



Social Research &
Planning Council

Operated by United Way Perth-Huron

Embracing Diversity

A Report on Newcomers to
Perth and Huron Counties

Report Summary for Employers

2017

In 2015, only 5.8% of recent immigrants settled in rural areas. This presents a challenging situation for rural communities that must now offer ways to not only attract newcomers to their communities, but also ensure they stay.

The Social Research and Planning Council (SRPC) is committed to understanding how rural communities, such as Perth and Huron Counties, can welcome and integrate newcomer families more effectively. The following information has been gleaned from the “Embracing Diversity: Newcomer Experiences in Perth and Huron Counties”

report, which was published in 2017. The findings are further informed by past reports, such as the 2015 Newcomer Outreach and Needs Assessment (NONA) report and the 2017 EmployerOne Survey.

The Government of Canada estimates that 100% of Canada’s workforce growth over the next 15 years will come from immigration. Unfortunately, not all of Canada is poised to benefit from the presence of New Canadians.

Huron Immigration Partnership Brief, 2010

Building on information previously gathered from the 70 NONA survey respondents, focus groups were held with 22 newcomers who were asked about their experiences and challenges when settling in Perth and Huron Counties. The researchers also collected information and experiences from other members of the community, including community organizations, service providers, and employers. These stakeholders were interviewed to dive deeper into the challenges they face in supporting newcomers.

Key issues facing the region include newcomer recruitment and retention. With an aging population and a declining workforce, newcomer integration holds the key to creating sustainable, vibrant and dynamic communities. Both Perth and Huron Counties have had negative net migrations, meaning more individuals have left these Counties than have come into them.

Report Highlights:

Newcomer Experiences

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The main draw for newcomers to move to Perth and Huron Counties.

Top newcomer difficulties:

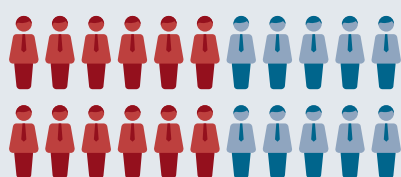


Limited English language skills

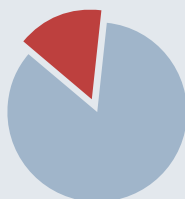


Lack of relevant job opportunities

Unemployed newcomers (in focus group):



12 of 22 (Focus Group, 2017)



11 of 70
(NONA Survey, 2015)

"I think it's impossible. I have a master's degree in teaching from Korea. It's not useful here. I'm trying to find other fields."

Focus group participant



The number of participants in the focus group whose previous education, training or work experience was recognized here.

Experiences and Training:

Prior to arriving in Canada



Trades



Education Sector



Medical



Personal Support Worker



Engineering



Accounting



Driving

Now



Processing



Manufacturing



Utilities



Health



Sales/Service



Trades

Employer Experiences

Interviewed employers had few to no newcomers working for them, but expressed interest in hiring newcomers and creating a more inclusive workforce.

Job posting channels employers found to be ineffective at recruiting newcomers:

local newspapers; online platforms (i.e. Kijiji, ESL websites); professional job boards; Kraft-Heinz Job Action Centre.

Key competencies employers are looking for when hiring for hard-to-fill positions:

1

- Work ethic
- Dedication
- Dependability



2

- Self-motivation
- Ability to work with little-to-no supervision



3

- Teamwork
- Interpersonal ability



Training can be provided to develop many industry-specific skills as long as soft skills are present in a candidate. (2017 EmployerOne Survey)

Employers interviewed acknowledged they need to be more flexible and:

- modify hiring requirements
- review and revise educational requirements

They will consider:

- increasing probation period to account for longer training and on-boarding processes
- starting a mentorship program

"...We would need to network with agencies in the community to identify (possible) barriers and work toward solutions to provide support for newcomers to encourage employment."

Employer

How to assist newcomers in becoming more employable:

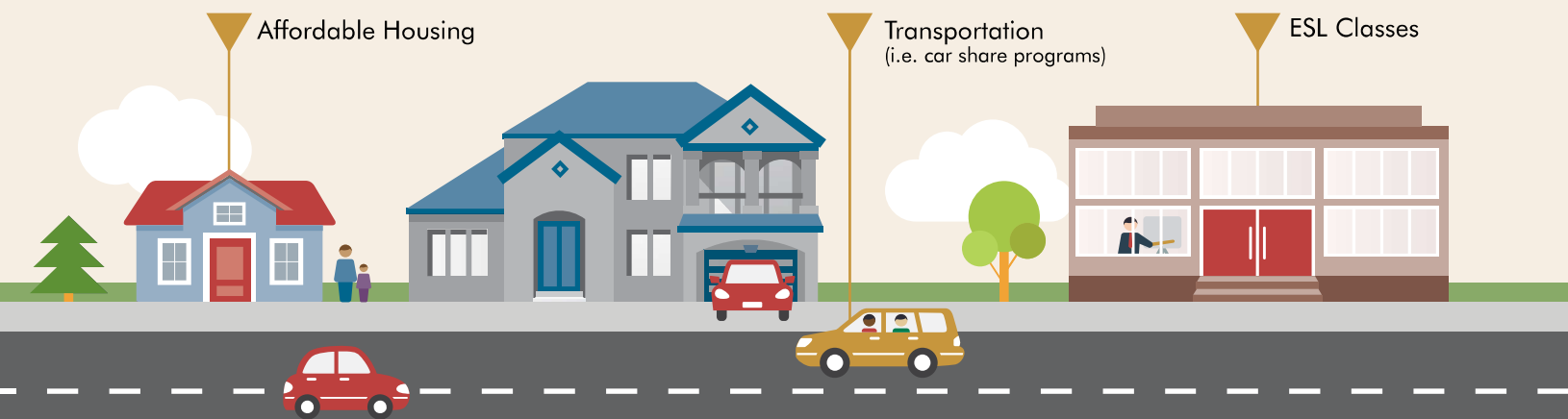
Affordable Housing



Transportation
(i.e. car share programs)



ESL Classes



While the prospect of finding work elicits interest in moving to the region, previous newcomer recruitment strategies have found that wages were not high enough to generate a desire for newcomers to relocate to this area.

\$16.47

The hourly **living wage** in Perth and Huron, as calculated by the SRPC



How can you make your workplace more welcoming to newcomers?



Develop a buddy system for newcomer with another staff member



Ask newcomer about their experiences and listen to what they have to say



Encourage newcomers and staff members to extend invitations to one another to social gatherings and community functions

About the SRPC

The Social Research and Planning Council (SRPC), operated by the United Way Perth-Huron, is comprised of community representatives who are dedicated to the collection, analysis, and distribution of information relating to social trends and issues in Perth and Huron Counties. The SRPC approaches its work in two ways:

- Commissioning research into specific social issues
- Developing recommendations for community improvement based on local findings, and working collaboratively with community members to implement change

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For more information about newcomers experiences, read the full report online at www.perthhuron.unitedway.ca/srpc/newcomer-report