

# A Look at Immigration to Castlegar, Nelson and Trail

Today, as in eras past, people from all over the world are arriving to live, work and raise families in communities across Canada. To help understand the part that newcomers are playing, we've created this look at who is coming to the West Kootenay, where they're coming from, and what they're doing after their arrival.

The information and data presented here is based on Census 2021 data, the only data source that provides high-quality statistical information on immigrant and refugee demographics at a community level. It is conducted every five years and is a "snapshot" in time. According to Census 2021, 525 new immigrants arrived to the region between 2016 and 2021.

However, through the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), nearly 1,000 immigrants arrived to the region from mid-2020 to November 2023. Due to their arrival date, many, if not all, were not yet permanent residents and therefore were not counted within Census 2021.

Selkirk College's International Student program is also contributing to the changing demographic profile of the West Kootenay region. We don't know how many have become permanent residents and stayed in the region in recent years, but at current registrations of approximately 600 students annually, we do know that some will apply for residency and contribute to the growing population of the West Kootenay region. In fact, between 2020 and 2023, 311 Selkirk graduates received community recommendations for permanent residency from RNIP.

Although this influx has a significant impact on overall numbers, the data and information held within this fact sheet offers insights on shifts and trends in immigration and settlement nationally, provincially and locally.

Note: As the "West Kootenay" is not a standard Census geographic unit, this factsheet is based on data from its three major cities: Nelson, Castlegar and Trail.



## The West Kootenay Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) is a community-led immigration program designed to bring skilled permanent residents to rural communities. The goal of the pilot is to spread the benefits of economic immigration to communities outside of large metropolitan centres. Locally the program is administered and delivered by Community Futures Central Kootenay. Under current funding, RNIP will complete in 2024. To learn more about the West Kootenay RNIP and other similar programs, go to the [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's website](#).

Funded by:

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Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

*Note: Census provides data in differing sample sets. Data used for this profile is derived from Census 2021: 25% sample data. This data shows slight variations from Census 2021: 100% sample data. For example, the total population of a city taken from the 25% sample (a Target Group Profile) will differ from that taken from the 100% sample (the online Census Profile). The 25% sample provides community level and population specific information that is not available within the 100% sample data set.*

# West Kootenay Immigration by the Numbers

Immigration supports the region's overall population growth, but between communities the picture differs.

- ▶ Immigration is contributing to the overall population growth of the West Kootenay region. However, Census data shows that the largest immigrant population growth is in Nelson.
- ▶ The region's immigrant population growth is the same as Prince George's at 3.8%, but lower than many of the province's main immigrant receiving communities. Nelson, however, at 19.2% immigration population growth, is the sixth highest of all communities in the province.
- ▶ In contrast, Castlegar and Trail both received new immigrants over the last Census period but show an overall negative growth rate in its immigrant population. It should be noted, however, that Census data excludes arrivals after 2021 and may not account for the impacts of initiatives such as the RNIP program or Canada's humanitarian efforts to place Ukrainians and Afghans.

| Geography            | Total Pop 2021 | Total Pop Growth 2016-2021 | Immigrant Pop 2021 | Immigrant Total Pop 2021 | Recent Immigrant Pop 2021 | Recent Immigrant Total 2021 | Immigrant Pop Growth 2016-2021 | Immigrant Pop Growth 2016-2021 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                      | #              | %                          | #                  | %                        | #                         | %                           | #                              | %                              |
| <b>West Kootenay</b> | <b>26,385</b>  | <b>3.9%</b>                | <b>3,005</b>       | <b>11.4%</b>             | <b>525</b>                | <b>2%</b>                   | <b>110</b>                     | <b>3.8%</b>                    |
| <b>Nelson</b>        | 10,725         | 5.1%                       | 1,615              | 15.1%                    | 340                       | 3.1%                        | 260                            | 19.2%                          |
| <b>Castlegar</b>     | 8,060          | 3.7%                       | 690                | 8.6%                     | 90                        | 1.1%                        | (-110)                         | (-13.8%)                       |
| <b>Trail</b>         | 7,600          | 2.7%                       | 700                | 9.2%                     | 95                        | 1.3%                        | (-40)                          | (-5.4%)                        |

Census 2021 – 100% sample data for total population and 25% sample data for immigration status

## The Big Picture

Immigration plays a vital role in fulfilling Canada's and B.C.'s labour market needs.

In 2022, Canada welcomed a record-breaking 437,539 immigrants. Looking ahead, the federal Immigration Levels Plan, announced in November 2023, sets ambitious targets: 465,000 newcomers in 2023, 485,000 in 2024, and 500,000 in both 2025 and 2026. Additionally, there was a significant increase in the number of people on temporary visas, with more than 1.5 million individuals holding work and study permits in 2022.

Immigrants now constitute a record 23% of the Canadian population, and this figure is expected to continue rising. Immigration plays a vital role for Canada, especially as the country grapples with an aging population and a declining birthrate. Currently, immigration accounts for nearly 100%

of labour force growth, and is projected to be the sole driver of population growth by 2032. It's important to emphasize that immigrants and temporary foreign workers alone cannot fulfill Canada's labour market needs. Notably, the rules for international students have changed, allowing them to work 20 hours while studying and full-time during breaks.

In British Columbia (B.C.), the number of new immigrants nearly doubled between the last two Census periods. In 2016, the Census reported 38,085 newcomers to B.C.; in 2021, the province welcomed 69,317 new immigrants. However, it's worth mentioning that in 2022, this number dipped slightly to 61,212.

# Immigrant Numbers Nationally

Immigrants now constitute a record 23% of the Canadian population.

- ▶ In Census 2021, British Columbia's 1.42 million immigrants represented 17% of the national total. Only Ontario, with 4.2 million, had more.
- ▶ 29% of all British Columbians were born outside of Canada, similar to Ontario's 30% and notably higher than the national level of 23%.
- ▶ During the Census period, B.C. welcomed 14.9% of Canada's recent immigrants, slightly less than Quebec's 15.3%.
- ▶ Of note, Census 2021 encompasses a portion of the Covid period, when immigration levels were low, and does not capture the strong post-Covid increase.

| Geography                 | Total Pop 2021    | Immigrant Pop 2021 | Immigrant Pop Total 2021 | Recent Immigrant Pop 2021 | Recent Immigrant Pop Total 2021 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                           | #                 | #                  | %                        | #                         | %                               |
| <b>Canada</b>             | <b>36,991,981</b> | <b>8,361,505</b>   | <b>23.0%</b>             | <b>1,328,240</b>          | <b>3.7%</b>                     |
| Ontario                   | 14,223,942        | 4,206,585          | 30.0%                    | 584,680                   | 4.2%                            |
| <b>British Columbia</b>   | <b>5,000,879</b>  | <b>1,425,710</b>   | <b>29.0%</b>             | <b>197,425</b>            | <b>4.0%</b>                     |
| Quebec                    | 8,501,833         | 1,210,600          | 14.6%                    | 202,740                   | 2.4%                            |
| Alberta                   | 4,262,635         | 970,970            | 23.2%                    | 193,175                   | 4.6%                            |
| Manitoba                  | 1,342,153         | 257,620            | 19.7%                    | 58,370                    | 4.5%                            |
| Saskatchewan              | 1,132,505         | 137,620            | 12.5%                    | 43,115                    | 3.9%                            |
| Nova Scotia               | 969,383           | 71,565             | 7.5%                     | 21,385                    | 2.2%                            |
| New Brunswick             | 775,610           | 44,120             | 5.8%                     | 16,040                    | 2.1%                            |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 510,550           | 14,250             | 2.8%                     | 4,265                     | 0.9%                            |
| Prince Edward Island      | 154,331           | 11,765             | 7.8%                     | 4,860                     | 3.2%                            |
| Yukon                     | 40,232            | 5,385              | 13.6%                    | 1,125                     | 2.8%                            |
| Northwest Territories     | 41,070            | 4,145              | 10.3%                    | 815                       | 2.0%                            |
| Nunavut                   | 36,858            | 1,165              | 3.2%                     | 240                       | 0.7%                            |

100% sample data for total population and 25% sample data for immigration status (Census 2021)

## Canada's immigration targets have an economic rationale

Between 2023 and 2026 Canada intends to welcome an unprecedented number of immigrants, mostly in the Economic class, which is primarily comprised of working-age, educated people who have English or French language skills.

### 2023-2026 Immigration Levels Plan

| Immigrant Category                     | 2023           | 2024           | 2025           | 2026           |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>465,000</b> | <b>485,000</b> | <b>500,000</b> | <b>500,000</b> |
| Economic                               | 266,210        | 281,135        | 301,250        | 301,250        |
| Family                                 | 106,500        | 114,000        | 118,000        | 118,000        |
| Refugees and Protected Persons         | 76,305         | 76,115         | 72,750         | 72,750         |
| Humanitarian & Compassionate and Other | 15,985         | 13,750         | 8,000          | 8,000          |

Source: 2023 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration

**Between 2016 and 2021, the West Kootenay region welcomed 525 new immigrants or about two every week. During the previous Census period, 2011 to 2016, the region welcomed 315 new immigrants.**

# Immigration to British Columbia

How the West Kootenay region compares to sampling of 12 B.C. municipalities attracting immigrants during the 2016 to 2021 Census period.

- ▶ At the time of Census 2021, 76.4% of all B.C.'s immigrants and 78.4% of recent immigrants resided in Greater Vancouver.
  - ▶ Although the greatest numbers of immigrants chose the larger cities, the immigrant population growth rate by percentage is growing in smaller, more suburban areas such as Langley (33%), Maple Ridge (31%), Chilliwack (24%) and Kelowna (21%). With housing and living costs on the rise, this trend is likely to continue.
  - ▶ It is important to note that Census data, captured in 2021, does not include the immigrants to the region as a result of RNIP.
- The program began making recommendations for Canadian permanent residency in June 2020 and, as of December 2023, 509 immigrants have come through the program. With spouses and children, the total number of new permanent residents supported by RNIP was 939.

| Geography               | Total Pop 2021<br># | Total Pop Growth 2016-2021<br>% | Immigrant Pop 2021<br># | Immigrant Total Pop 2021<br>% | Recent Immigrant Pop 2021<br># | Recent Immigrant Total 2021<br>% | Immigrant Pop Growth 2016-2021<br># | Immigrant Pop Growth 2016-2021<br>% |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>British Columbia</b> | <b>4,915,945</b>    | <b>7.8%</b>                     | <b>1,425,715</b>        | <b>29.0%</b>                  | <b>197,425</b>                 | <b>4.0%</b>                      | <b>133,040</b>                      | <b>10.3%</b>                        |
| <b>West Kootenay</b>    | <b>26,385</b>       | <b>3.9%</b>                     | <b>3,005</b>            | <b>11.4%</b>                  | <b>525</b>                     | <b>2%</b>                        | <b>110</b>                          | <b>3.8%</b>                         |
| Langley Township        | 130,960             | 13.1%                           | 29,890                  | 22.8%                         | 3,805                          | 2.9%                             | 7,395                               | 32.9%                               |
| Maple Ridge             | 89,860              | 11.0%                           | 20,230                  | 22.5%                         | 2,160                          | 2.4%                             | 4,770                               | 30.9%                               |
| Chilliwack              | 91,985              | 11.9%                           | 13,600                  | 14.8%                         | 1,610                          | 1.8%                             | 2,615                               | 23.8%                               |
| Kelowna                 | 141,760             | 14.2%                           | 21,635                  | 15.3%                         | 3,545                          | 2.5%                             | 3,795                               | 21.3%                               |
| New Westminster         | 78,055              | 11.7%                           | 29,265                  | 37.5%                         | 5,050                          | 6.5%                             | 4,890                               | 20.1%                               |
| Nelson                  | 10,725              | 5.1%                            | 1,615                   | 15.1%                         | 340                            | 3.1%                             | 260                                 | 19.2%                               |
| Nanaimo                 | 97,020              | 10.7%                           | 15,620                  | 16.1%                         | 2,260                          | 2.3%                             | 2,500                               | 19.1%                               |
| Surrey                  | 562,565             | 10.0%                           | 250,870                 | 44.6%                         | 39,910                         | 7.1%                             | 30,715                              | 14.0%                               |
| Abbotsford              | 150,800             | 8.8%                            | 43,190                  | 28.6%                         | 6,130                          | 4.1%                             | 4,970                               | 13.0%                               |
| Burnaby                 | 245,725             | 6.8%                            | 123,795                 | 50.4%                         | 18,920                         | 7.7%                             | 8,650                               | 7.5%                                |
| Richmond                | 208,400             | 6.0%                            | 125,600                 | 60.3%                         | 13,705                         | 6.6%                             | 7,295                               | 6.2%                                |
| Vancouver               | 650,380             | 5.2%                            | 274,365                 | 42.2%                         | 41,360                         | 6.4%                             | 11,595                              | 4.4%                                |
| Prince George           | 75,160              | 3.6%                            | 7,710                   | 10.3%                         | 1,440                          | 1.9%                             | 280                                 | 3.8%                                |
| Trail                   | 7,600               | 2.7%                            | 700                     | 9.2%                          | 95                             | 1.3%                             | (-40)                               | (-5.4%)                             |
| Castlegar               | 8,060               | 3.7%                            | 690                     | 8.6%                          | 90                             | 1.1%                             | (-110)                              | (-13.8%)                            |

Census 2021: 20 communities in B.C. that received the most immigrants over the last census period (2016 – 2021) 25% sample data.

**RNIP supported nearly 1,000 new immigrants to settle in the West Kootenay. Although impossible to be exact, a retention survey indicated that about 90% have stayed, none of which were counted in Census 2021.**

## Immigration to Castlegar, Nelson and Trail

In 2021 immigrants accounted for 10% of the region's total population growth; in Greater Vancouver, immigrants accounted for 69% of total population growth.

| Year | West Kootenay  |                       |                                | Greater Vancouver |                       |                                |
|------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
|      | Total Pop<br># | Immigrant<br>Pop<br># | Total<br>Immigrant<br>Pop<br>% | Total Pop<br>#    | Immigrant<br>Pop<br># | Total<br>Immigrant<br>Pop<br>% |
| 2021 | 26,385         | 3,005                 | 11.4%                          | 2,607,010         | 1,089,185             | 41.8%                          |
| 2016 | 25,390         | 2,895                 | 11.4%                          | 2,463,431         | 989,540               | 40.8%                          |

Population and Immigration Trends: (2016 - 2021)

- ▶ In 2021, immigrants made up approximately 11.4% of the West Kootenay population, unchanged from the percentage in 2016.
- ▶ At 11.4%, immigrants make up a smaller proportion of the population than in most B.C. municipalities, and a much lower proportion than in Greater Vancouver (41.8%). Between 2016 and 2021, the region's three major centres experienced relatively slow growth (3.8%) in their immigrant numbers.

## Period of Arrival

A significant proportion of immigrants to the region arrived in Canada before 1980.

- ▶ Census 2021 shows that recent immigrants (in Canada five years or less) made up 17% of the immigrant population in the region, a proportion similar to Greater Vancouver's 14%, and in keeping with the provincial trend.
- ▶ Fully 41% of immigrants in the region arrived to Canada before 1980, a much higher proportion than in most of B.C. In Greater Vancouver, for example, only 15% belong to this cohort.

|                         | West Kootenay |             | Greater Vancouver |             |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                         | #             | %           | #                 | %           |
| <b>Total Immigrants</b> | <b>3,005</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>1,089,185</b>  | <b>100%</b> |
| 2016 to 2021            | 525           | 17%         | 154,815           | 14%         |
| 2011 to 2015            | 180           | 6%          | 133,920           | 12%         |
| 2001 to 2010            | 485           | 16%         | 259,830           | 24%         |
| 1991 to 2000            | 255           | 8%          | 255,480           | 23%         |
| 1980 to 1990            | 315           | 10%         | 126,865           | 12%         |
| Before 1980             | 1,245         | 41%         | 158,270           | 15%         |

Immigrant Arrivals by Period of Immigration (Census 2021)

**New Immigrants to BC: Here are the numbers of immigrants to BC for the last five years. Of note, in 2021, BC welcomed the most immigrants in its history.**

**2018 - 44,855      2021 - 69,470**  
**2019 - 50,230      2022 - 61,212**  
**2020 - 28,475**

# Immigrants by Age Group

Census data illustrates Canada's emphasis on accepting immigrants of core working age.

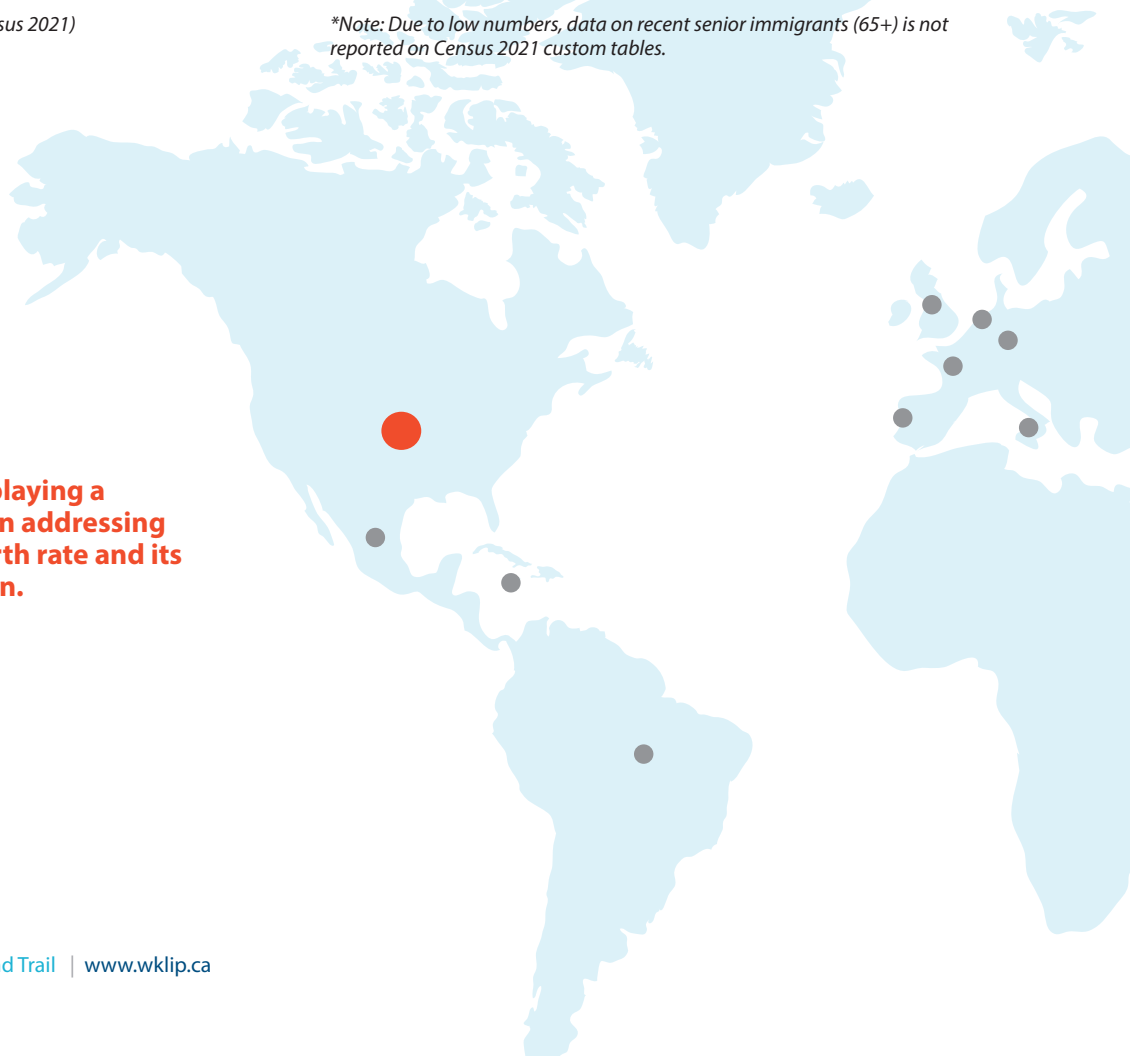
- ▶ Immigration is a key economic solution to Canada's aging population. In 2021, core working-age immigrants (25-54 years) to the region accounted for 73% of recent immigrants, compared to 39% among the Canadian-born population and 40% of all immigrants.
- ▶ The proportion of recent immigrants in this demographic is slightly higher than the 69% among recent immigrants in Greater Vancouver.
- ▶ Fully 38% of immigrants are 65 and over, in keeping with data showing that a high proportion arrived in Canada before 1980.

| Age          | West Kootenay |             |                  |             |                   |             | Greater Vancouver |             |                  |             |                   |             |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
|              | Canadian-born |             | Total Immigrants |             | Recent Immigrants |             | Canadian-born     |             | Total Immigrants |             | Recent Immigrants |             |
|              | #             | %           | #                | %           | #                 | %           | #                 | %           | #                | %           | #                 | %           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>22,175</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>3,005</b>     | <b>100%</b> | <b>525</b>        | <b>100%</b> | <b>1,350,620</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>1,089,180</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>154,815</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| 0 to 14 yrs  | 3,525         | 16%         | 90               | 3%          | 65                | 12%         | 315,040           | 23%         | 35,330           | 3%          | 19,650            | 13%         |
| 15 to 24 yrs | 2,210         | 10%         | 105              | 3%          | 35                | 7%          | 194,025           | 14%         | 65,190           | 6%          | 14,425            | 9%          |
| 25 to 54 yrs | 8,670         | 39%         | 1,200            | 40%         | 385               | 73%         | 513,995           | 38%         | 536,500          | 49%         | 107,135           | 69%         |
| 55 to 64 yrs | 3,190         | 14%         | 460              | 15%         | 10                | 2%          | 153,285           | 11%         | 191,990          | 18%         | 5,920             | 4%          |
| 65 yrs +     | 4,600         | 21%         | 1,150            | 38%         | —*                | —           | 174,260           | 13%         | 260,165          | 24%         | 7,690             | 5%          |

Age Distribution – West Kootenay, CMA (Census 2021)

\*Note: Due to low numbers, data on recent senior immigrants (65+) is not reported on Census 2021 custom tables.

**Immigration is playing a significant role in addressing Canada's low birth rate and its aging population.**



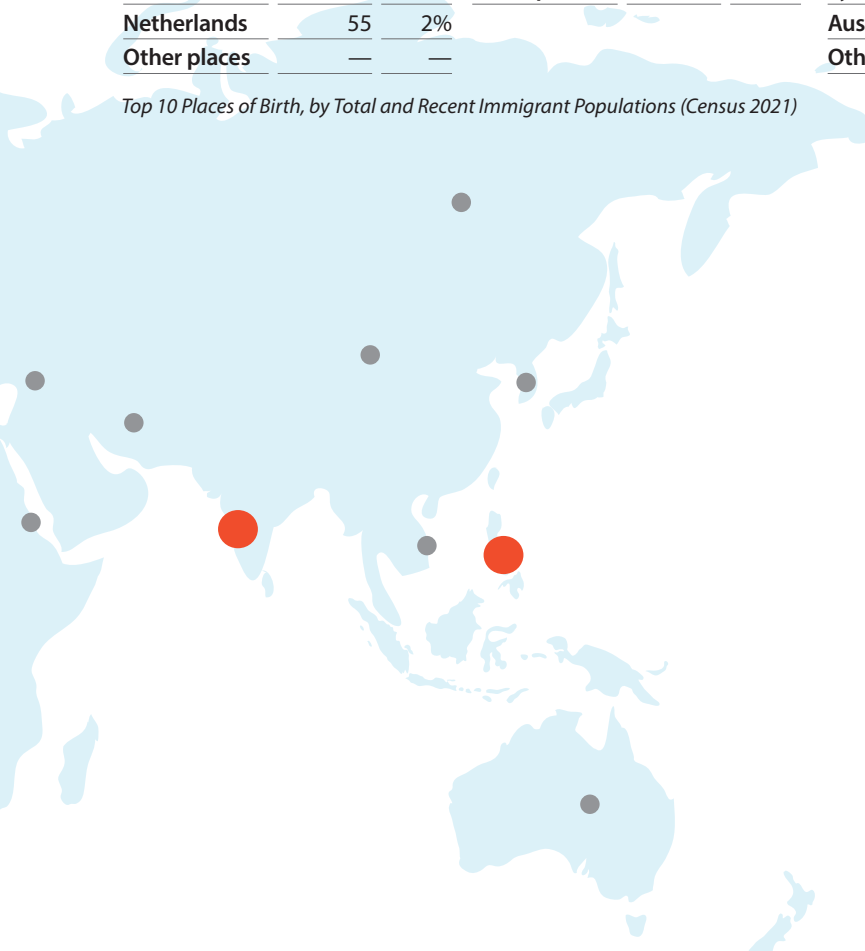
# Countries of Origin

Recent immigrants to the West Kootenay are much more likely to have arrived from Asia, compared to all immigrants to the region.

- ▶ A significant proportion of recent immigrants (40%) arrived from Asia, compared to only 20% among the total immigrant population.
- ▶ India is the top country of origin for recent immigrants, accounting for 24%, somewhat higher than in Greater Vancouver and B.C. overall.
- ▶ The 41% of immigrants and 27% of recent immigrants who are from the United States and United Kingdom illustrate the distinct nature of the West Kootenay's immigrant profile compared to the rest of B.C., where countries from Asia are predominant.

| West Kootenay           |              |             |                          | B.C.       |             |                          |                | Greater Vancouver |                          |                |             |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|
|                         | #            | %           |                          | #          | %           |                          | #              | %                 |                          | #              | %           |
| <b>Total Immigrants</b> | <b>3,005</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Recent Immigrants</b> | <b>530</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Recent Immigrants</b> | <b>197,425</b> | <b>100%</b>       | <b>Recent Immigrants</b> | <b>154,820</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| U.K.                    | 665          | 22%         | India                    | 125        | 24%         | India                    | 39,390         | 20%               | India                    | 30,545         | 20%         |
| U.S.                    | 580          | 19%         | U.S.                     | 85         | 16%         | China                    | 31,450         | 16%               | China                    | 28,970         | 19%         |
| Italy                   | 195          | 6%          | Philippines              | 65         | 12%         | Philippines              | 21,220         | 11%               | Philippines              | 15,090         | 10%         |
| Philippines             | 170          | 6%          | U.K.                     | 60         | 11%         | U.S.                     | 8,760          | 4%                | Korea, South             | 6,125          | 4%          |
| India                   | 145          | 5%          | Jamaica                  | 30         | 6%          | U.K.                     | 7,670          | 4%                | Iran                     | 5,615          | 4%          |
| Germany                 | 115          | 4%          | France                   | 15         | 3%          | Korea, South             | 7,225          | 4%                | U.S.                     | 5,460          | 4%          |
| China                   | 85           | 3%          | Russia                   | 10         | 2%          | Iran                     | 5,850          | 3%                | Brazil                   | 4,625          | 3%          |
| Portugal                | 70           | 2%          | Mexico                   | 10         | 2%          | Brazil                   | 5,125          | 3%                | U.K.                     | 4,555          | 3%          |
| Russia                  | 55           | 2%          | Other places             | 130        | 25%         | Syria                    | 4,955          | 3%                | Syria                    | 3,380          | 2%          |
| Netherlands             | 55           | 2%          |                          |            |             | Australia                | 3,280          | 2%                | Mexico                   | 2,460          | 2%          |
| Other places            | —            | —           |                          |            |             | Other places             | 62,500         | 30%               | Other places             | 47,995         | 29%         |

Top 10 Places of Birth, by Total and Recent Immigrant Populations (Census 2021)



### Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot: Top Countries of Origin

RNIP participant data collected between the project startup in 2020 and Nov. 2023 shows the diversity of the population coming to the West Kootenay region. Of note, many of the Census countries of origin for recent immigrants are also reflected in RNIP's Top Countries of Origin.

|             |     |         |   |
|-------------|-----|---------|---|
| India       | 310 | Jamaica | 9 |
| Philippines | 55  | U.S.    | 5 |
| U.K.        | 17  | Vietnam | 5 |
| Korea       | 15  | Germany | 5 |
| China       | 10  | Japan   | 5 |
| Australia   | 9   | Ukraine | 5 |



# Immigration Arrival Categories

The proportion of economic immigrants arriving to the region is high, but not as high as in Greater Vancouver.

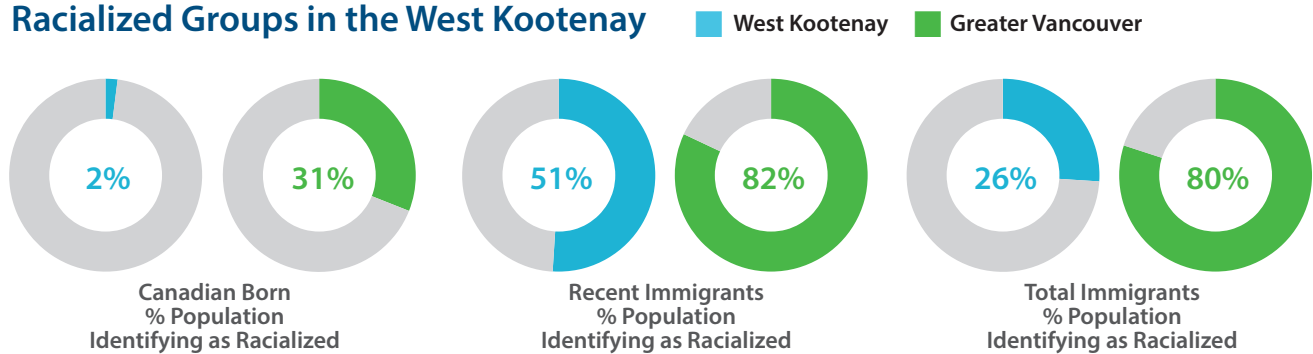
- ▶ 57% of recent immigrants arrived in the economic class, compared to 63% in Greater Vancouver.
- ▶ Slightly more than 40% of both immigrants and recent immigrants were sponsored by family members, among the highest proportion in the province.
- ▶ Just 5% of immigrants arrived as refugees, while the proportion among recent immigrants is very low and not included in Census data.

| Immigration Category                  | West Kootenay    |             |                   |             | Greater Vancouver |             |                   |             |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
|                                       | Total Immigrants |             | Recent Immigrants |             | Total Immigrants  |             | Recent Immigrants |             |
|                                       | #                | %           | #                 | %           | #                 | %           | #                 | %           |
| <b>Total Immigrants</b>               | <b>1,760</b>     | <b>100%</b> | <b>530</b>        | <b>100%</b> | <b>930,915</b>    | <b>100%</b> | <b>154,820</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Economic immigrants</b>            | 930              | 53%         | 300               | 57%         | 554,240           | 60%         | 97,715            | 63%         |
| Principal applicants                  | 465              | 26%         | 185               | 35%         | 225,255           | 24%         | 52,940            | 34%         |
| Secondary applicants                  | 465              | 26%         | 115               | 22%         | 328,990           | 35%         | 44,775            | 29%         |
| <b>Immigrants sponsored by family</b> | 720              | 41%         | 225               | 42%         | 282,705           | 30%         | 43,515            | 28%         |
| <b>Refugees</b>                       | 95               | 5%          | —                 | 0%          | 81,155            | 9%          | 12,880            | 8%          |
| <b>Other immigrants</b>               | 15               | 1%          | —                 | 0%          | 12,805            | 1%          | 710               | 0%          |

Number of Immigrants by Immigration Category (2021). Reflects admission category and applicant type for the immigrant population in private households who landed between 1980 and 2021 - 25% sample data

\*Note: 'Other immigrant' refers to a person who was granted permanent resident status under a public policy or humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

## Racialized Groups in the West Kootenay



▶ Slightly more than half of recent immigrants (51%) to the region identify themselves as members of a racialized group (previously referred to as visible minorities), double the 26% within the total immigrant population.

▶ In many parts of B.C., a significant proportion of Canadian-born residents also consider themselves racialized. However, in these major West Kootenay centres, the proportion is only 2%.

**A growing number of immigrants to the West Kootenay region identify themselves as racialized.**



# Languages Spoken

One in five recent immigrants to the region speaks a non-official language at home.

- ▶ In the 2021 Census, 21% of recent immigrants to the region spoke non-official languages most often at home, a higher proportion than the 14% of all West Kootenay immigrants, but much lower than the 56% in Greater Vancouver.
- ▶ There is no dominant non-official language spoken at home by immigrants, though Punjabi (6%) and Tagalog (4%) are most prevalent among recent immigrants.
- ▶ The vast majority of immigrants in the West Kootenay (87%) speak English only as their mother tongue, compared to 51% in Greater Vancouver.

| West Kootenay                       |              |             | Greater Vancouver                   |                |             |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|
|                                     | #            | %           |                                     | #              | %           |
| <b>Total Immigrants</b>             | <b>3,010</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>Recent Immigrants</b>            | <b>530</b>     | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Non-official languages</b>       | 420          | 14%         | <b>Non-official languages</b>       | 110            | 21%         |
| Italian                             | 70           | 2%          | Punjabi (Panjabi)                   | 30             | 6%          |
| Yue (Cantonese)                     | 55           | 2%          | Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)        | 20             | 4%          |
| Punjabi (Panjabi)                   | 30           | 1%          | <b>Other non-official languages</b> | 60             | 11%         |
| Czech                               | 25           | 1%          |                                     |                |             |
| Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)        | 20           | 1%          | <b>Recent Immigrants</b>            | <b>154,820</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| Russian                             | 20           | 1%          | <b>Non-official languages</b>       | 86,615         | 56%         |
| Portuguese                          | 20           | 1%          | Mandarin                            | 21,675         | 14%         |
| Mandarin                            | 10           | 0%          | Punjabi (Panjabi)                   | 13,095         | 8%          |
| Spanish                             | 10           | 0%          | Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)        | 6,160          | 4%          |
| <b>Other non-official languages</b> | 160          | 5%          | Korean                              | 4,515          | 3%          |
|                                     |              |             | Yue (Cantonese)                     | 4,180          | 3%          |
|                                     |              |             | Iranian (Persian)                   | 4,105          | 3%          |
|                                     |              |             | Arabic                              | 3,670          | 2%          |
|                                     |              |             | Spanish                             | 3,505          | 2%          |
|                                     |              |             | Portuguese                          | 3,335          | 2%          |
|                                     |              |             | Hindi                               | 2,510          | 2%          |
|                                     |              |             | <b>Other non-official languages</b> | 19,865         | 13%         |

Top 10 Non-official Languages Spoken at Home (Census 2021)

\*Note: These figures only include single non-official language responses. Multiple language responses, which is a combination of a non-official language response and a response indicating French and/or English, are not included.

# Religious Affiliation

Christians, along with those identifying as secular, are predominant.

- ▶ Close to half of both total and recent immigrants identify themselves as having no religion or holding secular perspectives, notably higher than in Greater Vancouver and most other B.C. regions.
- ▶ At 44%, the proportion of immigrants identifying as Christian is also high, though the number drops to 28% among recent immigrants, similar to Greater Vancouver.

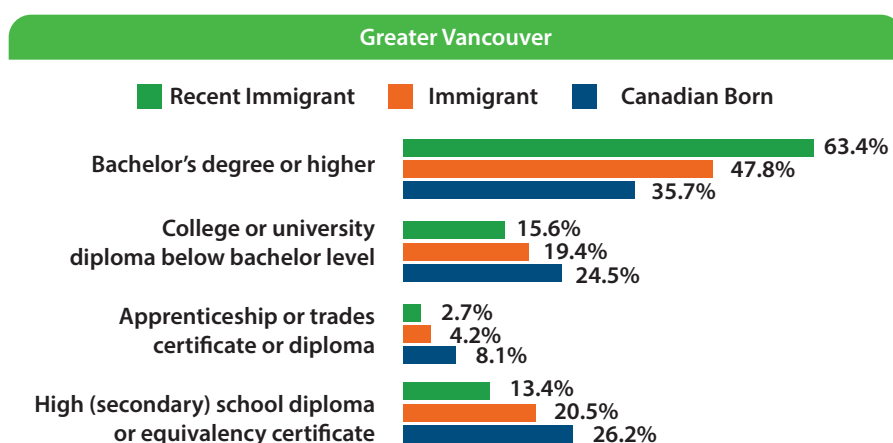
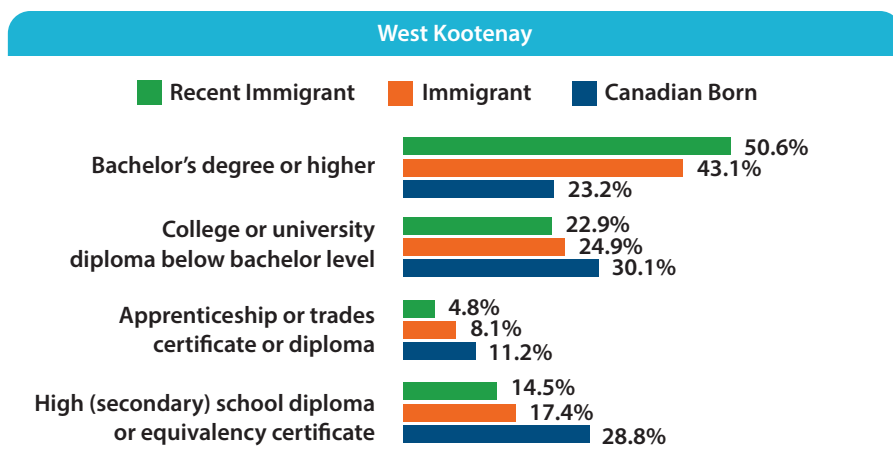
|   | West Kootenay    |                   | G.Van.            |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Religion  | Total Immigrants | Recent Immigrants | Recent Immigrants |
|   | %                | %                 | %                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>100%</b>      | <b>100%</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |
| Buddhist  | 3%               | 3%                | 3%                |
| Christian   | 44%              | 28%               | 30%               |
| Hindu   | 2%               | 8%                | 8%                |
| Jewish  | 1%               | 0%                | 1%                |
| Muslim  | 0%               | 0%                | 10%               |
| Sikh  | 1%               | 8%                | 11%               |
| Traditional (N. American Indigenous) spirituality | 0%               | 0%                | 0%                |
| Other religions and spiritual traditions          | 1%               | 2%                | 1%                |
| <b>No religion and secular perspectives</b>       | <b>46%</b>       | <b>47%</b>        | <b>38%</b>        |

Immigrants and religious affiliation (Census 2021)

## Education Levels

Immigrants are highly educated, with recent immigrants the most educated of all.

- ▶ Recent immigrants between the ages of 25 and 64 were highly educated, with 50.6% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. This is significantly higher than the proportion among the Canadian-born (23.2%) and all immigrants (43.1%).
- ▶ In addition, a significant proportion (22.9%) of recent immigrants to the region held a college or university diploma below the bachelor's level.



Education for population aged 25 – 64 (Census 2021)

## Labour Force Participation

Recent immigrants to the West Kootenay have a very high labour market participation rate at almost 83%.

- ▶ Census 2021 reported that immigrants and recent immigrants represented 14% and 3.4% of the region's labour force respectively.
- ▶ Census 2021 happened to coincide with a period of high unemployment due to Covid. 10.4% of West Kootenay recent immigrants were unemployed, similar to the Canadian-born population at 10%. At 8.4% immigrants had the lowest rate.
- ▶ Recent immigrants displayed a much higher participation rate than the other two groups, highlighting the role of immigration in the labour force.

|  | West Kootenay |                  |                   | Greater Vancouver |                  |                   |
|--|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|  | Canadian Born | Total Immigrants | Recent Immigrants | Canadian Born     | Total Immigrants | Recent Immigrants |
| <b>Population aged 15 years and over</b> | 18,650        | 2,915            | 465               | 1,035,580         | 1,053,850        | 135,165           |
| <b>In the labour force</b>               | 11,355        | 1,540            | 385               | 708,255           | 655,110          | 101,265           |
| <b>Participation rate (%)</b>            | 60.9%         | 52.8%            | 82.8%             | 68.4%             | 62.2%            | 74.9%             |
| <b>Employment rate (%)</b>               | 54.8%         | 48.7%            | 73.1%             | 62.8%             | 56.5%            | 68.1%             |
| <b>Unemployment rate (%)</b>             | 10%           | 8.4%             | 10.4%             | 8.2%              | 9.0%             | 9.1%              |

Employment / unemployment rates for population aged 15 years and over (Census 2021)

# Most Prevalent Occupational Sectors for Immigrants to the West Kootenay Region

A large portion of recent immigrants in the West Kootenay region work in Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade.

- ▶ Census showed that Accommodation and Food Services and Health Care and Social Assistance are significant sectors in the region and are filled at a high rate by new immigrants. This was also demonstrated by RNIP; a significant proportion of job offers were within these sectors. The RNIP report also revealed Early Childhood Educators and Assistants and Transport Truck and Taxi Drivers were also in high demand in the region.
- ▶ Although these sectors were demonstrated high demand for workers, according to their February 2023 Final Report, the RNIP program had placed participants in a total of 52 different jobs.
- ▶ It is also interesting to note that at 11%, immigrants play a significant role in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sectors.
- ▶ While a significant portion of recent immigrants are employed in the Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade sectors, they also make proportionate contributions in all the other West Kootenay top occupational sectors.

## North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

| Industry   | Canadian Born West Kootenay | Total Immigrants West Kootenay | Recent Immigrants West Kootenay |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 72 Accommodation and food services                 | 7%                          | 12%                            | 21%                             |
| 44-45 Retail trade                                 | 13%                         | 16%                            | 19%                             |
| 62 Health care and social assistance               | 15%                         | 17%                            | 14%                             |
| 48-49 Transportation and warehousing               | 3%                          | 4%                             | 8%                              |
| 23 Construction                                    | 9%                          | 7%                             | 6%                              |
| 54 Professional, scientific and technical services | 6%                          | 11%                            | 5%                              |
| 71 Arts, entertainment and recreation              | 3%                          | 3%                             | 4%                              |
| 81 Other services (except public administration)   | 5%                          | 5%                             | 3%                              |
| 52 Finance and insurance                           | 2%                          | 3%                             | 3%                              |
| 51 Information and cultural industries             | 1%                          | 1%                             | 3%                              |

*Distribution of Top Ten Occupations - By % labour force population aged 15 years and over. Sorted by % immigrant labour force*

**While a significant portion of recent immigrants are employed in the Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade sectors, they also make proportionate contributions in all the other West Kootenay top occupational sectors.**

# Glossary of Terms

**Census** refers to the population Census of Canada, which is taken at five-year intervals and counts persons and households and a wide variety of characteristics to provide a statistical portrait of the country.

**Total Population** refers to the total population counts in private households of a specific geographic area, regardless of immigration status on Census Day.

**Canadian-born** refers to a person who was born in Canada. The Canadian-born population also includes a small number of persons born outside Canada who are Canadian citizens by birth.

**Immigrant** refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada

permanently by immigration authorities. In the 2021 Census of Population, 'Immigrant' includes immigrants who were admitted to Canada on or before May 1, 2021.

**Recent immigrant** refers to a person who obtained landed immigrant or permanent resident status in the five years preceding a given census. In Census 2021, this refers to the period from January 1, 2016, to May 11, 2021.

**Greater Vancouver** is a regional district (Census Division) often known as **Metro Vancouver**. It is comprised of 21 municipalities, one electoral district and one First Nation (Tsawwassen). It borders the Strait of Georgia to the west, the U.S. border to the south, Abbotsford, and Mission to the east, and unincorporated mountainous areas to the north.

## Notes:

- ▶ Total population data in each chart or table may vary slightly due to different data sources, i.e. 100% data and 25% sample data from Census profiles.
- ▶ Totals in each chart or table may vary slightly due to rounding.






## About the West Kootenay LIP

**The West Kootenay Local Immigration Partnership** was established in 2023 and brings together key service providers and committed community leaders from the Castlegar, Nelson and Trail area to drive the development of an inclusive and resilient region where newcomers will feel welcome and supported. WKLIP is contract managed by the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL).

WKLIP operates on the unceded traditional territories of the Ktunaxa, Sinixt, and Syilx Nations. These lands are also home to many other Indigenous and Métis people.

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