



Local Immigration Partnership

The Settlement Strategy

Building Sarnia and Lambton's capacity as a
welcoming community for newcomers,
immigrants and refugees



SOCIAL PLANNING & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

150 N. Christina Street
Sarnia, ON N7T 8H3
Telephone: 519-344-2057
Toll Free: 1-800-387-2882
Fax: 519-344-2025
www.lambtononline.ca

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Introduction

The Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership or SL-LIP, a leader in immigrant research and knowledge sharing, is a community-wide, multi-sectoral partnership that works to increase collaboration between settlement agencies and smooth the settlement and integration experiences of newcomers. Established in 2009, the SL-LIP is housed with the County of Lambton and made up of a Council which oversees immigrant resettlement activities and working groups to identify and study gaps in immigration and settlement and implements activities based strategies to fill them.

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

Objective

The objective of the Sarnia Lambton LIP Council is to develop sustainable solutions for the integration and well-being of newcomers, immigrants and refugees that strengthen: employment outcomes; newcomer service outcomes; social integration outcomes; positive attitudes of all community members towards cultural diversity and newcomers, immigrants and refugees; access to suitable health care; education opportunities; housing outcomes; and access to affordable transportation.



Stephanie Ferrera
Project Coordinator



Aruba Mahmud
Social Planner



Dane Hansen
LIP Project Assistant

Message from Lambton County Council

On behalf of Lambton County Council, I wish to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Local Immigration Partnership Council (SL-LIP) over the past 9 years to create a more welcoming community for all newcomers, immigrants, and refugees and the significant impact it has made in Lambton County.

SL-LIP Council and supporting staff continue to foster existing and new partnerships throughout various sectors of the community as they move forward in the implementation of the Settlement Strategy. This strategy, including 18 action steps in areas of Employment & Volunteerism, Community Engagement, Coordination of Services, and Resource Development & Facilitation, is reflective of the input provided by local newcomers, the general public, and community stakeholders. Additionally, the strategy complements the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's Resident Attraction Strategy and the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board's Community Workforce Plan.



Our community's future growth and prosperity can be linked directly to sustainable solutions to support the integration and well-being of newcomers, immigrants, and refugees that strengthen employment outcomes, newcomer service outcomes, social integration outcomes, housing outcomes, access to suitable health care, education opportunities, access to affordable transportation, and positive attitudes of all community members towards cultural diversity and newcomers, immigrants, and refugees.

Lambton County Council shares commitment to the core values of diversity, equity, and respect, and recognizes the potential of all Canadians. Council encourages the integration of new immigrants through involvement in social, cultural, economic, and political affairs and is in full support of this community plan to foster more welcoming and inclusive communities in Lambton while improving settlement and integration outcomes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Weber".

Warden Bill Weber, County of Lambton



Community Profile

Building a healthy,
strong
and thriving
community

Like many communities across Canada, Lambton is dealing with some very familiar demographic challenges. As the population continues to age, birthrates decrease and youth leave to pursue education and employment opportunities elsewhere, Sarnia and Lambton will soon see the impacts of this on the local economy and labour market. Without a large enough pool of younger workers to replenish it, Lambton will struggle to fulfill its human resource needs. While immigration is often thought of as a viable solution to lagging population growth, Sarnia-Lambton has had difficulty in attracting and retaining immigrants to the area; over the past 20 years, immigration has been slowly declining. The recent

increase in the number of international students at Lambton College, however, is changing our landscape. This provides the community with an opportunity to come together and ask: How can we create a welcoming, diverse and prosperous Sarnia-Lambton and what do we need to do to ensure that all members of this community can thrive and grow?



The Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), a federally funded initiative through Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC), has enabled these questions to be asked. Shortly after the initiative was established the SL-LIP carried out research to: 1) Determine the community's current capacity to assist and support immigrants and newcomers; 2) Identify challenges and barriers immigrants and newcomers face when settling in Sarnia-Lambton and; 3) Brainstorm solutions to these challenges.

The resulting Settlement Strategy is a coordinated and comprehensive plan to move Sarnia-Lambton towards becoming a thriving and prosperous community that values diversity and innovation. It is comprised of 18 interrelated strategies organized by four priority areas of focus.



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

QUICK FACTS

According to IRCC Census Data 2016:

- ◆ **Overall Immigrant Population:** 12,390 immigrants lived in Lambton. 740 were non-permanent residents, 585 were refugees, 635 were newcomers (settled between 2011-2016), 61% were from European countries, 71% lived in the City of Sarnia
- ◆ **Areas of Origin:** Americas at 2,355, Europe at 7,660, Asia at 1,980 and Oceania and other at 40
- ◆ **Age at time of immigration:** 1,740 are under 5 years, 5 to 14 years = 2,585, 25 to 44 years = 4,180 and 45 years and over = 600 ppl
- ◆ **Lambton International Students:** By far international students represent the highest number of immigrants in Lambton. As of spring 2019, there are 1016 full time students enrolled at Lambton College, 88% of which are from India. At 12% other countries include [but are not limited to]: Belarus, Brazil, China, Colombia, Congo, Mexico, Spain, Russia and Vietnam.

Employment & Volunteerism

Increasing positive outcomes for immigrants and refugees seeking employment and Canadian experience through volunteerism and entrepreneurial opportunities

Immigrants and newcomers identified finding employment as the greatest roadblock in their settlement process. To address these challenges, four strategies have been recommended to improve employment outcomes for newcomers and to provide support to employers.

Strategy #1

Determine feasibility of modeling initiatives/programs in other communities to improve entrepreneurship in rural and urban Lambton

A number of Activities Include:

- ♦ Organizing monthly networking meetings for immigrants and employers and immigrant-focused job fairs
- ♦ Organize training events for employers and establish a point of contact where employers can direct questions related to hiring and retaining immigrants and newcomers
- ♦ Connect with leaders of municipalities in Lambton to solicit endorsement of volunteering and employment opportunities for immigrants in Lambton.



Strategy #2

Increase access to and connections with pools of employees for employers using virtual mentorship and social media

Examples of Action Steps Include:

- ♦ Bring together immigrant talent with volunteer mentors at regional companies through Immmploy*.
- ♦ Access effective tools and resources for recruiting, hiring and retaining skilled immigrants.
- ♦ Reach out to local employers/businesses and collaborate to create the #Hireimmigrants campaign.

Strategy #3

Identify and address barriers to employment through the use of initiatives like employer incentives and employer champions

Highlighted Actionables:

- ♦ Identify local employers and entrepreneurs that hire immigrants and partner to host events that celebrate employer 'champions'.
- ♦ Research available internships (and employer subsidies) for internationally-trained professionals
- ♦ Partner with Local Chamber of Commerce and relevant community organizations to identify best practice and implement placement programs.



Strategy #4

Access existing or underutilized programs designed to connect immigrants to volunteering opportunities in Lambton

Recommendations to be Implemented:

- ♦ Research viability of Sarnia Gives online volunteering tool.
- ♦ Collect stories and photographs of local employers, volunteering organizations and newcomer employees/volunteers to support the #AllAreWelcomeHere Campaign.
- ♦ Partner with local sporting/recreational orgs to provide volunteer opportunities for newcomers.

*Immmploy Mentorship programs bring together immigrant talent with volunteer mentors at regional companies. www.immmploy.ca

Community Engagement

Increasing newcomer, immigrant and refugee participation in the community while improving community support in the integration process

Engagement and inclusion, that is, feeling a part of the community, constitutes an important element of successful immigrant and newcomer settlement. Increased engagement in civic activities, sport/recreation, food, music and arts programs/events by both immigrants and domestic populations will increase the entire community's capacity to share culture and tradition and positively impact settlement outcomes through a greater sense of psycho-social and physical well being for all.

Strategy #5

Develop a virtual tool to remotely connect local service providers and newcomers, immigrants and refugees to increase awareness and accessibility to services

Recommendations to be Implemented:

- ♦ Develop a plan to ensure a connection between cultural/religious groups/supports and newcomers in the community
- ♦ Work with Sarnia Journal and Sarnia & Lambton County This Week to establish a series of columns featuring immigrant stories
- ♦ Reinvigorate past events related to civic engagement to increase immigrant participation and votership in local, provincial and national election processes



**In 2015 IYEP offered a series of art-based programs specifically designed to engage immigrant and newcomer children and youth in Lambton County www.facebook.com/immigrantyouthengagement*

Strategy #6

Provide education in community to promote the benefits of a diverse community through welcoming communities campaigns and events

Highlighted Actionables:

- ♦ Provide administrative and marketing support to Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- ♦ Partner with City of Sarnia to organize annual swearing in ceremonies for new citizens
- ♦ Partner with South West Film Festival Committee to bring immigrant focused films to Sarnia for fall festival



Strategy #7

Develop opportunities for multicultural exchange for youth by connecting with cultural groups, networking hubs and Multicultural Councils in schools

Examples of Action Steps Include:

- ♦ Establish relationships with cultural groups in Lambton and encourage volunteering for youth
- ♦ Create a Community Cultural Cookbook using local ethnic recipes
- ♦ Build Multicultural Councils consisting of students, in each school in Lambton

Strategy #8

Encourage newcomer participation in and remove barriers to accessing local recreation and sporting opportunities

A number of Activities Include:

- ♦ Partner with JNAAG to ensure continued classes and programs related to the *Immigrant Youth Engagement Program or IYEP
- ♦ Develop a virtual tool to be hosted on www.liveinlambton.ca to remotely connect local service providers and newcomers, immigrants and refugees to increase awareness and accessibility to programming
- ♦ Host annual Multicultural Elementary Games to introduced sport and recreation traditions from a variety of countries

Coordination of Services

Create a coordinated approach to service provision in both settlement and non-settlement service organizations

The largest challenge cited in service provision is access to accurate and comprehensive information on services. Sarnia-Lambton has very good settlement programs and services in place but that does not mean that services are being accessed. Furthermore, while services and programs exist in the city of Sarnia, a lack of available and accessible services in the rest of the County is an issue.

Strategy #9

Educate local service providers about the services of other organizations to ensure streamlined referrals and to increase positive settlement outcomes for immigrants, newcomers and refugees

A number of Activities Include:

- ♦ Research development of a comprehensive referral system for local service providers
- ♦ Create a presentation reflecting newcomer needs to be delivered to relevant service organizations in Lambton
- ♦ Work with school boards to develop/research models of specialized responses to assist teachers and staff in supporting culturally diverse student populations.

Strategy #10

Remove barriers to access to interpretation and translation services for local not for profit organizations

Examples of Action Steps Include:

- ♦ Identify and map top five languages in Lambton being requested by service providers
- ♦ Develop cost effective interpretation strategies. i.e. CIAP*
- ♦ Work with regional translation and interpretation service organizations to ensure access to language services for not for profit organizations

Strategy #11

Increase communication and engagement between settlement and non-settlement organizations to identify barriers to effective services and learn about newcomer needs

Highlighted Actionables:

- ♦ Disseminate and promote the use of the Immigrant Specific Services Resource for all social services organizations in Lambton
- ♦ Update & maintain community services information on Live in Lambton Portal
- ♦ Provide resources and promote opportunities that support healthy living for newcomer, immigrant and refugee children and youth

Strategy #12

Develop a comprehensive referral system, using online databases and tools, for community agencies whose service is relevant to the settlement and integration needs of newcomers to Lambton

Recommendations to be Implemented:

- ♦ Create inventory of available services [at the local and regional level] germane to immigrant settlement and organize under areas of priority and need for quick reference.
- ♦ Based upon results of inventory, develop a virtual tool on Portal to remotely connect local service providers and newcomers, immigrants and refugees to increase awareness and accessibility to services
- ♦ Maintain Facebook album to share and promote immigrant/diversity specific resources and virtual tools with community members and service providers



**The Community Interpreter Access Program (CIAP) was established in 2012 to address the lack of professional interpretation services locally*

Resource Development & Facilitation

Providing ongoing support for community initiatives and organizations through consultation, facilitation, research and evaluation

A general lack of understanding of immigrants and newcomers, rather than outright prejudice and discrimination, has more often brought up by newcomers as a barrier to feeling fully welcomed into the community. While Sarnia-Lambton is repeatedly described as a friendly place, the need to make the community more welcoming and culturally aware [in order to sustain and support the current population of immigrants as well as attract more] has been nevertheless mentioned. Service providers and community members alike also express a desire to become more culturally aware through education. It is important, therefore, to lead our community down a path to increased intercultural understanding and offer access to cultural literacy through the use of appropriate tools and resources.

Strategy #13

Continue to work with Lambton College to develop a comprehensive community plan to support international student integration and retention

Recommendations to be Implemented:

- ♦ Reach out to regional partners to identify trends in international student retention
- ♦ Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to implement recommendations in the OTF funded International Student Retention Project
- ♦ Continue to support a working group consisting of relevant stakeholders that have an interest in ensuring international students are successful integrating into the community.



Strategy #14
Re-establish connections with rural Lambton to develop supports for migrant and temporary foreign workers

Highlighted Actionables:

- ♦ Access current demographic statistics to identify countries of origin of migrant workers in Lambton and conduct needs assessment
- ♦ Connect with relevant stakeholders, employers and service providers in rural Lambton to create projects or resources that offset isolation for migrant workers
- ♦ Convene rural support groups to oversee migrant worker safety and integration efforts and continue to update online and print resources and materials



Strategy #15

Continue to support the collaborative between the YMCA* and Lambton Refugee Sponsors Network to ensure the successful integration of refugees in Lambton

Examples of Action Steps Include:

- ♦ Support and promote culturally relevant training opportunities for service providers, refugees and community members including anti-racism campaigns and any activities/events therein
- ♦ Provide administrative support for LRSN Facebook pages by managing membership, posting relevant events, news items and activities related to refugee resettlement
- ♦ Continue to measure the impact that activities being undertaken in support of refugees are having in the community

**YMCAs across Southwestern Ontario has been delivering Newcomer services in Sarnia-Lambton for over 20 years. The YMCA Newcomer, Immigrant and Refugee Centre, serving over 300 clients from 57 countries annually, provides personalized information and referrals to partnering agencies to assist newcomers with all settlement needs*

Strategy #16

Develop a plan to connect cultural groups to newcomers, immigrants and refugees in the community

A number of Activities Include:

- ◆ Conduct research to identify and map existing cultural and religious groups that exist in Lambton
- ◆ Determine what services and supports are offered at each along with annual events and volunteering opportunities therein
- ◆ Create a work plan that will serve as a planning guide to the Community Connections Program*



Strategy #17

Continue to support **ARAP's newly formed Diversity and Inclusion Committee by providing administrative and strategic planning support

Recommendations to be Implemented:

- ◆ Provide support to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee comprised of relevant members that will oversee the development of an anti-racism strategy to educate, inform and promote community solidarity
- ◆ Oversee the development of a group branding exercise inclusive of a tag line/brand print and work with marketing group to plan an official launch and follow up media promotion. I.e. YouTube videos, social media campaigns and billboards #AllareWelcomeHere
- ◆ Implement the Strategy

**Community Connections is a series of events that offer people in Lambton the opportunity to connect with newcomers, help the community become more welcoming to immigrants and serve as a cross-cultural exchange of culture, traditions and food.*

Strategy #18

Continue to manage the Newcomer Portal

Highlighted Actionables:

- ◆ Provide administrative and content management support for the SL-Newcomer Portal, a virtual guide to the community in areas of health, mental health, housing, education, social services etc.
- ◆ Identify funding opportunities and write grant proposals to continue web development support for the Portal
- ◆ Identify and engage web page analytics to measure customer pathing, traffic sources, content effectiveness, and video engagement

Research & Evaluation

An outcomes-based measurement framework will be used to evaluate the work of the SL-LIP and its activities:

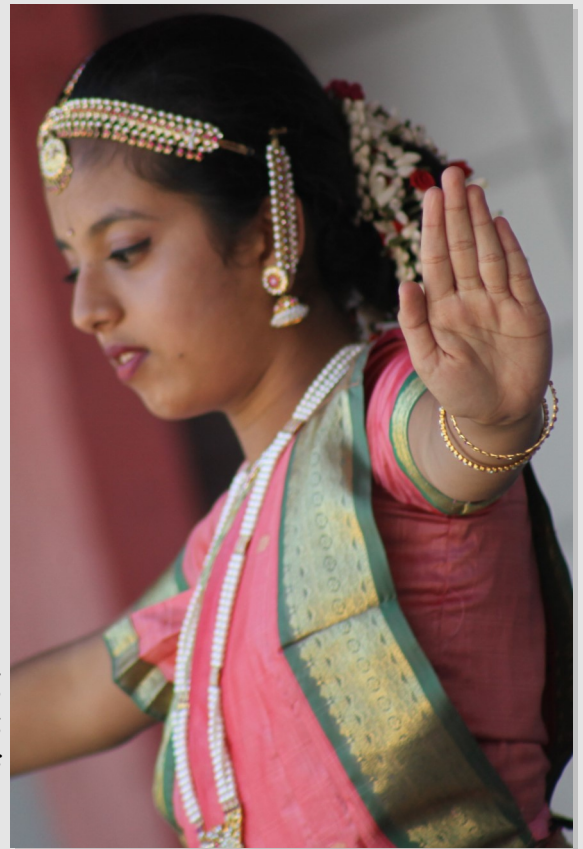
1. Objectives will be outlined for the event/activity and demonstrate a clear alignment with the overall goals of the LIP (i.e. increase access to services, increase access to the labour market, increase community capacity and/or create a welcoming community);
2. a list of performance indicators will be included and tailored to each event/activity. I.e. Indicators for training opportunities and workshops will include measuring an increase in knowledge attainment and satisfaction rating; for coordinated promotion of local services indicators will include increase in use of services, increased knowledge of services by community. There will also be indicators that span all activities. I.e. Increase in users of promotional tools; increased ability to provide services to immigrants to measure overall impact of the LIP;
3. a description of data collection will be included for each activity and involve methods such as evaluation forms, pre and post surveys, focus groups and interviews. Numerical data (e.g. number of participants at events, number of immigrants using services) will also be tracked consistently to provide a baseline and indicate trends and;
4. finally, an evaluation plan will contain a description of how the data will be used and shared.

***The Anti-Racism Arts Project (ARAP), initiated by the Samia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), consisted of a community wide anti-racism campaign, arts based workshops and youth art challenges to address racism and discrimination.*

NEXT STEPS

What does Sarnia-Lambton look like now and how will it look in the coming years?

Our research indicates that a diverse and welcoming community must continue to be cultivated so that it may grow and thrive.



Strong and solid partnerships become the foundation upon which a prosperous community can stand. Facilitating and nurturing the development of these partnerships has been, from the beginning, the cornerstone of the LIP initiative and will continue to be so in the future. The LIP will work to sustain these partnerships locally, through the ongoing existence of the Partnership Council and collaboration with existing economic development strategies. It will also tap into the broader region so that the community can utilize all of its resources more effectively and efficiently. In the end, the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy will increase this community's capacity for positive change and will lead us towards a community in which all of its members can prosper and grow.



All photos property of the County of Lambton Newcomer Portal. Photos courtesy of Hailey McHarg Photography, Jim Vergunst, Josh Jensen and Glen Ogilvie



Local Immigration Partnership

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

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



www.liveinlambton.ca/



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