

# Immigrant Attraction and Retention in Perth County

---

By: Brianne Labute and Bakhtawar Khan

Rural Immigration Project

Project Director: Dr. Wayne J. Caldwell

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

July 2015



Funding graciously provided by:



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## Acknowledgements

The Rural Immigration Project team would like to express our gratitude to all those involved in immigration efforts in Perth County for their support with this project. We would especially like to thank Dr. Gezahgn Wordofa for welcoming us with open arms and supporting our work. In addition, we would like to thank staff at the United Way, the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron, the Perth Economic Development Office, the Chamber of Commerce, the town of St. Mary's, and Partners in Employment. We value your input tremendously and hope that this research can help other rural municipalities follow in your footsteps as they try to initiate, expand, or sustain their immigrant attraction, integration, and retention efforts.

We acknowledge and appreciate the support of Dr. Jennifer Ball. She facilitated the first focus group help in Perth County for this research in the form of Circle and has been very supportive throughout this project.

We also want to thank our Project Director, Dr. Wayne Caldwell for the opportunity to engage in this meaningful research and for his support and guidance throughout the process. Additionally, we would like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs for their financial support.

## Executive Summary

With the challenge of declining populations nearing, due aging population and low birth rates, rural communities in Ontario are looking to immigration as a potential avenue through which economic development can be fostered and tax bases maintained. Recognizing the many limitations facing rural municipalities as they try to attract and retain immigrants, a team of researchers from the University of Guelph is conducting research to discover how some small towns and rural municipalities are attracting and retaining immigrants. The Rural Immigration Project chose Perth County as one of four case studies to understand best practices in immigrant attraction and retention in rural Ontario. To this end, the researchers conducted 8 key-informant interviews and two focus groups in Perth County.

The first objective of the research was to understand what Perth County is doing to attract and retain immigrants. The findings revealed that there are three components to immigration efforts in Perth County: the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron (MAPH), the Economic Development initiatives, and the Settlement Services Working Group. These multi-faceted, yet somewhat fragmented, efforts in Perth County are serving the needs of immigrants in the community and helping to attract new immigrants to Perth County.

The second objective of the research was to analyze Perth County's immigration-related efforts. A SWOT analysis revealed some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Perth County's immigration efforts. The key strengths include: the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron (MAPH), community dialogue about immigration, and the Settlement Services Working Group. The weaknesses include: lack of a strategic vision for MAPH, lack of formal collaboration between key players, and lack of awareness of services available to new immigrants. The opportunities include: community amenities and events, extensive service offerings, and increasing number of employment opportunities. The threats include: lack of adequate public transportation, lack of immigrant services on weekends, and lack of support from higher levels of government.

The third objective of the research was to understand the perceptions and experiences of immigrants in Perth County. They were asked to reflect on the factors that attracted them to the County, what made them want to stay, and the supports they wished they had to ease their integration. The main factor that attracted immigrants to Perth County was lifestyle, including: character of the community, parks and theatre, and cost of living. The factors that made

immigrants want to stay included perceptions of safety and opportunity, the perceived sense of belonging to the community, and the lifestyle of small communities. The supports immigrants wished they had included a telephone service specific for immigrants, a streamlined degree recognition system, and career-specific job search help.

In light of these findings, 10 recommendations are proposed for Perth County to enhance their immigrant attraction and retention efforts. They are:

1. Create a cohesive immigrant attraction and retention strategy by strengthening the collaboration between social service organizations and economic development;
2. Contact a Regional Advisor from OMAFRA for support with immigrant attraction and retention;
3. Consider using the collective impact framework to coordinate immigration efforts. A potential avenue for funding such an initiative is the Collective Impact Grant administered through the Trillium Foundation;
4. Consult OMAFRA's Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) report, which outlines a four-step process for small towns and rural municipalities looking to attract and retain immigrants;
5. Consider looking to the Multicultural Centre in Timmins as a model of a satellite multicultural centre;
6. Adopt a "no-wrong door approach" to social service provision. The no wrong door approach involves educating frontline staff to ensure that they have a solid understanding of all the service offerings in the County;
7. Integrate immigrant attraction and retention into Perth's economic development strategy. Look to Oxford County's Labour Market Plan as a resource;
8. Build capacity among MAPH staff and volunteers to ensure they understand all the services available to new immigrants;
9. Work with stakeholders to create a long-term vision and sustainability plan for MAPH; and,
10. Consider lobbying higher levels of government to address systematic barriers immigrants are facing such as: lack of a streamlined credential recognition system, lack of clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities of local governments in attracting and retaining immigrants, and funding support for attracting immigrants and settlement services.

It is hoped that the findings from this research will help Perth County enhance their immigrant attraction and retention efforts. Moreover, these findings will inform the creation of a best practices toolkit, intended for small municipalities looking to attract and retain immigrants.

**Table of Contents**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... I**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... II**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION..... 3**

**2.0 OBJECTIVES ..... 3**

**3.0 METHODS..... 3**

**4.0 CONTEXT: PERTH COUNTRY..... 4**

    4.1 IMMIGRATION TRENDS..... 5

    4.2. IMMIGRANTS IN PERTH COUNTY..... 6

**5.0 IMMIGRATION ATTRACTION AND RETENTION EFFORTS ..... 10**

**6.0 FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS ..... 13**

    6.1. SWOT ANALYSIS ..... 13

        6.1.1. *Strengths*..... 13

        6.1.2. *Weaknesses* ..... 16

        6.1.3. *Opportunities*..... 17

        6.1.4. *Threats* ..... 18

    6.2. NEXT STEPS..... 18

    6.3. IDEAL VISION ..... 20

    6.4. SUMMARY OF SWOT ..... 21

**7.0 FOCUS GROUPS..... 22**

    7.1. IMMIGRANTS IN PERTH COUNTY..... 22

    7.2. THE PULL OF PERTH COUNTY (ATTRACTION)..... 23

    7.3. THE DESIRE TO STAY (RETENTION) ..... 23

    7.4. WISHFUL THINKING (DESIRED SUPPORTS)..... 25

    7.5. BRIEF COMPARISON TO OXFORD COUNTY ..... 26

    7.6. RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 27

    7.7. SETTLEMENT STORIES ..... 28

**8.0 OUR LEARNINGS..... 29**

**9.0 PERTH COUNTY’S BEST PRACTICES ..... 30**

**10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS..... 31**

**REFERENCES..... 33**

**APPENDIX A..... 34**

**APPENDIX B..... 35**

## KEY TERMS

**Immigrant:** Any person who has gone through the Canadian immigration process to become a permanent resident and/or citizen of Canada. For this report, this definition includes people who have chosen to settle in Perth County as their initial home upon arrival in Canada (primary migrants) and people who have chosen to relocate to Perth County after initially living elsewhere in Canada (secondary migrants).

**Immigrant Attraction and Retention:** the efforts aimed at bringing immigrants into the region and encouraging them to stay.

**Local Immigration Partnership (LIP):** a local initiative funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to help identify gaps in service delivery for immigrants and to collaborate and coordinate services in order to fill these gaps.

**Settlement Services:** Settlement services are intended for immigrants to help them find their footing in new surroundings. They include, but are not limited to: help with interpreting and filling out government documents, referrals to community services, help finding jobs or training for specific jobs, and English as Second Language (ESL) classes.

**English as Second Language (ESL) classes:** ESL classes are for immigrants with varied levels of English in addition to their mother tongue. They can range from beginner to advanced levels, depending on the needs of the immigrant.

**Policy Makers:** For this research, policy makers are defined as any individuals who are affiliated with the government and can influence the policy-making or program implementation process.

**Service Providers:** For this research, service providers are defined as individuals or organizations that provide social, financial, or advocacy services and/or support for immigrants. These include organizations whose mandate is specific to immigrants and whose mandate encompasses all people, including immigrants.

Note: These definitions are not universal; they are specific to this report.

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Perth County .....	4
Figure 2: Immigration Trends from 1996-2011 in Perth, Ontario, and Canada. ....	6
Figure 3: Age of Immigrants at Immigration by Sex.....	7
Figure 4: Immigrants to Perth County by Region of Origin, 2011 .....	8
Figure 5: Country of Origin of Immigrants as Percentage of Total Immigrants .....	9

## **1.0 Introduction**

Many small and rural communities in Canada are struggling to maintain their population and employment base. They are challenged by forecasts of declining populations, expected changes in the workforce, and increasing national and global pressure to stay competitive (CRRF, 2005). In response to these challenges, all levels of government in Canada are working with communities to encourage the attraction and retention of primary and secondary immigrants in order to meet labour market needs, sustain population growth, and enhance diversity. However, many communities lack the resources to be able to create strategies to successfully attract and retain immigrants. This report looks at Perth County's efforts at immigrant attraction and retention, which will inform the creation of a toolkit. The resulting toolkit will compile lessons learned from the four counties involved in this research project.

This report is divided into three main sections. First, the purpose of the report, the methods employed, and the context of Perth County are introduced. Next, a findings section presents a SWOT analysis and next steps that emerged from the interviews with service providers and policy makers. Then, the findings from focus groups with immigrants are presented. Finally, recommendations for Perth County are offered

## **2.0 Objectives**

This study has three objectives. They are:

1. To understand immigration efforts in Perth County;
2. To assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) pertaining to immigration efforts in Perth County; and,
3. To explore the perceptions and experiences of immigrants living in Perth County.

## **3.0 Methods**

Perth County was selected as one of four case studies for the Rural Immigration Project led by Dr. Wayne Caldwell at the University of Guelph, which is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). The goal of this project is to help rural regions across Ontario develop policies and programs in order to attract and retain immigrants.

To investigate the situation in Perth County, the researchers used a mixed methods approach that included secondary data analysis, interviews, and focus groups. First, data from the National Household Survey (NHS, 2011) was analyzed to provide more information about immigration in Perth County. Then, interviews were conducted with people who were identified as key informants. Finally, two focus groups were conducted. The first one was conducted in the form of Circle<sup>1</sup> to understand the lived experience of immigrants in Perth County. The second was an informal focus group that involved conversations with immigrants at an event held by the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron. The secondary analysis of NHS data is presented in the next section.

#### 4.0 Context: Perth Country

Perth County is an upper-tier municipality located in southwestern Ontario (Perth District Health Unit, 2011). Perth County is composed of four lower-tier municipalities including: Perth South, West Perth, Perth East, and North Perth. Two additional “separated” municipalities (Stratford and St Mary’s) are located within the geography of Perth County. As of 2011, Perth County had a population of 73, 480 with Stratford as its most populated municipality (Statistics Canada, 2011). The County neighbors include the Region of Waterloo and Counties of Oxford, and London-Middlesex, which are known to be some of the fastest growing regions in the province of Ontario (Perth County, n.d.). In many of the reports pertaining to Perth County, the high quality of life is mentioned.

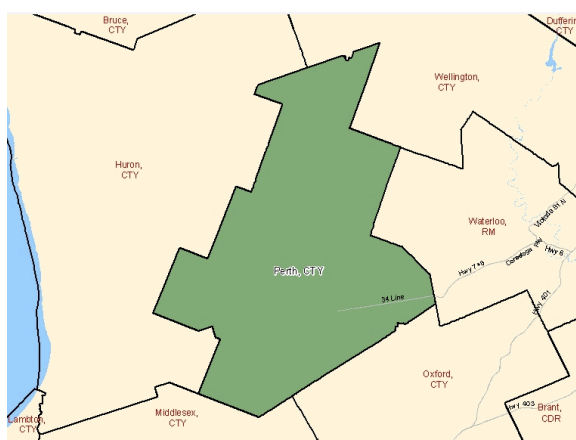


Figure 1: Map of Perth County

---

<sup>1</sup> The Circle Process will be further explained in the Focus Group Findings section of this report

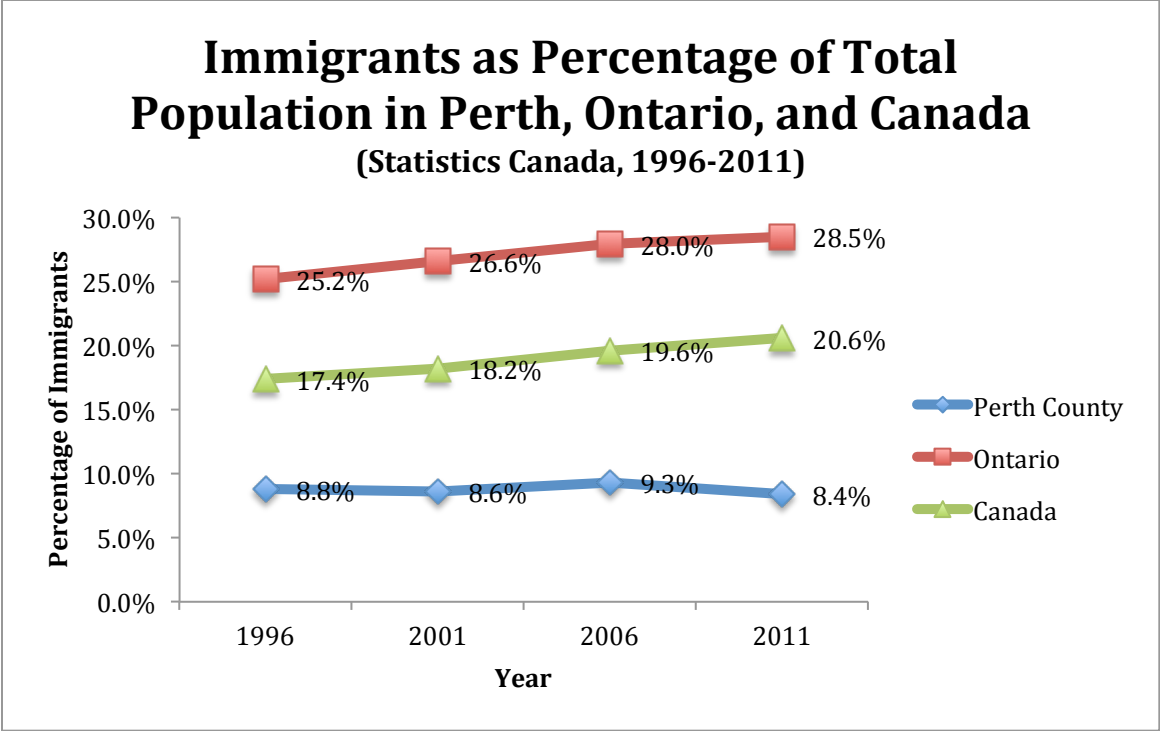
The geographic region of Perth County has a population of 73,480 people (Statistics Canada, 2012). Although the population of Perth County is expected to increase by 3.8 percent by 2022 (HCA, 2011), statistics show that the population is aging and that there is outmigration from the region. According to Harry Cummings and Associates (2011), approximately 22 percent of the population in urban areas of Perth County is over the age of 60. In addition, "between 2001 and 2006 the size of the Perth and Huron population in the 25 to 44 age group declined by approximately 8% compared to a 2% decline for the province as a whole. This change is partly linked to outmigration and the pursuit of employment opportunities elsewhere" (p. 11). Moreover, the Reproductive Health Status in Perth County (2004) report stated that the fertility rate in Perth County was 1.8 children per woman of childbearing age (p. 3). Although higher than the Ontario average of 1.5 at the time of the report, the fertility rate in Perth County is lower than the minimum population replacement rate of 2.1 (Caldwell, 2014). These statistics suggest that Perth County may be faced with labour force and population challenges in the future. Attracting and retaining immigrants has been identified as a potential way to mitigate these challenges. However, an economic development strategy focusing on Perth County in 2010 stated that:

The region is not attracting immigrants compared to the rest of southwestern Ontario. Immigrants can be either others from outside of the region or new Canadians. In addition, the local visible minority population is actually declining. Given that immigration is the primary source of population and labour force growth in Canada, this will have implications for the region's future labour force (Miller, Dickson, Blais, 2010, p.8).

The following section describes the composition of immigrants in Perth County, as per the NHS conducted by Statistics Canada in 2011.

#### *4.1 Immigration Trends*

The immigration trends (1996-2011) in Perth County in comparison to Ontario and Canada are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

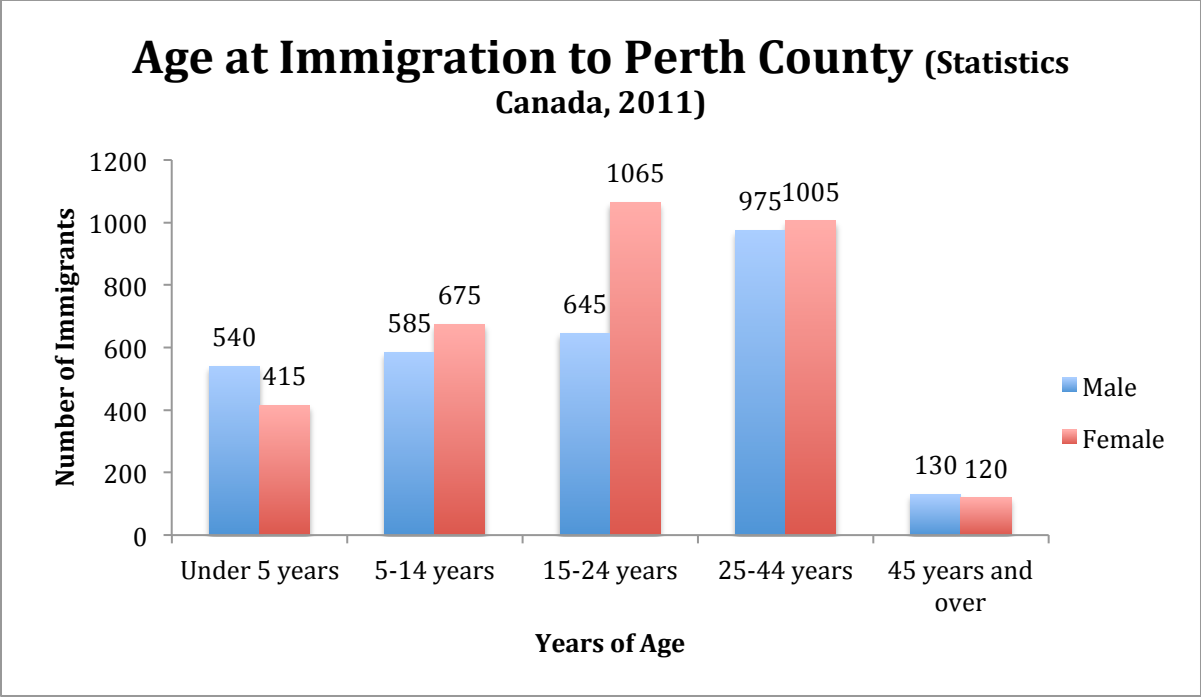


**Figure 2: Immigration Trends from 1996-2011 in Perth, Ontario, and Canada.**

From 1996 to 2011, the percentage of immigrants to Perth County decreased from 8.8 to 8.4 percent, a 0.4 percent decrease. In contrast, the number of immigrants to Ontario rose from 25.2 percent to 28.5 from 1996 to 2011, a 3.3 percent increase. Similarly, the percentage of immigrants to Canada increased from 17.4 percent in 1996 to 20.6 percent in 2011, a 3.2 percent increase. This shows that the percentage of immigrants to Perth County has decreased slightly while the percentage of immigrants to Ontario and Canada has increased by approximately 3 percent each.

**4.2. Immigrants in Perth County**

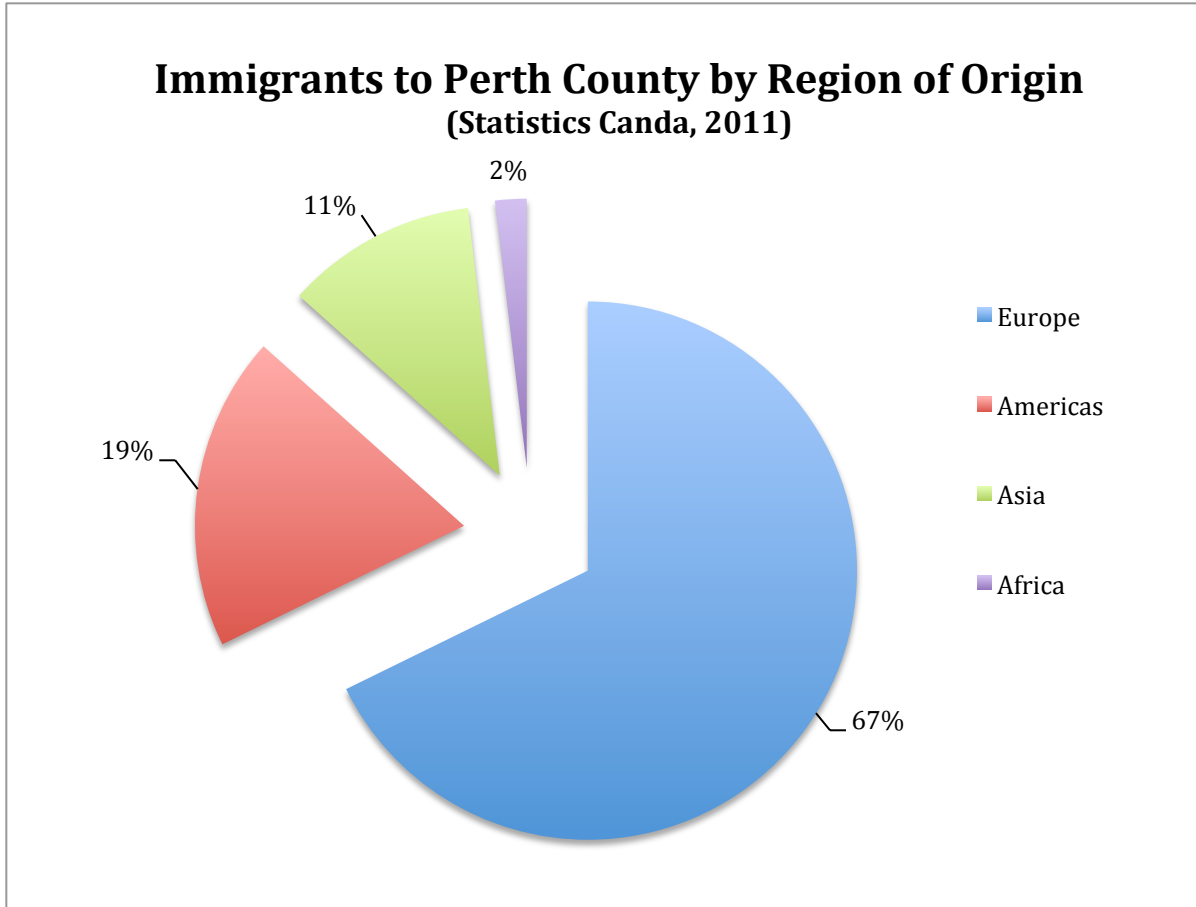
The sex distribution of immigrants in Perth County as of 2011 as well as their age at immigration is shown in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: Age of Immigrants at Immigration by Sex (Statistics Canada, 2011)**

This graph shows that there are differences between the ages at which male and female immigrants chose to move to Perth County. The highest number of female immigrants (1,065) chose to migrate between the ages of 15-24 years; whereas, only 645 males of the same age group made the decision to move, a 39 percent difference. Similarly, the highest number of males moved to Perth County between the ages of 25-44 years. By contrast, the graph shows that very few immigrants to Perth County immigrated at or after the age of 45. As can be expected, the majority of immigrants are between the working age group of 15-44.

The regions of origin of the immigrants in Perth County as of 2011 are presented in Figure 4 below.

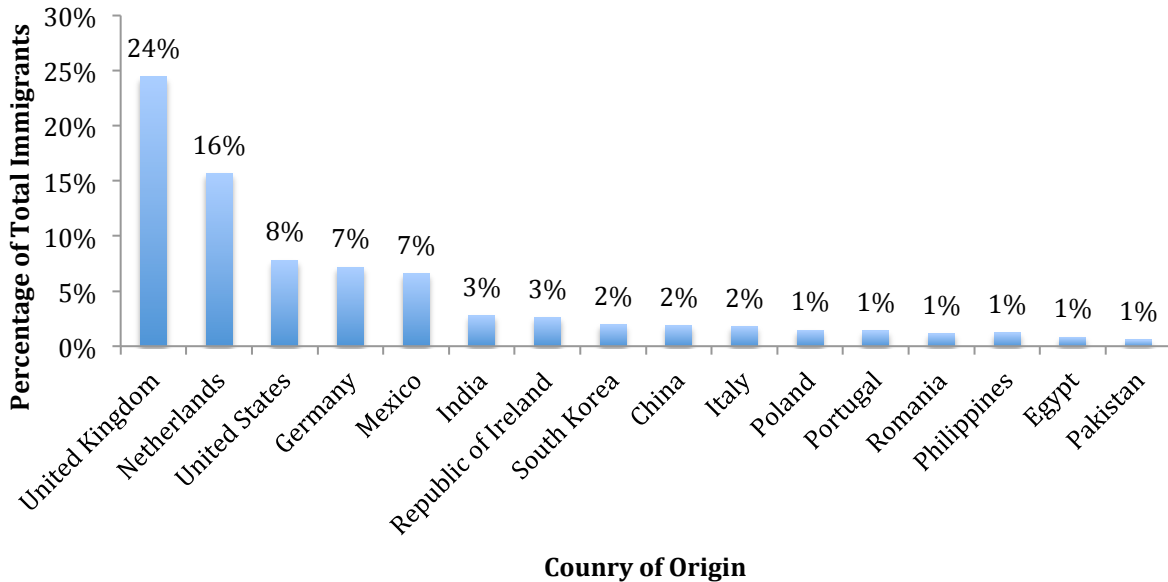


**Figure 4: Immigrants to Perth County by Region of Origin, 2011**

As of 2011, the majority of immigrants in Perth County emigrated from Europe, approximately 67 percent. Immigrants of African descent made up the minority of the immigrants in the County, approximately 2 percent.

Immigrants, as a percentage of total immigrants in 2011, by country of origin in Perth County are presented in Figure 5 below.

## Country of Origin of Immigrants as Percentage of Immigrant Population (Statistics Canada, 2011)



**Figure 5: Country of Origin of Immigrants as Percentage of Total Immigrants**

In 2011, approximately 80 percent of all immigrants to Perth County came from 16 countries of origin. Approximately 40 percentage of immigrants in the County identified the United Kingdom or the Netherlands as their country of origin; whereas, only approximately nine percent identified India, China, Philippines, and Pakistan as their respective countries of origin, a 31 percent difference.

In summary, immigration to Perth County decreased by 0.4 percent from 1996 to 2011. The majority of immigrants to Perth County immigrate between the ages of 15 to 45 and they originate from European countries. In addition to this picture of immigration in Perth County, a table that breaks down immigration by municipality is presented in Appendix A as per the 2011 NHS data by Statistics Canada. The section that follows will highlight the immigration efforts currently being undertaken in Perth County.

## 5.0 Immigration Attraction and Retention Efforts

This section will describe the immigration efforts in Perth County; mainly focusing on the Multicultural Centre of Perth - Huron (MAPH), Perth County's Labour Market Strategy, and the Settlement Services Working Group. It is important to note that the following is not intended to provide a complete picture of immigration efforts in Perth; rather, this report is reflective of the data collected by the researchers from March 2015 - May 2015.

Perth is unique in its approach to immigrant attraction and retention because it began as a grassroots initiative started by a private individual, Dr. Gezahgn Wordofa. Dr. Wordofa, an immigrant himself, came to Canada a few years ago and experienced, first hand, the struggles new immigrants face. Reflecting on his personal experience, and the lack of settlement services in the area, he decided to volunteer his time to assist new immigrants in the community. Dr. Wordofa used to meet new immigrants at a selection of coffee shops in Stratford to assist them with a variety of issues. His meetings at coffee shops started to grow and he unofficially founded the Multicultural Association in 2012. Dr. Wordofa knew working out of coffee shops was not sustainable, so he approached the United Way for assistance. In 2013, with the assistance of the United Way, a business plan was created for the Multicultural Association of Perth - Huron (MAPH) and it officially became a project of the United Way. Currently, there is a three-year Memorandum of Understanding between the United Way and MAPH to house the Multicultural Centre. Within the three years, there is hope that MAPH will find financial sustainability and be housed by a partner organization. The Multicultural Centre is governed by a steering committee. The steering committee is composed of members from various social services organizations and includes representation from two immigrants. According to the project documentation, the Multicultural Centre has four main purposes:

- Supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers to Perth Huron by acting as an initial point of contact and as a referral hub for government and community services and resources;
- Providing guidance to newcomers to enhance access to these services and resources and minimizing the unique barriers encountered by newcomers in rural areas;
- Supporting the efforts of local economic development organizations to attract newcomers to Perth and retain them in the local workforce by liaising with employment-related agencies; and,

Promoting ongoing social connections among newcomer groups, and between newcomers and Perth Huron societies as a whole, by highlighting and celebrating the similarities as well as the unique cultures that exist in Perth Huron.

It was estimated that since its inception MAPH has seen over 580 clients, representing over 54 different countries (NONA Backgrounder, 2015). In addition to volunteers, MAPH has three part-time staff: an outreach facilitator, a project administrator, and an office administrator/project coordinator position. According to information from MAPH staff, financial support for MAPH activities comes from various places such as the Stratford Local Arts Council, SunLife Financial, Labourforce Strategy Project, and Trillium Foundation. In addition to the front line service provided by MAPH, they have recently launched the Newcomer Outreach and Needs Assessment (NONA) project to demonstrate the need for MAPH. More specifically, they are collecting data to assess newcomer needs and available resources to promote settlement, integration, and employment. The project plans to meet these objectives through research, outreach, and the development of new programs and services (NONA Backgrounder, 2015). Despite MAPH's current progress, the steering committee acknowledges the need to plan for long-term sustainability. The key informants described a variety of visions for the future of MAPH including becoming a charitable organization; becoming a satellite office to one of the larger multicultural centres in London or Kitchener-Waterloo; or, becoming a resident program of another organization such as the Public Library.

The second component of immigration efforts is the dialogue and initiatives pertaining to immigrant attraction and retention within the County's Economic Development offices (Perth, St. Marys, and Stratford). An updated Labour Market Strategy for Perth County is almost completed. This Labour Market Strategy, developed by Economic Development staff and an accompanying action plan committee, is expected to be released to the public in summer 2015. With respect to immigrant attraction and retention, the document highlights gaps in social services provision for the general population, including immigrants. The focus of the Labour Market Strategy will be to increase the capacity of existing organizations to fill these gaps, rather than create additional services.

The Economic Development office also championed the creation of a Web Portal in partnership with employment agencies, Conestoga College, University of Waterloo, Partners in Employment, local industry partners, Perth Community Futures and the United Way in the hopes of promoting the county to newcomers. The portal is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and is nearing completion. Action items within the Labour Market Strategy, such as the social services audit and web portal, will be tackled as resources become available. No one organization has the financial or human capacity to take on all the action items articulated in the strategy; therefore, partnerships and the leveraging of resources will be of paramount importance. Since all the action items are not assigned to particular groups, there is hope that the action plan committee will continue to meet quarterly to keep the initiatives moving forward. Some industry representatives were engaged in the Labour Market Strategy's development and have expressed interest in financially supporting some of the action items if there is mutual benefit. Regarding immigration, an employer suggested they would be willing to financially support initiatives such as sector-specific recruitment videos.

The third component of immigration efforts in Perth County is the Settlement Services Working Group. This group is a joint effort between Perth and Huron County and consists of employment services, educational services, the Huron Local Immigration Partnership, the United Way, and MAPH. The group has recently received funding from the United Way to bring a part-time Settlement Services Counsellor to Exeter and Stratford, respectively.

Although there is interest from different groups in immigration, a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities is yet to be articulated. Some key informants expressed frustration with the expectations of the federal and provincial governments regarding the municipality's role in immigrant attraction and retention. As a result, immigration efforts can become disjointed with agencies only picking up parts of immigration that falls under their mandate. For example, the mandate of the Economic Development office involves creating strategies to mitigate labour market issues, which has them looking at immigration from the economic angle only.

As mentioned there are three components to immigration efforts in Perth County: MAPH; Economic Development initiatives; and, the Settlement Services Working Group. The MAPH

supports settlement and integration of newcomers, provides guidance, supports the efforts of economic development offices to attract and retain immigrants, and promotes ongoing social connections through large-scale community events. The Economic Development office creates County-wide strategies to attract and retain immigrants to fill gaps in the labour force in response to labour market demands. And, the Settlement Services Working Group mobilized resources to bring a part-time Settlement Services Counsellor to serve immigrants in Stratford and Exeter. The multifaceted immigration-related efforts in Perth County presented in this section are analyzed for their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the section that follows.

## **6.0 Findings: Interviews**

### ***6.1. SWOT Analysis***

One objective of this report is to provide a SWOT analysis to Perth County with respect to immigration efforts. A SWOT analysis looks at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of any unit of analysis (in this case Perth County). The strengths are the qualities, practices, or philosophies that help the unit in question progress towards their goals. By contrast, weaknesses are any qualities, practices, or philosophies that hinder progress towards defined goals. As such, strengths and weaknesses are internal to Perth County; whereas, opportunities and threats are external. Opportunities are the trends, conditions, or characteristics in the larger picture that can help Perth County progress towards their goal. In contrast, threats are trends, conditions, or characteristics that are external to immigration efforts in Perth County. In this case, a SWOT analysis was conducted to unpack the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Perth County's immigration efforts including the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron, the Labour Market Strategy, and the Settlement Services Working Group.

#### **6.1.1. Strengths**

Perth County has many strengths including: its grassroots approach, the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron (MAPH), community dialogue about immigration, the Settlement Services Working Group, and political support. As mentioned in the previous section, the MAPH

began as a grassroots initiative by Dr. Gezahgn Wordofa who continues to champion immigrant integration in Perth County. Dr. Wordofa is a major asset to immigration efforts as he has the natural ability to connect people from all different groups to work towards a common goal. Dr. Wordofa's understanding of the needs of new immigrants is not assumed, rather, understood through his own personal experiences and his interactions with new immigrants. As a result, the true needs of new immigrants become central to the development of new initiatives or programs. Many communities recognize the need for immigrants as economic agents and they try to create social conditions in order to retain immigrants. In Perth County, Dr. Wordofa plays a key role in building the social connections that ultimately make immigrants want to stay. In contrast, the researchers have observed that other communities are struggling to combat the social isolation immigrants tend to feel in rural and small towns.

The creation of the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron is the county's main strength for a variety of reasons. The association is a one-stop referral service for immigrants. Key informants consistently noted the strong offering of services in the County but immigrants' awareness of these services has historically been low. Ideally, if new immigrants hear of MAPH, which is increasingly becoming more well known, they can be directed to other municipal services to get established in their new home. MAPH provides more than referral services. The organization has activities that directly and indirectly support the social inclusion of immigrants. For example, MAPH's Events Committee plans a variety of multicultural events that are well attended by diverse groups of people from the immigrant and the non-immigrant communities. These events, such as the recent International Women's Day event, celebrate multiculturalism, raise funds for MAPH, and create a space for immigrants to interact with the greater community. Additionally, volunteering with MAPH and other community organizations such as the Local Community Food Centre, is promoted and encouraged by MAPH, furthering the social integration process for new immigrants.

Immigrants play a variety of important roles within MAPH. As mentioned, Dr. Wordofa is the Outreach Coordinator. In addition, the steering committee for MAPH consists of eight people, three out of which are immigrants (including Dr. Wordofa). This ensures that the immigrant lens is included in all aspects of MAPH. Another strength of the MAPH is the monitoring system that

has been implemented through the Newcomer Outreach and Needs Assessment (NONA) project. Through the use of intake forms, interviews, and focus groups, the NONA project is planning to track MAPH's clients and identify the needs of newcomers to better inform future programming.

Community dialogue around immigration is the third strength in Perth County. MAPH is sparking dialogue about multiculturalism and helping Perth County become a welcoming community through events and outreach. In addition, there is dialogue about immigrant attraction and retention in economic development circles with the recent development of a new Labour Market Strategy. The Labour Market Strategy involved the creation of a committee comprised of groups such as industry, municipalities, universities and colleges, amongst others to discuss labour market needs and potential solutions, including immigration.

The fourth strength of Perth County's approach is the Settlement Services Working Group. Interested parties from Perth and Huron County formed this working group and have successfully secured funding from the United Way for part-time settlement services in Stratford and Exeter on a pilot basis.

The final strength is that immigrant attraction and retention efforts appear to be garnering some political support. According to one key informant, MAPH proposed an application for funding to County Council, which was not granted, however, the council was interested and supportive of the activities being undertaken. The same key informant reported that the County Council understands the need for immigration, and there is hope that funding will be granted for projects in the future.

To recap, the five strengths of Perth County are its grassroots approach, the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron, community dialogue about immigration in economic development circles, the Settlement Services Working Group, and political support.

### 6.1.2. Weaknesses

As with any initiatives, there are some weaknesses surrounding immigration efforts in Perth County. These weakness, as highlighted by the key informants, include: minimal outreach to rural areas, lack of awareness of services, unclear roles and responsibilities, lack of strategic vision for MAPH, lack of formal collaboration between key players, and the absence of a full-time settlement counsellor.

The first weakness, lack of outreach activities to the rural areas, is a result of limited financial resources. Several key informants spoke about the importance of extending MAPH's services beyond Stratford once more resources become available. The second weakness is that immigrants and service providers' lack of awareness of services. Promotion of these services could be improved. In particular, one key informant felt that there was a need to build capacity amongst the staff and volunteers at MAPH to ensure they are referring their clients to the right services. The third weakness is the lack of a long-term vision for MAPH. Members of the steering committee felt the next step was to engage in a facilitated session to create a strategic plan, including a strategy for financial sustainability. The fourth weakness is the confusion around immigration responsibilities within the County. The responsibility of immigrant attraction and retention is increasingly being downloaded onto municipalities by higher levels of government without a clear indication of how efforts should manifest. As a result, there is an increased need to encourage a collaborative approach with potential stakeholders in the County. Currently, there is no formalized network bringing people together to talk about immigration in Perth County; therefore, different groups are working on immigration issues independently. For example, there could be a stronger connection between economic development and the social services (including MAPH), especially since one of MAPH's objectives is to assist the economic development office in attracting immigrants to the region. A final weakness of Perth County is the lack of a full-time

*“[We need] to be able to hold regular clinics in the smaller towns and rural areas so that it is more accessible to people. We tend to be centered more around Stratford. We need to reach out more into Perth and Huron counties and make our presence known there and hold more events there” -  
MAPH employee*

Settlement Counsellor, although there is a pilot project to establish a satellite office where a settlement counsellor from a larger centre comes to Stratford and Exeter (in Huron County) once a month. These factors - lack of rural outreach; lack of awareness of services; unclear responsibilities; lack of strategic visioning; lack of a formalized network; and, the absence of a full-time Settlement Counsellor - have the potential to hinder immigrant attraction and retention efforts in Perth County.

### 6.1.3. Opportunities

*“Part of the role of [the] Economic Development office is to ensure that the community has the foundation for growth and sustainability, making immigration part of their portfolio even though it is more of a social issue” - Economic Development Officer*

Many opportunities, external to MAPH and the Labour Market Strategy, exist in Perth County that may enhance immigration efforts. Some of the opportunities that were mentioned by key informants include: community amenities, community events, extensive service offerings, and employment opportunities. It was reiterated by key informants that Perth County is a great place to live because of its many amenities. Low cost of living, sense of community, theatre culture, a good parks network, slower pace of life, proximity to urban centres, interesting architecture, and strong presence of community groups were some of the examples used to describe the general factors that make Perth County attractive. The extensive offering of community events, many of which are a result of the flourishing tourism industry, further fosters Perth’s sense of community.

Specific factors that immigrants find attractive include: the availability of support services and an increasing number of employment opportunities. Perth County has many services useful to immigrants. Upon arrival, many engage in the ESL program held at The Centre for Employment and Learning in Stratford. Due to some innovative approaches, the impact of the ESL classes extends beyond the learners’ improved English; the ESL classes also acts as a platform for social integration. The ESL program introduces new immigrants to each other and involves them with other community organizations and events. Some also find Perth County attractive because there are an increasing number of employment opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, healthcare, transportation, science and technology, and financial

services. These opportunities and attractiveness factors - community amenities, community events, extensive service offerings, and employment opportunities - should be considered when creating strategies to promote the region to attract new immigrants.

#### **6.1.4. Threats**

There are a diverse range of external threats that may impede immigration efforts in Perth County. The threats described by key informants were on a community and governmental level. The overarching community threat to immigration efforts is the lack of available funding to support existing and new initiatives. For example, organizations such as MAPH have the momentum and capacity to expand their activities; however, procurement of funding continues to be a challenge. Additionally, the creation of a larger collaborative group to work on immigration issues will require funding for backbone staff to maintain the network and perform administrative duties. Other community level threats include: the lack of adequate transportation, and an absence of immigrant services on the weekends. On a government level, concern was expressed over the federal government's push towards attracting skilled workers to Canada. The labour needs in the county require both skilled and unskilled workers, especially to fill agricultural and manufacturing positions. Additionally, many key informants felt the provincial and federal government's regionalization efforts could be improved, as there are limited financial resources at the local level to create marketing strategies to attract primary and secondary immigrants.

#### **6.2. Next Steps**

This section will describe the next steps identified by the key informants. The next steps are divided into two categories: 1) next steps for MAPH; and, 2) next steps for immigration efforts at the County level.

## 1. *Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron*

The next steps for MAPH, according to the key informants, include:

- Secure long term funding and formalize the organization;
- Create a strategy for long-term sustainability (Eg. will MAPH be a charity, housed by a partner agency, or a satellite of a larger Multicultural Centre?);
- Build capacity among MAPH staff and volunteers to ensure they understand all the services available to new immigrants;
- Continue to facilitate collaborations with community organizations in order to enhance the social networks of new immigrants;
- Recruit more volunteers for the office;
- Increase outreach to rural areas;
- Create a welcome wagon to personally welcome newcomers into the community;
- Increase awareness of MAPH to new immigrants and the broader community;
- Use the space at MAPH to host information sessions about different service providers; and,
- Create a volunteer program where MAPH clients can consult with Canadians who are interested in travelling abroad, as a way to facilitate cross-cultural exchange.

*“Immigration is going to happen in this area and it is going to expand. The question is do we simply watch it expand or do we support immigration and support the process so that it happens in a way that is easier for people and doesn’t involve as much hardship and loneliness”*

*- MAPH employee*

## 2. *County Immigration Efforts*

The next steps for the County, according to the key informants, include:

- Develop bridging programs to improve the economic integration for new immigrants through internships and short courses;
- Encourage the provincial government to assist with immigrant attraction efforts by providing promotional materials to immigrants at points of entry;

- Offer College or University level credits for completion of advanced ESL classes to support new immigrants hoping to attend post-secondary education; and,
- Create a partnership with the tourism office to promote the region to secondary immigrants.

### *6.3. Ideal Vision*

The ideal vision for immigration in Perth County is nicely summarized by the following two quotes:

*“To have a society where newcomers contribute to the community and feel at home in the community and, even though they retain their own cultures and traditions, that they share those traditions with the community.” - Multicultural Centre Staff Member*

*“In an ideal world, immigrants would come into a land of opportunity where they can lead a life of their potential in full connection with the community where they can learn from each other and the community richness is born. I think we want newcomers to experience not only a welcoming but beyond a welcoming community, an invitation to participate. Sometimes, we are good at saying hello and we are not good at having people over for dinner so there needs to be a deeper relationship than simply a welcome.” - United Way Staff Member*

#### 6.4. Summary of SWOT

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassroots approach</li> <li>• The Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron (MAPH)</li> <li>• Community dialogue about immigration</li> <li>• The Settlement Services Working Group</li> <li>• Beginning to garner political support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of outreach to rural areas</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of services available to new immigrants</li> <li>• Unclear roles and responsibilities pertaining to immigration efforts</li> <li>• Lack of a strategic vision for MAPH</li> <li>• Lack of formal collaboration between key players</li> <li>• Lack of a full-time settlement counsellor</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community amenities</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Extensive service offerings</li> <li>• Increasing number of employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of long term funding for immigration efforts</li> <li>• Lack of adequate public transportation</li> <li>• Lack of immigrant services on weekends</li> <li>• Government focus on skilled workers (when there is also a need for unskilled labourers)</li> <li>• Limited government support for immigrant attraction efforts</li> </ul>

## 7.0 Focus Groups

In order to understand the experiences of immigrants in Perth County, two focus groups were conducted with the help of the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron (MAPH). The first focus group was held in April 2015 and used a Circle process, facilitated by Dr. Jennifer Ball who is a trained Circle process facilitator. Using Circle allowed the researchers to collect data, but it also created a supportive space for participants to share their stories. It is important to note that the Circle process is a native tradition that should not be appropriated without proper training. The second focus group was held in May 2015 and was informal in nature as it involved conversations with immigrants at an event held by the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron.

Approximately 20 immigrants participated in the two focus groups, representing various demographics, backgrounds, and residency statuses. In the focus groups, the immigrants were asked about the factors that attracted them to Perth County, the supports that helped them settle into the region, and the services they wished they had upon arrival that could have made their transition easier. An analysis of the data revealed the following key findings: the main factor that attracts immigrants to Perth County is lifestyle; immigrants feel socially connected because of MAPH; and, immigrants wish that they had a greater awareness of the services available for them. These findings will be elaborated upon below after a brief description of the characteristics of the participants.

### *7.1. Immigrants in Perth County*

The immigrants who participated in the focus groups were of various genders, ages, ethnic backgrounds, professional interests, and residency statuses. Approximately 20 immigrants (13 females and 7 males) participated in the discussions. The information below is based on information they provided the researchers in a pre-focus group survey. The age of participants ranged from 25 - 65+. Their incomes ranged from less than 10,000 to between \$50,000-70,000/year. They represented approximately 12 countries including: Colombia, Ethiopia, Philippines, Mexico, Spain, Iraq, El Salvador, Venezuela, Greece, Egypt, Trinidad, and China. Some of their diverse professional backgrounds included Personal Support Worker, Engineer, Doctor, and Entrepreneurs. Some of the immigrants were employed in their respective

profession, others were working towards achieving Canadian credentials, and the remainder were unemployed or retired. And, the participants included secondary immigrants categorized as Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The various voices of these diverse participants, as captured in the focus groups, are presented below.

### *7.2. The Pull of Perth County (Attraction)*

The literature on immigration cites job opportunities and the presence of friends and family networks as the primary factors that attract immigrants to municipalities. Contrary to the literature, 100 percent of the immigrants at the focus groups mentioned “lifestyle” as a primary factor that attracted them to Perth County. Descriptions of lifestyle included the theatre and entertainment, the parks and recreation trails, perceptions of safety, perceived peacefulness, low cost of living, friendliness of community, restaurants, nature, the train route connecting them to Toronto, and the small-town feel. In addition to lifestyle, approximately 10 percent (2 out of 20) of immigrants mentioned the presence of family, employment and educational opportunities, and cost of living as factors that were attractive to them. An immigrant from Mitchell mentioned the pull of a low cost of living as the reason she chose to relocate to Mitchell with her family of 6. Almost all participants chose Stratford and/or elsewhere in Perth County after initially migrating to a bigger Centre such as Regina, London, or Kitchener. It is also interesting to note that some participants (approximately 4 out of 20) were not residing in Perth County at the time of the focus groups but were considering relocating.

*“Stratford is like a big city but in a small community and that is unique.”*

### *7.3. The Desire to Stay (Retention)*

After being asked about the factors that attracted them to Perth County, immigrants were asked to reflect on what helped them settle and want to stay in the area. The literature on immigration states that social integration and a sense of

*“ I moved to Stratford because of my brother. He liked the lifestyle of the small towns. We first settled in Regina but my brother didn't like the lifestyle of the big city. He then moved to Stratford and liked the lifestyle here. I had some job opportunities in big cities, but I would like to continue to live in Stratford.”*

belonging are the primary factors that make immigrants want to stay in a community. In speaking about factors of retention, approximately 40 percent mentioned the virtues that Canadian society offers like safety, opportunity, and diversity. Another 40 percent spoke about social connection. They mentioned the important role that the MAPH plays in helping them stay connected to each other and as a source of social support. The remaining 20 percent spoke of “the character of the city” as a factor that made them want to stay in Stratford. To illustrate, one

*“Let the government put away you are over qualified. Let the government put away you need Canadian experience. Let the government put away you need the language. You have to work to keep it up [the language] and gain the experience. The government pays you to stay at home and not work...the government should subsidize the company and say hire this person. Six months down the road he has the experience, he has a social life, and he has an understanding about the character of life and the culture in Canada. You don’t have to learn just the language but also the culture. If the government focused on the value of a human, a lot could happen.”*

participant said that: “many people think you have a job and you follow the job to the city. Really it is one of the important things but when you have two things at the same time: the character of the city and a job, it is more magnetizing for newcomers. You find the longer time you stay, the more you love it...I have a feeling in this city that this is my home.” From the focus groups, it is clear that immigrants perceive settlement as a process. This process is made easier for immigrants by tapping into MAPH’s social support network, enjoying the lifestyle offered in Stratford, and by keeping Canada’s positive attributes (safety, opportunity, and diversity) in mind.

*“If I can’t find a job in my field, I will go elsewhere. Living on welfare is not a good life and I don’t want it.”*

It is interesting to note that the factors that were noted as being attractive about Perth County to immigrants were the same factors that made them want to stay, countering the conventional wisdom that job opportunities are the primary reason why immigrants will move.

#### 7.4. *Wishful Thinking (Desired Supports)*

While discussing the factors that made them want to stay in Perth County, participants also reflected on the supports they wished they had to help them settle. A few key ideas that were brought up included:

- Having a telephone support service for immigrants;
- Developing a streamlined degree recognition system; and,
- Procuring job search assistance to find employment in their respective fields of training and experience.

*“We need culture, we need respect, and we need a network.”*

In addition, one participant vehemently spoke about the many programs and services that are available for immigrants. He stated that: “more information and more integration [more awareness] for us is what we need.” He mentioned programs like the LINK ESL program, the bursaries that are available for low-income students, and Ontario Works as lost opportunities for immigrants who are not aware of these services and/or do not have access to them. Along similar lines, approximately 40 percent of participants (8 out of 20) mentioned the various services that they use at present, including: MAPH, healthcare services, ESL classes, and youth programs for their children. Although many participants mentioned making use of some of the services

*“The government should be more transparent of the barriers a new immigrant will face so that people can make informed decisions of whether or not they want to leave their home country.”*

available for immigrants, one suggested that more services are available than those being used. This reflects a need to raise the capacity of front-line service providers interacting with immigrants to ensure that immigrants are being informed of available services.

In speaking with immigrants outside of Stratford (from Mitchell), it was pointed out that accessing essential services such as ESL classes are difficult to access because of the distance. Developing rural outreach programs, such as satellite or virtual ESL classes, could potentially address this concern.

In summary, the focus groups revealed the factors that attracted immigrants to Perth County in general and Stratford in particular, the factors that made them want to stay, and the supports they wished they had in place to help them settle. The main factor that attracted immigrants to Perth County was lifestyle, including: character of city, parks and theatre, and cost of living. The factors that made immigrants want to stay included perceptions of safety and opportunity, the perceived sense of belonging to the community, and the lifestyle of small communities. The supports they wished they had included a telephone service specific for immigrants, a streamlined degree recognition system, and career-specific job search help. One immigrant in particular expressed that there should be more awareness of and access to the services that are already in place for immigrants so that immigrants can benefit from them as they strive to restart their lives in a new geographic location.

#### *7.5. Brief Comparison to Oxford County*

Almost every immigrant at the first focus group we conducted in Oxford County was thirsty for social connection and mentioned feeling socially isolated. The moment they walked into the door of the library where the focus group was taking place, they were surprised to see 20 other immigrants from the area. The fascination continued throughout the night and at the end of the focus group, many immigrants came up to the researchers saying: “please do this again, I want to be friends with everyone here but it is too soon.” In addition, many immigrants cried as they spoke of their social isolation and feelings of loneliness. In contrast, only one immigrant in Perth County spoke of social isolation in the two focus groups that were conducted. The researchers attribute this stark difference to the MAPH and the key role that Dr. Wordofa plays in bringing people together, coordinating social events, and helping immigrants achieve a sense of belonging. The MAPH serves as a shared space in which immigrants can foster social connections and share their struggles. The focus groups revealed that immigrants do indeed feel connected and socially integrated.

## *7.6. Recommendations*

The key recommendations from the focus group participants are three-fold. First, the idea of a telephone service to help immigrants with immigration-related issues was proposed. Second, although recognizing it is out of the mandate of local communities, the idea of a streamlined degree recognition system was proposed in response to the many complaints about degree recognition in Canada. Third, capacity building of immigrant-serving staff was proposed to help the front-line staff gain more knowledge of the Canadian system and the services that are available for immigrants. These three recommendations would help break down some of the barriers that immigrants face as they try to settle and integrate into small towns and rural communities.

## 7.7. *Settlement Stories*

### **Kenny's Struggle with Degree Recognition**

Kenny is an IT professional who immigrated from Egypt in 2011. He first moved to Regina because his brother lived there. Being proactive, Kenny sought to get his degree recognized upon moving so that he could start applying for jobs with credentials that are recognized in Canada. He went through one process, paid approximately \$250 dollars in money and 2 months in time, and thought he got his credentials recognized. When he applied for a job, he found out that his company did not accept the degree recognition process he went through. He then had to undergo the process again using a different avenue that the company recommended. Being fed up with the process and the lack of consistency in the system, Kenny used the focus group as an opportunity to express his frustration and recommended that the Government of Canada invest in a streamlined degree recognition system. Such a system would make the lives of skilled immigrants easier upon arrival, thereby allowing professionals to contribute to the economy as soon as possible.

### **Sarah's Appreciation for the Multicultural Association**

Sarah is a first generation immigrant who moved to Stratford in the 1980s from Trinidad. She moved to the area because of her husband. Sarah was enthused when she found out about MAPH. She deeply appreciates the work and effort that Dr. Wordofa puts into the events. She said that when she moved to Stratford, she recognized the need for something like the MAPH but was too busy raising her kids and trying to put food on the table to start something. She was impressed that Dr. Wordofa, while still facing similar challenges, dedicated his time to mobilize resources and garner the support needed to create space for immigrants to come together and share their diversity with the wider community.

## 8.0 Our Learnings

The primary research conducted with Perth County offered many learnings that will be incorporated into a toolkit for the Rural Immigration Project. The key learnings include:

1. “The Geza Factor”: the key role that Dr. Geza Wordofa has played in bringing together various groups using his networking skills and spearheading the creation of the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron was dubbed “the Geza Factor” by the Director of this Project. It is remarkable to see how much momentum one key player can create in a movement;
2. The fragmented nature of immigration programs and policies in Perth County can be expected in the take-off stage of County-wide immigration efforts. A cohesive network can be weaved once the conversation has started and strategic partnerships have been formed;
3. Immigrants and key-informants alike specifically mentioned the lifestyle in Perth County as a factor that is attractive. The evidence presented in this report suggests that the critical role of lifestyle in attracting and retaining immigrants cannot be overstated;
4. Although research efforts such as the NONA project are underway in Perth County, further research is needed to inform decision-making with respect to immigration. For instance, research could provide evidence to stakeholders to demonstrate need for immigration and inform attraction and retention strategies by better understanding the needs of the community, employers, and immigrants;
5. It can be worthwhile to reach out to and invest in relationships with key players such as Regional Advisors from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and Integration Officers from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC); and,
6. Immigration-related efforts take time. Experience in other counties suggests that planning for immigration is comprehensive when long-time horizons, for example 15-20 years, are kept in mind.

These learnings, along with the best practices outlined below, will inform a toolkit for rural municipalities looking to attract and retain immigrants with limited resources.

## 9.0 Perth County's Best Practices

The following section looks at the best practices in Perth County as identified by the researchers.

They include:

1. The Multicultural Association of Perth - Huron (MAPH) has emerged as the main 'best practice'. The purpose of the MAPH is four-fold. First, it creates a space in which social connections between immigrants can be fostered. Second, the community events that are organized through the MAPH help to create awareness about diversity and inclusiveness. Third, it provides opportunities for immigrants to use their skills through volunteering with the MAPH and other community organizations. Finally, it offers face-to-face support for new immigrants directing them to the services they need to begin their integration journey;
2. The United Way is playing an important role to facilitate the social inclusion and integration of immigrants in Perth-Huron. Through in-kind support provided to the MAPH and the funding provided for the Settlement Services pilot project, the United Way is helping to incorporate a social lens to the immigration efforts. From what the researchers have seen, the dominance of this perspective (over the view of immigrants as primarily economic agents) is unique;
3. Immigration efforts appear to recognize the importance of social and economic integration of immigrants. Understanding that even if immigrants are employed in their field, they are unlikely to stay in the community if they feel socially isolated;
4. Immigrants are involved in leadership positions pertaining to immigrant retention and integration. MAPH incorporates the immigrant lens into its activities by having representation from immigrants on staff, on their steering committee, and as volunteers;
5. An abundance of community events that celebrate diversity are organized in Perth County. For example, events such as the Multicultural Festival and International Women's Day Celebration help to build social connections between the immigrant and non-immigrant communities; and,
6. There is strong leadership in Perth County. Although, a network where all the leaders can come together and discuss immigration strategies is needed, it appears there are strong leaders in the County who are passionate about immigrant attraction and retention. These leaders have expressed interest in seeing the County's immigration-related efforts progress.

## 10.0 Recommendations

Weaving together the findings of this research, the researchers offer the following recommendations for future action based on data collected from key informants and immigrants:

1	Although Perth County's focus on immigrant retention is a strength, a cohesive strategy that combines attraction, retention, and integration needs to be created. A potential first step may include strengthening the collaboration between social services and economic development.
2	Consider contacting a Regional Advisor from OMAFRA. According to OMAFRA's website, regional advisors "help communities foster local economic development opportunities". Immigration efforts in other counties have been enhanced through engagement with a Regional Advisor. For specific information on who to contact for the Middlesex-Perth region, visit: <a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/contacts.htm">http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/contacts.htm</a>
3	Perth County should consider using the collective impact framework to coordinate immigration efforts. A potential avenue for funding such an initiative is the Collective Impact Grant administered through the Trillium Foundation. For more information about collective impact and the funding opportunity, refer to: <a href="http://www.otf.ca/what-we-fund/investment-streams/collective-impact-grants?redirected=1">http://www.otf.ca/what-we-fund/investment-streams/collective-impact-grants?redirected=1</a>
4	In light of the comments regarding lack of guidance from higher levels of government from key informants on how municipalities can attract and retain immigrants, we recommend that interested parties in Perth County consult the Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) report ( <a href="http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/cirro/index.html">http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/cirro/index.html</a> ). This report outlines a four-step process by which small towns and rural communities can attract and retain immigrants to fill labour market needs.

5	<p>One key-informant mentioned that the MAPH could become a satellite office of a larger Multicultural Centre in the future. A potential model that MAPH can look to is North Bay’s satellite Multicultural Centre in Timmins.</p>
6	<p>In light of immigrants’ comments regarding lack of awareness of existing services, we recommend that social service organizations in Perth County adopt a “no-wrong door approach” similar to the one that is adopted in Oxford County. The no wrong door approach involves educating frontline staff to ensure that they have a solid understanding of all the service offerings in the County.</p>
7	<p>To clarify how immigration fits into the larger economic development strategy, perhaps following a model similar to Oxford County’s would be helpful. As prescribed by OMAFRA’s CIRRO report, Oxford County has integrated immigrant attraction and retention into the 3-part economic development strategy. For Oxford County’s logic model outlining this strategy please refer to Appendix B.</p>
8	<p>Build capacity among MAPH staff and volunteers to ensure they understand all the services available to new immigrants.</p>
9	<p>Work with stakeholders to create a long-term vision and sustainability plan for MAPH.</p>
10	<p>Consider lobbying higher levels of government to address systematic barriers immigrants are facing such as: lack of a streamlined credential recognition system, lack of clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities of local governments in attracting and retaining immigrants, and funding support for attracting immigrants and settlement services.</p>

## References

- Newcomers Outreach and Needs Assessment (NONA) Project Backgrounder. (2014). Retrieved from Multicultural Staff Member.
- Perth County. (n.d.). Investor Community Profile. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.perthcounty.ca/fileBin/library/ecDev/County-Fact-Profile.pdf>
- Perth County Social Research and Planning Council. (2008). Quality of Life in Perth County: A 2008 Profile Report. Retrieved from: <http://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Quality-of-Life-A-2008-Profile-Report.pdf>
- Perth District Health Unit. (2011). Community Picture Summary - Perth County. Retrieved from:  
<http://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Community-Picture-Summary-Perth-County-March-20111.pdf>
- Perth District Health Unit. (2004). Reproductive Health Status in Perth County. *Community Health Series*, Vol. IV (2004). Retrieved from: <http://www.pdhu.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Reproductive-Health-Status-in-Perth-County-Community-Health-Services-Volume-IV-2004.pdf>
- Statistics Canada. (2011). National Household Survey: Perth County. Retrieved from:  
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3531&Data=Count&SearchText=Perth&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3531&TABID=1>
- Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). (2015). Regional Advisory Service Contacts. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/contacts.htm>

## Appendix A

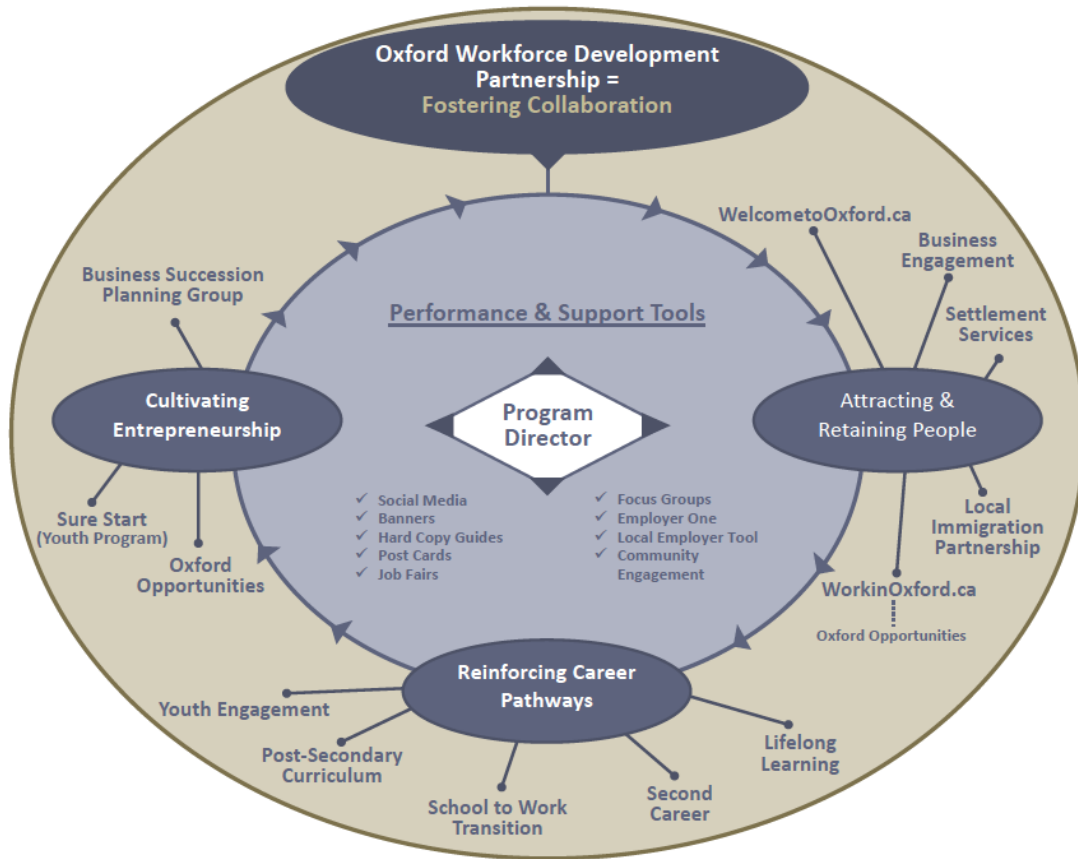
### Number and Percent of Immigrants in Perth County, Ontario, and Canada 2011

	2011 Population	Immigrant Population	% of Immigrants	Immigrated between 2001-2005	Immigrated between 2006-2011	% of Recent Immigrants
Stratford	29,930	3,355	11.2%	145	335	10.0%
Perth South	3,870	255	6.6%	20	0	0.0%
St. Marys	6,610	385	5.8%	40	45	11.7%
West Perth	8,800	555	6.3%	50	50	9.0%
Perth East	11,810	735	6.2%	55	75	10.2%
North Perth	12,460	875	7.0%	25	55	6.3%
Perth County	73,480	6160	8.4%	335	565	9.2%
Ontario	12,651,795	3,611,365	28.5%	518,405	501,060	13.9%
Canada	32,852,325	6,775,765	20.0%	992,070	1,162,915	17.2%

## Appendix B

### Oxford County's Logical Model

#### Our Collaborative Process In Action



By collaborating today, we can together transform into tomorrow's promise.