



Social Research &  
Planning Council



Operated by:

**United Way**

Perth-Huron



# QUALITY OF LIFE: A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

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## A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

A community can be diverse in many ways. It might be home to people from a range of ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Or community members may have different lifestyles, interests, values and experiences. Encouraging and maintaining a diverse community involves appreciating and respecting the ways people can be different from one another. Jean Augustine, Canada's first Black woman member of Parliament, said, "Diversity is a key component of high performing societies. Greater outcomes emerge when people come together regardless of race, lineage, religion or gender. Canada and the world's future success will be increasingly tied to our capacity to harness different backgrounds, skills, attitudes, experiences and perspectives. The advantages this brings are limitless."<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

When we reflect diversity such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture and disability in our communities and structures, we're more likely to have greater engagement and better outcomes for all.<sup>5</sup> It is important to consider the interconnected nature of these categorizations. A racialized person who also has a low socioeconomic status has very different experiences than someone who is not racialized but has a low socioeconomic status.

Although there is plenty of variation among residents of Perth and Huron, our region is less diverse than other parts of the province, something we share with other rural regions.





According to 2020 data from *EnviroNics Analytics*, 80% of people in Perth and 82% in Huron think that respect for Indigenous culture is a shared value to a great or moderate extent in Canada. These numbers could be even stronger today following the establishment of the *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* by the federal government in 2021 after the discovery of unmarked burial sites at former residential schools across the country.<sup>8</sup> Continued change speaks to the relentless work Indigenous peoples have put into protecting their identities and fighting for their rights.



*Friendship Centres provide culturally-based programs and services to Indigenous peoples living in urban centres or off-reserve.*



### The Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

established in 2008, formally documented the history and impacts of Canada's residential school

system which operated between 1831 and 1996. It is estimated that 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children were forcibly separated from their families and made to attend residential schools. Thousands died at those schools or because of the horrendous abuse they experienced in the system and thousands remain missing. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report along with 94 Calls to Action in 2015 after years of gathering testimonies from survivors and witnesses.<sup>9</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Learn about Canada's colonial roots and take responsibility for meeting the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Engage with the local Indigenous community to identify and establish self-determined resources in Perth-Huron, such as Friendship Centres, that will provide opportunities for collaboration and learning.



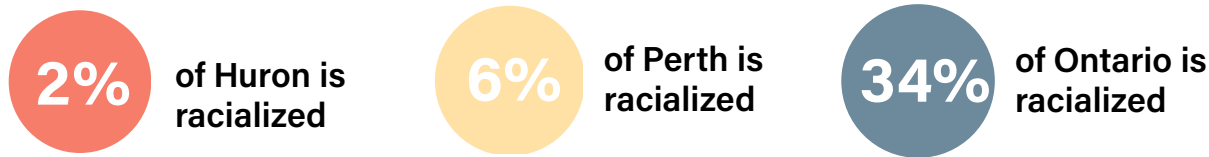
Photo by:  
Fred Gonder

### Racialized Population\* is Small For Province, Like Other Rural Areas

According to Statistics Canada, 5.5% of the population in Perth and 2% of the population in Huron are racialized populations. While this is much smaller than the provincial number of 34.3%, these percentages are consistent with other rural regions. Compared to some other rural areas, Perth and Huron have a slightly larger population of racialized groups. The largest racialized population in Perth is South Asian, while in Huron the largest population is Black.<sup>10</sup>

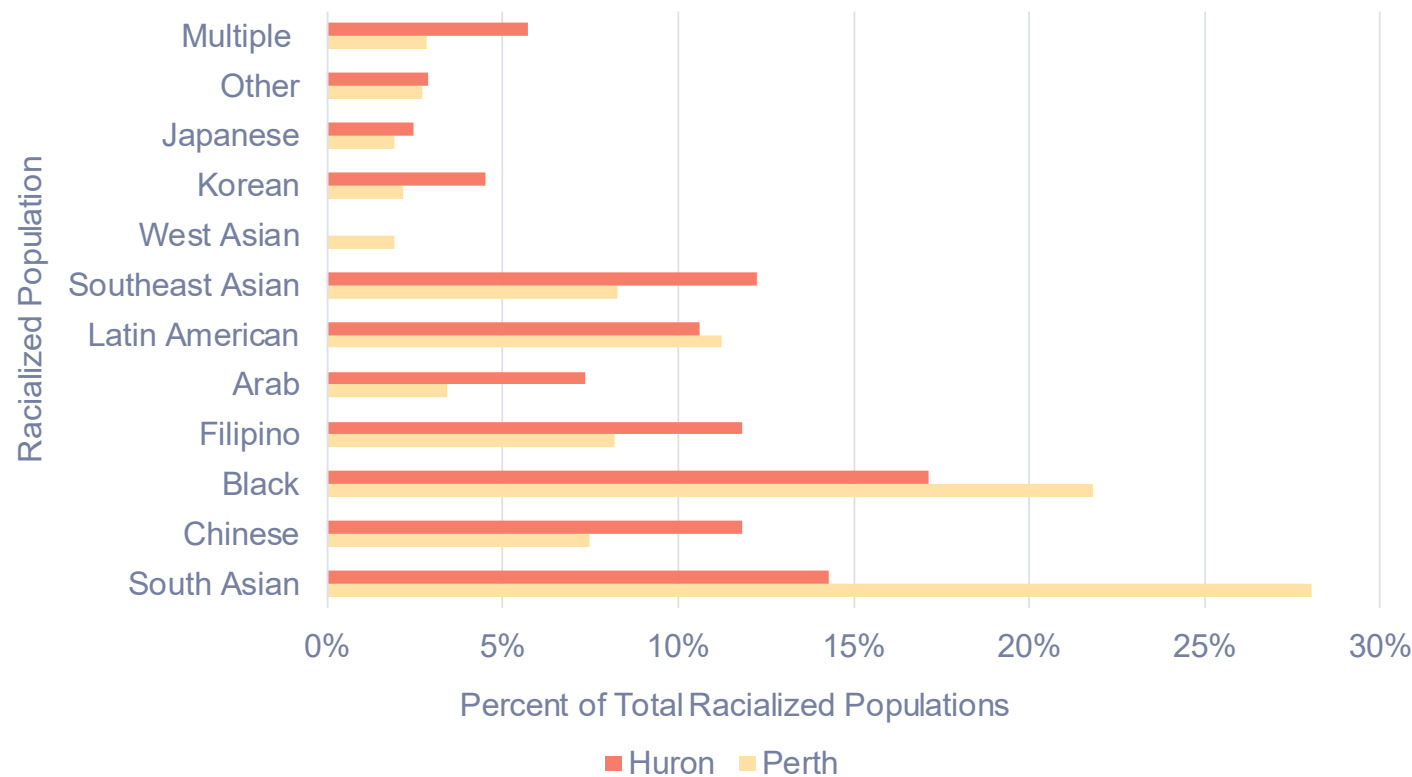
*\*According to the Government of Canada these are "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."*

*In 2021 Census analytical and communications products, the term "visible minority" has been replaced by the terms "racialized population" or "racialized groups", reflecting the increased use of these terms in the public sphere.*



**Graph 1: Racialized Populations in Perth and Huron**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Visible minority section.



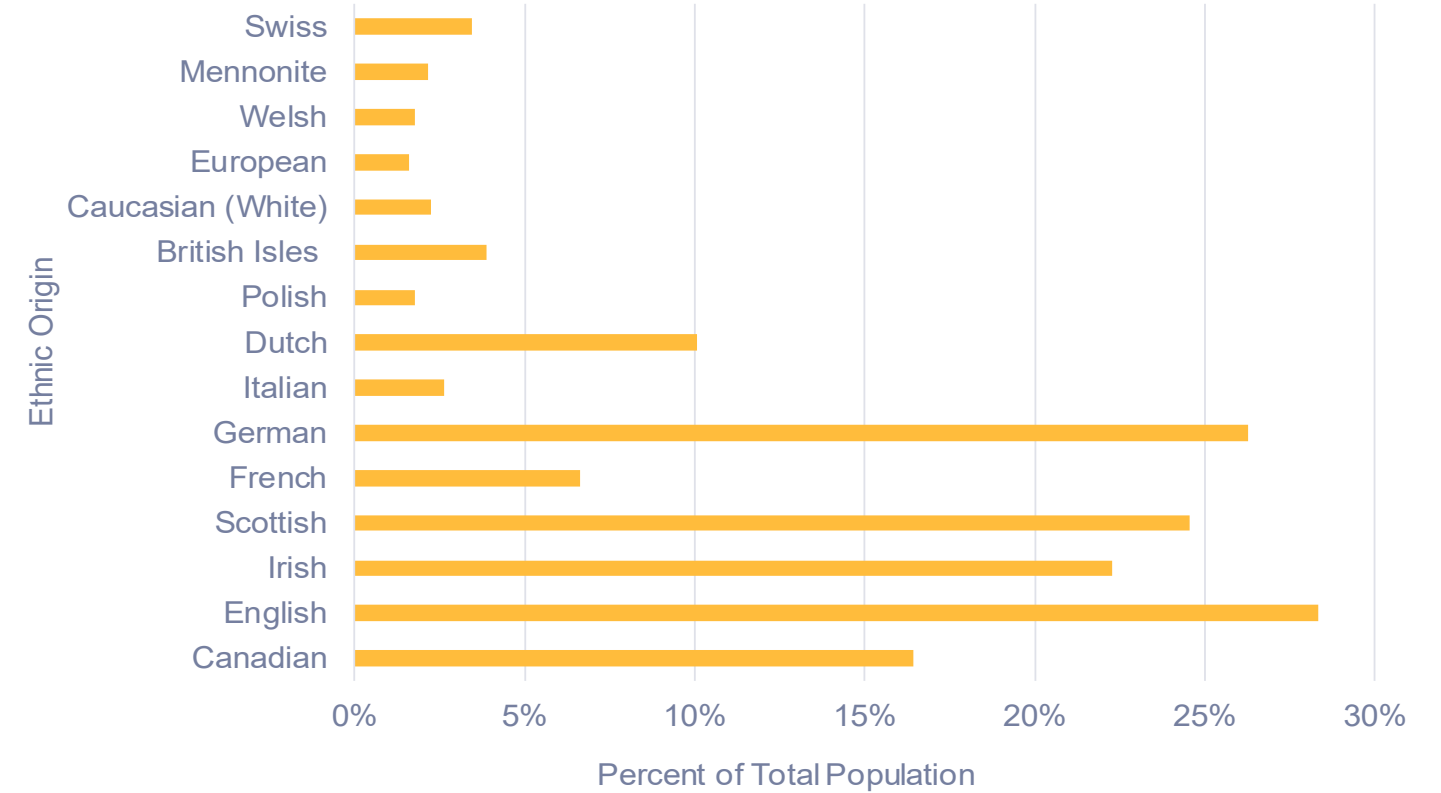
### Most Residents Are of European Ancestry

In the 2021 census, the top five ethnic or cultural origins in Perth-Huron were English, German, Scottish, Irish and Canadian. The following charts show the main ethnic or cultural origins identified.

*Race and ethnicity are not interchangeable. We are limited in the data we can access and we cannot alter terms. The data presented is based on Statistics Canada's categories and terminology and may not reflect the way people self-identify or racialized groups identify themselves.*

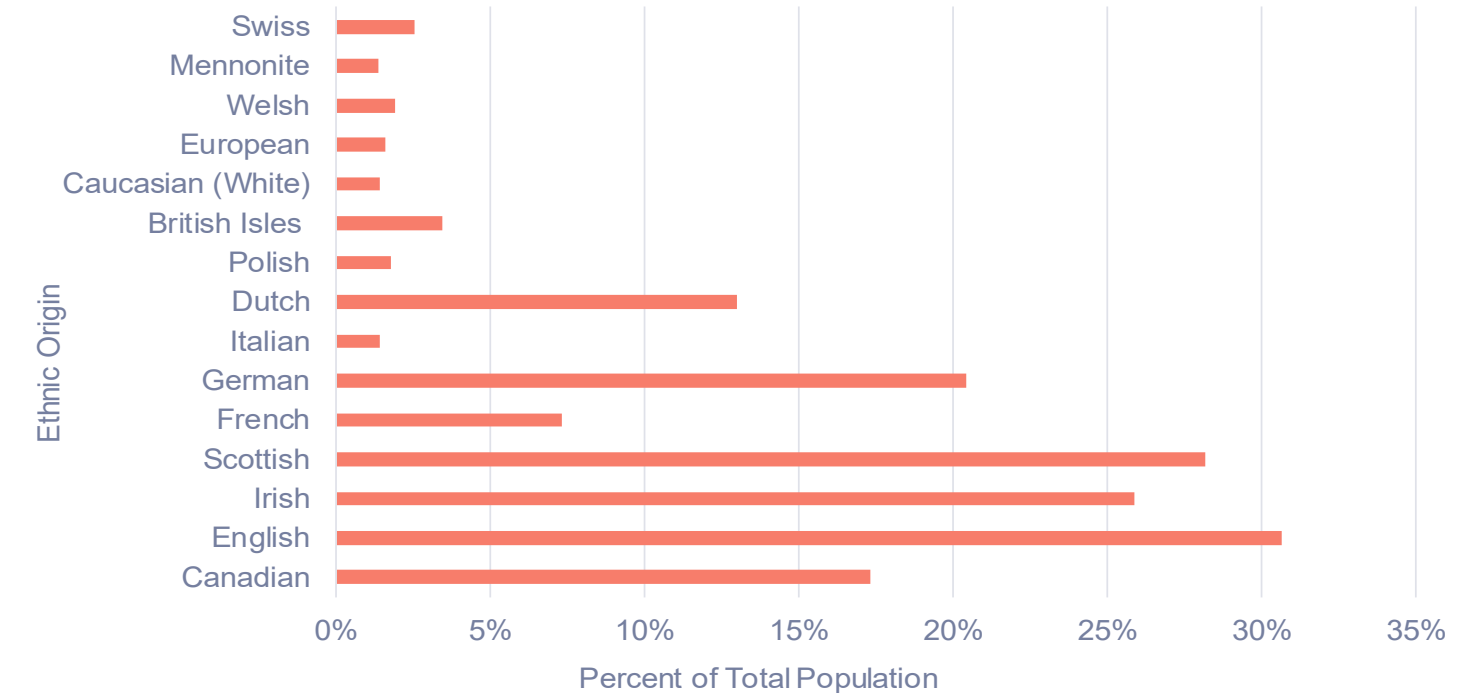
**Graph 2: Ethnic Origins in Perth**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Ethnic origins section.



**Graph 3: Ethnic Origins in Huron**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Ethnic origins section.



**Ethnicity** refers to the variety of behaviours, beliefs and traditions commonly held by a group of people with shared geography, religion, customs, history and/or language.<sup>11</sup>

**Race** is a socially constructed identity that groups people based on perceived shared characteristics, often physical traits.<sup>12</sup>

**Culture** is the mix of beliefs, knowledge, traditions and norms shared by a group of people with a common geography, social context, ethnicity, language, religion and/or history. It is passed on to subsequent generations.<sup>13</sup>

## The Amish and Mennonite Population is a Distinctive Part of Our Region

Perth and Huron are home to a significant Mennonite population. Since the first recorded Mennonite arrival in 1786, waves of Mennonite immigrants have come to Ontario from Pennsylvania, Eastern Europe, Mexico and the Canadian Prairies.

Although they all share common Anabaptist Christian roots, there are significant variations among congregations based on theological differences. Some reject all modern technology, including electricity, and can be seen driving a horse and buggy down country roads. Others use technology freely and are fully integrated into the broader community. They share beliefs in pacifism and a community-focused life.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the more traditional communities speak West Germanic languages at home, such as Low German and Pennsylvania Dutch. Notable groups include Old Order Mennonites, Russian Mennonites and Old Order Amish. As of 2011, there were 59,000 self-identified Mennonites in Ontario, 20% of whom belonged to more conservative communities.<sup>15</sup>

Although we do not have data to describe the diverse Mennonite populations in Perth-Huron more precisely, their presence adds to the distinctive character of our region.



## Far Fewer Non-Citizens Live Here Than Elsewhere in Province

The Perth-Huron population is mainly made up of Canadian citizens. The following table outlines the percentage of Canadian citizens, permanent residents and non-permanent citizens in Perth, Huron and Ontario. Non-citizens make up a much smaller percentage of the population in Perth and Huron than in Ontario.

Citizenship Status for Private Households	Perth	Huron	Ontario
Canadian citizens	97%	98.3%	90%
Not Canadian citizens (Permanent Residents)	1.5%	0.9%	7.2%
Non-permanent residents (work or study permit or who have claimed refugee status)	0.7%	0.4%	2.7%

**Table 2: Citizenship Status for Private Households**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Immigration, place of birth, and citizenship section.

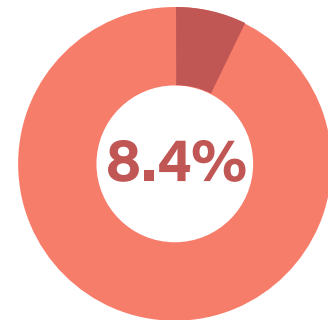


## Perth Has a Higher Rate of Recent Immigration

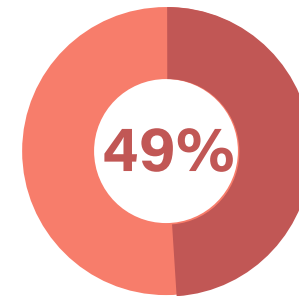
According to the 2021 census, Huron is home to 4,200 immigrants and Perth, 7,310 immigrants. In other words, 7% of the population in Huron and 9.1% of the population in Perth was born outside Canada. While these numbers are lower than the province overall, they are consistent with other rural areas in Ontario.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the immigrants in Perth and Huron arrived here before 1980, which is not true of the province. Perth outpaces Huron in terms of recent immigration, where **12.5% of the total immigrant population arrived here between 2016 and 2021, compared to only 6.5% in Huron.**<sup>17</sup>

Across Perth, Huron and the rest of Ontario, most immigrants were between the ages of 25 and 44 when they arrived in Canada. However, **Perth has seen significantly more young immigrants proportionally than Ontario as a whole.** This chart displays the age distribution of immigrants.



8.4%  
of the Perth-Huron population was born outside Canada



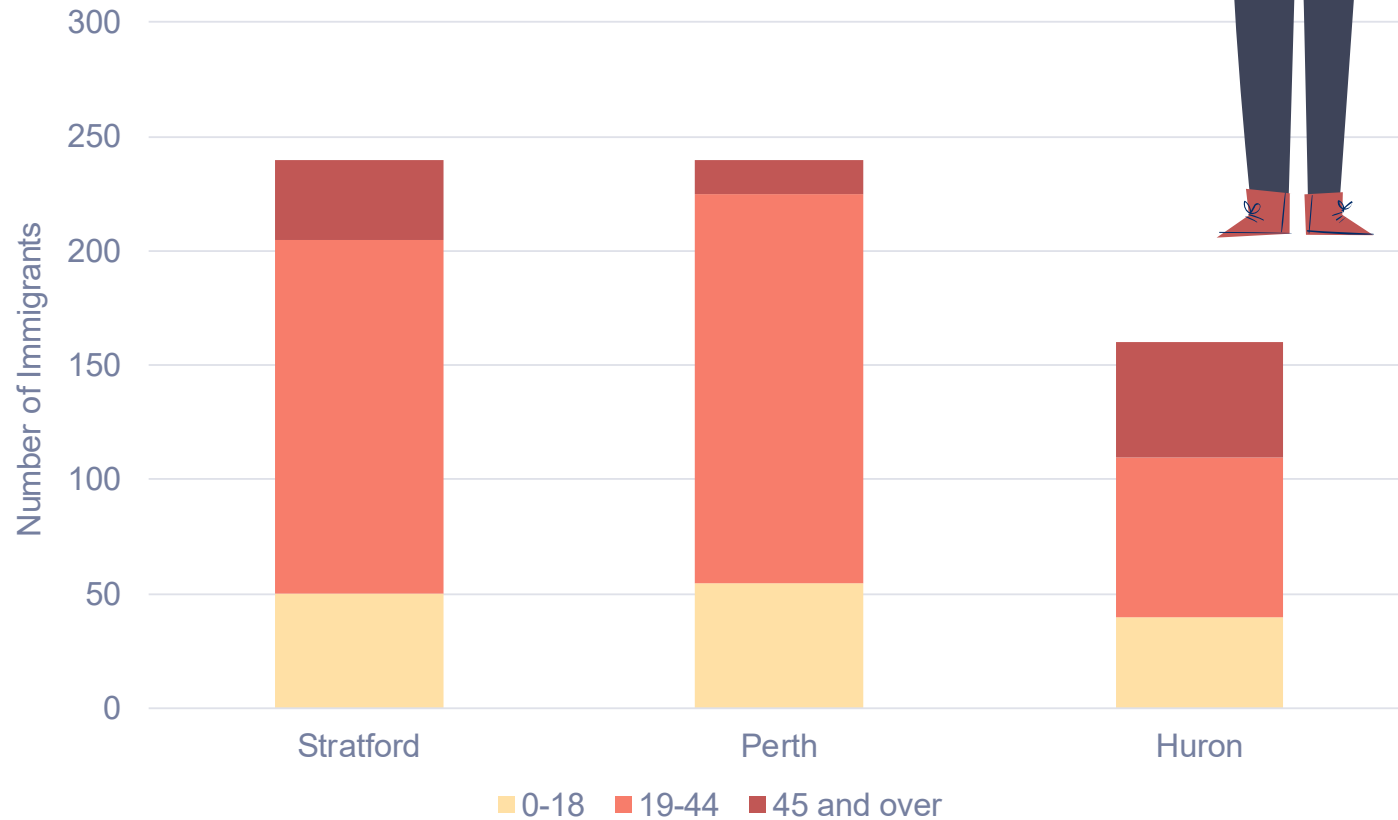
49%  
of immigrants in Perth-Huron arrived in Canada as economic immigrants

*Newcomer is an inclusive term used in this report to refer to anyone who has left another country and lives in Canada.*

*Temporary Foreign Workers are individuals who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents and work in Canada in positions facing labour shortages that are unfilled by Canadians.*

**Graph 4: Recent Immigrants in Perth and Huron**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021, Immigration section.



The most common places of birth among recent immigrants differs between Perth and Huron. In Perth, 50% of recent immigrants were from Asia and 33% were from the Americas. By contrast, 47% of recent immigrants in Huron were from the Americas and 30% were from Asia. Almost 70% of all immigrants living in Huron are from Europe compared to 50% in Perth. These regions are broken down further in the chart.

**48.5% of immigrants in Perth-Huron arrived in Canada as economic immigrants**, selected for their potential to contribute to the Canadian economy. Graph 6 displays the admission categories and applicant types for people in Perth, Huron and Ontario.<sup>18</sup>

The data in this report was collected prior to the arrival of Ukrainians who came to Canada under the *Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel* (CUAET) special measures. These measures were introduced by the Government of Canada in 2022 after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, allowing Ukrainians and their family members to live, work and study in Canada until they can safely return home. As of July 2023, over 166,000 Ukrainians have come to Canada through this program. In Huron County alone, approximately 70 Ukrainians arrived between March 2022 and June 2023. In Perth, 93 individuals in the CUAET immigration class have accessed government-funded settlement services.<sup>19</sup>

In July 2023, the Canadian government announced a new pathway to permanent residency for people who fled Ukraine, are temporary residents, who want to stay in Canada and have one or more family members in Canada. This new permanent resident pathway will begin October 23, 2023.

**In August 2020, there were over 500 temporary foreign workers in Perth-Huron. This number was estimated to be less than half of what is typical for our region during the peak agricultural season.\***

*\*The source for all information in this report is Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) System and Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Integrated Case Management System (ICMS).*

Settlement services are free and help newcomers settle in their community. Learn more:

**In Huron:** Huron County Immigration Partnership 'Get Settlement Support'

<https://www.huroncounty.ca/economic-development/our-services/immigration-partnership/>

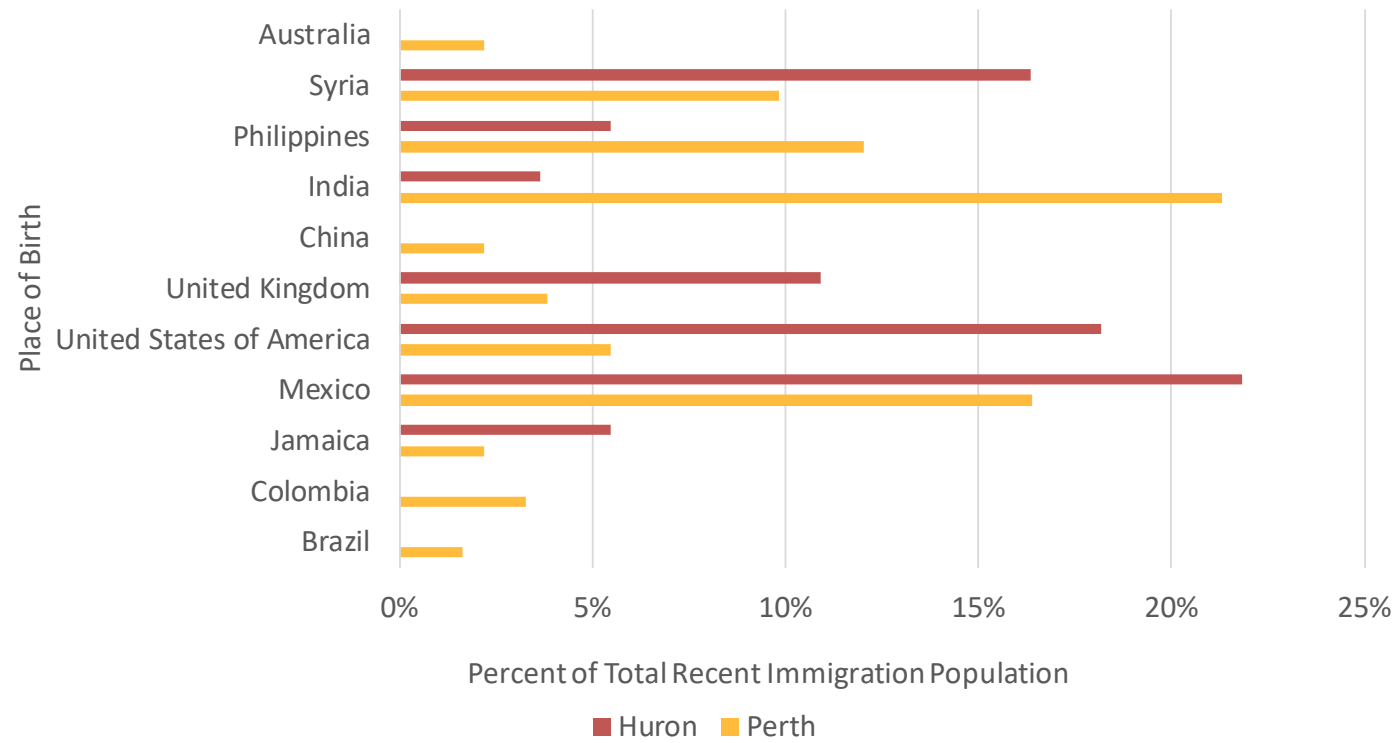
**In Perth:** YMCA of Three Rivers:

[www.ymcathreerivers.ca/settlement-services](http://www.ymcathreerivers.ca/settlement-services)



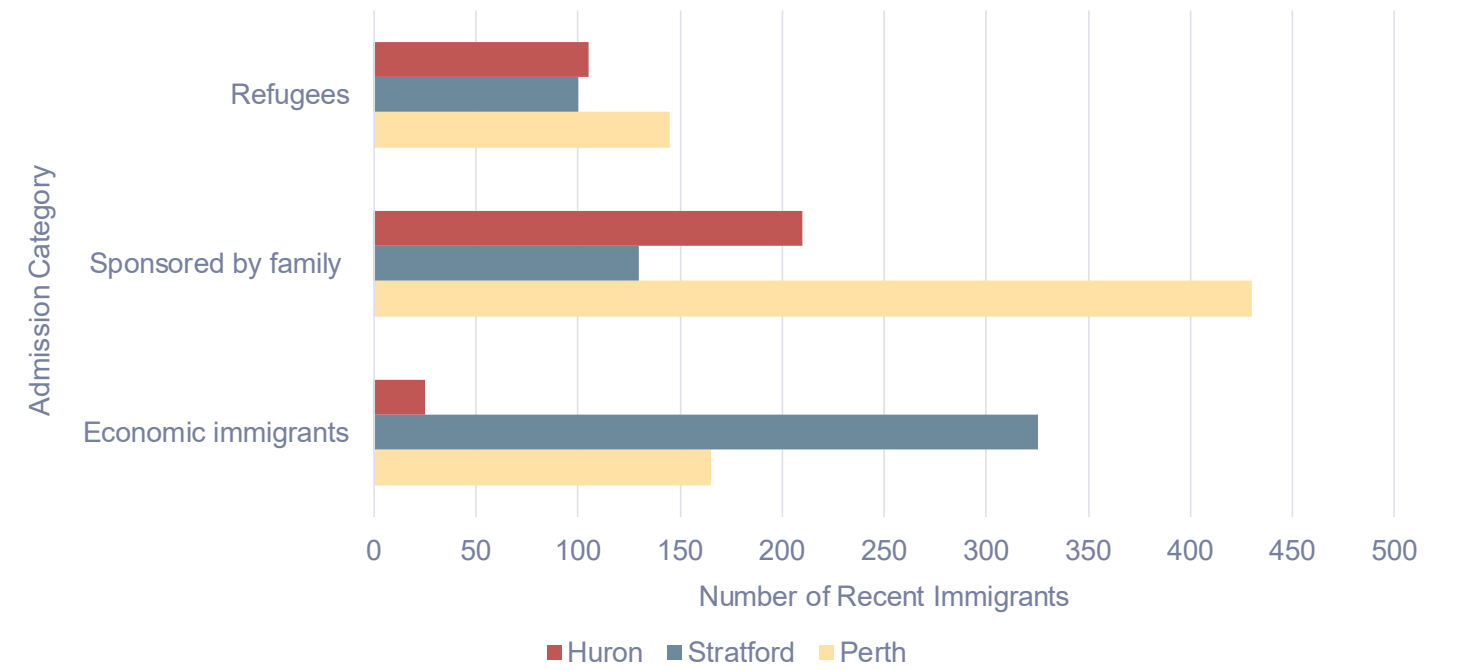
**Graph 5: Place of Birth for Recent Immigrants**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Immigration section.



**Graph 6: Admission Category and Applicant Type**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Immigration section.



Term	Definition
<b>Admission Category</b>	Refers to the name of the immigration program or group of programs under which an immigrant has been granted, for the first time, the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities.
<b>Applicant Type</b>	Refers to whether an immigrant was identified as the principal applicant, the spouse or the dependent on their application for permanent residence.
<b>Immigrant</b>	Refers to a person who is, or who has been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities.
<b>Economic Immigrants</b>	Includes immigrants who have been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy through meeting labour market needs, to own and manage or build a business, to make a substantial investment, to create their own employment or to meet specific provincial or territorial labour market needs.
<b>Immigrants Sponsored by Family</b>	Includes immigrants who were sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and were granted permanent resident status based on their relationship either as the spouse, partner, parent, grand-parent, child or other relative of this sponsor.
<b>Refugees</b>	Includes immigrants who were granted permanent resident status based on a well-founded fear of returning to their home country.



## RECOMMENDATIONS



The federal government, through IRCC, provides funding to establish an Immigration Partnership to better support newcomers and newcomer-serving organizations in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County.



Local agencies and government collect data in a manner that complies with the Ontario government's Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.



The Canadian government has introduced new temporary-to-permanent residency pathways to meet its immigration targets, particularly to address labour force challenges in essential sectors such as healthcare, hospitality and trades. The new pathways will support international students and temporary foreign workers. This presents Perth and Huron Counties with an opportunity given our substantial number of temporary workers. Access to these new pathways is offered on a competitive basis to those best positioned for success. Our communities should offer services that help temporary residents qualify for these programs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



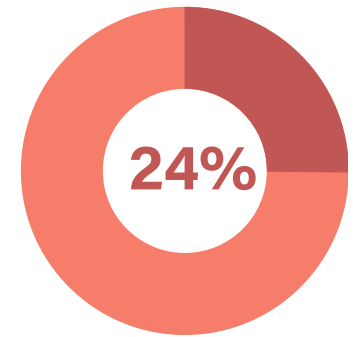
Provincial and federal governments fund programs and services such as settlement, employment, language learning, etc., for temporary residents. This will give them a better experience in the community and a better chance to transition to permanent residency.



Municipal government, community members, organizations and business engage with Immigration Partnerships and other programs to support newcomers, regardless of immigration status, to create welcoming communities

## 24% of People in Ontario Identify as Having a Disability

Every five years, Statistics Canada conducts the Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD). According to the most recent survey from 2017, 24.1% of people in Ontario identify as persons with either a visible or non-visible disability. 14.7% of people aged 15 to 44, 31.2% aged 45 to 74 and 53.5% aged 75 and over identify as persons with a disability. Data for the next CSD is currently being collected.<sup>20</sup>



## RECOMMENDATION



Local data on disabilities was not available. We recommend local agencies and governments collaborate to ensure the availability of quality data on those living with disabilities.

*It is important to recognize the challenges individuals may experience when deciding to disclose information about their disability. They may be faced with private or public discrimination due to both visible and non-visible disabilities.*





### Significant Gap in Data on the 2SLGBTQI+\* Community

There is a lot of missing data when it comes to the 2SLGBTQI+ population in Perth and Huron. Currently, there is limited data available from Statistics Canada through the last census. Out of 11,782,845 people in Ontario, around 24,000 identify as transgender and roughly 15,000 as non-binary persons. However, Statistics Canada data for our region does not reference transgender or non-binary identities. Instead, data is broken down by men+ (which includes men, boys and some non-binary persons) and women+ (which includes women, girls and some non-binary persons). Similar patterns are seen for data on sexual orientation and, while it is collected, it cannot always be reported. Data must be aggregated this way because of small population sizes and to protect the confidentiality of respondents. Unfortunately it also prevents us from understanding our community.

\*2SLGBTQI+ refers to the Canadian community.

- **2S:** Two-Spirit
- **L:** Lesbian
- **G:** Gay
- **B:** Bisexual
- **T:** Transgender
- **Q:** Queer
- **I:** Intersex
- **+**: inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities who use additional terminologies

### RECOMMENDATION



If surveys allow people to choose a gender identity other than male/female, findings should reflect where possible while protecting privacy. Recent Statistics Canada data on COVID-19 offers the option to see data on 2SLGBTQI+ respondents without reporting on particular sexual orientations or non-binary genders. This is a step in the right direction, but more granular data is required.

Local agencies and governments ensure that gender diverse options for self-identification are available in surveys and other data collection tools.

## SMALL PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION SPEAKS LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

### Knowledge of Official Languages

In Perth and Huron, over 99% of the population can speak English, French or both. This is slightly higher than the provincial numbers. Only 0.7% of the population in Perth and Huron speak neither English nor French. In all of Ontario this number is 2.4%.<sup>21</sup>

### Mother Tongue

In Perth, 88.5% of the population spoke one of Canada's official languages as a first language, 0.01% spoke Indigenous languages and 10.3% spoke other languages. For Huron, 91% spoke one of the official languages, 0.01% spoke Indigenous languages and 8.3% spoke other languages.<sup>22</sup>

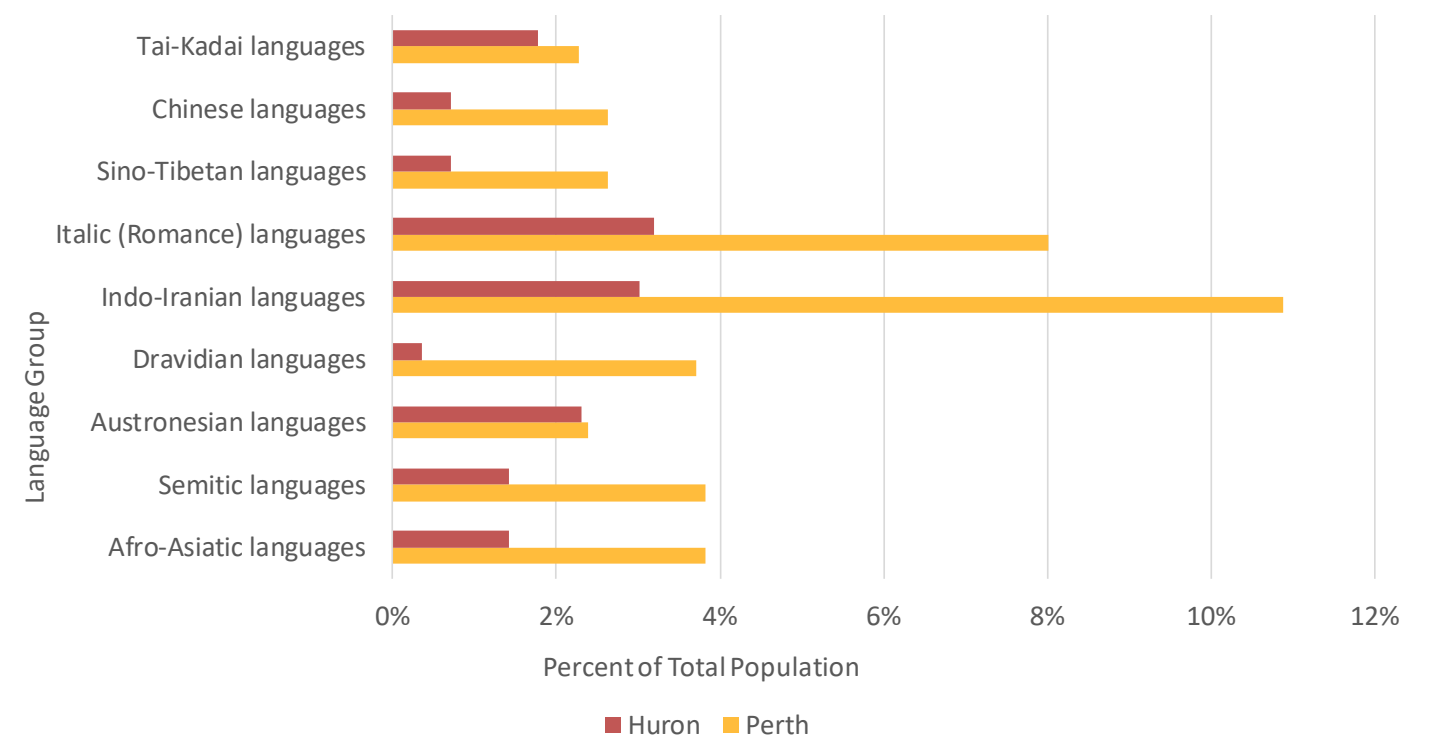
### Language Spoken at Home

Most people in Perth and Huron (95%) speak primarily English at home. Less than 1% primarily speak French at home. Of the households that speak non-official languages at home, most (81% in Perth, 91% in Huron) speak Indo-European languages, particularly Germanic languages. The following chart displays other language families people identified as the most spoken at home. There is a significant difference between Perth and Huron regarding Italic and Indo-Iranian languages spoken at home. The number of households speaking Italic and Indo-Iranian languages in Perth is significantly higher.<sup>23</sup>



Graph 7: Language Most Spoken at Home

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021. Language.



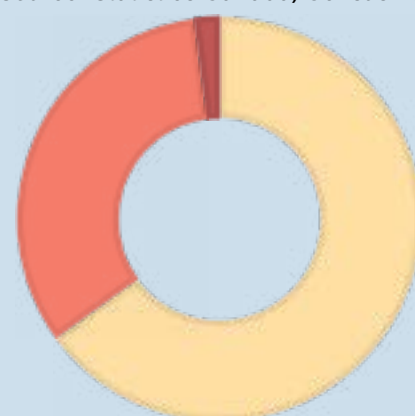
Language Family	Region of Origin	Language
<b>Tai-Kadai</b>	Southern China, Northeast India, Southeast Asia	Lao, Thai
<b>Sino-Tibetan</b>	China, India, Myanmar, Nepal	Mandarin, Cantonese
<b>Italic (Romance)</b>	Italy, Spain, Portugal, Romania	Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish
<b>Indo-Iranian</b>	India, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, some areas of the Caucasus Mountains	Gujarati, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Urdu, Persian
<b>Dravidian</b>	Southern India, Northeast Sri Lanka, Southwest Pakistan	Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu
<b>Austronesian</b>	Philippines, Indonesia, Madagascar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Taiwan	Ilocano, Pangasinan, Tagalog
<b>Afro-Asiatic</b>	North Africa, Southwest Asia	Amharic, Arabic, Tigrigna
<b>Indo-European</b>	Europe, Asia, Northern India	Balto-Slavic, Polish, Russian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Germanic (German, Pennsylvania Dutch), Dutch, Low German, Plaudietsch, Greek

	Recommendation	Individual / Community	Organizations Businesses	Municipal Gov.	Provincial /Federal Gov.
1	Learn about Canada's colonial roots and take responsibility for meeting the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (p.6)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Engage with the local Indigenous community to identify and establish self-determined resources, such as Friendship Centres in Perth-Huron, that will among other things, provide opportunities for collaboration and learning. (p.6)		✓	✓	✓
3	The federal government, through IRCC, provides funding to establish an Immigration Partnership to better support newcomers and newcomer-serving organizations in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County. (p.16)				✓
4	Provincial and federal governments fund programs and services such as settlement, employment, language learning, etc., for temporary residents. (p.16)				✓
5	Municipal government, community members, organizations and business engage with Immigration Partnerships and other programs to support newcomers, regardless of immigration status, to create welcoming communities. (p.16)	✓	✓	✓	
6	Local agencies and governments collaborate to ensure the availability of quality data on those living with disabilities. (p.17)		✓	✓	✓
7	Local agencies and government collect data in a manner that complies with the Ontario government's <i>Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism</i> (p.17)	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Local agencies and governments ensure that gender diverse options for self-identification are available in surveys and other data collection tools. (p.18)		✓	✓	✓

## RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

According to Statistics Canada, 65% of the population in Perth-Huron identifies as Christian, 33% practices no religion and/or holds a secular perspective (e.g., atheism, agnosticism, humanism) and 2% practice various other religions (Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh), Traditional (North American Indigenous Spirituality).<sup>24</sup>

**Graph 7: Religious Identity**  
Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021.



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- 19 Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
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## Additional Resources

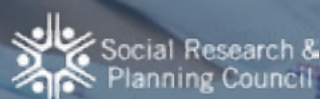
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action: [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)
- Stratford Public Library Indigenous Connections Hub: [https://spl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/379726997\\_spl\\_shauna/2177096829\\_indigenous\\_connections\\_hub%20%3Ctarget=%22\\_blank%22%3E](https://spl.bibliocommons.com/list/share/379726997_spl_shauna/2177096829_indigenous_connections_hub%20%3Ctarget=%22_blank%22%3E)

### About the SRPC

The Social Research & Planning Council (SRPC), operated by United Way Perth-Huron, is comprised of community representatives who are dedicated to the collection, analysis and distribution of information relating to social trends and issues in Perth and Huron Counties. The SRPC approaches its work in two ways:

1. Commissioning research into specific social issues.
2. Developing recommendations for community improvement based on local findings and working collaboratively with community members to implement change.





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