

# Immigrant Survey Results

This report outlines findings from the **Western Regional Enterprise Network's (REN) Immigrant Survey** which gathered input from 36 online survey respondents in October 2021. The survey invited immigrants living in the Western Region (Yarmouth County, Digby County, and the Municipality of Barrington) a series of questions about their settlement and integration into our communities. Immigrants were defined as people born outside Canada who are now permanent residents, temporary residents, Canadian citizens, or foreign nationals (including refugees, refugee claimants, international students and more). The survey was available in English, French and Spanish.

Survey results will help form a data baseline and to guide how more than 20 organizations work together to improve services and living experiences for immigrants in the Western Region. Information gathered through this survey will also be used to inform the Western NS LIP Strategy.

## Here are the highlights of our findings.

Our survey results indicated that most immigrants (48%) came to our region for work with 22% saying they chose our area because they had friends or family who already lived here. 64% have lived here for between 1-5 years and the average age of respondents was between 35-44. They came from a total of 18 countries with the highest number identifying as having been born in the United States, South Korea, or Korea. 17 different languages are spoken at home, with 62% saying they communicate in English very well and 22% stating they communicated in French either very or fairly well.

The goal of Local Immigration Partnership is to create a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers. When asked "How welcoming is the Western Region community to immigrants?" the results were:

- 50% very welcoming
- 43% somewhat welcoming
- 3% not very welcoming
- 3% not at all welcoming

We also asked how they would describe their sense of belonging in the region The results were:

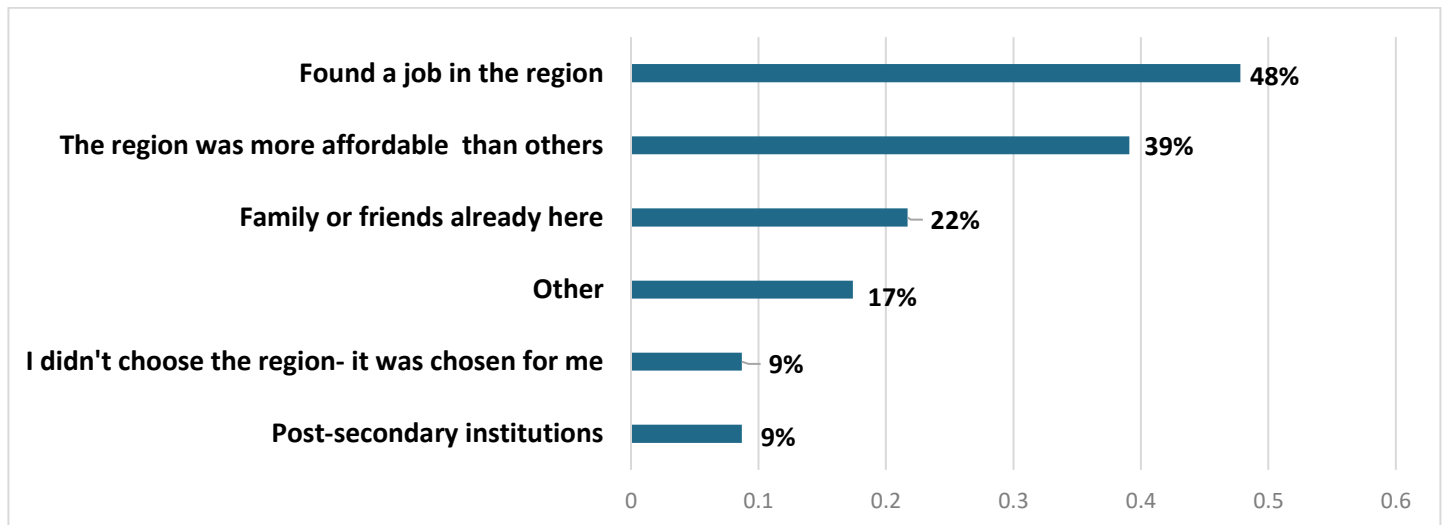
- 23% very strong
- 50% somewhat strong
- 20% somewhat weak
- 3% very weak
- 3% don't know

We asked a series of questions about access and use of various services; housing and transportation were rated as "poor". 29% stated they were not aware of certain listed services but if they were, they would have used them. 79% indicated that they would prefer to access information via websites.

37% have experienced discrimination "at a community/public event" being the top noted situation. 55% stated they thought the discrimination was because of their race or skin colour and 45% chose ethnicity or culture as the reason.

## Survey Results

### Why did you come to the Western Region?



#### Comments:

- Climate
- There was an opportunity to visit the Western Region before deciding to move: wilderness and wildlife, people, and cultural locations as well as the wonderful ocean air made this region highly attractive.
- Proximity to the States

### What makes you want to stay?

- Family, Natural beauty and opportunities
- La amistad de la gente (**translation** People's friendship)
- L'acceptation, le travail, les amis(es), le climat (**translation** Acceptance, work, friends, climate)

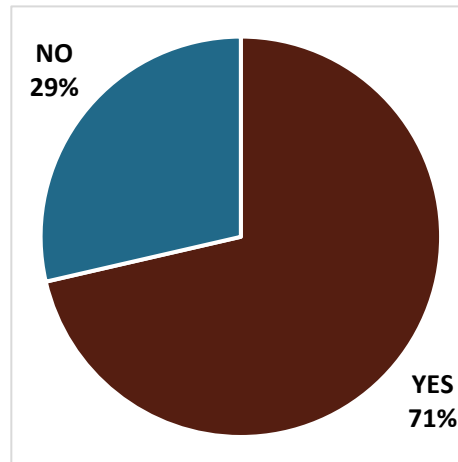
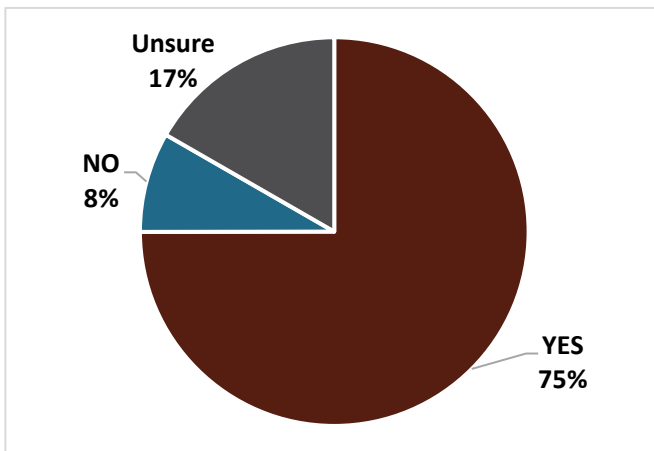
### If you are planning to move away from the region, what is your reason?

- The isolation of immigrant services in the zone. Most services are concentrated in Halifax
- Can not find a good job
- Education for children
- Job opportunities, better healthcare, more social and cultural programs
- More convenient location – for city life
- Travail, nourriture, diversité (**translation** work, food, diversity)

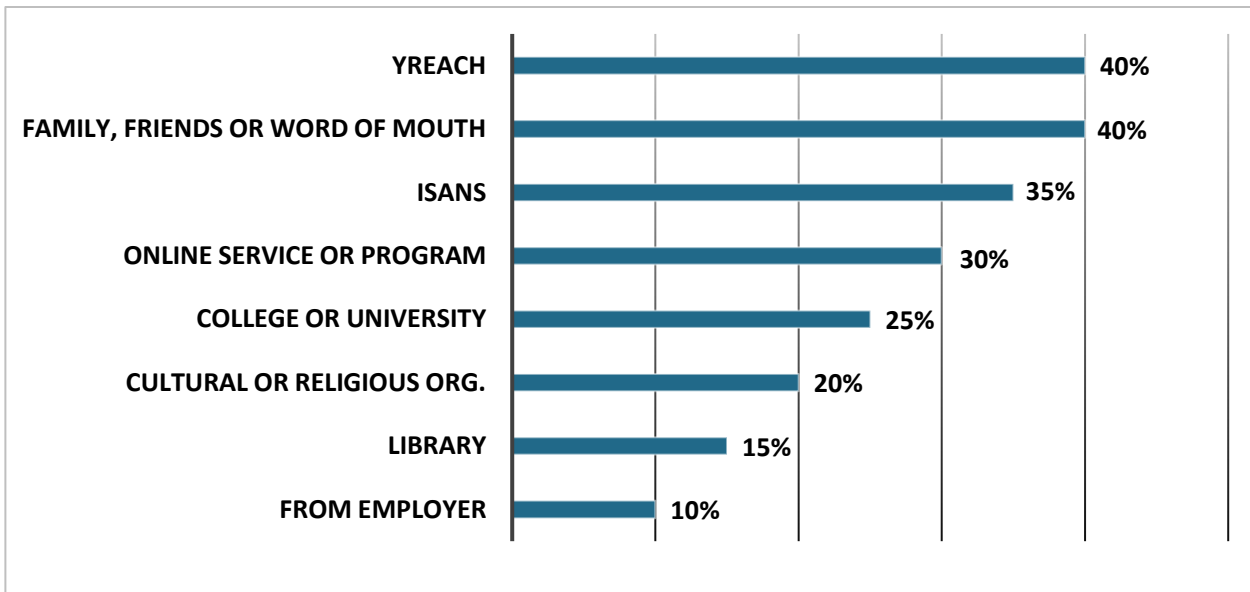
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*If you are a temporary resident, are you hoping to stay permanently?*

*Do you have any family members/close friends who want immigrant to the region?*

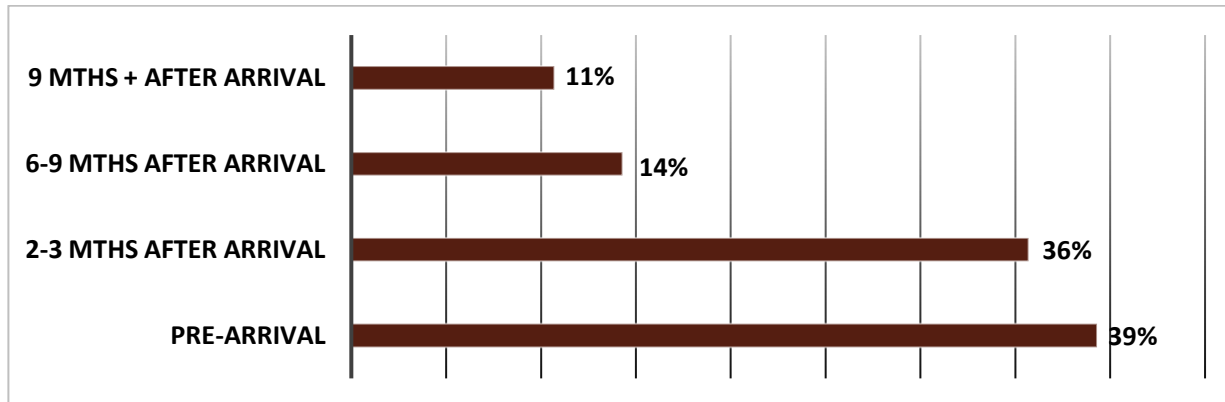


*If you accessed settlement services in the past year, which organizations did you seek them from?*

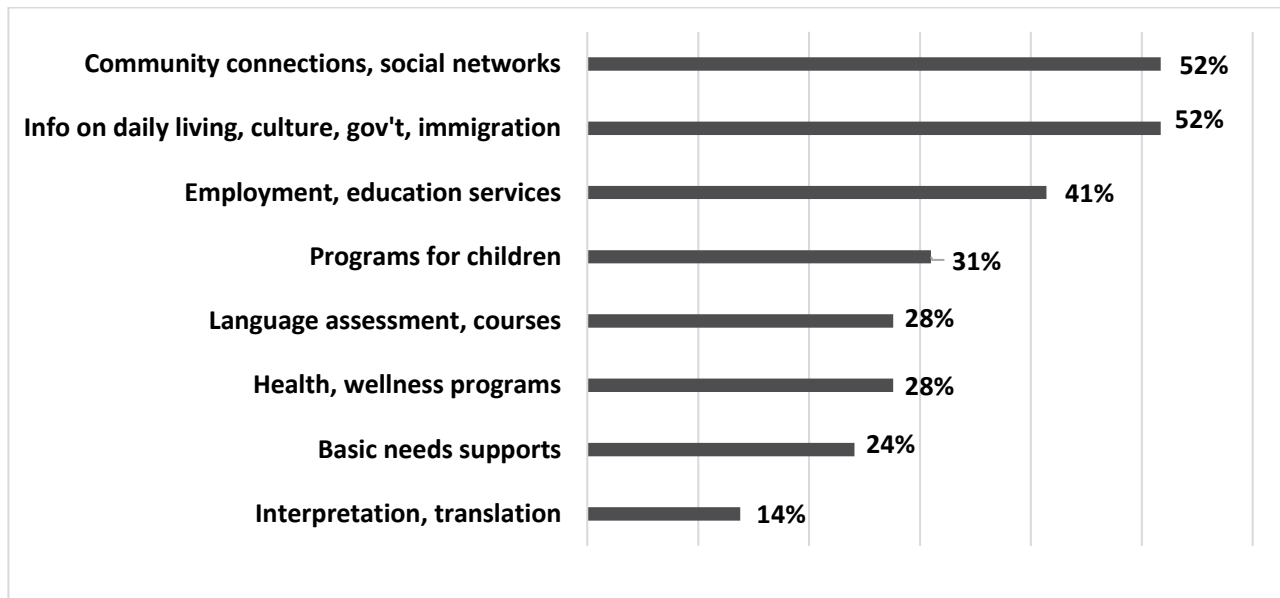


# Immigrant Survey Results

## When were settlement/immigrant services needed most?



## Which settlement services were needed most when you first arrived?



## If you accessed settlement services in the past year, how useful were they?

- 56% very useful
- 32% I did not access
- 8% Somewhat useful
- 4% Not very useful

## ***Specific suggestions for how any settlement services could be improved:***

- Improvement by having local organizations notified by federal or provincial entities that a new immigrant is residing in your region. Immigrant may not know these organizations exist to utilize.
- Immigrants do not know about services, please support them by social media or email them

## ***What are the biggest challenges you or your family have experienced in the last year in the Western Region?***

50%	Accessing healthcare
38%	Making friends or social connections
29%	Receiving public or social services (e.g., settlement or government services)
25%	Starting a new business
21%	Learning English
21%	Finding work
21%	Finding affordable housing
21%	Transportation
17%	Being socially isolated

### ***Comments:***

- We arrived at the beginning of Covid lock down making everything harder
- No asian grocery store

## ***What helped you most in the last year in the Western Region?***

- **61% Making friends**
- **30% Co-workers or fellow students**
- **30% Having family support**
- **26% Community programs and services**
- **22% Finding work**
- **17% Belonging to a religious group**

# Immigrant Survey Results

***The top 6 changes identified that would better enable immigrants to successfully settle into their jobs and communities in our region.***

- #1 More affordable housing options**
- #2 A central location where immigrants can receive services in one place**
- #3 More opportunities to help improve English skills**
- #4 Actions to improve social connectedness or immigrants**
- #5 Actions to increase welcoming and acceptance of immigrants**
- #6 Events and activities for children/youth**

***Ways that immigrants are contributing to creating a thriving and prosperous community for everyone:***

- **83% Help neighbours when they need it**
- **56% Contribute their skills and experience to the local economy through their job**
- **48% Help other newcomers to Canada as they make a home in their community**
- **39% Donate to local charities**
- **39% Continue to build their skills so they can better contribute to the community**
- **30% Speak up for fairness and treat people with kindness**
- **26% Are business owners who contribute to the economy**

***Please share any additional comments or ideas about how to help improve the welcoming, integration and wellbeing of immigrants in the Western Region.***

- Support Cultural programs or festivals to share the skills of immigrants with the locals,
- Most immigrant services are concentrated only in the central region. My hope is to make these services accessible to immigrants in rural NS.
- Some immigrants like myself would like to further their education and help with the healthcare needs of people in the rural areas (like becoming a Physician) and helping out in the rural areas and contribute to cultural competence in the healthcare system
- Se necesitan maestros de inglés para enseñar a las personas que tienen dificultad para comunicarse (**translation** English teachers are needed to teach people who have difficulty communicating)
- Meeting for all immigrants
- Take surveys like this seriously and listen to the breadth of experience.
- I hope that one day we will not travel to Halifax just to take our English test or for our PR medical application.
- Since immigrants do not know what organizations are available having a key organization be notified that an immigrant has settled in a region from the federal or provincial government would make sense.

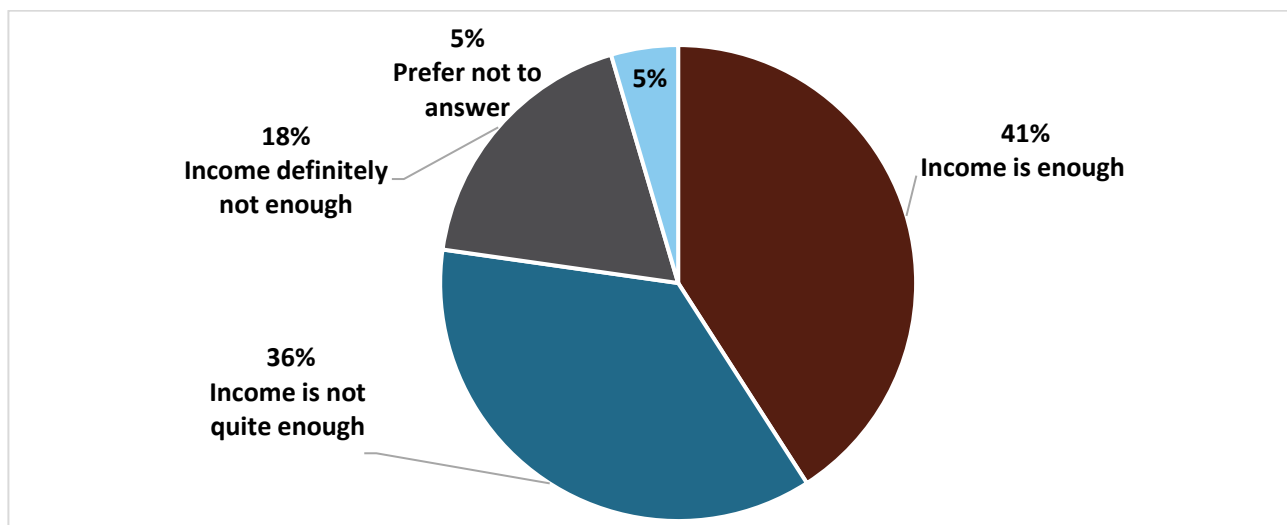
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## Employment

People were asked to rank their agreement with the following statements:

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>
<b><i>It is easy to find a job in the Western Region</i></b>	5	4	6	2	1
<b><i>I am paid a fair wage</i></b>	1	3	9	2	2
<b><i>Overall, I work a suitable number of hours per week</i></b>	1	3	7	5	2
<b><i>My current job suits my education and experience</i></b>	2	3	7	5	1
<b><i>My employer offers adequate training opportunities</i></b>	0	2	9	3	2
<b><i>I understand NS employment standards, and my rights and responsibilities</i></b>	2	1	9	4	1
<b><i>My employer follows NS employment standards</i></b>	0	1	9	4	2
<b><i>Overall, I am satisfied with my current job</i></b>	1	0	9	5	1

**Is your household income enough for your needs?**



# Immigrant Survey Results

## Discrimination

37% of respondents said they had experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in the past 12 months

**In what types of situations did you experience discrimination?**

<b><i>At community/public events</i></b>	<b>45%</b>
<b><i>At work or when applying for a job</i></b>	<b>27%</b>
<b><i>At school or university</i></b>	<b>27%</b>
<b><i>In a store, bank or restaurant</i></b>	<b>18%</b>
<b><i>When looking for housing</i></b>	<b>18%</b>
<b><i>When accessing government services</i></b>	<b>18%</b>
<b><i>Other (see below)</i></b>	<b>18%</b>

### *Comments:*

- Negative comments about my heritage when getting home insurance
- From other kid's parents at school

## **Bottom Line**

One of the most telling results of our survey was the overall final number of respondents. During the LIP feasibility study, our consultants identified a lack of robust immigration statistics for the region. The survey was shared widely with partners, immigrants, and employers where they were asked to share it within their immigrant networks/contacts.

The issue of no “one stop shop” for immigration resources may be a contributing factor as immigrants may struggle to find the information they need and thus are not aware of the existing supports/services.

In addition to this survey, we also had focused conversations with the members of our immigrant advisory committee, representatives of refugee sponsorship groups as well as with individual people living in the region who were born outside of Canada.

This information gives us a glimpse into the realities that some immigrants are experiencing while living in our region. It offers us all the opportunity to try to fill identified gaps and build on the initiatives that are already working. It points to a need for more provincially and federally decentralized services and resources being available in rural regions. Lastly, there is work to be done to ensure that our entire population is made aware of the impact and input that our immigrant residents are making on our communities.