Internationally Educated Nurses at a Glance: 2026

College of Nurses of Ontario
Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers de l'Ontario

Internationally educated nurses (IENs) are registrants who completed their foundational nursing education outside of Canada.

IEN Supply Snapshot

35,635 IEN renewals in 2026

8.4% increase in **IEN renewals** in 2026 compared to 2025

IEN registrants make up **18.1% of the nursing supply**

Growth in the nursing supply in the last five years was driven in part by **increases in IEN registrations**

Nearly one-third (32.5%) of **new registrants** in 2025 were IENs, **down from 41%** in 2024

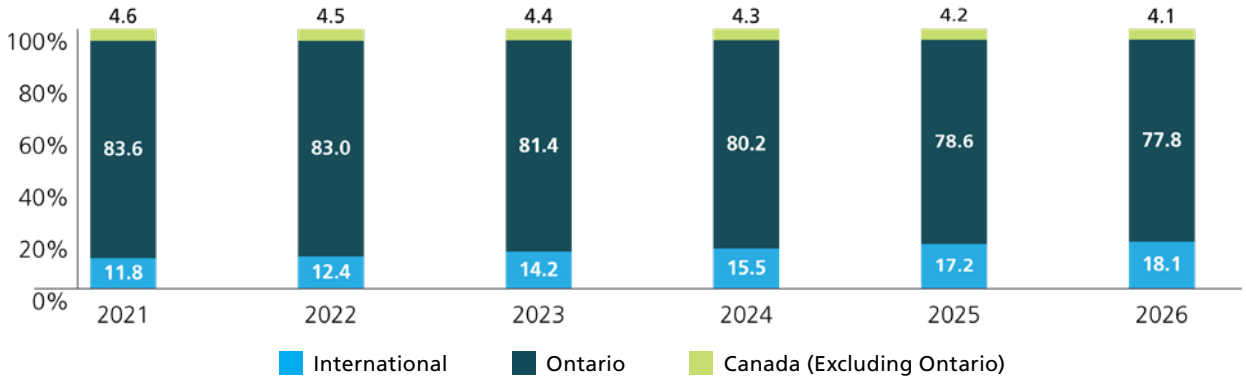
IEN Renewals Continue to Increase

Table 1. Overall IEN renewals in the General and Extended Classes

Nurse Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
RN	12,578	13,584	16,094	20,266	25,421	28,434
RPN	6,547	7,151	8,082	6,776	5,762	5,297
NP	332	353	373	401	449	490
Dual RN/RPN	435	428	680	974	1,254	1,414
Total	**19,892**	**21,516**	**25,229**	**28,417**	**32,886**	**35,635**
Year-over-year Change %	4.0%	8.2%	17.3%	12.6%	15.7%	8.4%

IENs Continue to Represent a Growing Share of the Supply

Figure 1. Proportion of overall nurse renewals by location of education



Internationally Educated Nurses: 2026 Highlights

Summary

Internationally educated nurses (IENs) remain a critical contributor to Ontario's nursing supply and workforce. In 2026, IENs accounted for 18.1% of all renewing nurses and nearly one-third of new registrants, continuing to support overall supply growth despite slower growth in new IEN registrants compared with previous years. First-time renewal rates among IENs have improved and an increasing proportion are registering as RNs only. However, new IENs continue to report lower employment rates than Ontario-educated nurses and are increasingly employed in long-term care. These findings highlight the growing importance of IENs to Ontario's health care system. More details can be found in the highlights below and in the *Nursing Statistics Report 2026*.

IENs Continue to Drive Growth in the Nursing Supply

Internationally educated nurses continue to be a key driver of growth in the nursing supply. The IEN renewals increased by nearly 80%, from 19,892 in 2021 to 35,635 in 2026. These nurses now account for 18.1% of all nurse renewals, up from 11.8% in 2021. During the past five years, growth in the nursing supply has been heavily influenced by increases in new IEN registrants. The number of new IEN registrants more than doubled from 2,457 in 2021 to a peak of 5,979 in 2024. However, new registrant data show new IEN numbers declined by 28.1% to 4,300 in 2025 compared to 5,979 in 2024, suggesting the rapid expansion observed before may be slowing.

Figure 2. Overall IEN renewals

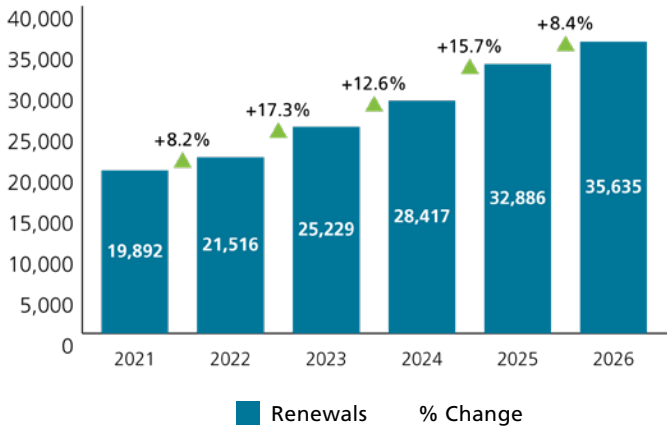
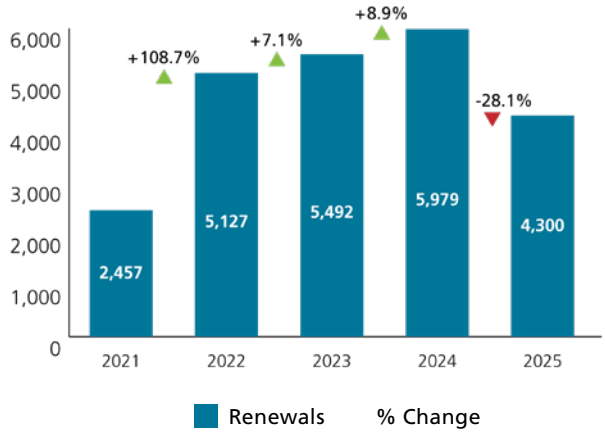


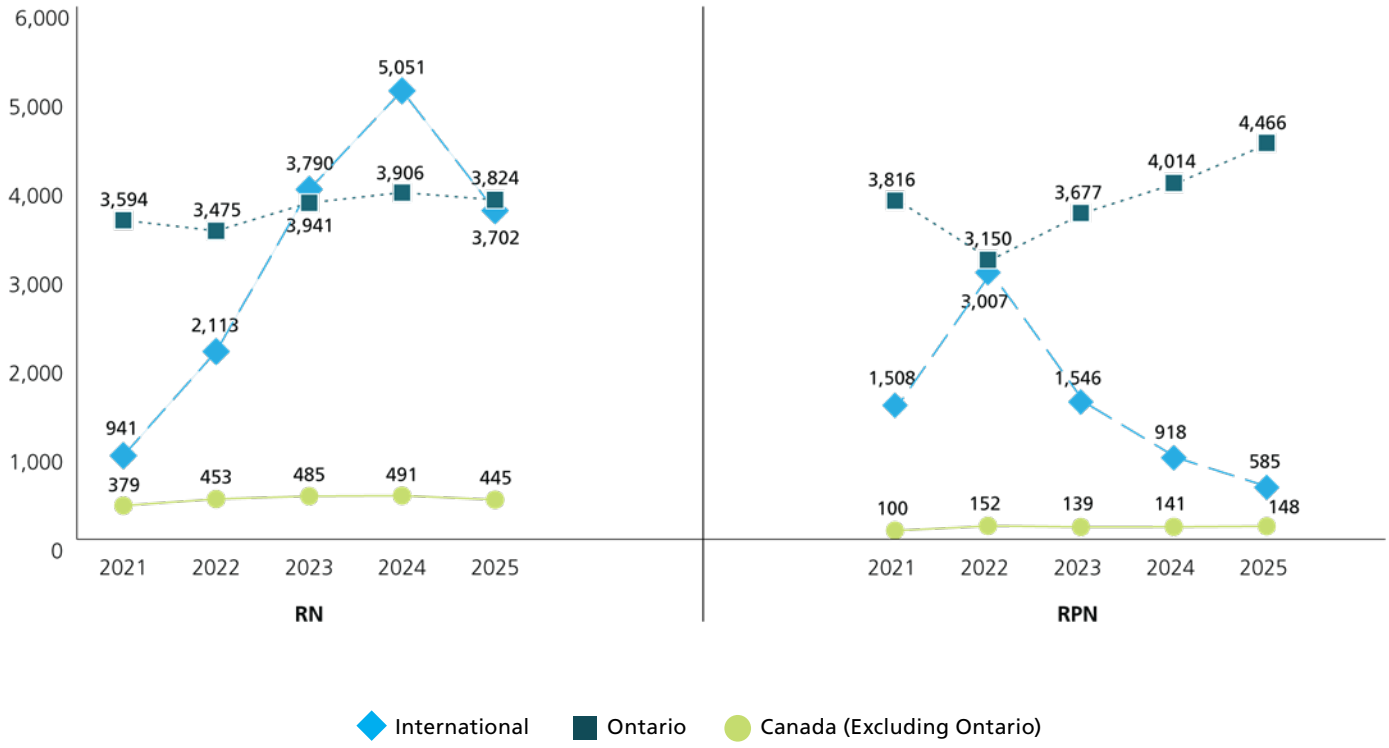
Figure 3. New IEN registrants



New IEN Registrants are Increasingly Registering as RNs

The number of new internationally educated RPN registrants has dropped from a peak of 3,007 in 2022 to 585 in 2025 (an 80.5% decrease). Conversely, there has been a steady increase in IENs amongst new RN registrants from 2021 to 2024. The IENs surpassed Ontario-educated new RN registrants in 2023 and 2024, but there was a decline in 2025. In 2025, 86.1% of new IEN registrants entered as RNs, compared with only 38.3% in 2021.

Figure 4. New registrants by location of education and nurse type



First-Time Renewal Rates for IENs Improve

The IEN first-time renewal rates fell from 91% in 2022 to 81.5% in 2024. By 2025 and 2026, the IEN first-time renewal rate rebounded to 92.3%, signaling improved retention. Although rates have improved, first-time renewal rates among IENs remain lower than those of Ontario-educated nurses (97.8% in 2026).

Table 2. First-time renewal rates by location of education

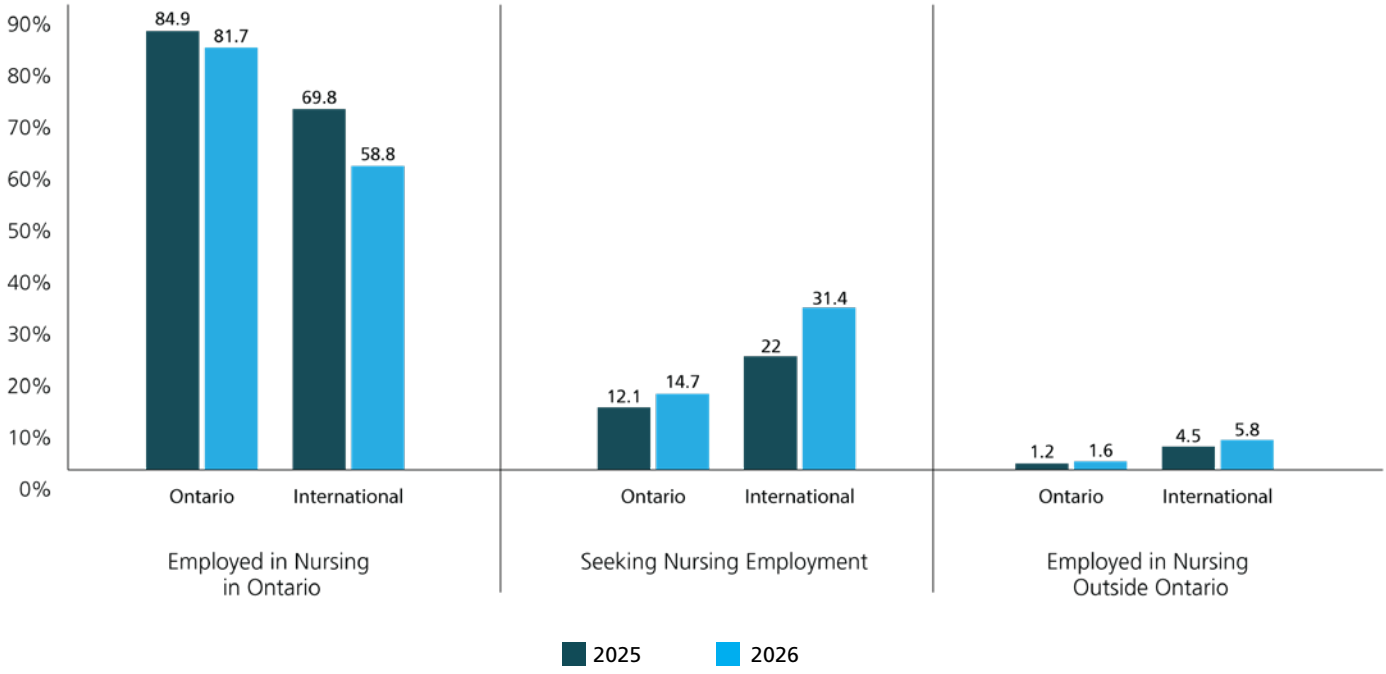
Nurse Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Ontario	**98.9%**	**98.5%**	**98.5%**	**98.4%**	**98.1%**	**97.8%**
International	**92.0%**	**91.0%**	**85.6%**	**81.5%**	**92.6%**	**92.3%**

Internationally Educated Nurses: 2026 Highlights

More New IENs Are Seeking Employment

Internationally educated nurses in their first year continue to report lower nursing employment rates than Ontario-educated graduates. In 2026, at first-time renewal, 58.8% of new IENs reported employment in nursing in Ontario compared with 81.7% of Ontario-educated nurses. New IENs at first-time renewal were also more likely to be seeking nursing employment (31.4% vs 14.7% of Ontario graduates) and 5.8% reported working outside Ontario compared to 1.6% of Ontario graduates in 2026. The proportion of new IENs seeking nursing employment has increased over the last two years from 22.0% in 2025 to 31.4% in 2026, suggesting challenges with entering the workforce, despite growth in renewals.

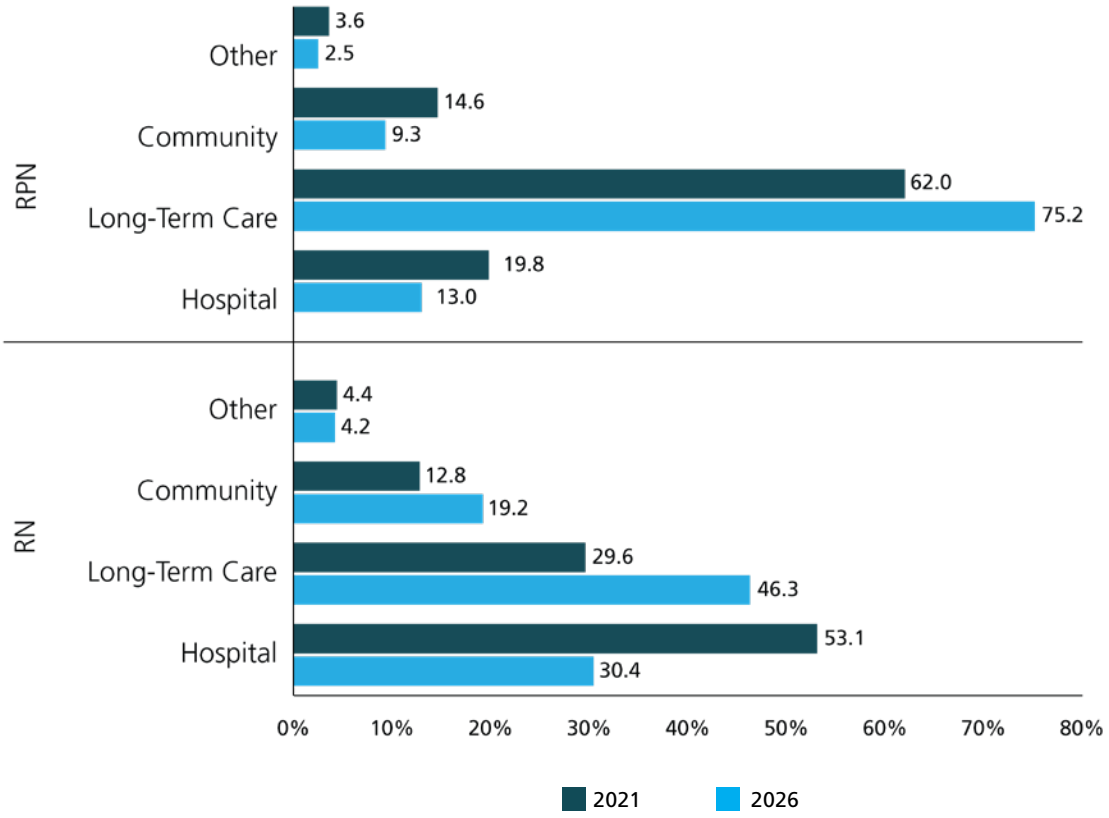
Figure 5. Employment status for first-time renewals by location of education



IENs are Increasingly Working in Long-Term Care

At first-time renewal, IENs are increasingly reporting jobs in long-term care (LTC). Historically, many RNs report employment positions in acute care settings; however, internationally educated RNs in their first year of renewal, are increasingly reporting LTC roles. Among internationally educated RNs in their first year of renewal, the share reporting employment in LTC increased from 29.6% in 2021 to 46.3% in 2026. Hospital positions declined from 53.1% to 30.4% during the same period. For internationally educated RPNs, LTC positions increased from 62.0% in 2021 to 75.2% in 2026 and hospital positions decreased from 19.8% to 13.0% respectively. These findings suggest both RN and RPN IENs are becoming increasingly represented in LTC settings.

Figure 6. Employment positions reported by sector for first-time IEN renewals by nurse type



Overall, there is strong supply growth and improved first-time renewal rates for IENs, alongside shifting employment outcomes. Internationally educated nurses remain a critical part of the nursing supply and workforce and are increasingly registering as RNs. While first-time renewal rates improved, new IENs have lower rates of nursing employment and are increasingly concentrated in LTC settings.

Explore more nursing statistics:

Nursing Statistics Report 2026
Nursing Statistics Report 2026: Appendix A
Nursing Statistics Report 2026: Appendix B
Nursing Statistics Report 2026: Appendix C