



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

# British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program

## Statistical Report 2021



BC Provincial Nominee Program

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Canada

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The offices of the BC Provincial Nominee Program are located on the traditional territory of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, who have been stewards of this area for many generations.

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## Introduction

The British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) Statistical Report has been produced annually since 2017 to share key program statistical results. The 2021 report provides an overview of key program statistics for the 2021 calendar year.

The 2021 edition is organized so that each program stream has its own section, using an explanatory narrative to provide context given that the streams are uniquely distinct from each other. Much of the statistical information is presented in the form of pie or line charts or simple diagrams, using visuals to convey the results of a complex program.

New in this year's report is an overview of the BC PNP's strategic objectives, as well as an expanded number of related key performance measures.



## **New in 2021: An overview of BC PNP Strategic Objectives**

## Program Overview

The British Columbia Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) was created in 2001 to strategically select and nominate a limited number of prospective immigrants for permanent residence status in Canada. BC provincial nominees can apply to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) for permanent residence for themselves and their dependants.

The BC PNP is the only tool available to the Province to directly select economic immigrants who will be coming to live and work in B.C. and create economic benefit.

### Two Streams: Skills and Entrepreneur Immigration

The BC PNP has two streams, each of which takes a unique approach to select immigrants who have the skills and experience needed to help with B.C.'s economic recovery and growth.

**The Skills Immigration (SI) stream** is for workers with the skills, experience, and qualifications needed by B.C. employers.

**The Entrepreneur Immigration (EI) stream** is for experienced entrepreneurs who intend to actively manage an eligible business in the province.

The SI stream typically accounts for about 99 per cent of BC PNP nominees, but up to 5 per cent of the program's nominations can be used for the EI stream.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect the BC PNP in 2021. The effect was especially notable for EI, as travel restrictions continued to impact the in-person exploratory visits required for the EI-Regional Pilot. In addition, while processing of EI applications continued, various restrictions made it more difficult for entrepreneurs to arrive in Canada and establish their businesses.

Total BC PNP Nominations				
Stream	2021	2020	2019	2018
Skills Immigration (SI)	6,213	6,251	6,503	6,439
Entrepreneur Immigration (EI)	38	17	48	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,251</b>	<b>6,268</b>	<b>6,551</b>	<b>6,500</b>

## Strategic Objectives

The Province of British Columbia's 2020 Strategic Plan introduced a set of broad goals for government, and the BC PNP works to align its program offerings to support as many of those goals as possible.

The BC PNP helps **improve the standard of living** for British Columbians by selecting nominees who are self-sufficient and contribute to increased wages in their sectors for all workers.

The BC PNP supports the provincial economy's ability to **deliver the services that people count on** by helping to address labour shortages in key service areas that British Columbians need, such as healthcare workers and early childhood educators.

The BC PNP helps **build a sustainable economy that creates opportunities for everyone** by supplementing the workforce in occupations that the domestic workforce cannot fully supply by itself. It also selects nominees who will encourage regional development by settling in communities outside of major urban centers, and it selects innovators and experts who will transfer knowledge and skills to British Columbians.

Finally, the BC PNP **advances equality, diversity, and inclusion** by selecting nominees who contribute to the diversity of social, cultural, and economic fabric of their new communities. It also strives to minimize any negative impact it might have on equity-seeking groups.

**The BC PNP works to support an economy that is diverse, inclusive, sustainable, and affordable**

## Key Performance Measures

The BC PNP continues to develop and refine key performance measures so that the program's contribution to the economic development of British Columbia can be more easily quantified, understood and reported publicly. In last year's report, there were two preliminary performance measures related to wage and regional program use in Skills Immigration.

This year’s report builds on that initial selection by adding regional program use for Entrepreneur Immigration as well as a new performance measure that monitors the number of nominees who perform essential services in health care and early childhood education. Specific targets for each performance measure have been added or are in development for inclusion in future reporting.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Baseline	BC PNP 2021 Data	Target (2022)
<b>1</b> The BC PNP selects nominees who are self-sufficient and who help increase wages in their sectors for all workers	Median wage of Skills Immigration (SI) nominees compared to median wage of British Columbians	Median wage for all B.C. workers (\$26.92/hour in 2021)	Median wage for BC PNP SI nominees in 2021: \$28.84/hour	Within reasonable range of the median wage for individual British Columbians
<b>2</b> The PNP selects nominee families who settle into affordable communities outside B.C.’s major urban centres	Skills Immigration (SI) Nominees who are settling outside of Metro Vancouver	21% of SI Nominees outside of Metro Vancouver (2020 level)	23% of the BC PNP’s SI nominees in 2021 were outside Metro Vancouver	Range: 23% to 25% of portion of allocation used for SI
	Entrepreneur Immigration (EI) Nominees who are settling outside of Metro Vancouver	71% of EI Nominees outside of Metro Vancouver (2020 level)	76% of the BC PNP’s EI nominees in 2021 were outside Metro Vancouver	Greater than 60% of portion of allocation used for EI
<b>3</b> The PNP selects nominees who help deliver essential services with identified shortages	Nominees who are essential service workers in health care and early childhood education	172 (2021 level)	Nominees in 35 prioritized healthcare occupations: 172	Increased level (Exact figure TBD)
		90 (2021 level)	Early childhood educator nominees: 90	Increased level (Exact figure TBD)

**Discussion of Results**

1. BC PNP’s median wage is currently just above the overall median wage for British Columbia. In 2021, BC PNP nominations generally targeted higher-skilled workers who bring their specialized knowledge and experience to British Columbia.
2. Moving forward, the program will be seeking to further support the immigration needs of all regions by progressively increasing the proportion of nominees settling outside of

Metro Vancouver. Under the current points system for Skills Immigration, registrants receive extra points if they will be working in any part of the province outside of the Lower Mainland. New measures are currently being introduced to prioritize regional candidates and are designed to lead to a higher percentage of regional nominees in 2023.

3. In March 2022, the BC PNP began to prioritize Care Economy occupations, specifically health and childcare. The program made process and criteria changes to support meeting the critical demands for these occupations. As the BC PNP is currently evaluating the immediate-term impact of these changes, a specific figure for a 2022 target has not yet been established for these Care Economy priorities.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

In the spring of 2020, the BC PNP made various temporary changes to deal with the impact of COVID-19. However, most of those measures were ended before the beginning of 2021. The only major change that continued into 2021 was a temporary policy that registrations in 31 occupations related to tourism, hospitality, retail and personal services would not be eligible to receive invitations to apply until further notice. That suspension was removed in February 2021.

Overall nomination levels for the BC PNP in 2021 were similar to the levels seen in 2020 and remained below pre-COVID 2019 levels. However, these figures do not represent an overall decrease in immigration to British Columbia, nor was there a decrease in the level of applications processed under the BC PNP. In 2021, the federal government introduced a limited-time temporary to permanent resident pathway for some temporary residents who were already working in Canada to apply directly to the federal government to become permanent residents without involving the BC PNP. For that reason, the BC PNP saw significantly more withdrawn applications in 2021 as it did in 2020, but most of those applicants still intended to immigrate to British Columbia.

## Skills Immigration (SI)

The SI stream is made up of five categories:

- Skilled Worker
- Healthcare Professionals (became Health Authority category in March 2022)
- International Graduate (IG)
- International Post-Graduate (IPG)
- Entry-Level and Semi-Skilled (ELSS)

The Skilled Worker category is for experienced workers in a professional, management, technical, trade or other skilled occupation. The Healthcare Professionals category was focused specifically on medical professionals. The International Graduate and Post-Graduate categories is for international students (undergraduate and postgraduate) who have come to study at Canadian institutions and who wish to remain in Canada and start their careers in British Columbia. The Entry-Level and Semi-Skilled category is open to workers in specific occupations in tourism/hospitality, long-haul trucking, food processing, and healthcare.

Except for ELSS, all categories have an **Express Entry BC (EEBC)** option. The EEBC option requires applicants to meet BC PNP criteria and those of the federal Express Entry programs to benefit from faster processing of their federal permanent residency application.



## The Registration Pool and Invitations to Apply (ITAs)

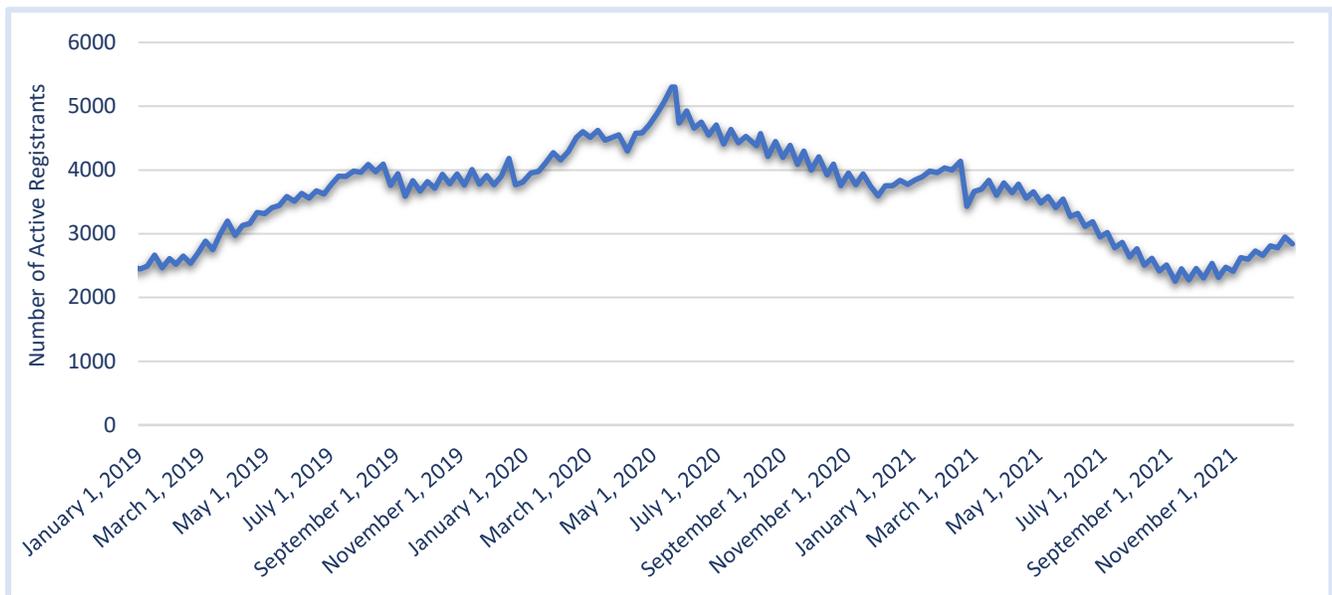
The Province uses an online, points-based expression of interest (EOI) system to manage application intake for the Skilled Worker categories, IG categories and ELSS category. This system helps prioritize candidates who are a strong match with program criteria. It also helps the BC PNP meet its service standards and process 80 per cent of applications within 3 months.

Prospective applicants first complete a no-fee registration that establishes a point score based on six main factors:

- Level of education
- Experience
- Language skills
- Occupation
- Salary being offered to them by a B.C. employer
- Job location

After a registration is received, it is automatically scored and immediately placed in a registration pool.

**Chart: Number of active registrations in Skills Immigration pool, 2019-21**



Registrations may remain active in the pool for up to one year. Registrants may elect to withdraw voluntarily at any time. To proceed on to the application stage, a registrant must receive an [invitation to apply \(ITA\)](#). The BC PNP periodically issues ITAs to the highest scoring active registrations. Some draws are limited to select, high-priority occupations. Recipients of ITAs have 30 days to apply. The minimum score necessary to receive an invitation fluctuates and is determined by factors that include BC PNP processing capacity and the size and quality of the registration pool.



\*The number of 2021 ITAs converted to applications is different from the number of applications received in 2021 in categories that require registration. This difference is caused by the fact that some late 2020 ITAs became applications in early 2021, and some late 2021 ITAs became applications in early 2022. Please also note that not all SI applications require registration, so the number of applications that result from ITAs is always smaller than the number of total applications in any given time period.

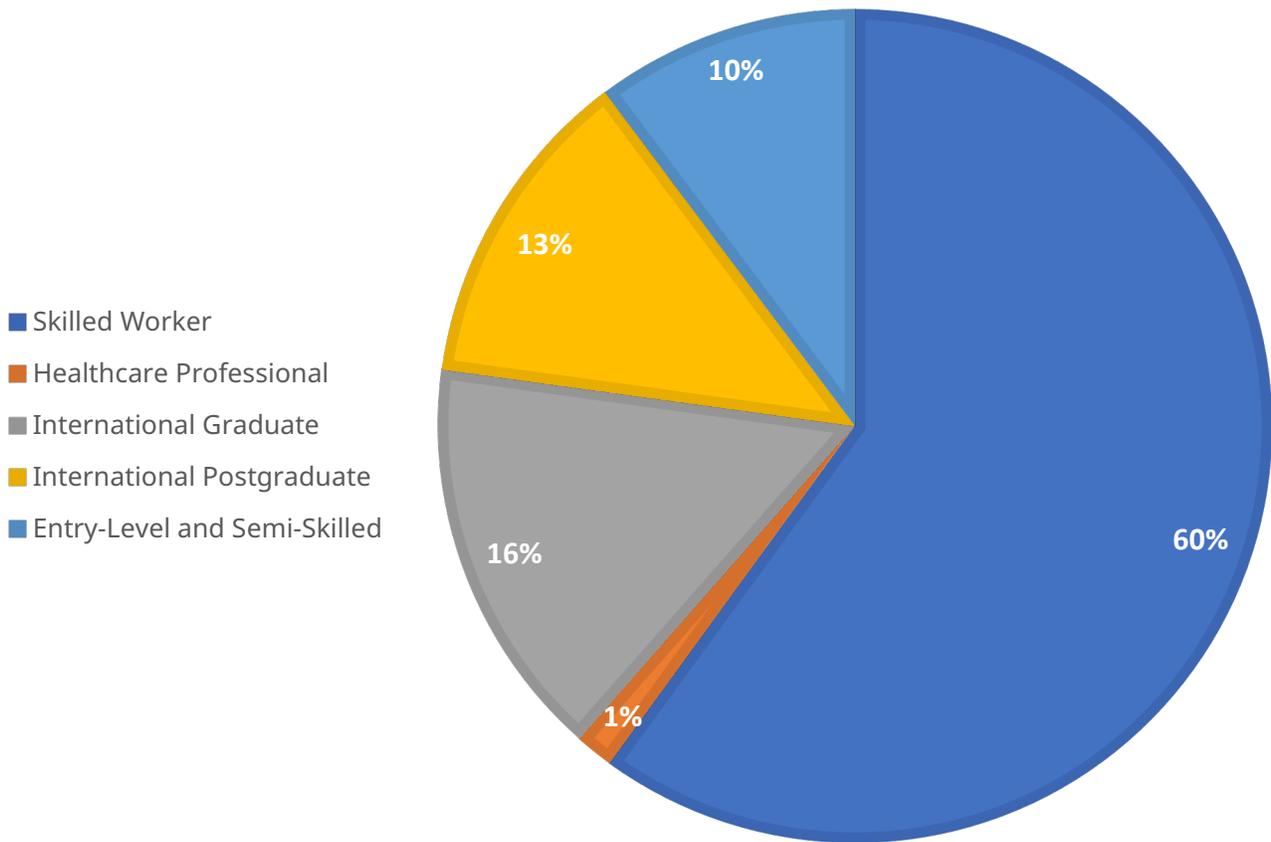
In 2021, the BC PNP issued an unusually high number of ITAs to receive approximately the same number of applications as it did in 2020. The main reason for this increase was the availability of time limited options to obtain permanent residency directly from the federal government in the first half of 2021. In general, most applicants to the BC PNP are already living in the province, and those temporary options were mainly focused on that type of applicant.

**Application Intake**

In 2021, 7,976 candidates responded to invitations to apply through the SI stream. This is a 2.1 per cent decrease from 2020, when the BC PNP received 8,148 SI applications.

The breakdown of applications by category can be found below. The Skilled Worker and EEBC – Skilled Worker categories, combined, accounted for 60 per cent of applications received in 2021. The student categories combined to make up 28 per cent of applications in 2021.

**Chart: Skills Immigration Applicants in 2021 by Category**



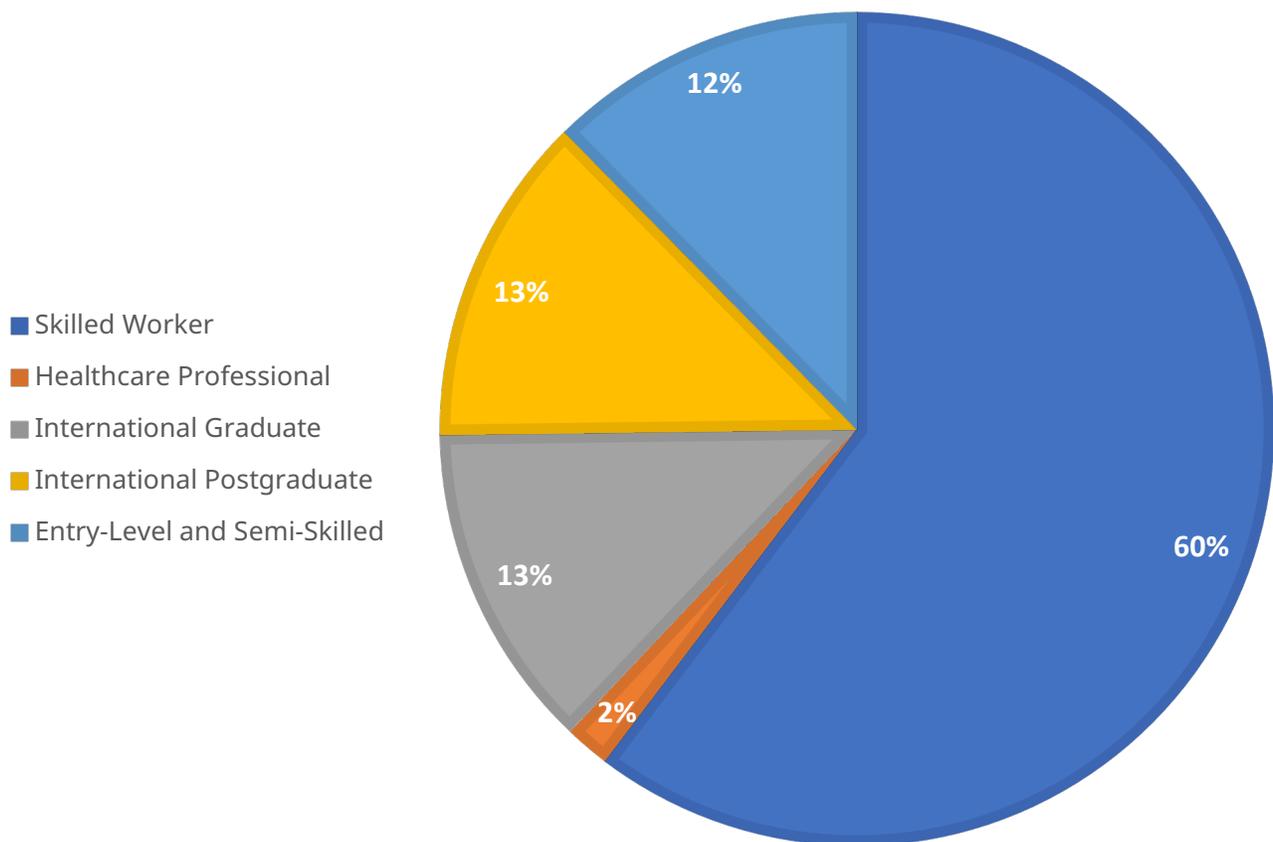
Total Skills Immigration Applications Received			
Category	2021	2020	2019
Skilled Worker	2,107	2,015	2,205
Entry Level and Semi-Skilled (ELSS)	815	570	827
International Graduate	474	468	568
International Post-Graduate	600	606	509
Healthcare Professional	75	76	70
EEBC - Skilled Worker	2,679	2,713	2,269
EEBC - International Graduate	776	1,351	1,270
EEBC - International Post-Graduate	406	320	280
EEBC - Healthcare Professional	44	29	26
<b>SI Total</b>	<b>7,976</b>	<b>8,148</b>	<b>8,024</b>

## Nominations

Each year, IRCC allocates a specific number of nominations to each province. Typically, the BC PNP uses about 99% of this allocation for the SI stream. In 2021, B.C. received an allocation of 6,750. As previously explained, there were temporarily a greater-than-normal number of options for many immigrants to apply for permanent residency in 2021. For that reason, the BC PNP ended the year with the somewhat lower figure of 6,214 SI nominations.

The following chart and table show the overall share of nominations for each category, as well as a more detailed breakdown.

**Chart: Skills Immigration Nominees in 2021 by Category**



<b>Total Skills Immigration Nominations by Category</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Skilled Worker	1,747	1,515	1,672
Entry Level and Semi-Skilled (ELSS)	768	374	667
International Graduate	375	339	420
International Post-Graduate	501	558	523
Healthcare Professional	71	72	70
EEBC - Skilled Worker	2,002	2,051	1,941
EEBC - International Graduate	415	1030	964
EEBC - International Post-Graduate	297	288	226
EEBC - Healthcare Professional	37	24	20
<b>SI Total</b>	<b>6,213</b>	<b>6,251</b>	<b>6,503</b>

In 2021, 60 per cent of all nominations were under the Skilled Worker categories and 26 per cent of nominations were under the International Graduate and International Post-Graduate categories. The percentage of nominees who were in a student category was less than normal in 2021 because many international students were eligible to apply directly to the federal government through temporary, limited-time pathways for permanent residency. This effect was particularly noticeable in the Express Entry option for the International Graduate category.

The International Post-Graduate categories nominated 798 new graduates who intend to settle in British Columbia. These categories help meet the objective of attracting and retaining innovative holders of advanced degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) with high human capital.

## **BC PNP Tech**

The BC PNP introduced the Tech Pilot in 2017 to help B.C. tech employers address their talent needs. In May 2021, the BC PNP indefinitely extended the Tech Pilot under a new name: BC PNP Tech. BC employers continue to be able to recruit and retain international skilled tech talent with a path to permanent residence. A list of the eligible occupations in engineering, technology, and business support services, along with other information about BC PNP Tech, can be found on our [website](#).

BC PNP Tech Nominations			
	2021	2020	2019
<b>Nominees</b>	1,697	1,855	1,509
<b>% of SI Nominees</b>	27.3%	29.7%	23.2%

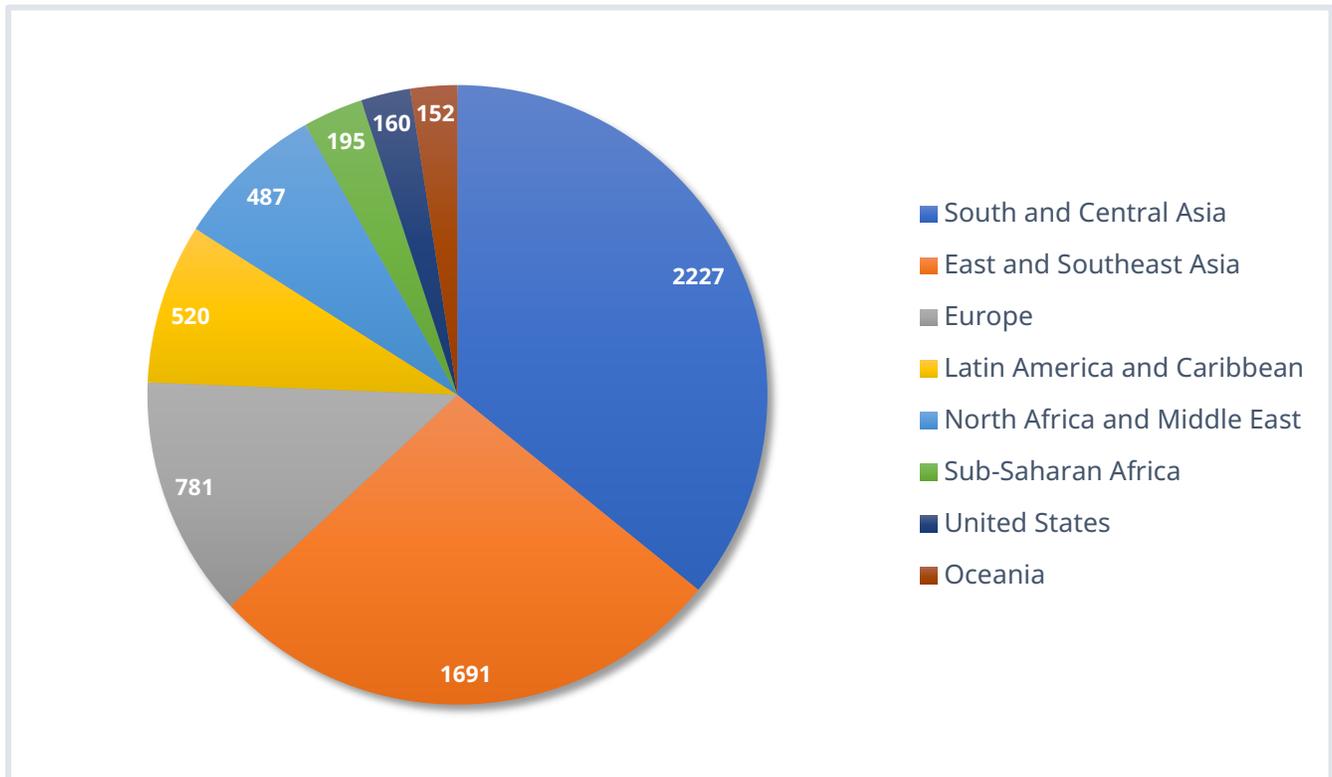
BC PNP Tech (which draws from the Skilled Worker and International Graduate categories) has grown to account for a large share of the program’s SI nominations. In 2021, Tech Pilot nominees constituted 27 per cent of all SI nominees. Six of the top 10 occupations nominated in 2021 were tech occupations: software engineers and developers, graphic designers and illustrators, computer programmers and interactive media developers, professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations, information systems analysts and consultants, and user support technicians.



## Geographical Origins of Nominees

Many nominees in the SI stream come from countries in Asia. 63 per cent of 2021 nominees came from either South/Central Asia or from East/Southeast Asia. Other regions that contributed significant numbers of nominees include Europe (12.6%) and Latin America/Caribbean (8.4%).

**Chart: Geographical Origins of 2021 Skills Immigration Nominees**



Top 5 Individual Source Countries for the SI Stream		
2021	2020	2019
India	India	India
China	China	China
Iran	Brazil	Brazil
Brazil	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
United Kingdom	Iran	South Korea

## Occupations

In 2021, there were no major changes to the distribution of SI nominees among the major occupational categories. Driven primarily by the success of BC PNP Tech, the natural and applied sciences and related continued to be the largest group. As in 2020, about a quarter of nominees belonged to that category.

The occupational category that saw the largest gain was trades, transport and equipment operators and related, which increased from a 13.0 per cent share of 2020 SI nominees to a 16.4 per cent share of 2021 nominees. The ongoing recovery of the retail and restaurant sectors from the COVID-19 pandemic also caused a modest increase in the share of sales and service workers (from 12.8% to 14.3%).

Occupational Category of SI Nominees	2021	2020	2019
Natural and applied sciences and related*	24.6%	26.5%	20.0%
Business, finance and administration	16.8%	18.4%	15.9%
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	16.4%	13.0%	11.3%
Sales and service	14.3%	12.8%	27.6%
No listed occupation (IPG)	12.8%	13.3%	11.4%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	5.0%	5.4%	5.5%
Education, law and social/community/government services	4.9%	5.0%	3.5%
Health	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%
Legislators and senior management	1.1%	1.1%	0.9%
Manufacturing and utilities	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Natural resources, agriculture and related production	0.8%	0.9%	0.4%

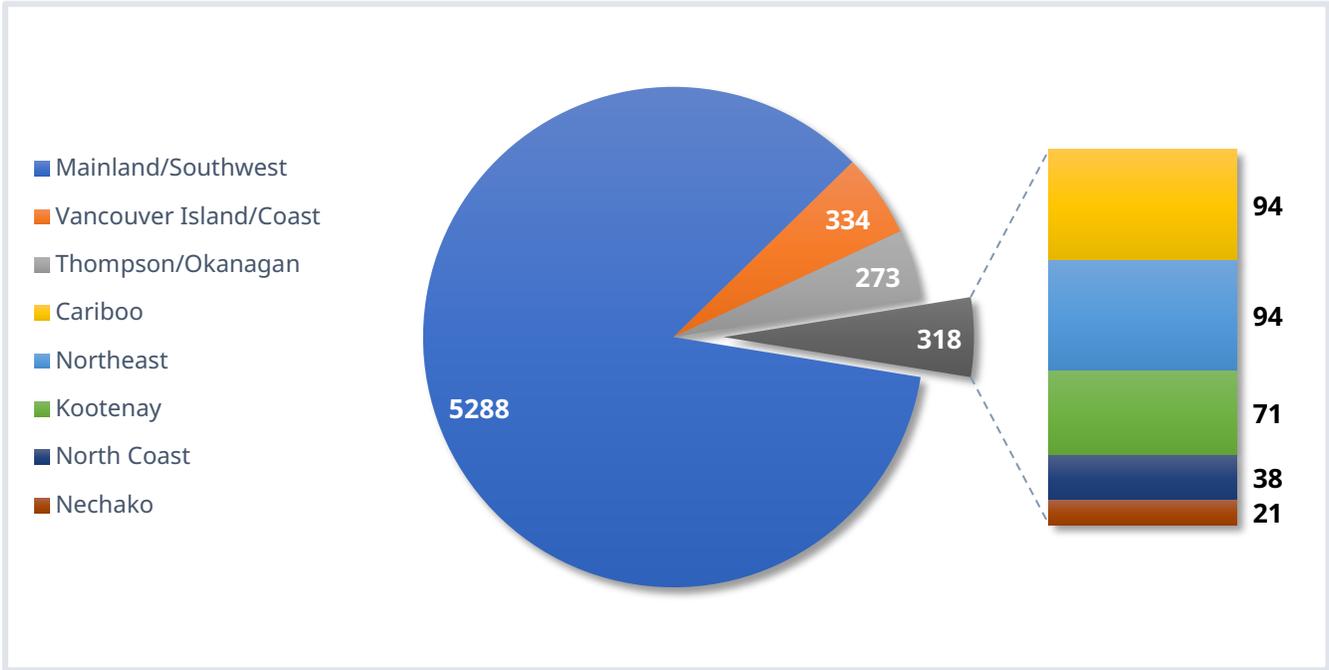
\*Increased nominations in this occupational category are mainly driven by nominees who are part of the BC PNP Tech initiative.

## Regional Distribution

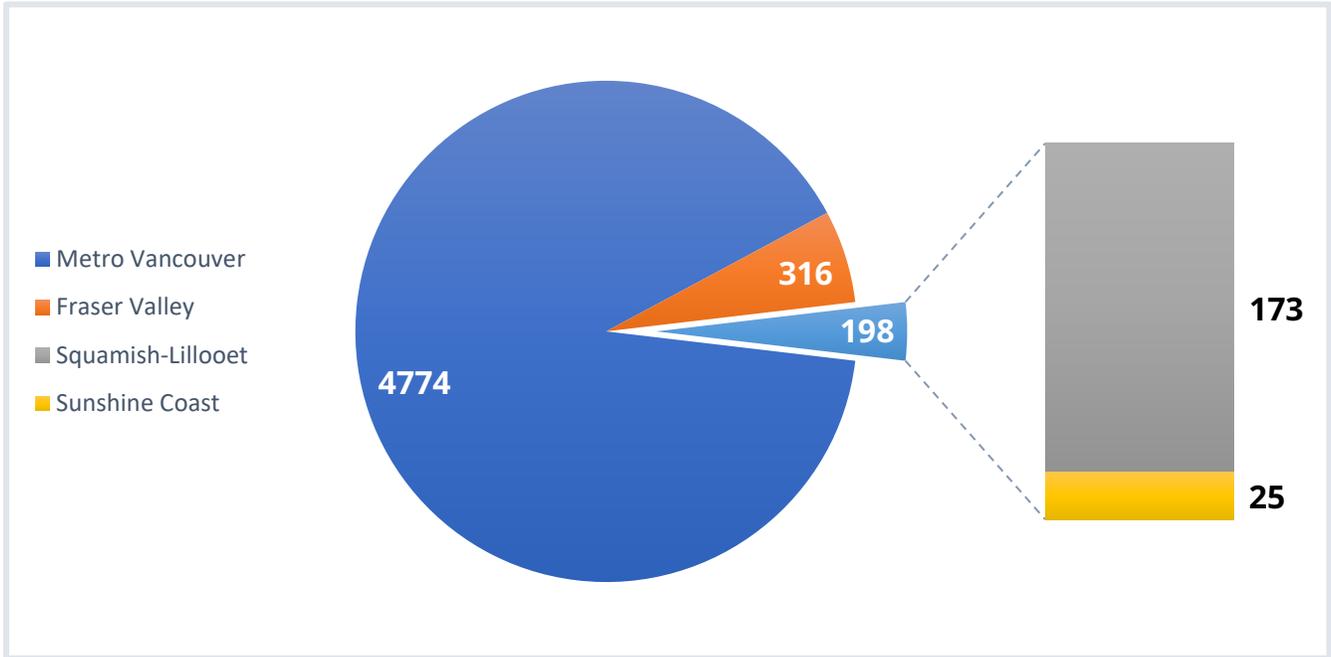
The primary destination for SI nominees is the Mainland/Southwest development region, which hosted 85.1% of Skills Immigration nominees in 2021. Most of them (76.8% of all Skills Immigration nominees) went to the Metro Vancouver Regional District, which is home to many of the jobs that immigrants are needed to fill.

The next three charts place a sharper focus on how the Mainland/Southwest region and the Metro Vancouver Regional District nominees can be further broken down.

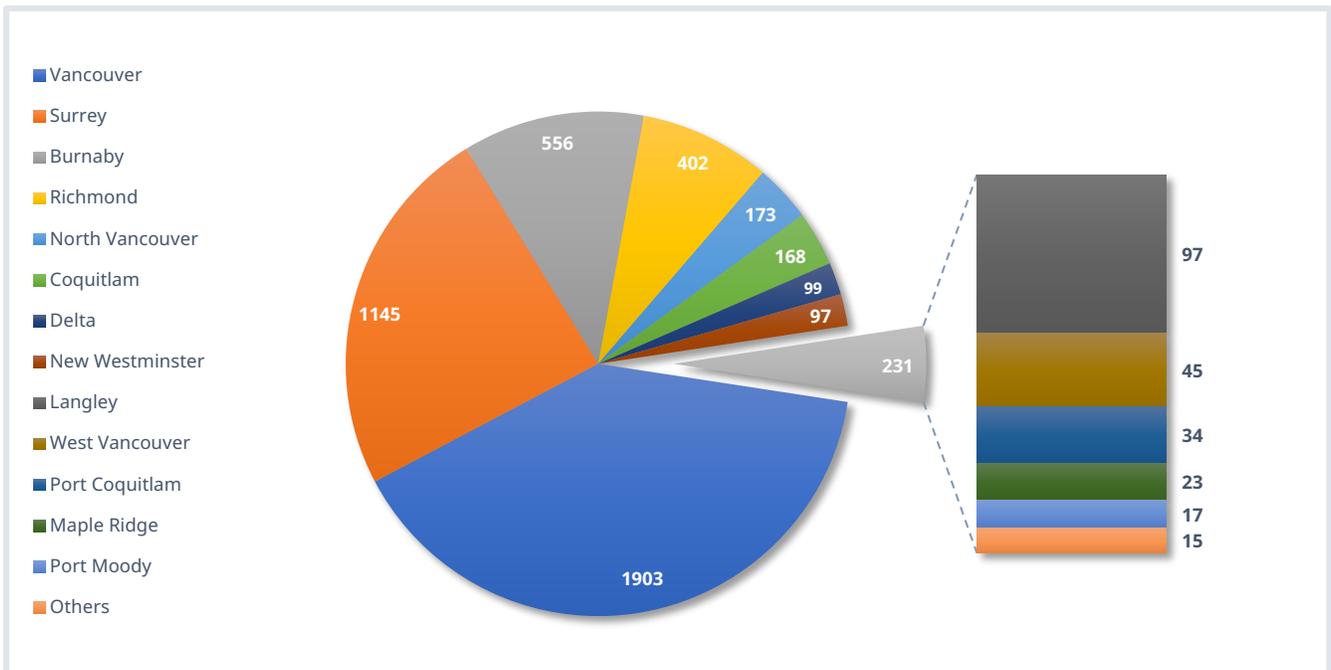
**Chart: 2021 Skills Immigration Nominees by Development Region**



**Chart: 2021 Skills Immigration Nominees per Regional District in the Mainland/Southwest Development Region**



**Chart: 2021 Metro Vancouver Regional District Skills Immigration Nominees by Municipality**

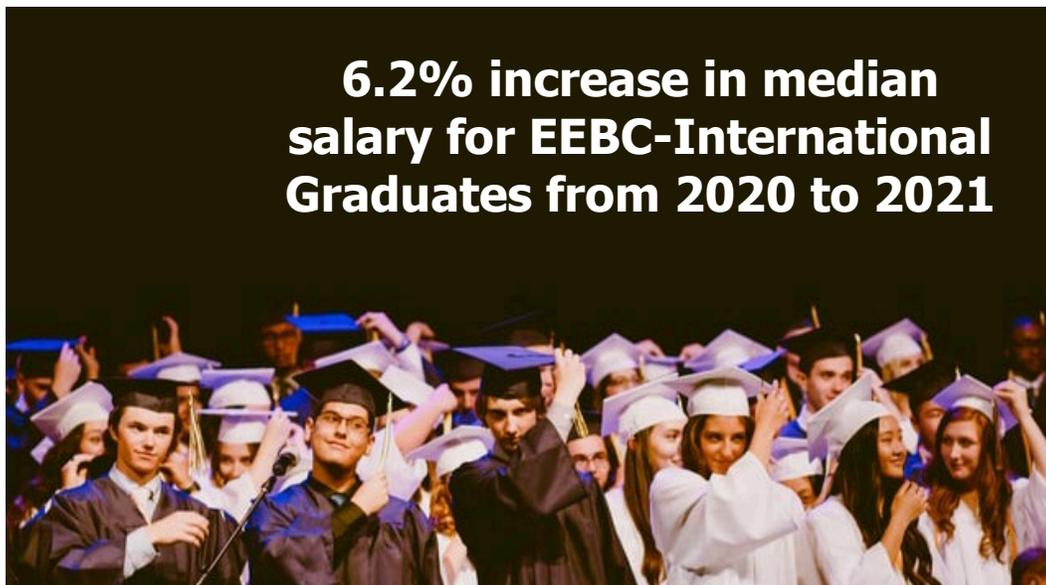


## Salary

Salary information about 2021 SI nominees can be seen in the table below.<sup>1</sup> Both average and median salary data is included, although the median data gives the most accurate indication of what the typical salaries are for each category.

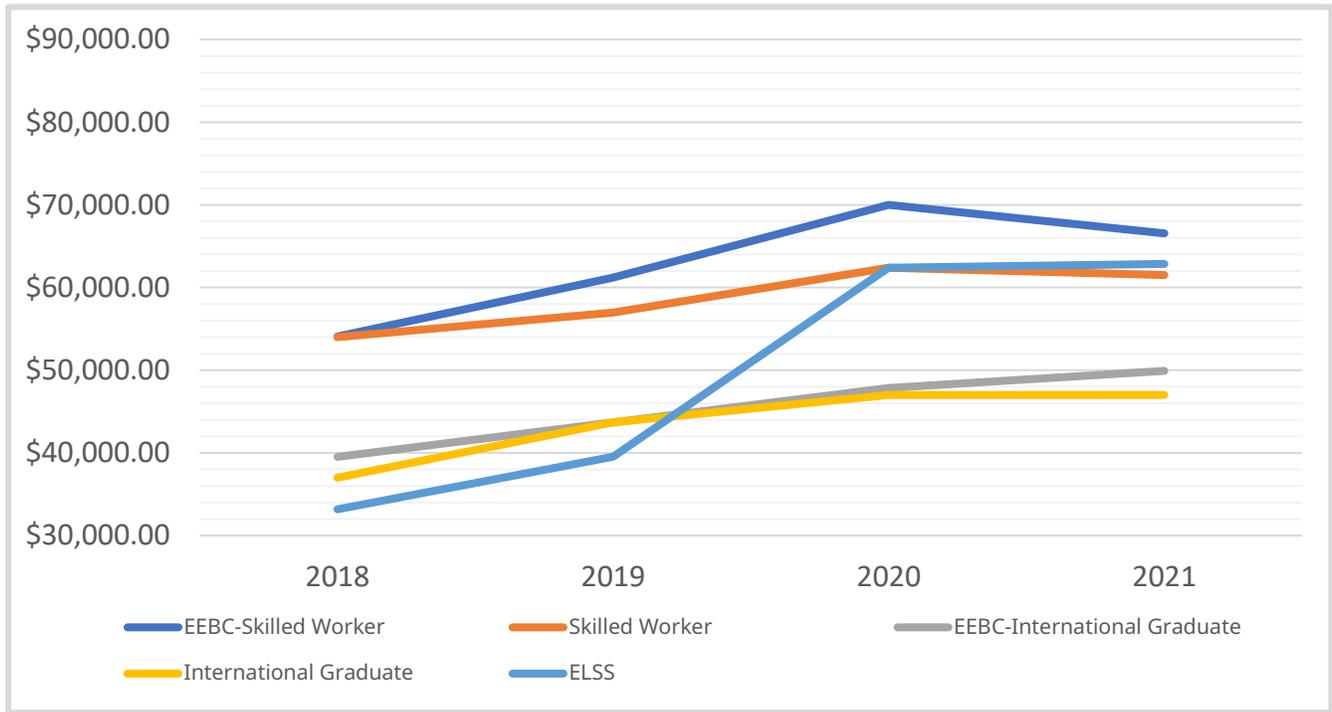
Category of Nominee	Average 2021 Salary	Median 2021 Salary
EEBC - Skilled Worker	\$81,167	\$66,560
Skilled Worker	\$74,495	\$61,500
EEBC - International Graduate	\$53,315	\$49,920
International Graduate	\$50,070	\$47,008
Entry Level and Semi-Skilled	\$56,921	\$62,855

As the charts on the next page illustrate, SI nominee salaries have generally risen in recent years. In 2021, there were modest decreases in average and median salary in most BC PNP categories, likely in part because of the temporary increase in the availability of opportunities to apply directly to the federal government for some of the highest-paid candidates in British Columbia for permanent residency.

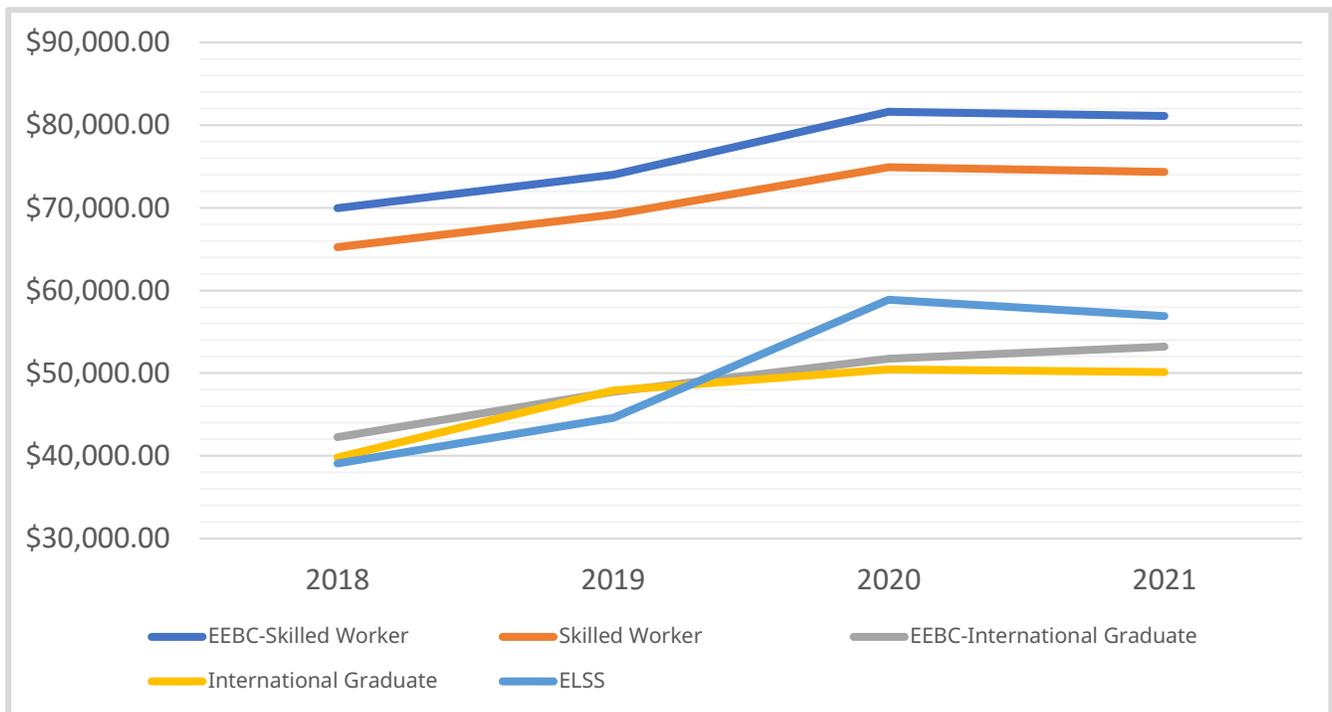


<sup>1</sup> For salary calculations, International Post-Graduates, EEBC – International Post-Graduates, Health Care Professionals and EEBC – Health Care Professionals have been excluded. Average salaries are found by simply dividing the sum of all the salaries by the total number of salary earners. Median salary data is found by identifying the middle number in the sequence of salary numbers when it is ordered from lowest to highest (or vice versa).

**Chart: Median Salaries in Skills Immigration Categories, 2018-21**



**Chart: Average Salaries in Skills Immigration Categories, 2018-21**



## Entrepreneur Immigration (EI)

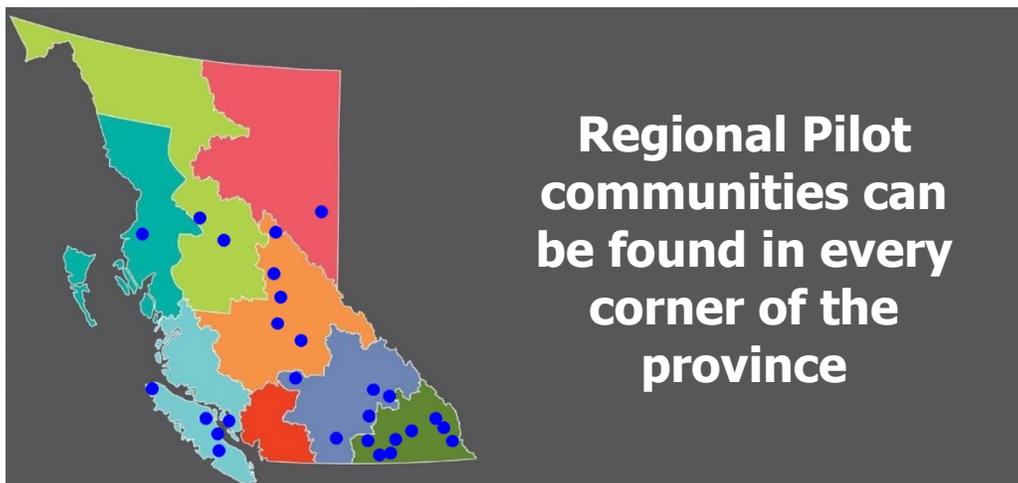
The EI Stream is designed to target experienced entrepreneurs who can support innovation and economic growth in the province. It has three categories:

- Base
- Regional Pilot
- Strategic Projects

The EI selection process has two steps. If an entrepreneur's business proposal is approved, the Province supports their application for a work permit that allows them to come to B.C. as temporary residents to implement their business plan. Entrepreneurs then have a specific period of time (between 12 and 24 months, depending on their application category) to establish their businesses before they become eligible for nomination.

The Base category allows foreign entrepreneurs to propose a new business or purchase an existing business in any part of British Columbia.

The BC PNP launched the EI Regional Pilot in March 2019. The Regional Pilot is limited to smaller communities that are not located within 30 km of a major center (population 75K or more). Unlike the Base category, which does not directly involve communities, the Regional Pilot category is delivered in collaboration with participating communities, based on their specific economic development needs. 2021 was a transitional period for the Pilot. In March, the Province extended it for an additional three years. This new phase of the Pilot, which includes new participating communities and minor adjustments to eligibility criteria, began to accept registrations on November 1.



The Strategic Projects category is designed for foreign corporations that have identified strategic investment opportunities in B.C. to establish operations that are integral to the growth and expansion of their core business. It enables foreign corporations to permanently transfer key staff with specialized corporate knowledge and expertise to their operation in British Columbia. The volume of prospective applicants who meet the criteria for this category is small, so their statistics are only captured in the totals for the EI stream.

### Registration, Qualification, and ITAs

Both the Base and Regional Pilot categories require registration. Registration for the EI stream requires a \$300 processing fee because program staff must assess it and assign a business concept score to determine whether an entrepreneur is qualified for the pool. Qualified registrants may remain in the pool for up to six months. Periodically, invitations to apply (ITAs) are issued to the highest scoring registrations. Draws for each category are conducted separately and at different scores.

***EI Base registrations submitted in 2021:***



Registration for the Base category is unrestricted and open to all interested entrepreneurs who feel they meet the criteria. In 2021, 76 per cent of registrants in this category were assessed as qualified and remained in the pool for up to six months. Invitations to apply were issued to 44 of these qualified Base Category entrepreneurs. These numbers are smaller than in 2020 because on July 19, 2021, the BC PNP temporarily paused intake of new registrations for the Base category in order to commence a review that ensures the category will continue to support government priorities and to effectively prepare prospective applicants to succeed as entrepreneurs in British Columbia.

### EI Regional Pilot registrations submitted in 2021:



To register for the Regional Pilot, an entrepreneur must have a referral from one of the 60+ [participating communities](#). In 2021, the BC PNP received 10 registrations for the Regional Pilot, a significant decrease from the 57 registrations received in 2020, but one that is expected to be temporary.

One reason for this decrease was the significant disruption to international travel created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because prospective entrepreneur immigrants were often unable to travel to Canada to conduct the exploratory visits required in this category during the pandemic, many had to delay submission of registrations that might otherwise have been received by the BC PNP during 2021. There was also a temporary lull in registrations because of the transition period between the first phase of the Pilot, which ended in March 2021, and the opening of registration intake for the second phase in November 2021. During this time, the BC PNP was mainly focused on working to bring new participating communities on board.

### Application Intake

EI Applications	2021	2020	2019
<b>EI-Base (Principal Applicant)</b>	46	127	224
<b>EI-Regional Pilot</b>	11	70	34
<b>Key Staff</b>	0	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>268</b>

There are three different types of EI applications, each of which is listed separately in the table below. In 2021, application volume was lower in both categories than in 2020. As discussed in the previous sections, these decreases are linked to the temporary pause on registration intake for the Base category, the transitional period in the Regional Pilot, and the COVID-19 pandemic's ongoing impact on international travel.

Key Staff applications are for key personnel who are attached to a Strategic Projects application, or to an EI-Base application that was received prior to January 29, 2020. On that date, the EI-Base Category was adjusted to no longer allow principal applicants to include additional key staff in their applications.

### Work Permits

If approved by the Province, applicant entrepreneurs have a specific period of time (18-24 months for the Base or 12-18 months for the Regional Pilot) to establish their businesses before they become eligible for nomination.

Entrepreneurs Approved at the Work Permit stage			
Year	2021	2020	2019
Work Permit Stage Approvals	81	77	77

Of the 81 work permits approved in 2021:

- 40 were in the Base category
- 35 were in the Regional Pilot category
- 6 were for Strategic Projects Key Staff



## Nominations and Nominee Origins and Destinations

In 2021, the BC PNP nominated 38 entrepreneurs for permanent residency through its EI stream, more than twice as many as the 17 entrepreneurs nominated in 2020. Most of them applied through the EI-Base category. Because the Regional Pilot category was only launched in March 2019, entrepreneurs in that category have only recently begun to have had enough time to complete the business establishment stage and become eligible for nomination. In the final months of 2021, the BC PNP made its first ever nominations of Regional Pilot applicants.

The 38 nominated entrepreneurs in the BC PNP's 2021 cohort provided British Columbia with a significant economic benefit. They created 163 new jobs and contributed more than \$21 million in total personal investment.

Because of the small number of nominees, it is not possible to provide useful, complete breakdowns of data on the geographical origins of entrepreneurs or their destinations in British Columbia. However, it is possible to provide the following highlights:

- China continued to be the primary country of origin, with half of nominees holding Chinese passports
- Iran was the country of origin that increased the most, moving up from having no nominees in 2020 to having 16 per cent of nominees in 2021
- As was the case in 2020, nominated entrepreneurs were split roughly evenly between the Mainland/Southwest Development Region and the rest of the province
- 76 per cent of nominees were starting businesses outside of Metro Vancouver



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The offices of the BC Provincial Nominee Program are located on the traditional territory of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, who have been stewards of this area for many generations.