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A Window of Opportunity

The case for Internationally Trained Professionals and Workforce Development in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin



Workforce Planning Board
of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin



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in the regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin

Key Findings

Over the past two years, the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington and Dufferin has observed significant shifts to our local labour markets as it pertains to skills and workforce demands across industries. The COVID-19 pandemic changed our understanding of work including how talent is accessed and sourced. Through various projects at the Planning Board, we continue to examine and support our local partners and industries plan how best to train, recruit and develop their workforce for today and for the future. This project is just one piece in the many initiatives which sets out to provide insights and recommendations as it relates to local labour market changes.

This research report in particular, explores Internationally Trained Professionals as they pertain to our local labour markets in Waterloo Region, Wellington County and Dufferin County. Specifically, this project provides a review of the changing nature of the local labour markets and what this means for skilled immigrants and the economic challenges and opportunities which lie ahead for our communities. This project aims to provide research and analysis to help local industries, community partners and policy makers make better informed decisions on how best to support and integrate Internationally Trained Professionals who are identified as a key talent pool for employers. Based on this study and the research outcomes, five key topics and findings are presented and discussed. They include:

- 1.** Economic class immigrants continue to be the largest class of immigration to Canada where their skills and education are a driver for their demand.
- 2.** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the skills and education of economic class immigrants coming to Canada did not sync effectively with the labour market where demand for general labor roles outweighed demand for skilled talent. Therefore, the skills and education of many immigrants remained underutilized.
- 3.** Increasingly, employers are facing difficulties finding candidates for occupations which require higher skill levels and training such as managerial, administrative and technical roles.
- 4.** COVID-19 has shifted the local labour market in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin where we find an increase in the number of jobs which require specialized skills and education and a decrease in general labour roles. This has presented a *Window of Opportunity* that our communities must take advantage of.
- 5.** As NOC A and NOC B skill levels become more in-demand, the findings suggest that a significant alignment is taking place between in demand skills and the NOC levels highlighted and required by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's NOC classification system. Therefore, an important opportunity exists for internationally trained professionals who have arrived with NOC A and NOC B level skills, to gain employment in their fields based on the changing nature of the labour market.

Introduction

This research examines the experience as well as the labour market integration of economic immigrants within the Region of Waterloo, Wellington County and Dufferin County to better understand workforce opportunities and to devise solutions. With Canada's increasing dependence on steady streams of immigration for its economic success and post-COVID-19 growth, this research sets out to answer the key questions:

- 1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic effected the employment opportunities of internationally trained immigrants?**
- 2. What are some of the emerging labour market trends for the post-COVID-19 economy which will impact the employment prospects for skilled immigrants?**





The successful integration of internationally trained professionals is key to Canada's immigration strategy and remains a cornerstone in the country's economic wellbeing. Among the importance of supporting internationally trained professionals, there is also a significant "global competition for talent and people pushing more and more countries and communities to develop international strategies to attract and retain" a skilled immigrant population.¹ As such, the successful integration of immigrants, as well as labour market opportunities, will be a determinant as to the quality of immigrants Canada is able to attract against global flows of migration.

It is imperative that governments, service providers and training centers be able to determine the nexus between immigration and the labour market given the role of immigration in Canada's economic wellbeing. The regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin continue to be important centres for immigrants. With these regions historically lower unemployment rates, proximity to larger cities and range of services, newcomers are arriving to these metropolitan areas in relatively large numbers both as first-stop arrivals as well as secondary migrations from other Canadian communities.

This report provides a study of economic class immigrants, specifically internationally trained professionals and those that have come through the Federal Skilled Worker (FSW) Program, to better understand their relationship to the labour market. This in turn will provide opportunities for supporting their integration and long-term economic success. This project undertakes a systematic review of the local labour markets by utilizing economic and labour force data as well as having conducted interviews with recent internationally trained immigrants who have settled in the region's of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin.

Labour Market Challenges and Shifts

The Canadian economy depends on immigrants for economic growth as immigrants remain a critical source of talent and labour. In 2021, 401,000 new permanent residents were accepted in Canada which was the highest residency ever given in a single year since the previous record set in 1913.² In Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin, immigrants make-up an important source for the local labour force and provide needed talent for the region's diverse industries. During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant slowdown in the number of newcomers coming into these regions.

Prior to COVID-19, the labour market was such that demand for workers was still heavily centered around general labour roles within manufacturing, construction and the accommodation and food services. Therefore, there has been a policy disconnect between the type of immigrants Canada is bringing – which is mainly skilled and foreign educated via the economic class stream – and the labour market needs. The following statement summarizes this policy disconnect,

Every year, hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many of them highly skilled, choose to make Canada their home. Far too often, however, skilled newcomers struggle to find work in their professions. They face significant financial and regulatory barriers that prevent them from fully integrating into the Canadian labour market and the sectors where their skills, training and experience are desperately needed.³

A recent survey of immigrants in Waterloo Region found that immigrants coming into the region were highly educated, with 71 percent of respondents stating that they held a Bachelor's degree or above, compared to only 23 percent of the general population.⁴ The survey also found that a significant proportion of immigrants felt that their skills were underutilized in their current jobs. For that reason, there has been a gap between the skills immigrants are coming to Canada with and industry demands for more labour intense roles. This demand still exists in various industries, but based on a review of recent labour market data, this demand is less pronounced than before for the regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin as the labour market shifts to new skills needs.

Therefore, a *window of opportunity* of sorts has emerged as it relates to the local labour markets. With respect to the economic class of immigrants or those considered to be internationally trained professionals, we see a significant shift in jobs and industries in demand which better aligns the skills and work experience of economic immigrants with current labour market demands. Examining the current data in-light of the labour market changes brought forth by COVID-19, local industries demand for skilled professionals has shown to be growing at a significant pace which now better matches skilled immigrants and the labour market. Here in lies the *window of opportunity* for the region, where the greater demand for skilled workers is increasing and better aligning with the skill sets of economic class immigrants being brought into the county.

A *window of opportunity* or policy window can be described as a moment or scenario in which a situation presents itself with the right environment to take an alternative course and to develop new policy to achieve a better outcome. Carleton University public policy professor, Leslie Pal, defines a policy window as, “Unpredictable openings in the policy process that create the possibility for influence over the direction and outcome of that process,” adding, “much depends on political jockeying, policy entrepreneurs, and combinations of complex and unpredictable forces” which end up shaping the results.⁵ In this case, the unpredictable force which has come to shape and change the labour market has been COVID-19 and its effects on labour supplies and labour demands. The result or outcome of these changes is that it has created a *window of opportunity* for skilled immigrants to be better integrated into the local labour market as we find more demand for their skills and expertise. The COVID-19 pandemic has essentially accelerated the need for skilled professionals – more so than in the past.

This report will focus on the economic class of immigrants given that they continue to be the largest class of immigrants coming into Canada. As such, continued research is needed on this immigration class to better understand and support this group given the economic importance placed on them. For this report, baseline data on immigration and industry is provided so that local communities have more data on the current economic and labour market conditions of their region. In addition, this information is combined with COVID-19 economic shifts to help local municipalities and industries better prepare strategies around skilled immigrants.

As the economy continues to stabilize, many industries are beginning to hire. Determining growth industries and where skills can be transferred and better utilized will be vital for the post-COVID-19 economy. As Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada consults with local communities and stakeholders to consider future immigration strategies, our region would be best served and prepared by having further insights to help determine next steps and priority areas. This will help ensure local labour markets are able to attract the workforce they need for the job demands they have.

Canada is not the sole country focused on attracting internationally trained immigrants. Recently, the German Government announced that they too want bring in over 400,000 skilled immigrants in the coming years due to their aging population and their economy's demand for skilled workers.⁶ This increased international competition for skilled immigrants is expected to only grow in the years ahead. Therefore, countries most effective in their settlement and integration process will be best at attracting and retaining global talent.

The table below provides a breakdown of Canada's immigration classes and targets up to 2023

Immigration Class	2021	2022	2023
Economic	232,500	241,500	249,500
Family	103,500	103,500	104,500
Refugee	59,500	60,500	61,000
Humanitarian	5,500	5,500	6,000
Total	401,000	411,000	421,000

Source: Canada Visa, July 12, 2021



Two important opportunities emerge regarding the issue of economic class immigrants and Canada’s future. First, Canada is amid a largescale skills shortage ranging from health care professionals to technology-based occupations. Recent immigrants face unemployment which is double that of established immigrants and those born in Canada. What this essentially means is that, although more educated and skilled immigrants are coming into Canada, they are not being successfully employed nor are their skills being effectively utilized. A 2022 Conference Board of Canada report states that vacancies related to skills shortages, “currently cost the Canadian economy \$1 billion or more annually in unrealized value owing to unfilled job vacancies.” The chart below provides key points for consideration on how immigrants are engaging in the labour markets in comparison to their workforce rate.

Immigrants account for 23.8 per cent of the Canadian workforce but are overrepresented in major essential industries, demonstrating an underutilization of immigrant skills

Industry Where Immigrants are Over-represented	Percentage of the Workforce that are Immigrants
Transit and passenger transportation	39.7
Food manufacturing	34.85
Administrative and support services	29.84
Truck transportation	29.71
Nursing and residential care facilities	29.21
Food services and restaurants	27.4

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, October 29, 2021

Secondly, with the Government of Canada’s continued focus on higher numbers of internationally trained professionals, it is important to examine growth industries and in-demand jobs considering the changes brought forth due to COVID-19. By looking at current labour market data and beginning the process of trend analysis, there is a real opportunity to align internationally trained immigrants with in-demand skills and occupations. A recent Canadian-wide study was conducted by Robert Half which examined the changing trends and demands for skilled talent. The chart below provides an overview of the report as it relates to in-demand skills and occupations which will come to shape the post-COVID-19 economy.

In-demand Occupations and Industries	Finance and Accounting Occupations	Administrative Occupations	Management Occupations	Sales and Service Occupations	Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations	Education, Law and Social, Community and Government Services Occupations
Positions in Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial auditors/ accountants Payroll clerks/ specialists Accounts receivable/ payable specialists Controllers Credit/ collections clerks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin/ Office assistants Receptionists Data entry specialists Project assistants/ coordinators Property management assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising managers Marketing managers Social media managers Digital marketing specialist/ managers UI and UX designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call centre representatives Customer service specialists Contract managers Senior call centre specialists Senior customer service specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer programmers Network administrators Information systems analysts Web designers/ developers Data architects Business intelligence analysts Mobile applications developers DevOps engineers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law clerks Compliance analysts Data privacy specialists Legal secretaries Litigation support
Companies Planning to Hire in 2022	49%	51%	57%	51%	53%	58%
Companies Planning to Increase their Contract Employees in 2022	51%	50%	66%	50%	59%	51%
Companies Having Challenges Finding Skilled Professionals in their Industry	96%	85%	98%	85%	94%	99%
Companies Concerned about Retention	84%	73%	89%	73%	88%	94%

Source: Robert Half, The Demand for Skilled Talent: 2022 Hiring and Employment Trends Report, 2022

COVID-19 and its Labour Market Impacts on Immigration and Employment

This section will focus on providing insights with respect to the changed nature of the labour markets as it relates to the immigrant workforce. The first point will be to describe and highlight the key effects that COVID-19 has had on immigrants and their relations to the labour market. The second point will discuss the rate of job loss among immigrants vs. Canadian-born peers to better demonstrate the change in employment for immigrants in today's labour market.

With the arrival of COVID-19, Canada's workforce in general faced difficult challenges. These challenges were compounded for recent immigrants as finding employment proved more difficult. Critical settlement processes such as childcare, healthcare and housing became more strained and uncertain especially in the early months of the pandemic. This affected many industries access to immigrant talent as was witnessed with the shortages in agricultural workers due to border closures as well as healthcare workers leaving their industry because of childcare needs and health concerns.

With new labour market information emerging, and economic trends taking shape, recent findings suggest that workers most vulnerable to changes in the economy pre-COVID-19 have been the most impacted in the current-COVID-19 economy as well. Immigrants with little-to-no Canadian work experience and with lower language abilities are categorized as a vulnerable workforce group.

With more data and research available, the pandemic's effects on the economy and labour markets can be better understood. As noted by Statistics Canada in a 2020 report,

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a growing need for additional information on the population groups that are more likely to be negatively affected by the pandemic in Canada, such as immigrants and population groups designated as visible minorities. One of the issues immigrants and visible minority groups have been facing since the start of the pandemic is that many of them are essential workers, which puts them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.⁸

Effects of COVID-19 on the Immigrant Workforce

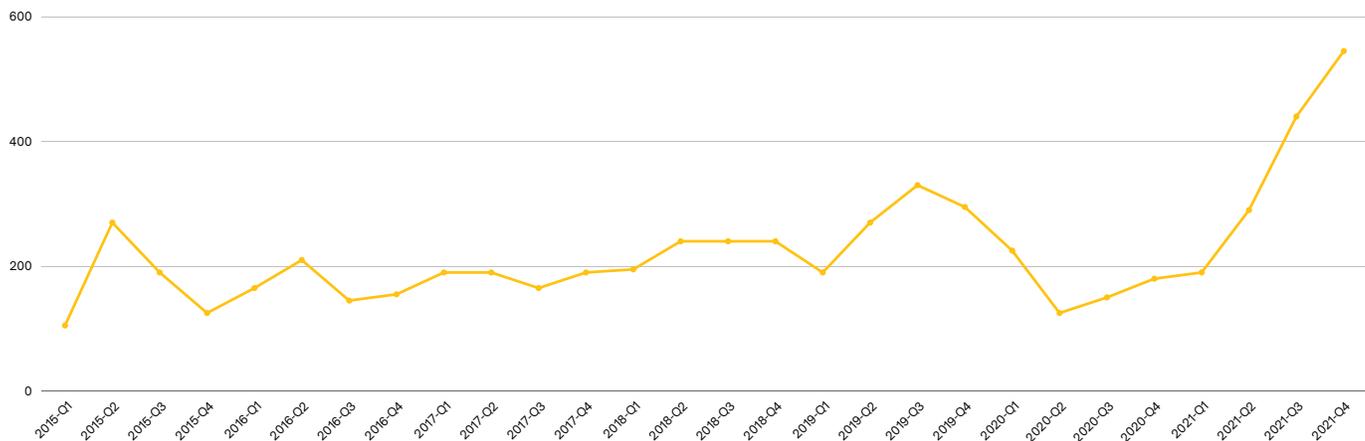
The COVID-19 pandemic's resulting lockdowns, business closures and supply chain disruptions caused significant challenges for both production and service delivery. Although workforces across sectors faced differing challenges, immigrants that arrived during the pandemic faced greater challenges given the economic uncertainty and lack of available services. This was also the case with recent immigrants who were more likely to be unemployed in the early stages of the pandemic. It is said that immigrants who arrived just prior to the pandemic would hold less seniority than others and were also more likely to be working in lower-wage jobs which placed them in a more vulnerable position than their Canadian born peers.⁹

Government closure of Canada's border also forced significant slowdowns in immigration numbers. In 2020, individuals and families planning to immigrate to Canada were said to be reconsidering their plans and timelines due to the uncertainties resulting from COVID-19. In a 2020 survey conducted by World Education Services, 32 per cent of respondents stated that they were considering delaying their immigration to Canada, while 11 per cent stated that they were reconsidering their immigration plans and were thinking about immigrating to another country all together.¹⁰

It is reported that by 2031, nearly 80 per cent of Canada's labour force growth will come from immigration even though immigrants were found to have lost employment at almost twice the rate of their Canadian-born peers during the pandemic.¹¹ A recent RBC Economics report states that, "even as the balance of immigrants has shifted towards those with more skills and education, immigrants aren't being fully rewarded by the labour market for the attributes that got them accepted in the first place."¹²

This means that even with immigration continuing to be vital to Canada's labour force, Canada's economy has yet to fully invest in how best to support and integrate immigrants into the labour market by reducing their vulnerabilities to economic change and by adequately compensating them.

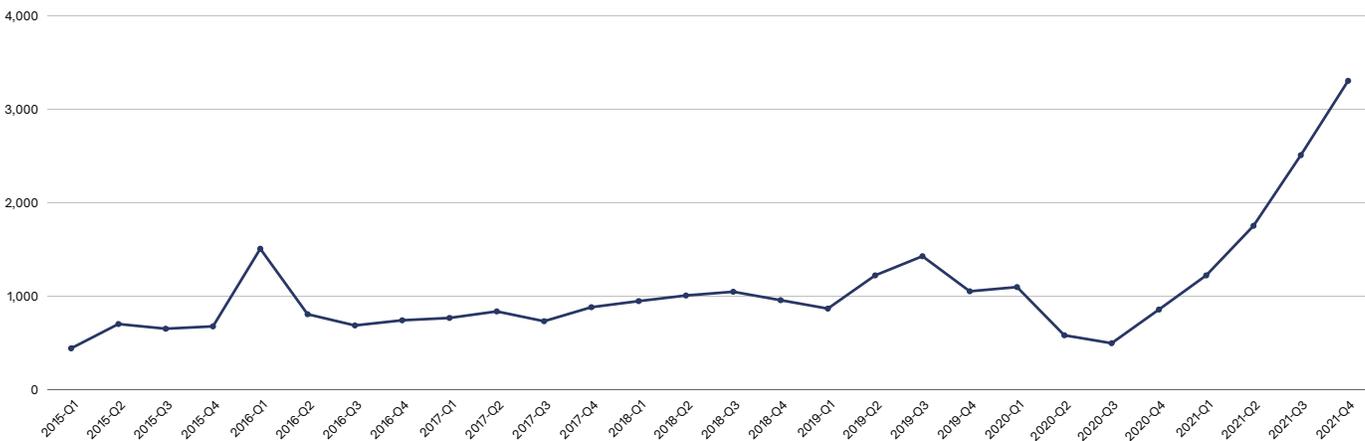
Waterloo Region Quarterly Permanent Resident Arrivals (2015 - 2021)



Source: Permanent Residents – Monthly IRCC Updates, 2021

This chart shows permanent resident arrivals to Waterloo Region between 2015 and 2021 based on quarterly intervals. Since 2015, new arrivals were steadily increasing with a significant drop in the 3rd quarter of 2019. We see a sharp increase in new arrivals after the re-opening of borders – signifying that Waterloo Region remains an attractive region for immigrants.

City of Guelph Quarterly Permanent Resident Arrivals (2015 - 2021)



Source: Permanent Residents – Monthly IRCC Updates, 2021

This chart shows permanent resident arrivals to the City of Guelph between 2015 and 2021 based on quarterly intervals. Since 2015, new arrivals were steadily increasing with a significant drop in the 3rd quarter of 2019. However, like Waterloo Region, the City of Guelph witnessed an increase in new arrivals in Q4 of 2020 after the re-opening of borders.

Comparing Permanent Resident Arrivals in Waterloo Region and the City of Guelph

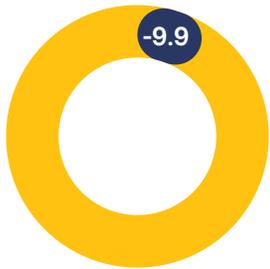
When comparing permanent resident arrivals to both Waterloo Region and the City of Guelph, we find relatively similar trends between 2015 to 2021 even though Waterloo Region welcomed a larger proportion of permanent residents which is consistent with Waterloo Region's larger population size. However, one notable difference between the two regions is the slightly sharper increase in the number of permanent residents arriving in Waterloo Region than to the City of Guelph after the re-opening of borders. This basically coincides with earlier data that Waterloo Region is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and therefore is attracting more people to its region.¹³ As a result, we find various demographic groups contributing to this trend, including permanent residents.

According to Statistics Canada, these figures are consistent with national trends which saw a decline in both permanent residents who have been in Canada for less than five years and for those permanent residents who have been in Canada for five-to-10 years. One interpretation for this decline is that a significant proportion of immigrants went back to their native countries when the pandemic started. The reasons for this range from not being able to re-enter Canada because of border closures and also due to loss of employment. Canadian researcher Robert Falconer has noted that, "It's actually not uncommon to have immigrants go back to their home country during the recessionary periods."¹⁴

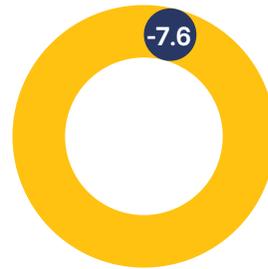


Rate of job loss among immigrants vs. Canadian-born peers

Canada



Percent change in employment for landed immigrants March to July



Percent change in employment for those born in Canada March to July

Geography	Canada				
Labour Force Characteristics	Employment				
Age Group	15 years and over				
Immigration Status	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Landed Immigrants	4779.9	4483.6	4219.0	4173.4	4306.4
Born in Canada	13,174.4	12,575.9	12,132.3	12,179.4	12,739.2

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0082-01 Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

Ontario



Percent change in employment for landed immigrants March to July



Percent change in employment for those born in Canada March to July

Geography Canada

Labour Force Characteristics Employment

Age Group 15 years and over

Immigration Status	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
Landed Immigrants	2401.1	2260.9	2114.8	2087.0	2133.5
Born in Canada	4664.7	4472.4	4297.0	4228.8	4443.0

Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0082-01 Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality

From March 2020 to July 2020, employment declined 9.9 percent (473,400) for landed immigrants and 7.6 percent (435,200) for those born in Canada (all figures unadjusted for seasonality). With the Canadian born population significantly larger than the population of landed immigrants, the employment decline was greater for landed immigrants both as a percentage and in actual number terms which demonstrates the severity of job losses for the immigrant population.

When looking at the figures for Ontario between the months of March 2020 to July 2020, we find a similar employment pattern with immigrants having been more affected than Canadian born workers. From March 2020 to July 2020, employment declined 11.1 percent (267,600) for landed immigrants in Ontario and 4.8 percent (221,700) for those born in Canada.

Prior to COVID-19, employment in Canada was in a steady growth which coincided with the growing economy. With this, Canada was welcoming on average 25,000 to 35,000 new immigrants each month.¹⁵ With immigration halting in the early 2020s, the Canadian government was quick to make sure that immigration targets and programs were able to get back to normal as soon as possible. In the first half of 2021, Canada had admitted nearly 184,000 permanent residents and was pursuing its most ambitious immigration target of roughly 410,000 newcomers for 2022 with the aim of supporting Canada's post-COVID economy.¹⁶

Reviewing the Data: Immigrants in Ontario and their Labour Force Characteristics

This section provides an overview and analysis of labour force characteristics of immigrants between 2016 and 2020 to help develop baseline data as it relates to immigrant unemployment and participation and employment rates. Labour Force Characteristics data specific to immigrants is not available at the census metropolitan area (CMA) level nor for immigration class. Rather, the data available is at the provincial level and for immigration status only. Nonetheless, important insights can be drawn by analyzing the labour force characteristics of immigrants at the provincial level based on immigrant status.

Ontario															
Immigrant Status	Unemployment Rate, 15 years and over					Participation Rate, 15 years and over					Employment Rate, 15 years and over				
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Landed Immigrants	6.9	6.3	6	5.8	10.2	60.9	61.2	61.1	62.2	61.3	56.7	57.3	57.5	58.6	55
Immigrants, landed 5 or less years earlier	11.5	10.1	9.9	9.3	13.7	61.1	62.7	65.8	65.4	69.5	54.1	56.4	59.3	59.3	59.9
Immigrants, landed more than 5 to 10 years earlier	9	7.2	6.8	7.5	13.2	68.6	69.4	70.1	72.4	69.2	62.5	64.4	65.3	67	60
Immigrants, landed more than 10 years earlier	5.9	5.5	5.2	4.9	9.1	59.6	59.7	59.1	60.1	58.9	56.1	56.4	56	57.2	53.5
Born in Canada	6.3	5.8	5.5	5.4	9.1	67.2	66.7	66.2	66.4	64.8	62.9	62.8	62.6	62.8	58.9

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0083-01 Labour force characteristics by immigrant status, annual

Landed Immigrants

- Landed immigrants, also known as permanent residents, saw their unemployment rates decrease between 2016 to 2019. In 2019, they had an unemployment rate of 5.8 percent.
- The unemployment rate for landed immigrants nearly doubles to 10.2 percent in 2020. This significant rise is associated to the lockdowns and business closures with industries that have higher concentration of newcomers, such as accommodation and food services and retail trade.
- The participation rate for landed immigrants between 2016 to 2020 has held steady. In 2016, it was at 60.9 percent and increased slightly to 61.3 percent by 2020. This means landed immigrants were still looking for work despite an increase in unemployment and in some industries, newcomers worked at a level consistent with the 2016 rate.
- Between 2016 and 2019, the employment rate for landed immigrants was steadily increasing which demonstrated their positive engagement with the labour market. However, with the arrival of COVID-19, the employment rate of landed immigrants decreased to pre-2016 levels.

Immigrants, Landed 5 or Less Years Earlier

- The unemployment rate was 11.5 percent in 2016 which was on a steady decrease until the arrival of COVID-19.
- The unemployment rate shifted from 9.3 percent in 2019 to 13.7 percent in 2020.
- The participation rate of this group increased between 2018 to 2020 where the number of immigrants working or looking for work went from 65.8 percent to 69.5 percent.
- The participation rate of this group might have increased as the economy tried to gain some balance from all the uncertainty. As international students and immigration more generally came to a halt in early 2020, this may have resulted in this group engaging and participating more in employment opportunities as some industries had higher demand for workers.
- This is also reflected in the group's employment rate which had a steady increase between 2016 to 2020. In fact, this group is the only group from the chart which had an increase in its employment rate from 2019 to 2020, an increase from 59.3 percent to 59.9 percent.
- If analyzed in isolation, immigrants who have landed five or less years would seem to have not been affected by COVID-19 as profoundly as the other groups in the chart. Even when compared to those born in Canada, this group had a 1 per cent higher employment rate in 2020.

Immigrants, Landed More than 10 Years Earlier

- Most in this group have become Canadian Citizens and have integrated socially and economically into the wider society. Their unemployment rate is the lowest of any immigrant group from the chart and matches closely with those born in Canada. Again, with the arrival of COVID-19, the unemployment rate for this group increased to 9.1 percent in 2020 which was the same rate as those born in Canada.
- This group's participation rate remains lower than the average, inclusive of those born in Canada, between the years of 2016 and 2020. This can mean many things, not least of which immigrants from this group have been in Canada for 10 years or longer and could very well be reaching retirement age.
- The employment rate for this group which is notably lower than all other groups presented and can be related to the fact that many immigrant women tend to leave the labour market to better balance home and family life.

The chart below demonstrates some of the labour force characteristics of specific visible minority groups across Canada in October of 2021. Not everyone in these groups are immigrants but this information could help provide some insight into where some immigrant groups are better connecting with the labour market.

Labour force characteristics for groups designated as visible minorities, October 2021

	Unemployment Rate (estimated)	Employment Rate (estimated)	Employment Rate (estimated)
South Asian	8.6%	70.9%	77.6%
Chinese	9.5%	65.0%	71.8%
Black	8.9%	69.0%	75.7%
Filipino	5.3%	80.2%	84.6%
Arab	12.8%	65.7%	75.3%
Latin American	5.8%	75.7%	80.4%
Southeast Asian	X	70.4%	72.3%
Total – Visible Minority	8.1%	79.9%	76.1%
Not Indigenous or a Visible Minority	5.0%	70.9%	74.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, October 2021.
X value indicates that unemployment data for this group was not available

Certain minority groups are better connecting to Canada’s labor market. Workers from Filipino and Latin American groups have lower unemployment rates that are close to full employment while also having the highest employment and participation rates of any group presented in the chart. Population groups identified as Chinese, Black and Arab, had higher unemployment rates combined with lower employment rates which identify these groups as ones that are struggling to gain employment. However, Black and Arab workers remain optimistic about employment given their higher participation rates which suggest that there are opportunities to improve their employment numbers within the labour market.

Summary

The economic effects from COVID-19 were more profound on immigrant populations who have been in Ontario for 10 years or less. However, the participation rate for this same group has been the highest among all other groups, including those born in Canada, which signifies that this group is engaging and seeking employment at higher rates than all other groups presented in the chart. Moreover, we find higher employment rates for those immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 to 10 years (60 percent) and for those immigrants who have been in Canada for 5 or less years (59.9 percent). Therefore, recent immigrants, and immigrants in general, have a positive effect on Canada's economy and help supply the labour market with critical talent and labour.



Baseline Regional Profiles: Demographic, Industry and Job Postings Data

This section reviews and develops further baseline data as it specifically relates to the regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin. To better understand the local labour market in relation to immigration, current statistical and qualitative data is examined and discussed. Provincial and national data is also presented to help make key comparisons and to develop necessary conclusions.

Demographic Baselines

Population Data: Waterloo Region, Wellington County and Dufferin County

Area	2018 Population	2020 Population	Change	Change %
Waterloo Region	579,197	605,232	26,035	4%
Wellington County	237,335	243,647	6,312	3%
Dufferin County	66,557	68,347	1,790	3%
Province	14,308,697	14,734,014	425,317	3%
Nation	37,065,178	38,005,238	940,060	3%

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

The demographic data indicates that the populations of Wellington County and Dufferin County increased in size by 3 percent each between the years of 2018 to 2020. This was consistent with the population increases for both Ontario and Canada. The Region of Waterloo, however, saw the largest population increase when compared to the three areas where it had a 4 per cent increase between 2018 and 2020. This population increase was greater than both the provincial and national rates. As net figures, the Region of Waterloo experienced a population increase of 26,035 people, Wellington County experienced a population increase of 6,312 people, and Dufferin County experienced a population increase 1,790 people.

In the Kitchener- Cambridge-Waterloo 2016 CMA data, 23 percent of the population identified as being an immigrant.

Number and distribution (in percentage) of the immigrant population and recent immigrants in census subdivisions, Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo, 2016

Geography	Total Population	Immigrant Population		Recent Immigrants (2011-2016)	
	Number	Number	%	Number	%
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	516,085	118,615	23.0%	13,975	2.7%
Kitchener	230,000	60,425	26.3%	7,910	3.4%
Waterloo	103,390	26,156	25.3%	3,840	3.7%
Cambridge	127,835	26,090	20.4%	1,900	1.5%
Woolwich	24,440	2,625	10.7%	200	0.8%
Wilmot	20,295	2,100	10.3%	105	0.5%
North Dumfries	10,120	1,215	12.0%	15	0.1%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Data products, 2016 Census.

- Between 2011 and 2016, 13,975 new immigrants settled in Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo. These immigrants represented 2.7 percent of the population.
- Between 2011 and 2016, 7,910 immigrants settled in Kitchener followed by 3,840 in Waterloo and 1,900 in Cambridge.

In the Guelph 2016 CMA data, 20.6 percent of the total population reported being an immigrant. This includes the areas for the City of Guelph, Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch Township.

Number and distribution (in percentage) of the immigrant population and recent immigrants in census subdivisions, Guelph, 2016

Geography	Total Population	Immigrant Population		Recent Immigrants (2011-2016)	
	Number	Number	%	Number	%
Guelph	150,030	30,880	20.6%	3,680	2.5%
Guelph	130,085	28,085	21.6%	3,580	2.8%
Guelph/Eramosa	12,655	1,605	12.7%	85	0.7%
Puslinch	7,290	1,195	16.4%	15	0.2%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Data products, 2016 Census.

- Between 2011 and 2016, 3,680 new immigrants settled in the Guelph CMA area. The recent immigrants for this period represented 2.5 percent of the population of Guelph and surrounding regions and 2.8 percent of the population for the City of Guelph alone.
- Between the periods of 2011 and 2016, 3,680 recent immigrants settled in the City of Guelph followed by 85 recent immigrants in Guelph/Eramosa and 15 recent immigrants in Puslinch Township.
- Based on these figures, we find most recent immigrants settling in the City of Guelph. This is consistent with the lack of immigration into the surrounding counties where industry and businesses historically have had difficulty attracting immigrants.



Industry Data: NAICS and NOC

Waterloo Region: Largest Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Manufacturing	44,819	40,719	(4,100)	(9%)	\$60,212
Retail Trade	29,712	27,419	(2,293)	(8%)	\$31,759
Health care and social assistance	27,913	26,964	(949)	(3%)	\$47,919
Education services	24,623	25,331	708	3%	\$60,902
Professional, scientific and technical services	19,608	20,158	550	3%	\$79,292
Accommodation and food services	19,126	14,147	(4,979)	(26%)	\$20,447
Construction	17,873	16,384	(1,489)	(8%)	\$70,179
Whole Sale Trade	15,481	14,688	(793)	(5%)	\$64,620
Finance and Insurance	15,225	16,384	1,159	8%	\$65,956
Public administration	12,424	11,069	(1,345)	(11%)	\$70,008
Administrative and support services	11,164	10,622	(543)	(5%)	\$42,425
Transportation and warehousing	10,327	10,080	(246)	(2%)	\$56,847
Information and cultural industries	9,355	9,588	233	2%	\$90,308
Other services (except public administration)	8,132	7,386	(746)	(9%)	\$43,977
Unclassified	5,372	4,488	(884)	(16%)	\$58,568
Real estate and rental and leasing	3,616	2,949	(667)	(18%)	\$53,057
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,614	2,880	(734)	(20%)	\$32,332
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,567	1,612	46	3%	\$29,104
Utilities	997	964	(34)	(3%)	\$79,800
Management of companies and enterprises	873	1,174	301	34%	\$53,383
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	253	239	(14)	(6%)	\$79,292

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

Waterloo Region: Fastest Growing Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Finance and insurance	15,225	16,384	1,159	8%	\$65,956
Education Services	24,623	25,331	708	3%	\$60,902
Professional, scientific and technical services	19,608	20,158	550	3%	\$79,292
Management of companies and enterprises	873	1,174	301	34%	\$53,383
Information and cultural industries	9,355	9,588	233	2%	\$95,308
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,567	1,613	46	3%	\$29,104
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	253	239	(14)	(6%)	\$79,292
Utilities	997	964	(34)	(3%)	\$79,800
Transportation and warehousing	10,327	10,080	(246)	(2%)	\$56,847
Administrative and support services	11,164	10,622	(543)	(5%)	\$42,423
Real estate and rental and leasing	3,616	2,949	(667)	(18%)	\$53,057
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,614	2,880	(734)	(20%)	\$32,332
Other services (except public administration)	8,132	7,386	(746)	(9%)	\$43,977
Wholesale trade	15,481	14,688	(793)	(5%)	\$64,620
Unclassified	5,372	4,488	(884)	(16%)	\$58,568
Health care and social assistance	27,913	26,964	(949)	(3%)	\$47,919
Public administration	12,424	11,069	(1,354)	(11%)	\$70,008
Construction	17,872	16,384	(1,489)	(8%)	\$70,179
Retail trade	29,712	27,419	(2,293)	(8%)	\$31,759
Manufacturing	44,819	40,719	(4,100)	(9%)	\$60,212
Accommodation and food services	19,126	14,147	(4,979)	(26%)	\$20,447

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

In 2020, the largest industry in Waterloo Region in terms of the number of jobs was manufacturing with 40,719 people employed. Between 2018 and 2020, the manufacturing industry lost 4,100 jobs which amounted to 9 percent of its workforce. The second largest industry in terms of the number of jobs was retail trade with 27,419 people working in this industry. Between 2018 to 2020, this industry experienced a loss of 2,293 people which was 8 percent of its total workforce. Health care and social assistance was the third largest industry in 2020 in terms of the number of jobs, followed by educational services, then professional, scientific and technical services. Although the health care and social assistance industry experienced a decrease of 949 jobs between 2018 and 2020, both educational services and professional, scientific and technical services saw an increase of 708 and 550 jobs respectively within the same period.

Accommodation and food services experienced the largest decrease in the number of jobs between 2018 and 2020 with 4,979 jobs lost. This was a 26 percent decrease of its workforce, which was the largest percentage change of any industry during this period. The arts, entertainment and recreation industry experienced the second largest percentage change in terms of the number of jobs lost which amounted to a decrease of 20 percent of its workforce.

The fastest growing industry in terms of the number of jobs in Waterloo Region between 2018 to 2020 was finance and insurance which saw 1,159 new jobs added. Educational services experienced the second largest growth in the number of new jobs at 708 new positions followed by professional, scientific and technical services which saw 550 new jobs added to its industry. However, the industry which had the fastest growth rate between 2018 and 2020 was management of companies and enterprises which grew its workforce by 34 per cent. Accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation and real estate and rental and leasing experienced the slowest growth of all industries in Waterloo Region where their workforces decreased by 26 per cent, 20 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.



Wellington County: Largest Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Manufacturing	31,927	29,736	(2,191)	(7%)	\$59,151
Health care and social assistance	11,270	10,597	(673)	(6%)	\$47,622
Retail Trade	10,990	10,369	(621)	(6%)	\$29,641
Education services	10,772	11,101	329	3%	\$56,925
Accommodation and food services	8,085	5,801	(2,285)	(28%)	\$20,127
Construction	7,184	7,022	(162)	(2%)	\$62,572
Whole Sale Trade	6,401	6,717	316	5%	\$64,537
Public administration	5,135	5,331	195	4%	\$72,455
Professional, scientific and technical services	4,978	5,247	269	5%	\$65,367
Administrative and support services	4,893	4,454	(439)	(9%)	\$38,734
Other services (except public administration)	4,352	3,668	(684)	(16%)	\$44,213
Transportation and warehousing	4,029	3,938	(91)	(2%)	\$57,350
Finance and Insurance	2,794	3,191	397	14%	\$64,354
Unclassified	2,302	1,944	(358)	(16%)	\$58,568
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,998	1,997	(1)	(0%)	\$40,905
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,538	1,242	(296)	(19%)	\$29,480
Information and cultural industries	1,331	1,303	(27)	(2%)	\$63,209
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,261	1,169	(92)	(7%)	\$46,454
Utilities	489	460	(29)	(6%)	\$91,098
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	201	233	32	16%	\$59,492
Management of companies and enterprises	190	248	59	31%	\$55,389

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

Wellington County: Fastest Growing Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Finance and Insurance	2,794	3,191	397	14%	\$64,354
Education services	10,772	11,101	329	3%	\$56,925
Whole Sale Trade	6,401	6,717	316	5%	\$64,537
Professional, scientific and technical services	4,978	5,247	269	5%	\$65,367
Public administration	5,135	5,331	195	4%	\$72,455
Management of companies and enterprises	190	248	59	31%	\$55,389
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	201	233	32	16%	\$59,492
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,998	1,997	(1)	(0%)	\$40,905
Information and cultural industries	1,331	1,303	(27)	(2%)	\$63,209
Utilities	489	460	(29)	(6%)	\$91,098
Transportation and warehousing	4,029	3,938	(91)	(2%)	\$57,350
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,261	1,169	(92)	(7%)	\$46,454
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Unclassified	2,302	1,944	(358)	(16%)	\$58,568
Administrative and support services	4,893	4,454	(439)	(9%)	\$38,734
Retail Trade	10,990	10,369	(621)	(6%)	\$29,641
Health care and social assistance	11,270	10,597	(673)	(6%)	\$47,622
Other services (except public administration)	4,352	3,668	(684)	(16%)	\$44,213
Manufacturing	31,927	29,736	(2,191)	(7%)	\$59,151
Accommodation and food services	8,085	5,801	(2,285)	(28%)	\$20,127

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

In 2020, the largest industry in Wellington County in terms of the number of jobs was manufacturing with 29,736 people employed in this industry. The manufacturing industry in Wellington County experienced a decrease of 2,191 jobs between 2018 to 2020 which was a 7 per cent decline in the number of people employed. The second largest industry in terms of number of jobs was the health care and social assistance industry which had 10,597 people employed. Between 2018 to 2020, this industry experienced a loss of 673 jobs which was 6 percent of the industry's total workforce. Retail trade was the third largest industry in 2020 in terms of the number of jobs, followed by educational services, then accommodation and food services.

Between 2018 and 2020, educational services saw its workforce grow by 329 jobs. Accommodation and food services experienced the largest decline in terms of both the actual number of jobs and percentage change with 2,285 job losses which amounted to a 28 per cent decrease in its workforce. The COVID-19 lockdowns were a factor in the steep decline for the accommodation and food services as many businesses had to close their dine-in options to the public. The arts, entertainment and recreation industry experienced the second largest percentage change in terms of the decrease in its workforce where it lost 19 per cent of its total jobs.

The industry with the most growth in the number of jobs in Wellington County between 2018 to 2020 was finance and insurance which saw 397 new jobs added to its industry. The educational services industry experienced the second largest growth in the number of new jobs added with 329 new positions. The two fastest growing industries in Wellington County – finance and insurance and educational services – were also the same two fastest growing industries in Waterloo Region. Moreover, the industry which saw the fastest growth rate in Wellington County was the management of companies and enterprises which had a 31 per cent growth in its workforce. Accommodation and food services and arts, entertainment and recreation both experienced significant declines in the number of workers in their industries.



Dufferin County: Largest Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Retail Trade	3,008	2,777	(230)	(8%)	\$30,108
Health care and social assistance	2,684	2,575	(109)	(4%)	\$48,210
Accommodation and food services	2,118	1,518	(600)	(28%)	\$19,796
Manufacturing	2,051	1,943	(108)	(5%)	\$51,709
Construction	1,493	1,429	(64)	(4%)	\$70,165
Education services	1,368	1,287	(81)	(6%)	\$63,266
Administrative and support services	888	886	(2)	(0%)	\$39,464
Other services (except public administration)	881	774	(107)	(12%)	\$41,473
Public administration	760	731	(29)	(4%)	\$60,248
Professional, scientific and technical services	725	797	72	10%	\$56,758
Transportation and warehousing	649	634	(15)	(2%)	\$55,175
Whole Sale Trade	551	561	10	2%	\$61,332
Finance and Insurance	494	579	85	17%	\$45,788
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	416	399	(18)	(4%)	\$28,446
Unclassified	376	317	(59)	(16%)	\$58,568
Real estate and rental and leasing	333	287	(45)	(14%)	\$43,967
Arts, entertainment and recreation	329	231	(98)	(30%)	\$25,823
Information and cultural industries	279	258	(21)	(7%)	\$60,747
Utilities	182	216	33	18%	\$81,651
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	11	11	(1)	(5%)	\$78,639
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0%	\$0

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

Dufferin County: Fastest Growing Industries

Industry	2018 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Job (2018-2020)	% Change	2020 Wages Per Worker
Finance and Insurance	494	579	85	17%	\$45,788
Professional, scientific and technical services	725	797	72	10%	\$56,758
Utilities	182	216	33	18%	\$81,651
Whole Sale Trade	551	561	10	2%	\$61,332
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0%	\$0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	11	11	(1)	(5%)	\$78,639
Administrative and support services	888	886	(2)	(0%)	\$39,464
Transportation and warehousing	649	634	(15)	(2%)	\$55,175
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Construction	1,493	1,429	(64)	(4%)	\$70,165
Education services	1,368	1,287	(81)	(6%)	\$63,266
Arts, entertainment and recreation	329	231	(98)	(30%)	\$25,823
Other services (except public administration)	881	774	(107)	(12%)	\$41,473
Manufacturing	2,051	1,943	(108)	(5%)	\$51,709
Health care and social assistance	2,684	2,575	(109)	(4%)	\$48,210
Retail Trade	3,008	2,777	(230)	(8%)	\$30,108
Accommodation and food services	2,118	1,518	(600)	(28%)	\$19,796

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

The largest industry in Dufferin County in 2020 in terms of the size of its workforce was retail trade with 2,777 jobs in this industry. However, between 2018 and 2020, 230 jobs were lost in this industry which was a decline of 8 percent of its workforce. The second largest industry in Dufferin County in terms of the number of jobs was health care and social assistance with 2,575 people employed. Accommodation and food services was the third largest industry in terms of the size of its workforce, followed by manufacturing and construction.

The two industries which witnessed the steepest decline in the number of jobs were both industries significantly impacted by COVID-19. Arts, entertainment and recreation experienced a 30 per cent decline in its workforce whereas accommodation and food services experienced a 28 percent decrease in the number of workers in its industry.

The fastest growing industry in terms of the number of jobs in Dufferin County was finance and insurance which saw 85 new jobs added to its industry. The professional, scientific and technical services industry witnessed the second largest growth of net new jobs with 72 more positions added. However, the industry which saw the fastest growth rate in new jobs was utilities which saw an 18 percent growth in its workforce. As in the other two regions, the sharpest workforce declines occurred in arts, entertainment and recreation as well as accommodation and food services which saw a decline of 30 percent and 28 percent respectively in their workforce numbers.





Summary

Based on the data, we find a notable decline in the number of jobs that are in industries that have more general labour or labour intense positions such as accommodation and food services, manufacturing, retail trade and construction. These industries would be classified as NOC C and NOC D jobs with the National Occupational Classification system. NOC C level jobs are defined as “intermediate jobs that usually call for high school and/or job-specific training,” whereas NOC D level jobs are defined as “labour jobs that usually give on-the-job training.”¹⁷

Importantly, we find an increase in the number of jobs in industries requiring higher skill levels. The industries that added the most jobs include finance and insurance, educational services, professional, scientific and technical services, and management of companies and enterprises. The overwhelming majority of roles in these industries are classified as NOC A and NOC B level jobs.

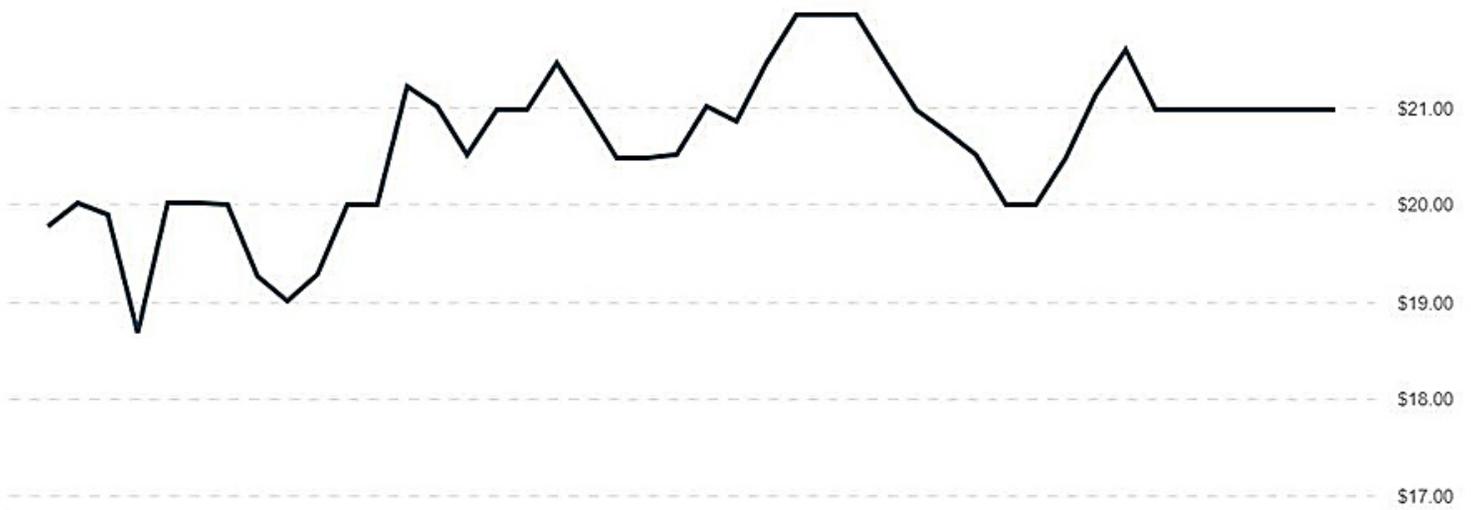
NOC A level jobs are defined as “professional jobs that usually call for a degree from a university,” whereas NOC B level jobs are defined as “technical jobs and skilled trades that usually call for a college diploma or training as an apprentice.”¹⁸ According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Canadian immigration programs use the NOC System to decide if a job or work type meets their eligibility requirements. Furthermore, they consider skilled jobs to be jobs with a NOC skill type of A or B. With the growing demand in NOC A and NOC B roles, we find a significant alignment between jobs in-demand and the NOC levels as required by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s classification system. Therefore, an important opportunity exists for internationally trained professionals who are in Canada and who have arrived with NOC A and NOC B skill levels, to gain employment in their fields based on the changing nature of the labour markets.

Job Postings Data between January 2018-August 2021

Waterloo Region

Advertised Wage Trend

▲ 6.1% Jan 2018 - Aug 2021
\$20.52 Median



195,177 Job Postings



Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021



Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (NOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2018 - Aug 2021)	Median Posting Duration
Retail salespersons	21,669/7,568	26 days
Other customer and information services representatives	22,475/7,322	24 days
General office support workers	12,005/5,452	21 days
Software engineers and designers	13,273/5,249	32 days
Other labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities	13,949/4,899	23 days
Administrative assistants	11,112/4,697	16 days
Material handlers	12,389/4,140	21 days
Other administrative service managers	9,602/4,044	25 days
Retail and wholesale trade managers	8,903/3,792	27 days
Administrative officers	8,249/3,759	21 days

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

- For Waterloo Region, we have 195,177 unique job postings
- The average wage for Waterloo Region rose 6.1 percent between January 2018 and August 2021 - this is reflective of the region's higher demand for workers over the years
- The top posted occupation for Waterloo Region includes retail sales, customer service and office support, software engineers as well as manufacturing and processing roles
- There are significant opportunities for internationally trained professionals to be able to fill the growing gap of skilled employment opportunities as demonstrated by job postings

Wellington County

Advertised Wage Trend

▲ 7.8% Jan 2018 – Aug 2021

\$20.03 Median



74,534 Job Postings



Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021



Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (NOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2018 - Aug 2021)	Median Posting Duration
Retail salespersons	10,094/3,188	26 days
Other labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities	9,430/2,897	28 days
Other customer and information services representatives	7,246/2,569	24 days
General office support workers	6,149/2,296	22 days
Material handlers	8,900/2,219	25 days
Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations	4,002/1,892	27 days
Administrative assistants	3,635/1,719	18 days
Transport truck drivers	3,344/1,303	29 days
Administrative officers	2,708/1,289	21 days
Retail and wholesale trade managers	2,788/1,285	25 days

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

- In Wellington County, there were 74,534 unique job postings
- The average wage for Wellington County rose by 7.8 per cent between January 2018 and August 2021 - this is reflective of the City of Guelph's historically low unemployment rates which has driven employers to increase their competitiveness by raising wages
- The top posted occupations were in retail sales, manufacturing and processing, customer services, office support and material handler
- Immigrants looking for general labour positions which do not require specific training or education would have more opportunities in Wellington County than compared to Waterloo Region where there is more availability of professional roles

Dufferin County

Advertised Wage Trend

▼ 14.0% Jan 2018 - Aug 2021
\$20.03 Median



15,544 Job Postings



Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021



Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (NOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2018 - Aug 2021)	Median Posting Duration
Other customer and information services representatives	2,062/671	19 days
Retail salespersons	2,667/662	21 days
Other labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities	1,097/485	24 days
Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations	883/479	18 days
Other administrative service managers	935/399	25 days
General office support workers	800/371	11 days
Administrative assistants	688/361	13 days
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	628/297	17 days
Material handlers	977/285	24 days
Administrative officers	518/273	18 days

Source: EMSI Analyst, 2021

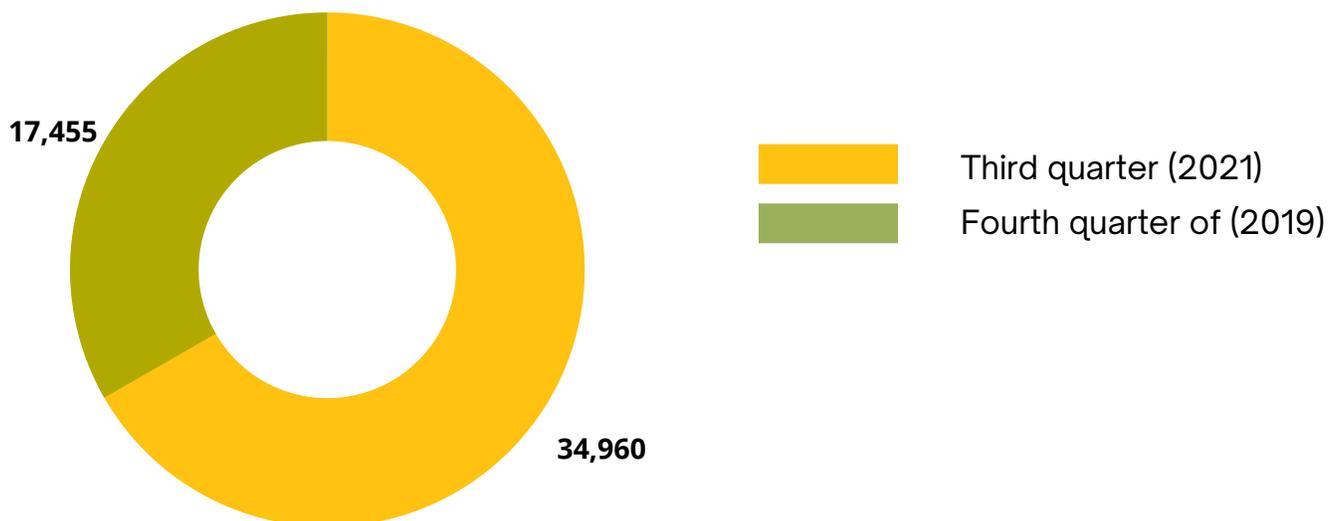
- In Dufferin County, there were 15,544 unique postings
- As with both Waterloo Region and Wellington County, there is a decline in job postings in Dufferin County in 2019 because of COVID-19
- By the beginning of 2020, there is an uptick in the number of unique job postings in Dufferin County which has continued to trend upwards into the beginning of 2022
- While both Waterloo Region and Wellington County have had their wages data parallel their job postings data, we find the opposite in Dufferin County
- Wages in Dufferin County have decreased by 14 per cent between January 2018 and August 2021. This can be for multiple reasons including the fact that Dufferin County started at a higher advertised median wage when compared to the two other regions and therefore has decreased over the years to balance out with surrounding areas
- The top posted occupations included customer and information services representatives, retail salespersons, manufacturing and processing labourers and housekeeping and home support workers
- Job postings in Dufferin County reflect more front-line, client-based roles which would require basic language abilities and other soft skills
- Immigrants with language abilities would have more opportunities in Dufferin County to find employment in these types of roles

Industries and Occupations in Transition for the Post-COVID-19 Economy

This section examines industries and occupations which are growing in-demand based on the labour market changes brought forth over the last two years. The research findings suggest that there is a real shift in local labour market demands where demand for higher skilled occupations are increasing. This demand provides an important opportunity for internationally trained professionals to better align their skills and talent with the labour market.

The post-COVID-19 economy is continuing to take shape as the pandemic has yet to fully subside. Given the vast changes brought forth, it was predicted some industries would grow while others would not be able to sustain the disruptions. Due to these changes, a considerable amount of industries did shift, with some companies producing PPEs (personal protective equipment) while others were forced to develop online retail services.

New policies and regulations also forced people to keep socially distant in offices and on factory floors. Statistics Canada findings show that the total number of job vacancies across all sectors reached an all-time high of 912,600 in the 3rd quarter of 2021 which was 349,700 more vacancies than in the previous period in 2019.¹⁹ Locally, job vacancies in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie economic region included:



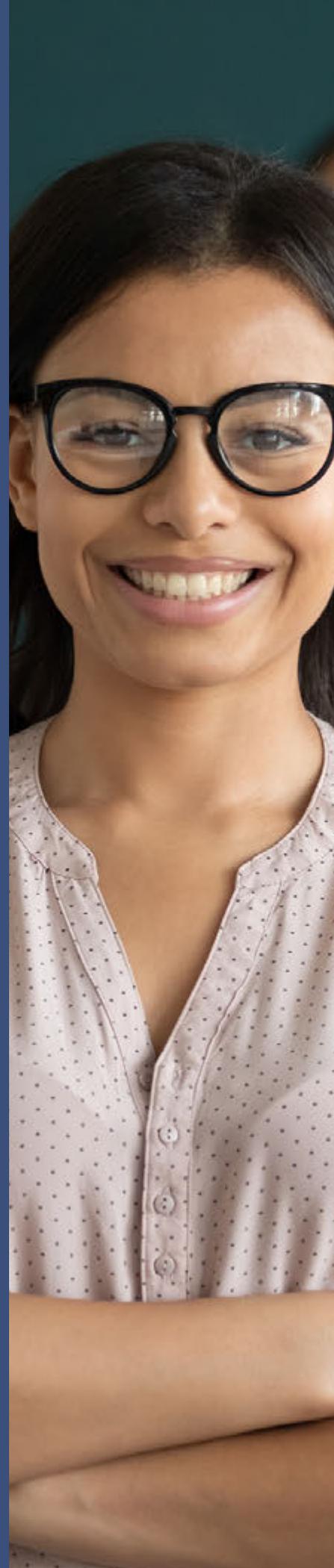
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0356-02

From the data, we find that industries are facing difficulties finding talent and are being forced to leave roles vacant as they cannot find people to take on jobs fast enough. Our local economic region has seen those vacancies almost double in the last two years where employers are struggling to find people to fill roles.

Industries such as accommodation and food services and the broader tourism sector have traditionally employed a significant number of immigrants where we are currently witnessing these industries undergo a workforce shift in terms of demand. These types of roles are becoming less sought out by job seekers which is resulting in more vacancies despite the re-openings. Employers are also having difficulties recruiting in these industries as continued lockdowns have resulted in less job security for workers and inconsistencies in scheduling and hours available.

Based on the job demand reports produced by [FindYourJob.ca](https://www.findyourjob.ca) – a job postings website focused on Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin – there are strong indications that industries and jobs are undergoing a transition.

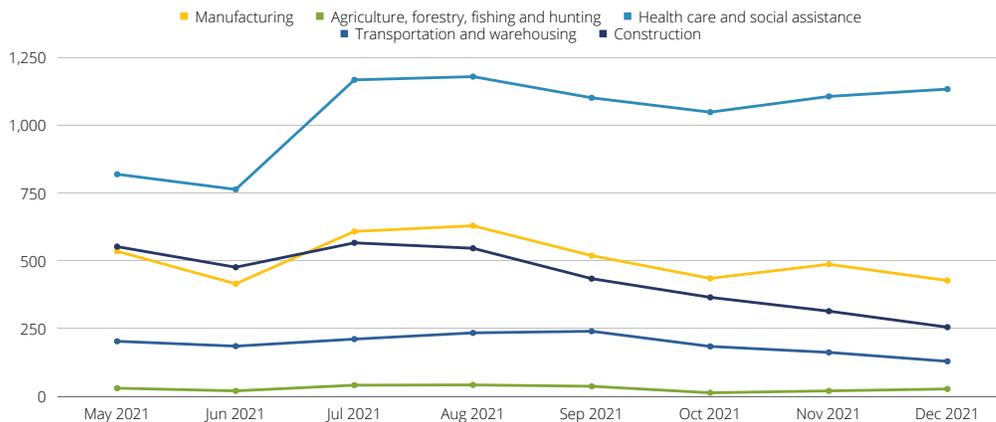
This transition supports the *window of opportunity* position for more focused support to assist internationally trained immigrants seize higher-skilled positions which are increasingly in demand. Based on the data, we find a declining trend in job postings for lower-skilled positions which have historically been areas where newcomers and immigrants have been employed, while at the same time, there is an increase in the number of job postings that require more skills and specialization. Again, we find a *window of opportunity* to provide better employment chances for internationally trained professionals given the shifts in industry demands.



Job demand by key sectors for the regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin

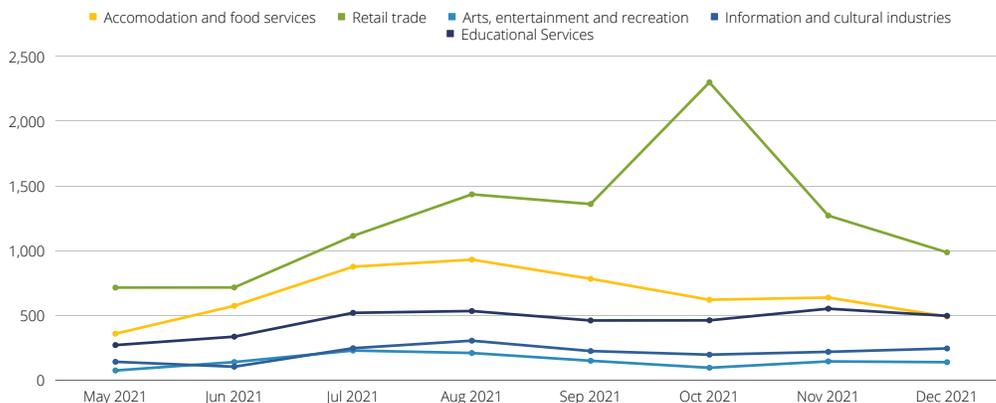
Demand By Key Sector (All Regions)

How many job postings were active for at least 1 day this month by sector?



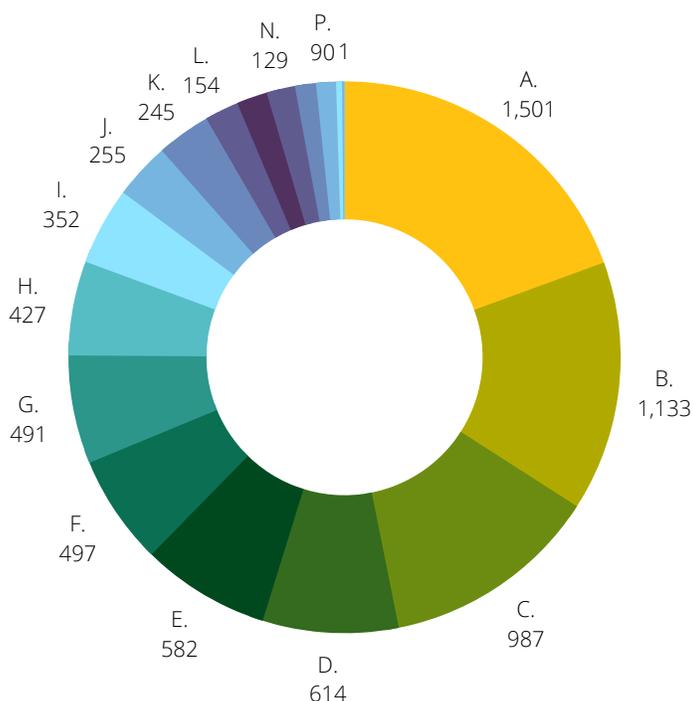
Demand By Impacted Sector (All Regions)

How many job postings were active for at least 1 day this month by sector?



A review of the job demands data from [FindYourJob.ca](https://www.findyourjob.ca) indicates a decline in job postings over the last 6 months for key sectors such as manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, construction and accommodation and food services. These sector jobs are mainly considered labour intense positions for much of their workforce. However, within this same period, there has been a slight increase in the number of jobs which require specialized skills such as health care and social assistance, information and cultural industries and educational services. Even though this data has not accounted for all the companies on [FindYourJob.ca](https://www.findyourjob.ca), we nevertheless find a trend of knowledge-based job postings on the rise and a decline in the number of job postings for industries considered to be less specialized and more labour focused.

Top Hiring Sector by 2-Digit NAICS Code, December 2021



- A.** Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- B.** Health care and social assistance
- C.** Retail trade
- D.** Finance and insurance
- E.** Professional, scientific and technical services
- F.** Educational services
- G.** Accommodation and food services
- H.** Manufacturing
- I.** Public administration
- J.** Construction Information and cultural industries
- K.** Other services (except public administration)
- L.** Arts, entertainment and recreation
- M.** Transportation and warehousing
- N.** Real estate and rental and leasing
- O.** Wholesale trade
- P.** Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Q.** Utilities
- R.** Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction

A review of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin's 2-digit NAICS code job postings highlight sectors which are hiring, including the number of jobs posted in each sector.

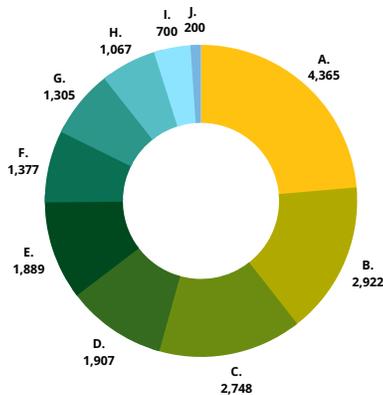
The top 5 sectors hiring the most in December 2021 included:

- Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- Health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Finance and insurance
- Professional, scientific and technical services

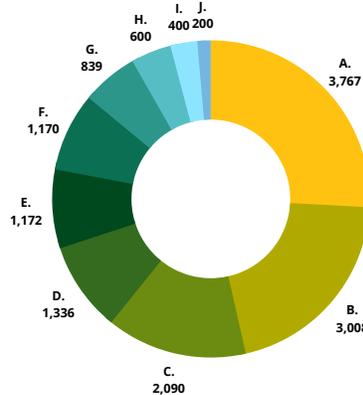
These sectors are looking for people who have some post-secondary or specialized training and are industries considered to be high-skilled. Most jobs in these sectors are classified as NOC A and NOC B jobs as they are in sectors which are in demand. Therefore, recent immigrants to Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin are likely trained with these in-demand skill sets needed for these occupations but are yet to be employed in their fields.

Job postings by skill type in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin from December 2020 to December 2021

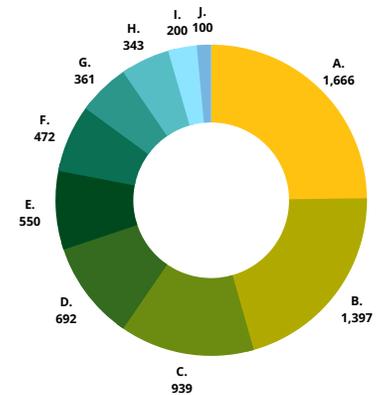
December 2021



June 2021



December 2020



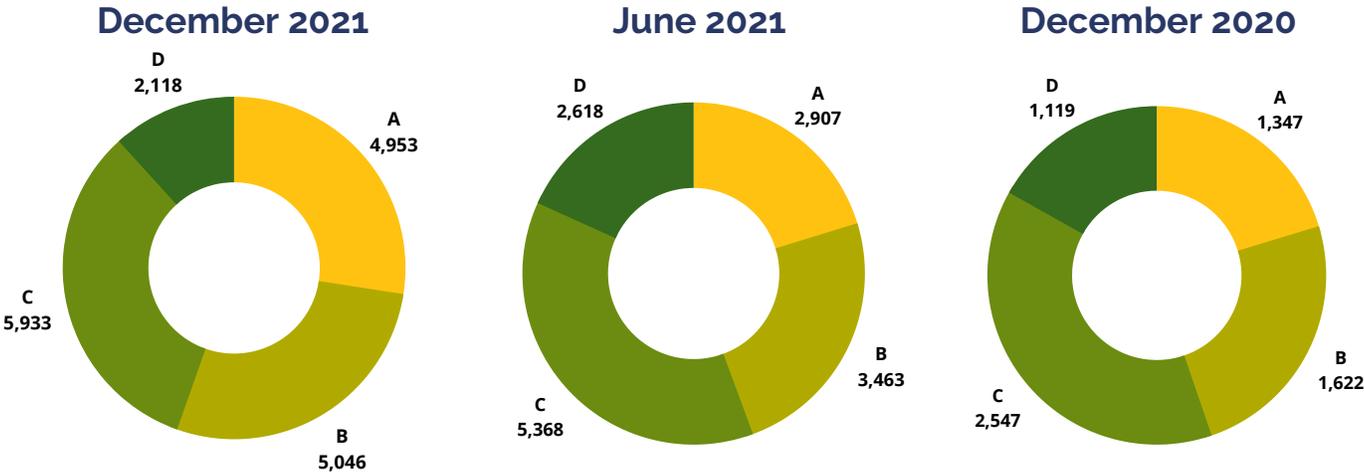
- A. Sales and service occupation
- B. Business, finance and administration occupations
- C. Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations
- D. Natural and applied sciences and related occupations
- E. Management occupations
- F. Occupations in manufacturing and utilities
- G. Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services
- H. Health occupations
- I. Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport
- J. Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations

A review of job postings by skill type and skill level provides important insights into the skills and specializations required by local industries. When examining job postings by skill type, we find significantly more jobs posted from December 2020 to December 2021, demonstrating that employers were returning to higher levels of employment and were also part of growth industries. However, there does not seem to be a shift in the order of demand when we examine the postings by skills type. This does not necessarily mean there was a decrease in occupations such as manufacturing – as job postings in these occupations also grew – but rather to highlight that a shift in the labour market has taken place with specialized occupations growing the most and becoming the most in-demand.

From the data, sales and service occupations remained the most in-demand followed by business, finance and administration and then trades, transportation and equipment operator occupations.

Job postings by skill (NOC) level in Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin from December 2020 to December 2021

What education do occupations typically require?



NOC Skill Level A | NOC Skill Level B | NOC Skill Level C | NOC Skill Level D

Skill Level A = Usually University Education | Skill Level B = Usually College Education or Apprenticeship training | Skill Level C = Usually Secondary Education or Occupation-Specific training | Skill Level D = Usually on-the-job training

When comparing skill levels by educational requirements for job postings, we again find a significant shift in the education and skills required by employers. In December 2020, 17 per cent of jobs required on-the-job training (NOC D) versus 18 per cent in June, which then further dropped to 12 per cent by December 2021.

We also find that 44 per cent of jobs in December 2020, and in June 2021, required either a college diploma or a university degree. That rate grew to 55 per cent by December 2021, signifying that more-and-more jobs are requiring a college diploma or university degree. Therefore, by December 2021, more job postings required a specialized training or education at the post-secondary or apprenticeship/skilled trades levels classified as NOC A and NOC B jobs.

Furthermore, it is possible that the types of roles that were in-demand did not necessarily change for employer, but rather the skills needed did change. For example, an employer may have needed office workers or financial clerks in the beginning of 2020 and has now found that they need administrative assistants or bookkeepers which require more advanced skill sets.

Some of those lesser skilled roles may be disappearing and work being redistributed to new roles based on a new set of skills. This shift in skills demand further supports the *window of opportunity* case as the job skills demand shifts to roles that require more advanced education and skills.

Therefore, this is the ideal time to look at how we further support internationally trained professionals to gain better and meaningful employment in this changing labour market.

Recommendations to Attract, Hire and Retain Internationally Trained Professionals

In this section, we conclude by providing specific recommendations which will support local efforts to attract, hire and retain internationally trained professionals. Based on interviews with newcomers to Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin, as well as extensive labour market research, certain recommendations have been developed. These suggestions include both new ideas as well as recommendations to support or expand existing programs and services which are consistent with the research findings.

Some of the recommendations to attract, hire and retain internationally trained professionals include:

- 1.** Improving and expanding the process for credential recognition so that internationally trained professionals can engage, apply and enter the labour markets more quickly. This would include expanding and fast-tracking licencing processes as well as skills improvements similar to the Career Pathways Program recently announced by Ontario's Health Ministry which is to deploy internationally trained professionals to work in health care facilities under the supervision of licenced nurses. This is a positive program as it will provide newcomer nurses with valuable work experience and also help them fast track their nursing licence.
- 2.** Improve and expand local immigration labour market data through systems such as FindYourJob.ca which could also support data as it relates to immigrant employment. Adding extra features and search options that provides local data on education and skill levels immigrants bring would also enrich the data and provide employers access to real-time talent. This improved data would enhance and support government programs to better channel immigrants with specific skills to regions where their skills and specializations are most in demand. This would not only help local communities better access needed skills and talent, but this would also help improve existing government programs such as the Municipal Nominee Program due to the improved available data and information.

- 3.** Develop opportunities to support internationally trained professionals career mobility and ability to utilize transferable skills. Employers can recognize and document the skills and experiences of professional immigrants and actively seek ways to employ these skills within their own organizations. For example, we have many cases of immigrant doctors and lawyers who have transitioned to management roles in other industries instead of pursuing their licences and have become quite successful while also filling important labour market needs.
- 4.** Accessible labour market and careers data tailored to internationally trained professionals. Newcomers need better information regarding Canada's labour market dynamics and growth industries as well as in-demand skills and jobs. Therefore, employment trends and employment outcomes should be timely, tailored and available for recent immigrants to help better prepare them for the labour market.
- 5.** Offering tailored micro-credential training programs to assist internationally trained professionals transition to local standards and skills qualification. Such programming should focus on occupations which are growing and in demand such as information technology, graphic design, digital technology, financial clerk, accounts services and administrative assistance. Local career services and Employment Ontario programs can be facilitators of this training as many are already undertaking such initiatives.
- 6.** Bridging Programs need to be expanded and provided throughout Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin as they are a great way for internationally trained professionals to move into career roles and professional positions. Not only does Bridging Programs allow for new immigrants to gain valuable knowledge about Canadian workplace culture and local standards, but Bridging Programs also help newcomers connect and network with local professionals in their industry.
- 7.** Invest and expand mentorship programs that include services focused on growth industries and occupations in-demand. This would help better position professional immigrants seeking mentors with labour market demands. This would also result in better connections and retention outcomes for mentorship clients. As Waterloo Region currently has mentorship and connectors programs, professional immigrants in Wellington and Dufferin County would be served well if such programs were offered in their communities as well or existing programs expanded into Wellington and Dufferin County. Mentorship programs, where possible, should also considering including and supporting rural communities which would also help rural economies pull newcomers into their regions. With online communication options available, more buy-ins are needed from employers as this can be an excellent source for connecting to talent with the ease of available technology. Lastly, mentorship programs should be offered to non-Permanent Residents as well where currently only PR holders are able to access these services.

- 8.** Expand services which provide volunteering and leadership opportunities for internationally trained professionals to help develop their skills and allow them to gain valuable networks and work experience. Volunteering has shown to benefit immigrants by helping them learn about workplace culture and to interact with senior management. In addition, volunteering allows immigrants to demonstrate their skills and knowledge without the employer having to commit to a full recruitment and hiring process. Leadership opportunities are also low-risk opportunities for professional immigrants to gain valuable knowledge and to network their skills and abilities.
- 9.** The Region of Waterloo, Wellington County and Dufferin County should establish an Internationally Trained Professionals Week which would bring to light the skills and experiences of professional immigrants. For this, the business community, non-profits, volunteer centres, government offices, hospitals and chamber of commerce could expand and offer to host an internationally trained professional for a week to provide them with work experience as well as to have an opportunity to learn from the newcomers themselves. This would help get public awareness about professional immigrants to the wider public, including employers. Such an initiative would also act as an avenue for employers to recruit and hire immigrant talent.
- 10.** Expand and invest in industry specific language and communications training for professional immigrants. Local universities and colleges should partner to develop micro-language training programs which would also involve classes led by actual industry professionals. This would not only provide further confidence and support to professional immigrants enrolled in the classes, but it would also act as an important bridge and expose industry leaders to immigrant talent. It is proven that such exposures and exchanges lead to direct networking and hires.
- 11.** Develop a comprehensive survey on what makes the Region of Waterloo, Wellington County and Dufferin County an attractive place for immigrants. This would help develop better knowledge and insights into how and why economic immigrants choose to settle in these regions. The survey findings would further support the regions attraction and retention strategies as well as to learn more about issues that are important for economic immigrants such as how they decide if they stay or move out of these regions to another city or town.

Conclusion

As Canada continues to recruit skilled immigrants for its economic needs, it is imperative that the skills and experiences immigrants bring be better utilized. The underutilization of immigrant skills and the overqualification of immigrants in many jobs, has been an issue facing the labour market for some time. Canada has continued to focus on economic immigrants, where skilled immigrants continue to be the largest class of immigrants coming into the country. Yet, as past data suggests, immigrant skill sets have not been effectively matched with labour market demands as intended.

However, based on recent labour market data from Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin, as well as COVID-19 economic outcomes and trends, a *window of opportunity* has emerged in which local labour market demands for skilled workers have increased. At the same time, demand for lower skilled positions have decreased or remained flat. With these new and emerging trends, we find a better and improved correlation between the skills immigrants are coming to Canada with and the local labour market demands for workers with more advanced skills. Therefore, as presented in this report, the time has come to better utilize the knowledge and experiences of skilled immigrants given the recent job demands for skilled candidates. From the health care sector to finance and management, the local labour market demands for skilled talent has never been greater. Employers, policy makers and workforce development professionals must plan and develop programs and services which can support the transition of skilled immigrants towards professional employment.

While this report provides insights into the changing nature of the local labour market and the status of skilled immigrants, further research is required to develop and coordinate policies and programs which can harness and benefit from this *window of opportunity*. Innovated, timely and effective programs and services must be developed to help employers access the skilled talent they need. Improving credential recognition processes, expanding bridging programs, offering more mentorship opportunities, and supporting employers in their onboarding process, are all recommendations which can assist industries to better hire and retain immigrant talent. The Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin will continue to research and develop local partnerships to help integrate immigrant talent within our labour market and to ensure the skills immigrants bring are employed for the benefit of Canada's economic success.

Appendices

Interview results with internationally trained professionals in the regions of Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin

When did you arrive in Canada and are you still living in the city/town you first arrived in?

The immigrants we spoke to were just more likely to still be living in their first city that they arrived in (Guelph and Kitchener) while less than half had moved to the GTA.

What made you come to this region?

Immigrants came to our region because:

- They were interested in educational programs at our universities.
- Friends were in the area.
- Housing affordability compared to the GTA
- Job prospects in tech, agriculture, industry of preference
- Proximity to the GTA
- The area had a high demand for workers
- Good area to live in and raise children.

Some made their decision when they were choosing their educational program, and some did research on communities before they left their country of origin. The Great Toronto Area does play a factor in all of this.

What stream or process of immigration did you come to Canada through?

All immigrants interviewed were economic class immigrants who arrived through the Foreign Skilled Workers program.

What is your education and experience from back home?

Some of the educational backgrounds of those interviewed:

- Masters and Bachelors in Food Science
- Masters in Human Resource
- Bachelors in economics
- Bachelors degree in economic and finance
- Advanced diploma in business management systems, IT profession
- Bachelors in Web Application and Design
- Masters in Business and Finance
- Bachelors in Medical Science (pre-Medicine)

Are you working in your field?

Some of the answers regarding current work status:

- No, I am not
- Yes, working in the field currently, not originally
- Couldn't find a job in this field, currently in data analytics in marketing
- Yes, working in my field
- Yes, currently working IT
- Yes, currently working in my field
- Somewhat, working in sales and marketing which is within the business and finance profession
- Somewhat, working in a laboratory

How did you (or didn't) find a job in you field?

Immigrants used several ways to find jobs in their field, including:

- Undertaking a part-time role to get experience
- Volunteering in a related field for a non-profit that would give them exposure
- Doing a short training program to shift their skills a bit for where the opportunities were
- Meeting people who would then refer them to someone else – turns into short-term contracts and then permanent hire – or just meeting others in the profession or field
- Working a job in an unrelated sector and then transitioning to a job that used their skills somewhat or starting in that related field while planning further education

How did you find your first job?

Immigrants used the following methods to find employment:

- Employment Ontario services: mentorships, job developers,
- Volunteering with non-profits
- Using on-line applications and resources
- Sought a “survival job” or “Canadian experience job” until they could secure employment in their field
- Started at an entry-level role and worked way up through responsibilities in the same company
- Use friend referrals and their network to find roles (contract, freelance)

How did you find your current job?

- Applied online and had good reference
- Found current job through networking and friend, believes in who you know then what you know. Went back to school for analytics for certificate program
- Same company, but changes roles, first account association, then accounts receivable analyst, now inventory costing analyst – same department
- I applied online and also updated my resume to reflect my Canadian experience
- Applied online and friend provided referral
- I applied online via Indeed and received an interview

What programs and services did you use to help you find or gain employment?

- Language training programs: ESL
- For-profit placement agencies, such as Express Employment Agencies
- Took a short-term training course to expand skill sets
- Settlement agency: learned about job market, networking, workshops on resumes/interviews, taxes, credit reports, meet other people who are to the country and area (create social networks and even friends)
- Networking opportunities
- Mentorship program and a lot of networking
- Online interview preparation videos
- Employment Ontario: getting credentials recognized, mentorship, resume advice

Do you plan to leave the region or current city of yours?

Many immigrants felt that they would stay in their current community. However, there was openness to moving to pursue educational goals, for improved quality of life (balance of city life and relaxation), move closer to family or if a work opportunity presented itself.

What feed back or recommendations do you have for others in your positions or for government to considers regarding policies?

- Should be able to better match the transcripts to see what they can and cannot do. Health need is significant and we need IT doctors and medical professionals to be able to get the training and work in this industry. Better programing for IT professionals so that they can better integrate into the healthcare industry.
- Career services programs should be more practical
- Should be encouraged and introduced by the schools to help build experience and networks
- I would really recommend having a database that is handy for companies or projects that has immigrants contacts that can be easily acceses for companies to reach out to
- A single data base with all the services and programs that are offered to immigrants to help newcomers better integrated and improve their skills and education
- Professional networking initiatives
- More efforts and opportunities for volunteering
- More programs for short-term specialized training
- Education employers to hire newcomers and immigrants
- Better and fasters processes for credential assessments and less paperwork



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