

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN CANADA: TRENDS IN FEDERAL FUNDING

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WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT

Objective: This research compares provincial landing rates and federal funding distribution for settlement and integration. It also examines federal funding for immigrant Service Providing Organizations (SPOs).

Justification: The Government of Canada has produced multi-year immigration plans to accept higher numbers of immigrants and refugees over the next 10 years. Provincial governments, advocacy organizations and researchers assert that current funding is insufficient to support the increase in immigrants and refugees. Trends in government funding for settlement services is, therefore, a critical issue of public policy. Yet there is little scholarship or data on this topic. Funding for SPOs is an important, but largely neglected, aspect of federal funding for settlement services.

Practical goal: Study findings can provide a resource for creating policies, pursuing research opportunities and providing services focused on newcomer support.

HOW WAS THE DATA OBTAINED

Primary sources for this study include information secured through the Access to Information Act, reports produced by IRCC, the scholarship on settlement and integration in Canada, and interviews with individuals who are employed within the sector. Researchers and service provider partners worked together to develop the research questions. A request for information was submitted to IRCC to obtain information on;

- Total amount of settlement and resettlement funding per year (2000-2018) per province.
- The funding formula used to allocate resources per region and/or per province.

Quebec is not included in this report because it has a different funding model to other provinces.

LANDING RATES

- The immigration landscape in Canada is changing. While the number of landed immigrants continues to rise, the places that they land and settle in Canada are changing.
- Settlement rates across Canada have risen except in Ontario, where landing rates have decreased since 2005; and British Columbia, where there has been only a minimal rise over the last 20 years. Ontario still receives the highest number of newcomers despite the recent decline in numbers.
- Newcomers are increasingly settling outside BC and Ontario. Many are settling in Atlantic Canada and the Prairies especially in mid-size cities like Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Halifax, as well as outer suburban areas. This shift is partly due to the growth of the Provincial Nominee Programs and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project introduced in 2017.
- Prince Edward Island receives the highest percentage of economic immigrants (86%) and the lowest percentage of family class immigrants at 6.5%. Manitoba has the lowest proportion of economic immigrants (35%) and the highest proportion of family class (36.3%). The province also receives the highest proportion of refugee class (26%) newcomers. British Columbia has the lowest proportion of refugees (4.7% of all newcomers to the province).
- Economic immigrants constitute the largest class of immigrants admitted to Canada, followed by family and refugee class.

FEDERAL FUNDING

- As landing rates have increased, so has funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) since 2002, with a slight decline from 2010-2015 and then a jump between 2015 and 2017 (in response to arrival of the Syrian refugees).
- Between 2005 and 2009, settlement funding rose by an average of \$1.3 billion each year as a result of policy and program changes within IRCC. In 2018, IRCC earmarked 62% of its \$3.95 billion budget to settlement support services
- Allocations for each province differ depending on federal-provincial funding agreements and reporting requirements which can be complex and ambiguous. This results in discrepancies in the services available to newcomers across Canada. This in turn can potentially have an impact on the successful integration and settlement of newcomers, particularly government-assisted refugees who tend to have more complex needs (e.g., dealing with trauma), arrive with less familial or community support and depend on services
- Overall, as landing rates increase across jurisdictions, so does federal funding through IRCC's Settlement and Resettlement Programs. There are exceptions to this trend, notably in Ontario and British Columbia between 2005 and 2010.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS (SPOs)

- Transfer payments from IRCC to non-governmental organizations increased from \$6 million in 1997 to \$1.6 billion in 2017.
- SPOs in Ontario receive the largest portion of federal funding followed by British Columbia and Alberta. Alberta accepts almost double the number of refugees and humanitarian classes of immigrants than British Columbia, but has fewer SPOs that receive federal funding for settlement and resettlement.
- Most of the SPOs that receive larger amounts of federal funding are large, well-established organizations concentrated in urban centres, despite evidence showing that newcomers are now settling more in mid-sized cities, peri-urban and rural areas. This makes it hard for smaller organizations to compete for limited funding opportunities.
- Overall, this study has shown that even though both the immigrant settlement rates and federal funding for the settlement sector has increased over the last 20 years, there are significant differences in amount of federal funding available in each province

ABOUT CYRRC

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) is a network of researchers, service providers, and government partners working together to produce and share research that facilitates the integration of young refugees and their families in Canada and beyond.

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