

Snapshot: Public opinion & immigration: maintaining Canada's advantage

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Why is this important?

The Government of Canada has committed to increasing immigrant admissions to 500,000 per year by 2025 – more than doubling the number of admissions to Canada in 2015. Meeting this commitment will depend on supportive public attitudes toward immigration, both at home and abroad.

Currently, public attitudes are a distinct Canadian advantage:

- | Canadians have maintained high and steady support for immigration, even in the context of significant increases and global upheaval.
- | Globally, prospective immigrants have positive views of Canada, allowing us to attract talent.

But this support must not be taken for granted. Changing conditions could undermine support for immigration and interest in immigrating, undermining our prosperity.

Research findings

Canadians are generally very supportive of immigration: About 7 in 10 Canadians support current – or increased – immigration levels. This is the highest level of support measured in Canada to date. Support for immigration has steadily increased over the years, and has demonstrated resilience to shocks like the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are potential risks to Canadian support for immigration. While strong support for immigration makes Canada unique among its peers, potential emerging risks include:

- | The escalating housing crisis and strains on public infrastructure and services.
- | Possible economic concerns, whether recession, stagflation, or unemployment.
- | Political rhetoric that aims to inflame anti-immigrant sentiment.

Canada is seen as a top immigrant destination:

Canada receives consistently good marks in international migration destination rankings, across the board: for quality of life, healthcare, education, civic engagement, jobs, and income. According to Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index, Canada is the most accepting country in the world for migrants.

There are potential risks to Canada's strong global "immigration brand": Without careful management, Canada's good reputation could be under threat, limiting our strong ability to attract and retain immigrants. Some potential risks to our reputation include:

- | The cost of living and housing affordability
- | Poor recognition of foreign credentials and experience
- | Administrative backlogs
- | Poor treatment of some immigrants at the hands of some employers and educational institutions
- | Increasing competition for talent driven by other countries



The way forward

Attitudes about immigration at home and abroad must be carefully stewarded, and potential threats to our competitive advantage must be monitored. Three major categories of public policy responses can help:

Improving the immigration system by:

- | Improving administrative capacity with new technologies, increased funding, simplified processes, notably through the planned implementation of a new global case management system
- | Creating more pathways for permanent residency

Creating a more welcoming environment for immigrants by:

- | Supporting and strengthening business attraction of immigration
- | Develop proactive incentives to attract and retain skilled immigrants and entrepreneurs
- | Monitoring the role of predatory private career colleges (and unscrupulous recruiters) that seek to profit off newcomers
- | Monitoring and regulating predatory recruitment and business practices to fight the mistreatment of migrant workers and immigrants
- | Sharing immigrants' stories, through informational campaigns
- | Amplifying advocacy for immigration by business leaders in the public sphere
- | Providing quality work for immigrants by improving recognition of international experience and credentials and improved hiring practices

Accommodating population growth by:

- | Proactively investing in the infrastructure and services that underpin economic growth such as healthcare and transportation
- | Growing the housing supply for all Canadians and tackling housing market discrimination
- | Leveraging underrepresented talent by prioritizing immigrants with strong in-demand skills while continuing to consider long-term human capital needs

Read the **full report** [📄](#) for more detailed insights and recommendations.

