


# Turning Research into Action:

## Responding to Emerging Needs During COVID

**MOBILIZING KNOWLEDGE**



Immigrant & Refugee Services  
ASSOCIATION  
Prince Edward Island

Photo credit: APEXI PHOTO STUDIO



## Research

Survey August 2021  
**259** participants

Consultations  
September – October 2021

Quantitative Analysis  
October 2021

Focused Research on Urgent Challenges  
(Housing, Mental Health, Racism, and other)  
Sept 2020 – August 2021

2020

Focus Group  
February 2021

Focus Groups and Consultations  
September 2000 – January 2021

Survey August 2020  
**236** participants

Survey June 2020  
**265** participants

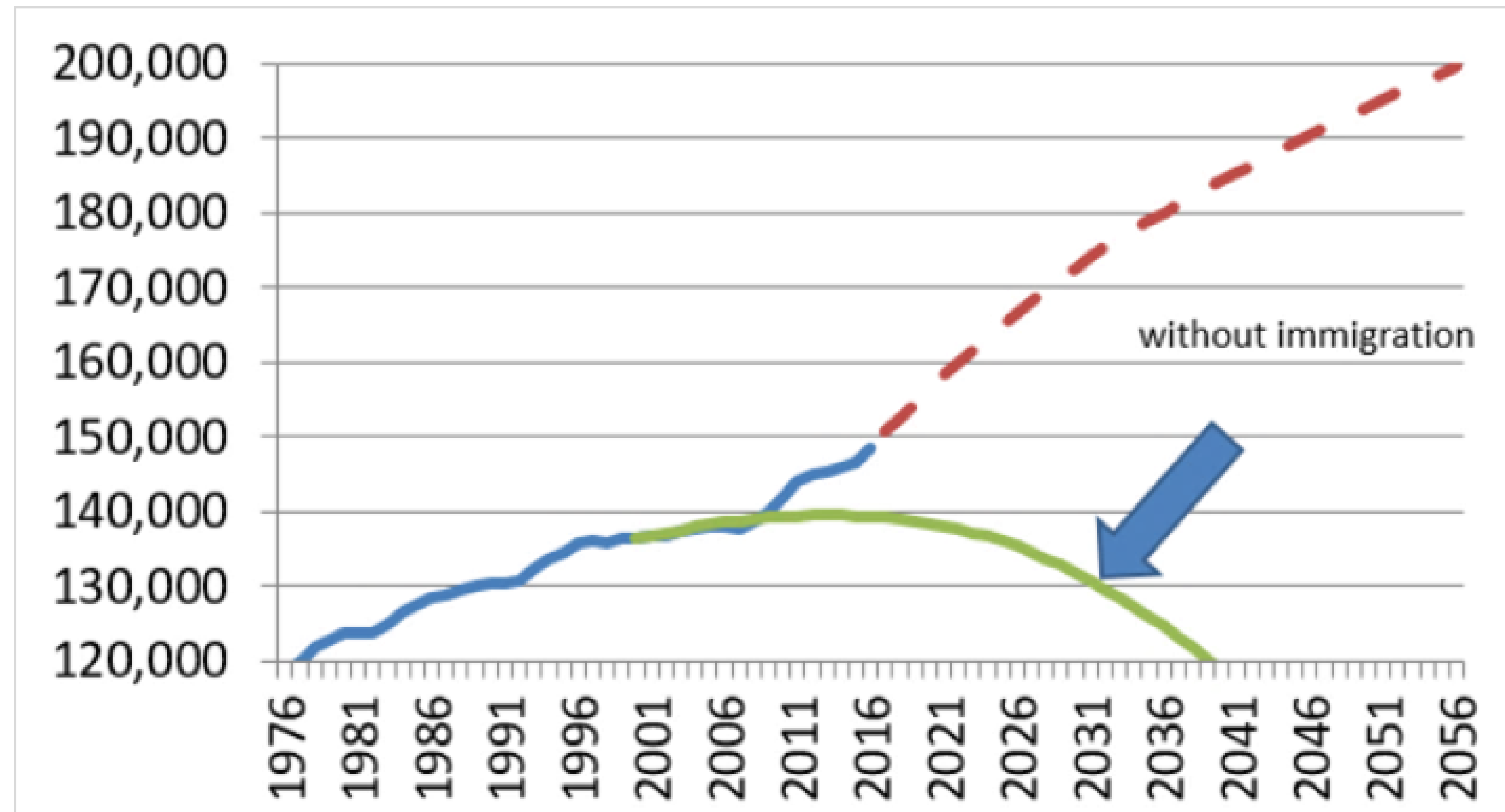
Large center: 2,000 survey responses / 20,000  
immigrants per year x 100 = **10.00%**

**Small center:** 259 survey responses / 2,000 immigrants  
per year 100 = **12.95%**

# The Immigration Imperative

Credit: David Campbell, President, Jupia Consulting

## Countering Population Loss



Credit: Nigel Burns, PEI Government



## Countering Labour Shortages

Labour Force	March 2013	March 2019	# Change
Born in Canada	78,700	72,500	- <b>6,200</b> *
Landed Immigrants	2,900	6,000	+ 3,100

Source: Statistics Canada Table: 14-10-0082-01

Credit: David Campbell, President, Jupia Consulting

## Revitalizing PEI Communities

New apartments opening to help support staff at Gillis Lodge in rural P.E.I.



Two new apartment buildings are helping health-care workers at Dr. John Gillis Memorial Lodge in Belfast, P.E.I., find local accommodation — right across the street.

"The idea would be to make self-sustained mini-townships," Punnapadam said.

With schools, grocery, recreation centre and a post office, he said, Belfast has all the facilities for a small town.

Love this! Newcomers solving local problems! Win - win - win!

Now this is positive news 😊

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-belfast-gillis-lodge-apartments-housing-1.5947580>

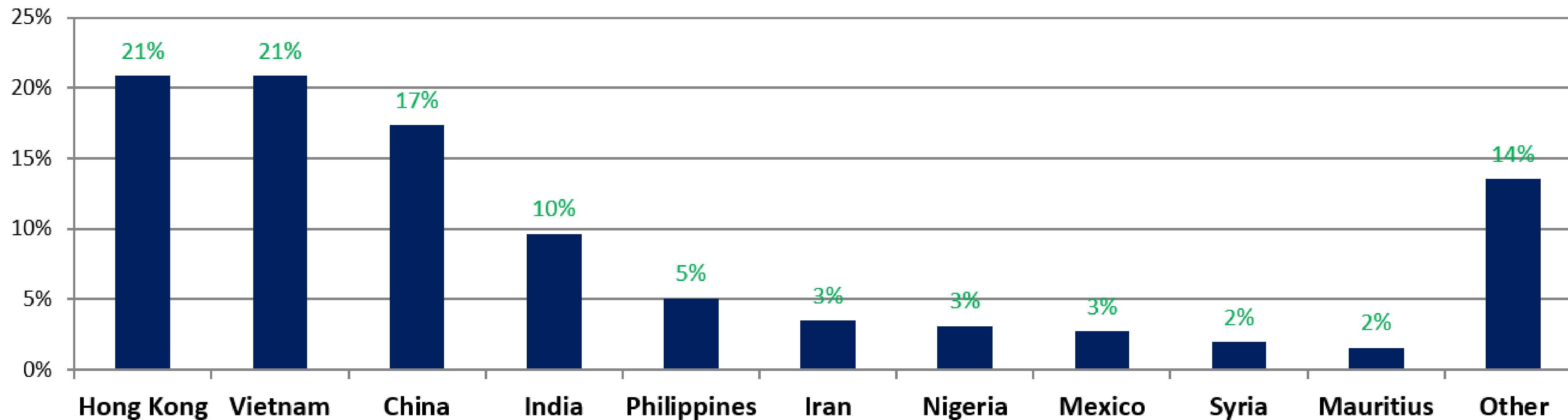
# Research: Current Needs in PEI's Immigrant Communities



# 2021 Survey Results

259 participants

## What is your place of birth?



**Other:** Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Dubai, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Libya, Morocco, Northern Africa, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia Taiwan, The Bahamas, UAE, UK, Ukraine



# 2021 Survey Results: Top 3 Issues

259 participants

Please select your 3 concerns or challenges			Aug 2021	Aug 2020
1	Health or medical concerns	↑	44%	27%
2	Finding or keeping a job	↑	42%	29%
3	Missing family and friends overseas	↓	39%	46%
4	Viability of my business coming back online	↑	32%	14%
5	Paying mortgage or rent	↓	25%	31%
6	Learning English	↑	23%	13%
7	Finding a place to live	↑	20%	8%
8	Maintaining healthy relationships	↓	15%	25%
9	Mental health	↑	13%	12%
10	Discrimination	↑	12%	6%
	Concern for International Students (College or University)	↑	10%	9%
	Access to daycare (infant to preschool)		8%	8%
	Children not doing well (Kindergarten - Grade 12)	↓	4%	24%

\*Other Concerns (please specify): immigration status expiring, business, travel, team sports, job search, mental health

# 2021 Survey Results: Other Trends

259 participants

Are you struggling with any of the following?	Yes & Sometimes
Stress / Anxiety	68%
Friends from my cultural community have all moved away	55%
Affording mortgage or rent	51%
Learning English	42%
Discrimination against my child at school	35%

# Challenges Interconnected; Collaboration Important



# Challenges Interconnected; Collaboration Important

## **32%** Report Struggling with Viability of their Business

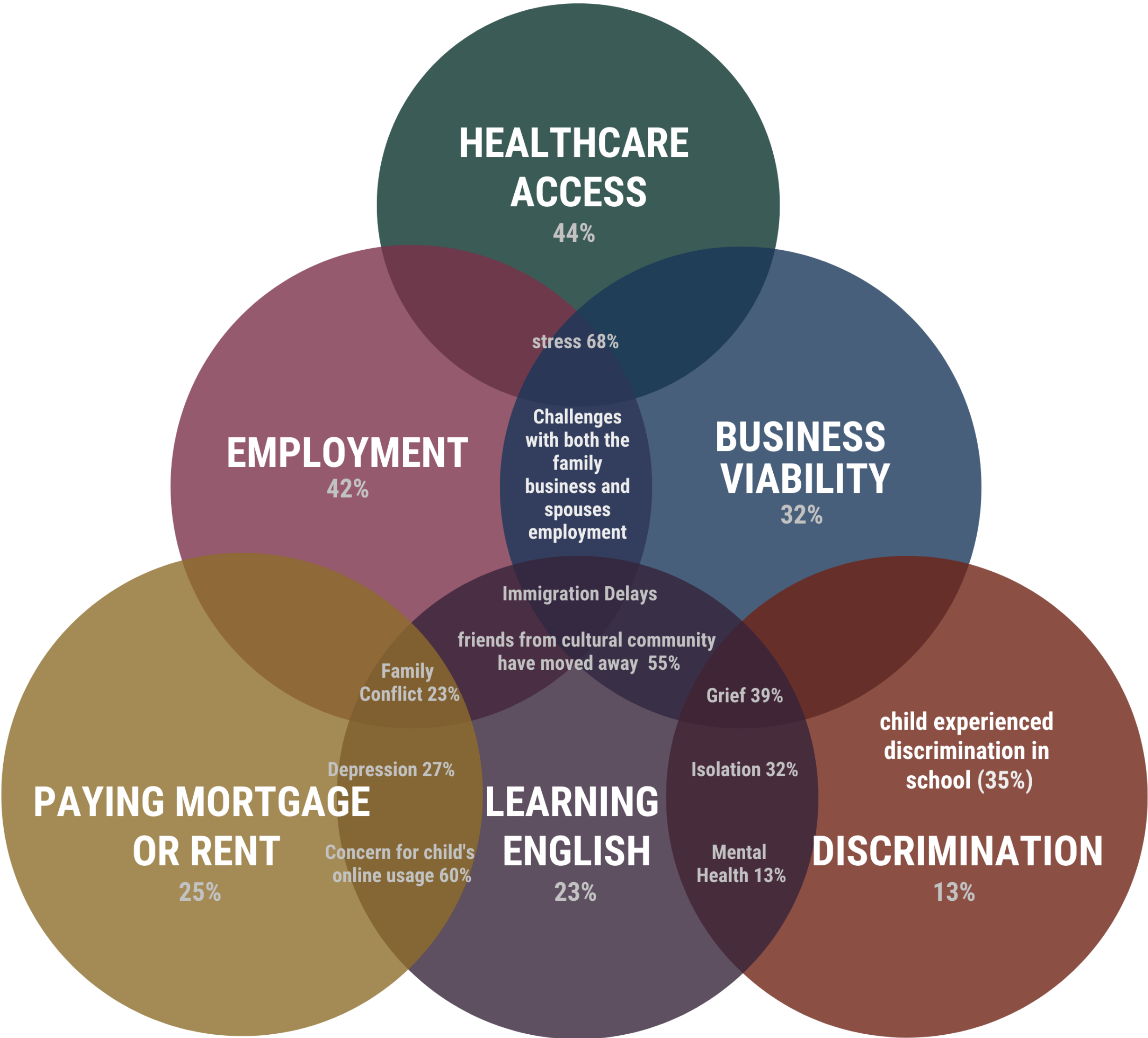
These 32% are also struggling with:

1. Learning English
2. Paying mortgage or rent
3. Maintaining healthy relationships

Source: August 2021 PEIPIP Survey

# Challenges Interconnected; Collaboration Important

Source: August 2021 PEIPIP Survey and February 2021 Focus Group



# Mobilizing Knowledge: three examples



# 1. Mental Health



# Mental Health

**“24% of Canadians reported fair or poor mental health...  
before the pandemic only 8%  
of Canadians reported fair or poor mental health”**

<https://www.ciim.ca/img/boutiquePDF/canadiandiversity-vol17-no3-2020-d3549.pdf>

# Mental Health

**STATISTICS  
CANADA  
ADVISED:**

- “Recent immigrant participants more likely to report symptoms of anxiety than other Canadians”
- “Recent immigrants reported fair or poor mental health more often than other Canadians”
- “Mental health of more than half of recent immigrant participants has worsened since the implementation of physical distancing”
- “Female recent immigrant participants are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety”
- “Recent immigrant participants financially affected by the pandemic exhibit higher levels of anxiety”

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00050-eng.htm>



# Mental Health

Please select your 3 concerns or challenges	
★1	Missing family and friends overseas
★2	Paying mortgage, rent, or groceries
★3	Finding or keeping a job
★4	Health or medical concerns
★5	Maintaining healthy relationships
★6	Children not doing well without social connection and structure of school (K-12)
★7	Challenges with online school (K-12)
★7	Viability of my business coming back online
★8	Learning English

Source: August 2020 PEIPIP Survey through the PEIANC

★Mental health risk factors





## Newcomer Feedback

“We all know that Covid19 make large and deep change special for mental health and psychological of people either local or newcomer... they think no ones care and no solutions for them”

“Being away from family overseas and not knowing when we can see each other again is the hardest part of all”

“Hard to find clients; hard to find vendors... do not know when will it finish and the business may be disappear but the expense is increasing debt still has to pay.... feeling unstable in anything”

“Mental Health service is not available in mother language for family members who can't speak perfect English.”

“Keeping healthy relationship was the biggest challenge”

“The gray future of our life”



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## TYPES OF HELP NEEDED

1. Counselling, therapy, or help for problems with personal relationships **(42%)**
2. Education workshop **(40%)**
3. Information about mental health problems, treatment, or available services **(38%)**
4. Health care providers such as family physicians, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, psychiatrists, medical specialists **(30%)**
5. Alternative care such as acupuncture, naturopath, chiropractor, herbalist **(24%)**
6. Medication **(13%)**





# ACTION FOR PEI

## COUNSELLING SUPPORT (ONE-ON-ONE)

- Increase trauma-informed, culturally-sensitive counselling support in \* different languages (\*interpreters needed)  
**In process; counsellor hired (IRSA)**
- Expanded services through the settlement association and provincial support  
**Jan/2021; Ongoing**
- Create a 1-page directory specific to mental health, helping tree concept, only just for mental health. Can CMHA do this or have they done already?

**Current need**

## SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL & INTERPRETERS

- Develop and distribute a self assessment tool with mental health access points (multiple languages)  
**Current need**
- Need a mental health/health interpreters and a training program for them (through CMHA Mental Health First Aid Training?)
  - \*Per McGill's research in transcultural psychiatry and those working with culturally diverse patients, 'impactful mental health support, particularly for those dealing with trauma... first-language support is needed. Interpreters needed.

**Current need**

## WELL BEING PROMOTION & EDUCATION

### Options:

- Large Group/small group, weekly social media posts on wellness strategies, and webinar/or interactive sessions on special topics (parenting, positive parenting, online usage/social media, healthy relationships, culture shock, grief, managing anxiety/stress, coping strategies, where to seek support, etc.) and referrals to other organizations
- Ideas for session topics:  
(<https://ca.ctrinstitute.com/topics/>)

**In process (IRSA)**

## HELPLINE & DIRECTORY

- Island helpline has *only* an English or French option. There are many people in PEI that speak other languages, who need crisis support too. Can the Island Helpline increase the number of languages they speak or can PEI partner with other provinces that do have multilingual crisis support?  
**Current need**
- **One example, in Ontario:**
- Multilingual Distress Line-1-877-298-5444. Support offered in 8 languages, including English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Portugese, Hindi,, Punjabi, and Urdu; it does **not** have Vietnamese or Tagalog and isn't 24 hours (**Operates 10am-10pm**)

Full research report: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EwwRknPFG2LFwlo2tQyOgIAQ0rVfmoBH/view?usp=sharing>

## 2. Housing



# PEI Housing Trends

**51%** of Survey Participants are  
always or sometimes struggling to  
afford mortgage or rent.

# PEI Housing Trends

For the full housing report, please reach out to [pip@irsapei.ca](mailto:pip@irsapei.ca)

High Demand

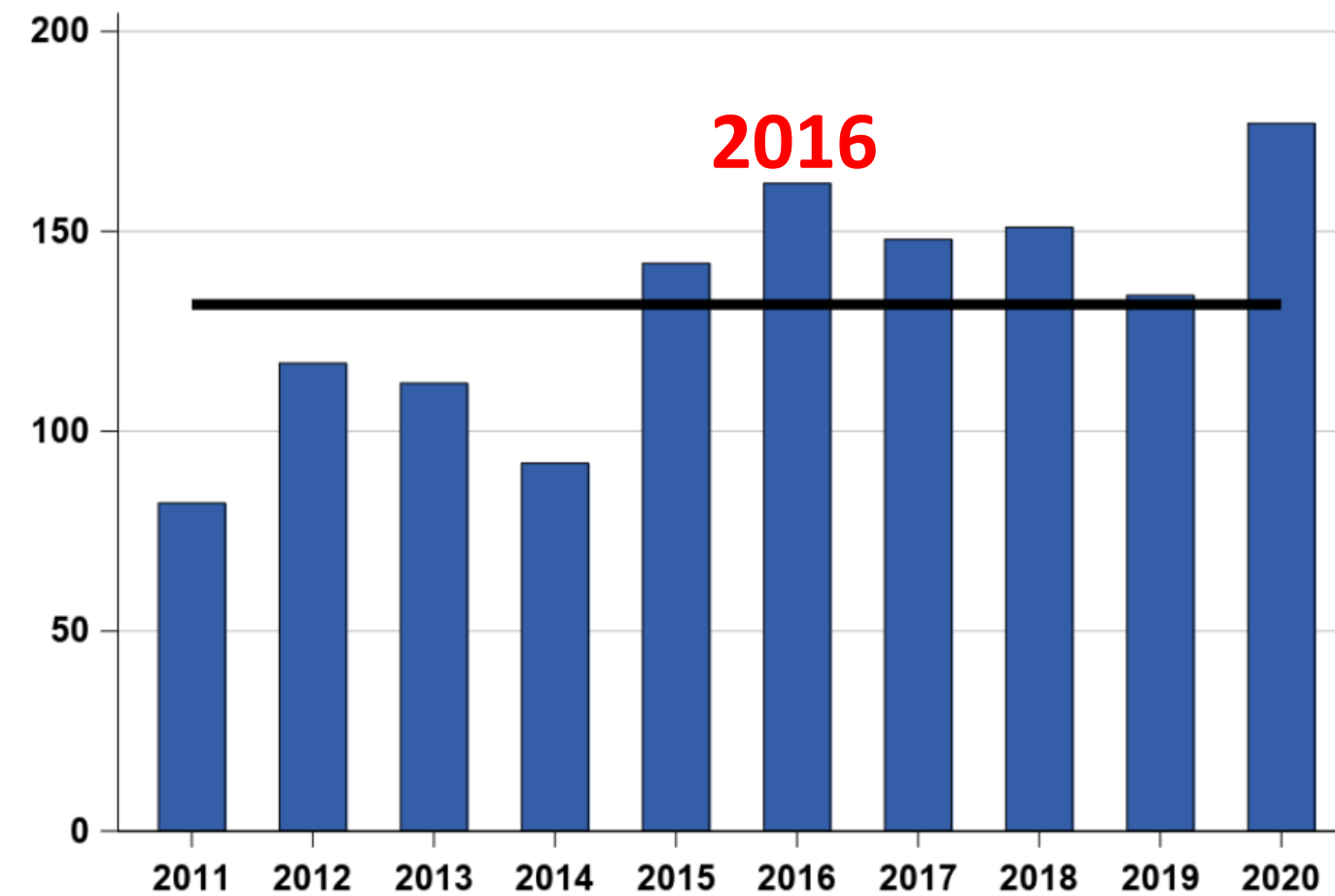


Short Supply



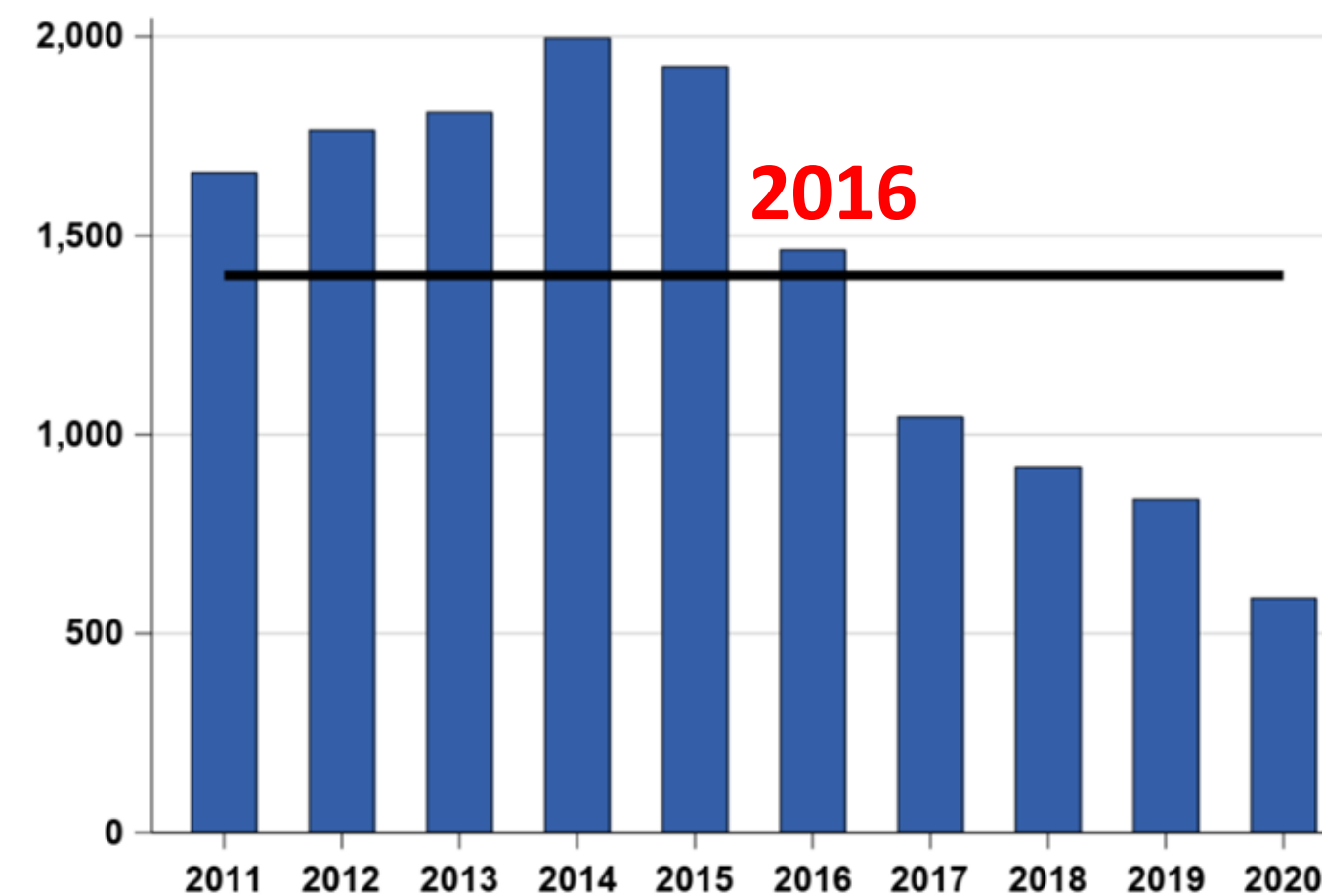
Rapid Price Increases

Residential sales activity (November only)  
Prince Edward Island



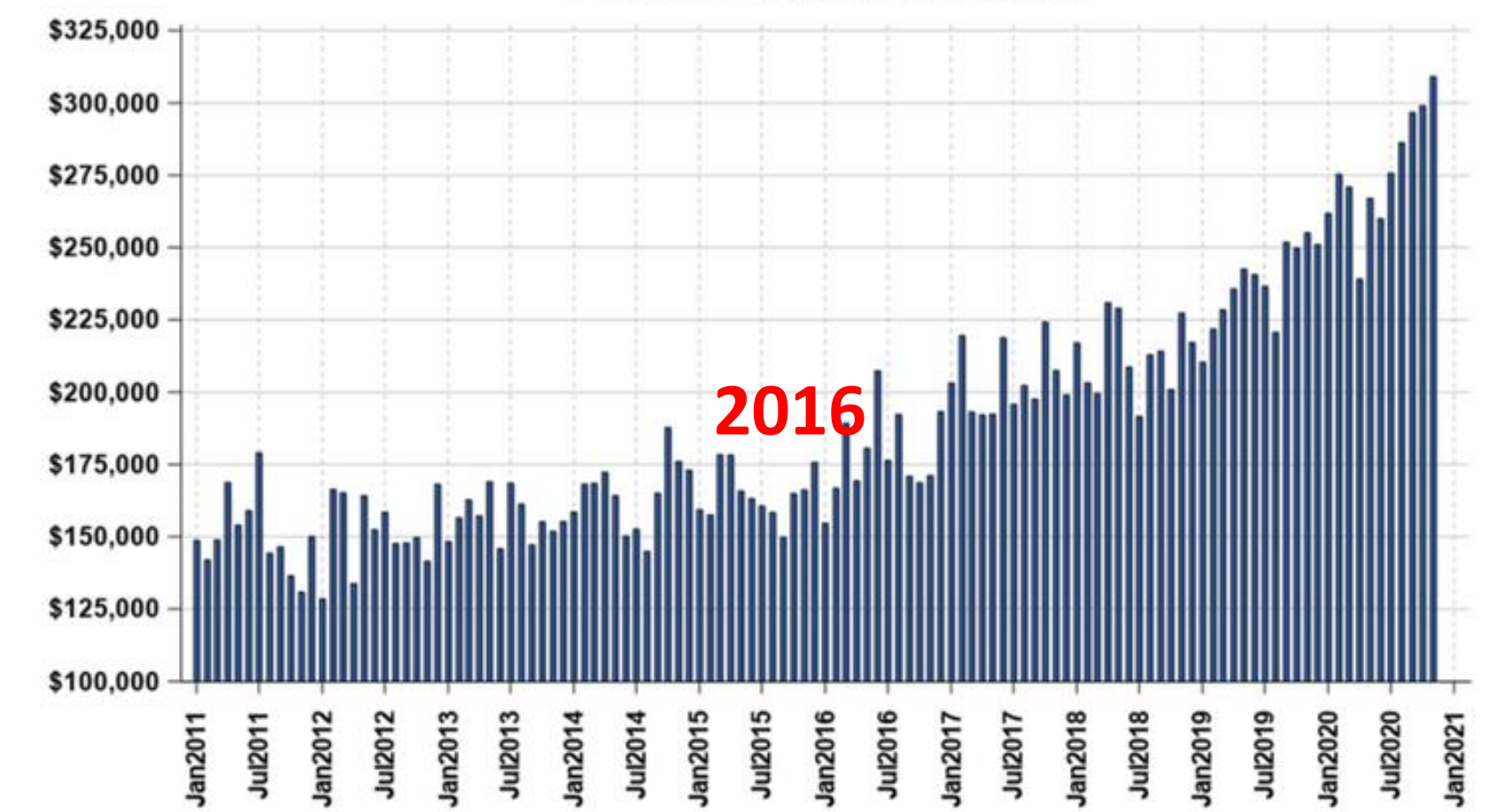
Source: The Canadian Real Estate Association

Residential active listings (November only)  
Prince Edward Island



Source: The Canadian Real Estate Association

Residential average price  
Prince Edward Island



Source: The Canadian Real Estate Association

<https://creastats.crea.ca/board/peia>

“Higher home prices are caused by high demand and short supply” - Shaun Cathcart, Director and Economist, CREA



# Housing Supply is at a Record Low



- Shaun Cathcart, Director & Economist, CREA

# Focus on Increasing Housing Supply

Shaun Cathcart, Director and Senior Economist with The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA), joined PEI's April 2021 information and collaboration session to share a current housing market update.

“While it is great to have demand, people need to live somewhere”. He recommended moving focus from short term solutions to the main issue at hand: “the housing stock we need, hasn’t been built yet. If we have demand as far as the eye can see, we’ll need to get busy swinging hammers”- at a pace we have only seen a few times in history. He said “if some pent up supply materializes, it will only be short-term relief- the housing situation has been unfolding in PEI and across Canada since 2015 and while some existing supply sustained us for a few years, that is no longer the case”.

Shaun mentioned, “perhaps there is some instructiveness in how we managed other historical housing situations in the past: in the 40s (nation-wide rapid housing development for returning vets), in the 80s (housing boom driven by the baby boomers; where our suburbs came from)”, and for PEI in the 80s – as one PEI expert pointed out- “DVA headquarters came to PEI, creating 1,000 new jobs and with that, a sudden increase in demand for housing”.

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**Next Steps:** While the approach to the current housing challenge needs to be similar in scale of response, the recommended approach is different- there is less land to work with. Land use, density, future sustainability and protecting land are all critical considerations in today's housing response. With **PEI's population forecasted to grow by 10,000 people, every 5 years** and with vacancy levels being under the recommended 3.5-4%, rapid and innovative responses are recommended to increase housing inventory now and into the future- to keep pace with a growing population. - advice from subject experts.

### 3. Municipal & Community Connection





# Municipal & Community Connection



This is what welcome looks like! The City of Charlottetown opening its doors and joining in celebrations of importance for its immigrant residents.

[#ImmigrationMatters](#)



# Municipal & Community Connection





# Inspire Hope

Inspiring hope in new immigrants through true stories and advice from those that have been where they are; who have struggled, but persevered.

– Emma Nguyen and Melanie Bailey

# Inspire Hope

Congratulations to Thinh, Xiaomei, Emma. And congratulations especially to each immigrant that has struggled, overcome, and found the courage to tell their story.  
[#InspireHope](#) [#immigrationmatters](#)



What a newcomer's journey to get a job in P.E.I can tell us | CBC News

# Turning Knowledge into Action

## Recommended Priorities 2021-2022

1. Employment; Business; English (work on together)
2. Healthcare Access
3. Mental Health
4. Housing Supply
5. Discrimination
6. Immigration & Processing  
Municipal Connections; Social Connections; Learning
7. Clarity on Service Providers, Programs Offered, and Eligibility

**Risk to immigrant well being and/or projected immigration levels over the next 3 years**



# Recommended Action 2021-2022

## 1. Employment; Business; English

- a) collaboration table to navigate changes in the labour market, where services overlap; and to oversee the work below
- b) official communication on English training access points for WP
- c) increase career development/ job search training; immigrant advisor has insights on approaches/options for expanded training
- d) develop or increase frequency of Canadian business culture training
- e) prioritize, focus on, and support momentum wherever it occurs related to upskilling and retraining workers for eligibility to work in high-demand fields (CAPEI, CASTL, possible new program at H.C.)
- f) **urgent trend:** Labour shortages; projects focused on getting job seekers trained to work in high shortage fields will be important
- g) Consider expanding impactful 3-mos English and Career Training at UPEI
- h) Consider extending impactful virtual support for small businesses:  
<https://www.cbdc.ca/en/programs/prince-edward-island-virtual-adviser-program>

## 2. Healthcare Access

- a) inform Province on immigrant feedback; healthcare access is now the number one challenge facing immigrants
- b) frequently remind immigrants of current healthcare access points

## 3. Mental Health

- a) continue impactful, expanded counselling through the settlement association
- b) need self-assessment tool; mental health interpreters; and develop or partner with existing multi-lingual crisis lines

## 4. Discrimination

- a) determine from those leading the work, how can we help?
- b) Support those working on racism in school

## 5. Housing Supply

- a) build collaboration around municipal partners, if CMHC Round 2 funds are secured
- b) communicate forecasted population growth numbers to the housing development sector
- c) Share data on housing supply with municipal partners

## 6. Immigration & Processing

- a) share feedback with partners re: immigration programs and processing delays during the pandemic & the impact on PEI's newcomers

## 7. Municipal Connection; Social Connection; Learning

- a) Share list of recommended programming with partners currently doing the work or doing similar work
- b) Project #InspireHope: Inspiring hope in new immigrants through true stories and advice from those that have been where they are; who have struggled, but persevered. Funds needed to cover the cost of writing more stories (journalist) and creating videos.

## 8. Clarity on Service Providers, Programs Offered, and Eligibility

- a) develop 1-page helping tree of services, SPO's that offer, and how to register
- b) document, keep updated, and share frequently: all Asian grocery stores



## Thank you for your time and advice:

Craig Mackie, Barry Ansems, Emma Nguyen, Todd MacEwen, Rocio McCallum, Erin Mahar, Carolyn Jenkins, Yvette Doucette, Rosalie Blanchard, Belinda Woods, Amy MacLean, and other IRSA staff; Jamie Aiken; Jeff Young; Kal Whitnell; Li Feng; Jennifer Cairns-Burke, Nigel Burns; Sheila Scott-IRCC; Dr. Victoria Esses; Christina Macleod -Volume 18; Christine Gordon Manley- Rosemount Editing; Alex MacBeath; Robert Hughes; CREA; CMHC; Nicole Bellefleur, Beverly Perry, Ali Siadat, and PEI Connectors staff; Victoria Esses; Sam Sanderson; Nigel Burns; Ally Guo; Tony Joy; Ajay Mathew; Ceejay Amadi; Ikechukwu Ohaegbu; John Dewey; Wayne Ellis; Truong Chien Ly; Anne Tran; Helena Do; Xiaomei Wang; Maxine Rennie; Angie Cormier; Allison Doughart; Scott Smith; Trevor MacLeod; Melody McInnis; David Arsenault; Samantha Murphy; Town of Cornwall; Town of Stratford; City of Charlottetown; City of Summerside; Mayor Steve Ogden; Tracey MacLean; the Chinese Association of PEI; New Life PEI; VietPEI; Indo Canadian Association (ICA) and Kerala Association (KAPEI); Sandigang Pinoy, Filipino Association; HK. APEI Photo Studio; Jean McRae; Carolyn Whiteway; Howard Ramos; Rodel Imbarlina-Ramos; Roberto Montiel; Cory Bailey

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Immigration, Refugees  
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## For more information please contact:

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# Turning Research into Action:

## Responding to Emerging Needs During COVID

**MOBILIZING KNOWLEDGE**



Immigrant & Refugee Services  
ASSOCIATION  
Prince Edward Island

Photo credit: APEXI PHOTO STUDIO