

Do refugees stay in the province where they land?

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Summary

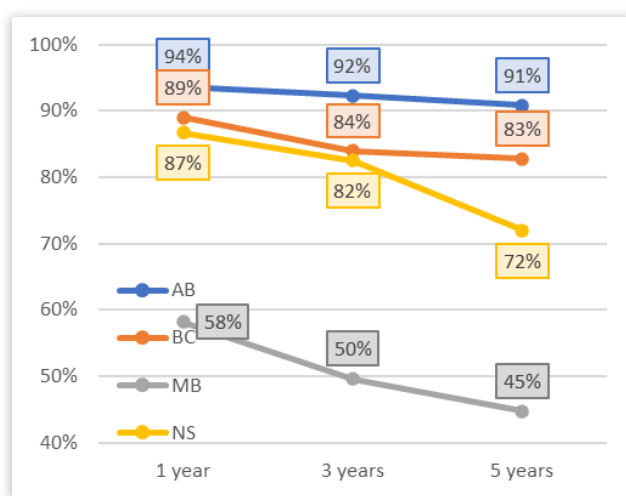
To learn about the well-being of refugees in Canada, examining whether they remain in the province where they first landed or move on to new locales can provide important information about how successfully they are settling into their new environments. This metric, called retention, also helps provinces understand how well programs to assist with refugee settlement and integration are working, and whether new programs and efforts are achieving their intended results.

Using data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB), which combines information from immigrants' landing records with their tax files, it is possible to study the retention of refugees over time. In this report, we use the IMDB 2016 to look at the provincial retention of refugees for three cohorts based on their year of landing in Canada: 2007-2009, 2010-2012, and 2013-2015. This report looks at retention in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia. Figures are generated from IMDB data that has been made publicly available by Statistics Canada. This report provides an example of what can be learned through the creation of customized tables using the tools and interactive applications provided on Statistics Canada's website, found at the following link: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4310001801>

Retention rates vary by province

Retention rates vary a great deal by province, and they are typically highest in provinces with major urban centres. Provinces with smaller and more rural populations often struggle to retain immigrants of all categories, including refugees. Both economic and social factors are important to retention: job opportunities and being near to family, friends, or community provide strong motivations for immigrants to stay in or leave an area. Figure 1 offers a snapshot of the differences in retention observed between Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia for the 2010-2012 landing cohorts. These differences will be explored in greater detail.

Figure 1: Refugee retention in **Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia**, 2010-2012 cohorts



Retention rates vary over time

Changes in both the composition of refugee cohorts (e.g. where they are arriving from, their ages, education levels, language proficiency, etc.) and in province-level factors such as policy changes or the quality and availability of settlement assistance can cause retention rates to vary over time. This report includes the 5-year and 3-year retention rates for refugees who landed in 2007-2009 and 2010-2012, as well as the 1-year rates for those who landed in 2013-2015.

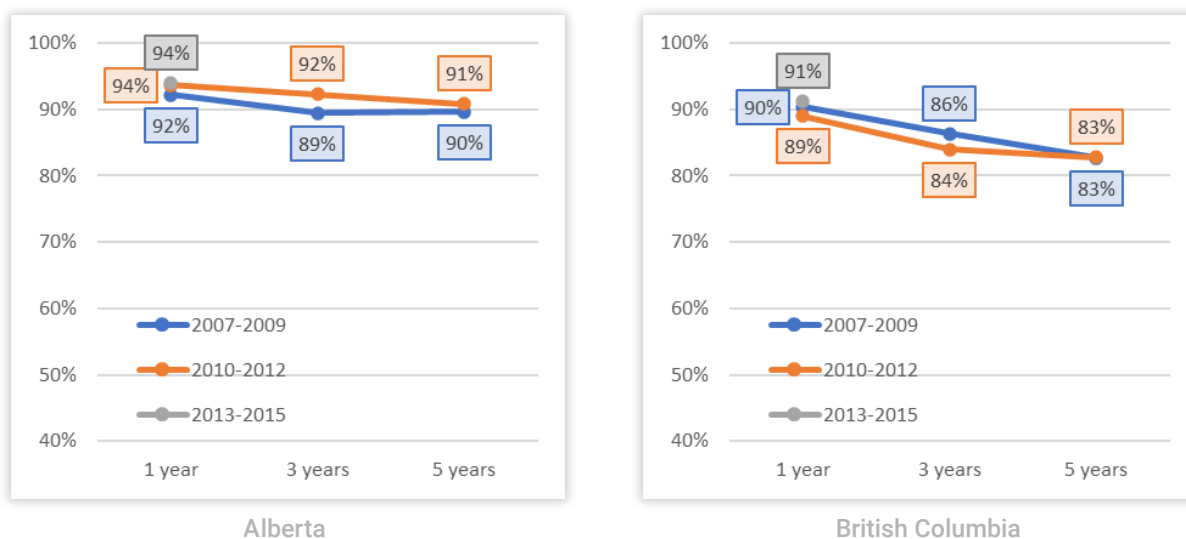
Retention rates vary for refugees compared to other immigrants

When thinking about retention, it is also valuable to consider how refugees compare to other immigrants to Canada. Because refugees may have lower levels of education or fewer language skills than other immigrants, they may have unmet needs or face additional hurdles that affect their decisions to stay or leave in the province where they first land. This report compares refugees to both family and economic class immigrants.

How has the provincial retention rate of refugees changed over time?

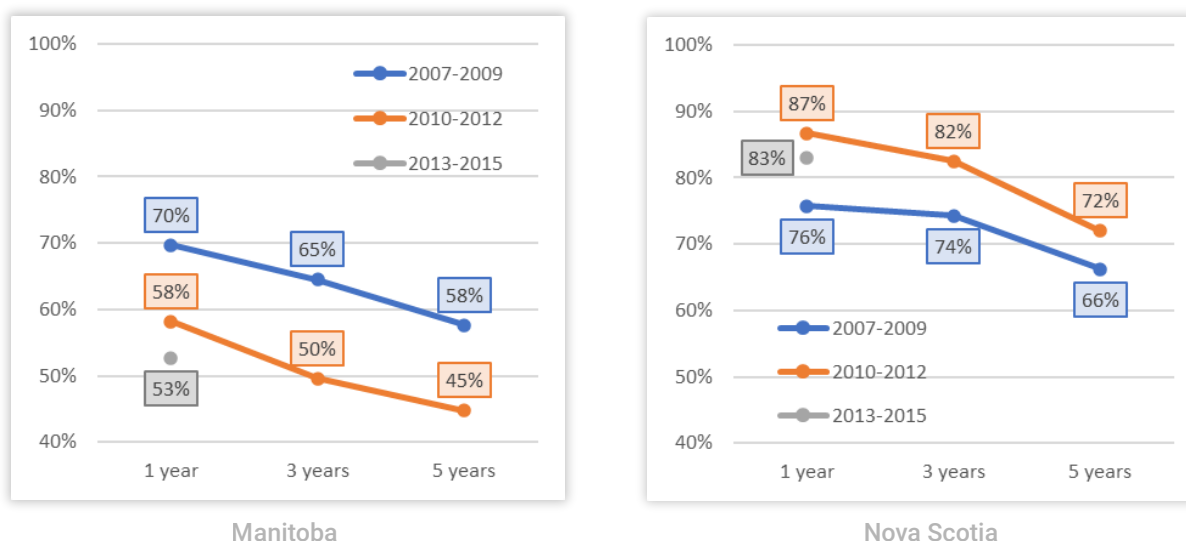
The retention rate of refugees varies by province in important ways. Alberta shows the highest retention, with 91% of refugees in the 2010-2012 cohort remaining in the province after 5 years. British Columbia also shows relatively high rates, at 83% for the 2010-2012 cohort after 5 years. These rates have remained stable across landing cohorts.

Figures 2 and 3: Refugee retention in **Alberta** and **British Columbia** by landing cohort



Manitoba, on the other hand, shows the lowest rates of refugee retention of all four provinces. These rates have decreased over time; after 5 years of landing, Manitoba retained 58% of the 2007-2009 cohort of refugees, and this declined to 45% for the 2010-2012 cohort. Nova Scotia, meanwhile, retained 66% of refugees who landed in 2007-2009 after 5 years, but this increased to 72% for the 2010-2012 cohort.

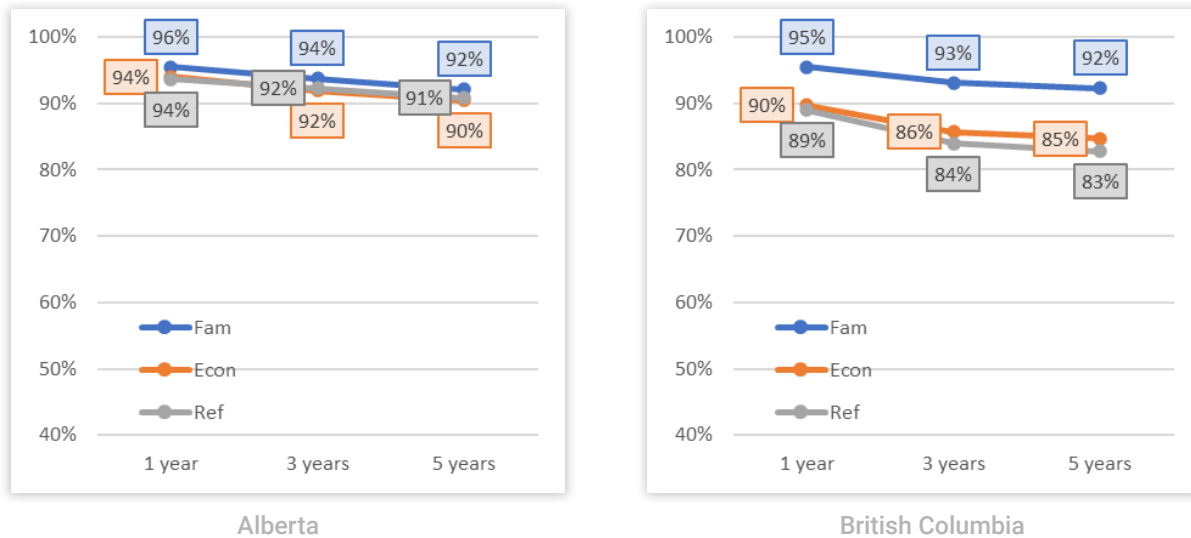
Figures 4 and 5: Refugee retention in **Manitoba** and **Nova Scotia** by landing cohort



How does provincial retention of refugees compare with other immigrants?

In both Alberta and British Columbia, retention rates for refugees and economic immigrants tend to be lower than for family class immigrants. This difference between categories is greater in British Columbia, where retention rates for family class immigrants are similar to those in Alberta but rates for refugees are about 8 percentage points lower after 5 years—at 83%, compared to 91% in Alberta.

Figures 6 and 7: Retention in **Alberta** and **British Columbia** by landing category for 2010-2012 cohort



In Manitoba, the difference in retention between refugees and other immigrant categories is extreme compared to other provinces. At 5 years, the retention rate is 84% for family class immigrants and 80% for economic immigrants, but only 45% for refugees. In Nova Scotia, on the other hand, it is economic immigrants showing the lowest retention, at 63%, while 5-year retention for refugees is nearly as high as for family class immigrants, at 72% and 74%, respectively.

Figures 8 and 9: Retention in **Manitoba** and **Nova Scotia** by landing category for 2010-2012 cohort

