

# Welcome Home: Immigration Trends in the Parry Sound District

Commentary | September 2022

By: Karly Mabee and Mercedes Labelle



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## Land Acknowledgement

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### Our main offices:

- Thunder Bay is on Robinson-Superior Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and Fort William First Nation.
- Sudbury is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnaabeg as well as Wahnapiatae First Nation.
- Kirkland Lake is on the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory and the land is the traditional territory of Cree, Ojibway, and Algonquin Peoples.
- All are home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous people have to these territories. We recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening these communities, the province and the country as a whole.

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Author's calculations are based on data available at the time of publication and are therefore subject to change.

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### Mercedes Labelle



Mercedes Labelle was born in Bilbao, Spain, and lived in the United States before moving to North Bay, Ontario. Mercedes attended McGill University, earning her B.A. in Political Science and Urban Systems and graduating in 2020. Through her role at NPI, Mercedes has worked on various projects related to population growth, demographics, and migration. In her free time, Mercedes enjoys running, hiking, and listening to podcasts. Mercedes is a Senior Policy Analyst at NPI and is located in Sudbury, Ontario.



Several data sources were utilized in this report such as the Community Data Program. NPI is the data consortium lead for Northern Ontario under the name "Northern Ontario Data Consortium".



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# Executive Summary

Ontario's northern, western, and central regions are facing labour shortages, as a result of an aging population, high levels of youth out-migration, and low fertility rates. The Parry Sound District, Ontario is no stranger to this issue, as it has experienced high average job vacancy rates of up to 55 per cent in some occupations. To combat the labour market impacts, the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program has been implemented across all five of Northern Ontario's largest cities. The RNIP aims to spread the benefits of economic immigration to small communities with demonstrated need, by creating a path to permanent residence for skilled foreign workers who want to work and live in one of the participating communities.

To assess the effectiveness of the RNIP program in the Parry Sound District, baseline immigration trends are needed to accurately identify which occupations are in need of economic stimulation, and which labour market skills are most beneficial to immigrant success in the community. If admission criteria is not aligned with community-based need, then labour market shortages will only continue to be exacerbated. Which is why evidence-based decision making is crucial to adequately plan for labour supply, demand for housing, and settlement service capacity.

The Parry Sound District has experienced a decrease in immigration since 2010 with a decrease of approximately 46 per cent. Most immigrants have been accepted under the sponsored family class. The number of economic immigrants that did settle in the Parry Sound District most frequently intended the National Occupation Codes (NOC) of administrative assistants, accommodation service managers, registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses, secondary school teachers, and food service supervisors. Although these are the occupations immigrants were most frequently qualified for, the occupation vacancy rates suggest that there is the greatest need for managers in customer and personal services, administrative service managers, and health care managers to name a few. Given that the Parry Sound District does not have a community participating in RNIP, there are no reported intended NOCs that the district was trying to attract.

This analysis finds that four recommendations are to be considered for the effective measurement of RNIP success.

1. Ongoing annual monitoring and assessment of community-level immigration trends;
2. Expanded analysis to include secondary and domestic migrants;
3. Strengthening the alignment between labour market shortages, targeted occupations, postsecondary institutional fields of study, and immigrant-intended occupations to maximize economic outcomes;
4. Undertaking welcoming community initiatives to welcome, attract, and retain immigrants and the existing population.





# Introduction

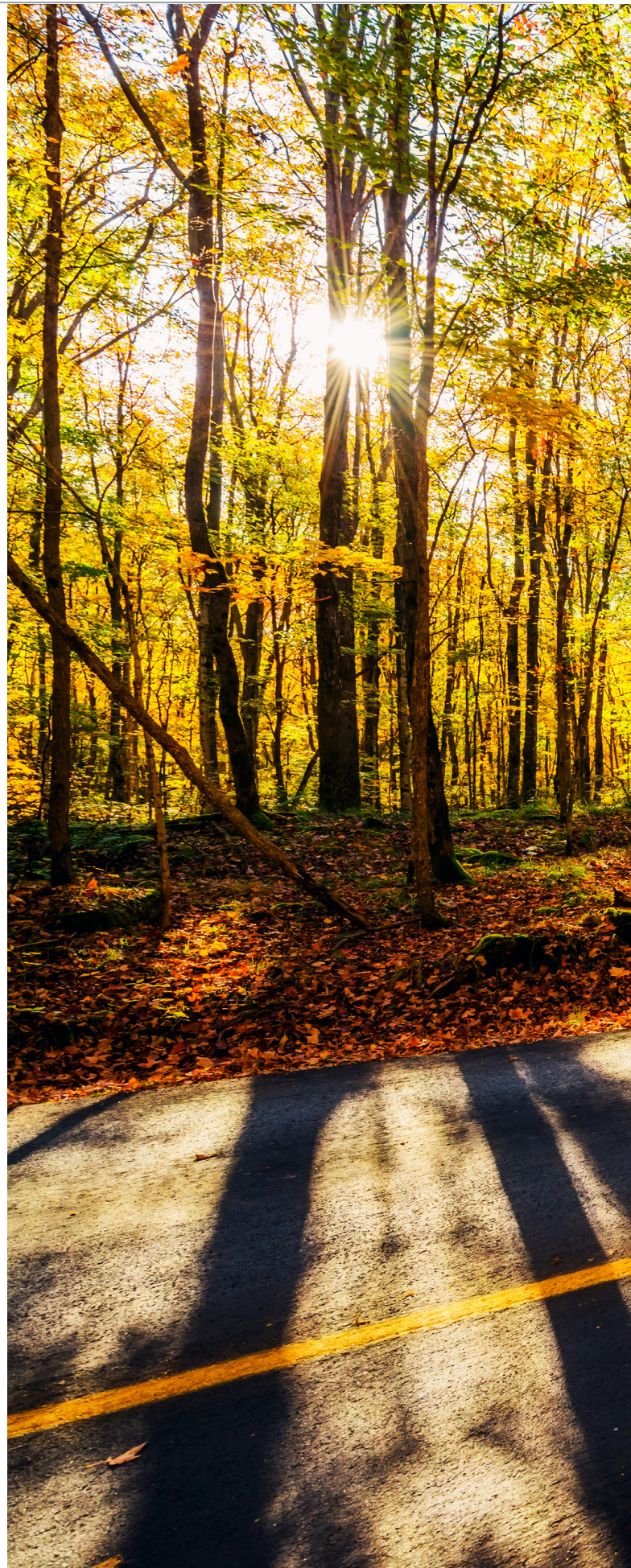
Population trends in many of Ontario's northern, western, and central regions are characterized by high levels of youth out-migration and low fertility rates. A significant portion of the population is about to age out of the core working-age and labour shortages will emerge. There will not be an adequate supply of young workers to fill these gaps.

Without an adequate influx of immigrants, coupled with integration of the current domestic population into the labour market, shortages will continue to emerge (Ross 2020, 9). To combat this trend and engage in evidence-based decision making that will positively impact Northern Ontario communities, there must be a baseline understanding of current and future immigration demographic characteristics. Using the available data, groups—such as workforce planning boards, chambers, municipalities, employers, and immigration partners—can strategically plan for and fill labour shortages that will emerge.

The purpose of these commentaries is to establish baseline assessments of immigration trends in the 11 Census Divisions in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions—Algoma, Cochrane, Greater Sudbury, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Timiskaming. These assessments can then be used to evaluate immigration pilot programs such as the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), and potential future newcomer programs.

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) is a community-driven program that is increasing immigration to northern and rural communities by creating a path to permanent residence for foreign skilled workers (Canada 2020c). The five Northern Ontario cities participating in the pilot are also its largest cities—North Bay, Greater Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, and Thunder Bay. There are six other communities outside Ontario participating in the pilot.

The data collected can be used to evaluate current federal initiatives and measure how communities in Northern Ontario are doing at attracting and retaining immigrants. It is crucial to have this information, identify the gaps, and pinpoint who is collecting that data. Additionally, it is important for the data to be collected and reported at the community level. With a more complete picture of immigration trends in Northern Ontario, communities can be compared against each other to assess the effectiveness of immigration, attraction, retention, and successes. Also, communities can self-assess by monitoring their progress, successes, and areas for improvement. Having this baseline immigration assessment will help communities continuously know which immigrants to target and attract to their communities.







## Methodology

Ideally, an immigration trend analysis would be done annually with a quick turnaround of results so communities could measure the impact of their decisions soon after they are made. Additionally, having baseline data provides a benchmark for assessing progress, or lack thereof, when compared with future reports. But there are limitations in attempting to annually update immigration trends at the community level.

The data sources used for this analysis include Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) admission data; the 2016 Census (and subsequent target group profiles obtained from the Community Data Program); Taxfiler Migration Estimates; Emsi Economic Modeling; and the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). Notably, the data obtained from the census are updated once every five years (as per the frequency of release) and at the time of publishing, details of citizenship and immigration had not been released. The IMDB has an approximate two-year lag for data to be released and Taxfiler data have a one-year lag. IRCC does have monthly updates to its admission data, but the process for obtaining the data at the community level takes up to six months, and high levels of data suppression are present when requesting data at the community level. Finally, Emsi has economic modelling data updated monthly.

It is important to look at immigration trends in each community over time to see how they evolve, especially when evaluating the impact of a pilot program. But doing so with community-level data, specifically IRCC admission data, reveal that many years have few observations to report as data are suppressed for privacy reasons (see Appendix A).

Additionally, certain datasets are of all immigrants who arrived before 1981, while others are based on those who arrived before 1990. This creates a large group of immigrants that overshadows more recent inflows, which is specifically present when looking at census data. Thus, recent data from post-2000 can provide a more accurate picture of immigration trends and their evolution over time.

Analyzing change over time is particularly difficult in the case of non-permanent residents. The data available are largely organized by year of immigration and, technically speaking, non-permanent residents are not 'official' (i.e. landed) immigrants, according to Statistics Canada datasets (notably the census). Non-permanent residents refer to people from another country who had a work or study permit, or who were refugee claimants at the time of the census and had family members living with them in Canada.



Despite limitations surrounding the frequency of data updates, high levels of suppression, and obtaining this data at the community level, a thorough overview of immigration trends in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions was produced.

Finally, it is important to note the impact COVID-19 has had on Canadian immigration flows, labour market, industries, and so on. This analysis is primarily focused on data prior to the pandemic as that is what was available at the time of writing. To assess the impact of immigration programs in Northern Ontario, we need to know the pre-COVID picture of immigration in the regions.

## Theme and Indicator Selection

Many of the indicators selected were aligned with pre-existing government immigration programs. For example, the Federal Skilled Worker (Express Entry) Program provides permanent residence to foreign skilled workers. There are minimum education, language, and work experience requirements. Applications are then further assessed based on age, education, work experience, job offers, official language skills, and adaptability (Canada 2020a).

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) looks at an applicant's skills, experience, and education, specifically in-demand skills, language skills, and status as a recent Ontario graduate (Ontario 2019). The RNIP also creates a path to permanent residency for foreign skilled workers with work and educational experience in specific occupations (Canada 2020c).

As mentioned previously, limitations were present surrounding data availability. Ultimately, for the purpose of our analysis, eight themes were identified: economic outcomes,<sup>1</sup> education, housing, immigrant characteristics, immigration system, income, retention,<sup>2</sup> and settlement service-providing organizations (SPOs).

## Limitations

Economic outcomes, such as income and involvement in the labour market, typically differ depending on the immigration stream the immigrant followed. In terms of labour force participation rates and employment rates among all newcomers, principal applicants in the Economic stream fare best in the Canadian labour market. In fact, they perform better in these metrics than the Canadian-born population (de Chardon 2019, 6). Additionally, unemployment rates among principal applicants in the Economic stream are on par with Canadian-born citizens. Immigrants arriving under the Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons stream as well as the Sponsored Family stream usually fare worse.

Although these distinctions are important to note, it was not possible to obtain community-level data separated by immigration stream and period of admission for all indicators (see Appendix C). When possible, the immigration streams were divided; when not possible, total immigration numbers were assessed. Addressing these gaps is crucial in order to collect specific data to ensure immigrants are not treated as a homogenous group. When evaluating a work experience program that will potentially directly impact Economic migrants, it would be useful to have stream-specific data to better assess program impacts.

Analysis of immigration trends must continue through the years, especially when assessing a pilot program. A detailed methodology is needed to ensure that the trend analysis can be replicated in the future. Immigration trends should continue to be tracked throughout Ontario's northern, western, and central regions before, during, and after the end of the RNIP and other immigration initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Service Usage data were only available for the Census Divisions (CDs) of Algoma, Greater Sudbury, Nipissing, and Thunder Bay.

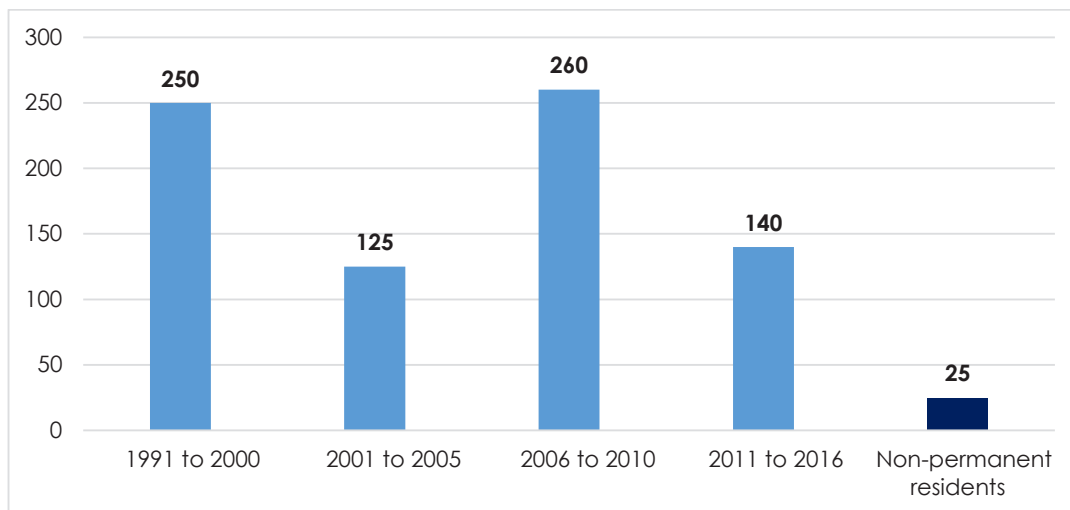
<sup>2</sup> Retention rates are not available for the Parry Sound district given limited data availability.



# Immigrant Characteristics

The 2016 Census counted 2,970 immigrants in Parry Sound. Immigrant, as defined by Statistics Canada, refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Thus, these figures do not include temporary residents, such as study and/or work permit holders. Most immigrants in Parry Sound immigrated before 1991 (2,200 immigrants)—the earliest data available. Since 1991, the city experienced the highest rate of immigration between 2006 and 2010, with levels fluctuating and falling since 2001. Additionally, most immigrants were Sponsored Family (485), followed by Economic immigrants (480), Refugees and Protected Persons (65) and 'All Other Immigration' (15). Most immigrants to Parry Sound since 2001 have a university degree or diploma. Temporary residents are included in the 'non-permanent resident' category, of which there were 25 in Parry Sound in 2016. Longitudinal data on non-permanent resident cohorts are not available from Statistics Canada. Non-permanent residents do not have an official 'period of landing' as they are not landed immigrants.

**Figure 1: Immigrants by period of immigration in the Parry Sound CD, 1991-2016**



**Source:** Author's calculations, Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of the Population, Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001.

To capture the effect of non-permanent (temporary) residents in Parry Sound, Taxfiler Migration Estimates can be used. Taxfiler data use tax records to estimate migration patterns. Taxfiler Migration Estimates of international in-migrants include those who file taxes and had a previous address (the year before) in a location outside Canada (Canada, 2021a).

Based on the Taxfiler definition of international in-migrants, Parry Sound has seen a decrease in the past five years.<sup>3</sup> In the 2014-2015 tax year, there were 51 international in-migrants. That number decreased over the years, reaching 36 in the 2018-2019 tax year. Additionally, that same year, the female-male ratio of international in-migrants was slightly imbalanced, with 58 per cent being female.

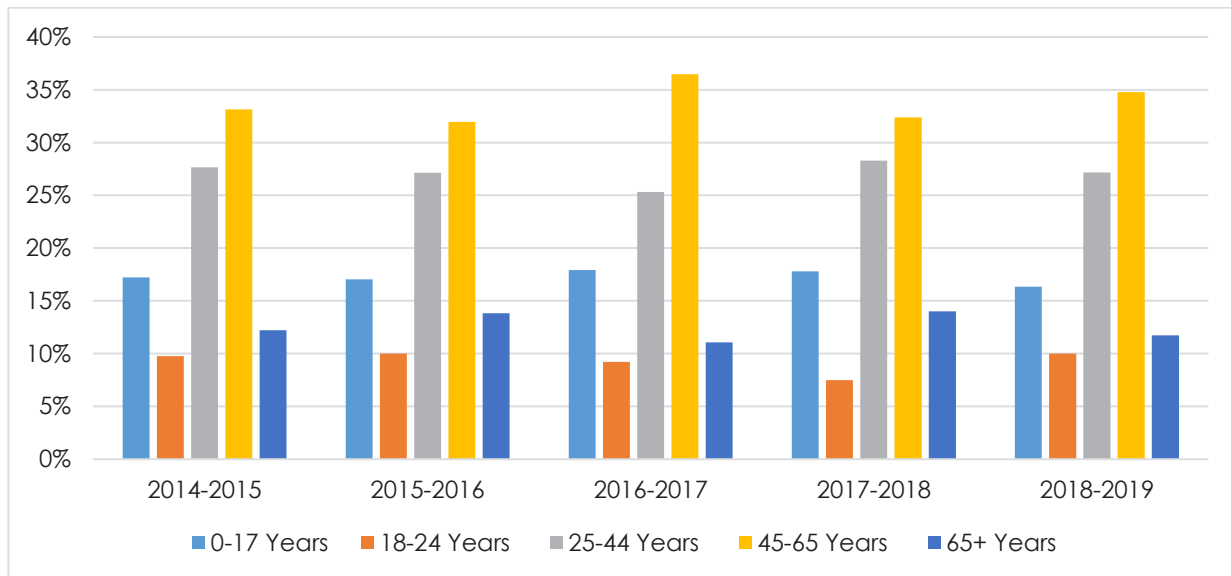
Permanent residents in Parry Sound who landed between 1998 and 2019 most commonly have citizenship from the United States of America. Other common countries of citizenship for landed immigrants included the United Kingdom, India, Germany, and Syria. Between 2006 and 2009, there was a large increase of permanent residents with United Kingdom citizenship. In 2017 to 2019, Parry Sound saw its highest numbers of permanent residents with Indian citizenship—totalling 25 during this period. The number of United States citizens was high from 2006 to 2013 but then decreased substantially.

The largest age group at landing in Parry Sound was 45 to 65.<sup>4</sup> The second largest group was 25 to 44, perhaps indicating the presence of economic immigration. The smallest age group at landing was consistently 18 to 24.

<sup>3</sup> The last five years data are available – 2014 to 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Age groupings done by IRCC are not uniform in age range. Age ranges are 0-17, 18-24, 25-44, 45-65, and 65+. Thus, 18-24 are underrepresented because of category groupings. The two groupings that have the largest age range are 25-44 and 45-65, which might overrepresent these categories in the data.

**Figure 2: In-migrant age at landing by year in the Parry Sound District, 2014-2019**



**Source:** Author's calculations, MIG: Migration Estimates from Taxfiler (T1FF), Table B: By Age Group, 2014-2019.

## Language

Among permanent residents in Parry Sound, the most prevalent language spoken is English, perhaps due to the points allotted to English speakers in the federal Express Entry immigration program.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, English is the primary language spoken in the United States—the most common country of citizenship for permanent residents. In fact, English is the most common language spoken by permanent residents in Northern Ontario's 11 districts and five largest cities. Other common languages include German, Arabic, Yoruba, and Hindi.<sup>6</sup>

Most German-speaking permanent residents became permanent residents between 1998 and 2000. Notably, 15 Arabic speakers gained permanent residence in Parry Sound in 2016; for most other years, the number of Arabic speakers ranged from zero to less than five. English-speaking permanent residents remained mostly consistent since 1998.

## Stream

Between 2015 and 2019, the number of permanent residents to Parry Sound stayed relatively stable, ranging between 20 to 35 permanent residents each year.<sup>7</sup> Between 2015 and 2019, the most common immigration stream in Parry Sound was Sponsored Family, with 65 people gaining permanent residence through that stream. The second most common stream in the past five years was Economic, settling 35 people.

Identical to trends seen in the past five years, the most common immigration stream between 1998 and 2019 for permanent residents in the Parry Sound District was Sponsored Family, followed by Economic, Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons, and 'All Other Immigration.' Both Sponsored Family and Economic immigrants predominantly know English. There are more immigrants who do not know either official language than those who know both.

In 2006, the number of Economic immigrants coming to Parry Sound peaked at 30. The number of Sponsored Family immigrants stayed mostly consistent year over year since 1998, with a peak of 25 Sponsored Family immigrants settling in the district in 2013. The number of Resettled Refugees and Protected Persons peaked in 2016 at 15.

Most Economic applicants immigrating to Parry Sound applied through spouse or dependents subcategories. Sponsored Family applicants were predominately primary applicants.

<sup>5</sup> Language spoken indicates an individual's mother tongue. Mother tongue is the native language of an individual upon entering Canada.

<sup>6</sup> Yoruba is a language spoken in West Africa, most prominently Southwestern Nigeria.

<sup>7</sup> The most recent years with full data available at time of writing. Captures data from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019.

## Analysis

Characteristics such as age, education, and language spoken are weighted heavily in the various streams of the Express Entry application system. For example, higher levels of education, such as university degrees, are given more points in the program. Additionally, certain age groups, such as 18-24, are allotted more points, while other age groups (0-17) receive no points.

Despite French being an official language and French-speaking applicants being given points in the Express Entry system, French is not one of the common languages spoken among permanent residents in any of Northern Ontario's 11 districts or five cities. Perhaps French-speaking immigrants are not common within most Northern Ontario regions due to the benefits they receive if they locate in Quebec, such as prioritized credential recognition between France and Quebec (Quebec 2019). Additionally, the immigration target set by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for French-speaking migrants to Canada (outside Quebec) is 4.4 per cent.





# Economic Outcomes

## Intended National Occupation Classifications (NOCs)

Measuring immigrants' intended occupations can help align labour supply with labour demand. To put it another way, strategically targeting immigrants with skills needed in the community, such as a specific labour shortage, can promote the vitality of the local labour force. National Occupation Classifications (NOCs) provide an organizational framework of occupations in the Canadian labour market.

Occupations are identified and grouped primarily based on the work usually performed, in other words, by the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of the occupation (Statistics Canada 2016).

In no particular order, the most frequent immigrant-intended NOCs in Parry Sound between 1998 and 2019 were:

- Administrative assistants
- Accommodation service managers
- Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses
- Secondary school teachers
- Food service supervisors

It is worth noting that 'Other Intended Occupation' was the most selected NOC answer for every district in Ontario's northern and western regions. Thus, it is excluded from this analysis as to only include specific occupations.

## Occupation Vacancy Rates

Occupation-specific vacancy rates represent vacancies as a proportion of the total labour force for that occupation. Thus, vacancy rates can identify potential current labour market gaps.

The methodology for calculating vacancy rate mirrors that of the Northern Policy Institute's "Assessing Labour Market Shortages" series of reports on North Bay, Greater Sudbury, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, and Thunder Bay (Ross, 2020). The series reflects trends from 2018, but the paper outlines updated calculations to reflect 2020 trends—the most recent full year with data available. A high job vacancy rate typically indicates a stronger labour market for job seekers as it demonstrates that a higher proportion of the total labour market consists of vacant jobs needing to be filled (Lindzon, 2019).

The data used to calculate job vacancy rates were obtained from Emsi Economic Modeling, which were provided through a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The methodology the Northern Policy Institute uses to calculate vacancy rate is explained in the "Assessing Labour Market Shortages" paper series by Alex Ross (2020).

According to Table 1, multiple management-related occupations appear to have the highest job vacancy rates (NOC Skill Level 0). Additionally, there are three Skill Level A occupations facing high vacancy rates:

- Therapy and assessment professionals
- Optometrists, chiropractors, and other health diagnosing and treating professionals
- Pharmacists, dietitians, and nutritionists

There were also two Skill Level C occupation with a high vacancy rate: Home care providers and educational support occupations, and Customer and information services representatives. It should be noted that Parry Sound had higher job vacancy levels than many other districts examined in Northern Ontario.

**Table 1: Occupations with the highest average job vacancy rates, Parry Sound CD, 2020**

NOC	Description	Total Labour Market 2020	Average Unique Job Postings 2020	Job Vacancy Rate
065	Managers in customer and personal services, n.e.c.	24	13	55.21%
<b>011</b>	<b>Administrative services managers</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>34.06%</b>
031	Managers in health care	25	5	20.89%
314	Therapy and assessment professionals	45	9	19.60%
312	Optometrists, chiropractors, and other health diagnosing and treating professionals	36	7	19.02%
313	Pharmacists, dietitians, and nutritionists	48	9	18.35%
001	Legislators and senior management	37	6	16.99%
<b>441</b>	<b>Home care providers and educational support occupations</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16.85%</b>
<b>655</b>	<b>Customer and information services representatives</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16.53%</b>
012	Managers in financial and business services	45	7	14.57%

**Source: Author's calculations based on Emsi – economicmodeling.com.**

Given that the Parry Sound District did not have a community participating in the RNIP, there were no reported intended NOCs that the district was trying to attract. Though, it is beneficial to consider the average raw job vacancies to target occupations that have demonstrated active recruiting through job postings. The occupations bolded in Table 1 rank among the top ten highest job vacancy rates, and of those ten, three had the highest average job postings for 2020.

At first glance, vacancy rate might not seem indicative of immigrants' economic outcomes. Looked at in conjunction with intended occupations, vacancy rate can indicate if there is alignment of the occupations experiencing high vacancy rates with employment, unemployment, and participation rates among immigrants.

To attract immigrants to Parry Sound, there should be an attempt to attract those with skills in the occupations with the highest vacancy rates or most positive LMIs issued. Alignment of an immigrant's education, skills, and work experience, to in-demand occupations, can contribute to higher employment satisfaction, and thus, retention.

## Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs)

When looking at the presence of work permit holders in a specific region, it is important to analyze the jobs they are filling. Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) are submitted by employers to gain approval, in most cases, to hire foreign workers. A positive LMIA will show that there is a labour shortage that cannot be filled by a Canadian worker or permanent resident, indicating a need for a foreign worker to fill the job (Canada, 2021d). It is worth noting that some foreign workers are exempt from needing a LMIA or work permit, such as those in the International Mobility Program.

For the lowest-skill and lowest-wage occupations in accommodation, food services, and retail trade sectors, LMIAs are only approved in regions that do not have high unemployment rates.

Reviewing positive and negative LMIAs is a way to measure, quantitatively, which occupations are experiencing labour shortages. LMIA information should be considered when identifying labour shortages in each community. Specifically, for the RNIP, communities select the occupations they will be 'targeting' each year.

In 2020, there was one occupation **approved** for LMIA in Parry Sound, with a total of seven unique positive LMIAs issued for 6311 – Food service supervisors (7).

As mentioned, an approved LMIA indicates that there is no Canadian talent available to fill the above positions in Parry Sound. As such, approved LMIA positions are a good indicator for decision makers of labour market gaps and occupations that could be targeted through the RNIP, post-secondary institutions, or through additional training and upskilling.

Parry Sound had four (4) **denied** LMIA applications in 2020 for the following occupations:

- 0631-Restaurant and food service managers
- 0311-Managers in health care
- 6311-Food service supervisors (2)

Denied LMIA applications do not necessarily indicate there is availability of Canadians to carry out the duties of the occupation. There are multiple reasons that contribute to whether an application is denied, including a company's experiences with the LMIA process (Canada, 2021b).

Between 2018 and 2020, there were a total of 15 LMIAs approved in Parry Sound.<sup>9</sup> The occupations with the most approved positions were as follows:

**Table 2: Occupations with most approved LMIAs in the Parry Sound District, 2018-2020**

NOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Approved Positions
6311	Food service supervisors	B	7
6321	Chefs	B	5
7231	Machinists and machining and tooling inspectors	B	3

**Source: Open Data - Government of Canada, Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP): Positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) Employers List, multiple issues.**

It should be noted that there were no positive LMIAs issued in 2020 that aligned with the occupations in the Parry Sound District with the highest vacancy rates (Table 1). Additionally, the occupations in Parry Sound with the most approved LMIAs between 2018 and 2020 did not align with the occupations that had the highest vacancy rates. It is important to note that Parry Sound had higher vacancy rates than other districts of comparable size in Northern Ontario.

## Employment/Unemployment/Participation

Immigrants in Parry Sound who immigrated between 1991 and 2005 experienced considerably higher employment rates than non-immigrants. Immigrants who settled between 2006 and 2016 experienced, on average, slightly higher employment rates than non-immigrants. Employment rates for immigrants who landed before 1990 are perhaps lower due to the age of

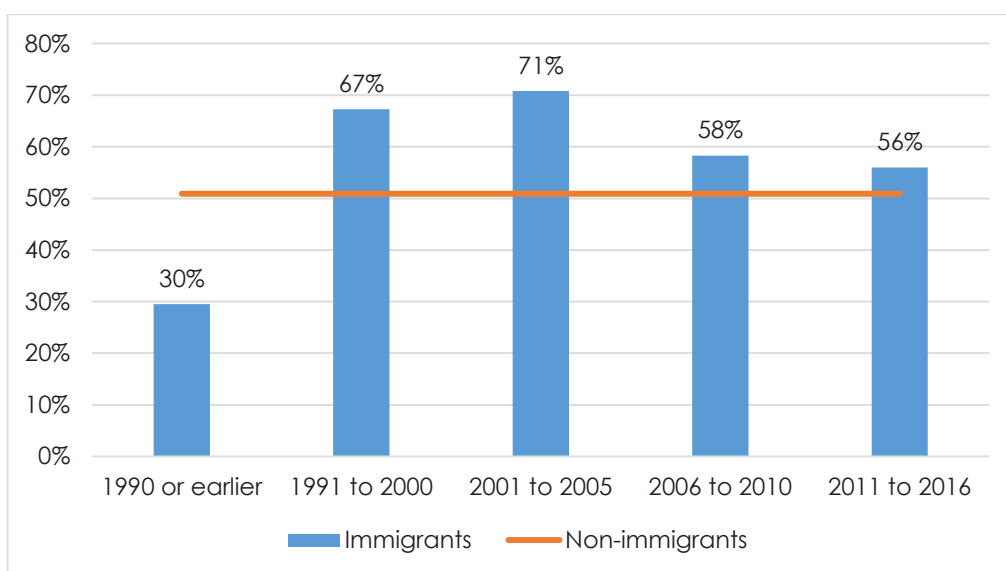
<sup>9</sup> Not all occupations are included in this table.



these immigrants—many were perhaps aging out of the labour market. More recent immigrants (2011 to 2016) in Parry Sound had lower employment rates than more established immigrants. For other cities in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions—notably North Bay, Timmins, and Kenora—recent immigrants also tended to have lower employment rates than more established immigrants.

The data suggest 100 per cent participation in the labour market among non-permanent residents, with a 75 per cent employment rate. However, this only represents 25 people, which may skew the results. For this reason, the data are not presented in Figure 3 and 4. Non-permanent residents, also known as temporary residents, may be in Canada with permits that have more work restrictions. For example, study permit holders who are enrolled full-time can, without a work permit, work on and off campus for up to 20 hours a week during school terms, which may make finding a job more difficult. Additionally, work permit holders can have either an open or closed work permit. Closed work permit holders are only able to work with the employer specified on their work permit, while open work permit holders can work for any eligible Canadian employer. These factors typically contribute to a higher rate of unemployment among non-permanent residents (Canada 2020d), which makes the results for the Parry Sound District outliers. Given limited data availability, further analysis is not possible.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 3: Employment rates (%) in Parry Sound by period of immigration, 2016**



**Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767-TBL7R.**

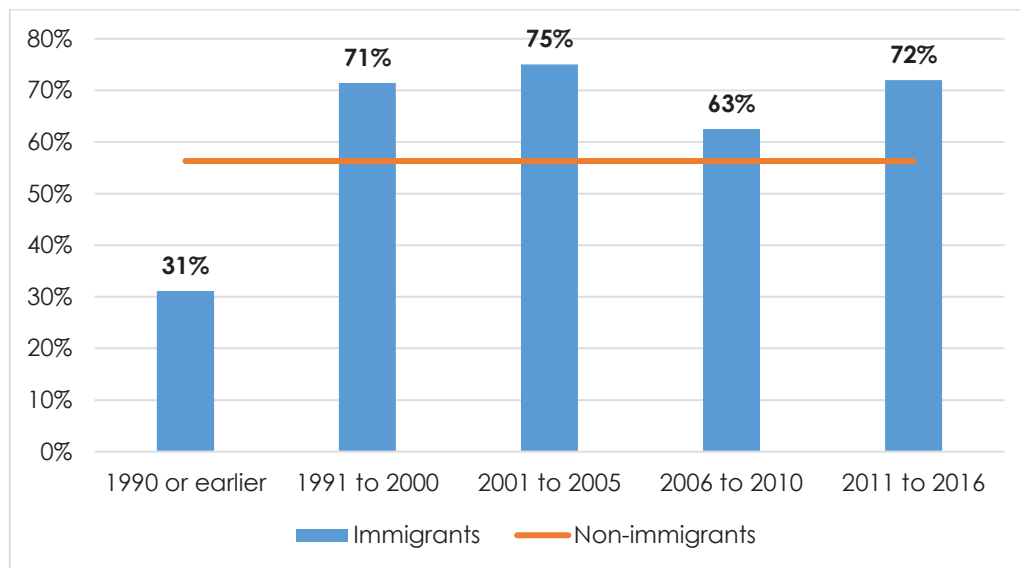
Participation rate measures the total labour force, comprised of those who are employed and those unemployed, relative to the size of the working-age population. It is the share of the working-age population that is working or looking for work. Measuring participation rate between immigrant cohorts quantifies the number of immigrants in each cohort actively participating in the labour force, as employed or searching for employment.

With regions in Northern Ontario facing an aging population, low birth rates, youth out-migration, and demographic shift, immigrant participation in the labour force is a way to maintain the current standard of living.

When discussing employment and unemployment, 'time since landing' is a large determinant in the measure of immigrants' labour market outcomes. For example, recent immigrants (defined above) face labour market hurdles that affect their integration into the labour market, such as lack of language proficiency, lack of recognition of foreign credentials, and inadequate familiarity with the Canadian labour market (Statistics Canada, 2003, 10). A high participation rate of immigrants in the workforce combined with a low unemployment rate, indicates there are robust opportunities in the labour market.

Recent immigrants in Parry Sound had a comparable participation rate to the three more established immigrant cohorts that landed between 1991 and 2010. In fact, the recent immigrant participation rate is slightly higher than the participation rate for non-immigrants.

<sup>10</sup> Unemployment rates have been excluded due to inconclusive results from limited data.

**Figure 4: Participation rate (%) in Parry Sound by period of immigration, 2016**

Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767-TBL7R.

## Discussion

The federal Express Entry program prioritizes immigrants with certain jobs or NOCs. All federal Express Entry streams require work experience in NOCs 0, A, or B, which are jobs in management and/or requiring university or college credentials. Thus, the Express Entry program caters to high-skilled workers.

As seen with Parry Sound's vacancy rates, the high-skilled workers category is not the only one in which there were labour market shortages. There was also a demand for NOC Skill Level C workers. Skill Level C includes intermediate jobs that usually call for high school and/or job-specific training such as transport truck drivers, home support workers and housekeepers (Canada 2020b).

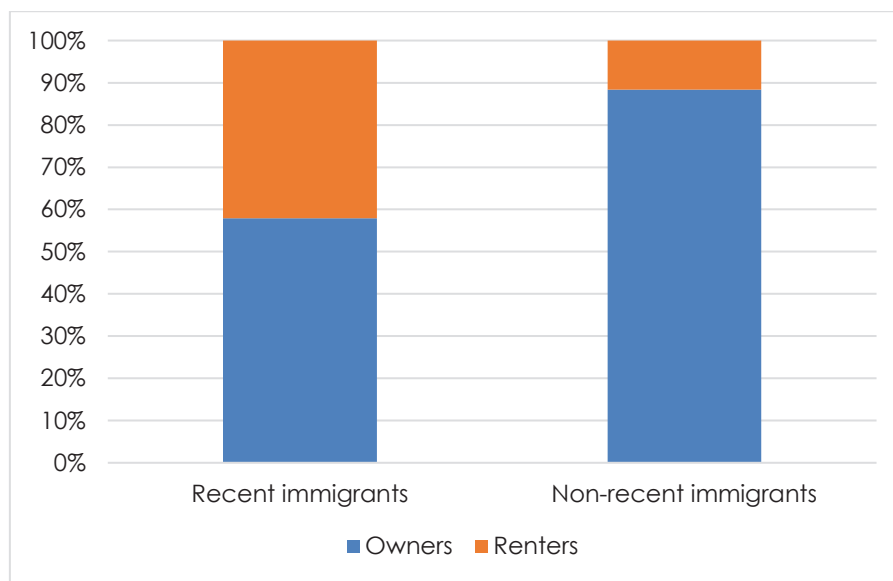
In theory, communities targeting immigrants with specific occupational experience that aligns with their current labour market shortages should result in an increase in employment rates for recent immigrants. Further contributing to positive labour market outcomes.

# Housing

Housing tenure refers to the financial arrangements under which someone has the right to live in a house or apartment. Looking at immigrants' housing tenure can help measure financial security, especially if the dwelling is owned (Haan 2012, 3). House ownership may also signify an immigrant household's commitment to their new community and society (ibid.), which may be a sign of retention.

In Parry Sound, recent immigrants are more likely to be renters than non-recent immigrants. Both recent immigrants and non-recent immigrants are more likely to be homeowners than renters.

**Figure 5: Immigrant households in the Parry Sound District by housing tenure (owners vs. renters), 2016**



**Source: Community Data Program (CDP), Target Group Profile of Recent Immigrant + Immigrant Population, Census 2016, retrieved August 5, 2021.**

There are many factors that can influence housing tenure such as housing prices, discrimination, admission category, navigating the system, stable employment, access to credit, affordability/income, availability, and adequacy.

The distinction needed when looking at housing tenure is that between recent and non-recent immigrants. A recent immigrant refers to a person who obtained a landed immigrant or permanent resident status up to five years prior to a given census year. For the data used in this paper, a recent immigrant would be defined as someone who landed between 2011 and 2016. Non-recent immigrants landed before 2011.

Non-recent immigrants have had more time to settle into the community, find careers, and make connections. Recent immigrants, on the other hand, might not yet have stable careers—making it more difficult to qualify for a mortgage and/or build credit—community connections, or knowledge of the Canadian housing market.



## Education

The most common field of study for immigrants in Parry Sound was architecture, engineering, and related technologies. The second most common field of study was business, management, and public administration. The third was health and related fields.

Immigrants who studied in a high-skilled field such as health care, engineering, or architecture, were most prominent in Parry Sound. The business, management, and public administration field of study aligned with two of the most intended occupations for immigrants to Parry Sound between 1998 and 2019: Administrative assistants, and Accommodation service managers. There was also alignment between the health and related fields of study and the immigrant-intended occupation of registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses.

The District of Parry Sound has a campus of Canadore College. The college had no reported full-time international students between 2012 and 2018.

International students comprise an important pool of potential immigrants. They have recognized Canadian education credentials, knowledge of French or English, potentially Canadian work experience, familiarity with Canadian culture, and a connection to the community. For these reasons, international students are expected to integrate more quickly into the labour market and to society than other types of immigrants (Hagar 2019). This key demographic could be an opportunity for growth in the Parry Sound District.



# Immigration System

## Study Permit Holders

In the Census District of Parry Sound, which houses a campus of Canadore College, study permit holders between 1998 and 2019 were overwhelmingly citizens of China. This is an outlier in the regions of Northern Ontario as India was the most common country of citizenship for study permit holders in six of Northern Ontario's other 10 districts during this period. In 2019, the number of study permit holders with Chinese citizenship in Parry Sound reached 35. Other common countries of citizenship for study permit holders include Mexico, Japan, the United States of America, and Korea.

Study permit holders who gained permanent residence in Parry Sound between 1998 and 2019 did so primarily through the Economic stream. Within the Economic category, the primary pathway was the Skilled Worker Program. Within the Sponsored Family stream, sponsored spouse or partner was the largest subcategory of permanent residents.

The discrepancy between the number of individuals who hold a study permit and the number of students at post-secondary institutions is due to a difference in definition by each data source. The number of international students at post-secondary institutions is based on full-time enrolment at institutions governed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, not private institutions nor specific training schools. Study permit holders can be studying part-time or enrolled at a private institution as per the definition from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, leading to a greater number of study permit holders than number of students at the post-secondary institution noted above.

## Work Permit Holders

Work permit holders in Parry Sound most commonly have citizenship in the United States of America. The same is true for Northern Ontario's other 10 districts and five largest cities. Other common countries of citizenship include the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Israel.

Work permit holders who gained permanent residence in Parry Sound between 1998 and 2019 did so primarily through the Economic immigrant stream, and most of them came through the Canadian Experience and Skilled Worker subcategories.

## Discussion

Temporary residents—work permit and study permit holders—make up a large share of Parry Sound's immigrant population; they contribute to the local economy and labour force.<sup>11</sup> International students pay tuition to local institutions and spend their money in the city (e.g. rent, groceries, transportation, textbooks, clothing), with additional indirect and induced economic impacts. Similarly, work permit holders fill in-demand jobs in the community and pay for rent/mortgage, groceries, transportation, and other necessities. It is important to measure their presence and assess their characteristics, as is done with permanent residents.

<sup>11</sup> See "Where are the international students? How COVID-19 could affect Northern Ontario's economy," Hilary Hagar, 2020.

# Income

## Employment Income

Employment income is calculated among immigrants who receive employment income whereas total income includes immigrants with employment income as well as those without. Despite total income also including income from government transfers and investments, employment income may be greater than total income.

In terms of average employment income, immigrants who settled in Parry Sound since 2011 had lower incomes compared to all immigrants and non-immigrants. However, recent immigrants had a higher median employment income than all immigrants and non-immigrants. Median and average total income levels were lower among immigrants who settled in Parry Sound within the past 10 years than among non-immigrants and more established immigrants.<sup>12</sup>

It appears that immigrants begin earning higher employment incomes as they become more established. Income levels among immigrants in Parry Sound were consistent with trends identified in the literature. De Chardon emphasizes this point, stating, "annual earnings for high-skilled principal applicants surpass the Canadian average soon after landing and increase over time." (2019, 9). Immigrants and refugees often need time to settle in their new country and, as a result, number of years since migration generally corresponds with improved economic and social outcomes (Crossman 2013).

## Household Income

Factors that contribute to household income for immigrants include number of people in the household, pre-admission experience, knowledge of official languages, and category of admission (Statistics Canada, 2021b). Like other variables, if possible, it is important to look at immigrants based on their period of immigration. For average and median household income metrics, data were only available for the following groups: all immigrants and recent immigrants.

Average household income levels for recent immigrants were lower than for all immigrants. The reasons for lower average income levels (both total and after-tax) are consistent with those previously mentioned: recent immigrants need time to settle into their new communities, gain stable employment, have recognized credentials, complete training, and so on. The discrepancy for median household incomes is an outlier.

**Table 3: Immigrant household income statistics in Parry Sound, 2016**

	Average total income	Median total income	Average after-tax income	Median after-tax income
Recent Immigrants	\$74,475	\$66,727	\$63,887	\$57,250
All Immigrants	\$81,954	\$59,807	\$68,379	\$54,900

**Source: Author's calculations, Community Data Program (CDP), Household & Family TGP of the recent immigrant population, Census 2016, custom tabulation.**

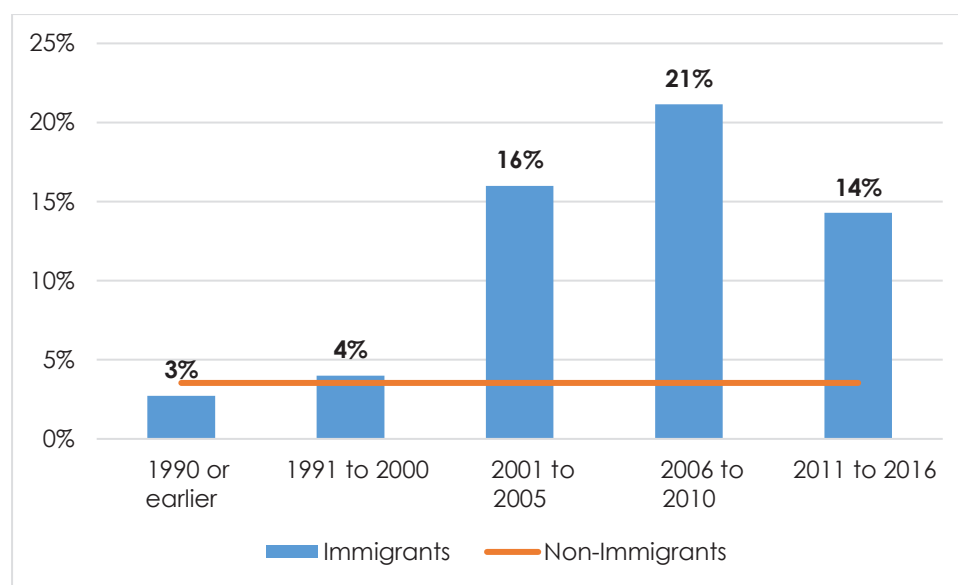
## Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs)

Low income cut-offs (LICOs) are income thresholds below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income to necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing than the average family. Statistics Canada calculates LICOs by looking at the income threshold at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than the average family on food, shelter, and clothing (Statistics Canada 2015). As the purchase of necessities is done with after-tax dollars, after-tax income is used to determine LICOs.

<sup>12</sup> At the time of the 2016 census, the past 10 years refers to 2006-2016.

Immigrants who came to Parry Sound after 1991 had LICO levels above that of non-immigrants. The incidence of LICO immigrants was much lower for immigrants who landed in 2000 or earlier than those landing after 2001. The data for non-permanent residents was too limited to draw conclusions.

**Figure 6: Percentage of low income cut-offs after tax (LICO-AT) in Parry Sound by period of immigration, 2016**



**Source: Author's calculations; Community Data Program (CDP); Selected Language, Labour Force, Education, Income and Mobility Status Characteristics; Table EO2767 - TBL7R.**

The above data show that having lower income levels as a recent immigrant is not a long-term phenomenon. Income levels appear to increase and LICO levels decrease proportionately with time spent in the community. As noted, factors such as immigration stream, knowledge of an official language, and employment situation all greatly affect income levels. Additionally, when more recent data are available, income levels will reflect what is happening in the economy at time of landing for the most recent immigrant cohort. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic will likely impact employment, income, and LICO levels among recent and non-recent immigrants alike.



# Conclusion

When assessing immigration programs, both current and future, it is important to establish baseline assessments of immigration trends for the purpose of monitoring and assessing effectiveness. Without these baseline immigration trends, it would be much more difficult to understand the impact of changing demographics and of services provided in the community. As communities in the regions of Northern Ontario seek to attract more immigrants and retain the current population, these metrics will be important for predicting the success of new community members and identifying needed improvements at the local level.

Welcoming initiatives and sustainable economic growth (via immigrants filling labour market shortages) help the entire community. Thus, although the purpose of this paper is to establish a baseline assessment of immigration trends in the region for the purpose of monitoring and assessing the impact of welcoming initiatives and settlement programs, many other aspects need to be looked at in tandem. Having this baseline immigration assessment will help communities continuously know which immigrants to target and attract to their communities. Reflecting on the trends of the past can help guide communities with data for informed decision making about their futures.

## Recommendations

Economic immigration is a valuable tool for communities to fill labour market shortages and counteract the effects of an aging population, low birth rates, and high levels of youth out-migration. For this process to be successful and meaningful for all parties involved, the following recommendations must be considered:

### 1. Ongoing annual monitoring and assessment of community-level immigration trends in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions

Now that baselines for immigration trends have been established in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions, this analysis should be used and built upon to monitor and assess trends in the regions year over year.

Not only should immigration trends be monitored and updated but so should labour market indicators such as vacancy rates in specific occupations. This analysis will aid in monitoring the impacts of the RNIP as well as other welcoming, attraction, and retention efforts undertaken by communities.

It should be noted that data availability and accessibility were a challenge, with long wait times for IRCC admission data. Additionally, there were high levels of data suppression when working at the community level. With the upcoming release of 2021 census data, as well as the continued updating of the IMDB and Taxfiler data, a more comprehensive picture of immigration trends can be provided moving forward.

### 2. Expanding the above analysis to also include domestic and secondary migrants to (and in) Northern Ontario communities

In terms of participation in the housing and labour markets, domestic and secondary migrants, and those already in the communities, shape the economic landscape. Once in the communities, to retain them, they need access to welcoming infrastructure, employers, and to the community as a whole.

A limitation to this extra layer of analysis is data availability. IRCC keeps admission records on international in-migrants and temporary residents based on intended destination. Domestic and secondary migration are not captured in these records. Thus, data sources are limited to the census and Taxfiler information.

### 3. Strengthening the alignment between labour market shortages, targeted occupations, post-secondary institutional fields of study, and immigrant-intended occupations to maximize economic outcomes

Available data should be used to align labour supply with labour demand, thus promoting a robust local labour market and contributing to sustainable economic growth. All involved—chambers, planning boards, post-secondary institutions, employers, immigration networks—can strategically target labour supply and fill current vacancies via targeted immigration.

To aid in attraction and retention of immigrants, as well as promote positive labour market outcomes for the community, more strategic alignment is recommended. Available data can and should be used to guide decision making alongside consultations with community partners and employers.

Additionally, migrants already in the community comprise a large source of labour. This population also needs to be considered. Are migrants participating in the labour force? Are they unemployed or underemployed? Are their (foreign) credentials and life experiences adequately acknowledged and compensated?

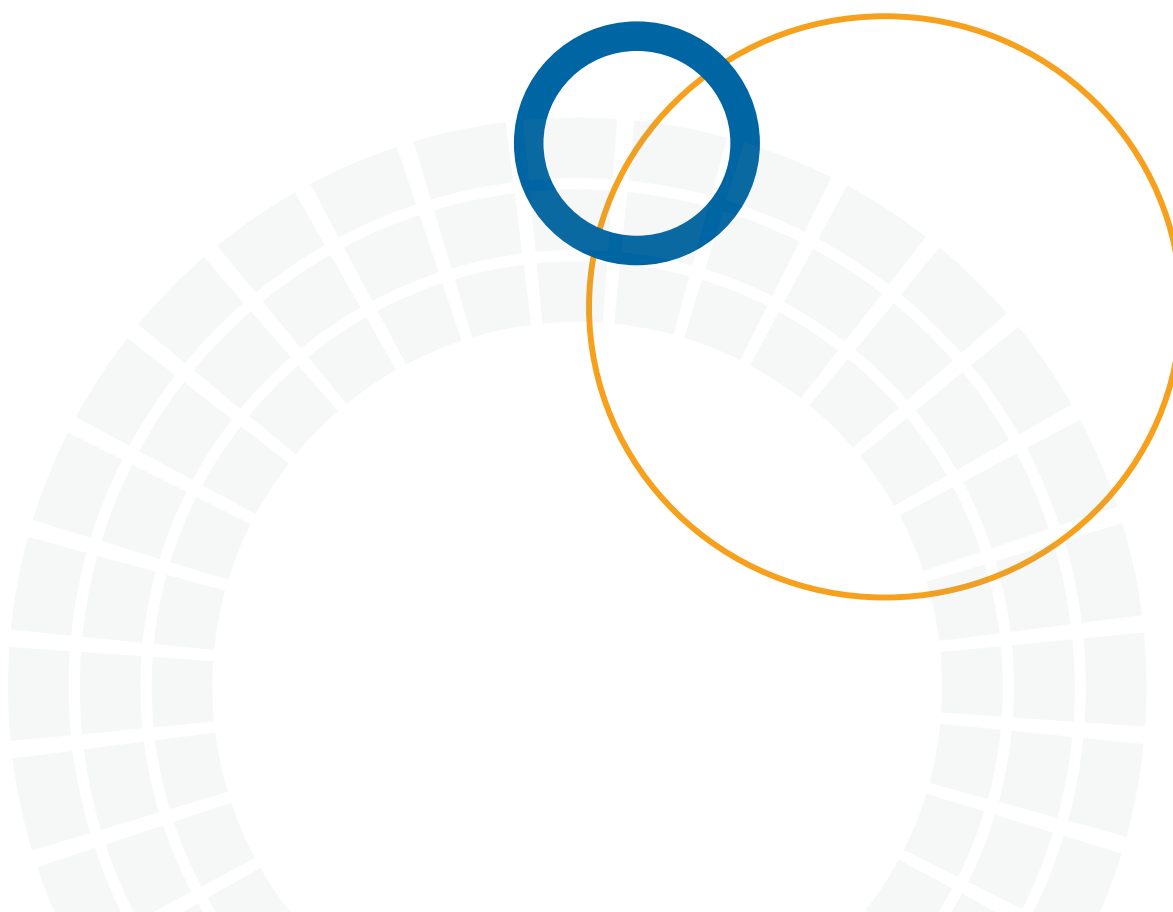
A limitation to this extra layer of analysis is data availability. IRCC keeps admission records on international in-migrants and temporary residents based on intended destination. Domestic and secondary migration are not captured in these records. Thus, data sources are limited to the census and Taxfiler information.

#### **4. Undertaking welcoming community initiatives to welcome, attract, and retain immigrants and the existing population to/in Ontario's northern, western, and central regions**

Beyond looking at the trends measured quantitatively using data gathered from IRCC, the census, Taxfiler estimates, and IMDB, there is a need to also measure attitudes and perceptions of people in the community. Communities participating in the RNIP are required to undertake community welcoming efforts. The implementation of community welcoming initiatives leads to positive benefits for everyone, not just those participating in the pilot.

The effects of these initiatives should be tracked on an ongoing basis, as should immigration trends generally. To do this, primary data collection must be deployed, likely in the form of focus groups and surveys. Important indicators to track include sense of belonging, meaningful employment, positive community interactions, and welcoming infrastructure (such as services available).

When looking at each community's labour market, the individual and community-wide benefits of immigration will be felt when there is alignment between the labour shortages in the community and the immigrants who are applying their skills to fill these gaps.



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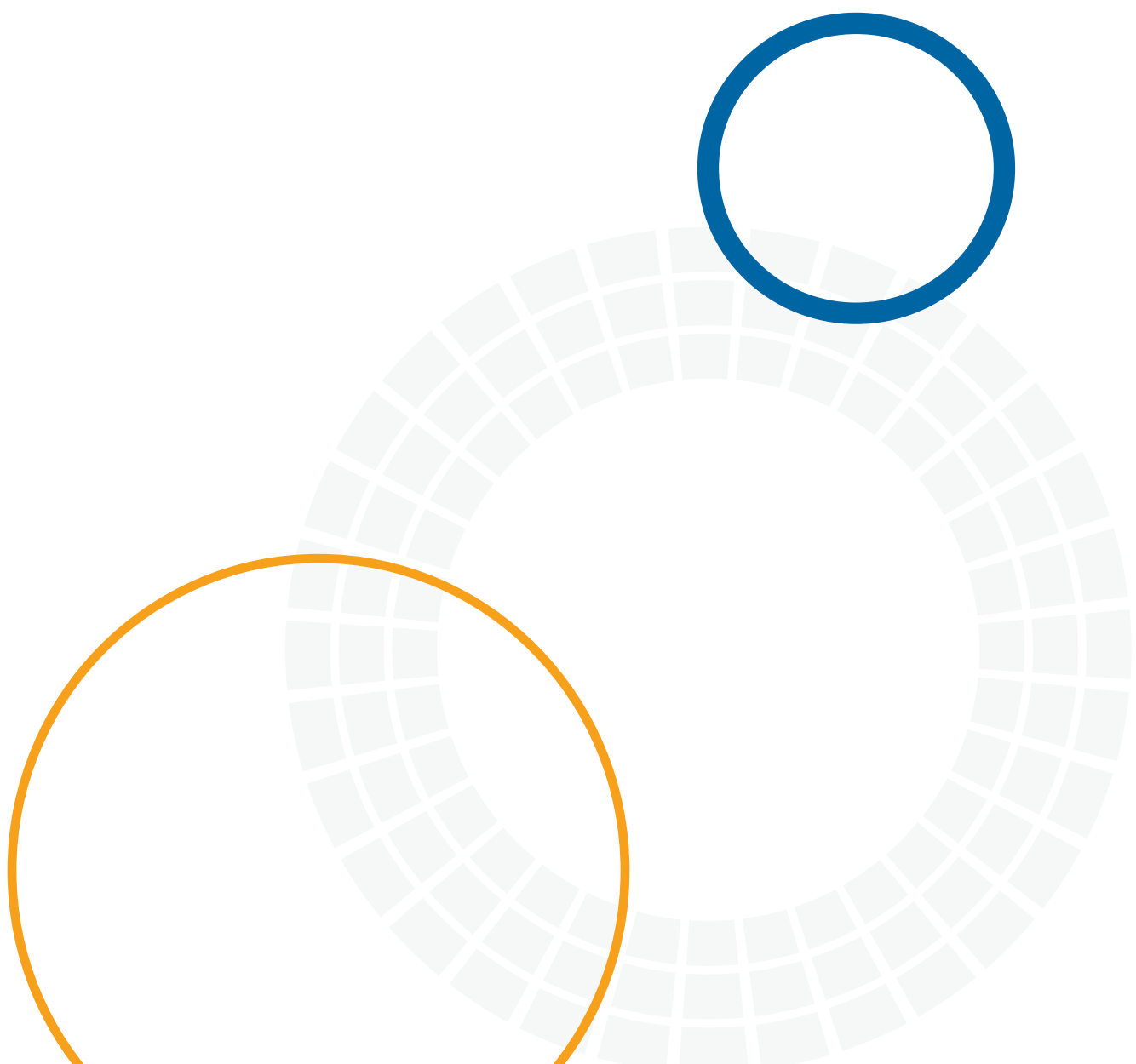
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## Appendix A: Data Suppression

All values between zero and five are shown as '---' in requested datasets from IRCC. This is done to prevent individuals from being identified when IRCC data are compiled and compared to other publicly available statistics. All other values are rounded to the closest multiple of five for the same reason. Years with suppressed or rounded data are still significant because they represent a non-zero value. But there are challenges when working with small and suppressed data.



## Appendix C: Indicator List

In total, 24 indicators were identified for trend tracking and analysis.<sup>10</sup>

Category	Indicator
Economic outcomes	Admission of permanent resident (PR) by intended occupation (NOC)
	Unemployment/employment/ participation rates
Housing	Housing tenure (renters vs. owners)
Education	Highest level of education
	Field of study for international students
	Field of study for the immigrant population
	Number of international students by post-secondary institute
Immigrant characteristics	Admission of PR by country of citizenship
	Gender of international in-migrants
	Age at landing
	Admission of PR by language spoken (mother tongue)
	Study permit holder by language spoken (mother tongue)
	Work permit holder by language spoken (mother tongue)
	PR by immigration stream and language
	PR by immigration stream and family status
	PR by country of citizenship
Immigration system	Study permit holders by country of citizenship
	Work permit holders by country of citizenship
Income	Percentage of low income cut-offs after tax (LICO-AT)
	Median and average total income by immigration status and time frame
	Median and average employment income by immigration status and time frame
	Median and average household income
Retention	Immigrant mobility – retention rates by years since admission
SPOs	Settlement service clients by service type

<sup>10</sup> Not all indicators were available for each geography. Service Usage data were only available for the Census Divisions (CDs) of Algoma, Greater Sudbury, Nipissing, and Thunder Bay. Retention data were not available for the Parry Sound District.

# Appendix D: Sault Ste. Marie RNIP Year 1 Targeted NOCs

- 11 - Professional occupations in business and finance
- 21 - Professional occupations in natural and applied sciences
- 30 - Professional occupations in nursing
- 31 - Professional occupations in health (except nursing)
- 40 - Professional occupations in education services
- 74 - Other installers, repairers and servicers and material handler
- 75 - Transport and heavy equipment operation and related maintenance occupations
- 76 - Trades helpers, construction labourers and related occupations
- 22 - Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences.
- 32 - Technical occupations in health
- 34 - Assisting occupations in support of health services.
- 44 - Care providers and educational, legal, and public protection support occupations
- 72 - Industrial, electrical and construction trades
- 75 - Transport and heavy equipment operation and related maintenance occupations
- 76 - Trades helpers, construction labourers and related occupations
- 92 - Processing, manufacturing and utilities supervisors and central control operators
- 94 - Processing and manufacturing machine operators and related production workers
- 95 - Assemblers in manufacturing
- 96 - Labourers in processing, manufacturing, and utilities
- 07-09 - Middle management occupations in trades, transportation, production, and utilities
- 6321 - Chefs

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*Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern Communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.*

## Related Research

**All Roads Lead Home: Immigration Flows into North Bay and What this Means for RNIP Impacts**

Mercedes Labelle

**All Roads Lead Home: Immigration Flows into Sault Ste. Marie and What this Means for RNIP Impacts**

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**All Roads Lead Home: Immigration Flows into Thunder Bay and What this Means for RNIP Impacts**

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