

Quarterly Population Highlights



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B.C. Highlights

As of January 1, 2024, the population of British Columbia reached an estimated 5,609,870, a net increase of 28,743 individuals compared to the previous quarter. In 2023, the population of B.C. grew by 178,515, an annual growth rate of 3.3%. This is the highest annual population growth since 1971 in term of population counts and annual growth rate.

In the fourth quarter of 2023, 32,909 net migrants came to B.C. from countries outside of Canada. For the third consecutive quarter, international migration to the province was driven by net non-permanent residents, as 20,516 non-permanent residents were welcomed to B.C.

The fourth quarter of 2023 also marked the sixth consecutive quarter in which B.C. saw a net interprovincial migration outflow. An estimated net 2,728 individuals migrated to other provinces during this period. The largest net loss for interprovincial migrants from B.C. was to Alberta (2,991), with 6,018 leaving B.C. for Alberta and

3,027 coming to B.C. from Alberta. With a net inflow of 397, Manitoba provided the largest net gain of interprovincial migrants to B.C. An estimated 744 individuals moved from Manitoba to B.C., with 347 moving from B.C. to Manitoba. Alberta, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick were the only provinces to experience an overall net gain in interprovincial migrants for the quarter, receiving 9,913, 858, and 302 interprovincial migrants, respectively.

B.C. population October 1, 2023		5,581,127
Interprovincial migration		- 2,728
Interprovincial arrivals	+7,892	
Interprovincial exits	- 10,620	
International migration		+32,909
Immigrants	+15,283	
Net emigrants	- 2,890	
Net change in non-permanent residents	+20,516	
Natural change		-1,438
Births	+10,167	
Deaths	- 11,605	
Net Change		+28,743
B.C. population January 1, 2024		5,609,870

With the natural increase in population and

interprovincial migration below zero, international migration was the only source of population growth in the fourth quarter of 2023. Total net migration, which includes interprovincial and international migration, contributed a population gain of 30,181 in the fourth quarter. Total net migration was driven entirely by international migration for the sixth consecutive quarter as B.C. continues to experience net losses in interprovincial migration, which started in the third quarter of 2022. Natural population change this quarter was negative for the third time in the last four quarters, with deaths numbering 11,605 and births totalling 10,167, for a net negative change to B.C.'s population of 1,438 individuals. These factors resulted in a total population gain of 28,743 for the fourth quarter of 2023.

The Last Twelve Months

During the twelve-month period concluding on January 1, 2024, the population in B.C. grew by 178,515 individuals, resulting in a growth rate of 3.3% for the 2023 calendar year, the highest growth since 1971. This population expansion was driven by record-setting international migration, which added 190,242 individuals to B.C.'s population during 2023. B.C. continues to welcome large numbers of non-permanent residents (NPRs), with a net inflow of 128,141 arriving in 2023, the highest total on record in a calendar year.

In contrast, during the last 12 months, net interprovincial migration and natural population change amounted to a negative population change, with a loss of 8,624 and 3,103 individuals in B.C.'s population, respectively.

National Overview[†]

Canada's population had an estimated quarterly growth rate of 0.60% in the fourth quarter of 2023, representing a total increase of 241,494 individuals. This expansion propelled the total population of Canada to 40,769,890. Ontario had the largest population increase among the provinces, with an increase of 109,517 (0.69%). Alberta followed with an increase of 44,360 individuals (0.93%). Quebec, with a population increase of 36,378 (0.41%), and B.C. with 28,743 (0.52%), had the third and fourth largest population increases in the fourth quarter of 2023.

In contrast to the rest of the country, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories experienced a population decline in the fourth quarter of 2023. Nunavut's population declined by 96 (-0.24%), while the Northwest Territories' population decreased by 19 (-0.04%).

International Migration to B.C.

High immigration levels to Canada continued in the fourth quarter of 2023, as an influx of 239,490 net international immigrants were welcomed into the country. 13.7% of Canada's quarterly net

[†] The numbers in parenthesis show the quarterly population growth rate.

^{††} Net international migration is calculated as immigrants entering B.C., plus the net change in NPRs, minus net emigrants.

^{†††} Net Emigrants are calculated as Emigrants plus Net Temporary Abroad minus Returning Emigrants. The component of Net Temporary Abroad was discontinued after the second quarter of 2016. This component was added to Emigrants and Returning Emigrants after this period.

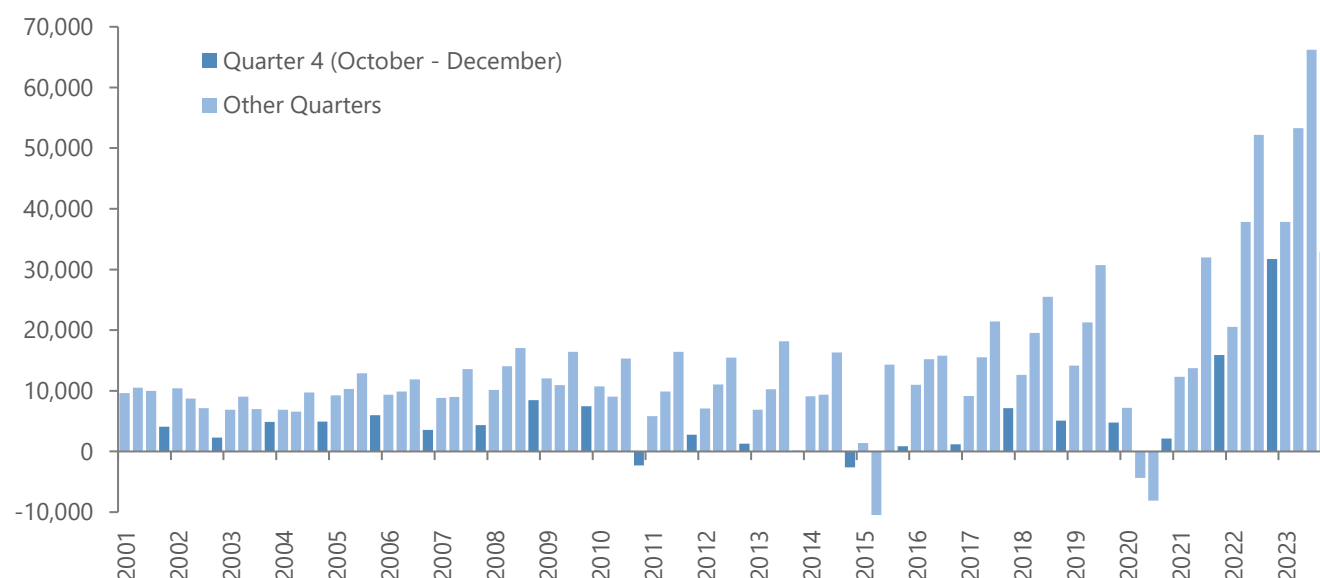
international migrants arrived in B.C., which ranked third among the provinces behind Ontario and Quebec, who received 46.1% and 16.3% of all net international migration to Canada, respectively. Alberta took in the fourth highest percentage of net international migration at 13%.^{††}

Net international migration in B.C. during the fourth quarter of 2023 totalled 32,909 people.^{††} This is a modest 3.8% increase over the fourth quarter of 2022, which saw a net gain of 31,711

individuals.

In the fourth quarter of 2023, B.C. received 15,283 new immigrants while 2,890 net emigrants left the province for international destinations.^{†††} Net non-permanent residents were once again the driver for population change through international migration. The province had a net increase of 20,516 non-permanent residents (NPRs) during the fourth quarter of 2023.

B.C. Net International Migration by Quarter, 2001Q1 to 2023Q4



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0040-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0011) Estimates of the components of international migration, quarterly. Last updated March 27, 2024

Interprovincial Migration

British Columbia had an interprovincial inflow of 7,892 individuals and an outflow of 10,620

individuals for the fourth quarter of 2023, resulting in a total net loss of 2,728 people to other provinces and territories. This marks the sixth consecutive quarter that B.C. had a net loss

[†] The numbers in parenthesis show the quarterly population growth rate.

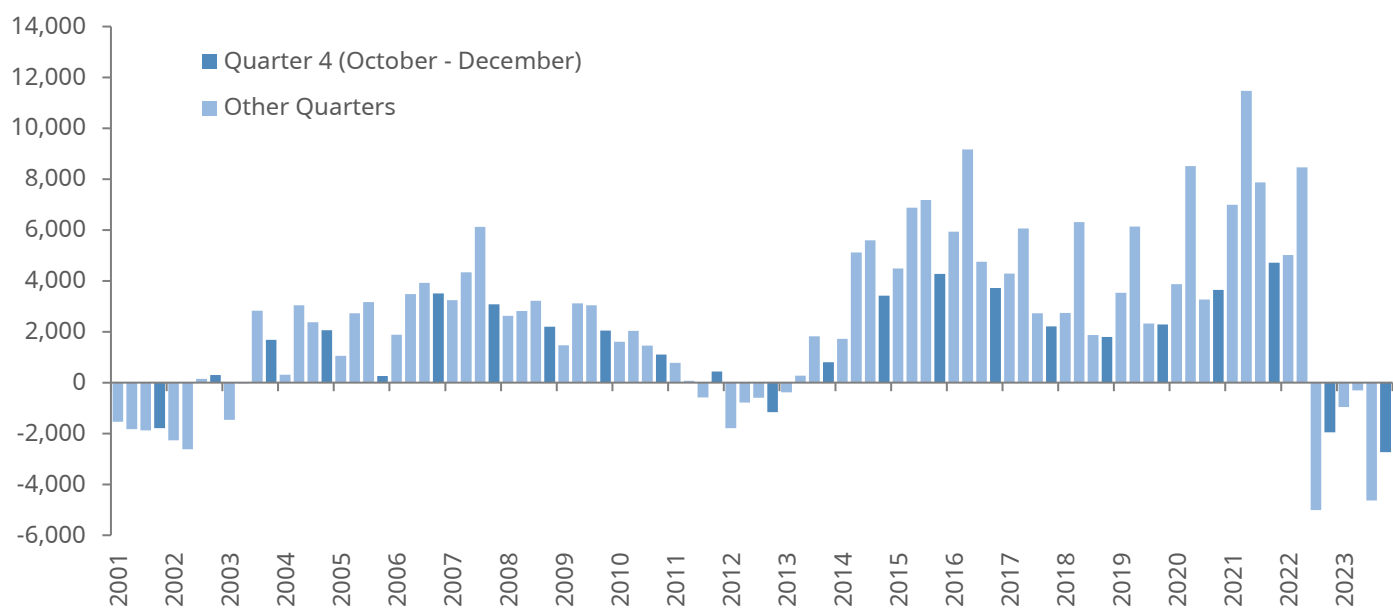
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of interprovincial migrants. Alberta remained the most popular destination for interprovincial migrants leaving B.C., with 6,018 people leaving B.C. for Alberta while 3,027 people arrived from Alberta (net loss of 2,991). Manitoba provided the highest net inflow of interprovincial migrants into B.C. during the fourth quarter of 2023, as 744 individuals arrived in B.C. from Manitoba while

347 individuals left B.C. for Manitoba (net gain of 397). Quebec and Saskatchewan followed closely behind, providing net gains of interprovincial migrants for British Columbia of 202 and 155, respectively.

B.C. Net Interprovincial Migration by Quarter, 2001Q1 to 2023Q4



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0020-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0017) Estimates of the components of interprovincial migration, quarterly. Last updated: March 27, 2024.

Composition of Non-Permanent Residents in B.C.

B.C. continues to welcome large numbers of non-permanent residents (NPRs). A record-setting 128,141 net non-permanent residents arrived in B.C. in 2023. This flow increased the number of NPRs living in B.C. from 347,637 to 475,778 (36.9%).

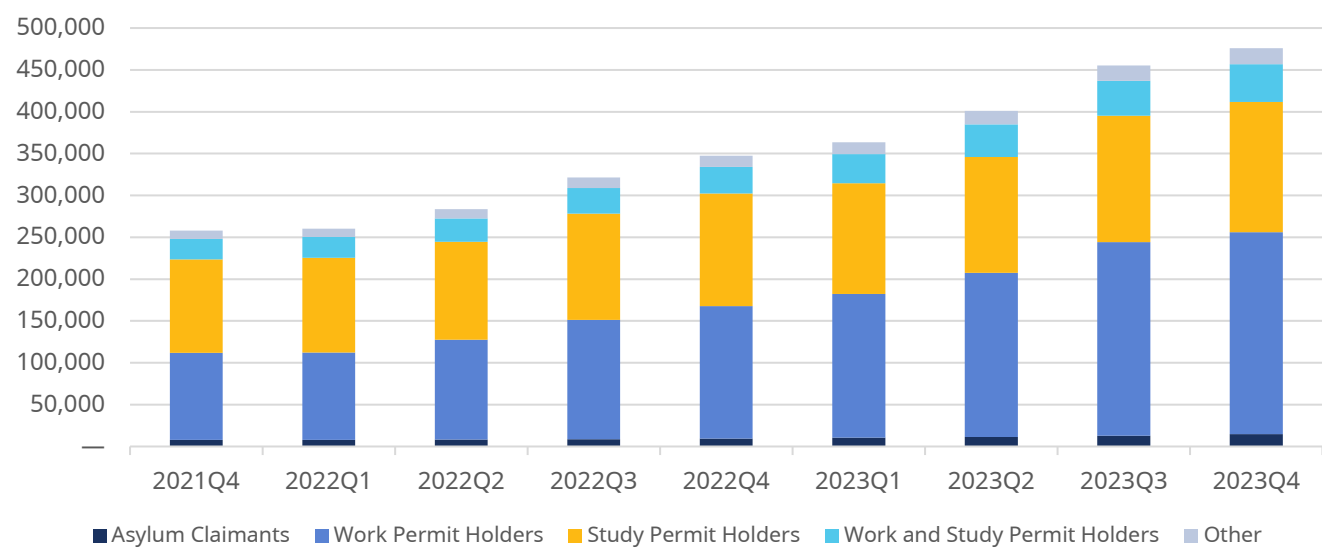
The primary driver of B.C.’s NPR increase in 2023 was the growing number of work permit holders, which rose from 158,143 to 241,196 (52.5%) in the past twelve months. The share of NPRs residing in B.C. who only hold a work permit grew from 45.5% to 50.7% in 2023.

The number of study permit holders in B.C. saw an annual growth rate of 15.6% in 2023, increasing from 134,469 to 155,415. However, the share of NPRs residing in B.C. with only a study permit decreased from 38.7% to 32.7% in the last twelve months. Individuals holding work and study permits increased from 31,737 to 45,164 (42.3%) but kept a relatively constant share, changing from 9.1% to 9.5% over the same

period.

Asylum claimants and individuals with other types of permits remain the smallest categories of NPRs in B.C., with a share of 3.1% and 4.0%, respectively in 2023. Asylum claimants in B.C. increased from 9,603 to 14,939 (55.6%) in 2023. The number of other types of permit holders grew from 13,685 to 19,064 in this period.

Non-Permanent Residents by Type, 2021Q4 to 2023Q4



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0121-01 Estimates of the number of non-permanent residents by type, quarterly. Last updated: March 27, 2024.

Did You Know?

While data collected from the 2021 Census provides a characterization of the Canadian population at a point in time, it is not an entirely accurate picture. The Census doesn't count people who did not complete their census questionnaire, e.g., because they were on holiday or travelling on business; this is an example of census undercoverage. It may also count persons more than once, e.g., parents sharing custody of their child(ren) and each adding them to both of their households as residents; this is an example of census overcoverage. Census undercoverage and overcoverage can cause estimates of the censal population to differ from the actual population count at the time of the Census.

After the census data collection, Statistics Canada conducts a comprehensive evaluation of its accuracy, a process that takes about two years to complete. This evaluation is referred to as the Census Coverage Studies, which aims to estimate the amount of census over- and undercoverage. The 2021 Census Coverage Studies are now complete, and after correcting for census net undercoverage, the new censal population estimate adjusted B.C.'s population upwards by approximately 24,300 persons or 0.47% as of July 1, 2021.

Starting with the release on September 27, 2023, the population estimates for Canada, the provinces and territories are based on 2021 Census population counts adjusted for census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated Indian reserves. Statistics Canada population estimates have been revised back to 2001.

Using the Information

Detailed results from the quarterly population and migration estimates for B.C. are published in Microsoft Excel format and are available on the [Population](#) page on the BC Stats website. The [Excel file](#) contains additional information and tables with data from 2000 to date that help users to look deeper.

BC Stats updates the quarterly population and migration estimates for B.C. on a regular basis. Readers are encouraged to provide feedback. In addition to your feedback, we'd love to know:

- Are there any different population and migration statistics and trends that you would like to see?
- What is a research problem you have, and how do you think this report might help?

Please submit your suggestions and feedback at www.gov.bc.ca/BCStatsRequests!

Visit the [Population](#) page on the BC Stats website for more information.