



Commentary from World Education Services on the 2025 Federal Budget – Canada Strong

Beyond Signals: Unlocking Immigrations Nation-Building Potential

Canada's federal [Budget 2025: Canada Strong](#) offers early signals that immigration could be recognized as one foundational element of a coherent national growth strategy. As the country confronts economic uncertainty and demographic decline, there's a real opportunity to catalyze and unlock immigration's full nation-building potential.

An Integrated Approach

Including the immigration levels plan within the federal budget is a significant shift. It could signal that immigration is being considered a part of broader economic and social planning, rather than treated as a standalone policy area.

To cement immigration policy as a cross-cutting policy arena, we must seize the moment and put enhanced coordination front and centre. Integrated coordination mechanisms, shared objectives, outcomes, and implementation tools can translate this recognition into coherent policy. The federal budget ought to create better linkages between immigration workforce planning and transformative nation-building investments—\$115 billion in infrastructure, \$30 billion in defense and security, and \$25 billion in housing over five years—and address labour shortages in in-demand sectors. In other words, investments in talent and human capital must be in lockstep with capital injections.

At the macro level, unlocking immigration's nation-building potential requires that we treat it as foundational to population renewal, economic growth, and community building—an approach WES has long advocated. In practice, innovative ways to break down silos means using a truly whole-of-government and whole-of-society strategy supported by dedicated funding that aligns immigration planning across key ministries ([IRCC](#), [ESDC](#), [ISED](#), [Health Canada](#), and [Global Affairs](#)) and engages provinces and territories, civil society, employers, communities, and immigrant-serving organizations.



At the meso and micro level, this means coordinating every stage of the immigration journey—from selection to integration—within a coherent, stable, and predictable system-wide framework. Such a framework must align newcomer and family well-being with regional needs, access to good work, labour market forecasting, infrastructure and community capacity, and settlement supports, creating shared benefit for Canada and for the people who choose Canada as their home.

Unlocking Talent Already Here

The new budget advances its economic agenda through major infrastructure and capital investments aimed at boosting productivity, and a critical productivity enabler is already in Canada: internationally trained professionals and tradespeople whose skills remain underutilized due to credential recognition barriers.

WES welcomes the inclusion of credential recognition through the federal government's \$97 million Foreign Credential Recognition Action Fund. Yet this funding has historically focused on supporting individual navigation supports, which, while important, addresses symptoms rather than root causes. Investments must shift toward implementing systemic reforms that expand licensure and certification access for all qualified internationally educated professionals and workers. Targets ought to focus on system-wide interventions to improve labour market integration, and one such indicator to assess program success is the increased number of internationally educated health care professionals who secure licenses. Achieving this objective will require unprecedented coordination across federal departments such as IRCC, ESDC, and Health Canada, as well as regulatory bodies, provinces and territories, and employers. The goal of this coordination is a coherent system that aligns immigration selection with viable licensure pathways, evidence-based labour market forecasting, and clear outcome measures.

Such a system would unlock significant productivity gains by ensuring that internationally trained professionals and tradespeople can actually work in their fields, but only if immigration is positioned as a strategic priority requiring coordinated oversight, cross-departmental collaboration, and sustained efforts to ensure that investments translate into measurable workforce outcomes.

Refocusing on Permanent Residence

Budget 2025's emphasis on permanent over temporary migration, meanwhile, aligns with [WES' recommendation](#) that permanent residence be the foundation of Canada's immigration system. Yet the budget provides limited detail on how the process of transitioning temporary residents to permanent status will be implemented, including how many will be able to transition and on what timeline.



As Canada rebalances the immigration system to emphasize permanent residence, we need a transition plan that involves clear pathways from temporary to permanent residence. The integrity of the immigration system depends on a well-designed transition plan that is transparent, clear, and predictable. Permanent status provides the stability immigrants need to fully integrate and contribute to Canada's productivity and economic growth, while enabling governments, employers, and communities to plan for the future.

Moving from Signals to Change

Budget 2025 offers important directional signals, recognizing immigration within broader economic planning and emphasizing permanent over temporary migration. Yet realizing immigration's nation-building potential requires more than signals. Canada needs coherent coordination mechanisms, systemic reforms, and comprehensive transition frameworks to ensure that newcomers, communities, and Canada as a whole can thrive for generations to come.

About WES

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For over 50 years, WES has set the standard for international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change. Together with its partners, WES enables people to learn, work, and thrive in new places. Since 2013, WES has been a designated provider of Educational Credential Assessments (ECAs) for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).