

How Many Immigrants are in Calgary?

In Canada there are different kinds of newcomers. Permanent residents include family class immigrants, economic immigrants, refugees, and other immigrants. There are also a large number of temporary residents (international students, temporary foreign workers, visitors, refugee claimants) who add to the total number of newcomers arriving each year.

According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC, 2012) Calgary continues to be the fourth choice of destination for new immigrants. Recent statistics released for permanent residents in the country show that 13.9% of the total immigrants in Canada in the year 2012 selected Alberta as their new home with 6.5% choosing to settle in Calgary.

In 2012, the total number of newcomers arriving in Calgary was 29,898. There were 10,985 temporary foreign workers, 16,813 permanent residents, and 2,100 foreign students.

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2012/index.asp>

Current Issues for Newcomers in Calgary

- Close to half (48.1%) of the Calgary's population aged 15 years and over are either first or second generation Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2008d, 2008e). This percentage is noticeably higher than provincial or national percentage.
- The Canadian fertility rate is now at 1.57 children per woman (replacement level is 2.1 births per woman), and our population is inevitably aging. By 2030 if recent trends continue, each year Canada will have more deaths than births. As a result the contribution of international migration to Canada's population will (must) increase in the decades to come.
- Two thirds of the city's population growth was from immigration, a trend reversal from the past when births made up the majority of Calgary's population increase.
- In the 2011 Calgary VitalSigns Report, Calgary was given a rating of B- in the area of "Getting Started," which focused on immigrants' ability to integrate into society. Calgarians say there is poor recognition of immigrant skills, less acceptance of new cultures, and a lack of diversity in neighbourhoods. <http://www.thecalgaryfoundation.org/initiatives/vital-signs/calgary-s-vital-signs>
- A large number of temporary residents (international students, temporary foreign workers, visitors, refugee claimants) add to the number of immigrants arriving each year.
- International students can now apply for permanent residency without having to leave the country. Under a new federal-provincial agreement, the Off-Campus Work Permit Program for International Students makes it easier for non-Canadian students to apply for work permits and allows them to work off campus while they complete their studies.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ... In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14, 16



- Recent immigrants have been selected on a point system, favoring the highly educated, who have studied English (likely learned from other non-native speakers). On arriving, they are shocked to find themselves disoriented by unwritten cultural assumptions and being unable to understand our spoken English and our idioms.
- There is a huge waste of human capital because professionals, largely, have not been able to get back into their field. Employers need workers who are socially integrated and accepted in our culture.
- Employers want newcomers to be socially integrated to fit in with their colleagues. We ultimately promote social and occupational integration with acceptance of newcomers, better intercultural understanding, and good communication skills.
- If Calgary does not succeed in meeting the challenge of immigration, the negative outcomes may include: increased poverty, social and economic polarization, racism, neighbourhood segregation, school dropout and crime. Even with the economic downturn there are ongoing labour force shortages in skilled workers causing serious negative economic spin-offs.

Immigrants in Your Community

Do you want to know more about the immigrants living in your community? The City of Calgary has individual Community Profiles for each neighbourhood in Calgary, which can be accessed through their website by entering 'Community demographics' on the search line. These Community Profiles include information such as how many people in that area speak a language other than French or English, how many immigrants live in the area, and immigrants' countries of origin, all of which are compared to totals for all of Calgary. Visit the City of Calgary website for more information on newcomers living in your community.

For more information about the social issues affecting recent immigrants to Calgary, see the *Signposts II - Recent Immigrants* document on the City of Calgary website: <http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/signposts/Sign%20Posts%20II%20-%20RECENT%20IMMIGRANTS.pdf>

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What Can We Do?

With so many immigrants now living in Calgary, Calgary's Christian community can play a significant role in these newcomers' lives. The greatest needs for new immigrants include a proficiency in English, finding work to match their qualifications, child care, and simply making ends meet. By offering church ESL programs (whether formal classes, conversation groups, or Bible studies), we can help these newcomers not only improve their English, but also become part of a community that cares. With more connections in the community, newcomers are more likely to find appropriate work, child care, and the support needed to fully integrate into society. One ESL class can do so much more than teach an immigrant English!

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself.

Matthew 22:37-38

