



SURREY On Track to Becoming the Province's Largest City

Immigration to Canada and B.C.—The Big Picture

In 2021, Canada welcomed 406,000 immigrants—a record number. Moreover, current plans are for that number to increase. Currently, immigrants make up 23% of the Canadian population, another record high that is expected to grow.

B.C. broke a record for the number of people moving to the province in 2021. B.C.'s net migration reached 100,797 people in 2021, the highest annual total since 1961.

In B.C. the number of new immigrants almost doubled between 2016 and 2021, from 38,085 in 2016, to 69,470 in 2021. In 2021, 17% of all new permanent residents to Canada chose B.C. as their destination, up from 13% in 2016. This trend is expected to continue, meaning that B.C. can expect to welcome an increasing number of immigrants each year.

Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Canada	296,370	286,540	321,055	341,175	184,590	406,030
Ontario	109,880	112,005	137,465	153,370	82,950	199,280
British Columbia	38,085	38,465	44,855	50,230	28,475	69,470
Quebec	53,240	52,380	51,125	40,565	25,240	50,275
Alberta	49,250	42,120	42,010	43,715	22,970	39,395
Manitoba	16,825	14,640	15,225	18,870	8,610	16,575
Saskatchewan	14,880	14,685	15,510	15,870	7,425	10,955
Nova Scotia	5,510	4,515	5,985	7,595	3,520	9,160
New Brunswick	4,715	3,660	4,610	6,005	2,890	5,310
Prince Edward Island	2,315	2,345	2,125	2,445	1,290	2,615
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,200	1,185	1,525	1,855	900	2,050
Yukon	210	225	305	400	175	595
Northwest Territories	185	240	280	195	125	295
Nunavut	35	40	30	40	20	40
Province/Territory not stated	45	30	5	15	—	20

An Unprecedented Growth Rate

Surrey is growing at an unprecedented rate, adding more than 51,000 people since 2016. Expressed another way, over the last five years, Surrey welcomed 28 new residents every day. At the current rate the City is on track to become the province's largest city around the year 2040, surpassing Vancouver in population.

Where are all the people coming from? Much of the growth can be attributed to the arrival of new immigrants. In 2021, nearly half of Surrey's population was born in another country. More than two-thirds identified as members of a racialized group. The following is a look at Surrey's growth and its newest residents.

Canada's immigration targets have an economic rationale

Between 2023 and 2025 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.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has targeted a significant increase in admissions in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

2023-2025 Immigration Levels Plan

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

Source: IRCC Supplementary Information for the 2023-2025 Immigration Levels Plan

Immigrant growth in Surrey and Metro Vancouver

Surrey attracts an increasing portion of immigrants to British Columbia's southwest coast. In 2021 immigrants made up 45% of Surrey's population, slightly higher than Metro Vancouver's regional level of 42%.

In 2021, 39,910 (20%) of recent immigrants to B.C. (those who arrived between 2016 and 2021) lived in Surrey. Recent immigrants made up 7% of Surrey's population and contributed 78% of the City's total population growth between 2016 and 2021.

Immigration patterns are constantly shifting. In recent years, Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Iraq have become top source countries, while the proportion of immigrants arriving from China and the Philippines has dropped.

Sorted by total immigrant population

Region	2021 Total Pop	2016 Total Pop	2016-2021 Total Pop Growth %	2021 Immigrant Population #	2021 Immigrant Population Total %	Recent Immigrant Population #	Recent Immigrant Population Total %	2016 Immigrant Population #	2016 - 2021 Immigrant Pop Growth %
BC	4,915,945	4,560,235	7.8%	1,425,715	29.0%	197,425	4.0%	1,292,675	10.3%
Greater Vancouver (CMA)	2,607,010	2,426,235	7.5%	1,089,185	41.8%	154,815	5.9%	989,540	10.1%
1. Vancouver	650,380	618,210	5.2%	274,365	42.2%	41,360	6.4%	262,770	4.4%
2. Surrey	562,565	511,545	10.0%	250,870	44.6%	39,910	7.1%	220,155	14.0%
3. Richmond	208,400	196,665	6.0%	125,600	60.3%	13,705	6.6%	118,305	6.2%
4. Burnaby	245,725	230,080	6.8%	123,795	50.4%	18,920	7.7%	115,145	7.5%
5. Coquitlam	147,465	138,090	6.8%	67,540	45.8%	8,595	5.8%	61,060	10.6%
6. Delta	107,270	100,840	6.4%	35,560	33.1%	4,325	4.0%	31,240	13.8%
7. Langley, Township	130,960	115,835	13.1%	29,890	22.8%	3,805	2.9%	22,495	32.9%
8. New Westminster	78,055	69,905	11.7%	29,265	37.5%	5,050	6.5%	24,375	20.1%
9. North Vancouver, DM	87,385	84,875	3.0%	28,195	32.3%	3,340	3.8%	26,505	6.4%
10. North Vancouver, City	57,505	52,185	10.2%	22,020	38.3%	3,585	6.2%	19,930	10.5%
11. Port Coquitlam	60,390	57,900	4.3%	20,765	34.4%	2,135	3.5%	18,430	12.7%
12. Maple Ridge	89,860	80,975	11.0%	20,230	22.5%	2,160	2.4%	15,460	30.9%
13. West Vancouver	43,385	41,680	4.1%	19,815	45.7%	2,080	4.8%	18,615	6.4%
14. Port Moody	33,455	33,450	0.0%	11,100	33.2%	1,185	3.5%	10,755	3.2%
15. Langley, City	28,025	25,315	10.7%	6,530	23.3%	1,310	4.7%	4,395	48.6%
16. White Rock	20,725	19,120	8.4%	6,005	29.0%	585	2.8%	4,895	22.7%
17. Pitt Meadows	19,025	18,425	3.3%	4,840	25.4%	425	2.2%	3,955	22.4%

Note: Census 2016 and Census 2021: Immigrant status and period of immigration - 25% sample data

Immigrants in Surrey and Metro Vancouver by recent Census periods

Surrey's Proportion of Metro Vancouver immigrants is increasing

Twenty years ago, Surrey had a lower proportion of immigrants than did Metro Vancouver. Today the situation has been reversed. Over the past 20 years, the immigrant population in Surrey has increased from 33% to 45%. In actual numbers that represents an increase of more than 136,000 newcomers since 2001, almost 40% of the Greater Vancouver total.

Surrey Population				
2021 Total Pop*	2016 Total Pop*	2011 Total Pop*	2006 Total Pop*	2001 Total Pop*
568,322	517,887	468,251	394,976	347,821
Immigrants** 250,870 45%	Immigrants** 220,155 43%	Immigrants** 187,845 41%	Immigrants** 150,230 38%	Immigrants** 114,730 33%
Recent Immigrants** 39,905 7%	Recent Immigrants** 36,340 7%	Recent Immigrants** 34,880 7%	Recent Immigrants** 29,230 7%	Recent Immigrants** NA

*Census Profiles (100% sample data) ** Census profiles (25% sample data)

Where Surrey's immigrants come from

Newcomers from the 10 leading source countries make up 81% of Surrey's recent immigrants. Almost half (46%) of those came from India.

Almost half of Surrey's recent immigrants arrived from India.

Elsewhere in Metro Vancouver and in the province, China closely rivals India as a main source of immigrants, a situation that is not the case in Surrey. In all three jurisdictions the Philippines is a significant source country.

Immigration patterns are constantly shifting. In recent years, Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Iraq have become top source countries, while the proportion of immigrants arriving from China and the Philippines has dropped. Once significant source countries such as Fiji, the United Kingdom and Taiwan are no longer found in the top 10.

Immigrants Place of Birth

Surrey Total Immigrants	Surrey Recent Immigrants	Greater Vancouver Recent Immigrants	B.C. Recent Immigrants
Total 250,870	Total 39,910	Total 154,815	Total 197,425
India 95,905	India 18,235	India 30,545	India 39,390
Philippines 29,510	China 4,430	China 28,975	China 31,450
China 23,850	Philippines 4,000	Philippines 15,090	Philippines 21,220
Fiji 8,570	Syria 1,360	South Korea 6,125	U.S. 8,760
U.K. 8,320	South Korea 1,010	Iran 5,615	U.K. 7,675
South Korea 6,995	Pakistan 900	U.S. 5,460	South Korea 7,220
Viet Nam 6,425	Iraq 765	Brazil 4,625	Iran 5,850
Pakistan 5,705	US 650	U.K. 4,560	Brazil 5,130
Taiwan 5,535	Nigeria 475	Syria 3,380	Syria 4,950
U.S. 3,720	Viet Nam 460	Mexico 2,460	Australia 3,280
Others 56,335	Others 7,625	Other 47,980	Other 62,500

Place of Birth of Recent Refugees to B.C. (2016-2021)

Refugee arrivals change over time, depending on events and circumstances around the world. In recent years Syria and other countries in the Middle East, as well as North Africa, have become the predominant sources. About 25% of all refugees to B.C. reside in Surrey.

Recent Refugees

Total	16,025	
Syria	4,845	China 395
Eritrea	1,330	Ethiopia 380
Iraq	1,280	Pakistan 365
Iran	1,120	Turkey 355
Afghanistan	1,050	Colombia 335

In Canada's most populous census metropolitan areas, specifically Metro Toronto and Metro Vancouver, racialized groups (also termed visible minorities) are now a majority. In 2021, 55% of Metro Vancouver's population identified as racialized. By comparison, 67% of Surrey's residents identified as a member of a racialized group.

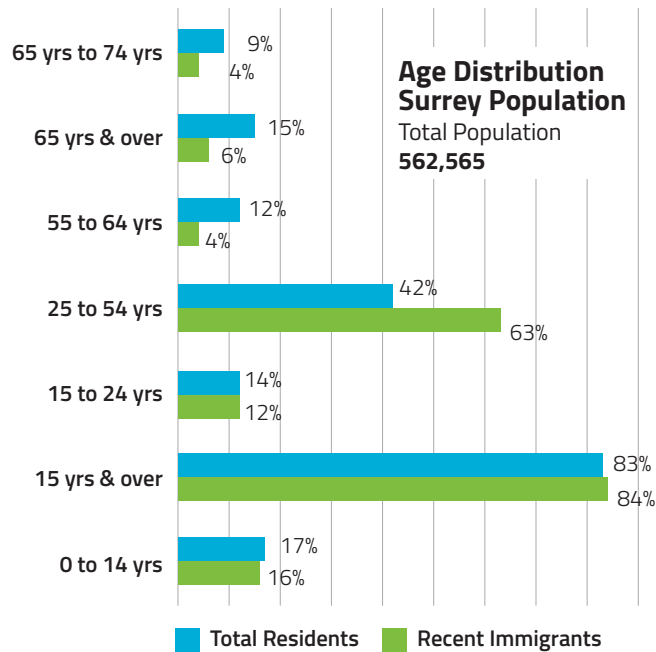
Metro Vancouver Population

2021 Total Pop*	2016 Total Pop*	2011 Total Pop*	2006 Total Pop*	2001 Total Pop*
2,642,825	2,463,431	2,313,328	2,116,581	1,986,965
Immigrants** 1,089,185 42%	Immigrants** 989,540 41%	Immigrants** 913,310 40%	Immigrants** 831,265 40%	Immigrants** 738,555 38%
Recent Immigrants** 154,815 6%	Recent Immigrants** 142,535 6%	Recent Immigrants** 155,125 7%	Recent Immigrants** 151,690 7%	Recent Immigrants** NA

*Census Profiles (100% sample data) ** Census profiles (25% sample data)

Surrey's immigrants are younger than the population as a whole

Canada's immigration system has been designed to favour working age immigrants (25 to 54). In Surrey fully 63% of recent arrivals are in the 25-54 age group, compared to 42% of the total population. Conversely, only 10% of recent arrivals are 55 or older, compared to 24% of the general population. From a regional perspective, the age differential is even more pronounced, as Surrey's general population is slightly younger than in Metro Vancouver.



Mother Tongues in Surrey and Metro Vancouver

English is the mother tongue of slightly more than half of the population of Metro Vancouver, but only 43% of Surrey residents. Punjabi accounts for nearly 23% of Surrey residents' mother tongue, versus 7% in the larger region. It is important to note that Surrey residents speak more than 170 languages.

Surrey

Mother Tongue

Total Pop	564,230
English	243,510
French	2,910
Punjabi (Panjabi)	128,305
Mandarin	28,080
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	18,640
Hindi	14,540
Korean	8,690
Yue (Cantonese)	8,165
Spanish	7,565
Vietnamese	6,860
Arabic	6,135
Urdu	5,820
Others	85,010

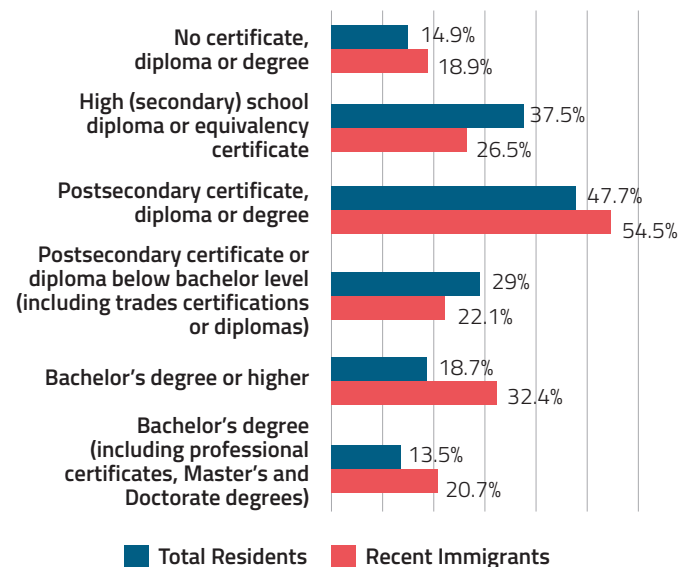
Metro Vancouver

Mother Tongue

Total Pop	2,619,420
English	1,340,995
French	24,710
Mandarin	191,475
Yue (Cantonese)	182,910
Punjabi (Panjabi)	180,355
Tagalog (Pilipino, Filipino)	67,790
Korean	52,525
Spanish	46,645
Hindi	27,990
Vietnamese	26,850
Russian	20,685
Portuguese	18,185
Others	438,305

Surrey's immigrants are well educated

32% of immigrants have a bachelor's degree or higher, almost double the share of the non-immigrant population.



About the Surrey LIP

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a collective of community partners, bringing diverse voices together to build a fair and inclusive city where all immigrants, refugees, and citizens thrive. Through dialogue and research, Surrey LIP's 40+ members collaborate on innovative and community-driven strategies to meet the changing needs of one of the fastest-growing cities in BC. They work collaboratively to develop strategies to prepare the community to welcome new immigrants and refugees through an equitable and inclusive approach.

Lenya Wilks | she / her

Senior Manager,

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

C: 604-307-2743

E: lwilks@dcrs.ca

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