

# FMRI



## FORUM OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMMIGRATION

### **Federal, provincial and territorial immigration Ministers meet to plan for the future of Canada's immigration system**

#### **News release**

**July 28, 2022 – Saint John, NB** – The Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration (FMRI), met today to consider opportunities for the future of immigration to Canada and initiatives to respond to pan-Canadian labour shortages. Ministers discussed ways to maximize the effectiveness of the immigration system to meet economic and regional needs, including increasing provincial/territorial (PT) involvement in the selection process and input into Express Entry modernization, avoiding duplication, increasing the allocations of the Provincial/Territorial Nominee Programs (PNPs) and providing timely multi-year allocations before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Ministers had conversations about Canada's immigration response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, federal-provincial/territorial (FPT) measures to attract immigrants to meet labour market and demographic needs, and recent settlement and integration efforts.

Ministers examined the progress made towards achieving the [FPT Strategic Plan for Immigration \(SPI\) 2020-2023](#) and reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the immigration system is an effective tool for economic recovery, protecting the world's most vulnerable populations, and helping newcomers fully participate and succeed in a welcoming Canadian society. Ministers supported greater FPT collaboration on temporary resident settlement services, immigration policies, and programs and pathways to transition from a temporary status to permanent residency.

Canada's immigration Ministers condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and reaffirmed their commitment to welcoming and supporting displaced Ukrainians and their family members who are fleeing violence. FPT governments have collectively taken action to respond to both the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including expediting the travel of displaced Ukrainians to Canada and extending access to services Ukrainians need to live, work or study. Ministers recognized that although Ukrainians coming to Canada as temporary residents are already contributing to their new communities, many require substantive supports. PTs also recognized that many Ukrainians are seeking permanent residency and expressed the need for greater federal resources to ensure Ukrainians' successful arrival and settlement.

Additionally, from coast to coast to coast, Canada welcomed close to 17,000 Afghan Refugees. The FMRI emphasized the need for a collaborative approach among governments to ensure these newcomers are welcomed in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

Over the last year, immigration continued to contribute to population and economic growth in Canada. Ministers took stock of the joint FPT efforts to welcome and settle over 405,000 immigrants in 2021, a record number. FPT consultations on shared priorities for the immigration levels plan remain a cornerstone of Canada's immigration system. Ministers recognized the need to build on consultation efforts and seek views more effectively from stakeholders, partners and Indigenous Peoples.

The FMRI discussed the necessity of improving federal immigration processing times. Ministers reflected on the outcomes of federal special measures introduced during the pandemic and agreed that going forward, short-term immigration strategies must be consistent with longer term objectives. It will be important to monitor and understand the impacts of current and emerging pressures on the immigration system, such as a growing demand for housing and social services, when planning for the future.

Ministers recognized that Canada has one of the most comprehensive and facilitative immigration systems in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) though opportunities for enhancement remain. Reflecting on the increasing complexity of the economic immigration system, Ministers agreed on the need for a more agile, client-centered system. Ministers acknowledged the essential roles and responsibilities of federal and PT governments in Canada's immigration system, and highlighted the importance of working together so programs are complementary and flexible. Ministers recognized that it is essential for federal and PT governments to collaborate to achieve regional economic immigration objectives. Ministers highlighted that PT knowledge of real-time regional labour market needs is an advantage that must be leveraged.

Furthermore, Ministers considered ways to meet regional needs and increase immigration to Canada's smaller and rural or remote communities including mapping and coordinating economic and settlement capacity across the country, taking stock of the lessons learned from the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) and the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP). The well established and successful PNP remains the primary tool for regional economic immigration and allows for testing of new approaches to meet a wide range of demographic and labour market needs. PT Ministers called for timely increases in PNP allocations to help address increasing labour needs in jurisdictions across the country and expressed unanimity over the need for greater agency over the PNP programs and the selection process of economic immigrants.

Ministers agreed to take steps to ensure public support for immigration remains strong, and to continue to work together to ensure that long-term FPT immigration goals contribute to Canada's future prosperity. Ministers committed to a mid-term meeting in advance of the annual FMRI Ministers Meeting.

**Note:** *As requested by the Government of Quebec, the Quebec minister responsible for immigration holds observer status at the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers' Table. Under the Canada-Québec Accord, Quebec assumes sole responsibility for establishing immigration levels, and for the selection, francization and integration of immigrants. In areas under its responsibility, Quebec develops its policies and programs, and legislates, regulates and sets its own standards.*

**About the FMRI:** The Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration is an FPT decision-making body with the goal of supporting a flexible, timely and effective immigration system for Canada. In 2020, FPT Ministers established a vision for immigration to Canada and a mission for the FMRI. The vision articulates a co-ordinated strategic plan for a system that strengthens the positive economic and social benefits of immigration in all parts of Canada. The FMRI's mission is to advance joint immigration priorities and to enhance Canada's immigration policies and programs.

**Quotes:**

“Immigration is key to addressing labour shortages across our country and I am excited about the productive discussions with the provinces and territories we’ve had here today. As Canada continues to see increased demand of those seeking to live and work in Canada, our governments will continue to work together to ensure our immigration system can withstand the demand and meet the diverse needs of our clients. Our collaborative efforts on immigration will help strengthen our post-COVID economic recovery in the short term, while continuing to contribute to local economies and communities in the long-term and bring the benefits of immigration from coast to coast to coast.”

- The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and federal co-chair of the Forum of Ministers responsible for Immigration.

“This joint meeting has allowed us to strategize on ways to streamline the immigration process to help provinces and territories meet their labour market priorities while finding ways to be more flexible in our approaches. We will continue to find ways to improve the experience of all immigration candidates and employers throughout the immigration process.”

- The Honourable Arlene Dunn, Minister Responsible for Immigration, Minister Responsible for Opportunities New Brunswick, and Provincial-Territorial co-chair of the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration.

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