

The AMSSA Info Sheet series has been created to inform and support our members and community partners. The Info Sheets cover a wide range of topics and highlight important facts and trends from across Canada and BC. Our goal is to assist organizations in navigating the rapidly changing landscape of the BC settlement sector.*

Review: 'Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies'

Naomi Alboim & Karen Cohl, Maytree Foundation, October 2012

This report on Canada's immigration policies has been published very recently, in October 2012, and there has been a lot of interest around this document in the sector. As promised, AMSSA has therefore drawn up an overview of the most important information that can be found in this report as well as a brief explanation on how this information is of relevance to the sector.

Type of Information	Where?	Relevance to the Sector
Summary of all policy changes from 2008 to July 2012.	Page 21 – 57 Appendix A (table)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives a complete overview of changes made to all immigration programs and policies, including temporary programs and citizenship. • Shows trends such as increased focus on economic immigration and temporary labor migration; reduced focus on family and humanitarian immigration; an increased emphasis on policies aimed at fraud prevention; policies aimed at restricting access to permanent residence and citizenship; move to unilateral decision-making at the expense of public consultations and parliamentary participation. • Appendix A contains a table with a complete list of all these changes broken up into the different immigration classes. It is therefore a summary of the current status of all immigration classes and citizenship rules.
List of all federal immigration proposals that are still outstanding as of July 1, 2012.	Table 1, page 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists all outstanding and announced policy changes that are still in the pipeline. • This helps keep track of what is still coming and gives a good understanding of the direction in which the immigration system is currently headed.
Brief history over changes to immigration system over past 5 years (Highlights).	Page 3-6 Table 3, page 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronological overview that shows interesting trends such as a move away from a consultative approach in favor of increasing ministerial powers coupled with the use of omnibus and budget bills. • Parliamentary Process Case Study on Refugee Legislation.
Section on Ministerial Powers	Table 2, page 10 Page 9 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists all changes made by Ministerial Instruction (Nov. 2008 – June 2012) (table). • Shows the dramatic increase in Ministerial Powers over last 2 years, reaching the point that the Minister for Immigration can now create new and change existing immigration programs without going through Parliament.
Section on Federal-Provincial Relations	Page 14 - 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses some federal decisions that have caused concerns among provinces and territories, including the termination of the BC-Canada agreement. • Gives background on how the Federal-Provincial relationship has developed in other Provinces where CIC funds settlement services directly and might give pointers as to the kind of relationship that BC and CIC might have.

* Disclaimer: The following summaries have been compiled by AMSSA. They have not been sanctioned by the Immigrant Integration and Multiculturalism Branch (IIMB), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) or agency representatives, so the information should be confirmed as appropriate.

Type of Information	Where?	Relevance to the Sector
<p>Analysis of cumulative effects of policy changes, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on short term labour market gains; • Policy incoherence and unpredictability; • Weakening of democratic process; • Less welcoming environment 	<p>Page 58 - 71</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This analysis looks at all the recent changes and makes educated predications on how these will impact Canadian society and change the social and economic structure of the country. • It explains how the sum of recent changes has the potential to make Canada unattractive for newcomers due to a less welcoming environment and increasing unpredictability and complexity of the immigration system.
<p>General Recommendations</p>	<p>Page 72 - 73</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines a 'Vision for the Future' and the principles future immigration reform should be based on. • Calls for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policies based on long-term social and economic objectives and a commitment to citizenship; • policies that are evidence-based, comprehensive, fair and respectful of human rights; • policies developed through public and stakeholder engagement, consultation and democratic processes.
<p>Specific Recommendations (responding to the specific changes to individual immigration programs).</p>	<p>Page 78 – 85</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 57 individual recommendations responding to specific changes proposed or implemented by the Federal government. • Looks at all immigration programs and subcategories in turn (Economic Class, Family Class, Refugee Class, Temporary Entry and Two-Step Immigration).