Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)

Evaluation Division

July 2016

Canada

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Acronyms

BVOR	Blended Visa Office-Referred
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CG	Constituent Group
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CPO-W	Centralized Processing Office - Winnipeg
CS	Community Sponsors
CSS	Client Support Services
CVOA	Canadian Visa Office Abroad
DMR	Destination Matching Request
FOSS	Field Operations Support System
G5	Group of Five
GAR	Government Assisted Refugee
GCMS	Global Case Management System
HIAS	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
iCAMS	Immigration Contribution Accountability Measurement System
iCARE	Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment
IFH	Interim Federal Health
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IMDB	Longitudinal Immigration Database
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRPA	*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*
LES	Locally Engaged Staff
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning
NAT	Notice of Arrival Transmission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHQ	National Headquarters
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
RAP SPO	Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organization
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
RSTP	Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SPO	Service Provider Organization
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
VOR	Visa Office-Referred

Executive Summary

The evaluation of the Resettlement Programs was conducted in fulfilment of the 2009 Treasury Board *Policy on Evaluation* and section 42.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*. The programs under review included Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) program, Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) program, Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) program, and the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). While the evaluation covered the period of 2010 to 2015, the government's commitment to admit 25,000 Syrian Refugees, launched in November 2015, is not covered in this evaluation.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The evaluation found that there is a continued need to provide protection to refugees and resettlement assistance upon arrival in Canada. In addition, the Resettlement Programs are in alignment with Government of Canada and departmental priorities to support humanitarian objectives, while being consistent with federal roles and responsibilities.

Performance – Management Outcome Findings

Multi-year commitments and yearly targets provide opportunities to the department for both planning and flexibility regarding the ability to meet emerging needs. However, there are challenges to implementing the yearly targets. And while numerous steps have been taken by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to address the recommendations from the previous evaluations in 2008 and 2011, certain recommendations remain outstanding.

Performance – Program Findings

Evidence indicated that Canada has effectively contributed to international protection efforts and was one of the top three resettlement countries in terms of volume between 2010 and 2014. Canadians continue to demonstrate active engagement in refugee sponsorship through Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) and Group of 5 (G5); however, less engagement occurred through the BVOR program, at the time of the evaluation.

Between 2010 and 2014, PSRs had lower approval rates and longer processing time compared to GARs. However, during the same time period, the department has been successful in reducing the PSR inventory by 13%, while the GAR inventory increased by 35%.

The immediate and essential needs of resettled refugees were found to be met through RAP and private sponsors; however, not enough time is allocated to the provision of RAP services for GARs with greater needs, including finding permanent housing. Evidence also indicated that RAP income support levels continue to be inadequate to meet essential needs of refugees.

Since 2002, GARs tended to have lower economic performance compared to PSRs. Specifically, GARs had lower incidence of employment, lower employment earnings and higher reliance on social assistance.

Regarding program delivery, gaps were observed regarding the monitoring around the PSR program, and a lack of clarity of the guidance for the BVOR program. While mechanisms are in place to coordinate program delivery, internal stakeholders expressed the need for greater coordination and governance within IRCC.

Resource Utilization

Evidence indicated that the total annual processing cost for refugee programs decreased between fiscal year (FY) 2011/12 and FY 2014/15, and per unit processing costs increased for GARs and decreased for PSRs. For RAP, while the overall RAP cost per client has remained relatively stable, the average RAP income support provided to GARs and RAP SPOs to deliver the program has decreased over time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While the evidence indicated that GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP programs are aligned with departmental priorities, the evaluation found that there were some challenges regarding various aspects of the programs, most notably the adequacy of RAP income support, the lack of clarity regarding the BVOR program, lengthy processing times for PSRs, and a lack of clear roles and responsibilities concerning the internal governance of the resettlement programs. As a result, the subsequent recommendations were developed to address these issues. The department has agreed with these recommendations and has developed a management response action plan to address them.

Recommendation 1: IRCC should develop policy options to ensure that refugees supported by the Government of Canada are provided with a sufficient level of support (including RAP income support) to meet their resettlement needs in support of their successful integration.

Recommendation 2: To improve the BVOR program, IRCC should:

a) clarify the distinction between BVOR and Visa Office-Referred (VOR) programs in operational guidance (e.g., manuals and bulletins);
b) review candidacy criteria for the BVOR program and implement a consistent and transparent practice to enroll refugees into the BVOR program; and
c) develop an engagement strategy for SAHs to increase uptake of the BVOR program.

Recommendation 3: IRCC should develop a strategy to improve privately-sponsored refugees' awareness of the supports available to them during their first year in Canada.

Recommendation 4: IRCC should review its application intake management tools and approaches and implement measures to ensure timely decisions on PSR applications.

Recommendation 5: IRCC should review the roles and responsibilities of branches involved in the Resettlement Programs and implement a strengthened governance structure to improve coordination.

Recommendation 6: IRCC should provide additional support to IRCC staff, sponsors and Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organizations in its refugee processing network. In particular, IRCC should consider:

a) increasing opportunities for training across Canadian Visa Office Abroad (CVOA), local IRCC office staff and Groups of Five and Community Sponsors;
b) expanding the sharing of best practices across CVOA and local IRCC offices; and
c) developing a tool to support the automatic calculation of RAP income support.

Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs—Management Response Action Plan

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Completion Date
Recommendation #1: IRCC should develop policy options to ensure that refugees supported by the Government of Canada are provided with an adequate level of support (including RAP income support) to meet their resettlement needs in support of their successful integration.	IRCC agrees with the recommendation. The Department acknowledges the importance of extending resettlement and settlement services, along with financial support, to refugees to assist in their full participation in the economic, social, and cultural life in Canada. The services and financial support provided to resettled refugees are designed to recognize and accommodate their unique circumstances and needs. However, IRCC also recognizes the fiscal, structural and policy constraints associated with changes to income support levels for refugees, particularly the significant constraint represented by the need to generally align with the average levels of income and services delivered by provinces and territories.	IRCC will develop comprehensive policy options on how RAP could be modified to provide eligible RAP clients with adequate resources and services to meet their immediate and essential needs in support of their transition towards successful integration. In doing so, IRCC will consider: • the impact of the current level of income support and types of services on the capacity of clients to effectively settle and integrate in Canada; • the unique circumstances of resettled refugees given the humanitarian objectives of the resettlement programs; • the impact of any potential changes on a client's ability to successfully transition from RAP onto other sources of income; • the current RAP service programming's linkages with settlement programs and community-based services; • the possible effects of any change on key resettlement stakeholders, such as provinces and territories; • issues of fairness; and, • the financial priorities of the Government of Canada, and the value for money of the proposed options.	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB) Support: ADM OPERATIONS (IPMB), ADM Finance, ADM Strategic and Program Policy (IFCRO)	March 2017
		The options will be presented to senior management and policy and program changes will be implemented, as required.	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB) Support: ADM Operations (IPMB), ADM Finance, ADM Strategic and	March 2018

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Completion Date
			Program Policy (IFCRO)	
Recommendation #2: To improve the BVOR program, IRCC should: a) clarify the distinction between BVOR and VOR programs in operational guidance (e.g., manuals and bulletins);	IRCC agrees with this recommendation. While the Department acknowledges the gaps identified in the BVOR program during the period examined for the evaluation, since the implementation of the 2015-2016 Syrian refugee initiative, significant advances have been made. As a result of this progress, sponsor interest and uptake in the program has grown to such a degree that demand now significantly exceeds supply, which makes an engagement strategy to increase uptake unnecessary. Nonetheless, IRCC strongly agrees with the need for an engagement strategy on the BVOR program given the essential partnership with sponsors required for the program's success	a) IRCC will review the VOR program in order to assess its continued relevance in light of the BVOR program. IRCC will update the operational guidance to ensure clarity between the BVOR and VOR programs, as required.	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB) Support: ADM Operations (IPMB, OMC and IR)	December 2016
b) review candidacy criteria for the BVOR program and implement a consistent and transparent practice to enroll refugees into the BVOR program; and	IRCC also monitors and adjusts its sponsor engagement strategy as needed in order to ensure a fair and transparent process to identify appropriate BVOR cases, to enroll refugees in the program, and for sponsors to have access to those cases. As such, this recommendation was largely addressed through adjustments to the BVOR program immediately following the conclusion of the evaluation study. However, in keeping with the spirit of this recommendation, IRCC is committed to strengthening the BVOR program as needed. In support of transparent and consistent enrollment practices, IRCC continually reviews criteria for the BVOR program in order to maintain flexibility and achieve a balance between sponsor interest and operational requirements. This enabled the Department to effectively adapt to the rapid and significant increases in demand for BVOR program since the start of the Syrian Refugee Initiative in November 2015.	b) IRCC will conduct annual reviews of the BVOR candidacy criteria and, as necessary, update candidacy criteria in order to maintain a flexible, responsive program with consistent enrolment practices. The annual review and any updated criteria will be shared with SAH Council at the Fall face to face NGO-Government Committee meeting. Consultations undertaken through the BVOR Ad Hoc Committee will help inform these reviews. IRCC will also share its annual BVOR plan and candidate criteria with sponsors via the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program; the annual plan will include numbers of expected referrals in an effort to enable forward planning.	Lead: ADM Operations (IPMB) Support: ADM Operations (IR and OMC), ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB)	December 2016
c) develop an engagement strategy for SAHs to increase uptake of the BVOR program.	IRCC has implemented an engagement strategy whereby the Department engages with sponsors and the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program to meet demand and modify candidacy criteria where required. At this time, activities to increase sponsorship uptake are not part of the strategy as they are not currently required.	c) As part of this strategy, IRCC will consult on and share its annual BVOR plan with sponsoring groups. Consultations with sponsors and the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB)	

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Completion Date
		will continue to be conducted through the BVOR Ad Hoc Committee.	Support: ADM Operations (IPMB, OMC and IR)	
Recommendation #3: IRCC should develop a strategy to improve privately-sponsored refugees' awareness of the supports available to them during their first year in Canada.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation. IRCC acknowledges the need to improve awareness of available supports and resources amongst privately sponsored refugees and their sponsors. Ensuring that privately sponsored refugees are aware of available post-arrival supports to be provided by their sponsors and settlement services facilitates their transition to living in Canada. The Department is committed to increasing awareness both amongst sponsors and refugees as to where to go if there is a potential sponsorship breakdown situation.	IRCC will develop a plan to improve awareness of the supports and settlement services available to privately sponsored refugees after arrival in Canada. In the development of this plan, IRCC will assess how best to raise awareness and will, accordingly, consider options to: • Improve information sharing methods and resources (both pre- and post-arrival) to ensure refugees are aware of supports they are to receive from their sponsoring groups and from settlement services provider organizations, including the possibility of sharing of settlement planning information with refugees; • Develop a mechanism for improved client/sponsor monitoring of the PSR and BVOR program; and, • Clarify points of contact for PSRs and BVORs upon arrival and in the event of sponsorship breakdown. Options for an awareness strategy will be presented to senior management and will be implemented, as required.	Lead: ADM Operations (IPMB) Support: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB and IFCRO), ADM Operations (OMC and CPO-W), Communications	March 2017
Recommendation #4: IRCC should review its application intake management tools and approaches and implement measures to ensure timely decisions on PSR applications.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation. IRCC recognizes the importance of timely processing, particularly with respect to refugee applications which involve uniquely vulnerable group. The Department further acknowledges the risks associated with extended wait times for PSR applicants as identified in this evaluation, including changes in family size and composition, and maintaining sponsor engagement. Accordingly, IRCC is committed to reducing processing times for PSRs, as demonstrated by a number of measures implemented in recent years. Principally,	In support of this recommendation, IRCC will design an early and robust engagement strategy to ensure the sponsorship community is consulted on annual application intake management planning via SAH Council. In addition, IRCC will review its existing application management tools and approaches, and develop options to support timely decision making, including a multi-year approach to levels and	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB) Support: ADM Operations (IR, IPMB and CPO-W) Lead: ADM Operations (OMC)/	December 2016 June 2017

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Completion Date
	this includes efforts to manage intake of applications and reduce backlogs by introducing caps on the number of applications submitted annually to overseas visa offices. Complementary efforts such as streamlining and centralizing processing and improving the quality of applications are also used. The Department also created a PSR Action Plan working group, which evaluates progress on the overall streamlining efforts for the PSR program. Potential measures in this area will be considered recognizing that a reduction of refugee resettlement processing times are linked to the Department's consideration of a multi-year immigration levels plan.	intake management to address persistent case inventories. Program and/or policy changes will be implemented as needed.	ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB) Support: ADM Operations (IR, IPMB and CPO-W)	
Recommendation #5: IRCC should review the roles and responsibilities of branches involved in the Resettlement Programs and implement a strengthened governance structure to improve coordination.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation. Successful delivery of Canada's Resettlement programs requires coordinated efforts across a breadth of stakeholders within IRCC as well as other government departments, the sponsorship community and resettlement service providers across the country. Despite efforts to ensure the smooth management of the resettlement system, changes to the Canadian resettlement context, volumes, and evolving needs of stakeholders, have highlighted the need for clarified roles and responsibilities and a strengthened governance structure for these programs. IRCC is committed to the continuing need for streamlined and effective horizontal governance, and concurs with the need for a governance framework which ensures appropriate accountabilities and facilitates coordination across participating organizations as well as timely decision making within all Resettlement programs.	The Department will complete a review of the current governance structure to identify efficiencies and prepare options for adjustments, as needed. IRCC will define roles and responsibilities of the branches within the Department as they relate to the design and delivery of Resettlement programs, and where possible, streamline points of contact.	Lead: ADM Strategic and Program Policy/ ADM Operations	December 2016
Recommendation #6: IRCC should provide additional support to IRCC staff, sponsors and Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organizations in its refugee processing	IRCC agrees with this recommendation. The Department is committed to ensuring adequate training and learning tools are available to all staff in its refugee processing network, and acknowledges the need to build on its current suite of available resources and training options, which include classroom and online training, as well as operational manuals, to ensure effective delivery of its Resettlement programs.			

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Completion Date
network. In particular, IRCC should consider:	IRCC acknowledges that sharing of best practices across CVOA and local offices helps the Department to learn from successes and improve program delivery. The Department also acknowledges the importance of providing the necessary training to officers to ensure consistent program delivery.			
a) increasing opportunities for training across CVOA, local IRCC office staff and Groups of Five and Community Sponsors;	In support of this recommendation, the Department has begun work on the development of an automatic income support calculation tool based on the findings of a review conducted by the Internal Financial Controls team in 2014. Further, the Department has recently published an updated operational manual which serves as the main functional guidance used by local IRCC staff, and the office responsible for processing all privately-sponsored refugee applications as developed a set of standard operating procedures to guide their work.	a) The Department will fund specific support, training and outreach to the Group of Five and Community Sponsors via the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP). IRCC will enhance training opportunities for CVOAs, including through improvements to the refugee training program for officers in missions abroad.	Lead – ADM Operations (IPMB) Support – ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB), ADM Operations (IR) Lead – ADM Operations (IR) Support – ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB)	December 2016 December 2016
b) expanding the sharing of best practices across CVOA and local IRCC offices; and		b) The Department will implement new ways of sharing best practices across its local offices, CVOA and between National Headquarters and regional offices.	Lead – ADM Operations (IPMB and, for CVOA, IR) Support – ADM Operations (OMC - local offices)	March 2017
c) developing a tool to support the automatic calculation of RAP income support.		c) IRCC will develop an automatic income support calculation tool that will ultimately standardize forms, tools and processes for the RAP income support payment process.	Lead – ADM Operations (IPMB)/ ADM Finance Support: ADM Strategic and Program Policy (RAB)	Identification of the system requirements and initial building and testing: March 2017 Implementation of new system: March 2018

1.   Introduction

1.1.   Purpose of the Evaluation

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Refugee Resettlement Programs and the Resettlement Assistance Program which covered the period of 2010 to 2015. The evaluation was conducted in fulfillment of requirements under the Treasury Board *Policy on Evaluation* and section 42.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*.[1] The evaluation examined program relevance and performance in accordance with the 2009 Treasury Board Secretariat *Directive on the Evaluation Function*[2].

This Executive Evaluation Report provides the high level summary of the evaluation. An Extended Evaluation Report of the evaluation of IRCC's Refugee Resettlement Programs is available upon request.

1.2.   Brief Program Profile

Canada's Refugee Resettlement Programs are part of Canada's humanitarian tradition to help find solutions to prolonged and emerging refugee situations. Resettlement is how Canada selects refugees abroad and supports their health, safety, and security as they travel to and integrate into Canadian society.[3] Resettled refugees can be admitted to Canada via one of the following three resettlement programs.

1. **Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR)** are usually referred by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or other designated referral agencies and supported by the Government of Canada who then provides initial resettlement services and income support for up to one year.[4] The introduction of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) in 2002 placed a greater emphasis on selecting GARs based on their protection needs rather than on ability to establish in Canada. As a result, GARs often carry higher needs[5] than other refugee groups. GARs are also eligible to receive resettlement services (i.e., reception at port of entry, temporary accommodation, assistance in finding permanent accommodation, basic orientation, links to settlement programming and federal and provincial programs) provided through a service provider organization that signed a contribution agreement to deliver these services under IRCC's **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).**

2. **Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR)** are sponsored by permanent residents or Canadian citizens via one of three streams: through a **Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)** that is an incorporated organization that has signed a sponsorship agreement with IRCC for the purpose of submitting sponsorship cases on a regular basis[6]; through a **Group of Five (G5)** that consists of a temporary group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents

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[1] Canada, Treasury Board (2010) *Policy on Results.* https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31300

[2] Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat (2009) *Directive on the Evaluation Function.* www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=15681

[3] Canada, CIC (n.d.) *Terms and Conditions for Contributions to the Resettlement Assistance Program.*

[4] Financial support may be provided for up to two years for special cases and three in some exceptional cases, or until clients become self-sufficient, whichever comes first.

[5] Examples of higher needs include high literacy or education needs, health concerns, trauma, physical disabilities, challenging family compositions, lengthy refugee camp histories and limited resilience or coping skills. Source: Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism (2013) *Enhanced Settlement Service Final Report.*

[6] In addition, SAHs can authorize Constituent Groups (CG), which are local groups in the community, to sponsor refugees.

that will sponsor one or a few cases and will act as guarantors; or through **Community Sponsors (CS)** that are organizations that do not have formal agreements with IRCC as these organizations will sponsor only once or twice. In each of these PSR streams, sponsors provide financial support or a combination of financial and in-kind support to the PSR for twelve months after arrival, or until refugees are able to support themselves[7], whichever comes first. Refugees in the PSR program are intended to be resettled in addition to those arriving under the GAR program, as the PSR program allows Canadians to get involved in refugee resettlement and offer protection space over and above what is provided directly by the government (i.e., principle of additionality).

3. **Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR)** refugees are referred by the UNHCR or other designated referral agencies and identified by Canadian visa officers for participation in the BVOR program based on specific criteria. The BVOR program evolved from the Visa Office-Referred (VOR) program in 2013.[8] The refugees' profiles are posted to a designated BVOR website where potential sponsors (SAHs and CGs) can select a refugee to support. BVOR refugees receive up to six months of RAP income support from the Government of Canada and six months of financial support from their sponsor, plus start-up expenses. Private sponsors are responsible for BVOR refugees' social and emotional support for the first year after arrival, as BVOR refugees are not eligible for RAP services.

This evaluation also examined the **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).** RAP funds the provision of immediate and essential services (i.e., reception at port of entry, temporary accommodation, assistance in finding permanent accommodation, basic orientation, and links to settlement programming and federal and provincial programs) to GARs and other eligible clients through service provider organizations. These resettlement services are provided for up to six weeks. Similarly to BVOR refugees, GARs also receive monthly income support (based on provincial social assistance rates) which is a financial aid that is intended to provide monthly income support entitlements for shelter, food and incidentals. In the case of GARs, this income support is provided for up to one year or until they become self-sufficient, whichever comes first.[9]

Over the past five years, the number of resettled refugees admitted to Canada, excluding Quebec,[10] has increased by 7% from 9,809 in 2010 to 10,466 in 2014. Across all years, excluding 2013, more GARs were resettled as compared to PSRs. BVOR refugees accounted for a small proportion of refugees from 2013 onward, as the program was implemented in that year. From 2010 to 2014, overall admissions are shown in Table 1.

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[7] As per Inland Processing 3 Part 2, Self-sufficient is defined as 1) being enrolled in programs normally outside public school system (e.g., language training and job training); 2) seeking employment; and 3) being employed.

[8] While similar in program theory, both BVOR and VOR programs are distinct. The VOR program was not examined as part of this evaluation.

[9] GARs with special needs may receive additional payments (e.g., dietary allowance, National Housing Supplement) and in some cases, income support may also be extended for up to two years.

[10] Immigration to Quebec is administered through the Government of Quebec, as per the Canada-Quebec Accord and was not included in the scope of this evaluation.

Table 1:   Admissions by Year and Resettlement Program, excluding Quebec (2010-2014)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2010-2014
GAR	5,460 (56%)	5,646 (52%)	4,282 (54%)	4,726 (45%)	6,352 (61%)	26,466 (53%)
PSR	4,349 (44%)	5,183 (48%)	3,694 (46%)	5,565 (53%)	3,946 (38%)	22,737 (46%)
BVOR Refugees	-	-	-	145 (1%)	168 (2%)	313 (1%)
Total: Admissions	**9,809**	**10,829**	**7,976**	**10,436**	**10,466**	**49,516**

Source: Global Case Management System (GCMS)/Field Operations Support System (FOSS).

A detailed profile of the Refugee Resettlement Programs is provided in the Extended Evaluation Report.

1.2.1.   Characteristics of Resettled Refugees (2010-2014)

The following characteristics of resettled refugees admitted from 2010 to 2014 were observed:

- **Overall admissions:** 26,466 GARs (53%), 22,737 PSRs (46%) and 313 BVOR refugees (1%).

- **Gender:** Slightly more PSRs were male compared to GARs and BVOR refugees (GARs male 50%; PSRs male 54%, BVOR male 52%).

- **Proportion of adults:** A smaller proportion of adults was admitted under the GAR category (GAR 61%, PSR 70%, BVOR refugees 69%).

- **Knowledge of official language[11]:** More PSRs reported knowing at least one of the official languages than either GARs or BVOR refugees (GAR 26%, PSR 38%, BVOR refugees 14%).

- **Education level[12]:** GARs more commonly had nine or fewer years of education compared to PSRs and BVOR refugees (GAR 61%, PSR 48%, BVOR refugees 54%).

- **Country of citizenship (top three):** The top three countries of citizenship varied by program GAR: Iraq, Bhutan, Somalia; PSRs: Iraq, Eritrea, Ethiopia and BVOR refugees: Myanmar, Eritrea, Iran.

- **Case composition (% single adult):** Fewer GAR cases were composed of a single adult (GAR 47%, PSR 57%, BVOR refugees 56%).

- **Intended province of destination:** The three programs had very similar distribution in Canada, with the majority intending to settle in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

- **Family Composition:** Cases most commonly included a single adult (representing 52% of the cases), or two adults with children (representing 21% of cases). PSRs and BVOR

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[11] Four categories of knowledge of Canada's official languages are shown for permanent residents: English only, French only, both French and English, and neither language. These are self-declared indicators of knowledge of an official language.

[12] Issues surrounding the consistency of coding of Level of Education was noted by the department in 2014. As a result, information on level of education represents preliminary estimates and is currently being examined as part of an internal data quality assurance exercise.

refugees, more commonly arrived as a single adult as compared to GARs (57%, 56%, and 47%, respectively).

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation scope and approach were determined during a planning phase, in consultation with IRCC branches involved in the design, management and delivery of the Refugee Resettlement Programs. The terms of reference for the evaluation was approved by IRCC's Departmental Evaluation Committee in September 2014, and the evaluation was conducted by the IRCC evaluation division with the support of an external contractor from January 2015 to November 2015.

2.2. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation assessed the issues of relevance and performance of the Refugee Resettlement Programs for the period between 2010 and 2015, and was guided by the program logic model, which outlines the expected immediate and intermediate outcomes for the program (see Appendix A).[13] Evaluation questions were developed to address the Treasury Board Secretariat core issues[14], and are presented in Table 2. Performance indicators were identified for each evaluation question to form the evaluation framework for the study.

In November 2015, the Government of Canada committed to admitting 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 2016. The evaluation did not examine the impacts, operations, or results of the Syrian Refugee Initiative. A Rapid Impact Evaluation will be conducted separately on the results of the Syrian Refugee Initiative.

Table 2:   Evaluation Questions

Relevance
Is there an ongoing need for Canada to provide protection and resettlement assistance to refugees?
Are GAR/PSR/BVOR and the RAP aligned with departmental strategic outcomes and Government of Canada priorities?
Are the refugee resettlement programs and the RAP consistent with federal roles and responsibilities?
PERFORMANCE – Management Outcomes
Has IRCC addressed the program issues identified in the previous PSR and GAR/RAP evaluations related to: PSRs (Monitoring activities, Application intake and guidelines)/GARs/RAP (Information sharing mechanisms, Changing needs of GARs, Adequacy of housing and income support)?
Have policy advice and directives supported effective program delivery?
Are stakeholder relations effectively supporting program delivery and protection priorities?
Do Canadians and permanent residents engage in supporting resettlement?
Are the selection, matching and processing efficient and effective for the resettlement programs? • Do SPOs and sponsors have sufficient information to meet resettled refugees' needs upon arrival? • Are resettled refugees' arrivals safe, and GAR arrivals coordinated?
Are the immediate and essential needs of resettled refugees met? • To what extent is the resettlement assistance provided timely, accessible, useful and client‐focused? • Are resettled refugees receiving social support that responds to their needs?

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[13] Quebec, as it manages its own resettlement program, was excluded from the evaluation except when discussing Canada's overall resettlement commitments (Section 1.2), Canada's Contribution to International Protection Efforts (Section 5.1) and overall GAR, PSR and BVOR Program Processing costs (Section 6.1).

[14] Canada, TBS (2009) *Directive on the Evaluation Function*. www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=15681

Are resettled refugees linked to IRCC-funded settlement services, other government and specialized services?
Do refugees have the knowledge, skills and means to live safely and independently? • Have resettled refugees developed social networks and connections with the broader community?
Have the refugee resettlement programs contributed to uniting refugee families in Canada?
Does Canada contribute to international protection efforts and protects refugees? • To what extent national population priorities and targets take into account international protection priorities, protection needs and resettlement capacities in Canada?
Have there been any unintended impacts[15] associated with the refugee resettlement programs?
PERFORMANCE - Resource Utilization
Are there approaches to resettled refugees selection and processing that could lead to a more efficient process?
Are there alternative RAP design and delivery options that would better facilitate the achievement of improved outcomes?

2.3.   Data Collection Methods

Multiple lines of evidence were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of perspectives, including program managers, stakeholders and clients. These lines of evidence included the following:

- Document Review: IRCC, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and other documentation.

- Key Informant Interviews: IRCC representatives (17), Other Stakeholders (UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP), and SAH Council) (6), Provinces/Territories (4).

- Program Data Analysis: Global Case Management System (GCMS), Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB), Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE), and Financial Data.

- Site visits to Matching Centre and Centralized Processing Centre in Winnipeg: 4 interviews.

- Inland Case Studies in Vancouver, Calgary/Lethbridge, Winnipeg, Toronto and Halifax, which included:

  - Interviews with Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organizations (RAP SPO) (14), SAHs (6), local IRCC (10), and SPO stakeholders (including health providers and community partners) (10)

  - Focus groups with GARs (8) and PSRs (5)

  - File Review

- International Case Studies in Amman, Ankara, Nairobi, and Singapore, which included:

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[15] For the purpose of this evaluation, program unintended impacts are understood to be any impact that is not part of the program design and program theory. These can be either positive or negative impacts.

- Interviews with IRCC Canadian-based staff (13), Locally Engaged Staff (7), UNHCR (6), IOM (5), Global Affairs Canada[16] (1), and Other Referral Agencies (2)
- File Review

- Follow-up focus groups in Edmonton and Ottawa with GARs, PSRs as well as CG and G5 sponsors.

- Surveys[17]

Table 3:   Survey Completion and Response Rate

Respondent Group	Survey Completions	Response Rate	Margin of Error (95% confidence level)
RAP SPO	20	80%*	±10%
SAH	43	47%*	±11%
GAR	810	76%**	±3%
PSR	541	78%**	±4%
BVOR Refugee	20	74%**	±21%

Response rate for the RAP SPO and SAH was calculated using the total population
*** Response rate for the GAR, PSR, and BVOR refugees was calculated using those that consented to participate in the survey and had valid contact information*

These lines of evidence are presented in Appendix B, and more detailed information on the data collection methods used in the evaluation is provided in the Extended Evaluation Report.

The following scale was used for reporting qualitative interview results:

Table 4:   Qualitative Data Analysis Scale

Scale	Description
All	Findings reflect the views and opinions of 100% of the interviewees.
Majority/Most	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 75% but less than 100% of interviewees.
Many	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 50%, but less than 75% of interviewees.
Some	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least 25%, but less than 50% of interviewees.
Few	Findings reflect the views and opinions of at least two respondents, but less than 25% of interviewees.

2.4.   Limitations and Considerations

Some limitations were noted in relation to the early implementation of the BVOR Program (i.e., data only available from 2013), and limited access to information from both PSRs and BVOR sponsors. Various mitigation strategies were used to address the limitations and to ensure that the evaluation presented reliable information to support strong findings. These limitations and their corresponding mitigation strategies are described in more detail in the Extended Evaluation Report.

The 2015 Syrian Refugee Initiative was not taken into consideration for the evaluation. The Initiative began in November 2015, after the data collection phase of the evaluation had been

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[16] Formerly the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.
[17] The survey results were weighted to address imbalances identified in order to ensure that they were representative of the total GAR and PSR population, whereas the BVOR refugee survey was more exploratory due to the low number of admissions.

completed. As those admitted after November 4th, 2015 had different experiences with the GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP programs, (e.g., processing times were expedited, immigration loans were waived, etc.), the refugees admitted under the Syrian Refugee Initiative were not taken into account. For these reasons, administrative data for 2015 was not the most recent year used for comparative purposes, in order to avoid reporting on exceptional events.

Overall, the evaluation design employed numerous qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The different lines of evidence were complementary and reduced information gaps, and generally, the results converged towards common and integrated findings. The triangulation of the multiple lines of evidence, along with the mitigation strategies used in this evaluation are considered sufficient to ensure that the findings are reliable and can be used with confidence.

3.   Key Findings: Relevance

3.1.   Continued Need for the Resettlement Programs

> **Finding #1:** There is a continued need to provide protection to refugees and resettlement assistance upon arrival.

Several lines of evidence confirmed a strong need for the resettlement of refugees. Canada's humanitarian commitment to resettle refugees allows Canada to continue to provide protection to those in need[18] and allows Canada to help share the burden for countries of asylum.[19] Between 1980 and 2015, Canada helped other countries alleviate this burden by resettling 333,303 GARs, 267,587 PSRs and 565 BVOR refugees, totalling 601,436 resettled refugees. The UNHCR estimates that global resettlement needs will exceed 1,150,000 persons in 2016, a 22% increase over 2015 estimates, which is largely due to unrest in Syria and parts of Africa.[20]

Most interviewees believed that resettlement was a necessary and durable solution for refugees for whom there is no reasonable prospect of voluntary repatriation or local integration. International case study interviewees confirmed that local integration options were limited: though respondents noted that some host countries had provided space for integration, resources were strained by the high refugee demand, as conflicts in many areas of the world continue.

In addition, resettlement assistance services are needed for refugees, as they have specific needs which differ from newcomers being admitted under other immigration categories. Refugee populations entering Canada have diverse needs. Some refugees are arriving from urban areas and are able to use public transportation and modern technologies (such as banking, computers) whereas other refugees are coming from rural areas or refugee camps and had less exposure to these type of activities. Research and documentation has shown that refugees are known to be coming from difficult situations, and significant barriers are often experienced when accessing traditional settlement services.[21] This was confirmed through many interviewees who identified various services (e.g., reception, orientation and needs assessments, financial assistance, settlement services, etc.) as being needed by refugees.

3.2.   Alignment with Departmental and Government of Canada Objectives

> **Finding #2:** Refugee resettlement programs align with Government of Canada and IRCC priorities to support humanitarian policy objectives.

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[18] Hyndman, Jennifer, Silvia D'Addario, and Matt R. Stevens (2014) *CERIS Refugee Research Synthesis 2009-2013. Final Report.*

[19] Library of Parliament (2015) *Resettling Refugees: Canada's Humanitarian Commitment.*

[20] UNHCR (2015) *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2016.*

[21] [1] Pressé, D. & Thomson, J. (2008) The resettlement challenge: Integration of refugees from protracted refugee situations. *Refuge*, 25; [2] Siggner, Rebecca, Jill Atkley, and Michael Goldberg (2007) *Study of Income Support Benefits Offered to Government Assisted Refugees Under the Resettlement Assistance Program.*

Canada's priorities to support humanitarian objectives originates from both the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,*[22] to which Canada is a signatory. These international agreements form the basis of current international refugee protection and establish the minimum standards for the treatment of refugees. Canada's ongoing international efforts in support of these agreements has positioned it as a leader in providing resettlement options for refugees with the purpose of saving lives and offering protection for the displaced and in supporting integration. For example, many key informant interviewees indicated that Canada has been a member of various UNHCR working groups including the Core Working Group on Syria. Given that participation in international resettlement efforts is not mandatory, these actions reaffirm the Government of Canada's commitment to prioritizing international refugee resettlement to support humanitarian objectives. It is also in alignment with IRCC's departmental strategic objectives (Strategic Outcome 2: Family and humanitarian migration that reunites families and offers protection to the displaced and persecuted; Strategic Outcome 3: Newcomers and citizens participate in fostering an integrated society).

The emphasis on refugee resettlement as a priority for Canada was strengthened in November 2015. The new Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's Mandate Letter from the Prime Minister specifically indicated that refugees were a "top priority", and committed to efforts to resettle 25,000 refugees from Syria.[23]

Despite documentation demonstrating alignment of the resettlement programs, there is some evidence that suggests that the department's prioritization of support for GARs through RAP income support is debateable as recommendations to change RAP income support have been made numerous times[24], and limited action has been taken to date.

3.3.   Consistency with Federal Roles and Responsibilities

> **Finding #3:** Resettlement programs are consistent with federal roles and responsibilities in offering humanitarian protection.

It was felt by many key informants that refugee resettlement should remain within the federal purview. They also felt that federal oversight of resettlement programs was appropriate as it ensured the delivery of consistent services across Canada.

As the federal government has committed to supporting and resettling GARs, key informants noted that the federal government has a responsibility to ensure services are adequately and consistently provided across Canada when refugees arrive.

A few key informants questioned two aspects of the federal role related to RAP. First, interviewees questioned whether RAP income support for refugees should be a federal responsibility as RAP income support is designed to mirror social assistance provided by the provinces and as in a few regions, RAP income support was lower than provincial social assistance. Second, these key informants and some SPO case study participants were concerned

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[22] UNHCR (2010) *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.*
[23] Prime Minister of Canada (2015) *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter.*
[24] These issues have been raised through key documentation clearly identifying an insufficiency in RAP funding, including the 2010 GAR-RAP Evaluation, the 2010 Audit of the Administration of the Resettlement Assistance Program, and the 2015 Immigration Loan Program Evaluation.

that the use of social assistance rates as a benchmark for income support was inadequate. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.9.

4.   Key Findings: Performance – Management Outcomes

4.1.   Recommendations Identified in Previous Evaluations

Finding #4: Numerous steps have been taken by IRCC to address recommendations identified in previous GAR-RAP and PSR evaluations, but certain recommendations remain outstanding.

4.1.1.   Work Completed, Planned or Underway

The evaluation examined work completed, planned or underway to address recommendations[25] for the improvement of the GAR-RAP and PSR programs made in previous departmental evaluations.[26]

A primary concern raised in the 2007 PSR summative evaluation was the efficiency of application processing, as long processing times and high refusal rates were noted. In addition, inventories were created as the number of PSR applications exceeded the targeted number of PSRs under the Annual Immigration Level Plan. Examples of efforts to create efficiencies in PSR processing and address inventories included:

- the introduction of Centralized Processing Office-Winnipeg (CPO-W) in April 2012;

- regulatory changes in 2012 to the PSR Program requiring that prospective G5 and CS PSRs must be recognized as refugees by either the UNHCR or a foreign state, and must submit a complete application; and

- introduction of annual global caps and regional sub-caps since January 2012 to limit the number of applications SAHs can submit to Visa Offices in Islamabad, Nairobi, Cairo, and Pretoria.

The 2011 GAR-RAP evaluation suggested that additional information sharing platforms and tools were needed. Some actions taken to address the recommendations included increasing training for Canadian Visa Offices Abroad (CVOA) staff, and implementation of the eMedical system.[27]

4.1.2.   Recommendations Not Yet Addressed

The following recommendations from the previous evaluations (PSR and GAR-RAP) have not been addressed, due primarily to resourcing constraints and shifting priorities. These areas are explored further in the evaluation and also form part of this report's recommendations.

Current monitoring activities are insufficient (PSR)

- A lack of monitoring activities for the PSR program, including whether settlement plans have been implemented, remained an issue despite being identified in the 2007 PSR Evaluation.

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[25] For the 2007 PSR evaluation, "recommendations" were called key findings.
[26] [1] Canada, CIC (2007) *Summative Evaluation of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.*
     [2] Canada, CIC (2011) *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP).*
[27] Canada, CIC (2013) *Privacy Impact Assessment Summary: eMedical.*

- Centralization of PSR application processing in CPO-W had not improved monitoring, as CPO-W staff and local IRCC office staff were not clear on the extent of their monitoring responsibilities.

Enhance or develop information sharing mechanisms (GAR and RAP)

- Despite piloting a program to transfer medical records to refugees in a sealed envelope upon their arrival in Canada, there are still barriers to sharing medical information with relevant partners and health practitioners in Canada.

- Although multiple actions were taken to address the information sharing regarding the GAR and RAP programs, there are still gaps in sharing best practices across different offices, both internationally and domestically.

Address insufficiency of RAP income support

- Finally, concrete actions to address the adequacy of housing and RAP income support levels have not been taken and the RAP income support is still insufficient to meet essential needs for GARs.[28]

4.2. Planning and Target Setting

Finding #5: The combination of multi-year commitments and yearly targets provide opportunities for both planning and flexibility to meet emerging needs; however, there are challenges related to operational planning and the implementation of yearly targets.

4.2.1. Target Setting

Every year, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship tables the Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration on or before November 1st. The report includes the Immigration Levels Plan that projects how many people will be admitted to Canada as permanent residents for the following year. The Immigration Levels Plan is an important strategic tool because it lays out the distribution of admissions across all immigration categories, including the number of refugees to be admitted under the GAR, PSR, and BVOR programs. This plan is developed in consultation with other federal departments, as well as provinces and territories. Each program has a range (a low and high end) as well as a specific target for each calendar year.

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[28] While the 2010 GAR-RAP Evaluation solely made recommendations in relation to RAP income support impacting GARs, changes to RAP budgets would now also impact the BVOR program, as BVOR refugees are eligible for RAP income support.

Table 5: Overall Targets and Admissions for GARs, PSRs and BVOR refugees (2010-2014)

	Low	High	Target	Admitted	% of Target
GAR					
2010	7,300	8,000	7,500	7,264	96%
2011	7,400	8,000	7,500	7,364	98%
2012*	7,500	8,000	7,500	5,430	72%
2013	6,800	7,100	7,100	5,756	81%
2014	6,900	7,200	7,100	7,573	107%
PSR					
2010	3,300	6,000	4,500	4,833	107%
2011	3,800	6,000	4,500	5,582	124%
2012*	4,000	6,000	5,500	4,220	77%
2013	4,500	6,500	6,300	6,277	100%
2014	4,500	6,500	6,300	4,559	72%
BVOR Refugee					
2010			**		
2011			**		
2012*			**		
2013	200	300	200	153	77%
2014	400	500	500	177	35%

*The closure of Damascus visa office impacted IRCC's ability to meet targets in 2012.

**No figures exist for BVOR prior to its creation in 2013.

Sources: Annual Report on Immigration Levels Plan, GCMS/Field Operations Support System (FOSS).

The numbers of GARs admitted did not meet the low end of the range for all years except in 2014. However, in 2014 it exceeded the high end (107%). The number of PSRs admitted did not reach the target in 2012 (77%), reached target in 2013 (100%), and remained below target in 2014 (72%), but were all within the allocated ranges. BVOR refugees were below target in 2013 (77%) and 2014 (35%).

4.2.2. Issues with Target Setting

Key informants noted several issues associated with target setting. First, for GARs, late target announcements[29] to CVOA and UNHCR caused issues affecting all phases of the resettlement process, from the referral stage to resettlement services in Canada (e.g., shortened time to process and refer refugees, concentration of departure and arrival of refugees in the summer and late December which increased the travel costs and delayed the provision of certain services).

Secondly, for PSRs, the SAH community stressed that they had not been sufficiently consulted on BVOR refugee targets, and did not have resources to promote the program among their constituents. Although the principle of additionality is not part of the PSR program theory, private sponsors felt that the PSR program was contradicting the principle of additionality[30], as in 2013, as the number of admitted PSRs was higher than the number of GARs.

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[29] Typically announced in November, the immigration targets are formally announced with the Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration which announces the immigration targets for all immigration categories, following approval by Cabinet.

[30] Private sponsorship is additional to government assisted refugees. Each year the government makes its commitment, on behalf of Canadians, to resettle a certain number of refugees. Anything that Canadians do through private sponsorship is on top of that commitment. This means that it allows Canadians to offer protection and a permanent home to extra refugees, who would not otherwise have the opportunity. Source:

4.2.3. Use of Multi-year Commitments

Multi-year commitments, which were used by IRCC between 2010 and 2014, are a comprehensive approach to resettlement planning for a particular refugee group over a specified period of time.[31] Establishing multi-year commitments offered several potential advantages to Canada, including enhanced collaboration and coordination with other countries, coordinated referral requests with UNHCR, and efficiency savings in terms of better meeting the needs of large groups and potential improvements in processing time.[32] Multi-year commitments were expected to improve planning and resource utilization internally at IRCC and among external partners such as the UNHCR, IOM, and RAP SPOs.

A few key informants noted that the multi-year commitments did not eliminate or reduce the resettlement program's overall flexibility to respond to international priorities, as the proportion of refugees to be resettled as part of multi-year commitments accounted for about half of GARs levels. For example, in 2011, only 54% of GARs were resettled based on multi-year commitments, with the remaining 46% coming from a non-multi-year target population.

Canadian Council for Refugees (2013) *Important Changes in Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.* http://ccrweb.ca/en/changes-private-sponsorship-refugees.
[31] Canada, CIC (2013) *Media Lines/Qs and As.*
[32] Internal Documentation.

5.   Key Findings: Performance - Program Outcomes

5.1.   Canada's Contribution to International Protection Efforts

Finding #6: Canada has effectively contributed to international protection efforts and was one of the top three resettlement countries in terms of volume between 2010 and 2014.

Among UNHCR's member states, Canada is a leader in resettling refugees. Along with the United States and Australia, Canada was in the top three resettlement countries in terms of volume resettled between 2010 and 2014, and also ranked highly in terms of per capita resettlement in 2014 (see Table 6).[33] In 2014, Canada received the second highest number of refugee referrals (7,233), following the United States (48,911), and third highest overall between 2010 and 2014. Canada has also played a substantial role in the UNHCR emergency resettlement program: between 2010 and 2012, Canada accepted 100 emergency cases[34] (264 refugees) for resettlement, which amounted to 10% of all emergency referrals worldwide.[35]

Table 6:   UNHCR Resettlement Departures by Resettlement Country 2010-2014[36]

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	%	Per Capita (2014)/Rank
USA	54,077	43,215	53,053	47,875	48,911	**247,131**	**70.90%**	6,384/6
Australia	5,636	5,597	5,079	11,117	6,162	**33,591**	**9.64%**	3,636/1
Canada	6,706	6,827	4,755	5,140	7,234	**30,662**	**8.80%**	4,718/3
Sweden	1,789	1,896	1,483	1,832	1,812	**8,812**	**2.53%**	5,177/4
Norway	1,088	1,258	1,137	941	1,188	**5,612**	**1.61%**	4,117/2
Germany	457	22	323	1,092	3,467	**5,361**	**1.54%**	23,945/12
Finland	543	573	763	665	1,011	**3,555**	**1.02%**	5,310/5
United Kingdom	695	424	989	750	628	**3,486**	**1.00%**	98,831/18
New Zealand	535	477	719	682	639	**3,052**	**0.88%**	6,911/7
France	217	42	84	100	378	**821**	**0.24%**	167,278/19
Other Resettlement Countries	1,171	1,318	867	1,217	1,901	**6,474**	**1.86%**	N/A
Total World Resettlement	**72,914**	**61,649**	**69,252**	**71,411**	**73,331**	**348,557**	**100.00%**	**N/A**

Source: UNHCR (2015) UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013) World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition.

In addition, a few interviewees from case studies (including domestic and international) reported that Canada has set an international example insofar as it influenced other resettlement countries

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[33] UNHCR (2015) *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2016*.

[34] The UNHCR Resettlement Handbook defines "emergency" cases as those in which the threat faced by the refugee necessitates removal within a few days, if not hours. For the sake of clarity, a notional limit of a maximum of five days is understood. Therefore, the word "emergency", when used by UNHCR members, can be translated to mean a case requiring "urgent" consideration under IRCC's Urgent Protection Program.

[35] UNHCR (2013) *Emergency submissions to Canada 2010-2012: Observations and Trends Analysis*.

[36] These numbers do not include refugees who were referred through another referral agency, or did not require a UNHCR referral. Therefore, Canada's numbers do not include all individuals who were admitted under the GAR or PSR programs.

to increase the number of women at risk and LGBTIQ[37] refugees they receive, as well as to increase their use of multi-year commitments. A few key informants also suggested that Canada's international representatives took a leadership role through the chairing of various international committees (e.g., Syria Core Group, 2013 Annual Tripartite Consultation on Resettlement)[38] and by championing the needs of vulnerable populations within these international committees.

5.2. Program Delivery – Supports and Challenges

5.2.1. Policy, Guidance and Procedures

Finding #7: While numerous policies and tools exist to support program delivery, gaps were observed regarding the clarity of the guidance for the BVOR program, and the monitoring around the PSR program.

Several advances have been made since 2010 on policies and procedures to improve clarity and efficiency in program delivery. These include a new Sponsorship Agreement between SAHs and IRCC in 2014, global and regional sub-caps on PSR SAH applications, performance measurement frameworks, and the introduction of CPO-W. Despite these advancements, key informants, international case study participants, and domestic case study participants noted confusion with some of the resettlement policies and procedures.

Although the introduction of the BVOR program in 2013 was followed by operational bulletins and modifications to manuals, at the time of the evaluation, CVOA officers had not received sufficient guidelines and training regarding the implementation of the BVOR program. Interviewees from case studies (including domestic and international) felt that the BVOR procedures and selection criteria that should be used to identify potential refugees to be part of the program were unclear. This lack of clarity on procedures led to inconsistencies in how BVOR refugees are included in the program, and in how they are processed internationally. For example, international site visits findings highlighted that as there was no guidance available on BVOR enrolment, some potential BVOR refugees were asked (in person) by a CVOA officer if they wanted to participate in the program, some asked (in writing only) if they would consider being sponsored through a check box on a form with little explanation, while others were automatically entered in the program without being informed (not asked at all). As a result, this lack of clarity led to inconsistency in enrolling potential BVOR refugees in the program. Additionally, despite criteria that BVOR refugees should have low medical needs[39], in some CVOA, BVOR refugees were referred before medical exams were completed.

In addition, a review of the current guidance showed that it does not clearly distinguish between BVOR and VOR refugees.[40] Some SAHs perceive this program as a branch of the PSR program and as a result, they interpret the BVOR program as contravening the Principles of Naming and Additionality. Furthermore, there is a misalignment between one of the criteria that UNHCR uses to refer cases to Canada (i.e., having family in Canada) and the BVOR program selection

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[37] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning.
[38] UNCHR (2013) *ATCR Agenda*.
[39] Canada, CIC (n.d.) *BVOR Selection and Processing*.
[40] Canada, CIC (2014) *Operational Bulletin 512: Resettlement Assistance Program Income Support Payments for Privately sponsored Refugees Arriving under the Visa Office- Referred Program*.

criteria (i.e., to be considered one should not have family links in Canada) which reduces the eligible pool of potential BVOR refugees.

Although IRCC has guidance indicating that local IRCC office staff are responsible for the monitoring of sponsors and sponsored refugees,[41] domestic case study interviewees revealed that there are no formal mechanisms to implement the monitoring of sponsors' activities and very little resources were available in the regions. Further, some CPO-W staff and local IRCC office staff indicated they were not clear on what procedures to follow in the event of sponsorship breakdown or when the SAHs, CS, or G5 failed to comply with the settlement plan. In addition, as there are no requirements for either IRCC or sponsors to share the settlement plan with PSRs, PSRs may not know what their sponsors have committed to provide them with in the first year.

Other areas of confusion related to the lack of supporting policy guidance and procedures included how CVOA should operationalize high medical needs cases, and how to apply the 5% cap on high medical needs among GARs. Due to varying decisions on coverage for special allowances, there was also uncertainty among local IRCC staff regarding coverage for special allowances under RAP income support, even though eligibility criteria for special allowances is outlined in an internal manual.[42]

5.2.2.   Tools

Finding #8: There are issues with the tools to support program delivery, most notably, GCMS and a lack of a RAP income support calculation tool.

Despite the availability of many tools to support program delivery, issues were identified with GCMS. Some of these issues noted by CVOA staff included functionality issues, frequent speed issues, a lack of program stability, disruptions or problems arising with new releases or updates, and the inability to print forms.[43] Some CVOA staff also noted that they had problems reading officer notes in GCMS and tracking statistics on inventories and specific groups of applicants, and then had to rely upon parallel, office-specific programs to manage inventories and support processing.

During domestic case studies, IRCC staff noted that calculation of income support for GARs/BVOR refugees was done manually, and varied by jurisdiction. It was felt that IRCC could develop an online form that could automatically calculate required income support based on family size, jurisdiction, and/or special circumstances.

5.2.3.   Training

Finding #9: Training available for IRCC staff, sponsor and RAP SPOs was insufficient.

While refugee program-specific training was available for IRCC staff both internationally (e.g., visa officers) and domestically (e.g., local RAP officers) as well as for SAHs and private sponsors

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[41] Canada, CIC (2012) *Operational Bulletin 405-B – Centralized In-Canada Processing of Private Sponsorship of Refugee Sponsorship Applications at Centralized Processing Office-Winnipeg.*

[42] Canada, CIC (2012) *IP3 – In-Canada Processing of Convention Refugees Abroad and Members of the Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad Classes.*

[43] IRCC Internal Documentation.

(through the RSTP), several issues with training, both internationally and domestically, were reported.

- Variances in on-the-job training by CVOA resulted in inconsistencies in applied practices.

- Refugee-specific training for CVOA staff was reported, by a few international case study interviewees, as oversubscribed; thus, not all officers had access to this training.

- CVOA officers noted that training on using advanced reporting and management functions of GCMS was not provided.

- A few CVOA officers expressed a desire for counselling services to help staff cope with the high level of stress of refugee processing.

- Additionally, CVOA officers and Locally Engaged Staff (LES) also noted that the training for LES was very limited and could be expanded.

Despite the availability of local RAP officer training, some key informants noted that training for local RAP officers was insufficient (i.e., training was too short and it did not prepare them properly). Moreover, some key informant interviewees, domestic case studies and sponsor focus group participants suggested that more training was needed for G5s and sponsors who were not affiliated with a SAH to ensure they correctly completed the PSR application forms. As noted in the 2010 GAR-RAP Evaluation, CVOA and local IRCC staff indicated they would welcome opportunities to share best practices across different offices, which could potentially serve as a new method of training.

5.3. Coordination with Stakeholders

Finding #10: While mechanisms are in place to coordinate program delivery, internal stakeholders expressed the need for greater coordination and governance within IRCC.

5.3.1. Internal Coordination and Governance

IRCC key informants noted the existence of mechanisms to coordinate and support program delivery within the department at both the international and domestic levels which included working groups and operational guidance and support. Most key informants believed that these mechanisms worked well and did not suggest the need for additional coordination mechanisms.

Despite the existence of these mechanisms, interviewees explained that governance issues impacted the coordination of Resettlement and RAP programming within IRCC. Even with the existence of an operational bulletin on the matter, several key informants explained that branches often did not know each other's respective roles and responsibilities due to the large number of IRCC branches involved in the resettlement programming from operations and policy sectors.[44] This lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities resulted in a fragmented approach to resettlement, resulting in an uncoordinated approach to delivery.

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[44] IRCC branches involved in the Resettlement Programs include: Refugee Affairs Branch, Integration-Foreign Credentials Referral Office, Integration Program Management Branch, Operation Management and Coordination Branch, International Region (which includes CVOA), Centralized Processing Region, Migration Health Branch, Operational Program Management Branch, Case Management Branch, Strategic Policy and Planning, and Regional Directors General (Eastern, Ontario, and Western Regions).

In addition to the challenges affecting governance, CVOA and local IRCC office staff noted several coordination challenges affecting day to day operations, in particular, concerns with delays in responses to case-specific questions between National Headquarters (NHQ) and local IRCC office staff, CVOA and CPO-W and CVOA and NHQ. In particular, local IRCC offices noted that between 2010 and 2015, local IRCC office staff lost a central point of contact from which to request and receive information from NHQ.

In addition, domestic site visits raised the issue that during this period of change, the RAP officers no longer had the authority to make operational decisions on RAP expenditures. This issue was noted through an example, in which requests for small amounts of funds (e.g., $40) for special allowances for income support took an extended period of time to be approved, as multiple players in local IRCC offices and NHQ were involved.

5.3.2.   External Coordination

> **Finding #11:** Overall external stakeholders indicated coordination methods were sufficient; however, some expressed a need for increased consultations.

IRCC had numerous mechanisms in place to coordinate and communicate with external stakeholders such as UNHCR, IOM, SAHs, RAP SPOs, provinces/territories, and NGOs, including UNHCR Core Groups, monthly meetings with SAH Council, and regular meetings and consultations with provincial and territorial representatives.

Most external key informants agreed that the communication and coordination methods in place were sufficient. UNHCR and SAH Council key informants believed that Canadian officials were accessible and noted that IRCC communication activities were effective and helpful. SAH Council key informants noted that they are included in target and sub-cap discussions. RSTP key informants noted that IRCC coordinates well through information exchanges and that they were also able to contact IRCC with questions from sponsors that they otherwise could not answer. In turn, RSTP shared the information provided by IRCC with the sponsor community.

Key informants, however, did provide some suggestions on how coordination could be further improved. For example, certain external stakeholders expressed a desire to play a larger role in policy consultations regarding logistics of traveling. Other stakeholders indicated that the dissemination of the refugee target numbers for each CVOA could take place earlier.

Provincial government representatives suggested that increased external collaboration with IRCC on the number of PSRs and GARs arriving, their destinations, and their needs could improve management of community capacity. RAP SPOs noted that their responses to the RAP SPO Capacity Survey[45], in terms of the number and profile of refugees they could support, did not seem to be taken into account when IRCC assigned cases to their organizations.

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[45] RAP SPO Capacity Survey is conducted annually by IRCC to gather information on the capacity of SPOs to provide services to refugees.

5.4. Canadians' Engagement in Supporting Resettlement and Contribution to Uniting Refugee Families

5.4.1. Application Submission

Finding #12: Canadians continue to demonstrate active engagement in refugee sponsorship through SAHs and G5s; however, less engagement has occurred through the BVOR program.

The volume of PSRs being sponsored is an indicator of the continued engagement of Canadians and permanent residents towards supporting resettlement. Between 2010 and 2014, 39,694 PSR and 808 BVOR refugees had been referred for sponsorship. The PSR numbers are much higher than the admissions targets for the same time period.

Across the reporting period, SAHs (either SAHs or their Constituent Groups) sponsored the greatest number of PSRs, followed by G5s (66% and 31% respectively).

Table 7: Number and Proportion of PSRs Sponsored, by Sponsoring Group

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Community Sponsors	192	220	96	124	173	**805**
	4%	4%	2%	2%	4%	**3%**
Group of Five	2,006	2,070	1,226	1,752	763	**7,817**
	42%	37%	29%	28%	17%	**31%**
SAH	2,624	3,284	2,898	4,390	3,620	**16,816**
	54%	59%	69%	70%	79%	**66%**
Other	11	10	5	3	3	**32**
	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	**<1%**
Total Sponsored	**4,833**	**5,584**	**4,225**	**6,269**	**4,559**	**25,470**

Sources: GCMS and FOSS.

When asked about their usage of the BVOR program, SAHs noted that the current high demand for the PSR program, as well as a lack of clarity regarding the BVOR program, prevented them from promoting or utilizing the BVOR program to its full extent.

5.4.2. Family Reunification

Finding #13: Resettlement programs are contributing to refugee family reunification, particularly through the PSR program.

As outlined in IRPA, family reunification is a key objective of Canada's resettlement efforts, which is met, in part, through the PSR and GAR programs. Private sponsor groups commonly include a member of the refugee's family in Canada, either as a member of the sponsor group or as a volunteer. In fact, 62% of PSRs surveyed were sponsored by a member of their family.

Similarly, UNHCR takes into consideration the location of family members in Canada in its decision to refer refugees to Canada's GAR program. When a GAR's application is sent for destining, the Matching Centre applies 'family ties' as the primary criteria for destining GARs. Among the GARs surveyed, 35% had family members living in Canada prior to their arrival; and, of those who had family members living in Canada, 80% were placed in a city or town close to that family member.

5.5. Processing Effectiveness and Efficiency

5.5.1. Processing Effectiveness

> **Finding #14:** There were specific challenges associated with the processing of different refugee groups.

The evaluation found that refugee application processing was affected by a number of key issues that impacted the three programs. While these issues are not solely refugee-specific, they included:

- Slowness of GCMS in CVOA

- IRCC's late announcement of GAR, PSR, and BVOR annual refugee targets to the CVOA and their key stakeholders (i.e., UNHCR, IOM and SPOs)

- Unclear guidance regarding the 5% cap on high medical needs refugees

- Need to travel to conduct interviews with refugees in many CVOA

There were also specific challenges associated with processing different refugee categories which impacted processing.

In terms of challenges identified with processing PSRs, it was noted that the PSR application process was perceived to be overly complex for the sponsors, and application forms changed often with no grace period offered, and could not be completed online. CVOA staff suggested that the lack of a detailed refugee story section[46] in the PSR application (as compared to GARs) compounded the process of verifying the individual's identity and assessing eligibility. The majority of key informant interviewees, who could comment, noted that G5 applications continued to have errors, requiring a lot of back and forth between G5s and CPO-W. In addition, PSR application process was particularly impacted by difficulties accessing some refugees for an interview in some countries (in which case the files are dormant until IRCC can conduct interviews), and difficulties in obtaining exit permits (such as in Thailand and Turkey).

CVOA staff noted that a significant amount of work was associated with processing BVOR refugee applications overseas compared to the processing of GAR applications. While the Matching Centre coordinates the online process of connecting a BVOR refugee with a sponsor, CVOA staff are required to validate the identification of the candidates, to develop a case profile to be presented on a website for potential sponsors, and to provide responses to information requests that came from the Matching Centre on behalf of potential sponsors. These steps led to a reduced efficiency for the processing of BVOR refugees.

5.5.2. Approval Rates, Processing Times and Year-End Inventories

> **Finding #15:** Between 2010 and 2014, PSRs had lower approval rates and longer processing time compared to GARs. However, during the same time period, IRCC has been successful in reducing the PSR inventory by 13%, while the GAR inventory increased by 35%.

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[46] Part A of the Schedule 2: Refugees Outside Canada (IMM0008).

It is important to note that GAR and PSR processing is affected by admission levels (described in section 4.2.1) which are set annually by Cabinet. If the number of applications received in one year is greater than the level set, the additional applications may be placed at the end of the queue in the inventory. In the case of GARs, UNHCR and other referral agencies are provided with a set number of referrals per year and if the number of GARs admitted is approaching the yearly target for a specific CVOA, IRCC may notify them to slow or halt referrals. For PSRs, until 2012, there were no caps[47] on applications that could be submitted by sponsors and as a result, the number of applications submitted greatly exceeded the amount that could be processed. This created a large inventory and has lengthened processing times. Therefore, the following statistics have to be considered within this context.

Operationally, processing for GAR is streamlined in comparison to PSR. Referrals from the UNHCR contain verified refugee stories, which CVOA officers then use to interview the applicant. Conversely, the PSR process is more complex and requires additional steps, such as the assessment of sponsors and verification of refugees' identities and stories.[48] Reflecting the complexity of the PSR application process, between 2010 and 2014, the overall approval rate for PSRs was lower than GARs at 69%, as compared to 78%.

In terms of processing times, GARs are processed more quickly than PSRs. Between 2010 and 2015, the processing time for 80% of GAR cases ranged from a minimum of 14 months to a maximum of 24 months, while for PSR cases it ranged from 36 to 54 months.[49] The processing times for 80% of PSR cases increased by 50% from 36 months in 2010 to 54 months in 2015 whereas for GARs, the processing time decreased by 13% from 16 months in 2010 to 14 months in 2015.

PSR processing times were perceived as very long by the sponsor community and refugees. In addition, the sponsor community stressed that long processing times made it difficult for them to keep the sponsorship group, and the larger supporting community, engaged in the process. Some of these difficulties included the upfront work to build interest in sponsoring a refugee, and the level of effort needed to complete an application. On top of these difficulties, since applications took years to process, changing refugee family compositions would alter the resettlement needs of a particular case. In some cases, this may result in one-year window sponsorship[50] issues in Canada if refugees do not alert the department of these family composition changes before they depart. Moreover, members of a sponsor group often needed to be replaced and resources needed to be sought elsewhere as the length of processing time increases. PSR also noted that in addition to the stress associated with the lengthy processing times, there was the lack of available updates on the application. Some key informants, SAH representatives, and sponsor focus group participants, therefore, cited the need for a better online method for them to monitor PSR application status.[51]

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[47] Canada Gazette (2012) *Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations.* Part II, Vol. 146. November 7, 2012.

[48] For a complete description of the application process, see the Extended Evaluation Report.

[49] Processing times were only available for 80% of the cases.

[50] One year window allows resettled refugees in Canada, within one year of arrival, to identify for resettlement family members abroad who were unable to travel with them. They must be dependents of the original family member. Source: RSTP (2014) *Factsheet: Understanding One Year Window.*

[51] These informants and SAHs explained that the current online portal to monitor application status provided few relevant details and was regularly out of date.

Between 2010 and 2014, the year-end inventory of GARs increased by 35% from 8,126 to 10,989 individuals, whereas the year-end inventory of PSRs decreased by 13% for the same time period (from 21,602 in 2010 to 18,762 in 2014).

Table 8 demonstrates the impact of the changes that were introduced in 2012 to reduce the inventory of PSR applications, such as the introduction of regional sub-caps and the development of CPO-W. Since the introduction of these measures in 2012, there was a noticeable reduction (26%) in the year-end inventory of PSR applications, from 25,569 to 18,762 individuals. Additional data on approval rates, processing times and year-end inventories is presented in the Extended Evaluation Report.

Table 8:   GAR and PSR Year-End Inventory (2010-2014)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
GAR					
Total	8,126	6,911	7,125	8,520	10,989
Year over year % change		-15%	3%	20%	29%
PSR					
Total	21,602	25,368	25,569	20,493	18,762
Year over year % change		17%	1%	-20%	-8%

Source: GCMS.

5.6.   Matching and Arrivals

Finding #16: Matching and information provision is generally effective; however, uneven arrival patterns, lack of medical information, and secondary migration impact service provision.

5.6.1.   Matching

Many key informants and domestic case study participants felt that the Matching Centre was appropriately destining refugees to communities. The appropriateness of matching was supported by a relatively low level of GARs moving away from the city to which they were first sent by the Matching Centre, as 13% of GARs surveyed had moved away from their destination to which they were first matched within the first year.

5.6.2.   Information Provision

RAP SPOs and local IRCC office staff felt that they were appropriately consulted on arrivals through the Destination Matching Requests (DMR). However, a few RAP SPOs suggested that the Matching Centre sent matches which they had to refuse on occasion due to a lack of resources in the community or a lack of RAP SPO resources. Specifically, RAP SPOs in smaller communities had refused requests due to a lack of appropriate health services, and some RAP SPOs had refused requests due to a lack of space in temporary accommodation.

RAP SPOs and local IRCC office staff noted that, overall, information in the Notice of Arrival Transmissions (NAT) had improved and was available early enough to facilitate planning (90% of RAP SPOs agreed). RAP SPOs, however, still found gaps, inconsistencies or lack of detail in the information provided in the NATs from the various CVOA. RAP SPOs and SAHs indicated through their respective surveys that they sometimes had issues with the information provided, including:

- Family composition: 30% of RAP SPO and 7% of SAH respondents reported an issue;

- Language needs: 45% of RAP SPO and 26% of SAH respondents reported an issue; and

- Number of refugees arriving: 25% of RAP SPO and 7% of SAH respondents reported an issue.

Despite improvements in the NAT since the last evaluation, the medical information provided was sometimes insufficient for RAP SPOs to plan for the medical services needed on arrival (i.e., prescription renewal needed upon arrival, wheel chair, transport to hospital, etc.). The majority (90%) of RAP SPOs indicated that the NATs lacked necessary medical information. Respondents acknowledged the need to balance the refugees' privacy and providing the information necessary for the relevant service providers to best meet the health needs of refugees. While some of the medical information may be provided directly to refugees overseas, domestic case study participants (including health care providers interviewed as part of these case studies) indicated that some refugees had received vaccines or x-rays twice (prior departure and upon arrival in Canada) because their immunization and other medical records were not shared with the relevant health authorities and service providers.

To better support the provision of services to refugees admitted under multi-year commitments, RAP SPOs suggested that IRCC continue to create and share background profiles for key populations (such as the one created for the Bhutanese refugee movement).

5.6.3.   Arrival Patterns

Uneven arrival patterns of GARs impacted RAP SPO and local IRCC office service provision. Data showed that from 2010 to 2014, higher volumes of GARs arrived during the months of May/June and November/December. Many key informants and RAP SPOs stressed that these peaks in arrival volumes made it difficult to maintain staffing levels and to provide services to refugees at reasonable costs during some times of the year. Many key informants and RAP SPOs, however, did acknowledge that arrival patterns were influenced by many factors, such as the late announcement of targets to CVOA, which in turn compressed the time to make referrals and process refugees. Many key informants also mentioned some factors which could not be controlled, including travel conditions or changes in departure procedures in the country of asylum.

5.6.4.   Secondary Migration

Although there are no impacts on a RAP SPO when a PSR engages in secondary migration, when secondary migration occurred in the first year of arrival for GARs, it increased the workload of both the RAP SPO receiving the refugee and the RAP SPO transferring the refugee. This additional work for the RAP SPO transferring the refugee is to ensure that there is no duplication of RAP services and to inform the receiving SPOs.

Overall, 11% of GARs[52] moved in the first year and sought services from another RAP SPO. Of the GARs who indicated that they moved, 40% indicated it was to find employment, 22% indicated it was to be closer to friends, and 19% indicated it was to be closer to family.

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[52] Although 13% of GARs had moved away from their original destining community within their first year, 11% had moved had moved within their first year and sought services from the RAP SPO in their new community.

RAP SPOs noted that secondary migration occurred infrequently; however, GARs who moved often experienced significant challenges including being unable to afford accommodation or other necessities after spending their RAP income support on transportation for the move. Additionally, when GARs moved away from the original community to which they were destined, they were no longer eligible to receive RAP services from their new RAP SPO if those services had already been received in the original destining community. According to some RAP SPOs, this left some GARs unable to navigate and find temporary and permanent accommodation or appropriate services in the new location.

5.6.5.   Sponsorship Breakdown

Approximately one-quarter (26%) of the SAHs surveyed had experienced at least one breakdown of a sponsorship relationship in the past five years. Sponsorship breakdown, according to the IRCC operational manual, is an official declaration that there is a failure to meet the sponsorship arrangement of care for the refugee applicants listed in the sponsorship undertaking, including situations where sponsorship terms are not being met for reasons beyond the sponsor's control.

5.7.   Unintended Impacts of the Resettlement Programs

The evaluation found a few unintended impacts related to the resettlement programs. Some interviewees raised questions about having specific criteria for GAR selection in certain regions. Some of these criteria, were considered by some of those interviewed as not necessarily selecting those most vulnerable.

Confusion regarding the clarity of eligibility requirements of settlement services for PSRs was raised among sponsor focus group participants, a few interviewees, and domestic case study participants (including IRCC representatives). Specifically, some PSRs may not be receiving certain settlement services due to confusion around which services should be provided by SPOs and which ones should be provided by sponsors.

Additionally, key informants and some PSR focus group participants noted that some PSRs had been asked to provide funds to support their resettlement. The funds were provided either from the refugee or the refugee's family in Canada. While PSR documentation indicates that "a sponsoring group may establish a trust fund for the sponsorship but may not accept or require a payment of funds from a refugee for submitting an application"[53], a minority (4%) of PSRs that completed the survey agreed that their sponsor required they provide money before coming to Canada.

The 2012 regulatory changes which required G5 and CS-sponsored PSRs to have a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) by UNHCR or a foreign State resulted in reductions of the number of refugees who could be admitted into the PSR program, as well as G5s requiring increased support from SAHs during the application process. This has resulted in less utilization of the G5 program and an increase in SAH applications as more PSR applications come through the SAH program. In 2010, G5s sponsored 42% and SAHs sponsored 54% of all PSRs admitted. By 2014, however, G5s were sponsoring only 17% of PSRs admitted, while SAHs were sponsoring 79% of PSRs admitted.

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[53] Canada, CIC (2014) *Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.*

Some key informants noted that as a result of some SPOs tailoring settlement services for GARs, there is variance in terms of services available to refugees across Canada. For example, in Southern Ontario, GARs can access Client Support Services (CSS), which are funded through IRCC's Settlement Program and are designed only for GARs. CSS provides settlement services through client-centered case management delivered over a twelve to eighteen-month period. The program uses needs assessments and referrals to link GARs with services which focus on primary needs, such as health and life skills, designed to improve long term integration among GARs. The CSS program is designed to help GARs adapt and adjust their community, deal with life challenges, establish social support networks, access local services including mental health supports, and achieve self-sufficiency. Similar case-management supports may not be available in all communities across Canada to which GARs are destined.

5.8. Immediate and Essential Needs of Resettled Refugees

5.8.1. Services Received by Refugees

> **Finding #17:** The immediate and essential needs of resettled refugees are generally being met; however, not enough time is allocated to the provision of RAP services for GARs with greater needs including finding permanent housing.

The majority of refugees surveyed had received the required reception services and temporary accommodation through a RAP SPO or sponsor upon their arrival to Canada. GARs received these services through the basic orientation to Canada, life skills training, and financial orientation. Similarly, PSRs and BVOR refugees who completed the survey most commonly agreed they had received help regarding skills such as budgeting/banking, shopping and using public transportation. RAP SPOs and sponsors provided information about, or taught GARs, PSRs and BVOR refugees how to complete a variety of activities associated with life in Canada, from budgeting money and opening a bank account to using public transportation.

Surveyed refugees agreed that they were now able to use public transportation, budget money, access health care, and complete other tasks associated with daily living in Canada. In addition, the majority of refugees surveyed agreed they had gained the necessary skills to find a permanent place to stay. GARs, PSRs and BVOR refugees agreed that the resettlement services provided were timely (84%, 95%, and 95%, respectively) and accessible (86%, 96%, and 85%, respectively).

While most interviewees and domestic case study participants believed that refugees were receiving the correct services to meet their immediate and essential needs in general, they felt that RAP services could be expanded beyond six weeks to better facilitate integration for those refugees with greater needs. Being able to provide RAP services for a longer period of time would allow GARs with greater needs to better absorb all the information that is currently provided to them in a very short timeframe.

Another area of concern for GARs was the length of stay in temporary accommodation. GARs were dissatisfied with the time provided by their RAP SPO to find permanent accommodation, as they felt rushed to find appropriate and affordable permanent accommodation. Based on the refugee surveys, it took almost double the amount of time (on average 3.7 weeks) for GARs to find their first permanent accommodation compared to 8.2 weeks for PSRs. The recommended

length of stay in temporary accommodation is approximately two weeks (depending on each location).[54]

5.8.2. Linkages to Settlement Services

> **Finding #18:** Refugees are receiving assistance to access mandatory services and are being referred to settlement services. However, there is a lack of mental health services available for refugees.

Evidence indicated that RAP SPOs and SAHs/sponsors were assisting refugees to obtain mandatory services (i.e., Social Insurance Number, provincial health card, Interim Federal Health (IFH) program and National Child Benefit).

The majority of RAP SPOs and most SAHs (80% and 67%, respectively) agreed that there were appropriate programs, in the community to which they or other sponsors could refer refugees when needed. However, a lack of sufficient mental health services available for refugees was identified by RAP SPOs and SAHs.

As per the refugee surveys, GARs were often twice as likely as PSRs to require referrals to specialized services related to health (i.e., centre for victims of trauma/torture, specialized health centres, mental health centres, psychotherapy professionals, specialized schools and specialized hospitals). Overall, 38% of GARs and 16% of PSRs identified that they required at least one referral to a health service (specialized health centers, specialized hospitals, centres for victims of trauma/torture, mental health centers, and/or psychotherapy professionals). Less than half of the refugees requiring services for victims of trauma or torture received the necessary services and most of refugees who received a referral to a mental health center received the necessary services (60% of GARs received such services compared to 79% for PSRs).

In addition, the perception of some sponsors within focus groups was that as PSRs are only eligible for basic services until they qualify for provincial/territorial health care coverage, enrolment in the IFH program was often not needed.[55] This suggests that there is a disconnect between some sponsors and IFH program eligibility criteria as between 2010 and 2014, PSRs would have been eligible to receive some Supplemental Coverage and Prescription Drug Coverage for up to 1 year under the IFH program (i.e., even after they qualify and enrol for provincial/territorial health care coverage). This example further supports the issue identified in Section 5.2.1 that PSRs may not be receiving accurate information regarding what they are entitled to receive in terms of resettlement services from their sponsors.

> **Finding #19:** Refugees experienced delays in accessing language training which may affect their integration.

GAR focus group participants indicated they would have liked to access employment services early after their arrival. However, they were encouraged by their SPO to complete the RAP services and to enrol in language or education training while they are receiving RAP income support. Surveyed GARs and PSRs commonly received referrals to both employment services

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[54] Canada, CIC (2013) *RAP Service Delivery Handbook.*
[55] Canada, CIC (2014) *Determine Your Eligibility and Coverage Type: Interim Federal Health Program.*

and language training, though referrals for employment services were less likely to be given to GARs (see Table 9).

Table 9:   Referrals to Settlement Services

	GAR (n=810)	PSR (n=541)	BVOR Refugees (n=20)
Language training	86%	84%	85%
Employment services	44%	84%	75%

Sources: GAR, PSR, BVOR surveys.

While referrals to language training were given to surveyed refugees, it was noted that delays[56] in accessing language training impacted refugees' integration as they were not able to complete language training within the first year which they are encouraged to do while receiving RAP income support. This affected their employability, their ability to pursue education/training, and their capacity to interact with school representatives, doctors, neighbours, etc.

It was noted in several lines of evidence that there were opportunities to increase the effectiveness of RAP to help ensure that high need clients received additional supports, whereas client with fewer barriers could be provided with a reduced, appropriate level of service. Possible approaches included the following:

- Encouraging RAP SPOs to use the flexibility in the RAP guidance to adapt RAP services to unique refugee population needs, which was identified through domestic case studies, key informant interviewees; and

- Encouraging RAP SPOs to allow high-needs refugees to obtain services for a longer period of time and low-needs to access settlement services for a shorter period of time in order for them to access language and employment services soon after their arrival, which was identified through surveys and domestic case studies.

5.9.   Adequacy of Income Support to Meet Essential Needs

Finding #20: RAP income support levels are inadequate to meet essential needs of refugees.

Several indicators confirmed that the level of RAP income support is inadequate to meet the essential needs of refugees. Most key informants and domestic case study participants felt that RAP income support did not cover GARs' or BVOR refugees' essential needs. Only 53% of GARs and 35% of BVOR refugees agreed that RAP income support covered their basic necessities. This compares to 87% of PSRs who felt that the income support plus in-kind support received from their sponsor covered their basic needs. Further, 65% of GARs and 40% of BVOR refugees reported using food banks, as compared to only 29% of PSRs. Refugees who participated in focus groups, most key informants, and domestic case study participants all

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[56] Delays refer to not being able to start language training early enough in order to be able to complete it within the first year in Canada, (i.e., while they are on RAP income support, or supported by their sponsor.). Delays were caused by a lack of spaces in low literacy classes and/or a lack of child-minding spaces.

stressed that GARs utilized the majority of their RAP income support to cover housing, with little remaining for other basic necessities.[57]

Additionally, domestic case study key informants and refugees noted that the lack of funding for child transportation (e.g., bus tickets for children) through RAP income support, could be a large expense when the family needed to travel to purchase food, visit health care professionals, or do other activities beyond walking distance from their home.

5.9.1. Cost of Housing

An analysis of GARs' monthly housing costs also confirmed the inadequacy of RAP income support. On average, GARs self-reported paying $915 per month to rent their first permanent accommodation (median rent = $885), PSRs $849 per month (median rent = $847), and BVOR refugees $869 per month (median rent = $838), with utilities adding to the cost of accommodation (see Table 10). Among adult refugees surveyed, only 42% of GARs and 62% of PSRs were happy with the cost of their first permanent accommodation.

Table 10: Satisfaction with Cost and Actual Cost of Refugees' First Permanent Accommodation

	GAR (n=810)	PSR (n=541)	BVOR Refugee (n=20)
Satisfied with cost	42%	62%	60%
Average cost for all accommodation- rent (mean)*	$915	$849	$869
Average cost for all accommodation - utilities (mean)*	$196	$215	$128
Average cost for one bedroom- rent (mean)**	$736	$737	$811
Average cost for one bedroom - utilities (mean)**	$108	$122	$61
Satisfied with time to locate	66%	86%	70%
Average time (mean) to find permanent accommodation	3.7 weeks	8.2 weeks	4.2 weeks

Note: The average cost of accommodation is not provided by apartment size, and the average rent cost for all accommodations could be for a bachelor apartment or multiple bedroom apartment.
**Note: Those reporting living in a one bedroom: GAR n=112, PSR n=128, BVOR n=8.*
Source: GAR, PSR and BVOR Surveys.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports the average rent in Canada's 35 major centers as $774 for a one bedroom apartment and $629 for a bachelor studio,[58] while the average RAP monthly total income support is only $489 per client (excludes start-up cheque).[59] As shown in Table 11, GARs living in a one bedroom apartment paid on average $736 per month; less than the average one bedroom rental rate as reported by CMHC, but still more than their RAP monthly income support. Although CMHC recommends spending no more than 32% of gross monthly income on housing,[60] most single GARs needed to spend more than 100% of their RAP income support to cover the cost of rent (see Table 11). As a result, many single GARs are forced to live with roommates or are using other sources of income (e.g., Goods and Services Tax) to supplement their RAP income support to afford housing.

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[57] The 2015 Evaluation of the Immigration Loan Program also confirmed that RAP income support was insufficient to pay for the basic necessities. For more information regarding the impact of the immigration loan on refugees, see www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/ilp/2015/index.asp.

[58] Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2015) *Rental Market Reports – Major Centres*.

[59] Internal documentation.

[60] Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2012) *Get House Smart*.

Table 11: RAP Income Support Rates and Average Housing Cost

City	RAP Monthly Budget 2014 Single Adult – housing and other basic allowances **	Average Rent-Bachelor*	Average One Bedroom Apartment*	Percentage of Income
Vancouver, BC	$610	$902	$1,038	148%
Calgary, AB	$627	$906	$1,134	144%
Winnipeg, MB	$555	$586	$782	106%
Toronto, ON	$626	$896	$1,067	143%
Halifax, NS	$555	$716	$800	129%

*Source: CMHC Rental Market Reports 2014.

**Source: Internal Documentation.

Some key informants and domestic case study participants noted that housing costs are most problematic for large families, single GARs, and those with special needs, such as those requiring wheelchair access. Among the GAR cases admitted to Canada between 2010 and 2014, 15% included a large family (two adults and three or more children) and 47% included single adults. This means 62% of GAR cases fall into the groups that have more difficulty affording housing.

5.9.2. RAP Income Support vs. Social Assistance Rates

As discussed above, most key informants believed that the RAP income support was not sufficient to meet GARs' immediate and essential needs. For the most part, however, RAP income support matched provincial social assistance in 2014, though it was lower than social assistance rates in Winnipeg and Toronto.[61, 62] Table 12 provides a sample of RAP income support provided to GARs compared to social assistance amounts for the same city.

Table 12: Social Assistance compared to RAP Income Support in Sample Cities for Single Adults (2014)

Single Person	Social Assistance Rate (Total)	RAP Income Support (Total)
Vancouver, BC	$610	$610
Calgary, AB	$627	$627
Winnipeg, MB	$655	$555
Toronto, ON	$656	$626
Halifax, NS	$555	$555

Note: Sample cities were selected based on evaluation site visit locations. For more information on other cities across Canada, please see the Extended Evaluation Report.

Sources: Internal Documentation; British Columbia, Income Assistance Rate Table; AlbertaWorks (2015) Financial Benefits Summary; Manitoba (2015) Employment and Income Assistance for the General Assistance Category; Ontario (2015) Ontario Works Directives; Nova Scotia (2013) Basic Income Assistance Rates.

BVOR refugees do not receive the one-time start-up allowance; however, they do receive up to 6 months of RAP income support from the Government of Canada and 6 months of support from their sponsor.

Financial support for PSRs is either direct income, or a combination of direct income and in-kind supports (i.e., groceries) from their sponsor. Among those that responded to the survey,

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[61] Since the initial calculations for the evaluation, Toronto has increased its social assistance total to $681 for 2016.

[62] Additional information on social assistance rates in other RAP cities can be found in the Extended Evaluation Report.

monthly income was reported as ranging from $0 to $3,000, with a mean of $407 for all surveyed PSRs. Additionally, PSRs reported receiving a wide range of in-kind supports, including groceries (78%), clothing (72%), and furniture (71%), as well as having their rent (58%), utilities (54%) and transportation (68%) paid by their sponsor.

5.10. Economic Integration

Although refugees are not selected based on their capacity to establish economically, one of IRPA's objectives regarding refugees is to support self-sufficiency and the social and economic well-being of refugees.[63] Thus, the following section presents information about refugees' economic integration in Canada.

IMDB data were used to examine the overall economic performance of GARs and PSRs for the last 20 years (1992-2012). In the first years following admission, GARs tended to have lower economic performance as compared to PSRs. Specifically, they had lower incidence of employment, lower employment earnings, and higher social assistance reliance. Pre-IRPA, GARs used to catch-up to PSRs economically after seven years in Canada (and surpass them after 10 years). However, following IRPA implementation this catch-up did not occur after ten years in Canada. The section below focuses on information for the 2002 to 2012 period (for details on the full 20 year period (1992-2012), see the Extended Evaluation Report).[64]

> **Finding #21:** Since 2002, GARs tended to have lower economic performance compared to PSRs. Specifically, they had lower incidence of employment, lower employment earnings and higher social assistance reliance.

5.10.1. Incidence of Social Assistance since IRPA (2002-2012)

Focussing on refugees admitted since 2002, 93% of GAR cases relied on social assistance in the year of admission compared to 6% for the PSR cases. As the RAP income support is declared, for tax purposes as social assistance benefits, it explains the high proportion of GARs receiving social assistance in the year of admission. Five years following their admission, the proportion of GAR cases dropped to 41% whereas the proportion of PSR relying on social assistance increased to 28%.

As per Figure 1, the difference between the incidence of social assistance for GARs and PSRs is greater at the beginning of their establishment in Canada, and after 10 years, this difference converged to near parity.

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[63] Canada, Department of Justice (2002) Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. Section 3(2)f. IRPA objectives and application.

[64] In this section, the IMDB analysis included the following: all non-Quebec GARs and PSRs admitted between 2002 and 2012 that were 18 years of age or older at admission time and who filed at least one tax return.

Figure 1:   Percentage of Refugee Families Who Declared Social Assistance Benefits by Year since Admission and Immigration Category (2002-2012)

Source: IMDB
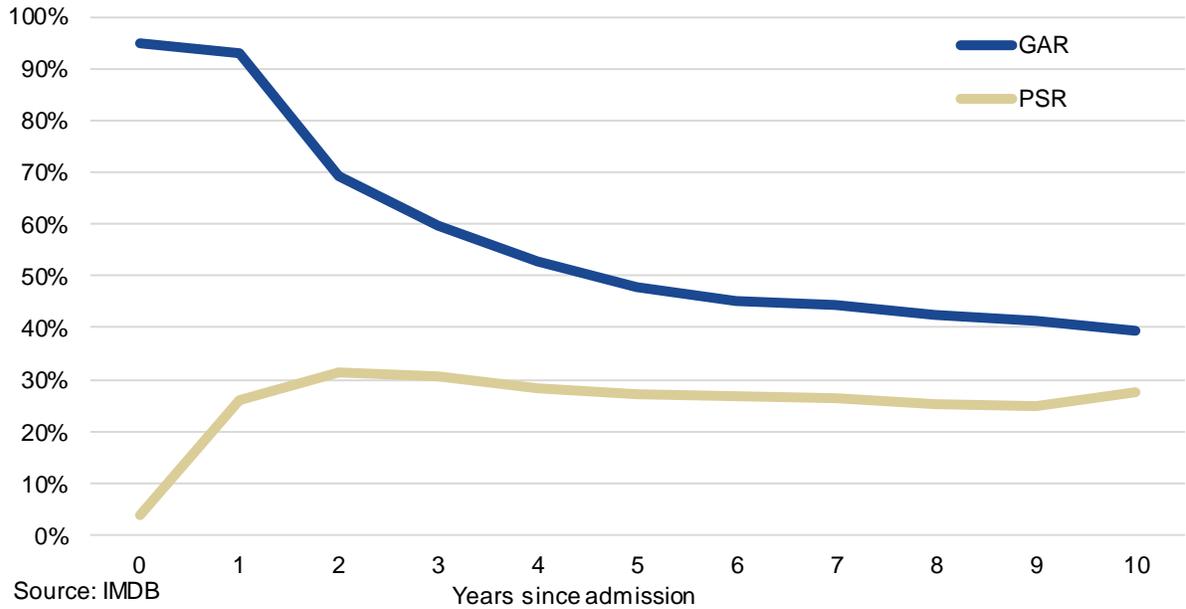
Note: RAP income support is included as a social assistance benefit as RAP income support can extend into year 1 (depending on the arrival date of the refugee within the tax year). The RAP income support is not included in the social assistance benefits after year 1.

5.10.2.   Incidence of Employment since IRPA (2002-2012)

Focussing on those admitted since 2002, 12% of GARs had found employment in year of admission compared to 50% of PSRs. After five years in Canada, this proportion increased to 58% for GARs and to 69% for PSRs. After 10 years in Canada, the proportion of refugees who declared employment earnings decreased for both groups (54% for GARs, and 58% for PSRs).

Figure 2: Percentage of Individual Refugees Who Declared Employment Earnings by Year since Admission and Immigration Category (2002-2012)

Source: IMDB
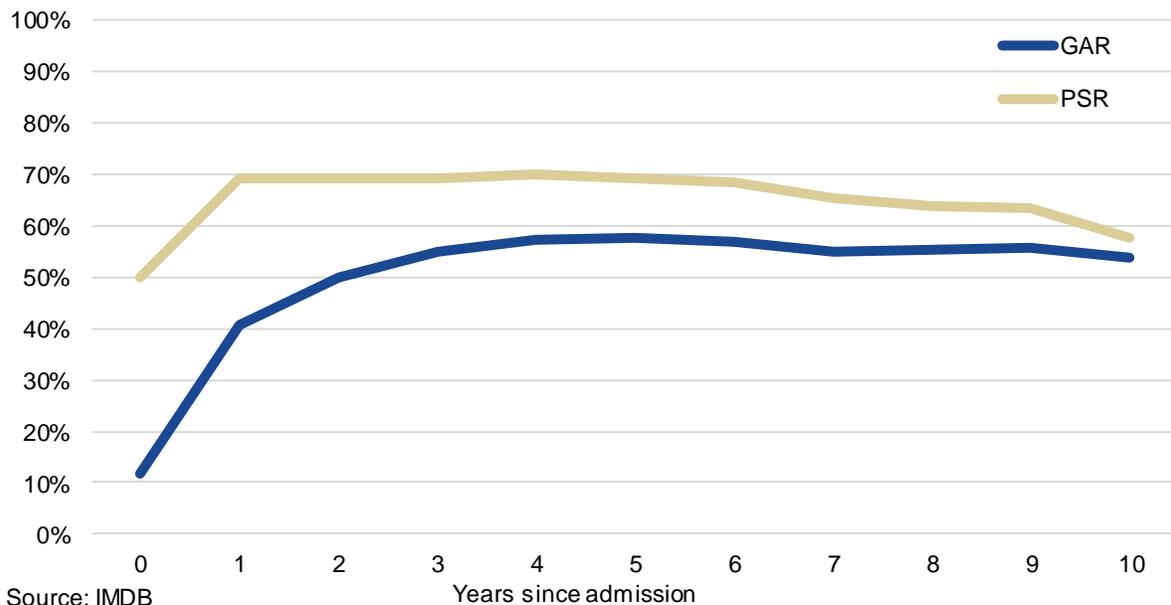
As indicated previously, the proportion of PSRs who found work within their first year in Canada is higher than GARs. However, when looking at socio-demographic characteristics of the GARs and PSRs who found work, the common characteristics associated with finding employment during their first year in Canada included, being a male, being between 18 and 44 of age, and having some knowledge of official languages.

Similar observations were found in the GARs and PSRs survey as in the IMDB in terms of characteristics leading to employment. When asked about employment, 21% of GARs surveyed reported having found work before RAP income support ended, compared to 66% of PSRs that reported having found work before their in-kind/income support ended (for more details, see Extended Evaluation Report).

A large proportion of GARs (79%) did not find employment prior the end of their RAP income support, the main reasons provided were: because they needed language training (41%); they were in school (22%); or were unable to work due to illness or being older than 65 years (19%). All of these reasons are in line with the intention of RAP in providing training needed prior seeking employment. Only a low proportion of GARs (17%) tried to find employment and were unsuccessful.

A smaller proportion of PSRs (34%) did not find employment prior to the end of their in-kind/income support. The main reasons provided for not finding work were: being unable to work due to illness or being older than 65 years (30%); having difficulty finding work (25%); or being in school (21%).

5.10.3. Average Employment Earnings since IRPA (2002-2012)

The average employment earnings of GARs and PSRs increased with time in the Canada. In the year of admission, the average earnings for GARs who declared employment earnings was of $6,400 compared to $9,000 for PSRs. Ten years after being admitted to Canada, GARs average employment earnings increased to $32,000 compared to $33,000 for PSRs.

Figure 3: Average Employment Earnings by Year since Admission and Immigration Category (2002-2012)

Source: IMDB
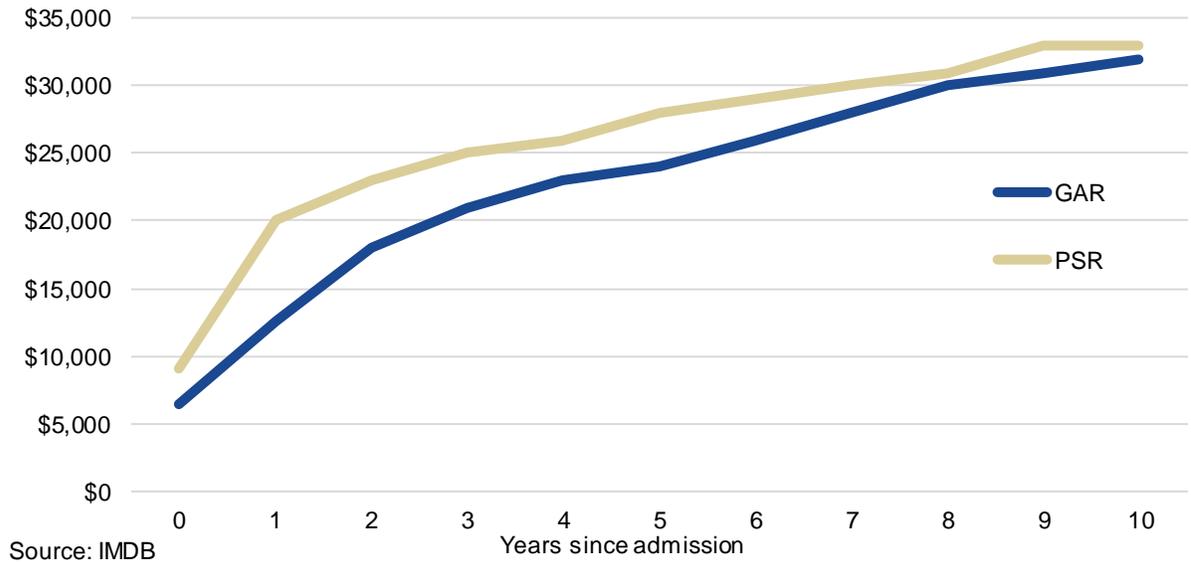
6. Key Findings: Performance – Resource Utilization Outcomes

6.1. Costs by Program and Client

6.1.1. GAR, PSR and BVOR Processing Program Costs

Finding #22: The total annual processing cost for refugees has decreased between FY 2011/12 and FY 2014/15. Per unit processing costs have increased for GARs and decreased for PSRs.

The total annual processing cost of the three refugee resettlement programs (GAR, PSR and BVOR[65]) combined has decreased by 4% from FY 2011/12 and FY 2014/15. While the GAR program cost increased by 16% from FY 2011/12 to FY 2014/15, the PSR program cost fell by 25% over the same time period. Only one year of data was available for the BVOR program. Total costs by program are presented in Table 13.

Table 13:   Total Program Costs

Program Costs	FY 2010/11*	FY 2011/12	FY 2012/13	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	%change from FY 2011/12 to FY 2014/15
GAR	--	$12,196,973	$9,036,310	$11,231,886	$14,189,432	16%
PSR	--	$17,771,588	$13,513,953	$12,424,889	$13,297,429	-25%
BVOR**	--	--	--	--	$1,376,612	--
Total	--	**$29,968,561**	**$22,550,263**	**$23,656,775**	**$28,863,473**	**-4%**

Note: These costs include all IRCC and other government department "feeder" processes and the Cost Management Model's allocation of related Program Management and Departmental Support spending (Category 2 & 3) of all fund centers in the Operations sector to those "feeder" processes including the contribution to Employee Benefits Plan, Operating expenditures (vote 1), Grants and Contribution (Vote 5). Note that the vote 5 amounts in the table source data is SAP and include the gain/loss amount, where it applies while the Employee Benefit Plan and Operating expenditures (vote 1) data source is from Cost Management Model for the respective fiscal years.
* The exclusion of FY 2010/11 was recommended because the inherent efforts of the User Fee Model for that year was limited to the efforts from the domestic regions, the International Region, and the Case Processing Region compared to the full IRCC exercise from FY 2011/12 to FY 2014/15.
** Although IRCC began capturing costs associated with BVOR processing in FY 2013/14, the full capture of costs in the Cost Management Model associated with the BVOR Program was only available for FY 2014/15.
Source: Cost Management Model

While interviewees were generally unable to comment on the specifics of GAR, PSR and BVOR program costs, information received as part of the financial data suggested that a potential explanation for the reduction in PSR program costs can be linked to changes associated with the federal government's 2011 Deficit Reduction Action Plan, C-50 Modernization initiatives starting in 2008, and the closure of Damascus visa office in 2011 (impacting both GAR and PSR programs). In addition, the large reduction in PSR costs was attributed to the centralization of some functions, particularly the creation of CPO-W to assess sponsorship component of PSR applications and the reduction of regional staff involved in the PSR program.

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[65] The BVOR program cost should be considered in addition to the GAR program cost.

Unit costs for each program are provided in Table 14.[66] Between FY 2011/12 and FY 2014/15, the cost per GAR decision increased by 12% (from $1,453 to $1,621) and the cost per PSR decision decreased by 25% (from $2,056 to $1,550).

Table 14: Processing Costs for Refugee Groups (Unit Cost by Program)

Program	FY 2011/12 # of application decisions	Cost per decision	FY 2012/13 # of application decisions	Cost per decision	FY 2013/14 # of application decisions	Cost per decision	FY 2014/15 # of application decisions	Cost per decision
GAR	8,397	$1,453	7,616	$1,186	8,726	$1,287	8,753	$1,621
PSR	8,643	$2,056	9,260	$1,459	11,167	$1,113	8,578	$1,550
BVOR	--	--	--	--	167	*	185	$7,441

Note: These costs include all IRCC and other government department "feeder" processes and the Cost Management Model's allocation of related Program Management and Departmental Support spending (Category 2 & 3) of all fund centers in the Operations sector to those "feeder" processes including the contribution to Employee Benefits Plan, Operating expenditures (vote 1), Grants and Contribution (Vote 5). Note that the vote 5 amounts in the table source data is SAP and include the gain/loss amount, where it applies while the Employee Benefits Plan and Operating expenditures (vote 1) data source is from Cost Management Model for the respective fiscal years. RAP is not included in these costs but is discussed separately in Section 6.1.2.
* Although IRCC began capturing costs associated with BVOR processing in FY 2013/14, the full capture of costs in the Cost Management Model associated with the BVOR Program was only available for FY 2014/15.
Source: Cost Management Model and GCMS/FOSS

6.1.2.   RAP Program Costs

> **Finding #23:** While the overall RAP cost per client has remained relatively stable, the average RAP income support provided to GARs and RAP SPOs to deliver the program has decreased over time.

Between FY 2010/11 and FY 2014/15 the average yearly cost per client for RAP was $10,573. This average cost can be broken down into the following expenses:

- $7,296 for income support paid directly to RAP clients[67];

- $2,716 for RAP SPOs to deliver RAP programming to clients[68]; and

- $561 for other costs[69].

Within the average $7,296 RAP income support expenses paid to RAP clients[70], the average breakdown of expenses is as follows;

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[66] Annual unit costs for each program were calculated by dividing each program cost with the number of application decisions made in that year for each resettlement program. Application decisions consist of approved, refused, or withdrawn persons.

[67] This average was calculated by dividing all RAP payments to GARs (including spouses and dependents) by the total number of GARs from FY 2010/11 to FY 2014/15.

[68] This expenditure refers to the funds that is provided to RAP SPOs under Contribution Agreements with IRCC for the delivery of RAP Services.

[69] Other costs include miscellaneous costs, advance payments, National Child Clawbacks and re-investment.

[70] This average was calculated by dividing all RAP payments to GARs (including spouses and dependents) by the total number of GARs from FY 2010/11 to FY 2014/15.

- $5,871 in ongoing support for the monthly income support ($489 per month on average); and

- $1,425 for start-up support.

During the years under examination for the evaluation, the average yearly cost per client for RAP ranged from $9,915 in FY 2014/15 and $12,578 in FY 2012/13. Between FY 2010/11 and FY 2014/15, the average yearly cost per client for RAP (including the amount paid to the client, RAP SPO and other costs) decreased by $324, or 3% (from $10,239 in FY 2010/11 to $9,915 in FY 2014/15).[71]

6.2.   Alternative Approaches

As part of the evaluation, information was collected as to how the various refugee and resettlement services could be delivered more effectively or efficiently.

6.2.1.   Use of Alternatives for Processing Refugees

Based on the international case studies, as well as interviews with key informants, several initiatives were identified in terms of possible alternatives to the current method in which IRCC selects and processes refugees which could potentially contribute to increased efficiencies. The following initiatives were identified:

- **Improve the use of GCMS:** Better training on the capabilities of GCMS functionalities, and improvement in terms of its responsiveness (i.e., increased bandwidth).

- **Introduce 'best practices' to expedite the processing of low risk refugee populations/applicants:** Making use of templates to assist officers conducting interviews (i.e., drop down options, links to country maps, country descriptions, etc.), or utilize new technologies (i.e., the use of Digital Video Conferencing when interviewing a refugee in person was not feasible) used by some CVOA to undertake interviews with refugee applicants.

- **Clarify the application process guidelines for BVOR candidates:** Adopting more consistent approaches across CVOA to BVOR refugee identification and selection.

- **Provide better medical information to serve refugees:** Providing more detailed information to help local offices and SPOs to better address the medical needs of refugees upon arrival in Canada.

- **Streamline the private sponsor application process:** Improving online resources that include sample descriptions, improved templates, and/or other online help tools; increased promotion/awareness of RSTP resources among sponsors; and ability to upload more information electronically, such as changes in family composition, or contact information for refugees.

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[71] Annual RAP costs fluctuate as it is affected by changes in the GAR population associated with family composition (i.e., larger families receive more income support), specific refugee needs (i.e., whether clients are entitled to receive supplementary allowances) and the number of arrivals coming to a specific province (as base rates are designed to match provincial social assistance rates).

6.2.2. Use of Alternative Referral Agencies

In a few select CVOA, Canada has made use of referral agencies other than the UNHCR, including, to date, both Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and Refuge Point.

Overall, the results of the evaluation suggest that there may be opportunities to utilize more non-UNHCR referral agencies, although use of such agencies may introduce additional challenges. In Nairobi, CVOA staff and UNHCR identified benefits regarding the use of alternative referral agencies, including:

- High quality referrals given that agencies are social support organizations and know clientele very well before making referrals (i.e., very high acceptance rates and confidence among CVOA staff);

- Increased support with completion of forms, a service which is no longer provided by UNHCR; and

- Expansion of the refugee population accessed, in both numbers and diversity (i.e., could reach refugees not served by UNHCR).

Despite these benefits, some interviewees raised several potential concerns with using alternative referral agencies, including:

- Potential increase of fraud/program misuse arising from working with new organizations;

- Potential loss of efficiency and quality of referral (in some visa offices GARs approval rates are already very high, and processing time already fast);

- Increased need for coordination and communication; and

- Potential negative reactions from source countries.

7.   Conclusions and Recommendations

The following section summarizes the overall conclusions for the evaluation and proposes related recommendations along six broad themes: adequacy of RAP, BVOR program, monitoring of the PSR settlement plans, PSR processing, internal governance, and IRCC training and support.

Adequacy of RAP

As refugees are initially in a state of transition towards becoming full contributors to Canadian society, they are encouraged in the first year to avail themselves of settlement supports such as language training and other employment-related services in order to facilitate their participation in the labour market and their community integration.

Since GARs and BVOR refugees are selected based on resettlement need and supported by the Government of Canada, it is expected that the level of support provided should allow GARs to meet their essential needs and enable them to meet the UNHCR stated goal of allowing refugees to rebuild their lives in dignity.[72] Several lines of evidence showed that the RAP income support levels are inadequate to meet these expectations.

RAP income support is insufficient to meet the basic necessities and housing needs of GARs. Most notably, the cost of housing is significantly higher than what RAP income support allocates for housing. Furthermore, RAP income support is substantially lower than the Low-Income Cut Off rate for all major cities in Canada. Also, while RAP income support is designed to mirror provincial social assistance rates, some lags occur in matching RAP income support to social assistance rates.

These findings regarding the insufficient level of RAP income support have been raised in previous IRCC evaluation and audit reports. Although IRCC has previously agreed with these findings and recommendations, the issues still remain.

> **Recommendation 1:** IRCC should develop policy options to ensure that refugees supported by the Government of Canada are provided with an adequate level of support (including RAP income support) to meet their resettlement needs in support of their successful integration.

BVOR Program

Multiple challenges were identified with the BVOR program. First, minimal guidance on the processing of BVOR refugees is provided through the Overseas Processing and Inland Processing Manuals and when guidance is available, it does not clearly distinguish between BVOR and VOR refugees.

Second, there is a misalignment between a criterion the UNHCR uses to refer cases to Canada and the BVOR program. Whereas the UNHCR considers whether refugees have family links in Canada, Canadian immigration officers will only identify GAR cases with no family link in Canada for the BVOR program. This misalignment reduces the eligible pool of potential BVOR refugees. In addition, due to the minimal guidance on the BVOR processing, inconsistencies in the enrolment of BVOR refugees were found. Whereas some CVOA enrolled BVOR refugees by promoting and explaining the Program to prospective applicants, others were asked in writing

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[72] UNHCR (2016) Durable Solutions. www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cf8.html.

if they would consider enrollment in the program with minimal explanation of the program, and some enrolled without consultation.

Finally, the BVOR program was not well understood by the SAH community and/or constituent groups, which contributed to the limited uptake of the program among Canadian sponsors.

Recommendation 2: To improve the BVOR program, IRCC should:

a) clarify the distinction between BVOR and VOR programs in operational guidance (e.g., manuals and bulletins);
b) review candidacy criteria for the BVOR program and implement a consistent and transparent practice to enroll refugees into the BVOR program; and
c) develop an engagement strategy for SAHs to increase uptake of the BVOR program.

Monitoring of PSRs

PSRs are receiving the appropriate resettlement services from their private sponsors and outcomes for PSRs are generally positive; however, PSRs are not fully aware of their settlement plans and what their sponsor has committed to providing them in their first year. According to departmental guidance, IRCC is expected to monitor a portion of sponsors upon arrival of the refugee in the community of destination. However, this monitoring occurs infrequently. There is a need to adopt a risk-based approach to monitoring to ensure PSRs are not left vulnerable in their first year. At a minimum, there is a need to inform PSRs about their Settlement Plan and to engage them in the implementation of their plan.

Recommendation 3: IRCC should develop a strategy to improve privately sponsored refugees' awareness of the supports available to them during their first year in Canada.

PSR Processing

Recognizing that the department has implemented some inventory management activities to reduce the number of applications (caps, G5 requirements for UNHCR RSD, and requirements for a complete application), the number of PSR applications submitted to IRCC has surpassed the planned number of admissions set annually by Cabinet. This has resulted in large inventories and lengthy processing times for PSR applications (i.e., 53 months in 2014).

The long processing times for PSRs make it difficult to keep a sponsorship group, including individual sponsors, engaged between submitting an application and the arrival of the refugee. This places the PSR program at risk of losing the engagement of the sponsorship community at large.

In addition, when refugees remain in the inventory for a long time, a refugee family can see changes to their family size and composition over a few years (e.g., added family member, health conditions, etc.). As a result, this can have an impact on the settlement plan and the funds required for sponsoring a refugee family. This can also create more work by IRCC staff and private sponsors to amend the PSR's application to account for changes in family composition.

Recommendation 4: IRCC should review its application intake management tools and approaches and implement measures to ensure timely decisions on PSR applications.

Internal Governance

The Resettlement Programs underwent some internal changes between 2010 and 2015. Despite the availability of operational guidance, internal stakeholders expressed a need for clear roles and responsibilities regarding resettlement programming. This lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities has created a fragmented approach which had an impact beyond NHQ, with CVOA officers and local IRCC office staff noting difficulties in obtaining pertinent information regarding Resettlement Programs.

The department would benefit from a review of the roles and responsibilities of the branches involved in Resettlement programming and a renewed whole of IRCC governance.

> **Recommendation 5:** IRCC should review the roles and responsibilities of branches involved in the Resettlement Programs and implement a strengthened governance structure to improve coordination.

IRCC Support

Some groups in IRCC's processing network could benefit from increased training. On-the-job training for officers varied across CVOA, resulting in inconsistencies in processing practices across CVOA. There were also limited spaces for officers to access refugee specific training. In addition, other areas in which training can be improved included training for RAP officers and increasing training for G5s and Community Sponsors to ensure they correctly complete the PSR application forms.

In addition, IRCC could also increase support to those involved in the resettlement process. CVOA and local IRCC office staff noted that they would welcome opportunities to share best practices across different offices. Lastly, RAP officers would benefit from the development of a standard tool to support the automatic calculation of RAP income support.

> **Recommendation 6:** IRCC should provide additional support to IRCC staff, sponsors and Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organizations in its refugee processing network. In particular, IRCC should consider:
>
> a) increasing opportunities for training across Canadian Visa Offices Abroad (CVOA), local IRCC office staff and Groups of Five and Community Sponsors;
> b) expanding the sharing of best practices across CVOA and local IRCC offices; and
> c) developing a tool to support the automatic calculation of RAP income support.

Appendix A: Refugee Resettlement and Resettlement Assistance Programs Logic Model: GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP Programs

ACTIVITIES

Program Management

- Partner/Stakeholder Engagement
- Population Prioritizing

Refugee Sponsorship Processing

- Sponsorship Processing
- PSR Processing
- GAR Processing
- BVOR Processing

Resettlement Support

- PSR and BVOR Support
- GAR Support (RAP)

OUTPUTS

Partner/Stakeholder Engagement
- Partnerships
- Consultations and information sharing
- Communication and outreach
- Horizontal coordination

Population Prioritizing
- Population priorities and targets
- Contribution to government-wide strategies
- Contribution to international protection strategies

Sponsorship Processing
- Arrivals and refusals of sponsorship applications
- Notifications

PSR Processing
- Eligibility assessments
- Final decisions
- PR Visas
- Notifications

GAR Processing
- Eligibility assessments
- Final decisions
- Matching/destining decisions
- PR Visas
- Notifications

BVOR Processing
- Eligibility assessments
- Final decisions
- Matching decisions
- PR Visas
- Notifications

PSR and BVOR Support
- Income support (including income support through RAP for BVORs)
- In-kind support
- POE services
- Settlement and social support

GAR Support (RAP)
- Income support; and

Services including:
- POE services
- Information and orientation
- Links to mandatory programs
- Life skills training
- Temporary accommodation
- Assistance locating permanent accommodation
- Social support
- Transportation
- Translation and interpretation

EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Immediate

Program Management
- Relationships effectively support program delivery and protection priorities
- Canadians and permanent residents engage in supporting resettlement
- National population priorities and targets take into account international protection priorities, protection needs and resettlement capacities in Canada

Refugee Sponsorship Processing
- Resettlement refugee and sponsorship applications are processed in an efficient manner
- BVORs and sponsors are matched appropriately
- Receiving communities are matched to GAR needs
- Sponsors and SPOs are prepared for resettled refugee arrivals through appropriate notification
- All resettled refugees arrive safely while GARs arrive in a coordinated manner in Canada

Resettlement Support
- Resettlement assistance is timely, accessible, useful and client-focused
- Resettled refugees have their immediate and essential needs met
- Resettled refugees are linked to the IRCC settlement, other government and specialized services
- Resettled refugees receive social support that respond to their needs

Intermediate

- The refugee resettlement programs are responsive to priorities
- Refugee families are united in Canada
- Refugees have knowledge, skills and means to live safely and independently
- Refugees obtain and benefit from IRCC settlement, other government and specialized services
- Resettled refugees have social networks and connections with the broader community

ULTIMATE OUTCOME

- Canada contributes to international protection efforts and protects refugees
- Resettled refugees participate economically, socially and culturally in Canada

STRATEGIC OUTCOME

SO 2: Family and humanitarian migration that reunites families and offers protection to the displaced and persecuted
SO 3: Newcomers and citizens participate in fostering in an integrated society

Appendix B: Lines of Evidence Used in the Evaluation

Lines of Evidence	Description
Document and Literature Review	The review examined relevant background policy and program documents, reports and research articles published in Canada and abroad.
Key Informant Interviews	Twenty-eight (28) key informant interviews were conducted with IRCC representatives (17), as well as with members of non-governmental organizations (UNHCR, SAH Council, Canadian Council of Refugees, IOM, RSTP (7), and representatives from provinces/territories (4).
Administrative Data Analysis	Global Case Management System (GCMS) was used to develop the profile of applications and admissions under the Refugee Resettlement Programs from 2010 to 2015.
	The Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) was used to provide information on the incidence of income, level of income, and use of social assistance among GARs and PSRs who landed both prior to and after the inclusion of the IRPA in 2002.
	The Immigration-Contribution Accountability Measurement System (iCAMS) and the Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE) were used to provide information on the use of RAP services by GARs admitted between 2010 and 2014.
	IRCC Cost Management Model was used to obtain federal processing costs for GARs, PSR, and BVOR Programs. In addition, data on income support payments to resettled refugees and contributions (Vote 5) to RAP SPOs was obtained from SAP.
Case Studies	Domestic (Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary/Lethbridge, and Vancouver) and international case studies (Ankara, Turkey; Nairobi, Kenya; Amman, Jordan; and Singapore, Singapore) were designed to facilitate an understanding of the full resettlement process, including refugee selection and processing, resettlement assistance, as well as challenges and best practices.
	• Data collection methodologies for the case studies included: A review of key documents provided by CVOA, SPOs/SAHs, and other key stakeholders; • A review of administrative data for each site visited; • Interviews (79): Domestic (44) (SPOs and their stakeholders, SAHs, IRCC Local Offices, CPO-W); International(35) (CVOA [IPM, visa officers, Locally-engaged staff], UNHCR, IOM, DFATD, other referral agencies); • Reviews of GAR, PSR and BVOR refugee applications at CVOA; • Focus groups with GARs/PSRs during domestic case studies (13); and, • Observational research, including interviews of applicants at CVOA and of SPO programming.
Validation focus group	At the completion of data collection for the evaluation, 4 focus groups were also held with GARs (2), PSRs (1), and sponsors (2) to validate evaluation findings.
Surveys of GARs, PSRs, and BVOR refugees	As the result of an informed consent process (i.e., mailing a consent form to all GARs, PSRs and BVOR refugees admitted to Canada between 2010 and 2014), 1,162 GARs, 728 PSRs and 28 BVOR refugees consented to participate in a survey. These surveys, which collected information on resettled refugees' experiences in Canada, were offered online and over the telephone and were translated into the six top languages spoken by the eligible populations (French, Arabic, Farsi, Nepali, Somali and Tigrigna). Using a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of errors for GARs, PSRs, and BVOR refugees were ±3%, ±4%, and ±21%, respectively.
	Following survey data collection and cleaning, the GAR and PSR survey samples were found to under-represent women and those aged 15 to 24, compared to the population of eligible refugees. The survey data were then weighted to improve alignment of the sample to the population. The BVOR refugee survey was not weighted.
Survey of RAP SPOs and SAHs	All 24 RAP SPOs and 91 SAHs were surveyed in order to obtain their perspectives on the extent to which the GAR and PSR Programs are operating as intended. Using a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of errors for RAP SPO and SAHs were ±10% and ±11%, respectively.

Appendix C: Management Responses for Previous PSR (2007) and GAR-RAP (2011) Evaluations

Summative Evaluation of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (2007)

1. The PSR program is aligned with the Government of Canada's and CIC's objectives of upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition in the resettlement of refugees and providing protection of those in need.
2. A number of evaluation findings related to the administration of the PSR Program suggest that current monitoring activities are insufficient.
3. Increasing submission volumes and high refusal rates have contributed to delays in processing times and created a cumbersome application inventory, all of which impact on program efficiency and effectiveness. A relatively small population of Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) were responsible for a disproportionate volume of the sponsorship applications and for the high overall refusal rate. Processing times, which have doubled in the last four years, represent a significant waiting time for a protection program.
4. Overall, sponsors have been successful in meeting the immediate needs of refugees and are providing support to refugees over the course of the sponsorship, and even sometimes beyond the one-year period.
5. Although there are no noteworthy differences between PSRs and GARs in terms of employment income and employment earnings over time (i.e. after about three years), PSRs become self-supporting far more quickly than GARs.
6. While the operating budget for the GAR Program is higher than that for PSR Program (due to greater numbers and the provision of income support for one year), the PSR Program is more expensive to administer on a per application basis.

Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) (2011)

Government Assisted Refugees Program

1. The processing of GARs needs to be streamlined.
   a. Enhance training and orientation to Canadian Visa Office Abroad (CVOA) staff
   b. Adopt more efficient refugee screening and processing approaches where appropriate.
   c. Re-examine the need to retain the source country designation.
   d. Consider logistical and processing constraints in planning CVOA.
2. Information sharing mechanisms should be enhanced
   a. Enhance information technology platforms within CVOAs
   b. Enhance or develop information sharing mechanisms
3. The need for the transportation and medical loans should be re-examined
   a. Re-examine the need, appropriateness and functionality of the transportation and medical loans

Resettlement Assistance Program

1. Programming modifications to reflect changing needs of GAR clients
   a. Review RAP resources to reflect the changing needs of GARs arriving in Canada
   b. Address SPO concerns with program flexibility and service provision

    c.   Consider adopting a case management approach for GAR clients
    d.   Consider modifications to the length of time GARs have access to RAP services
    e.   Address gaps in RAP service delivery
2. Addressing the issue of the inadequacy of income and housing supports
    a.   Address insufficiency of income support
    b.   Re-examine housing allowances
3. Information sharing.