

## Land Acknowledgement

The Region of Durham exists on lands that the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg inhabited for thousands of years prior to European colonization. These lands are the traditional and treaty territories of the Nations covered under the Williams Treaties, including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and the Chippewa Nations of Georgina Island, Beausoleil and Rama.

We honour, recognize, and respect Indigenous Peoples as rights holders and stewards of the lands and waters on which we have the privilege to live. In our efforts toward reconciliation, we continue to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations, as well as the large Métis communities and growing Inuit communities here in Durham. We commit to learning from Indigenous values and knowledge, building opportunities for collaboration, and recognizing that we are all connected.



## Message from Regional Chair, John Henry

On behalf of Durham Regional Council, I am proud to introduce the new Durham Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan.

Durham is a community that embraces diversity, where every individual is valued and included. This plan outlines the priorities and actions necessary to support the successful integration and inclusion of newcomers, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to thrive in Durham. Their successful integration will benefit all of Durham Region. As the region's population continues to grow and welcomes individuals from across the globe, this plan helps us remain focused on actionable steps that can help newcomers navigate their new home, find opportunities to connect with their neighbours, and access support and services that can improve their settlement experience.

The Durham LIP and local services are steadfast in their commitment to supporting the integration and well-being of newcomers. We know that immigration has positively impacted Durham by contributing to the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods, bringing global talent, and supporting our labour market demands. I am excited about the work ahead, as presented in this plan, which will guide us toward a better Durham for all.



## Message from the Regional Municipality of Durham CAO, Elaine Baxter-Trahair

As the CAO of the Regional Municipality of Durham, it is my pleasure to introduce the new Durham Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan. This plan outlines our strategic approach that will enhance the integration and well-being of newcomers in Durham Region.

Durham has long been a welcoming community for newcomers. This plan reflects our ongoing commitment to fostering a sense of belonging for all residents who choose to make Durham their home. While we work closely with our federal and provincial partners in supporting immigrants, we know that settlement happens in local communities. Over the past years, our community partners have done an excellent job of adapting and supporting newcomers despite increasing pressures on the immigration and settlement sectors. It is through this collective strength that we can support Durham's new residents and advance their long-term contributions to a more prosperous region.

Newcomers have brought valuable knowledge and fresh perspectives to Durham, creating new businesses, driving innovation, and bringing cultural and social diversity. Their skills and experiences enrich our community and fuel our economic growth. As immigration in Durham continues to grow, we will continue to build on our strengths, working toward a future where everyone feels a sense of belonging and can fully participate in our community.



## Acknowledgements

The Durham Local Immigration Partnership (Durham LIP) would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organizations who contributed to the development of the 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan. This plan is the result of collaboration and consultations, and it would not have been possible without the dedication and support of our community partners, stakeholders, and residents.

- **DLIP Council:** For their community leadership and unwavering commitment to championing a welcoming and inclusive Durham Region. Their endorsement of this plan is critical.
- **Newcomer Advisory Table:** For generously volunteering their time and sharing their lived experiences. Their input has been crucial in identifying gaps for newcomers and fostering discussions on topics we might not have otherwise considered.
- **Community Partners in Diversity:** For their dedication and front-line work supporting newcomers. Their expertise in service delivery has been vital in identifying best practices and areas for improvement, strengthening our collective efforts to enhance settlement and inclusion outcomes.
- **Francophone Working Group:** For their steadfast commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the recognition of Durham's bilingual heritage. Their advocacy for Francophone newcomers and efforts to raise awareness about their needs have helped foster stronger relationships between Anglophone and Francophone services.
- **Regional and local area municipal staff:** For their ongoing support, collaboration, and commitment to the projects and events of the Durham LIP. To our leaders, thank you for your vision and for leading by example. A special thank you to our communications and engagement team for their expertise in shaping the design of this Plan.
- **Principal 1964 Consulting Group:** For leading the engagement sessions with excellence and preparing this report. Your esteemed work and writing captured the conversations and insights from the working groups and the LIP.
- **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):** For their financial support and commitment to supporting newcomers through direct and indirect services. Your contributions have enabled us to undertake this important work and implement the initiatives outlined in this Plan.

Finally, we would like to thank and recognize the over 500 residents who participated in the survey and consultations that informed this Plan. Your contributions and discussions were pivotal in creating this new plan, ensuring it is grounded in the experiences and needs of our community.

We look forward to continuing our work to create a welcoming, inclusive, and thriving Durham Region for all.



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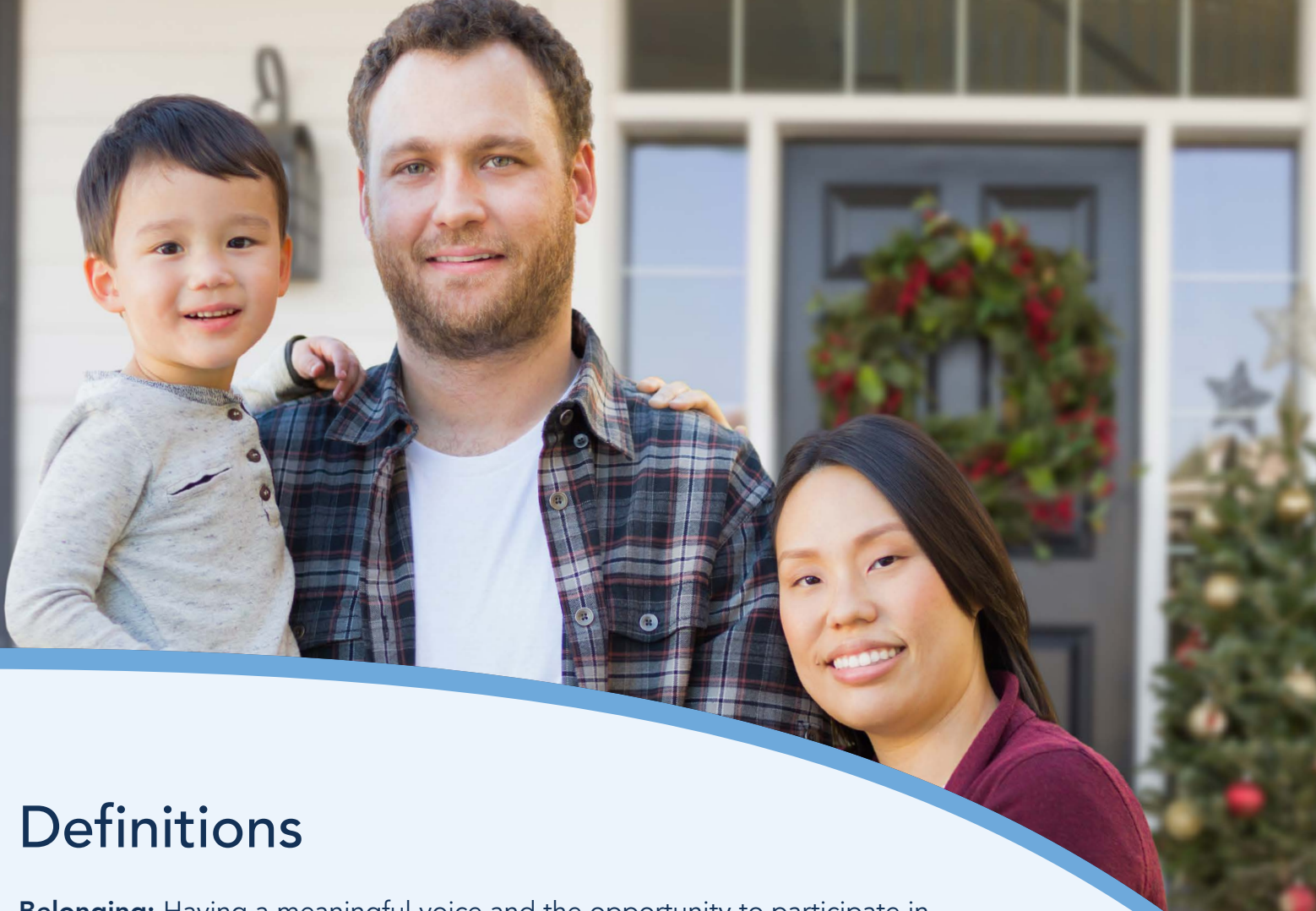
# Executive summary

Immigrants have long chosen Durham as their place to settle and call home. Today, 28 per cent of Durham's current immigrant population are immigrants, or individuals born outside of Canada (Durham Region, 2022). Immigration enriches our community by bringing global talent, contributing to the labour force, creating businesses, and enhancing social and cultural diversity. These are critical components of a healthy, prosperous, and thriving Durham for all.

The 2025-2030 Durham Community and Inclusion Plan (the Plan) builds on the work and success of the Durham LIP's previous Community Plan and outlines strategic priorities and actions that aim to improve the integration outcomes of newcomers and immigrants in Durham Region. The Plan aims to complement other regional strategies that impact the settlement journey of immigrants, such as accessibility, employment, housing, mental health, and feelings of belonging. The [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#), [At Home in Durham](#), [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#), the forthcoming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan and Durham Region's 2025 Strategic Plan address these issues more directly.

This report was developed with input from Durham residents, newcomers, community partners, regional and area municipal staff, and all the Durham LIP's advisory and working groups, namely the Durham LIP Council, Community Partners in Diversity (CPD), the Francophone Working Group (FWG), and the Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT). This approach allowed us to create a Plan that is evidence-driven, leverages community assets, and is championed by a collective network that has similar strategic priorities.

To address community needs, this Plan will focus on three key areas: championing collective action in immigration and settlement, building inclusive communities, and embracing innovation and responsiveness in a rapidly changing sector. The Regional Municipality of Durham and the DLIP Secretariat will steward the implementation, measurement, and evaluation of the Plan, while working collaboratively with newcomers, community partners, local municipalities, and service providers to deliver on its initiatives.



## Definitions

**Belonging:** Having a meaningful voice and the opportunity to participate in the design of political, social and cultural structures that shape one’s life—the right to both contribute and make demands upon society and political institutions. Belonging requires mutual power, access and opportunity among all groups and individuals within a shared container (such as a society, organization, club, etc). It is a feeling of security, support and acceptance felt by a person within a space or a system.

**Diversity:** The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizes our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Diversity can also be considered in terms of organizational, professional and societal differences.

**Discrimination:** Treating someone unfairly by either imposing a burden on them, or denying them a privilege, benefit or opportunity enjoyed by others, because of their race, citizenship, family status, disability, sex or other personal characteristics (note: this is not a legal definition).



**Francophone:** Persons whose first language is French, plus those whose first language is neither French nor English but have a particular knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home.

**Immigrant:** Refers to a person who is, or has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants are either Canadian citizens by naturalization (the citizenship process) or permanent residents (landed immigrants) under Canadian legislation. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others have arrived recently.

**Immigrant status:** Refers to whether the person is a non-immigrant, an immigrant or a non-permanent resident.

**Inclusion:** Acknowledging and valuing people’s uniqueness to enrich social planning, decision-making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing members of society. Real inclusion takes place when those already included in the “mainstream” learn from those who are excluded and initiate change.

**Newcomer:** An inclusive term for immigrants or refugees who have been in Canada for a short time, usually less than five years. Newcomers contribute greatly to a country’s social and economic prosperity.

**Refugee:** A person who is forced to flee from persecution and who is located outside of their home country

# Introduction



The Regional Municipality of Durham, the Durham Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) and the Durham LIP council are pleased to present the 2025-2030 Immigration and Inclusion Community Plan. Durham Region is at a pivotal moment of growth and transformation. As one of Canada's fastest-growing areas, the region is projected to reach 1.3 million people and 460,000 jobs by 2051. The expansion in population brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly when it comes to evolving directives and supporting the growing immigrant population.

This five-year Community and Inclusion Plan reflects a response to the significant growth in immigration to Durham Region. Insights from consultations with individuals and community partners have highlighted both changing immigration pathways and evolving experiences of newcomers. Consultations also underscored the evolving political and public sentiment alongside an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.

As LIP council members, we recognize that the success of newcomers is critical—not only to their personal prosperity but also to the economic and social fabric of Durham. Empowering newcomers to thrive ensures a more vibrant, inclusive, and thriving future for all who call Durham home.

While immigrants make important contributions to our region, they also face unique challenges when establishing themselves here. Ensuring that newcomers can successfully integrate and contribute to our region's economy and community is crucial not just for them but also for the overall prosperity of Durham Region and Canada..

This Community and Inclusion Plan addresses those challenges and focuses specifically on supporting newcomers as they navigate their settlement journey.

This document builds on the success of three previous plans and was developed through a multi-pronged approach, drawing on evidence-based insights and driven by engagement with newcomers, service providers and community partners. The result is a comprehensive plan that puts newcomers at the centre of our efforts, ensuring their long-term success.

As we move forward, the Durham LIP council remains committed to mobilizing collective action across sectors to support immigrant success.

We thank all partners for their contributions to the 2025-2030 Immigration and Inclusion Community Plan and for your commitment to the work that lies ahead. Stronger together, we will continue to foster the collaboration and partnerships needed to create lasting change, ensuring that Durham remains a welcoming, inclusive, and thriving community for all.

**We all belong here.**

**From the Durham LIP Council**



## Durham LIP Council Members

**Allison Hector Alexander**, Co-Chair, Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of Division, Regional Municipality of Durham

**Boluwa Massina**, Executive Director, Conseil des Organismes de Francophone de Durham

**Caroline Chikoore**, DEI Lead, Ontario English Teachers Union

**Elizabeth Roy**, Co-Chair, Mayor, Town of Whitby

**Hermia Corbette**, Executive Director, Community Development Council Durham

**Jackie Flowers**, CEO, Pickering Public Library

**Janelle Benjamin**, Owner, All Things Equitable

**Karey Anne Large**, CEO at Whitby Chamber of Commerce

**Lina Zakaria**, Executive Director, Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre

**Marina Morgenshtern**, Professor and Director of Social Work, Trent University

**Roberta Reyns**, Director of Recruitment and Onboarding, Ontario Power Generation

**Sydney Marcoux**, Clinical Director, Victims Services Durham

**Thom MacDonald**, Dean, Durham College

**Tracey Wright**, Case Manager, Durham College Community Services

**Zareen Butt**, Manager, Public Health, Region of Durham

The 2025-2030 Community Plan builds on the success of the [Durham Immigration and Inclusion Community Plan 2020-2024](#) which focused on the critical role of immigration in driving Durham Region's economic growth.

The following are achievements from the previous plan.



### **Economic Prosperity**

- Developed a local Employer Toolkit, containing information and resources related to immigration and settlement in the workplace and in the community.



### **Service Coordination**

- Continued to maintain and enhanced the Durham Immigration Portal.
- Developed and disseminate program development and planning tools (service maps, resources, measurement tools, etc.).
- Co-ordinated, conducted and disseminated local research.
- Delivered a Best Practices Forum.
- Co-ordinated a Funder's Forum.
- Developed and disseminate an e-Newsletter with a focus on the needs of community partners.



### **Community Belonging**

- Co-ordinated the Newcomer Advisory Table.
- Developed and implemented a regional anti-discrimination awareness campaign.
- Co-ordinated community events that promote public discourse around immigration, diversity, equity and inclusion.

# Approach

This 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan was developed as a result of a three-phase approach designed to engage with residents and community partners across Durham Region to co-design a plan for collective action.



- Had engagement sessions with Durham LIP working groups.
- Analyzed and themed of action planning findings.
- Organized all knowledge articles and wrote the new Durham LIP community plans.



- Launched community survey to residents to identify newcomer issues.
- Held three in-person and one virtual resident engagement sessions.
- Analyzed and themed public engagement findings.



- Validated with working groups.
- Finalized new strategic plan.

# Durham Local Immigration Partnership overview

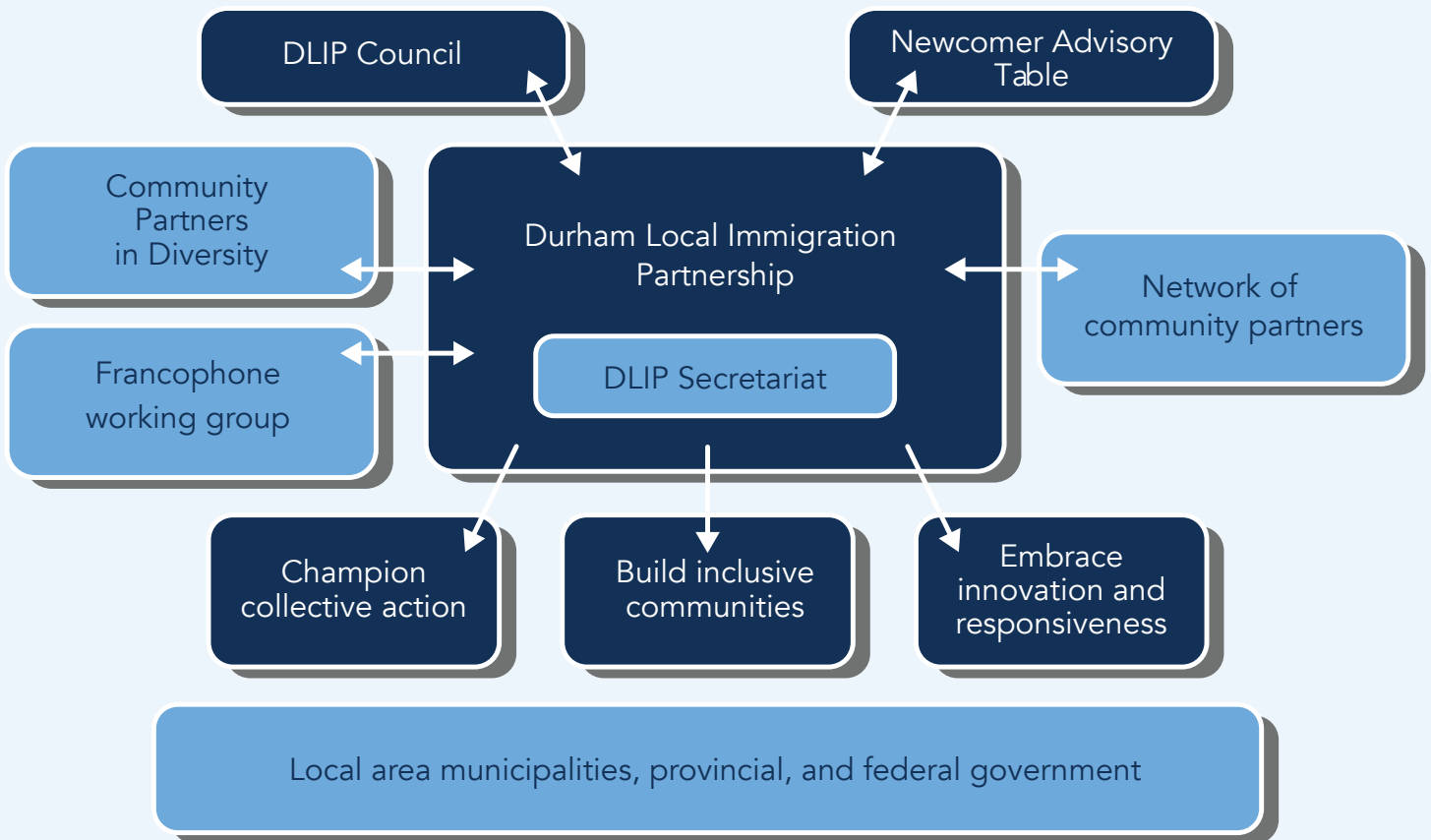




The Durham LIP is a dynamic network dedicated to fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers in Durham Region.

Formed in 2009, the Durham LIP is part of a Canada-wide initiative of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), which are designed to build local partnerships and engage in community-based planning to meet the needs of both immigrants and residents.

At the heart of Durham's LIP is a collaborative network of more than 140 community partners. These partners represent diverse service sectors including Welcome Centres, Language Training, Employment Skills and Training, Education, Labour Market Development, Health, Francophone Communities, Social Services and Government. As a network, the LIP works together to address the evolving needs of newcomers by identifying emerging trends, sharing resources, and developing initiatives that enhance inclusion and integration.



It is the responsibility of the Durham LIP Council and Secretariat to support the exchange of information and knowledge across the broader partnership.

**Secretariat:** The Durham LIP is led by staff from the Regional Municipality of Durham, within the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion division.

**Durham LIP Council:** An advisory body comprised of executives and community leaders from a range of sectors, lending direction to the development and execution of the work of the broader Durham LIP.

**Community Partners in Diversity:** Agencies and institutions from across sectors share information with the goal of co-ordinating services and building capacity.

**Francophone Working Group:** Agencies and institutions that serve French-speaking residents across sectors share information with the goal of co-ordinating services and building capacity.

**Newcomer Advisory Table:** Local residents (born outside of Canada) share their lived experience, provide perspective and advice on Durham LIP activities and act as a channel for the work of the Durham LIP to their own communities and networks.

Durham LIP’s mandate is to make Durham a welcoming community where immigrants can belong and contribute socially, culturally, and economically. The LIP also plays a crucial role in mobilizing community resources to tackle the challenges newcomers face, while acting as an incubator for innovative ideas that strengthen the overall settlement landscape.

# Strategic context: Immigration in Durham Region



# National and regional growth trends

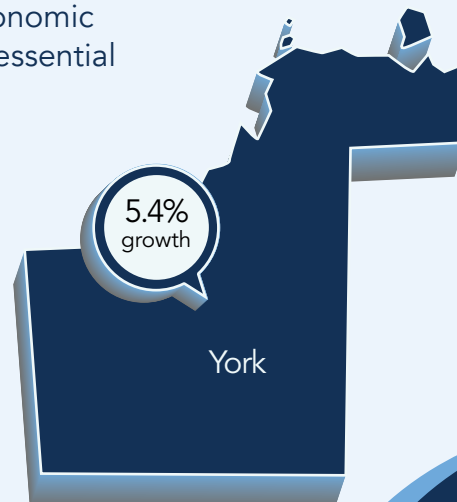
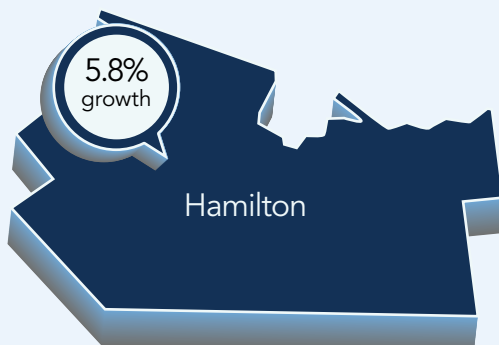
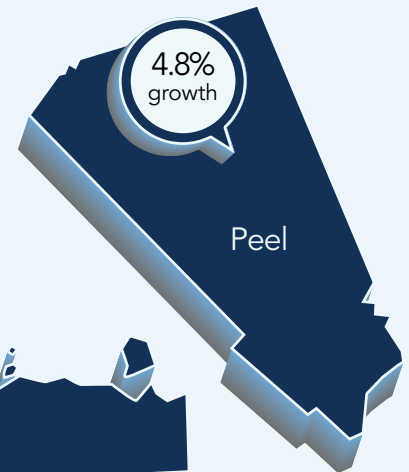
Between 2016 and 2021, Canada's population increased by 5.2 per cent, marking the fourth consecutive census period where Canada led G7 countries in population growth. International immigration played a significant role, accounting for approximately 80 per cent of the country's population growth during this period.

In 2021, 23 per cent of people living in Canada were immigrants, underlining the vital role of immigration in sustaining the country's population and economic prosperity.

Durham Region is part of this growth trajectory, ranking fifth in Ontario and tenth nationally in terms of population compared to other regions, counties, and large cities. During the 2016-2021 census period, Durham's population increased by 7.3 per cent (approximately 51,130 people), outpacing neighbouring regions like Toronto (2.2 per cent), Peel (4.8 per cent), York (5.4 per cent), and Hamilton (5.8 per cent).

Canada's population growth is heavily reliant on immigration, which highlights the important role that immigrants play in sustaining the Canadian population and the economy.

For Durham Region, this booming population growth positions the region as a key player in Ontario's economic development. The ability to support this growth is essential for long-term prosperity.





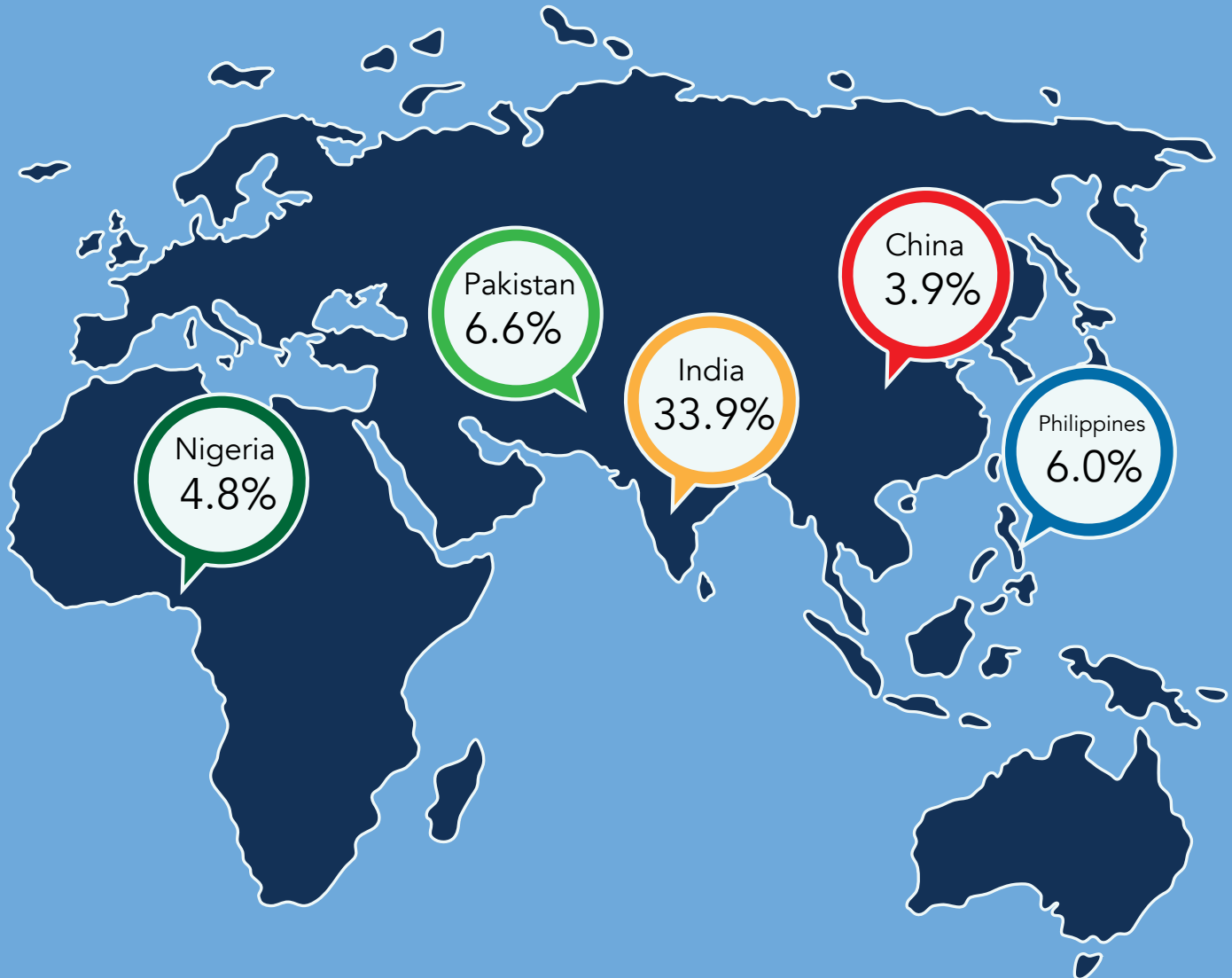
## Immigration demographics in Durham Region

As of the 2021 Census, immigrants represent 27 per cent of Durham’s total population, or 186,460 people. This is a significant increase from the 24 per cent reported in 2016, with Durham’s immigrant population growing at a rate that outpaces both the provincial and national averages. However, compared to other communities, Durham still has the lowest percentage of immigrants in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Within Durham, the municipality of Ajax stands out as the most popular settlement destination for immigrants, accommodating 28 per cent of Durham’s total immigrant population, followed by Oshawa at 21.3 per cent, and Whitby at 20.2 per cent. In terms of percentage of the local population, Ajax again ranks highest with 42.7 per cent of its residents being immigrants, followed by Pickering at 37.3 per cent, and Whitby at 28.4 per cent. In contrast, municipalities like Brock have much lower immigrant populations, with only 8.2 per cent of its residents being immigrants. Overall, approximately 96.8 per cent of Durham’s total immigrant population resides in the southern municipalities, highlighting the concentration of services and economic opportunities in these areas.

# Shifting immigration origins

There have been notable changes in the countries of origin of immigrants settling in Durham. As of 2021, the top five countries of birth for recent immigrants in the region are:



This shift reflects broader trends in immigration, with an increasing proportion of immigrants coming from countries outside of Europe.



### **Growing Francophone population**

Durham Region is also home to a growing Francophone population. In 2021, over 9,300 individuals (1.3 per cent of the population) reported French as their first language. This percentage is higher than the GTHA average (1 per cent) but lower than the provincial average of 3.4 per cent. Additionally, approximately 3,500 residents reported speaking French as the primary language at home, while 580 residents identified French as their only known language.

The composition of Durham's Francophone immigrant population is changing as well. Historically, most French-speaking immigrants came from Europe, but this trend is shifting. In 2011, 37 per cent of French-speaking immigrants originated from Europe. By 2016, this percentage had dropped to 28 per cent, while the proportion of French-speaking immigrants from Africa increased to 35 per cent.

### **Racial diversity**

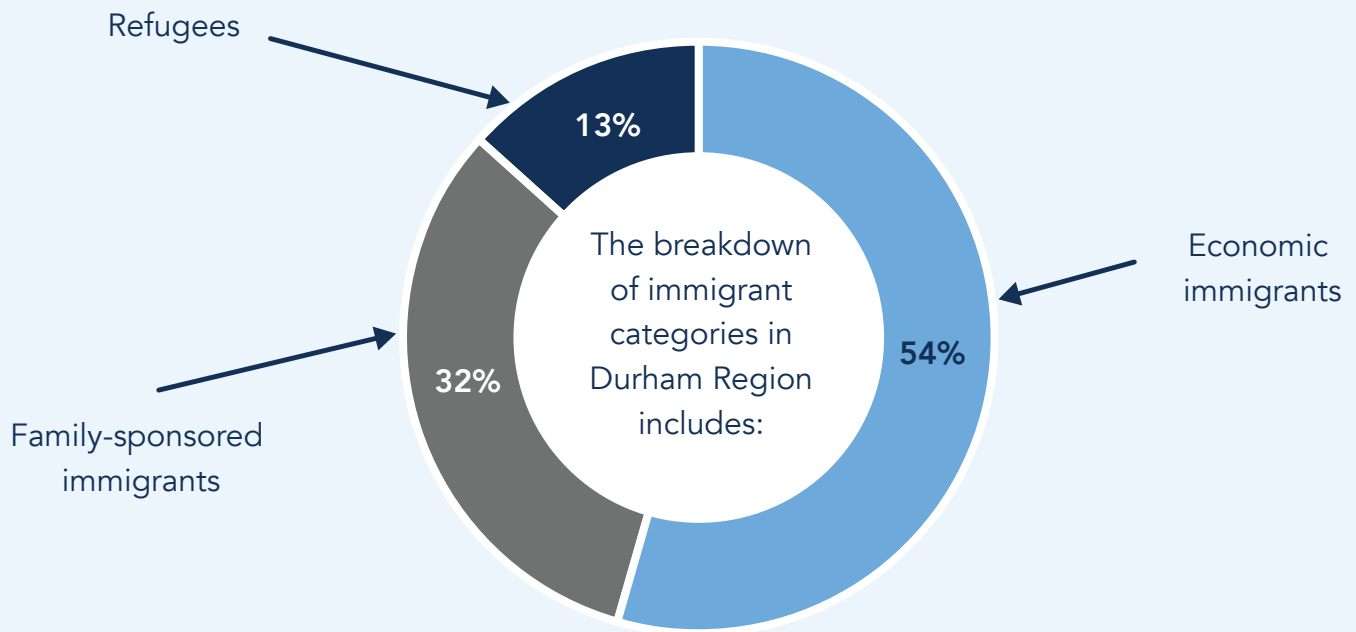
In 2021, 36.3 per cent of Durham's population identified as belonging to a racialized group, an increase from 27.1 per cent in 2016 and 26.8 per cent in 2006. This growing diversity is one of Durham's key strengths as the population continues to expand.

The rising number of immigrants in Durham, particularly in southern municipalities like Ajax and Pickering underscores the increasing social, cultural, linguistic and economic importance of immigrant communities. Understanding these changing demographics is important for tailoring services, programs and policies to meet the unique needs of these populations and support successful integration into Durham's communities.

# Contributions to Durham's economic landscape

Of the immigrants arriving in Durham, 65 per cent are of core working age, and many are admitted as economic immigrants due to their ability to rejuvenate Canada's aging population and address labour force gaps.

The breakdown of immigrant categories in Durham Region includes:



Educational attainment among immigrants in Durham is high, with nearly 30 per cent holding a bachelor's degree or higher, according to national census findings. This educated workforce contributes significantly to Durham's economy, with data showing a steady increase in immigrants' median income over time. The most substantial income gains typically occur three to five years after arrival, demonstrating the growing economic contributions of immigrants as they settle and integrate.

Durham also has a strong base of immigrant entrepreneurs. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of self-employed immigrants in the region more than doubled, increasing from 5,415 to 11,310. These entrepreneurs play a critical role in driving innovation, creating jobs, and contributing to the local economy.

The high levels of educational attainment among immigrants mean that Durham has a well-qualified labour force to continue to drive the economy forward. The level of entrepreneurship further strengthens the region's resilience. However, ensuring that the skills of immigrants are fully utilized in the workforce remains critical.



## Challenges

Despite the positive contributions of immigrants to Durham and Canada more broadly, there are emerging challenges.

- **Onward migration:** The Institute for Canadian Citizenship (2024) indicates that onward migration—where immigrants choose to leave Canada after settling—has been increasing, with ‘unprecedented peaks’ in recent years. This trend, combined with declining citizenship rates, raises concerns about the ability to maintain a stable and engaged immigrant population.
- **Housing:** Housing is another critical challenge. For the first time since 1976, Durham’s population has grown faster than its supply of private dwellings, intensifying the housing shortage. As newcomers seek to establish themselves in the region, they often encounter difficulties in finding affordable, suitable housing, which can delay or disrupt their settlement processes.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination remains a significant barrier for immigrants. Many immigrants continue to face challenges that hinder their full social and economic integration into a community. From wage disparities (invalidation of credentials) to racial bias in health care or community interactions, discrimination has a detrimental impact on the success of newcomer settlement in a community.

The growing trend of onward migration and declining citizenship rates poses risks to the sustainability of Canada’s immigrant population (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2024). In Durham Region, if issues and challenges are not addressed, the region may lose valuable talent and diversity, weakening its long-term growth prospects.

A key solution lies in creating a more welcoming and inclusive community—one where immigrants feel a strong sense of belonging and support, encouraging them to stay, engage, and fully integrate. By fostering such an environment where all residents and newcomers feel like they belong, Durham can strengthen its ability to retain immigrants and sustain its economic and social vitality.

# 2025-2030 Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Community and Inclusion Plan





# LIP Community and Inclusion Plan

Building on the foundation of the previous plan and shaped by the insights gathered through extensive consultations, this plan reflects a collective vision for addressing the evolving needs of Durham's growing newcomer community.

## Key activities

The Durham LIP works to foster more welcoming communities by enhancing the coordination of services and partnerships designed to improve settlement and inclusion outcomes of immigrants and residents. The LIP provides indirect settlement services, with work falling primarily within four areas:

1. Coordination and collaboration

2. Capacity building

3. Community building and engagement

4. Data and research

The feedback gathered during consultations clearly illustrates that the Durham LIP is successfully delivering on its core mandate of service coordination and collaboration, data and research, capacity building, and community engagement. The feedback from attendees not only affirms the value the LIP brings to community partners and Durham LIP Council members, but also showcases how the LIP has been successful in meeting its strategic objectives.



## Who we create value for



**Newcomers:** The LIP connects newcomers to services in Durham Region and facilitates smoother integration into the community. The LIP allows newcomers to have a direct voice in shaping services through the Newcomer Advisory Table (NAT), enabling their needs and experiences to be heard and reflected in programs and policies.



**Durham communities:** The LIP fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment by promoting cultural awareness and supporting campaigns and programs that celebrate diversity.



**Community service providers and partners:** The LIP enhances collaboration and coordination among Community Partners in Diversity (CPD) and builds capacity among service providers to support better outcomes for immigrants. The LIP also provides data and research that highlights trends, strengthens partnership networks and improves the accessibility of services for newcomers.



**Durham region elected officials and staff:** The LIP highlights community needs to drive informed decision-making and the development of programs and policies that are responsive to meet the needs of diverse immigrant populations.

# Community and Inclusion Plan summary



## **Champion collective action**

Create long-term change in systems and institutions in Durham Region, highlighting immigration and settlement challenges, advocating for solutions, and mobilizing resources, partners and institutions to act.

- 1.1 We mobilize data, research and insights on immigration and settlement.
- 1.2 We raise the profile of the LIP and its partners.
- 1.3 We advocate for improved access to core services and infrastructure.



## **Build inclusive communities**

Create a supportive, inclusive and welcoming environment where newcomers are empowered to connect, contribute and thrive by amplifying their voices, fostering meaningful relationships and enabling access to services that meet them where they are.

- 2.1 We amplify newcomer voices.
- 2.2 We foster community connections.
- 2.3 We celebrate newcomer successes and contributions.
- 2.4 We enhance service navigation.



## **Embrace innovation and responsiveness**

Continue to be recognized as a trusted and forward-thinking partner, known for quickly adapting to emerging needs in the settlement sector and innovating to meet the needs of both our partners and Durham's immigrants.

- 3.1 We implement innovative solutions to meet community needs.
- 3.2 We continue to be responsive to service providers and partners.
- 3.3 We adapt to the shifting immigration landscape.
- 3.4 We advance capacity and service coordination in the settlement sector.

# Champion collective action



# 1. Champion collective action

**Goal:** Create long-term change in systems and institutions in Durham Region, highlighting immigration and settlement challenges, advocating for solutions, and mobilizing resources, partners and institutions to act.

## **What this means for the Durham LIP**

This goal reflects the LIP's commitment to fostering long-term collective action for systemic change in Durham Region. It is specifically aimed at enhancing the newcomer experience and addressing the challenges that they face in accessing services, employment and community integration. This priority was reinforced by feedback gathered during consultations where stakeholders consistently highlighted the critical role of the LIP in addressing structural issues affecting immigration and settlement.

Advocacy was recognized as essential in addressing persistent barriers that affect newcomers such as access to affordable housing, employment opportunities, health care and other essential services, all of which can hinder the successful integration into a community. This means responding to existing and emerging challenges and working to influence broader policies and systems that shape the experiences of newcomers in Durham Region.

In the previous community plan, the Durham LIP specifically focused on the Economic Prosperity of newcomers. Building upon the work to date, stakeholder consultations for this new plan highlighted the importance of considering the interrelated factors that influence settlement outcomes and create a welcoming environment (Appendix 1). These consultations emphasized that conditions such as housing, employment and healthcare should not be considered in isolation but rather addressed through a system-wide approach that considers the interrelated nature of these factors.

Consultations also underscored the importance of collective action in creating meaningful change. The LIP is uniquely positioned to bring together partners, institutions, and government officials to collaborate on solutions, ensuring immigration and settlement challenges are addressed collectively so that both newcomers and residents can thrive in an inclusive and welcoming Durham Region.

## 1.1 We mobilize data, research and insights on immigration and settlement.

**We actively understand newcomer needs and share research, insights and settlement outcomes to drive informed decision-making.**

### **Rationale**

Understanding newcomer needs through research is essential for informed decision making. The LIP must not only undertake research but also focus on using insights to develop actionable solutions. Consultations emphasized the LIPs role in leading and collaborating on research that identifies gaps, trends and challenges. Research should focus on uncovering barriers and informing strategies that promote successful integration and well-being.

By sharing insights and outcomes, the LIP will drive informed decision-making that empowers stakeholders, from service providers to regional staff, to develop and implement strategies that address newcomer challenges. This approach ensures that policies and programs are not only evidence-based but also adaptable, responsive and impactful.

## 1.2 We raise the profile of the LIP and its partners.

**We raise the profile of the LIP and its partners by enhancing the visibility and reputation of the LIP and our partners, positioning ourselves as the go-to resource on issues that impact Durham's newcomers.**

### **Rationale**

As Durham Region's immigrant population grows, it is important to enhance the visibility and reputation of the LIP as the go-to resource for reliable information and services. The non-profit sector in Durham, which provides essential services to newcomers, is facing challenges, with 68 per cent experiencing staffing changes in 2022- 2023 (Vital Signs, 2023). This turnover highlights the need to raise awareness of the LIP among partners affected by service disruptions, ensuring that they stay informed about key resources available to both service providers and newcomers.

Increasing the LIP's profile will strengthen partnerships, attract new collaborators, reduce duplication and amplify advocacy efforts, helping address systemic and emerging issues collectively. A strong profile builds credibility and influence, encouraging engagement from key decision-makers including regional staff, elected officials, and community service providers. This supports the LIP's ability to advocate for policies, mobilize resources, and drive collective action, ultimately enhancing the newcomer experience and fostering long-term community growth.

### 1.3 We advocate for improved access to core services and infrastructure.

**We advocate for the evolving settlement needs of immigrants such as housing, employment, and healthcare, critical for successful integration and quality of life by engaging key partners, institutions and decision-makers.**

#### **Rationale**

Advocating for immigrant-centred solutions was identified in consultations as important to addressing the evolving settlement needs of newcomers and driving meaningful change in Durham Region. Participants identified an opportunity for the LIP to strengthen its internal advocacy in areas within the Region's control - such as public transit and community safety – allowing the Region to lead by example in advancing policies that directly impact newcomers.

The importance of storytelling was also emphasized, combining compelling personal narratives with data to highlight the challenges and successes of immigrant integration. This approach deepens understanding, builds case studies and resonates with decision-makers, amplifying the call for action.

By collaborating with key partners on advocacy initiatives, the LIP can amplify its efforts, sharing resources and working together to close service gaps. Collective advocacy enhances the LIP's impact, ensuring that immigrant needs are prioritized and addressed through data-driven solutions that improve quality of life and successful integration into Durham Region.

# Build inclusive communities



## 2. Build inclusive communities

**Goal:** Create a supportive, inclusive and welcoming environment where newcomers are empowered to connect, contribute and thrive by amplifying their voices, fostering meaningful relationships and enabling access to services that meet them where they are.

### **What this means for the Durham LIP**

Building welcoming communities has always been a strategic priority of the Durham LIP. Creating a supportive, inclusive and welcoming environment for newcomers is not only about providing services but about actively building social capital within the Region. Feedback from consultations emphasized that newcomers often face barriers of isolation and loneliness, with many unaware of the support available to them. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of fostering connections at the grassroots level and also in meeting people where they are – whether through culturally responsive services or by engaging them in their communities – so that they feel supported and empowered to access resources. Participants suggested that the LIP should focus on building communities where immigrants feel truly integrated and valued, driving both social cohesion and community well-being.

“How we gather, where we gather and what we do when we gather matters because thriving communities are gathering communities”  
~ **Durham Community Foundations (2023)**

In their 2023 Vital Signs report, Durham Community Foundations noted that ‘deeper and broader community engagement is required, especially considering population growth, Durham’s diversity, and demands on non-profit organizations’. Grassroots organizations are often the closest to newcomers and can play a pivotal role in helping them navigate their surroundings.

Consultations also suggested that the booming population growth and changing immigration demographics in Durham Region require a continued focus on education and addressing discrimination, whether based on race, ethnicity, language, religion or immigration status.

Discrimination has negative implications for overall health and well-being and creates divides within communities, leading to exclusion, inequality and social isolation, particularly for immigrants and marginalized groups.

Moving to a new place can be daunting because it involves adapting to a wide range of unfamiliar challenges, from practical concerns like housing and employment to emotional and social adjustments. Supporting newcomers to overcome these barriers is critical for fostering a sense of belonging, easing the transition and enabling equal opportunities for all community members.

## 2.1 We amplify newcomer voices.

**We create platforms and opportunities for newcomers to actively share their stories, experiences, and perspectives, empowering them to demonstrate their positive impact on Durham and Durham's future.**

### **Rationale**

Amplifying newcomer voices is essential, allowing the individuals most affected by policies and services to have a say in shaping them. When newcomers are given platforms to share their experiences, they highlight perspectives that might otherwise be overlooked, especially when it comes to language, cultural differences and service navigation. Participants noted that certain stigmas can discourage newcomers from accessing certain services. Including newcomer voices in decision-making helps Durham create more tailored, responsive services, improving settlement outcomes.

Empowering newcomers also fosters belonging and inclusion. When immigrants actively participate in shaping policies and programs, they are more likely to feel connected to community, reducing social isolation and strengthening community cohesion.

## 2.2 We foster community connections.

**Through partners in the LIP network, we support the development of social capital and meaningful connections between newcomers and residents through grassroots connections that foster trust and understanding.**

### **Rationale**

Fostering community connections in Durham Region builds social capital among newcomers and strengthens cohesion with the broader community. These connections enable cultural exchange, breaking down stereotypes and promoting mutual respect. By engaging newcomers and residents, the LIP creates space for dialogue and collaboration, helping newcomers connect and also helping existing community members appreciate the contributions that immigrants bring to the region. This mutual understanding strengthens community resilience, by fostering a shared sense of responsibility and inclusion.

## 2.3 We celebrate newcomer successes and contributions.

**We celebrate the achievements of newcomers, shining a spotlight on their contributions to the economic and social fabric of our community through recognition and storytelling.**

### **Rationale**

Celebrating the successes and contributions of newcomers recognizes their vital role in shaping the social, cultural, and economic fabric of Durham. By sharing personal stories, the LIP can combat stereotypes and showcase the unique skills and perspectives that immigrants bring. Participants in consultations emphasized that storytelling adds a human element, creating relatable narratives that resonate with broader audiences.

Recognizing accomplishments boosts the confidence and sense of belonging of newcomers while also encouraging broader community engagement in supporting immigrant integration.

## 2.4 We enhance service navigation.

**We identify opportunities to improve service navigation, enabling newcomers to easily access equitable and culturally appropriate services that provide visibility into local ways and meet them where they are.**

### **Rationale**

Service navigation remains a challenge for newcomers in Durham Region. Enhancing it is critical for the LIP, as it directly addresses one of the main barriers to accessing services.

Many immigrants struggle to find, understand or use available services, leading to unmet needs, making it difficult for newcomers to fully integrate and contribute in the region. Effective service navigation reduces confusion, streamlines access and ensures that newcomers get timely support. When individuals can find the help they need quickly and efficiently, it leads to better longer-term outcomes.

# Embrace innovation and responsiveness



### 3. Embrace innovation and responsiveness

**Goal:** Continue to be recognized as a trusted and forward-thinking partner, known for quickly adapting to emerging needs in the settlement sector and innovating to meet the needs of both our partners and Durham’s immigrants.

#### **What this means for the Durham LIP**

Based on the feedback from consultations, it is clear that the LIP plays an essential role in information and resource sharing, fostering collaboration, understanding community needs, and supporting the newcomer community in Durham Region. This positions the LIP as a trusted and forward-thinking partner, a reputation that it must continue to uphold to remain a vital resource for both service providers and newcomers, ensuring that the region’s settlement services evolve in response to emerging needs.

By embracing innovation and responsiveness, the LIP will not only strengthen its ability to adapt to future challenges but will also continue to foster collective action among service providers, ensuring Durham’s growing immigrant population is supported with the resources they need to thrive in a dynamic and evolving environment.

#### 3.1 We implement innovative solutions to meet community needs.

**We demonstrate leadership by championing and supporting creative thinking and new approaches of doing things to drive continuous improvement and meet the evolving needs of immigrants in Durham.**

##### **Rationale**

Rapid developments in digital technologies and increasing operating pressures in the non-profit and community services sectors are reshaping service delivery expectations. Individuals, including newcomers, expect personalized and efficient services that meet their unique needs. As immigration patterns, policies, and needs evolve, the LIP must adopt innovative approaches, both digital and in-person, to remain relevant, effective, and equitable, helping immigrants integrate successfully and navigate the complexities of settlement.

By embracing innovative solutions, the LIP can remain adaptive and proactive in responding to emerging challenges. Additionally, the LIP plays a key role in encouraging service providers to think explore new approaches that enhance outcomes for newcomers. Participants in consultations emphasized the LIP’s potential to share innovative ideas and continue to facilitate information sharing, strengthen outreach and build stronger community connections.

### 3.2 We continue to be responsive to service providers and partners.

**We actively engage with service providers and ensure our support is timely, relevant and tailored to their needs.**

#### **Rationale**

Service providers play a critical front line role in supporting immigrants to integrate and succeed in Durham Region. By engaging with service providers and offering tailored, timely support, the LIP equips partners with the information, resources and connections required to serve newcomers effectively.

Given the diverse services provided to newcomers, service providers face unique challenges, tailoring the LIP's support to these specific needs helps close service gaps and improve service quality. By staying responsive, the LIP fosters positive, reliable partnerships and builds trust within the network of service providers and partners.

Consultation feedback highlighted that service providers value the LIP's customized, practical guidance and resource sharing, which helps them adapt to immigration trends and evolving needs. By continuing to be responsive, the LIP fosters collaboration, strengthens partnerships and meets the needs of our partners.

### 3.3 We adapt to the shifting immigration landscape.

**We monitor changes in immigration policies and trends and collaborate with partners to adjust our strategies and programs.**

#### **Rationale**

Monitoring immigration policies and trends is essential for keeping programs and strategies aligned with the global geopolitical environment. Immigration patterns are influenced by global factors including economic conditions, political instability, and humanitarian crises, affecting the types of immigrants arriving. Currently, Durham's immigration profile includes economic immigrants (54 per cent), family-sponsored immigrants (32 per cent), and refugees (13 per cent), each with unique needs and settlement challenges.

As policies and global events evolve, staying up-to-date and collaborating with partners allows the LIP to proactively adjust its strategies and respond to emerging needs. This ensures that the LIP remains responsive, relevant, and effective in addressing diverse needs.

### 3.4 We advance capacity and service coordination in the settlement sector.

**We empower service providers through targeted, system-level, capacity-building initiatives, to create a strong, more integrated network that supports immigrants in Durham Region.**

#### **Rationale**

Newcomer settlement relies on the strengths of the communities and service providers positioned to support them. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many service providers face ongoing operational challenges, including financial pressures and an increased demand for services. Staffing issues and program reductions due to funding have further strained resources (Durham Community Foundations, 2023). Building capacity within these providers remains a key for maintaining a strong, interconnected network to support immigrants effectively.

Empowering service providers through system-level initiatives enhances coordination, resource sharing, and alignment across the settlement system. Strengthening capacity enables newcomers to receive consistent, high-quality support across different providers, supporting their effective integration into the community.



## Conclusion

As newcomers continue to choose Durham Region as their destination of choice, supporting the social and economic inclusion of new residents will be critical to the region's growth and prosperity. The success of newcomers in Durham will be the success of the whole community.

The Durham Local Immigration Partnership's 2025-2030 Community and Inclusion Plan serves as a shared blueprint for the region and its community partners to continue their collaborative work focused on improving the settlement journey of newcomers. The Durham Local Immigration Partnership, informed by local, provincial, and federal priorities, will identify collective actions and initiatives to advance the strategic areas outlined in this Plan. This Plan will also be supported by a forthcoming measurement and evaluation framework, which will identify key outcomes and performance measures to assess the DLIP's progress toward its objectives.

When Canada's immigration programs and policies change, so too will the components of this Plan. It will remain responsive to community needs so that the work of the region and its partners brings real, tangible impact to the lives of Durham's newest residents.

# Appendix

## 17 Factors which contribute to an open and inclusive environment Employment Opportunities

1. Employment Opportunities
2. Fostering of Social Capital
3. Affordable and Suitable Housing
4. Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
5. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers
6. Links between Main Actors Working toward Welcoming Communities 7
7. Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
8. Educational Opportunities
9. Accessible and Suitable Health Care
10. Available and Accessible Public Transit
11. Presence of Diverse Religious Organizations
12. Social Engagement Opportunities
13. Political Participation Opportunities
14. Positive Relationships with the Police and the Justice System
15. Safety
16. Opportunities for Use of Public Space and Recreation Facilities
17. Favourable Media Coverage and Representation

Source: [Citizen and Immigration Canada \(n.d\). Local Immigration Partnerships Handbook.](#)

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