Executive Directors Report

March 2026

Update on IRCC/Provincial Funding/Federal/Operational Impacts

- On Thursday February 26th, all Settlement Service Provider Organizations outside of Quebec were provided with their amended notional budgets by IRCC for the next 2 fiscal years (years 2 & 3) and an additional 4th fiscal year. Please see the attached document ***IRCC Notional Budget Correspondence.*** RODS held 2 all staff in person/Zoom meetings on Thursday March 5th to share the details of the Federal reductions and organizational next steps.

- IRCC stated that % reductions were based on immigration levels, individual agency metrics and data within the iCare reporting system, as well as the impact from the new service eligibility limits on Economic Class Newcomers, a 6 year cap effective April 1/26 and a 5 year cap effective April 1/27.

- While there was an overall 9.0% reduction to the sector nation wide, $100 million dollars, Saskatchewan was projected to see a 13.3% reduction in previously budgeted/contract funding for 26/27. Given that the new notional budgets were based on iCare metrics and data, % reductions varied between agencies. Finance will be providing a more detailed analysis based on variances to prior 3 year IRCC contracts. As reflected in the ***IRCC Notional Budget Correspondence:***
  - ***LINC will see reductions from current year 25/26 of 13.5% in 26/27, 2% in 27/28 and 17% 28/29***
  - ***Consolidated Settlement will see reductions from current year 25/26 of 14.6% in 26/27, 23% in 27/28 and 17% in 28/29.***
  - ***RAP will not see a reduction, the budget is driven by arrival numbers and associated costs.***
  - ***Provincially funded programming will be indirectly affected by the reductions.***

- The reductions will see 12 Settlement staff affected by layoff and an additional 10 with reduced hours or position shifts, with LINC seeing up to 7 positions affected by layoff, hours reduction or position shifts. In person meetings with affected staff will take place on Friday, March 20th and Thursday/Friday, March 26th & 27th Following the finalization of the 26/27 notional contracts for the 2 affected departments, will we be in a position to assess the staffing impact on Admin and finalize the organizational budget, projecting our future occupancy options.

- Given the tremendous financial challenge RODS faces with IRCC reductions, our current lease of the Donahue Building needs to be evaluated for viability.

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- **Donahue:** We are in a 3 year lease at the Donahue Building, but have a 90 day notice clause to terminate the lease after 24 months, that being March 31, 2027. Budgets for 26/27 have been structured to maintain current occupancy for 26/27, but planning for the 2 remaining IRCC contract years will necessitate the building of scenarios for no/partial Donahue occupancy combined with utilizing Smith Street as well as the vacant space at Woodbine and other adjacent Neisner properties.

- **Smith Street:** Our owned building, provides low operating costs, but has limited available space with daycare remaining at Smith, (part of the main floor, 2nd floor and basement), and we will need to proceed with essential facility upgrades and repairs including the sewer line repair, demised egress for the stair wells and an air handling unit for the basement. Smith Street operating costs are approximately $170,000 annually.

- **The 2nd floor Woodbine location:** The previous new home for daycare, has 10,000 sq. ft. of space where RODS was the last occupant. It is $13.74 PSF all in. There is additional main floor space at Woodbine, our former Newcomer Welcome Centre, but it is under contract. We will explore options with the owner regarding relocating the current Woodbine tenant as well as consider the adjacent Neisner owned property ½ block north on Smith Street.

- The RODS owned property at 1855 Smith Street and adjacent parking lot have been removed from listing with Avison Young as of April 7, 2026. The Boards concerns over the Globe & Mail article and Avison Youngs involvement with warehouse sales to ICE and RODS funding reductions were shared. I have confirmed with Linely that he received the notice to terminate the listing, he said we have taken the listing signs out of the windows. Regarding the warehouses in Georgia, Linely shared that ICE approached the warehouse owners directly, not through Avison and Young, and finalized the deal with the owners, through lawyers, not the realty company. It is unclear what happened to the terms of the listing agreement.

- In light of the IRCC funding reductions, we have placed the architectural/code work on the Woodbine Building on hold, pending termination. We will have had conversations with the Donahue Ownership Group and Addie Neisner about our circumstances. We have met with Daycare and shared the gravity of our situation, and so planning has shifted to the daycare remaining at Smith Street. Donalee did an assessment of required square footage required to continue with the 26 seat expansion and unfortunately the Smith Street main floor does not have sufficient usable space. Following our conversation with the Board on March 25th, we will be required to provide formal notice to Daycare Branch of our decision to continue with the expansion, decline the additional seats, or advise that we need additional time to assess our situation. Management recommends not continuing with the expansion in seats.

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- Language training, both Federal and Provincial Programs, have significant wait lists. The Federally funded LINC Program has 305 learners in class and a current wait list of **238** learners, while the Provincially funded Stage 1 & 2 have 130 learners in class and a wait list of **88** learners. Immigration and Career Training (ICT), Province of Saskatchewan, has awarded us an additional 45 seats in Stage 1 & 2 (non IRCC eligible clients), and an additional 75 seats in a new initiative for clients of the provincial social assistance program(SAR). As of the moment, the levels/class make up of the new SAR program is subject to intake. The cuts to the LINC budget will see additional learners exited from the program and placed on wait lists.
- IRCC and the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH) have announced changes to the program effective May 1, 2026. The IFH Program provides interim health care coverage to GAR clients until they become eligible/enrolled in Provincial Health Care, as well as for refugee claimants and other categories of protected individuals. Provincial Health Care charge back to the provinces expenses for GAR clients within their first year in Canada and for expenses incurred treating refugee claimants. IFH expenses have received attention of late from the Province of Alberta as well as the Federal Leader of the Opposition.
  - A **30% co-payment** will be implemented for supplemental products and services, including vision care, assistive devices, urgent dental care and occupational therapy.
  - A **$4 co-payment per prescription** will be implemented for prescription medications and renewals.
  - The balance of the IFH program, basic health, pre-departure medicals and Immigration Medical Exams remain unchanged with no co-pay component.

  RODS Management will assess the impact of these changes on our clients, determine if there will be any special consideration for GAR clients, as well as review the terms and conditions of the current RODS Board approved Newcomer Emergency Fund and assess its potential suitability to address possible challenges. This has been deferred until April due to work required to address IRCC funding reductions. An initial review indicates that RODS will need to establish new eligibility criteria for supplementary health support for GAR clients, if the Board wishes to do so. The current eligibility criteria in the Newcomer Emergency Fund, relating to health, is non prescription drugs and disability aids.

Metropolis

- A total of four RODS staff attended the Metropolis Conference in Halifax, Tatiana Zotova, Ricardo Arisnabarreta , Getachew Woldysus and myself. There were also 2 staff from the RRLIP and their Volunteer Committee Chair. There about 1,100 participants at the conference, with many representatives from Saskatchewan SPOs. The plenary panels were very interesting, the reoccurring theme was the future of the immigration to Canada, trying to provide insight as to how we are in the situation we are in now. The consensus was that a combination of long standing capacity and infrastructure issues in housing and healthcare met head on with policy decisions. The sense was that immigration to Canada is not broken, but caught in this infrastructure/policy and shift of public opinion on immigration to Canada. The other underlying theme was that given labour market needs and a declining Canadian fertility rate, the vital importance of immigration continues to exist.
- Sessions at the conference reflected some academic research pertaining this broad hypothesis and also agencies efforts to creatively realign to meet IRCC expectations and innovate. The 'feeling in the room' reflected the cuts all agencies were now scrambling to manage and plan for going forward. IRCC did participate in the final panel, with ADM Catherine Scott presenting along side SPOs. IRCC maintained their dispassionate delivery of the messaging around funding reductions, citing the Comprehensive Expenditure Renewal and reflecting reduction in immigration levels.
- The RODS Team were able to work the room, gather imformation and reconnecting with colleagues from across Canada, learning how other agencies were trying to manage the reductions. We were able to have lengthy discussions with John Biles from the IRCC Resettlement Branch. John assured us that agency funding reductions were driven by overall declining numbers but also from iCare metrics and data. We were left with the perception that the Prairie Region, while hit hard now, was positioned better than others to rebound from these reductions. Their seems to be a sense of optimism from some IRCC staff that this will be the bottom of the curve and that SPO delivery will reemerge.
- RODS Employment Services reconnected with the NorthPine Foundation at the Metropolis Conference in Halifax. NorthPine is eager to finalize discussions asap.

RODS Update

- RODS is currently contracted to provide CELPIP language testing and has finalized discussions to also host IELTS language testing. We continue to work to address technical requirements to deliver the IELTS testing, including IELTS installation of a lab camera system as well as waiting room cameras. These contracts generate some additional revenue for the programs.
- The Language Team continues to operate 1 ENACT class **(Empowering Newcomers through Access to Community and Training).** The Saskatoon Open Door Society has launched its own version of our ENACT program, with the same fee structure.
- The construction of the 8’ fence for the gated parking compound behind the Donahue Building has been cancelled.

RODS Update

Settlement Family, and Community Services Department

Monthly Report to Executive Director

Month: February	**Date of Submission:** 19-03-2026	
Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)		
Arrivals	**Month:** April - February	**Total:**123
Expected Arrival	**Month:** March 2026	**Total:** 20
Countries of Citizenship	Sudan, Mali, Syria, South Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq, Uganda.	
Service Updates		
No. of Newcomers served	**Month**: April-February	**Total**: 5,589
Clients' top Language	Gujarati, Arabic, Tigrinya, Mandarin, Somali, Tigrigna, Hindi, Dari, Swahili, Punjabi, Yoruba,	
No. of Services provided	19,067	
No. of Clients by Gender	**Male**: 2,605 **Female**: 2,776 **Unknown**: 208	**Total**: 5,589
Countries of Citizenship	**Top countries of citizenship:** India, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Nigeria, Vietnam, Philippines, China, Pakistan, Syria, Somalia, Vietnam,	
In-person Services: February 2026		
No. of Clients served	952	
No. of services	969	
Mode of Services	Telephone or emails Staff -led online	
Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW)		
No. of Clients Served	24	
No. of Services	26	
Refugee Claimant		
No. of Claimants	18	
Countries of Origin	Eritrea (1), Egypt (1), Ghana (1), Nigeria (9), Pakistan (4), Syria (2)	

Other Information of Interest

- ACS Metropolis has shared some analytics from IRCC polling data from late 2025, which reflects the impact of the reductions to immigration levels, their regional impact and public opinion polling. A National Post Article below provides a high level look at the information. The full ACS Report/presentation has not been made available yet, but I was able to grab screen shots of the live presentation done on line. I will bring some hard copies to the meeting on Wednesday. Key findings are:

- Saskatchewan saw a 40% reduction in immigration levels to the province in 24/25, with 44% fewer Economic Class arrivals, 9% fewer Family Class arrivals, and 32.5% reduction in Refugees. Saskatchewan had the largest reduction in Refugee arrivals and was clustered with several other provinces in having some of the highest Economic Class and Family Class reductions.
- Overall admissions to Canada dropped by 18.6% in 2025.
- Temporary Foreign Workers admissions declined by 16% in Saskatchewan.
- Canada had been one of the *Top 20 Fastest Growing Countries* in the world, and now has negative/zero population growth and a fertility rate of 1.1%
- Opinion data shows that 60% of Canadians feel that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada, with 58% of Saskatchewan residents believing that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.
- Amongst the 37% of Canadians who view immigration as having a negative impact on Canada, 20% view immigration as negatively impacting housing, 17% job competition, 11% citing concerns about newcomer adaptation and 11% citing a strain on social supports.
- There is additional interesting data in the slide deck that we can review at the meeting or at a later date.

https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canada-immigration-data