



2025 Annual Evaluation & Model Review

Cultural Brokerage Program (CCBP), Family Violence Education Sessions (FVES), & Temporary Accommodation

Executive Summary

Introduction The 2025 CCIS Cultural Brokering Program (CCBP) evaluation focused on better understanding and documenting CCIS’ model of cultural brokering through a secondary literature review and series of strategic interviews.

The assessment focuses on CCBP and it’s complementary program offerings: Family Violence Education Sessions (FVES) and Temporary Accommodation for low-risk perpetrators of family violence; and is informed by mid-term evaluation findings of the recently established Youth Cultural Brokerage Program partnership with Calgary’s Youth Probation Office and by a past, Cultural Liaison role in partnership with Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (2021-2022).

Research methods included: a scan of cultural brokering models and literature, interviews with CCBP staff, interviews with key informants with working knowledge of CCBP or cultural brokering, review of past program evaluation reports, and analysis of annual program data.

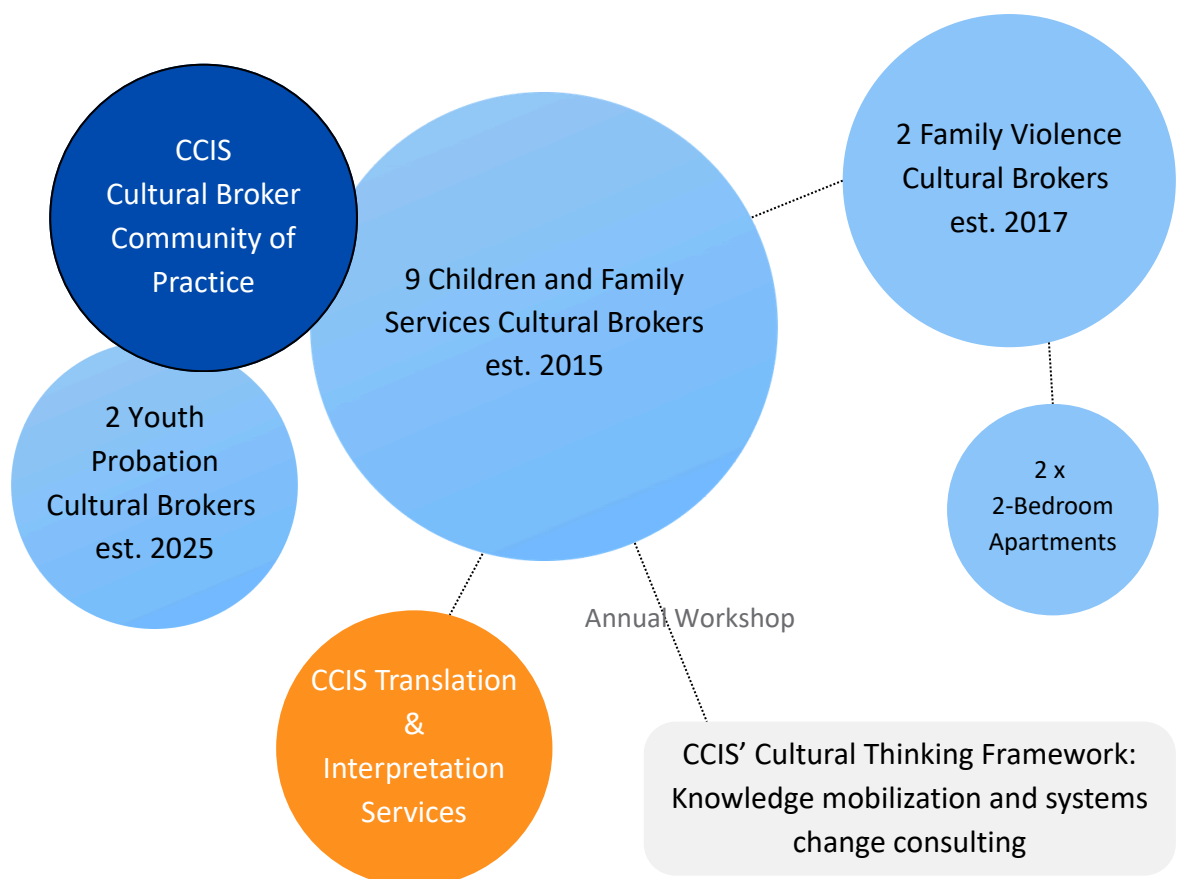


Image: CCIS Cultural Brokerage Model

About Cultural Brokering

The concept of cultural broker is used in two ways: as a formal job role/title ("Cultural Broker") or, more often, as a practice/process ("cultural brokering").

Brokers may work with a specific cultural group, with immigrants or culturally diverse people more broadly and, when formalized as a role, Brokers usually broker to or within a specific sector or field of work, for example disabilities, recreation, education, research, settlement, or justice. Common language to describe the role of a broker includes bridge, liaison, connector, facilitator, interpreter, capacity builder, listener, advocate, educator, and mediator.

Across contexts, cultural brokers typically engage in one or more of the following:

- Linguistic and cultural interpretation
- System orientation and navigation
- Two-way education, trust building, and mediation
- Advocacy or supporting client capacity to self-advocate
- System education or training to enhance cultural awareness

Cultural brokering can include individual, organizational, and policy-level brokering. Based on a review of brokering examples, it was most evident that Brokers support individuals to connect in to, participate with, and achieve outcomes from systems by providing direct navigation support or by building their capacity to self-advocate. Fewer models (usually health) reference Brokers as having a level of expertise in the system they are brokering to or state systems change as a direct outcome goal of brokering activities.

CCIS' Approach to Cultural Brokering: Distinguishing features

CCIS's model of cultural brokering has established proof of concept, based on long-term program funding and commitments, established outcomes, responsiveness to internal and external changes, annual evaluation and CARF accreditation, recognition as a national promising practice, and successful scaling to other systems.

System-funded and system-identified need: A unique feature of CCIS' broker model is a system-funded partnership in response to a system-identified need. This is distinct from the more common structure of brokers as an external resource or service provider.

Brokers as service partners: Brokers are embedded within the system with which they are brokering, working as colleagues and partners rather than an add-on or supportive service. In addition to supporting system-defined outcomes, Brokers contribute with a more holistic assessment of needs, broader family engagement, and a wider set of community resources. Establishing this complementary but expanded role of Brokers has been important in encouraging their involvement even where cultural barriers are not evident.

Staff of a CCIS & Broker Community of Practice: Though co-located as system colleagues, Cultural Brokers are employed by and grounded in the organizational values and mission of CCIS. CCIS Brokers support one another with mentorship, consultations, emotional support, and access to community knowledge. This base of support has been fundamental in scaling the model to new contexts and in keeping Brokers separate from the system at the same time as working within it – supporting them to maintain and assert role boundaries.

Systems change as a stated program goal: Change and enhancement for the system within which Brokers are working is a definitive outcome goal for the program. Brokers have formalized pathways to provide feedback to the system and affect real-time change. CCIS often also provides additional training to system staff as part of the partnership

Competency-based hiring: Cultural brokering relies on the professional and objective use of lived experience as a skill. Though brokering is mainly learned through doing, common characteristics are a person with compassion, extensive community knowledge or connections, an exceptional ability to manage boundaries, flexibility and patience, humility, willingness to ‘push’ the system, and curiosity to learn.

Conditions of Success

- Co-location: co-location has consistently emerged as a success factor for system brokering as it helps to build trust and a sense of a working partnership.
- Early involvement: the CCBP program continuously advocates for early involvement of brokers as a promising practice to mitigate service challenges and promote outcomes.
- Clear role boundaries: these often need to be asserted by brokers, as was also discussed in the literature scan, to ensure Cultural Brokers are working as partners and can push back when systems are rigid instead of responsive.
- Ongoing socialization of the model to system staff: Practical integration of brokers requires ongoing and consistent communication to new and even established system staff to ensure their role as a partner and cultural mediator is understood.
- Real-time communication & trust: ongoing and real-time communication and feedback loops between both frontline staff and management have been critical to effective working partnerships, ongoing quality improvement, and achievement of outcomes.
- Organizational capacity: CCIS’ broker programs are well-supported by the organization’s assets, reputation, and collective experience.

Conclusion

The CCIS Cultural Brokerage Program has demonstrated its value as an impactful model for addressing cultural barriers in formal systems. By fostering mutual understanding, improving outcomes for families, and driving systems change, the CCBP continues to be a vital resource for immigrant families and the systems that serve them. CCIS’ approach to cultural brokering aligns with established models with several key, distinguishing features. CCIS can continue to leverage their experience with and approach to cultural brokering for broader systems change.

CCIS Cultural Brokerage Program (CCBP) – in partnership with Children and Family Services:
November 1, 2024 - October 31, 2025

- 890 new cases opened
 - 37.8% increase from the previous year and the all-time busiest program year.
- Clients represented 88 countries of origin and 64 home languages.
- Family violence was present for 58.5% of families .
- Main settlement needs that were supported included system education, mental health, and isolation.

Family Violence Education Sessions (FVES) for CCBP clients Jan 1, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025

- 221 clients participated in FVES in 2025
- Each client received 3–4 sessions on family violence, systems expectations, and strategies for conflict resolution.
- Cultural conflicts and economic challenges were key underlying challenges for these families.

Temporary Accommodation for CCBP clients:

- 40 clients utilized short-term housing in 2025, with an average stay of 33 days.
- All clients participated in FVES.
- 81% of clients returned home after their stay.

Interpretation and Translation Services:

- 479 interpretation requests were fulfilled for the CCBP and FVES programs.
- This represented 48 languages and engaging 78 unique interpreters.

