# Leeds and Grenville Immigration Strategy 2022-2027







# **Table of Contents**

Message from the Immigration Partnership	1
Who We Are	2
Our Structure	3
Accomplishments	5
Vision and Guiding Principles	6
Mission and Equity Statement	7
About Leeds and Grenville	8
Immigration Highlights	9
Immigration Strategy Planning Process	10
Community Feedback	11
SWOT Analysis	12
Strengths	13
Weaknesses	14
Opportunities	15
Threats	16
Survey	17
Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews	20
Strategic Priorities and Goals	21
Advancing Welcoming Communities	22
Workforce Development	25
Enhancing Community Profile	27
Appendices	29
References	35

### Message from the Immigration Partnership

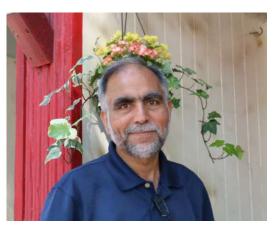
We want to acknowledge the work of our Immigration Partnership Council, community members, partner agencies and municipalities undertook in providing feedback for the refreshed Leeds and Grenville Immigration Strategy. This has been a community effort led by Loretta Corbeil, Non Profit Consultant and supported by the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership staff.

Much has changed in Leeds and Grenville since the development of the initial Immigration Strategy (2011). The local labour market has experienced significant challenges, a large influx of refugees have arrived and settled in our local communities, the popularity of Leeds and Grenville for international student education has continued to rise, and COVID has created its own set of very unique economic and social challenges.

This plan provides our community with a framework that reflects these local realities while enabling the successful welcome, integration, and retention of newcomers in Leeds and Grenville. We encourage everyone to involve themselves in this welcoming. Together we can make Leeds and Grenville an even more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive place for all.







### Who We Are

# St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership

Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) supports the development of community-based partnerships and planning to meet the needs of newcomers. Established in 2011, the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership is one of nearly 80 Local Immigration Partnerships across Canada committed to building local capacity to attract, settle, and integrate immigrants. The Immigration Partnership also encourages organizations, individuals and communities to recognize and welcome cultural diversity.

### **Immigration Partnership Staff**



MELISSA FRANCIS
PROGRAM MANAGER



LAUREN SMITH
PROJECT COORDINATOR

### Our Structure



# Land Acknowledgement

The work of the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership takes place on the traditional territory of the Anshinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Haudenosaunee peoples. We honour and recognize the importance of Indigenous peoples' contributions to our community, our province and to Canada. As Canadians, we must be personally connected to our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.



# Accomplishments



Increased membership and diversity of Immigration Partnership Council



In partnership with the City of Brockville the development of a multilingual Immigration Portal for Leeds and Grenville



The initiation of the Leeds and Grenville Immigrant Award (now in its 8th year) to recognize the contributions of immigrant entrepreneurs to the region



The creation and continuation of We Are Neighbours (now in its 5th year) a story sharing campaign to celebrate newcomers and diversity www.weareneighbours.ca



The initiation and continuation of Diversity Day. This event continues to attract many people from across Leeds and Grenville and Eastern Ontario



Participated in Ryerson University's 'Immigrant Futures' study on the attraction of immigrants to smaller communities in Canada



The coordination of intercultural competency training for service providers and the general public



Development of a quarterly newsletter that promotes cultural diversity and welcoming communities

### Vision

Leeds and Grenville is a welcoming community where newcomers are included and feel a strong sense of belonging. Leeds and Grenville offers newcomers the opportunity to live to their full potential through education, employment, recreation, civic engagement and opportunities for leadership roles.

# **Guiding Principles**

The St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership demonstrates respect for all people's unique perspectives, lived experiences and contributions.

We act in a non-discriminatory manner and recognize that diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our purpose.

We are leaders in research, and sharing best practices on the benefits of immigration and newcomers.

We work together with others in our community in a deliberate and coordinated manner to ensure newcomers are at the centre of our efforts.

The St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership acknowledges that systemic racism and oppression exist and communities must work together to ensure solutions and change.

### Mission

The St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership is multi-sector, community-driven collaborative committed to building local capacity to attract, settle, and integrate immigrants in Leeds and Grenville through research, service coordination and planning, and advancing opportunities to create welcoming communities.

# **Equity Statement**

The St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership is committed to building equitable, welcoming communities. We celebrate diversity by respecting all people regardless of their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation or identity, education or disability. The Partnership will provide leadership and coordination to initiatives that promote and welcome diversity, inclusion and a strong sense of belonging for everyone.

### About Leeds and Grenville

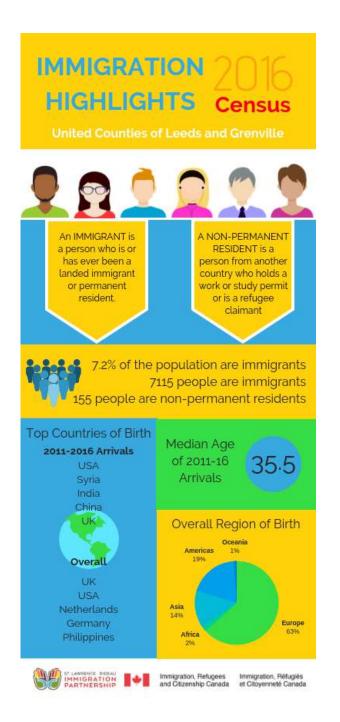
Leeds and Grenville, located approximately halfway between Toronto and Montreal, is home to 13 municipalities – 10 townships, the City of Brockville, the Town of Gananoque, and the Town of Prescott. The total population of Leeds and Grenville is 104,070 (Statistics Canada 2021). The City of Brockville (population 22,116) is the area's largest city followed closely by North Grenville (17,964). North Grenville is the fastest growing municipality in the region.

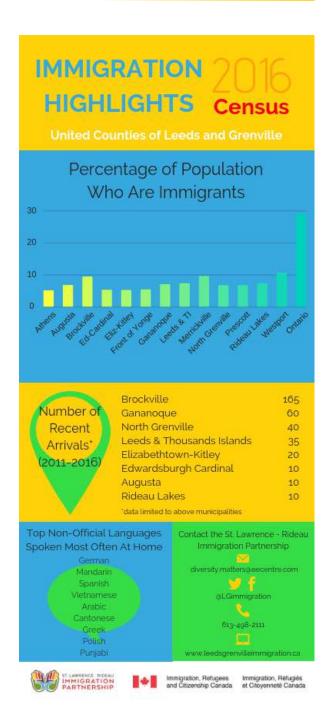
Statistics Canada data indicates that Leeds and Grenville had a growth in population of 3.5% which is less than growth rate in Ontario of 6.0%. There are communities in Leeds and Grenville undergoing a decrease in population. There was a significant increase in the demographic trend of population of 60 plus and a considerable decrease in ages 45 to 59.

Attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers is essential for regional economic and workforce development. Consultation with economic development at both municipal and county levels revealed an acute labour shortage, with difficulty finding suitable employees across all sectors in both skilled and unskilled positions. Numerous employers reported finding difficulty in securing the needed human resources for their businesses.

The Eastern Ontario Innovation Board's (EOIB) annual "Local Labour Market Planning Report 2022" (LLMP) reveals that prior to the pandemic, employers and employment agencies were reporting labour shortages particularly in the skilled trades, health, and food and beverage sectors. However, since the pandemic and most notably this year, a chronic labour shortage is being cited across the EOIB catchment area. There are many jobs being posted that are going unfilled and many of them are good, high paying jobs in the sectors of manufacturing, IT, health, and construction.

# Immigration Highlights







# Planning Process

The Immigration Strategy included a literature review, recommendations from the Newcomer Consultation, St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership 2020-2021, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership Council, a community survey, focus group sessions, key informant interviews with municipal leaders, economic development staff, local employers, newcomers and interested community members. Due to COVID public health restrictions all feedback was obtained via phone or online structures including Zoom and Survey Monkey.

The purpose of soliciting stakeholder feedback was to:

- discuss the characteristics of welcoming communities
- •acquire a better understanding of the community's perception and opinion of diversity and newcomers
- •share information and experiences at both an organizational and personal level
- identify gaps and barriers for newcomers in our region
- identify needs and support required by organizations and businesses
- •garner constructive feedback about the Immigration Partnership Council

# Community Feedback

Stakeholders across Leeds and Grenville recognize the importance of increasing immigration for economic reasons but also the benefits of diversity to enrich local communities. Leeds and Grenville citizens take great pride in being welcoming to newcomers and recognize that diversity enriches our neighbourhoods, workplaces and communities. Throughout the engagement process people spoke of positive signs of welcome including a history of support for welcoming refugees, the City of Brockville "No Room for Racism" campaign, and the large and well attended annual Multicultural Festival in Brockville.

Diversity as a strength was an overarching theme of all responses. Community life is enhanced through opportunities to share and to learn about different cultures, ideas and stories. There was consensus that our world view changes when we have life experiences outside our own. It is educational and enlightening when we have the opportunity to live, interact and work with people from different cultures, countries and experiences.

We also heard that racism and misunderstanding of the benefits of immigration still exist in pockets of our community. Addressing racism requires education and action and is everyone's responsibility.







## **SWOT Analysis**

The SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership and discuss ideas for strategic direction.

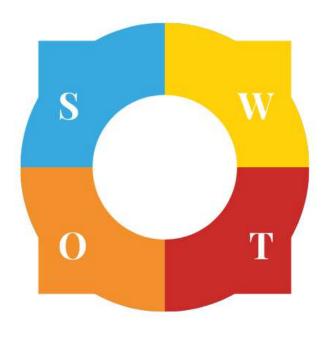
#### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### **STRENGTHS**

·What do we do best? ·What unique knowledge, talent, or resources do we have? ·What advantages do we have?

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

·How can we turn our strengths into opportunities? ·How can we turn our weaknesses into opportunities? ·What opportunities did we pass that are still available to us? ·What could we do that is not already being done?



#### WEAKNESSES

What could we improve?
 What knowledge, talent, skills, representation and/or resources are we lacking?
 Have we experienced negative community comments about our organization?

#### THREATS

·What obstacles do we face? ·Could any of our weaknesses prevent the Partnership from meeting goals? ·Are there any standards, policies, and/or legislation changing that might negatively impact us?

# Strengths

A collaborative environment that presents meaningful engagement and a significant number of diverse members.

It supports the development of local partnerships and community-based planning around newcomer needs.

Relationships extend beyond the scope of LIP Council work.

LIP Council members demonstrate high levels of support for immigration and showcase and celebrate regional diversity.

The coordination of services has been enhanced in addition to the quality and consistency of resources and support.

There is a representation of the immigrant voice.

There is a large number of international students in Leeds and Grenville.

Community data that is housed by the LIP and community level research is supported.

Children's services agencies are now included in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion discussions.

There is an improved coordination of efforts to support families.

LIP Council facilitates knowledge sharing about community services in addition to soft referrals.

The quarterly LIP newsletter, We Are Neighbours, and resources on the Immigration Portal are all beneficial.

The LIP reflects positive messages about immigration and diversity.

LIP staff are responsive and accessible.

**Collaborative** 

**Supportive** 

**Positive** 

Coordination

Resources

Research

Responsive

### Weaknesses

The number of immigrants/newcomers represented on the LIP Council and campaigns.

The limitations and red tape on the role of the LIP can be frustrating as staff cannot provide direct services.

Negative comments on social media particularly regarding Diversity Day.

The lack of municipal representation from communities across Leeds and Grenville.

There is a lack of wrap around supports in rural communities. (For example, English as a Second Language classes and daycare.)

There is a lack of understanding on the part of some employers of the benefits of hiring newcomers.

Immigrant representation

LIP role

Municipal representation

Lack of awareness

## Opportunities

Expand the representation and diversity of the LIP Council.

Pursue and increase the cooperation for connecting data sets (particularly qualitative) from multiple partners.

Improve reporting outcomes for newcomers.

Broaden geographical reach and relationships with key stakeholders and influencers.

Strengthen municipal links.

Increase relationships with media.

Improve marketing.

Expand social media participation and engagement.

Increase number of participants in initiatives such as We Are Neighbours.

Increase website engagement and functionality.

Increase public education, advocacy and community training opportunities.

Improve attitudes towards immigration and diversity.

Expand representation

Improved reporting

Improved relationships

Increase awareness and participation

### **Threats**

Ongoing uncertainty with COVID challenges.

Funding sustainability.

The changing priorities of governments.

Negative attitudes, resentment and anti-immigration sentiments.

Adverse comments and misinformation on social media.

Vague community understanding of the role of the LIP.

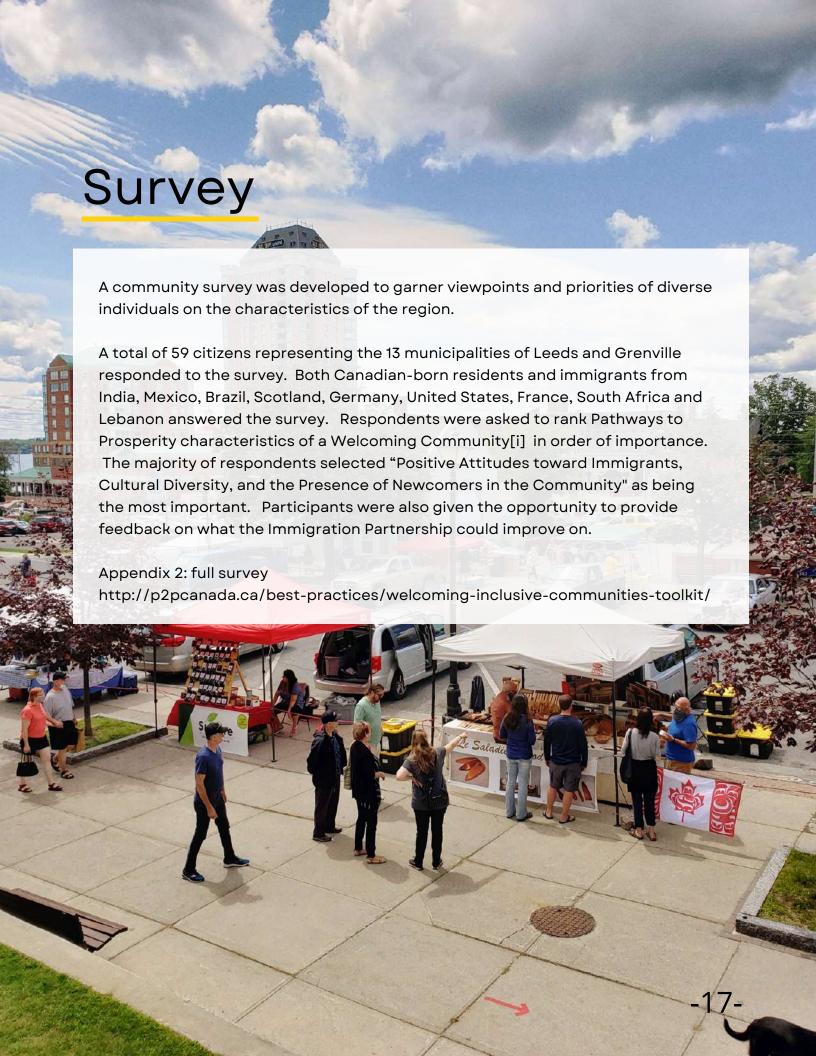
Competition with other regions for immigrant settlement.

**COVID** 

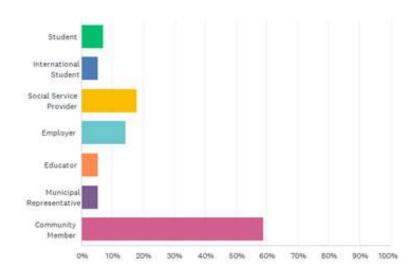
Government priorites

**Funding** 

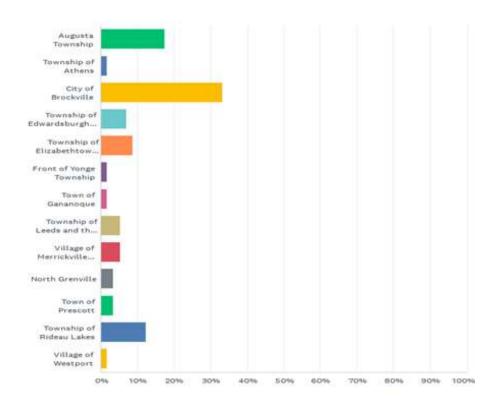
**Attitudes** 



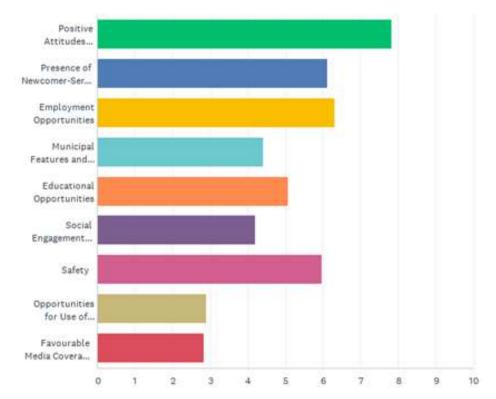
Q1 It is important that this survey reflect a diversity of opinions, viewpoints and priorities. Please share as much you as you feel comfortable with the questions. Please pick the most appropriate category below to describe yourself.



#### Q2 Where do you live in Leeds and Grenville?



Q3 As described by Pathways to Prosperity below are a list of characteristics of a Welcoming Community. Please rank the characteristics in importance with 1 being the most important to 9 being the least.



Q4 What do we need to improve to ensure Leeds and Grenville is a welcome community?





# Focus Groups

Additional stakeholder engagement was solicited through three virtual community consultation sessions with over 30 members representing Employment Ontario Service Centres, local libraries, Arts and Culture organizations, local museums, non profit organizations, municipal employees, businesses and interested community members.

Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

# Key Informant Interviews

A number of key informant interviews were conducted with municipal leaders including Mayors, municipal councillors, Economic Development staff and local business leaders. Those interviewed expressed that the attraction and retention of newcomers and newcomer families are essential for the region's economic prosperity and growth. Interviewees also indicated that newcomers are needed to address the labour shortages and ensure population growth in small communities with an aging population. As well as discussing the economic drivers for welcoming newcomers, all key informants spoke of the community

enrichment through cultural diversity.



# Strategic Priorities and Goals

Based on feedback from the survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews, three strategic priorities were established. Advancing Welcoming Communities, Workforce Development and Community Profile and Diversity will guide the Immigration Partnership for the duration of this Leeds and Grenville Immigration Strategy 2022-2027.

ST. LAWRENCE-RIDEAU IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

## 3 Strategic Priorities





Working to make Leeds and Grenville more welcoming to attract and retain newcomers.



Helping to fill labour gaps, to see newcomers employed, and retain those already here.



Enhancing community profile and increasing diversity of the St. Lawrence Rideau Immigration Partnership.

## Advancing Welcoming Communities

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Continue to raise awareness on the need for immigration, immigrants' contributions and successes	Continue We are Neighbours Continue positive social media campaigns	Annually	# of We Are Neighbours campaigns created Social media engagement: # clicks, likes, shares
Increase support to municipalities and local organizations with educational opportunities and tools	Create Organizational Audit Offer Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) evaluation training	2022/2023: Organizational Audit development  2023/2024: Distribution of audit and offering of training	Audit created # of audit forms distributed to community organizations # of organizations report improvements in organization with audit use # of participants attend EDI evaluation training #/% of training participants indicate satisfaction with training #/% of participants indicate increased knowledge through

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Enhance partnerships with educational institutions	Presentation to principal associations  Coordinate Professional Development opportunities to educational staff  Create a resource for newcomers families to be distributed through school communities	2022/2023 2022/2023 2023/2024	# of presentations  # of educational staff who participate in training  Resource for newcomer families created and distributed
Increased presentations to key stakeholders and allies	Presentations to local library association, service groups  Presentation to St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development, Leeds and Grenville Economic Summit	Annually	# of presentations
Create opportunities for newcomers to develop social connections through volunteerism	Explore a newcomer volunteer program with the Volunteer Centre St. Lawrence Rideau	2023/2024	Program established

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Co creation of and cross promotion of local initiatives and events	Explore possible engagement with educational community and other community stakeholders to coordinate activities/events/ campaign including Human Library project and /or celebration of Cultural diversity / Utilize St. Lawrence- Rideau Immigration Partnership newsletter to share partner events	Annually	# of partnerships created  # of activities, events and/or campaigns initiated  # of newsletter produced  # of partnerships highlighted
Reinforce understanding of and respect for diverse communities	Contribute articles in local media on subjects related to welcoming community	Quarterly each year	# of articles published







### Workforce Development

All Activities below will be done in consultation with Employment Ontario organizations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development offices and other business or employment related agencies.

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Increase awareness of successes related to immigrant employment	Continue Immigrant Entrepreneur Award  Identify best practices for employers for hiring and supporting newcomers  Initiate public recognition for employers who meet criteria as determined above	Annually  2023/2024: Develop and distribute  2022/2023: Research  2023/2024: Implement	# of entrepreneur nominees  Best Practice resource developed  # of employers recognized
Coordinate with Employment Centres to identify strategies to retain a newcomer workforce	Research best practices  Disseminate research to municipal partners, Chambers of Commerce and employers	2023/2024	Resource developed # of stakeholders receiving resources

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Continue to dispel myths and misconceptions with newcomer employment	Coordinate workshops, training and resources to employers, workplaces and community organizations on benefits of hiring newcomers, intercultural competency  Continue sharing of positive messages through LIP newsletter and social media channels	2023/24 every other year after Annually	Training provided  # of registrations  % of attendees indicating satisfaction and learning through training



# Enhance Community Profile and Increase Diversity of the Immigration Partnership

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Broaden geographical reach and relationships with key stakeholders	Presentation to Leeds and Grenville municipal Councils following October 2022 municipal election	2022/23 Ongoing as required	# of presentations Increased Geographical representation
Build LIP Council (Expand representation and diversity of Council)	Presentations to cultural associations and newcomers groups		# of presentations # of newcomers and variety of sectors represented on council
Increased role as leader/ community resource for immigration and settlement	Create data sharing agreements  Pursue and increase cooperation for connecting data set from multiple partners  Create a report on newcomer outcomes	2023/2024 2024/25	Data sharing agreement created Comprehensive report completed

Goal	Activities	Timelines	Indicators of Success
Continue to advocate for immigration and settlement at community planning tables	Continue to attend and be a voice at multiple planning tables ( e.g . EKIOC)	Annually ongoing	# of partnerships maintained # of new partnerships
Increased level of understanding of St. Lawrence-Rideau immigration Partnership	Pursue speaking engagements  Attend local signature events and festivals (e.g. Plowing Match, Multicultural Festivals  Continue with social media campaigns	Annually ongoing	# of speaking engagements / public presentations  # of signature events attended  Social media engagement # clicks, likes, shares



# Appendices

APPENDIX 1

**Full Council List** 

APPENDIX 2

**SWOT Questions** 

APPENDIX 3

**Survey Questions** 

APPENDIX 4

**Focus Group Questions** 



# Appendix 1: Immigration Partnership Council Member List (2022)

Organization	Representative	Website
Brockville & District Multicultural Association	Bea Singh	brockvillemulticulturalfestival.com
Brockville Police Service	Greg Francis	brockvillepolice.com
Chinese & Canadian Heritage Cultural Association	Peter Au	n/a
City of Brockville Economic Development	Lesley White	brockville.com
CSE Consulting	Tracy McDonald	cseconsulting.com
Eastern Workforce Innovation Board	Frank O'Hearn	workforcedev.ca
Employment + Education Centre	Jane Rudolph	eecentre.com
Every Kid In Our Communities	Margaret Fancy	everykid.on.ca
Francophone Immigration Support Network of East Ontario	Latre Esenam	rsifeo.org
Immigrant Representative North Grenville/Nigeria	Frank Onasanya	n/a
Fulford Academy	Bryan Edgeley	fulfordacademy.com
KEYS Job Centre	Trish McNamara	keys.ca

### Appendix 1: Immigration Partnership Council Member List (2022)

Organization	Representative	Website
Immigrant Representative Brockville/Pakistan	Kashif Riaz	n/a
Leeds Grenville Small Business Centre	Jeanette Johnson	lgsbec.com
Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit	Tanis Brown	healthunit.org
Merrick Preparatory School	Johanna Zeigler	merrickprep.com
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs	Kathryn Liotta	omafra.on.ca
Refugees for Brockville	Marianne Emig Carr	marianneemigcarr@gmail.com
St. Lawrence College	Doug Roughton	stlawrenccollege.ca
TR Leger Immigrant Services/TR Leger Services aur Immigrants	Brandy Smith	trlimmigrantservices.com
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	Ann Weir	leedsgrenville.com
Upper Canada Leger Centre	Matthew Raby	uclc.ca
Volunteer Centre of St. Lawrence Rideau	Mary Lynn Villeneuve	volunteercentre.ca
YMCA of Eastern Ontario, Brockville YMCA	Emily Wimpenny	eo.ymca.ca

#### Appendix 2: SWOT Questions

#### **Strengths**

What do we do best?

What unique knowledge, talent, or resources do we have?

What advantages do we have?

#### Weaknesses

What could we improve?

What knowledge, talent, skills, representation and/or resources are we lacking?

Have we experienced negative community comments about our organization?

#### **Opportunities**

How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

How can we turn our weaknesses into opportunities?

What opportunities did we pass that are still available to us?

What could we do that is not already being done?

#### **Threats**

What obstacles do we face?

Could any of our weaknesses prevent the Partnership from meeting goals?

Are there any standards, policies, and/or legislation changing that might negatively impact us?

#### **Appendix 3: Survey Questions**

- 1. It is important that this survey reflect a diversity of opinions, viewpoints and priorities. Please share as much as you feel comfortable with the questions. Please pick the most appropriate category below to describe yourself.
  - a.Student
  - b.International Student
  - c. Social Service Provider
  - d.Employer
  - e.Educator
  - f. Municipal Representative
  - g.Community Member
- 2. What language(s) do you speak?
- 3. What country were you born in?
- 4. If you were born outside of Canada have you been here more than 5 years? (Yes or No)
- 5. How do you describe your race/ethnicity?
- 6. Where do you live in Leeds and Grenville?
- 7. As described by Pathways to Prosperity below are a list of characteristics of a Welcoming Community. Please rank the characteristics in importance with 1 being the most important to 9 being the least.
  - a. Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
  - b. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that Can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers
  - c.Employment Opportunities
  - d.Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
  - e. Educational Opportunities
  - f. Social Engagement Opportunities
  - g.Safety
  - h. Opportunities for Use of Public Space and Recreation Facilities
  - i. Favourable Media Coverage and Representation
- 8. What do we need to improve to ensure Leeds and Grenville is a welcoming, inclusive community?
- 9. What is Leeds and Grenville doing well to be a welcoming community?
- 10. Do you have any additional comments?

#### Appendix 4: Focus Group Questions

- 1. What is a "welcoming community"?
- 2. What are some of the characteristics of a welcoming community?
- 3. How are we doing in Leeds and Grenville in being a welcoming community?
- 4. Are there barriers to being a welcoming community?
- 5. Given the role of the LIP what are 3 priorities to focus on?
- 6. Do you see yourself or your organization having a role to play with ensuring and sustaining we have a welcome community for all ?



#### References

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#### **End Notes**

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http://p2pcanada.ca/role-of-the-welcoming-communities-initiative-in-the-pathways-to-prosperity-partnership





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