



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

2023-24 IRCC Annual Tracking Study

Executive summary

Prepared for: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Supplier Name: Ipsos

Contract Number: CW2334125

Contract Value: \$295,428.24 (including HST)

Award Date: 2023-10-16

Delivery Date: 2024-03-29

Registration Number: POR 069-23

For more information on this report, please contact IRCC at:

IRCC.COMMPOR-ROPCOMM.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Canada 

Copyright

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**.

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. For more information on this report, please contact Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada at IRCC.COMMPOR-ROPCOMM.IRCC@cic.gc.ca or at:

Corporate, Marketing & Digital Communications Branch
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Jean Edmonds Tower South
365 Laurier Ave W
Ottawa ON K1A 1L1

Catalogue Number: Ci4-183/1-2024E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-72344-0

Related publications:

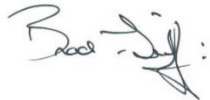
Catalogue Number: Ci4-183/1-2024F-PDF (Final Report, French)

ISBN: 978-0-660-72345-7

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024

Political Neutrality Statement

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Ipsos that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Brad Griffin
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

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.