



# A Place to Thrive:

York Region's 2024 to 2027  
Plan for Newcomer Inclusion

[york.ca](http://york.ca)

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing icon above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a blue and green background.





## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Peoples including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis peoples and the treaty territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Williams Treaties First Nations. Today this area is home to many diverse Indigenous Peoples, and we recognize their history, spirituality, culture and stewardship of this land. We also acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest First Nation community.

Affirmed by the Inclusion Charter for York Region, celebrating its 6th anniversary in 2024, York Region is committed to establishing welcoming and inclusive communities where diversity is celebrated and where everyone can develop to their full potential, participate freely in society and live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination. For more information, visit [york.ca/InclusiveYR](https://york.ca/InclusiveYR)





Chairman & CEO  
Wayne Emmerson

## A MESSAGE FROM YORK REGION CHAIRMAN AND CEO AND MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Regional Municipality of York is home to more than 1.2 million people, representing diverse ages, backgrounds and interests. As one of the fastest growing and most diverse communities in Canada, recent immigrants account for more than 84% of the Region's population growth between 2016 and 2021.

Immigration brings diverse cultures and ideas to our communities, as well as skills, education and work experience, which all contribute to a thriving and robust local economy.

Since 2009, York Region Local Immigration Partnership has supported welcoming and inclusive communities by raising awareness of newcomers' needs, supporting research and strategic policy, and improving programs and services that facilitate settlement and inclusion.

*A Place to Thrive: York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion* builds on the successes of the *2017 to 2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy* and moves us forward on a collaborative approach to supporting healthy communities, social inclusion and economic prosperity for our newest community members.

As part of our commitment to building welcoming and inclusive communities for all, York Regional Council remains dedicated to working with community partners, newcomer residents and local municipal partners to make York Region a welcoming place where everyone can thrive.



Mayor  
Frank Scarpitti  
City of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Michael Chan  
City of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Jim Jones  
City of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Joe Li  
City of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Alan Ho  
City of Markham



Mayor  
John Taylor  
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor  
Tom Vegh  
Town of Newmarket



Mayor  
Steven Del Duca  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Linda Jackson  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Mario Ferri  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Gino Rosati  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Mario G. Racco  
City of Vaughan



Mayor  
Margaret Quirk  
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor  
Naomi Davison  
Town of Georgina



Mayor  
David West  
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor  
Godwin Chan  
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor  
Joe DiPaola  
City of Richmond Hill



Mayor  
Tom Mrakas  
Town of Aurora



Mayor  
Virginia Hackson  
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor  
Steve Pellegrini  
Township of King



Mayor  
Iain Lovatt  
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

# A MESSAGE FROM THE NEWCOMER INCLUSION TABLE OF YORK REGION CO-CHAIRS

The Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region is pleased to support *A Place to Thrive: York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion*, which expresses our collective vision for making settlement and inclusion of newcomers in York Region more responsive to their needs.

We take pride in the Table's work to inform development of the Plan and are confident that it reflects the many voices heard in our communities. We are excited for the opportunities to support newcomers' economic and social inclusion as well as their health and well-being.

We thank York Regional Council and members of the 2019-2022 term of the Community Partnership Council for their guidance and support.

Collaboration and partnerships are central to the success of this Table and implementation of this Plan. We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen relationships across our communities and partners so that York Region is a place that all are proud to call home.

Sincerely,



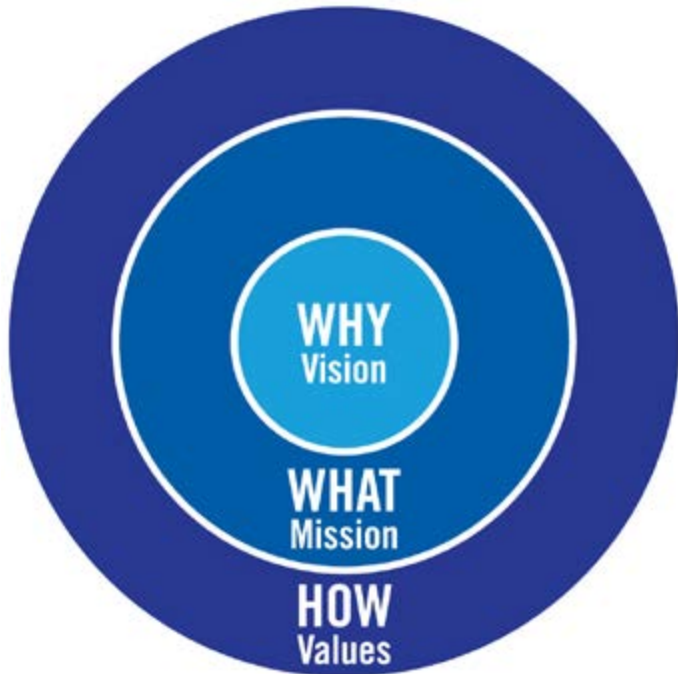
Mayor Frank Scarpitti  
City of Markham  
Co-Chair  
Newcomer Inclusion Table, 2023 to 2026



Alfred Lam, Executive Director  
Centre for Immigrant and Community Services  
Co-Chair  
Newcomer Inclusion Table, 2023 to 2026

# YORK REGION HAS

**1** VISION  
MISSION  
VALUES



We envision  
strong,  
caring,  
safe communities

through our mission of

working together to serve  
our thriving communities  
– today and tomorrow

by relying on our values of

Integrity  
Commitment  
Accountability  
Respect  
Excellence

YORK REGION

## NEWCOMER SPOTLIGHT

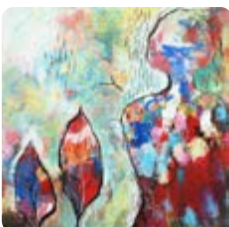
### NEWCOMER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Throughout this document, a selection of artwork by newcomers in our communities is showcased. York Region is pleased to share these and thanks the artists who contributed their work for this Plan.



### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Also included is a series called, “In Their Own Words,” highlighting first-person stories of York Region newcomers and community partners who support them, which were gained through community engagement and consultation.



The cover image was created by newcomer artist, Dana Sewell. Dana specializes in painting and mixed media.

*“Nature is my muse...I love the way I feel in nature. It’s calming and meditative. I fully developed my appreciation for nature here in Canada. There are so many beautiful places. I love to hike and bike on the trails, admiring the wildlife. My inspiration shows in my paintings.”*





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

York Region welcomes the thousands of newcomers to Canada who choose to settle in our communities every year. It is well documented that newcomers bring education, skills and experience to the Region, replenish the labour force, support services by paying taxes, and enrich our social fabric through cultural diversity. These are essential elements for the Region's growing economy, innovation and prosperity.

The challenges facing newcomers – like accessing housing and employment – are not unique to newcomers. While the Region has other plans that address these issues more directly, such as [Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone](#), [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for York Region](#) and [Inclusion Charter for York Region](#), this plan focuses on supporting newcomers to succeed so York Region communities can thrive.

*A Place to Thrive: York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion (Plan)* builds on the successes of previous plans and presents a vision for how York Region Local Immigration Partnership will support newcomer health and well-being, build welcoming communities where everyone belongs, and promote equitable and prosperous economic pathways for diverse groups of newcomers.

This Plan was developed with feedback from York Region residents, community partners and the Newcomer Inclusion Table (formerly Community Partnership Council), a community advisory group appointed by York Regional Council focusing on addressing newcomers' needs. By leveraging an evidence-based, community-driven approach, this Plan reflects the voices of newcomers, service providers and community partners, and aligns with priorities of senior levels of government.

To support implementation of the Plan, The Regional Municipality of York will play a stewardship role, working with newcomers, partners, local municipalities and service providers.



## DEFINITIONS

**Asylum seeker** refers to **refugee claimants** and individuals who have yet to apply for refugee protection status in Canada.

**Immigrant** refers to a person who is, or who 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 who have obtained Canadian citizenship are included in this group.

**Immigrant status** refers to whether a person is a non-immigrant (e.g., born in Canada), an immigrant or a non-permanent resident.

**Newcomer** refers to an immigrant or a non-permanent resident that has been in Canada for less than five years.

**Non-permanent resident** refers to a person from another country who is visiting, has a work or study permit, or is a refugee claimant in Canada.

**Permanent resident** refers to a person that has been granted the right to live permanently in Canada by Canadian immigration authorities but has not yet obtained Canadian citizenship.

**Recent immigrant** refers to immigrants that have been in Canada for less than five years.

**Refugee claimant** is a person who has applied for refugee protection status while in Canada and is waiting for a decision on their claim.

**Refugee landed in Canada** is a permanent resident who applied for and received permanent resident status in Canada after their refugee claim was accepted.

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Glossary.  
[canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html](https://canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship/helpcentre/glossary.html)





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the 2019-2022 Community Partnership Council for their contributions in the development of this Plan, their valuable insights and expertise, and their endorsement of the Plan’s strategic priorities.

We also gratefully acknowledge the participation of over 1,200 individuals, including newcomer residents, community ambassadors (and Health Commons Solutions Lab, which trained them), service providers, local municipalities, community partners, planning tables and Regional staff for their insights and lived experience.

We recognize the [York Region Arts Council](#) for their coordination of newcomer art submissions and the newcomer artists, residents of York Region, who contributed their work and stories to this Plan.

The Regional Municipality of York would like to recognize the significant contributions of Prince Sibanda to the creation of this Plan for Newcomer Inclusion. Thank you for your smile, kindness and unwavering commitment to serving our newcomer communities.

Prince Sibanda (1976-2023)  
Community Development Program Specialist  
The Regional Municipality of York



[Health Commons](#) is a health innovation lab whose model is rooted in a recognition that health inequities are not inevitable and that solutions must be co-designed with community members who are experts in what the path forward looks like.

# CONTENTS

<b>01 NEWCOMER INCLUSION IN YORK REGION</b> .....	13
Collaboration and Coordination .....	14
York Region Local Immigration Partnership .....	14
Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region .....	16
Welcome Centres.....	17
York.ca/NewcomerServices.....	17
York Region At-a-Glance.....	18
<b>02 YORK REGION'S 2024 TO 2027 PLAN FOR NEWCOMER INCLUSION</b> .....	21
Building on the Previous Plan .....	21
The Path to a Refreshed Plan .....	23
Strategic Framework .....	26
Priority Area 1: Healthy Communities .....	31
Priority Area 2: Social Inclusion .....	37
Priority Area 3: Economic Prosperity.....	41
<b>03 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN</b> .....	46
Stewarding the Plan for Success.....	46
<b>04 CONCLUSION</b> .....	49
<b>05 APPENDICES</b> .....	51
Appendix 1 – Healthy Communities workplan .....	52
Appendix 2 – Social Inclusion workplan.....	54
Appendix 3 – Economic Prosperity workplan.....	56





NEWCOMER  
**SPOTLIGHT**

**ARTIST: ANNIE SONG**  
**MEDIA: PAINTING**

*"My family immigrated to Canada in 2014. Immigrant inclusion to me means a new start in life, a new challenge!"*







# 01 NEWCOMER INCLUSION IN YORK REGION

Immigration plays an important role in York Region's population growth and prosperity. According to the 2021 Census, York Region's total population increased by 63,455 residents between 2016 and 2021. Among this number, 53,495 (or 84%) were newcomers to Canada. This represents a 4% increase in newcomer settlement over the previous five-year census period. Today, nearly half (48%) of all York Region residents are immigrants, the second highest proportion in Ontario, behind Peel Region.

According to the most recent information available from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in 2022, Canada welcomed over 431,645 immigrants, the largest number in a single year. The federal government announced that the annual immigrant admission target will increase to 500,000 by 2025. Based on historical experience and national admission targets, York Region could expect up to 19,500 newcomers to settle in our communities annually until 2025.

Given the scale and importance of newcomers to our population and workforce growth, the successful inclusion of newcomers is a priority that will maintain and build York Region's vitality and prosperity.

## Did you know?



During the 2016 to 2021 census period, York Region welcomed an average of 10,700 newcomers annually, maintaining high levels of newcomer settlement despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

**51%**



Half (51%) of permanent residents settling in York Region are economic migrants, selected by the federal government for their skills and ability to contribute to the Canadian economy.

# COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

## York Region Local Immigration Partnership

Development and implementation of a plan for newcomer inclusion is driven and supported by the York Region Local Immigration Partnership, a federally funded, community-based collaborative that:

- Raises awareness of newcomers' needs
- Engages local partners in developing welcoming communities
- Supports community-level research and strategic planning
- Improves coordination of services that facilitate immigrant settlement and inclusion

No one organization can make the necessary changes to make a community more welcoming to newcomers. It takes collective actions by many to drive local change and make a difference.

In 2009, the federal government selected The Regional Municipality of York to lead the York Region Local Immigration Partnership, one of almost 90 such partnerships across the country. As collective impact initiatives, local immigration partnerships recognize that large-scale change requires better cross-sector coordination and convening community actors to collaborate and innovate to address complex social needs.

## York Region Local Immigration Partnership – Community Partner Ecosystem







### **York Region's settlement landscape includes:**

- Settlement service organizations, funded primarily by the federal and provincial governments, which work directly with newcomer clients to provide language, employment, and community supports and programs
- Non-settlement organizations and community partners, including local municipalities, education, workforce development and healthcare services, whose services also help support newcomers



## **Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region**

Local immigration partnerships are required to establish a multi-sectoral partnership council to develop and implement local settlement strategies. Since 2010, York Regional Council has appointed members to a partnership council, now known as the Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region, to inform the development and implementation of a plan for newcomer inclusion.

Members of the 2023 to 2026 term of the Newcomer Inclusion Table were approved by Regional Council in [December 2022](#) and are ambassadors of the Plan within their own organizations, with partners and in their communities. Success in implementing the Plan effectively depends on strong community leadership, participation and coordination.

A list of 2023-2026 Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region members appears on the back cover of this Plan.

### **Members of the Newcomer Inclusion Table represent diverse service sectors:**

- Welcome Centres
- Language training
- Employment skills and training
- Labour market development
- Police services
- Health
- Education
- Francophone communities
- Social services
- Government





## Welcome Centres

Five [Welcome Centres](#) in York Region help to welcome and settle newcomers. Using a hub service delivery model and funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, these Centres are the main access points to the newcomer service system by providing comprehensive settlement services and referrals for newcomers, including language training, skills evaluation, employment supports and resources. Through this work, they also help build social networks and important connections to communities.

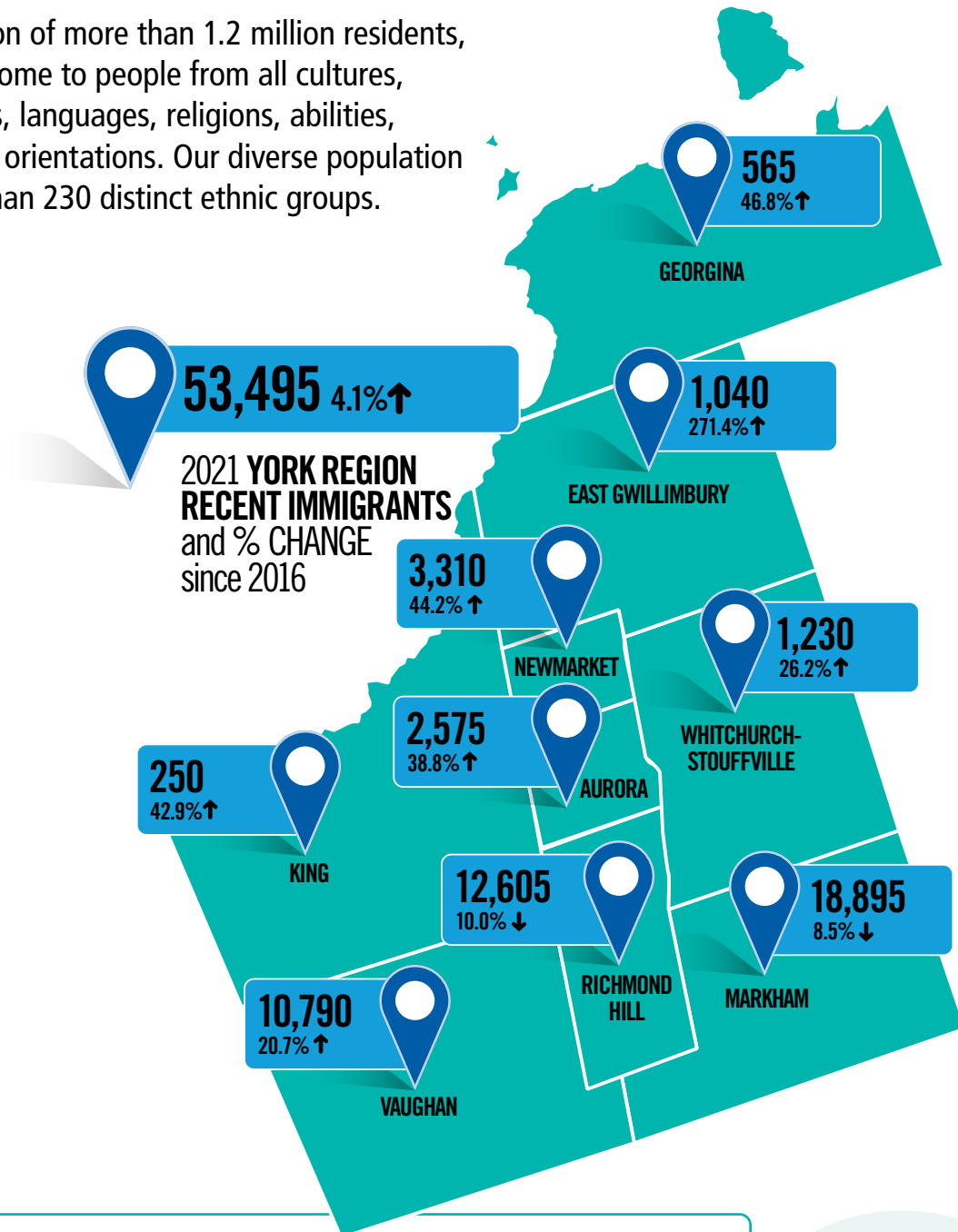
## York.ca/NewcomerServices

[York.ca/NewcomerServices](#) provides links to resources for newcomers and community service providers, including a *York Region Newcomer Guide* that provides useful information on living, learning and working, as well as accessing services, using transit, staying healthy and having fun. The *Guide* is available in six languages: English, French, Persian, Simplified Chinese, Tamil and Ukrainian.



# YORK REGION AT-A-GLANCE

With a population of more than 1.2 million residents, York Region is home to people from all cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, religions, abilities, ages and sexual orientations. Our diverse population includes more than 230 distinct ethnic groups.



## ACCORDING TO THE 2021 CENSUS

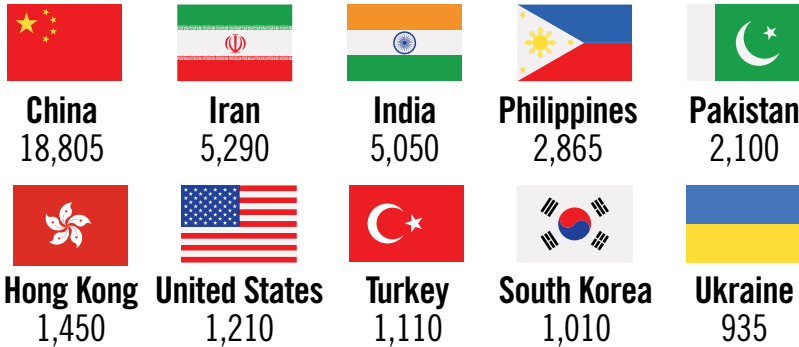


**47.8%**  
of York Region's residents were born outside of Canada

**53,495**  
recent immigrants lived in York Region in 2021, accounting for over 84% of the total population growth between 2016 and 2021

**55.8%**  
of York Region's population will be immigrants by 2041 according to York Region Long Range Planning Population Forecast

## Top 10 countries of origin for recent immigrants to York Region



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.



# 62%

of recent immigrants aged 25 to 64 in York Region had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 41.4% of their non-immigrant counterparts

The majority of recent immigrants in York Region are of working age



The majority of recent immigrants in York Region continue to be economic migrants who are here to work and contribute to our workforce

AGE GROUPS	2016 CENSUS	2021 CENSUS
0-14	14.3%	14.9%
15-24	11.2%	8.6%
25-64	61.9%	66.3%
65+	12.6%	10.1%

ADMISSION CATEGORIES	2016 CENSUS	2021 CENSUS
ECONOMIC CLASS	53.4%	50.5%
FAMILY CLASS	37.9%	34.1%
REFUGEE CLASS	7.4%	13.8%
OTHER	1.3%	1.6%

The vast majority of recent immigrants in York Region have knowledge of our official languages, particularly English

LANGUAGE(S)	2016 CENSUS	2021 CENSUS
ENGLISH ONLY	73.6%	78.6%
FRENCH ONLY	0.2%	0.1%
ENGLISH AND FRENCH	3.4%	4.8%
NEITHER ENGLISH NOR FRENCH	22.8%	16.5%

Bonjour

Hello

Visit [york.ca/Census](https://york.ca/Census) for more immigration, language and other census data resources

\*Due to rounding, the percentages of recent immigrants may not necessarily add up to 100%





NEWCOMER  
**SPOTLIGHT**

**ARTIST: AMNA NAWAB**  
**MEDIA: MIXED MEDIA AND EMBROIDERY**

*"For the first time in many years, I believe that I'm finally home. Canada has given me a way to find a voice through my art and be able to sustain myself and my young family."*

**IN THEIR OWN  
WORDS**

*"During the settlement process, I think I became more resilient and stronger. At the very beginning, I was a little unconfident (sic) and a little bit shy. Now I am an active member in the community. That's how I changed during those years. These were positive experiences that I had in York Region"*

*– Newcomer mother*





# 02 YORK REGION'S 2024 TO 2027 PLAN FOR NEWCOMER INCLUSION

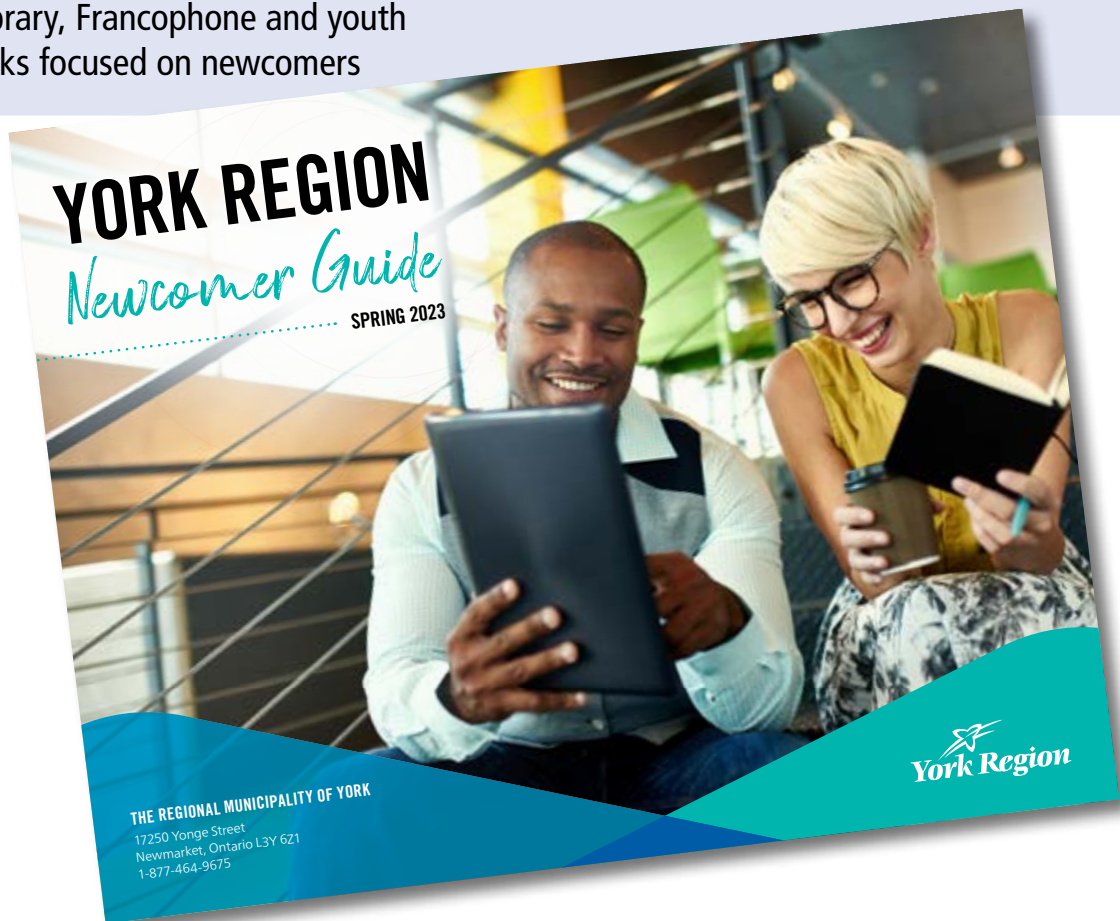
## BUILDING ON THE PREVIOUS PLAN

York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion builds on the success of the [\*2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy\*](#), which featured social and economic integration priority areas and collective actions:

SOCIAL INTEGRATION	ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addressing information needs</li><li>• Increasing local service planning</li><li>• Strengthening social cohesion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthening newcomer employability</li><li>• Promoting inclusive workplaces</li></ul>

**THESE COLLECTIVE ACTIONS, EACH WITH SPECIFIC INITIATIVES,  
WERE ACHIEVED BY 2021, INCLUDING:**

- Developed the [York Region Newcomer Guide](#)
- Enhanced service awareness and navigation support by developing [york.ca/NewcomerServices](http://york.ca/NewcomerServices) and two virtual *Opening Doors* events attracting hundreds of participants
- Expanded community partner and engagement capacity by establishing working groups and creating connections with library, Francophone and youth networks focused on newcomers
- Mapped community assets, including newcomer services, leveraging [YorkMaps](#)
- Worked with KPMG on a business case to enhance newcomer employability and with York University on newcomer resiliency research
- Hosted a conference for internationally educated professionals, the third annual conference of its kind in York Region



Key results continued to be achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting newcomers' needs beyond economic and social integration. Consultation findings to refresh this plan were strongly influenced by newcomers' and service providers' pandemic experiences.



# THE PATH TO A REFRESHED PLAN

**"The country I came from don't have these kinds of settlement services. That's why I don't have a sense that there are supports out there for newcomers."**

*Young adult newcomer*

**"I was afraid to communicate with other people, even to order coffee. But I gradually improved my English skills. At Aurora Library... I really felt I became free with people, could talk with other people. I really appreciate a lot of opportunities to help us."**

*Newcomer senior*

**"Social and economic integration are interconnected. Health and well-being affects social integration, and that affects economic integration, and vice versa."**

*Community service provider*

**"How do we support the transition beyond employment to empower newcomers?"**

*Community service provider*

**"I had everything there. I finished my diploma, was an assistant manager, and was top in my country. But here, I don't have any chance to go outside. I have to take care of my kids. My husband does night work. My kids love to live in York Region because they study here. They don't face the same difficulties as me."**

*Newcomer mother of three*



This Plan is the result of extensive research, outreach and engagement with support and input from over 1,200 community partners and residents – including newcomer youth, seniors, families, internationally educated professionals and entrepreneurs – as well as service providers, and municipal and Regional staff who shared their insights and experience. These consultations helped shape understanding of how newcomers are settling in York Region and how to support them more holistically and effectively.

Local Immigration Partnership staff heard stories that validated the research and literature, and provided an understanding of the local context, such as how newcomers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing challenges newcomers were already facing while settling in York Region.



Feedback from newcomers and service providers highlighted how newcomer inclusion can be improved, such as increasing awareness of settlement service and language supports, conducting outreach to isolated and at-risk newcomer populations, and building greater trust in the community.

Community consultations confirmed the need to maintain a focus on economic and social inclusion from the previous plan, while also expanding strategic scope to address newcomers' health and well-being priorities.

### Engagement supporting the Plan's development

- 1,200 newcomer residents, internal and external partners, municipal and Regional staff
- Community Conversations led by trained community ambassadors who are immigrants and identify with the newcomer sub-populations with whom they consulted (youth, seniors)
- Engagement workshops with local municipal and library staff as well as organizations serving diverse newcomer segments, including refugees, non-status migrants, Francophone, 2SLGBTQI+ and newcomers experiencing low income
- Strategic planning workshops with Community Partnership Council and Newcomer Inclusion Table members to inform development of the Plan's strategic framework and collective actions
- Consultations with local municipal and York Region staff
- Resident survey







## EXAMPLES OF WHAT WE HEARD

FROM NEWCOMERS	FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS, REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL STAFF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to better understand how newcomers’ basic needs, including health care, affordable and accessible housing, transportation, food security and childcare, contribute to well-being</li> <li>• Specific newcomer sub-populations (e.g., seniors, women with young children) are at particular risk for social isolation and compromised health and well-being</li> <li>• Enjoying community parks, trails, libraries and recreation activities help to improve newcomers’ sense of belonging</li> <li>• Need to address incidents of racism, discrimination and bullying targeted at newcomers, particularly youth</li> <li>• Many newcomers continue to report long-standing challenges to equitable workforce participation, such as a lack of Canadian work experience and an inability to connect to their chosen career</li> <li>• Need better wrap-around supports (e.g., affordable childcare, transportation) that reduce barriers to accessing employment services and workforce participation, particularly among newcomer women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to establish and strengthen partnerships that enhance service coordination</li> <li>• Need to build awareness of and trust in publicly funded services</li> <li>• Improve connections with newcomers in community not connected with human services networks</li> <li>• Need to find ways to address housing, even if housing supply and affordability are complex and systemic challenges</li> <li>• Building partnerships among faith communities, libraries, ethnocultural organizations and service providers can foster greater community connectedness and address social isolation experienced by hard-to-reach newcomers</li> <li>• Employers in York Region continue to experience difficulty hiring and retaining employees in the post-pandemic environment (<a href="#">Local Labour Market Report - Workforce Trends in York Region 2023, Workforce Planning Board of York Region</a>)</li> <li>• Need for more information on the local labour market and newcomers’ education, skills and work experience</li> </ul>



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### **Supporting newcomers to succeed so York Region communities can thrive**

Research and consultation insights underlined the importance of maintaining and continuing the work from the previous 2017-2021 York Region Newcomer Strategy (economic and social integration priority areas) in a refreshed plan, as well as including a priority area on newcomers' health and well-being. In April 2023, York Regional Council approved an expanded three-pillar strategic framework (now called priority areas) for York Region's Plan for Newcomer Inclusion - Healthy Communities, Social Inclusion and Economic Prosperity. These represent essential dimensions for successful newcomer settlement and inclusion in York Region and reflect key social determinants of health from the perspective of newcomers and those who support them.





According to the Province of Ontario Health Equity Guideline (2018), social determinants of health are the interrelated social, political and economic conditions that influence how people live, learn, work and play. "The intersection of the social determinants of health cause these conditions to shift and change over time and across the life span, impacting the health of individuals, groups and communities in different ways."

**The 12 Social Determinants of Health for York Region's Community and Health Services Department include:**



"Numerous studies suggest that [social determinants of health] account for between 30-55% of health outcomes" – World Health Organization, 2024



NEWCOMER  
**SPOTLIGHT**

**ARTIST: TANYA BESEDINA**  
**MEDIA: SCULPTURE**

*"I was immediately struck by the natural beauty of the vast fields and nature that surrounded me. As an artist, I felt compelled to capture my feelings and impressions of this new environment in my art. Through my porcelain sculptures, I was able to convey my sense of awe and wonder at the natural beauty of my new home."*

**IN THEIR OWN  
WORDS**

*"We need to continue to bring awareness to other services available to newcomers. Those who access services do better."*

*– Community service provider*







## PRIORITY AREA 1: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Supporting newcomer health, safety and well-being

#### OBJECTIVES

- Build understanding of newcomers' health and well-being priorities among service providers
- Enhance service provider capacity to work in ways sensitive to newcomers' needs
- Expand newcomers' awareness of and access to health and well-being services and resources

#### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Newcomers are at risk of declining physical and mental health due to socio-economic challenges they face associated with immigration and settlement. Health, safety and well-being are interconnected and can impact socio-economic integration. Some newcomers face housing instability and are unaware of their rights and services available to them, and lack trust in publicly funded services. Improving our collective understanding of newcomers' needs, expanding education and capacity building among service providers, and increasing awareness of and access to related supports among newcomers can work to improve newcomers' health and well-being.

Intended outcomes of actions under this priority area include: reduced stigma in using publicly funded services; newcomers feel healthy, safe and supported; and newcomers are aware of and can access culturally sensitive services and supports.

## HOW ARE NEWCOMERS DOING?

Consultation insights from newcomer residents, service providers, and Regional and municipal staff identified a diversity of challenges facing newcomers in York Region, including:

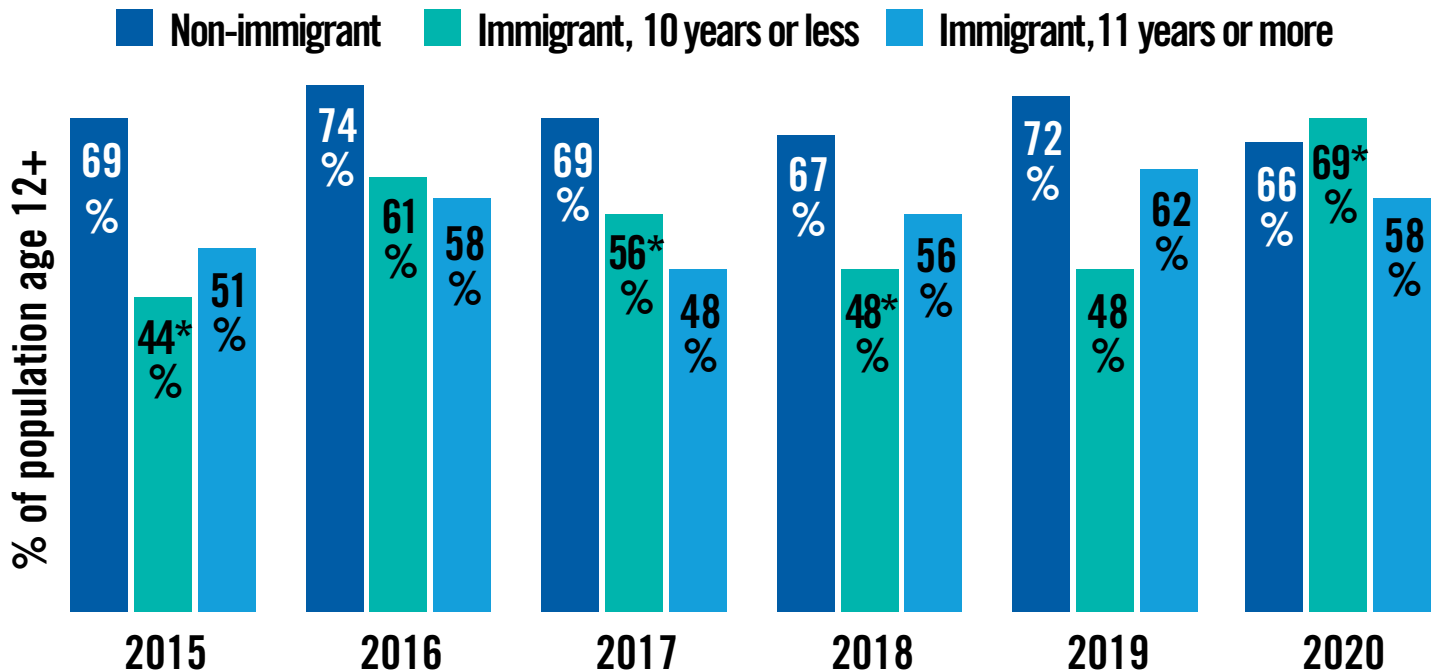
- Gaps in health access and equity were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Newcomers feel supported when they can access services in their preferred language
- There is a persistent need to continue promoting service navigation supports

To inform planning, two community-level indicators have been included, providing a population-level picture of the health and well-being of newcomers in York Region compared to their Canadian-born counterparts:

- Self-reported physical health, whether excellent or very good
- Self-reported mental health, whether excellent or very good

## Canadian Community Health Survey

### PERCEIVED PHYSICAL HEALTH EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD, YORK REGION, 2015-2020

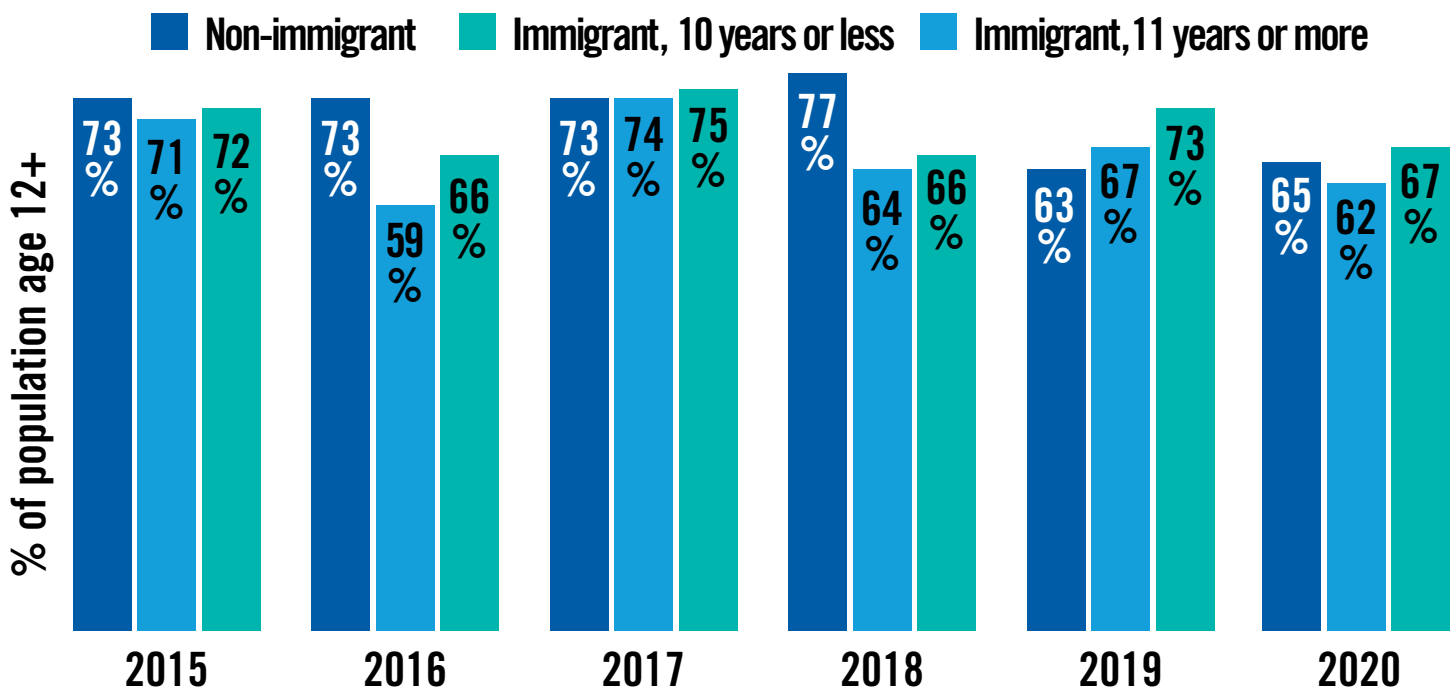


The data above suggests that non-immigrants (Canadian-born residents) generally self-report higher levels of excellent or very good physical health compared to newcomers (who arrived within the past 10 years) and established immigrants (who arrived 11 years ago or more).





**PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTH EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD, YORK REGION, 2015-2020**



In recent years, non-immigrants and immigrants have reported similar levels of perceived mental health. Staff will continue to monitor community-level indicator trends and changes to help inform planning.

Notes: 1.\*Interpret with caution-high variability associated with this percentage. 2. The data used for this indicator are self-reported and may be subject to errors in recall and over or underreporting due to social desirability. 3. Percentages are weighted to be representative of the population and rounded. 4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection operations for CCHS 2020 were disrupted and adversely affected resulting in a reduced number of completed interviews. Statistics Canada has a note to users to use the CCHS 2020 data with caution, especially when creating estimates for small sub-populations or when comparing to other CCHS years. 5. Data reported are for population aged 12 and over. Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015-2020, Community and Health Services - Public Health, The Regional Municipality of York.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

### COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

1.1

Develop and promote a resource for service providers to enhance their capacity to design and deliver services responsive to newcomers' needs

1.2

Work with health partners in York Region to support culturally informed health care approaches

1.3

Continue promoting and enhancing supports for newcomers that build their awareness of and access to services in York Region

1.4

Advance opportunities to increase health care access for at-risk newcomer populations

1.5

Enhance newcomers' awareness of housing supports and their legal rights, and build partnerships to strengthen how landlords work with newcomers as tenants

#### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*"Living in York Region really helped me to understand a new culture. It strengthened my connection to Canadian society, and with my mom working here, we also feel more Canadian. It's been a very good experience. I was discriminated against in school. It's a bad thing, but at the same time, I knew how to combat racism and promote multiculturalism, which is a very important part of Canadian culture. So, I view it as a lesson, and I'm very grateful."*

– Newcomer youth





NEWCOMER | ARTIST: JING FU  
**SPOTLIGHT** | MEDIA: PAINTING

*"The most important reason I love York Region is that we are surrounded by parks, trails, and nature-reserved areas. As a landscape painter, nature gives me so much inspiration. I always go hiking and photographing, which helps me [to] keep creating better artwork."*



*"Our family is enjoying the York Regional Forest. We went to different trails, beginning in the pandemic, to release stress."  
– Newcomer parent*

For more information on the York Regional Forest, visit: [york.ca/Forests](http://york.ca/Forests)







## PRIORITY AREA 2: SOCIAL INCLUSION

### Building welcoming communities where everyone belongs

#### OBJECTIVES

- Promote welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers
- Celebrate newcomers' contributions to the Region's diversity and economy
- Support the Inclusion Charter for York Region, where everyone can live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination

#### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Building more connections with newcomer communities, celebrating newcomers' contributions, and addressing racism and discrimination can help increase newcomers' sense of belonging and social connectedness. These contribute to positive health and socio-economic outcomes and create conditions for newcomers to participate more fully and thrive in York Region communities.

Some intended outcomes of actions under this priority area include: newcomers feel included, welcomed and accepted; newcomers feel they can develop to their fullest potential in York Region; and newcomers are celebrated for their contributions to the Region's diversity and economy.



## HOW ARE NEWCOMERS DOING?

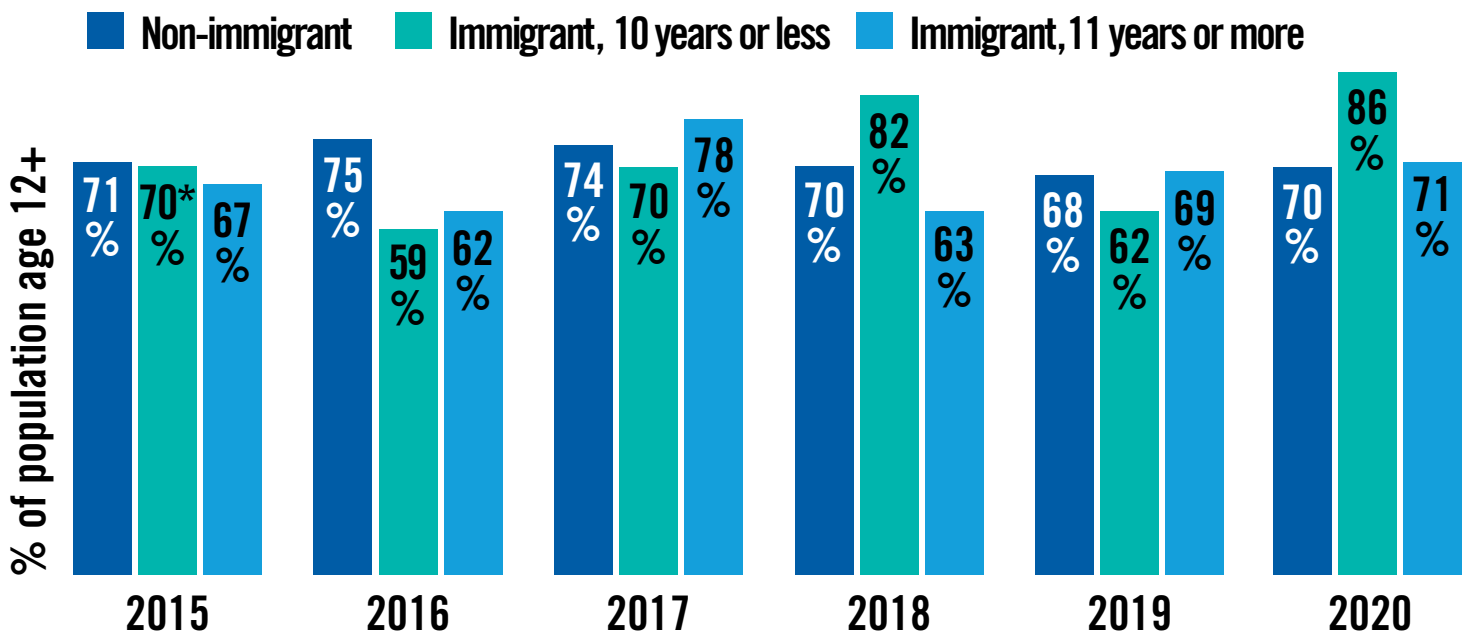
During the consultation process, newcomer residents and community partners said that newcomers feel York Region is welcoming and inclusive, but they also want to learn more about their diverse neighbours and increase their social connectedness. In addition, there is a need to find opportunities to recognize and promote newcomer achievements and contributions to their community.

To enhance our understanding of social inclusion among York Region newcomers, sense of belonging data provides a community-level perspective:

## Canadian Community Health Survey

### SENSE OF COMMUNITY BELONGING

VERY STRONG OR SOMEWHAT STRONG, YORK REGION, 2015-2020



Generally, sense of community belonging is quite varied among immigrants, whether newcomers or established, compared to non-immigrants, who appear to be relatively more stable in this respect.

Notes: 1.\*Interpret with caution-high variability associated with this percentage. 2. The data used for this indicator are self-reported and may be subject to errors in recall and over or under-reporting due to social desirability. 3. Percentages are weighted to be representative of the population and rounded. 4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data collection operations for CCHS 2020 were disrupted and adversely affected resulting in a reduced number of completed interviews. Statistics Canada has a note to users to use the CCHS 2020 data with caution, especially when creating estimates for small sub-populations or when comparing to other CCHS years. 5. Data reported are for population aged 12 and over. Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015-2020, Community and Health Services - Public Health, The Regional Municipality of York.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

### COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 2.1 | Build connections and foster collaboration among community-based newcomer networks and human service providers                 |
| 2.2 | Promote municipal programs and services to newcomers to strengthen community belonging   |
| 2.3 | Create an annual region-wide newcomer celebration to recognize newcomers' contributions to York Region's diversity and economy |
| 2.4 | Promote educational and awareness building opportunities that support the goals of the Inclusion Charter for York Region       |







## PRIORITY AREA 3: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

### Promoting equitable and prosperous economic pathways for newcomers

#### OBJECTIVES

- Build employers' understanding of local labour market supply and demand to enhance capacity to plan and respond
- Promote a regional economy in which newcomers have jobs that align with their education, skills and work experience
- Promote equitable access to labour market readiness supports for newcomers

#### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Labour force growth, a key determinant of long-term economic growth, is driven primarily by immigration. Newcomers bring global talent and skills to York Region communities, as well as help create jobs, fill labour gaps and volunteer, which also contribute to local and regional economic growth. Increasing collective understanding of the local labour market, working with employers to connect with local immigrant talent sources and addressing barriers to fuller workforce participation among newcomers can enhance York Region's economic vitality.

Some intended outcomes under this priority area include: newcomers helping to meet labour market shortages to keep York Region economically competitive; newcomers having employment commensurate with their education, skills and work experience; and newcomers having access to wrap-around supports, enabling them to attend employment services and enhance their ability to participate in the workforce.





## HOW ARE NEWCOMERS DOING?

Consultation insights identified several economic challenges faced by newcomers in York Region:

- Need to ensure that newcomers' incomes are sustainable and can meet the increasing cost of living, especially in multi-generational households
- Employers in York Region continue to experience difficulty hiring and retaining employees in the post-pandemic environment
- Need to continue promoting employment, career progression, networking and strategies for building social capital for newcomers, such as mentoring, volunteerism and internship opportunities

Two community-level indicators inform our understanding of the economic integration and labour force participation among York Region newcomers:

- Unemployment rates for newcomers in the Greater Toronto Area, which includes York Region
- Median income levels of newcomers compared to Canadian-born residents in York Region

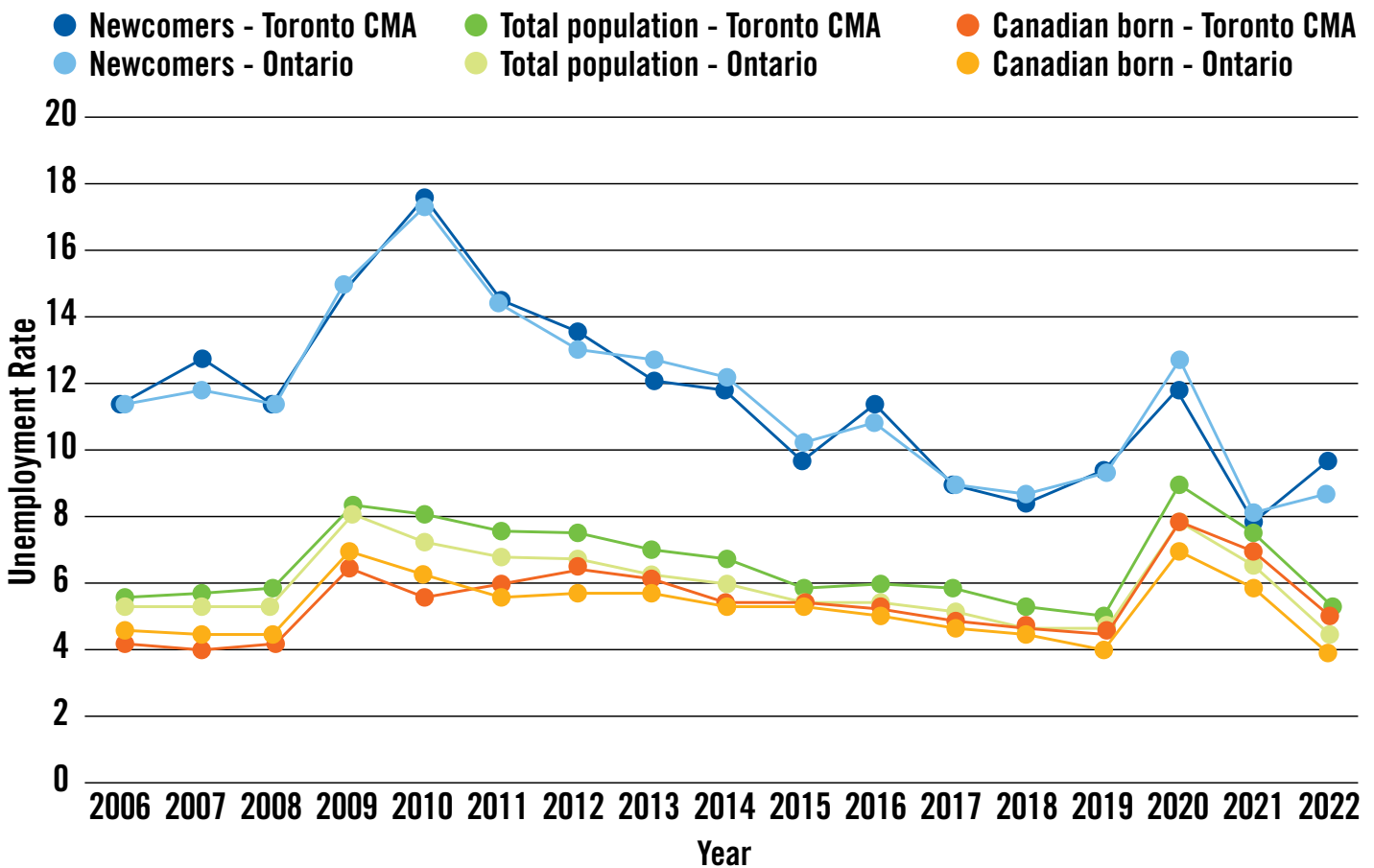


# Statistics Canada

Despite having higher levels of education on average than Canadian-born residents, many newcomers face barriers connecting to employment opportunities. This results in newcomers, as a group, experiencing more challenges getting employed in roles that align with and fully leverage their education, skills and work experience.

The graph shows that newcomers in the Toronto census metropolitan area persistently experience much higher unemployment rates. The 2008 recession amplified these differences, however, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced this discrepancy as many Canadian-born residents were unemployed. As the economy re-opened after 2021, the data indicates a widening disparity between newcomers and Canadian-born residents who are unemployed.

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR ADULTS 25-64 BY IMMIGRANT STATUS**  
ONTARIO AND TORONTO CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA (CMA)



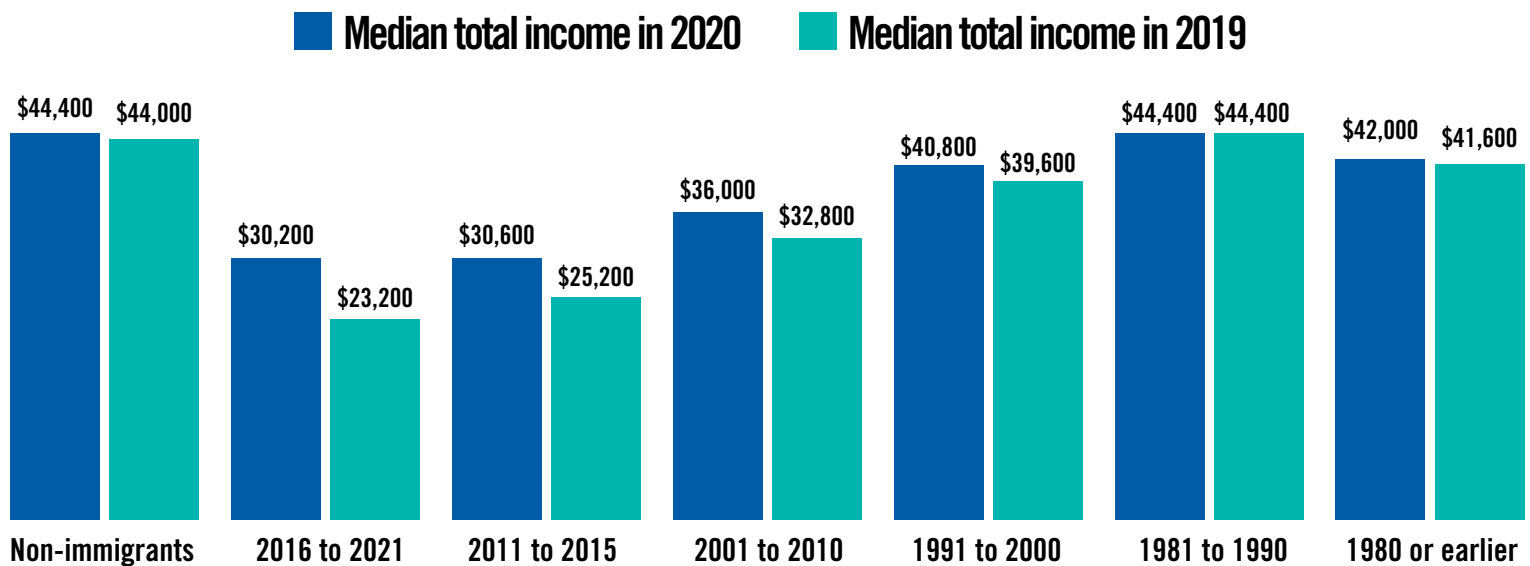
Notes: 1. "Newcomers" refer to immigrants who landed within 5 years prior to the survey. 2. Toronto CMA includes Toronto, York, Peel, Halton and Durham. Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006 to 2022.



## Statistics Canada

### MEDIAN TOTAL INCOME OF YORK REGION RESIDENTS

BY IMMIGRATION STATUS AND PERIOD OF IMMIGRATION, 2019 AND 2020



Notes: 1. Median total income refers to the sum of certain incomes (including sources such as employment, investment, pension, other regular cash income like child/spousal support payments, scholarships and government transfers) before income taxes and deductions. 2. Data are for population aged 15 years and over in private households. 3. The 2021 Census reports income data for the calendar years 2020 and 2019. Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, Target Group Profile of Population by Immigration and Citizenship Status.

The graph shows that newcomers and immigrants who arrived less than 10 years ago have significantly lower median total income than all other groups. Even established immigrants who arrived 11 to 30 years ago still earn less than their Canadian-born counterparts. Only those who have arrived 30 years or more ago have median total incomes comparable to the Canadian-born population.



## COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

- 3.1 Develop and promote resources that help employers better understand and engage newcomer and immigrant talent in York Region
- 3.2 Expand relationships with local employer networks to promote newcomers and immigrants in the workforce and related employment programs
- 3.3 Promote mentoring, paid internships and other strategies that enhance newcomers' access to the local labour market
- 3.4 Support organizations advocating to regulatory bodies for accelerated licensing of internationally educated professionals to address local labour market needs



Local Immigration Partnership staff will collaborate with York Region Economic Strategy Branch on newcomer-focused actions that align with the [2024-2027 York Region Economic Development Action Plan](#)



# 03 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

## STEWARDED THE PLAN FOR SUCCESS

The Newcomer Inclusion Table will provide strategic direction on implementation of the Plan. To support effective implementation of the Plan's collective actions, the Newcomer Inclusion Table's three working groups, aligned with each of the strategic priorities, are committed to bringing these initiatives to life in community. This will be accomplished through continued collaboration and coordination with community partners, local municipalities and staff, and the newcomer populations they serve.



To maximize potential impact and reach, implementation of each collective action will consider:

- Prioritizing relevant newcomer sub-populations (e.g., seniors, families, youth, international students, internationally educated professionals, migrant workers, non-status migrants, asylum seekers, refugees designated for resettlement, rural residents, newcomers experiencing low income, and newcomers living with disabilities)
- Collaborating with municipal partners
- Leveraging existing expertise and programs among community partners
- Leveraging existing resources, such as service navigation tools, to mitigate duplication of efforts
- Aligning with other Regional plans and strategies, and to provincial and federal priorities
- Identifying opportunities to advocate to senior levels of government for policy and funding changes where appropriate
- Maximizing the role of the Region's five Welcome Centres as important points of newcomer engagement, coordination and access to wrap-around services

York Region will play a stewardship role in coordinating this wide range of efforts by working with the Newcomer Inclusion Table, its working groups and community partners to:

- Coordinate and convene community partners to build partnerships
- Establish targets on performance measures
- Monitor progress of and impact resulting from implementation of the Plan's collective actions
- Identify opportunities to scale up successful initiatives
- Lead coordination of identified advocacy opportunities
- Support the sector through shifts in federal and provincial policies
- Monitor community-level indicators that may inform shifts in strategic direction
- Report on the Plan's implementation as required



*"When I first came, I was pretty young. My father went to college to get another degree so he could work in international trade. My mom used to be a nurse. When she came here, she tried to apply, but she had to go to school again. She was not able to do that, so she couldn't apply her skills that she practiced back home. So, she went into manual labour to help make ends meet."*

– Newcomer young adult



# 04 CONCLUSION

York Region continues to grow, driven in large part by newcomer settlement in our communities. Enhancing newcomers' ability to settle here and be included positively – from health and well-being to social and economic inclusion – will support the Region's continued success and prosperity.

As the Region's third plan for newcomer inclusion, the vision for *A Place to Thrive: York Region's 2024 to 2027 Plan for Newcomer Inclusion* serves as an important guide that leverages existing community-based newcomer settlement and inclusion efforts and focuses additional contributions through collective actions for greater success. As a result, this approach aims to optimize current investments while also building in flexibility, resilience and responsiveness to newcomers' needs and to any shifts in provincial and federal priorities. By aligning with existing plans and community assets, this Plan enhances our opportunities to create better local conditions for newcomers to thrive in York Region.





NEWCOMER  
**SPOTLIGHT**

**ARTIST: AMNA NAWAB**  
**MEDIA: MIXED MEDIA, EMBROIDERY**

**IN THEIR OWN  
WORDS**

*"I definitely feel a sense of belonging in York Region. Since immigrating to Canada, I have felt very connected to York Region. I feel very welcome, and York Region is very diverse. They have a lot of services to include newcomers. I feel this area is my new home. This is my home forever, and I'm really hoping to help my new community."*

– Newcomer adult





# 05 APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1 – HEALTHY COMMUNITIES WORKPLAN

## Supporting newcomer health, safety and well-being

### OBJECTIVES:

- Build understanding of newcomers’ health and well-being priorities among service providers
- Enhance service provider capacity to work in ways sensitive to newcomers’ needs
- Expand newcomers’ awareness of and access to health and well-being services and resources

**LEAD:** Healthy Communities Working Group under the Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region

COLLECTIVE ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>1.1 Develop and promote a resource for service providers to enhance their capacity to design and deliver services responsive to newcomers’ needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of surveyed community partners satisfied or very satisfied with resource</li> <li>• #/% of agencies reporting resource and training supports strengthened their capacity to work with newcomer clients and partners</li> </ul>	1.1.1 Develop a resource that builds service provider capacity to work with newcomers and newcomer sub-populations (e.g., seniors, youth, 2SLGBTQI+, asylum seekers, etc.) 1.1.2 Promote resource and relevant cultural sensitivity training for service providers	●	●		
<b>1.2 Work with health partners in York Region to support culturally informed healthcare approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community partners involved in supporting Ontario Health Team (OHT) engagement</li> <li>• # of engagements with newcomers</li> </ul>	1.2.1 Work with OHTs in York Region to identify engagement opportunities with community partners 1.2.2 Support the OHTs’ respective diversity and inclusion efforts regarding newcomers (e.g., harmonizing newcomer-related resources and supports to promote consistency, increasing representation of newcomers on OHT committees and advisories)	●	●	●	●
<b>1.3 Continue promoting and enhancing supports for newcomers that build their awareness of and access to services in York Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of resources developed for residents and service providers</li> <li>• # of downloads of York Region resources</li> <li>• # of community partners engaged</li> <li>• #/% of community partners reporting strengthened ability to welcome newcomers</li> </ul>	1.3.1 Identify and develop targeted resources and outreach approaches to enhance newcomer service awareness and navigation 1.3.2 Enhance and promote York Region resources to support newcomer service awareness and navigation (e.g., Access York, York Region Newcomer Guide, york.ca/NewcomerServices) 1.3.3 Collaborate on a framework to enhance readiness to respond to migrant influxes in York Region		●	●	●
<b>1.4 Advance opportunities to increase health care access for at-risk newcomer populations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of opportunities developed and implemented</li> <li>• #/% of community partners reporting enhanced ability to support at-risk newcomers</li> </ul>	1.4.1 Identify at-risk, hard-to-reach newcomer populations and their needs (e.g., existing Public Health programming, 9-1-1 usage information, combatting stigma to address newcomers’ mental health needs) 1.4.2 Assess opportunities to increase newcomer access to health services (e.g., service models like leveraging post-secondary nursing programs with focused populations including newcomers, campaigns, and partnerships such as OHTs)	●	●	●	●
<b>1.5 Enhance newcomers’ awareness of housing supports and their legal rights, and build partnerships to strengthen how landlords work with newcomers as tenants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of resources distributed and information sessions promoted</li> <li>• # of newcomers and landlords engaged</li> <li>• #/% of newcomers reporting increased knowledge of their rights</li> <li>• % of landlords reporting increased capacity to work with newcomer renters</li> </ul>	1.5.1 Provide information, resources and engagement to build newcomers’ awareness of their legal rights and the housing supports available to them	●	●	●	●

Priority area was approved by York Regional Council in [April 2023](#).



## APPENDIX 2 – SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKPLAN

Building welcoming communities where everyone belongs

### OBJECTIVES:

- Promote welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers
- Celebrate newcomers' contributions to the Region's diversity and economy
- Support the Inclusion Charter for York Region, where everyone can live with respect, dignity and freedom from discrimination

**LEAD:** Social Inclusion Working Group under the Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region

COLLECTIVE ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>2.1 Build connections and foster collaboration among community-based newcomer networks and human service providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community partners engaged</li> <li>• #/% of community partners reporting strengthened partnerships</li> </ul>	2.1.1 Identify and prioritize newcomer sub-populations to work with and increase engagement (e.g., those served by faith-based organizations, Black newcomers, 2SLGBTQI+, seniors, etc.) 2.1.2 Strengthen referral pathways to Francophone service providers 2.1.3 Coordinate and enhance advocacy to senior governments and other partners (e.g., foundations, financial institutions, etc.) for more newcomer settlement services in northern York Region	●	●	●	●
<b>2.2 Promote municipal programs and services to newcomers to strengthen community belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community partners engaged in outreach</li> <li>• % satisfaction among municipalities with newcomers participating in local parks, recreation, tourism and events</li> </ul>	2.2.1 Work with local municipalities to strengthen promotion of parks, trails, library services, and recreation programs to newcomers, including local tourism, attractions and community-based event opportunities	●	●	●	●
<b>2.3 Create an annual region-wide newcomer celebration to recognize newcomers' contributions to York Region's diversity and economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of community partners and residents engaged in planning</li> <li>• % of community partners, residents, volunteers and attendees satisfied and very satisfied with annual celebration</li> <li>• # of posts and interactions on social media</li> </ul>	2.3.1 Coordinate an approach to establish an annual newcomer recognition celebration across York Region starting in 2025 2.3.2 Work with local municipalities and service providers to host annual newcomer celebration event(s) and related activities in York Region	●	●	●	●
<b>2.4 Promote educational and awareness building opportunities that support the goals of the Inclusion Charter for York Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of community partners, residents, and attendees satisfied and very satisfied with related initiatives</li> <li>• # of community partners and residents engaged</li> <li>• # of resources distributed</li> </ul>	2.4.1 Support Inclusion Charter for York Region initiatives, such as anti-hate, racism and discrimination campaigns, workshops, advocacy and other learning opportunities 2.4.2 Identify opportunities for meaningful engagement and collaboration among newcomer and Indigenous communities and service providers (e.g., for newcomers to learn about Indigenous culture) 2.4.3 Promote and develop civic engagement and community leadership opportunities for newcomers	●	●	●	●

Priority area was approved by York Regional Council in [April 2023](#).

# APPENDIX 3 – ECONOMIC PROSPERITY WORKPLAN

## Promoting equitable and prosperous economic pathways for newcomers

### OBJECTIVES:

- Build employers’ understanding of local labour market supply and demand to enhance capacity to plan and respond
- Promote a regional economy in which newcomers have jobs that align with their education, skills, and work experience
- Promote equitable access to labour market readiness supports for newcomers

**LEAD:** Economic Prosperity Working Group under the Newcomer Inclusion Table of York Region

COLLECTIVE ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES			
			2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>3.1 Develop and promote resources that help employers better understand and engage newcomer and immigrant talent in York Region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of surveyed employers satisfied and very satisfied with resources provided</li> <li>• #/% of employers reporting that resources enhanced their human resource practices</li> </ul>	<p>3.1.1 Engage employers and partners to identify priority newcomer recruitment and retention topics that can enhance employers’ human resource practices and reduce barriers for newcomer talent</p> <p>3.1.2 Curate and develop relevant employer resources (e.g., recruitment and retention guides), including how and where to deploy these resources effectively</p> <p>3.1.3 Promote these resources to employers and through partners (e.g., employment service providers and service system manager, industry associations and events, employer networks, etc.)</p>	●	●		
<b>3.2 Expand relationships with local employer networks to promote newcomers and immigrants in the workforce and related employment programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #/% increase of employer and other (e.g., Workforce Planning Board of York Region, associations) contacts over time</li> <li>• # of engagements with these contacts</li> </ul>	<p>3.2.1 Engage partners to identify and grow number of local industry associations and employer network contacts on an ongoing basis</p>	●	●	●	●
<b>3.3 Promote mentoring, paid internships and other strategies that enhance newcomers’ access to the local labour market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of employers engaged</li> <li>• # of employers implementing programs</li> <li>• # of newcomers and employers reporting program satisfaction</li> </ul>	<p>3.3.1 Identify mentoring, paid internship and other relevant programs to promote to local employers</p> <p>3.3.2 Prioritize and engage employers to support program implementation</p> <p>3.3.3 Engage prioritized employers, and support program implementation</p>	●			
<b>3.4 Support organizations advocating to regulatory bodies for accelerated licensing of internationally educated professionals to address local labour market needs</b>	• # of initiatives supported	3.4.1 Identify, prioritize regulated professions to support based on York Region labour market needs	●	●	●	●
		3.4.2 Identify approaches and tools that support advocacy	●	●	●	●

Priority area was approved by York Regional Council in [April 2023](#).



# NEWCOMER INCLUSION TABLE OF YORK REGION, 2023-2026 MEMBERS



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