

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



Vibrant, prosperous,
welcoming communities.

This is our vision.

This is our plan.

Message from Co-chairs

When we stop and think about what makes us proud to live in Grand Erie, it takes only a moment to realize that one of the contributing factors is the wonderful mosaic of cultures and customs we experience on a daily basis. We enjoy the freedom to practice and experience a wide variety of religions, cultural celebrations, cuisines, and lifestyles. We need only think about our local community centres, businesses and restaurants to see the important role immigrants have played in building the fabric of our communities.

Today, newcomers from all over the world continue to choose Grand Erie as their home – hoping to be valuable participants in our workforce and in our community life. Like those that arrived before them, the transition can be difficult as they seek opportunities and overcome challenges to integrate into their new communities.

During the past year, newcomers, residents, business owners, service providers and municipal leaders worked in collaboration with the Grand Erie Immigrant Partnership to identify what is working well, what strengths our communities can build on, and how we can become more welcoming communities. Through discussion, story-telling and collaboration we have turned statistics into stories, and stories into a well thought-out plan.

As co-chairs of the Grand Erie Immigration Partnership, we thank everyone who helped create this community action plan by sharing their experiences, knowledge and vision for the future.

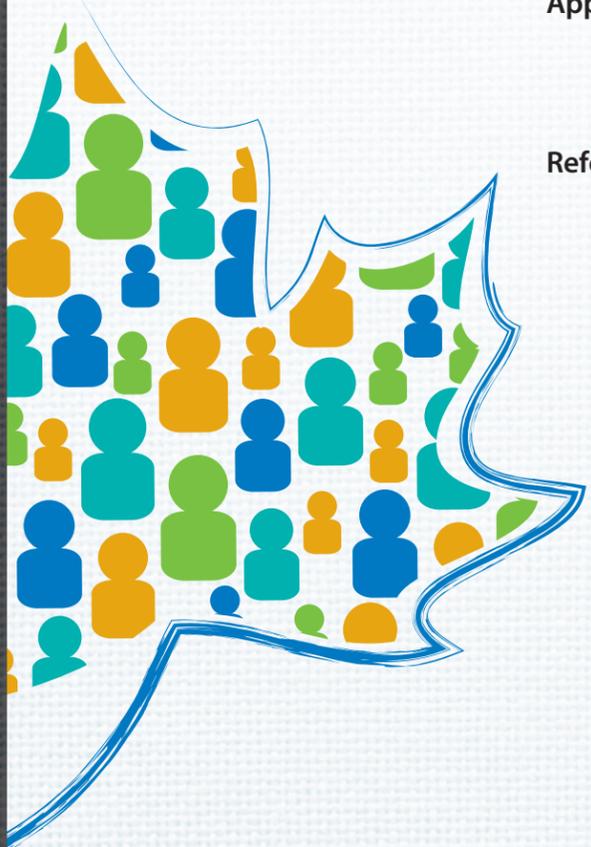
Sincerely,

Jill Halyk
Co-Chair, Grand Erie Immigration Partnership
Executive Director, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie

Robert Ham
Co-Chair, Grand Erie Immigration Partnership
Development Officer, Economic Development and Tourism Department, City of Brantford

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Executive Summary

Immigrants have helped to build the communities of Grand Erie and are an investment in the future — investments that will help to sustain and enhance the quality of life for everyone!

The Grand Erie Immigration Partnership is an initiative that brings together residents, community organizations and businesses to plan and develop strategies and actions that affect the economic, social, cultural and civic life of newcomers and communities. Our focus is to ensure that the present realities of each community are considered, that newcomers' eagerness to contribute is recognized and our approach is coordinated, intentional and action-oriented.

This Community Action Plan is the result of personal interviews, consultations and meetings with more than 250 individuals from June 2011 to March 2012. Individuals and organizations involved were routinely asked to provide feedback which was used to help guide the process and ensure on-going community involvement and ownership.

This plan highlights five areas of focus: Employment, Education/Training, Health, Social Support and Community Readiness. The first four represent elements of life that are important to all individuals. Community Readiness focuses on how prepared our communities are to attract, retain and integrate newcomers.

- Employment**
- Education/Training**
- Health**
- Social Support**
- Community Readiness**

Vibrant, prosperous,
welcoming communities.

This is our vision.

This Community Action Plan outlines sixteen strategies that help us move towards improving the lives of newcomers and the communities in which they live. Leadership, commitment and collaboration will move these actions forward during 2012.

Employment

- Create opportunities for newcomers to gain Canadian work experience.
- Educate newcomers on how to access job market information.
- Help newcomers understand the accreditation process.
- Educate businesses about the benefits of hiring newcomers and using community supports.
- Help local agencies enhance customer service delivery to newcomers seeking employment.

Education/Training

- Introduce newcomers to post-secondary education, adult training and skills upgrading options available in Grand Erie.
- Expand existing programs and support new methods of language training and program delivery in Grand Erie.

Health

- Help newcomers understand and access health care services in Grand Erie.
- Promote healthy living and health maintenance to newcomers.

Social Support

- Assist newcomers in their efforts to volunteer and actively participate in the community.
- Inform newcomers of community services, activities and resources.
- Educate newcomers on how to find and access available information, services and resources.
- Promote/establish newcomer peer youth networks.
- Establish a co-ordinated approach to service delivery for newcomers.

Community Readiness

- Identify and promote the economic, social and cultural benefits of immigration.
- Support government and non-government agencies to improve the delivery of services to newcomers.

Throughout discussions it was emphasized that Grand Erie represents many communities within the four municipalities of: Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County, and Norfolk County. Grand Erie is a blend of urban and rural communities, each with a unique identity, values and character. In all discussions, maintaining and enhancing our quality of life was emphasized. This Community Action Plan aims to build on our strengths and leverage our current capacities to support our vision of becoming "vibrant, prosperous, welcoming communities".

We have a vision. We have a plan. It is time for action.

Introduction

Welcome to the Grand Erie Immigration Partnership. This partnership offers Grand Erie the opportunity to shape the future of our communities.

Brantford, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk have welcomed people from around the world for generations. Immigration has played an important role in establishing the communities of Grand Erie, providing newcomers a place to call home, to raise a family, to build careers and to start new lives.

This Community Action Plan reflects the economic and social needs of newcomers and the communities in which they live and is written with the perspective that immigrants and immigration are an investment in community. More than 250 individuals, organizations, businesses and government agencies/officials have contributed to establishing a foundation to guide the communities of Grand Erie through the work that lies ahead.

Background

The Grand Erie Immigration Partnership is one of many Immigration Partnerships throughout Ontario.

Through Local Immigration Partnerships, communities work together to create conditions that will assist newcomers in reaching their maximum potential.

Local Immigration Partnerships are financially supported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in co-operation with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (2005). The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement outlines and encourages all levels of government to work together to support community-based approaches to the integration of immigrants.

Local Immigration Partnerships also provide municipalities the opportunity to identify community needs and align these needs with the contributions that immigrants are eager to make.

In 2011, each of the four municipalities in Grand Erie (City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County and Norfolk County) prepared letters of commitment in support of the Immigration Partnership. A Leadership Council was established to provide guidance and direction to the project. The Leadership Council consists of newcomers and representatives from municipalities, businesses, education and community organizations.

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie is pleased to fill the role of lead agency for the Grand Erie Immigration Partnership.



Vision, Areas of Focus and Guiding Values

Our Vision

It is the collective responsibility of the communities in Grand Erie to work towards a common vision through collaboration, leadership and a commitment to action.

Vibrant, prosperous, welcoming communities.

This is our vision.

Areas of Focus

- Employment
- Education/Training
- Health
- Social Support
- Community Readiness

Five areas of focus have guided conversation during community discussions and information gathering. They are connected and important to everyone. Efforts to improve the lives of newcomers will also improve the lives of all community residents.

Guiding Values

Inclusive, asset-based and holistic are the values that will guide the planning, implementation and governance of this partnership².

Inclusive

A commitment to ongoing community involvement including the participation of newcomers/immigrants.

Asset Based

Building on the strengths, capacity, and promising practices which exist in Grand Erie.

Holistic

An economic development approach focusing on the connection between economic and social benefits to all, in the communities of Grand Erie.

For more details about the current governance structure please refer to Appendix A – Governance.

“...a collaborative effort across many sectors can make a difference in people’s lives and therefore their community.”

Patti Moore, General Manager

– Haldimand & Norfolk Health & Social Services Department Annual Report 2010

Why is this Work Important?

Rural and urban communities throughout Ontario are actively focusing on the attraction, retention and integration of immigrants. The impact of immigrants and immigration is important to consider in planning for the future of communities in Grand Erie.

Sustaining Population

Ontario's population of people in their prime working years (25–44) is decreasing, leaving fewer people in the workforce. In some areas of Grand Erie, the population of older adults (55 years and over) will substantially increase over the next 20 years while the population of children and youth is projected to decline³. Immigration offers a solution. Twenty-five percent of recent immigrants moving to Grand Erie communities are under 15 years of age and 59% are between the ages of 15 and 44⁴. Immigration is expected to be a significant source of population growth for Canada in the next 15 years.

Workforce Development

By 2031, roughly one in every three people in the labour force could be foreign born⁵. Internationally trained newcomers bring with them experience and expertise that cannot always be found locally. Older adults will depend on people of working age to support social security and pensions. It is important to continue to attract people in their prime working years so we can maintain and grow the industry sectors that support the local economy.

Economic Development

Business immigrants are those who invest money in an approved venture, intend to run their own business, or intend to be self-employed. Since 2001, 50 individuals have been accepted as self-employed, entrepreneurs or investors into Grand Erie⁶. Attracting new business investment and diversifying the economic base of Grand Erie contributes to the tax base supporting economic development efforts and social programs within each municipality.

Supporting the Local Economy

Newcomers are consumers, eager to support the local economy. Demand for local goods and services contributes to the economic prosperity of each community.

Utilization of Resident Skills/Talents

One third of all new immigrants moving to Grand Erie are accepted as economic immigrants under the skilled worker category⁶. Immigrants come here in search of a better life for themselves and their families. They come here looking to work and contribute to society. This presents several unique benefits to local employers looking to grow their business. Utilizing the skills and experiences newcomers bring with them offers employers global expertise, access to new markets, understanding of new business practices and an educated workforce. Studies show that a culturally diverse workforce improves the bottom line⁷.

Social and Cultural Benefits

Cultural festivities, new languages and holiday traditions contribute to the life and character of communities. Cultural diversity creates a welcoming and vibrant place for people to live.



Communities of Grand Erie

Grand Erie is a region with a blend of urban and rural communities, each one with unique characteristics. There are four municipalities:

- **City of Brantford** — Population 93,650
- **County of Brant** — Population 35,638
- **Haldimand County** — Population 44,876
- **Norfolk County** — Population 63,175

Each municipality is represented by a single-tier government responsible for providing all services to residents. Grand Erie includes two native reserves — Six Nations (Canada's largest native reserve) and New Credit, and is home to approximately 10,000 Mennonites and over 4,000 seasonal agricultural workers.

City of Brantford

The City of Brantford, also known as "The Telephone City", has a rich history dating back to 1877 when it was first incorporated. Sitting on the edge of the Grand River, Brantford is nestled inside the County of Brant and is close to two native reserves (Six Nations and New Credit). Brantford has grown and evolved into a modern urban centre.

County of Brant

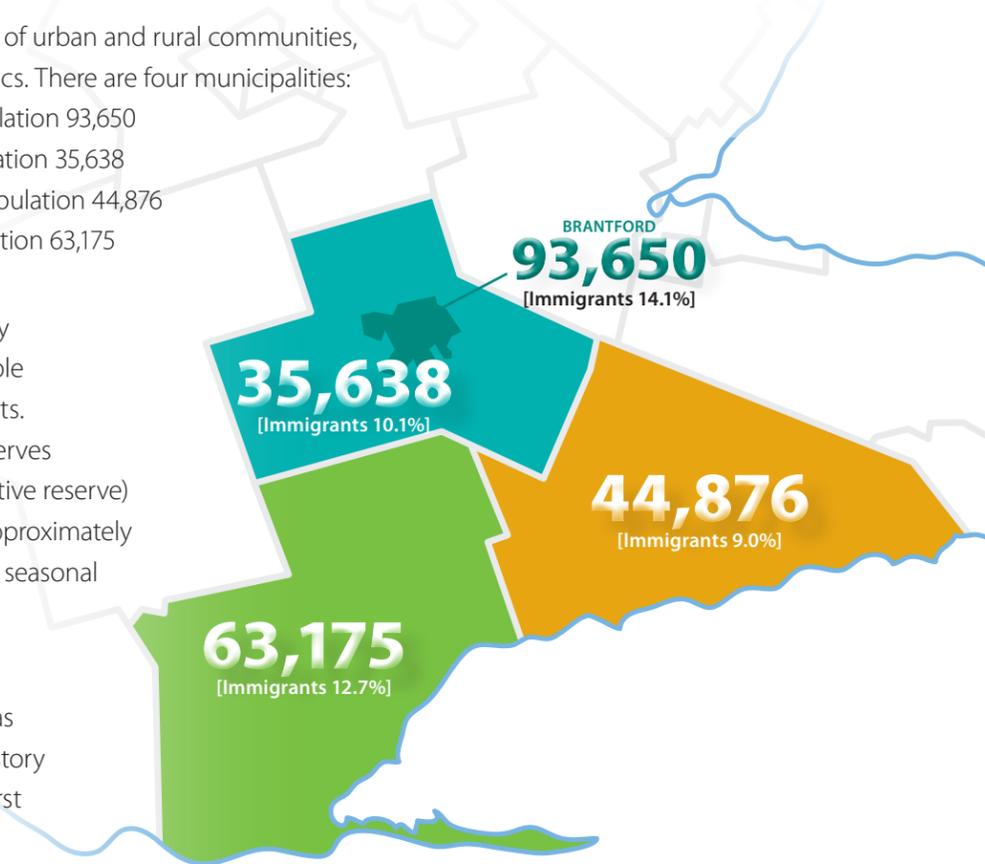
The County of Brant surrounds the City of Brantford and borders both Haldimand and Norfolk Counties and two native reserves, Six Nations and New Credit. There are three urban centres; Burford, Paris and St. George.

Haldimand County

Haldimand County is located on the Niagara Peninsula in Southern Ontario, on the north shore of Lake Erie and along the Grand River. With strong roots and a history of European settlement, Haldimand County is an urban-rural mix of communities including Caledonia, Cayuga, Dunnville, Hagersville, and Jarvis. Six Nations and New Credit also border Haldimand County.

Norfolk County

Norfolk County is known as "Ontario's South Coast", located on the north shore of Lake Erie, neighbouring both Haldimand County and the County of Brant. There are four urban centres throughout the county including Delhi, Port Dover, Simcoe and Waterford. Norfolk County has a well-established network of European immigrants and is home to over 10,000 Low-German Mennonites. Each year, over 4,000 seasonal agricultural workers also join the community during spring, summer and fall.



Community Snapshot

The population of Grand Erie is changing. Each year we receive approximately 300 new permanent residents from countries around the world. Overall, immigrants represent about 12% of Grand Erie's total population, which has remained consistent over the past 15 to 20 years. The largest immigrant populations in the area live in Brantford and Norfolk County. The following table illustrates some quick facts for each municipality.

The snapshot below details some of the key facts about the communities of Grand Erie, including a comparison to Ontario.

Quick Facts

	Brantford	County of Brant	Haldimand County	Norfolk County	Ontario
(2011) Total Population	93,650	35,638	44,876	63,175	12,851,821
(2006) Total Population	88,845	33,980	44,705	61,860	12,160,282
(2006) % of Total Population Urban	100%	46.7%	48.6%	43.9%	85.1%
(2006) % of Total Population Rural	0%	53.3%	51.4%	56.1%	14.9%
Median Age (Total Population 2006)	39.1	41.1	40.4	43.4	39.0
(2006) Total Number of Immigrants	12,505	3,425	4,025	7,830	3,398,725
(2006) % of Total Population	14.1%	10.1%	9.0%	12.7%	27.9%
Recent Immigrants: 2007 to 2010	865 (Brantford+Brant)		85	290	447,167
Recent Immigrants: 2001 to 2006	1,030	165	135	460	580,740
Visible Minorities (% of Total Population 2006)	7.0%	1.5%	1.3%	1.7%	22.8%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, RDM Facts and Figures 2010

Top Source Areas of Recent Immigrants: 2007-2010

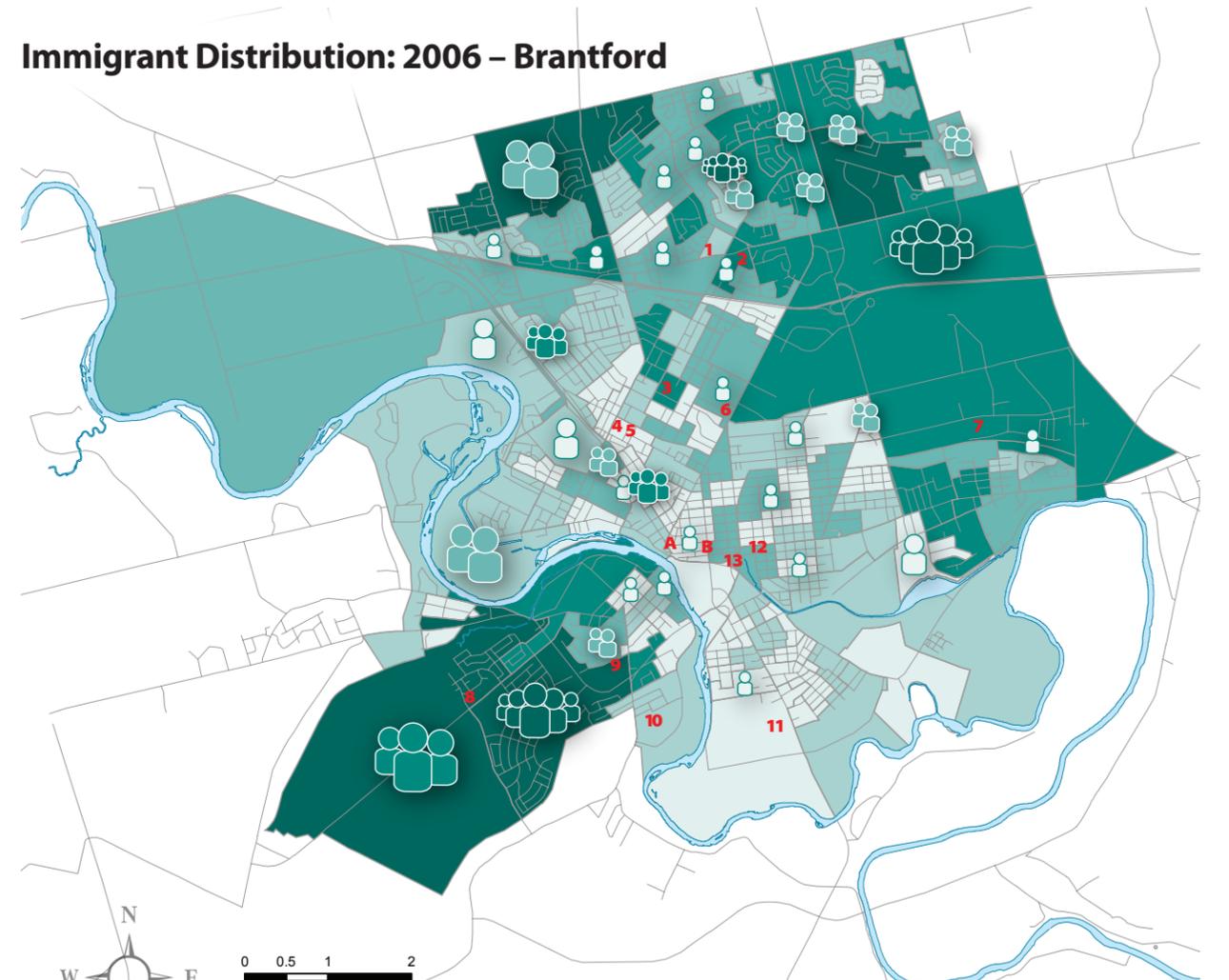
Brantford/Brant	Haldimand	Norfolk	Ontario
1 Asia & Pacific	Europe	South & Central America	Asia & Pacific
2 Europe	Asia & Pacific	Asia & Pacific	Africa & Middle East
3 South & Central America	South & Central America	Europe	Europe

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, RDM Facts and Figures 2010

Where do Immigrants Live in Grand Erie?

Immigrants have helped to shape the culture in Grand Erie communities for many decades. The following series of maps demonstrate where immigrants are settling within the boundaries of Grand Erie. For each area you can see where established immigrants (those who came to Canada prior to 2001) and where recent immigrants (those who came to Canada between 2001 and 2006) have settled. The maps also include some immigrant supports including service and government agencies.

Immigrant Distribution: 2006 – Brantford



Brantford Legend

BEFORE 2001	2001 – 2006
0 – 35	0
36 – 60	1 – 10
61 – 100	11 – 20
101 – 170	21 – 50
>170	>51

IMMIGRANT SUPPORTS

- St. Leonard's Employment Services 1
- Brant Skills Centre (literacy) 1
- BHNCDSB Catholic Education Centre 2
- Nova Vita 3
- Brantford General Hospital 4
- Brant County Health Unit 5
- Enterprise Brant 6
- Mohawk College 7
- Community Resource Services – Employment Support. 8
- Ontario Early Years Centre 9
- Boys & Girls Club of Brantford 10
- Grand Erie District School Board 11
- Joseph Brant Learning Centre 11
- Newcomer Reception and Assessment Centre 11
- Grand River Community Health Centre 12
- Community Legal Clinic 13

DOWNTOWN

- Family Counselling of Brant. A
- SACAP – Rosewood House Inc., Skills and Counselling Access Program A
- YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services A
- Canadian Mental Health Association A
- Contact Brant A
- Laurier Brantford B
- Brant County Social Services B
- Grand Erie Learning Alternatives. B
- Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre. B
- Career Link B
- Brantford Public Library. B

Immigrant Distribution: 2006 – County of Brant, Norfolk County, Haldimand County

Norfolk Legend

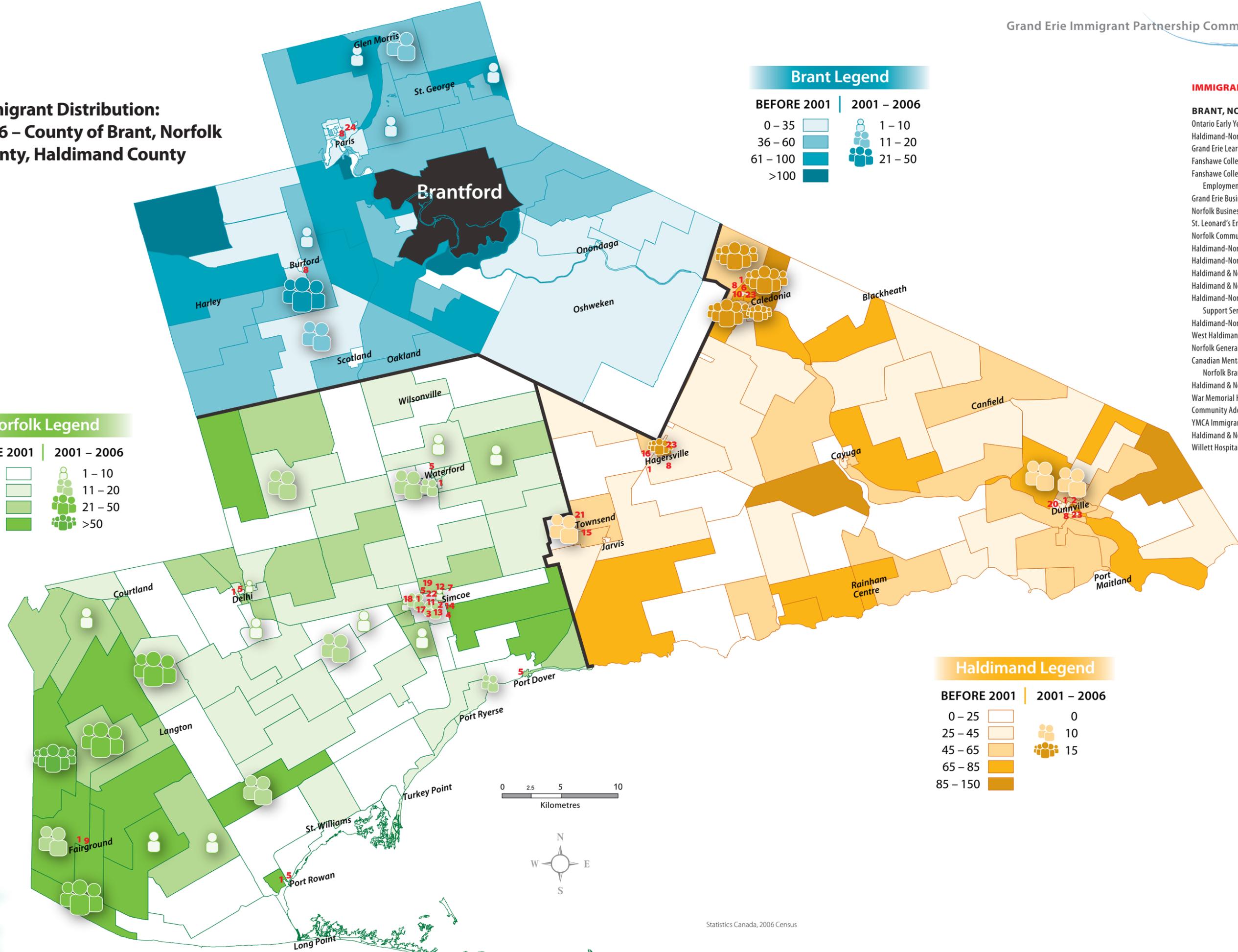
BEFORE 2001	2001 – 2006
0	1 – 10
1-10	11 – 20
11 – 20	21 – 50
>21	>50

Brant Legend

BEFORE 2001	2001 – 2006
0 – 35	1 – 10
36 – 60	11 – 20
61 – 100	21 – 50
>100	

Haldimand Legend

BEFORE 2001	2001 – 2006
0 – 25	0
25 – 45	10
45 – 65	15
65 – 85	
85 – 150	



IMMIGRANT SUPPORTS

BRANT, NORFOLK & HALDIMAND	
Ontario Early Years Centre	1 ...
Haldimand-Norfolk Literacy Council	2 ...
Grand Erie Learning Alternatives	3
Fanshawe College	4
Fanshawe College Community Career & Employment Services	5 ...
Grand Erie Business Centre	6
Norfolk Business Development Corp.	7
St. Leonard's Employment Services	8 ...
Norfolk Community Help Centre	9
Haldimand-Norfolk Community Support Centre	10
Haldimand-Norfolk Information Centre	11
Haldimand & Norfolk Social Services	12
Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services	13
Haldimand-Norfolk Community Senior Support Services	14
Haldimand-Norfolk Reach	15
West Haldimand General Hospital	16
Norfolk General Hospital	17
Canadian Mental Health Association Haldimand-Norfolk Branch	18
Haldimand & Norfolk Health Unit	19
War Memorial Hospital	20
Community Addiction & Mental Health	21
YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services	22
Haldimand & Norfolk Housing Corporation	23 ...
Willett Hospital	24

... indicates multiple locations

Community Involvement and Methodology

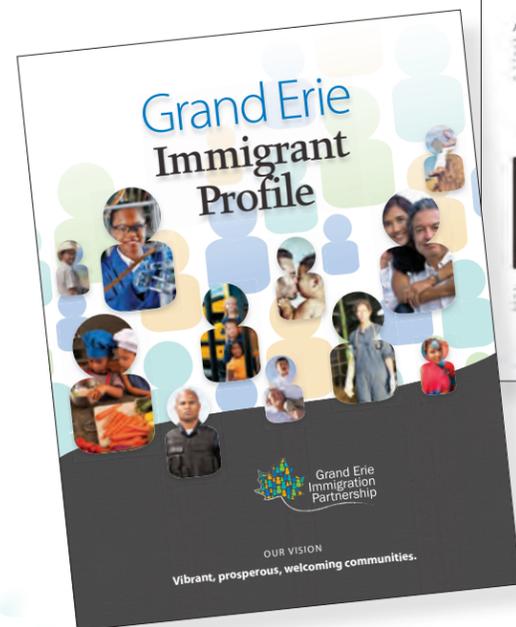
Engaging and interactive describes the process undertaken to develop this Community Action Plan. Ideas and opinions were shared honestly and passionately by members of each community throughout all stages of planning and development.



*Immigrant Settlement Transition, Employment and Partnerships

Secondary Research Process

We began by learning about who lives in Grand Erie. Where have the residents of Grand Erie come from? What languages do they speak? How old were they when they arrived and how old are they now? With this information, we created a comprehensive *Grand Erie Immigrant Profile* document that details demographics of the immigrants who live here. A *5 Myths About Immigrants* document was developed to encourage dialogue and discussion about the contributions that immigrants make to Grand Erie. Maps were developed to illustrate the geographic distribution of immigrants throughout Grand Erie in combination with organizations offering services needed during the settlement process.



Data Sources:

- Statistics Canada
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Exploring Newcomer Settlement and Integration Supports in Brantford and Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Counties (Grand Erie Training and Adjustment Board, Bharati Sethi, 2009)
- YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services
- Ontario Works (Brantford/Brant and Haldimand/Norfolk)
- Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (F.A.R.M.S)
- Service Canada
- Grand Erie District School Board
- Brant Haldimand Norfolk – Catholic District School Board

Primary Research Process

Primary research was conducted to learn about the settlement process, newcomer needs, community services and business practices. This process helped to identify community strengths, opportunities and challenges. Feedback was regularly solicited throughout the planning phase to ensure participants were satisfied with the process (refer to Appendix B – Participant Feedback for more details).

Activities:

- Personal Interviews
 - 29 Community Organizations
 - 19 Businesses
 - 3 Faith Organizations
- Newcomer Focus Groups – 103 Participants
- Low-German Mennonite Focus Group – 12 Participants
- Mayor Interviews – 4 Mayors
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Surveys – 43 Students (Adult & Youth)
- Community Consultation – Brantford – 32 Participants
- Community Conversations – Simcoe, Paris, Dunnville and Caledonia – 19 Participants
- Strategic Planning Session with Leadership Council and Immigrant Settlement Transition, Employment and Partnerships (ISTEP) Advisory Committee – 15 Participants



Action Plan

This Community Action Plan focuses on actions that can be accomplished by building on the strengths and existing capacities within Grand Erie. Our strategy is to focus on what we do well, to grow and seek out ways to continue to improve, and to be innovative while striving for excellence.

There are five areas of focus:

- Employment**
- Education/Training**
- Health**
- Social Support**
- Community Readiness**

For each, we present:

- General description
- Key findings
- Opportunities
- Strategies – What are we going to do?
- Actions – How are we going to do it?
- Timeline – When can we do it?
- Potential Partners (Appendix C) – Who will support these actions?

In addition to the areas of focus, community strengths and challenges guided conversations. Although many of these may be beyond the scope of our work, they should not be ignored as both strengths and challenges will impact how we proceed in the implementation of activities.

Areas of Strength:

- There is a general community openness to “diversity”.
- Newcomers are interested in making the community a better place to live.
- Service provider partnerships exist.
- No service duplication has been identified.
- Affordable housing is available in some areas of Grand Erie.
- Newcomers identified newspapers as a good source of information.
- Discrimination/intolerance was not directly identified by newcomers.
- Employers interviewed were interested in learning about mentorship initiatives and diversity.
- There is recognition that “what brings in newcomers may also bring in business and prosperity”.

Areas of Challenge:

- Economic challenges impact the entire community.
- A coordinated approach to community services is lacking.
- There is limited targeted marketing/outreach to newcomer populations.
- Community and government services are frequently perceived as not user friendly (i.e. referral process, method of delivery, etc.).
- Public transportation systems (in/out of town) are inadequate.
- There is only one settlement specific organization in Grand Erie (one additional organization providing services to the Mennonite community).
- There is a lack of availability and awareness of interpretation/translation services in Grand Erie.
- Sensitivities exist around discussions about discrimination/intolerance.



“A goal of Local Immigration Partnerships is to create welcoming communities for everyone.”

Mary Barr, Ontario Regional Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Employment



Finding and keeping employment is important for all families living in Grand Erie, including newcomers. Newcomers arrive expecting to find work related to their skills and experiences, seeking the opportunity for a better life. Most newcomers enter Canada as economic immigrants under the skilled worker category. Skilled workers are awarded points for their level of education and work experience in specific occupations. Finding suitable employment is one of the most significant challenges facing newcomers.

Key Findings:

- The unemployment rate for recent immigrants was 58% higher than total population (2006).
- The average income for recent immigrants was 35% less than Canadian-born or established immigrants (2005).
- 46% of recent immigrants are between the ages of 25 and 44 – prime working age
- 90% (1,121) of economic class immigrants between 2000 and 2010 were accepted as skilled workers.
- 56% of newcomers are not working in their field of study/expertise.
- Newcomers and employers agree that the following factors directly impact employability:
 - ability to speak/read/write English
 - understanding of “soft skills” and Canadian workplace culture
 - lack of Canadian work experience
- Credential assessment process is viewed as confusing, difficult and costly.
- Employers and service providers expressed interest in learning more about diversity practices.
- Employers reported it has been difficult to retain internationally trained professionals due to lack of cultural amenities and potential adjustment to small town.

Opportunities:

- Newcomers have valuable skills, talents and experiences that can help diversify and improve the local workforce.
- Local employers agreed that diversity will help the community to advance competitively and compete globally.

Immigrants “are a tough, hard-working, honest lot who have each a tale to tell and have lived with risk and purpose.”

STRATEGIES:

ACTIONS:

TIMELINE:

What are we going to do?

How are we going to do it?

When will we do it?

Create opportunities for newcomers to gain Canadian work experience.

Expand existing programs that connect newcomers with local employers/businesses (mentorship).

Create new programs that connect newcomers with people in similar professions (networking, job shadowing, and internships).

Educate newcomers about how to access job market information.

Develop a Newcomer Employment Strategy that:

- Compares the occupations and skills of newcomers with those required by the industry base in Grand Erie.
- Identifies occupational pathways for newcomers who want to reside in Grand Erie.
- Highlights education/training resources.
- Identifies entrepreneurial supports and opportunities.
- Identifies the economic development priorities of municipalities.

Help newcomers understand the accreditation process.

Develop strategies and tools that provide accurate information about the accreditation process including credential assessment, translation requirements and associated costs.

Educate businesses about the benefits of hiring newcomers and using community supports.

Develop tools and resources showcasing benefits of a diverse workforce. Identify and recognize local workplace diversity champions. Help local business understand the benefits of using community supports.

Help local agencies enhance customer service delivery to newcomers seeking employment.

Develop tools and resources to help service providers meet the unique needs of newcomers.



Education/Training

Having a well-educated population is essential to a community's success. We know that the jobs of the future will be different than they are today reinforcing the message that education and training should be life-long. Many newcomers moving to Grand Erie are well educated and prepared to meet Canadian standards in their fields of study.

Key Findings:

- Levels of education for recent immigrants over 15 include:

Level of Education – 2006 Census	Brantford /Brant	Haldimand & Norfolk Counties
University certificate, diploma or degree	51%	11%
Post-secondary education (trade, college, university, etc.)	67%	28%
No diploma (high school or any post-secondary)	14%	53%

- An increasing number of recent immigrants with degrees in agriculture, natural resources and conservation are entering Haldimand & Norfolk Counties.
- The top field of study for newcomers is architecture, engineering and related technologies.
- Newcomers may require upgrading to meet the needs of the local labour market and/or provincial/national standards.
- There is a need for additional and/or enhanced English language training for adults (technical/workplace English training, higher levels, etc.).
- Newcomers indicated a lack of knowledge about post-secondary education and professional training options in Grand Erie.
- Access to training, skills upgrading or higher levels of education is often limited – viewed as confusing, complex to navigate and costly.
- Immigrant youth identified the need for a more social approach to English language training.
- Immigrant teens indicated they did not feel they were being evaluated accurately before being placed into high school classes. They also suggested that post-secondary options were not adequately explained (college vs. university level courses, etc.).

Opportunities:

- Newcomers indicated a desire to better understand the post-secondary education, adult training and skills upgrading opportunities in and around Grand Erie. These were described as unfamiliar, hard to navigate and expensive.
- Newcomers (youth/adults) and employers understand and agree that improving their ability to speak, read and write English directly impacts integration and employability.



STRATEGIES:

What are we going to do?

Introduce newcomers to post-secondary education, adult training and skills upgrading options available in Grand Erie.

ACTIONS:

How are we going to do it?

- Promote and support work of Education Works Alliance:
- Contribute to the development of adult education, training and English language instruction inventory.
 - Support the development of an on-line resource guide for residents/service providers outlining available training options.

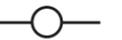
Create marketing tools and resources that will help educators and training facilities target the newcomer population living in Grand Erie.

Expand existing programs and support new methods of language training and program delivery in Grand Erie.

- Work with community partners to develop new methods of service delivery for English language training:
- Take language training into the community and workplace.
 - Pilot use of technology including webcasting, radio, etc.
 - English language home study.
 - Provide employment/workplace specific language training in the work environment.
 - Create newcomer youth peer mentorship initiative (see Social Support).
 - Expand conversation groups to counties.
 - Newcomer Orientation Week for high school students.

Implement a mobile newcomer training unit to deliver common training modules including WHMIS, health and safety and other workplace related topics throughout Grand Erie.

When will we do it?



“Respect for the existing ambiance and character of the Community: these should be enhanced, rather than radically and rapidly changed.”

Brant Economic Development Strategic Plan – Main Report March 2010



Health



Understanding the health care system and how to access services is important to achieve and maintain optimal health. Newcomers have cultural perspectives related to maintaining and managing health issues which should be understood and respected.

Key Findings:

- Immigrants are screened on medical and other health related criteria before they are admitted to Canada.
- When immigrants arrive, they are generally in better health than the Canadian born population.
- Recent immigrants from non-European countries were twice as likely as Canadian born to report deterioration in their health over an eight year period.
- There is a 3 month wait for OHIP coverage for newcomers upon arrival in Canada.
- The healthcare system is confusing to newcomers – (how does it work, what is available, how to access).
- Newcomers did not understand how to access family doctors & specialists upon arrival.
- Health maintenance and prevention is often not a focus for newcomers.
- Public display of unhealthy behaviors (smoking, substance abuse, etc.) was identified as an issue from a variety of perspectives (personal health, role modeling for youth and community image).

Opportunities:

- Newcomers want to learn how to access and navigate the healthcare system.
- Upon arrival newcomers are generally in better health than their Canadian peers. Studies show that newcomers arrive healthy, then report deteriorating health over an eight year period.

STRATEGIES:

What are we going to do?

Help newcomers understand and access health care services in Grand Erie.

ACTIONS:

How are we going to do it?

- Create marketing tools and resources that will help agencies and organizations target the newcomer population living in Grand Erie:
 - Develop a brochure outlining how to find a family doctor, emergency departments, family health teams, health units, etc.
 - Offer orientation workshops for newcomers to teach them about what is available and how to access.
 - Develop culturally appropriate messaging to remove stigma and dispel myths related to health and health services.
- Establish local protocol to deal with emergency health services to newcomers during 3 month waiting period (no OHIP coverage).
- Create awareness about the need to have private health insurance coverage upon arrival (until provincial OHIP coverage is available).
- Help existing health and wellness groups/agencies understand the unique needs of newcomers.

TIMELINE:

When will we do it?

Promote healthy living and health maintenance to newcomers.

- Create marketing tools and resources that will help health organizations target newcomers living in Grand Erie.
- Host health promotion activities for newcomers.
- Organize forum for health care professionals and newcomers to share information about cultural differences related to health promotion.
- Support health care providers in the delivery of culturally appropriate health care services (training, information, etc.).



Social Support



Successful integration is about creating a home, participating in social networks, engaging in community activities and building relationships. Social support is often defined as a belief that we are cared for and that our needs are being met. It is often what connects us to our families and to the communities we live in.

Key Findings:

- One settlement specific community organization serving all of Grand Erie.
- Some organizations offer programs targeted to newcomers.
- There is a perceived lack of communication between service providers impacting service delivery.
- Service providers identified lack of coordinated approach to service delivery (case management or referrals) resulting in newcomer perception of services not being user friendly.
- Newcomers indicate they are unfamiliar and unaware of affordable social/cultural/recreational community activities and amenities.
- Newcomers noted limited availability of family focused activities (social/cultural/recreational) in Grand Erie.
- Newcomers may feel a sense of isolation (youth and new moms identify specific challenges).
- Newcomers indicated an interest in volunteering and identified the importance of being actively involved in the community.
- Free local newspapers identified as a good way to provide information to newcomers.
- Non-profits reported they do not have newcomer representation on their boards.
- Nationally, immigrants were less likely than Canadian-born to volunteer (40% vs. 49% - 2007). Immigrants who did volunteer contributed more hours (171 vs. 163).

Opportunities:

- Newcomers are interested in learning about and accessing local social supports, community services, recreational activities and ethno-specific services in Grand Erie.
- Newcomers want to be actively involved in their community to help make it a better, more welcoming place to live.

STRATEGIES:

ACTIONS:

TIMELINE:

What are we going to do?

How are we going to do it?

When will we do it?

Assist newcomers in their efforts to volunteer and actively participate in the community.

- Develop a Civic Engagement Strategy including:
- Inventory of civic, social and community advisory/planning boards
 - Identify local volunteer networks and supports
 - Identify supports to ensure organizational and newcomer readiness to volunteer



Host events exposing newcomers to volunteer and civic engagement opportunities.



Inform newcomers of community services, activities and resources.

Develop mix of innovative rural and urban initiatives promoting available services and activities.



Create "Welcome Package" for newcomers. Include information on community resources, recreational activities and amenities throughout Grand Erie. Considerations:

- Virtual package/social media (Facebook, etc.)
- Visual marketing tools
- Complimentary samples of services and goods
- Strategic communications and distribution strategy – i.e.; mobile displays



Partner with existing initiatives promoting Grand Erie communities to keep newcomers engaged, involved and spending in Grand Erie.



Educate newcomers on how to find and access available information, services and resources.

Work with existing service providers to establish protocols to help newcomers find and access information independently.



Promote/establish newcomer youth peer networks.

Partner with existing youth programs to bring youth together, enhancing communication skills, social supports, etc.



- Newcomer Youth Mentorship Program
- Identify youth ambassadors

Establish a coordinated approach to service delivery for newcomers.

Evaluate the current service delivery process, identifying promising practices and options to improve the referral and case management process.



Work with existing service providers and information centres to establish protocols for basic service delivery to newcomers. Establish a "Pathways to Settlement" protocol for Grand Erie.



Community Readiness



The municipalities of Brantford, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk have values deeply rooted in history, tradition and community. The uniqueness of all communities within the four municipalities was regularly highlighted during the planning process. As our population ages and population growth declines, we have the opportunity and responsibility to welcome newcomers into the communities of Grand Erie.

Key Findings:

- Limited research has been done to understand the perception of immigrants and diversity in Grand Erie.
- Service providers identified a lack of general understanding about how to target and provide quality services to newcomers.
- Public transportation systems (within City/Counties and to other major cities) very limited – newcomers also identified motor vehicle licensing and insurance as challenging and costly.
- There is a lack of understanding regarding the benefits of immigration to small/medium sized urban/rural communities.
- There is a need to enhance community image (making communities safer, healthier and appealing for everyone).
- New tools are being developed to help measure how “welcoming” a community is.

Opportunities:

- The contributions of immigrants, and immigration, will assist in sustaining and enhancing the quality of life in communities throughout Grand Erie.
- New partnerships and initiatives supporting the economic, social and civic inclusion of newcomers are emerging in Grand Erie.



STRATEGIES:

ACTIONS:

TIMELINE:

What are we going to do?

How are we going to do it?

When will we do it?

Identify and promote the economic, social and cultural benefits of immigration.

Develop and co-ordinate public awareness campaign(s) promoting the benefits of newcomer attraction, retention and integration.



Integrate positive newcomer stories into initiatives already taking place throughout Grand Erie (local media, business newsletters, Education Works Alliance, etc.).



Support government and non-government agencies to improve the delivery of services to newcomers.

Identify intercultural training needs and resources and develop partnerships for implementation.



Improve community capacity to provide qualified and affordable interpretation and translation services.



Develop a Grand Erie version of “How to Guide – Welcoming Newcomers to Grand Erie” Tool Kit for government and non-government services.



“...newcomers are integral to the diversity, economic development and sustainability of the community.”

Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO), Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011

How Can You Become Involved?

There are many ways to become involved and take action to support the initiatives outlined in this Community Action Plan:

1. Participate in the Advisory and Work Groups assigned to execute this plan.
2. Invite us to make a presentation at your service club, community group or workplace.
3. Learn more about the benefits of immigration and the contributions that newcomers make to the community.
4. Read and share the *5 Myths About Immigrants* booklet.
5. Support cultural diversity in your workplace and community.
6. Spread awareness of the employment potential and qualifications of immigrants.
7. Help a newcomer feel at home within the community.
8. Become a mentor to a newcomer.
9. Let us know you're interested – share your thoughts with us.



Next Steps

We have a vision. We have a plan. It is time for action.

The best way to acknowledge the efforts of those that have contributed to this Community Action Plan is to make a commitment to take action and proceed with implementation.

Transition Phase

(April 2012 – July 2012)

- Move seamlessly from community planning phase into implementation.
- Recruit individuals/leaders with the ability to influence, plan and deliver identified activities.

Business Plan Development

(April 2012 – March 2013)

- Strategies and Actions identified in the Community Action Plan will guide the development of business plans.
- Business plans will maximize community resources.
- Business plans will be based on flexible delivery models, shared interests of communities, community size, leadership and available resources.
- Two separate business plans developed – Brantford/Brant and Haldimand & Norfolk.

Communications and Marketing Strategy

(April 2012 – March 2013)

- Communications and Marketing Strategy will be developed to promote and support the work being done by the Grand Erie Partnership around each area of focus.

Measuring Community Impact and Success

(May 2012 – March 2013)

- Time, effort and energy being invested in communities will be measured.
- Results based objectives will be created for each action.
- The “social value” model of performance will be considered as a measure. (This evaluation process measures the social return on investment and identifies “how the community benefits economically and socially⁸” from the work being done.)
- Grand Erie Immigration Partnership will participate in a “Performance Measurement Framework” being developed by the Welcoming Communities Initiative and Citizenship and Immigration Canada⁹.

“Ultimately success depends on co-operation between communities, governments, business/entrepreneurs and educational institutions working together.”

Appendix A – Governance

This Community Action Plan has been developed with the guidance and support of the Leadership Council and the ISTEP Advisory Committee.

The Leadership Council consists of representation from: Grand Erie newcomers, the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County, Norfolk County, NCO Financial Services Inc., Laurier Brant, YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services and Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie.

The Immigrant Settlement Transition, Employment and Partnership (ISTEP) Committee, established in 2007, is the advisory group for the Grand Erie Immigration Partnership. Committee participants represent a variety of community organization and sectors. The mission of the ISTEP Committee is to share information and establish diverse, effective partnerships to support the successful integration of immigrants into the communities of Grand Erie.

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie is the lead organization and is accountable to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for all contracted activities.

The role of the Leadership Council and the ISTEP Advisory Committee will evolve during the implementation of the activities identified in this Community Action Plan.

Appendix B – Participant Feedback

During the development of this Community Action Plan several different research techniques, consultations and planning sessions were conducted to solicit opinions, experiences and ideas. To ensure this process was conducted professionally, participants were asked to provide feedback on a regular basis. Participants included newcomers, employees from community organizations, businesses, faith groups, the Grand Erie Immigration Partnership Leadership Council and members of the ISTEP Committee.

We asked participants if they felt their participation was an effective use of their time, if they felt the information was important to the community, if they would recommend others to participate and if they would like to be made aware of future opportunities to contribute.

We received consistently positive feedback. Most people agreed or strongly agreed that their participation was a positive experience and that they would be interested in future opportunities to contribute.

Below are some of the comments received.

“I liked everything, because all of this will help the immigrant community. We need changes, they are necessary. I loved the session.” – *Newcomer*

“Very useful, I will gladly come back and share my experience as a newcomer to Canada.” – *Newcomer*

“This meeting was very informative and it was well worth my time.” – *Newcomer*

“Excited already about some of the new data that has been collected – and the opportunity for greater community awareness...” – *Community Organization*

Appendix C – Potential Partners

From information sharing, to consulting, to decision making, various sectors in the community have contributed to the progress of this Community Action Plan. Community sectors include:

- Government and Government Services
- Newcomers and Community Residents
- Community Counseling and Support Services
- Non-profit Organizations
- Private Business/Employers
- Health/Housing/Education
- Service Clubs
- Arts/Cultural Groups
- Media
- Financial Contributors (corporations, foundations, local/provincial/federal levels of government)

As we move forward into implementation, continued support and involvement is required.

Potential partners include:

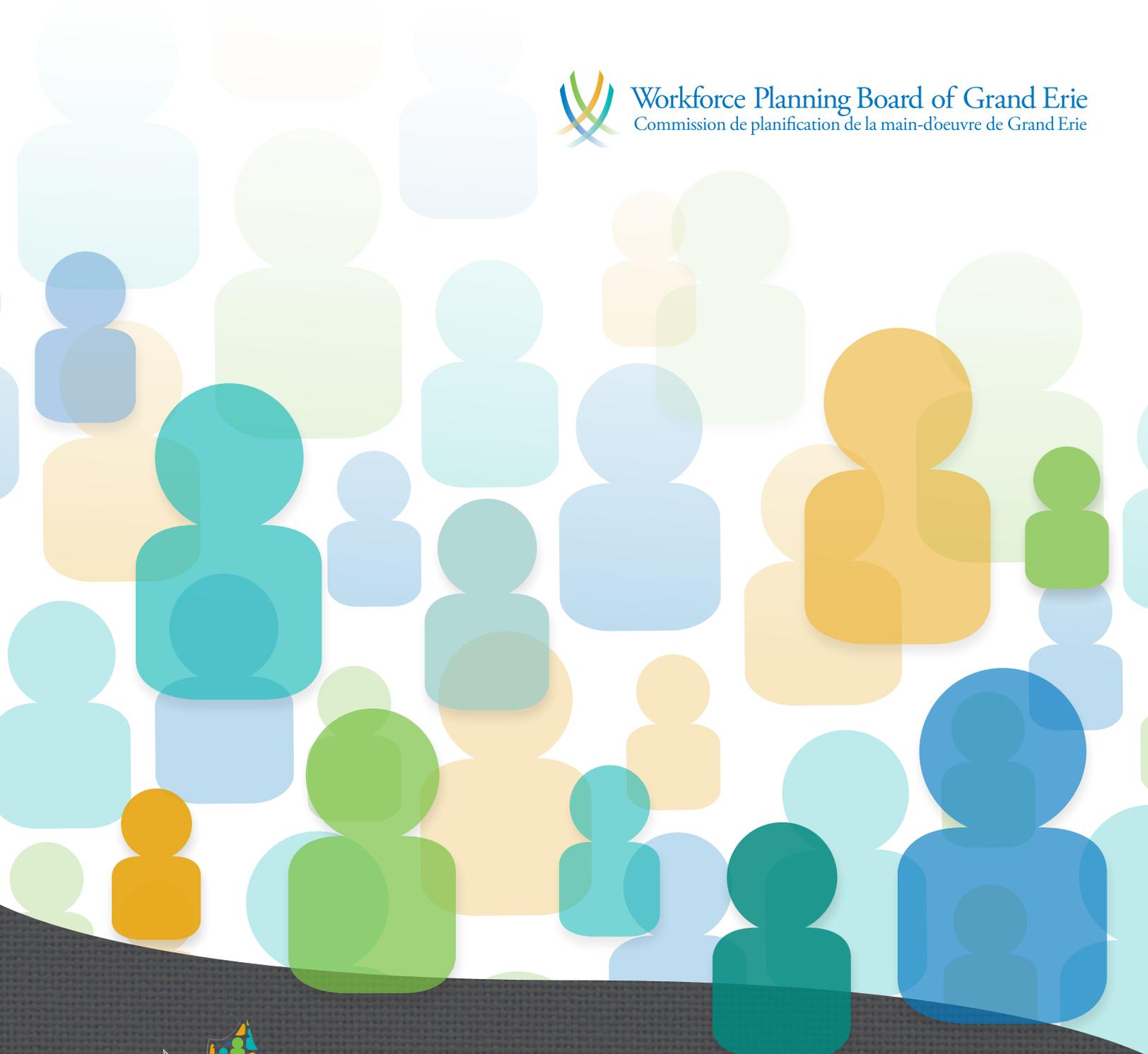
211 Directory	Educational Institutions (Universities, Colleges, School Boards)	Newcomer Portal
Active Grand	Employment Ontario Agencies	Norfolk Community Help Centre
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Excellence in Manufacturing Industry Associations	Office of the Fairness Commissioner
Boys and Girls Club	Family Health Teams	Parks and Recreation
Business Development Agencies	Global Experience Ontario	Places of Worship
Canada Post	Grand Erie Learning Alternatives	REACH
Canadian Cancer Society	Grand River Community Health Centre	Real Estate Boards
Canadian Diabetes Association	Grand River Conservation Authority	School Councils
Canadian Mental Health Association	Health and Safety Training Providers	Small Business Support Services
Chambers of Commerce & Business Associations	Health Equity Groups	ST. Leonard's Community Services
Community Resource Services	Heart and Stroke Association	Stroke Recovery Canada
Community Welcome/Information Centres	Hospitals	Telemedicine Advisory Committee
Community Youth Groups	Libraries	Translation/Interpretation Service Agencies
Contact Brant	Literacy Councils	Welcome Wagon
Credential Assessment Service Agencies	Local Health Integration Network	Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Economic Development	Local Newspapers, Radio and Television	YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services
Education Works Alliance		

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6. Citizenship and Immigration Canada, RDM Facts & Figures, 2010
7. Impact of Diversity Initiatives on the Bottom Line, Society for Human Resource Management, 2001
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Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie
Commission de planification de la main-d'oeuvre de Grand Erie



Grand Erie Immigration Partnership

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, YMCA Immigrant Settlement Services, the City of Brantford, County of Brant, Haldimand County and Norfolk County are working together with businesses, community organizations and individuals, to support partnerships and planning around the needs of newcomers.

For more information please contact us at 519-756-1116 or visit www.workforceplanningboard.org/immigration.

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