



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

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Recent Changes to Economic Immigration Programs

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**Sandra Harder – Director General
Strategic Policy and Planning, CIC**



Canada



Today's Presentation

Purpose:

To provide a brief description of changes to Canada's economic immigration programs, future directions with the Expression of Interest application management system, and discuss outstanding issues facing the immigration system

Outline:

- 1. Immigration overview**
- 2. Recent changes to economic immigration programs**
- 3. Key issues for policy consideration**





A fast and flexible immigration system to serve economic needs

- Immigration reform is a key priority for the Government of Canada
 - Highlighted in Economic Action Plan 2012
 - Also, in the Prime Minister's speech at the January 2012 World Economic Forum
- Evidence points to a need to enhance the labour market responsiveness of the immigration system
 - Majority of new jobs in next decade will demand high-skill
 - High-skilled immigrants have better economic outcomes than low-skilled
 - Critical low-skilled shortages persist in some regions and sectors
 - Language ability is a key predictor of success
- To build an agile system, a number of measures have been undertaken
 - The ongoing modernization of CIC's operations
 - Strengthened programs and the introduction of new streams
 - Closer collaboration with partners and stakeholders



Overview of Canada's Immigration Program

Permanent Residents:

- In 2012, 257, 887 migrants accepted as permanent immigrants
- Planning range of 240,000 – 260,000 since 2007

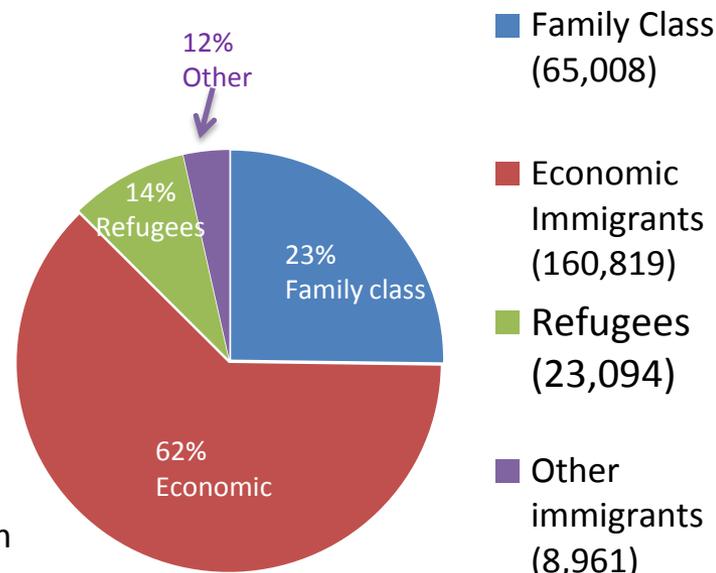
Temporary Residents:

- 2012 entries include:
 - 213, 573 temporary foreign workers
 - 104,810 foreign students
 - 1,013,000 visitors
- Temporary program also supports permanent program: qualified students and foreign workers can transition

Annual Immigration Levels Plan:

- Permanent immigration is subject annual levels plan
- Balances policy choices with operational realities
- Input from PTs, stakeholders
- Does not include temporary residents whose levels are completely demand driven

Permanent residents by category



Economic immigration: many programs, multiple objectives

National	<p>Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ All applicants are assessed against the points grid, based on criteria such as age, language and education <p>Federal Skilled Trades Class (FSTC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Open to certain skilled trades occupations, applicants must meet the four program requirements <p>Canadian Experience Class (CEC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Open to skilled temporary foreign workers and foreign graduates with skilled work experience here in Canada <p>Business Immigration Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investors, start-up visa, entrepreneurs and self-employed <p>Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and International Student Program (ISP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Employers who cannot find a Canadian option can hire a TFW; ISP facilitates study and work opportunities for international students
Provincial & Territorial	<p>Provincial Nominee Program (PNP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provinces and territories nominate workers at all skill levels who meet their specific needs <p>Quebec-selected Skilled Worker Program and Business Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Quebec manages its own program for skilled workers and business immigrants destined to that province





Significant program changes implemented, and underway

To improve outcomes and the immigration system's responsiveness to labour market demand, a host of measures have been taken since 2006 , including:

- Eliminating backlogs in the Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) Program
- Changing the FSW points grid, to select for factors associated with labour market success
- Measures to improve the assessment, equivalency and authentication of a foreign educational credential
- Introducing the Canadian Experience Class and Federal Skilled Trades Program; Immigrant Entrepreneur Start-Up Visa
- Expanding the Provincial Nominee Program (grown from 13K in 2006 to 41K in 2012)
- Developing a federal/provincial/territorial foreign qualification framework
- Introducing an Expression of Interest application management system





Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP)

Program overview:

- Main objective: select skilled workers who can succeed in the Canadian economy based on criteria that have been shown to help them adapt to the Canadian labour market and society.
- Introduction of Ministerial Instructions and the Action Plan for Faster Immigration in 2008 have helped to manage intake and reduce the backlog of applications

Changes to the points grid

- **Language:** mandatory language threshold (CLB 7); most important selection factor in terms of points
- **Age:** increased weighting and redistributed points to favour younger immigrants
- **Work Experience:** decreased maximum points awarded for foreign work experience, making additional points available for language and age.
- **Education:** mandatory assessment of foreign educational credentials introduced; designated third-party organizations perform assessment, equivalency checks and authentication. Points are awarded based on the foreign credential's equivalency in Canadian standards
- **Adaptability:** award adaptability points for Canadian study and work experience and reward accompanying spouse's official language proficiency
- **Arranged Employment:** redesigned assessment process; requires a Labour Market Opinion plus indeterminate job offer





Canadian Experience Class & Provincial Nominee Program

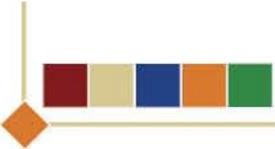
Canadian Experience Class

- The program seeks to retain temporary workers or recent graduates who have the skills and experience to succeed in Canada
- Recent improvements to the Program came into effect on January 2, 2013:
 - Faster transition to permanence by reducing the work experience requirement from 24 months to 12
 - Standardized eligibility requirements for all applicants, effectively merging the two separate streams for foreign graduates and temporary foreign workers
 - The following thresholds must be met in reading, writing, listening and speaking:
 - CLB 7 (adequate intermediate) for the most highly skilled NOC O, A applicants
 - CLB 5 (initial intermediate) for skilled NOC B applicants

Provincial Nominee Program

- Accepts immigrants nominated by province and territories (PTs) based on regional needs - including those of employers - and individual's ability to economically establish
 - All PTs except Québec and Nunavut have agreements with the federal government
 - Budget 2012 committed the Government to working with PTs to improve the program by focusing on economic immigrants who can quickly respond to regional labour market needs
 - An important pathway to permanence: in 2012 54% of PNs had been TFWs; the proportion was 95% in BC and 75% in Alberta





Improving Foreign Qualifications Recognition (FQR)

- **Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment & Recognition of Foreign Qualifications:**
 - A Commitment by the federal, provincial and territorial governments to address FQR barriers
 - To date, 14 target occupations have been the focus of the Framework
 - Regulatory bodies and stakeholders are meeting service commitments for all 14 target occupations
 - That means, internationally trained workers are advised within one year how their qualifications compare to existing Canadian standards
- **Pre-Arrival Preparation Services:**
 - CIC funds three types of pre-arrival settlement services: Active Engagement and Integration Project, Canadian Immigrant Integration Program, and Canadian Orientation Abroad
 - Offer labour market and settlement information, and FQR information orientation sessions to economic immigrants and refugees
 - CIC is currently developing a strategy to expand its reach via online resources and in-person services to more economic immigrants and refugees
 - In 2012-2013, CIC served 7% of economic immigrants and 47% of vulnerable individuals through pre-arrival services
- **Future directions:**
 - FQR reiterated as a Government priority in 2013 Speech from the Throne
 - Next set of target occupations for the Pan-Canadian Framework to be announced in the coming months, likely to include skilled trades





Expression of Interest (EOI): a key to program modernization

- Identified as a priority in Economic Action Plan and the 2013 Speech from the Throne, Expression of Interest (EOI) represents a new way of managing immigration applications:
 - Involves the creation of a pool of prospective immigrants, skilled workers interested in coming to Canada as permanent residents
- Objective is to deliver a faster, more flexible system, that responds to Canada's economic needs and produces better skilled immigrant outcomes
- January 1, 2015 is the system's targeted launch date:
 - EOI will become a required pre-application stage for several existing CIC programs, likely the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Canadian Experience Class, and the Federal Skilled Trades Program
 - Employer and PT use is also envisioned, subject of ongoing consultations



The Two Stages to the EOI Process

1. Expression of Interest

Candidates complete online EOI form – information provided relates to, e.g.:

- occupation & work experience
- assessed language & educational credentials
- region(s) of desired destination
- job offer (if applicable)

If a candidate's submission meets eligibility criteria, it is entered into the EOI pool and assigned a points score

Candidates may be considered / nominated by CIC, employers and Provinces and Territories

Based on criteria, candidates might be drawn from the EOI pool and invited to apply for a permanent residence visa

Invitation to Apply (ITA)



2. Application for Permanent Residence (PR)

After being issued an invitation to apply, the EOI candidate submits an application for a PR visa with supporting documentation

The applicant's visa application and supporting documents are assessed against *IRPA* requirements

If approved, the applicant is issued a visa





Hybrid Selection

- Since the introduction of IRPA in 2002, CIC's permanent economic programs have focused on the selection of labour migrants with high levels of human capital
 - Research shows that this approach leads to greater resiliency, and better outcomes initially and over time
- However gaps remain
 - Though performing better than earlier cohorts many immigrants take several years to catch up to the Canadian-born (many never do)
 - Those with high human capital and job offers do better. CIC data shows that immigrants who come with arranged employment have much better outcomes than those who come without
- Occupational screens through Ministerial Instructions have gone some way to combining occupational and human capital criteria
- The adaptability of the Expression of Interest application management system will allow CIC to better address human capital and occupational needs





Where this takes us: an agile immigration system

- Move from the passive receipt of applications to the active recruitment, assessment and selection of skilled immigrants
 - Removes obligation to process all interested candidates: will select those with skills, experience, and education that best meet economic needs, not necessarily 1st in line
- Prevents backlogs: matching intake to application processing capacity and levels targets
- Offers more choice, flexibility and precision in skilled immigrant selection: through increased employer role in selection, potential for better outcomes, improved labour market responsiveness
- Over the long-term, better outcomes as immigration better matches labour market needs





Key issues for policy consideration

- **The impact of a new application management system:**
 - Currently, CIC commits to bringing in a certain number of immigrants annually
 - EOI will be responsive to labour market demand. Will our levels planning approach need to be more flexible?
- **Balancing social and economic objectives**
 - Appropriate mix between economic, family, and humanitarian immigrants
 - Balancing low-skilled /high-skilled and temporary/permanent labour market needs
- **New partners and new roles**
 - Is there a greater role for employers in settlement/integration?
 - Implications for LIPS expansion and sustainability – can LIPS be leveraged to do more?
- **Recognition of foreign qualifications:**
 - How will the qualification recognition process work with EOI to ensure new arrivals can start working immediately?
 - How can federal, provincial, and territorial governments, and regulatory and professional bodies, further reduce duplication and other inefficiencies in the qualification recognition process?
- **System modernization**
 - New technologies and tools to manage immigration in a digitally driven world





Questions

Sandra Harder

Director General
Strategic Policy and Planning,
Citizenship and Immigration Canada

