

Employer Study:  
**Immigrant Employment in Langley**

---

A Langley LIP Research Report



by StoneCoast Group  
March 2022

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

## Executive Summary

Employers in Langley who seek to employ immigrant talent navigate barriers and challenges in attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and development. This report explores those issues and offers insights into strategies and tactics that will inform the broader Langley Local Immigration Partnership Settlement Strategy. PEERs Employment & Education Resources (PEERs) Inc., on behalf of the Langley LIP, contracted Stonecoast Group to conduct a study to seek answers to a two-part fundamental research question: What are the challenges faced by Greater Langley employers in attraction, recruitment, onboarding, and retention of immigrants and, what are the approaches, tactics, and strategies to address and overcome these challenges?

Stonecoast conducted four types of research – a preliminary environmental scan, an online employer survey, a series of key informant interviews, and a literature review to identify examples of promising immigrant hiring practices in other jurisdictions.

The survey, completed by 64 respondents, offered demographic information along with responses to questions designed to explore challenges along with suggested actions. The following provides some of the highlights and key themes that emerged from the survey responses.

### Highlights and Themes from Survey

- The primary business types represented were manufacturing, healthcare, and education
- Most respondents represent small businesses with fewer than 100 employees
- Respondents reported having current hard-to-fill vacancies in trades and transportation, manufacturing, and health related occupations
- Most respondents either have recruited or currently recruit immigrant workers
- Word of mouth, job boards and local service providers were the top three sources used by employers seeking immigrant talent
- English language skills, access to reliable transportation, affordable housing and competitive wages and benefits were cited as the most significant barriers to attraction, recruitment, and retention of immigrant workers
- Less than half of respondents have used services from immigrant employment service providers in Langley
- Respondents identified specific strategies they have used to attract and recruit immigrant talent, including these highlights:
  1. We reach out to applicants outside the country to offer employment
  2. Extensive employee involvement in community networking from frontline to management
  3. Word of mouth through our diverse employee population has provided immigrant talent
  4. Offering referral bonuses to existing employees
- Respondents suggest that the following would be beneficial to Langley employers:
  1. Work with ITABC on special Permanent Resident status tracks for trades workers
  2. Assistance with obtaining drivers' licences
  3. Better public transit at all hours
  4. Connect with employers for job fairs / interviews / info sessions
  5. English comprehension classes driven by the need to understand safety procedures

- Many of the persistent challenges and barriers identified in other studies continue to create challenges for Langley employers e.g., English skills, transportation, credential recognition, 'local' experience expectations, and immigration status

Key informant interviews (KII) were conducted with 13 employers. Interview questions were informed, in part, by the results of the employer survey. A set of specific questions was used to ensure that interviews were consistently structured. Interviewees' comments are anonymous and reported in the aggregate. Responses reflect varying levels of active outreach to attract and recruit immigrant workers. All recognize the importance of the immigrant workforce, yet many do not actively seek out immigrant talent to fill vacancies. Here are some highlights from the interview process:

### Highlights and Themes from Key Informant Interviews

- Langley's proximity to Metro Vancouver is seen as beneficial for recruiting from nearby communities.
- The Greater Langley area offers a wide range of opportunities and distinct communities with a diversity of lifestyles. It also has two post-secondary institutions and a mix of housing types. The immigrant population in Greater Langley is growing substantially.
- Challenges related to being in Greater Langley include transportation challenges while waiting for transit upgrades and an unattainable housing market, particularly for young families and cost of suitable housing.
- Many respondents work with local post-secondary institutions to recruit qualified candidates. This includes international students. Many others use Indeed, LinkedIn or internal job posting websites. Other sources include WorkBC, Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), Ministry of Labour in Mexico, Temporary Foreign Worker Program, and trading talent between organizations.
- Most respondents do not use immigrant employment services. Results are mixed among the ones who do. One respondent indicated these services are "Not great...and expensive." Others found the services were useful for entry-level positions but not particularly useful for higher-skill positions beyond that. Answers indicate that these services require regular attention to ensure results are achieved. They do not work well "in the background".
- Most respondents indicated that retention is not much of a concern in their business. Some said that entry-level labour roles have significant turnover depending on the nature of the job. Some respondents indicated that inadequate transit causes some turnover and when another job comes up closer to home or with fewer bus transfers, workers will leave.
- Few respondents were aware of any best or promising practices. The most common theme that arose among respondents was workplace culture. Creating a healthy workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion and celebrates success through employee recognition is a key success factor in attracting, recruiting, and retaining immigrant talent.
- Most respondents would like to see increased accessibility to government supports.
- A single point of contact for immigrant employment resources would be very helpful.
- International credential recognition is also a very common theme, along with fast-tracking permanent residency for students.
- Many respondents are glad to see the Langley LIP conducting this research and are looking forward to seeing the results.

The secondary research component consisted of twenty-one reports and publications that were reviewed by the project team. Most originated in other jurisdictions in BC and Canada. These reports show that issues facing employers seeking immigrant talent have persisted for many years, and that a mix of strategies have been developed and tested over time.

The four research elements reflected in this report show that there is recognition and acknowledgement of the significance and value of the immigrant workforce in Greater Langley. Employers differ in their approach to attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and development of immigrant talent. Those that actively seek immigrant talent use some immigrant employment services with varying levels of satisfaction.

There are persistent barriers to immigrant employment e.g., English skills, transportation and housing challenges, credential recognition, etc. Local challenges do not differ significantly from those reported in other jurisdictions, nor do the suggested solutions to address them. The Langley LIP is viewed as a positive force in the effort to welcome and support immigrants to the Greater Langley area.

**Recommendations include:**

1. Establish a single point of contact and referral for employers seeking to access immigrant talent
2. Build immigrant friendly attraction and recruitment practices
3. Strive to be an employer of choice among immigrants by building a culture of inclusion
4. Use culturally sensitive recruitment practices to ensure good candidates aren't screened out
5. Partner with employment service agencies to offer info sessions and training workshops
6. Foster social connections among workers
7. Offer mentorship opportunities
8. Hire for talent and skills – not qualifications
9. Use a professional credential assessment service when required
10. Offer clear career pathways to encourage retention
11. Be aware of the potential for unconscious bias in the hiring process
12. Offer a buddy system for immigrant workers
13. Conduct regular reviews of hiring practices
14. Take full advantage of government funding and supports

## Table of Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i> .....	<i>i</i>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	<i>1</i>
Research Questions .....	1
<i>Methodology</i> .....	2
Environmental Scan .....	2
Employer Survey .....	2
Key Informant Interviews.....	2
Secondary Research (Literature Review) .....	3
Limitations to the Research .....	3
<i>Analysis of Findings</i> .....	4
Survey Findings .....	4
Key Informant Interview Findings .....	5
Secondary Research (Literature Review) Findings .....	7
<i>Key Findings and Recommendations</i> .....	17
Key Findings and Emerging Themes.....	17
Recommendations .....	17
Considerations for the Langley LIP .....	19
<i>Appendices</i> .....	20
Appendix A – KII Backgrounder and Questions.....	20
Appendix B – Detailed Survey Responses .....	23

This report was prepared for the Langley Local Immigration Partnership by StoneCoast Group  
[www.stonecoast.ca](http://www.stonecoast.ca)

## Introduction

This report identifies barriers, challenges and issues facing employers in Greater Langley who seek to employ immigrant talent. Research findings will aid employers to better understand and access the pool of local immigrant talent (skilled and unskilled). The report also includes key findings and recommendations for consideration by the planned Langley LIP employment focused working group.

As a community planning table, the Langley LIP includes community agencies and institutions representing local government, settlement and community agencies, education, business, parks, recreation and culture, policing, libraries, volunteerism, and others.

Immigrant employment barriers, issues and challenges have been the focus of numerous studies, many of which have viewed these challenges through the eyes of immigrants and immigrant serving organizations. Others have applied a 'business lens' to the issues. Studies have been conducted in neighbouring areas (e.g., the 2015 Surrey LIP Immigrant Labour Market Research Project), however, no such research has focused on the Greater Langley area. This report views immigrant talent attraction, recruitment, onboarding, development, and retention through the eyes of local employers. Through this study, the Langley LIP is striving to craft a *local* response to the needs of Greater Langley employers and how those needs can be met strategically.

## Research Questions

The two principal questions that guided this research were:

1. What are the challenges faced by Greater Langley employers in attraction, recruitment, onboarding, and retention of immigrants?
2. What are the approaches, tactics, and strategies to address and overcome these challenges?

## Methodology

Four different information/data gathering approaches were used in this study – an environmental scan, an online survey of local employers, a series of Key Informant Interviews, and a literature review that explored how other jurisdictions have approached immigrant employment strategies. Each element of the methodology is described below.

### Environmental Scan

A preliminary environmental scan was conducted to inform the Employer Survey questions and Key Informant Interview questions. The scan included a brief review of other local immigration partnerships' publications, government policies and resources, and immigrant employment agencies' publications. The scan provided some insight into what programs are available to employers, and what challenges and barriers employers face when hiring immigrants and newcomers.

### Employer Survey

The online employer survey was prepared and launched on SurveyMonkey, a robust platform with a user-friendly interface and an appropriate level of analytic/reporting functions. The survey included a brief backgrounder describing the overall Settlement Strategy project and its intended outcomes. The 20 survey questions reflected a mix of multiple choice, rating scale, Likert, and matrix – with multiple opportunities for respondents to leave written comments. All respondents were required to answer a screening question that restricted responses to those representing Langley area employers.

The survey was distributed to members of the Langley LIP and through its social media platforms. See **Appendix A** for social media ad copy that was used to promote the survey. In addition, the survey link was sent in an email 'blast' to ~1,700 businesses on the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce membership list and to more than 1,000 business contacts provided by the Township of Langley. A further ~300 invitations were emailed to a hand-picked list of other Greater Langley employers with additional assistance from the City of Langley, and WorkBC.

Seventy-six respondents participated in the online survey, of whom, 82% identified as having a business presence in Greater Langley. The initial target number of responses was 50.

### Key Informant Interviews

A significant number of organizations (~200) were invited to participate in Key Informant Interviews. Invitations were extended via email and by telephone. Interviews were structured with a mix of open ended and closed ended questions, allowing interviewees to provide unrestricted answers while allowing the interviewer a chance to summarize and confirm what they heard. KIIs were designed to last approximately 30 minutes, however, some interviewees devoted as much as a full hour. A total of 13 interviews were conducted with a mix of employers, short of the initial range of 20-30. See **Appendix B** for the list of interview questions.

It is reasonable to assume that businesses are still struggling to emerge from the past two years of COVID-19 impacts so participating in an interview for a research project is low on their priority list. In short – employers are maxed out.

Further, the project’s target audience (i.e., Langley area employers) may be reluctant to offer opinions on immigrant employment because they feel uninformed or unable to provide meaningful feedback on what might seem to be a complex issue. The KII process, therefore, may have seemed challenging to navigate for some.

Finally, immigrant employment may simply not be ‘top of mind’ among Langley employers i.e., the issues may not resonate with – or seem relevant to many employers.

### Secondary Research (Literature Review)

Secondary research involved an internet search and a review of promising practices sourced from 21 recent, relevant publications, reports, and documents from jurisdictions in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada. The purpose of this review was to gauge the extent to which immigrant attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and development has been studied in other jurisdictions and to explore strategies, actions and tactics that could inform the settlement strategy.

### Limitations to the Research

The project team faced challenges gathering responses from Langley employers. Large retailers e.g., Staples, Best Buy, Home Depot, Safeway, Loblaws (Superstore) cited corporate policy as a constraint preventing them from discussing HR practices. Similarly, large public sector employers including School District 35 and Fraser Health, despite hiring lots of workers, were not able to participate in research of this type because they either have restrictive corporate policies in place or their HR function is managed centrally (outside Greater Langley), so local, granular data is unavailable.

## Analysis of Findings

This section describes the research team's findings from three principal activities – Survey, Key Informant Interviews, and Literature Review.

### Survey Findings

Below is an analysis and synthesis of the survey findings, categorized under respondent profile, perspectives on barriers to immigrant employment, perspectives on attraction and recruitment of immigrants, and suggested actions to be considered in the overarching settlement strategy. Detailed response data can be found in **Appendix C**.

#### **Respondent Profile:**

Most respondents were in the communities of Aldergrove, Douglas and Willoughby. Two-thirds of respondents represented employers with a single location in Greater Langley. The primary business types represented were manufacturing, healthcare, and education. Most respondents represent small businesses with fewer than 100 employees and have either recruited or currently recruit immigrant workers.

#### **Perspectives on Barriers to Immigrant Employment:**

The most significant barriers to attraction, recruitment, and retention of immigrant workers were English language skills, access to reliable transportation, affordable housing, and competitive wages and benefits. Many of the persistent challenges and barriers identified in other studies continue to create challenges for Greater Langley employers, e.g., English language skills, transportation, credential recognition, 'local' experience expectations, and immigration status.

Respondents reported having current hard-to-fill vacancies in trades and transportation, manufacturing, and health related occupations. Job vacancies in trades and transportation, manufacturing and health related occupations are expected to increase. Only natural and applied science occupations were projected to decrease. Education, business, and finance were expected to remain constant.

#### **Perspectives on Attraction and Recruitment of Immigrant Talent:**

Word of mouth, job boards, and local service providers were the top three sources used by employers seeking immigrant talent. Local immigrant settlement and employment agencies were most effective in attraction and recruitment efforts. Less than half of respondents have used services from immigrant employment service providers in Greater Langley. Of those, 60% indicated they were satisfied with the services while 15% reported dissatisfaction. Respondents reported that they considered listing only essential qualifications and using clear language with minimal use of acronyms or jargon when writing job descriptions and postings.

Respondents identified eight specific strategies they have used to attract and recruit immigrant talent:

1. Local postings on different boards such as building complexes, etc.
2. Reach out to applicants outside the country to offer employment.
3. Extensive employee involvement in community networking from frontline staff to management.
4. Distribute flyers in a few foreign languages most spoken on the worksite.
5. Word of mouth through diverse employee population has provided immigrant talent.

6. List NOC codes in job ads.
7. Offer referral bonuses to existing employees
8. Assist with upgrade of technology/skills for jobs.

### **Suggested Actions:**

Respondents suggested that the following resources would be beneficial to Greater Langley employers:

1. Trades based immigration programs
2. Working with ITABC on special Permanent Resident status tracks for trades workers
3. Pertaining to libraries, anything that raises general awareness of the range of jobs available and the education/skills/experience required for the various positions
4. Transportation improvements
5. Assistance with obtaining drivers' licences
6. Better public transit at all hours as employment opportunities are 24/7
7. Connect with employers for job fairs/interviews/info sessions
8. English comprehension classes driven by the need to understand safety procedures

## **Key Informant Interview Findings**

The Key Informant Interview questions were informed, in part by the environmental scan and employer survey responses and were designed to gain deeper insight into methods, barriers, and successful tactics for attracting, recruiting, onboarding, retaining, and developing immigrant workers in Greater Langley.

Three of the thirteen KII respondents reported actively seeking out immigrant talent. Most of the respondents have open hiring practices that include immigrant talent but do not target immigrants specifically. Furthermore, some interviewees were unaware of what specific attraction, recruitment, and retention practices are used by their organization. Below is an analysis and synthesis of the KII findings.

### **Key Themes from the KII process**

Challenges and barriers facing employers in Greater Langley have been consistent and persistent over time and across multiple jurisdictions in BC and Canada – particularly regarding attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and development of immigrant talent. Immigrant HR strategies, actions, and tactics identified in other jurisdictions are equally applicable to Greater Langley. Some strategies, actions, and tactics (e.g., fast tracking permanent residency) fall outside the control of Greater Langley employers. There is an apparent lack of coordination among immigrant-focused organizations, especially in the provision of services to employers. Employers are stretched thin after more than two years of COVID-19 impacts – they need help to strategically rebound and refocus as their businesses recover. Tapping immigrant talent is viewed as a positive step.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of being in Greater Langley:**

Respondents reported that Greater Langley's proximity to Metro Vancouver is seen as beneficial for recruiting from nearby communities. Greater Langley has significant room to expand and grow. Transit improvements are on the way with a planned expansion of the SkyTrain coming in the next three to five years, and walkability is already improving. The Greater Langley area offers a wide range of opportunities and distinct communities with a diversity of lifestyles. It also has two post-secondary institutions and a mix of housing choices from single family to multi-unit residential complexes. The immigrant population in Greater Langley is growing substantially, as is the general population. Some respondents noted that the

diversity of demographics in Greater Langley helps many immigrants feel at home and attracts more people to the community.

Significant challenges related to being in Greater Langley include transportation challenges while waiting for public transit upgrades. Public transit is available in many communities but employers report scheduling challenges and route limitations as barriers, especially for shift workers. Relatively high housing costs, particularly for young families were cited as unattractive community attributes.

### **Barriers to Employment:**

Many respondents reported that they do not actively seek out immigrant talent. Others said it is difficult to discern the qualifications and skills of an applicant based solely on their written application. The concern is that many applicants seem qualified, but on closer inspection are not. Most respondents also indicated that retention is not a significant issue for their organization. Some said that entry-level labour roles have significant turnover depending on the nature of the job. Some respondents indicated that inadequate transit causes some turnover and when another job comes up closer to home or with fewer bus transfers, workers will leave.

Common challenges include access to reliable public transit and availability and cost of suitable housing. Language barriers also caused concern among some respondents. Food security and access to services are also challenging for many immigrants in the community.

### **Attraction and Recruitment:**

Many employers use Indeed and/or LinkedIn to attract and recruit workers, though some noted that those sources were not particularly helpful in finding immigrant talent specifically. Some respondents use their own internal job posting sites and place ads in local newspapers. Other avenues for recruitment include WorkBC, SAWP, Ministry of Labour in Mexico (for TFWs), networking through employees or other businesses, Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS), trading talent between organizations, the TFW program, and Facebook Jobs. Many respondents also work with local post-secondary institutions to recruit qualified candidates. This includes international students.

Most respondents do not use immigrant employment services. Results are mixed among the ones who do. One respondent indicated that these services are “not great...and expensive.” Others found the services were useful for entry-level positions but not particularly useful for higher-skill positions beyond that. Answers indicate that these services require regular attention to ensure results are achieved. They do not work well “in the background”.

Most respondents noted that entry-level labour positions are the most difficult occupations to fill. Conversely, others stated that the entry-level positions are easier to fill, while higher skilled positions are much more difficult. All respondents are experiencing labour shortages in at least one area of their organization.

### **Action Items:**

Few respondents were aware of any best or promising practices in attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, or development. The most common theme that arose among respondents was workplace culture. Creating a healthy workplace culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion and celebrates success through employee recognition is a key success factor in attracting, recruiting, and retaining immigrant talent. Other helpful actions include providing a living wage and benefits and making changes

to the Temporary Foreign Worker program. Flexibility in hours and scheduling was another common theme.

Diversity of languages in the workplace also provides more lines of communication for workers with limited English skills. Tuition reimbursement was also identified as best practice that supports immigrants in obtaining Canadian certifications to grow their careers.

Most respondents would like to see improved accessibility to government supports. A single point of contact for immigrant employment resources would be very helpful. International credential recognition is also a very common theme, along with fast-tracking permanent residency. Mental health and other social supports are also in short supply in Greater Langley. Some respondents also suggest government funded internships and practicum programs to help immigrants integrate into Canadian workplaces. Overall, respondents were pleased that the Langley Local Immigration Partnership is conducting this research and are looking forward to seeing the results.

## Secondary Research (Literature Review) Findings

The following section explores 21 reports and publications that identify promising practices in Immigrant hiring in Greater Langley, and other BC and Canadian jurisdictions. Prior studies dating back seven or more years show that issues facing employers seeking to hire immigrant talent have persisted for some time. The 2015 Surrey LIP LMI study, for example, identified five significant issues. All of these remain on the priority list in 2022:

- The lack of English language fluency was a top issue raised by employers
- The difficulties of translating, evaluating, and assessing the equivalency of foreign credentials and qualifications was noted by many employers, particularly for regulated occupations
- Employers view a lack of Canadian work experience as a clear impediment to hiring more immigrants, primarily because they see a cost associated with training and mentoring
- Employers would like to see better coordination of service agencies that work with immigrants, and improvements in their capacity to interface with and support employers
- Employers indicated they need easy access to other supports such as on-line tools/toolkits for employers (e.g., recruiting plans, in-house mentoring, etc.) that are immigrant-specific

Each of the 21 reports and publications reviewed by the project team is summarized on the following pages. Promising practices identified in these reports include:

1. Build immigrant friendly attraction and recruitment practices
2. Strive to be an employer of choice among immigrants by building a culture of inclusion
3. Use ethnic media for recruitment
4. Use culturally sensitive recruitment practices to ensure good candidates aren't screened out
5. Strive for in-person interviews rather than telephone or virtual
6. Partner with employment service agencies to offer info sessions and training workshops
7. Foster social connections among workers
8. Offer a bridging program to fill gaps in education and training
9. Offer mentorship opportunities
10. Hire for talent and skills – not qualifications
11. Use a professional credential assessment service when required

12. Offer clear career pathways to encourage retention
13. Be aware of the potential for unconscious bias in the hiring process
14. Create barrier-free job descriptions
15. Offer a buddy system for immigrant workers
16. Conduct regular reviews of hiring practices
17. Take full advantage of government funding and supports

## 1. Attracting Immigrant Talent – Monster.ca<sup>1</sup>

Canada needs the immigrant talent pool. Immigrants are statistically higher educated than Canadians, and some industries (such as IT) have already picked up on this and are recruiting from other countries.

*“Diversity initiatives improve corporate culture, improve recruitment of new employees, improve client relations, and increase employee retention.”*

Different perspectives bring new insights and open global opportunities. Having a diverse brand as a company also improves the reputation among consumers. However, integrating immigrants and newcomers takes significant time and effort. Language barriers and cultural differences cause hesitation from potential employers. This is especially true for smaller companies. Large companies often have mentorship programs and active recruitment and retention procedures in place.

*“Attracting and retaining immigrant talent takes commitment from the top levels of the organization.”*

## 2. Immigrant-Friendly Businesses: Effective Practices for Attracting, Integrating, and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces – The Conference Board of Canada.<sup>2</sup>

This report proposes a three-stage approach to immigrant engagement and employment.

### Stage 1: Immigrant-Friendly Attraction and Recruitment Practices

This begins with building and promoting organizational brand that prioritizes inclusion. This inclusive culture that respects diversity will help at all other stages of engagement. Working with a recruitment agency is also a key success factor. Job fairs also provide an opportunity for interpersonal connection that is more accessible to immigrant applicants than online application forms. Ethnic media outlets are also a highly successful method for recruiting immigrant talent.

Culturally sensitive recruitment and screening practices are important to ensure the right immigrant applicant is not inadvertently screened out. At the beginning of the interview, employers should inform applicants about the company’s diversity and immigrant hiring procedures. Ask specific questions about the applicant’s accomplishments to encourage them to share. Interviewers should listen carefully and always ask for clarification if they are unsure. Employers should also strive to use clear, plain language

---

<sup>1</sup> Lynda Goldman. “Attracting Immigrant Talent.” Monster. N.D. <https://hiring.monster.ca/resources/workforce-management/workplace-diversity-equity/business-case-to-hire-immigrants-canada/>

<sup>2</sup> “Immigrant-Friendly Businesses: Effective Practices for Attracting, Integrating, and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces.” The Conference Board of Canada. November 2009. <https://hireimmigrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/Immigrant-Friendly-Businesses.pdf>

and be mindful of how body language is being perceived. Telephone interviews are not ideal. If a telephone interview is necessary, employers should send the list of questions to the applicant in advance. All recruitment personnel should receive cross-cultural training.

Partnering with immigrant employment agencies to provide information sessions and training workshops is also a good practice for recruitment. Many large corporations have adopted this practice, but it can be done on a smaller scale as well. Fostering social connections in the workplace is so important for attracting immigrant workers. Providing workplace experience through bridging and mentorship programs can support the qualified immigrant talent pool for job vacancies. A bridging program helps immigrants fill education gaps or other professional requirements. Mentorship is more of a one-on-one learning practice, and many employers use accelerated mentorships to help place immigrant workers in roles.

Hire for talent and skills rather than qualifications if possible. Employers can assess international credentials by using a professional credential assessment service or by conducting in-house assessments of the candidate's skills. If Canadian credentials are required, employers can help immigrant employees obtain them by providing supervised work experience, flexible scheduling that allows for language or other classes, or financial support if capacity exists.

## **Stage 2: Immigrant-Friendly Integration and Development Practices**

It is more difficult for immigrants to integrate into a new workplace than Canadians. Support can come as mentoring through the onboarding process. Experienced staff members volunteer to provide one-on-one training and guidance to their mentees. Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal, depending on the setting and the capacity of the employer. Employers can also provide English language and professional communication skills training either directly or through another organization. Providing opportunities for growth and achieving goals is also a key success factor.

*“Employees tend to leave an organization if they see limited professional growth opportunities.”*

## **Stage 3: Immigrant-Friendly Retention Practices**

Retention comes down to building a culturally inclusive organization. This includes promoting cultural awareness within the organization through training and implementation of diversity and inclusion practices. Cultural affinity groups or employee resource groups can also help a larger organization foster inclusiveness. Support from the executive team for cultural diversity initiatives is critical to the success of an initiative.

### **3. Canada must adapt quickly to attract skilled workers, immigration minister says. – Kathleen Harris, CBC News.<sup>3</sup>**

---

<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Harris. “Canada must adapt quickly to attract skilled workers, immigration minister says.” CBC News. August 13, 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/economic-labour-migration-hussen-oecd-1.5244416>

Canada's immigration practices serve as a benchmark for the rest of the world, according to a 2019 OECD report. Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen says Canada should remain open to learning from others and constantly improving the system.

#### **4. Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labor Market? A Field Experiment with Thirteen Thousand Resumes – Philip Oreopoulos<sup>4</sup>**

This study involved 13,000 mock resumes sent out to employers in the Greater Toronto Area. The study found that Canadian-born individuals with English-sounding names were more than twice as likely to get a callback for a job interview, regardless of education or job experience. This call-back gap is like the employment gap according to the census at the time of the study.

The study also found that Canadian employers valued Canadian experience more than Canadian education. Adding just one type of Canadian work experience increased the callback rate from 6% to 8.5%. Listing all previous work experience in Canada increased the callback number to 11%. Changing education to a Canadian institution did not yield a significant increase in call-backs.

Non-Canadian names on resumes had a significant impact on the callback rate as well. Many employers state that they see a non-Canadian name as a sign of poor language skills. Other hiring managers are also risk-averse and receive rewards for successful hires, so they avoid foreign names. However, including English and French language proficiency on the resume did not significantly increase callback rates.

This report highlights the need to address unconscious bias when screening resumes.

#### **5. Employer Tools & Resources Library – IECBC<sup>5</sup>**

This webpage is a collection of resources to find, hire, and retain immigrant talent.

Finding immigrant talent begins with creating barrier-free job descriptions. Barrier-free job descriptions have distinct essential vs non-essential qualifications, focus on what needs to be achieved, and use plain language. Descriptions should also include specific communication requirements and working conditions and avoid identifying personal traits. The webpage also has a directory of BC immigrant employment agencies they suggest working with.

Hiring immigrant talent requires a careful review of resumes and applications, a culturally sensitive job interview, and a skills assessment. Immigrant applicants may have different resume styles than what employers may expect from a Canadian applicant. This can make it difficult to identify the skills and experience needed. Focus on key areas such as language proficiency, academic credentials, personal credentials, and experience. Culturally sensitive job interviews should also use plain language. Employers should expect some miscommunications or awkward moments. Avoid small talk, slang, jargon, and unnecessarily technical language. Some questions may need to be rephrased for clarity. Telephone interviews are not ideal and should be handled carefully if necessary. Employers should use scenario-

---

<sup>4</sup> Philip Oreopoulos. "Why Do Skilled Immigrants Struggle in the Labour Market? A Field Experiment with Thirteen Thousand Resumes." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*. 3 (November 211): 148-171. <https://oreopoulos.faculty.economics.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Why-Do-Skilled-Immigrants-Struggle-in-the-Labor-Market.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> "Employer Tools & Resources Library." IECBC. N.D. <https://iecbc.ca/employer-tools-and-resources/>

based questions and request examples to enable the candidate to demonstrate their skills. Body language differs between cultures as well. Personal space or forward phrasing may seem inappropriate or rude. Employers should be aware of these cultural differences and focus on what is important. Ask about what experience would be relevant and valuable in Canada rather than asking for Canadian job experience.

Integrating immigrants into an organization fosters a stronger corporate culture, reduces turnover, and provides an avenue to tap into new ideas. Employers can help newcomers improve their English language skills by connecting them with classes or accent reduction tutors. Larger employers may be able to provide customized language training. Employers can provide additional support through orientation, buddy systems, regular check-ins, and growth opportunities.

## 6. Employer Playbook: Strategies for Immigrant Inclusion in Canadian Workplaces - #ImmigrantsWork Coalition<sup>6</sup>

This playbook provides best practices for hiring immigrant workers for Canadian employers. The information is divided into Recruiting, Hiring, Onboarding, and Integrating.

### Recruiting:

Conducting a systemic review of internal practices is something organizations should begin doing even before they start hiring. Job descriptions should be carefully written to separate essential vs non-essential skills and experience, avoid long or complicated words, avoid technical terminology and acronyms, use culturally neutral qualifications, and clearly communicate the skills required for the role. Jobs should be posted to immigrant/community media, associations for internationally trained professionals, language or bridge training programs' media, and local settlement and employment agencies. Using current employees to obtain job referrals is also a good practice. When screening immigrant resumes, it is important to evaluate prior non-Canadian work experience for skills and competencies, focus on the content of the resume rather than the format or style, leverage existing organizational diversity to support the hiring process, and evaluate international credentials for useful education.

### Hiring:

Interviewing immigrant talent requires hiring managers to look beyond cultural differences and unconscious biases. When addressing unconscious biases, interviewers should consider what qualities they think demonstrate professionalism in an interview, their perception of animated vs reserved individuals, their initial reaction to a regional or foreign accent, and their initial reaction to a different racial or ethnic background than their own. Interviewers should strive to consider the candidate as an individual rather than allow preconceived notions to impact their assessment. Interview questions should be carefully worded to be intentional and specific, avoid metaphors or complicated language, connect questions to essential skills, and include a skills-based assessment.

Other simple tips for interviewing include:

- Be consistent
- Ask one question at a time
- Focus on content
- Rephrase questions as needed
- Interpret silence

---

<sup>6</sup> "Employer Playbook: Strategies for Immigrant Inclusion in Canadian Workplaces." #ImmigrantsWork Coalition. N.D. <https://www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca/download/strategies-for-immigrant-inclusion-in-canadian-workplaces/?wpdmdl=6964&masterkey=60a6bcfb0e867>

- Be mindful of non-verbal cues
- Plan for disruption
- Navigate lags in video communication for virtual interviews
- Offer technical tips and support

#### Onboarding:

It is critical to ensure the new immigrant hire feels welcome in the new workplace. Onboarding should engage all staff in creating a welcoming environment for new hires. When building an orientation procedure, employers should consider the following strategies:

- The 3 Ps: people (who they should meet, buddy system, etc.), performance (job shadowing, check-ins, training, etc.), and paperwork/process (policies and procedures, handbook, etc.).
- Accommodation needs: Immigrants may require space to participate in religious practices.
- Timelines: Clearly communicate expectations for working hours, deadlines, etc. This is especially important for remote workers.
- Lingo and norms: Spell out acronyms in meetings and consider providing a cheat sheet of commonly used acronyms specific to the workplace for new employees.
- Prioritize health and safety: communicate clearly about safety measures.

Onboarding is an ongoing process – provide ongoing check-ins and engagement to foster a positive working relationship and address concerns early. The buddy system can also be used to help new employees feel connected and confident in the workplace.

#### Integrating:

Inclusion includes meaningful preparation of the workplace to include and incorporate immigrant talent. Formal and informal mentorship programs are useful tools in integrating newcomers. Investing in a diverse and inclusive leadership model is also highly valuable.

## 7. Support & Retain Your Workers - WelcomeBC<sup>7</sup>

Provincial and federal government programs exist for employers who wish to support or sponsor a newcomer employee.

## 8. 10 Reasons to Hire a Newcomer to Canada – Newcomers Canada<sup>8</sup>

The 10 reasons to hire newcomers in Canada in this article are:

1. Newcomers bring diversity of experiences, perspectives, and skills.
2. Newcomers help tap into new markets.
3. Newcomers help connect to audience.
4. Newcomers are here to stay.
5. Newcomers have already demonstrated skills by settling in Canada.
6. Newcomers will work hard to keep their jobs.

<sup>7</sup> "Support & Retain Your Workers." WelcomeBC. N.D. <https://www.welcomebc.ca/For-B-C-Employers/Support-Retain-Your-Workers>

<sup>8</sup> "10 Reasons to Hire a Newcomer to Canada." Newcomers Canada. October 6, 2021. <https://www.newcomerscanada.ca/10-reasons-to-hire-a-newcomer-to-canada-2/>

7. Newcomers improve employee relations and foster healthier culture.
8. Newcomers provide talent in a low unemployment market.
9. Hiring newcomers enhances corporate image
10. The benefits of hiring newcomers outweigh the challenges

## **9. Case Study: Tap into Skilled Immigrants for Your Recruitment Efforts – go2HR9**

This case study explores two BC programs to support employers in hiring immigrant talent: the Maple 2.0 - Mentorship in Action Program and Skills Connect for Immigrants Program.

Maple 2.0 Mentorship Program:

This mentorship program connects new immigrants with local employers in Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver through paid and unpaid work-mentorships. Placements are anywhere from four to twelve weeks in administration, project management, accounting, marketing, web development, engineering, IT, etc. across several industries including tourism and hospitality. This program has been active since 2011 and has assisted over 1500 mentees. 60% of these mentorships result in direct hires. Employers benefit from access to a rich talent pool, cultural competency training, and ongoing cultural competency support.

Skills Connect for Immigrants Program:

This program is designed to help professional newcomers find applicable employment that relates to their pre-arrival skills and experiences. The program pre-screens applicants based on employer's requirements, including language training and reference checks. Skills Connect also coordinates job fairs and specialized hiring fairs for groups of industry employers.

## **10. These immigrant women are lifting each other up while advancing their careers – Bisakhi Roy, The Globe and Mail<sup>10</sup>**

This article follows Sahar Sayedy's journey through finding employment as a newcomer in Canada. Despite her educational qualifications and work experience, Sayedy was not receiving call-backs for her job applications due to her lack of Canadian experience. She took advantage of the Sister2Sister newcomer program and was placed in a job as a research and partnerships specialist with IECBC. Nearly 90% of immigrant job seekers in the Greater Toronto Area struggled with meeting Canadian work experience requirements.

## **11. Facing labour shortages, Liberals loosen rules on foreign workers ahead of budget – The Canadian Press (Langley Advance Times).<sup>11</sup>**

This recent article describes the federal government's easing of rules around hiring foreign workers for low-wage jobs. Higher-skilled workers will also be able to secure three years of employment eligibility

---

<sup>9</sup> "Case Study: Tap Into Skilled Immigrants for Your Recruitment Efforts." go2HR. 2020. <https://www.go2hr.ca/recruitment/case-study-tap-into-skilled-immigrants-for-your-recruitment-efforts>

<sup>10</sup> Baisakhi Roy. "These immigrant women are lifting each other up while advancing their careers." The Globe and Mail. April 11, 2022. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-these-immigrant-women-are-lifting-each-other-up-while-advancing-their/>

<sup>11</sup> The Canadian Press. "Facing labour shortages, Liberals loosen rules on foreign workers ahead of budget." Langley Advance Times. April 4, 2022. <https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/news/facing-labour-shortages-liberals-loosen-rules-on-foreign-workers-ahead-of-budget/>

instead of two, which provides an easier path to permanent residency. This will provide short-term relief for companies with high vacancies. These changes are part of a larger effort to improve the foreign-worker program. However, this change does not address quality of jobs. The article recommends the government require gig employers to pay into CPP and provide benefits.

## **12. Making it Easier for Businesses to Find Skilled Workers: Regional Immigration Pilot to Fill Labour Gaps, Attract Top Talent in Rural Ontario – Province of Ontario<sup>12</sup>**

The Ontario Government is launching a new Regional Immigration Pilot program to help businesses in rural communities attract and retain skilled workers. The pilot provides an opportunity for businesses to fill talent gaps and supports economic growth and pathways for skilled foreign workers to gain permanent residency. The targeted rural regions have infrastructure and capacity to welcome newcomers.

## **13. Quebec commits \$246 million to help attract and integrate immigrants – Alexandra Miekus, CIC News.<sup>13</sup>**

This 2021 article describes Quebec's increase in immigration spending to help support economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is intended to support the MIFI in increasing its efforts to better recognize the skills of immigrants and encourage regional immigration based on labour market needs. It will also help provide French language courses and support attraction and retention of international students. The Quebec government was previously averse to immigration to the province and was trying to reduce it. Since the pandemic, they have changed their perspectives and now see immigration as a solution to many problems.

## **14. U.S. Green With Envy Over Canada's Ability to Attract Top Tech Talent – Colin Singer, Immigration.ca<sup>14</sup>**

American companies are losing skilled labour to Canada via immigration.

*“Canada is positioning (itself) successfully to compete for the world's best and brightest, gaining competitive advantage through the utilization of specific provisions which were adopted as recently as 2017.”*

The Global Talent Stream program expedites work permits for the technology sector and allows fast-growing tech companies to hire highly skilled foreign talent. Immigrants are typically very highly educated and contribute to the horizon of scientific knowledge and understanding. They also include entrepreneurs who grow the economy through new avenues and create jobs. Canada's Start-Up Visa program enables

---

<sup>12</sup> “Making it Easier for Businesses to Find Skilled Workers: Regional Immigration Pilot to Fill Labour Gaps, Attract Top Talent in Rural Ontario.” Government of Ontario. December 19, 2019. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/55197/making-it-easier-for-businesses-to-find-skilled-workers#quickfacts>

<sup>13</sup> Alexandra Miekus. “Quebec commits \$246 million to attract and integrate immigrants.” April 9, 2021. <https://www.cicnews.com/2021/04/province-of-quebec-commits-246-million-to-help-attract-and-integrate-immigrants-0417720.html#gs.x7gwhj>

<sup>14</sup> Colin Singer. “U.S. Green With Envy Over Canada's Ability to Attract Top Tech Talent.” Immigration.ca. September 17, 2021. <https://www.immigration.ca/u-s-green-with-envy-over-canadas-ability-to-attract-top-tech-talent>

immigrant entrepreneurs obtain a fast-track work permit to launch businesses in Canada that leads to faster permanent residency.

#### **15. New Immigration Pathways for Hospitality Sector to Hire Skilled Workers – Government of Nova Scotia<sup>15</sup>**

The service industry is experiencing labour shortages and the Province is making changes to help employers hire skilled newcomers. The Province added the following occupations to the Occupations in Demand immigration stream:

- Food counter attendants
- Kitchen helpers
- Related support operations
- Food and beverage servers
- Light duty cleaners

These occupations bypass the need for a labour market impact assessment prior to hiring newcomers.

#### **16. Permanent Atlantic Immigration Program to attract workers and drive economic growth – Cision<sup>16</sup>**

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot has brought thousands of newcomers to Atlantic Canada who have helped communities thrive. The Atlantic Immigration Program will build on the success of the project, providing a permanent solution to help Atlantic provinces attract skilled newcomers. The permanent program will retain three features that made the pilot so successful:

- A focus on employers
- Enhanced settlement support
- A collaborative approach across all Atlantic provinces

#### **17. Saskatchewan unveils pilot program to attract skilled immigrants in key sectors – Talent Canada<sup>17</sup>**

The Government of Saskatchewan launched a new pilot under the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program to help support employers in filling hard-to-fill positions in the province. The Hard-To-Fill Skills Pilot enables employers to recruit workers through international recruitment activities into jobs that have significant recruitment challenges. Sectors include:

- Health
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Ag-tech
- Construction
- Hospitality
- Retail

---

<sup>15</sup> “New Immigration Pathways for Hospitality Sector to Hire Skilled Workers.” Government of Nova Scotia: Labour, Skills, and Immigration. November 17, 2021. <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20211117001>

<sup>16</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. “Permanent Atlantic Immigration Program to attract workers and drive economic growth.” Cision. December 17, 2021. <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/permanent-atlantic-immigration-program-to-attract-workers-and-drive-economic-growth-800948480.html>

<sup>17</sup> “Saskatchewan unveils pilot program to attract skilled immigrants in key sectors.” Talent Canada. November 26, 2021. <https://www.talentcanada.ca/saskatchewan-unveils-pilot-program-to-attract-skilled-immigrants-in-key-sectors/>

Workers nominated through the stream would be supported by their employers and community. Applicants must have an offer of employment, English language proficiency, and meet minimum education and work experience requirements. Employers must demonstrate extensive efforts to hire domestically prior to utilizing the pilot.

### **18. Nova Scotia Launches Program to Help Attract International Workers – Andy Walker, My East Coast Experience<sup>18</sup>**

The International Graduates in Demand immigration stream helps address job shortages in fields like healthcare and education. Before the launch of the new stream, international graduates had to have one year of work experience prior to applying to the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. This program allows employers to hire and retain international graduates in specified professions more quickly. It also helps international graduates apply for permanent residency.

To be eligible, applicants must have a full-time permanent job offer, be 21-55 years old, have a high school diploma, and complete the course of study within three years of applying.

### **19. Canada to Increase Immigration Levels Over Next Three Years – Lauren Boorman, Canada Immigration Law Firm<sup>19</sup>**

At the time of this article, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC) had just released the updated immigration levels for 2022-2024, and immigration targets increased significantly. The new plan suggests Canada will focus on PNP candidates and Federal Economic Program candidates for 2022. This announcement reaffirms Canada's reliance on immigration in a post-pandemic economy.

### **20. SPRINT: Skills Passport for Newcomers in Tech<sup>20</sup>**

SPRINT is a national project funded by Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition program to accelerate integration of skilled immigrants in information and communication technology, or biotechnology and life sciences. SPRINT connects employers and newcomer talent and provides fast access to immigrant talent for employers. SPRINT facilitates immigrants' credential evaluation, competency assessment, industry designation, and more.

### **21. New assessment tool helps newcomers enter labour force - NBCC<sup>21</sup>**

FAST NB (Facilitating Access to Skills Talent in New Brunswick) is a new online skills assessment and development platform will help newcomers access meaningful employment in New Brunswick. The tool assesses newcomers' formal training, competencies, and life experiences against NB industry standards to open pathways to employment. Employers can also use the platform to find skilled workers to fill

---

<sup>18</sup> Andy Walker. "Nova Scotia Launches Program to Help Attract International Workers." My East Coast Experience. November 29, 2021. <https://myeastcoastexperience.com/nova-scotia-launches-program-to-help-attract-international-workers/>

<sup>19</sup> Lauren Boorman. "Canada to Increase Immigration Levels Over Next Three Years." Canada Immigration Law Firm. February 14, 2022. <https://www.canadim.com/news/canada-to-increase-immigration-levels-over-next-three-years/>

<sup>20</sup> "SPRINT: Skills Passport for Newcomers in Tech." SPRINT. N.D. <https://sprintcareers.ca/>

<sup>21</sup> "New assessment tool helps newcomers enter labour force." NBCC. March 2, 2022. <https://nbcc.ca/news-community/news-releases/2022/03/02/new-assessment-tool-helps-newcomers-enter-labour-force>

vacancies. The program is being launched by NBCC and other colleges, government, and advisory councils as the first phase in a larger plan to support newcomers in integrating into the NB labour market. The FAST platform was developed by IECBC to help immigrants understand how their skills align with occupations in the Canadian labour market. FAST NB is building on that success with a pilot that focuses on six in-demand skilled trades like carpentry.

# Key Findings and Recommendations

## Key Findings and Emerging Themes

1. Businesses and employers in Langley as identified by respondents to the survey and subsequent research methodologies are predominantly small, comprised primarily of manufacturing, healthcare, and education.
2. Langley employers recognize the value in employing immigrant workers and are keen to tap into this important talent pool, however, many employers do not know where to start or are not finding success through the avenues they have tried.
3. Challenges and barriers facing employers in Greater Langley have been consistent and persistent over time and across multiple jurisdictions in BC and Canada – particularly regarding attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, and development of immigrant talent.
4. Key barriers to immigrant employment are English language skills, access to reliable transportation, affordable housing, and competitive wages and benefits.
5. Immigrant HR strategies, actions, and tactics identified in other jurisdictions are equally applicable to Greater Langley.
6. Some strategies, actions, and tactics (e.g., fast tracking permanent residency) fall outside the control of Greater Langley employers.
7. There is an apparent lack of coordination among immigrant-focused organizations, especially in the provision of services to employers.
8. Employers are stretched thin after more than two years of COVID-19 impacts – they need help to strategically rebound and refocus as their businesses recover. Tapping immigrant talent is viewed as a positive step.

## Recommendations

### **Employer Action Recommendations:**

1. Put Culture First - Building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace culture is the first step to attracting, recruiting, and retaining immigrant talent. Not only are employees more likely to stay somewhere they feel welcome and included, but many immigrants also find job opportunities through word of mouth. Promoting a healthy workplace culture can also improve the community's perception of an employer, which is ultimately where they draw their talent from.
2. Diversify Job Postings - Employers should post jobs in as many locations as possible to reach a wide range of potential applicants. Some immigrant-focused recruiting opportunities include ethnic newspapers, community job boards, Facebook Jobs, and immigrant employment and settlement agencies. Partnerships with educational institutions can also help improve reach.

3. Strive to be an employer of choice among immigrants by building a culture of inclusion.
4. Use culturally sensitive recruitment practices to ensure good candidates aren't screened out.
5. Partner with employment service agencies to offer info sessions and training workshops.
6. Foster social connections among workers.
7. Offer mentorship opportunities.
8. Hire for talent and skills – not qualifications.
9. Use a professional credential assessment service when required.
10. Offer clear career pathways to encourage retention.
11. Be aware of the potential for unconscious bias in the hiring process.
12. Offer a buddy system for immigrant workers.
13. Conduct regular reviews of hiring practices.
14. Take full advantage of government funding and supports

**Community Action Recommendations:**

1. Improve Access to Resources – Immigrant employment and settlement agencies are not accessible or effective for the participating employers in this research. Respondents were very supportive of a *single access point* for community supports.
2. Improve public transit - adjust schedules and routes to provide better service to shift workers

**Government Action Recommendations:**

1. Improve International Credential Recognition.
2. Create more trades-based immigration programs.
3. Fast-Track Permanent Residency.
4. Improve Mental Health and Social Supports.
5. Fund Work Experience Initiatives: Some respondents suggested government funded internships and practicum programs to help immigrants integrate into Canadian workplaces.
6. Work with ITABC on special Permanent Resident status tracks for trades workers.

## Considerations for the Langley LIP

Engagement of Greater Langley employers in workforce strategy research is difficult and requires patience and persistence.

There is a desire for a coordinated, central point of contact and referral for matters related to immigrant hiring. The LIP should consider where such a service could be housed, how it should be structured and managed, and by whom.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – KII Backgrounder and Questions



#### *Langley Settlement Strategic Plan – Employer Research*

##### **What is the Langley Local Immigration Partnership?**

The Langley Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a federally funded community planning table that includes local government, settlement and community agencies, education providers, **local businesses**, and others.

##### **Why is the Langley LIP conducting this research?**

Immigrant employment barriers, issues and challenges have been the focus of countless studies. Most reports have viewed these challenges through the eyes of immigrants and immigrant serving organizations. Few, however, have applied a business or employer lens to the issues.

Research conducted during this employer-focused phase of the project will play a vital role in determining the challenges faced by Greater Langley businesses in attraction, recruitment, onboarding, and retention of immigrant talent.

Findings will aid the development of a comprehensive Langley Settlement Strategic Plan that identifies barriers and challenges and recommends approaches, tactics, and strategies to address and overcome these challenges.

The principal questions that drive this research are:

- 1. What are the challenges faced by Greater Langley employers in attracting, recruiting, onboarding, and retaining immigrant workers?*
- 2. What are approaches, tactics, and strategies to address and overcome these challenges?*

##### **How can you help?**

The Langley LIP has contracted PEERs Inc., an employment and education consulting firm to conduct interviews with select employers. You have been identified as someone with experience and insights valuable to this research.

##### **Questions?**

Contact Trevor Van Eerden at 604.765.4621 [trevor.vaneerden@peersonline.ca](mailto:trevor.vaneerden@peersonline.ca) or Dan Wood at 250.882.0203 [dan@stonecoast.ca](mailto:dan@stonecoast.ca).



## Langley Local Immigration Partnership – Questionnaire

Please complete and return by email to [dan@stonecoast.ca](mailto:dan@stonecoast.ca)

### 1. Organizational profile

Name:

Position:

Organization Name:

Location(s) or just head office or primary location:

Number of Employees:

Number of Years in Business:

Sector Category, (e.g., Health Tech, Clean Tech, Agriculture, Advanced Manufacturing, Creative, Retail, Hospitality, etc.):

### 2. To what extent does your organization actively seek out immigrant talent to fill vacancies?

### 3. To what extent do you think being in Greater Langley is helpful (or not) for attracting and retaining immigrant talent?

a) What are Greater Langley's attractive (and unattractive) attributes in this context?

### 4. What specific tools or approaches does your organization use to access immigrant talent?

### 5. Please offer your perspective on related factors (other than workforce) impacting hiring of immigrant talent.

a) What other factors or trends (e.g., demographics, markets, rents, etc.) are impacting hiring of immigrant talent?

b) To what extent are availability of affordable housing and accessible transportation affecting your ability to attract/recruit and retain immigrant talent?

### 6. What sources of labour does your organization/industry rely on for recruiting immigrant talent (e.g., general population, interprovincial and international migrants, other companies, other industries, etc.)?

### 7. What has been your experience (if any) with immigrant employment services and service providers in Greater Langley?

### 8. Does your organization/industry currently face labour or skills shortages or hard-to-fill vacancies? If so, which occupations are primarily impacted and to what extent? What do you think is causing this?

9. Does your organization/industry have difficulty attracting immigrant workers with the right skills and qualifications needed to do the job? If so, which occupations and why?
10. Does your organization/industry have difficulty retaining immigrant workers? If so, in which occupations and why?
11. What specific strategies, actions or tactics would be most helpful for your business to attract, recruit and retain immigrant talent?
12. Please identify any best or promising practices you are aware of to attract, recruit, and retain immigrant talent.
13. What actions by governments and others does your organization believe are needed to help address 1) labour shortages; 2) skills shortages; 3) opportunities to attract, recruit, hire and retain immigrant workers?
14. What other comments or questions do you have about this topic that you would you like to share?

## Appendix B – Detailed Survey Responses

Detailed responses to each of the 20 survey questions are captured below.

Q1 - Is your organization or part of it located in Greater Langley?

81% yes                      18% no

Q2 - In which centre(s) is your organization located? (Select all that apply)

Top three are Aldergrove, Douglas, and Willoughby

Q3 - Please indicate whether your establishment in Greater Langley is the organization's head office, or a branch of an enterprise located outside of Greater Langley.

Head office 67.5%                      Branch 32.5%

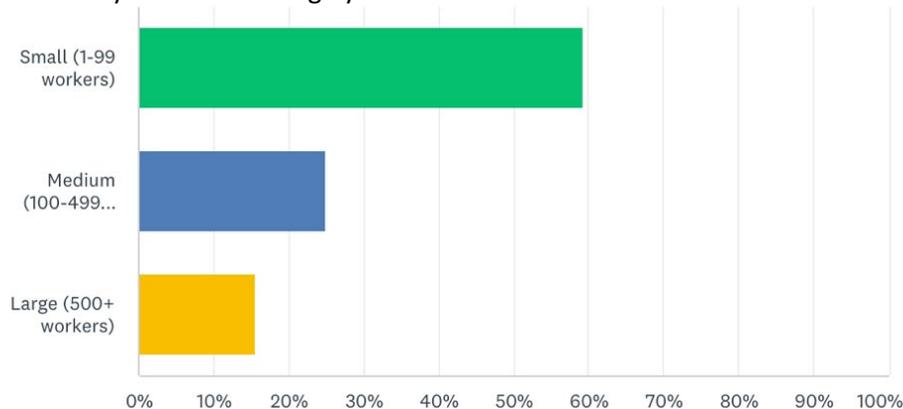
Q4 - Are there any other branch offices/operations of the enterprise located in Greater Langley? If yes, please indicate how many.

66% Single location only

Q5 - What is your primary business? (Select one only) If you are not certain, choose 'Other'.

Manufacturing, healthcare, and education were top three, with non-profits and community service agencies also high on the list.

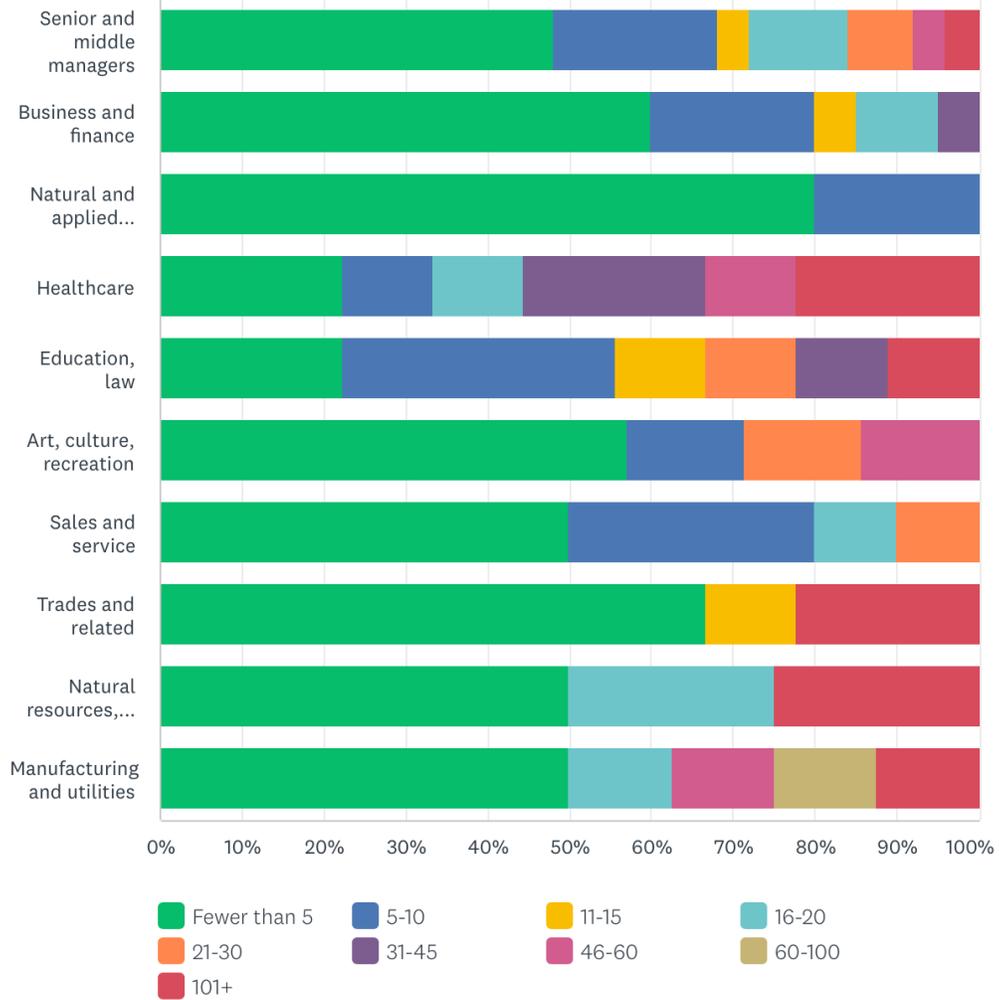
Q6 – What is the Size of your current Langley area workforce?



Q7 - Please indicate the following:

1. The current number of workers (full-time + part-time) within your establishment in ten occupational categories.

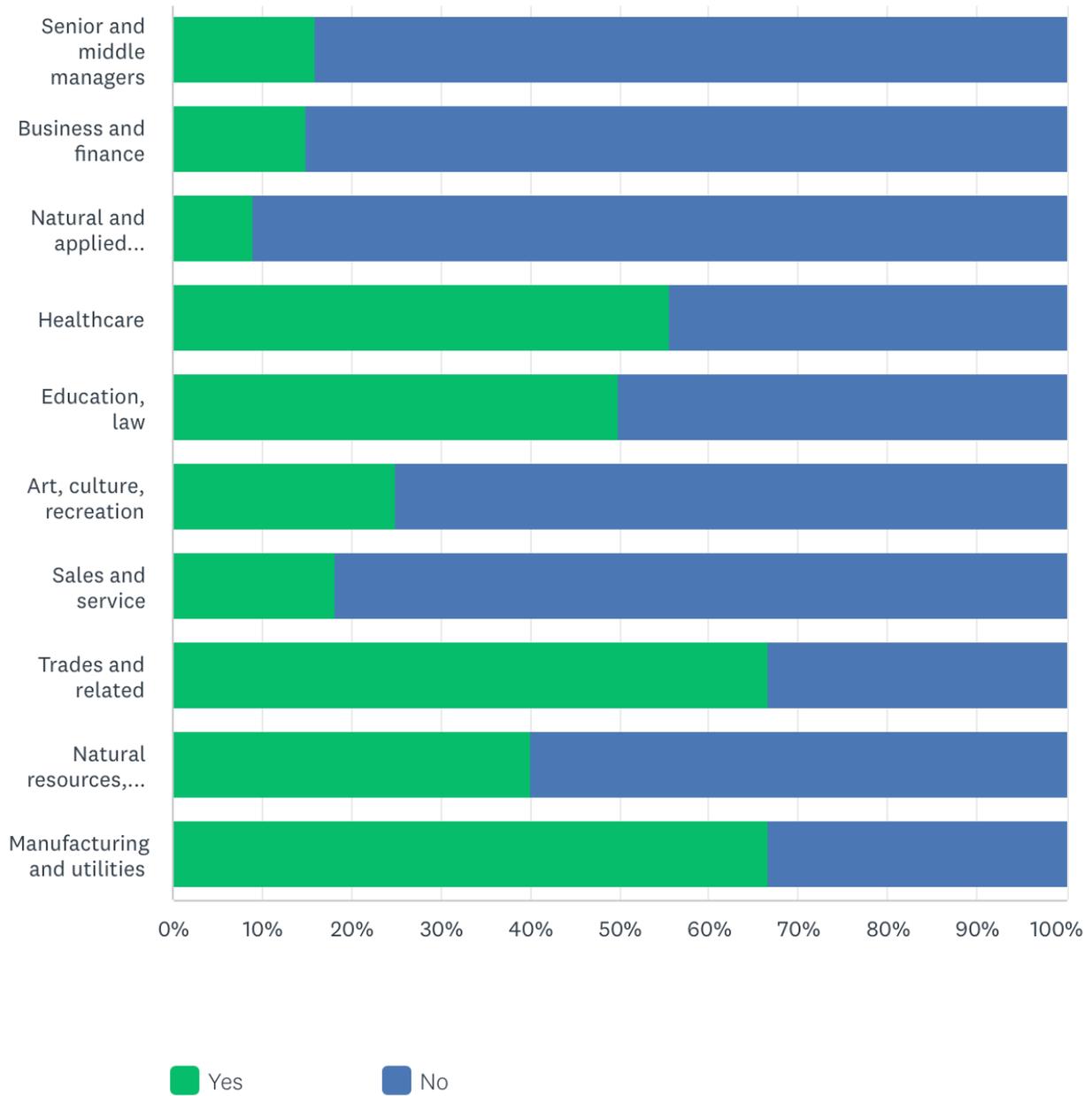
Current Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Employees



2. For each job category, indicate whether you have a current hard-to-fill vacancy or not.

Trades and transportation, manufacturing, and health related occupations were highlighted as having current hard-to-fill vacancies

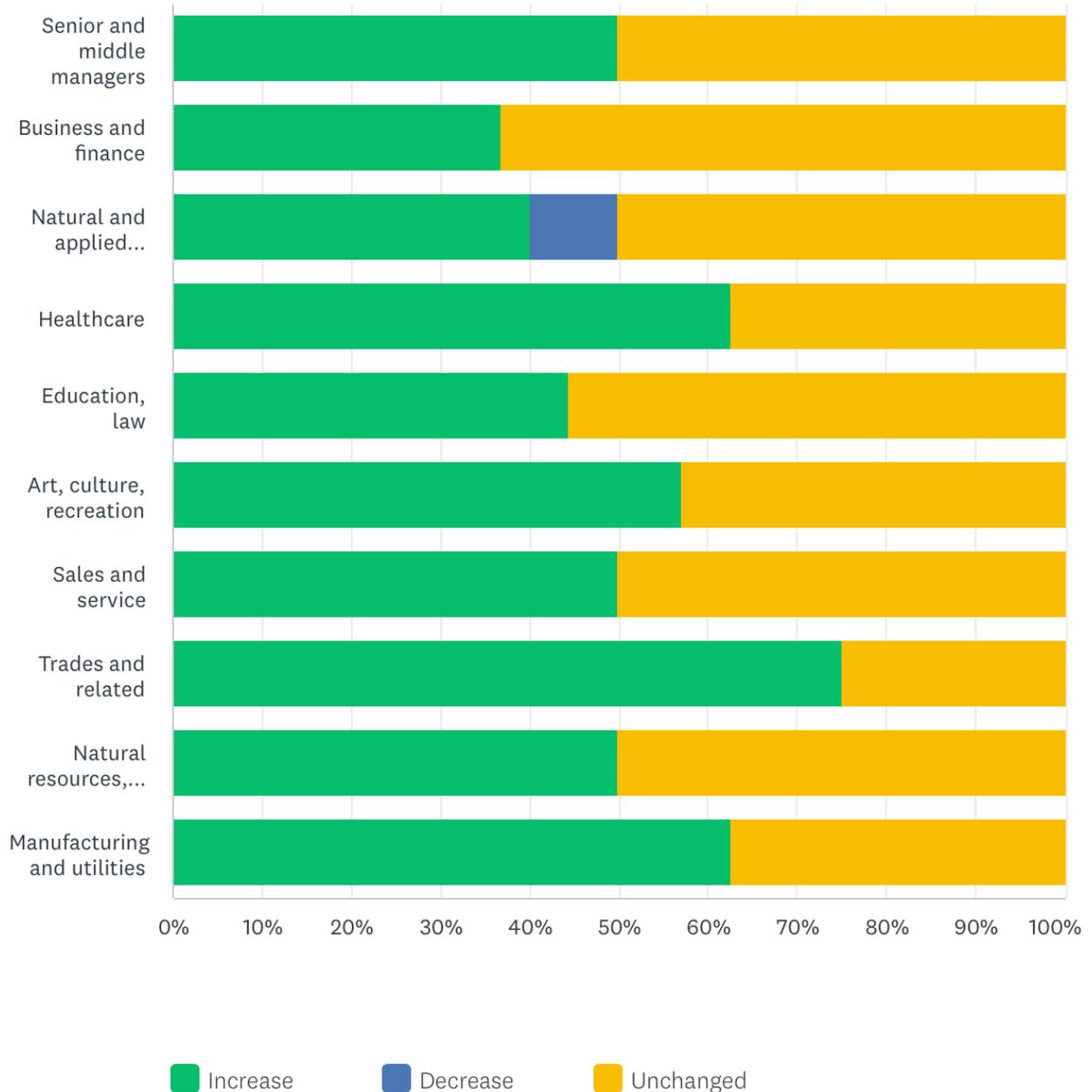
Do you have a current hard-to-fill vacancy?



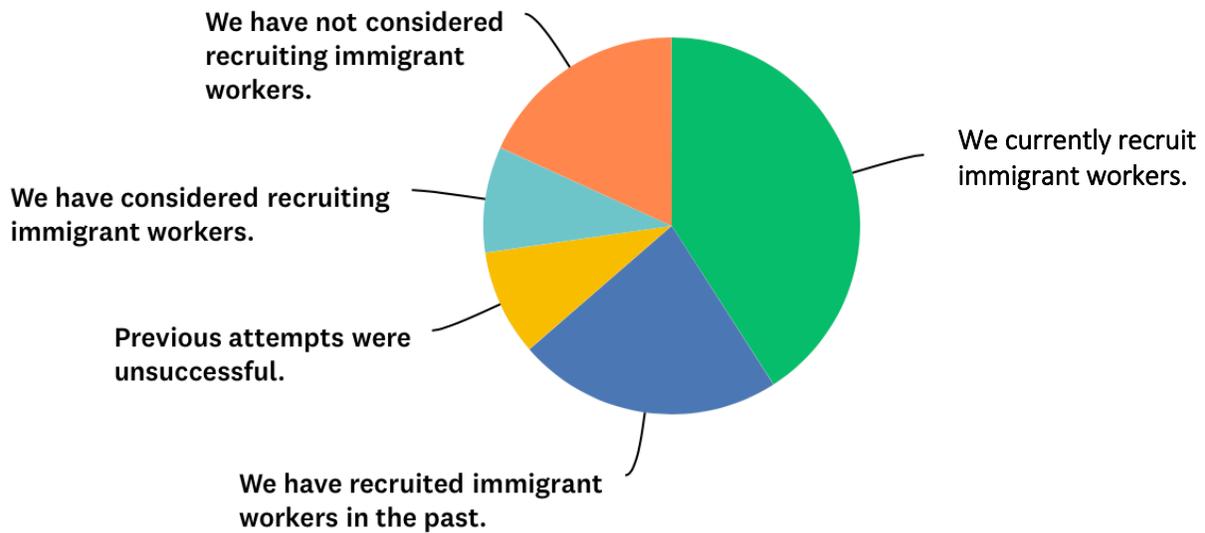
- For each job category, indicate whether you expect the number of employees to increase, decrease, or stay the same over the next 5 years.

Trades and transportation, manufacturing and health related occupations also rose to the top of the occupations for which demand is expected to increase. Only natural and applied science occupations were projected to decrease. Education, business, and finance were expected to remain constant.

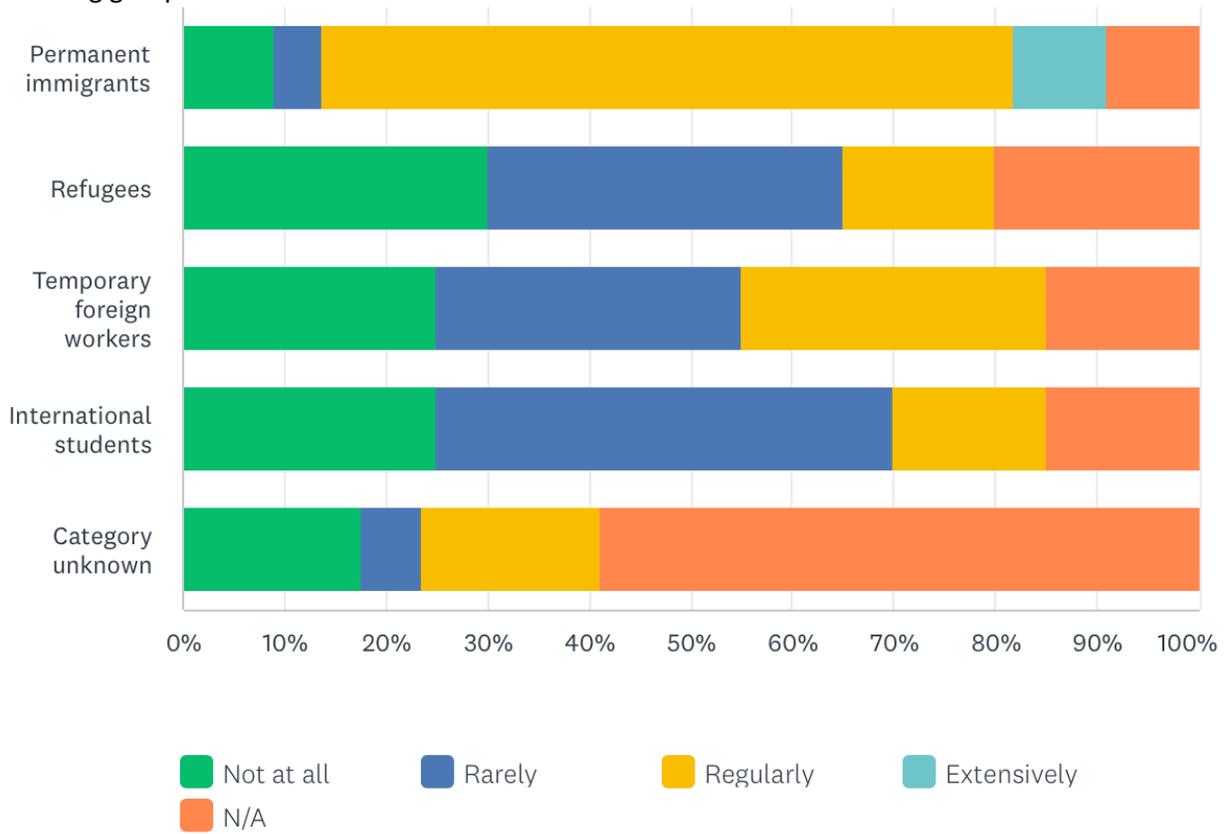
Do you expect the # of employees to increase, decrease, or stay the same in 5 years?



Q8 - Has your organization recruited immigrant workers as part of your workforce strategy?

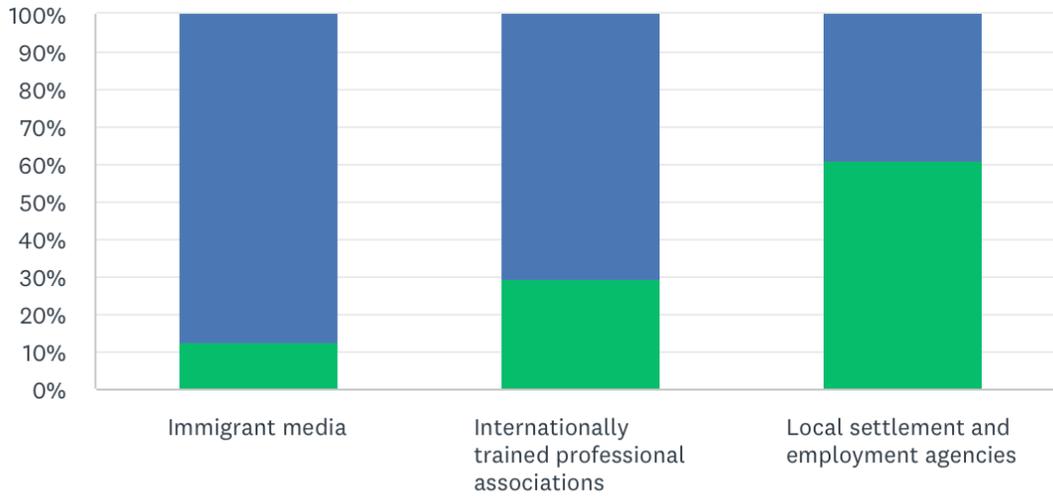


Q9 - Please indicate the extent to which your organization recruits and employs workers from the following groups.



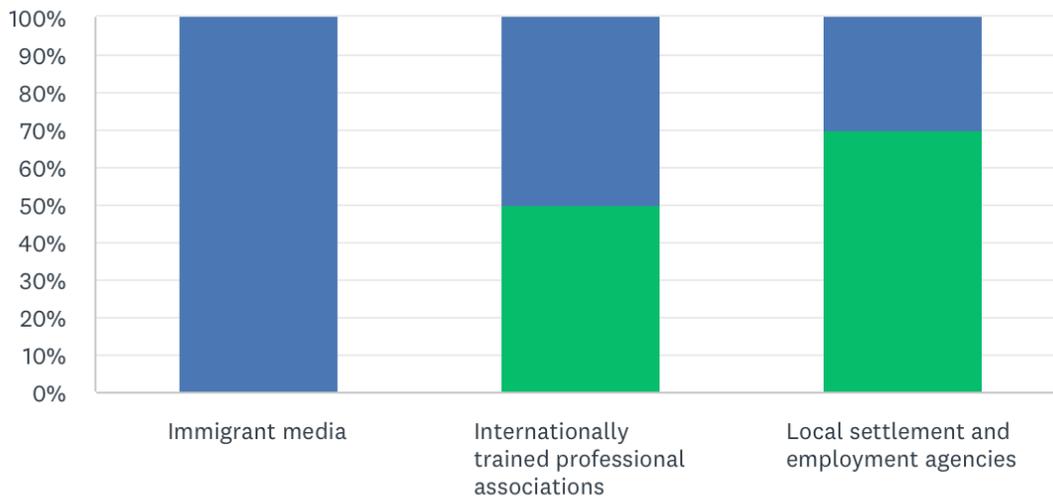
Q10 - Please indicate whether you have used the following methods of advertising when posting opportunities for immigrant workers and whether you found them to be effective.

Have you used this method?



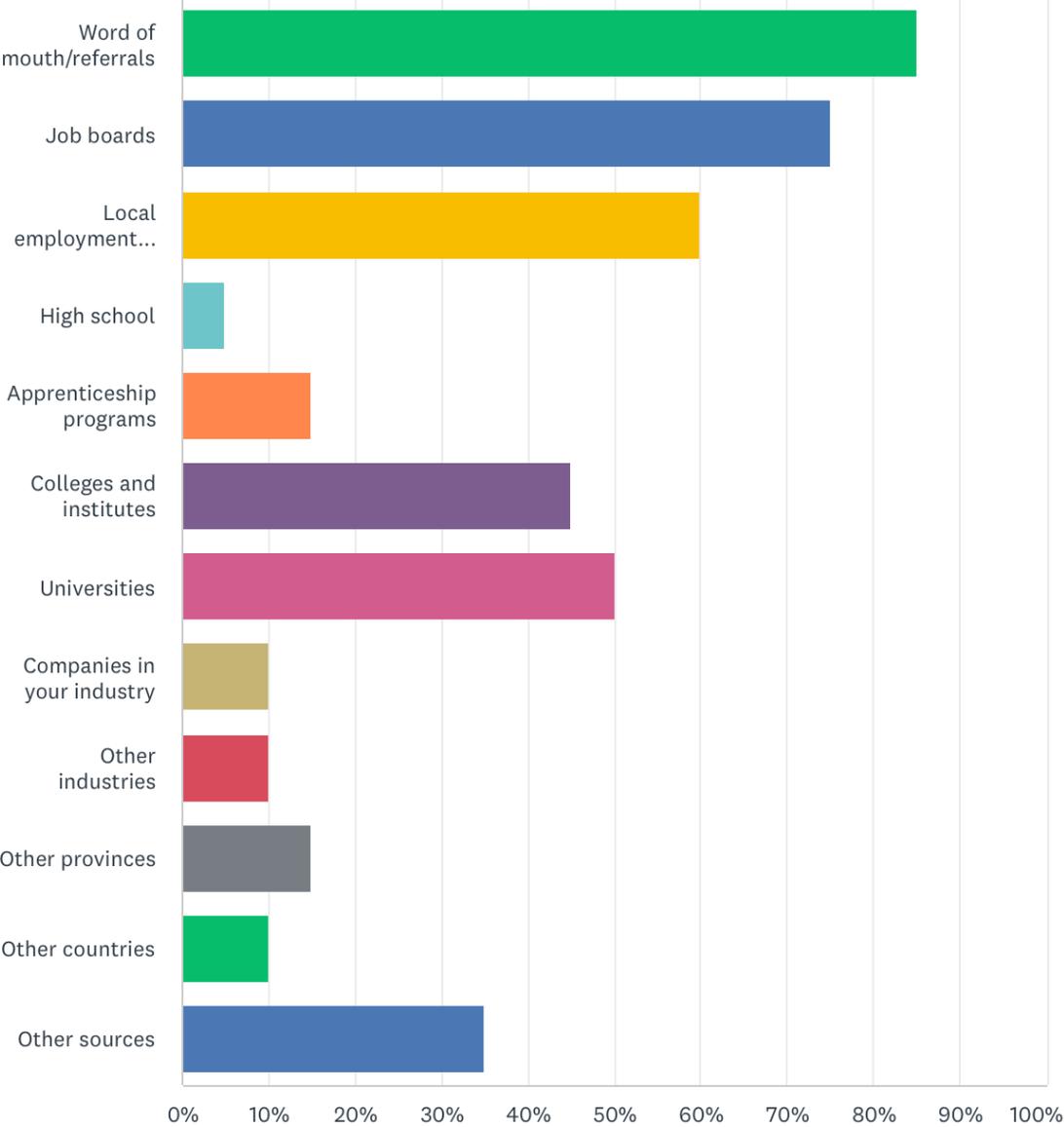
Yes No

If you have used this method, have you found it to be effective?

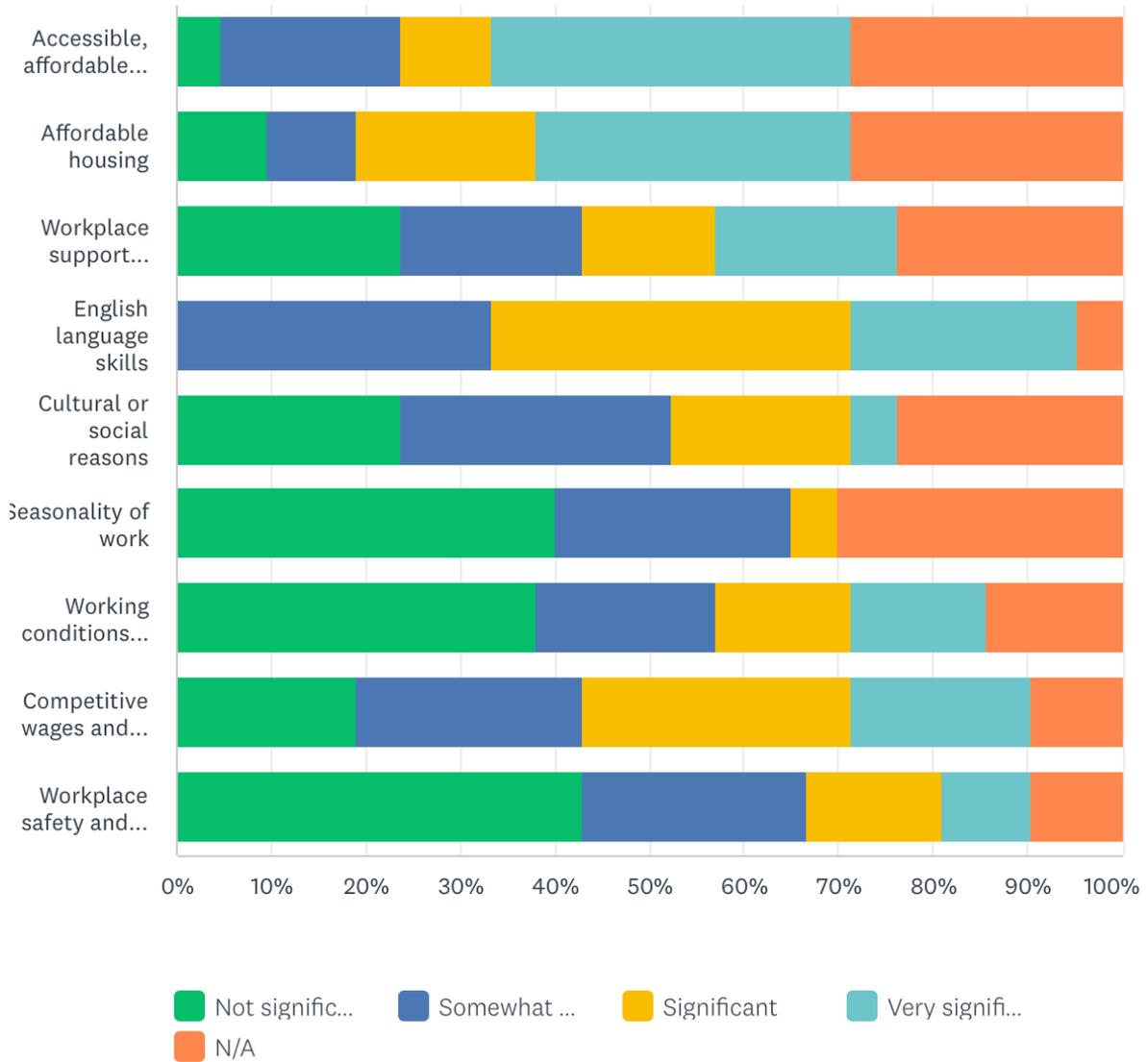


Yes No

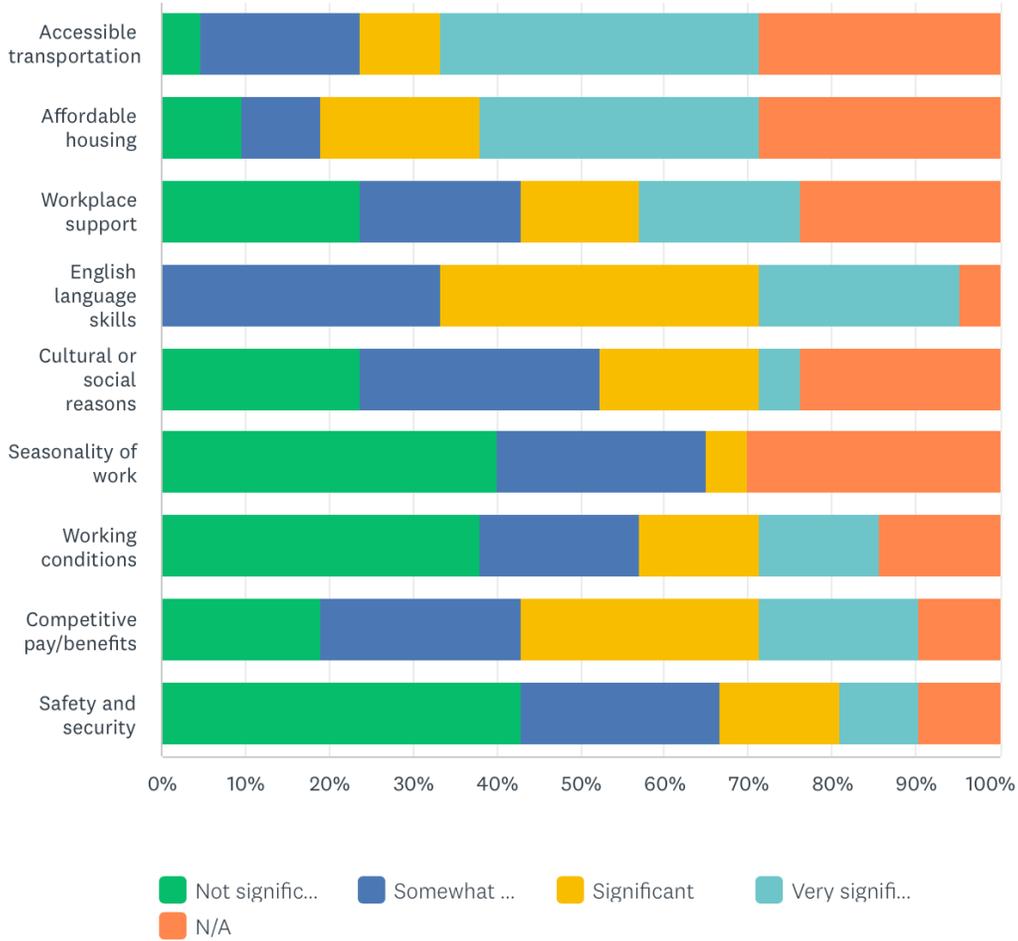
Q11 - When recruiting immigrant talent, indicate which sources your organization uses. Please check all that apply.



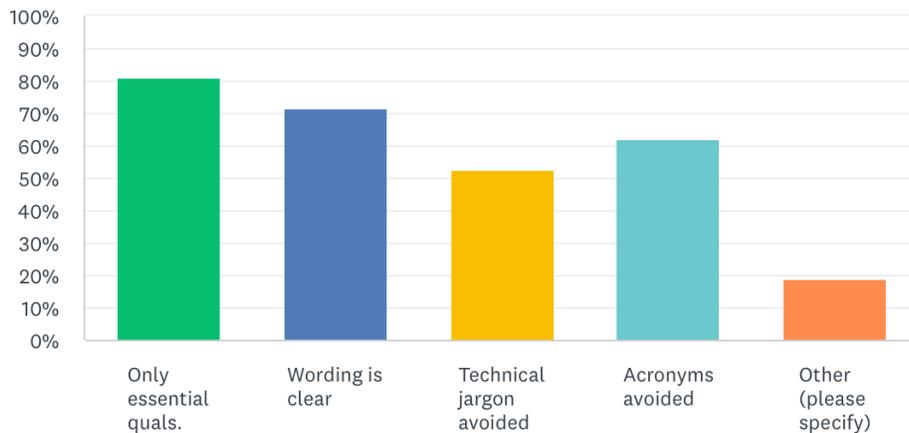
Q12 - How significant are the following challenges in attracting and recruiting immigrant workers for your organization?



Q13 - How significant are the following challenges in retaining immigrant workers for your organization?



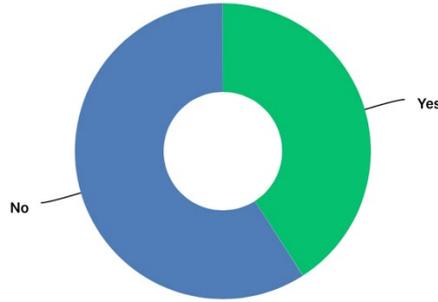
Q14 – When preparing job postings, which of the following do you consider? (Check all that apply)



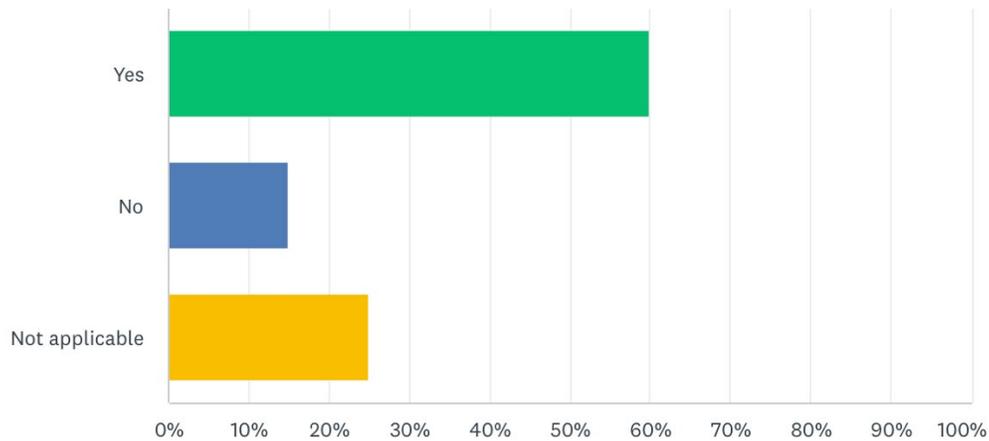
Comments include:

- We don't always achieve perfection in these areas, but we do make an effort.
- Must comply with applicable collective agreements.
- We just need people who can work in our tough work environment.

Q15 - Have you used services from any immigrant employment service providers in Greater Langley?



Q16 - Overall, are you satisfied with immigrant settlement or employment service providers in Greater Langley?



Q17 - Please describe any innovative strategies your company has used to attract and recruit immigrant talent.

- Local postings on different boards such as building complexes, etc.
- We reach out to applicants outside the country to offer employment.
- Extensive employee involvement in community networking from frontline to management.
- We are in the process of distributing flyers in a few foreign languages most spoken in the plants.
- Word of mouth through our diverse employee population has provided immigrant talent.
- We are going to try and list NOC codes in jobs.
- Our field welcomes everyone to apply, however basic English comprehension is required for safety and teaching.
- Offering referral bonuses to existing employees Assist with upgrade of technology/skills for jobs.

Q18 - What other services, programs or resources could be brought to or used in Greater Langley to assist employers to attract and recruit immigrant workers? Please list.

- Trades based immigration programs.
- Working with ITABC on special Permanent Resident status tracks for trades workers.
- Pertaining to libraries, anything that raises general awareness of the range of jobs available and the education/skills/experience required for the various positions.
- Transportation improvements.
- Training in different languages.
- Assistance with obtaining driver's licenses.
- Better public transit at all hours as we operate many of our services 24/7.
- Connect with employers for job fairs / interviews / info sessions.
- English comprehension classes driven by the need to understand safety procedures.

Q19 - Please provide any additional comments about barriers, challenges or strategies for attraction, recruitment, hiring and retention of immigrant talent.

- English is a critical requirement for home-based trades, specifically related to communication about issues, solutions, and pricing.
- So far, we have only hired two temporary foreign workers and it worked out very well but the personal challenges for them to apply for permanent residency is beyond unreasonable.
- If we are going to have a temporary foreign worker program, we should also be able to approve a permanent residency track at the same time.
- Individuals might face a whole range of barriers in a general way, but specific to library jobs, most relevant are specific educational requirements and English language skills (although other language skills are highly valued).
- Jobs requiring 'local experience' are challenging for many immigrants.
- Language barriers can often present significant challenges.
- The main barrier is for safety and the ability to read and understand English.
- The work environment is cold, noisy, wet, and requires working with meat.
- Use of personal vehicle - employees must have a Class 7 driver's licence and the ability to obtain a Class 5 within a month. Some of our services require a Class 4 commercial vehicle license.
- Main challenge is lack of accessible public transportation in Langley.
- Provincial requirements for working in the field i.e., the time it takes to evaluate training that was completed in their home country or previous province.

Q20 - Thank you for your participation! If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview to explore this topic further, please provide your contact info.

Fourteen individuals indicated interest in a follow-up conversation. The project team reached out to all who responded, inviting them to participate in a Key Informant Interview. Six agreed and were interviewed.