

West Kootenay Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot

LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP FINAL REPORT



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and the Province of British Columbia.



This program is administered by
Community Futures Central Kootenay.

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Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot West Kootenay

February 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) is an economic development community-based immigration pilot to test targeted attraction and settlement approaches at the local level.

The Pilot is a community-driven program designed to spread the benefits of economic immigration to rural communities by creating a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers who want to work and live in the region. The Pilot supports immigration to the West Kootenay rural communities. It matches new immigrants with permanent full-time jobs and promotes a welcoming community, connecting newcomers to members of the community and settlement services. The Pilot's goal is to bring newcomers to regions confronting severe labour shortages due to a youth exodus, declining birth rate, and aging population.

The Solution

Utilizing immigration to help meet local labour market needs and support regional economic development.

The Pilot has established a new pathway to permanent residence in the West Kootenay, which in turn secures newcomers' futures in the region and makes settlement for them and their families a reality.

The Pilot creates economic independence, integration, and retention of newcomers while supporting employers to address labour shortages. The Pilot also provides important lessons regarding regional immigration to support future policy and program development. The Pilot significantly impacted the West Kootenay region resulting in sustainable job creation and measurable economic benefits.

Some newcomers are also entrepreneurial. Many consider starting or purchasing a business as an alternate career option. Community Futures Central Kootenay (CFCK) supports business development and is well positioned to support their future business development.

RNIP outcomes in the West Kootenays include:

- Creating a welcoming environment that attracts, integrates, and retains newcomers.
- Increasing community diversity.
- Contributing towards regional economic sustainability.
- Increased productivity and revenues for regional businesses and organizations.
- Creating a secure way for employers to retain skilled employees.
- Creating peripheral employment benefits through the settlement of spouses and dependents who also participate in the labour force.
- Newcomers contributing to the economy and increasing the productive capacity of the region.
- Skilled newcomers starting successful career paths in long-term stable employment.
- Creating opportunities for business development and business succession through the provision of information, resources, and supports to permanent residents.

Highlights

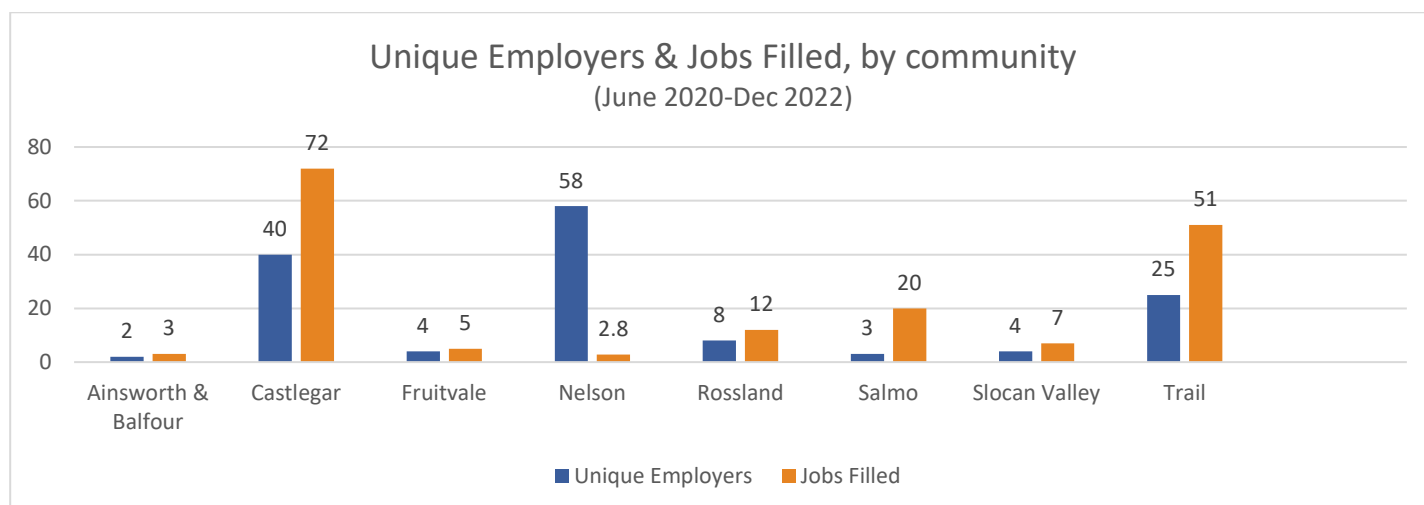
Statistics

From June 2020 to December 2022, the West Kootenay Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot recommended 302 primary applicants and 250 spouses and dependents for Canadian permanent residency.

Those 302 primary applicants filled jobs throughout the West Kootenay region. Top jobs include:

- 45 Healthcare Aides
- 29 Early Childhood Educators and Assistants
- 81 Food and Beverage sector workers (primarily cooks, chefs, managers, supervisors)

One hundred forty-four employers in eleven West Kootenay communities used RNIP to fill jobs in their business or organization.



Of the 302 primary applicants, 188 were Selkirk College graduates (62% of all RNIP primary applicants).

News and Media

- May 2021: local media coverage in the Nelson Star: “[Immigration pilot targets hard to fill jobs in West Kootenay](#)”.
- June 2022: the RNIP Regional Coordinator, Erin Rooney, was interviewed for the Columbia Basin Trust-funded podcast, *Headwaters*, about the success of the Pilot: [Headwaters, Episode 9: Newcomers](#)
- August 2022: Local media coverage in the Nelson Star: “[Nelson employers depend on foreign workers, want increased immigration](#)”.

Events

In June 2022, the Pilot held a “Welcome to Permanent Residency (PR) Party”. Every RNIP candidate who received their permanent residency through the Pilot (thus far) was invited. Over 150 people attended including RNIP permanent residents, their families, local and provincial government officials, regional partners, and more. Press Release: [West Kootenay Immigration Pilot Helps Kootenay Businesses Address Workforce Shortages](#)

Success Stories

In 2022, we completed a candidate and employer [Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot Success Stories](#) project which was promoted on our website, as well as Community Futures Central Kootenay newsletter and social media.

Advocacy

We successfully advocated to extend the Pilot duration to the full five years. We also successfully advocated to expand the boundaries of our region to include more communities. “[Expanding the benefits of immigration in rural and northern communities](#)”.

Keys to Success

- **Dedicated Steering Committee:** the volunteer RNIP Steering Committee members play an important role in the structure, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement of the Pilot. They are engaged in making community recommendations for permanent residency. The committee includes regional economic development representation from Trail, Nelson, Kaslo, Nakusp, Castlegar, Creston, and Grand Forks, multiple regional employers, [Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy Settlement Services](#), [Selkirk College’s International Department](#), [Community Futures Central Kootenay](#) board member, and [Kootenay Career Development Society](#) (regional WorkBC organization)
- **Effective Web Presence:** since launching in May 2020, the West Kootenay Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot website (<https://wk-rnip.ca/>) has had 198,874 users and 322,184 sessions, and 785,057 page views. An online portal was also developed to streamline the final application process.

- **Selkirk College's International Program:** the college's strong international program attracts students from around the world. Upon completion of their schooling (minimum two-year program), international students can apply for a three-year [Post Graduation Work Permit](#), an open work permit that allows them to work anywhere in Canada. Having the Pilot as a pathway to permanent residency not only encourages students to remain in the region after graduation, but it also makes it easier for West Kootenay employers to retain their workers. In addition, many students complete practicums during their schooling with West Kootenay employers which can lead to further employment.
- **Responsive RNIP Regional Coordinator:** the coordinator is responsive to primary applicants and employers as they go through the process of applying. Many people are grateful to have a person to talk to when they need help with the applications process.

Recommendation for Broader Implementation

For rural British Columbian communities to continue to benefit from the success of this pilot, it is recommended that the Pilot become an ongoing program and that the geographic area be expanded to include the addition of the Regional District of East Kootenay. Our team has initiated advocacy regarding this opportunity with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada as well as to Rob Morrison, Kootenay-Columbia Member of Parliament.

West Kootenay Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot (2020-2022)

Job Offers/ Candidates by West Kootenay Community

Job Offer Location	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
Ainsworth	1	0	1	2
Balfour	1	0	0	1
Castlegar	18	19	35	72
Crescent Valley	1	0	0	1
Fruitvale	4	0	1	5
Nelson	36	47	49	132
Rossland	2	2	8	12
Salmo	1	15	4	20
Slocan City	0	0	1	1
South Slocan	2	1	2	5
Trail	19	13	19	51
TOTAL	85	97	120	302

Unique Employers by West Kootenay Community

Community	2020	2021	2022	2020-2022 PILOT TOTAL
Ainsworth	1	0	1	1
Balfour	1	0	0	1
Castlegar	12	12	24	40
Crescent Valley	1	0	0	1
Fruitvale	3	0	1	4
Nelson	24	20	31	58
Rossland	2	2	5	8
Salmo	1	1	2	3
Slocan City	0	0	1	1
South Slocan	2	1	1	2
Trail	13	7	11	25
TOTAL	60	43	77	144

Note: yearly number of unique employers does add up to the "Pilot Total" because some employers used the pilot over multiple years.

Pathway to RNIP

Candidate	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
Selkirk Graduates	68	50	70	188
Other In-Region Candidates	16	29	30	75
Overseas/ Elsewhere in Canada Candidates	1	18	20	39
TOTAL	85	97	120	302

Community Recommendation for Permanent Residency

Recommendations for Permanent Residency	2020	2021	2022	TOTAL
Primary Applicants	85	97	120	302
Spouses & dependents	40	100	110	250
TOTAL	125	197	230	552

West Kootenay Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot: Jobs (2020-2022)

2016 NOC	2021 NOC	RNIP JOB OFFER	JOB OFFERS in 2020	JOB OFFERS in 2021	JOB OFFERS in 2022	PILOT TOTAL
0114	10019	Operations Manager			1	1
1111	11100	Accountant			4	4
1122	11201	Business Management Consultant			1	1
1123	11202	International Student Recruiter		1	0	1
1215	12013	Warehouse supervisor	1		0	1
1222	12100	Executive Assistant			1	1
1223	12101	Human resources and recruitment officers	1		0	1
1225	12102	Purchasing Officer			1	1
1311	12200	Accounting Technician/ Bookkeeper	4		7	11
1314	12203	Assessors, evaluators and appraisers	1		0	1
1241	13110	Administrative Assistant	2		3	5
1521	14400	Shipper			1	1
7452	14400	Warehouse receivers		1	0	1
2174	21232	Software Developer			1	1
2232	22301	Mechanical engineering technologists & technicians	1		0	1
2234	22303	Construction estimator			1	1
3233	32101	Licensed Practical Nurse			3	3
3413	33102	Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	12	29	4	45
0421	40020	Registrar			1	1
4212	42201	Social & Community Service Workers	1	5	6	12
4214	42202	Early childhood educators & assistants	3	16	10	29
5244	53111	Production Assistant (artisan)	1		0	1
0621	60020	Retail Manager	7	2	8	17
0631	60030	Restaurant & Food Service Managers	10	1	3	14
0632	60031	Accommodation Service Managers	4		0	4
6211	62010	Retail Sales Supervisor	8	3	3	14
6311	62020	Food Service Supervisor	13	1	6	20
6313	62022	Accommodation, travel, tourism & related services supervisors	1		3	4
6315	62024	Cleaning Supervisors	3	1	1	5
6316	62029	Security Services Supervisors	2		0	2
6321	62200	Head Chef		1	3	4
6322	63200	Cook, Line Cook, Sous Chef	5	8	27	40
6332	63202	Baker			1	1
6421	64100	Retail salespersons		1	0	1
6525	64314	Front Desk Agent/ Night Auditor			3	3
6513	65200	Food & Beverage Servers	1		0	1
6711	65201	Food service helpers		1	0	1
6731	65310	Guest Room Attendant			1	1
0711	70010	Construction Managers		1	0	1
0714	70012	Facility Operations & Maintenance Managers	1		0	1
7205	72014	Contractors & supervisors, other construction trades, installers, repairers & servicers	1		0	1
7305	72024	Taxi & Chauffeur supervisors		1	0	1
7235	72104	Structural Metal & Platework Fabricators & Fitters	1		0	1
7237	72106	Welders		1	0	1
7271	72310	Carpenter		3	2	5
7312	72401	Heavy-duty equipment mechanics		2	1	3
7321	72410	Commercial Vehicle/ Automotive Technician		1	2	3
7294	73112	Painters and decorators	1		0	1
7511	73300	Transport truck driver		16	4	20
7513	75200	Taxicab Driver			6	6
0822	82031	Managers in horticulture			1	1
9437	94124	K2 Machine Operator		1	0	1
			85	97	120	302

Note: this data captures the number of jobs that were offered to an RNIP candidate for which that candidate then received a community recommendation to apply for Canadian permanent residency. If the candidate did not receive a community recommendation, the job was not counted.

West Kootenay Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Data Collection & Analysis Methodologies

February 2023

Terms & Acronyms

- **Candidate:** the person who has applied to the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. Also referred to as the primary applicant.
- **Designated Learning Institution (DLI):** accredited post-secondary educational institutions. In the West Kootenays, the main DLI is Selkirk College.
- **IRCC:** Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- **Job/ Job Offer:** the job that the candidate is filling
- **NAICS:** North American Industry Classification System
- **NOC:** National Occupational Classification (as of November 16, 2022, RNIP is using the 2021 NOC codes in keeping with IRCC, [more information.](#))
- **Primary Applicant:** i.e., the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot candidate.
- **RNIP:** Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot
- **TEER Categories:** a system used to identify and categorize jobs (occupations) based on training, education, experience and responsibilities (TEER).
- **Unique Employers:** the number of employers that have used the pilot. Employers that have used the pilot more than once will only be counted once.

Data Collection

Note: only candidates who receive the community recommendation to apply for Canadian permanent residency are counted in the data. Candidates that are declined are not counted.

Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot candidates submit their application through a secure online portal.

Submissions include an IMM5984 Job Offer Form that collects data on the candidate (and their family members), the employer, and the job offer. From this form, the following data is collected:

- Employer, business location, NAICS code, contact information
- Job offer, job location, NOC, TEER, hourly wage, start date
- Candidate name, age, nationality, citizenship, country and address of residence, marital status, number of family members, and contact information

Other Documentation/ Data Collected

If the candidate attended a designated learning institution (DLI) in the West Kootenay, they submit documentation through the online portal. This information helps track candidates that are already in the region. The IMM5984 Job Offer Form includes fields for the candidates residence, so we can track overseas candidates/ candidates living outside the West Kootenay.

Data Analysis

Using the data collected through the online portal and the IMM5984 Job Offer Form, RNIP tracks information on:

- Job offers including job title, NOC, and location.
- Employers, unique employers to use the pilot, and the top employers using the pilot
- Pathway to applying to RNIP: in the region, studied at Selkirk college, overseas/ elsewhere in Canada.
- Total number of people receiving community recommendations for Canadian permanent residency.

Jobs/ Job Offers

This data demonstrates the jobs that are most in demand in the West Kootenay region. It helps identify priority jobs for the region to encourage more candidates to pursue those jobs.

Information about jobs is also useful for international students at Selkirk College/ those planning to attend Selkirk college, as they decide on their area of study.

Community

Job Offers/ Candidates

This demonstrates the uptake of the Pilot throughout the region. This data is shared quarterly with the RNIP Advisory Committee so that we can work with the representatives from communities with low numbers to increase uptake, and identify sectors/ employers that would benefit from the pilot.

Unique Employers

Tracking unique employers shows uptake and reach within the community. It also indicates employers and sectors where outreach may be required.

Pathways to RNIP

This data demonstrates the strong relationship between Selkirk College and RNIP. It also shows the growing uptake with overseas candidates as the pandemic restrictions loosen.

Community Recommendation for Permanent Residency

This data demonstrates the total number of people who are able to apply for Canadian permanent residency due to RNIP.