



**RESEARCH PROJECT: ESTABLISHING A BASELINE ON
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, AND IMMIGRANT
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN KINGSTON-AREA
WORKPLACES**

FINAL REPORT
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PREPARED BY



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Executive Summary

Kingston is facing a labour market shortage that will become more acute in the next few years. One necessary remedy to this shortage is to attract immigrant talent and successfully integrate this talent into the labour market. However, Kingston is performing weakly in this regard.

To understand why this is the case and to find solutions, research was undertaken from October 2018 to March 2019 for KEYS Job Centre. The research goals were to create a baseline understanding of diversity and inclusion with Kingston employers, and to identify challenges with respect to immigrant recruitment and retention. Over 200 Kingston employers and employees completed online surveys. As well, key informant interviews and focus groups were conducted with Kingston employers, employees, and service providers to inform the research.

The findings show that Kingston has further to go to become a welcoming city for immigrants. Racism and discrimination is prevalent and immigrants are experiencing poor labour market outcomes. While Kingston employers believe that racial and cultural diversity is beneficial to their workplace, in practice many employers are not engaging in concrete initiatives to foster an inclusive environment. Survey findings show that immigrant employees, in particular visible minorities, have experienced racial and cultural discrimination in their workplace. With respect to immigrant recruitment and retention, Kingston is experiencing multiple challenges. Employers note that they lack experience in assessing foreign credentials and skills, are finding it difficult to onboard and integrate new hires, and feel immigrant-service agencies don't meet their expectations. Immigrants feel they lack networking opportunities, experience language barriers in the recruitment process, find their positions and salaries don't match their experience, and believe they are not given the same promotional opportunities. Some of the more deep-rooted issues uncovered in the research was the lack of inter-cultural competency and communication in Kingston workplaces.

Given the complexity, depth, and breadth of these challenges, they need to be addressed at a systemic, organizational and service-system level. One systemic solution lies in bringing together key stakeholders, perhaps through the Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy, to address each challenge through a task force. Employers also have a responsibility to create more inclusive workplaces by embedding diversity and inclusion in their business/strategic plans. Service-system partners can help to promote the business case for hiring immigrants, deliver inter-cultural competency training to employers, and create opportunities for immigrants to network. In order for Kingston to become a more welcoming city, multiple stakeholders need to come together to tackle the challenges and implement viable solutions.

Research Methodology

The research took place from October 2018 to March 2019 and included the collection of quantitative data and qualitative information. The quantitative data was gathered from online surveys with Kingston employers and employees. The survey data was collected from 196 completed employee surveys and 42 completed employer surveys. The data was tabulated and analyzed for the report.

Qualitative information was gathered through focus groups and key informant interviews. Focus groups were conducted in January 2019 with 30 people, including Kingston employers, immigrants who are currently employed or seeking employment, and Canadian-born employees. The focus group with Canadian-born employees was seen as an opportunity to gain a unique perspective for the research. In-depth key informant interviews were conducted with 12 informants, including Kingston employers, service providers, and immigrant job seekers and employees. The interviews were conducted from December 2018 to January 2019.

An analysis of Statistics Canada data was conducted to inform the research on immigrant labour market trends, and a review of relevant literature was also synthesized in order to supplement the direct research findings.

The results of this research are summarized in the following report. More detail on the research methodology is contained in Appendix 1.

Kingston Labour Market Trends

Kingston is facing a labour market shortage that seems certain to become more acute over the next decade. Population growth has stood at 1% over the past 5 years for Kingston Census Metropolitan Area and at 0.4% for the city¹. Retirements due to an aging population will intensify these trends. Labour shortages are expected to be most critical starting in 2021, at which time the available jobs will exceed the actual population aged between 20 and 74 years old². These demographic trends don't look promising and has employers worried about their future.

Kingston employers are concerned about meeting labour force needs

The survey findings show that 66.7% of employers are concerned about their organization's ability to meet their labour force needs over the next five years. According to the survey results, key industries that are experiencing labour market shortages include professional, scientific and technology; healthcare and social assistance; public administration; and, accommodations and food services. Based on survey data and focus group feedback, employers noted their key labour force challenges as:

- difficulty hiring for entry-level and senior management positions;
- lack of skilled applicants; and,
- few incentives (apart from salary) to attract workers.

Labour market shortages will vary by industry

Approximately four-fifths of Kingston's economic base is made up of public sector administration and services, postsecondary education, specialized health care and tourism; the remaining one fifth is industry³. Going forward, the primary areas of growth are anticipated to be in the health care and education sector, while tourism will experience modest growth, and industry and agriculture sectors are expected to decline⁴. According to a 2018 MDB Insights report by the City of Kingston which tracks online postings over a period of time, the majority of the job postings were in the retail sector (19.2%), followed by healthcare and social assistance (16.8%), and educational services (14.6%)⁵. According to the report, 44.8% of the job postings require a university education, or some form of college or vocational education or apprenticeship training⁶. The data shows that Kingston will experience growth in key areas of its economy that will require educated and skilled workers.

¹ City of Kingston.2017. City of Kingston Workforce and In-Migration Strategy. Report to Council Number 17-116. Kingston, Ontario.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ City of Kingston.(2018). *Jobs Demand Report Kingston*. MDB Insight. Kingston, Ontario.

⁶ Ibid

Initiatives are being undertaken to address labour market shortages

In April 2017, the City of Kingston endorsed the Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy to address the skills shortage. The development of the Strategy involved the input of more than 150 participants representing a cross-section of employers, employment services and job seekers. The City established the Strategy Implementation Office (SIO) to develop and execute on the key areas of workforce development and talent attraction, including:

- strategic human resource approaches;
- inclusive workplace practices;
- labour market data analytics;
- employment branding;
- tapping into potential streams of future talent;
- supporting dual careers (spousal employment); and,
- establishing pathways for launching and/or advancing careers.

Kingston Immigrant Labour Market Trends

Canadian cities such as Kingston see immigration as an opportunity to boost population growth and to address labour market shortages. In this study Statistics Canada data was analyzed to gain insight on the type of immigrants that are coming to Kingston and their experiences in the local labour market. The definition of ‘immigrant’ used by Statistics Canada is ‘a person who is, or has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident.’ The Statistics Canada Census data from the period of 2011-2016 is used in this analysis to show recent immigration trends, and is filtered for ages 15 and up to account for working age adults. The data is presented for immigrants and non-immigrants (Canadian-born) for comparison.

Immigrants coming to Kingston are highly educated

The data shows that immigrants to Kingston are highly educated and have degrees in relevant sectors of the economy - 73.7% of immigrants have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree compared to 56.2% of non-immigrants.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Immigrants		Non-immigrant	
Total - Highest certificate, diploma or degree for the population aged 15 years and over in private households	1540		113075	
No certificate, diploma or degree	125	8.1%	16070	14.2%
Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate	275	17.9%	33450	29.6%
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	1135	73.7%	63550	56.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

Of those who have post-secondary credentials, the top three areas of education are: 1) business, management and public administration, 2) architecture, engineering, and related technologies, and 3) health and related fields. For non-immigrants, the top three are: 1) health and related fields, 2) architecture, engineering and related technologies, and 3) business, management and public administration.

TYPE OF EDUCATION - TOP 5 AREAS

	Immigrants	
Business, management and public administration	215	14.0%
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	210	13.6%
Health and related fields	170	11.0%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	130	8.4%
Physical and life sciences and technologies	110	7.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

	Non-immigrants	
Health and related fields	12980	11.5%
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	10500	9.3%
Business, management and public administration	10355	9.2%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	8795	7.8%
Personal, Protective and Transportation Services	4935	4.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

Majority of immigrants are visible minorities

The data shows that 72.5% of immigrants arriving into Kingston are visible minorities; the top five being South Asians (23.5%), Chinese (19.0%), Black (10.4%), Filipino (10.0%), and Arab (9.5%). In Kingston, 97.9% of the population do not identify as visible minorities, which means the population is predominately white. The top five visible minority groups in Kingston are: Black (24.8%), Chinese (23.6%), South Asian (18.0%), and Arab (5.6%).

VISIBLE MINORITY STATUS

	Immigrant		Non-Immigrant	
Total - Visible minority for the population in private households	1525		113075	
Not a visible minority	430	28.2%	110650	97.9%
Total visible minority population	1105	72.5%	2420	2.1%
South Asian	260	23.5%	435	18.0%
Chinese	210	19.0%	570	23.6%
Black	115	10.4%	600	24.8%
Filipino	110	10.0%	135	5.6%
Arab	105	9.5%	70	2.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X20162033

Most immigrants speak English at home

With respect to language, 86.3% of immigrants arriving into Kingston speak English at home and only 2.0% do not speak an official language.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

	Immigrant	%	Non-Immigrant	%
Total - First official language spoken for the population in private households	1535		113070	
English	1325	86.3%	109060	96.5%
French	60	3.9%	3890	3.4%
Neither English nor French	30	2.0%	120	0.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

*Table will not add up to 100% as only relevant categories to the study are displayed.

Immigrants are facing high unemployment rates

Despite having high education levels in pertinent sectors of the economy, immigrants face a difficult time in the Kingston job market. Immigrants have a higher participation rate (share of working-age adults that are working or looking for work) than non-immigrants. However, the unemployment rate for immigrants is nearly double that of non-immigrants: 11.5% compared to 7.3%. The unemployment rate in Ontario for February 2019 was 5.7%⁷.

LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION RATE

	Immigrant	Non-Immigrants
Participation rate	67.8	64.6
Employment rate	59.9	59.9
Unemployment rate	11.5	7.3

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

Immigrants have lower income levels

Immigrants have lower income levels. The average income for an immigrant is 66% of a non-immigrant in Kingston.

INCOME LEVEL

	Immigrant	Non-immigrant
Median total income in 2015 among recipients (\$)	\$21,712	\$36,669
Average total income in 2015 among recipients (\$)	\$31,503	\$47,188

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X20162351

⁷ Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey, February 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190308/dq190308a-eng.htm>.

Immigrants are finding jobs in hospitality and education sector

One of five immigrants in Kingston are working in the accommodation and food service industry (hospitality and restaurant sector). Another one-fifth are working in educational services (universities, colleges, schools, etc.). Rounding out the top five occupations for immigrants are healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, and manufacturing. In contrast, the top five occupational categories for the non-immigrant population in Kingston are: 1) healthcare and social assistance, 2) educational services, 3) public administration, 4) retail trade, and 5) accommodation and food service.

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS FOR IMMIGRANTS

	Immigrant	%
Accommodation and Food Service	190	19.6%
Educational Service	190	19.6%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	135	13.9%
Retail Trade	95	9.8%
Manufacturing	60	6.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS FOR NON-IMMIGRANTS

	Non-Immigrant	%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	11370	15.9%
Educational Service Public Administration	8315	11.6%
Retail Trade	9010	12.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	8435	11.8%
	6075	8.5%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016203

Immigrants overall are not faring well in Kingston

Immigrants to Kingston are highly educated, have degrees in relevant sectors of the economy, and speak English. However, they continue to be overlooked by many employers. Despite a higher labour market participation rate, immigrants experience approximately double the unemployment rate of their native-born counterparts. Almost a fifth of immigrants end up in the hospitality industry even though a majority have degrees that are postsecondary or higher. After being hired, they experience a significant disparity in income levels. Unfortunately, the findings show a mismatch with the type of immigrant talent coming into Kingston and their labour market outcomes.

The Kingston Environment

As more immigrants settle in Kingston from different parts of the world, local demographics are bound to change. Issues such as racism, discrimination and xenophobia are already surfacing. A survey in 2017 called 'Kingston Includes You' was conducted to gain a baseline understanding of the prevalence of racism and discrimination, and related experiences⁸. The main findings show that a majority of Kingston's population feel they will be more enriched by having a diverse and inclusive population⁹. However, 7 out of 10 people have witnessed racism and discrimination in the community – non-Europeans feel discriminated against at a rate 7 times higher than the remainder of the community¹⁰. The four sites where racism and discrimination are most present are: public places, social media, workplaces, and education institutions¹¹. Unfortunately, Kingston carries a negative reputation as a white city where minorities are not welcome, leading to a loss of talent and skills because newcomers are choosing to settle in other communities¹².

“Kingston as a city needs to attract a more culturally diverse population. There seems to be a real lack of diversity and as a result most employers are unable to recruit employees.” – Survey respondent.

Employers are 'not there yet' in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

Our research shows that 88.1% of Kingston employers think that racial and cultural diversity is beneficial for the workplace. However, not all employers believe that there is a business case for racial and cultural diversity. This is significant. A business case articulates the 'why' for the organization and is essential to generating senior leadership support. Without the right tools and organizational backing inclusion initiatives tend to fall flat. In fact, our survey data shows that 47.6% of Kingston employers have not implemented Intercultural Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, and of that, 23.8% have no plans to do so. Only, 33.3% of employers reported having embedded initiatives in their workplace. Our survey findings suggest that while employers believe in racial and cultural diversity they may not have the desire to foster an inclusive workplace. Further research is needed to explain why some employers do not see the need for a business case and to identify the types of initiatives that are currently underway.

⁸ Kingston Immigration Partnership.(2017). *Kingston Includes You Survey*.. Kingston, Ontario. Retrieved from: <https://kipcouncil.ca/pages/it-s-time-for-an-honest-discussion-about-discrimination-in-kingston>.

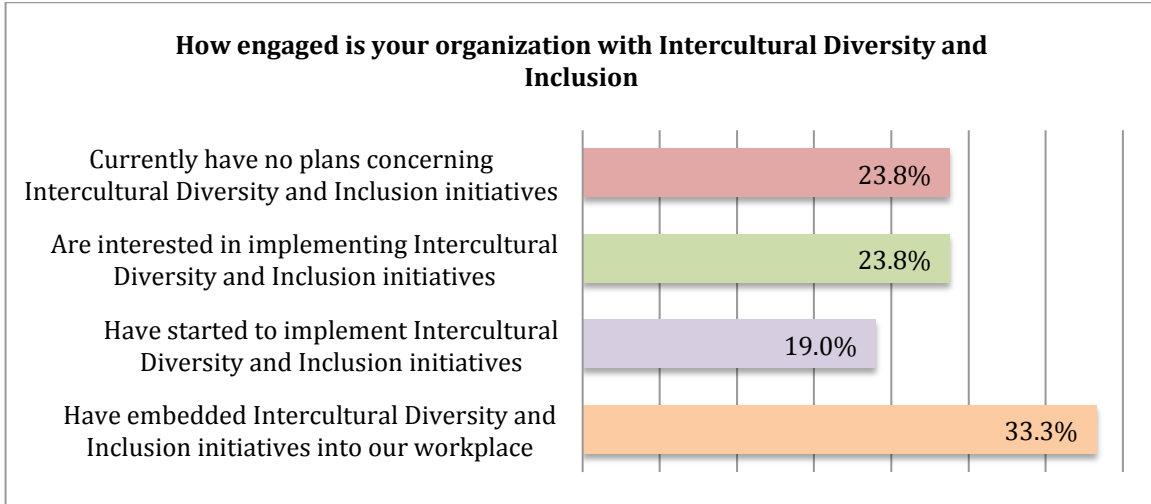
⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

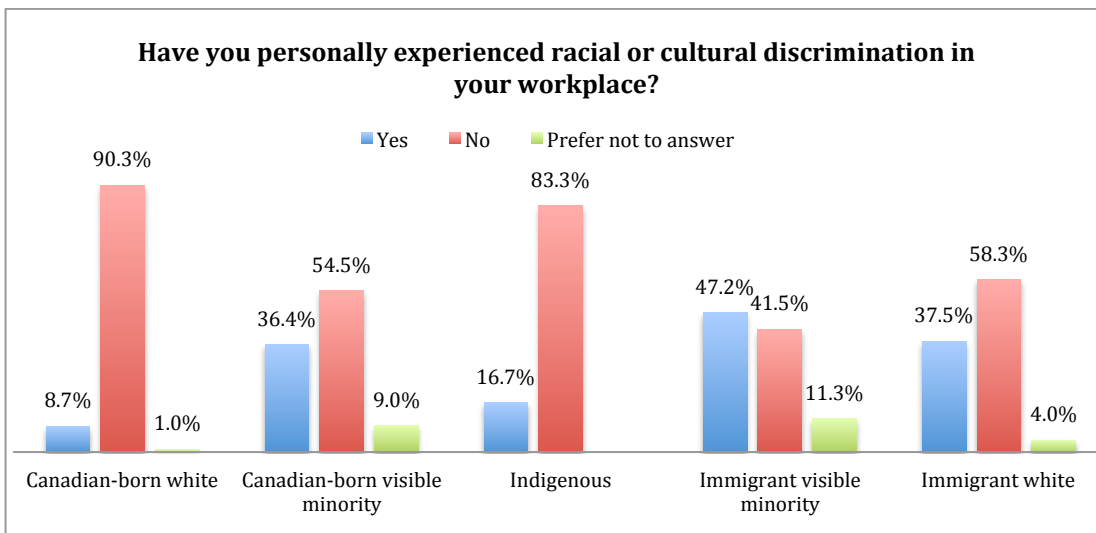
¹² Ibid

	Yes	No
Do you think that racial and cultural diversity is beneficial for the workplace?	88.1%	11.9%
Do you believe there is a business case for racial and cultural diversity in your workplace?	66.7%	33.3%



Immigrants are experiencing workplace discrimination

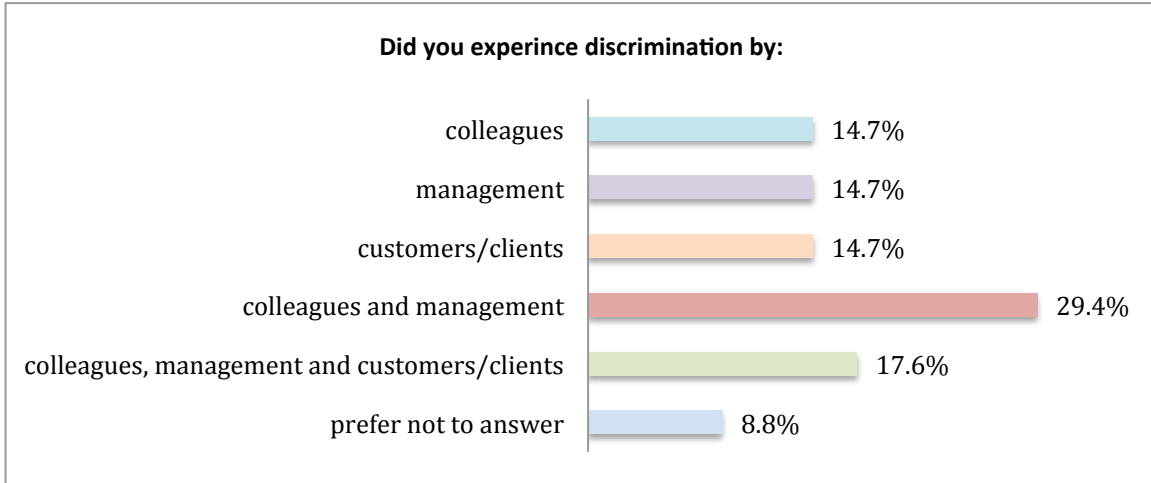
Our research shows that immigrants are experiencing discrimination in the workplace - 47.2% of the visible minority immigrants and 37.5% of non-visible minority immigrants have experienced racial and cultural discrimination. In contrast, 90.3% of White Canadian-born employees have not.



*Please note that data for Canadian-born visible minority and indigenous are not statistically significant given small sample size.

“Employees could be better educated. Unfortunately, racism still exists in Kingston. While employers themselves might be welcoming and inclusive, other employees might not be so welcoming.” - survey respondent.

When immigrants were asked by whom they experienced discrimination, the highest response was by colleagues and management.



Immigrants feel that resumes with ethnic-sounding names are overlooked

Immigrants in our study felt employers were passing on their resume because of an ethnic sounding name. This type of experience has been corroborated in a University of Toronto study that revealed Canadian employers are 40% more likely to call back someone with an English sounding name rather than an ethnic name¹³.

“The bosses have carefully avoided hiring diversity. They didn't fill the job I got until I came along because they didn't want someone who might be "too different". The crew of four men and two women is white, English speaking, Canadian-born and me (US born).” – Survey respondent.

Efforts are being made to address racism and discrimination

Kingston is working towards addressing racism and discrimination. As part of the Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy, the City of Kingston in partnership with KEYS Job Centre and other stakeholders have launched the Kingston Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Charter. The Charter sets out key commitments for employers to undertake in order to create and foster a more inclusive work environment.

¹³ Dechief and Oreopoulos. 2011. 'Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir'. Centre for Excellence for Research in Immigration and Diversity. Retrieved from: <http://mbc.metropolis.net/assets/uploads/files/wp/2011/WP11-13.pdf>

Immigrant Recruitment

Our survey findings indicate that 95.2% of Kingston employers believe that immigrants are beneficial for the local workforce and are suitable to their workplace. Employers who participated in the focus group mentioned they have no option but to tap into the immigrant workforce, especially in sectors that are experiencing labour market shortages. Also, they expressed a desire to have different ethnicities and skill sets on their teams to grow their business; for example, fostering business relationships and meeting the needs of a diversified customer base. However, the survey findings show that of those employers who believe immigrants are beneficial to the local workforce, only 57.5% feel that local employers need to prioritize attracting and retaining an immigrant workforce. It appears that while a majority of employers believe that skilled immigrants are beneficial to their organization, not all agree immigrant recruitment and retention is central to their human resource strategy.

Some employers are hesitant to hire immigrants

Our survey findings show that 69.0% of employers noted they recruit immigrant candidates and 31.0% do not. Of those who do not, the reasons included:

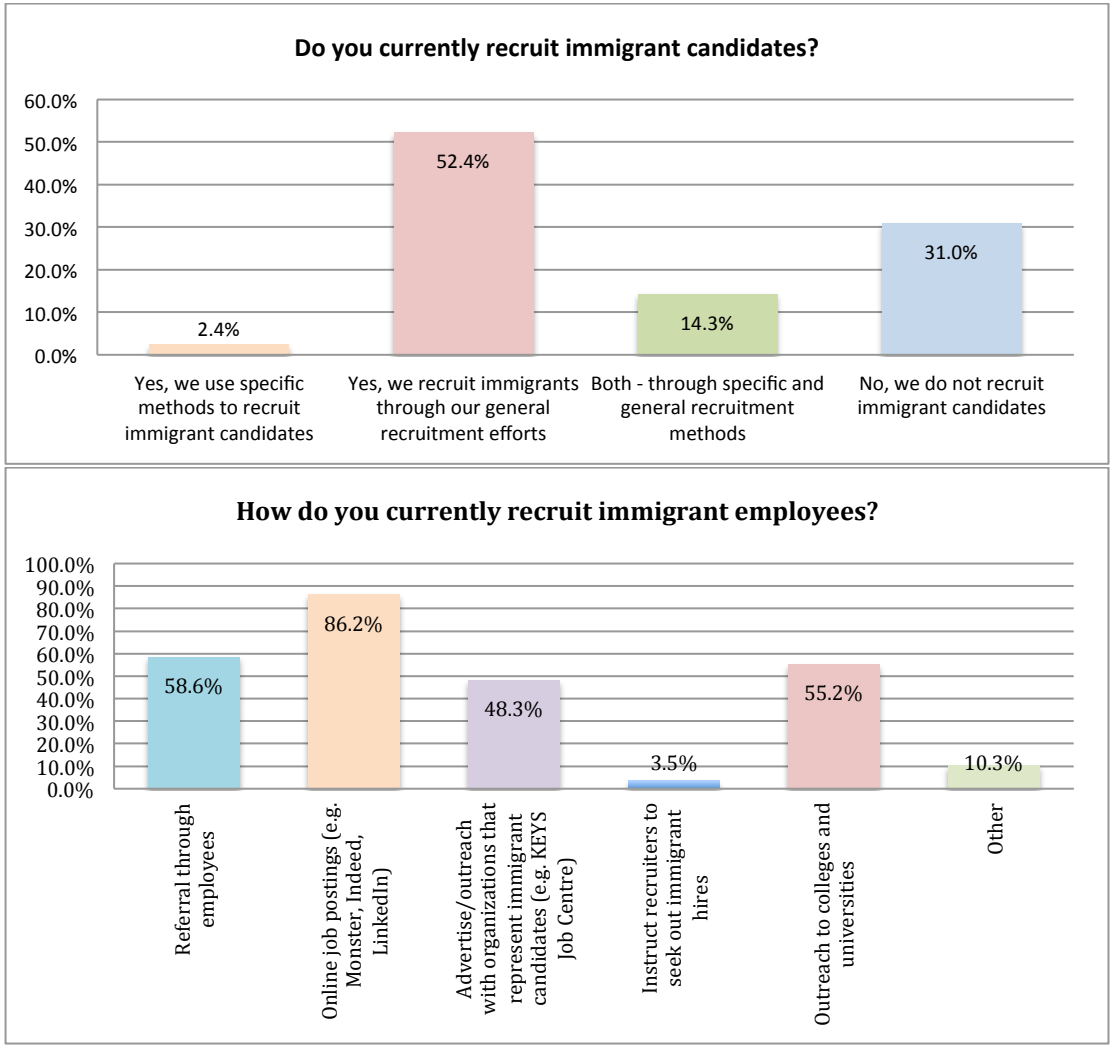
- not sure if immigrants are a cultural fit;
- not sure if immigrants have the language skills;
- not sure if immigrants skills are a match with the position;
- do not have the mandate to hire immigrants; and,
- a preference to hire locals.

“No one is willing to take a risk in hiring you [newcomer]” – Focus group participant.

Immigrant employees and job seekers noted that employers see them to be a risky hire and do not trust them to do the job. Some Canadian-born employees mentioned that employers need be made aware of or at least reminded of the business case for hiring immigrants. We also heard that it would be helpful to continually communicate the positive impact immigrants make to the organization and share promising practices.

Majority of recruitment is through general methods

The survey findings show that 52.4% of employers recruit immigrants through general recruitment channels and only 2.4% do so through more targeted methods. The top four avenues of recruitment are: 1) online job postings, 2) referrals through employees, 3) outreach to colleges and universities, and 4) outreach to immigrant-serving agencies. In the focus groups, some employers and Canadian-born employees mentioned that immigrants referred through an immigrant-serving agency might carry a stigma of needing more support.



*Respondents checked multiple answers

Kingston employers experience challenges in recruiting immigrants

The survey findings show 44.8% of employers experience challenges in recruiting immigrants; the top two reasons are: 1) immigrants do not have sufficient qualifications for the position, and 2) employers do not have the experience to assess immigrant skills and experience. These two challenges could be interrelated; an employer’s lack of experience in assessing foreign credentials and skills may lead to the conclusion that the immigrant applicant is not sufficiently qualified for the position. The ‘other’ response included a variety of reasons, one of the most repeated being immigrants do not have the English language requirements.



*Respondents checked multiple answers

Immigrants lack networks to employers

Networking came out as a key theme from the focus groups and key informant interviews. Participants noted that Kingston’s job market is very much about ‘who you know’. A few participants noted that Kingston is a ‘closed city’ and new people can make locals feel uncomfortable; therefore, networking is essential to ‘break the ice’. One participant summed up the job market as ‘Kingston has two degrees of separation’. Some of the suggestion for networking included joining social clubs, hobbies/interest groups and industry-specific gatherings. Employers stressed that networking is essential for immigrants to market themselves to potential employers and land a job.

Immigrants still face language barriers when looking for a job

Employers felt that the verbal and written English language skills of immigrants are insufficient to meet the requirements of the position. We heard this was especially the case for higher-skilled positions. There were examples in our research of a few employers who accommodated work schedules so that immigrants could attend English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, or reviewed reports and provided feedback. However, this did not seem to be common practice. The Statistics Canada data indicates that a majority of immigrants speak English; therefore, further research is required on where exactly immigrants fall short on English language skills when it comes to job applications and interviews.

There is some misalignment with what employers need and what immigrant-serving agencies are providing

Some of the employers who use immigrant-service agencies noted a misalignment in expectations. Some expressed frustration with the application process for programs (i.e. subsidy programs), noting that the paperwork is cumbersome and time-consuming. A more streamlined and speedy application system would be preferable. Other employers felt that job readiness training does not match

employer expectations, specifically with respect to English language ability and Canadian workplace knowledge, such as inter-cultural communication. It is important to keep in mind that these are the perspectives of employers, and immigrant-serving agencies may feel that these expectations go beyond what they are able to provide. Agencies may also feel that employers have a shared responsibility to onboard and provide support to immigrant hires.

Employers feel that immigrant onboarding is not necessarily their responsibility

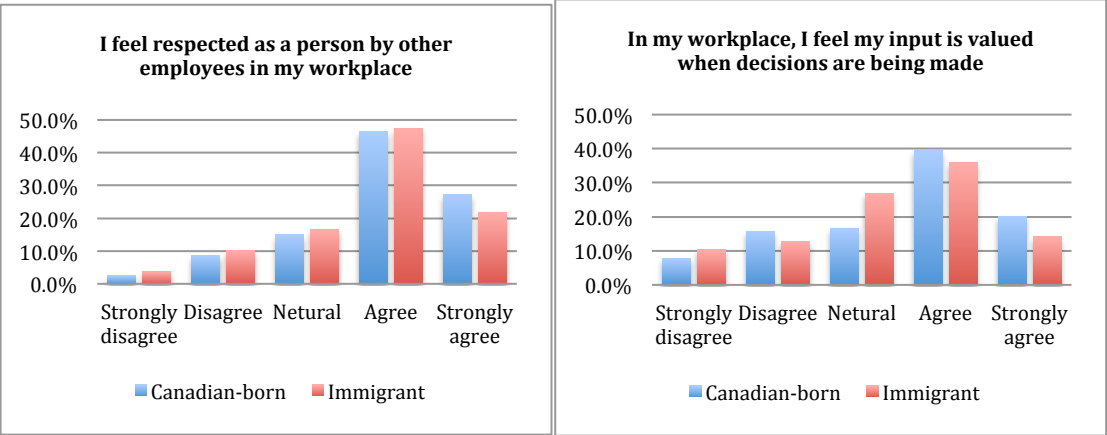
Most employers who participated in the study felt immigrant onboarding is not their responsibility. Capacity was an issue. We heard from employers that larger institutions such as government and hospitals have the organizational capacity for onboarding whereas small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) do not. A SME high-growth technology employer noted they had more success hiring people in their home country verses bringing them to Canada. It is important to keep in mind that employee onboarding is a larger systemic issue in Canada that impacts all new hires and requires a systemic culture shift among employers.

Immigrant Retention

The ability for employers to retain immigrants is equally important as recruitment. In the employee survey, we asked immigrants how they feel about their workplace and compared their responses to Canadian-born counterparts to see where there was alignment and disagreement. In the employer survey, we asked employers about immigrant recruitment and through focus groups and key informant interviews we unpacked some of the findings and took a deeper look.

Immigrants feel a sense of belonging in their workplace

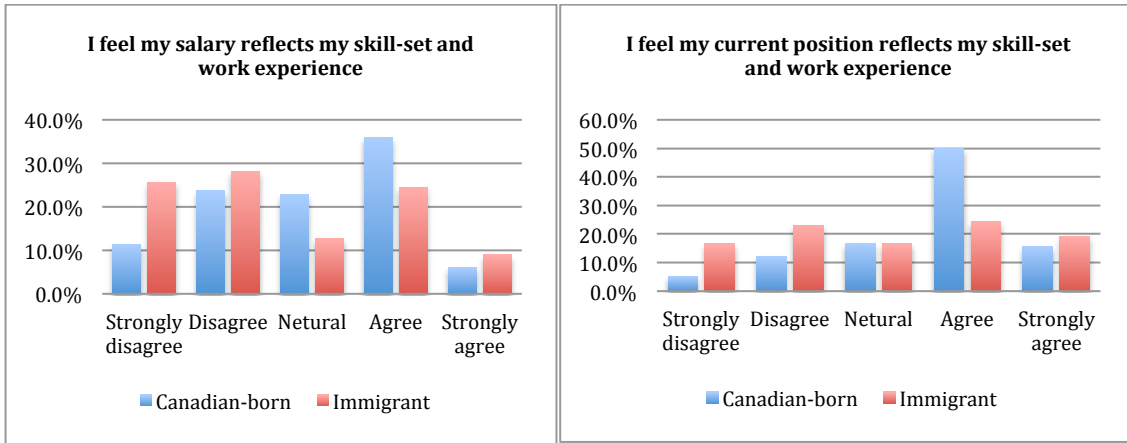
The survey results show that Canadian-born and immigrant employees align on feeling respected in the workplace – 73.7% of Canadian-born and 69.2% of immigrants indicated that they agree to strongly agree they are respected. When it comes to feeling valued, there is a larger variance: 50% of immigrant employees noted they agree to strongly agree their input is valued in the decision-making process compared to 59.7% of Canadian-born employees.



Immigrants feel their skill-set does not match their position and salary

According to survey findings, 43.6% of immigrant employees stated that they agree to strongly agree that their skill-set and work experience matches their position compared to 65.8% of Canadian-born employees. In terms of salary, 33% of immigrant employees compared to 42.1% of Canadian-born employees indicated they agree to strongly agree their salary reflects their skill-set and work experience. The findings on salary is not surprising given that Statistics Canada data shows that the average income for immigrants is 66% that of locals. Immigrant sentiment towards their position might be linked to employers not having the experience to assess foreign credentials and skills. In the focus groups and interviews, immigrants expressed expectations that their credentials, skills and experience would translate into positions that match their background and instead felt frustrated and disappointed in landing jobs below their expertise. We heard some focus group participants say that locals feel that immigrants need to ‘pay their dues just like everyone else’, and that is only fair that they start from the bottom. A few employers noted disappointment in newcomers’ hesitation to volunteer – they saw it as a

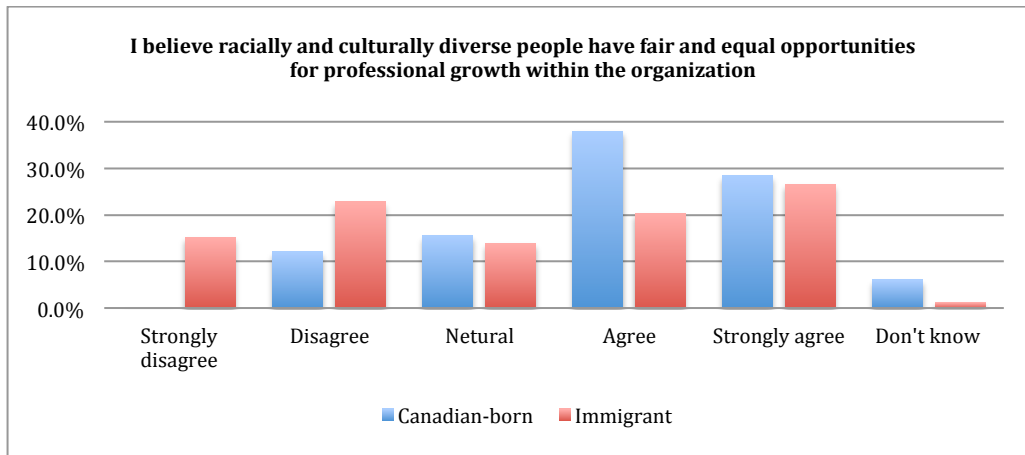
missed opportunity to gain local work experience and showcase skills and talent to a potential employer. However, volunteering may not be feasible for all newcomers, especially if they need to find paying jobs to afford rent and food.



Immigrants do not feel there are promotional opportunities for racial and culturally diverse employees

Our research shows there is a difference in perception on opportunities for advancement. According to survey results, 46.8% of immigrant employees compared to 66.4% of Canadian-born employees agree to strongly agree that racially and culturally diverse employees have fair and equal opportunities for professional growth within their organization. The findings were corroborated in focus groups and interviews with immigrants. Many expressed disappointment with the lack of advancement opportunities available to them in their organization. Some felt they were a ‘token hire’ just to show that the company recruits for diversity, but after coming into the organization there wasn’t any real commitment to promoting them. Others noted the lack of equity and inclusion initiatives to allow for fair and equal opportunities for professional growth.

“As a newcomer, [you] have to work very hard to prove yourself.” - Focus group participant



There is a mismatch in expectations for employers

Some of the employers mentioned that newcomers do not live up to the expectations of the position. When asked for specifics, most employers noted language ability and a few noted difficulties in executing the position. With respect to unskilled positions, we heard there is a misinterpretation between employers and newcomers on the duties of the position. A few employers spoke to work ethic, noting that the work habits of immigrants are not on par with locals; for example, with respect to reporting and dressing for work and carrying out job requirements. Image also came up as an issue – employers emphasized that immigrants need to work on how they present themselves, especially in an interview. These areas of discussion are delicate and require further conversation with employers to unpack where there are actual issues that need to be addressed versus biases held by employers.

There needs to be more workplace inter-cultural communication

One of the more significant themes that came out of the focus groups and informant interviews was the lack of inter-cultural communication in the workplace. Newcomers come from various countries where organizational practices and communication style are different than in Canada. We heard from employers and immigrants that newcomers may initially struggle with grasping the soft skills in terms of communicating and interacting with customers, colleagues and management, and in understanding the corporate culture such reporting processes (i.e. communicating within a hierarchy). For example, Canadians are often thought of as polite in their communication, which can be misinterpreted if you are new to Canada. We heard a few newcomers mention they thought they were doing a great job in their positions based on conversations with their managers, but were let go and are still not sure why. We also heard cases where newcomers did not know if they could approach their managers about an issue and instead of speaking to their managers, they quit their jobs.

We also heard from employers that they are unaware of the workplace practices that newcomers bring with them. One of the employers interviewed for this study noted that when working with newcomers he enjoys asking about the morale and corporate practices of the newcomer's home country – it helps him to identify where there are similarities and differences to the organizational culture. However, this did not seem to be common practice with employers we spoke to.

“ [Need to have more] understanding of the work morale/environment of the candidates' countries”

- Survey respondent

Kingston needs to create a welcoming community

Many of the employers who participated in the focus group mentioned that it is hard to retain immigrant staff because there is little to keep them in Kingston. They mentioned that immigrants are not able to find their own community and therefore feel isolated; for example, there are very few cultural events and ethnic grocery stores to make immigrants feel at home. They expressed frustration in losing immigrant staff to metropolitan cities that can offer a sense of community. To retain immigrants, employers noted that the City of Kingston and ethnic communities need to step up and come together to make Kingston a more welcoming city for immigrants through various types of social supports (i.e. cultural events).

“[Kingston] needs more events that bring Kingston community and immigrants together on a regular basis.” – Survey respondent.

Recommendations

We know Kingston will be experiencing acute labour market shortages very soon. What we heard is Kingston has further to go to become a welcoming city. Racism and discrimination exists and challenges in immigrant recruitment and retention continue. As part of our research we sought input on how to address these challenges so that immigrants feel welcome, experience better labour market outcomes, and employers are able to fill skills shortages as well as benefit from global talent. The recommendations are discussed at a systemic level, as employer-based initiatives, and at the service-system level – all of which are all interrelated.

SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION

- Develop a multi-stakeholder strategy with respect to recruitment and retention of immigrants
- Make Kingston a more welcoming city for newcomers

Potential Stakeholders: immigrant-serving agencies, employers, immigrants, HR associations/organizations, industry associations, boards of trade, cultural organizations, faith groups, City of Kingston, Kingston Immigration Partnership, and Kingston Economic Development

EMPLOYER-LED INITIATIVES

- Employers need to embed diversity and inclusion policies in their business/strategic plans
- Employers need to do more to successfully onboard new hires
- Employers need to support immigrants in taking ESL classes

Potential Stakeholders: immigrant-serving agencies, employers, immigrants, HR associations/organizations, City of Kingston and Kingston Immigration Partnership.

SERVICE-SYSTEM LEVEL

- Employers need more education on the benefits of hiring immigrants
- Provide employers with inter-cultural competency training
- Help employers with foreign credential and skill assessment
- Provide immigrants with networking opportunities and job readiness

Potential Stakeholders: immigrant-serving agencies, employers, immigrants, HR associations/organizations, industry associations, and Kingston Immigration Partnership.

Systemic Transformation

Develop a multi-stakeholder strategy with respect to recruitment and retention of immigrants

The challenges in immigrant recruitment and retention are not the sole responsibility of immigrant-serving agencies to solve, but instead require a coordinated multi-stakeholder effort with immigrant-serving agencies, employers, immigrants, HR associations/organizations, City of Kingston, Kingston Economic Development and other relevant stakeholders. It is important to bring all of these stakeholders together as each one has their own perspective, experience and resources to bring to the table. Through the Workforce Development and In-Migration Strategy, a multi-stakeholder initiative should be set up to address the full range of recruitment and retention challenges over time. It is important monitor and evaluate the progress.

Make Kingston a more welcoming city for newcomers

Making Kingston a more welcoming city is imperative and requires the efforts of multiple stakeholders, including the City of Kingston, immigrant-serving agencies, immigrants, employers, faith groups, cultural agencies, Kingston Economic Development. Initiatives such as 'Change the Conversation' have been implemented to address racism and discrimination. However, tackling this issue requires a sustained and multi-pronged approach. Wider consultation with key stakeholder groups may reveal more opportunities to make Kingston a welcoming city.

Employer-Led Initiatives

Employers need to embed diversity and inclusion policies in their business/strategic plans

Helping employers to embed diversity and inclusion in their organizational DNA could improve racism and discrimination in the workplace and with immigrant recruitment and retention. The City of Kingston's Workforce In Migration Strategy launched the Kingston Workplace's Diversity and Inclusion Charter to create more inclusive work environments. A great first step is to create an opportunity through the Charter to encourage employers to embed diversity and inclusion their business/strategic plans. This will help to garner senior leadership support and hold the organization accountable for implementing on their commitments.

Employers need to do more to onboard new hires

In our research we heard onboarding is a challenge for both employers and immigrants. Employers can develop a simple manual applicable for all new hires that provides tips on:

- communication protocols with customers, colleagues and management;
- communication protocols within the hierarchy;

- suggestions on how to address issues with management;
- common terminology used in the organization and industry;
- dress code for the workplace; and
- organizational work ethic.

These are just some suggestions and will be depend on the organization. Each organization has its own work culture and communication style. We also propose that the manual not be a cumbersome task for the employer, but a very simple document that can be of benefit to anyone who comes into the organization.

With respect to immigrant hires, employers may want to identify a mentor within the organization to help new hires orient to the workplace culture. Immigrant hires can mentor the organization on foreign workplaces practices. In addition, this type of partnership may help employees to gain a deeper understanding of other cultures and address preconceived notions and biases.

Employers need to be supportive of immigrant hires taking ESL classes

We heard employers say that immigrants do not have the desired level of verbal and written English language skills. When immigrants arrive to Kingston they must find a job to pay for rent and food and may not have the time to go without income to focus on ESL classes. A way to remedy this is to encourage employers to support immigrant hires in taking ESL classes. Most employers encourage their staff to take professional development courses and allocate funds for them to do so; similarly, ESL classes should be seen in the same vein. A few employers mentioned that a tax incentive may encourage employers to give immigrants the opportunity to upgrade their English to a desired level.

Service-System Level

Employers need more education on the benefits of hiring immigrants

We heard more effort needs to be placed on educating employers on the benefits of hiring immigrants – this could be in the form of presenting a business case to employers along with case studies that highlight promising practices. There are a lot of business case resources available through immigrant-serving agencies such as KEYS Job Centre, Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), Hire Immigrants Ottawa, Immigrant Employment Council of BC. There are also several studies by leading organizations such as McKinsey, Deloitte, Boston Consulting Group, and Catalyst that have demonstrated the link between innovation and profitability with diverse organizations, especially at the leadership level. We heard from research participants that it is important to meet employers where they are to present the business case; for example, going to Boards of Trade, HR associations, etc. Employers who have had positive experiences hiring immigrants could also act

as advocates within the employer community and use their story to build trust; they could also be used as a 'go to' resource for other employers.

Provide inter-cultural competency training to employers

One of the key underlying themes that came out of the research was the importance of inter-cultural competency training for employers. The two key areas with this regard are:

- **Understanding of foreign workplace culture.** Immigrants will most likely demonstrate the workplace culture and communication style from the country where they previously worked. Given that a majority of Kingston's workplaces are homogenous, employers can't be expected to have the necessary experience in understanding the divergence between foreign and Canadian workplace communication protocols and styles. However, educating employers on foreign workplace norms may help them to bridge this gap for new hires.
- **Unconscious bias training.** Our research did point to racism and discrimination in the workplace, a majority of which is experienced by immigrants from management and colleagues. Providing unconscious bias training to everyone in the organization – the CEO through to front line staff - is one of the first and most fundamental tools to addressing racism and discrimination. This also has to be complemented with additional inclusion initiatives sustained over time.

KEYS Job Centre recently launched the Newcomers Empowering Business Initiative – a reverse mentoring program where immigrant job seekers are matched as mentors to employers. The goal of the program is to: 1) improve the inter-cultural competence of employers, 2) help employers understand the benefit of hiring immigrants, and 3) facilitate access to essential workplace and general settlement information. This program is important as it helps to address inter-cultural competency in the workplace and onboarding and, if successful, should be considered for expansion.

Help employers with foreign credential and skill assessment

The research shows that employers struggle with foreign credential and skill assessment and in turn may be passing on immigrant applications or offering positions and compensation far below immigrant qualifications. This does not bode well in the long run for immigrants or employers.

Key stakeholders such as immigrant-serving agencies, employers and industry associations need to come together with the goal of finding mechanisms to help employers translate foreign experience to local positions. This issue primarily pertains to the unregulated professions as regulated professions have regulatory bodies that assess foreign credentials. Unfortunately, credential and skills assessment is a long-standing challenge in the immigration field across Canada. Kingston may want to identify if there are successful initiatives in other jurisdictions

that can be applied to the local context or develop an innovative system that works for them.

Provide immigrants with networking opportunities

Participants in our research emphasized that networking is key to helping immigrants find job opportunities. However, newcomers to Kingston may not know where to start. Immigrant-serving agencies in partnership with HR/industry associations and Kingston Economic Development can help to cohost networking events that bring together employers and newcomers, especially in industries that are experiencing labour market shortages. Immigrant-serving agencies may want to encourage newcomers to join industry associations and/or organizations that represent their hobbies/interests, sports clubs, etc. Agencies can provide newcomers with a list of organizations or direct them to a list.

Areas for Further Research

The research has brought forward important findings on diversity and inclusion in Kingston workplaces and with immigrant recruitment and retention. The majority of the findings are from original research specific to Kingston using various research tools. In writing the report, however, there were areas of further investigation and key questions were noted:

- Why are employers not pushing the business case for racial and cultural diversity in their workplace? The research showed that not all employers believe in a business case for racial and cultural diversity. It is important to understand why this is case, to identify the barriers, and to address them.
- What are the different types of diversity and inclusion initiatives in Kingston-area workplaces? The research conducted for this report provided a baseline understanding of where many employers are at with their diversity and inclusion initiatives. Further research needs to be conducted on what types of initiatives are being implemented.
- Are immigrants falling short on verbal and written English language skills or is employer bias at play? The Statistics Canada data indicates that a majority of immigrants speak English. Further research is required to identify if employer perceptions of immigrant language skills is accurate and, if so, where exactly immigrants fall short on English language skills.
- What are the exact challenges employers experience with onboarding new immigrant hires? The research was able to uncover some of the key challenges; however, the process of onboarding can look different for each organization. The issue deserves a more concentrated examination. A deeper examination of work ethic also needs to happen, especially with respect to unskilled position. These areas of discussion are delicate and require further conversation with employers to unpack where there are actual challenges versus biases.

Appendix 1

This research was conducted by D&D Inclusion Consulting for the KEYS Job Centre in order to create a baseline understanding of diversity and inclusion with employers in the Kingston-area and challenges with respect to immigrant recruitment and retention.

The research was conducted from October 2018 to February 2019. The research designed involved employer and employee surveys to collect quantitative data and key informant and focus group questions to gather qualitative information. The research approach allowed for comparison of data from different sources – surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews (‘triangulation’). The research is valid and robust given the mix of qualitative and quantitative information from surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews.

The surveys were conducted with Kingston employers and employees who received an anonymized link to the survey through two distribution methods:

- direct email communication with the employer and employees;
- direct email communication with organizations representing employers and employees; and,
- social media links to the survey.

The surveys were online from December 3, 2018 to February 11, 2019 – a total of 10 weeks. The total number of employees who took the survey was 282; however, to ensure validity of the data, the survey data was sorted for complete responses and employees working in Kingston. In total, the employee survey had 196 complete responses. The total number of employers who took the survey was 78; however, to ensure validity of the data, the survey data was sorted for complete responses and employers based in Kingston. In total, the employer survey had 42 complete responses. The data sets for both the employer and employee surveys were large enough to conduct statistically relevant analysis for the report. Where this was not possible, a note has been made under each table presented in the report.

D&D Inclusion Consulting conducted in-depth key informant interviews from December 2018 to January 2019 with 5 Kingston employers, 3 service providers, and 4 immigrant job seekers and employees. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow for exploratory questioning.

D&D Inclusion Consulting conducted 3 focus groups in January 2019 with employers, immigrant employees and job seekers, and Canadian-born employees. The employer focus group was conducted with 12 Kingston employers; the immigrant focus group was conducted with 7 immigrants who are currently employed or seeking employment in Kingston; the Canadian-born focus group was conducted with 11 Canadian-born employees working for a Kingston employer.

An analysis of Statistics Canada data was conducted to inform the research on immigrant labour market trends (source: Statistics Canada *immigrants landing into Kingston 2011-2016*, Data tables: 98-400-X2016203 and *Labour Force Survey*, Data table: 98-400-X20162351). A review of relevant literature was also synthesized in order to supplement the direct research findings.