

# The Impact of COVID on the Settlement Program

Findings from the 2023 Settlement Outcomes Report

Settlement and Integration Policy Branch, November 2023



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada



# Context-setting

## Settlement and integration is a “whole-of-society” responsibility

The main way in which IRCC can influence the attainment of positive outcomes for newcomers is through IRCC-funded settlement and resettlement services.

These services are provided through:

- 1. The Settlement Program** which are settlement services provided for eligible recipients (pre-arrival or domestically); and
- 2. Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)** which provides specialized services and income support to help resettled refugees meet their short-term resettlement needs.



# The 2023 Settlement Outcomes Report

The Report is one way we can be accountable, and share what we're learning



The report is divided into modular parts:



**Chapeau/ Executive Summary**



**Part 1: Newcomer Outcomes Stock Take**

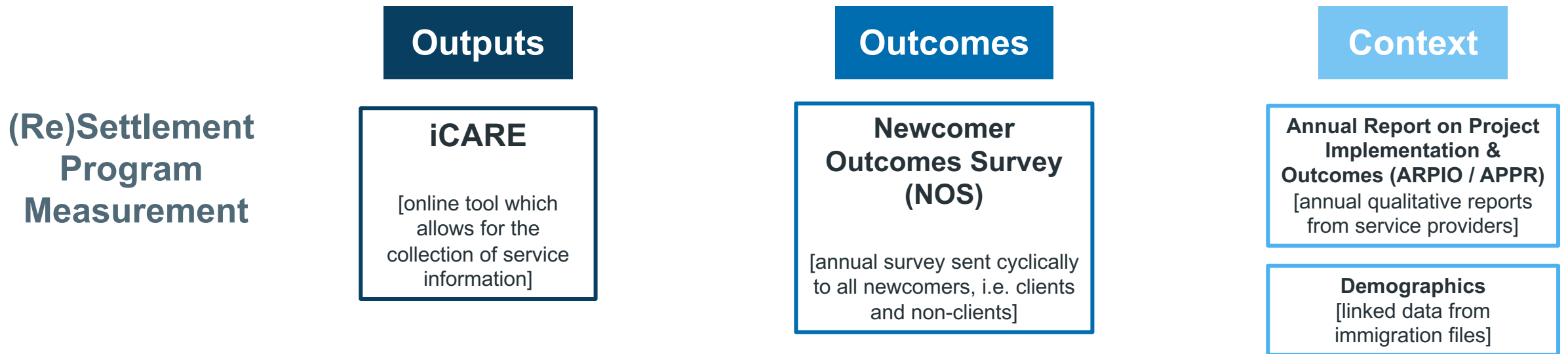


**Part 2: Digital Transformation**



**Part 3: Place-Based Programming**

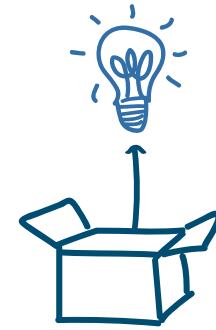
# Measuring Success



## Other sources of evidence

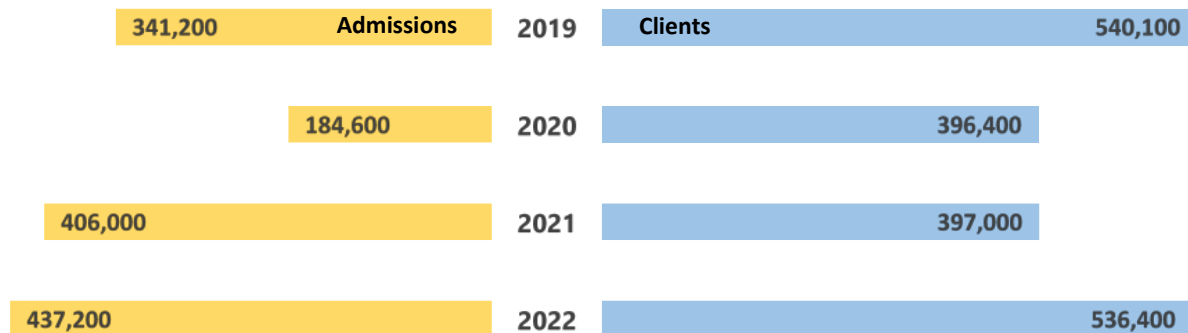
- Case studies on certain aspects of (re)Settlement Programming
- Official evaluations of IRCC programming
- Official reports from other Government Organizations (e.g. Statistics Canada)
- Academic Literature
- Grey Literature (e.g. other reports, research papers from other organizations)

# 1. Key Findings



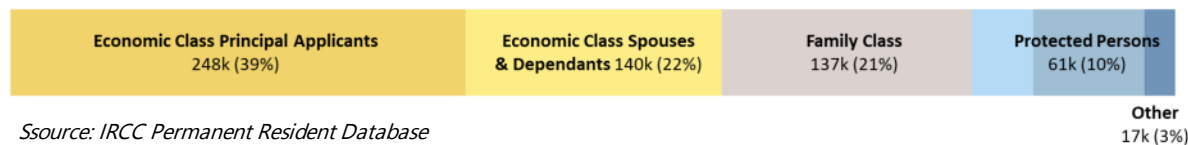
Part 1: Newcomer Outcomes Stock Take

# COVID restrictions affected the number and nature of newcomers admitted to Canada, as well as domestic settlement clients served.



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

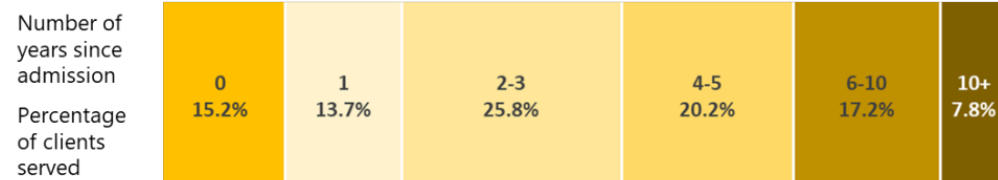
There were fewer permanent resident admissions in 2020; however the decrease in the role of settlement services was less pronounced because the existing permanent resident population continued to access services



Source: IRCC Permanent Resident Database

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

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.

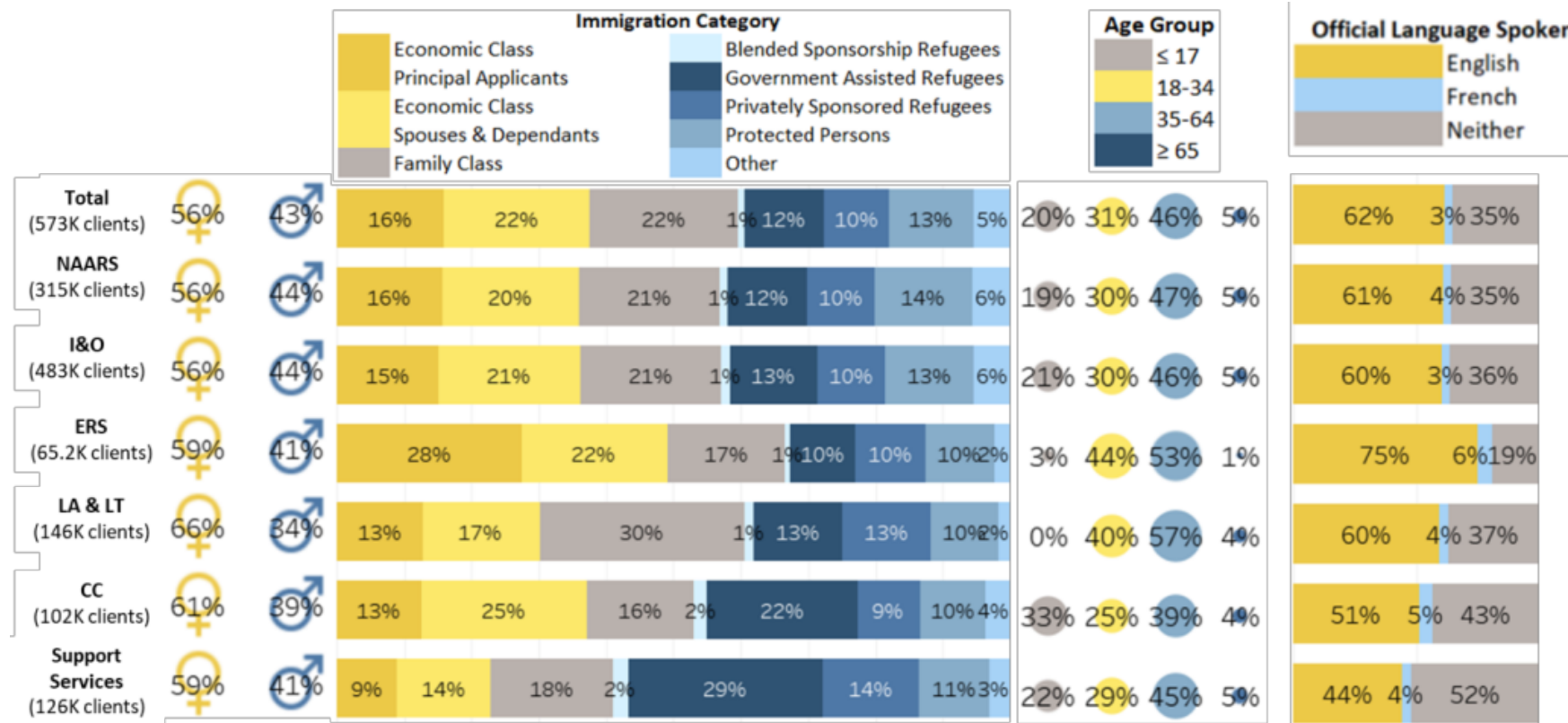


Source: iCARE

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

# COVID did not result in major changes to client demographics.

573, 000 unique clients accessed one or more types of service in 2020/21 and 2021/22



- Key differences vs pre-pandemic:
- slight **increase in female** clients, particularly for LA & LT and ErS
  - percentage of clients from the **Economic or Family Classes decreased**, while the percentage of clients who were **Resettled Refugees increased**
  - more clients **accessed services online**
  - **fewer support services** were accessed
  - some services, like referrals and community connections **events decreased**

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.

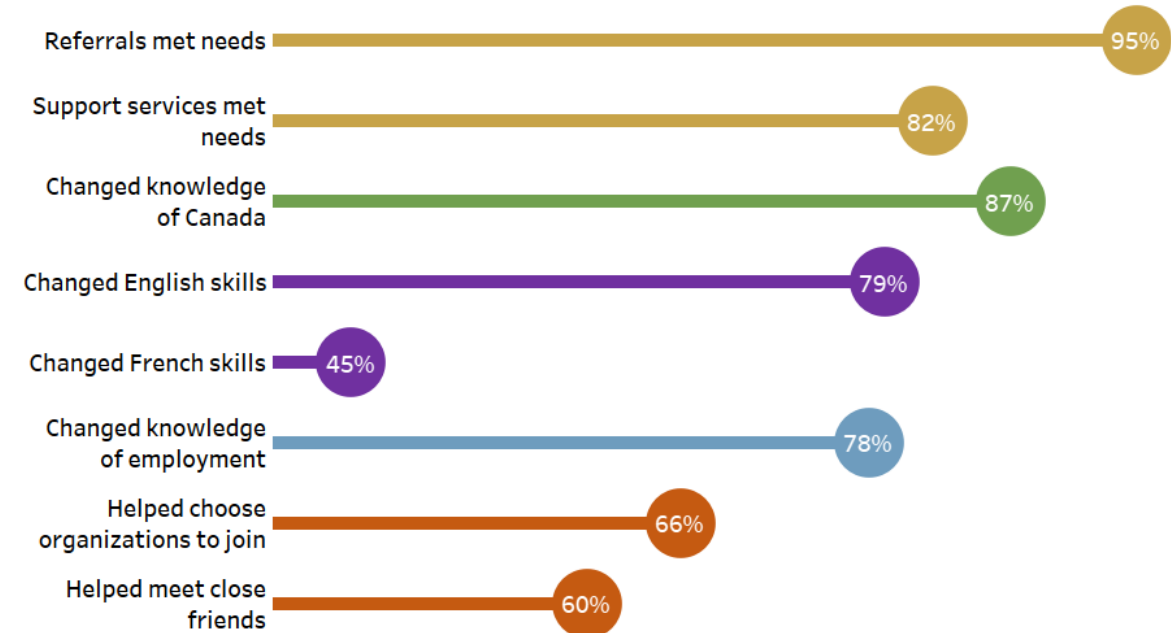
# Most clients can access services that meet their needs, but not all newcomers are aware of settlement services.

- For clients, most (85%) were **able to access the Program** with no reported barriers. Most non-clients (61%) reported that they did not need services.
- More could be done to **improve awareness**, as 32% of survey respondents were not aware of IRCC's Settlement Program.



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

## How did services meet clients needs?



Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey



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

- A higher percentage of clients reported improved knowledge compared to non-clients, indicating that **information services may have had a positive impact**.
- The main **sources of settlement information** are similar for program clients and non-clients.
  - **Friends, family, and the internet** are the top 3.
  - For clients, **settlement service providers** were the fourth most cited source.
- Both clients (91%) and non-clients (92%) reported having enough information about life in Canada.
  - **Fewer GARs** (83%) reported having sufficient information.

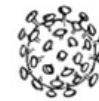


<b>Clients</b>	1 Friends	2 Family	3 Internet	4 IRCC-funded settlement services
<b>Non-clients</b>	Internet	Friends	Family	Employers / co-workers

Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey



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



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



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

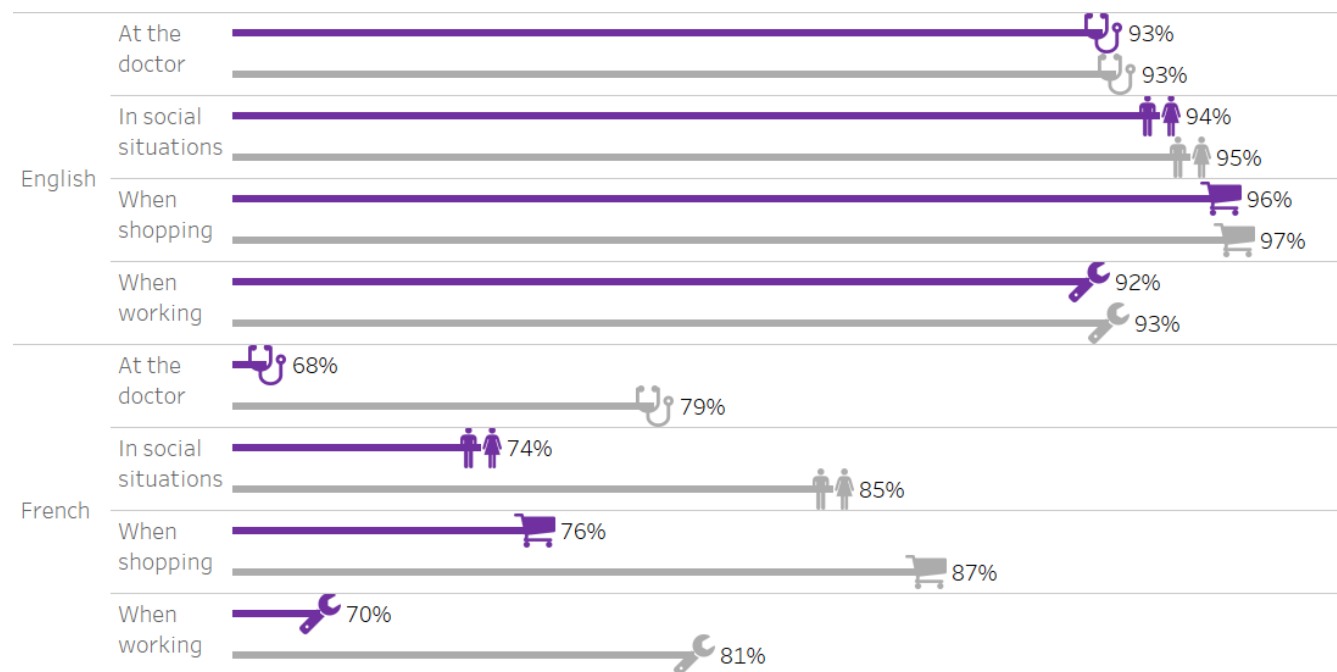
# Both clients and non-clients are able to use official languages in real-life situations

- **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.



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

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.

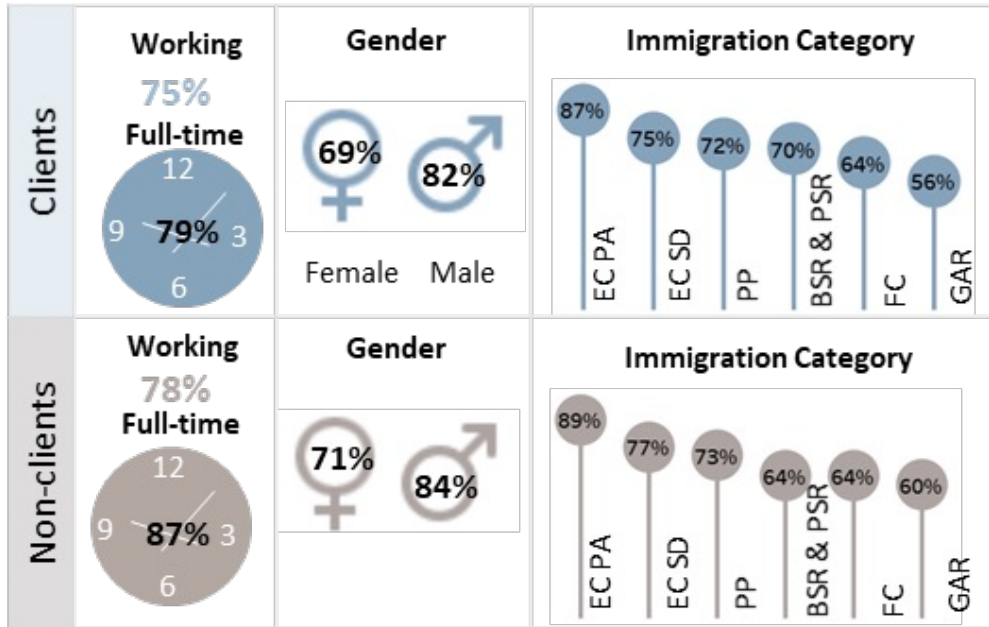


Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey

# The majority of newcomers directly participate in the Canadian labour market (or contribute to Canada in other ways)

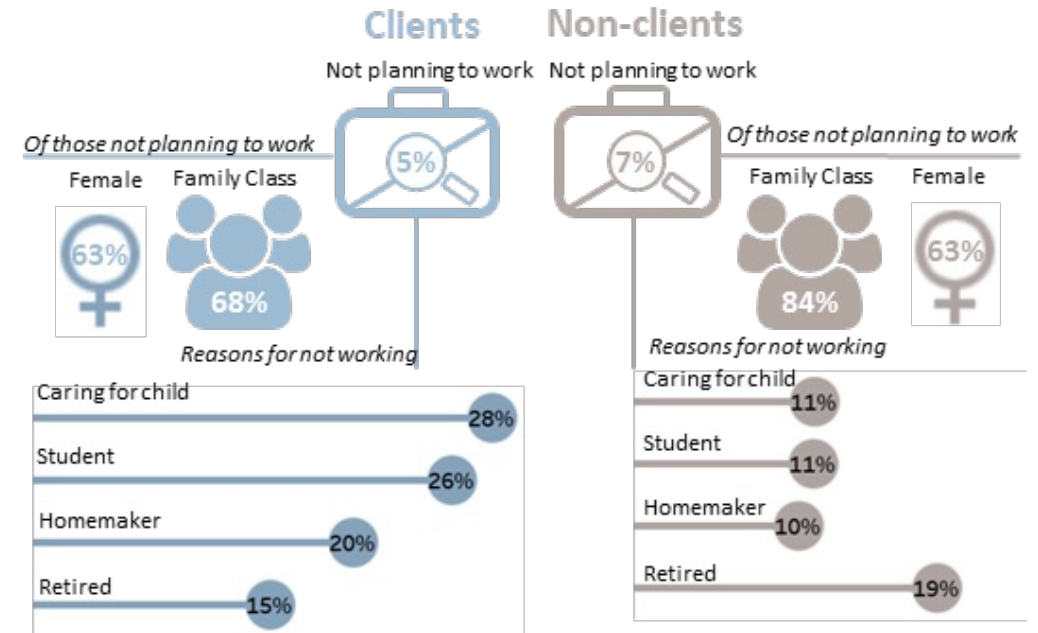
Clients reported more improvement in their knowledge of employment topics compared to non-clients.

## Self-reported employment rates



Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey

## Reasons for not working



Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey

# Most newcomers feel that they belong and are welcomed in Canada

- 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.
- Newcomers are also participating in community organizations



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

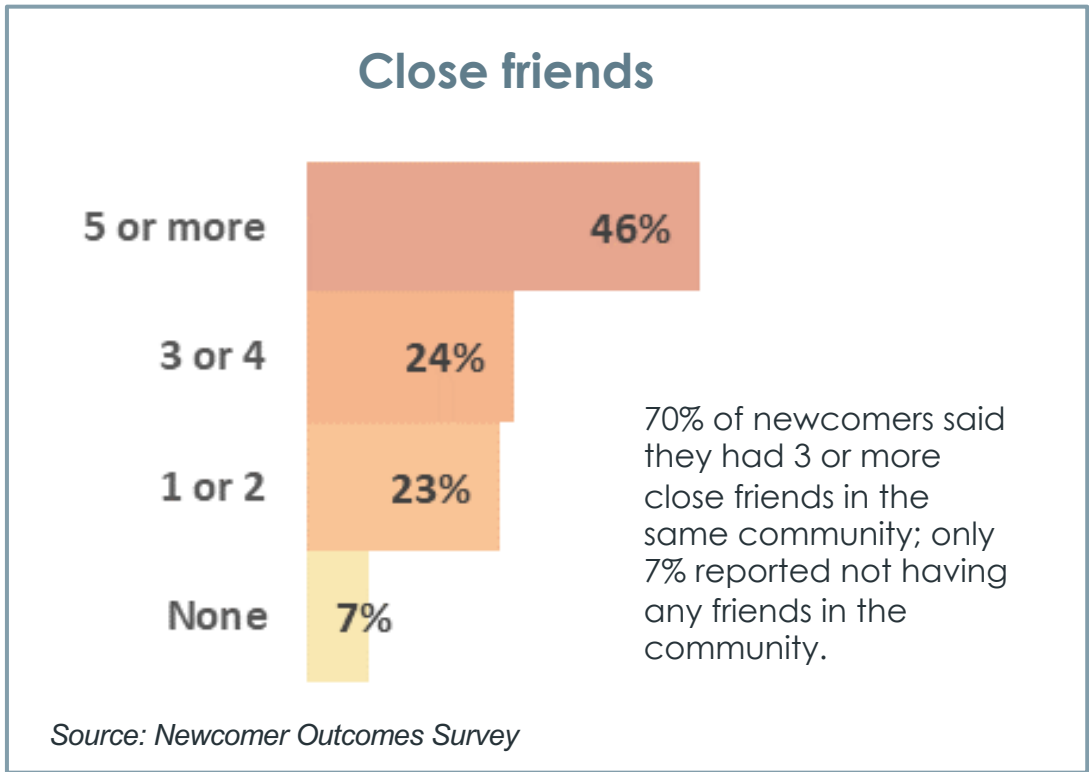


The sense of belonging to the community was slightly lower among French-speaking respondents.



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.**



# To summarize the main takeaways



Settlement Program and SPOs that deliver programming were **able to successfully adjust to the pandemic** and related restrictions. While COVID-19 had significant impacts on new admissions and Settlement Program client volumes, **the numbers are rebounding**. **Newcomer women were particularly hard-hit by impacts** to the Canadian labour market.



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.



There are **some gaps in awareness of IRCC-funded settlement services**, with an awareness rate of only 68% among all newcomers.



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 homemakers.



For most outcomes, **clients reported slightly higher rates of improvement in knowledge** and abilities than their non-client counterparts.

# SETTLEMENT INFORMATION AND RESEARCH ALL IN ONE PLACE



- Showcase and disseminate information about the Program
- Publish more frequent and targeted findings:
  - ✓ Upcoming *2023 Settlement Outcomes Report*
  - ✓ Information about CFP 2024 once the process is launched

## English

[Canada.ca/settlement-resettlement-information](https://Canada.ca/settlement-resettlement-information)



Point your phone's camera  
at the QR Code of choice  
and a link should pop up  
for you to click!

## French

[Canada.ca/information-etablissement-reinstallation](https://Canada.ca/information-etablissement-reinstallation)



# Annexes

Other useful information for your reference

# Annex A: Overview of the 1<sup>st</sup> Settlement Outcomes Report

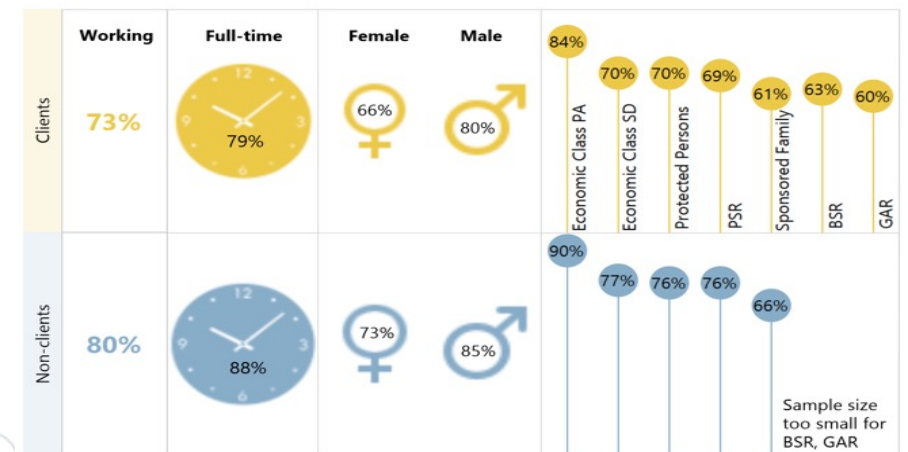


- In 2021, the **Settlement Outcomes Highlights Report** was published publicly
- Guided by the Settlement Program’s Performance Information Profile and the Departmental Results Framework, the Report focuses on reporting on outcomes from the Settlement Program Logic Model
- Existing data helped SIS tell a baseline story of Settlement Program performance

- The Report established foundational knowledge on:

- How resources are distributed by service line/outcome
- Who uses settlement services
- How long clients access settlement services
- Are clients improving their knowledge (e.g. in law, justice, housing, healthcare, finances, and education in Canada)
- Are clients working? (See Figure A)

Figure A: Example - Are clients working?



Source: Newcomer Outcomes Survey



# Annex B: iCARE – Measuring Outputs

## Q: WHAT IS iCARE?

A: 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 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.

## Q: WHAT DOES iCARE TELL IRCC?

A: For each service a client receives, SPOs use iCARE to provide IRCC with:

  
Client  
identifier

  
Service type


  
Location

  
Use of support  
services

  
Service  
dates

  
Topics  
covered

  
Service  
format  
(e.g., online, in-  
person)

 Language Training SPOs also tell IRCC details like Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels and attendance.

# Annex C: NOS – Measuring Outcomes

## Q: WHAT IS THE NOS?

A: Annual survey of newcomers to Canada that collects settlement outcomes information from both clients and non-clients of the (Re)Settlement Program.

## Q: WHAT DOES THE NOS TELL IRCC?

A: Designed with Statistics Canada, collects information specifically to measure immediate (knowledge gains), intermediate (behaviour changes), and long-term (integration) outcomes, as well as outcomes of the Resettlement Program. Sections include:



Responses are linked to IRCC's administrative and (Re)Settlement service data to get a full picture of a respondent's demographics and Program use.

### Where can I see the results?

Results from the NOS feed into almost all of IRCC's (Re)Settlement Program research and outcomes analysis. The **Settlement Outcomes Highlights Report** is the flagship product.

### iCARE

We use iCARE to help determine who our clients are (and aren't!), as well as which services they have received for specific lines of questioning.

# Annex D: Context Setting (ARPIO/APPR and Demographics)

Adding **context** to the outcomes we're seeing is important to inform next steps and program direction.

- 1) **Demographics** – UCI in **iCARE** is linked to immigration files in order to
  - Understand differential outcomes, who is more impacted by events
  - Look at trends over time to keep our finger on the pulse (not just in crisis)
  
- 2) **Individual delivery and organizational factors** – ARPIO (formerly APPR)
  - Completed by direct Settlement service providers only
  - Provides information on promising practices, challenges
  - Identify where additional guidance/program tweaks might be required to support our SPOs

# Annex E: Resettlement Assistance Program and Pre-Arrival Services

## 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

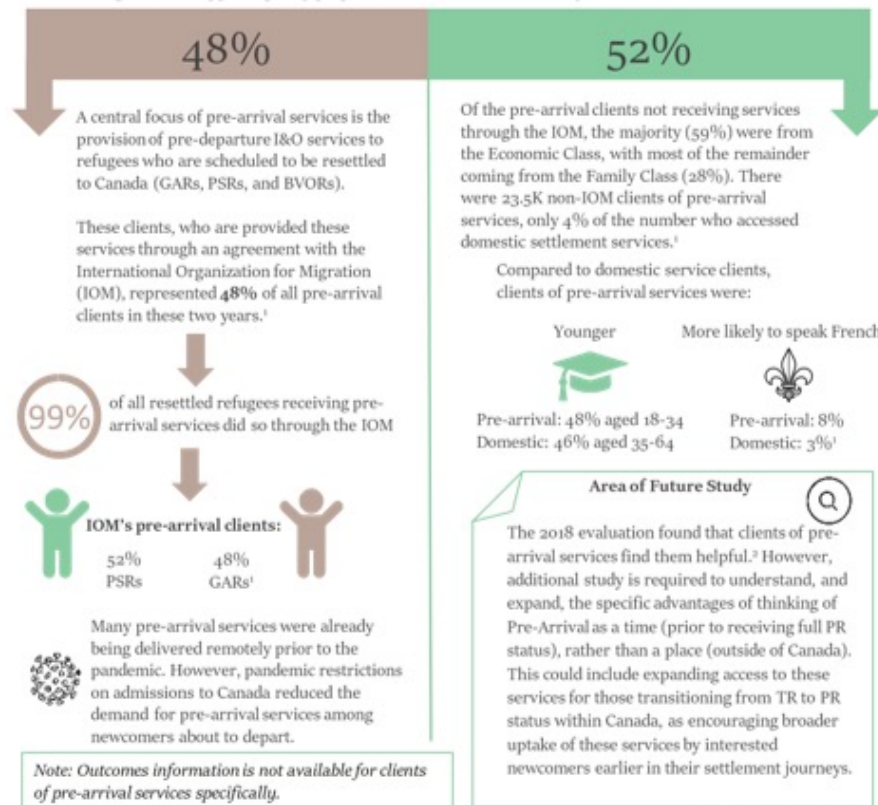


Clearer expectations



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.



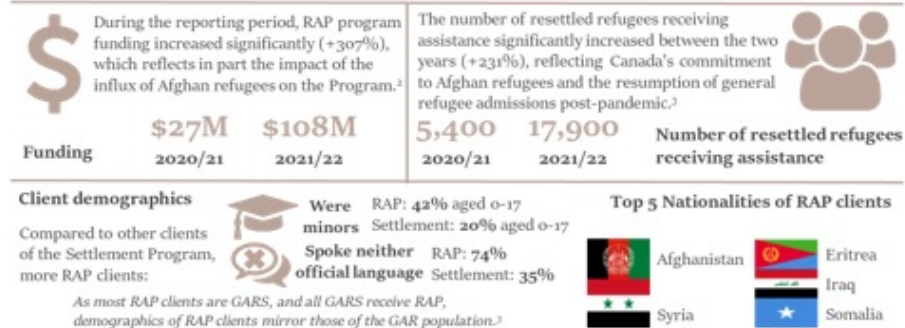
Data Sources: <sup>1</sup>ICARE, <sup>2</sup>IRCC 2018

## 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.

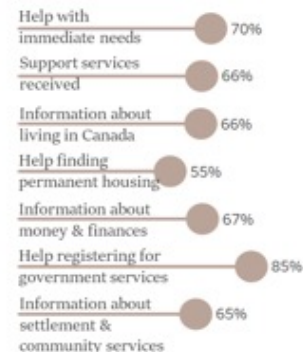
In addition to providing RAP services, IRCC provides [income support](#) to GARs and certain other [eligible clients](#) for up to twelve months to help cover costs associated with starting their lives anew in Canada.



### 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.*

**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.<sup>4</sup>

*Because the [resettlement of Afghan nationals](#) began in August 2021, outcome information for this important cohort of newcomers is not yet available.*

Data Sources: <sup>1</sup>Newcomer Outcomes Survey (2020 and 2021), <sup>2</sup>SAP, <sup>3</sup>ICARE, <sup>4</sup>ICARE & Permanent Resident database