



# Halton Newcomer Strategy

## 2013 Community Indicators Report



Funded by:

Financé par :



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We would like to acknowledge the following members of Halton Newcomer Strategy Steering Committee and Working Groups for their contributions to the 2013 Community Indicators Report:

#### **2012 -2013 Steering Committee Members**

(Chair) Barb Krukowski – The Centre for Skills Development  
Amira Masud - Sheridan College, Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning  
Carmen Condo – Halton Catholic District School Board  
Christine VandeGraaf – YMCA of Hamilton / Burlington / Brantford  
Cliff Fast – Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
Jackie Oxley – Halton District School Board  
Jane Jenner – Sheridan College, Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning  
Joe Valvasori – Regional Municipality of Halton  
Karamjit Sangha-Bosland – Halton District School Board  
Katherine Talarico – Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities  
Kay Ham – Halton Catholic District School Board  
Kim Jenkinson – Halton Multicultural Council  
Marie-Pierre Daoust – Le Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud  
Melissa Pedersen – The Centre for Skills Development  
Moya McKinnon – The Centre for Education & Training  
Sita Jayaraman – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton  
Suzanne Muir – Halton District School Board  
Ted Hildebrant – Community Development Halton

#### **Equity Working Group**

(Chair) Sita Jayaraman – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halton  
Ancilla Ho-Young – Burlington Caribbean Connection  
Babur Mobarak – Halton Multicultural Council  
Carmen Condo – Halton Catholic School Board  
Joe Valvasori – Regional Municipality of Halton  
Jorge De Vivero – Sun Life Financial  
Karamjit Sangha-Bosland – Halton District School Board  
Laila Eiriksson – Bahai's of Oakville  
Ryan Persaud – Halton District School Board  
Susan Biggs – Halton Region Police Service  
Suzanne Muir – Halton District School Board  
Wanda Komorowski – Centre for Skills Development

#### **2013 Community Indicator Report Development Team**

Laura Armstrong – Researcher  
Joe Valvasori – Halton Newcomer Strategy Coordinator

#### **Service Coordination Working Group**

(Chair – Acting) Joe Valvasori, Regional Municipality of Halton  
Agnes Wilczak – The Centre for Education and Training  
Barb Krukowski – Centre for Skills Development  
Betty Read – Milton Community Resource Centre  
Jacqueline Balea – Halton Multicultural Council  
Karen Young – Burlington Public Library  
Katherine Baker-Reid – Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services  
Lila Saab – Oakville Public Library  
Linda Oliver – Halton Multicultural Council Member  
Mostafa El Nagger – The Centre for Education & Training  
Paul Roche – Seniors And Law-enforcement Together (SALT)  
Zerezghi Haile – Regional Municipality of Halton

#### **Employment Working Group**

(Chair) Melissa Pedersen – The Centre for Skills Development  
Antony Vadakkanchery – Sheridan College, Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning  
Carolyn Matteo – iiEmpower Consulting  
Darshak Vaishnay – Halton Multicultural Council  
Fadi El-Addallah – Royal Bank of Canada  
Joe Valvasori – Regional Municipality of Halton  
Ken Pustai – TD Bank  
Rodel Imbarlina-Ramos – TRIEC  
Scot Luren – Employment Halton  
Sharon Munslow – YMCA Career Development and Learning Centre

#### **Report Data Contributors**

Amira Masud – Sheridan College  
Erica van Roosmalen – Halton Catholic District School Board  
Jody Wilson – Halton Regional Police Services  
Judy Wedgewood – The Centre for Education and Training  
Karen McNeil – The Centre for Education and Training  
Luisa Botelho – Halton District School Board  
Lydia Law – Halton Multicultural Council  
Marsha Perry Folkes – The Centre for Education and Training  
Poliana Oliveira – Halton Multicultural Council  
Shelly Lothian – Halton Region  
Subhadra Ramachandran – Halton Catholic District School Board  
Ted Hildebrant – Community Development Halton  
Tim Sadai – Halton District School Board  
Yutaka Dirks – Advocacy Centre for Tenants – Ontario

**For more information about the Halton Newcomer Strategy, contact Joe Valvasori at 905.825.6000 or visit [haltonnewcomers.wordpress.com](http://haltonnewcomers.wordpress.com)**

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# Letter from the Halton Newcomer Strategy Chair

On behalf of the Steering Committee and Working Groups of the Halton Newcomer Strategy (HNS), I am pleased to present our 2013 Community Indicators Report. The report provides a strategic planning and evaluation framework to support the activities of the HNS Steering Committee and Working Groups. Through our work, we have engaged a broad range of stakeholders from across Halton to advance the shared goal of building welcoming communities where newcomers can participate and prosper.

To build and maintain welcoming communities requires well-defined objectives and a clear understanding of the results of our activities in achieving success. We have adopted a proven planning and evaluation framework – Results-Based Accountability – to guide our work and measure our impact on newcomers, families and communities in Halton.

Through the Results-Based Accountability framework, our members identified desired outcomes that we will pursue in our community, and established indicators to inform our progress towards these goals. This report utilizes background data to provide insight into the current conditions of newcomers in Halton. The report also offers recommendations for future research, as this process will continue to evolve and reflect changes within the Halton community.

As the Halton Newcomer Strategy moves forward with its work plan, we will continue to collect new data related to these indicators in order to expand our knowledge, maintain an evidence-based approach, and report on our progress. We all have a role to play in building and maintaining welcoming communities, and we invite you to be part of our work.

Barb Krukowski, Chair  
*Halton Newcomer Strategy Steering Committee*



# Executive Summary

The 2013 Community Indicators Report supports the Halton Newcomer Strategy (HNS) by providing Halton-specific data to increase understanding of the current experience of newcomers and establishing local benchmarks to guide and evaluate the activities of the Steering Committee and Working Groups.

Following the completion of background research and community consultations, HNS members identified six initial indicators of a welcoming community and corresponding local data to establish benchmarks to be used in the Results-Based Accountability process. The six indicators and corresponding findings are:

## 1. Newcomers Are Valued and Engaged in the Community

Findings indicate that while immigrant youth score equal or higher than Canadian-born respondents in youth programs participation and perceptions of safety, fewer newcomer youth feel they live in a caring neighbourhood.

## 2. Newcomers Access Affordable and Suitable Housing

Local housing data show a scarcity of rental housing stock and rising rental costs in Halton have contributed to nearly half of immigrant renter households with housing costs that are considered unaffordable.

## 3. Newcomers Develop Positive Relationships with Police

Halton Regional Police Service has established a number of programs to promote diversity and inclusion in Halton. These programs appear well-supported and effective.

## 4. Newcomers are Supported Through Public Organizations

Data available for the number of language classes and newcomer program participants in Halton show that overall, these trend lines are heading in a positive. Data regarding service locations appears to show that the areas with the highest levels of newcomer populations also have the highest number of service locations.

## 5. Newcomers Achieve Positive Educational Outcomes

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores of English language learners in both the Halton District School Board (HDSB) and the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) suggest that the majority of students in grades 3 and 6 in Halton are performing at or above provincial levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The data evaluating “sense of school belonging” show that newcomer respondents scored high in this area and the trend lines for these three assets are heading in a positive direction.



## 6. Newcomers Access Employment Opportunities

Available data show immigrants in Halton face a higher unemployment rate than Canadian-born residents and on average, earn less. The trend line for these indicators, however, is headed in the desired direction with the difference in unemployment rate between new immigrants and Canadian born residents diminishing. The trend line for average income is also heading in a positive direction, but still shows that recent immigrants not only earn considerably less than other groups, but those earnings have remained stagnant.

## Conclusion

A review of available data for the selected indicators shows that Halton Region has



established a solid foundation as a welcoming community. Key findings from the research include:

- Halton is increasingly a destination of choice for newcomers, who value the quality of local schools and safe communities.
- Newcomer youth show they largely feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, perform comparatively well academically, and engage in community activities.
- Halton newcomers benefit from a range of settlement services delivered by an established and collaborative network of service providers, but there are concerns that the growing newcomer population is reaching the capacity of the current system.
- In the areas of employment and housing, the data show that newcomers to Halton face challenges in accessing the labour market and affordable housing.

This report is intended to be a starting point for discussion – it is anticipated that additional indicators will be added and the data will evolve. The Halton Newcomer Strategy Steering Committee and Working Groups will continue to develop and implement activities to creating communities where newcomers are welcomed, supported and employed. The benchmarks in this report will be tracked over time and updated on a two-year cycle to inform the progress of the work.

Finally, this report is an invitation to participate. The Halton Newcomer Strategy recognizes we all have a role to play in ensuring newcomers to Halton are welcomed, supported and employed to their potential.



# Introduction / Background

The 2013 Community Indicators Report is an important step in the work of the Halton Newcomer Strategy (HNS) to create welcoming, inclusive and supportive communities where newcomers can participate and prosper. This Report supports the work plans of the HNS Steering Committee and Working Groups by providing baselines to improve our understanding of the current experience of newcomers in Halton, and to inform our progress in creating and maintaining the conditions of a welcoming community.

Through the development of the strategy, stakeholders identified the need to implement a planning and evaluation framework to determine if activities were achieving the desired results. The HNS Steering Committee chose a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) approach to determine the outcomes they are looking to achieve, identify baseline indicators to establish current conditions, and measure the impact of the work.

In selecting indicators, the Steering Committee and Working Groups reviewed the findings of the consultation process completed in the development of the Halton Newcomer Strategy in 2011-2012. These discussions involved a range of stakeholders and identified a number of priorities, including an emphasis on building welcoming communities.<sup>1</sup>

The Steering Committee and Working Groups also reviewed examples of RBA and other research involving indicators and benchmarking. These included the Our Kids Network 2011 Report Card, Peel Counts 2011 and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS). Finally, the groups reviewed the research



document “Characteristics of a Welcoming Community” prepared by the Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI) for the Integration branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.<sup>2</sup> Following the completion of the background research and consultation, the Steering Committee and Working Groups identified six initial indicators for the RBA process.

This report contains data related to the indicators that will serve to benchmark the progress in creating and sustaining welcoming communities. The information is intended not only to allow HNS members to better understand the current situation of newcomers in Halton, but also to monitor how these outcomes change over time.

<sup>1</sup> Halton Newcomer Strategy: Local Immigration Partnership Final Report, 2012 can be viewed at [www.welcometohalton.com](http://www.welcometohalton.com)

<sup>2</sup> Victoria M. Esses, Leah K. Hamilton, Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash and Meyer Burnstien, *Characteristics of a Welcoming Community*, March 2010

It is also important to note that this report is intended to be a starting point for discussion. It is anticipated that additional indicators will be added and the data will evolve as the Steering Committee and Working Groups move forward. Finally, this report is an invitation to participate. The Halton Newcomer Strategy recognizes we all have a role to play in ensuring newcomers to Halton are welcomed, supported and employed to their potential.

## A Note About the Data

Data included in this report was collected between February and July 2013 from a range of sources, including census data from Statistics Canada. At the time of writing, initial data sets from the 2011 census were being released by Statistics Canada. It is important to acknowledge recent changes in data collection methods that may impact future updates to the indicators used in this report.<sup>3</sup>

In 2010, the federal government replaced the mandatory long form census with a voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). The first set of data from the 2011 NHS was released in May 2013 and initial results indicate the voluntary nature of the survey may have resulted in a lower response rate and non-response bias. As a result, Statistics Canada has issued warnings and cautions to its readers about the reliability and comparability of the NHS data.

The NHS data that has been published to date contains information only at the national, provincial, Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and Census Agglomeration (CA) level. At this point,

the cross-tabulated data have not been released at the Census Subdivision (CSD) level and Statistics Canada is still determining how and when data at the lower geographies (i.e., Census Tract and Dissemination Area) will be released.

As a result, it is not yet clear if 2011 census data will be available at the local and neighbourhood level given the low response rate and the non-response bias of the NHS data.

As new census data is released, the indicators in this report will be updated, with the revised report released in a two-year cycle. In the event that census data is not available at the required level, alternative sources will be used to update the benchmarks.

## Definitions

Although there is no official definition for newcomer, it is usually understood to mean those who have recently arrived to Canada. In this report, the two terms “newcomers” and “immigrants” are used interchangeably.

“Newcomers” or “immigrants” – means individuals and families born in another country, but have immigrated to Canada.

“Recent immigrant” – means individuals who have been granted permanent resident status and have been living in Canada five years or less.

“Established immigrant” – means individuals who have been granted permanent resident status and have been living in Canada more than five years.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, see *Community Development Halton, Community Dispatch – Vol 18, #5 National Household Survey (NHS)* available at: [www.cdhalton.ca/publications/community-dispatch/489-cd1805](http://www.cdhalton.ca/publications/community-dispatch/489-cd1805)



# Welcoming Communities

The Halton Newcomer Strategy works to ensure newcomers in Halton are welcomed, supported and employed to their fullest potential. In evaluating progress towards these objectives, it is important to fully understand what constitutes a welcoming community.

In the 2010 research paper “Characteristics of a Welcoming Community,” the authors presented the findings of a review of current literature and best practices regarding characteristics and indicators of welcoming communities in Canada. The report outlines governments’ increasing emphasis on building community capacity to receive newcomers and a shifting focus from program activities to outcomes and notes “an awareness that the provision of basic settlement services is not sufficient for promoting inclusive communities, and that we must also be concerned with achieving higher level objectives, including social engagement, sense of belonging, social cohesion and strong citizenship.”<sup>4</sup>

Over the last two decades, the term “welcoming community’ has emerged to describe an approach

that encompasses higher level objectives and the concept of responsible citizenship. In this model, obligations for settlement are shared between immigrants, who are responsible for integrating into communities and host societies, which are responsible for implementing strategies to attract, retain and support newcomers through the settlement process.<sup>5</sup>

Welcoming communities are described as having both a defined physical location and a discourse dimension, which involves collaborative and dedicated efforts to facilitate integration.<sup>6</sup> These areas have “a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home”.<sup>7</sup>

Based on their review of available literature, the Welcoming Communities Initiative document identifies key characteristics of a welcoming community. The Halton Newcomer Strategy Steering Committee and Working Groups reviewed this research in identifying the indicators to be used in the Results-Based Accountability framework for the Halton Newcomer Strategy.



4 Victoria M. Esses, Leah K. Hamilton, Caroline Bennett-AbuAyyash and Meyer Burnstien, *Characteristics of a Welcoming Community*, March 2010, p.8

5 Chedly Belkhodja, *Toward a more welcoming community? Observations on the Greater Moncton Area*, p. 1

6 *Characteristics of a Welcoming Community* p.9

7 *Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Attracting and Retaining Immigrants: A toolbox of ideas for smaller centres (2nd ed).* 2007. p.65

# Results-Based Accountability

Through the Halton Newcomer Strategy development process, the Steering Committee was responsible for selecting a framework to be used to guide the planning and to measure the success of activities through implementation of the work plan. After reviewing a number of evaluation models, the Steering Committee supported the recommendation of project staff to use a Results-Based Accountability framework for planning and evaluation. Results-Based Accountability (RBA) is a proven model to engage community stakeholders and develop an evidence-based approach to move from planning to action in a collaborative way. The RBA model is particularly well-suited to better understand complex systems and take action to affect broad-based community conditions.

Key features of Results Based Accountability include:

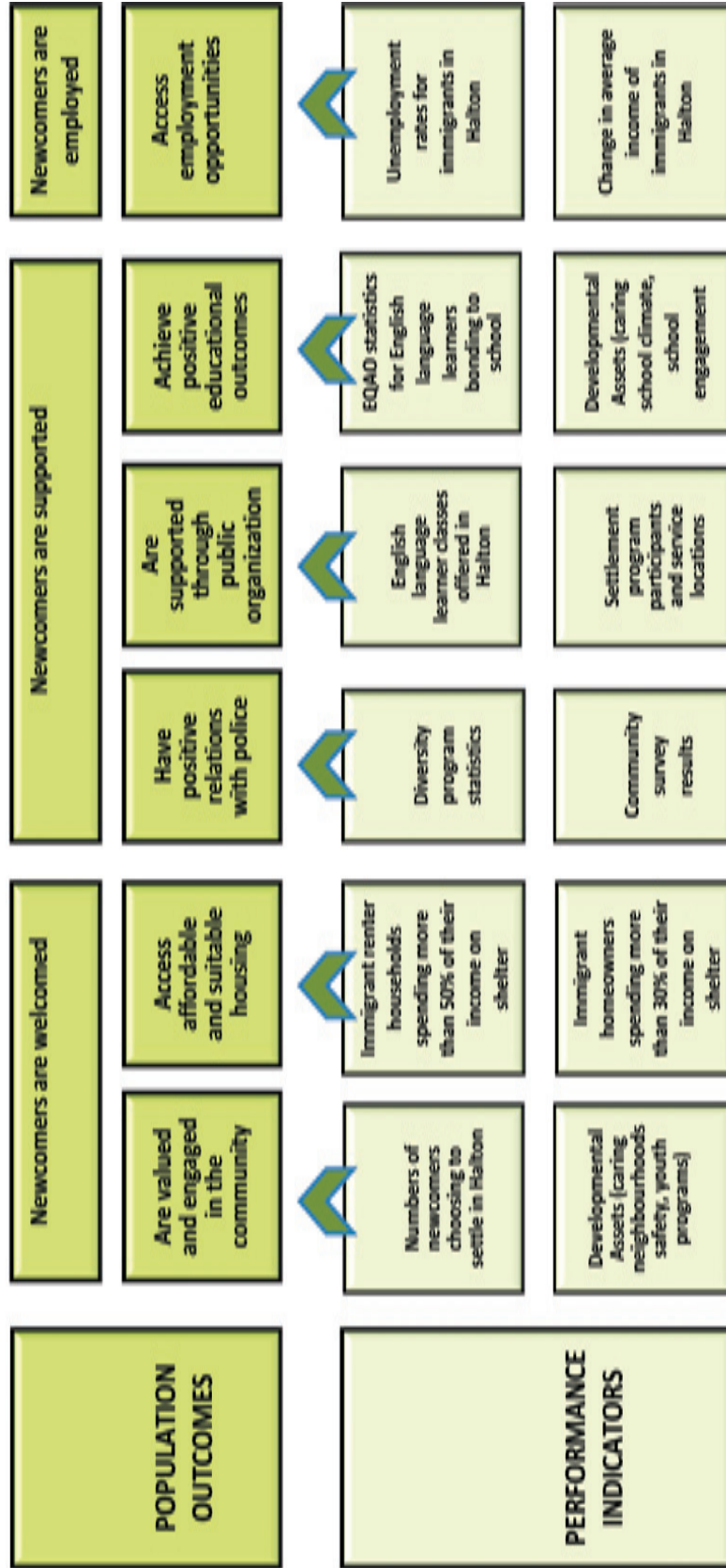
- Clear distinctions between population accountability – the outcomes experienced by communities, cities and regions, and performance accountability – the outcomes experienced by individual programs, organizations and systems.
- Recognition that population outcomes can only be achieved by collaborative, co-ordinated and sustained action by multiple partners, and that it is not the sole responsibility of individual services or organizations.

- RBA works backwards from ends (population outcomes) to means (performance outcomes). Stakeholders determine the population outcome they would like to see (for example – newcomers are supported), and then agree on performance measurements that will accurately evaluate their progress towards these desired results (for example – number of language classes available locally).
- Partners are not only engaged in developing benchmarks and baseline information, but also are involved in the collection of primary data.

The RBA model has been implemented in multiple jurisdictions in North America and Europe, and the Halton Newcomer Strategy will benefit from local expertise in developing and implementing the RBA model. Current local practitioners include Halton Region's Our Kids Network, Peel Region's Success by 6 and the United Way of Peel Region.

In the development of the Halton Newcomer Strategy, the Steering Committee and Working Groups utilized the welcoming communities research and Results-Based Accountability framework to develop the desired population outcomes for the strategy, and identified the indicators that will be used to track our progress towards the outcomes.

# Halton Newcomer Strategy Community Indicators



# Newcomers Are Valued and Engaged in the Community

## The Story Behind the Indicators

Canada is a country of immigrants. The percentage of Canadians born outside the country has been rising for decades and now sits at one in five.<sup>8</sup> With an aging population and declining birth rate, immigration will increasingly be relied upon to support Canada's population growth in the future. By 2031, it is projected that immigration will account for 80 per cent of Canada's population growth, up from 67 per cent today.<sup>9</sup>

Creating welcoming communities that attract and retain newcomers is crucial to our social and economic growth – a growing newcomer population is a positive baseline indicator of a welcoming community. Following the arrival of newcomers, it is important for communities

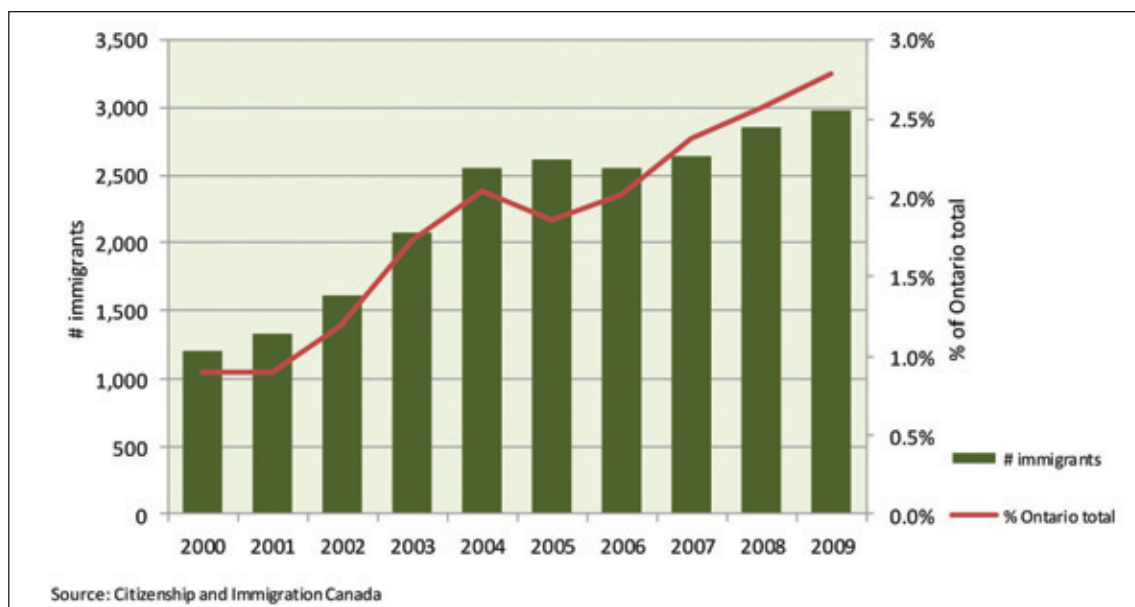
to take steps to create inclusive and supportive environments for immigrants and immigration, as these are the conditions in which welcoming communities thrive.

## Halton Region Context – Growing Newcomer Population

Halton Region has increasingly become a destination of choice for newcomers.

Statistics from Citizenship and Immigration Canada show that between 2000 and 2009, the annual number of immigrants landing in Halton increased by over 140 per cent from 1,200 to 3,000, and the Region's share of Ontario's total landings has also increased from less than one per cent to just under three per cent over the same period.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1: Number of immigrants landing Halton and share of Ontario's total, 2000-2009



8 Statistics Canada, *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population, 2006 Census, December 2007*. p.7

9 Statistics Canada *The Canadian Immigrant Labour Market 2008 – 2011, 2012*, p. 7

10 *Community Development Halton Profile of Newcomers in Halton, 2012*, p.4

Within the four municipalities that make up Halton Region, the Town of Milton experienced the most significant growth in immigrant population over the last decade. Its share of Halton immigrants increased from five per cent in 2000 to over 21 per cent in 2010. The Town of Oakville continued to attract half of the intended landings in Halton with 51 per cent in 2000 and 51 per cent in 2010. Newcomer arrivals to the City of Burlington increased 76 per cent between 2000 and 2010. Burlington's share of the region's immigrant population was at 24 per cent in 2010.

This increasing newcomer population is a reliable indication that Halton is appealing to new immigrants. During the consultations for the Halton Newcomer Strategy, newcomer focus groups were asked what factors influenced their decision to

settle in Halton. The top five responses were:<sup>11</sup>

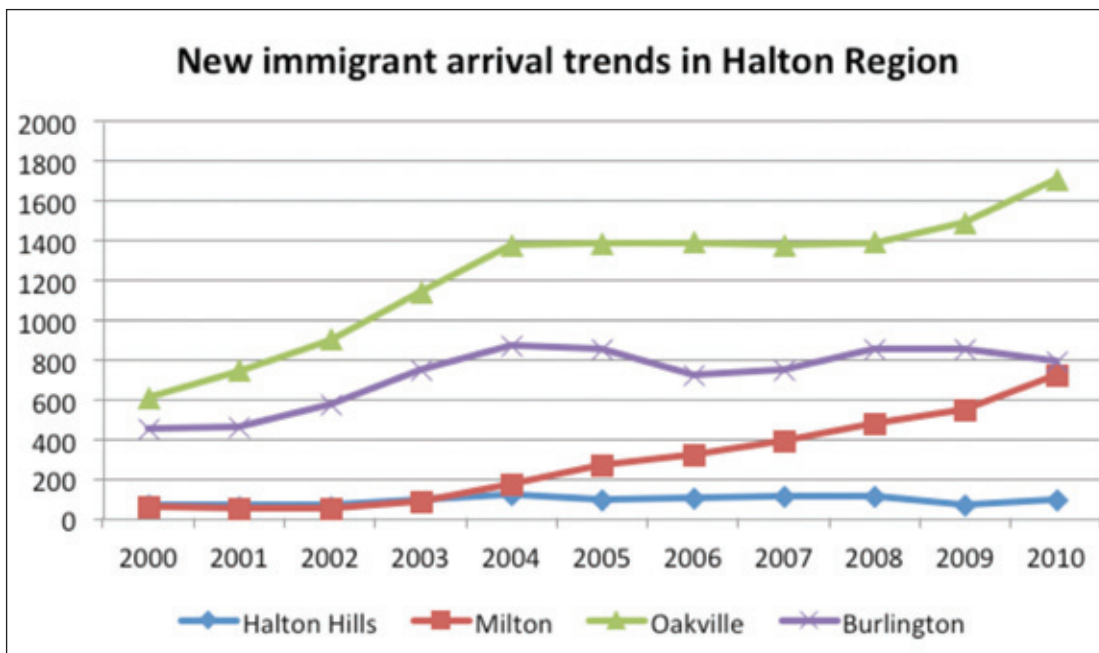
- Quality of local schools
- Community safety
- Employment opportunities
- Friendly / welcoming neighbourhoods
- Housing options

While the growing newcomer population is a positive sign of a welcoming environment for newcomers, additional data is used to determine qualitative factors such as sense of belonging and engagement.

## Halton Region Context – Sense of Inclusion and Engagement

Newcomer-specific data from the Halton Youth Survey will be used to establish a baseline

Figure 2: New immigrant arrival trends



Source: CIC, Facts and Figures: 2010

<sup>11</sup> Halton Newcomer Strategy: Local Immigration Partnership Final Report, 2012.



## KEY HNS WORK PLAN ITEMS RELATED TO THIS INDICATOR

### Newcomers Are Valued and Engaged in the Community

- Conduct research to obtain better understanding of key drivers of newcomer settlement location decisions
- Facilitate formal and informal opportunities for newcomers to connect with communities
- Develop programs to engage volunteers to welcome newcomers to Halton
- Take a lead role in increasing the number of local events promote diversity
- Provide opportunities for ongoing engagement of newcomers post-settlement.

for newcomer perceptions of inclusion and engagement. The Halton Youth Survey is conducted by the Our Kids Network (OKN), a region-wide network of organizations working towards the healthy development and safety of children, youth and families in Halton.

The survey was administered in 2006, 2009 and 2012, and completed by Grade 7 and Grade 10 students in both the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board. In 2012, this involved 121 schools and 10,379 students, representing a response rate of 83 per cent.<sup>12</sup> The survey uses 20 Developmental Assets, which represent the competencies, values, self-perceptions and relationships required for children and youth to succeed.<sup>13</sup>

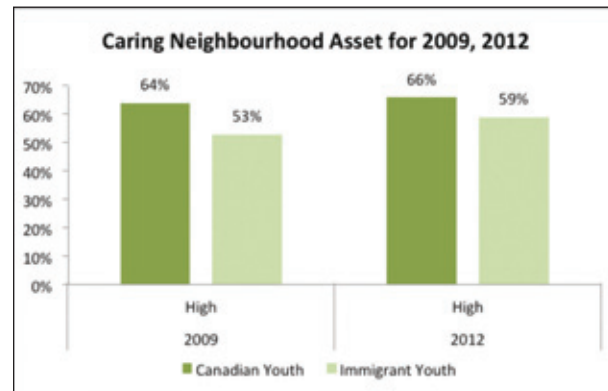
Responses for youth not born in Canada have been isolated from the 2009 and 2012 survey results – three assets can be examined related to perceptions of inclusion and engagement.

<sup>12</sup> Our Kids Network 2012-2103 Halton Youth Survey March 2013. p3 (For more about the Our Kids Network and Developmental Assets, visit [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca))

**Caring Neighbourhood Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent experiences caring neighbours. This asset is measured by one question, which asks if youth feel that their neighbours care about them.

According to the OKN survey results, in 2009 and 2012 more Canadian-born students (64 per cent and 66 per cent) experienced caring neighbours compared to newcomer students (53 per cent and 59 per cent). However, from 2009 to 2012, the percentage of newcomer students scoring high on this asset increased by six percentage points to 59 per cent.

**Figure 3: Caring Neighbourhood Asset**



Source: Our Kids Network

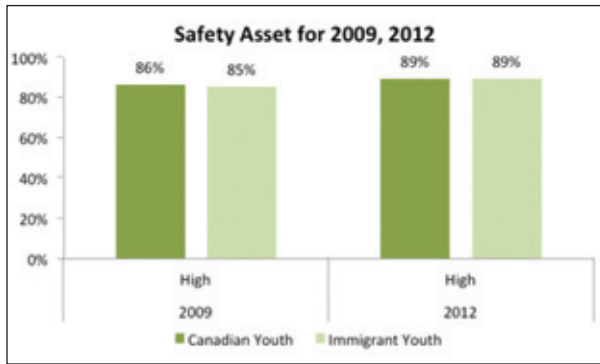
**Safety Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent feels safe at home, school and in the neighbourhood. This asset is comprised of two questions, which ask youth their perceptions of how safe they feel at school and where they live.

In 2009 and 2012, the percentage of Canadian-born students and the newcomer student scoring high on the safety asset is almost identical.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 6



Figure 4: Safety Asset



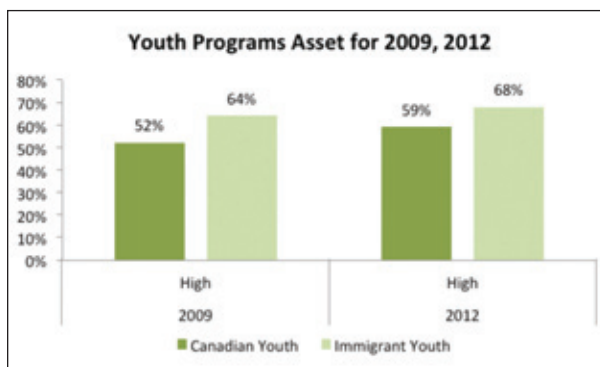
Source: Our Kids Network

This suggests that a large proportion of both newcomer and Canadian-born students in Halton feel equally safe in their neighbourhoods and in their school environment.

**Youth Programs Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent spends time participating in youth programs. This asset is comprised of four questions, which ask youth about their participation in sports teams or clubs, use of their local library, attendance at religious services and participation in youth programs.

In this asset, more newcomer students (68 per cent) than Canadian born students (59 per cent) scored high in youth programs involvement in

Figure 5: Youth Programs Asset



Source: Our Kids Network

both 2009 and 2012. In addition, the percentage of newcomer students ranking high in this asset increased by four percentage points.

## Summary and Next Steps

Halton Region is one of the fastest growing communities in Ontario – due in part to Halton’s ability to attract a growing number of newcomers. The trend line for newcomer population in Halton is heading in a positive direction. However, nearly all the growth is occurring in two of the four municipalities.

Feedback from newcomers indicates they feel Halton is a welcoming community that offers a safe environment and good schools for children. Qualitative data from the Developmental Assets show while immigrant youth score equal or higher in the youth programs and safety asset, immigrant youth score lower on the caring neighbourhood asset. Recommended next steps involve updating the indicator trend lines, as new data becomes available and exploring opportunities to expand the Developmental Assets surveys to include newcomer data from parents.

### MULTICULTURAL DAY – HALTON MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL

For over 10 years, Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) has been organizing Multicultural Day, a free community event to celebrate diversity and appreciate the contributions of multicultural groups and communities in Halton. The event features multicultural entertainment, and food and activities for families. In 2013, over 2,000 people participated in Multicultural Day, which featured 18 multicultural acts, a youth soccer game, community information booths and a children’s area.

# Newcomers Access Affordable and Suitable Housing

## The Story Behind the Indicators

Access to housing that is suitable and affordable to newcomers is not only an important component of the settlement process, but also a key quality of life indicator. Research has linked housing conditions to economic activity, health, social interaction and general well-being.<sup>14</sup> Statistics show that within the first five years of arrival in Canada, newcomers are much more likely than the non-immigrant population to be renters, but once they become established, newcomers are also much more likely to become homeowners.<sup>15</sup>

Accessing suitable housing is challenging for many newcomers. Data show that 40 per cent of recent immigrants experience difficulties finding housing upon arrival to Canada, and that these challenges were due to the high cost of housing, lack of co-signers and lack of suitable housing options.<sup>16</sup>

A balanced rental vacancy rate is commonly viewed at three per cent, with rates consistently below this threshold seen as exerting upwards pressure on rental costs. In 2010, the rental vacancy rate for Halton was 1.4 per cent, well below the balanced threshold.<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, data also show that rental cost in Halton has been climbing over the past decade. In 2011, while the median cost of a two-bedroom apartment climbed to \$1,113 in Halton, the overall vacancy rate of 1.1 per cent fell behind Durham and Peel

Regions in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).<sup>18</sup> As a result, Halton has a significantly lower percentage of immigrant renters and a larger percentage of immigrant homeowners than other jurisdictions examined by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.<sup>19</sup>

The cost of purchasing a home in Halton has also significantly increased over the past decade. The average cost of a new home has risen from \$268,772 in 2001 to \$536,006 in 2010, well above the Ontario average.<sup>20</sup>

These high costs and limited availability have resulted in housing that is unaffordable to many Halton newcomers.

## Halton Context – Newcomer Household Expenditures on Housing

The percentage of income spent on shelter is a widely accepted measure to gauge the affordability of housing to an individual as well as the relative risk of homelessness. Housing costs that account for over 30 per cent of household income are considered unaffordable.

Data regarding renter households in Halton reveal that while 41.1 per cent of non-immigrant households were spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent, the percentage

14 *Abdullahel Hadi and Ronald Labonte Housing and Health of Recent Immigrants in Canada: A Narrative Review. Institute of Population Health Ottawa, Ontario. p.4*

15 *Federation of Canadian Municipalities Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities, Theme Report #5, 2009, p.29*

16 *Statistics Canada Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress and Progress, October 2003, p.18*

17 *Halton Region, 2011 State of Housing Report, p.17*

18 *Ibid. p.17-18*

19 *Federation of Canadian Municipalities Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities, Theme Report #5, 2009, p.29, 42*

20 *Federation of Canadian Municipalities, No Vacancy: Trends in Rental Housing in Canada 2012. p.11.*



for newcomers was higher – 47.9 per cent of established immigrant households (over five years in Canada) and 48.5 per cent of recent immigrant households (five years or less in Canada) were in unaffordable housing.<sup>21</sup>

Between 2001 and 2006, these figures declined slightly. For recent immigrant households, the decrease was 1.2 per cent while established immigrant households decreased by 0.7 per cent.<sup>22</sup> In Halton, nearly half of all immigrant renter households live in unaffordable housing.

Data regarding immigrant homeowner households in Halton reveal that immigrants, particularly recent immigrants, are much more likely to be spending more than 30 per cent of household income on housing. Of non-immigrant households in Halton, 17.2 per cent fell into this category, while 22 per cent of established immigrants and 45.6 per cent of recent immigrant homeowners were in unaffordable housing.<sup>23</sup> This represents a significant

increase for recent immigrants. Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of recent immigrant households whose housing costs are considered unaffordable jumped by 16.5 per cent while

#### TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM – HALTON MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL

Since 2004, the Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) has offered a temporary housing option for eligible newcomers in the community. Funded in partnership with the federal government and Halton Region, the Transitional Housing for Newcomers to Halton program HMC provides temporary supportive accommodation while residents search for permanent housing in Halton.

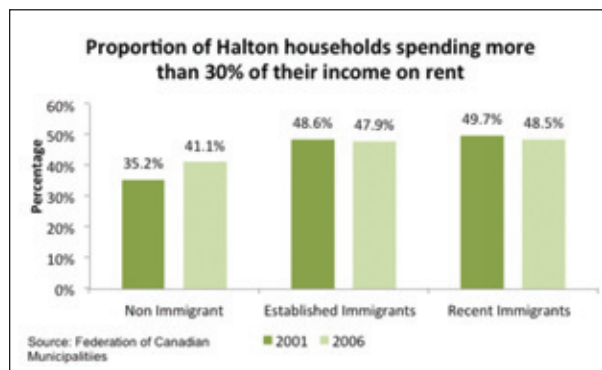
Residents also receive additional services and supports necessary to establish their home in Canada. Through the program, HMC manages six transitional housing units that provide a home for newcomer families at risk for homelessness for up to a year to help them settle in Halton.

21 *Federation of Canadian Municipalities Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities, Theme Report #5, 2009 data tables*

22 *ibid*

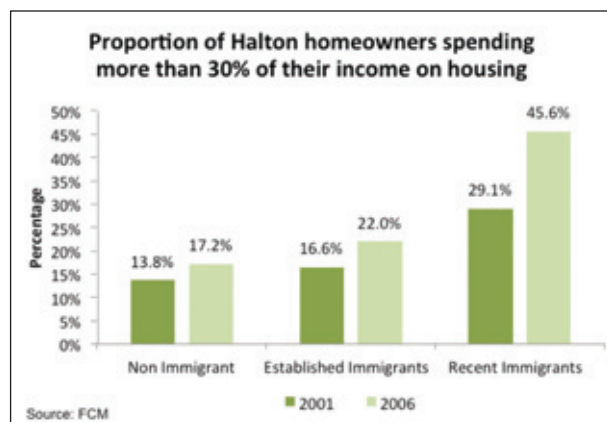
23 *ibid*

**Figure 6: Renters spending over 30 per cent of income**



the increase for established immigrants was 5.5 per cent. By comparison, the increase for non-immigrant households in Halton was 3.4 per cent.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 7: Homeowners spending over 30 per cent**



## Summary and Next Steps

The housing situation of newcomers affects their ability to access schools, employment opportunities and key services within the community. The availability and affordability of housing can influence where newcomers choose

<sup>24</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities *Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities, Theme Report #5, 2009 data tables*

to settle and their level of satisfaction with their life in Canada.<sup>25</sup>

A scarcity of rental housing stock and rising rental costs in Halton have contributed to nearly half of immigrant renter households spending more on housing than what is considered affordable. Newcomer homeowners are also facing housing costs that are unaffordable, as a growing number of newcomer homeowners, especially recent immigrants, are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on housing.

The trend line for immigrant rental households with unaffordable housing costs remains virtually unchanged from 2001-2006, while the trend line of newcomer homeowners with unaffordable housing costs is increasing rapidly for recent immigrants. As new data becomes available, we will determine if these trends are continuing. Recommended next steps involve improving access to affordable rental units for newcomers and also strengthening labour market supports to increase household income.

### KEY HNS WORK PLAN ITEMS RELATED TO THIS INDICATOR

#### Access affordable and suitable housing

- Promote easily accessible and relevant information related to housing
- Engage stakeholders to develop new initiatives related to key priorities identified by newcomers (housing, finance, childcare)
- Work with HNS service delivery partners to explore enhancements to employment aspects of settlement curriculum to increase employment and earnings for newcomers.

<sup>25</sup> Houle, R., & Schellenberg, G. *New immigrants' assessments of their life in Canada, Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, February 2010. p.27*



# Newcomers Develop Positive Relationships with Police

## The Story Behind the Indicators

Research has shown that community safety is an important factor in determining where immigrants choose to live and the quality of their settlement experience. A Statistics Canada study examining what newcomers liked most about Canada four years after arrival showed safety ranked near the top of the list, third only behind climate/physical environment, and cultural aspects such as personal freedoms and respect for rights.<sup>26</sup> These findings are supported by the results of Halton Newcomer Strategy consultations, in which newcomers routinely identified the safety of Halton as a primary reason behind their decision to settle in the community.



Studies have also shown that new immigrants are easily susceptible to crime and are less likely to report the incidents to police.<sup>27</sup> For these reasons, the presence of immigrant-police partnerships and proactive efforts to cultivate relationships are important to keep communities welcoming and safe.

## Halton Context – Halton Regional Police Service Diversity Team

Through the creation of the Diversity team in 2001, the Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) partnered with community stakeholders to establish a number of programs to support a growing and diverse community.

The Diversity Team is comprised of approximately 100 civilian and uniform employees involved in a range of activities to enhance cultural awareness and foster relationships between the police and all members of the public. The Halton Regional Police Service assigns one of its sergeants to lead its diversity initiatives and this Diversity-Equity-Inclusion co-ordinator is also responsible for outreach to Halton Region's diverse communities

Currently the Halton Region Police Service offers four diversity programs.<sup>28</sup>

1. *The Emergency Services Introduction for New Canadians (ESINC)* helps immigrants and new

26 Schellenberg, G & Maheux, H (2007) *Immigrants' Perspectives of their first four years in Canada: Highlights from the three waves of the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada. Canadian Social Trends, 2007*

27 COPS (2009) *Policing in New Immigrant Communities p 7* Retrieved from <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/e060924209-NewImmigrantCommunities.pdf>

28 <http://www.hrps.on.ca/Diversity/Pages/default.aspx>

## KEY HNS WORK PLAN ITEMS RELATED TO THIS INDICATOR

- Have positive relations with police
- Develop partnerships and connect with existing networks to raise community awareness and acceptance
- Expand relationships with ethno-specific media and / or faith-based institutions to support communication with newcomer communities
- Leverage HNS resources and partnerships to increase understanding of equity and diversity issues
- Continue to support and expand civic awareness initiatives - (ESINC, HSINC. Grade 10 civics classes, citizenship workshops)

Canadians understand how to access emergency services, including police, fire and ambulance in Halton Region (see sidebar).

2. *Police Ethnic and Cultural Education Program (PEACE)*, is an 11-week program for high school students between the ages of 15 to 18 years, to help them develop more positive relationships with police, and improve their cultural proficiency, communication and leadership skills. The program has been running for more than 25 years and has served more than 750 students.

3. *Enhanced Language Training (ELT)* is delivered in partnership with the Halton Multicultural Council and is a specialized English as a Second Language program targeted at new Canadians with an interest or background in policing. The

program helps prepare students for a potential career in law enforcement in Canada.

4. *Multi-Faith Support Team (MFST)* is a program developed to meet the needs of Halton Regional Police Service's diverse workforce. This program provides spiritual, religious and moral support to HRPS personnel and their families in times of work-related and/or personal crisis and/or trauma.

## Halton Context – Halton Regional Police Community Survey

Since 1995, the Halton Region Police Service has been conducting community surveys to gather feedback from Halton residents regarding policing matters and their experience with the service. The last survey was taken in 2012 and received 503 responses.

While the survey does not isolate immigrant responses, there are a number of questions that relate to positive relations with the police service and can serve as initial benchmarks to be expanded to include newcomer-specific responses in future surveys.

In particular, the survey asked respondents if they agreed with a number of statements related to Halton police.

Of respondents expressing an opinion, 96 per cent agreed that HRPS members were honest and fair, respected human rights, and were approachable and representative of their community. These results were consistent with the 2009 survey results.

29 Halton Region Police Service *2012 Community Survey* p. 1



Table 1: Halton Regional Police Service 2012 community survey

Members of the Halton Region Police Service	Percentage Agreeing
Are honest/fair	96% (+1%)
Respect human rights	96% (-1%)
Are approachable	96% (+1%)
Represent their community	96% (+2%)
<b>NOTE:</b> The values in parenthesis represent the change from the 2009 survey	

Source: Halton Regional Police Service

## Summary and Next Steps

Community safety and respect for individual freedoms and rights play a large role as to where newcomers choose to land and settle. In some cases, this is due to the fact that many newcomers have left countries where police and other authority figures are seen as corrupt and restricting individual freedoms and human rights. Active measures from police services to engage newcomers and foster positive relationships are an important element of creating and sustaining welcoming communities.

Halton Regional Police Service has established a number of programs to promote diversity and inclusion in Halton. Available data show these programs are well supported and effective. Additional program-specific data would be beneficial to better evaluate the outcomes of these efforts. Recommended next steps also include expanding data collected through the Community Survey to isolate newcomer respondents for comparison with non-immigrant results.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES INTRODUCTION FOR NEW CANADIANS (ESINC) – HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES

The Emergency Services Introduction for New Canadians (ESINC) has been held in Halton Region since 2005. Organized in partnership with Halton Region Police Service, Halton Regional Paramedic Services, local fire departments, the Halton Diversity Advisory Committee and community service providers, the ESINC helps newcomers understand how to access emergency services. The event has drawn thousands of newcomers to the Halton Regional Administrative Centre for demonstrations and community barbeque, and ESINC information is taught in a classroom setting at local schools.

# Newcomers are Supported Through Public Organizations

## The Story Behind the Indicators

Jurisdiction for immigration is shared between federal, provincial and territorial governments. In Ontario, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) each provides programs and services to promote social and economic inclusion.

At the federal level, immigration policies have seen significant changes over the last five years. The pace of change has accelerated since 2011, with new policies introduced affecting the three immigration streams (economic, family, refugee), citizenship requirements, temporary workers and Settlement Program funding.<sup>30</sup>

Through the Settlement Program, CIC funds newcomer serving organizations to deliver information and orientation services, language training, supports for community connections and labour market participation.<sup>31</sup> In 2011-2012, CIC initiated a Grants and Contributions modernization initiative, involving a national call for proposals process and review of settlement and multiculturalism programs, resulting in an 8 per cent reduction in federal funding for the Settlement Program.<sup>32</sup> In Ontario, this translated into a reduction in Settlement Program funding of \$32 million.<sup>33</sup>

A reduction in Settlement Program funding has the potential to have an impact on the capacity of communities to support the language,

employment and other settlement needs of immigrants. According to the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), language is the most serious barrier that newcomers encounter when looking for employment and furthering their education and training.<sup>34</sup> The continued availability and accessibility of these services will be used to benchmark support of newcomers through public organizations.

## Halton Context – Language Programs

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) is a language training program funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It provides free English language instruction to adult newcomers who want to learn or improve their English language skills as they settle in Canada. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration also supports newcomers to learn English through the English as a Second Language programs (ESL) delivered through local school boards. Curriculum for the programs is similar enough that often both LINC and ESL students are combined in the same class.

Currently, there are five language-training providers offering classes at 11 different locations within Halton Region. They include:

1. Centre for Education & Training – LINC Home Study. This program is available to any eligible

30 Alboim, N. and Cohl, K. *Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies*. Maytree, 2012.p.4

31 *Citizenship and Immigration Canada Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*. 2012. p. 23

32 *Ibid* pg 23

33 Alboim, N. and Cohl, K. *Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies*. Maytree, 2012.p.15

34 *Evaluation of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program* p.11

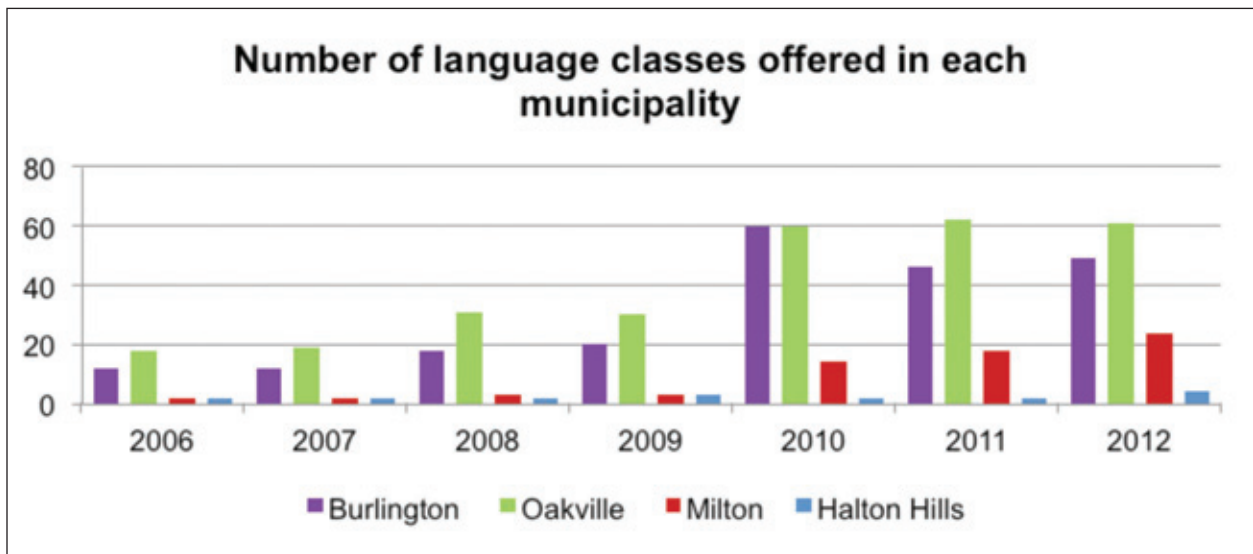
client in Ontario who cannot attend regular LINC classes.

2. Halton Catholic District School Board, Thomas Merton Centre – language programs are offered in Milton, Oakville and Burlington.
3. Halton District School Board, through the Centre for Skills Development & Training –

language classes are offered in Burlington (two locations), Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills.

4. Halton Multicultural Council offers language classes at two locations in Oakville.
5. Sheridan College – language classes offered in Oakville.

**Figure 8: Language classes in The Region of Halton**



Source: Halton language training providers

A review of language classes offered in Halton since 2006 shows that overall the number of classes offered across Halton has increased. The majority of language classes are available in Oakville, followed by Burlington. This is consistent with newcomer populations in these municipalities. In 2009-2010 the number of classes offered in Oakville doubled while classes

in Burlington increased by 200 per cent. In 2011, however, the number of available classes in Burlington declined, while the number of classes in Milton and Oakville increased slightly. The number of classes in Milton increased from two in 2006 to 24 in 2012, which is understandable with the rapid population growth in Milton during this period.

## Halton Context – Settlement Program Participants and Service Locations

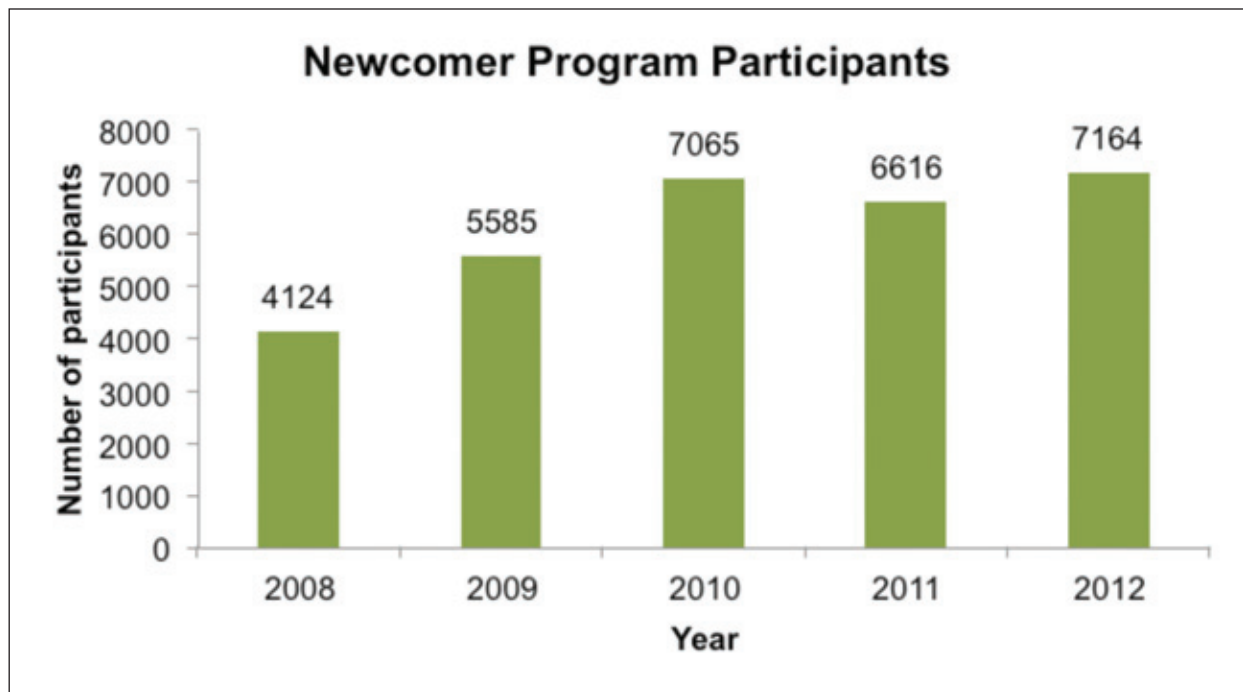
As noted earlier, Settlement Program funding supports a range of services in addition to language programs. Information related to participation in these services will enhance our understanding of the accessibility and utility of these programs to newcomers.

Data provided by newcomer service providers in Halton can be used to determine the usage of Settlement Program services on an annual basis

from 2008-2012. As is shown in Figure 9, despite a slight dip in 2011, participation in settlement programs has been increasing. Participation has grown from 4,124 contacts in 2008 to 7,164 contacts in 2012.

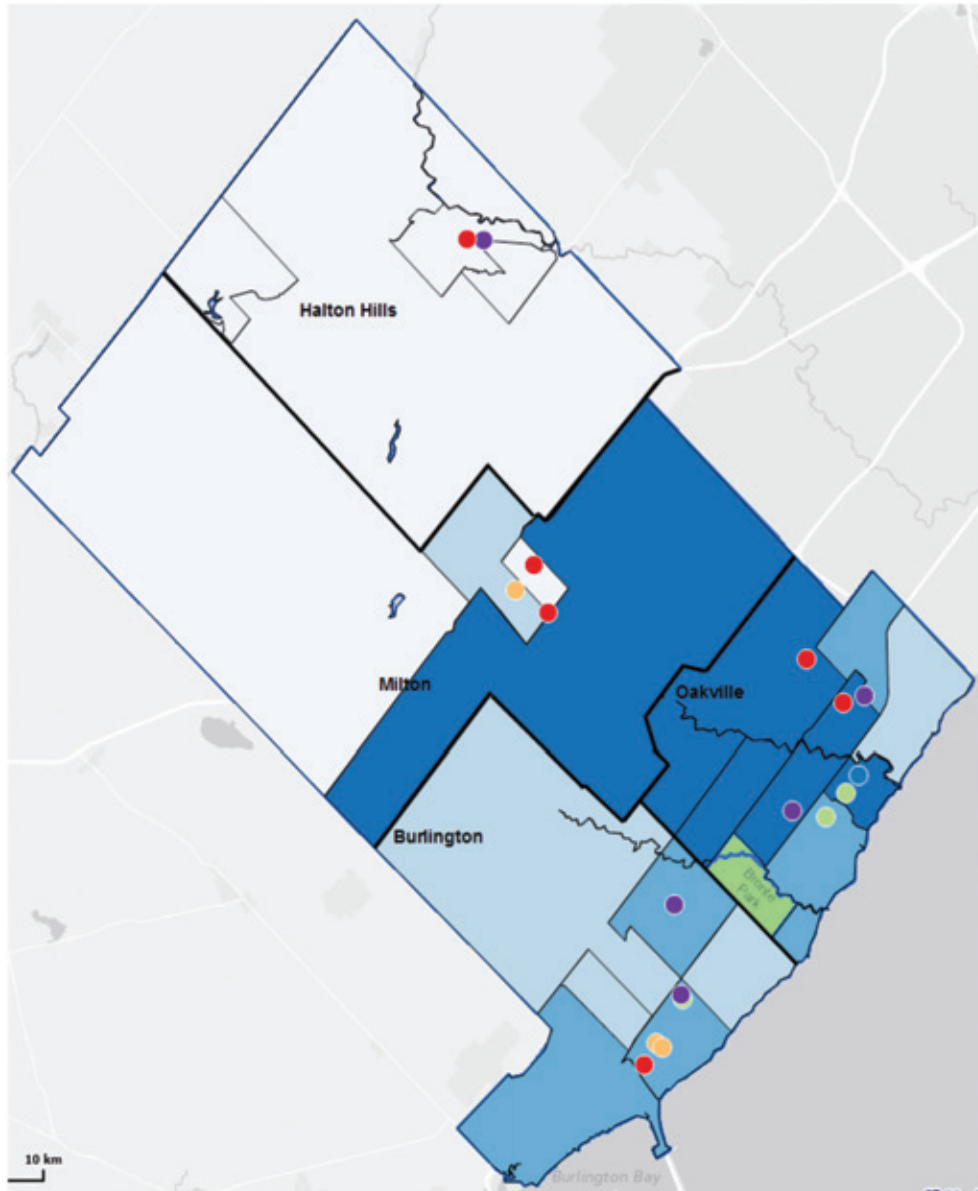
Service location data show that the bulk of settlement service locations are in Oakville and Burlington, followed by Milton. Halton Hills has the fewest service locations. As is shown in Map 1, this is consistent with newcomer settlement patterns in Halton. As new data becomes available, we will determine if the rapid growth of the newcomer population in Milton is matched with appropriate services.

Figure 9: Number of program participants in the Region of Halton

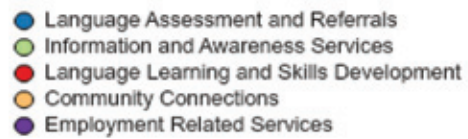


Source: Halton newcomer service providers

Map 1: New Immigrant Population and Newcomer Services in Halton.



Source: Statistics Canada



Shading represents percentage of new immigrant population in Halton.(Based on 2006 Statistics Canada data).

## Summary and Next Steps

The availability of supports such as language training, job search assistance, and information on local programs and service are crucial components to the effective settlement of newcomers within a community. Recent years have seen significant changes to immigration policy and the funding provided to organizations to deliver settlement programs.

Data available for the number of language classes and newcomer program participants in Halton show that overall, these trend lines are heading in a positive direction. A closer examination at the municipal level shows a slight decline in 2011 in

### WORKPLACE LANGUAGE TRAINING – THE CENTRE FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Centre for Skills Development, in partnership with local employers, offers an innovative and effective program to support newcomers with language and employment preparation. With funding support provided by the Government of Ontario, the Centre for Skills Development co-ordinates the Workplace Language training program. This service is intended for companies with a sizeable foreign-born workforce and delivers language curriculum to employees on the job site.

In addition to improving employee pronunciation, it is hoped that this language program will assist newcomers in becoming more proficient at their jobs, improve health and safety conditions at the workplace, and assist newcomers in understanding job functions. Classes are typically two hours per week for 15 weeks and require a minimum of six people to form a class.

available language classes and program participants, but these appear to have rebounded in 2012.

Data regarding service locations appear to show that the areas with the highest levels of newcomer populations also have the highest number of locations. As new data becomes available, we will determine if these trends are continuing.

While these indicators establish a baseline perspective on the availability, location and usage of settlement programs, recommended next steps involve a better understanding of capacity of these programs and the service providers.

In order to better understand local capacity, it is recommended that local partners and stakeholders explore additional data collection methods and sources to inform the indicators.

## Key HNS Work Plan Activities Related to the Indicator:

Are supported through public organizations

- Engage partners in municipal services, education, healthcare to develop strategies to inform/engage newcomers in the development of programs and services.
- Service providers complete inventory of current messaging and collaborate to ensure information is current and accurate.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration to create and implement flexible service plans best suited to newcomer settlement goals.
- Support existing newcomer initiatives through cross-promotion of services and pooling of resources.
- Support the continued development and utilization of the Halton Immigration Portal through local partnerships and networks.



# Newcomers Achieve Positive Educational Outcomes

## The Story Behind the Indicator

Research has shown that the quality of the local education system and availability of education opportunities influences where many newcomers choose to settle and how they rate their immigration experience. Four years after arrivals, immigrants rank educational opportunities for themselves and their families near the top of what they liked most about Canada.<sup>35</sup> This has proven true in Halton. When newcomer focus groups were asked why they decided to settle in Halton, the quality of local schools was identified as one of the primary reasons for their decision.<sup>36</sup>

A review of literature regarding school outcomes for immigrant children suggests that while English language learning students initially score lower academically than English speaking peers, they perform just as well or better than Canadian born students within five years.<sup>37</sup> However, research also shows that student ages at the time of immigration play a significant role in education outcomes. A study done by Miles Corak on the *Age at Immigration and the Education Outcomes of Children*, suggests that students who migrate younger than the age of nine, show no discernible differences in educational outcomes compared to Canadian born students. However, those who migrate after the age of nine are at risk of not graduating from high school.<sup>38</sup>



To establish a benchmark of the educational outcomes for newcomers in Halton, the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores for English Language Learners can be used.

35 Schellenberg, Grant and Maheux, H  l  ne, *Immigrants' perspectives on their first four years in Canada: Canadian Social Trends*, April 2007, p.4

36 *Halton Newcomer Strategy: Local Immigration Partnership Final Report*, 2012

37 Coelho, E. (no date). *How long does it take? Lessons from EQAO data on English language learners in Ontario schools. Inspire: The Journal of Literacy and Numeracy for Ontario*. Retrieved May 27, 2013 from [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/equity/ELL\\_July30.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/equity/ELL_July30.html)

38 Corak, M. (2011). *Age at Immigration and the Education Outcomes of Children Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2011336-eng.html>

## Halton Region Context – Halton EQAO English Language Learners

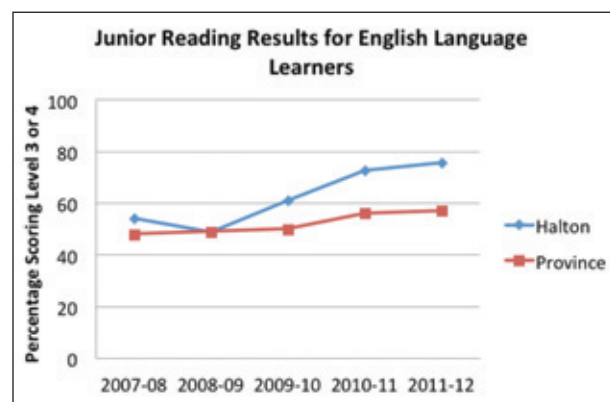
The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is an independent agency of the Ontario government that conducts testing and provides information regarding student achievement. EQAO tests Ontario students in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to the expectations of the Ontario school curriculum. This data offers a comprehensive look at student results across different school boards compared to provincial outcomes.

### SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS – HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

In partnership with Halton Multicultural Council, the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) has established youth settlement programs in schools to assist in newcomer student success. Settlement workers in schools support communication and cultural understanding between school staff and newcomer students and their families. In addition, the workers also provide a range of settlement services to newcomer families, including information on employment, referrals to helpful agencies, language training programs and even short-term settlement counselling. Through these activities, newcomer students are supported in school, and newcomer families are supported through the settlement process.

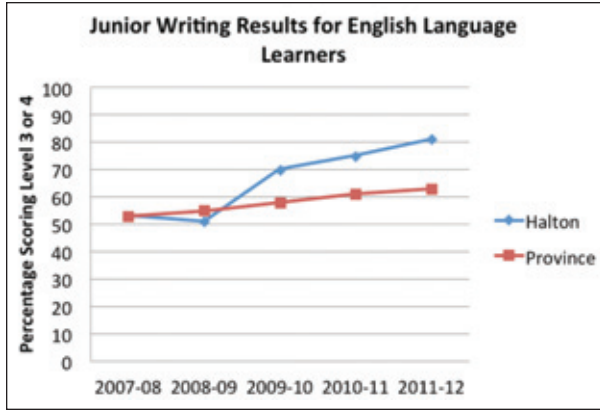
One of the groups identified in the EQAO testing are English Language Learners. This group is defined as students in provincially funded English language schools whose first language is one other than English, or is a variety of English that is significantly different than used for instruction in Ontario's schools, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English. These students may be Canadian born or recently arrived from other countries.<sup>39</sup>

Below are aggregated EQAO results from the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board for English Language Learners, as well as provincial English Language Learner outcomes. The data represents the reading and writing results for junior (grade 6) English Language Learners and the results of English Language Learners on the Ontario secondary school literacy test (OSSLT). The OSSLT includes reading and writing components and is written by all grade 10 students in Ontario. The results show that higher percentages of Halton English Language Learners performed at level three and four, which is at or above the provincial standard.

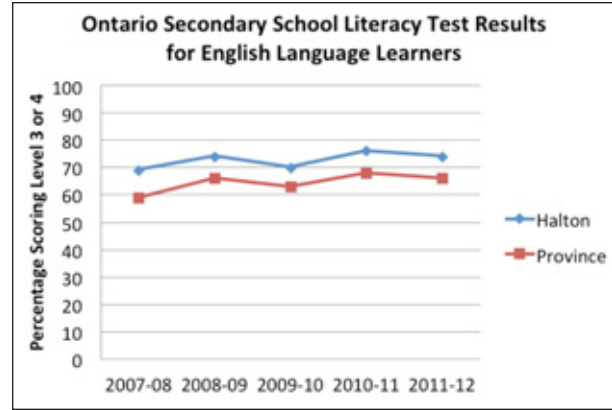


Source: Halton District School Board

<sup>39</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *English language learners, ESL and ELD program and services: Policies and procedures for Ontario elementary and secondary schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. p. 8



Source: Halton District School Board



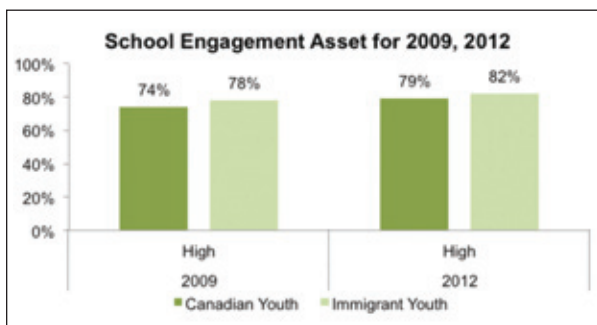
Source: Halton District School Board

## Halton Region Context – Sense of School Belonging

As was the case for the Sense of Inclusion and Engagement indicator, newcomer-specific data from the Halton Youth Survey will be used to establish a baseline for newcomer perceptions of school belonging. Responses for youth not born in Canada have been isolated from the 2009 and 2012 survey results, and three assets can be examined related to sense of school belonging.

**1. School Engagement Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent is actively engaged in learning. This asset is

**Figure 10: School Engagement Asset**



Source: Our Kids Network

comprised of seven questions which ask youth about the importance of getting good grades, making friends at school, participating in extra-curricular activities, getting to class on time, learning new things, expressing one's opinion in class, and getting involved in the student council or other similar groups.

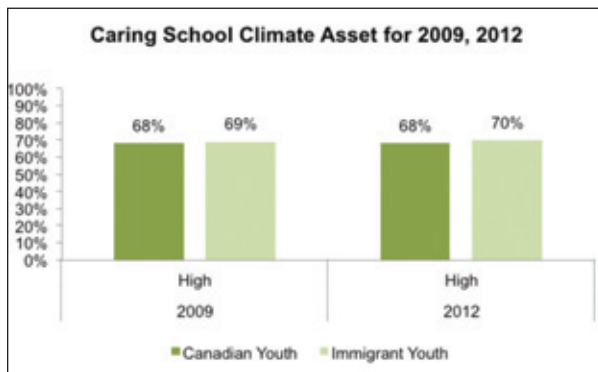
The combined OKN survey results for Halton grades 7 and 10 students reveal that newcomer students in both grades consistently score higher on the school engagement asset. The above data illustrates that the percentage of newcomer students scoring high increased from 2009 to 2012. The 2012 percentage increase (74 per cent to 79 per cent) in Canadian students scoring high was only slightly greater than the newcomer students. The data also suggest that a large proportion of newcomer students are committed to learning.

**2. Caring School Climate Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent feels the school provides a caring, encouraging environment. This asset includes three questions, which ask youth if their teacher is interested in

them, if their teacher shows recognition of good behaviour and work, and if their teachers show high expectations of them.

Almost identical high scores of newcomer students in 2012 (68 per cent) and Canadian born students (70 per cent) in the caring school climate asset suggest that teachers in Halton show equivalent levels of recognition to both categories of students.

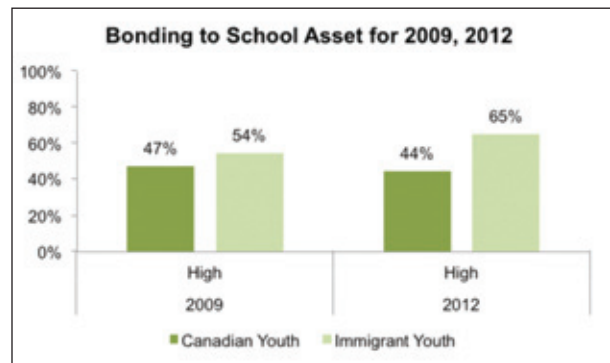
**Figure 11: Caring School Climate Asset**



Source: Our Kids Network

**3. Bonding to School Asset:** This result measures the degree to which the respondent cares about her or his school. This asset includes two questions which ask youth about the degree to which they like or dislike school, as well as if they are proud of their school.

**Figure 12: Bonding to School Asset**



Source: Our Kids Network

According to the OKN survey data, newcomer students consistently score higher than Canadian students on the bonding to school asset. In 2009, there was a seven per cent difference in newcomer students to Canadian born students. In 2012, the percentage of newcomer students ranking the bonding to school asset as high increased to 65 per cent while the percentage of Canadian born students fell to 44 per cent, a difference of 21 per cent.

## Summary and Next Steps

The quality of local education for newcomers is not only an important factor in landing decisions, but also an essential step in supporting immigrant families through the settlement process.

The EQAO scores of both the Halton District School Board (HDSB) and the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) for English Language Learner students suggest that grade six English Language Learners in Halton are performing above provincial levels in reading and writing. The data also show grade 10 English Language Learners in Halton are performing above the provincial average on the Ontario secondary school literacy test.

The data evaluating sense of school belonging show that newcomer respondents scored above non-immigrant respondents in the school engagement, caring school climate and bonding to school assets. In addition, the trend lines for these three assets are heading in a positive direction.

Recommended next steps involve exploring opportunities to collect additional data to support school outcomes for newcomer high school students.

## Key HNS Work Plan Activities Related to the Indicator:

Achieve positive educational outcomes

- Continue and expand civic awareness initiatives – (Emergency Services Introduction for New Canadians, Grade 10 civics classes, citizenship workshops).
- Enhance monitoring to continually request feedback, learn and seek improvement.
- Work with partners to increase civic engagement of newcomers in community activities.
- Engage local educational institutions in developing strategies to address accreditation issues.
- Develop and implement advocacy and education strategy to promote equity and diversity in Halton.

# Newcomers Access Employment Opportunities

## The Story Behind the Indicator

Demographic trends have made immigration a key support to economic growth in Canada. Attracting and retaining newcomers will become increasingly important in the coming decades. Even at current

### KEY HNS WORK PLAN ITEMS RELATED TO THIS INDICATOR

Access employment opportunities

Create advisory group of employer “champions” to support the development and implementation of HNS labour market initiatives.

Engage employers in discussions to identify barriers to newcomer recruitment and develop strategies based on the specific needs of industry.

Enhance Region-wide mentoring program to provide newcomers with relevant experience, increase professional contacts and improve newcomers’ understanding of the Canadian workplace culture.

Expand and leverage partnerships with self-employment training providers to support newcomer entrepreneurs.

Work with service providers to develop/enhance employment programs that meet the specific needs of newcomers.

immigration levels, an aging population and falling birth rates are leading to long-term declines in Canada’s labour force population.<sup>40</sup>

This is occurring at a time when Canadian communities are competing with countries around the world for the skilled workers required in the knowledge-based economy. Attracting immigrants and connecting them with appropriate employment opportunities is crucial to our future prosperity.

Not surprisingly, research has shown that availability of local employment opportunities is seen by immigrants as one of the most important factors in determining where they will settle.<sup>41</sup> These findings are supported by recent newcomer focus group participants who identified local employment prospects as a key reason behind their decision to settle in Halton.<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, the evidence also shows that newcomers face significant challenges in successfully entering the Canadian labour market. Immigrants have higher unemployment rates than the Canadian born population, are less likely to find jobs in their chosen field and are more likely to be low income.<sup>43</sup> Despite having much higher levels of education than the Canadian born population, immigrants with university degrees earn less than their Canadian counterparts and were more likely to be overqualified for their job.<sup>44</sup>

40 *Federation of Canadian Municipalities Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities 2009*, p.17

41 *Statistics Canada Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, October 2003* p.13

42 *Halton Newcomer Strategy: Local Immigration Partnership Final Report, 2012*, p.30

43 *Ibid* pg. 28

44 *Statistics Canada: The 2008 Canadian Immigrant Labour Market: Analysis of Quality of Employment, November 2009*, p.20

45 *Halton Region Economic Development, Economic Review 2012*, p.18-19

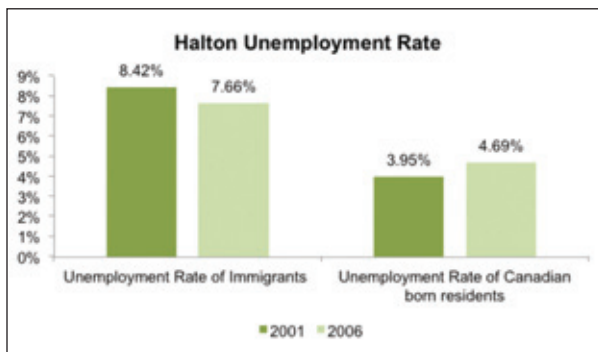


## Halton Region Context – Unemployment Rate of Newcomers in Halton

A review of data specific to Halton Region shows that Halton newcomers are also experiencing challenges in the local labour market.

Data related to the unemployment rate for recent immigrants who have been in Canada 10 years or less, and Canadian-born residents aged 15+ show that immigrants to Halton experienced higher rates of unemployment. The unemployment rate for immigrants to Halton in 2001 was twice that of Canadian born residents (8.42 per cent vs. 3.95 per cent). In 2006 the rate for immigrants was 7.66 per cent compared to 4.69 per cent for Canadian born residents.

**Figure 13: Unemployment rate in Halton, 2001-2006**



Source: Federation of Canadian Municipalities

While the difference in unemployment rate between immigrants and Canadian-born residents has decreased between 2001 and 2006, it still remains significant: Newcomers in Halton continue to experience higher unemployment rates than Canadian-born residents. While recent newcomer specific data is not yet available, Labour Force



### MENTORING PARTNERSHIP – SHERIDAN COLLEGE

The Mentoring Partnership at Sheridan College connects recent skilled-immigrants with established Canadian professionals in job-specific mentoring partnerships. This program provides newcomers with an opportunity to develop professional networks, collect information on local industries trends, identify required skills and locate job training opportunities within the profession.

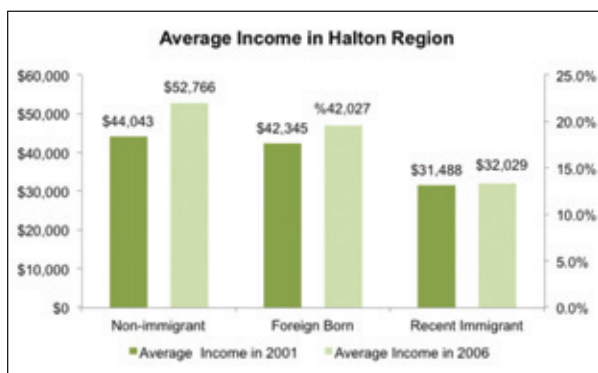
It is also mutually beneficial as it facilitates the exchange of ideas and information, provides an understanding of the skills and experiences of newcomers, and potentially cultivates future employees for local businesses. This program requires a combined total of 24 hours of interaction between the partnered individuals during a four month period.

Survey estimates from Statistics Canada show the overall unemployment rate for Halton in 2012 at 5.5 per cent and the 2007-2012 Halton unemployment rate trend steadily climbing.<sup>45</sup> If past trends continue, newcomers likely faced higher unemployment rates during the last recession.

## Halton Context – Average Income for Newcomers in Halton

A review of the data regarding average incomes of immigrants in Halton compared to non-immigrant residents shows that while earnings are increasing, they are increasing more slowly for newcomers than Canadian-born residents. As shown in Figure 14, the average income of non-immigrant, Canadian-born residents in Halton rose from \$44,043 in 2001 to \$52,766 in 2006, an increase of 19.8 per cent.<sup>46</sup> The average income of established immigrants who have been in Canada more than five years, also increased during this period, but only by 11.1 per cent to \$47,027.<sup>47</sup> Finally, the average income of recent immigrants who have been in Canada less than five years remained virtually unchanged with a growth rate of only 1.7 per cent from \$31,488 in 2001 to \$32,029 in 2006.<sup>48</sup>

**Figure 14: Average Income in Halton, 2001-2006**



Source: Federation of Canadian Municipalities

## Summary and Next Steps

Difficulties securing and maintaining employment that pays an adequate wage has obvious and significant impacts on settlement efforts. Not only do these challenges affect earnings of newcomers, but also have a less tangible impact, such as reduced opportunities to interact with co-workers, build professional relationships, and develop the social capital that is important to inclusion, job retention and career progression.

While Halton has a lower unemployment rate than surrounding municipalities, the indicators show that immigrants in Halton face a higher unemployment rate than Canadian-born residents and, on average, earn less. The trend line for these indicators, however, is headed in the desired direction with the difference in unemployment rate between new immigrants and Canadian-born residents diminishing. The trend line for average income is also heading in a positive direction but still shows that recent immigrants not only earn considerably less than other groups, but also that those earnings have remained stagnant. As new data becomes available, we will determine if these trends are continuing.

Recommended next steps involve increased labour market supports directed to newcomers, particularly those who immigrated recently, and supplementing the employment and earnings statistics with new data as it is released. Finally, it is recommended that Halton Newcomer Strategy members leverage relationships with newcomers, employers and other partners to gather local data relevant to the employment and earnings indicators.

<sup>46</sup> *Immigration and Diversity in Canadian Cities and Communities 2009*, p.40

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40

# Conclusion

A review of available data for the selected indicators shows Halton Region has established a solid foundation as a welcoming community. Halton has a positive reputation in Canada and abroad, and is increasingly a destination of choice for newcomers, who value the quality of local schools and safe communities. Data from newcomer youth show they largely feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, perform comparatively well academically, and engage in community activities.

Halton newcomers benefit from a range of settlement services delivered by an established and collaborative network of service providers. However, there are concerns that the growing newcomer population is reaching the capacity of the current system. This will be monitored closely during this period of rapid and significant changes to immigration policies.

There are examples of public organizations, such as the Halton Regional Police Service, which has developed and implemented programs and services to promote diversity and inclusion. Further research will determine the extent to which of other organizations have established similar approaches and supports.

In the areas of employment and housing, the data show that newcomers to Halton face challenges in accessing the labour market and affordable housing. Current programs and partnerships in these areas should be expanded to ensure newcomers can participate, contribute and enjoy the full range of opportunities Halton offers.

Indicator data will be updated as new data is released from Statistics Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and a variety of other sources. In addition, partnerships with established networks and existing research activities will be leveraged to gather local data related to the indicators and an updated Community Indicators Report will be released on a two-year cycle.

Finally, the Halton Newcomer Strategy Steering Committee and Working Groups will continue to develop and implement activities in pursuit of creating communities where newcomers are welcomed, supported and employed. Work plan items identified in this report will be implemented and the trend lines established will be tracked over time to evaluate progress. In 2014, the HNS membership will be creating a 2015-2017 work plan, and the Community Indicators data will play a crucial role in plotting the direction of the Halton Newcomer Strategy in the coming years.

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