



COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR NEWCOMERS TO SARNIA-LAMBTON

AN ASSET AND GAP ANALYSIS

Prepared By

Mary Baxter, Emily Nielsen, and Victoria Esses



**Western
SocialScience**

Network for Economic
and Social Trends (NEST)

2025



The Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership is an initiative funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and housed within the Corporation of the County of Lambton

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or official policies of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) or the County of Lambton.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	5
REGIONAL OVERVIEW	5
<i>Demographics.....</i>	5
<i>Municipal and First Nation Governance.....</i>	5
<i>Local Economy.....</i>	6
IMMIGRATION TO SARNIA-LAMBTON	7
<i>Temporary Residents</i>	8
THE CURRENT REPORT	8
METHODOLOGY.....	9
DESK REVIEW	9
ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY	9
SETTLEMENT	10
OVERVIEW	10
RESOURCES.....	11
<i>Main Service Providers</i>	11
<i>Other Programs.....</i>	11
EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	13
SPECIAL STATEMENT ABOUT THE SARNIA-LAMBTON ECONOMY	13
OVERVIEW	15
<i>Workforce Labour Trends.....</i>	15
<i>Temporary Residents Under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (Agricultural Stream) and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.....</i>	15
<i>Aging Workforce.....</i>	16
<i>Specialized Skills</i>	16
<i>Multilingual Skills</i>	16
<i>Newcomer Challenges</i>	17
<i>Employment Capacity.....</i>	17
<i>Entrepreneurship.....</i>	18
RESOURCES.....	18
<i>Employment.....</i>	18
<i>Entrepreneurial and Employment.....</i>	20
<i>Entrepreneurial</i>	22
<i>Employment Resources for Migrant Workers</i>	22
<i>Agriculture.....</i>	23
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION.....	24
OVERVIEW	24
<i>Employer Concerns</i>	24
<i>Student Concerns.....</i>	25
<i>College Response.....</i>	25
<i>Services for Other Members of the Migrant Population</i>	26
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	26
RESOURCES.....	26
<i>French-Language Schools</i>	27
<i>Online Information on Navigating Public Education</i>	27

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE.....	28
OVERVIEW	28
<i>Physician Shortage.....</i>	28
<i>Navigational and Cultural Barriers to Access</i>	29
<i>Responses and Interventions.....</i>	30
<i>Recruitment Efforts.....</i>	31
RESOURCES.....	31
<i>Primary and Preventive Health Services</i>	31
<i>Immunization and Child Health Programs</i>	33
<i>Sexual and Reproductive Health Services.....</i>	33
<i>Infant and Pregnancy Care.....</i>	33
<i>Worker Health</i>	34
<i>Mental Health and Addiction Services.....</i>	34
<i>Navigation</i>	35
<i>Language and Cultural Accessibility.....</i>	35
HOUSING	37
OVERVIEW	37
<i>Rental Housing and Home Ownership.....</i>	37
<i>Housing Issues.....</i>	38
<i>New Builds.....</i>	38
RESOURCES.....	39
<i>Housing Supports and Resources Tailored to Immigrants and Temporary Residents</i>	39
<i>International Student-Specific Housing Resources and Supports</i>	39
<i>Rental Housing.....</i>	40
Rental Apps and Social Media.....	40
Affordable Housing	40
Supportive Housing.....	41
<i>Emergency and Temporary Housing.....</i>	41
<i>Home Ownership.....</i>	42
House Sale Listings	42
Homeowner Financial Support Programs.....	43
<i>Housing Resiliency Programs</i>	43
Community Navigators	45
Legal Supports.....	46
TRANSPORTATION	47
OVERVIEW	47
<i>Local Trends and Issues.....</i>	47
<i>Transportation Infrastructure</i>	48
RESOURCES.....	48
<i>Employer Travel Support Commitments Under Temporary Foreign Workers Programs</i>	48
<i>Public Transit.....</i>	49
Sarnia	49
Northern Lambton.....	49
Southern Lambton.....	50
<i>Private Transportation</i>	50
Rail.....	50
Bus	50
Taxis and Shuttles.....	50
<i>Community Services</i>	51
<i>Micro Loans for Vehicle Purchases</i>	51
<i>Rideshares</i>	52

CHILDCARE	53
OVERVIEW	53
<i>The Space Crunch and Other Issues</i>	54
<i>Mitigation Strategies</i>	55
RESOURCES.....	55
<i>Regulated Childcare</i>	55
<i>Unregulated Childcare</i>	56
<i>EarlyON Child and Family Centres</i>	56
<i>Pathways Health Centre for Children</i>	56
<i>Financial Resources</i>	57
Childcare Subsidy, Lambton County	57
Children with Special Needs	57
Youth Recreation and Sports Program Support	57
<i>Navigation Services</i>	57
<i>Online Resources</i>	57
Social Media.....	57
Finding Quality Child Care Website.....	57
INSIGHTS FROM THE SETTLEMENT SECTOR.....	58
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE SUMMARIES	58
<i>YMCA of Southwestern Ontario—Settlement and Integration Services</i>	58
<i>Centre Communautaire Francophone de Sarnia-Lambton</i>	58
DATA SHARING.....	59
INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION.....	59
PERCEPTIONS OF SARNIA-LAMBTON AS A DESTINATION FOR MIGRANTS	60
PERCEPTIONS OF HOW MIGRANTS ARE FARING IN SARNIA-LAMBTON	60
IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	61
INSIGHTS FROM THE EMPLOYMENT SECTOR.....	63
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE SUMMARIES	63
<i>Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board</i>	63
<i>Express Employment Professionals</i>	63
<i>Community Futures Lambton</i>	63
<i>Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce</i>	64
<i>Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership</i>	64
<i>Ontario Works</i>	65
<i>The WorkPlace Group</i>	65
<i>Service Canada</i>	65
<i>Lambton College Community Employment Services</i>	66
DATA SHARING.....	66
INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION.....	67
PERCEPTIONS OF SARNIA-LAMBTON AS A DESTINATION FOR MIGRANTS	68
PERCEPTIONS OF HOW MIGRANTS ARE FARING IN SARNIA-LAMBTON	68
IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	68
INSIGHTS FROM THE EDUCATION SECTOR.....	70
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE SUMMARIES	70
<i>Lambton College</i>	70
<i>École élémentaire Les Rapides</i>	70
<i>École secondaire Franco-Jeunesse</i>	71
DATA SHARING.....	71
INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION.....	71
PERCEPTIONS OF SARNIA-LAMBTON AS A DESTINATION FOR MIGRANTS	72

PERCEPTIONS OF HOW MIGRANTS ARE FARING IN SARNIA-LAMBTON	72
IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	73
INSIGHTS FROM THE HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE SECTOR	74
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICE SUMMARIES	74
<i>St. Clair Child & Youth Services</i>	74
<i>Canadian Mental Health Association</i>	74
<i>The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre</i>	75
<i>Lambton Public Health</i>	75
<i>North Lambton Community Health Centre's Migrant Worker Project</i>	75
<i>Twin Bridges Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic</i>	76
<i>Pathways Health Centre for Children</i>	76
DATA SHARING.....	77
INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION.....	77
PERCEPTIONS OF SARNIA-LAMBTON AS A DESTINATION FOR MIGRANTS	78
PERCEPTIONS OF HOW MIGRANTS ARE FARING IN SARNIA-LAMBTON	79
IDENTIFIED NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	80
CONCLUSION	82
SOURCES	84
INTRODUCTION	84
METHODOLOGY	85
SETTLEMENT.....	85
EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	86
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION	89
HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE	90
HOUSING.....	92
TRANSPORTATION	94
CHILDCARE.....	95
APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	97

Introduction

In the Sarnia-Lambton region, as in many smaller urban and rural areas in Ontario, immigrants and temporary residents play important roles in fostering diverse, sustainable, and prosperous communities. Many of the immigrants and temporary residents in the region arrive directly from other countries through immigration programs, temporary foreign worker programs, on student visas, or as refugees. Others arrive via secondary migration from elsewhere in Ontario or Canada.

As they settle into their new communities, many immigrants and temporary residents need support to ensure a successful transition. This support may range from short-term and nominal, such as help with finding housing, a family doctor, or childcare, to longer, sustained supports, such as those to improve language proficiency or to obtain skills training and employment. Broad awareness of the various services that are available in the community is crucial for ensuring that migrants receive adequate support and that appropriate referrals are made when necessary. As such, this report aims to provide a thorough overview of the services present in Sarnia-Lambton and recommendations for how access to these services and support for migrants to the region can be improved.

Regional Overview

The Sarnia-Lambton region in Southwestern Ontario is located on the Canadian-American border and is bordered on the east by the St. Clair River and, to the north, Lake Huron. The region contains 11 lower-tier rural and urban municipalities and three First Nations: Aamjiwnaang; Kettle and Stony Point; and Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory. Sarnia is the area's largest centre, and commuting to work is a fact of life for many in the region—of its nearly 29,000 commuters in 2021, about half spent more than 15 minutes getting to work and more than 10,000 routinely spent up to 29 minutes on the road (Statistics Canada 2023a).

Demographics

The region is growing, although at a rate below the provincial average. The Statistics Canada 2021 Census listed Lambton County's total population in private households as 126,050, an increase of 1,455 people compared to the 2016 census (124,595) (Statistics Canada 2022a).

Much of this population increase appears to have taken place in Sarnia and the surrounding municipalities. According to the 2021 Census information for the Sarnia census agglomeration, which includes some surrounding communities, the total population in households in 2021 (96,285) represented an increase of 1,400 people from its 2016 population of 94,885 (Statistics Canada 2022b). In 2024, the population estimate for the Sarnia census agglomeration was 108,636 (Statistics Canada 2025b).

Municipal and First Nation Governance

A brief overview of municipal and First Nation governance in the region provides insights into how services are coordinated and delivered. The municipalities all belong to the County of Lambton, an upper-tier municipality whose roles include the delivery of services such as long-term care and senior housing, social services such as Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability

Support Program and rent-geared-to-income funding, social housing, libraries, and arts and culture programming. It also administers provincial offences, such as traffic tickets and parking fines, and provides planning services for 10 of its 11 municipalities. (Sarnia conducts its own planning.)

Delivering community health initiatives is another upper-tier responsibility. Unlike most Ontario municipalities, which operate boards of health that are formed as a separate entity and are governed by a mix of elected officials and members of the public, Lambton County directly delivers these services and county councillors form its Board of Health (Vega 2021). Public health also oversees the county's emergency medical ambulance services and collaborates on public health issues with the First Nations communities.

The traditional lands and territories of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa First Nations) on which the Sarnia-Lambton region is located are subject to treaties 29 (1827), 21 (1819), 7 (1796), and 2 (1790); Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory is unceded. All of the three First Nations communities have agreements with the federal government, and their funding and governance falls under the auspices of the Indian Act. In 2018, with the launch of the Anishinabek Education System that serves 23 Anishinabek communities in Ontario, Aamjiwnaang became self-governing in the delivery of on-reserve education from junior kindergarten to Grade 12 (Ontario 2018; Aamjiwnaang First Nation 2025). It is useful to note the difference in how these jurisdictions are funded because the funds for services such as health care, child and family services, and education are intended to benefit First Nations residents. Programs operated in these communities are, therefore, unlikely to be available to immigrants or temporary residents.

Local Economy

The Sarnia-Lambton region has many of the economic features of the neighbouring municipal areas of Huron-Perth, London-Middlesex, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex. Like these communities, it possesses a mixture of urban and rural businesses and activities, although in markedly different proportions that may be of great appeal to migrants, particularly those seeking permanent residency. Manufacturing, specifically petrochemical manufacturing, plays a dominant role in the local economy, with the Sarnia-Lambton region being the centre of the province's chemical manufacturing industry and the seat of the country's second-largest oil and gas refinery cluster. Nova Chemicals is the region's largest private-sector employer, with nearly 1,000 people working at its four plants (Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership 2025; Morden 2024a).

This focus has significantly shaped other industries, such as construction, which, from 2016 to 2021, was one of the fastest-growing local industries in the region in terms of its percentage gain in employment numbers (Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board 2025). Regular and large-scale seasonal maintenance at refineries and their related facilities requires a specially skilled construction pool that can be available when needed, sometimes in the form of on-site contractors, and scale up to meet seasonal demand.

The petrochemical industry has brought the opportunity of well-paying work to residents for nearly 70 years, but over the past 20 years, these jobs have become more precarious as the

industry responds to the pressures of global competition, government policies promoting green energy, and more stringent environmental controls. In 2021, manufacturing's workforce share of the total local workforce declined 7.7% to 5,995 from its employment numbers of 6,495 in 2016 (SLWDB 2025). The sector has responded by investing in diversifying into biochemical and clean energy manufacturing and obtaining government supports for research and development.

This precarity can also affect other major employment sectors. The growth in employment in the area's construction industry of nearly 20% between 2016 and 2021, for instance, is likely to have been tied to short-term projects, such as the recent construction of a new facility for Nova completed in 2023 and the demolition and remediation of the former coal-fueled Lambton Generating Station in St. Clair Township.

Indeed, the uncertainty in this sector has likely contributed to high levels of unemployment in the region that in 2024 vacillated between 8.2% to 10.2%. More than a third of Employment Ontario's clients were jobless for less than three months, and nearly a quarter remained unemployed for more than a year (SLWDB 2025).

Immigration to Sarnia-Lambton

Like many communities across Canada, Lambton County is undergoing significant demographic changes. These include an aging population, a declining birth rate, and the departure of youth pursuing study or work in other locations. The region's economic, social, and political leaders have long recognized that encouraging immigration is a necessary and welcome strategy to help fill the gaps as people retire (WOWC Workforce Strategy 2021a; WOWC Workforce Strategy 2021b, p. 9-10; SLEP 2018, p. 8).

Yet immigration to the region is not keeping up. In 2021, the Lambton region's population included approximately 12,195 immigrants or 9.7% of its total population. This is a slight decrease from approximately 12,390 immigrants in 2016, which was 9.9% of the population (Statistics Canada 2022a). The census information ranked the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands as the top three places of birth for the region's immigrant population in both 2016 and 2021. For recent immigrants who had arrived in Canada within the previous five years, the top places of birth in 2016 were the United States, India and the United Kingdom, whereas in 2021 the top places of birth for recent immigrants were India, the Philippines, and Jamaica.

The 2021 Census indicates that in the Sarnia census agglomeration, approximately 10,080 or 10.5% of the population were immigrants (Statistics Canada 2022b). This is again a slight decrease from approximately 10,400 immigrants in 2016, which was 11.0% of the population. The top three places of birth for the area's immigrant population were similar to those of Lambton County, though Syria was in the top three places of birth of recent immigrants, rather than Jamaica. In 2021, just over 30% of immigrants in the Sarnia census agglomeration were visible minorities, whereas over 80% of recent immigrants were visible minorities. Slightly less than a third of the city's immigrant population in private households had immigrated at an age of less than 15 years old, while roughly two thirds had immigrated at working age (15 to 64 years; Statistics Canada 2022b).

Temporary Residents

Statistics Canada (2025a) defines temporary residents as “a person from another country with a usual place of residence in Canada and who has a work or study permit or who has claimed refugee status (asylum claimant, protected person or member of related groups). Family members living with work or study permit holders are also included unless these family members are already Canadian citizens, landed immigrants (permanent residents), or non-permanent [temporary] residents themselves.”

Statistics Canada's 2021 statistics indicate that temporary residents numbered approximately 1,445 people and made up 1.1% of the Lambton region's population and numbered approximately 1,360 people and made up 1.4% of the Sarnia census agglomeration population (Statistics Canada 2022a; Statistics Canada 2022b).

It is reasonable to assume that international students constituted a large share of this population, given that in January 2024, Lambton College calculated its international student population to be 1,900 at its Lambton campus (Morden 2024b).¹ Most of the remaining share of temporary residents are migrant workers under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program or Temporary Foreign Worker program (Vega 2023).

The Current Report

Established in 2010, the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (SL-LIP) is a community-wide, multi-sectoral partnership that works to increase collaboration between settlement agencies and smooth newcomers' settlement and integration experiences. The Partnership includes representatives from the settlement, healthcare, education, employment services, social services, economic development, and business sectors of the community.

In 2025, the SL-LIP commissioned the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) Research Consultancy at Western University to conduct a comprehensive review of the sectors relevant to immigrants and temporary residents, and to survey organizations that may serve newcomers in the Sarnia-Lambton region. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the resources that are in place to help newcomers transition to both short-term and long-term residency, identify service gaps, and provide actionable recommendations to enhance the local support structure. This report, which presents the results from this project, builds on the research and facilitation portion of the SL-LIP's 2022-2025 settlement strategy and will be used to inform their strategy moving forward. By improving the delivery of resources and fostering strong partnerships, the SL-LIP seeks to ensure that newcomers have access to the services necessary to establish fulfilling and productive lives in the region, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability and growth of Sarnia-Lambton.

¹ In 2024, Lambton College, in partnership with private colleges Queen's College of Business, Technology and Public Safety in Mississauga and Cestar College of Business, Health and Technology in Toronto had obtained 9,639 international student permit holders (Ouellet & Crawley 2024).

Methodology

This project included two components: a desk review focused on the various supports available in the Sarnia-Lambton region and a survey conducted with representatives from organizations that operate in the community. Both components were used to identify assets and challenges to settlement, as well as areas for improvement, leading to a set of recommendations for enhancing the integration of newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton.

Desk Review

A review of more than 130 reports, studies, and Internet resources was used to compile an inventory of existing supports and programs that help make Sarnia-Lambton a welcoming community, which has been described as "a collective effort to design and sustain a place where immigrants feel that they belong and that supports immigrants' economic, socio-cultural, and civic-political integration. A welcoming community has structures, processes, and practices in place to meet the needs and promote the inclusion of immigrants in all aspects of life and actively works to ensure these are effective" (Pathways to Prosperity Partnership 2023, p. 6). The desk review focused on the following sectors: Settlement, Employment and Entrepreneurship, Education, Health and Mental Health Care, Housing, Transportation, and Childcare.

Organizational Survey

An online survey of organizations was designed through consultation with the SL-LIP. It included questions about the types of services offered, the demographics of the newcomers served, the degree to which organizations are aware of and collaborate with one another, the intended outcomes of services and methods of outcome evaluation, if and what type of client data is collected, perceptions of how newcomers are faring in the region, perceived challenges and gaps in service provision, perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a destination for migrants, and strategies for future outreach and service provision. (See Appendix for the full survey.) Survey distribution was led by the SL-LIP who, in April 2025, contacted key individuals at organizations from four sectors of interest: settlement, employment and entrepreneurship, education, and health and mental health care. The survey was circulated to 43 service providers, and a total of 21 responses were collected: two from the settlement sector, nine from the employment and entrepreneurship sector, three from the education sector, and seven from the health and mental health care sector.

Settlement

Overview

The federal government funds settlement agencies to provide assistance to immigrants to Canada so that they can adjust to their new communities. All permanent residents, including refugees and other protected persons, are eligible for settlement services (until they become Canadian citizens). Some temporary residents who meet certain conditions are also eligible to receive specific services (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2025).

Settlement refers "to a short period of mutual adaptation between the newcomers and the host society, during which the government provides support and services to newcomers" (Immigration and Citizenship Canada 2025). Services are intended to help immigrants and refugees tackle challenges specific to the newcomer experience so they may participate in all aspects of life in Canada. This federal program funds direct services under five categories:

- Services that connect newcomers to supports, such as childcare, translation and interpretation assistance, crisis counselling, transportation assistance, and disability supports;
- Assessments of needs and assets, referrals, and personalized settlement plans;
- Resources to inform and orient newcomers to life in Canada, including information about their local community, and to develop the life skills necessary to integrate such as individual and family consultations and counselling;
- Language training, including assessments, classes and informal learning opportunities; employment-related services such as mentoring and networking supports, skills development and training; and
- Counselling to obtain employment and qualifying credentials; and services that link newcomers to their local community including community and cross-cultural activities, mentoring and networking.

In Sarnia-Lambton, the settlement sector comprises a network of community-based services and organizations that provide support to newcomers as they transition to life in Canada. These services address a range of settlement needs, including housing, employment, language training, cultural orientation, and community integration.

Sarnia-Lambton region settlement agencies work with many groups to deliver services, including translation services, health agencies, and various departments within Lambton County. Over the years, this sector, through the SL-LIP, has produced several resource documents that touch on specific groups such as Ukrainians who arrived in Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program and immigrants in rural Lambton County (SL-LIP 2022; SL-LIP 2012).

More information about the different components of the network appears in the resources section below.

Resources

Main Service Providers

Key service providers in the region include the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario – Sarnia-Lambton (<https://www.ymcaswo.ca/programs/education-enrichment/new-canada>), which serves as a central hub for newcomer settlement services. The YMCA offers comprehensive intake and needs assessments, orientation to Canadian society, housing and employment referrals, and community connections. Through partnerships with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the YMCA also delivers targeted programming such as Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and information sessions related to applying for citizenship, healthcare, and rights and responsibilities in Canada.

Similar services are delivered to French-speaking newcomers through the Centre Communautaire Francophone Sarnia-Lambton, a member of the French Canadian Association of Ontario (ACFO) network (<https://ccfsarnia.com/bienvenue-au-centre-communautaire-francophone-de-sarnia-lambton/>). Newcomers can access these services as well in either English or French through Collège Boréal's Sarnia site (<https://collegeboreal.ca/services/services-a-la-communauté/services-en-immigration-et-intégration/>).

Temporary residents, such as those who have arrived under the Temporary Foreign Worker and Seasonal Agricultural Worker programs, as well as refugee claimants, are eligible for some assistance through these settlement agencies. The provincially funded YMCA-operated newcomer settlement program (<https://www.ymcaswo.ca/newcomer-settlement>) and orientation for international students (<https://www.ymcaswo.ca/orientation-international-students>) that is operated in partnership with Lambton College are more limited than the programs available to permanent residents. For instance, they do not provide needs and assets assessments or assistance with the development of settlement plans. However, they can provide information about preparing for Immigration and Refugee Board hearings, assistance with navigating the transit system or finding housing.

Temporary residents can also access similar supports online through services such as the FCJ Refugee Centre (<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/>), which provides online orientation sessions about hearings and appeals for refugees, as well as resources about Canada's refugee process, the country's safe third country agreement, changes to sponsorship, and how to prepare for a hearing and an appeal. The centre also provides information about how to apply for legal aid and the work permit applications process and assists temporary foreign workers in urgent need. The organization's website is offered in English, French, and Spanish (FCJ Refugee Centre 2025).

Other Programs

Specific supports for refugees and protected persons are available through targeted programming within the YMCA, including assistance with permanent residency applications, access to mental health services, and transitional housing referrals. Programs are offered in multiple languages where possible, and interpretation services are available to reduce language barriers.

Employment-related settlement services are also a core part of the sector. Organizations such as Lambton College and local employment agencies work with newcomers to provide job search training, credential recognition assistance, workplace communication training, and employer

engagement activities. (See sections Employment and Entrepreneurship and Education and Workforce Preparation.)

Community engagement and social integration are facilitated through programs such as conversation circles, volunteer mentorship programs, cross-cultural events, and youth newcomer programs that aim to reduce isolation and foster social inclusion. Faith-based organizations and ethno-cultural associations also provide informal settlement support and community connections (County of Lambton n.d.).

Employment and Entrepreneurship

Special Statement About the Sarnia-Lambton economy

At the time of writing, leaders and businesses in the Sarnia-Lambton region faced rapidly changing circumstances that have affected the economic and labour sectors (as well as affecting those of Canada as a whole). These circumstances include continuing uncertainties about the future of the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, the United States' shifting policies toward border security, and imposing tariffs to protect U.S. industry. Currently, the United States is honouring the free trade agreement with the exception of imposing a 25% tariff on automobiles and related parts not made in the United States, steel, and aluminum. In addition, the U.S. Government has placed a 10% tariff on all items not included in the free trade agreement and on energy products and potash. Canada, in turn, has issued counter tariffs of nearly \$30 billion on U.S. steel and aluminum products and additional goods, tariffs on \$30 billion worth of U.S. goods from peanut butter to wine, beer and spirits (Department of Finance Canada 2025).

Local leaders, such as Mike Bradley, Sarnia's mayor, have predicted the impact of this economic conflict could be severe in the region because of the degree to which local business activity is integrated with Michigan and beyond. Several pipelines that supply the region's petrochemical industries and are used to deliver products to U.S. customers cross American territory. Currently, the province supplies \$3 billion in chemicals and \$9 billion in plastics to the United States, of which much is manufactured in the region, described by a Chemistry Industry Association of Canada spokesperson as the "heartbeat of Ontario's chemical manufacturing sector" (Morden 2025a).

Locally, a \$245-million whisky distillery development set to begin operations in 2025 has been paused. Nova Chemicals, the region's largest private-sector employer, also announced in March 2025 that it had shelved plans to develop a plastics recycling plant in Sarnia. Neither company tied its plans directly to the new U.S. protectionist policies. However, Nova did announce plans to proceed with a recycling facility in Indiana, which is expected to create 125 jobs (Morden 2025b). Tariffs and increased border security could also conceivably increase the costs of certain materials and slow down shipments. Compounding the challenges to the petrochemical sector was the October 2024 decision of the Ineos Styrolution chemical plant to decommission its Sarnia plant following provincial/federal pursuit of the plant's avoidance of air pollution prevention regulations. The closure put the plant's 80 employees out of work (Morden 2025c).

Despite these setbacks, other recent developments have suggested that the region's petrochemical industry might experience protection from some impacts. In mid-April 2025, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fast-tracked tunnel permits that will allow Enbridge to build a protective tunnel around its Line 5 pipeline where it crosses the bed of Lake Michigan. The aging pipeline supplies Sarnia-Lambton refineries and manufacturers with oil and liquid natural gas products and crosses American territory, including the bed of Lake Michigan. It has been the subject of considerable concern from environmental activists and adjacent residents who fear its potential to leak, especially in the lakebed (AP 2025).

Of uncertain impact is the recent sale of Nova Chemicals to the Borouge Group International. Nova employs nearly 1,000 people over its four plants in the region. Local reaction to the sale is mixed. Bob Bailey, the region's MPP, described the sale as promising, noting that a previous sale of the plants in 2009 drew investment to the region. Mike Bradley, however, has suggested the outcome is uncertain and Matthew Slotwinski, CEO of the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership was hopeful it was a sign that the local operations would remain sustainable (Morden 2025d).

Canada's decision to reduce its target numbers for both permanent and temporary immigration programs has been another blow for the region, whose economic development organizations have identified as a priority attracting workers through these two streams to replace an anticipated large volume of retiring workers and to fill a wide number of positions anticipated to be created by future economic growth. These immigration caps make it more difficult for businesses to compete with other regions for workers and have reduced the volume of international students training at Lambton College for in-demand positions such as mechanic and repair technicians and health aides. Indeed, in March 2024, a spokesperson for Lambton College indicated that its international student population of 1,900 of a total of 4,100 students at its Sarnia campus could be affected (Morden 2024). As of April 2025, the college was expecting a 62% total drop in international student enrolment in the fall of 2025 compared to the same time in 2024 (Kula 2025a).

However, the province announced in January 2025 that the region would be included in the provincial labour ministry's Rural Economic Development through Immigration program. The pilot program allows selected communities in Ontario to reserve nominations for applicants through the province's Immigrant Nominee Program. Sarnia's allocation will be 200 nominations (Kula 2025b). Childcare, construction, healthcare, and skilled trades are the sectors in which these new workers will be distributed.

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership has reported that it is hearing concerns about increased costs and some customers deciding not to consider Canadian products or services and therefore reducing demand. Other customers are expecting businesses to adjust to avoid offering U.S. products. The Partnership also warns that the Canadian electric vehicle and battery supply chain, one of the sectors that the region had earmarked for economic development, is particularly affected. Additionally, the Partnership warns that although its investment attraction activities continue to identify projects, members anticipate fewer companies will be attracted and some projects already in the pipeline are being paused, cancelled or re-assessed (SLEP 2025a).

The Partnership has responded to these challenges by promoting a business retention and expansion program that aims to develop long-term relationships with local businesses that will improve information sharing about concerns, challenges and opportunities to support the business community as a whole. It also notes that a focus on the Canadian energy security will drive new investment in products such as ethanol, biodiesel and energy production. The changed field of competition will also mean that supply chains and customers will diversify and include more domestic sources. It is also expected that satellite and distribution offices will be set up to accommodate the Canadian market (SLEP 2025a).

The Canadian commitment to clean technology along with uncertainty of U.S. support of the sector may help to better position Canada as a destination for foreign direct investment. Products and services such as renewable energy, water and wastewater management, energy storage, and other energy-related solutions can become points of collaboration with partner countries. The Partnership notes that Canada's research and development tax incentives to businesses are the most generous in the G7 (SLEP 2025a).

Overview

Despite the uncertain economic climate, several factors indicate that opportunities for migrants in both employment and entrepreneurial activities will grow in coming years. These are listed below:

Workforce Labour Trends

The Sarnia-Lambton region's manufacturing and construction workforce is vulnerable to an aging population trend affecting the western Ontario region more generally. A 2021 Western Ontario Wardens Caucus report estimated that from 2020 to 2030, more than 15,000 workers would be needed to replace retiring workers in the Sarnia-Lambton region. This demand is slightly larger than in other locations in Western Ontario but reflects the broader manufacturing sector trend of worker decline. Roughly three times the number of workers is needed to replace these positions compared to the number of workers needed to fill new positions created over the same 10-year period (WOWC 2022, p. 108). The Sarnia-Lambton Workplace Development Board has identified skilled trades as being one labour category particularly affected by the need to replace workers (SLWDB 2025a, p. 31).

While the manufacturing sector that extends from Sarnia south through St. Clair Township is valued as the region's largest income driver, in 2024 it ranked sixth in terms of industry employer by total employees. Educational services, health care and social assistance and retail trade were the top three industry employers, respectively (SLWDB 2025b, p. 5). The top labour occupation categories by total employees for 2024 were sales and service; trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations; and business, finance and administration (SLEP 2025b). These statistics suggest different and intersecting trends in employment needs for these other industries.

Temporary Residents Under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (Agricultural Stream) and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

As of 2021, the Sarnia-Lambton region had 2,140 farms, of which 14 were greenhouse, nursery and floriculture operations. A further 51 were vegetable, melon, fruit and tree nut farms, and the county also had 68 hog and pig farms. These types of farm operations are Ontario's largest agricultural employers of temporary foreign workers with greenhouses employing the largest volume of workers (Statistics Canada 2025a). For instance, in 2022, one local greenhouse operation maintained 120 temporary foreign workers (The Municipality of Lambton Shores 2022).

Food and beverage manufacturers are another large employer of these workers. Lambton has 24 food processors, which, as a sector in 2022, employed 2,321 people (Food & Beverage Ontario 2022, pp. 14-15). Half of the more than 900 processors in the southern Ontario region employed

fewer than 50 workers on their premises. The southern Ontario processors that employed the most temporary workers were bakeries, tortilla operations, and wineries. In Ontario, of the 32,585 temporary foreign workers in 2024, nearly half came from Mexico, and nearly a fifth came from Jamaica (Statistics Canada 2025b).

Aging Workforce

Like the manufacturing and construction sectors, an aging workforce is driving the need for new workers, but an aging population, in general, is driving a need in the health and social assistance sectors for workers in the form of personal support workers and others involved in home and community care.

These growing and changing needs of the local population comprise replacement and additional jobs of the same type. A 2024 Canadian Institute for Health Information study of recruitment and retention of healthcare workers in Canada suggests this local trend may reflect a broader provincial trend. The study indicates that over three years from 2019 to 2022, both entries and exits of family physicians and regulated nurses in direct care in Ontario reached high levels. (The net gain in numbers for these professions was small; the net gain of nurse practitioners, on the other hand, was much higher.) Recruiting migrants will be essential for meeting the large volume of workers to fill existing and new positions in healthcare (CIHI 2024).

Specialized Skills

More generally, the demand for workers with specialized skills including those in the trades is high, creating opportunities for accredited migrants. For instance, of the 374 Sarnia job listings on the SLWDB job board on May 27, 2025, 43% were for workers in the fields of health care, natural and applied science and trades, transport and equipment operators (SLWDB 2025c). These sectors not only support an increasingly aging population but also play key roles in the manufacturing sector and the industries that support it.

Multilingual Skills

In May, the SLWDB job board also indicated a small but notable demand exists for workers who speak French. The Lambton Kent District School Board, for instance, was advertising for French language teachers. In April, the Ontario government's launch of French-language services to Sarnia-Lambton's Francophone population had resulted in at least two postings for French speakers (SLWDB 2025c). There are 2,415 people who speak French at home as their first language in Sarnia-Lambton (SLEP 2025c). The SLWDB's annual survey of employers also found that employers expected to hire French-speaking social workers within the next year (SLWDB 2025b, p. 7). The job board also listed one Spanish-speaking job in May.

While the demand for French-language workers is small, a 2021 report on attracting Francophone workers to the region indicated that the community could grow by 100 people per year. The strategy recommends targeting international students from Ontario and Quebec universities who want to gain Canadian work experience in their fields to fill hard-to-fill and specialized jobs. Noting the aging population, the report notes that Sarnia “must target economic immigration to maintain its labour force and to support its various industries, including the petrochemical industry and public health care institutions” (Brynaert, Brennan & Associ  .e.s 2021, p. 1-3).

Newcomer Challenges

In a 2020 Summary of Local Labour Market Plans, the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus found that newcomers to the southwestern Ontario region, of which Sarnia-Lambton is a part, are generally more disconnected from local industry and professional networks, leading to fewer opportunities for Canadian work experience. Recognition of international training and qualifications can be a significant barrier, particularly in regulated professions like health care. Limited immigration settlement supports in the region, particularly compared to larger urban centres, may compound these challenges (WOWC 2020a, p. 9).

Another key barrier in this larger region is that small businesses, which are most of the region's employers, often lack the capacity and knowledge for international recruitment processes. Smaller employers also need to develop equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) strategies to ensure welcoming workplaces (WOWC 2022, p. 7; WOWC 2020b, p. 3).

Employment Capacity

The Sarnia-Lambton region continues to face steep challenges in recruitment and retention of employees. Many employers, especially small and medium-sized businesses and those in healthcare, struggle to fill positions with skilled candidates. The 2025 annual survey of employers by the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board found 53% of responding businesses had hard-to-fill positions and 63% of medium businesses, defined as those with 100 to 499 employees (SLWDB 2025b, p. 6). Key issues reported include skills gaps (both technical and soft skills like dependability and communication), not enough applicants and lack of work experience. Job postings requiring French language skills take on average 29 days to fill, while postings for social and community service workers take on average, 30 days (SLWDB 2025a, p. 32). Sectors most struggling with a lack of applicants over the past year include public administration, construction, educational services and healthcare and social assistance. Those sectors dealing with a lack of qualifications in applicants include educational services, public administration, manufacturing and services the Workforce Development Board lists as “other services (except public administration)” which is a catchall for roles such as lawn care workers, graphic designers, job developers, business development officers, website developers, summer students and project managers (SLWDB 2025b, p. 7)

Industries anticipating the most hires in 2025 are healthcare and social assistance, public administration, other services and educational services. Industries expecting to take on new hires because of expansion include real estate and rental and leasing, manufacturing and educational services. Public administration, transportation and warehousing, and management of companies and enterprises anticipate the most retirements in 2025 (SLWDB 2025b, p. 7).

According to the survey, 63% of respondents expected to hire employees in 2025 to fill a current or expected vacancy or because of expansion. All told, the number of new hires is estimated to be 2,062 employees (SLWDB 2025b, p. 7). To encourage retention, about one fifth of the employers who responded to the survey offer regular salary increases and recognition for service and outstanding work. Other strategies include training, perks, such as discounts on merchandise, job flexibility, clear promotional opportunities and increases in benefits (SLWDB 2025b, p. 9).

The survey also looked at sector attitudes towards hiring international talent and found accommodation and food services, educational services and healthcare and social assistance, and "other services (excluding public administration)" most open to hiring candidates with international backgrounds. Least likely to consider this group are those in manufacturing, construction, and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sectors. Close to half of survey respondents indicated that they had hired individuals with international talent previously (47% reporting yes and 53% reporting no) (SLWDB 2025b, p. 11).

Entrepreneurship

Several studies over the past seven years concerning economic development in the region have recognized the importance of attracting newcomers to the Sarnia Lambton region not only to meet labour demands but also as entrepreneurs to foster economic growth, and to offer a clear path to advancement for entry-level workers (Mellor Murray Consulting 2018, p. 8; WOWC 2022, pp. 33, 36; County of Lambton 2022, p. 7; and SLWDB 2025a, p. 20).

Another factor generating interest in fostering more entrepreneurial activity is that the region's business landscape is dominated by businesses that employ no workers (70%) (SLWDB 2025a, p. 13). Among those with employees, micro (1-4 employees) and small (5-99 employees) businesses are most common, particularly in construction and retail. Medium-sized businesses are mainly in manufacturing and healthcare/social assistance, while large businesses are concentrated in manufacturing, educational services, and public administration. Many of these businesses, however, are affected by the region's aging population trend and lack a succession plan (Western Ontario Wardens Caucus 2022b).

Migrants searching for resources to aid employment or entrepreneurial efforts will find a robust selection of general local and online resources, and a number of these are listed in the Resources section below. Some resources specific to newcomers are also available and are included. These entries are intended to be as comprehensive as possible at the local level, but many more exist online than can be listed here. Many of these resources are sector specific, and to exemplify their range, we show what some of these look like in the agricultural sector.

Resources

Employment

Support for the search for jobs and for employment are available through the Lambton County Orientation and Referral Settlement Services program (<https://liveinlambton.ca/settlement-services/>). This program is operated through the YMCA Learning and Career Centre and the French Canadian Association of Ontario London-Sarnia Regional Council. To be eligible for the program, people must be permanent residents, convention refugees, or be in Canada and have approval in principle to become a permanent resident.

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (<https://www.slwdb.org/wisl/>) maintains a number of job-search resources for those looking for employment. These include information about working in the region, an online job board, an online library that provides information about the different industry groups and an interactive map showing where these are located in the

region and information about different careers. It also maintains a monthly newsletter. The Board's website also offers a tip sheet for employers about equity, diversity and inclusion.

The YMCA Learning and Career Centre (<https://www.ymcaswo.ca/employment-programs>) operates a job search workshop program that provides pre-employment training to migrants from across the province (County of Lambton Social Planning and Children's Services Department n.d.). For this program, participants must complete an employment assessment, have a high intermediate (5/6) Canadian Level Benchmark for English (ISSofBC 2025). Participants must also be a permanent resident, convention refugee or a live-in-caregiver.

Several employment service providers exist in the region including YMCA Learning and Career Centre, Lambton College Community Employment Services, Goodwill Career Centre and The WorkPlace Group. The YMCA Career Centre, for instance, offers programs designed to served groups with different needs, including a program for newcomer youth.

Many of these same services also provide services to employers. The Workplace Group (<https://theworkplacegroup.ca/>), for instance, provides recruitment assistance services for a fee such as developing job descriptions and assistance with implementing job fairs. Similarly Express Professionals (<https://www.expresspros.ca/ca-ontario-sarnia>) and Agilus Work Solutions (<https://www.agilus.ca/>) help candidates and employers connect. Express specializes in sectors such as light industrial, skilled trades and office services; Agilus focuses on connecting workers with specialized and management skills with employers.

The Sarnia Goodwill Career Centre (<https://www.goodwillindustries.ca/sarnia-career-centre/>) offers free services and programs to help participants explore options and build job-search strategies, build resumes, prepare for job interviews or explore training to upgrade skills. The service features the options of virtual and remote services or in-person appointments and a drop-in resource centre. Among the centre's resources is a list of job postings as well as job search directories and guides.

Similarly, the Lambton College Community Employment Services offers a range of services depending on the job seeker's situation. These include skills and experience assessment; information about occupations, careers, the local labour market, employment and training; access to hiring incentives and training; advice about community services; access to job boards, and computers to search for jobs and free printing and faxing. (<https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/training-career-advancement/employees-job-seekers/services-for-employees-job-seekers>)

The Lambton Works Centre (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/our-resource-centre.aspx>), located in Sarnia, provides free of charge employment and community resource advisors who can provide support for accessing computers or other related technology, job search supports, including interview preparation, employment workshops and connections to employment opportunities, local labour market information and referrals to community supports. One-on-one services are available. The centre also provides free of charge services to employers, such as developing employee training, assistance with locating government programs for employers and a job fair.

LEADS Employment Services (<https://leadsservices.com/>) specializes in delivering support to people with disabilities and/or experience other barriers to employment in the region. The not-for-profit serves the Southwestern Ontario region but maintains an office in Sarnia. For those searching for work, LEADS provides employment planning, job placement, and job coaching and follow-up support. The agency also offer a job posting service for potential employers, will pre-screen candidates and provide follow-up support.

The Magnet platform (<https://poweredbymagnet.ca/>) that can be accessed through the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce links jobseekers and recruiters with specific communities and provides resources for jobseekers to obtain some skills training. Communities can be larger communities seeking workers or those of potential workers with some sort of shared experience, such as being newcomers.

The Ontario government provides a list of job search resources that include job profiles, a search tool to find in-demand jobs in a certain location. It also provides several other resources for both job seekers and employers on its Employment Ontario page. (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario>)

Ontario Employment Assistance Services is a referral service to a number of employment programs to support people with disabilities in the preparation of the job search and to find a job (<https://eopg.labour.gov.on.ca/en/programs/ontario-employment-assistance-services/>). In 2023-2024, the program served 356 people. Of these 12% were newcomers, 8% were racialized and 13% were categorized as “other” (SLWDB 2025a, p. 27).

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton's employment programs assist people with disabilities in finding work, including building interview skills, resumes, connecting to employers and counselling (<https://www.communitylivingsarnia.org/services/employment-support>). The programs also provide job coaching for onsite support. The organization offers three streams of programs: two employment transitions programs, one for permanent placements and another for summer placements, and a workshop series that includes field trips to help people with disabilities formulate their approach to the job hunt.

Lambton County Developmental Services (<https://lcdspetrolia.ca/>) also connects people with disabilities to employment agencies, provides on-site job coaching and ongoing communication support for workers who are disabled and their employers.

Entrepreneurial and Employment

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (<https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/work-here>) offers a wide range of resources for both those seeking employment and those seeking employees.

Explore Talent Sarnia-Lambton (<https://exploretalentsl.com/>), for instance, offers several links to local job boards, information about the different employment sectors and the region's top employers, an opportunity for job seekers to create profiles and add video resumes. The Partnership also offers an online apprenticeship job match and information about the Regional Economic Development Through Immigration Pilot.

The Société Économique de l'Ontario (SÉO): Workforce Development helps French-speaking and bilingual newcomers in their job search, supports employer recruitment, and supports newcomers establishing new businesses (<https://www.seo-ont.ca/aide-emploi-nouveaux-arrivants>). In terms of employment assistance, the organization helps newcomers by assessing their skills, helping to develop an action plan, assisting with developing a resume and contact letter, preparing newcomers for job interviews, and supplying advice and training about the provincial labour market.

The SÉO holds networking sessions with employers, maintains job listings from its partners such as Collège Boréal (thus outside of the region) and an online job search platform. As well, it organizes virtual job fairs and helps French-speaking and bilingual racialized female newcomers to find work that matches their professional interest and skills.

The SÉO also provides training, networking and entrepreneurial resources as well as funding support. Initiatives include access to the organization's entrepreneurship team that can provide templates for business planning, financial forecasting and market research, help search for new business opportunities, funding, and financing.

For those interested in starting a business, the SÉO operates a virtual business incubator that offers training in French. The program also has specialized groups, including Entrepreneurship for newcomers, new-agriculture, and Black women entrepreneurs.

One of the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's newest offerings, The Sarnia-Lambton Newcomer Hub (<https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/newcomerhub>), provides a variety of supports to newcomers. The recently launched initiative that is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada includes tools, connections and activities to assist newcomers in finding jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities and build their career networks. The program offers resume building and skills development, small group events geared to help participants to connect with local employers, assistance with developing a business proposal, mentorship, and peer learning.

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (<https://www.slwdb.org/>) maintains a number of employer resources including a monthly newsletter, current statistics on the local labour force, industry reports and links to provincial training programs.

The Service Canada Centre (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/service-canada.html>) in Sarnia provides career planning assistance and counselling, student and youth employment services, and access to the service's online Job Bank, a listings services of employment opportunities that are both local and national. The centre and the national online website provide information about federal benefits and pensions as well as application forms for a social insurance number. The service also provides information about employees and safety such as labour standards and occupational health and safety standards as well as records of employment, information about the labour market, and wage subsidies.

Entrepreneurial

The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.slchamber.ca/>) provides a wide range of services and supports for area businesses including a directory of its member businesses, access to private health and dental benefits plans, networking opportunities and representing local business interests and issues to different levels of government.

The Lambton Business Collaborative is developing a website directory of local businesses and is currently asking businesses to register. It has also developed a video series to feature local business and communities such as the Kinetoscope Theatre in Forest, Growling Gater in Grand Bend and Roeland Plant Farms, a greenhouse in Forest. Familiarization tours of local businesses are also offered. The Lambton Business Collaborative through the municipality also offers workshop and networking sessions and job fairs. An economic development newsletter that provides local business with information about workshops, tariffs, local resources and businesses rounds out its offerings (The Municipality of Lambton Shores 2025).

InvestSarnia (<https://www.investsarnia.ca/>) is an online tool that provides those interested in business opportunities in the region with a wealth of background information including funding resources, information on sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, land available for development, and more. Programs on which it has information include the Ontario Life Sciences Scale-Up Fund that grants for-profit entities that have been in operation for two or more years and employ between five and 500 full-time equivalent employees up to \$2.5 million to cover 33% of a project's costs. The service also lists local events, such as Sarnia-Lambton B2B Resource Nights and information about how to navigate tariffs, and other helpful information.

The Sarnia Community Improvement Plan (<https://www.sarnia.ca/community-improvement-plan/>) offers a number of financial incentive programs intended to be used on building and property improvements. These include building facade, landscape and property improvement grants as well as a renovation grant for the city's downtown and Mitton Village areas. A planning and building fee reduction program is also offered that offers up to 50% reduction on the costs of planning applications and building permits for qualifying properties. The city also offers an affordable rental housing community improvement plan that offers qualifying projects a host of incentives such as tax increment equivalent grants of up to 10 years for eligible costs and a planning and a building permit fee grant.

Community Futures Lambton (<https://cflambton.com/community-futures-grants/>) offers an annual grant program to support projects within the community. Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000 and are made available to qualifying charitable organizations, registered charities, non-profit corporations, service clubs, social service organizations and educational institutions.

Employment Resources for Migrant Workers

The Sarnia- Lambton Local Immigration Partnership and the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers have developed an orientation booklet for temporary workers. The book is in English and describes workers' rights, employment contracts and employment benefits and several other points of community information, such as how to open a bank account, send a letter, and community maps (Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership & Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers 2015).

Worker Support Services at the Neighbourhood Organization (<https://tno-toronto.org/>) provides people in the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program with a number of programs free of charge to prepare them for their stay in Canada, including skills training and coaching as well as employment-related services. The province-wide program is offered in different languages, including English, Spanish and Patois, and the services are confidential. The organization also provides a number of online videos, guides and brochures, many in English and Spanish, including provincial information about employment standards and workers' rights, and how to access a social insurance number. The organization also provides support services for businesses that employ temporary foreign workers, including workshops on health and safety, workplace mental health support and assistance with immigration programs and services. The program can be contacted by phone at 647-296-0161 and email at jrajasekar@tno-toronto.org. The program contains satellite offices in Oshawa and Simcoe.

The FCJ Refugee Centre (<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/>) assists temporary foreign workers in urgent need. The organization's website is offered in English, French and Spanish.

Agriculture

Farmlink.net, is an online tool that links those interested in agricultural business with opportunities to lease or acquire land from retiring farmers. The resource is nation-wide and currently has three such opportunities in the Sarnia-Lambton region listed on its interactive map. It also provides listings of individuals who are seeking farms. The website also lists a number of resources for those planning a farm business. Service is in English.

Farmsatwork.ca is a similar online tool that is specific to Ontario properties. It too provides links to resources.

The National Farmers Union—Ontario Branch (<https://nfuontario.ca/projects-and-research/land-access/>) maintains an email list for those wanting to access land opportunities and attend related workshops. On its website, it also provides a guide to support new and landless farmers to access land.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture offers a guide in English and French in how to start a farm in Ontario. (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/publication-61-starting-farm-ontario>) More generally, the province also offers a website with information in French and English for how to start a business in Ontario (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/business/start>).

Education and Workforce Preparation

Overview

This section focuses on post-secondary education and Lambton College's role in the community because of the impact this institution has had as an intermediary between immigrants and newcomers and the community at large. Over the past several years, Lambton College has played an integral role in attracting immigrants to the Sarnia-Lambton region through its international student recruitment and programming initiatives. The other educational institutions listed in the resources section below also contribute to preparing newcomers for the workplace by offering English-language instruction and job-preparedness workshops. Collège Boréal offers some programs that lead to accreditations designed for international students, although these appear to combine virtual instruction and in-person attendance at the college's campus in Windsor (Collège Boréal 2025). However, these institutions have not been as actively or extensively involved in recruiting international students to the region in the same way that Lambton College has.

Lambton College has also long contributed to the resiliency of the local workforce by acting as an intermediary between local employers and job seekers by offering its students—both local and international—training and accreditation for in-demand roles within the region. In 2023, for example, the college responded to the growing demand for healthcare workers by launching its nursing school, which offers bachelor-level nursing degrees. Additionally, the college responded to local employers' needs in 2023 by introducing a fast-track program for early childhood education and increasing the number of seats in its Construction Boilermaker 428A trade program (Lambton College 2024). Most recently, in 2025, the college added the ability to hold exams for English-language proficiency accreditation under the International English Language Testing System (Lambton College 2025a). The test is one accepted by the Canadian federal government to satisfy its new post-graduate work permit requirement in language proficiency.

Because of the college's unique dual intermediary role in the community, it is reasonable to assume that when the local job readiness educational network comes under criticism, these complaints mostly refer to the efforts of the local post-secondary educator. Both the business community and former students have raised concerns—directly and indirectly—about Lambton College's delivery of its services.

Employer Concerns

When responding to a 2025 Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board survey, the more than 300 respondents from the region's business community indicated that graduates in general—not just former international students—lacked "necessary skills." They attributed the lack to a "mismatch between education [and] workforce needs" (SLWDB 2025b, p. 12). Local employers have rated communication, management, driving, customer service, and interpersonal skills as top required skills (SLWDB 2025a, p. 17). Their top competency expectations are

- Work ethic;
- Self-motivation and the ability to work with little or no supervision;
- Dependability;
- Teamwork and interpersonal abilities;

- Willingness to learn; and
- Oral and written communication (SLWDB 2025b, p. 8).

Student Concerns

In turn, on social media, an international student who attended Lambton College praises the college for the support it provides in terms of resources and logistics, but warns that placements depend on the professor, suggesting that the competition for work experience opportunities begins in the classroom (yss_me 2021). Nearly two thirds of students consider moving to another city "as there are not enough field jobs here," the former student writes. Another poster, a former local student, provided secondary accounts that indicated there were high unemployment rates among international students who took specialized technical programs, as well as how the quality of their education or work experience has hindered their ability to compete for high-paying, highly skilled jobs ([deleted] 2021).

College Response

Expecting a single local college to deliver training that meets such divergent needs and expectations is a big ask, especially when opportunities arise in different niche and highly specialized occupations such as machine learning and agri-business management. Lambton College has responded to the challenge by partnering with other small, northern, and rural colleges in the province in early 2025 to launch the Ontario Regional Economic Workforce and Innovation Network (Lambton College 2025b). (Collège Boréal is also involved in the partnership.) The college has noted that the network will help its participants to expand STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and skilled trades training capacity. Another goal for the project is to expand the pool of specialized candidates for Sarnia-Lambton jobs by connecting local businesses to a larger pool of international students and others studying specialized areas elsewhere in the province.

To address student concerns about finding employment, the college has provided in- and out-of-region employment supports to international alumni through its International Graduate Services & Support Centre. The centre offers alumni seeking to settle in Canada immigration guidance and services, career coaching and job search supports, workshops and social events. These services are delivered through an advisor and digital supports (Lambton College 2025c). The college also supplies internship and work experiences through its network of research partnerships with other institutions and industry, including a number of on-site research centres (Lambton College 2025d).

Locally, however, the college's specialized and niche programming for international students is dwindling. The decline is not connected to the decision to partner with other educational institutions but rather reflects changes to the conditions of eligibility for post-graduate study permits recently introduced by the federal government. Many of the programs the college offered did not fall under the new permit's eligible areas of study, and the situation reduced international student enrolment. In turn, the college suspended 18 programs for the 2025-26 school year. Most of these are two-year postgraduate programs designed for international students (Duale 2024; Morden 2025).

Services for Other Members of the Migrant Population

The capacity of Lambton College to provide specialized supports and educational streams to other members of the area's migrant population remains unclear. The college certainly offers programs that provide retraining or educational upgrades for immigrants who have relocated to the region from elsewhere in the province or country and instruction in new technologies to other temporary residents, such as migrant farm workers. These programs, however, target the population at large and may not consider the migrant population's unique needs, such as language and cultural supports as well as the need to adapt individuals' existing training and experience to meet Canadian standards and expectations.

Industry training programs also exist at the secondary school level in the form of specialist high school majors for sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and construction. These programs, however, are only open to students in Grades 11 or 12 and do not appear to make special provisions to support the needs of immigrants and temporary residents (Ontario Education and Training 2025).

Conclusion

A tendency to conflate the local job readiness educational network with the Sarnia-Lambton region's main post-secondary institution obscures the complexity of both the network itself and the challenges it faces. The increasing reliance on a single institution to deliver the bulk of recruiting, readying and facilitating the entry of immigrants into the local workforce may be the greatest hurdle that this sector faces.

Resources

Sarnia-Lambton offers a range of services to support immigrant and temporary resident integration into educational and community settings. The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, administered by the YMCA, provides federally funded English language instruction to adult immigrants. This program is designed to support language development for everyday communication, employment, and community engagement.

The Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) is a standardized English proficiency test used for immigration and professional certification purposes. The closest CELPIP test centre for residents of Sarnia-Lambton is located at the YMCA in Windsor, which may pose logistical challenges for individuals without reliable transportation.

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program is available in the region and provides support to immigrant students and families as they transition into the Canadian education system. SWIS workers offer orientation, translation support, and facilitate connections between families and schools.

Lambton College and two of the four local school boards also offer international student programs. Lambton College's international student program provides a variety of programs including a post-graduation work permit program in disciplines such as advanced project management in information technology and agri-business management. The college does require students to supply proof of meeting its English-language requirements. The college also offers

community orientation classes for students as well as other supports through its website. (<https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/international/sarnia/study-in-sarnia>)

The Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) (<https://www.lkdsb.net/>) accepts international students for one semester, multiple semesters, or a full academic year. Students are placed with local families through the Canada Homestay Network, and promotional materials indicate participation from students originating in Europe, South America, and East Asia. Publicly available details on eligibility, grade levels, and program content are limited.

The St. Clair District School Board (<https://www.st-clair.net/>) operates one high school in Sarnia and several elementary schools throughout the Sarnia-Lambton region.

French-Language Schools

French-language schools in Ontario have adopted strategies intended to facilitate the academic success and well-being of newcomer students by supporting those learning French as a second language and helping them to make the transition into French-language community and society (Ontario 2025). The Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA) helps to smooth the transition for those who may have experienced interruptions in their education, have little formal education experience or are adjusting to very different experiences of classroom education. The programs not only build into the curriculum culturally responsive elements but also ensures that educators are trained to support these students.

Similar to the LKDSB, Conseil scolaire Viamonde (<https://csviamonde.ca/>), the French-language public school board, offers a similar international program for students in Grades 9–12. Students may enroll for one semester or a full year but are required to secure accommodation through family members or an independent homestay organization.

The school board operates two schools in Sarnia: Les Rapides Elementary School up to Grade 6 (including La Ribambelle French-speaking pre-school centre); and Franco-Jeunesse Secondary School from Grades 7 to 12. The high school offers Specialist High Skills Major programs in nutrition, healing and well-being, the environment, information and communications technology and sports.

The province's French-language Catholic school board, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence (<https://www.cscprovidence.ca/>), operates two schools in Sarnia. École élémentaire catholique Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin is an elementary school up to Grade 6; the secondary school is École secondaire catholique Saint Francis Xavier. It runs from Grades 9 through 12. The location also contains a middle school for Grades 7 and 8.

Online Information on Navigating Public Education

Settlement.org provides guides in Arabic, French and English that discuss the structure of both elementary and secondary education in Ontario and provide tips on how to help children adjust to the new school environment, and how parents can become engaged in the educational experience. (<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/>)

Health and Mental Health Care

Overview

At the time of writing, the health services sector in Sarnia-Lambton, as in much of Ontario, is wrestling with a shortage of health professionals that is creating barriers to care, such as delays in treatment and a lack of access to primary care such as family doctors and nurse practitioners, the traditional gatekeepers to health care. In Sarnia, for instance, the number of residents without a primary care provider increased from just over 8,200 in 2020 to more than 10,000 by 2023 (Trevithick 2025).

For immigrants and temporary residents, systemic pressures complicate the navigation of an already complex system fraught with communication barriers. In recent years, the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team, a local network of approximately 40 partners, has been working towards addressing these issues both for the community at large and specific populations, such as immigrants and temporary residents, by establishing and implementing recruitment and healthcare navigation strategies and establishing new approaches to care (Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team 2024). Comprised of local hospitals, mental health care organizations and other groups that provide care to specific populations such as First Nations communities, older adults and French speakers, and including services such as midwives and hospice, the team is funded by Ontario Health West, an arm of the provincial government.

In its 2023-2024 annual report, the health team notes several health issues within the region's population that are increasing pressure on the local health care system. Nearly a third of the Sarnia-Lambton region's population will be aged 65 years or older over the next 12 years. More than half of older adults have two or more chronic conditions, increasing the demand for acute services. Substance abuse and mental health have been identified as frequent users of emergency departments and alternative level of care beds in hospitals and also require a variety of community supports. The health team has identified adults over the age of 55 years and youth experiencing mental health and addiction issues as its two priority populations (S-L OHT 2024).

With the local health system having to respond to these significant issues and changes, immigrants and temporary residents may experience longer waits to access health care in busy emergency rooms or from primary health care providers (Kula 2024); they may also experience extensive waits for treatment to problems that can arise from their unique circumstances. Not being able to obtain assistance in a timely manner can sideline a successful transition to a new community. Social isolation and loneliness, for instance, have long been identified as factors that can take tolls on immigrants and temporary residents' health and mental health and, more recently, particularly for immigrants who are seniors (Robert & Wilkinson 2012; McMaster University 2023). For this older population, risks include depression, social anxiety, coronary disease and dementia.

Physician Shortage

The doctor shortage directly affects immigrants and temporary residents by making it difficult for them to access primary care at the North Lambton Community Health Centre (NLCHC), a non-profit organization that provides health care to vulnerable populations. In June 2025 the

centre, which provides services in Sarnia and the northern portion of Lambton County, noted on its website that its primary care clinic was unable to accept new patients (NLCHC n.d.-a).

To cope, immigrants and temporary residents are likely to adopt strategies similar to those of other residents in the region, such as the growing trend in Sarnia to seek medical assistance from hospital emergency departments for issues typically handled by family health practitioners (O'Brien 2024). This trend is also evident in Lambton Emergency Medical Services statistics. According to the services' recent master plan, roughly one quarter of all patients transported by ambulance are triaged at the lowest acuity levels, suggesting an inability to access a family doctor has prompted the emergency call or challenges with navigating the health system (County of Lambton 2023).

A shortage of physicians is also affecting other essential aspects of local health care. In late 2024, Bluewater Health, the region's main hospital, was forced to divert general surgery services for a week because its complement of surgeons, normally standing at five, had shrunk to two (The Independent 2024). General surgery once again paused for a week in May 2025 (The Journal 2025). The scarcity also extends to several other specialties, including general paediatrics, psychiatry, pathology, and general internal medicine (O'Brien 2024).

Local authorities identify an aging population of healthcare providers as a main contributor to the situation. Nearly half of the family doctors currently serving the Sarnia Lambton region are over the age of 60 (O'Brien 2024). However, attracting new doctors is not easy. The region must compete with many other small urban or rural Ontario communities to attract new doctors. Current provincial rules prevent graduates of programs in other countries from securing residencies (Morden 2023). A lack of "turnkey clinics that are modern, co-located spaces that can house a minimum of three physicians," is also playing a role, says Carly Cos, a representative of Blue Coast Primary Care, an organization formed by the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce to recruit doctors to the region (Hassan 2025). "New graduates and relocating physicians are not interested in investing in renovating clinics and currently we lack those clinics in Sarnia Lambton," Cos says (Hassan 2025).

But even before finding a primary physician, immigrants and temporary residents need to obtain health insurance coverage. Otherwise, they can expect to pay the full cost of services and procedures normally covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan unless they obtain private insurance. Some may qualify through programs such as the Interim Federal Health Program or OHIP. Even if they qualify for OHIP, immigrants and temporary residents must wait three months before coverage begins. In the interim, some programs do exist to treat those without health insurance (see Responses and interventions below), but the already significant strain on health care resources in the region may mean overcrowding as well in these programs and long waits. Steps to Justice (2022) does provide assistance and resources for migrant populations to determine whether they can obtain health care.

Navigational and Cultural Barriers to Access

For residents, including those new to the region, a lack of clear information regarding service availability has been a persistent problem. A 2022 study by Lambton Public Health identified this information gap as the single greatest barrier to accessing care for older adults, noting that

patients and caregivers were often left to coordinate care independently and without adequate follow-up between services (Hutchinson, Saucier, & Subotic 2022). Patients, quite simply, did not know where to go or who to contact for information. The study also found a lack of awareness about community supports and health services. It is likely that similar barriers face immigrants and temporary residents who are unfamiliar with the system, despite the system navigation support offered by settlement agencies to newcomers.

Navigating the system is particularly a challenge for non-English speakers. Some healthcare websites offer Google translation or versions in other languages, and many of these services also provide other translation services for those who need them. For instance, Bluewater Health offers its patients an on-demand translation app covering over 240 languages. (Boyce 2025). Nevertheless, the service is inconsistent. Bluewater Health's basic materials, including its patient and family guide, a video intended to orient patients, and its official website, remain available only in English (Boyce 2025). This lack of translated material presents a significant barrier to equitable access.

Responses and Interventions

The many organizations and healthcare agencies that make up the Sarnia-Lambton healthcare system have long acknowledged these issues and have instituted strategies to remedy them. Several online services help residents find family doctors who are accepting new patients. These include the provincial Health Care Connect program (<https://hcc3.hcc.moh.gov.on.ca/HCCWeb/faces/layoutHCCHomePage.xhtml>), Blue Coast Primary Care (<https://www.bluecoastprimarycare.com/>) and local family practice clinics (<https://rapidsfhteam.ca/physicians>). Lambton Public Health provides a web page (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/find-a-local-primary-care-provider/>) providing links to websites such as these to connect people with primary care. The website also provides health alerts and other data for issues such as water and air quality monitoring, disease outbreaks and inspection results (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/news/>).

To address the issue of connecting people to relevant health information, the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team, in partnership with hospitals in the southwestern Ontario region, has introduced ConnectMyHealth, an online, single-access portal (<https://info.connectmyhealth.ca/>) that allows people to view their health records from hospitals throughout the larger southwestern Ontario region. As of 2024, more than 500 people have registered with the digital app (S-L OHT 2024).

Programs are also offered for specific vulnerable populations. The NLCHC (North Lambton Community Health Centre) offers a Health Care for Agricultural Workers program, providing primary care and interpretation services to temporary migrant workers, regardless of their insurance status (NLCHC n.d.-b). The NLCHC also operates the First Five Program for children without a family doctor, for which a provincial health card is not required—an essential feature for newly arrived families that may still be in the process of acquiring identifying documents (NLCHC, n.d.-c).

According to the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team's annual report, priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year included establishing centralized access hubs for chronic disease management,

community supports, and mental health to reduce wait times, adding supportive housing for mental health and addictions, and recruiting healthcare workers (S-L OHT 2024).

Recruitment Efforts

Long-term recruitment remains a central priority with local leaders calling for the establishment of local physician residencies to attract medical graduates (Morden 2023). Some initiatives currently exist. The Sarnia Community Foundation and the Norma and Don Moore Memorial Scholarship support doctors and nurse practitioners who have enrolled in a program that will "lead to a license to practice in Ontario, with preference given to those planning to practice in Lambton" (Trevithick 2025). The long-running Discovery Week places first-year medical students at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University in Bluewater Health's Sarnia and Petrolia hospitals (The Journal 2025).

To enhance initiatives like these, the Sarnia Lambton Ontario Health Team has prioritized establishing partnerships with provincial educational institutions to create local internships to expose healthcare workers to the area (S-L OHT 2024). Investing in the local community and building from within, argues the Sarnia Lambton Ontario Health Team's primary care council, is the best way to address issues facing similar-sized communities across the province (S-L OHT 20).

Resources

Primary and Preventive Health Services

Sarnia-Lambton offers a range of primary and preventive health services designed to support the well-being of its residents, including immigrants and temporary residents. The North Lambton Community Health Centre (<https://www.nlcchc.com/>) has offices in Forest, Sarnia, Watford and Kettle & Stony Point First Nation and offers a range of health promotion and wellness programs. While these programs are generally accessible, specific adaptations or outreach strategies targeting immigrants and temporary residents are not explicitly detailed on their platforms.

The Central Lambton Family Health Team (<https://centrallambtonfamilyhealthteam.com/>) provides primary care that includes the prevention of disease and its management and health promotion. Among the programs and services it offers are smoking cessation, memory assessment, foot care, nutrition counselling, social work counselling, immunizations and the management or monitoring of conditions such as diabetes and blood clotting or blood pressure issues. The team maintains offices in Petrolia, Wyoming and Alvinston. The team also operates a Rural Access to Care Centre in Wyoming, an urgent care centre provided by a nurse practitioner. People do not have to be an existing patient of the team in order to obtain care, but they must call one day ahead or on the same day to book an appointment.

With operations based in two main locations in Sarnia, the Rapids Family Health Team (<https://www.rapidsfhteam.ca/>) provides primary care and other services to local residents. Along with delivering primary services, the centre offers occupational therapy, cognitive screening, respiratory assessment and a congestive heart failure support program. It also offers diabetes education and management and counselling with a registered dietician, social workers, psychologists and a pharmacist. The team provides medical language translation services at all of

its locations. The team also operates an after-hours clinic and an access to care centre for acute and episodic conditions such as urinary tract infections, ear aches or rashes. The Access to Care centre requires patients to call ahead to book an appointment. The Well Woman Clinic at the Rapids Family Health Team offers women's health services such as cervical screening and clinical breast exams.

Twin Bridges (www.twinbridgesnplc.com) is a nurse practitioner-led clinic in Sarnia that provides primary care services and other programs, such as women's wellness classes, including a post natal exercise program, fitness and nutrition classes (including for children) and grief support programs.

Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre (<https://gbachc.ca/>), located in Grand Bend, Lambton Shores, and with a branch in Hensall in Huron County, provides primary health care to patients in the Lambton County communities of Grand Bend and Port Franks. The centre also provides walk-in services to local and seasonal residents on Saturday mornings. The service offers a number of free programs, including fitness and exercise programs, community education programs delivered either in-person at its centre or online regarding issues such as dementia, smoking cessation, addiction and childhood anxiety. It also provides social work services, diabetes education, rehabilitation therapy and dietician services. Some programs and services are delivered through home visits in a number of communities including Grand Bend, Port Franks, Thedford and Petrolia.

There are walk-in medical clinics in the region that offer in-person or virtual care. These include Good Doctors Sarnia (<https://gooddoctors.ca/site/good-doctors-sarnia/>), which maintains a virtual care clinic with a nurse on site; Wiltshire Pharmacy walk-in clinic (<https://wiltshirepharmacy.com/walk-in-clinic/>) in Sarnia for issues such as infections, prescription renewals and minor burns; and the MD Connected Walk-in Clinic (<https://www.mdconnected.ca/>), in Sarnia, that also offers virtual care ranging from general consultations and men's and women's health to (for a fee) sick notes and forms.

The MobileCare Sarnia-Lambton (<https://sl.mobilecareclinic.ca/>) initiative operates a mobile clinic that travels to various municipalities, enhancing access to primary care, mental health, and addiction services, particularly for individuals facing transportation barriers. This service is instrumental in reaching underserved populations, including migrants residing in remote areas.

The County of Lambton's Emergency Medical Services Department operates a community paramedic program (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/health-care-professionals/partnerships/>) that assists individuals who frequently use emergency services in living independently. Under the program, paramedics conduct home visits to do activities such as physical assessments, home safety scans and medication reviews. They can also perform some diagnostics and treatments. Referrals to the program are done by primary care practitioners, Ontario Health at Home, and EMS. Paramedics also operate community wellness clinics throughout the region.

For seniors, the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (<https://seniors.accerta.ca/>) provides free routine dental services to eligible individuals aged 65 and over who are low-income. This program is accessible through Lambton Public Health and affiliated dental providers.

Immunization and Child Health Programs

Lambton Public Health administers several immunization programs, including school-based clinics for students in Grades 7 and 8, as well as catch-up clinics for students from junior kindergarten to Grade 12. These services are crucial for maintaining public health standards and are available to all students, regardless of immigration status.

(<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/events/clinics/immunization/>)

Additionally, Lambton Public Health provides various child health programs, such as the Healthy Smiles Ontario program (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/events/clinics/dental/>), which offers preventive dental services to children under 17 from low-income families. Visual care for individuals under 19 is covered through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). The Ontario Student Nutrition Program, in collaboration with the Victoria Order of Nurses (<https://osnp.ca/>), ensures that students receive healthy meals and snacks, supporting overall child health and development.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Sexual health services are available through Lambton Public Health, offering counseling, birth control options, pregnancy testing, and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment. Free condoms and safer sex supplies are also provided. Clinic hours are primarily during standard working hours, which may limit accessibility for some individuals.

Infant and Pregnancy Care

Lambton Public Health also provides several programs to support new mothers and their babies (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/events/clinics/family-health-line/>). These range from prenatal classes and home visits under its Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, post-partum supports in conjunction with St. Clair Child and Youth, and the Family Counselling Centre and drop-in sessions.

Midwifery Services of Lambton Kent (<https://sarniamidwives.com/>) provides care in labour, delivery and up to six weeks in the post partum which is covered by OHIP. The service also offers a post-partum and newborn care program to those who may not have a doctor or pediatrician or do not have OHIP. People can access the program through a health care provider or self-referral.

Lambton Public Health offers prenatal classes (<https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/classes/prenatal/>) and several other individuals, groups and community organizations in the region offer classes as well (<https://sarniamidwives.com/prenatal-classes>).

Bluewater Health's Maternal Infant Child Program (<https://www.bluewaterhealth.ca/types-of-care/maternal-infant-child-program>) offers a variety of services including an orientation clinic to help expecting mothers plan their visit to the hospital for delivery and what to expect. The program's website provides links to other resources, such as OMama (<https://www.omama.com/en/index.asp>), a mobile app that provides evidence-based information about pregnancy, birth and early parenting, and the NHCLC's First Five Program (<https://www.nlchc.com/first-five-program/>) for families that do not have a primary care provider.

The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre (<https://www.pregnancycentre.org>) offers counselling for women who are experiencing an unexpected pregnancy. The non-profit organization maintains a pro-life perspective, so it is advisable for those considering abortion to look elsewhere for support (Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada 2025, 11). The centre maintains an extensive list of resources on its website for the newly expecting and provides services such as assistance with urine-based pregnancy tests and guidance with adoption and parenting.

Worker Health

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/worker-perspective/>) maintains a clinic in Point Edward that services southwestern Ontario west of London and St. Thomas from Lake Erie to Lake Huron. The clinic provides a number of free services to workers in general. In-person visits are by appointment.

The clinic is not-for-profit and funded by the Prevention Office of the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Services include a program that provides guidance and direction on dealing with workplace situations for specific worker groups, including migrant farm workers. This educational outreach also provides basic information on the operations of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), health and safety committees, the Internal Responsibility System, and Anti-Reprisal Protection. Information about these topics can also be found on the organization's website.

The service also fields inquiries about health and safety issues in the workplace, examines workplaces to identify any health and safety problems, and makes recommendations for groups of workers. The organization will also provide health and safety education to groups.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

Mental health services in Sarnia-Lambton are delivered through various organizations (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/listCategories.aspx?id=10027>). Bluewater Health offers both inpatient and outpatient mental health and addiction services, including programs for withdrawal management and community addictions support. (<https://www.bluewaterhealth.ca/programs-services/mental-health-addiction-services>)

The Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent (<https://lambtonkent.cmha.ca/>) provides community-based mental health services, including crisis intervention, counseling, and outreach programs across multiple locations in the region.

For children and youth, St. Clair Child & Youth Services (<https://www.stclairchild.ca/>) offers a continuum of mental health services, including prevention, assessment, treatment, and crisis intervention. Services are available in both English and French, enhancing accessibility for Francophone immigrants and temporary residents.

The Community Health Integrated Care (CHIC) Team (<https://www.omssa.com/lambton-county-integrated-team/>), a collaborative initiative involving Lambton EMS and other partners, delivers mobile crisis response services to individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental

health challenges. This team plays a vital role in reaching vulnerable populations who may face barriers to accessing traditional healthcare services.

Navigation

Ontario Health at Home (<https://ontariohealthathome.ca>) coordinates home-based and community care, including managing long-term care placement and supportive housing. Among the services the provincial agency offers are home supports to assist recovery after a hospital stay, finding a primary care practitioner, locating community services to maintain independence, and coordinating end-of-life care. People can self-refer themselves to the service, which is delivered in French and English. The agency also maintains the Healthline.ca that lists local resources. On its main website, Ontario Health at Home offers a link to Google Translate for those who do not speak English or French (instructions, however, are in English).

The Family Counselling Centre (<https://agefriendlysarnialambton.ca/Connect>) supplies system navigation services via email and telephone for healthcare, mental health and addictions, family and caregiver supports and many other sectors. According to the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team's annual report, these navigators respond to roughly 27 to 35 calls per month (S-L OHT 2024). The service is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week. Residents can also obtain information about a variety of health-related services through both the Erie St. Clair healthline.ca (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/>) and the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team-operated Age-Friendly Sarnia-Lambton (<https://agefriendlysarnialambton.ca/>). While presented in English, Age-Friendly Sarnia-Lambton does offer a search for accessing services in other languages in its equity, diversity and inclusion services section.

Staff at the Sarnia library can show residents how to navigate resources such as the Age-Friendly website and the Connect My Health portal. The library also provides a soundproof meeting space with a phone, internet connection and a device for those who need access to a private space for a meeting or a virtual appointment (S-L OHT 2024).

Health811 is a free and confidential telephone service that people can call 24 hours a day to get health advice, find health services or obtain localized information about healthcare services (S-L OHT 2024).

Let's Go Home is a program that helps people who have been discharged from hospital to access home and community services for up to six weeks after leaving the hospital (S-L OHT 2024).

Language and Cultural Accessibility

Efforts to enhance language accessibility include the Accès Franco-Santé program (<https://ccfsarnia.com/acces-franco-sante/>), a multi-agency hub providing health and social services in French. This initiative aims to improve service navigation and coordination for Francophone residents.

For migrant workers speaking languages other than English, the Migrant Worker Project by NLCHC (<https://www.nlchc.com/services/migrant-worker-project/>) offers translation services and transportation assistance to facilitate access to healthcare and settlement services. However,

comprehensive information on the availability of interpretation services across other health programs is limited.

The Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team also provides equity, diversity and inclusion training to its partners (S-L OHT 2024).

Housing

Overview

Migrants to the Sarnia-Lambton region will encounter many of the same challenges in securing housing as in other urban and rural locations throughout southern Ontario: an existing housing stock that has not grown apace with local demand, and the region has experienced steep increases in rental and property prices. In turn, recognizing the importance of housing to ensure a healthy, sustainable economy, local governments have responded with efforts to secure new public and private housing resources. Most of these services are delivered in English and/or French. Most of the resources do not specifically target the needs of migrants to the region, other than strategies to house international students. Nevertheless, many of these resources are useful to newcomers, and some, such as community navigators listed below, offer ideas on how to improve not only newcomers' initial experiences in settling in the region, but also their ongoing experiences.

Rental Housing and Home Ownership

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) rental market survey data tables for 2024, Sarnia's total apartment and townhouse rental stock numbered 5,550 and 6,388, respectively (CMHC 2024). Lambton Shores had a stock of 148 apartments and 152 townhouses that same year. No data were given for other communities in the county, but it is reasonable to assume a slight downward trend in total rural rental stock from 2023 to 2024 as was evident in Chatham-Kent, south of Lambton County, for that time period.

Average rents in Sarnia increased more than 9% from 2023 to 2024, with the average monthly rent of a one-bedroom apartment increasing from \$1,099 to \$1,197. In Lambton Shores, rental prices dropped by nearly 12% from 2023 to 2024, with average monthly rents dropping from \$1,455 to \$1,274.

The CMHC data tables indicate that while vacancy rates doubled in Sarnia to 4.8% in 2024 compared to the year before, they substantially declined in Lambton Shores to 0.7% from 3.3%. Of particular note are the relatively high turnover rates of rentals in 2024. These reached 13.7% in Sarnia and 7.5% in Lambton Shores.

By April of 2025, a buyers' market had begun to emerge in the region. Residential sales activity dropped slightly for March 2025 compared to the same time the year before, but the number of listings was well above that of the year before, and of the region's 10-year average, with residential new listings also well above the 10-year average. Average prices also showed a slight decline in March 2025 to just under \$500,000 compared to the month before (just under \$550,000), although it was a considerable spike in average price compared to the same month in 2024 (roughly \$225,000). The year-to-date average price of \$508,763, however, was down only 0.3% compared to the same period in 2024 (Sarnia-Lambton Association of Realtors 2024).

Jeremy Guérette, president of the Sarnia-Lambton Association of Realtors, attributed the market shifts to buyers showing reluctance to buy in the face of the Canada-U.S. trade war while sellers appear motivated to sell (Sarnia-Lambton Association of Realtors 2024). Yet vernacular and

statistical accounts suggest that housing capacity is a mixed bag that differs depending on the type of housing under consideration. In November 2024, for instance, the Smart Prosperity Institute ranked Sarnia 95th out of 100 urban communities across Canada in terms of the total housing starts per 1,000 residents, indicating a shortage of mid-range housing (Moffat 2024). The city ranked 86th in apartments produced and 84th in new builds for a five-year period from July 1, 2018 to July 2024. These statistics reflect a total of 10.7 housing starts per 1,000 residents, or, in total, 769 starts. In terms of apartments, the city had 4.7 per 1,000 people and a total of 769. The city produced six ground units—multiplexes— per 1,000 people, or a total of 433 in the same period. The Ontario government's housing supply tracker, however, indicates that 561 homes have been added in Sarnia since 2022 (Ontario 2025).

Housing Issues

Contributors to Reddit threads have noted a solid availability of apartments for students. Two commenters observed differences in pricing for short-term housing intended to serve construction workers travelling to the city to work on plant maintenance shutdowns and other housing geared to students. "Sarnia isn't too bad for finding a room rental for college, it can look a lot worse than it is though because people see the short-term rentals that plant workers will stay in for significantly higher rates (weekly) and assume it is the same," one poster explained (BackToTheBas1cs 2025). Another poster noted that finding affordable rentals can become difficult as the school term begins (Cin_Mac 2025). Other commenters blamed a large volume of international students for reducing the capacity of rental stock in the city and pushing up rents—comments that may indicate a broader public resentment of migrants with international backgrounds (captainunicornlove 2021; Demirep77 2021). However, with anticipated enrolment of international students reduced because of federal caps on student visas, it is reasonable to assume that there will be a larger-than-normal short-to-mid-term rental capacity available in the fall of 2025 in Sarnia.

County documents indicate that there continues to be significant demand for supportive housing for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. (Issues of homelessness may be of particular concern to immigrants and temporary residents who have been recruited for specific roles that did not work out, and for international students searching for employment.) Homeless numbers have declined between April 2024 and April 2025, although county statistics indicate there are 274 people registered on its By Names List of homelessness, of which 203 are chronically homeless. Shelters over the past year have operated at more than 90% capacity (County of Lambton Homelessness Prevention and Social Planning Department 2025).

New Builds

Public, private, and community efforts to build capacity in various forms of housing are well underway. Several affordable housing projects are at different stages of development in Sarnia. These include a project slated for completion in 2026 that will feature 50 one-bedroom units, of which 14 are March of Dimes-supported units that will provide "scheduled and unscheduled service to people with disabilities" (March of Dimes 2024). Lambton County and Indwell Community Homes also plan to partner to develop and operate between 150 and 300 supportive housing units in the region. The projects are a part of the county's affordable strategic plan, which is also responsible for adding two new community housing units in Sarnia and the

county's recent acquisition of three other properties in Sarnia to use for community housing (Aviles-Saez 2025).

Considerable private development is taking place in Sarnia and throughout the region. In January, the Village of Point Edward passed an official plan amendment that green lights a mixed-use development of low, medium, and high-rise buildings that would add 1,900 units, most of which would be apartment rentals. In Alvinston, at least two subdivisions are at different stages of development. One of these proposes developing 244 mixed-use residential units. In Lambton Shores, a development that consists of 32 single-family dwellings; a three-storey, 70-unit apartment building; and 24 townhouses is also in the pipes. A proposal in Warwick Township calls for the development of 147 units of mixed-use residential housing, and in Petrolia, a 426-home subdivision recently approved to be constructed over time will supply 332 single detached homes and 96 townhouse units. Most of these private projects are supplying "missing middle" housing (Nauta 2025; Malleum Partners 2024; Lambton Shores 2025; Warwick Township 2025; and Wright 2024).

Resources

Housing Supports and Resources Tailored to Immigrants and Temporary Residents

Several supports exist in the region that are focused on helping residents obtain, build, and maintain housing. Some specifically support newcomers. Lambton County, for instance, provides a webpage that provides newcomers with information on community housing, rent supplements, and financial assistance for acquiring homes. On its website (liveinLambton.ca), the county's Department of Social Planning and Children's Services also lists different settlement services that support newcomers seeking or maintaining housing. The Newcomer Settlement Program, which the YMCA Learning and Career Centre operates, assists with finding housing. Some housing supports are also available through the Centre Communautaire Francophone Sarnia-Lambton and Collège Boréal, such as guidance on affordable housing resources and English-to-French translation services (See Settlement Section).

International Student-Specific Housing Resources and Supports

On its website, Lambton College provides several resources for international students seeking accommodations, including links to short-term housing at local hotels, mobile apps for those seeking shared accommodation, information about its college residence, and several rental websites (Lambton College 2025). This listing also provides useful information about how to avoid rental scams.

Vision Nursing Home (<https://www.vision74.com/>), an integrated facility that provides a variety of supportive housing primarily to older adults, provides students with accommodation at affordable rates and part-time work. The facility includes a 146-bed not-for-profit long-term care operation, a rest home, and independent or semi-independent apartments. As of 2022, there was space for 11 students in the program. Most students work as personal support workers, in housekeeping, or in the facility's kitchen (Morden 2022).

The Canada Homestay Network (<https://canadahomestaynetwork.ca/>) is a not-for-profit organization that matches students with hosts. The organization charges students a fee for the

service and pays hosts an allowance. The program ensures accommodations provide, at minimum, a furnished room complete with a bed, clean coverings, private storage, study space and window, as well as access to a shared bathroom. The program offers a variety of meal arrangements from full board (three meals a day) to kitchen access for students to cook their own meals.

Rental Housing

Rental Apps and Social Media

Two relatively new housing rental apps assist in the affordable housing search by matching people to potential roommates or hosts. Developed in Ontario and aimed at the student market, SpacesShared (<https://www.spacesshared.ca/home>) matches students with older adult homeowners with a spare bedroom. Applicants must pass a criminal background check. Those searching for accommodation can use the service for free. Hosts share a small percentage of the rent with the app.

Happipad (<https://happipad.com/>), another Canadian-developed app, works on a similar principle to SpacesShared but targets a more general market. Rental agreements can range from a month to a year. The service also conducts background checks and requires identity verification.

More conventional rental apps include Places4Students.com, 4Rent.ca, Rentseeker, Rentboard, Skyline Living, View.ca, Execurooms.ca, Kijiji and AirBnB. Rentals are also often advertised through social media sites. "For Rent Sarnia and Lambton County" is a private group on Facebook that includes rental listings for the region and other supportive services, such as moving and cleaning services. Realtor.ca Multiple Listings Service also provides some rental listings.

Affordable Housing

The County of Lambton Housing Services administers a variety of housing and financial support programs, of which most require income disclosures. It owns and operates 16 apartments and four family sites that provide rent-geared-to-income housing. As of October 2024, however, the wait list for this program stood at more than 900 (Chaves 2024).

The county also offers a portable housing benefit that recipients apply to a list of privately owned buildings. The buildings where the benefit can be spent are located throughout the county, although most are in Sarnia. Many of those located outside of Sarnia are limited to seniors. In 2024, 127 households received support from this program (County of Lambton Social Services Division 2025).

Another alternative is the county-administered Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, which supports low-income households and vulnerable individuals. This benefit is portable and issued monthly to those who qualify, but its acceptance disqualifies recipients from other housing programs, such as the wait list for social housing and other rent-geared-to-income programs. In 2024, 40 households in the county received the benefit (County of Lambton Social Services Division 2025). Special needs housing is another program available. It requires a referral from a doctor or a support agency.

Other agencies provide housing services to migrants who qualify for a specific support. The Lambton-Kent chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association (<https://lambtonkent.cmha.ca/programs-services/supportive-housing-services/>), for instance, provides a rent supplement for people who live with mental illness and are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness and are receiving clinical case management.

Some housing co-operatives provide subsidized housing to people on low incomes. Co-operative housing is not-for-profit and reinvests any surplus income into its housing. Those who live in these complexes become voting members of the co-operative that owns the facility. These services are all located in Sarnia and include the Alexander Mackenzie Housing Co-operative (<https://alexmaccoop.wixsite.com/home>), Faethorne Place Co-op (faethorneplacecoop@gmail.com) and St Clair Meadows Co-op (stclairmeadows@gmail.com).

Supportive Housing

The March of Dimes operates a 10-bedroom facility that offers round-the-clock supportive living to people with complex care needs. Standing Oaks (<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/acsh/nphl/Pages/Standing-Oaks.aspx>) is located in Sarnia and includes equipment such as ceiling lifts, automatic door openers, and a hydrobath for physiotherapy. The services in the facility are free, and rent is geared to income. Service is in English, and acceptance is based on an assessment.

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton (<https://www.communitylivingsarnia.org/>) provides people with developmental and/or physical disabilities with a range of supports to live independently in the community. These range from independent apartments to shared apartments or townhouses with regular daily and weekly supports. The service maintains three houses that can accommodate up to four people. Service is in English. It offers services for a fee.

Lambton County Developmental Services (<https://lcdspetrolia.ca/>) provides accommodation and support for people with developmental disabilities. The Petrolia-based service also offers a host family service that enables adults eligible for the program to live in a family home environment with non-family caregivers. Host families provide day-to-day care and work with the organization to ensure service users meet their goals. The organization also maintains direct care staff.

St. Francis Advocates (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/mobile/displayservice.aspx?id=41165>) in Arkona operates 13 supported group living homes for adults with developmental disabilities in the broader southwestern Ontario region, including Sarnia-Lambton. The program also provides supported independent living.

Emergency and Temporary Housing

The Inn of the Good Shepherd (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/#lodge>) operates an emergency shelter with 25 beds and two private family rooms. The service provides two meals, computer access, laundry, showers, lockers, phone access, and assistance with finding housing.

The charity also offers five transitional housing spaces to help those designated "hard to house" acquire the skills to maintain permanent housing. Units are furnished and have access to a laundry facility. A transitional support worker also supports this housing by assisting those accepted into the program in setting goals and working toward them. Program participants must also attend programs that build budgeting, cooking, and stress management skills.

The Inn of the Good Shepherd additionally offers short-term co-ed shelter for young adults aged 16 to 21 through its Haven program (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/#haven>). The Haven can house up to nine people—four females and five males—for 30 to 60 days. The program assists residents in securing a source of income and stable housing. Intake can take place day or night. Facilities come with access to laundry and a shared phone. Those who enter the program must follow certain conditions, such as being willing to apply for Ontario Works social assistance.

River City Vineyard (<https://rcv.org/>), a church and community centre in Sarnia, operates a 65-bed shelter service of which 15 beds are designated for women. The service comes with meals and access to showers and clothing.

Women's Interval Home of Sarnia Lambton (<https://www.womensintervalhome.com/>) operates a 17-bed emergency shelter for women — cisgender or transgender, and regardless of sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religious beliefs — and their dependents seeking refuge from unsafe situations. The shelter is available at all hours throughout the week. It does not accommodate pets but can work with others in the community to find a solution to their care. Services are in English or French; interpreters for other languages are available on request. The shelter is located in Sarnia, though it also offers supports to rural areas, including transitional and housing support and transportation, through partnerships with community health centres in Forest, Petrolia, and Watford.

Ohana Landing is a transitional housing facility for homeless or precariously housed youth aged 16 to 24. The Sarnia space offers affordable and furnished apartments for up to four years and support services from Rebound Sarnia-Lambton (Kula 2019). Youth eligible for the program obtain referrals through the county's social services (Morden 2024).

In winter, Lambton County, in partnership with the Inn of the Good Shepherd, operates an Out of the Cold overflow program that provides up to 35 shelter beds and basic needs such as food (Lambton County Homelessness Prevention Services 2025). The county's public health arm also operates warming and cooling centres during bouts of extreme weather at several locations throughout the region. Many of these centres are located in libraries. These centres operate during the locations' regular business hours and are intended to provide residents with some relief from the weather, but do not provide overnight assistance.

Home Ownership

House Sale Listings

Realtor.ca Multiple Listings Service carries the most comprehensive residential sales listings for the Sarnia-Lambton region. The Canadian Real Estate Association operates the service.

Homeowner Financial Support Programs

Under its homeownership down payment assistance program, Lambton County offers eligible households a 20-year interest-free, forgivable loan for a 10% down payment to a new or resale home. Permanent residents and refugee claimants can qualify as long as their gross household income is less than \$99,000 and their household assets are less than \$100,000 (County of Lambton Housing Services Department 2025a). The program is intended to help households that rent transition to home ownership and comes with several conditions. For instance, the loan remains interest and payment free as long as the recipient remains in the home and the home remains the sole primary residence. The county awards applicants on a first-come, first-served basis, and applicants must qualify for a mortgage from a "recognized financial institution" (County of Lambton Housing Services Department 2025a).

Permanent residents and refugee claimants who are homeowners are also among those eligible to be considered for the county's Lambton Renovates program that provides a 10-year forgivable, interest-free loan to a maximum of \$20,000 for home repairs (County of Lambton Housing Services Department 2025b). It also issues a grant of up to \$5,000 for accessibility improvements. Both are one-time loans. Applications are processed first-come, first-served, but there is some flexibility for some repairs as determined by the program administrator. The program requires applicants to meet certain conditions: the home must be owned (not rented), and the householder's sole and principal residence throughout the term of the loan. The home must be over five years old and have a maximum market value of \$325,000. There are limits on the maximum income that can qualify for support. Work has to meet the program's eligibility requirements and cannot start before the loan is approved. Eligible repairs include roof replacements, basement waterproofing, mould removal, electrical, plumbing, and furnace repairs.

Another county homeowner support program is the Additional Dwelling Unit Incentive program, which provides homeowners who qualify with an interest-free, payment-free loan forgiven at a rate of 6.6% of the lowest cost of up to \$25,000 or 75% of the project's total cost to add a dwelling unit in their home. The unit must be made available to a tenant with an income of less than \$99,000 (County of Lambton Housing Services Department 2025b).

Habitat for Humanity also provides financial support to participants in its program and is recruiting families for builds in Sarnia, Petrolia, and Forest. Applicants must meet a variety of conditions to be eligible. These include living in "unsafe, unhealthy, unaffordable, unsuitable, or inaccessible" housing, having a stable income of at least \$22,000, and possessing a willingness to work on the construction project (Habitat for Humanity n.d.-a). Those accepted into the program can expect a 20-year mortgage with zero interest and zero down payment. In February, the charity planned on developing five units in 2025 — one single-family home and a four-plex — in Forest. A five-unit townhouse complex in Sarnia is planned for 2026 (Kula 2025).

Housing Resiliency Programs

The Inn of the Good Shepherd (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/#rent>) administers several programs to help Lambton residents with housing-related expenses, such as rent or utility arrears. Individuals who receive social assistance, such as Ontario Works or ODSP, must first contact their case worker to apply for funding through the municipality residency benefit. An application for rent and utility assistance can be found on The Inn of the Good Shepherd's website:

<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/rent-utility-assistance-form/> (It is not clear whether this form provides funds additional to those available in the programs listed directly below or from these programs.)

The Low-income Energy Assistance Program, (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/#rent>) administered through United Way Simcoe-Muskoka, provides up to \$500 to eligible applicants who have fallen behind on Enbridge Gas or Hydro One payments. Those interested in applying can call 1-855-487-4327 for assistance or to request an application form.

The Ontario Electricity Support Program: (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/#rent>) provides eligible lower-income households with a reduction in their electricity bills. The credit is calculated based on the number of people who live in the home and the combined household income.

Ontario Works (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/applying-for-assistance.aspx>) provides financial assistance for housing and other necessities to Lambton residents who qualify for the support. Lambton County administers the program. People can apply online or by phone.

Ontario residents can also apply for emergency assistance from the province under certain conditions, such as when experiencing an eviction or safety concerns, or having emergency refugee status. Individual eligible participants can receive \$733 a month for food and shelter, and more if there are children. The support can last up to 48 days and be renewed depending on circumstances. Online applications are available to those who can satisfy identification and contact requirements, and, otherwise, from the local Ontario Works office (Ontario 2022).

NeighbourLink Sarnia-Lambton (<https://neighbourlinksarnia.org/>) is a non-denominational service staffed by volunteers and supported by 18 churches in the Sarnia-Lambton region. The call-in service can provide financial assistance with utility cut-offs, rent evictions, and other housing-related issues. The service may refer a caller to another agency better positioned to support or offer a direct connection with a member church. Those wishing to use the service can also find an online contact form. The service is free of charge but is not an emergency service and may sometimes need one to two weeks to provide a service.

The Salvation Army (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=174373>) in Sarnia provides some emergency financial assistance to people unable to pay their rent or utility bills. The support is open to individuals and families in need in the Sarnia-Lambton region. Service is offered in English.

St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank & Help Centre on Davis Street in Sarnia provides financial assistance to individuals and families behind in rent and utilities payments in an effort to prevent homelessness. The centre assists those living in Sarnia and the surrounding area. The office is open Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Service is delivered in English. (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=185433>)

Community Navigators

The Housing and Homelessness Resource Centre (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/housing-homelessness-resource-centre.aspx>) provides culturally appropriate supports and can connect individuals to housing supports such as Community Legal Assistance and programs that assist with housing for special needs, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association. The centre operates during regular daytime hours and shares space with the Out of the Cold shelter overflow program.

Community support workers can be accessed through the County of Lambton's housing services (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/community-support-workers.aspx>). These workers advocate for tenants and can assist with maintaining housing, preventing eviction, establishing a financial budget, mediating tenant issues and complaints, and addressing issues of hoarding and other concerns. They can also provide home visits to ensure the health and safety of clients. These services serve a general population with many different needs and are, therefore, not explicitly focused on migrants, though they are available to them.

Ontario Works (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/emergency-assistance.aspx>) also provides a crisis worker for those experiencing homelessness at its Sarnia office at 162 Lochiel St., from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during weekdays, and through its telephone line, 519-344-2062 ext. 2329.

The North Lambton Community Health Centre, which maintains offices in Forest, Sarnia, Kettle Point, and Watford, offers a community navigator service that provides housing supports, such as assisting with applications and paperwork to connect clients with financial assistance. The program does not specifically target immigrants, but through its migrant worker program, the centre does offer translation services. (<https://www.nlchc.com/services/community-navigators-housing-supports/> and <https://www.nlchc.com/services/migrant-worker-project/>)

The Inn of the Good Shepherd (<https://www.theinnsarnia.ca/programs/>) also provides a rent and utility community outreach worker who can assist residents by connecting them with local resources.

The Women's Interval Home of Sarnia Lambton (<https://www.womensintervalhome.com/who-we-are>) offers a transitional and housing support program to help women entering or leaving shelter and to those in the community needing support. The program involves risk assessment, safety planning, and assistance in obtaining housing and legal supports and in filling out Ontario Works applications. Services are in English or French, and interpreters for other languages are available on request. The service is based in Sarnia, but it provides transitional and housing support to rural residents through partnerships with Forest, Petrolia, and Watford community health centers.

Sarnia Lambton Rebound (<https://www.reboundonline.com/programs/housing-support-worker>) provides a housing support worker to help youth obtain permanent housing, connect with community services and resources, and build independent living skills. The support worker develops transition planning and coordinates the resources to support youth aged 16 to 24.

The Family Counselling Centre offers community navigation services to connect older adults with programs, supports, and services available in Lambton County. The service operates seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 519-336-3000 or 1-888-347-8737, or online through the Age Friendly Sarnia Lambton website (<https://agefriendlysarnialambton.ca/Connect>).

The John Howard Society of Sarnia Lambton (<https://johnhoward.on.ca/sarnia-lambton/services/housingsupport/>) provides intensive case management and assistance in locating housing for those who are chronically homeless or precariously housed. The program helps people develop the skills to achieve housing stability.

Legal Supports

Community Legal Assistance Sarnia (<https://www.claslegalclinic.ca/>) is a non-profit legal clinic that provides free services to residents in Sarnia-Lambton on low incomes. Those on programs such as Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program, or those with active Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims, immediately qualify for the service. While the charge is free, users may be asked to contribute towards fees related to obtaining documents to support a legal action, such as court filings or doctor's fees. The service provides tenants and co-op partners with support for legal issues involving evictions, harassment, rent subsidy cut-offs, and repairs.

The Steps to Justice website (<https://stepstojustice.ca/legal-topic/housing-law/>) provides in-depth information to Ontario residents about housing legalities including a tenant's rights in a shared housing arrangement, explanations about rent-geared to income housing, paying rent, obligations concerning repairs and maintenance, human rights in terms of housing, legal protocols for moving out, eviction, tenant applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board, and how to obtain help in housing law. This resource also provides free online interviews to help people fill out Landlord and Tenant Board forms needed for a legal action concerning housing. The objective of these forms includes asking for money from a landlord that is owed to the renter, compelling landlords to make repairs, and compiling the information needed to object to an eviction. Community Legal Education Ontario/Education juridique communautaire Ontario operates the website. Its services are available in English and French.

Transportation

Overview

In rural-urban communities such as Sarnia-Lambton, transportation is not only about services offered within the region's urban centre but also the pathways and services that connect the centre with its rural surroundings and with other urban centres that its residents routinely connect with, including London, Chatham, Windsor, Goderich and Owen Sound. Recognizing these different modes of physical connection is especially important when considering the choices available to the region's immigrant community and temporary residents.

That a relationship exists between where people choose to live and where people work is supported by a substantial body of research. However, a similar volume of research suggests that people are willing to put some distance between their homes and workplace to locate in a neighbourhood with certain amenities or a community with specific demographics or to obtain a particular type of housing (Kures & Deller 2022, p. 55).

Many factors also condition how much distance an individual is willing to put between these two points, or between housing and other basics of life such as shopping, recreation, education and health services. Factors such as occupation, gender and household structure can also shape attitudes towards commuting (Kures & Deller 2022, p. 55).

Further, studies have shown that commuting is a fact of life in rural and small-town Canada. Health and social services are increasingly consolidated in these regions' urban communities. Recreation, such as youth team sports, routinely involve competing in different communities. One study has put the threshold between too much commute and not enough benefits at, on average, 118 kilometres. This distance is greater than the dimensions of the region where a drive between Thedford in the Municipality of Lambton Shores in north Lambton County to Dresden, just south of the border between Lambton County and Chatham-Kent is roughly 90 kilometres (Kures & Deller 2022, p. 55).

Nor is it safe to assume that commutes always involve people living in rural areas travelling to work in an urban centre. Statistics Canada has found that, on average, urban jobs employ 16% of rural workers and urban workers in turn fill about 7% of rural jobs. Commuting, therefore, tends "to be multidirectional and do not merely follow a periphery-to-core flow" (Harris, Alasia & Bollman 2008, p. 3).

Local Trends and Issues

Indeed, in the Sarnia-Lambton region, where key petrochemical industries are located in the Township of St. Clair, a largely rural municipality, and where two main sectors—education and agriculture—drive the presence of temporary residents, some indications suggest that the relationship between where a newcomer lives and works may not always be closely related. One of these involves well-established commuting behaviour in the region. Roughly one sixth of the population routinely spends more than 15 minutes commuting and a tenth spend up to 29 minutes on the road. Most of these commuters drive themselves (Statistics Canada 2023).

Another indication is the rate of growth in communities outside of Sarnia. In 2025, for instance, the Lambton Area Water Supply System predicted that the fastest growing municipalities over a 20-year period that it serves would be St. Clair Township (24.7%), the Town of Plympton-Wyoming (25%) and the Township of Warwick (21.7%). Over that same period of time Sarnia (10.2%) is expected to grow at half the rate (Lambton Area Water Supply System 2025, 1-5). Petrolia is another community anticipated to grow over the next decade with its population of children aged 0 to 12 projected to grow by 20% from 2021 numbers. This growth has been attributed to the community's appeal to young families (County of Lambton Social Services Division 2024; Wright 2024). The well-documented practice of housing temporary foreign workers that work in agriculture in adjacent urban centres further suggests that housing and workplaces are more commonly split between urban and rural locations than might be anticipated (Enano 2022).

Transportation Infrastructure

Sarnia-Lambton's transportation infrastructure, both within its urban centre of Sarnia and throughout the county reflects how important commuting is to the region's residents—and to economic development. With respect to its highway infrastructure, the region bears a distinct advantage over regions directly to the north because of its direct access to one provincial 400-series highway, two provincial highways (40 and 21), and an international border crossing. These highways and crossing are essential for connecting Sarnia with its other urban counterparts in the southwestern Ontario region and beyond. Fed by a well-developed network of county roads, these highways are also essential for inter-community commuters.

Public transportation has improved in recent years along this regional and inter-regional road network and within Sarnia itself with several types of bus routes available as discussed in the resources section below. However, inter-community public transit is nearly non-existent in the region's rural communities south of Hwy 402. Existing inter-community transit services to the north of the 402 and similar services in Chatham-Kent, directly south of Lambton certainly provide inspiration and the potential for expansion for addressing the public transportation challenges in this rural area. These services rely on all levels of government for support.

For those who do not have access to a vehicle or who are unable to drive distances, private alternatives do exist throughout the region, including taxi, Uber and chartered bus services and rideshare apps. Service organizations provide some transportation services to area residents with special needs, but these services may be limited to specific communities. These and other transportation services and programs are outlined in the resources section.

Resources

Employer Travel Support Commitments Under Temporary Foreign Workers Programs

The federal Seasonal Agricultural Worker program requires employers to pay for the round-trip transportation for the worker between their place of work and their home country. The program allows the employer to recoup some of these costs up to a maximum amount specified in the contract through payroll deductions. For instance, the 2025 contract for seasonal workers from the Caribbean allows employers to deduct up to \$494.00 from workers' pay to cover airport costs

from Kingston, Jamaica to Toronto. The contract also stipulates that the employer must provide the worker with round-trip transportation once a week to do shopping and provide transportation to and from medical appointments (Employment and Social Development Canada 2025). The program covers workers from Mexico and the Caribbean.

Similar conditions apply for temporary foreign workers hired through the agricultural stream (similar to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program but not limited to specific seasons). No such requirements exist under the more general low-wage temporary worker stream, although employers are required to pay for the round-trip between workers' home countries and their place of work. In this case, employers cannot recoup these costs from their employees. No travel requirements exist under the high-wage temporary worker stream, which can include higher level agricultural positions (Employment and Social Development Canada n.d.-a; Employment and Social Development Canada n.d.-b; Employment and Social Development Canada n.d.-c).

Public Transit

Sarnia

Best served with public transportation is Sarnia, which maintains a full roster of public transit services that include both express and regular bus service and a single loop community bus that allows users to avoid transfers and supports those with mobility issues. The city also operates Care-A-Van, a door-to-door public transportation service for people who require vehicles with lifts. (<https://www.sarnia.ca/living-here/getting-around/sarnia-transit/>)

A regular fare costs \$3 but the city offers a wide range of seasonal passes for high school and college students, including those enrolled in adult education programs, seniors, families and members of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. The city also offers a special, year-long relief pass for refugees who have relocated to the city which are available by application. People with low incomes may also qualify for discounted passes and tickets that are available through the Inn of the Good Shepherd. Tickets and passes are available online, at city hall and three other commercial outlets.

Northern Lambton

Two regional, inter-community bus services connect Sarnia with the northern portion of the region and to London. The Huron Shores Area Transit (<https://huronshoresareatransit.ca/>) provides service between Sarnia and Grand Bend and stops at several shoreline communities. Three trips a day in each direction make up the daily service, which charges \$10 or less per trip, depending on the distance. Smart cards are available for monthly passes and can be obtained online and at some local stores. Users can also borrow passes for up to five days from libraries to try the service out (County of Lambton 2024). Buses are accessible, and children under 12 ride for free when accompanied by an adult.

The Inter-Community Bus Service (<https://www.strathroy-caradoc.ca/living-in-strathroy-caradoc/transit/>) connects Sarnia to Strathroy Caradoc and London. The service provides three round trips a day Monday to Friday and two on Saturday and Sunday. Seven regular stops make up the service. Two of these are in Sarnia, three in Middlesex County and two in London. The service also operates a third “flex stop” at the VIA train station in Sarnia. Fares for a one-way

trip range from \$5 to \$20, depending on the distance travelled. The service requires users to book ahead, and its operators are looking at adding more stops, monthly passes, and online purchasing. Currently, seats must be reserved at least 24 hours in advance.

Southern Lambton

The Huron Shores Area Transit (<https://huronshoresareatransit.ca/>) recently introduced service to the community of Plympton-Wyoming as part of its regular inter-community route through the region. Otherwise, public service is non-existent in the rural and small urban areas south of Hwy 402.

Private Transportation

Rail

VIA Rail (<https://www.viarail.ca/en>) provides service between Sarnia, Wyoming, and London, with one trip a day in each direction. A one-way regular fare from Sarnia to London costs \$26 and a roundtrip fare starts at \$52.

Bus

FlixBus (<https://www.flixbus.ca/>) offers regular service between Sarnia and London, Toronto and, in partnership with Greyhound, between Sarnia and Ann Arbor, Michigan at a frequency of one trip a day, six days a week.

Taxis and Shuttles

Several taxi services operate within Sarnia and the adjacent communities of Point Edward and Brights Grove. Selections can be found in online directories such as Yelp.ca and Yellowpages.ca. Many of these services operate only within the urban area but some do offer services to a broader geographic area.

Grace Taxi (<https://www.gracetaxis.ca/>) and airport shuttle, for instance, serves the northern end of the region, and, along with providing shuttle services to bus and train stations in Sarnia and London, it provides transportation for people on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, as well as employee transportation.

Walker's Shuttle Service (<https://www.facebook.com/people/Walkers-shuttle-service/61575096307219/>), launched in 2025, offers service throughout the Sarnia-Lambton region for set rates. These rates range from \$3 to travel from Sarnia to Point Edward and \$41 between Sarnia and Alvinston to \$70 to London or Windsor.

Petrolia Taxi (<https://canada.chamberofcommerce.com/business-directory/ontario/petrolia/taxi-service/841626-petrolia-taxi>) offers local transportation and individual inter-community transportation for set fees.

Wyoming-based Prestige Specialty Car Service (<https://www.prestigelimousine.ca/>), another airport shuttle service, also provides transportation to medical appointments and other destinations for special occasions. It offers rate packages for seniors and corporations.

Uber, (<https://www.uber.com/ca/en/ride/>) an online-booking ride service, also offers service throughout the Sarnia-Lambton region.

Community Services

The Sarnia-Lambton Branch of the Canadian Red Cross provides transportation within Sarnia for the frail, elderly and disabled for a set fee. It is available to people who cannot use public or private services and will transport clients to medical appointments, grocery stores, social outings including day programs. The service operates within Sarnia, Point Edward and Bright's Grove. It can also provide service to clients who need to obtain service from locations in the London-Windsor corridor. Those wishing to use the service must be able to get in and out of a van on their own and be over the age of 17 years. Requirements for bookings range from two days in advance for within the Sarnia area and five days in advance for out of the region. (<https://eriestclairhealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=40261>)

The North Lambton Community Health Centre (<https://www.nlchc.com/services/migrant-worker-project/>) offers temporary residents working in agriculture rides to its programs free of charge. It also provides information and instruction about bicycle and road safety.

Lambton Elderly Outreach (<https://www.lambtonelderlyoutreach.org/>), based in Wyoming, provides transportation within a 160 km radius from its office at Reeces Corners on Oil Heritage Road south of Hwy 402. Available to adults 60 years or older or adults with disabilities, the service provides non-emergency transportation to local and long-distance medical appointments and for activities such as grocery shopping and banking. The service features volunteer drivers and a paid staff driver and has accessible vans. The service also provides non-urgent stretcher van transportation between home and hospital. Fees vary and users apply via an intake form.

The Four Counties Health Services Community Support Services offers transportation to locations centred around Rodney, in Elgin County, to residents in southeastern Lambton County. This service provides non-emergency transportation to local appointments and activities and costs \$8 one way or \$16 return, although it will also consider special arrangements. It serves older adults, people with disabilities and anyone requiring transportation to a medical appointment. Service is wheelchair accessible. Users must call ahead to book service. (<https://www.southwesthealthline.ca/displayService.aspx?id=11127>)

Micro Loans for Vehicle Purchases

Since the mid-2010s, the county has offered micro loans for vehicle purchases through its Circles program (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/circles/circles.aspx>) to qualifying sole-support parents, including migrants, who are enrolled in post-secondary studies or employed. The loans ranges from about \$3,000 to \$4,000. Applicants do not have to be on social support programs to qualify. Circles is a community initiative intended to help people identify the barriers they must overcome to break out of poverty and provide supports and a community network to help them develop strategies to overcome these hurdles (M. Creasor, personal communication, May 7, 2025).

Rideshares

A number of social media sites and apps offer opportunities for people to find rides to other locations. Some of these are specific, such as Lambton-Sarnia Rideshare. This private members' group on Facebook connects students throughout the county to share transportation. Other notices may appear on more generalized pages, such as Lambton Buy, Sell, Trade, Free on Facebook.

Poparide (<https://www.poparide.com/>) is an online Canadian carpooling service. The service matches drivers with passengers for carpooling. Passengers pay a fee for carpooling. A ride to London from Sarnia, for instance, may cost \$16 or more. The service requires all users to provide identifying information, including cell phone numbers and pictures of themselves. It also allows passengers to review drivers.

Childcare

Overview

Sarnia-Lambton's network of regulated childcare services is extensive and well established. The system's core features a central clearinghouse, called the OneList, which parents and guardians access through the County of Lambton's website (https://onehsn.com/lambton/ux_2_0). Parents and guardians use OneList to register their children for daycare. The system subsequently distributes applications to the selected daycare facilities.

The county website also provides information about other childcare supports such as access to daycare and recreational subsidies and to Pathways Health Centre for Children (<https://www.pathwayscentre.org/>), which maintains the region's Smart Start Hub, an assessment referral service for child and youth development supports, and the No Wrong Door Program, which helps to equip the many agencies and organizations to assist families and children with obtaining the services and supports they need. EarlyON Child and Family Centres (<https://earlyonlambton.ca/>) throughout the region round out access to institutional childcare services. EarlyON can also help parents connect with public health programs, SmartStart and SoundStart (a preschool speech and language service also coordinated by Pathways).

As with many other community services in Lambton, the network is designed to accommodate a wide variety of needs. Newcomers can receive assistance from settlement agencies to negotiate the system, and small additions in the system's design make solid contributions toward accommodating the specialized needs of newcomers (See Settlement section). Provincial requirements mandated in 2023 require that local childcare strategies target underserved and vulnerable populations and "meet or exceed the proportion of French language spaces for ages 0 to 5, proportional to the population of Francophone people in Ontario." (Ontario 2023, p. 10) Locally, this mandate has resulted in the addition of a 32-space French daycare in Sarnia, the inclusion of tools to translate the OneList and SmartStart web pages into many different languages, and English and French versions of the EarlyON Child and Family Centres website (Kula 2024).

Under its No Wrong Door program (<https://www.pathwayscentre.org/no-wrong-door/>), Pathways offers a reference guide to help childcare professionals determine when to seek advice or treatment for a child. Along with tackling topics such as signs of bullying and dental and hearing issues, the guide includes some information about topics of inclusivity, such as how to talk to parents about sensitive issues, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This section of the guide defines terms such as equity, diversity, and inclusion and lists their legally protected characteristics. The guide's settlement services section lists challenges children might face as they adjust to new environments. These include items such as cultural shock, language barriers, lack of familiarity with certain foods, adolescent identity issues, discrimination, and change in economic status for the family. The guide also lists settlement supports, although this list needs to be updated to include French-language services.

The Space Crunch and Other Issues

Few other supports exist to assist newcomers facing challenges with the system that are also experienced by the community at large. A lack of childcare spaces because of a lack of early care educators to fill positions is of central concern. When La Garderie Beaux Sourires, Sarnia's French-speaking daycare, opened in 2024, for instance, a lack of staff meant only 13 children were enrolled even though the facility had been funded for 32, and the previous bilingual service in the city closed in 2022 after it lost its staff (Kula 2024; Morden 2022). This gap is especially concerning considering that the County has identified 231 children in the region who speak French as their official language (County of Lambton 2024).

The space crunch has contributed to extended wait lists. Garderie had a wait list of 180 names at the time of opening. In September 2024, more than 3,000 children were on the OneList waiting for a spot in daycare. Childcare is labour intensive, especially with regard to younger children: infants require one educator per three children, toddlers one per five, and preschoolers one per eight. The County has sponsored a year-long fast-track program for early childhood educators at Lambton College to address the staffing issue. The program, taken after typical working hours, allows daycare workers a chance to meet qualification requirements while working. It was anticipated that 20 people would take the program in 2025. To qualify for the county-funded spots, students must agree to work in the County for two years after completing the course (Roushorne 2024).

Another documented gap is a lack of readily available information to clarify how the service works. Local journalist Melissa Roushorne (2024) has reported on the confusion arising from differences in acceptance criteria between daycares and services and how services are accessed. She notes that some services establish a certain number of spaces each year to introduce some predictability but charge an upfront fee to guarantee the space. OneList cannot provide its users with standard wait times because wait lists vary from service to service and depending on the child's needs. Parents may not enrol their children early enough, resulting in long waits, or delay application because they think they can access it through the school system since many daycare facilities are attached to schools. Another bottleneck arises from most parents taking a 12-month rather than an 18-month parental leave, straining the space allocated for infants (Roushorne 2024). The website also fails to explain that due to long wait times, once a space has been assigned, it is difficult to switch to a different provider because the match is based on the child's needs at a particular stage of development, which may change by the time another space becomes available.

A recent survey of area employers has indicated that a lack of access to childcare is a significant issue in retaining employees (SWLDB 2025, p. 12). The County has been working on easing wait list times and improving local access to childcare by developing 573 new childcare spaces in high-need areas by December 2026, responding to forecasts that the population of children in the County will grow by up to 15% between 2023 and 2051 (Ontario 2025). The number of new spaces reflects the number needed to ensure the County meets the province's goal of establishing an access rate of 37% by the end of 2026 or the equivalent of one affordable childcare space for every 2.7 children aged 0 to 5. As of May 8, 2025, the County's access rate was 26.6% (Morden 2025).

Mitigation Strategies

The County has adopted different strategies to generate the spaces. It has offered start-up grants to service providers that target neighbourhoods that need more spaces and administers the provincial wage subsidy for early childhood educators. In Petrolia, whose current population of over 6,000 has been underserved, the County is leading the development of a new facility to add 73 licensed spaces in a new daycare facility by 2026. The addition addresses past undersupply and responds to estimates of 20% population growth in the community over the next decade and the County's current largest concentrated population of children under four years old, "pointing to the fact that many young families are choosing to live there." (Wright 2024; Morden 2025). Late last year, 300 children in the town were waiting for childcare, and the town would need 120 new spaces to meet the provincial targets for childcare access (Wright 2024). Many other rural communities where the population of children up to age 12 is expected to increase significantly have also been targeted for an expansion of services: Lambton Shores, Plympton-Wyoming, and St. Clair Township are slated to receive more childcare spaces, with the cluster of Sarnia, Brights Grove, and Point Edward anticipated to receive 113 new spaces in total (County of Lambton 2024, p.20).

Currently, OneList contains 79 childcare providers. Three of these provide home-based service, more than half provide service in centres located throughout the region, five are nursery-based, roughly a third are school-based, and seven are recreation-based. Of these services, 20 accept infants, 32 accept toddlers, 45 accept preschoolers, four offer an extended day, and 74 provide for special needs. Of the services registered, 54 provide full-day service and only one provides evening service, but the service, Ska:na, specializes in supporting Indigenous communities on-reserve and in urban areas. Only one of these services does not accept the Ontario childcare subsidy.

Childcare subsidies have not yet met the provincial target of \$10 a day by 2026. In September 2024, the provincial average for daily licensed childcare was \$20 (Roushorne 2024).

Resources

Regulated Childcare

The OneList Lambton hosted on the County of Lambton website provides a centralized window for applying for childcare in the Sarnia-Lambton region (https://onehsn.com/lambton/ux_2_0). The website subscribes to Google Translate, allowing applicants to review the application in the language of their choice.

The application process involves three sections — gathering information about the parent or guardian, gathering information about the children who will receive the service, and referral to childcare programs that match the family's needs and the generation of applications to these programs.

Applicants can expect to fill out a variety of details about their child including primary language (English, French, Other) and school board (of which there are four: Lambton Kent District School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence, and St. Clair

Catholic District School Board). Parents can identify if their child has Indigenous or Francophone ancestry or has special health or development needs.

The system also provides links to information about children's services and the local childcare sector. (The links in the system, however, appear to be out of date or broken.) The County provides information about daycares on its website, including an interactive map to help parents narrow their search for appropriate services.

Unregulated Childcare

Families can arrange unregulated care for a maximum of five children who are 13 years old and under. According to the Finding Quality Child Care website (see the section regarding this website below), provincial legislation requires unregulated caregivers to "include their own children in the number of children under four years. No more than two children under two years (including the caregiver's children) may be cared for" (Childcare Resource and Research Unit 2016).

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres (<https://earlyonlambton.ca/>) are situated throughout the region and offer a place where parents or caregivers and children under their care aged 0 to 6 can play and learn together. These centres offer a range of availability. Centres in rural communities such as Alvinston and Corunna are open for partial days one to three days a week; in larger communities such as Forest, Sarnia, and Petrolia, they are available throughout the week and on Saturdays. Mobile programs serve smaller communities such as Bright's Grove, Brigden, Grand Bend, and Thedford with one-day-a-week service. These centres encourage learning through play and parents' or caregivers' involvement in children's development. The centres also offer a chance for families and children to socialize with others and to access other professionals, such as public health.

Pathways Health Centre for Children

Through its SmartStart Hub Services, Pathways Health Centre for Children (<https://www.pathwayscentre.org/>) connects families with local developmental services and supports for children and youth. The hub acts as a centralized point of entry for families to access these services. It defines developmental services and supports as those needed to address concerns about a child's mobility, ability to perform routine daily activities, communicate their needs, or participate in activities. The service offers intake and coordination of services and explores the family's concerns. Its website offers play and learn activities, a tool to help parents identify concerns about their child's development, links to information about autism and speech language milestones, and other programs.

Pathways also hosts a complimentary service, No Wrong Door, that equips its partner agencies and childcare professionals with information and methods to direct families to organizations that can help address their needs (<https://www.pathwayscentre.org/no-wrong-door/>). The program supplies its partners with an intake form that it completes with the parents and provides protocols on how to explain the services available in the County. Parents or guardians must express consent for the referral service by signing the form in person or by providing oral consent over the phone. Participating agencies can refer directly to a resource, such as EarlyON Child and

Family Centres or a library, or they can send the form to Pathways, which can determine the next steps.

Financial Resources

Childcare Subsidy, Lambton County

The County offers a childcare subsidy based on family income and the family's need for childcare. Reasons for needing childcare include working, attending school or a training program, or having a child with special needs (https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/child-care-subsidy.aspx?_mid_=117264). The share of the cost is based on the family's net income as reported on line 236 from the current income tax notice of assessment. Along with providing an explanation of the subsidy online, the County provides a calculator (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/child-care-subsidy-calculator.aspx>) that helps parents determine how much funding they will be eligible for.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs who attend regulated childcare can be eligible for a subsidy administered by the County (See "Childcare Subsidy, Lambton County" above).

Youth Recreation and Sports Program Support

Families that receive social assistance from the County, such as Ontario Works, subsidized childcare, or rent-geared-to-income housing, are eligible to receive support for enrolling their children in recreation and sport activities. The County administers the program. (<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/subsidies-and-supports.aspx>)

Navigation Services

Settlement agencies such as the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario—Sarnia-Lambton YMCA Jerry McCaw Family Centre or the French Canadian Association of Ontario London-Sarnia Regional Council (ACFO) and Collège Boréal offer some support in helping newcomers connect with the childcare system.

Online Resources

Social Media

Several social media sites support parents looking for childcare resources. The "Sarnia Mom Group," for instance, is a private group on Facebook with 2,500 members. "Mommy Market Sarnia," also on Facebook, is a place where members can search for goods and services.

Finding Quality Child Care Website

This website (www.findingqualitychildcare.ca), developed by the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, a non-profit policy institute in Toronto, provides general information for parents on how to find appropriate childcare for their children. The website contains a helpful discussion of what quality means in terms of service delivery and how children and parents perceive it. It advises when to begin looking for childcare and describes how the system is designed. The website also defines the difference between regulated and unregulated childcare.

Insights from the Settlement Sector

This section draws on survey data from two settlement sector organizations: the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario's (YSWO's) Settlement and Integration Services and the Centre communautaire francophone Sarnia-Lambton (CCFSL). The findings reflect the perspectives of organizations that provide settlement services, and offer insight into how policies, funding, and programming can be enhanced to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for all newcomers in the Sarnia-Lambton region.

Organizational Service Summaries

YMCA of Southwestern Ontario—Settlement and Integration Services

The YSWO's Settlement and Integration Services program provides services in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. Most of their settlement and integration clients are immigrants (85%), with the remainder being temporary migrants (15%). The services they provide include:

- Employment assistance (provided to immigrants);
- Settlement needs assessment and support services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants); and
- Language training (immigrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Improved official language skills;
- Improved health, mental health, and well-being;
- Improved access to education;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education;
- The creation of social and professional networks;
- Settlement; and
- Integration.

Newcomer services at the YSWO are funded by IRCC and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), and the effectiveness of these services is assessed through annual client satisfaction surveys.

Centre Communautaire Francophone de Sarnia-Lambton

CCFSL provides services exclusively in French. Approximately 20% of their clients are immigrants and 10% are temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Health services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Language training (immigrants and temporary migrants); and

- Welcoming new residents (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Improved official language skills;
- Improved health, mental health, and well-being;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education; and
- Integration.

They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of the services they provide to immigrants and temporary migrants.

Data Sharing

One of the settlement sector respondents—the YSWO’s Settlement and Integration Services—reported that they collect and store data about their clients in a data management system. This system is capable of producing reports on topics such as client demographics and service delivery, and they have used this system in the past to collect data on behalf of community partners. They have also collected and shared some data publicly through IRCC-funded Service Delivery Improvement projects. They would be willing to contribute anonymized data about their clients to an aggregated community data repository, though they would need to consult with and receive approval from IRCC beforehand.

Inter-Organizational Awareness and Collaboration

The settlement sector respondents demonstrated an inconsistent level of awareness regarding the services that are provided to immigrants and temporary migrants by other organizations in the Sarnia-Lambton region—while the YSWO’s Settlement and Integration Services reported that they are extremely aware of the other services that are available, CCFSL indicated that they are only slightly aware of the services offered by others in the community. This pattern is mirrored in their responses to the question of how often they work with other organizations in Sarnia-Lambton to provide services to immigrants and temporary migrants, with the YSWO’s Settlement and Integration Services stating that they always work with others and CCFSL noting that they sometimes work with others to deliver services. Both, however, frequently make referrals to other services as needed. Clients are often referred to government programs and services, community and social services, educational institutions, immigration services, housing services, employment services, language services, legal aid, and healthcare programs. The YSWO’s Settlement and Integration Services further specified that they maintain formal partnerships with the local school boards through Memoranda of Understanding, which aids in their ability to deliver Settlement Worker in School (SWIS) programming. They also have strong relationships with agricultural employers in Lambton County.

In addition to connections with others within Sarnia-Lambton, both settlement sector respondents maintain connections with organizations outside of the region. The YSWO’s Settlement and Integration Services, for instance, is an active member of the Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in London-Middlesex, Huron County, and Windsor-Essex. They share resources and best

practices with others throughout the province and country through their connections with other YMCA locations and their participation in networks such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and the Canadian Council for Refugees. CCFSL, on the other hand, collaborates with Carrefour communautaire francophone de London (CCFL) to support Francophone newcomers in local schools.

Perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a Destination for Migrants

Both of the settlement sector respondents reported that they believe that both immigrants and temporary migrants are drawn to the Sarnia-Lambton region due to the reasonable cost of living, affordable housing, strong sense of safety, and welcoming and inclusive community that is present in the region, as well as the presence of family and friends who live in the area. The availability of community amenities and services, nature, education prospects, employment or self-employment prospects, and the reputation of Sarnia-Lambton were further highlighted by one of the respondents as attractive features of the region. These factors contribute to a perception that immigrants, in particular, are very likely to remain in the region long-term.

Perceptions of How Migrants are Faring in Sarnia-Lambton

Both of the settlement sector respondents indicated that they believe migrants in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia are faring slightly better than those in the city of Sarnia and that immigrants are generally doing better than temporary migrants in both settings. When asked to elaborate on the reasoning behind their responses, one respondent stated that a high quality of life is more readily available outside of the city than inside and that those who choose to settle outside of the city tend to already be advantaged in some ways:

Communities in Lambton County often have lower housing costs and do not have homeless encampments. Additionally, evidence of the opioid epidemic is much more obvious and out in the open in Sarnia when compared with the smaller communities of Lambton County. Additionally, newcomers that end up settling in the communities of Lambton County are already faring better for a variety of reasons. E.g. they have already been in Canada for some time, and this is secondary migration from a larger urban community; they are more likely to own their home; they are more likely to be in the Family Class [of immigrants] and have family members to support them.

The other respondent commented that resources within the city are sometimes limited due to underfunding, whereas this seems to be less of an issue in the region of Lambton outside of the city.

The availability of services was also noted as a factor that limits how well different groups of migrants fare, with one respondent explaining that they rated “immigrants as faring better [than temporary migrants] due to the limited eligibility that temporary migrants face when it comes to access to services and supports.” They further indicated that immigrants—particularly those that come to Canada through family sponsorship—often benefit from robust support systems, which help them establish strong social networks. In contrast, international students and refugee claimants may struggle to make local connections, while migrant agricultural workers are often isolated due to their work environment.

Identified Needs and Recommendations

There is a shared sentiment from both of the settlement sector respondents that immigrants and temporary migrants can access services relatively easily in Sarnia. However, in the broader Lambton region outside of Sarnia, accessing necessary resources is believed to be more difficult for both groups. Both respondents also indicated that there are specific services or supports for migrants that are lacking in the city of Sarnia and in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. They further stated that there are specific activities that could be done to better support immigrants and temporary migrants in Sarnia-Lambton. In particular, the following needs and recommendations were identified by settlement sector respondents:

- **Expand Funding:** Temporary migrants, refugee claimants, and international students face the greatest barriers to services. Increased funding would enable the delivery of essential programming, including legal aid, healthcare, and language training, to these individuals and migrants in general. It would also allow necessary resources to be purchased (e.g. computers for delivering strong and effective programs) and staff to be trained and supported.
- **Expand the Focus of Support:** International students have received a great degree of focus and support to date. Enrolment of international students, however, is beginning to slow, meaning that they do not provide a stable solution for addressing population declines and labour gaps. As such, specific attention should be given to supporting refugee claimants and protected people, who often excel economically but may otherwise leave the region due to lack of opportunities.
- **Enhance Career-Focused Employment Services:** Programs should be developed to support credential recognition, address underemployment, and guide career advancement to prevent economic stagnation among skilled migrants. As one respondent said, “Employment services focus on “getting a job,” but newcomers need support with career advancement so that they do not end up underemployed in survival jobs and not using the skills, abilities, and experience that would benefit our local community.”
- **Develop Navigation Aids:** Migrants should be provided with guidance on how to navigate Canadian culture, Canadian work environments, and the various services that are available to them. In addition to training in these areas, a database of services should be developed.
- **Invest in Transportation Services:** Transportation services and supports should be enhanced/provided so that in-person programming is accessible to all migrants.
- **Increase Affordable Housing Options:** More investments in housing are required to meet the growing needs of migrant populations, especially those facing financial constraints.
- **Improve Staff Training:** Service providers should receive ongoing education on the unique needs of diverse migrant populations to ensure that barriers are recognized and addressed and that services adequately meet the needs of the migrants who use them.
- **Support Community-Wide Education:** Anti-immigrant sentiment should be addressed through public education campaigns and outreach to provide accurate information about migrants and their contributions to the community.
- **Foster Community Involvement:** Migrants and other members of the community should be consulted to ensure that service and activity development and provision is

informed by the needs and wants of the individuals most impacted by these services and activities.

Insights from the Employment Sector

This section presents findings from the following nine employment sector organizations that responded to the survey: the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, Express Employment Professionals, Community Futures Lambton, the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce, the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP), Ontario Works, The WorkPlace Group, Service Canada, and Lambton College Community Employment Services. These organizations offer a wide array of services, including employment assistance, career development, community connections, civic engagement opportunities, and social networking.

Organizational service summaries

Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board provides services in English. Approximately 5% of their clients are immigrants. Though none of their current clients are temporary migrants, they offer education and training services to both immigrants and temporary migrants. The intended outcomes of these services are:

- A stronger labour force and
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education.

They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals provides services in English. Approximately 13% of their clients are immigrants and 25% are temporary migrants. The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (provided to immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- A stronger labour force and
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education.

The effectiveness of these services is evaluated through third-party surveys and reviews posted on Google and social media.

Community Futures Lambton

Community Futures Lambton—formerly known as the Sarnia-Lambton Business Development Corporation—provides services in English. Approximately 20% of their clients are immigrants and none are temporary migrants. The services they offer include:

- Community connections (immigrants),
- Business plan development, and

- Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) loan support.²

Through these services, they provide Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents opportunities for business loans of up to \$300,000, business coaching, and other support services free of charge. The effectiveness of these services is evaluated through a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which tracks client interactions and outcomes.

Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce

The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce provides services in English. Approximately 7% of their clients are immigrants and 6% are temporary migrants. The services they offer include:

- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Education and training services (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education;
- Creation of social and professional networks;
- Financial independence;
- Ability to secure adequate housing;
- Settlement; and
- Integration.

They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership

SLEP—which provides services in English—serves a large number of migrants, with immigrants making up approximately 20% and temporary migrants approximately 30% of their clientele. The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants); and
- Cross-cultural sensitivity training or anti-racism training (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- A stronger labour force and
- The creation of social and professional networks.

² They did not specify if business plan development and SME loan support is provided to immigrants and/or temporary migrants.

The effectiveness of these services is evaluated via surveys, follow-up interviews, and the collection of client success stories.

Ontario Works

Ontario Works provides services in English. Approximately 10% of their clients are immigrants and none are temporary migrants. The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Social support services (immigrants); and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education and
- Financial independence.

They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

The WorkPlace Group

The WorkPlace group provides services in English. Immigrants and temporary migrants make up 12% and 30% of their clientele, respectively. The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

They further specified that temporary migrants receive non-case-managed services because they are ineligible for case-managed services.

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- A stronger labour force and
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education.

They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

Service Canada

Service Canada provides services in both English and French. This federal agency supports a large volume of migrants, with approximately 60% of their clients being immigrants and temporary migrants.³ The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Social support services (immigrants and temporary migrants); and

³ When asked to indicate what percentage of their clients are immigrants and what percentage are temporary migrants, this respondent answered 60% for both. It has been presumed, therefore, that this number refers to immigrants and temporary migrants combined.

- Federal benefits (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Settlement; and
- Integration.

Key performance indicators are analyzed on a monthly basis to determine if organizational priorities are being met.

Lambton College Community Employment Services

Lambton College Community Employment Services provides services in English. They serve a small proportion of migrants, with immigrants and temporary migrants each making up 1% of their clientele. The services they offer include:

- Employment assistance (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- A stronger labour force;
- Improved access to education; and
- The creation of social and professional networks.⁴

Data Sharing

Five of the employment sector respondents reported that they collect data about their clients that include whether they are immigrants or temporary migrants. In particular, The WorkPlace Group collects information about clients' residential status and ability to work in Canada as part of the Employment Ontario intake process, and, as mentioned previously, Community Futures Lambton collects general data on everyone they serve through their CRM system. As a newly appointed service provider organization (SPO), SLEP will soon be collecting client data through IRCC's iCARE system, but they were unable to provide details about the type of data that will be collected. Lambton College Community Employment stated that they collect limited data on their clients, and Service Canada did not describe the type of data they collect or their data collection processes. Two of the employment sector respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute anonymized data about their migrant clients to an aggregated community repository—The WorkPlace Group specified that they would be willing to provide details about their number of Permanent Resident clients on a yearly basis, and SLEP is also willing to share some of the data they collect, but they would need to seek approval from IRCC beforehand.

⁴ This respondent appears to have misinterpreted the question of if and how they evaluate the effectiveness of their services. As such, their response to this question has not been included.

Inter-Organizational Awareness and Collaboration

On average, the employment sector respondents indicated that they are moderately aware of the services provided to immigrants and temporary migrants by other organizations in the Sarnia-Lambton region. The highest level of awareness was reported by the Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board and SLEP, both of whom responded that they are very aware of the various services that are available to migrants in Sarnia-Lambton, and the lowest level of awareness was reported by Community Futures Lambton, who stated that they are marginally aware of the services available to migrants in the region.

The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce always works with other groups and organizations to provide services to immigrants and temporary migrants, including the SL-LIP, SLEP, and the Sarnia-Lambton Immigration Task Force. Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development, SLEP, and Service Canada also often collaborate with others. Community Futures Lambton never works with others to provide services to temporary migrants and rarely works with others to serve immigrants. The other respondents rarely or sometimes collaborate with others to serve migrants in Sarnia-Lambton. In particular, Ontario Works often partners with organizations that provide translation services, and Lambton College Community Employment collaborates with the YMCA's Newcomer Services, SLEP, the County of Lambton, Lambton College's Co-op & Career Services, and Employment Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills program and Integrated Employment Services.

Lambton College Community Employment rarely makes referrals for immigrants but often refers temporary migrants to English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, government services, and, for those who are students, other college services. Referrals for temporary migrants are never made by Community Futures Lambton and are rarely made by Ontario Works. All of the other respondents indicated that they sometimes or often make referrals for migrants as needed. Referrals are commonly made to other employment and business development services, health and mental health services, networking and community connection services, social services, financial services, Francophone and language-based services, housing services, and literacy and academic services. Specific examples were provided by The WorkPlace Group, who stated that they "refer temporary migrants to the community navigator for health/housing and settlement services at the YMCA for various tasks such as work permit questions, language groups, etc."

Four of the employment sector respondents noted that they have links with other organizations outside of Sarnia-Lambton with whom they can share lessons and best practices about providing services to migrants. In particular:

- The Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce is connected with other Chambers of Commerce through the Ontario and Canadian Chamber of Commerce networks;
- SLEP has ties with WILL Employment Solutions, the Newcomer Centre of Peel, and various services in Chatham-Kent;
- The WorkPlace Group is a member of First Work, which is a provincial workforce development network; and
- Service Canada has many community partners at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels.

Perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a Destination for Migrants

When asked about why they believe migrants choose to come to Sarnia-Lambton, three of the employment sector respondents declined to answer, with one of these three stating that they did not “feel qualified to answer,” and that they had “insufficient data to provide an informed answer.” Of the six who did respond, all six indicated that they believe migrants are drawn to the region due to its sense of safety and the presence of friends and family living in Sarnia-Lambton. The reasonable cost of living (selected by five of the respondents); education prospects (selected by four of the respondents); availability of affordable housing and nature (both selected by three of the respondents); and the welcoming and inclusive community, employment or self-employment prospects, and reputation of Sarnia-Lambton (all selected by two of the respondents) were also cited as attractive features of the region. On average, employment sector respondents believe that immigrants are moderately likely to remain in the region long term, though two of the respondents believe that long-term retention is only slightly likely. In particular, these two respondents raised concerns about a lack of community amenities and services, limited diversity in the region, poor education prospects, poor employment or self-employment prospects, an inability for individuals to obtain appropriate health care, poor public transportation, and a lack of services in Sarnia-Lambton.

Perceptions of How Migrants are Faring in Sarnia-Lambton

Two of the employment sector respondents declined to respond to the question of how immigrants and temporary migrants are faring in Sarnia-Lambton, with one of these two again stating that they “do not have sufficient information to provide an answer.”⁵ The respondents who did respond believe that, on average, immigrants and temporary migrants are faring similarly to one another and both are faring slightly better in the city of Sarnia than in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. In particular, migrants are perceived to be faring moderately well in the city of Sarnia and slightly well in the region outside of the city. This difference was attributed to the greater availability of services and opportunities within the city, such as public transportation, employment prospects, and settlement services. Navigating these services, however, can still pose a challenge, with one respondent explaining that they rated migrants as faring only moderately well because they “feel the services are a bit disconnected from each other and can be confusing for a newcomer [in terms of] who is doing what in the community.

Identified Needs and Recommendations

When asked to rate how easy they believe it is for immigrants and temporary migrants to access services in Sarnia-Lambton, two of the employment sector respondents declined to respond. Responses from those who did respond ranged from difficult to easy, with average responses indicating that employment sector respondents perceive service access to be moderately easy for immigrants and slightly easy for temporary migrants in the city of Sarnia and slightly difficult for both groups in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. Five of the employment sector respondents reported that there are specific services or supports for migrants that are currently lacking in the city of Sarnia and four stated that services or supports are lacking in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. Six of the respondents further commented that there are specific

⁵ One of the other employment sector respondents was also excluded from analyses in this section due to question misinterpretation.

activities that could be done to better support migrants in Sarnia-Lambton. In particular, the following needs and recommendations were identified by employment sector respondents:

- **Expand Funding:** Increased funding is necessary to support the development and delivery of essential services and programming for migrants, including employment services; services for temporary migrants; community navigation services; and recreational, social, and cultural events.
- **Expand the Focus of Support:** Service eligibility should be expanded to include international students and other temporary migrants who are not currently eligible for the same level of support as Permanent Residents. This would require additional funding and coordination from multiple levels of government.
- **Provide Targeted Services:** Service availability, in general, needs to be expanded to match the growth of the population in Sarnia-Lambton. Wherever possible, these services should be targeted to the specific needs of the community, with dedicated providers being funded to provide these targeted services. Immigration-focused legal services, for example, should be made available to both immigrants and temporary migrants, and in the employment sector, an employment service provider should be designated to provide support to temporary migrants.
- **Help Migrants Develop In-Demand Skills:** Supports should be provided to help migrants develop important skills, such as language skills, interpersonal skills, and other soft skills. These skills will be beneficial in both employment settings and community integration.
- **Reduce Barriers to Service Access for Those Outside of Sarnia:** Migrants who reside in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia face barriers to accessing services, such as limited transportation and service availability. Service availability should be expanded outside of the city and transportation services should be enhanced/provided so that in-person programming is accessible to all migrants.
- **Increase Data Collection and Dissemination Efforts:** Collection and dissemination of data and research pertaining to employment trends—including through in-person sessions—would facilitate a better understanding of the economic landscape in Sarnia-Lambton and would allow service providers to offer more targeted and relevant guidance to their clients.
- **Improve Community Navigation:** Sarnia-Lambton should designate a Navigator to support and connect migrants with services and members of the community in both Sarnia and the broader region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. A “Welcome Hub” should also be developed to welcome migrants to the area and act as a primary point of contact to their community.
- **Support Community-Wide Education:** Public education campaigns incorporating positive stories about immigrants and temporary migrants will help to foster inclusion and support for these individuals.
- **Promote Community Building:** Places should be designated for community gatherings where immigrants and temporary migrants can connect with one another for social, recreational, networking, and cultural events. These events should include non-migrant members of the community as well to aid in community integration.

Insights from the Education Sector

This section integrates findings from the survey responses of three organizations in the education sector: Lambton College and two French-language schools operating under the Conseil scolaire Viamonde. Together, these data sources offer insight into how educational institutions perceive and support newcomers, where service gaps exist, and how the sector views Sarnia-Lambton as a place of settlement and opportunity.

Organizational Service Summaries

Lambton College

Lambton College, which provides services in English, serves a diverse student body. Over half of their student population comprises migrants, with 49% being temporary migrants and 6% being immigrants. The college provides a wide array of services, including:

- Employment assistance (provided to temporary migrants);
- Social support services (temporary migrants);
- Health services (temporary migrants);
- Settlement needs assessment and support services (temporary migrants);
- Community connections (temporary migrants);
- Housing services (temporary migrants);
- Education and training services (temporary migrants);
- Services to address gender-based violence (temporary migrants); and
- Cross-cultural sensitivity training or anti-racism training (temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- Improved access to education;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education;
- Creation of social and professional networks;
- Ability to secure adequate housing; and
- Integration.

They conduct assessments of these services through annual reflections, surveys conducted by Student Services, graduation surveys, and operational planning.

École élémentaire Les Rapides

Les Rapides is a French-language elementary school. Approximately 40% of their student population is immigrants and 5% is temporary migrants. Aside from education, they provide:

- Social support services (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Improved official language skills;
- Improved health, mental health, and well-being;
- Improved access to education;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education; and
- Financial independence.

The school also administers the Actualisation linguistique du français (ALF) and Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA) programs, which support migrant students in developing language skills and achieving academic success in Francophone schools. Progress assessments are conducted via these programs.

École secondaire Franco-Jeunesse

Franco-Jeunesse is a French-language high school. Their student body includes relatively few migrants, with approximately 2% of their student population being immigrants and none being temporary migrants. The only service they provide to immigrants is education.

The intended outcomes of this service are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Improved official language skills;
- Improved health, mental health, & well-being;
- Financial independence; and
- Integration.

They do not, however evaluate the effectiveness of the service they provide to immigrants.

Data Sharing

All three of the education sector respondents reported that they collect data about their clients that include whether they are migrants, but only one—Lambton College— indicated that they would be willing to contribute anonymized data about these clients to an aggregated community repository. Data is collected at the college via surveys that are administered to the student body (including international students) by the Institutional Intelligence department. Data requests can be made by contacting Heather Torres, Associate Director of Reporting, Quality Assurance & Decision Support at heather.torres@lambtoncollege.ca. The French-language schools collect demographic data, such as country of birth, citizenship status, and date of entry into Canada, upon registration. This information, however, cannot be shared externally.

Inter-Organizational Awareness and Collaboration

The education sector respondents demonstrated an inconsistent level of awareness regarding the services that are provided to immigrants and temporary migrants by other organizations in the Sarnia-Lambton region. More specifically, Lambton College reported that they are extremely

aware of the other services that are available, Les Rapides reported that they are slightly to moderately aware, and Franco-Jeunesse reported that they are not at all aware of the services offered by others in the community. This pattern of responding is reflected in the frequency with which the respondents work with other organizations in Sarnia-Lambton to provide services to immigrants and temporary migrants. In particular, Lambton College always collaborates with others—such as Settlement Services at the YMCA, the SL-LIP, the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP), and the Lambton Elderly Outreach (LEO) team—to provide services to temporary migrants and sometimes works with others to serve immigrants, Les Rapides rarely collaborates with others to serve temporary migrants but sometimes collaborates with the Centre communautaire régional de London to provide services to new immigrant students at the school, and Franco-Jeunesse rarely works with others to serve either immigrants or temporary migrants. Franco-Jeunesse also rarely makes referrals to other services, but the other two respondents occasionally make referrals to employment, housing, settlement (e.g., at the YMCA), Francophone, financial (e.g., tax clinics), healthcare (e.g., midwifery services, the Canadian Mental Health Association [CMHA]), and specialized support (e.g., Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre) services as needed.

Neither of the French-language schools reported that they have connections with organizations outside of Sarnia-Lambton with whom they can share lessons and best practices related to the provision of services to immigrants and/or temporary migrants. Lambton College, however, does have such connections and specifically noted their connection with Laadliyan, which is a non-profit organization that works to empower South Asian girls and women.

Perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a Destination for Migrants

Views on Sarnia-Lambton as a destination for immigrants and temporary migrants were mixed, highlighting a tension between affordability and limited opportunity. All three education sector respondents indicated that the reasonable cost of living, affordable housing, and presence of existing social networks in Sarnia-Lambton are compelling reasons as to why immigrants, and in some cases temporary migrants, choose to settle in the region. Other "pull" elements in the local migration landscape include a strong sense of safety and a welcoming and inclusive community (both selected by two of the respondents), as well as the availability of amenities and services, a well-established multicultural environment/ethnic community, nature, education prospects, employment or self-employment prospects, and the reputation of Sarnia-Lambton (selected by one respondent). On average, however, the education sector respondents believe that immigrants are only moderately likely to stay in Sarnia-Lambton long-term. They expressed concern about the lack of economic and entrepreneurial opportunities, limited diversity in the region, the absence of personal community for some migrants, poor education prospects, and the weak reputation of Sarnia-Lambton.

Perceptions of How Migrants are Faring in Sarnia-Lambton

The education sector respondents believe that there is no difference in how immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton are faring compared to temporary migrants in the region.⁶ Distinct response differences

⁶ Due to question misinterpretation by two of the education sector respondents, comparisons cannot be made regarding how migrants are believed to be faring in the city of Sarnia versus in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia.

were, however, observed between respondents, with one respondent reporting a more positive perception of how migrants are faring than either of the other respondents, who both perceive migrants to be faring slightly poorly in Sarnia-Lambton.

Identified Needs and Recommendations

On average, the education sector respondents believe that it is slightly easy for both immigrants and temporary residents to access the services they need in the city of Sarnia and slightly more difficult for both groups to access necessary services in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. Respondents' opinions about lacking services and supports for migrants are consistent with these findings—two of the three respondents believe that there are specific services or supports for migrants that are currently lacking in Sarnia while all three believe that services or supports are lacking in the region of Lambton outside of the city. Two of the respondents also indicated that there are specific activities that could be done to better support migrants in the region. In particular, the following needs and recommendations were identified by education sector respondents:

- **Invest in Transportation Services:** All migrants would benefit from improved transportation within the county. This will require collaboration and investment from all levels of government, as well as employers who are looking to hire migrants who do not have a vehicle.
- **Increase Housing Options:** More investments in housing are required to meet the growing needs of migrant populations.
- **Develop and Support Access to Employment Opportunities:** Creating and promoting stable, well-compensated employment opportunities is essential to retaining migrants in the region.
- **Provide Immigration Support:** Temporary migrants should be aided in the process of renewing their immigration documents.
- **Support Migrant Children:** Tutoring and educational supports should be provided to migrant children, and other child-focused opportunities for engagement, such as cultural and sporting events, should be funded and staffed.
- **Expand Access to Francophone Settlement Services:** More Francophone settlement services, led by CCFS and with the help of institutional staff and social workers, should be offered.
- **Support Community-Wide Education:** Anti-immigrant sentiment should be addressed through public education campaigns and outreach to reduce prejudice and dispel myths about migrants, including those that link temporary migrants to job “theft” and issues around infrastructure availability (e.g., healthcare and housing access).
- **Foster Community Involvement:** Migrants and other members of the community should be consulted to ensure that service and activity development and provision is informed by the needs and wants of the individuals most impacted by these services and activities.

Insights from the Health and Mental Health Care Sector

This section presents findings from the following seven health and mental health care sector organizations that responded to the survey: St. Clair Child & Youth Services, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre, Lambton Public Health, North Lambton Community Health Centre's (NLCHC's) Migrant Worker Project, Twin Bridges Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (NPLC), and Pathways Health Centre for Children. These organizations provide a wide range of services—including mental and physical healthcare, social support, and community integration—and this section highlights their roles, perceptions, and challenges in supporting migrant populations in the region.

Organizational Service Summaries

St. Clair Child & Youth Services

St. Clair Child & Youth Services provides services in English. They do not collect information about the immigration status of their clients and, thus, declined to indicate the proportion of their clients who are immigrants and/or temporary migrants. They provide mental health services to their clients, including to immigrants and temporary migrants, and the intended outcome of these services is improved health, mental health, and well-being. They do not, however, evaluate the effectiveness of these services.

Canadian Mental Health Association

The CMHA provides services in English. Approximately 20% of their clients are immigrants and 15% are temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Social support services (provided to immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Health services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Housing services (immigrants and temporary migrants); and
- Education and training services (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- A stronger labour force;
- Improved health, mental health, and well-being;
- Improved access to education;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education;
- The creation of social and professional networks;
- Financial independence;
- Ability to secure adequate housing;
- Settlement; and
- Integration.

The effectiveness of these services is evaluated via program evaluations and feedback surveys administered to the community, their clients, and the family members of their clients.

The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre

The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre provides services in English. Eight percent of their client base is immigrants and 16% is temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Social support services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants); and
- Other pregnancy-related services (to both immigrants and temporary migrants), namely
 - Pregnancy options information,
 - Decision making tools,
 - Pregnancy/parenting education,
 - Post abortion recovery support, and
 - Information regarding healthy relationships.

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Improved health, mental health, and well-being;
- Improved access to education;
- Capacity to make informed decisions about life in Canada;
- Ability to find jobs commensurate with skills and education; and
- Creation of social and professional networks.

They indicated that the effectiveness of these services is evaluated, but they did not elaborate on the evaluation strategies that are used.

Lambton Public Health

Lambton Public Health provides services in English. While only 1% of their clients are temporary migrants, 30% are immigrants. Their services include:

- Health services (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Services to address gender-based violence (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcome of these services is improved health, mental health, and well-being, and they reported that service evaluation is built into all program and service plans.

North Lambton Community Health Centre's Migrant Worker Project

The NLCHC's Migrant Worker Project, the TeamWork project, provides services in English. All of the clients that they serve through this project are temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Social support services (temporary migrants);
- Health services (temporary migrants);
- Community connections (temporary migrants); and

- Language training (temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Civic inclusion and engagement;
- Improved official language skills;
- Improved health, mental health, and well-being; and
- Integration.

The effectiveness of these services is evaluated in multiple ways using a community-centred and responsive approach:

Feedback – After events or services, we engage in one-on-one conversations with participants to gather immediate reactions, suggestions, and concerns. This often provides the most honest and direct insight into their experience.

Surveys – When appropriate and accessible, we distribute short surveys (in the worker's preferred language when possible) to collect structured feedback on specific services or events.

Attendance – Monitoring the number of participants at events and services helps us understand reach, interest levels, and logistical effectiveness (e.g., transportation, timing).

Review Meetings – Our team holds regular planning and review meetings where we reflect on what has been learned from the above methods and discuss adjustments or new ideas based on the needs expressed by workers. This flexible strategy allows us to continuously improve while respecting the diverse needs and realities of temporary migrant workers.

Twin Bridges Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic

Twin Bridges NPLC provides services in English. They currently serve a small proportion of immigrants (5%) and no temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Health services (immigrants and temporary migrants) and
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants).

The intended outcomes of these services are improved health, mental health, and well-being, and the effectiveness of these services is evaluated via patient satisfaction surveys.

Pathways Health Centre for Children

Pathways Health Centre for Children provides services in English. They do not collect information about the immigration status of their clients and, thus, declined to indicate the proportion of their clients who are immigrants and/or temporary migrants. Their services include:

- Social support services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Health services (immigrants and temporary migrants);
- Community connections (immigrants and temporary migrants); and
- Publicly funded children's rehabilitation services.⁷

The intended outcomes of these services are:

- Improved health, mental health, and well-being and
- Integration.

The effectiveness of these services, however, is not evaluated.

Data Sharing

Four of the health and mental health care sector respondents reported that they collect data about their clients that include whether they are immigrants or temporary migrants. In particular, the CMHA, The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre, Lambton Public Health, and Twin Bridges NPLC collect various types of sociodemographic data from their clients. Both The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre and Twin Bridges NPLC specified that the provision of this data by clients is voluntary, and The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre further explained that this data is collected via an intake process that is conducted through an individual appointment. Lambton Public Health, on the other hand, noted that migration status is sometimes included in documentation forms. Only the CMHA, however, indicated that they would be willing to contribute anonymized data about their migrant clients to an aggregated community repository. Once it is fully operational, their newly developed database will be capable of producing reports that include demographic information (e.g., age, gender, culture, housing status, level of education, etc.) services offered, and outcomes, and they would be willing to share demographic and outcome data on a biannual basis.

Inter-Organizational Awareness and Collaboration

On average, the health and mental health care sector respondents indicated that they are moderately aware of the services provided to immigrants and temporary migrants by other organizations in the Sarnia-Lambton region. The highest level of awareness was reported by the CMHA, who responded that they are very aware of the services available to migrants in Sarnia-Lambton, and the lowest was reported by St. Clair Child & Youth Services, NLCHC's Migrant Worker Project, and Pathways Health Centre for Children, all of whom stated that they are slightly aware of the services available to migrants in the region. Lambton Public Health often works with other organizations to provide services to both immigrants and temporary migrants. The other respondents, however, rarely or only sometimes collaborate with others to serve migrants in the community. Both the CHMA and Pathways Health Centre for Children mentioned that they sometimes collaborate with the YMCA. Other collaborators include organizations that provide interpretation and translation services, the SL-LIP, and the County. Referrals to other services are slightly more common, with the CMHA, The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre, and Pathways Health Centre for Children often or always making referrals as needed and Lambton Public Health sometimes making referrals; the other respondents rarely

⁷ They did not specify if these services are provided to immigrants and/or temporary migrants.

refer migrants to other services. In particular, The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre explained that

The services we would refer immigrants or temporary migrants to would also be services we refer all residents to, by and large. The types of services most referred to would be health care providers (Lambton Public Health/Midwives), food banks, places for free clothing/children's supplies, employment services.

They also highlighted the specific efforts that they make to assist temporary migrants:

We recognize the particularly difficult time temporary migrants have in accessing health care without OHIP, so we do our best to find them community resources to help. ... We reached out to as many medical care/community health groups as possible, but without OHIP, it's very difficult for a temporary migrant to find affordable medical care for their pregnancy, if they would like to carry.

Others make referrals to the County; St. Clair Child & Youth Services; Sarnia-Lambton Rebound; Family Counselling Centre Sarnia-Lambton; and—more generally—to housing services, education and/or employment supports, health care providers, mental health supports, counselling, food security services, financial supports, social and recreational supports, and volunteer opportunities.

The CMHA reported that they do not have links with other organizations outside of Sarnia-Lambton with whom they can share lessons and best practices about providing services to migrants. All of the other health and mental health care sector respondents stated that they do have such connections. Most of these connections seem to be within the same area of practice that respondents operate in:

- St. Clair Child & Youth Services are connected to the provincial Lead Agency Consortium for children's mental health;
- The Pregnancy Options & Support Centre has ties with pregnancy centres across the country;
- Lambton Public Health is linked to other local public health units, particularly those in the western region;
- NLCHC's Migrant Worker Project has partners in other areas that also have large populations of temporary foreign workers, such as in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent;
- Twin Bridges NPLC has links with other primary care organizations in Southwestern Ontario and all other NPLCs in the province; and
- Pathways Health Centre for Children is connected to Empowered Kids Ontario, which is an association that represents children's treatment centres in the province.

Perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a Destination for Migrants

The majority of health and mental health care respondents believe that migrants are drawn to Sarnia-Lambton due to the reasonable cost of living (selected by six of the respondents), the presence of educational opportunities, the availability of employment or self-employment prospects (both selected by five of the respondents), a sense of safety in the community, and

existing family or community ties in the region (both selected by four of the respondents). Other attractive factors that were cited are affordable housing, the availability of amenities and services, the welcoming and inclusive nature of the community, a well-established multicultural environment/ethnic community, nature, and the reputation of Sarnia-Lambton (all selected by two respondents each). Immigrants are generally perceived by those in the health and mental health care sector as likely to remain in the region long term, though two respondents indicated that they believe long-term retention is unlikely or only slightly likely. In particular, these individuals expressed concerns about a poor sense of safety in the community, a lack of amenities and services, an unwelcoming environment, a lack of diversity in the community, poor employment or self-employment prospects, and the reputation of Sarnia-Lambton.

Perceptions of How Migrants are Faring in Sarnia-Lambton

On average, the health and mental health care sector respondents believe that migrants are faring slightly to moderately well in Sarnia-Lambton. Immigrants are generally believed to be faring better than temporary migrants in both Sarnia and in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia, and the perceived difference between groups is larger outside of the city than within, with respondents reporting that immigrants are faring largely the same while temporary migrants are faring slightly worse outside of Sarnia compared to within the city itself.⁸ Differences were attributed to the availability of services and infrastructure, which tend to be more plentiful and/or well-developed in Sarnia than in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. Respondents also noted that immigrants tend to have better access to services and stronger social networks in Sarnia-Lambton, while temporary migrants often face greater isolation, limited access to healthcare, and difficulty finding stable housing and employment. For example, one of the respondents explained that:

My response reflects the relative centralization of resources and support systems in Sarnia compared to other parts of the county. While not perfect, Sarnia offers more accessible public services, and there is a growing awareness and infrastructure to support newcomers. However, there's still work to be done to ensure immigrants and migrants feel fully welcomed and supported in all aspects of life here. ... The challenges of rural isolation, language barriers, and limited public infrastructure—especially around transportation—have consistently been raised as concerns [regarding the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia]. Temporary migrants, in particular, are often invisible in rural systems, despite their essential role in the local economy. There's a clear need for more localized support and policy change to ensure equity across the region.

Another respondent stated that:

It seems to me [that] temporary migrants are more vulnerable due to lack of housing, difficulty in finding jobs, lacking access to some basic things like health care (if not covered by Guard Me at [Lambton College]). I think temporary migrants also feel more isolated than immigrants as they are not yet part of social/cultural/faith-based groups. I

⁸ Due to question misinterpretation, two of the health and mental health care sector respondents have been excluded from analyses related to how migrants are faring in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia.

get the sense that many are fending for themselves in a strange culture far from their families.

Identified Needs and Recommendations

On average, the health and mental health care sector respondents believe that it is slightly easy for migrants to access the services they need in the Sarnia-Lambton region, though individual responses varied widely; one respondent, for instance, stated that they believe it is difficult to very difficult for migrants to access services in the area and another shared that they think services are easy to access. Service access is generally believed to be slightly easier for immigrants and for those in the city of Sarnia than for temporary migrants and for those in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia, respectively. Six of the seven respondents indicated that there are specific services and supports for migrants that are lacking in the city of Sarnia and in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia. Five of the seven also noted that there are specific activities that could be done to better support immigrants and temporary migrants in Sarnia-Lambton. In particular, the following needs and recommendations were identified by health and mental health care sector respondents:

- **Expand Funding:** Increased funding from both the government and private organizations is necessary to support the development and delivery of essential services and programming for migrants, including health and mental health care services, language services and programs, transportation services, social services, employment services, legal aid services, and opportunities for community connections.
- **Reduce Barriers to Healthcare Access:** Individuals without OHIP coverage, such as temporary migrants, frequently encounter barriers to healthcare access. Receiving necessary and appropriate care can also be complicated by a lack of transportation, language barriers, and cultural differences. Advocacy is needed at the provincial and federal levels to expand coverage for those not currently eligible for OHIP. In addition to improving transportation services, mobile health and information services could be helpful for reaching those without personal modes of transportation. Translation and interpretation services should also be made available in healthcare contexts, and providers should employ culturally sensitive practices when interacting with clients; hiring a diverse workforce that mirrors the diversity of the community would further be helpful in this regard.
- **Invest in and Develop Healthcare Supports:** Funding should be allocated for the procurement of specialized medical supports, such as those for augmentative and alternative communication, adaptive seating, and feeding. One respondent also commented that the development of a federal-provincial immunization registry, supported by the local health unit, would help to streamline the immunization process.
- **Invest in Transportation Services:** Reliable and affordable transportation remains a major barrier, especially for those living in rural areas of Lambton County. Expanding the availability of transportation services, such as those provided by the NLCHC's Migrant Worker Project, would improve access to employment opportunities, community events, and essential health and social services. Specific suggestions for cost-effective mobility solutions included a volunteer-run driving service and a bike bank.
- **Invest in Language Supports and Services:** Access to language supports and services—including interpretation and translation services—should be expanded to

ensure that migrants can effectively navigate health and social services. English/French as a Second Language programs and English/French conversation circles would also provide migrants with valuable opportunities to develop and practice their language skills and connect with others in the community.

- **Increase Affordable Housing Options:** There is a critical need for housing options that are affordable and that meet the needs of migrants, particularly those working in temporary or seasonal roles and those residing in rural parts of the region.
- **Increase Data Collection and Dissemination Efforts:** Collection and dissemination of data pertaining to the migrant community in Sarnia-Lambton would facilitate a better understanding of the migrants in the region, including who they are and what they need to thrive.
- **Foster Collaborations:** Collaboration between the local government, non-profit organizations, health and mental health care providers, educational institutions, and community centres will help to foster a more effective, coordinated, and informed approach to service provision. Designating a “champion” to lead the effort of improving services for migrants will help to ensure that actions are taken and progress is made.
- **Support Community-Wide Education:** Public education campaigns and outreach focused on the needs and rights of immigrants and temporary migrants will help to foster inclusion and support for these individuals.
- **Promote Community Building:** Both migrants and non-migrants alike would benefit from the creation of more welcoming spaces and opportunities for social interaction. Community and cultural events, gatherings, and activities would help migrants integrate into the community and build local support systems, boost mental health, and reduce feelings of homesickness. They would also provide opportunities to honour the diverse cultural identities of those living in the region and showcase these identities to other members of the community. Specific ideas suggested by respondents include international fairs, holiday dinners, women’s wellness day events, and recreation and fitness nights. Holding events such as these in community spaces would be particularly beneficial for migrant workers, who may not otherwise have many opportunities to socialize outside of their place of employment.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study has been to explore the resources and supports available to help migrants make the Sarnia-Lambton region their home, whether for the short or long term, and to examine how the region's welcoming community infrastructure could be improved. In many respects, this infrastructure is already far-reaching, reflecting years of steady effort, particularly on the part of the county and its member municipalities, as well as settlement, education, and business organizations. The desk review, for instance, reveals a large volume of interconnected resources, while the organizational survey quantifies the great degree to which many organizations are already sharing with each other both within and beyond the region. Particularly encouraging are the cross-sector partnerships that have evolved, such as the employment of the federally funded Settlement Workers in Schools program in area schools, a program to assist temporary residents in agriculture to access services vital for their health, including medical care and social connections and, most recently, the successful multi-agency application, led by the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, to be included in the Ontario Rural Economic Development through Immigration program.

A number of these partnerships might be geared to serve the community at large, such as Pathways Health Centre's SmartHub services, but their design also takes into account the unique needs of the region's migrant populations, whether it be access to translation services or offering culturally sensitive services and supports. The volume of sharing that already takes place in the region between different agencies and groups involved is evident in the responses to the organizational survey, as is the willingness of several groups to take the extra step of sharing data to improve newcomer services and supports.

This study also reveals many challenges to the delivery of services, with most sectors reviewed in the organizational survey indicating that funding constraints limit the system's ability to expand its capacity and benefits. Other issues and gaps emerge, and many of these concern connections. Settlement agencies that serve immigrant populations, for instance, could strengthen their connections to the temporary migrant community. Organizations that might support another niche population, such as people needing mental health support, might consider fostering greater connection with settlement agencies to develop strategies to address the intersecting needs of migrants.

Settlement organizations that offer service in French, in particular, might consider strengthening relationships with organizations in other sectors, and other sector organizations in turn might consider expanding their capacity to deliver services in French to accommodate a growing French-speaking population in the region. As well, many respondents to the organizational survey highlighted the importance of fostering greater engagement among the broader Sarnia-Lambton community to support the successful transition of newcomers, and of ensuring training to help staff members improve their responses to the unique needs of the migrant community.

Gaps that involve basic supports, such as the lack of transportation in rural communities or difficulties in finding suitable housing, further complicate successful transitions to living in the

region. Municipalities are attempting to address these issues. Other gaps in the delivery of basic services are specific to the specialized needs of migrant communities. For instance, how do people with no, or only limited understanding of English, make use of an English-only video intended to orient patients and their families on what to expect during a hospital stay? How do they navigate a system fraught with complications to access childcare? The call for specialized navigation services, which emerged repeatedly in the recommendations from the different sectors surveyed, appears to be one of the leading solutions to addressing issues such as these, as well as identifying an organization or group of organizations to lead the coordination of the region's welcoming community infrastructure.

While such initiatives certainly justify the call for more funding, frequently a top recommendation in the sector organizational survey, circumstances external to the region—in particular, shifts in federal and provincial economic priorities and federal immigration policy—may make obtaining public funding especially challenging at this point in time. Challenging does not have to mean unrealistic or unattainable, but in the interim, exploring solutions developed to serve other niche groups in the community (a number of which are featured in this report's desk review section), may provide inspiration for new approaches to pool resources and engage other members of the community to contribute their support.

Sarnia-Lambton's commitment to welcoming newcomers is evident in its robust and collaborative support network. While the region can expect to face continuing challenges related to funding and finding resources to support temporary migrant populations, the well-established principle of inter-agency and inter-sectoral cooperation, combined with a push for local solutions, offers a clear path forward. So too does the targeted investment in key areas, such as specialized navigation and improved connectivity. Ultimately, these efforts will ensure Sarnia-Lambton remains an inclusive and supportive home for all.

Sources

Introduction

- Aamjiwnaang First Nation. (2025). *Anishinabek Education System*.
<https://www.aamjiwnaang.ca/anishinabek-education-system-2/>
- Morden, P. (2024a, March 31). *Sarnia's feeling like home to new Nova Chemicals VP*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/sarnia-feels-like-home-to-new-nova-chemicals-vp>
- Morden, P. (2024b, January 27). *Lambton College facing financial hit from international student visa cuts*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/lambton-college-facing-financial-hit-from-international-student-cuts>
- Ontario. (2018). *Map of Ontario treaties and reserves*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-ontario-treaties-and-reserves#reserves>
- Ouellet, V. & Crawley, M. (2024, February 27). *Canada's international student spike was blamed on private colleges. Here's what really happened*. CBC. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/2052500/canadas-international-student-spike-was-blamed-on-private-colleges-heres-what-really-happened>
- Bozheva, A. & Esses, M. (2019). *IMB Analysis of Immigrant Settlement Geography and Retention Rates for CMAs and CAs in Ontario, 2002-2016* [Report to policy group]. <https://crdcn.ca/publication/imdb-analysis-of-immigrant-settlement-geography-and-retention-rates-for-cmas-and-cas-in-ontario-2002-2016/>
- Environics Analytics. (2024). *Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership Municipal Data & Analytics*. <https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/data-reports>
- Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership (SLWDB). (2025). *Chemicals & Energy*. <https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/chemicals-and-energy>
- Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership (SLWDB). (2018). *Final Strategic Plan*. Retrieved May 23, 2025 [Web page link no longer available].
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025). *Local Labour Market Plan: Sarnia Lambton 2024-2025* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LLMP-2025.pdf>
- Statistics Canada. (2025a) *Components of population change by census metropolitan area and census agglomeration, 2021 boundaries* (Table 17-10-0149-01). <https://doi.org/10.25318/1710014901-eng>

Statistics Canada. (2025b) *Population estimates, July 1, by census metropolitan area and census agglomeration, 2021 boundaries* (Table 17-10-0148-01). <https://doi.org/10.25318/1710014801-eng>

Statistics Canada. (2023a). *Commuting duration by main mode of commuting and time arriving at work: Census metropolitan areas, tracted census agglomerations and census tracts of work* (Table 98-10-0504-01). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810050401-eng>

Statistics Canada. (2023b). *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population* (Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001). <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

Statistics Canada. (2022a). *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population Lambton, County*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?lang=E&topic=9&dguid=2021A00033538>

Statistics Canada. (2022b). *Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population Sarnia, Census agglomeration*. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/fogs-spg/page.cfm?topic=9&dguid=2021S0504562&lang=E>

Vega, N. (2023, June 15). *Teamwork project connects migrant workers with health, safety, and community integration resources*. Sarnia News Today. <https://sarnianewstoday.ca/sarnia/news/2023/6/15/230112211>

Vega, N. (2021, October 12). *Future county council to consider health board*. Sarnia NewsToday.ca. <https://sarnianewstoday.ca/news/2021/10/12/future-county-council-consider-health-board>

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC) Workforce Strategy. (2021a). *Lambton County: Economic, Demographic and Housing Trends and Projections* [Report]. https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Lambton_projections.pdf

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC) Workforce Strategy. (2021b). *Workforce Supply and Demand Review* [Report]. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Workforce-Supply-and-Demand-Review.pdf>

Methodology

Pathways to Prosperity Partnership. (2023). *Measuring welcoming communities: A toolkit for communities and those who support them* [Report]. <http://p2pcanada.ca/library/measuring-welcoming-communities-a-toolkit-for-communities-and-those-who-support-them>

Settlement

County of Lambton. (n.d.) *Cultural Groups*. <https://liveinlambton.ca/cultural-groups/>

FCJ Refugee Centre. (2025). *Immigration Help and Refugee Protection*.
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/immigration-and-refugee-protection/>

Immigration and Citizenship Canada. (2025). *Settlement Program*.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/transparency/program-terms-conditions/settlement.html>

Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (SL-LIP). (2022). *Supports for Ukrainians Coming to Lambton County* [Information sheet].
<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/Local-Immigration-Partnership/Ukraine-Support.pdf>

Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (SL-LIP). (2012, November). *Immigrants in Rural Lambton County* [Summary of Research].
<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/Local-Immigration-Partnership/ROWG-Research-Summary.pdf>

Employment and Entrepreneurship

Brynaert, Brennan & Associé.e.s. (2021). *Strategic Framework to Support economic Immigration to Sarnia* [Report].
<https://www.reseausoutien.org/media/attachments/2021/07/07/cadre-strategique-immigration-sarnia-version-dfinitive-en.pdf>

Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). (2024). *Health workforce recruitment and retention* [Report]. <https://www.cihi.ca/en/the-state-of-the-health-workforce-in-canada-2023/health-workforce-recruitment-and-retention#exit>

County of Lambton. (2022). *Lambton Settlement Strategy, 2022-2025* [Report].
<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/Local-Immigration-Partnership/2022-2025-Settlement-Strategy.pdf>

County of Lambton Social Planning and Children's Services Department. (n.d.) *Live in Lambton Settlement Services*. <https://liveinlambton.ca/settlement-services/>

[deleted]. (2021). *r/Sarnia [Deleted by user]* [Thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 18 2025.
https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/lr78ni/deleted_by_user/

Department of Finance Canada. (2025, May 13). *Canada's response to U.S. Tariffs on Canadian goods*. [Policy statement] <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/international-trade-finance-policy/canadas-response-us-tariffs.html#s1>

FCJ Refugee Centre. (2025). *Immigration Help and Refugee Protection*.
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/immigration-and-refugee-protection/>

Food & Beverage Ontario. (2022, August). *Understanding Ontario's Food and Beverage Manufacturing Sector* [Report]. <https://foodandbeverageontario.ca/wp->

content/uploads/2022/11/Understanding-Ontarios-Food-BeverageProcessingIndustry2022.pdf

- ISSofBC. (2025). *Understanding Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels*.
<https://issbc.org/tools-resources/understanding-canadian-language-benchmark-clb-levels/>
- Kula, T. (2025a, April 1). *Sarnia-Lambton: Rolling with the punches, guided by purpose; How Canada Wins*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/sarnia-lambton-rolling-with-the-punches-guided-by-purpose>
- Kula, T. (2025b, January 19). *Sarnia-Lambton selected for economic immigration pilot program*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/sarnia-lambton-selected-for-economic-immigration-pilot-program>
- Mellor Murray Consulting. (2018). *Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership Final Strategic Plan*. Retrieved May 21, 2025. https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66f8b03f4594ca1c1f9c9a98/67dba1c45203d0ff2363d552_2024-2029-Strategic-Plan-2024-Update.pdf [Source replaced with updated plan].
- Morden, P. (2025a, February 8). *Tariffs, trade war could be 'dire' for Sarnia-area industry, mayor warns*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/tariffs-and-trade-war-could-be-dire-for-sarnia-area-industry-mayor>
- Morden, P. (2025b, March 27). *Nova Chemicals' not pursuing' plastics recycling plant in Sarnia area*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/nova-chemicals-recycling-plant-considered-near-sarnia-not-going-ahead>
- Morden, P. (2025c, January 18). *No leads on future use for Sarnia Ineos site: union*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/no-leads-on-future-use-for-sarnia-ineos-site-union>
- Morden, P. (2025d, March 4). *Chemical giants say they'll merge units, buy Nova Chemicals for \$13.4B*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/nova-chemicals-to-be-purchased-as-part-of-international-corporate-merger>
- Morden, P. (2024, January 27). *Lambton College facing financial hit from international student visa cuts*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/lambton-college-facing-financial-hit-from-international-student-cuts>
- Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership & Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. (OHCOW). (2015). *Welcome Booklet for Migrant Workers* [Booklet]. https://liveinlambton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/MWWelcome_Booklet_2015_English_ONLY.pdf
- Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP). (2025a, May). *Tariffs & International Trade* [PowerPoint presentation].

- <https://lambton.civicweb.net/FileStorage/3B14B5EF572446ECBF0A09DFF4DF22A8-SLEP%20County%20Council%20Presentation%202025%20-%20Tariffs%20an.pdf>
- Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP). (2025b). *Lambton County data reporting, labour force*. <https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/data-and-reports/lambton-county>.
- Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP). (2025c) *Municipal Data & Analytics*. <https://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/data-reports>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025a). *Local Labour Market Plan Sarnia Lambton 2024-25* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LLMP-2025.pdf>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025b). *Employer One Survey 2025 Results* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/EmployerOne-2025-English.pdf>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025c). *Job Board*. <https://www.slwdb.org/jobs/>
- Statistics Canada. (2025a). *Temporary foreign workers in the agriculture and agri-food sectors, by industry* (Table 32-10-0218-01). <https://doi.org/10.25318/3210021801-eng>
- Statistics Canada. (2025b, May 9). *Countries of citizenship for temporary foreign workers in the agricultural sector* (Table 32-10-0221-01). <https://doi.org/10.25318/3210022101-eng>
- The Associated Press (AP). (2025, April 16). *U.S. Army engineers to fast-track Great Lakes tunnel permits for Enbridge pipeline*. Financial Post. <https://financialpost.com/pmn/u-s-army-engineers-to-fast-track-great-lakes-tunnel-permits-for-enbridge-pipeline>
- The Municipality of Lambton Shores. (2025, April 15). *Economic Development Update Q1 2025* [Report]. <https://pub-lambtonshores.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=12139>
- The Municipality of Lambton Shores. (2022). *ZBA ZO-13/2022 - 5894 Douglas Line* (Report PL 26-2022). <https://pub-lambtonshores.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=8923>
- TNO—The Neighbourhood Organization. (2024). *TNO Program & Services Guide* [Pamphlet]. <https://tno-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/tnoBrochure-FINAL.pdf>
- Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC). (2022). *Western Ontario Workforce Strategy: Findings and Issues Report*. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WOWC-Findings-and-Issues-Report-2022.pdf>

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC). (2022b) *Western Ontario Workforce Strategy Background Discussion Report*. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WOWS-Background-Discussion-Report-v5-B-1.pdf>

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC). (2021a). *Findings and Issues Report Summary—2021*. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Findings-Issues-Report-Summary.pdf>

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC). (2020a). *Summary Local Labour Market Plans*. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Summary-Local-Labour-Market-Plans.pdf>

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC). (2020b). *Small Business and Workforce Development* [Report]. <https://workforcestrategy.wowc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Small-Business-and-Workforce-Development.pdf>

Education and Workforce Preparation

Collège Boréal. (2025). *Our campuses*. <https://collegeboreal.ca/en/student-life/locations/>

Duale, Yasmin. (2024, December 23). *Reduced international student permits signal big changes ahead for Lambton College*. Sarnia Journal. <https://sarniajournal.com/news/reduced-international-student-permits-signal-big-changes-ahead-for-lambton-college-150712>

Lambton College. (2024) *Annual Report 2023-24*. https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/docs/default-source/our-college/corporate-documents/reports/lambton-college-annual-report-2023-24.pdf?sfvrsn=af3a8b60_4

Lambton College. (2025a, April 15). *Globally Recognized English Language Proficiency Test Now Administered at Lambton College* [News release]. <https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/news/article/2025/04/15/globally-recognized-english-language-proficiency-test-now-administered-at-lambton-college>

Lambton College. (2025b, April 14). *Lambton Partners With Small, Northern and Rural Colleges to Advance Province's Role as Canada's Economic Engine* [News release]. <https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/news/article/2025/04/14/lambton-partners-with-small-northern-and-rural-colleges-to-advance-province-role-as-canada-economic-engine>

Lambton College. (2025c). *International Graduate Services & Support Centre*. <https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/international/international-education/international-graduate-services-support-centre>

Lambton College. (2025d). *Research at Lambton*. <https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/community/research-innovation/research-at-lambton>

- Morden, P. (2025, March 7). *Lambton College expects deficit as new rules cut foreign enrolment*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/lambton-college-expects-deficit-as-new-rules-cut-foreign-enrolment>
- Ontario. (2025, June 26). *French-language education*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/french-language-education#section-3>
- Ontario Education and Training. (2025). *Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/specialist-high-skills-major>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025a). *Local Labour Market Plan: Sarnia Lambton 2024-2025* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/LLMP-2025.pdf>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025b). *Employer One Survey 2025 Results* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/EmployerOne-2025-English.pdf>
- yss_me. (2021). *r/Sarnia [Deleted by user]* [Thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 18 2025. https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/lr78ni/deleted_by_user/

Health and Mental Health Care

- Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada. (2021). *List of Anti-Choice Groups in Canada* [Report]. <https://www.arcc-cdac.ca/media/2021/09/list-anti-choice-groups-CPCs-only.pdf>
- Boyce, J. (2025, June 9). *BWH hires two general surgeons to strengthen local service*. Sarnia News Today. <https://sarnianewstoday.ca/sarnia/news/2025/06/09/bwh-hires-two-general-surgeons-to-strengthen-local-service>
- County of Lambton. (2023, November 15). *Lambton Emergency Medical Services Master Plan 2024-2028*. <https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/county-government/resources/Documents/PlansReportsandStudies/Public-Health/EMS-Master-Plan-2024-2028.pdf>
- Hassan, S. (2025, May 9). *Some Ontario mayors oppose communities' financial incentives to attract doctors*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/some-ontario-mayors-oppose-communities-financial-incentives-to-attract-doctors>
- Hutchinson, A., Saucier, S., & Subotic, A. (2022, November). *Older Adult Care Pathway Extension Phase* [Report for Lambton Public Health and Lambton College]. <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Older-Adult-Care-Pathway-Phase-2-Report-1.pdf>
- Ipsos. (2024, January 24). *Community Health Survey 2023 Research Report*. Lambton Public Health. <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/report/community-health-survey-2023/>

- Kula, T. (2024 April 10). *Long-term care bottleneck boosting ER waits: Bluewater Health*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/long-term-care-bottleneck-boosting-er-waits-bluewater-health>
- McMaster University. (2023, October 18). *Social isolation and loneliness among immigrant and refugee seniors*. <https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/blog/detail/blog/2023/10/18/social-isolation-and-loneliness-among-immigrant-and-refugee-seniors>
- Morden, P. (2023, June 7). *Lambton politicians back effort to boost physician numbers*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/lambton-politicians-back-effort-to-boost-physician-numbers>
- North Lambton Community Health Centre. (n.d.-a). *Home page*. <https://www.nlchc.com/>
- North Lambton Community Health Centre. (n.d.-b). *Migrant Farm Worker Program*. <https://www.nlchc.com/migrant-farm-worker-program/>
- North Lambton Community Health Centre. (n.d.-c). *First Five Program*. <https://www.nlchc.com/first-five-program/>
- O'Brien, J. (2024). *Putting down roots*. Rapport Magazine. https://www.schulich.uwo.ca/rapport/2024/features/putting_down_roots.html
- Robert, A-M. & Gilkinson, T. (2012, November). *Mental health and well-being of recent immigrants in Canada: Evidence from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC)* [Study]. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/research/mental-health-well-being-recent-immigrants-canada-evidence-longitudinal-survey-immigrants-canada-lsic.html>
- Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team [S-L OHT]. (2024, April 5). *Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team 2023-24 Annual Report*. <https://www.sarnialambtonoht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Sarnia-Lambton-Ontario-Health-Team-Annual-Report.pdf>
- Steps to Justice. (2022, February 8). *Can I get health insurance if I'm not a permanent resident?* <https://stepstojustice.ca/questions/immigration/can-i-get-health-insurance-if-im-not-a-permanent-resident/>
- The Independent. (2024, December 27). *Bluewater Health diverting general surgeries for a week due to surgeon shortage*. <https://petrolialambtonindependent.ca/2024/12/27/bluewater-health-diverting-general-surgeries-for-a-week-due-to-surgeon-shortage/>
- The Journal. (2025, May 28). *Discovery Week brings Western University med students to Sarnia*. <https://www.thesarniajournal.ca/news/discovery-week-brings-western-university-med-students-to-sarnia-10727135>

Trevithick, M. (2025, May 8). *Doctors are badly needed in Lambton County. This scholarship is trying to attract them.* CBC. <https://www.cbc.ca/lite/story/1.7529325>

Wilton, A. (2025, May 5). *Emergency General Surgery on hold again at Bluewater Health.* The Journal. <https://www.thesarniajournal.ca/news/emergency-general-surgery-on-hold-again-at-bluewater-health-10612565>

Housing

Aviles-Saez, J. (2025, May 8). *Lambton County purchases St. Bartholomew's Church site for affordable housing.* The Journal. <https://www.thesarniajournal.ca/news/lambton-county-purchases-st-bartholomews-church-site-for-affordable-housing-10631161>

BackToTheBas1cs. (2025, January). *Lambton College from London* [Student housing thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 30 2025 from https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/1hwbdof/lambton_college_from_london/

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). (2024, December 17). *Rental Market Survey Data Tables.* <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-data/data-tables/rental-market/rental-market-report-data-tables>

captainunicornlove. (2021). *Priced out in Sarnia* [Thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 30, 2025. https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/pyx01k/priced_out_in_sarnia/

Chaves, S. (2024, October 9). *Lambton affordable housing project preparing for next steps* Sarnia News Today. <https://sarnianewstoday.ca/sarnia/news/2024/10/09/lambton-affordable-housing-project-preparing-for-next-steps>

Cin_Mac. (2025, January). *Lambton College from London* [Student housing thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 30 2025 from https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/1hwbdof/lambton_college_from_london/

County of Lambton. (2025, May 1). *Addressing Homelessness Data Dashboard.* <https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/data-dashboard.aspx>

County of Lambton Homelessness Prevention Services. (2025, February 5). *Homelessness Prevention Services Report* [Information report]. <https://lambton.civicweb.net/FileStorage/AD0BABD689AD401EA7646D2D9D2BF0C5-Homelessness%20Prevention%20Services.pdf>

County of Lambton Housing Services Department. (February 2, 2025a). *Application for Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program* [Information sheet]. <https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/Housing/Homeownership-Down-Payment-Assistance/HO-Info-Sheet.pdf>

- County of Lambton Housing Services Department. (2025b, February 2). *Application for Lambton Renovation Program* [Information sheet].
<https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/Housing/Lambton-Renovates/LR-Info-Sheet.pdf>
- County of Lambton Social Services Division. (2025, February 19). *Housing Services Comparative Statistics Report 2024 to 2023*.
<https://lambton.civicweb.net/FileStorage/0D3459B79C7040D7971204861F47463F-03.%20Housing%20Services%20Comparative%20Statistics%202024%20t.pdf>
- Demirep77. (2021). *Priced out in Sarnia* [Thread]. Reddit. Retrieved June 30, 2025.
https://www.reddit.com/r/Sarnia/comments/pyx01k/priced_out_in_sarnia/
- Habitat for Humanity. (n.d.) *Home ownership information*. <https://habitatsarnia.org/general-information/>
- Kula, T. (2025, February 26). *Habitat projects resonate amid affordable housing shortage*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/habitat-projects-resonate-amid-affordable-housing-shortage>
- Kula, T. (2019, November 7). *Transitional housing build gets its name*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/transitional-housing-build-gets-its-name>
- Lambton College. (2025). *Housing*. <https://www.lambtoncollege.ca/international/sarnia/housing>.
- Lambton Shores. (2025, February 25). *Council meeting agenda*. <https://pub-lambtonshores.escibemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=6c16a66e-79bd-4e79-93d6-b2d8e2b4d920&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>
- Malleum Partners. (2024, October 7) Planning Justification Report for 200-206 Exmouth Street [Report for Point Edward Village council].
<https://www.villageofpointedward.com/sites/4/files/2024-11/LTR%20-%20Planning%20Justification%20Report%20-%20200-206%20Exmouth%20St%20-%20October%202024%20-%20Clean.pdf>
- March of Dimes. (2024). "Attendant Care and Supportive Housing."
<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/acsh/nphl>
- Moffat, M. (2024, November 19). *Ontario Communities Falling Behind on Homebuilding* [Report]. https://placecentre.smartprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/place_centre_memo_-_ontario_communities_falling_behind.pdf
- Morden, P. (2024, May 11). *Sarnia's Ohana Landing helping youth find their way to stable housing*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/sarnias-ohana-landing-helping-youth-find-their-way-to-stable-housing>

- Morden, P. (2022, February 11). *Sarnia program combines work and housing for international students*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/sarnia-program-combines-work-and-housing-for-international-students>
- Nauta, C. (2025, February 19). *4th Quarter 2024 Planning Work in Progress* [Report for chair and committee members, Lambton County Infrastructure & Development Services Division]. <https://lambton.civicweb.net/FileStorage/B3FB40A9F4D940D38720D7685ECC587B-6.%20DS%20-%204th%20Quarter%202024%20Planning%20Work%20in%20Progress.pdf>
- Ontario. (2025, April 30). *Tracking housing supply progress*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/tracking-housing-supply-progress>
- Ontario. (2022, May 2). *Apply for emergency assistance*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/apply-emergency-assistance#section-3>
- Sarnia-Lambton Association of Realtors. (2024, April). *Sarnia-Lambton Association of REALTORS® MLS® home sales down, new listings continue to rise in March* [Monthly report]. Retrieved May 14 2025. <https://creastats.crea.ca/board/sarn> [Source replaced with new report].
- Warwick Township. (2024, March 25). *Council agenda*. <https://warwick.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/102695/?preview=105014&splitscreen=true>
- Wright, H. (2024, July 10). *Zoning for 426 home subdivision OKed*. The Independent. <https://petrolialambtonindependent.ca/2024/07/10/zoning-for-426-home-subdivision-oked/>

Transportation

- County of Lambton. (2024). *Lambton County Library teams up with Huron Shores Area Transit* [News release]. <https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/news/lambton-county-library-teams-up-with-huron-shores-area-transit.aspx>
- County of Lambton Social Services Division. (2024, November 6). *Child Care Facility Development* [Report]. <https://lambton.civicweb.net/FileStorage/7737178089EA4726AAE2DCD5BFD90A6B-Child%20Care%20Facility%20Development.pdf>
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2025). *Contract for the Employment in Canada of Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers—2025*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/agricultural/seasonal-agricultural/requirements/caribbean.html>

- Employment and Social Development Canada. (n.d.-a). *Program requirements for low-wage positions*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/median-wage/low/requirements.html>
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (n.d.-b). *Hire a temporary foreign worker in a high-wage position*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/median-wage/low.html>
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (n.d.-c). *ProHire a temporary foreign worker through the Agricultural stream*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/agricultural.html>
- Enano, K. (2022, September 21). *Human Rights Commission reacts to proposed migrant worker housing by-law in Kingsville*. Law Times. <https://www.lawtimesnews.com/practice-areas/human-rights/human-rights-commission-reacts-to-proposed-migrant-worker-housing-by-law-in-kingsville/370042>
- Harris, S., Alasia, A. & Bollman, R. (2008, September) *Rural Commuting: Its Relevance to Rural and Urban Labour Markets* [Report]. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/21-006-x/21-006-x2007006-eng.pdf?st=6GJdAjVy>.
- Huron Shores Area Transit. (2025, April). *Lambton Shores Approves One-Month Funding Extension for Huron Shores Area Transit* [News Release]. <https://huronshoresareatransit.ca/lambton-shores-approves-one-month-funding-extension-for-huron-shores-area-transit/>
- Kures, M., & Deller, S. (2022). Growth in commuting patterns and their impacts on rural workforce and economic development. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 37(1), 54–63. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1177/08912424221145173>
- Lambton Area Water Supply System. (2025). *Population Growth Projections for 2026 Master Plan Update (FINAL)* [Report]. Retrieved from <https://pub-lawss.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=5757>
- Statistics Canada. (2023). *Commuting duration by main mode of commuting and time arriving at work: Census metropolitan areas, tracted census agglomerations and census tracts of work* (Table 98-10-0504-01). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/9810050401-eng>
- Wright, H. (2024, November 6). *Lambton to build 49 space child care building at Meadowview Villa*. The Independent. <https://petrolialambtonindependent.ca/2024/11/06/lambton-to-build-49-space-child-care-building-at-meadowview-villa/>

Childcare

- Childcare Resource and Research Unit. (2016). *Finding quality child care: A guide for parents*. www.findingqualitychildcare.ca

- County of Lambton. (2024). *Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan 2024-2028* [Report]. <https://www.lambtononline.ca/en/resident-services/resources/Documents/ChildrensServices/Child-Care-and-Early-Years---Service-Plan---2024-2028-FINAL.pdf>
- Kula, T. (2024, June 19). *Strong demand at new French-language daycare in Sarnia*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/strong-demand-at-new-french-language-daycare-in-sarnia>
- Morden, P. (2025, May 8). *Plans for new Petrolia area childcare centre grow by 24 spaces*. Sarnia Observer. <https://www.theobserver.ca/news/local-news/plans-for-new-petrolia-area-childcare-centre-grow-by-24-spaces>
- Morden, P. (2022, September 21). *Staff shortage temporarily closes Sarnia childcare centre*. Sarnia & Lambton County This Week. <https://www.sarniathisweek.com/news/local-news/staff-shortage-temporarily-closes-sarnia-childcare-centre>
- Ontario. (2025). *Ontario population projections*. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-population-projections>
- Ontario. (2023). *Ontario's Access and Inclusion Framework 2023: Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System* [Report]. <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-access-and-inclusion-framework-en-2023-07-07.pdf>.
- Roushorne, M. (2024, September 26). *OneList for childcare: How to navigate the online system*. The Journal. <https://www.thesarniajournal.ca/news/onelist-for-childcare-how-to-navigate-the-online-system-9568586>
- Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB). (2025). *Employer One Survey 2025 Results* [Report]. <https://www.slwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/EmployerOne-2025-English.pdf>
- Wright, H. (2024, November 6). *Lambton to build 49 space child care building at Meadowview Villa*. The Independent. <https://petrolialambtonindependent.ca/2024/11/06/lambton-to-build-49-space-child-care-building-at-meadowview-villa/>

Appendix: Survey Questions

Block 1: Organization Information

Q2.1 Name of Organization:

Q2.2 Location of Organization (please indicate specific address and postal code)

Q2.3 Name of Person Completing Survey:

Q2.4 Position of Person Completing Survey:

Q2.5 Date:

Block 2: Description of Clients and Services

Q2.1 What language do you **primarily** deliver services in?

- ☐ English
- ☐ French
- ☐ Both English and French equally
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

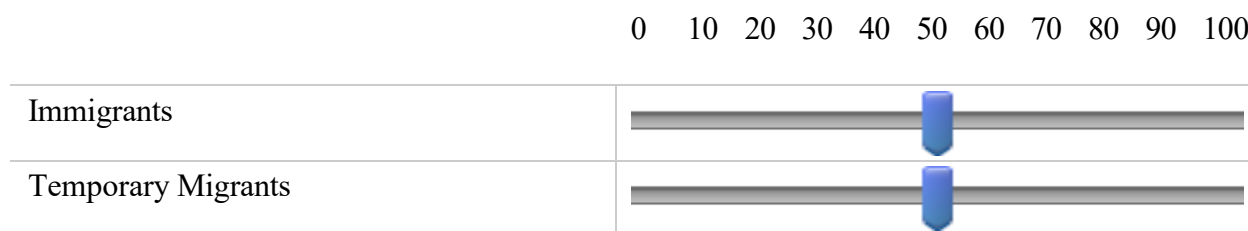
We would now like to ask you a series of questions regarding your organization's provision of services to immigrants and temporary migrants in Sarnia-Lambton.

An **immigrant** is someone who was born outside of Canada and came to Canada to live permanently.

A **temporary migrant** is someone who was born outside of Canada and came to Canada to work and/or go to school on a temporary basis.

(Note: These definitions are available as pop-ups throughout the survey in places where these terms are underlined. You can view these definition pop-ups by hovering your cursor over the underlined text if you are completing the survey via a computer or by clicking on the underlined text if you are completing the survey via a mobile device.)

Q2.2 Approximately what percentage of your clients are immigrants or temporary migrants?



Q2.3 What are these percentages based on?

- ☐ Data we have collected about our clients
- ☐ The number of immigrants and/or temporary migrants we seem to serve on a daily basis
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Q2.4 Please indicate which of the following services you provide to immigrants and/or temporary migrants in your community. (Check all that apply.)

	Immigrants	Temporary Migrants
Employment Assistance	☐	☐
Social Support Services	☐	☐
Health Services	☐	☐
Settlement Needs Assessment and Support Services	☐	☐
Community Connections	☐	☐
Housing Services	☐	☐
Language Training	☐	☐
Education and Training Services	☐	☐
Services to Address Gender-Based Violence	☐	☐
Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Training or Anti-Racism Training	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

(If one or more options are selected for “Immigrants” and/or “Temporary Migrants” in Q2.4, display Q2.5a and/or Q2.5b, respectively, with choices from Q2.4 carried forward; else, skip to Q3.1.)

Q2.5a For each of the services that you provide to immigrants, please indicate if the service is provided only to immigrants or if it is provided to all residents.

	Provided Only to Immigrants	Provided to All Residents (Including Immigrants)
Employment Assistance	☐	☐
Social Support Services	☐	☐
Health Services	☐	☐
Settlement Needs Assessment and Support Services	☐	☐
Community Connections	☐	☐
Housing Services	☐	☐
Language Training	☐	☐
Education and Training Services	☐	☐
Services to Address Gender-Based Violence	☐	☐
Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Training or Anti-Racism Training	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

Q2.5b For each of the services that you provide to temporary migrants, please indicate if the service is provided only to temporary migrants or if it is provided to all residents.

	Provided Only to Temporary Migrants	Provided to All Residents (Including Temporary Migrants)
Employment Assistance	☐	☐
Social Support Services	☐	☐
Health Services	☐	☐
Settlement Needs Assessment and Support Services	☐	☐
Community Connections	☐	☐
Housing Services	☐	☐
Language Training	☐	☐
Education and Training Services	☐	☐
Services to Address Gender-Based Violence	☐	☐
Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Training or Anti-Racism Training	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

Block 3: Connections with Other Organizations

Q3.1 How aware are you of the services provided to immigrants and temporary migrants by other organizations in the Sarnia-Lambton region?

	Not at all Aware 1	2	3	Moderately Aware 4	5	6	Extremely Aware 7
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(If “Moderately Aware 4,” “5,” “6,” or “Extremely Aware 7” is selected for “Immigrants” and/or “Temporary Migrants” in Q3.1, display Q3.2a and/or Q3.2b, respectively; else skip to Q3.3.)

Q3.2a If you responded moderately or above regarding your awareness of services for immigrants, please describe:

Q3.2b If you responded moderately or above regarding your awareness of services for temporary migrants, please describe:

Q3.3 How often do you work with other organizations in Sarnia-Lambton to provide services to immigrants and/or temporary migrants?

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(If “Sometimes 3,” “Often 4,” or “Always 5” is selected for “Immigrants” and/or “Temporary Migrants” in Q3.3, display Q3.4a and/or Q3.4b, respectively; else skip to Q3.5.)

Q3.4a If you responded that you Sometimes, Often, or Always work with other organizations to provide services for immigrants, please describe:

Q3.4b If you responded that you Sometimes, Often, or Always work with other organizations to provide services for temporary migrants, please describe:

Q3.5 How often do you refer immigrants and/or temporary migrants to other services in Sarnia-Lambton?

	Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(If “Sometimes 3,” “Often 4,” or “Always 5” is selected for “Immigrants” and/or “Temporary Migrants” in Q3.5, display Q3.6a and/or Q3.6b, respectively; else skip to Q3.7.)

Q3.6a Please describe the referrals that you provide for immigrants, including

1. The type(s) of services to which you are most likely to refer immigrant clients (e.g., health, mental health, employment, Francophone services, etc.); and
2. Whether the services to which you refer immigrant clients are most likely to be specifically for immigrants or for all residents:

Q3.6b Please describe the referrals that you provide for temporary migrants, including

1. The type(s) of services to which you are most likely to refer temporary migrant clients (e.g., health, mental health, employment, Francophone services, etc.); and
2. Whether the services to which you refer temporary migrant clients are most likely to be specifically for temporary migrants or for all residents:

Q3.7 Do you have links with organizations in locations outside of Sarnia-Lambton with whom you can share lessons and best practices about providing services to immigrants and/or temporary migrants?

- ☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q3.8; else, skip to Q4.1*)
- ☐ No

Q3.8 If yes, please describe:

Block 4: Outcomes of Current Services

Q4.1 What are the anticipated outcomes of the service(s) you currently provide to immigrants and/or temporary migrants? (Check all that apply.)

	Immigrants	Temporary Migrants
Civic Inclusion & Engagement	☐	☐
Stronger Labour Force	☐	☐
Improved Official Language Skills	☐	☐
Improved Health, Mental Health, & Well-Being	☐	☐
Improved Access to Education	☐	☐
Capacity to Make Informed Decisions About Life in Canada	☐	☐
Ability to Find Jobs Commensurate with Skills and Education	☐	☐
Creation of Social and Professional Networks	☐	☐
Financial Independence	☐	☐
Ability to Secure Adequate Housing	☐	☐
Settlement	☐	☐
Integration	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

Q4.2 Do you try to evaluate the effectiveness of the services you provide to immigrants and/or temporary migrants?

- ☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q4.3; else, skip to Q5.1*)
- ☐ No

Q4.3 Please describe your evaluation strategy:

Block 5: Client Data

Q5.1 Do you have any data about your clients that include whether they are immigrants or temporary migrants, such as demographic information, client outcomes, etc.?

- ☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q5.2; else skip to Q6.1a*)
- ☐ No

Q5.2 Please describe the type of data you have about your immigrant and/or temporary migrant clients and how you acquire these data:

Q5.3 Would you be willing to contribute anonymized data about your immigrant and/or temporary migrant clients to an aggregated community data repository?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (*If selected, skip to Q6.1a; else, continue*)

Q5.4 How often would you be willing to share these data?

- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ Once every three months
- ☐ Once every six months
- ☐ Once per year
- ☐ At some other interval, please specify: _____

Q5.5 Please describe the data that you would be willing to share:

Block 6: Needs and Gaps

Q6.1a How do you think that immigrants and temporary migrants are faring **in the city of Sarnia?**

	Very Poorly 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very Well 7
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6.1b How do you think that immigrants and temporary migrants are faring **in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia?**

	Very Poorly 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very Well 7
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6.2a Why did you respond as you did regarding immigrants and temporary migrants **in the city of Sarnia?**

Q6.2b Why did you respond as you did regarding immigrants and temporary migrants **in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia?**

Q6.3a What do you think would improve the situation for immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton the most?

Q6.3b What do you think would improve the situation for temporary migrants in Sarnia-Lambton the most?

Q6.4a What services do you think are most important for immigrants living in Sarnia-Lambton?

Q6.4b What services do you think are most important for temporary migrants living in Sarnia-Lambton?

Q6.5a In your opinion, how easy do you think it is for immigrants and temporary migrants to access the services they need **in the city of Sarnia**?

[illegible]

Q6.5b In your opinion, how easy do you think it is for immigrants and temporary migrants to access the services they need **in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia?**

	Very Difficult 1	2	3	4	5	6	Very Easy 7
Immigrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Temporary Migrants	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6.6a Are there any specific services or supports for immigrants and/or temporary migrants that are currently lacking or under-provided **in the city of Sarnia?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q6.6b Are there any specific services or supports for immigrants and/or temporary migrants that are currently lacking or under-provided **in the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

(If “Yes” is selected in Q6.6a or Q6.6b, continue to Q6.7a; else skip to Q6.8.)

Q6.7a Please describe these services or supports, including

1. Whether they are services or supports for immigrants and/or temporary migrants, and
2. If they are lacking in Sarnia and/or the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia:

Q6.7b Who should be involved in providing these services or supports?

Q6.7c What would be needed to provide these services or supports?

Q6.8 Are there any activities we could be doing in Sarnia-Lambton to support immigrants and/or temporary migrants more effectively?

- ☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q6.9a; else skip to Q7.1*)
- ☐ No

Q6.9a Please describe these activities, including

1. Whether these activities should be aimed toward immigrants and/or temporary migrants, and
2. If they should be done in Sarnia and/or the region of Lambton outside of Sarnia:

Q6.9b Who should be involved in these activities?

Q6.9c What would be needed to develop these activities?

Block 7: Perceptions of Sarnia-Lambton as a Destination for Migrants

Q7.1 Why do you think immigrants and temporary migrants choose to come to Sarnia-Lambton?
(Check all that apply.)

	Immigrants	Temporary Migrants
Cost of Living	☐	☐
Affordable Housing	☐	☐
Sense of Safety	☐	☐
Community Amenities & Services	☐	☐
Welcoming & Inclusive Community	☐	☐
Multicultural Environment & Well-Established Ethnic Community	☐	☐
Friends & Family Living in Sarnia-Lambton	☐	☐
Nature (e.g., Parks, Trails, Air Quality)	☐	☐
Education Prospects	☐	☐
Employment or Self-Employment Prospects	☐	☐
Well-Developed & Accessible Public Transportation	☐	☐
Well-Established Services	☐	☐
Reputation of Sarnia-Lambton	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

Q7.2 In your opinion, how likely are immigrants (i.e., those who are in Canada permanently) to stay in Sarnia-Lambton long term?

	Not at all Likely 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Likely 7
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(If “Not at all Likely 1,” “2,” or “3” is selected in Q7.2, display Q7.3; else skip to Q8.1.)

Q7.3 Why do you think immigrants are likely to leave Sarnia-Lambton? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ High Cost of Living
- ☐ Unaffordable Housing
- ☐ Poor Sense of Safety
- ☐ Lack of Community Amenities & Services
- ☐ Unwelcoming Environment
- ☐ Discrimination in the Community
- ☐ Lack of Diversity in the Community
- ☐ Few Friends & Family Living in Sarnia-Lambton
- ☐ Poor Outdoor Environment (e.g., Lack of Parks or Trails, Poor Air Quality)
- ☐ Poor Education Prospects
- ☐ Poor Employment or Self-Employment Prospects
- ☐ Lack of Childcare
- ☐ Inability to Obtain Appropriate Health Care
- ☐ Poor Public Transportation
- ☐ Lack of Services
- ☐ Poor Reputation of Sarnia-Lambton
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

Block 8: Future Planning

Q8.1 Does your organization have any specific strategies to make sure that immigrants and/or temporary migrants know about your services?

☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q8.2; else skip to Q8.3*)

☐ No

Q8.2 Please describe how your organization reaches out and makes sure that immigrants and/or temporary migrants know about your services:

Q8.3 Does your organization have any emerging plans to provide new services to immigrants and/or temporary migrants in Sarnia-Lambton?

☐ Yes (*If selected, continue to Q8.4; else skip to Q9.1*)

☐ No

Q8.4 Please

1. Describe these possible new services, and
2. Indicate why you are considering offering them:

Block 9: Final Comments

Q9.1 If there is any additional information you would like to share with us about immigrants and/or temporary migrants in the Sarnia-Lambton region, please enter it here:
