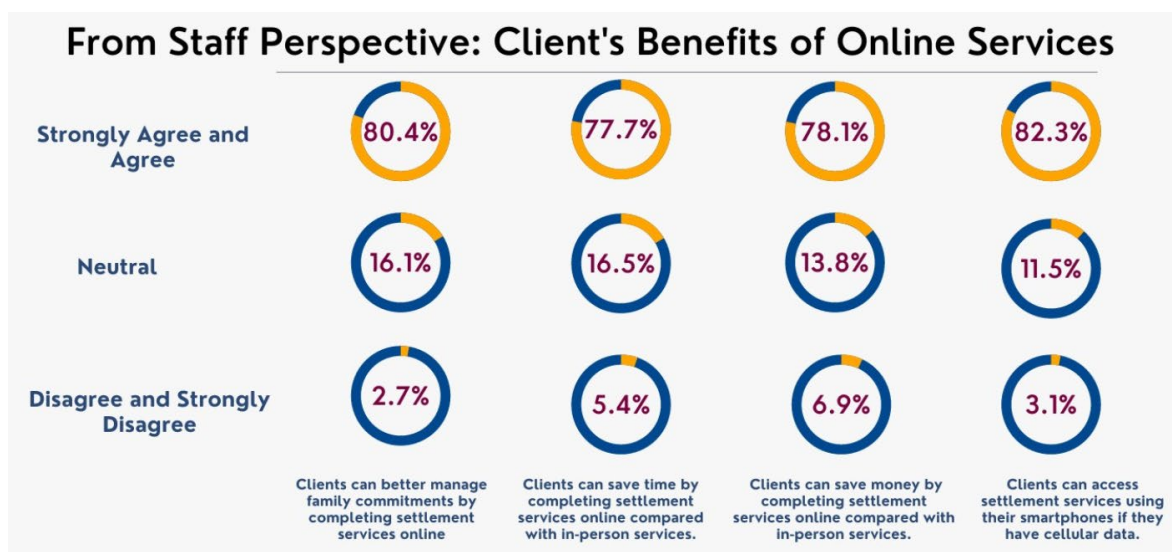
- North York Community House, Department of Imaginary Affairs and Campana, (2020), COVID and Canada's Settlement Sector: Survey Results North York, North York community house.
- PeaceGeeks (2019), Settlement 2.0 Projects: Situational Analysis. Funded by IRCC.
- Souza, J.D, Ekra, M., Preston, V., Shields, J., (2022). Pandemic Response Survey Results OCASI Agency Frontline Workers. Report. York University. Retirved on 19-04 from: [Microsoft Word - Executive Summary OCASI Management Report.docx \(yorku.ca\)](#)



## Can you think of more benefits (or drawbacks!) to hybrid service for clients?

In our staff survey we asked about the benefits of Hybrid services for Newcomer clients. We found results consistent with the York and OCASI study:

- Remote services help reducing the need for commuting and alleviate parking costs.
- They also allow clients to save time on commuting, reduce paper costs, and reduce queuing and waiting times.
- In addition, remote services facilitate access for clients with physical disabilities and encourage multiple visits due to flexibility.
- These services are more convenient as customers can fill out forms, book appointments, and read information on the website 24/7 (Wong et al., 2021).
- In this way, the clients enjoy more flexibility and don't have to worry about a specific time to get services (Hackbarth & Cata, 2021).
- In using remote services, clients avoid going out in harsh weather conditions and avoid long trips, especially if they live in rural areas (Moriarta et al. 2020). Also, remote services allow clients to care for their families while still accessing services at home or at their residence.



**Note:** The data illustrated is based on the survey responses of 260 settlement staff from all across Canada. The data was collected between June and September 2022.

### Sources:

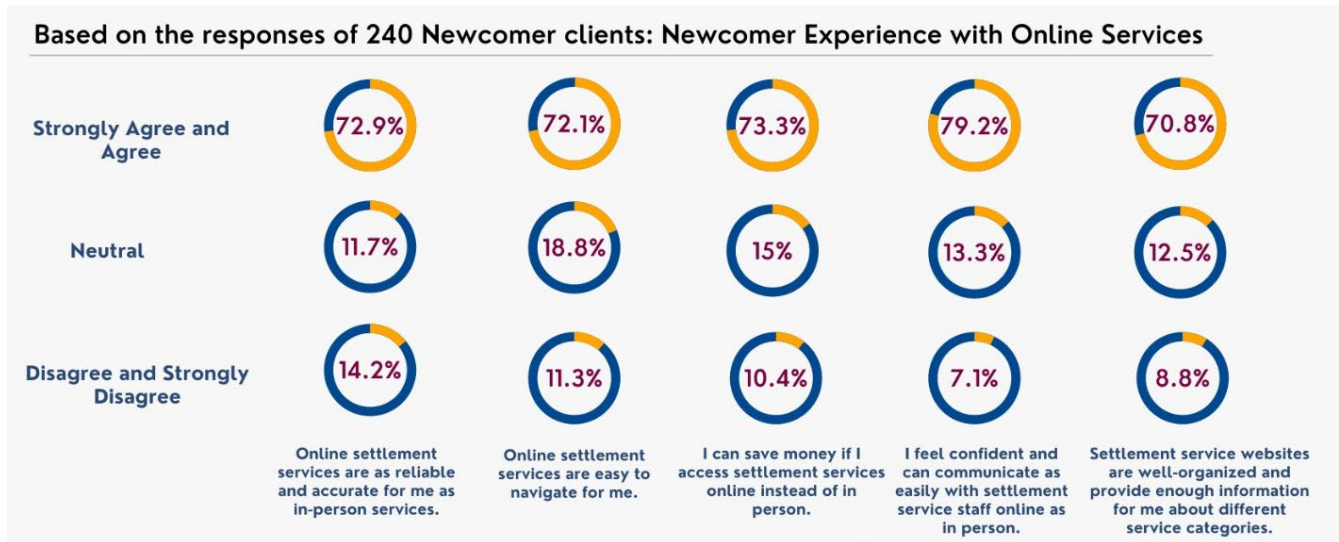
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- Moriarta, Marcia; Cahill, Anthony; and Fredine, Heidi (2020) "Using Quality Improvement (QI)-Focused Evaluation to Redesign Direct Home- and Community-based Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency:" *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 18.
- Wong, M. S., Hideki, N., & George, P. (2011). The use of importance-performance analysis (IPA) in evaluating Japan's e-government services. *Journal of theoretical and applied electronic commerce research*, 6(2), 17-30.



## What drives Newcomers to use online services?

In a service context, clients' choices depend on their motivations.

This image presents the perception of 240 Newcomers' towards the ease of use and usefulness of Online services. The data was collected between June and September 2022.



The Theory of Reasoned Action, as put forth by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1975, highlights that behavioral intention (BI) hinges on attitude (A) and subjective norm (SN). Attitude is shaped by the anticipation of outcomes and beliefs about the action, while subjective norm is influenced by the expectations of significant others and normative beliefs. In simpler terms, Newcomers are more likely to use online services if they perceive positive outcomes and receive encouragement and good word of mouth from their social circle.

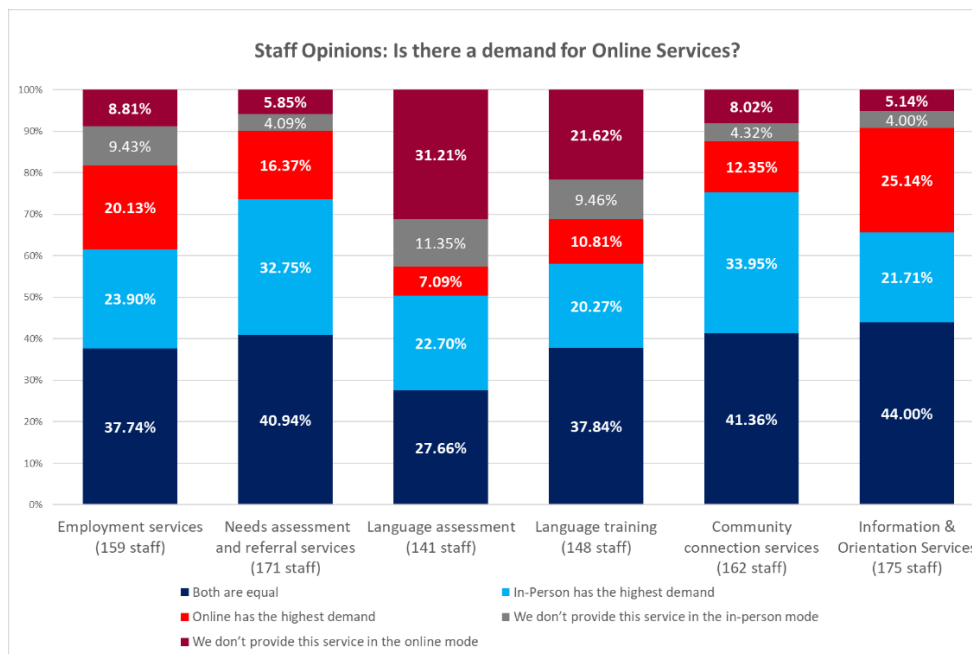
Furthermore, Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) adds a relevant perspective to this discussion. TAM highlights that perceived ease of use and usefulness significantly influence the intention to use technology. In essence, if Newcomer clients find online services easy to use and beneficial, they are more inclined to engage with them.

However, the digital literacy challenges and limited access to online services among many newcomers can affect their willingness to use hybrid services. It's important to consider these barriers in the context of behavioral intentions.

### Sources:

- Ajzen, I., and Fishbein, M. (1975). A Bayesian analysis of attribution processes. *Psychological bulletin*, 82(2), 261.
- Davis, F. 1989. Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3): 319-340.





- The image above summarizes staff perspectives on demand and service offerings for the six main settlement categories. The data comes from the pre-survey of the Toolkit training. The data was collected between June and October 2023. The number of staff that responded to each question is illustrated in the infographic.
- 31.21% of staff reported that they exclusively provide in-person services for language assessments, while almost 35% of staff noted that online services have equal or greater demand for this service. In contrast, 11.35% reported offering only online services. This suggests that nearly one-third of providers do not offer flexibility for clients.
- One-fifth of staff reported that they exclusively offer in-person language training, with almost 48.65% (almost half) reporting that online services either have equal or greater demand compared to in-person services. Additionally, 9% reported offering online services exclusively.
- The results show that there is a consistent and strong demand for both online and in-person service modes across all service categories.

Verma et al. (1999) explain that by understanding client choice models, managers can strategically align their service offerings to more effectively cater to the market's demands.

Additionally, client choices can inform various operational decisions, such as

- staff scheduling,
- planning special activities,
- and refining service offerings.

This process will enable the development of optimal service configurations to meet clients' needs. Furthermore, it has been found that the likelihood of choosing a particular provider increases with the variety they offer (Verma et al., 1999).

**Source:**

- Verma, R., Thompson, G. M., & Louviere, J. J. (1999). Configuring service operations in accordance with customer needs and preferences. *Journal of Service Research*, 1(3), 262-274.



## Recommendations:

- Reassess service offerings for language assessments and training to explore efficient ways to provide both in-person and online services. This adjustment aims to provide greater flexibility for newcomers, aligning with the consistent and strong demand observed for both modes.
- Develop targeted strategies to bridge the newcomer digital divide, considering barriers such as limited access to online services. Implement initiatives to ensure equitable access and support for all clients.
- Strategically align service offerings based on client choice models to inform operational decisions, such as staff scheduling, planning activities, and refining service offerings. Consider client preferences for both online and in-person modes.
- Establish a feedback loop with clients and staff to continuously assess the effectiveness of services. Use feedback to adapt and improve offerings based on evolving client needs and technological advancements.
- Foster collaborations with technology experts or organizations to stay updated on the latest advancements and best practices in digital service delivery. Leverage external expertise to enhance the sector's technological capabilities.
- Implement mechanisms to measure the impact of hybrid services and report success stories. Use this data for advocacy, securing funding, and demonstrating positive outcomes resulting from the sector's adaptation to technology.

