

## Economic and Social Reports

# Economic outcomes of provincial nominees: Differences between Express Entry and non-Express Entry



by Max Stick, Feng Hou and Garnett Picot

Release date: February 25, 2026



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

---

## How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca).

You can also contact us by

**Email at** [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)

**Telephone**, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- Statistical Information Service 1-800-263-1136
- National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired 1-800-363-7629
- Fax line 1-514-283-9350

## Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, the Agency has developed standards of service which its employees observe in serving its clients. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) under "Contact us" > "[Standards of service to the public.](#)"

## Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Industry, 2026

Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada [Open Licence Agreement](#).

**An [HTML version](#) is also available.**

*Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.*

---

# ***Economic outcomes of provincial nominees: Differences between Express Entry and non-Express Entry***

by Max Stick , Feng Hou  and Garnett Picot

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202600200005-eng>

This study was jointly conducted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Statistics Canada.

Canada's immigration system plays an important role in addressing the country's short- and long-term labour market needs, admitting many immigrants with high levels of education, official language proficiency and work experience. Across provinces and territories, distinct regional population dynamics and economic conditions create varying demands for immigration to address specific workforce gaps, demographic challenges and community development priorities. From 1996 to 2009, all provinces and territories (except for Quebec and Nunavut) signed Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) agreements (Picot et al., 2024). The PNP has two primary aims: (1) to better distribute economic immigrants across the country and (2) to address specific economic needs of the provinces and territories (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2017). More economic immigrants entered through the PNP than any other single program in the late 2010s (Picot et al., 2023a).

The expansion of the PNP has played a primary role in bringing economic immigrants to the Atlantic and Prairie provinces (Picot et al., 2023a). Provincial nominees used to earn more in the initial years after immigration than immigrants in the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), but this pattern was reversed in recent years, likely because of changes in the selection criteria for FSWP immigrants (Picot et al., 2023b). In 2015, IRCC introduced the Express Entry (EE) system to manage applications for federal economic immigration streams (IRCC, 2024). Compared with the earlier points system, this approach is more efficient in selecting applicants with a high likelihood of economic success through the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS). EE principal applicants (PAs) had higher entry earnings than non-EE PAs (IRCC, 2020).

Through the PNP, provinces and territories can select and nominate applicants from the EE candidate pool to partially meet their annual PNP allocation (IRCC, 2017; 2024). Understanding the differences in human capital characteristics and labour market outcomes between EE provincial nominees (enhanced PNs) and regular (base) PNs can inform policy discussions regarding potential ways of improving the PNP and the coordination between federal and provincial immigration programs (Business Council of Alberta, 2024; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2024).

Several factors may affect the differences between enhanced PNPs and base PNPs. The EE system, to which EE PNPs are invited to apply, focuses on higher-skilled and higher-educated candidates, while some base PNP streams seek medium- and lower-skilled workers to fill chronic labour market needs at different skill levels. This can result in differences in skill and education levels between enhanced EE and base PNPs.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the additional language and education assessments imbedded in the CRS may improve the level and quality of human capital for enhanced PNPs relative to base PNPs. These screens are not necessarily required for base PNPs. However, under the CRS, EE applicants with a provincial nomination are generally guaranteed admission (IRCC, 2017; 2024). Consequently, EE candidates with lower CRS scores or lower levels of human capital are more likely to be admitted through the PNP than through federal programs (Picot et al., 2023b). Whether going through the EE pool makes a difference in the characteristics and labour market outcomes of PNPs remains to be seen.

The objective of this study is to examine whether enhanced PNPs have better labour market outcomes than base PNPs. This study uses the Longitudinal Immigration Database, which combines the admission records and annual tax information (1982 to 2023) of immigrants who filed one or more tax returns. The analysis focuses on PNP PAs and their spouses and dependants admitted from 2016 to 2024.

## The share of Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants screened through the Express Entry system has increased

Enhanced PNP PAs accounted for 21% of all PNP PAs in 2016, when a sizable number of immigrants were admitted under the newly implemented EE system (Chart 1). Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia had the largest shares, at about 35% or higher. Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta had the lowest shares, at about 1% or lower.

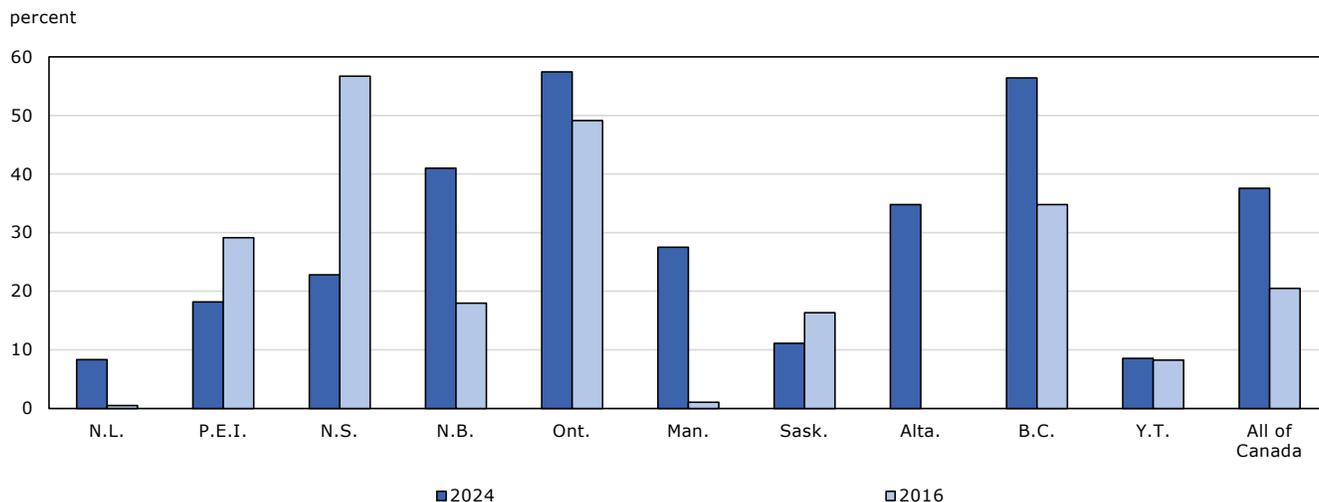
From 2016 to 2024, the share of enhanced PNP PAs increased by about 17 percentage points nationwide. Growth was observed in most provinces and territories, with the largest increases in Alberta (35 percentage points) and British Columbia (22 percentage points). Three provinces—Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan—witnessed decreases over this period.

Ontario had the highest share (57%) of enhanced PNPs among its PNP PAs in 2024, followed by British Columbia (56%) and New Brunswick (41%). Saskatchewan (11%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (8%) had the lowest share of PNP PAs screened through the EE system.

---

1. For instance, the top two intended occupations of enhanced PNPs were (1) computer, software and Web designers and developers and (2) computer and information systems professionals. By contrast, the top two intended occupations of base PNPs were (1) service supervisors and (2) cooks, butchers and bakers. These occupations accounted for about 19% and 17%, respectively, of the intended occupations for each group.

**Chart 1**  
**Percentage of Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants screened through the Express Entry system**



Source: Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database.

## Enhanced Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants had higher levels of education and earnings than base Provincial Nominee Program streams

While enhanced and base PNP PAs had similar demographic profiles in terms of sex, age at admission and knowledge of official languages, there was greater disparity in educational attainment (Table 1, left panel). Enhanced PNs were more likely to have a university degree (78%) than base PNs (65%).

There was also a disparity in intended occupations. Nearly all the intended occupations of enhanced PNP PAs were at the managerial, professional, and skilled and technical levels, compared with about two-thirds of base PNP PAs. These differences in education and intended occupation would tend to result in higher earnings among enhanced PNs, compared with base PNs. However, enhanced PNP PAs were 20 percentage points less likely to have Canadian work or study experience than base PNP PAs. This would tend to reduce initial earnings among enhanced PNs, compared with base PNs.

There was little difference in employment incidence<sup>2</sup> between enhanced and base PNP PAs at one year and three years after admission.

Based on annual earnings, enhanced PNP PAs outearned base PNP PAs by about 19% (2016 to 2019 arrivals) and 34% (2020 to 2022 arrivals) one year after admission, and the gap was at 29% three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals).<sup>3</sup> When differences in sociodemographic characteristics were taken into account, these gaps were about 7% (2016 to 2019 arrivals) and 16% (2020 to 2022 arrivals)

2. Employment incidence is defined as earning at least \$500 annually.

3. Based on median earnings, enhanced PNP PAs outearned base PNP PAs by about 16% (2016 to 2019 arrivals) and 28% (2020 to 2022 arrivals) one year after admission, and about 30% three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals).

one year after admission and 12% three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals), and they were statistically significant.<sup>4</sup>

## **Spouses and dependants of enhanced Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants have greater employment earnings than spouses and dependants of base Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants**

There were only modest differences between the demographic profiles of spouses and dependants of enhanced PNP PAs and those of spouses and dependants of base PNP PAs (Table 1, right panel).<sup>5</sup> Of note, spouses and dependants of enhanced PNP PAs were about 5 percentage points less likely to have no official language proficiency than the non-EE group. Spouses and dependants of enhanced PNP PAs were also about 12 percentage points less likely to have previous Canadian work or study experience than their base counterparts.

Spouses and dependants of enhanced PNP PAs had lower employment incidence than their base PNP counterparts by about 5 percentage points one year after admission and 1 percentage point three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals). However, the enhanced group among the 2020-to-2022 arrivals had employment incidence that was 1 percentage point higher one year after admission, compared with base PNP spouses and dependants.

Among those who were employed, the enhanced group had higher annual earnings than the base group by about 21% (2016 to 2019 arrivals) to 31% (2020 to 2022 arrivals) one year after admission and about 33% three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals). When differences in the sociodemographic characteristics between the two groups were considered, the earnings gaps were about 13% (2016 to 2019 arrivals) to 24% (2020 to 2022 arrivals) one year after admission and 21% three years after admission (2016 to 2019 arrivals).

In summary, the results from this article show that enhanced screening through the EE selection matters for the labour market outcomes of PNP PAs. One year and three years after arrival, PNP PAs who were screened through EE had higher average employment earnings than those admitted through the base streams. This result held, although somewhat reduced, after accounting for differences in sociodemographic characteristics. Furthermore, spouses and dependants of enhanced PNP PAs had higher employment earnings than spouses and dependants of base PNP PAs. The enhanced PNP category is designed to attract higher-skilled individuals, while base PNP streams are used to address labour market shortages across varying skill levels.

---

4. Ordinary least squares regression models (controlling for sex, age at admission, knowledge of official languages, education, intended occupation, Canadian work or study experience, source region and destination province) were run for labour market outcomes one year and three years after admission.

5. Education and intended occupation were excluded, because data were mostly missing for spouses and dependants of economic PAs.

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of Provincial Nominee Program principal applicants and spouses or dependants admitted from 2016 to 2024**

	Principal applicants			Spouses or dependants		
	Enhanced provincial nominees	Base provincial nominees	Total	Enhanced provincial nominees	Base provincial nominees	Total
	percent					
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	62.8	63.5	63.3	39.3	34.8	36.3
Female	37.3	36.5	36.7	60.8	65.2	63.7
<b>Age at landing</b>						
29 years or younger	40.3	42.5	41.7	22.0	26.0	24.6
30 to 39 years	46.2	34.4	38.4	56.1	41.9	46.8
40 years or older	13.5	23.1	19.9	21.8	32.1	28.6
<b>Official languages</b>						
Unable to speak English or French	0.0	1.0	0.6	1.8	6.3	4.8
Other mother tongue, able to speak English or French	90.1	92.7	91.9	88.9	87.6	88.1
Mother tongue English or French	9.9	6.3	7.5	9.3	6.1	7.2
<b>Education</b>						
Secondary or less	5.4	8.6	7.5	...	...	...
Some postsecondary	16.4	24.3	21.6	...	...	...
Bachelor's degree	46.3	41.7	43.3	...	...	...
Graduate degree	31.8	23.0	26.0	...	...	...
Education missing	0.1	2.4	1.6	...	...	...
<b>Intended occupation</b>						
Managerial	13.6	7.9	9.8	...	...	...
Professional	38.7	11.9	21.0	...	...	...
Skilled and technical	46.1	44.3	44.9	...	...	...
Intermediate and clerical	0.6	17.9	12.0	...	...	...
Elemental and labourers	0.0	7.8	5.2	...	...	...
Others	1.0	10.2	7.0	...	...	...
<b>Canadian work or study experience</b>						
No prior Canadian work or study experience	34.2	14.4	21.1	54.0	42.2	46.2
Work or study permits before immigration	65.8	85.6	78.9	46.0	57.8	53.8
<b>Source region</b>						
United States	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.7
Caribbean and Central and South America	5.4	5.2	5.3	7.4	7.8	7.6
Europe	6.8	8.5	7.9	7.2	10.9	9.6
Africa	13.8	6.2	8.8	18.2	7.3	11.0
Southern Asia	49.7	38.4	42.2	45.1	28.5	34.2
Southeast Asia	5.0	16.1	12.3	5.6	20.3	15.3
Eastern Asia	12.6	21.2	18.3	9.4	19.8	16.2
Western Asia	4.6	3.1	3.6	5.3	4.3	4.6
Other regions	1.4	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.7
<b>Employment incidence, observed</b>						
One year after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	92.8	92.4	92.5	72.4	76.9	75.8
One year after immigration, 2020 to 2022 arrivals	94.0	92.9	93.4	80.2	78.9	79.4
Three years after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	93.2	91.3	91.8	77.9	79.0	78.8
<b>Employment incidence, adjusted</b>						
One year after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	92.7	92.5	92.5	74.7	76.2	75.8
One year after immigration, 2020 to 2022 arrivals	93.8	93.1	93.4	79.6	79.3	79.4
Three years after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	92.4	91.5	91.8	79.2	78.6	78.8
<b>Average annual earnings among the employed, observed</b>	2023 constant dollars					
One year after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	62,100	52,300	54,800	37,400	30,900	32,400
One year after immigration, 2020 to 2022 arrivals	71,300	53,400	59,200	46,000	35,000	38,500
Three years after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	76,700	59,400	64,000	47,800	36,000	39,000
<b>Average annual earnings among the employed, adjusted</b>						
One year after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	57,500	53,900	54,800	35,500	31,500	32,400
One year after immigration, 2020 to 2022 arrivals	65,200	56,300	59,200	44,400	35,700	38,500
Three years after immigration, 2016 to 2019 arrivals	69,500	62,000	64,000	44,700	37,000	38,900

... not applicable

**Notes:** Spouses and dependants are restricted to those aged 20 and older. Education excludes 2024 arrivals. Adjusted results for principal applicants are based on ordinary least squares regression models controlling for sex, age at landing, knowledge of official languages, education, intended occupation, Canadian work or study experience, source region and destination province. Adjusted results for spouses and dependants are based on ordinary least squares regression models controlling for sex, age at landing, knowledge of official languages, Canadian work or study experience, source region and destination province.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Immigration Database.

---

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Sarah Evershed, Chantal Goyette, Maciej Karpinski and Zackary Van-Daele for their advice and comments on an earlier version of this article.

## Authors

Max Stick and Feng Hou are with the Economic and Social Analysis and Modelling Division, Analytical Studies and Modelling Branch, at Statistics Canada. Garnett Picot is with the Research and Knowledge Mobilization Division at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

## References

Business Council of Alberta. (2024). [Watered Down: The Case for Strengthening, Rather than Diluting, the Provinces' Role in Immigration](#).

IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada). (2017). [Evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program](#).

IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada). (2020). Evaluation of Express Entry: Early impacts on economic outcomes and system management. Evaluation Division, Reference number: E3-2019.

IRCC (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada). (2024). [Express Entry Year-End Report 2023](#).

Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. (2024). [Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program](#) (OINP).

Picot, G., Crossman, E., & Hou, F. (2023b). [Provincial Nominee Program: Recent trends and provincial differences in earnings outcomes](#). *Economic and Social Reports*, 3(12), 1-21.

Picot, G., Hou, F., & Crossman, E. (2023a). [The Provincial Nominee Program: Its expansion in Canada](#). *Economic and Social Reports*, 3(7), 1-14.

Picot, G., Hou, F., & Crossman, E. (2024). [The Provincial Nominee Program: Provincial differences](#). *Economic and Social Reports*, 4(3), 1-23.

Picot, G., Stick, M., & Hou, F. (2025). [The occupational outcomes of provincial nominees](#). *Economic and Social Reports*, 5(8), 1-6.