



IMMIGRATION IN THE ERA OF REMOTE WORK

Challenges and Opportunities for Canada

ACTION  CANADA
BUILDING LEADERSHIP FOR CANADA'S FUTURE

ABOUT ACTION CANADA

The Action Canada Fellowship is a public policy leadership program that aims to enhance new leaders' understanding of the country and public policy choices for the future.

The theme selected for this year's fellowship is immigration. In this report, we have specifically surveyed the emerging phenomenon of remote work and its potential impacts on Canada's immigration system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge and express our deepest gratitude to Action Canada and the Public Policy Forum (PPF) for the opportunity to partake in this Fellowship. We would also like to thank our mentor Zainub Verjee, who embarked on this 10-month journey with us and provided her unwavering support, advice and guidance throughout this process. We could not have accomplished this report without her. We are grateful to those who took time to review our paper at various stages and provide valuable feedback, including Action Canada Advisors and Robert Lapper, Lam Chair in Law and Public Policy at the University of Victoria. Finally, we are grateful to the countless individuals we interviewed who shared their knowledge, expertise and lived experiences which informed and shaped our understanding and recommendations of this topic.



DISCLAIMER

This project has been undertaken pursuant to an Action Canada fellowship, delivered in partnership by the Public Policy Forum and Action Canada. The views, opinions, positions and/or strategies expressed herein are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, positions or strategies of their employers or their universities, PPF, Action Canada, Action Canada Foundation or the Government of Canada. PPF, Action Canada, Action Canada Foundation and the Government of Canada make no representations as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability, non-infringement or currency of any information in this paper and will not be liable for any errors or omissions in this information, or any losses, costs, injuries or damages arising from its display, use or publication.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



David Campbell, BAsC, MPP, is the Policy Lead, Energy Future Forum at the Public Policy Forum.



Sami Khan, BAsC, SM, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the School of Sustainable Energy Engineering, Simon Fraser University.



Kate Menzies, MD, is a palliative and family physician, and Co-Chief of Staff at Percy E Moore Hospital Hodgson.



Sharnelle Morgan, BPAPM, MPP, is a Policy Analyst at the Privy Council Office and Co-founder/Executive Director of the Canadian Black Policy Network.



Sandra D. Peloquin, B.ACom, MBA, is the Director of International Relations at Business Development Bank of Canada and the Secretary General of The Montreal Group, a non-profit international organization.



Joshua Regnier, B.A., is a Juris Doctor/Juris Indigenarum Doctor candidate at the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law.



MENTOR

Zainub Verjee, Senior Fellow of Massey College, is laureate of 2020 Governor General's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Visual and Media Arts. A firm believer that Art is a public good, she has contributed to international instruments of culture such as Status of the Artist and Cultural Diversity and building institutions such as British Columbia Arts Council. In 2021 OCAD University conferred an honorary doctorate on her, and she was also appointed as a McLaughlin College Fellow—School of Public Policy at York University. Currently, she is the Executive Director of the Galleries Ontario/Ontario Galleries.

CONTENTS

FRAMING THE DISCUSSION	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	9
METHODOLOGY	15
THE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY PERSPECTIVE	16
THE PROVINCIAL, TERRITORIAL AND MUNICIPAL PERSPECTIVE	22
THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE	27
LOOKING AHEAD	30
APPENDICES	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	38

FRAMING THE DISCUSSION

IMMIGRATION



Immigration accounts for over **80% of Canada's population growth**, which is essential for economic development.¹



Canada struggles to attract and retain enough top-talent in various sectors.



Canada receives more applications for economic immigration than it accepts, creating a large backlog.

REMOTE WORK



The number of people who work from home has risen by **159% since 2009**.²



99% of people say they would choose to continue working remotely either full- or part-time.²



Canada is a choice destination for remote workers, especially from the US.



Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the adoption of remote work across the Canadian economy. Research suggests that this new model of work is here to stay beyond the pandemic, especially for certain types of high-skilled workers. At the same time, the Canadian government is setting increasingly ambitious immigration targets in a bid to tackle growing demographic and labour challenges, and high-skilled workers form a crucial subset of the immigrants the country hopes to attract.

This paper examines the intersection of these two subjects: immigration and remote work. We explore this dynamic through three different perspectives—that of federal immigration

policy; that of provinces, territories, and municipalities; and that of employers. A crucial fourth perspective—that of immigrants themselves—is woven throughout using stories, quotes and insights from those with firsthand experience of the immigration system.

Our research finds that the impact of remote work on immigration is still in its earliest stages and has been mostly unstudied as a result. Nevertheless, drawing from the existing literature and interviews with industry experts, community leaders, and immigrants themselves, this paper offers recommendations on possible policy actions, as well as several suggested areas for future research.

Recommendations

Recommendations explored in the report are summarized below.

Federal Immigration Policy

- 1** To fully benefit from the emerging phenomenon of remote work, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) should explore new expedited work visa pathways specifically for immigrants in sectors well suited to virtual work.
- 2** In addition, or as an alternative to expedited work visa pathways, IRCC should consider a temporary work visa designed to attract individuals who can work remotely, specifically digital nomads.
- 3** To maximize the potential of these new pathways, IRCC should develop a robust targeted marketing strategy on the new immigration pathways for remote workers in relevant international jurisdictions, highlighting Canada as a remote work destination.

Provinces, Territories and Municipalities

- 4** To put to advantage the potential for remote work to support economic development in targeted regions of the country, IRCC should coordinate with and provide further supports for regional initiatives that are successfully relocating remote workers to Canada, especially in communities with demographic and labour challenges.
- 5** To attract immigrants as remote workers to specific regions of the country, governments at all levels should develop holistic strategies for preparing communities for remote work, including considerations for digital infrastructure, physical infrastructure and settlement supports.

Employers

- 6** To enhance the Canadian economy's ability to attract global top talent, the Government of Canada should convene relevant stakeholders to create guidelines and best practices for businesses considering adopting remote work arrangements.
- 7** To give all sizes of private company an opportunity to benefit from remote work, the Government of Canada should collaborate with organizations like the Business Development Bank of Canada to create additional support to small and medium-sized enterprises for attracting and retaining immigrants working remotely.

Recommendations for further study

These recommendations represent an initial approach to this topic, but much remains to be learned through further study and experience with the impacts of remote work. This paper suggests a few areas for future study:

- Recognizing the essential role of lower-skilled immigrants to our economy, IRCC should continue to examine the value of reduced skill requirements and new pathways to permanent residency for workers in critical industries;
.....
- To adapt to the rise of remote work, governments at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels should review the tax treatment of businesses and individuals embracing remote work and ensure incentives around this growing practice are strategically aligned;
.....
- To ensure Indigenous communities can capitalize on opportunities arising from remote work, governments should work with Indigenous communities to attract and employ remote-working immigrants. Options developed should center Indigeneity and be a result of co-development. Additionally, this will require addressing the issue of access to high-speed internet in remote areas;
.....
- To ensure communities are prepared for the demographic changes that may come from an influx of remote workers, provinces and territories alongside settlement agencies should explore programs and services aimed at welcoming newcomers and preparing local populations;
.....
- To reduce social isolation that can occur as a result of remote work, local and provincial governments should explore programs aimed specifically at welcoming and acclimatizing these workers to their new homes and communities; and
.....
- Canadian organizations—both public and private—must develop adequate cybersecurity resources.





Introduction

Action Canada Fellows in Carcross Tagish First Nation

For decades, Canada's system for economic immigration has been considered one of the best in the world.³ Our economic opportunities, pluralism, inclusivity and rich outdoor spaces have consistently attracted some of the world's best and brightest. Our constellation of immigration services—from Federal High Skilled Programs and Provincial Nominees to an array of resettlement and support services—have achieved some degree of success in attracting newcomers to Canada and integrating them into Canadian society.

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a human tragedy. But in the world of immigration,

it has also accelerated macroeconomic and labour force trends that were already underway, and fundamentally altered the way we live. The “Future of Work” has arrived, as our economy becomes increasingly defined by features like remote work. Canada's immigration system must adapt to remain competitive in attracting a large diversity of immigrants, including both essential skills and global top talent.

For this report, we examine the ways in which remote work as a disruption impacts Canada's current immigration system, and the actions Canada can take to respond to the challenges and opportunities therein.

Remote work is here to stay

In the 1970s, a research group at the University of Southern California conducted one of the first major studies into what they would term “telecommuting”.⁴ The study focused on a Los Angeles-based insurance company that had more than 2,000 employees commuting an average of 34.4 kilometers each day.⁵ The cost of this travel was immense—for employee mental health, worker productivity, city infrastructure, and the broader environment. The authors concluded that technology would soon make it feasible for organizations like this insurance company to decentralize their operations using telecommuting. But the authors also concluded that “technology was not the limiting factor in the acceptance of telecommuting”. Instead, the main barrier was a human one—a lack of cultural acceptance for the idea.⁵

In recent years, new tools have made telecommuting—or remote work, in modern

jargon—more practical and accessible than ever before. By the turn of the century, a number of important studies were identifying widespread changes in work culture and norms, enabled by new technologies.⁶ But until very recently, cultural barriers prevented these practices from achieving broader adoption.

These barriers have undergone a dramatic change over the last two years. In an effort to flatten the curve of the COVID-19 virus, millions of Canadians have been forced to adapt to working from home. Workers have set up home offices and developed new routines, while businesses have closed office spaces and invested in new technologies to enable remote work. In 2016, only about 4% of Canadian employees performed most of their work from home. As of June 2021, that number had skyrocketed to 30%.⁷ The cultural barriers to remote work seem suddenly like a relic of the past.

“THE PANDEMIC HAS
ACCELERATED THE
CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE OF
TELEWORKING **BY 25 YEARS.**”

*Isabelle Hudon,
President and CEO,
Business Development Bank of Canada*



“REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS, IT’S REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT **MOST INDUSTRIES WILL RELY ON REMOTE WORK** TO SOME DEGREE. A HIGHER PROPORTION OF IT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTREPRENEURS, AS WELL AS THOSE IN PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES, WILL RELY ON TELEWORK. THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR THOSE IN FINANCE AND INSURANCE.

Pierre Cléroutx,
VP Research and Chief Economist,
Business Development Bank of Canada

A recent study from McKinsey predicted that this shift is here to stay.⁸ The report concluded that “hybrid models of remote work are likely to persist in the wake of the pandemic, especially for a highly educated, well-paid minority of the workforce.” In several high-skilled fields, the workforce could dedicate more than half of their time to working remotely without losing productivity. Canada’s labour market in the pandemic has borne this out—according to Statistics Canada, approximately 70% of individuals in the finance, insurance, and professional, scientific and technical services sectors worked from home from April 2020 to June 2021.⁷

Many tech companies have enthusiastically embraced remote work, allowing large portions of their workforce to work from home indefinitely. In 2020, one of Canada’s largest e-commerce companies, Shopify,⁹ introduced a “digital by default” staffing model. They closed most physical office space and allowed employees to work from wherever they call home. As a result, the company has and will continue to save money on real estate, and has dramatically expanded its pool of potential workers, while employees have flexibility to live where they wish. Twitter¹⁰ and other tech companies have been following suit.

The tech sector is not alone in jumping on the trend. A survey from the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) in 2021 found that 74% of small business owners intend to offer some employees the chance to continue working remotely in the wake of the pandemic¹¹. Whatever the future holds, it seems unlikely that remote work will return to its pre-pandemic levels.



What does this mean for immigration?

Canada is dependent on immigration for its economic future. This is true on a national scale, where immigration is key to filling gaps in our workforce. And it's even more true in regions of the country where demographic challenges like population decline and worker shortages are most

pronounced. In recognition of this, Canada has been steadily increasing its immigration targets. Over the next three years, the government aims to welcome more than 1.2 million new Canadians, a rate of just over one percent of Canada's population each year.¹²

DECLINING FERTILITY RATES, INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY AND THE AGING OF THE BABY BOOM GENERATION HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAMATIC CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED TO THE STRUCTURE OF [NEW BRUNSWICK'S] POPULATION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES. WHILE THIS SITUATION IS NOT UNIQUE TO NEW BRUNSWICK, THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN FURTHER COMPOUNDED IN THE PROVINCE BY CONSISTENTLY **HIGH LEVELS OF NET OUT-MIGRATION AMONG YOUTH AND RELATIVELY LOW IMMIGRATION LEVELS.**

New Brunswick Population Report, 2021¹³



LOW-SKILLED WORKERS

This report focuses on the subset of immigrants who are highly-skilled and well-paid, often working in fields like finance, insurance, tech, and management. Research shows that these workers are those most impacted by the shift to remote work.

Nevertheless, it is important to also acknowledge the crucial role that immigrants play in filling lower-skilled roles in the Canadian economy. Never has this role been more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic. Border closures and workforce shortages have left Canada with a critical lack of workers in sectors like agriculture, hospitality, and retail^{14, 15}. In response, Canada has experimented with dramatic changes to our immigration system, making ad hoc changes like reduced skill requirements in an effort to invite more “low-skilled” immigrants to arrive and stay in Canada.

This experience has raised crucial questions for the future of our immigration system. The December 2021 mandate letter for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship raised the prospect of expanding pathways to permanent residency for international students and temporary foreign workers, for example.¹⁶ Going forward, Canada will need to continue to interrogate the role that our immigration system plays in welcoming and supporting the lower-skilled workers that form the backbone of our economy.



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: Recognizing the essential role of lower-skilled immigrants to our economy, the IRCC should continue to examine the value of reduced skill requirements and new pathways to permanent residency for workers in critical industries.

Canada is not alone in seeking to attract newcomers, particularly high-skilled immigrants. Many developed nations are facing similar demographic and economic challenges, setting off a heated competition for immigrants. An increasing number of countries in Central America, the Caribbean

and Europe are offering digital nomad visas,¹⁷ which create opportunities for non-nationals to live and work legally for periods of time and provide generous tax incentives, hoping to attract high-skilled remote workers without the expectation of them becoming citizens.

As countries compete to attract workers, this select group of high-skilled potential immigrants can be selective in where they choose to settle—a dynamic that is only enhanced if

workers no longer need to live where they work. In this context, remote work creates significant new challenges and opportunities for Canada's immigration system. For example:



ATTRACTION.

Canada competes globally to attract the best talent to both work and live in our country.

Remote work could allow immigrants to choose Canada while still accessing top jobs in the United States and around the world. But is this an arrangement the country would want? And if so, how can Canada adapt its system to facilitate this?



SETTLEMENT.

Some immigrants are no longer choosing to live in the city or region where their employer is located. How can communities in need of new talent capitalize on this opportunity, and ensure their communities are places where new immigrants would want to settle? And if the efforts are successful, what will the repercussions be for issues like infrastructure, housing, and successful newcomer integration?



RETENTION.

Workers are developing new expectations for flexible work arrangements from their employers. Are Canadian businesses prepared to make the changes necessary to retain top talent? And what help do they need to get there?

Our approach

Our research found that these dynamics are so far mostly understudied in Canada, given the novel nature of the remote work phenomenon. This paper attempts to bridge the current research gap and identify ways forward for policymakers. We examine the impacts of remote work on immigration through three different perspectives—that of federal immigration policy; of provinces, territories and municipalities; and of employers. Our paper goes on to explain our methodology and explore each of these three perspectives. A fourth, crucial perspective—that of immigrants themselves—is woven throughout using stories, quotes, and insights from those with firsthand experience of the immigration system.

Where our research revealed concrete steps forward for policymakers, we identify those as “Recommendations for Action.” But we found ourselves limited by time or resources from fully exploring certain crucial aspects of this emerging policy area. In those cases, we point to these aspects as “Research Highlights” and propose “Recommendations for Future Study.”

We believe that remote work presents a fundamental challenge to Canada's current immigration system, while also providing many promising opportunities. We hope this paper inspires policymakers to action, embracing the new world of work and the new dynamics it brings.

Methodology

Recognizing Canada's rich geographical and ethnocultural diversity, our research aims to highlight a few microcosms across the country and extrapolate our findings to the broader federal immigration strategy.

Framing the policy question

“ *What challenges and opportunities are created for Canada's immigration system by the rise of remote work?* ”

Exploring the question

Our research has been informed by three main sources:



INTERVIEWS:

In-person and virtual interviews were conducted from summer 2021 into winter 2022. Stakeholders interviewed included community and industry leaders, policymakers, remote workers and immigrants themselves.



STUDY TOURS:

The Action Canada Fellowship included visits to three communities leading to our final research (Whitehorse, Fredericton, Winnipeg (virtual)). New Brunswick provided an opportunity to understand the local dimensions of remote work and jurisdictional needs related to immigration. As a result, many of the interviews that informed this paper were conducted with people working in New Brunswick and the Atlantic region.



LITERATURE REVIEWS:

Research included both academic and non-academic literature. We found the intersection of remote work and immigration to be under-researched, and as a result many articles we used focused either on remote work as a new macroeconomic trend, or on issues related to immigration in Canada. We have inferred their interconnected relationship in our paper.



The federal immigration policy perspective

Seizing opportunities for new models of immigration

The first perspective explored in our report is that of the most macro level—federal immigration policy. The proliferation of remote work adds a new dimension to the global competition for top talent. Canada's immigration policy must adapt, embracing new models of immigration to ensure we remain an attractive destination for workers with the skills and economic impacts that we need.

Canada has long been an attractive destination for many immigrants, enabled by features like a high standard of living and safe society. Nonetheless, at times Canada has struggled to attract and retain top talent, particularly in competition with large employers in the U.S. and Europe. In the tech sector, for example,¹⁸ industry leaders south of the border regularly

offer higher salaries and greater career opportunities than are available in Canada. Remote work may allow Canada to attract these workers to live in Canada even as they work for foreign firms. The result is that Canada has an opportunity to become a first-choice destination for more of the world's top talent.

Promising models for scaling this opportunity already exist in the private sector. Companies such as Remote¹⁹ in the Netherlands have capitalized on the growing need for support in finding, hiring, and retaining remote workers from around the globe. Other companies such as Syndesus²⁰ in the US, and MobSquad²¹ here in Canada are specifically targeting workers interested in working remotely, but not necessarily for clients based in Canada.



Capitalizing on International Remote Employment

MobSquad and Syndesus

MobSquad and **Syndesus** are companies that connect both Canadian and American companies with top global IT talent. They use Canada's flexible immigration pathways to capitalize on U.S. work visa challenges. When U.S. companies are struggling to retain top talent due to lottery-based immigration challenges, MobSquad and Syndesus hire the employee directly, help them relocate to Canada as temporary workers, and contract them back remotely to support the U.S. company. This allows U.S. companies to continue working with highly-skilled technology talent, in a nearby country with similar standards, culture, and time zones, while allowing Canada to benefit from the energy, tax dollars, and local spending these individuals bring.

This arrangement is currently made possible by using Canada's Global Talent Stream (GTS), a temporary immigration pathway that streamlines the work visa process to as little as four to six weeks. Employees can then apply for permanent residency and eventually citizenship. MobSquad and Syndesus can access and use the GTS because they are (MobSquad) or partner with (Syndesus) Canadian companies, meeting the eligibility requirements. It is important to note, however, that the GTS, which is designed to meet the talent needs of Canadian employers, was not designed with this model of employment in mind.

Both MobSquad and Syndesus resolve multiple barriers for companies hoping to work with remote workers in other countries: since they hire the employees themselves, the remote workers are protected by Canadian employment standards, pay Canadian income taxes, and will not suffer from disruptions to their immigration status if there are disturbances in their client status, as they are permanent employees of MobSquad or Syndesus.

On top of this, MobSquad also provides settlement services such as support in finding education for children and employment for spouses, and even applying for permanent residency and citizenship.

For more information on MobSquad, refer to this case study produced by Harvard Business Review: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/821010-PDF-ENG>

Syndesus and MobSquad are capitalizing on a phenomenon called “**nearshoring**”.²² Nearshoring is when companies transfer work or workers to nearby locations that share similar characteristics like time zones and language, such as the U.S. and Canada. Canada is well suited to take advantage of this phenomenon: it has a high degree of societal safety,²³ has accessible healthcare²⁴ and education,²⁵ pristine nature,²⁶ and a robust economy.²⁷ Equally importantly, Canada has a much more flexible and reliable immigration system for specialized economic immigrants than the U.S., with various pathways to securing permanent residency. The U.S. immigration system, by contrast, places many highly skilled immigrants in a precarious position of having a job but no guaranteed pathway to permanent residency. This creates an opportunity for Canada as a home for these workers while allowing them to keep working remotely with their former employers in the U.S.



Nearshoring is a means by which companies transfer work or workers to nearby locations that share similar characteristics like time zones and language (An ideal example being the U.S.A. and Canada)

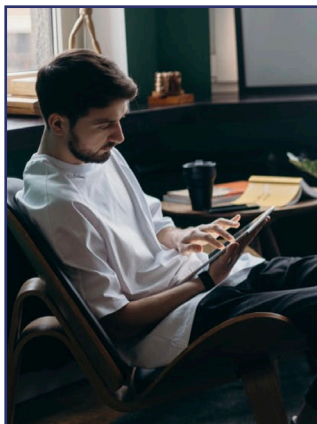
However, despite this opportunity to attract top talent from the U.S., Canada has not yet developed a specific immigration stream for top-talent remote workers. Canada’s immigration system does have a model that might serve as inspiration. As part of Canada’s Global Skills Strategy, the Global Talent Stream (GTS)²⁸ assists Canadian businesses to scale up and grow by allowing companies to hire unique and high-skilled global talent to fill in-demand

positions through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. The advantage of the GTS is that qualified workers may have their work visas expedited and received within four to six weeks, significantly faster than other pathways. This provides the flexibility and responsiveness needed to make Canada an attractive option for top tech workers, many of whom are able to work remotely.

Companies like MobSquad and Syndesus are capitalizing on the opportunity to attract remote tech workers to Canada by

using the GTS in creative ways. MobSquad is a Canadian company, but finds and directly hires top tech talent from the U.S. (immigrants to the U.S.) who have encountered U.S. visa issues, such as expiring U.S. work visas. MobSquad pre-screens the employee to ensure they will meet the requirements for a temporary work visa through the GTS and facilitates the application process. The employee

then relocates to Canada as an employee of MobSquad and is econtracted back to work with the former U.S. employer as a client. They operate under Canadian labour standards, pay Canadian taxes, and in most cases begin the process of working toward Canadian permanent residency. Over time, remoteemployees will likely help mentor others in the Canadian tech sector, and start new enterprises, providing direct value to Canada’s tech sector.



Syed is a Systems Analyst originally from India.

After encountering challenges with his U.S. work visa, he contacted MobSquad and relocated his family to Halifax. As a MobSquad employee, he was able to continue working with his former U.S. employer. He and his family are now on their path to Canadian permanent residency—and eventually citizenship—enabling them to follow their dream of living and working in North America

The MobSquad story sheds light on a new and emerging market for relocating top talent to Canada who can continue to work nearshore with foreign companies. Companies like MobSquad and Syndesus are currently adapting the GTS to facilitate this market. As remote work continues to grow, it is in Canada's interests to consider the development of additional immigration pathways for top-talent remote workers. These pathways could draw inspiration from the GTS and replicate its efficiency and flexibility. While the GTS is designed primarily for tech workers, new immigration streams could target multiple economic sectors that are well suited for virtual work such as finance, insurance, and management.²⁸

According to both Syndesus and MobSquad, Canada can win the war for talent by leveraging its desirability as a place to live and its accessible immigration system.



RECOMMENDATION: To fully benefit from the emerging phenomenon of remote work, IRCC should explore new expedited work visa pathways specifically for immigrants in sectors well suited to virtual work.

“FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE, **WELCOMING REMOTE WORKERS INTO CANADA WHO ARE PAID BY FOREIGN FIRMS IS NET POSITIVE FOR THE COUNTRY** SINCE FOREIGN MONEY IS SPENT IN CANADA. THE OPTIMAL SCENARIO IS WHEN THESE JOBS WOULD HAVE NOT BEEN FULFILLED BY CANADIANS IN THE FIRST PLACE.”

Marc Bélanger,
*Partner at DS Avocats,
Specialized in international tax
(Montreal, QC)*



TAX IMPLICATIONS

Global tax regimes, including those in Canada, are often ill-equipped to facilitate remote work. For example, experts at Deloitte shared that in theory a single Deloitte Canada employee working remotely from the U.S. for more than five days in a given year would create an obligation for every single Deloitte Canada partner to file a U.S. income tax return—nearly 1,000 partners in total.

In other words, tax systems can impose major barriers to those looking to embrace remote work. In some ways, these barriers may be desirable, while in others they may create misaligned incentives. But in any case, the system should be reviewed to make sure its approach to remote work is intentional and reasonable.

Marc Bélanger, an international tax expert based in Montreal, told us the tax system could be used to support remote workers relocating to Canada. For example, Canada could reduce the barriers for foreign firms by ensuring such businesses are not required to register and pay taxes in Canada, despite having employees located here, so long as their operations remain outside the country. For workers themselves, Canada could offer individual tax incentives during the first two to five years after arrival, long enough for these remote workers to begin considering Canada their permanent home. Other countries are experimenting with similar programs—both Italy and Greece, for example, have introduced new residency programs that allow visa holders to enjoy tax breaks of 50% for up to seven years.²⁹



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: To adapt to the rise of remote work, governments at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels should review the tax treatment of businesses and individuals embracing remote work, and ensure incentives around this growing practice are strategically aligned.

Another innovation Canada could consider for promoting remote work is a virtual work visa, or what are often referred to as a “Digital Nomad Visa.” A growing number of countries are offering these temporary virtual work visas, such as Croatia and Estonia. They allow individuals who want to travel while working virtually, also known as digital nomads, to stay in a country for up to a year, or more in some cases when flexible extensions are factored in.

Whether they are staying in their country of origin or moving internationally, with the help of reliable internet, digital nomads seek lives free of the tethers that fill up daily life. They are usually not looking to become citizens, and do not fall under the category of temporary workers. The U.S. already has a large digital nomad presence and Europe's is rising, with some areas, such as Madeira in Portugal, going so far as to offer free workspaces as a tool to attract more virtual workers.³⁰ A global company called the "Work From Anywhere Team" was launched in Europe, which provides advice for digital nomads navigating the tax rules under their long-term visas.³¹ Given the high number of digital nomads and the

projected rise to one billion virtual workers by 2035, more businesses are starting to provide the infrastructure to support the hiring of digital nomads.³²

Almost 40% of digital nomads earn over US\$75,000 annually.³³ While not employed domestically, they spend money on local food, accommodations, and travel. At the same time, digital nomads may present challenges to communities they visit, such as strains on housing and other effects of long-term tourism. Nonetheless, Canada would be remiss not to examine digital nomad visas as another option for capitalizing on the growing phenomenon of remote work.



RECOMMENDATION: In addition, or as an alternative to expedited work visa pathways, IRCC should consider a temporary work visa designed to attract individuals who can work remotely, specifically digital nomads.

Finally, another area where Canada can enhance its attractiveness to top-talent is through better marketing of its accessible immigration pathways. According to Marc Pavlopolous, the founder and CEO of Syndesus—one of the companies currently using the GTS to relocate top talent to Canada—Canada is not effectively marketing the flexibility of its immigration pathways. While he is providing a highly sought-

after service, he estimates that 70–80% of the Canadian companies he meets with have never heard of GTS. That rises to over 90% for U.S. companies. Alongside the development of new immigration pathways for remote-working top-talent, Canada would be well served to market actively to foreign businesses, especially in the U.S., who may be in an ideal position to nearshore their remote working employees.



RECOMMENDATION: To maximize the potential of these new pathways, IRCC should develop a robust targeted marketing strategy on the new immigration pathways for remote workers in relevant international jurisdictions, highlighting Canada as a remote work destination.

**“WE WILL SHOW
THE WORLD THAT
OUR COMMUNITY
IS ONE OF THE
MOST ATTRACTIVE
REMOTE WORK
HUBS OUT THERE.”**

*Susy Campos,
CEO 3+Corporation
(Moncton, NB)*



The provincial, territorial and municipal perspective

Preparing towns, cities and provinces for changing immigration flows

Remote work is enabling Canadians to make different choices about where to live in the country. Regions that are struggling with aging demographics or an eroding tax base have an opportunity to attract new residents who bring energy and new income into a community. These remote workers can be attracted by the relaxed living style, friendly atmosphere, and affordable cost of living in smaller centres. But provincial, territorial and municipal governments also need to be cautious, ensuring local infrastructure is prepared to support new residents.

Cities and towns across North America are jumping on this trend, launching initiatives

to market their communities as destinations for remote workers. New Brunswick, for one, was an early mover with their 2021 campaign entitled “Live for the Moment”.¹³ The campaign aims to attract Canadians to New Brunswick and become full-time remote workers. Anecdotal reports suggest the program has been a success, with U-Haul for example reporting increasing inflows of do-it-yourself movers into the province.³⁴ While the initial phase was targeted at existing Canadians, plans already exist to scale the program to target international communities. For more details on the “Live for the Moment” campaign, see the case study in Appendix 2.

“COME HERE AND BRING A JOB,
TAKE A JOB, OR MAKE A JOB—
THEY’RE ALL THE SAME. **WE**
JUST WANT YOU HERE!”

Larry Shaw, CEO Ignite Fredericton (Fredericton, NB)



Meanwhile in the U.S., a Northwest Arkansas program offered incentives of up to US\$10,000 and a mountain bike to attract remote workers during the pandemic. The program received over 26,000 applications from a wide range of professions, including 2,600 applications from high-skilled professions such as coders and engineers, award-winning artists, venture capitalists, and company founders.³⁵

And Tulsa, Oklahoma has recruited more than 600 remote workers since launching their recruitment program in 2018. Among the new residents, 90% have stayed and 23% have purchased a home. Recruits are given

US\$10,000, paid in monthly stipends during the first year or in a lump sum if they purchase a home.³⁵ For more examples of incentives for digital nomads from around the world, refer to Appendix 3.

These campaigns and others like them offer a promising new model for attracting new immigrants to Canada. They also address a crucial need to meet acute demographic and labour challenges in many Canadian communities. Federal leadership can help to convene stakeholders and promote best practices, to encourage broader adoption of these campaigns at all levels of government.



RECOMMENDATION: To put to advantage the potential for remote work to support economic development in targeted regions of the country, IRCC should coordinate with and provide further supports for regional initiatives that are successfully relocating remote workers to Canada, especially in communities with demographic and labour challenges.



COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous communities should not be left outside of the opportunities created by remote work for hiring and attracting new immigrants. Governments and the private sector must work with Indigenous peoples and communities in developing strategies that capitalize on the opportunities of remote working, including accessing talent.

In part, this will require that issues such as access to high-speed internet in remote areas are addressed. In 2019, 87.4% of Canadian households had access to broadband internet services that met or exceeded the CRTC's universal service objective. In comparison, only 34.8% of First Nations reserves had such access.³⁶

Additionally, with remote work there is the potential for newcomers to be isolated from the pernicious history and impact of colonization. IRCC should explore collaborative ways to ensure new immigrants learn about and are connected to the lands and territories they live in. For more on the connection between immigration and Indigenous communities, read *We All Live on Indigenous Land*.



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: To ensure Indigenous communities can capitalize on opportunities arising from remote work, governments should work with Indigenous communities to attract and employ remote-working immigrants. Options developed should center Indigeneity and be a result of co-development. Additionally, this will require addressing the issue of access to high-speed internet in remote areas.

If communities are going to attract new remote workers, they must also ensure they are ready to support them when they arrive. New workers may put a strain on local resources, from housing supply to internet bandwidth. Communities must ensure adequate investment in:

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE.



Reliable and affordable broadband must be a priority in host communities (including small, northern, and remote communities) as well as high-quality cyber-security standards;

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.



To be an attractive destination, communities should invest in things like an ecosystem of hubs and rentable offices for remote workers to meet and network, cultural centres to help connect newcomers with community resources, and accessible housing; and

SETTLEMENT SUPPORTS.



Communities that offer better supports for newcomers will improve the attraction and retention of workers. This includes clear and accessible information on remote work implications (taxation and employment standards, for example), financial supports for moving expenses, language classes, and social programs to help newcomers meet their new community.

“SOME CITIES ARE PERFECT CANDIDATES FOR TELEWORKING HUBS, SUCH AS IN PLACES OFFERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND LOCATED IN THE PROXIMITY OF NATURAL AMENITIES. THESE CITIES COULD ENHANCE THEIR OFFERING FOR SUCH WORKERS, INCLUDING **INVESTING IN BROADBAND AND SOCIAL HUBS FOR REMOTE WORKERS**, AND THEN BOOST THEIR MARKETING TO ATTRACT REMOTE WORKERS FROM ELSEWHERE.”

Mattia Corbetta,

Policy Analyst,
OECD Trento Centre
(Trento, Italy)



RECOMMENDATION: To attract immigrants as remote workers to specific regions of the country, governments at all levels should develop holistic strategies for preparing communities for remote work, including considerations for digital infrastructure, physical infrastructure, and settlement supports.



THE IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Most immigrants to Canada today move to urban areas.³⁷ But remote work offers an opportunity to attract new workers to smaller communities that have traditionally struggled with the attraction and retention of immigrants.

While this is a positive development, leaders in these communities will need to be ready to adapt to the changing demographics that can come with immigration. Welcoming newcomers creates significant opportunities, but also can create anxieties and backlash. For further thoughts on acceptance of immigrants in rural areas, please read *Settling the unsettled: Closing the urban-rural immigration gap in Canada*.



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: To ensure communities are prepared for the demographic changes that could come from an influx of remote workers, community leaders should explore programs and services aimed at welcoming newcomers and preparing local populations.

SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF WORKING FROM HOME

Research suggests that employees are more productive when they switch to a virtual setup for work.³⁸ But with increased productivity, what do workers lose?

For immigrants and newcomers in particular, work is often a place to meet people outside of typical social circles and get to know a community in a deeper way. Newcomers working in virtual environments lose the opportunity to form these important networks. Isolation may exacerbate mental health challenges, as well as limit career growth due to a loss of informal mentorship.

For communities to successfully attract and retain immigrant remote workers, they must be aware of these risks and work actively to mitigate them. Programs designed specifically to welcome newcomers, introduce them to the community, and foster inclusive pluralism may help to prevent the isolation that can come from working from home in an unfamiliar place.



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: To ensure immigrant remote workers do not become isolated, communities should explore programs aimed specifically at welcoming and acclimatizing these workers to their new homes.



The employer perspective

Keeping Canadian businesses competitive for top talent

As we have discussed throughout this paper, remote work offers an opportunity for Canada to be more competitive in attracting top global talent to relocate to our country. Even temporary relocation to Canada provides benefits in the form of tax dollars, local spending and contributions to communities. Ideally, though, these immigrants will choose to stay permanently and eventually work for Canadian firms. Unfortunately, our research found that a reluctance to adopt remote work practices is making it more difficult for some Canadian firms to attract and retain global top talent. While this is not strictly an issue of immigration policy (for example, within the mandate of IRCC), it is an important factor to ensuring Canada becomes a place where talented immigrants locate and stay for the long term.

“REMOTE WORK
ISN’T ONLY
PRODUCTIVE FOR
PHYSICAL DISTANCING;
EMPLOYEES
ARE ACTUALLY
ASKING FOR IT.”

Pierre Clérout,
VP Research and Chief
economist, Business
Development Bank of Canada



Martin Wiedenhoff is originally from Sweden, but now calls Canada home. When looking for a new job, he decided to take one that offered more flexibility. His new employer had never thought of hiring remote workers before the pandemic. Now Martin works for a German company while living in his Montreal home.

The disruption of COVID-19 has led to a significant rise in professionals changing jobs or careers.³⁹ While it is too early to confidently identify broader trends, early evidence suggests that many of these individuals are seeking opportunities that offer fully remote or hybrid work options—including some that may not be tied to where the employee lives. Canada has long struggled to compete for talent against employers in the U.S. and Europe that offer more lucrative salaries.⁴⁰ This struggle is only enhanced if workers in Canada can accept those opportunities without even needing to relocate.

Canadian firms have traditionally been slow to adopt new technology. As of 2014, investment in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) per job in Canada was only 56.3% that of the U.S..⁴¹ In an era of remote work, this will need to change if Canadian firms are to retain the most talented people. Companies will need to more readily embrace both the technology and labour policies to enable remote work options for their employees.

While companies such as Shopify have adopted long-term “work from anywhere”⁴² policies that embrace remote work, other companies have been more reluctant.⁴³ This reluctance may reduce their competitiveness in other jurisdictions, restricting Canada’s ability to capitalize on this work model to attract or retain top talent, including those from abroad. Establishing baseline standards for remote work options that employees can rely on and that support private companies to increase their remote work capacity could better position Canada to capitalize on this phenomenon and increase immigration of global top talent.



RECOMMENDATION: To enhance the Canadian economy’s ability to attract global top talent, the Government of Canada should convene relevant stakeholders to create guidelines and best practices for businesses considering adopting remote work arrangements.

“FLEXIBLE WORK WAS NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED DURING THE PANDEMIC, THERE WERE CLEAR ‘HAVES’ AND ‘HAVE-NOTS’. IF WE DO NOTHING TO CHANGE THAT NARRATIVE THERE IS A REAL RISK WE WILL INTRODUCE A NEW FRONTIER OF INEQUITY IN THE CANADIAN LABOUR MARKET. BUT, IF WE GET THIS RIGHT AND AS A RESULT THERE IS AN ABUNDANCE AND VARIETY OF HIGHLY FLEXIBLE ROLES AVAILABLE, IT COULD BE AN **INCREDIBLE BOOST FOR LABOUR MARKET ATTACHMENT AND INCLUSION COAST TO COAST TO COAST.**”

*Stephen Harrington,
Partner, Deloitte & National Lead
Workforce Strategy (Ottawa, ON)*



THE IMPORTANCE OF CYBER SECURITY

For all the benefits of virtual work, it can also expose both the private and public sector to significant online threats. Our research and interviews identified strong cyber security as an essential prerequisite to organizations embracing remote work.

Canada already has promising homegrown companies that can help to meet this challenge. The province of New Brunswick, for example, led by the University of New Brunswick and leading companies like Beauceron Security, has become a hub for global excellence in cybersecurity innovation. Continued investment and support for clusters like this one can contribute to Canada's ongoing leadership in this space.



RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY: Canadian organizations—both public and private—must develop adequate cybersecurity resources.


Opportunities may also exist to help Canadian companies access more talent by being more flexible in our immigration system to capitalize on remote work. In the case of the current pandemic restrictions and delays with immigration,⁴⁴ for example, flexible remote work policies could allow employers to continue the overseas hiring processes until arrival in Canada. This would contribute to Canadian businesses avoiding worker shortages and remaining competitive in the global market.

Even for those companies that have implemented remote work policies, there often remain additional challenges. These include different tax and labour laws⁴⁵ across jurisdictions, and the need for reliable immigration pathways.⁴⁶ For larger companies, these challenges may not be significant barriers to hiring remote workers, as they have the resources, capacity, and knowledge to open subsidiary companies in relevant

foreign jurisdictions. This is evident in recent hiring projections in Canada¹⁸ from the largest American tech companies. But for smaller companies that lack these resources, hiring remote workers can become complicated and expensive, ultimately inhibiting adoption. Additional supports and processes designed to help smaller companies to hire remote workers could help. Government already has crown corporations that are well-placed to provide these forms of supports, such as the BDC.



RECOMMENDATION: To give all sizes of private companies an opportunity to benefit from remote work, the Government of Canada should partner with organizations like the BDC to create additional support to SMEs for attracting and retaining immigrants working remotely.



“FOR MANY EMPLOYEES, THE PANDEMIC HAS DEFINITELY CHANGED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK LOCATION AND HOME. PEOPLE CAN MOVE TO OTHER CITIES THAT ARE MORE AFFORDABLE, OR ATTRACTIVE FOR OTHER REASONS SUCH AS ACCESS TO NATURE. MOST CITIES IN NEW BRUNSWICK COULD BE AN IDEAL DESTINATION, BUT **WE ARE WORKING TO ACCELERATE EFFORTS TO MAKE HOUSING IN PARTICULAR MORE AVAILABLE AND AFFORDABLE.**”

Krista Ross, CEO at Fredericton Chamber of Commerce (Fredericton, NB)

Looking Ahead

The rapid rise of remote work creates important changes for Canada's immigration system. And yet to date, the intersection of these two important topics has been mostly understudied. This is a serious gap for policymakers, who may miss emerging trends in the successful attraction, settlement, and retention of highly skilled immigrants.

This paper is an attempt to begin filling this policy gap. The recommendations, sourced from the best available research and the advice of leading experts, only scratch the surface of the

required policy adjustments. Further research is needed to better understand the evolving world of remote work and its impact on immigration. And policymakers will need to exercise flexibility and creativity as they implement new policies to respond.

Canada has a proud track record as one of the leading jurisdictions in the world for successful immigration policy. If we are proactive, we can maintain this position for the next generation of the labour market, keeping Canada as the best place in the world to live and work. But we must act now.

Recap: Recommendations

Recommendations explored in the report are summarized below.

Federal Immigration Policy

- 1** To fully benefit from the emerging phenomenon of remote work, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) should explore new expedited work visa pathways specifically for immigrants in sectors well suited to virtual work.
- 2** In addition, or as an alternative to expedited work visa pathways, IRCC should consider a temporary work visa designed to attract individuals who can work remotely, specifically digital nomads.
- 3** To maximize the potential of these new pathways, IRCC should develop a robust targeted marketing strategy on the new immigration pathways for remote workers in relevant international jurisdictions, highlighting Canada as a remote work destination.

Provinces, Territories and Municipalities

- 4** To put to advantage the potential for remote work to support economic development in targeted regions of the country, IRCC should coordinate with and provide further supports for regional initiatives that are successfully relocating remote workers to Canada, especially in communities with demographic and labour challenges.
- 5** To attract immigrants as remote workers to specific regions of the country, governments at all levels should develop holistic strategies for preparing communities for remote work, including considerations for digital infrastructure, physical infrastructure and settlement supports.

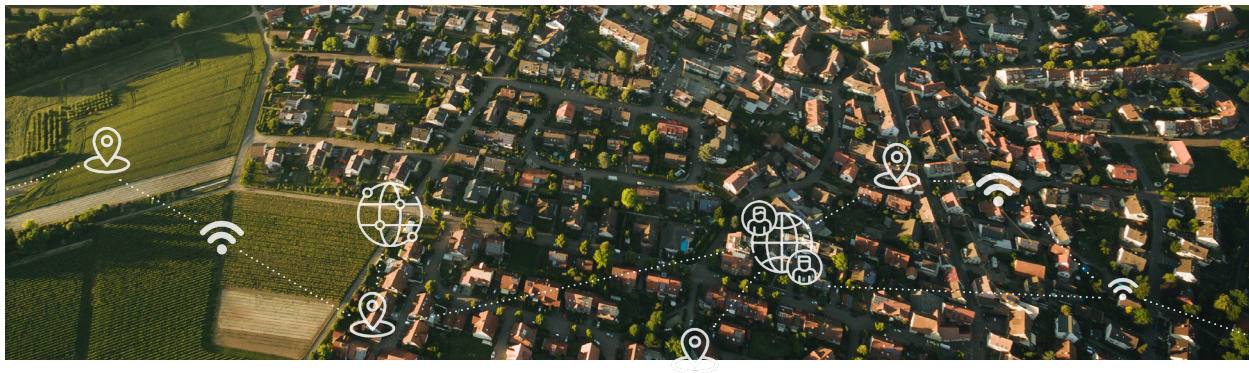
Employers

- 6** To enhance the Canadian economy's ability to attract global top talent, the Government of Canada should convene relevant stakeholders to create guidelines and best practices for businesses considering adopting remote work arrangements.
- 7** To give all sizes of private company an opportunity to benefit from remote work, the Government of Canada should collaborate with organizations like the Business Development Bank of Canada to create additional support to small and medium-sized enterprises for attracting and retaining immigrants working remotely.

Recommendations for further study

These recommendations represent an initial approach to this topic, but much remains to be learned through further study and experience with the impacts of remote work. This paper suggests a few areas for future study:

- Recognizing the essential role of lower-skilled immigrants to our economy, IRCC should continue to examine the value of reduced skill requirements and new pathways to permanent residency for workers in critical industries;
.....
- To adapt to the rise of remote work, governments at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels should review the tax treatment of businesses and individuals embracing remote work and ensure incentives around this growing practice are strategically aligned;
.....
- To ensure Indigenous communities can capitalize on opportunities arising from remote work, governments should work with Indigenous communities to attract and employ remote-working immigrants. Options developed should center Indigeneity and be a result of co-development. Additionally, this will require addressing the issue of access to high-speed internet in remote areas;
.....
- To ensure communities are prepared for the demographic changes that may come from an influx of remote workers, provinces and territories alongside settlement agencies should explore programs and services aimed at welcoming newcomers and preparing local populations;
.....
- To reduce social isolation that can occur as a result of remote work, local and provincial governments should explore programs aimed specifically at welcoming and acclimatizing these workers to their new homes and communities; and
.....
- Canadian organizations—both public and private—must develop adequate cybersecurity resources.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews

In researching this paper, our team benefitted from interviews and presentations with experts from across the country on a wide variety of topics. We are grateful to each of these interviewees, who were gracious in offering their time and insights to our research.

Oluwatosin Ajibola (Tosin), CEO, Welkom-U Inc. (Fredericton, N.B.)

Tatheer Ali, Senior Policy Analyst, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Ottawa, Ont.)

Marc Bélanger, Partner, DS Avocats (Montréal, Que.)

Suzanne Blackjack, Multicultural Centre of the Yukon, (Whitehorse, Yukon)

Ann Bowen, Immigration Officer, Government of Yukon, (Whitehorse, Yukon)

Susy Campos, CEO, 3+Corporation (Moncton, N.B.). Aside from her role as CEO at 3+ Corporation, Susy is overseeing the promotional campaign that emerged during the pandemic called “Live For the Moment NB”, aimed at presenting remote workers with the notion of choosing New Brunswick for an optimal choice on their location.

Pierre Cléroux, VP Research and Chief Economist, Business Development Bank of Canada (Montréal, Que.)

Mike Connell, COO and CFO, Sabian Cymbals Ltd. (Meductic, N.B.)

Mattia Corbetta, Policy Analyst, OECD Trento Centre (Trento, Italy). Mattia worked on a Remote Work study case about a small Italian town called Trento: “Working from home after the pandemic” - OECD October 2021.

Richard Cormier, Director of Communities, Inclusive Growth and Skills, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (Moncton, N.B.)

Marius Curteanu, Director of the Immigration Unit, Government of Yukon, (Whitehorse, Yukon)

Stephen Harrington, National Lead—Workforce Strategy, Deloitte Canada (Ottawa, Ont.) Stephen gave a virtual presentation to the Action Canada cohort on the future of work, including a focus on the Great Resignation phenomenon taking shape since the outbreak of the pandemic. A lot of what he shared directed to the remote work phenomenon as well.

David Heurtel, Counsel, Fasken; Former Minister of Immigration for Quebec (2017-19) (Montréal, Que.)

Isabelle Hudon, President and CEO, Business Development Bank of Canada (Montréal, Que.)

Sunil Johal, Policy Director, Mowat Centre (Toronto, Ont.)

Jérôme Youmani Lankoande, President and Founder, Yulcom Technologies (Montréal, Que.)

Patrick McEvenue, Senior Director, Strategic Policy Branch, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Ottawa, Ont.)

Francis McGuire, President, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (Halifax, N.S.)

Marc Pavlopoulos, Founder and CEO, Syndesus (San Francisco, U.S.)

Arif Khimani, President and Chief Operating Officer, MobSquad (Calgary, Alta.)

Krista Ross, CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce (Fredericton, N.B.)

Larry Shaw, CEO, Ignite Fredericton (Fredericton, N.B.)

Martin Wiedenhoff, Director, Simon-Kucher & Partners (Montréal, Que.)



Appendix 2: Live for the Moment Campaign

This work from anywhere (wfa) culture has opened up the possibility of these employees considering a move to new brunswick where they can continue in their careers while enjoying greater affordability, an improved quality of life and an improved work/life balance.



Both phases of the pilot program included 8-week online campaigns. The media buys utilized geo targeting, demographics, online communities and sector specific communities to profile the value proposition of New Brunswick and everything the Province has to offer to remote workers from other parts of Canada.

The campaign included digital and video assets, social media campaigns, a new landing page and an ambassador program.

A cornerstone of the pilot program was the role of the regional onboarding coordinators who filtered requests and managed requests from those considering a move to New Brunswick. Another key element of the campaign was the ability for each region of our province to showcase the best they have to offer.

The campaign generated close to 4,000 total leads and almost 600 qualified leads. Of these, over 300 were considered hot leads. In total, both phases of the campaign generated over 2.5 million impressions and over 20,000 unique clicks

To date, the campaign has resulted in 21 families with a total of 35 individuals moving to New Brunswick, with an additional 44 probable moves.

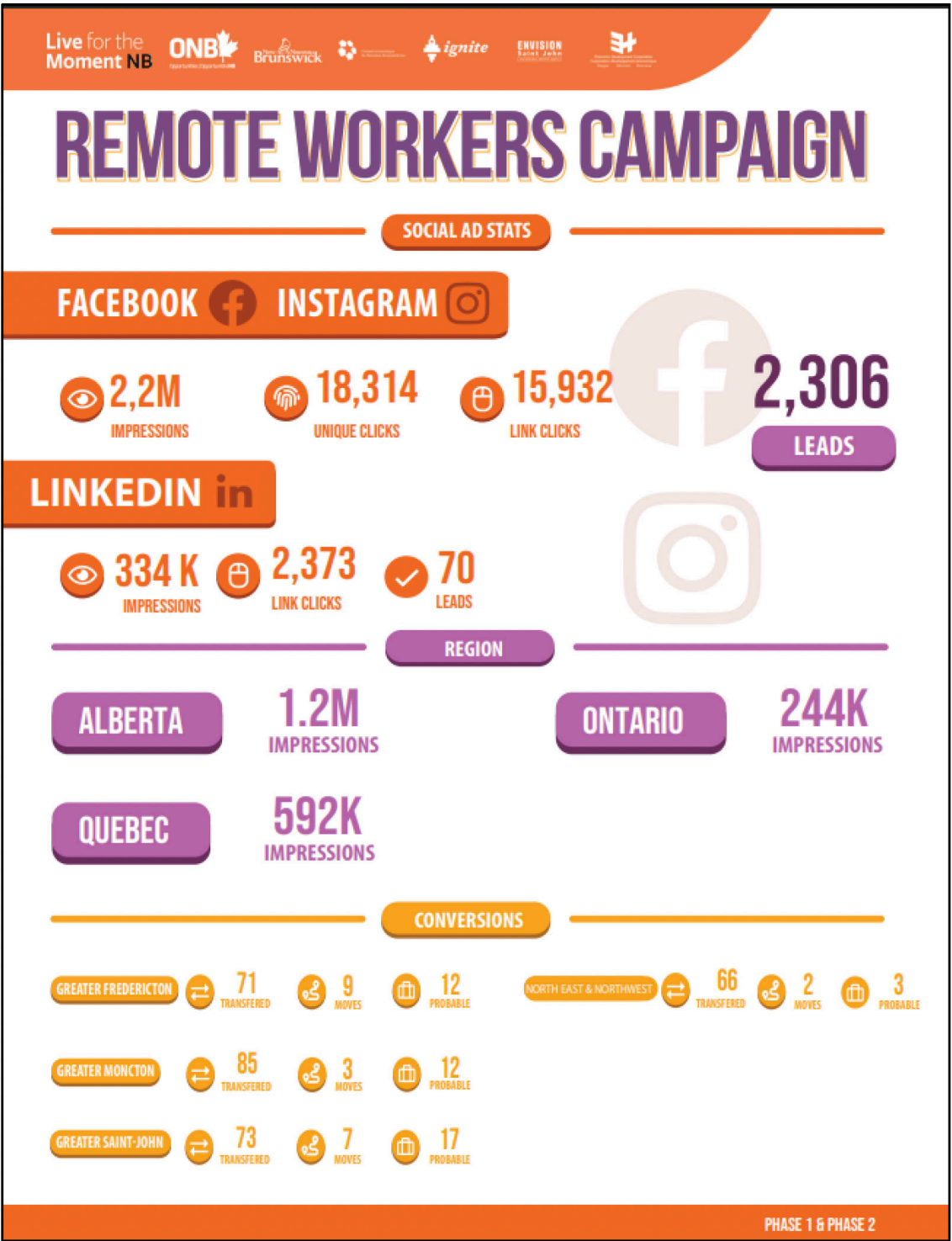
Using the average individual salary of the campaign target regions of \$55,917 and accounting for 65 moves/probable moves, the potential economic impact of the campaign for New Brunswick is \$3,634,605.

On average, each move accounts for a family with 2 working adults moving to N.B., creating a much greater potential economic impact of \$7,269,210.

This coordinated marketing approach to attract remote workers to all areas of New Brunswick was delivered in two phases during 2021. Phase 1 of the pilot program focused on remote workers in Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau and Montreal while phase 2 focused on smaller regions in Sherbrooke, Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

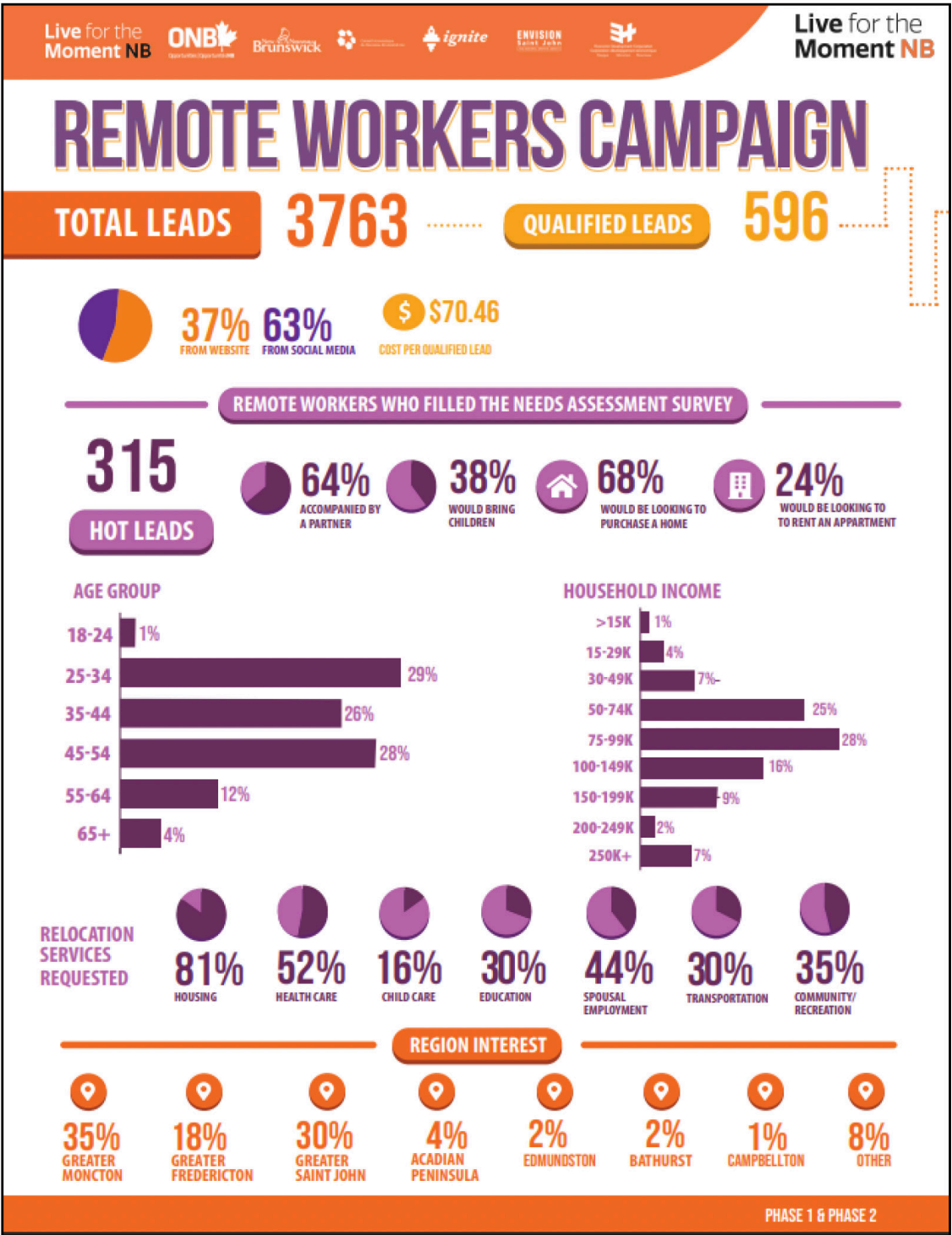
Appendix 2: Live for the Moment Campaign

Campaign Summary



Appendix 2: Live for the Moment Campaign

Campaign Summary



Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan of New Digital Nomad and Global Remote Workers Programs

Ref: Accenture Remote Working Research Report—Why Remote Work Should Be Work from Nova Scotia
—An overview of research and stakeholder consultations—June 2021

Jurisdictional Scan of New Digital Nomad and Global Remote Workers Programs (1 of 3)

Anguilla⁶⁴

Individuals are offered extended visas and are permitted to spend up to 12 months in the country. Individuals must pay a \$1,000 fee if staying under 2 months or \$2,000 if staying 3-12 months. The fee covers 2 COVID-19 tests as well as a digital work permit. Individuals planning to stay with family under 3 months must pay \$1,500, which increases to \$3,000 if they plan to stay 3-12 months.

Aruba⁶⁴

This program is specifically aimed at US travellers, who can work for up to 90 days in Aruba. Individuals are provided special rates at a range of hotels and resorts, along with other benefits. Individuals must book a minimum of seven days' stay in a participating hotel. Individuals must be employed by a company or self-employed, and are not permitted to render services or receive payment from any companies in Aruba. Individuals must also purchase Aruba Visitors Insurance, which is \$15/day.

Barbados⁶⁴

Individuals from US, Europe and Latin America can apply for a special visa for remote working under a 12-month Barbados Welcome Stamp. This proposal was direct response to current COVID-19 travel restrictions, in which lengthy quarantines restrict short-term travel.

Bermuda⁶⁴

The Work From Bermuda certificate is a 12 month visitor visa to attract remote workers and digital nomads. Individuals must be 18 years old, have a clear police background check, proof of employment, health insurance and the means of financial support. This program is also available for students.

Costa Rica⁶⁵

Costa Rica's freelancer visa is called the Rentista for digital nomads to stay for up to 2-years, with the ability to extend it. Individuals must show proof of income of \$2,500 per month for two years or make a \$60,000 deposit in a Costa Rican bank.

Czech Republic⁶⁶

The Czech Republic has offered a *zivno* visa, or long-term business visa, for years. The visa is targeted at freelance and remote workers looking to live in the country for longer periods of time. Individuals will need to provide proof of income, travel medical insurance, and accommodation.

Dubai, UAE⁶⁷

Dubai has a visa program for individuals to work remotely from Dubai for companies that are based overseas. Workers can stay along with their family for up to a year. The long-term visa will allow the individual to open a bank account, get a local phone number, get Internet access, and enroll their children in local schools. Individuals must earn a minimum of \$5,000 a month.

Estonia⁶⁸

Estonia launched a new Digital Nomad Visa which allows remote workers to live and work for up to a year. Individuals must prove they can do their job remotely, have earned at least US\$4,130 a month for the last six months, and that they are either employed or self-employed with a company that's registered outside of Estonia. If the individual is in Estonia "more than 183 days in a consecutive 12-month period" they will have to declare and pay tax in the country.

Jurisdictional Scan of New Digital Nomad and Global Remote Workers Programs (2 of 3)

Georgia⁶⁹

Georgia's new visa program is aimed at freelancers, full time employees and business owners looking to stay in the country for six months or longer. Individuals must have an income of US\$2,000 per month, travel insurance, a certificate of employment, and provide required personal information. The individual must have expandable income and cannot take up any local jobs.

Germany⁷⁰

Germany's *Freiberufler* Visa targets freelancers and remote workers. It lasts for three months, but can potentially be converted into a residency permit. Individuals must show proof of income, travel insurance, and letters of recommendation from previous employers.

Hawaii⁷⁰

Hawaii's Movers and Shakas program offers free round-trip tickets to Honolulu, as well as special discounts on accommodations and co-working spaces, to 50 successful applicants. In return, remote workers must commit to helping a local nonprofit.

Helsinki, Finland⁷¹

Helsinki Business Hub is offering 15 foreign individuals a free 90-day Finn Programme to lure remote tech workers. Participants will be offered airport pickup, orientation, cultural training, Finnish experiences, remote work facilities, introductions to local business networks and documentation for a 3 month stay.

Iceland⁷²

Individuals can apply for a 180-day remote work visa if they are working for a foreign company and plan to work remotely; do not intend to stay in Iceland long-term; were not issued a long-term visa in the last 12 months; and have a monthly income over ISK1,000,000 (US\$8,000) for individuals or ISK1,300,000 (US\$10,400) for those with a partner or a child under 18.

Mexico⁷³

Mexico is permitting individuals to live and work in Mexico for up to four years with the country's temporary resident visa (one year initially, with a possible three-year extension). In order to qualify for the Temporary Resident Visa, applicants will need to show an income of more than \$1,620 per month or a bank account balance of over \$27,000. Under this Visa, visitors would not be able to work for the government.

Portugal⁷³

Portugal's remote workers visa program offers temporary residence for independent workers who can demonstrate that their skills are needed in the country. Applicants have to register as a freelancer, outline any local Portuguese clients, and have a valid Portuguese bank account. BePortugal, a website for expats, has a cohesive outline of the requirements and how to apply.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario⁷⁴

Sault Ste. Marie has struck a task force to recruit, attract and retain workers in knowledge-based industries from the Greater Toronto Area.

Savannah, Georgia⁷⁵

The Savannah Technology Workforce Incentive will reimburse up to US\$2,000 in moving expenses for a remote worker or self-employed person moving to the city.

The Shoals, Alabama⁷⁵

The Remote Shoals program covers moving expenses for full-time remote workers with an employer based outside of Colbert and Lauderdale counties. Individuals must be 18 years old, able to work in the US and have a minimum annual income of \$52,000.

Appendix 3: Jurisdictional Scan of New Digital Nomad and Global Remote Workers Programs

Ref: Accenture Remote Working Research Report—Why Remote Work Should Be Work from Nova Scotia
—An overview of research and stakeholder consultations—June 2021

Jurisdictional Scan of New Digital Nomad and Global Remote Workers Programs (3 of 3)

Spain⁷⁶

Spain's Self-Employment Work Visa is a Non-Lucrative Residence Visa which allows freelancers and self-employed individuals to live and work in Spain for up to a year. Applicants will need to establish and maintain employment and pass a background check.

Tulsa, Oklahoma⁷⁷

The Tulsa Remote program was successful in both raising awareness of the city and attracting remote workers. Among other benefits, the program provides funding of up to US\$10,000 to new residents. Established in 2018, the size of the program has been increased from 100 grants to 250 grants annually. More than 10,000 people applied to the program in its first year of operation. Some of those who were not successful were still convinced to move to Tulsa.

Vermont⁷⁸

Vermont's Remote Worker Program provides up to \$5,000 per year for two years to reimburse new residents for relocation costs, hardware and software, and broadband access.

Bibliography

- 1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “2020 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration,” Oct. 30, 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2020.html> (accessed Mar. 01, 2022).
- 2 “The Ultimate List Of Remote Work Statistics for 2022,” Feb. 03, 2022. <https://findstack.com/remote-work-statistics/> (accessed Mar. 01, 2022).
- 3 OECD, “Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Canada 2019.” 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/publication/4abab00d-en>
- 4 J. Waters-Lynch, “50 years of bold predictions about remote work: it isn’t all about technology,” The Conversation. <http://theconversation.com/50-years-of-bold-predictions-about-remote-work-it-isnt-all-about-technology-135034> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 5 “Book Reviews : The Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff, Options for Tomorrow, Jack M. Nilles, F. Roy Carlson, Jr., Paul Gray, and Gerhard J. Hanneman. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976, 196 pages,” The Journal of Business Communication (1973), vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 84–85, Apr. 1977, doi: 10.1177/002194367701400312.
- 6 K. K. Myers and K. Sadaghiani, “Millennials in the Workplace: A Communication Perspective on Millennials’ Organizational Relationships and Performance,” J Bus Psychol, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 225–238, Jun. 2010, doi: 10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7.
- 7 S. C. Government of Canada, “The Daily—Working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, April 2020 to June 2021,” Aug. 04, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210804/dq210804b-eng.htm> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 8 “The future of remote work: An analysis of 2,000 tasks, 800 jobs, and 9 countries | McKinsey.” <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/whats-next-for-remote-work-an-analysis-of-2000-tasks-800-jobs-and-nine-countries> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 9 “Scoop Our Strategies: Shopify’s Remote Work Systems,” Shopify. <https://www.shopify.ca/partners/blog/remote-work> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 10 “Americans might never go back to the office, and Twitter is leading the charge,” Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/10/01/twitter-work-from-home/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 11 “How to Adapt to the Labour Shortage Situation: Hiring Difficulties Are Not Going Away,” Business Development Bank of Canada, BDC.ca, September 2021.
- 12 “Canada to target over 400,000 immigrants per year | Canada Immigration News,” Oct. 30, 2020. <https://www.cicnews.com/2020/10/canada-to-release-2021-2023-immigration-levels-plan-1016133.html> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 13 New Brunswick Population Report, April 2021: <https://www.nbjobs.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/LMI%20reports/2021-03-15-LMI-Population-Report-EN.pdf> (accessed Jan. 03, 2022).
- 14 S. C. Government of Canada, “The Daily—Job vacancies, second quarter 2021,” Sep. 21, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210921/dq210921a-eng.htm> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 15 “These Canadian industries are currently facing the biggest labour shortages,” CTVNews, Oct. 05, 2021. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/these-canadian-industries-are-currently-facing-the-biggest-labour-shortages-1.5612004> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).

- 16 “Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Mandate Letter,” Prime Minister of Canada, Dec. 15, 2021. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-mandate-letter> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).
- 17 “Countries Offering Digital Nomad Visas,” Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/countries-offering-digital-nomad-visas-5190861> (accessed Jan. 03, 2022).
- 18 T. C. Press, “An enormous hiring challenge’: Canadian tech companies face U.S. hiring spree - BNN Bloomberg,” BNN, May 21, 2021. <https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/an-enormous-hiring-challenge-canadian-tech-companies-face-u-s-hiring-spre-1.1606964> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 19 “About Remote.” <https://remote.com/about> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 20 “About Us,” Syndesus. <https://syndesus.com/about-us/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 21 “About - MobSquad.” <https://mobsquad.io/about/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 22 “Nearshoring, Outsourcing, Onshoring & Offshoring: What’s Difference?,” Amsterdam Standard. <https://amsterdamstandard.com/en/post/nearshoring> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 23 “Global Peace Index Map » The Most & Least Peaceful Countries,” Vision of Humanity. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 24 “Health resources - Health spending - OECD Data,” theOECD. <http://data.oecd.org/healthres/health-spending.htm> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 25 “Education attainment - Adult education level - OECD Data,” theOECD. <http://data.oecd.org/eduatt/adult-education-level.htm> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 26 G. of C. Parks Canada Agency, “Parks Canada - Home,” Jan. 16, 2020. <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/index> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 27 “The Top 25 Economies in the World,” Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 28 “Global Talent Stream,” Canadim. <https://www.canadim.com/work/lmia/global-talent-stream/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 29 L. Razavi, “The Great Migration: Remote Work, Digital Nomads and the Future of Citizenship,” Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, Dec. 2021. Accessed: Jan. 31, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://institute.global/policy/great-migration-remote-work-digital-nomads-and-future-citizenship>
- 30 “Why Europe is a great place for digital nomads,” The Economist, Oct. 02, 2021. Accessed: Dec. 10, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/10/02/why-europe-is-a-great-place-for-digital-nomads>
- 31 “Global Tax Marketplace | Remote Work Tax Services – Work From Anywhere,” The Work From Anywhere Team. <https://www.wfa.team/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).
- 32 “There will be 1 billion digital nomads by 2035,” @levelsio (Pieter Levels), Oct. 25, 2015. <https://levels.io/future-of-digital-nomads/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).
- 33 “2022 Worldwide Immigration Trends Report,” Fragomen - Immigration attorneys, solicitors, and consultants worldwide - 2022 Worldwide Immigration Trends Report. <https://www.fragomen.com/trending/worldwide-immigration-trends-reports/2022-worldwide-immigration-trends-report.html> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).

- 34 B. Perry, "New Brunswick Grows Population, One U-Haul At A Time," Huddle.Today, Jan. 18, 2021. <https://huddle.today/2021/01/17/new-brunswick-grows-one-u-haul-at-a-time/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).
- 35 "Remote Working Research Report: Why Remote Work Should be Work from Nova Scotia (2021) | Accenture." <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/consulting/future-work> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 36 LOPRESPUB, "Broadband Internet in Indigenous Communities," HillNotes, Dec. 08, 2021. <https://hillnotes.ca/2021/12/08/broadband-internet-in-indigenous-communities/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2022).
- 37 "Canadian Social Trends: The city/suburb contrast: How can we measure it?" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-008-x/2008001/article/10459-eng.htm> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 38 N. Bloom, J. Liang, J. Roberts, and Z. J. Ying, "Does Working from Home Work? Evidence from a Chinese Experiment*," The Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 130, no. 1, pp. 165–218, Feb. 2015, doi: 10.1093/qje/qju032.
- 39 "Look for a reverse 'brain drain' as more remote workers choose to stay home or return from the U.S. - The Globe and Mail." <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/careers/article-look-for-a-reverse-brain-drain-as-more-remote-workers-choose-to-stay/> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 40 B. Bharti, "New threats to an old problem: The pandemic has made 'brain drain' even worse," Financial Post, May 04, 2021. Accessed: Jan. 03, 2022. [Online]. Available: <https://financialpost.com/news/economy/virtual-brain-drain-pandemic-immigration>
- 41 "Canada's Digital Trajectory: Are we doing enough to support business tech adoption amidst COVID-19?," Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship. <https://brookfieldinstitute.ca/canadas-digital-trajectory-are-we-doing-enough-to-support-business-tech-adoption-amidst-covid-19> (accessed Jan. 03, 2022).
- 42 "Work Anywhere: Digital by default. Digital by design. | Shopify Careers." <https://www.shopify.ca/careers/work-anywhere> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 43 G. N. · C. News ·, "Widespread working from home will end at some point, won't it? Maybe not | CBC News," CBC, Nov. 15, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/work-from-home-covid19-future-workers-wfh-1.6244944> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 44 P. D. · C. News ·, "Immigration applications used to take months. They're now stretching into years | CBC News," CBC, Dec. 07, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/delays-across-immigration-streams-leave-many-in-limbo-in-canada-and-overseas-1.6275084> (accessed Jan. 03, 2022).
- 45 "The 'Work from anywhere' shift—Is your business ready?," KPMG, Jun. 03, 2021. <https://home.kpmg/ca/en/blogs/home/posts/2021/04/the-work-from-anywhere-shift.html> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).
- 46 "Remote work and implications for immigration and residency—The Lawyer's Daily." <https://www.thelawyersdaily.ca/articles/28519/remote-work-and-implications-for-immigration-and-residency> (accessed Dec. 10, 2021).



ABOUT PPF



The Public Policy Forum builds bridges among diverse participants in the policy-making process and gives them a platform to examine issues, offer new perspectives and feed fresh ideas into policy discussions. We believe good policy makes a better Canada.

© 2022, Public Policy Forum
1400 - 130 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1P 5G4
613.238.7858



Immigration in the Era of Remote Work
ISBN: 978-1-77452-108-3

ABOUT ACTION CANADA



During the 10-month Action Canada Fellowship, Fellows enhance their leadership skills, forge lifelong connections with people and communities across the country and promote greater civic engagement among all Canadians as they dive into critical public policy topics. In 2017, the Public Policy Forum and Action Canada joined forces to expand Canada's top accelerator of emerging leaders.



WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

