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With economy on the rise, Alberta leads country in interprovincial migration

'The Alberta Advantage is not only back, it's booming,' boasted Premier Danielle Smith

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Crowds flock to Stephen Avenue during Stampede week in Calgary on July 15, 2022. Bailey Seymour/Special to Postmedia

Alberta saw the highest net interprovincial migration of any Canadian province at the end of 2022, as the country reports record population growth.

Statistics Canada says the country's population grew by over one million people in 2022 — the most recorded in a 12-month period in Canadian history. International migration accounted for 95.9 per cent of that growth.

According to Statistics Canada, Alberta's population grew by just over 160,000 people last year.

In the fourth quarter of 2022, Alberta logged a net growth of nearly 29,680 international migrants and 11,534 interprovincial migrants. The overall population growth of 45,864 between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 represents a quarterly growth of one per cent, the highest among the provinces and territories, said Anupam Das, an economics professor at Mount Royal University.

“Seventy-two per cent is international migration, whereas 28 per cent is interprovincial migration to Alberta,” Das said Wednesday. “The majority of this population growth is driven by international migrants.”

Alberta seeing greatest net interprovincial migration growth

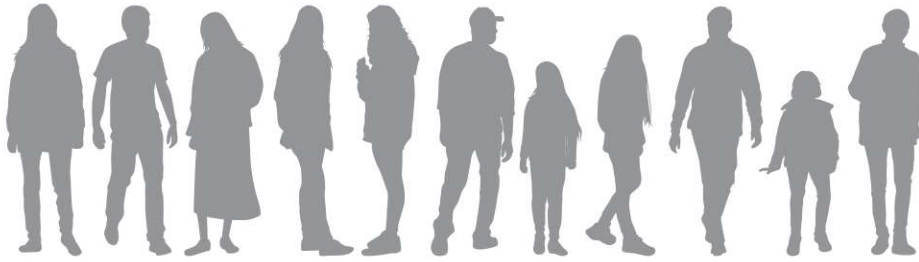
The number of net interprovincial migrants to the province also led the country.

Alberta saw a net growth of more than 11,000 interprovincial migrants in the fourth quarter of 2022 — with 20,514 people moving to Alberta and 8,980 leaving. The closest province or territory with a net increase was Nova Scotia with 1,025.

Das said the price of oil and Alberta's cost of living are factors in many Canadians' decision to move to Alberta. He said historically, people move to the province when the oil industry does well, and Alberta has seen an upward trend since the third quarter of 2021.

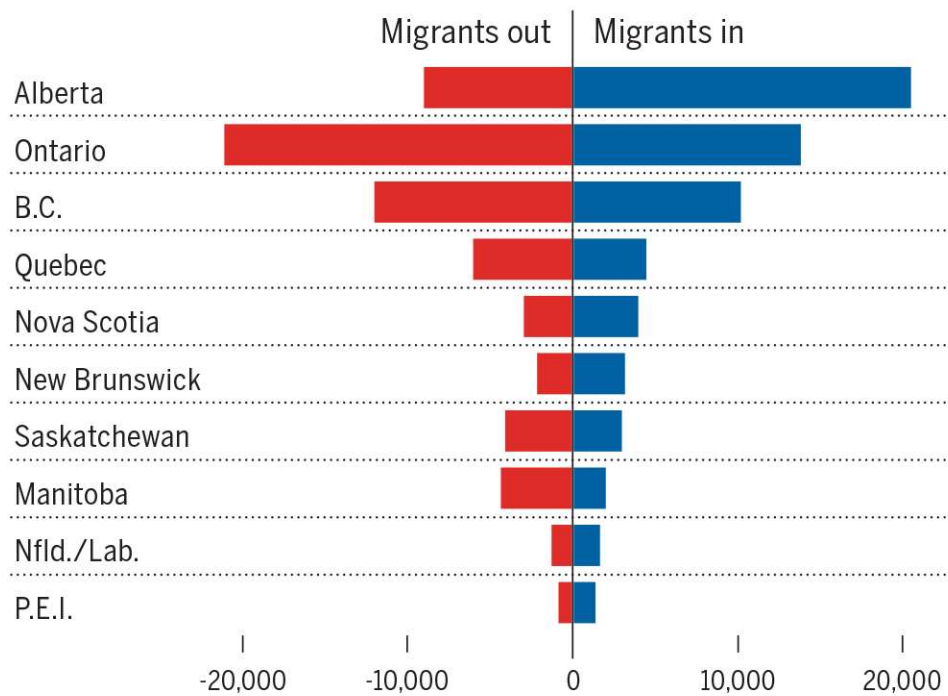
Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Alberta has welcomed more than 26,000 Ukrainian newcomers, with thousands more expected to arrive in the coming months.

Several thousand Afghan refugees have also settled in Alberta since the summer of 2021, Das said.



ALBERTA BOUND

From Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022, Alberta led the country in inter-province migration, with 11,534 more people moving in than out. Ontario, B.C. and Quebec all recorded fewer people moving in than out.



SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA

DARREN FRANCEY / POSTMEDIA

Alberta recruiting more workers to the province

The updated data come a week after the Alberta government announced the second phase of its Alberta is Calling campaign.

Jobs, Economy and Northern Development Minister Brian Jean announced last week that the \$5-million campaign will target workers from northern and southwestern Ontario and the

Maritimes. The first iteration of the campaign, which was launched last summer, focused on workers in Toronto and Vancouver.

On Twitter, Premier Danielle Smith boasted about the fourth-quarter data.

“Alberta did it again,” she said. “More Canadians are choosing our province as their new home. The Alberta Advantage is not only back, it’s booming.”

Alberta’s population sits at 4.6 million entering 2023.

Das said the population growth could benefit the province’s economy.

“It can be seen as a good thing for Alberta’s economy that we are receiving more people to our province than are leaving,” said Das. “We know the labour market is tight and there is a labour shortage. Hopefully, this inward movement of people will help solve some of those shortages.”

Helping newcomers imperative, says expert

Dr. Pallavi Banerjee, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Calgary, said Alberta, and especially Calgary, has a strong immigrant and refugee-serving network.

“These organizations have leadership and staff who are totally committed and dedicated to making Alberta welcoming for newcomers,” said Banerjee in a statement to Postmedia. “I think these organizations need a lot of support in the form of increased funding and resources both from the province and the federal government.”

To accommodate the influx of newcomers, Alberta also needs to focus on affordable housing, job training, youth programming and investments aimed at making the province a safer place for racialized and queer migrants, she explained.