



**Discussion Guide for Immigration  
Levels, Settlement and Integration  
Roundtables  
2017**



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

**Canada**

# Discussion Guide for Immigration Levels, Settlement and Integration Roundtables

## Purpose

Last year's national effort to resettle thousands of Syrian refugees placed a spotlight on the role that the Government of Canada, the provinces and territories, municipalities, employers, settlement organizations and the public play in supporting newcomers' integration to Canada. It also highlighted the importance of integration in building a strong society.

The Government of Canada wants to engage Canadians on the issues of settlement and integration as we plan for the future. We are building on Canada's welcoming tradition to create a national vision that will guide and inspire how we foster a welcoming society, where newcomers can be involved in all aspects of life and contribute to our country's success.

We are also interested in hearing from partners, stakeholders, employers and Canadians on our immigration levels plan, which establishes how many permanent residents Canada will welcome in the coming year.

Your views and advice will help to shape a collective national vision for settlement and integration, and also contribute to planning immigration levels in the coming years.

## Context: Role of settlement and integration

Canada has a managed migration model that includes:

- setting annual immigration levels and selecting immigrants,
- supporting settlement in the early years after arrival, and
- supporting the acquisition of Canadian citizenship with a view to long-term integration.

The ultimate goal is for immigrants to fully participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

When we talk about immigration, we mean permanent residents. These are people who have immigrated to Canada permanently, but who are not yet Canadian citizens.

There are four main permanent resident classes:

- Family,
- Economic,

- Refugee, and
- Humanitarian and Other (which includes people admitted on humanitarian grounds or for reasons of public policy).

Permanent residents may go on to apply for citizenship, and most do. People around the world also come to Canada on a temporary basis to study and work, and many of these people later apply for permanent residence.

The 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* is the guiding legislative framework for Canada's immigration system. It outlines Canada's major objectives for immigration, such as:

- supporting the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy, in which the benefits of immigration are shared across all regions in Canada,
- family reunification,
- fulfilling Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and affirming Canada's commitment to international efforts to provide assistance to those in need of resettlement, while also
- protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians.

In addition to the major objectives outlined above, the Government also sets priorities for immigration each year.

The setting of immigration levels every year allows the Government of Canada to manage a complex immigration system with the many stakeholders and partners involved. When it comes to settlement and integration, the levels plan provides information for organizations that help settle and integrate newcomers. This includes how many new immigrants they should plan for in the coming years and the individual needs they might be expected to support, as the needs of economic class immigrants can be quite different from the needs of refugees. Canada is a global leader in managed migration, in part because of this carefully managed system.

## **Integration's role in Canada's success**

Diversity has always been considered one of Canada's strengths, and is a major contributor to the economic prosperity and social cohesion that defines our success on the international stage. By 2011, about one-fifth of Canada's population was comprised of immigrants with over 200 ethnic origins.

Immigration provides an important source of population and labour growth that will help Canada generate stronger long-term economic stability. It is anticipated that at some point in the 2020s, the number of people leaving the labour force (mainly through retirement) will equal or surpass new labour supply from within Canada. At that point, immigrants will account for the net increase in the labour force.

All permanent resident immigration streams have access to, and can benefit from settlement and integration programming. Successful integration addresses the disadvantages that newcomers may have, creates a more equal playing field, and gives all immigrants the opportunity to succeed.

To ensure a successful immigration program, Canada aims to have newcomers and citizens participating to their full potential in society. The sooner immigrants integrate, the sooner Canada benefits economically and socially.

Integration in Canada is a two-way street, with a role for both newcomers and Canadian society. On one hand, recently arrived immigrants are expected to take ownership of their settlement and integration. This includes accessing and contributing to the Canadian labour market, tapping into available supports and resources, making social connections within their communities, and learning and adhering to Canadian laws.

On the other hand, Canadian society's role is to ensure that there are inclusive laws/policies and enabling programs in place to promote inclusion for all permanent residents and citizens. Successful integration, one which involves both the newcomer and society, also decreases the factors that can contribute to discrimination, alienation and radicalization.

## Settlement program

The Settlement Program provides a comprehensive suite of services intended to meet the diverse needs of newcomers, from employment-ready economic immigrants to refugees with multiple barriers to integration. Programming is delivered through partnerships with more than 500 organizations across Canada. All permanent residents, including refugees, have access to settlement services.

In 2017/18, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will invest over \$690 million to support the settlement needs of newcomers, outside of Quebec. This includes over \$93 million in response to the Syrian refugee effort.

Federally funded settlement services aim to provide newcomers with:

- **Information required to make informed decisions:** This includes in-class information sessions on topics such as navigating public transportation, filing taxes and banking.
- **Language skills to achieve integration goals:** Clients have both in-class and online options, with language classes ranging from literacy to advanced and work-specific language.
- **Labour market services to find and retain employment commensurate with their education and experience:** This includes basic skills such as resumé-writing and

interview techniques, as well as mentoring, connector programs to introduce employers and newcomers, and bridging programs.

- **Community supports to build professional and personal networks:** These programs are designed to address social isolation, and can include conversation circles, mentoring and matching.

Organizations provide services in over 4000 locations across Canada, including urban and rural areas. In 2016/17, over 401,000 unique clients used one or more settlement services. Services are available before and after a newcomer's arrival in Canada. In addition to the main locations of the settlement service providers, services are provided at ports of entry, in community organizations, public spaces such as libraries, online and in schools.

## Our partners in settlement and integration

Settlement programming is a shared role, with provincial and territorial governments providing varying levels of service across similar program areas as the federal government. They will often cover client groups who are ineligible for federal programming (for example, international students and other temporary residents).

IRCC works closely with provinces and territories to ensure complementary programming. For example, in the case of language programming, training occurs both in schools (which are a provincial jurisdiction) and in service delivery locations. Provinces and territories are also responsible for critical health and education services used by newcomers, sometimes with specific needs that are met by settlement programming, such as settlement workers in schools.

Municipalities also play a key role in welcoming and integrating newcomers. They manage many of the essential services that newcomers rely on daily including housing, public transit, child care, recreation, cultural facilities and library services. Additionally, a number of municipal governments are developing newcomer attraction and retention strategies and funding initiatives to respond to the needs of immigrants in their communities.

Roughly one-third of the 68 IRCC-funded local immigration partnerships are housed within municipal governments. Local immigration partnerships support the development of community-based partnerships and planning around the needs of newcomers to support their settlement and integration in Canada.

Other municipally run organizations, such as police services, health centres and others are also responsible for adapting their services to be inclusive and respond to the unique needs of immigrants and refugees. And all of this is done within the context of the privileged relationship the federal government has with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

## Questions

### Immigration levels

After a period of relatively stable yearly admissions of approximately 250,000/year between 2004 and 2014, the Government of Canada increased the target to 300,000 in 2016, the highest level of planned admissions since the First World War. In general, admissions in the Economic Class account for 55 to 65 percent of total admissions, while the family category (25 to 30 percent) and refugee category (10 to 15 percent) are smaller.

- [Breakdown of permanent resident admissions by category, from 1980 to 2015](#)
- [Graphic illustrating permanent resident admissions from 1860 to 2014](#)

There are a number of things considered in immigration levels planning, including:

- The Government's priorities for immigration and objectives, as set out in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.
- The economic needs of the country. Our international legal obligations with respect to refugees and Canada's longstanding tradition of offering protection to those seeking it.
- The ability of IRCC and its partner departments, such as the Canada Border Services Agency and the RCMP, to screen and process applications in a timely manner.
- The capacity of organizations to deliver settlement services.

The 2017 immigration levels plan was a milestone in immigration planning, as it maintained the strong admissions of 2016 while establishing 300,000 as a new baseline for permanent resident admissions. With the 2017 plan the Government balanced Canada's economic needs with the commitments to reunite families and offer protection to those in need. The full 2017 levels plan can be found [here](#).

Closely linked with the question of how many people to welcome is the question of the appropriate mix (or distribution) of permanent residents across the main immigration classes. All immigrants, regardless of class, will make economic, social and cultural contributions to Canada. Nevertheless, the mix needs to reflect the main immigration objectives, as well as yearly priorities.

1. How many newcomers should Canada welcome?
2. Do we have the balance right among the immigration classes, programs or streams? If not, what priorities should form the foundation of Canada's immigration planning?

## Settlement and integration

The questions being asked in this consultation are meant to be broad and overarching. We are interested in looking, at a high level, for ways to adapt the Settlement Program and the federal role in integration for the future. Ultimately, the vision for settlement and integration in Canada must reflect the Government's overall vision for Canada.

1. Given the current Settlement Program, what works well? What should our vision be in terms of settlement and integration?
2. What needs to change? How?
3. What should the Federal government's role be in settlement and integration in relation to:
  - Our partners?
  - Provinces and territories?
  - Municipalities?
  - Employers?
  - Civil society?
4. How do we know if we are making a difference? How can we improve in this area? How can we tell if language training goals are being met?