



Saint Mary's
University

ARGEIAD Newsletter

September 2025

Are smaller provinces losing their shares in national immigration programs?

On October 24, 2024, the Government of Canada announced it will pause its plan for population growth through immigration in the short term to achieve a sustainable growth in the long term. Controlled targets for permanent and temporary residents were announced. These changes aim at alleviating pressures on housing, infrastructure and social services which are said to have partially resulted from the steep rise in admissions of permanent and temporary residents in recent years.

The 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan is expected to result in a population reduction of 0.2% in both 2025 and 2026, before returning to a population growth of 0.8% in 2027.

Compared to the last year's plan, the current year's Levels Plan aims to:

- reduce from 500,000 permanent residents to 395,000 in 2025
- reduce from 500,000 permanent residents to 380,000 in 2026
- setting a target of 365,000 permanent residents in 2027

The Levels Plan also supports efforts to reduce temporary resident volumes to 5% of Canada's population by the end of 2026. Along with the temporary resident reductions announced in the past year, this plan will result in Canada's temporary population to decrease over the next few years as significantly more temporary residents will transition to being permanent residents or leave Canada compared to new ones arriving.¹

Over the past two decades, smaller provinces in Canada have seen increasing inflows of permanent and temporary residents, thanks to their specific policy measures and community initiatives to attract and retain immigrants considering their population is aging faster than in larger provinces.² The provincial impacts of recent policy restrictions on the inflows of permanent residents, study permit holders and temporary foreign workers in the first half of 2025 are compared with the first half of 2024 in the three Tables and Chars that follow.

¹ For further details, the reader is referred to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/government-of-canada-reduces-immigration.html> and <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/government-of-canada-reduces-immigration.html>

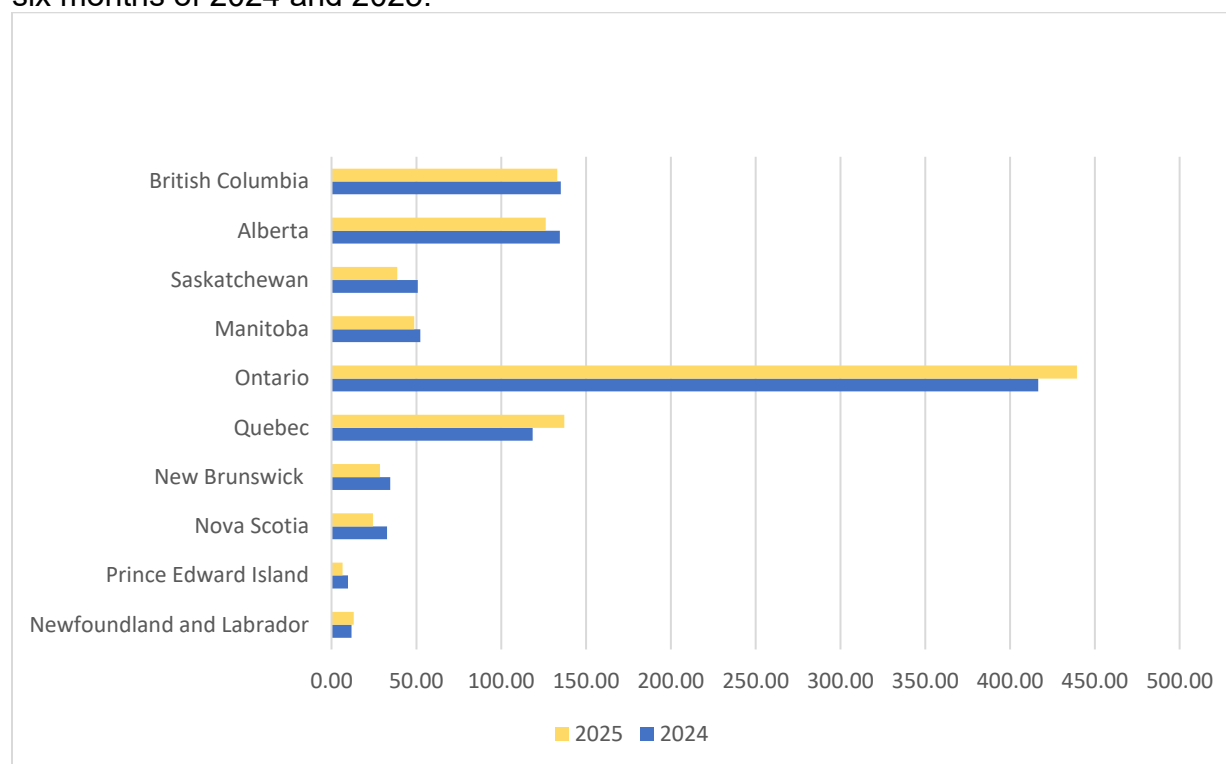
² In Canadian immigration literature on regionalization of immigration, following four provinces are viewed as larger provinces compared to the rest: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

Table 1: Permanent resident status granted, Canada and Provinces, first six months of 2024 & 2025.

Province	2024 (Jan–Jun)	2025 (Jan–Jun)
Newfoundland and Labrador	2,995	2,715
Prince Edward Island	2,500	1,360
Nova Scotia	8,360	5,060
New Brunswick	8,880	5,920
Quebec	30,325	28,510
Ontario	106,620	91,270
Manitoba	13,415	10,145
Saskatchewan	13,020	8,050
Alberta	34,435	26,230
British Columbia	34,580	27,650
Canada Total	255,950	207,650

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-Permanent Residents – Monthly IRCC Updates-Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, January 2015 - June 2025.

Chart 1: Provincial distribution of permanent residents per 1,000 admissions in the first six months of 2024 and 2025.



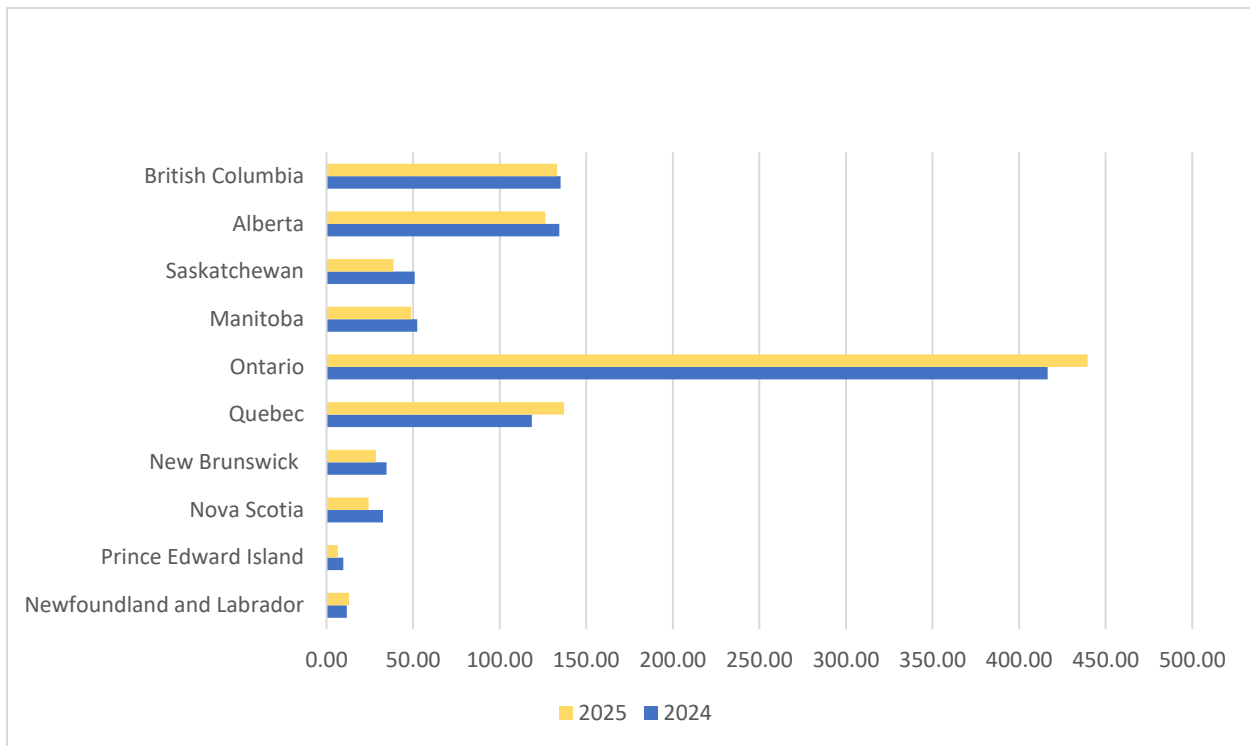
Source: Calculations based on Table 1

Table 2: Study permits issued, Canada and Provinces, first six months of 2024 & 2025.

Province	2024 (Jan–Jun)	2025 (Jan–Jun)
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,425	1,085
Prince Edward Island	765	735
Nova Scotia	4,695	3,380
New Brunswick	2,840	2,805
Quebec	26,880	21,540
Ontario	125,160	68,035
Manitoba	7,280	5,595
Saskatchewan	3,890	2,980
Alberta	18,070	12,655
British Columbia	52,045	29,915
Canada Total	245,055	149,860

[Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)-Temporary Residents: Study Permit Holders – Monthly IRCC Updates-Canada - Study permit holders by province/territory of intended destination, study level and year in which permit\(s\) became effective, January 2015 - June 2025 Category, January 2015 - June 2025](#)

Chart 2: Provincial distribution of study permit holders per 1,000 admissions in the first six months of 2024 & 2025.



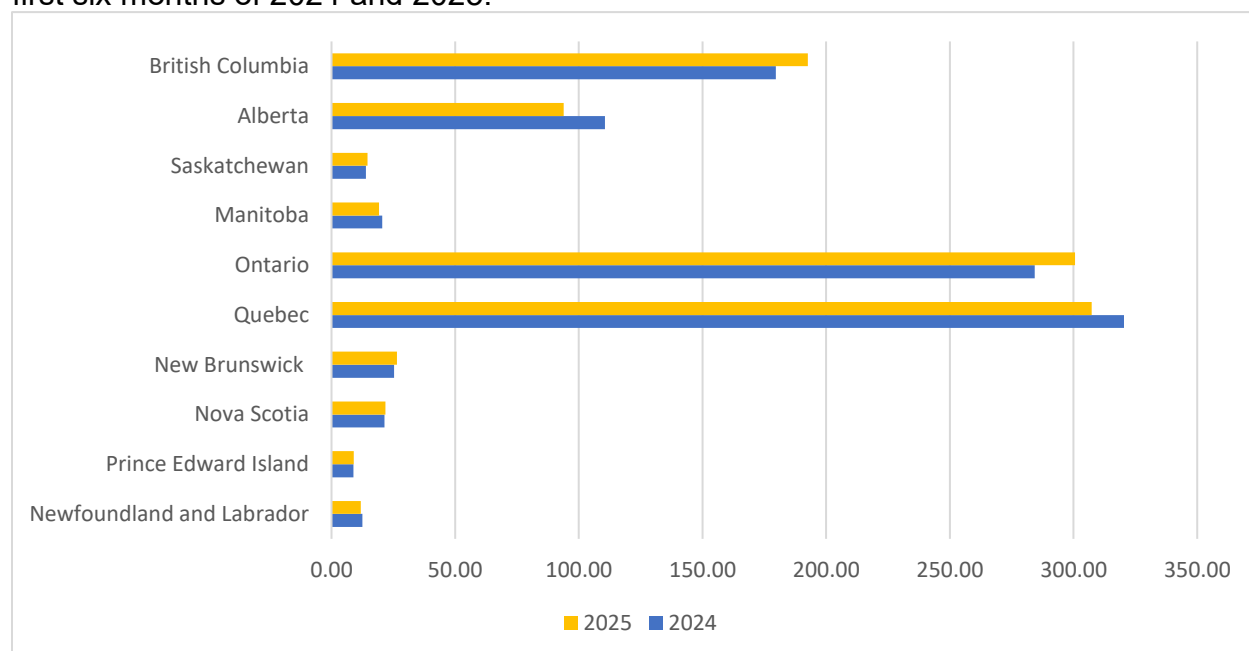
Source: Calculations based on Table 2.

Table 3: Temporary foreign worker admissions in the first six months of 2024 & 2025.

Province	Work permit holders for International Mobility Program (IMP)	
	2024 (Jan–Jun)	2025 (Jan–Jun)
Newfoundland and Labrador	3,340	2,110
Prince Edward Island	1,610	1,065
Nova Scotia	9,030	6,170
New Brunswick	6,015	4,175
Quebec	44,130	33,450
Ontario	162,405	119,370
Manitoba	15,635	12,790
Saskatchewan	8,060	5,705
Alberta	40,250	29,620
British Columbia	62,040	49,450
Canada Total	410,825	302,280

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)-Temporary Residents: Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and International Mobility Program (IMP) Work Permit Holders – Monthly IRCC Updates - Open Government Portal-Canada - Work permit holders for Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), International Mobility Program (IMP) work permit holders, Work permit holders for Humanitarian and Compassionate purposes by province/territory of intended destination and year in which permit(s) became effective, January 2015 - June 2025.

Chart 3: Provincial distribution of temporary foreign workers per 1,000 admissions in the first six months of 2024 and 2025.



Source: Calculations based on Table 3.

Summary of findings

- As a result of controlled targets announced by the federal government in 2024, the numbers of permanent residents, study permit holders and temporary foreign workers approved for admission in the first six months of 2025, compared to the same period in 2024, dropped by 19 percent, 39 percent and 27 percent, respectively.
- All smaller provinces experienced falls in their shares of permanent residents. Among larger provinces, Ontario and Quebec gained while Alberta and British Columbia incurred losses in their shares.
- With respect to temporary foreign workers, the share of smaller provinces in national admissions remained almost unchanged while in larger provinces, Ontario and Alberta saw modest increases in their shares. Quebec and British Columbia experienced modest drops in their shares.

- With respect to study permit holders, the shares of smaller provinces rose. Among larger provinces, the shares of Ontario and British Columbia dropped while Alberta and Quebec experienced increases.

Final remarks

As population in smaller provinces ages at a faster rate, it is important that any changes to planned targets of permanent and temporary resident admissions does not adversely affect their shares relative to larger provinces.

ARGEIAD activities

Presentation at the Atlantic Association of Applied Economists (AAAE) Event:

Hosted by: The Atlantic Chapter of the Canadian Association for Business Economics- Atlantic Association of Applied Economists (AAAE) at the Board Room – Bank of Canada Regional Office, on May 21, 2025

Presentation Topic: “Job-Education Mismatch: Do Social Experiences Matter in the Case of International Students in Atlantic Canada?”



Dr. Ather Akbari presented ARGEIAD research showing that international students in Atlantic Canada with stronger social integration through campus activities, peer relationships, and broader interactions are more likely to secure jobs aligned with their education. These findings sparked a lively discussion among economists, policy professionals, and academics on how institutions and employers can better support international graduates' career success.