

# Quarterly Population Highlights



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## B.C. Highlights

The population of British Columbia reached an estimated 5,581,127 as of October 1, 2023, an increase of 62,114 individuals compared to the previous quarter. From October 1, 2022, the population of B.C. has experienced an annual growth rate of 3.3%, marking the highest annual increase since 1972.

The third quarter of 2023 saw B.C. break the previous historic record for quarterly international migration, set in the previous quarter. B.C. welcomed 66,190 net migrants from countries outside of Canada, which was mainly driven by a historic influx of net non-permanent residents (NPRs) of 54,298.

With respect to interprovincial migration, B.C. saw a net outflow of an estimated 4,634 individuals migrating to other provinces during this period, marking the fifth consecutive quarter of net losses in this component of population change. B.C. experienced the largest net loss of interprovincial migrants to Alberta (5,269), with 9,589 leaving B.C. for Alberta and only 4,320

coming to B.C. from Alberta. In contrast, Ontario provided the largest net inflow of 236 interprovincial migrants, with 4,224 individuals moving from Ontario to B.C. and only 3,988 moving from B.C. to Ontario. All provinces experienced net losses of interprovincial migrants except for Alberta and New Brunswick, which experienced net gains of 17,094 and 21 interprovincial migrants this quarter, respectively.

B.C. population July 1, 2023		5,519,013
Interprovincial migration		- 4,634
Interprovincial arrivals	+12,552	
Interprovincial exits	- 17,186	
International migration		+66,190
Immigrants	+13,755	
Net emigrants	- 1,863	
Net change in non-permanent residents	+54,298	
Natural change		+558
Births	+10,897	
Deaths	- 10,339	
Net Change		+62,114
B.C. population October 1, 2023		5,581,127

Total net migration, which includes interprovincial and international migration, remained the primary source of population growth in the third quarter of 2023, contributing a population gain of 61,556. This growth was driven entirely by international migration since B.C. has experienced net losses in interprovincial migration starting in the third quarter of 2022. Natural population change was positive for the first time since the third quarter of 2022, adding 558 individuals to B.C.'s population with 10,897 births and 10,339 deaths recorded. These changes resulted in a total population gain of 62,114 for the third quarter of 2023.

## The Last Twelve Months

B.C. witnessed its highest annual population increase rate since 1972 during the twelve-month period concluding on October 1, 2023, as the number of people grew by 177,599, resulting in an annual growth rate of 3.3%. Consistent with recent trends, the population expansion was driven by international migration, which added 189,044 individuals to B.C.'s population during this period. B.C. continues to welcome a significant number of non-permanent residents (NPRs), with a net inflow of 133,747 arriving in B.C. This represents the highest annual number of NPRS on record.

In contrast, during the last 12 months, net interprovincial migration amounted to a

population loss of 7,851 individuals in B.C.'s population, while natural population change, the difference between births and deaths, reduced the population by a further 3,594.

## National Overview<sup>†</sup>

During the third quarter of 2023, the population of Canada experienced an estimated growth of 430,635 individuals, representing a quarterly growth rate of 1.07%. This expansion propelled the total population of Canada to 40,528,396. The provinces and territories that contributed the most to Canada's population growth during the third quarter of 2023 were Ontario, with an increase of 193,399 (1.24%), followed by Quebec, with a growth of 73,857 individuals (0.83%). B.C. and Alberta were the provinces with the third and fourth largest population growth in the second quarter of 2023, with an expansion of the population of 62,114 (1.13%) and 61,118 (1.30%), respectively.

In contrast to the rest of the country, the Northwest Territories experienced a population decline of 212 (-0.47%), while Nunavut had the smallest quarterly population increase of 144 (0.35%).

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<sup>†</sup> The numbers in parenthesis show the quarterly population growth rate.

<sup>††</sup> 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.

<sup>†††</sup> Net international migration is calculated as immigrants entering B.C., plus the net change in NPRs, minus net emigrants.

## International Migration to B.C.

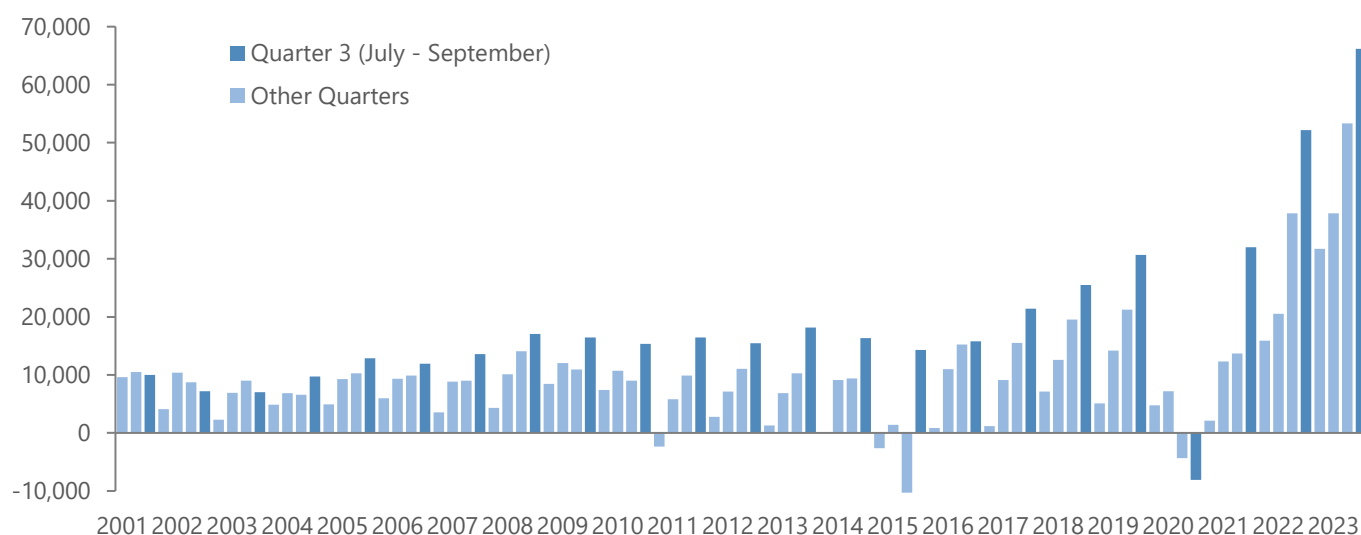
Canada continued to witness high levels of immigration in the third quarter of 2023, with an influx of 107,972 new permanent residents. B.C. attracted 12.7% of all new immigrants to Canada, ranking third among the provinces, just behind Ontario and Quebec, who received 43.7% and 15.3% of the newcomers, respectively, during that time.

During the third quarter of 2023, B.C. welcomed 13,755 new immigrants and recorded 1,863 net emigrants leaving B.C. for international

destinations.<sup>††</sup> In addition, the province experienced an unprecedented net gain of 54,298 non-permanent residents (NPRs), the most significant quarterly influx on record.

In total, B.C. had a net international migration of 66,190 people during the third quarter of 2023.<sup>†††</sup> This figure represents an increase of 26.9% compared to the net gain of 52,170 observed during the same quarter of 2022 and represents the highest total net international migration in a quarter for B.C.

## B.C. Net International Migration by Quarter, 2001Q1 to 2023Q3



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0040-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0011) Estimates of the components of international migration, quarterly. Last updated December 19, 2023

<sup>†</sup> The numbers in parenthesis show the quarterly population growth rate.

<sup>††</sup> 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.

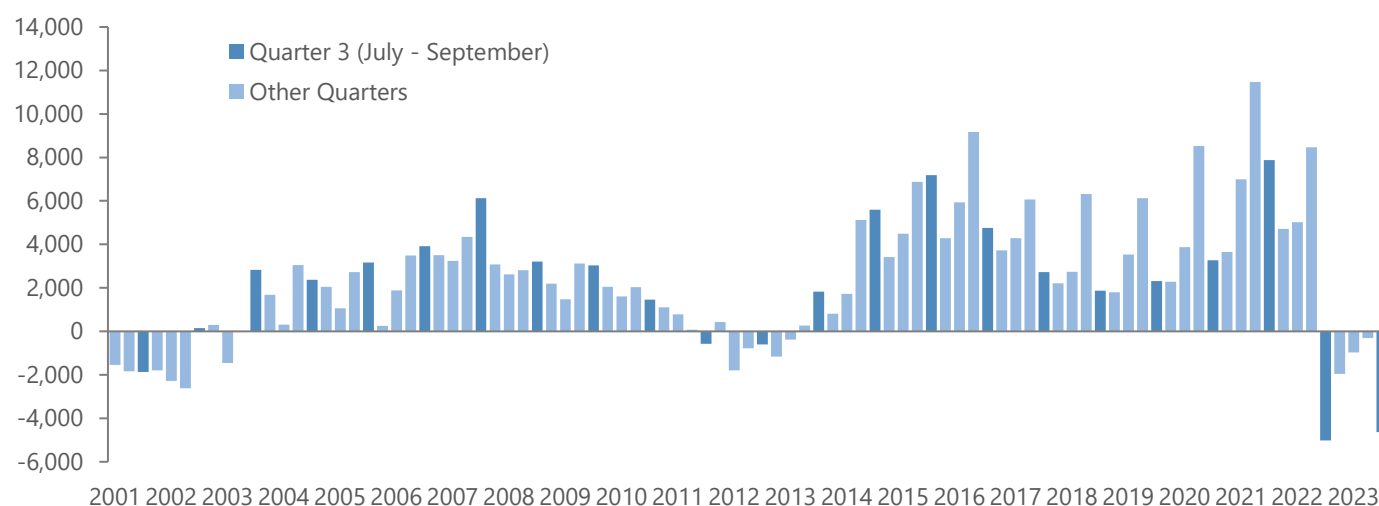
<sup>†††</sup> Net international migration is calculated as immigrants entering B.C., plus the net change in NPRs, minus net emigrants.

## Interprovincial Migration

The third quarter of 2023 saw British Columbia experience an inflow of 12,552 individuals and an outflow of 17,186 individuals, resulting in a total net loss of 4,634 people to other provinces and territories. This marks the fifth consecutive quarter with a net loss of interprovincial migrants and the second largest since the losses began in the third quarter of 2022. The largest net outflow

of interprovincial migrants from B.C. was to Alberta, with 9,589 people leaving B.C. for Alberta while 4,320 people arrived from Alberta (net loss of 5,269). Conversely, the highest net inflow of interprovincial migrants was from Ontario, with 4,224 individuals arriving from Ontario, while 3,988 individuals left B.C. for Ontario (net gain of 236). Saskatchewan followed closely behind with a net gain of 231 migrants to British Columbia.

## B.C. Net Interprovincial Migration by Quarter, 2001Q1 to 2023Q3



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0020-01 (formerly CANSIM 051-0017) Estimates of the components of interprovincial migration, quarterly. Last updated: December 19, 2023.

## Composition of Non-Permanent Residents in B.C.

Non-Permanent Residents (NPRs) continue to be the primary contributor to population growth in B.C. From the third quarter of 2021 to the third quarter of 2023, the total number of NPRs residing in B.C. increased from 263,009 to 455,262, an increase of 192,253 (73.1%).

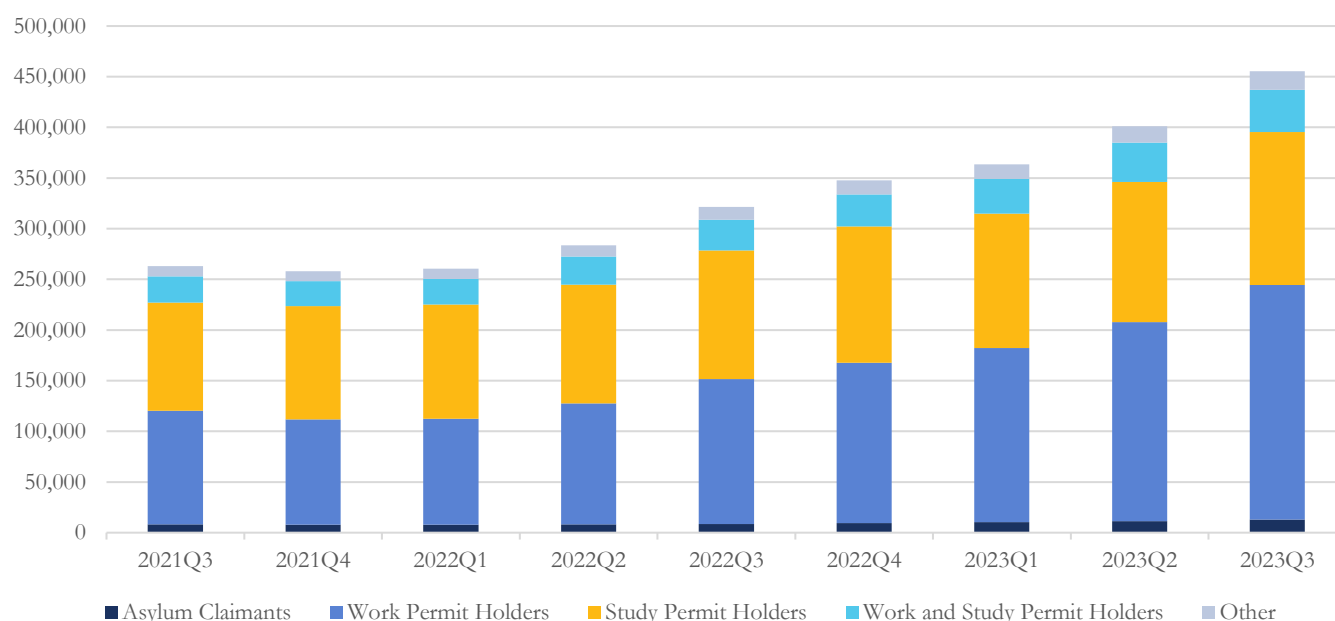
The growth in NPRs was primarily driven by the increase in the number of work permit holders, which increased from 112,099 to 231,289, growth rate of 106.3%, between the third quarter of 2021 and the third quarter of 2023. This group increased its share in the total number of NPRs in B.C. from 42.6% to 50.8% over this period.

The number of study permit holders grew from 106,801 to 150,998 during this period, which represents a growth rate of 41.4%. However, the participation of the holders of this type of permit in the total number of NPRs residing in B.C. decreased from 40.6% to 33.2% between the third quarter of 2021 and the third quarter of 2023. In contrast, individuals holding both work and study permits kept a relatively constant share in the total number of NPRs in B.C., changing from 9.8% to 9.1% on the same period. This category of NPRs experienced a 62% inc-

rease between the third quarter of 2021 and the third quarter of 2023, changing from 25,729 to 41,650.

Asylum claimants and individuals with other types of permits represent the smallest categories of NPRs in B.C., with a participation of 2.9% and 4%, respectively, in the third quarter of 2023. Asylum claimants residing in B.C. increased from 8,213 to 13,006 between the third quarter of 2021 and the third quarter of 2023. Holders with other types of permits changed from 10,167 to 18,319 in this period.

## Non-Permanent Residents by Type, 2021Q3 to 2023Q3



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 17-10-0121-01 Estimates of the number of non-permanent residents by type, quarterly. Last updated: December 19, 2023.

## 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](http://www.gov.bc.ca/BCStatsRequests)!

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