

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Visa Issuance Statistics

Canadian Visa Issuance



PRESS RELEASE

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Out of the 3 million immigrants to Canada between 2015 and 2024, 2.6% (81,325) originated from Pakistan – **Canada Visa Issuance Statistics**

Islamabad, December 10th, 2024

Gallup Pakistan, as part of its Big Data Analysis initiative, is looking at Canada Visa Issuance Statistics, which can be found [HERE](#).

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was started by Bilal I Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. Bilal explains the rationale of the series: *"The usual complaint from academics and policy makers is that Pakistan does not have data availability. Our experience negates that. Pakistan has lots of data, but it is not available in a usable form and not widely accessible. At Gallup we plan to bridge this gap in terms of accessibility and use of data. The Gallup Big Data series has earlier worked with data sets such as [PSLM](#), [Labour Force Survey](#), and [Economic Survey reports](#) as well as [National Census Reports](#) and [Election Commission Data sets](#). The current series is using the [Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard](#), which provides a variety of visa-related statistics. We hope that these series are useful, and we welcome both feedback as well as possible collaborations as we create a public good in the form of useful data sets in Pakistan."*

For more reports and dashboards on Pakistan please visit our dedicated website:

<https://www.galluppakistananddigitalanalytics.com/>

What data points this current edition covers:

This series aims to present the important learnings from the Visa Issuance Statistics Dashboard, for policy makers, the public, as well as for marketers in an easy and understandable way. This edition looks at Canada Visa Issuance Statistics. The series' main aim is to provide data. Implications of these data points for development sector as well as wider socio-political ramifications is something we would like to trigger in relevant circles.

Canadian Visa Issuance Statistics

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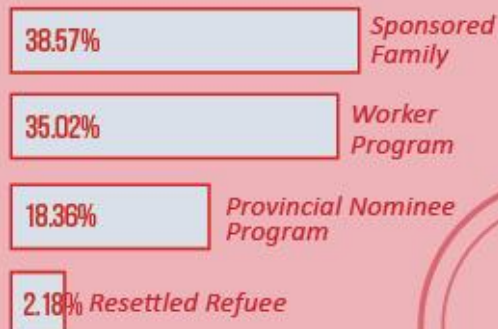
DISTRIBUTION OF CANADIAN VISAS ISSUED TO PAKISTANIS

Out of the 3 million immigrants to Canada between 2015 and 2024, 2.6% (81,325) originated from Pakistan, reflecting a modest but steady contribution to Canada's diverse immigrant population



TYPES OF CANADIAN VISAS ISSUED TO PAKISTANIS,

Sponsored Family visas accounted for the largest share of Canadian visa issuances to Pakistanis, comprising 31,365 visas or 38.6% of the total.



APPROVAL RATE FOR STUDY PERMITS APPLICATIONS BY IRCC:

For Pakistani applicants, the Study Permit approval rates steadily increased over the three years, rising from 29% in 2019 to 33% in 2020 and reaching 37% in 2021.



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA 2025-2027 IMMIGRATION LEVELS PLAN

According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the plan is set to reduce permanent residency targets over the next three years

395,000 permanent residents in 2025 (down from 500,000)
395,000 permanent residents in 2025 (down from 500,000)
365,000 in 2027

Source: Government of Canada, visualization by Gallup Pakistan



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Key Findings:

1. Out of the 3 million immigrants to Canada between 2015 and 2024, 2.6% (81,325) originated from Pakistan.
2. Sponsored Family visas accounted for the largest share of Canadian visa issuances to Pakistanis, comprising 31,365 visas or 38.6% of the total.
3. Of the total 31,365 Sponsored Family visas, the highest annual issuance occurred in 2023, with 4,445 visas issued amidst the post-COVID recovery.
4. For Pakistani applicants, the Study Permit approval rates for Canada steadily increased over the three years, rising from 29% in 2019 to 33% in 2020 and reaching 37% in 2021.
5. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the plan is set to reduce permanent residency targets to 395,000 permanent residents in 2025 (down from 500,000)
6. Canada aims to reduce its temporary resident population to 5% of the total population by the end of 2026.

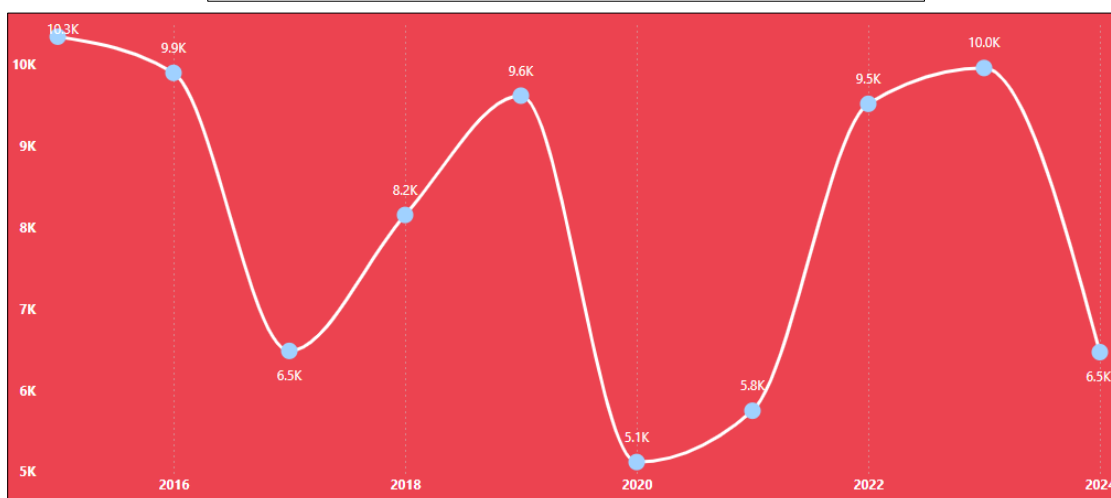
1. Out of the 3 million immigrants to Canada between 2015 and 2024, 2.6% (81,325) originated from Pakistan, reflecting a modest but steady contribution to Canada's diverse immigrant population.

Between 2015 and 2023, an average of 8,317 Canadian visas were issued to Pakistanis annually.

The issuance of Canadian visas to Pakistanis over the past decade has followed a wave-like pattern, with notable fluctuations influenced by global and regional factors. In 2015, visa approvals peaked at 10,345, indicating a period of relatively high immigration activity. This was followed by a decline to 6,485 in 2017. Numbers rebounded to 9,620 in 2019, suggesting renewed interest and opportunities for migration, before plummeting to 5,120 in 2020—a decline likely exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns, border closures, and travel restrictions. By 2023, visa issuances had recovered significantly, rising to 9,960, nearing pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 1: Distribution of Canadian visas issued to Pakistanis, 2015-2024

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2024	2,140	1,590	2,740		6,470
2023	2,490	2,720	2,250	2,500	9,960
2022	1,930	2,425	2,675	2,490	9,520
2021	930	750	2,105	1,965	5,750
2020	1,995	865	1,275	985	5,120
2019	1,905	2,690	2,725	2,300	9,620
2018	1,965	2,115	2,070	2,005	8,155
2017	1,535	1,675	1,700	1,575	6,485
2016	2,475	3,125	2,620	1,680	9,900
2015	1,925	2,930	3,130	2,360	10,345
Total					81,325

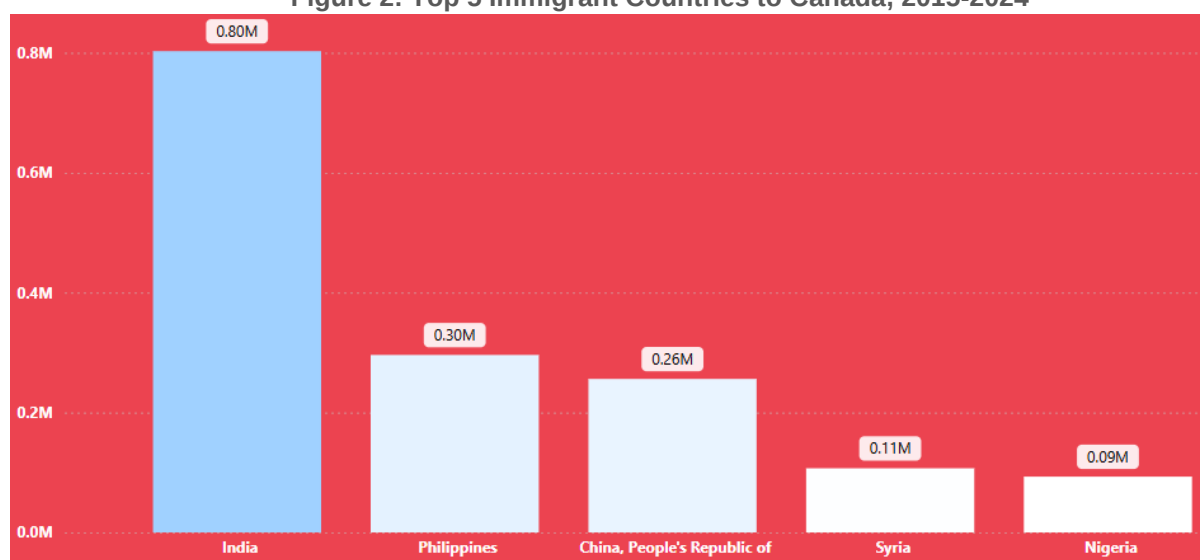


Source: Government of Canada¹, visualization by Gallup Pakistan²

The overall contribution of Pakistan to Canadian immigration underscores a strong connection between the two countries, supported by Canada's multicultural immigration policies and the presence of a growing Pakistani diaspora. The wave-like trend in visa issuances highlights the dynamic nature of migration, influenced by a combination of economic, political, and global health factors. The sharp decline in 2020 serves as a reminder of how external crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic, can disrupt even established migration flows.

The recovery observed in 2023 suggests resilience in demand for Canadian visas among Pakistanis, driven by opportunities for education, employment, and family reunification. However, the variability in visa numbers over the years could also point to systemic bottlenecks, policy adjustments, or stricter application screening during certain periods.

Figure 2: Top 5 Immigrant Countries to Canada, 2015-2024



Source: Government of Canada, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

With Pakistan accounting for just 2.6% of immigrants to Canada between 2015 and 2024, it is insightful to examine the top five countries contributing to Canada's immigrant population. India leads by a significant margin, comprising 25.6% (802,650 immigrants) of the total. The Philippines follows with 9.5% (295,985 immigrants), while China ranks third with 8.2% (255,995 immigrants). Syria and Nigeria round out the top five, contributing 106,975 and 93,055 immigrants, respectively. These figures highlight the diverse origins of Canada's immigrant population and the varying scales of migration flows from different regions.

2. Sponsored Family visas accounted for the largest share of Canadian visa issuances to Pakistanis, comprising 31,365 visas or 38.6% of the total.

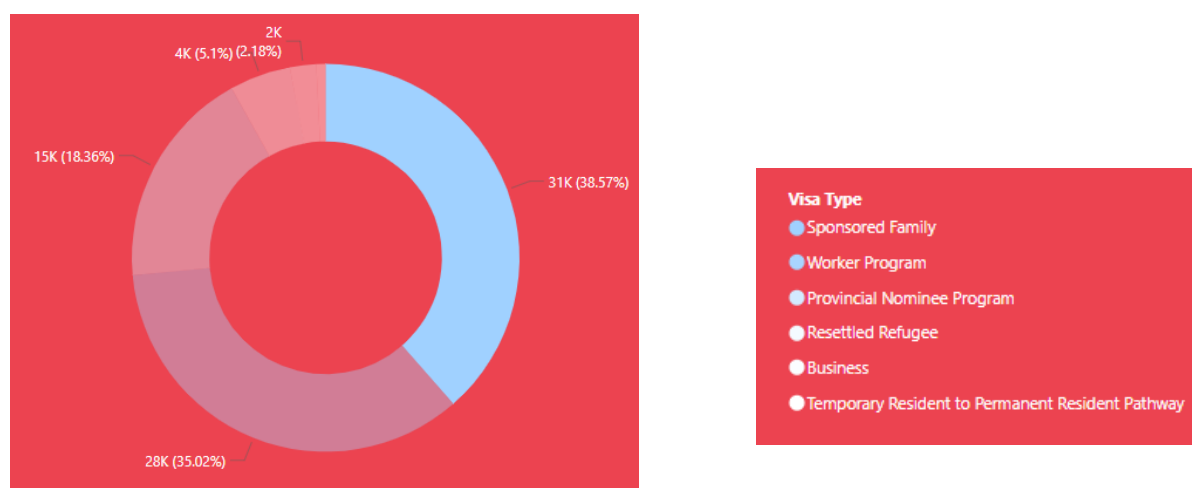
This was followed closely by Worker Program visas, which made up 35%. Other notable categories included the Provincial Nominee Program (18.7%), Resettled Refugee visas (5.1%), and Business visas (2.2%).

¹ <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda>

² <https://gallupakistandigitalanalytics.com/canada-global-visa-issuance-analysis/>

The prominence of Sponsored Family visas reflects the strong familial and cultural ties between Pakistan and Canada, with many Pakistani immigrants leveraging Canada's family reunification policies to bring loved ones to the country. The substantial share of Worker Program visas underscores the demand for Pakistani labor in Canada's economy, particularly in industries seeking skilled and semi-skilled workers. This category also demonstrates the effectiveness of Canada's immigration strategies in addressing workforce shortages while offering economic opportunities to migrants.

Figure 3: Types of Canadian visas issued to Pakistanis, 2015-2024



Source: Government of Canada, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) represents another significant pathway, showcasing Canada's regional approach to attracting immigrants based on provincial needs. The 18.7% share for PNP visas indicates growing interest among Pakistani applicants in settling outside of major urban centers, aligning with Canada's efforts to distribute immigration benefits across its provinces and territories.

The smaller shares of Resettled Refugee and Business visas point to more specific migration objectives. Resettled Refugee visas reflect Canada's humanitarian commitments, with Pakistan being a notable source of refugee applicants due to its regional challenges. Business visas, though a small percentage, highlight the potential for Pakistani entrepreneurs and investors to contribute to Canada's economy, albeit on a more limited scale compared to other categories.

These trends illustrate the multifaceted nature of Pakistani migration to Canada, shaped by a combination of economic opportunity, humanitarian need, and family reunification. Moving forward, policies that balance these priorities while addressing systemic challenges—such as improving application processing times or supporting regional immigration initiatives—will be crucial in sustaining and strengthening the Pakistan-Canada migration relationship.

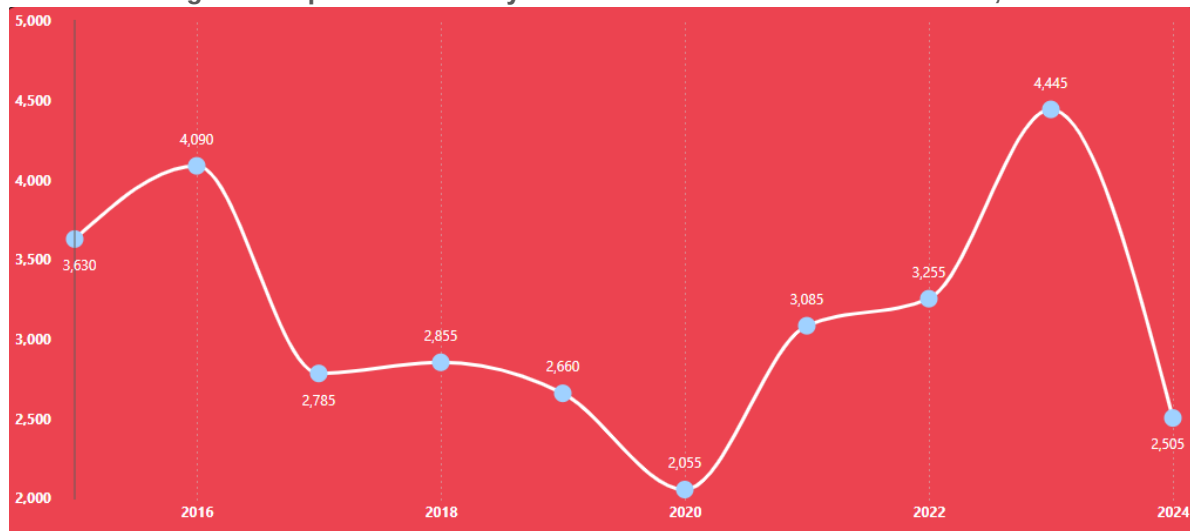
Analyzing the 38.6% share of Sponsored Family visas issued to Pakistanis between 2015 and 2024 reveals a trend far more stable than the overall pattern of Canadian visa issuances during the same period.

- Of the total 31,365 Sponsored Family visas, the highest annual issuance occurred in 2023, with 4,445 visas issued amidst the post-COVID recovery.**

Unlike other visa categories, this type did not experience a significant decline in 2017 or a sharp spike in 2019, indicating a consistent demand and supply dynamic.

The steadier trend in Sponsored Family visas also suggests a level of resilience in this category, possibly because it is less influenced by economic cycles or labor market needs compared to other visa types, such as Worker Program visas. Families applying under this category may also face fewer policy shifts, as these visas are often insulated from geopolitical or economic considerations that affect other immigration streams.

Figure 4: 'Sponsored Family' Canadian visas issued to Pakistanis, 2015-2024



Source: Government of Canada, visualization by Gallup Pakistan

Approval rates for study permit applications (excluding extensions) processed by IRCC from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2021, reveals that the overall global approval rate remained at 60% in 2019 and 2021, with a significant decline to 51% in 2020, likely reflecting disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. For Pakistani applicants, the Study Permit approval rates steadily increased over the three years, rising from 29% in 2019 to 33% in 2020 and reaching 37% in 2021.

While this upward trend is noteworthy and suggests progress in meeting application requirements or enhanced emphasis on attracting Pakistani students, the approval rates for Pakistan consistently lagged behind the global average. In 2019, the approval rate for Pakistani applicants was less than half the global rate, and although the gap narrowed slightly by 2021, it remained significant, highlighting potential systemic challenges for applicants from Pakistan.

Interestingly, despite the global drop in approval rates during the pandemic year of 2020, Pakistani applicants saw an increase in approvals. This divergence suggests that the processing or prioritization of Pakistani applications during this period may have been less affected by pandemic-related disruptions compared to other countries.

Figure 5: Approval Rate for Study Permits Applications by IRCC (2019-2021)

Country of Residence 	2019 	2020 	2021 
Grand Total	60%	51%	60%
Pakistan	29%	33%	37%

Source: Government of Canada³

The data underscores the persistent disparity in approval rates for Pakistani applicants compared to global averages, reflecting challenges that need to be addressed to ensure equitable access. However, the steady improvement in approvals for Pakistani students may indicate growing recognition of their potential, offering opportunities for Pakistan to strengthen educational ties with Canada and improve outcomes for future applicants.

Canada's 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan outlines a significant shift in the country's immigration and temporary residency policies, reflecting a strategic response to demographic and economic challenges.

5. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the plan is set to reduce permanent residency targets over the next three years, with notable reductions from previous goals:

- 395,000 permanent residents in 2025 (down from 500,000)
- 380,000 in 2026 (down from 500,000)
- 365,000 in 2027

These adjustments are expected to result in a temporary population decline of 0.2% in both 2025 and 2026 before rebounding to 0.8% growth in 2027. The reductions aim to address natural population losses, manage temporary resident volumes, and mitigate housing and labor market pressures.

Figure 5: Government of Canada 2025-2027 Immigration Levels Plan

Temporary Residents			
	2025	2026 	2027
Overall Arrivals 	673,650 (604,900 - 742,400) 	516,600 (435,250 - 597,950)	543,600 (472,900 - 614,250)
Workers (Total)	367,750	210,700	237,700
International Mobility Program 	285,750	128,700	155,700
Temporary Foreign Worker Program   	82,000	82,000	82,000
Students 	305,900	305,900	305,900

Source: Government of Canada⁴

6. Additionally, Canada aims to reduce its temporary resident population to 5% of the total population by the end of 2026.

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/committees/cimm-feb-15-17-2022/student-approval-rates.html#wb-auto-7>

⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2025-2027.html>

This involves significant policy changes, including stricter eligibility for temporary foreign workers and a cap on international student admissions. As a result, the temporary resident population is projected to decline sharply by approximately 445,000 in both 2025 and 2026, before a slight recovery in 2027 with an expected increase of 17,439 residents. These shifts reflect an emphasis on transitioning existing temporary residents to permanent status while curbing new inflows.

These measures highlight Canada's evolving approach to immigration, balancing economic goals with demographic sustainability. The focus on reducing temporary residents may signal a longer-term strategy to address systemic challenges, such as housing shortages and labor force integration, while maintaining Canada's commitment to supporting immigrants and their families.

In conclusion, the trends and shifts in Canadian visa issuances and immigration policies carry significant implications for Pakistan and its citizens. The steady demand for family sponsorships and worker programs highlights the enduring ties between the two countries, but the wave-like fluctuations in overall visa approvals underscore the challenges faced by Pakistani applicants in navigating evolving policies. As Canada adopts stricter immigration and temporary resident measures under its 2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan, Pakistanis seeking opportunities in Canada may encounter more competitive and selective processes. Strengthened support systems, improved application preparation, and continued engagement between the two nations will be crucial to ensuring that Pakistanis can effectively access opportunities in Canada while contributing meaningfully to its society and economy.

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

Wish to know more about the Canada Visa Statistics Dashboard?

The Canada Visa Statistics Dashboard unravels the complexities of immigration through data-driven insights. Whether you are interested in immigrant or non-immigrant visas, our dashboard provides a comprehensive overview of issuances by types, passport analysis, embassy statistics, and emerging trends. The dashboard allows users to discover key trends in country of origin data and understand the evolving patterns of immigration to Canada.

You can find more information on Visa Issuances on
<https://www.galluppakistandigitalanalytics.com/>

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