

**Pathways to Permanent Residence:
The Impact of Changes to Immigration Policies and Categories on
Immigrant Service Providers**

1. Background

Since 2009, the Toronto Immigrant Employment Data Initiative (TIEDI) has sought to meet the data needs of non-profit organizations whose goals include the better integration of immigrants into Greater Toronto's workforce. The project has produced a range of reports, factsheets and updates; all are available on the project's website: www.yorku.ca/tiedi.

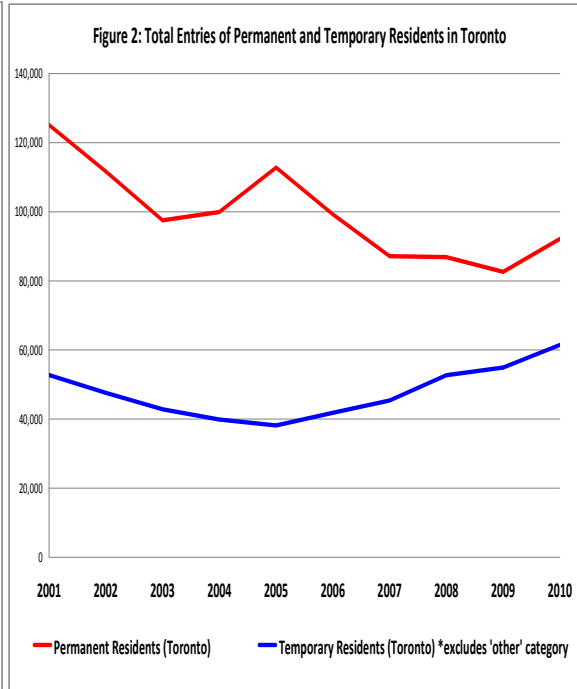
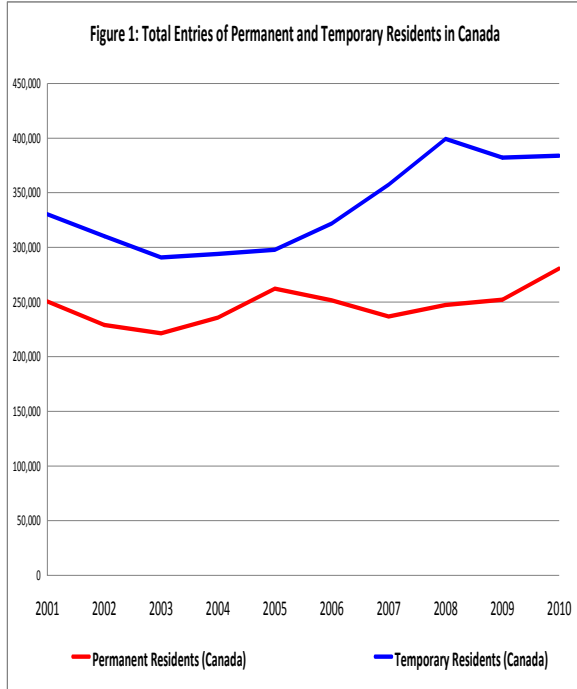
With further support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), TIEDI initiated a public outreach program from October 2011 to April 2012 (<http://www.yorku.ca/tiedi/events.html>). The outreach program sought to engage key stakeholders in discussing the project's findings. The purpose was to explore the implications of data generated by TIEDI for program planning and policy-making. Topics were identified at a forum in October 2011, and then in January-April 2012, four roundtable discussions were held with leaders and frontline workers from settlement agencies, advocacy groups, labour and employer organizations and all levels of government.

This report is one of a series providing highlights from the discussions at these roundtables. It contains the primer material that was sent to roundtable participants, as well as key points that arose during discussions. Reports from other roundtables are available at: <http://www.yorku.ca/tiedi/roundtable2012.html>

2. The Issue

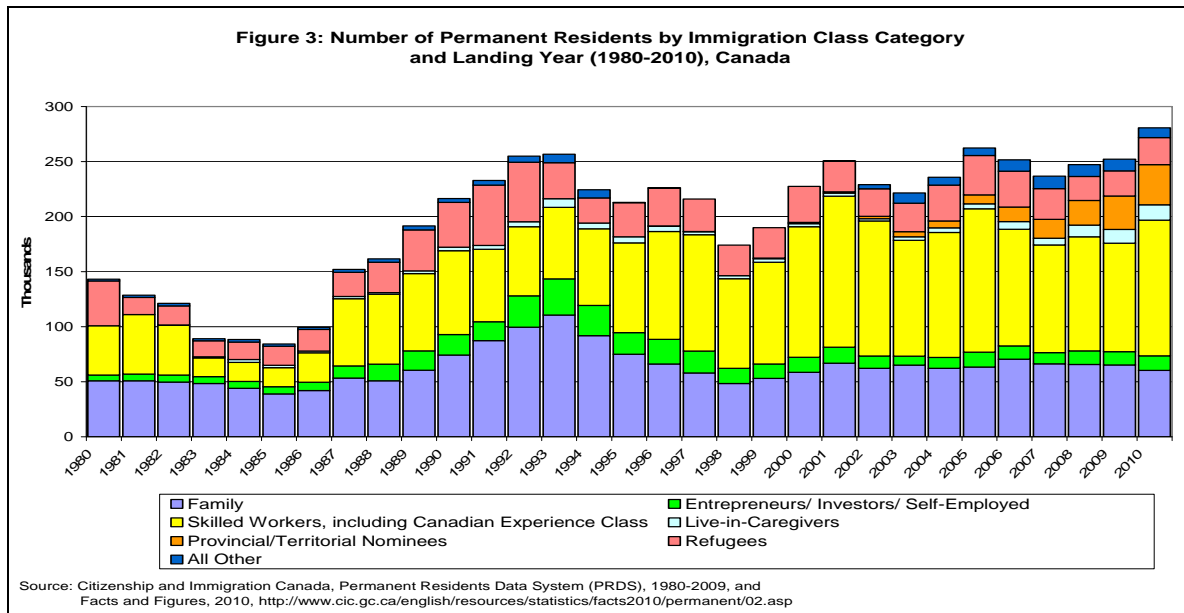
The purpose of this roundtable discussion was to solicit feedback from immigrant service providers on the effects of changing immigration patterns on their clients' needs and their organizations' capacity to meet those needs.

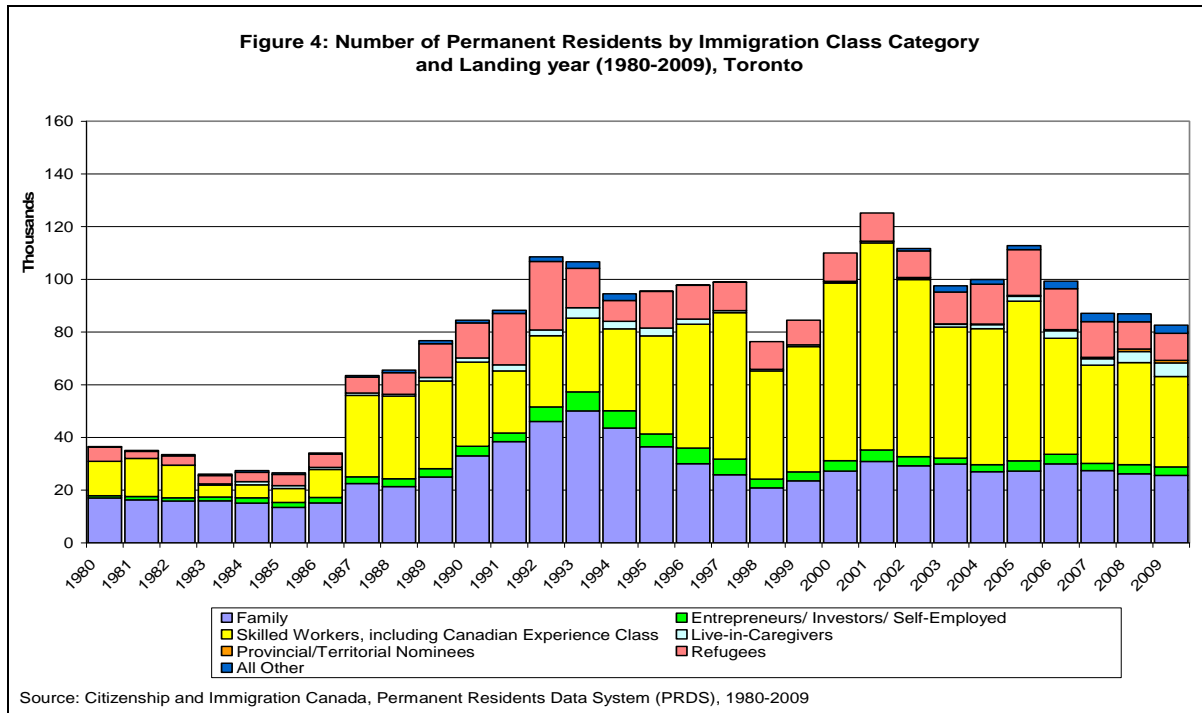
Over the years, Canada's immigration programs have changed dramatically: entry requirements have been modified; new programs have been introduced; and the numbers arriving under different categories have shifted. In addition, the number of temporary residents in Canada has increased significantly. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate changing arrival patterns and the growth of temporary resident arrivals.



In the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (which includes most of Halton, Peel, York, Durham and the City of Toronto), immigration trends include: a significant increase in the number of temporary residents, including temporary foreign workers and students; a large growth in arrivals under the Live-In Caregiver Program; and a shrinking proportion of skilled immigrants in the composition of Toronto’s immigrant arrivals.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the ways in which the size and profile of Canada’s immigrant arrivals have changed over time, between 1980 and 2009.





Over the last decade, arrival numbers across the country have remained high, but have declined in the Toronto CMA. The profile of permanent immigrants has also changed. In Canada as a whole, the most notable trend has been the expansion of the Provincial Nominee Program (although arrival numbers under this program have been capped at low levels in Ontario). In Toronto, the main changes have been:

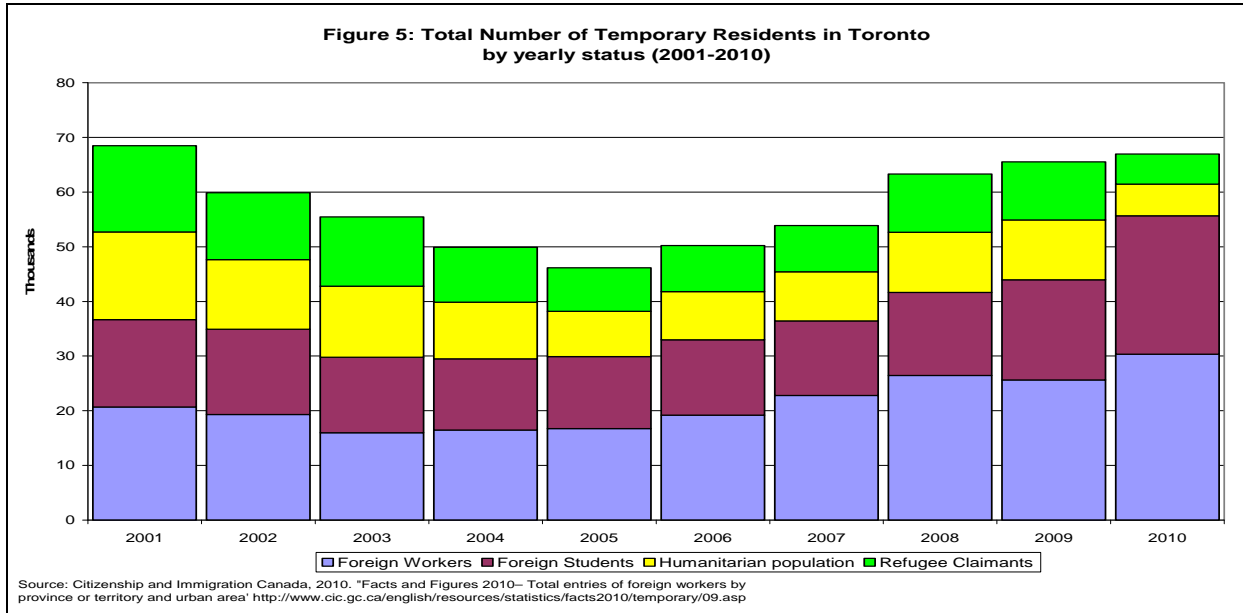
- an increasing proportion of immigrants arriving in refugee classes;
- a shift within the economic class away from the skilled worker category towards an expansion in those entering through other economic classes such as the live-in caregiver program.

It is also important to note that changes have also occurred *within* all of these programs in the last decade, for example:

- new systems of refugee status determination;
- changes to the ‘points system’ for selecting skilled workers;
- modified conditions associated with the live-in caregiver program.

CIC’s 2011 *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration* foresaw a decline in the Economic Class as a whole for 2011, primarily through shrinking the federal skilled worker class – although other economic categories such as the Canadian Experience Class, the Provincial Nominee Program, and the Live-in Caregiver Program have continued to grow. At the same

time, there has also been an expansion of temporary foreign worker programs, such that permanent resident arrivals will continue to decline relative to temporary admissions. In the Toronto CMA, the numbers of temporary resident arrivals has risen steadily in the last five years – the majority arriving as foreign workers or international students (see Figure 5).



Sweeping changes to Canada’s immigration system are currently being rolled out by the federal government. In this context, it is important to understand how past and future changes affect the work of immigrant service providers (ISPs).

3. Research on the Effects of Immigration Class

There is relatively little research that examines the relationship between immigration class and economic performance. In part, this is because major sources of data, such as the census and the labour force survey, do not differentiate immigrants according to the class through which they arrived. Other sources, such as the IMDB (the Longitudinal Immigration Database) and the LSIC (Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada) are therefore very significant, although both have drawbacks. Past studies examining the effect of immigrant category have examined the following questions:

- The earnings of different classes of immigrants arriving in the 1980s.
- The effects of economic, family and refugee categories on income, employment, and social assistance claims.
- The short term labour market participation, employment and earnings outcomes according to immigrant selection criteria.

- The difficulties faced by business class immigrants in establishing enterprises in Canada.
- The relative earnings of arrivals through the Provincial Nominee Program.
- The convergence of earnings among different immigrants classes over time.

4. Questions for Discussion

The purpose of the roundtable discussion was to consider how changes to immigration programs, numbers and selection criteria affect the work of service providers. Participants in the roundtable were presented with the following questions:

- 1) How have changes to immigration categories and selection criteria over time affected the work of your organization?
- 2) What impact do you anticipate as a result of recent trends, and changes in categories and selection criteria?
- 3) Do you plan to modify any programs or service changes to meet the changes to recent immigration class categories?
- 4) What kind of data that is currently not available would be useful for your organization?
- 5) What policy changes would help in serving the needs of a changing population immigrants and temporary residents?
- 6) How have the increases in temporary residents relative to permanent residents, affected the work of your organization?

5. Key Points

The key points raised at the roundtable were distilled into 8 sets of issues:

1) The Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP):

ISPs have noticed a significant increase in the number of women transitioning from the LCP to PR status in recent years. This has created new and unique service needs (e.g. counselling) especially in circumstances of family separation and reunification. The impacts on caregivers and their families give rise to significant but often overlooked integration and public health issues.

Caregivers may be difficult for service providers to reach, as time off is limited and they are often secluded in employers' homes. Also, those still in the program are not eligible for federally funded settlement assistance which means the women who are effectively 'immigrants-

in-waiting’ are not able to access a range of services. For the same reason, caregivers who have gained permanent residency and who continue to work in domestic settings may not be aware of available services to assist them in transitioning to new roles in the labour market.

2) International Students:

The number of international students has greatly increased in recent years. This is another category of temporary residents who may convert to permanent status (for example under the Canadian Experience Class or Provincial Nominee Program), but are not eligible for federally funded settlement services. Many are dealing with mental health issues because of separation from family/home, and require settlement services of a kind that smaller colleges, training institutions and many universities are not equipped to provide.

3) Temporary Foreign Workers:

The majority of TFWs (who are in low skilled categories) are not accompanied by family members. As with other groups of temporary residents, this fact represents a largely hidden psychological health risk well known to settlement workers. The counselling support needed is seldom available. Even though some TFWs may convert to PR status, no federal settlement funding exists to assist them until they become PRs. Health and educational opportunities prior to obtaining PR status are also very limited. Fear of deportation means that workplace violations and mistreatment are unlikely to be reported by TFWs, a situation that increases their chances of experiencing exploitative working conditions. More resources are required to support the rights of TFWs and actively investigate workplace violations.

4) Migrants without legal immigration status:

Those without legal immigration status do not feature in statistics on immigration or temporary residents, but they too have needs. For example women facing domestic violence, or those subject to workplace abuse, are extremely vulnerable. Also, when certain groups cannot be reached by service providers, public health issues may arise.

5) Family reunification and (grand)parent supervisas:

Grandparents and parents provide essential social support for many families, but the cost of health insurance that will be a requirement with the new “supervisa” will be a barrier. At the same time, it is important to recognize that senior immigrants represent a vulnerable group as they have difficulty navigating Canada’s bureaucratic social service systems and may themselves be exploited within their own families. As visa arrivals, they have access to far fewer funded services.

6) Jurisdictional issues:

Service providers operate within a complex set of rules that vary according to which level of government is providing funding. Federal funding for settlement services tends to be the most restrictive - only permanent residents are eligible, meaning that refugee claimants, temporary migrants and workers, as well as citizens, (even if their settlement/integration service needs continue) have no access to federal settlement services. Provincial settlement funding does not have the same restrictions, but the amount of provincial funding available is much smaller than the need of those ineligible for federal settlement services. Municipal and school board support in Toronto is most flexible, but this is not true across all municipalities.

7) Data needs:

Several areas exist where relatively little data is available to assist in program planning and analysis. These include: detailed profiles of temporary resident populations; transitions from temporary to permanent status; effects of family separations and reunifications; persons without legal status; the labour market trajectories of those transitioning in a 'two-stage' immigration; the outcomes from various forms of service provision and labour market entry frameworks (bridging, apprenticeships); and detailed data on labour market shortages/needs.

8) General:

In part because of the demographic shift towards immigrants and temporary residents from the Global South, in conjunction with existing systemic barriers, poverty and social marginalization have become racialized. Immigrants and temporary residents need to be made better aware of the services that exist, including through more extensive pre-departure orientation sessions. Once here, specific groups may need tailored outreach activities.

There is a need to create partnerships between service providers and employers (who control so much of temporary foreign worker's life while they are in Canada). Workplace-based programming might be needed. Businesses can also be more involved in mentoring and other programs but there are insufficient channels to few channels to make this happen.

6. Recommendations:

- Allow caregivers to live independently and to bring their family members. This is a position that has been advocated for some time by groups in the Filipino community. Also, permit caregivers to pursue educational advancement and training while still engaged in the program. Specific outreach programs are needed to serve the needs of caregivers both before and after they achieve permanent residency.
- Fund 'settlement' services at a federal level for temporary residents, including students, temporary foreign workers and live-in caregivers. Particular attention is needed towards

students enrolling in small private colleges that may have inadequate social supports for international students.

- Expand funded services to include counselling in cases of family separation and reunification. This is a source of psychological stress that will become increasingly widespread as the prevalence of two-step migration grows.
- Temporary workers should have access to education and health resources in recognition of the fact that many are effectively ‘immigrants-in-waiting’. The same applies to refugee claimants.
- The replication of federal employment equity at a provincial level.
- Expanded data gathering and analysis capacity is needed to address a variety of gaps. Assistance is also needed so that community groups can compile and analyze the administrative data that they collect and report to funders. Funders could also do more to provide feedback based on this data.
- Coordination of funders at different levels of government, and relaxation of federal rules concerning eligibility for settlement funding.
- Greater protection and enforcement of standards for workers in exploitative situations, especially TFWs. Consideration of the basic needs of those without legal status is also important.
- More widely available, and more extensive, pre-departure orientations so that all immigrants, temporary and permanent, can more effectively navigate Canadian society and social services when they arrive.