

# National policies and local realities – Employment experiences of recent immigrants in a Canadian mid-sized city

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# Agenda

- Background and Context
- Research design
- Key findings
- Discussion and Conclusions

# Canada Needs Immigration



Fertility rate record  
low at 1.4 in 2020



Worker to retiree ratio  
decreasing



1 in 4 people aged  
65 and over by 2035



Close to 1 million job  
vacancies in Canada  
March 2022



5,000,000 Canadians are  
expected to retire by 2035

Sources: *Statistics Canada; 2022;*  
*Conference Board of Canada, 2019*

# Federal Government's Response

Politics

## Ottawa reveals plan to welcome 500,000 immigrants per year by 2025



Plan to boost immigration comes as country faces labour shortage

The Canadian Press · Posted: Nov 01, 2022 12:36 PM EDT | Last Updated: November 1, 2022

Table 1. *Canada Immigration Levels 2024-2026*

Immigration Class	2024	2025	2026
Economic	281,135	301,250	301,250
Family	114,000	118,000	118,000
Refugee	76,115	72,750	72,750
Humanitarian	13,750	8,000	8,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>485,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>

Source: *Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2023.*

# Provincial Government Response

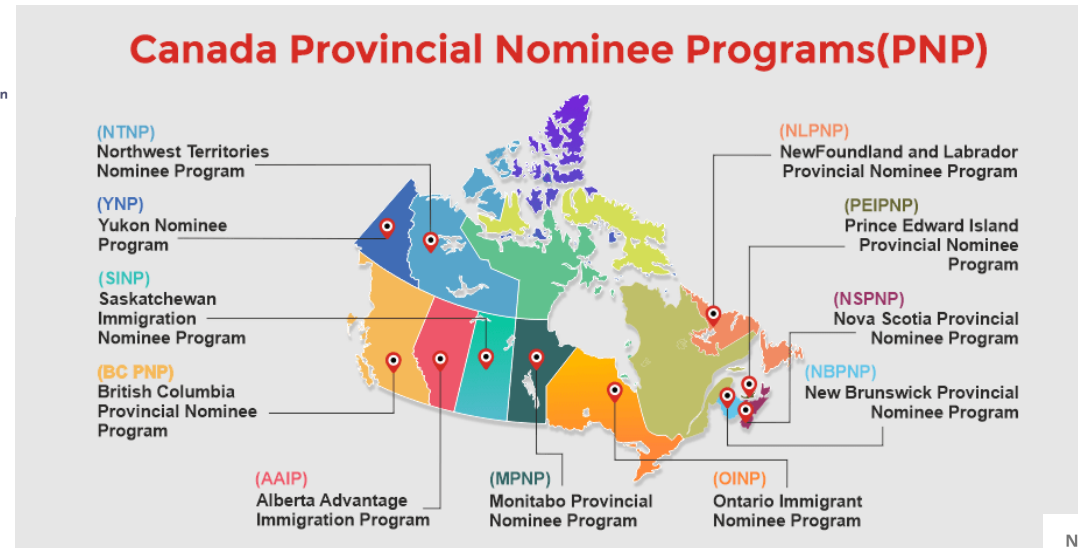
## British Columbia PNP changes points allocations for applicants

The BCPNP has modified its points system to reflect NOC changes and importance of human capital factors.

Asheesh Moosapeta

Published on November 18th, 2022 at 09:00am EST

Aa  
ACCESSIBILITY



Atlantic Canada > News

## Quebec taking dwindling share of immigrants to Canada, according to new data

In 2022, Quebec brought in roughly 15.7 per cent of the immigrants to Canada, despite the province representing nearly 23 per cent of Canada's population

Ryan Tumilty | Posted: Jan. 19, 2023, 8:31 a.m. | Updated: Jan. 19, 2023, 8:27 a.m. | 5 Min Read



### PROVINCIAL POLITICS

## Doug Ford wants to combat labour shortages with more immigrants

Province's labour shortage could be eased with the fast-tracking of skilled trade workers, Premier Doug Ford says.

By Kristin Rushowy Queen's Park Bureau  
Mon., July 11, 2022 | 3 min. read

Nova Scotia

## Plans underway to settle health-care workers from Kenya in Nova Scotia



MacLeod Group health services has bought homes for new employees

Gareth Hampshire · CBC News · Posted: Jan 12, 2023 5:00 AM EST | Last Updated: January 12

# What happens when they arrive?

- Immigrants face challenges finding commensurate employment
- Less likely to be employed, often in low-skilled, precarious jobs
- Employment is a complex process that includes a range of community services and engaged political and economic systems

Sources: Crea-Arsenio et al., 2022; Crossman et al., 2021; Wong, 2020

# Integration Occurs Locally

- Regionalization policies redistribute immigrant populations away from large cities toward smaller urban centres.
  - 90% of immigrants resided in one of Canada's 41 census metropolitan areas (Statistics Canada, 2022).
  - In 1980, 75% of recent immigrants settled in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver but by 2021 the proportion had decreased to 53.4% (Statistics Canada, 2022).

# Rationale for the Study

- Research on immigrant employment focuses on Canada's three largest cities (Akbar, 2019; Branker, 2017; Frenette, 2018).
- Studies suggest that immigrant employment outcomes are better in smaller urban centres (Fong et al., 2015; Sano et al., 2017).
- Less is known about how immigrants integrate into employment in small and mid-sized cities.



# Rationale for the current study

- Current policies and practices place responsibility on the individual to integrate into employment (Anwar, 2014; Chatterjee, 2019; Thomas, 2015).
- Investments into bridge training programs create a narrative that immigrants are “deficit”
- There is a need to shift the focus away from the individual to the system

# Purpose of the study

The study aimed to examine the employment integration of recent immigrants in the mid-sized city of Guelph, Ontario.

*Employment integration* defined as the process of entering the labour market “efficiently, effectively and with productive employment” (Baumann et al. 2011, p.49).

# Why the City of Guelph?

- Census Metropolis Aggregation - population of 165,888
- One of the fastest growing cities in Ontario
- Increased growth in immigrant population- 22%
- Low unemployment- pre and post pandemic
- Targeted employer-based programs
- Industry largely driven by manufacturing



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census Data

Map of Southern Ontario

# Research Design and Methods

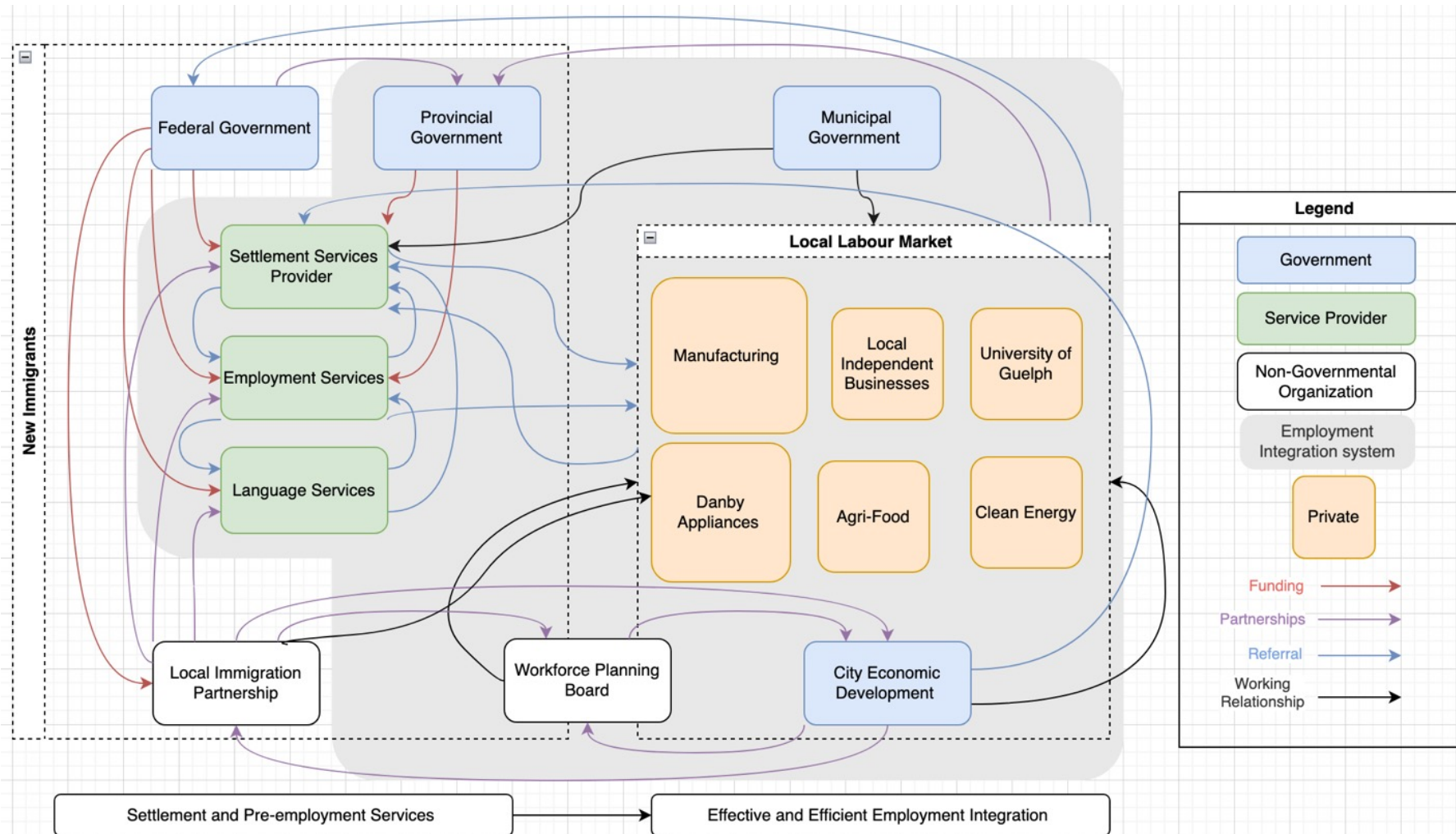
## Case Study Design (Yin, 2009)

- Review of grey and peer-reviewed published literature
- Stakeholder analysis of 14 key actors
- Systems map of immigrant employment
- Interviews with 20 recent immigrants

# Key Findings

Challenges, Opportunities, Perspectives and Policies

# Systems Map – Immigrant Employment Integration



Source: Crea-Arsenio, Newbold, Baumann, Walton-Roberts (2023).

# Stakeholder Challenges

- Episodic and limited funding
- Lack of timely data
- Reaching all immigrants
- Inadequate supply of local labour
- Frayed connection with employers

# System Opportunities

- Coordination and connectivity “between all of the moving pieces”
- Increased “flow of information, flow of expectations, and a feedback loop”
- Service providers create connections to employers outside the manufacturing sector
- Support for employer-based initiatives – Danby approach

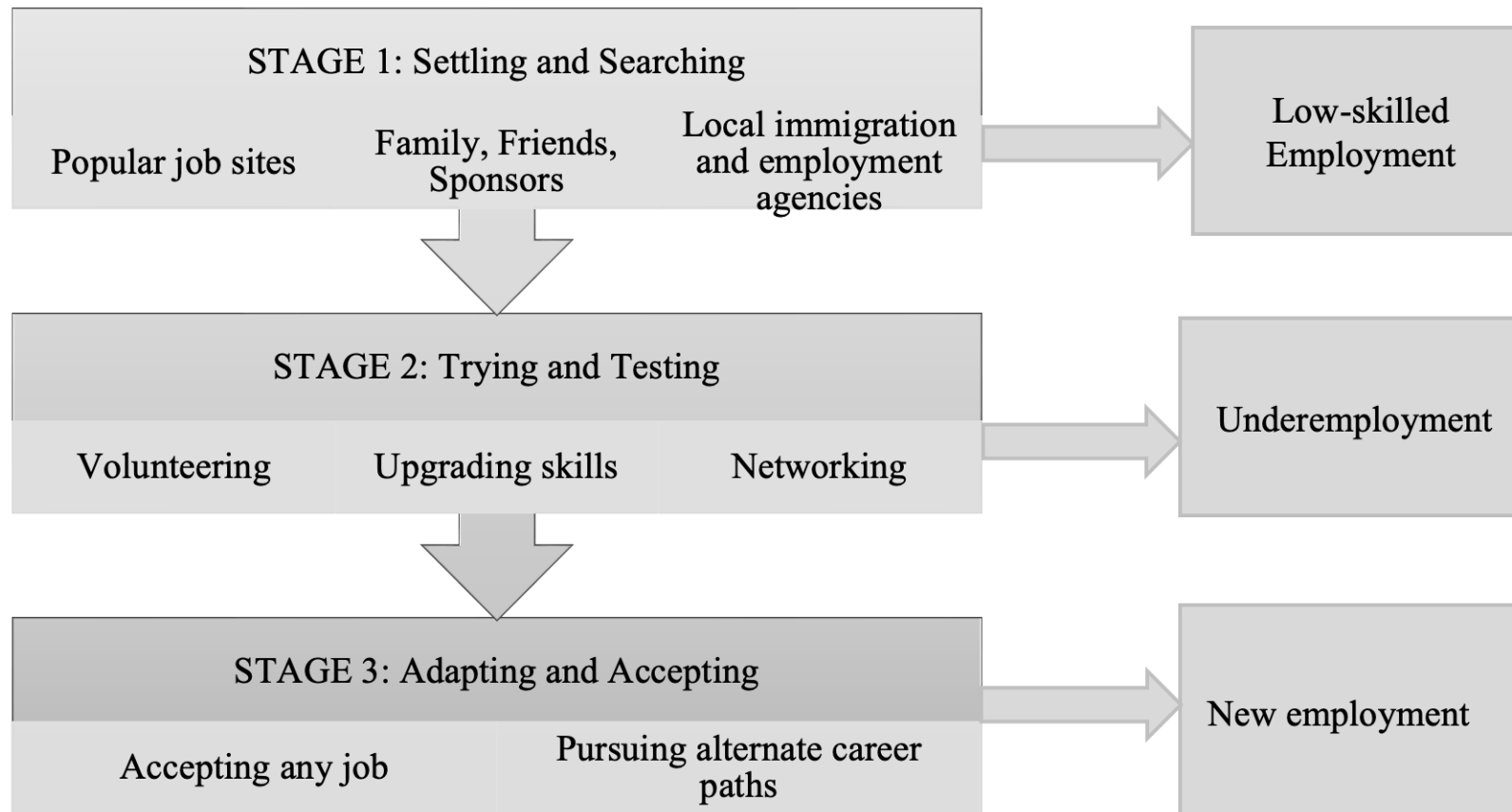




# Immigrant Perspectives

Demographics Data	
<b>Gender</b>	Total of 20 Immigrants
Male	10
Female	10
<b>Age</b>	30-39 years of age
<b>Years in Canada</b>	3-5 years in Canada
<b>Immigration class</b>	
Refugees	11
Family class	4
International students	3
Economic	2
<b>Highest level of Education</b>	
Post-secondary	19
High school	1
<b>Employment</b>	
Employed	15
Unemployed	5

# Pathway to Commensurate Employment



## Mid-Sized City – Local Matters

- Cities outside Canada's three largest urban centres lack the infrastructure and capacity to provide essential services to newcomers
- In a mid-sized city, relationships are important and community engagement is essential.
- Success in small and mid-sized cities requires targeted planning and innovative community-based strategies unique to the local context.

## Policies – Where change can happen

- Enhancement pre-arrival services to include labor market details.
- Improve access to regional data to support local planning.
- Engage employers in targeted immigration initiatives.
- Formalize immigration strategy at the municipal level
- Continue investment into the LIP infrastructure with increased collaboration between larger and smaller centres.

# Conclusions

- *Nationally*, providing support at critical points in time would accelerate the employment integration of new immigrants.
- *Regionally*, governments must recognize that mid-sized cities across Canada will continue to face labor shortages that require enhanced immigration.
- *Locally*, need to focus on system-level initiatives to improve the efficient and effective integration of immigrants into the labor market.

# Questions



# Contact

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