



Growing Nova Scotia's Francophone Population

An Action plan for Success

2022–2025

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Labour, Skills and Immigration and
Acadian Affairs and Francophonie
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Message from the Ministers

As the Ministers responsible for Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) and Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, we recognize the value of having francophone communities in Nova Scotia that are both growing and welcoming.

The Acadian community in Nova Scotia is one of the oldest in Canada and has been an essential part of Nova Scotia's identity and heritage for more than 400 years.

Nova Scotia now has a population over one million strong, and it continues to grow each day. We are working to keep up the momentum and ensure more French-speaking newcomers take part in Nova Scotia's incredibly bright future.

Immigration is a priority for the province, and we have a goal to significantly grow our population through increased immigration. LSI works to attract newcomers to Nova Scotia from across Canada and around the world and connect them to the supports they need to settle in communities across regions of the province.

We recognize francophone newcomers' value to Nova Scotia. Francophone immigration plays a vital role in supporting Acadian and francophone communities and increasing the number of overall newcomers to Nova Scotia to address provincial labour needs.

The first Nova Scotia Francophone Immigration Action Plan outlined the strategic direction for furthering francophone immigration and highlighted new opportunities during 2019–21. In collaboration with the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie and francophone community partners, we will use the new 2022–25 Growing Nova Scotia's Francophone Population - An Action Plan for Success to build on the first plan and further grow the francophone population in Nova Scotia.

The 2022–25 action plan includes efforts on

- ▶ Partner engagement
- ▶ Promotion and attraction
- ▶ Population growth programs
- ▶ Retention and inclusion
- ▶ Research measuring and progress

With these inclusive and integrated efforts, the province aims to meet or exceed the targets that the federal government set for French-speaking immigrants to Canada.

We look forward to continuing our work with Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Université Sainte-Anne, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and thank them for their contributions and collaboration.

Through a collaborative effort across government, and with our partners we will continue to build on our growth and success and ensure Nova Scotia is a place for all to work, learn, live and thrive.



Honourable Jill Balser

Minister

Nova Scotia Labour, Skills and Immigration



Honourable Colton LeBlanc

Minister

Acadian Affairs and Francophonie

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Background

In 2018–19 the (then) Nova Scotia Office of Immigration and the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) partnered to launch the first Nova Scotia Francophone Immigration Action Plan (FIAP) in March 2019. The plan coordinated francophone immigration efforts to support francophone and Acadian communities by increasing the recruitment of French-speaking economic immigrants to the province through strategic efforts in five key areas:

- ▶ Partner Engagement
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Attraction
- ▶ Retention and Integration
- ▶ Research and Measuring Progress

Since the launch of FIAP, Nova Scotia has experienced success. In December 2021, Nova Scotia marked a major population milestone as the province surpassed one million people. This population growth has been supported with a significant increase in the number of French-speaking candidates approved through provincial immigration programs (see table 1 below). In evaluating our success, these two tables will serve as a benchmark.

Table 1: French-speaking Candidates Approved through Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Program

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL	7	7	221	200	156
% of all nominations	0.47%	0.50%	13.72%	10.53%	6.40%
All nominations	1,477	1,400	1,610	1,900	2,443

Candidates approved by the province then apply to the federal government for permanent residency for them and their immediate family, which is the data the federal government uses for its target (see table 2 below).

Table 2: Number of French-speakers Becoming Permanent Residents in Nova Scotia

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
French speakers	47	45	117	161	178
% of all landings	1.0%	0.8%	1.5%	4.6%	2.0%
All landings	4,513	5,964	7,581	3,508	9,018

This growth in French-speaking newcomers has been achieved through more coordinated engagement with key francophone partners and increased international francophone recruitment activity.

Nova Scotia

Population growth is a priority for Nova Scotia. The province needs to take bold steps to achieve the goal of reaching two million people by 2060. Immigration, together with interprovincial in-migration and the retention of newcomers, is essential to the future of our province and is key to our province's economy. To ensure we are successful in attracting and retaining newcomers to our province and to our communities, we need to work together to

- ▶ Help employers meet their labour needs
- ▶ Understand the opportunities and challenges in growing our population
- ▶ Support newcomers and their families to want to stay and settle here

The Immigration and Population Growth (IPG) branch of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) is responsible to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants and newcomers to the province by taking a lead role in engaging and working with partners to ensure Nova Scotia is well-positioned for growth.

Under an agreement with the federal department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), IPG administers the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and shares the administration of the Atlantic Immigration Program. These programs are implemented under the Economic Class of immigration.

OAAF is responsible to administer the French Language Services Act¹ to ensure that the government is aware of and understands the needs of the Acadian and francophone community and supports its vitality through multiple funding programs. OAAF works toward the development of mutual and beneficial partnerships at the provincial, national, and international levels.

Currently, IPG and OAAF support the following francophone population growth and retention efforts:

- ▶ LSI administers the NSNP and supports the administration of the Atlantic Immigration Program.
- ▶ LSI provides funding to three provincial organizations—Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDENE), and Université Sainte-Anne—to deliver immigration settlement services to French-speaking immigrants.
- ▶ LSI coordinates international and domestic marketing campaigns and recruitment activities and provides wrap-around supports to newcomers in communities throughout the province and in partnership with community partners.
- ▶ LSI and OAAF participate on provincial and Atlantic committees on francophone immigration to coordinate immigration efforts and share information.
- ▶ LSI and OAAF partner on international recruitment of French-speaking candidates in French-speaking countries.

¹ [French-language Services Act - Loi sur les services en français \(nslegislature.ca\)](https://www.nslegislature.ca/fr/legislation/lois/2016/la-2016-01-01)

- ▶ OAAF funds community projects to promote the Acadian and Francophone culture.
- ▶ OAAF works to promote French language and Acadian culture for government employees.

Canada

The 2018–23 federal Action Plan for *Official Languages* outlines key actions to increase francophone immigration. It includes \$40.8 million to support the attraction and retention of French-speaking immigrants outside of Québec with a target of 4.4 per cent of all immigrants to Canada being French speaking by 2023.

The federal government has tabled legislation to modernize the *Official Languages Act*, which includes francophone immigration as a solution to support Acadian and francophone communities outside of Québec.

Federal efforts have also resulted in changes to immigration programming that support increased francophone immigration including the following:

- ▶ Additional points in the federal Express Entry system for French language ability.
- ▶ A francophone integration pathway coordinated through Connexions Francophones.²
- ▶ Funding for the Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative to support communities across the country to welcome new immigrants to their regions.
- ▶ The implementation of the Mobilité Francophone program to help employers outside of Québec hire French-speaking temporary workers.
- ▶ The continued and enhanced marketing and recruitment activities targeting French-speaking immigrants by groups such as Destination Canada.

At the provincial and federal levels of government, the recruitment and retention of French-speaking immigrants³ is a priority. Francophone immigration efforts exist to meet this priority.

² (<https://www.connexionsfrancophones.ca/fra>)

³ Nova Scotia adopted IRCC's definition of a French-speaking immigrant as an immigrant for whom French is the first Canadian official language of usage. This includes permanent residents who declare knowledge of "French only" as their official language or those who declare knowledge of "French and English" as their official languages, as well as those who declare French as the language that they are the most at ease to use.

Development of a New Action Plan

Beginning in the spring of 2021, LSI and OAAF worked with the FANE, CDENE, l'Université Sainte-Anne, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) to develop the next iteration of the francophone immigration plan.

The process identified many strengths in the current plan and opportunities in development of a new plan. Nova Scotia's francophone partners acknowledge this focused effort to increase the number of French-speaking newcomers supports the vitality of Acadian and francophone communities in Nova Scotia.

The new action plan will continue this shared approach and be adaptive so that it may continue to reflect the achievement of key actions and goals.

Population Growth

In 2021, LSI's mandate expanded to include priorities for population growth through the recruitment and retention of immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants. LSI has clear goals with respect to attracting more interprovincial migrants, increasing the number of immigrants arriving in Nova Scotia, and leveraging population growth to support economic growth and recovery. Efforts to increase francophone immigration align and, under the population growth mandate, now include interprovincial in-migrants.

In recognition of this opportunity for Nova Scotia, the FIAP has evolved to become Growing Nova Scotia's Francophone Population - an Action Plan for Success, which includes the following five key areas:

1. Partner Engagement
2. Promotion and Attraction
3. Population Growth Programs
4. Retention and Inclusion
5. Research and Measuring Progress

Leadership on the provincial vision for francophone population growth is critical to align activities and build support across networks and communities. The new action plan will be led by IPG with support from OAAF. Both are committed to implementing this plan together in coordination with community partners.

Collaborative partner engagement leverages existing Acadian and francophone committees and initiatives and will be revisited and continuously monitored through implementation of this plan.

Growing Nova Scotia's Francophone Population, an Action Plan for Success

Key Action Areas

1. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Objective: To engage and communicate with francophone partners to support increased francophone economic immigration and interprovincial in-migration.

- ▶ LSI will engage with employers and immigration candidates through strategic attraction events (domestic and international).
- ▶ OAAF will liaise with the Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia to better understand and represent their needs.

Actions:

1.1 Engage with employers and candidates to increase understanding and use of provincial immigration programs.

1.2 LSI will engage with immigration partners including the federal government, other provincial departments, municipalities, and communities.

- ▶ Engage and collaborate with IRCC on events and include participation of employers and international student recruitment partners, when appropriate.
- ▶ Support immigration initiatives such as the federal Welcoming Francophone Communities' initiative, a pilot program in Clare.

1.3 Support efforts to clarify the licensure process for internationally educated and interprovincial in-migrants (as relevant).

- ▶ Support multi-partner initiatives, including working groups, on the recognition of foreign credentials, and work with other provincial departments on the recognition of foreign credentials including
 - Qualified francophone teachers (early childhood education/primary and secondary).
 - Nurses and continuing care assistants.
 - Other relevant occupations based on labour market indicators.
- ▶ Focus on interprovincial in-migration of French teachers to reduce credentialing issues.

1.4 Increase engagement with key francophone organizations through the implementation of this action plan.

- ▶ Hold twice yearly meetings with key francophone organizations at a senior level.
- ▶ Hold quarterly meetings at the working level to review progress and plan collaborative initiatives and events.

- ▶ Participate in broader francophone community and organization meetings, including annual general meetings, strategic planning sessions, and consultations.

1.5 LSI and OAAF continue to engage and collaborate with key francophone organizations and to ensure continued engagement with provincial, Atlantic, and national partners.

- ▶ Réseau en immigration francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RIFNE)
- ▶ Comité atlantique sur l'immigration francophone (CAIF)
- ▶ Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA)
- ▶ Federal-provincial-territorial committees and working groups

1.6 Continue to work with provincial education partners to

- ▶ Promote opportunities for French-speaking students to study in Nova Scotia and stay after graduation.
- ▶ Increase the understanding of immigration pathways for international students to stay in the province after graduation.
- ▶ Identify new opportunities to support the recruitment of international and domestic French-speaking students to the province.

2. PROMOTION AND ATTRACTION

Objective: Attract French-speaking immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants to Nova Scotia with marketing campaigns and promotional materials that inspire them to move to Nova Scotia and settle permanently.

- ▶ LSI will continue to develop communication tools, materials, and promotional events.
- ▶ OAAF will support LSI (e.g., participation in international events), cost sharing for translation to French (through the *Canada - Nova Scotia Agreement*) and applying an Acadian and francophone lens to product development.

Actions:

2.1 Deliver targeted marketing campaigns, both internationally and domestically, that promote Nova Scotia's lifestyle, work, and immigration opportunities.

2.2 Increase awareness of Nova Scotia through the development and distribution of marketing materials.

- ▶ Develop French-language marketing tools (print, web, video, imagery) to increase awareness of the province's lifestyle, work opportunities, and immigration programs and services.
- ▶ Review and update the marketing website to incorporate relevant content for francophone newcomers.⁴

⁴ A francophone newcomer includes francophone immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants.

- ▶ Develop success stories and testimonials on moving to and living in Nova Scotia, including stories related to businesses that have hired French-speaking workers and from francophones who have settled in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ Promote Nova Scotia through targeted advertising and social media campaigns.
- ▶ Promote Nova Scotia's cultural and education opportunities.

2.3 Work on a communications plan for promoting francophone migration.

- ▶ Communicate the importance of francophone immigration on key dates such as National Francophone Immigration Week (November) and Reflection Day on Francophone Immigration (March).
- ▶ Make use of existing vehicles to promote francophone migration (e.g., LSI and OAAF social media and Vivre en Acadie webpage and social media).
- ▶ Develop key messages on life in Nova Scotia and the benefits of hiring French-speaking workers.
- ▶ Develop key messages to generate awareness about Nova Scotia and opportunities for francophones to settle in the province.

2.4 Promote Nova Scotia at international and domestic recruitment efforts for francophone immigrants and newcomers.

- ▶ Participate in strategic recruitment events hosted by LSI or in partnership with IRCC (e.g., Destination Canada, Destination Acadie, webinar presentations, virtual job fairs).
- ▶ Explore new opportunities, in partnership with provincial, regional, and community partners and employers, to offer information on pathways to permanent residency to temporary foreign workers who wish to stay in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ Work with economic and community partners on focused efforts to attract francophone candidates from other parts of Canada to fill Nova Scotia's labour needs.

2.5 Support the retention of French-speaking temporary residents (e.g., international students, temporary foreign workers) by sharing information on permanent residency pathways and criteria.

- ▶ Deliver campus outreach presentations with IRCC at universities with francophone international student populations.
- ▶ Continue the IPG on-campus initiative to engage with international students individually and/or in small groups.
- ▶ Present to temporary foreign workers/work permit holders currently in Nova Scotia.

3. POPULATION GROWTH PROGRAMS

Objective: To have innovative and responsive programs/campaigns that attract and retain French-speaking immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants to Nova Scotia.

- ▶ IPG offers a range of options under the NSNP and the Atlantic Immigration Program that can be used by French-speaking international candidates. IPG has been innovative and used existing NSNP streams to target French-speaking candidates (e.g., francophone draws under the Labour Market Priorities stream of the NSNP) and continuously monitors and evaluates immigration programs and streams to assess use and success.
- ▶ IPG coordinates campaigns to attract interprovincial in-migrants and provide supports pre and post arrival through a network of community-based navigators.

Actions:

3.1 Work with partners and settlement service providers to maximize use of existing programs to support francophone immigration including

- ▶ the federal Mobilité Francophone program to facilitate recruiting French-speaking candidates to the province and converting them to a permanent residency program.
- ▶ provincial immigration pathways, including the NSNP and the Atlantic Immigration Program.

3.2 Explore opportunities to support the recruitment of French-speaking immigrants in the NSNP.

3.3 Explore ways to enhance the connection of NSNP Labour Market Priority French-speaking nominees with resources to facilitate labour market attraction, including improved awareness of pathways to licensure in regulated occupations.

4. RETENTION AND INCLUSION

Objective: To support the retention and inclusion of French-speaking international and interprovincial in-migrants in Nova Scotia through access to services in French.

- ▶ IPG provider funding to support three provincial organizations—FANE, CDENE, and Université Sainte-Anne—to deliver immigration settlement services to French-speaking immigrants.
- ▶ OAAF provides funding to Acadian and francophone organizations to support inclusive projects related to culture, education, language, and economy that contribute to strengthening community vitality.

Actions:

4.1 In partnership with settlement service provider organizations and other government departments, explore ways to strengthen services for French-speaking immigrants and interprovincial in-migrants.

- ▶ Meet with francophone settlement service provider organizations to better understand the strengths and opportunities related to settlement services for francophone immigrants as

part of a review of the IPG Settlement Funding Program, including exploring ways to expand services to interprovincial in-migrants.

- ▶ Work with provincial and federal government departments to identify programming needs and priorities for French-speaking students, including services for international students and graduates and programs for school-aged children.
- ▶ Identify barriers to access and awareness of settlement services for French-speaking international and interprovincial in-migrants that impact social integration and community connections.

4.2 Promote the use of settlement services in both official languages to nominated candidates through the NSNP and ensure employers using the Atlantic Immigration Program facilitate candidate access to settlement services in the Canadian official language of choice.

- ▶ Continue to provide information on access to francophone settlement services funded by the province of Nova Scotia.
- ▶ Continue to advertise settlement services available in French to candidates on the LSI website and social networks.

4.3 Explore and promote funding/resources supporting francophone immigration, including

- ▶ The federal Action Plan for Official Languages, which includes increasing availability and accessibility of official language training for French-speaking immigrants as well as a consolidated francophone integration pathway.
- ▶ Opportunities related to the modernization of the Official Languages Act.
- ▶ Opportunities for partnering with Atlantic provinces through the Atlantic Workforce Partnership and the Atlantic Attraction and Immigration Table (AAIT).
- ▶ Existing agreements, including the *Canada – Nova Scotia Agreement* on French-language Services and the Agreement for Cooperation and Exchange between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Nova Scotia with Respect to Francophonie.

5. RESEARCH AND MEASURING PROGRESS

Objective: To track and measure progress on francophone population growth and settlement outcomes, including labour market outcomes, settlement success, and retention data.

- ▶ IPG is responsible for measuring population growth and for the measurement of the action plan results.
- ▶ IPG monitors the results of the Settlement Funding Program and leads the 2022 review process.
- ▶ OAAF provides funding to Acadian and francophone organizations to support inclusive projects related to culture, education, language, and economy that contribute to strengthening the vitality of the community.

Actions:

5.1 Track progress of the action plan.

- ▶ Develop indicators to measure progress and establish a process for measurement.
 - Identify sources data for measurement in the NSNP and Atlantic Immigration Program (employer and candidate).
 - Incorporate data on motivations to move to Nova Scotia from Nova Scotia's Medical Service's Insurance (MSI) surveys completed by French-speaking interprovincial in-migrants.
- ▶ Share results through quarterly meetings with partner organizations (FANE, CDENE, Université Sainte-Anne, CSAP, ACOA).
- ▶ Report annually at a senior level on plan progress.

5.2 Work with partners within government and in the community to better understand the labour market needs of francophone communities in Nova Scotia and the need for French-speaking labour.

- ▶ Collaborate with CDENE and other partners on research about the labour market needs of francophone employers/francophone communities across the province.

5.3 Leverage existing research groups to identify best practices in francophone immigration and interprovincial in-migration and engage in research at a provincial, regional, and pan-Canadian level.

- ▶ Support the federal-provincial-territorial Francophone Immigration Working Group.
- ▶ Incorporate a Francophone-lens into all LSI research projects and the 2022 LSI Settlement Funding Program review.
- ▶ Share information with academic institutions and participate in related projects to increase knowledge among researchers in Nova Scotia.

Glossary of Acronyms/Initialisms

AAIT – Atlantic Attraction and Immigration Table

ACOA – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

CAIF – Comité atlantique sur l’immigration francophone

CDENE – Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse

CSAP – Conseil scolaire acadien provincial

FANE – Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse

FCFA – Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne

FIAP – Francophone Immigration Action Plan

IPG – Immigration and Population Growth branch

IRCC – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

LSI – Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration

NSNP – Nova Scotia Nominee Program

OAAF – Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie

RIFNE – Réseau en immigration francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse

