



A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy

A new strategy for selecting, helping and welcoming immigrants to our province.

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Minister's Message

Ontario's economy is the largest in Canada and the sixth largest in North America. A strong economy keeps our quality of life high and ensures the services and benefits we enjoy today will be there tomorrow for our children and grandchildren.

A strong plan for immigration is a vital part of that strong economy. Our province is the top destination in Canada for immigrants, but there is increasing global competition for the world's best and brightest.

In Ontario, our population is getting older, birth rates are low, workers are retiring and forecasts say there will not be enough new workers to meet the demand. In addition, federal government policies have restricted the number of skilled immigrants coming to Ontario.

To ensure our prosperity I am proud to present A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy. It's our plan to make immigration work better for immigrants, their families and our province.

We have a vision of a new direction for immigration – attracting highly skilled workers and their families, supporting diverse communities and growing a globally connected economy. Achieving this vision requires a new partnership with the federal government.

Our strategy outlines how to attract and retain more skilled workers and their families and how we can better support and welcome them to our vibrant communities all across Ontario. We will report annually to Ontarians on our progress.

I thank everyone who helped us get to this point, in particular the Expert Roundtable on Immigration and the many Ontarians who shared their perspectives and expertise. This strategy will allow us to take immigration in a new direction. It will strengthen our province economically and socially for years to come. Because when newcomers succeed, we all succeed.

Charles Sousa
Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

Executive Summary

Ontario's Immigration Strategy sets a new direction for how we select, welcome and help immigrants to our province. This vision will help build a highly skilled workforce and support the development of strong communities where all Ontarians can thrive.

Objectives

- Attracting a skilled workforce and building a stronger economy.
- Helping newcomers and their families achieve success.
- Leveraging the global connections of our diverse communities.

Targets:

- As immigration increases, raise the proportion of economic immigrants to 70 per cent from the current level of 52 per cent.
- Request a doubling of our Provincial Nominee Program limit to 2,000 in 2013, increasing to 5,000 in 2014.
- Achieve employment rates and income levels for immigrants that are in line with those of other Ontarians.
- Maximize the potential and use of temporary foreign workers and international students.
- Improve job prospects of non-economic immigrants.
- Provide more resources for employers to recruit and welcome immigrant employees.
- Encourage employers to develop or expand mentorship, internship and on-the-job training programs.
- Achieve five per cent Francophone immigration.
- Increase employment rates of immigrants in fields that match their experience.
- Work toward a decrease in the unemployment rate of recent immigrants so that it is in line with that of other Ontarians.
- Increase the number of immigrants licensed in their professions.
- Create a Ministers' Forum to drive a "no wrong door" approach to accessing immigrant services.
- Commit to annual reports on progress and achievement.

- Establish a Minister's Table with employers to consult businesses on immigration matters.
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Why does Ontario need an immigration strategy?

We need immigrants to fill skilled jobs

Demographics show that our population is aging, and our birth rate is low. Without further immigration, our labour force will begin to shrink by 2014. That will have a significant effect on the economic and social well-being of the province.

Ontario will face serious worker shortages unless we are able to attract new immigrants. Employers say that jobs are already going unfilled and their businesses are suffering. Most new jobs will require skilled workers and there will not be enough people here with the right skills to fill them.

Arnon Melo: Entrepreneur

My first boss in Ontario was an immigrant who gave me the break I needed to get started in logistics. I feel an obligation to pay it forward

Brazilian immigrant Arnon Melo is definitely paying it forward. The logistics company he founded now employs 10 people, most of them immigrants. MELLOHAWK recently won the Scotiabank and Canadian Federation of Independent Business "Small Business, Big Impact Challenge" award for its leadership role in community building.

Federal policies are hurting Ontario

The federal government selects the vast majority of immigrants who can come to Ontario, but it has significantly cut the number it allows to settle here. This affects our ability to fill skilled job positions. Immigrant selection needs to be able to respond to Ontario's dynamic economy.

Immigration is a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. However, the federal government is unilaterally reforming the immigration system. Ontario needs to be a full partner with Ottawa in making immigration decisions that affect our economy and our society.

The province needs more economic immigrants who are ready to step into skilled jobs. That means 70 per cent of our immigrants should be economic class as is the case in most other provinces.

Key Stats: Did You Know?

In 2011, the federal government allowed Ontario to directly select only 3.5 per cent of its landed economic immigrants through its Provincial Nominee Program, compared to an average of 54 per cent for other provinces (excluding Quebec).

Dr. Luc Mertens: Pediatric Cardiologist

I chose Ontario because of its academic and research qualities and the unique multicultural environment I discovered here.

As a leading pediatric cardiologist, Luc Mertens had several job offers from the U.S., but chose Ontario. The trilingual doctor (English, French, and Flemish) credits the Provincial Nominee Program for a smooth transition from his native Belgium. He's now doing ground-breaking research and clinical work at Sick Kids in Toronto, working with physicians from all over the world.

Newcomers need support to settle and succeed

Ontario must support immigrants so they can succeed and contribute to our economy and communities more quickly. Economic immigrants are ready to enter the job market, and when we welcome their families, they are more likely to settle stay and succeed. In addition, many will not only fill positions but also create jobs and invest in our province.

We also know that supporting immigration through family reunification programs builds strong communities. Families grow roots and settle permanently, and new generations enrich our culture and society.

We also need to help immigrants who are already here. Some skilled immigrants have not been able to find work in their professions or that matches their education and training. We must do more to help them succeed by removing barriers to meaningful employment.

Key Stats: Did You Know?

- Since 2001, federal policies have meant that annual immigration to Ontario has declined by 33 per cent.
- In 2011, Ontario received 40 per cent of all immigrants to Canada, its lowest share in over 30 years.
- All other regions of the country except B.C. increased their share over the same time period.

Ignat Kaneff: Builder and Land Developer

With passion and vision, we the immigrants built this province into the mature and respected economic force it is today.

Since 1956, he has constructed thousands of family homes, and has built commercial retail and office complexes and golf courses that are owned and operated by the Kaneff Group. The company employs more than 300 people. In recognition of his business achievements and philanthropy, Mr. Kaneff was awarded the Order of Ontario in 2011.

The Path to Ontario's New Direction for Immigration

The Expert Roundtable on Immigration – In the spring of 2012, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration invited a number of leading experts to examine Ontario's immigration issues. The Roundtable made 32 recommendations in its report, *Expanding Our Routes to Success*.

Stakeholder Consultations – The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Parliamentary Assistant Teresa Piruzza, MPP Windsor West, led six stakeholder consultations and received written submissions. Consultations were also held with municipal partners to ensure the strategy reflects the needs of Ontario communities.

Labour Market Forecasting – The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration analyzed data showing where the new jobs will be, the skills Ontario will need and the level of immigration required to support economic prosperity.

Collaboration Across Government – The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration collaborated and consulted with the Ministries of Finance, Training, Colleges and Universities and Economic Development and Innovation to help identify the role of immigration in meeting Ontario's labour market needs.

Underutilizing the skills of internationally-trained individuals is estimated to cost Canada between \$3.4 – 5B per year in lost productivity.

Conference Board of Canada, 2004.

Strategy Objectives

Attracting a skilled workforce and building a stronger economy

Immigrants make up 29 per cent of Ontario's labour force. The successful selection and integration of immigrants into Ontario's economy is critical. We need to change how immigrants are selected and ensure that those who come here succeed.

Among those employed in 2006, 62 per cent of the Canadian-born were working in the regulated profession for which they trained compared to only 24 per cent of foreign-educated immigrants.

Statistics Canada, 2010.

Our targets

- As immigration increases, raise the proportion of economic immigrants to 70 per cent from the current level of 52 per cent.
- Increase Ontario's role in selecting the immigrants who meet our unique labour market needs.
- Request a doubling of our Provincial Nominee Program to 2,000 in 2013, increasing to 5,000 in 2014.
- Maximize the potential of temporary foreign workers and international students.

How we get there

- Work with the federal government to expand Ontario's role in economic immigrant selection.
- Immediately request an increase to Ontario's ability to select immigrants that meet our province's needs, such as through the Provincial Nominee Program.
- Promote and expand pathways to keep experience and skills in Ontario.
- Provide easier access to services for immigrants.
- Establish an annual Minister's Table with employers to discuss immigration needs and challenges.
- Better promotion of immigration programs to businesses, temporary foreign workers and international students.

Helping newcomers and their families achieve success

We need to do a better job of welcoming immigrants. This includes encouraging municipalities, stakeholders and employers to attract and retain skilled immigrants who can make valuable contributions to local economies.

Building stronger, inclusive communities that promote and value diversity will help all Ontario municipalities grow and succeed. Newcomers complement the skills of the domestic labour force, bring new investments and innovative practices, help to open trade routes with their countries of origin and enhance cultural diversity.

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TD Economics, 2012.

Our targets

- Improve job prospects of non-economic immigrants.
- Provide more resources for employers to recruit and welcome immigrant employees.
- Encourage employers to develop or expand mentorship, internship and on-the-job training programs.

- Achieve 5 per cent Francophone immigration

How we get there

- Enhance information and referral tools for attracting and recruiting immigrants to communities across Ontario.
- Work with municipalities and employers to promote the value of immigration and diversity.
- Work co-operatively with the federal government and stakeholders to increase Francophone immigration and improve access to services.

Immigration is directly associated with investment and economic activity that makes Canadian companies and marketplaces more innovative.

Conference Board of Canada, 2010.

Growing a Globally-Connected Economy

Immigration is not a one-way ticket. Newcomers to Ontario arrive with vital ties and connections to their former homelands that can be leveraged to produce economic growth and prosperity for Ontario.

The key to realizing this two-way benefit is to quickly integrate immigrants into our economy.

That means moving to a unified system of delivering Immigrant settlement services that allows immigrants to get the help they need quickly.

Another key to Ontario leveraging the global value of immigration is to get the internationally trained working in their fields as soon as possible. Barriers are coming down, but the internationally trained still face a number of challenges getting their credentials and experience recognized.

One of the biggest obstacles to building a globally-connected economy is professional language training for immigrants. Proficiency in English or French is essential to living and working in Ontario.

Mastering language fluency and cross-cultural communication quickly is critical for immigrant success and building strong, two-way global connections in our economy.

Our targets

- Growing a globally-connected economy by increasing the employment rates of highly skilled immigrants in their fields.
- Maximizing the global value of immigrants already here by decreasing their unemployment rate to the provincial average.

- Leveraging global expertise by removing barriers and increasing the number of internationally trained professionals licensed in their professions.

How we get there

- Improve eligibility and access to settlement and integration programs that help immigrants.
- Increase awareness of government settlement and integration programs.
- Create an annual Ministers' Forum to drive a "no wrong door" approach to immigrant services across government.
- Enhance pre-arrival information for immigrants, including foreign qualifications.
- Improve access to French and English language training programs.
- Enhance Ontario's successful bridge training programs.
- Increase participation in mentorship, internship and on-the-job training programs.
- Better assist employers in hiring immigrants.
- Improve support for temporary foreign workers, including live-in caregivers.
- Explore the root causes of undocumented workers and bring the issue forward for national discussion.
- Continue to improve foreign qualification recognition of internationally trained professionals, by working with regulators and Ontario's Fairness Commissioner.
- Formally assess progress on foreign qualification recognition with the assistance of a third-party reviewer.
- Better co-operation and alignment of key agencies that help immigrants with employment.

Commitment to Action

Ontario now has a long-term immigration strategy. We are setting a new direction for immigration in Ontario – attracting highly skilled workers and their families, supporting diverse communities and growing a globally-connected economy.

The Government of Ontario is committed to achieving the vision and targets of this strategy and building a brighter future for immigrants and their families.

Work is already underway on several fronts to move the strategy forward – from the seeking of a new partnership with the federal government to the creation of a Minister's Table with employers designed to produce a stronger dialogue with the business community on the benefits of immigration. We will report annually to Ontarians on our progress.

When immigrants succeed, Ontario succeeds. Making immigration work better for immigrants, their families and our province will ensure a strong Ontario and an even stronger Canada.

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