

## Newcomer and Immigrant Readiness Assessment Checklist

This Newcomer and Immigrant Readiness Assessment Checklist is a self-assessment tool to help communities determine their capacity to attract and retain new residents, coming from elsewhere in the province, the country or around the globe.

Most communities in the Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus region will need to attract new residents in the coming years to ensure they can meet workforce demand. Depending on the community and industry, upwards of 25-30 percent of the workforce is expected to retire in the next decade. There are also a number of growing industries that need additional workers.

This Newcomer and Immigrant Readiness Assessment Checklist is an easy way to determine if your community is ready to attract new residents, particularly newcomers from outside Canada. Most communities will need to attract more immigrants to help meet workforce demand. The checklist includes a series of questions relating to capacity to attract, onboard and retain newcomers in the community. Low scores in an area will help you identify areas of focus for newcomer and immigrant attraction efforts.

Each question that you can answer yes indicates your community is one step closer to being ready for newcomers.

### 1. Strategy

Having a plan in place that clearly defines the goals, and objectives is an important element in being ready for newcomers as it provides the community with clear and measurable actions, responsible parties to undertake the actions and timeframes for implementation.

Strategy	Yes	No
1. Does your municipality’s community or corporate strategic plan incorporate resident attraction and retention?		
2. Does your community have a resident attraction and retention strategy?		
3. Does your community have a plan to attract and support immigrants?		
4. Does your community have a housing strategy to ensure sufficient quantity and forms of housing to meet newcomer and immigrant needs?		
<b>Total Points</b>		



## 2. Contacts

Having a designated contact for prospective newcomers, local employers and organizations serving newcomers is essential to successfully supporting newcomer attraction and retention as it facilitates the consistent, accurate and timely response to newcomer related inquiries.

Contacts	Yes	No
1. Does your community have a designated contact for resident attraction?		
2. Is that person familiar with the community amenities, immigrant support programs, health and education services in your community?		
3. Do they have a directory of resident service providers, community organizations, health and education contacts and immigration settlement services to respond to newcomer related inquiries?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 3. Housing

Matching housing options to the workforce needs is an important consideration in supporting newcomers. Supportive housing policies and programs, and the development of partnerships for affordable housing all contribute to being considered ready for newcomers.

Housing	Yes	No
1. Does your community have targets for the number and types of attainable housing?		
2. Does your community have planning policies to support the construction of ARU (additional rental units)?		
3. Does your community have inclusionary zoning or other policies to support greater housing density?		
4. Does your community have incentive programs through Development Charges or Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) to support affordable/attainable housing?		
5. Does your community track data on land inventory and affordable housing units to measure and report on available unit construction?		
6. Does your community support partnerships and programs with housing non-profits?		
7. Do you have a community engagement strategy to educate the public on housing options and its relationship to workforce development?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 4. Employment

Employment is a key consideration for newcomers. Engaging and educating employers ensures they have the information and supports they need to attract and retain newcomers and immigrants.

Employment	Yes	No
1. Does your community have an online directory of job postings?		
2. Does your community have a directory of local employers?		
3. Does your community provide information and updates to local employers on the following recruitment and retention supports? (point for each)		
• Online recruitment tools and platforms		
• Community promotional materials		
• Experiential education programs (co-ops, internships, apprenticeship, etc.)		
• International student employment recruitment		
• Equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism training		
• Cultural sensitivity and mentoring programs		
4. Does your community host employment forums to discuss newcomer attraction and retention?		
5. Are employers actively engaged in your community's immigrant attraction and support programs?		
6. Do local employers include messages welcoming newcomers in their recruitment ads?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 5. Communications

Communications is a vitally important part of an effective people attraction plan. People looking at moving to the region need access to a wide range of information to help in their decision-making process. People who have just moved to the region are more likely to stay long term if they have access to information issues such as where to access services, employment opportunities, recreation, etc. It is also important to have communications efforts targeting the local population ensuring they understand the importance of population growth and the role they can play to help ensure that new people in the region are welcomed.

Communications	Yes	No
1. Does your community have a specific community promotional website that makes a strong case for people considering a move into the area?		
2. Does your community have an online data hub to help newcomers access community amenities and services?		
3. Does your community have a community profile that provides information on key industry sectors and occupations, health care, education, tourism assets, airports, libraries, recreation facilities and cultural institutions?		
4. Does your community offer promotional and community content in multiple languages?		
5. Does your community use social media or other communications channels to promote your community as a place to live and work?		
6. Does your community have a public engagement campaign to educate local residents on the importance of population growth and attracting newcomers?		
7. Is your community tracking and reporting on population diversity?		
8. Does your community profile new residents as part of your promotional activities and community engagement efforts?		
9. Does your community have formal anti-NIMBYism, equity/diversity/inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism communications?		
10. Is your community providing cultural sensitivity education for municipal staff, community stakeholders, employers, public?		
11. Does your community engage newcomers to provide feedback on newcomer attraction and retention efforts and communications tools?		
12. Are municipal communications materials (images and videos) inclusive, with representation from a diverse population?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 6. Leadership

Ensuring the region has the workforce needed to meet demand is everyone's business. If there are not enough workers, businesses will downsize or close, residents will need to commute further to access services and the overall economy will suffer.

Leadership	Yes	No
1. Does your community have ongoing communications with government leaders, business community leaders, faith and other community groups about the need to attract population to meet workforce demand?		
2. Does your community engage with provincial and federal politicians on the issues related to workforce demand and population growth?		
3. Does your community have community growth plans and targets including population growth and housing starts		
4. Does your community track and report on labour force data?		
5. Is your municipality leading by example on equity/diversity/inclusion (EDI) programs?		
6. Does your municipality have EDI policies and targets in areas such as municipal hiring, committee membership and procurement?		
7. Does your municipality consult with an advisory group to solicit feedback on newcomer attraction/retention efforts?		
8. Does your community have (or is part of) a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 7. Education

The education sector is a very important asset in the attraction and retention of newcomers. The post-secondary education system provides the training and skills needed to advance in the local workforce. The K-12 system plays a vital role in the retention of young families in the community.

Education	Yes	No
1. Does your community provide public information on the local K-12 school system and related policies?		
2. Do K-12 schools have a plan for supporting immigrants and newcomers?		
3. Is there a plan in place to support sufficient numbers and types of English language training in the K-12 school system?		
4. Is there a specific plan to encourage newcomer students to take part in sports, arts and other school activities?		
5. Is English language training available for newcomer adults that accommodate their work and family commitments?		
6. Is there a formal process in place to align training in local post-secondary education (PSE) institutions with local employer workforce demand?		
7. Are the post-secondary education institutions in your community/region actively recruiting international students?		
8. Do local PSE institutions offer a wide range of experiential education opportunities with local employers?		
9. Are local educators trained in understanding newcomers' experiences, challenges and strengths?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 8. Community amenities

Offering a range of amenities is an important way your community can set itself apart from the competition. Newcomers attracted from elsewhere in Ontario and Canada or from around the world are more likely to stay in a community in which they feel engaged.

Community Amenities	Yes	No
1. Does your community have a centralized website with information on all community amenities (health care, recreation, libraries, education, immigrant support, etc.)?		
2. Does your community have immigrant settlement services (e.g. an organization(s) that provide and introduce newcomers to community organizations, education & employment)?		
3. Does your community provide information on community services in multiple languages?		
4. Does your community have available, accessible public transit services?		
5. Does your community offer free or subsidized public transportation to introduce newcomers to local transit services?		
6. Is your community developing other public transportation concepts if required (e.g., ride sharing, etc.)?		
7. Does your community have available, accessible and suitable health care for newcomers to the community?		
8. Does your community have a volunteer program that connects newcomers with local residents?		
9. Are municipal services sensitive to the presence/needs of newcomers?		
10. Does your community have a plan to ensure public safety organizations such as police and fire services are sensitive to the needs of newcomers (language, cultural context, etc.)?		
11. Does your community have a 'no wrong door approach' approach to serving newcomers (i.e. no matter where they go they will be directed to the appropriate supports)?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 9. Health Care

Access to high quality health care is another important attribute for long term retention in the community. People moving to a new community expect to be able to access the health system when needed and in a timely fashion.

Health Care	Yes	No
1. Does your community have available, accessible and suitable health care for newcomers to the community?		
2. Does your community have a program/information that educates newcomers about local health care system (e.g. how to find a family physician, use emergency care, etc.)?		
3. Does your community have a plan to ensure health care workers are sensitive to the differing needs of newcomers (language, cultural context, etc.)?		
<b>Total Points</b>		

## 10. Social Engagement

Long term retention is tied to newcomers putting down roots in the community. One of the best ways to put down roots is to build social networks and develop friendships in the community. There are many actions that can be taken to ensure newcomers are building networks and developing friendships.

Social Engagement	Yes	No
1. Does your community have formal social engagement opportunities where new residents can interact with long-time residents (Mayor's breakfasts, multicultural events, etc.)?		
2. Does your community offer and promote interfaith and cultural events?		
3. Does your community have mentoring programs that connect local volunteers to newcomers?		
4. Does your community offer newcomer forums / welcoming sessions where they can access information and meet long-term residents?		
5. Does your community encourage newcomers to get involved with volunteer organizations?		
<b>Total Points</b>		



Newcomer and Immigrant Readiness Assessment Scorecard		
Category	Your Score	Maximum Possible Score
Strategy		4
Contacts		3
Housing		7
Employment		12
Communications		12
Leadership		8
Education		9
Community Amenities		11
Health Care		3
Social Engagement		5
<b>Total</b>		<b>74</b>

This scorecard will help you identify areas for improvement to support your newcomer and immigrant attraction and retention efforts. This exercise should be completed annually to track your progress towards being a welcoming community for newcomers and immigrants and building a strong workforce to ensure long term economic opportunity and prosperity.