



IMMIGRANT SURVEY RESULTS, 2022

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Introduction

The Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership (SCLIP) is a community partnership focused on the development of settlement strategies for newcomers. The SCLIP conducted this survey to collect information from immigrants living in Simcoe County to guide the 2022-2032 Settlement Strategy and further community consultations.

The purpose of the survey was to collect information from immigrants on their experiences living, belonging and/or working in Simcoe County. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Measure what attracted immigrants to move to Simcoe County,
- Understand what is important to immigrants when choosing a place to live/work,
- Gather information on the services immigrants' access within their community, and
- Understand what services immigrants would like to access within their communities.

People who were born outside of Canada and are now refugee claimants, on work permit visa or visitors were not eligible to complete the survey. Immigrants who lived outside of Simcoe County were also excluded from the survey.

Methodology

A survey was developed to collect information from immigrants living in Simcoe County on their experience living, belonging and/or working in Simcoe County. The survey was drafted by the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) team with input from Economic Development staff. Questions from similar surveys carried out in other areas and national surveys were reviewed and considered. The survey was then reviewed and finalized by the LIP team with support from the Research Analysts.

As the survey was collecting information from Simcoe County residents outside of service delivery and improvement, the survey and methodology was submitted and received approval from the County of Simcoe Research Ethics Committee.

The survey was programmed into Checkbox and launched on May 31, 2022 for data collection. The survey was advertised at the Ethnic Mosaic Alliance/211 event, on social media, and at various tables and groups to be distributed through community agency networks and mailing lists.

LIP staff made the survey available on computers to people who attended the Ethnic Mosaic Alliance/211 event on May 31, 2022.

In partnership with the Service Simcoe Department, the LIP also developed a postcard to advertise the survey. The promotional material included a QR code to guide survey respondents to the online survey. A social media schedule was also developed. The posts strategically targeted local ethno-cultural and faith-based groups. They were published periodically while the survey was active to encourage participation in the survey.

The postcard was distributed to:

- The Local Immigration Partnership Council
- The Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Sub-council
- Ethnic Mosaic Alliance
- The Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) of Simcoe County
- The South Simcoe Community Action Network (SSCAN)
- The Non-Profit Network of South Georgian Bay
- Libraries
- The COMPASS South Western Simcoe County
- The Bradford COMPASS

Immigration Services

- Bradford Immigrant Community Services (BICS)
- Collège Boréal - Barrie
- Georgian College -Immigrant Job Finding Club
- Simcoe Muskoka YMCA Immigrant Services
- Welcome Centre - (Collingwood, Orillia, Alliston conversation circles)
- CMHA York-South Simcoe

Language Services:

- Learning Centre - ESL classes
- Georgian College – OSLT classes
- Barrie Public Library - English Conversation Circle

Local Educational Institutions:

- Georgian College
- Lakehead University
- Collège Boreal
- Simcoe County District School Board
- Simcoe Muskoka Catholic School Board

Service Providers

- CONTACT (Bradford Works)
- Simcoe County OW
- La Clé

The survey link was also e-mailed to the Simcoe County Data Consortium on June 8th, 2022, which included members from:

- Barrie Police Service
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County
- Catulpa Community Family Services
- Children, Youth and Family Coalition
- Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe
- Community Connection
- County of Simcoe
- EarlyON Child and Family Centre - Simcoe North
- Georgian College (Research Analyst Program; Institutional Research)

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- New Path Youth and Family Services of Simcoe County
 - Ontario Health
 - Simcoe County District School Board
 - Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
 - Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
 - Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury
 - Town of Collingwood
 - Township of Tay
 - United Way of Simcoe Muskoka

Updates on the number of survey responses were e-mailed to the LIP team on June 2nd, 6th, 14th, 22nd and July 8th, 2022. The survey closing date was extended from June 28th to July 15th, 2022. When the survey closed on July 15th, 2022, 98 survey responses were collected. 15 respondents screened out from completing the survey, leaving 83 responses for analysis.

Interpreting the Data

In the case of the Immigrant Survey, a convenience sample was used which limits how representative the data is of the immigrant population as a whole. To get a representative sample, probability sampling methodology must be used. Probability sampling is when everyone in a population has a known chance of being selected to participate. It is time consuming, complex and expensive to carry out. A challenge to achieving a probability sample was having access to a list of everyone in the immigrant population to select respondents from. Therefore, a convenience sample was used. When reviewing findings from a convenience sample, the size of the sample in relation to the population as a whole is useful to consider. The demographic breakdown of the sample compared to the population as a whole is also useful to consider.

The Immigrant Survey collected responses from immigrants who saw social media content/ads for the survey, attended the Ethnic Mosaic Alliance/211 event or were made aware of the survey through interactions with service providers who were promoting the survey. Given this survey methodology, responses may not be representative of those not engaged with service providers, the event, social media or those who chose not to respond to the survey. Also, the survey was conducted in English, so immigrants less comfortable with the language may have chosen not to participate.

The data presented in this report represents the self-reported perspective of respondents at the time the survey was carried out.

Summary of Data

Of the 83 respondents, the largest percentage were permanent residents (47%), had been in Canada 5 years or less (47%), and/or currently lived in Barrie (47%).

The top 5 attributes that attracted respondents to live in Simcoe County were:

- Small town feel (41%),
- Safety of the community (34%),
- Access to lakes, parks and forests (29%),
- Proximity to family or friends (29%) and
- Housing options (24%).

The top 5 attributes respondents selected as 'very important' or 'somewhat important' when choosing a place to live were:

- Safety of the community (99%),
- Cost of living (99%),
- Access to health care (96%),
- Housing options (94%) and
- Air quality (93%).

The top 5 services accessed by respondents and/or their families were:

- Healthcare (78%),
- Libraries (73%),
- Recreational activities (68%),
- Schools (55%), public transit (55%) and
- Municipal government services (54%).

The top 5 services respondents would like to receive were:

- Recreational activities (53%),
- Healthcare (47%),
- Cultural associations (45%),
- Employment services (41%) and
- Libraries (40%).

The top five services respondents would like to receive but haven't were:

- Cultural associations (34%),
- Housing resource centres (29%),
- Language classes (23%),
- Emergency services (23%) and
- Settlement services (22%).

The top 5 ways respondents indicated they participate in their community were:

- Helping neighbours (63%),
- Helping family members (60%),
- Donating to local charities (43%),

- Doing volunteer work (39%) and
- Speaking up for fairness (36%).

Approximately 61% of respondents were employed, 52% were employed permanent full-time and 78% worked in Simcoe County. When asked why they work outside of Simcoe County the majority of respondents (9/14) mentioned comments around being dissatisfied with job options available in Simcoe County.

The majority of respondents in the labour force indicated online job websites (64%) as a place they found out about job opportunities. Other popular sources included friends and family (38%) and LinkedIn (38%).

Of those in the labour force, the largest percentage of respondents reported having faced challenges finding a job that aligned with their education and experience (65%), followed by finding a job that matched their salary expectations (52%) and finding an employer that recognized their international credentials (48%). Finding a full-time permanent position (41%), repeatedly applying to positions and not being successful (36%), judgement based on background and/or identity (28%) and finding an employer that offers “work from home” (22%) were also challenges experienced by respondents.

Only 55% of employed respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they were satisfied with their job, 13% ‘disagreed’ and 32% selected ‘neutral’. Almost one third (27%) of respondents ‘disagreed’ their job aligned with their education and experience. Approximately 72% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ in their workplace, people from all backgrounds and with a range of identities have opportunities to advance their careers, 7% ‘disagreed’ and 21% selected ‘neutral’.

Over three quarters (76%) of respondents in the labour force ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they wish to pursue a career in their field of study and 71% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they were pursuing a career in their field of study. Two thirds (66%) of respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ working in Simcoe County was ideal for them, while 9% ‘disagreed’ and 24% selected ‘neutral’. Over one in four (27%) respondents ‘disagreed’ their international credentials were recognized.

When asked ‘what supports would help retain you as an employee?’, 81% of respondents who were in the labour force selected opportunities for career advancement. Over half of respondents (54%) selected developing professional connections, 49% selected secure housing, 38% selected education opportunities to upgrade language skills and 32% selected recognize and celebrate multicultural traditions and receive mentoring. Less common options selected by respondents were on-the-job English language training (25%), obtaining employment for family members (24%), information on Canadian workplace culture (21%), connecting with local ethnocultural and faith groups (19%), registering children for school (15%) and accommodating faith based needs (14%).

Overall, 72% of respondents reported their experience settling into Simcoe County as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ and over half (59%) of respondents reported their sense of belonging to local community as ‘very strong’ or ‘somewhat strong’.

When asked about opportunities to improve experience living in Simcoe County, over half of respondents selected connecting with their community (58%), 47% selected learning about Canadian culture and 46% selected connecting with other immigrants.

The top 5 biggest challenges experienced by respondents and/or their families in Simcoe County included:

- Finding work (48%),
- Making friends or social connections (43%),
- Accessing health care (35%),
- Finding housing (29%), and
- Accessing public transit systems (28%).

The top 5 most helpful things when moving to Simcoe County selected by respondents included:

- Making friends (40%),
- Having family support (35%),
- Visiting a public library (30%),
- Connecting with others that share their background or language (27%), and
- Volunteering (25%).

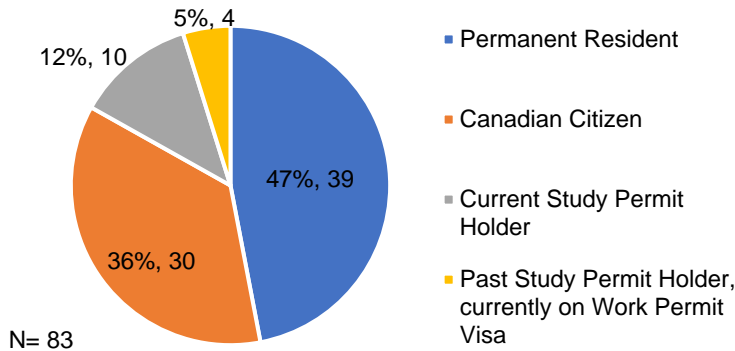
The top 5 activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County were:

- Increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies (43%),
- A central location where immigrants can receive settlement and employment services in one place (42%),
- Opportunities to improve the social connectedness of immigrants (40%),
- A central location to participate in multicultural celebrations and programming (34%), and
- A greater voice or involvement in community leadership and planning (31%).

Survey Results

A total of **83** responses were collected and used for analysis.

Current Status in Canada

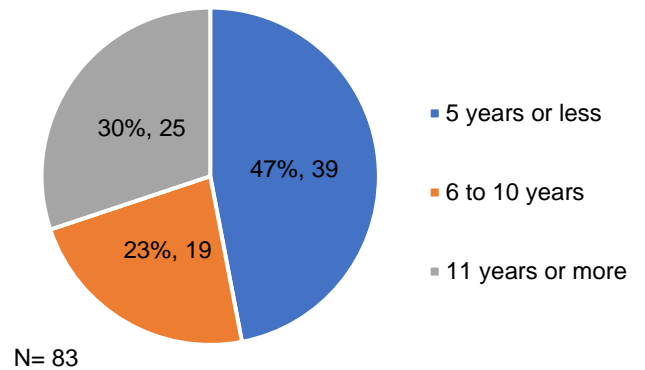


The largest percentage of respondents were permanent residents (47%), followed by Canadian Citizens (36%), current study permit holders (12%) and past study permit holders, currently on a work permit visa (5%).

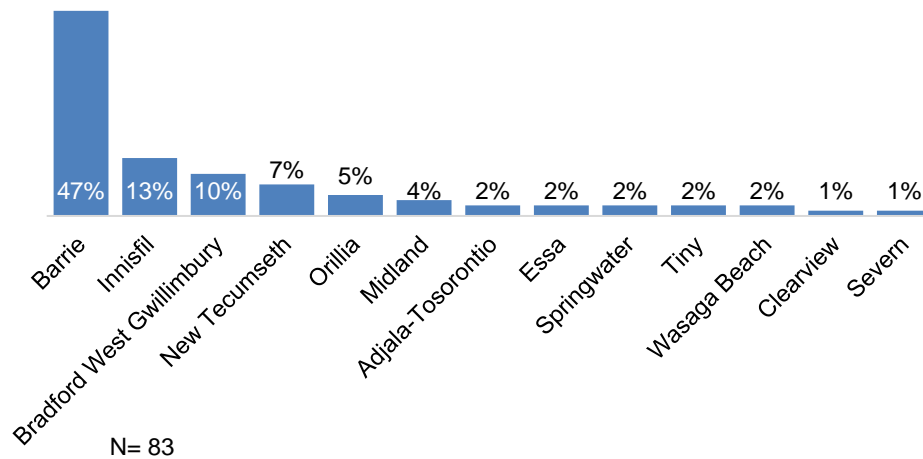
Refugee claimants, work permit visa holders and visitors were excluded from participating in the survey.

Length of Time Living in Canada

The largest percentage of respondents had lived in Canada for 5 years or less (47%). Approximately 23% had lived in Canada for 6-10 years and 30% had lived in Canada for 11 years or more.



Current Community



The largest percentage of respondents currently lived in Barrie (47%), followed by Innisfil (13%) and Bradford West Gwillimbury (10%).

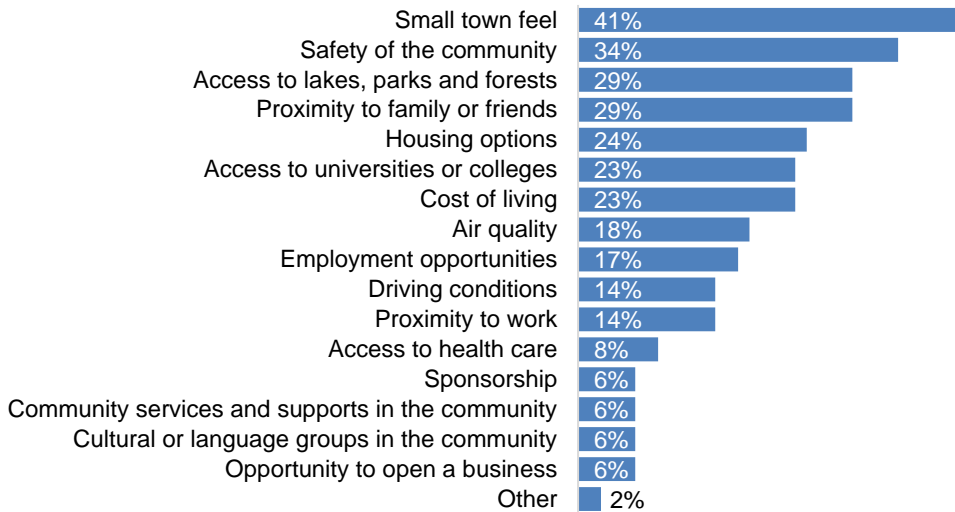
Attributes that Attracted Respondents to Live in Simcoe County

The top 5 attributes that attracted respondents to live in Simcoe County were:

- Small town feel (41%),
- Safety of the community (34%),
- Access to lakes, parks and forests (29%),
- Proximity to family or friends (29%) and
- Housing options (24%).

Other responses not recategorized into existing options included ‘better place to raise children’ and ‘I have not been able to change my location’.

Attributes that Attracted Respondents to Live in Simcoe County



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

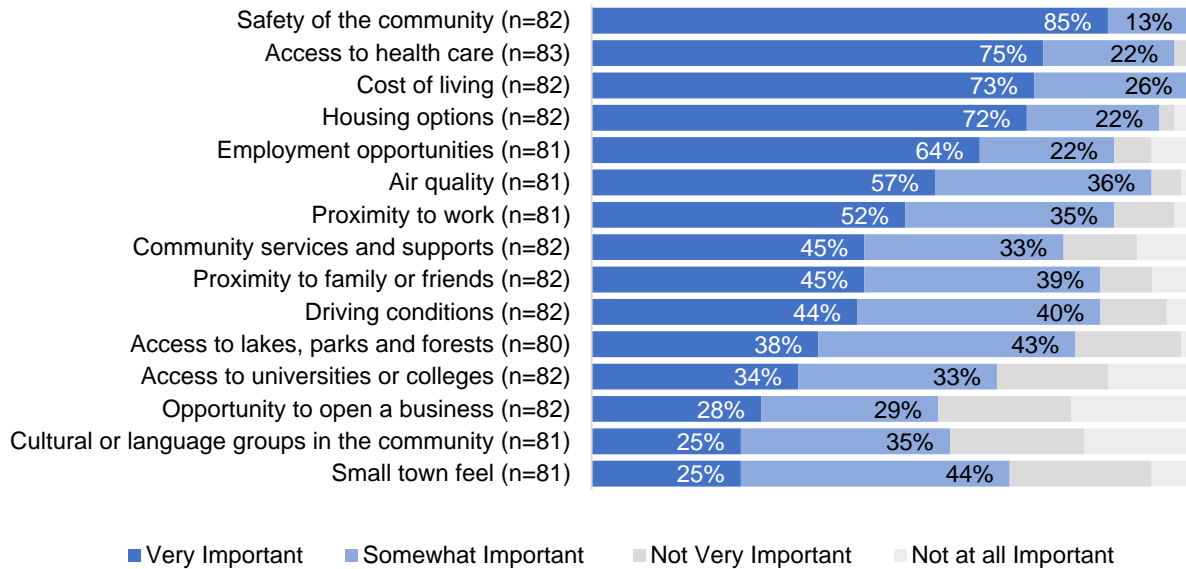
Importance of Community Attributes

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated all community attributes were ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ when choosing a place to live. The top 5 attributes respondents selected as ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’ when choosing a place to live were:

- Safety of the community (99%),
- Cost of living (99%),
- Access to health care (96%),
- Housing options (94%) and
- Air quality (93%).

The largest percentage of respondents selected ‘safety of the community’ (85%), followed by ‘access to health care’ (75%) and ‘cost of living’ (73%) as ‘very important’ when choosing a place to live.

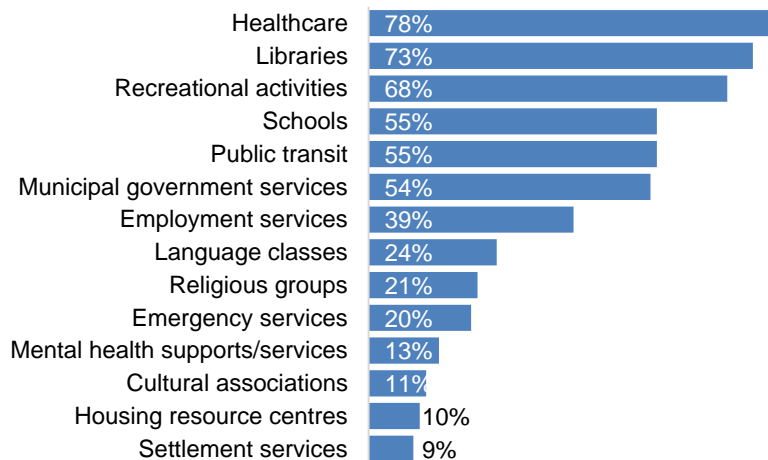
Importance of Community Attributes



Services Accessed by Respondents and/or Their Families

Respondents were asked 'Since moving to Simcoe County, which services have you and/or your family accessed?'. The top 5 services accessed by respondents and/or their families were: healthcare (78%), libraries (73%), recreational activities (68%), schools (55%), public transit (55%) and municipal government services (54%). Less commonly accessed services included employment services (39%), language classes (24%), religious groups (21%), emergency services (20%), mental health supports/services (13%), cultural associations (11%), housing resource centres (10%) and settlement services (9%).

Services Accessed by Respondents and/or Their Families



N= 82

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Services Respondents and/or their Families Would Like to Receive

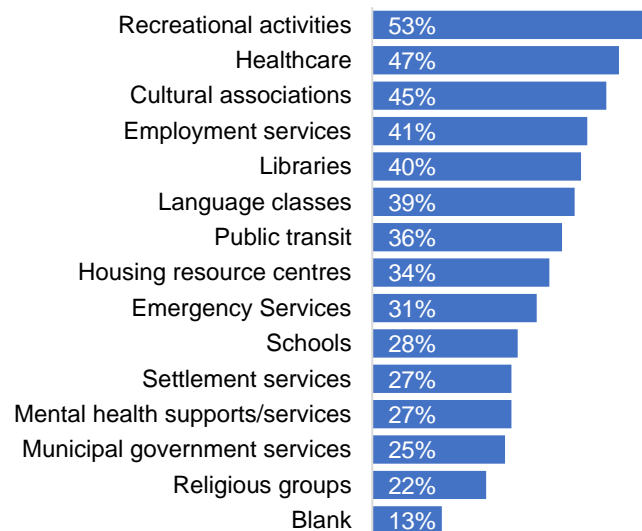
Respondents were then asked, ‘What type of services would you and/or your family like to receive?’.

The top 5 services respondents would like to receive were:

- Recreational activities (53%),
- Healthcare (47%),
- Cultural associations (45%),
- Employment services (41%) and
- Libraries (40%).

Other responses which were recategorized into existing categories but were worth noting included: ‘Leisure swim time and gym time for women only’, ‘Art, culture, fun, socializing’ and ‘Cultural content like theatres, concert venues, urban pedestrian areas, combined residential and business areas.’

Services Respondents and/or Their Families Would Like to Receive



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

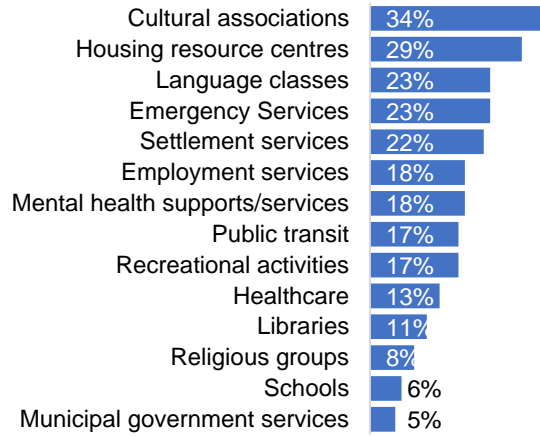
Services Accessed vs Services Respondents Would Like to Receive

It was noticed that some respondents had accessed services and also indicated they would like to access the same service in the following question. Data from the two questions were used to look at only services respondents would like to receive but had not already accessed.

The top five services respondents would like to receive but haven't were:

- Cultural associations (34%),
- Housing resource centres (29%),
- Language classes (23%),
- Emergency services (23%) and
- Settlement services (22%).

Services Respondents Would Like to Receive but Haven't



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Participation in Community

The top 5 ways respondents indicated they participate in their community were:

- Helping neighbours (63%),
- Helping family members (60%),
- Donating to local charities (43%),
- Doing volunteer work (39%) and
- Speaking up for fairness (36%).

Other responses mentioned by two respondents were 'I'm open to volunteering and helping out' and 'I help myself'.

Participation in Community

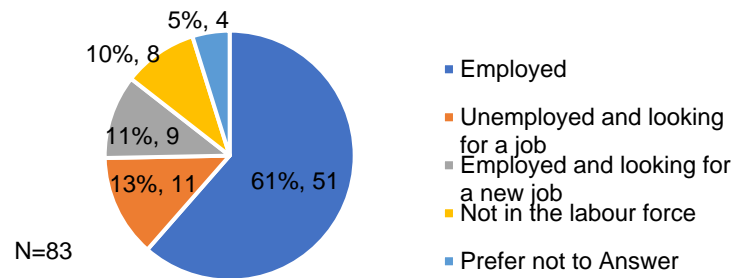


N= 80

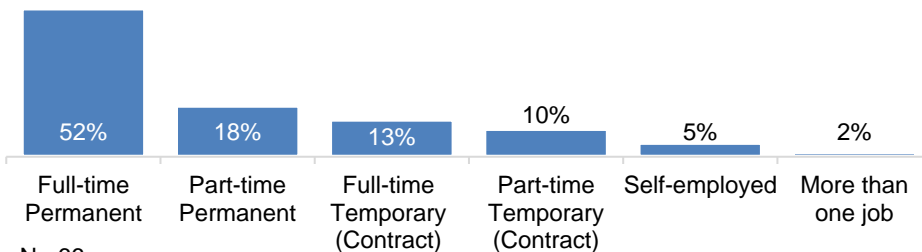
Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Labour Force Status

The majority of respondents were employed (61%), 13% were unemployed and looking for a job, 11% were employed and looking for a new job, 10% were not in the labour force and 5% preferred not to answer.



Classification of Current Job

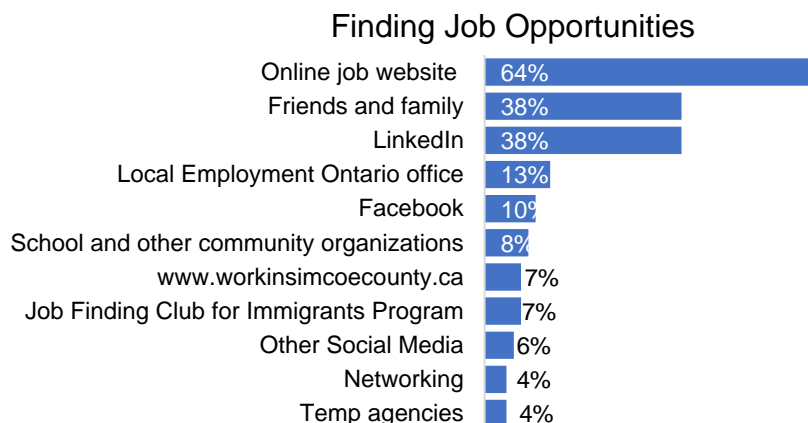


The majority of employed respondents were employed full-time permanent (52%), 18% were part-time permanent, 13% were full-time temporary, 10% were part-time temporary (10%), 5% were self-employed and 2% had more than one job.

N= 66
 Note: Question was not asked of those who were not in the labour force or unemployed.

Finding Job Opportunities

The majority of respondents who were in the labour force indicated online job websites (64%) as a place they found out about job opportunities. Other popular sources included friends and family (38%) and LinkedIn (38%). Themes that were identified through the open-ended answers were school and other community organizations and networking.



N= 72
 Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%. Question was not asked of those who were not in the labour force.

Location of Job

Over three quarters (78%) of employed respondents worked in Simcoe County, 13% worked in Toronto, 6% worked in York Region and two responses were unclear.

When asked why they work outside of Simcoe County the majority of respondents (9/14) mentioned comments around being dissatisfied with job options available in Simcoe County. Specifically, some respondents mentioned not wanting labour jobs, factory jobs or retail (3), wanting jobs with better compensation (2) and hiring practices that favour Canadian born residents (1). Five respondents mentioned that's where their job is.

Challenges Faced When Looking for Employment in Simcoe County

The largest percentage of respondents reported having faced challenges finding a job that aligned with their education and experience (65%), followed by finding a job that matched their salary expectations (52%) and finding an employer that recognized their international credentials (48%). Additional challenges were finding a full-time permanent position (41%), repeatedly applying to positions and not being successful (36%), judgement based on background and/or identity (28%) and finding an employer that offers “work from home” (22%). Other challenges mentioned by respondents were employers wanting Canadian work experience (2), public transit in Innisfil (1) and employers wanting them to do things they don't want to do (1).

Challenges Faced When Looking for Employment in Simcoe County



N= 69

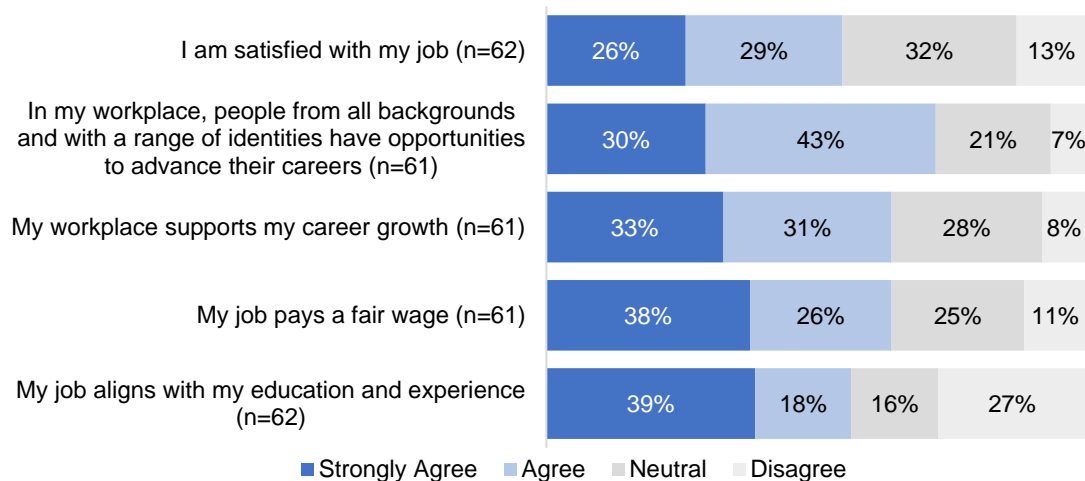
Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Question was not asked of those who were not in the labour force

Attributes of Current Job

Only 55% of employed respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they were satisfied with their job, 13% ‘disagreed’ and 32% selected ‘neutral’. Almost one third (27%) ‘disagreed’ their job aligned with their education and experience. Approximately 72% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ in their workplace people from all backgrounds and with a range of identities have opportunities to advance their careers, 7% ‘disagreed’ and 21% selected ‘neutral’.

Level of Agreement on Attributes of Current Job

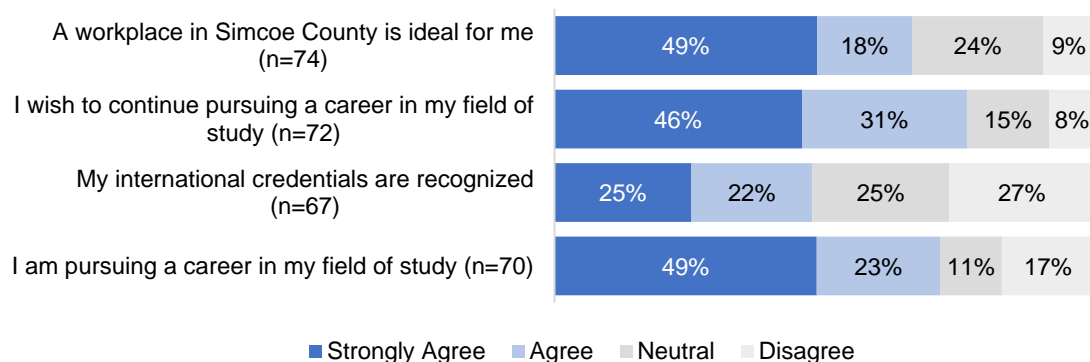


Note: Questions were not asked of those who were not in the labour force or unemployed.

Attributes of Career Path

Over three quarters (76%) of respondents in the labour force ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they wish to pursue a career in their field of study and 71% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ they were pursuing a career in their field of study. Two thirds (66%) of respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ working in Simcoe County was ideal for them, while 9% ‘disagreed’ and 24% selected ‘neutral’. Over one in four (27%) respondents ‘disagreed’, that their international credentials were recognized.

Level of Agreement on Attributes of Career Path



Note: Questions were not asked of those who were not in the labour force or unemployed.

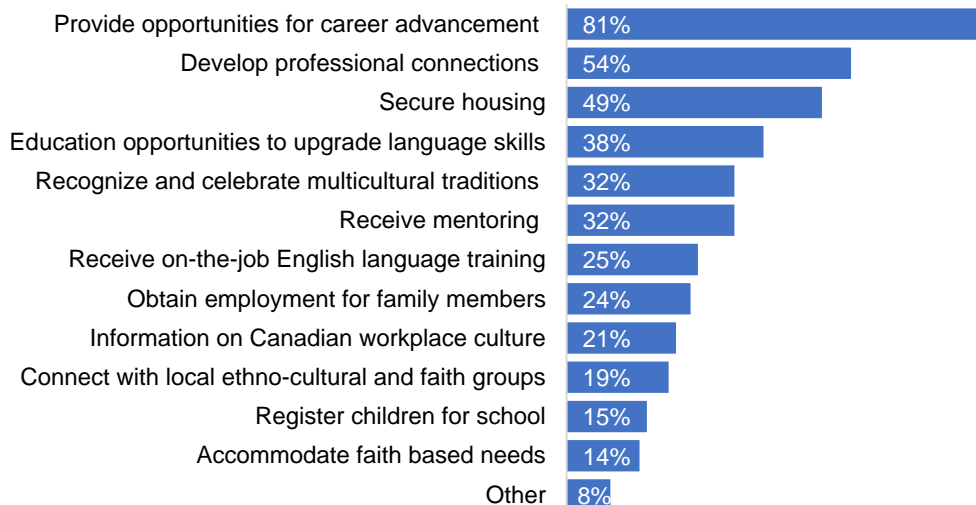
Suggestions for Retaining Employees

When asked ‘what supports would help retain you as an employee?’, 81% of respondents who were in the labour force selected opportunities for career advancement. Over half of respondents (54%) selected developing professional connections, 49% selected secure housing, 38% selected education opportunities to upgrade language skills and 32% selected recognizing and celebrating multicultural traditions and receive mentoring. Less common options selected by respondents were receiving on-the-job English language training (25%), obtaining employment for family members (24%), information on Canadian workplace culture (21%), connecting with local ethnocultural and faith groups (19%), registering children for school (15%) and accommodating faith based needs (14%).

Other suggestions included:

- French language courses,
- Benefits, union, high pay, hybrid or remote work,
- Recognition of skills from abroad,
- Positive action programs as fundamental policy in all Simcoe County employment environments,
- Less work more pay, and
- Shares in the company.

Suggestions for Retaining Employees



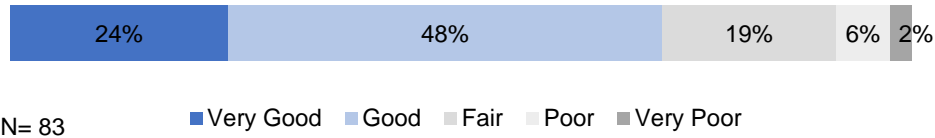
N= 72

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Question was not asked of those who were not in the labour force.

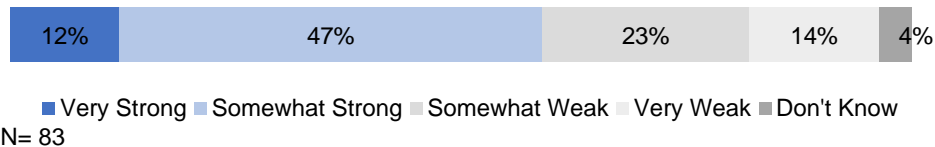
Experience Settling into Simcoe County

Overall, 72% of respondents reported their experience settling into Simcoe County as very good or good.



Sense of Belonging to Local Community

Over half (59%) of respondents reported their sense of belonging to local community as very strong or somewhat strong.



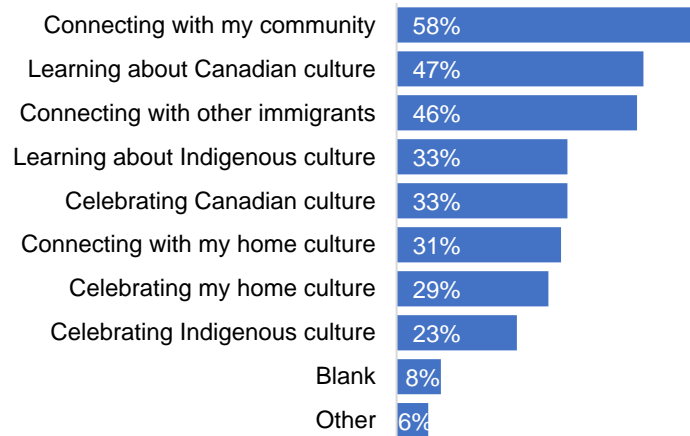
Opportunities to Improve Experience Living in Simcoe County

When asked about opportunities to improve experience living in Simcoe County, over half of respondents selected connecting with their community (58%), 47% selected learning about Canadian culture and 46% selected connecting with other immigrants. Additional options selected by respondents included learning about indigenous culture (33%), celebrating Canadian culture (33%), connecting with their home culture (31%), celebrating their home culture (29%) and celebrating Indigenous culture (23%).

Other responses mentioned by respondents included:

- Access to adult autism spectrum services,
- Learning about Canada taxes,
- Being accepted,
- Connecting with Canadians who are educated enough to feel truly comfortable with people who do not look like them, and
- Less pronounced class segregation.

Opportunities to Improve Experience Living in Simcoe County



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

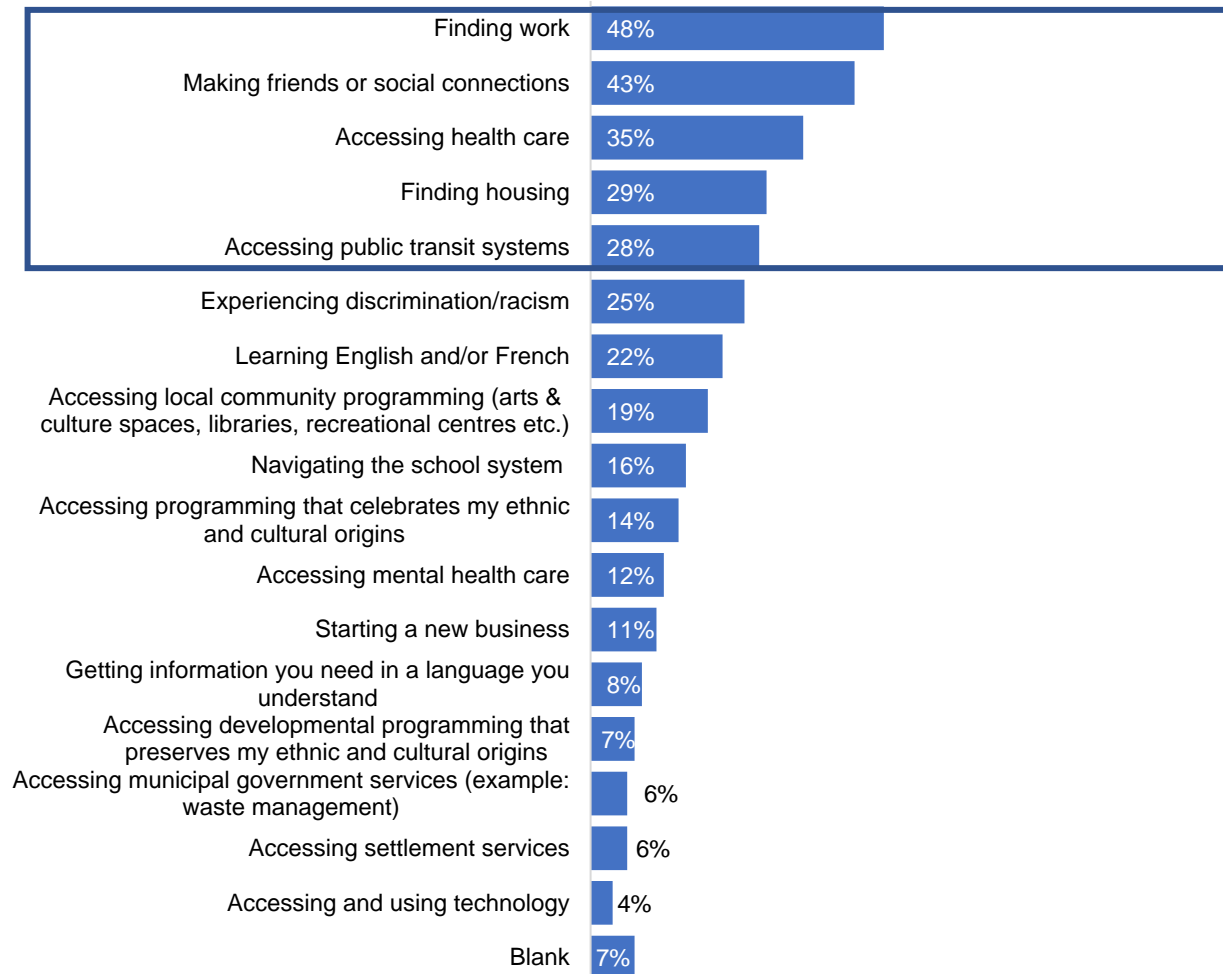
Biggest Challenges Experienced in Simcoe County

The top 5 biggest challenges experienced by respondents and/or their families included:

- Finding work (48%),
- Making friends or social connections (43%),
- Accessing health care (35%),
- Finding housing (29%), and
- Accessing public transit systems (28%).

Less common challenges included experiencing discrimination/racism (25%); learning English and/or French (22%); accessing local community programming (19%); navigating the school system (16%); accessing programming that celebrated their ethnic and cultural origins (14%); accessing mental health care (12%); starting a new business (11%); getting information in a language they understand (8%); accessing developmental programming that preserves their ethnic and cultural origins (7%); accessing municipal government services (6%); accessing settlement services (6%); and accessing and using technology (4%).

Biggest Challenges Experienced in Simcoe County



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

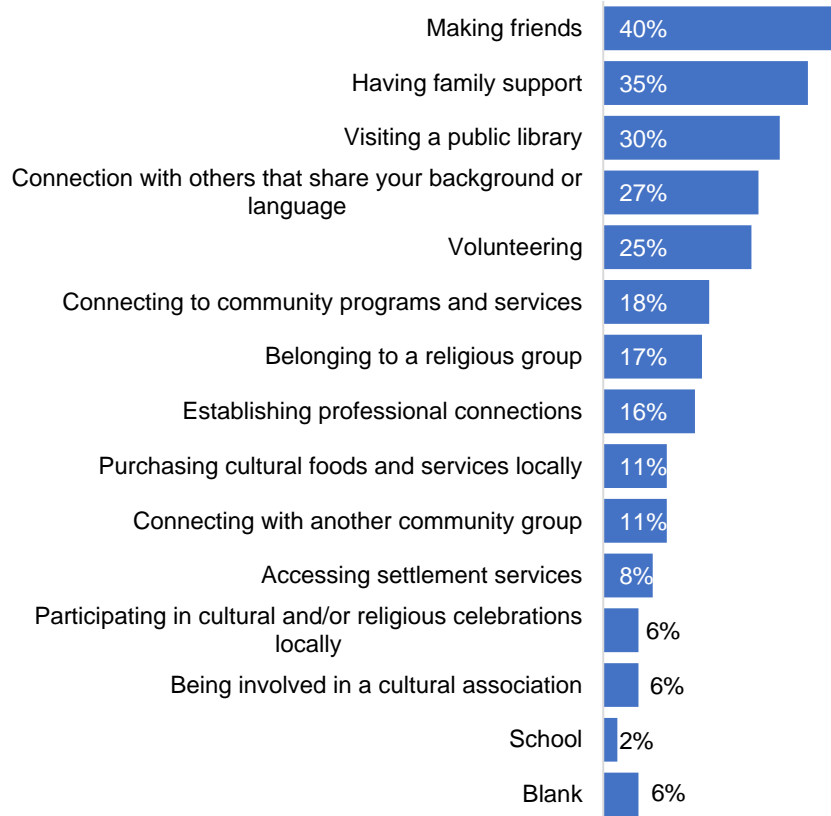
Most Helpful When Moved to Simcoe County

The top 5 most helpful things when moved to Simcoe County selected by respondents included:

- Making friends (40%),
- Having family support (35%),
- Visiting a public library (30%),
- Connecting with others that share their background or language (27%), and
- Volunteering (25%).

Less commonly selected things were connecting to community programs and services (18%); belonging to a religious group (17%); establishing professional connections (16%), purchasing cultural foods and services locally (11%); connecting with another community group (11%); accessing settlement services (8%); participation in cultural and/or religious celebrations locally (6%); being involved in a cultural association (6%); and school (2%).

Most Helpful When Moved to Simcoe County



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

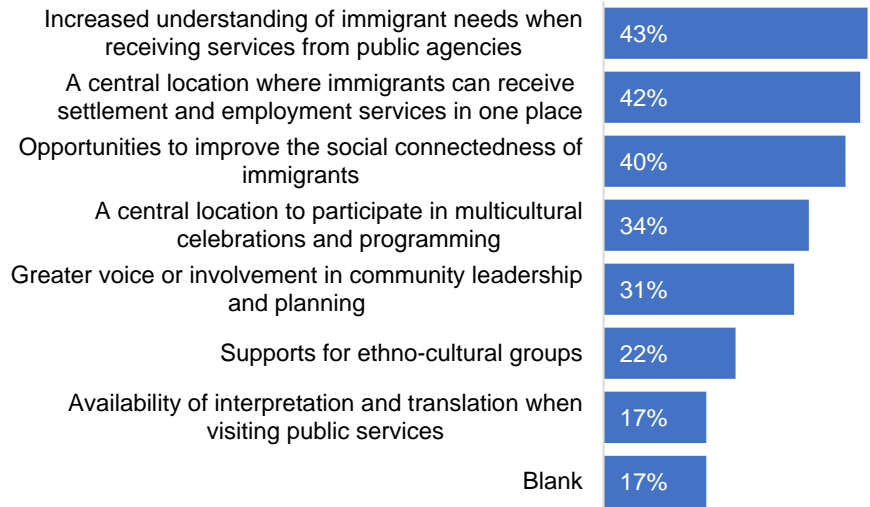
Activities/Programs to Improve Belonging in Simcoe County

The top 5 activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County were:

- Increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies (43%),
- A central location where immigrants can receive settlement and employment services in one place (42%),
- Opportunities to improve the social connectedness of immigrants (40%),
- A central location to participate in multicultural celebrations and programming (34%), and
- A greater voice or involvement in community leadership and planning (31%).

Less commonly selected activities/programs were supports for ethno-cultural groups (22%) and availability of interpretation and translation when visiting public services (17%).

Activities/Programs to Improve Belonging in Simcoe County



N= 83

Note: Multiple response question, percentages may not add up to 100%.

Ideas About How Organizations Within Simcoe County Could Help Immigrants Live, Belong and/or Work

Over one in three (34%) respondents shared comments or ideas about how organizations within Simcoe County could help immigrants live, belong and/or work. Themes that emerged from most common to least common were:

- Access to better jobs and services to help gain employment (n=9)
- Positive comments around living in Simcoe County and services accessed (n=7)
- Improvements to transit (n=7)
- Services to promote culture and religion, including access to cultural food (n=7)
- Comments related to racism (n=7)
- Access to housing and programs to support access (n=6)
- Access to recreation (n=6)
- Access to health care (n=5)
- Access to other services such as grocery, education, mental health, food banks, support for refugees, support for students and language services. (n=11)

Discussion

Finding work was the biggest challenge experienced by respondents in Simcoe County (48%).

Of employed respondents, 78% worked in Simcoe County. When asked why they work outside of Simcoe County, the majority (9/14) mentioned comments around being dissatisfied with job options available in Simcoe County. Two thirds (66%) of respondents in the labour force 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' working in Simcoe County was ideal for them, while 9% 'disagreed' and 24% selected 'neutral'.

The largest percentage of respondents in the labour force reported having faced challenges finding a job that aligned with their education and experience (65%), followed by finding a job that matched their salary expectations (52%) and finding an employer that recognized their international credentials (48%). Finding a full-time permanent position (41%), repeatedly applying to positions and not being successful (36%), judgement based on background and/or identity (28%) and finding an employer that offers "work from home" (22%) were also challenges experienced by respondents. Over one in four (27%) employed respondents 'disagreed' their job aligned with their education and experience and/or 'disagreed' their international credentials were recognized.

Over three quarters (76%) of respondents in the labour force 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' they wish to pursue a career in their field of study and 71% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' they were pursuing a career in their field of study.

When asked 'what supports would help retain you as an employee?', 81% of respondents who were in the labour force selected 'opportunities for career advancement'. Over half of respondents selected 'developing professional connections' (54%), 49% selected 'secure housing', 38% selected 'education opportunities to upgrade language skills' and 32% selected 'recognize and celebrate multicultural traditions' and 'receive mentoring'.

Increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies (43%) and a central location where immigrants can receive settlement and employment services in one place (42%) were top activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County.

Friends, family and social connections are very important in respondent's experience settling into Simcoe County.

Making friends was the most commonly selected (40%) most helpful thing when moving to Simcoe County followed by family support (35%). Making friends and social connections was also the second most commonly selected (43%) biggest challenge experienced by respondents in Simcoe County. Friends and family (38%) were also the second most commonly selected source respondents in the labour force found out about job opportunities and when asked 'what supports would help retain you as an employee?', developing professional connections (54%) was the second most commonly selected response. Helping neighbours (63%) and helping family members (60%) were also the top two ways respondents indicated they participate in their community.

Opportunities to improve the social connectedness of immigrants (40%), and a greater voice or involvement in community leadership and planning (31%) were top activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County.

Connection to community is an area to support immigrants in Simcoe County.

When asked about opportunities to improve experience living in Simcoe County, over half of respondents selected connecting with their community (58%), 47% selected learning about Canadian culture and 46% selected connecting with other immigrants. Connecting with others that share their background or language (27%), and volunteering (25%) were also the fourth and fifth most commonly selected most helpful thing when moving to Simcoe County. Donating to local charities (43%), doing volunteer work (39%) and speaking up for fairness (36%) were also top ways respondents indicated they participate in their community.

Approximately, 73% of respondents reported accessing libraries since moving to Simcoe County, 40% reported liking to access libraries and 30% reported visiting a public library was most helpful when moving to Simcoe County. Recreational activities (53%) and cultural associations (45%) were also top services respondents would like to access in Simcoe County. Cultural associations were also the top service respondents would like to access but haven't (34%). Other services respondents would like to access but haven't were housing resource centres (29%), language classes (23%) emergency services (23%) and settlement services (22%).

Increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies (43%), opportunities to improve the social connectedness of immigrants (40%), a central location to participate in multicultural celebrations and programming (34%), and a greater voice or involvement in community leadership and planning (31%) were top activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County.

Safety of the community and health care were very important to respondents.

Safety of the community (34%) was the second most commonly selected attribute that attracted respondents to Simcoe County and the most commonly selected response as 'very important' or 'somewhat important' when choosing a place to live.

Access to health care was the third most commonly selected response as 'very important' or 'somewhat important' when choosing a place to live (96%). Approximately, 78% of respondents reported accessing healthcare since moving to Simcoe County and accessing health care was the third most commonly selected (35%) biggest challenge experienced in Simcoe County.

The top activities/programs selected by respondents to improve their feeling of belonging in Simcoe County were increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies (43%).

Recommendations

1. Build an increased understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services from public agencies.

The SCLIP should prioritize a short biannual survey to collect information from immigrants in Simcoe County. Topics should be identified by a research subcommittee which will help to build buy-in from community partners to disseminate the survey. The biannual nature of the survey will build recognition in the community and a commitment to collecting timely local data. Incentives should be given to promote participation in the survey. Ensuring the survey is short will also reduce the burden on respondents. Presentations of the data to public agencies will help increase understanding of immigrant needs when receiving services.

2. Central location where immigrants can receive settlement and employment services in one place.

Finding work was the biggest challenge experienced in Simcoe County by respondents. Helping immigrants find jobs that; align with their education and experience; provide opportunities for career advancement; and provide opportunities to develop professional connections should be areas of focus. Working to build recognition of international credentials should also be a focus.

3. Improve the social connectedness of immigrants.

Respondents selected making friends as the most helpful thing when moving to Simcoe County followed by family support. Making friends and social connections was also the second most commonly selected biggest challenge experienced by respondents in Simcoe County. Increased programing in libraries, for recreational activities and for cultural associations would be effective as these were top services respondents would like to access in Simcoe County.

4. Ongoing engagement of police services in the SCLIP

Safety of the community was the second most commonly selected attribute that attracted respondents to Simcoe County and the most commonly selected response as 'very important' or 'somewhat important' when choosing a place to live. Ongoing connection and engagement of police services in the SCLIP is important to address immigrant needs.

5. Engage health care in the SCLIP

Health care was very important to respondents and the third most commonly selected biggest challenge experienced in Simcoe County. Engaging health care in the SCLIP will help ensure these services consider immigrant needs in planning.