2023 Settlement Outcomes Report

Data-driven Insights for the Future of the Settlement Program

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
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List of Acronyms

AIP – Atlantic Immigration Program

ARPIO – Annual Report on Project Implementation and Outcomes (Formerly known as the APPR - Annual Project Performance Report)

APRCP – Annual Performance Report for Community Partnerships

BVORs – Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees

CC – Community Connections

CLB – Canadian Language Benchmarks

CMAs – Census metropolitan areas

DCS – Digital Case Study

EDOs – Economic Development Organizations

ErS – Employment-related Services

GARs – Government Assisted Refugees

GCMS – The Global Case Management System

GCS – Grants and Contributions Management System

iCARE – Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment

I&O – Information and Orientation

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IRCC – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

LA – Language Assessment

LIPs – Local Immigration Partnerships

LT – Language Training

NAARs – Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals

NOS – Newcomer Outcomes Survey

PBI – Place-Based Immigration

PNP – Provincial Nominee Program

PSRs – Privately Sponsored Refugees

RAP – Resettlement Assistance Program

RIFs – Réseaux en immigration francophone

RNIP – Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot

SPOs – Service Provider Organizations

SS – Support Services

SWIS – Settlement Workers in Schools

TRs – Temporary Residents

WFCs – Welcoming Francophone Communities

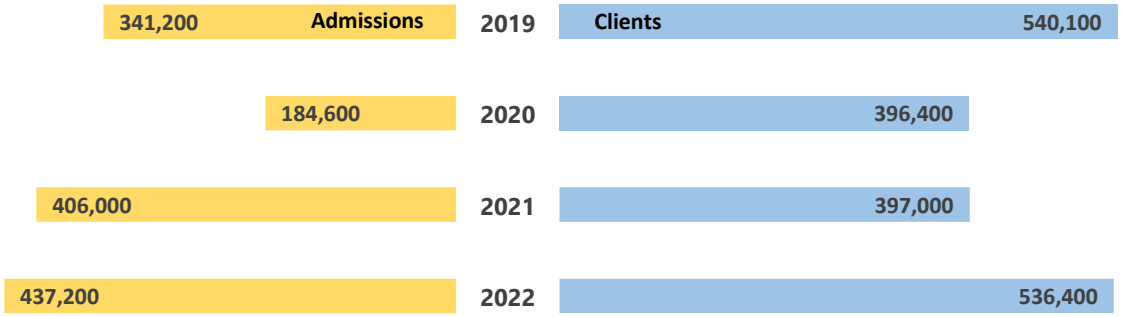
Part 1 – Newcomer Outcomes Stock Take

This part of the report covers the peak COVID-19 pandemic fiscal years of 2020-21 and 2021-22, and presents early signals of the impact of COVID on IRCC's Settlement Program and the settlement outcomes of its clients. This part also provides a series of infographics with additional insights on service use and the outcome achievement of newcomers, as well as spotlights on additional services available to specific newcomer populations.

Impact of COVID on permanent resident admissions and client volumes

Border closures and other restrictions reduced the number of new permanent residents arriving in Canada. Although the number of new permanent residents admitted in 2020 was 46% lower than in 2019, the number of clients served by the Settlement Program only decreased by 27%. To make sense of this finding, it is important to note that newcomers are eligible to access settlement services over an extended period of time - generally speaking, from the time they are accepted to become permanent residents until they become citizens.

There were fewer permanent resident admissions in 2020; however, the decrease in the rate of settlement services was less pronounced, as the existing permanent resident population continued to access services.



Figures shown are rounded to the nearest hundred. Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database, iCARE

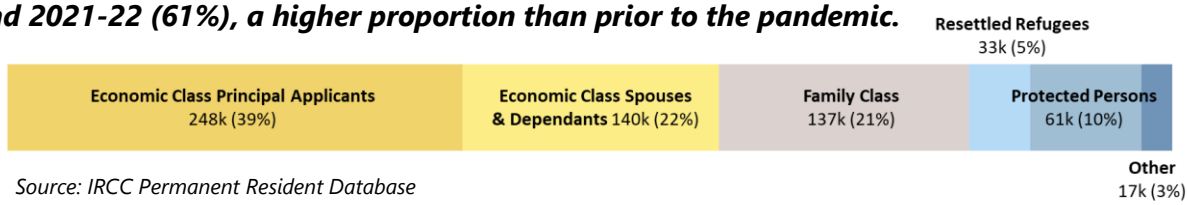
In response to prolonged pandemic-related challenges in admitting new permanent residents from overseas, in 2021, IRCC pivoted to focus on processing applications for permanent residence from temporary residents already in Canada. As part of these efforts, a time-limited temporary resident to permanent resident pathway was established, targeting recent international graduates and essential workers in areas such as healthcare. Through this pathway, approximately 24,000 new permanent residents were admitted in 2021 and 39,000 in 2022. Overall, in 2021, 60% of new permanent residents were previously temporary residents, almost double the normal rates.[1] Because they had spent time in Canada prior to becoming permanent residents, these newcomers may have been less likely to access settlement services, which is a

[1] Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database

factor that could explain why client numbers in 2021 did not climb at the same rate as admissions.

Characteristics of recently landed newcomers

Economic Class immigrants comprised the majority of admissions to Canada in 2020-21 and 2021-22 (61%), a higher proportion than prior to the pandemic.



Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database
Figures shown are rounded to the nearest hundred, Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database

Compared to pre-pandemic permanent resident admissions,[2] there was a shift in the mix of types of immigrants admitted. For example, the proportion of Economic Class Principal Applicants went from 27% pre-pandemic to 39% post-pandemic, and the proportion of Protected Persons increased by 5%. These differences are in part a result of the focus on applicants already living in Canada who could transition from temporary to permanent residence through the Economic Class, as well as pilots providing a pathway to permanent residence for asylum claimants.

Analysis of the intended province/territory of destination of new permanent residents showed that, compared to pre-pandemic admissions, there was an increase in the proportion of newcomers destined to Ontario and British Columbia, and a decrease in the percentage destined to Alberta and Quebec. Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia remained the main provinces of intended destination.

Canada began resettling refugees from Afghanistan through special immigration programs in August of 2021. While these new arrivals are included in the admissions and client data presented in the report, it was too early to draw specific outcomes conclusions about this population. Work is underway to monitor the outcomes of the Afghan movement.

The Settlement Program and its Clients

Overview of IRCC's Settlement Program

IRCC funds settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) outside of Quebec[3] through grants and contribution agreements to deliver the Settlement Program. The Program's services are designed to help newcomers on their settlement and integration journey so they can more fully contribute to Canadian society. In addition to in-Canada services, IRCC funds settlement services for some newcomers outside of Canada (see Pre-Arrival services spotlight at the end of this part

[2] See the first Settlement Outcomes Highlights Report for additional details related to pre-pandemic results.
[3] IRCC provides the Quebec government with funding in the form of a grant through the Canada-Quebec Accord, to offset the costs associated with the reception and integration services provided by the province.

of the report). Furthermore, additional services are provided specifically to Government-Assisted Refugees to help them with their immediate needs – details can be found in the Resettlement Assistance Program spotlight.

To be eligible for IRCC-funded services under the Settlement Program during the period of study (fiscal years of 2020-21 and 2021-22), newcomers had to be one of the following:

1) Permanent resident of Canada;
2) Protected person with accepted asylum claim;
3) Refugee selected for resettlement;
4) Newcomer approved to become a permanent resident;
5) Temporary resident, foreign national, or dependent selected under the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP);[4] or
6) Temporary resident or dependent selected under the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP).[5]

Eligible newcomers have access to various services through the Settlement Program, including:

- **Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals (NAARs)** services to determine what services clients need and provides referrals to receive them
- **Information and Orientation (I&O)** services that provide information to clients about various elements of life in Canada
- **Language Assessment & Language Training (LA & LT)** services to help clients of school-leaving age develop their official language skills
- **Employment-related Services (ErS)** help clients to prepare for the labour market
- **Community Connections (CC)** services help clients learn about and integrate into their local communities
- **Support Services (SS)** that enable clients to access these settlement services

Settlement Program Funding

Settlement Program funding has remained relatively stable with increases year over year in line with increasing immigration levels. The envelope was approximately $800.9M in 2020-21 and $848.2M in 2021-22 for settlement services outside of Quebec.

[4] These temporary residents were only eligible for NAARs, I&O, CC and SS.
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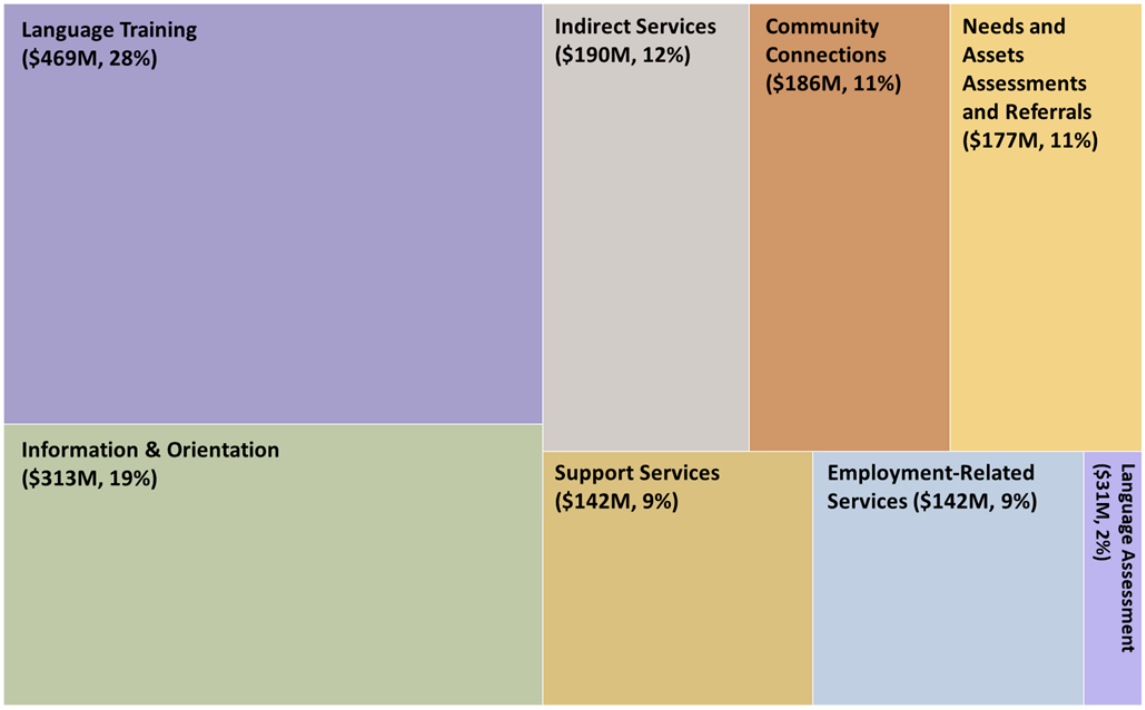
In 2020-21 and 2021-22, and in line with previous years, language assessment and training services was the largest spending category, representing 30% of expenditures.



Source: GCS as per agreement allocation by Program Components & SAP as of March 31st, 2022. Note that this information includes costs for domestic service delivery, pre-arrival services, and indirect services.

Impacts of COVID-19 on settlement service availability

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to minimize in-person contact to avoid spread of the virus. This created challenges in supporting clients' access to settlement services. On March 16th, 2020, IRCC provided guidance to SPOs regarding measures to safeguard the well-being, safety, and security of clients and staff by focusing on critical services, and providing services remotely when possible. To support this shift to remote service delivery and provide flexibility in Settlement Program delivery, IRCC made changes to eligible expenditures to enable SPOs to purchase cell phones, laptops, and tablets - both for employees and to loan to clients. Through these mechanisms, IRCC sought to ensure that clients could continue to access settlement services without contravening health guidelines. In turn, SPOs were able to convert to the remote delivery of many services in a matter of weeks.

Later in the pandemic, IRCC instructed SPOs to align their re-openings with local public health advice, and to maintain remote delivery where practical. The fact that nearly 400,000 clients were served in each of 2020 and 2021 (compared to 490,000 clients in 2018 and 540,000 clients in 2019) shows that SPOs continued to provide clients access to services when possible.[6]

[6] The impacts of the shift to remote delivery are explored in greater detail in Part 2 of this report.

Use of the Settlement Program during COVID

By combining data on when newcomers are admitted to Canada and when they received settlement services, it is possible to analyze Settlement Program uptake rates by immigration category, type of service, and demographics to gain insight into which clients accessed services at which point on their settlement journey. Results show:

Area of Future Study

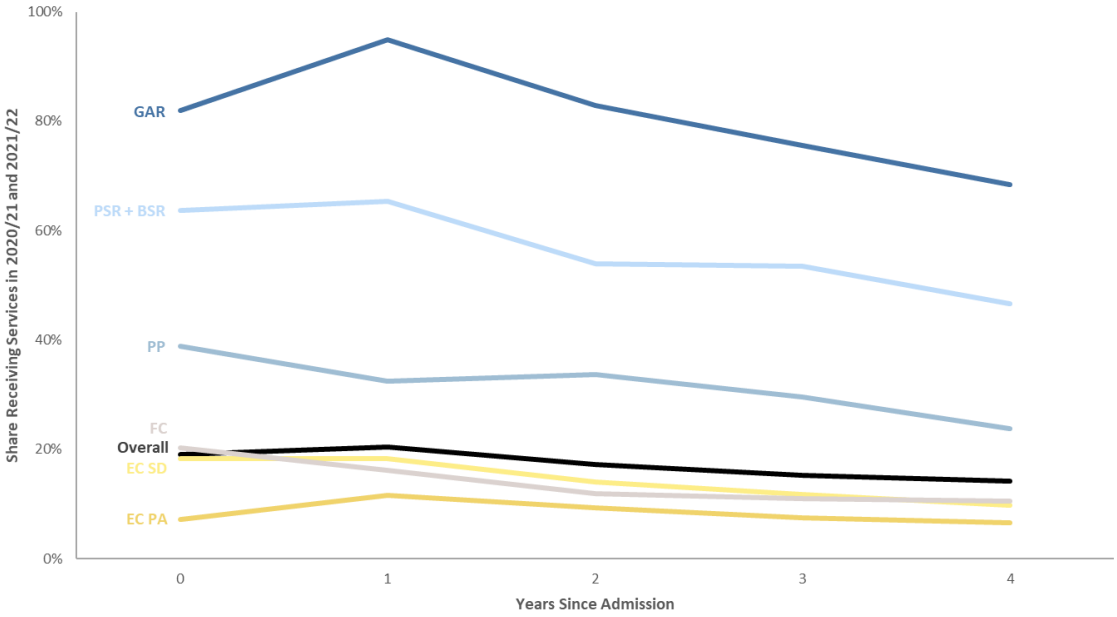
Further analysis of uptake rates will increase understandings of gaps in service access by newcomers who need support, and how to best address barriers faced by this population.

- During the pandemic, uptake rates were lower for almost every immigration category, in every year since admission, with the greatest decrease observed for **Economic Class Principal Applicants**.
- There was a much higher uptake for services among **resettled refugees**,[7] which is a sign they were able to access the settlement services they needed.
    - Uptake rates **for Government-assisted Refugees (GARs)** rose in their first year after admission; this likely relates to their transition into the Settlement Program after accessing RAP services directly after their arrival.
- **Economic Class Principal Applicants** had lower uptake rates compared to the overall average, which aligns with how they are selected on the basis of their ability to establish themselves in Canada, and thus, in theory, need less settlement assistance.

In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the proportion of newcomers receiving services in their year of becoming a permanent resident was 19%, a decrease from 38% pre-pandemic.[8] This is likely related to the reduced availability of settlement services during lockdowns, combined with a lower need for services among recent arrivals, particularly among members of the Economic Class who were more likely to have transitioned from temporary to permanent residence and thus would already have several years' experience living in Canada.

[7] This immigration category includes Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs), and Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees (BVORs). The BVOR Program is also known as the Blended Sponsorship Refugee Program (BSR). Because of the small volume of admissions through this immigration category, information for BVORs may be included in results for PSRs.
[8] See the first Settlement Outcomes Highlights Report for additional details related to pre-pandemic results.

Similar to prior to the pandemic, GARs had the highest uptake rate for domestic settlement services in 2020-21 & 2021-22.



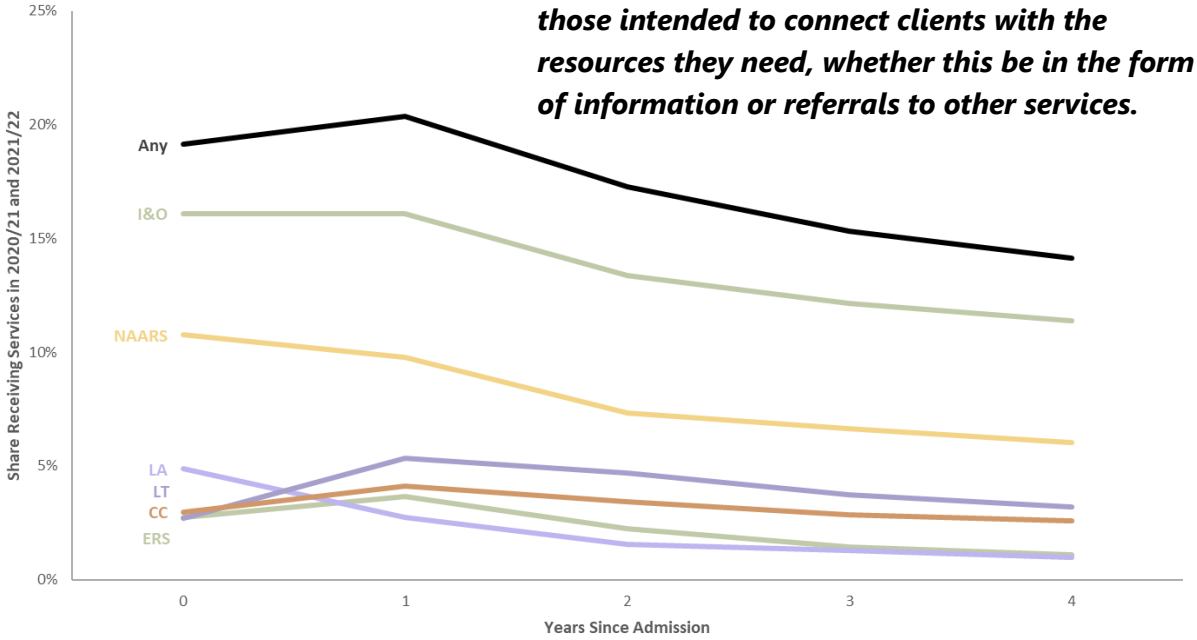
Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database, iCARE

A more detailed analysis of uptake rates by service type show which services are accessed by the highest proportion of newcomers over time.

- **For NAARs and LA,** uptake rates were highest in the admission year, showing that these services are primarily accessed early in newcomers' settlement journeys.
- **For ErS, LT, and CC,** uptake rates increased after the initial year, reflecting that labour market integration, official language skill progression, and community integration are longer-term priorities for clients of IRCC-funded services.
- **For I&O services,** uptake rates were nearly identical in the admission year and the first year thereafter, showing a continued need for these services.
    - Although there was a decrease in the number of clients seeking information on education in later years, and an increase in the number seeking information on becoming a Canadian citizen, there was little change overall in the topics being accessed by clients early or later in their settlement journeys.

Compared to pre-pandemic, the percentage of newcomers who accessed a NAARs in their first year after admission decreased, from approximately 25% to approximately 11%, which is likely the result of more Economic Class newcomers, who have lower rates of accessing all settlement services. I&O remains the service most commonly accessed by clients, including later in their settlement journeys – 11% of newcomers received an I&O service four years after landing, including 62% of all GARs and 39% of all PSRs/BVORs.

Services with the highest uptake rates were those intended to connect clients with the resources they need, whether this be in the form of information or referrals to other services.



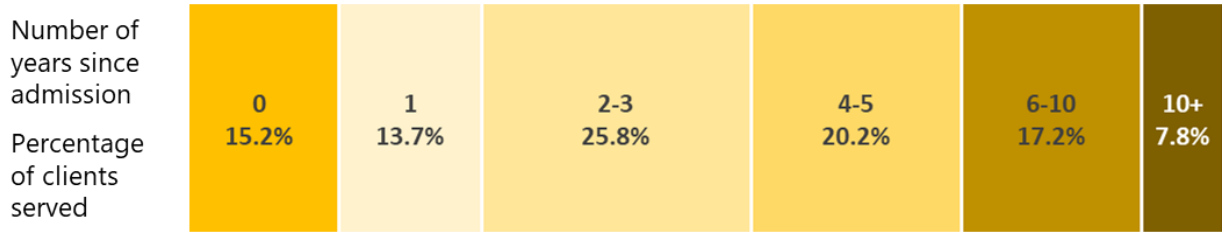
Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database, iCARE

Analysis by age group shows that those aged 17 and under at time of admission, and those aged 35-64, had higher uptake rates than those aged 18-34 or 65 and over. Usage of I&O services was a key driver of uptake rates within these age groups. Many clients aged 17 and under have access to services through the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) initiative.

Client Demographics

Newcomers to Canada remain eligible for settlement services until they choose to become naturalized citizens. This means that while the Settlement Program's eligible client base is impacted by sudden increases or decreases in admissions, it also continues to feel the cumulative impact of these events for a longer period of time.

25% of clients receiving services in 2020-21 and 2021-22 had been in Canada for 6+ years.

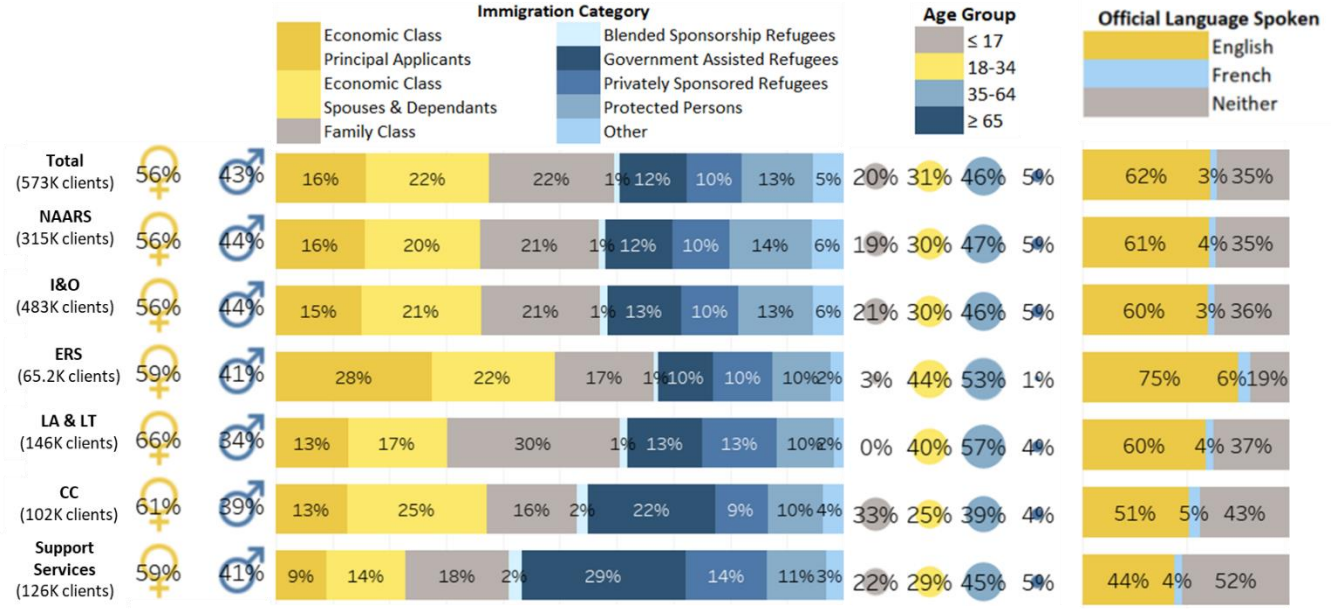


Source: iCARE

Compared to historical data, lower admission volumes during the pandemic reduced the percentage of clients accessing services in their admission year or the first year thereafter.

Because of the cumulative nature of the Settlement Program's client base, even during the pandemic the Program was able to provide services to more than half a million newcomers.

573K unique clients accessed one or more types of service in 2020-21 and 2021-22.



Source: iCARE

Note: Because clients can access multiple services, the total number of unique clients across service types is lower than the sum of the number of clients of each service type.

Key demographic highlights of Settlement Program clients during these years include:

- There were **more female than male clients** for each type of service.[9]
- **Economic Class Principal Applicants** made up a higher percentage of **ErS** clients than for any other service component.
- **GARs** accessed support services more than any other immigration category.
- Lower proportions of ErS clients **aged 17 and under** reflect their pre-labour-market status. Similarly, there were no LA & LT clients 17 and under because eligibility to access IRCC-funded language services is reserved for newcomers of legal school-leaving age.
- The percentage of clients who spoke neither of Canada's Official Languages when they became permanent residents was highest among users of CC services, and lowest among users of ErS.

[9] There were too few clients identifying as Gender X to report on separately.

While many results are similar to pre-pandemic findings, there are some key differences worth noting:

- There was a **slight increase in female clients**, particularly for LA & LT and ErS.
- For all service components, the percentage of clients from the Economic or Family Classes **decreased,** while the percentage of clients who were Resettled Refugees **increased** for all components except ErS.
- There were **minor shifts in client ages,** with an increase in the percentage of clients aged 35-64, and a decrease of those aged 18-34.

Clients who accessed services in 2020-21 and 2021-22 received an average of ten services each, which is similar to pre-pandemic findings. The number of services received by resettled refugees was much higher: 12 for PSRs and 26 for GARs. Although resettled refugees used more of each type of service other immigration categories, they were particularly heavy users of I&O services.[10] These results are similar to those observed prior to the pandemic, suggesting that there has been relatively little change in the service needs of clients.

Types of services used

In addition to its impacts on the Settlement Program's client base, the pandemic also affected the kinds of services that clients accessed, and how they did so. IRCC adjusted the type of data it collects about settlement service delivery in order to better reflect the realities of the pandemic. The Service Usage infographic at the end of this part of the report provides more detailed insights on changes to how the Settlement Program was accessed during the pandemic. Key insights include:

- **More clients accessed services online,** as a result of lockdowns and SPOs' ability to quickly pivot to online service delivery.
- **Fewer support services were accessed**, again likely due to the shift to online service delivery and less of a need for transportation or childcare supports. However, more clients accessed digital skills training to support accessing online services.
- Some services, like **referrals and community connections events decreased**, likely due to closures and social distancing requirements.
- ErS clients in **health occupations** were more likely to receive information on preparation for licensure.

Client Settlement Outcomes

The expected settlement and integration outcomes for all newcomers to Canada are that they are able to acquire the knowledge and skills they need, and are then able to apply them to their life in Canada. The Settlement Program and its services are intended to provide newcomers who

[10] Source: iCARE

need extra support with obtaining information and practicing skills. The short and medium term outcomes can be grouped into five themes with services tailored to address each theme:

1. Newcomers are able to access services that meet their needs
2. Newcomers gain knowledge and are able to make decisions about life in Canada
3. Newcomers improve official language skills and use them in Canadian society
4. Newcomers acquire knowledge, skills, and connections to prepare for and participate in the Canadian labour market
5. Newcomers participate in and are connected to communities

The primary data source of Settlement Program outcomes for this report is the *Newcomer Outcomes Survey* (NOS) 2020 and 2021 survey waves. In order to capture outcomes from various points along the settlement timeline, the analysis represents newcomers who became permanent residents Canada between 2013 and 2020. The survey reaches both clients and non-clients of the Settlement Program,[11] meaning IRCC can compare self-reported outcomes of the two populations.

Starting in 2020, respondents to the NOS were given the opportunity to describe their racial or ethnic background. Overall, 84% of NOS respondents identified as racialized (any response other than "White"). This included 91% of client respondents and 78% of non-client respondents.

A Gender-Based Analysis Plus approach was taken to the analysis which includes examining results in greater demographic detail, and key significant differences have been included where appropriate. In addition, each of the following pages presents highlights of the following, where applicable:

COVID-19 Impacts

Francophone outcomes

Racialized newcomer outcomes

While many services can contribute to some or even all of the Program's outcomes, generally speaking, specific Settlement Program services are intended and designed to contribute to a primary outcome. An analysis of client outcomes can be found below and in the accompanying infographics which provide more detailed insights.

Area of Future Study

In recent years, significant numbers of people from Afghanistan and Ukraine have made new starts in Canada. Future research will focus on the settlement outcomes of these populations.

Newcomers are able to access services that meet their needs

Certain newcomers may experience barriers when trying to access the Settlement Program. In order to address challenges related to a newcomer's access to services, IRCC funds enabling services. These services include Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARs) to identify a pathway for settlement, as well as Support Services (which include child care, translation, interpretation, transportation, short-term counselling, and provisions for those with disabilities). Key findings related to this outcome are:

- More could be done to improve awareness of settlement services, as 32% of survey respondents were not aware of the free services offered by IRCC's Settlement Program.

[11] Newcomers who accessed pre-arrival services, but not domestic services, would be classified as non-clients.

- For clients, most (85%) were able to access the Settlement Program with no reported barriers. Most non-clients (61%) reported that they did not need services.
- The majority of clients felt IRCC-funded organizations helped on their settlement journey.
- Most clients who received support services said their needs were met, although some gaps persist (e.g., among those requiring accommodations for disabilities).

SPOs reported an increase in clients' needs for digital skills and access to devices during the pandemic, as well as in mental health service needs.[12]

Newcomers gain knowledge and are able to make decisions about life in Canada

Knowledge about life in Canada, and linkages to resources to draw on for further information is fundamental to newcomers' successful settlement and integration and can help immigrants gain confidence in their ability to make informed decisions. While many (if not all) of the Program's services aim to increase knowledge, Information and Orientation services are the main information support provided to newcomers. Key findings related to this outcome are:

- The main sources of information are similar for clients and non-clients of the program, with friends, family, and the internet being the top 3 sources. Among clients, settlement service providers were the fourth most cited sources of settlement information.
- Clients reported improved knowledge compared to non-clients across a variety of topics, indicating that information services were needed by clients, and had an impact.
- The vast majority of both clients and non-clients reported being able to make informed decisions about life in Canada.

SPOs helped provide newcomers with information about COVID and vaccines, and helped combat misinformation.[13]

Newcomers improve official language skills and use them in Canadian society

Knowing an official language enhances newcomers' capacity to obtain information about daily life in Canada, and also increases their chances of obtaining employment. Basic proficiency in English or French is also one of the requirements to obtain Canadian citizenship. IRCC-funded language assessments and training support newcomers in learning one of Canada's official languages. Key findings related to this outcome are:

- More clients reported improvements in English skills, likely due to a lower level of knowledge upon permanent residence compared to non-clients.
- Outside of Quebec, non-clients were less likely to report improvement in French skills than clients.
- The majority of newcomers report being able to speak English in a variety of real-world situations. Fewer newcomers report using French in the same situations.

[12] Based on a review of Annual Reports on Project Implementation and Outcomes for 2021-22.
[13] Based on a review of Annual Reports on Project Implementation and Outcomes for 2021-22.

Newcomers who spoke neither English nor French had to rely on friends and relatives to provide them with information about COVID.

More non-clients reported being able to communicate without help in French compared to clients.

Respondents identifying as Black, South Asian, and Southeast Asian were more likely to report they were able to speak English in all situations than respondents from other populations.

Newcomers acquire knowledge, skills, and connections to prepare for and participate in the Canadian labour market.

Newcomers can contribute to the Canadian economy in many ways - through employment, volunteering, or providing unpaid work like housework or caregiving that enables another person to have paid employment. Newcomers looking to directly participate in the Canadian labour market need to know how to present their existing skills in a way that will resonate with Canadian employers and understand what new skills will be advantageous in the Canadian labour market. IRCC funds Employment-related Services to directly help clients increase their knowledge of employment in Canada. Key findings related to this outcome are:

- The majority of newcomers directly participate in the Canadian labour market, with 75% of clients and 78% of non-clients indicating they were working at the time of the survey.
- Clients reported more improvement in their knowledge of employment topics compared to non-clients.
- For those who were not working, many were contributing to Canada in other ways, like caring for a child, being a student, or being a homemaker.

Newcomers participate in and are connected to communities.

Newcomer connection and participation in communities signals that they are moving forward on the path to integration and that their new communities are creating space for these contributions. IRCC services bring together newcomers, long-time Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and settled immigrants with the aim of creating welcoming communities that nurture clients' sense of belonging, promote social cohesion and community engagement, and provide opportunities for informal language learning. Key findings related to this outcome are:

- Many newcomers engage in community activities, with the most common types being professional, religious, or school-related.
- Most newcomers feel that they belong to Canada (90%), and are welcomed by their community (92%).
- The vast majority (93%) of newcomers have confidence in Canadian public institutions.

Spotlight on COVID-19 Impacts on Newcomer Economic Outcomes

The outcomes of the settlement program focus on a "whole-of-person" approach to supporting the settlement of newcomers, which includes support for labour market entry for those who choose to work. The importance of immigrants to the Canadian economy cannot be understated and as such, understanding the specific impacts of the pandemic on the newcomer population is important as Canada moves forward from COVID-19.

- Newcomers to Canada were particularly hard-hit by impacts of the pandemic on the Canadian labour market. In May 2020, the unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 15.3%, compared to 9.1% for the Canadian-born. Immigrants were also more likely to report that there would be a major impact on their ability to meet financial obligations or essential needs than the Canadian-born.[14]
- A study found that racialized workers bore a disproportionate burden during the pandemic in two ways: they were more concentrated in industries that were most likely to suffer job losses from the pandemic and they were more concentrated in frontline occupations at high risk of infection.[15]
- Census data shows that over 80% of immigrants to Canada between 2011 and 2021 were visible minorities.[16] A study of newcomers' tax filings found that COVID-19 emergency support measures helped compensate for the decrease in wages and salaries.[17]
- Other data have shown that newcomers had a higher rate of receiving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, as did workers in visible minority groups (41% of immigrants and visible minorities, compared to 35% of Canadians overall).[18]
- Although this provided short-term relief, the pandemic may have longer-term impacts on the economic outcomes of newcomers. A study of skilled women who were recent immigrants to Canada found that the pandemic pushed them towards unemployment, lower-skilled or less stable employment. Most study participants had their career trajectory delayed, interrupted or reversed due to layoffs, fewer job opportunities and increased domestic burden.[19]

There are signals that some of the economic impacts of the pandemic are lessening, with the share of very recent immigrants of core working age who were working almost 8 percentage points higher in December 2021 than in December 2019.[20] However, the full recovery from COVID will take time, particularly for immigrant women, and will require ongoing attention.

[14] Badets, J. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Newcomers: Socio-economic concerns and experiences of immigrants during COVID-19. Chapter within COVID-19 – Immigration in a Time of Pandemic: Confronting the Challenge.
[15] Alook et al. (2021). A Disproportionate Burden: COVID-19 labour market impacts on Indigenous and racialized workers in Canada.
[16] Statistics Canada (2022). Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population (topic = "immigration, place of birth, and citizens").
[17] Statistics Canada (2022). The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the economic integration of many immigrants.
[18] Statistics Canada (2021). Workers receiving payments from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit program in 2020.
[19] Nardon et al. (2020). Skilled immigrant women's career trajectories during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada.
[20] Statistics Canada (2022). COVID-19 in Canada: A Two-year Update on Social and Economic Impacts.

Conclusion

Evidence shows that the Settlement Program and SPOs that deliver programming were able to successfully adjust to the pandemic and related restrictions. While COVID had significant impacts on new admissions and Settlement Program client volumes, the numbers are rebounding, and are expected to continue to increase, especially taking into account the announced immigration levels plans, as well as recent Afghan and Ukrainian arrivals.

Overall patterns in service usage and the demographic characteristics of clients accessing services remained similar to before the pandemic, indicating that newcomers continued to have timely access to the services required to meet their distinct needs. The evidence also suggests that newcomers to Canada are generally successful in their settlement journeys, and continued to be successful during the pandemic.

There are some gaps in awareness of IRCC-funded settlement services, with an awareness rate of only 68% among all newcomers. More than half of non-clients indicated they chose not to access services as they felt they were not required. Few clients reported barriers to accessing services, and the majority of clients felt that the services they received from SPOs were useful.

The vast majority of both clients and non-clients reported being able to make informed decisions about life in Canada. Newcomers also said that they were able to speak Canada's official languages in a variety of real-world situations. The majority of newcomers directly participate in the Canadian labour market; many of those not working contributed in other ways, including caring for a child, being a student, or being a homemaker. The vast majority of newcomers reported a strong sense of belonging to Canada, and felt that they were welcomed by their communities, a sign that Canada provides a positive environment in which to settle. For most outcomes, clients reported slightly higher rates of improvement in knowledge and abilities than their non-client counterparts.

The pandemic had some impact on newcomer outcomes. Some of these impacts were short-term in nature (e.g., challenges in accessing accurate information about the pandemic, COVID-related racial discrimination), while others, such as economic outcomes, will likely be felt over the longer term and will require additional study over time.

One of the most significant effects of the pandemic was that the settlement sector pivoted to providing services remotely. This digital transformation, and findings related to its effectiveness, are the subject of the next part of this Report.

Spotlight: Pre-arrival Services

IRCC provides some newcomers the opportunity to access settlement services prior to arriving in Canada as permanent residents, once they have received confirmation of approval in principle of their permanent residence application and if they are residing outside of Canada. These pre-arrival services are intended to help clients prepare for and adjust to life in Canada.

More information

Clearer expectations

Earlier start

The intent is to accelerate the settlement process by reducing information gaps and allowing clients to be better-prepared upon arrival through, for example, providing realistic expectations of what will be necessary to successfully settle and integrate, and supporting early preparations for labour market entry.

48%

A central focus of pre-arrival services is the provision of pre-departure I&O services to refugees who are scheduled to be resettled to Canada (GARs, PSRs, and BVORs).

These clients, who are provided these services through an agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), represented **48%** of all pre-arrival clients in these two years.[1]

99% of all resettled refugees receiving pre-arrival services did so through the IOM

IOM's pre-arrival clients:

52% PSRs

48% GARs[1]

Many pre-arrival services were already being delivered remotely prior to the pandemic. However, pandemic restrictions on admissions to Canada reduced the demand for pre-arrival services among newcomers about to depart.

Note: Outcomes information is not available for clients of pre-arrival services specifically.

52%

Of the pre-arrival clients not receiving services through the IOM, the majority (59%) were from the Economic Class, with most of the remainder coming from the Family Class (28%). There were 23.5K non-IOM clients of pre-arrival services, only 4% of the number who accessed domestic settlement services.[1]

Compared to domestic service clients, clients of pre-arrival services were:

Younger

Pre-arrival: 48% aged 18-34
Domestic: 46% aged 35-64

More likely to speak French

Pre-arrival: 8%
Domestic: 3%[1]

Area of Future Study

The 2018 evaluation found that clients of pre-arrival services find them helpful.[2] However, additional study is required to understand, and expand, the specific advantages of thinking of Pre-Arrival as a time (prior to receiving full PR status), rather than a place (outside of Canada). This could include expanding access to these services for those transitioning from TR to PR status within Canada, as encouraging broader uptake of these services by interested newcomers earlier in their settlement journeys.

Data Sources: [1]iCARE, [2]IRCC 2018

Spotlight: Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

RAP services assist resettled refugees and other eligible clients with their immediate and essential needs in the period directly after arriving in Canada. This includes meeting refugees at the airport as well as providing temporary accommodation and assistance in finding permanent accommodation, interpretation and translation services, orientation and assessments, and linkages to further services, including to the Settlement Program.

In addition to providing RAP services, IRCC provides income support to GARs and certain other eligible clients for up to twelve months to help cover costs associated with starting their lives anew in Canada.

During the reporting period, RAP program funding increased significantly (+307%), which reflects in part the impact of the influx of Afghan refugees on the Program.[2]

Funding

2020/21	2021/22
$27M	$108M

The number of resettled refugees receiving assistance significantly increased between the two years (+231%), reflecting Canada's commitment to Afghan refugees and the resumption of general refugee admissions post-pandemic.[3]

Number of resettled refugees receiving assistance

2020/21	2021/22
5,400	17,900

Client demographics

Compared to other clients of the Settlement Program, more RAP clients:

- **Were minors** — RAP: **42%** aged 0-17; Settlement: **20%** aged 0-17
- **Spoke neither official language** — RAP: **74%**; Settlement: **35%**

As most RAP clients are GARS, and all GARS receive RAP, demographics of RAP clients mirror those of the GAR population.[3]

Top 5 Nationalities of RAP clients

Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia

Outcomes

The expected outcomes for RAP include:

- meeting the immediate and essential needs of RAP clients, and
- ensuring that resettled refugees have the tools to live independently in Canadian society.

These are intended to be achieved sooner than the broader settlement outcomes sought for all newcomers. Once resettled refugees enter the Settlement Program, that Program's outcomes apply to them as well.

68% of GARs agreed that their needs during their first six weeks in Canada were met.[1] These results are broken out below:

- Help with immediate needs — 70%
- Support services received — 66%
- Information about living in Canada — 66%
- Help finding permanent housing — 55%
- Information about money & finances — 67%
- Help registering for government services — 85%
- Information about settlement & community services — 65%

Settlement program uptake: GARs had the highest uptake rates for domestic settlement services in their first year in Canada: 82% of GARs accessed services, compared to 19% overall. GARs used similar types of services as other client groups, but with greater intensity.

GARs continue to have high uptake rates for Settlement Program services over time. In their fourth year since admission, 68% of GARs accessed settlement services, compared to 14% overall, highlighting the importance of continued access to support for GARs once RAP eligibility has completed.[4]

Because the resettlement of Afghan nationals began in August 2021, outcome information for this important cohort of newcomers is not yet available.

Data Sources: [1]Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021), [2]SAP, [3]iCARE, [4]iCARE & Permanent Resident database

Service Usage

Domestic Settlement Services in 2020-21 & 2021-22

Eligible newcomers have access to a suite of services through the Settlement Program:

SS	Support Services enable clients to access settlement services
NAARS	Needs and Assets Assessments and Referrals services determine what services clients need and provides referrals to receive them
I&O	Information and Orientation services provide information to help clients settle
LA & LT	Language Assessment & Language Training services help clients develop their official language skills
ERS	Employment-related Services help clients prepare for the labour market
CC	Community Connections services help clients learn about and integrate into their local communities

The pandemic changed how and where clients accessed services.

Fewer clients accessed services **at SPO offices** and **schools**.

More clients accessed services **online** or **at home**.

The ways that services were delivered and accessed also changed during the pandemic.

Due to the shift to online services and other COVID restrictions, clients using support services decreased from 30% to 22%, with transportation seeing the largest decrease.

While the % of **NAARS clients** identifying needs remained about the same, the % of clients referred to services decreased, likely due to decreased availability of all services during the pandemic.

Most clients are learning how they can use their skills and experiences in Canada with 64% of **NAARS clients** discussing their assets. GARs had the highest rate of assets being discussed (74%), and Family Class the lowest (59%).

58% of French-speaking clients received at least one service from a francophone organization. There could be several reasons for this, related both to service availability and client preferences.

Top 3 topics that **IO clients** received info on:

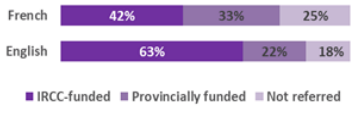
- 79% How to find information
- 54% Important documents
- 48% Education in Canada

More clients received **digital skills training** as part of **I&O** or **CC** services, likely to enable access to online services.

More LA clients were assessed for **French language skills.**

More LA clients requested **online language training.**

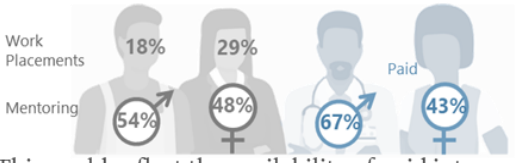
More clients were referred to IRCC-funded LT.



Fewer clients were "not referred" for any training.

Women were more likely to receive work placements than mentoring.

But were less likely to get paid during work placements.



This could reflect the availability of paid interventions matching clients' skills and experiences, and/or unconscious bias.

ERS clients in **health occupations** had the highest rate of receiving info on **preparation for licensure.**

New data!

ERS clients in **management occupations** had the highest rate of receiving info on **preparation for entrepreneurship.**

As a result of pandemic closures, **fewer CC clients** took part in **activities to connect them with the local community**.

*IRCC **does not collect data on the race or ethnicity** of newcomers or clients of settlement services in iCARE – this is asked in the NOS.*

Data Source: iCARE

Newcomers are able to access services that meet their needs

Certain newcomers may experience barriers when trying to access the Settlement Program. In order to support newcomer's access to services, IRCC funds enabling services. These services include: Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS) to identify a pathway for settlement, as well as Support Services: child care, translation, interpretation, transportation, short-term counselling, and provisions for those with disabilities - to facilitate access to settlement services.

IRCC enabling services help ensure clients are:

More could be done to improve awareness of settlement services.

Both IRCC and SPOs **promote awareness** of settlement services through advertising campaigns.

68% of respondents **were aware** of IRCC-funded settlement services, either because they had taken services or reported being aware of them.

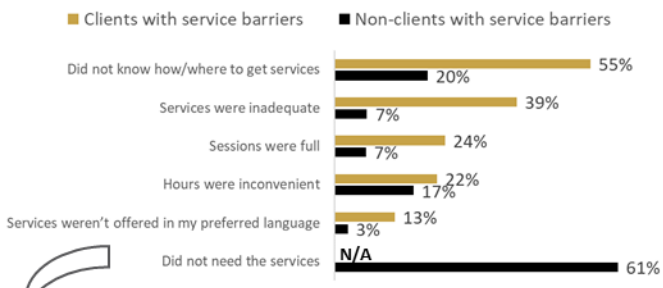
The remaining 32% had not accessed services and reported being unaware IRCC funded services available.

Of these, **70%** would have accessed settlement services if they known about them, particularly females and resettled refugees or protected persons.

Similar results were observed for French-speaking and racialized respondents.

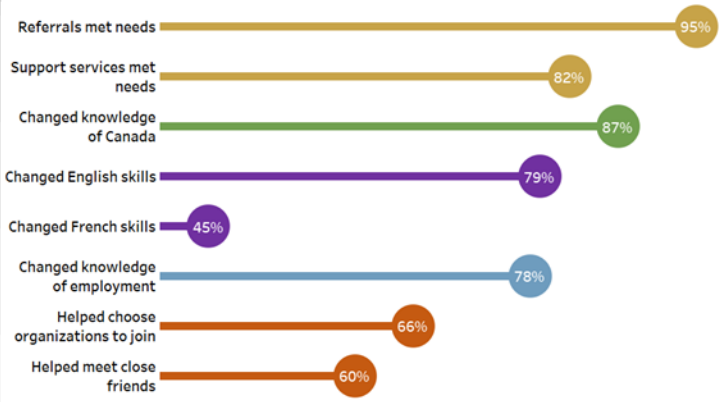
Settlement services are accessible to those who seek them, though some barriers exist.

85% of clients were able to access services without difficulty. Barriers experienced by **clients** were different from the reasons why **non-clients** did not access services.[1]



22% of barrier-experiencing French-speaking clients identified services not being offered in their preferred language as a challenge.

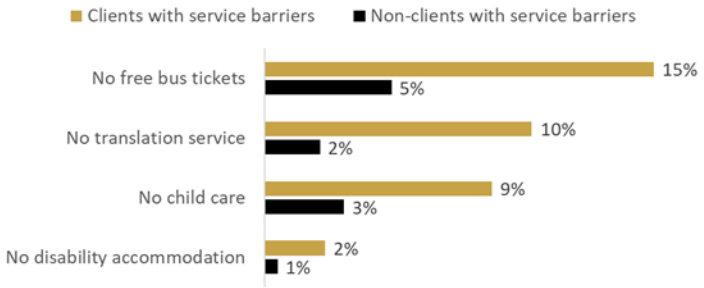
Clients agreed that most types of service helped them in their settlement journeys.



Results indicate that IRCC-funded services are helping clients progress towards achieving their immediate settlement outcomes.

Access to services can be facilitated through support services.

Although most clients who received support services agreed they met their needs, others could not access services due to gaps in support service availability.



Most SPOs were **able to convert to remote delivery** of many services in **just a few weeks.**

SPOs reported an **increase in clients' needs for digital skills and access to devices** during the pandemic, as well as for **mental health service needs**.

Data Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021)

Newcomers gain knowledge and are able to make decisions about life in Canada

Knowledge about life in Canada, and resources to draw on for further information, are fundamental to newcomers' successful settlement and integration and can help immigrants gain confidence in their ability to make informed decisions. While many of the Program's services aim to increase knowledge, Information and Orientation services are the main information support provided to clients.

IRCC services help clients increase their knowledge of life in Canada by:

- Promoting realistic expectations about life in Canada
- Assisting in the navigation of the Canadian system
- Facilitating access to and use of services

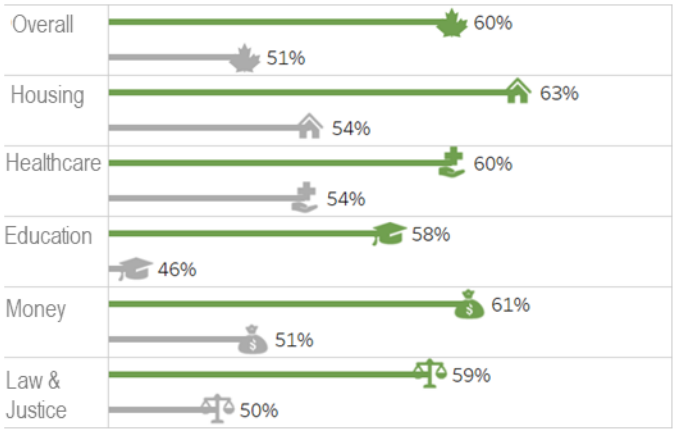
Clients and non-clients received settlement information from similar sources.

	1	2	3	4
Clients	Clients	Family	Internet	IRCC-funded settlement services
Non-Clients	Internet	Friends	Family	Employers / co-workers

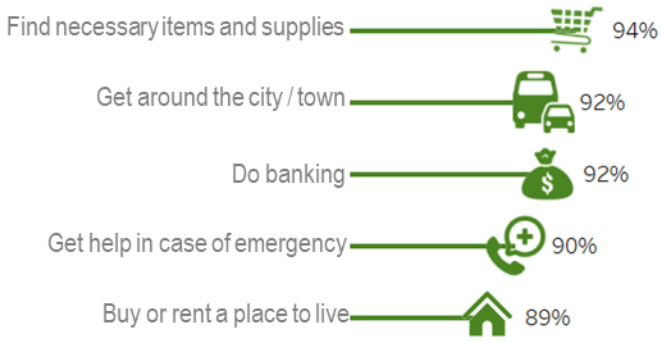
*French-speaking **non-clients** relied on employers or co-workers as a source of information more so than non-French-speaking **clients**, with 40% indicating this as a top source of information.*

Newcomers are improving their knowledge of life in Canada over time.

A higher percentage of **clients** reported knowledge gains, suggesting that IRCC-funded settlement services helped them improve their knowledge of life in Canada.



Clients and non-clients are making informed decisions about life in Canada.



Both **clients (91%)** and **non-clients (92%)** reported having sufficient information to get help in case of emergency, buy or rent a place to live, get around the city, find things they need like groceries or clothing, and do their banking.

There were no major differences by gender or age; however, only 83% of GARs reported having sufficient information.

Overall, respondents from all racial groups agreed that they had the information they needed to make decisions about life in Canada.

*French-speaking **non-clients** reported being able to make decisions about life in Canada at a slightly lower rate than their non-French-speaking counterparts.*

SPOs helped provide newcomers with information about COVID and vaccines, and helped combat misinformation.

Data Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021)

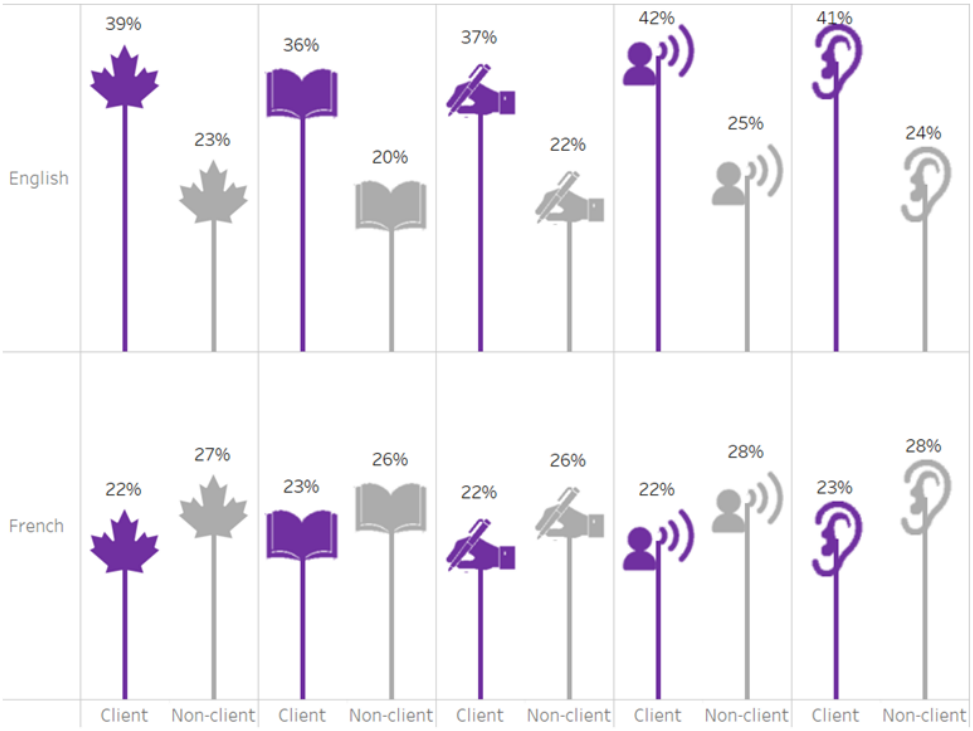
Newcomers improve official language skills and use them in Canadian society

Knowing an official language enhances newcomers' capacity to obtain information about daily life in Canada, and also increases their chances of obtaining employment. Basic proficiency in English or French is also one of the requirements to obtain Canadian Citizenship.

IRCC services help clients improve their official language capacity

READING WRITING SPEAKING LISTENING

A higher proportion of clients reported improving their official language skills in English.
A higher proportion of non-clients reported improving their official language skills in French.

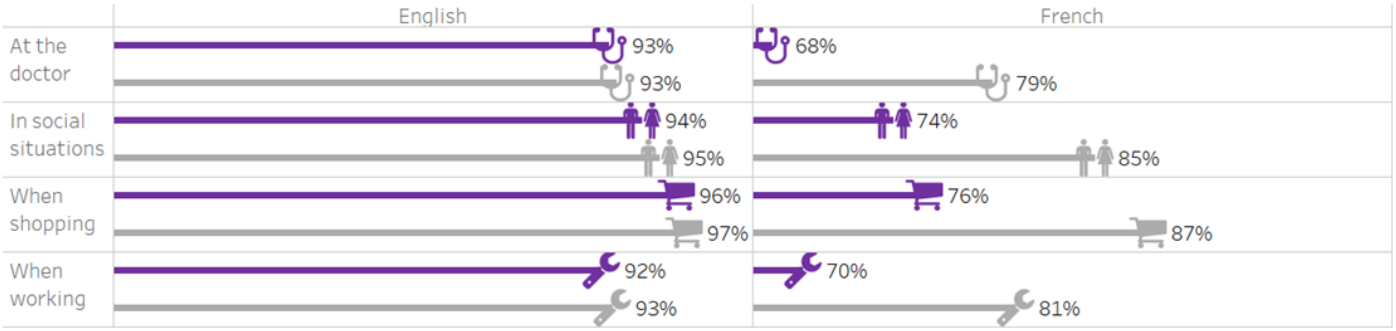


39% of **clients** reported improving their English language skills, compared to 23% of **non-clients**.

Conversely, 27% of **non-clients** reported improving their French skills, compared to 22% of **clients**. Among respondents outside of Quebec, 20% of **clients** reported improving their French skills, compared to 15% of **non-clients**.[1]

In addition to these self-reported results, IRCC data show that 38% of language **clients** in 2020/21, and 36% in 2021/22, improved their official language skills by at least one level in at least one of the four language skills in the year they participated in training.[2]

Newcomers are using their language skills in the real world.[1]



Respondents identifying as Black, South Asian, and Southeast Asian were more likely to report the ability to speak English in all situations than respondents from other populations. East Asian respondents reported lower rates of being able to speak English at the doctor and while working.

More **non-clients** reported being able to communicate without help in **French** than **clients**.

Newcomers who spoke neither English nor French had to rely on friends and relatives to provide them with information about COVID.[3]

Data Sources/Notes: [1]**Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 20121),** [2] IRCC 2022 [3] Statistics Canada 2020.

Newcomers acquire knowledge, skills, and connections to prepare for and participate in the Canadian labour market

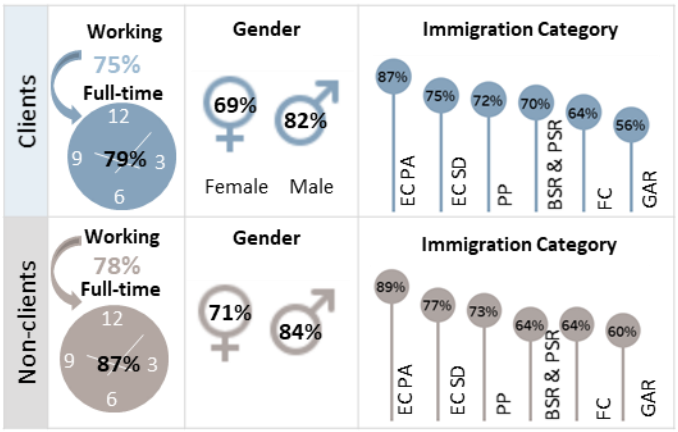
Newcomers can contribute to the Canadian economy in many ways - through employment, volunteering, or providing unpaid work like housework or caregiving that enables another person to have paid employment. Newcomers looking to directly participate in the Canadian labour market need to know how to present their existing skills in a way that will resonate with Canadian employers and need to understand what new skills will be advantageous in the Canadian labour market.

IRCC provides Employment related services to help clients directly increase their knowledge of employment in Canada.

- ✓obtain work experience
- ✓connect with employers and professionals
- ✓receive employment counselling and coaching
- ✓adapt existing skills to a Canadian context

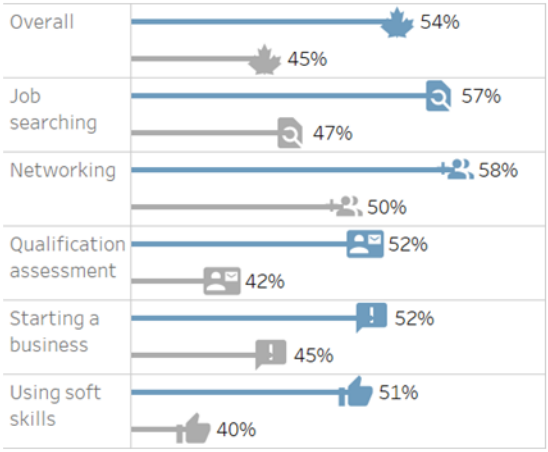
Other settlement services, like Language Training or Community Connections, can also help newcomers prepare for the Canadian labour market.

The majority of newcomers directly participate in the Canadian labour market.[1]



Respondents from all racial/ethnic groups reported employment rates within 5% of the overall average. Southeast Asians reported the highest employment rate (77%).

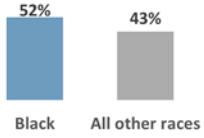
Clients improved their knowledge of employment topics more than non-clients.



This suggests that that settlement services helped **clients** improve their knowledge of employment in Canada.

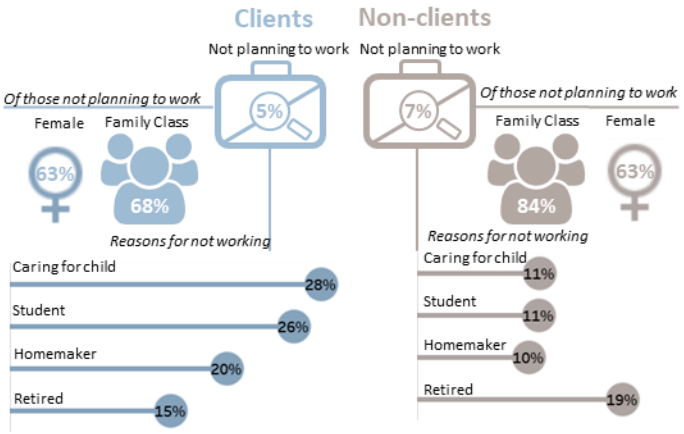
Among those not working, 46% of clients and 41% of non-clients said they are looking for work or starting work soon.

Respondents identifying as Black reported looking for work at a higher rate.



Results for French-speaking newcomers were similar to those for non-French speaking newcomers.

Many of those who weren't working contribute to Canada in other ways.[1]



The COVID-19 pandemic had a greater impact on the economic outcomes of newcomers, which are discussed in more detail in the report.

Data Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021).

[1] The labour market participation rate includes those who are working, looking for work, or starting work in the near future.

Newcomers participate in and are connected to communities

Newcomer connection and participation in communities signals that they are moving forward on the path to integration and that their new communities are creating space for these contributions.

To measure civic outcomes for newcomers, IRCC uses questions designed and tested by Statistics Canada as proxy measurements, such as confidence in public institutions and sense of belonging.

IRCC services bring together newcomers and long-time Canadians, Indigenous peoples, and settled immigrants with the aim of creating welcoming communities that

- Nurture clients' senses of belonging
- Promote social cohesion and community engagement
- Provide opportunities for informal language training

Many newcomers engage in community activities.

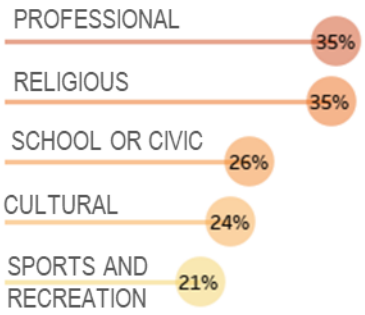
Participation through volunteering

More **clients** than **non-clients** indicated they had volunteered in the 12 months preceding the survey,[1] compared to 41% of Canadians.[2]

Volunteering rates were higher for French-speaking newcomers (30%)

Participation in organizations

Clients and **non-clients** had nearly identical participation rates, with **almost half** of respondents engaging in groups, organizations or associations in the 12 months preceding the survey.[1]



Clients had higher rates of participating in religious organizations; **non-clients** had higher rates of participating in sports and recreation organizations, as well as in professional organizations.[1]

A survey by Statistics Canada showed **increased levels of discrimination** during the pandemic, particularly among gender-diverse, Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian and Black participants. Participants who reported that they had experienced discrimination during the pandemic had **lower levels of trust in institutions**.[3]

Most newcomers (both clients and non-clients) feel that they belong and are welcomed in Canada.

Welcoming communities and sense of belonging

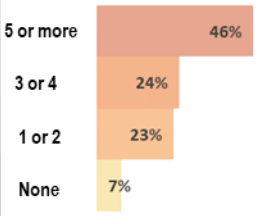
92% of newcomers agreed their **community was welcoming** to newcomers.[1]

89% of newcomers had a **strong sense of belonging** to Canada, **82%** their province, and **80%** to their community.[1]

The sense of belonging to Canada was high amongst all racial/ethnic groups.

The sense of belonging to the community was slightly lower among French-speaking respondents.

Forming social connections



70% of newcomers said they had 3 or more close friends in the same community; only 7% reported not having any friends in the community.[1]

Confidence in institutions

93% of newcomers indicated that they had confidence in Canadian institutions such as the courts, healthcare, social security, the police and the Government of Canada.[1]

Data Sources: [1]Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021), [2]Statistics Canada 2021 [3] Statistics Canada 2020

Data Sources

This following contains information about primary data sources used in the report – i.e. data collected directly by IRCC. Many other sources of information were used in the development of this report. Secondary data sources (i.e. data collected or analysis done by other parties) are referenced directly in the report.

IRCC Permanent Resident Database
The IRCC Permanent Resident Database is based on the Global Case Management System (GCMS). GCMS is IRCC's single, integrated and worldwide system used internally to process applications for citizenship and immigration services.
This report uses GCMS information **about** newcomers to Canada: • who were admitted as permanent residents between 2013 and 2020, or • who used settlement services in 2020-21 and 2021-22.
The data were **extracted** between December 2022 and June 2023.

iCARE
The **Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE)** is a data entry system that collects key characteristics of services used by clients of the Settlement and Resettlement Programs, including Pre-Arrival. The data is entered by Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) and they are required to report monthly as per their Contribution Agreement with IRCC. iCARE has been used to collect Settlement Program data since 2013 and Resettlement Program data since 2014.
This report uses iCARE information **about** settlement services used in 2020-21 and 2021-22.
The data were **extracted** between December 2022 and June 2023.

GCS
The **Grants and Contributions System (GCS)** is an online tool that allows Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) to submit applications for funding, as well as manage Grants or Contribution Agreements.
This report uses GCS information **about** Contribution Agreement funding and reporting for 2020-21 and 2021-22.
The data were **extracted** March 2023.

SAP
SAP is the Department's financial management system used to support the preparation of financial statements and other reporting.
This report uses SAP information **about** settlement program expenditures in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.
The data were **extracted** March 2023.

NOS
The **Newcomer Outcomes Survey (NOS)** is an annual survey of newcomers to Canada that collects settlement outcomes information from both clients and non-clients of IRCC's Settlement Program. Each year, the survey is sent to all newcomers who became permanent residents in specific years. Two years of survey data are combined to provide a response set from newcomers across eight admission years.
This report uses NOS responses to the 2020 and 2021 survey waves **about** the settlement experiences of newcomers who became permanent residents between 2013 and 2020.
The data were **extracted** March 2022.

ARPIO / APRCP
SPOs delivering direct settlement services provide an **Annual Report on Project Implementation & Outcomes (ARPIO)** and Local Immigration Partnerships/Réseaux d'immigration francophone provide an **Annual Project Report on Community Partnerships (APRCP)**. The reports provide an equitable opportunity to hear from SPOs across the country on similar issues. Note that the ARPIO was formerly called the APPR – Annual Project Performance Report.
This report uses ARPIO and APRCP reports **about** Contribution Agreements funded for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2020-21 and 2021-22.
The data were **extracted** after the end of the reporting cycles.

2020 Remote Service Delivery Survey
IRCC conducted a **Remote Service Delivery Survey** of Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in November 2020 to better understand what the delivery of direct settlement services looked like in the COVID-19 context for SPOs receiving IRCC funding.
This report uses survey information **about** the impact of the transition from in-person to remote service delivery.
The data were **extracted** January 2021.

2022 Digital Case Study Client Survey
IRCC conducted an online survey of client experiences using online settlement services in August 2022, to better understand which settlement services were working well, and what needed improvement.
This report uses survey information **about** client experiences using settlement services prior to August 2022.
The data were **extracted** April 2023.

2022 Digital Case Study Client Focus Groups
IRCC conducted focus groups with clients who had accessed settlement services, to better understand what types of settlement services should be offered online, for which clients, and how to ensure that online services work well for clients.

This report uses focus group information **about** newcomer client views and experiences regarding online settlement services.
The focus groups were **held** May 2022.

2022 Digital Case Study Service Provider Focus Groups
IRCC conducted focus groups with staff from Service Provider Organizations (SPOs), to better understand in what contexts Settlement Program services should be offered online, for which clients, and how online services can be offered in a responsive, effective, and efficient way.
This report uses focus group information **about** views and experiences on the delivery of online settlement services.
The focus groups were **held** May 2022.

2022 RNIP Newcomer Survey
IRCC conducted an online survey of newcomers' experiences participating in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in October 2022, to better understand how the pilot is working, and what needs improvement.
This report uses survey information **about** RNIP newcomers' use of services and supports, experiences of discrimination, sense of belonging, and desire to stay in the RNIP communities where they settled.
The data were **extracted** February 2023.

2022 RNIP Employer Survey
IRCC conducted an online survey of employers participating in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in August 2022, to better understand how the pilot is working for employers, and what needs improvement.
This report uses survey information **about** the settlement supports provided by RNIP employers to support their candidates.
The data were **extracted** December 2022.

2022 RNIP Client Focus Groups
IRCC conducted focus groups with newcomers who had responded to the RNIP Newcomer Survey, and expressed a willingness to participate in focus group discussion, to contextualize survey responses and obtain further insights into RNIP newcomers' experiences using settlement supports.
This report uses focus group information **about** experiences with volunteer matching, use of settlement services, and experiences within the community.
The focus groups were **held** February 2023.

2022 IRCC Survey: Newcomers' experiences of discrimination in their city or town
IRCC conducted an online survey of newcomers in February 2022 to better understand experiences of discrimination in their city or town. The results of the survey will help IRCC inform its services and awareness campaigns going forward, and to meet the needs of newcomers to Canada.
This report uses survey information **about** experiences of discrimination in newcomers' city or town, including the type of discrimination experienced.
The data were **extracted** April 2023.