Longitudinal Immigration Database: Immigrants' mobility during the initial years since admission

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Understanding whether or not immigrants stay in their intended destination is very important in developing policies to encourage immigrants to stay in their province or territory of admisison, particularly at the sub-provincial level. Based on the latest available data on immigrant taxfilers from the 2020 Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB), this article reports the retention rates of immigrants at both the provincial and Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) levels in 2019 by mainly focusing on immigrant taxfilers admitted in 2014.

Immigrants with pre-admission work experience in Canada more often stay in their province or territory of admission

Having Canadian experience, such as work or study, prior to immigration plays a role in immigrants' decisions about whether to remain in their province or territory of destination after admission. Among immigrants admitted in 2014, those with work experience more often stayed in their province or territory of admission, indicating that having employment is a key factor for retention. Higher retention rates were observed among immigrants with asylum claims (93.0%) or work permits only (90.2%) prior to admission, while lower retention rates were observed among immigrants who had only study permits (79.1%) or study permits in addition to work permits (81.3%) prior to admission. Students might move more often to seek employment. Further analysis would be required to understand specific reasons behind immigrants' mobility.

Five years after admission in 2019, 85.5% of immigrants who were admitted in 2014 filed taxes in their original province or territory of admission. Overall, Ontario had the highest provincial retention rate (93.7%), followed by British Columbia (89.7%) and Alberta (89.0%).

Atlantic provinces had lower retention rates than the rest of the country; among them, Nova Scotia had the highest provincial retention rate (62.8%).

The presence of family members in the province or territory of admission is related to higher retention rates. Among immigrant taxfilers admitted to Canada in 2014, provincial retention rates five years after admission were 93.2% for family-sponsored immigrants, 86.4% for refugees and 81.7% for economic immigrants.

Table 1
Five-year retention rates, by pre-admission experience and province or territory, for the 2014 admission year

	All	Study permit only	Work permit only	Work permit and study permit	Asylum claimant	No pre-admission experience
				%		
Canada	**85.5**	**79.1**	**90.2**	**81.3**	**93.0**	**83.9**
Newfoundland and Labrador	46.2	0.0	46.0	45.0	0.0	45.6
Prince Edward Island	28.1	22.2	50.0	33.3	0.0	24.6
Nova Scotia	62.8	58.3	74.4	51.6	0.0	59.1
New Brunswick	42.4	41.2	65.8	61.9	0.0	35.5
Quebec	79.1	61.9	92.3	83.1	92.2	76.4
Ontario	93.7	89.9	94.9	92.8	94.9	93.3
Manitoba	72.8	58.7	67.2	55.9	66.7	74.8
Saskatchewan	62.7	54.5	67.3	43.1	50.0	68.0
Alberta	89.0	89.2	92.7	79.5	89.8	88.0
British Columbia	89.7	87.8	90.7	88.5	91.1	89.4
Territories	67.1	0.0	65.7	40.0	0.0	70.3

Source(s): Longitudinal Immigration Database 2020 (**5057**), table **43-10-0018-01**.

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Interprovincial moves decreased as the number of years since admission to Canada increased, based on a comparison between five-year and 10-year retention rates for immigrants admitted in 2009. The overall retention rate was 87.9% five years after admission and 85.8% 10 years after admission in Canada. This indicates that the decision to settle in a different province or territory is often made during early years following admission. The provinces with the highest 10-year retention rates were Ontario (91.5%), British Columbia (87.3%), and Alberta (86.1%). Among the Atlantic provinces, Nova Scotia had the highest 10-year retention rate (58.0%). Immigrants with asylum claims (92%) and work permits only (88.3%) most often stayed in their province or territory of admission.

Vancouver, Toronto and Edmonton are the top three CMAs of admission where immigrants most often stayed

At the CMA level, immigrant taxfilers admitted in Vancouver (86.1%) in 2014 had the highest retention rate five years after admission in 2019. These immigrant taxfilers indicated Vancouver as their intended destination at the time of their admission in 2014 and filed taxes in Vancouver in 2019. The retention rates for immigrants admitted in 2014 were 85.5% for Toronto and 84.6% for Edmonton.

Five year after admission, family-sponsored immigrants more often remained in their intended CMAs of admission than economic immigrants and refugees, with Vancouver (89.7%), Montréal (89.2%) and Toronto (89.1%) having the highest five-year retention rates for family-sponsored immigrants among all CMAs in Canada.

In the Atlantic region, the five-year retention rate of immigrant taxfilers was the highest in Halifax (57.7%). Following the countrywide pattern, the five-year retention rates were higher among family-sponsored immigrants than economic immigrants and refugees in all three Atlantic CMAs.

Table 2
Five-year retention rates by immigration category in selected Census Metropolitan Areas, for the 2014 admission year

	Immigrants sponsored by family	Economic Immigrants	Refugees	All immigrants
	retention rate			
St. John's	61.5	50.0	42.9	49.4
Halifax	67.3	56.9	50.0	57.7
Moncton	60.0	40.6	0.0	42.1
Montreal	89.2	66.6	88.0	74.1
Toronto	89.1	83.1	85.5	85.5
Winnipeg	82.1	73.3	40.7	71.2
Regina	75.0	58.5	66.7	60.9
Edmonton	85.8	84.1	84.0	84.6
Calgary	87.1	81.2	81.3	82.9
Vancouver	89.7	83.9	88.6	86.1

Source(s): Longitudinal Immigration Database 2020 (**5057**), table **43-10-0022-01**.

Note to readers

The Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) is a comprehensive source of data that plays a key role in the understanding of the economic behaviour of immigrants and non-permanent residents. It is the only annual Canadian dataset that allows users to study the characteristics of immigrants to Canada at time of admission and the economic outcomes and regional mobility of immigrants over a period of more than 35 years.

The IMDB is the result of a partnership between Statistics Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the provinces. The IMDB combines administrative data files on immigrant admissions and non-permanent resident permits from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) with tax files from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). IRCC's administrative records contain extensive information on immigrants admitted to Canada since 1952. They also include information on non-permanent residents who have been granted a temporary resident permit since 1980. Fiscal data from the CRA's tax files are available for immigrant taxfilers admitted since 1980. Tax records for 1982 and subsequent years are available for immigrant taxfilers.

The IMDB links short-term and long-term outcomes to characteristics at admission, such as immigrant admission class, country of origin and knowledge of official languages. The IMDB also provides information on pre-admission experience in Canada, such as work or study permits or asylum claims. It also includes Canadian citizenship acquisition data since 2005.

For additional information regarding the data coverage and data quality of the IMDB, users should refer to the 2020 Longitudinal Immigration Database technical report.

It is to be noted that the IMDB is updated annually. From year to year, there have been changes to data processing. Each yearly updates are independent.

Economic immigrant admission categories include immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through their ability to meet labour market needs, to own and manage or to build a business, to make a substantial investment, to create their own employment, or to meet specific provincial or territorial labour market needs.

Immigrant sponsored by family categories include immigrants who were sponsored to come to Canada by a family member who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.

Refugee categories include immigrants who were granted permanent resident status on the basis of a well-founded fear of returning to their home country. These include government-assisted refugees, privately-sponsored refugees, refugees admitted in Canada, and their dependents.

Taxfilers are immigrants and asylum claimants who have filed a tax return for a given taxation year.

The province or territory of admission is the province or territory of intended destination according to immigration application.

Retention rate is the percentage of immigrant taxfilers who filed taxes in their intended destination geography.

Available tables: 43-10-0017-01, 43-10-0018-01, 43-10-0022-01 and 43-10-0024-01.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5057.

The Longitudinal Immigration Database 2020, including the wages and salary module (1997 to 2020), is now available upon request.

The "Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) Technical Report, 2020" is now available as part of the series *Analytical Studies: Methods and References* (11-633-X).

The data visualization tools "Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) Interactive Application: Economic Outcomes" and "Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) Interactive Application: Mobility" are also available.

The products are available on the "Immigrant and Non-Permanent Resident Statistics" Portal. The portal was designed to provide easy and free access to immigrant and non-permanent resident data and publications. Information is organized into broad categories including analytical products, data products, reference materials and interactive applications.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).