



More young Manitobans setting sights on other provinces, stats show

Number of people leaving Manitoba for other provinces slowly climbing, statistics show

By Teghan Beaudette, CBC News

Posted: March 05, 2015

The number of people leaving Manitoba for other provinces is slowly climbing — and young people are leading the charge.

From 2013 to 2014, 4,800 more people left Manitoba for other provinces than came in — a 13 per cent increase over the year before — and the number one age group on their way out: people age 20 to 24.

And that's no good for Manitoba, according to Michael Haan, the Canada research chair in population and social policy at the University of New Brunswick.

"The early investments that governments make in their young people are never recouped with an out-migrant," he said. "Instead, young energy is used to create wealth elsewhere."

Haan is one of the only people in Canada using large data sets to study why young people come and go from their home provinces.

"It's not just about job opportunities. It's not just about the labour market. You know, there's a long list of factors and all of them sort of congeal into a decision that often takes people out of smaller jurisdictions," said Haan.

Haan said there's not much research on what drives young people away or makes them stay put — but provinces are trying desperately to keep their talented, trained young people at home.

Often, places like Manitoba and many of the Atlantic provinces are the big losers.

"I think I have seen a lot leave," said Graham Barga, a 29-year-old entrepreneur who opened a specialty coffee shop in West Broadway two years ago. "A lot of people can gravitate toward larger cities — entrepreneurs alike — they also are leaving to open things in more exciting, trending places."

The lifelong Manitoban chose to stick it out in Winnipeg because it was a less expensive place to start a business, and he already had a familiarity with the city. But it wasn't an easy choice.

"Sometimes I'm walking down the streets of Vancouver, and I'm thinking, 'You could open anywhere here,'" he said. "I think leaving is, in some ways, the easier option."

Tax credit cost \$149M but did it work?

The province is trying to stop the outflow of the young and educated — in 2007, it introduced a tuition fee income tax rebate for graduates who stayed in the province.

It offers a 60 per cent rebate on tuition fees for any graduate of a post-secondary program who either moves to or stays in Manitoba.

Since 2007, the province has spent \$149 million on the program, and the number of claims have gone up every single year since it was introduced.

Other provinces with similar out-migration numbers have also launched incentive tax rebates, but Haan points out there's no evidence that retention credits work because it hasn't been studied.

"My own suspicion is that giving someone \$3,000 or \$4,000 to stay in a province, whether it be Nova Scotia or Manitoba, would probably only reward people for making decisions they would have made anyway," he said. "If we're talking about \$3,000 and you have the opportunity to go live under the big city lights of Toronto, I don't think \$3,000 will necessarily convince you to change your mind."



Matt Reid left Manitoba in 2008, when he was 25. He had just finished an aircraft maintenance program at Red River College, and his options for jobs were either The Pas or Calgary. He chose the bigger city.

"To get me to come back to Winnipeg would not be that hard, really I would just need a good job to move back for. I personally think that Winnipeg is a much better city to live in," he said.

28-year-old Steve Roucek has a similar story. He left in 2006 to get a job in Alberta working in the oil and gas industry.

"I figured if I didn't like the work, I could return to Winnipeg the following year with tuition [money] in hand," he said. "I ended up loving the work." He has no plans to come back to Manitoba.

How do young people decide?

Haan said more research is needed to figure out what young people are basing their decisions on.

"I think we should get out and talk to young people," he said. "People at this age group probably have a fuzzy idea of what the world they want to live in looks like."

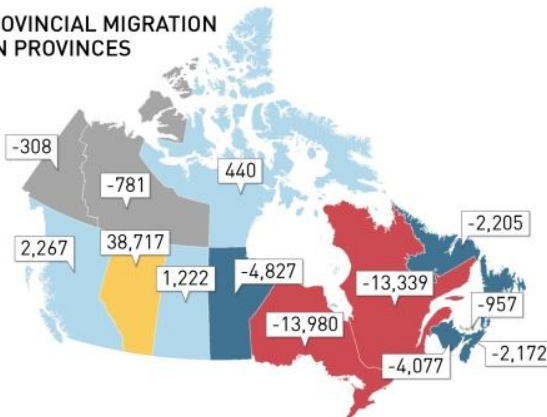
Bargen thinks if Manitoba's biggest city offered some of the amenities of its trendier counterparts, such as Vancouver and Montreal, it might stand a better chance at keeping young people.

"I think urban density is a huge factor ... Just being able to walk to the coffee shop or the bar and come home," he said. "It's so attractive to have a place where you can live and have your neighbourhood be your living room."

Bargen thinks Winnipeg is making progress in that regard, but Haan said Manitoba may always have a tough time selling itself when it's going up against international cities like Toronto.

"There's always the perception that smaller jurisdictions don't have the amenities that young people actually need or think they need," said Haan.

NET INTER-PROVINCIAL MIGRATION
FOR CANADIAN PROVINCES
2013-14



Source URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/more-young-manitobans-setting-sights-on-other-provinces-stats-show-1.2980582>