

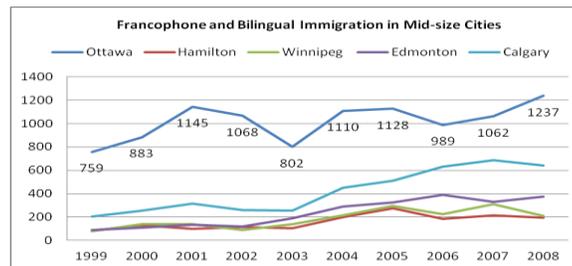
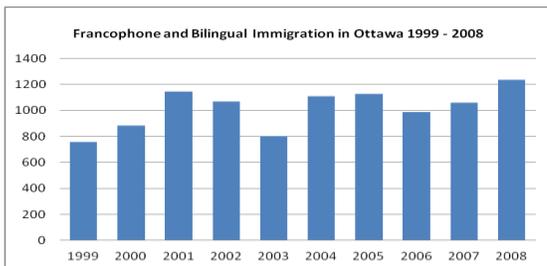


Francophone Immigration in Ottawa: Trends, Issues and Current Action

Ottawa is a cosmopolitan city that welcomes people of different cultures from around the world. Each year, more than 1,000 Francophone newcomers choose Ottawa as their destination in Canada. According to the Association for Canadian Studies, 8945 francophone immigrants have moved to live in Ottawa between 2006-2011¹.

Notably, francophone immigrants choose to settle in Ottawa over Gatineau. Near 60% of immigrants with French as their mother tongue chose Ottawa when they settled in the national capital region between 2001 and 2011². According to Jack Jedwab, Director of the Association for Canadian Studies, cultural diversity and access to community services may be the factors behind making Ottawa more attractive for francophone immigrants.

The historic trends show that Ottawa's annual intake of francophone and bilingual immigration has grown on the average of 34.2% between 1999 – 2008. Moreover, Ottawa is a leader among the mid-sized Canadian cities, where French is a minority language, in attracting francophone and bilingual immigration. It is ahead of all other similar size cities by approximately twice the number of francophone and bilingual immigration³.



Nevertheless, francophone immigrants face many challenges. Despite the fact that their level of education surpasses that of the local Francophone population and of the Ottawa population in general⁴, they have difficulties integrating into the Ottawa labour market. Their diplomas are not always recognized; those who are eventually hired are poorly paid and, in many cases, have to accept positions which are not commensurate with their qualifications. Lack of proficiency in English is a barrier to their recruitment. Access to housing is another difficulty, which Francophone newcomers face⁵.

For the period of April 2012 - March 2013, the Conseil Économique et Social d'Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC) has served 636 new francophone immigrants, which is less than half of the francophone immigrant population who have arrived in Ottawa in the same period⁶.

In this context, the creation of the Réseau de soutien à l'immigration francophone de l'Est de l'Ontario (RSIFEO) is timely. The RSIFEO was established in February 2007 by the CÉSOC and is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The RSIFEO is a network of Francophone partners from various sectors, including: education, health, employment, housing, municipalities, who share a common objective - fostering Francophone immigration. They act as spokespersons for the issue of Francophone immigration. Their role is to make recommendations for initiatives and projects to mainstream organizations to achieve this goal. Ottawa chapter of RSIFEO has twenty seven members. More information about RSIFEO membership base and current work is available on RSIFEO website: www.rsifeo.org.

¹ Immigration and Official Language Communities in Ottawa and Gatineau, Jack Jedwab Executive Director of Association for Canadian Studies, May 2013

² National Household Survey 2011, Statistics Canada

³ [The Role of Immigration in Ottawa's Historic Growth and Development, 2010, OLIP Publication](#)

⁴ État des lieux de l'immigration d'expression française à Ottawa, Ronald Bisson, 2009

⁵ État des lieux de l'immigration d'expression française à Ottawa, Ronald Bisson, 2009

⁶ CESOC Annual Report 2012-2013