

Census 2016: Economic Immigration Gains

- **Ahead of Ottawa’s decision on its 2018 immigration target, Statistics Canada released data from the 2016 Census** which provides critical insight into immigration flows and regional economic developments.
- **First generation immigrants accounted for 21.9% of the Canadian population** in 2016, just shy of the highest-ever recorded share in the 1921 Census. In Toronto and Vancouver, immigrants represented 46.1% and 40.8% of all residents, respectively.
- **The share of newcomers admitted under the economic category¹ continued to rise** from 42% of international migration to Canada during the 1980s to more than 60% during 2011–16 (chart 1). In the US, just 14% of migrants were admitted based on employment-related considerations in 2015.
- **Saskatchewan (80.3%) and Manitoba (79.2%) admitted the highest portion of newcomers via the economic stream** between 2011 and 2016. Brisk employment growth during the post-recession resource boom assisted Alberta’s attraction as well as Saskatchewan. Alberta’s share of economic migrants also is elevated, up 7 percentage points from 2006–10, leading to Calgary reporting the third-highest CMA share of immigrants.
- **Economic immigration also reached record highs in Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador** during 2011–16. The four largest provinces’ more limited use of the Provincial Nominee Program from 2011 to 2016 opened up room for the other regions, particularly in Atlantic Canada. Nearly half of all immigrants (and 74% of economic immigrants) to the East Coast were admitted via the Program (chart 2).
- **Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver remain the most prominent destinations**, accounting for more than half of total and economic immigrants during 2011–16, larger than their 36% population share (chart 3). However, the share of newcomers settling in Canada’s three largest cities fell from 2006–10. Urban centres in the Prairies and Atlantic Canada were the main beneficiaries.
- **Immigrant incomes in 2014 were 86% of Canadian-born workers’ earnings.** Newcomers to Atlantic Canada fared the best, with incomes greater than other residents’ in every province but PEI, led by immigrants in St. John’s and Saint John. In Toronto and Vancouver, the earnings gap exceeded 25% and it also was stubbornly high across the Prairies.

Table 1 — Canadian Provinces’ Share of Immigration, 2011–16

	NL	PE	NS	NB	QC	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC
% Total Immigration	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.8	17.8	39.0	5.2	4.0	17.1	14.5
% Economic Immigration	0.3	0.4	1.0	0.8	18.1	32.9	6.8	5.3	19.3	14.9

¹ Includes immigrants chosen for their ability to meet labour market needs, based on their skills, work experience, and Canadian work history.

CONTACTS

Marc Desormeaux
416.866.4733
Scotiabank Economics
marc.desormeaux@scotiabank.com

Chart 1

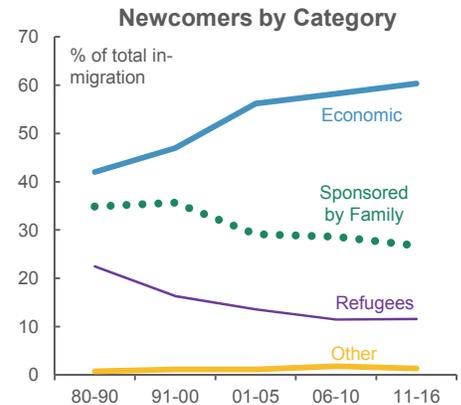


Chart 2

Provincial Nominee Program Uptake

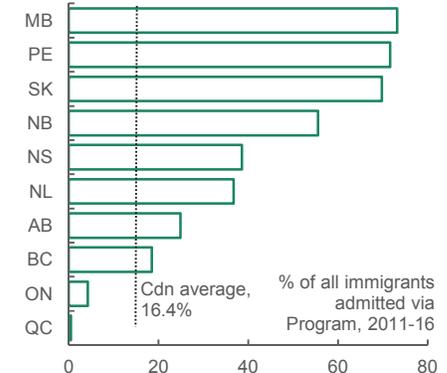
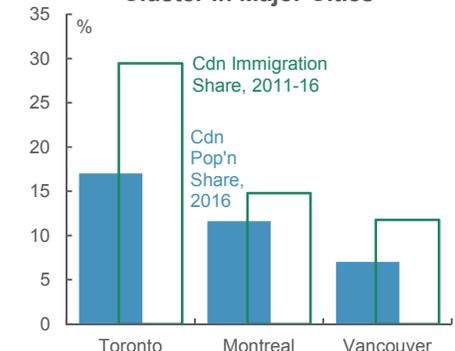


Chart 3

Migrants Continue to Cluster in Major Cities



Sources for charts: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census.

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