

METROPOLIS AMERICAS SUMMIT

MIGRATION MEASURES IN
THE UNITED STATES AND
CANADA: REFLECTING ON
IMMIGRATION
CHALLENGES AND
BILATERAL
COOPERATION

Metropolis
Institute - Institut



FEBRUARY 26

2026

LORD ELGIN HOTEL
MACDONALD ROOM
100 ELGIN ST
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

PROGRAM

www.metropolisconference.ca

Introduction

Rethinking the US Canada Dialogue on Immigration

Both Canada and the United States have often been described as nations of immigrants. Newcomers have historically made critical contributions to the economic and social fabric of the two countries. In recent years the perception of the two countries as nations of immigrants and newcomer welcoming societies has shifted. Survey data consistently points to growing public concern about the numbers of newcomers admitted. Increased attention is being directed at how governments are managing migration as they react to public concern and media attention.

Economic uncertainty, border security and global conflicts have all made for greater challenges to bilateral and multinational cooperation on immigration. With respect to migration, the ever-evolving international and domestic context calls for reflection on how Americans and Canadians can identify shared interests and work together to address these critical issues.

In part one of the Canada-US Summit, experts will gather to review the current immigration landscape in the two countries, with a focus on knowledge transfer and data sharing. Avenues for future cooperation in these and other strategic areas will be proposed.

The following themes will be covered in the program

- Immigration and Categories of Admission in the United States and Canada
- Immigrant Settlement and Integration in the United States and Canada: Deploying Data to assess Best Practices
- Understanding Changes in Public Opinion in the United States and Canada
- Asylum, Refugees and the Safe Third Country Agreement in the United States and Canada
- Rethinking the Bilateral Dialogue on Immigration in the two countries

Welcome from Summit Co-chairs

9:00 AM -
9:30 AM

- **Jack Jedwab**, President & CEO, ACS-Metropolis Institute, Montreal, QC
- **Jennie Murray**, President & CEO, The National Immigration Forum, Washington, DC, USA

Opening Remarks

9:30 AM -
10:00 AM

- **The Honourable Peter Hoekstra**, US Ambassador to Canada, Washington, DC, USA
- **The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab**, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Ottawa, ON (invited)

Session 1 : Understanding Changes in Public Opinion in the United States and Canada

10:00 AM -
11:30 AM

Survey data over the past few years has consistently shown that public support for immigration in both Canada and the US has declined. What are the contributing factors? Is the trend based on fact or fiction? How is public opinion driving policy decisions and will these changes result in positive or negative outcomes for our countries?

- **Jack Jedwab**, President & CEO, ACS-Metropolis Institute, Montreal, QC.
- **Sahana Mukherjee**, Associate Director, The Pew Research Center, Washington, DC, USA
- **Dr. Gallya Lahav**, Associate Professor, Stony Brook University, NY, USA
- **Dr. Allison Harell**, Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, QC.

Lunch

11:30 AM -
1:00 PM

Session 2 : Selection, Settlement and Integration in the United States and Canada: Deploying Data to assess Best Practices

1:00 PM -
2:30 PM

Both Canada and the US use two main categories for entry to the country: temporary and permanent. The US has a comprehensive system of visa categories, each corresponding to a specific purpose of travel and Canada classifies immigrants based on the program under which they are granted permanent residence. For higher education, both countries use broad applicant categories based on academic background and residency status. Evidence of successful (or unsuccessful) immigrant integration can be a powerful tool to assist policy makers. Experts from both countries will share models and best practices that can inform policy-making in the two countries and look at possible avenues for bilateral collaboration.

- **Josée Bégin**, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour, Statistics, Statistics Canada
- **Dr. Paul Holley**, Research Director of ACS, Metropolis Institute / The Canadian Index for Measuring Integration and Inclusion (CIMII), Montreal, QC
- **Roger Waldinger**, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Director of the UCLA Centre for the Study of International Migration, USA
- **Stan Veuger**, Senior Fellow, the American Enterprise Institute, USA

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| Coffee Break | 2:30 PM - 2:45 PM |
| Session 3 : Asylum, Refugees and the Safe Third Country Agreement in the United States and Canada | 2:45 PM - 4:00 PM |
| <p>The U.S. and Canada manage asylum seekers primarily through the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA), which generally requires claims in the first safe country reached (U.S. or Canada), limiting claims at the land border unless exceptions apply (like family ties). Recent expansion of the STCA in 2023 to the entire border reduced irregular crossings, but security remains high with agencies like Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the RCMP working to intercept irregular entries, while both nations process claims, managing significant flows of asylum seekers and refugees with differing national programs. What can data tell us about the current challenges in the two countries and the decisions that emerge therefrom? What can be done to strengthen cooperation between the two countries?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Selee, President, The Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC, USA • Dr. Lori Wilkinson Distinguished Professor, Canada Research Chair in Migration Futures, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB • Deborah Waller Meyers, Retired-former Director of Canadian Affairs with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Washington, DC, USA • Catrina Tapley, Retired-former Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada | |
| Closing Remarks and Next Steps : Rethinking the Bilateral Dialogue on Immigration in the two countries | 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM |