Study: Transition from temporary foreign workers to permanent residents

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in The Daily, Tuesday, February 21, 2017

The share of temporary foreign workers who become permanent residents in Canada increased significantly over the 1990s and 2000s.

Temporary foreign workers are a diverse group—both in terms of categories and skills. There are two main categories of foreign nationals who hold work permits in Canada: those in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and those in the International Mobility Program (Government of Canada).

A new study, "Transition from Temporary Foreign Workers to Permanent Residents, 1990 to 2014", examines the transitions of temporary foreign workers into permanent residence, and the immigration classes through which they made this transition.

From 1995 to 1999, about 296,000 temporary foreign workers were admitted to Canada. About 26,000 of them, or about 9%, became permanent residents within five years of receiving their first work permit. From 2005 to 2009, just over 530,000 temporary foreign workers were admitted to Canada and about 112,000 of them, or 21%, became permanent residents within five years of receiving their first work permit. Over the 2005 to 2009 period, 1,250,000 permanent residents were admitted to Canada.

The rate of transition to permanent residence varied across types of temporary foreign workers. Among those who came to Canada from 2005 to 2009, transition rates were highest among those in the Live-in Caregiver Program (56%) and the Spouse or Common-law Partner category (50%). The lowest rates for transition to permanent residence were among those in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (2%) and the Reciprocal Employment category (9%).

Temporary foreign workers in these programs also tended to become permanent residents through different immigration classes. Those in the Low-Skill Pilot program were more likely to become permanent residents through the Provincial Nominee Program. In turn, those in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program and the Reciprocal Employment category were more likely to become permanent residents through the Family Class after having left Canada. Higher-skilled temporary foreign workers were more likely than others to be admitted as economic immigrants.

The research paper "Transition from Temporary Foreign Workers to Permanent Residents, 1990 to 2014," part of the Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series (11F0019M), is now available.

For more information contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca).

To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Feng Hou (613-608-4932; feng.hou@canada.ca), Social Analysis and Modelling Division.