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## Alberta most popular among Canada's interprovincial migrants: Statistics Canada

*Most of its major cities recorded net gains*

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Alberta has overtaken British Columbia as the most popular destination for people looking to migrate from one province to another. PHOTO BY BRENT CALVER/POSTMEDIA FILES

Alberta has overtaken British Columbia as the most popular destination for people looking to migrate from one province to another, with most of its major cities recording net gains, according to a new report by Statistics Canada.

From July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023, Calgary and Edmonton recorded overall net gains of 26,662 and 16,082, respectively, when it comes to exchanges with other provinces.

By contrast, Ontario reported a net loss in each of its large cities for the second consecutive year. Vancouver recorded a net loss of 4,795 people, its highest loss to interprovincial migration in more than 20 years.

“People tend to move to places where there are more jobs and housing costs are lower,” Stacey Hallman, an analyst at Statistic Canada’s Centre for Demography, said. “This can change at any point. What we are seeing right now is a lot of people are moving to Alberta.”

The agency’s annual report on sub-provincial areas provides crucial information on population growth in large cities as well as suburban and rural areas, which can then be used to figure out their resulting needs, such as housing and health care.

“Areas with growing populations need more infrastructure, services, and houses. When the population isn’t growing, you can have challenges with intergenerational transfers, pensions, labour shortages,” Hallman said. “So, there’s a very strong relationship between demography and the economy.”

The report also shows the overall population growth in each area, including the number of births and international migration, as well as interprovincial migration. All of Canada’s large cities reported an increase in population when those factors were taken into consideration. This was mainly due to the rising number of temporary residents, such as students, temporary workers and asylum seekers.

Overall, Canada’s census metropolitan areas (CMAs) grew at a rate of 3.5 per cent, which outpaced the country’s growth rate of 2.9 per cent, the report said, suggesting Canada continues to become more urbanized. Almost three in four Canadians, or about 29.8 million people, lived in CMAs as of July 1, 2023.

Of the CMAs, the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo triangle in Ontario and Moncton, N.B., have reported the fastest annual population growth since 2001, the earliest period for which data is available. Both areas grew by around six per cent due to international migration.

The report also said people are increasingly moving away from city centres to peripheral areas in the same province.

For example, the CMAs of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver reported a net loss of 93,024, 20,624 and 18,399 people, respectively, to other regions of the same province.

The population in rural areas grew by 1.1 per cent, which is below the overall growth rate of Canada.