



IRCC Consultation on Immigration Levels and Municipal Nominee Program (MNP)

Background Document



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

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Introduction

IRCC conducts annual consultations on immigration in Canada. Given the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation – with varying impacts by region and sector – this year’s consultations will be particularly informative.

We recognize that there have been significant challenges, and consequently, there has been a need to innovate and adapt, where possible. We are interested in hearing your thoughts on immigration in the current context, but also longer term. We are seeking your views on Canada’s immigration levels plan, including the balance between different classes and programs, and how immigration can support Canada – particularly in light of the current pandemic.

This consultation also requests your feedback on the Municipal Nominee Program (MNP) – a new economic immigration program included in the Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s [2019 mandate letter](#).

Through your experiences with immigration, your views and advice will help to shape a collective national vision for planning immigration levels in the coming years and will also support the development of an economic immigration program that will help fill regional labour market needs.

We thank you for your participation.

Immigration Levels Planning

The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* requires the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to table a projection of permanent resident admissions (the levels plan) in Parliament every year. The immigration levels plan details how many immigrants Canada will welcome as permanent residents under the economic, family, and refugee and humanitarian programs.

The 2020-2022 immigration levels plan renews the three-year time frame for the multi-year plan and proposes to increase the number of permanent residents Canada welcomes annually to 341,000 in 2020; 351,000 in 2021; and 361,000 in 2022. Due to the impacts of COVID 19 and travel restrictions, the 2020 target of 341,000 permanent resident admissions will not be met. However, assuming travel restrictions are eased, the current plan calls for levels to increase in coming years. We are seeking your feedback as there is an opportunity to adjust out-year targets (i.e., currently 2021 and 2022) each year. The full 2020-2022 levels plan can be found [here](#).

A number of considerations are taken into account when developing the immigration levels plan, including:

- Government priorities and objectives for immigration, as set out in the [*Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*](#);

- Economic needs across Canada, including at this time, considerations of economic needs of various sectors in the context of economic recovery due to COVID-19;
- International obligations with respect to refugees and offering protection to those in need;
- Ability of IRCC and its partner departments to screen and process applications in a timely manner; and
- Capacity to settle, integrate and retain newcomers (e.g., settlement services, housing availability, public infrastructure, etc.).

The plan is designed to contribute to an immigration system that fosters economic growth; supports diversity; and helps build vibrant, dynamic, and inclusive communities; while maintaining border integrity to preserve the safety and security of Canadians

The current plan outlines a steady increase in admissions that trends towards 1 percent of Canada's population by 2022.

Closely linked with the question of how many people to welcome, is the question of the appropriate mix (or distribution) of permanent residents across the main immigration classes. In the current plan for 2021, the economic class would account for 58 percent of total admissions. The family class would represent 26 percent, and the refugee and humanitarian classes would account for 16 percent. Please see below for the full list of categories and programs ([Annex 1](#)).

[Municipal Nominee Program \(MNP\): A regional economic immigration program for permanent residency](#)

Canada is recognized as a world leader in innovative immigration programs that have long been based on fulfilling national economic growth objectives (OECD, 2019). In recent years, Canada's immigration programs have evolved to be more regionally-focused, in order to better respond to the unique demographic and labour market challenges experienced in different areas of the country.

In 2019, the Minister of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada was mandated to "Introduce a Municipal Nominee Program (MNP) that will allow local communities, chambers of commerce and local labour councils to directly sponsor permanent immigrants. At least 5,000 new spaces will be dedicated for this program."

In designing the MNP, IRCC is committed to extensive consultation with key stakeholders. To date, we have had early engagements with key federal partners, provincial and territorial governments and some national stakeholder groups. We are now seeking input from stakeholders, like yourself, to help us scope out the following program considerations.

Objective of the New Program – Existing federal, provincial and territorial economic immigration pathways target various types of skills and candidate profiles and were designed to address

various needs and gaps. Through consultation, we would like to define the objective of the program to ensure complementarity with existing economic immigration programs ([Annex 2](#)).

Scope and Criteria for Participation – Demographic, labour and immigration needs vary across communities and regions in Canada. While the MNP will be able to contribute to meeting those needs, it will be difficult to address all of them. Putting in place criteria for community participation will also be an important program design element. Parameters such as the population size of communities, amount of newcomers that communities have traditionally received and priority economic sectors or labour shortages in occupations could be used to inform criteria for community participation.

Retention – To meet Canada’s regional demographic and economic challenges, retention of newcomers in a particular region or community is important. Many factors contribute to retention (e.g. meaningful employment and career development opportunities for the newcomer, as well as for family members; welcoming communities; community infrastructure such as affordable housing, schools and healthcare services, etc.).

Role of municipalities and community partners – Municipalities, and regional and local economic development organizations have pre-existing relationships with local employers and services within the communities which they serve. However, the economic development and business landscape, and capacity to partner in an immigration program, vary across municipalities, communities and regions within Canada.

Role of provinces and territories – Jurisdiction over immigration is shared between federal and provincial/territorial governments. Provinces and territories currently play an important role in the selection of economic immigrants based on their jurisdiction’s economic development and labour market needs via their respective Provincial and Territorial Nominee Programs.

Role of settlement and support services – Settlement and support services¹ contribute to newcomers’ settlement and integration, so that they may fully participate and contribute in various aspects of Canadian life. IRCC pilots such as the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) recognize that settlement cannot follow a one-size-fits-all model and have implemented retention-based principles which prioritize strong community settlement services.

¹ Through contribution agreements, IRCC funds service provider organizations (SPO), such as immigrant-serving agencies, social service organizations or educational institutions to provide settlement services to newcomers under six main areas (Needs Assessments and Referrals, Information and Orientation, Language Assessments, Language Training, Employment-Related Services and Community Connections). The Settlement Program also funds six support services (i.e., Care for Newcomer Children, Transportation, Translation, Interpretation, Disability Support and Crisis Counselling) to help facilitate access to settlement programming as well as Indirect Services that support the development of partnerships, capacity-building and the sharing of best practices among Settlement service providers. Furthermore, as an essential part of the Settlement Program, IRCC engages provinces/territories, civil society, businesses and other stakeholders such as employer associations, sector councils, and credentialing bodies to mobilize resources to deliver responsive and coordinated settlement and non-settlement services to newcomers. (IRCC (2017), *Evaluation of the Settlement Program*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/settlement-program.html>)

Annex 1 – Immigration Classes and Categories

Immigration Class	Category
Economic	Federal High Skilled
	Economic Pilots
	<i>Caregivers</i>
	<i>Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot</i>
	<i>Agri-Food Pilot</i>
	<i>Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program</i>
	Federal Business
	Provincial Nominee Program
	Quebec Skilled Workers and Business
Family	Spouses, Partners, and Children
	Parents and Grandparents
Refugees and Protected Persons	Protected Persons in Canada and Dependents Abroad
	Resettled Refugees
	<i>Government Assisted</i>
	<i>Blended Visa Office Referred</i>
	<i>Privately Sponsored</i>
Humanitarian & Other	

Annex 2 - Existing Economic Immigration Programs

In developing the MNP, IRCC will leverage lessons learned from existing regional immigration programs and pilots, below, in order to contribute to, and further, the overall aim of sharing the benefits of immigration across all regions of Canada.

- [Over 60 PNP Streams](#)² – distributed across 11 PTs and including regional/rural initiatives like the Yukon Community Pilot, the British Columbia Regional Entrepreneur Stream, etc. Provincial and territorial programming is accessible to communities with dedicated streams for workers at all skill levels, as well as students and entrepreneurs.

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is a jointly administered federal-provincial-territorial immigration program that was designed to help share the benefits of immigration across all regions of Canada. In 20 years, it has become established and grown to be the single most effective contributor to the “regionalization” of immigration in Canada, helping shift immigration landing patterns outside of the three most populous provinces. In 2017, 34% of

² The number of streams varies year to year depending on changes made by provinces and territories to their PNPs.

economic immigrants were destined outside Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, compared to just 10% in 1997 (IRCC, 2018).

Despite the PNP's success at increasing the distribution of economic immigrants across Canadian regions, we continue to see immigrants settle primarily in Ontario, BC and Quebec, and in major centers within each province or territory. "Among all PNP-selected immigrants between 2006 and 2016, a full 80% landed in a metropolitan area including in Toronto and Vancouver" (OECD, 2019).

- **[Express Entry \(2015\)](#)** – consisting of the following federal programs: Federal Skilled Worker, Federal Skilled Trade and Canadian Experience Class – serves to attract immigrants who possess "high human capital" factors like education and language proficiency to supply the Canadian labour market (outside Quebec) with immediate and long-term talent.
- **[Atlantic Immigration Pilot \(AIP\) \(2017\)](#)** – an employer-driven pilot with enhanced settlement support with the goal of aligning immigration with economic development priorities and strengthening retention outcomes within the four Atlantic Provinces. Based on early results, the federal government has committed to making this a permanent program.
- **[Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot \(RNIP\) \(late 2019\)](#)** – while still in the early stages of implementation, IRCC is currently working with 11 communities in Northern Ontario and Western Canada to launch the pilot locally. RNIP is a community economic development-driven model, combining meaningful employment with wrap-around community support to encourage newcomers to establish roots and stay in smaller and remote communities in the long-term.
- **[Agri-Food Pilot \(2020\)](#)** – helps address the labour needs of the Canadian agri-food sector, particularly in meat processing and mushroom production, by testing a new industry-specific approach while attracting experienced, non-seasonal workers who can settle in Canada.

Sources:

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2020), *2019 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2019.html>.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2018), *2018 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2018/report.html>.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2017), *Evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/provincial-nominee-program-2015.html>.

OECD (2019), *Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Canada 2019*, Recruiting Immigrant Workers, OECD, Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/4abab00d-en>.

Prime Minister of Canada, *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter*, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2019/12/13/minister-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-mandate-letter>.

Annex 3 - Survey

1. Please provide your name and your organization's name:

- Your name (optional):
- Organization:

2. What is the primary focus of your organization?

- Academia, research foundation, or think tank
- Employer or business
- Chamber of commerce or board of trade
- Settlement or resettlement organization
- Industry or sector council
- Indigenous, First Nations, or Inuit organization
- Francophone or official language minority community
- Crown corporation
- Government (federal, provincial or territorial, municipal or regional administration)
- General Public
- Non-profit organization
- Other, please specify: _____

3. In which province or territory do you operate? *Please select all that apply.*

- National organization
- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Yukon Territory
- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut

COVID-19

4. What impacts, changes or shifts do you foresee in the short- and long-term to how you/your sector/your clients operate in the future as a result of COVID-19?

4a. What role do you see immigration playing in recovery efforts for your sector/your clients?

5. How might immigration play a role for your sector/your clients looking forward – in the longer term?

Levels and Mix

6. Do you wish to provide input on the immigration levels plan?

- Yes
- No [SKIP TO MNP SECTION]

7. Canada's immigration target for 2020 of 341,000 permanent resident admissions will not be met due to the impacts of COVID-19. Thinking forward to 2021, if travel restrictions are lifted, the current plan sets targets for each immigration class for 2021 per the following table.

For each of the following immigration classes and the overall total, do you feel that this would be too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

For easy reference, the full 2020-2022 immigration levels plan can be found [here](#).

	2021 Target	Too Many	Too Few	About Right	Don't Know
Economic (for example: workers, or business immigrants)	203,050				
Family (for example: spouses, partners, children, or parents of people already in Canada)	91,000				
Refugees, Protected Persons, and Humanitarian (for example: resettled refugees, or asylum seekers)	56,950				
All Categories (approximately 0.92 percent of Canada's population)	351,000				

8. Under the current plan, in 2021, the economic class will account for 58 percent of total admissions. The family class will represent 26 percent, and the refugee and humanitarian classes will account for 16 percent. What adjustments, if any, should IRCC make as Canada recovers from COVID-19? If so, what could these look like?

- No adjustments needed
- Don't know

9. How, if at all, does Canada's immigration planning need to change as Canada recovers from COVID-19?

10. Which of the following would you say are the most important reasons for Canada to have a robust immigration program in 2021? Please rank up to three factors by typing 1, 2 and 3 into the text boxes, with 1 as the most important. [RANDOMIZE LIST ORDER]

- Fill labour market gaps and bring new skills
- Reunite families
- Support humanitarian commitments
- Increase Canada's population
- Support community development
- Contribute to Canada's diversity
- Support Canada's economic recovery
- Support the development of minority official languages communities

11. In an uncertain context such as a pandemic, is it helpful for the Government of Canada to continue to set a three year trajectory for levels planning?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

12. Subject to potential impacts, changes or shifts due to COVID-19, the current plan sets a notional target for 2022 to welcome 361,000 newcomers (or approximately 0.93 percent of Canada's population).

In your opinion, do you feel that this would be too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

- Too many
- Too few
- About right
- Don't know

13. Beyond 2022, would you like to see immigration levels increase each year, stabilize at 361,000 immigrants per year, or decrease?

- Increase
- Stabilize at 361,000 immigrants per year
- Decrease
- Don't know

14. If immigration levels were to increase, in which immigration class would you prioritize growth?

- Economic
- Family
- Refugees and Protected Persons
- Don't know

15. If immigration levels were to decrease, in which immigration class would you recommend a decrease?

- Economic
- Family
- Refugees and Protected Persons
- Don't know

16. Finally, is there any other feedback you would like to provide about immigration levels or classes?

- No other feedback

Municipal Nominee Program

17. Do you wish to provide input on the Municipal Nominee Program (MNP)?

- Yes
- No **[SKIP TO END]**

18. What key gap do you see the MNP addressing?

- Increasing the role of municipalities/communities in existing immigration landscape and programs
- Distributing the benefits of immigration to underserved communities
- Other, please specify: _____

19. What criteria should be used to select participating MNP municipalities/communities? *Please select all that apply.*

- Population size
- Amount of newcomers the community traditionally receives (e.g., Medium-size centers tend to receive a lower share of economic immigration)
- Experience in welcoming and retaining newcomers
- Priority economic sectors
- Labour shortages
- Infrastructure capacity
- Other, please specify: _____

[IF POPULATION SIZE] 19a. Which population size(s) should be prioritized? *Please select all that apply.*

- Large urban centers – population of 100,000 and greater
- Medium-size communities – population of 30,000 to 99,999

- Smaller communities – population of 1,000 to 29,999
- Designated place – population of 1,000 or less
- Other (e.g., regional approach/groupings of communities), please specify:

[IF ECONOMIC SECTORS] 19b. Which priority economic sectors should be the focus?

[IF LABOUR SHORTAGES] 19c. What labour shortages should be included?

[IF INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY] 19d. What infrastructure is required to support an increased population? *Please select all that apply.*

- Public transportation
- Housing
- Technological (ie: internet access)
- Schools
- Healthcare services
- Other, please specify: _____

20. What would be the most important indicator of success for the MNP?

- High retention rates in selected municipalities/communities
- Long-term role for municipalities/communities in immigration landscape
- Increased immigration to underserved communities
- Other, please specify: _____

21. How viable do you consider each of the following methods of incorporating municipalities/communities into the immigration landscape and programs? Please respond on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is “not at all viable” and 7 is “completely viable.”

- Partnering with the Provincial Nominee Program
- Developing municipal/community capacity to leverage existing immigration programming
- Long-term role for municipalities/communities in immigration landscape (e.g., selecting immigrants)
- Partnering with IRCC and Provinces and Territories to provide insight into local labour market/economies

22. What kinds of settlement supports will be important to include as part of the MNP? *Please select all that apply.*

- Create new, tailored settlement supports
- Leverage existing community services
- Other, please specify: _____

23. Finally, is there any other feedback you would like to provide about MNP?

- No other feedback