

## ASYLUM CLAIMANTS PROCESSED IN CANADA

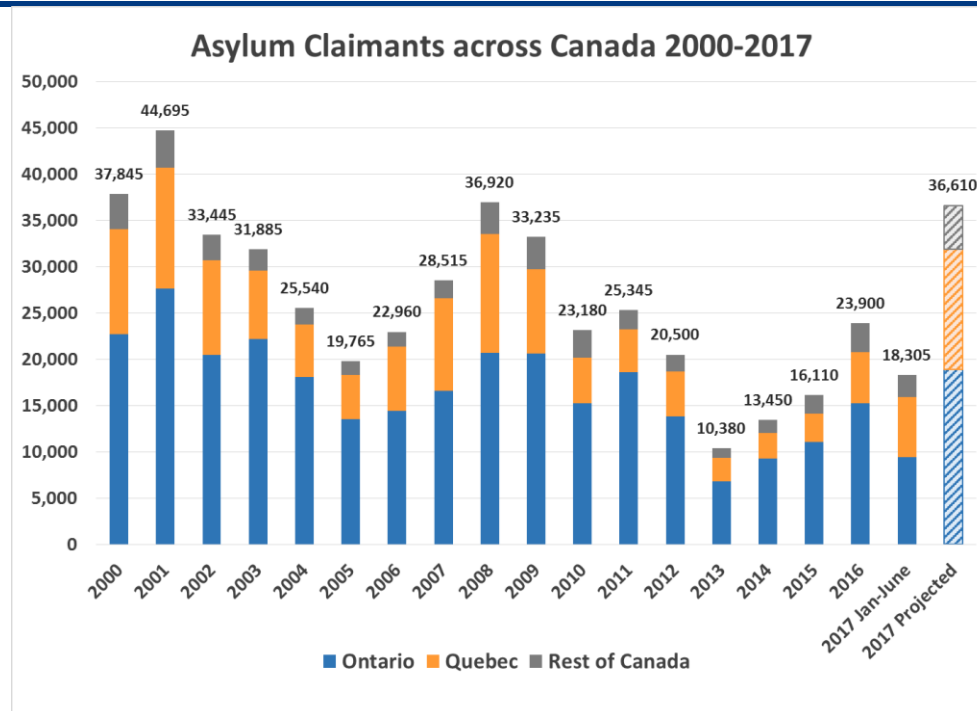
Number of asylum claims processed in Ontario, Quebec, rest of Canada and the entire country, over the period of 2000 to 2017

Recently, the number of asylum-seekers – people applying for refugee status at the Canadian border (as opposed to individuals claiming refugee status from their country of origin) – has attracted a great deal of media attention. The focus has been on the recent unexpected influx of asylum-seekers crossing the border from the U.S. into Manitoba and Quebec. The federal government has made an assertion that Canada can handle the surge in newcomers. However, it is provincial or municipal governments, and in particular local social agencies, in a municipality in which the claim is being made, that are responsible for allocating the necessary resources to handle the surge in asylum-seekers. This is important for understanding the potential impact it may have on the agencies’ ability to provide those individuals with the required assistance and other support.

The number of asylum claimants in Canada ebbs and flows over time and by province. Projected values for 2017 are similar to those of 2000 and 2008, while 2001 saw the largest surge in asylum-seekers in Canada since the year 2000

Today’s edition of *Social Policy Trends* reports the number of asylum claims made in Ontario, Quebec, rest of Canada, and the entire country, over the period of 2000 to June 2017, with a projected 2017 twelve-month value. The number of claims from year to year varies widely and unexpectedly.

The recent crisis may have made many Canadians aware of asylum-seekers for the first time, however, they have been arriving to Canada in significant numbers for many years. The graph shows that the number of asylum-seekers in Canada peaked in 2001 at 44,695 claims, with 27,610 claims registered in Ontario, 13,085 in Quebec and 4,000 in



Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, <http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/b6c9cf4d-f763-4924-a2fb-8cc4a06e3de4> and <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/asylum-claimants-historical.asp>

the rest of the country. The year with the lowest number of claims over the period was 2013, with 6,850 claims made in Ontario, 2,485 in Quebec and 1,045 elsewhere in Canada. The current Quebec January to June 2017 count stands at 6,500 claims, which if doubled by the end of the year, would closely match that province’s 2001 and 2008 values. This could mean Quebec would process over four times the number of claimants from two years earlier.

Manitoba has reached its record high, with the current number of claims from January until June at 825. If we double those numbers to account for the second half of 2017, we might find that by the end of this year, Manitoba will have processed nearly eight times the number of claimants from just two years earlier.

These wide swings in the number of asylum-seekers are particularly challenging for social agencies, whose staff must understand the unique circumstances of each claim, which may vary greatly depending on the claimant’s country of origin.