

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES
AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA

2025–2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

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et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

Message from the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) 2025–2027 Strategic Plan. This plan—the first of its kind published in more than 10 years—introduces a renewed sense of rigour and focus in the Department's planning efforts. The plan sets out the priority areas we need to rally around now to achieve our vision of building an immigration system for the future.

The plan comes at a pivotal point, as we begin reducing immigration levels and applying additional fiscal restraint, while continuing to stabilize the organization. We know we must also further modernize how we do business.

Our enterprise-level priorities and initiatives will serve as a foundation for management decision-making, as well as for sector-level planning. Our hope is that everyone in the Department clearly recognizes the link between the plan and their own work. That is important because collectively, we are the architects of a well-managed immigration system; our work is instrumental at every step of a newcomer's journey.

The plan presents five Strategic Priorities for our work ahead: well-managed and coordinated migration; nimble and equitable humanitarian response; client service excellence; program integrity and evidence-driven policies that translate into public confidence in the immigration system; and sound internal management. Equity and digital modernization underpin these priorities and will help drive us forward.

People are at the heart of our mandate and with that responsibility top of mind, we must continue to foster trust, and promote transparency and accountability in everything we do. The Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector must guide our decisions. We also want to take a moment to celebrate all we have accomplished together at IRCC and with our many partners.

Our collective success depends on the continued hard work, professionalism and dedication of our workforce. You are truly our greatest asset. We are grateful for your extraordinary efforts to serve the needs of Canadians and newcomers. As your Deputy Ministers, we are committed to supporting you throughout your time at IRCC. We look forward to starting this next chapter with you.



Dr. Harpreet S. Kochhar
Deputy Minister



Scott Harris
Associate Deputy Minister

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INTRODUCTION

The 2025–2027 Strategic Plan¹ sets the direction for the Department in the next three years, identifying Strategic Priorities and how they will be achieved. In a complex and ever-changing immigration landscape, the plan aims to provide clarity on IRCC’s direction to all IRCC staff and to guide senior management decision-making, particularly when faced with evolving priorities and trade-offs.

The plan’s *Key Strategic Actions and Key Results* will be tracked through the Periodic Review process, with an annual progress update provided to IRCC senior management and staff. The diagram on the facing page illustrates the relationship between IRCC’s various planning and reporting activities.

Unlike more comprehensive corporate plans and reports written for Canadians and Parliament, this plan targets an IRCC audience and focuses on departmental priorities. The plan will guide departmental planning including corporate plans and reports, such as the [Departmental Plan](#), the Departmental Results Risk Profile, the [Departmental Results Report](#) and the [Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration](#), and will advance alignment among such plans and reports to ensure an integrated approach moving forward.

¹ The 2025–2027 Strategic Plan covers the following fiscal years: 2024-2025, 2025-2026, and 2026-2027.

HOW THE PIECES FIT TOGETHER: IRCC'S PLANNING OVERVIEW



STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

Several external and internal factors determine the Department's operating context. IRCC needs to address multiple priorities and obligations, while strengthening program effectiveness, efficiency and equity to benefit clients, newcomers and Canadians in a reliable and sustainable way.

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

The context within which migration must be managed has changed significantly in the last few years. Global displacement numbers are growing, and immigration has been increasingly used to respond to crises abroad, including conflicts, natural disasters, and other humanitarian situations. This adds pressure on IRCC to offer crisis response pathways for affected populations, alongside the need to process historic volumes of applications from its regular suite of programs. In addition, IRCC must maintain its commitments to international responsibility-sharing in addressing refugee situations.

Competition for top international talent remains strong, with IRCC continually innovating to attract and retain skilled immigrants, particularly in sectors facing labour shortages. However, while temporary and permanent residents are still critical to Canada's economy and the diversity of Canadian society, the volume of newcomers in recent years has led to rapid population growth and shifting public attitudes toward immigration.

This reality requires the Department to strike a careful balance between restoring public confidence in Canada's managed migration system, while ensuring that immigration continues to support Canada's economy and communities. Such a balance will be particularly critical with unemployment rates on the rise (especially among youth and newcomers) and a more competitive labour market for job seekers.

Threats to the integrity of IRCC programs have increased, such as non-genuine visitors, digital fraud, abuse and misuse of Canada's immigration programs, as well as foreign interference. These must be addressed to ensure Canada's immigration system is well-managed and meets the goals of immigration and citizenship programs.

INTERNAL CONTEXT

Program and policy directions

Given the evolving operating context, the Department has undertaken recent reorganizations to better meet its needs and orientations. To guide future direction, IRCC has undertaken a series of consultations, program reviews and evaluations; and, engaged in a medium-term planning exercise. This included a Strategic Immigration Review, which culminated in the report, [An Immigration System for Canada's Future](#), published in October 2023. It provided direction to ensure IRCC's managed migration system continues to help Canada thrive.

Changes are underway. IRCC has introduced intake caps to the international student program. While international students bring significant social, cultural and economic benefits to Canada, this cap aims to ensure genuine students have the support and resources they require, as well as alleviate the strain on community services and infrastructure. In 2024, the cap is projected to lead to approximately 360,000 approved study permits, a 35% reduction from 2023.

Furthermore, the [2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan](#) helps to balance Canada's immigration needs with restoring confidence in our managed

migration system and moving away from the higher admissions targets of recent years. The Levels plan includes phased reductions to permanent resident targets and, for the first time, it includes targets for temporary residents, specifically international students and foreign workers. IRCC's goal is to reduce temporary resident volumes to 5% of Canada's population by the end of 2026.

In response to new obligations under the [Modernization of the Official Languages Act](#), IRCC's [2024 Policy on Francophone Immigration](#) formalizes an ongoing departmental role in enhancing the vitality and economic development of Francophone minority communities in Canada, including restoring and increasing their demographic weight. The Levels plan supports the commitments in the Policy by maintaining an upward trend for French-speaking permanent resident admissions targets.

In response to increases in the number of asylum claims and other concerns with the integrity of the in-Canada Asylum Program, potential reforms are being explored to ensure that claims for refugee protection can be processed quickly and fairly, while also addressing integrity issues and strengthening the asylum system.

Internal services and enabling functions

The work of IRCC's programs is supported by Finance, Workforce and Workplace Planning, and Digital Strategy, Services and Innovation. These internal services ensure that employees have the training, resources and tools they need to do their jobs and that the Department can respond to its shifting internal and external context.

The Department will continue in its commitment to a diverse and high performing workforce and to an inclusive workplace where everyone is valued, and accessible tools are provided by design.

At the same time, all Government of Canada organizations are working in an environment of fiscal restraint and need to align departmental resources with priorities. IRCC will closely evaluate its spending and ensure it runs within its revised budget and in line with departmental priorities. By strengthening its Management Systems, IRCC will continue to be an institution that learns, innovates and adapts.

While IRCC focuses on its workforce and financial planning, the Department is also investing heavily in an overhaul of the technological systems that deliver its programs and services. Through the Digital Platform Modernization initiative, the Department will be able to better meet the growing expectations of clients, employees and partners in a digital age. The Platform will also position IRCC to achieve many of its objectives by facilitating the implementation of initiatives set out in this plan.

The Department is also modernizing its approach to equity through a renewed strategic framework that strengthens departmental work on anti-racism, accessibility and intersectional analysis, including *Gender-Based Analysis Plus*. This new approach, driven by the launch of an Equity Strategy in 2025, will help to ensure programs and policies reflect the diversity of the population they serve, are free from bias and discrimination, and align with IRCC's commitment to create an equitable and supportive workplace for employees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025–2027

Five fundamental Strategic Priorities will guide the Department's work over the next three fiscal years. For each priority, a set of specific activities and expected results is identified. The first four Strategic Priorities are focused on delivering IRCC's mandate and services to clients and Canadians, whereas the last is about how the Department manages itself internally to achieve its ambitious mandate.

**STRATEGIC
PRIORITY****1**

Well-managed, comprehensive and coordinated migration, aligned to social, economic and regional needs of Canada; and effective integration of newcomers into Canadian society

This Strategic Priority is guided by the need to preserve the effectiveness of Canada's immigration system, as well as the public's confidence in it. This priority involves working closely with partners to improve migration management across the continuum, from selection to integration, including accounting for Canada's capacity to welcome and support new temporary and permanent residents.

Alongside other program and policy changes, a key mechanism to advance this Strategic Priority is the [2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan](#) which emphasizes a balanced, fair, and sustainable immigration approach. The Levels plan outlines the Government's intention to

welcome immigrants to meet Canada's economic, social and humanitarian objectives through a well-managed and more comprehensive approach that provides clarity and transparency of the full scope of newcomers. It also aims to ensure that both permanent and temporary admissions are balanced with the need to decrease pressure on Canadian services and infrastructure. It limits international student intake and the number of temporary workers to sustainable volumes, while boosting Francophone immigration.

Ongoing engagement and collaboration with partners across Canadian society on migration management activities are critical to achieving this priority.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Continue to implement the **cap on international student** intake, alongside other **temporary resident reduction** and integrity measures.
- Broaden approach to enable **whole-of-society immigration planning** that aligns with Canada's welcoming capacity.
- Streamline **service delivery capacity** and deepen **collaboration with partners and stakeholders** in the delivery of the Levels plan, including strong partnerships with provinces and territories and organizations (e.g., employers, private sector, service provider organizations) to meet their regional immigration objectives.
- Ensure the application and horizontal coordination across the Department of the [**Policy on Francophone Immigration**](#).
- Enhance **Canada's global competitiveness** in attracting and retaining top talent while aligning with Canada's labour market needs.
- Work with provinces, territories, federal partners, and other stakeholders to ensure newcomers and refugees are aware of, and have access to, the support they need, including **settlement services**: *right service to the right client at the right time*.
- Address the impact of Canadian international borders on **Indigenous Peoples**, on their mobility and on their communities divided by Canada's borders.

KEY RESULTS

- The three-year student intake cap, Temporary Foreign Worker Program changes and management of student and worker volumes meet the 5% target of Canada's population by 2026.
- The economic, social and regional needs of Canada are addressed through collaboration with and contributions from federal and provincial partners and key stakeholders in alignment with the Levels plan.
- Economic development is supported in rural areas through the launch of programs in designated communities (e.g., Rural Community Immigration Pilot and Francophone Community Immigration Pilot.)
- New contribution agreements in line with the priorities set out in the [**Call for Proposals 2024**](#) are in place with settlement sector organizations by April 1, 2025 to ensure the continuity of service delivery.
- The new annual targets for Francophone immigration are achieved and the [**Policy on Francophone Immigration**](#) is implemented, including the application of the Francophone Lens to IRCC strategic decisions, policies, programs and measures.
- International students with high-demand skills remain in Canada through the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program.
- Policy and legislative reforms are advanced to address complex border crossing and mobility challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples.

**STRATEGIC
PRIORITY****2**

Programs are simplified, modernized, delivered efficiently and driven by client service excellence guided by the principle of digital first

This Strategic Priority is about simplifying interactions between clients and the Department. Setting up IRCC's programs for the digital pathway is key for enhancing service delivery to newcomers and Canadians. This includes streamlining programs and processes to meet the expectations for fast and client friendly services.

As IRCC undergoes a major digital transformation through its Digital Platform Modernization initiative, complementary work is underway to simplify and modernize programs. Removing unnecessary complexity will help

IRCC improve client service, operational efficiency, and the integrity and responsiveness of programs. Past digital transformation initiatives have demonstrated that overly complex programs can translate into system issues.

Notably, simpler programs also benefit IRCC employees. Instead of having to interpret a multitude of program requirements, streamlined programs underpinned by a modern digital platform can increase officer productivity and job satisfaction, further driving efficiency, accessibility, client services and program benefits.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- **Streamline pathways and programs** to reduce duplication and unnecessary complexity.
- Improve client satisfaction and processing efficiencies by implementing **online passport applications** and automated decision-making for some Canadians, moving towards a **Digital-First**, but not digital-only approach to the Passport Program.
- Build a modern, digital, and user-friendly online experience for clients across all lines of business via the new **Client Experience Platform** (i.e., single sign-in online account).
- Streamline application processing for select lines of business by implementing a new **Case Management Platform** that will speed processing and decision-making and better leverage the Department's data, skills and resources.

KEY RESULTS

- Improvements in user experience and efficiency through streamlined pathways and programs.
- The delivery of passports to Canadians is improved with streamlined back-end capabilities, including automated-decision making, to ensure processing efficiencies.
- A new Client Experience Platform delivers improved user experience with new online client account for all lines of business including for passports to increase satisfaction and system reliability.
- A new Case Management Platform for the visitor and economic permanent programs enhances service delivery systems ensuring ease of use, security, stability and reliability.
- A new advisory council of newcomers is created to provide lived experience input to policy/program development and service improvements.

**STRATEGIC
PRIORITY****3**

Nimble, equitable and sustainable approach to support vulnerable and at-risk populations, and improving the asylum system

This Strategic Priority focuses on IRCC's responsiveness in the face of unpredictable world events and natural disasters, both of which are on the rise. Alongside its humanitarian mandate, the Department faces increasing demand to provide fast and innovative solutions to numerous crisis situations. To help manage this, the Department is establishing a Crisis Response Framework and Program to provide a foundational, coherent, and comprehensive approach to crisis management and preparedness.

Changes to the in-Canada Asylum Program are also relevant here. IRCC, in close cooperation

with the Canada Border Services Agency and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, will implement strategies to improve asylum processing and system integrity, find efficiencies in current processes, and ensure decision makers are provided with relevant and timely information.

Building on these efforts, this priority can be advanced through several strategic actions that enable the Department to honour its humanitarian commitments and responsibilities in balance with managing concerns from partners and the public about Canada's capacity to welcome more people.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Establish a **Crisis Response Framework and Program** to provide foundational, coherent and comprehensive approach to crisis management.
- Improve the **asylum system** through targeted legislative and regulatory changes and **ongoing collaboration** with Canada Border Services Agency and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.
- Continue to innovate and improve management of Canada's **resettlement programs**, including through the effective use of intake controls.
- Position the immigration system to **adapt quickly and respond equitably and sustainably** to global humanitarian crises.
- Support **partner countries** to strengthen their migration and protection systems through targeted capacity building.
- Maintain ongoing **collaboration with jurisdictions across Canada** to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of services for asylum claimants, including housing, through the Interim Housing Assistance Program.

KEY RESULTS

- More efficient and effective processing of claims through changes to Canada's asylum system. Agreements established with provinces and territories on voluntary relocation of asylum claimants to better support them in quickly achieving housing independence.
- Timely protection (in the context of growing global displacement) is increased by reducing processing times in Canada's Resettlement Program.
- A Crisis Response Framework and Program are in-place, providing a more consistent and equitable approach to services and support.

**STRATEGIC
PRIORITY****4**

Evidence-driven policies and programs minimize program integrity risk and improve outcomes for newcomers, Canada and Canadians

This Strategic Priority aims to ensure that the Department makes the best use of data to drive program outcomes, manage risk, and deliver results for Canadians. While IRCC has a history of designing and operationalizing its programs based on well-informed, evidence-based parameters, there is an opportunity to more strategically and systematically leverage data and information to target program changes, address equity issues, and better manage risk – all of which contribute to program integrity and public confidence.

Technological improvements will play a role in advancing this priority, such as through new methods to proactively detect fraud and abuse, identify bias, and monitor program impacts. An immigration system that can detect and deter threats to the health, safety, and security of Canada, while focussing on client service, will increase Canadians' confidence in it.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Implement **International Student Program** reforms with the Letter of Acceptance Verification Pilot and the Recognized Institutions Framework.
- Calibrate **temporary resident visa screening** to maximize benefits and mitigate risks.
- Implement the **Global Risk Framework** & revised **Departmental Results Risk Profile**.
- Enhance **risk calibration strategies** to proactively support decision-making and enable a mature organizational risk tolerance.
- Advance **racial equity, identify and address bias** in decision-making and risk management, including automation practices.
- Consolidate the implementation of the **Institutional Bias and Racism Identification Method** and **Renewed Risk Management Framework** mechanisms across programs to identify and eliminate institutional bias.

KEY RESULTS

- Program integrity in the International Student Program improves following implementation of its reforms.
- Introducing digital credentials improves program integrity, as does the implementation of the Administrative Penalties and Consequences Regime and the College of Immigration and Citizenship Consultants Regulations.
- Effective visitor program management, through Canada's Visa Policy Framework, that screens foreign nationals commensurate to their level of risk, with the aim of protecting public safety and reducing non-genuine asylum claims.
- Greater transparency and fairness in decision-making, including for French-speaking newcomers.
- Settlement program integrity and strong stewardship of resources is maintained, through the collection of settlement data from service providers and advancing work on measuring outcomes.

STRATEGIC
PRIORITY

5

Sustainable operations through strong management accountability, fiscal responsibility, a diverse high-performing workforce, inclusive workplace, and digital modernization

This Strategic Priority is about maturing IRCC's internal management fundamentals to ensure robust systems are in place to enable the Department to deliver on its mandate in a complex and ever-evolving context.

Stronger Management Accountability: Through the implementation of this plan, alongside periodic reporting cycles to track progress, the Department will be able to plan and prioritize work, allocate resources, forecast risks, and develop mitigation strategies. These efforts will be supported by the renewed Departmental Results Framework and Program Inventory, and an annually reviewed set of targets, and Strategic Priorities.

High-Performing Workforce and Inclusive Workplace: IRCC's workforce is its greatest asset, and the Department will continue in its commitment to be a diverse and inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued, and equipped with accessible tools and training. IRCC's Workforce and Workplace Strategy is under development and will be implemented for 2025–2027, aiming to align human resources strategies with business and financial priorities. It will be accompanied by an action plan to address workforce and workplace priorities, with specific and measurable actions. IRCC will champion a workplace culture that encompasses the Clerk's 2021 [Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion](#), the [Accessible Canada Act](#), and reconciliation commitments.

Fiscal Responsibility: In collaboration with all IRCC sectors, the Finance Sector continually reviews and analyses financial resource allocations to manage the financial health of the Department and ensure it can meet its commitments. As part of the [Budget 2023](#) and the [2023 Fall Economic Statement](#), IRCC committed to reducing its operating spending in 2024-2025 and ongoing. Additionally, [Budget 2024](#) introduced the second phase of savings for departments to address. Lastly, on October 24, 2024, the Minister announced the [2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan](#) which included a plan to reduce both permanent and temporary immigration levels.

Digital Transformation: IRCC's Digital Platform Modernization initiative will replace the Department's existing IT systems to support business modernization, and deliver a state-of-the-art, service and client experience. The Digital Platform Modernization will deliver two new platforms: first, a new online portal to enable single sign-in client account with case-status tracking and improved client support; second, a new Case Management Platform to serve as the primary system to process applications and issue IRCC documents. These two platforms will increase the efficiency of program delivery while improving user experience and maintaining public trust.

KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- Provide an annual update to this **Strategic Plan of 2025–2027** through **Periodic Reviews**; and review and update the **Department's Results Framework** and **Program Inventory** to ensure the Department is measuring progress on what matters most.
- Review [IRCC's Anti-Racism Strategy 2.0 \(2021–2024\)](#) and produce a progress report to inform development of the Department's next **Equity Strategy for 2025–2028** and augment the Department's capacity to effectively resolve employee concerns with the creation of an **Ombud's Office**.
- Implement the **IRCC Workforce and Workplace Strategy 2025–2027**, including an action plan to address the workforce and workplace priorities with specific and measurable actions and reporting cycle.
- Implement **long-term financial planning and forecasting** aligned to Workforce and Workplace Planning and Strategy as well as Strategic Planning.
- Redefine principles for **workload distribution** and enhance cross-collaboration and effective **horizontal governance** between sectors.
- Implement the **Client Experience Platform** and the **Case Management Platform** as critical technological enabler to program and service delivery.

KEY RESULTS

- IRCC is a planning-based and forward-looking Department, proactively responding to challenges, where decision-making is informed by analysis of risks, and results are monitored through program monitoring and reporting.
- IRCC has a strong evidence-base related to equity, makes measurable improvements to eliminate discrimination, and better demonstrates consistency and fairness in people management, policy and program design and service delivery.
- Workforce planning strategies are accompanied by specific and measurable actions, with an expected outcome of affordability and having *the right people, with the right skills, in the right positions*. It is also reflective of the [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#), the [IRCC Code of Conduct](#), and a continuous improvement approach of people management practices throughout the Department.
- Financial sustainability is achieved through financial strategies aligned with the Department's Strategic Priorities; financial resources are allocated towards those priorities; strategic investments consider benefit realization; and financial risks are identified and mitigated through appropriate risk management practices.
- Workload is aligned with workforce strategies, improving application processing efficiency while increasing program integrity.
- IRCC is a leader in digital services, with more sustainable and resilient systems to support and enable immigration, as well as providing seamless and consistent Government of Canada service delivery.

THE WAY FORWARD

By focusing on these overarching Strategic Priorities, IRCC can ensure it continues to provide an immigration system that is nimble, and balances immigration policies and programs to meet Canada’s immigration and citizenship needs.

The Strategic Plan will provide the overarching guidance in the development of other plans created within the Department, including sector-level plans. In turn, sector-level plans provide details on how Sectors will accomplish each of these Strategic Priorities and Key Results identified. It also provides Senior Management with a tool to gauge progress toward meeting these Strategic Priorities and achieving Key Strategic Actions, as well as to support decision-making and prioritization, as IRCC continues to navigate an evolving landscape and address emergent issues.

The plan is also designed to serve as a valuable reference for employees in understanding how their efforts contribute to the overall departmental priorities.

Annual updates will be provided to monitor progress, pivot and reprioritize, as required. The next monitoring cycle and the one-year review of the Strategic Plan is expected in 2025.

ANNEX

Links to the documents mentioned:

- [2023 Fall Economic Statement](#)
- [2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan](#)
- [Accessible Canada Act \(Summary\)](#)
- [An Immigration System for Canada’s Future](#)
- [Annual Reports to Parliament on Immigration](#)
- [Budget 2023](#)
- [Budget 2024](#)
- [Call for Proposal 2024 \(Settlement Program and Resettlement Assistance Program\)](#)
- [Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#)
- [Departmental Plans](#)
- [Departmental Results Reports](#)
- [IRCC Anti-Racism Strategy 2.0 \(2021–2024\)](#)
- [IRCC Code of Conduct](#)
- [Modernization of the *Official Languages Act*](#)
- [Policy on Francophone Immigration](#)
- [Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector](#)