



MAYOR REPORT TO COUNCIL

1100 Patricia Blvd. | Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 3V9 | www.princegeorge.ca

DATE: May 16, 2024

TO: COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Simon Yu, Mayor

SUBJECT: Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program

ATTACHMENT(S): [Expanding the benefits of immigration in rural and northern communities. 2022 Press Release: Expanding the benefits of immigration in rural and northern communities - Canada.ca](#)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. THAT Council RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION the report dated May 16, 2024, from Mayor Yu titled, "Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot".
2. THAT Council AUTHORIZES the Office of the Mayor to write to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship requesting that the City of Prince George be added to future rounds of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program should any take place.

PURPOSE:

This report is intended to provide council with information on a federal pilot program launched in 2022 titled, Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot, which aims to support communities in recommending candidates for permanent residency who have in demand skill sets which would benefit the community.

BACKGROUND:

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) is a community-driven program. It's designed to spread the benefits of economic immigration to smaller communities by creating a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers who want to work and live in one of the participating communities.

Eleven rural and northern communities have been selected as part of the new Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to invite newcomers:

- Deadline for communities to demonstrate they met eligibility criteria was March 11, 2019.
- Original [Federal announcement](#) was June 14, 2019; [backgrounder](#).
- Launch of the program took place in 2020; the program has been extended several times.

The participating communities were selected as a representative sample of the regions across Canada to assist in collecting information on how the program may be best delivered nationally.

The Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (IRCC), who is responsible for this program, has stated the 11 communities were selected based on their economic needs and the presence of resources and community partners required to administer the pilot. The following communities are participants in the program:

1. North Bay, ON
2. Sudbury, ON
3. Timmins, ON
4. Sault Ste. Marie, ON
5. Thunder Bay, ON
6. Brandon, MB
7. Altona/Rhineland, MB
8. Moose Jaw, SK
9. Claresholm, AB
10. Vernon, BC
11. West Kootenay (Trail, Castlegar, Rossland, Nelson), BC

As this pilot is community-driven, the participating communities are required to:

- assess prospective permanent residency candidates who:
 - best fit the economic needs of these communities.
 - have a genuine employment opportunity that meets their community requirements.
 - have the intention of staying in the community.
- recommend candidates for permanent residence to IRCC for a final decision.
- connect newcomers with settlement services and mentoring opportunities with established members of the community.

There are quickly approaching deadlines related to the end of the current pilot for applicants:

- July 31, 2024: Deadline for communities to recommend candidates
- August 31, 2024: Deadline for candidates to submit a permanent residence application to IRCC

I assess that this program would have benefited the City of Prince George had the community been chosen as a location at the start of this program. Should an expansion of the pilot take place I would like to communicate our interest in being considered for participation to the Minister responsible for the program.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Growing our community and labour pool through thoughtful immigration supports many strategic priorities, including building a strong, resilient and diverse economy in Prince George.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no known financial considerations stemming from the recommendations of this report. As more information becomes available further reports highlight the cost of participation will follow as may be appropriate.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This report provides information on a recently announced federal pilot program and requests Council support to inquire on having Prince George considered as an addition to the list of participating communities.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Simon Yu, Mayor

Meeting Date: 2024 /05/27