Purpose

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is designed to study how recent immigrants adjust to living in Canada. Statistics Canada will collect this information to assist Citizenship and Immigration Canada—as well as other federal and provincial government departments and many other organisations—in determining how to better help immigrants settle in this country.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information to further our understanding of how immigrants adjust to life in Canada. The purpose of this survey is neither to evaluate current immigration policy nor the services provided to immigrants by various groups or organisations.

Importance

As they adapt to life in Canada, many immigrants face challenges, such as:

- learning or becoming more fluent in one or both of Canada’s official languages;
- participating in the labour market;
- accessing education and training opportunities; and
- exercising the rights and undertaking the responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

The results of this survey will provide an indication as to how immigrants are meeting these challenges and what type of different resources and programs could be more helpful to their settling in Canada.

The Survey of Immigrants is ‘longitudinal’—that is, the same respondents will be interviewed six months, two years and four years after arriving in Canada, to provide an update on their experiences in this country. By interviewing the same people over a period of time, the LSIC information will compile a dynamic picture of the experiences of these newly arrived people, rather than offering a static ‘snapshot’ of immigrant life. Similar longitudinal immigration surveys have been initiated in Australia, New Zealand and the United States with positive results.

Participation

About 21,000 people aged 15 and over will be selected out of approximately 190,000 immigrants who settle in Canada each year. Their first interview will take place six months after their arrival in Canada, beginning in April 2001. This first wave of interviews will last about one year.
Participation in the survey is voluntary, but because all respondents represent others with similar characteristics, it is important that participants continue to take part in LSIC until the end of its four-year cycle. This will help to ensure that survey results are as accurate as possible.

**Topics covered**

Survey respondents will answer questions on a variety of topics, such as:

- socio-demographic information;
- family structure;
- education;
- employment and income;
- current housing;
- the role of social networks, such as relatives and friends already in Canada; and
- the organizations immigrants turn to when they need help.

The questionnaire will also include an assessment of respondents’ knowledge of Canada’s official languages, as well as questions as to their intention of becoming Canadian citizens and the importance that they and their family place on maintaining ties with their cultural or ethnic background.

In addition, respondents will be asked about their reasons for immigrating to Canada and their perception of settling here.

**Results**

Survey results will play an important role in planning and developing programs to assist future immigrants. Data users will include federal government departments, such as, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, provincial ministries, immigrant settlement agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Some of the questions that this survey will be able to answer include:

*Are recent immigrants able to find and afford adequate housing? Do they move often before establishing more permanent roots, such as purchasing a home?*

*Did the recent immigrants have difficulty in having their foreign qualifications (degrees and other educational training) recognized in Canada?*

*Are recent immigrants able to find employment related to their field of study and/or work experience?*

*What is the degree of importance in the role played by family and friends already living in Canada, in helping recent immigrants integrate into Canada?*

Preliminary survey results from the first wave of data collection will be available in fall 2002.
Confidentiality

Because the LSIC is conducted under the authority of the Statistics Act, all information received from respondents is confidential. The Act also requires that all Statistics Canada staff take an oath of secrecy. No personal information that could identify respondents or their families can be given to anyone—or to any other government department—without the respondent’s permission. Furthermore, survey results will be released in an aggregate format, making it impossible to identify any individual or family group.

For further information

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