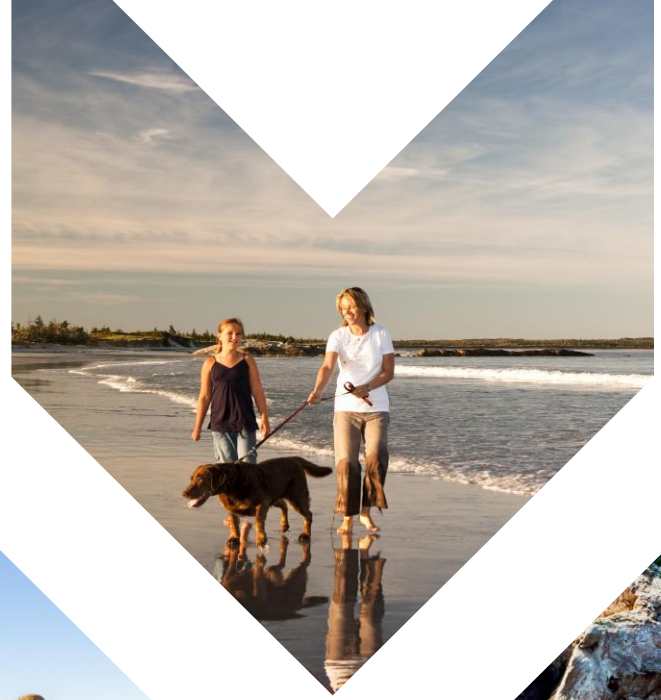
NOVA SCOTIA'S RESPONSE TO A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

How Nova Scotia is adapting immigration programs to support workforce and population growth

October 16, 2026



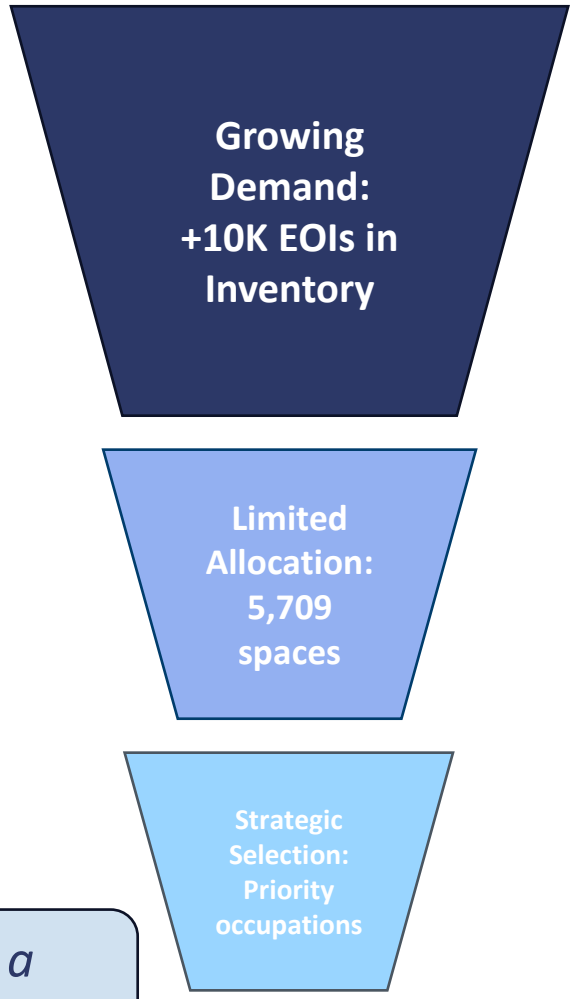






NOVA SCOTIA'S IMMIGRATION CONTEXT HAS CHANGED

- Federal immigration policy shifted significantly beginning in 2025, with lower permanent and temporary resident targets and a focus on sustainable growth.
- Demand for immigration continues to far exceed available nomination and endorsement spaces.
- The province is increasingly prioritizing healthcare, skilled trades, education and applied sciences to address critical labour shortages.
- 93% of nominations/endorsements support the transition of temporary residents already living and working in Nova Scotia to permanent residence.
- Attraction remains important, but retention and long-term labour market outcomes are increasingly driving program decisions.



Immigration remains a critical tool for population and workforce growth, but in a constrained environment every immigration space must be used strategically.

HOW NOVA SCOTIA HAS ADAPTED

Better Alignment

- Selection priorities focused on occupations experiencing persistent labour shortages.
- Increased emphasis on healthcare, physicians, skilled trades and applied sciences.
- Greater focus on regional and rural economic growth.

Program Modernization

- Formalized expression of interest (EOI) system.
- Streamlined NSNP from 10 streams to four.
- Published selection priorities and immigration data to improve transparency and predictability.

Support Retention

- Increased focus on settlement and retention as key drivers of immigration success.
- Investments in language, employment and integration supports for newcomers and families.
- More evidence-based approaches to improving newcomer retention.

The objective is ensuring limited immigration spaces support labour market needs, population growth and long-term retention.


NOVA SCOTIA