



SOCIAL PLANNING & PROGRAM SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

150 N. Christina Street
Sarnia, ON N7T 8H3
Telephone: 519 344-2057
Toll Free: 1-800-387-2882
Fax: 519 344-2025
www.lambtononline.ca

Developing Sustainable Solutions for the Attraction and Inclusion of Newcomers to Sarnia-Lambton

Sarnia-Lambton
Local Immigration
Partnership (LIP)

Settlement Strategy

November 2010



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) team wishes to sincerely thank those in the community who shared their time and their thoughts with us this past year. Your contributions to our research have made this initiative a true community effort. We would also like to acknowledge the Sarnia-Lambton LIP Council for their guidance and support throughout this entire process:

Doug Ball - Chair

*Manager of Social Planning and Program Support
County of Lambton*

Abita Okutinyang

Project Management Professional

Ann Marie Cosford

*Manager
Government & Access Programs*

Barbara Milanovic

*Project Officer
Citizenship and Immigration Canada*

Brian DeWagner

*Coordinator
YMCA Yield Program*

Cindy Dubois

*President
Lambton County Human Resource Administrative Services*

Chandrika Patel

*Director of Immigrant Settlement Services
Esso YMCA Learning & Career Centre*

Chris Slade

*Dean of International Education
Lambton College*

Donna Cain

*ISAP, SWIS & JSW Facilitator
Esso YMCA Learning & Career Centre*

Garry McDonald

*General Manager
Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce*

Gigi Walent

*Human Resources Advisor
Worley-Parsons*

Jasmine Lenuzzi

*Director
Learning Visions*

Jennifer Lajoie

*Project Officer - Newcomer Portal
County of Lambton*

Kim Hunt

*Computer Training Coordinator
Lambton College*

Kirsty Pazek

*Project Coordinator
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board*

Marie Watson

*HOST Program Coordinator
Esso YMCA Learning & Career Centre*

Ralph Hare

*Information and Resource Consultant
Employment & Learning Centre, Lambton College*

Rosa Zamudio

*Ontario Works Caseworker
County of Lambton*

Shauna Carr

*Project Coordinator
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board*

Suzanne Quinn

*Settlement Counsellor
Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario*

Ted Zatylny

*Project Leader, New Resident Attraction and
Retention
Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership*

Vicky Ducharme

*Executive Director
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board*

THE SARNIA-LAMBTON LIP TEAM:

Stephanie Ferrera

Project Coordinator

Jeneane Fast

Social Researcher

Dale Mosley

Economic Researcher

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Executive Summary</i>	v
Introduction	v
Research Framework and Key Findings	vi
Sarnia-Lambton LIP Strategies	viii
<i>Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Initiative</i>	1
Background	1
Establishment of the Partnership Council	1
<i>Research Methodology</i>	2
Research Objectives	2
Data Collection	2
Data Analysis	5
Research Challenges	5
<i>Profile of Sarnia-Lambton</i>	6
Regions and Municipalities	6
Demographics	7
Economic Outlook	8
Immigration to Sarnia-Lambton	9
<i>Profile of Immigrants and Newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton</i>	11
Settlement Geographically	11
Time of Immigration	12
Regions of Origin	12
Age	13
Language	13
Education	14
Workforce Involvement	14
Temporary Residents	15
<i>Snapshot of Local Service Provision</i>	16
Availability and Accessibility of Services	17
Languages of Service	17
Services Offered Geographically	17
Sources of Funding	17
Community Capacity	18

<i>Employment and Labour Market Access</i>	<i>18</i>
Bridging the Gap	18
The Conundrum of Canadian Experience	19
Promoting Benefits to Employers	21
Other Barriers to Employment.....	22
Employer Perspectives	23
Suggestions and Recommendations	25
<i>Settlement Issues and Concerns</i>	<i>25</i>
Housing Concerns	26
Transportation	27
Healthcare.....	28
Other Barriers to Settlement	28
Suggestions and Recommendations	29
<i>Language & Communication.....</i>	<i>29</i>
Opportunities for Learning English	29
Translation and Interpretation Services	31
Other Barriers for Language and Communication	32
Suggestions and Recommendations	32
<i>Coordination of Services.....</i>	<i>32</i>
Access to Accurate and Comprehensive Information on Services	33
Utilizing Local Resources.....	34
Suggestions and Recommendations	35
<i>Public Awareness.....</i>	<i>35</i>
Cultural Understanding in the Community	36
Suggestions and Recommendations	37
<i>Sarnia-Lambton Settlement Strategy</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Appendix A</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Appendix B</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>48</i>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

QUICK FACTS

- 14,700 immigrants live in Sarnia-Lambton
- 71% are from European countries
- 61% are over the age of 55
- 69% live in the City of Sarnia
- 1010 immigrants settled in Sarnia-Lambton between 2001-2006
- Common countries of origin for recent immigrants include Columbia, China and India
- 39% of recent immigrants have a university degree compared to 14% of the overall population

Like many small communities across Canada, Sarnia-Lambton is dealing with some very familiar demographic challenges. As the population continues to age, birthrates decrease and youth leave to pursue education and employment opportunities elsewhere, Sarnia-Lambton will soon see the detrimental impacts of this on the local economy and labour market. Within the next 15 years, a large portion of the area's workforce will be set to retire and the local economy is projected to increase by 5000 jobs by 2016. Without a large enough pool of younger workers to replenish it, Sarnia-Lambton will struggle to fulfill its human resource needs.

While immigration is often thought of as a viable solution to lagging population growth, Sarnia-Lambton has had difficulty in attracting and retaining immigrants to the area; between 2001 and 2006 only 1010 immigrants settled in Sarnia-Lambton. This relatively small number reflects an overall decline in immigration over the past 20 years. These challenges put Sarnia-Lambton in a difficult position. However, they also provide this community with an opportunity to come together and ask; how can we create a welcoming, diverse and prosperous Sarnia-Lambton? And what do we need to do to ensure that all members of this community can thrive and grow?

Sarnia-Lambton's Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), a federally funded initiative through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), has enabled these questions to be asked. In its first phase, the Sarnia-Lambton LIP undertook an extensive examination of the community's capacity to assist and support immigrants and newcomers in their social and economic integration. Research was conducted through surveys, consultations, focus groups, and individual interviews to identify the challenges and barriers immigrants and newcomers face when settling in Sarnia-Lambton. The community was also engaged in brainstorming solutions to these challenges.

The resulting Settlement Strategy is a coordinated and comprehensive plan to move Sarnia-Lambton towards becoming a thriving and prosperous community that values diversity and innovation. Far from being a standalone document, the Strategy is meant to provide a solid foundation for current and future community planning and economic

Sarnia-Lambton's population could shrink as much as 13% over the next two decades. The decline can be attributed to an aging population, out-migration of youth and low birthrate.

County of Lambton Planning & Development Services Department. (2010). *Population: Summary of Trends & Projections Census Years 2006 to 2031*, p.18.

development initiatives. In particular, the strategy acts as a complement to the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's resident attraction strategy and the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board's community workforce plan. Together, these plans can not only strengthen the local economy by meeting local labour needs, bringing entrepreneurial talent, and offsetting demographic decline, but they also play a part in continuing to build a healthy, strong and thriving community.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND KEY FINDINGS

Community stakeholders identified the following five areas of focus as key priorities for immigrant and newcomer settlement and integration. These areas provided the framework for the subsequent research:

- **Employment:** improving local labour market access for immigrants and newcomers
- **Settlement:** improving access to effective services and supports that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration
- **Language & Communication:** improving community capacity for language training and translation services
- **Coordination of Services:** creating comprehensive and effective service provision for immigrants and newcomers
- **Public Awareness:** ensuring that Sarnia-Lambton is a welcoming place for immigrants and newcomers

The LIP research indicates that Sarnia-Lambton faces some challenges in providing services and supports to immigrants and newcomers. The following are the project's key findings:

- **Employment and Labour Market Access:** Immigrant and newcomer participants identified finding employment as the greatest roadblock in their settlement process. Three barriers in particular arose repeatedly: 1. Their lack of Canadian work experience, 2. Their inability to promote themselves and the benefits they bring to local employers, and 3. The lack of immigrant-specific job search assistance available in Sarnia-Lambton. Employers identified a lack of knowledge of the Canadian work environment and difficulties with language and communication as challenges for them when hiring and retaining immigrant employees.
- **Settlement Issues and Concerns:** The settlement barriers that were most often cited by immigrants and newcomers were housing, transportation and healthcare. Their frustrations were not predominantly with the specific services (i.e. lack of affordable housing, low calibre of healthcare) but with the lack of assistance or guidance in navigating these services. Isolation in general and the

inability to fully engage in the community, along with the lack of social and recreational opportunities for immigrant children and youth were also cited as significant challenges for participants.

- **Language and Communication:** Most newcomers spoke very highly of the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses currently available in Sarnia-Lambton but expressed frustration with the lack of variety or diversity in language training opportunities (i.e. conversational English, occupation-specific and higher-level language training). In addition, many service providers stated the lack of local professional interpretation services in the area posed significant difficulties for them in providing their services to immigrant and newcomer clients.
- **Coordination of Services:** The largest challenge cited in service provision was access to accurate and comprehensive information on services. This was voiced by all participants; newcomers and immigrants, employers and service providers. Furthermore, the lack of available services through the entire County (i.e. in the rural areas outside of Sarnia) was mentioned. In addition, because of the area's relatively low population of immigrants and newcomers, participants expressed the need to pool resources together and better utilize regional resources to provide the best services possible.
- **Public Awareness:** While issues of prejudice and discrimination were mentioned as challenges in the community, participants more often identified a general lack of understanding of immigrants and newcomers; where they are from, the processes they go through to come to Canada, and the difficulties they face in settling in the community. Although most participants felt that Sarnia-Lambton was a friendly place, many nevertheless voiced the need to make the community more welcoming and culturally aware. For service providers, this meant learning to be more culturally competent in their organizations in order to provide respectful and appropriate services to immigrants and newcomers.

SARNIA-LAMBTON LIP STRATEGIES

In light of these key findings, and through further consultation with the community, the following 12 strategies, organized under the five priority areas of focus, are the foundation of Sarnia-Lambton LIP's recommended Settlement Strategy.

EMPLOYMENT	SETTLEMENT	LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION	COORDINATION OF SERVICES	PUBLIC AWARENESS
<p>1. Increase networking opportunities between employers and newcomers and immigrants</p> <p>2. Provide opportunities for gaining Canadian work experience relevant to profession and career aspirations</p> <p>3. Provide enhanced immigrant and newcomer-specific job search assistance</p>	<p>4. Increase and promote opportunities to engage immigrants and newcomers in the community</p> <p>5. Increase and promote opportunities for immigrant and newcomer children and youth in the community</p>	<p>6. Create more diverse opportunities for language learning (ESL, ELT, Occupation-Specific)</p> <p>7. Increase community capacity for translation and interpretation services</p>	<p>8. Provide a 'point of contact' to advocate for and address concerns/questions regarding immigrant and newcomer issues</p> <p>9. Create opportunities for local and regional partnerships to utilize current resources more effectively</p> <p>10. Facilitate effective governance and implementation of LIP strategies with County of Lambton as lead</p>	<p>11. Promote public awareness of newcomer and immigrant issues through media campaigns and community events</p> <p>12. Design comprehensive marketing strategy for current, enhanced, and upcoming services</p>

LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (LIP) INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND

The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is an Ontario-wide initiative funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), in cooperation with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). Its purpose is to help communities across the province put immigration on their planning and programming agendas. It also offers a chance for smaller municipalities – like Sarnia-Lambton – to explore the benefits, both socially and economically, of welcoming immigrants and newcomers into their communities.

In September 2009, the Corporation of the County of Lambton signed an agreement with CIC to lead the Sarnia-Lambton LIP. In its first phase, this project undertook a comprehensive investigation of current supports and services for immigrants and newcomers in the community, the gaps in these services and supports, and the barriers and challenges that immigrants and newcomers continue to face when settling in Sarnia-Lambton. This community-based research effort has



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

provided a solid foundation for future programming and ongoing community development. The resulting Settlement Strategy thus aims to:

- Improve access to effective services that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration
- Improve access to the labour market for immigrants and newcomers
- Educate non-settlement service providers and the community in order to inspire greater understanding of the economic and social needs of immigrants and newcomers
- Complement existing economic development strategies that support the attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

The Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership Council was officially established by January 2010. It brought a cross-section of stakeholders together, including service providers from the settlement, education, economic development, social service and employment service sectors of the community, as

well as representatives from business and newcomers themselves. In the first phase of the project, this Council maintained a predominantly advisory role, providing guidance to the staff of three tasked with conducting the research.

In the second phase of the project, this Partnership Council will continue to provide a venue for open and creative discussions about immigrant and newcomer related issues and will oversee the implementation of the strategies laid out at the end of this report. The Council will continue to facilitate ongoing partnerships and collaborative efforts within the community which will lead to more effective and coordinated supports and services for immigrants and newcomers and will utilize and build upon the resources currently available in Sarnia-Lambton.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Sarnia-Lambton LIP included the following research objectives:

- To provide a profile of the immigrant and newcomer population in Sarnia-Lambton
- To provide a comprehensive inventory of current services and supports
- To identify gaps in service and barriers faced by immigrants and newcomers
- To provide recommendations in overcoming these barriers and challenges

In order to complete these objectives, the research followed a community-based approach that involved relevant stakeholders in the research and strategic planning process. The three broad groups of stakeholders were service providers (both settlement and mainstream organizations), employers, and newcomers and immigrants.¹ Therefore, data collection and analysis were conducted using a variety of methods.

DATA COLLECTION

Statistical Information

Statistical and background information was important in order to put Sarnia-Lambton in a broader national, provincial and regional context. Secondary data, therefore, was collected through Statistics Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ministry of Citizenship and

¹ For the purposes of this project, the term *immigrant* refers to any individual who is not Canadian-born. This includes, but is not limited to, Canadian Citizens, Permanent Residents and Temporary Residents. The term *newcomer* refers to an immigrant who has come to Canada within the last 10 years.

Immigration. Local statistics on immigration trends and on immigrants and newcomers were gathered from the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB), the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP), the Settlement Services at the Esso YMCA Learning & Career Centre and the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO).

Community Strategy Meeting

A community strategy meeting was held in February 2010 to introduce the project, its objectives and structure, and to obtain feedback from community members about priority areas of focus for the subsequent research. Attendees also provided a preliminary inventory of services for immigrants and newcomers already in existence in the community.

The meeting was attended by over 80 individuals representing the business, education, government, non-profit, social service, and ethnic/religious sectors of Sarnia-Lambton. Community feedback from this day indicated that the research needed to focus on the following areas:

- **Employment:** improving local labour market access for immigrants and newcomers
- **Settlement:** improving access to effective services and supports that facilitate immigrant settlement and integration
- **Language & Communication:** improving community capacity for language training and translation services
- **Coordination of Services:** creating comprehensive and effective service provision for immigrants and newcomers
- **Public Awareness:** ensuring that Sarnia-Lambton is a welcoming place for immigrants and newcomers

These areas of focus helped to direct the collection of data through surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Surveys

Service Provider Survey

In March 2010, the LIP Service Provider Survey was distributed. Its purpose was to provide a more in-depth inventory of current services and supports for immigrants and newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton and also to gain a better understanding of this community's capacity for delivering such services. Because Sarnia-Lambton has a relatively low population of immigrants and newcomers and only two settlement service organizations, the survey was sent out to over 100 local service providers from a diverse cross-section of sectors. In total, 54 surveys were completed and returned.

Newcomer Talent Survey for Employers

In April 2010, the Newcomer Talent Survey for Employers was developed and distributed in order to obtain local employers' perspectives on the hiring and retention of immigrants and newcomers. To reach a broad spectrum of employers, from large corporations to small businesses, the survey was circulated through the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce, the Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) and the Human Resources Professionals Association of Sarnia and District (HRPA). In total, 26 surveys were completed and returned.

Focus Groups

Through April and May 2010, focus groups were held to investigate the barriers and gaps in services



Jim Vergunst, Newcomer Portal

and supports for immigrants and newcomers and to provide suggestions and recommendations for improved service delivery. These focus groups were audio recorded and later transcribed by the research team members who adhered to the County of Lambton's confidentiality and information storage policies. In total 14 focus groups and two interviews were conducted with 90 individuals; 35 service providers, 40 immigrants and newcomers (including ESL students,

international students, and internationally-trained professionals) and 15 employers.

'Global Talent' Interviews

In January and February 2010, the Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB), with funding from the provincial government, conducted interviews with local employers and immigrant employees in order to produce a publication about hiring and retaining international talent in Sarnia-Lambton.² A LIP staff member helped facilitate these interviews, which were also audio recorded and transcribed. In total, eight local employers representing small, medium and large-sized businesses as well as eight immigrant employees from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds were interviewed.

Community Consultation Meeting

On September 15th, a final community meeting was held in order to review the findings of the research and to highlight the strategies that are outlined at the end of this report. Just over 50 individuals

² Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Global Talent: Hiring Immigrants Makes Good Business Sense*.

attended the meeting and offered feedback through small group discussions. Their feedback provides a solid foundation for the implementation of these strategies and their subsequent action steps in the second phase of the LIP initiative.

DATA ANALYSIS

The results of both surveys were compiled and distributed to the LIP Council for feedback. The focus group and Global Talent transcriptions were analyzed by the social and economic researchers separately in order to highlight emerging themes according to the five identified areas of focus. These findings were then compared and relevant quotes were extracted and divided into further sub-themes.

In mid-July, small-group brainstorming sessions were organized for LIP Council members. The purpose of these sessions was to utilize Council member expertise in order to synthesize survey results with focus group data (i.e. compare what the community has with what it needs), prioritize key recommendations for the Settlement Strategy, and discuss the feasibility of such recommendations, keeping issues such as funding sources, potential partnerships and timelines in mind.

RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Despite very enthusiastic participation from most of the Sarnia-Lambton community, the research team nevertheless faced some challenges in the data collection process.

The largest challenge involved the difficulty in engaging the more rural areas of Sarnia-Lambton. Attempts were made to reach out to the smaller communities in the County. This was done through letters and phone calls to all 11 of the municipal offices in Lambton County. However, although interest in the project was certainly expressed by those individuals contacted, the team was unable to conduct any formal interviews or focus groups within those rural areas. Fortunately, because many of the service providers located in Sarnia offer services throughout the County, the Service Provider Survey provided some insight into what is offered and for whom in general. This information notwithstanding, a gap remains in this research as to the perspective of those living in the rural areas of Lambton County.

Employers were another group of stakeholders that proved challenging to engage in the process. While employer perspectives are definitely represented in this report, a larger sample that included a more accurate cross-section of Sarnia-Lambton's business sector would undoubtedly have augmented the results of the research.

Finally, for statistical information on immigration trends and the demographic profile of immigrants and newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton, the research team had to rely on Census data that was collected in 2006. Furthermore, because of its size, even small shifts in numbers can have a large impact on the

community. Therefore, the information gathered does not necessarily reflect the Sarnia-Lambton of 2010, leaving the profile somewhat incomplete.

PROFILE OF SARNIA-LAMBTON

Sarnia-Lambton is located on the Ontario-Michigan border on the Southern tip of Lake Huron at the mouth of the St. Clair River. It is home to over 128, 000 residents and covers over 1800 square kilometers. Sarnia-Lambton relies heavily on the petrochemical, agriculture and tourism sectors for its economic stability. However, the area is also actively working to diversify its economy with a particular focus in the alternative energy, cleantech and industrial bioproduct sectors.



REGIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES

The municipality encompasses both urban and rural areas and is made up of cities, towns, villages and farmland, not to mention beaches and green spaces such as conservation areas and a provincial park. Sarnia-Lambton is broken down into 11 municipalities and three First Nations Communities:

- Township of Brooke-Alvinston
- Township of Dawn-Euphemia
- Township of Enniskillen
- Municipality of Lambton Shores
- Village of Oil Springs
- Town of Petrolia
- Town of Plympton-Wyoming
- Village of Point Edward
- City of Sarnia
- Township of St. Clair
- Township of Warwick
- Chippewas of Kettle and Stoney Point First Nations
- Aamjiwnaang First Nations
- Walpole Island First Nations

DEMOGRAPHICS³

Sarnia-Lambton is currently going through a demographic shift; as communities in Ontario continue

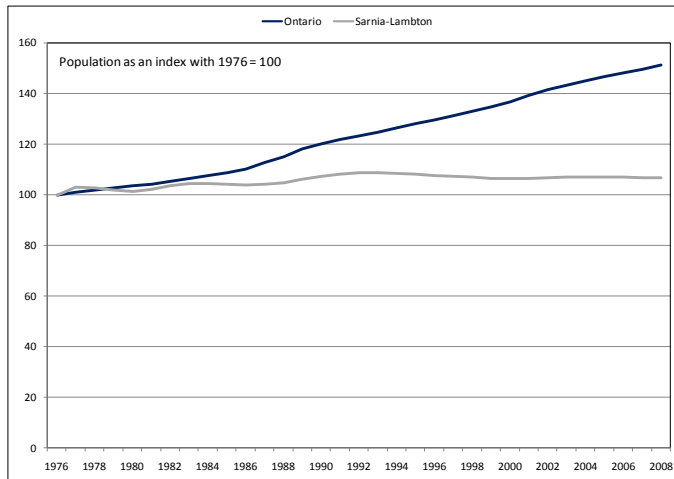


Figure 1: Population growth in Sarnia Lambton and Ontario
Source: Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board

to grow, this area's population remains stagnant. Sarnia-Lambton's population has grown by only 6.3% since 1976, whereas Ontario's population grew by 51% over the same time period (see Figure 1).

A report released by the County of Lambton entitled *Population: Summary Trends & Projections, Census Years 2006 to 2031* analyzes trends in the last three census periods to predict what the population will be by 2031. According to the report, the population in Sarnia-Lambton could shrink as much as 13%

over the next two decades, dropping from 128,205 (2006 census) to 111,317 by 2031.⁴ This decline can be attributed to three general demographic trends: an aging population, the out-migration of youth, and a low birthrate.

Aging Population

As with many communities, the population of Sarnia-Lambton is getting older. In 2006, the median age in Sarnia-Lambton was almost 43, four years higher than the provincial norm. In 2001, 15% of Sarnia-Lambton residents were 65 years and older. In 2006, this number rose to 16.9%. This increase, in just a five-year span, is in sharp contrast to the province where 13.6% of the total population was

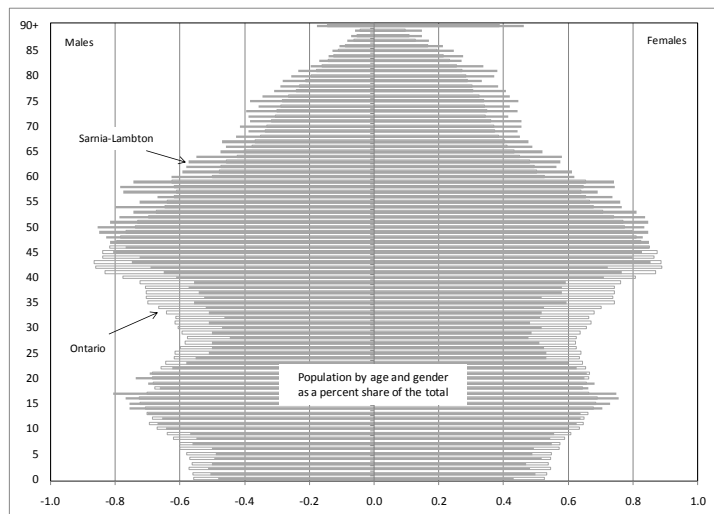


Figure 2: Age of Population in Sarnia-Lambton Compared to Ontario in 2006

Source: Sarnia-Lambton's Workforce Development Board

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all statistical information about Sarnia-Lambton's demographics comes from Statistics Canada's 2006 Census data.

⁴ County of Lambton Planning & Development Services Department. (2010). *Population: Summary of Trends & Projections Census Years 2006 to 2031*, p. 18.

over the age of 65. Figure 2 shows this community's over-representation of people 50 and older in comparison to the province.

Out-Migration of Youth

Figure 2 also shows that Sarnia-Lambton has an over-representation of youth ages 13 to 21. However, 24% of the youth population migrated out of the area in 2006. Since Sarnia-Lambton does not have a university, this out-migration can presumably be attributed to the desire to attain a post-secondary education and is troubling in and of itself. However, data also shows that very few youth return after completing their education. The aforementioned population study has found that throughout most of Lambton County, the number of people in their 20s has steadily decreased at an approximate rate of 15-25% from one census to another.⁵

Low Birthrate

Another factor contributing to this region's stagnating population is this region's low birthrates. In 2001, Sarnia-Lambton's population aged 0-15 represented 19% of the population. In 2006, the population under the age of 15 decreased to 16.9%. This decrease in the birthrate is 9.3% more than the province over the same time period. Despite these declining numbers, two recent reports suggest that birthrates have started to stabilize locally, becoming more proportionate to the provincial rate, and are projected to hold steady in the coming years.⁶ Even if this is the case, however, birthrates in the area will continue to be too low to counteract the other two demographic challenges facing Sarnia-Lambton.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

These three factors of an aging population, the out-migration of youth and a low birthrate have significant and troubling consequences for the area's workforce. As with the general population, employees over the age of 50 are over-represented in Sarnia-Lambton⁷. Within the next 15 years, these individuals will be set to retire leaving many positions open. Unfortunately, due to low birthrates and the challenge of retaining youth, maintaining and replenishing an active and adequate local labour force may pose quite a challenge for this community.

Labour Market Partnership Project (LMPP)

The Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board has responded to this problematic demographic shift and strain on the local labour market by spearheading a community-driven research initiative called

⁵ County of Lambton Planning & Development Services Department. (2010). *Population: Summary of Trends & Projections Census Years 2006 to 2031*, p. 3.

⁶Ibid, p.16.; County of Lambton Community Health Services Department Health Promotion & Program Support. (2007). *Lambton County 2007Health Status Report: Reproductive Health*, pp. 2-3.

⁷ Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2009). *Trends Opportunities Priorities: TOP Report*, p. 5.

the Labour Market Partnership Project (LMPP). The resulting report, *Sarnia Lambton's Labour Market: Where our talent works today and where it will work tomorrow*, is an in-depth analysis of the community's current and projected labour market needs. According to the report, employment has and will continue to decline in the petrochemical and power generation industries (sectors that Sarnia-Lambton has historically relied heavily upon for its economic growth). However, current baseline projections nevertheless indicate that area jobs will increase from 53,515 in 2006 to 58,200 in 2016. This is a 0.9% growth rate over a 10-year period.⁸ This increase of nearly 5000 jobs is projected to occur predominantly in the fields of education, healthcare, social assistance, and administration in reaction to the increased social demand of an aging population.⁹

Workforce 2020: Sarnia Lambton's Workforce Action Plan, a complementary document to the report, identifies three areas of priority to guide the community in ensuring that its talent pool can meet this projected increase in jobs effectively. These areas of priority are entrepreneurship, strengthening a quality workforce, and increased economic diversity. These areas are further divided into six strategies that include general action steps for their implementation.

Attracting and retaining newcomers and immigrants to Sarnia-Lambton is an important component of Workforce 2020, which recognizes the fundamental role they will play in the workforce of the future. In particular, the project's third and sixth strategies recommend promoting and marketing local career and educational opportunities internationally in order to draw skilled talent from abroad. Indeed, tapping into this pool of 'global talent' complements all three priority areas; over 57% of recent immigrants to Canada are of prime working age (25-54), and 83% are from the economic and family immigration classes and more than twice as likely to have a university education than an individual born in Canada.¹⁰ Many new immigrants, therefore, are highly skilled and educated; they have experience working in different and diversified economies; and they bring with them innovative and creative perspectives, a good combination for an entrepreneurial mindset.

IMMIGRATION TO SARNIA-LAMBTON

While immigration may be a very viable strategy to help address this demographic shift and the projected increase in labour market demand, Sarnia-Lambton has had difficulty attracting new Canadians to the area and immigration has been little more than a slow trickle since the 1990s.

⁸ Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Sarnia Lambton's Labour Market: A data-driven report on where our talent works today and where it will work tomorrow*, p. 2.

⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁰ Conference Board of Canada. (2009). *Immigrant Friendly Communities: Making Immigration Work for Employers and Other Stakeholders in Small-Town Canada*, p. 3.

Comparison to National and Provincial Trends

Between 2001 and 2006, almost 1.1 million immigrants arrived in Canada with just over 52% settling in Ontario, predominantly (77%) in the Greater Toronto Area. In the same five year span, Sarnia-Lambton welcomed 1010 immigrants; this is just 0.8% of the total population of Sarnia-Lambton and 7% of the area's immigrant population. Figure 3 illustrates how the number of immigrants in Sarnia-

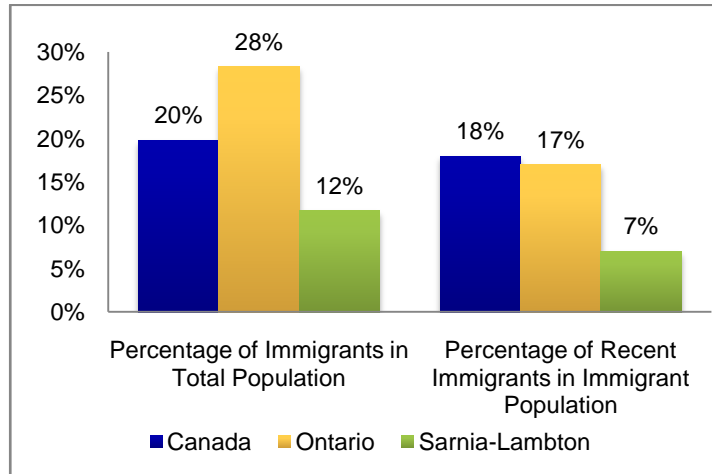


Figure 3: Comparison of Sarnia-Lambton with Federal and Provincial Immigrant Populations

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Lambton's total population and the number of recent immigrants in the immigrant population are well below both the national and provincial percentages.

Furthermore, the number of immigrants settling in the area has been declining steadily for the past

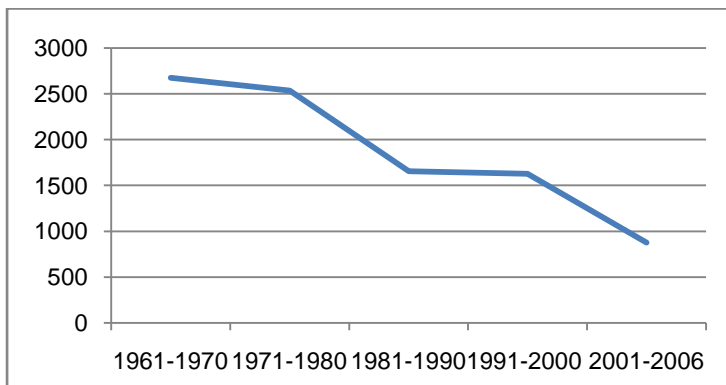


Figure 4: Sarnia-Lambton Immigrant Population by Municipality

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

20 years. As seen in Figure 4, immigration to the area has slowly decreased over the past 40 years.

Attracting Newcomers to Sarnia-Lambton

Despite these low immigration numbers, Sarnia-Lambton is currently working on some initiatives to attract newcomers to the area.

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic

Partnership (SLEP) has developed the SEER Strategy as a way to attract and retain new residents to the area. The strategy focuses on the attraction of people from four main categories: students, employees, entrepreneurs, and retirees. Although intended for attracting any new resident to Sarnia-Lambton, the strategy has the necessary elements in place to attract immigrants and new Canadians within the four main target groups. For example, as part of the SEER Strategy, SLEP has spearheaded some initiatives to recruit and support internationally trained engineers for Sarnia-Lambton's petrochemical industry.

Another significant initiative to attract newcomers to Sarnia-Lambton is this region's immigration portal, www.liveinlambton.ca. Developed and launched by the County of Lambton in 2007, the website

provides a point of contact for immigrants and newcomers settling in the area. The site offers information on living and working in Sarnia-Lambton and includes a calendar of local events and a job board. As part of its development, the immigration portal has also implemented a marketing plan to draw newcomers from larger urban areas and promote Sarnia-Lambton in media geared to immigrants and new Canadians.

PROFILE OF IMMIGRANTS AND NEWCOMERS IN SARNIA-LAMBTON

SETTLEMENT GEOGRAPHICALLY

According to the 2006 Census, 14,700 immigrants live in Sarnia-Lambton.¹¹ Out of this number, 69% have continued the national and provincial trends of settling in urban areas by living in the City of Sarnia (Figure 5). The remaining immigrants are spread throughout the small towns and rural areas of the county. The second largest immigrant population after the City of Sarnia is in Lambton Shores (8%), followed by St. Clair Township (7%) and Plympton-Wyoming (6%). The remaining municipalities have a population under 3%.¹²

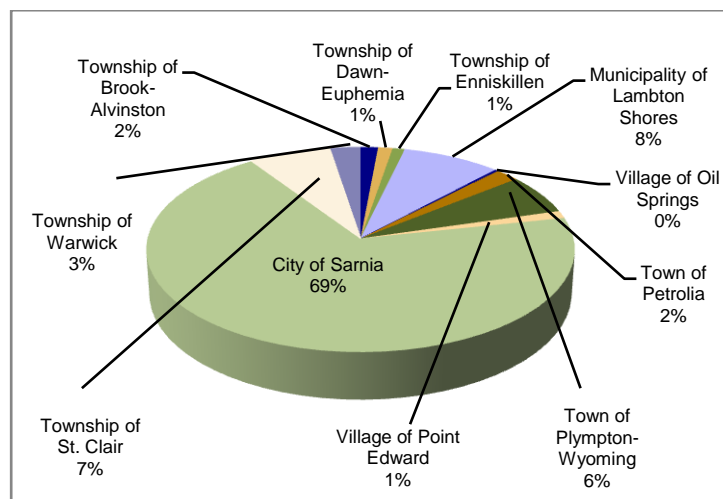


Figure 5: Immigration to Sarnia-Lambton
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

¹¹ While this project has maintained a broad definition of immigrants and newcomers (see footnote 1), please note the number 14,700 (along with all other statistics in this section of the report) refer only to Permanent Residents. Information regarding Temporary Residents (in particular foreign workers and international students) is included separately at the end of this section on page 15.

¹² Data on immigrant populations in the three First Nations communities was unavailable.

TIME OF IMMIGRATION

The small percentage of newcomers moving to Sarnia-Lambton illustrates that most of the immigrant population is very well established. The community trend of an aging population is consistent with the

	Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2006	Total
Lambton	5,195	2,675	2,535	1,655	750	875	1,010	14,700
Sarnia	3,205	1,950	1,780	1,170	575	550	735	9,970
St.Clair Township	345	205	220	105	20	45	75	1,025
Dawn-Euphemia	75	0	15	30	15	15	10	170
Brooke-Alvinston	65	40	35	30	30	0	0	205
Enniskillen	65	10	10	30	0	10	15	145
Oil Springs	20	15	10	0	0	0	0	45
Petrolia	120	20	40	50	20	10	40	305
Point Edward	100	10	30	10	0	25	0	170
Plympton-Wyoming	405	145	155	70	25	65	40	910
Lambton Shores	635	225	165	80	15	55	40	1220
Warwick	135	25	35	35	35	75	25	370

Table 1: Total of immigrant population by Period of Arrival
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

immigrant population as most (35%) immigrants arrived before 1961. As seen in Table 1, there is a large dip in the number of immigrants arriving after 1991 and only 18% of

immigrants have settled in the area in the last 20 years. This correlates with the limited population growth over the same time period. In addition, immigration to rural Lambton County has been dwindling as only 180 newcomers settled within the small towns and agricultural areas; St. Clair Township has seen the most immigration growth from 2001 to 2006. Brooke-Alvinston, Oil Springs and Point Edward, on the other hand, have had no immigrant settlement over the same time span.

REGIONS OF ORIGIN

As stated before, most immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton are well established and came from those areas that have historically been the main source of immigrants to Canada, namely countries in Europe. The region of Northern Europe encompasses the most (31%) of the immigrant population with the majority coming from the United Kingdom. Immigrants from Western Europe (21%) have the second largest population with the majority coming from Poland and Germany. Southern Europe (11%), including Italy and Portugal, also has a large community within

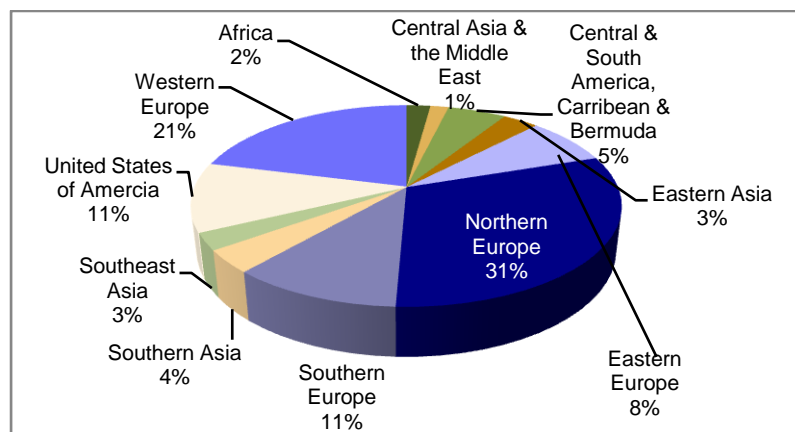


Figure 6: Sarnia-Lambton Immigrant Population by Region of Origin
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

and Germany. Southern Europe (11%), including Italy and Portugal, also has a large community within

Sarnia-Lambton. Due to the close proximity to the United States, a large immigrant population has developed in the area from across the border.

Recent immigrants, however, are coming to Sarnia-Lambton from different parts of the world than earlier waves of immigration. Out of the 1010 immigrants that arrived between 2001 and 2006, the top three countries of origin were India, the United States of America and Colombia.¹³ Furthermore, according to local settlement agencies, recent arrivals that accessed their services in 2008 and 2009 are from such areas as South America, China and India.¹⁴

AGE

The majority (61%) of the immigrant population in Sarnia-Lambton is over the age of 55 whereas only two percent of the population is under the age of 15. This shows that the immigrant population is in

Age Group	Lambton County			Sarnia		
	Total Pop.	Immigrant Pop.	%	Total Pop.	Immigrant pop.	%
Under 15 years	21710	450	2	11375	235	2
15-24	17305	555	3.2	9885	355	3.6
25-34	12910	745	5.7	7345	515	7
35-44	16570	1595	9.6	9080	1165	12.8
45-54	20875	2305	11	11700	1625	13.9
55-64	16880	3605	21	9135	2350	25.7
65-74	10980	2755	25	6175	1840	29.7
75 +	9305	2685	28.9	5630	1885	33.4

Table 2: Immigrant Population Age Grouping
Source: Statistic Canada Census 2006

line with the community's overall population and demographic trends of an aging population and a low birthrate. In addition, contributing to the lack of population growth, only 26% of the immigrant population is within the prime working age

cohort (24-52) and only 11% of the immigrant population is under the age of 34. Table 2 shows the age groups of the total population and the immigrant population in both Lambton County and the City of Sarnia.

LANGUAGE

One of the most important aspects of community settlement is knowledge of the local language. Language attainment is key to the social and economic independence of new Canadians. In Sarnia-Lambton, out of the 128, 205 residents, only 265 reported being able to speak neither one of the official languages, English or French.

¹³ Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Global Talent: Hiring Immigrants Makes Good Business Sense*, p. 9.

¹⁴ As part of the LIP's assessment of the area's capacity for immigrant service provision, immigrant-serving agencies completed a demographic survey of their clients.

Table 3 shows the top ten languages spoken most often at home with European languages being the most prominent, occupying seven of the ten languages. The table shows that a large number of German and Dutch speaking immigrants live in the rural and agricultural areas of the county while Italian, Greek and Chinese speaking residents live almost exclusively within the City of Sarnia.

	Lambton County	Sarnia
Italian	305	300
Portuguese	295	255
German	275	75
Polish	245	230
Chinese	230	230
Dutch	175	30
Spanish	165	150
Gujarati	145	130
Greek	135	135
Arabic	70	60

Table 3: Language spoken most frequently at home
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 census

EDUCATION

Education levels among immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton are fairly equal between each category, hovering around the 20% mark. In addition, the levels of education attained by immigrants are fairly

	Immigrants	%
No Certificate, Diploma, Degree	2110	19
High School Certificate or equivalent	2580	24
Apprentice, trade certificate or diploma	1545	14
College, GEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	2170	20
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	560	5
University certificate or diploma	1915	18

Table 4: Level of Immigrant Education Attainment in Sarnia-Lambton in 2006

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census Data

consistent with that of the overall population. Since, as has already been noted, the immigrant population is older and well established, this can likely be attributed to the fact that education and employment attainment were not as tightly connected in earlier waves of

immigration as they are today. Table 4 illustrates the total number of immigrants and their educational attainment as of 2006.

Recent immigrants, on the other hand, are coming with higher levels of education. According to Statistics Canada, 39% of newcomers to Sarnia-Lambton have a University education. By comparison, the education level in the overall population is just under 14% for a university certificate, diploma, or degree.

WORKFORCE INVOLVEMENT

According to the 2006 census, the unemployment rate among immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton was 4%, with just over 87% participating in the workforce. The overall unemployment rate in Sarnia-Lambton at that time was 6.5%. At present, and with the area's recent economic downturn, the overall unemployment rate has jumped to 9.8%. While no specific data is available, it would be unsurprising to see a similar spike in unemployment among immigrants in the community as well.

Among recent immigrants arriving between 2001 and 2006, 85.7% were able to find employment with a modest unemployment rate of 7.4%. Historically immigrants in Sarnia-Lambton have had success in finding employment and being able to economically integrate into the community. In light of Sarnia-Lambton's projected labour force demand due to retirement and growth, this is an encouraging trend. Table 5 shows the labour force activity of all immigrants and recent immigrants within Sarnia-Lambton.

	Total-immigrants	2001-2006
Total - Labour Force Activity	7635	735
In the labour force	6935	675
Employed	6660	630
Unemployed	275	50
Not in the labour force	700	60
Participation Rate %	90.8	91.8
Employment Rate %	87.2	85.7
Unemployment Rate %	4	7.4

Table 5: Immigrant Labour Market Participation Sarnia-Lambton
Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census Data

TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

While the aforementioned statistics only take into account immigrants with permanent status (either Permanent Residents or Canadian Citizens), Sarnia-Lambton also provides a temporary home to immigrants of other statuses, namely international students and temporary foreign workers. While these individuals may not remain in Canada over the long term, they nevertheless contribute to the Sarnia-Lambton community. Their needs and perspectives are also vital to a comprehensive settlement plan and individuals from these categories are, therefore, included in this report.

International Students

International education is a growing business in Canada. In 2008, Canada welcomed 178,227 students that contributed \$5.5 billion to the Country's economy.¹⁵ Sarnia-Lambton has also discovered the benefits of hosting international students at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education levels. In the 2009/2010 school year, Lambton College enrolled 115 international students, most arriving through school partnerships in China. This year Lambton College's international student enrolment increased to 250 students. This increase is mainly due to Lambton College's active recruitment in India. At the elementary and secondary school level, the Lambton-Kent District School Board (LKDSB) welcomed 80 international students in its previous school year (2009/2010). In the 2010/2011 school year, enrolment has decreased to 30 students due to the downturn in the economy and higher tuition fees.

¹⁵ Rosalyn Kunin & Associates, Inc. (2009). *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada*, p. 10.

Temporary workers

Temporary workers are admitted into Canada to address specific labour shortages that are not or cannot be filled by Canadians. Every year, over 150 000 temporary workers enter Canada.¹⁶ In Sarnia-



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

Lambton, temporary workers fill positions in agriculture as farm hands, harvest labourers, and nursery workers. Temporary workers are also employed as nannies or parent helpers. These workers come from a wide variety of countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, and Caribbean countries and enter Canada through programs such as the Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP), the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), and

the Live-In Caregiver Program. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), there were approximately 285 temporary foreign workers in Sarnia-Lambton in 2008.¹⁷ However, this is difficult to determine because the reporting requirements for these programs are not always consistent or regulated.

SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION

With Sarnia-Lambton's immigrant population hovering just below 12% and the recent immigrant population comprising only 7% of that, it is unsurprising that the community has only two local settlement service providers. Together, these two organizations offer federally and provincially funded services to newcomers in both English and French.¹⁸

While these might be the only two organizations that receive government funding to provide settlement services, the broader Sarnia-Lambton community also has a role to play in immigrant and newcomer settlement. For this reason, a cross-section of service providers were surveyed including those from the following sectors; children and youth services, counselling services, education, employment and economic development, healthcare, housing and transition services, immigrant services, information and referral services, religious/ethnic organizations, safety, protection and justice services and services for persons with disabilities. While by no means complete (having a response rate of 50%), the LIP Service

¹⁶ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, retrieved from website, www.cic.gc.ca, September 1, 2010.

¹⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Facts and Figures Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*, p. 64.

¹⁸ For full inventory of immigrant-specific services and supports, please see Appendix A.

Provider Survey nevertheless offers a more comprehensive snapshot of this community's capacity to serve the immigrant and newcomer population.

AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES

The majority of service providers who completed the survey responded that immigrants and newcomers accessed their services (87%). However, most (73%) estimated that no more than 10% of their clientele consisted of immigrants and newcomers, which is in line with Sarnia-Lambton's overall immigrant population. Furthermore, only 26% of service providers responded that they had services specifically designed for immigrants and newcomers.

LANGUAGES OF SERVICE

The majority of service providers in the community offer their services in English (93%) while 13% stated that they provide services in French. A further 30% stated that they could provide services in other languages including Spanish, Mandarin, Italian, African dialects, Greek, Burmese, Sign Language, Gujarati and Hindi. However, often these languages could only be provided through staff multilingualism or the hiring of an interpreter, neither of which offered consistent and timely service in those languages.

SERVICES OFFERED GEOGRAPHICALLY

Given that over half of the population of the County of Lambton (and almost 70% of the immigrant population) is concentrated in the city of Sarnia, it is unsurprising that the majority of overall service provision takes place there. 91% of respondents stated that more than half of their services are provided in Sarnia, 23% stating that their services are provided exclusively in the city. Furthermore, of those service providers that do offer services throughout the rest of the County, the majority stated that they offer 5% or less outside Sarnia.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments provided a significant portion of funding for service providers in the community, the largest contributor being the Government of Ontario (61%), followed by the County of Lambton (24%) and then the Government of Canada (15%). Aside from government funding, service providers also received revenue from the following sources: charity and community foundations, private donations, fundraising, event and program fees, membership fees, and tuition.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

These survey results suggest that service provision to immigrants and newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton faces some challenges, most notably, the lack of availability of immigrant-specific and multilingual services, and the low penetration of services into rural areas of the County. The following section corroborates and expands upon these and other challenges by providing an overview of the research findings that came out of the focus group discussions.



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET ACCESS

Access to the labour market is one of the most prominent concerns for new immigrants to Canada. Much research has been undertaken to examine this issue¹⁹ and labour market access is one of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC) key outcomes in its recently revised funding structure for settlement service providers. Unsurprisingly, Sarnia-Lambton's LIP research reveals the same; that the ability to find employment is the largest and most challenging barrier for newcomers to the area.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Many of the focus group participants, and especially those newcomers who entered Canada as economic immigrants, identified an inability to find employment as the greatest roadblock in the

¹⁹ Grant, T. and Yang, J. (July 24, 2009) "Immigrants Take Brunt of Recession, Recover Less Quickly." Toronto: Globe and Mail; Oreopoulos, P. (2009). *Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labour Market*, Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia; Reitz, J. (2001) "Immigrant Skill Utilization in the Canadian Labour Market." Toronto: Centre for Industrial Relations and Department of Sociology.

settlement process. Some voiced frustration at what they perceived as misinformation from Canada's overall immigration system:

[R]ight now there is a gap, a disconnect, between the immigration process and the employment process. The immigration process is that you are good enough to come to Canada; the employment process is you don't have the Canadian experience.
Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

[W]e came over [to Canada] based on the experience we had over there [in our home country] and that was the reason for getting the immigration visa. So getting here I have been told, "Sorry you can't work because you don't have Canadian experience." There is a bridge missing. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

[W]hat I'm saying is we, in Canada, we say we want educated people, experienced people, we bring them here, but then we don't give them the opportunity or some way of working in their fields. Service provider participant

This distinct disconnect between government level eligibility criteria and hiring practices at the local level underlies the two largest barriers newcomers identified in securing employment in Sarnia-Lambton; their lack of Canadian experience and their inability to promote themselves and the benefits they bring to local employers.

THE CONUNDRUM OF CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Newcomers expressed the perpetual cycle they encountered when looking for work in Canada; to find employment, they need Canadian experience but in order to get Canadian experience, they need to be given the opportunity to work. Not being given such an opportunity was a recurring theme for many participants:

[W]hen I came here even if I was not really exactly hoping that I would find a job like [I had in my home country] but I am willing to start all over again. But then I have a family so I have to earn money for a living. But when I tried to look for a job, they asked me for...Canadian experience which I don't have because I just arrive here. How will I have that experience if they will not give me a chance to try?...I said even if I will forget nursing, I will disregard that and look for any simple job [like] housekeeping or cleaning or whatsoever. They also require experience. Do you have experience in cleaning! Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

[W]e want to work but we don't have experience. They didn't give us the chance to start a job first. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

And we don't have any [Canadian experience] because we're not able to work. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

The first barrier...is Canadian experience...[H]ow do you ask for Canadian experience to an immigrant who has just come to Canada? Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Some participants also questioned the benefit of requiring Canadian experience exclusively while ignoring the wealth of international experience that immigrants bring with them, echoing again the sentiment that immigrants are good enough to enter Canada because of their education and work experience but are not good enough to get hired for those same reasons:

[I]sn't every employer looking for the best candidate for the job? Someone who can deliver, looking for somebody who has experience who can do the job? And I wonder, what is the relevance of this Canadian experience? For example I have a friend she works in a bank and now she was a banker back home and she works in a bank. But funny enough the opportunity she got before working in a Canadian experience to work in a bank had nothing to do with banking. She did some menial job...And so I am like is that what the



www.careerbeacon.com

bank wants for your Canadian experience that you did customer service? That is not going to add value to your organization. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

[Y]ou come here and everywhere you go - the wall. Oh you have this fantastic international experience but you don't have Canadian experience. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

[Employers] feel [immigrants] are coming with their mindsets so they are not able to pick up the Canadian system, without realizing we have worked in ten different systems and are so adaptable and so flexible. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

One employer participant mirrored this frustration as well:

I get frustrated. Maybe it is my ideology on the table, [but] what is this Canadian experience? What do we do when we hire recent graduates? They don't have Canadian experience...I think [it is] a barrier that is put up to deal with certain issues. Employer participant

This quote alludes to another, perhaps more insidious, barrier newcomers may face when seeking employment and underscores a significant challenge identified by participants; namely the perception that not all employers truly understand newcomers' situations or the tangible benefits of hiring immigrants as employees.

PROMOTING BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

Participants identified personal, service delivery, and attitudinal barriers as obstacles to the hiring of newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton. On an individual/personal level, participants acknowledged that their own lack of understanding of Canadian job search practices hindered their ability to engage employers and felt that it was their responsibility to learn appropriate ways to do so. At the same time, however, many felt that this community lacked adequate job search workshops or information designed specifically for immigrants and newcomers:

I started one [job search workshop] but I realized that I am a newcomer so kind of not directly coincide with their program...I need kind of mock interview to improve interviewing skills, just....resume writing...I need some extra help...They [employment agency] focused on the local employees. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

A service provider in the employment services sector shared their experiences in assisting newcomer clients and the lack of resources available:

I feel helpless working for these people because, quite frankly, this guy is smarter than me for one and you have to admit this. This is someone with PhDs and everything else. These are bright people, and I am saying, well I don't want to say go look on the job bank or the job board because they actually need professional head-hunters who are going to help them find work and target for their skill level. Service provider participant

Aside from their own difficulty in engaging employers and the lack of immigrant-specific job search information, newcomer participants also identified a lack of understanding on the part of employers as a challenge

We know that Canada is very warm country and they want immigrant to come but at the same time some employers, they are discriminative with immigrants, they are. Even though out there [they] say, "Yes we welcome immigrants," but at the same time they say, "What if I don't understand what the person is saying? What if this employee has to talk to a client that comes from a company and the client does not understand him or does not understand her?" So I think it is something that the employer, the employer needs to change their way of how they think about immigrants. They need to be more open and otherwise you are going to lose a lot of immigrants. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant



Hailey McHarg Photography

Similarly, newcomer participants generally felt that more needed to be done in this community to make sure local employers understand just how much immigrants and newcomers bring with them and not only in terms of their skills and education. For alongside the obvious benefits of hiring highly-educated employees, newcomers felt they also provide innovative perspectives and diverse experiences:

[B]ut I am always saying this; the employers must see the benefit, that [hiring immigrants] is not a social service; that there is lots [and] lots of benefits. And the truth about it is if Sarnia-Lambton opens up everybody here is going to be a winner. The economy here will expand and things will happen; the airport will be better used; there will be more and more things happening

and people coming here will have to see the big picture and not just see, "Look it is just me and my dog and my car." Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

In other words, hiring immigrant employees is a benefit to this entire community and can help it prosper and grow.

OTHER BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Along with the aforementioned barriers, newcomers identified other challenges that they felt inhibited their ability to find employment. While the lack of adequate job search assistance specifically for immigrants and newcomers has already been highlighted, participants also felt that Sarnia-Lambton did not have enough affordable training and education opportunities for newcomers such as bridging programs for internationally-trained professionals. From a service provider perspective, the challenge of providing such programs boiled down to numbers; these types of programs cannot be sustained by the

low percentage of newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton's population. Because of this, newcomers have no choice but to go farther afield to access these programs, heading to London or Windsor instead.

Another barrier to employment newcomers identified were specific bureaucratic processes such as professional credential and international education recognition and, especially for international students, applications for work permits. In general, newcomers perceived these processes as lengthy, complicated and expensive and didn't always feel like they knew where to go to get assistance.

Finally, participants felt that Sarnia-Lambton lacked job opportunities in general and meaningful and fulfilling job opportunities for newcomers in particular. Canadian experience notwithstanding, participants felt that this community lacked adequate diversity in the labour market to offer meaningful employment for the entire family; even if one member of the family could find work, equally rewarding employment was often not available for their spouse.

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES

Employers who participated in the focus groups shared their own challenges in hiring immigrants and newcomers. The largest barrier they identified was a perceived lack of knowledge of the Canadian work environment on the part of newcomers and immigrants. This included inappropriate job search techniques such as resume and cover letter writing as well as interview skills; skills newcomers themselves also felt they were lacking. However, more importantly, employers felt that newcomers did not have adequate knowledge of Canadian health and safety practices and other policy and procedural related knowledge. One employer states it thus:

[T]here is certain basic employment expectations when it comes to roles that we all know and that are all in our policy manuals and that are not all that different when it comes to employment law and what I do and what you do and the employee is expected to do. Most of us have learned it... [but] if you are a newcomer coming into Canada you get none of that. And [when] plunked into the middle of a group of people you can create some pretty good chaos before anyone has realized what you have done. Employer participant

This reasoning helps to explain the requirement for Canadian experience but also highlights the conundrum newcomers repeatedly find themselves in; how do they learn these 'Canadian ways' without being given the chance to try?

Another related challenge is the perception that newcomers are coming with specific expectations of the kind of work they should be doing and that they are coming with some sense of entitlement:

[S]omehow we have to change that message we are sending to different countries; that message needs to be changed, like, come to Canada you are not actually going to get a job in your field right away. Like everybody thinks they are going to. Employer participant

If Canadian government people are trying to attract people...they should not give them unrealistic expectations. Employer participant

These comments emphasize the disconnect between immigration and employment processes expressed by newcomer participants earlier. However, it does not necessarily reflect the employment expectations newcomers themselves bring with them. Rather, some newcomer participants recognized that they would need to start at a different level than what they left in their home country:

I know that my education in [my home country] is not equivalent...here. So, I know right from the beginning that I have to take the exam and then take some bridging courses and then take some again for me to be able to reach [the same level] again. Newcomer participant

We do understand and appreciate the fact that things work differently in different countries so yes there is the Canadian experience that you need to understand about how things work in Canada...Yes we do understand that we should have the experience to know how things really work. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

The issue it seems, once again, is how newcomers can get that experience.

Another significant concern for employers was language and communication barriers. While employers agreed with newcomers themselves that learning English should be a priority in their quest for employment, they also identified different communication styles and difficult accents as real drawbacks to hiring newcomers. In the Newcomer Talent Survey, when asked what has prevented them from hiring newcomers and immigrants in the past, one respondent answered that the "inability of Canadians to understand the accent of immigrants" created a real challenge and went on to say that "the immigrant grasp of vocabulary and language is very good usually but many Canadians have difficulty understanding the immigrant's speech/accent." A focus group participant shared this experience:



Hailey McHarg Photography

[O]ur experience from our clients' perspective, the place where they were hired they could not understand what they were saying. We thought he was gifted and really clever but if people cannot understand what he was saying they would not want to take him...it was the accent that he spoke. Employer participant

Finally, employer participants also identified their own lack of knowledge of immigrant-related issues as a barrier to hiring newcomers. This lack of knowledge included; Canada's complex immigration eligibility criteria and work permit processes; where to access a pool of qualified immigrant applicants; where to get information on supports for themselves when hiring immigrants and newcomers; and understanding foreign credential and education recognition processes.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus group participants offered the following suggestions to improve employment outcomes for immigrants and newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton:

- Increased communication between employers and newcomers through immigrant-specific networking opportunities, volunteer/mentorship/internship programming, employer champions and/or ambassadors
- Increased training (both on-the-job and prior to employment) opportunities
- Employment advocate or job developer positions specifically for newcomers and immigrants
- Increased supports for small to medium-sized businesses
- Increased information sharing in relation to self-employment and entrepreneurship and skills inventory of newcomers to the area
- Financial hiring incentives



www.northbaycouncil.org

SETTLEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Aside from their inability to find meaningful employment, newcomers who participated in the focus groups identified further barriers that hindered their settlement into Sarnia-Lambton. The three challenges most often cited were housing, transportation, and healthcare.

HOUSING CONCERNS

For newcomer participants, neither the availability nor the cost of housing was of primary concern. Indeed, most participants felt that Sarnia provided affordable and abundant places to live. Rather, their difficulties had to do with the process they had to go through in order to get accommodations. The requirements of credit checks and references were frequent barriers cited:

[I]t's very difficult to get apartment....we have to sign so many papers. We have to give them proof, everything, we have to bring the checks and give them and, uh, when we moved there and for the internet too, they're asking for a credit check. So, it's really problem.
Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

I start looking for a place to stay; I [find] an apartment...the first thing they told me was cannot pay for that apartment; [they] said I bring referral and I told them that I don't have one...I think if I come I think I should be able to live in a place. I have money to pay for the place I should be able to live in that place...I go here and I go there and if I don't have someone in Canada where do I get a reference? You see the challenge you have as an immigrant? You can't even find a place to stay with the money you have in your pocket. Isn't that wrong? I don't think that it is okay. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Furthermore, participants expressed their frustration with what they perceived as close-mindedness or discrimination on the part of landlords:

[T]hat kind of problem I would say even me, with friends I encountered in Sarnia, I met in Sarnia, was to find a house...a place to live because just I guess local landlords are suspicious about newcomers, about immigrants. So, we were even a little bit cheated.
Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Taking them through the apartments...it is very time consuming and the fact that in a couple of places that they went to, one landlord kind of slammed the door in our faces. Which I thought was extremely ignorant. So you are dealing with racism. Service provider participant

Housing challenges, then, according to participants, have more to do with community attitudes towards and assumptions about newcomers and immigrants than they do about affordability and availability.

TRANSPORTATION

While perhaps beyond the scope of this project, newcomer participants expressed their frustration with what they perceived as this area's inadequate public transportation system. Their criticisms ranged from expensive fares to infrequent running times to inaccessible or underserved areas of the city.



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

And just transportation here is, yeah, I find...[laughs]...very difficult [laughs]. Like, even, for example, going to class every day. If I miss the bus, like even for just a minute, I will have to wait for 30 minutes...So, that's a lot of time. And I'm not used to that because in our country like the bus comes every minute or every 5 minutes. Like, there's always a bus there. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

For those who had could afford their own vehicle and did not need to rely on public transit, another frustration was the lengthy and complicated process it took to get their driver's license in Canada.

[T]he only thing I had the problem is nothing related to the government is the thing is how you get your driver license...I had the money to buy a car but I could not because I have a driver's license [from my home country] but they were asking paper over paper. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Of course, many recognized that these frustrations stemmed from their previous experiences in their home country and/or in other Canadian cities. Nevertheless, participants undoubtedly felt that these transportation challenges hindered their ability to settle into the community; to locate and access other necessary resources and to find and maintain employment.

Service providers also indicated lack of transportation as a barrier for newcomers, especially for those in the rural areas of Lambton County. Fortunately, some service providers were able to compensate for this inaccessibility through their own programs of outreach or transportation subsidies.

HEALTHCARE

For the most part, newcomer participants were very positive about the caliber of Canadian healthcare. The challenges they faced, rather, had to do with understanding, accessing and navigating the healthcare system in general. Where and how to find a family doctor, for example, was frequently cited as a challenge. Similarly, fees for services for those who had not yet received their health cards or who were not eligible under OHIP (i.e. temporary residents) were not as transparent as some participants felt they should be. One participant shared her experience:

After 2 weeks I was sick. I has high fever and I didn't know about, I didn't have healthcare card because healthcare is three months...and I say to my husband we go to emergency... And after three days my fever is fine and they send me home. And after one week they send me the bill. For one day in the hospital, \$1200, for three days, \$3600...I was shocked [laughter]! I was just in Sarnia two weeks, I got the bill and I don't know, I have to go away from school, I have to find job...They didn't tell me they would charge me, if they tell me they would charge me, I wouldn't go. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

Again, while these challenges may be beyond the scope of this project, this quote shows just how much a misunderstanding can delay settlement. For this participant, the shock of realizing that she had to pay so much money for healthcare services made her contemplate quitting her ESL classes and looking for any kind of work to pay those bills.

OTHER BARRIERS TO SETTLEMENT

Although not mentioned as often, participants cited financial issues as a challenge. This was especially the case for international students who were more constrained by visa and permit requirements that hampered their ability to find work than other newcomers of other immigration statuses. Participants also identified isolation and the lack of recreational and social opportunities for children, youth, and students as a barrier. Lastly, newcomer participants felt the lack of specialty and international foods posed a challenge. It was not uncommon for participants to state they had to go to London or even Toronto to be able to get specific ingredients.

Service providers who offered services that assist in newcomer settlement (whether specifically designed for newcomers or not) also outlined some barriers. While transportation has already been mentioned, service providers also indicated that specific resources for immigrant and newcomer women, especially as they pertain to domestic violence, were lacking in this community. Furthermore, some expressed frustration with the limited services available for newcomers without permanent residency status (i.e. temporary workers, international students, and refugee claimants).

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus group participants felt that newcomers' settlement into Sarnia-Lambton would be greatly enhanced through services that would assist in orientating them to the community. Thus, they offered the following suggestions:

- Increase host and community mentoring programs
- Engage local cultural associations and communities in the settlement process more formally
- Encourage community involvement and engagement through volunteering and recreational activities
- Provide more transparent and comprehensive sharing of information through libraries and other centralized organizations (about healthcare, transportation, housing, etc.)



Glen Ogilvie, Newcomer Portal

Some of these initiatives are already occurring in Sarnia-Lambton through current programming. However, that they are mentioned at all shows there is nevertheless a need to increase and expand upon these services in order to reach more newcomers who would benefit greatly from them.

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

All focus group participants seemed in agreement that an inability to communicate well in English was a significant barrier to life in Sarnia-Lambton. For newcomer participants, learning English not only helped to improve job prospects and ease their transition into their new life; learning English also helped to decrease their feelings of isolation and went a long way in boosting their confidence. There was a consensus among all participants that learning English should be a priority for any newcomer who was not already fluent in the language.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

Most newcomers spoke very highly of the English as a Second Language (ESL) courses that were currently available to them in Sarnia-Lambton. However, some still identified gaps in the types of classes

offered. One such gap was the lack of opportunities to practice speaking and conversational English. While the current classes offered excellent grammar instruction, participants felt that the classes didn't provide enough in terms of practice:

[B]ut to find communication, it was...but still it's...school...you with all immigrants. The teacher teaches; they have very good English so I didn't have problem to understand teachers. They understood me from the very beginning but it's, does not help a lot, you know. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

And while other programs were suggested to them to improve this, such as Toastmasters, participants felt that that level of English was too high. An appropriate middle level practice, therefore, was identified as missing.

For Lambton College's international students, practicing their English was also a priority. However, they felt that the opportunities they were given to do this, such as being matched with a Canadian student, were not as helpful as they could be:



www.static-p4.fotolia.com

And even when we have a partner, we only have one partner, and they just like to give us assignment. After talk with us half an hour or an hour, they just do their assignment and we are not in the same major so we will not met again. So we just, like, do our assignment, after met them, write our record to the staff. It's nothing help us. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

All participants felt that it would be much more helpful to increase the opportunities for informal conversation clubs.

Participants also felt that not enough opportunities for higher-level or occupation-specific language training were available in Sarnia-Lambton. This gap was identified by language learners and employers, both groups stating that learning opportunities to improve language skills - written as well as verbal - for a workplace setting would be very valuable:

I found it very difficult to communicate with the people. This was terrible. I need to improve my English. Even though I have knowledge and engineering background, I said I can't work because I cannot talk with employees so I cannot work. Even though, I can read the blueprint but, so I think the first thing I need to do is improve my English. Immigrant/Newcomer Participant

I think to add to that communication skills, I find our senior managers, far more than what I used to hear, the inability to effectively write reports because the ability to communicate in written form is not a strength, in the engineering world is not a strength in general, and if English is not that individual's first language it is just an added barrier and for us, a consulting firm, you do not want that report going to the client in a manner that is going to jeopardize business. Employer participant

Good language and communication skills, therefore, are not only important in being able to get a job, but play a crucial role in maintaining one as well.

While this need for more specialized and targeted language training was identified by participants, language instruction service providers expressed their own barriers in providing such programming; specifically, while the demand is there, it is not perceived as high enough to support a full-scale program of enhanced or occupation-specific language training. Rather, one or two clients each from distinct professions (i.e. nursing, engineering, accounting) required such training. Finding new ways to provide this to a smaller number of people, therefore, is a significant challenge.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

Far more pressing, however, for service providers in general was the lack of formal and professional translation and interpretation services in Sarnia-Lambton. While some participants alluded to lists of volunteer interpreters that could be called upon when necessary, few could actually identify where these lists existed and who could be asked to get accurate information on them.

Furthermore, because there is no local service, professional interpreters needed to be called in from further afield which increased costs and the timeframe in which such services could be accessed:

But we don't [have] anything local where that person could say, someone from Sarnia needs translation or they have to go to court and translate, has to be a neutral party, as well. We don't have that so now we have to outsource to hire people in Toronto in order for them to come, or into London, to come to Sarnia. Service provider participant

While some service providers indicated they utilized out of County services, many did not. Rather, the majority of service providers relied on the limited multilingualism of their staff, most often citing French or Spanish speaking staff, or placed the responsibility of finding interpreters on the non-English speaking clients they were serving. This often took the form of family members and brought with it its own complications and concerns about confidentiality:

Because we have tried to hook them up with at least an interpreter too, so they can understand what our programs and services are about. And we have family members come in and they have had to take time off of work so it is a challenge for them and they don't want to because they are afraid they are going to lose their jobs because of it and they are trying to help but there is [sic] no interpreters. Service provider participant

This lack of interpretation services was the largest impediment to service providers who wanted to offer and explain their services as effectively as possible to newcomer clients.

OTHER BARRIERS FOR LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Aside from those already mentioned, participants indicated some further challenges. These included; lack of access to language training for temporary foreign workers, barriers specifically for French-speaking immigrants and newcomers, and discrimination and prejudice in general.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to alleviate some of these barriers, participants provided the following suggestions for improved service provision:

- Further financial supports for English language learners (i.e. incentives and/or subsidies to keep ESL students in classes)
- On-the-job or onsite ESL training for newcomers who are already employed but still require assistance
- Access to enhanced language training (ELT) and occupation-specific language training
- Establishment of a professional interpretation service locally



www.pdfcast.org/images

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Participants at the community strategy meeting in February as well as focus group participants acknowledged that Sarnia-Lambton has some very good programs in place to support immigrants and newcomers in the community (whether specifically designed for them or not). However, the mere

existence of the programs did not necessarily mean they were utilized or even known about. Therefore, how to foster more effective communication between newcomers, service providers, and employers about programs and services was identified as a significant challenge in this community.

ACCESS TO ACCURATE AND COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON SERVICES

'If the information is out there, how can we get it?' That was a common question posed by newcomer participants. And while most newcomers were very complimentary of the settlement services that do exist within the community, such as ESL and LINC classes, ISAP, NSP, and Host programs, many felt that they still lacked sufficient assistance in navigating more mainstream services, especially within healthcare services.

Furthermore, newcomers expressed frustration with being given inappropriate referrals and being bounced from service to service, having to tell their story over and over again:



www.lemonade3d.com

But, for example, I'm not so clear with the process, for everything. And when I try to ask people that I know because I am alone here, like you and like many people, you must to try some people that the people are saying to you, okay, there is no way that you can do that thing. And they start passing and passing and you say, okay. Immigrant/Newcomer participant

[Y]ou know especially for language limited, you go here and new place, you shy, you don't want to [ask] whom you can apply. Sometimes...it's not direct communication where one person delivered

[information] to you directly to your hand and you have again and again to explain your problem. Immigrant/Newcomer participant

Having one point of contact or one person to guide them, and not just point them the right direction, was something newcomer participants suggested often as a way to alleviate this frustration:

[B]ecause we don't know nothing [sic] information, where we can get....Just need one person, like you need to tell information about Sarnia. Immigrant/Newcomer participant

If I was going to show the way to the bridge just go like this turn this way and move that way and point the direction to you. What we need is someone who will take you by the hand, and say this is the bridge here. There is a gap. Immigrant/Newcomer participant

Employers, too, felt this gap between the services that were currently available and their knowledge of them. This was particularly the case with credential and education recognition supports. When one employer was informed that a local service provider could provide information on this process, he shared these thoughts:

I didn't know that they did it and I am an employer. So that needs to go the employers and, say, if we are bringing someone from India and I can send them [there] so they can get tested and I know what I am getting. I was not aware that...well, it is a service the community [has] and I was not aware of that. Employer participant

Employers also felt that having one person to contact would be of great assistance in supporting their efforts to hire and retain immigrant employees and would be more effective and efficient than they themselves calling around from service provider to service provider, which, many admitted, they wouldn't do simply because of the amount of time that would take.

For service providers, both settlement and mainstream agencies, getting the information about their services out to the larger community (newcomers, employers and each other) posed a significant challenge, and not for lack of trying. The barrier, once again, boiled down to not knowing how or who to contact to pass on their information. This was especially difficult when not only programs and services but also staff members, continually change and develop.

UTILIZING LOCAL RESOURCES

To tackle these gaps in service provision and information sharing, participants addressed the issue of community partnerships. The funding limitations for Sarnia-Lambton, a smaller community with a lower than provincial average of immigrants in its population, were evident in the service provider focus group sessions. And while the sharing of resources was identified as a good way to circumvent these limitations, participants felt that this community has not yet done enough to use the resources it does have by establishing more effective and mutually beneficial partnerships between service providers:

[B]ut I think that we're sort of looking at things, 3 or 4 ideas, independently. Unless there is some coordination aspect to it, we're really just going to be continuing along the stream where we are a number of parallel services that are sort of looking for the magic formula. Service provider participant

Breaking down these service and sector 'silos', therefore, and creating more formal partnerships within the community was referenced frequently. This included partnerships with businesses, religious institutions, cultural associations and organizations, government, school boards as well as other service providers.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants gave the following suggestions for improving and enhancing service provision for immigrants and newcomers in Sarnia-Lambton:

- Actively develop formal partnerships within the community
- Create one 'point of contact' for newcomers, service providers, and employers for inquiries and concerns
- Work towards a more centralized service delivery system (i.e. one-stop shop)
- Increase funding to market and advertise services (pamphlets and brochures)
- Create one comprehensive and up-to-date directory of services for immigrants and newcomers
- Tap into regional supports for services Sarnia-Lambton cannot sustain by itself
- Provide pre-arrival information for immigrants and newcomers



c.photoshelter.com

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Focus group participants all agreed that providing services, supports and opportunities in Sarnia-Lambton for immigrants and newcomers was of utmost importance. Just as important, however, and perhaps more difficult to achieve, was the need to educate the community at large on newcomer and immigrant issues. And although newcomer participants generally felt that this was a friendly place to live, all participants acknowledged that Sarnia-Lambton, rightly or wrongly, had a reputation for being less open minded and less welcoming to those from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, in order to sustain and support the current population of immigrants as well as attract more, participants felt that it

was imperative to challenge that reputation and encourage open and transparent communication within the entire community.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE COMMUNITY

Immigrant and newcomer participants, while very complimentary of Sarnia-Lambton's friendly atmosphere, nevertheless felt that the community at large did not entirely understand their circumstances and some expressed frustration when interacting with Canadians:

[T]hey expect me to understand them, but nothing comes back and it should be a reciprocal relationship I feel. It's no problem to relate. I like Canadians, that's why I'm here. If I didn't like them, I wouldn't come but you should get something back, I think. It's not fair.
Immigrant/Newcomer participant

Some participants also highlighted the assumptions people have made about their language abilities and education, relying on stereotypes rather than real knowledge of their countries or their backgrounds:

Talk to me, because when they are talking to me they say, 'Oh where did you learn to speak English this well?' and things like that. It is obvious you have some preconceived notions about people from [my country]. I have spoken English all my life and my kids don't speak any other language apart from English and French.
Immigrant/Newcomer participant

Participants, in particular service providers, also expressed frustration in what they identified as outright discrimination:

[P]eople from Sarnia are having a hard time dealing with a lot of the changes that are coming and you feel it; landlords have slammed doors to new immigrants, and that's in the last month. It's not an old thing, it's still there. Service provider participant

[S]ay there's a group of people, we get a lot of visitors from [another country] for example, they meet friends and they're talking in their home language, and there's a lot of



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

misunderstanding or judgment going on. And you can see it and how do you address that?

Service provider participant

Service providers also expressed concern in their own abilities to serve the immigrant and newcomer population in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. This was especially the case for those organizations that already dealt with very vulnerable populations (e.g. those struggling with poverty, domestic violence and abuse, and mental health issues):

I think also becoming competent as an organization dealing with, um, some shocking things that have happened to these [people] in their background. You know, we certainly understand trauma...but this takes it to a whole different level...Um, staying culturally competent with things, not just on language but understanding what it means to serve an Italian family, and how they see family, not making suggestions that they would find offensive. Service provider participant

This need for service providers to better understand immigrant and newcomer circumstances was echoed by newcomers as well:

Even I think that we have to talk more professional. For example, when you have to go and talk with your family doctor. They have to be prepared about your situation. So, and, um, and they try to treat you like you're another Canadian, and they don't realize that a newcomer from another country [has a different understanding of things]...myself, you are shy to tell your story. So, um, I think that doctor don't like me because I was trying to give my problem by myself. Immigrant/Newcomer participant

In all, participants felt that Sarnia-Lambton, while friendly and hospitable in many ways, still had some distance to go in becoming a welcoming and truly diverse community.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants provided many suggestions to help the community embrace and encourage diversity and cultural understanding:

- Celebrate cultural diversity through events and festivals and by more actively promoting the celebrations that already exist here
- Develop and implement community education campaigns that target specific groups in the community (i.e. children & youth, employers, general public)

- More actively engage churches and other religious institutions in promoting diversity and understanding
- Provide a venue in which newcomer stories can be shared with the wider public - identify newcomer 'ambassadors' to share their stories
- Encourage and facilitate diversity training for service providers and employers
- Create and disseminate multicultural information to service providers and employers



Hailey McHarg Photography, Newcomer Portal

SARNIA-LAMBTON SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

The community-based research conducted over the past year examined the current supports and services for immigrants and newcomers in the community, the gaps in these services and supports, and the barriers and challenges that immigrants and newcomers face when settling in Sarnia-Lambton. In response to these identified gaps and barriers and in an effort to complement the community's existing resident attraction and economic development strategies, the following 12 strategies, divided among the five priority areas of focus, are recommended for implementation. Each strategy also includes a series of action steps to be undertaken. It is important to note that these strategies and their subsequent action steps are interrelated and together create a comprehensive and effective Settlement Strategy for the Sarnia-Lambton community as a whole.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET ACCESS

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
<p>1. Increase networking opportunities between employers and newcomers and immigrants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize monthly networking meetings for immigrants and employers • Organize immigrant-focused job fairs • Organize networking/support groups for employers • Establish a point of first contact where employers can direct questions related to hiring and retaining immigrants and newcomers • Hold events to celebrate employer 'champions'
<p>2. Provide opportunities for newcomers and immigrants to gain Canadian work experience relevant to their profession and career aspirations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot a mentorship program for internationally-trained professionals • Investigate which professions could accommodate volunteer opportunities for newcomers • Investigate possibility of providing internships (and employer subsidies) for internationally-trained professionals
<p>3. Provide immigrant and newcomer-specific job search assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot an adequate job search program designed specifically for immigrants and newcomers • Create a job developer position dedicated to assisting and advocating for immigrants, newcomers and employers

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
<p>4. Increase and promote opportunities to engage immigrants and newcomers in the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to actively recruit and market current CIC funded Host programs • Develop and pilot a volunteer program specifically for immigrants and newcomers • Establish rural outreach programs for newcomers outside of Sarnia
<p>5. Increase and promote opportunities for immigrant and newcomer children and youth in the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program • Expand recreation and social programming for immigrant children and youth (i.e. Youth Host Program)

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
<p>6. Create more diverse opportunities for language learning (ESL, ELT, Occupation-Specific)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships between local ESL providers to increase number of students • Investigate possibility of providing on-the-job language training for newcomers • Actively market Sarnia-Lambton as an ESL destination • Connect with regional ESL service providers to form potential partnerships • Investigate the use of new technologies (i.e. webinars, Skype) to expand local language programs

7. Increase community capacity for translation and interpretation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and update volunteer lists of interpreters already in existence • Formalize connections with cultural associations as potential pool of interpreters • Pursue regional resources to create more timely and cost-effective provision of interpretation services
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

COORDINATION OF SERVICES	
STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
8. Provide one 'point of contact' to advocate for and address concerns/questions regarding immigrant and newcomer issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot an outreach program to meet with newcomers and immigrants in rural areas • Disseminate information about local services for immigrants and newcomers to entire community from centralized point • Maintain 'virtual point of contact' through use of County of Lambton's Immigration Portal, liveinlambton.ca
9. Create opportunities for local and regional partnerships in order to utilize current resources more effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards developing creative partnerships with religious institutions, cultural associations, private sector and business, school boards, First Nations community etc. • Continue to work with current community initiatives as they pertain to immigration (such as economic development and resident attraction) • Explore and initiate regional partnerships to enhance the capacity of local services.

10. Facilitate effective governance and implementation of LIP strategies with County of Lambton as lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amalgamate community newcomer support groups, including Phase I LIP Council, to form one collaborative body to guide and support implementation of settlement strategy • Revise Terms of Reference to finalize structure of council and responsibilities of its members • Fulfill appropriate human resource needs for Phase II implementation
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

PUBLIC AWARENESS	
STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS
11. Promote public awareness of newcomer and immigrant issues through media campaigns and community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop multi-media campaign to promote a welcoming and inclusive Sarnia-Lambton • Continue to encourage current (and organize more) multicultural events in S-L • Create better access to diversity training for businesses and non-profit organizations • Advocate for immigrants and newcomers to be more visible in the community, in the workplace, and in public office
12. Design comprehensive marketing strategy for current, enhanced, and upcoming immigrant services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure programming for immigrants and newcomers has adequate funds for marketing of services • Share marketing resources among service organizations • Encourage stakeholders to utilize County of Lambton's immigration portal, liveinlambton.ca, to advertise and market services and events

CONCLUSION

So, what will Sarnia-Lambton look like in the coming years? Our research indicates that a diverse and welcoming community must be cultivated so that it may grow and thrive. Strong and solid partnerships become the foundation upon which a prosperous community can stand. Partnership, by definition, is collaborative in nature; a relationship where individuals agree to cooperate with others, and advance beyond their own interest, where there is an equal division of creative input and responsibility. Facilitating and nurturing the development of these partnerships is the cornerstone of the LIP initiative and will continue to be so in the implementation phase. Not only will the LIP work to sustain these partnerships locally, through the ongoing existence of the Partnership Council and collaboration with existing economic development strategies. It will also tap into the broader region so that the community can utilize all of its resources more effectively and efficiently. In the end, the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy will increase this community's capacity for positive change and will lead us towards a community in which all of its members can prosper and grow.

APPENDIX A

INVENTORY OF IMMIGRANT-SPECIFIC SERVICES IN SARNIA-LAMBTON

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND LABOUR MARKET ACCESS

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO (ACFO) LONDON-SARNIA:

- DC - Programme de développement des compétences / Skills Development Program (employment counsellor commutes from office in London weekly to address employment issues with newcomer clients in Sarnia and area)

COUNTY OF LAMBTON NEWCOMER PORTAL (LIVEINLAMBTON.CA):

- Information on working in Canada, Sarnia-Lambton's labour market, credential recognition and links to local employment service agencies
- Online job postings

ESSO YMCA LEARNING & CAREER CENTRE:

- JSW - Job Search Workshop (3-day workshop part of ISAP [see below] that includes information on working in Canada, résumé/cover letter writing, and interview skills)
- Settlement counsellor can also review résumés one-on-one

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

ISAP - Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (counselling, advocacy, referrals, support)

HOST Program (mentoring, matching)

SWIS/PIDEF - Settlement Workers in Schools/Programme d'intégration dans les écoles francophones (elementary and secondary levels)

NSP - Newcomer Settlement Program (counselling, advocacy, referrals, support)

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO (ACFO) LONDON-SARNIA:

- ISAP
- HOST
- PIDEF (within the schools under the French (CSDCDO) and French-Catholic School Boards (CSDÉCSO))

ESSO YMCA LEARNING & CAREER CENTRE:

- ISAP
- HOST
- Itinerant SWIS (under umbrella of ISAP)
- NSP
- Onsite childminding for clients
- Immigrant Youth Group
- Summer Camps for newcomer children

LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES

LINC - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

ESL/EAL - English as a Second Language/English as an Additional Language

ELT - Enhanced Language Training

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO (ACFO) LONDON-SARNIA:

- Provides monthly 'Conversation Circles' in both English and French

ESSO YMCA LEARNING & CAREER CENTRE:

- LINC and ESL (day and evening classes in Sarnia & Petrolia)
- ELT - Speechcraft for Foreign Trained Professionals (in partnership with Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board (SLWDB) and local Toastmasters)

LAMBTON COLLEGE

- Informal and on an as-needed basis ESL tutoring for international students

LAMBTON-KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

- ESL class at St. Clair Secondary School in Sarnia

LEARNING VISIONS

- ESL Summer Program (4-6 weeks; includes homestay; international students age 17+)

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE DE L'ONTARIO (ACFO) LONDON-SARNIA:

- CSB - Service Traduction/Translation Service (documents sent to head office in London for translation)
- Onsite interpretation for clients

ESSO YMCA LEARNING & CAREER CENTRE:

- Facilitate out of town document translation through London Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)
- Onsite interpretation for clients

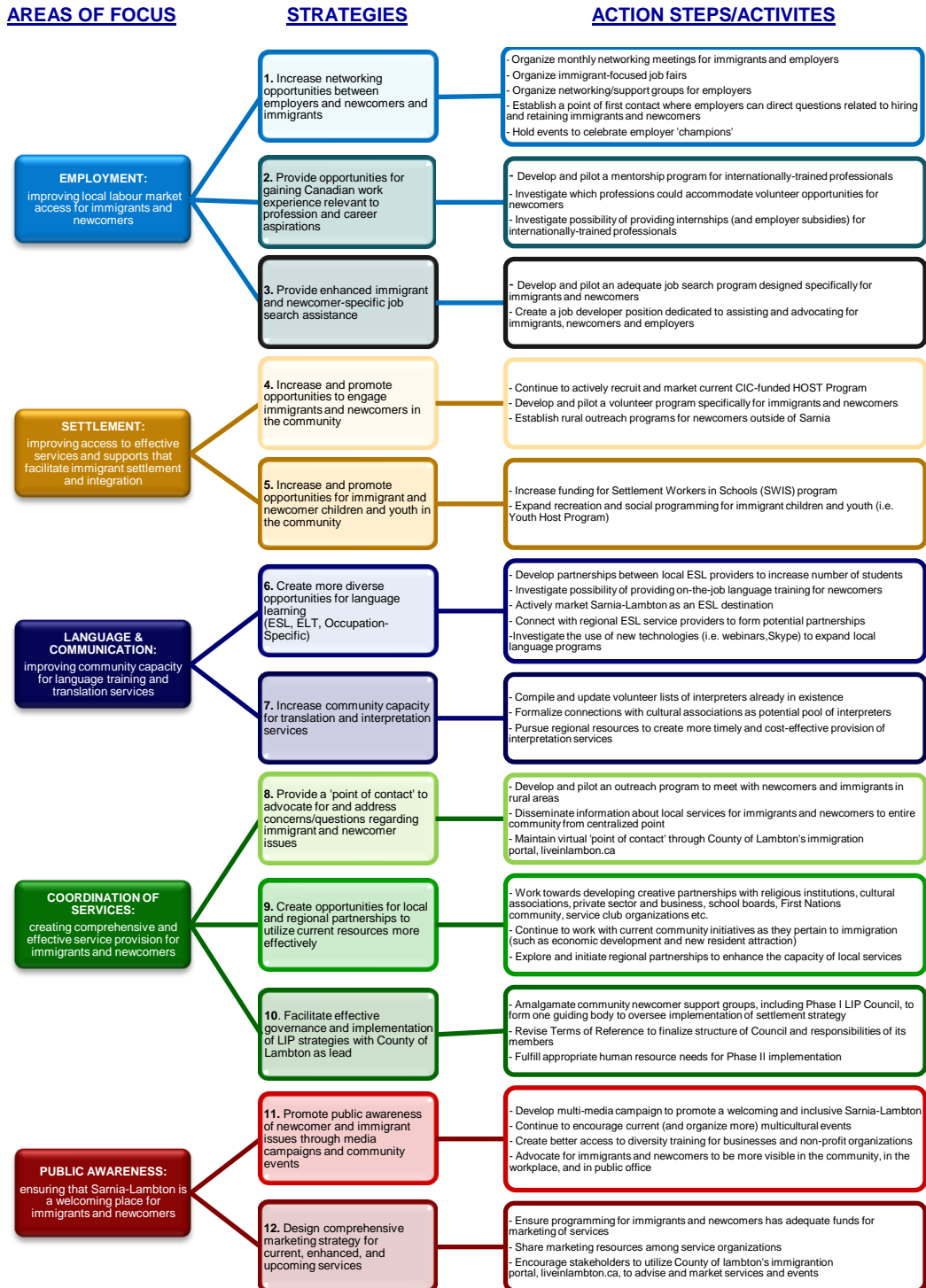
SARNIA-LAMBTON FOLK ARTS & MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL:

- Maintains volunteer lists of local interpreters

MULTICULTURAL GROUPS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Burmese Community of Sarnia
- Centre Culturel Francophone Jolliet
- Dante Club Bocciofila
- Filipino-Canadian Community Lambton County
- India-Canada Association of Sarnia
- Lambton Chinese-Canadian Association
- Northern Collegiate Institute and Vocational School Multicultural Awareness Club (MAC)
- Sarnia Hindu Cultural Society
- Sarnia-Lambton Folk Arts & Multicultural Council
- Sarnia Muslim Association
- Sarnia Newcomers Club
- Sarnia Portuguese-Canadian Club
- St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church of Sarnia & Vicinity

APPENDIX B



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2008). *Facts and Figures Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents*. Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Conference Board of Canada. (2009). *Immigrant Friendly Communities: Making Immigration Work for Employers and Other Stakeholders in Small-Town Canada*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.

County of Lambton Community Health Services Department Health Promotion & Program Support. (2007). *Lambton County 2007 Health Status Report: Reproductive Health*. Sarnia: Corporation of the County of Lambton.

County of Lambton Planning & Development Services Department. (2010). *Population: Summary of Trends & Projections Census Years 2006 to 2031*. Sarnia: Corporation of the County of Lambton.

Grant, T. and Yang, J. (July 24, 2009) "Immigrants Take Brunt of Recession, Recover Less Quickly" Toronto: Globe and Mail.

Kunin, R. & Associates, Inc. (2009). *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada*. Vancouver: Rosalyn Kunin & Associates, Inc.

Oreopoulos, P. (2009). *Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labour Market?* Vancouver: Metropolis British Columbia.

Reitz, J. (2001) *Immigrant Skill Utilization in the Canadian Labour Market*. Toronto: Centre for Industrial Relations and Department of Sociology.

Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Global Talent: Hiring Immigrants Makes Good Business Sense*. Sarnia: SLWDB.

Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Sarnia Lambton's Labour Market: A data-driven report on where our talent works today and where it will work tomorrow*. Sarnia: SLWDB.

Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, (2009). *Trends Opportunities Priorities: TOP Report*. Sarnia: SLWDB.

Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board. (2010). *Workforce 2020: Sarnia Lambton's Workforce Action Plan*. Sarnia: SLWDB.