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Expanding the benefits of immigration in rural and northern communities

From: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)

News release

August 26, 2022—Timmins, Ontario—Immigration plays a crucial role in our economic recovery from the pandemic and, now more than ever, newcomers are vital to the future of rural and northern communities across the country. The Government of Canada is committed to supporting these communities, expanding immigration to create jobs, addressing our labour shortage, and helping businesses grow.

The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, today announced the expansion of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), increasing the benefits of immigration in the 11 participating communities. A number of new improvements will be implemented this fall and will support community partners, employers and candidates by

- expanding the geographic boundaries of the following participating communities, so more employers are able to participate: North Bay (Ont.), Sudbury (Ont.), Timmins (Ont.), Thunder Bay (Ont.), Moose Jaw (Sask.), West Kootenay (BC) and Vernon (BC)

- making it easier to fill labour market needs in the health care and trades sectors, by expanding the range of job offers available to candidates, with specific work experience
- allowing communities to participate for a longer period, until August 2024, when the pilot comes to an end
- helping community partners provide greater support to candidates and employers
- reducing the amount of settlement funds participants are required to have
- strengthening program integrity

Based on the recommendations of our community partners, these changes take another step in meeting their needs and promoting growth in smaller and rural communities across the country. With expanded geographic boundaries, the RNIP will support more employers in filling crucial labour market needs.

Regional immigration programs, like the RNIP, are increasingly important to the sustainable growth of our country and build on the success of the new permanent Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP), launched in March 2022, which continues to help the Atlantic provinces attract the skilled newcomers they need to address the labour shortage and demographic challenges in the region. To date, 167 confirmed permanent program applications have been received since the launch.

Francophone immigration is also crucial for Canada, including in rural and northern communities. Immigration is one of the most important factors in maintaining, and even increasing, populations of Francophone minority communities, and we are collaborating with partners, provinces and territories to ensure French-speaking immigrants have the opportunity and resources to settle in, and contribute to, Francophone communities across the country. We

will continue to take measures to increase the proportion and retention of French-speaking newcomers in welcoming Francophone communities outside Quebec.

Expanding regional immigration builds on the ongoing work to strengthen Canada's immigration system, including our plan to hire up to 1,250 new employees by the end of this fall to reduce application backlogs, with a focus on addressing labour shortages, improving client experience and reuniting families. We are taking action to ensure that our immigration system works well for everyone—including those in rural and northern communities.

Quotes

“Rural and northern communities face unique economic and demographic challenges, and the expansion of RNIP announced today makes it that much easier for communities to fill their critical labour market needs. They also expand community boundaries so that employers in remote areas can access the program, helping to support economic development and growth in smaller communities across the country.”

– The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Quick facts

- Rural communities employ over 4 million Canadians and account for almost 30% of the GDP. They help to supply food, water and energy for urban centres, sustaining the industries that contribute to Canada's prosperous economy.

- The 11 RNIP communities are: North Bay (Ont.), Sudbury (Ont.), Timmins, (Ont.), Sault Ste. Marie (Ont.), Thunder Bay (Ont.), Brandon (Man.), Altona/Rhineland (Man.), Moose Jaw (Sask.), Claresholm (Alta.), West Kootenay (BC) and Vernon (BC).
- As of June 30, 2022, 1,130 newcomers have arrived in RNIP communities, helping address labour shortages in key sectors, such as health care, hospitality and food services, retail, manufacturing and transportation.
- It is estimated that an average of 125 newcomers and their family members could be welcomed into each of the participating communities, every year.
- There is a maximum of 2,750 principal applicants, plus family members, whose applications can be accepted for processing under RNIP, in any given year.
- In January 2022, the Government of Canada invested \$35 million to ensure newcomers settling in small towns and rural communities have access to essential services during their first year in Canada.

Associated links

- [RNIP Community Boundaries](#)
- [Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot](#)
- [Atlantic Immigration Program](#)
- [Immigration Matters](#)

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