



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 1L1

The Honourable Kevin Sorenson, P.C., M.P.
Chair
Standing Committee on Public Accounts
131 Queen Street, 6th Floor
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

Following the March 29, 2018 tabling of the Committee's Report, *Settlement Services for Syrian Refugees*, and my letter of April 30, 2018, it is my pleasure to provide you with the Department's response to Recommendations 1 and 2.

You will find enclosed the following documents in both official languages:

- The updated "Chapter 2: Planning and Priority Setting" of the *IRCC Grants and Contributions Manual*; and
- The report *Progress to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts on Information Available on Language Training Waitlists*.

I want to thank the Committee for its interest in the Department's continuous improvement in settlement services available to refugees.

Yours sincerely,


Marta Morgan

Enclosures

Response to Recommendation 1

IRCC Grants and Contributions Manual

Chapter 2 – Planning and Priority Setting

Table of Contents

1. What this chapter is about
2. Planning Overview
3. Procedures
 - 3.1 Assessing the environment
 - 3.1.1 External environment
 - 3.1.2 Internal IRCC environment
 - 3.2 Information sources
 - 3.2.1 Direct sources
 - 3.2.2 Indirect sources
 - 3.3 Funding
 - 3.3.1 Financial environment
 - 3.3.2 Budget Allocation process
 - 3.3.3 Requirements
 - 3.3.4 Communicating budget amounts
 - 3.4 Planning and delivering services to meet official language obligations
 - 3.4.1 Implementation of official languages requirements

1. What this chapter is about

This chapter explains the planning elements that need to be considered when delivering a contributions program. To guide and support the planning process, the chapter also identifies potential information sources, describes information that needs to be gathered and indicates how to analyze such information to develop planning goals.

2. Planning Overview

The objective of planning for the delivery of Grants & Contributions (G&C) programming is three-fold: (i) to identify needs, priorities and delivery objectives at the regional, community, or other level; (ii) to determine the IRCC staffing resources and operating budget needed to implement and manage delivery of the programs and (iii) to identify and prepare to properly manage the processes related to G&C funding and funding allocations.

Proper planning and priority setting:

- Engages and works collaboratively with provincial/territorial partners and others to ensure that local, regional and jurisdictional needs and priorities are addressed in the context of call for proposals or other intake processes, such as requests for quotations and expressions of interest.
- Confirms whether existing programs and services remain responsive to newcomer needs, including official language requirements and identifies service gaps through stakeholder engagement and outreach.
- Ensures that local/regional and federal priorities are aligned.
- Guides management decisions as to how G&C and operating resources should be distributed within and across the Settlement Network (SN) (NHQ and regions).
- Ensures that departmental spending is properly authorized, documented and can be accurately reported.
- Uses a multi-year approach to levels planning that provides increased stability and helps inform long-term planning for the department and its partners.
- Ensures the timely release of funding to recipients.

Planning roles and responsibilities:

Settlement Network - National Headquarters (NHQ)

- Set the framework for operational planning exercises.
- Work with IRCC policy branches in the setting of national, regional and other priorities using information collected by regional offices.
- Support the interpretation and implementation of priorities across the Settlement Network (SN).
- Coordinate and communicate issues and challenges identified during regional and local planning processes for consideration in broader strategic policy and program development and/or operational resource allocation exercises.
- Ensure that obligations set out in legislation, such as those in the *Official Languages Act*, are considered in regional and local planning processes and acted upon.

Settlement Network - Regions

- Develop/update Community Profiles:
 - Collect information regarding the composition of immigrant communities and the geographical communities in which newcomers are settling.
 - Analyze program data to identify migration trends and emerging populations.
- Collect and analyze information on the demographics and characteristics of clients accessing settlement services and the nature and type of services used.
- Compile information on programming offered to newcomers by provincial, territorial and/or municipal governments, other federal departments and organizations.
- Collect data pertaining to the number of existing and potential program recipients and their needs, the type and number of immigrant-serving organizations, and referrals to these organizations.
- Consult provinces and territories to help determine priorities and coordinate strategies to address identified needs (part of this exercise is to advise NHQ with respect to identified needs) along with Policy colleagues.
- Gather information on which organizations offer services in English and/or French, in order to plan and implement the requirements stipulated in the *Official Languages Act* that allows eligible clients to access programs and services in the official language of their choice.

3. Procedures

Priority Setting

3.1 Assessing the environment

It is important to ensure that information gathered to guide or support decisions related to community needs, regional and local funding distribution, and/or internal operational resources is valid, verifiable and reliable. The following section outlines internal and external data that can be considered, as well as possible data sources.

3.1.1 External environment

The external environment focusses on what we know or need to know about newcomer arrivals, residency patterns, newcomer needs, community capacity, employment opportunities, etc. The following elements can be considered during the data gathering stage:

- Population profile: demographic data/statistics concerning the age of the population, family composition, education level, etc.
- Arrival patterns, including rural, urban and ethnic distribution.
- The political, social and economic climate and trends in the areas that are serving or will serve a high volume of newcomers.
- New groups, organizations, agencies, employers and potential sponsors that may reach out or serve newcomers.
- The service providers, other federal, provincial/territorial or municipal government programs that can assist or complement existing IRCC-funded settlement services.
- Services available (or not) in rural or official language minority communities.

Additionally, for the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) the following elements should be considered:

- The number of government-assisted refugees and other eligible clients resettled to Canada each year, which is set by Parliament as part of the annual levels planning exercise.
- Annual arrival targets for each RAP centre across Canada, which are determined by IRCC in consultation with the provinces and territories.
- Available RAP funding.

3.1.2 Internal IRCC environment

The internal environment focuses on the operational resources that are needed to meet G&C program delivery. This assessment is usually done at the network-wide level and normally considers:

- Introduction of new programs.
- Changes to existing programs.
- Changes to contribution funding levels and/or the status of the program.
- Loss or gain of staff resources.
- Learning needs that exist among program delivery staff.
- Change to operational resources that could impact on project monitoring (e.g. impacting on employee travel).
- Other resourcing issues such as accommodation or equipment required to deliver the program.

3.2 Information sources

The process of collecting information can be formal in nature, but can also involve informal contacts with sources known to be reliable and useful. The officer responsible for managing a contribution agreement will often use both direct (formal) and indirect (informal) sources in the planning process.

An example of how the direct and indirect sources of information interact to provide an accurate assessment follows. Landing statistics (direct source) from IRCC give an accurate picture about the number of newcomer arrivals, but do not identify where such newcomers settle within a community. Recipients (indirect source) can supply the latter details and should be approached when conducting such assessments. Accessing multiple types of information sources often provides good information for planning the best locations and allocating optimal resources for effective service delivery.

Throughout the planning process, any information collected should be noted on file. Such information contributes to IRCC's corporate memory and assists in future efforts to support the target newcomer community or group.

3.2.1 Direct sources

Officers should make full use of direct sources when compiling or updating information as a support to the planning process. Some examples of direct sources are:

- [Statistics Canada Web site](#)
- [Landing statistics](#)
- [Immigration and Refugee Board statistics](#)
- Local assessment centre statistics
- [Grants and Contributions System \(GCS\)](#)
- Provincial or territorial statistics and reports
- Immigration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment ([iCARE](#))
- [Job Bank](#)
- [Labour Market Information: Employment and Social Development Canada \(ESDC\)](#)
- [Service Canada: workplace bulletins](#)
- [Government of Canada: on-line information/tools for newcomers](#)
- [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](#)

3.2.2 Indirect sources

To further assist in the planning process, officers often gather information about newcomers, the communities in which they live, and the services available, by consulting various indirect sources:

- Interactions and consultations with recipients.
- Consultations with departmental colleagues.
- Meetings with other federal government departments and agencies, and other levels of government.
- Information from local media.
- Community meetings and advisory committees.

3.3 Funding

The departmental plan outlines the objectives, strategies, and resources (G&C and operational) needed to effectively meet newcomer needs and ensure that resources are distributed in a manner that ensures the successful delivery of G&C programs.

While RAP allocations are generally pre-determined (based on Government Assisted Refugee targets by city) and settlement allocations are formula-based by jurisdiction, the Settlement Network maintains the flexibility within and across regions to reallocate funds based on identified needs and gaps.

Examples of when allocations may be adjusted:

- The program targets a client group that is over-represented in a particular region.
- An immigration-related factor emerges e.g. destining of refugees, or is identified in a particular region that merits increased funding.
- A RAP centre receives more or fewer Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) arrivals than anticipated in their annual target.
- Funds are reallocated to prevent slippage.
- Impact of future year commitments on current and future budgets.
- Funds are prioritized for specific initiatives, such as reduction of waitlists or focusing on vulnerable populations.

3.3.1 Financial environment

Knowledge of the financial environment helps officers understand the context relevant to planning, priority setting and funding allocations.

New procedures pertaining to IRCC's Spending Authority for Grants and Contributions are effective as of July 1, 2018. These procedures apply to all IRCC G&C programs and replace any regional, local and/or departmental policy instrument or guideline on spending authority.

The procedures on spending authority outline the process for budget allocation, reporting on forecast, exercising expenditure initiation, commitment and the authority to sign a funding agreement, to ensure that the requirements of the Treasury Board Directive on Delegation of Spending and Financial Authorities is met in a consistent and standard manner throughout the department. They also ensure that appropriate financial management controls are applied to the decision making process related to G&C funding.

3.3.2 Budget Allocation process

The annual budget allocation is based on funding approved through Annual Reference Level Updates (ARLU), an annual process by which the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and departments revise and agree on the level of funding available to departments to carry out authorized activities. The ARLU process is usually completed by November each year.

3.3.3 Requirements

As a first step in the budget allocation process, the Settlement and Integration Policy (SIP) Branch seeks the Minister's approval of a notional budget allocation for the Settlement Program (in the fall). The Grants and Contributions Financial Management Directorate (GCFM) then provides a notional budget breakdown by Sector and region to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Assistant Deputy Ministers based on the Main Estimates with consideration of previous years' decisions and current year expectations.

By March, the CFO presents the Department's initial budget allocations by sector and region (including historical budget decisions and funding for new pressures) to the Executive Committee (ExCom) for approval. The initial budget allocations are entered in SAP early April so that system controls on commitments can be in effect early in the new fiscal year.

The Branch/Region budgets are entered in SAP by April 30th at which time the control level on commitments is at the Branch level. The Branches, provide the information to allocate budget amounts at the Cost Centre level.

3.3.4 Communicating budget amounts

IRCC uses a multi-year approach to levels planning which, in part, provides greater stability with regards to settlement program funding. The formal allocations process is augmented to include internal operations-level steps by which regions are informed of notional funding allocations. The goal is to communicate budgets in mid-November with a 3 year budget range to improve budget predictability for service providers and facilitate their planning. IRCC's goal is to provide a 3 year budget planning horizon: years 2 and 3 will provide a range to allow adjustments

related to actual landing data. This new planning cycle will allow the Department to initiate negotiations earlier in the year, on a multi-year basis, resulting in a reduced number of amendments over the cycle of a contribution agreement.

3.4 Planning and delivering services to meet official language obligations

According to the *Official Languages Act* (OL Act) and the *Immigration and Refugees Protection Act* (IRPA), IRCC and the Settlement Program have the responsibility to support the vitality of official language minority communities (Part VII OL Act) and also to satisfy the principle of substantive equality and adapt its services to meet the needs of the minority (Part IV of OL Act).

The Francophone Integration Pathway is a major component of IRCC's Francophone Immigration Strategy through which IRCC will engage and collaborate with the settlement sector, including non-Francophone and Francophone organizations to ensure French-speaking newcomers have the opportunity to settle and integrate in French and to contribute positively to Canadian society and to the vitality of Francophone communities. This is achieved through a Francophone integration pathway that spans from pre-arrival to citizenship.

3.4.1 Implementation of official languages requirements

The [Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023](#) was announced March 2018.

Over the next five years, IRCC will be leading new initiatives to support Francophone immigration outside of Quebec. The consolidation of the Francophone integration pathway will be achieved through:

- A new Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative.
- Targeted capacity-building for the Francophone settlement sector.
- Increased availability and accessibility of language training adapted to the needs of French-speaking newcomers.
- Enhanced functional support to Francophone service provider organizations.

Additionally, IRCC 's Francophone Immigration Policy Hub Action Plan includes measures such as: Settlement services by a Francophone service provider at Toronto Pearson International Airport; a commitment to work with language testing organizations to increase the availability and reduce the cost of French language tests in Canada for economic immigrants; and the development of a new departmental Francophone Immigration Strategy.

Guided by the Roadmap, the SN Regions will work with NHQ to develop and implement a plan that meets official languages obligations.

Response to Recommendation 2

The Government is taking action in a number of areas to improve the management of IRCC-funded language training waitlists that may impact eligible newcomers, including refugees.

The Department is improving the data entry tools used by language training service providers funded through the Settlement Program by enhancing the iCARE system, specifically in the area of language training waitlist management. The Department is developing a new system that will move iCARE from a waitlist management tool that was not intended for monitoring and oversight to a comprehensive language training waitlist management tool. These enhancements will not only facilitate language training service providers reporting on language training activities and implementation of the guidelines on waitlist management and referrals, but also support IRCC officials in managing language training contribution agreements.

By fall 2018, IRCC expects to improve the collection of additional data, increase client management functionalities and allow for increased sharing of course availability and waitlist information, thereby improving the relevance and timeliness of language training waitlist data. Additional iCARE waitlist management features and functionality will be developed and released in future phases. As part of the rolling-out of the new iCARE features, IRCC will obtain user feedback and provide user training on an ongoing basis to support usage of the new module.

In addition IRCC has also improved the information made available to officials who monitor language training activities. To further support decision making, monitoring of language seat occupancy requirements and language providers' compliance with the IRCC guidelines on waitlist management and referrals to language training, these reports were enhanced in June 2018 by:

- streamlining the waitlist information in the reports to facilitate data analysis;
- adding language training information at the course level; and
- developing accompanying tools, including a manual and webinar training, to support officials with the analysis of the reports

As the Department advances work to address waitlists for language training, officials will continue to obtain stakeholder feedback. The Department will remain in close contact with language provider organizations on a regular basis to determine demands on their services. In areas where waitlist pressures exist, targeted operational measures will be implemented in order to ensure classes are at full occupancy and that funding is directed towards language services where the need is greatest.

Strengthening provincial and territorial collaboration in settlement language training constitutes another key IRCC initiative to improve the management of information on language training. Under the terms of bilateral settlement arrangements, IRCC and provincial and territorial ministries are committed to sharing information, results and best practices. For example, the Department continues to work collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of settlement language training, including the sharing of information and best practices in the area of employment related

language training, English as a Second Language/French as a Second Language literacy as well as e-learning.

In summary, IRCC is pleased to report to the Committee on progress to implement the recommendations of the PACP and the OAG. Actions on several fronts have been undertaken to improve the information and tools that support the management of IRCC-funded language training waitlists. These initiatives further support IRCC officials managing the contribution agreements of language training providers, the organizations delivering language training services, as well as partnerships with provinces and territories. The new measures all share the ultimate objective of providing clients with the opportunity to make informed decisions related to their language training options. Settlement language services aim to help all newcomers, including refugees, develop the English or French language skills that they need to integrate successfully into their communities and contribute to the Canadian economy. It is expected that the actions featured in this report will reduce wait times for clients waiting for language training and ensure that newcomers and refugees receive the settlement services they required in a timely manner to successfully settle and integrate in Canada.