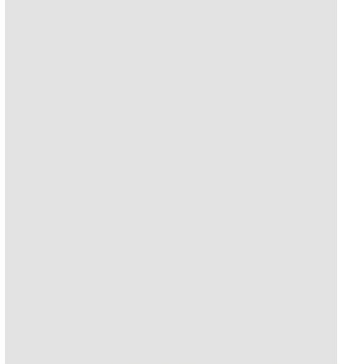




# Waterloo Region Immigration **STRATEGY** 2025 - 2028

| Building Community through **Immigration**



# Immigration 2025 and Beyond

Waterloo Region has welcomed immigrants since its early beginnings. Immigrants from around the world make Waterloo Region a better community for all with their talents, passion and strengths. Everyone has a role in helping them thrive.

Since 2009, public, private and non-profit organizations have worked together through the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity.

This strategy – our sixth – reflects our ongoing commitment to both immigrants and our regional community. During its development, the world continued to grapple with the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and a new wave of economic uncertainty was unleashed following the recent American election. Immigration will continue to play a vital role in Waterloo Region’s resilience, now and in the future.

We are pleased to launch Waterloo Region's Immigration Strategy 2025. It is grounded in the expertise and instinct of immigrants, partner organizations and the wider community. It sets community priorities for the next three years, guiding what we will do and accomplish. Together, we are building community through immigration. Join us.

On behalf of the Immigration Partnership:



**Dr Ernest Osei**  
*Chair*



**Trish Weigel-Green**  
*Vice Chair*



**Tara Bedard**  
*Executive Director*

Waterloo Region, April 2025.



# About Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership

## Who We Are

The Immigration Partnership is a collaboration of public, private and non-profit partner organizations working together through a Leadership Council and three Steering Groups – Settle, Work, Belong – to take action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity.

We engage with federal, provincial and other government and community initiatives to strengthen their ability to contribute immigrant success.

We are accountable to each other, our regional community and our funders.

## Vision

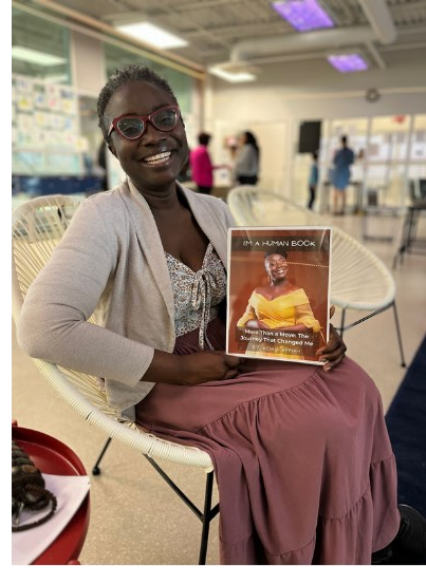
Waterloo Region is an inclusive community where immigrants thrive and contribute to shared prosperity and growth.

## Mission

We equip partners and community leaders to take action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity through research, mobilization and influence.

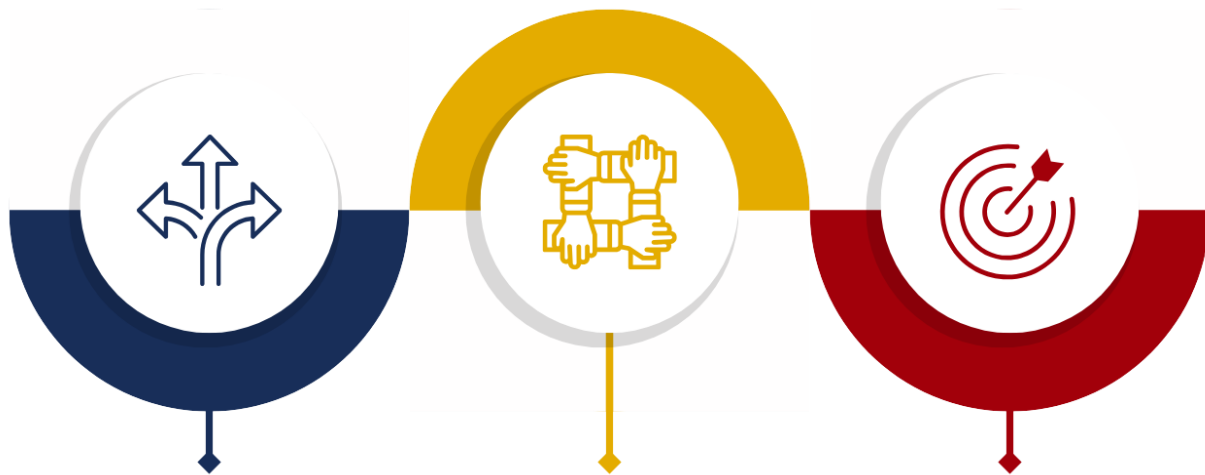
## Territorial Acknowledgment

Waterloo Region is located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Anishnaabe and Chonnonton peoples. This land, within the Haldimand tract, is promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River, taking in six miles on each side of the Grand River. We acknowledge the enduring presence of the Indigenous people with whom we share this land, and our shared responsibility to help realise the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.



# Our Guiding Principles

We are:



## **RESPONSIVE**

Striving to be flexible in adapting to the changing needs of immigrants and refugees through broad community consultation.

## **COLLABORATIVE**

Working collectively in an inclusive, respectful, non-judgmental manner which follows consensus and builds on best practices and innovation while being transparent and accountable to the community.

## **RESULTS-ORIENTED**

Taking action to efficiently achieve community-wide change to the systems and supports that impact immigrants and refugees.

We Will:

- Amplify immigrant voices
- Help everyone do their part
- Foster mutual learning and interrelatedness among immigrants and others
- Work for equity
- Tailor community actions to unique immigrant journeys





## Why Immigration

Canada has a history of managed migration. It selects people from around the world to contribute to Canada’s economic success. It provides a fresh start to refugees fleeing war and persecution. It encourages family sponsorship. It welcomes many temporary residents on work and study visas.

Immigrants have helped to build prosperity for all in Canada over generations. In 2023, almost 98% of Canadian population growth came from immigration. Immigrants fill labor shortages, boost consumer spending, and create businesses. Immigrants bring new skills, ideas, and entrepreneurial spirit, contributing to innovation and economic growth and making important contributions across every sector of Canada's economy. They contribute to the tax base which supports social programs, donate to charity, volunteer and are drivers of arts and culture.

The last decade saw incredible change. We weathered a global pandemic that disrupted every aspect of economic and social life. Canada chose significant immigration growth and rapid immigration policy change to respond to regional and industry-based population and labour force challenges. Infrastructure did not keep pace with this unplanned growth. The federal government recently reversed its immigration growth path. There is national and global economic uncertainty emanating from American economic policy.

In this time of immense uncertainty, immigration remains a core element of Canadian economic policy. Intentional community-based action to support and sustain immigration success is critical.



# Expected Outcomes

## COUNCIL

- Partners and community leaders are taking action to enhance immigrant success and community prosperity
- The community understands the beneficial impact of and supports immigration
- Policies and systems progressively enhance immigrant and community success

## SETTLE

- Services are increasingly responsive to the needs of immigrants
- Immigrants are using a range of settlement and other community services

## WORK

- Employers are increasingly aware of the benefits of immigration and are successfully hiring & retaining immigrants
- Immigrants are finding appropriate and desirable work

## BELONG

- Waterloo Region is increasingly welcoming
- Immigrants are connected and engaged in the community



## Strategic Priorities

1. Gather insights and evidence
2. Mobilize partners and community leadership
3. Influence decision makers
4. Build organizational resilience

## Goals and Objectives

1. Gather insights and evidence	
Goals	Objectives
1.1 Synthesize insights, data and research about immigration and immigrant experiences to develop a shared understanding of immigration and its ecosystem	1.1.1 Build strong partnerships to be a centre of excellence for immigration research and insights
	1.1.2 Conduct research and gather data and insights to understand the settlement ecosystem, immigration trends, experiences, gaps, opportunities, and innovations
1.2 Leverage data to identify system-wide strategies that build support for immigration and address the primary needs of immigrants	1.2.1 Share research data and insights with partners and community leaders to plan strategies for improving immigrant settlement, work and belonging
	1.2.2 Develop action-oriented tools that support immigrant integration based on current evidence and community priorities



## 2. Mobilize partners and community leadership

Goals	Objectives
2.1 Drive the adoption of infrastructure that improves access to information and supports for partners and immigrants	2.1.1 Leverage tools, funding and expertise to streamline information and supports for partners and immigrants
	2.1.2 Strengthen collaboration with other immigration partnerships and organizations for greater reach and efficiencies
2.2 Collaborate with partners and community leadership to make changes that improve immigrant integration	2.2.1 Facilitate data driven service coordination and enhancement decisions, and lead community response to mass arrivals and emerging events
	2.2.2 Generate engagement, learning and partnership opportunities that advance immigrant integration and foster systemic change

## 3. Influence decision makers

Goals	Objectives
3.1 Influence public, private and non-profit decision makers to make change and investments that improve immigrant settlement, work and belonging	3.1.1 Build relationships and provide partners with impactful connection and advocacy opportunities
	3.1.2 Advocate for organizational and system wide change and investment on shared priorities
3.2 Guide public, private and non-profit employers to actively improve immigrant settlement and employment	3.2.1 Connect partners to employers to advance shared priorities
	3.2.2 Advocate for changes that reduce immigrant employment barriers



## 4. Build organizational resilience

Goals	Objectives
4.1 Engage a robust, representative group of partners and staff with appropriate skills and influence	4.1.1 Identify necessary skills and networks
	4.1.2 Align recruitment and training with findings of needs assessment
4.2 Ensure organizational funding, governance and structures optimize performance	4.2.1 Regularly review governance policies and structure for effective performance
	4.2.2 Implement a long-term funding strategy that includes diversifying revenue sources



## Our Partners

### Council

**Dr Ernest Osei (Chair)**, Community Member  
**Trish Weigel Green, (Vice Chair)**, Conestoga College

**Tracey Hare Connell (Past Chair)**, The Coaching Co.

**Charlene Mak**, International Student Advisor Group & Wilfrid Laurier University

**Ian McLean**, Greater KW Chamber of Commerce

**Paulina Rodriguez**, City of Waterloo

**Zohra Wali**, City of Cambridge

**Brian Kamm**, United Way Waterloo Region Communities

**Dauda Raji**, House of Friendship

**Katherine Peterson**, YMCA of Three Rivers Immigrant Services

**Lucia Harrison**, KW Multicultural Centre

**Michael Doroshenko**, Community Member

**Murray Gamble**, The C3 Group of Companies

**Peter Sweeney**, Region of Waterloo, Commissioner, Community Services

**Prof Jenna Hennebry**, Wilfrid Laurier University, International Migration Research Centre

**Conal Vaughan**, Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (*ex officio*)

**Andrea Hopkins**, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (*ex officio*)

### Settle

**Charlene Mak (Chair)**, International Student Advisor Group & Wilfrid Laurier University

**Debbie Engel (Vice Chair)**, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

**Zeri Zigeta (Advisory Chair)**, Kinbridge Community Association

**Alana Banton, Brittany Bridge, Kristine**

**Marchetti, Nikolett Agoston, Sheryl Mascoll and Vanessa Allen**, Region of Waterloo

**Almira Hodzic, Julie Vu, Laura Stoutenburg and Natalie Hughes**, Conestoga College

**Ana Luz Martinez, Brittney Emslie, Eltag**

**Elkhalifa and Tera Dargavel**, KW Multicultural Centre

**Angie Pham, Imtenan Abd-El-Razik and Jennifer Ardon**, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

**Anna Schwarz and Babur Mawladin**, Reception House Waterloo Region

**Asma Alwahsh**, Canadian Arab Women Association KW

**Ben MacBride-Smith, Michele Breault, Pauleen Payne and Sandra Kuppek**, St. Louis Adult Learning and Continuing Education Centre

**Brenda Okoree**, Kind Minds Family Wellness

**Carolyn Beukeboom**, The Centre for Family Medicine

**Dauda Raji**, House of Friendship

**Diana Wiles**, Heart of the Region

**Donalee McIntyre**, City of Cambridge

**Duaa Al-Aghar**, Muslim Social Services

**Eliseo Martell**, Community Member

**Emily Gray**, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

**Engin Sezen and Jenna Hennebry**, Wilfrid Laurier University

**Faduma Musse**, Somali Canadians Association of Waterloo Region (SCAWR)

**Hoda Ghonim**, Shore Centre

**Isaiah Ritzmann**, The Working Centre

**Jean De Dieu Basabose**, Collège Boréal

**Jingling Xue**, Kitchener Public Library

**Lidia Gomez**, English at First

**Lily Adams and Marian Rozman**, YMCA of Three Rivers

**Linda Terry**, Age Friendly Waterloo Region Network

**Mayada Abou Warda**, Community HealthCaring Kitchener Waterloo

**Natasha Hergott**, Women's Crisis Services Centre

**Paula Marshall**, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario

**Priscilla Muzira**, AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area

**Shelley Campagnola**, COMPASS Refugee Centre

**Siba Al-Khadour**, Levant Canada

**Wisam Osman**, Coalition of Muslim Women



## Work

**Ian Mclean**, Chair, Greater KW Chamber of Commerce  
**Sheila McIntosh**, Vice-Chair, Community member  
**Caroline Nessner**, City of Kitchener (SDG)  
**Charlene Hofbauer**, Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington and Dufferin  
**Dominique Charbonneau**, City of Waterloo Economic Development  
**Eltag Elkhalfa**, KW Multicultural Centre  
**Isabel Vankuik**, Scotiabank  
**Jonathan Hendel**, Region of Waterloo Economic Development  
**Jordyn Leith**, Wilfrid Laurier University  
**Julie Newman**, Willow Hall HR  
**Katrina Michielsen**, Conestoga College  
**Laura Pearce**, City of Cambridge Economic Development  
**Lily Magnus**, Kinbridge Community Association  
**Michael Doroshenko**, Community member  
**Mohamed Bille Hassan**, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health  
**Natalie Cooper**, Region of Waterloo Employment Services  
**Roberto Villamar**, Community member  
**Sue Benoit**, YourH2R  
**Swati Sharma**, YMCA of Three Rivers  
**Tamin Hamidi**, Serco

## Belong

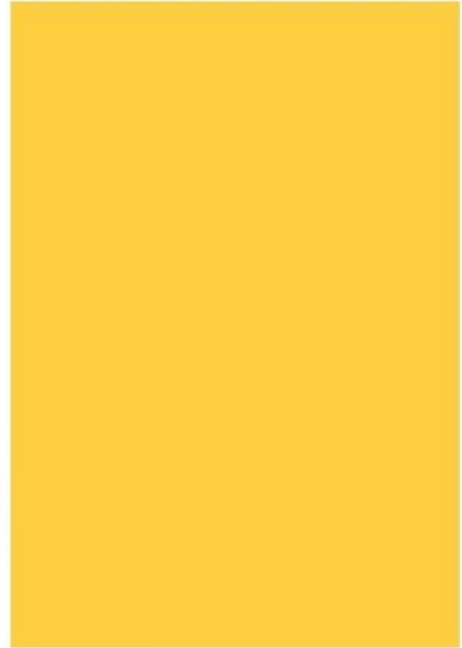
**Paulina Rodriguez (Co-Vice Chair)**, City of Waterloo  
**Zohra Wali (Co-Vice Chair)**, City of Cambridge  
**Ana Lagos and Brittney Emslie**, KW Multicultural Centre  
**Abby Cooper**, Hearts Open for Everyone  
**Ali Aminaei Chatroudi, Jennifer Sullivan, Marina Dotzert and Mary Dowhaniuk**, City of Kitchener

**Alex Allen**, Hospice WR  
**Anna Schwarz, Babur Mawladin and Pari Karem**, Reception House Waterloo Region  
**Aoussaf Arrout and Marwa Gebeil**, Kinbridge Community Centre  
**Arcy Canumay**, Sustainable WR Travel Wise  
**Asma AlWahsh**, Canadian Arab Women's Association  
**Cameron Tai and Emily Vincent**, Volunteer WR  
**Cheryl Faria, Nikolett Agoston and Sheryl Mascoll**, Region of Waterloo Children's Services  
**Cheryl Grove, Julia Nosova and Umi Mohammed**, Region of Waterloo  
**Corie Schweertman**, Conestoga College  
**Emily Jaarsma**, Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre  
**Fadhilah Balogun, CCORIC member**, African Women Alliance of Waterloo Region  
**Fauzia Wafai, Kokui Appiah and Mifrah Abid**, Community members  
**Fidelia Ukueje**, Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo (NIROW) and Region of Waterloo  
**Julia Gingrich**, Waterloo Public Libraries  
**Kathilee Porter**, ELLA  
**Lisa Leachman**, Cambridge Food Bank  
**Lisset Jacinto**, YMCA of Three Rivers – Cambridge  
**Marie-Pierre Daoust**, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Mon Avenir  
**Ravit Lechter**, Waterloo Region Jewish Community Council  
**Rihanat El-Alawa**, Waterloo Region District School Board  
**Saifullah Muhammad**, Rohingya Centre  
**Sarah Shafiq**, Coalition of Muslim Women Kitchener – Waterloo  
**Shannon Markle**, Cambridge Public Libraries  
**Teena Paul**, Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health





# Waterloo Region Immigration **STRATEGY** 2025 - 2028



## Building Community through Immigration

For more information:

Email: [immigrationpartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:immigrationpartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca)

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