



THE METROPOLIS ACTION GUIDE ON IMMIGRATION & INTEGRATION (MAGII)

Presented by the Metropolis CAiRES (Canadian Advocacy for Immigrant and
Refugee Entry and Settlement) Initiative

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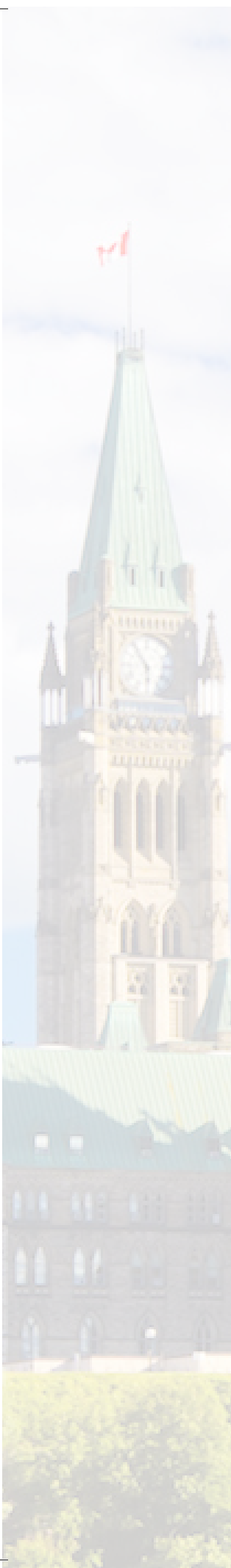


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Overview

Canada is often recognized as a nation of immigrants, with much of its historical growth and demographic vitality rooted in the contributions of newcomers. Achieving the country's demographic and economic goals hinges on maintaining a strong immigration pathway. Investing in and strengthening the immigration system is essential for securing Canada's future. In the face of shifting global migration patterns, the release of the Metropolis Action Guide on Immigration & Integration (MAGII) is particularly timely. There is an increasing need to educate Canadians about the history of immigration and its ongoing impact on the country, ensuring a shared understanding and awareness. The MAGII outlines the challenges newcomers face in key areas, drawing insights from the settlement sector across the country. It serves as an important initial step toward mobilizing this sector and emphasizes its crucial role as a partner to policy-makers in the newcomer settlement and integration process. The guide offers valuable information and recommendations designed to improve dialogue and decision-making, with the goal of developing inclusive and equitable policies that benefit both newcomers and all Canadians. Ultimately, it seeks to promote understanding, encourage a commitment to inclusion, and help eliminate discrimination and racism in all its forms.

The primary objective of the MAGII represents a first step towards mobilizing the sector and serves to remind us of its critical role as a partner to the policy-making community in the newcomer settlement and integration process

This guide summarizes eight key Immigration and Settlement Policy areas along with calls to action that demonstrate how immigration can support sound public policy.

Immigration & Settlement Policies

1. Immigration Levels

The Constitution of Canada, under Article 95, stipulates that immigration is a shared responsibility between the federal government and the Provincial and Territorial governments. Since 1991, immigration to Québec has been co-managed through the Canada-Québec Accord. All other provinces and territories have followed suit with their own agreements on immigration, which include annexes specifically for Francophone immigration.

Immigration is critical to Canada's population growth and its associated social and economic well-being. Evidence shows that immigration accounts for almost all of Canada's labour force growth, and it is projected that by the next decade, it will account for 100% of the country's population growth as well as 100% of the country's population growth by the end of the next decade.

Canada has a long history of managed migration, balancing economic needs with the importance of family reunification and assisting the world's most vulnerable populations. Multi-Year Immigration Levels Plan (MYLP) are not new, but for the first time in Canadian history, the 3 year levels plan for 2025-2027 released on October 24, 2024 combined both permanent and temporary resident target. This is a positive step forward as it increases our ability to undertake more accurate long-term planning. The following are highlights of the 2025-2027 immigration levels plan starting with overall planned admissions of permanent residents:

- 395,000 in 2025
- 380,000 in 2026
- 362,000 in 2027

Temporary Residents admission numbers align with Government of Canada's plan to decrease the number of temporary residents to 5% of the total population over the next three years.

Compared to each previous year, we will see Canada's temporary population (work and study permits) set at:

- 673,650 in 2025
- 516,600 in 2026
- 543,600 in 2027

Additionally, the 2025 priority categories will include: health care occupations, trade occupations, and French-language proficiency. Categories are established each year,

informed by labour market information and projections as well as input received from partners, including provinces and territories, and stakeholders across the country. More than 40% of anticipated permanent resident admissions in 2025 will be from those who are already in Canada as temporary residents. Lastly, there is a continued focus on economic immigration, with approximately 62% of total permanent resident admissions that will be dedicated to the economic class, in key sectors such as health and trades, by 2027.

The levels exercise is subsequently linked to a budgetary process, representing a planned multi-year budget for IRCC and its partners. However, no such predictable process, with formal consultations, exists for Temporary Residents. Combining both permanent and temporary resident targets into the recently announced 2025-2027 Multi-Year Levels Plan provides the legislative framework needed to adequately fund these programs and ensure a seamless continuum of integration support for all newcomers regardless of legal status, enhancing their contributions to Canada.

Getting the annual plan right is critical. If Canada lacks the capacity to properly integrate the newcomers we welcome each year, we risk eroding public support for immigration and damaging the country's positive global reputation, as well as our ability to attract highly skilled individuals. Furthermore, rising unemployment among newcomer populations could hinder efforts to increase labour market productivity.

Recognizing the skills and competencies of foreign-trained individuals is essential to ensuring that newcomers can be gainfully employed in sectors where demand is high. Since provinces and territories govern the regulatory bodies and apprenticeship authorities responsible for granting licensure, one way to hold them accountable for advancing foreign credential recognition would be to link their annual Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) allocations to improvements in foreign credential recognition practices within their jurisdictions.

Public confidence in the immigration system is critical to maintaining a robust system and fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers. Therefore, it is important for Canadians to be better informed about all aspects of the immigration system, including the diverse categories of immigrants, refugees, and temporary residents admitted to Canada; how they are selected; their impact on local, provincial, and national economies; and the challenges they face in making their fullest contributions to Canadian society.

Additionally, the Government of Canada based on their Policy on Francophone Immigration has set a target to increase Francophone immigration outside of Quebec, aiming for 8.5% in 2025, 9.5% in 2026, and 10% in 2027. Successfully integrating Francophone immigrants into minority language communities is crucial for maintaining Canada's official language objectives but requires adequate support. In Quebec, knowledge of French is considered a key factor in the successful integration of newcomers.

In summary, it is essential to rethink our current immigration system to ensure it aligns with desired objectives and outcomes. There is also an urgent need for tools and

resources to improve advanced planning and better respond to projected labour market needs and sustained population growth. This includes investing in the modernization of tools used by both the government and the settlement and integration sector, leveraging emerging technologies to improve the immigration experience while managing services within a limited budget.

Settlement and resettlement budgets are currently oversubscribed with historically high number of newcomers seeking support - over 700,000 permanent residents last year alone according to IRCC data, and provinces and territories are facing overwhelmed social service, education, and healthcare systems. The annual process by which Parliament approves the Multi-Year Levels Plan must also include a corresponding budget to cover the federal costs necessary for implementing the program.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Ensure the federal budget is reflective of the levels announcement that allows for the successful settlement and integration of both permanent and some at risk temporary residents to fully and actively participate in Canadian society especially given the fact that 40% of temporary residents will transition to permanent resident status.
- ◇ Advocate for amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) to incorporate annual temporary resident targets into the Multi-Year Levels Plan.
- ◇ Hold the government accountable for ensuring that affordable and appropriate housing, settlement and resettlement supports, and the necessary infrastructure costs are factored into determining sustainable immigration levels for the country.
- ◇ Encourage greater investment in public literacy on immigration to foster a better-informed and more engaged public, enhancing the national conversation around immigration and its benefits to Canada.

2. Admission Categories

Permanent immigration to Canada consists of four main categories: economic migrants, family class, refugees and protected persons, and the humanitarian/compassionate class. While the number of people admitted annually in each category requires careful consideration, all contribute significantly to the economic and social fabric of Canadian society.

Until the early 1990s, the family class was the largest admission category, representing about six in ten newcomers in the permanent resident stream. However, from the 1990s onward, the government shifted its focus toward economic class immigrants, who now make up approximately two-thirds of all newcomers. Within these three broad categories, there are up to 300 sub-categories, which can make navigating the immigration system incredibly complex for prospective newcomers trying to identify the best option for their needs.

The economic class is the largest and most complex admission category, encompassing a wide range of individuals, including skilled workers in trades and professions, entrepreneurs, self-employed business owners, provincial nominees, and caregivers, among others. In this category, only spouses and dependent children can accompany the principal applicant.

Economic immigrants often arrive without adequate pre-arrival preparation tools, such as interactive guides or online portals that provide information on in-demand skills, job locations, or additional training requirements. It is crucial to equip these newcomers with the resources needed to make informed decisions before arriving in Canada, as these tools can significantly improve their integration and long-term success.

Family reunification allows individuals already in Canada to sponsor close family members. However, this process can be costly and time-consuming, placing undue stress on newcomers living in Canada. Delays in processing times can negatively impact families' ability to integrate successfully and, in some cases, may influence their decision to leave Canada. For refugees, prolonged separation from family members can severely affect their well-being.

Refugees and individuals admitted on humanitarian grounds require special attention, as their numbers are largely influenced by current political and environmental conditions. Canada's humanitarian tradition, which has long guided its approach to refugee resettlement, predates modern international conventions and is not tied to any specific migration-related legal obligations. Refugee resettlement is voluntary and based on this tradition of providing sanctuary to those in need. However, the processing of asylum seekers is governed by Canada's legal obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, which Canada ratified in 1969. These agreements

outline Canada's responsibility to protect individuals fleeing persecution, ensuring their right to seek asylum and receive fair consideration under international law.



Calls to Action

- ◇ For economic immigrants, provide clear and transparent information about job qualifications, labour market trends, geographic opportunities, and the cost of living in different regions to improve newcomers' chances of success.
- ◇ Streamline processing times for all immigration categories, with a particular focus on expediting refugee applications.
- ◇ Give serious consideration to special refugee admissions that go beyond annual target numbers when necessary. The urgent relocation of Ukrainians, for example, demonstrated the need for flexible responses to genuine refugee crises. Canada has successfully implemented similar temporary and permanent evacuations in the past (e.g., Lebanese Canadians in 2011, Kosovars in 1997, Yazidis in 2017, Syrians in 2016)
- ◇ Eliminate disparities in how different groups are treated, particularly LGBTQ+ individuals, who often face longer processing times and more intensive scrutiny of their applications.

3. Family Reunification

Family reunification is a fundamental component of Canada’s immigration system, recognized for its role in fostering social stability and supporting the successful integration of immigrants and refugees.

Spousal reunification in Canada faces notable challenges, particularly in terms of processing times. While the government strives to process spousal sponsorship applications within 12 months, many couples experience delays that extend beyond this target. Application backlogs, limited resources, and other logistical barriers contribute to these delays, often resulting in prolonged family separations. Despite these challenges, spousal sponsorship is recognized as a key component of Canada’s family reunification program, with the majority of sponsored spouses participating in the labour market.

Parent and grandparent reunification in Canada presents a different set of challenges. The Parents and Grandparents Program (PGP) is quota-based, with a limited number of applications accepted each year. While this program provides a pathway for Canadians and permanent residents to bring their parents or grandparents to Canada, the high demand and strict quotas create an extremely competitive process. Processing times for PGP applications can extend up to 25 months, leaving many families in a prolonged state of separation. Additionally, this program imposes significant financial requirements on sponsors, who must meet a minimum income threshold that is 30% above the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) for three consecutive years.

Family reunification is especially critical for refugees, who often arrive in Canada after fleeing persecution and enduring significant trauma. For refugees, reuniting with family members is not only a matter of emotional support but also a crucial factor in their mental health recovery and long-term integration. Unfortunately, the process of family reunification for refugees is often hindered by restrictive policies and bureaucratic hurdles. One major challenge is the narrow definition of “family” under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), which limits eligible family members to spouses, dependent children, and, in some cases, parents or grandparents. This definition excludes siblings, adult children, and extended family members, which can be particularly distressing for refugees who have been separated from a broader network of relatives due to conflict or persecution.

While the emotional and social benefits of family reunification are well-documented, it is important to recognize the economic impact as well. Spouses of Canadian citizens or permanent residents often integrate quickly into the workforce, contributing to the labour market and overall economy. For parents and grandparents, their contribution comes indirectly by providing caregiving and household support, which allows their sponsors to work more effectively and participate actively in the labour market.

However, the lengthy and complex processes involved in family reunification—particularly for parents, grandparents, and refugees—can delay these benefits. Reducing pro-

cessing times and simplifying bureaucratic procedures would not only reunite families faster but also unlock the economic potential of these family members in a timely manner.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Increase the number of family class reunification admissions. Family reunification is essential for the successful resettlement of refugees and for fostering positive integration into Canadian society. Families who are involuntarily separated—whether due to war, economic hardship, or other circumstances—remain in a state of “limbo,” preventing full integration into Canadian life. Reunited families are more likely to stay rooted in their communities and are less likely to relocate within Canada.
- ◇ Incorporate family reunification into resettlement plans for refugees displaced under chaotic circumstances (such as Yazidi or Afghan refugees) by identifying missing family members who are critical to the resettled refugee’s well-being. Establish a reunification process for these missing family members, should they be located.
- ◇ Simplify the Spousal Reunification Application Process. Simplifying the process and providing clear, accessible instructions can reduce confusion and help applicants submit more complete applications.
- ◇ Increase Awareness of Settlement Services for Family Reunification: Newcomers and Sponsors. Identify strategies to raise awareness of the settlement services available to newcomers under the Family Reunification program.

4. Temporary Workers

Canada has relied on both permanent and temporary immigration streams to support population growth and address critical labour market shortages. The temporary migration stream, which consists mainly of temporary foreign workers, international students, and visitors, has been a focal point of policy interest and debate. While the temporary stream is not included in Canada's annual Multi-Year Levels Plan, it has more than doubled over the past three years, increasing from 1.3 million in 2021 to nearly 2.8 million in 2024. Although many temporary residents stay in Canada for a limited time, federal and provincial governments have developed pathways to encourage some to transition to permanent residency.

The rate of transition from Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) to Permanent Residents (PRs) has steadily increased. Among TFWs who arrived between 2006 and 2010, less than 10% (specifically 9.4%) transitioned to permanent residency within their first two years in Canada. For the 2016 to 2020 cohort, this rate rose to 23.2%. Evidence shows that migrants with pre-landing Canadian experience generally experience better economic outcomes, particularly those who held high-skilled jobs before becoming PRs. In 2021, the federal government relaxed restrictions on temporary migration to help businesses recover from pandemic-related labour shortages.

Recently, changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program have significantly reduced the number of new entrants, with exceptions in key sectors like food security, construction, and healthcare. Similarly, the reduction in new international student permits has caused Canadian universities to lose students due to the federally imposed cap. Stringent restrictions on study permits, coupled with inadequate support for international students to secure competitive jobs, could threaten Canada's economic competitiveness and hinder technological innovation.

In line with efforts to reduce the number of temporary residents, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recently ended an exemption that allowed visitors to apply for work permits from within Canada. However, it remains crucial to create permanent pathways for skilled and deserving TFWs and international students already in Canada who are interested in settling and contributing to the economy.

Additionally, concerns about workplace abuse and the exploitation of TFWs have persisted for years. How do we ensure that protective measures and support services are available and enforced to safeguard their rights? How do we create suitable pathways to permanency for temporary residents, including those under special visas like the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET)?

Further, easing restrictions on regulated occupations where foreign credential recognition remains a significant barrier is vital. How can we engage regulatory bodies and stakeholders to develop and implement streamlined pathways for foreign credential reco-

gnition, ensuring newcomers can fully utilize their skills and contribute to Canada's workforce?



Calls to Action

- ◇ Engage provinces and territories to review and enhance existing pathways to permanent immigration. The goal should be to develop seamless, clear, and transparent routes to permanency that prioritize both economic needs and family reunification, ensuring these options are well communicated to newcomers.
- ◇ Implement a coordinated approach to align temporary migration with labour market shortages in critical sectors. This will help reduce newcomer unemployment and strengthen Canada's competitiveness in the global economy.
- ◇ Collaborate with provinces, territories, regulatory bodies, and apprenticeship authorities on a time-sensitive plan to further reduce barriers to foreign credential and qualification recognition for temporary migrants and all newcomers, ensuring their skills are fully utilized in the Canadian workforce.

5. Housing Affordability and Availability

The core issue regarding housing affordability for newcomers lies in how immigration policies align with infrastructure development to accommodate population growth. Immigrants and refugees, including refugee claimants, aspire to be self-sufficient from day one in Canada, and policies must support this desire. As Canada's population grows, infrastructure investments must address population pressure points, not only where immigrants and refugees first arrive but also where secondary migration occurs.

Population growth cannot be separated from housing development, including social housing and other infrastructure. Historically, for every two-person population increase, one housing start was needed to maintain a balanced housing supply. Currently, Canada's ratio is closer to one housing start per five or six people, a stark mismatch that has contributed to the skyrocketing housing prices. Housing policy has failed to keep pace with population growth, creating unsustainable market conditions.

Furthermore, secondary migration away from high-cost urban centers toward more affordable markets should be encouraged through infrastructure development in those lower-cost cities. This helps distribute population growth more evenly and provides cost-effective housing solutions for newcomers.

Newcomers also face various barriers, including discrimination, challenges with financing homes, and difficulties securing leases due to a lack of credit history and references. Refugee claimants are particularly vulnerable, often facing "status discrimination," where Canadian policies contribute to precarious housing and even homelessness. On average, it takes 4.5 years from submitting a refugee claim to receiving a "6" starting SIN, with bureaucratic inefficiencies and work permit gaps preventing self-sufficiency. These delays not only increase reliance on income support programs and public expenditures but also waste the labour potential of refugees who could otherwise contribute to infrastructure development.

Immigrants and refugees are a vital labour source for building the infrastructure Canada needs, including housing, energy, transportation, and healthcare. However, many newcomers face barriers to employment in these sectors due to unrecognized credentials and other obstacles. Accelerating pathways to employment, particularly in construction and skilled trades (such as engineering and general labour), is crucial for both housing development and broader economic growth.

Innovative housing solutions are available but underutilized. Examples include converting empty office spaces into housing, modular housing, and lease co-signing sponsorships. These solutions need more robust support and expedited implementation to address the housing crisis.

Housing policies must be evidence-based, focusing on integrated short-term and long-term solutions. Incentives for increasing housing density, converting unused commercial spaces, and developing new purpose-built communities are among the potential strategies. Additionally, targeted loans, grants, employer-linked housing, and lease or mortgage sponsorships should be explored to support newcomers' housing needs.

Policy approaches and bureaucratic reforms must prioritize newcomer self-sufficiency. Reducing bureaucratic red tape, eliminating redundant processes (such as work permits, SINs, and health cards), and cutting down the average 24-month wait time for permanent residency applications are essential steps. Similarly, reducing the four-month processing time for work permits and SINs would help eliminate barriers to self-sustainability. The disconnection between refugee claims, work permits, SINs, permanent residency, and citizenship applications exacerbates delays and inefficiencies, necessitating significant reforms.

Policies and programs must also recognize internal mobility and invest in secondary markets. Ignoring where people ultimately settle, as opposed to where they initially arrive, skews infrastructure development and delays newcomers' integration into Canadian life. Targeted investments and incentives are required to promote migration to secondary markets and support infrastructure where it is most needed.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Ensure IRCC collaborates with provinces and territories to monitor secondary migration trends and assist in the design and planning of housing infrastructure and new developments.
- ◇ Increase financial support for innovative housing models to expand social housing and below-market rental options.
- ◇ Promote greater migration to smaller second- and third-tier cities to alleviate pressure on larger urban centers and distribute population growth more evenly.
- ◇ Streamline processes for newcomers contributing to the housing supply by merging the issuance of permits, SINs, and work permits, with open work permits being issued by default.
- ◇ Make the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program permanent to support regions in Canada that require workers and investment.

6. Employment, Labour Market and Credentials

While immigration has long been a key driver of labour market growth in Canada, persistent underemployment and unemployment among newcomers prevent both immigrants and the country from realizing their full economic potential. Two major barriers impede immigrants from quickly securing employment that fully utilizes their skills and experience.

First, newcomers often struggle to navigate the Canadian job market and identify opportunities that match their qualifications. Many find themselves taking survival jobs, which can result in long-term setbacks in securing roles aligned with their skills. This mismatch delays their ability to contribute fully to the economy and hampers their career progression.

Second, many employers lack the tools and expertise to assess the skills and qualifications immigrants acquired abroad. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent the majority of Canadian employers and often do not have dedicated human resources teams experienced in evaluating international credentials.

Credential recognition is a challenge in both regulated and non-regulated professions. In regulated professions, licensing processes are intended to ensure that professionals' practice safely and competently. However, many qualified immigrants trained abroad face long delays or give up on their profession due to costly and lengthy licensing processes. When documents or evidence of recent practice are considered sequentially instead of concurrently, they may expire, causing further delays. Studies show that half of immigrants trained abroad in STEM and medical fields experience skill underutilization in Canada. This skill waste is especially costly at a time when Canada faces critical shortages in healthcare and innovation sectors.

The challenge extends beyond regulated professions. Employers often struggle to assess the value of international credentials, leading to underemployment and wasted potential. SMEs, in particular, may rely on proxy measures, such as "Canadian experience," which traps many immigrants in cycles of underemployment or unemployment. Without proper tools to evaluate the capabilities of immigrant applicants, employers miss out on the valuable skills that newcomers bring.

Credential recognition is often treated as a proxy for skills and abilities, yet it fails to fully capture the competencies that immigrants possess. Skills and experiences gained abroad are frequently undervalued or misunderstood by Canadian employers, preventing newcomers from contributing meaningfully to the workforce.

Canada's current approach to credential recognition is fragmented, with different requirements and multiple document submission points across immigration, licensure, and

employment processes. To make matters more complex, requirements vary across provinces and territories, reducing labour mobility. Even immigrants carefully selected for their professional qualifications may find upon arrival that their credentials are not recognized or are undervalued.

Canada can do more to support newcomers in the job market by creating a more streamlined, transparent, and cohesive system for recognizing international credentials. Addressing these barriers would help ensure that immigrants can quickly find meaningful employment and contribute fully to Canada's economy.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Incorporate skills-based recognition into the existing credential recognition processes for immigration. Standardized tools and consistent skills assessment methods should be developed to help employers accurately evaluate newcomers' competencies across various sectors. Programs that facilitate pre-arrival skills assessment and recognition in fields like healthcare, technology, and skilled trades can bridge gaps and allow newcomers to demonstrate their skills more effectively upon arrival.
- ◇ Provide targeted support for SMEs, including cultural competency training, assistance in evaluating international experience and credentials, and access to wage subsidy programs. These measures will enhance the capacity of SMEs to attract and retain newcomer talent.
- ◇ Simplify and expedite workforce entry processes for newcomers, particularly in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, technology, and trades. Expanding access to bridging programs, pre-arrival services, and clear pathways to certification or licensure will help newcomers integrate more quickly and effectively into the labour market.
- ◇ Expand access to essential job market preparation programs for newcomers. These initiatives, which offer language training, sector-specific certifications, and insights into Canadian workplace culture, are critical to helping newcomers succeed in the Canadian job market.

7. Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Canada's economy, accounting for the majority of private sector jobs. To drive economic growth, innovation, employment, and sustainability, it is essential to support not only start-ups but also scale-ups and established businesses. Notably, nearly one-quarter of private sector businesses in Canada are majority-owned by immigrants, and these businesses account for one-quarter of net job creation in the private incorporated sector.

Immigrants are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship than individuals born in Canada, bringing unique perspectives and skills that can be leveraged to fuel innovation. Many immigrants are multilingual and possess cultural insights and knowledge of foreign markets, which contribute to higher export rates among immigrant-owned SMEs compared to the general SME population in Canada.

However, the path to entrepreneurship for immigrants is often fraught with challenges. Immigrant entrepreneurs frequently face difficulties navigating Canadian rules and regulations, tax and accountability requirements, and available programs and policies. They also experience discrimination, particularly if they are racialized. Moreover, current financial systems are not immigrant-friendly, making it difficult for newcomers to establish credit and secure financing for their businesses. Immigrants often have lower credit visibility than Canadian-born individuals, and accessing formal credit systems can be challenging due to the reliance on local credit histories.

To better support immigrant entrepreneurs, Canada must reduce fragmentation and improve coordination within the settlement sector to ensure their needs are met, regardless of which service they access. Entrepreneurial success requires not only human capital (skills, knowledge, and competencies) but also social capital (networks including coaches, investors, and customers) and financial capital (grants, loans, and the time needed to grow a business).

Additionally, programs like the Start-up Visa and Entrepreneurial Class are inconsistent in their impact, raising concerns about their costs versus benefits. Economic class immigrants represent the largest group of immigrant business owners, accounting for over 40% of all immigrant-owned businesses, yet they are insufficiently recognized and supported. There is a significant unmet need for entrepreneurship support services tailored to immigrants to help them succeed.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Recognize entrepreneurship as a legitimate pathway for newcomers by providing tailored support, including incorporating the newcomer/immigrant perspective into existing programs aimed at fostering entrepreneurship.
- ◇ Reduce barriers to financing by implementing innovative strategies, such as start-up funds specifically designed to support immigrant entrepreneurs.
- ◇ Showcase and celebrate the entrepreneurial successes of newcomers, highlighting their contributions to job creation, innovation, and export growth.
- ◇ Strengthen evaluation frameworks and data sharing, focusing on outcomes that measure business creation alongside traditional success metrics such as job growth, sales, and investment.

8. Health Care

Immigrants and refugees in Canada face numerous policy-related barriers that significantly limit their access to healthcare services. Key challenges include language barriers, inadequate healthcare coverage, and limited access to mental health services. Over one in five immigrants have limited language proficiency, and the lack of interpretation and translation services in many healthcare settings leads to miscommunication, increased emergency visits, and poorer health outcomes. Additionally, many newcomers face waiting periods for provincial healthcare coverage, during which they are 1.5 times more likely to delay seeking medical care.

Social determinants of health, such as income, employment, education, and housing, further complicate healthcare access for newcomers. Approximately one in four recent immigrants live below the poverty line, and immigrants are twice as likely to live in inadequate housing compared to Canadian-born residents. These socioeconomic factors contribute to higher rates of chronic conditions, mental health issues, and additional barriers to healthcare access.

Immigrants and refugees experience disproportionately high rates of mental health issues, yet access to preventive care, women's health services, and emergency preparedness is hindered by policy gaps. Moreover, barriers such as credential recognition affect the healthcare workforce, with over one in four internationally trained healthcare professionals underemployed, limiting their ability to contribute to the sector. Undocumented immigrants and those with precarious status are particularly vulnerable, facing even greater obstacles to receiving care.

Inadequate data collection on the health outcomes of immigrants and refugees further hinders the development of evidence-based policies tailored to their specific needs. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive, culturally competent, and coordinated policy responses to ensure equitable healthcare access for all immigrants and refugees in Canada.



Calls to Action

- ◇ Increase support for community-based healthcare navigation services that provide tailored assistance to immigrants and refugees, helping them access and navigate the healthcare system effectively.
- ◇ Accelerate the credential recognition process for internationally educated healthcare professionals (IEHPs) to enable them to fully contribute to Canada's healthcare system and address workforce shortages.

- ◇ Eliminate healthcare coverage waiting periods to ensure immediate access to medical care for all newcomers.
- ◇ Expand health literacy programs to educate immigrants about the Canadian healthcare system, preventive care, and how to access available services.
- ◇ Invest in digital health tools, such as telehealth, multilingual health apps, and online portals, to improve access to healthcare information and services for immigrants and refugees.
- ◇ Implement targeted health initiatives for immigrant and refugee women and children, focusing on maternal health, pediatric care, and family planning services.

Glossary

Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET)	Special measure by the Canadian that allows Ukrainian nationals and their families to apply for free extended temporary status, including visitor visas, work permits, and study permits, enabling them to live and work in Canada for up to three years.
Economic immigrant	Immigrants selected for their potential to contribute to Canada's economy by addressing labour market needs, managing or creating businesses, making substantial investments, or fulfilling specific provincial or territorial labour market requirements.
Family Class or Immigrant sponsored by family	Immigrants sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, based on their relationship as a spouse, partner, parent, child, or relative.
Humanitarian/compassionate class	Granting permanent residence to foreign nationals who don't qualify in any other class, based on compelling personal circumstances.
Immigration and refugee Protection Act (IRPA)	The IRPA outlines the core principles governing Canada's immigration and refugee programs. It came into effect on June 28, 2002.
Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO)	An income threshold in Canada used to identify families likely to spend a higher share of their income on necessities like food, shelter, and clothing.
Multi-Year Levels Plan (MYLP)	The upcoming 2025–2027 immigration plan, focusing on balancing temporary and permanent resident numbers, addressing regional labour needs, reversing employment service cuts, and improving the asylum system amid global crises.

Parents and Grandparents Program (PGP)	Allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their parents and grandparents for permanent residency. From 2021, only those invited by IRCC can apply. For 2024, 35,700 invitations will be issued to those who submitted forms in 2020.
Permanent Residents (PRs)	A Canadian permanent resident is someone granted status to live in Canada with similar benefits to citizens but must meet residency requirements to maintain it.
Refugees and protected persons	Immigrants granted permanent residency due to a well-founded fear of persecution or the effects of war, either applying from within Canada or resettled from abroad via referrals.
Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot	Helps smaller communities by offering skilled foreign workers a pathway to permanent residence.
Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)	Enterprises with less than 250 employees and less than 250 employees and less than \$50 million in total revenue.
Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs)	Allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers when qualified Canadians are unavailable, with approvals doubling over the past five years due to increased labour demands.
Temporary Resident	Temporary residents include visitors, students, workers, and temporary resident permit holders.



