

LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP GUELPH-WELLINGTON



The Local Immigration Partnership is a coalition of over 30 organizations seeking to enhance coordination and collaboration around newcomer integration in Guelph and Wellington County. We

believe that every organization affects newcomers one way or another, and we bring together community organizations, school boards, government bodies, business associations, health providers, and others with the shared goal of creating a more welcoming and inclusive community. We support strategic planning and research at the community level and improve coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration.

The pandemic brought about an added layer of challenges for newcomers. Travel restrictions and the implementation of 'social bubbles' have resulted in increased isolation for many who were left with limited networks and contacts. Newcomers, being new to their workplaces, might also have been disproportionately affected by layoffs. Thankfully, **we're also seeing an increased recognition of the value of immigrants' contributions to society.** Temporary foreign workers in essential services are suddenly more visible, and this brings attention to the need to give them rights and a pathway to permanence. Workforce gaps in healthcare are also highlighting the systemic barriers preventing internationally-trained medical professionals from practicing here, and the urgency to remedy to those inequalities.

One of our key priorities is to address some myths and misconceptions about what immigrants need. **Newcomers are not a homogeneous, monolithic group of people.**

The only thing that they all have in common is that they were not born in Canada and yet at some point decided to call it home. Apart from that, it can be misleading to generalize. When it comes to housing, for example, newcomers face a diversity of barriers. While some will require translation or financial assistance, others' main challenge might be that they don't have a credit history or a rental reference. We need to widen our perspective on what newcomers look like or need.

"We dream of an equitable and welcoming community; not only for immigrants, but for everyone. We can only move forward when we all move together."

How can you make a difference?

Think about the ways that you or your organization interact with newcomers and immigrants. Place yourself in their shoes. How can you support their journey?

