



**Altered  
Minds  
Inc.**

learning, changing, growing

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



**Hockey Day at Camp Assiniboia**



**Living English, Farming Group**



**Living English, Gardening**

**Altered Minds Inc.  
June 6, 2019**

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**Living English, Food Preparation & Nutrition**



**Living English, Leather Working**



**Living English, Sewing**



## Executive Summary

In 2018-2019, Altered Minds Inc. received funding from 3 sources to help immigrants and prospective immigrants gain knowledge and skills to integrate socially and economically in Manitoba. We served 3,617 individuals, including 2,963 permanent residents (PR) and 462 prospective PRs in Manitoba, and 192 pre-arrival immigrants still in their home countries.

Program & Number of Clients Served in 2018-19	Funding Source & Duration of Agreement	Amount
1. <u>Entry Program (EP) &amp; Entry Program Online (EPO)</u> : Orientation & Language for Newcomers for new arrivals to Manitoba - 2,902 participants	Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) 2017-2020	\$1,220,263
2. <u>Living English for Employment (LEE)</u> : Summer language and work experience program for newcomers with limited English – 61 participants	2018-2021	99,355
3. <u>Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)</u> : Settlement planning and employment services for immigrants destined to Manitoba – 192 pre-arrival PRs	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) 2015-2020	225,609
4. <u>Computers for Life (C4L)</u> : Developed curriculum for basic computer training for newcomers with limited English – classes begin in April 2019	Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada (ISED) 2018-2022	29,415
	Total:	<b>\$1,574,642</b>

The most significant events of the fiscal year were:

- The completion of an independent evaluation of the Entry Program
- Having the Entry Program selected as 1 of 6 ‘promising practices’ out of 79 submissions nationally
- Securing funding from IRCC to offer Living English for Employment (LEE) as a Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) project for 3 years
- Securing 3 years of funding from ISED to deliver basic computer training for newcomers with limited English
- Having our SOPA agreement extended till March 2020
- Achieving major targets on AMI’s first ever Strategic Plan
- Having our funding for the Entry Program decreased by 12%

## Entry Program

### EP Evaluation

Since the federal government took over the direct funding of settlement services from Manitoba in 2012, IRCC has questioned the length and dual focus of the Entry Program on orientation and language. Apparently this is a unique format unlike other orientation programs in Canada. In our 3-year Contribution Agreement (2017-2020), therefore, IRCC stipulated that we complete a 3<sup>rd</sup> party evaluation of the Entry Program. Working with a national advisory committee, we put out a formal Request for Proposals, and selected Health in Common to conduct the evaluation.

The evaluation sought to determine if AMI's 4-week Entry Program clients have better outcomes than clients in orientation programs of shorter duration. A retrospective pre/post survey was distributed directly to participants, which they completed in print or online in English or their first language. The evaluation compared respondents' self-assessed changes in knowledge, confidence level and satisfaction with orientation received. A total of 290 clients completed the survey, as shown below.

Control Group	Non-AMI respondents, Non-Refugees	n=102
Entry Program 4-week	Attended 4-week Entry Program	n=104
Entry Program 1-week	Attended 1-week Entry Program "Express"	n=84

Results of the evaluation indicated that when comparing Entry Program 4-week students vs the Control Group:

- 4-week EP respondents reported significantly better outcomes than control group respondents who attended orientation programs of shorter duration, in all areas of knowledge and capacity assessed.
- Entry Program clients were almost two times more satisfied (very satisfied, satisfied) than control respondents when asked about instructors, methods, material and information.
- The average self-reported level of change in knowledge and capacity is greater among all EP respondents (1- and 4-week) when compared to the control group.
- When comparing participants attending one week or four weeks at AMI, 4-week students report an increased knowledge about laws, capacity to adapt to Canada, and feeling less anxious.

Ultimately, the study showed that there are significant benefits in knowledge and capacity gain derived from the Entry Program, and that duration has a positive relationship with knowledge gain. The longer the program, the greater change in knowledge and capacity for orientation clients.

### EP as a Promising Practice

Encouraged by the results of the Entry Program evaluation, we responded to a national call for submissions of settlement projects/programs that can provide empirical evidence that they are promising practices. The Entry Program was 1 of 6 programs selected out of 79 submissions. Each selected agency received a small financial award, and a media specialist and photographer traveled across Canada to interview staff about the project. A series of short videos was produced which can be viewed at:

<http://p2pcanada.ca/promising-practices/category/sharing-settlement-and-integration-practices-that-work/>.

Grace Eidse also presented the Entry Program orientation model and evaluation results at the Metropolis Conference in Halifax in March 2019.

### EP Statistics

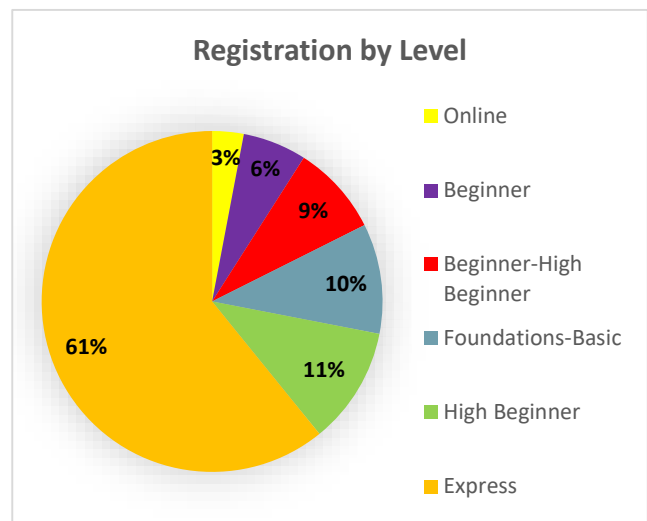
Over 3,364 newcomers from 108 different countries attended the Entry Program. Student numbers fluctuated between 593 in June to only 224 in February.

- 47% attended classes in the morning, 28% in the afternoon, 22% in the evening, and 3% online
- 64% attended the 1-week 'Express' or EPO, and 36% attended the 4-week program
- 36% of participants received interpretation services
- 67% were Economic immigrants, 15% were Refugees, and 18% were Family Class



Newcomers acquire valuable Canadian experience from volunteer and paid work opportunities at the Entry Program. Each year, a handful of clients get their first paycheck for serving as interpreters for lower level students.

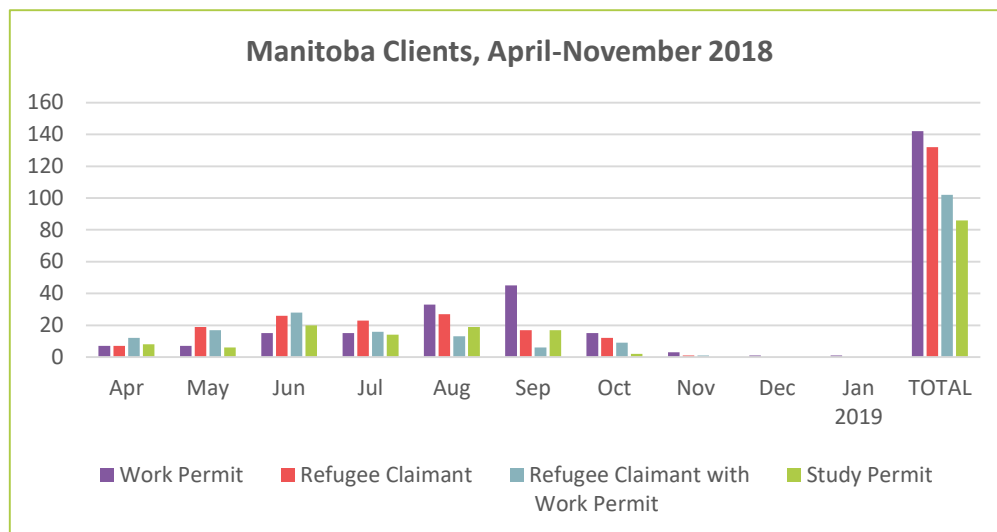
- 526 newcomers volunteered while attending EP
- 119 speakers from 33 agencies delivered presentations on Guest Speaker Day
- 60% of our 140 freelance interpreters and several guest speakers were former clients



### Pilot Study

When Manitoba Education & Training put out a Request for Proposals in March 2018 seeking to expand services to individuals who are not eligible for IRCC-funded programs, AMI submitted 2 applications for funding. Anticipating a positive response, we conducted a 6-month pilot study to better understand who these 'ineligible' clients are and how many would avail themselves of our services if funding were secured.

From April to September, 462 of what the province now calls 'Manitoba Clients' attended the Entry Program, as shown below. A majority were Temporary Foreign Workers (31%), followed by Refugee Claimants (29%), Claimants with Work Permits (22%), and International Students (18%). We shared these demographic findings with the Province, but in the end our proposals were not approved.



## Challenges

**Enrolment decline and fluctuation:** The number of newcomers registering for the Entry Program has been declining since 2014-2015. This past year it decreased almost 50%, from 4,433 the previous year to 2,902. Add to that the wild fluctuations in enrolment from winter to summer months, and one can understand how difficult it has been to keep full-time staff gainfully employed. One reason for the declining numbers may be that more prospective immigrants are coming to Manitoba on temporary visas and applying for permanent residence from within Canada. They are not eligible for IRCC-funded services when they arrive, and once they receive PR status a few years later, they tend not to follow the same referral pathways as newly-arrived immigrants.

We hope that the Province will reconsider its decision in the future and see the benefits funding AMI to provide orientation for all newcomers, regardless of status. It would create cost efficiencies by ensuring we have the critical mass needed to offer orientation in a large group format. It would reduce duplication of our services elsewhere, be convenient for clients who go through intake next door at Manitoba Start, and maximize the use of our space.

**Reduced budget:** Due to decreased landings in Manitoba in the past few years, the federal government reduced funding for settlement services to the province. We were advised to reduce our budget by 5% in 2018-2019 and by 10% in 2019-2020. After final negotiations, our budget for 2018-2019 was actually reduced by 12%. We were forced to cut back interpretation services and rely more on volunteers. To maintain a semblance of job security for long term staff, we implemented creative job sharing strategies to avoid lay-offs.

## Living English for Employment

This past year marked the 12th anniversary of Living English, and a shift to an employment focus for the activity-based summer EAL program. In July and August 2018, the program provided 4 language training and work experience for 61 learners with limited English, and established new partnerships with 7 employers. Students were placed in multi-level classes according to the work focus they selected at registration. The options were Sewing, Farming & Gardening, Food Preparation & Nutrition, and Leather Work.

Of the 47 students who completed the program:

- 25 were female and 22 were male
- Their ages ranged from 22-69 years old
- Source countries (self-declared at registration) were:
  - Syria (9)
  - Iraq (7)
  - Eritrea (6)
  - Afghanistan (4)
  - Congo (4)
  - Somalia (3)
  - Myanmar (3)
  - China (1)
  - Djibouti (1)
  - Ethiopia (1)
  - India (1)
  - Israel (1)
  - Ivory Coast (1)
  - Mali (1)
  - Mauritania (1)
  - Sudan (1)
  - Turkmenistan (1)
  - Venezuela (1)

Work Theme & Employer Partner(s)
Farming & Gardening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Hnatiuk Gardens CSA</li><li>○ Almost Urban Vegetables</li><li>○ Northern Sun Farm Co-op</li></ul>
Leather Work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Earth &amp; Hyde Leathercraft</li></ul>
Sewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Cutting Edge</li><li>○ One Nation Exchange</li></ul>
Food Preparation & Nutrition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Food Matters Manitoba</li></ul>

## Challenges

**Inadequate ramp up time:** Coordinators officially had only 1 week to register students, hire and train teachers, organize work placements for 60 students, and develop curriculum. Fortunately, the team was willing to begin work early, trusting that the Agreement would be signed, but we had to reduce the length of the program.

**New curriculum framework:** Because of the shift to an employment focus, teachers could not use the wealth of materials developed over the past decade. Coordinators established a completely new framework with student Learning Portfolios as the focal point.

**Scheduling conflicts:** About one-third of those who quit LEE did so in order to join one of the Refugee Employment Development Initiative (REDI) programs being offered during the same time frame.

## Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)

AMI has delivered pre-arrival employment services since 2015, as the Manitoba partner for the national program managed by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). SOPA partners in each region provide services for permanent residents destined to their province. Our SOPA Manitoba team consists of 1 Intake Counsellor, a Soft Skills Facilitator, and a Job Search Strategies Facilitator.

One hundred and ninety-two (192) clients completed intake for SOPA Manitoba in 2018-19.

### Challenges

**Technology:** Despite technological advances, face to face meetings with clients around the world pose an on-going challenge. Our SOPA facilitators primarily use Big Blue Button, but poor audio and video connections often force them to switch to Skype and other aps, or abandon the effort and revert to email communication.

## Computers for Life

We were proud to be one of 2 agencies in Manitoba to receive funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada to deliver digital literacy training for multi-barriered individuals. It is the first time ISED has funded an immigrant serving agency, as their clients are typically big businesses, working on large projects for indigenous groups.

Due to delays in signing the Agreement, we were not able to start classes in FY1, but we did develop curriculum for a 2-level program for adult newcomers. Demand for the classes is high, and we have already registered 127 students for classes beginning in April 2019.

Interpretation and childminding supports will be provided, and we have partnered with the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI) to deliver classes at 61 Juno St for those who need childminding. We plan to deliver 66 classes (new intakes) from April 2019 to March 2022, to groups of 10-12 students each, reaching a total of 660 immigrants over the next 3 years. Students receive a free, refurbished desktop computer donated by "Computers for Schools" upon completing the program, and have the option to apply for low-cost internet through the "Connecting Families Program".



Computers for Life, First 2 graduating classes





## Strategic & Operational Planning

AMI held its first strategic planning session in January 2018, and staff have managed to achieve most of the targets set for 2018-2019.

Strategic Priority	Accomplishments to date
<b>1. Diversify Revenue</b>	
a. Explore and pursue fee for service and cost recovery options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMI staff completed a pilot study for The Settlement Enterprise Consortium (TSEC) – a national group that is researching potential fee for service offerings for the non profit sector.</li> <li>• We have costed out and begun to register ‘non-eligible’ clients for the Entry Program</li> <li>• We established ‘AMI Academy’ and developed curriculum for 2 levels of English training to be offered on a fee for service basis. The anticipated start date is June 2019.</li> <li>• To offset extra costs of hosting groups in our space, we established room rental rates for agencies who can afford it</li> </ul>
b. Social enterprise strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explored possibility of establishing an Urban Garden as a social enterprise and will continue to research other options</li> <li>• Continuing to seek out partnerships to support small business ‘incubation’ in tandem with the LEE. Hoping to establish skills training year round.</li> </ul>
c. Grant applications	5 funding proposals submitted between Nov 2017 and Apr 24, 2018. Two approved and 3 declined.
d. Engage in fundraising activities	Have not yet organized fundraisers
e. Gain charitable status	Have not yet registered AMI as a charity
<b>2. Networking &amp; Marketing - Increase awareness, visibility and profile of AMI</b>	
a. Via expansion of Living English	Living English for Employment (LEE) approved for 3 years, till March 2021
b. Identify people of influence and establish a plan to connect with them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained connections with provincial government</li> <li>• Invited Jon Gerard (Liberal Party) to attend an EP graduation</li> </ul>
c. Increase knowledge & relationships with partners; visibility, and awareness of our services	SOPA and EPO staff regularly promote AMI’s programs at SOSSA meetings in 7 Oaks and use multilingual SOPA promo video to raise awareness of our services on immigration forums in Winnipeg and internationally.
d. Connect with former students/clients	Clients are invited to attend guest speaker presentations. Info is posted on FB and a schedule is on our website.

Strategic Priority	Accomplishments to date
e. Identify and connect with org's or employers to market / sell curricula	Entry Program produces Resource Sheets in 23 languages. English & French versions are available on our website, and we will supply translations to agencies for a small fee. The funds will help cover the cost of regular updates.
f. Establish a plan contribute for networking and marketing	Engaged a WorkStart placement to develop a marketing strategy for AMI
g. Clarify our brand	Updated logos, standardized email signatures. We use brand colours in our promotional materials, table cloth 'banner' and social media.
<b>3. Human Resources</b>	
a. Embrace and support family feel in the workplace – positive culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All project teams are involved in PD planning and team building activities</li> <li>ED supports positive life/work balance via schedule flexibility and time off to care for family members</li> </ul>
b. Secure employment and benefit plan	New benefit plan in place as of December 2018 involving almost all staff
c. Full-time volunteer coordinator	Not able to secure funding
<b>4. Expand Services and Programs</b>	
a. Prioritize ideas for programming and explore feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEE &amp; Digital Literacy approved</li> <li>Proposals for MB Education &amp; Training not approved</li> <li>We draft and submit proposals every time an RFP occurs</li> </ul>

## Looking Ahead

Our current Contribution Agreement with IRCC for the Entry Program will end in March 2020. We have submitted a 5-year proposal to IRCC to continue delivering the Entry Program and other services in from 2020 to 2025, and hope to hear back from IRCC in August. Our Entry Program budget for 2019-2020 has been cut by 21%, which will have a significant impact on client services and staff hours.

Yet despite these difficulties, I am thrilled to see staff members step up to take on more responsibility, explore creative ways to help learners overcome barriers, take the initiative to apply for funding, organize events, manage new programs, write reports. We are maturing as a team and learning to roll with the punches.

I am pleased to have agreements in place to continue delivering the following programs:

- Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) till March 2020
- Computers for Life (C4L) till March 2022, and
- Living English for Employment (LEE) till March 2021.

And I am blessed to have many great partners and a special team of talented, creative and caring individuals by my side.

## Statement of Operations

**ALTERED MINDS INC.**  
**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

	Year ended March 31,	
	2019	2018
<b>Revenues:</b>		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	\$ 1,287,020	\$ 1,314,754
Settlement Online Pre-Arrival program funding	225,609	225,009
Digital Literacy Exchange Program	15,700	-
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets		
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	66,950	44,216
Digital Literacy Exchange Program	6,228	-
Other income	3,690	765
	<u>1,605,197</u>	<u>1,584,744</u>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Amortization	73,178	44,216
Bank charges	944	1,138
Communication	7,357	8,613
Digital Literacy Exchange Program	15,699	-
Insurance	5,114	5,215
Living English expenses	90,190	64,160
Office expenses	55,718	82,066
Professional fees	4,860	5,445
Rent	239,420	239,420
Repair and maintenance	20,088	25,851
Salaries and contractor payments	856,758	868,583
Settlement Online Pre-Arrival program	195,738	196,228
Training and conferences	1,188	7,224
	<u>1,566,252</u>	<u>1,548,159</u>
<b>Difference between revenues and expenses</b>	<u><u>\$ 38,945</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 36,585</u></u>

## Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors is comprised of individuals who support our mission statement, represent the demographics of the people we serve, and have skills and experience that assist the agency in achieving its goals.

Chair	Gonzalo Agrimbau
Vice Chair	Adrian Ong
Treasurer	Minh Hoang Nguyen
Secretary	Judianne Jayme
Member at Large	Hongyu (Max) Wang
Member	A'elaf Erdachew
Member	Idris Knapp
Member	Aradhana Kumari
Member	Patrick Kabongo
Member	Matt Teymouri
Member	Margarida Demarchi

Incorporating Directors/Founders: Grace Eidse, Deborah Spear



*AMI welcomes refugees and immigrants to Manitoba and promotes the well-being of their families and communities, locally and overseas, by harnessing resources and providing responsive programs and services that assist individuals in adapting to change and overcoming barriers to a good quality of life.*

