



Executive Directors Report

September 2024



IRCC/Federal: Regional & National

- ▶ **Immigration Levels:** The results of the 2025 IRCC Levels Consultation will be tabled in Parliament in November. As detailed in later in the update, the last several months has seen significant changes in IRCC policy regarding temporary foreign workers, students on educational visas and refugee claimants.
- ▶ **Refugee Claimants:** There have been ongoing calls from the Governments of Ontario and Quebec for additional financial resources from the Federal Government to support provincial efforts to assist the large number of refugee claimants/asylum seekers who are establishing claims in those provinces. The provinces of Manitoba and Newfoundland & Labrador expressed an interest at that time to receive some of the refugee claimants/asylum seekers in their respective provinces to relieve some of the burden. During the week of September 9th, the ongoing discussions of a Fed/Prov working group on Refugee Claimants/Asylum Seekers were leaked to the media, sparking Provincial and Territorial Government reactions.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/ottawa-looks-to-relocate-thousands-of-asylum-seekers-to-provinces-from-ontario-quebec/ar-AA1qpLMC?ocid=entnewsntp&pc=HCTS&cvid=df8ea184dc414b5c9430099885f43ff1&ei=22>

- ▶ The Government of Saskatchewan has expressed concern over the proposal, and several other provinces have come forward with concerns about receiving additional claimants from Ontario and Quebec.

<http://ctvnews.ca/sask-won-t-take-asylum-seekers-if-ottawa-attempts-to-relocate-them-1.7042661>

IRCC/Federal: Regional & National

- **Labour Market Funds to the Provinces/Territories:** In the spring of 2024, the provinces and territories lobbied for the reversal of the 625 million dollar reduction in the labour market transfer agreements from the Federal Government, a reduction that may significantly impact the provision of provincial/territorial employment services and the specific labour market supports provided to newcomers. The 625 million dollar reduction were funds that were identified as a top up to the base of labour market funds committed to the Provinces and Territories. The top up funds were to end in 2023, but were extended by the Federal Government one additional year into 2024, with the reduction impacting the 2025 allocation. The Government of Saskatchewan announced that it would be backfilling the \$17.6 million reduction it received as a result of the reduction to support Saskatchewan programming. SPOs receiving Labour Market Transfer Funds were invited to media conferences to announce the Federal reduction as well as the intention of the Province to backfill the reduction in funds. The Province is also encouraging SPOs to communicate directly to the Federal Government on the importance of these transfer funds in an effort to encourage additional Federal dollars to offset the reduction.

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/other/the-sask-gov-t-says-ottawa-cut-17-6m-for-job-training-the-feds-say-it-was-always-meant-to-be-temporary/ar-AA1pcZW7?ocid=BingNewsSerp>

<https://www.cjme.com/2024/08/22/sask-gov-takes-over-after-labour-market-transfer-top-up-ends/>

IRCC/Federal: Regional & National

- **Temporary Foreign Workers & Student Visas:** Both the Federal Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister have made announcements over the summer in relation to reductions in the number of student visas available as well as reductions in temporary foreign workers. The overall intent is to reduce the number of temporary residents down to 5% of total population, it currently sit at 6.5%. Student visas/study permits were initially reduced by 10% to 485,000 permits in 2025, that number has now been reduced a further 10% to 437,000 permits. Temporary foreign workers will now be subject to a 10% employer cap within the low wage track, with construction, healthcare and food processing continuing with a 20% cap. All low wage track positions will be limited to one year. All metropolitan areas with an unemployment rate over 6% will not see employers TFW applications processed with the exception of the above identified sectors.

[Trudeau announces reduction in temporary foreign workers, suggests more immigration changes to come | CBC News](#)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/09/strengthening-temporary-residence-programs-for-sustainable-volumes.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2024/09/minister-boissonnault-provides-next-steps-on-recent-changes-to-the-temporary-foreign-worker-program.html>

IRCC/Federal: Regional & National

- ▶ **CUAET Program - Ukrainian Temporary residents and their dependents in Canada:** IRCC has announced that effective March 31, 2025, Ukrainian Temporary Residents under the CUAET Program will no longer be able to access IRCC NAARS Assessments, Language Assessments, Settlement Services or attend LINC language classes after June 30, 2025 (if they were attending class as of March 31, 2025). Agencies have been provided timelines to advise affected clients of the future end of eligibility. This will significantly impact CUAET clients attending RODS LINC and accessing RODS Settlement Services. Discussions are underway about the possibility of developing RODS volunteer run language classes to support the affected clients.
- ▶ **Immigration Attitudes:** A survey conducted by Leger Marketing for the National Post in August 2024 found that 65% of Canadians polled believe that current immigration targets are too high, with 20% believing that they are the correct level. Results also reflect that 78% of those polled believe high immigration levels contribute to housing shortages, and 76% believe that they also impact healthcare. <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/canada-immigration-poll>

A Nanos survey conducted for CTV, released on September 19/24 states that 64% of those polled think Canada should accept fewer immigrants in 2025 than in 2024, and 72% of those polled who support or somewhat support reducing immigration levels until more affordable housing is achieved. The same survey also reflected 50% of those polled stated that Canada should settle more or about the same number of refugees, with 46% stating that Canada should accept fewer. <http://ctvnews.ca/politics/most-canadians-want-fewer-immigrants-in-2025-nanos-survey-1.7044594>

Update on IRCC/Provincial Funding/Federal

- ▶ **Resettlement of Rohingya Refugees:** In spite of earlier indications that the special Federal Government program to resettle Rohingya refugees would commence soon, there appears to be a delay. RODS had previously responded to IRCC inquiries about agency & community language capacity as well as community support. RODS and the community are able to provide support in Chittagonian, Bengal and Burmese.
- ▶ **LINC Class Sizes:** Amidst growing participant wait lists in the IRCC funded LINC Program in the PNT Region, IRCC has renewed its direction to 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 size based on language level and physical space.
- ▶ **Housing top up funding:** IRCC has also announced that housing top up funds to assist GAR clients in securing permanent accommodation will be winding down.

Update on IRCC/Provincial Funding/Federal

- ▶ All IRCC contracts for 2024/25 have been finalized with the anticipated amendments underway. RAP has experienced an increase in GAR arrivals in the 2nd quarter, and is therefore requesting an upward amendment to their contract. Given that RAP services and the budget correspond directly to the number of GAR arrivals, the upward amendment of the contract is an ongoing practice.
- ▶ IRCC has (again) confirmed that the results of the 2024 CFP will be announced in the Fall of 2024 with negotiations completed by March 31, 2025. IRCC has promised to not replicate the frenzy of work imposed on agencies to complete contracts in very tight timelines during the last CFP. Given recent events in Ottawa and a pending non-confidence vote in Parliament, there is growing concern in the sector about finalizing contracts prior to a possible Federal election.
- ▶ RODS has signed a 1 year contract with the Government of Saskatchewan, Immigration and Career Training for the core Readiness Program. The RODS Management Team are meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister and Senior Officials from ICT on Friday, September 20, the agenda included the new Saskatchewan Immigration Act, pre arrival services and additional settlement services.
- ▶ Employment Services had applied to Service Canada for a multi year renewal of the YESS Program, Youth Employment & Skills Strategy. We were unfortunately unsuccessful and the program came to an end at the end of May 2024.

RODS Update

- ▶ In recognition of Truth and Reconciliation Day, all RODS staff will be attending an afternoon event led by Indigenous story teller, Dickie Yuzicapi. RODS will be closed on Monday, September 30, 2024 in acknowledgement of the Day For Truth and Reconciliation.
- ▶ RODS is exploring external grant funding to establish a refugee employment track within the Employment Services Team. Given the literacy needs and low language levels of many of our GAR clients they tend to not qualify for the LINC Benchmark Level 4 requirement of the current program. Employment Services will be applying to Scotia Bank for a grant, and we will be pursuing other granting opportunities.
- ▶ RODS has received 140 Government Assisted Refugees (GARS) from January 1 to August 31, 2024. An additional 173 GAR clients are anticipated to arrive before March 31/25. From January 1/24 to August 31/24 RODS Settlement Services have assisted 7,365 new and returning clients.
- ▶ Bob England at RJ England Engineering has reviewed the proposal from Action Sewer to install a high performance macerating lift pump at the back of the building, as well as installing new ceiling height sewer lines that will connect to repaired/sleeved line in the main area of the Smith Street basement. This repair will be approximately \$40,000.00 opposed to the earlier \$100,000.00 estimate to cut open above the existing sewer line in the entire Smith Street basement. The lower price modified plan can be completed over the Festive Season closure, the original plan would require complete closure of the building for a minimum of 2 weeks.

RODS Update

- ▶ RODS has met with the Regina Public Library regarding their future plans for a new/refurbished downtown central library. Conversations will continue this fall.
- ▶ RODS should be receiving capital/building assessment of the mechanical, electrical and structural/roof systems of 1855 Smith Street & 1610 Toronto Street by early October. The project is being lead by Bob England of RJ England Engineering.