




2024 Partner Survey

Summary Report



The Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region (IP) is a collective of community partners that collaboratively develop and implement strategies to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community. Over 100 community service, business, municipal and post-secondary organizations and Waterloo Region residents are engaged to address organizational, systems and policy issues that affect immigrants in our community.

This report outlines findings from the IP Partner Survey conducted in October 2024. It is part of IP's Data and Evaluation Strategy, which aims to understand the settlement and community integration of immigrants in Waterloo Region and how the collaborative work of the Partnership is contributing to their success. The findings from this survey will contribute to the development of the Partnership's strategic plan for 2025.

Summary of Findings

We heard from 44 partners¹ in October 2024, with an invitation going to all members of the Immigration Partnership Council, Steering Groups and Working Groups, as well as subscribers to the Immigration Waterloo Region Weekly email updates.

¹ In terms of a breakdown of the 44 Partner Survey respondents, 80% were a member of IP Council, steering groups or committees. Breaking that down further, 45% were on IP Council or one of the committees of Council (27% of respondents were members of IP Council specifically), 18% were part of SSG steering group or committees, 14% were part of WSG steering group or committees, and 20% were part of BSG steering group or committees. Demographically, IP aims to have at least a third of all Council, steering group and committee members to have been born outside of Canada and have personal experience of immigration. In this survey, 37% of respondents from these groups had not been born in Canada. A similar 36% of respondents self-identified as being from a racialized group.

Partners were asked about their engagement with the Immigration Partnership²

In general, respondents expressed significant engagement in the Partnership and saw significant impacts for them and their organizations. However, compared to 2022 Partner Survey responses, there were a number of areas where 2024 responses were less positive than in the past.

Partners that strongly agree that, in the past 12 months, as a result of their connection or collective work through the Immigration Partnership, they...	2024
Am committed to the success of the Immigration Partnership	98%
Have aligned our vision or activities with those of the Immigration Partnership	70%
Feel motivated to contribute and follow-through with actions of the Immigration Partnership	88%
Have aligned internal policies with those of the Immigration Partnership	↓ 45%
Have an increased awareness of the services offered in the community	↓ 83%
Have increased knowledge of newcomer needs and service pathways	86%
Make more or better referrals to other organizations	70%
Receive more or better referrals from other organizations	↓ 38%
Have developed new (formal or informal) partnerships to better serve immigrants	68%
Work better with settlement agencies	↓ 50%
Get better feedback about our services and programs from immigrant clients	52%
Have implemented specific initiatives to support newcomer welcoming and inclusion	↓ 66%
Work more collaboratively with other organizations	↓ 68%
Have greater communication with other partners about immigrant needs/issues	73%
Have greater coordination around immigrant needs/issues	67%
Have acquired stronger abilities and tools for welcoming and responding to newcomer needs	↑ 74%
Have made organizational changes that are positively impacting immigrants and others	57%

When we examine how partners who are immigrants themselves responded differently from those who were born in Canada, immigrant respondents were much more likely to say they receive more or better referrals, and to say that Waterloo Region has become more welcoming of immigrants in the past 12 months.

(Note: Because of the small response numbers for this comparison, we haven't included specific numbers and only mentioned generalized insights about larger differences.)

² These questions had a 5-option scale including "A great deal", "Quite a bit", "Somewhat", "A little bit" and "Not really". The table includes responses that more strongly agreed with each statement ("A great deal" and "Quite a bit" responses). A black arrow indicates a larger difference from findings in 2022, and a bolded red arrow indicates a much larger difference from findings in 2022.

The overall mission and impact of the Immigration Partnership

We asked respondents about the overall mission and impact of the Partnership. While respondents generally tended to feel the Immigration Partnership was indeed focused on the critical areas, it was a catalyst, and achieving our mission, most responses were generally lower than in the past.

	2024
The Immigration Partnership is focused on the critical issues for immigrants in our community	↓ 86%
The Immigration Partnership is a catalyst for effective changes that help immigrants reach their full potential and help create and sustain a thriving community for everyone	↓ 71%
Overall, we are achieving the IP Mission (“We work together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community.”)	↓ 67%
Waterloo Region has become more welcoming of immigrants in the past 12 months compared to previous years	↓ 36%
Across our community, immigration and engaging/supporting immigrants is increasingly seen as a priority in planning and implementing policies, services and systems.	↓ 57%

Partners were asked about the greatest Impact of the Immigration Partnership

They shared wide variety of impacts within a specific pillar or across the whole Partnership or related to the experiences of individual immigrants or for respondents, their organization, systems or the community overall.

“My org has staff on all pillars, council, and some of the subcommittees. We see incredible value in being engaged with IP in multiple different ways. The connection to other agencies, sectors, grassroots orgs, community individuals etc. means that the community can all work together to support immigrants and refugees more holistically. I have seen a lot of positive change come from agencies attending steering group meetings, learning about issues, and about changes they can make within their orgs to make things easier for newcomers - even small things, they have a ripple effect.”


“IP has been the go-to organization as it relates to the social service systems for newcomers and refugees. Particularly helpful for our organization in connecting with a variety of sector stakeholders and betters our own understanding of what's happening in community for newcomers and refugees in a more personal way (particularly, in person meetings!). Data provided by IP team members is always thorough and helpful in grounding what we know about community challenges for newcomers & refugees.”

“The partnerships voice also matters very much - a collective group communicating about the positive impact of newcomers to our region is vital.”

“The greatest impact has been to bring awareness to all things immigration in Waterloo Region. [...] Education and resources are key to IP's role. It is where impact is noticeable. Also, being a resource. Staff having a big picture understanding helps partners to access valuable information for our work.”

“IP has the power to unite diverse stakeholders across various sectors, working as a cohesive force for the future of new immigrants choosing Canada's Waterloo Region as their home.”

“The Immigration Partnership is an excellent example of a collaborative that works. The needs of new immigrants are diverse and complex. To meet these needs there are many organizations providing excellent programs and services. IP is not only a central hub for system navigation, they use their expertise to support and influence collaborative responses to arising issues in this sub-sector. IP is a leader in the work to support newcomers to settle, work and belong in this region. IP has been a lead for major resettlement initiatives to ensure that efforts are coordinated. Sitting on the local initiatives and some national initiatives related to recent mass resettlements, I have seen first-hand that value add that our IP has had on the coordination and forward thinking about potential needs. Other communities across Canada have commented on the quality of the work here in Waterloo Region for which IP is a lead.”



When we asked them to share specific stories that highlight the impact of their involvement with the Immigration Partnership in the last 12 months, they spoke about:

- 65% - Collaboration & referrals
- 38% - Understanding needs/partners & general awareness/ research
- 35% - Better newcomer supports/ results
- 23% - Our programming & services
- 23% - Public events
- 15% - Funding
- 4% - Collective advocacy
- 4% - Personal growth

When asked what strategic decisions the Immigration Partnership most needs to make, partners mentioned:

- Where to focus
- Level and focus of its commitment to advocacy
- Collaborative approach / model
- Leveraging opportunities to better support newcomers
- Integration / coordination with other services / organizations in the community

When asked where the Partnership should focus its attention and resources over the next 3-5 years, partners referenced the following:

- Education and skill development
- Advocacy for policy and investment changes related to immigration, housing, health care, and infrastructure
- Employment outcomes and support
- Housing
- Integration / coordination of services; central hub
- Language services
- Changing the narrative on immigration; helping the community appreciate the value and necessity of immigrants to our region
- Health and wellness of newcomers

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- If the Partnership were to do something brave in the next few years that would lead to a dramatically more immigrant-friendly region 15 years from now, partners suggested that might include:
 - Integrated platform/hub
 - Targeted advocacy for policy and investment changes related to immigration, housing, and health care
 - Address negative public opinion / anti-immigration sentiment

 - Partners suggested several changes that would make the biggest positive difference to the Partnership's effectiveness (related to the priorities we set, the types of actions we choose, the partners involved, structure, etc.). The most common suggestions were regarding:
 - Strengthening collaboration and coordination among partners
 - Unified advocacy and policy change efforts
 - Clear mandate

 - Partners shared various measures of success that should matter most to the Partnership, with the top being:
 - 61% (of respondents mentioning) - Newcomer wellbeing & satisfaction & belonging
 - 58% - Settlement & basic needs indicators (housing/job/health/etc.)
 - 30% - Public & community leaders' positive perceptions/seeing value of immigration
 - 24% - Service satisfaction & success
 - 21% - IP as valuable, and engagement in IP
 - 18% - IP partner-specific metrics & accomplishments
 - 15% - Immigrant attraction & retention in Waterloo Region
 - 9% - Waterloo Region & Waterloo Region IP seen as models
 - 6% - Discrimination & hate crimes



Building community through immigration

For more information:

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