



Executive Directors Report

January 2024



Arrivals Update

- ▶ While there are no longer any scheduled charter flights of arrivals from Ukraine, independent arrivals from Ukraine continue at a slower rate. With the pending closure of the CUET window for arrival in Canada, it is anticipated that there will be a surge of arrivals prior to the deadline of March 31, 2024. According to a CBC article on January 18th, 936,293 CUET temporary emergency visas have been approved for travel to Canada but only 210,178 people have actually arrived.
- ▶ A charter flight from Pakistan arrived in Saskatoon on Thursday, January 18th with 314 Afghan arrivals. While some of the arrivals will remain in Saskatchewan, 5 families in Regina, the majority of the arrivals will board onward flights to 32 destinations across Canada.



Arrival update cont'd

- ▶ IRCC and the Government of Canada have reached and exceeded the identified milestone of resettling 40,000 Afghans, and as of the end of December 45,000 Afghans have arrived through the special initiative. While the initial objective has been reached and surpassed, IRCC will continue to resettle Afghans from the region.
- ▶ As mentioned previously, IRCC and the Afghan Secretariat in Calgary are encouraging RAP agencies to mark achieving the milestone in some way, and RODS has agreed to hold an event on March 14th. The event RODS will hold will honour and thank community partners for their contributions in supporting all of our clients and assisting RODS in the successful resettlement of refugees from all countries. The recent Afghan initiative will be highlighted as a recent community partnership success. RODS Settlement staff, and all RODS staff, will be thanked and acknowledged for their direct arrival efforts and the work of all of our staff as the support our Afghan clients, Global Government Assisted Refugee clients and other new arrivals. Location of the event is pending.

IRCC

- Settlement and LINC are in the midst of completing proposals for the IRCC call for proposals (CFP) for settlement and language programs for 2025 to 2030. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2024. RODS will be making applications for the following programs: RAP, Case Management, OSN, WCN, SSWIS and LINC. Each program specific application will be required to provide requested narrative and activity information as well as budgets for the 5 year from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2030. Agencies will be contacted regarding the success of their applications before the end of March 2024.
- APEX Consulting out of Saskatoon was contracted to perform a compensation review of 15 positions within the RODS staffing structure, undertaking both primary/directly solicited data as well as secondary data. APEX was able to analyze the results and provide us a proposed compensation grid/structure, with the assumption that RODS wants to be at 50% of market. The proposed RODS grid changes will be used in the IRCC CFP submissions. I will provide a detailed update later in the agenda.



IRCC Cont'd

- As mentioned previously, Carol Brouwers, Regina RRLIP Manager and Deborah Stevens, Assistant RRLIP Manager both announced their retirement at the end of December 2023. The new RRLIP Manager is Mussarat Parveen, the former Team Lead with the Welcoming Community for Newcomers Program, and the new Assistant Manager is Sonika Chaudhary who was a former member of staff. Both staff started January 8th, 2024, with Carol providing 40 hours of transition support.

New Opportunities.....

- ▶ Donahue Building: We have been able to negotiate tentative lease renewal rates with building owner/representative Lou Nuspl. The building ownership conducted their own market review and came back to us looking for a 2% increase on the base lease, from year 5 of the current lease to a proposed year 6, with 2% increase every subsequent year. A proposed new 5 year lease will see the facility undergo minor changes and be provided the full parking lot.
- ▶ Pending the outcome of the IRCC CFP, we will formalize the terms of a new 5 year lease and make any adjustments that may result from the CFP. We are not able to sign a letter of intent with Donahue ownership until we have signed contracts that take us into a new 5 year service contract.

Some internal and external challenges.....

- ▶ On all IRCC contracts a 15% Admin Fee is charged, as well as smaller % on other funders based on the ability of the contract to support it. Pending the results of the IRCC CFP, there may be significant changes to the way IRCC authorizes certain types of expenses as either a program expense or as an Admin expense. The result may find that the 15% Admin fee may have to shoulder additional expenses for items such as technology support, specifically the current MicroAge managed IT contract. They may be other shifts within allowable expense homes.
- ▶ The Quebec Premier has reached out publicly to ask the Federal Government for relief given Quebec's significantly high number of asylum seekers/refugee claimants. Currently Quebec receives more asylum seekers/refugee claimants than the rest of the provinces combined. A proposed approach from the Quebec Government would see the Federal Government transport asylum seekers/refugee claimants to other provinces to share the burden.

Some internal and external challenges cont'd....

- ▶ A January 16th CBC story about LINC waitlists in Calgary refers to a waitlist of 7,455 people. Overall increases in arrivals over the past 18 month as well as the arrival of people from Ukraine, and no additional classes being opened have contributed to the waitlist. At the RODS LINC program, a significant percentage of our learners are at the literacy level, and classes up to LINC level 4. With the exception of the addition of LINC POLM classes, (Provincial On Line Model), RODS has not been able to open additional classes.

Update on IRCC/Provincial Funding/Federal

- ▶ We are soon entering year 5 (April 1/24) of the current 5 year contract with IRCC.
- ▶ All IRCC funded programs have submitted amended year five budgets, with some higher than the min spec budgets set out at the signing of the 5 year contract. With the increased number of arrivals, enhanced services and classes, year 5 budgets will require sustained levels of funding based on year 4 actuals to maintain service levels. We suspect negotiations on year 5 will commence following the closure of the CFP
- ▶ There are several provincially funded programs that have been renewed already for the year, Stage 1 and E4E, while the Readiness Program, the core employment program, is scheduled for renewal in May 2025. Apart from a small one time increase in 2023, provincially funded programs have not received cost of living increases for more than 5 years. Lack of additional dollars for cost of living forces the Director and Manager to refine programming and staffing to find the 1.5% cost of living allowed by IRCC benchmark.
- ▶ With their shift in funding priorities, RODS no longer receives funding from the United Way of Regina.
- ▶ The Public Health Agency of Canada is currently funding a vaccine/immunization program within Settlement, and have asked RODS to apply for multi year funding to sustain our efforts in vaccination and immunization for Newcomers. Blue Cross is also interested in continuing/extending their support of health literacy efforts delivered in partnership with RODS & SODS.
- ▶ Employment Services has applied to Service Canada for a multi year renewal of the YESS Program, Youth Employment & Skills Strategy