



Workplace & Immigrant Network

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BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING EVENT

Practical Communication for Today's Canadian Workplace

The Grand Way, Elora, ON

June 9th, 2026

Register: [Here](#)



Editor's Note

Immigration is reshaping the workforce in Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington. According to the 2021 census, 25.8% of the population in Waterloo Region are immigrants, and 23.8 % of Guelph residents are immigrants, and those numbers have continued to rise since then.

Across both regions, many employers have made progress in attracting internationally trained professionals into their workforce. Yet, a common pattern continues to emerge, while talent is being hired, they are not fully supported to succeed, and too often they leave. This cyclical “gain and drain” of talent is not just a staffing challenge but a missed opportunity to build long-term stability, team effectiveness, and improve service delivery.

What ultimately shapes the outcome is not just who you hire but what happens after they are employed. Employers who are seeing success are intentional about their foreign born new hires are welcomed, integrated and supported.

In this edition, we spotlight Schlegel Village. Bryce McBain, General Manager at the Village of Riverside Glen in Guelph, shares their journey. We hope the insights shared help your organization build a great team and retain great talent.

If your organization has been rethinking how you attract, hire and retain talent, and you'd like to share your journey in a future edition, we'd be happy to hear from you.
-Olusola Oladele

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

BRYCE MCBAIN

General Manager, The Village of Riverside Glen
Schlegel Villages, Guelph, Ontario

How has the labour shortage and demand for care in the health sector influenced Schlegel Villages' approach to attracting and supporting talent, including internationally trained professionals?

Like many in healthcare, the labour shortage required us to think differently about how we attract and support talent. Immigration became an important part of stabilizing our workforce during a critical time. But what stood out to us was what happened beyond staffing. As internationally educated professionals joined our teams, we saw their resilience, commitment, and willingness to grow. Many stepped into roles while working toward Canadian credentials, and rather than viewing that as temporary, we began to see it as a meaningful pathway. That shifted our thinking. Not just how do we fill roles, but how do we support people to grow into them.



Bryce McBain

GM, The Village of Riverside Glen
Schlegel Villages

What began as a response to labour pressures evolved into a more intentional approach to building both capacity and culture.

Looking back, what early lessons stood out as you began hiring internationally trained professionals, and how did they shape your approach?

One of the earliest lessons was that recruitment is only the starting point—what matters most is what happens after someone arrives. We learned that many internationally educated professionals bring significant experience and capability, but are navigating new systems, new expectations, and often major life transitions at the same time.

That required us to slow down and be more intentional. We focused on creating space for learning without pressure, ensuring clear expectations and communication, Building confidence alongside competence, supporting them through their journey. It reinforced something we believe strongly—when people feel supported, they grow. And when they grow, the entire team benefits.

As your workforce evolved, what practical changes or adjustments did you make to better support employees who are new to Canada?

We began to treat integration as a structured pathway rather than an informal process.

Practically, that included Supporting credentialing and exam preparation, Offering flexibility in scheduling to accommodate study and settlement needs, creating mentorship and peer support opportunities, working closely with our Schlegel Villages People Team and programs like the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) to ensure alignment and support.

But beyond the structure, we focused on the experience. We asked ourselves: Do people feel welcomed here? Do they feel seen? Do they feel they belong? Because support is not only about systems—it's about culture.

What impact have these changes had on your organization and the experience of your clients?

The impact has been both operational and cultural—but the cultural impact has been the most meaningful. We’ve seen stronger collaboration across teams, increased empathy, and a deeper sense of shared purpose. Different perspectives have enriched how we care for residents and how we support one another. For residents and families, that translates into more meaningful connections, greater cultural understanding, a team that is engaged and committed. When team members feel valued and supported, it shows in the care they provide. What started as a workforce strategy has strengthened the overall experience of living and working in our Villages.

Based on your experience, what would you recommend to organizations looking to proactively build a workplace where all employees, regardless of their race, cultural/educational background, can contribute and succeed?

Start by shifting the focus from hiring to growth. Inclusion is not achieved through a single initiative—it’s built through consistent, intentional actions that support people over time. That means creating clear pathways for development, investing in mentorship and learning, recognizing the experiences people bring, not just the roles they fill and building environments where people feel safe to ask questions, learn, and grow.

When organizations move beyond performative efforts and commit to supporting people in a meaningful way, inclusion becomes real. And when that happens, it doesn’t just strengthen teams—it strengthens the culture, the organization, and ultimately the experience of those we serve.

Closing Thought:

“Immigration may help address workforce challenges, but its greatest impact is in how it strengthens culture, builds belonging, and creates pathways for people to grow” - Bryce McBain



Bryce McBain with Jesica, an Internationally Educated Nurse working in Village of Riverside Glen Long Term Care in Guelph, Ontario.



UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENT

Construction Connect (Waterloo Region): A networking event on June 9th, 2026, designed to foster meaningful connections between employers in the constructor industry and skilled newcomer talent.

Interested organizations, please contact:

Olusola@workforceplanningboard.com or fadhwa@workforceplanningboard.com

Looking for what's next?

All upcoming events are posted on our [website!](#)



WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- ✓ Align your business vision with your talent needs
- ✓ Review HR practices and policies
- ✓ Co-create practical solutions to fill the potential challenges and gaps


 **Don't hesitate to connect with us to discuss options for in-house workshops tailored to your business's unique needs.**


Additional Resources

[Immigrant Friendly Businesses](#)

[Inclusivity at Work: Empowering Newcomer Talent for Long-Term Impact](#)

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