



OPPORTUNITY AWAITS

Attracting Francophone immigrants to Prince Edward Island

RDÉE

Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Votre conseil de développement économique

OFFICE

RDÉE Prince Edward Island Inc.

5 Acadian Drive
Charlottetown, PE
C1C 1M2

Email info@rdeeipe.org

Website www.rdeeipe.net/english

Telephone (902) 367 8412

Toll free 1 (866) 494 3439

Fax (902) 854 3099

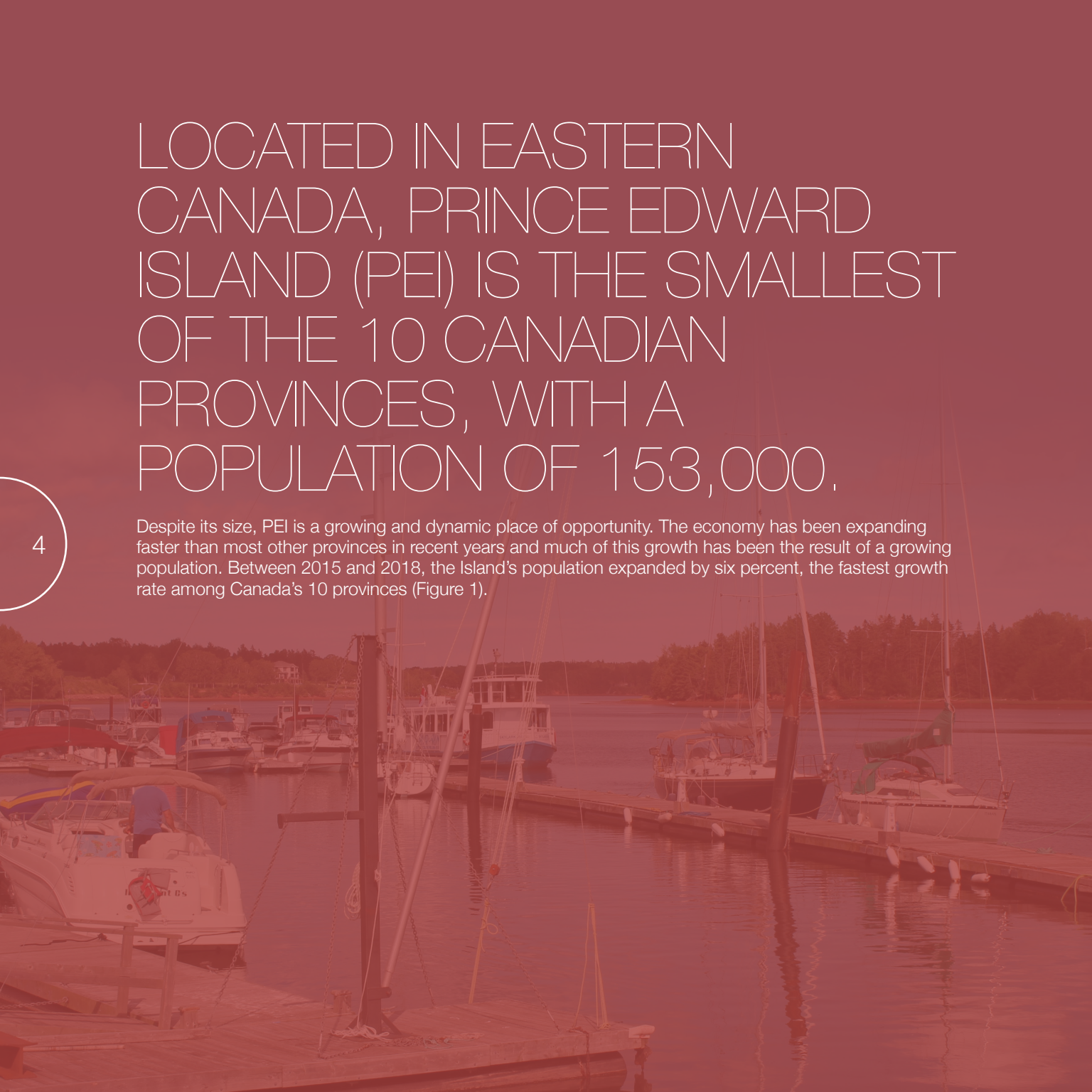
The **RDÉE** acronym signifies Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité.

A

Introduction:

The case for Francophone immigration





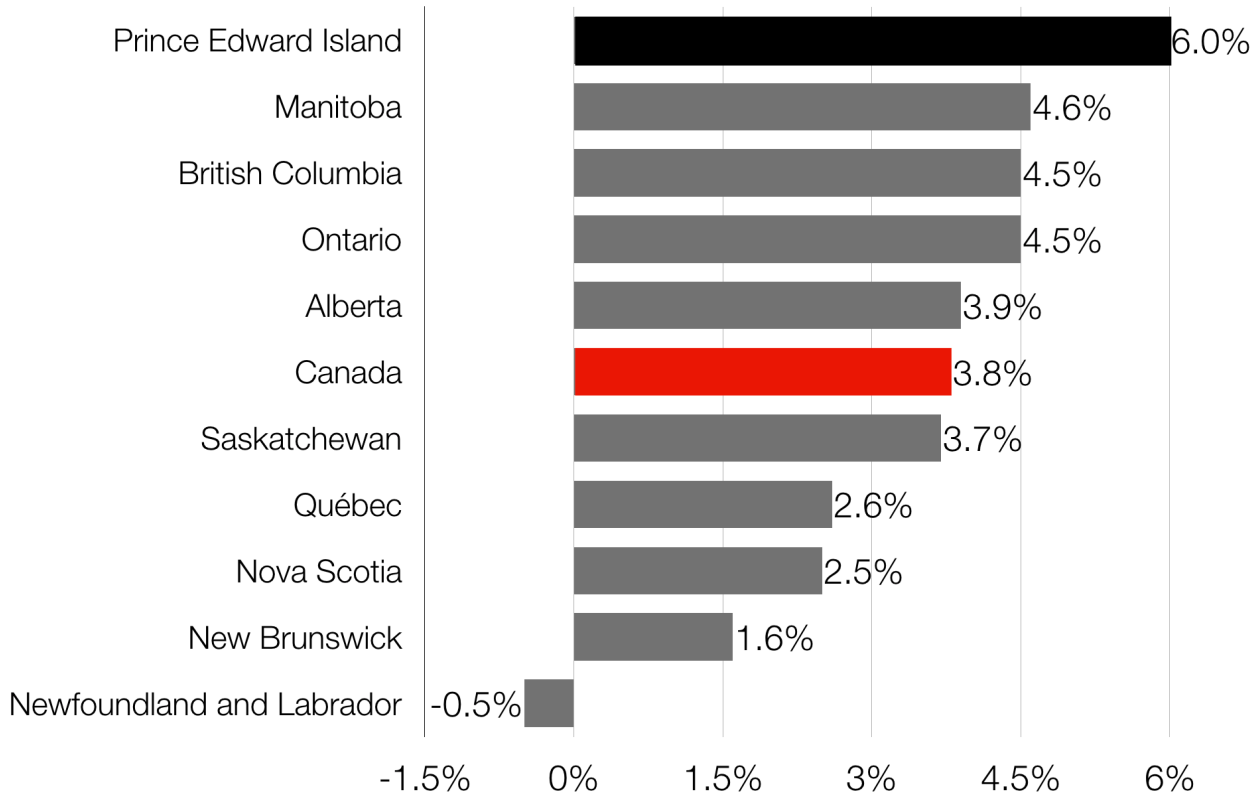
LOCATED IN EASTERN CANADA, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND (PEI) IS THE SMALLEST OF THE 10 CANADIAN PROVINCES, WITH A POPULATION OF 153,000.

4

Despite its size, PEI is a growing and dynamic place of opportunity. The economy has been expanding faster than most other provinces in recent years and much of this growth has been the result of a growing population. Between 2015 and 2018, the Island's population expanded by six percent, the fastest growth rate among Canada's 10 provinces (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Population growth rate by province in Canada - 2015 to 2018



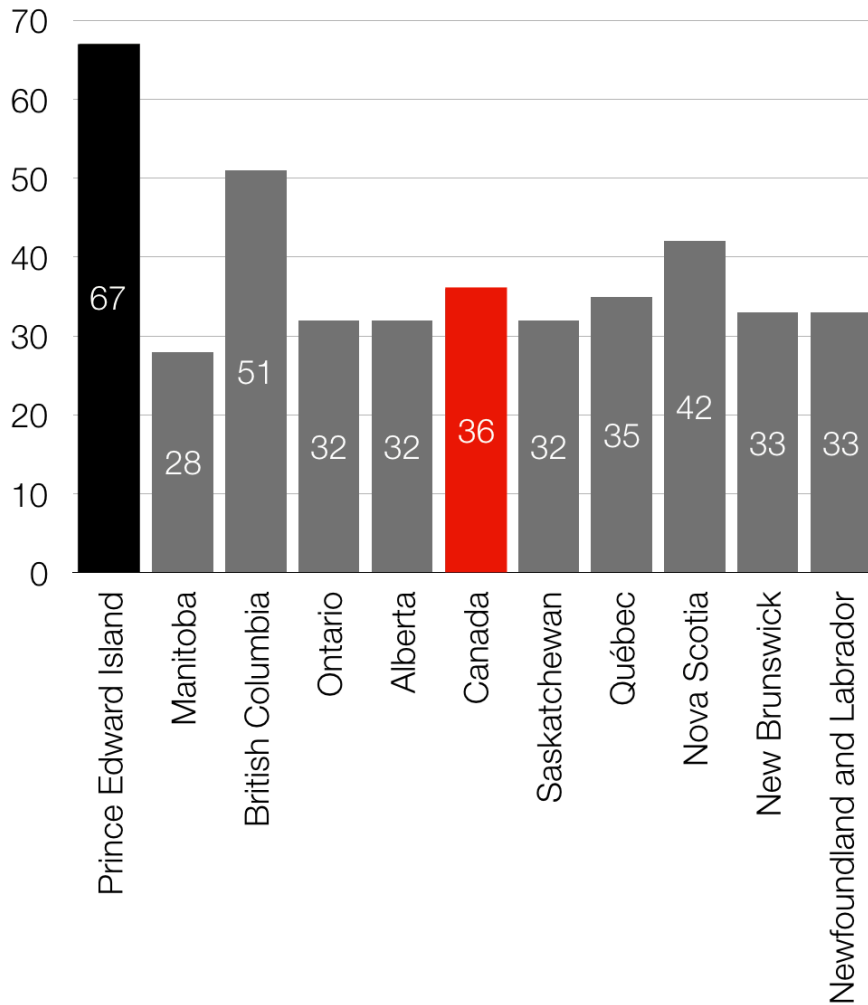
Source: Statistics Canada Table 17-10-0005-01.

There are a number of industries that have potential for future growth including tourism, value-added manufacturing, information technology and digital media production. As an indication of this potential, the total value of international merchandise exports from Prince Edward Island increased by 29 percent in the past five years, the second fastest growth rate among Canada's 10 provinces. Major exports include frozen French Fries, engine and turbine equipment, fish and seafood, aerospace parts, potatoes and pharmaceutical products.

Tourism is one of Prince Edward Island's most important industries. In fact, tourism contributes a larger share of the province's gross domestic product (GDP) than all other provinces in Canada. There are over 5,000 people working in tourism activities and hundreds of small businesses that derive a large part of their income from the attraction of tourists from around the world. PEI has the highest concentration of tourism workers of any province in Canada (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Workers in tourism activities per 1,000 in the overall labour market



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 24-10-0042-01.

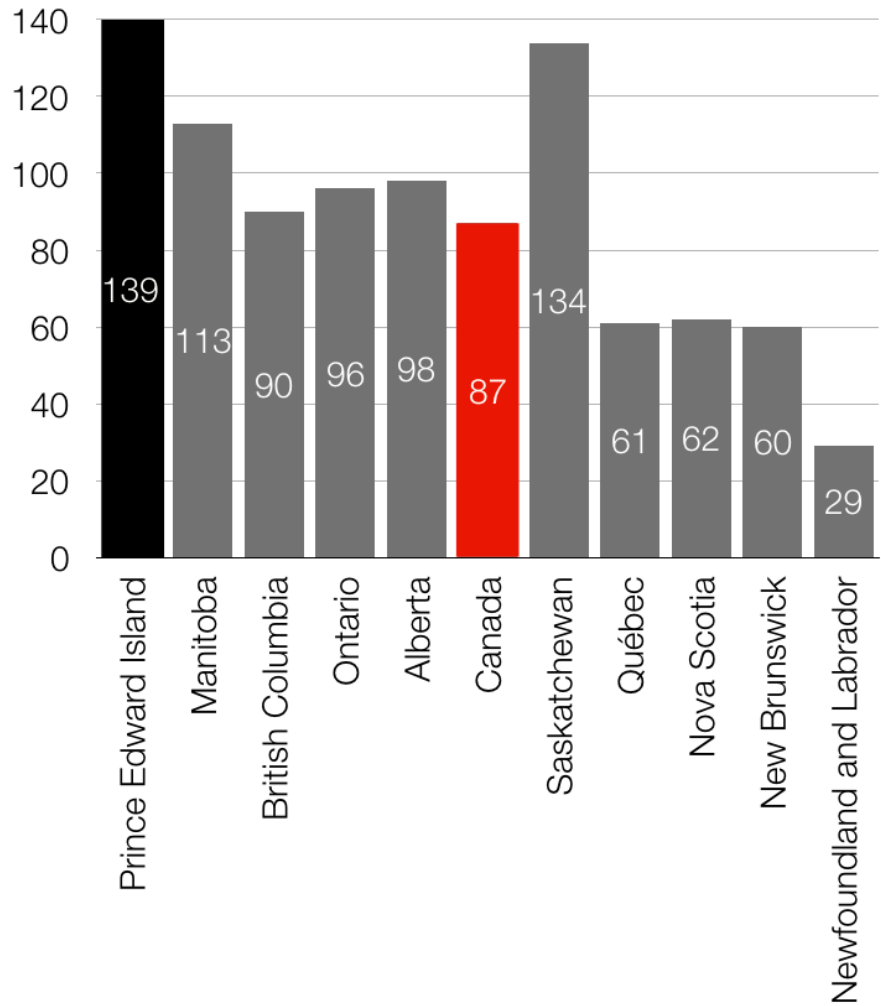
The growing economy needs workers

Nearly a decade ago the provincial government decided it would increase its focus on immigration. The demographic situation on the Island required a significant boost in the population of younger people. The immigrant attraction effort has been successful as the number of immigrants settling on the Island each year is has more than tripled compared to a decade ago. Between 2016 and 2018, an average of more than 2,100 immigrants came each year to live on Prince Edward Island.

In 2018, PEI had the highest immigration rate among the 10 provinces across Canada (Figure 3) with 139 new immigrants for every 10,000 in the population. And, mainly because of the influx of young immigrants, the median age of the province's population (the age at which half the population is younger or older) declined in 2018 for the first time in history.

FIGURE 3

Immigration rate per 10,000 population (2018)



Source: IRCC and Statistics Canada.

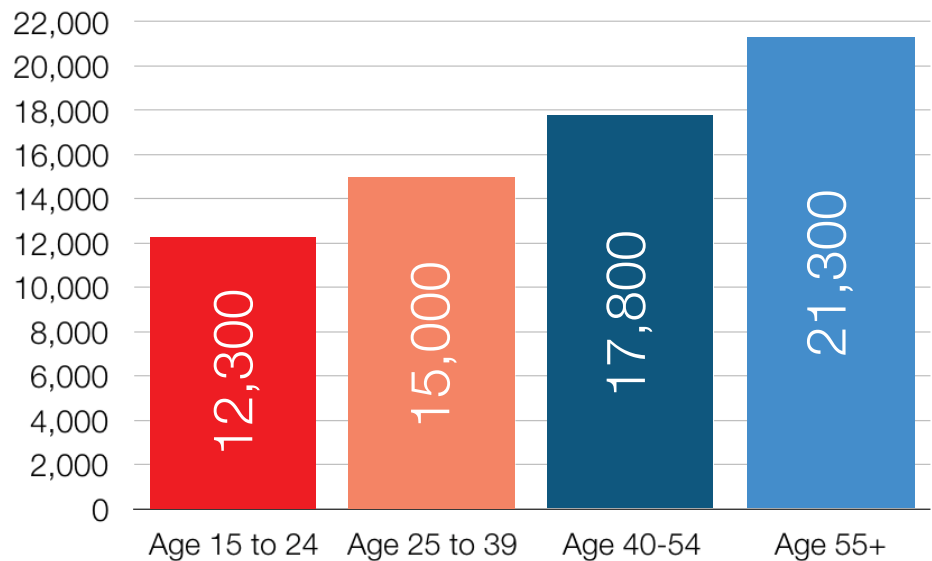
Why does PEI need to attract more people?

Put simply, Prince Edward Island doesn't have enough people to meet the growing demands of the workforce. Like most jurisdictions across North America and Europe, the share of the working population over the age of 55 is growing much faster than that of younger workers. As shown in Figure 4, there are 21,300 people in the labour force on PEI over the age of 55 or more than 25 percent of all workers. At the same time there are not nearly enough young people coming into the labour market to take their place.

In addition, many industries on the Island continue to grow, creating the need for even more workers. Between 2016 and 2018, the number of people working on Prince Edward Island expanded by 6.3 percent. Employment is increasing in many industries including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, professional services, education, accommodation and food services.

FIGURE 4

The number of people in PEI's labour force by age group (2018)



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0018-01.

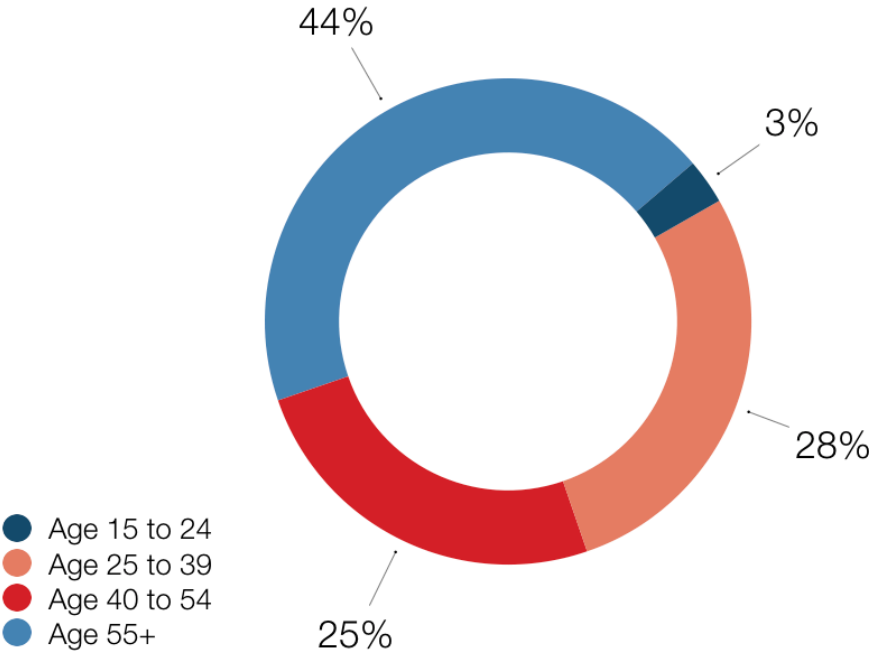
Combine this need for workers to support labour market growth with the expanding number of retirees (people leaving the workforce) and it creates the demand for PEI to attract significant numbers of immigrants each year. The Government of Prince Edward Island clearly understands the importance of attracting immigrants. Its 2017 Population Growth Strategy set a target of adding 10,000 to the population by 2022.

In addition to attracting people to work on PEI, the province will need to attract more entrepreneurs in the coming years. According to Statistics Canada, there were 7,970 people who were self-employed in 2016. Over 3,500 of them (or 44 percent) were over the age of 55.

As these business owners look to transition into retirement, the province will need young entrepreneurs to step up and take their place.

FIGURE 5

Breakdown of PEI entrepreneurs by age group – percentage of total



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

Why does PEI want more Francophone immigrants?

Canada has one of the largest French speaking populations among countries around the world. There are 7.2 million people who have French as their mother tongue. Outside of Quebec, there are over 2.6 million people who speak French. Canada attracts a lot of French-speaking immigrants each year. At the time of the 2016 Census, there were over 250,000 French speaking immigrants and non-permanent residents who had moved to Canada between 2011 and 2016. These immigrants are supporting economic growth in all regions of the country.

Prince Edward Island's Francophone community dates back to 1720 when a French colony settled on the Island. The community is relatively small but it is thriving. There are French-language media, schools, annual festivals, and other social and cultural infrastructure. There are communities where the population is concentrated. There are over 11,000 primary and secondary school students enrolled in either Core French or French Immersion instruction. Between 2011 and 2015, the population on PEI that speaks both French and English increased by over five percent.

In addition, as will be developed below, there are important advantages to being able to speak French on Prince Edward Island. However, Prince Edward Island has not attracted many French speaking immigrants in recent years. Of the more than 10,000 immigrants living on the Island, only 225 speak French as their mother tongue (Francophones). This is just 2.1 percent of all immigrants living on the Island¹.

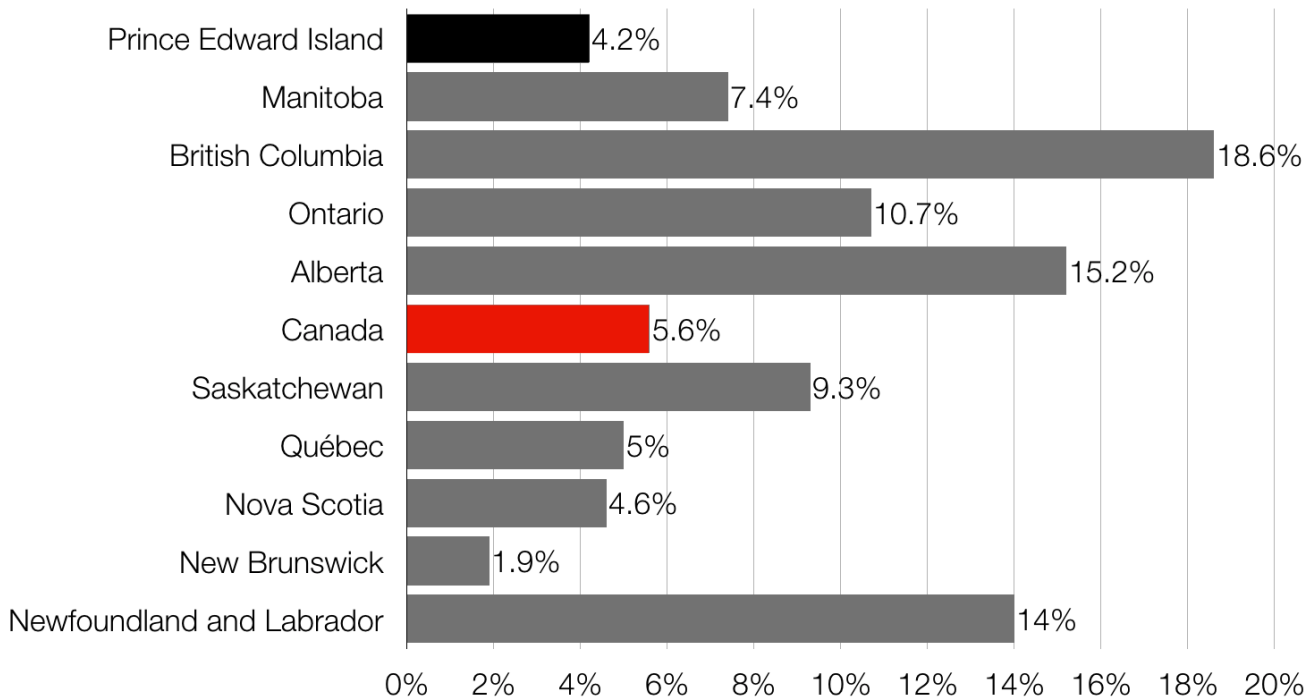
Those 224 immigrant Francophones represent only a small fraction of the total Francophone population on the Island. Just over four percent are immigrants, one of the lowest rates among the provinces in Canada (Figure 6).

Prince Edward Island needs to attract more Francophone immigrants to help strengthen the community now and for the future. It is important to point out that more than 51 percent of the province's Francophone population is over the age of 55 compared to just 34 percent for the population overall. The rest of this report makes a clear and compelling case Francophone immigrants to Prince Edward Island will find opportunity and be welcomed into the community.

¹Those indicating French and/or French and another language as their mother tongue on the 2016 Census.

FIGURE 6

**Francophone immigrants as a share of all Francophones
living in each province (2016)**



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

There are many economic opportunities on Prince Edward Island for Francophones and French-speaking immigrants looking to settle in Canada. Many of the Island's important industries need bilingual (French and English) workers and there is a growing need for new entrepreneurs. In addition to economic opportunities, immigrants who settle on Prince Edward Island benefit from an excellent quality of life.



B

Economic opportunities for Francophone immigrants



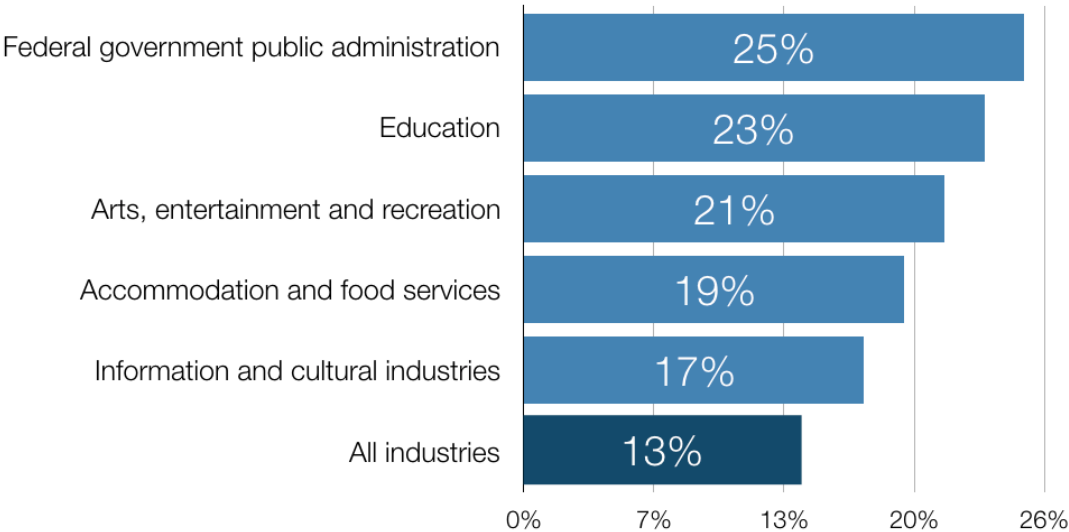
French-speaking employment by sector

There are advantages to speaking French in Canada. Bilingual workers, those who speak English and French, are needed in many different industries. As shown in Figure 7, on Prince Edward Island, workers who can speak French are over represented in a number of higher wage industries including information and culture, education and federal government public administration.

The ability to speak French is also a valuable skill in tourism-related industries such as accommodation and food services as well as arts, entertainment and recreation. According to Statistics Canada, residents of the two top French speaking provinces in Canada, Quebec and New Brunswick, make more than \$63 million worth of tourism expenditures each year on the Island.

FIGURE 7

**Workers who speak French as a share of total employment:
Selected industries (2016)***



*Workers who speak both French and English.
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

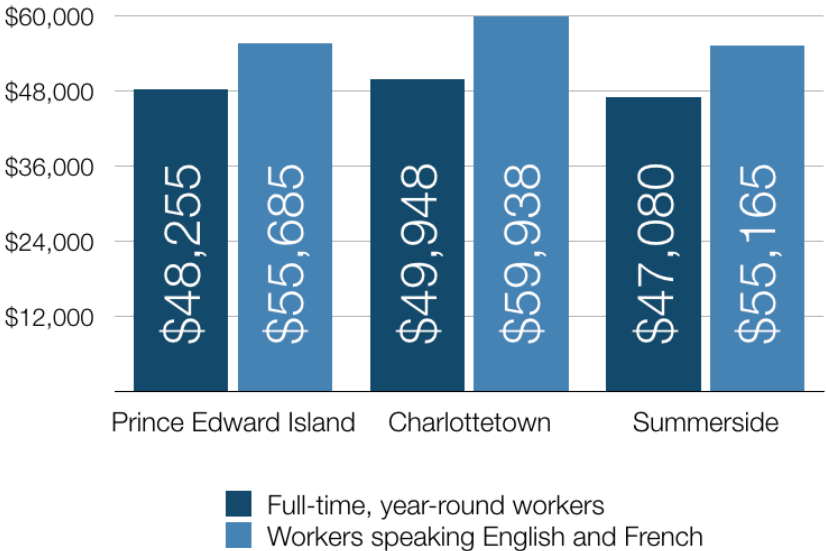
The French language income premium

Immigrants who can speak both French and English can benefit from a substantial wage premium on PEI. As shown in Figure 8, the average additional income for bilingual workers on PEI in 2016 was 15 percent, meaning they earned on average 15 percent more

than workers who didn't speak French and English. In Charlottetown, the bilingual wage premium was higher (20 percent) and in Summerside, bilingual workers earned 17 percent more on average than other workers.

FIGURE 8

Average annual employment income (2016)



Source: Recensement 2016, Statistics Canada.

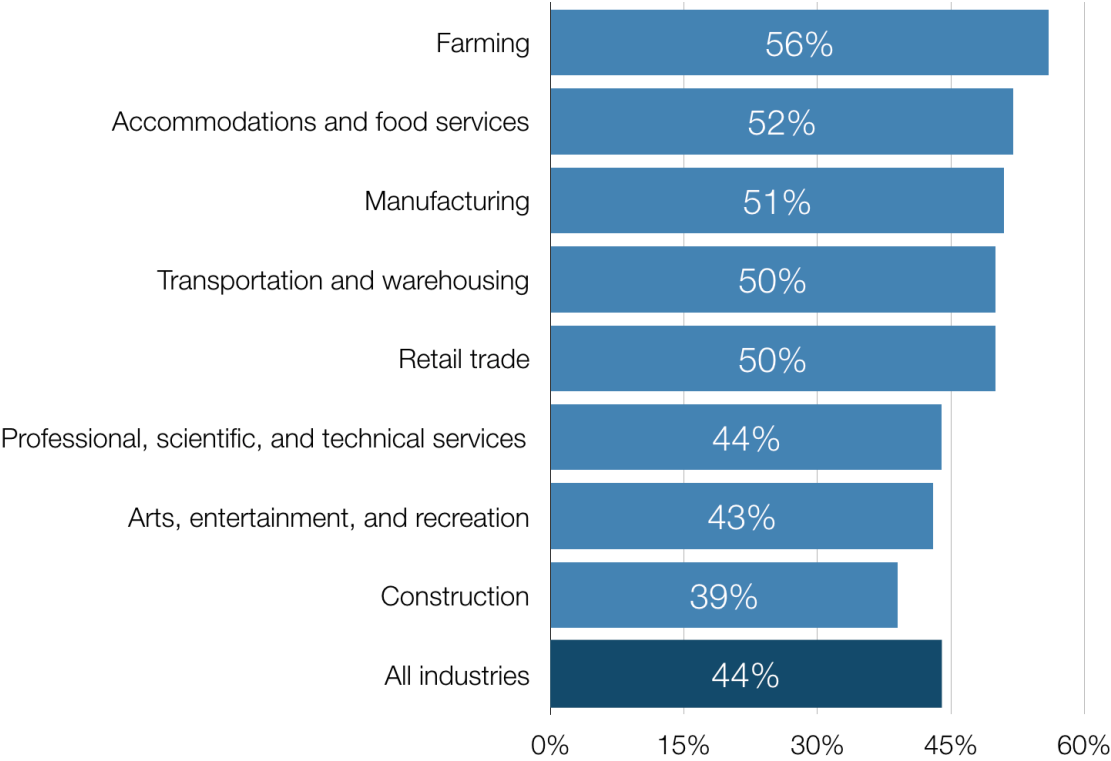
Entrepreneurship opportunities

Entrepreneurship has been a critical part of Prince Edward Island's economic growth. There are nearly 8,000 self-employed people in the PEI workforce and there are more than 6,000 businesses that have employees. On average, the Island's entrepreneurs are older than the workforce overall. Over 40 percent are

over the age of 55 and will be heading into retirement in the next decade or so. As shown in Figure 9, there are some sectors where the share of workers over the age of 55 is even higher such as farming (56 percent), accommodation and food services (52 percent) and manufacturing (51 percent) and manufacturing (51 percent).

FIGURE 9

Share of self-employed who are over the age of 55, Prince Edward Island (2016)



Source: Recensement 2016, Statistique Canada.

In addition to needing entrepreneurs to take the place of those who are retiring, the Island is looking for a new generation of entrepreneurs to set up new companies in strategically important industries such as information and communications technology (ICT), professional services, manufacturing and tourism.

The Island has already attracted several hundred immigrant entrepreneurs in recent years and is looking for more to help strengthen the provincial economy and bolster local communities across the province.

Taking advantage of the Island's unrivalled quality of life

Canada is a place where quality of life is an important societal objective. In the 2019 Best Countries rankings, developed by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Canada was ranked #1 for quality of life ahead of Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The United States ranked 17 for quality of life. The index was developed using criteria including cost of living, a good job market, economically stable, family friendly, income equality, politically stable, safe, well-developed public education system and well-developed public health system.

Within Canada, Prince Edward Island stands out for its quality of life. It offers a relatively low cost of living, very low crime rates, a wide range of recreational and cultural activities and strong, close knit communities. These are the reasons why more than 2,000 people are moving to PEI from around the world each year.

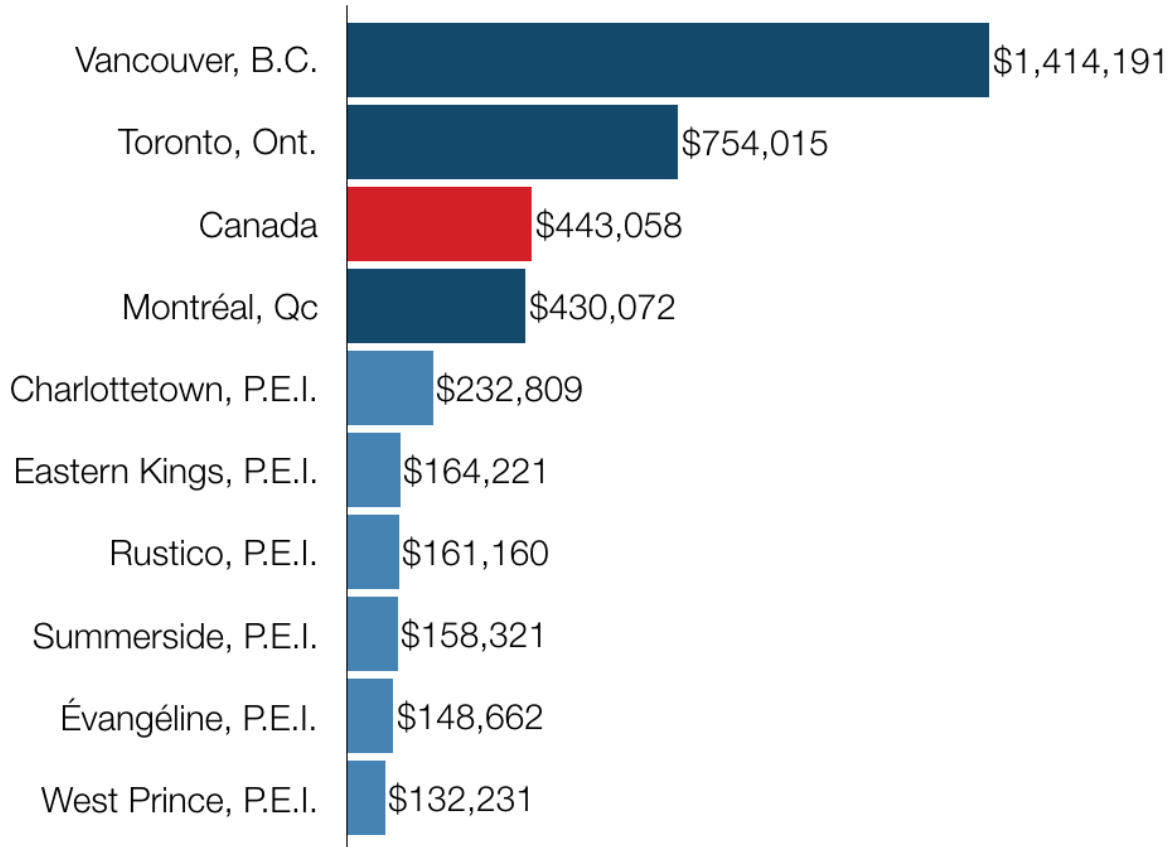
Cost of living

The Island offers its residents a relatively low cost of living. This is mainly due to the cost of housing. Statistics Canada's annual survey of household expenditures finds that Islanders spend less household income on shelter costs (mortgage, utilities, insurance, etc.) than all but one other province across Canada. On average, shelter costs on PEI are nearly 40 percent lower than in British Columbia.

The lower cost of housing is a real advantage. Figure 10 shows the average value of a dwelling (all types) for various communities on the Island compared to a few larger urban centres across Canada. Communities in rural PEI have a substantial advantage in this area. Even in Charlottetown, the average value of a dwelling is nearly half of what it is across the country and nearly 70 percent less than in Toronto.

FIGURE 10

Average value of dwellings (2016)



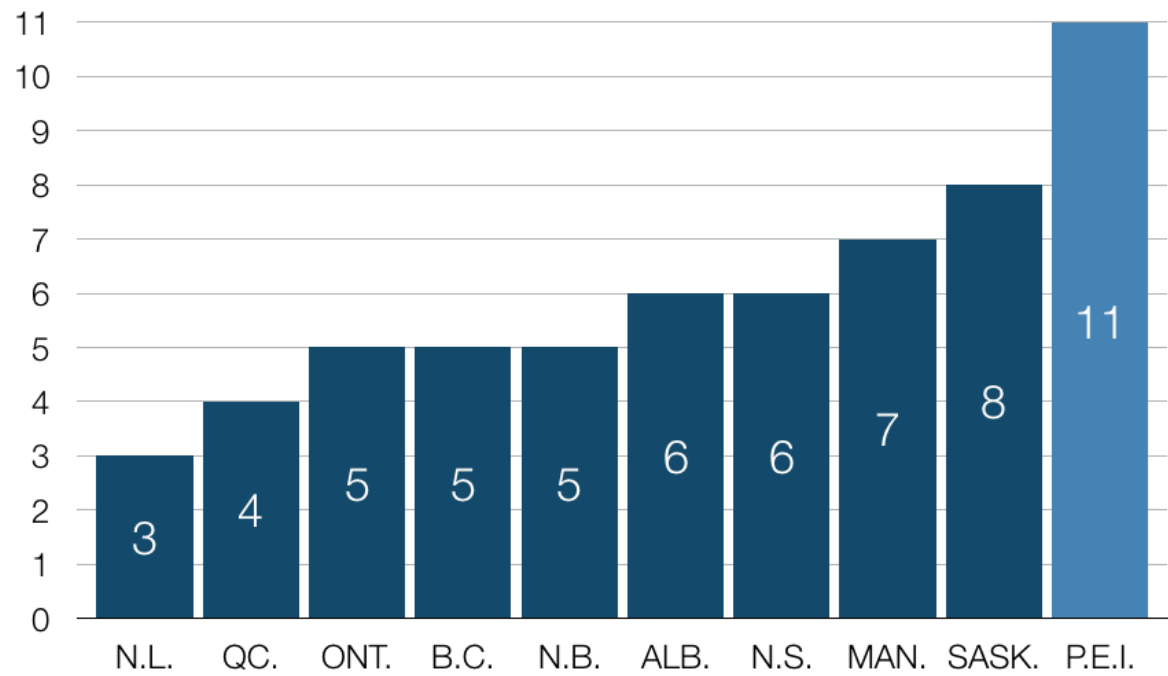
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census. For Charlottetown and Summerside, the figure represents the average value of dwellings for the Census Agglomeration area. For the other regions on PEI, the figure reflects the median value among Census sub-divisions in the region.

Entertainment and recreation

The large tourism industry on Prince Edward Island benefits Islanders by giving them access to a wide variety of restaurants, entertainment and recreation facilities they would not have otherwise. There are 19 restaurants on the Island for every 10,000 residents – more than every other province except one. Also, Prince Edward Island has more golf courses than anywhere in Canada, adjusted for population size. Table 1 summarizes some of the recreation, arts and cultural infrastructure on Prince Edward Island. Residents benefit from two dozen formal beach areas, 23 national and provincial parks and over two dozen museums. No matter where you live on the Island you are not far from good restaurants, beaches, hiking trails, golf courses and amusement parks.

FIGURE 11

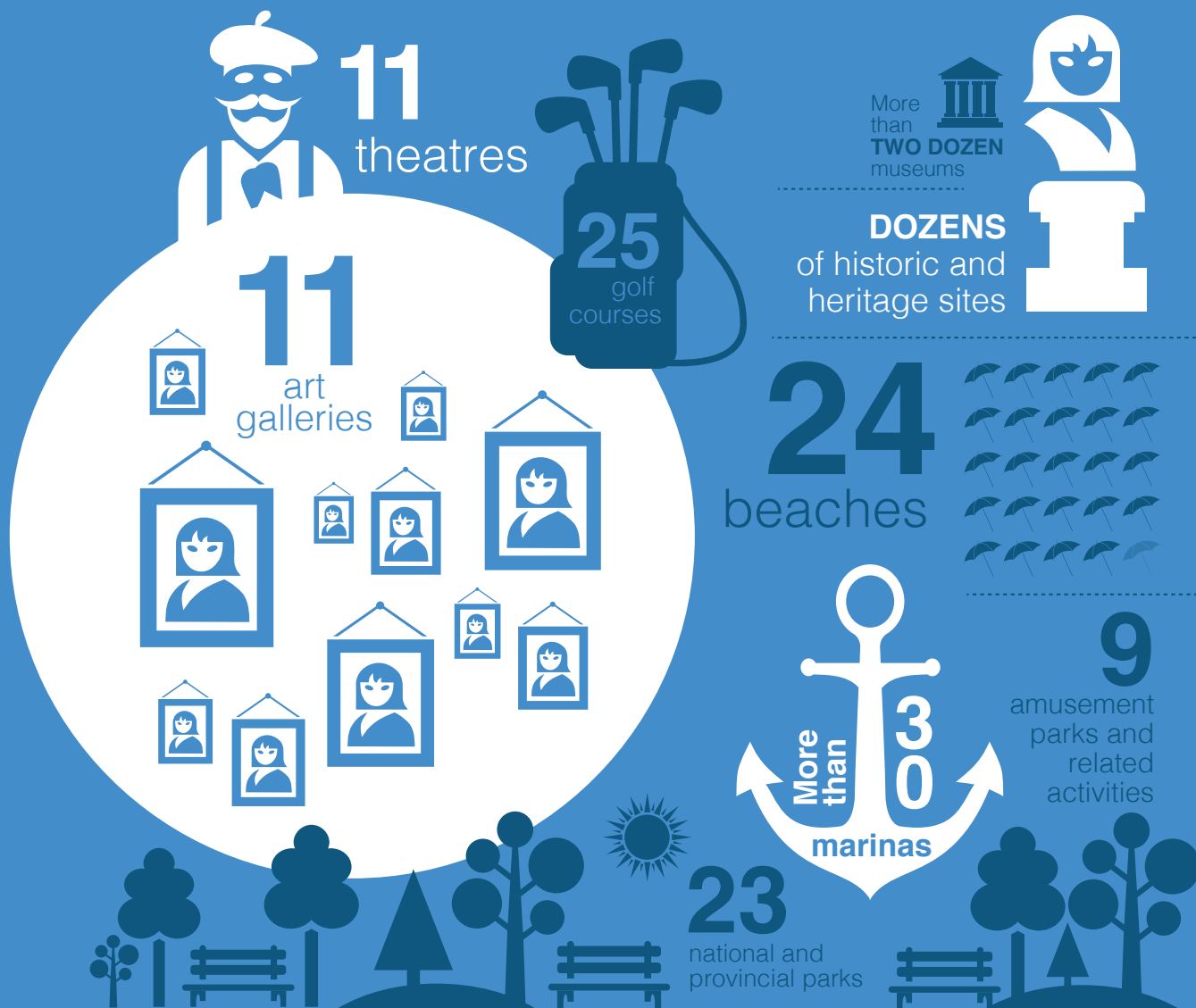
Golf courses per 100,000 population



Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Business Patterns. Facilities with employment.

TABLE 1

Recreation, art and cultural infrastructure on PEI



Sources: Compiled using government tourism websites and Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Patterns.

Crime rates

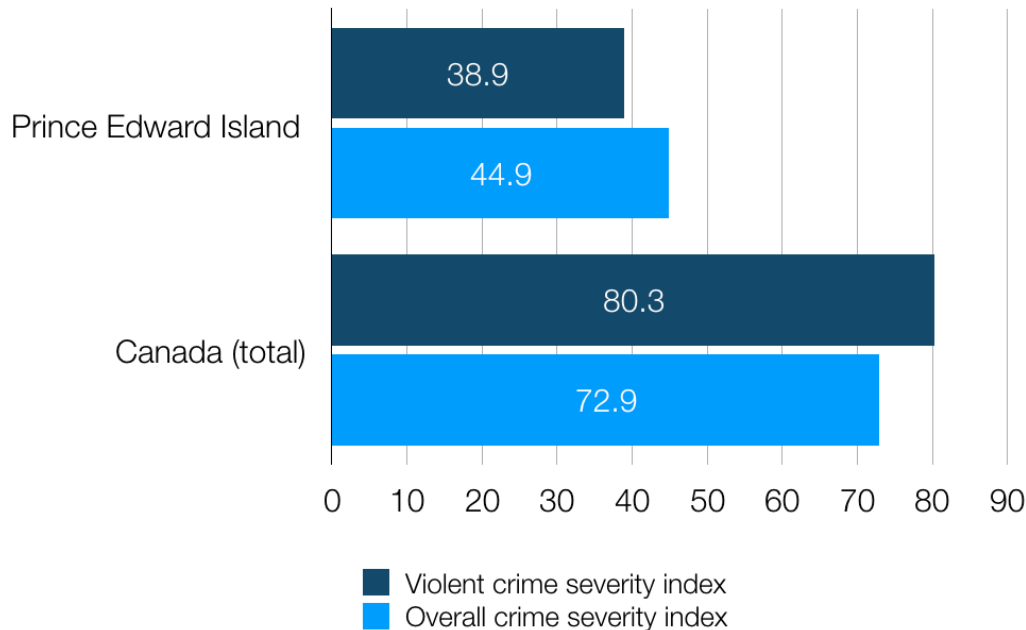
Criminal activity in Canada is well below average compared to most other countries and has been declining in recent years. The Crime Severity Index, which is meant to assess the seriousness of crime, has been declining across the country in recent years. Prince Edward Island has the lowest crime severity index level and violent crime severity index score among the 10 provinces in Canada by a wide margin.

Figure 12 shows the crime severity index has been falling in recent years across Canada (2006 was the base year at 100) but it also shows the significantly lower index level on the Island.

Prince Edward Island is a safe place to build a career, raise a family and live into old age.

FIGURE 12

Crime severity index (2006 = 100)



Source: Statistics Canada Table 35-10-0026-01.

Health and wellbeing

Islanders have a very good understanding of the value of living in safe, friendly communities with access to good quality public services. When asked by Statistics Canada during the annual Community Health Survey to rate life satisfaction, over 92 percent of Islanders indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their life on Prince Edward Island. When asked about their perceived health, Islanders ranked second among the ten provinces for the share who believe their health is either very good or excellent.

When asked about daily stress in their lives, only 15 percent indicated “most days are quite a bit or extremely stressful” which was the second lowest share of the population among the 10 provinces.

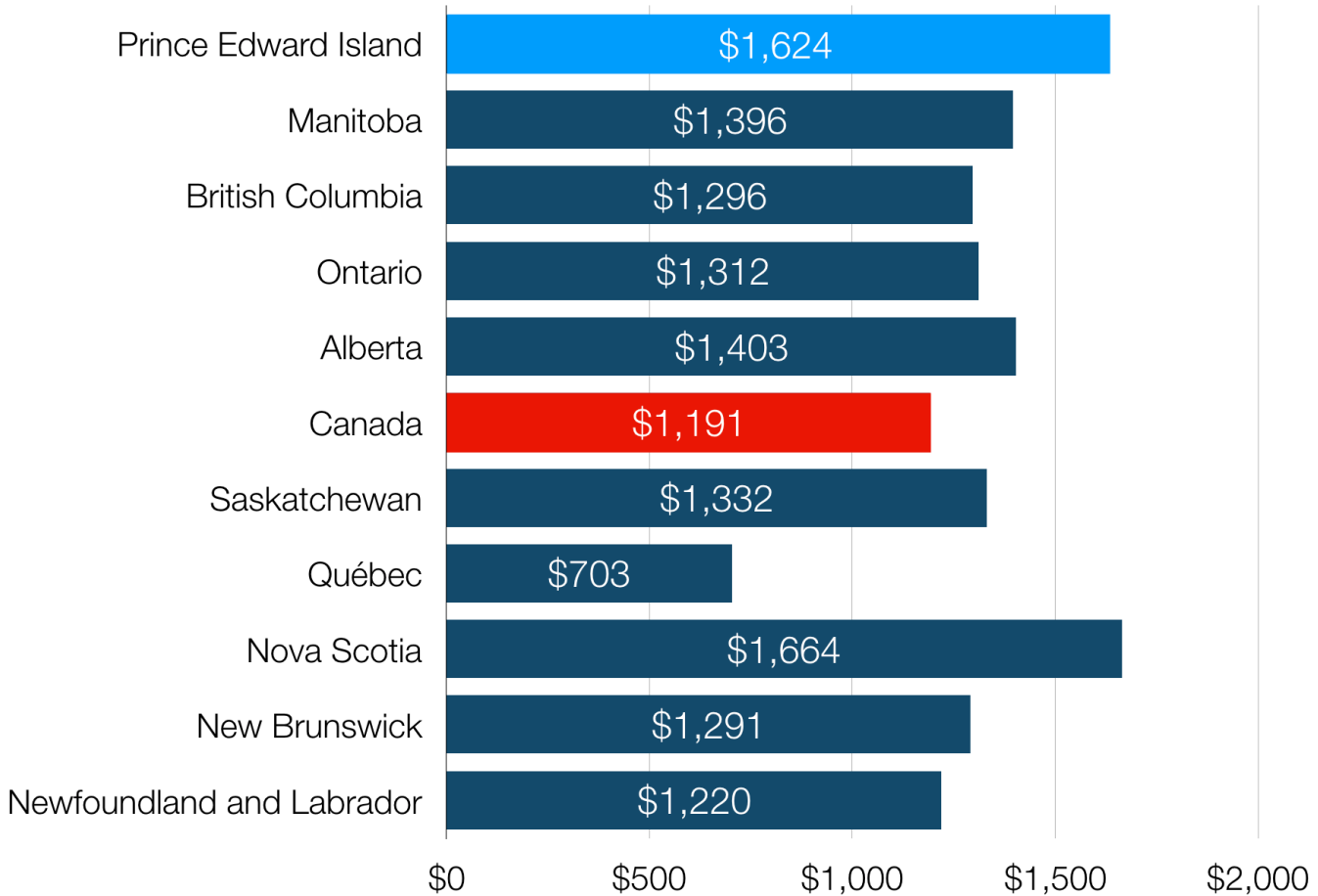
The survey also asks about sense of belonging to the local community. This is a very important quality of life indicator. Nearly 77 percent of Islanders said they had a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to their local community, third best among the 10 provinces.

A strong sense of belonging and a high rate of life satisfaction. These may help explain why Prince Edward Islanders spend a lot of time volunteering and giving back to their community. In 2013, Statistics Canada attempted to quantify the economic value of all the volunteering activity across the country. The agency estimates that volunteerism on PEI is worth the equivalent of \$234 million each year. As shown in Figure 13, that is the second highest rate per capita among the 10 provinces across the country. Islanders also allocate a larger share of household income each year on financial gifts to people than any other province in Canada². Sharing and volunteering to the local community is an important feature of life on Prince Edward Island.

²Source: Statistics Canada Table 11-10-0222-01.

FIGURE 13

Economic value of volunteering – per capita (2013)



Source: Statistics Canada Table 36-10-0618-01.

Conclusion

Take a look at Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island has put a priority on attracting Francophone immigrants to help fill needs in our workforce and establish entrepreneurial ventures. Attracting young immigrants to the province will also help build a stronger demographic foundation for the future.

If you are considering moving to Canada, you should take a close look at Prince Edward Island. This document has outlined the case for living and building your career here. Why not come and take a look? Prince Edward Island is one of the top tourist destinations in North America. You will see first hand the people, the places and the opportunities that await you.

Welcome to Prince Edward Island.