




PARTNER SURVEY

2023- RESULTS



**IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP**
WATERLOO REGION



The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (IP) is a collaboration of community partners that work together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community for all. Over 100 immigrant and community service, business, municipal, post-secondary and ethno-cultural organizations and Waterloo Region residents are engaged to address organizational, systems and policy issues that affect immigrants¹ in our community.

This report presents findings from the Immigration Partnership’s November 2023 Partner Survey. It is part of IP’s Data and Evaluation Strategy,² which aims to understand the settlement and community integration experiences of immigrants in Waterloo Region and how the collaborative work of the Partnership is contributing to their success. Results from this survey inform our work – and in 2024 will inform development of Immigration Partnership’s 2025-2030 strategic plan.

In 2023, 14 individuals responded to the survey – much lower than past surveys.³ This level of engagement is a sign of the times. The results are not necessarily representative or comparable to previous years, but the responses summarized here provide valuable reflections and useful suggestions.

Partners feel strongly that the Immigration Partnership is having a positive impact in Waterloo Region:

- **93%** felt⁴ the Immigration Partnership is focused on the critical issues for immigrants in our community (compared to 93% in 2022, 88% in 2020, 97% in 2019)
- **93%** felt the Immigration Partnership is a catalyst for effective changes that help immigrants reach their full potential and help create a thriving community for everyone (compared to 90% in 2022, 84% in 2020, 89% in 2019)
- **100%** felt that we are achieving the IP mission of working together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community (compared to 91% in 2022, 78% in 2020)
- **67%** felt that Waterloo Region has become more welcoming of immigrants in the past 12 months (compared to 55% in 2022)
- **93%** felt that across our community, immigration and engaging/supporting immigrants is increasingly seen as a priority in planning and implementing policies, services and systems (compared to 71% in 2022)

¹ This report refers to immigrants throughout. This includes anyone born outside of Canada who now lives, works or is connected to Waterloo Region (inclusive of Canadian citizens, foreign nationals, permanent residents, temporary residents, refugees, refugee claimants, international students and more).

² See: www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/dataevaluationframework.

³ The survey was previously conducted in [2022](#), [2021](#), [2020](#), and [2019](#).

⁴ Includes those who responded “A great deal” & “Quite a bit”. The question also had options of “Somewhat”, “A little bit” or “Not really”.

Partners reflected on the Immigration Partnership's greatest impacts in the past year.

Partners saw significant impact. They noted successful employer and newcomer engagement initiatives, collaborative service planning dialogue, and meaningful data generated through surveys. Partners highlighted IP's role in connecting individuals with employment opportunities, facilitating the hiring of newcomers, and supporting settlement in Canada. They acknowledged IP's positive influence on public discourse surrounding immigrants, maintaining connections across community services, promoting opportunities for immigrants across sectors, and initiating initiatives like WINWR.⁵ Respondents appreciate IP's role in creating a supportive environment, providing resources, and acting as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue and collaboration. Partners see the Immigration Partnership's impact in concrete initiatives and in the support, resources, and collaborative spirit it brings to the community.

Partners commented on the most pressing challenges they anticipate when it comes to immigration and supporting immigrant success in the coming year.

Partners most often mentioned housing & affordability issues, but also economic integration, equitable access to education and language services, community engagement obstacles, health and well-being concerns, the technology divide, and navigating changing immigration law and policy. There was concern about job opportunities for immigrants and international students, employer progress in hiring diverse employees, and addressing shifting attitudes about immigration due to housing, health, and cost of living issues.

Partners shared suggestions for work the Immigration Partnership should start, stop or continue.

Survey respondents suggested the initiation of key programs on digital literacy, more targeted employer outreach to enhance workplace diversity, and establishment/expansion of culturally appropriate mental health services. Partners underscored the importance of continuing community engagement, legal advocacy, and language support programs. Respondents expressed a desire for impact, urging the Immigration Partnership to prioritize areas where it can have the most significant impact. Partners felt continued advocacy, collaboration, promoting the community benefits of immigration, providing balanced meeting formats, addressing anti-immigrant sentiments, future focused planning, and maintaining the Partnership's positive work is essential.

Partners commented on their goals for collective accomplishments in the next year.

Partners advocated for enhancing economic integration through targeted programs, engaging in policy advocacy and awareness activities, prioritizing education and skill enhancement initiatives, and fostering community cohesion. They want to implement health and well-being initiatives, promote technology inclusion, strengthen collaboration with employers, expand legal support services, and reduce service duplication. Partners want to work more with public sector, increase belonging for newcomers, have critical conversations about strategic planning, and do public education to counter misinformation.

Partners reflected on who should be further engaged in the work of the Immigration Partnership.

Partners urged further engagement with local business associations and employers, educational institutions, health professionals, mental health advocates, faith-based organizations, media and communication professionals, technology leaders, and community leaders from underrepresented groups to address diverse aspects of immigrant integration and well-being. They want to work more with municipal government officials, legal experts, and political representatives.

Partners shared ways in which the Immigration Partnership should to help further anti-racism efforts.

Partners emphasized the need for more diversity, equity, and inclusion policies within the Immigration Partnership, and embedding anti-racist principles to guide decision-making and program development. They suggested organizing regular community dialogues on racism, reviewing resource allocation for equitable distribution, encouraging increasing BIPOC representation in organizations, and facilitate networking and learning between different groups to promote a greater appreciation for the region's diversity through events and initiatives.

⁵ See: <https://www.workforceplanningboard.com/projects/workplace-immigrant-network-win/>.



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“Data produced by the IP helps us make decisions about services (i.e. languages requested in translation, response rates within certain linguistic populations to surveys).”

— ” —

— IP partner




— “ —

“Being involved in the [federal immigration funding] conversations has allowed conversations to take place about power, influence and new and better ways to work across the community.”

— ” —

— IP partner




— “ —

“[We] made connections to help hire new immigrants.”

— ” —

— IP partner





For more information:

Email: immigrationpartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca

99 Regina Street South, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 4P9

Building Community through Immigration

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<https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca>



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