

SOPA

Settlement Online Pre-Arrival is a free program funded by IRCC that helps you arrive prepared for work and life in Canada. SOPA is an initiative led by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and delivered by six settlement agencies across the country. SOPA provides personalized guidance, online courses, and expert support to help you build skills, understand the Canadian job market, explore professional licensing, and start forming connections.

PRE-ARRIVAL CANADA CONNECTS PROGRAM

The Canada Connects program is designed to help pre-arrival newcomers build connections with landed and settled newcomers to better prepare for their own settlement journey.

Focused on women, youth, and refugees, the matches are tailored and the volunteers meet virtually with pre-arrival newcomers.

WHY MATCHING MATTERS?

- IRCC's 2018 findings – receiving mentorship reduces stress during resettlement.
- Build meaningful social connections and a sense of belonging.
- Early social ties support mental health and well-being, reducing anxiety.
- Connections help address challenges faced by newcomers.
- Smooth transition for youth and help them feel more confident.
- Higher retention rates in their settlement city.

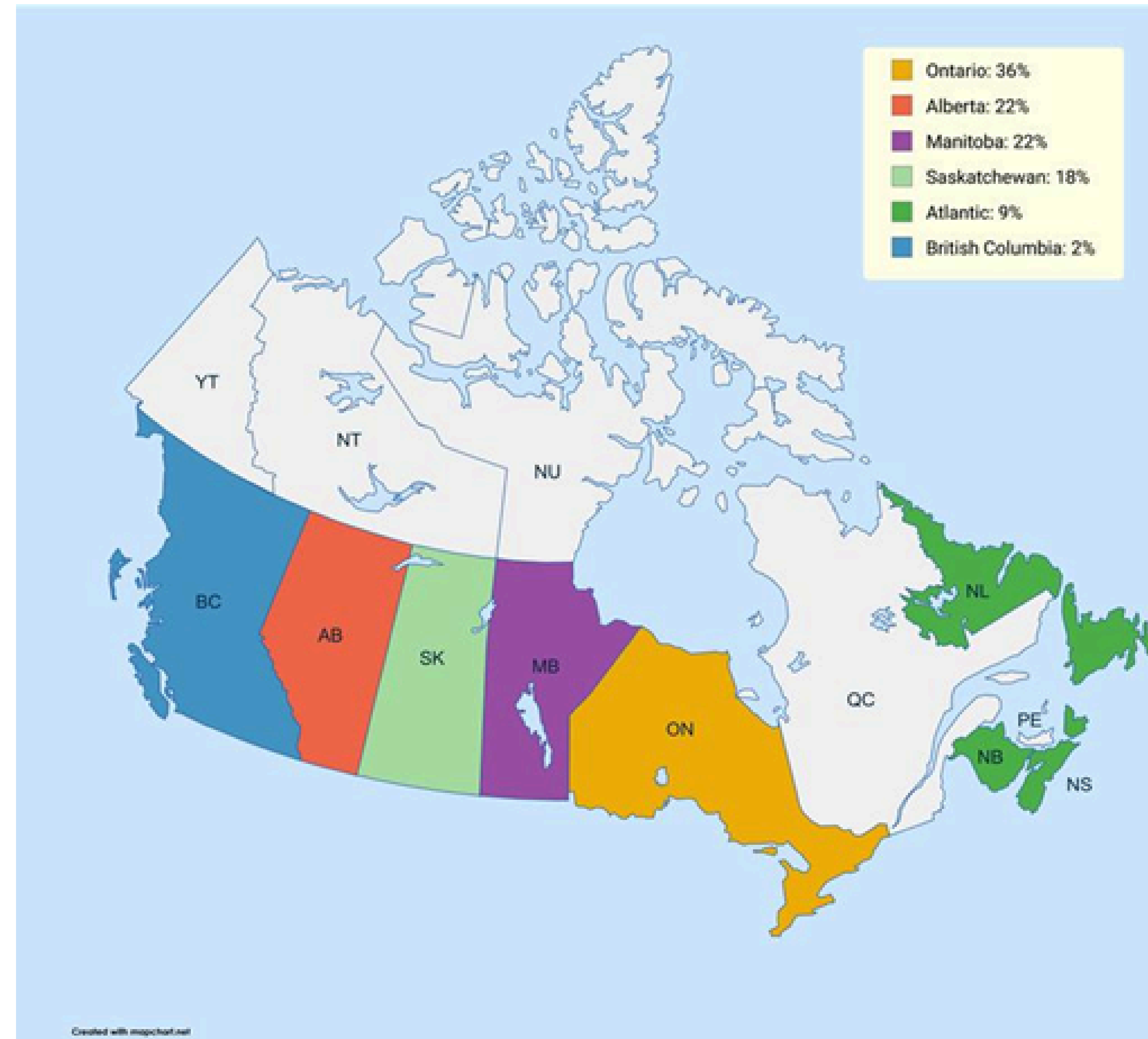
PROGRAM'S STRUCTURE:

- SOPA intake counsellors introduce the program to the client
- Intake counsellor makes an internal referral
- Program Coordinator matches the client with appropriate mentors, considering:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Spoken language
 - Destination city/province
 - Background
- Clients and mentors held weekly or bi-weekly virtual meetings to discuss housing, life in Canada, school, community services, job search, etc.

CANADA CONNECTS VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide information on Canadian customs, culture, and society.
- Offer insights into daily life in Canada.
- Engage in leisure activities together.
- Provide moral support.
- Facilitate English language practice in an informal setting.
- If applicable, arrange one in-person meeting following the participant's arrival.

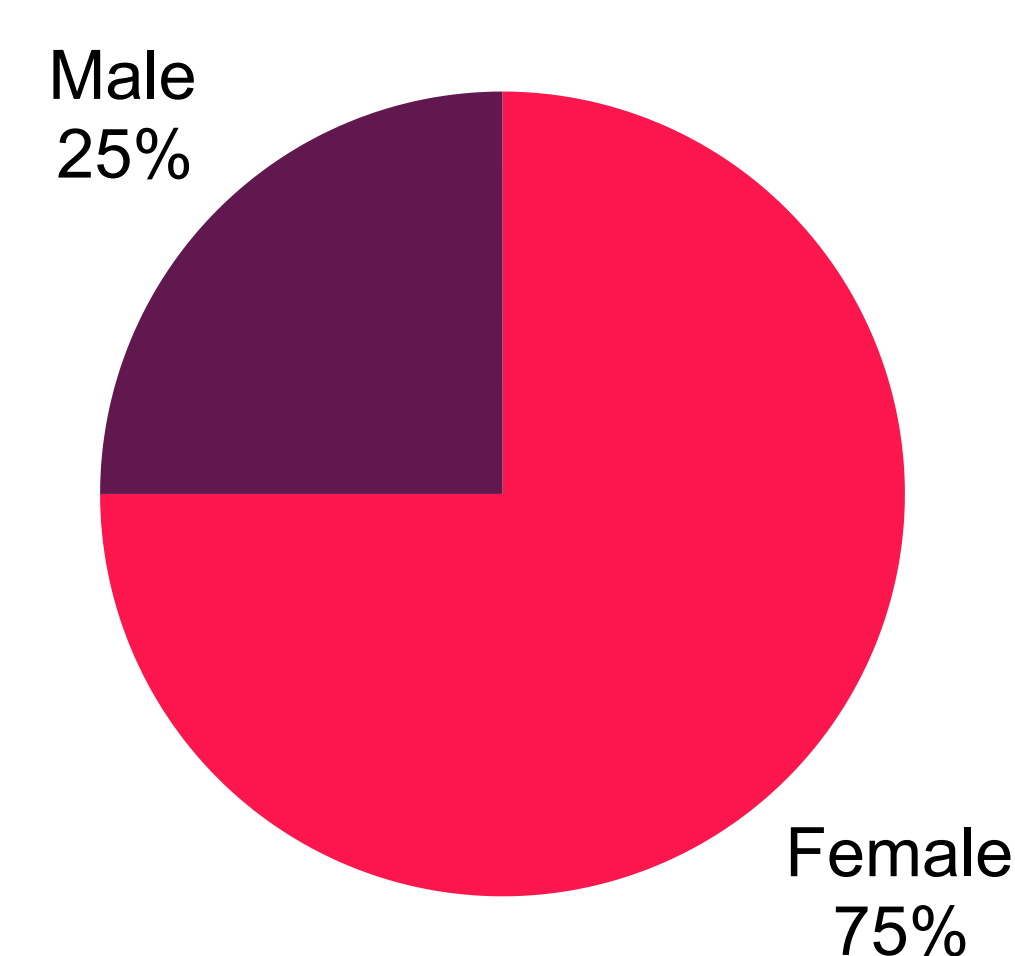
MAPPING OF THE MATCHES



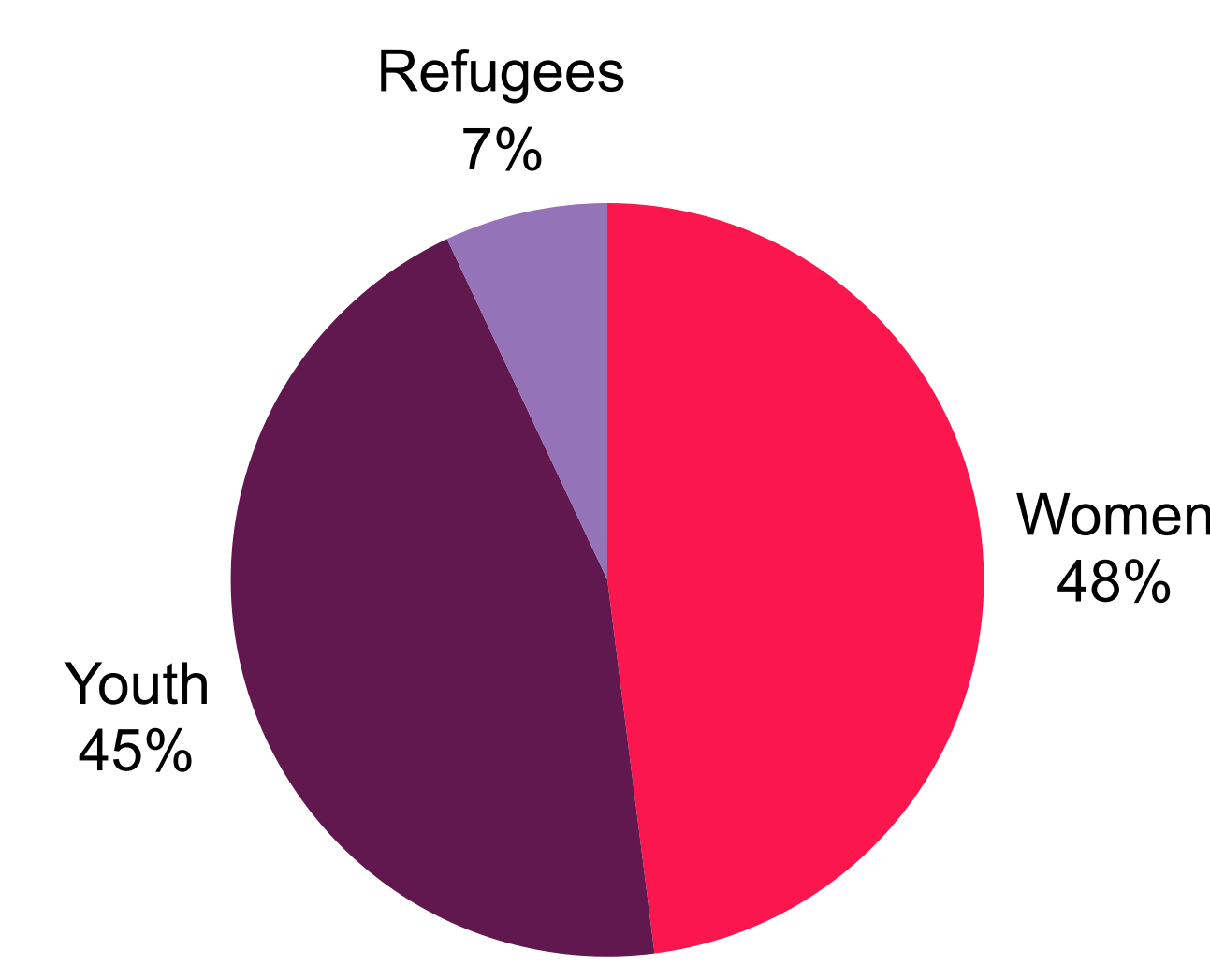
MATCHING DATA APRIL 01 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

Province	Number
Alberta	11
British Columbia	1
Manitoba	11
Ontario	18
Saskatchewan	9
Atlantic	6
Total	56

GENDER



MENTEE



TESTIMONIALS

“It has been incredibly beneficial during this transition. The support you provided made a significant impact, especially in adjusting my resume to fit Canadian professional expectations. That guidance was a crucial first step, and it really helped me feel more confident about my applications.- **Ghaida** from **Tunisia (settled in Calgary)**”

“I really felt that I was talking to a sister who holds my hand as I am moving to a scary new place. - **Salma** from **Morocco (moving to Toronto, Ontario)**”

“The mentorship programs have been really helpful as am currently working with RODS, RIWC and IWS to enable me settle in quickly and more appropriately. - **Nnenna** from **Nigeria (arrived in Regina, Saskatchewan)**”

“I shared information on essential settlement tasks and connecting with community resources. This ongoing support helped the mentee gain confidence and independence in navigating her new surroundings.

Having a dedicated mentor offered both practical and emotional support, reducing the uncertainty and stress often experienced during the early stages of resettlement. As a result, the client successfully settled and developed a stronger sense of belonging within her community.

This mentorship experience was also valuable to me personally, as it enhanced my communication, cultural awareness, active listening, leadership, and problem-solving skills. - **Mentor Dorene B. Stern** from **British Columbia**

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Read more about the SOPA program here:



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