

Quebec Announces 20% Cut In Immigration

QUEBEC: Staying true to its election promise, the new Coalition Avenir Quebec government announced Tuesday it will cut immigration by about 20 per cent next year despite labour shortages across the province.

Too many newcomers are unemployed, don't speak French and aren't fully integrated, Quebec Immigration Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette told reporters after tabling his immigration targets for 2019.

Citing the majority mandate received in the Oct. 1 election, Jolin-Barrette said the Quebec public supports the government plan to reduce its immigration objective to 40,000 people next year — a drop of about 10,000.

The announcement sets up a potential flashpoint with Ottawa, which has a say over a portion of immigration to Quebec.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau questioned the plan before Jolin-Barrette even made it official.

"What I hear across Quebec is entrepreneurs and businesses

worried about the shortage of labour," Trudeau told reporters Tuesday morning. "I'm not sure that this is the best time to reduce the number of people who come."

Jolin-Barrette said the reduction will be temporary, in order to give the government time to overhaul the immigration system. More resources will be put towards teaching immigrants French and better matching newcomers with the needs of the job market. "It's not respectful for us to tell people to come here, and they can't find work in their field," Jolin-Barrette said. "This temporary reduction will allow us to have a better balance between new arrivals and the needs of the regions and employers."

The cuts drew criticism from the Opposition Liberals, who asked how the government could reduce immigration when businesses across Quebec are suffering from labour shortages.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business released data Tuesday indicating Quebec



Coalition Avenir Quebec's Simon Jolin-Barrette at the legislature in Quebec City. File photo: The Canadian Press/Jacques Boissinot

has a 4.1 per cent vacancy rate in its labour market, representing about 118,000 unfilled jobs. It is the highest rate in the country.

Liberal immigration critic Dominique Anglade questioned what studies support the reduction, which was a central plank of the Coalition election platform. Critics said the promise was aimed at voters outside Montreal

fearful that non-francophone immigrants threatened the survival of the French language.

"The only thing that is clear is that they are using an arbitrary number — supported by ideology," Anglade said Tuesday.

The government plan would reduce by roughly 20 per cent each of the three categories of immigrants welcomed to Quebec

every year.

Under a deal with the federal government, Quebec has control over the selection of so-called economic immigrants to the province, who are mostly skilled workers and businesspeople. They account for about 70 per cent of new arrivals every year.

The other 30 per cent are selected by Ottawa. They are either refugees or relatives of people already in Quebec coming through the family reunification program.

If it is to meet its new targets, Quebec needs Ottawa's approval to reduce the number of immigrants from the second and third categories. Jolin-Barrette He indicated the government could be open to increasing the numbers again starting in 2020.

But Federal Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc expressed concern that reducing the number of family reunification candidates will mean immigrants wait longer to be reunited with their families in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada.

Pilot Project To Support Visible Minority Newcomer Women

OTTAWA: Visible minority newcomer women integrating into Canadian society can face many barriers to employment. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, on Wednesday announced the launch of a 3-year Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot.

The goal of the pilot is to improve the employment and career advancement of visible minority newcomer women in Canada by addressing the barriers they may face — gender- and race-based discrimination, precarious or low income employment, lack of affordable childcare and weak social supports.

As part of the pilot, IRCC is launching an expression of interest process for new service providers that are not currently funded by the department. IRCC

will provide funding of up to \$7 million for new, innovative programs and services to support visible minority women in accessing the labour market and to build capacity in smaller organizations that serve or are led by visible minority women.

IRCC will also amend existing contribution agreements of select service provider organizations (SPOs) across Canada with funding of up to \$5 million. This additional funding will increase SPOs' capacity and expand their existing employment services to address the needs of visible minority newcomer women.

Finally, IRCC will work with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation to develop a program design and measurement framework to quantify the effectiveness of specific employ-



ment interventions and program designs, learning what methods work best to support visible minority newcomer women.

Ahmed Hussen said: "Employment is key to the successful integration of newcomers. Having a job isn't just about making an economic contribution to Canada, it's also about providing a sense of dignity and belong-

ing. Newcomers—especially visible minority women—often face multiple barriers to employment including discrimination and lack of affordable childcare. I'm proud that my Department has developed this exciting pilot that will offer direct support and services to these newcomer women as they get ready for the Canadian workforce, look for jobs and develop their careers."

"When Canada's women succeed, Canada succeeds. This investment will support racialized newcomer women to participate in our economy and grow our middle class. We are counting on these women to share their talents and help fill critical labour shortages from coast to coast to coast."

— The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Status of Women

• Visible minority newcomer women have the lowest median annual income of all newcomer groups at \$26,624, compared to non-visible minority newcomer women (\$30,074), visible minority newcomer men (\$35,574), and non-visible minority newcomer men (\$42,591).

• Visible minority newcomer women are more likely to be unemployed. The unemployment rate of visible minority newcomer women (9.7%) is higher than that of visible minority (8.5%) and non-visible minority (6.4%) newcomer men, based on the 2016 Census.

• Organizations interested in the EOI process are encouraged to review the Funding Guidelines available online and submit their letter of interest by December 19, 2018.



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