

# Study: Economic Immigrants in Gateway Cities: Factors Involved in Their Initial Location and Onward Migration Decisions

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Through much of the 2000s and 2010s, Canada has admitted more than 250,000 new immigrants each year. That number is expected to reach 310,000 in 2018 and 340,000 by 2020.

Economic immigrants, including skilled workers, provincial nominees, Canadian experience class immigrants, business class immigrants, and live-in caregivers, account for well over half of new entrants. Given that economic benefit to Canada is the broad objective underlying their admission, the initial settlement and subsequent mobility of economic immigrants are relevant to local labour markets and regional economies.

A new Statistics Canada study examines the initial settlement and onward migration of economic immigrants in Canada. The study focuses on principal applicants (accompanying spouses and dependent children are excluded) and distinguishes those settling in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver from those settling elsewhere. Data were drawn from the Longitudinal Immigration Database covering the period from 2004 to 2015.

While a large share of economic principal applicants still settle in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver, the share doing so declined markedly over the reference period. Just under three-quarters (72%) of economic principal applicants admitted in 2004 initially settled in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver compared with just over one-half (51%) of those admitted in 2014.

The expansion of provincial nominee programs and the introduction of the Canadian experience class in 2009 contributed to this decline. There were a broad range of factors examined, and immigration category was most strongly associated with initial settlement in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver.

Among those admitted in 2014, 85% of business class immigrants and 70% of skilled workers settled in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver compared with 59% of Canadian experience class immigrants and 20% of provincial nominees. These latter two categories accounted for 57% of all economic principal applicants admitted in 2014, up from 4% in 2004. Other factors associated with initial settlement in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver included country of birth, intended occupation, knowledge of official languages, and pre-admission work experience in these centres.

The vast majority of economic principal applicants who initially settled in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver remained in these centres in subsequent years. Of those in the 2004 admission cohort who settled in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver, 93% were still there after five years and 89% were still there after 10 years. The numbers were much the same among subsequent cohorts.

Likewise, economic principal applicants who initially settled outside of Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver tended to remain outside of these centres. Among those in the 2004 admission cohort, 11% had moved into Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver after 10 years, and 6% of those in the 2009 admission cohort had made the move after five years.

The research paper "[Economic Immigrants in Gateway Cities: Factors Involved in Their Initial Location and Onward Migration Decisions](#)," which is part of the *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series (11F0019M)*, is now available.

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