



Immigrant & Refugee Services
ASSOCIATION
Prince Edward Island

Annual Report

2024/2025 Fiscal Year



Board of Directors list 24/25

Tina Saksida

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Vanessa Wachuku

Vice President

Gloria Crocket

Treasurer

Sandy Irwin

Secretary

Bobby Cameron

Corinne Chappell

Dan Doran

Lucas MacArthur

Robert Saada

Trung Ngo



*Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors
DiverseCity Kensington 2025*

Land Acknowledgment

IRSA acknowledges that Prince Edward Island is the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq First Nation. For more than twelve thousand years, the Mi'kmaq people have lived on Epekwitk and have cared for this land with deep knowledge, responsibility, and connection. Today, they remain the rightful stewards and owners of this land, and we recognize their enduring presence and their continuing contributions to the life of this province.

We are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on Mi'kmaq territory, and we honour the Mi'kmaq people, including Elders, community leaders, and future generations. As an organization that welcomes and supports newcomers, we are committed to learning from the truths of this land and to fostering respectful relationships with the Indigenous peoples of Epekwitk.

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Mission, Vision, & Values



Our Vision

We see our island as a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive community that supports new immigrants as full members of society and values their contributions.



Our Mission

We provide settlement services and foster community connections, empowering immigrants and refugees to build a prosperous future in PEI.

Our Values

• Accountability

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions, acting with honesty, fairness, and transparency.

• Respect

We treat every client, volunteer, partner, and staff member with dignity, understanding, and compassion.

• Integrity

We uphold strong ethical standards in all that we do, ensuring professionalism and trustworthiness.

• Empathy

We listen, understand, and respond to the experiences and needs of others with care.

• Diversity

We value the unique perspectives and strengths of all individuals and promote inclusion, equity, and belonging.

• Innovation

We seek new ideas, approaches, and solutions to better meet the evolving needs of our clients.

• Teamwork

We collaborate with colleagues, clients, and community partners to achieve shared goals and strengthen our impact.



President's Message

Tina Saksida

As I reflect on this past year, my final one as President of IRSA's Board of Directors, I am filled with deep gratitude for the extraordinary people who shape this organization. Serving on the Board since January 2016 has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my professional life, and it has been a true honour to contribute to IRSA's mission of welcoming and supporting newcomers to Prince Edward Island.

This year brought both continuity and change. IRSA continued to deliver essential settlement, integration, and community engagement services to thousands of newcomers across the province, helping individuals and families overcome challenges and build strong foundations for their new lives on the Island. At the same time, we experienced a significant leadership transition. Our Executive Director, Bernadette Reynolds, retired, leaving a legacy of exceptional leadership, professionalism, and dedication. Her impact on IRSA's clients, staff, and community partners will be felt for many years to come.

In March 2025, we were pleased to welcome Dean Constable as IRSA's new Executive Director. Dean has more than two decades of nonprofit leadership experience, including senior roles at the REACH Foundation and the Confederation Centre of the Arts. He is a committed advocate for diversity, inclusion, and community, and we are confident that his vision and leadership will guide IRSA forward with strength and purpose.

I extend my deepest appreciation to IRSA's staff. Their resilience, compassion, and professionalism remain the heart of this organization. I am equally grateful to my fellow Board members for their time, expertise, and thoughtful governance throughout the year. We welcomed Gloria Crockett, Dan Doran, and Lucas MacArthur to the Board, and we expressed our thanks to Gary Demeulenaere, Chera-Lee Gomez, Rachel Murphy, and Matt Toten as they completed their terms after years of valued service. Their dedication has strengthened IRSA's work and enhanced our collective impact.

I would also like to acknowledge our Board's administrative assistant, Beti Andric, whose knowledge, efficiency, and steady support have been invaluable to our operations. On behalf of the Board, I offer our sincere appreciation to our funding partners, especially the Federal and Provincial Governments, as well as the many volunteers and community supporters who continue to champion our mission. Your trust and commitment make this work possible.

As I conclude my time as President and Board member, I leave with immense pride in all that IRSA has accomplished and with great optimism for the future. Newcomers enrich our communities in countless ways, and IRSA will continue to play a vital role in ensuring they can thrive, grow, and truly make Prince Edward Island their home.



A note from the Executive Director

Dean Constable

This past year has been one of meaningful progress and renewed commitment across IRSA. Before anything else, I want to acknowledge the leadership of Bernadette Reynolds, outgoing Executive Director of IRSA. Much of what we highlight in this report reflects her leadership of the IRSA team. Over the past year, IRSA welcomed 2,181 newcomers from 106 countries, along with 91 refugees from eight countries, primarily Syria, Somalia, and Uganda. Each arrival represents a unique journey, supported by the dedication and compassion of our staff. Through settlement support, youth services, language programs, employment resources, community connections, and mental health referrals, our teams worked

diligently to help newcomers feel informed, supported, and included. This year also marked the first anniversary of our Summerside office. In just twelve months, it has grown into a vibrant hub of activity, offering services for all ages and hosting programs that reflect the needs of the community. The Summerside job fair was a standout success, bringing together more than 120 participants, employers, and training partners to explore opportunities in Western PEI. As we move forward, our focus is on building momentum, expanding our reach, and ensuring every newcomer who arrives in PEI is met with support, dignity, and the opportunity to build a meaningful future.



His Excellency Mr. Pham Vinh Quang, Ambassador of Vietnam to Canada visited our Charlottetown IRSA Office.

Newcomer Settlement Services

Settlement workers play a vital role in helping newcomers build their lives in Canada by offering personalized guidance, resources, and referrals to both IRSA programs and community partners. Through an individual case management approach, the NSS team provides tailored support, from understanding cultural norms to accessing healthcare and essential services, ensuring clients have the knowledge and confidence to navigate their new environment.



HIPPY Program
Family Graduation Day

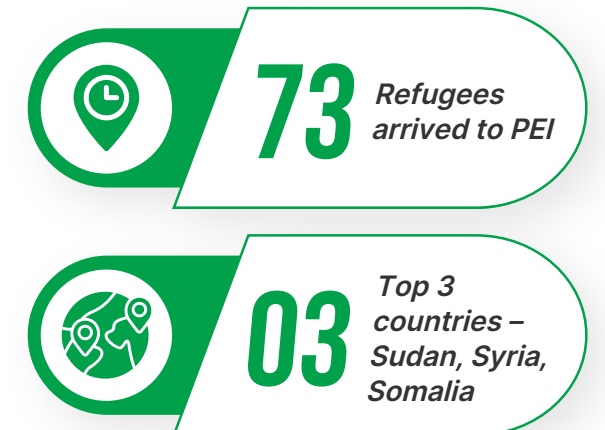
Resettlement Assistance Program

A TOTAL OF **2,181**
NEW CLIENTS REGISTERED WITH IRSA
FROM
97 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

THIS FISCAL YEAR
WE HAD A TOTAL OF
14,388
SETTLEMENT INTERVENTIONS

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) provides support to Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) during their first 6 to 8 weeks in Prince Edward Island. The program helps newcomers meet their initial settlement needs, including greeting them at the airport, providing transportation to temporary accommodations, and assisting with finding permanent housing.

RAP also offers an initial assessment, delivers orientation and essential information to begin the resettlement process, and provides guidance on accessing health and medical services. In addition, the program connects clients to other available programs and services and supports them with necessary documentation for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), ensuring a smooth start to their new life in Canada.





Youth Settlement Services

The Youth Settlement Services (YSS) team supports immigrant students from kindergarten to Grade 12 and their families in both Charlottetown and Summerside, helping children adjust to the Canadian school system, build essential skills, and navigate social, emotional, and family-related challenges so they can reach their full potential. YSS offers a wide range of programming, including school enrollment support, information sessions on the PEI school system, Youth Circle, Girls Circle, Boys Council, Future Readiness activities, and numerous sport and recreational opportunities, as well as PD Day camps, March Break camps, summer camps, and overnight camps. The team also delivers the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program, an evidence-based home-visitation model that works with parents of children aged three to five, helping families prepare their children for school while reducing isolation, building confidence, and strengthening their connection to the community.

YSS Program Statistics

New Students	398
Group Activity Sessions	157
Unique Clients Served	3,169

HIPPY Program Statistics

Mothers Enrolled	25
Children Enrolled	29
Home Visits Completed	Over 300

Employment Assistance Services

At IRSA, we are committed to helping immigrant clients navigate the challenges of finding meaningful employment in Prince Edward Island. Using a client-centered approach, the Employment Team provides personalized support that reflects the unique goals and experiences of each newcomer. Services include one-on-one employment counseling, job search guidance, résumé and interview preparation, and support with credential recognition through the World Education Services (WES) program. Throughout the year, we delivered a range of workshops on Canadian workplace culture, job readiness, interview skills, and employment standards, helping clients understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace and preparing them for long-term career success.

A TOTAL OF **2,404**
EMPLOYMENT INTERVENTIONS WERE
COMPLETED FOR
1,196 CLIENTS

Atlantic Immigration Program


The Atlantic Immigration Program remained an important part of our work with both newcomers and employers across the province. Through this program, IRSA's AIP Specialist supported employers with program navigation and provided newcomers with tools to build stable, long-term careers in PEI.



Alternate Careers Event


Provincial Immigration Partnership Program

The Provincial Immigration Partnership (PIP) is a province-wide initiative funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Led by the PIP team at IRSA, the program brings together partners from across Prince Edward Island to strengthen collaboration and improve settlement and retention outcomes for newcomers. Its mission is to support community-based efforts that help build welcoming communities across the Island.



82

Events organized by PIP or a direct partner organization



58

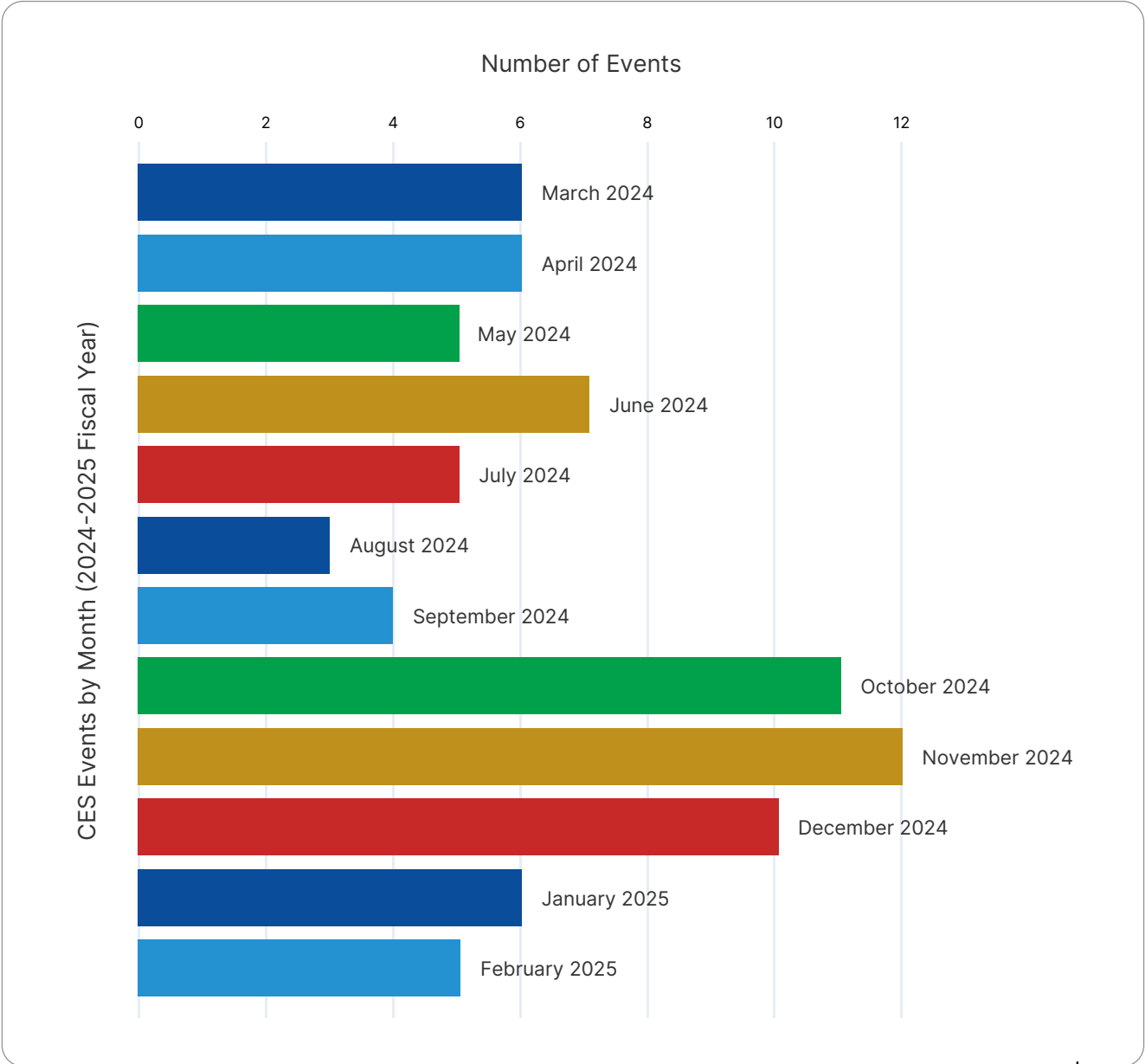
Collaboration groups meetings



Community Engagement

IRSA’s Community Engagement Services provides a variety of programs and events to support newcomers as they settle into life on Prince Edward Island. Through initiatives like Canada Connects and the English as an Additional Language Volunteer Tutor program, newcomers receive language support, cultural guidance, and mentorship from experienced community volunteers. Our events, such as Volunteer Appreciation Night and Women’s Wellness Night, create welcoming spaces for connection and community engagement. We also offer practical support through programs such as the Canada School and Tax Clinic, helping newcomers navigate essential tasks like tax filing with confidence.

IRSA HOSTED
80+
EVENTS THIS FISCAL YEAR!



DiverseCity

DiverseCity first took place on Victoria Row in Charlottetown in 2007 and has grown larger each year. By 2014, it had expanded into a multi-event festival across all three counties, becoming a celebrated part of Prince Edward Island’s summer festival lineup.

In 2024, DiverseCity expanded to six locations — Charlottetown, Summerside, Kensington, Montague, Alberton, and Souris — with Kensington joining the festival for the first time. Throughout the season, the festival welcomed an estimated 7,080 attendees, not including performers and partners. The program featured 150 talented performers who

proudly shared their cultures through music, dance, and art.

Food was once again a highlight, with food vendors serving authentic dishes from countries including Afghanistan, the Bahamas, China, India, Jamaica, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Alongside them, craft vendors offered handmade items ranging from Indian jewelry and Persian rugs to Ghanaian fabrics, Ivorian paintings, and Moroccan crafts. The festival also included non-profit organizations that shared valuable information and resources with attendees.



Mi'kmaq Heritage Actors



Hesham Riad ElHamshary



Dianadelirio Band



Monelli - Persian Dance for DiverseCity 2024, Charlottetown

Community Training

Cultural Inclusion Training (CIT)

The Cultural Inclusion Training (CIT) Program promotes cultural diversity, fosters inclusion, and addresses racism across Prince Edward Island by creating welcoming environments and challenging stereotypes, biases, and discrimination. Through workshops and presentations tailored to various audiences, the program engages government employees, businesses, educators, students, community organizations, and more while also supporting the cultural integration of newcomers in workplaces and communities. This year, CIT worked with participants from Holland College, Cavendish Farms, Seniors College, the public sector, healthcare, and other community groups.



SESSIONS DELIVERED

96 sessions (combined in-person and virtual)



PARTICIPANTS REACHED

Approx. 2650 people

Quotes from participants:

- 01** The course was super easy to follow along with and very informative. It was engaging and taught lots of transferrable skills.
- 02** Lisa’s presentation was very dynamic and enriching. She provided materials and examples that were informative and served up the “ah-ha” moment when it comes to culture shock and diversity in the workplace! Really appreciated her time.
- 03** I found Lisa very knowledgeable, and she offered many insights into our immigrant and newcomer clients. The course was well presented and interactive making the day flow well.
- 04** It was interesting to put into perspective the different types of cultures and how this can impact our office culture and working relationships.
- 05** Very well done and relevant. Great instructor.

Intercultural Competency Training for Employers

To help employers create inclusive and supportive workplaces, IRSA delivered Intercultural Competency Training (ICT) across multiple sectors.



24 TRAINING SESSIONS CONDUCTED



79 EMPLOYERS REACHED



LISA DOLLAR, CULTURAL INCLUSION TRAINER



*Sewing Workshop
Summerside Office Anniversary Event*

One Year Anniversary of the Summerside Office

In 2024, IRSA celebrated the 1st anniversary of our Summerside office at 30 Greenwood Drive. To mark this milestone, we hosted a series of community events at the office, including sewing workshops, a Fresh Air Fun Walk, gardening activities, and more. These events offered newcomers and community members opportunities to connect, learn new skills, and enjoy time together in a welcoming environment. The anniversary celebrations highlighted the Summerside office's ongoing role as a hub for settlement services, youth and family programming, and community engagement, reinforcing our commitment to supporting newcomers across Western Prince Edward Island.

Special Programs and Events Highlights

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Tutor Program

Special Programs: EAL, Volunteers, Newcomer Orientation Program, Tax Clinic

Event Highlights: Day of the Dead, Christmas Social, Alternate Careers Summerside Fair

Success story: "I'm so happy to share with you my learner has progressed much beyond my expectations. She started in Aug 2024 with zero level of English and after 4 months of tutoring and her all-out effort to practice English anytime by all means possible, such as talking to other people, watching English films on Netflix, listening to English songs and doing grammar exercises, she got CLB 5 last week and is now very confident speaking and understanding conversations. Thanks to her English improvement, she got a promotion to Kitchen Supervisor at A&W restaurant in Stratford from her early role of Kitchen Helper. She is now confident picking up phone calls from customers for food orders and doing more tasks like managing the inventory of the restaurant to ensure enough supplies. I'm so proud of her resilient effort and strongly believe that she will go further in her career"

– EAL Tutor

- **Matches completed: 70**
- **Active volunteers: 52**
- **Conversation Circles:**

5 weekly groups across 3 locations

Average attendance: 80 clients monthly

Volunteers:

The Community Engagement Team hosted our annual Volunteer Appreciation Night to celebrate and thank our hardworking volunteers. This year's theme embraced the joys of summer, with bright outfits and beach-inspired decorations. We were thrilled to welcome over 100 guests to the event.

- # of active volunteers: Approx 134
- # of hours given by volunteers to IRSA: Approx 1647



*Conversation Circle at the Charlottetown
Library Learning Centre*

Newcomer Orientation Program, Canada School

The Canada School program provides newcomers with presentations on a range of topics, offered both online and in person. Sessions are delivered by the orientation coordinator or subjectmatter experts, giving participants the chance to ask questions and learn in a supportive, welcoming environment.

 **37** SESSIONS DELIVERED

 **746** CLIENTS ATTENDING



*Health & Safety in the Workplace
Canada School Info Session*

Day of the Dead event:

For the first time, we celebrated the **Day of the Dead event** in partnership with the Latinos Association of PEI at Beaconsfield Carriage House. The event highlighted the richness of Mexican culture, traditions, and flavors, including the delicious Pan de Muerto we shared. Two local Mexican singers filled the room with music, and attendees were invited to place their own photos on the altar. The celebration was a wonderful success, welcoming 75 clients along with many community members.

Christmas Social:

On December 4, 2024, we hosted our annual **Christmas Social** at the Confederation Court Mall. The event was full of festive cheer, with live music setting the holiday mood. Guests enjoyed a variety of international foods and drinks, while children took part in crafts and decorated cookies at the kids' table. The evening's highlight was a special visit from Santa Claus and his friendly elves, spreading holiday joy to more than **650 attendees** who joined in the celebration.

Tax Clinic:

This year marked the first time IRSA offered a **tax clinic**, designed exclusively for newcomers to Canada, and it was very well received by the community. Many clients shared their appreciation, noting that the Canadian tax filing process can feel complicated and challenging to navigate without support. In March 2025, the clinic assisted approximately **112 clients**. The service continued until April, and those numbers will be reflected in the next reporting period.

Alternate Careers Summerside Fair:

Through a client-centered approach, our team works collaboratively with government organizations, community partners, and employers to help newcomers achieve their career goals and successfully integrate into the local workforce.

This year the Alternate Careers event featured three key speakers — Skills PEI, Apprenticeship Office, and the Government of PEI — providing valuable insights on career pathways while giving newcomers networking opportunities.



*Santa Claus, Christmas Social,
Charlottetown 2024.*



*Christmas Social,
Summerside 2024.*



*Kids' Table.
Christmas Social, 2024.*



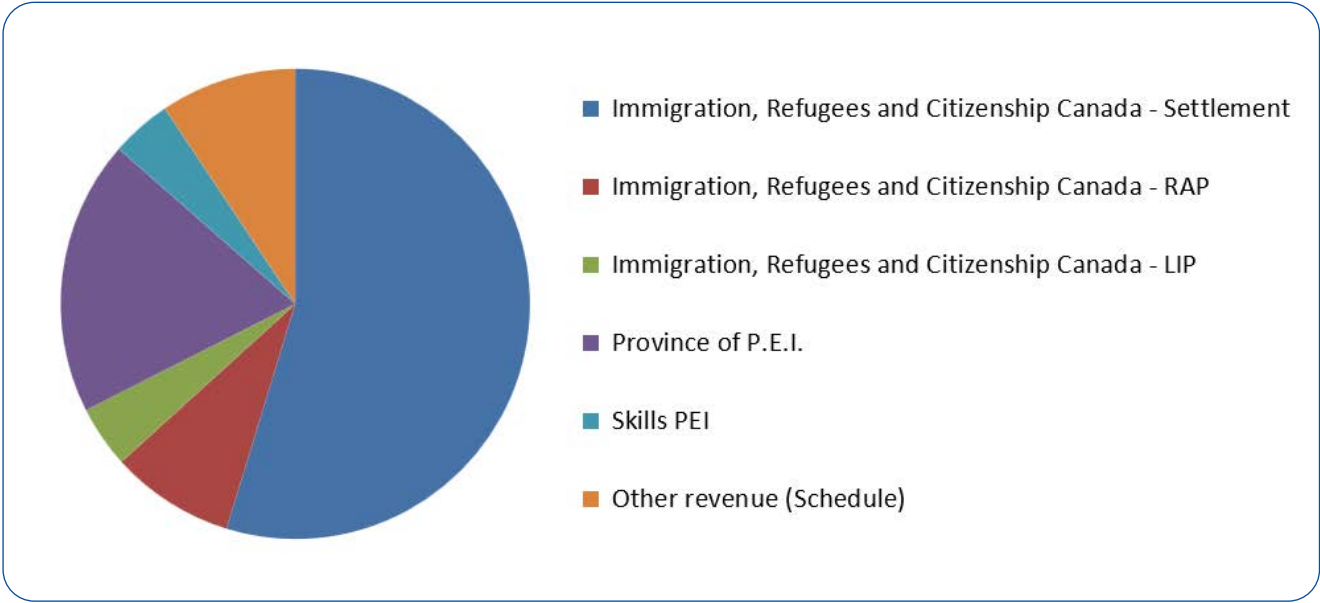
*Singer Octavio Medina
-Day of the Dead Event.*



*Kids Table at Christmas Social
Charlottetown 2024.*

Statement of Operations Data

Revenue	2024-2025	2023-2024
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - Settlement	2,557,728	2,493,406
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - RAP	399,023	953,220
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada - LIP	198,775	196,187
Province of P.E.I.	884,194	570,699
Skills PEI	194,536	225,965
Other revenue (Schedule)	438,274	737,762
Total	4,672,530	5,177,239



Expenses	2024-2025	2023-2024
Wages and wage levies	3,236,086	3,457,699
Program Activities	650,535	606,388
Operating Expenses	121,161	139,005
Website, intranet development, and translation	115,664	69,202
Rent	236,261	217,978
Client expenses	132,706	430,940
Office	7,732	8,758
Travel	52,195	85,172
Professional development	37,482	85,391
Miscellaneous	13,160	13,866
Advertising	4,568	5,884
Professional fees	6,773	32,833
Amortization	3,929	5,177
Total	4,618,252	5,158,293
Excess of revenue over expenses	54,278	18,946



Community Partners List 24/25

- ARAISA
 - ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY (ACOA)
 - ATLANTIC COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – ACIC CACI
 - ATLANTIC LOTTERY CORPORATION
 - BIG BROTHERS AND BIG SISTERS OF PEI
 - BIPOC USHR
 - BLACK CULTURAL SOCIETY OF PEI
 - CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
 - CANADIAN VIETNAMESE ASSOCIATION ON PEI
 - CARREFOUR DE L'ISLE-SAINT-JEAN
 - CHANCES
 - CHARLOTTETOWN CITY POLICE
 - CHARLOTTETOWN FARMER'S MARKET
 - CHINESE-CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PE
 - CITY OF CHARLOTTETOWN
 - CITY OF SUMMERSIDE
 - COMMUNITY LEGAL INFORMATION
 - CONFEDERATION CENTRE OF THE ARTS
 - CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION OF PEI
 - COOPERATIVE D'INTEGRATION FRANCOPHONE (CIF)
- CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH
 - CREDIT UNION PLACE
 - CULTURE SUMMERSIDE
 - DISCOVER CHARLOTTETOWN
 - GREATER CHARLOTTETOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 - GREATER SUMMERSIDE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 - HEALTH PEI
 - HOLLAND COLLEGE
 - HOLLAND COLLEGE - INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
 - HOLLAND COLLEGE - LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)
 - JUMPSTART
 - KERALA ASSOCIATION OF PEI
 - KIDSPORT PEI
 - LA COOPÉRATIVE D'INTÉGRATION FRANCOPHONE
 - LATINOS ASSOCIATION OF PEI
 - MI'KMAQ CONFEDERACY
 - NATIVE COUNCIL OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
 - PARKS CANADA
- PEI BUSINESS WOMEN ASSOCIATION
 - PEI CONNECTORS
 - PEI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
 - PEI LITERACY ALLIANCE
 - PEI MUSEUM AND HERITAGE FOUNDATION
 - PEI PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
 - PROVINCIAL CREDIT UNION
 - PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE
 - PUBLIC SCHOOLS BRANCH
 - RBC ROYAL BANK OF CANADA
 - RCMP
 - RESOURCE ABILITIES
 - STATUS OF WOMEN
 - STUDY ABROAD CANADA (LINC)
- THE ROTARY CLUB OF CHARLOTTETOWN
 - TIA PEI (TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION)
 - TOWN OF ALBERTON
 - TOWN OF MONTAGUE
 - TOWN OF SOURIS
 - TOWN OF STRATFOR
 - TOWN OF THREE RIVERS
 - TOWN OF KENSINGTON
 - TRINITY UNITED CHURCH
 - UNITED WAY OF PEI
 - UPEI
 - UPEI INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICE
 - WOMEN'S NETWORK PEI

Social Media & Website Stats

On Facebook, our content reached **73.6K** people and generated **7.4K** interactions, which is an increase of about **115%** compared to the previous reporting period.

On Instagram, our reach grew to **14.5K**, a **365%** increase from last year, and we recorded **5.2K** profile visits, representing a **276%** increase over the previous period.

Website: In this reporting period, IRSA's website had an average of **36,530** unique visitors monthly. Typically, more than **5,500** visitors browsed the website for longer than **30 minutes** during their visit each month, and we had a total of **572,681** visits during this reporting period.

Thanks!

Connect With Us



IRSAnewcomers



@irsapei



@irsapei



@IRSAPEI

