

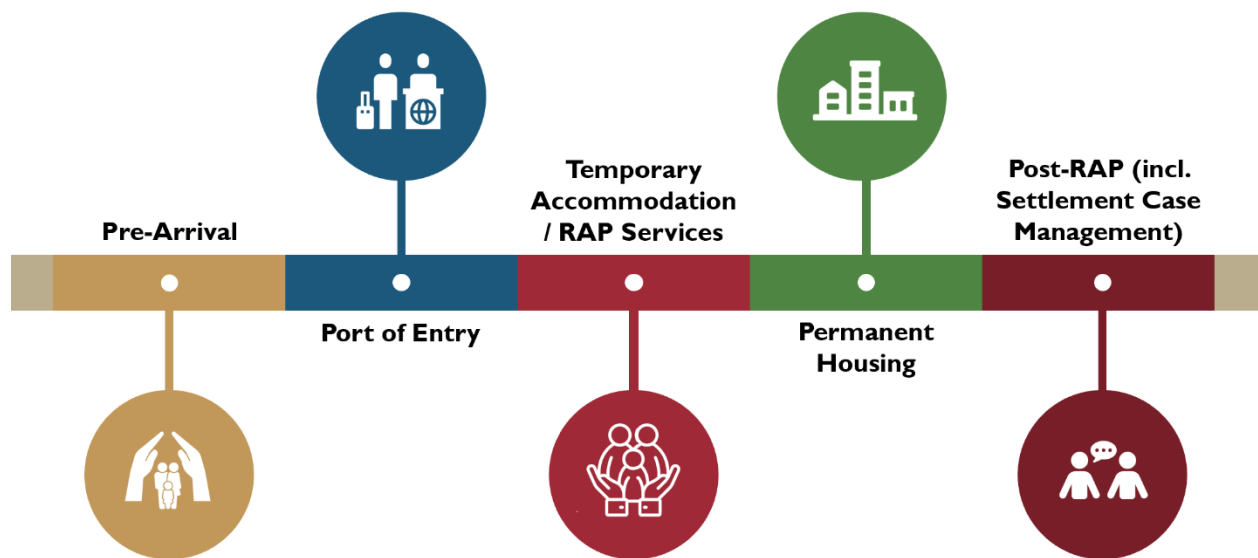
DELIVERY OF CRITICAL SERVICES TO GARs DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

PRE-ARRIVAL TO POST-ARRIVAL (TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION, PERMANENT HOUSING, SETTLEMENT CASE MANAGEMENT)

August 31, 2020



FLOWCHART AND PROTOCOLS: CONSENSUS VIEW OF RAP SPO COVID-19 RESPONSE TASK TEAM



Background

The first version of this document, issued on May 14, 2020, was the consensus view of the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) COVID-19 Response Task Team that was struck in late March 2020 to advise Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) on the needs of RAP Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) and to share resources and best practices to support RAP SPOs to safely continue to deliver critical services. The task team was made up of 12 leaders from the Settlement sector and several IRCC officials.

This document has now been updated with the latest guidelines from IRCC and from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). It outlines the five critical times/transitions for GAR clients while outlining proposed approaches and protocols for each stage. These five critical transitions include:

1. Pre-Arrival
2. Port of Entry Airport Services
3. Temporary Accommodation & Delivery of Critical RAP Services
4. Assistance in locating Permanent Housing/Transition to Settlement Case Management
5. Post-RAP services including Settlement case management services

The purpose of this document is to support RAP SPOs in developing and implementing their management strategies, standards, guidelines and protocols for the delivery of critical services to GARs during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is recognized that GAR arrivals to Canada are now slowly resuming, and it is assumed that current measures such as physical distancing and the requirement for a 14-day mandatory quarantine upon arrival in Canada will be applicable for the foreseeable future.

The practices outlined in this document are based on the best available information at the time of writing. This document is evergreen, and is being updated as new information or guidance becomes available. Please check the [SettleNet.org](https://settle.net.org) group "Resettlement of GARs and COVID-19" for the most recent version of this document.

The adoption of these practices supports efforts to standardize good practices across the country to ensure that public health guidelines, and the mandatory quarantine period required upon arrival, are being strictly followed. Some standards in this document may require additional resources to implement; RAP SPOs are to contact their IRCC project officer to flag and discuss any additional resources they may need to implement these measures.

Lastly, this document does not replace the [latest official guidance from PHAC](#), nor official IRCC functional guidance, nor the contents of the [RAP Service Provider](#)

Handbook, however, it has been reviewed to make sure it is consistent with these. The previous version of this document has also be reviewed by PHAC and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) for accuracy. Suggestions for updates to this document, or questions for IRCC about the COVID-19 response should be directed to your IRCC Project Officer.

Stage One: Pre-Arrival



- Canada's border restriction measures, coupled with the temporary suspension of resettlement departures by Canada's primary resettlement delivery partners – the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – initially resulted in a very limited number of resettlement movements. Although certain selected refugees are exempt from the travel ban, and resettlement movements are now slowly resuming, there are still limitations on who can be resettled at this time, given capacity constraints of partners abroad and in Canada which still renders travel very challenging.
- IRCC continues to be committed to working with RAP SPOs to confirm their capacity to support GAR arrivals as resettlement travel slowly resumes. IRCC will continue to reach out to RAP SPOs prior to the resettlement of any case.
- Prior to boarding, air travelers will undergo a limited examination with a focus on signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air. All air passengers are also required to have a non-medical mask or face covering to cover their mouth and nose during travel.
- IOM provides a visual guide ([‘Help reduce the spread of COVID-19’](#), and since August 2020, [‘Resettling to Canada during the COVID-19 Pandemic’](#)¹ both available in multiple languages) to resettled refugees that outlines hygiene and safety measures including social distancing and hand washing techniques. Where possible, IOM distributes hand sanitizers and tissues to departing clients.

¹ Will be published at <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/settlement-resettlement-providers.html> in September 2020

- In lieu of in-person sessions, where possible, IOM is currently providing pre-departure orientation over the phone to travel-ready refugees. These phone sessions are approximately two hours in length. The most essential and critical topics are covered during these sessions, including:
 - COVID-19 and quarantine measures on arrival in Canada
 - Travel, what to pack, and baggage allowances
 - Multicultural Canada
 - Canadian seasons
 - Resettlement programs, and related financial and settlement support
 - Health (particularly mental health)
 - Housing
 - Education (with a focus on language training)
 - Employment
 - Budgeting
- Clients are given the opportunity to ask questions about all of the above, and to share any other question or concern they may have.
- Where possible, IOM will also provide the COA Participant Workbook to clients before their departure.

Stage Two: Port of Entry Airport Services



- RAP POE Airport Services staff wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) meet the GAR clients at the airplane gate and provide escort accompaniment through customs and immigration processes, as per current protocols described in [Chapter 5 of the RAP Service Provider Handbook](#).
- Upon arrival, clients are reminded to follow good hand hygiene on a regular basis, either by washing their hands when possible, or by using hand sanitizer. RAP POE staff will explain PHAC guidelines, including the mandatory 14-day quarantine upon arrival at their final destination.
- RAP POE Airport Services staff will provide an additional mask and a pair of gloves to each client at the airport. Clients are reminded that they should be wearing a mask or face covering at all times while they are in the airport, and until they reach their temporary accommodation at their final destination. As recommended by PHAC, they are informed that the use of masks is recommended for periods of time when it is not possible to consistently maintain a 2 meter distance from others, particularly in crowded public settings such as stores, shopping areas, and public transportation. They are also informed that in [some jurisdictions](#), the use of masks in many indoor public spaces and on public transit is now mandatory.
- On arrival at the POE airport, a health check is conducted by the Canadian officials. If the GAR client exhibits no health concerns, they will proceed to their final destination where RAP staff awaits to undertake immediate reception and intake procedures. If the client is symptomatic, they cannot continue using a public conveyance to go to the final destination. The PHAC quarantine officer at the port of entry will determine if:
 - 1) the client needs to be quarantined at a PHAC quarantine facility at the POE (or nearby); if so, the quarantine officer will arrange for the transportation of the client to the quarantine centre. OR
 - 2) the client can continue to their final destination without using a public conveyance. The quarantine officer will ensure that the transport to the end destination is appropriate and the end destination is suitable to complete a quarantine period (e.g. easy access to medical facilities, and

not be in close contact with vulnerable persons such as those who are immune compromised or very elderly). OR

- 3) If there are factors that suggest that their needs may be better served by the local RAP SPO, arrangements may be made at that time for the client to stay in a RAP temporary accommodation managed by the local RAP SPO to complete their 14-day quarantine period, before continuing their onward journey to final destination.
- Services/professionals available at federal quarantine centres include: mental health services, social workers, specialized medical health teams, telehealth, nurses performing regular health checks, over the phone interpretation services, rooms with phones and free WiFi.
 - All GAR clients will have with them a 'Letter of Introduction' prepared by IRCC (see Annex A), and addressed to the CBSA officer. This letter explains that GARs will be received in Canada by RAP SPOs, and reassures the CBSA officer and/or PHAC officer that RAP SPOs have been instructed by IRCC to implement suitable arrangements for a quarantine plan for all incoming GAR clients. Using the RAP SPO Emergency Contact list, and prior to letting the GAR client proceed to final destination, CBSA or PHAC may contact the receiving RAP SPO to confirm that the arrangements made for clients to complete their 14-day quarantine are adequate.
 - If the client must spend the night at the POE due to having had a long journey to Canada, or having arrived too late at the POE to continue their journey, they may be directed to remain at a PHAC quarantine facility for 14 days. However, instead, at the discretion of the PHAC quarantine officer, the client may either:
 - 1) stay overnight at the airport hotel in strict isolation, and continue his or her onward journey the next day. RAP POE Airport Services staff will escort clients to the overnight hotel, bring food to their hotel room's door and bring them back to airport next day, OR
 - 2) as explained above, if there are factors that suggest that their needs may be better served by the local RAP SPO, arrangements may be made at that time for the client to stay in a RAP temporary accommodation managed by the local RAP SPO to complete their 14-day quarantine period, before continuing their onward journey to final destination.
 - If a GAR client does in fact exhibit health concerns and symptoms related to COVID-19, but is authorized by PHAC to continue their journey to final destination, the POE RAP SPO should alert the receiving RAP SPO as soon as possible, in advance of the client leaving the airport.

- All clients will be given the **“Help Reduce the Spread of COVID-19”** pamphlet from Public Health Agency of Canada to reinforce personal hygiene during the transfer to final destination.
- Transportation from airport or bus terminal to temporary accommodation facility (for asymptomatic clients):
 - Clients must continue to wear their masks until they arrive at their private quarters in the temporary accommodation facility.
 - As a preferred option, clients should be transported using taxis or private vehicles. If using a private vehicle, clients should sit in the back seat. If not possible to maintain the 2-meter distance in the private vehicle, and if the weather allows, it is recommended to keep the windows open for the full journey to the temporary accommodation facility.
 - If using public transport (e.g. bus), each family unit should enter one by one and be seated in a manner to ensure that the 2-meter distance is respected between each family unit.

Stage Three: RAP Temporary Accommodations & Delivery of Critical RAP Services



- PHAC and/or CBSA may contact the RAP SPO throughout the 14-day quarantine period to follow up and ensure that quarantine requirements are being followed, or to follow contact tracing procedures. The calls would be specific to each client or family group, so the RAP SPO may receive multiple calls each day.
- RAP SPO staff are encouraged to seek locally-available training on COVID-19 or communicable diseases.²
- They should be equipped with the necessary PPE, cell phone and laptop to be able to work from home or the office, as required. RAP SPOs are to contact their IRCC project officer for any questions related to the equipment or resources RAP SPO staff may need to continue to provide critical RAP services.
- RAP SPO staff are provided with training on how to use protective gear and protocols for their use.
- RAP SPO arranges for temporary housing in either reception house or in commercial accommodation, ensuring the facilities that will be used by incoming clients allow them to adequately and safely quarantine for the mandatory 14-day period.
- RAP SPO staff meets the GAR client and undertake reception services wearing PPE. RAP SPO assesses and addresses any urgent need (e.g. need for prescription refills).

² Examples of training available in the Toronto area include: Communicable Diseases online certificate course offered by [Toronto Hostels Training Centre](#); 'Protecting Workers in the Service Sector from COVID-19' training delivered by Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS)

- RAP SPO follows [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and local health authority guidance if individuals exhibit symptoms and may need to be tested or treated. All subsequent follow up should follow local health authority directions.
- Arrange for onsite primary health care screening. Contact your local Telehealth service or local clinic to follow advice on how and where to obtain these services. If a health emergency occurs during the 14-day quarantine/isolation period, follow standard emergency procedures and inform first responders of pertinent, COVID-related information. If on-site medical supports (e.g. personal support worker assistance) are required by the client, contact your IRCC officer as soon as possible to assist in making these arrangements.
- GAR clients proceed into 14-day quarantine:
 - RAP SPO staff arrange to deliver meals or groceries (will vary due to local context) and any necessary prescription medication during quarantine period. Food allowance/meal costs are adjusted to respond to local food shortages/cost increases due to limited staff capacity to shop around.
 - To the extent possible, clients should remain in their assigned quarters in the temporary accommodation facility, for their safety and that of others. However, clients are permitted to go outside alone or as a family unit (for health breaks, smoking, etc.), all while remaining on the property of the temporary accommodation facility. If they do so, they must:
 - Ensure to wear a mask from their quarters until they get outside, as well as from outside until they reach their quarters
 - Maintain a physical distance of at least 2 meters from others that are not in their family unit
 - If they must take an elevator, ensure they are in the elevator alone or only with other members of their family unit.
 - Children resource box (e.g. toys, books) are provided as appropriate during this period. Toys or books are cleaned and sanitized prior to distribution and after usage.
 - GAR family is provided with a cell phone, if they don't already have one, or are assisted in obtaining a SIM card for their own phone, for use in case of emergency or other needs.

- RAP staff check-in daily either remotely, or in person while keeping a 2-metre distance or greater and wearing PPE.
- Explain implications of the March 25th 2020 Order:
 - The Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order was issued on March 25, 2020, in order to manage all persons who enter Canada whether by air, land, rail and sea, to minimize the travel related risk of introduction and spread of COVID-19 by requiring all persons who enter Canada to isolate for 14 days from the day upon which they entered Canada.
 - In situations where newly arrived refugees express interest to move to another community prior to completing their mandatory 14-day isolation, RAP SPOs are asked to:
 - Find out why the client wants to move and explain that they can do so after the quarantine period.
 - Remind the client of their legal obligation to quarantine for 14 days, whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19 and inform the client that they must not move until after completing the 14-day quarantine period.
 - Ensure the client fully understands that failure to comply with this Order is an offense under the Quarantine Act, and could lead to the clients facing penalties including fines or imprisonment. One tool that may be used for this purpose is the Refugee Acknowledgement Form for Mandatory Self-Isolation (shared by your IRCC officer in April 2020).
 - Inform the client that RAP SPOs are expected to notify the appropriate local authorities and IRCC of any refugees who move out of temporary accommodation before the end of the 14-day quarantine.
 - Inform the client of current provincial or regional travel restrictions
 - Ask for details of the client's plan for accommodation, as they may not receive accommodation services in the new community from a RAP SPO.
 - As per usual procedures, RAP SPOs are asked to inform IRCC of any secondary migrating RAP client who comes to their organization

unannounced and seeking IRCC-funded temporary accommodation or other RAP services.

- Explain to clients that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, any visitors including friends and relatives are prohibited during the isolation/quarantine period, or the entire stay in RAP temporary housing.
- Explain that quarantined clients cannot receive items, food or gifts from relatives or friends outside the hotel/reception centre or share items with other quarantined families inside the hotel/reception centre.
- Use of common spaces:
 - Shared laundry room (if available on-site): provide extended access hours and explain that only one family at a time can use the laundry facilities.
 - Kitchen facilities: Have one family unit at a time use the facilities; have the kitchen facilities cleaned after each use.
 - Cafeteria/dining room: Have each family unit to maintain a distance of 2 meters or more from each other, or set a schedule for families in quarantine to use the cafeteria at separate times than those not in quarantine. Clean tables and chairs after each use.
- Depending on local context, RAP SPOs may quarantine GAR clients in a different temporary housing site. RAP SPOs that may arrange for permanent accommodation prior to arrival will consider placing GAR client(s) directly into permanent accommodation.
- In cases where clients exhibit signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19, local public health authorities have been contacted, and clients are advised to isolate, RAP SPOs should have measures in place to ensure that clients have easy access to medical services, as well as ability to isolate in a place where they would not be in contact with the rest of their family, or other vulnerable persons.
- A basic emergency protocol is provided to clients in their first language (including phone numbers to use in case of emergencies)
- Provide basic orientation to COVID-19 pandemic and current public health authority guidelines
- During the self-isolation period, if at all possible to do over the phone with the client(s), using interpretation services as needed:
 - Complete a hard copy or online application for:

- Provincial health care insurance
- Social insurance number (SIN) ([SIN online application](#) – While Service Canada (SC) offices are gradually reopening, space will be limited due to physical distancing measures. RAP SPOs are strongly encouraged to direct clients to online applications. RAP SPOs can assist clients in completing the online application, but they cannot apply on their behalf. SC's service standard for clients' receipt of their SIN is 20 business days from the time the application is received.
- Canada Child Benefit (CCB)
- Provide basic orientation on:
 - [Interim Federal Health Program](#)
 - Health and safety as per [latest PHAC guidance](#)
 - Most essential topics relating to [rights and responsibilities](#) and [laws in Canada](#)
 - [Culture shock](#), including mental health and mental health supports available to them
 - [Immigration Loans](#)
 - [RAP Income Support](#) to be provided upon move out – **NOTE:** While in some locations, RAP orientation interviews are led by RAP SPOs, in locations where these are led by IRCC RAP Officers, interviews will be conducted by phone, until further notice.
 - [Budgeting](#), i.e. convey that support that will be provided is only meant to cover immediate and essential needs
- In the case that a single parent falls ill, RAP SPO staff work with their respective provincial child protection authority to ensure children are have temporary protection and/or that a guardianship is in place. RAP staff are not to act in the capacity of a guardian or foster parent.
- After the client's 14-day quarantine or isolation period, RAP staff continue to deliver the immediate and essential RAP services that they are able to deliver while ensuring that physical distancing measures can still be applied, including the service of assistance in locating permanent accommodation, and other immediate and essential RAP services.
- As a result of longer than usual stays in temporary housing and depending on the reception centre model, GARs may be given personal supplies and food and incidental allowances on one-month basis in order to limit the number of transactions.

- **NOTE:** One Year Window (OYW) clients who book their own flights to Canada will be counseled by IRCC prior to their departure regarding the fact that they will not be provided with RAP temporary accommodation services upon arrival, but rather, they will have to quarantine themselves for 14 days upon arrival in their family's home in Canada.

Stage Four: Assistance in locating permanent accommodation and transition to Settlement Case Management Services



- When assisting clients to locate permanent accommodation, in alignment with provincial real estate and rental guidance, use virtual viewings where possible, or have clients (and staff if accompanying) wear PPE for any viewing that may take place (and follow [this link](#) for more helpful tips to follow when assisting clients with finding permanent accommodation). If necessary, limit physical viewings to only one GAR family member, and during escort accompaniment, ensure GAR client and staff are wearing PPE.
- When permanent housing is secured, as per usual procedures, necessary furniture and/or payment in lieu of furniture is provided. If using a furniture cash model, as stores typically used may not currently be opened, assist clients with purchasing furniture online and/or curbside pick-ups.
- If clients will be living in apartment building, go over procedures of physical distancing and other sanitary measures, e.g. not to enter elevator with other people are in it, use elbows for door handles, etc.
- Clients should be informed that building managers may only be dealing with urgent requests during this period (e.g. water leaking, etc.), and that other requests may be dealt with later on when public health guidelines are updated.

DELIVERY OF CRITICAL SERVICES TO GARs DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- If applicable to client and services are available, GAR client is referred by RAP staff to Settlement Case Management services.

Stage Five: Post-RAP / Settlement Case Management



- Settlement case management staff undertake telephone check-in and assessment of all newly arrived RAP clients to ensure any immediate need, concern or issue can be mitigated
- Case management staff use phones or social media platforms to connect with GAR clients where appropriate.
- Staff undertake necessary intake and assessment, develop settlement action plan and deliver specialized support virtually whenever possible, and in-person (using PPE and practicing physical distancing) if absolutely necessary.
- Settlement Case Management staff develop a tracking system to assess vulnerable clients in their care using a vulnerable person assessment tool. If there are concerns, referrals are made to specialized services within the SPO (e.g. short-term counsellor, health coordinator, etc.) or to external community resources based on each assessment.
- RAP or settlement staff ensure that RAP clients, if needed, are successfully transitioned from RAP income support to Provincial income assistance.
- Either RAP or settlement staff ensure that GAR clients landed in 2019 are supported to file their income tax in order to avail themselves of all federal benefits.
- Single parents who are RAP clients are linked, if necessary, to respective provincial child protection services as needed if they fall ill and must be hospitalized.

Annex A – Letter of Introduction



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

To the Border Services Officer:

This application for permanent residence in Canada has been approved under the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program.

The applicant(s) has/have been informed of travel restrictions measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including that all air travelers, including refugees, must pass a health screening (where available) before boarding their flights to Canada and that all travelers arriving in Canada must wear masks/face coverings on all commercial flights and undergo another health screening at the port of entry.

Additionally, the applicant(s) has/have been advised of the mandatory requirement for travelers with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to isolate for 14 days and those without symptoms to quarantine for 14 days.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recognizes that all travelers arriving in Canada must present a credible [quarantine plan](#) when asked by a Border Services Officer and/or a Public Health Quarantine Officer.

Please note that the Government of Canada, through IRCC, is responsible for providing Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) with the support that they require to facilitate their settlement in Canada. Relevant support services are carried out by Resettlement Assistance Program – Service Provider Organizations (RAP-SPO). This includes providing them and their families (if applicable) with temporary accommodation upon arrival for a minimum of 14 days to complete the mandatory quarantine period, and assistance in locating permanent housing.

As such, IRCC avails itself of this opportunity to advise the Canada Border Services Agency and the Public Health Agency of Canada that the RAP-SPOs have been instructed to implement suitable arrangements for a quarantine plan for the applicant(s).

Additionally, RAP-SPOs provide orientation sessions to GARs to disseminate information relevant to their settlement in Canada, including guidance on public health measures in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To obtain further information on the quarantine plan and accommodation arrangements for the refugee(s), please contact the RAP-SPO at the final destination.

IRCC extends its gratitude for your continued support and collaboration. Please contact the Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa (IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@cic.gc.ca) should you require further information in relation to this application.

Sincerely,

Resettlement Operations Centre - Ottawa
IRCC.INROCO-CORORI.IRCC@cic.gc.ca