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Immigration Trends in Canada: What a deeper dive into the numbers tells us about the first half of 2025

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Background

Last October 2024, the Government of Canada announced a reduction to its permanent immigration targets to align with the country's economic needs from 500,000 down to 395,000 in 2025; from 500,000 to 380,000 in 2026; and setting a target of 365,000 in 2027. With respect to the breakdown by categories, the economic category remained by far the largest proportion of admissions to reach some 62% by 2027. Support for family reunification continues through the family category, which maintains a rate of 22% of overall permanent resident admissions. Canada's strong and proud tradition of offering protection to those most in need is evident through the sustained targets for Government Assisted Refugees, which contributes to the resettled refugees and protected persons category rate of 15% of overall permanent resident admissions. 21,200 admissions are provided to commitments made on humanitarian and compassionate grounds over three years (<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2025-2027.html>)

Meeting these targets is not simple given the need to account for regional priorities, pre existing commitments and other considerations. That which follows will look at the immigrant admission numbers for the first two quarters of 2025 (January 1 to June 30th) and the initial adjustments that were made and how they compare with the admission numbers for the same two quarters over the period January 1-June 30th, 2024. There has been much speculation about whether the Government will reach the targets but much less attention directed at how it will go about doing so and what categories of immigrants will be most affected, what regions of the country will feel the impact and how it numbers in immigrant countries of origin will be shift accordingly. That which follows will provide detailed analysis of evolving migration over the first six months of 2025 and, in particular, see how they compare with the same period over the previous year.

Cuts to immigration in the first half suggest reaching target for permanent residents will require somewhat greater cuts in the second half of the 2025

Category of Immigration - Permanent Residents	2023 Total	2024 Q1 & Q2	2024 Q3 & Q4	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025 (first two quarters)
Economic Category	272635	158415	123195	130650	-17.5%
Sponsored Family	109715	51420	54525	46880	-8.8%
Refugees and protected persons	74940	38375	38300	24345	-36.6%
Other	14425	7680	11615	5720	-25.5%
Total	471820	255950	227705	207650	-18.9%

Net result of the cuts in Q1 and Q2 is an increase in the percentage of Economic immigration as Permanent residents and a marked decline in the share of Refugees

Category of Immigration - Permanent Residents	2023		2024		2025	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Economic Category	272,635	57.8	281,600	58.3	130,650	63%
Sponsored Family	109,715	23.2	105,940	21.9	46,880	22.6
Refugees and Protected Persons	74,940	15.9	76,675	15.8	24 345	11.7
Other	14,425	3.1	19,310	4	5,720	2.7
Total	471,820	100%	483,655	100%	207,650	100%

In the Economic category, the cuts thus far have had the least impact on Quebec, Ontario & NFLB

Economic Category	2023 Total	2024 Q1 and Q2	2024 Q3 and Q4	2025 Q1 and Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025 (Q1 & Q2)
Newfoundland & Labrador	4,025	2,435	2180	2,335	-4.1%
Prince Edward Island	3,280	2,340	1290	1,195	-48.9%
Nova Scotia	9,005	7,160	4520	4,040	-43.6%
New Brunswick	9,470	7,905	5755	5,220	-34.0%
Quebec	36,185	20,165	21050	21,235	5.3%
Ontario	102,390	56,080	46010	52,845	-5.8%
Manitoba	18,220	10,285	7220	7,230	-29.7%
Saskatchewan	21,310	11,205	7860	6,355	-43.3%
Alberta	25,085	18,460	12625	12,400	-32.8%
British Columbia	42,690	21,725	14230	17,235	-20.7%
Yukon	755	490	340	365	-25.5%
Northwest Territories	220	165	115	195	18.2%
Total	272,635	158,415	123195	130,650	-17.5%

As regards family sponsored admissions thus far the biggest declines were in Quebec and British Columbia

Sponsored Family	2023 Total	2024 Q1 & Q2	2024 Q3 & Q4	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
Newfoundland & Labrador	280	125	195	140	12.0%
Prince Edward Island	155	95	110	110	15.8%
Nova Scotia	1,185	560	665	540	-3.6%
New Brunswick	620	365	415	375	2.7%
Quebec	10,295	5555	4845	4,320	-22.2%
Ontario	56,125	25655	26995	23,230	-9.5%
Manitoba	3,440	1635	1935	1,685	3.1%
Saskatchewan	2,280	1040	1240	1,070	2.9%
Alberta	17,035	7970	8875	7,815	-1.9%
British Columbia	18,100	8315	9135	7,480	-10.0%
Yukon	120	40	60	55	37.5%
Northwest Territories	80	45	55	60	33.3%
Total	109715	51420	54525	46880	-8.8%

Ontario, Quebec, BC, Alberta and NFLD have seen the biggest cuts in the number of refugee admissions in the first half of 2025 relative to the same six month period in 2024

Refugees & Protected Persons	2023 Total	2024 Q1 & Q2	2024 Q3 & Q4	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
Newfoundland & Labrador	1135	430	370	220	-48.8%
Prince Edward Island	160	45	50	55	22.2%
Nova Scotia	1535	585	680	430	-26.5%
New Brunswick	1330	580	300	300	-48.3%
Quebec	5435	4285	2715	2600	-39.3%
Ontario	39125	19765	18995	11715	-40.7%
Manitoba	2985	1335	1755	1025	-23.2%
Saskatchewan	1520	755	940	555	-26.5%
Alberta	14160	6990	8720	5090	-27.2%
British Columbia	7525	3615	3755	2345	-35.1%
Yukon	20	0	0	0	
Northwest Territories	10	10	20	--	
Total	74940	38375	38300	24335	-36.6%

Reduction in numbers and share of refugees between 2024 and 2025 Q1 and Q2 is highest in Syria, Iran and Afghanistan

Refugees & Protected Persons by Country of origin (top 10)	2024 Total	2024 Q1 & Q2 est.	2025 Q1 & Q2	% Estimated change from 2024 to 2025
Eritrea	15675	7838	4615	-41.1%
Afghanistan	9970	4985	2480	-50.3%
Syria	6775	3388	1415	-58.2%
Democratic Republic of Somalia	5130	2565	1715	-33.1%
Ethiopia	3185	1593	1445	-9.3%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3180	1590	1470	-7.5%
Iran	2785	1393	665	-52.2%
Pakistan	2130	1065	660	-38.0%
Nigeria	2005	1003	720	-28.2%
Democratic Republic of Sudan	1440	720	735	2.1%

As regards source countries of permanent residents, they mainly affected India, China, Philippines and Afghanistan when comparing the first half of 2024 and 2025

Permanent Residents	2023 Total	2024 Q1 & Q2	2024 Q3 & Q4	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
India	139,790	75,430	51,945	59,260	-21.4%
Philippines	26,965	17,380	14,940	13,925	-19.9%
China	31,785	15880	14,085	11,480	-27.7%
Cameroon	11,685	8810	12,400	10,355	17.5%
Nigeria	17,465	10510	9,880	8,920	-15.1%
France	10,075	5005	4,940	5,960	19.1%
Eritrea	10,680	6000	10,600	5,340	-11.0%
Pakistan	11,860	5635	6,330	4,780	-15.2%
Ukraine	3,110	3935	2,845	4,340	10.3%
USA	10,640	4980	4,350	3,785	-24.0%
Algeria	5,245	3730	4,525	3,780	1.3%
Colombia	4,660	3390	5,470	3,690	8.8%
Morocco	6,410	3675	3,955	3,495	-4.9%
Iran	10,680	3840	4,305	3,360	-12.5%
Afghanistan	20,180	8005	4,280	3,185	-60.2%
Brazil	7,225	3530	2,450	2,880	-18.4%
Mexico	5,735	3510	2,905	2,725	-22.4%
Tunisia	3,470	2615	3,095	2,685	2.7%
Haiti	3,015	1600	3,575	2,570	60.6%

EXPRESS ENTRY

Express entry categories saw considerable drop in Experience Class and Provincial Nominee program in the first half of 2025

Express Entry Categories	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 Q1-Q2 (est.)	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
Canadian Experience Class	44,665	85,755	12,975	41,455	43,870	21,935	11,150	-49.2%
Federal Skilled Trades	195	0	0	--	--		0	
Federal Skilled Worker	22,160	8,655	5,200	21,730	21,045	10,523	13,270	26.1%
Provincial Nominee Program	14,125	13,690	19,160	22,575	25,085	12,543	4,790	-61.8%
Not Stated	0	--	0	0	0		0	
Total - All Categories	81,145	108,105	37,335	85,760	90,005	45,003	29,205	-35.1%

Estimated cut to Express entry stands at one-third for 2025 if trend continues from first half of 2025

Express Entry	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 Q1 & Q2 (est.)	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
Newfoundland and Labrador	165	280	345	260	290	145	100	-31.0%
Prince Edward Island	450	750	415	480	350	175	80	-54.3%
Nova Scotia	1,705	3,120	1,880	2,180	1,630	815	470	-42.3%
New Brunswick	850	1,475	950	2,160	2,825	1413	1,145	-18.9%
Ontario	50,750	65,325	17,930	51,225	57,655	28828	18,655	-35.3%
Manitoba	1,495	1,930	2,195	2,470	3,320	1660	1,030	-38.0%
Saskatchewan	2,060	1,960	1,375	1,610	1,050	525	370	-29.5%
Alberta	6,235	8,235	4,655	8,980	7,800	3900	3,250	-16.7%
British Columbia	17,350	24,860	7,500	16,280	14,900	7450	3,990	-46.4%
Total - All Canada	81,145	108,105	37,335	85,760	90,005	45003	29,205	-35.1%

Express entry sources dive from India, Nigeria, China and the Philippines

Express Entry Invitation Category and Country of Citizenship						2024	2025	% change from 2024 to 2025
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Q1 & Q2 (est.)	Q1 & Q2	
India	38,190	61,100	16,860	40,775	42,150	21,075	7,980	-62.10%
Cameroon, Federal Republic of	600	500	760	2,845	7,150	3,575	7,795	118.00%
Nigeria	4,935	3,720	2,700	5,840	6,070	3,035	1,420	-53.20%
Algeria	385	325	510	1,230	1,580	790	1,130	43.00%
Morocco	755	625	775	1,620	1,880	940	1,055	12.20%
China, People's Republic of	7,090	8,410	2,020	4,650	3,675	1,838	910	-50.50%
France	1,200	1,080	780	1,200	1,410	705	750	6.40%
Ivory Coast, Republic of	305	205	115	360	825	413	710	72.10%
Philippines	920	1,955	815	2,170	2,280	1,140	580	-49.10%
Iran	1,575	1,725	1,090	2,255	1,965	983	480	-51.10%
Pakistan	2,025	1,505	765	2,025	1,685	843	420	-50.10%
Brazil	1,945	2,510	750	1,460	1,285	643	290	-54.90%
Tunisia	255	205	215	455	525	263	285	8.60%
United Kingdom & Territories	2,090	2,170	675	1,165	920	460	275	-40.20%
Mauritius	310	215	195	580	685	343	240	-29.90%
Mexico	660	1,085	355	885	845	423	225	-46.70%
Togo, Republic of	20	45	30	120	235	118	220	87.20%
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	45	40	40	145	325	163	205	26.20%
Benin, Republic of	30	20	25	120	210	105	200	90.50%
United States of America	1,235	1,185	665	1,020	770	385	200	-48.1%
Total	81,145	108,105	37,335	85,760	90,005	45,003	29,205	-35.1%

Massive drop in asylum claims in Canada when comparing first half of 2025 to the first half of 2024 notably with respect to inland and airport claims

Canada - Asylum Claimants by Claim Office Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 Q1 & Q2	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change 2024 to 2025
Airport - Total	3,035	3,865	6,930	8,110	1,865	3,460	17,150	41,315	42,590	31,440	6,275	-80.0%
Border - Total	7,355	11,615	21,025	20,680	5,705	9,040	46,345	29,920	15,425	9,390	10,655	13.5%
Inland - Total	13,440	34,855	27,035	35,195	16,095	12,345	28,120	72,040	113,790	65,085	40,505	-37.8%
Other Offices	10	25	25	25	15	20	35	40	30		--	
Total	23,835	50,360	55,015	64,010	23,680	24,870	91,645	143,315	171,840	105,925	57,440	-45.8%

Massive declines in asylum claimants from India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Mexico, but a considerable increase from Haiti and small increase from Iran

Canada - Asylum Claimants	2024 Q1 & Q2	2025 Q1 & Q2	% change from 2024 to 2025
India	16,760	9,770	-41.7%
Bangladesh	10,885	1,905	-82.5%
Nigeria	7,620	3,455	-54.7%
Sri Lanka	4,690	1,530	-67.4%
Mexico	5,875	2,490	-57.6%
Haiti	3,990	7,855	96.9%
Ghana	3,630	1,540	-57.6%
Iran	3,295	3,510	6.5%
Pakistan	2,695	1,710	-36.5%
Colombia	2,360	1,375	-41.7%
China, People's Republic of	1725	2,155	24.9%
Algeria	1205	1,120	-7.1%
Turkey	1390	715	-48.6%
Congo, Democratic Republic of	1510	925	-38.7%
Guinea, Republic of	1000	1,190	19.0%
Uganda	1375	235	-82.9%
Cameroon, Federal Republic of	1090	670	-38.5%

ASYLUM CLAIMS

Cautionary note: This data should not be used as an indication of the number of asylum claimants residing in a province or territory. The table pulls data on number of asylum claimants who have submit a valid claim by year and province of claim. The data set may include individuals who have claimed asylum and since obtained a referral to the IRB, individuals who have been determined to be protected persons by IRPA, as well as those who may have since become a permanent resident may still be included in the claimant count in the year in which their asylum claim was made.



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