



Local Immigration Partnership



Welcome



स्वागतम

Bienvenidos



SETTLEMENT STRATEGY



BIENVENUE



Welkom

أهلاً وسهلاً



欢迎



Benvenuto



Καλωσορίσατε

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this Settlement Strategy could not have been completed without the participation of over 200 individuals from every corner of the community who took part in the research and shared their time and thoughts with the Project Team this past year. Those contributors have made this initiative a true community effort and for that, we offer our sincerest thanks.

This project was guided by the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Council, a multi-sector advisory committee that was officially struck in January 2010. Members of the LIP Council brought their expertise to this initiative and offered guidance and support to the Project Team throughout the research process. Again, we thank each and every one of them for their time and input.

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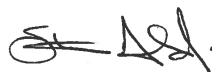
MESSAGE FROM LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL

On behalf of Lambton County Council, I wish to acknowledge the work that has been undertaken over the past year and a half which has resulted in the creation of this settlement strategy for Sarnia-Lambton.

This community effort, led by the Local Immigration Partnership Council and supported by County of Lambton staff, has produced this document which will help guide us as a community to ensure that Sarnia-Lambton is welcoming to newcomers.

It is anticipated that new partnerships will form amongst and throughout the various sectors of our community as we move forward in the implementation of this strategy. It is also anticipated that our community will gain a greater awareness of how our community's future growth and prosperity can be linked to the successful settlement of new citizens.

This settlement strategy and the twelve strategies contained in it are reflective of the input provided by local newcomers, the general public and local stakeholders of our community. The strategy complements the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's resident attraction strategy and the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board's community workforce plan. As well, the strategies will support many other local entities who are trying to attract newcomers to the area. Overall, implementation of this community strategy should help make Sarnia-Lambton a healthy, thriving and welcoming community.



Steve Arnold
Lambton County Warden

BACKGROUND

Like many small communities across Canada, Sarnia-Lambton is dealing with some very familiar demographic challenges. As the population continues to age, birthrates decrease and youth leave to pursue education and employment opportunities elsewhere,

Sarnia-Lambton's population could shrink as much as 13% over the next two decades. The decline can be attributed to an aging population, out-migration of youth and low birthrate.

County of Lambton Planning & Development Services Department. (2010). *Population: Summary of Trends & Projections Census Years 2006 to 2031*, p.18.

Sarnia-Lambton will soon see the impacts of this on the local economy and labour market. Within the next 15 years, a large portion of the area's workforce will be set to retire and the local

economy is projected to increase by 5000 jobs by 2016.* Without a large enough pool of younger workers to replenish it, Sarnia-Lambton will struggle to fulfill its human resource needs.

While immigration is often thought of as a viable solution to lagging population growth, Sarnia-Lambton has had difficulty in attracting and retaining immigrants to the area; over the past 20 years, immigration has been slowly declining. The recent increase in the number of international students at Lambton College, however, is changing our landscape. This provides the community with an opportunity to come together and ask; how can we create a welcoming, diverse and prosperous Sarnia-Lambton? And what do we need to do to ensure that

all members of this community can thrive and grow?

The Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), a federally funded initiative through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), has enabled these questions to be asked. In its first phase the Sarnia-Lambton LIP carried out research to: determine the community's current capacity to assist and support immigrants and newcomers; identify challenges and barriers immigrants and newcomers face when settling in Sarnia-Lambton; and brainstorm solutions to these challenges.

The resulting Settlement Strategy is a coordinated and comprehensive plan to move Sarnia-Lambton towards becoming a thriving and prosperous community that values diversity and innovation. It is comprised of 12 interrelated strategies organized by five priority areas of focus.

Far from being a standalone document, the Strategy is meant to provide a solid foundation for current and future community planning and economic development initiatives. Working together, these initiatives can not only strengthen the local economy by meeting local labour needs, bringing entrepreneurial talent, and offsetting demographic decline, but they also play a part in continuing to build a healthy, strong and thriving community.

QUICK FACTS

CENSUS DATA 2006

- 15,055 immigrants lived in Sarnia-Lambton
- 355 were temporary residents (students, workers, refugee claimants)
- 1010 were newcomers (settled between 2001-2006)
- 71% were from European countries
- 61% were over the age of 55
- 69% lived in the City of Sarnia

CIC FACTS & FIGURES 2010

- 153 permanent residents came to Sarnia-Lambton
- 602 temporary residents arrived; 279 temporary workers; 323 international students
- Since 2007, the number of international students has more than doubled
- Common regions of origin for newcomers included Central & South America, China and India

*Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (2010). *Sarnia Lambton's Labour Market: A data-driven report on where our talent works today and where it will work tomorrow*, p.2.

EMPLOYMENT

Improving local labour market access for immigrants and newcomers

Immigrants and newcomers identified finding employment as the greatest roadblock in their settlement process. Their lack of Canadian work experience, their inability to promote themselves and the benefits they bring to local employers, and the lack of immigrant-specific job search assistance available in Sarnia-Lambton contributed to challenges in finding successful and meaningful employment. Local employers expressed newcomers' limited knowledge of the Canadian work environment and difficulties with language and communication as challenges for them when hiring and retaining immigrant employees.



To address these challenges, three strategies have been recommended to improve employment outcomes for newcomers and to provide support to employers.

Strategy #1

Increase networking opportunities between employers and newcomers and immigrants

Action Steps:

- Organize monthly networking meetings for immigrants and employers
- Organize immigrant-focused job fairs

- Organize networking/ support groups for employers

Right now there is a gap, a disconnect, between the immigration process and the employment process. The immigration process is that you are good enough to come to Canada; the employment process is that you don't have the Canadian experience.

Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

- Establish a point of contact where employers can direct questions related to hiring and retaining immigrants and newcomers
- Hold events to celebrate employer 'champions'

Strategy #2

Provide opportunities for newcomers and immigrants to gain Canadian work experience relevant to their profession and career aspirations

Action Steps:

- Develop and pilot a mentorship program for internationally-trained professionals

The first barrier...is Canadian experience... [H]ow do you ask for Canadian experience to an immigrant who has just came to Canada?

Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

- Investigate which professions could accommodate volunteer opportunities for newcomers
- Investigate possibility of providing internships (and employer subsidies) for internationally-trained professionals

Strategy #3

Provide immigrant and newcomer-specific job search assistance

Action Steps:

- Develop and pilot an adequate job search program designed specifically for immigrants and newcomers
- Create a job developer position dedicated to assisting and advocating for immigrants, newcomers and employers

SETTLEMENT

Improving access to effective services and supports that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration

Engagement and inclusion, that is, feeling a part of the community, constitutes an important element of successful immigrant and newcomer settlement. Not

understanding what Sarnia-Lambton has to offer, especially in terms of housing, transportation and healthcare, was identified as a challenge for newcomers and often prevented them from

feeling like they could fully participate in the community. Not knowing who could assist them with navigating these services also added to their frustrations as did feeling isolated in general. Finally, the lack of social and recreational opportunities for immigrant children and youth were also cited as significant challenges for newcomer families.

After two weeks I was sick, I didn't have healthcare because healthcare is three months and we go to emergency. And after three days my fever is fine and they send me home. And after one week they send me the bill...I was shocked! I was just in Sarnia two weeks, I got the bill and I don't know, I have to go away from school, I have to find job [to pay for the hospital bill]...They didn't tell me they would charge me, if they tell me they would charge me, I wouldn't go.

Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

The following two strategies have been recommended to help immigrants and newcomers become more active participants in the Sarnia-Lambton community.



Strategy #4

Increase and promote opportunities to engage immigrants and newcomers in the community

Action Steps:

- Continue to actively recruit and market current CIC funded Host Programs
- Develop and pilot a volunteer program specifically for immigrants and newcomers
- Establish rural outreach programs for newcomers outside of Sarnia



Strategy #5

Increase and promote opportunities for immigrant and newcomer children and youth in the community

Action Steps:

- Increase funding for Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program
- Expand recreation and social programming for immigrant children and youth (i.e. Youth Host Program)

Only thing she told me that bothered her is since she was 14 years old it was difficult for her to find friends...She always think she like Canada but the only thing - she can't involve these teenagers' friendship. I don't know how to solve that problem for immigrant families.

Immigrant/Newcomer participant



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

Improving community capacity for language training and interpretation services

The inability to communicate well in English was acknowledged as a significant barrier to life in Sarnia-Lambton and learning English was emphasized as a priority for any newcomer who was not already fluent in the language. Most newcomers spoke very highly



of the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses currently available in the community but expressed frustration with the lack of variety or diversity in language training

opportunities, in particular higher level language learning.

For service providers, the largest impediment they faced in providing comprehensive and appropriate services to immigrant and newcomer clients was the lack of local professional interpretation and translation services in the area.

In order to alleviate these challenges, two strategies for improved service provision in the area of language and communication have been recommended.

Strategy #6

Create more diverse opportunities for language learning (ESL, ELT, Occupation-Specific)

Action Steps:

- Develop partnerships between local ESL providers to increase number of students
- Investigate possibility of providing on-the-job language training for newcomers
- Actively market Sarnia-Lambton as an ESL destination
- Connect with regional ESL service providers to form potential partnerships
- Investigate the use of new technologies (i.e. webinars, Skype) to expand local language programs

This is something about [the language training service provider] - it's a lower level of English, [the] lowest levels....each have level class. But the high level is a whole bunch of people. Something like 5-10 the same, all, everybody in the same class. So, it's....difficult.

Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Strategy #7

Increase community capacity for translation and interpretation services

Action Steps:

- Compile and update volunteer lists of interpreters already in existence
- Formalize connections with cultural associations as potential pool of interpreters



If we have staff that speaks Spanish or French, then we're okay. The normal process is that at the time of intake, we'll say to them we will certainly be needing a translator because the information that we have is so in-depth and we want to make sure they're completely understanding of their rights and responsibilities. So, it's up to the individual to get someone.

Service Provider Participant

- Pursue regional resources to create more timely and cost-effective provision of interpretation services

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Creating comprehensive and effective service provision for immigrants and newcomers

The largest challenge cited in service provision was access to accurate and comprehensive information on services. Sarnia-Lambton may have some very good settlement programs and services in place but that did not necessarily mean that these services were utilized or even known about. This challenge was voiced by immigrants and newcomers, service providers, and employers alike. Furthermore, while services and programs existed in the city of Sarnia, a lack of available and accessible services in the rest of the County was also identified.



In order to foster more effective communication between newcomers and immigrants, service providers, employers, and to provide a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to service provision, the following three strategies have been recommended.

Strategy #8

Provide one 'point of contact' to advocate for and address concerns/questions regarding immigrant and newcomer issues

Action Steps:

- Develop and pilot an outreach program to meet with newcomers and immigrants in rural areas
- Disseminate information about local services

for immigrants and newcomers to entire community from centralized point

- Maintain 'virtual point of contact' through use of County of Lambton's Immigration Portal, liveinlambton.ca

Strategy #9

Create opportunities for local and regional partnerships in order to utilize current resources more effectively

Action Steps:

- Work towards developing creative partnerships with religious institutions, cultural associations, private sector and business, school boards, First Nations community, service club organizations, etc.
- Continue to work with current community initiatives as they pertain to immigration (such as economic development and resident attraction)
- Explore and initiate regional partnerships to enhance the capacity of local services

But I think that we're sort of look at things, 3 or 4 ideas, independently. Unless there is some coordination aspect to it, we're really just going to be continuing along the stream where we are a number of parallel services that are sort of looking for the magic formula.
Service Provider Participant

Strategy #10

Facilitate effective governance and implementation of LIP strategies with County of Lambton as lead

Action Steps:

- Amalgamate community newcomer support groups, including Phase I LIP Council, to form one collaborative body to guide and support implementation of Settlement Strategy
- Revise Terms of Reference to finalize structure of council and responsibilities of its members
- Fulfil appropriate human resource needs for Phase II implementation

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Ensuring that Sarnia-Lambton is a welcoming place for immigrants and newcomers



A general lack of understanding of immigrants and newcomers, rather than outright discrimination, was more often brought up by newcomers as a barrier to feeling fully welcomed into the community. While Sarnia-Lambton was repeatedly described as a friendly place, the need to make the community more welcoming and culturally aware - in order to sustain and support the current population of immigrants as well as attract more - was nevertheless mentioned. Service providers also expressed their desire to become more culturally competent in order to provide respectful and appropriate services to immigrants and newcomers.

Two strategies have been recommended to bring a greater awareness of newcomer and immigrant circumstances and experiences to the broader Sarnia-Lambton community as well as create an awareness of services and supports for immigrants and newcomers currently available here.

I think also becoming competent as an organization, staging culturally competent with things, not just on language, but understanding what it means to serve an Italian family (for example) and how they see family, not making suggestions that they would find offensive.
Service Provider Participant

Strategy #11

Promote public awareness of newcomer and immigrant issues through media campaigns and community events

Action Steps:

Talk to me, because when they are talking to me they say, 'Oh, where did you learn to speak English this well?' and things like that. It is obvious you have some preconceived notions about people from [my country]. I have spoken English all my life and my kids don't speak any other language apart from English and French.
Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

- Develop multi-media campaign to promote a welcoming and inclusive Sarnia-Lambton
- Continue to encourage current (and organize more) multicultural events in Sarnia-Lambton
- Create better access to diversity training for businesses and non-profit organizations
- Advocate for immigrants and newcomers to be more visible in the community, in the workplace, and in public office

Strategy #12

Design comprehensive marketing strategy for current, enhanced, and upcoming immigrant services

Action Steps:

- Ensure programming for immigrants and newcomers has adequate funds for marketing of services
- Share marketing resources among service organizations
- Encourage stakeholders to utilize County of Lambton's immigration portal, liveinlambton.ca, to advertise and market services and events



NEXT STEPS



So, what does Sarnia-Lambton look like now and how will it look in the coming years? Our research indicates that a diverse and welcoming community must continue to be cultivated so that it may grow and thrive.

I'm very happy in Sarnia and I think the people here are very kind...I think I have to learn from Sarnia, to be kinder to strangers...In [my home country] people don't speak with strangers. Um, the most important thing I learn from living in Sarnia is be happy, be nice, be kinder to strangers.

Immigrant/Newcomer participant

Strong and solid partnerships become the foundation upon which a prosperous community can stand. Facilitating and nurturing the development of these partnerships has been, from the beginning, the cornerstone of the LIP initiative and will continue to be so in the future. The LIP will work to sustain these partnerships locally, through the ongoing existence of the Partnership Council and collaboration with existing economic development strategies. It will also tap into the broader region so that the community can utilize all of its resources more effectively and efficiently.

In the end, the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy will increase this community's capacity for positive change and will lead us towards a community in which all of its members can prosper and grow.



For more information on the implementation of the LIP Settlement Strategy, please see the Strategy's companion publication, *A Welcoming & Diverse Sarnia-Lambton: Implementing our Settlement Strategy*, available in both print and electronic formats.

To obtain a copy of this or any of our publications, or for more information on the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) in general, please visit us on the County of Lambton Newcomer Portal.



www.liveinlambton.ca/newcomers

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