

Integration Outcomes of Resettled Refugees in Canada

This issue of Migration Matters explores the settlement and integration outcomes of refugees resettled in Canada. It explores the evidence on the economic and social integration of resettled refugees and the latest research to help explain differences in the outcomes of government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees. Links to further resources are provided.

Introduction

Resettled refugees are refugees who are selected overseas by Canadian officials. Upon arrival in Canada, they receive Permanent Resident status. They can enter Canada via three major streams:¹

- **Government-assisted refugees (GARs):** A person who is outside Canada and has been determined to be a Convention refugee and who receives financial and other support from the Government of Canada or Province of Quebec for up to one year after their arrival in Canada. GARs are selected from applicants referred by the UNHCR and other referral organizations.
- **Privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs):** People outside Canada determined to be a Convention refugee or member of the Country of Asylum class and who receive financial and other support from a private sponsor for one year after their arrival in Canada.
- **Blended visa office-referred refugees (BVORs):** People outside Canada determined to be Convention refugees and referred by the UNHCR. They are matched with private sponsors in Canada and receive a blend of government and private financial and other supports.

Immigration Levels Plan 2017: Resettled Refugees

Refugee Stream	2017 Target
Government-Assisted Refugees	7,500
Privately Sponsored Refugees	16,000
Blended Visa-Office Referred	1,500
Resettled Refugees Total	25,000

Source: IRCC (2016). 2017 Immigration Levels Plan.

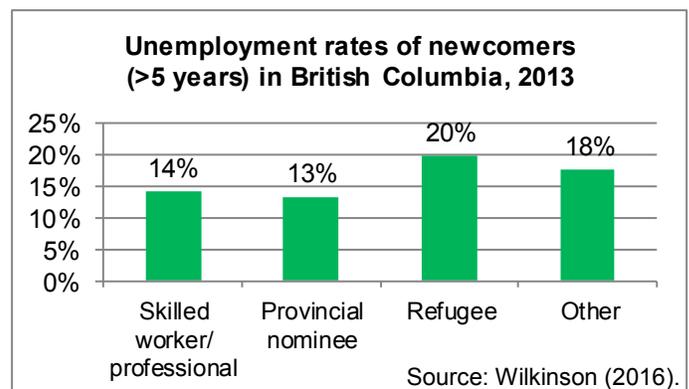
Between 1980 and 2015, Canada resettled over 330,000 GARs, over 267,000 PSRs, and 565 BVORs.² The province of British Columbia receives approximately 11% of all GARs and 7% of all PSRs coming to Canada.³ Researchers have noted that it is often difficult to find data that would help to understand the differences in settlement outcomes between GARs and PSRs and there is very little information on the settlement outcomes of BVORs.⁴

References

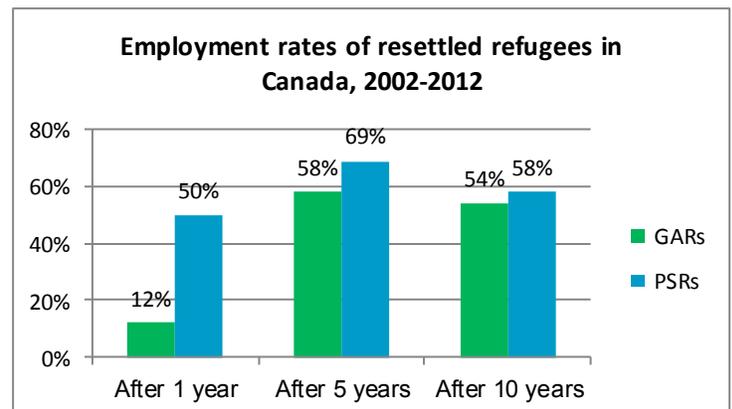
- ^{1, 8, 9}IRCC (2016). [Setting the context: Syrian Refugee Resettlement in Canada](#). Powerpoint Presentation.
- ^{2, 6, 17, 19}IRCC (2016). [Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs \(GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP\)](#). Evaluation Division.
- ^{3, 5, 7, 12, 13, 15}Wilkinson, L. and Garcea, J. (2017). [The Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada: A Mixed Record?](#) Migration Policy Institute.
- ^{4, 18}Hyndman, J. et al (2016). [The State of Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: Trends, Issues, and Impacts](#). Refugee Research Network / Centre for Refugee Studies.
- IRCC (2016). [Key Highlights 2017 Immigration Levels Plan](#).

Economic integration

Although refugees coming to Canada will eventually reach equivalent employment rates and incomes as Canadians, they face many barriers to achieving this. On average, it takes 12 to 15 years for refugees to achieve comparable employment rates and incomes relative to the Canadian-born population. In British Columbia, refugees residing in Canada for under 5 years have an unemployment rate of 19.7%.⁵



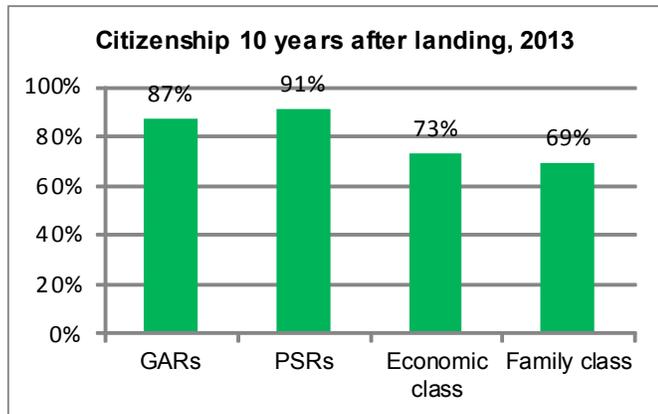
PSRs also tend to enter the labour market more quickly than GARs. Over the ten year period from 2002-2012, 50% of PSRs found employment in their first year in Canada, compared to 12% of GARs.⁶ PSRs also have higher earnings than GARs at the beginning of their time in Canada. However, after about 10 years since resettlement, GAR and PSR earnings are roughly equal.⁷



Source: IRCC (2016). Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs.

Social integration

Social integration is more difficult to measure than economic integration. In general, refugees resettled to Canada report high levels of satisfaction with their lives—80% of GARs and 84% of PSRs are either satisfied or completely satisfied with their life in Canada.⁸ Refugees are also more likely than other newcomers to Canada to become Canadian citizens—87% of GARs and 91% of PSRs acquire citizenship ten years after landing.⁹ Overall, refugees' sense of belonging in Canada is roughly similar to that of other newcomers.¹⁰



Source: IRCC (2016). Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs.

Explaining differences between PSRs and GARs

The social and economic integration of resettled refugees in Canada is impacted by a number of factors, including refugees' language skills, education levels, age, gender, and country/region of origin.¹¹ Factors within Canada also affect refugee outcomes, underlying economic conditions,¹² the support services accessed,¹³ and discrimination.¹⁴

In light of these broad considerations, researchers have identified several important points for understanding the differences in settlement outcomes between PSRs and GARs, including:

- **Demographic differences:** Due to the different ways that GARs and PSRs are selected for resettlement, there are some generalized demographic differences between the groups. For example, PSRs are more likely to speak an official language of Canada and have a higher level of education than GARs, on average.¹⁵ The profile of refugees' countries of origin is also different for GARs and PSRs, which research has shown may also influence settlement outcomes.¹⁶
- **Access to settlement services:** Refugees are more likely than other newcomers to access settlement services; nationally refugees constitute 30% of service users while they make up 11% of newcomers to Canada.¹⁷ However,

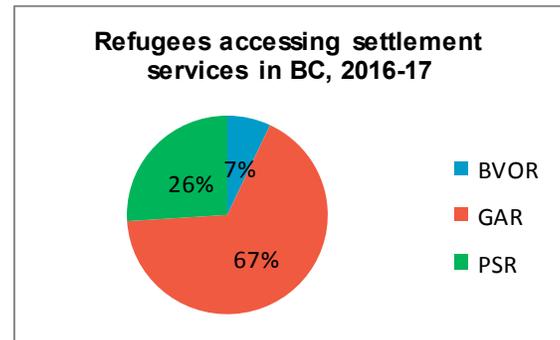
References

¹⁶ Hou, F. et al (2016). [Patterns and determinants of immigrants' sense of belonging to Canada and their source country](#). Statistics Canada.

^{5, 9, 19, A} Hyndman et al (2014). [Refugee Research Synthesis 2009-2013](#). CERIS.

Open Government Portal (2017). [Canada - Settlement Service Clients by Province/Territory of Settlement Provider Organizations, Immigration Category, Service Type and Fiscal Year](#). Settlement Service Clients—Monthly IRCC updates.

some studies have found that PSRs find it more difficult to access information about settlement services. In BC, two thirds of refugees accessing settlement services are GARs. Access to settlement services can also affect how a refugee approaches the settlement process; for instance, Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) providers may encourage GARs to concentrate on their language skills before entering the labour market, resulting in fewer GARs finding employment in the first year.¹⁸



Source: Open Government Portal (2017).

- **Access to family and friend networks:** Research has shown that refugees' sense of "home" depends greatly on the presence of family and social networks nearby, and PSRs are more likely than GARs to have family members in Canada. In a survey of resettled refugees, IRCC found that 62% of PSRs were sponsored by a family member already in Canada. In contrast, 35% of GARs had a family member in Canada (of which 80% were destined to a community close to their family member).¹⁹

Further Resources

Websites

- [Syrian GAR and PSR arrivals to Canada by community](#) (IRCC)
- [Resettlement Assistance Program service provider organizations](#) (IRCC)
- [Private sponsorship of refugees in 2017](#) (Canadian Council for Refugees)
- [Refugee Readiness Hub](#) (ISSofBC)

Information Sheets

- [Services for Refugees in BC](#) (Province of BC)
- [A settlement counsellor's guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees \(PSR\) system](#) (Refugee Sponsorship Training Program)
- [About Private Sponsorship](#) (Metro Vancouver Refugee Response Team)

Video

- [Refugee Pathways to Settlement](#) (AMSSA)