



2021-2022 **COLLECTIVE** **IMPACT REPORT**



Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) is a project of United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) and is funded by



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FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Joining the **Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG)**, I learned how well this local immigration partnership has worked for more than 15 years. PNSG has drawn partners together on current issues that newcomers, who arrive to make Peel region home, face.

Immigrant and refugee-serving organizations in Peel region have developed supportive partnerships and networks to improve services for newcomers that, in turn, support newcomers' community connections locally. Peel Newcomer Strategy Group actively fosters cross-sectoral partnerships for greater capacity, responsiveness and adaptability of services in Peel region.

The number of immigrants arriving in Peel region as permanent residents continues to grow, as you will read on [page 6](#); and the welcoming of a growing number of temporary residents such as international students and displaced persons from Ukraine and other countries has drawn together various community responses.

I am encouraged that our collaborative work in the community is starting to incorporate greater capacity-building by focusing on the

professional development of staff within the organizations and amplifying the voice of newcomers themselves. For example, we were thrilled that PNSG made a successful case for a participatory grantmaking pilot to begin in Peel region. A People's Panel (coordinated by Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement with the support of the Mariam Assefa Fund of the World Education Services) demonstrated how diverse perspectives—whether lived experience and/or formal or informal service experience—can create strategic learning and decision-making. See [page 19](#) for more on this initiative.

Further learning in the newcomer service and support system is supported by a [consultation project](#) funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). PNSG is consulting with stakeholders on regional accountability for settlement services, supports and planning. We are asking, "What might a regional structure or entity look like in Peel region for effective community planning, funding and accountability for newcomer services?"

We are looking forward to exploring these questions together and finding new ways to work collaboratively.



Jessica Kwik
Director, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group

PEEL'S LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

PEEL NEWCOMER STRATEGY GROUP (PNSG) IS THE LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP FOR PEEL REGION, SERVING THE CITY OF BRAMPTON, THE TOWN OF CALEDON AND THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA.

As a community collaborative, PNSG engages local service providers and stakeholders to optimize and coordinate services that facilitate newcomer settlement and integration.

PNSG accomplishes this through:

- Community strategic planning
- Stakeholder engagement and communications
- Convening and participating in community advisories and committees
- Conducting research and formulating policy recommendations
- Managing [ImmigrationPeel.ca](https://immigrationpeel.ca), the region's immigration web portal

PNSG receives core funding from Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) with project and salary support from the Region of Peel. Our fiscal sponsor, the United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT), also provides salary, management and shared-services support.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS (2020-2025)

- 1. Mental health**
- 2. Healthcare**
- 3. Digital Equity & Inclusion**
- 4. Women & families**
- 5. Seniors**
- 6. Youth**

IMPROVING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR PEEL NEWCOMERS

SITUATION

- An average of 39,000 newcomers settle in Peel annually
- It takes years for the average newcomer to reach income parity with established immigrants and Canadian-born residents in Peel
- Newcomers are disproportionately unemployed and under-employed despite high levels of education
- Service-providing organizations say they need better support to assist newcomer clients more holistically
- Many newcomers rely on informal settlement supports in the community that are not connected to formal service providers



PNSG FUNCTIONS

- Community-level strategic planning
- Stakeholder engagement and communications
- Service integration
- Research and policy
- Project management

STAKEHOLDERS

- Newcomers
- Settlement agencies serving newcomers
- Local service-providing organizations
- Government and funders
- Diverse community stakeholders

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Services for newcomers are accessible, coordinated and sensitive to their needs
- Newcomers are employed similarly to non-newcomers
- Greater connections established between informal community supports and formal service providers

IMPACT

- Enhanced capacity to integrate newcomers more holistically and effectively
- Peel is a welcoming community for newcomers

DEMOGRAPHICS & STATISTICS

PEEL IMPACTS: ACCELERATING IMMIGRANT ADMISSIONS

In 2021, Peel settled 9.8% of annual national immigrant admissions, representing a 2.4% increase from its previous level of immigrant admissions.

51.5%

of Peel's population
are immigrants

5%

growth in Peel region's
population between
2016 and 2021

32.5 years

the median age of
newcomers in Peel

With new targets nationally:

Year	National levels / targets	Peel level/forecast
2021	405,330	39,620 (9.8% of national level)
2022	431,645	29,870 (forecast)
2023	447,055	30,936 (forecast)
2024	451,000	31,209 (forecast)

* Forecasts were made based on the average % of national immigrant admissions settled by Peel region in the past 5 years from 2017 to 2021 (Average % of national admission: 6.92%)

*Sources

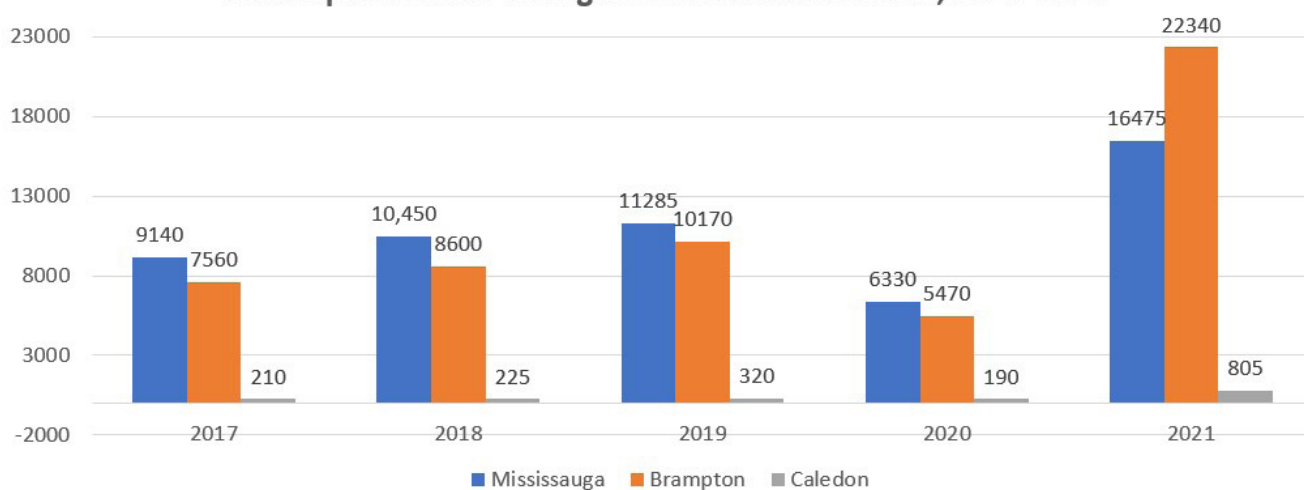
1. IRCC 2022-2024 Immigration Levels Plan: Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2022-2024 Immigration Levels Plan - Canada.ca
2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/02/new-immigration-plan-to-fill-labour-market-shortages-and-grow-canadas-economy.html>
3. Source of 2021 data: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/1a8171dc-292b-4209-a700-63cb699269ff>
4. Statistics Canada. (2022). Population and dwelling counts: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions (municipalities); Peel Data Centre. 2011 Census Bulletin



Between 2016 and 2021, Peel had a 5% population growth. Caledon had the fastest population growth from 66,502 in 2016 to 76,581 in 2021.

Caledon: +15.2%
Brampton: +10.6%
Mississauga: -0.5%

Municipal Level of Immigrant Admissions in Peel, 2017-2021*



*Sources
<https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/1a8171dc-292b-4209-a700-63cb699269ff>

PNSG RESEARCH

MENTAL HEALTH

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is working with members of its Service Delivery Network (SDN) table and other stakeholders to develop a report on the role of the settlement sector in supporting mental health for newcomers — a strategic priority.

The report synthesizes stakeholder insights, including short-term counsellors from

Peel's settlement sector, and identifies key issues related to settlement service delivery and the mental health needs of clients. Innovations and opportunities for greater connection among various service providers will be highlighted.

The report will be a launching point for discussion at a cross-sectoral forum in 2023.

HEALTH CARE

Health care is top of mind and research is underway for this strategy priority. Data is being gathered to provide an overview of newcomer access to health care and health outcomes, including health data linkages to the federal Longitudinal Immigrant Database. A literature review will consider the social determinants of health and various insights and perspectives have been shared by:

- **Newcomers who have accessed care in Peel region**
- **Front-line service providers**
- **Other health policy stakeholders**

PNSG ADVISORY TABLES

CENTRAL PLANNING TABLE

Central Planning Table (CPT) is PNSG's multi-stakeholder project advisory, which guides and informs the group's activities and confirms its strategic priorities. CPT is convened by PNSG staff and co-chaired by community stakeholders. The advisory is committed to:

- A vision that newcomers to Peel are included in all aspects of the community, embracing everyone's contribution and ensuring well-being for all
- A mission to champion a coordinated and collaborative strategy for the successful engagement of newcomers in the economy and community of Peel

The table is a platform to connect with broader regional, provincial and national stakeholders and have a direct dialogue with the policymakers. The table supports the integration of services and the establishment of cross-sector collaborations and partnerships to better support newcomers.

PNSG provides an opportunity for me to share knowledge and research that positively influences the experience of newcomers to Peel. Being a part of the group has also exposed me to new data sources which have enhanced the work I do at the Region of Peel.

— **Judith McWhinney**

Regional Economist, Region of Peel

SERVICE DELIVERY NETWORK

Service Delivery Network (SDN) is an incubator of settlement-service innovation and a collaborative convened and supported by PNSG. This working group is comprised of settlement leaders and community partners committed to strengthening service coordination and planning across the region as well as ensuring accessible, client-centred services for all newcomers.

The group meets monthly to share sector updates as each member sits on multiple federal, provincial, regional and organizational-level tables. The meeting discussions are focused on sharing ideas for improving service delivery in the region and building partnerships to learn from each other's experiences.

Community Hubs: Peel Multicultural Council (PMC), together with Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, received a grant of \$30K, from the Region of Peel, to conduct a consultant study for establishing a Community Hub in the Erin Mills Parkway corridor. PNSG was involved in the recruitment of the consultant, who will be working to develop the business case.

Recently, the group has been focusing on optimizing **digital service delivery** within the settlement sector.

In CWICE, we say that we get further ahead through partnerships. We appreciate that PNSG consistently engages with groups to ensure partnerships are developed and renewed across the region. We've had the pleasure of collaborating for several years through the Service Delivery Network and, more recently, the Regional Resettlement Group. A few of the benefits of these tables are increased cross-sector understanding and coordination, joint training initiatives and projects, and discussions about accountable and equitable services for all newcomers arriving in the region. As our LIP, PNSG's leadership in the region is invaluable.

— Danielle Ungara, RSW, Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence (CWICE)
Peel Children's Aid Society

MEMBERS' LIST

CENTRAL PLANNING TABLE MEMBERS

ACCES Employment
Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
COSTI
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD)
Moyo Health & Community Services
Newcomer Centre of Peel
Peel Children's Aid Society
Peel District School Board
Peel Halton Workforce Development Group
Peel Multicultural Council
Punjabi Community Health Services
Region of Peel
Regional Diversity Roundtable
Trillium Health Partners
United Way of Greater Toronto

SERVICE DELIVERY NETWORK MEMBERS

Caledon Community Services
Indus Community Services
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
Malton Neighbourhood Services
Peel Children's Aid Society
Peel Multicultural Council
Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
Punjabi Community Health Services

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT WORKING GROUP

On October 14, 2021, a Peel Refugee Resettlement Support Working Group (RRSWG) was reconvened to support the federal Afghan Initiative. The Region of Peel and PNSG co-chair the bi-weekly meetings. Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, the lead for the refugee resettlement assistance program in Peel, Malton Neighbourhood Services and Centre Francophone du Grand-Toronto play central roles in receiving and supporting Afghan and other government-assisted refugees.



At the beginning of 2022, Newell Canada donated strollers and car seats to Afghan families in Peel region under their “New Mom” project.

Photo: (L-R) Devanand Maharaj, Executive Director of Peel Career Assessment Services, which supported the logistics for receiving and storing donations; Ashraf Omeri and Allawdin Zalmi, staff of Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, which supports the new Afghan families at the resettlement reception centres. The donations were coordinated by the Region of Peel and distributed by Polycultural.

At present, the working group has added a focus on the displaced Ukrainians while considering equitable supports for all refugees arriving in Peel. Current issues for coordination include **housing** (e.g. [host family program by COSTI](#)), **health care access** and **employment**. Updates on supports and preparations are shared by government representatives, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress–Toronto chapter and resettlement leads such as COSTI. The working group supports information sharing across sectors, resource coordination and pathways to required services for resettlement.

Representatives include all levels of government, including IRCC, Ontario’s Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, all three local municipalities as well as relevant Region of Peel departments. About 40 different community-level organizations, including settlement agencies, child welfare organizations, school boards and police departments, are part of the group. This table supported the Operation Syrian refugees in 2015 and the support needed for asylum-seekers in the GTA in 2018.

Please see the next page to learn more about the achievements of this working group.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Micro credential course for settlement staff

To offer language and culture-specific services to clients from Afghanistan, settlement organizations hired Dari and Pashto-speaking staff, some of whom were not from the social service background. To develop their awareness of the legal and professional competencies required to work in the settlement sector, a **one-year micro-credential coursework** was **developed in collaboration with Sheridan College**. About 20 staff enrolled in the course for the first cohort, which started in June 2022.

Referral list

PNSG collected data from agencies across Peel and Halton to compile a **referral list of Dari/Pashto-speaking staff** for the Afghan Initiative and a **list of staff who speak Ukrainian, Polish and Russian** to support Ukrainian arrivals.

Donations to support the basic needs

Coordinated sector efforts, leading to **donations coming from various corporates and individuals**. Newell Brands donated car seats and strollers for new families with young children. Hundreds of baby bundles, including diapers, toiletries, clothing etc., were also received through the Region of Peel. The donations reached the families in need through the coordinated efforts of the local agencies, which collaborated on the logistics involving storage and distribution.

Vaccination for kids

Coordinated efforts with Ontario Health and Rexdale Medical Centre, Toronto, to support the **vaccination of children**, which was a mandatory requirement for school admission.

Dentistry referrals

Dentistry support was **offered by Monarch Dentistry**, services that are not supported under Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

Addressing housing demands

Coordinating to address the **housing challenges** and working with a number of stakeholders, including IRCC, regional and municipal partners, and considering innovative ideas offered by other agencies like Raising the Roof.

Ukrainian support

Learning from the experiences and challenges of the Afghan initiative, the sector started coordinating support and information for the resettlement of displaced Ukrainians. The **Resettlement Support Working Group** already **started the dialogue** with various levels of stakeholders to get **services in place to serve Ukrainian nationals** efficiently.



CONSULTATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

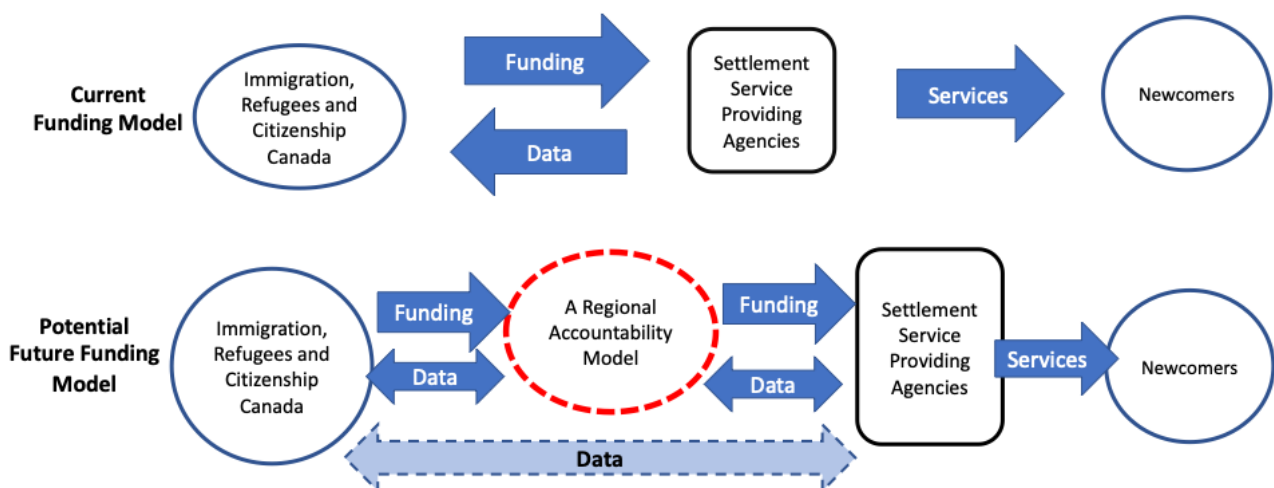
REGIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MODELS FOR SETTLEMENT

PNSG launched the Regional Accountability Models for Settlement project (RAMS) in partnership with the Centre for Community-Based Research (CCBR). This project was initiated and funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

Purpose

To facilitate a community consultation process to develop a specific plan for how the IRCC funding could be governed in Peel regions going forward.

Developing A Regional Accountability Model



PNSG is one of the local immigration partnerships across Canada invited by IRCC to develop a **regional funding and accountability model through a community-based planning process**. IRCC recognizes that newcomer settlement and integration occur locally and that decision-making at the local level may improve the effectiveness of service delivery, leading to better outcomes for newcomers.

To learn more about the project, visit the [RAMS page](#) on our website.

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the RAMS project is to carry out a co-design process through community consultations to draft a shared recommended model for regional settlement funding accountability.

ENGAGE stakeholders

ENVISION a way to collect regional settlement data on service provision

IDENTIFY potential funding hosts

BUILD a collective vision for a new approach to governance and funding

The model will be developed over a two-year period in collaboration with stakeholders from Peel-based newcomer-serving agencies. The findings of this project will be shared with IRCC to inform the development of future funding models, including possible testing in the future.

The project's first virtual information session was held on January 21, 2022. An advisory committee has been formed with 11 partners from the settlement sector and related organizations to guide the project and support with designing the model. Currently, the project is in its **environmental scan phase**. The project team is working on identifying existing settlement funding and governance models using methods such as literature review, survey and focus group. A community forum will be held in September 2022 to share the outcomes of the environmental scan phase. The outcomes from the environmental scan will be used to facilitate the community consultation process to draft a Peel-specific model for regional settlement funding accountability.

IRCC PLANNING DAY

On February 3rd and 4th, 2022, an executive council of various settlement agencies funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in Peel and Halton regions participated in a consultation on areas for future IRCC funding.

Key recommendations were provided in the main settlement domains, including settlement information, awareness and orientation; community connections; employment; language training; as well as considerations for refugee support and digital service delivery. A follow-up '**IRCC Action Day**' is being organized in the fall to follow-up on priority recommendations summarized in a report to:

- **Broaden the settlement sector capacity by:**
 - Enhancing collaboration and resource-sharing—with consideration of tools and platforms
 - Strengthening staff recruitment and ensuring retention, providing culturally-relevant staff training and succession planning to ensure newcomers receive high-quality services from qualified staff
- Standardized data collection tools to facilitate consistent service quality and information sharing
- Innovations in digital access and post-pandemic service delivery to enable successful client outcomes

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group contributed to the planning and coordination alongside representatives from **IRCC**, co-chairs of the **Peel-Halton-Dufferin Executive Council**, **Halton Newcomer Strategy** and **Ryelle Strategy Group**.

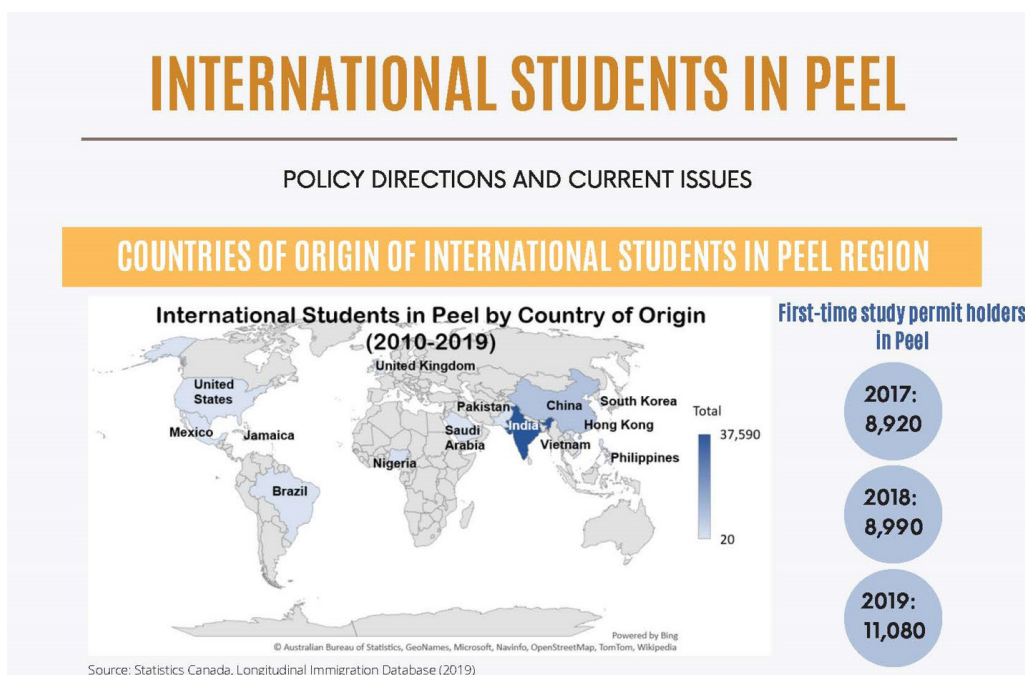
PUBLIC GOOD INITIATIVE

The Public Good Initiative is a student-led initiative that provides pro-bono consulting services to non-profit organizations across Ontario, with a mission to make positive contributions to increase policy and research capacity in the province's non-profit sector.

In the fall of 2021, three pro-bono consultants (Patricia Guzman Bautista, Tea Vasha and Nour Ellassiuty) from the Public Good Initiative supported PNSG's policy work in creating a series of infographics on immigration pathways and key populations of interest in Peel region.

INFOGRAPHICS

1. Demographic data about **Government Assisted Refugee** populations resettled in Peel since September 2021 as a part of the **Afghan initiative** as well as from other parts of the world.
2. The **challenges of international students**, existing policy frameworks pertaining to international students at various levels of government, and country of origin data for study permit holders in Peel region.
3. Overview of **immigration pathway terminology** and **national data on immigration levels**.



TAMARACK PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PILOT PROJECT

BUILDING EQUITABLE ECONOMIES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN PEEL



Tamarack Institute, in partnership with the **World Education Services (WES) Mariam Assefa Fund**, has launched a **Participatory Grantmaking Pilot** (PGP) to support immigrants' economic mobility in Peel region. This opportunity was developed as part of a participatory grantmaking pilot funded by the WES Mariam Assefa Fund to shift decision-making power to residents and community stakeholders in Peel.

PNSG made a strong case for Peel to be the first pilot community, which ultimately led to the selection of Peel region based on the growth of immigrants and refugees arriving, community momentum and alignment of initiatives, among other factors.

This project highlighted the role of a local immigration partnership, as PNSG offered Tamarack knowledge of the landscape of services and data on local issues to ground the work. PNSG supported outreach efforts and shared key information about the project, which supported the formation of a **People's Panel**, representing diverse experiences, to co-design the funding opportunity; and, encouraged a diversity of applications for Tamarack's call for funding proposals.

The People's Panel, which included immigrants and leaders from the immigrant and refugee-serving sector, reflected their knowledge and lived experiences to identify funding priorities aimed at removing economic barriers for immigrants and refugees to make a regional impact.

Six projects were announced for funding earlier this year. **Afghan Women's Organization, Family Services of Peel, Laadliyan, MIAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families, Peel District School Board** and Sikhs Serving Canada Association will receive a total of \$600,000 grants. The projects and organizations funded through this initiative will improve economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees by supporting employment programs to ensure their ability to thrive.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SETTLEMENT SECTOR

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group was tasked by the Executive Council to conduct **professional development (PD) trainings** for the settlement sector organizations of Peel and Halton regions.

PNSG continued working with the co-chairs of the Executive Council and its four sub-committees — Community Connections Partnership; Information, Awareness and Orientation Partnership;

Labour Market Partnership and Language Partnership — as well as its Halton counterpart (Halton Newcomer Strategy) to determine the sector needs for learning opportunities.

PNSG sourced sector experts and facilitators to offer virtual professional development sessions to the staff with a focus on prioritizing capacity-building and learning opportunities.

In the fall of 2021, a survey was conducted within the settlement sector to identify staff training needs. Responses from 76 participants from the four partnership tables identified some common topics including:

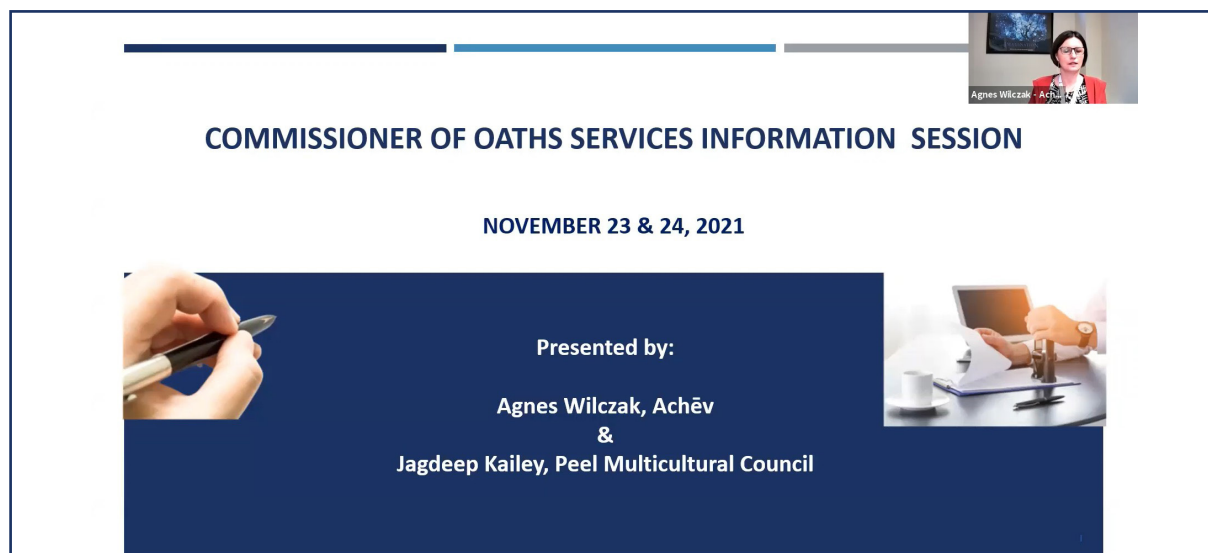
- **Supporting mental health for clients and staff**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Project management**
- **Case management techniques**
- **Digital service delivery**
- **Developing culture competency**
- **People management best practices**

Sessions covering the priority topics have been planned for 2022-2023.

I attended the professional development sessions organized by PNSG, one of the best professional development sessions for service providers I ever attended. As a service provider, I felt empowered and equipped with valuable tools that will enable me to provide an excellent service to my clients. The sessions were well-organized, insightful and easy to understand. I attended two sessions: Online service navigation platforms for newcomers and Connecting refugees to employment: customization for optimal client support.

— **Amal Haroon,**
**Program Coordinator–Settlement
Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)
Peel-Halton Integrated Services
Reception Centre**

IMPACT OF THE SESSIONS



A snapshot from a professional development virtual session on the role and function of Commissioners of Oaths

300 total participants

6 sessions

45% frontline workers

25% managers,
supervisors

31% identified as serving
Halton

53% identified as serving
Peel

TOPICS FOR THE SESSION INCLUDED:

- A Spotlight on Global Affairs Canada - Presented by Global Affairs Canada and the Child Welfare and Immigration Centre of Excellence (Children's Aid Society) (May 20, 2021)
- BoardWalk: Volunteer MBC's Info session – Leadership learning opportunity for newcomers (September 9, 2021)
- Afghan Culture and History: Info session with Afghan Women's Organization (November 4, 2021)
- Role and function of Commissioners of Oaths (November 23 & 24, 2021)
- Communicating Vaccine Policies to Clients: Webinar and Discussion (February 17, 2022)
- Manager's discussion, supporting mental health on teams (February 23, 2022)

Evaluation feedback collected after each professional development training demonstrated that participants felt that the session content was relevant to their work and they will do something new or different as a result of attending the session.

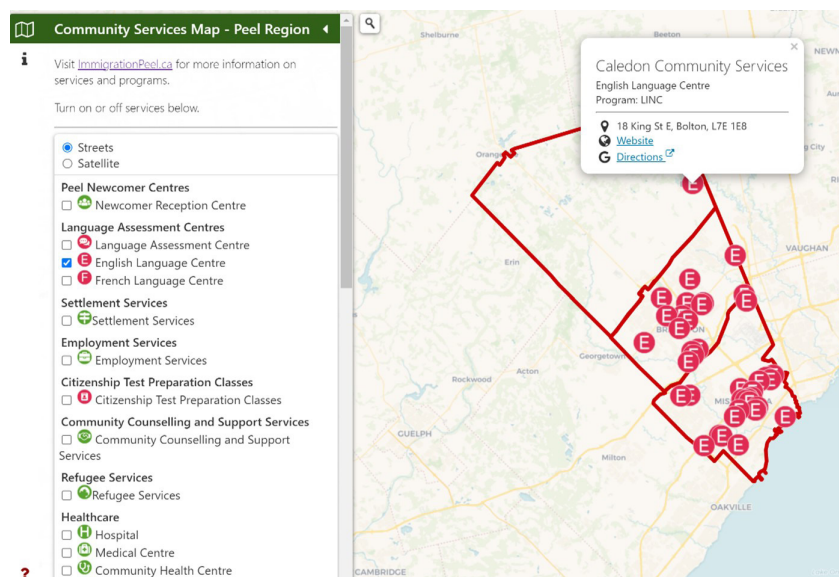
IMMIGRATION PEEL WEB PORTAL

[Immigrationpeel.ca](https://immigrationpeel.ca) is a one-stop resource that helps newcomers to find key information on local services, programs and events that facilitate their settlement, employment, education and integration in Peel region, including Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.



This comprehensive web portal has two key interactive features that assist newcomers in finding programs and services:

1. An interactive community services map that allows users to search for helpful local community services and resources.



2. A calendar of events that allows users to search for events delivered by a variety of service providers in Peel based on their own selected criteria.

WEB PORTAL STATS' OVERVIEW

According to the comparison report data collected via Google Analytics, the number of users who visited the [Immigration Peel Web Portal \(IPWP\)](#) increased by **23.57%** between 2020 and 2021. The number of visits to the IPWP climbed up by 24.13%, and the number of pages viewed grew by 18.38%. These three top traffic metrics indicate that the IPWP is on the right track to meet the users' needs.

Site visitors' overview (2020 & 2021)

Users		Sessions		Page views	
2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
43,281	53,484	50,965	63,262	78,278	92,656
23.57% ↑		24.13% ↑		18.38% ↑	

In 2020 and 2021, the majority of users discovered the website organically through search engine results. It shows that the contents of [Immigration Peel Web Portal](#) are highly relevant to the users' search keywords.

Site content overview (2020 & 2021)

Page Title	
2020	2021
1. Peel immigration	1. Peel immigration
2. Newcomer services in Peel region	2. At the airport
3. At the airport	3. Citizenship test preparation classes
4. Colleges and universities	4. Newcomer services in Peel region
5. Citizenship test preparation classes	5. OHIP card
6. Learn language	6. Colleges and universities
7. Calendar	7. Learn language
8. OHIP card	8. Calendar
9. Employment programs	9. Employment programs
10. Adult education and training	10. Housing

The top 10 ranked page titles represent the most popular topics that visitors were looking for on the IPWP in 2020 and 2021.

MEET OUR TEAM

PEEL NEWCOMER STRATEGY GROUP STAFF



Jessica Kwik
Director



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Shriya Seksaria
Service Integration Specialist



Sara Cheriyan
Communications Specialist



Leila Mortazavi
Peel Immigration
Web Portal Specialist



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