

INTRODUCTION

In the past two years, there have been significant changes to immigration policies as it relates to the number of new immigrant arrivals in Canada. This is in large part due to a cap on international students (introduced in January 2024) and further reductions made in the Immigration Levels Plan 2025-2027 and 2026-2028. These changes affected both permanent and temporary residents and also reduced BC-Yukon's Provincial Nominee Program allocations. Simultaneously, there have been changes to both provincial and federal programming when it comes to updating existing programs and introducing new ones. This information sheet provides an overview of key immigration policy updates introduced over the past two years at the federal level, with a focus on British Columbia and the Yukon.

Highlights of the 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan

- Stabilization of permanent resident admissions at 380,000 from 2026 to 2028. The economic category represents the largest proportion of admissions, reaching 64% in 2027 and 2028 by increasing admissions under the Federal High Skilled and Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).
- Increasing the target for Francophone admissions outside Quebec, reaching 10.5% by 2028, while supporting the broader goal of achieving 12% by 2029.
- Keeping the overall proportion of family class admissions relatively stable, between 21.3-22.1% in order to support family reunification.
- 13% of overall admissions dedicated to refugees and protected persons admissions.
- Significant reductions in Humanitarian & Compassionate admissions, from a target of 10,000 for 2025 in the 2025-2027 plan to a 6,900 target for 2026 and 5,000 for 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Comparison between 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plan

The 2025 federal government's budget announced that the 2026-2028 Levels Plan would target 380,000 permanent resident admissions each year, down from 395,000 in 2025. It also indicated an increased focus on economic immigration – from 59% in 2025 to 64% of overall admissions – and transitioning temporary residents already in Canada to permanent residents. The target for Francophone admissions destined for outside Quebec also increased, reaching 10.5% by 2028, to support the broader goal of achieving 12% by 2029. The Plan sharply decreased the targeted number of temporary resident admissions from 673,650 to 385,000 in 2025 – about 43% less than the 2025 target – while keeping targets steady at 370,000 in 2027 and 2028. Overall, the 2026-2028 Levels Plan target for temporary and permanent admissions in 2026 is down by about a quarter compared to the previous immigration plan.

"...Canada will continue to prioritize economic immigration, with nearly 65% of new permanent residents supporting our labour market needs and growth by 2027. We will also give priority for permanent residence to temporary residents already living and settled in Canada, further reducing the number of new arrivals. This in turn will help ease some of the pressure on our infrastructure and social services."

**Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, 2025
Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration
The Hon. Lena Metlege Diab, ECNS, KC, PC, MP**

The 2024 Policy Pivot on Immigration

During Canada's post-COVID recovery period, Canada's growth rate accelerated due to (1) a relatively modest increase in permanent resident arrivals, and (2) a much larger increase in non-permanent resident arrivals. The overall Canadian population grew by 2.5% in 2022, by 3.1% in 2023, and by 1.8% in 2024 – the highest population growth in over 50 years. The subsequent slowdown in 2024 was largely due to fewer temporary resident admissions following the record number of admissions in 2022 and 2023. While newcomers were instrumental in contributing to Canada's economy, especially post-COVID, this unprecedented population gain outpaced the capacity of public services to be able to provide adequate supports. This contributed to a change in public sentiment about immigration, leading the government to pivot on prior immigration plans. In January 2024, the government announced a cap on international students. Thereafter, in March 2024, the government announced plans to include temporary residents in future Immigration Levels Plans and indicated its aim to reduce the temporary resident population to 5% of total population by end of 2026. Later, in October 2024, the government announced significant reductions to the inflow of permanent residents for 2025. In contrast, the previous 2024-2026 Levels Plan aimed to welcome 485,000 permanent residents in 2024, 500,000 in 2025, and 500,000 in 2026.

Comparison between Permanent Resident Admission Numbers

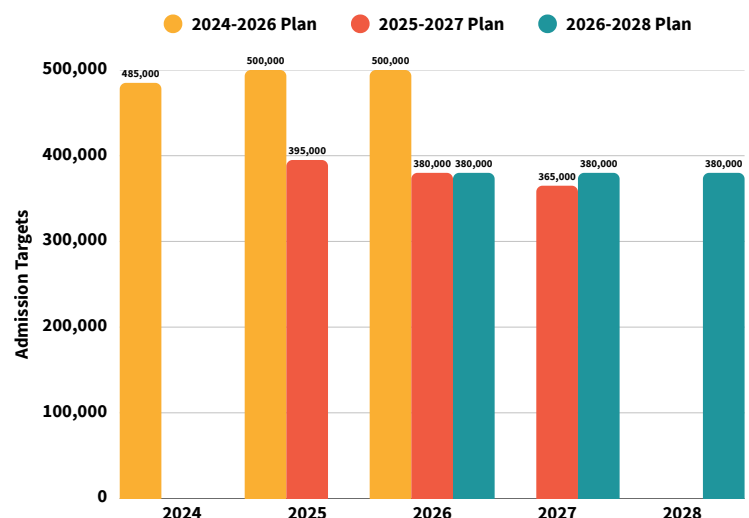


Figure 1: Comparison between different Levels Plans released from 2024 to 2028

Economic Category

The economic category represents the largest proportion of admissions proposed for each year, reaching 244,700 (64% of all permanent admissions) in both 2027 and 2028. To achieve this, the 2026-2028 Plan seeks to increase Federal High Skilled (comprised of the Federal Skilled Worker Program, Federal Skilled Trades Program, and Canadian Experience Class) and Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) admission. This seeks to “attract the talent needed to deliver on nation-building projects while also responding to the distinct labour market needs of provinces and territories.”

Permanent Resident Admissions - Economic

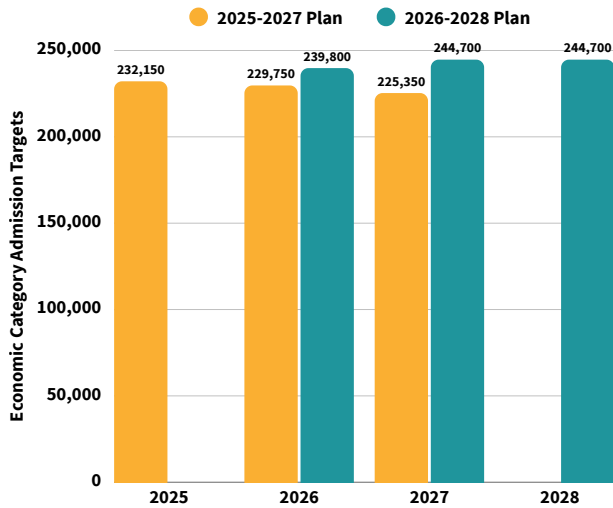


Figure 2: Economic category targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Refugees and Protected Persons

Targets for Refugees and Protected Persons have also been decreased from 58,350 in 2025, 55,350 in 2026 and 54,350 in 2027 as per the 2025-2027 Levels Plan to 49,300 for all three years of the 2026-2028 Levels Plan.

Permanent Resident Admissions - Refugees and Protected Persons

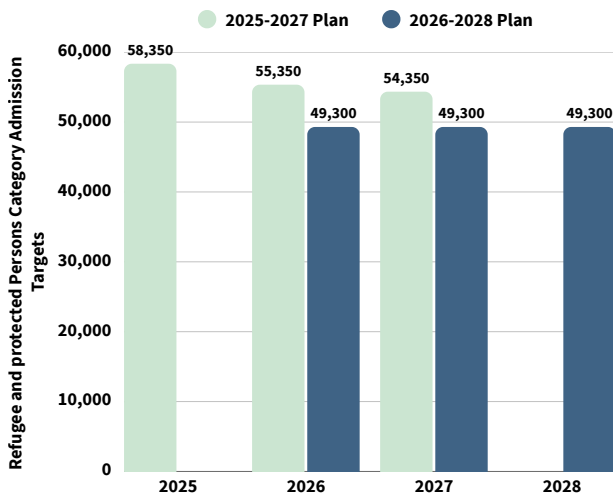


Figure 3: Refugees and Protected Persons category targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Family Reunification

The overall proportion of family class admissions will remain between 21.3-22.1% of overall admissions, declining from a target of 94,500 in 2025, 88,000 in 2026 and 81,000 in 2027 according to the 2025-2027 Plan, to 84,000 in 2026 and remaining at 81,000 for 2027 and 2028 respectively as per the 2026-2028 Plan.

Permanent Resident Admissions - Family

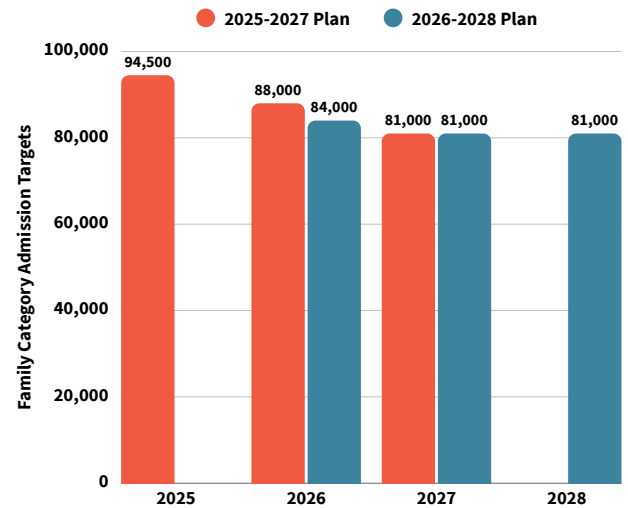


Figure 4: Family category targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Humanitarian & Compassionate and Other

Targets for Humanitarian & Compassionate and Other circumstances have also declined from 10,000 in 2025, 6,900 in 2026 and 4,300 in 2027 as per the 2025-2027 Levels Plan to 6,900 for 2026 and 5,000 for 2027 and 2028 respectively as per the 2026-2028 Levels Plan.

Permanent Resident Admissions - Humanitarian & Compassionate and Other

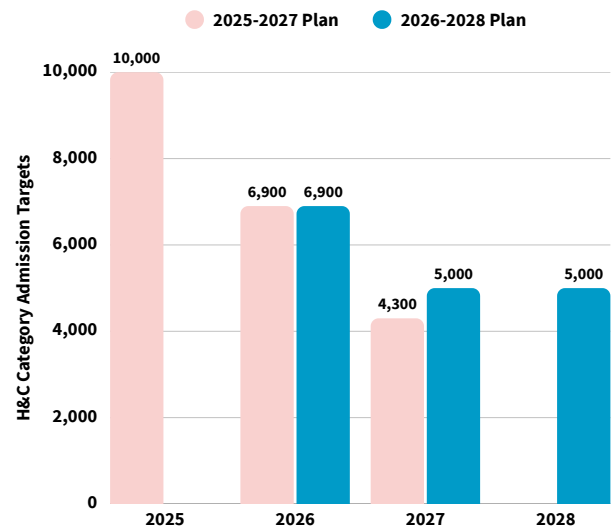


Figure 5: H&C category admissions as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Temporary Resident Admissions

In an attempt to reduce Canada's temporary population to less than 5% of the total population by the end of 2027, new targets for temporary resident arrivals are set at 385,000 in 2026 and 370,000 in 2027 and 2028. These figures represent new temporary worker and student arrivals to Canada. Targets for temporary residents include new arrivals under one of the temporary worker programs (i.e., the Temporary Foreign Worker Program [TFW Program] and the International Mobility Program [IMP]), as well as new arrivals under the International Student Program.

Comparison between Temporary Resident Admissions - Total

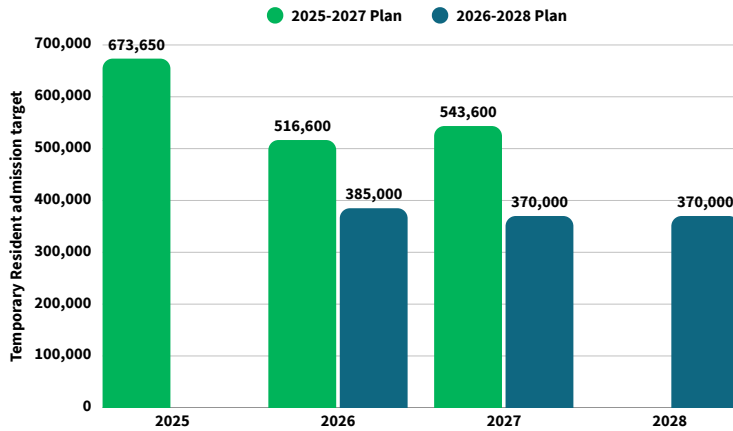


Figure 6: Temporary resident admission targets as per the 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plan

International Mobility Program

The IMP is comprised of a collection of streams that do not require Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA), including work permits issued in accordance with agreements with partner countries, or work permits issued under economic, family-class or humanitarian public policies, and Post-Graduation Work Permits. However, Post-Graduation Work Permits are not included under these targets, as IRCC treats them as an extension or change of status, not new arrivals. The current target for IMP entries is stabilized at 170,000 for 2026, 2027 and 2028 respectively. This is an increase from the previous Levels Plan which targeted 128,700 for 2026 and 155,700 for 2027.

Temporary Resident Admissions - International Mobility Program

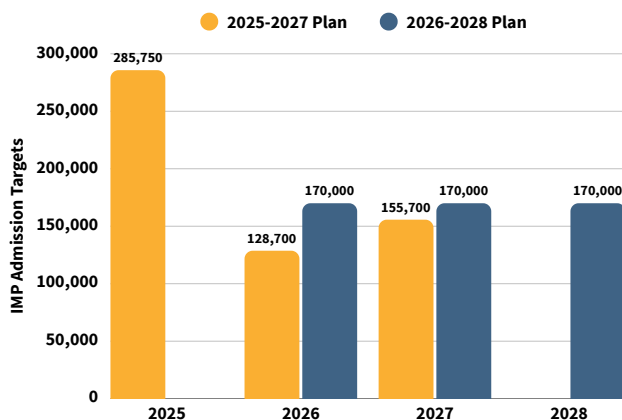


Figure 7: International Mobility Program admission targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Temporary Foreign Worker Program

The TFW Program is jointly administered with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and is based on employer demand to fill specific jobs when no Canadians or permanent residents are available to do the work, with an LMIA required to issue closed work permits. The TFW Program includes seasonal and non-seasonal agricultural streams. TFW Program targets include all non-seasonal workers who remain in Canada for longer than one year. In other words, the TFW Program targets exclude seasonal workers who enter and leave Canada within the same year (e.g., some seasonal primary agriculture and seasonal low-wage occupations in Canada for less than 270 days). The current target for TFWs is 60,000 for 2026 and 50,000 for 2027 and 2028 respectively, down from 82,000 as mentioned in the previous Plan.

Temporary Resident Admissions - Temporary Foreign Worker Program

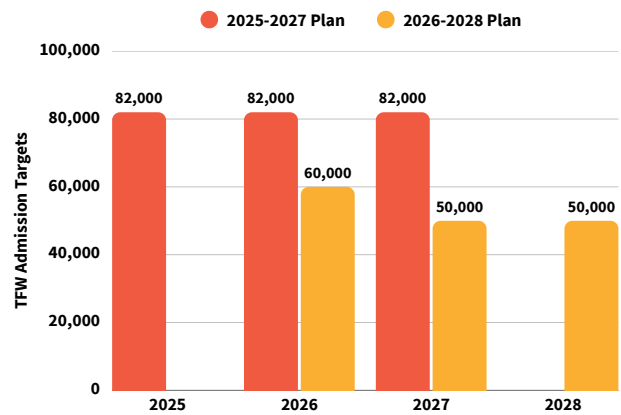


Figure 8: Temporary Foreign Worker Program admission category targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

International Students

Study permits are issued to foreign nationals studying for six months or more in Canada at a Designated Learning Institution (DLI) approved by a provincial or territorial government to host international students. The current Plan decreases the previous target from 305,900 from 2025 to 2027 to 155,000 in 2026 and thereafter 150,000 in 2027 and 2028. However, it is important to note that 61% fewer new students (a total of 115,470) arrived in 2025 compared to 2024, which was a steeper decline than expected. Thus, the 2026-2028 targets reflect an already sharp decline in international student recruitment at post-secondary institutions.

Temporary Resident Admissions - International Student Program

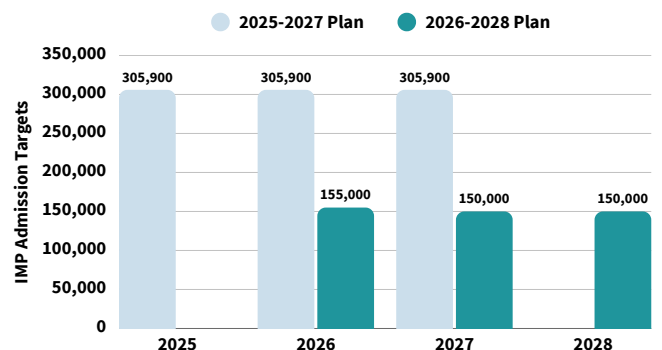


Figure 9: International Student admission targets as per 2025-2027 and 2026-2028 Levels Plans

Recent Immigration Policy Updates

Pathways to Permanent Residence for Medical Professionals

As part of Canada's broader International Talent Attraction Strategy, a new Express Entry category was introduced for international doctors with at least one year of Canadian work experience as a medical doctor in Canada, gained within the last three years. In addition, 5000 admission spaces are being reserved for provinces and territories to nominate international doctors with a job, a job offer, or letter of support to work as a medical doctor in Canada. These spaces are in addition to the annual Provincial Nominee Program allocations. Doctors who are nominated through this provincial pathway will receive expedited 14-day work permit processing, allowing them to work while awaiting permanent residence. Foreign credential recognition and licensing for doctors are the responsibility of each province and territory.

BC Provincial Nominee Program Numbers

While the province of British Columbia requested 9,000 PNP nominations in 2026 to meet labour shortages, the federal government allocated only 5,254 to the province. The BC government is yet to share the 2026 priorities for the current PNP allocations. In 2025, BC received a total of 6,214 allocations spread out across the year. The nominations were applied to the previously announced priorities, including applying a portion of the allocation to the waitlisted International Post-Graduate applications.

One-time Protected Persons Initiative

A one-time, two-year initiative was introduced for 2026 and 2027, to recognize approximately 115,000 persons as permanent residents, who have been recognized as needing protection by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) or by IRCC.

Yukon Provincial Nominee Program Numbers

The federal government has allocated 282 spots for the 2026 Yukon Nominee Program. In comparison, Yukon nominated 312 individuals for permanent residency in 2025. While BC experienced a 15.45% reduction in its Provincial Nominee Program allocations, Yukon's allocation numbers were reduced by 9.62%.

Yukon Provincial Nominee Program 2025-2026 Numbers Comparison

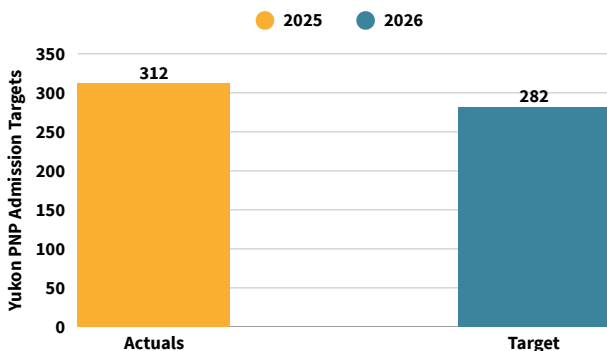


Figure 10: Yukon Provincial Nominee numbers

Reduction in International Student Numbers

In January 2024, IRCC announced a 35% reduction in the number of international students for 2024 compared to 2023 by placing a cap of approximately 360,000 for new study permit approvals. Later that year, in the 2025 to 2027 Immigration Levels Plan, this target was adjusted to 305,900. The 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan further reduced the targeted new study permit number to 155,000 in 2026 and 150,000 in 2027 and 2028 respectively. Additional restrictive measures related to cost-of-living requirements, post-graduation work permit eligibility, and spousal work permit eligibility were also introduced in 2024 and 2025.

BC PNP Entrepreneur Immigration Program

The Entrepreneur Immigration Pilot Program is a provincial program mandated by Immigration BC which the province intends to maintain as an ongoing immigration stream. This allows experienced entrepreneurs to establish new businesses in BC, through either the Base stream or the Regional stream. Base stream is an immigration pathway for individuals who are looking to start a new business or take over and grow an existing one. The regional stream is an immigration pathway for individuals who are looking to start a new business outside the Metro Vancouver Regional District, wishing to make a participating BC community their home.

One-Time Accelerated Pathway for Temporary Workers

A one-time, two-year initiative was introduced for 2026 and 2027, to convert 33,000 skilled temporary workers working in Canada in specific in-demand sectors to permanent residency. The government has indicated this program will focus on those in rural areas.

The Yukon Provincial Nominee Program Priorities for 2026

The provincial government of Yukon has announced its 2026 priorities for two intake periods:

- Regulated health care professionals
- Employers in rural Yukon
- Foreign nationals who:
 - have lived and worked in the Yukon for at least one year
 - are Yukon University graduates
 - are Francophone or French-speaking
 - received a Temporary Measure Letter of Support in 2024 or 2025

"...Our government is committed to supporting the business community in upholding a nominee program to address staffing shortages. We are also committed to reviewing the Yukon's immigration processes to ensure they are fair, transparent and continue to support local businesses and communities while ensuring we support those who have already chosen the Yukon as their home."

**Hon. Jen Gehmair, Minister of Economic Development,
Yukon Legislative Assembly**

References

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024). 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/20252027-immigration-levels-plan.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025). Supplementary Information for the 2026-2028 Immigration Levels Plan. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/levels/supplementary-immigration-levels-2026-2028.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025). Corporate Initiatives:Canada's Immigration Levels. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/corporate-initiatives/levels.html>
- Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2025011-eng.htm>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024). Newsroom. Speaking notes for the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: Announcement related to Temporary Residents. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/03/speaking-notes-for-the-honourable-marc-miller-minister-of-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-announcement-related-to-temporary-residents.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025). Supplementary Information for the 2024-2026 Immigration Levels Plan. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2024-2026.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2026). Key numbers on Canadian immigration. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/statistics-open-data/immigration-stats/students-workers.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024). Newsroom. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/01/canada-to-stabilize-growth-and-decrease-number-of-new-international-student-permits-issued-to-approximately-360000-for-2024.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2026). Live and work as a medical doctor in Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/medical-doctors/experience.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024). Newsroom. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2025-05/temporary-workers.html>
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2024). Minister Boissonnault provides next steps on recent changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2024/09/minister-boissonnault-provides-next-steps-on-recent-changes-to-the-temporary-foreign-worker-program.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025). IRCC Minister Transition Binder 2025-05. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2025-05/temporary-workers.html>
- Welcome BC. (2025). About the Provincial Nominee Program/Archives. Retrieved from: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/immigrate-to-b-c/about-the-bc-provincial-nominee-program/archives#News>
- Welcome BC. (2025). Immigrate to BC/For entrepreneurs and businesses. Retrieved from: <https://www.welcomebc.ca/immigrate-to-b-c/for-entrepreneurs-and-businesses>
- Finlayson, Jock and Globerman, Steven (2025). Canada's Changing Immigration Patterns, 2020-2024. Fraser Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/canadas-changing-immigration-patterns-2000-2024.pdf>
- Darren Major (2025). CBC News. Government dialling back number of temporary residents it allows into Canada. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-rudcing-temporary-residents-budget-9.6966217>
- Luca Caruso-Moro (2026). CTV News. Canada admitted 393,500 permanent residents last year. Retrieved from: <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/article/canada-admitted-393500-permanent-residents-last-year/>
- Heron Law Offices (2026). Retrieved from: <https://heronlaw.ca/2026-bc-pnp-updates-general-program-information-and-streams/>
- Government of Yukon. (2026). News/Government of Yukon announces Yukon Nominee Program update for 2026. Retrieved from: <https://yukon.ca/en/news/government-yukon-announces-yukon-nominee-program-update-2026>

