

The expansion and changing characteristics of the Provincial Nominee Program

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The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) was introduced in all Canadian provinces (except Quebec) and most territories in the period from 1998 to 2005. It was designed primarily to distribute more immigrants outside the three largest Canadian cities and to help meet the workforce needs of employers in the provinces and territories.

Different characteristics of the PNP were examined in various articles in *Economic and Social Reports* over the last several months, including in the fourth article in the series published today, "The Provincial Nominee Program: Provincial differences." The research was done in collaboration with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and examined the program's [expansion](#), [retention](#) and [earnings outcomes](#). The analysis used the Longitudinal Immigration Database, which enables the geographic mobility and earnings trajectories of immigrants to be examined by admission program.

The expansion of the Provincial Nominee Program has significantly transformed the selection process for economic immigrants in Canada since the early 2000s

In 2000, the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) accounted for 79% of economic immigrants, but its share decreased to 13% in 2023. Meanwhile, the PNP has emerged as the largest program, accounting for 40% of all economic immigrants to Canada in 2023.

The Provincial Nominee Program has played a key role in bringing economic immigrants to the Atlantic and Prairie provinces

In 2023, provincial nominees made up 93% of new economic immigrants in Saskatchewan and 85% of those in Manitoba, compared with 21% of those in Ontario. In the four Atlantic provinces, provincial nominees accounted for 65% to 80% of new economic immigrants.

Over the 2000-to-2023 period, the share of new economic immigrants to Canada intending to settle in the Prairie provinces and the Atlantic provinces increased from 10% to 33%, while the share intending to settle in Ontario declined from 61% to 38%.

Changing sociodemographic characteristics of provincial nominees

The sociodemographic characteristics of provincial nominees have also changed considerably. In particular, the share of provincial nominees aged 20 to 54 at admission who were previously temporary foreign workers rose from 6% in 2000 to 61% in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. This share was highest in Alberta (85%) and lowest in New Brunswick (28%) and Saskatchewan (35%). This regional variation likely reflects different selection criteria for the PNP across provinces and territories.

Changing occupations of economic immigrants

The growth in the PNP, combined with the corresponding decline in the FSWP, has affected the distribution of intended occupations among economic immigrants. Provincial nominees were more oriented towards technical occupations than FSWP immigrants, who were more likely to be professionals. As a result, by 2019, almost as many new economic immigrants were intending to work in a technical occupation as in a professional occupation—a significant change from 2005, when professional occupations dominated.



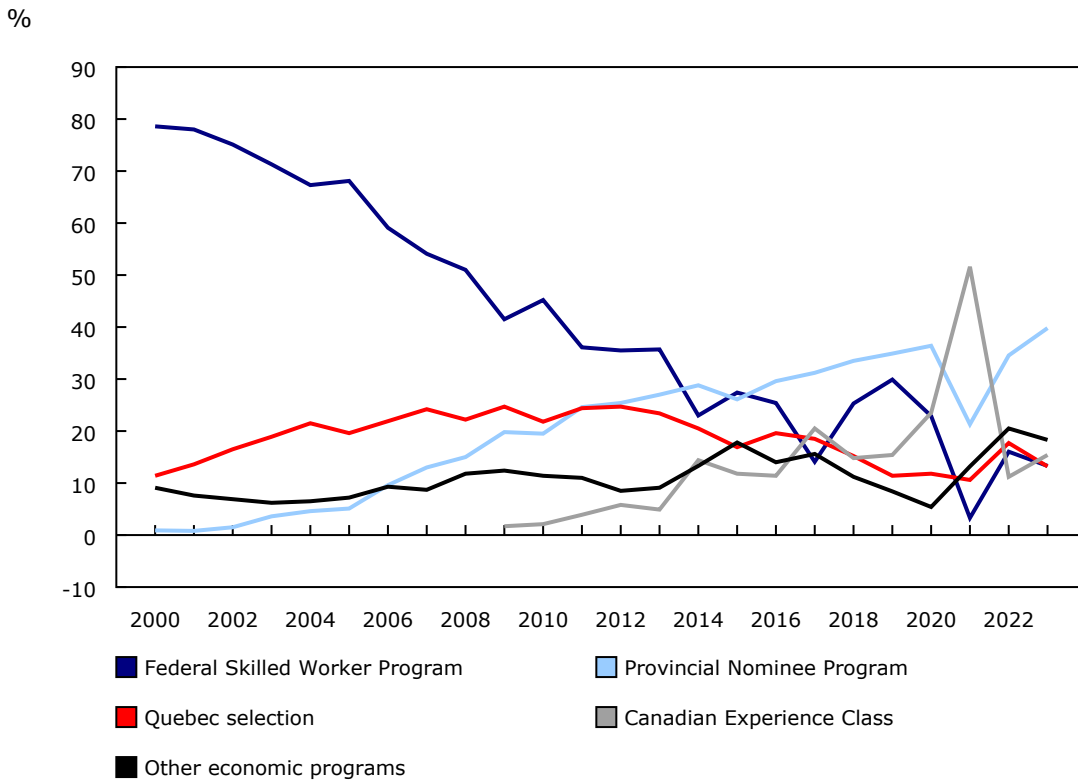
Provincial differences in occupations

There was also significant provincial variation in the intended occupations of new provincial nominees in 2019. Nominees intending to work in a technical occupation dominated in Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Alberta, while British Columbia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island had relatively large shares of nominees intending to work in a professional occupation. In Manitoba, nominees who intended to work in occupations requiring no more than a high school education outnumbered those who intended to work in professional or technical occupations.

Differences in earnings

Provincial nominees used to earn more in the initial years after immigration than FSWP immigrants, but this pattern has changed for subsequent arrival cohorts. Among the 2005-to-2014 admission cohort, provincial nominees had \$6,900 (in 2020 dollars) higher annual earnings in the initial two years after admission than FSWP immigrants. However, in the 2015-to-2019 cohort, provincial nominees earned \$6,500 less than FSWP immigrants in the initial two years. This reversal in initial earnings between the two groups was likely related to changes in the selection criteria for FSWP immigrants.

Chart 1
Share of new economic immigrants by admission program, Canada, 2000 to 2023



.. not available for a specific reference period

Source(s): Longitudinal Immigration Database; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Permanent Residents – Monthly IRCC Updates (5057).

For information on the other articles released today in *Economic and Social Reports*, please see the *Daily* release "[Economic and Social Reports, March 2024.](#)"

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Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5057](#).

The article "[The Provincial Nominee Program: Provincial differences](#)" is now available in the March 2024 issue of *Economic and Social Reports*, Vol. 4, no. 03 ([36280001](#)).

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).