



WELCOMING
COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE

Opinion Leader Interviews: Views on Cultural Diversity and Immigration

Project funded by Citizenship and
Immigration Canada (Ontario)



INITIATIVE DES
COMMUNAUTÉS
ACCUEILLANTES

Our Objectives

- To assess the “warmth of the welcome” for immigrants and visible minorities in 15 Census Metropolitan Areas outside Toronto
- To identify targets and strategies for change
- To assess policy directions and help shape anti-racism and welcoming community program interventions

Assessing the warmth of welcome

- Environics Research Group is conducting confidential telephone interviews with 5 opinion leaders from the governmental sector and 5 from the non-governmental sector in each municipality.
- Interviewees in each municipality are randomly selected from lists of 40-50 opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are knowledgeable about local attitudes and organizational capacity, and play a key role in shaping the “climate” of the community and in setting the social and economic context for newcomers.

Interview Agenda Themes

- Probes perceptions of:
 - local and regional government interest in immigration
 - community leader attitudes about the contribution of immigration to the community's economic, social/cultural, political/civic life, and identity
 - community member interest in immigration
 - the advantages and disadvantages of immigration, and whether the community welcomes newcomers and visible minorities
 - community capacity to serve newcomers, refugees

Relevance for communities and policymakers

- Candid interview evidence will help policymakers identify targets and strategies for program interventions to improve the warmth of welcome and help immigrants find meaningful work.
- Provides information on the demographic composition of opinion leaders in second and third-tier municipalities:
 - Immigrant status, ethno-racial background, gender, age, length of residency
- Accounts for city variations in the warmth of welcome

Project Update as of October 28, 2010

- Fieldwork completed in St. Catharines-Niagara, London, Greater Sudbury, Ottawa and Windsor.
- Interview process concluding in Durham Region and Hamilton
- Next communities: Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, North Bay, Peterborough, Thunder Bay