

Report

Immigration and Refugee Settlement in Canada: Trends in Public Funding

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Executive Summary

This report is the product of a collaboration between the University of Alberta and the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA). It is a comparative study of provincial funding programs for refugees and immigrants in Canada. The report is divided into three sections: section one examines provincial government programs and their mandates; section two compares provincial funding patterns; and section three identifies patterns in funding from the federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

The primary finding in this report is that most provincial budgets remained static between 2012 and 2017. However, the number of newcomers admitted to Canada continued to rise. The exception is Ontario, which has provided some additional funding through a new program. Meanwhile, Alberta has surpassed British Columbia in the number of immigrants, but funding has remained flat or stable. In other words, Alberta underfunds programs for immigrants and refugees. Federal funding for Settlement and Resettlement was declining for years until 2015-2017, albeit this might be a temporary increase attributable to the influx of Syrian refugees. The sharpest drop in funding has been in British Columbia. This is a result of a major policy change in 2014 wherein the federal government stopped transferring funds to the province to administer federal programs in this sector. It is unclear, however, if the federal government has provided the same level of funding in British Columbia since 2014.¹ The Atlantic Provinces have an unusually high per capita funding ratio. Overall, however, Ontario still provides the most funding for immigration and settlement while receiving the highest amount of federal transfer payments.

This report also identifies provincial programs that are dedicated to assisting immigrants and refugees. The largest amount of money is allocated to settlement and integration services for newcomers. Most provinces also have substantial programs for economic and labour market integration. Language training is usually subsumed within labour market integration programs except in Alberta.

Project Description and Methodology

Canada is one of the world's leading destinations for immigration. Australia and Canada accept more immigrants every year than any other country in the western world.² For this reason alone, trends in government funding for settlement is an important issue of public policy. As this report demonstrates, funding has remained static or declined except for a brief surge of federal funding related to the influx of Syrian refugees. This trend in funding is especially problematic at a time when the number of newcomers is increasing. In addition to the influx of Syrian refugees, there has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers across the border from the United States. Meanwhile, economic outcomes for immigrants and refugees are in decline.³

Provincial and municipal governments insist that the federal government is failing to provide sufficient funding to address this influx.⁴ The lack of funding has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. Many women, for instance, struggle with English language acquisition because of a lack of availability for childcare services.⁵ It also has an impact on children. More than half of government-sponsored refugees in 2016 were children. According to the 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.⁶ Ramos and Unger suggest that part of the solution is collecting data on government programs.⁷ Better data might not only provide insight on the quality and availability of public services, but it would also draw public attention to the lack of support for newcomers. In 2017, the Auditor General advised that the federal government was struggling to determine the impact of its programs in assisting refugee

settlement. This study provides data to better understand trends in federal and provincial funding for this sector.

The federal government provides funding to assist Permanent Residents (immigrants and refugees) to settle in Canada. Some groups, however, such as refugee claimants, temporary foreign workers, international students or naturalized citizens, are ineligible for federal funding. As a result, provincial governments have created programs to assist with settlement and integration to fill this gap and to complement existing federal programs. The need for provincial funding has become especially acute in recent years because of a lack of federal funding. Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in provinces with minimal matching funding are especially vulnerable to reductions in federal funding. Funding for the federal government's Settlement Program, for instance, declined from \$628,097,452 in 2011 to \$585,511,768 in 2013 and \$578,437,254 in 2016 (funding rose in 2016-2017 during the Syrian refugee crisis). This issue has implications for both federal and provincial policy. For example, in the case of Government-Assisted Refugees, a visa officer's decision about which province to destine a family could significantly impact the course of their integration if funding and service levels are dramatically lower in some jurisdictions. In this way, families might have better chances at successful integration in some provinces compared to others if there is a significant difference in the level of funding and services.

Our primary objective was to identify provincial programs for immigrant and refugee settlement. The programs identified in this report derived from applications under provincial freedom of information legislation. We requested information on provincial

programs targeted to immigrant and refugee settlement. In some cases, programs such as language acquisition are subsumed within much larger programs. This report is concerned only with identifying those programs solely mandated to support refugees and immigrants. The information in this study was limited to what we secured through freedom of information legislation. While this restricted the scope of our study, it is also a unique source that provides new insights on trends in provincial funding.

The research was conducted in two stages. First, we collaborated with AMSSA, which reached out to its network of SPOs to identify existing government programs. Based on feedback from these organizations, we submitted requests for information to all ten provinces to document funding for these programs over the past five years. Each submission requested the following information:

1. A list of existing programs for immigrants and refugees
2. Total amount of funding per year (2012 to 2017) per program
3. A description of the mandate of each program
4. [If the program includes funding for SPOs] A list of recipients and amounts per year

Finally, although the focus was on comparing provincial funding models, this report includes data on federal funding for settlement and integration. The federal data provides a useful foundation for identifying national trends.

Government Programs

Labour Market Integration/Participation/Credentialing

All provinces have programs dedicated to promoting labour market participation and integration among newcomers. The goal is to enhance economic independence and participation in the workforce.

British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario have programs that address obtaining recognition, re-certification, or licensure of pre-arrival skills and qualifications of newcomers, including bridging programs, work and internship placements, licensure exam preparation, and small no-equity loans available for costs related to accreditation. Other program mandates include support for occupation-specific training and job placement, skill development to improve upward workforce mobility, career and labour market education for informed labour market choices, as well as support for organizations to assist unemployed individuals to find and prepare for employment.

Settlement and Integration Services

All provinces have programs for promoting successful social and economic integration of newcomers, including the provision of high quality services and adequate access to services and supports to address newcomers' needs. Most jurisdictions provide services for refugees and asylum seekers to complement federal grants and fulfill the service gap for people who are ineligible for federal funding. The mandates for these programs include promoting pluralism and ethno-cultural diversity, participation of newcomers into

collective community life, learning around rights and responsibilities, and additional social programming. Ontario also has programming for newcomer youth.

Ontario has a new Municipal Immigration Program, which seeks to attract, retain and integrate newcomers. It provides funding for municipal programs that foster welcoming communities as well as best practices including: enhancing local immigration websites and online initiatives that deliver information on local services; promoting municipalities as an attractive destination for settlement; helping newcomers integrate into the community; and highlighting gaps in the local labour market.

Language Training

All provinces provide funding for language training. Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, however, have separate, stand-alone language programs while other provinces have it subsumed under different, often larger, programs with broader mandates. Alberta offers funding for “innovative approaches to language training” while Ontario provides language training delivery, assessment services, and occupation-specific training. Quebec offers funding to support French language acquisition among newcomers while providing funding for individuals to defray the costs of language courses.

Ontario provides programming for Language Interpretation Services to facilitate access to health care, social services, justice and law enforcement as well as funding for victims of domestic or sexual assault. Smaller provinces, such as Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, provide language training and acquisition services that are subsumed within

settlement and integration programs. There are no exclusive language training programs for immigrants and refugees in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Refugee Support Services

British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec have refugee-related programs. The British Columbia Settlement and Integration Service program provides support for people ineligible for federal funding. Manitoba has two Refugee Support Programs. One provides paralegal services to refugee claimants and safe transportation from Emerson (U.S./Canada border town) to Winnipeg. The other program provides support for a Refugee Response Coordinator. Ontario offers funding for Settlement and Integration Services for Refugees and Vulnerable Newcomers, including refugee sponsorship support and funding that promotes the social and economic integration of refugees. Quebec's PRINT (Programme Réussir l'Intégration) program offers humanitarian assistance for refugees, including housing support and information for asylum seekers. This program also offers services that promote the successful integration of refugees and immigrants in Quebec society. Nova Scotia had a one-time program in 2015-2016 called the Refugee Support Fund. Prince Edward Island also had a one-time 'Welcome Project' in 2015-2016 that was intended to support Syrian Refugee Resettlement.

Other Programs

Ontario introduced a new program in 2018 called the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program. This program aims to build diverse and inclusive communities. It supports

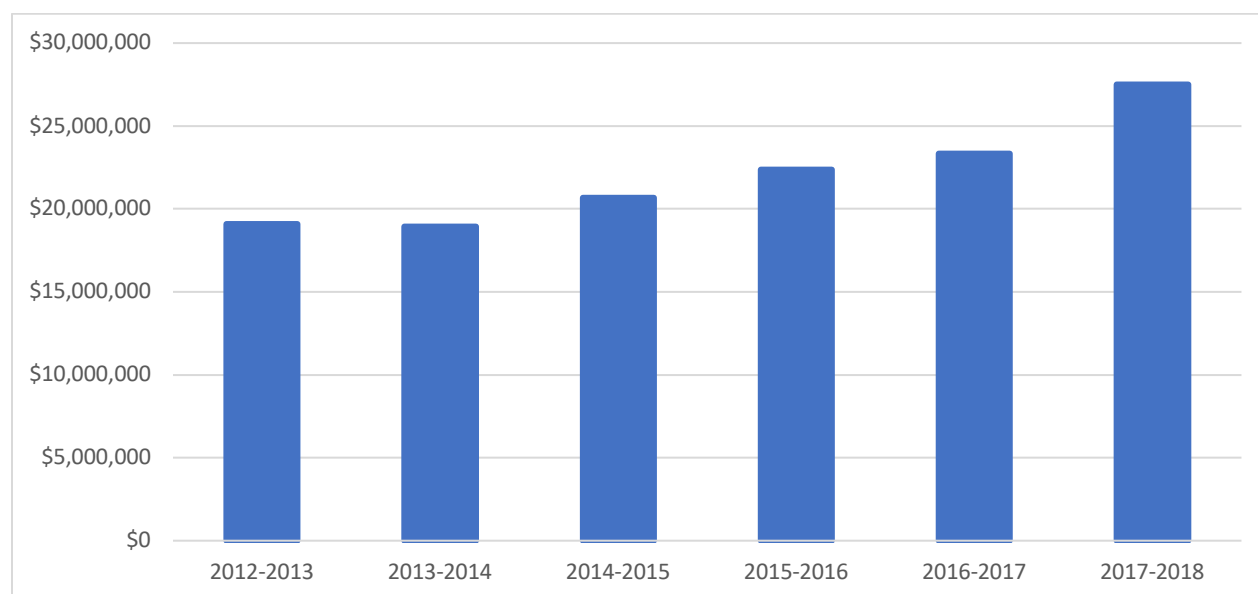
community-based projects that promote civic engagement, women's empowerment and inter-cultural understanding to enhance the ability of newcomers and ethno-cultural communities to participate fully in civic, cultural, social and economic life. Similarly, Quebec's PMD (Programme Mobilisation-Diversité) program provides funding for organizations that promote collective action and innovative practices in promoting ethno-cultural diversity, harmonious and constructive intercultural diversity and dialogue, immigrant participation in collective activities, and conditions that facilitate immigration.

Prince Edward Island's Graduate Mentorship Program for International Students is an employment program to assist employers to create long-term employment opportunities for recent post secondary graduates in their field of study.

Trends in Provincial Funding

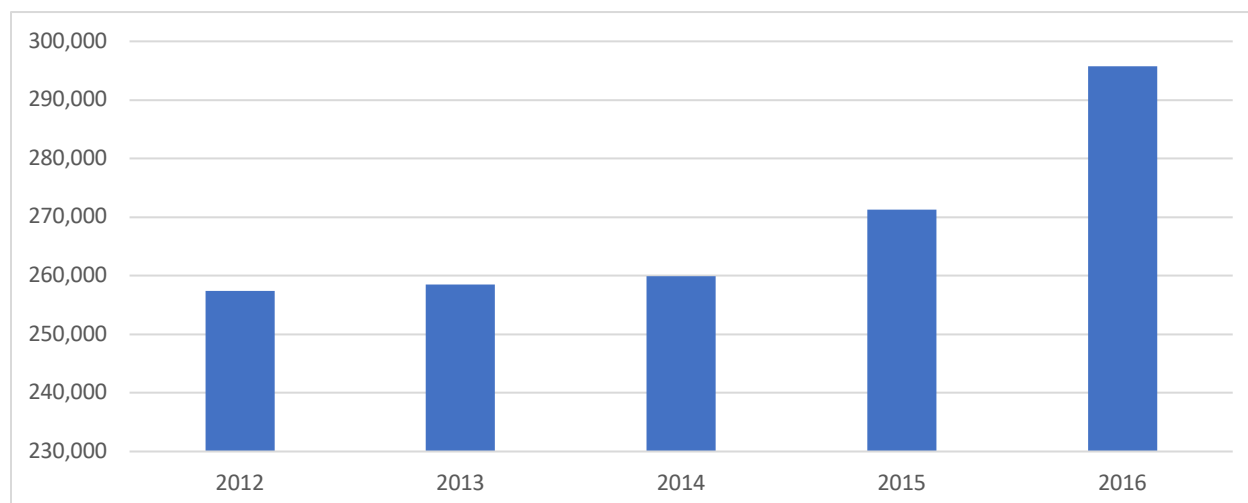
Overall provincial government funding for immigration and settlement has increased since 2012, from \$19,083,916 to \$27,493,954. However, this overall increase is largely attributable to a single province: Ontario. Otherwise, funding in most provinces has either remained constant or decreased (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total Provincial Combined Funding, 2012 to 2018



The number of immigrants and refugees admitted to Canada was relatively stable between 2012 and 2014. The number increased significantly between 2014 and 2016, largely as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees into Canada (Figure 2).

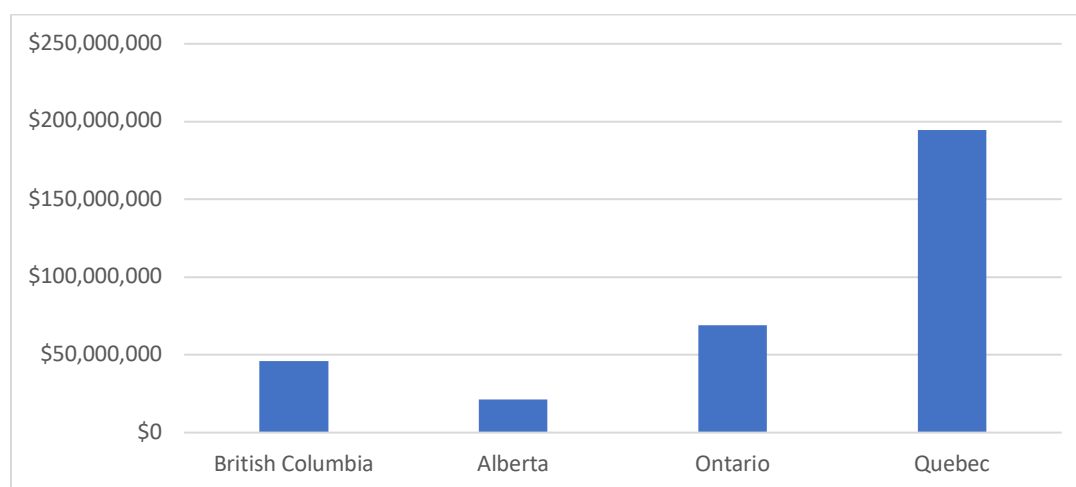
Figure 2: Number of Newcomers Admitted Per Year, 2012 to 2016



Source: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada 2017 Annual Report to Parliament

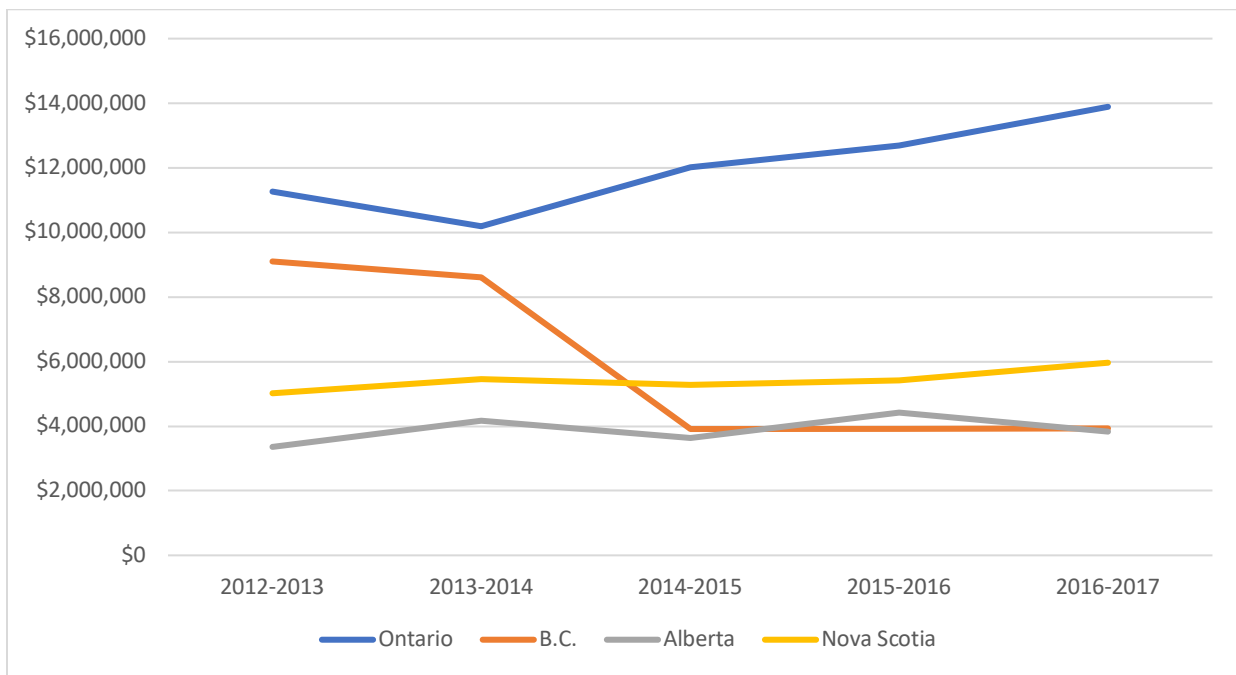
With the exception of Quebec, Ontario provides the most funding for programs dedicated to immigrant and refugee settlement (approximately \$69,000,000 over 5 years, averaging approximately \$11,500,000 per year). Funding in British Columbia was \$45,851,091 compared to \$21,289,583 in Alberta between 2012 and 2017 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Funding for 2012 to 2017, Four Largest Provinces by Population



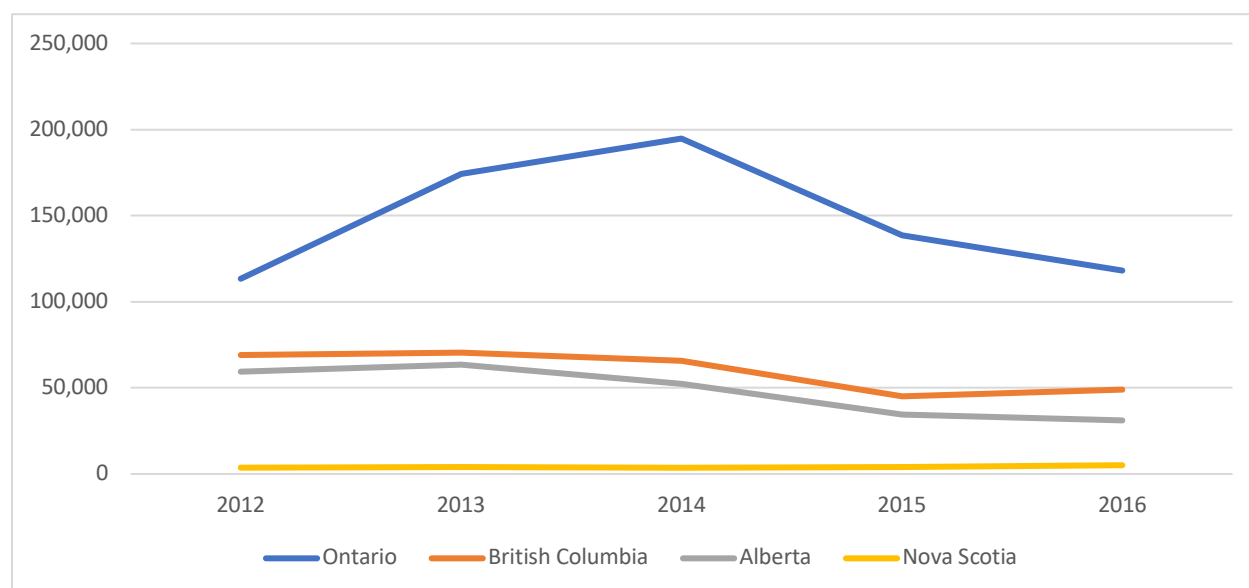
Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Nova Scotia have the largest budgets for immigrant and refugee settlement. Alberta and Nova Scotia’s funding has remained stable whereas there was a significant drop in British Columbia in 2014, which corresponds with a change in funding agreements with the federal government. The province, however, has not replaced the loss of federal funding with comparable provincial programs. Funding in Ontario grew incrementally, but rose significantly from \$13,889,049 in 2016-17 to \$111,100,000 in 2017-18 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Annual Funding, 2012 to 2017, Four Provinces Comparison



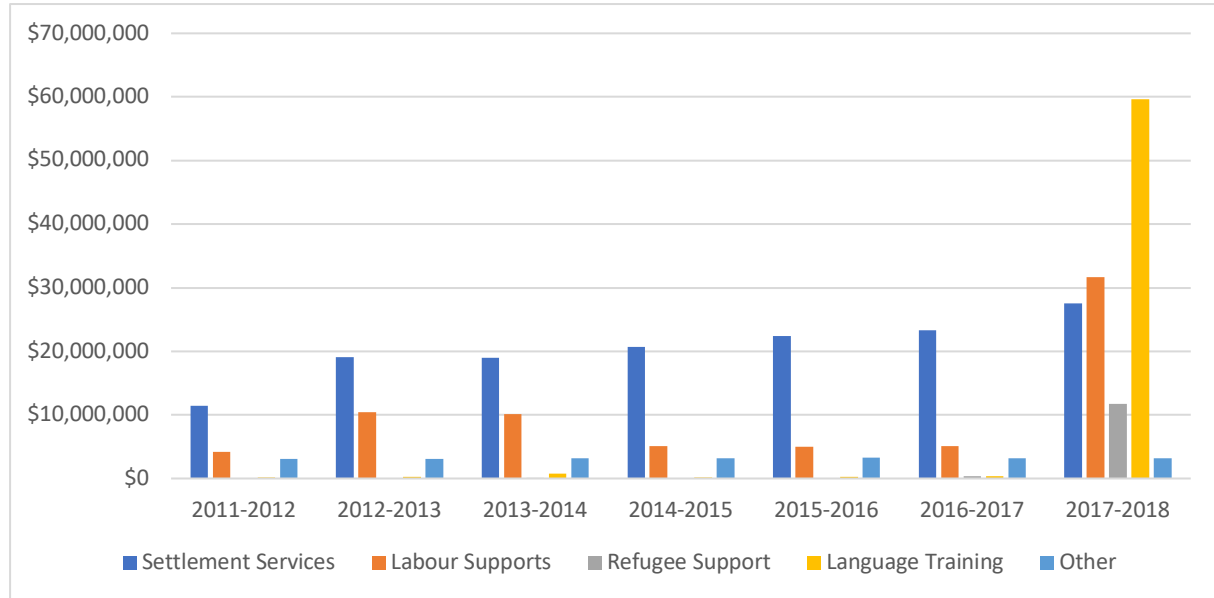
The number of temporary residents (Temporary Foreign Worker Program; International Mobility Program; Asylum Seekers) admitted per province per year has been relatively stable except in Ontario which saw a continual rise until 2014 and then a steady decline. (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Temporary Residents Admitted 2012 to 2016, Four Provinces Comparison



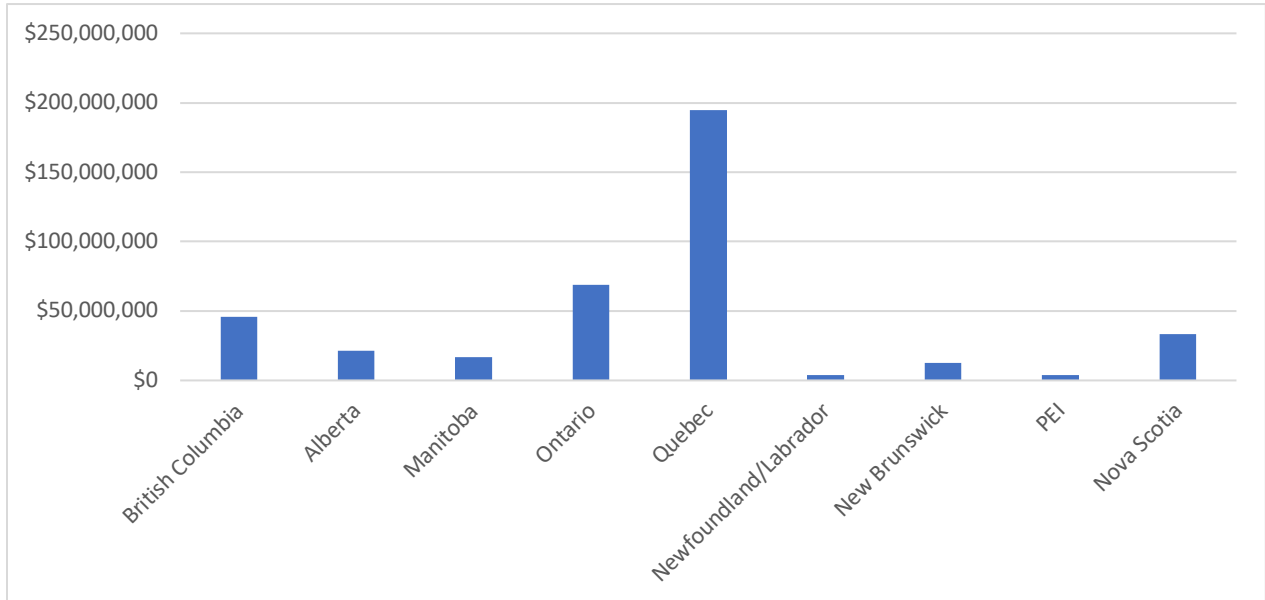
Source: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada Asylum Claimants IRCC Updates 1997-2016)

Each province has at least two primary funding programs: settlement services and labour market integration. Most provinces allocate some funding for language training and refugee support, either as independent programs or within larger programs such as education. Funding for settlement and integration services remained relatively flat since 2011 (there was a slight increase in 2017-2018). Funding for labour market integration declined but rose again in 2017-2018 due to a substantial increase in Ontario's budget (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Funding by Program, 2011 to 2018

With the exception of Quebec, Ontario provides the most funding for newcomer settlement. Newfoundland and Labrador provide the lowest. However, the level of funding does not always correspond with the number of immigrants and refugees in the province. Provincial funding in Nova Scotia over five years, for example, is greater than Alberta despite the volume of newcomers to each province (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Funding for Immigration and Settlement Services by Province 2011-2017



Nova Scotia has the highest per capita funding in Canada. British Columbia on the other hand, has the lowest per capita funding. Funding for Nova Scotia's Labour Market Integration Program is funded through the Canada–Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement.

Table 1: Temporary Residents by Province and Funding per capita in 2016

Province	Temporary Residents Admitted	Provincial Funding	Funding per Capita
British Columbia	49,000	\$3,915,750	\$79.91
Alberta	31,119	\$4,420,019	\$142.03
Manitoba	7,526	\$3,230,000	\$429.17
Ontario	118,044	\$12,090,189	\$102.42
Newfoundland	3364	\$397,395	\$118.13
Nova Scotia	5098	\$5,418,928	\$1,062.95
Prince Edward Island	1255	\$840,043	\$669.35
New Brunswick	2946	\$1,968,976	\$668.35
Quebec	44746	\$18,628,240	\$416.24

Source: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada Facts and Figures 2016: Immigration Overview Temporary Residents

Finally, another source of funding to assist immigrants and refugees is grants to Service Provider Organizations (SPOs). Every province provides some funding for SPOs. However, the amount of funding differs dramatically among the provinces. For instance, the amount of funding in British Columbia is vastly disproportionate (less) than Ontario or Quebec, and lower in aggregate funding than Alberta or Nova Scotia. It is also comparable to Manitoba, which accepts far fewer immigrants and refugees (Table 2).

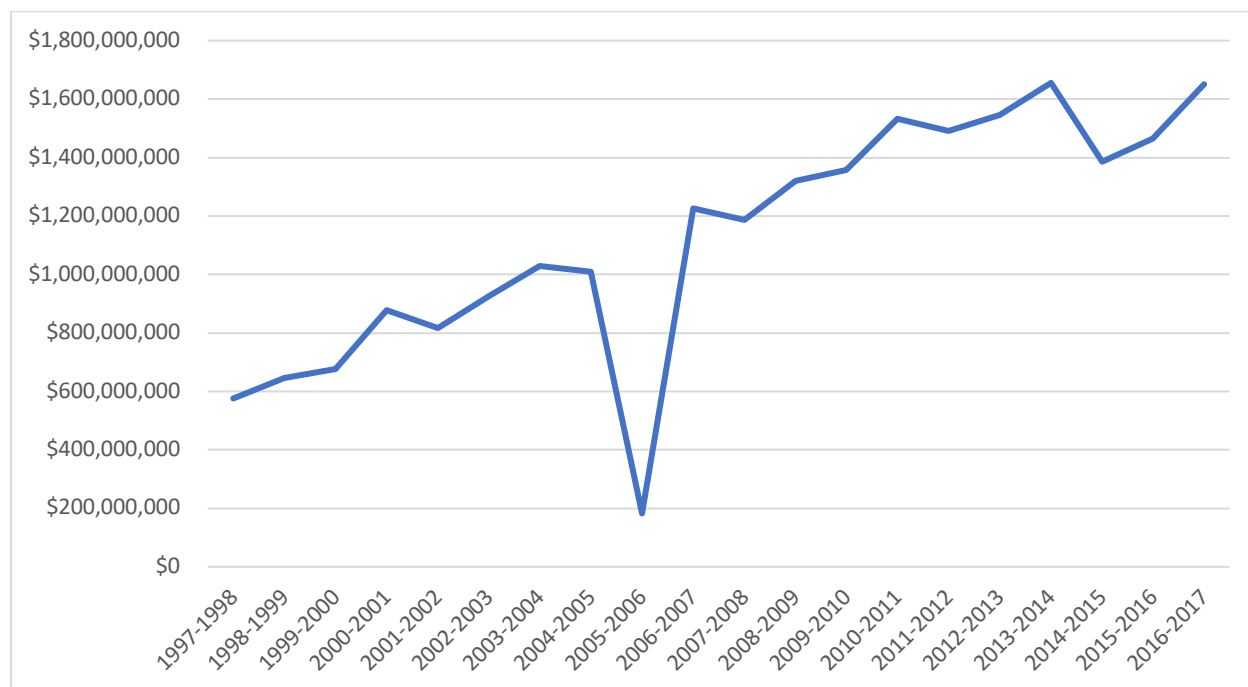
Table 2: Funding for Service Provided Organizations, 2011 to 2017⁸

Jurisdiction	2016-2017	Average Funding Per SPO
British Columbia	\$3,524,835	\$110,515
Alberta	\$3,822,059	\$125,673
Manitoba	\$3,280,000	\$838,750
Ontario	\$79,735,479	\$118,709
Quebec	\$18,481,249	\$189,227
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$475,188	\$118,523
Prince Edward Island	\$862,903	\$172,580
Nova Scotia	\$5,608,306	\$279,274

Trends in Federal Funding: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (formerly Citizenship and Immigration)

On the Federal level, there has been an overall increase in funding to SPOs through IRCC's grants and contributions program over the past decade. Transfer payments have increased from \$6 million in 1997 to \$1.6 billion in 2017 (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Citizenship and Immigration Grants and Contributions 1997-2017



Source: Public Accounts

Ten of the twenty top federally funded service-provider organizations (SPO) are located in Ontario. Most of the SPOs that receive the bulk of federal funding are organizations that offer a variety of settlement services and have existed for well over 20 years in their

communities. In other words, the federal government is less likely to fund new or grassroots organizations in this sector.

The Federal government administers dozens of programs through IRCC alone for immigrant and refugee settlement. The top dozen programs have provided almost \$100 million dollars each over the past twenty years. The three largest programs – by a significant margin – have been Newcomer Settlement and Integration, Settlement and Integration of Newcomers, and the Integration Program (Table 3).

Table 3: Citizenship and Immigration/IRCC, Total Funding by Program 1997 to 2017

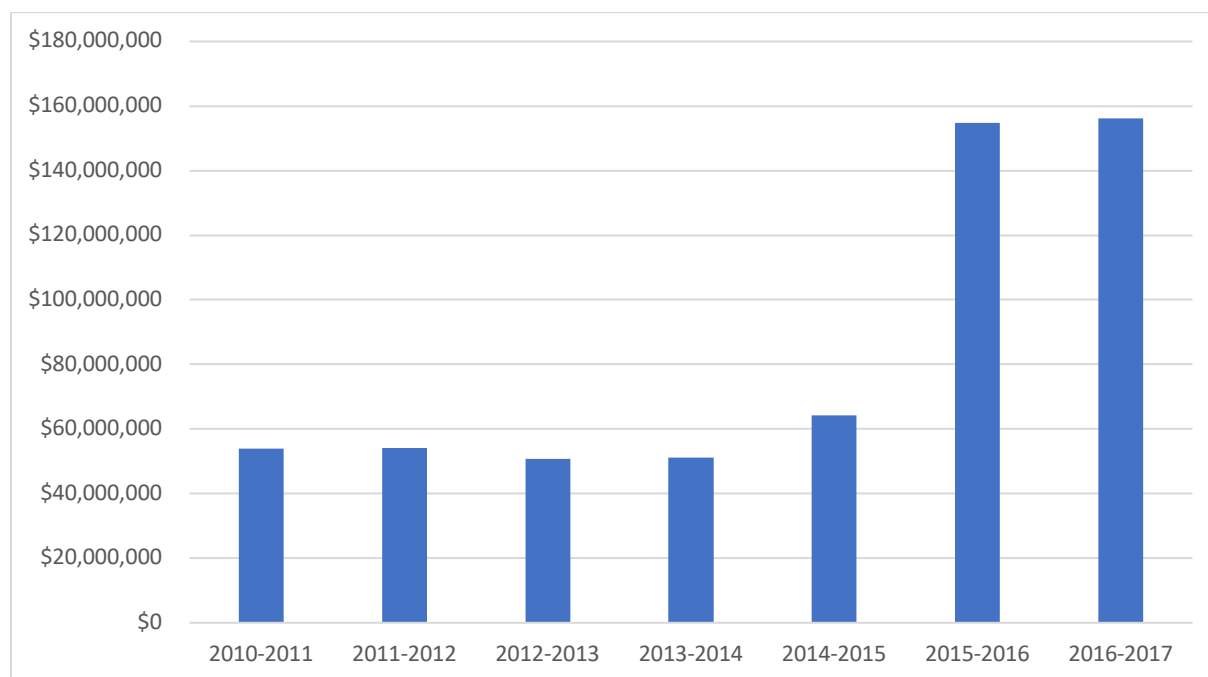
Program	Amount
Newcomer Settlement and Integration	\$973,358,823
Settlement and Integration of Newcomers	\$960,521,000
Integration Program	\$638,610,000
Promoting the Integration of Newcomers	\$296,260,000
Settlement	\$270,755,000
Immigration Program	\$198,444,000
In-Canada Service	\$150,437,000
Internal Services	\$129,256,000
Revitalization of the Toronto Waterfront	\$116,800,000
Managing Access to Canada	\$98,016,000
Refugee Program	\$93,947,000
Temporary Resident Program	\$89,512,000

Source: Public Accounts

The Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program provides immediate and essential support services and income support to assist in meeting refugees' resettlement needs. Services include, but are not limited to, reception services, assistance with accommodations, links to mandatory federal and provincial programs, life skills training, and orientation on financial

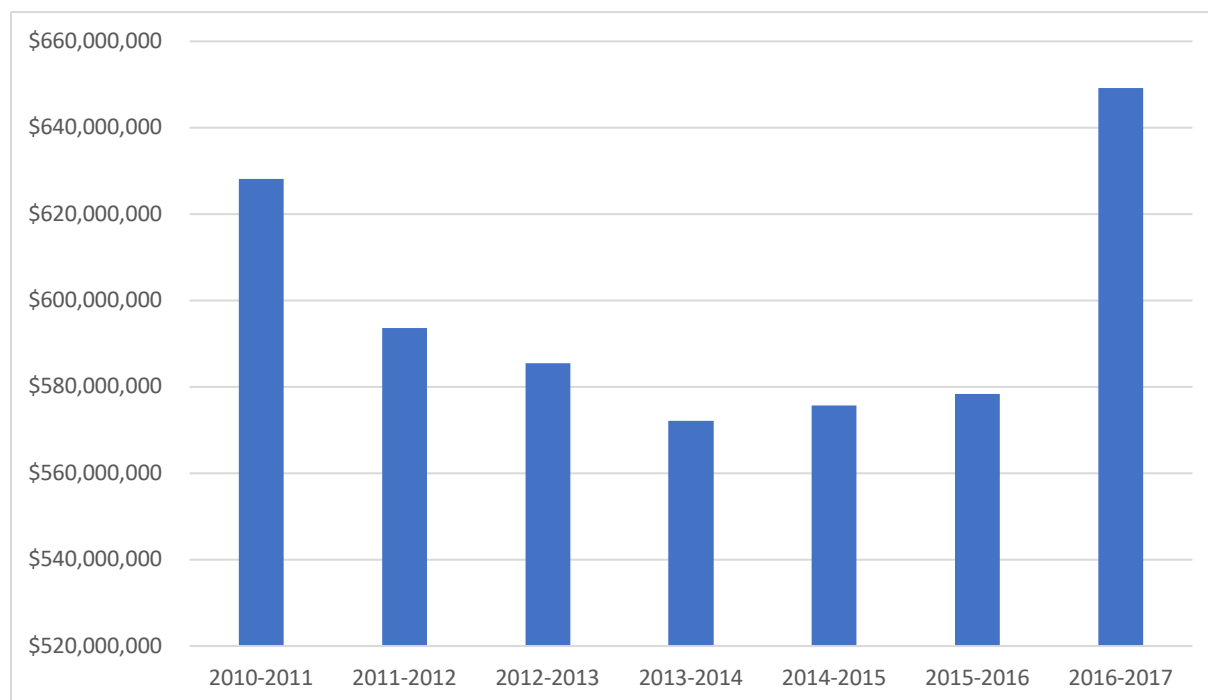
and non-financial information.⁹ Resettlement funding remained relatively flat from 2010 to 2015, albeit it doubled in response to the influx of Syrian refugees (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Resettlement Program Funding 2010 to 2017



Source: Public Accounts

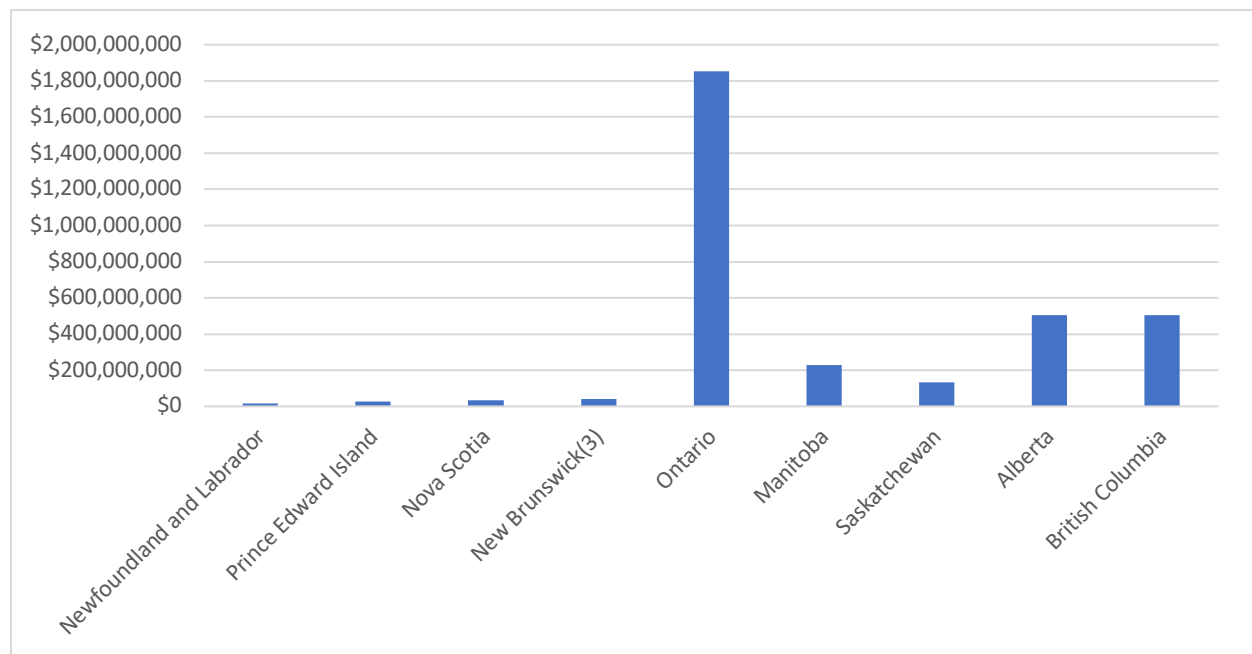
The Settlement Program assists immigrants and refugees in overcoming barriers specific to the newcomer experience such as a lack of official language skills or limited knowledge of Canada. These programs enable newcomers to better participate in the social, cultural, civic and economic life in Canada.¹⁰ Settlement funding declined from 2010 to 2014, then incrementally rose from 2014-2016 and saw a sharp increase in 2016-2017 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Settlement Program Funding 2010 to 2017

Source: Public Accounts

Ontario received the majority of Settlement program funding between 2011 and 2017 (\$1,853,187,176). Alberta and British Columbia each received approximately \$500,000,000. Newfoundland and Labrador received the least funding (\$14,723,969) (Figure 11; Table 4).

Figure 11: Funding for Settlement Program by Province 2011 to 2017¹¹



Ontario admitted the largest number of immigrants in 2016 - approximately 37 per cent of all immigration (Quebec accepted 19 per cent). However, Ontario received over 50 per cent of federal settlement funds. British Columbia and Alberta each received approximately 16 per cent of federal funds even though Alberta admitted 3.8 per cent more immigrants that year than British Columbia (Table 4). It is worth noting that that this is only Settlement funding. As Table 3 shows, there are numerous federal programs. Nonetheless, the Settlement program is by far the largest single federal program in this sector.

Table 4: Percentage of Newcomers Divided Compared with Federal Settlement Funds by Province in 2016¹²

Province	Percentage of newcomers	Settlement Funding	Percentage of Settlement Funds
Newfoundland	0.38	\$2,353,808	0.4
Prince Edward Island	0.78	\$3,333,710	0.6
Nova Scotia	1.85	\$6,331,505	1.1
New Brunswick	1.58	\$6,560,579	1.2
Ontario	37.13	\$281,911,795	53.0
Manitoba	5.68	\$37,512,186	7.0
Saskatchewan	5.01	\$25,992,425	4.0
Alberta	16.60	\$89,312,801	16.4
British Columbia	12.80	\$89,017,899	16.4

Source: Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada 2017 Annual Report to Parliament

The average per capita funding for a newcomer in Canada between 2011 and 2016 was \$3900 (Table 5). Prince Edward Island is significantly above the average at \$7747. Alberta and Saskatchewan are well below the average at \$2419 and \$2788, respectively. Most provinces fall within \$500-\$700 above or below the average (Table 6).

Table 5: Federal Funding Per Capita, 2011 to 2016

Total Amount of Immigrants (2011-2016)	Settlement Funding (2011-2016)	Resettlement Funding (2011-2016)	Total (2011-2016)	Per Capita (2011-2016)
1,212,075	\$4,182,907,099	\$585,272,239	4,768,179,338	\$3900

Source: Public Accounts, IRCC Report to Parliament 2017

Table 6: Federal Funding Per Capita by Province (2011-2016)

Province	Total Amount of Newcomers (2011-2016)	Total Settlement Funding (2011-2016)	Per Capita (2011-2016)
British Columbia	175,555	\$503,379,366	\$2,876
Alberta	207,790	\$502,759,494	\$2,419
Manitoba	63,210	\$226,788,062	\$3,587
Saskatchewan	47,935	\$133,644,686	\$2,788
Ontario	472,170	\$1,853,187,176	\$3,924
Newfoundland and Labrador	3,675	\$14,723,969	\$4000
Nova Scotia	11,790	\$35,617,956	\$3021
Prince Edward Island	3369	\$26,102,592	\$7747
New Brunswick	9,330	40,649,510	\$4,356

Summary of Findings

There are several common trends among provincial funding programs. The largest amount of money is allocated to settlement and integration services for newcomers. Most provinces also have programs for economic and labour market integration. Language training is usually subsumed within labour market integration programs (except in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec). Funding has increased in recent years primarily for labour market integration.

Provincial funding for refugee resettlement has increased (modestly) in recent years.¹³ However, this was largely a result of a sharp increase in funding in Ontario. Otherwise, most provincial budgets have remained flat or only slightly increased, with no new programs except in Ontario. British Columbia's budget declined substantially after the federal government ended its practice of transferring settlement program funding to the province to administer federal programs. The province also underfunds SPOs compared to other provinces. Ontario provides an immense amount of funding through these programs alone to SPOs. The province also benefits from the largest amount of federal funding for SPOs compared to other provinces.

Ontario allocates the largest amount of funding to newcomer settlement and integration. Over the past five years, Alberta has surpassed British Columbia in admitting newcomers, but there has been no increase in funding to address this influx. Alberta had the lowest per capita funding in 2016 even though it admitted the third largest number of immigrants to

Canada. In the Atlantic Provinces, provincial per capita funding was substantially higher than anywhere else in the country, especially in Nova Scotia.

The amount of funding distributed by IRCC through grants and contributions over the past 15 years has steadily increased over time. However, although the federal government funds hundreds of organizations every year across the country, most of the funding is concentrated in a small number of established organizations. Similarly, resettlement and settlement program funding rose sharply in 2015, which corresponded with the influx of Syrian refugees. Before this brief surge, though, funding was on the decline. Although the federal government provides funding through dozens of programs, from health to social services, IRCC's largest programs are concerned with settlement and integration. Ontario receives disproportionately more federal funding relative to the number of newcomers compared to other provinces. This includes funding for SPOs.

Notes

¹ IRCC has refused to release data on the distribution of funding by province except for the Settlement Program (which includes explicit transfer payments to provincial and territorial governments). This is not unusual. IRCC has also been refusing to release information on transfer payments to non-governmental organizations below the reporting threshold. We have been working on an appeal with the federal Information Commissioner over the past two years to force IRCC to release this information.

² Ana M. Ferrer, Garnett Picot, and William Craig Riddell. "New Directions in Immigration Policy: Canada's Evolving Approach to the Selection of Economic Immigrants." *International Migration Review* 48, no. 3 (2014): 846-868.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michelle Zilio. "Ottawa pledges \$50-million for Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba to cover asylum-seekers costs." *Globe and Mail*, 1 June 2018. Teresa Wright. "Ontario asks federal government to foot \$200M bill for asylum seekers." *CTV News*, 13 August 2018.

⁵ Zahida Rahemtull, Diana Jeffries, Amea Wilbur, "Supporting Refugee Women: Barriers and Opportunities in Language and Settlement Programs, Policies and Research." In Luisa Veronis, Margaret Walkton-Roberts, eds., *Canadian Diversity: Gender & Migration* 14, 2 (2017): 23-26.

⁶ Immigrant Services Society of B.C. *Syrian Refugee Operation to BC: Taking Stock Two Years After Arrival*, May 2018. <https://issbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ISSofBC-Operation-Syrian-Refugees-Taking-Stock-Two-Years-After-Arrival-May-15-2018.pdf>

⁷ Howard Ramos and Micheal Unger, "Refugee Children and Families in the Canadian Context." In Howard Ramos and Micheal Unger, eds., *Canadian Diversity: Refugee Children and Families in the Canadian Context* 14, 3 (2017): 3-4.

⁸ Manitoba has the highest average funding per NGO, however it should be noted that they only have four organizations that are provincially funded, whereas British Columbia and Ontario have between 50 to 100 organizations in each province.

⁹ Accessed from <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/partners-service-providers/funding.html>

¹⁰ Accessed from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/partners-service-providers/funding.html>

¹¹ Quebec is not included in this figure because of the different funding model.

¹² Canada-Quebec Accord funding is as follows: \$283,102,000 (2011-12); \$284,501,000 (2012-13); \$319,967,000 (2013-14); \$340,568,000 (2014-15); \$345,059,000 (2015-16); \$378,213,000 (2016-17).

¹³ Ontario substantially increased its immigration and settlement budget (including refugee resettlement) in 2017-2018 year, which has had the effect of artificially pulling up the overall funding trends across the country.