



**IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE AND VOCATIONAL  
ASSESSMENT - REFERRAL CENTRE (ILVARC)**  
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## **Public Report**

**April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013**

**Dated: May, 2013**

**Funded by:**

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Alberta Human Services**

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### ***VISION***

*Immigrants and their families participate fully in an integrated and cohesive Canadian society.*

### ***MISSION***

*Immigrant Services Calgary is committed to being a comprehensive settlement agency working together with immigrants and their families to make Canada home.*

### ***VALUES***

*We are passionate, collaborative, accountable, and ethical leaders in settlement services. We believe that people come first. We are committed to quality services for a diverse Canadian community.*



## **Immigrant Language & Vocational Assessment - Referral Centre (ILVARC)**

### **Mandate**

ILVARC assists immigrants and refugees to:

- 1) determine their English language proficiency and/or
- 2) access language training opportunities and/or
- 3) advance their vocational/career/employability goals and/or
- 4) enhance their educational opportunities and/or
- 5) access support services

These services are primarily offered through first language assistance.

To accomplish its mission, the Centre serves stakeholders and the community by:

- 1) identifying and analyzing clients' needs,
- 2) referring clients to appropriate language, education and training programs
- 3) sharing information,
- 4) providing networking and liaison opportunities,
- 5) conducting workshops.

In addition, the Centre may undertake special projects related to the mandate.

### **Language Capacity:**

Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Czech, Dinka, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Macedonian, Mandarin, Nepali, Nuer, Pashto, Persian (Dari, Farsi), Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Telegu, Tigrinya, Toishanese, Urdu, Vietnamese.

### **Funded by:**

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## IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE AND VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT - REFERRAL CENTRE (ILVARC)

ILVARC's primary mission is to provide English proficiency and first language literacy assessment, ESL and career counselling and referrals.

ILVARC provides information on and referrals to language, education and training programs to support the advancement of our beneficiaries' linguistic and vocational goals. Operating as the sole centralized language assessment and referral centre in Calgary, we also determine eligibility for the federally sponsored Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program.

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### OUR CLIENTS

ILVARC serves individuals of all backgrounds, a large percentage of whom possess academic or technical skills yet are often faced with language challenges and other barriers. By determining the current level of English proficiency and first language literacy, educational background, work experience and career goals, our first-language counselors develop action plans for our beneficiaries and refer them to the most suitable LINC/ESL programs. They also link them with bridging programs, skills training, employment programs and services as well as accreditation bodies. In addition, they connect them to either in-house or external settlement services for support in their settlement and integration process.

Due to the increasing numbers of immigrants arriving to Calgary from in-land and abroad, we have seen an increased demand for services in 2012. Recent changes in the LINC/ESL and Canadian citizenship policies have also caused a greater number of beneficiaries to seek ILVARC's assistance. ILVARC continued to respond to this demand by carefully balancing the allocation of available resources in its central as well as off-site locations and by employing the most prudent strategies to maximize efficiencies and to facilitate timely access.

### OUR IMPACT

In response to identified needs and trends, we offer workshops that are professionally hosted. Through these workshops we enhance the employability and career related skills of educated but not yet integrated immigrants and link them to employment bridging programs and accrediting bodies which assist them with labour market integration.

Beneficiary satisfaction is very important to us and we determine our success from feedback provided in the client satisfaction questionnaire. Over 90% of those surveyed expressed a high level of satisfaction and appreciation of ILVARC's services and a follow up standard questionnaire further indicated that over 92% were enrolled or pre-registered in ESL and/or other programs.

### OUR REACH

ILVARC is committed to continue improving access to services for under-served, multi-barriered, isolated and underprivileged newcomers to Calgary and surrounding areas as well as for underserved ethno-cultural community groups. To that end, ILVARC staff worked tirelessly to strengthen community connections by increasing our assessment and referral services in various Calgary geographic areas, in particular in north east communities of Calgary at the Genesis Centre and periodically on demand in Calgary's surrounding areas such as Canmore, Banff, Cochrane, High River, and Okotoks.

### A LEADER IN THE FIELD

In 2012-2013 the professional experience and expertise of ILVARC's professionally certified language assessment team served to further advance the needs of ESL service providers across the province by presenting at conferences, hosting workshops and participating in the development of specialized assessment tools and pilot projects.

One of the highlights of the year was ILVARC hosting the LINC 20th Anniversary celebration marking two decades of success of this federally funded English language training for newcomers to Canada and ILVARC's pivotal role in the LINC assessment and referral service provision in Calgary during these past 20 years. Beneficiaries, funders and service providers celebrated the successes of LINC and its partnerships with ILVARC.

*"In our support to newcomers we plant the seeds of hope, direction and encouragement. With our assistance throughout the settlement process, nourished with inspiration, stimulated by empowerment, the seeds sprout, grow and bloom into the fruit of their success."*

IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE AND VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-REFERRAL CENTRE (ILVARC)																															
<p><b>ILVARC Referrals - 2012/2013</b> <i>Number / Percentages</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><i>A. Access Language Training Opportunities</i> 26,061 / 42%</p> <p><i>B. Advance Vocational/Career/ Employability Goals</i> 5,841 / 9%</p> <p><i>C. Enhance Educational Opportunities</i> 6,494 / 10%</p> <p><i>D. Access Support Services</i> 23,491 / 38%</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>TOTAL 61,887 / 100%</b></p>	<p><b>BENEFICIARIES</b> Served <b>12,732</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>SESSIONS</b> <b>20,266</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>ASSESSMENTS</b> Completed <b>7,879</b></p> <p>.....</p>																														
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEADING LANGUAGE GROUPS</b> <i>Served by ILVARC</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Punjabi / Urdu / Gujarati / Hindi</td><td style="text-align: right;">16.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mandarin</td><td style="text-align: right;">11.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>Spanish</td><td style="text-align: right;">10.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tagalog</td><td style="text-align: right;">9.2%</td></tr> <tr><td>Arabic</td><td style="text-align: right;">7.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Persian (Farsi, Dari)</td><td style="text-align: right;">5.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Amharic</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Russian/Ukrainian</td><td style="text-align: right;">3.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tigrinya</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>French</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Korean</td><td style="text-align: right;">2.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>Vietnamese</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Cantonese</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>English</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>Nepali</td><td style="text-align: right;">1.7%</td></tr> </table>	Punjabi / Urdu / Gujarati / Hindi	16.4%	Mandarin	11.5%	Spanish	10.3%	Tagalog	9.2%	Arabic	7.3%	Persian (Farsi, Dari)	5.3%	Amharic	3.9%	Russian/Ukrainian	3.3%	Tigrinya	2.8%	French	2.8%	Korean	2.7%	Vietnamese	1.9%	Cantonese	1.7%	English	1.7%	Nepali	1.7%	<p><b>LANGUAGES</b> <b>SPOKEN</b> by Beneficiaries of Services <b>132</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b> of Origin <b>145</b></p>
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## Annual Report April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013 Executive Summary

From April 1, 2012 until March 31, 2013, ILVARC served a total of **12,732** clients including **7,724** first-time clients served in **13,859** sessions, **4,441** repeat clients served in **6,367** sessions and **567** workshop participants served in **40** sessions. A total of **69,766** services were provided (including 7,879 assessments). In order to provide comprehensive service to the clients served, ILVARC made **43,650** other contacts.

### **A. Profile of First-time Clients Served:**

#### **1. Number of First-time Clients**

- A total of 7,724 first-time clients were served in 13,859 sessions  
The number of first-time clients served exceeded the target (6,700) by 1,024 (15.3%).

#### **2. Gender**

- ILVARC provided services to 3,055 (39.6%) male and 4,669 (60.4%) female clients.  
Overall, 1,614 more female clients were served compared to male clients. This constitutes 52.8% more female clients than males.

#### **3. The Leading Languages:**

- Punjabi/Urdu/Gujarati/Hindi – 1,270 (16.4 %)
- Mandarin - 890 (11.5 %)
- Spanish - 797 (10.3 %)
- Tagalog - 714 (9.2%)
- Arabic - 566 (7.3 %)
- Persian (Farsi, Dari) - 411 (5.3 %)
- Amharic - 301 (3.9 %)
- Russian/Ukrainian - 258 (3.3 %)
- Tigrinya - 215 (2.8 %)
- French - 213 (2.8 %)

#### **4. Leading Immigration Categories**

- Independent Class – 3,745 (48.5%)
- Family Class/Assisted Relative – 2,282 (29.5%)
- Refugees – 1,602 (20.7%) of which 638 (8.3%) were Government Sponsored Refugees.

#### **5. Length of Residency in Calgary**

- Less than 1 year – 4,452 (57.6%)
- 1 - 3 years – 790 (10.2%)
- 4 - 6 years – 1,462 (18.9%)

Overall 5,242 (67.8%) clients have resided in Calgary less than 3 years.

## 6. Inland Migration

- A total of 1,921 (24.9%) clients moved to Calgary from other provinces or other cities in Alberta which reflects continued inland migration.

## 7. Outcomes of English Proficiency Assessments

Overall, there were **7,059** assessments performed for first-time clients which exceeded the target (6,650) by **409 (6.1%)**. The 7,059 assessments conducted at ILVARC included 949 using CLBA, 5,771 using CLBPT, 26 using ELTPA, 234 using CLBLA/CLBLA Screening, and 79 using CELBAN.

- The majority of first-time clients demonstrated English proficiency ranging from Pre-Benchmark to Benchmark 5 in the following four skill areas: 5,060 (65.5%) in Listening, 4,888 (63.3%) in Speaking, 4,151 (53.7%) in Reading and 5,647 (73.1%) in Writing.

## 8. Employment Status

- Employed – 2,546 (33.0%): 1,589 (20.6%) full-time; 957 (12.4%) part-time
- Unemployed – 5,178 (67.0%)

## 9. Referral to Programs and Services

Total referrals made – 37,331 with the following breakdown:

- To access language training opportunities – 14,599 (39.1%) of which 8,904 (61.0%) were LINC related and 5,695 (39.0%) were related to ESL.
- To advance vocational/career/ employability goals – 3,915 (10.5%)
- To enhance educational opportunities – 3,792 (10.2%)
- To access support services – 15,025 (40.2%)

## 10. Follow-up

- Follow-up services were provided to 1,680 (21.8%) clients of which 1,592 (94.8%) were successfully contacted. Of those contacted, 1,475 (92.7%) were either enrolled or pre-registered in LINC/ESL classes or other programs.

## 11. Citizenship Status

- Canadian Citizens – 960 (12.4%)

## ***B. Profile of Repeat Clients Served:***

### 1. Number of Repeat Clients

- A total of 4,441 repeat clients were served which reflects an increase of 241 (5.7%) as compared to the target (4,200). These individuals were served in 6,367 sessions.

### 2. Gender

- Female – 2,889 (65.1%), Male – 1,552 (34.9%)
- ILVARC provided services to 1,337 (86.1%) more female repeat clients than male.

### 3. Leading Immigration Categories

- Independent Class – 1,910 (43.0%)
- Family Class/Assisted Relative – 1,376 (31.0%)
- Refugees – 1,131 (25.5%) of which 591 (13.3%) were Government Sponsored Refugees.

### 4. Length of Residency in Calgary

- Less than 1 year – 1,632 (36.7%)
- 1 – 3 years – 1,465 (33.0%)
- 4 – 6 years – 913 (20.6%)

For first-time clients, those who have resided in Calgary for less than 1 year represent the highest percentage (57.6%). Interestingly, the highest percentage of repeat clients are also those who have resided in Calgary for less than 1 year (36.7%).

### 5. Current English Proficiency

- Current English proficiency was determined in 4,441 cases
- The majority demonstrated English proficiency ranging from Pre-Benchmark to Benchmark 5 in the following four skill areas: 3,098 (69.8%) in Listening, 3,005 (67.7%) in Speaking, 2,748 (61.9%) in Reading, 3,516 (79.2%) in Writing.
- Overall, 820 repeat clients were assessed at ILVARC, which reflects 30 (3.5%) less than the target (850) – 185 with CLBA, 496 with CLBPT, 71 with ELTPA, 11 with CLBLA, and 57 with CELBAN. The remaining clients' English proficiency was determined based on the benchmark outcomes received by students upon their exit from LINC programs or was based on the prior assessment performed at ILVARC or other assessment centres outside of Calgary.

### 6. Employment Status

- Employed – 1,695 (38.2%): 1,020 (23.0%) full-time; 675 (15.2%) part-time.
- Unemployed – 2,746 (61.8%)

### 7. Referral to Programs and Services

Total referrals made – 24,556 with the following breakdown:

- To access language training opportunities – 11,462 (46.7%) of which 7,665 (66.9%) were related to LINC and 3,797 (33.1%) were related to ESL.
- To advance vocational/career/ employability goals – 1,926 (7.8%)
- To enhance educational opportunities – 2,702 (11.0%)
- To access support services – 8,466 (34.5%)

During this reporting period, a high demand for ILVARC services and a high level of activities continued. As a result, ILVARC served a total of **12,732** individuals, which exceeded the target (11,500) by **1,232 (10.7%)** and provided **69,766** services (including **7,879** assessments) which exceeded the target (61,100) by **8,666 (14.2%)**. A total of **7,879** assessments were administered which exceeded the target (7,500) by **379 (5.1%)**.

## **Needs, Trends and Recommendations for Consideration**

### **LINC Trends:**

- There is an increase in the number of elderly beneficiaries approaching ILVARC for services. In 2012/2013 ILVARC served a total of 507 (6.6%) first-time beneficiaries 55 years of age and over.
- There is an increase in the number of Persian speaking and Tagalog speaking beneficiaries requiring counseling and referral.
- There was a significant increase in the number of French speaking beneficiaries. In particular, ILVARC has noticed an increasing number of inland migrants from Quebec who have studied French but now need English language training. A large number of these migrants are naturalized Canadian citizens who are thus ineligible for LINC classes. Many of these beneficiaries expect a living allowance while they study.
- There are more beneficiaries with special needs accessing assessment and referral services.
- ILVARC continues to serve unemployed beneficiaries who are employment bound and are seeking access to skills training as well as programs and services that would enhance their employment search skills and labour market integration.
- The demand for off-site and itinerant assessment and referral services continues to grow as more programs are offered in different geographic locations.
- The demand for LINC classes is increasing due to the change in citizenship language requirements that require proof of language ability at a minimum of Benchmark 4 to apply for citizenship.
- Removal of the 1200 hour LINC cap in addition to the change in ESL policies in correlation with the LINC 1200 hours cap removal has placed a higher demand for part-time LINC 6 classes by beneficiaries who wish to continue enhancing their language skills while working.
- ILVARC noticed an increase in the number of clients requiring literacy assessments with CLB/CLB Screening in 2012-2013 (183 in 2011/2012 and 245 in 2012/2013). This represents an increase of 33.9% as compared to last year. This impacts the demand for LINC/ESL classes with literacy support.

### **LINC Needs:**

#### **Child Minding**

- Additional spots in care for newcomers' children (in particular for the ages 6 to 19 months) would lessen beneficiaries' waiting time for classes. Specifically, a need for child minding for beneficiaries residing in the deep north and deep south of Calgary as well as downtown still exists.
- Beneficiaries with kindergarten-aged children would benefit from half-day childcare options to accommodate their children while they attend full day LINC classes, as most kindergarten classes are only half day.

#### **Availability of Classes**

- There is a growing need for more schools to offer LINC classes with supports for students with special needs. Currently only one LINC provider has these supports in place.

- There continues to be a need for LINC classes in the northwest quadrant of the city (Crowfoot, Dalhousie) as there are currently no LINC providers in these areas.
- There is a need for LINC classes to be provided in Calgary's surrounding communities of Chestermere, Cochrane and Airdrie.
- There is a need for more high level LINC evening classes across the city, including LINC 6, so beneficiaries can work to support themselves yet still continue to increase their linguistic abilities.
- Additional LINC programs for seniors would be beneficial as currently the waiting list for these programs is quite long. These programs provide seniors with relevant language skills as well as opportunities to make new friends, expand their social support and learn about community resources. In 2012/2013 ILVARC served a total of 507 (6.6%) first-time beneficiaries 55 years of age and over.

### **Content of LINC Classes**

- Employment destined LINC students at higher levels could benefit from LINC classes offering computer skills as well as workplace essential skills. Essential skills acquisition is especially important for beneficiaries taking LINC 6 classes as they are often already working or seeking to enter the workforce.
- Some beneficiaries have expressed the need to incorporate pronunciation as an essential component within LINC classes as this would enhance their overall communication skills. Furthermore, additional classes focusing on specific language skills such as reading/writing and listening/speaking would assist with fast-tracking beneficiaries who need to improve their English competencies in specific skill areas.

### **Services for Youth**

- Service providers identified a need for two types of programming: one that would engage youth who are at risk of dropping out of school, and one for youth who have already left the school system.
- There is a need for more programs for employment-destined youth, especially short-term training programs to direct youth into the trades.
- There is a need for more programs for lower level youth language learners. It has also been noted that often youth will have higher conversational English, but lack the academic and workplace English necessary to perform well at work or academically.

### **Assessment and Referral**

- There is a need for a standardized LINC exit assessment and CLB professional development to provide more consistent LINC exit benchmarks for students.
- There continues to be a need for literacy assessments (CLBLA) in Nuer, Dinka, Oromo, Nepali and Karen.
- Since the only ELTPA version has been in use for several years, there is a need for parallel ELTPA versions to ensure the security and validity of the test.
- The growth in Calgary's population and an increasing demand for language assessment and referral services in Calgary's surrounding communities impacts staff and transportation resources as special arrangements need to be made to respond in a timely and efficient manner and to ensure test security.

### **Access to Support Services**

- Transportation assistance or subsidies would increase beneficiaries' ability and motivation to attend classes.
- Beneficiaries with low English proficiency who are EI recipients and face employment barriers could benefit from priority processing and approval by the authorized assessment services so they can access LINC classes while still receiving EI benefits.
- Access to assistive technology would enhance service provision to beneficiaries with special needs.

### **ESL/Vocational Trends:**

- As new immigration plans predict more focus on skilled workers and higher language proficiency requirements, there will be a significant impact on the type of language and skills/employment bridging programs that will be needed to fast-track these newcomers to labour market attachment.
- The recent change in LINC/ESL policies allows for more flexibility in transitioning students from LINC to ESL and therefore results in higher demand for funded ESL programs.

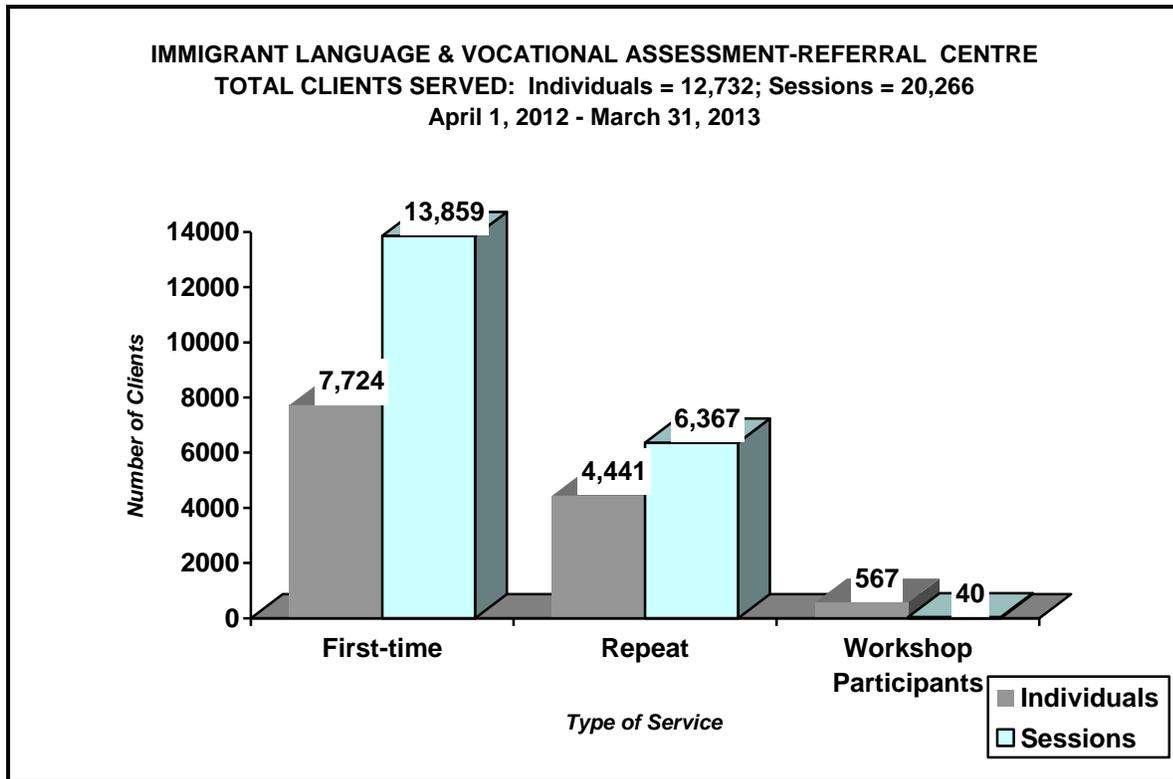
### **ESL/Vocational Needs:**

#### **ESL Programs**

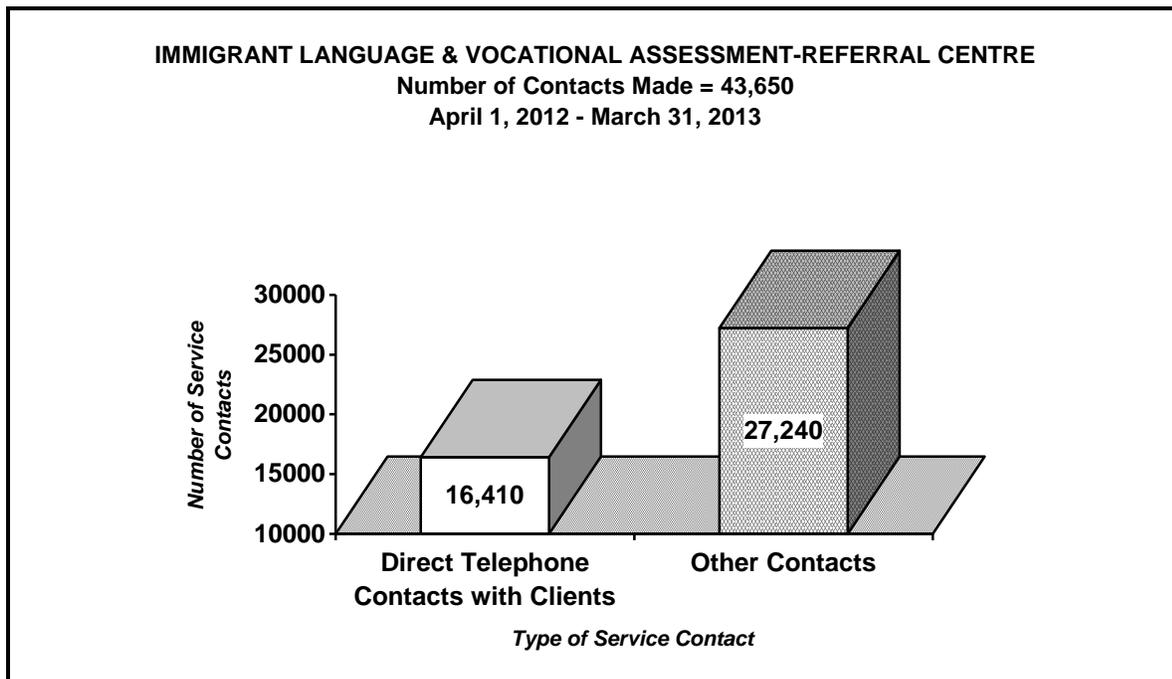
- With recent changes to Canada's immigration projections, a need for specific bridging programs emerges to assist newly arrived skilled immigrants with most expedient transition to the Canadian labour market.
- In addition, due to higher English requirements for immigration, a need may emerge for additional higher level English classes focusing on occupation specific vocabulary, employment search strategies, and workplace essential skills.
- Beneficiaries who are employed would benefit from more weekend and part-time ESL classes being offered.
- A need has been noticed for low-level affordable ESL classes due to the number of beneficiaries with Canadian citizenship status who are considered ineligible for LINC and ESL funding support yet still need language training.
- There is a need for a variety of ESL classes with different components to meet the needs of various learners. Examples might include literacy ESL, general computer skills and ESL, and classes for seniors focusing on basic computer skills, community engagement and conversation to help with integration. In addition, more ESL classes with employment search components could help beneficiaries of all ages to be better prepared for labour market integration.
- There is a need for more ESL schools to offer childcare programs. It is also important that child-minding programs have the capacity to accept and provide care for disabled children.

**ELT/Vocational Programs**

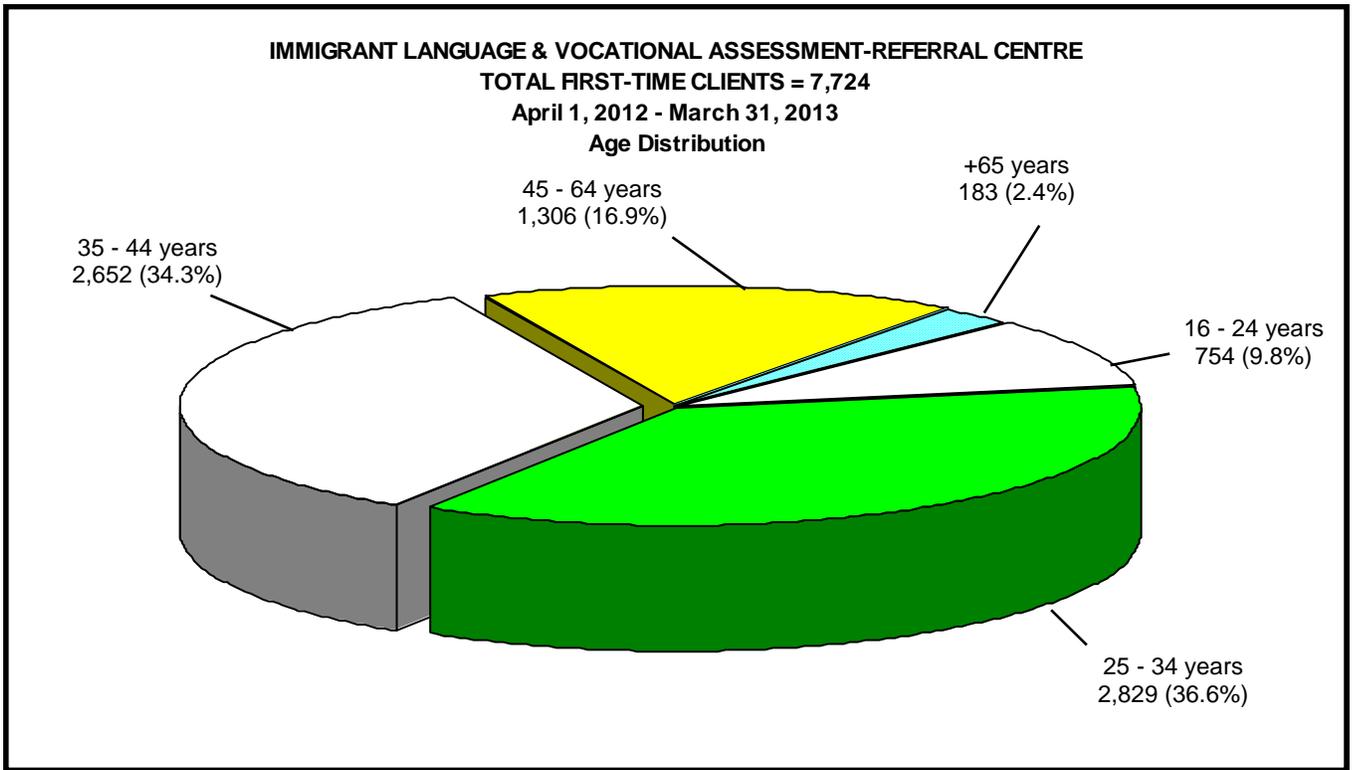
- There is need for greater connection with employers in all stages of employment readiness programs. Language training supplemented with industry specialists who can supply the employment training would be more beneficial. A liaison between schools and employers would help secure internships and assist employers with buying in to the idea of hiring a newcomer.
- Currently ELT programs focus on newcomers' transition to employment congruent with their expertise acquired in their home country. This approach works well for many professions; however, there is a need for programs for clients who would like to transition into another career.
- Additional intakes and seats for ELT programs for engineers would benefit the large number of newcomers with engineering backgrounds who are unable to get into these programs due to the limited number of available seats. In 2012-2013 ILVARC served 584 first-time beneficiaries who held occupations in Natural Sciences, Engineering and Mathematics.
- Clients have expressed a desire for shorter term daycare worker bridging programs as childcare workers with foreign credentials could benefit from a faster track to accreditation to facilitate their employability in this particular field.
- There is a need for a dentistry bridging program (a bridging program in Manitoba has proven quite successful).
- There is a need for more "on the job training" programs incorporating internships for immigrants with experience in trades to allow them to integrate into the Canadian job market by acquiring hands-on experience and learning the necessary vocabulary specific to their employment field. This type of program would also assist employers looking for suitable labour.
- A need has been identified for a closer cooperation between ELT programs and licensing bodies so as to facilitate these high-level skilled workers rapid integration into the labour force. Additional programs are needed to assist beneficiaries with accreditation procedures. Beneficiaries need additional hands-on guidance in successfully completing this process as it is quite complex.
- It is important that employment readiness programs include components of language, cultural and workplace skills needed to be successful in the given field. Additionally, limited living allowance funding is available for beneficiaries in these programs, presenting challenges for clients who cannot afford to attend these programs without an income support.
- There is a need for opportunities to challenge exams to be available for more regulated trades, as some newcomers possess the needed technical skills but do not necessarily have the time or finances to complete the upgrading process to be provincially licensed.



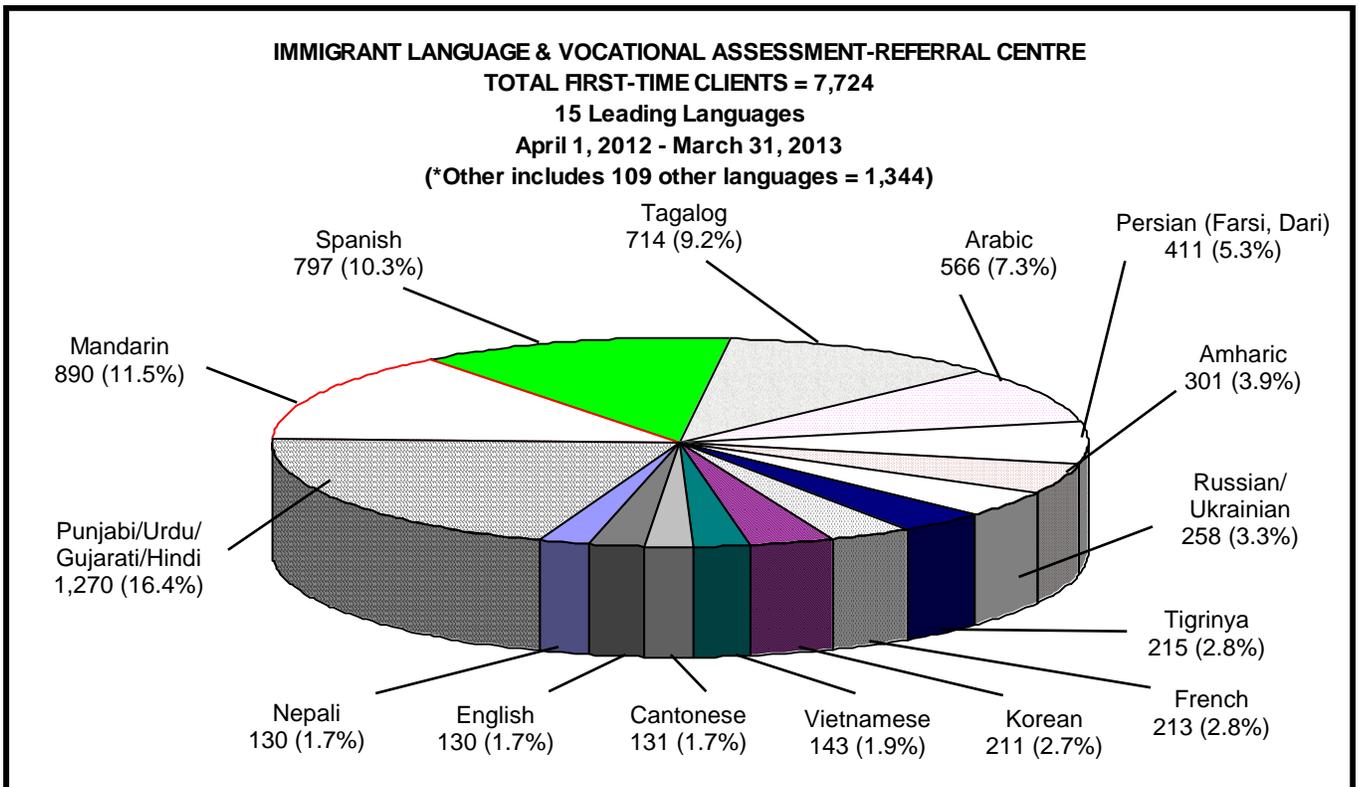
**GRAPH 1**



**GRAPH 2**



**GRAPH 3**

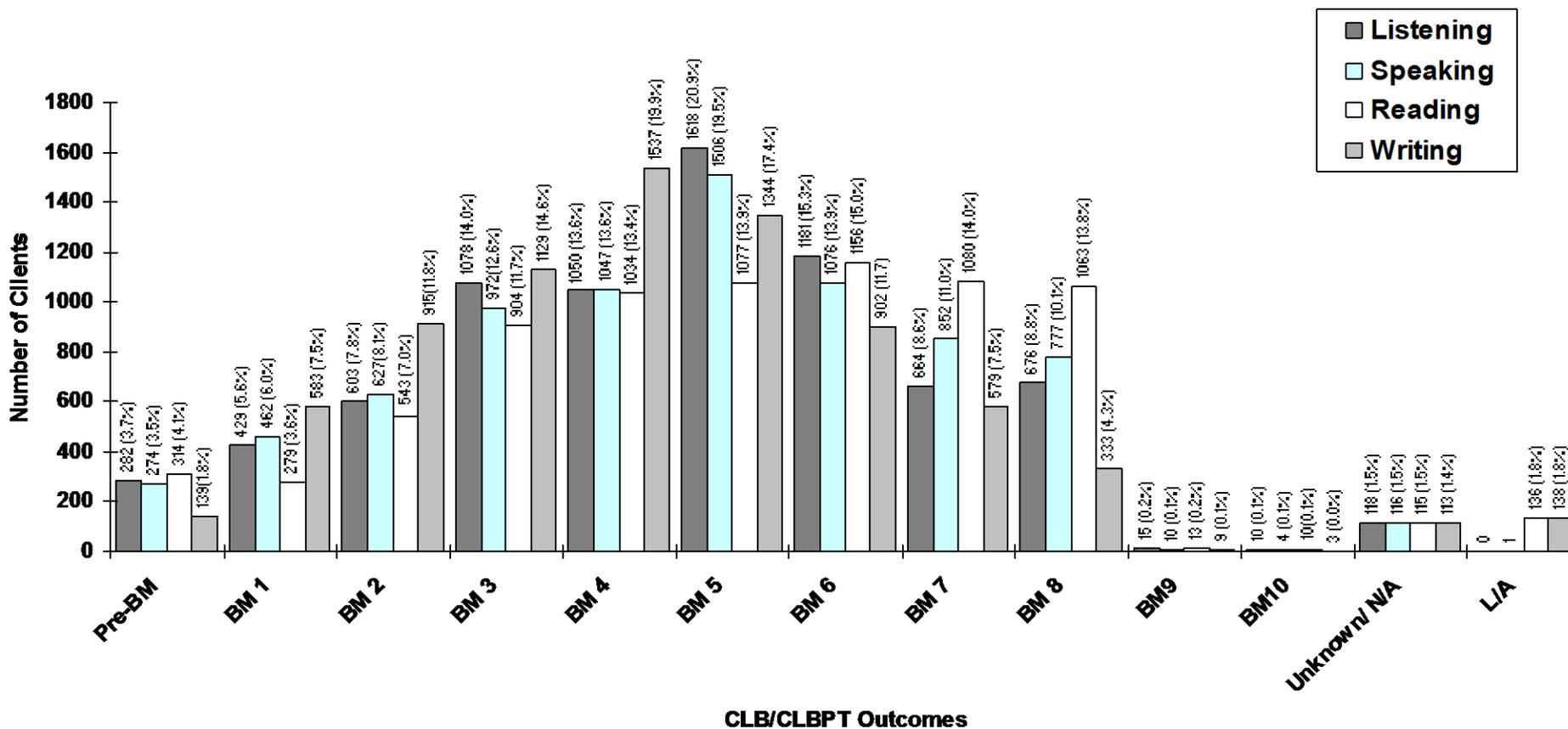


**GRAPH 4**

**IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE & VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-REFERRAL CENTRE**

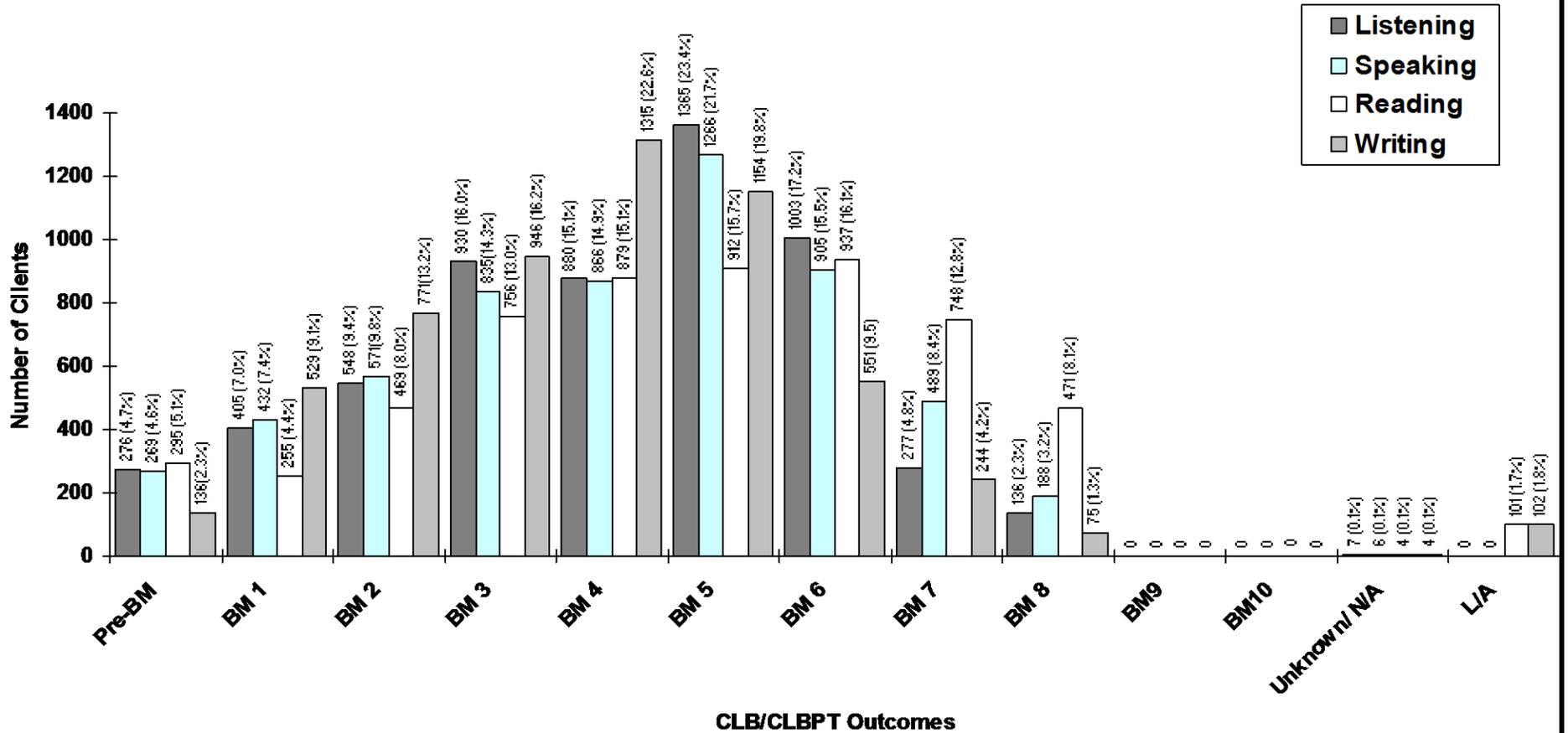
**April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013**

**Results of English Proficiency for All First-time Clients = 7,724**



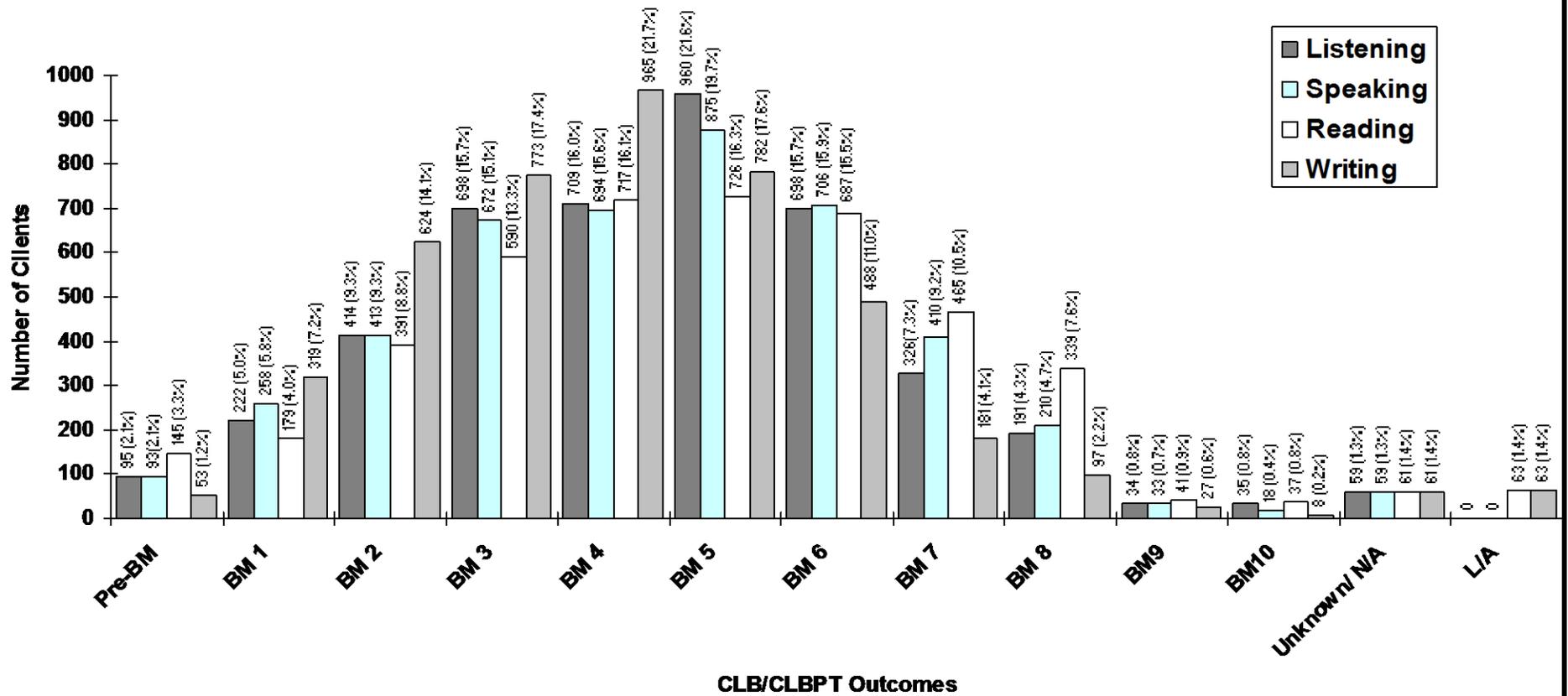
GRAPH 5

**IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE & VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-REFERRAL CENTRE**  
**April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013**  
**Results of English Proficiency for First-time LINC Eligible Clients = 5,827**



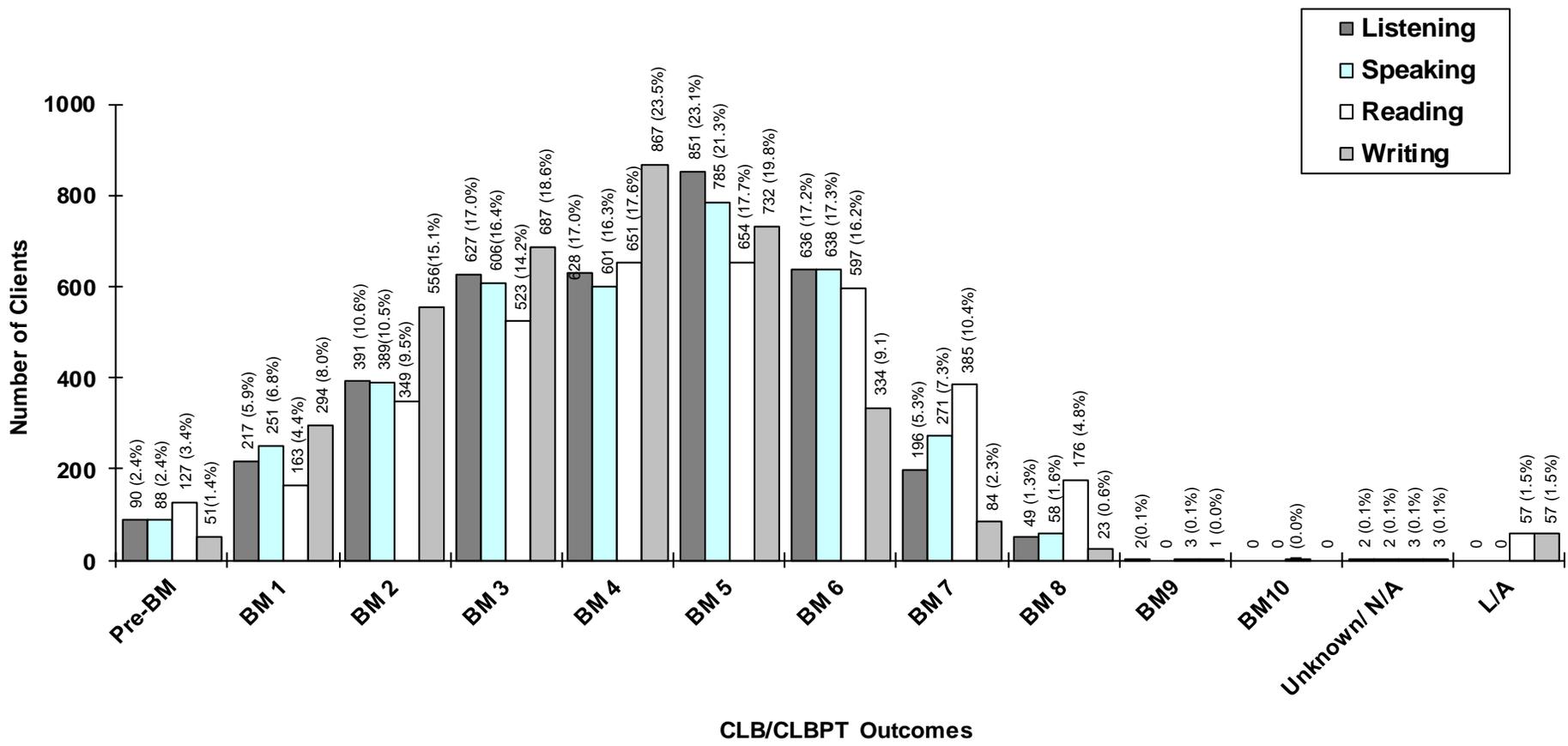
GRAPH 5LINC

**IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE & VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-REFERRAL CENTRE**  
**April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013**  
**Current English Proficiency for All Repeat Clients = 4,441**

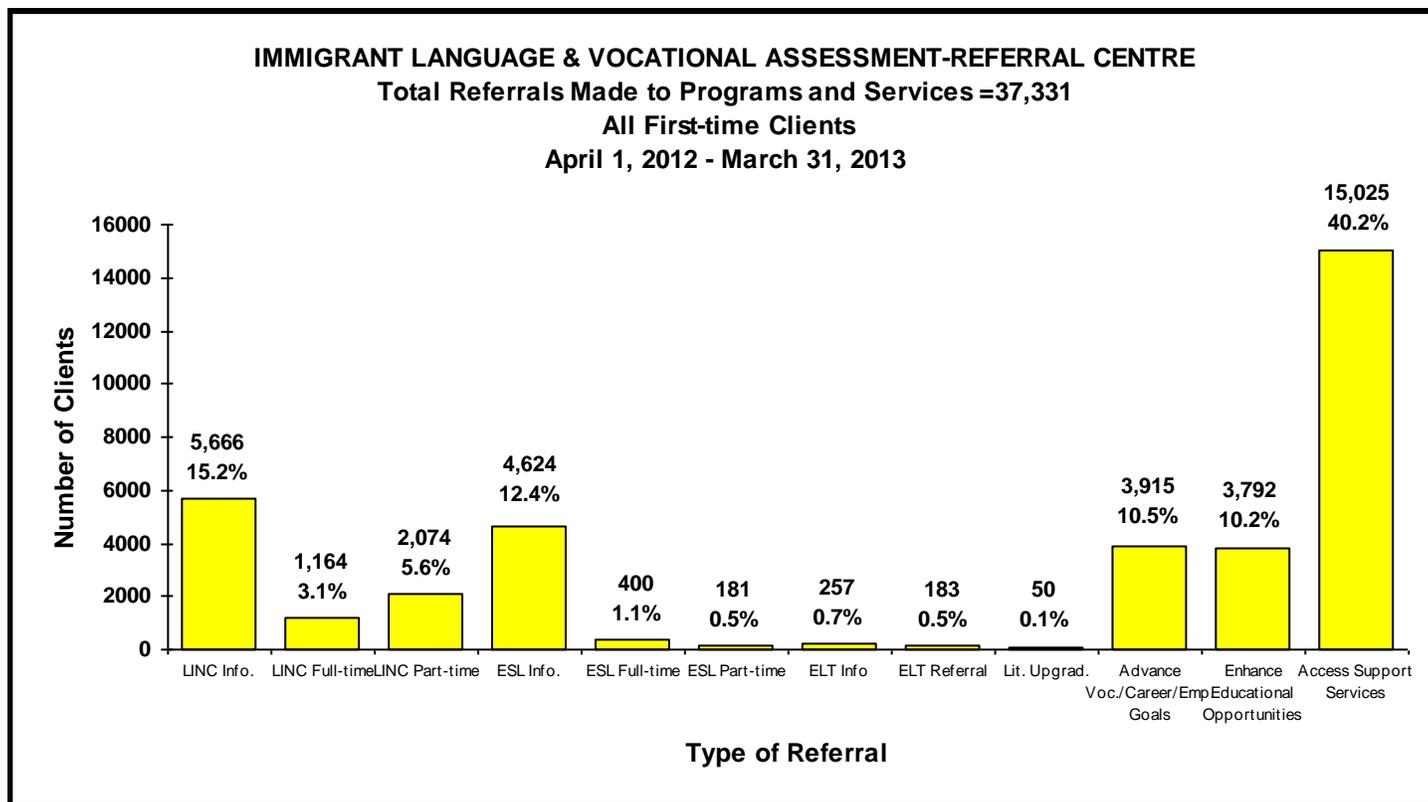


GRAPH 5R

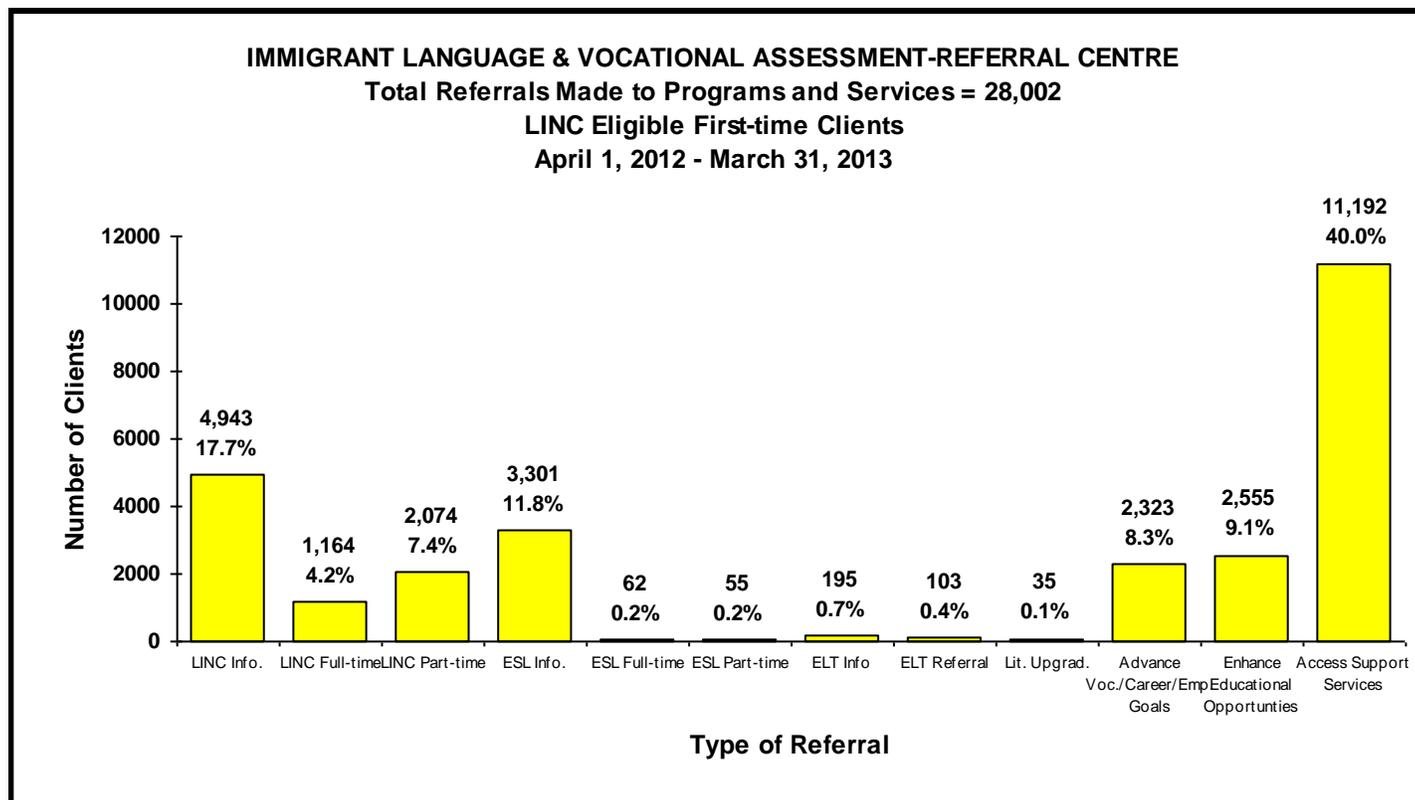
**IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE & VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-REFERRAL CENTRE**  
**April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013**  
**Current English Proficiency for Repeat LINC Eligible Clients = 3,689**



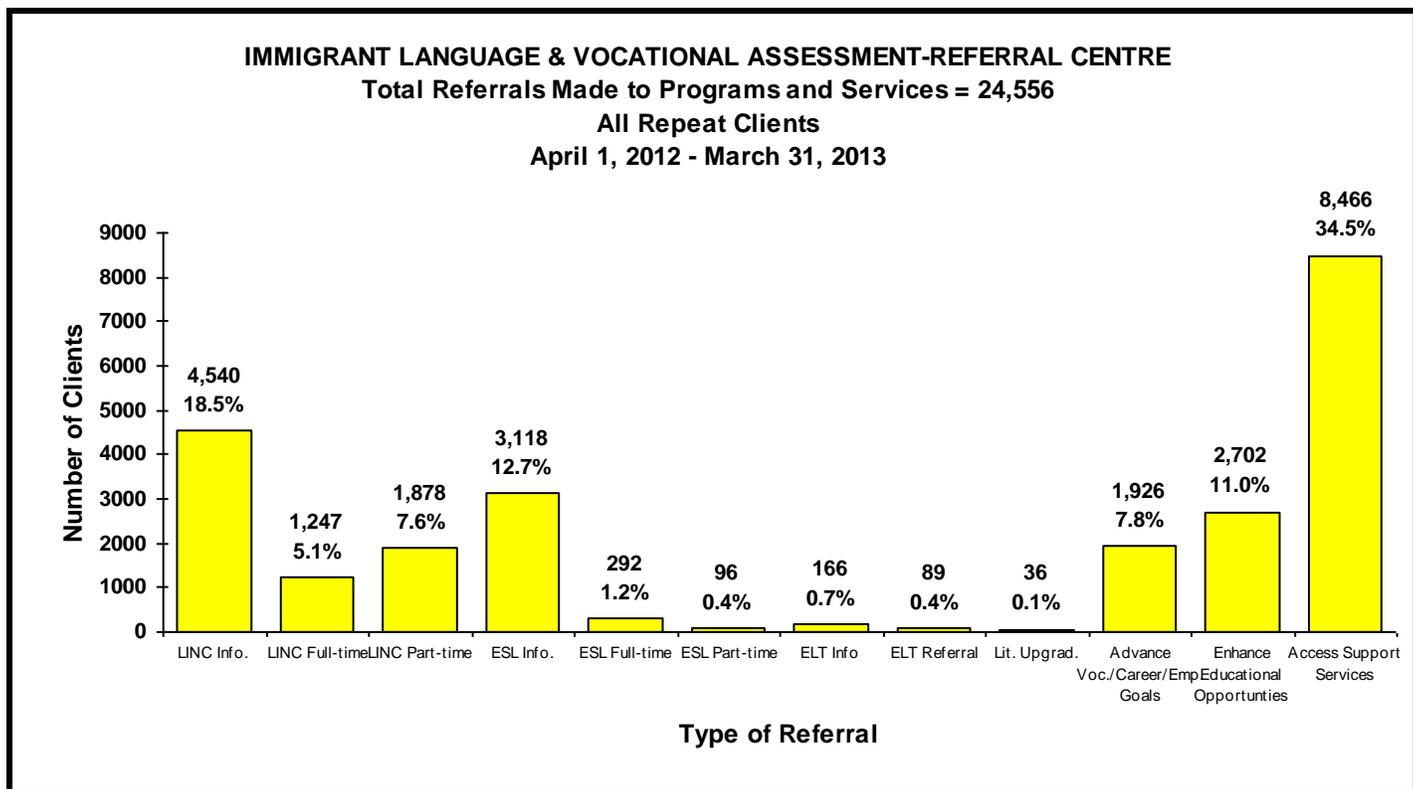
GRAPH 5RLINC



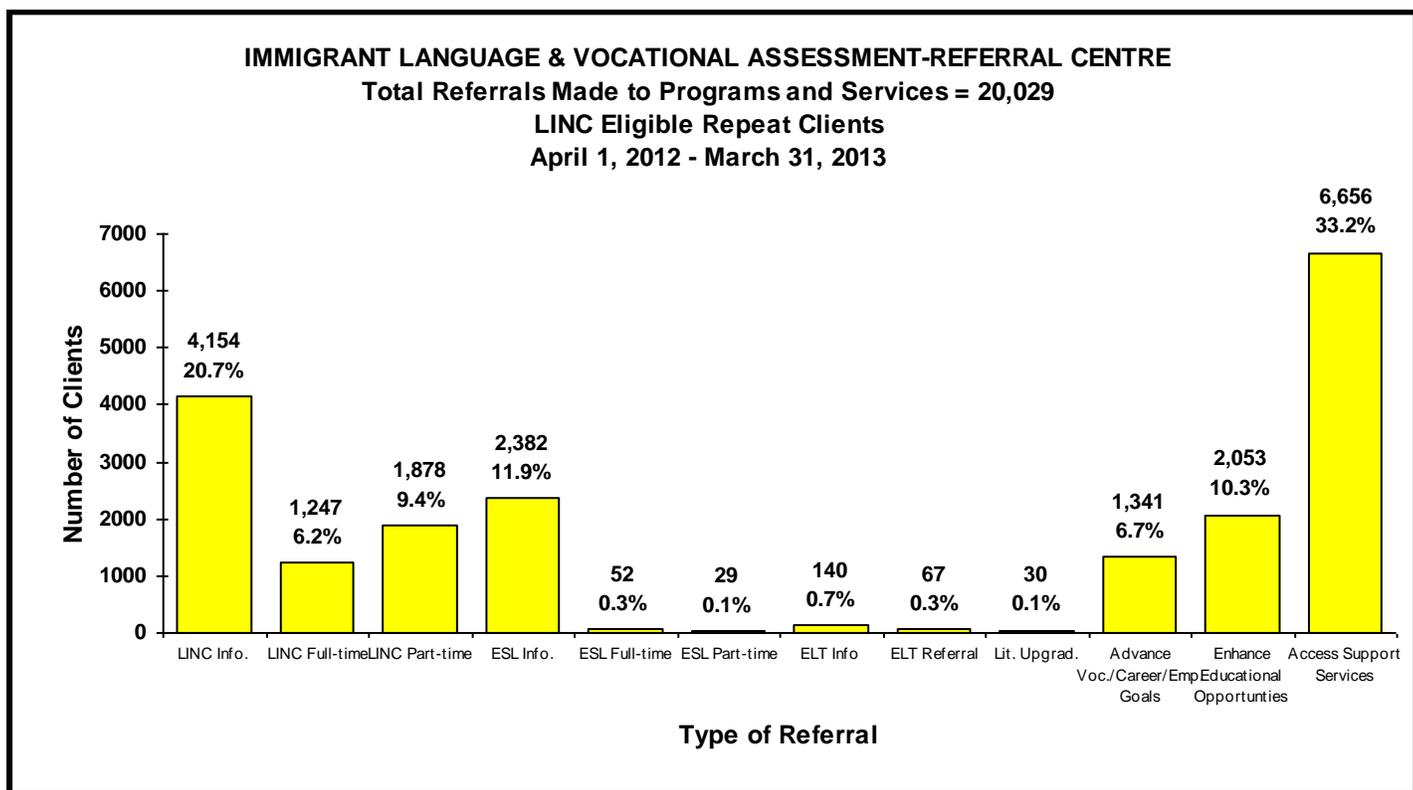
GRAPH 6



GRAPH 6 LINC



GRAPH 7



GRAPH 7 LINC