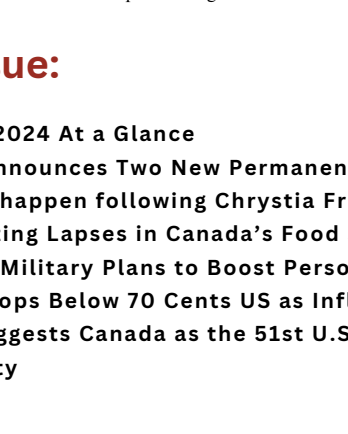
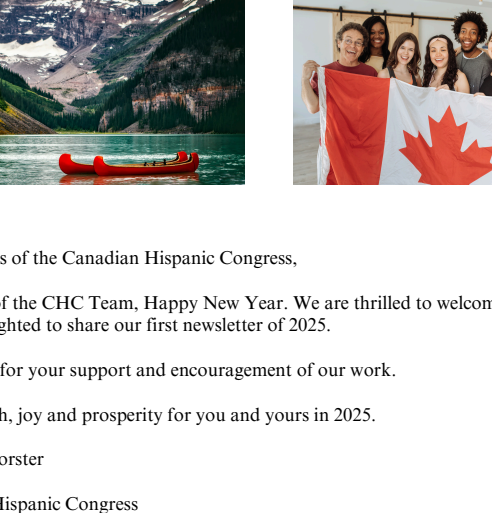
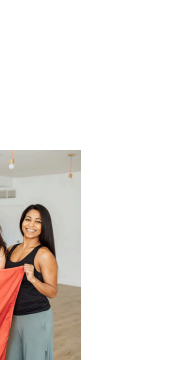


Happy 2025, from the CHC



Dear friends of the Canadian Hispanic Congress,
On behalf of the CHC Team, Happy New Year. We are thrilled to welcome the new year with you in mind. We are delighted to share our first newsletter of 2025.

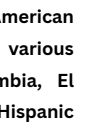
Thank you for your support and encouragement of our work.

Good health, joy and prosperity for you and yours in 2025.

Monique Forster
President
Canadian Hispanic Congress

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The Year 2024 At a Glance



The year 2024 witnessed significant events for Canada, many of which had a direct or indirect impact on the Hispanic community. Here we present a quick overview of ten of the most relevant occurrences, with a focus on their impact on migrant communities and cultural diversity.

One of the most significant developments for this country was the debate over Canada's immigration policy. In September, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced reductions to Canada's immigration targets with a view towards balancing population growth and the country's economic capacities. These changes raised concerns among immigrant communities, including the Hispanic-Latin American community, due to changes' potential impact on family reunification programs and job opportunities for new immigrants.

Culturally, Canadians born in Canada and around the world delighted in the many Hispanic Latin American festivals held throughout Canada in 2024. Together, these festivals attracted over 2,000,000 visitors to their respective communities. These events showcased the richness of the Hispanic Latin American culture, featuring artistic representations from various Spanish-speaking countries such as Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Bolivia, and more, and many emerging Hispanic artists born and developed on Canadian soil.

The diplomatic crisis between Canada and India also affected immigrant communities. In October, tensions escalated following investigations into the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian Sikh activist. While this incident was not directly linked to the Hispanic community, it reignited debates about the protection of immigrant rights and security in Canada, a critical topic for all migrant groups.

Another significant moment was the recognition of Hispanics in the political sphere. During British Columbia's provincial elections, the New Democratic Party included several Latino candidates for the first time, highlighting the growing political impact of the Hispanic community in Canada. Although none were elected, their participation marked a significant step toward greater representation.

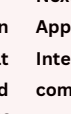
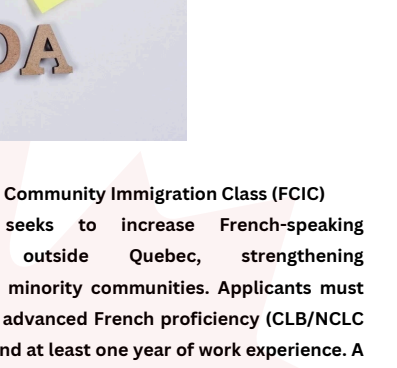
The summer also brought climate challenges, with wildfires affecting Labrador and other regions. Hispanic communities in Toronto came together to raise funds and support victims, showcasing the solidarity that defines this community in times of crisis.

The Canada Post workers' strike that began in November had a significant impact on small businesses, some led by Hispanics, and many of which rely on postal services for their daily operations. While the strike ended in December, delays in service continue to affect these enterprises.

Hispanic art and culture also gained recognition when Colombian Canadian writer José Ramirez became a finalist for the 2024 Giller Prize for his novel "Roots in the North," which explores the experiences of Latin American immigrants in Canada. This achievement was a source of pride for the community and a reminder of its growing influence in the national literary landscape.

The permanent closure of the Ontario Science Centre in June marked the end of an era for scientific education in the country. The decision to close the facility was made following the identification of severe building structural issues. Thus, ending decades of education and entertainment for many generations of Canadians.

Finally, the Canadian Hispanic Congress 40th Anniversary Gala celebration brought together celebrants representing the twenty Spanish-speaking countries represented in Canada's Hispanic Latin American community, as well as representatives of other immigrant communities, who gathered to honor the CHC's four decades of service to our diverse and inclusive country.



Canada Announces Two New Permanent Residency Pathways



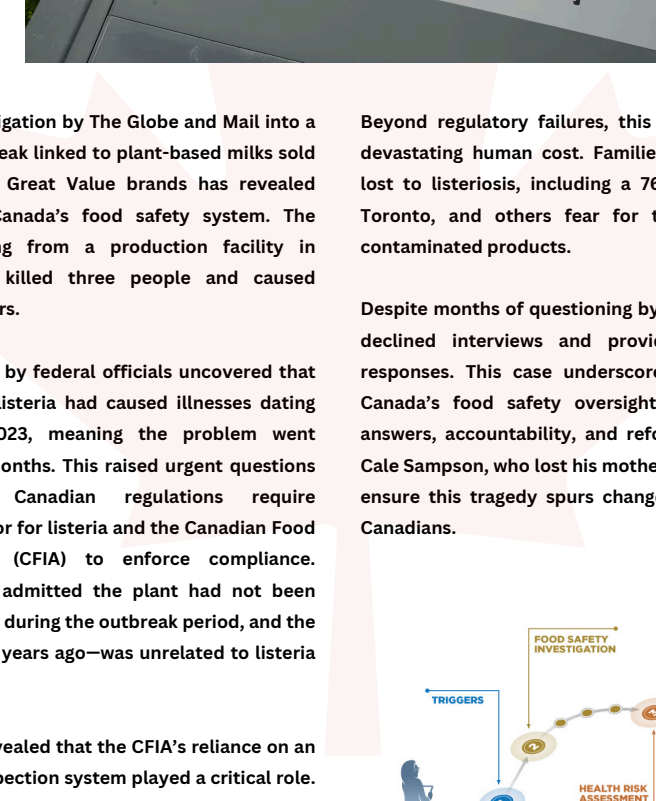
Immigration news reported that, Canada has introduced two new permanent residency pathways: the Rural Community Immigration Class (RCIC) and the Francophone Community Immigration Class (FCIC). These programs aim to attract skilled workers to rural and Francophone communities outside Quebec, addressing labor shortages and promoting economic development.

Rural Community Immigration Class (RCIC)
This program is for foreign nationals willing to settle in designated rural communities. Eligibility includes at least one year of work experience in a recognized occupation, valid temporary resident status (if applying from Canada), and language proficiency (CLB 4-6, depending on the job). Applicants must secure a genuine job offer from a designated employer within the community and obtain a Certificate of Recommendation from the local Economic Development Organization. International graduates from local institutions may qualify without work experience if they meet specific criteria.

Next Steps
Applications for both pathways open in early 2025. Interested applicants should research designated communities, ensure credentials meet program requirements, and engage with local Economic Development Organizations for guidance. These pathways represent Canada's ongoing commitment to building resilient, diverse communities while addressing regional labor shortages.



What will happen following Chrystia Freeland's Resignation



As reported by CBC News, the resignation of Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, announced just hours before she was to deliver the fall economic statement, continues to reverberate in Canadian politics. Freeland's departure marks a critical turning point for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government, raising significant questions about Canada's economic and political trajectory.

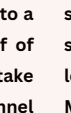
Freeland's resignation could signal broader implications for Canada's political landscape. Opposition leader Pierre Poilievre is pushing for a non-confidence vote, calling the government "out of control." Meanwhile, Trudeau must urgently address his fractured caucus and policy challenges, including Trump's tariff threats and a struggling economy.

Freeland cited irreconcilable differences with Trudeau over the "best path forward for Canada" and criticized his "costly political gimmicks." While she will remain a Liberal MP and plans to run in the next federal election, her exit leaves the government's economic roadmap in chaos, especially as the country faces the looming threat of 25% tariffs from U.S. president-elect Donald Trump.

Freeland's call for Trudeau to collaborate with provincial premiers may pressure him to adopt a more inclusive approach, but questions about his leadership remain central. Will Trudeau take steps to rebuild unity within his government, or will this moment mark a deeper unraveling of his tenure as prime minister?

This unexpected resignation adds to mounting challenges for Trudeau, whose leadership is already under fire. Recent by-election losses and declining poll numbers have amplified internal dissent within the Liberal Party. With four MPs publicly calling for Trudeau to resign, Freeland's high-profile departure has further shaken the party's stability.

As the fallout continues, Canadians and political observers await clarity on the government's strategy to navigate this turbulent chapter. Freeland's resignation is not just a political event but a pivotal moment that could reshape the country's governance and economic future.



Investigating Lapses in Canada's Food Safety System



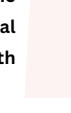
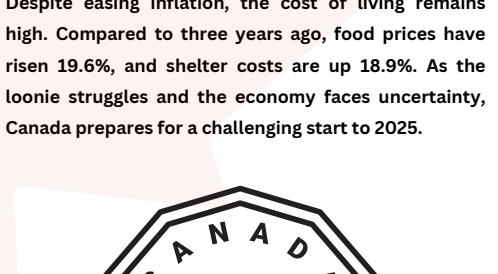
A four-month investigation by The Globe and Mail into a deadly listeria outbreak linked to Plant-based Milk sold under the Silk and Great Value brands has revealed critical lapses in Canada's food safety system. The outbreak, originating from a production facility in Pickering, Ontario, killed three people and caused serious harm to others.

Beyond regulatory failures, this story highlights the devastating human cost. Families mourn loved ones lost to listeriosis, including a 76-year-old woman in Toronto, and others fear for their health due to contaminated products.

Genome sequencing by federal officials uncovered that the same strain of listeria had caused illnesses dating back to August 2023, meaning the problem went undetected for 11 months. This raised urgent questions about oversight. Canadian regulators require companies to monitor for listeria and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to enforce compliance. However, the CFIA admitted the plant had not been inspected for listeria during the outbreak period, and the last inspection—five years ago—was unrelated to listeria protocols.

Despite months of questioning by The Globe, the CFIA declined interviews and provided delayed vague responses. This case underscores systemic gaps in Canada's food safety oversight and the need for answers, accountability, and reform. For victims like Cale Sampson, who lost his mother, the goal is clear: to ensure this tragedy spurs change and safeguards all Canadians.

The investigation revealed that the CFIA's reliance on an algorithm-based inspection system played a critical role. This system determines inspection priorities based on risk calculations, which in this case allowed the Pickering facility to go unmonitored for years. Inspectors described the system as inherently flawed and a "recipe for a problem."



Canadian Military Plans to Boost Personnel to 86,000



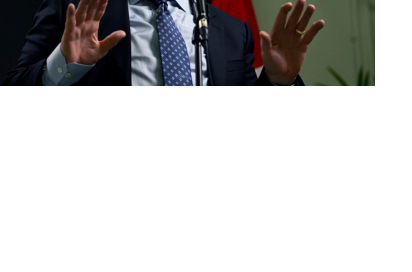
As reported by the Ottawa Citizen, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have unveiled an ambitious plan to increase their regular force ranks to 86,000 personnel, up from the current 63,000. According to a briefing prepared for Lt. Gen. Lise Bourgon, chief of military personnel, this goal is expected to take decades, with projections estimating 75,000 personnel by 2032 and approximately 86,000 by 2040.

Efforts to modernize recruitment include trial programs to accelerate applications, improved advertising, and streamlined medical and security screening processes. Despite these efforts, the CAF still faces obstacles, including concern over leadership. In April 2024, Chief Warrant Officer Bob McCann highlighted toxic leadership as a significant reason soldiers are leaving the ranks.

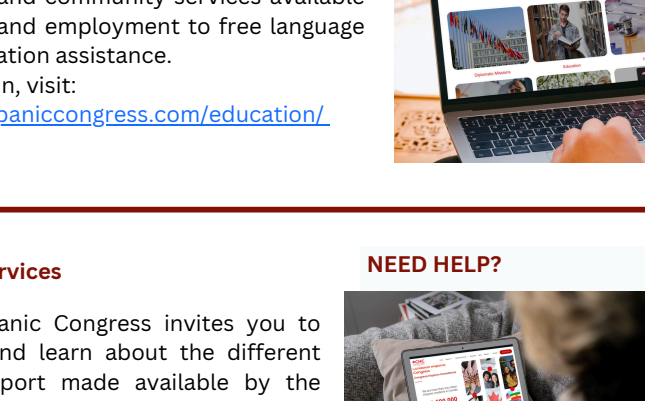
The plan hinges on the Liberal government's commitment to increase defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2032. This funding support the annual intake of over 7,150 recruits. However, no increases have been mentioned for Canada's reserve force, which remains authorized at 30,000 personnel.

The success of this long-term plan remains uncertain, but it marks a clear attempt to rebuild Canada's military capability amid growing national and international security challenges.

Recruitment remains a challenge despite a recent improvement in application rates. The CAF has enrolled 3,357 recruits between April and November 2024, aiming for a total of 6,496 by March 2025. However, the current strength of the regular force is 63,940, significantly below the authorized level of 71,500.



Loonie Drops Below 70 Cents US as Inflation Cools in November



As reported by Global News, Canada's annual inflation rate slowed to 1.9% in November, down from 2% in October, according to Statistics Canada. The decline was driven by a broad reduction in price increases, particularly for travel tours and mortgage costs.

Economists, such as Douglas Porter from BMO, expect a more moderate cut at the bank's next decision on January 29. Inflation is expected to dip to 1.5% in January, temporarily affected by the federal government's two-month "tax holiday" on certain household goods, before rebounding in February.

Meanwhile, the Canadian dollar dipped below 70 cents in the US for the first time since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, marking a rough close to 2024. The loonie's decline has been fueled by economic uncertainty and political concerns following Donald Trump's re-election in the United States, which strengthened the U.S. dollar. This depreciation increases the cost of imports, including automobiles and groceries.

Despite easing inflation, the cost of living remains high. Compared to three years ago, food prices have risen 19.6%, and shelter costs are up 18.9%. As the loonie struggles and the economy faces uncertainty, Canada prepares for a challenging start to 2025.



Trump Suggests Canada as the 51st U.S. State, Sparking Outrage



As reported by CTV News, U.S. president-elect Donald Trump has stirred controversy again by suggesting that Canada become the "51st state" of America with a "great idea." In a post on Truth Social, Trump claimed, "Many Canadians want Canada to become the 51st State. They would save massively on taxes and military protection."

This is not the first time Trump has targeted Canada's economy. His repeated assertions that the U.S. "subsidizes" Canada by over \$100 billion annually seem to reference Canada's trade surplus with the U.S., which reached nearly \$80 billion in 2022. Critics argue these claims distort the complexity of bilateral trade.

Former Quebec premier Jean Charest called the comments a "wake-up call," urging Canadians to unite against Trump's rhetoric and take a stronger stance in international relations. The remarks come amid tense Canada-U.S. relations, fueled by Trump's plan for 25% tariffs on Canadian imports, which Ontario Premier Doug Ford likened to "a family member stabbing you in the heart."

As Trump prepares to take office again, his rhetoric signals a challenging road ahead for Canada-U.S. relations.



Resources for Everybody

The Canadian Hispanic Congress displays details about government and community services available to all. From health and employment to free language courses and immigration assistance. For more information, visit: <https://canadianhispaniccongress.com/education/>



CHC Community Services

The Canadian Hispanic Congress invites you to visit our website and learn about the different resources and support made available by the government and community organizations!

NEED HELP?

Visit our Webpage
Learn about the different resources and supports for the entire family.

To sign up for our newsletter please email us at: membership@canadianhispaniccongress.com

We ask for your support by following us on our social media accounts shown below.

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