

what we know...



We envision a caring and equitable community where everyone thrives.

Introduction and Research Goals

From July to November 2016, the Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership (GWLIP) conducted research to:

- Better understand the needs and experiences of recent immigrants in Guelph and Wellington.
- Produce actionable recommendations to improve the social and economic inclusion of immigrants in Guelph and Wellington.

The research investigated the following questions:

Do immigrants in Guelph and Wellington have...

- Resources to meet basic needs?
- Access to services?
- A sense of belonging and community connection?
- Education, training, and skill development opportunities?
- Meaningful employment?

Background

The GWLIP is a large coalition of individuals and organizations addressing the social and economic challenges that immigrants face. We envision a caring and equitable community where everyone can thrive.

This research was undertaken to provide updated *local* information to help guide planning for the GWLIP's next steps in our work in the community. The study focused on immigrants who had been in Canada for 10 years or less because this is the period in which most support is needed and in which access to information can be most challenging.

The research was guided by a theory of change, developed by the GWLIP in 2015, which identified gaps in existing data, and describes the underlying assumptions and logical process of achieving our vision.

Methods

The study used a mixed methods approach to gather data from a broad range of immigrants, as well as deeper insight into the stories and experiences of a few. The following qualitative and quantitative methods were employed concurrently:

- Review of existing local, provincial, and national data
- Survey administered online and in hard-copy to 218 respondents in Guelph and Wellington County through convenience sampling
- 2 Focus group discussions
- 5 Phone interviews

Face validity and content validity techniques were used to assess the reliability of the survey tool. Special care was taken to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided by participants in this research.

Limitations

The results of this research should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size and the convenience sampling methodology chosen. Researchers relied heavily on service providers, particularly in the local settlement agencies, to recruit participants with the result that the sample is influenced by the client eligibility criteria of these service agencies, and skewed for those who are already aware of at least one support service provider.

Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership 2016 Immigrant Survey and Research Report

Brief Demographic Profile

In 2011, there were 208,360 people living in Guelph Wellington. Immigrants born outside of Canada made up 21 % of Guelph's population and 11 % of Wellington County's. Between 2006 and 2011, approximately 700 newcomers immigrated directly to Guelph-Wellington every year.

Between 2011 and 2015, the majority of permanent residents arriving to the area came under the economic class and held a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree. The manufacturing and educational services sectors are the largest employers of immigrants in Guelph and Wellington. The top non-official languages spoken in Guelph in 2011 were Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Italian, and Polish. In Wellington County, they were German, Dutch, Polish, Punjabi, and Italian.

Key Findings

Primary data collection reveals that:

- 77% of survey respondents reported feeling welcome "often" or "always" in Guelph and Wellington. 81% indicated that they have friends from different religions and cultures.
- Up to about one third of respondents feel out of place in certain contexts - most strikingly at work, school, and in neighbourhoods - due to their culture, language, race or religion.
- 65% of respondents reported being employed. However, almost half of those (44%) are not working in their area of education or training.
- Of the 36% of respondents who were not working, 47% identified transportation as a barrier to employment. Language issues and lack of networks were also mentioned.
- Respondents have a high level of awareness of health, education and settlement services in the region; but less so of employment, financial or housing services.
- 58% of respondents find housing to be either "somewhat affordable", or "not affordable". However, few are aware of financial (58%) or housing (57%) supports, and less than half of them have accessed these services.
- Large numbers of survey participants reported "good" or "excellent" physical (71%) and mental (78%) health, and 98% reported feeling safe "always" or "often".
- Only 58% of survey respondents said that they "always" had access to health food, the remaining 42% responding that they had access to healthy food "often", "sometimes", "rarely", or "never".

Permanent Residents in Guelph and Wellington by Immigration Category, 2011-2015

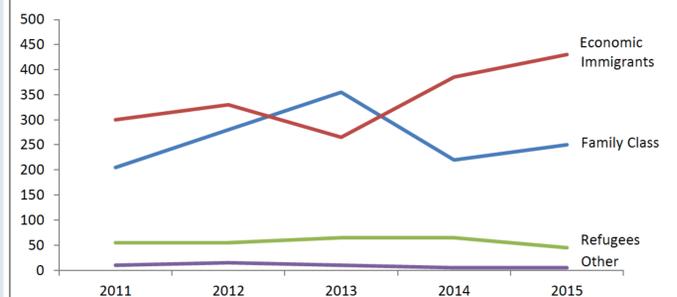


Figure 1. Permanent residents by immigration category, 2011-2015. Source: Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada, 2016.

Percent of Survey Respondents Who Accessed Support Services in Guelph and Wellington County

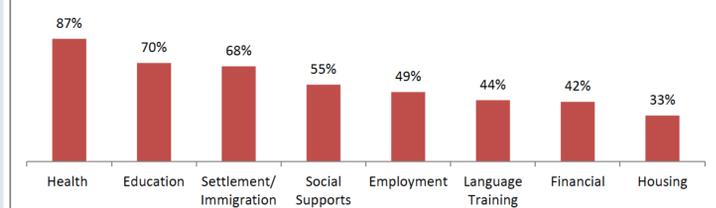


Figure 2. Percent of respondents who accessed support services in Guelph-Wellington. Source: LIP Immigrant Survey, 2016. *Only respondents who reported being aware of a service are included in these proportions.

Next Steps

- The final report and accompanying recommendations for action will be presented at the GWLIP Annual Event on March 29, 2017, and available as of spring 2017 at www.guelphwellingtonlip.ca.
- The results and recommendations will be shared widely with relevant stakeholders in Guelph-Wellington, including front-line workers, service planners, policy makers, political leaders, research participants, and the general public.
- This research and accompanying recommendations will help to determine the future activities undertaken by the GWLIP to improve social and economic inclusion of immigrants in Guelph and Wellington.

Project Contributors

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Toward Common Ground



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