



Executive Directors Report

June 2024



IRCC: Regional & National

- ▶ IRCC has launched the 2024 Levels Consultation to provide feedback into the establishment of immigration levels for 2025 and beyond. As a part of this process, IRCC, Provincial and Territorial Governments met in May 2024 to discuss the levels consultation. In addition to the levels discussion, the provinces and territories lobbied for the reversal of the 625 million dollar cut in the labour market transfer agreements, a reduction that may significantly impact the provision of provincial/territorial services to newcomers.
- ▶ IRCC has confirmed that there will be no dedicated resources allocated in Saskatchewan to provide temporary accommodation to individuals establishing a refugee claim. Currently RODS has been able to secure temporary accommodation for those coming to the organization at the early stages of establishing a claim. RODS continues to monitor the number of claimants attending our office in search of assistance. There were **157** refugee claimants who attended RODS for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, and **55** refugee claimants attending RODS for the period from April 1, 2024 to June 6, 2024.
- ▶ Amidst growing participant wait lists in the IRCC funded LINC Program in the PNT Region, IRCC has directed service providers to increase class sizes, where possible, beyond the contracted levels to reduce/eliminate existing wait lists. RODS was already operating at levels in excess of maximum class levels.
- ▶ RODS has received initial indications that the special Federal Government program to resettle Rohingya refugees will commence soon. RODS has responded to IRCC inquiries about agency & community language capacity as well as community support. RODS and the community can provide support in Chittagonian, Bengal and Burmese.
- ▶ IRCC has moved away from larger charter flights to a new 'pacing model' which will see regular GAR client arrivals every couple of weeks. This will allow organizations to provide a better arrival experience by not having use hotels and large arrival planning, effectively using reception facilities.

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- ▶ IRCC has undertaken a 'rapid review' of the Ukrainian Response initiative (CUET). RODS will be reviewing the findings document.
- ▶ Effective September 2024, IRCC has fixed the number of employment hours international students can work to 24. The number of hours was increased to 40 during the pandemic.
- ▶ IRCC has agreed to extend work permits for temporary residents in the process of securing permanent residency in the province of Manitoba.
- ▶ Federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced in May that Canada has increased the number of applications Canada will process for individuals wishing to leave Gaza from 1,000 to 5,000. As of May 24, 2,903 applications had been received, with 179 temporary-resident permits granted. There is no confirmation if any of the 179 successful applicants had arrived in Canada.
- ▶ On June 3rd Federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced a 2 new enhanced pilot programs for individuals offering care to children, seniors and disabled people, offering permanent residency to these caregivers on arrival. Qualification will be based on a full time position offer, high school equivalency as well as job experience. These new pilots replace earlier pilots that required Level 5 language ability, employment for 2 years with one year of post secondary education.

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- ▶ Recent articles in the Globe and Mail and CBC have highlighted the significant increase in rental rate in Saskatchewan and a dramatically low rental rate. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/more-immigrants-move-to-sask-but-housing-in-short-supply-1.7224228>
- ▶ Regina and Saskatoon represent 2 of the 3 census metropolitan areas with the highest levels of immigration in Canada.
- ▶ IRCC has established a process where GAR clients can apply to the RAP Program for rent top up funds during their 1 year of Federal assistance, and RODS has been successful in securing these additional funds for clients. With the additional funds and strong contacts in the community, RODS staff are still successful in providing rental opportunities to our clients.

Provincial Update

- Immigration and Career Training have undertaken a soft launch of their new Labour Market Strategy, members of the RODS Management Team have been invited to an ICT Conference on June 6th to learn more details about the strategy. At this point, we are aware of yet undefined new investments in rapid credential recognition, supporting overseas recruitment for skill position requirements and undefined possible new investment in provincially funded settlement support through SPOs. We hope to more details in the weeks to come.

Update on IRCC/Provincial Funding/Federal

- ▶ All IRCC contracts for 2024/25 have been finalized with amendments underway.
- ▶ IRCC has officially confirmed that the results of the 2024 CFP will be announced in the Fall of 2024 with negotiations completed by March 31, 2025. We will be signing a lease extension with the Donahue Building ownership to carry us through to the end of the 24/25 fiscal year.
- ▶ RODS is in the process of signing a one month extension and the 11 month contract with ICT for the core Readiness Program.
- ▶ RODS was not successful in securing a 2 year extension of Public Health Agency of Canada vaccine/immunization program.
- ▶ Employment Services has applied to Service Canada for a multi year renewal of the YESS Program, Youth Employment & Skills Strategy. We await a decision from Service Canada on the continuation of the program.
- ▶ SSWIS/WCN were successful in receiving Federal support for 5 summer student positions. After initially being advised of successfully receiving 2 summer student positions in Marketing & Communications, Service Canada indicated that there was an error, and after a few weeks of additional waiting, we were informed that we were not successful. We were able to use the salary top up budgeted in Admin for the unfunded positions to hire one Sask Poly Practicum Student for the balance of the summer.

RODS Updates

- ▶ The RODS World Refugee Day Partner/Staff Recognition Event will take place on Thursday, June 20th at the Mitakuyé Owâs'â Centre - 1770 Halifax St
- ▶ RODS and REACH are operating a 'grocery store' every Thursday for our clients, making available highly discounted staple fresh grocery items for purchase. This takes place at the Donahue Building.
- ▶ In cooperation with the Regina Food Bank, RODS also will be operating a food locker for non perishable items out of the Donahue Building. The lockers are in the basement lunchroom and are made to available to clients who are experiencing food insecurity.
- ▶ We will be speaking with the Regina Public Library regarding their future plans for a new/refurbished downtown central library. The library is looking for RODS endorsement.
- ▶ We have just confirmed the cost to complete the building assessments of the Reception House at 1610 Toronto Street and our office at 1855 Smith Street. Bob England of RJ England Engineering will be leading the mechanical, electrical and structural/roof systems reviews of the properties. With the inclusion of the building envelopes in the assessment, the total cost of the assessment, from operations, will be approximately \$15,500.00