

# Regional Immigration Strategies: A Policy-Research Perspective



Robert Vineberg  
Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Brandon, April 2005



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

Canada

# CIC's regional immigration strategy

- Commitment to work in partnership to share the benefits of immigration more evenly across the country by testing new approaches:
  - in the short-term, to examine possibilities for adapting existing programs
  - in the longer-term, to explore creating new programs or approaches based on community interest and initiative



# What is Known

- Immigration is the primary driver of population and labour force growth
- About 75% of all immigrants go to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver
- The Prairies' share of immigration dropped steadily from:
  - 21% in 1982 to
  - 10% in 1992 and
  - 9% in 2002



# What are the Challenges?

- The draw to bigger cities
- Competitive services & infrastructure
- Development of community capacity
- Need for partnership
- Need for information, promotion
- Need to dispel “myths” about communities smaller than 1 million



# What are the Opportunities?

- Commitment from Minister and Federal Government
  - building capacity within CIC to help facilitate pilot projects
- Interest from many provinces
  - Manitoba, NB, Alberta, Saskatchewan, NS
- Emerging regional or local skills shortages



# The Federal Government's Role

- **Facilitator**
  - Facilitating provincial and community-led initiatives through processing and removal of policy and procedural impediments
- **Promoter**
  - Going to Canada web portal
  - Missions abroad
  - Publications (e.g. the Tool Box for Smaller Communities)
- **Partner**
  - Working with provinces and territories, other federal departments (e.g. IC, HRSD), NGOs, to remove barriers



# Guiding Principles for Action

- Respect for mobility rights of all residents
  - Increase choices for settlement in Canada
  - Increase information for intending immigrants
- Flexible approaches and arrangements to meet diverse regional needs
  - Provincial Nominees
  - Francophone initiatives
  - Student and Temporary Worker initiatives
  - Municipal involvement (e.g. Winnipeg Agreement)



# Have we turned the tide?

- In 2003, immigration to Canada declined by 8,000 from 229,000 in 2002 to 221,000 in 2003.
- But in 2003 the Prairies received 24,100 immigrants, an increase of 3,000 over 2002.
- The Prairies share rose to 10.9% - the first relative increase since 1988.



# Perhaps

- Immigration to the Prairies increased again in 2004 to 26,000 or 11% of Canada's total of 235,824
- This represented an increase of 7.58% over 2003
- Also more are going to more destinations



# The Data\*

<u>Province</u>	2003	2004	Change
Alberta	15,834	16,468	+ 4.0%
Saskatchewan	1,668	1,941	+16.4%
Manitoba	6,500	7,426	+14.3%
<u>City</u>			
Calgary	9,153	9,307	+ 1.6%
Edmonton	4,566	4,810	+ 5.3%
Winnipeg	5,126	5,890	+14.9%



# The Manitoba Data\*

<u>City</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>
Altona	4	36	+ 800%
Brandon	69	130	+ 88%
Morden	9	73	+ 711%
Steinbach	150	310	+ 106%
Winkler	259	465	+ 80%
Winnipeg	3,715	5,890	+ 59%



# The Data\* (con't)

## Francophone & Bilingual Immigration

<u>Province</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>Change</u>
Alberta	491	846	+ 72%
Saskatchewan	54	159	+194%
<u>Manitoba</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>231</u>	<u>+ 44%</u>
Total	705	1236	+ 75%

*\* Provisional Data for 2004*



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

Canada

# What does all this mean?

- We need to look at “what’s hot” for policy makers.
- Regionalization of immigration is “hot!”
- Policy makers need to know what works:
  - Compare Provincial nominees programs
  - Compare student pilots
  - Assess effectiveness of municipal initiatives
  - Examine Francophone pilot projects
  - etc.



# Conclusion

- This is new territory but early results are encouraging, especially in Manitoba.
- We need to evaluate programs and pilot projects, act on recommendations and share what works.
- Practitioners and researchers have a real opportunity to help to define future regionalization policy.

