



Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Program Renewal: Adapting to Evolving Funding and Client Needs

Consultations on Settlement and Resettlement
Assistance Program Renewal



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada 

*The **purpose** of this presentation is to solicit your early thoughts and co-generate ideas about how we can adapt the Settlement and Resettlement Programs to better suit the needs of clients over the next few years in a context of reduced funding and lower immigration levels.*

Two reference decks will be included in the consultation package we send you :

- 1. How Government Decisions are Made.***
- 2. Current Operating Context***

These decks describe the mechanics of government and how the policy and operations of Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs are determined.

Context

The **2025-27 Immigration Levels Plan (approved by Cabinet)** included **reduced targets** for permanent resident (PR) admissions. The **2026-28 Levels Plan** to be tabled by Nov 1.

The **Comprehensive Expenditure Review** requires Departments to reduce program spending by **7%, 10% and 15%** over the next **three fiscal years**.

Modernizing the Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs will ensure that services remain **relevant and responsive to evolving client needs and preferences**.

- The Government's focus on returning to more sustainable immigration levels, realigning Government spending with key priorities, combined with sunseting funding for crisis responses, have meant that the Settlement Program is in a situation where it must adapt to declining funding levels.
- IRCC has begun reflecting on a transformation of the program that will adapt it to modern client expectations and better ensure longer-term sustainability in this environment of fiscal restraint.
- The need to adapt to these evolving circumstances also presents a real opportunity for program renewal and renewed collaboration toward the shared outcome of helping new immigrants thrive in Canada
- This deck will outline broad reflection themes, and deep-dive into specific areas where IRCC is seeking advice.

Program Renewal

- After the initial 2025-27 Multi-Year Levels Plan decisions, IRCC made a decision to sign three-year agreements considering funding uncertainty. We also recognized a need to rethink and renew the Settlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs in advance of a new funding cycle.
- Despite an environment of fiscal restraint, the goal of program renewal remains to continue to serve clients well and achieve strong outcomes in the digital age.
- This is an opportunity to work together to ensure the programs are keeping up with clients' evolving needs and expectations, and to do so while maintaining longer-term sustainability. IRCC is currently developing advice and potential directions on program renewal, for which we are seeking external input and ideas.

Data-driven efficiencies and optimization

Many of the Program Renewal initiatives will be undertaken on a longer-term basis, but there may be a need to find savings and efficiencies. The sector is already working with IRCC on some initiatives, such as:

- Confirming client eligibility more frequently; and
- Leveraging client service data and results reporting to:
 - Maximize program investments through regular review of waitlists, uptake and client outcomes;
 - Validate and enhance national consistency

For discussion: Do you have any additional suggestions as to how to optimize the program?



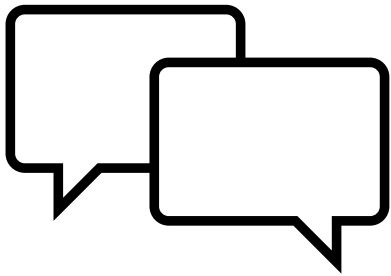
More than 4K participants took part in the iCARE training held earlier this year. Your participation and cooperation during this transition period plays an important role in enabling the Department to take a data-driven approach to find efficiencies and areas for optimization.



Areas for Consultation

Areas of focus for consultation

- The following slide provides an overview of themes identified by IRCC for discussion and sector feedback.
- These themes build on the work already underway in the current funding cycle to find efficiencies and optimize existing resources.
- Some of the work, such as NAARS Transformation, has already begun. Other themes are core elements to consider within a broader program renewal context, where we must **balance program sustainability with maximizing client outcomes**.



If you haven't already, please refer to the two reference decks for additional context. (*How Government Decisions are Made* and *Current Operating Context*).

Key areas of focus for Program Renewal

The overall objective **for renewing** the Settlement Program includes identifying **initiatives** where services can be **optimized** in the **short-term** as well as **longer-term changes** that will be implemented over multiple phases. There are several **key themes** guiding the work:

Renewed digital strategy

Supporting skills for economic success

NAARS Transformation

Aligning RAP service delivery

Revising length of eligibility

Collaboration with PTs

Question:

Are these the right areas of focus, and are there others that should be considered in addition?

Renewed Digital Strategy

Issue: Expanding digital settlement services can be a cost-effective and efficient means of supporting clients who are increasingly looking for digital options. While there has been noteworthy innovation in digitalization across the sector, a siloed approach persists.

For discussion: How can we further shift towards a '*digital-first, but not digital-only*' model, where service providers have access to a standardized set of digital tools for cost-effective service delivery, and IRCC plays a more active role in seamlessly connecting clients to the right services at the right time through a centralized platform offering settlement information and digital triage?

Questions:

1. As clients increasingly access information online, how can service providers support newcomers most effectively? **What types of services would most appropriately be provided online and in-person?**
2. How can we ensure that SPOs have the capacity to effectively manage privacy and security in an online environment, so that clients can access services without facing undue risk to their personal information or other harms?
3. As technology continues to reshape settlement service delivery, **how can IRCC further support the sector's digital capacity** alongside the work of the two technology-focused sector working groups?
4. **What advantages do you see in using technology to support clients?** Do you have any examples of specific digital tools that are working well?

NAARS Transformation (standardization and DNS)

Issue: Explore how standardization of NAARS delivery could better ensure clients, especially those who are most vulnerable, are supported in their settlement journey.

For discussion: This approach is a significant change for the sector and IRCC but has the potential to be more effective at ensuring clients obtain only the services they need when they need them.

Current plans are to have NAARS transformation components in place by the next funding cycle, guided by the National Advisory Table, the implementation of Communities of Practice, and ongoing engagement with the sector.

The transition, already underway, will require increased collaboration between the sector and IRCC, and between SPOs, with a goal of overall greater effectiveness in standardizing assessment of services needed and referral to the appropriate service provider.

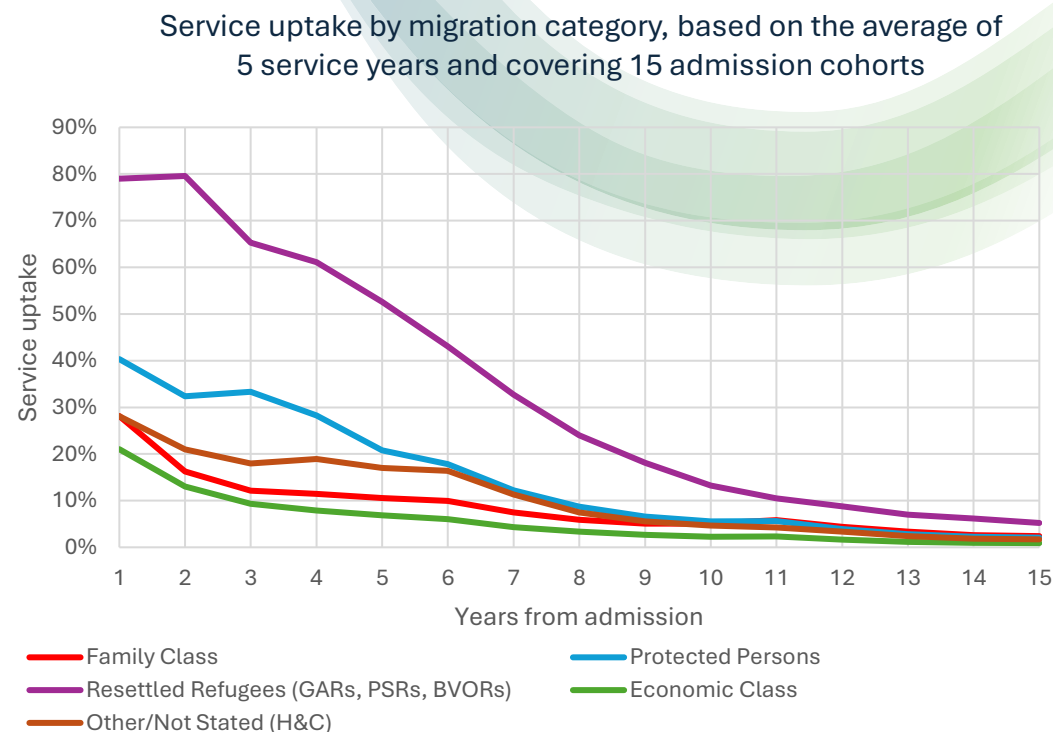
Questions:

1. Implementing changes to NAARS, would require substantial collaboration and trust between SPOs. What steps can IRCC take to foster and support increased collaboration among SPOs?
2. If a common platform to manage referrals is implemented, what would be the most critical features for this platform to include?
3. To help inform the future direction of NAARS, do SPOs have best practices or lessons learned related to ensuring clients' need are met without going through NAARS?

Revising the length of clients' eligibility for settlement services

Issue: Clients are eligible for services until citizenship, but we see some clients accessing services many years post-arrival. In an environment of fiscal restraint, setting reasonable limits on the amount of time that clients can access settlement services could help ensure that IRCC-funded supports remain focused on clients' early settlement and integration while promoting their self-sufficiency and long-term engagement with community-based resources and other government-provided services.

For discussion: What are the potential benefits and challenges you can identify if clients were given fixed amounts of time to access settlement services? How do we consider client vulnerability in implementing a new framework?



Questions:

1. What tools and supports would you require to implement these changes effectively?
2. What can IRCC do to encourage newcomers who need settlement services to access them as early as possible after arriving in Canada?

Supporting skills for economic success

Issue: Knowing an official language significantly improves economic integration. Data shows very high turnover rates in IRCC funded classes, making language progress under the current model difficult. Alternatives to formal language training may be underutilized within the Program.

There is a need to find efficiencies and improve the effectiveness of employment-related services to overcome barriers specific to being a newcomer, ensuring IRCC funding is not duplicating other Federal, P/T, or municipal services. Additionally, employer engagement is critical to fostering equitable hiring and retention of newcomers. However, duplication of efforts limits effectiveness and there may be an opportunity for more clearly defined roles.

Questions:

1. How do you adapt your language programs in response to high turnover? What helps you offer courses that meet different learners' needs? How do you support a client's transition to other language services in the community?
2. In your experience of providing ErS, which activities are best delivered in-person and where has online service delivery, (1 on 1 or group) proven beneficial in terms of meeting client needs?
3. What are some best practices in coordinating employer engagement within your community? How do you work with IECs, LIPs or Umbrellas?

Continue to align RAP service delivery with Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) levels

Issue: The foundations of the RAP program are strong. However, an analysis of resettlement communities and the corresponding RAP-SPO network should be undertaken to ensure RAP SPO capacity continues to be aligned with numbers of GAR arrivals, available funding and client needs.

Questions:

1. What do you envision being important to bear in mind as we continue to seek to match RAP-SPO capacity with GAR arrivals?
2. What considerations do you think will be important to make when analyzing the layout of the RAP-SPO network, and the costs and outcomes associated with the destining / reception of GARs?

Stronger collaboration with PTs to align co-planning and service delivery

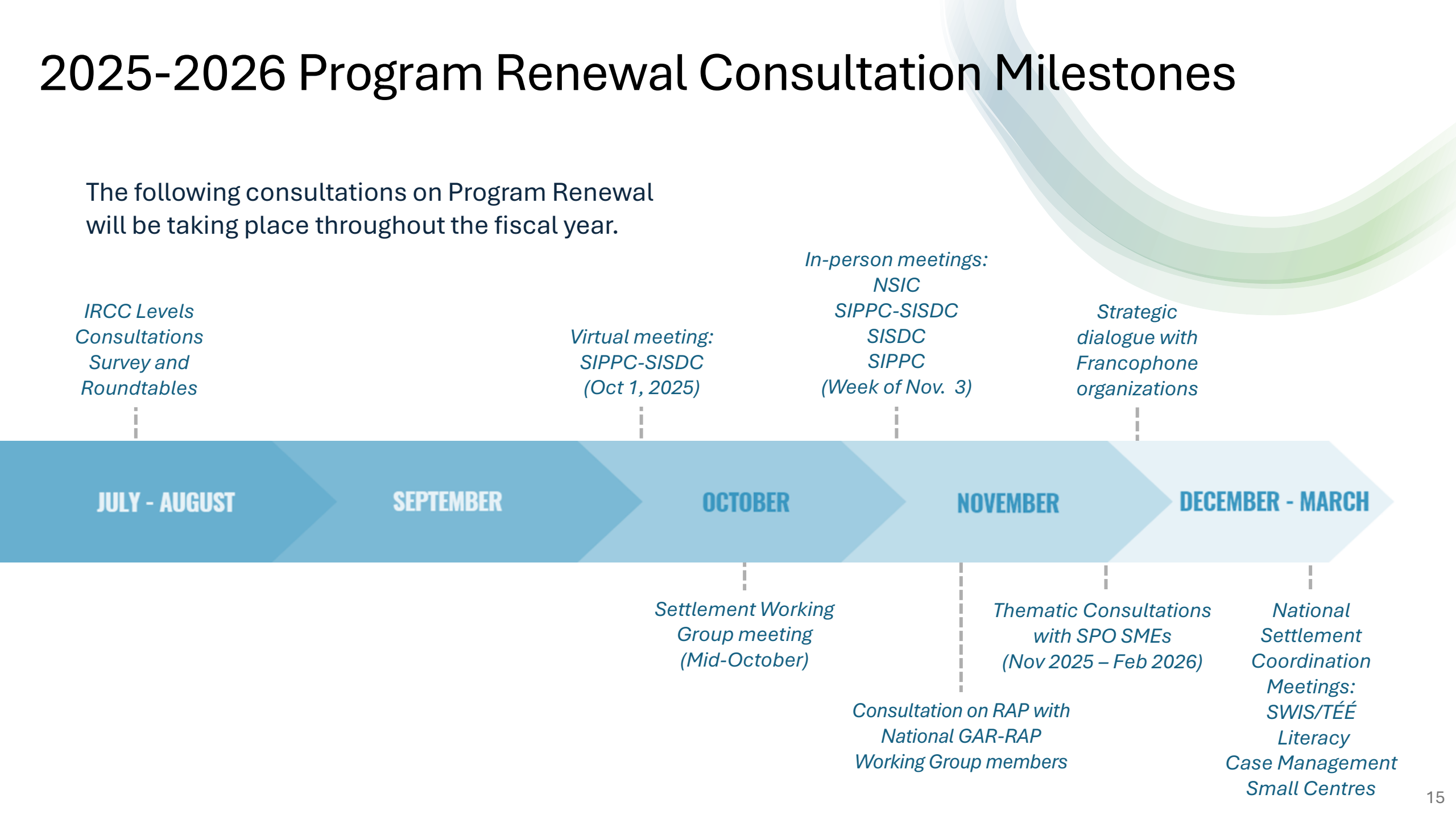
Issue: IRCC works closely with its PT counterparts. However, further strengthening collaboration could lead to more efficient and effective provision of settlement services, ensuring that newcomers receive complementary supports at the right time with as few gaps as possible. Additionally, exploring the practices of other federal departments in supporting Francophone Minority Communities could help implement a more effective, coherent program that enables IRCC to maintain and uphold the vitality of FMCs.

Questions:

1. What opportunities do you think exist for improving collaboration between IRCC and PTs? Some options could include enhanced joint planning and cooperation between IRCC and PTs, as well as alternative approaches to the funding and provision of services.
2. What potential challenges or opportunities do you see in strengthening the relationship among SPOs, PTs, and IRCC to provide settlement services to newcomers?

2025-2026 Program Renewal Consultation Milestones

The following consultations on Program Renewal will be taking place throughout the fiscal year.



Next Steps

With this presentation, we are setting the stage for topics that will be discussed in greater detail at the upcoming NSIC and SIPPC-SISDC meetings this November.

To help us all make the best use of our in-person time, and to enable IRCC in proactively addressing some new ideas or concerns during the NSIC meetings, we ask that over the next four weeks:

- **Immediate-term:** Please **provide us with feedback by October 15th** with any additional thoughts **from committee members** on the renewal themes and if you have additional or alternative suggestions, and if there are specific topics you would like to discuss at NSIC / SIPPC-SISDC meetings.
- **Short-term:** Please distribute this presentation and discussion questions with **your peers in the sector** to update them on the Program Renewal discussion, and to collect and send us any high-level questions, ideas or concerns by **October 29th**.

Note: There will still be an opportunity during the meetings to provide additional feedback.