

2025 Public Consultation

PLANNING OF IMMIGRATION TO QUÉBEC FOR THE 2026–2029 PERIOD

Consultation Booklet

Ministère de l'Immigration,
de la Francisation et de l'Intégration
(Ministry of Immigration,
Francisation and Integration)

This document was written by the Direction de la planification de l'immigration (Department of Immigration Planning) of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration in collaboration with several of the ministère's administrative units.

All documents prepared for the public consultation, including this one, may be accessed on the website of the Assemblée Nationale (National Assembly): www.assnat.qc.ca.

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List of acronyms

- ▶ Accompagnement Québec (AQ) (Québec Support)
- ▶ *Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, 1991* (Canada–Québec Accord)
- ▶ Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)
- ▶ Census metropolitan area (CMA)
- ▶ Certificat d’acceptation du Québec (CAQ) (Québec Acceptance Certificate)
- ▶ Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ) (Québec Selection Certificate)
- ▶ Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) (Montréal Metropolitan Community)
- ▶ Emploi en région (EER) (Employment in the Regions)
- ▶ Federal-provincial-territorial (FPT)
- ▶ Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) (Québec Research Fund)
- ▶ Francisation Québec (FQ) (Francization Québec)
- ▶ High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR)
- ▶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB)
- ▶ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- ▶ International Labour Organization (ILO)
- ▶ International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- ▶ Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA)
- ▶ *Loi sur l’immigration au Québec* (LIQ) (*Québec Immigration Act*)
- ▶ Ministère de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) (Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity)
- ▶ Non-permanent resident (NPR)
- ▶ Non-profit organization (NPO)
- ▶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- ▶ Plan d’action ministériel sur la régionalisation de l’immigration (PAMRI) (Ministerial Action Plan on the Regionalization of Immigration)
- ▶ Programme d’accompagnement et de soutien à l’intégration (PASI) (Integration Help and Support Program)
- ▶ Programme d’aide à la reconnaissance des compétences (PARC) (Credential Recognition Assistance Program)
- ▶ Programme d’aide financière pour la reconnaissance des compétences (Financial Assistance Program for Credential Recognition) (PAFFARC)
- ▶ Programme d’appui aux collectivités (PAC) (Group Support Program)

- ▶ Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ) (Québec Experience Program)
- ▶ Programme de l'expérience québécoise, volet Diplômés du Québec (Québec Graduates Stream) (PEQ-Diplômés)
- ▶ Programme de mobilité internationale (PMI) (International Mobility Program)
- ▶ Programme de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés (PSTQ) (Skilled Worker Selection Program)
- ▶ Programme des étudiants étrangers (PEE) (International Student Program)
- ▶ Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires (PTET) (Temporary Foreign Worker Program)
- ▶ Programme régulier des travailleurs qualifiés (PRTQ) (Regular Skilled Worker Program)
- ▶ Refugee Appeal Division (RAD)
- ▶ Refugee Protection Division (RPD)
- ▶ Regional county municipality (RCM)
- ▶ Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP)
- ▶ Temporary foreign worker (TFW)
- ▶ Temporary public policy (TPP)
- ▶ World Health Organization (WHO)

From the Premier of Québec



Québec has long been a place of welcome, one that works hard to integrate immigrants and help them actively contribute to the prosperity of our nation, in French. We have every reason to be proud of this.

In recent years, Québec has grown from 200,000 to over 600,000 non-permanent residents. This rapid growth is well beyond our integration capacity and has weakened the status of French. As Premier, I have therefore committed to reducing the number of temporary immigrants. In light of the instability and trade tensions we are currently facing, Québec needs to adopt a measured approach to immigration.

For the first time, Québec's immigration plan features temporary immigration targets. The proposed targets aim to reduce the number of temporary immigrants in order to alleviate pressure on housing, public services, and to preserve French. Given Québec's powerlessness as regards most non-permanent residents, we have repeatedly urged the federal government to take action. Efforts have been made in recent months, but the federal government needs to take concrete measures to reduce, particularly in Montréal and in Laval, the number of holders of permits issued under the Programme de mobilité internationale (PMI) (International Mobility Program) and the number of asylum claims on the territory to 200,000.

Given the current economic situation, we must remain attentive to the realities of various regions and sectors. Several scenarios have also been put forth to address permanent immigration, all within the goal of alleviating pressure on our services while maintaining a high proportion of economic immigration. What we are proposing is to prioritize the permanent admission of immigrants who are already in Québec and who know French, since they have already begun integrating into the Québec nation.

Québec is the only Francophone state in North America. Thus, we have an important duty toward our language, which is at the heart of Québec identity. This is why our government has taken drastic measures to protect French. A record number of immigrants accessed Francisation Québec services this year, and we will continue to act to maximize the number of immigrants who speak French.

It is worth remembering that as a proportion of its population, Québec takes in a higher number of immigrants than most jurisdictions worldwide. We are well poised to continue to attract top talent and build an even more competitive economy. However, this requires a balanced approach that respects our reception and integration capacity.

François Legault

Premier of Québec

From the Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration



In recent years, Québec's population has seen exceptional growth. This is primarily due to the increase in the number of non-permanent residents, which hit an all-time high on January 1st, 2025, at 616,552 people. This substantial increase over a few years has resulted in unsustainable pressure on public services and housing availability, not to mention problems for the preservation of French, which is already declining in Québec.

The effects of such growth are also tangible for newcomers to Québec. The rapid increase in the volume of immigration, together with reduced access to the labour market, has compromised our ability to provide a positive experience to newcomers and thereby encourage them to settle permanently in Québec.

The multi-year planning of immigration for the 2026–2029 period falls within the government's desire to improve how it manages immigration to Québec. Our government has enacted measures to halt recent trends, and we are currently proposing a reduction in immigration volumes under our control given that Québec's capacity to receive and integrate immigrants is already limited, if not exceeded.

For the first time, the government's proposed orientations include temporary immigration targets. We are proposing temporary immigration levels that would reduce the number of permit holders under programs run by the Gouvernement du Québec: the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires (PTET) and the Programme des étudiants étrangers (PÉE). The fact remains that a meaningful decrease in the number of non-permanent residents in Québec will require greater efforts to lower numbers in the categories of temporary immigration exclusively controlled by the Government of Canada.

For Québec to stay within its reception and integration capacity, a key focus of the permanent immigration reduction scenarios open for public consultation is the permanent admission of people who already reside here. These individuals have initiated their integration process, and many of them are fluent in French.

The orientations put forth in this consultation document also reflect our desire to keep permanent immigration French-speaking. Since the last consultation, the Gouvernement du Québec has updated most of its economic immigration programs to make knowledge of French a condition for selection. Our government will continue to do everything in its power to make use of French the key to fully participating and successfully integrating into life in Québec.

For immigration to contribute to the development of Québec society in a meaningful way, we need to strike a balance between our economic needs, our integration and francization capacity and the aspirations of immigrants. There is no doubt in our minds that the orientations envisaged for the next four years will restore this balance and offer better predictability for immigrants and all socioeconomic stakeholders.

This is why I am inviting Québécois to read and provide feedback about the proposed multi-year orientations. We are all affected by this public consultation. It represents a critical step in defining our vision for immigration and will serve as a foundation for the actions of the Gouvernement du Québec for years to come.

Jean-François Roberge

Ministre de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration

Ministre de la Langue française et de la Francophonie

Ministre responsable des Institutions démocratiques

Ministre responsable de l'Accès à l'information et de la Protection des renseignements personnels

Ministre responsable de la Laïcité

Introduction

Québec has long been considered a welcoming society for people who wish to immigrate to the province.

Immigration represents an undeniable asset for Québec, since it contributes to the achievement of the Québec economic, social, linguistic and demographic goals. Québec needs to recruit, select, receive and integrate—in French—immigrants whose socio-professional profiles meet the province's needs. It also has a humanitarian duty to receive and integrate people who are fleeing natural disaster, persecution and violence. Lastly, it reunites family members.

The division of responsibility between Québec and Canada in terms of immigration stems from the *Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, 1991 (Canada–Québec Accord). This public consultation exercise falls within the responsibilities of the Gouvernement du Québec and is stipulated in the *Québec Immigration Act* (LIQ). At the end of this exercise, the government will adopt multi-year orientations on the subject of immigration. The LIQ is thus able to provide a consolidated vision of immigration and integration that focuses on affirming the distinct nature of Québec society.

Based on Québec's population projections, the number and proportion of people aged 65 and over within the population will continue to increase rapidly in the coming decades. What's more, for many years now, Québec has been experiencing labour shortages in certain economic activity sectors; these shortages have worsened following the health crisis. This situation has led employers in certain sectors to increasingly resort to temporary foreign workers. Meanwhile, the significant influx of asylum seekers and international students has caused a marked increase in the number of non-permanent residents (NPRs). This rapid increase over a few years has resulted in non-negligible impacts on essential public services, in particular access to housing, healthcare and education, not to mention challenges to the preservation of the French language.

To halt the rising number of NPRs on its territory, the Gouvernement du Québec has already taken several measures within the temporary immigration programs it controls. Québec has also called on the federal government to reduce the number of NPRs.

In order to structure government action as regards the planning of temporary immigration and to sustainably and reproducibly bring it in line with permanent immigration, the Gouvernement du Québec has decided to add temporary immigration to the multi-year planning of immigration to Québec.

Hence, this is the first ever public consultation to include the planning of temporary immigration.

That being said, a substantial portion of NPR immigration is not directly controlled by the Gouvernement du Québec, particularly that of asylum seekers and holders of work permits under the Programme de mobilité internationale (PMI). Thus, the federal government also needs to take action to ensure that the number of NPRs in Québec returns to sustainable levels.

This consultation booklet begins by presenting the legal framework for planning and the responsibilities related to immigration (Section 1), changes in various components of immigration to Québec over time (Section 2), migration flows and a comparison between Québec and certain countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Section 3), as well as the immigration-related issues currently affecting Québec (Section 4). The sections that follow concern Québec's requests from the federal government (Section 5), governmental measures to control global volumes of immigration to Québec (Section 6), international recruitment activities of the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration (Section 7) and changes in humanitarian immigration over time (Section 8). The booklet then moves on to the status of French, a catalyst of integration into Québec (Section 9), before looking back at the previous multi-year plan for 2024 and 2025 (Section 10). The final section presents the orientations of the multi-year planning of immigration for the 2026–2026 period (Section 11).

The Gouvernement du Québec invites the population and stakeholders concerned to participate in this public consultation, as it represents a rare opportunity to collectively define new orientations for immigration to Québec. These orientations will depend on Québec's reception, integration and francization capacity in the ever-changing context of immigration and the transformation of international migration.

1. Legal framework for planning and responsibilities related to immigration

Pursuant to the Canadian Constitution, the federal government and the constituent states share responsibility for immigration. The Canada–Québec Accord, which came into force in 1991, establishes the division of responsibility between Québec and Canada.

The Canada–Québec Accord gives Québec full responsibility over the planning of its permanent immigration, selection, reception, francization and integration levels. In regard to this responsibility, the Gouvernement du Québec defines its own policies and programs and legislates, regulates and establishes its own standards.

The Accord specifically reflects the Gouvernement du Québec’s desire to ensure that immigration and integration are respectful of the distinct nature of the Québec nation. It acknowledges that the Gouvernement du Québec oversees immigrant reception services and linguistic, cultural and economic integration services for permanent residents in Québec. The federal government has withdrawn from providing these services and financially compensates Québec for operating its own programs.

1.1 Québec’s immigration responsibilities and the *Québec Immigration Act*

Under the Canada–Québec Accord, Québec assumes its responsibility for planning immigration levels by determining the volume of immigrants it intends to receive according to the orientations it adopts. The planned intervention and measures aim to enable all immigrants to fully immerse themselves in their host society so that they participate and contribute in ways that are beneficial to the development of both their community and Québec.

As for determining how many immigrants Québec intends to receive, Articles 3 to 5 of the LIQ (2016) stipulate that the exercises carried out as part of the multi-year planning of immigration to Québec must aim to determine the type of immigrants and anticipated number of immigrants admitted. The LIQ provides for a process featuring a public consultation, following which the Gouvernement du Québec adopts multi-year immigration orientations. Furthermore, pursuant to changes introduced by the *Act mainly to improve the regulatory scheme governing international students* (L.Q. 2024, Chapter 43), temporary immigration is henceforth a mandatory component of immigration planning. This consultation will enable Québec to set new orientations for the 2026–2029 period, which will inform its annual immigration plans.

Lastly, Article 160, paragraph 8 of the *Charter of the French language* (CQLR, Chapter C-11) highlights the importance of French in the multi-year planning of immigration as an indicator of the changes in language in Québec over time.

1.2 Division of responsibility regarding permanent immigration

Québec determines the conditions for selection of immigrants under the category of permanent economic immigration to its territory. This category includes people selected by Québec due to their socio-professional characteristics, credentials and capacity to contribute to the economic, demographic and linguistic development of Québec. They are qualified workers and businesspeople.

Québec also determines the conditions for selection of people under certain humanitarian immigration programs, i.e., people who are recognized as refugees abroad and subsequently assisted by the government or sponsored, in addition to those submitting an application for selection under humanitarian considerations.

As for the family class, Québec does not list criteria for selection but rather selects foreign nationals according to criteria determined by the federal government. Québec manages sponsorship undertakings signed in Québec, determines the duration thereof, establishes scales where the federal government deems that the financial capacity of a sponsor needs to be taken into account and monitors undertakings. It issues a Certificat de sélection du Québec (CSQ) to people who meet its requirements.

With exclusive responsibility for admission, Canada sets and applies the criteria authorizing a person to enter and stay in the country, particularly the conditions of stay, inadmissibility and removal criteria in addition to the documents required. It defines general processing standards and general immigration categories.

1.3 Division of responsibility regarding temporary immigration

In terms of temporary immigration, Québec consents to the stay of a foreign national when this person meets all of the conditions of the immigration program under which they applied for temporary selection. Thus, Québec plays a role in two temporary immigration programs, the Programme des étudiants étrangers (PEE) and the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires (PTET). That being said, the federal government is solely responsible for holders of work permits under the PMI.

1.3.1 International students

Québec must give prior consent to the admission of any international student who is not selected under a federal program to assist developing countries. This consent takes the form of a Certificat d'acceptation du Québec (CAQ).

1.3.2 Temporary foreign workers: the PTET and PMI

Foreign workers residing in Québec hold work permits obtained through the PTET or PMI.

Under the PTET, Québec:

- ▶ Determines, together with Canada, whether a Canadian citizen or permanent resident would be available to fill the job offered to a temporary foreign worker (TFW) through a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA);
- ▶ Consents to the stay, on its territory, of any TFW hired under this program by issuing a CAQ.

Upon creating the PTET, in 1973, Canada introduced worker categories that do not require a LMIA on the availability of Canadian workers. As such, these worker categories are exempt from obtaining a CAQ. When the PTET was reformed in 2014, the federal government created the PMI in order to manage these cases separately.

Consequently, most TFWs come to work in Québec through the PMI, for which the federal government is exclusively responsible. The provisions of the Canada–Québec Accord, however, stipulate that Canada must consult Québec to identify TFW categories in the PMI and notify it of any changes it makes to these categories. Certain LMIA exemptions under the PMI have been implemented by the federal government at the request of Québec in order to allow, for example, workers selected under a permanent immigration program to work in Québec while awaiting permanent residence.

Note that the PTET and PEE require Québec's consent and indirectly affect volumes in the PMI, namely the number of post-graduate work permits issued to former international students and the number of work permits issued to TFW family members and international students.

1.4 Division of responsibility regarding asylum seekers

Asylum claims may be filed at any point of entry to Canada, particularly border crossings, or after arriving on Canadian soil at an inland office. After determining eligibility, these requests are processed by the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB). As such, recognition of refugee status for people requesting Canadian protection, within Québec or abroad, is exclusively overseen by the federal government.

Québec receives and offers certain services to asylum seekers who have settled on its territory. In terms of housing, Québec provides temporary housing and help to find permanent housing. Asylum seekers can also receive last-resort financial assistance, universal employment services, free information sessions on life in Québec and social services, which include psychosocial and health coverage. Furthermore, this immigration category provides access to French lessons, free education for school-aged children, general education for youth (elementary and secondary levels), early childhood education services, community daycare activities and legal assistance to prepare a claim for asylum.

For people recognized as refugees within Québec by the IRB following an approved claim for asylum, Québec is not required to consent to their settlement on its territory under the status of NPR. These individuals may subsequently apply for permanent residence from the federal government and remain in the province until Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) issues its decision. IRCC admission volumes account for the thresholds set by Québec under this category.

In the event the claim for asylum is denied, the person must either leave the country or exercise the recourse options available before removal measures are applied. As far as recourse is concerned, the person may file an appeal with the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD). If the appeal is also denied, the person can file an Application for Leave and for Judicial Review with the Federal Court of Canada.

2. Changes in various components of immigration to Québec over time

The three components of immigration to Québec are permanent immigration, temporary immigration and asylum seekers. Permanent immigration comprises four main admission categories: economic immigration, family class, refugees and people in similar circumstances and, lastly, other immigrants, namely including people admitted for humanitarian considerations. These last two categories constitute humanitarian immigration.

Temporary immigration, for its part, consists primarily of international students and TFWs.

Meanwhile, asylum seekers are people who are awaiting a decision on the recognition of their refugee status. After refugee status is granted, they may initiate a permanent residence procedure.

2.1 Permanent immigration

The number of permanent immigrants admitted annually to Québec has fluctuated since the late 1970s. The number of immigrants admitted has increased from 13,936 in 1978, or 1978% of the total Québec population in 6 432 019 (1978,59,426), to 2024,0 people in 7, or slightly under 8.956% of the population (326,956,326).

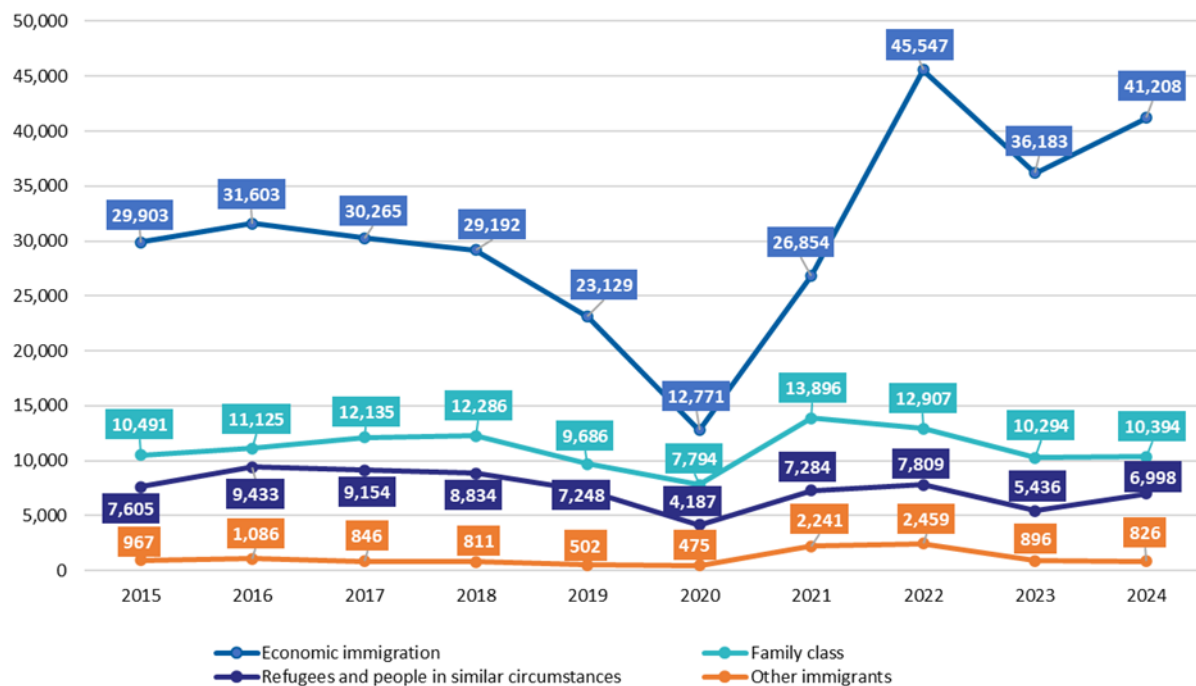
In 1991, the Programme de suppression de l'arriéré des revendicateurs de statut de réfugié (Program to Clear the Backlog of Refugee Status Claimants) pushed admissions of permanent immigrants to Québec over the 50,000 mark. The 1994–1999 period showed a decrease in the number of immigrants permanently admitted to Québec to slightly less than 30,000. During the 2010–2018 period, the volume of permanent admissions gradually rose again and stabilized at approximately 52,000. Between 2009 and 2019, out of all permanent immigrants, the proportion of refugees or people in similar circumstances admitted to Québec more than doubled, increasing from 8.2% in 2009 to a peak of 17.9% in 2019. There is a visible upward shift this immigration category from 2015 onward, in light of Québec's humanitarian efforts to receive Syrian refugees, among others.

In 2019, the Gouvernement du Québec committed to temporarily reducing the number of immigrants permanently admitted in order to better receive them, integrate them and support them in learning French. This decreased the number of immigrants admitted to 40,565 that year, i.e., a decrease of approximately 21% with respect to 2018 (51,123).

Due to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the number of admissions in 2020 dropped to 25,227 people, the lowest level recorded since 1986. In 2021, the number of admissions reached 50,275. However, in 2022, efforts to catch up on admissions brought the total to 68,722 people. During the pandemic years, due to border restrictions, a significant proportion of the people admitted were already located on the territory with temporary status, such as TFWs and international students. The volume of permanent admissions rose to 52,809 in 2023 and 59,426 in 2024.

Graph 1

Number of immigrants admitted annually, by immigration category, Québec, 2015 to 2024

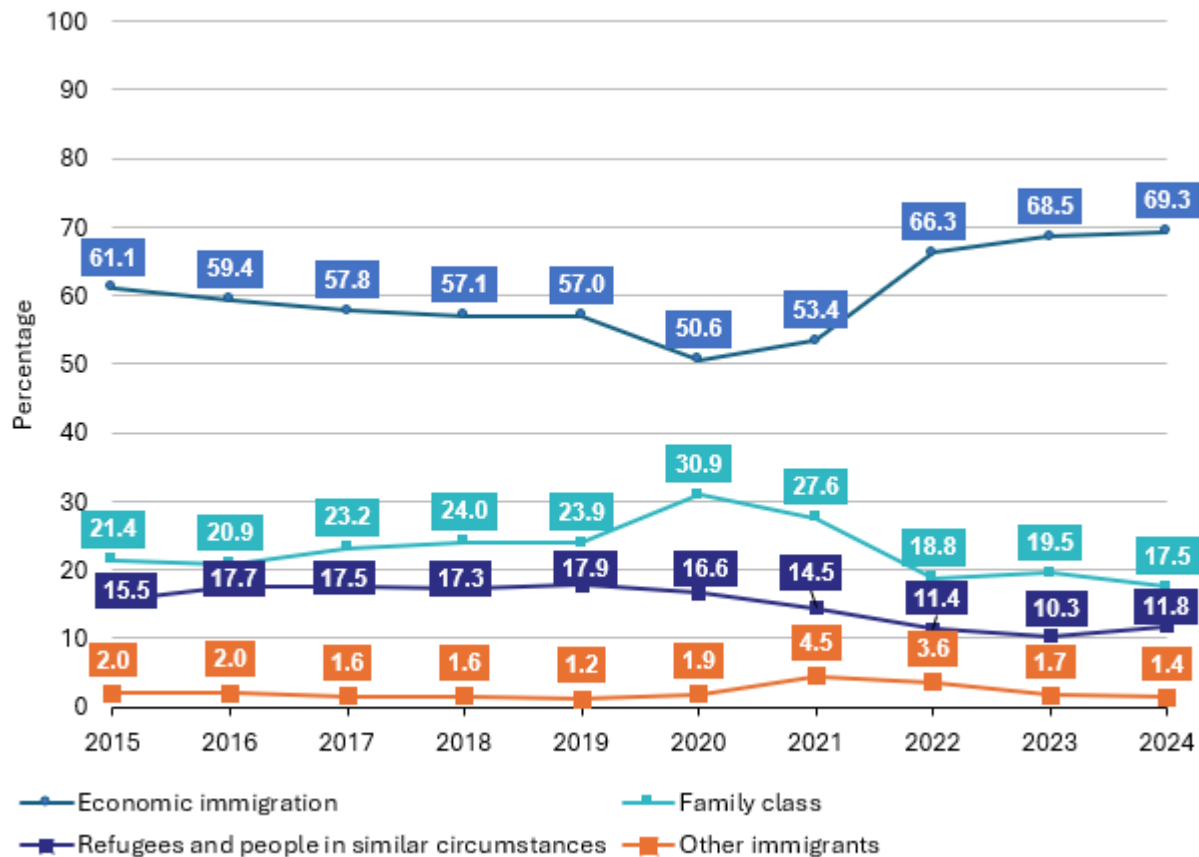


Preliminary data for 2024

Source: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION: Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion (Department of Statistics and Management Information), Permanent admissions database.

Graph 2

Proportion of immigrants admitted annually, by immigration category, Québec, 2015 to 2024



Preliminary data for 2024

Source: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION: Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion, Permanent admissions database.

2.1.1 Economic immigration

The main category of economic immigration comprises qualified workers and businesspeople. It is subject to selection by Québec and represents an essential lever for contributing to the economic prosperity of the province, population changes and the vitality and preservation of French.

The two main immigration programs for qualified workers are the Programme de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés (PSTQ), which replaced the Programme régulier des travailleurs qualifiés (PRTQ) on November 29, 2024, and the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ). In the image of its predecessor, the PRTQ, the PSTQ is a component of the immigration request management system that relies on an expression of interest and selects individuals according to their profiles and the economic, demographic and linguistic needs of Québec. More specifically, this program accounts for the socio-professional characteristics of these individuals such as age, level of education, knowledge of French, and the professional qualifications in demand in the labour market.

For its part, the PEQ facilitates the transition from temporary to permanent resident status for TFWs and international students who graduated in Québec and speak French.

What's more, three permanent immigration pilot programs aim to select qualified workers who meet specific labour needs in Québec:

- ▶ The Programme pilote d'immigration permanente des travailleurs de la transformation alimentaire (Permanent Immigration Pilot Program for Workers in Food Processing);
- ▶ The Programme pilote d'immigration permanente des travailleurs de l'intelligence artificielle, des technologies de l'information et des effets visuels (Permanent Immigration Pilot Program for Workers in the Artificial Intelligence, Information Technologies and Visual Effects Sectors);
- ▶ The Programme pilote d'immigration permanente des préposés aux bénéficiaires (Permanent Immigration Pilot Program for Orderlies)

These pilot programs have been implemented for a duration of five years and will end on January 1st, 2026.

Meanwhile, businesspeople settle in Québec to do business through the Programme des investisseurs (Investor Program), the Programme des entrepreneurs (Entrepreneur Program) or the Programme des travailleurs autonomes (Self-Employed Worker Program). On January 1st, 2024, regulatory changes came into force, requiring fluency in French from principal applicants to a degree that enables them to integrate into Québec society, particularly in the business sector. Changes were also introduced to encourage the long-term settlement of selected individuals.

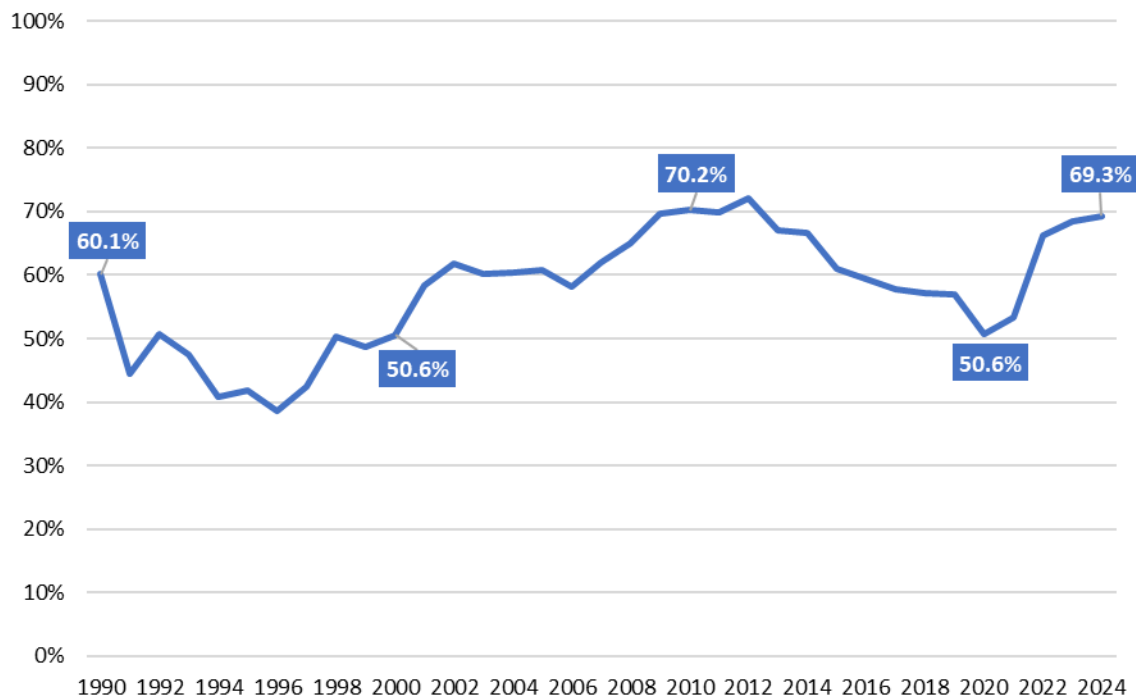
Economic immigration remains the immigration category with the highest number and proportion of admissions out of permanent immigration to Québec as a whole¹. It represents a proportion of around 70% in 2011, before slowly decreasing to 57% in 2018 and 2019, then to 51% in 2020 in the context of the health crisis.

In the multi-year plans for 2020–2022 and 2024–2025, the government established orientations with a view to returning to an upward trend in favour of this immigration category. This helped gradually increase the proportion of economic integration, from 53% in 2021 to 69% in 2024.

¹ Admissions include principal applicants and their accompanying family members.

Graph 3

Share of economic immigration out of the entire population admitted, Québec, 1990 to 2024



Preliminary data for 2024

Source: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION: Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion, Permanent admissions database.

2.1.2 Family class

Family class is the immigration category that allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to reunite with some of their family members, such as their husband or wife, de facto spouse, children, parents and grandparents. Applications under this category are processed jointly by the Governments of Canada and Québec.

The volume of foreign nationals concerned by family class applications is generally higher than the admission target set by the Gouvernement du Québec. Its admission targets under this category have slightly increased in recent years, from 8,900 to 9,400 people in 2019 to between 10,200 and 10,600 starting in 2022. However, in terms of applications, between 2018 and 2023, the annual average number of applications for permanent residence under the family class was 17,000, except in 2020, the first year of the health crisis. The Gouvernement du Québec implemented a management system for undertaking applications for the period from June 26, 2024, to June 25, 2026, inclusive, to bring selections in line with the admission thresholds planned by Québec under the family class. That being said, initial applications are filed with IRCC, which does not manage applications under this category according to the thresholds established by the Gouvernement du Québec for undertaking or admission applications. On January 1st, 2025, approximately 42,000 people had an ongoing permanent residence application under the family class with IRCC or were awaiting admission.

2.1.3 Humanitarian immigration

Humanitarian immigration is divided into two admission categories: refugees or people in similar circumstances and other immigrants, who are primarily admitted for humanitarian considerations. The category of refugees or people in similar circumstances concerns people who have been recognized as refugees by the federal government, whether abroad or within Québec.

Programme des personnes réfugiées sélectionnées à l'étranger (Program for Refugees Selected Abroad)

People who have been recognized as refugees abroad settle in Québec after being selected under the Programme des personnes réfugiées à l'étranger. They may be sponsored or assisted by the government.

The number of admissions under this sub-category was relatively stable from the early 2000s until 2014, with an annual average of approximately 2,000 admissions. The number of admissions under this sub-category subsequently increased from 2015 to 2019 (average of 5,700 annual admissions), due to the reception of Syrian refugees. In this specific context, most refugees selected abroad were sponsored by civil society organizations and individuals, in addition to the sponsorship of certain individuals by the Gouvernement du Québec.

During the pandemic years, the number of admissions decreased considerably (average of 1,700 annual admissions in 2020 and 2021), only to return to higher levels in 2022 (slightly more than 3,700 admissions), due to catch-up efforts.

In 2023, the number of admissions under this sub-category was just over 2,600 people, with this sub-category primarily consisting of government-assisted refugees (54%), which was normal before 2015. The volume of admissions for this sub-category was similar in 2024.

Refugees recognized within Québec

Refugees recognized within Québec, i.e., asylum seekers granted protection by the IRB, do not need to be selected by the Gouvernement du Québec to settle there pursuant to the Canada–Québec Accord. That being said, refugees recognized within Québec may apply for and obtain a CSQ. This certificate makes it easier to access certain services offered by the Gouvernement du Québec.

In recent years, the Gouvernement du Québec has seen a substantial rise in the number of refugees recognized within Québec due to the increase in IRB decisions following the influx of asylum seekers beginning in 2017.

From 2010 to 2020, the number of admissions of refugees recognized within Québec remained relatively stable in Québec (average of 2,700 annual admissions). Despite an uptick in the context of the pandemic (nearly 5,700 admissions in 2021) and the subsequent catch-up efforts (nearly 4,100 admissions in 2022), the number of admissions returned to a volume of just over 2,800 in 2023. In 2024, the number of admissions under this sub-category was 4,337.

That being said, the modest increase in the number of admissions under this sub-category remained substantially lower than the increase in the number of people applying for permanent residence following refugee recognition by the IRB.

Consequently, the number of refugees recognized within Québec with an ongoing permanent residence application has considerably increased in recent years. Thus, on January 1st, 2025, approximately 45,600 refugees recognized within Québec had an ongoing permanent residence application with IRCC or were awaiting admission. This situation has resulted in longer wait times before these people are admitted as permanent residents. They may remain on the territory while awaiting permanent residence once they have obtained refugee status in Canada.

People admitted for humanitarian or public policy considerations (other immigrants)

The category of other immigrants includes people selected by the Gouvernement du Québec on humanitarian or public policy grounds under the Programme des personnes sélectionnées pour des considérations humanitaires (Program for People Selected for Humanitarian Considerations). Over time, this admission category, created to respond to exceptional and highly specific cases, has been used to meet new needs, namely to select people targeted by temporary public policies (TPPs) of the federal government (e.g., Ukrainians).

The increase in asylum seekers in recent years has also contributed to the rise in applications under this category, since it constitutes a last resort for people who are not recognized as refugees at the end of the entire process, including appeals.

From 2010 to 2020, the number of admissions under this category remained below 1,000 per year (except for 2016, when the number of admissions was 1,086). In the context of the pandemic, the number of admissions nonetheless rose to 2,241 in 2021 and to 2,459 in 2022, namely due to the creation of the Programme spécial des demandeurs d'asile en période de COVID-19 (Special Program for Asylum Seekers During COVID-19). Yet, the number of admissions has dipped back below 1,000 since 2023.

The number of admissions under this category is distinctly lower than the number of people who applied for permanent residence for humanitarian considerations, resulting in an uptick in the number of individuals awaiting processing of their permanent residence application. As of January 1st, 2025, 12,800 people in the other immigrants category had an ongoing permanent residence application. This was concomitant with an increase in wait times for admitting the individuals in this category as permanent residents. According to IRCC's website, in January 2025, wait times were 47 months.

2.2 Marked increase in the number of non-permanent residents

NPRs are TFWs, international students, asylum seekers, protected persons and related groups, as well as other types of people such as accompanying individuals who do not hold a work or study permit and temporary resident permit holders.

The estimated number of NPRs in Québec has risen substantially: it has increased by 203% since January 1st, 2019, and reached an all-time high of 616,552 people on January 1st, 2025.

NPRs accounted for 78.6% of population growth in Québec between January 1st, 2023, and January 1st, 2024. Between January 1st, 2024, and January 1st, 2025, this proportion rose to 66.8%. While the net number of NPRs peaked at 152,053 between January 1st, 2023, and January 1st, 2024, it decreased to 103,736 between January 1st, 2024, and January 1st, 2025. Despite trending downward, this net number remains high. These people contributed to Québec's population growth of 2.2% in 2023 and 1.7% in 2024. By comparison, in the past two decades, the average annual population growth rate was 0.8% in Québec. This transformation in the volume and structure of immigration constitutes an important change that poses several challenges in Québec.

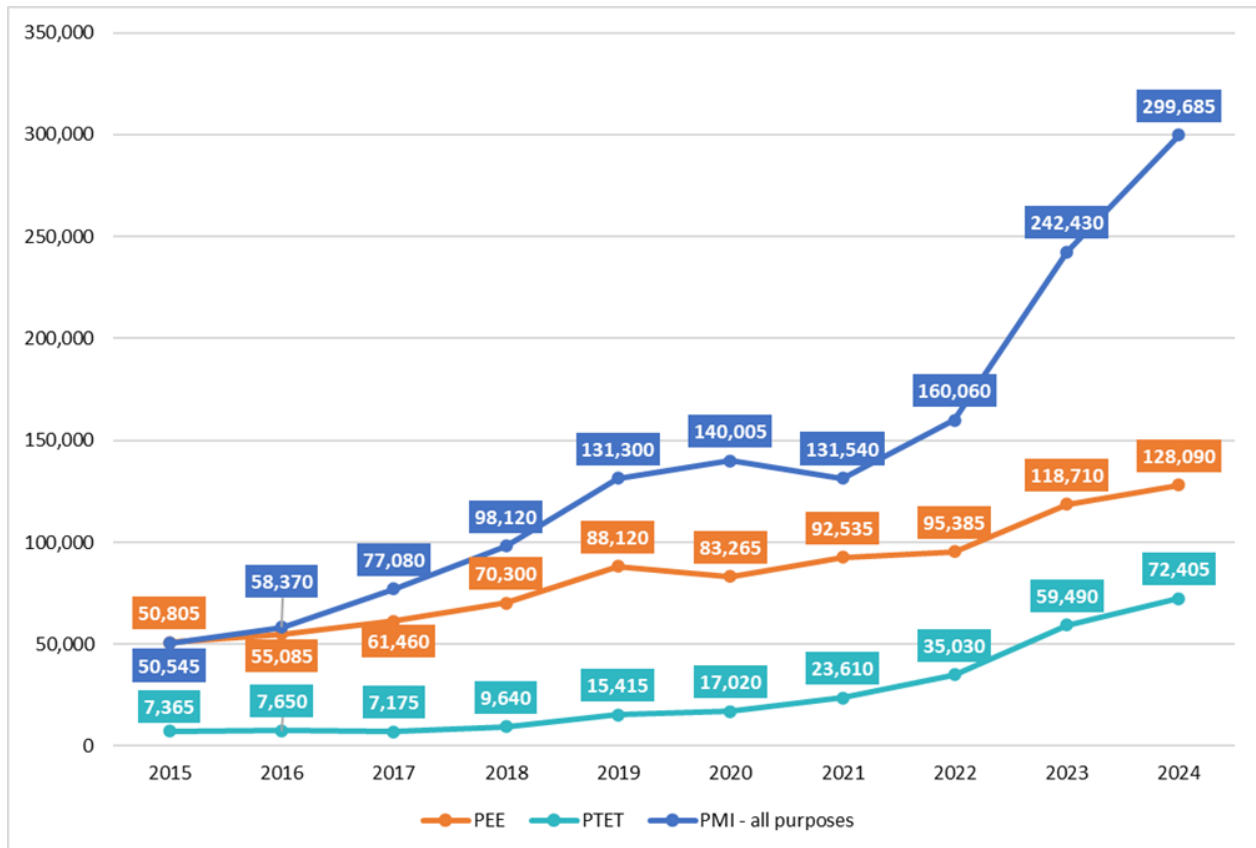
This uptick in the number of NPRs in Québec is reflected in the number of valid permit holders in the three temporary immigration programs². The number of valid study permit holders on December 31 has markedly increased every year since 2015, except for a brief slowdown in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The upward trend resumed in 2021 to reach a peak of 128,090 individuals in 2024. Since the end of 2018, this number has grown by 82%, increasing from 70,300 to 128,090. In the Programme de mobilité internationale (PMI), the number of valid work permit holders on December 31, regardless of the purpose of the permit³, rose from 98,120 people in 2018 to 299,685 in 2024, or a 205% increase. In the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires (PTET), the number of valid permit holders on December 31 saw a marked increase of 651% during this period, from 9,640 to 72,405 people between 2018 and 2024.

² Data about permit holders was compiled using IRCC data for Q4 2023.

³ The PMI issues work permits for four purposes: employment purposes, humanitarian purposes, permanent residence purposes and study purposes.

Graph 4

Valid permit holders on December 31 of each year by immigration program, Québec, 2015 to 2024



The data represents preliminary estimates and may change.

Source: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION: Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion, using IRCC data for Q4 2024.

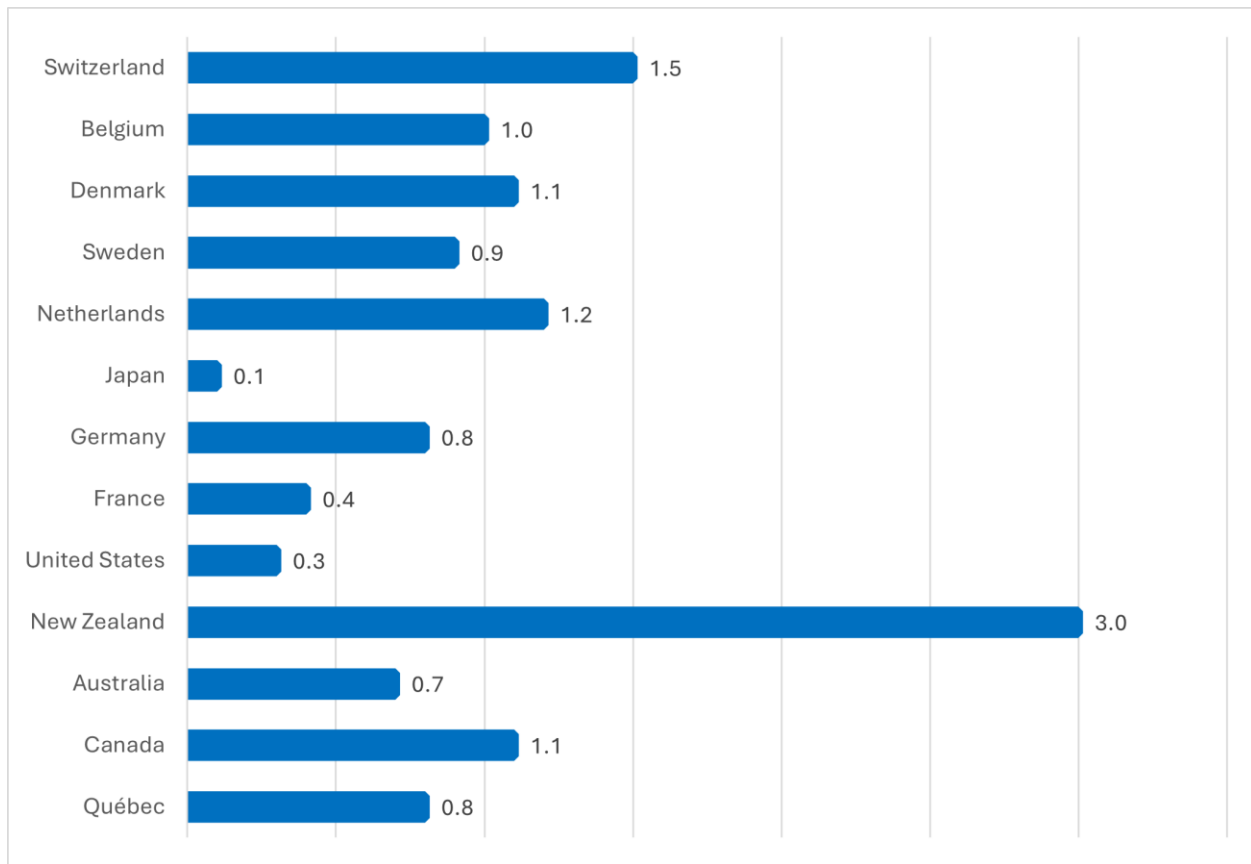
3. Migration flows: Comparison between Québec and certain Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries

The dynamics of changes in migration flows within OECD countries over time are complex, influenced by both economic, social and geopolitical factors and diverse migration policies. In this context, migration flows vary considerably within the OECD and are influenced by ever-changing policies that differ from country to country. Among these factors, the global health crisis had a direct, major impact on immigration in 2020 and 2021. Border closures and travel restrictions considerably reduced arrivals of immigrants in OECD member countries. However, certain countries upheld policies to allow the entry of qualified workers, namely in essential fields such as health, in order to meet pandemic-related needs.

Thus, in several countries, the increase in annual arrivals of permanent immigrants in 2022 represented a return to pre-pandemic levels. Another major factor involved in changes in migration flows over time is the aging population. Japan, along with several European countries, has seen a substantial decline in its labour force. To address these shortages, these countries have implemented immigration policies to attract qualified workers in key sectors, like technology and healthcare. Furthermore, geopolitical and environmental crises are also putting increased pressure on the immigration systems of OECD member countries. This type of forced migration, namely for refugees, is pushing countries to review their reception policies. While some countries are tightening their asylum system via reform, others, such as Australia, are choosing to set up new pathways to temporary or permanent immigration, in parallel with their immigration system.

Graph 5

Annual arrivals of permanent immigrants as a proportion of the total population, Québec, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland, 2022 (%)^{1, 2}



Notes:

1. OECD data on permanent admissions may include, for some countries, people who arrive with a permanent residence authorization or equivalent. Data comparison must therefore account for this in addition to differences in immigration systems and social, historical and political contexts. What's more, the viability of the comparison between each country cannot be guaranteed, namely due to the method for annually determining the number of new arrivals. So, all comparisons should be made with caution.
2. The value of annual arrivals of permanent immigrants as a proportion of the total population observed in 2022 in Québec (0.8%) is the result of post-COVID-19 pandemic efforts to clear the backlog of admissions. As such, it can be considered exceptional.

Sources:

Population and permanent admissions data for all states, except Québec: OECD. *International OECD Migration Outlook 2013–2024*, [Online], 2024. [<https://www.oecd.org/fr/migrations/statcles.htm>] (Accessed on November 29, 2024).

Data on permanent admissions to Québec: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION. *Tableaux de l'immigration permanente au Québec (Tables on Permanent Admission to Québec) 2019–2023*, [Online], 2024. [[https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/immigration/publications/fr/recherches-statistiques/TAB Tableaux Immigration permanente 2019-2023.pdf](https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/immigration/publications/fr/recherches-statistiques/TAB_Tableaux_Immigration_permanente_2019-2023.pdf)].

Data about the Québec population: INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC (ISQ) (Québec Statistics Institute). *Québec population estimates, July 1st, 1971 to 2024*, Québec, ISQ, [Online], September 25, 2024. [<https://statistique.quebec.ca/en/document/population-and-age-and-sex-structure-quebec/tableau/population-of-quebec>].

Table created by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion.

In Québec, annual arrivals of permanent immigrants as a proportion of the total population were 0.8% in 2022⁴. In Canada (including Québec), this proportion was 1.1%. Canada's system is considered favourable to qualified workers, similar to Australia (0.7%) and Germany (0.8%). However, in Canada, the federal government's 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan is expected to reduce the number of permanent residents in the coming years.

The highest permanent immigration volumes, observed in the Netherlands (1.2%) and New Zealand (3.0%) in 2022, can be explained by policies that favour qualified workers, but also by an increased desire to fill job openings during severe labour shortages in specific sectors. However, the Netherlands and New Zealand recently introduced stricter laws regarding workers with minimal qualifications or low wages.

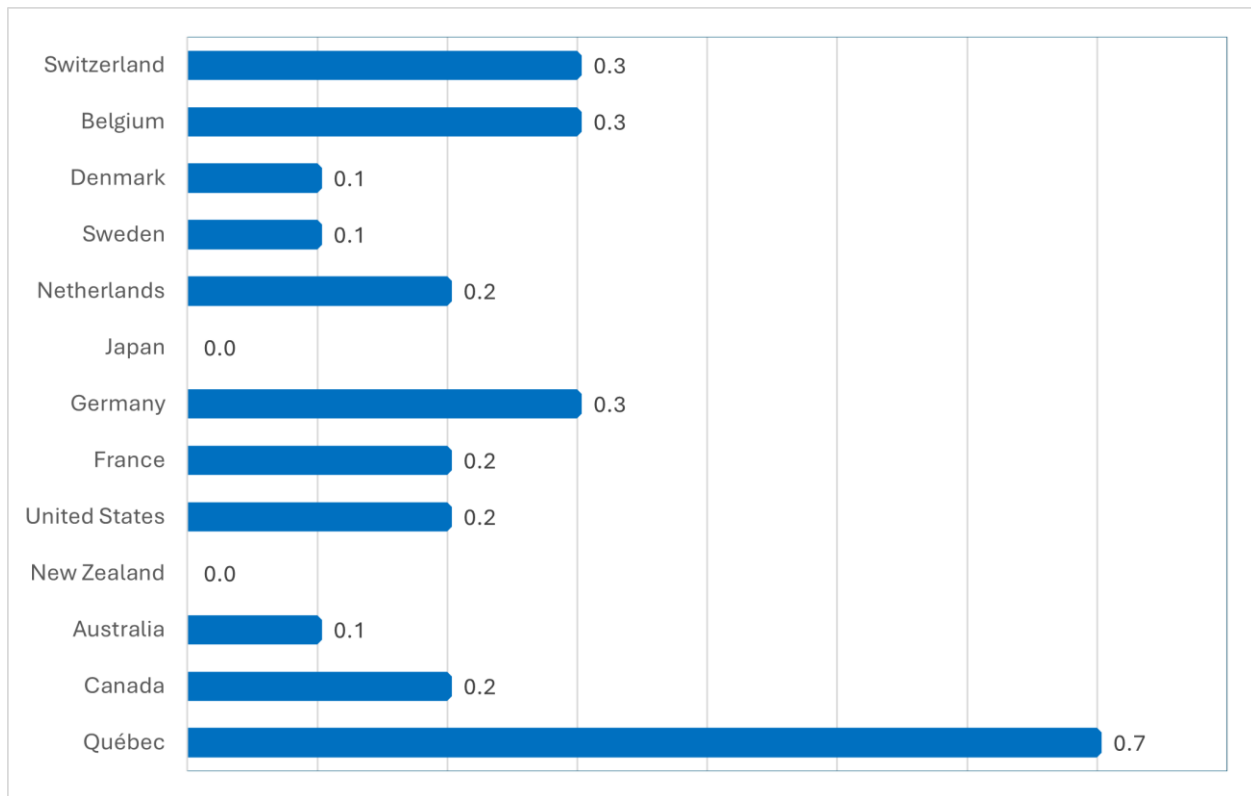
In Sweden, annual arrivals of permanent immigrants represented 0.8% of its total population in 2022. Since 2019, Sweden has been trying to reduce the number of admissions of immigrants by adopting restrictive measures to counter certain integration-related difficulties. For its part, Denmark applies severe restrictions to immigrants and refugees, despite the fact that they represent 1.1% of its total population.

In comparison with Québec, France has a more moderate permanent immigration volume (0.4%), as a result of its specific social and economic policies, often in response to the rise in certain more immigration-averse mentalities. The same trends have been observed in the United States, where annual arrivals of permanent immigrants accounted for 0.3% of the total population in 2022. The country remains an important destination for immigrants, but stricter migration policies in recent years, challenges related to illegal immigration and the massive population size partially explain this lower proportion. Lastly, Japan has a noticeably low number of annual arrivals of permanent immigrants (0.1%). This can be attributed to the implementation of restrictive migration policies in order to preserve the country's cultural and social homogeneity, despite its aging population. What's more, the country has been criticized for its relatively low intake of asylum seekers.

⁴ The percentages presented represent the total number of annual permanent admissions out of the total censused or estimated population of certain states or territories for a given year.

Graph 6

Arrivals of asylum seekers as a proportion of the total population, Québec, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland, 2022 (%)¹



Note:

1. It should be taken into consideration that, since Québec is not an OECD member country, the data source is different from the other countries for which data compiled by the OECD was used. What's more, the viability of the comparison between each country cannot be guaranteed, namely due to the method for determining the annual number of new arrivals of asylum seekers. So, all data comparisons should be made **with caution.**

Source:

Population data for all countries, except Québec: OECD. *International OECD Migration Outlook, 2013 to 2024*, [Online], accessed on November 29, 2024, [<https://www.oecd.org/fr/migrations/statcles.html>].

Québec data: based on IRCC data.

Graph produced by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion.

In recent years, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Québec has remained high. In 2022, these people represented 0.7% of the total Québec population, compared to 0.2% for the entire Canadian population. Thus, in 2023, Québec took in approximately 45% of asylum seekers.

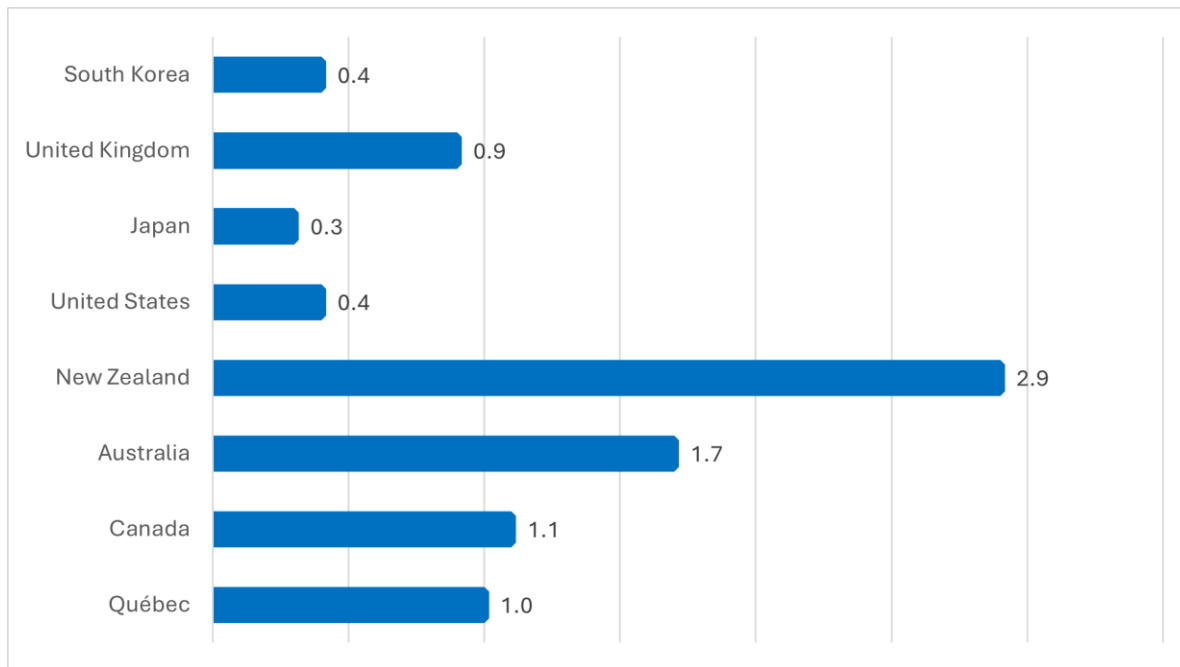
Several OECD member countries have strengthened their laws regarding asylum to reduce the number of applications and counter irregular immigration, namely by adopting stricter policies. For example, in Germany, a new law entered into force in January 2024, providing for longer retention periods, restricted access to social services and various measures to facilitate removals. In the Netherlands, the government intends to put an end to “permanent resident permits for asylum purposes”, increase removals in the event an asylum claim is denied and repeal the law on the distribution of asylum seekers. These measures aim to more equitably distribute asylum seekers and refugees in the country. In recent years, Sweden has tightened the conditions for obtaining a resident permit for special reasons or due to an extremely difficult situation. The Swedish government also launched an investigation to reassess the regulatory framework surrounding asylum. While annual arrivals of asylum seekers represented 0.1% to 0.3% of the total population in several European countries in 2022, these proportions are expected to change in the coming years.

In 2022, the proportion of asylum seekers received in the United States was 0.2%. Since 2017, the United States has been one of the main destinations for asylum seekers within the OECD. New restrictions on asylum have been applied since the change in US leadership on January 20, 2025. As for Japan and New Zealand, these countries receive very few asylum claims every year.

Graph 7 illustrates annual arrivals of temporary immigrants as a proportion of the total population for certain OECD member countries. These arrivals are comparable to the chapter on new arrivals of temporary immigrants, which excludes countries in the European Union as they do not record international students or TFWs travelling within these countries.

Graph 7

Annual arrivals of temporary immigrants as a proportion of the total population, Québec¹, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States, Japan, United Kingdom and South Korea², 2022 (%)



Notes:

1. It should be taken into consideration that, since Québec is not an OECD member country, the data source is different from the other countries for which data compiled by the OECD was used. Estimated volumes for Québec were based on an estimate of the number of holders of initial permits issued annually (individual people) for the entire PTET, PMI and PEE in Québec out of the total population. The number of initial permit holders does not necessarily correspond to the number of “new arrivals”, since a person can obtain an initial permit in one program despite already holding a permit issued under a different program. It is therefore possible that their proportion in Québec is slightly overestimated. Furthermore, since 2016, IRCC has used a different methodology to count permit holders, thereby invalidating any comparison with previous years. For all of these reasons, comparisons between temporary immigration volume data should be made with caution.
2. The countries presented in this table are different from those in the previous tables, since the number of new arrivals of temporary individuals varies significantly within European Union countries. There is substantial variation in the data for countries in this territory, since it excludes migrations within the European Union. Thus, the data significantly underestimates the actual number of new temporary immigrants, according to the Canadian definition. For this reason, countries with temporary immigration systems (visas or permits issued for study or work purposes) were used in order to make international comparisons.

Sources:

Population data for all countries, except Québec: OECD. *International OECD Migration Outlook, 2013 to 2024*, [Online], accessed on January 28, 2025 [<https://www.oecd.org/fr/migrations/statcles.htm>]. Québec data: compiled using customized data obtained from IRCC.

Graph produced by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion.

In Québec, annual arrivals of temporary immigrants, consisting for the most part of temporary international students and foreign workers, represented 1.0% of the Québec population in 2022, a slightly lower proportion than throughout Canada (1.1%). That being said, Canada has announced a decrease in the number of temporary residents for 2026 via various reforms to programs affecting international students and foreign workers. Furthermore, Australia and New Zealand have higher temporary immigration volumes, of 1.7% and 2.9%, respectively. This is because temporary immigration plays a key role in the economy of these countries, which strive to attract talent in specific sectors and use international students and foreign workers to meet labour needs. In other OECD countries, temporary immigration volumes were more moderate in 2022, like in Japan (0.3%), South Korea (0.4%) and the United States (0.4%).

In conclusion, immigration in OECD countries is significantly influenced by each country's specific migration policies, economic needs related to aging populations, as well as geopolitical and environmental crises. While certain countries have implemented selective immigration policies to attract qualified workers, others, such as Japan and Denmark, continue to uphold globally more restrictive policies. As such, although migration trends are similar in some cases, each country is faced with unique challenges that shape its policies and immigration approach, which sometimes change quickly.

4. Current issues regarding immigration to Québec

Québec intends to implement the necessary measures for immigration to fully contribute to its economic and social development and the vitality of French. However, it does not hold all of the immigration power required to adequately meet its needs. The rapid rise in the number of NPRs observed in recent years has caused the Gouvernement du Québec to use its limited resources to plan the number of immigrants arriving in Québec with temporary status.

4.1 Vitality and preservation of French

The Gouvernement du Québec is keeping a close eye on the status of French, the province's common language. French is more than just a way of communicating; it is a symbol of belonging to Québec. Knowledge and use of French represent the key to participating in every aspect of Québec life and successful integration. Fluency in French is a determining factor in the ability of immigrants to reach their full potential and wholly participate in the development of their host community.

French knowledge requirements vary according to the immigration category to which the immigrant belongs. As Québec determines its own selection criteria for economic immigration, this category has the highest proportion of immigrants who know or report that they know French at admission. A higher proportion of existing Québec residents, whether temporary or permanent, know French compared to people coming from abroad. This situation is not expected to change, assuming that the requirements surrounding knowledge of French and access to services to learn French are upheld. In recent years, Québec has decided to favour the admission of economic immigrants in its immigration plan, namely to help preserve the vitality of French. However, the rapid increase in the number of NPRs in recent years in Québec is posing major challenges to the vitality of French in Québec and is putting pressure on government services to learn French.

In a report commissioned by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Mr. Marc Termote⁵, associate professor in the Department of Demographics of the Université de Montréal, explains that the rapid integration of immigrants depends on Francophone immigration and the ability of non-Francophone immigrants to learn French for all of Québec, but especially for the Montréal area, which is showing concerning signs regarding the use of French. Montréal is a unique case, since there is no “law of the land (*loi du sol*)”, as the author puts it. In the regions, this “law of the land” means that all immigrants must speak French in public spaces, while they can choose between English and French in Montréal.

Québec needs to constantly develop tools to better receive and support immigrants in their process to learn French and integrate. In order to put an end to the decline of French in Québec, the Gouvernement du Québec has also issued a *Plan pour la langue française, au Québec l'avenir s'écrit en français* (*French Language Plan, A Québec Future Written in French*), which lists the priorities and action to take in this respect in the coming years. Issued from work involving ministries, governmental organizations, public consultations and expert opinions, this plan centres on intervention axes that affect the status of French and aims to ensure its future, while providing a framework for the follow-up of indicators and the linguistic situation in Québec.

In another report commissioned by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Mr. Pierre-Carl Michaud⁶, who holds the Chaire Jacques Parizeau en politiques économiques (Jacques Parizeau Chair in Economic Policy) of HEC Montréal, believes that data related to the language used at work and in public should be preferred over data pertaining to the language used in a person's personal and family life, given the limitations on governmental action in this regard.

Michaud also mentions that the francization issue would mostly concern NPRs who are likely to eventually seek permanent residence. Thus, francization efforts targeting this type of NPR would be an option for the government to consider.

⁵ TERMOTE, M.: *Les défis d'une politique d'immigration pour le Québec. Rapport soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* (*The Challenges of an Immigration Policy for Québec. Report Submitted to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*), [Online], 2025.

⁶ MICHAUD, P-C.: *Orientations de la planification pluriannuelle de l'immigration au Québec. Rapport soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'intégration* (*Orientations of the Multi-Year Planning of Immigration to Québec. Report Submitted to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*), [Online], 2025.

4.2 Uneven population growth in the OECD

Population growth is determined by the natural growth resulting from the difference between births and deaths and by the migration-related growth resulting from international and interprovincial migration.

Québec's population growth reached 1.7% in 2024, i.e., 155,303 more people than in 2023, while this growth was 2.2% in 2023, representing 193,398 more people than in 2022. The growth in 2023 is the highest ever recorded in terms of number of individuals. The growth recorded in 2024, while less substantial than in the previous year, is the second-highest in terms of number of individuals for Québec. This is explained by substantial migratory gains in a context in which natural population growth is at its lowest point in the past century.

The net 152,053 NPRs in 2023, along with the 103,736 recorded in 2024⁷, represented the largest category contributing to migration-related growth. This is nearly double the 59,497 permanent residents admitted to Québec in 2024⁸.

The record population growth in 2023 is lower than in the rest of Canada (3.4%) and in several other Canadian provinces (3.5% in Ontario, 4.2% in Alberta and 3.3% in British Columbia) in 2023, but it is higher than in several OECD countries such as Spain (1.2%) and Norway (1.1%) and is comparable to Australia (2.4%)⁹.

Thus, population growth in Québec in recent years has primarily resulted from migratory increases. The main takeaway is that challenges remain as regards the relative population of Québec within Canada, the aging population and the workforce to replace it.

Indeed, the 2024 population assessment revealed that the proportion of people aged 65 and older slightly increased across 2021 (20.2%), 2022 (20.8%) and 2023 (21.0%): this aging trend is expected to continue over the coming decades. Of the OECD countries, Québec's statistics are similar to countries such as Belgium, Sweden and Spain (20% to 21%), albeit lower than Japan (30%), France, Italy and Germany (22% to 24%). International immigration therefore represents an important lever to counter the continued decrease in birth rates (e.g., 1.1% in 2013 to 0.88% in 2022) and the increasingly aging population (15.3% in 2010 and 27% projected for 2066), in a context of persistent interprovincial migration shortfalls.

⁷ INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC. *Le bilan démographique du Québec, Édition 2025 (Québec Population Report, 2025 Edition)*, [Online], 2025. [[Le bilan démographique du Québec. Édition 2025](#)].

⁸ INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC. *Migrations internationales et interprovinciales, Québec, 1961-2024 (International and Interprovincial Migration, Québec, 1961-2024)*, [Online], accessed in 2025. [<https://statistique.quebec.ca/en/document/international-interprovincial-migrations-quebec/tableau/international-and-interprovincial-migration-quebec>].

⁹ Data for Canada and the provinces: STATISTICS CANADA. *Population estimates, quarterly*, Table 17-10-0009-01, 2025, [Online], accessed in 2025. [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710012101&request_locale=en].

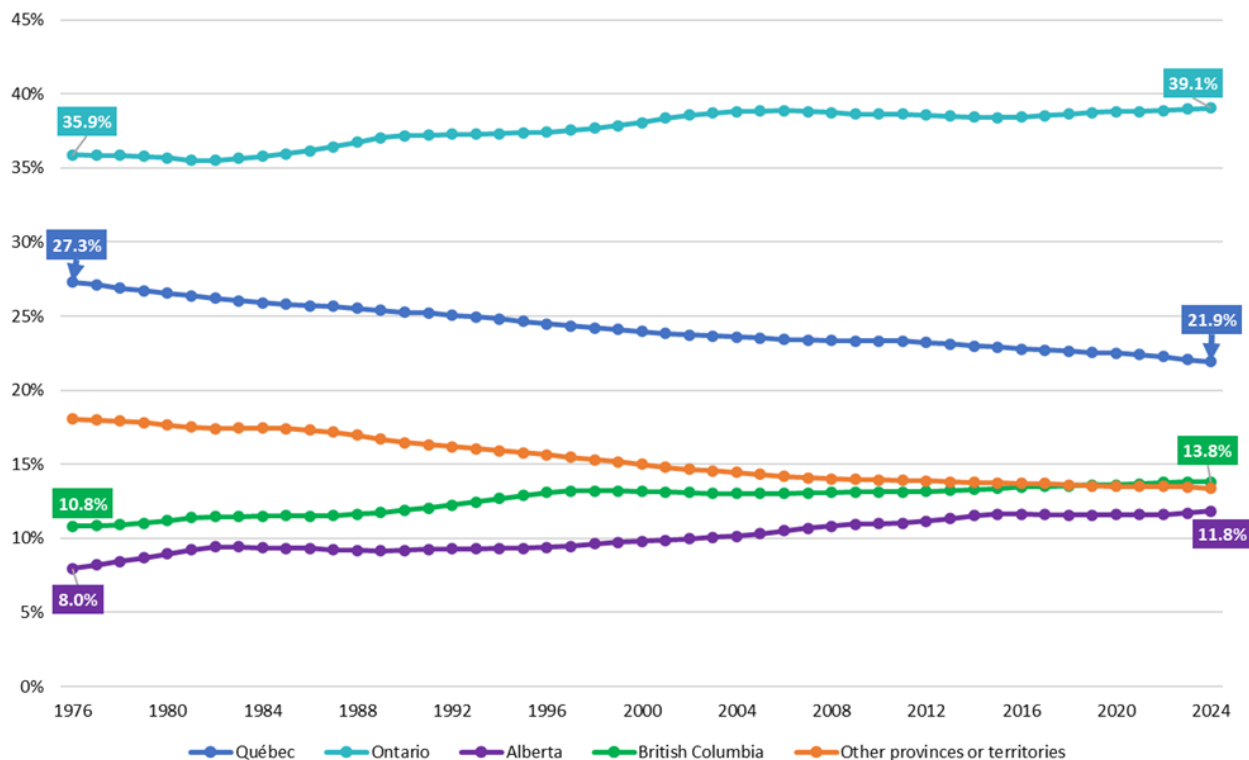
Data on OECD countries, growth is measured on July 1st, contrary to Québec and Canada: WORLD BANK, *Population growth (annual %)*, [online], accessed in 2025. [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>]

4.3 Relative population of Québec within Canada

For several decades now, the number of immigrants relative to the population has been higher in Canada as a whole than in Québec. From 2012 to 2023, the number of immigrants received by Québec as a proportion of all immigrants who permanently settled in Canada gradually decreased, from 21.4% to 11.4%. Meanwhile, the relative population of Québec slid from 27.3% on July 1st, 1976, to 21.9% on July 1st, 2024. This consistent decline over the past 50 years seems to be partly related to the lower migration volume in Québec than in the rest of Canada, given the current birth rate.

Graph 8

Changes in the relative population of Québec, Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta over time, based on population estimates on July 1st, 1976 to 2024



Source: STATISTICS CANADA. *Population estimates, quarterly*, Table 17-10-0009-01.

Graph produced by the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion.

4.4 Volume of asylum seekers in Québec relative to the rest of Canada

An asylum seeker is a person who requests protection from Canada at a point of entry or inland office due to fears of persecution in the country in which they hold citizenship or typically reside.

The estimated number of asylum seekers, protected persons and related groups present in Québec has considerably increased in recent years, from 61,031 on July 1st, 2021, to 181,130 on January 1st, 2025. Québec is thus home to 39.6% of all asylum seekers, protected persons and related groups. This percentage is nearly double its relative population within Canada (21.9%).

The flow of asylum seekers received annually in Québec remains high, even with the implementation of various measures to slow their arrival in the country. Despite the entry into force of the additional protocol to the Safe Third Country Agreement on March 25, 2023, 65,260 people filed a claim for asylum in Québec in 2023, i.e., 45.5% of all asylum seekers received in Canada. While some of these people may have moved elsewhere in Canada after arriving in Québec, the province continues to play a significant role in receiving and supporting asylum seekers. Similarly, 57,375 people filed a claim for asylum in Québec in 2024, representing one third (33.3%) of all asylum claims in Canada during this period.

The federal government is solely responsible for reviewing asylum claims. Given the high volume of such claims in recent years, IRB processing timelines have increased. In March 2024, the projected wait time for new asylum claims was 37 months¹⁰. During this wait period, Québec coordinates services for asylum seekers on its territory, such as temporary housing, last-resort financial assistance, help to find housing, social and other services, information sessions on available services, legal assistance.

4.5 Pre-admission wait times

Processing times for applications for selection under all Québec immigration programs are compliant with the province's undertakings under its Déclaration de services à la clientèle (Customer Service Statement).

That being said, wait times to obtain permanent residence have significantly lengthened in certain immigration categories. On January 8, 2025, projected processing times for permanent residence applications for people destined for Québec were 32 to 36 months under the family class for spouses and 48 months under the family class for parents and grandparents. Wait times were 46 months for refugees recognized within Québec and 47 months for cases involving humanitarian considerations (other immigrants).

Québec is hoping to better manage permanent admissions in favour of economic immigration. Thus, for certain immigration categories, the number of permanent residence requests received each year is notably higher than the volume of people that Québec can admit according to the multi-year orientations adopted at the conclusion of public consultations. This reality results in substantially longer wait times for obtaining permanent residence under these immigration categories.

¹⁰ IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE BOARD OF CANADA *Chairperson's Appearance before the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights*, [Online], 2024. [<https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/transparency/proactive-disclosure/Pages/ridr-binder-june-2024.aspx>].

Bear in mind that under the categories of family class, refugees recognized within Québec, and, to a broader extent, other immigrants¹¹, the Gouvernement du Québec has no control over the initial receipt of permanent residence applications. Therefore, it cannot limit the number of applications at the start of the process, which would help reduce overall wait times prior to admission.

Under the family class, while it has no power over the initial receipt of applications, the Gouvernement du Québec has decided to use the levers available to it and implemented, in June 2024, a management system for undertaking applications following receipt of applications sent to the federal government. This application management system aims to bring the number of CSQs issued in line with the admission threshold set by Québec for the family class, in a context in which the Canadian government is at risk of failing to meet the thresholds planned by the Gouvernement du Québec. That being said, Québec's efforts to manage applications have no bearing on pre-admission wait times since there are no restrictions on the volume of applications filed with the federal government.

4.6 Multiplication of public policies of the federal government

In recent years, the federal government has frequently used its discretionary power to adopt immigration-related TPPs. This type of policy is provided for in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and lets the federal government facilitate access to permanent or temporary residence for target groups who otherwise would not be eligible for an immigration category or program under the Act. According to IRCC, before 2020, fewer than 10 TPPs were adopted annually.

This number increased to 26 in 2020, to 53 in 2021 and to 25 in 2022¹².

While TPPs are a valuable tool to respond to unforeseen situations that require a rapid response, such as humanitarian crises, the significant increase in such policies in recent years has represented a challenge for Québec. Even if the Gouvernement du Québec believes that it has final say on the implementation of TPPs on its territory to facilitate permanent residence, the multiplication of these policies has complicated the management of the “other immigrants” admission category, which include admissions under a TPP.

¹¹ In the category of other immigrants, most applications are filed within Québec, pursuant to the federal government's power of discretion to review permanent residence applications for humanitarian or public policy considerations. These applications should first be submitted to the federal government.

¹² IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA (2024). *IRCC Minister Transition Binder 2023: Humanitarian and Compassionate Considerations and Public Policy*, [Online], 2023.
[\[https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2023/humanitarian-compassionate-considerations-public-policy.html\]](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/transition-binders/minister-2023/humanitarian-compassionate-considerations-public-policy.html).

Furthermore, TPPs give the federal government the power to more easily exempt employers from the LMIA requirement under the PMI, which allows it to issue more work permits without requiring Québec's consent. For example, since 2021, the federal government has implemented several public policies, namely in order to issue work permits to foreign nationals from various places experiencing crisis (Hong Kong, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Gaza, Haiti)¹³. The number of work permits issued annually under these policies, for holders who intend to settle in Québec, increased by 254% between 2021 and 2023, from 3,470 to 12,290, i.e., 7% of people holding at least one work permit, regardless of the purpose of the permit, issued under the PMI in 2023¹⁴. Practically speaking, no work permits were issued under public policies prior to 2021. Consequently, this is a major paradigm shift since these types of people had previously arrived through permanent immigration programs, which allowed Québec to determine the number of people it was prepared to receive.

4.7 Québec labour market

The Québec labour market continues to be favourable to job seekers in certain sectors. While recent total population projections, more specifically for people of working age (15 to 64 years old), are trending upward on the medium term, this does not do away with population issues such as the aging population.

After slowing in 2023, the Québec economy experienced a revival in 2024. In the fall of 2024, forecasts of the Ministère des Finances (Ministry of Finance) indicated that economic growth could accelerate in the coming years. However, the current uncertainties regarding international trade could have a non-negligible impact on economic growth in Québec. Thus, the Ministère des Finances revised its forecasts in March 2025 and is now predicting slower economic growth.

After a decrease to 72.5% in 2020 due to the health crisis, the employed population in Québec aged 15 to 64 recovered to 77.3% in 2024. In the past 20 years, the employment rate in Québec has grown faster than in Canada as a whole. This rate, which was 69.9% in 2003 and lower than in Canada (72.2%), increased to 77.3% in 2024, compared to 74.7% for Canada. In this respect, Québec is ranked first among constituent states.

As for the unemployment rate for the population aged 15 and over in Québec, it had climbed to 8.9% in 2020 during the health crisis and subsequently decreased to 4.3% in 2022 before increasing again to 5.3% in 2024. In March 2025, it was 5.7%¹⁵. The youth unemployment rate, i.e., for the population aged 15 to 24, recorded a non-negligible increase of 2.1 percentage points between 2023 and 2024 (from 7.4% to 9.5%).

When it comes to immigrants aged 15 and over very recently admitted to Québec (within the past year), the unemployment rate saw a notable increase between 2023 and 2024, from 11.3% to 18.1%, while the rate for immigrants recently admitted (in the past 1 to 5 years) remained relatively stable, increasing from 8.9% in 2023 to 9.2% in 2024.

¹³ Before this, Canada offered permanent immigration pathways for this type of situation. For example, Syrian foreign nationals were granted permanent residence upon arriving in Canada in 2015–2016.

¹⁴ IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA. *RDB, UAT Temporary residents, 2024, request for customized tables RD-24-0320*, 2025, [PDF file].

¹⁵ Seasonally adjusted monthly data for the entire population. Similar data is unavailable for the immigrant population and cannot be compared to annual data. Sources: STATISTICS CANADA. *Labour Force Survey. Adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec*, [Online], accessed in 2025. [<https://statistique.quebec.ca/en/produit/tableau/916>]. Source: [Résultats de l'Enquête sur la population active pour le Québec au mois de mars 2025 \(Results of the Québec Labour Force Survey in March 2025\)](#).

Based on recent data from the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, in Q4 2024, Statistics Canada recorded 130,525 job vacancies in Québec¹⁶. Compared to Q4 2023, this volume had decreased by slightly over 30,705 (-19.0%). This decrease was reflected in the lower job vacancy rate, which dropped from 4.0% to 3.2% during this period. While Québec had long held one of the highest job vacancy rates among constituent states, it is now 6th in Canada. In Q4 2024, there were 2.2 unemployed people per job vacancy compared to 1.5 one year prior, which is indicative of a loosening of the labour market.

Long-term forecasts of the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) for 2024–2033 show that nearly 1.4 million jobs will be filled.

What's more, over the shorter term from 2024 to 2028, the MESS predicts that over half of the 516 occupations of the National Occupation Classification will experience labour shortages: 56 (11%) will experience a shortage and 207 (40%) will experience a mild shortage. By comparison, 170 occupations (33%) will remain stable and 6 (1%) will experience a mild surplus (no occupations will experience a surplus)¹⁷.

According to reports commissioned by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, immigration cannot necessarily resolve the labour shortage issue, since all immigrants consume but do not necessarily actively contribute to the labour market, even those in the economic category. Thus, for Pierre Fortin¹⁸, professor emeritus in economics at UQAM, increasing immigration to meet the needs of specific employers causes an increase in activity that generates different labour shortages elsewhere in the economy. It is therefore difficult to say that immigrants can, generally speaking, resolve the labour shortage issue.

¹⁶ INSTITUT DE LA STATISTIQUE DU QUÉBEC. *Résultats de l'Enquête sur les postes vacants et le salaire pour le Québec au quatrième trimestre de 2024 (Results of the Survey on Job Vacancies and Wages for Québec, Q4 2024)*, [Online], 2025. [<https://statistique.quebec.ca/en/communiquer/postes-vacants-et-salaire-quatrieme-trimestre-2024>].

¹⁷ GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC. *État d'équilibre du marché du travail à court et moyen termes, 2024 – Diagnostics pour 516 professions (Labour Market Equilibrium: Short and Medium Term, 2024 – Diagnosis for 516 Occupations)*, [Online], 2025. [https://cdn-contenu.quebec.ca/cdn-contenu/adm/min/emploi-solidarite-sociale/publications-adm/rapport/Diagnostic_516_Professions_VF.pdf].

¹⁸ Fortin, P. *Les conséquences de l'expansion accélérée de l'immigration de 2016 à 2024 : que doit maintenant faire le Québec ? Mémoire soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration du Québec (The Consequences of Accelerated Immigration Growth from 2016 to 2024: What Should Québec Do Now? Thesis submitted to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration du Québec)*, [Online], 2025.

In addition to the mixed effect on the labour shortage, massive immigration does not necessarily increase the employment rate and can actually decrease it. Pierre-Carl Michaud's report¹⁹ highlights the fact that recent immigrants generally have a lower employment rate than non-immigrants, and that this gap appears difficult to close. What's more, Michaud also mentions that permanent immigrants under the economic category who arrive directly from abroad have a lower average employment income than non-immigrants, and take several years to catch up in this regard. In this context, the use of temporary foreign workers must be viewed as a last resort. A paradigm shift is needed to return to the fundamental principles of temporary immigration programs and reduce the increasing dependence on temporary foreign workers. Attracting and retaining a local workforce, reorganizing work within companies, retraining workers and automating production are all options that could have a meaningful effect on reducing significant labour needs in Québec.

4.8 Factors influencing Québec's reception and integration capacity

It is important to remember that the integration of immigrants in Québec depends on the capacity of Québec society to receive them in the regions where they intend to settle. This integration relies on a strong foundation involving several governmental stakeholders, such as the capacity to meet infrastructure needs (housing, transportation, classrooms, etc.), economic needs (local employment options and vitality of the region) and service needs (health, education, early childhood education services, French lessons). The capacity to meet these needs helps immigrants integrate, settle on the long term and participate in Québec society in French. All people who live in Québec, no matter their status, need to be able to access these various services. The excessively rapid increase in immigration volumes is currently putting pressure on the capacity to meet these needs. Marc Termote²⁰ mentions that there is also a chronological component to the province's reception capacity, since it can change over time. The significant growth in international immigration in recent years, combined with the aging population, has, in his opinion, significantly affected Québec's reception capacity. Meanwhile, Pierre Fortin²¹ highlights the social aspect of reception capacity. He believes that the volume of immigrants admitted should respect the social absorption capacity of the host community by allowing for the progressive creation of new social safety nets.

In this respect, the concept of reception capacity should be interpreted with caution, since it refers to both quantitative aspects (e.g., housing needs and job vacancies) and qualitative aspects (feeling of belonging, presence of inclusive environments and social cohesion, etc.) and cannot be determined using a scientific method.

¹⁹ MICHAUD, P-C.: *Orientations de la planification pluriannuelle de l'immigration au Québec. Rapport soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*, 2025, [Online].

²⁰ Termote, M. *Les défis d'une politique d'immigration pour le Québec. Rapport soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*, 2025, [Online].

²¹ Fortin, P. *Les conséquences de l'expansion accélérée de l'immigration de 2016 à 2024 : que doit maintenant faire le Québec ? Mémoire soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration du Québec*, 2025, [Online].

4.9 Importance of the regionalization of immigration

The Gouvernement du Québec has made the regionalization of immigration a priority. The regionalization of immigration represents a response to the regions' labour needs. That being said, immigrants who have chosen to settle in a region require proper support in order to see to their successful integration and long-term settlement in French.

In this respect, support and integration services must be consolidated at all costs. Immigration planning therefore requires taking into account the regions' integration capacity.

Immigration to the regions is another of the Gouvernement du Québec's priorities with a view to developing the regions. In its Plan stratégique 2023-2027 (2023–2027 Strategic Plan), the Ministère emphasized the capacity of its regional network to receive and integrate immigrants on its territory, in French. This concept informed the creation of an initial Plan d'action ministériel sur la régionalisation de l'immigration (PAMRI) for 2020–2024. "Primary" regionalization is considered a priority in this plan, so that more people make the decision to settle outside the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) before arriving in Québec. Indeed, of the immigrants living in Québec, the proportion of those residing outside the CMM two years after admission has increased by 12.9 percentage points, from 21.0% in 2021 to 33.9% in 2025.

Nevertheless, there is a significant disparity across the regions. In January 2025, 37.2% of people admitted two years earlier (in 2023) and residing outside the CMM were located in the Capitale-Nationale administrative region; this proportion was less than 2% for the following regions: Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord, Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Nord-du-Québec. Meanwhile, some of these regions have a negative net inter-regional migration rate, namely Abitibi-Témiscamingue (-0.3% from 2023 to 2024, more recent data available), Nord-du-Québec (-0.4%) and Côte-Nord (-0.5%) and would benefit from the arrival and long-term settlement of new immigrants.

The ministère already offers a variety of services to help with integration and to prepare host communities in the regions through several of its programs, namely the Accompagnement Québec (AQ) service implemented in 2019, the services available to businesses since 2018, the Programme d'accompagnement et de soutien à l'intégration (PASI) and the Programme d'appui aux collectivités (PAC) implemented in 2020. The PAC covers nearly 80% of regional county municipalities (RCMs). It is primarily concerned with bridging cultures, in order to make communities more welcoming and more inclusive and meet the intercultural challenges faced by Québécois and newcomers to Québec.

For the Ministère, the attractiveness of the regions before immigrants leave their country of origin is an essential component of the regionalization of immigration. It is achieved by promoting settlement in the regions and by supporting immigrants in preparing their plans to move to a region and settle there. Between April 2022 and September 2024, AQ oversaw more than 10,000 applications in the pre-departure phase.

It is therefore important to optimize all services related to reception and integration to see to the success of immigration to the regions and better integrate newcomers, namely by maintaining consistency between eligibility for integration services and the temporary immigrants concerned by immigration planning.

Immigration to the regions also represents support that the Ministère can provide to businesses located outside the CMM and seeking to meet labour shortages using foreign workers. In his report ²²submitted to the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, Pierre-Carl Michaud posits that the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires is an excellent program to encourage the regionalization of immigration. For example, for 2023, 75% of people hired during international recruitment missions were given jobs with employers located outside the CMM.

Under the Programme Action concertée (Concerted Action Program) in partnership with the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) — secteur Société et culture (Society and Culture Sector), the Ministère allocated funding of nearly \$320,000 to a research project on the regionalization of immigration and long-term settlement.

4.10 Québec's levers

Due to the division of responsibility when it comes to immigration, the Gouvernement du Québec does not have the necessary levers to select all of the immigrants it receives.

Given the specifics of the various immigration categories and their individual goals, knowledge of French and even residency in the province are not always considered a condition for selection.

Nevertheless, measures can be implemented in collaboration with the federal government to ensure that immigrants who settle in Québec learn French and that government services cater to their needs. In order to see to the satisfactory reception of new immigrants who arrive in Québec in the coming years, a better plan for their arrival is needed, particularly where temporary immigration is concerned.

²² MICHAUD, P-C.: *Orientations de la planification pluriannuelle de l'immigration au Québec. Rapport soumis au ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*, 2025, [Online].

5. Québec's requests from the federal government

In the last year, the government's two orders have led to the implementation of various measures to reduce the number of non-permanent residents in Québec. While the federal measures are broader in scope, those of the Gouvernement du Québec are targeting Montréal and Laval as starting points to reduce numbers. Since a high proportion of NPRs (asylum seekers and TFWs under the PMI) come from immigration programs under the exclusive responsibility of the federal government, the Gouvernement du Québec has repeatedly reminded the federal government of the urgency of acting to tighten overall immigration volumes, particularly NPRs, in order to relieve the ever-increasing pressure on Québec's reception and integration capacity in terms of housing availability and access to public services. As a result, Québec has requested the following from the federal government:

- ▶ Decrease the number of holders of work permits issued under the PMI and asylum seekers so that they number 200,000 by 2029 compared with 416,000 in 2024. The Gouvernement du Québec wants the federal government to prioritize the Montréal and Laval regions in the application of its reduction;
- ▶ The IRCC is asked to tighten its visa allocation policy applicable to foreign nationals from countries that also produce the majority of asylum seekers, by imposing additional constraints such as more thorough security screenings, acquiring travel tickets to get to Canada and return to the country of origin and having a certain degree of financial assets;
- ▶ Implement a system to equitably distribute asylum seekers throughout Canada and have it coordinated by the federal government according to the relative population of each constituent state. Meetings of the federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) group on asylum did not result in the establishment of the system requested by Québec;
- ▶ Speed up IRB processing times of asylum claims, since the current wait times (approximately 37 months) result in individuals without recognized refugee status who stay in Québec for several years, which makes it harder for them to leave the territory if their asylum claim is denied.

The full effects of potential measures of the federal government to answer these claims will not be felt until several years after implementation. Given the large share of NPRs under the exclusive responsibility of the federal government, the Gouvernement du Québec intends to act by proposing a decrease in permanent immigration levels. This is a delicate exercise, however—one that must take into account Québec's idiosyncrasies, namely those related to regional economic realities.

6. Government measures to control the overall volume of immigration to Québec

For the first time, this plan includes temporary immigration, which is now mandatory to include pursuant to the *Act mainly to improve the regulatory scheme governing international students* amending the LIQ.

6.1 Québec government measures

As regards temporary immigration, on September 3, 2024, Québec implemented a six-month renewable suspension on the intake of certain LMIA applications for jobs offered in the administrative region of Montréal with a lower wage than the current median hourly wage in Québec (\$27.47/hour). Québec extended this measure until November 30, 2025, increasing the scope to include the Laval region and adjusting the wage threshold to that established by the federal government for the low-wage stream.

Moreover, Québec revised its methodology for determining the Liste des professions admissibles au traitement simplifié (List of Occupations Eligible for a Facilitated Process). Henceforth, only occupations experiencing a labour shortage throughout Québec and occupations in priority sectors experiencing a shortage or mild shortage in at least one Québec region will be eligible for a facilitated process. This reduces the number of occupations in the list from 276 to 76. The decision was also made not to renew the changes to the PTET negotiated with the federal government in 2021 and 2023, which expired on December 31, 2024, and made it easier to hire workers with fewer qualifications.

Furthermore, in December 2024, the Gouvernement du Québec established legal levers to better and more specifically support the arrival of international students on its territory and see to the healthy and sustainable management of the PEE. Indeed, after being approved on December 6, 2024, the *Act mainly to improve the regulatory scheme governing international students* amended the LIQ, namely so that the government can make decisions by order relating to the management of applications submitted by international students based on a range of variables such as region, level of education, language of instruction, study program and any distinction deemed relevant in order to better support the arrival of international students in Québec.

These new powers enabled the Gouvernement du Québec to issue a first application management order targeting the PEE, which came into effect on February 26, 2025. This order is valid for one year and limits temporary selection applications for study purposes for the following three levels: vocational, collegial and university.

In terms of permanent immigration, two temporary measures came into effect on October 31, 2024, to better manage the growth of permanent immigration:

- ▶ Suspend the intake of permanent selection applications under the Programme de l'expérience québécoise, volet Diplômés du Québec (PEQ-Diplômés); The suspension has been extended until November 30, 2025;
- ▶ Temporarily pause invitations to apply for permanent selection under the PRTQ, replaced since November 29, 2024, by the PSTQ. Invitations will begin in July 2025.

The Travailleurs (Workers) stream of the PEQ is currently pausing the intake of applications for permanent selection until November 30, 2025.

In the family class, in June 2024, the Ministère set up a system to manage undertaking applications over a two-year period so that the number of people selected is in line with the admission thresholds planned for this category. This measure aims to avoid exceeding the admission thresholds planned by Québec in a context in which the number of applications received significantly exceeds the number of people Québec is able to admit.

As regards humanitarian immigration, on December 18, 2024, the Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration announced the suspension of the intake of undertaking applications under the Programme des personnes réfugiées à l'étranger (collective sponsorship) until June 30, 2025. This suspension was subsequently prolonged until December 31, 2027. What's more, since Québec was not going to be able to reach the admission thresholds stipulated under collective sponsorship in 2024, the decision was made to transfer part of the admission targets under this category to the category of refugees recognized within Québec and to that of other immigrants.

On November 27, 2024, the Ministère also announced the suspension of its international recruitment activities until June 30, 2025. This decision, while consistent with the government's goal to reduce the number of NPRs in Québec, will make it easier to bring future Ministère recruitment activities in line with the orientations stemming from the multi-year plan, namely with regard to temporary immigration.

The orientations issued from this multi-year immigration planning exercise will guide decisions to be made in the coming months and years about these various immigration programs.

6.2 Federal government measures

In early 2024, the federal government announced its intent to reduce the number of NPRs, over three years, from 6.2% of the Canadian population to 5% by the end of 2026. The federal government formalized this intent in October 2024 by submitting its 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan. For the first time, this plan contains temporary admission targets for international students and TFWs. The total number of arrivals under temporary programs should be 673,650 in 2025, 516,600 in 2026 and 543,600 in 2027. The Plan also plans for a decrease in the total number of permanent admissions to 395,000 in 2025, 380,000 in 2026 and 365,000 in 2027.

To reach its goals, the federal government took a series of measures within the PTET, PEE and PMI:

- ▶ Refuse to process certain LMIA requests in the low-wage stream (hourly wage below \$32.96/hour) of the PTET applicable to census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in which the unemployment rate is 6% or more;
- ▶ Decrease the TFW hiring limit from 20% to 10% per workplace, for the low-wage stream of the PTET;
- ▶ Reduce the maximum employment duration for TFWs in the low-wage stream of the PTET from 2 years to 1 year;
- ▶ Modify the wage threshold determination model for the high-wage stream;
- ▶ Set, as of January 2024, a limit on the number of study permit applications for each constituent state. This limit was subsequently revised for 2025;
- ▶ Place restrictions on the post-graduate work permit and work permit for spouses of international students under the PMI. These restrictions may also have a downward effect on the number of international students by decreasing the attractiveness of studying in Canada and Québec;
- ▶ Place additional restrictions on the work permit for spouses of TFWs under the PMI.

A new directive entered into force on January 1st, 2025, suspending applications for sponsorship of permanent residence for parents and grandparents indefinitely. However, applications of this nature received in 2024 can be processed in 2025.

The federal government has also taken certain measures to reduce the number of people seeking asylum upon arrival or during their stay in Canada. In February 2024, it introduced a visa requirement for all Mexican citizens travelling to Canada, as they represented a substantial proportion of asylum seekers in 2023²³.

In recent months, the federal government also announced measures to strengthen Canada's border security and immigration system. These measures include, for example, improved communication of information with United States authorities, the implementation of detection technologies and more thorough reviews of visa applications²⁴.

Overall, these measures could have a non-negligible impact over the medium term on migration flows destined for Canada and, consequently, Québec.

²³ IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA. *Actions taken to strengthen Canada's temporary residence programs and migration pathways*, 2024, [Online]. [<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/09/actions-taken-to-strengthen-canadas-temporary-residence-programs-and-migration-pathways.html>].

²⁴ IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA (2024). *Measures to strengthen border security and Canada's immigration system*, 2025, [Online]. [<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2025/01/measures-to-strengthen-border-security-and-canadas-immigration-system.html>].

7. International recruitment activities of the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration

The *Act respecting the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration* establishes the Ministère as the coordinator, with the support of the ministries and organizations concerned, of the promotion of immigration to Québec, as well as the identification and recruitment of foreign nationals in other countries.

International recruitment activities coordinated by the Ministère, more specifically the Journées Québec (Québec Days), help employers access international recruitment in order to temporarily relieve labour shortages where there is an insufficient local workforce. Thus, from January 1st to December 31, 2024, 2,063 people were recruited under the Journées Québec, including 77% in key sectors of the Québec government's Opération main-d'œuvre (Operation Workforce)²⁵.

The Journées Québec contribute to the regionalization of immigration and the economic vitality of the regions. They also help recruit workers in sectors prioritized by the government, such as health, education and construction. Furthermore, the coordination of the recruitment of foreign workers by the Ministère constitutes a tool to plan immigration, namely in contexts where the selection of temporary immigrants already living in Québec is expected to increase under permanent immigration programs. Indeed, the Ministère's involvement helps bring the recruitment of such workers in line with the needs of Québec society.

As part of these international recruitment activities, Québec adheres to principles of ethical recruitment, in keeping with the local job market and in collaboration with its international partners. Its activities follow the guiding principles and international standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Health Organization (WHO). They are carried out in full transparency with partner countries, in keeping with the ecosystem of the local job market and according to a collaborative approach. They also aim to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, such as upskilling and human capital development projects in countries where Québec is recruiting.

²⁵ Opération main-d'œuvre targets the following sectors: health and social services, education, early childhood education services, information technology, engineering and construction.

The suspension of the Ministère's international recruitment activities until June 30, 2025, will make it easier to bring them in line with the orientations resulting from the next multi-year plan, namely in terms of temporary immigration and the approach to addressing the labour needs of Québec businesses. The Ministère intends to reduce its international recruitment action in order to target strategic sectors for the government.

Lastly, immigration should not be considered the sole solution to Québec's labour issues. Employers can also adjust production methods, look into automation options and ways of boosting local employment, in a context of tightening of the labour market.

8. Changes in humanitarian immigration over time

The number of displaced persons and refugees in the world is at an all-time high. While the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) estimated that 117.3 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of 2023²⁶, the IOM recorded 35.3 million refugees at the end of 2022, 41% of whom were under the age of 18²⁷. Nearly 2.9 million asylum claims were recorded on a global scale, the highest number ever recorded, 51,700 of which were filed by unaccompanied children separated from their families.

Based on data of the High Commissioner for Refugees for the Americas at the midway point of 2024, Canada had the fourth-highest number of asylum seekers on its territory (253,944), after the United States (3,184,161), Peru (508,429) and Mexico (276,696)²⁸. It also had the third-highest number of refugees, defined here as protected persons awaiting permanent residence (194,302), after the United States (435,333) and Brazil (243,076)²⁹. North America is by far the most popular irregular international migration corridor³⁰.

²⁶ HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. *Global Trends 2023*, p. 6, [Online], [<https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2023>]. The rise to 117.3 million at the end of 2023 constitutes an 8% increase compared to the end of 2022, i.e., 8.8 million people, and continues the gradual upward trend over the last 12 years.

²⁷ This number includes people recorded by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

²⁸ HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. *Refugee data finder*, accessed in 2025, [Online], [<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download>]. The definition of "asylum seekers" includes people awaiting a decision on their asylum claim as well as those appealing an unfavourable decision of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).

²⁹ *Ibid.* International comparisons should be interpreted with caution, since the number of refugees, as defined by the High Commissioner for Refugees, may be recorded differently from country to country. For example, for Peru, over one million people are included in the category of "other people in need of international protection" or "displaced persons" but are not considered asylum seekers or refugees.

³⁰ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION. *World Migration Report 2024*, p. 23, 2024, [Online]. [<https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2024>].

Québec is inevitably affected by these international migration trends. In 2023, the federal government expanded the application of the Safe Third Country Agreement, which led to a radical decrease in asylum claims submitted by people passing through Roxham Road. However, there has been an increase in asylum claims at official points of entry to Canada, like at Pierre-Elliott Trudeau International Airport and inland offices.

The number of people awaiting a decision from the IRB about their claim for several years continues to increase.

8.1 Importance of collaboration within Canada to better manage the flow of asylum seekers

The Gouvernement du Québec contributes to international solidarity efforts toward people in distress and adheres to international agreements and standards to protect these people, namely by offering safe, legal and sustainable paths to immigration. It reiterates the importance of implementing a more equitable distribution system for asylum seekers within Canada, according to the relative population of the constituent states. This distribution system will need to be coordinated by the federal government.

8.2 Adapting humanitarian immigration to the current context

In 2023, 2,611 refugees (1,420 government-assisted and 1,191 sponsored) were admitted abroad and resettled in Québec, representing 0.03% of its population. What's more, Canada is one of the leading host countries for resettled refugees in the world, i.e., refugees requesting protection from Canada while they are located abroad, with over 51,000 in 2023, i.e., 0.13% of its population. By comparison, the United States resettled 60,050 refugees, or 0.02% of its total population.³¹

Meanwhile, Québec is experiencing substantial growth in the number of people recognized as refugees on its territory and people who, having been denied refugee status within Québec, ask to stay in Québec for humanitarian reasons.

In order to continue to meet its humanitarian undertakings while taking into account the substantial number of refugees or people in similar circumstances already in Québec and the current wait times for obtaining permanent residence, Québec could prioritize the admission of people belonging to the category of humanitarian immigration and already located on its territory.

³¹ HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES. *Refugee data finder*, accessed in 2025, [Online].
[<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download>].

9. French, a catalyst of integration into Québec

As the only Francophone society in North America, Québec is facing linguistic challenges. French is the language of the government, work, education, communication, trade and business. Immigrants' knowledge of French is the key to their participation in society and successful integration, which would support their long-term settlement in Québec.

Following its commitment to counter the decline of French, the Gouvernement du Québec launched Francisation Québec (FQ) on June 1st, 2023, as the only access point for government services to learn French. Furthermore, in November 2023, it reformed economic immigration programs to make knowledge of French an essential requirement for people who intend to permanently immigrate to Québec. The Plan pour la langue française (French Language Plan), in force since 2024, recognizes the need for immigrants to contribute to the preservation and vitality of French. Lastly, the Gouvernement du Québec announced its intent to require that TFWs know French, except for agricultural workers, as a condition for obtaining a CAQ under the PTET. These TFWs must have a cumulative stay of three years in Québec with the intention to work. At the request of Québec, the federal government also agreed to impose a similar requirement for certain categories of work permit under the PMI. This measure is expected to enter into force in the fall of 2025.

9.1 Importance of linguistic immigration orientations to ensure the vitality and preservation of French in Québec

The French language is at the heart of Québec identity. The 1977 *Charter of the French language* confirmed Québec's desire to uphold a Francophone society in North America. On June 1st, 2022, the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec* was adopted, amending the *Charter of the French language* to establish French as the only official and common language of Québec. Since knowledge of French allows immigrants to more easily and quickly integrate into their jobs and host communities, in addition to ensure the preservation of the language, Québec needs to act and set appropriate and innovative language-related orientations.

FQ helps people domiciled in Québec and immigrants who intend to settle in Québec learn French. French lessons are available for free to anyone aged 16 and over residing in Québec and not subject to compulsory education. These lessons are offered in person, remotely and online, part-time and full-time, and may come with financial assistance under certain conditions. Free services to learn French are also offered to people domiciled abroad who intend to settle in Québec. FQ also offers consulting services and workplace francization services for businesses to encourage their workers to learn French.

With AQ, services are personalized for immigrants who are able to start learning French before they arrive in Québec.

In November 2023, the Gouvernement du Québec reformed its economic immigration programs in order to improve its efforts to strengthen the vitality of the French language. Under the PEQ-Diplômé, since November 23, 2024, anyone who intends to apply for permanent selection must have completed a study program in Québec in French or have completed at least three years of full-time secondary or post-secondary studies in French. Knowledge of spoken French has also been required for applicants to three programs for businesspeople since January 1st, 2024. Lastly, under the PSTQ, effective as of November 29, 2024, there are minimum French knowledge requirements³².

Government programs to structure and support learning French are regularly updated in order to meet the needs of adults in the process of francization and to be in line with the reality of today's world. Each year, FQ finds new educational materials, French learning tools, and innovative lesson formats for its students, who consist of immigrants domiciled in Québec, immigrants learning French abroad and employed workers. Throughout the enhancement and diversification of the services it offers, the Gouvernement du Québec must make sure these services remain accessible to an increasingly large population.

³² Only one of four streams of the PSTQ has no French requirement: Stream 4 on exceptional talent. However, this stream should only apply to a very small number of foreign nationals.

9.2 Changes in knowledge of French and its use in the workplace by immigrants over time

9.2.1 Permanent immigration

Census data from Statistics Canada³³ points to interesting trends in Québec residents' knowledge of French³⁴. The percentage of immigrants who stated that they can hold a conversation in French grew from 1996 to 2021, increasing from 72.9% to 80.5%, but remained stable at 80.5% between 2016 and 2021. This dynamic is different from the knowledge of French of non-immigrants, which remained stable for 25 years, increasing from 96.3% in 1996 to 96.8% in 2021. However, a lower knowledge of French has been observed in very recent immigrants. Thus, while 75.8% of immigrants admitted between 2016 reported knowing French in 2021, this proportion was 86.1% for people admitted between 2006 and 2015.

Prioritizing people in Québec during the pandemic and the high proportion of economic immigration in Québec led to an increase in the proportion of people admitted who reported knowing French. Thus, Québec made decisions regarding immigration thresholds by category and reformed permanent immigration programs by making knowledge of French a priority. There appears to be an annual progression in the proportion of immigrants who reported knowing French, from 49.8% in 2019 to 60.4% in 2020. This progression continued into 2021 at 69.2% and 2022 at 67.8%. In 2023, the rate of immigrants who reported knowing French slightly regressed to 65.6%. It was 72.5% for people admitted to Québec in 2024.

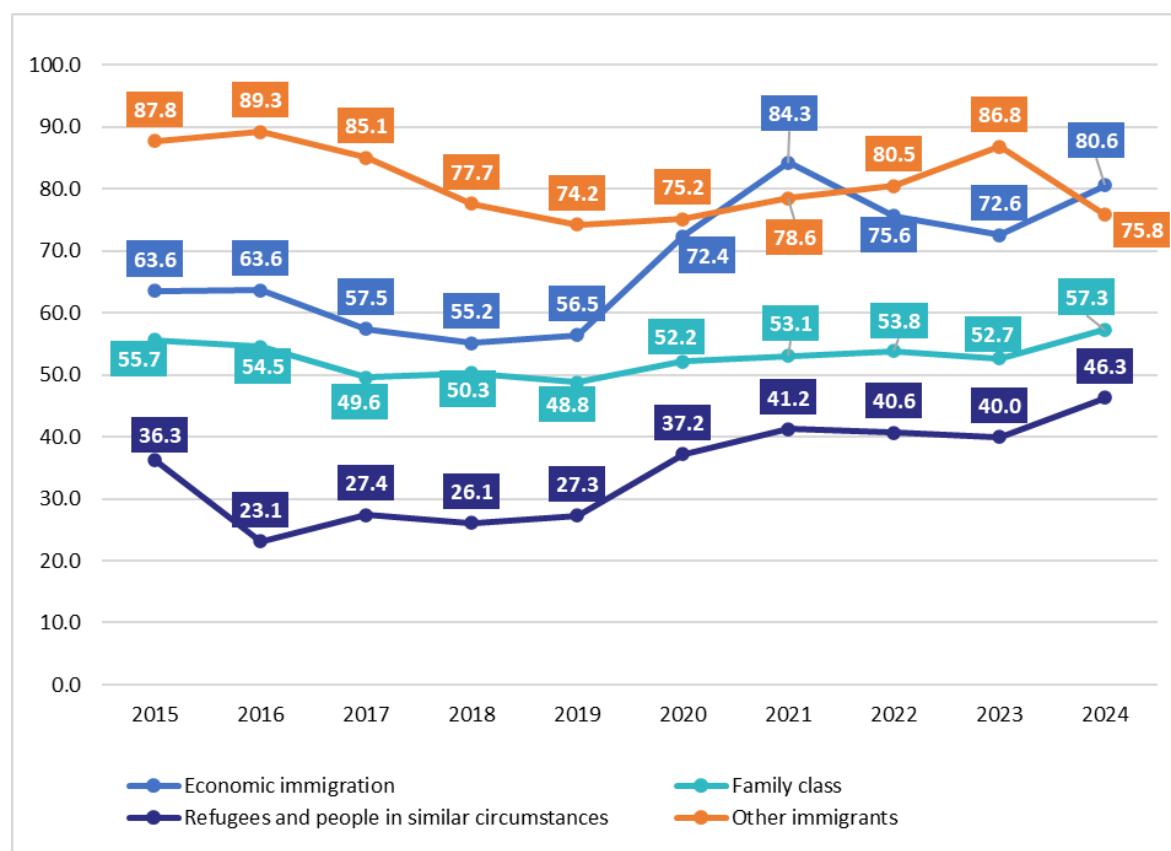
In general, the proportion of people admitted under the category of economic immigration who reported knowing French is higher than that of permanent immigration as a whole. The proportion of people admitted under the category of economic immigration who reported knowing French, which was 56.5% in 2019, progressed to reach 72.4% in 2020 at the start of the health crisis. This proportion was 84.3% in 2021, 75.6% in 2022, 72.6% in 2023 and 80.6% in 2024.

³³ STATISTICS CANADA. Compilation by the Ministère, customized tables (CO-2440 Table 11, CO-2277 Table 4, CO-2277 Table 3, CO-2277 Table 2, CO-2277 Table 1 and CO-2439 Table 10).

³⁴ Knowledge of French targets people who only know French or several languages, including French.

Graph 9

Proportion of people admitted who reported knowing French by immigration category, Québec, 2015 to 2024



Preliminary data for 2024.

Source: MINISTÈRE DE L'IMMIGRATION, DE LA FRANCISATION ET DE L'INTÉGRATION: Direction de la statistique et de l'information de gestion. Permanent admissions database.

9.2.2 Temporary immigration

NPRs' knowledge of French has increased over the years but remained stable between 2011 and 2021. Indeed, 68.4% of NPRs stated that they could carry a conversation in French in 2021, representing a slight decrease compared to 2011 (68.6%), but a clear increase compared to 1996 (55.4%). Nevertheless, these proportions remain below those of immigrants and non-immigrants.

In the 2021 census, international students represents the NPR group in Québec with the highest rate of people who reported knowing only English³⁵. In this respect, the Commissaire à la langue française (French Language Commissioner) established a correlation between the language of postsecondary studies and the language used at work in Québec after graduation³⁶.

³⁵ COMMISSAIRE À LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE. *Immigration temporaire : choisir le français (Temporary Immigration: Choosing French)*, 2024, [Online]. https://www.commissairelanguefrancaise.quebec/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rapport_Immigration_temporaire_choisir_le_francais.pdf.

³⁶ COMMISSAIRE À LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE. *Analyse de la situation du français au Québec – Études complémentaires (Analysis of the Situation of French in Québec – Additional Studies)*, 2024, [Online]. <https://www.commissairelanguefrancaise.quebec/publications/etude/analyse-francais-etudes-complementaires/>.

Over three quarters (76.8%) of valid study permit holders as of December 31, 2024, under the Programme des étudiants étrangers in Québec reported knowing French. This is a clear progression when compared to the average of valid study permit holders between 2019 and 2023 (61.9%).

For their part, over half (53.1%) of valid work permit holders as of December 31, 2024, under the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires (PTET) in Québec reported knowing French. This also represents a progression when compared with the average of valid permit holders under the PTET between 2019 and 2023 (41.3%). This trend does not carry across to holders of work permits for employment purposes under the Programme de mobilité internationale (PMI), since 57.7% of them reported knowing French in 2024, versus 63.6% on average between 2019 and 2023.

In this light and the context of the PTET, on November 1st, 2023, the Gouvernement du Québec announced its intent to require level 4 knowledge of spoken French according to the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français (Québec Scale of Competency Levels in French)* under the PTET. This requirement will apply upon selection of TFWs who intend to renew their work authorizations after staying in Québec for a period of three or more years. The required level corresponds to functional communication in French, which will provide TFWs with the basic language skills needed to meet their everyday needs in French, namely to understand and exercise their rights, which will help decrease their vulnerability. This will also help them better integrate into the Francophone labour market and into their host communities, thus helping to preserve French in Québec. This measure is expected to enter into force in the fall of 2025, with temporary measures planned so that all TFWs, including those already present in Québec, can learn and prove the required level of competency in French. All details relating to this measure are presented in proposed legislation published in the *Gazette officielle du Québec (Official Journal of Québec)* for public consultation. Also note that at the request of Québec, the federal government confirmed its intent to introduce a similar language requirement under the PMI.

9.2.3 Use of French in the workplace

While knowledge of French in Québec seems to be relatively stable, its use in the workplace remains a major challenge. Census data³⁷ shows that 71.0% of the employed immigrant population used French most often (alone or with another language) at work in 2021; this represents a decrease of 2.3 percentage points compared to 2016 (73.3%). In people very recently admitted, i.e., between 2016 and 2021, this proportion was 64.6% in 2021, while it was 75.5% for people admitted between 2006 and 2015. These levels are different from those of the non-immigrant labour force, 88.8% of which used French most often in the workplace in 2021, compared to 90.0% in 2016.³⁸

³⁷ STATISTICS CANADA. Compilation of the Ministère, customized tables (CO-1824 Table 2 and CO-2439 Table 2).

³⁸ Statistics Canada recommends interpreting comparisons with caution, since the questions on the languages used in the workplace in 2021 are different from previous censuses. For further details:
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021010/98-200-x2021010-eng.cfm>

English as a language of work also seems to have grown in 2021, as it represented the only language used most often in the workplace for more than one quarter (26.4%) of immigrants, 2.2 percentage points higher than in 2016 (24.2%). While English is also increasing in the non-immigrant population, it is only by a single percentage point (10.7% in 2021 versus 9.7% in 2016).

Employed NPRs are also less likely to use French at work than the immigrant and non-immigrant population, with 60.1% of this group using French most often at work in 2021. This group was also the most likely to use only English most often at work, at 34.7%.

The Ministère de la Langue française, in its *Au Québec, l'avenir s'écrit en français* plan published in April 2024, highlighted the apparent effect on the declining use of French of the rapid increase in the volume of NPRs and lower use of French by immigrants recently admitted to Québec.

10. Looking back on the last multi-year plan for 2024 and 2025

A two-year period was retained for the previous multi-year plan (2024 and 2025) in order to measure the impact of the entry into force of the reformed economic immigration programs and the substantial increase in the number of NPRs in recent years. Twelve orientations were adopted after the public consultation held from May to September 2023, illustrating Québec's determination to remain a thriving Francophone society that is able to responsibly address its population, social and economic needs. Orientation 12 upholds the cap on regular admissions at 50,000 people in 2024 and 2025 and the ongoing, unrestricted admission of people selected through the PEQ-Diplômés.

10.1 Increase in the proportion of Francophone immigration

- ▶ ***A. Preferably select only principal applicants who know French under economic immigration programs***
- ▶ ***B. Increase, over the planned period, the proportion of adults who report knowing French at admission***

In November 2023, the reform of economic immigration programs imposed minimum French knowledge requirements. On November 29, 2024, the PSTQ replaced the PRTQ. The latter consisted of a selection grid that did not require knowledge of French despite favouring French speakers. All streams of the PSTQ now contain such requirements, except for Stream 4: Exceptional Talent, which requires a certain level of knowledge of French. In 2024, the proportion of principal applicants selected under an economic immigration program who communicate orally in French was 97%.

Moreover, the proportion of admitted adults who reported knowing French at the time of admission was 75% in 2024, an increase compared to 2023 (68%). This increase reflects the Ministère's efforts to strengthen the conditions for selection under economic immigration programs, more specifically when it comes to fluency in French.

10.2 Implementation of Francisation Québec and increase in immigrants' knowledge of French

- ▶ *A. Help immigrants residing in Québec learn French*
- ▶ *B. Increase the availability of services to learn French to immigrants before they arrive in Québec*
- ▶ *C. Improve knowledge of French among temporary foreign workers*
- ▶ *D. Increase workplace francization efforts in collaboration with employers*

Learning French is a priority of both the Ministère and the government to ensure the preservation of French in Québec. On June 1st, 2023, the Gouvernement du Québec launched Francisation Québec (FQ), which is now the sole government access point for people seeking services to learn French. For 2024–2025, 91,165 people accessed FQ services (including online francization services), 89,701 of whom were immigrants. This represents an increase of 26.9% and 26.6%, respectively, compared to 2023–2024. The Ministère intends to increase the efficiency and accessibility of the francization services it offers remotely, online and abroad, in order to facilitate the linguistic integration of candidates for immigration and their immediate family, in addition to newcomers to Québec. To do so, it has drawn up a 2023–2025 action plan. For immigrants domiciled abroad, the Ministère recommends remote lessons offered by FQ, in-person and online lessons at partner language schools (registration fees are reimbursed upon arrival in Québec), open-access online resources on the Références francisation (Francization References) platform, in addition to access to online francization. While the French lessons available are intended for people selected through international recruitment activities (currently suspended), the provision of francization services abroad also helps improve candidates' language skills in credential recognition processes for priority employment sectors, such as health, nursing, engineering and construction.

Since 2022–2023, temporary immigrants have represented the majority of francization clients. NPRs also have access to free French lessons, as individuals or in the workplace to promote their social and professional integration. International students can also use these services, on the condition that their studies remain their main activity.

What's more, Québec companies can receive support to set up activities to learn French during work hours. There are three levels to this support: introductory French activities for small businesses, short training sessions for workers and courses leading to qualification in the workplace. These courses aim to make French the language of work and services, help workers reach specific goals over a short period, and measure the progression of French knowledge according to the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français*. From April 1st to December 31, 2024, 2,688 workers were concerned by workplace francization efforts.

10.3 Québec selection

► *Increase the share of people selected by Québec*

In 2024, the proportion of people selected by Québec was 75%, i.e., similar to 2023. This result accounts for regular admissions and admissions outside regular targets, namely of people selected under the PEQ - Diplômés, in addition to admissions stemming from the flow of permanent residence applications processed under the programs for businesspeople. In 2025, according to the targets set in the Plan d'immigration du Québec pour 2025, this share is expected to reach 77%. Bear in mind that Québec has the power to determine its own selection criteria for the categories of economic immigration, immigration of other immigrants and in the subcategory of refugees selected abroad. That being said, it cannot define such criteria for refugees recognized within Québec or for people admitted under the family class.

10.4 Importance of economic immigration

► *Increase the share of economic immigration within immigration as a whole*

The percentage of economic immigration was 69% in 2024, i.e., comparable to 2023. This result accounts for regular admissions and admissions outside regular targets, namely of people selected under the PEQ - Diplômés, as well as admissions stemming from the flow of permanent residence applications processed under the programs for businesspeople. Based on planned levels for 2025, economic immigration should represent approximately 72% of all admissions.

10.5 Youth immigration

- *Encourage the permanent immigration of youth in order to help, over the medium term, mitigate the effects of the aging population in Québec*

The Gouvernement du Québec prioritizes the immigration of youth who are likely to successfully integrate into Québec society. This approach aims to mitigate the effects of the aging population and to increase the number of people of working age as a proportion of the total population. For 2024, the proportion of admitted people aged 35 and under was 68%, compared to 65% in 2023.

10.6 Backlog and wait times for obtaining permanent residence

- *Make sure, with the collaboration of the federal government, to process selection and permanent residence requests of qualified workers within 12 months*

The immigration process of qualified workers in Québec consists of several steps: ranging from an expression of interest under the PRTQ, which was replaced by the PSTQ; from the submission of an application for selection under the PEQ and the submission of an application for permanent residence to IRCC.

Processing timelines for these applications depend on several factors, namely the complexity of the application, the operational capacity of the Ministère and IRCC and the completeness and conformity of the documents provided and how quickly the candidate answers requests for additional information.

In 2024, from January 1st to August 31, the 12-month goal for processing selection and permanent residence applications of qualified workers in Québec was met for three quarters of cases (75%), i.e., from the submission of the permanent selection application to the approval of the application by the Ministère (5, 6 months) and from the receipt of the permanent residence application to IRCC's final decision (6, 7 months). Efforts are needed to maintain or even improve these timelines.

10.7 Labour market needs

- ***Promote the workplace integration of people stemming from all immigration categories, in order to meet the diverse labour needs of Québec, including in priority sectors in all regions.***

Faced with the labour shortages affecting Québec, the government set up Opération main-d'œuvre in 2021, an ambitious initiative that aims to strengthen key sectors in society. This action plan emphasizes several priority sectors, namely health, education, childcare services, information technology, engineering and construction, which are showing major needs for qualified labour.

Targeted immigration is one of the government's strategies to remediate the labour shortage. Under the PRTQ, invitations to apply for permanent selection are sent to people listed in the expression of interest bank whose occupation corresponds to a priority occupation. These people may subsequently submit an application under this program. In 2024, out of all the principal applicants selected as qualified workers under the PRTQ, the foreign worker stream of the PEQ and the three pilot programs, 55% of principal applicants worked in an occupation targeted by Opération main-d'œuvre. Moreover, in 2024, 23% of principal applicants selected under the PEQ - Diplômés du Québec had completed training that qualified them for an occupation targeted by this operation and prioritized by the government in key economic sectors.

Furthermore, foreign nationals are categorized in order to target those who could be invited to apply for permanent selection under the PRTQ, now replaced by the PSTQ. This categorization uses a detailed points system which takes into account several criteria. These criteria include the labour diagnosis produced by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, which evaluates the needs of the labour market in target occupations, as well as the foreign national's experience in their occupation. These elements make it possible to prioritize profiles that best meet Québec's economic needs. In 2024, 96% of invited individuals had an occupation identified as experiencing a labour shortage or a mild labour shortage according to this diagnosis. This is a slight increase compared to 2023, when this proportion was 95%.

10.8 Credential recognition

- ***Boost action to recognize the credentials of immigrants so that they can rapidly integrate into the Québec labour market, by working a job in line with their skills***

In recent years, the Gouvernement du Québec has announced the implementation of systems and of several projects to recognize the credentials of professionals trained abroad and working a job in high demand, namely in the fields of health, construction and education.

These initiatives help accelerate credential recognition for immigrants trained abroad by pre-emptively identifying and selecting people whose skill profiles are similar to those sought, then integrating them through a credential recognition process abroad, developed and rolled out in collaboration with all partners involved. Access, throughout the process, to personalized support for credential recognition, francization, immigration and settlement encourages the retention and long-term settlement of the individuals concerned and their families. In addition, the Programme d'aide financière pour la reconnaissance des compétences (PAFFARC) offers immigrants an allowance to take upgrading courses, which allows them to obtain official recognition of their credentials through a regulatory organization.

The implementation of the Regulated Occupations and Careers Stream in the new PSTQ will provide additional leverage to select people who have started a credential recognition process and who, thanks to support measures, could meet Québec's labour needs, using their skills.

Furthermore, the Programme d'aide à la reconnaissance des compétences (PARC), funded by the Ministère, continues to support professional orders, educational establishments and specialized organizations. The PARC aims to develop and improve tools, services and activities in order to accelerate the credential recognition of immigrants trained abroad.

In 2024–2025, 3,278 people used at least one credential recognition service (data compiled on December 31, 2024). The release of some fifty cohorts of upgrading training since 2022 in all Québec regions has helped people trained abroad have their credentials recognized and be able to work in their occupation in Québec as soon as possible.

The Ministère plans to see to the continuity of credential recognition initiatives and consolidate working relationships between teams of the ministries and partner organizations, in line with the changes made by the governments of Québec and Canada to immigration programs.

10.9 Regionalization of immigration

- *See to the sustainable settlement and successful integration, in French, of immigrants throughout Québec, to more effectively meet the regional needs of the labour market, in collaboration with regional stakeholders*

Since 2019, immigrants go through the Accompagnement Québec service, which offers personalized support to immigrants by assessing their needs in six areas (settlement, francization, community life, employment, immigration and credential recognition processes) and referring them to the appropriate services. Available from abroad, this service also serves to pique immigrants' interest in the regions, by referring them to partners in their regions of interest to help them settle and integrate.

Businesses receive close support to recruit and integrate immigrants thanks to international recruitment and regional immigration counselors, in addition to tools such as the Portail employeurs (Employer Portal) and the Journées Québec. Through the PASI, the Ministère also offers support to community partners outside the Montréal CMA to offer services designed to meet the needs of immigrants. In the regionalization sub-stream of the PASI 2024–2025, from July 1st to December 31, 2024, 1,574 people benefited from regionalization services, 1,173 of whom went through the Emploi en région (EER) group (provisional data, two first quarters of the PASI 2024–2025). In 2023–2024 (from July 1st, 2023, to June 30, 2024), 2,962 immigrants had received these regionalization services from community partners, 2,319 of whom went through the EER located in the Montréal area, which is mandated to help immigrants hoping to leave the CMM move to the regions.

Lastly, the Ministère acts on behalf of communities through the PAC in order to support them and provide them with conditions that encourage the long-term settlement of immigrants in the regions. Thus, various local stakeholders, such as cities, municipalities and non-profit organizations (NPOs), work within these projects to strengthen the attractiveness of the regions and thereby encourage the long-term settlement of immigrants in the regions. This support also relies on the involvement of a strong regional network made up of 10 regional departments and 72 satellite bodies.

10.10 Governmental coordination of immigrant reception and integration services

- *A. Encourage the reception, integration and retention of immigrants in all regions through immigrant reception and support services*
- *B. Ensure governmental leadership in order to document the reception capacity of Québec society*

The Ministère offers a complete range of services to support immigrants in their integration into Québec. These services are designed to make sure they can fully participate, in French, in their host society.

Among essential services, AQ is the gateway to settlement in Québec. This free, personalized service aims to support immigrants as soon as they arrive in Québec. PASI supports the AQ service by offering supplemental services to immigrants for various aspects of integration (settlement, community life and full participation). The Ministère also works in collaboration with various community, social and economic partners to offer services that match the diverse needs of immigrants, namely those in vulnerable circumstances.

From July to December 2024, 11,661 individuals received reception and settlement services outside the administrative region of Montréal under the PASI program. For the 2023–2024 period (from July 1st, 2023, to June 30, 2024), 17,403 individuals had received these services; this figure was 18,097 for the 2022–2023 period.

During the first two quarters of the PASI 2024–2025, i.e., from July 1st to December 31, 2024, 70,819 people received reception and integration services offered by the Ministère and the community organization network, versus 52,021 from July to December 2023. In 2023–2024 (from July 1st, 2023, to June 30, 2024), this number rose to 97,191 people.

However, while continuing to offer integration services to immigrants, Québec needs to face up to a major challenge: its reception capacity, particularly in a context of sustained population growth. Québec has had an influential role in raising the federal government’s awareness of the issue of reception capacity. The issue of immigrant reception capacity is multifaceted, since it involves several ministries and organizations that provide services to the population. It also affects several dimensions, such as labour and housing needs and the feeling of belonging. It is therefore possible to assess certain components of reception capacity without being able to measure it overall.

10.11 Humanitarian undertaking

► *Continue Québec’s humanitarian undertaking by receiving refugees, other people in need of protection and asylum seekers*

For several decades now, Québec has actively participated in international solidarity action by receiving refugees and other individuals experiencing major vulnerability. This undertaking is reflected in immigration-related orientations that target refugees and people selected for humanitarian or public policy reasons. In 2024, approximately 13% of admissions concerned refugees and people selected for humanitarian or public policy reasons. This proportion is higher than in 2023, when it was 12%.

Québec’s humanitarian undertaking is also clear in its reception of asylum seekers. Since 2017, Québec has recorded a significant increase in the number of people filing a claim for asylum on its territory. IRB has recognized several of these people as refugees as a result of these claims. Once this recognition is granted, they are permanently received by Québec, which offers them not only refuge, but also support in their social, economic and cultural integration. This process includes services for housing, healthcare, in addition to legal and administrative support to help them settle and adjust to life in Québec.

10.12 Immigration levels

- ▶ **A. Maintain immigration targets at 50,000 annual admissions for 2024 and 2025**
- ▶ **B. Continuously admit people who file a claim for permanent residence after obtaining a *Certificat de sélection du Québec* under the *Programme de l'expérience québécoise*, volet « *Diplômés du Québec* »**

In 2024, the total number of regular admissions was 51,019. This number represents the bracket targeted in the plan, of 48,500 to 51,500 admissions (bracket median 50,000 admissions). In addition to these admissions, there are 4,244 admissions beyond the limit of people selected under the PEQ-Diplômés and 4,163 admissions stemming from the flow of permanent residence applications in progress or awaiting processing under programs for businesspeople.

The Plan d'immigration 2025 targets a permanent immigration level of 48,500 to 51,500 regular admissions. In addition to these regular admissions, people selected under the PEQ-Diplômés will be admitted on an ongoing basis without restriction. The estimated number of people admitted under the PEQ-Diplômés prior to the suspension of the intake of applications, was 15,000 to 19,000. The suspension will limit this number to approximately 13,500 to 15,000 people for 2025.

11. Orientations of the multi-year immigration plan for the 2026 to 2029 period

11.1 Guiding principles of the Gouvernement du Québec's immigration-related action

The government is seeking to determine guiding principles for its immigration-related decisions in the coming years.

First, it must act in accordance with Québec's reception and integration capacity in order to mitigate issues accessing housing and alleviate pressure on public services.

Second, it intends to reduce overall immigration volumes by decreasing the number of NPRs and capping permanent immigration. This falls within a view to further reduce the pressure on public services. That being said, the government will pay particular attention to the needs of the regions, namely those related to the aging population and the workforce.

The scenarios proposed as part of this consultation account for this goal of reducing immigration volumes.

The table below shows the changes over time in the number of NPRs as a proportion of the Québec population in recent years.

Table 1 - Estimated number and proportion of NPRs in the Québec population on January 1st, from 2018 to 2025 ^{1, 2, 3, 4}

ESTIMATED POPULATION	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of NPRs	160,273	203,582	267,532	261,122	272,597	360,763	512,816	616,552
Total Québec population	8,338,883	8,430,363	8,537,376	8,550,561	8,616,610	8,762,928	8,956,326	9,111,629
Share of NPRs in the population	1.9%	2.4%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	4.1%	5.7%	6.8%

Notes:

1. Estimated number of NPRs and estimated total Québec population: on January 1st of each year.
2. The data for 2025 is provisional.
3. An NPR is a person from another country whose primary place of residence is in Canada and who holds a work or study permit or who has applied for refugee status (asylum seeker). This also includes family members living with holders of work or study permits, unless these family members are already Canadian citizens, landed immigrants (or permanent residents) or non-permanent residents themselves.
4. Statistics Canada has updated the population estimate method twice since 2023. The data series for 2018 to 2021 uses an old method which has not been updated. Data comparisons between the “2018 to 2021” and “2022 to 2025” periods should therefore be made with caution. In terms of method changes, the estimates for the “2022 to 2025” period account for children without a study permit who accompany a temporary foreign worker or an international student as well as holders awaiting renewal of their temporary resident permit, to a maximum of 90 to 120 days after expiry of said permit (instead of 30 days previously). In a second method change, Statistics Canada also updated the estimated number of asylum seekers in Québec, which henceforth takes into account the most recent residence address indicated in the asylum claim file.

Sources:

- 2018 to 2021: STATISTICS CANADA. *Population estimates (March 2024)*. Adapted by the Institut de la statistique du Québec and the ministère, Direction de la statistique et de l’information de gestion.
- 2022 to 2025: data compiled by the ministère, Direction de la statistique et de l’information de gestion, using data from: STATISTICS CANADA. *Estimates of the number of non-permanent residents by type, quarterly*, Table 17-10-0121-01, March 19, 2025. [Online]. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710012101&request_locale=en.

To ensure the vitality of French in Québec moving forward, the Gouvernement du Québec estimates that it must seek knowledge of French in 88 to 90% of permanent immigrants to the constituent state in the coming years. Such a proportion would limit the impacts of the arrival of new immigrants on francization services and on the preservation of French, since it would be closer to the proportion of the overall Québec population that reported being able to carry a conversation in French (93.7%) in 2021 census data from Statistics Canada. However, the Gouvernement du Québec is aware that, pursuant to the Canada–Québec Accord, it does not have the necessary leverage to impose knowledge on French on all of these people. What’s more, certain immigration programs prioritize other considerations over individuals’ socio-professional profiles. Thus, knowledge of French is not necessarily required of immigrants who settle in Québec for humanitarian or family class reasons. These individuals may nonetheless receive support and integration services from the Gouvernement du Québec, such as francization lessons. The government intends to explore every possibility to ensure the preservation of French in Québec.

The Gouvernement du Québec also acts with regard to the knowledge of French of temporary immigrants. Indeed, it has plans to introduce, in the fall of 2025, a French knowledge requirement for individuals intending to renew their authorizations under the PTET after staying in Québec for at least three years. The federal government has also confirmed its intent to introduce this requirement for the PMI, which it oversees.

The implementation of the multi-year plan requires careful monitoring; key indicators may be used to assess discrepancies between the circumstances of recent permanent immigrants and those of people born in Canada aged 15 to 64. These indicators will reveal any persistent or emerging discrepancies and help determine any necessary adjustments to the planned measures, such as pausing or resuming the intake of applications under a given program, making changes related to the applications to be received or setting specific criteria.

Thus, indicators could concern the unemployment rate, employment rate, hourly wage, knowledge of French, housing vacancy rate, estimated supply and demand of childcare, proportion of the population with access to front-line services in the health and social services network, among others. During this public consultation, the government is eager to hear from stakeholders about the indicators to consider.

11.2 Orientations proposed under the multi-year immigration plan for 2026 to 2029

The rapid uptick in the number of NPRs in recent years has resulted in issues requiring governmental action. Both the Canadian and Québec governments have announced measures in recent months affecting various temporary and permanent immigration programs. When it comes to temporary foreign workers in particular, the Gouvernement du Québec plans to act in such a way as to meet the needs of the regions and help their economies prosper.

This multi-year plan constitutes an opportunity for the Gouvernement du Québec to define the multi-year orientations it intends to implement in the coming years. The end goal is the creation of an immigration plan over the medium term, so that people in the process of or considering immigrating to Québec can better predict their immigration outcomes. It also serves to harmonize the Gouvernement du Québec's action regarding temporary immigration, now a main source of population growth, with its orientations related to permanent immigration.

11.2.1 Duration of the multi-year plan and adaptability of orientations regarding immigration levels

The proposed term of the multi-year immigration plan is four years, covering the period from 2026 to 2029. This timeline provides both predictability as regards governmental orientations and a chance to observe the results of measures implemented at the start of the term. Indeed, the results of several immigration-related measures may not be visible until several years after the implementation thereof.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to anticipate the issues that may arise over a four-year period. Certain events can have major impacts on migration flows. Furthermore, the status of the economy is currently uncertain, in light of changes on an international scale. In order to appropriately adjust immigration levels based on economic circumstances and changes throughout the effective period of the multi-year plan, it would be worth considering granting the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration a certain degree of flexibility in the determination of annual immigration levels.

The multi-year orientation as regards permanent immigration levels could be higher in magnitude than in previous years, at approximately 10,000 permanent admissions annually, for example. According to the analysis carried out ahead of every annual immigration plan, immigration levels could fluctuate around this number, depending on context and the government's objectives.

Temporary immigration levels could also be adjusted annually, to make sure they are in line with the context, the government's objectives, and the most pressing needs of the regions.

Thus, the estimates provided in the next section are presented as a range with a lower limit and an upper limit that allow for such adjustments. The specific numbers could be revised after the public consultation and potentially adjusted accordingly.

11.2.2 Proposed orientations

Temporary immigration

The rapid rise in the number of NPRs in Québec in recent years has identified the limitations of a lack of formal planning of temporary immigrations levels by the Gouvernement du Québec.

This public consultation is an opportunity for the government to communicate intentions to reduce temporary immigration in line with the recently announced measures under the PTET and PEE. More specifically, the consultation aims to take into consideration the reality of employers who are grappling with labour issues and that of educational establishments attended by international students.

The Gouvernement du Québec plans to act within the scope of its responsibility to decrease the number of NPRs on its territory. This means the PEE and PTET will see the most changes.

► **Government orders to limit the number of new international students**

Under the PEE, the government published an order on February 26, 2025. After adopting the *Act mainly to improve the regulatory scheme governing international students* in December 2024, this order will limit enrollments in certain short-term vocational and college programs in 2025. No such limits have been imposed on universities. Meanwhile, other events have led to a decrease in applications for admission submitted from abroad for the current year.

Other orders could be published in the coming years to reinforce the desire to control temporary immigration. While these orders help limit the number of temporary selection applications received by the Ministère, they are tied to broader goals of the Gouvernement du Québec.

► ***Annual adjustments to the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires based on key indicators of the labour market and the labour needs of various sectors and regions***

Employer recourse to the PTET is closely related to the economic circumstances and changing labour market in Québec. The labour shortage observed in recent years has come hand in hand with the increased use of this program by certain Québec employers. That being said, this shortage is less significant than in previous years, and certain labour market indicators suggest the availability of a growing local workforce.

In recent months, the Governments of Canada and Québec have taken several measures to limit recourse to the PTET, particularly for low-wage positions. Nevertheless, there are exceptions for jobs in certain economic activity sectors that are essential, strategic or specific to the regional labour market. Adjustments may be required in the coming months, namely to measures taken by the federal government in the fall of 2024, to account for global economic changes in Québec.

Based on the temporary immigration levels proposed, adjustments could be made in the coming years to reach the target reduction in the number of permit holders under the PTET in Québec, while limiting the impact on regional economic activity. In order to account for changes in economic circumstances over time, the government is proposing an annual reassessment of the situation, based on key labour market indicators and sectorial and regional labour needs. This analysis could be carried out prior to the submission of each annual immigration plan, in order to determine the measures required. The number of people to settle in Québec will be estimated annually via immigration plans and could vary according to economic circumstances and changes in Québec's labour market.

As the effects of the measures announced in recent months are not yet fully known, changes in the number of permit holders under the PTET will be monitored in the coming months and years. Other measures may be taken over the next few years to reach the reduction targets. The estimated number of work permit holders under the PTET for 2029 are presented below.

► ***Other necessary measures to reduce the number of non-permanent residents***

While the Gouvernement du Québec intends to act directly within programs requiring its consent, the decrease in the number of NPRs is also subject to measures requiring implementation by the federal government.

In recent months, the federal government announced certain measures under the PMI, resulting in stricter conditions for admission to certain streams of the program. Nevertheless, the Gouvernement du Québec has requested a decrease in the number of holders of work permits issued under the program. This number, combined with the number of asylum seekers, should be reduced to 200,000 by 2029 compared with 416,000 in 2024. This goal could require additional measures in the coming years, based on the results obtained from existing measures. The Gouvernement du Québec wants the federal government to first apply its reduction measures applicable to the temporary immigration programs it controls to the Montréal and Laval regions.

Furthermore, the Gouvernement du Québec has repeatedly reiterated the need for a notable decrease in the number of asylum seekers present in Québec. Québec has no control over the number of individuals seeking asylum on its territory, despite receiving a high proportion of asylum seekers in Canada in recent years and offering them several services necessary for their settlement and integration. These individuals represent a significant proportion of NPRs in Québec. Measures are needed to restrict visa allocations and better distribute asylum seekers on Canadian territory following their arrival. Québec is therefore requesting a more equitable distribution of such individuals on Canadian territory in the years to come.

Strategic decisions

To reach the decreases envisioned in the PTET and PEE, Québec will need to make strategic decisions, which will affect employers and educational establishments alike. During the public consultation, the government is interested in hearing the opinion of stakeholders on decisions to be made:

- ▶ Do specific sectors of the economy or occupations need to be prioritized?
- ▶ Do specific levels or programs of study require protection from reduction measures?
- ▶ Do the proposed measures need to account for the regional aspect?

ORIENTATION 1 –

Gradually reduce the number of non-permanent residents in Québec, by:

- ▶ **Acting within programs requiring the consent of the Gouvernement du Québec prior to admission, aiming for a decrease of approximately 13% in the number of permit holders under the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires and the Programme des étudiants étrangers;**
- ▶ **Calling upon the federal government to subsequently restrict support for admissions under the Programme de mobilité internationale and claims for refugee protection destined for Québec.**

The Gouvernement du Québec will take the necessary measures in programs requiring its consent, by annually revising its approach within the framework of annual immigration plans. Québec will ask the federal government to reduce, by 2029, the number of asylum seekers and holders under the Programme de mobilité internationale to 200,000, compared to 416,000 in 2024. Montréal and Laval must be the focus of this decrease, in order to encourage immigration to the regions, to places where the threat to French is lower and where the economic prosperity of the region needs to be prioritized.

The estimated number of valid permit holders on December 31 for the PTET and PEE is shown in the table below.

Table 2

Estimate of the number of valid permit holders on December 31, 2029, under the two programs concerned¹

TEMPORARY RESIDENTS	2023	2024	2025 (est.)	2029 (est.)
Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires	59,490	72,405	67,600 (62,500 – 72,700)	65,000 (53,600 – 76,400)
Programme des étudiants étrangers	118,710	128,090	126,200 (116,700 – 135,700)	110,100 (90,800 – 129,400)
Total number of valid permit holders on December 31 under the two programs concerned	178,200	200,495	193,800 (179,200 – 208,400)	175,100 (144,400 – 205,800)

1. The estimates include all valid permit holders on December 31. These estimates include individuals who held a valid permit before the year began or who extended their stay in Québec over the course of the year.

Thus, in 2029, the number of valid permit holders on December 31 ($\pm 175,100$) under the two programs concerned could be lowered by approximately 13%, compared to 2024 (200,495). This would represent a decrease of approximately 10% under the PTET and approximately 14% under the PEE.

Permanent immigration

► *Scenarios submitted for consultation*

Three permanent immigration scenarios have been submitted for public consultation. They are similar in their proposed wording, but differ in the number of immigrants admitted.

All scenarios propose a decrease in the number of admissions compared to the levels observed in recent years. This decrease has been proposed in light of the significant increase in the number of NPRs in recent years and its impact on Québec's reception and integration capacity.

ORIENTATION 2 – SCENARIO 2A

Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 25,000 immigrants

This scenario involves decreasing permanent immigration levels by approximately 50%, compared to the average from 2019 to 2024. Combined with the decrease in the number of non-permanent residents, this would allow for the most significant decrease in the overall number of new immigrants arriving in Québec out of all scenarios submitted for consultation. The goal is to alleviate pressure on Québec's reception and integration capacity as much as possible.

Permanent immigration levels of 25,000 immigrants admitted annually would represent around 0.27% of the Québec population in 2029. This would amount to a decrease of approximately 50% compared to 2019–2024 (0.55%). Thus, Québec's permanent immigration levels as a proportion of its population would be lower than most OECD countries in 2022, except for Japan (see Graph 5).

The number of qualified workers would be considerably lower than in other scenarios. This would limit the Gouvernement du Québec's capacity to select people whose socio-professional profiles meet specific needs of the labour market.

To mitigate impacts on the share of economic immigration and the proportion of individuals who know French, the decrease in immigration levels would be proportionate in all immigration categories.

The table below presents the proposed distribution of admissions under this scenario.

Table 3 - SCENARIO 2A
Projected permanent admissions

PERMANENT RESIDENTS	2026	2027	2028	2029
Economic immigration	15,550 (14,600 – 16,500)	15,550 (14,300 – 16,800)	15,550 (14,000 – 17,100)	15,550 (13,700 – 17,400)
Qualified workers	15,275	15,275	15,275	15,275
Businesspeople	250	250	250	250
Other economic categories ¹	25	25	25	25
Family class	5,800 (5,500 – 6,100)	5,800 (5,400 – 6,200)	5,800 (5,300 – 6,300)	5,800 (5,200 – 6,400)
Refugees and people in similar circumstances	3,400 (3,200 – 3,600)	3,400 (3,100 – 3,700)	3,400 (3,000 – 3,800)	3,400 (2,900 – 3,900)
Refugees selected abroad ²	700	700	700	700
Refugees recognized in the host country ³	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700
Other immigrants ⁴	250 (200 – 300)	250 (200 – 300)	250 (200 – 300)	250 (200 – 300)
Total immigration	25,000 (23,500 – 26,500)	25,000 (23,000 – 27,000)	25,000 (22,500 – 27,500)	25,000 (22,000 – 28,000)
Share of Québec selection ⁵	66%	66%	66%	66%
Share of economic immigration	62%	62%	62%	62%
Proportion of immigrants who know French	76%	76%	76%	76%
Proportion of individuals in the host country	58%	63%	63%	63%

1. Includes individuals from the Live-in Caregiver Program and other economic immigrants.

2. Includes government-assisted refugees and sponsored refugees in particular.

3. Includes their dependants living abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrants admitted for humanitarian or public policy reasons.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

6. People who already hold a temporary permit.

ORIENTATION 2 – SCENARIO 2B

Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 35,000 immigrants

This scenario involves decreasing permanent immigration levels by approximately 30%, compared to the average from 2019 to 2024, but to a lesser extent than in Scenario 2A.

Permanent immigration levels of 35,000 immigrants admitted annually would represent around 0.38% of the Québec population in 2029. This would represent a substantial decrease compared to 2019–2023 (0.55%). Despite this decrease, Québec’s permanent immigration levels as a proportion of its population would be similar to those of France and the United States in 2022 (see Graph 5).

The number of qualified workers would be considerably lower, albeit less so than in Scenario 2A. As in Scenario 2A, this could limit the Gouvernement du Québec’s capacity to select people whose socio-professional profiles meet specific needs of the labour market.

The decrease in immigration levels would be proportionate across immigration categories, like in Scenario 2A, in order to mitigate collateral impacts on the share of economic immigration and the proportion of immigrants who know French.

The table below presents the proposed distribution of admissions under this scenario.

Table 4 - SCENARIO 2B
Projected permanent admissions

PERMANENT RESIDENTS	2026	2027	2028	2029
Economic immigration	21,750 (20,800 – 22,700)	21,750 (20,500 – 23,000)	21,750 (20,100 – 23,400)	21,750 (19,600 – 23,600)
Qualified workers	21,375	21,375	21,375	21,375
Businesspeople	350	350	350	350
Other economic categories ¹	25	25	25	25
Family class	8,100 (7,800 – 8,400)	8,100 (7,700 – 8,500)	8,100 (7,600 – 8,600)	8,100 (7,500 – 8,700)
Refugees and people in similar circumstances	4,800 (4,600 – 5,000)	4,800 (4,500 – 5,100)	4,800 (4,400 – 5,200)	4,800 (4,300 – 5,300)
Refugees selected abroad ²	800	800	800	800
Refugees recognized in the host country ³	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
Other immigrants ⁴	350 (300 – 400)	350 (300 – 400)	350 (300 – 400)	350 (300 – 400)
Total immigration	35,000 (33,500 – 36,500)	35,000 (33,000 – 37,000)	35,000 (32,500 – 37,500)	35,000 (32,000 – 38,000)
Share of Québec selection ⁵	65%	65%	65%	65%
Share of economic immigration	62%	62%	62%	62%
Proportion of immigrants who know French	76%	76%	76%	76%
Proportion of individuals in the host country	60%	65%	65%	65%

1. Includes individuals from the Live-in Caregiver Program and other economic immigrants.

2. Includes government-assisted refugees and sponsored refugees in particular.

3. Includes their dependants living abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrants admitted for humanitarian or public policy reasons.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

6. People who already hold a temporary permit.

ORIENTATION 2 – SCENARIO 2C

Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 45,000 immigrants

This scenario involves decreasing both the number of permanent immigrants and the number of non-permanent residents. The decrease would be lesser than in the other two scenarios, however.

This scenario involves Québec selecting slightly more qualified workers.

Permanent immigration levels of 45,000 immigrants admitted annually would represent around 0.49% of the Québec population. Despite the decrease in the number of immigrants admitted on a permanent basis compared to previous years, this rate would nevertheless remain above that of several OECD countries in 2022.

The table below presents the proposed distribution of admissions under this scenario.

Table 5 - SCENARIO 2C
Projected permanent admissions

PERMANENT RESIDENTS	2026	2027	2028	2029
Economic immigration	26,650 (25,500 – 27,800)	27,950 (26,650 – 29,250)	27,950 (26,350 – 29,550)	27,950 (26,000 – 29,900)
Qualified workers	26,175	27,475	27,475	27,475
Businesspeople	450	450	450	450
Other economic categories ¹	25	25	25	25
Family class	10,400 (10,200 – 10,600)	10,400 (10,150 – 10,650)	10,400 (10,000 – 10,800)	10,400 (9,900 – 10,900)
Refugees and people in similar circumstances	6,200 (5,900 – 6,500)	6,200 (5,850 – 6,550)	6,200 (5,750 – 6,650)	6,200 (5,700 – 6,700)
Refugees selected abroad ²	850	850	850	850
Refugees recognized in the host country ³	5,350	5,350	5,350	5,350
Other immigrants ⁴	450 (400 – 500)	450 (400 – 500)	450 (400 – 500)	450 (400 – 500)
Total immigration	43,700 (42,000 – 45,400)	45,000 (43,000 – 47,000)	45,000 (42,500 – 47,500)	45,000 (42,000 – 48,000)
Share of Québec selection ⁵	64%	65%	65%	65%
Share of economic immigration	61%	62%	62%	62%
Proportion of immigrants who know French	75%	76%	76%	76%
Proportion of individuals in the host country ⁶	59%	66%	66%	66%

1. Includes individuals from the Live-in Caregiver Program and other economic immigrants.

2. Includes government-assisted refugees and sponsored refugees in particular.

3. Includes their dependants living abroad.

4. Includes various specific categories of immigrants admitted for humanitarian or public policy reasons.

5. Economic immigration, refugees selected abroad and other immigrants.

6. People who already hold a temporary permit.

► **Other scenario analyzed, but not submitted for consultation**

Concerned by the consistent decrease in the relative population of Québec within Canada, the government also analyzed a scenario in which Québec's share of Canadian immigration would correspond to its relative population (21.9%). This scenario would help mitigate the downward trend of Québec's relative population within Canada, which has been consistently observed for several decades now.

This scenario involves the permanent admission of over 80,000 immigrants annually, which has been deemed as exceeding Québec's reception and integration capacity.

► *Collateral effects of the permanent immigration scenarios*

The three options proposed represent a decrease in the number of annual permanent admissions compared to the last few years. Thus, this restriction in the volume of permanent immigration requires strategic decision-making, particularly as regards qualified worker programs.

For most holders of a study or work permit, the preferred route to permanent residence is the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ), via its streams for Québec graduates and for qualified workers. The implementation of the new Programme de sélection des travailleurs qualifiés (PSTQ) and its four streams (highly qualified, intermediate and manual skills, regulated profession and exceptional talent), together with the desire to reduce permanent immigration volumes, has led us to consider the complementary nature of these two programs. As part of the public consultation, the government would like to hear from stakeholders in this regard.

Already, in October 2024, the government decided to temporarily pause the intake of applications under the Diplômés du Québec stream of the PEQ and to halt invitations under the Programme régulier des travailleurs qualifiés (PRTQ), since replaced by the PSTQ. While the suspension of the Diplômés du Québec stream of the PEQ will extend until November, the government has also decided to pause the intake of applications under the Travailleurs stream of this program until November. Invitations to apply for permanent selection under the PSTQ will begin throughout the summer of 2025.

ORIENTATION 3

Aim for a proportion of over 75% of permanent immigrants who know French and promote learning French in non-permanent residents

While the percentage of individuals who know French out of all permanent immigrants has varied between 50% and 71% since 2010, this orientation reflects the government's ambition to improve permanent immigrants' knowledge of French.

A share of 75% of immigrants who know French is considered the minimum target to achieve.

Other measures could be implemented in the coming years to maximize the share of immigrants who know French. This will be a guiding principle for government action regarding immigration in years to come.

Several measures have already been implemented in recent years, primarily in permanent economic immigration programs. While there are some exceptions, knowledge of French is henceforth a condition for selection under all economic immigration programs.

Increasing this share depends on non-permanent residents learning French, since more and more permanent residents already reside in Québec at the time of their admission.

In the coming years, the Gouvernement du Québec, together with the federal government, intends to require knowledge of French when renewing TFW permits on its territory after three or more years.

Since November 1st, 2024, the federal government has required basic knowledge of French or English to issue a post-graduate work permit. Minimum knowledge corresponding to Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 7 for university graduates and CLB Level 5 for college graduates is henceforth required for anyone applying for a post-graduate work permit.

Considering the unique language situation of Québec within Canada, the Gouvernement du Québec has called upon Canada to make only knowledge of French a requirement for international students applying for a post-graduate work permit to work in Québec.

ORIENTATION 4

Increase the share of permanent immigrants already in Québec so that they represent 63 to 66% of admissions at the end of the period

The transition from non-permanent resident status to permanent resident status is consistent with several other orientations of the Gouvernement du Québec. It helps reduce the number of non-permanent residents in Québec while offering these people a path to permanent residence. Furthermore, this transition reduces the impact of permanent admissions on Québec's reception and integration capacity. This orientation also serves to promote permanent immigrants' knowledge of French, since their prior stay in Québec is more conducive to learning French at a higher level.

The share of permanent immigrants admitted who had previously stayed in Québec was approximately 38% in 2023. This share climbed to 45% in 2024. It should subsequently increase to around 52–53% in 2025, as a result of the high planned number of admissions of people previously selected under the PEQ-Diplômés.

Beyond 2025, an increase in permanent admissions of people having previously stayed in Québec is planned, so that these individuals represent 63 to 66% of admissions at the end of the period. To achieve this, the main lever is economic immigration, since the Gouvernement du Québec can determine the criteria for selection under these programs and determine the number of applications to receive.

However, it could be harder for people residing outside Québec to permanently immigrate to Québec. Together with the reduction in the number of arrivals of NPRs, immigration to Québec could be reasonably reduced for people who do not already reside in Québec. The selection of people residing abroad could target primarily people whose occupations specifically correspond to the most pressing needs of the labour market. Namely, these individuals could be recruited as part of the Ministère's international recruitment activities, which target strategic activity sectors in Québec and certain specific occupations.

ORIENTATION 5

Uphold a high proportion of economic immigration, i.e., over 60%, in permanent admissions, in order to address labour issues in priority strategic sectors of the Québec economy

From 2016 to 2021, economic immigration represented a proportion of less than 60%. The orientations adopted by the Gouvernement du Québec in recent years carried this proportion to 69% in 2023. This share should remain similar in 2024 and increase further in 2025, to reach approximately 72% of permanent admissions.

For the scenarios submitted for consultation, it has been proposed to uphold a share of economic immigration above 60% despite the downward revision of thresholds. This high share of economic immigration would enable the Gouvernement du Québec, via selection conditions that it determines, to promote the selection of people whose profiles meet the workforce needs of the labour market in Québec. That being said, this share of economic immigration would involve upholding immigration levels in other immigration categories (Scenario 2C) or decreasing them (Scenarios 2A and 2B). This could result in issues pertaining to wait times before admission in certain other immigration categories.

ORIENTATION 6

Readjust the distribution of admissions under humanitarian immigration programs in order to prioritize people residing in Québec

There has been a considerable number of asylum seekers residing in Québec in recent years. Despite long processing times for asylum claims, the IRB has considerably increased the number of decisions issued in recent years, thus increasing the number of people recognized as refugees following an approved claim for asylum. The number of refugees recognized in the host country with a permanent residence application in progress with the federal government is steadily increasing.

To account for the changes in migration flows in recent years, a review of the distribution of permanent admissions under humanitarian immigration programs has been proposed. Scenario 2C would involve increasing the number of admissions of refugees recognized in the host country. Scenario 2B would involve upholding targets that are similar to the number of admissions, compared to recent years. That being said, due to the notable decrease in immigration levels, Scenario 2A would involve decreasing the number of admissions in all immigration categories, including refugees recognized in the host country.

In all scenarios, the number of refugees selected abroad would be considerably lower.

Despite a possible increase in the number of refugees recognized in the host country, most of these people already reside in Québec, except for family members of principal applicants, who may be located abroad. Thus, their permanent admission constitutes a simple status change as a result of obtaining permanent residence. This would mitigate effects on Québec's reception and integration capacity while reducing the number of non-permanent residents located in the province.

However, this orientation would involve prolonging the pause on the intake of applications for collective sponsorship of a refugee located abroad, currently in force until June 30, 2025.

12. Conclusion

The public consultation on the Planning of Immigration to Québec for the 2026–2029 Period is the product of circumstances marked by a significant increase in the number of NPRs. This increase has considerably affected Québec's reception and integration capacity. This is why, in addition to decreasing levels in the PTET and PEE, lower permanent admission levels have been proposed for the 2026–2029 period. These levels may be reassessed at the end of the 2026–2029 period, in light of the expected decrease in NPRs, particularly in categories for which the federal government holds exclusive responsibility.

Like most Western countries, the Gouvernement du Québec is weighing the impacts of migration-related growth on its reception capacity and on trust in the immigration system. All of the proposed scenarios fall within this framework. For 2025 and 2026, the OECD expects population growth, including migration-related growth, to decrease in all member countries. Namely, it foresees an average population growth for European countries of 0.11% in 2026.³⁹

Aside from the orientations targeting a decrease in permanent and temporary immigration levels, Québec intends to continue working toward Francophone immigration and economic immigration. Prioritizing people already residing in Québec has also been proposed.

In total, six orientations will be reviewed by a parliamentary committee.

1. Gradually reduce the number of non-permanent residents in Québec, by:

- Acting within programs requiring the consent of the Gouvernement du Québec prior to admission, aiming for a decrease of approximately 13% in the number of permit holders under the Programme des travailleurs étrangers temporaires and the Programme des étudiants étrangers;
- Calling upon the federal government to subsequently restrict support for admissions to the Programme de mobilité internationale and claims for refugee protection destined for Québec.

³⁹ OECD. *OECD Economic Surveys: Canada 2025*, p. 28, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2025, [Online].
[https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-economic-surveys-canada-2025_28f9e02c-en.html]

2. Choose one of the following scenarios:
 - > **Scenario 2A** - Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 25,000 immigrants;
 - > **Scenario 2B** - Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 35,000 immigrants;
 - > **Scenario 2C** - Decrease permanent immigration levels to annually admit approximately 45,000 immigrants.
3. **Aim for** a proportion of over 75% of permanent immigrants who know French and promote learning French in non-permanent residents.
4. **Increase the share of permanent immigrants already** in Québec so that they represent 63 to 66% of admissions at the end of the period.
5. **Uphold a high proportion of economic immigration**, i.e., over 60%, in permanent admissions, in order to address labour issues in priority strategic sectors of the Québec economy.
6. **Readjust the distribution of admissions under humanitarian immigration programs in order to** prioritize people residing in Québec.

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