

INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, MIGRATION, AND URBANIZATION IN CANADA: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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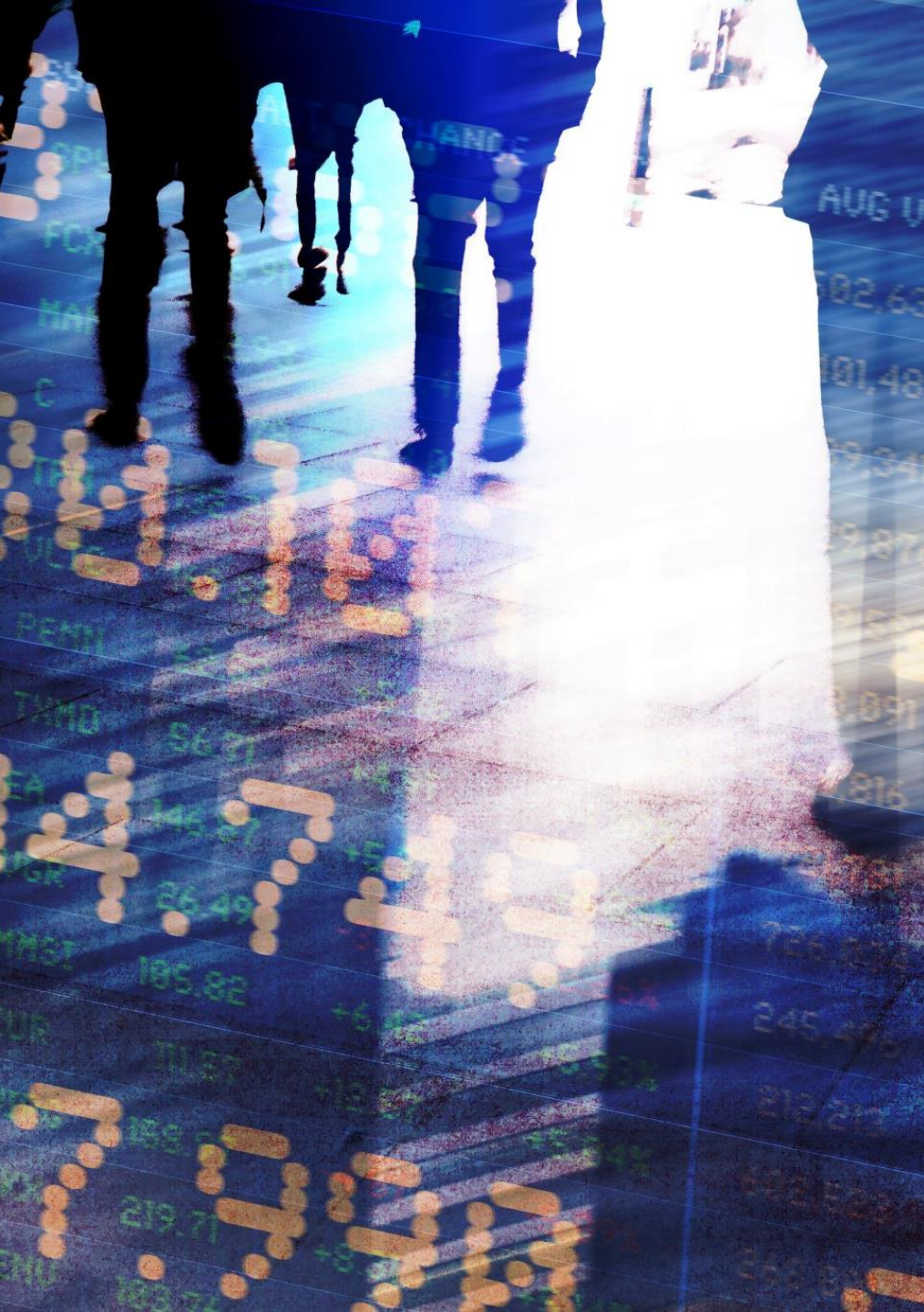
Megatrends and Families: Focus on Demographic Change, Migration, and Urbanization in North America, November 11, 2023, Orlando, FL, USA



Land Acknowledgement

The Vanier Institute of the Family is located on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people, who have protected this land since time immemorial. We acknowledge and appreciate the generosity of our Indigenous neighbours whose ancestral lands are where we live, work, and thrive.

We strive to support decolonization by amplifying voices and research that highlight the ongoing impacts of colonialism, displacement, and systemic racism on Indigenous family and community connections, cultures, and wellbeing. Through our efforts and commitment, may we be reconciled so that we truly experience equality, justice, and harmony.



Agenda

- Explore interlinkages between demographic change, migration and urbanization by highlighting
 - Declining fertility rates, aging populations
 - Linkage to the increasing proportion of immigrants
 - Focus on legal migration channels
- Linkage of migration to urbanization
- Barriers and facilitators to family wellbeing
- “Good” policies

The importance of a family lens

- **Thinking about *families*, rather than *individuals***, is essential if we wish to position families as the focus of policy discussions
- **Lays the groundwork for evaluating culture and practices of policy makers**, and recognizes policy strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in understanding
- Useful in identifying **unintended influences on families** of policies designed with individuals in mind

How do we define family wellbeing

Sustainable Development Goals

- SDG 1 (No Poverty)
- SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)
- SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being)
- SDG 4 (Quality Education)
- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

Vanier Institute approach

- Material
 - What families have
- Relational
 - Quality of families' social connections
- Subjective
 - Families' sense of fit between their goals and experiences

Families and social policy

- Goal is to improve the wellbeing of families, especially those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantages
- Explicit versus implicit policy impact
- Different effects for singles or couples, with or without children
- Challenge: With the increased complexity of contemporary family forms, what types of families are the policies intended to serve? Impact of demographic change?





Demographic Change

FERTILITY & AGING

Declining total fertility rate

- Total fertility rate reached a record low of **1.33 in 2022**
- The last year that replacement-level fertility occurred in Canada was in 1971 at 2.1 children per woman
- Smaller families mean fewer members to assume the family work of providing support and care across generations
- Labour market and economic considerations; implications for social services

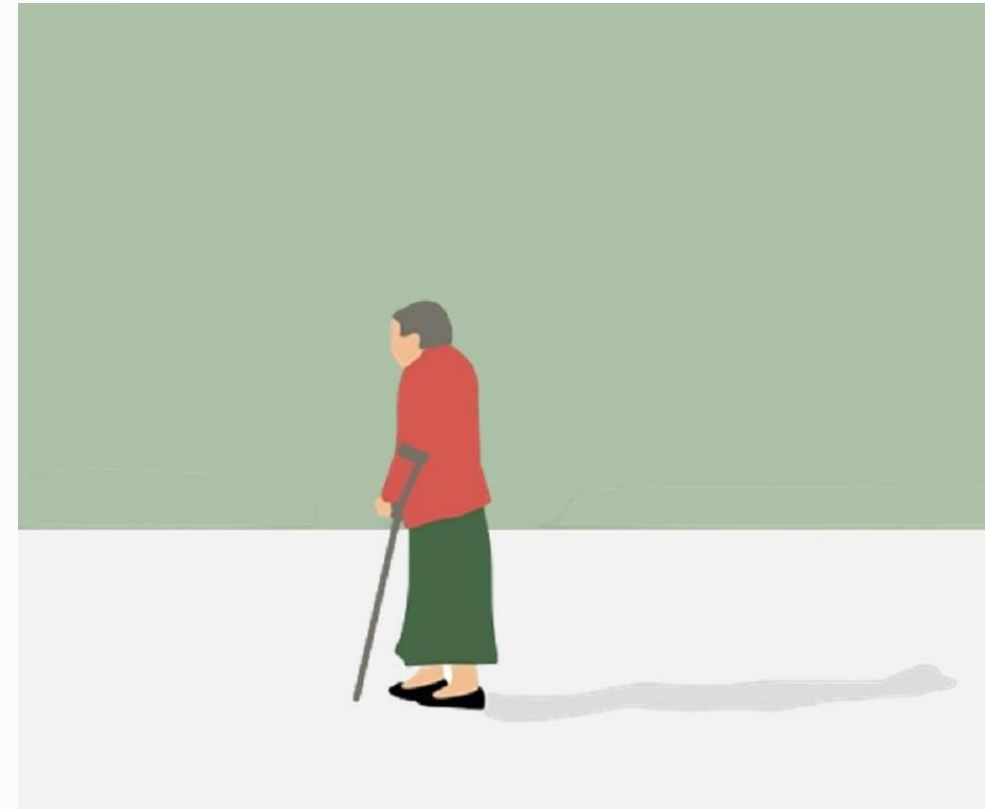


Policy response

- **Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare Plan (2021)**
 - Reduce the cost of child care in licensed facilities to \$10 a day over five years
 - Challenge: Limited licensed spaces
- **Canada child benefit**
 - Non-taxable benefit directed toward families with limited financial resources to assist with the cost of raising children under age 18
 - Accommodations for lone-parents, same-gender parents, and parents with shared custody

An aging population

- In 2021, 18.5% of the population aged 65+ years
- Depending on forecasting model, could increase to 21.6% - 29.8% in 2068
- Problem: shortage of workers, stresses on public health care system, sustainability of home care, supportive housing, and increased need for unpaid family care currently valued at \$112.7 B
- Promise: generative role - care provision (dependent adults and children), financial support, fewer older adults living in poverty (12.3%) vs total population (15.0%)



Policy responses

Old age security program

- **All Canadians and legal residents** may apply to receive a monthly pension once they reach age 65, if they have lived in Canada for at least 10 years since age 18

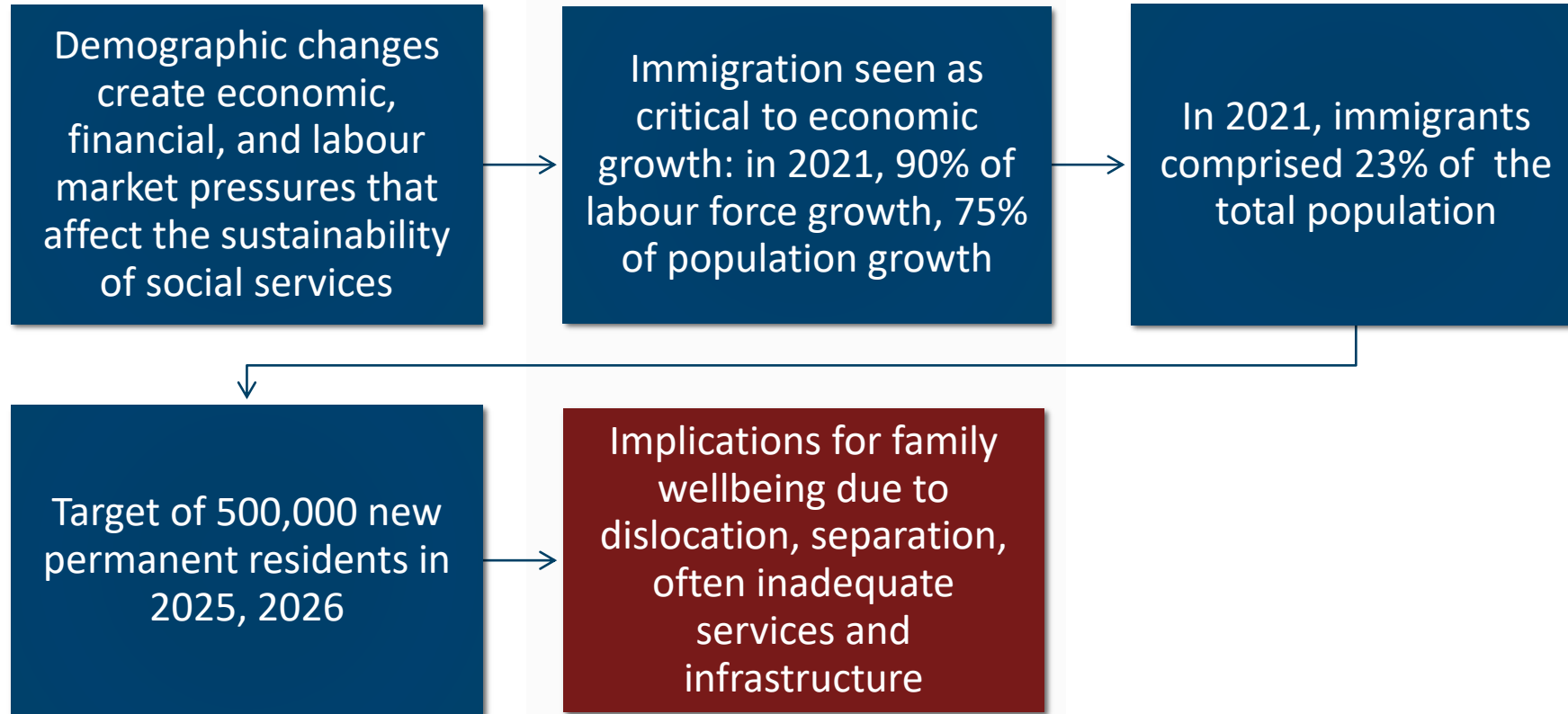
Employment Insurance special benefits

- Compassionate care benefits (CCB) and family caregiver benefits for adults (FCBA)
- Financial assistance for employees who need time off work to care for family members
- **Immediate family members, other relatives, and “individuals considered to be like family, whether or not related by marriage, common-law partnership, or any legal parent-child relationship”**

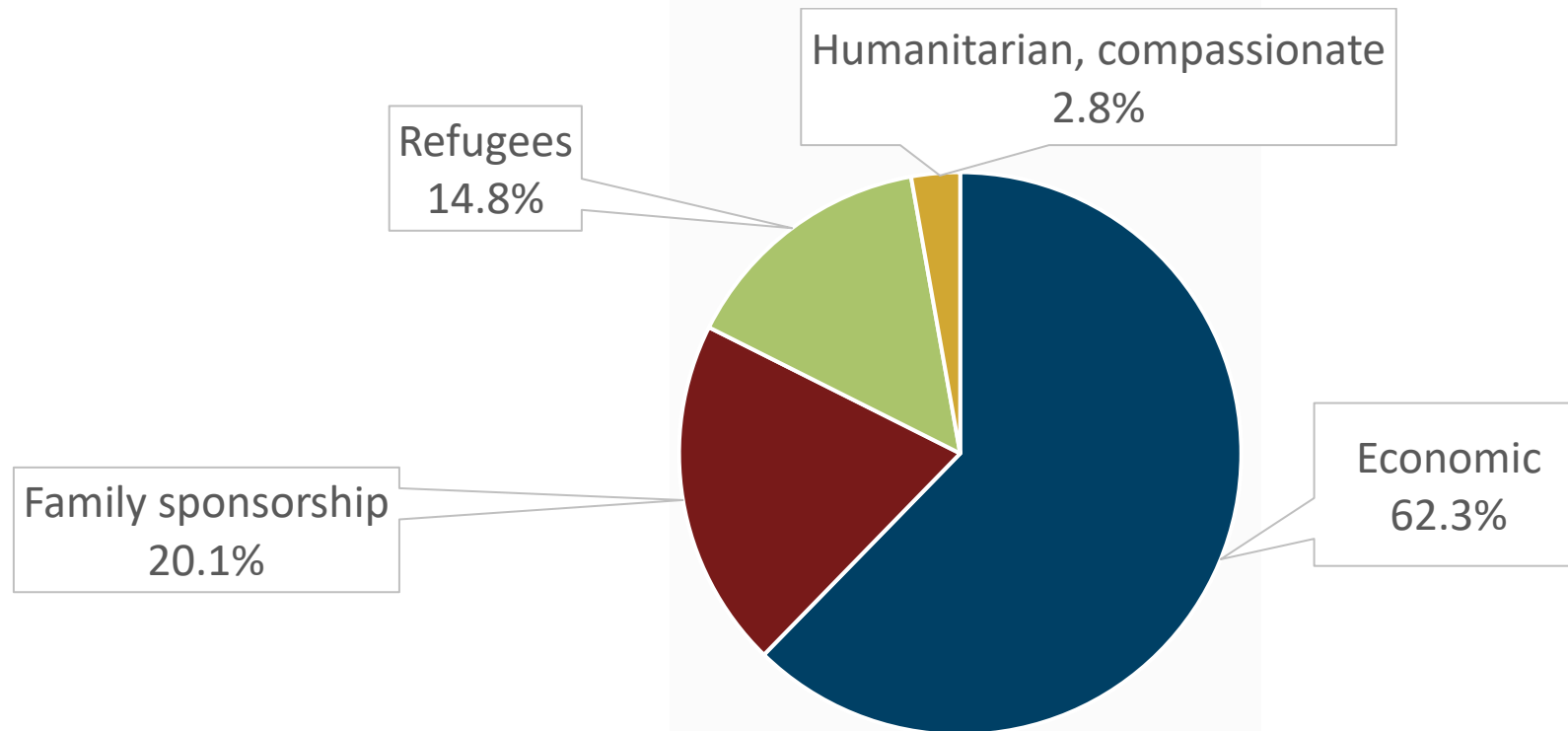
Multigenerational housing tax credit

- Tax credit offsets the cost to homeowners of adding a secondary unit for an adult (age 65 and older) or person with an eligible disability
- **Parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew of the qualifying individual, or the qualifying individual’s cohabiting spouse or common-law partner**

Linking demographic change to migration



Percentage of Permanent Residents, including family members, admitted to Canada by Immigration Class, 2021



Source: Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. (2022, November 8). *2022 Annual report to parliament on immigration*.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2022.html>

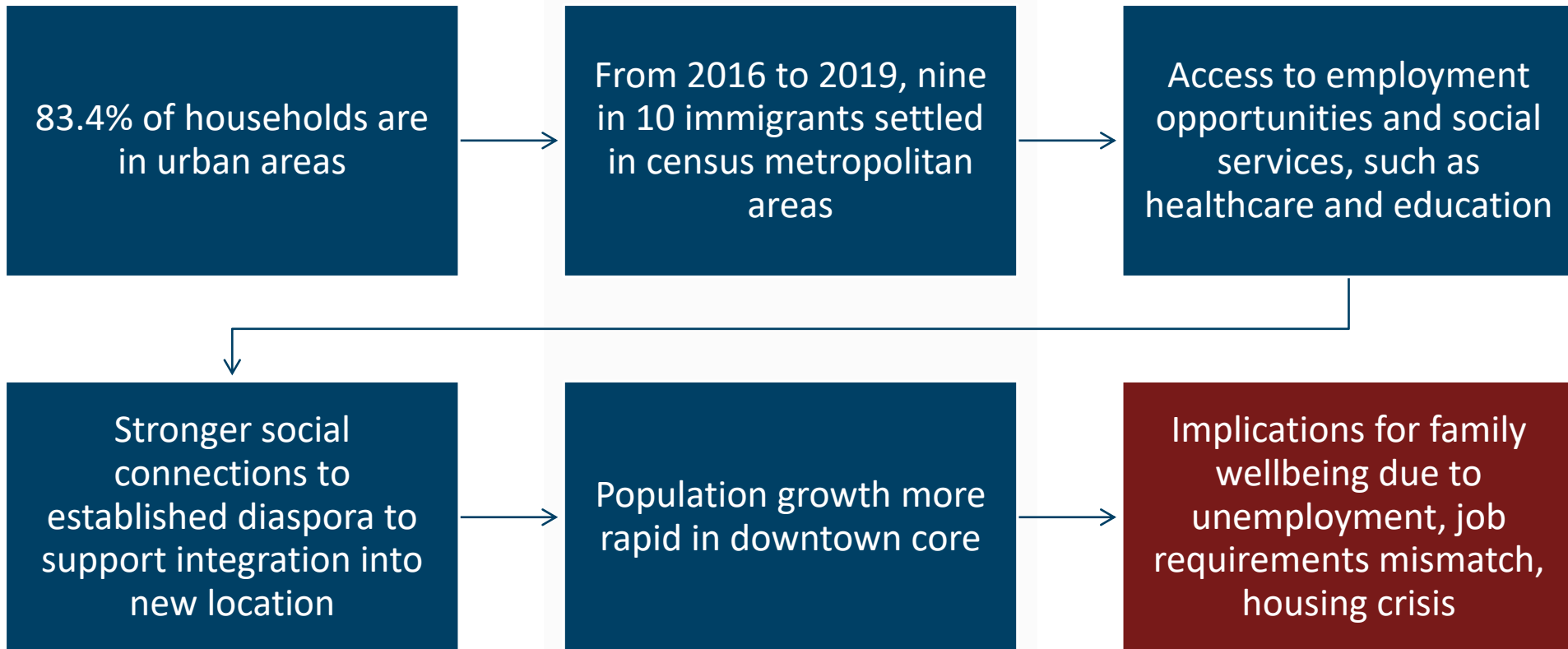
Immigration policy – who is family?

- Limited to vertical generational members: spouses, partners, children (including adopted and “to be” adopted), parents, grandparents, and certain “other relatives”
- Horizontal generations normally excluded: siblings, aunts, and uncles
- Policies can unite or fragment families due to whether their family structure conforms to the policy definition of who is family

Open work permits for family members of foreign workers

- January 2023 – phased approach to counteract massive labour shortages allows family members of temporary foreign workers to apply for an open work permit
- The temporary measure meant to keep families together to support physical health, emotional wellbeing, and financial stability of workers

Linking migration to urbanization



Urbanization and family wellbeing

- Housing shortage – 60% of unit gap in BC & ON, provinces with large cities
- Housing affordability crisis
- Mismatch between skills and qualifications required for entry and employment opportunities available to new immigrants
- Significant barriers to employment: requirement for Canadian work experience, lack of credential recognition, racial discrimination
- Undocumented immigrants at risk of deportation, cannot access provincial services

Sanctuary cities

- Global movement
- Toronto in 2013 followed by others
- Assists immigrants and their families who lack legal status to improve their quality of life through access to municipal services like education, libraries, childcare, food banks, emergency shelters, transportation, and some health services
- Reduces the potential for deportation and family separation
- Reduces feelings of living in fear

Recommended policy approaches

- Apply a more inclusive and consistent definition of family
- Reduce policy inconsistencies, and resulting inequalities among immigrant families who may define family differently than how it is enacted in policy
- Recognize the importance of family support systems across all policies
- Focus on improving families' material wellbeing as a starting point
 - Addresses SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 10
- Relational and subjective wellbeing improved by alleviating financial and other types of pressures on families
- Allow families to remain intact for better relational wellbeing
- Address societal challenges to benefit all vulnerable groups, e.g., housing affordability crisis, health care system
- Collect high quality data to monitor stability and change in family wellbeing for different immigrant and identity groups

Thank you

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<https://vanierinstitute.ca/>



Announcement from the Federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship

November 3, 2023

We will identify and explore solutions to potential barriers faced by families accessing and navigating Canada's immigration system, such as reviewing ways to ensure equity considerations are built into policy and program changes and better support accompanying family members.

We will consider lessons learned from understanding family compositions from various parts of the world, and implement more inclusive measures when possible.

Source: An Immigration System for Canada's Future: A plan to get us there

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/canada-future-immigration-system/plan.html>