

STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS UPDATE

2020–2025



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INTRODUCTION

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group (PNSG) is a local immigration partnership that helps coordinate among the services and supports for newcomers in strategic ways. The goal is to make a collective impact or improvement for newcomers in Peel region. We are guided by a Central Planning Table (CPT), which serves as a strategic advisory body that outlined five original priorities in 2020 has evolved to include:

1. **Mental health**
2. **Healthcare**
3. **Digital Equity & Inclusion**
4. **Amplifying the voice of newcomers**
5. **Regional Accountability Models for Settlement**

The following pages outline the progress to date on the strategic priorities.

We look forward to keeping you updated on these priorities and emerging issues through our [monthly e-newsletter](#).

Open to your thoughts and interest, please feel free to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group
info@peelnewcomer.org



CENTRAL PLANNING TABLE MEMBERS

- ACCES Employment
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- COSTI
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)
- Moyo Health & Community Services
- Newcomer Centre of Peel
- Peel Children's Aid Society / Child Welfare and Immigration Centre of Excellence
- 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 Greater Toronto





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PEEL NEWCOMER STRATEGY GROUP

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 stakeholders to facilitate integrated newcomer services based on local data and planning.

As a local immigration partnership, PNSG conducts community-level strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, communications, research, policy formulation and project management – to improve social and economic outcomes for Peel newcomers, immigrants and refugees.

A project of United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT), PNSG is funded by:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



OUR VISION

The successful inclusion of newcomers into all aspects of the community, embracing everyone's contribution and ensuring well-being for all.

OUR MISSION

To champion a coordinated and collaborative strategy for the successful engagement of newcomers in the economy and community of Peel.

MANDATE

- Convene stakeholders to improve and integrate regional settlement services
- Provide evidence-based immigration policy exploration contextualized regionally
- Increase stakeholder access to regional immigration data (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Facilitate newcomer access to services through immigrationpeel.ca website and other online resources
- Provide relevant training and workshops to agency partners

IMPROVING SOCIAL & ECONOMIC OUTCOMES FOR PEEL NEWCOMERS

SITUATION

- An estimated 33,000 newcomers will settle in Peel in 2023
- 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 & 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

PEEL IMPACTS: ACCELERATING IMMIGRANT ADMISSIONS

According to [2021 census data](#), immigrants (recent and established) account for **51.8%** of Peel's population of **1.45 million residents**. As per forecasts calculated based on the [2023-2025 Immigration Levels Plan](#) for Canada, Peel is expected to receive **32,178 new permanent residents in 2023** and **33,562 in 2024**. In 2021, Peel received **39,620 permanent residents**, 9.8% of national-level admissions.

51.8%

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

Year	National level/targets	Peel level/forecast
2021	405,330	39,620 (9.8% of national level)
2022	437,450	29,985 (6.85%)
2023	465,000	33,061 (*forecast)
2024	485,000	34,483 (*forecast)
2025	500,000	35,500 (*forecast)

*Forecasts were made based on the average % of national immigrant admissions settled by Peel region in 5 years from 2018 to 2022 (Average % of national admission: 7.1%)

Four percent of the population in [Peel region](#) speak predominantly a language other than English or French at home. As many as **670,775 people** had a single non-official language, other than English or French, as their mother tongue. The top five languages most often spoken at home in Peel include **Punjabi (168,795 people)**, **Urdu (60,165)**, **Hindi (35,325)**, **Arabic (33,735)** and **Gujarati (28,880)**.

*Sources

1. IRCC Immigration Levels Plan 2023-2025: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html>
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/77e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda/resource/1a8171dc-292b-4209-a700-63cb699269ff>
4. Source of 2023 and 2024 data: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/an-immigration-plan-to-grow-the-economy.html>

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PNSG works with stakeholders to champion a coordinated and collaborative strategy for the successful engagement and integration of newcomers into the economy and community of Peel. We have identified five key strategic priority areas to focus on from 2020 to 2025:



Mental health



Healthcare



Digital equity & inclusion



Amplifying the voice of newcomers



Regional Accountability Models for Settlement

When the pandemic hit, the sector realized the need to include **mental health, healthcare, and digital equity and inclusion** as key strategic priorities. Over the past two years, it became more evident that these are not individual focus areas, but those that overlaps into others, hence, requiring a sustained approach.

In addition, we recognize the need to continuously focus on **amplifying the voice of newcomers** from diverse backgrounds.

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is also working on a **Regional Accountability Models for Settlement (RAMS)** project to facilitate a community consultation process to develop a specific plan for how the Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funding could be governed in Peel region going forward.

MENTAL HEALTH

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, members of its Service Delivery Network (SDN) and other stakeholders released a report on the role of the settlement sector in supporting mental health for newcomers. Since its release, PNSG has raised themes at relevant committees to support collaboration on many of the recommendations.

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 are highlighted.

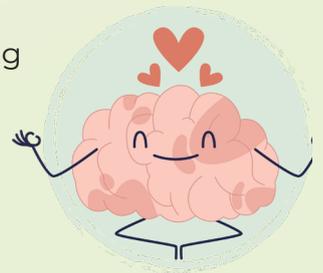
Goals

To actualize report recommendations in Peel such as:

1. To improve staff mental health by providing staff with adequate supports for their own selfcare needs to prevent and mitigate burnout, compassion fatigue and stress
2. To build bridges between settlement agencies and mainstream mental health providers
3. To consider how a family-centred approach can be better integrated by service providers (children & youth, adults, seniors)

Actions

1. Hosted a virtual discussion on Building Bridges between the mainstream mental health providers and newcomer-serving staff and managers (February 2023)
2. Hosted an in-person senior leader discussion called: Advancing Newcomer Mental Health (May 26, 2023)
3. Released [Newcomer Mental Health and Wellness Through a Settlement Lens Report](#) (June 2023)
4. Hosted an in-person Professional Development and Wellness forum (June 14 & 15, 2023)



Progress to date

Recommendations are starting to be grounded in collaborative work with the community through the Community Safety and Well-being Plan Mental Health and Addictions action table with the Region of Peel.

HEALTHCARE

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group has formed an advisory committee of healthcare practitioners, settlement agencies, and government healthcare stakeholders to support the writing of a report on refugee healthcare access.

A quantitative analysis using Statistics Canada datasets such as Canadian Community Health Survey, the Longitudinal Immigration Database, and the Census is being conducted to explore healthcare use trends amongst newcomer populations, established immigrants and Canadian-born individuals. This data, along with qualitative interview data collected through discussions with refugees, frontline healthcare providers and healthcare policymakers will be the foundation of the research.

Goals

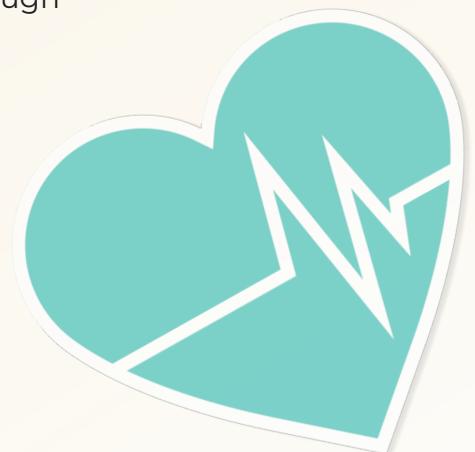
The refugee healthcare report will identify inequities in refugee health and mental health outcomes and the needed supports for health promotion and care access in Peel region. An advisory committee will guide the work, giving feedback on case studies, access challenges, examine relevant models and tools, and support the development of recommendations targeted at policy and planning entities, among other stakeholders.

Actions

1. Advisory committee of Peel-based healthcare stakeholders formed (March 2023)
2. Report objectives and framework identified through Advisory Committee (April 2023)

Progress to date

Report is on track to launch in spring of 2024



DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, settlement agencies had to shift to an online/hybrid service delivery model. With the sudden change, a need was identified to focus on digital equity and inclusion in the settlement sector. Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is working with members of its Service Delivery Network to assess the capacity of agencies in delivering digital services to newcomers and the quality of services and access for newcomers, and to identify gaps in digital equity and inclusion.

Goals

1. To develop a framework of equitable hybrid service delivery strategies in the settlement sector through coordinated partnership in Peel region
2. To implement early coordinated action on key areas of the framework
3. To build organizational and newcomer capacity to interact digitally
4. To explore a benchmark for minimum level of digital maturity and whether that can provide data insights on client services

Actions

1. Alignment with National Steering Committee on Technology (Marco Campana co-authored); and IRCC-funded Executive Council agencies
 - On June 28, 2022, Marco Campana, co-author of National Steering Committee on Technology report—[The Future Is Now: Strengthening High-Quality, Inclusive and Innovative Hybrid Service Delivery](#)—presented how to advance the collective conversation on hybrid and digital service improvements regionally and highlighted how we can use the resources already available to make a difference in areas such as professional development.

RECORDING: [Strengthening Hybrid and Digital Service Delivery: Models for consideration](#)
2. Digital Equity and Inclusion project (pending)
 - Developing online resource library
3. Settlement digital skills development: survey of digital training needs



Progress to date

This strategic priority is currently in the early phase of assessment.

AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF NEWCOMERS

Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is working with agencies in the region and across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) to understand the challenges faced by immigrants and refugees, including Afghan, refugee claimants and Ukrainian arrivals, and how to serve them better. This includes individuals in different age groups, families, women, children, youth, seniors, and international students, among others.

We are looking at ways to:

- Improve access to and the coordination of services that facilitate newcomer settlement and inclusion
- Improve access to the labour market for newcomers
- Strengthen local and regional awareness and capacity to attract, receive, integrate and retain newcomers
- Enhance partnerships and participation of multiple stakeholders in the planning, delivery and coordination of services



I. SYSTEM DECISION-MAKING

Tamarack Institute participatory grantmaking pilot project

Goal

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

Actions

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.

Progress/Outcome

Six projects were announced for funding earlier in 2022 and they received a total of \$600,000 grants.



1. **Afghan Women's Organization (AWO):** Provides employment readiness training in addition to wrap-around services and mental health to refugees and immigrants in the Peel region.
2. **Family Services of Peel:** The Family Services of Peel–Peel Institute of Research and Training, together with the Institute for Management & Innovation at the University of Toronto, Mississauga, started a research project titled [Peel Family Pathways Project](#) to understand the needs of government-assisted refugees and immigrant families in Peel region and build an equitable economy for them.
3. **Laadliyan:** Promote equitable hiring practices for businesses hiring women-identifying international students in Peel. Laadliyan engages women-identifying international students to help develop training modules for local small and midsize employers to create safer, more inclusive workplaces.
4. **MIAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families:** Provides self-employment and entrepreneurship training for immigrant women.
5. **Peel District School Board:** PDSB's Continuing and Adult Education programs provides adults the opportunity to further their educational, language, career and personal goals through the diverse program opportunities. PDSB has created a new role, a Pathways Coach, to exclusively support marginalized immigrants and refugees enrolled in adult educational programs.
6. **Seva Food Bank (Sikhs Serving Canada):** Provides cooking and culinary training program to help newcomer women from low-income communities in Peel develop employment skills, find jobs, and acclimate to the life in Canada.

II. NEWCOMER POPULATION GROUPS - Emerging needs

(i) Refugees & Ukrainians evacuees

Goals

- A Resettlement Support Working Group (RSWG) was reconvened to coordinate resettlement support for Afghan refugees, Ukrainian evacuees and refugee claimants seeking asylum
- Have a platform to discuss and find solutions

Actions

- Worked with stakeholders to address housing challenges, make healthcare accessible, provide employment supports and coordinate donations
- Initiated a micro-credential course for settlement sector staff in collaboration with Sheridan College
- Webinar sessions on Afghan culture and history that helped orient over 100 staff, and another session on Ukrainian culture

Progress/Outcome

- Supported coordination of settlement services for refugee claimants, Afghan arrivals and displaced Ukrainians with the Region of Peel and over 30 agencies
- Helped with information sharing and resource coordination for housing (e.g. host families), health care access, language support and employment

(ii) International students

Goals

- Work with educational institutions and stakeholders providing support to international students to identify ways in which PNSG can help find solutions

Actions

- With the help of three pro-bono consultants from the Public Good Initiative, PNSG created an [infographic](#) on policy directions and current issues experienced by international students
- Shared key data on [Needs of international students: Assessment report](#) at various discussions, convened discussions and participated in talks, including the [International Student summit](#) organized by Sheridan College in July 2022, to highlight the challenges faced by international students

Progress/Outcome

- PNSG is currently monitoring and understanding the pressures that settlement services and community organizations are experiencing with the growing number of international students



REGIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MODELS FOR SETTLEMENT

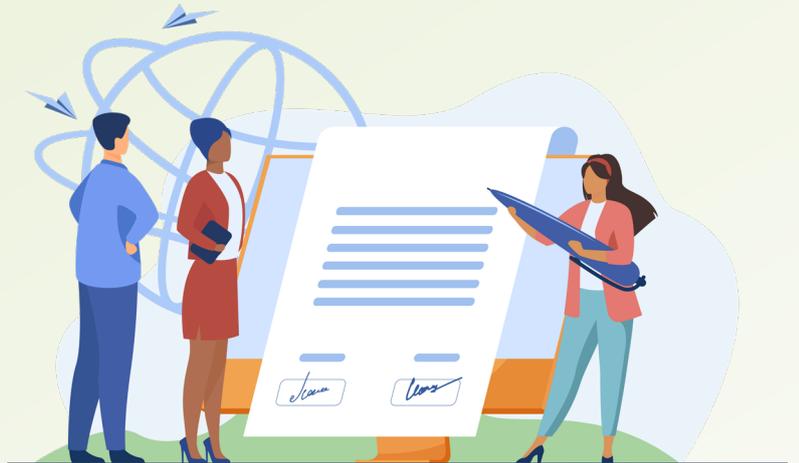
Peel Newcomer Strategy Group is consulting on a key question: What might newcomer settlement sector funding and governance look like with regional-level disbursement and accountability in Peel?

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 IRCC.

Goals

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



Actions

1. Surveys with settlement service providers in Peel region to identify how programs that support newcomers are currently being funded
2. A series of place and issue-based focus groups with service providers across the settlement sector, newcomer populations and broader sector
3. Three community information forums to share outcomes of the project with interested stakeholders
4. Meetings with advisory committee

Progress to date

The team is currently undertaking environmental scan of the project.



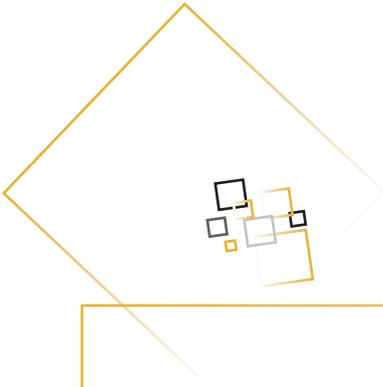


COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thanks to our community partners who have been part of our Central Planning Table, Service Delivery Network and Resettlement Support Working Group, and for helping us deliver on the collective work as per our strategic plan. Many are listed below:

- ACCES Employment
- Achēv
- Afghan Women's Organization
- Aga Khan Council of Canada, The Ismaili Centre
- Brampton Multicultural Centre
- Caledon Community Services
- Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
- CAS (Peel)
- Catholic Crosscultural Services
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- COSTI
- City of Brampton
- City of Mississauga
- Dixie Bloor Neighborhood Centre
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- Elizabeth Fry
- Halton Newcomer Strategy
- HMC Connections
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Indus Community Services
- Lifeline Afghanistan
- Malton Neighbourhood Services
- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)
- Moyo Health & Community Services
- Newcomer Centre of Peel
- Our Place Peel
- Peel Career Assessment Services
- Peel Children's Aid Society
- Peel District School Board
- Peel Family Education Center
- Peel Halton Workforce Development Group
- Peel Multicultural Centre
- Peel Regional Police Services
- Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
- Punjabi Community Health Services
- Region of Peel
- Regional Diversity Roundtable
- Roots Community Services
- Syrian Canadian Foundation
- Town of Caledon
- Trillium Health Partners
- Ukrainian Canadian Congress
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Volunteer MBC
- 211





If you would like to learn more about this strategic plan or our work, visit our website:

[*peelnewcomer.org*](http://peelnewcomer.org)

For information on newcomer supports, visit:

[*immigrationpeel.ca*](http://immigrationpeel.ca)

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