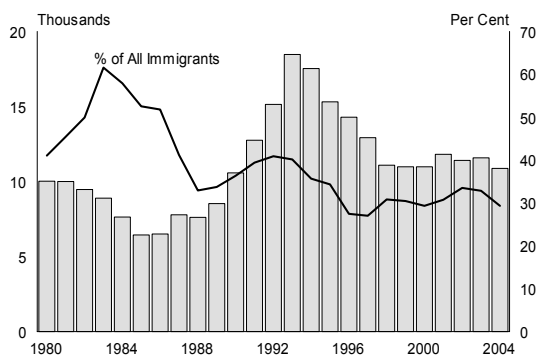


Family Reunification has always been a main theme in Canada's immigration policies. Immigrants in the family classes are major components in the overall immigrant landings in British Columbia and Canada. Family immigrants are those who are admitted due to the existence of direct family members in Canada. Family immigrants generally include parents, grandparents, sons and daughters, spouse and fiancé, and their accompanying dependent children.

In recent years, family immigrants represented about 30 per cent of all immigrants arriving in the province each year. The total number of family immigrants who came to the province has averaged around 10,000 persons per year over the last five years. While the number of family immigrants to B.C. seems to have peaked during the early nineties, the proportion of family immigrants to total landings has been declining since the mid eighties. This was mainly a result of more immigrants being admitted under the skilled workers and business classes. Similar observations can also be made for family immigrants who landed elsewhere in Canada. The total number of family immigrants to Canada has averaged around 60,000 persons annually over the past five years.

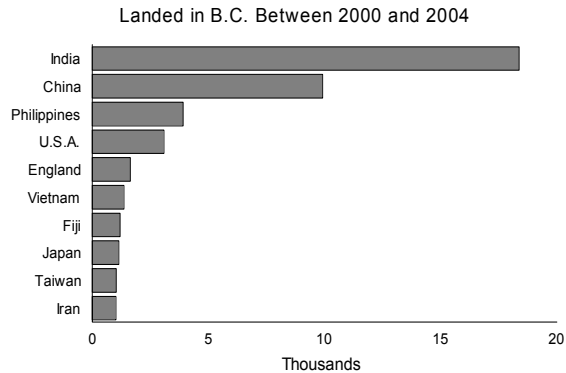
Family Immigrants to British Columbia



India has always been the top source of family immigrants to the province. Over the past five years (2000-2004), one-third of family immigrants who landed in B.C. were from India. China has consistently been the second top source of family immigrants, followed by the Philippines, United States and

England. Also, a high number of family immigrants came from Hong Kong during the few years before 1997, but the numbers have declined sharply in recent years.

Top 10 Source of Family Immigrants



Since a high percentage of family immigrants are spouses/fiancé or parents/grandparents, almost half of the family immigrants landed in the period 2000-2004 were between 20 to 34 years old, and about 28 per cent were 50 years or older. Also, females represented about 60 per cent of all recent family immigrants to the province.

Unlike independent and business immigrants, who are selected based on their skills and economic contribution to the Canada, family immigrants are admitted mainly for family reunification purposes. Hence, family immigrants tended to have lower education attainment when compared to other immigrants. A relatively higher proportion of family immigrants aged 20 or older arrived in the province with only secondary or lower education (44.2% family vs. 15.5% others). Also, a relatively lower proportion of family immigrants had achieved a bachelor or higher university degree prior to immigrating to B.C. (25.1% family vs. 60.4% others)

Similarly, English language ability of recent family immigrants was slightly below that of the overall immigrants as a relatively large number of them were from non-English speaking countries, such as India and China. The proportion of family immigrants who arrived in B.C. with no English language ability during the last two decades was about 57 per cent.