



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

2023-24 IRCC Annual Tracking Study

Final report

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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This public opinion research report presents the results of two surveys and a series of focus groups conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Telephone surveys were conducted with a nationally representative sample of 3,000 Canadians between November 3rd and December 17th, 2023, and with 1,540 residents of 13 selected municipalities between January 3rd and February 5th, 2024. Fourteen online focus groups were conducted with a total of 92 Canadians between February 26th and March 11th, 2024.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : **2023-24 Étude de suivi annuelle d'IRCC.**

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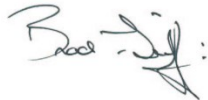
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Brad Griffin
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Detailed Quantitative Highlights	11
Detailed Qualitative Findings	16
Contextual Attitudes to Immigration	16
Attitudes to Permanent Residents Government Announcements and Streams	20
Attitudes to Temporary Residents Announcements	27
Appendix 1 – Quantitative methodology	31
Appendix 2 – Qualitative and quantitative instruments	40
Appendix 3 – Full set of tabulated data	41

Executive Summary

Ipsos Public Affairs is pleased to present this report to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Background

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) facilitates the arrival of immigrants, provides protection to refugees, and offers programming to help newcomers settle in Canada. It also grants citizenship and issues travel documents (such as passports) to Canadians.

IRCC conducts an ongoing research program to help the Department develop a better understanding of Canadian attitudes toward the issues surrounding citizenship and immigration. By gauging and analyzing these opinions, the Department gains insights into important policy areas related to the mandate of the department and related services.

Research Objectives

The 2023-24 IRCC Annual Tracking Study, conducted with members of the Canadian general population, including newcomers, established immigrants, and Indigenous peoples, was designed to provide IRCC with comparable tracking data about attitudes toward issues of priority to the Department surrounding immigration, refugees, and citizenship. Specifically, it focused on:

- Immigration levels;
- The impact of immigration on Canada;
- Perceptions of service provided by IRCC to clients and to the general public;
- Canada's immigration system and priorities; and
- The settlement and integration of newcomers.

The research project included two phases: two quantitative surveys conducted by telephone, and a series of qualitative online focus groups. The value of this contract, including HST, is **\$295,428.24**.

Quantitative Methodology

To meet the research objectives, Ipsos conducted a national telephone survey and a targeted telephone survey to selected municipalities across the country. The 15-minute national telephone survey was conducted among a nationwide sample of n=3,000 Canadian adults between November 3rd and December 17th, 2023. The telephone survey sample was a probability sample generated through random digit dialing obtaining an overall margin of error of ± 1.8 percentage points (calculated at a 95% confidence interval). Respondents were offered the survey in the official language of their choice.

Ipsos also conducted an 11-minute telephone survey with a random sample of 1,540 individuals across 13 selected municipalities (with 100 to 120 surveys completed per municipality) between January 3rd and February 5th, 2024. The sample of members of the general population aged 18+ was a probability sample

generated through random digit dialing. The margins of error for each municipality are between ± 8.9 and ± 9.8 percentage points, depending on sample size (calculated at a 95% confidence interval).

A full quantitative methodology report, including all information about the execution of the fieldwork that is needed to replicate the research initiative, may be found in Appendix 1. The quantitative survey research instruments and a set of tabulated results from the quantitative surveys are provided under a separate cover.

Qualitative Methodology

Ipsos conducted 14 online focus groups in total with the following research audiences:

- Members of the Canadian **general public** 18 years of age or older (including those living in more rural areas of the country)
- **Newcomers** (immigrants who have lived in Canada in 2018 or later)
- **Indigenous Canadians** (mix of regions).

Fieldwork took place between February 26th and March 11th, 2024. As shown in the table below, the research was national in scope, engaged members of the general public including newcomers and Indigenous participants and conducted in both official languages.

Group	Research audience	Language	Number of participants
1	General population in the Greater Toronto Area	English	6
2	General population in Calgary and Edmonton	English	5
3	General population in Atlantic Cities	English	5
4	General population in Saskatoon and Regina	English	7
5	General population in Metro Vancouver	English	6
6	General population in Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, Guelph and London	English	7
7	General population in Montreal	French	6
8	General population in Francophone communities outside of Quebec	French	8
9	General population in smaller centres (with population of less than 30,000) across Canada	English	7
10	Newcomers in Western Canada	English	10
11	Newcomers in Eastern Canada	English	9
12	Newcomers in Quebec and in Francophone communities in Eastern Canada	French	8
13	Indigenous Peoples in Eastern Canada and Territories	English	4
14	Indigenous Peoples in Western Canada and Territories	English	4

Discussions were hosted online and lasted approximately 2 hours each. A total of 92 participants took part in the discussions. Participants received a \$125 incentive for their participation.

Note to reader on the nature of Qualitative Results: It should be noted that qualitative research findings are exploratory and directional in nature. The value of qualitative research is that it allows for the in-depth exploration of factors that shape public attitudes and behaviours on certain issues. When interpreting the findings, it should be noted that at no point is the intention to produce results that are statistically representative of the general population. A separate quantitative survey was conducted and the report from that survey should be consulted for a representative picture of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions on the topic among the Canadian public.

Summary of Quantitative Highlights

National Survey

When asked about the number of immigrants coming to Canada, half (48%) of Canadians feel that there are 'about the right number'. About one third (35%) feel there are 'too many', while one in ten (12%) feel that there are 'too few' immigrants coming to Canada.

Just over half (55%) of Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect on their city or town, compared to one in five (22%) who feel immigration has a more negative effect. At a provincial level, perceptions of immigration are similar where six in ten (58%) Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect on their province, while one quarter (24%) feel it has a negative effect. Overall, on a national level, perceptions of immigration are more positive, as six in ten (63%) Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect, compared to one quarter (23%) who feel it has a negative effect.

When looking at attitudes and opinions towards immigration, Canadians have positive impressions of Canada's reputation as an open and welcoming society (74%) and two thirds (65%) agree that accepting immigrants from many different cultures makes Canada's culture stronger. At an economic level, two thirds (67%) of Canadians agree that immigration is necessary for Canada to sustain economic growth considering the aging population and six in ten (61%) agree that Canada's competitiveness depends on the ability to recruit immigrants who meet the countries evolving labour needs. Six in ten (62%) also agree that immigration is necessary to help fill skill and labour shortages in their local economies. On the other hand, just under half (46%) of Canadians agree that Canada should focus on helping unemployed Canadians rather than looking for skilled immigrants to fill labour shortages.

In terms of perceptions of refugees, half (48%) of Canadians feel that there are 'about the right number' of refugees coming to Canada, compared to three in ten (29%) who feel that there are 'too many' and one in five (18%) who feel there are 'too few'.

Municipal Survey

Analysis was not conducted for the municipal survey as it was contracted using standing offer *Series B - Fieldwork and Data Tabulation for Telephone Surveys*. A full set of tabulated data for the municipal survey is provided under a separate cover.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Top issues of concern

Housing along with the general rise in the cost of living were highlighted as the top issues across the board. On housing specifically, several participants shared stories of how they had been affected such as: their rents and mortgage payments increasing substantially; having to move as a result of rising housing costs; or their inability to move to housing that would be more suitable for their needs.

Participants in the newcomer groups shared how they faced additional challenges due a lack of credit history or landlord references within Canada and not having enough connections to secure a guarantor. Several recounted experiences being taken advantage of by landlords or financial advisors because of their lack of familiarity with the Canadian market. Participants who had arrived more recently were aware of the housing challenges in Canada but were taken aback by the actual difficulty they faced upon arrival.

Immigration came up only a couple of times as a top concern and a minority explicitly brought up immigration when describing the challenges their communities face with respect to housing.

Attitudes to Permanent Residents Announcement and Streams

The broad sentiment throughout the groups, including in the groups with newcomers, was ongoing support for immigration but accompanied with an attitude of “not right now” or “how are we going to make this work”. This sentiment was partly underpinned by the following: concerns about the impact of immigration on infrastructure; perceived unfairness to newcomers of Canada not being able to deliver on the promise of a better quality of life; preference for prioritizing those who are already in Canada and struggling with housing, healthcare etc.

Overall Targets. Awareness of the targets for permanent residents announced in the fall was low across the board. Many participants felt that the targets set for the next three years, which were presented to them, were too high. They could not fathom how cities, that are already receiving high volumes of immigrants and where infrastructure is already under great strain, could accommodate the proposed targets. It is worth noting that there were some participants who had a more neutral reaction and they were more likely to focus on the small percentage of 1.2% when the target is expressed as a proportion of Canada’s population. They were also more likely to have faith that the government has conducted appropriate research in setting the targets and is “in control” of the situation.

Economic Stream. On the types of skills and experience permanent residents under the economic stream should have, participants tended to focus on healthcare workers to address issues with access to healthcare, skilled trades to help with building the housing and infrastructure Canada needs and teachers to reduce class sizes. There were strong appeals for reducing the barriers that prevent experienced newcomers from practicing in their fields of expertise. Reactions to prioritizing those with business skills were more mixed.

Family Stream. Discussion on the family stream largely revolved around its economic implications. Participants generally agreed on setting a higher target for sponsoring spouses and partners, who are likely to be working-age, and a lower target for sponsoring parents and grandparents, who might put a strain on the healthcare system rather than contribute to the economy.

Several participants proposed that applications for healthier parents and grandparents should be given priority over frailer ones. Participants in the newcomer groups were more inclined to support a lottery system for processing parents and grandparents' applications as they considered it to be a fair approach.

Humanitarian Stream. The few participants who opposed immigration outright were highly critical of the humanitarian stream: they tended to view refugees and asylum seekers as a “burden” on the system and taxpayers and therefore called for reducing the target considerably. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a few participants believed that providing asylum was the “right thing” for Canada to do. Between these two ends of the spectrum, some participants recognized the need to assist, but also voiced concerns about Canada's ability to realistically support population growth given the current strains on public infrastructure.

Many also wished to understand why Sudan and Gaza were prioritized when they were presented with information on the humanitarian programs for these countries. There were few specific concerns with the programs per se. Main concerns about the programs were related to Canada's ability to accommodate more individuals and the government resources required to support them.

Francophone Immigration Outside of Quebec. Only participants in Quebec had strong views on the increase in the proportion of new permanent residents admitted outside of Quebec who speak French. They viewed it as a positive as it would lessen the pressure of immigration on the province.

Strategic Immigration Review. None of the participants had heard of the Strategic Immigration Review.

Attitudes to Temporary Residents Announcements

International Students. Of all the various government announcements on immigration tested in the research, participants were most likely to have heard of the cap on international students, albeit the number who had heard of this was still small. Perspectives on the cap were mostly positive though some held conflicting views. Some participants believed that the limit could help alleviate the pressure on housing demand and the main concerns raised related to the financial impact universities and colleges.

Temporary Foreign Workers. Similarly, attitudes towards temporary foreign workers were mixed. Some participants felt that temporary foreign workers played an important role in filling positions that domestic workers did not wish to do. Others meanwhile were more inclined to believe that these positions were unfilled because employers did not offer adequate wages. Their perception, primarily shaped by media coverage, was that temporary foreign workers were subjected to poor living and working conditions by some employers.

Temporary Resident Levels. Participants were generally unsure why the number of temporary residents has increased in the past year from 1.5 million to 2.2 million. One explanation offered was due to the intake of Ukrainians fleeing the war. Most participants remarked that the number of temporary residents was larger than expected – and viewed the increase negatively within the context of already expressed concerns about absorptive capacity in general.

Detailed Quantitative Highlights

National Survey

Attitudes towards the number of immigrants

Half (48%) of Canadians feel that there are ‘about the right number’ of immigrants coming to Canada. About one third (35%) feel there are ‘too many’, while one in ten (12%) feel that there are ‘too few’ immigrants coming to Canada. Older Canadians are more likely than younger Canadians to feel that there are ‘too many’ immigrants coming to Canada as 39% of those Canadians 55 years of age and older feel this way, compared to 30% of those between the ages of 18 and 24.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: Do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Too many	35%	33%	38%	40%	24%	41%	25%	25%	37%	36%	30%	23%
About the right number	48%	52%	46%	50%	52%	46%	51%	52%	50%	36%	48%	48%
Too few	12%	10%	9%	7%	20%	8%	18%	13%	4%	19%	19%	18%
Don’t know	5%	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	6%	10%	9%	8%	3%	10%

When considering that Canada will admit 485,000 immigrants in 2024, Canadians are split on whether this number is ‘too many’ (46%) or ‘about the right number’ (44%). Only 6% feel that this number is ‘too few’. Perceptions that Canada admits ‘too many’ immigrants increases when the number of immigrants that will enter Canada in 2024 is provided (46%, compared to 35%). On the other hand, when the number of immigrants coming to Canada is defined as ‘1% of Canada’s current population’, perceptions of the number of immigrants softens as just under half (47%) of Canadians feel this is the ‘right number’, compared to four in then (38%) who feel this number is ‘too many’.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: Currently, Canada plans to admit 485,000 immigrants [HALF OF RESPONDENTS SHOWN "as permanent residents"] in 2024. Do you feel that this would be too many, too few, or about the right number?

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Too many	46%	46%	52%	47%	37%	49%	38%	43%	49%	51%	46%	31%
About the right number	44%	44%	39%	44%	51%	42%	47%	52%	40%	36%	41%	51%
Too few	6%	4%	4%	5%	7%	5%	10%	5%	5%	12%	7%	10%
Don’t know	4%	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%	1%	5%	2%	6%	7%

When looking at immigration to provinces and territories across the country, perceptions of the numbers of people immigrating are similar to overall perceptions of immigration on a national level. Slightly fewer than half (44%) of Canadians feel that the ‘right number’ of immigrants are coming to their province or territory, compared to four in ten (38%) who feel there are ‘too many’ and 14% who feel there are ‘too few’. Similarly, at a more local level, just under half (45%) of Canadians feel that there are ‘about the right number’ of immigrants coming to their city or town, while three in ten (32%) feel that there are ‘too many’ and one in five (19%) feel that there are ‘too few’.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: Do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to your province or territory?

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Too many	38%	38%	36%	31%	19%	51%	25%	24%	44%	38%	25%	14%
About the right number	44%	48%	44%	43%	57%	39%	49%	47%	50%	41%	40%	53%
Too few	14%	11%	15%	22%	22%	6%	24%	27%	4%	19%	34%	27%
Don't know	3%	4%	5%	3%	1%	4%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	6%

Slightly more than half (55%) of Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect on their city or town, compared to one in five (22%) who feel immigration has a negative effect. When looking at Canada’s largest three cities, residents of Montreal are the most likely to indicate that immigration has a positive effect (59%), while residents of Toronto are the most likely to feel that immigration has a negative effect (31%). At a neighbourhood level, perceptions of immigration are similar, as half (51%) of Canadians feel that immigration has a positive impact on their neighbourhood, compared to 16% who feel immigration has a negative effect. At a provincial level, perceptions of immigration are similar where six in ten (58%) Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect on their province, while one quarter (24%) feel it has a negative effect. Overall, on a national level, perceptions of immigration are more positive, as six in ten (63%) Canadians feel that immigration has a positive effect, compared to one quarter (23%) who feel it has a negative effect.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: In general, what effect does immigration to this country have on your province or territory? Is the effect...

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Positive (Very/Somewhat)	58%	58%	57%	58%	72%	53%	63%	66%	59%	68%	68%	67%
Neither positive nor negative	17%	17%	16%	21%	10%	15%	21%	16%	7%	12%	15%	20%
Negative (Very/Somewhat)	24%	24%	27%	20%	17%	31%	15%	17%	33%	19%	16%	13%

Overall attitudes and opinions towards immigration

Attitudes and opinions towards immigration are generally positive, however there are some concerns among Canadians about the impact of immigration on public services, availability of housing, and integration into society. Canadians have positive impressions of Canada’s reputation as an open and welcoming society (74%) and two thirds (65%) agree that accepting immigrants from many different cultures makes Canada’s culture stronger. Three quarters (73%) of Canadians agree that most immigrants who come to Canada want to contribute to society, however half (51%) of Canadians also agree that immigrants need to do more to integrate into Canadian society. Almost half (46%) of Canadians agree that immigration has placed too much pressure on public services in the country. When looking at housing, half (50%) of Canadians agree that immigration puts too much pressure on the availability of housing in their city or town. Finally, only about one quarter (27%) of Canadians agree that immigration is causing Canada to change in ways that they don’t like.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Statement: Immigration puts too much pressure on the availability of housing in your city or town

Question: And finally, thinking about housing in your city or town, please tell me to what extent you either agree or disagree with the following statement. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 10 means "strongly agree".

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Agree (7-10)	50%	51%	47%	42%	52%	49%	53%	54%	47%	54%	56%	57%
Neutral (5-6)	26%	31%	22%	30%	23%	26%	26%	27%	27%	19%	24%	26%
Disagree (1-4)	23%	18%	30%	26%	25%	24%	20%	19%	26%	25%	20%	16%

Looking at the economic, skills, and employment impacts of immigration, two thirds (67%) of Canadians agree that immigration is necessary for Canada to sustain economic growth considering the aging population and six in ten (61%) agree that Canada’s competitiveness depends on the ability to recruit immigrants who meet the country’s evolving labour needs. Six in ten (62%) also agree that immigration is necessary to help fill skill and labour shortages in their local economies. On the other hand, just under half (46%) of Canadians agree that Canada should focus on helping unemployed Canadians rather than looking for skilled immigrants to fill labour shortages.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Statement: Immigration is necessary to help fill skill and labour shortages in my local economy

Question: To what extent do you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 10 means "strongly agree".

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Agree (7-10)	62%	61%	54%	56%	70%	56%	75%	72%	67%	57%	67%	68%
Neutral (5-6)	20%	20%	21%	22%	18%	23%	16%	16%	16%	19%	16%	17%
Disagree (1-4)	18%	18%	24%	22%	11%	21%	9%	12%	17%	24%	17%	15%

Attitudes towards the number of refugees

Looking at perceptions of refugees coming to Canada, these perceptions are similar to overall immigration to Canada. Half (48%) of Canadians feel that there are ‘about the right number’ of refugees coming to Canada, compared to three in ten (29%) who feel that there are ‘too many’ and one in five (18%) who feel there are ‘too few’. Perceptions of the number of refugees is slightly different depending on how refugees come to Canada. When refugees are selected to be resettled in Canada, about half (51%) of Canadians feel there is the ‘right number’ of refugees coming to Canada, while one in five feel there are ‘too many’ (23%) or ‘too few’ (21%). When refugees come to Canada and claim asylum, half (48%) of Canadians feel there is the ‘right number’ coming to Canada, while three in ten (30%) feel there are ‘too many’ and 16% feel there are too few.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: Do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of refugees coming to Canada?

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Too many	29%	23%	36%	29%	19%	34%	24%	24%	23%	27%	27%	14%
About the right number	48%	52%	43%	55%	55%	46%	50%	50%	56%	45%	49%	52%
Too few	18%	20%	17%	12%	20%	14%	22%	20%	15%	22%	19%	28%
Don't know	5%	6%	4%	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%	4%	5%

Overall attitudes and opinions towards refugees

Looking at overall perception of refugees, seven in ten Canadians agree that accepting refugees is part of Canada’s humanitarian tradition (72%) and that Canada has a responsibility to do its part in accepting refugees (68%). About two thirds (63%) also agree that most refugees who come to Canada want to contribute to society, while half (49%) agree that refugees have a positive impact on the economy. Just under half of Canadians (44%) feel that accepting refugees places too much pressure on public services and four in ten (41%) feel that the federal government should focus on helping Canadians rather than welcoming refugees.

More than half (57%) of Canadians feel that accepting refugees has a positive effect on the country, while one in five (19%) feel this effect is negative. Perceptions of the impact of accepting refugees on a more local level are less positive, as fewer than half (47%) of Canadians feel that accepting refugees has a positive effect on their city or town, and one in five (18%) feel this is negative.

Table: Provincial and Territorial results for Question: What effect does accepting refugees have on Canada? Is the effect...

	Total	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	PE	NS	NL	Territories
Positive (Very/Somewhat)	57%	60%	52%	56%	68%	53%	60%	63%	63%	64%	68%	74%
Neither positive nor negative	23%	21%	19%	22%	16%	23%	29%	17%	18%	15%	10%	15%
Negative (Very/Somewhat)	19%	17%	27%	19%	15%	23%	11%	20%	18%	19%	20%	11%

Municipal Survey

Analysis was not conducted for the municipal survey as it was contracted using standing offer *Series B - Fieldwork and Data Tabulation for Telephone Surveys*. A full set of tabulated data for the municipal survey is provided under a separate cover.

Detailed Qualitative Findings

Contextual Attitudes to Immigration

Top-of-Mind Attitudes to Immigration

The research was designed to first explore participants' attitudes to immigration in an unaided manner. This was achieved in two ways: first, participants were asked to identify what they thought were the most important issues facing their communities, then they were asked for their top-of-mind thoughts on immigration.

Housing, along with the general rise in the cost of living, were highlighted as the top issues across the board. Other issues raised included healthcare access issues, lack of childcare, deterioration of the quality of education, a weakening economy, lack of job opportunities and the fentanyl crisis.

On housing specifically, several participants shared stories of how they had been affected: their rents, mortgage payments and property taxes increasing substantially; having to move as a result of rising housing costs; their inability to move to housing that would be more suitable for their needs; and frustration at real estate being "out of reach". Moreover, there was frustration at the lack of affordable options and how options that were deemed as "affordable" were still out of their reach.

"Our rent's doubled. Last month, the building sold and this month the rent doubled from around \$700 to almost \$1,400. And nothing changed, still the same. It makes me angry. Nobody can afford \$1,400 a month, right? And plus, your power, plus your utilities, plus everything else, right? Plus, plus, plus. Too much."
– Smaller population centre participant

Others who had not been personally affected by rising housing costs were acutely aware of the lack of affordable housing in general. They had heard of stories of others struggling (e.g., having to pick up a second job to cover housing costs) and had seen an increase in homelessness and tent cities in their communities. They were grateful for their current housing status though expressed worry about the housing prospects of their children and their peers in the future. Housing experiences of participants who are newcomers are covered in more detail in the next section.

"I own my house and thank goodness we paid off a couple of years ago. But I can see my adult children, they got a lease and after a year, they went month by month. Now the landlord is increasing the rent like \$500 or so, just after a month. And he is trying to find another place to live. And the cost of rent is really high. And it's not like the employment here is abundant. He was thinking of doing a master's degree. He said, what else can I do? Do I need to get another job in order to pay rent? And it's really awful for them, especially that they are young adults."
– Calgary & Edmonton participant

Immigration was not frequently brought up as a top concern. A small number explicitly brought up immigration when describing the challenges their communities face with respect to housing and sometimes they, in smaller communities and in Atlantic Canada in particular, referred to internal migration pushing up the cost of housing. That said, when the topic of immigration was introduced into the discussions, many participants were quick to link immigration to their concerns about housing.

The broad sentiment throughout the groups, including in the groups with newcomers, was ongoing support for immigration but accompanied with an attitude of “not right now” or “how are we going to make this work”. This sentiment was partly underpinned by the following viewpoints:

- Pressures on the system – many were concerned about the impact of immigration not only on housing, but also on access to healthcare (e.g., wait times in ER, lack of access to a family doctor) and to a lesser extent classroom sizes.
- Unfairness to newcomers themselves – some highlighted the challenges students and immigrants face when arriving to Canada, which ranged from overcrowded rooming houses and reliance on foodbanks to inability to obtain employment in their fields of expertise. They did not believe that Canada was in a position at this point in time to offer immigrants a good quality of life. In the case of students, the perception was that they are unable to secure housing and any jobs they are able to secure does not allow them to cover the rising cost of living.
- Taking care of one’s own first – several were of the belief that the priority should be helping Canadians already in the country who are struggling with housing, healthcare, etc., before considering helping others. There was a minor perception that newcomers are offered more supports to integrate and settle compared to supports for the local population.
- Recent influx – a small number had the impression there had been a drastic increase in students and other types of immigrants in recent years as opposed to the “trickling in” of the past.

Discussion on the perceived benefits of immigration was more limited. There were some references to the benefits of addressing labour shortages and Canada’s ageing population as well as to the contribution to Canada’s diversity. Benefits were often discussed in tandem with some of the challenges discussed above, leading to the view that immigration, in the current climate, was a “double-edged sword”.

There was general agreement that significant improvements to Canada’s infrastructure is required *before* Canada can accommodate more people, regardless of whether they are temporary or permanent residents. One participant reference was: “a body is a body at the end of the day”. Needing more housing, more doctors and more teachers were brought up time and time again. Improving infrastructure and amenities available in smaller centres was highlighted too, along with programs to encourage newcomers to move to these smaller centres.

“I think that immigration is a big part of Canadian culture. We’re a very diverse place. Especially Vancouver for that matter. In the world, we’re a very popular place to come to and to immigrate and to choose to move and to live to. And I think that’s wonderful. I think that makes us a unique place to be. But I do think

that it is a driving force in terms of making the city a little bit more unaffordable in a lot of ways. I think there's a lot of people from different levels of income who immigrate here, not just low- or medium-income but also very high-income people who come, and are able to afford our living situation a lot easier, driving the home prices upwards even more. Making it harder for the average person who works here and lives here to continue to try and make it happen.” – Vancouver participant

“Immigration is good, but we don't have the infrastructure in place. So, to bring people over and promise them a better life, right now it's not here. If you don't have a place for them to live, how can you in good conscience bring them over and say, “Come to a great country”? And then, like others have said, you give them a blanket in the street corner. That's not what they thought they were getting. So, we need better communication between all forms of government to come up with a sustainable plan and implement more things for everybody; affordable housing, better healthcare, more accessible healthcare.” – Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, Guelph and London participant

Some suggested more settlement resources for newcomers, especially training in order for them to participate in the economy. As noted above, however, others felt newcomers receive a considerable amount of resources. Participants in the newcomer groups highlighted the need for better education for immigrants regarding the realities of life in Canada, particularly around healthcare and housing. They felt this could help manage the expectations of newcomers and ensure that they come to Canada better financially prepared.

In terms of nuances by subgroups, some participants in the newcomer groups highlighted personal challenges with the immigration process and settlement. They experienced feelings of “stress” and being “outside of one’s comfort zone” due to a combination of the “paperwork” and financial cost associated with the process; being “back to square one” with their careers; having to learn “a whole bunch of new systems and processes”; and adjusting to a climate that is drastically different from the countries they immigrated from. The theme of “reverse migration” was discussed in one of the groups with newcomers. Participants shared how the stressors outlined previously combined with the high cost of living and housing is fostering a perceived sense of disillusionment among their peers. They pointed out that Canada’s promise of a better quality of life did not reflect the reality of many newcomers. A few went on to describe a trend whereby their peers are motivated to stay in Canada for the short-term until they are eligible to obtain their citizenship, then planning on moving to countries with better economic opportunities.

Perspectives of Newcomers on Housing

The research provided the opportunity to uncover the lived experiences of newcomers in finding housing. All participants who took part in the newcomer discussion groups had arrived in Canada in 2018 or later.

Many reported that they had conducted research on the housing situation in Canada prior to their arrival. It appeared that the research was at a high level and limited to the major cities or to the city they had already decided they would relocate to based on other reasons. In other words, availability of housing options did not seem to factor greatly in decisions on where participants initially settled in Canada. The consensus was that the best sources of information were contacts who were already living in Canada or information shared on social media (such as Reddit) by others who had gone through the experience of settling in Canada.

“Prior to when I came, I did a bit of research. But at that time there wasn't a ton of information available for housing if you weren't looking at Toronto or the GTA. Once you type in like ‘Housing in Canada’ the first thing that comes up is Toronto. So what if I don't want Toronto? [...] And God bless you if you have people that are already living here, then it makes it easy for you to ask questions. But there were those of us that didn't know anybody here [...] And so we could only rely on information that we found online.” – Newcomer participant

Since arriving in Canada, participants in the newcomer group discussions reported facing similar housing challenges to those mentioned by participants in non-newcomers groups. Those who had been in Canada closer to six years ago felt that finding suitable housing—both in terms of size and affordability—had severely worsened in recent years, noting that this was a less acute issue before the Covid-19 pandemic. Those who had arrived more recently were aware of the housing challenges in Canada but were taken aback by the actual difficulty they faced upon arrival. Several found temporary or short-term accommodations by living with friends, family, or in shared housing situations, until they could find housing that accommodated their lifestyle and family needs.

In terms of challenges that specifically arose from arriving in Canada recently, participants in the newcomer groups pointed to difficulties with securing rentals due to a lack of credit history or landlord references within Canada and not having enough connections to secure a guarantor. There was a sense of being caught in a "Catch-22" situation, where they needed to establish themselves in order to access housing, but couldn't do so without having secure housing first. Several recounted experiences being taken advantage of by landlords or financial advisors because of their lack of familiarity with the Canadian market. Consequently, they called for more practical information on how systems and processes work for newcomers.

“I am dying to talk about [housing]. So I came in Canada soon after the pandemic. So before I came, honestly, as per my research, it didn't seem that daunting or that challenging. [...] But right after coming here, it was a brutal winter. [...] I had a toddler and my husband. So we initially rented an Airbnb [...] the main challenge came in when we started our house hunting. [...] Everywhere that we reached out we were told that you need credit score. I'm a new immigrant, just landed. [...] I need a proper job that pays well above \$70,000 annually before tax. [...] And a job

from a reputed company, it cannot be like any job. So it was like almost reaching to impossibility.” – Newcomer participant

Relocation due to challenges with finding appropriate housing was discussed by a few participants. These participants had contemplated moving to smaller centres with less expensive housing but were deterred by other factors such as forming new social bonds or lack of job opportunities. They were more likely to express regret that they had not moved to smaller centres when they first arrived in Canada, noting that information about smaller centres was harder to access while abroad.

The main advice that participants would provide to immigrants who are considering moving to Canada was to conduct comprehensive research on housing options, to be financially prepared for the cost and prospective deposits, and to seek out as much information as possible from those who are already living in Canada.

“My advice would be, do your research and do your research properly. And try and justify if you have to live in a big city like Vancouver or Toronto, where the salary to housing market is at about 12%, where housing to salary ratio in Calgary is at about 6%. So your decisions there will make it a lot easier for you to be comfortable.” – Newcomer participant

Attitudes to Permanent Residents Government Announcements and Streams

For all the announcements covered in this report, participants were first asked whether they had heard about the announcement prior to attending the discussions. This was followed by the moderator presenting information regarding the announcements (shown in text boxes below) for participants’ reactions.

Overall Targets

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

In the fall the Government of Canada announced plans to admit 485,000 immigrants as permanent residents in 2024, followed by 500,000 in each of 2025 and 2026. This represents about 1.2% of Canada’s population each year.

Awareness of the targets for permanent residents announced in the fall was low across the board. Reflecting their concerns with the impact of immigration highlighted above, many participants felt that the targets set for the next three years were too high. These participants felt the numbers in and of themselves were large (e.g., size of mid-size Canadian city), and/or they pointed out that most newcomers settle in major centres and thus they could not fathom how these centres, where infrastructure is already under great strain, could accommodate the proposed targets. Participants often conflated different categories and different streams which partly drove negative sentiment. For example, some would

negatively point to support received by refugees when discussing the economic stream or they referred to temporary residents when discussing their reaction to the targets for permanent residents.

“The targets definitely seem like a lot [of people]. I think of a city like...the City of Edmonton is right around a million people. So that's half the population of Edmonton. So we're...again, where are they going to live? Like can you build a city in one year that can support a half a million people?” – Indigenous participant

The negative reaction to the targets was by no means universal. There were some participants who had a more neutral reaction and felt that the overall targets were reasonable. A very small number of participants were surprised at the targets as they expected them to be higher, but again the conflation of permanent and temporary residents could be at play. These participants were more likely to focus on the small percentage of 1.2% when the target is expressed as a proportion to Canada's population, or they believed that Canada's vast land area could easily accommodate the new permanent residents.

“I'm not very surprised [...] it doesn't seem like that many people. I mean like spread across Canada, 485,000 people does not seem to be a lot. I mean if they were introduced into Newfoundland whose population's only 500,000 that would be a little crazy.” – Atlantic Canada participant

Participants with a neutral reaction to the targets were more likely to have faith that the government has conducted appropriate research in setting the targets and is "in control" of the situation. On the other hand, skepticism about the targets appeared to decrease some participants' faith that the government has a plan for immigration.

“The government has promised to protect Canadians. When it comes to immigration, the government does their utmost to screen people thoroughly, make sure they've been investigated, that they have references, and that they haven't been involved in any crimes. They're selective in their choice, and its determined by the information that they have received about what's going on in this country. Therefore, I am inclined to trust the government.” – Montreal participant (quote translated)

Targets for Each Immigration Stream

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

The 485,000 new permanent residents in 2024 includes:

58% economic immigrants selected because of their skills, education or experience, and their immediate family members (spouses/partners/children)

24% family members of people already in Canada, such as spouses/partners/children (17%), and parents and grandparents (7%)

19% refugees and humanitarian admissions, including persons resettled from overseas, successful asylum claimants, and persons selected on humanitarian and compassionate grounds

The details about the allocation for each stream of permanent residency had a minimal effect on participants' perspectives. Those who held a neutral stance on the targets generally found the quotas set for each stream to be appropriate. Meanwhile, this information didn't significantly change the overall sentiment of those who were supportive of immigration but felt that now is not the time, nor did it affect the views of the vocal minority who were critical of immigration. If anything, this latter group expressed a desire to see the quota for refugees and humanitarian admissions further reduced.

Economic Stream

On the types of skills and experience that permanent residents under the economic stream should have, participants tended to focus on healthcare workers to address issues with access to healthcare, skilled trades to help with building the housing and infrastructure that Canada needs and teachers (both anglophone and francophone) to reduce class sizes.

Reactions to prioritizing those with business skills were mixed. A few felt that these types of individuals would have the right skillsets to thrive in the workplace and the economy would benefit if they chose to start a new business. Others expressed skepticism about the economic benefits of new business, citing their reliance on government subsidies, inherent riskiness, and potential lack of well-paying jobs for the local population.

A few participants adopted a forward-looking mindset and suggested that priority should be given to workers in the technology and innovation sectors, such as IT workers, software developers and AI engineers. In contrast, others emphasized the importance of attracting workers with lower educational qualifications but who could fill crucial labour gaps in the economy, like truck drivers.

"It's important to focus on critical public services. So teachers, healthcare workers, engineers, especially those trained in green energy and renewable technology, childcare workers, again some of the major gaps that we're having. I would suggest that entrepreneurship and business is less of a priority. [...] we focus on

the creation of jobs as a be-all end-all and whether that business dies in two or three years because it wasn't sustainable is never factored into the equation of job creation.” – Saskatoon & Regina participant

While there was general agreement that the government should prioritize the economic stream, some expressed skepticism about whether the stream is achieving its intended objectives. The lack of recognition of foreign credentials or experience which results in newcomers unable to fill labour shortages in industries (e.g., healthcare) was highlighted. Participants in the newcomer groups expressed their personal frustrations on this point and, in one group, believed this was contributing to a trend of reverse migration. There were strong appeals for reducing the barriers that prevent experienced newcomers from practicing in their fields of expertise.

Family Stream

Discussion on the family stream largely revolved around its economic implications. Participants generally agreed on setting a higher target for sponsoring spouses and partners, who are likely to be working-age, and a lower target for sponsoring parents and grandparents, who might put a strain on the healthcare system rather than contribute to the economy. However, a few participants, including some newcomers, pointed out the valuable role of parents and grandparents in providing childcare, which they perceived to be lacking and expensive.

The emotional toll of family separation also came up. Participants felt that this was especially the case for applicants who are in Canada on their own and wishing to sponsor their immediate family. Meanwhile, being separated from one's parents and grandparents was seen as less emotionally challenging and could be mitigated through regular visits.

“Having your family members here mean that you have better social adjustment, and you kind of integrate better into society. [...] I think it's the right thing to do as a country, just because we don't want people living in isolation and being alone.” – Greater Toronto Area participant

Several participants proposed that applications for healthier parents and grandparents should be given priority over frailer ones. The requirement for applicants to demonstrate their financial ability to support their parents and grandparents was crucial in alleviating concerns about the potential financial impact of this stream of permanent residents. Other suggested criteria for evaluating applications included the length of time the applicant has been in Canada and the safety conditions in the country from which the parents and grandparents are immigrating.

Participants in the newcomer groups, who were more familiar with the family stream, were more inclined to support a lottery system for processing parents and grandparents' applications. They considered it to be a fairer approach and less likely to overload the application website than a first-come-first-served system; the latter comment was based on past direct experiences. Some suggested that holding the lottery more frequently could improve individual applicants' chances. When pressed to think beyond

ensuring that applicants have enough resources to support family members, participants from the general public also showed a preference for a lottery system, although they acknowledged that it might seem harsh and potentially prolong wait times.

“Because the sheer number of applications and the limited number of positions open, I think it should be a lottery draw, for sure. To be honest, there are not a lot of people who have lived all their life in one country who would willingly want to move to another country at the age of 60 or 70. The only purpose of them coming is to help their children or their grandchildren, either to help raise the grandchildren because the two parents are not able to afford a nanny or daycare. I don't think that we should look at it from the perspective of, oh, are they contributing to the economy? They're contributing to helping their children afford to live in the country.” – Newcomer participant

Refugees and Humanitarian Stream

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

Canada announced a new family-based humanitarian pathway, which allows Canadians to sponsor immediate family members from Sudan to become permanent residents of Canada.

Canada announced temporary immigration measures for Gazans who have family members in Canada, giving them free access to expedited temporary resident visas.

Each year, Canada resettles a number of refugees from overseas as new permanent residents. This includes, for example, people coming to Canada from Afghanistan and Eritrea. These individuals receive direct support from the government and-or private sponsors to get established in Canada after arriving. In addition to this, Canada has offered shelter to people from Ukraine and Gaza through the use of temporary resident visas. At a minimum, this provides people with temporary protection in Canada.

The few participants who opposed immigration outright were highly critical of the humanitarian stream: they tended to view refugees and asylum seekers as a “burden” to the system and taxpayers and therefore called for reducing the target considerably. This perspective came from negative stereotyping of refugees: refugees were perceived as lacking economic resources, not keen to work, and that refugees might increase crime rates in major cities. This viewpoint was further fueled by the perception of increased global conflicts and misconceptions about the ease of taking advantage of the system by claiming refugee status. These participants appeared to hold more Canada-first views – i.e., shy away from the notion of “fixing problems beyond our borders” – and more inclined to call for “proper vetting” of refugees admitted.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a few participants believed that providing asylum was the “right thing” for Canada to do and aligned with “Canadian values”. These participants expressed a preference for placing no limits on the number of temporary residents admitted under humanitarian programs.

Between these two ends of the spectrum, some participants recognized the need to assist, but also voiced concerns about Canada's ability to realistically support population growth given the current strains on infrastructure. These participants emphasized the need for robust support systems to offer temporary safe refuge and facilitate successful integration for permanent residents.

There was little awareness of programs in place to help those fleeing the conflicts in Sudan or Gaza; instead, support for individuals fleeing the war in Ukraine was top-of-mind. It was evident that most participants were unaware of the conflict in Sudan. Thus, when presented with information about the new family-based humanitarian pathway, their first reaction was “Why Sudan?” Many also wished to understand why these two conflict zones were prioritized via specific programs. There were few specific concerns with the programs per se; participants’ main concerns were once again related to Canada's ability to accommodate more individuals and the government resources required to support them in general.

Reactions were mixed towards the distinction of offering permanent residency in some instances versus temporary residency in other cases:

- A few were more drawn to the temporary residency option as it provides individuals with shelter during a conflict without a commitment to resettling individuals longer term.
- A small number were also more drawn to the temporary residency option because it allows individuals to experience Canada first before deciding if it is “a good fit”.
- A small number of participants felt it was unfair to only offer temporary residency as it leaves affected individuals “in limbo”, as they presumed these individuals would prefer to settle permanently in Canada. Unfairness was further discussed in terms of treating individuals from different conflicts in different ways through various programs.
- Those who opposed immigration most strongly agreed that those applying for a temporary visa would want to apply for permanent residency. Thus, they viewed temporary residency negatively.

“We should be helping people, but we do need to have the systems in place to actually properly support. And then reading that about Gazans and temporary resident visa, I don't like the sounds of that. How temporary is it? Is that going to add more pressure to their lives? Bring them here but are we going to kick them out fast?” – Saskatoon and Regina participant

“Temporary stream, guess what they're going to do when they arrive here? They're going to say, “Oh, I like it here. Oh, I want to live here.” So let's face it, the temporary thing could very easily be switched to a more permanent issue,

especially if the conditions of the country they're coming from deteriorate even further. They're not really two separate programs.” – Atlantic Canada participant

Some participants expressed confusion about the reason for the different types of programs, which led to a suggestion that the government could provide information on the objectives of humanitarian programs. This in turn could contribute to the impression that there is a “plan” as opposed to a piecemeal approach.

Francophone Immigration Outside of Quebec

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

The federal government has announced that it will increase the proportion of new permanent residents admitted outside of Quebec who speak French (from 4.4% last year to 6% this year and 8% in 2026).

The majority of participants showed a lack of strong feelings regarding the increase in French-speaking new permanent residents admitted outside of Quebec. They found the language-specific policy perplexing, considering English is the primary language spoken outside of Quebec. They also expressed a preference for prioritizing skills over language proficiency.

A small number of participants welcomed the policy. They viewed it as an opportunity to promote the French language across the country, particularly in regions known to have French-speaking communities outside of Quebec. They emphasized the potential advantages for children who would have increased exposure to the French language.

“We can always use some more French. We're Canadian, we're supposed to be bilingual. I know French is actually part of my Cree language; it has a lot of French words in it. In the French-speaking areas, yeah, they would blend right in.” – Indigenous participant

Participants in Quebec supported the policy as they believed it would lessen the pressure on the province which they assumed received the largest share of francophone newcomers. Francophone newcomers in Quebec acknowledged that this would have provided them with more opportunities for them to move to other parts of the country, yet also admitted that they personally would not have changed their decision to settle in Quebec.

“I think it is a good thing because Canada is a bilingual country, and I know we may exaggerate when we talk about defending the French language in Quebec and in Canada, but I think it is still important that French is learned and known outside of Quebec. This measure could help increase the percentage of Francophones outside of Quebec.” – Newcomer participant (quote translated)

Strategic Immigration Review

None of the participants had heard of the Strategic Immigration Review. A handful speculated that the Review might be a thorough examination of the entire immigration system, and a few expressed an interest in knowing more. Opinions on the review were divided: a few participants viewed it as a positive step towards improving immigration policies, while a small number questioned whether such reviews actually led to noticeable change.

Attitudes to Temporary Residents Announcements

International Students

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

The federal government has decided to cap the number of new international students it will admit in 2024. The cap is set at 360,000 new international students. A portion of the cap will be allocated to each province and territory, proportional to population. Provinces and Territories will then allocate to learning institutions.

Of all the various government announcements on immigration tested in the research, participants were most likely to have heard of the cap on international students, albeit the number who had heard of this was still small.

"I've heard that the government was putting a cap on the number of students they were letting in until they could figure out what to do, because of the financial problems that students have, and the housing problem. I think it's probably a good idea." – Greater Toronto Area participant

Perspectives on the cap were mostly positive though some held conflicting views. In terms of the positives, some participants believed that the limit could help alleviate the pressure on housing demand. They also thought it might lead to an increase in the admission of domestic students. This perception was fueled by the belief that universities tend to favor international students due to the higher tuition fees they pay. Several participants felt that the limit could curb the number of "diploma mills" that exploit international students by charging high tuition fees for subpar education and serve merely as a gateway to permanent residency. Therefore, a few viewed limiting the number of international students as a positive development as it could decrease the demand for permanent residency.

However, concerns were raised about the impact of the limit on the financial stability of universities and colleges. Some participants were of the opinion that post-secondary institutions depend on the higher tuition fees international students pay and speculated that a limit could result in higher tuition fees for domestic students. This led to a sentiment that "we need them as much as they need us". Other less frequent concerns included universities' ability to attract the "brightest students", potential negative impacts on educational quality, loss of local economic demand generated by international students, a

decline in campus diversity, and potential job losses among academic staff. A handful of participants believed that Canada's economy benefits when international students are encouraged to remain after their studies.

“On the one hand, it makes admissions for Canadian-born students or residents of Canada easier into universities. But on the other hand, like, we kind of would want the best and the brightest in our universities. But there has to be some way for them to transition from learning to working, being in the workforce.” – Calgary and Edmonton participant

Regarding the announcement of increased funds that international students must have available, awareness was once again limited, but this policy received more support compared to the cap. This requirement seemed logical to participants, considering the rising cost of living and the need to ensure students are not dependent on support programs during their studies.

Temporary Foreign Workers

Views on temporary foreign workers varied among participants. Some saw these workers as vital in filling roles that domestic workers often avoid due to the nature of the jobs. These jobs were commonly associated with seasonal industries like agriculture, fishing, or tourism. A handful of participants also held a high opinion of temporary foreign workers, describing them as "hard-working", which they felt could explain why employers might prefer to hire them.

“For some industries it's just not viable to raise wages. And they just can't find local Canadians who are willing to take shift work [...] whereas for foreign workers [...] they're willing to hunker down for a few years [...] it makes a lot of difference back in their home country. So it makes sense.” – Vancouver participant

On the other hand, some participants believed that these job vacancies existed because employers were not offering competitive wages, and they viewed the program as a tool for reducing labour costs. Influenced largely by media stories, these participants felt that temporary foreign workers were often subjected to "deplorable" living and working conditions. They called for the government to implement more protective measures for temporary foreign workers and to ensure the program was not being abused by employers. They suggested that employers should have to demonstrate that they have offered competitive wages and attempted to hire domestic workers first. Some participants also raised concerns about temporary foreign workers remitting their earnings back to their home countries, thus contributing less to the local economy.

“We need to make sure that people aren't doing it with the subsidies in mind, and they're doing it for the right reasons. [...] the business should have to prove that they're offering a fair wage or an industry standard wage to the job that they're searching for. And they have to prove that they've tried to hire locally before going to the rest of the world.” – Small population centre participant

A few participants had neutral views, mainly due to their limited prior knowledge about this category of temporary residents.

Participants also held contrasting views on whether temporary foreign workers should be prioritized for permanent residency. Some supported this idea, arguing that these workers were already contributing to the economy in sectors with labour shortages and adding to the tax base. They felt that these workers had "earned" their permanent residency. However, others were more skeptical, citing a range of reasons: it could be unfair to other permanent residency applicants; the seasonal nature of some jobs might not provide year-round employment; priority should be given to more highly skilled international students; and they believed that many of these workers preferred temporary work arrangements.

"Should temporary workers have an immigration route? I think it depends. If they are integrated, if they've been working long enough at their job that they can make a career of it or another in Canada, then yes." – Francophone participant outside of Quebec (quote translated)

When asked to compare an employer-led approach to identifying labour shortages (as in the temporary foreign worker program) with a government-led approach to assessing industry gaps (as in the economic stream of permanent residents), most participants had limited feedback. Some agreed that an employer-led approach "made sense", but questioned why domestic workers were not being hired. This was an extension of the belief that employers were abusing the temporary foreign worker program to cut labour costs and underpinned by the broader skepticism towards immigration in the current climate. A small number of participants felt that complementing the employer-led approach with a broader industry approach also made sense, with one reason being that it allows for targeting workers across the skill spectrum.

Temporary Resident Levels

The following information was shown on screen to participants:

There are currently about 2.2 million temporary residents living in Canada. This represents about 5% of Canada's total population. The number of temporary residents in Canada goes up and down over time. In the past year, the number of TRs in Canada increased from about 1.5 million to 2.2 million.

Participants were generally unsure why the number of temporary residents has increased in the past year from 1.5 million to 2.2 million. A few explanations were offered: intake of Ukrainians and others fleeing war and conflict; the desirability of Canada as a place to live due to quality of life; and presence of companies that specialize in attracting students and other forms of immigration to Canada.

Most participants remarked that the number of temporary residents was larger than expected. They went on to view the increase negatively within the context of already expressed concerns about absorptive capacity in general. There was a concern, expressed by a minority, that temporary resident programs were facilitating a bypass of traditional immigration pathways. This impression was partly driven by the

perceived growth of specialist immigration firms that advise their clients to enter Canada via temporary visas and apply for permanent residency once in Canada.

“It feels a lot. I just don't know what the government's plan is for that, like why you're bringing so many? It's very hard for students if you don't offer them at least the basic needs while they're here.” – Greater Toronto Area participant

Appendix 1 – Quantitative methodology

National telephone survey

Ipsos conducted a 15-minute telephone survey among a nationwide sample of n=3,000 Canadian adults between November 3rd and December 17th, 2023. The sample is a probability sample generated through random digit dialing. For respondents contacted on a landline, respondents within households were selected at random, by using the “birthday method” of identifying and interviewing the member of the household (aged 18+) who had their birthday last.

Respondents contacted on a cellular phone were also random digit dialed and needed to be 18+ to participate. Wireless samples were selected on a provincial and community level (where possible) from a database containing all possible numbers in 1000-blocks of area codes and exchanges dedicated to wireless numbers.

Within the total sample of 3,000 Canadians for this survey, 900 respondents were contacted on their landlines, while the other 2,100 respondents were contacted on their cellphones. The margin of error for a telephone survey of 3,000 respondents is $\pm 1.8\%$, using a confidence interval of 95% (19 times out of 20). The final questionnaire used was provided by IRCC to ensure adequate tracking of previous research results conducted by the department.

Telephone sample weighting

The tables below indicate the unweighted and weighted distributions of the telephone sample. The sample was stratified by region, with quotas used to ensure appropriate representation. Weighting was applied to the sample to ensure that the final data reflects the adult population of Canada by region, age and gender according to the 2021 Census.

Please note, the totals below may not add up to 3,000 due to some respondents’ refusal to provide socioeconomic information.

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Region (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
British Columbia	374	416
Alberta	283	333
Saskatchewan	150	87
Manitoba	150	105
Ontario	965	1158
Quebec	573	690
New Brunswick	102	65
Nova Scotia	103	81
Prince Edward Island	98	13
Newfoundland and Labrador	103	43
Territories	99	9

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Gender (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
Male	1527	1429
Female	1414	1504

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Age (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18-24	196	303
25-34	361	498
35-44	485	495
45-54	532	471
55-64	597	526
65+	829	708

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Education

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
High school or less	582	602
College, CEGEP, RA or Trades	917	890
University	1492	1499

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Income

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
Under \$40K	492	511
\$40K to under \$60K	395	409
\$60K to under \$100K	727	721
\$100K or more	1154	1136

Weighted and unweighted telephone sample: Country of birth

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
Born in Canada	2294	2211
Born outside of Canada	703	785

Statistics presented in the table above show minimal differences between the final unweighted and weighted samples. However, those 18 to 34 years old are underrepresented, resulting in a higher unweighted to weighted ratio.

Call dispositions

The following table provides the call dispositions and response rate calculation, as per the former MRIA's empirical method of calculating response rates for telephone surveys.

	Landline	Cellphone	Total
Total Numbers Attempted	100329	178110	278439
Invalid (NIS, fax/modem, business/non-res.)	69626	106755	176381
Total unresolved units (Busy, no answer, answering machine)	16534	40141	56675
Total in-scope - non-responding units	11002	20639	31641
Language problem	251	562	813
Illness, incapable, deaf	148	68	216
Household refusal	10511	19871	30382
Qualified respondent break-off	92	138	230
Total in-scope - responding units	1115	3065	4180
Over quota	215	24	239
No one 18+	0	941	941
Occupation Disqualified	0	0	0
Completed interviews	900	2100	3000

The response rate, calculated as the number of **in-scope – responding units** divided by the sum of **unresolved units**, **in-scope – non-responding units**, and **in-scope – responding units**, was 3.89% for landline numbers, 4.80% for cellphone numbers, and 4.52% for all telephone numbers. The total response rate of 4.52% for a telephone survey of the Canadian general population with up to 8 call-backs per household is typical.

Non-response analysis

As with any probability sample, there exists within the current sample the possibility of non-response bias. In particular, this survey would not include members of the population who do not have access to a telephone (either landline or cell phone) or who are not capable of responding to a survey in either English or French. In addition, some groups within the population are systemically less likely to answer surveys.

The table below compares the unweighted sample to the 2021 Census results by region, age, gender, education, income and country of birth. The comparison between the two samples for the three variables used in the weighting scheme (using interlocking weights for region with age and region with gender) shows underrepresentation of younger Canadians (18 to 34 years of age). However, this discrepancy is small enough that it can be corrected through weighting without affecting the quality of the final results. As the regional distribution was set through hard quotas, the weighting is correcting for the selected quota targets, rather than non-response.

Telephone sample population comparison: Region (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
British Columbia	12%	14%
Alberta	9%	11%
Saskatchewan	5%	3%
Manitoba	5%	3%
Ontario	32%	39%
Quebec	19%	23%
New Brunswick	3%	2%
Nova Scotia	3%	3%
Prince Edward Island	3%	0.4%
Newfoundland and Labrador	3%	1%
Territories	3%	0.2%

Telephone sample population comparison: Gender (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
Male	51%	49%
Female	47%	51%

Telephone sample population comparison: Age (Variable included in the weighting scheme)

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
18-24	7%	10%
25-34	12%	17%
35-44	16%	17%
45-54	18%	16%
55-64	20%	18%
65+	28%	22%

Telephone sample population comparison: Education

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
High school or less	19%	40%
Trade school or college	31%	29%
University or higher	50%	31%

Telephone sample population comparison: Income

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
Under \$40K	16%	12%
\$40K to under \$60K	13%	12%
\$60K to under \$100K	24%	25%
\$100K or more	38%	51%

Telephone sample population comparison: Country of birth

	Unweighted percentage	Census 2021 proportions (adults)
Born in Canada	76%	72%
Born outside of Canada	23%	28%

This comparison between the unweighted sample distribution and the actual population figures for variables not included in the weighting scheme shows that the final sample obtained was mostly representative of the general population for this survey. However, there are noticeable differences in education levels between the sample and the Canadian adult population, with the telephone sample being more educated than Census figures show. The largest gap was for the university educated stratum, with 50% of the sample having obtained a university degree, compared to 31% among Canadian adults. Education is a variable that could be considered in future weighting schemes for national surveys to correct for this imbalance. Income distributions for the sample are very close to those measured in the 2021 Census, except who have a household income of under \$100K or more (38% vs 51%). The country of birth distribution differs by 5% from the 2016 Census.

Municipal telephone survey

Ipsos conducted an 11-minute telephone survey targeting 13 specific municipalities, with a random sample of 1,540 individuals selected from members of the general population (aged 18 or older) residing in these municipalities, between January 3rd and February 5th, 2024. The sample is a probability sample generated through random digit dialing.

For respondents contacted on a landline, respondents within households were selected at random, by using the “birthday method” of identifying and interviewing the member of the household (aged 18+) who had their birthday last.

Respondents contacted on a cellular phone were also random digit dialed and needed to be 18+ to participate. Wireless samples were selected on a municipality level from a database containing all possible numbers in 1000-blocks of area codes and exchanges dedicated to wireless numbers.

Within the total sample of 1,540 for this survey, 462 respondents were contacted on their landlines, while the other 1078 respondents were contacted on their cellphones. The margins of error for each municipality using a confidence interval of 95% (19 times out of 20) are shown in the table below. The final questionnaire used was provided by IRCC to ensure adequate tracking of previous research results conducted by the department.

Sample sizes and margins of error for each Municipality

Municipality	Landline	Cellphone	Total	Margins of error
North Bay, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Sudbury, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Timmins, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Sault Ste. Marie, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Thunder Bay, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Cornwall, ON	36	84	120	±8.9%
Brandon, MB	36	84	120	±8.9%
Altona/Rhineland, MB (includes Plum Coulee and Gretna)	30	70	100	±9.8%
Moose Jaw, SK	36	84	120	±8.9%
Red Deer, AB	36	84	120	±8.9%
Vernon, BC	36	84	120	±8.9%
West Kootenay, BC (Trail, Castlegar, Rossland, Nelson)	36	84	120	±8.9%
Whitehorse, YT	36	84	120	±8.9%

Call dispositions

The following table provides the call dispositions and response rate calculation, as per the former MRIA's empirical method of calculating response rates for telephone surveys.

	Landline	Cellphone	Total
Total Numbers Attempted	14660	110287	124947
Invalid (NIS, fax/modem, business/non-res.)	6965	68953	75918
Total unresolved units (Busy, no answer, answering machine)	2295	17472	19767
Total in-scope - non-responding units	3645	12622	16267
Language problem	38	160	198
Illness, incapable, deaf	53	45	98
Household refusal	3509	12346	15855
Qualified respondent break-off	45	71	116
Total in-scope - responding units	478	1634	2112
Over quota	1	5	6
No one 18+	15	551	566
Occupation Disqualified	0	0	0
Completed interviews	462	1078	1540

The response rate, calculated as the number of **in-scope – responding units** divided by the sum of **unresolved units**, **in-scope – non-responding units**, and **in-scope – responding units**, was 7.45% for landline numbers, 5.15% for cellphone numbers, and 5.54% for all telephone numbers. The total response rate of 5.54% for a telephone survey of the Canadian general population with up to 8 call-backs per household is typical.

Municipal sample weighting

The tables below indicate the unweighted and weighted distributions of the municipal sample. The sample was stratified by municipality. Weighting was applied to the samples from 11 of the 13 municipalities to ensure that the final data reflects their adult population by age according to 2016 Census profiles. Weighting was not applied to the samples for two municipalities (Altona/Rhineland and West Kootenay) due to a lack of available census data.

North Bay: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	17	32
35 to 54	32	38
55+	71	50

Sudbury: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	20	31
35 to 54	34	40
55+	66	49

Timmins: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	27	32
35 to 54	39	42
55+	54	46

Sault Ste. Marie: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	17	28
35 to 54	35	36
55+	68	56

Thunder Bay: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	26	31
35 to 54	36	37
55+	58	52

Cornwall: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	16	29
35 to 54	31	34
55+	73	57

Brandon: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	18	40
35 to 54	41	39
55+	61	41

Moose Jaw: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	27	32
35 to 54	26	37
55+	67	51

Red Deer: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	19	40
35 to 54	32	42
55+	69	37

Vernon: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	9	26
35 to 54	32	36
55+	79	58

Whitehorse: Weighted and unweighted municipal sample: Age

	Unweighted sample size	Weighted sample size
18 to 34	12	36
35 to 54	33	44
55+	75	40

Appendix 2 – Quantitative and qualitative instruments

English and French quantitative and qualitative instruments are provided under separate cover.

Appendix 3 – Full set of tabulated data

A full set of tabulated data for the national survey and the municipal survey are provided under separate cover.