



CHATHAM-KENT LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

# Assessing the Needs of Temporary Workers in the Agriculture Sector

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RESILIENCE IN ACTION



CHATHAM-KENT  
LOCAL IMMIGRATION  
PARTNERSHIP

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CK</b>	Chatham-Kent
<b>CKLIP</b>	Chatham-Kent Local Immigration Partnership
<b>TFW</b>	Temporary Foreign Workers
<b>PR</b>	Permanent Resident
<b>TFWP</b>	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
<b>SAWP</b>	Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The authors of this report review the current needs of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in Chatham-Kent (CK) within the agricultural sector and make recommendations to better understand their settlement and integration needs and assess their interest in pursuing Permanent Residency (PR)/remaining within CK.

The report includes an overview of the importance the agricultural sector in Canada and of the role that TFWs have across Canada and within the Canadian agricultural sector as well as some of the challenges and opportunities they face.

This review provided the background to develop a survey tool to gather primary information about the experiences of TFWs across CK and what resources might provide additional support.

Collected information highlight that the current cohort of TFWs in CK are a heterogeneous group; they are varied in composition, nationality, language, and long-term plans of residency. This group has also changed over time; their home country has changed and now reflects large groups from Central America. To provide effective and needed resources to support this group requires an understanding of their heterogeneity; a one-size-fits-all support is not appropriate. Efforts must be made to provide resources that are reflective of current TFWs. To be able to provide appropriate resources, it is important to re-visit this population regularly to ensure the community is doing what is best.

### The following is a summary of recommendations:

#### Recommendation #1:

Launch a promotional campaign is launched that targets temporary foreign workers to educate them on what is available.

#### Recommendation #2:

There is a need to stream-line and/or clarify how to access services that are available to TFWs within and across CK.

#### Recommendation #3:

Supports must be flexible to reflect the needs of the workers in any given year, this is a dynamic group and the supports offered must reflect this dynamism.

#### Recommendation #4:

This work highlights that the County must continue to work and engage with this community. The temporary workforce within Chatham-Kent will continue to have an important role and we must continue to engage with this group to be able to provide reflective and useful supports.

## Outline of Report

This report is organized as follows:

### Project Understanding:

An overview of the context, the role of temporary foreign workers in Chatham-Kent, and some of the central challenges faced.

### Goals & Objectives:

An overview of the central project goal and the five related objectives are provided.

### Literature Review:

A review of relevant literature related to agriculture, temporary foreign workers, and the critical TFWs have within the agricultural sector. An overview of the framework that was used in this study, Theory of Change, is also provided.

### Methodology:

A brief overview of the methods that were used in this study.

### Results:

A complete overview of the data that was collected and the contextual relevance of those within the context.

### Literature Review:

The final section of this report provides three recommendations for next steps and an importance of the context.

## 1.0 PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

In Canada, the impact of geography on health outcomes often goes unrecognized, particularly evident in the disparities faced by individuals in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities compared to their urban counterparts. Rural administrations grapple with the task of providing adequate support to their smaller populations, hindered by limited tax revenues and modest municipal infrastructures.

Included within many rural communities are temporary foreign workers who travel to Canada to fulfill critical gaps in the workforce. A significant milestone in understanding the challenges faced by temporary foreign workers (TFWs) within Chatham-Kent and beyond was marked by a 2014 report from the Chatham-Kent Local Immigration Partnership (CK LIP). This report delved into the economic contributions of TFWs to both Canada and CK, guiding crucial priorities and programs. However, the landscape has evolved substantially over the past decade, necessitating a reevaluation of strategies.



Recent developments have seen the Canadian government establish a bold target of settling 465,000 permanent residents in Canada by 2023. While major urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal remain preferred destinations, many newcomers are opting for permanent housing outside these bustling hubs. Simultaneously, in 2021, Canada welcomed 777,000 TFWs across various sectors, with significant numbers employed in agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing, particularly in Ontario.

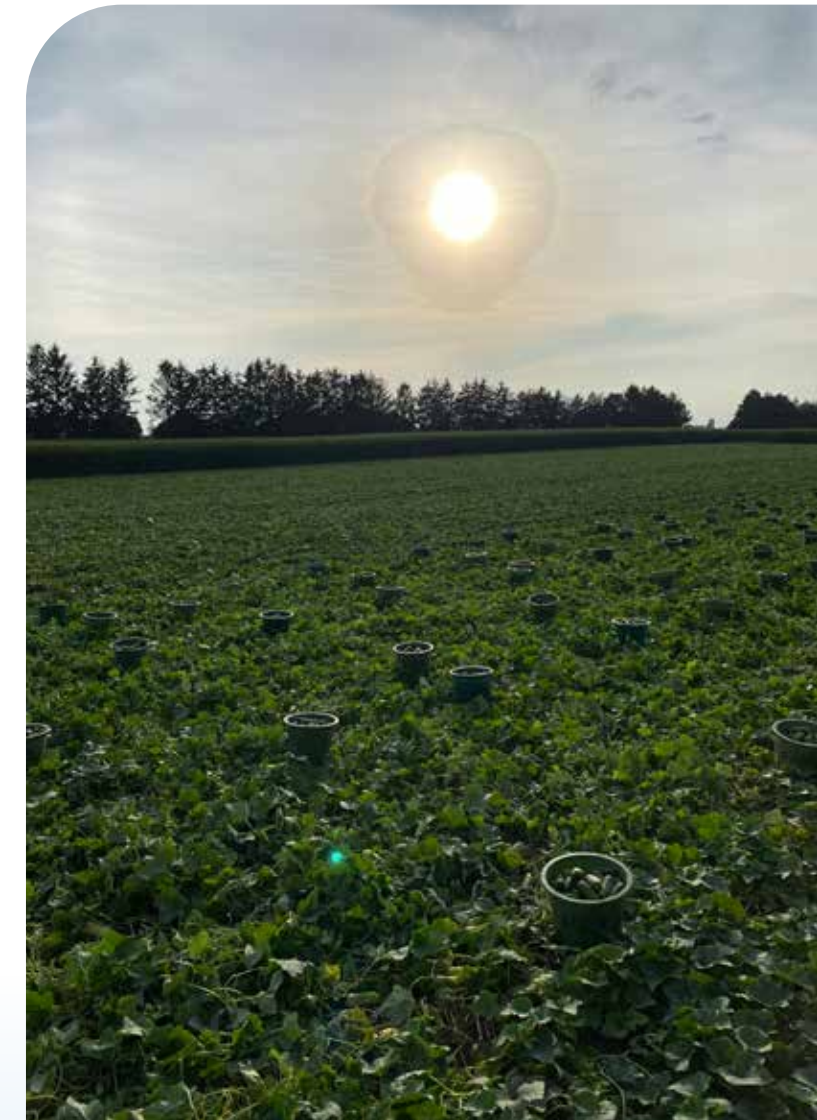
While Mexico and Guatemala are prominent countries of origin for TFWs, the demographic is diverse, requiring a deeper understanding to address their needs effectively, identify service gaps, and offer local support initiatives.

Canada has witnessed a notable influx of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in recent years, with their numbers tripling since the early 2010s to over 500,000. While encompassing a diverse range of skills, the majority of TFWs are engaged in the agricultural sector, constituting approximately 58% of the workforce.

Increasingly, TFWs are transitioning to permanent residency across OECD countries, including Canada. Although Canadian immigration programs traditionally catered to skilled TFWs, avenues exist for those in low- and semi-skilled occupations to obtain permanent residency through provincial nominee programs.

TFWs significantly contribute to Canada's economic prosperity, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, where they comprise nearly 16% of employment. In Ontario's agricultural sector alone, TFWs represent 42% of the workforce.

However, TFWs face numerous occupational hazards and systemic challenges, including physical injuries and mental health issues exacerbated by loneliness, poor working conditions, and stress. It is imperative for the Canadian government and employers of TFWs to provide appropriate support services to ensure the well-being of this crucial workforce. Moreover, facilitating pathways to permanent residency for TFWs seeking to settle in Canada is essential for their long-term integration and contribution to the country's prosperity.



## 2.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project is to better understand settlement and integration needs of TFWs and assess their interest in pursuing Permanent Residency (PR)/remaining within CK. Specifically, data will be collected from two participant groups: TFWs and Employers.

### There are five objectives of this study:

#### Objective #1:

Survey TFWs within and across the region to better understand the settlement and integration needs of TFWs in our region (survey/interviews/focus groups).

#### Objective #2:

Survey employers and relevant service organizations within and across the region to better understand their experiences and needs related to TFWs in our region (survey/interview/focus groups).

#### Objective #3:

Analyze collected data to identify the needs of the region's TFWs and employers to enable relevant local partners to better plan and support this important community.

#### Objective #4:

Recommend strategies to implement to fill gaps, ensure adequate/appropriate service/support provision is available for TFWs and employers within CK.

#### Objective #5:

Translate/disseminate findings across the region to relevant stakeholders to support the development of services for TFWs and employers within and across CK.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Canadian Agriculture

The Canadian agricultural sector stands as a cornerstone of the nation's economy, contributing substantially to employment, food security, and export earnings. Spanning vast landscapes from coast to coast, Canada's diverse climate and fertile soils support a wide range of agricultural activities, from grain and oilseed production to fruit and vegetable cultivation.

#### Key Features

##### Geographic Diversity:

Canada's agricultural sector benefits from its vast geographic expanse, encompassing diverse climates and ecosystems suited to various crops and livestock.

From wheat fields to vineyards, Canadian agriculture thrives on its geographic diversity.

##### Export Orientation:

Canada is a major player in global agricultural trade, exporting a wide array of commodities, including grains, oilseeds, livestock, seafood, and processed food products. With access to international markets facilitated by trade agreements and a reputation for high-quality products, Canada's agricultural exports contribute significantly to the nation's GDP.

##### Innovation & Technology:

The Canadian agricultural sector is characterized by a commitment to innovation and technology adoption, driving advancements in crop genetics, precision agriculture, sustainable farming practices, and value-added processing. Research institutions, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders collaborate to enhance productivity, environmental sustainability, and competitiveness.

##### Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship:

Sustainability is a guiding principle in Canadian agriculture, with farmers and producers adopting practices to minimize environmental impact, conserve natural resources, and promote biodiversity. From soil conservation and water management to integrated pest management and organic farming, Canadian farmers prioritize environmental stewardship.

##### Rural Communities and Livelihoods:

Agriculture plays a vital role in sustaining rural communities across Canada, providing employment, income, and social cohesion. Family farms, cooperatives, and agribusinesses form the backbone of rural economies, supporting livelihoods and contributing to the vibrancy of rural life.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its strengths, the Canadian agricultural sector faces challenges, including labor shortages, climate change impacts, market volatility, and regulatory complexities. However, these challenges also present opportunities for innovation, diversification, and adaptation to changing consumer preferences and global trends.

## Moving Forward

As Canada's population grows, and global demand for food increases, the agricultural sector will continue to play a crucial role in meeting these challenges and opportunities. By embracing innovation, sustainability, and collaboration, Canadian agriculture is poised to thrive in the 21st century, contributing to both national prosperity and global food security.



## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.2 Temporary Foreign Workers

Temporary foreign workers (TFWs) play a significant and multifaceted role in labor markets around the globe, contributing to diverse industries and economies. In an era marked by globalization, labor mobility, and shifting demographic trends, the demand for TFWs has grown steadily across sectors facing labor shortages or requiring specialized skills. From agriculture to healthcare, hospitality to technology, TFWs fill critical gaps in labor supply, driving productivity, and sustaining economic growth in destination countries.

The phenomenon of temporary migration has gained prominence as governments and employers seek flexible workforce solutions to meet fluctuating labor demands while balancing domestic labor market priorities and migration policies. TFW programs, often governed by complex regulatory frameworks and bilateral agreements, serve as mechanisms for managing the entry and employment of foreign workers for limited periods, typically to address short-term labor needs or fill specific job vacancies.

By understanding the complex interplay of factors shaping the temporary migration landscape, policymakers, employers, civil society, and other stakeholders can develop more effective and equitable policies and practices to harness the potential benefits of temporary foreign labor while safeguarding the rights and well-being of migrant workers and host communities.

#### 3.2.1 Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada

Temporary foreign workers (TFWs) hold a vital and dynamic role in Canada's labor market, contributing significantly to various sectors of the economy. In response to labor shortages, skills gaps, and seasonal demand fluctuations, Canada has increasingly relied on TFWs to fill critical positions, sustain productivity, and support economic growth. From agriculture to hospitality, healthcare to information technology, TFWs play a crucial role in complementing the domestic workforce and meeting the diverse needs of Canadian industries.

Canada's TFW program has evolved over the years, reflecting changing economic priorities, demographic trends, and immigration policies. The program offers pathways for employers to recruit foreign workers for temporary employment in specific occupations and industries, providing opportunities for both employers seeking skilled labor and foreign workers seeking employment opportunities abroad.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.2.2 Temporary Foreign Workers in the Canadian Agricultural Context

Canada's agricultural sector plays a pivotal role in the nation's economy, contributing significantly to employment, food security, and export earnings. Within this sector, temporary foreign workers (TFWs) have emerged as indispensable assets, filling crucial labor gaps, and sustaining agricultural productivity.



Temporary foreign workers hold a vital and dynamic role in Canada's labor market, contributing significantly to various sectors of the economy. In response to labor shortages, skills gaps, and seasonal demand fluctuations, Canada has increasingly relied on TFWs to fill critical positions, sustain productivity, and support economic growth. From agriculture to hospitality, healthcare to information technology, TFWs play a crucial role in complementing the domestic workforce and meeting the diverse needs of Canadian industries.

Canada's TFW program has evolved over the years, reflecting changing economic priorities, demographic trends, and immigration policies. The program offers pathways for employers to recruit foreign workers for temporary employment in specific occupations and industries, providing opportunities for both employers seeking skilled labor and foreign workers seeking employment opportunities abroad.

By delving into the multifaceted role of TFWs in Canada, this research seeks to shed light on the complexities of temporary migration, the regulatory frameworks governing TFW programs, and the implications for labor market dynamics, social cohesion, and international relations.

#### Addressing Labor Shortages:

- A:** Canada's agricultural sector faces chronic labor shortages, particularly during peak seasons such as planting and harvesting. TFWs bridge these gaps by providing a reliable workforce to ensure timely cultivation and harvesting of crops.
- B:** The seasonal nature of agricultural work makes it challenging to attract domestic workers. TFWs, often recruited from countries with surplus labor, offer a solution to this dilemma, ensuring a consistent labor supply throughout the growing season.

#### Supporting Economic Growth:

- A:** The presence of TFWs sustains the viability and growth of Canada's agricultural industry by enabling farmers to maximize production and meet market demand.
- B:** Agricultural exports contribute significantly to Canada's economy, and TFWs play a crucial role in ensuring the competitiveness of Canadian agricultural products in global markets by facilitating efficient production practices.

#### Filling Specialized and Skilled Roles:

- A:** While TFWs are commonly associated with low-skilled agricultural tasks, many also fill specialized roles requiring specific skills and expertise, such as operating complex machinery, managing livestock, and implementing precision agriculture techniques.
- B:** The agricultural sector relies on a diverse workforce with a range of skills and experiences, and TFWs contribute to this diversity by bringing unique perspectives and knowledge from their home countries.



## Challenges Faced by Temporary Foreign Workers:

### Vulnerability to Exploitation:

- A:** TFWs often face precarious working conditions, including long hours, low wages, and limited access to legal protections and social services.
- B:** Language barriers, cultural differences, and dependency on employers for housing and transportation exacerbate TFWs' vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

### Legal and Administrative Hurdles:

- A:** Navigating Canada's complex immigration and labor regulations can be daunting for TFWs, leading to uncertainties regarding their legal status and rights.
- B:** Changes in government policies and administrative procedures can further complicate TFWs' ability to secure and maintain employment in the agricultural sector.

### Social Isolation and Integration:

- A:** TFWs often experience social isolation due to their temporary status, limited social networks, and geographic isolation on remote farms.
- B:** Lack of access to community services, healthcare, and recreational activities further exacerbates TFWs' sense of isolation and hampers their integration into Canadian society.

## Implications and Recommendations:

### Policy Reforms:

- A:** Enhancing protections for TFWs through robust labor regulations, enforcement mechanisms, and avenues for redress is essential to safeguard their rights and well-being.
- B:** Streamlining immigration processes and providing pathways to permanent residency for TFWs with demonstrated skills and contributions can promote their long-term integration and retention in the agricultural sector.

### Support Services:

- A:** Investing in support services, such as language training, cultural orientation, and access to healthcare, can improve TFWs' quality of life and facilitate their social integration.
- B:** Collaborative efforts involving government agencies, employers, community organizations, and TFW advocates are needed to develop comprehensive support systems tailored to the unique needs of TFWs in agriculture.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.3 Framing Chatham-Kent's TFWs within Theory of Change

Chatham-Kent Local Immigration Partnership (CKLIP) developed three strategic priorities related to immigrants and newcomers in the community.

The three priorities are:



1.

Prepare newcomers and employers for the labour market (PR status, educating TFWs on their rights, educating employers on their responsibilities, identifying gaps for both).



2.

Increase newcomers social belonging (do they feel like they are a part of CK? Do they get out in the community? Are there social groups available to them and if so, are they aware? Do employers encourage socialization? How can we improve this?)



3.

Increase and promote community supports and information (healthcare services – what are available and are they utilized? Health and safety protocol, available transportation, do they know where to access resources?)

While these groups are distinct from TFWs, there are overlapping concerns. To be able to address these three priorities within the context of nuanced concerns of the TFWs, we will frame the project within the Theory of Change.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.3.1 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a comprehensive framework that outlines the steps and causal pathways by which an intervention or initiative is expected to bring about desired outcomes. It serves as a roadmap for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs or projects, providing a structured approach to understanding how and why change occurs. At its core, ToC is a dynamic process that encourages stakeholders to articulate their assumptions, beliefs, and strategies underlying their efforts to address complex social issues.

At the heart of a Theory of Change is a clear articulation of the desired long-term goals or outcomes, often referred to as the “impact.” These impacts represent the ultimate changes or improvements that the intervention seeks to achieve in the broader context. These impacts are then broken down into intermediate outcomes or “outcomes,” which are the necessary preconditions for achieving the impact. These outcomes are further refined into short-term outcomes or “outputs,” which are the tangible products or services delivered by the intervention.

The ToC framework also identifies the key actors or “actors” involved in the change process, including beneficiaries, implementers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. It maps out the relationships and interactions between these actors and highlights their respective roles and responsibilities in driving change.

One of the key strengths of the Theory of Change approach is its emphasis on causality and logic. It requires stakeholders to articulate the underlying assumptions about how and why change occurs, as well as the evidence base supporting these assumptions. By making these assumptions explicit, ToC facilitates a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of change and allows for more rigorous evaluation and learning.

Moreover, ToC promotes a participatory and collaborative approach to program design and implementation. It encourages stakeholders to engage in a process of dialogue and reflection, fostering buy-in, ownership, and accountability. This participatory approach not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of interventions but also builds the capacity of stakeholders to drive change in their communities.

In summary, the Theory of Change is a powerful tool for planning, implementing, and evaluating social change efforts. It provides a structured framework for understanding the pathways to change, engaging stakeholders, and fostering learning and adaptation. By making explicit the underlying assumptions and causal pathways, ToC enables stakeholders to design more effective and sustainable interventions that can bring about meaningful and lasting change.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

There were two primary methods of data acquisition.

### Literature Review / Jurisdictional Scan:

To be able to ask informative and impactful questions, it's critical that the current landscape of supports available are well documented and understood. A brief literature review of TFWs will be completed and a jurisdictional scan of relevant existing programs will be conducted.

### Quantitative Survey (digital):

A quantitative, confidential, completely anonymous survey to better understand two participant groups i) TFWs: the settlement and integration needs of TFWs in CK (including what works, what doesn't, barriers, etc.), their interest in pursuing PR and remaining in CK and ii) Employers: what are their concerns, interests in supporting TFWs. The survey would be designed using SnapSurvey Software that supports digital analysis. Digital surveys could be distributed via collected email addresses associated with relevant organizations across CK. No email is asked for on the survey – the researcher would not have access to their contact information. Descriptive analysis of the data would be completed (frequencies but also cross-tabulations) to be able to start to develop a better understand of the needs the needs of both TFWs and current employers.



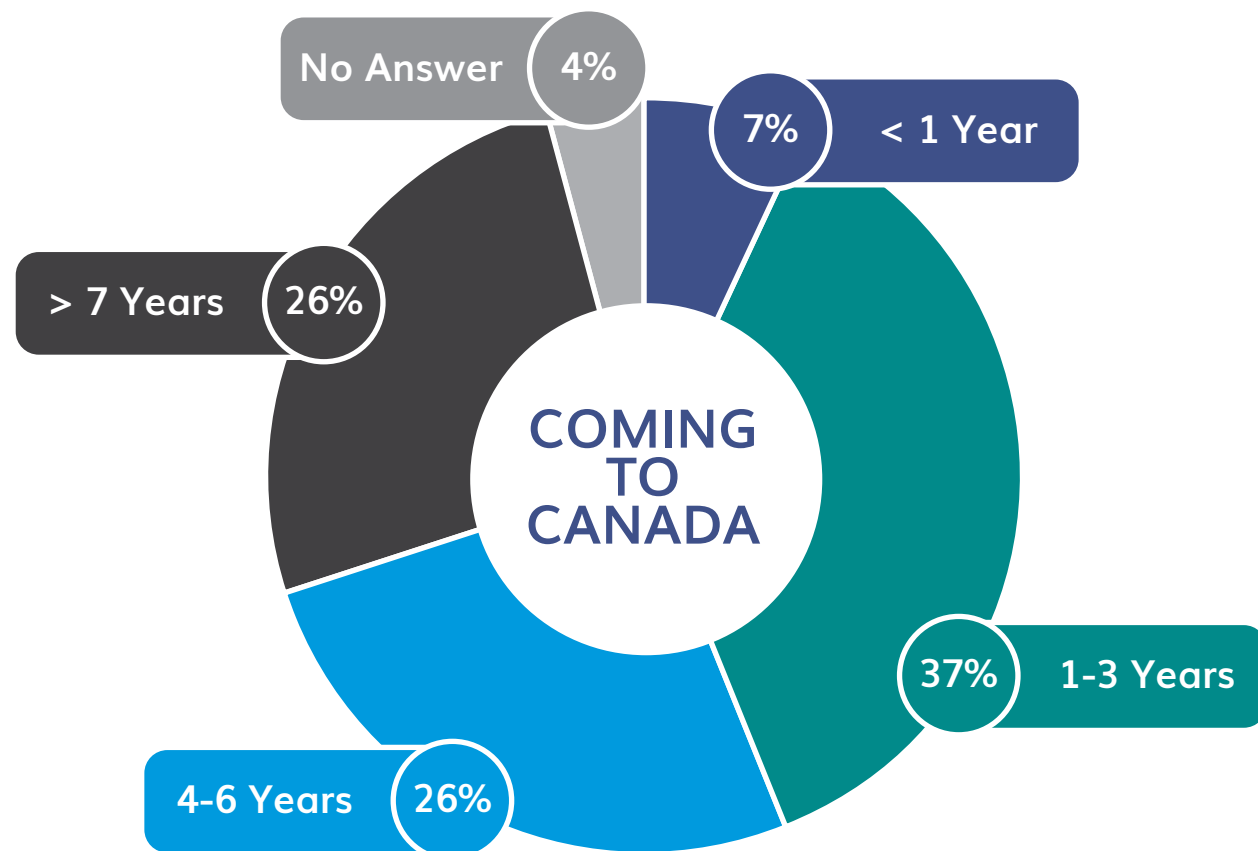
## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Demographics

To be able to design and deliver appropriate and reflective healthcare, understanding who your clients are is critical. Gender, age, ethnicity, and sectoral employment are important considerations when developing long-term plans.

The first question we asked participants was “how long have you been coming to Canada?” This was asked to determine whether the supports offered should be aimed at first-time workers or for individuals with more experience coming to Canada. Results (see Figure 1) highlight a highly variably answer; 37% of participants responded that they have been coming to Canada for between one and three years, nearly 26% of participants indicated that they had been coming to Canada for between four to six years or more than seven years, and slightly over 7% of participants indicated that they had been coming to Canada for less than one year.

Figure 1 – How long have you been coming to Canada?

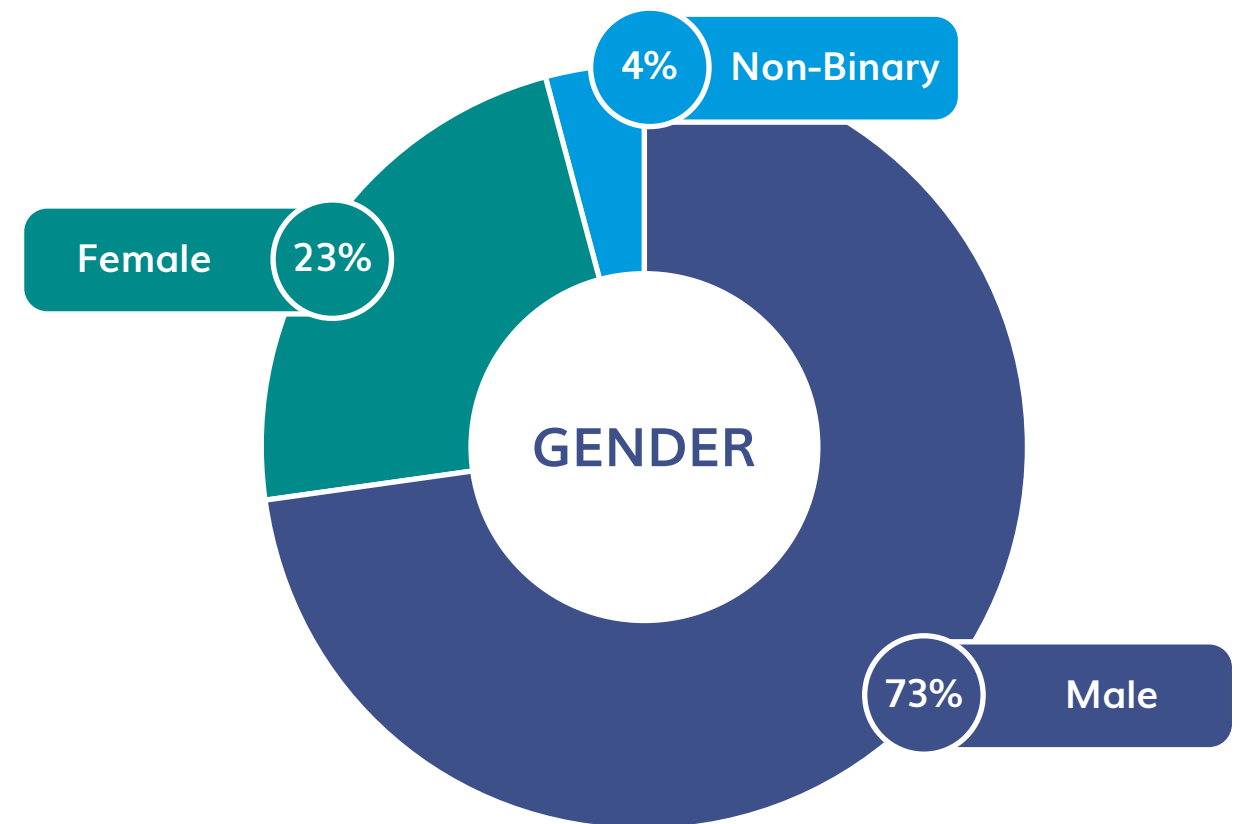


## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1.1 Gender

Gender is arguably the most important consideration when designing policy. Males, females, and those who do not identify as either, require different and appropriate supports.

Figure 2 - How do you describe your gender?



As expected, most participants self-identified as male (73%). Twenty-three percent of participants self-identified as female and a small number (4%) self-identified as non-binary or prefer another term (see Figure 1).

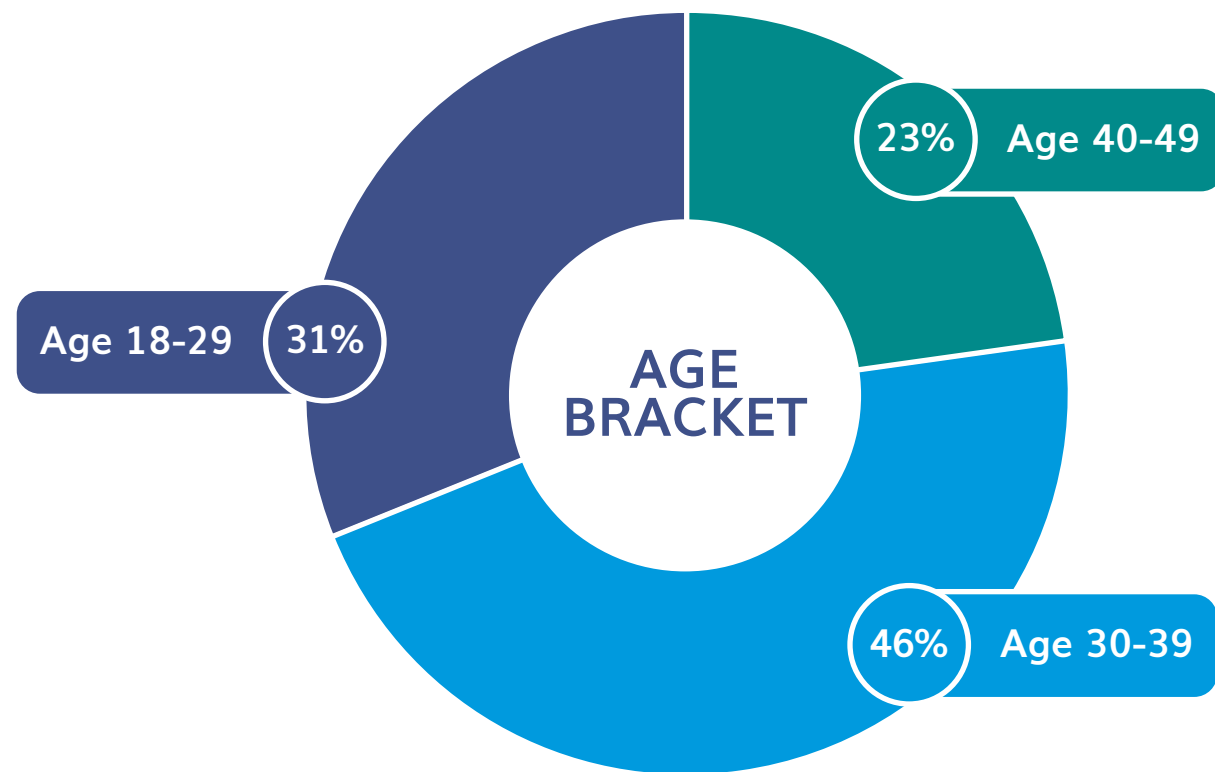
Moving forward, when developing and designing relevant policy for temporary foreign workers, it is recommended that it reflect the diversity of the population; males require different supports than females. Ensure that policy is inclusive and reflective of all users.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1.2 Age

Age is another important consideration when designing what supports are needed across the region. While there is a tendency for rural populations to have an older resident population, this is not the case for temporary foreign workers. This difference is critical to consider on all programming and policy support decisions.

**Figure 3 – What is your age bracket?**



The largest cohort of participants was the 30 – 39 years (46%). This was followed by 18 – 29 years (31%) and 40 – 49 years (31%) (see Figure 2). For context, the average age of residents within Chatham-Kent, according to Statistics Canada is 46.4 years (Statistics Canada, 2021). It is important to note that there were no participants above the age of 49 years of age – this is critical to consider when designing and implementing appropriate support programs within Chatham-Kent.

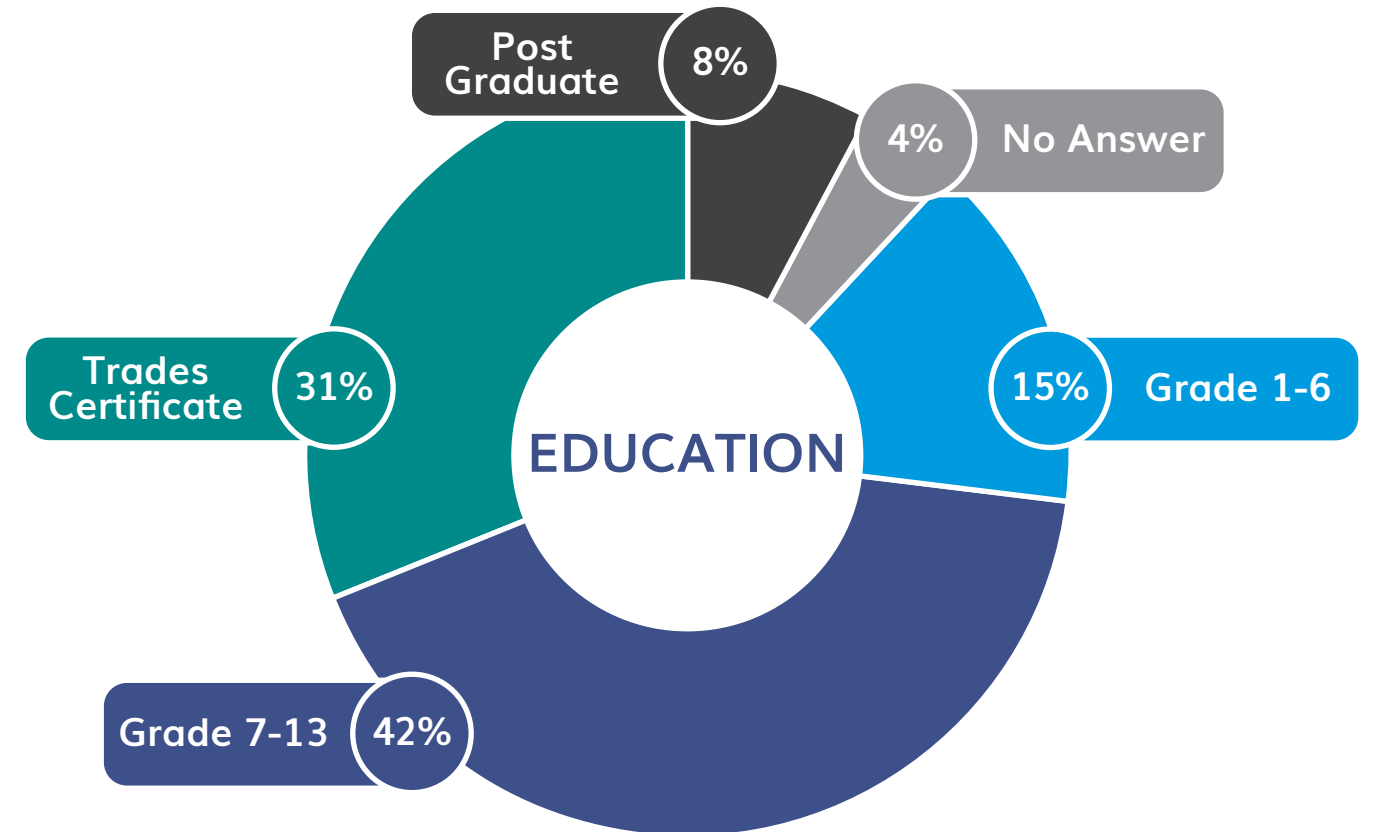
This age difference is particularly important to consider when designing support programs. While there is a tendency to provide services for permanent residents at both ends of the life spectrum (i.e., for children and seniors), this important sub-population within Chatham-Kent do not fit within these cohort categories. The types of supports that are offered must reflect the age breakdowns.

## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1.3 Education

Understanding and giving adequate consideration of a population's educational completion is important. Canada is ranked first in the G7 for the share of working-age people (25 to 64 years) with a college or university credential (57.5%). However, the education background of temporary foreign workers significantly differs. Most participants had completed grades 1 – 13 (57%) and only 38% of participants had completed some form of post-secondary education (see Figure 3). It is important to ensure that supports that are being offered are appropriate and accessible to all users, including those with less than post-secondary education.

**Figure 4 - What is your highest level of educational completion?**



## 4.0 RESULTS

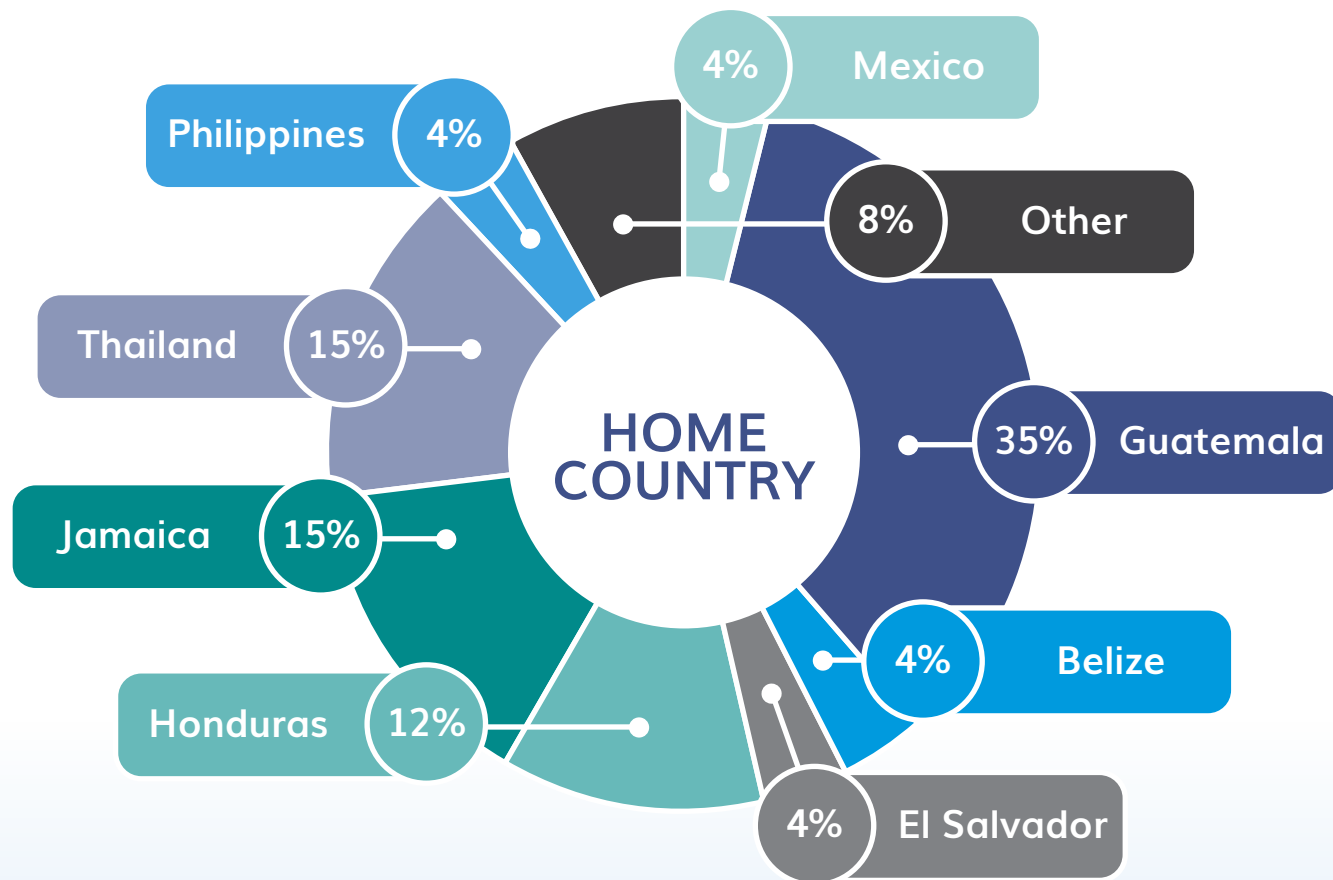
### 4.1.4 Country of Birth and First Language

Canada is a country of immigrants; the 2021 Census highlights that nearly one in four people (23%) are or have been a landed immigrant or permanent resident. The places of birth of immigrants and refugees to Canada has changed over time, reflecting changing immigration policies. For decades, Asia (including the Middle East) has accounted for the largest share of recent immigrants making up 62% of recent immigrants admitted from 2016 – 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021). The largest share of these new Canadians is from India (18.6%), the Philippines (11.4%), and China (8.9%). While it is critical that services are provided for this population as they settle into Canadian life.

However, to assume that temporary foreign worker place of birth is the same, would be incorrect. The largest cohort represented for in the study was from Guatemala (34.6%) followed by Jamaica and Thailand (15.4% each), Honduras (11.5%), and Mexico, Belize, El Salvador, and the Philippines (3.8% each) (see Figure 4).

Unsurprisingly, an individual's place of birth impacts their first language. Spanish accounted for the greatest share of participant first language (46.2%), followed by English (26.9%), and Thai (19.2%).

Figure 5 - What is your home country?

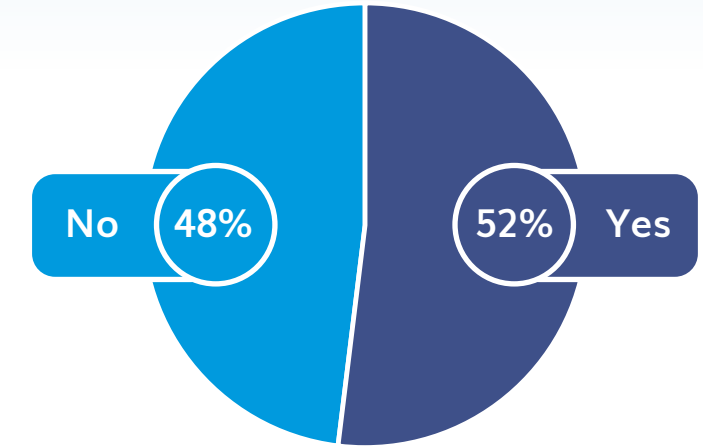


## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1.4 Dependents

Participants were asked whether they had dependents/children. Slightly over half (52%) of participants indicated that they did have dependents. This question was asked to better understand the motivation for seeking employment and whether seasonal employment was supporting other individuals than the worker directly.

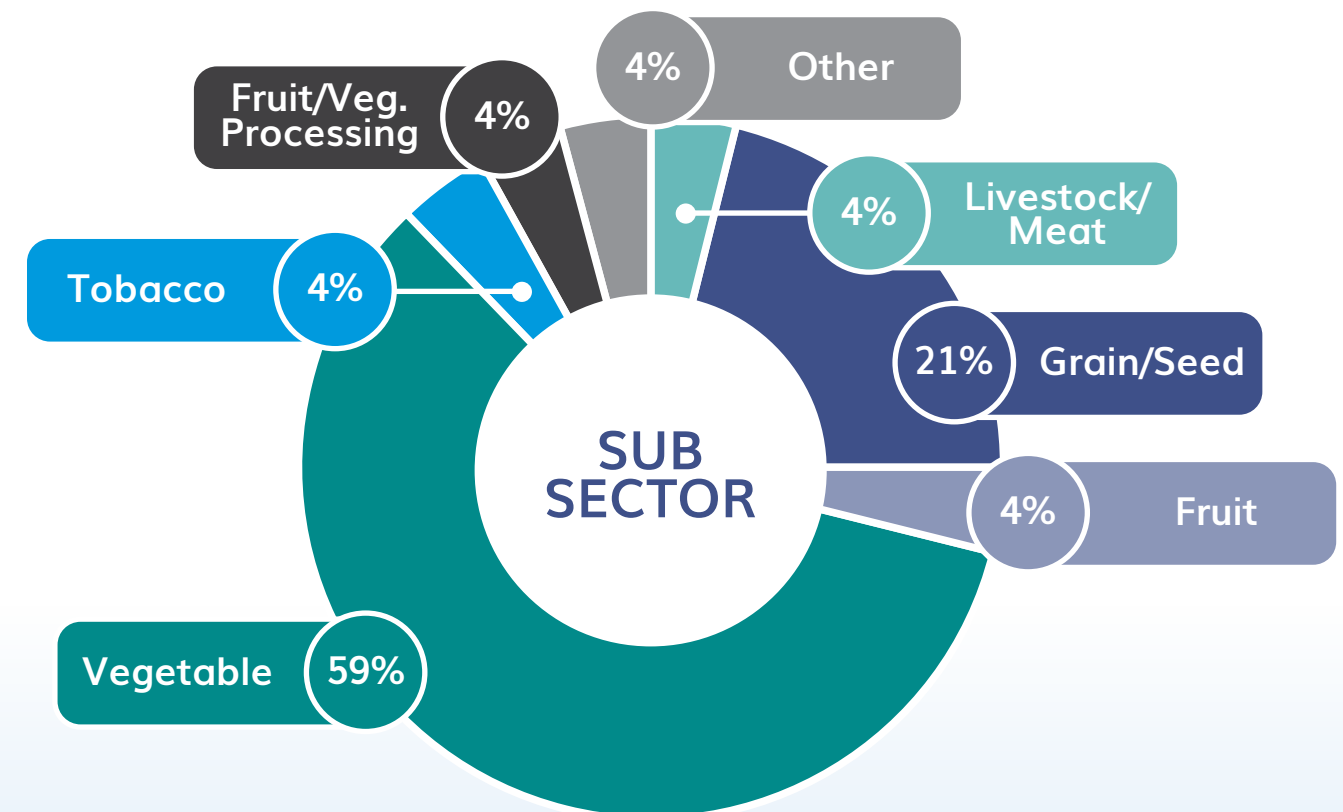
Table 1 – Do you have any dependents/children?



### 4.2 Employment by Agricultural Sub-Sector

Participants were asked to self-identify what type/sector of agriculture they were employed in. Overwhelmingly, the single largest type of agriculture identified was vegetables (58.3%) followed by grain/seed (20.8%), and livestock/meat, fruit, tobacco, fruit-vegetable processing, and 'other' (4.2% each).

Figure 6 - What type/sector of agriculture do you work in?



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.3 Experiencing Chatham-Kent

To be able to provide appropriate supports for temporary foreign workers, it is important to have a baseline of their current experiences arriving in the area, what visa programs they used to come to the region, and what services they accessed.

When participants responded to which visa program they used to come to the region as a seasonal employee, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program - Agricultural Stream (TFWP) was the most common response (58.3%) followed by the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) (29.2%) and 'Other' (12.5%).

#### 4.3.1 Services Accessed

**Only 37.5% of participants indicated that they had accessed any services for seasonal employees that were available in Chatham-Kent.** Those participants were asked to identify what services they had accessed while they were living in Chatham-Kent. Of those who accessed services, 88.9% indicated that they had found the supports provided useful. What is of potential interest is that most participants (62.5%) indicated that they **had not accessed any services while in Chatham-Kent.**

Of those participants who had accessed services, healthcare services were by far the most common response (10.3%). Other services that were accessed include language services, library, church or faith-based services, banking, public transport, and legal. No participants indicated that they accessed migrant-worker specific services or cell phone/communication services.

Participants who accessed healthcare indicated that the Chatham-Kent Community Health Services was the primary access program (66.7%) followed by Chatham-Kent Health Alliance and Public Health (16.7% each).



## 4.0 RESULTS

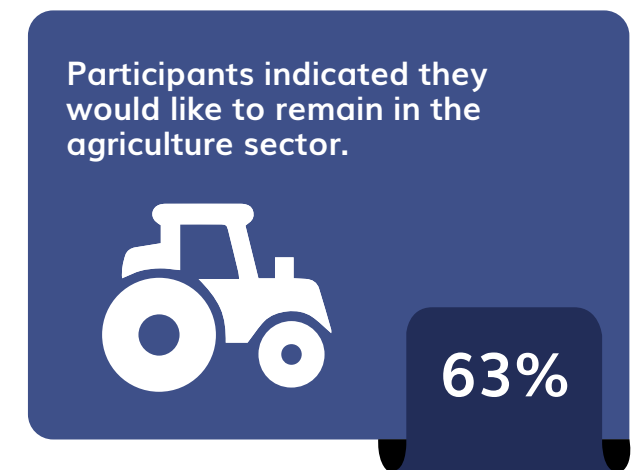
### 4.3.1 Services Accessed (Cont.)

Participants were asked "Why did you not access support services that you are eligible for in Chatham-Kent?" Two responses accounted for nearly 90% of the answers: 60% of participants indicated that they did not access supports that they are eligible for because they simply were not aware of the program and 26.7% indicated that they didn't know how to access the services. This is an important outcome of this study; no matter how beneficial or useful an available support might be, if the targeted users are unaware or don't know how to access the service, that service is effectively useless. Services available must be effectively promoted across a wide variety of mediums to ensure that all members of the community are aware of them. A small number of participants (6.7%) indicated that the services offered were not helpful.

There was not one service that participants indicated should be available that is not. Rather, it appears to be a question of promotion and accessibility of the services that are already available.

#### 4.3.3 Long-Term Plans

Participants were asked whether they would like to remain in Canada in the long-term. The vast majority (90.9%) of participants indicated they would like to and 63.2% of those responded that they would like to remain in the agricultural sector.



**Of the participants who accessed supports/services in Chatham-Kent, 50% indicated that they experienced difficulty or barriers doing so.**

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTEXTUAL IMPORTANCE, AND LIMITATIONS

The goal of this project was to better understand settlement and integration needs of TFWs and assess their interest in pursuing Permanent Residency (PR)/remaining within CK. Results highlight that there are many areas that Chatham-Kent is doing well while there are others that need attention.

### 5.1 The Good

Every participant responded that they felt welcome in Chatham-Kent. This speaks to the work of relevant organizations – both formal and informal – who work to make Chatham-Kent a desirable place for temporary foreign workers. This feeling of welcome translated into the long-term plans of participants; 91% of participants indicated that they wished to remain in Canada. Canada is a country of immigrants and many TFWs use the various visa programs to gain permanent residence. Chatham-Kent is supporting this and making Canada a welcoming place for new Canadians.

Participants who accessed supports and services, in particular healthcare, responded that they found these services helpful. Nearly 90% of participants who accessed services responded they found them useful.

### 5.2 Room for Improvement

While participants who accessed the supports that are available in Chatham-Kent found them useful, 62.5% of participants responded they did not access any supports. This group was asked why, 60% responded that they didn't know the services were available and 26.7% responded that they didn't know how to access what was available. Perhaps more concerning is that 50% of those who did access services, experienced difficulty or barriers.

While these are perhaps alarming, they are relatively straight-forward to address. Temporary foreign workers need to be made aware of what is available in the community and what they are eligible for. This promotion includes translation – most temporary foreign workers in Chatham-Kent arrive from Spanish-speaking countries.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The Chatham-Kent Local Immigration Partnership and its relevant organizations are doing great work to make the community a welcoming place for temporary foreign workers. However, more can be done. According to the participants in this study, the services that are being offered reflect what they need and want – there was not one participant who listed a service they thought would be helpful that is not already available. This is good news. Rather than developing new supports, communication is the key obstacle according to participants.

#### There are three recommendations that can be focused on.

- 1. Promotion** – the good news is that the services that are being offered are reflective of what temporary foreign workers want and need. However, it is critical that they know about these services. The first recommendation is that a promotional campaign is launched that targets temporary foreign workers to educate them on what is available. This campaign could include a 'welcome package' that is provided to each worker upon arrival to Chatham-Kent. It is critical that these packages are offered in multiple languages to ensure full access. Included in these packages should be details on healthcare availability – this was the top listed support needed. Perhaps local support organizations could add inserts to the welcome package that provide further information. It is recommended that this information is digital (QR code) and physical (short pamphlet).
- 2. Streamlining / Clarity** – one of the most concerning findings of this study is that 50% of participants who accessed supports within Chatham-Kent experienced difficulty or barriers. In addition to promoting what supports are available (recommendation #1), there is a need to stream-line and/or clarify how to access services. In addition to focusing on the workers themselves, it is critical that the community-at-large understands the importance of the temporary foreign workers to Chatham-Kent (e.g., economic, social, cultural). The community needs to understand that this group might not speak English, they might not be familiar with 'how the Canadian system works', and therefore, might need to be extra patient. While CKLIP and relevant organizations are trained experts on how to work with workers to deliver programs effectively and efficiently, the general public is not. A small campaign to educate the public perhaps could be beneficial to remind them of how they can be helpful and welcoming, especially if they encounter a TFW experiencing difficulty.
- 3. Targeted supports** – while there was no specific data that suggests that this is not already occurring, the temporary foreign worker population is dynamic and changes each year. Supports must be flexible to reflect the needs of the workers in any given year. Age, gender, and educational levels must be taken into consideration. What services were needed one year might not be the same the next.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTEXTUAL IMPORTANCE, AND LIMITATIONS

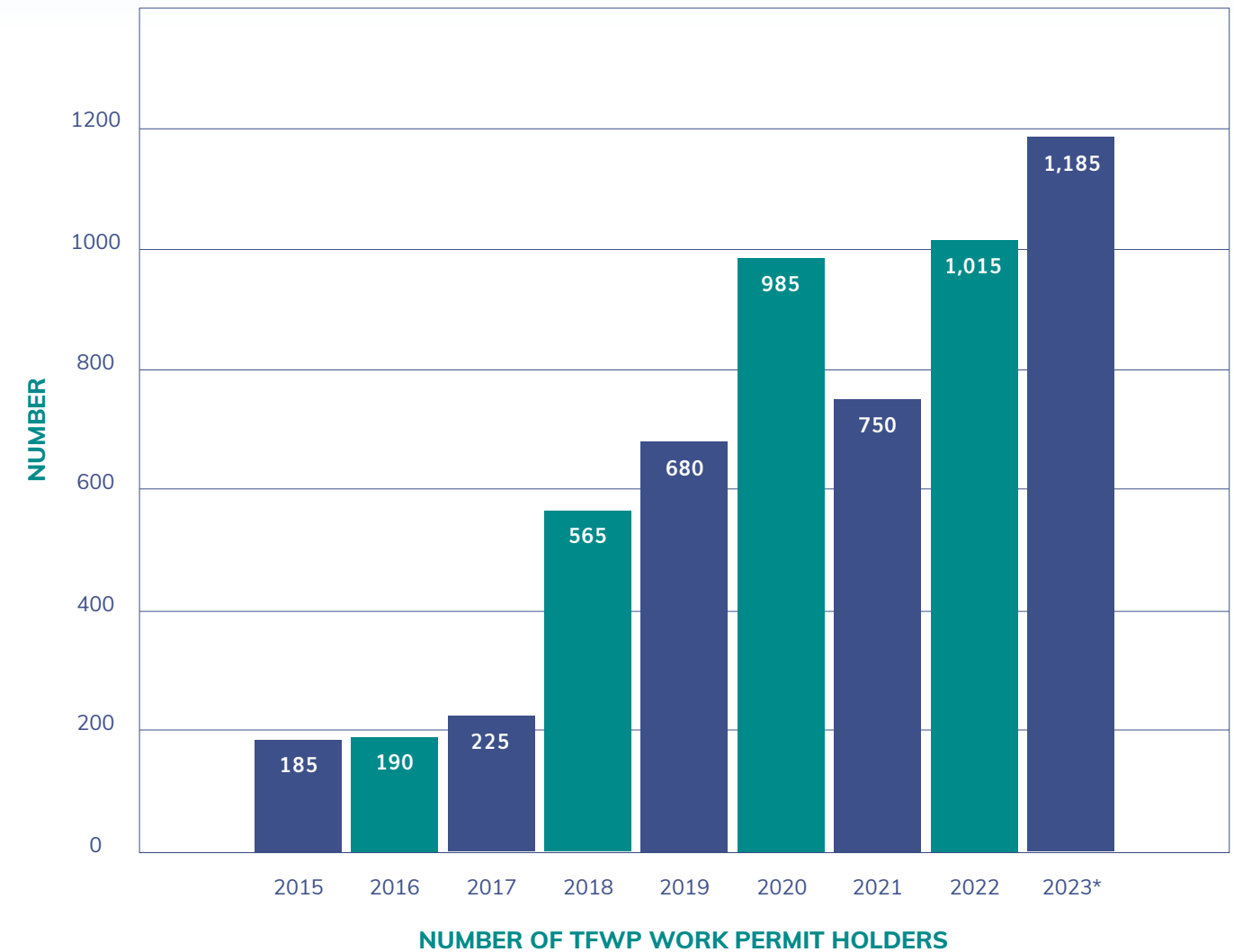
### 5.3.1 Context Matters

To develop appropriate supports for TFWs in Chatham-Kent, it is important to realize that they are different than TFWs in other communities. Temporary foreign workers who are arriving to Chatham-Kent are different than those who arrive to Leamington and other areas in Southwestern Ontario. According to data collected between April to June 2023, in Leamington, for example, many TFWs are employed in nursery and greenhouse workers. Across Southwestern Ontario, the occupation of TFWs varies considerably. However, within Chatham-Kent, apart from a small number of employees, the overwhelming majority of workers are employed as general farm workers. The TFWs who are employed across Chatham-Kent largely are working outdoors, on-farm, and in very physical positions. They risk injury from repetitive movements, sun exposure, and various other ailments associated with on-farm work.

It is useful to reach out to organizations across Southwestern Ontario, around Leamington, where there is a longer history of TFWs, to learn what has worked there. However, as the data suggests, there are many local differences and nuances that must be considered.

One of the challenges of collecting data from this population is sample size and accurate representation. Immigration, Refugees and Citizen Canada (IRCC) is the department of the Government of Canada with responsibility for matters dealing with immigration to Canada, refugees, and Canadian citizenship. When the data collected from our study is contextualized within IRCC data, much of it mirrors the federal numbers. For example, data from this project highlights IRCC data that not only has Chatham-Kent experienced continuous growth in the numbers of TFWs coming to the region (see Figure 6), but also the occupation type varies (see Figure 7). Additionally, IRCC data highlights that the largest age cohort of TFWs is between 30 and 44 years of age, which is also corroborated by our collected data. IRCC data highlights that the majority of TFWs that come to Chatham-Kent are employed in the agricultural sector, there are no study permit holders. This reaffirms the direction of supports that should be available to reflect the needs of those in the agricultural sector.

Figure 7: Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) Work Permit Holders in Chatham-Kent by Year in which Permit became effective (2015 – October 2023)





## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTEXTUAL IMPORTANCE, AND LIMITATIONS

**Table 2: Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) Work Permit Holders in Chatham-Kent by Occupation (2-digit NOC 2011), 2023\***

OCCUPATION (2-DIGIT NOC)		# OF WORK PERMIT HOLDERS (2023*)
<b>34</b>	Assisting occupations in support of health services	<b>5</b>
<b>67</b>	Service support and other service occupations, n.e.c.	<b>20</b>
<b>63</b>	Service supervisors and specialized service occupations	<b>25</b>
<b>82</b>	Supervisors and technical occupations in natural resources, agriculture, and related production	<b>30</b>
<b>84</b>	Workers in natural resources, agriculture, and related production	<b>465</b>
<b>86</b>	Harvesting, landscaping and natural resources labourers	<b>450</b>
<b>96</b>	Labourers in processing, manufacturing, and utilities	<b>190</b>

The ability to situate our collected data within the larger IRCC data provides additional credibility and validity to the findings.

### 5.4 Limitations

There were several limitations that impacted this project; however, they all have methodological considerations:

- 1. Participation:** all attempts were made to engage with as many TFWs as possible; the survey was available in eight languages, was delivered virtually, and promoted at local events. Even with these attempts, participation rates remained low. The window for participation was extended several times to increase participation with some success. While additional participation would have increased the size of the data pool, a critical mass was achieved, and the results are valid and can be used to influence policy discussions and decisions.
- 2. Methodological:** initially the project was to include focus groups with participants who indicated they would participate in their surveys. However, even with multiple contact methods to invite participants to a focus group, we were unable to get a valid participant sample. Our hope from the focus groups was to add contextual nuances and unique examples of the type(s) of support that would be more useful to the TFWs across CK.
- 3. Sample variety:** the study also included a survey of employers of TFWs from across CK and related support organizations. We used the same techniques to increase participation (as we did with the employee cohort) but we were unable to gather enough data to make any conclusions or recommendations from. For example, less than two employers completed the survey.
- 4. Focus on agricultural workers:** this project focused on TFWs within the agricultural sector. There are many other occupation sectors which TFWs are employed in, and these should be explored. However, the CKLIP was interested in supporting those TFWs within the agricultural sector for this project and were the explicit focus.
- 5. Response rates:** all questions provided participants the opportunity to not respond or indicate “prefer not to answer”. In those questions, where response rates were low, they were not presented within this report.





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