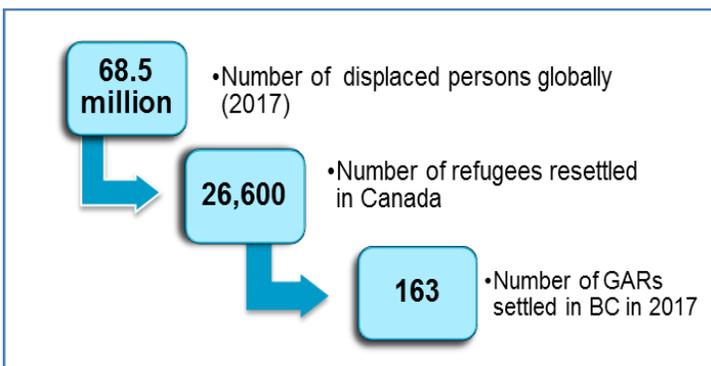


Refugee Integration Support After Year One

This issue of *Migration Matters* explores the gaps in services that government-assisted refugees (GARs) experience after specialized government services and funding runs out at the beginning of their second year in Canada, and the different levels of readiness between GARs and privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs). Links to further resources are provided.

Introduction

Canada holds humanitarian commitments to admit and resettle refugees. Historically, 10% of resettled refugees across the globe have been accepted by Canada. In 2010, the government committed to resettle 20% additional refugees than in previous years and have increased the number of refugees since then.¹



Refugee resettlement in 2017: By the numbers^{2,3}

Government-assisted refugees (GARs): A person outside Canada who has been determined to be a Convention refugee and receives governmental support for up to *one year* after their arrival in Canada. The primary financial assistance comes from the **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)**.

Privately-sponsored refugees (PSRs): People outside Canada determined to be a Convention refugee or member of the Country of Asylum class who receive support from a private sponsor for *one year* after their arrival in Canada. Often support for PSRs continues in the form of emotional, community connection through groups of sponsors.

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.

Those who are considered to have special needs (trauma from violence or torture, medical disabilities, the effects of systemic discrimination, or a large number of family members) may be eligible for the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS)** program, which provides additional funding for a total of 24 months.

Levels of readiness in PSRs and GARs

GARs and PSRs receive vastly different support⁴ and as such, PSRs have overall shown higher levels of readiness after one year than GARs have. This is often due to social networks and differences in financial support. PSRs have been shown to rely less on food banks and social assistance than GARs, which is also associated with higher success in finding employment and adequate market housing.⁵ In a study of refugees eight years after landing who had completed post-secondary education in Canada, PSRs had higher economic outcomes than GARs.⁶

RAP Supports for GARS

	First year	Second year and onwards
Financial support	Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)	Provincial Income Assistance (IA) Continued funding for 24 months (36 months in special cases) for those under JAS program
Housing	Temporary accommodation, help with permanent accommodations, funds for basic household items	Market housing
Health	Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP)	Provincial Medical Services Plan (BC MSP)
Services	Case management through RAP, access to federally & provincially funded settlement services	Continued access to settlement services

References

- Elgersma, S. (2015). [Resettling Refugees: Canada's Humanitarian Commitments](#). Library of Parliament
- UNCHR (2018). [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017](#).
- ISS of BC. (2017). [GAR Bulletin: Statistical Highlights](#).
- Munson, J (2016). [Finding Refuge in Canada: A Syrian Resettlement Story](#). Report of the Standing Senate Committee.
- IRCC (2016). [Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs \(GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP\)](#). Evaluation Division.
- Prokopenko, E. (2018). [Refugees and Canadian Post-Secondary Education: Characteristics and Economic Outcomes in Comparison](#). Statistics Canada.

After the first year: gaps

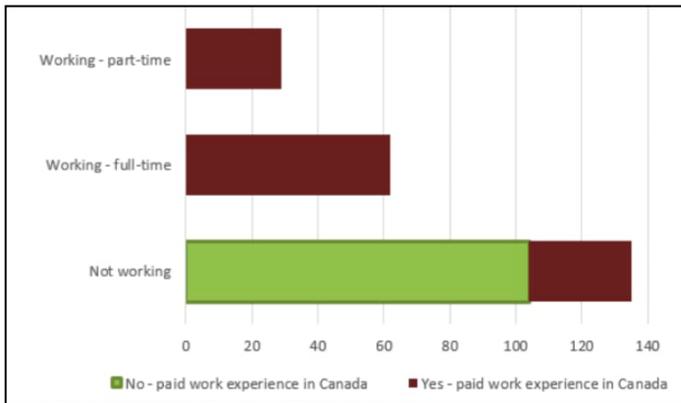
Housing

Some of the challenges in accessing market housing are: low incomes, lack of information about the system and tenant rights, landlord discrimination, as well as potential changes in immigration status and the effects that mental health issues stemming from trauma may have on housing.⁷

“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”⁸

Employment

PSRs show consistently higher employment rates than GARs for the first 4 years.⁹ The number of GARs working full-time doubles between the first and second year, indicating that attaining full time work and becoming self-sufficient may take longer than one year.¹⁰



Work in Canada since arrival and current (2 years in)¹¹

Medical

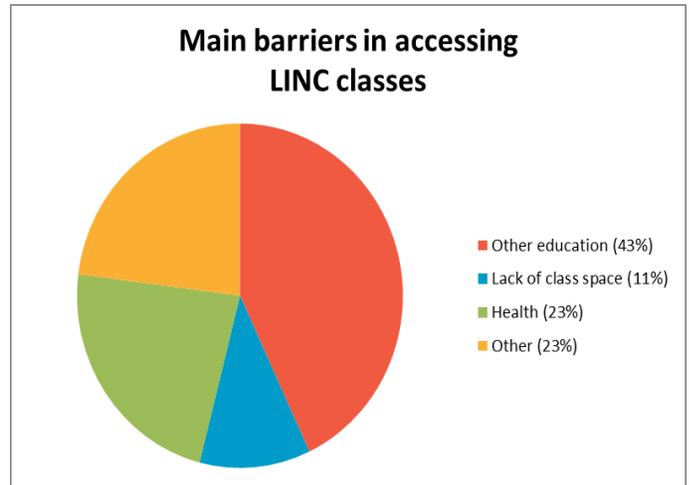
By their second year in Canada, GARs have ideally found a family doctor and integrated into the primary care system. Not only is there an overall shortage of medical professionals, but refugees must overcome additional barriers to accessing healthcare. Higher education and English proficiency can be factors in GARs successfully finding a family doctor indicating the need for GARs to have specific and supplementary language training around navigating the medical system, and more training for health professionals.¹²

References

- ⁷ Francis, J. and Hiebert, D. (2011). [Shaky Foundations: Precarious housing and hidden homelessness among refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in Metro Vancouver](#). Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity
- ⁸ IRCC (2016). [Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs \(GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP\)](#). Evaluation Division.
- ⁹ Wilkinson, L., & Garcea, J. (2017). [The Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada: A Mixed Record?](#) Transatlantic Council on Migration.
- ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹³ ¹⁵ ISS of BC (2018). [Syrian Refugee Operation to BC: Taking Stock Two Years after Arrival](#).
- ¹² Mayhew, M., et al (2015). [Facilitating refugees' access to family doctors](#). *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 11(1).
- ¹⁴ Friesen, C., & Hyndman, J. (2006). [The First 365 Days: Acehnese Refugees in Vancouver, BC](#). Vancouver

Language

A vast majority (87%) of refugees in BC reported that their English improved within the first two years, with 69% of them attending IRCC-funded LINC classes. The range of wait times was 3 -18 months, with 20% waiting over a year to attend LINC classes.¹³ Some had abandoned their language training for childcare reasons or in order to actively search for jobs in order to meet the standards of provincial Income Assistance.¹⁴



Mental health

Of those individuals who indicated depression in their family at the one year point, 62% indicated that their emotional health had worsened by the second year. A majority of those who were already struggling with their physical and emotional health reported a worsening in the condition.¹⁵

Further Resources

- [Services for Refugees in BC Factsheet](#) (BC Gov)
- [Refugee Mental Health](#) (CAMH)
- [Month 13 Resource Kit](#) (Refugee Sponsorship Training Program)
- [RAP Factsheet](#) (ISS of BC)
- [Tenant Handbook](#) (BC Housing)
- [RAP service provider organizations](#) (IRCC)

Funded by:

Financé par :