

# IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN CANADA: TRENDS IN PUBLIC FUNDING

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Refugee, Immigrants, Funding, Provincial Trends, Canada

## WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT

**Objective:** To identify provincial programs for immigrant and refugee settlement, compare provincial funding trends and provide federal funding data for identifying national trends in settlement funding.

**Research Justification:** As Canada continues to be a destination for immigration, there is need for data on trends in funding and programs for assisting newcomers. Data on federal and provincial funding will provide insight on the quality and availability of public services and assist government to determine the impact of its programs in assisting newcomers.

**Practical Goal:** Provide a resource for creating policies, pursuing research opportunities and providing services focused on newcomers including children and youth.

**Intended Primary Audience:** Service Providers, the Public and Policy makers

## HOW WAS THE DATA OBTAINED

**Research Method:** The research was conducted in two stages; In stage one, AMSSA reached out to Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) within its network to identify existing government programs. Based on the feedback, all 10 provinces were requested to provide information on the following;

- A list of existing programs for immigrants and refugees
- Total amount of funding per year from 2012-2017 per program
- A description of the mandate of each program
- If the program includes funding for SPOs- to provide a list of recipients and amounts per year

## CALL TO ACTION

Lack of sufficient public funding to address the needs of newcomers has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups of immigrants and refugees especially women and children. According to Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, more than half of refugees in the province depend on food banks and a significant number struggle with depression or emotional health. A strategy that ensures not just an increase in funding but also an equitable distribution among the provinces would help ensure better outcomes for newcomers regardless of

## WHAT THE STUDY FOUND

### GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

There are similarities in provincial programs for newcomers. All provinces have programs promoting labour market participation and integration, settlement and integration, language training and refugee support. Language training is usually subsumed within labour market integration (except in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec). Ontario also introduced a new program in 2018 (Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program) that supports community-based projects. Quebec's PMD (Programme Mobilisation- Diversité) funds intercultural diversity and dialogue while Prince Edward Island's Graduate Mentorship Program for International Students assists employers to create long-term employment opportunities for recent graduates.

Most funding is allocated to settlement and integration services for newcomers. Funding has increased in recent years primarily for labour market integration.

### TRENDS IN PROVINCIAL FUNDING

Overall provincial government funding for immigration and settlement has risen since 2012 from \$19,083,916 to \$27,493,954. However, this increase is attributable only to Ontario, while funding elsewhere has remained constant or decreased. Quebec, Ontario, BC, Alberta and NS have the largest budgets for immigrant and refugee settlement.

After Quebec, Ontario has the highest funding for immigrant and refugee programs (approximately \$11,500,000 per year) while Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest. Funding for BC fell in 2014 after a change in federal funding agreements. Funding for Alberta and NS remained flat, but Alberta saw increases in landing rates.

Each province has at least two primary funding programs; settlement services and labour market integration. Most also allocate funding for language training and refugee support.

Levels of funding do not always correspond with the number of newcomers. NS has the highest per capita funding while BC has the lowest.

All provinces provide some funding for SPOs, but amounts differ significantly across provinces.

### TRENDS IN FEDERAL FUNDING

Overall federal funding to SPOs through IRCC grants and contributions program has increased from \$6 million in 1997 to \$1.6 billion in 2017.

Most of the federally funded SPOs have existed for over 20 years and 10 of the top twenty are in Ontario.

Federal funding through IRCC supports dozens of programs from health to social services. However, its largest programs are concerned with settlement and integration.

Refugee resettlement funding supports refugee's resettlement needs. This funding remained flat from 2010 to 2015. Settlement funding, which assists immigrants and refugees better participate in Canadian lifestyle declined from 2010 to 2014, then rose incrementally from 2014-2016 and sharply in 2016-2017.

Ontario received the majority of settlement funding while Newfoundland and Labrador received the least.

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This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



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