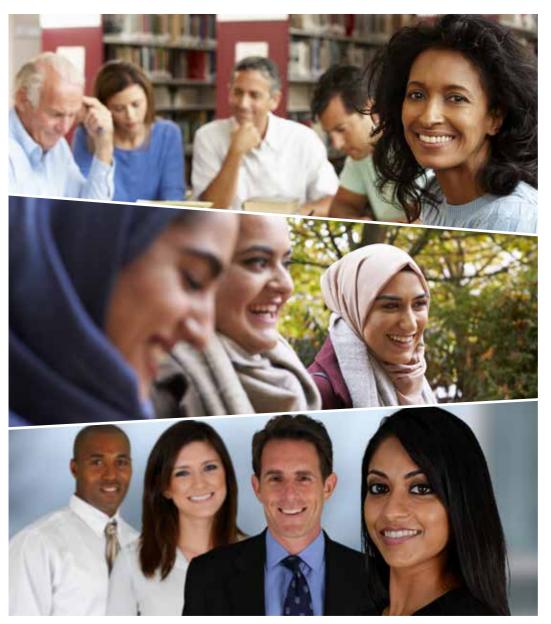




2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy

Celebrating diversity. Strengthening community.





Frank Ścarpitti City of Markham



Regional Councillor Jack Heath City of Markham



Regional Councillor Jim Jones City of Markham



Regional Councillor Joe Li City of Markham



Regional Councillor Nirmala Armstrong City of Markham



Mayor David Barrow Town of Richmond Hill



Maurizio Bevilacqua City of Vaughan



Chairman & CEO Wavne Emmerson



Regional Councillor Vito Spatafora Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor Michael Di Biase City of Vaughan





Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor Mario Ferri City of Vaughan





Mayor Tony Van Bynen Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor Gino Rosati City of Vaughan







Regional Councillor John Taylor Town of Newmarket



Margaret Quirk Town of Georgina



Naomi Davison Town of Georgina



Geoffrey Dawe Town of Aurora



Mayor Virginia Hackson Town of East Gwillimbury



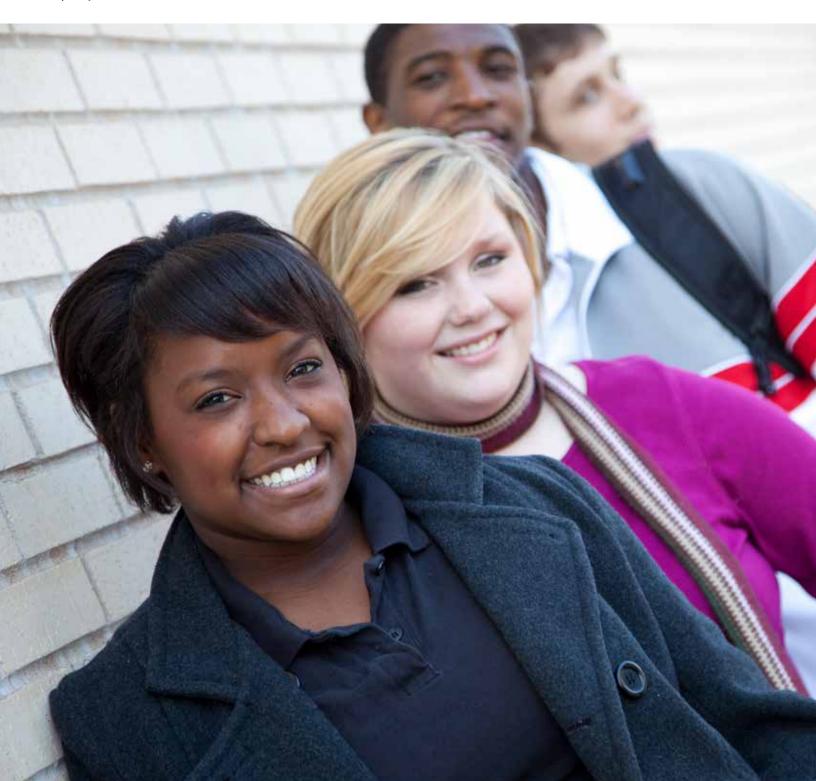
Mayor Steve Pellegrini Township of King



Mayor Justin Altmann Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

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Message from the Community Partnership Council Co-Chairs

Message from the Community Partnership Council Co-Chairs City of Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Job Skills Executive Director Nella Iasci

The Community Partnership Council is pleased to present this Newcomer Strategy, which supports our ongoing vision for the settlement and integration of newcomers in York Region.

We take pride in the work completed to date and feel confident our renewed focus and actions will help create a welcoming community that fully supports newcomers. Our efforts continue to focus on setting newcomers and their families up to succeed, encouraging diversity and addressing local challenges through awareness and action.

Strong partnerships play an important role in completing actions in the Newcomer Strategy, and we will continue to strengthen relationships with our communities and government partners. Working together, we can ensure York Region is a place that everyone is proud to call home.

Frank Scarpitti Mayor, City of Markham

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Nella Iasci

Executive Director, Job Skills



Community Partnership Council Members

Wayne Emmerson Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, York Region

Mayor Frank Scarpitti Co-Chair, the Community Partnership Council, Mayor, City of Markham

Mayor Tony Van Bynen Mayor, Town of Newmarket

Lina Bigioni Chief of Staff, Office of the Regional Chair, York Region

Katherine Chislett Commissioner, Community and Health Services, York Region

Angela Palermo Manager of Cultural Services, City of Vaughan

Sandra Tam Senior Business Development Officer, City of Markham

Tricia Myatt Manager Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs, Town Of Richmond Hill

Nella Iasci Co-Chair, the Community Partnership Council, Executive Director, Job Skills

Robert Hickey Executive Director, Catholic Community Services of York Region

Moy Wong-Tam Executive Director, Centre for Immigrant and Community Services of Ontario

Robert Cazzola Director, Education and Information Systems, COSTI Immigrant Services

Patricia Cousins Chief Executive Officer, Social Enterprise for Canada

Karen McNeil Director, Language Services, York Region, Centre for Education and Training

Joanne Jeffrey Senior Manager Education, Training and Outreach Division, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Kim Coulter Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Vocational Services

Al Wilson Executive Director, Workforce Planning Board of York Region and Bradford, West Gwillimbury



Beth Clarke Director, Employer Programs, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council Denis Gravelle Chair, Faculty of Continuing Education and Training, Seneca College Valerie Preston Professor, York University

Ricky Veerappan Inspector, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bureau, York Regional Police

Stav D'Andrea Chief Human Resources Officer, Mackenzie Health

Rebecca Shields Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Mental Health Association, York and South Simcoe

Cecil Roach Superintendent, Equity and Engagement, York Regional District School Board

Frances Bagley Associate Director, Strategic Leadership, York Region Catholic District School Board

Suzanne Harding Community Liaison Officer, Conseil scolaire Viamonde

Pedro Barata Senior Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives and Public Affairs, United Way of Toronto and York Region

lan Nyman General Manager, York Region Employment YMCA of Greater Toronto

Caitlin Andrews Regional Advisor, Midhurst Office, Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Baljit Bardai Service Delivery Manager, Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development

Employment and Training Division, Central Region

Jackie Smith Acting Operations Manager, Settlement, IGA and Multiculturalism, Ontario Region, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Lindsay Fung Manager, Citizen Services and Program Development, Service Canada York/Durham Region Sandra Cella Director, Central LHIN, Health System Planning and Design



Working Together

Local Immigration Partnership Initiative

In 2009, the Government of Canada selected York Region to lead their Local Immigration Partnership initiative. Local Immigration Partnerships are required to establish multisectoral Community Partnership Councils to develop and implement local settlement strategies. York Region was one of the first communities to be selected to lead a Local Immigration Partnership and the initiative has since spread across the country.

Objectives of a Local Immigration Partnership:

- Improve access to, and coordination of, immigrant immigration services
- Improve labour market outcomes for newcomers
- Improve social outcomes for newcomers
- Strengthen regional awareness and capacity to successfully integrate immigrants
- Build and support partnerships at the community level

The Community Partnership Council

No one organization can make the necessary changes to make a community more welcoming to newcomers. It takes collective action by many to make a difference.

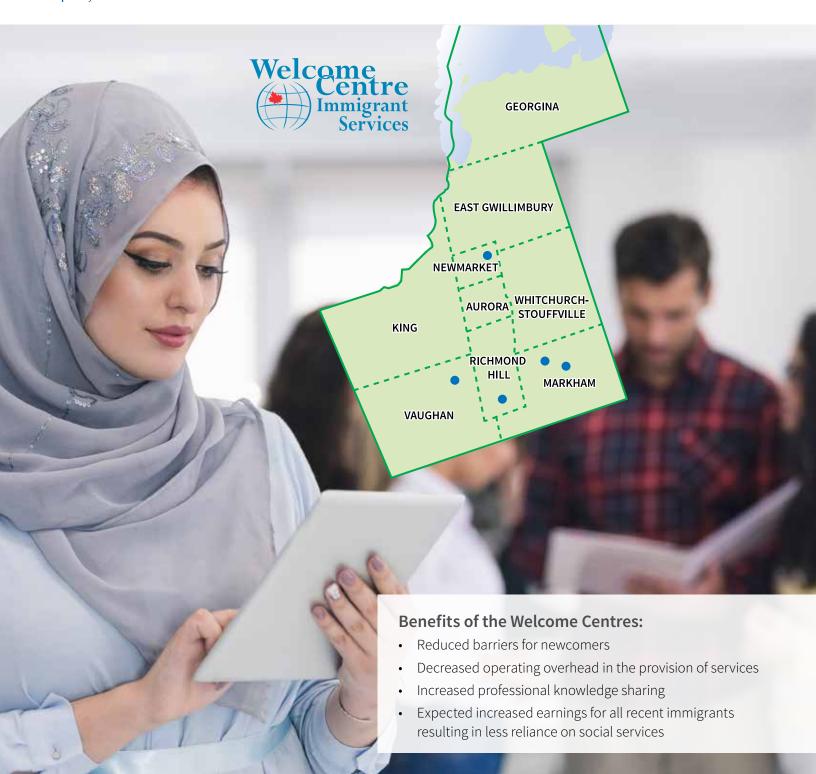
In 2010, York Region Council appointed a Community Partnership Council to lead the region's Immigration Settlement Strategy. As a result of the initial settlement strategy work and its collective actions, the York Region Community Partnership Council has grown to become a strong collaborative body with a common agenda.

Its members are the ambassadors of the strategy in their own organizations, with their partners and in their communities. The strategy's continued success depends on this type of community leadership and effort.

Members of the Community Partnership Council represent the following sectors:

- Welcome Centres
- Language Training
- Employment Skills and Training
- Labour Market Development
- Academic
- Police Services

- Health Services
- Education
- Francophone communities
- Social Services
- Municipalities, York Region, the Governments of Ontario and Canada



Supporting Newcomers

Coordinated Service System

The federal, provincial and municipal governments work together to provide various types of immigration services for newcomers to Canada.

Municipal governments do not have a constitutional responsibility for settlement and integration, yet they still play an important role as new immigrants connect with local services upon arrival in their new homes.

It is everyone's responsibility to be part of a welcoming system so that newcomers are able to support themselves, and contribute to the local economy and their new communities.

Throughout the region, newcomers can access a range of social supports and programs to help them reach their goals; for example, there are non-profit agencies that offer varied services, such as help finding employment or housing. Post secondary institutions provide educational and retraining opportunities through bridging and alternate career pathway programs and accreditation services.

Welcome Centres

York Region has five strategically located Welcome Centres that have specific responsibilites to welcome and settle all newcomers to the region.

Using a hub service delivery model funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, they are the main access point to the newcomer service system in York Region. They provide comprehensive settlement services and help all newcomers, including refugees, access resources, such as language training, skills evaluation, and citizenship awareness. Through this work they help build social networks for all newcomers.

A 2015 evaluation of the Welcome Centre model indicated that for every \$1.00 spent, Welcome Centres create \$3.50 in social value.1

YorkWelcome.ca

In addition to the Welcome Centres, the York Region immigration portal, YorkWelcome.ca provides comprehensive newcomer information and links to additional resources for newcomers, international students and service providers.

From 2006 to 2011, the majority of new immigrants to York Region came from China, Iran, India and Philippines.9



The top five languages spoken by new immigrants in York Region are: English, Mandarin, Chinese*, Farsi and Russian.8

In 2012, over 50% of those who landed in York Region had a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.11

York Region's population is diverse and belongs to more than 200 distinct ethnic origins.5 In 2016, an estimated 48% of the York Region population considered themselves as belonging to a visible minority group.

By 2031, it is projected to be 62%

In 2014, immigrants accounted for all net labour force growth in Canada.12

York Region's employment target is expected to grow from **565,000** in 2014 to **900,000** by 2041.4

10,000

On average, about 10,000 new immigrants landed in York Region annually between 2010 to 2015.7

York Region's population in 2016 was almost 1.2 million² and is expected to grow to

1.8 millio

in 2041.



61%

In 2012, 61% of those who landed in York Region were of working age between 24 and 65 years old.10

Opportunities for Newcomers in York Region

York Region's strategic priorities include creating and maintaining economic vitality and healthy communities.

York Region has a diverse population and a fast-growing workforce.

- In 2016, almost 560,000 immigrants were estimated to live in York Region more than the total populations of moderately sized cities like Halifax, Nova Scotia and London, Ontario.¹³
- Its general population grew 7.5% between 2011 and 2016, the second highest in the GTA after Halton at 9.3%.14
- Employment has outpaced the national, provincial and GTA rates, growing at an average of 3.1 per cent over the last five years. 15

York Region's Economic Development Action Plan 2016 encourages economic growth and prosperity for the entire region. Additionally, the Human Services Planning Board of York Region engages partners to advocate for affordable housing and employment opportunities for low- and moderate-income families.

A healthy community is both welcoming and inclusive. The Region is developing a Diversity and Inclusion Charter to promote understanding and respect for all the differences people experience.

Milestones

York Region Local Immigration PARTNERSHIP

LEADING CHANGE FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY



York Region appointed to lead Local Immigration Partnership

2010

- Community Partnership Council members appointed
- Research and public consulation on strategy development

First Immigrant Settlement Strategy developed

2011

YORK REGION LOCAL IMMICRATION PARTNERSHIP

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT STRATEGY



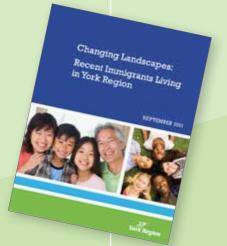
 2012 – 2015 Immigrant Settlement Strategy Collective Action plan begins

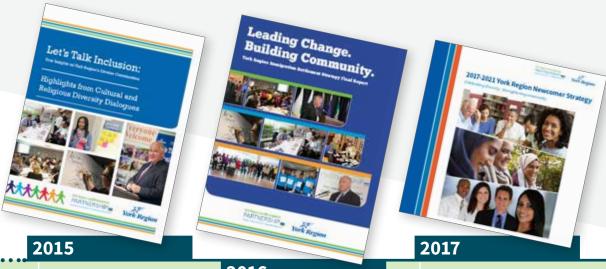
LEADING CHANGE FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY

First Gateway Conference for Internationally Educated Professionals

lork Region Pasting resid







- Immigrant Settlement Strategy Action plan completed in full, Community Partnership Term ends
- Second Gateway Conference for Internationally Educated **Professionals**



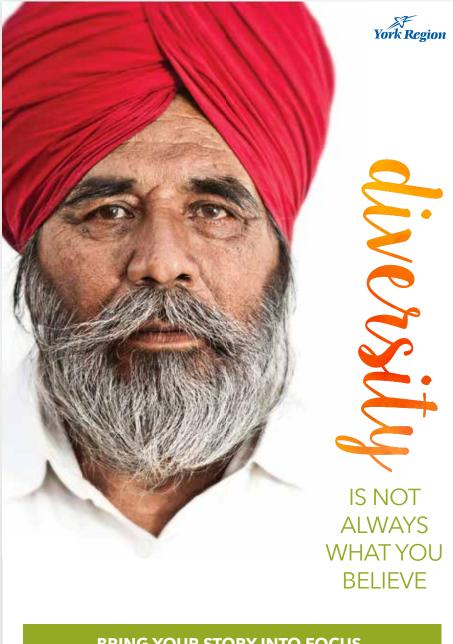


- 2016
- New term and new members of the Community Partnership Council
- Strategy refresh begins

- Development of refreshed Newcomer Strategy
- Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion Charter through community dialogues
- Third Gateway Conference for Internationally Educated Professionals

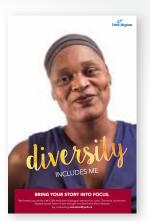


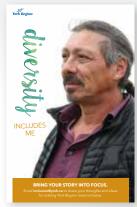


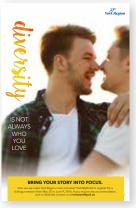


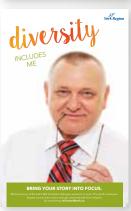
BRING YOUR STORY INTO FOCUS.

dialogue session from May 25 to June 9, 2016. If you require any accommodation due to disability contact us at inclusion@york.ca











Continuing the Strategy

Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Community

In April 2016, York Regional Council confirmed a new term of the Community Partnership Council. Members met in May and June of that year to discuss past efforts and successes. Using a process called Results Based Accountability, they identified gaps and opportunities to build on previous work and move the strategy forward to greater success.

The Community Partnership Council decided that efforts should focus on two broad community results: economic and social integration for newcomers to York Region.

Using the Results Based Accountability method helped them to define social and economic integration, measure results and identify new actions and determine the resources needed to put an action plan into place.

The decision to target two results commits the Community Partnership Council's energy to deal with the main issues for newcomers - finding good jobs to support their families, feeling at home in York Region and connecting to their community.

Diversity and Inclusion

One of the key recommendations of the first term of the Community Partnership Council was the development of a charter to promote diversity and inclusion. This commitment to promote understanding among different cultures and faiths is a necessary action for the Region to nurture its reputation as a welcoming and inclusive community.

In 2017, the Community Partnership Council restated its commitment to assist in the development of the Charter as the basis of its work.



Continuing the Strategy

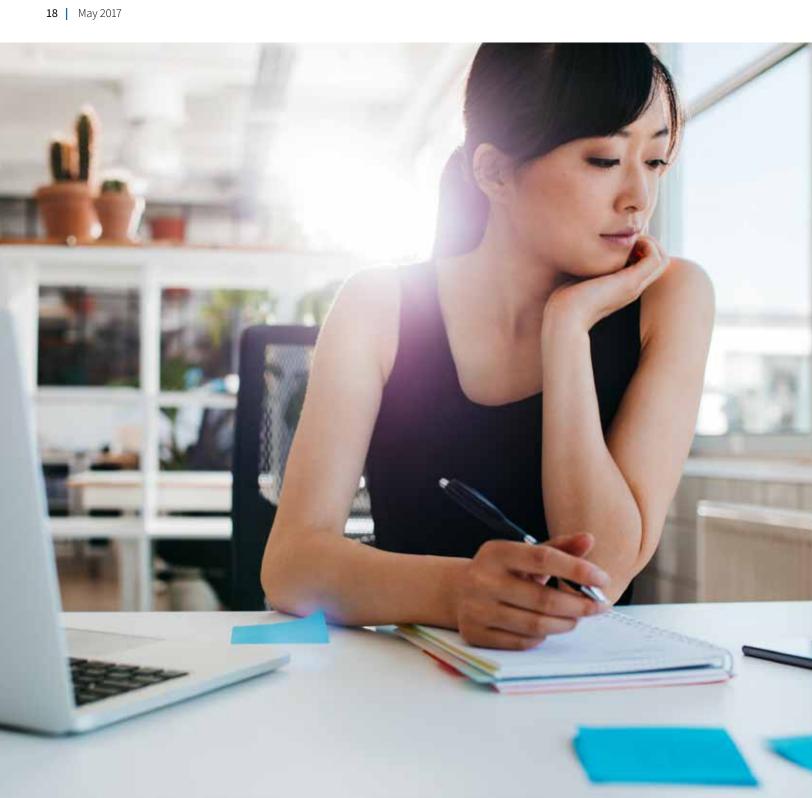
The 2017 - 2021 Newcomer Strategy aims to address both settlement and integration for recent immigrants, (those who have been in Canada for five years or less) as well as those who have been here between five and ten years. "Canadian experience has shown the critical period of settlement and integration can last as long as ten years." - Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Starting on Solid Ground, 2011

The Ongoing Vision for York Region

York Region is welcoming and inclusive – a cohesive community that openly receives newcomers and promotes social equity. It is a community that understands the needs of newcomers and facilitates their full participation in all aspects of community life, the economy and Canadian society.

Founding Priorities to Guide the York Region Newcomer Strategy

- Build community capacity to support adequate resources, partnerships, promotion of community awareness and acceptance of newcomers
- Continue to improve collaboration and knowledge across sectors and all levels of government
- Support the continued development of the Welcome Centre model and the York Region **Immigration Portal**
- Improve access for newcomers to York Region's labour market
- Help address issues of social isolation
- Consider language barriers and their impact on all areas of integration



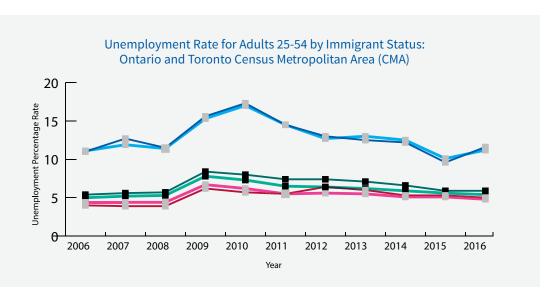
Economic Integration

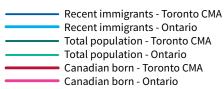
Newcomers experience economic integration when they feel:

- Valued for their contribution to the economic growth of the community
- Appropriately employed, considering their skills and education
- Engaged in economic activities to achieve a livable household income

After arriving in Canada, newcomers find it can take years before their incomes catch up to the rest of the population, despite their skills and education. The unemployment rate of newcomers is likely to be twice as high as the unemployment rate of the general population.¹⁶ Low-income rates are almost three times the rate of the rest of the population. 17

Many arrive without English language skills to practice their profession. Sometimes newcomers find it difficult to have their credentials or university education recognized by Canadian employers. Learning new systems, finding adequate housing and childcare can make it more difficult to obtain suitable employment and as a result, newcomers often take the first job that they can get. While this is not the case for every person coming to Canada, it is a common hurdle and one that the strategy will address.

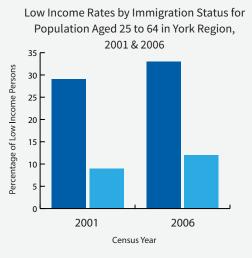




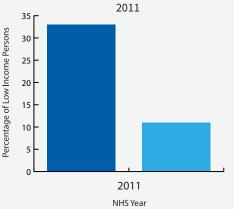
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006 to 2016.

- Notes: 1. "Recent Immigrants" refers to immigrants who landed within 5 years prior to the survey.
 - 2. Toronto CMA includes Toronto, York, Peel, Halton and

Comparison of Low Income Rates of Newcomers



Low Income Rates by Immigration Status for Population Aged 25 to 64 in York Region,



Newcomers Overall Population

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Censuses and 2011 National Household Survey.

Notes: 1. 2001 Census reports income data for year of 2000; 2006 Census reports that of 2005, 2011 NHS reports that of 2010.

2. Low Income Cut-Offs Before-Tax (LICO-BT) is used

3. Due the different methodologies, Census data should not be compared with NHS data.

Economic Integration

If so many newcomers are well educated and experienced, then why are more newcomers underemployed or unemployed or have lower incomes than the **general population?** The reasons vary but could include:

- Language skills are lacking
- Accreditation of previous education may not be recognized
- Newcomers may work two jobs making it difficult to get ahead and losing skills they arrived with
- Discrimination

Why do the rates vary from year to year?

Census data from Statistics Canada has shown that newcomers fared better economically in some years than others. There are reasons for this. In some years, the general economy was stronger so more newcomers were employed. The number of immigrants allowed into Canada and under what category (e.g., economic immigrant, family reunification, refugees) is set by the federal government each year. This may impact the job readiness of newcomers in a particular year. Changes to federal policies and funding for programs may also determine the economic success of newcomers at a particular point in time.

Economic Integration Collective Actions 2017-2021

Strengthen Newcomer Employability

- Host 3rd Internationally Educated Professionals Conference
- Develop a business case to Enhance Newcomer Employability
- Advocate for additional bridging programs, language training and accreditation opportunities

The next Internationally Educated Professionals Conference is planned for the fall of 2017. Its purpose is to provide Internationally Educated Professionals with a better understanding of York Region's employment landscape with workshops to improve skills in finding employment and understanding of the Canadian employment culture. There will also be a focus on employers helping them to understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion.

Some newcomers still struggle to find employment despite having good education and skills. The Community Partnership Council will develop a case management model to address this gap within the employment system. Newcomers within the program will be able to gain specific skills and training needed to secure employment. This approach will also provide coaching and follow-up once the individual is employed.

When the business case for the model is complete, working with our partners, we will identify sources of funding for implementation and advocate for additional resources to support training.

Promote Inclusive Workplaces

- Develop communications campaign to promote and disseminate Diversity and Inclusion Tools for employers
- Support the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Charter

A key feature of the 2017 Internationally Educated Professionals Conference will be a focus on employers to help them understand the benefits of diversity and inclusion and the tools that are available to assist them.

The Community Partnership Council will commit to actions developed under the Charter.

Economic Integration

This strategy aims to help newcomers achieve economic integration. To succeed, the strategy will address the issue of newcomers not just finding employment, but finding employment that is more in keeping with their skills and education. The strategy aims to help employers understand the value of a diverse workforce, particularly in the new global market.

It will not be easy nor will it be completed quickly, but significant changes can be made when everyone works together.

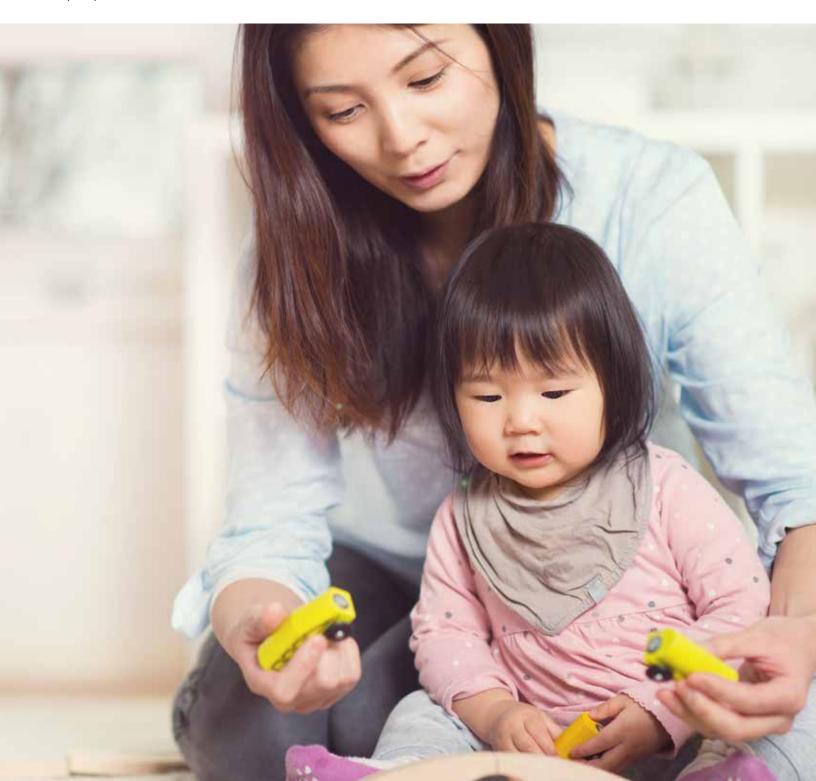
All members of the Community Partnership Council will contribute in some way to make things better. A detailed work plan will be developed in 2017 to explain how these actions will be put in place.

How will York Region demonstrate that improvements have been made?

Employment income and unemployment rates are the core indicators to show economic integration. 18

On an ongoing basis, York Region will track low income and unemployment rates for newcomers compared to the general population. Research will also be done to determine the percentage of newcomers considered to be underemployed compared to the general population. Underemployment refers to employed people who are in jobs that do not match their skills and education.

The strategy's measurement of success will be smaller differences in low income and underemployment rates between newcomers and the general population.



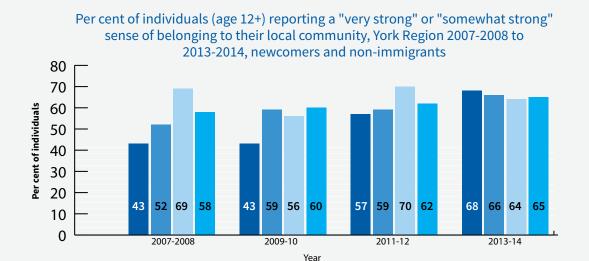
Social Integration

Newcomers who truly experience social integration:

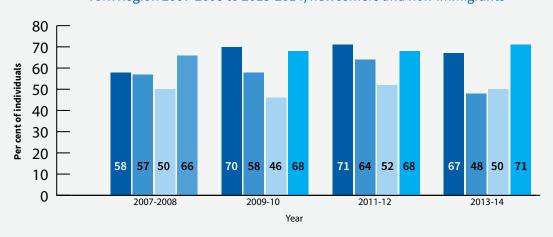
- Feel at home in York Region
- Connect and engage with their communities
- Access required services when and where they need them

Newcomers to Canada arrive with great optimism for their own and their children's futures. They have chosen to be here and are excited about the new lives they will build. The first few months however, can be overwhelming. Over time, the hope is that newcomers will feel comfortable and be a part of the York Region community. Finding a job, going to school, feeling good about living here, making friends and using available services are all elements of social integration.

Canadian research has shown that social belonging is an important part of a newcomer's settlement.¹⁹ In York Region, it is mostly a good news story, but there is still work to be done.

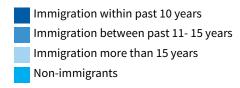


Per cent of individuals (age 12+) who perceive their health as "excellent" or "very good", York Region 2007-2008 to 2013-2014, newcomers and non-immigrants



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007-2014, Statistics Canada, Ontario Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

*Interpret with Caution: High Variability



Social Integration

York Region residents have been surveyed about their perception of the impact immigration has in this community for several years. Does it have a positive or negative effect on York Region?

When comparing survey results from 2015 to 2016, there were increases in the belief that immigration had a positive impact in the labour market, community engagement, the local economy, heritage, leisure and culture. This is an encouraging increase and one that the Community Partnership Council through its support for social inclusion will continue to work on.

As shown in the charts on the previous page, the Canadian Community Health Survey captured recent newcomers' feelings of belonging in two different ways: by asking newcomers about their 'sense of belonging' to their local community and by asking how they rated their heath. In this case, health means not only an absence of disease, but also physical, mental and social well-being.

The rate of newcomers and non-immigrants reporting their overall sense of belonging as "very good" or "excellent" is similar. While the perception of sense of belonging remains high over the years and very comparable to the general population, immigrants' perception of their health declines over time.

In any particular year, changes to the economy, attitudes of other residents, availability of additional support services such as language training, mental health services or childcare may determine if newcomers feel they belong.



Social Integration Collective Actions 2017-2021

Address Information Needs

- Update yorkwelcome.ca
- **Develop resource of** services available to newcomers
- Map community assets including formal and informal services

Service systems can be challenging to navigate. To address this, the YorkWelcome.ca portal will be refreshed to better meet the needs of newcomers and service providers.

Working with community partners, a one-stop resource will be developed for newcomer services.

York Region and other stakeholders are currently mapping community assets, which include service providers, community associations, and public institutions such as schools, faith groups, and libraries. Coordinating efforts could lead to a comprehensive resource map and easier access to services.

Increase Local Service Planning

- Advocate for Welcome **Centre community** hub model
- **Develop local** capacity to respond to newcomers needs

Welcome Centres are unique hubs for newcomer settlement, language and employment services. Advocating for Welcome Centres to expand and sustain the services offered within their locations will allow newcomers to access a greater range of services.

York Region's local municipalities have knowledge and experience in planning and programming for newcomers, as do Welcome Centres and other local service providers. Creating an opportunity with these partners to support local planning will assist with community engagement and capacity building.

York Region is a partner with York University on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council project grant to better understand and complement the newcomer settlement process.

Data will be updated using 2016 Census information and other sources to better understand the profile of immigrants arriving in York Region.

Strengthen Social Cohesion

Identify and support local opportunities to strengthen social cohesion within communities

The goal of social cohesion is to positively engage all residents within a community. This is accomplished by promoting welcoming and inclusive communities to all residents.

The Community Partnership Council will continue to work on their original mandate to build social inclusion by securing funds to support community groups in developing or promoting projects that help build welcoming and inclusive communities. Municipalities already support this work by hosting and supporting festivals and cultural events. Working with municipalities, we will develop a project to further promote welcoming and inclusive communities.

Social Integration

This strategy aims to help newcomers and all residents feel like they belong. Isolation and a lack of ability to connect with the resources they need impacts the social integration of immigrants. It is important that newcomers or immigrants who need health and other services know how, when and where to access them. To succeed, this strategy must help newcomers remain optimistic about living in Canada and York Region.

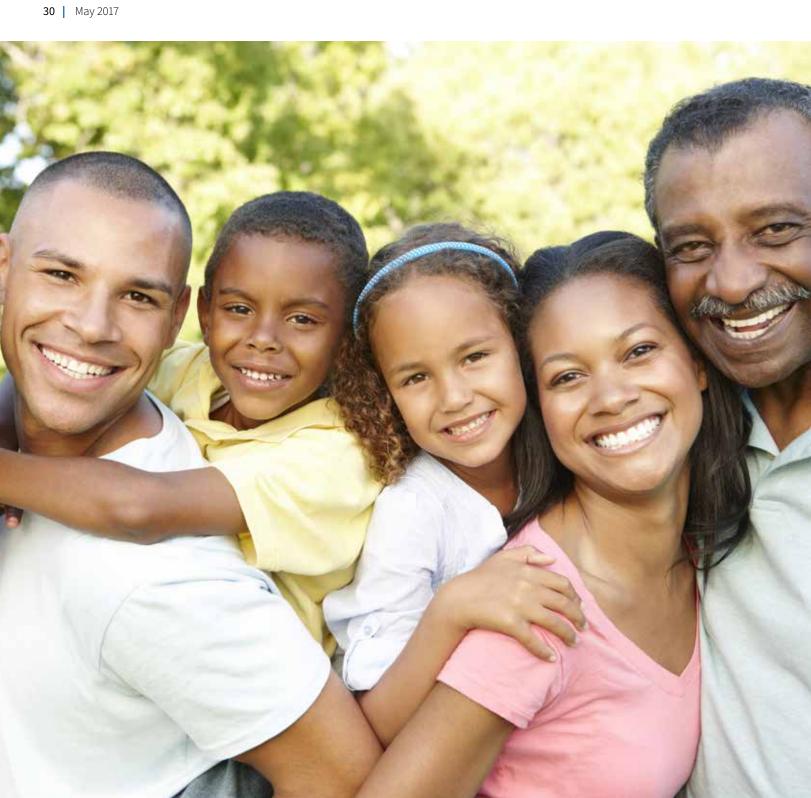
The chart to the left shows the collective actions the Community Partnership Council and York Region will take to help newcomers not just settle but socially integrate into the community and feel comfortable calling York Region home. In particular, the strategy will focus on advocating for diversity and inclusion by engaging with the community in different ways and helping York Region and its partners adopt the Diversity and Inclusion Charter. A detailed work plan will be developed in 2017 to explain how these actions will come about and how the Community Partnership Council will follow-up to see what kind of impact was made.

How will York Region demonstrate that improvements have been made?

Social integration is different for everyone, and there are many different ways to show how newcomers perceive how comfortable they feel in York Region. Continuing to track the perception of social belonging and overall health will be the best way to demonstrate improvements for those who live in York Region.

Measuring diversity and inclusion or social cohesion to ensure York Region continues to be recognized as a welcoming community is more complex and will require additional research and analysis in the years ahead.

The strategy's measurement of success will be to show that newcomers report a high level of social belonging and overall health over time when compared to the general population.



Going Forward

Canada is a nation of immigrants and has been for over 500 years. With the exception of the indigenous peoples of Canada, everyone came here from somewhere else and built lives for themselves where they could feel at home and connect with others. It can be difficult for some Canadians to recognize that others who came afterwards will need to find their way as residents and citizens of Canada. Opportunities to build respect and acceptance by others to strengthen social cohesion will need to be encouraged.

In developing this strategy, York Region hopes to demonstrate its continued and sincere commitment to leadership on settlement and integration issues for newcomers so all residents can thrive. Each member of the Community Partnership Council is determined to move this strategy forward.

In the coming months, the Community Partnership Council will set up working groups to accomplish the goals and vision set out in this document. A detailed work plan will be developed to show how the actions will be put into place. The plan will be reported upon. During the course of implementing the strategy, advocacy activities to support stakeholders, partners and newcomers will continue.

Integration issues are complex and, undoubtedly, additional research will be needed as the plan moves forward. Community feedback will also be sought.

These collaborative actions to support economic and social integration will take shape over time. York Region will demonstrate the successful changes and the impact that its partnerships have made.

For more information, please visit YorkWelcome.ca

End Notes

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- York Regional Local Immigration Partnership, Leading Change. Building Community. York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy Final Report, 2015.
- ⁶ The Regional Municipality of York, Corporate Services Long Range Planning, Population Cultural Forecast, 2016 to 2031.
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory and Census Division of Intended Destination, 2010 to 2015.
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- 15 The Regional Municipality of York, Planning and Economic Development Branch and Statistic's Canada Labour Force Survey, 3-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.
- ¹⁶ Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006 2016
- Statistics Canada 2001 and 2006 Censuses and 2011 National Household Survey
- ¹⁸ Employment Rate of Immigrants An Update since the Recession Ray D. Bollman, FACTSHEET P2P October 2015.
- ¹⁹ Increasing Newcomers' Sense of Belonging, K. Neufeld et al October 2016, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.





Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

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