

2017 Progress Report

OUR FOUNDATION FOR TOMORROW

ONTARIO'S IMMIGRATION STRATEGY





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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Ontario was built on immigration, and diversity has always been an important part of our culture, heritage and economic success. In the years to come, immigration will continue to play a critical role in our future prosperity.

In 2012, the Government of Ontario released *A New Direction*, Ontario's first-ever immigration strategy. I'm pleased to report that, five years on, our policies and initiatives to support the successful resettlement of immigrants to Ontario are making a difference.

Immigration is a shared responsibility between federal and provincial jurisdictions, and an effective relationship between the two levels of government is key to ensuring a successful immigration strategy.

Ontario's relationship with the federal government is strong, and is perhaps best exemplified by the recent successful negotiation of a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). This agreement provides a framework that will permit



a more collaborative partnership with our federal partners and allow our province to respond to the current geopolitical climate and its effect on patterns of immigration.

We've also enhanced our already strong standing on the international stage. Ontario has always been known as a welcoming place for newcomers, but the manner in which our province and its people responded to the Syrian refugee crisis is being noticed around the world. Ontario regularly receives international delegations eager to learn about our approaches to settlement and integration.

Here at home, our work continues to make Ontario an attractive and welcoming place for prospective immigrants. In times of rapid technological change and fierce global competition, we need a skilled and resilient workforce to give us a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions. With this in mind, we continue to attract the best and brightest international students and workers who

have the skills we need to strengthen our workforce and ensure continued economic prosperity for all Ontarians.

Newcomers to Ontario represent more than 200 multicultural communities and speak more than 250 languages and dialects. Thanks to the thousands of people from around the world who, every year, choose to call this province home, Ontario enjoys a remarkable diversity that strengthens us economically and socially. Our immigration strategy is working well to continue to attract newcomers who choose Ontario as their new home.



Laura Albanese

MINISTER OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION



INTRODUCTION

In 2012, our government released *A New Direction* in response to a clear and growing need for a new approach to immigration in Ontario, specifically to the way in which we attract, select and support new arrivals to this province.

This strategy established three priority objectives for immigration in Ontario:

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

It also contained a commitment to report regularly to the people of Ontario on the progress being made towards achieving these objectives. This document represents our latest immigration progress report.



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.

A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy, 2012



ATTRACTING A SKILLED WORKFORCE AND BUILDING A STRONGER ECONOMY

The October 2016 report by the Government of Canada's Advisory Council on Economic Growth continues to emphasize the need for immigration in order to grow our workforce, stimulate innovation and keep us competitive in today's global economy. As a result, Ontario not only needs more immigrants, it needs to specifically attract newcomers who possess the skills and ability to meet the province's labour market needs and help our economy grow.



Progress Made

Although the determination of how many immigrants come to Canada in any given year is the role of the federal government, Ontario continues to ensure that it has effective legislative, policy and programming tools to be a sought-after destination.

Ontario supports the federal government's recent decision to release its first ever multi-year immigration levels plan as it provides more predictability and informs Ontario's immigration program planning. The federal government has set an overall national landings target of 310,000 immigrants for 2018, with targets of 330,000 in 2019 and 340,000 in 2020.

Ontario's Immigration Act

The Ontario Immigration Act received Royal Assent in May 2015 and will be proclaimed on January 1, 2018. This

legislation positions Ontario as a full partner on immigration with the federal government, with an enhanced role in immigration selection aimed at attracting more economic immigrants. It also creates a framework that allows Ontario to better design, deliver and manage a larger and more efficient provincial nominee program.

The draft regulations were made available for public comment during a 45-day consultation period. Feedback received during this process, and through stakeholder outreach, was considered in finalizing the regulations. In early December, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) provided pre-proclamation information to stakeholders and the general public about the upcoming implementation of the Ontario Immigration Act regulations taking effect on January 1, 2018.

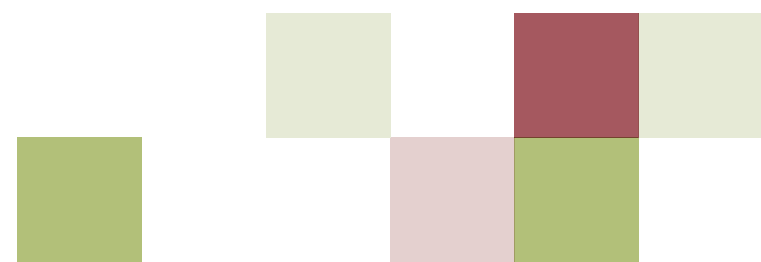
Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA)

Ontario receives more immigrants and refugees than any other province in Canada, and our internationally trained immigrants play a key role in making Ontario strong and prosperous. That is why a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement is an important achievement that will strengthen our long-term partnership on immigration with the federal government and boost our economies.

A second phase of negotiations is ongoing in three priority areas, which will become Annexes to the COIA. These include a French Speaking Immigrant Annex, a Municipal Annex and an International Student Annex, which are expected to be finalized in early 2018.



Since 2013, there have been 25 *Minister's Employers Tables* held in 16 communities across Ontario. Approximately 500 employers and organizations have participated.



Minister's Employers Tables

Minister's Employers Tables (METs) were a key recommendation of Ontario's immigration strategy to produce a clear picture of current and future labour market needs. These roundtables were created to help MCI gather critical employer perspectives on immigration in Ontario.

METs provide the government with valuable insight as how best to access the international talent we need to increase our global competitiveness, address labour needs and improve our programs and services. These roundtables provide both provincial and regional perspectives on labour needs and on policy and programming responses.

Over the past year, the Minister and/or Minister's representatives have led seven roundtable discussions, meeting with 96 employers in Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, Belleville, Thunder

Bay, Ottawa and Peterborough. These roundtables provide an opportunity for employers to discuss challenges they face in accessing talent to fill their labour market needs, including in the growing high tech and skilled trades sectors. The information gathered during the roundtable discussions is being used to develop a series of nine recommendations to accomplish the following objectives:

- Address barriers to opportunities within the immigrant selection process;
- Improve labour market integration of international talent; and
- Develop a business advisory council.



Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) allows the province to support employers in attracting and retaining the skilled workers they need to compete in today's knowledge-based economy. Through the OINP, Ontario nominates individuals and their families for permanent residence. Nominees typically include skilled workers, international students, entrepreneurs and key staff of established foreign corporations. Every year, the federal government provides provinces and territories with a specific nominee allocation.

Improving the program and increasing the number of nominees Ontario is allocated have been a major focus of the province's immigration strategy.

Our gains in this regard have been significant, with Ontario's allocation increasing from 1,300 nominees in 2013 to 6,000 in 2017.

In 2017, Ontario took significant steps in modernizing the OINP by moving to an online application process, which has made the program easier to access for applicants, while greatly reducing processing times.

In addition, the program launched new targeted streams to better respond to provincial labour market needs, including:

- Ontario's Express Entry: Skilled Trades Stream, which provides a pathway for workers with experience in a number of skilled trades; and,
- Employer Job Offer: In-Demand Skills Stream pilot, which provides a pathway for workers with work experience and a job-offer in an in-demand occupation in the agriculture and construction sectors.

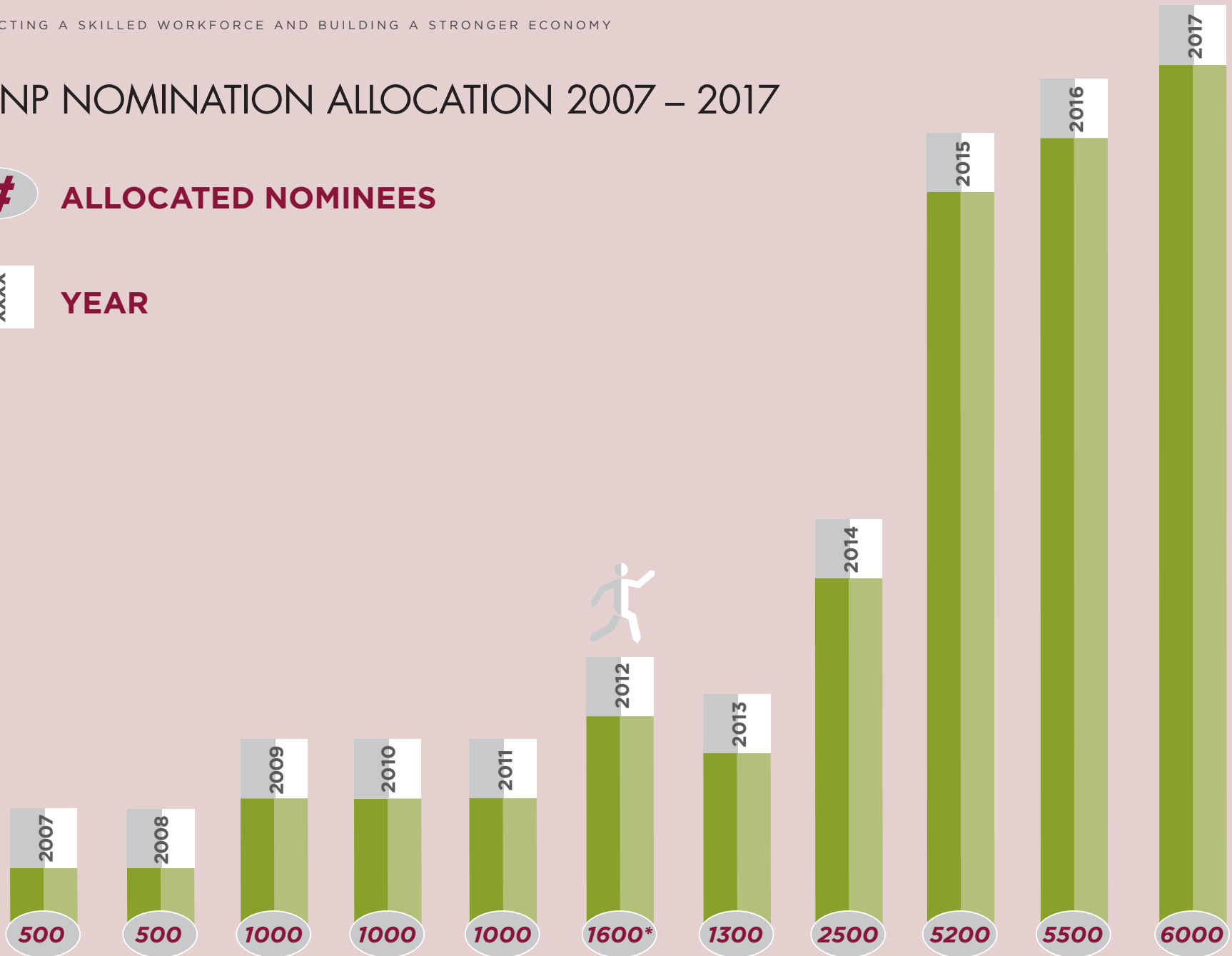
The OINP continues to be a very popular program and demand exceeds the current allocation. MCI has built the human resource and digital capacity to process larger numbers of nominations, while continuing to improve customer service. As a result, Ontario continues to advocate with our federal counterparts for significant increases to our provincial allocation.

Most OINP applications are now being processed within 60 days from the application date, with the exception of Entrepreneur and Corporate streams, which are assessed on a case by case basis. This is a significant improvement and underpins the ministry's commitment to enhanced customer service.

OINP NOMINATION ALLOCATION 2007 – 2017

ALLOCATED NOMINEES

XXXX YEAR

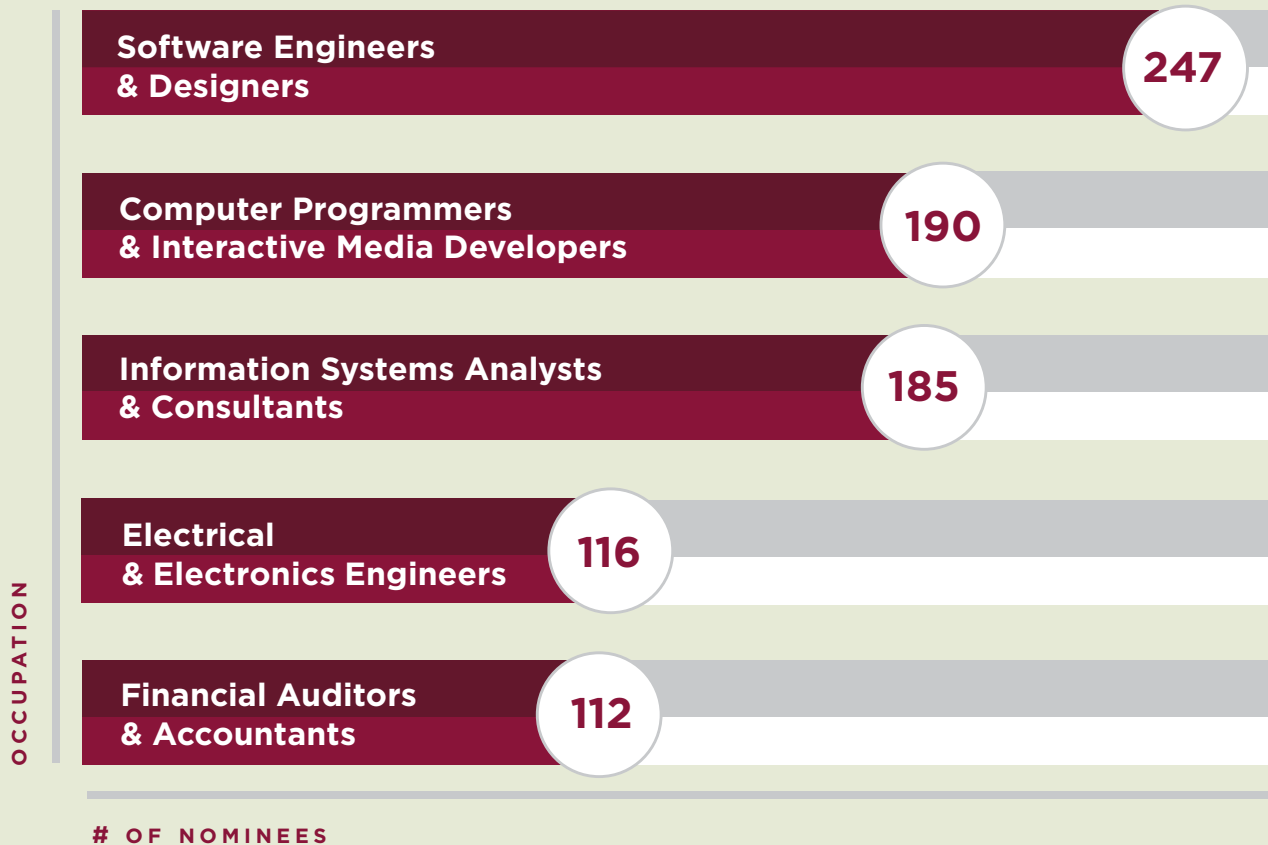


*In 2012, the federal government granted Ontario an additional 600 nominations through the Federal Skilled Workers Backlog Reduction Pilot. This was a one-time initiative.

ONTARIO IMMIGRANT NOMINEE PROGRAM (OINP) OCCUPATION OVERVIEW (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2017)

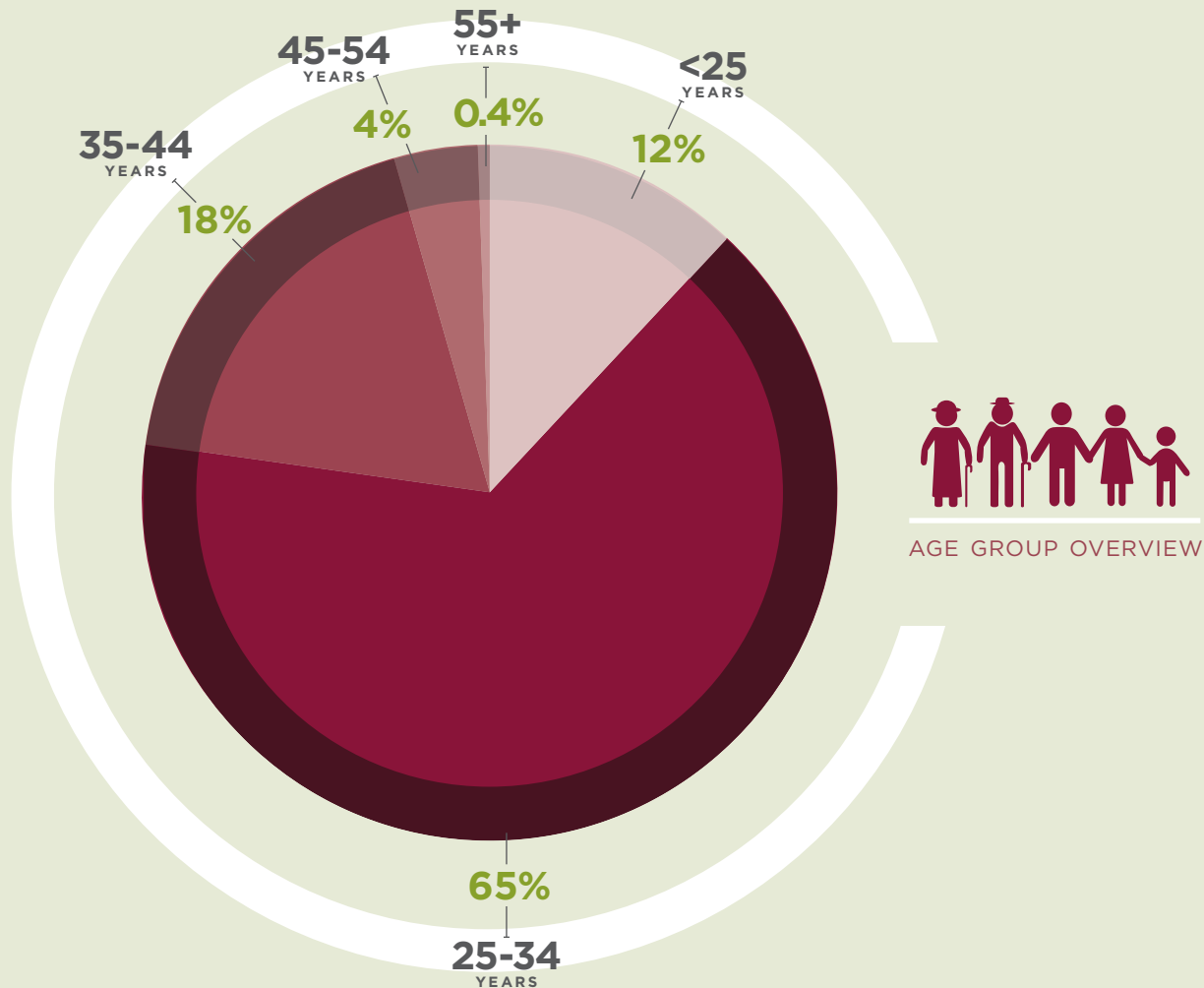
OINP 2017 nominees are employed across 251 different occupations, the majority of whom are employed within information and communication technologies (ICT) occupations.

The top five OINP nominee occupation categories include:



ONTARIO IMMIGRANT NOMINEE PROGRAM (OINP) AGE GROUP OVERVIEW (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2017)

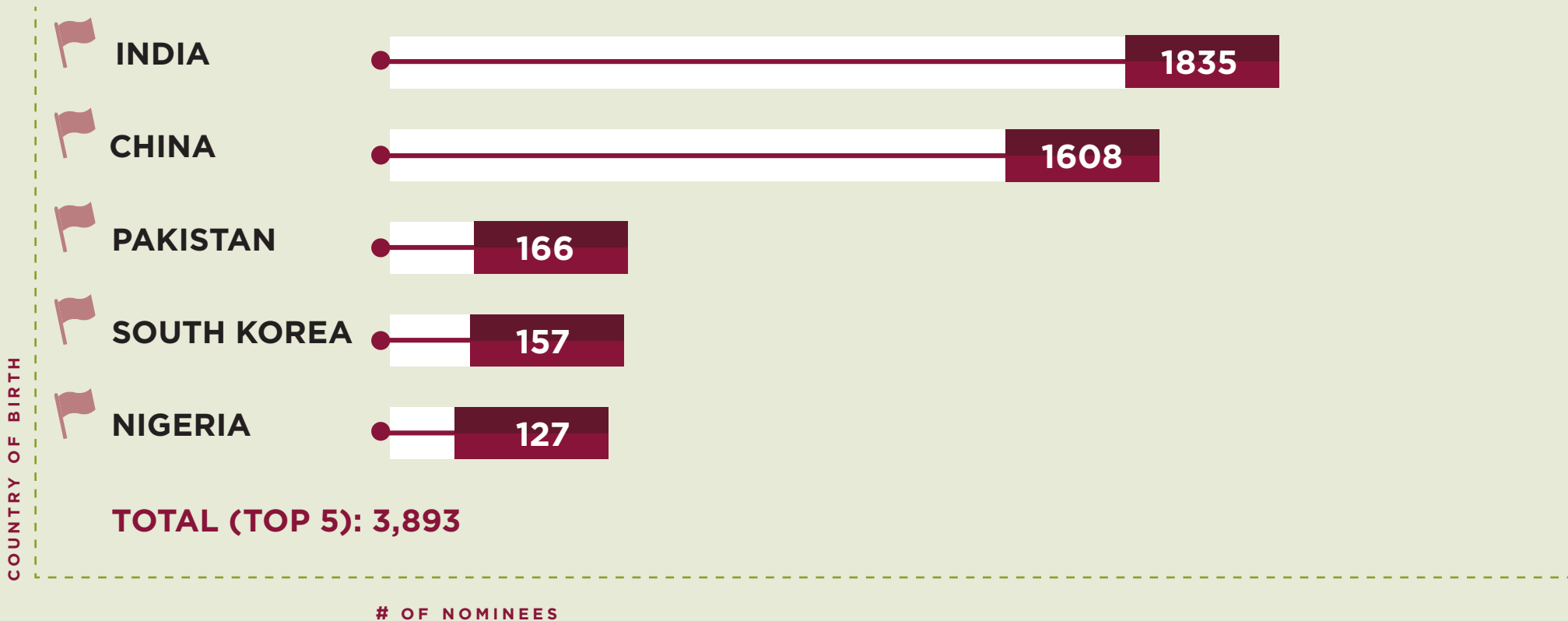
OINP 2017 nominees are concentrated in the prime working age group (aged 25-44) with 65% of the nominees between the ages of 25 and 34.



ONTARIO IMMIGRANT NOMINEE PROGRAM (OINP) COUNTRY OF BIRTH OVERVIEW (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2017)



India and China remained as the top two source countries for OINP 2017 nominees, accounting for 35% and 31% of the total nominees respectively.



TOTAL 2017 NOMINEES: 5,173

The OINP e-Filing Portal makes it easier for applicants to apply to the program and has greatly improved processing times.

Municipal Immigration Program

A key part of our immigration strategy is informing potential immigrants about the wide variety of municipalities across Ontario ready to help them settle, find employment and build a brighter future for themselves and their families.

The Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO) program supports local governments in developing and enhancing websites that promote their municipalities as attractive settlement destinations. MIIO supports immigrant decisions on where and how best to settle when they arrive in Ontario, as well as how to prepare for moving to a particular municipality at the pre-arrival stage. The program has supported 32 local immigration portals that provide online information to more than 160 communities across Ontario. In addition, 21 communities collaborate

to highlight Francophone immigration opportunities and promote communities with French-language services.

In addition, the Municipal Innovation Fund (MIF), launched in 2014-15, supports municipal projects that promote innovative approaches to attracting and integrating immigrants. In early 2017, MIF provided funding to the City of Toronto to support the development of Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement (CFWNS), an employability/skills program for Syrian newcomers that provides experience in the food services sector, as well as employment services, training and social supports. In 2017, this City of Toronto program was internationally recognized with a Milan Pact Award for leadership in using food policy as a tool for refugee resettlement and integration. The Milan Pact Awards honour signatory cities that demonstrate best practices in sustainable food management.



FADIA'S STORY

In Her Own Words:

My name is Fadia. I came to Canada in March 2016 from Egypt. For me or anyone coming to a different country he must have a friend but me I came I don't have any friends here. Then I listened about community food works* and listen also about this session that running in Arabic for Arabic people. I registered on it I learned from this program for me my husband and my kids, all of my family. I have new friends here. And I'm volunteering with City of Toronto for community food works. I use my skills to register people for the program and improve my English. I thank everybody who helped get this position.

*The City of Toronto's **Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement** program is funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Municipal Innovation Fund.

Global Skills Strategy

In 2016 and early 2017, MCI worked with the federal government on reforms to the temporary foreign worker system to help connect Ontario businesses with top international talent in a timely fashion. Building on Ontario's experiences supporting Thomson Reuters to establish a technology centre in Toronto by facilitating immigration pathways for the talent required, the federal government launched the Global Skills Strategy (GSS) in June 2017.

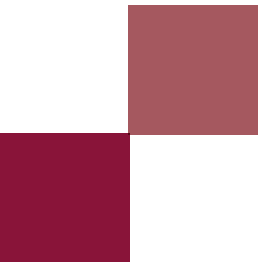
GSS is a two-year pilot program intended to give employers a faster and more predictable process for attracting top talent and in-demand skills, creating economic growth and more middle-class jobs. The strategy facilitates the processing of Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) applications for temporary foreign workers by providing a targeted two-week service standard.

It also provides a dedicated service channel offering personalized client services to help guide employers through federal immigration options. GSS helps companies making significant investments in Ontario to relocate here, and helps innovative Ontario companies recruit the talent they need to grow.

To be eligible to access the GSS dedicated service channel, companies must be referred by a GSS-designated referral partner. MCI and the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth are two such partners. To date, these ministries have referred six companies to the GSS and are fielding a growing number of information requests from interested Ontario businesses. Feedback from corporate stakeholders indicates that they see the program as a valuable tool to help them bring top international talent, innovation and growth to the province.



Francophone Immigration




Ontario is home to the largest Francophone community in Canada outside Quebec. Based on Census 2016 data, 622,415 people in Ontario are members of the Francophone community, which recently celebrated 400 years in Ontario. Francophone culture is a vital part of our provincial heritage to be celebrated and enhanced.

A significant goal of *A New Direction* is a commitment to increase Francophone immigration to 5% of Ontario's annual intake. MCI created a Group of Experts on Francophone Immigration to develop strategies to accomplish this goal.

The Group of Experts tabled its report in November 2016, and the ministry is making progress implementing the

13 recommendations contained in their report. Our initiatives aim to support Francophone immigration and settlement in Ontario and to strengthen Ontario's Francophone communities.

Progress Made — Promotion and Attraction



MCI developed an enhanced communications approach for international promotion, which included an editorial feature in L'Express magazine's 2016 and 2017 special editions on settling in Canada. Other initiatives included collaborating with the Canadian Embassy in Paris on strategies to attract Francophone immigrants, including informational

webinars reaching hundreds of participants, participation in Canada Week 2016 and 2017, and participation in Destination Canada 2016 and 2017. Through these efforts, MCI staff have reached several thousand prospective Francophone immigrants to share knowledge and provide tactical immigration advice. The ministry also employed social media strategies, including a French-language Twitter account and Facebook page, to share information about Ontario and raise our profile among Francophones.

French-Speaking Skilled Workers: Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) through a Francophone Lens

To attract new members with the skills and education required in Ontario's labour market to Ontario's Francophone community, MCI developed a specialized stream of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. The French-Speaking Skilled Worker (FSSW) stream was designed to encourage Francophone professionals to choose Ontario. Through MCI's outreach and promotional efforts, the stream has been growing every year.

MCI also created a Francophone immigration website portal with economic, demographic and cultural information about 21 Ontario municipalities, providing prospective Francophone immigrants with details about living and working in Ontario.

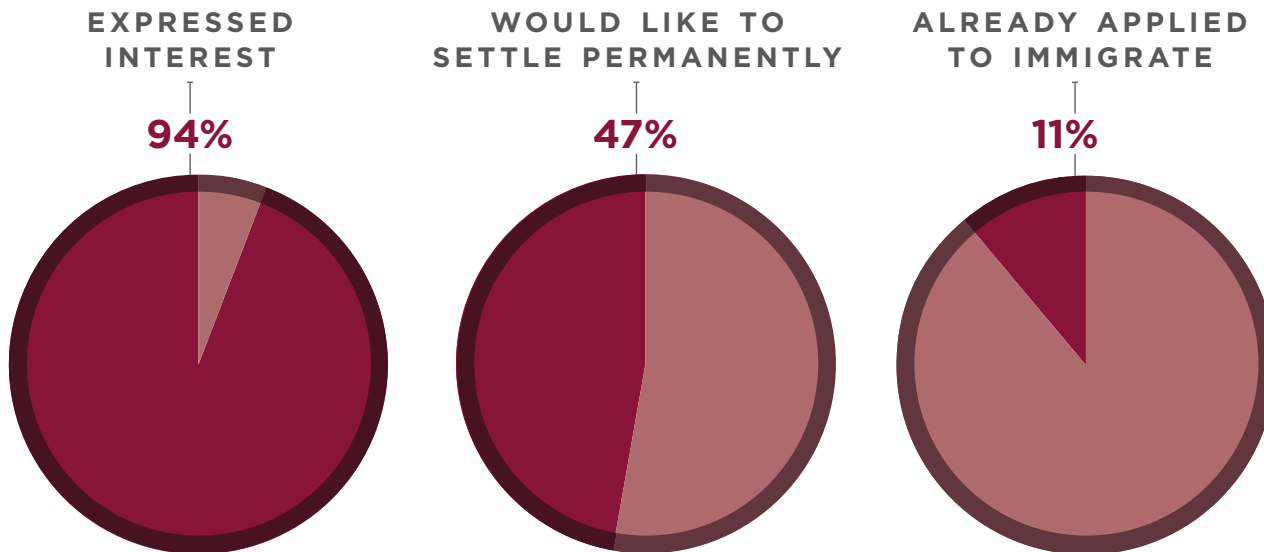
Selection and Pre-Arrival

Ontario co-chaired the Express Entry Working Group with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Through this working group, MCI contributed to the development of changes to the federal immigration program to better support the selection of Francophone candidates, including the awarding of additional points to French-speaking applicants in the Express Entry system.

MCI also continues to raise the issue of French-language testing barriers at bilateral and multilateral discussions.

CANADA WEEK 2016 FRANCOPHONE PARTICIPANTS HAVE THEIR SAY:

- 94% of participants expressed interest in Ontario
- 47% of participants would like to settle permanently in Ontario
- 11% of participants have already applied to immigrate to Ontario



Arrival and Settlement

MCI has engaged IRCC on improving Francophone newcomer supports at international arrival venues, such as Pearson International Airport. The 2017–2018 Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO) Call for Proposals encourages applicants to develop innovative tools to increase the quality and accessibility of information available to potential Francophone newcomers, including labour market information, as well as French-language settlement and integration services available in specific communities.

MCI also supports a number of key initiatives that promote the successful integration of Francophone newcomers.

The ministry's Bridge Training Program supports ACCES Employment and Collège Boreal's delivery of Speed Mentoring™ en Français, a networking service for



AHMED'S STORY

After attending Destination Canada 2016 in Paris, Ahmed expressed an interest in moving to Ontario with his wife and children. To his delight, he received a nomination under the French-Speaking Skilled Worker stream of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). Ahmed believes that Ontario's promise of a multicultural society and its rich Francophone communities offer a wealth of opportunity for his family. He and his family view the possibility of immigrating to Ontario as a great privilege, and are eagerly anticipating their 2018 arrival.

Francophones to grow their professional network and receive practical career advice. Another Bridge Training project with a Francophone focus is Emplois Spécialisés en Soutien à l'Ontario Rural (ESSOR), offered by La Cité collégiale. This program prepares internationally educated Francophone professionals with previous training and/or experience in agrology and agri-food sectors for employment in rural Ontario.

Global Experience Ontario also offers advice to Francophone newcomers on professional licensing and certification processes, international credential assessment, and employment and training programs, along with information about joining professional networks.

The Newcomer Settlement Program provides funding to support Orientation to Ontario (O2O), a bilingual federal-provincial pilot program that provides orientation and referral information about settlement to newcomers and refugees through workshops, webinars and the dissemination of print and online materials.

In addition, MCI supports the delivery of language training services to Francophone immigrants through a comprehensive network of schools and community agencies across the province, and newcomer settlement services through a range of community partners. MCI also supports civic engagement initiatives for Francophone newcomers through the new Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program, launched in June 2017.



The following proposals that focus on French-speaking immigrants were approved for *Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO)* funding:

- ✓ Creation of a Francophone Job Bank, Thunder Bay
- ✓ Immigration portal refresh to attract skilled Francophone talent, Sudbury
- ✓ Enhanced, mobile-friendly Francophone web content development, Durham
- ✓ Web content development to attract Francophone immigrants, Brockville

Partnerships with Francophone Agencies

MCI recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with Francophone community agencies to support the successful integration of French-speaking newcomers.

Key initiatives in 2017 include:

- Engaging with employers through Minister's Employers Tables and encouraging dialogue about how they can best leverage the skills of Francophone newcomers
- Establishing an Advisory Committee on Francophone Immigration tasked with providing advice to the ministry on implementing recommendations from the Group of Experts

- Sitting on the first-ever Francophone Workforce Development Council and providing funding to La Passerelle-Intégration et Développement Économique to organize the first forum on Francophone Human Capital in 2016

- At this forum, consulting firm Mercer presented research and later released a report highlighting workforce trends and the future of Francophone bilingual talent in Ontario

- Funding the International Student Connect pilot program, which also provides targeted support for Francophone international students
- Negotiating a French-Speaking Annex and an International Student Annex under COIA, and working closely with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to reflect the needs of Francophone international students

- Participating in stakeholder events in Ontario focusing on Francophone immigration and recruitment

Moving Forward

MCI will continue to pursue its objective of achieving 5% Francophone immigration to Ontario. In early 2018, a ministry delegation will participate in the first-ever Destination Ontario français mission to Morocco and Algeria. This event, in collaboration with the Canadian Embassy in France, will inform prospective French-speaking immigrants about life in Ontario and the immigration avenues available to them.

Also in early 2018, Ontario will host the second Joint Forum on Francophone Immigration, which will bring together federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for Immigration, as well as ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs.

This Forum will build on progress made at the first Joint Forum on Francophone Immigration, which took place in Moncton in March 2017. At the first Forum, ministers from across the country agreed to work together to enhance efforts aimed at increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec. Since the first Forum, Ontario has been working with its federal, provincial and territorial immigration and Francophonie counterparts to develop a national action plan to attract, receive, integrate and retain Francophone immigrants. The action plan will be presented at the 2018 Joint Forum.





HELPING NEWCOMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Immigration patterns to Ontario often reflect conflict and political upheaval unfolding in places far away from our province. Recent statistics support this, with Syria, Iraq, Eritrea, Jordan and Afghanistan making up the top five countries of birth for resettled refugees arriving in Ontario in 2016.

Once their journey to a new life in Ontario is complete, resettled refugees make their homes in a variety of communities across the province.

Newcomers to Ontario bring with them a wide variety of skills and experiences that enrich our communities and economy. In order for them to fully unleash their potential, Ontario ensures that supports are in place to facilitate settlement and integration, and that newcomers are aware of these supports.

MAIN DESTINATION CENSUS DIVISIONS (MUNICIPAL REGIONS) FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES IN 2016

MUNICIPAL REGIONS	# OF RESETTLED REFUGEES
Toronto	6,691
Ottawa	2,652
Middlesex	1,884
Waterloo	1,764
Hamilton	1,696
Peel	1,351
Essex	1,338
York	409
Wellington	219
Peterborough	215
Niagara	203
Frontenac	181
Durham	164
Thunder Bay	140
Halton	131
All Other Census Divisions	912
Total Number of Resettled Refugees in 2016	19,950

Source: MCI Research, November 2017; IRCC Permanent Resident Landings Q1-2017



Progress Made

Newcomer Settlement Program

Ontario's Newcomer Settlement Program provides support to agencies that help newcomers settle by providing orientation, settlement information and community supports.

In 2017-18, this program is providing \$11.7 million in funding to support 95 agencies that deliver settlement services across the province.

The Newcomer Settlement Program also supports targeted programming designed to address the needs of vulnerable newcomer youth, including mentoring, academic upgrading, leadership and skills development, cultural and recreational activities and integration supports.

Settlement and Integration Services for Refugees and Vulnerable Newcomers

Ontario has a long history of welcoming refugees from all over the world. Our province is known not only as an extraordinary place to live, but also one where people fleeing war and persecution are welcomed and given the support they need to start new lives.

Prior to 2015, Ontario welcomed an average of 13,400 refugees from around the world each year. In 2015, that number grew significantly in response to the international humanitarian crisis resulting from conflict in Syria.

In September 2015, the Government of Ontario launched a Refugee Resettlement Plan to co-ordinate efforts to resettle, support and integrate 10,000 Syrian resettled refugees.



The Newcomer Settlement Program
helps nearly 80,000 immigrants
every year.





Between November 2015 and June 2017, that figure more than doubled, as Ontario welcomed 20,673 Syrian resettled refugees, in addition to about 8,430 resettled refugees from other parts of the world.

In the weeks prior to the arrival of the first cohort of Syrian refugees, MCI led a co-ordinated effort that helped mobilize an unprecedented collection of ministries, municipalities, settlement agencies, community organizations and individuals to provide wrap-around supports for those seeking refuge in Ontario. This co-ordinated response contributed to the view that Ontario is seen as a leader in refugee resettlement.

Similarly, Ontario has worked with a range of federal, provincial, municipal and community partners to respond to increasing numbers of refugee claimants with urgent and complex needs.

During the first nine months of 2017, Ontario received 14,580 refugee claimants, a 34.5% increase over the same time period in 2016. Unlike resettled refugees, who are

processed overseas, refugee claimants must undergo a hearing to determine whether they can stay in Canada. These claimants rely heavily on provincially funded services as they are ineligible for federally funded settlement supports while awaiting results of their hearing.

Ontario invests over \$100 million annually in newcomer settlement and integration services. In 2015, Ontario announced a plan to welcome and help settle an increased number of refugees, including new funding to enhance refugee services. Since September 2015, Ontario has invested almost \$30 million in additional targeted funding to address the complex social and economic integration needs of refugees, refugee claimants and other vulnerable newcomers. Targeted services include:

- Social integration supports, such as first language settlement services, case management, housing and mental

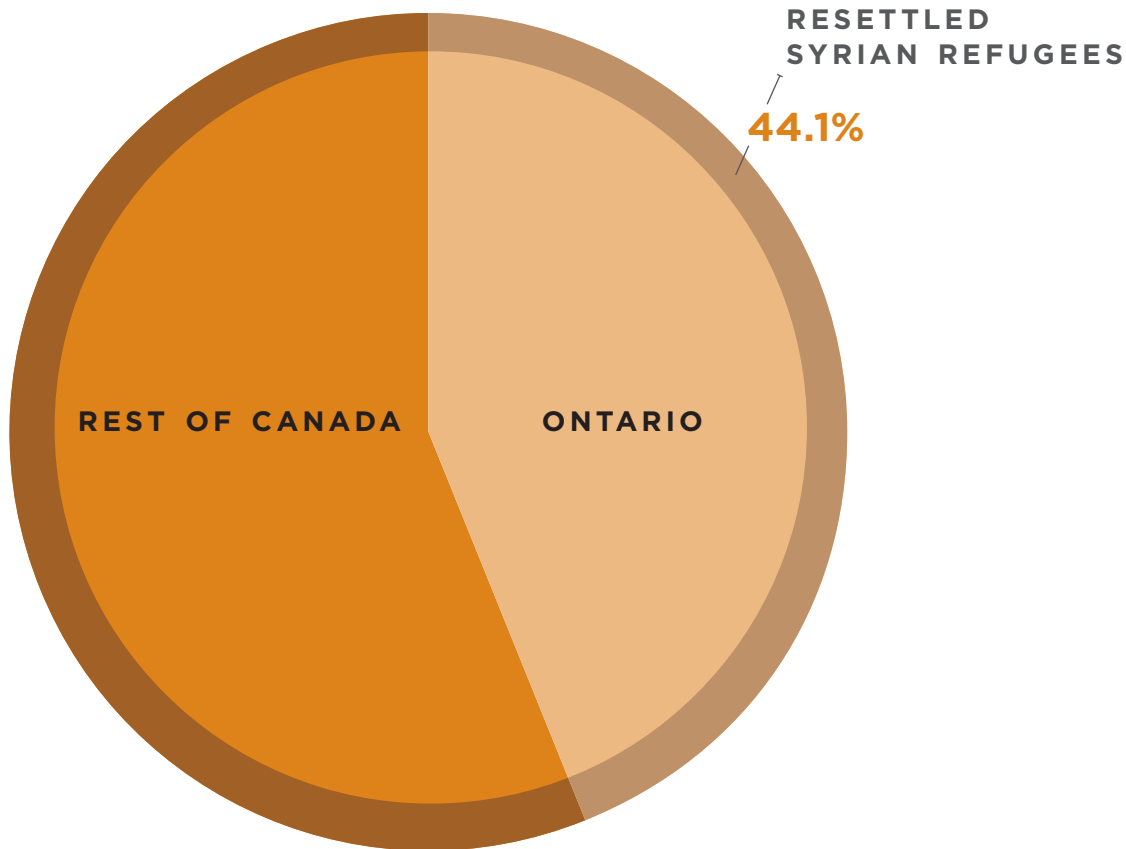
health supports, and specialized programming to meet the needs of vulnerable newcomer and refugee women and youth; and

- Economic integration supports that combine skills development with language training, employment, and wrap-around supports tailored to the needs of newcomers with low education and official language fluency.

Refugees are benefiting greatly from these services. The large Syrian refugee cohort is adapting well, with adults participating in language training and children in school. Early results show promising trends with regards to the types of education, health, settlement and community attachments that promote long-term success.

SYRIAN REFUGEES RESETTLED IN ONTARIO

Between November 2015 and June 2017, 20,673 Syrian refugees resettled in Ontario. This represents 44.1% of all resettled Syrian refugees who came to Canada during this period, about 1,670 more than Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia combined.



THAER'S STORY

Thaer, a lawyer from Syria, came to Canada in July 2016 as a 29-year-old Government-Assisted Refugee. Once settled in Hamilton, a local Resettlement Assistance Program agency helped Thaer access information about how to obtain employment related to his qualifications, as well as learn more about continuing education opportunities. By December 2016, only five months after his arrival in Canada, Thaer was successfully employed as a research assistant at an Ontario university.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF MCI-FUNDED SERVICES, BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2015 AND SEPTEMBER 2017:

✓	9,281 Syrian refugee adults had their language skills assessed for enrolment in federally and provincially funded language training
✓	21,329 OHIP cards were issued to Syrian refugees
✓	155 settlement agencies across the province enhanced their capacity to support refugees with mental health needs and to connect clients with specialized trauma services
✓	More than 2.5 million people in Ontario viewed a public service announcement challenging racist attitudes and behaviours, and promoting inclusive communities
✓	Approximately 10,694 people in Ontario participated in sponsorship information and training
✓	11,000+ adult resettled refugees and their family members received settlement, housing, employment, and mental health support, with refugee women and youth benefiting from specialized support*

*Figure from November 2015 - March 2017

Refugee Resettlement Secretariat

The Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat worked across government to co-ordinate efforts to help the Syrian refugee cohort to resettle in Ontario. After their first year in Canada, approximately 50% of privately sponsored refugees had full- or part-time jobs.

Key reasons for Ontario's success in accepting and integrating Syrian refugees were MCI's co-ordination of an inter-ministerial response and its work with municipalities and community agencies.

The Syrian Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (SRRS) was established in 2015 to co-ordinate the cross-government work of helping the large cohort of Syrian refugees to resettle in Ontario. In Ontario's 2017 budget, funding was announced for a transformed Refugee Resettlement Secretariat (RRS).

The RRS has a two-year mandate to work with partner ministries to address barriers to successful integration for all refugees and vulnerable newcomers, and to implement a multi-year follow-up of the Syrian refugees who arrived in Ontario in 2015 and 2016. The goal of this ground-breaking work is to provide longitudinal data on the outcomes for refugees and vulnerable newcomers. This data will inform strategies to enhance services and supports for other vulnerable groups.

The RRS is engaging with government partners, service providers, employers, volunteers and refugees to help improve the social and economic outcomes for vulnerable newcomers and refugees.



ZAHER'S STORY

Originally from Syria, Zaher came to Thunder Bay, Ontario with his family in February 2016. Upon arrival, he and his family received comprehensive support from his new community, including translation services at the airport, a new home made ready by local churches and settlement services accessed through the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association. Determined to get on his feet quickly, he opened his own restaurant within a year of arriving in Canada, allowing him to share his cuisine and his thanks with his new neighbours.



A Community Reaches Out

The decision by the community of Prince Edward County to sponsor one Syrian refugee family grew into a grass-roots resettlement project that would eventually see the sponsorship of several refugee families. Embraced by the citizens of Prince Edward County, the sponsored families received constant support, companionship and guidance from a group of dedicated volunteers.



Adult Non-Credit Language Training Program

The Adult Non-Credit Language Training Program helps eligible adult newcomers learn the English or French skills they need to live and work in Ontario. As part of this program, Language Training Projects are available to complement and improve language assessment and training services currently delivered across Ontario.

In 2017-18, this program is providing \$58.8 million in funding to support Ontario Public and Catholic District School Boards and community agencies in delivering language training services to approximately 70,000 immigrants every year.

Throughout the 2016-17 school year, 38 school boards (33 English and 5 French) delivered approximately 4,500 English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) courses in about 325 locations across the province. FSL is a growing segment of the program. For 2017-18, eight school boards will deliver FSL courses to over 4,000 learners.





LEVERAGING THE GLOBAL CONNECTIONS OF OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

When Ontario's Immigration Strategy was launched in 2012, it recognized the importance of diversity as an economic asset. New research released by the Centre for International Governance Innovation in its 2017 report, *The Diversity Dividend: Canada's Global Advantage*, supports this assertion. The report also identifies the importance of supports and programs that reduce barriers for internationally trained professionals in gaining licensure and employment in their fields of endeavour.



Viewed across all sectors, a one percent increase in ethnocultural diversity was associated with an average 2.4 percent increase in revenue and a 0.5 percent increase in workplace productivity.

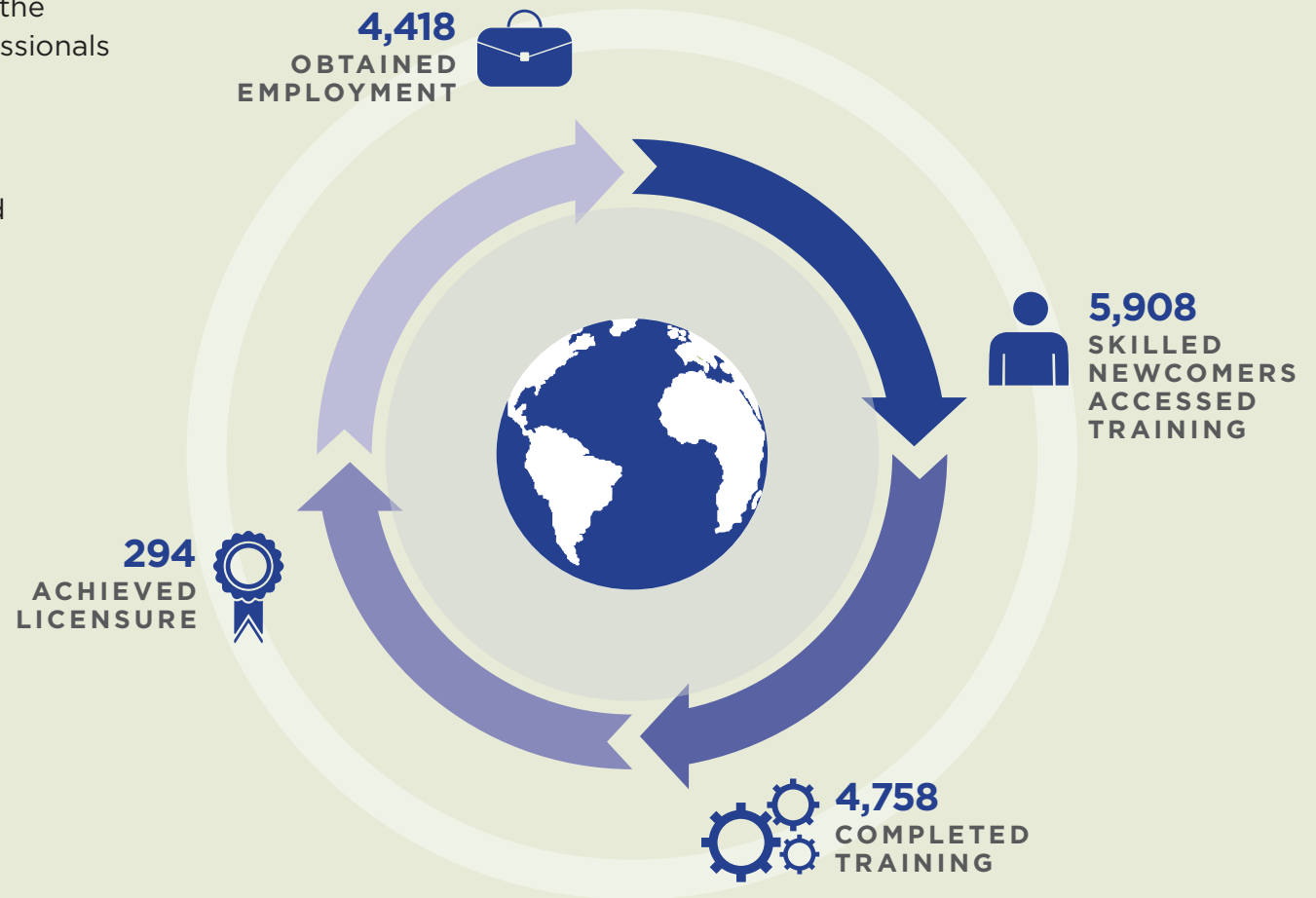
The Diversity Dividend: Canada's Global Advantage, p.1



A New Direction specifically identified the objective of “growing a globally-connected economy,” by “increasing the employment rate of highly skilled immigrants in their fields” and “removing barriers and increasing the number of internationally trained professionals licensed in their professions.”

In the past year alone:

- 5,908 skilled newcomers accessed a bridge training project
- 4,758 completed a bridge training project
- 294 achieved licensure in their regulated occupation
- 4,418 obtained employment in their field



OFFICE OF THE FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) helps to ensure that everyone who is qualified to practise in a profession or trade that is regulated in Ontario can get a licence to practise, including those individuals trained or educated outside the province.

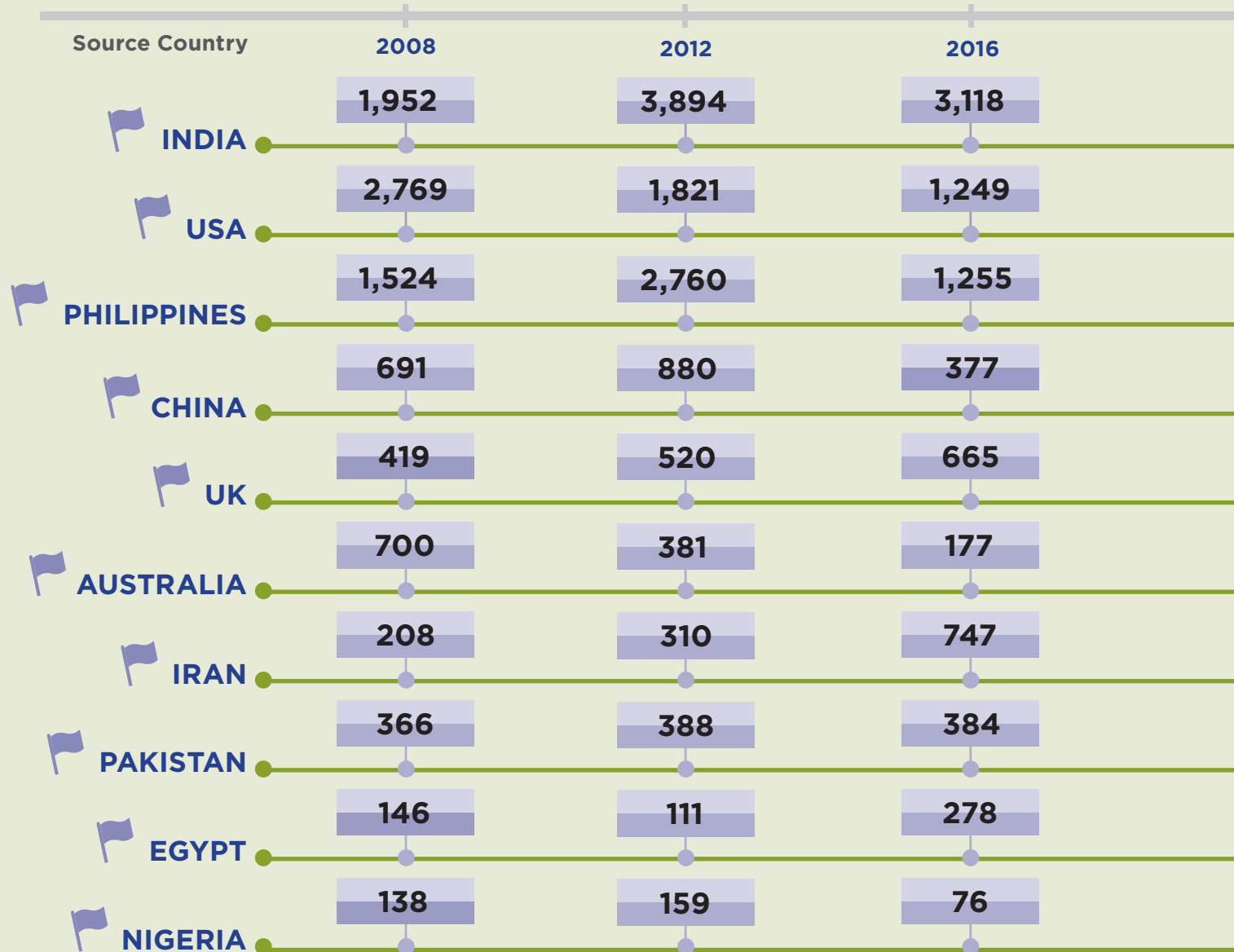
The OFC celebrated its tenth anniversary on March 21, 2017. The first institution of its kind in Canada, the Office has worked together with Ontario's professional licensing bodies to ensure fair access to regulated professions for everyone who is qualified. To review this decade of achievement and highlights from this past year, please refer to the OFC's annual report available at fairnesscommissioner.ca.

In April of 2017, the province appointed Grant Jameson as Ontario's new Fairness Commissioner to continue the work of promoting transparent, objective, impartial and fair registration practices in Ontario's regulated professions and compulsory trades. The Fairness Commissioner will also modernize the agency's approach to carrying out its compliance oversight mandate and to reduce the burden on regulatory bodies.

In September, new legislative amendments came into effect that changed the OFC's governance and reporting structure enhancing the agency's accountability. These amendments did not change the Fairness Commissioner's mandate or independence in assessing and advising on registration practices.

The influence of internationally-trained professionals and tradespeople over the past decade continues to grow. For instance, between 2016 and 2017, the College of Pharmacists of Ontario had the largest percentage increase of internationally-trained members, at 45%. During this period, India, the United States and the Philippines were the top source countries of applicants to Ontario's regulated professions and trades.

TOP 10 SOURCE COUNTRIES BASED ON NUMBER OF APPLICANTS TO ONTARIO'S REGULATED PROFESSIONS/TRADES:



Global Experience Ontario

Global Experience Ontario (GEO) helps immigrants gain recognition of their foreign credentials and experience. GEO offers information to help immigrants become licensed or certified to work in Ontario's regulated professions and skilled trades. It offers services in English and French, in-person, by telephone, online and through video calls, and also provides counselling to immigrants before they arrive in Ontario.

Bridge Training Program

One of the best ways of integrating newcomers into the province's workforce is to ensure that they find employment commensurate with their skills and experience. That is what the Ontario Bridge Training Program is intended to do.

In 2016, there were 68 active Bridge Training Program projects across the province, offering internationally-trained individuals the occupation-specific training and services required to help them prepare for licensure in regulated professions or to obtain work in highly skilled, non-regulated professions.

In Ontario's 2017 budget, the province increased its annual funding for the Ontario Bridge Training Program by \$7 million. With this new investment, our support for Bridge Training programming increases from \$16.2 million to \$23.2 million annually. The funding will be allocated to non-profit organizations, including colleges, universities and community agencies that deliver the program. Services are designed to help internationally trained professionals integrate successfully into the Ontario labour market without duplicating their international training and education.



In the past year, Global Experience Ontario (GEO) delivered 24 training workshops to 507 participants in 11 cities across Ontario. During the same time period, GEO also delivered 44 webinars to 424 participants from 40 countries.



Innovative projects funded by the Bridge Training Program include:

- ✓ Communicating for Success and Understanding Workplace Culture, offered by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE)
- ✓ Immigrant Access Fund: Micro Loans for Bridge Training, offered by Immigrant Access Fund of Canada Inc.
- ✓ RAISE — Resource Awareness About ITPs for Small/Medium Employers, offered by the Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP)

Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program

The Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program is a new initiative that received a funding commitment of \$6 million allocated over two years in the 2017 provincial budget.

The program's goal is to support projects that allow newcomers to participate fully in the civic, cultural, social and economic life of Ontario. It helps build diverse and inclusive communities by working with local organizations to remove barriers through increased intercultural awareness, strengthened social connections and improved integration of newcomers.

Some of the 465 projects that have already received funding under this program include events that connect people with employers, cultural and recreational programming, mentoring and tutoring for children and youth and parenting support groups for newcomer women.



MIGUEL'S STORY


Miguel had worked as a CEO in Mexico before he decided to start a new life in Canada. Once here, he struggled to find employment in his field. Eventually, he found a job at a bank, and also enrolled in the Business Edge program at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. Funded by MCI's Bridge Training Program, Business Edge helped Miguel develop a career management plan. He credits the program with helping him earn several promotions and increase his salary by 33%.



LOOKING AHEAD

In the five years since *A New Direction* was released, significant progress has been made in advancing Ontario's immigration priorities.

We have negotiated a new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) with the federal government. We have significantly increased the number of nominees Ontario is allotted under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program, along with modernizing the program's application system and launching new targeted streams to better respond to labour market needs. We are working hard to continue increasing our Francophone immigration numbers. In addition, we have improved the range of services and supports newcomers can access to ease their transition into Ontario life. Across the province, we're helping communities make themselves more attractive to prospective immigrants and, as a province, we're doing a better job letting the world know all that Ontario has to offer.



Despite our many successes, we are mindful of the dynamics of our modern world, and remain ready to respond quickly to the evolving needs of Ontario employers as we consider immigration selection.

Ever-changing global dynamics also impact the refugee population. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees estimates that there are currently more than 22 million refugees around the world. As Ontario continues to welcome refugees and asylum seekers in response to international tragedies, the ministry will continue to ensure that our programs and services effectively integrate all who newly call Ontario home.





