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Accessibility Planning in the Settlement Sector: Newcomers with Disabilities

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- What barriers may prevent a person from accessing your services before getting to your front door?

- Once at your front door, what barriers might they experience at your agency?

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- Attitudinal

- Information and communication

- Physical accessibility

- Technology

- Organization

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Webinar 1

- How barriers intersect and interlock impacting the experiences of newcomers with disabilities in Canada

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act as it relates to supporting newcomers with disabilities

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Oppression

- What oppression(s) have they experienced?

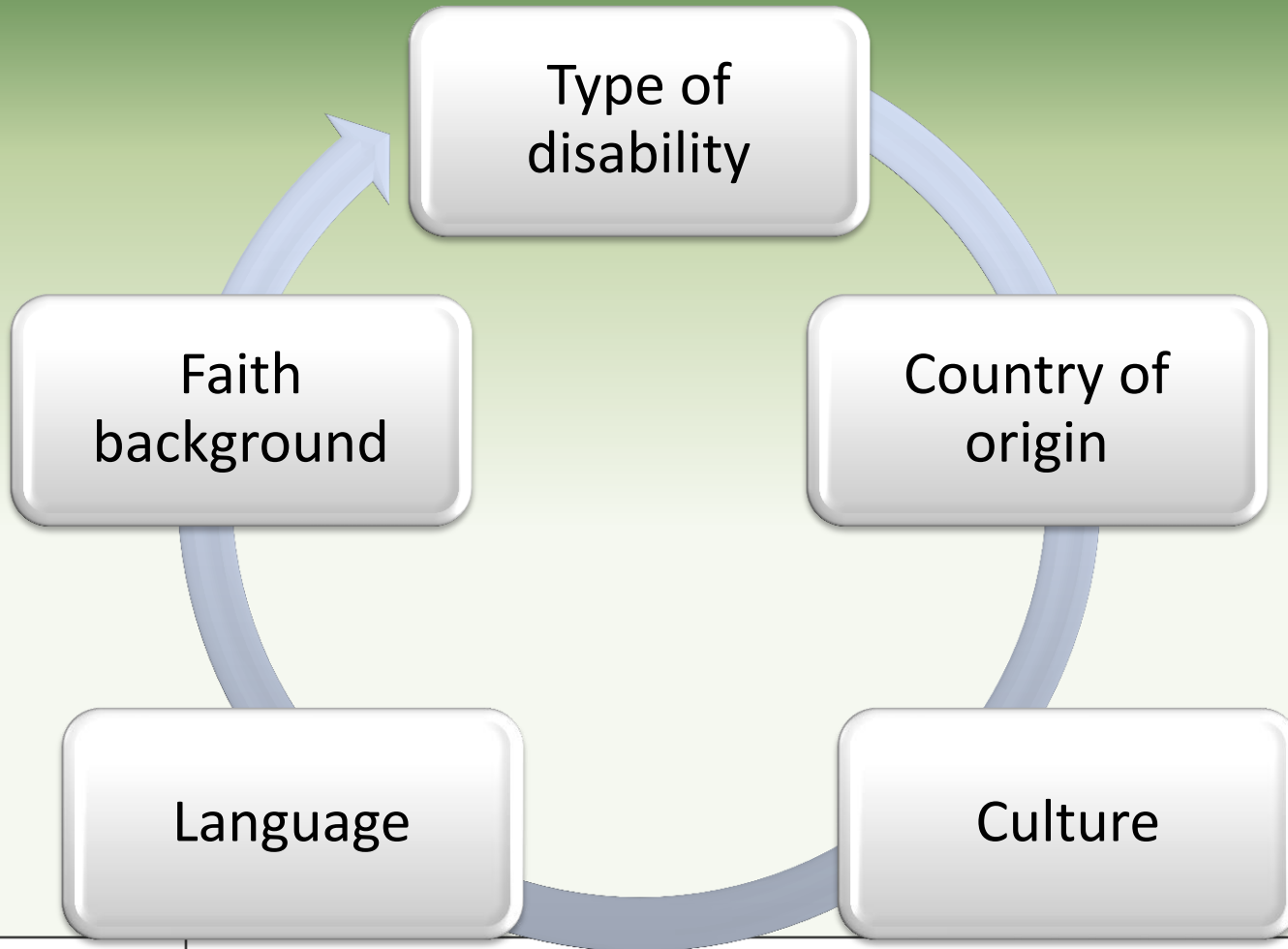- How have they dealt with the barriers and challenges they experienced?

A + B = AB

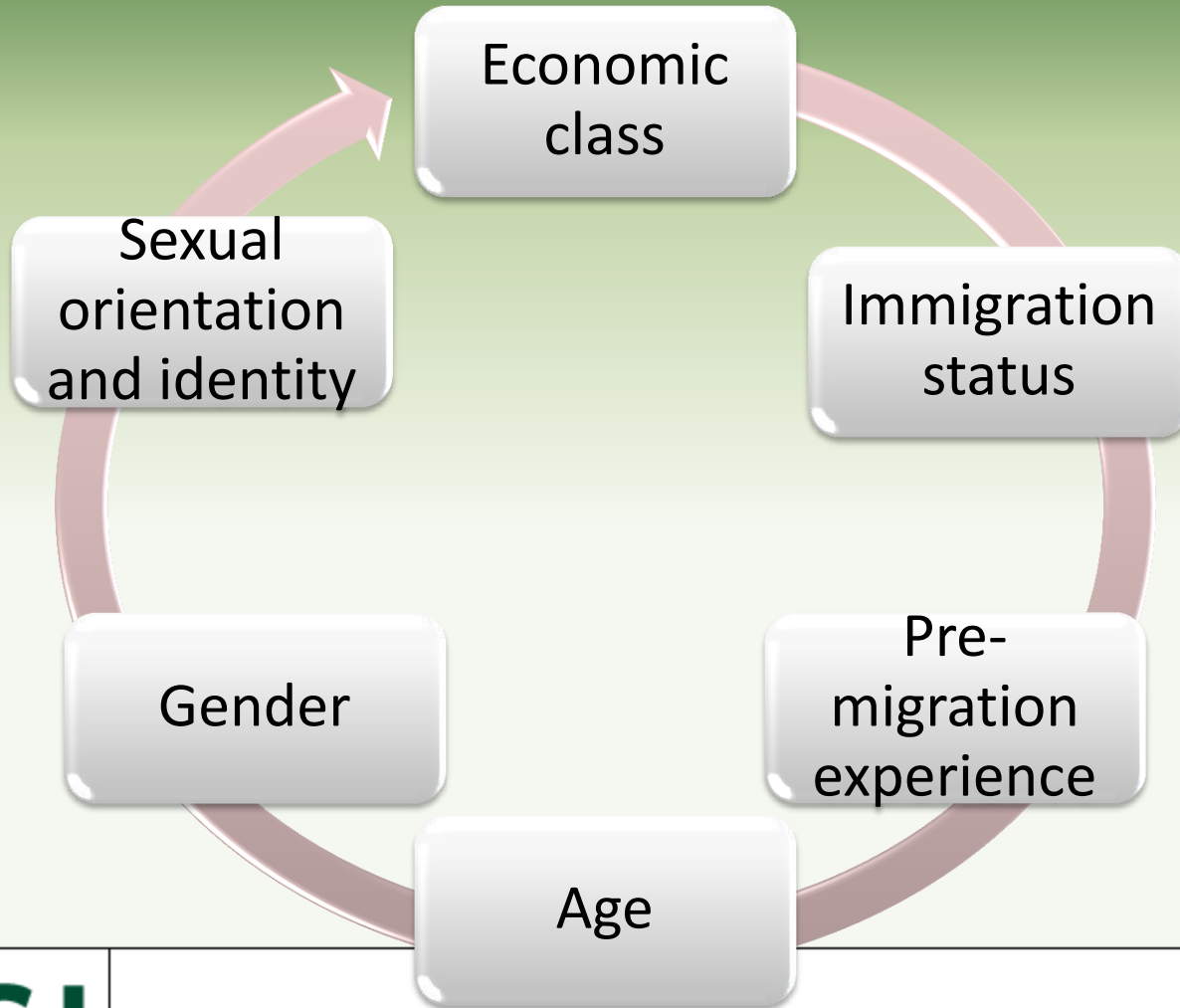# immigrant + disabilities = both barriers

$$A + B = AB$$

immigrants + disabilities =

both barriers

WRONG

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They are Diverse!

Type of disability

Country of origin

Culture

Language

Faith background

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Diverse…

- Economic class
- Immigration status
- Pre-migration experience
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual orientation and identity

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White Female	White Male	Brown Female
Born in Canada	Born in Italy	Born in Ghana
Canadian citizen	Immigrant	Refugee
Cerebral palsy	Multiple sclerosis	Speech disability
Upper class	Middle class	Lower middle class
Speaks English	Speaks minimal English	Minimal English

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Barriers for Newcomers with Disabilities

Exclusion from the labour market.

•Lack of education and training.

•Employers may have negative attitudes/misconceptions towards people with disabilities.

•Employers may be unaware of the capacity of people with disabilities.

More vulnerable to domestic abuse and other forms of abuse.

•Social isolation.

•Missing key contacts.

Negative attitudes towards disability in their own and mainstream cultures.

Barriers for Newcomers with Disabilities

- **Lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate health, social, and educational services.**
  - Service providers lack sensitivity when delivering services.

- **Lack of knowledge of how to navigate all areas of community life and may not feel it is appropriate to questions to people in power.**

- **Barriers to learning English or French.**

Barriers for Newcomers with Disabilities

- **Lack of affordable and accessible housing.**
  - Distance from place of employment to home.

- **Gap between immigrant settlement services and disability specific services.**

- **Not enough recruitment and outreach.**

- **Discriminatory immigration policies for people with disabilities.**

Legislative and Legal Tools

- There are a number of international, national and provincial/territorial legislative and legal tools that pursue the accommodation needs of people with disabilities so they may have equal opportunity to participate in all avenues of daily living.

- These tools have the cumulative effect of bringing the concerns, needs and contributions of people with disabilities to the attention of Canadians.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (The Act)

- In 2005 the government of Ontario enacted the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

- This act provides a definition of disability and lays out province-wide mandatory standards on accessibility in all areas of daily life, entrenching them in law with timelines for fulfillment.

- These standards were developed to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

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Definition of Disability

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement

- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability

- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language

- A mental disorder

- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan

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Accessibility Standards

1. Customer service

From the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation:

2. Employment

3. Information and communications

4. Transportation

5. Built Environment

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Customer Service

- Outlines ways in which people with disabilities are to be supported as consumers of goods and services.

- The Standard applies to all organizations (public, private and non-profit) that provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other organizations in Ontario and that have one or more employees in Ontario.

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Customer Service Requirements

- The Standard will require organizations to:
  - Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities
  - Make sure existing policies and procedures are consistent with the four principles underlying the Act.
    - Independence
    - Dignity
    - Integration
    - Equal opportunity

- Communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into consideration their disabilities.

Customer Service Requirements

- Allow people with disabilities to have
  - service animals, unless otherwise excluded by law.
  - attendant or support person with them while accessing goods or services.

- Inform people with disabilities when there is a disruption of services.

- Train employees, volunteers and others who interact with the public about a number of specified accessibility issues.

- Create a feedback mechanism so people with disabilities can let you know about your service.

Customer Service Requirements

- Organizations that employ more than 20 employees will also be required to:

  - Prepare documents summarizing their policies concerning accessible customer service, training plans, and other accessibility standards required by the Act. They will also be required to provide a copy of any such document to any person upon request.

  - Keep records of the training provided which should include who attended, training outline, and date .

  - Report to the Ministry about compliance with the Customer Service Standard. A web tool to allow organizations to report has been developed.

Visit Ontario.ca/AccessON for more information

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Inclusive Practice Tips

1. Introduce/identify yourself
2. Speak clearly and directly to the person
3. Offer to shake hands (if culturally appropriate)
4. Eye level (if culturally appropriate)
5. Listen carefully
6. Offer assistance/wait for acceptance
7. Treat adults as adults
8. Respect personal space
9. Don't pet or play with service animals

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

- Requires all organizations in the province with at least one employee to develop accessibility policies.
    - Organizations must develop, implement and maintain policies about what your organization will do to meet the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation requirements and become more accessible.

- Keep your accessibility policies up to date and make sure they accurately reflect your organization and its practices.

- Deadlines for compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation vary depending on the size and nature of the organization and range from January 1, 2012 to January 1, 2017.

Employment

- People with disabilities are an untapped resource
  - Assist Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of finding, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities

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Adding Value to your Workplace

- You find the right person for the job.

- You create a place where anyone can work and be productive.

- You allow employees of all abilities to compete in the marketplace.

Recruitment and Selection

- Establish a consistent selection process

- Be clear about what you can and cannot ask during an interview.

  – Ask only questions that are job-related. For example, you cannot ask about health problems. However, you may ask about the person's physical abilities if they have to move heavy objects as part of their job.

  – Ask how candidates <u>will</u> fulfill job requirements instead of asking <u>if</u> they can fulfill them.

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Employment Requirements

- Organizations will have to:

  - Let job applicants know that recruitment and hiring processes will be modified to accommodate them, if requested.

    - Example, Aziz is one of seven people who have been selected for an interview. When the Human Resource Department contacts him to schedule an interview, he request more time for the interview and test as he has a learning disability and it takes him a little longer to read the information.

  - Build the accessibility needs of employees into your human resources practices.

    - Provide for accessibility across all stages of the employment life cycle.

    - Pro-actively remove barriers across the employment life cycle, employers can help to create workplaces that are accessible that will allow employees to reach their full potential.

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Employment Requirements

- Create a written process (not applicable to small organizations) for developing and documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

- All sectors were required to provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees, when necessary, as of January 1st 2012.

- The other requirements of the standard will be phased in for:
  - Public sector organizations (hospitals, municipalities, colleges, and universities) beginning in 2014 and 2015.
  - Private and non-profit organizations beginning in 2016 and 2017.

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Changing your Workplace Culture

- Making an accessible work environment may include more than physical accommodations. Changes to your workplace culture may be required.

- It is important for employees to feel they can disclose information and ask for assistance. Here are ways you can create an open environment:
  - Respect employees' confidentiality.
  - Learn from others.
  - Let people know they are included, valued, and accepted.
  - Use language that focuses on people, not on disabilities.

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Listen to Employees

Listen to employees with disabilities - they're experts in what they need. You should:

- Ask questions in a respectful manner, when you don't understand.

- Get information to help you understand specific disability accommodations.

- Be creative, flexible and look for new ways of doing things.

- Get your employees with disabilities to test any special equipment or device before you purchase it.

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Making Workplace Accommodations

Here are some examples of accommodations that together, you and your employee(s) may decide are required:

- TTY telephone service
- Computer screen magnifiers
- Flexible scheduling and reduced or part-time hours
- Quiet workspace
- Written instructions
- Self-paced workload
- Frequent breaks
- Extra time for training
- Alternative methods of communication (telephone, tape recorder, verbal instructions)

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Information and Communications

- Help Ontario businesses and organizations make their information accessible for people with disabilities.

- Outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide and receive information in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities
  - for example, access to more websites using screen readers, expanded large print option and digital collections in public libraries.

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Information and Communications Requirements

- Organizations will have to:
  - Make their websites and web content accessible according to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
    - (Note: Organizations with less than 50 employees are exempt from this requirement.)
    - Example: a school board has posted a video on its website to explain their adult learning programs. This video is captioned for people with hearing loss.

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Information and Communications Requirements

- Provide accessible formats and communications supports as quickly as possible and at no additional cost when a person with a disability request it.

  - Example: Last week Nalini picked up a pamphlet about the youth program being offered at your settlement agency. Nalini has a visual disability and cannot read small print. She called the number on the pamphlet and asked for the information in an alternative format. A text only file was emailed to her. Nalini can now access the information using her screen reading software installed on her computer.

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Information and Communications Requirements

- Make feedback processes accessible by providing accessible formats and communications supports when requested.
  - Make public emergency information accessible when requested.

- Educational and training institutions must:
  - Provide educational and training resources and materials in accessible formats upon request.
  - Provide educators with accessibility awareness training related to accessible program or course delivery.
  - Producers of educational or training materials must:
    - Provide educational or training institutions with accessible or conversion ready textbooks and supplementary resources upon request.

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Information and Communications Requirements

- Libraries:
  - Libraries of education and training institutions must make resources accessible upon request.
  - Public libraries must provide access/or arrange access to accessible materials where they exist.

Making Information Accessible

What are alternative formats?

- Alternative formats are other ways of publishing or sharing the same information.

- These formats are designed to address the specific needs of a user but can be used by everyone.

By providing information in alternative formats, more people have access

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Providing Alternate Formats

Why do we need to provide information in alternative formats?

•Some people need alternative ways of accessing information.

This can include people who have:

•A visual disability

•A learning disability

•An intellectual disability

•A physical disability

•A hearing disability

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Examples of Alternate Formats

- Large print

- Screen readers

- Braille

- Descriptive Video Services (DVS)

- Audio format

- Captioning

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Written Materials

When translating a document to plain language:

- Include the most important information and decide what can be left out.

- Be mindful of how words get lost in translation.

- Ask yourself: "How can I say this more literally and in a more direct way? Am I using accessible language?"

Written Materials Continued

Be sensitive to design issues in your layout and presentation:

• Use straightforward headings to lead the reader through the logic of the document.

• Use relevant images that do not confuse others.

• Avoid putting too much text on a page.

• Avoid putting images behind the text.

Transportation

The Standard will make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario.

- Goal is to help transportation providers as well as municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals and school boards make their services and vehicles accessible to people with disabilities.

- Accessible transportation services will assist people with disabilities in being able to live, work and participate in their communities AND visitors, families, and seniors.

Transportation Requirements

- Conventional transportation services, for example, London transit and the Toronto transit commission (TTC).
  - Requirements include providing clearly marked courtesy seating for people with disabilities.
  - Not charging
    - People with disabilities a higher fare than people without disabilities.
    - Storing mobility aids or mobility assistive devices such as wheelchairs or walkers .
  - Technical requirements for lifting devices, steps, grab bars/handrails, floor surfaces, lighting, signage, etc.
- Providing verbal and visual announcements of routes and stops on vehicles.

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Transportation Requirements

- Specialized transportation services, for example, TTC's wheel-trans, and DARTS in Hamilton
  - Requirements include: developing an eligibility application process including an independent appeal process.

  - Charging fares that are no higher than the fares for convention transit where they are both operated by the same service provider.

  - Providing the same hours and days of service as those offered by conventional transit where they are both operated by the same service provider.

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Built Environment

- The Standard focuses on removing barriers in two areas:
  - Public spaces
    - The standard for the design of public spaces only applies to new construction and major changes to existing features.
  - Buildings
    - Enhancements to accessibility in buildings will happen at a later date through Ontario's Building Code, which governs new construction and renovations in buildings.

Built Environment Requirements

The standard covers:

- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible parking (on and off street)
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas
- Maintenance and restoration of public spaces

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Physical Accessibility

Evaluate your premises for physical accessibility. Ask:

- Do you own or lease your premises?

- What are immediate, lower-cost and simple things you can do to improve accessibility?

- Can your building accommodate physical changes? Can any necessary renovation work be done as part of scheduled maintenance or update work?

- Do you need to hire an architect or engineer, or can a contractor complete the job?

Establish Priorities

In order to make your premises accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities, think beyond ramps and accessible washrooms. Also look at:

- Lighting
- Audible and visual alarm systems
- Signage with high contrast lettering
- Easy-to-find directories
- Accessible parking

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Universal Design

- You may be able to make buildings, spaces and products accessible with simple or low-cost solutions.

- The best solutions will follow the rules of universal design. This means designing products and environments that most people will be able to use without having to make modifications.

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Webinar 2

- How to complete an accessibility audit of your workplace including what accessibility features an office or meeting should include.

- How to develop an action plan for priority accessibility issues including organizational budget.

- Where to apply for accessibility funds/grants and how to include it in the current CFP.

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Questions to think about…

1. How is my agency accessible?

2. How does my agency take into consideration the needs of immigrant and refugees with disabilities when developing programs and services?

3. What feedback mechanism do I have in place that lets me know how my clients with disabilities feel about the services they receive?

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Thank you

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