



LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP
PROGRESS
REPORT
2020





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Warden's Message

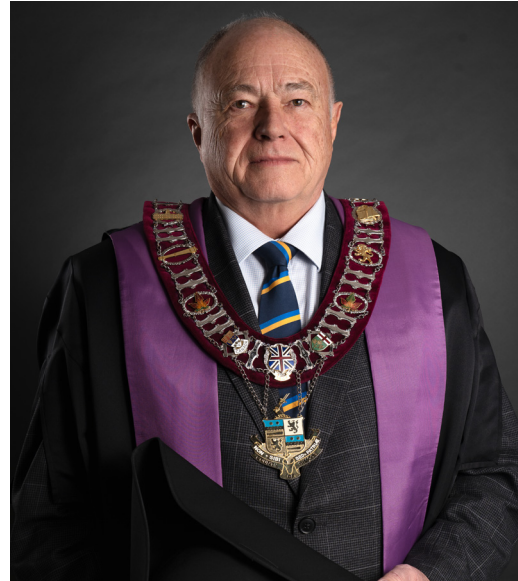
The County of Simcoe is committed to building vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities. Across Simcoe County, we benefit greatly from the talents, skills, dedication and hard work of more than 61,000 newcomers, speaking over 100 mother tongues.

The County is proud of our community-based planning led by the Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership (LIP). Their initiatives support the attraction, recruitment, integration, and retention of newcomers in our region, while working closely with our vital service providers.

Our growing diversity is a huge strength. Our local economy relies on immigration that fuels growth in our agriculture, manufacturing and technology sectors, and our health-care system is continually becoming more diverse as newcomers support us through the pandemic and provide care to our ageing population. As the County continues to promote a sustainable future for our residents, it is crucial that we continue to support newcomers to live, work and raise a family in Simcoe County.

With the generous funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the County is proud to support the Simcoe County LIP. Our 10-year Settlement Strategy was launched in October 2012, and it identified opportunities to collaborate and improve local immigration resources and services with the support of the federal government. Since 2016, the Simcoe County LIP has made great progress on our four-pillared approach to immigration, which centres around the themes of Readiness, Opportunity, Celebrate, Inspire. We have worked to strengthen basic public services to promote retention by working with our partners, including local libraries, to develop conversation circles and cultural competency training opportunities. We have also promoted employment and business opportunities through initiatives including our hireimmigrants.simcoe.ca website. We look forward to launching our new 10-year strategy in the context of the 2021 Census data, which will build on our successes and further our commitment to our newest residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on all our residents, but particularly our immigrant population. The County has worked



closely with our partners in the provincial government, as well as local stakeholders, to provide relevant multilingual information and resources around public health guidelines and the vaccination process via our immigration.simcoe.ca website, social media and in-person opportunities.

Throughout 2020, racism captured global headlines. On a local level, the County has continued to lead the way as a proponent of anti-discrimination and integration initiatives. With the support of community partners, the County continues to host the #ITSTARTS campaign each March to reduce racism and discrimination and encourage cultural competency. We also continue to showcase the outstanding work of local newcomers through our annual Newcomer Recognition Awards.

As a result of COVID-19, the County has witnessed our communities coming together like never before, in spite of all of the challenges we face. Our partnership with IRCC is a powerful tool in promoting this social cohesion and building significant relationships, and we look forward to continuing to work with the federal government to further our programs and our progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Cornell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Cornell
County of Simcoe Warden

Introduction

Data and analysis from the 2016 Census, Statistics Canada highlights the growth that is apparent in communities across Simcoe County. Many communities, particularly in the southwestern municipalities of Simcoe County, are developing at a rapid pace. Communities with rapid population growth also experienced high immigrant population growth.

Overall, the immigrant population increased by 10,270 residents during the reporting period. Most immigrants arrive in Simcoe County through a secondary or tertiary pathway, after initially landing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Direct landings (immigrants arriving in Simcoe County directly from a foreign country) are an important but smaller contributor to the total immigrant growth in Simcoe County.

The population of Simcoe County is projected to grow to 902,000 by 2051¹. Increasing population growth will reflect the diversity that is already part of the communities in the City of Toronto, and Peel and York regions.

Growing diversity in Simcoe County residency is also apparent in the increasing number of non-official mother tongues reported by local residents. In 2016, 112² non-official mother tongues were reported. In 2006, 66³ non-official languages were reported.

Anticipated continued growth requires additional community supports, and the 2023 Community Settlement Strategy will provide a new set of recommendations to support the integration and retention of Simcoe County's growing immigrant residency.

Table 1: Population Growth and Immigrant Population growth by communities

(Source: Census, Statistics Canada 2006, 2016)

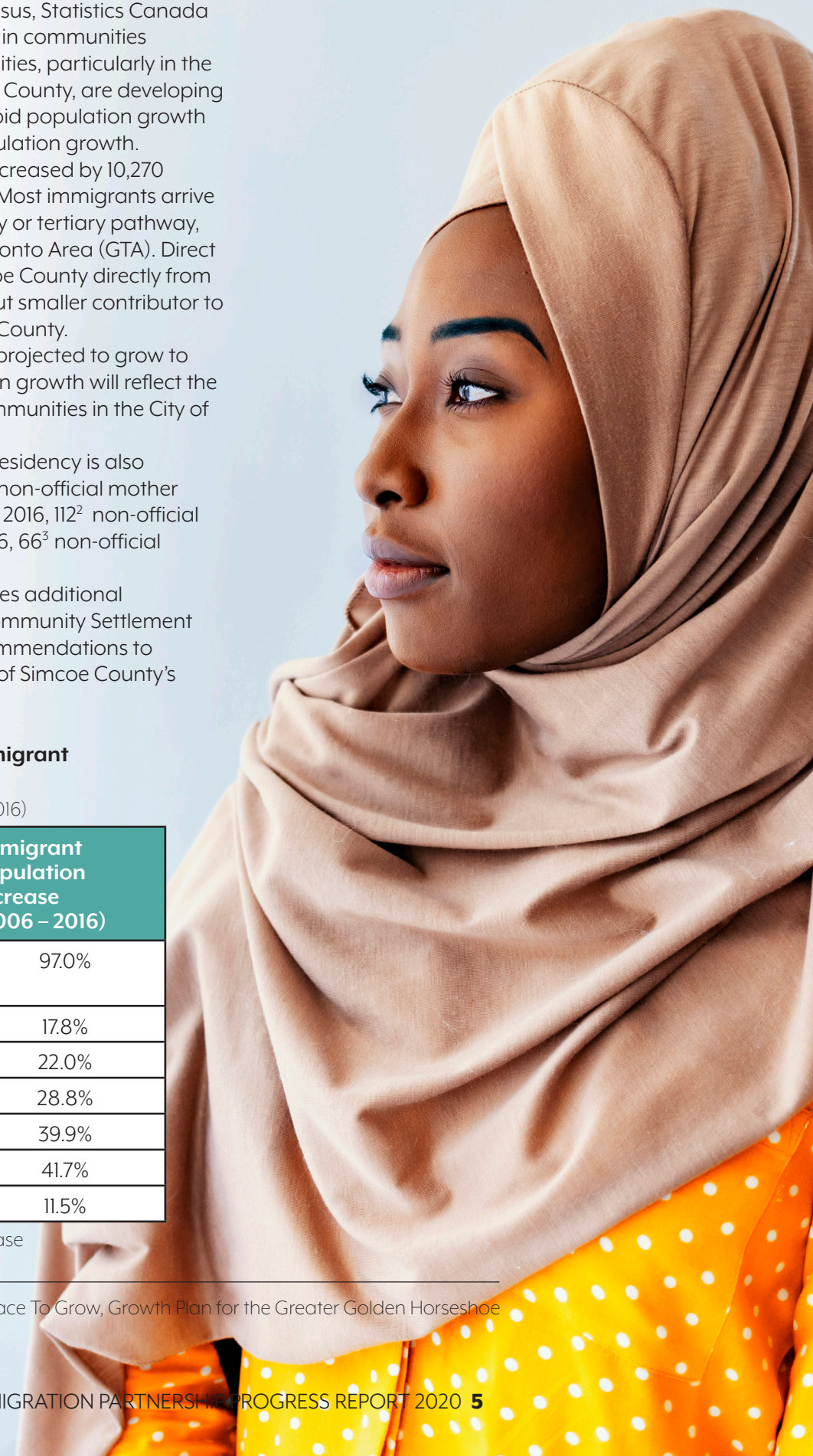
Community*	Population Increase (2006-2016)	Immigrant Population Increase (2006 – 2016)
Bradford West Gwillimbury	46.9%	97.0%
Wasaga Beach	37.6%	17.8%
Collingwood	26.1%	22.0%
Essa	24.7%	28.8%
New Tecumseth	23.6%	39.9%
Innisfil	17.3%	41.7%
Barrie	10.1%	11.5%

*listed in order by highest population increase

¹ Government of Ontario, August 2020, A Place To Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

² Census, Statistics Canada, 2016

³ Census, Statistics Canada, 2006



Community Settlement Strategy

The Simcoe County Community Settlement Strategy was published in the fall of 2012 following an extensive period of local research activities, data compilation, and literature reviews. The strategy was designed as a “made in Simcoe County” response and included several recommendations to meet the needs of a growing immigrant residency. The strategy is based on four themes of community action:

- **Readiness**
- **Opportunity**
- **Celebrate**
- **Inspire**

The 2020 Progress Report is the second formal report highlighting community accomplishments that align with the recommendations in the strategy.

The Community Settlement Strategy is a ten-year action plan based on information/data (2006) available at the time. Our communities have continued to change in the past few years:

- growing immigrant residency
- community response to the 2016 international Syrian refugee crisis
- increasing local labour force vacancies due to baby boomer retirements
- business growth and expansion

Community stakeholders are encouraged to reflect on the population changes in Simcoe County and consider opportunities to support the growing permanent and temporary residency of foreign-born individuals.

Many local businesses rely on temporary foreign workers, and the international student population is growing at an unprecedented rate. For 2019, Georgian College reported international students comprised 32% of the college’s total student population.





Francophone Immigration

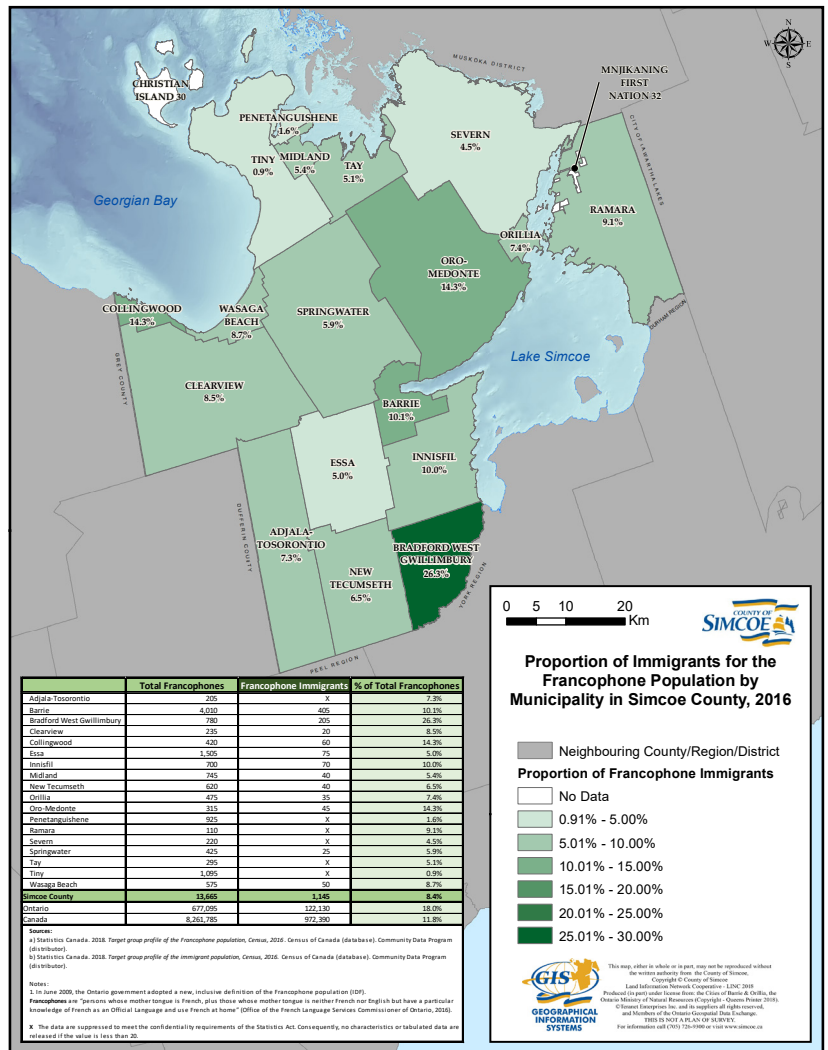
The Simcoe County Francophone community represents approximately 3% of the total population. According to the 2016 Census, the county's French-speaking community has grown, in part due to the arrival of new French speaking immigrants. In 2016, French immigrants represented 8.4% of Simcoe County's total Francophone population. French immigration increased 40.5% between 2006 and 2016.

8.4%
of Simcoe County's
Francophone population
are French immigrants

Francophone immigrants arriving in Simcoe County are not settling in designated French language communities, creating a disconnect between French language service delivery and new Francophone immigrant residency.

Bradford West Gwillimbury experienced the greatest Francophone immigrant population growth between 2006 and 2016. The French-speaking foreign-born population increased by 26.3% in South Simcoe. Collingwood and Oro-Medonte each experienced a 14.3% increase in French speaking newcomers during the same period.

Figure 1: Proportion of Immigrants for the Francophone Population by Municipality in Simcoe County, 2016



Growth in Settlement Service Delivery

Bradford Immigrant and Community Services

Bradford Immigrant and Community Services (BICS) has been supporting immigrant residents for over 25 years. The immigrant population in Bradford West-Gwillimbury increased by 97% between 2006 and 2016, creating increasing demand for service delivery to meet community needs.

BICS receives funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to provide the “Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada” (LINC) program and part-time settlement supports.

BICS also delivers the “Integration to Canadian Society”. This program helps newcomers and their children understand the importance of their child’s education including their roles, rights and responsibilities. Additionally, this funding is used to help build social networks and facilitate integration into Canadian society by offering an immigrant support group twice per month. BICS added “Connect Up” using the “Meet Ups” model to connect newcomers in their communities. This computer training teaches clients to connect using the site and provides new skills that increase confidence and self-sustenance.



Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe

The Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe (CMHA YSS) launched the “Newcomer Health and Wellbeing” program in 2020, funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This program offers health care from a nurse practitioner, health education, support, counselling, and time-limited trauma specific services. CMHA YSS’s holistic approach focuses on the whole person including their language and culture to help them adjust to living in their new community.



Canadian Mental Health Association
York and South Simcoe
Mental health for all

Georgian College

Georgian College offers two programs to support newcomers living in Simcoe County, the “Job Finding Club for Immigrants” (JFCI) and “Occupation-specific Language Training” (OSLT). Both programs are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

JFCI was established in 2017 and is the only immigrant-specific employment initiative in Simcoe County. Interest in the program grows annually. This four week peer-supported job search program guides immigrants through all aspects of job search including, resume writing, cover letter writing, mentorship, networking, interview strategies, and understanding Canadian work culture. JFCI also helps newcomers navigate the local labour market by facilitating connections with employers and professional contacts. Georgian College reports that over 80% of participants find employment within three months of attending the program.



OSLT helps students develop communication skills for the Canadian workplace. Georgian provides information on pathways to employment and further education and training to internationally trained professionals. The courses help participants develop language and communication skills necessary to successfully transition to the workplace. Class sizes are small and offered after work hours to accommodate employed students. Georgian College is currently offering OSLT for the business and healthcare sectors.

Simcoe County District School Board

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) offers “English as a Second Language” (ESL) to adult learners interested in improving daily communication skills, increasing employment opportunities, or preparing for post-secondary education. Classes include engaging conversation with guest speakers and exploring Canadian culture and history. Successful completion of the course provides learners with a certificate for their Canadian citizenship application. In 2020, SCDSB served over 500 students from over 80 countries and speak more than 45 different languages. The classes were provided in Alliston, Barrie, Bradford, Collingwood and Innisfil Library.





YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka supports immigrants residing in Simcoe County by offering “Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada” (LINC) and settlement services funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS).

Three full-time LINC classes are available to Permanent Residents. These classes are supported by a child minding program that allows parents to access English language classes while their children receive quality early childhood education at no cost.

Settlement counsellors provide clients with community information and resources to families living in Barrie, Innisfil, and Midland. The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka’s Immigrant Services offers creative and innovative programming based on community need. Initiatives have included free income tax clinics to help newcomers navigate and submit taxes to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and English conversation circles.

The YMCA also facilitates “Orientation to Ontario” and “International Student Connect” sessions for Georgian College and Lakehead University international students for COSTI.



Welcome Centre

Social Enterprise for Canada supports newcomers living in Collingwood, New Tecumseth, Orillia, and Wasaga Beach through the Welcome Centre’s Mobile Unit. These services are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). The Mobile Unit provides regularly scheduled and on-call settlement appointments in communities that have traditionally been underserved. Additionally, the Mobile Unit supports English language conversation circles in Alliston, Collingwood and Orillia.

Immigrants living in rural communities in Simcoe County can use the “Click Connect Immigrant Assistance” program at their local library. This initiative, established in 2018, provides technology in libraries to connect local residents with a virtual settlement counsellor.

The Welcome Centre Mobile Unit is the only service delivery in Simcoe County providing “Accreditation and Qualification Information Services” (AQIS). This service helps foreign educated residents understand local employment pathways that align with their previous education, skills, and work experience. AQIS is available in all Simcoe County communities.



System Transformation

Libraries

Libraries continue to be community leaders in supporting immigrant residents in our communities. The Library Immigrant Hub Project, starting as a pilot initiative in 2015, expanded to 16 libraries by 2018. The initiative included staff training, signage, outreach materials, and multilingual resources. Most libraries have created a multicultural liaison role.

Seniors Partnering with Immigrants in Conversation Exchanges” (SPICE) connects newcomers with senior citizens. The program pairs newcomers wanting to practice English language skills with retired community members.

The “Click Connect Immigrant Assistance” program began in libraries across Simcoe County in 2017. Newcomers in rural communities can visit a library computer station and connect to a settlement worker at the Welcome Centre in Newmarket. Libraries are a touchstone for local immigrant residents receiving settlement information and support remotely.



Simcoe County District School Board

In May 2017, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) approved four strategic priorities to guide their work from 2017-2022. Equity, diversity and inclusion were prioritized, highlighting SCDSB's commitment to transforming their school system by dedicating additional resources to initiatives such as the Social Changemakers Conference, the International Day of Pink, and student and staff training. The SCDSB hired a Principal of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and two teachers. Dedicated staff enable the SCDSB to:

- regularly train school-based leaders on issues of bias, discrimination, and harassment
- provide opportunities for equity training for staff on an annual basis
- ensure that schools, classrooms, and resources reflect the lived realities of students and celebrate their backgrounds and achievements



Your Future... Our Priority



READINESS

Strengthen basic public services to promote retention

English Conversation Circles

English conversation circles are free activities to help immigrant residents improve and practice English conversational skills. These initiatives give immigrant residents an opportunity to connect, share experiences, and build a network in their local communities. Conversation circles are led by volunteers and offered in four locations in Simcoe County.

The Barrie Public Library launched its first English conversation circle in 2015. The program has welcomed nearly 300 participants born in 37 different countries. Organizers built partnerships with local agencies including Georgian College and the YMCA, contributing to the program's success. In March 2019, the Barrie Public Library added a Saturday morning session. Many former program participants have become volunteers and help guide newcomers through the challenges of immigrant life in Canada.

The program expanded to other communities in Simcoe County. The Welcome Centre Mobile Unit collaborates with Focus Employment Services, Tracks Employment Services, and the Orillia Public Library to offer English conversation circles in Alliston, Collingwood, and Orillia.



ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE

Downtown Branch

Angus Ross Room

Saturdays, September 30 -
December 2, 11:00am -12:30pm

Painswick Branch

Huronion Room

Saturdays, September 23 -
November 11, 11:45am - 1:00pm

Practice English, meet new friends and learn more about life and culture in Canada! Volunteer facilitators will lead small group discussions and activities to help build your vocabulary, improve your confidence and practice your conversation skills.

barrielibrary.ca

[@barriepubliclibrary](#) [/barriepubliclibrary](#) [/BPL_insteady](#)



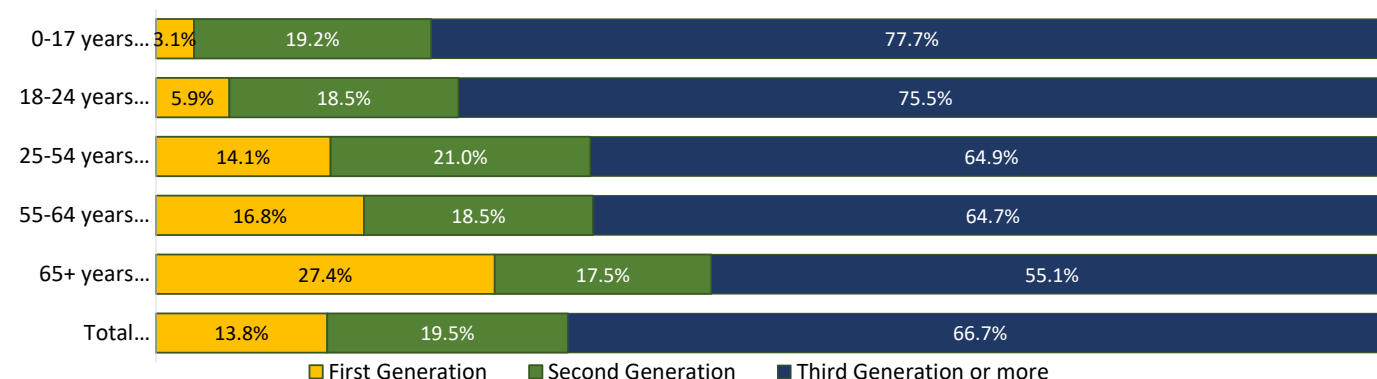
- **“Immigrants Enrich our Communities” videos**
- **“Opening Doors”, CMHA**
- **Mosaic Newsletter**
- **Immigrant Health Outcomes Survey**
- **2018 Community Consultation**

Immigrant Age Data

Most immigrants arrive in Canada in their early adult years and have children after they have settled. Their offspring, second generation Canadians, are often a bridge for their parents' connection to Canadian society. The dichotomy of these families' experiences should not be overlooked by education and human and health service organizations providing service delivery to children and young adults.

Figure 3: Distribution of the population by generation status and age category in Simcoe County

(Source: 2016 Census Data Table (No. 98-400-X2016211) Population by Municipality in Simcoe County, 2016)





#ITSTARTS Campaign

#ITSTARTS is a public awareness campaign designed to reduce racism and discrimination in Simcoe County. The campaign encourages community members to share educational information through social media posts and in public spaces. Starting in 2017, multilingual #ITSTARTS cards have been distributed through the network of local libraries and made available online. The annual campaign takes place throughout the month of March, aligning with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21st.

Campaign ambassadors were introduced in 2018. Ambassadors are individuals who help raise campaign awareness and increase participation by organizing activities in their respective communities of practice. In 2019, the campaign added Community Champions (organizations) to lead and empower meaningful change. These lead organizations and individuals are catalyst to creating momentum for the #ITSTARTS campaign.

- online repository of information and resources
- 215 Ambassadors (2017-2019)
- 8 Community Champions (2019)
- 2.94 million users reached by social media (2019)

Hate Crime Data

Hate crime is defined as damage to person or property. Reported hate crime has been increasing in Canada in the past five years. The number of incidents have increased by 39% in the most recent reporting period.

Table 2: Hate Crime Data

Source: Statistics Canada: Table: 35-10-0191-01 (formerly CANSIM 252-0094)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total number of hate crimes	1,295	1,362	1,409	2,073	1,798
Rate per 100,000 population	3.7	3.8	3.9	5.7	4.9



Cultural Competency

“Cultural Competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable effective outcomes in cross-cultural situations”⁴. Cultural competence is measured on a continuum of development and proficiency. Organizations are encouraged to self-assess their placement on the cultural competency continuum to provide a benchmark for ongoing growth, development and cultural safety.

A growing number of organizations/agencies are engaging in learning activities to increase the cultural competency of their staff. These include professional development events focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion, and providing staff training modules focused on cultural competency.

A train-the-trainer cultural competency program took place in late fall of 2020. This learning opportunity increased the pool of individuals able to provide cultural competency training to local organizations/agencies.

“**I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and more confidence in interacting with my friends and colleagues because of this cultural awareness training. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to expand my understanding of the uniqueness of others.**”
Laura M., Training Participant

Refugee Rescue South Simcoe

Refugee Rescue South Simcoe is a community group formed with the purpose of sponsoring refugee families in New Tecumseth. The group comprises 10 local churches and community groups. Since 2016, the South Simcoe Refugee Sponsorship Committee raised funds and sponsored two refugee families and a single woman.

The group connected with the local Employment Ontario office to support the families’ employment journey. They worked with a local ESL teacher to help a family member acquire job specific language skills. Both mother and father were able to receive interpretation support to take the Safe Food Handling and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) tests.

The outpouring of support from the community helped the families secure housing, enroll children in schools, and obtain employment.

For more information and updates on Refugee Rescue South Simcoe, follow their Facebook page at facebook.com/RefugeeRescueSS.

⁴ National Centre for Cultural Competence, 1998, modified from Cross et al.

OPPORTUNITY

Promote employment and business opportunities

HireImmigrants.simcoe.ca

Simcoe County's labour force needs will increase as baby boomers retire from the workforce and birth rates decline. Population growth will rely on immigrants to support Simcoe County's current and future economic success.

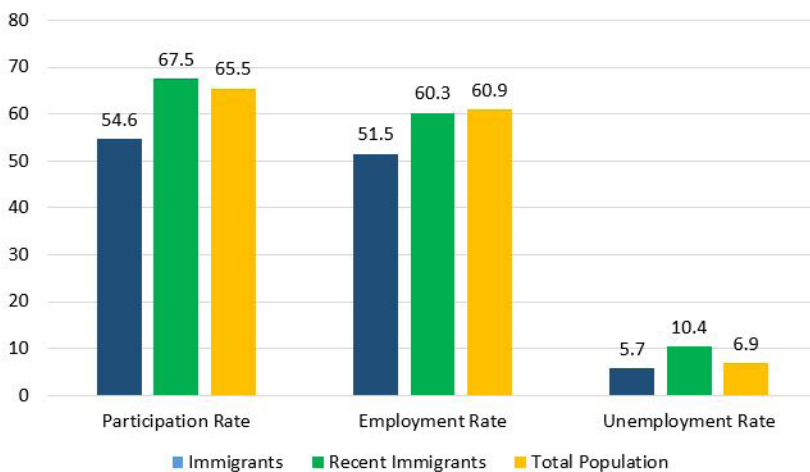
Each year skilled immigrants arrive in Canada ready and able to contribute their education, skills, and work experience. Effectively recruiting and retaining skilled immigrant talent is Simcoe County's best prospect for increasing the size and strength of the county's workforce. For more information, visit HireImmigrants.simcoe.ca

Unemployment Data for Immigrants, Recent Immigrants and Population

The unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 3.5% higher than the population as a whole.

Figure 4: Simcoe County Labour Force Activity, Age 15+, Total Population, All Immigrants & Recent Immigrants

Source: 2016 Census, Statics Canada



- **Employer newsletter**
- **Employer Breakfasts (MCI, EDO, SMWDB)**
- **Career Conversation Circle (BPL)**

International Experience Counts!

The County of Simcoe received funding from the Government of Ontario to enhance the capacity of the local system of Employment Ontario service delivery organizations. The project included a series of workshops for agency staff that increased their understanding of immigrants' experiences, cultural competency, mentoring, networking, accreditation, employer engagement, and positive client outcomes.

Local agencies were provided signage and promotional materials designed to encourage immigrant residents to visit employment services. The project included evaluation through the Research Analyst (RA) program offered by Georgian College. In total, 204 participants attended training sessions, and 96% of participants indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their training experience.



Job Finding Club for Immigrants (JFCI)

The Job Finding Club for Immigrants is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to assist newcomers to find employment that aligns with their career goals. JFCI supported Briyitt in securing local meaningful work.

Briyitt came to Canada from Columbia in 2014. She initially settled in Montreal, Quebec. In Columbia, Briyitt worked for three years at KPMG as a certified Accountant and eight years in related administrative positions. She came to Canada with the hope of working in a similar field, but after four years in Quebec, she decided to move to Barrie with her family to look for better opportunities.

A month after arriving in Simcoe County, Briyitt enrolled in Georgian College's Job Finding Club for Immigrants. She worked on her resume and interview skills, found a mentor, and networked with professionals in her field. She also quickly built connections in the community working alongside other immigrants seeking to establish their careers in Simcoe County.

Briyitt found a job as an accounting clerk with the Canadian Forces Morale & Welfare Service within four months of participating in the program. Her new job, along with the connections she made at the Job Finding Club for Immigrants, has increased her sense of belonging in the community. She has made Barrie her home and recently became a Canadian Citizen.



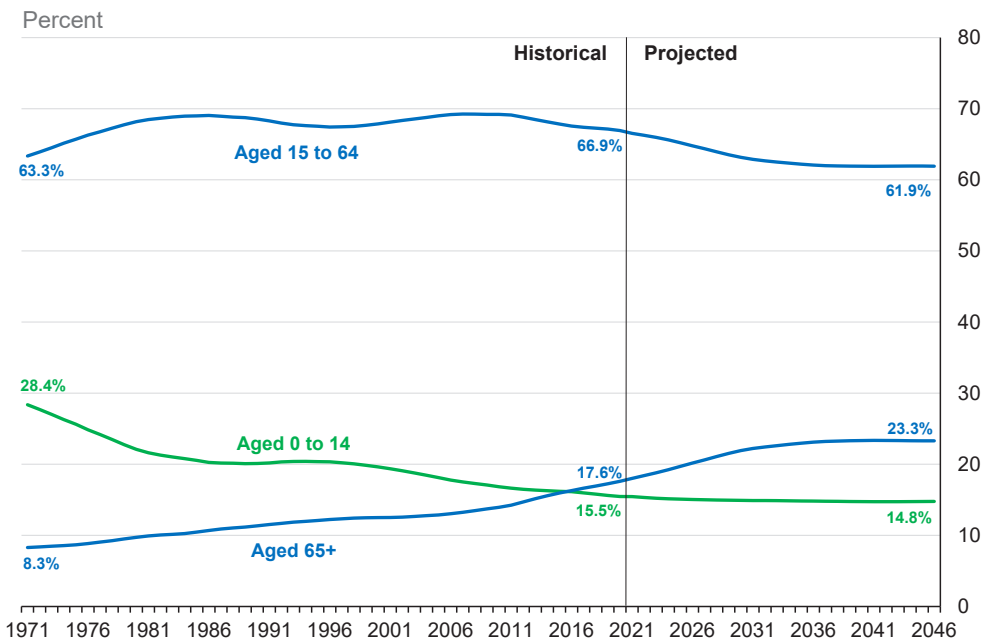
Briyitt, a participant in the Job Finding Club for Immigrants

Ontario Age Data and Workforce

In 2016, for the first time, the number of seniors aged 65+ in Ontario surpassed the number of children aged 0 to 14 years. Children now account for 15.5% of Ontario's population, down from 28.4% in 1971. By contrast, the share of seniors in the provincial population is now at an all-time high of 17.6%, up from 8.3% in 1971. The core working age population is projected to decline from 66.9% of the population in 2020 to 61.9% by 2046⁵.

Figure 5: Ontario Broad Age Groups 1971-2046 with 2020 Estimates

Source: A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Office Consolidation 2020



⁵ Government of Ontario, 2020, A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Office Consolidation 2020.

CELEBRATE

Supportive environment reflected through celebration of diversity

Newcomer Recognition Awards

The annual event brings together more than 150 community members to celebrate the contribution of immigrants living in Simcoe County and the organizations and businesses supporting enhanced opportunities for a growing and changing demography.

Established in 2013, the Newcomer Recognition Awards are open to individuals, organizations, and businesses residing in Simcoe County. Community stakeholders in the private and public sector financially sponsor the awards ceremony.

In 2020, the County of Simcoe hosted the eighth annual Newcomer Recognition Awards online, employing safe practices during the pandemic resulting in a greater audience, engaging more than 500 viewers for the event.



Newcomer Recognition Award Winners, 2019.

Award categories include:

- Immigrant Youth
- Immigrant Mentor
- Immigrant Artist
- Immigrant Entrepreneur
- Ethno-cultural Group
- Culturally Diverse Workforce
- Welcoming Work Environment
- Marketing and Outreach
- Multiculturalism through Education – School & Educator
- Service Excellence
- Community Champion (Youth)
- Community Champion (Adult)



COMMUNITY ACTION

- **Come Together Week (Georgian College)**
- **Diwali Celebrations**
- **Multicultural Book Club**
- **Alternative Language Program (SCDSB)**



Bhangra Crew Ontario community performance, 2018.

Bhangra Crew Ontario

Karandeep and Gurpartap Singh, Georgian College international students, co-founded Bhangra Crew Ontario in 2017. Bhangra Crew Ontario shares their passion for bhangra dancing with the community by offering dance classes to college students and community members.

In 2018, Bhangra Crew Ontario competed for the first time in a Canadian regional Bhangra competition. Bhangra Crew Ontario also performs for the community and recently honoured front-line health workers during the pandemic with a performance.

In 2018, the group was recognized as the Immigrant Artist at the Newcomer Recognition Awards.



Oro Church Restoration

The Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1849. It is a designated National Historic site and the oldest African log church in North America.

In 2013, the Township of Oro-Medonte developed a preservation strategy to restore the building and sustain an important piece of African-Canadian history.

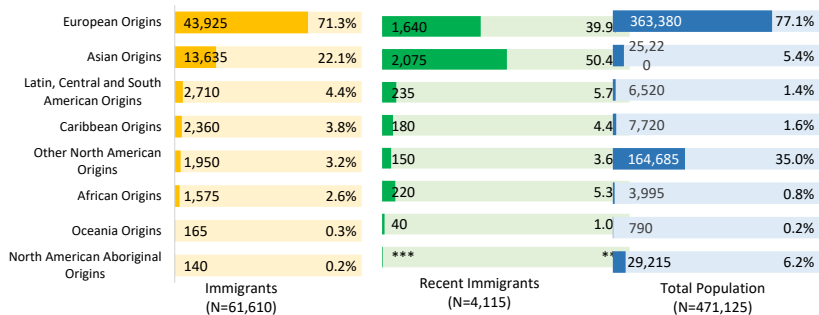
The township initiated a fundraising campaign to support the church restoration and received over \$70,000 from community members and \$140,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Simcoe County Museum committed resources to support staffing at the historic church.

Ethnicity

In Simcoe County, residents reported approximately 210 ethnic origins or ancestries including Indigenous communities⁶. Immigration patterns change over time, and may be influenced by global events. In 2016, more than half of recent immigrants in Simcoe County reported Asian origins⁷.

Figure 6: Distribution of Ethnic Origins by Immigrant Status in Simcoe County, 2016

Source: 2016 Census, Highlight Tables (No. 98-402-X2016007)



*** Value is less than 20, so data is suppressed. Data suppression has been adopted to further protect the confidentiality of individual respondents' personal information.

Multicultural Centre

An important recommendation in the Community Settlement Strategy is the establishment of a centralized multicultural services facility that offers easy access to a multitude of relevant services, and a home base for multiple ethno-cultural organizations. The Ethnic Mosaic Alliance (EMA), a new not-for-profit organization, was formally incorporated in March 2019. EMA's vision is to build a multicultural centre by 2027 to embrace the growing cultural diversity in Simcoe County.

In November 2019, the County of Simcoe, in partnership with EMA submitted an application to "Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program", a new envelope of funding that supports culture and recreation infrastructure projects. If successful, the federal government will support 40% of the project expenses, the provincial government 33.3% of the costs, and EMA will fundraise the remaining 26.7% of the construction costs. EMA is exploring land acquisition options with local municipalities to confirm the location of the new facility.

⁶ Statistics Canada, 2016

⁷ Statistics Canada, 2016

INSPIRE

Empower newcomers to contribute to local leadership capacity

Bradford West Gwillimbury Diversity Action Group

The Bradford West Gwillimbury (BWG) Diversity Action Group was established in Simcoe County's most diverse community in 2015. The organization's goal is to create a community that recognizes and values the uniqueness of each community member and their culture, while respecting and including every resident. The group plans and hosts celebratory and educational events with the help of community volunteers.



Over the past five years, BWG Diversity Action Group has highlighted many important topics, including remembering the selfless efforts of veterans, celebrating the raising of the rainbow pride flag, honouring National Aboriginal day, observing Black History month, and organizing a Holocaust education week.

Their efforts have been met with excitement and positive feedback from many in Bradford West Gwillimbury. The group was honoured by a well-deserved community award from the South Simcoe Police Service in 2016.

Ethnic Mosaic Alliance

The Ethnic Mosaic Alliance (EMA) is a non-profit organization incorporated in March, 2019. This group envisions establishing a multicultural centre that is safe and welcoming to all who wish to embrace the growing diversity in Simcoe



County. A multicultural centre is a key recommendation in the County of Simcoe's Community Settlement Strategy.

Once built, the EMA will be responsible for the oversight and operation of the multicultural centre. The intention is to provide a hub of services, supports, and multicultural celebrations that meet immigrants' needs.



- **La Clé (increasing) immigrant representation on Board of Directors**

- **Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) "Towards Parity" project**

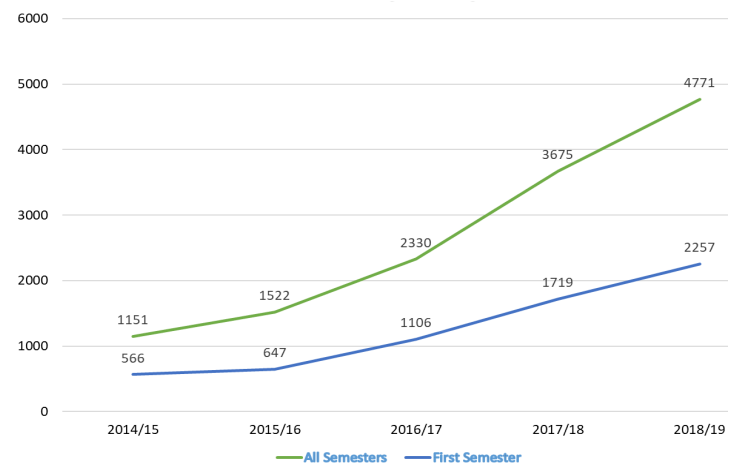
International Students

In the past four years, Simcoe County has experienced a significant growth in international student enrollments. Georgian College estimates that 3,600 students from 85 countries enrolled in studies in 2019, representing a 60% enrollment increase between 2016 and 2019. Lakehead University's Orillia campus experienced 78.5% growth in international student enrollment in the same period.

International students positively influence the social fabric and economies of their communities. In addition to paying tuition, students rent housing, purchase goods and services, and participate in the local labour market. In its recent international education strategy plan, the federal government reported foreign students contributed an estimated \$21.6 billion to Canada's GDP in 2018⁸. The Canadian Bureau for International Education reports that 60% of international students plan to apply for permanent residency after they graduate⁹.

Figure 7: International students at Georgian College 2014/15 to 2018/19

Source: Georgian College International Department



⁸ Global Affairs Canada, 2019, Building On Success: International Education Strategy 2019–2024

⁹ CBIE Research In Brief Number 9, August 2018, The Student's Voice: National Results of the 2018 CBIE International Student Survey

Community Champions

Georgian College

Georgian College's student population includes more than 3,000 international students. The college is invested in supporting international students and connecting them to local communities. The international department has been a key partner in the County of Simcoe's anti-racism and anti-discrimination #ITSTARTS campaign. Georgian College expanded the concept by creating a "Come Together Week", a celebration of cultural diversity at Georgian College. The college continuously invests in faculty and staff intercultural training.

Georgian College offers Occupational-specific Language Training (OSLT) and a Job Finding Club for Immigrants (JFCI). JFCI is the only employment program offered to newcomers and immigrants in Simcoe County. Both programs are funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).



International Students celebrating Day of the Dead, 2018.



Ethnic Mosaic Alliance Board of Directors, 2019.

Ethnic Mosaic Alliance

The Ethnic Mosaic Alliance (EMA) incorporated in 2019 and has a vision to build a multicultural centre in Simcoe County by 2027. The organization received funding from the provincial government in 2019 for board development and was further supported by the County of Simcoe Arts, Culture and Heritage Grant program to develop its strategic plan.



In November 2019, in partnership with the County of Simcoe, an application was submitted for infrastructure funding to build a multicultural centre in Simcoe County. EMA launched its fundraising campaign with a silent auction at the 2019 Simcoe County Newcomer Recognition Awards ceremony.

In 2020, EMA continues to establish new fundraising avenues.



Public Libraries

Simcoe County libraries, under the leadership of the Simcoe County Library Cooperative, have embraced recommendations outlined in the Community Settlement Strategy. Libraries expanded the pilot project of welcoming immigrant hubs, increasing multilingual resources, adding welcoming signage and outreach materials, and providing cultural competency training for library staff.

Public libraries provide community leadership to the annual #ITSTARTS campaign to reduce racism and discrimination in Simcoe County. Libraries host engaging events and share educational information in their physical locations and on social media platforms.

Libraries have collaborated with the Welcome Centre Mobile Unit (Newmarket) to connect rural immigrant residents with settlement services through the “Click Connect Immigrant Assistance” program.



Spice Celebration, 2020.

Simcoe County District School Board



The Simcoe County District School Board has a number of initiatives that support positive outcomes of immigrants in communities across the county. The school board supports elementary and secondary school students, and staff with learning activities and events supported by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion department. The continuing education division provides “English as a Second Language” (ESL) in Barrie, Bradford, Collingwood, and New Tecumseth. The “International and Indigenous Languages” program supports family retention of mother tongue languages. In 2019, classes in Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian, and Urdu were offered in Simcoe County classrooms.

Immigrants Enrich Our Communities

In 2018, the County of Simcoe produced a series of video clips, “Immigrants Enrich our Communities”. The videos can be shared on social media, or embedded in community presentations to highlight the many ways immigrants contribute to Simcoe County. The video series are available on the County of Simcoe YouTube channel.



Sam Gupta

Sam Gupta moved from New Delhi, India, to Brampton with his family in 2016. He wanted to settle in a city with a strong community, close to nature. He visited Barrie with his family and decided to make Barrie his permanent home in August 2017.

Sam developed connections in the community quickly. He met and volunteered for the South Asian Association of Simcoe County (SAASC), and became a board member in 2018. The association organizes events to celebrate South Asian holidays, and connects with the South Asian community in Simcoe County. Recently, the association raised \$1,200 for Georgian College international students.

In India, Sam was a pharmacist; he owned a pharmacy in New Delhi for six years before moving to Canada. Currently, Sam is pursuing his accreditation with the Ontario College of Pharmacists.

Sam capitalized on the skills he gained running a pharmacy by combining it with his passion for giving “new life to old objects” to open a franchise, New Creations, in Barrie. The company repairs, and restores used or damaged items including automotive interiors, home furniture, flooring, countertops and siding. Sam’s business mission is to reduce and divert unnecessary waste from going into landfills to “keep our planet healthy”.

Paola Osorio Silk

Paola Osorio Silk was born in Querétaro, Mexico. Paola graduated from the University of the Gulf of Mexico before immigrating and settling in Mississauga. After a successful career in the hotel industry, Paola made the life-changing decision to pursue her passion for fashion as a business owner in Simcoe County. She founded an e-commerce store, Shilango, in partnership with talented women from her hometown in Mexico. Her mission is to design and sell ethically sourced, fair trade, handmade, organic fashion pieces that make a positive impact in her hometown, and in Canada.

Paola employs artisans from her hometown and ensures they are paid a fair wage. Shilango products use organic and vegan materials such as hazelnut shells, orange peels, and cantaloupe seeds to create environmentally friendly cultural clothing. Paola has facilitated workshops on environmental sustainability and is always willing to provide advice to newcomers and local entrepreneurs.





Adriana Granes

Adriana Granes moved to Canada in 2013. In her hometown of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Adriana was an accomplished architect and urban planner. She worked for seven years in the education sector and ten years as an architect and urban planner helping developers find appropriate land for construction purposes. She hoped to find a similar position in Canada, but Canadian building codes and regulations are different. Consequently, Adriana needed to become certified in Ontario to be able to practice in her field of expertise.

Adriana found her English communication skills were sufficient for everyday life, but she felt she needed to improve these skills to start her career in Canada. Adriana participated in four sessions of the “Occupation-specific Language Training” (OSLT) program at Georgian College, attaining the necessary level of language comprehension to study the Ontario Building Code.

When Adriana finished her OSLT program, she attended a local job fair and found a summer job in a local greenhouse, Cronos Group. While working in the greenhouse, Adriana applied for an internal AutoCAD analyst position. AutoCAD was the building design software Adriana used in Brazil. Cronos Group was pleased to hire her as they had been looking for a qualified candidate for some time.

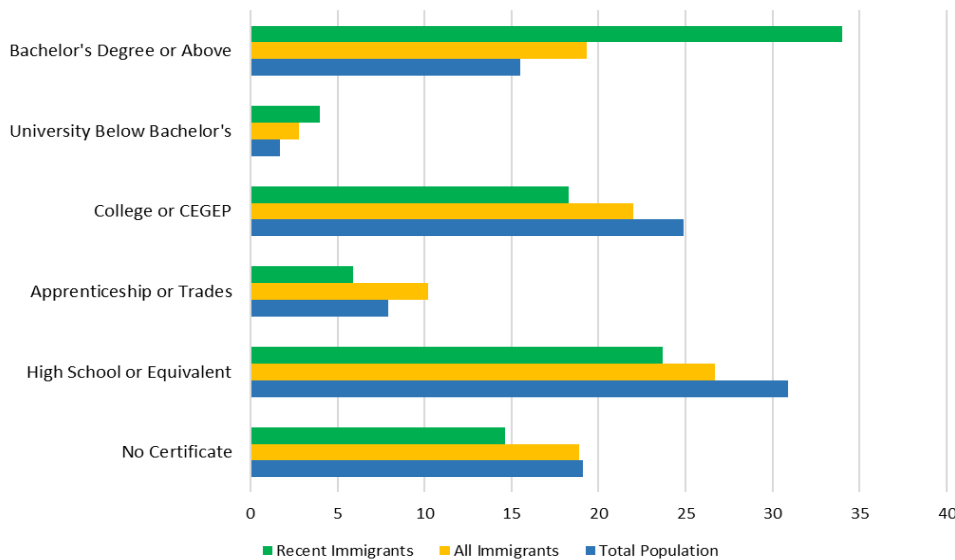
In her current role, Adriana works with teams across her organization on warehouse renovations and new facility design projects. Her experience working in the greenhouse paired with her strong technical skills in architecture allows her to have a complete vision of the production process.

Education

Immigrants contribute positively to our economy. Newcomers’ technical skills, high levels of education and global work experience are assets in our communities. In Simcoe County, recent immigrants are twice as likely to have a university designation compared to the population as a whole.

Figure 9: Simcoe County Highest Level of Education (2016): Immigrants, Recent Immigrants, Total Population

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada



Local Immigration Partnership Council 2020

Co-Chairs

Anita Dubeau
County of Simcoe - County Councillor (Co-Chair)

Andrew Fletcher
South Simcoe Police (Co-Chair)

Community Partners

Tina Christman North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN	Emeka Onuoha Contact South Simcoe – Employment Service: Bradford WORKS
Christine Colcy Barrie Community Health Centre	Leslie Palson Georgian College
Ashley Dunning Ontario Provincial Police	Ian Pavlik pavliks.com
Richard Haggins Credit Canada	Jonathan Rajalingam Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
Gayle Hall County of Simcoe - Library Cooperative	Arunthathy Ratnashingham Welcome Centre Immigrant Services (Social Enterprise for Canada)
Holly Hie Georgian College – Career and Employment Community Services	Shelley Sarin Ethnic Mosaic Alliance
Nancy Huether County of Simcoe - Economic Development Office	Andrew Scavarelli County of Simcoe – Ontario Works
Martin Kuzma Nottawasaga Futures	Heather St. Germain County of Simcoe - Early Learning & Childcare Services
Susan Laycock Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board	Katie Stevenson Lakehead University
Kathryn Manners Child Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County	Irfan Toor Simcoe County District School Board
Jun Maranan Canadian Mental Health Association - York and South Simcoe	Christopher Vanderkruys Barrie Public Library
Janette McGee YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka	Lauren Wild City of Barrie, Mayor's Office
Linda Moorhouse City of Barrie Police Services	Louise Woodrow Barrie Career Centre
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