



Retention Is the New Recruitment

Driving Policy and Practice in Canada through Applied Immigration Research

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Retention Is the New Recruitment

1. The Conference Board of Canada
2. Academic research vs. applied research
3. Onward migration and immigrant retention (the “Leaky Bucket” research series)
4. What’s next? Upcoming research projects
5. What’s on your mind? Current issues polling



The Conference Board of Canada

What do we do?

About us

The Conference Board of Canada is our country's foremost independent organization for applied research. We deliver unique, evidence-based insights to help Canada's leaders shape a more prosperous future.

Since 1954, our work has helped guide decision-makers to solve complex issues and navigate a better path for organizations and Canadian society.

Drawing on deep academic and practical experience, we provide unparalleled objectivity and rigour in our analysis. As researchers and economists with profound subject matter expertise, we bring applied insights to our key focus areas of Immigration, Health, Economics, Indigenous & Northern Communities, Human Resources & Leadership, Education & Skills, Sustainability, Inclusion, and Innovation.

Through sophisticated data modelling, best-in-class forecasting, and multi-method approaches, we deliver research that helps leaders take action. Our relationships are built on the trust in the validity and objectivity of our work. Leaders know they can turn to us to help solve Canada's most wicked problems.



Knowledge Areas at the Conference Board



Economics



Education & Skills



Health



Human Capital



Immigration



Indigenous & Northern
Communities



Innovation &
Technology



Sustainability

Immigration Research Centres

- National Immigration Centre (NIC)
- Centre for Business Insights on Immigration (CBII)





Academic research vs. applied research

How different are they really?



Academic research

- Expand knowledge
 - Theory-driven
 - Academic style
- Non-commercial context
- Non-economic context
 - Researcher-driven
- Academic publications
 - Publication goals
- Academic networking



Applied research

- Solve problem
- Practice-driven
- Plain language
- Commercial context
- Economic context
- Knowledge user-driven
 - Reports, op eds
 - Impact goals
- Industry networking

How does this affect migration research?

- Ongoing conversations and collaborations with policy-makers, interest holders and practitioners
- Conceptualizing research with economic implications in mind
- Fast turnaround of research projects
- Focus on actionable insights and impact work



Academic and applied researchers should talk more! 😊

- Learning from each other
- Collaboration and research guidance (example: Research Advisory Boards)



Onward migration and immigrant retention

The “Leaky Bucket” research series

The Leaky Bucket 2024

A Closer Look at Immigrant Onward Migration in Canada



Onward migration and immigrant retention

- Study series in collaboration with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship
- English version:
https://www.conferenceboard.ca/product/the-leaky-bucket_2024/
- French version:
https://www.conferenceboard.ca/product/des-occasions-manquees_2024/

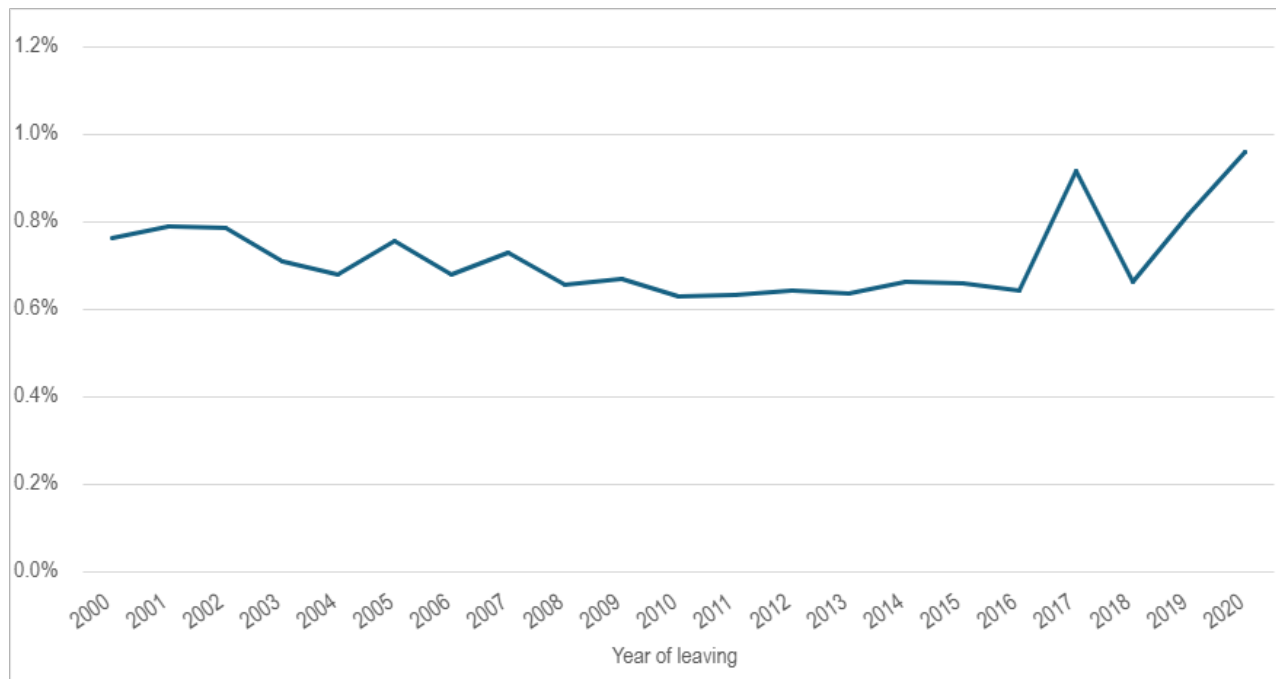


How we measured onward migration

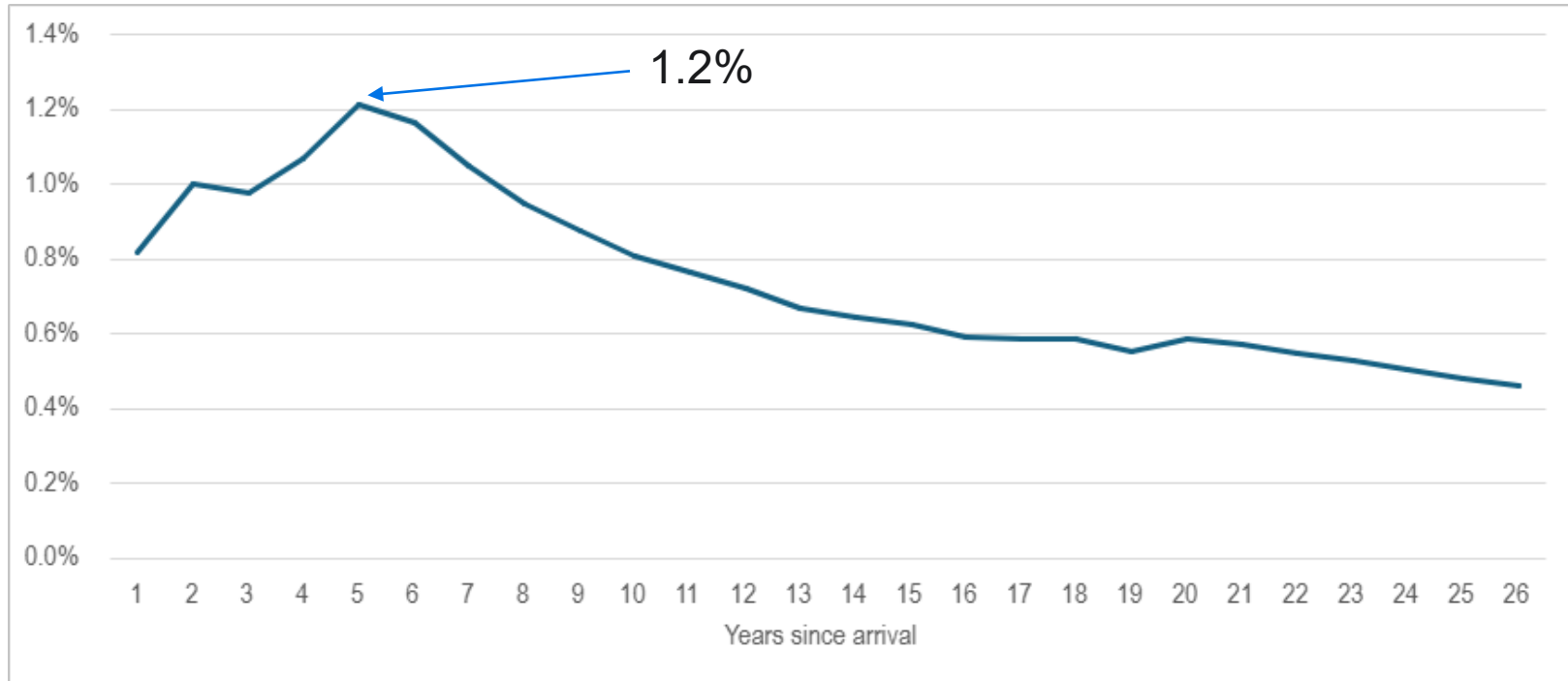
- **No direct data on onward migration:** Government of Canada does not track people that have left Canada
- **We use tax data instead:** Statistics Canada custom request, based on individual tax filer data
- **Last available data:** 2020 arrival cohort, filing taxes up to the 2021 tax year
- **Onward migrants:** PR over 18 years old who landed between 1982 and 2019, filed taxes at least once and failed to do so for two consecutive years and did not file again by 2021

Immigrants are leaving at record levels

On average, immigrants who landed since 1982 are leaving at an annual rate of 0.9%

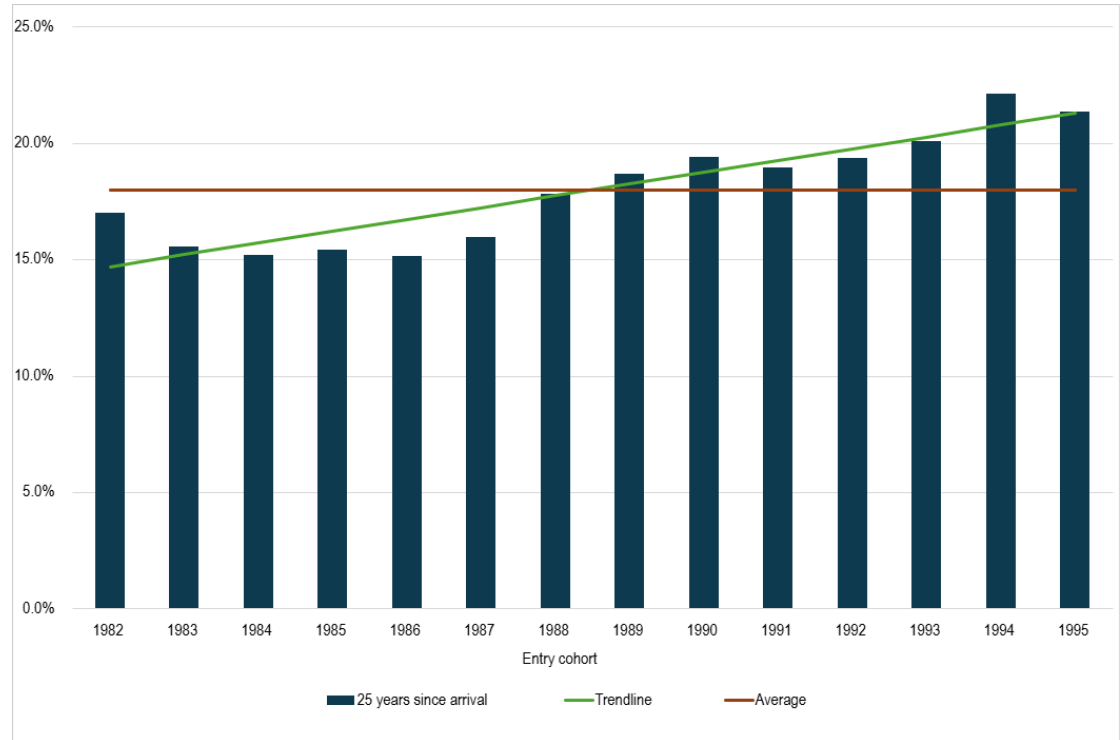


They are most at risk of leaving in the first 3 to 7 years since arrival

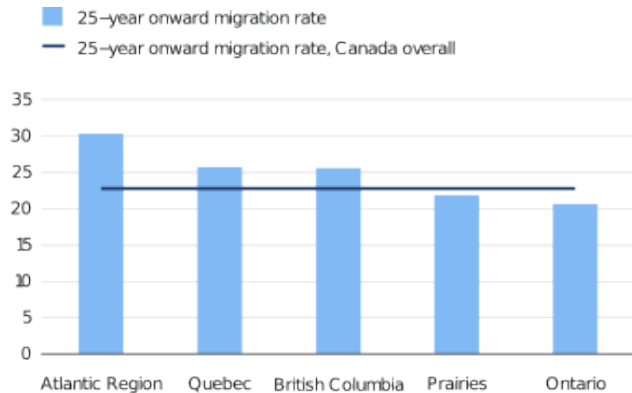


Long-term onward migration is accelerating

On average, 18% of immigrants leave within 25 years since arrival, and this percentage is increasing overtime

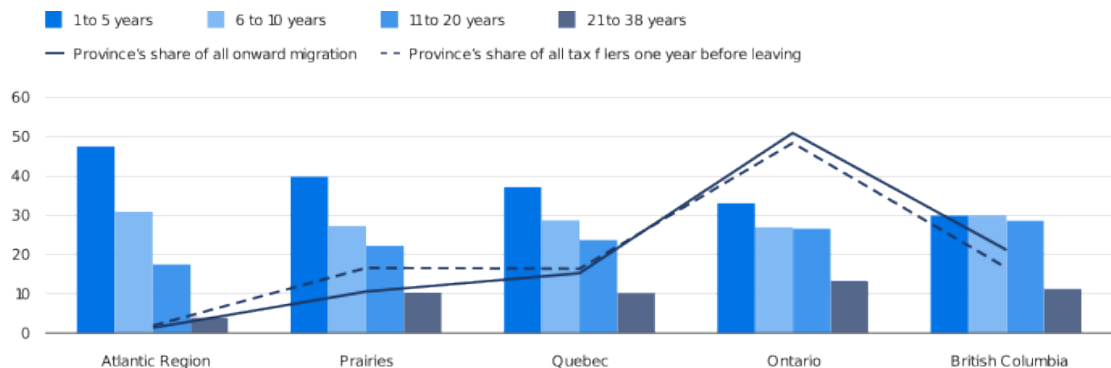


Atlantic Canada has the highest onward migration rates

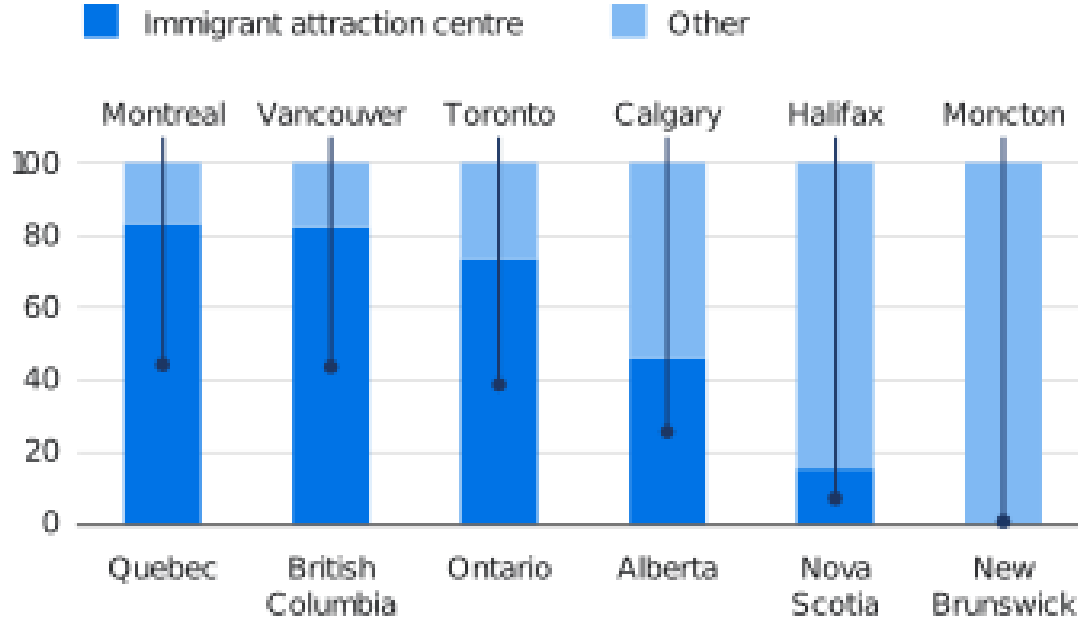


Atlantic Canada has the highest onward migration rates in the long-term

... but also within the first five years since arrival



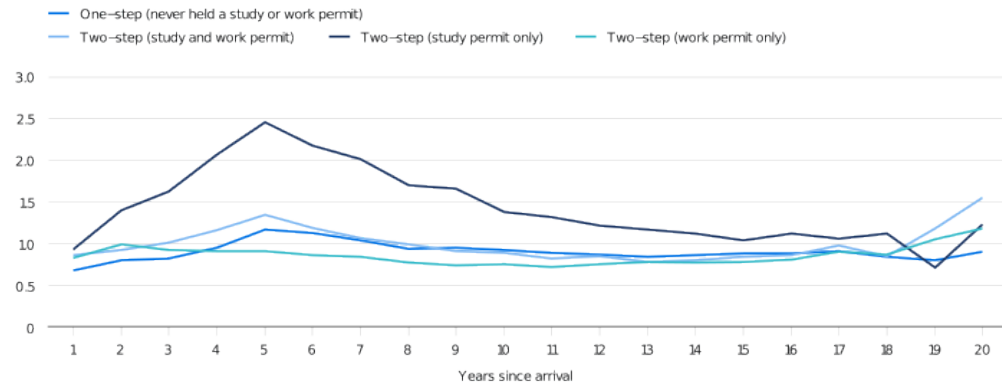
Halifax and Moncton though are not the problem



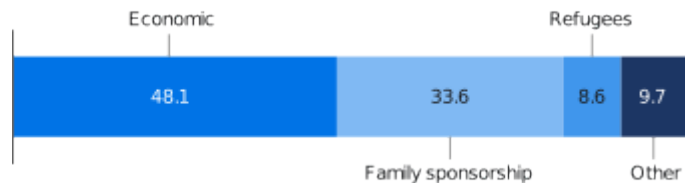
Onward migration is a problem outside of the immigrant attraction centers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, as well as Alberta

But the reverse in Quebec, British Columbia and Ontario

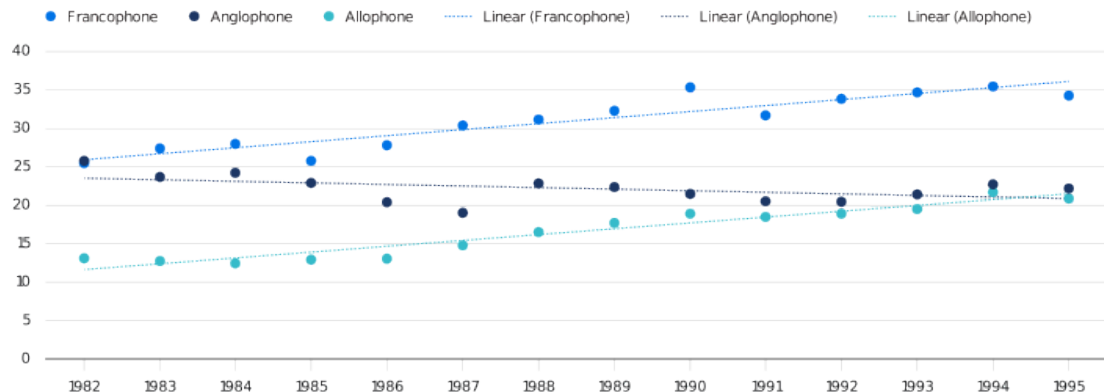
Onward migration is “brain drain”



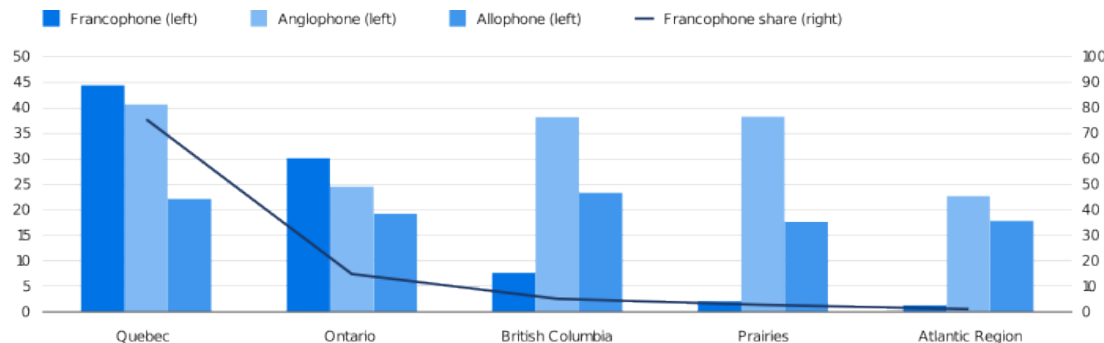
Former international students and economic immigrants are leaving



Francophone immigrants are leaving at a higher rate than anglophones and allophones



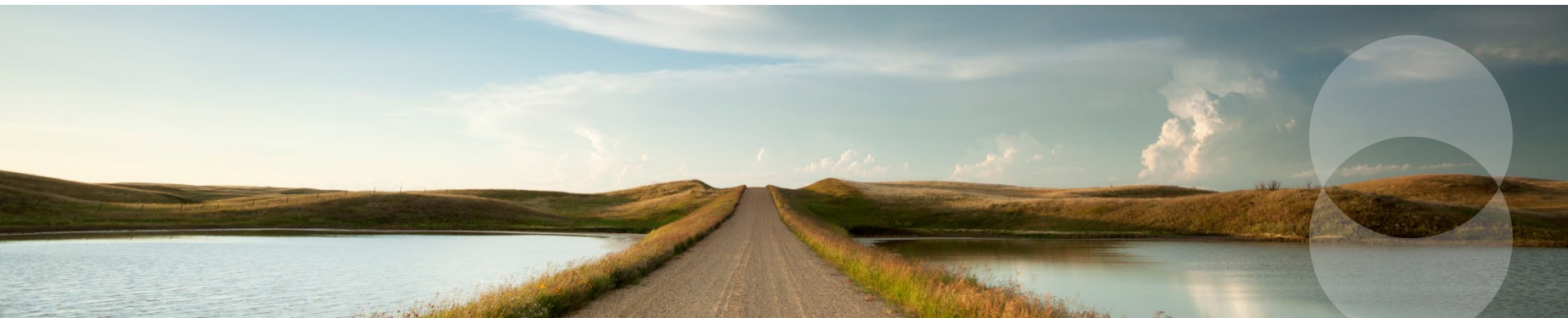
About one-third of francophones will leave in the long-term



Quebec and Ontario are disproportionately losing francophone immigrants

Recommendations and next steps

- **Develop early retention strategies:** Focus on the first five years after arrival
- **Set retention targets:** Integrate retention goals into immigration policy
- **Support regional policymakers:** Address unique retention challenges
- **Expand integration services:** Especially for francophone immigrants in Quebec and Ontario





What's next?

Upcoming research projects

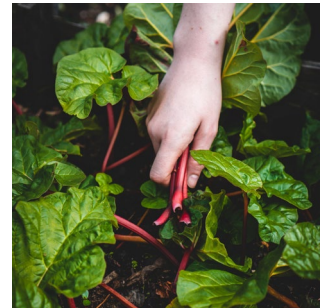
A Scorecard for Immigrant Skill Utilization

Mapping opportunity by city, nation-wide: We are developing a scorecard to show how Canadian cities are performing in using immigrant talent effectively.

Focusing on three sectors with urgent needs: Our research examines skill mismatch and skill wastage in health, construction, and accommodation and food services. These sectors have acute labour and skill shortages, yet high availability of immigrant talent.

Exploring barriers and solutions: We investigate why and to what extent immigrant skills are underused in key sectors—and what can be done to change that.

Empowering change-makers: Our research findings will identify practical steps for government, employers, and settlement services to better align immigrant skills with workforce demands.





More research to come:

The Leaky Bucket 2025, our third annual study of onward migration and immigrant retention

Retaining Canada's Healthcare Workforce, a joint project between our Health and Immigration knowledge areas tracking mobility of healthcare professionals inside and outside Canada

Research on **Enhancing Immigrant Access to Mentorship and Professional Networking** to address barriers and ease economic integration

Canada's first-ever **Immigration Index** measuring the impacts of immigration and absorptive capacity at the community-level



What's on your mind?

Current issues polling



AnswerGarden

Go to:

<https://answergarden.ch/5045547>

Question:

What current immigration issues do you want to see addressed?



Where insights
meet impact

The Conference
Board of Canada

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