

# Developing Sustainable Strategies to Address Homelessness Amongst Racialized Newcomers

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# Land Acknowledgement

The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples.

# Ice Breaker

**Describe Immigration and Homelessness in one word.**





**CP  
24**.COM



This roundtable focuses on the development of practical strategies for addressing homelessness among racialized newcomers. The facilitators will introduce the workshop theme, shedding light on the "4 Ws and Hs" of the daily problems that newcomers face. Following this, we will actively engage in the exchange of ideas, comparing and contrasting perspectives and exploring a broader spectrum of potential outcomes and how these ideas can pave the way for innovative solutions. The roundtable aims to identify problems, enhance their understanding, and collectively develop a new thought model to address homelessness among racialized newcomers.

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# Homelessness challenges facing racialized communities in Peel region

In a recent study by the Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG), data collected from 179 people who were experiencing homelessness shows that:

- ❖ 72% of those surveyed were men and 54% of respondents were living in Brampton.
- ❖ More than 50% of the participants said they move their sleeping locations multiple times a night and stay in parks, alleyways, rooftops, stairwells and parking lots.
- ❖ The survey asked them why they became homeless, to which
- ❖ 42% responded they were unable to afford rent and;
- ❖ 41% said it was due to physical and mental health and addiction issues.
- ❖ Several respondents noted that they felt unsafe going to a shelter
- ❖ 6% said their experiences with stigma and discrimination at shelters led them to stay outside.

# Discussion

What unique challenges do immigrants face that may contribute to homelessness, and how can these barriers be addressed effectively to promote housing stability?

How can homelessness services be more culturally competent to better serve the diverse needs of immigrant populations, taking into account language, cultural norms, and immigration-related stressors?



# Housing & population statistics in Peel Region as of 2021

	0-14 years	15-64 years	65-85	85+
Male	17.2%	69.2%	13.6%	1.3%
Female	15.9%	68.4%	15.7%	2.0%

Average age of the entire Peel region population  
 Male: 38 years; Female: 40 years

## Household and dwelling characteristics

Single detached house	Semi detached house	Apartment	Single detached house
205,800	53,255	20,185	125

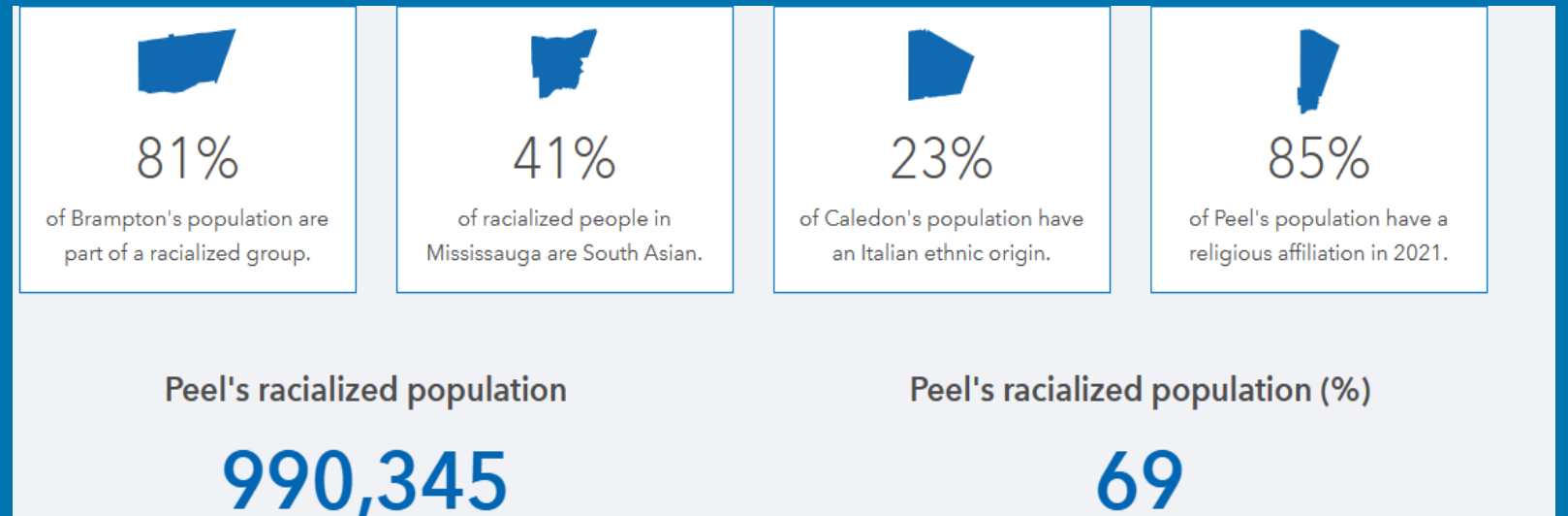
# Demographic Statistics of Peel Region

Immigrants	Non-Immigrants
745,330	625,555

## Visible Minorities

Male	Female
491,120	499,225

	Economic Immigrants	Immigrants sponsored by families	Refugees
Male	165,120	95,865	44,580
Female	153,085	137,620	38,165



Source: Statistics Canada

Source: Ethnic Diversity and Religion Census of Peel, 2021

# Breakdown of racialized groups in Peel region

Brampton (%)

81

Caledon (%)

33

Mississauga (%)

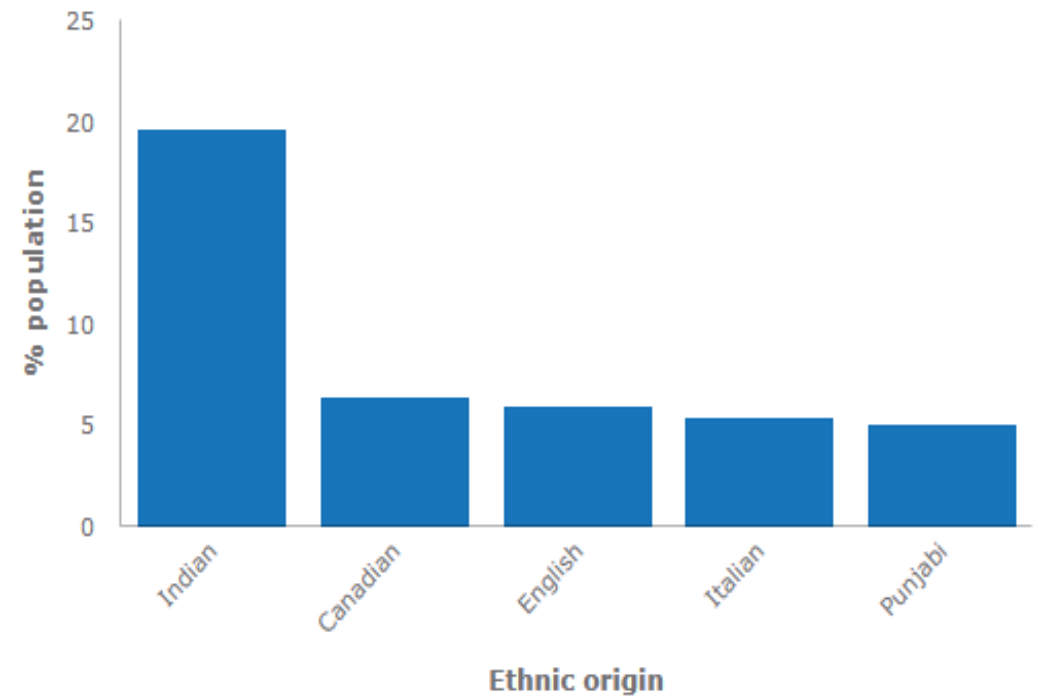
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## Racialized groups

Over half of Peel's racialized population report belonging to the South Asian racialized group.

- South Asian is also the most commonly identified racialized group within all three municipalities.
- 3% of racialized people report belonging to multiple racialized groups.

Top ethnic origins in Peel



# Homelessness in Peel region

## HOMELESSNESS

Total number of individuals experiencing homelessness:	866 (2021)
Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness:	38% (2021)
Individuals staying in emergency shelters:	37% (2021)
Individuals staying in transitional housing:	16% (2021)
Individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness:	11% (2021)
Number of hidden homeless:	Someone else's place: 3% (2021)

## Provincial Statistics

### PROVINCIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

5.1% (April 2023)

### MINIMUM WAGE

\$15.50/hr (2023)

### TOTAL NUMBER OF SHELTERS

5 (2020)

### TOTAL NUMBER OF BEDS

490 (2020)

Currently 91,000 households in Peel are in Core Housing Need (Core housing need determines if a household can afford suitable and adequate housing in their community).

Source: Region of Peel Housing Services

Source: Peel Region Homeless Hub

## Discussion

How do intersecting factors such as immigration status, ethnicity, gender, and family structure impact the experiences of homelessness among immigrants, and what targeted interventions are needed?

What strategies can be implemented to improve immigrants' access to support services, including mental health resources, job training, and education, as a means to prevent and address homelessness?

How can communities actively promote the integration of immigrants, creating a supportive environment that reduces the risk of homelessness and fosters a sense of belonging?

# Homelessness in Peel Region: Clients Using Emergency Shelter

Source Peel Region Housing Services

## Demographics of Peel's Emergency Shelter System Clients

The table below provides demographic information of Peel's emergency shelter system as of September 25, 2023. It is broken up by asylum claimant status and non-asylum claimant status.

Demographic Item	Asylum Claimants		Non-Asylum Claimants	Total		
	Count	Proportion	Count	Proportion	Count	Proportion
<b>Age</b>						
0-15	59	6.9%	236	27.7%	295	17.3%
16-24	99	11.6%	140	16.4%	239	14.0%
25-64	694	81.1%	448	52.6%	1,142	66.9%
65 and up	4	0.5%	28	3.3%	32	1.9%
<b>Total (individuals)</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Gender</b>						
Man	452	52.8%	416	48.8%	868	48.9%
Woman	401	45.8%	429	50.4%	830	48.6%
Transgender	2	0.2%	3	0.4%	5	0.3%
Non-binary	0	0%	2	0.2%	2	0.1%
Undisclosed	1	0.1%	2	0.2%	3	0.2%
<b>Total (individuals)</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Single	525	61.3%	311	36.5%	836	48.9%
Divorced/Separated	25	2.9%	53	6.2%	78	4.6%
Married	206	24.1%	67	7.9%	273	16.0%
Common Law	12	1.4%	40	4.7%	52	3.0%
Undisclosed	88	10.3%	381	44.7%	469	27.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Household Composition</b>						
Families with children	32	4.2%	142	30.1%	174	14.1%
Couples/Co-dependent households without children	26	3.4%	49	10.4%	75	6.1%
Singles	709	92.4%	280	59.4%	989	79.9%
<b>Total (households)</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,238</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Top 5 Country of Birth (households)</b>						
	Asylum Claimants			Non-Asylum Claimants		
<b>Country</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Proportion</b>	
Kenya	400	52.2%	Canada	212	45.0%	
Nigeria	142	18.5%	Jamaica	52	11.0%	
Uganda	103	13.4%	Nigeria	22	4.7%	
Ethiopia	13	1.7%	India	20	4.3%	
Congo	10	1.3%	Kenya	15	3.2%	

# Homelessness challenges facing racialized communities in the Peel region



According to CBC News, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023, “Veronica, left, and Sandra Dwira say a Brampton non-profit, REST Centre has helped them find housing after losing their mother two years ago.”

- ❖ The number of racialized youths has tripled in the Peel region
- ❖ In Brampton alone, the city has received more than 4,000 requests for homeless supports; more than 250 requests for housing; and a 60% increase in new visits to food banks
- ❖ All shelters in Brampton are operating at over 100 per cent capacity right now
- ❖ Average monthly rent in Brampton in 2022 was \$2,219/month as against \$1,930 in 2021 and in Mississauga, it was \$2,517 per month in 2022 as against \$2,075 in 2021

# Current 10-year housing and homeless plan



## Weaknesses in this plan

1. Generic in nature—it is not specific to racialized communities
2. Does not contain any form of solutions to the key factors that led to homelessness among the racialized communities like mental health issues, discrimination, biases, and income disparities
3. Not aligned with the population and demographic statistics of the key racialized groups in the Peel region—the South Asians are the most racialized while key strategies for remediating homelessness for other groups in the black communities are not mentioned



# Strategies for overcoming challenges

At the moment, the following factors contribute to the current homeless situation in Peel region:

- Our population continues to grow rapidly and is aging.
- The cost of rental housing and home ownership continues to rise.
- Low rental vacancy rates are keeping rental rates high.
- Land values in Peel are driving up the cost of housing development.
- We have aging social housing infrastructure: Region of Peel, Peel Housing Corporation and other housing providers must keep properties in state of good repair to sustain affordable housing supply into the future.
- The number of homeless residents and tenants in the affordable housing system that require physical and mental health supports to maintain stable housing is growing

In spite of the above challenges, the Peel region still achieved the following results in reducing homelessness in the region:

## In 2022:

- 16,395 households call the affordable housing system home.
- 87% of all buildings in the community housing systems are in a Good State of Repair.
- 103 new affordable rental units added to the community housing system.
- 886 people were permanently housed in 2022.
- 3,411 evictions prevented, 18% increase since 2021.
- 4,480 people served through emergency/crisis intervention supports

Source: [Peelregion.ca](https://www.peelregion.ca)

# Proposed strategies

In addition to region's current 10-year plans, a working committee which will reach out directly to individuals and families in the homeless community needs to be set up. Their voices must be heard. Their needs and challenges must be documented.

- All the key causes of homelessness among these identified groups must be tackled painstakingly
- Equal access to loans and grants must be given to racialized groups
- All cases and causes of mental health challenges should be documented and remediated
- Maintain an asset database on immigrants to include transferable skills. Connect this databased to government employment program and most importantly utilize the persons
- Create employment and short-term training program that focusing on upskilling of new immigrants at reduced cost or free . There is already proposal to remove Canadian experience so this is a good start. Although there is OPS program, it's current structure needs revision
- Where immigrants enter Canada as professionals, foster ease of transition into field by removing or lowering barriers while possible increasing monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and quality relative to Canadian standard

## Discussion

Should the Government provide funds to NGO's to support the housing crisis? NGO's purchasing homes, renting to clients on a short-term basis?

Should hotels/motels be purchased outright by governments to support the lack of affordable housing in major cities?

Should rural towns/cities be more involved in supporting the major housing issues facing big cities? promotion/job opportunities, building of multigenerational homes?

# Proposed strategies

- Utilizing immigrant skills to build more affordable homes. Similar to the agriculture program, stringent immigrant program can be used to ensure faster production
- Remove barriers to affordable housing for new immigrants
  - reduce downpayment (immigrants already have to find huge sums to migrate to Canada and without surety of a good job)
  - lessen interest rates for first five years
  - create special incentive program
  - design housing program based on cultural needs.

# Proposed strategies

- Key government policies that seek to exclude housing information from African and Asian immigrants must be reviewed and revised to promote equal access to these groups and to others as well
- There have been cases of deliberate increase in costs of borrowing and access to government shelters. These cases must be investigated and resolved
- All racialized communities with unemployment challenges or with challenges to securing high paying jobs need to be supported—current gaps in access to high paying jobs need to be investigated and closed.
- Implement financial programs that are in alignment with immigrant culture. The credit union is a major player in many Caribbean territories and often provides far greater benefits than traditional banks. While in Canada, there is very little promotion of these and unsure of the level of support to be as effective
- Parceling of lands to foster community living; for example, making it easier for a community-based co-operative to purchase lands with low barriers , reduced costs and sell to racialized newcomers creating housing developments.



## Q & A



# References

[Ethnic diversity and Religion 2021 | Census Information Hub \(arctis.com\)](#)

[Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Peel, Regional municipality \(RM\) \[Census division\], Ontario \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

[Peel Region | The Homeless Hub](#)

[Report surveyed 179 people living on Peel streets \(bramptonguardian.com\)](#)