



IRCC Consultation on Immigration Levels and Responsive Economic Immigration

Background Document



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Introduction

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) conducts consultations on immigration in Canada every year. Given the rapidly evolving COVID-19 recovery situation – with varying impacts by region and sector – this year’s consultations will be especially informative.

We recognize that there have been significant challenges presented in the pandemic context, which drove a need to innovate and adapt. We are interested in hearing your thoughts on immigration in the current context, as well as considerations in the longer term. As such, we are seeking your views on Canada’s immigration levels plan – including the balance among different categories and programs, and how immigration can be better positioned to support Canada, from the perspectives of economic recovery and future growth, and the vitality of communities in all parts of Canada.

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 to help inform future direction of an immigration system that will be more responsive to economic needs while equally supporting diversity and ensuring inclusivity.

We thank you for your participation.

Immigration Levels Planning

The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* requires the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship 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 2021-2023 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 401,000 in 2021; 411,000 in 2022; and 421,000 in 2023. While targets and ranges are firm in the first year, the outer years are notional – which are subject to review to allow reflections of any developments or changes in reality. We are seeking your feedback as there is an opportunity to adjust outer year admissions targets (i.e., currently 2022 and 2023) and to help inform targets for 2024. The full 2021-2023 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 and regional 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 ensuring 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 2023.

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 2022, the economic class would account for 59 percent of total admissions. The family class would represent 25 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).

[Responsive economic immigration: evolving Express Entry to better meet Canada's needs](#)

Canada's immigration system is critical to supporting our economic recovery and building a stronger Canada for all. In thinking about Canada's economic recovery and future growth, the federal government is looking at ways to simplify our immigration system and make it more responsive to economic and labour market needs, including using Express Entry.

Express Entry has been an important innovation in managing application intake to [Canada's federal high skilled](#) programs and has a [track record](#) of bringing in highly skilled immigrants who succeed in Canada's economy and contribute to Canadian society. These newcomers fill needs in our economy that are critical for our growth and create shared prosperity for all.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, in 2020 IRCC issued a highest-ever 107,350 invitations to apply for permanent residence to Express Entry candidates, to support achievement of 2020 and 2021 immigration levels targets. Express Entry will continue to be an important tool in meeting economic immigration objectives, helping Canada reach its 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan.

[Budget 2021](#) announced the Government of Canada's intention to propose amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*. These amendments would increase the flexibility of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to use Express Entry Ministerial

Instructions to better select candidates who can meet a range of economic, labour market and skills needs. The Government also made investments through Budget 2021 to deliver a secure, stable and flexible enterprise-wide digital platform to improve application processing and help Canada remain a destination of choice.

These initiatives will support an immigration system that is more client-focused, streamlined and better able to respond to evolving economic needs across Canada. With this in mind, IRCC is considering ways in which it could adjust the Express Entry system, building on the human capital foundation of economic immigration that has been a hallmark of Canada's success.

As IRCC develops these ideas, this year's levels consultations are an opportunity to provide your perspectives on evolving Canada's economic immigration system to better meet our needs. Your input will help shape early thinking with our partners and help us plan future engagement on this topic with interested individuals, organizations and groups.

Sources:

- [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(2020\), *Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2021-2023.html>](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2021-2023.html)
- [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(2020\), *Evaluation of Express Entry: Early impacts on economic outcomes and system management*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/eval-express-entry-economic-outcomes-system-management.html>](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/eval-express-entry-economic-outcomes-system-management.html)
- [Government of Canada \(2021\), *Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience*, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>](https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html)
- [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(2021\), *2020 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2020.html>](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2020.html)
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- [Prime Minister of Canada \(2021\), *Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter*, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/01/15/minister-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-supplementary-mandate>](https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/01/15/minister-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-supplementary-mandate)

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	