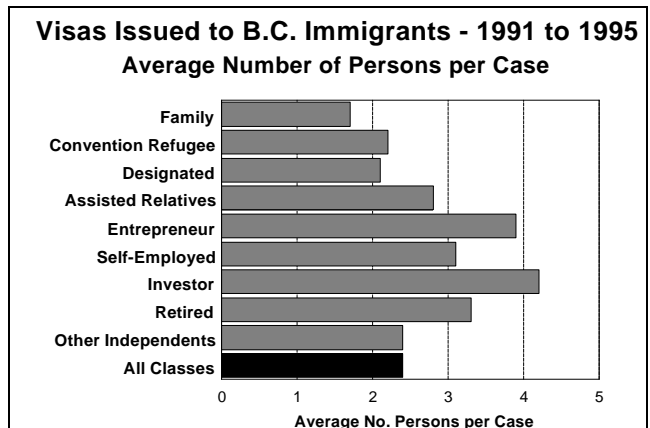


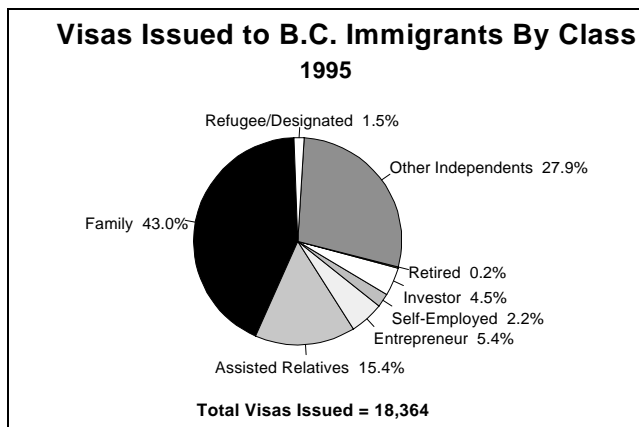
Special Feature: Immigration Visas Issued Overseas to B.C. Immigrants

As part of the immigration application process, immigration visas are issued by overseas Canadian immigration offices to successful applicants, who seek permanent residence status in Canada. Once a visa is issued, the applicant will have a time period of twelve months or less before he or she will come to Canada as a landed immigrant. The time lag between when the visa is issued and when the immigrant lands varies among immigrants. Although the variations are normally within twelve months, understanding the factors that affect this time lag might provide useful information for short-term immigration and population forecasts, especially as immigration has been the major contributing factor in the province's recent population growth (see the Special Feature in the previous release of the Immigration Highlights).

Whereas immigrant landings are normally analyzed by the number of arrivals (that is, the number of persons landed by different characteristics), immigration visas are commonly analyzed by the number of cases. A case may cover one person who applied individually, or a number of persons in a family including the principal applicant, spouse of the principal applicant, and any dependent family members. Case size, number of persons per case, varies between different classes of immigrants. For immigrants landed in B.C. between 1991 and 1995, average case size varied from 1.7 persons in Family Class to 4.2 persons in Investor Class, while the overall case size was 2.4 persons. In general, there were more persons per case in the business classes or Retired Class and fewer in the Family Class or refugee/designated classes.



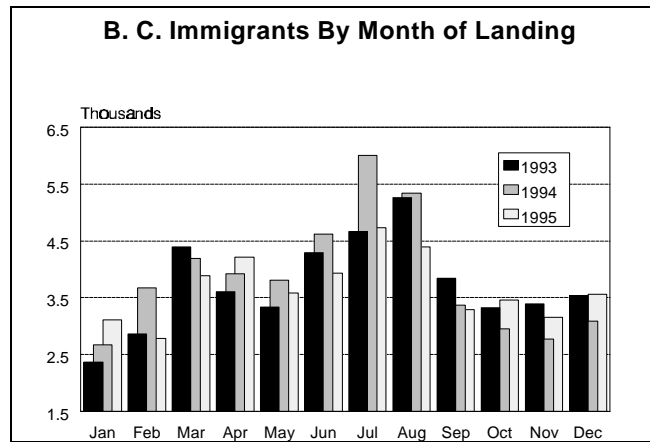
Principal applicants of business classes, such as the Entrepreneur or Investor Classes, are commonly middle aged with young dependent children. These children were qualified as accompanying family members under one case. Hence, there are proportionally more nuclear families landed under the business or Retired classes. On the other hand, a large number of immigrants who came under the Family Class belong to categories such as spouse/fiance(e), parents/grandparents or children of Canadian citizens. Average case size of these categories is smaller because many of these cases include only one or two persons. In 1995, a total of 18,364 visas were issued to immigrants destined to the province, and a majority of them were issued under the Family Class (43.0 per cent), followed by Other Independents Class (27.9 per cent), and Assisted Relatives Class (15.4 per cent).



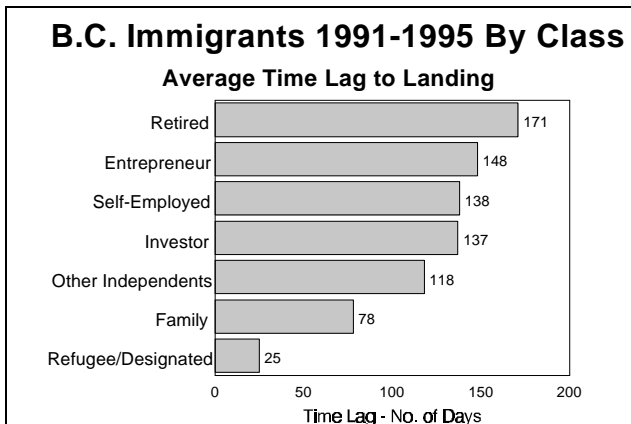
Some of the receivers of these visas issued during 1995 may not have landed in 1995, nor even in the first half of 1996. There are many factors affecting the choice of landing timing after a visa is issued. Statistics for immigrants landed in B.C. during the last three years indicated that a relatively

higher proportion of immigrants chose to arrive in the months of March, April, June, July, or August. One of the reasons why more immigrants arrive during the summer is the termination and beginning of school terms for immigrants of school age. Milder climate during the summer could also be another factor why more immigrants chose to enter the country between June and September.

The time lag between the date an immigrant obtains the visa and the date the immigrant arrives in Canada varies due to many reasons, which include personal circumstances and seasonal factors. A study of immigrants landed in B.C. between 1991 and 1995 indicated that the average time lag varies significantly for immigrants in different classes, and from different sources. On average over the five year period, immigrants in the Retired Class have the longest time lag of 171 days, and those in Refugee/Designated Classes have the shortest of 25 days. In general, immigrants in economic classes have longer time lags than those in the social or humanitarian classes.



As mentioned earlier, many immigrants in the Family Class belong to categories of parents/grandparents, fiancé(e), and children of Canadian residents, etc., and these family members tend to be more ready to emigrate from their home country after visas are issued, as compared to economic immigrants who might take longer to organize or phase out their job-commitments or business activities before leaving their home country.



Asian immigrants take the longest time before they land in Canada after visas are issued, whereas North/Central American immigrants take the shortest. Comparing the 1995 top ten source countries of immigrants to B.C., the lag time was the longest for immigrants from Hong Kong (175 days) and shortest for those from the United States (49 days). This might be partly related to the fact that a high proportion of Hong Kong immigrants were in economic classes while a majority of those from the United States were in family classes.

